East Riverside Corridor Master Plan Produces White In-Migration Growth

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2019 Report

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- Gabriel Amaro, Ph.D. and Edwin Sanchez, University of Texas at Austin Latino Research Initiative, for examining demographic and housing affordability changes that have occurred in the East Riverside Corridor (ERC) since the City of Austin's adoption of the East Riverside Corridor Master Plan.
- Sylvia Herrera, Ph.D. PODER, Health Coordinator, for qualitative research of displaced residents and qualitative research on AISD educational data.
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Executive Summary

Zoning and land use planning have been described by some scholars as not only as a root enabling cause of disproportionate burdens and environmental injustice, but also the most fundamental and potentially most powerful of the legal weapons deployed in the cause of racism. The history of land use planning and zoning in Austin helps to explain how the unequal distribution of economic and environmental burdens has occurred, and why these historical patterns have been the source of many injustices that confront people of color and/or low-income communities in East Austin.

This report, *East Riverside Corridor Master Plan Produces White In-Migration Growth,* shows that these injustices are still occurring today, and are caused in part by the very plans that were designed – at least in part – to help. The report examines how zoning and new design regulations changed the housing and demographic along the area which encompasses East Riverside Drive, southeast of downtown Austin, Texas. The corridor extends from Highway 35 to State Highway 71, including the East Riverside/Oltorf and Montopolis Neighborhood Planning Areas. The East Riverside Corridor Master Plan was adopted in 2010 and design regulations were adopted in 2013 by the Austin City Council.

Census data was reviewed from 2010, year the East Riverside Corridor Master Plan (ERCMP) was adopted to 2017, the year the most recent Census data is available. To isolate the changes to areas within, and directly adjacent to, the Corridor, Census block group boundaries, the lowest geographic level available in ACS (American Community Survey) data was used. The East Riverside Corridor Master Plan was envisioned as a plan that emphasized a transit-oriented and walkable development and sustainable practices throughout the Corridor, while also maintaining housing options for people with a range of incomes (ERCMP 2010).

East Riverside Drive was described as a "commercial center to an economically and socially diverse group of residents living in proximity to the roadway" and "a gateway to downtown". At the time of the Master Plan adoption, demographic trends suggested that the population growth in the Corridor would primarily originate from growth in the Latino population and that White and Asian populations would be a "source of growth due to migration into the Corridor" (ERCMP 2010 A8).

Overall, the data presented here documents that instead of creating a corridor that would create affordable housing and continue the growth of the Latino population

and a socially and economically diverse population, the plan has caused displacement and gentrification. The findings are that the growth in the East Riverside Corridor is primarily the result of White in-migration of educated, young-adult, and higher-income who live alone or who live with other unrelated individuals. This population is also likelier to be renters than homeowners.
In general, the ERC area experienced significant proportional growth of the White population including one block area that increased by 490%. In another area where the Oracle Campus is located there was also significant proportional growth of the White population by 183%. On the other hand, the overall Latino share of the population declined from 64% in 2010 to -56% in 2017. Some neighborhoods with market-based affordable units such as Connection Apartments, Paradise Oaks Apartments, and River crossing Townhomes showed minimal growth of the Latino population.

The changing demographics of the ERC area is evidence of the displacement of low-income households. The number of affordable housing units for families of limited incomes are not replenished in the new housing stock that is marketed to young single persons of higher incomes. The adoption and implementation of the East Riverside Corridor Plan has negatively impacted low-income and people of color. For instead, between 2010 and 2017, the East Riverside Corridor experienced a significant increase in per capita income. Whites per capita income increased 20%. The Latinos per capita income increased 9%.

Solutions to the problem: urban planning and gentrification

This report provides the foundation for further discussion on the negative impacts of the adopted East Riverside Corridor Master Plan and regulating plan. Therefore, this report provides recommendations for policy changes that will improve the quality of life for current and vulnerable residents:

Austin City Council should incorporate consideration of potential displacement/gentrification and negative impacts of land use decisions into the fabric of their planning and zoning activities. The University of Texas report, *Uprooted: Residential Displacement in Austin's Gentrifying Neighborhoods and What can Be Done About It*, should be utilized to identify as priority target areas to protect.

Austin City Council should use their full legal authorities to enact appropriate ordinances, issue policies, develop guidance, and develop accountability measures

to ensure that, all core government functions are authorized and required to address displacement/gentrification.

City officials who are responsible for planning, zoning, public heath, and environmental protections should take immediate action to protect residents in low-income and people of color neighborhoods encountering excessive levels of displacement/gentrification.

The Peoples Plan a comprehensive, executable anti-displacement plan, was submitted to the City of Austin from a coalition of grassroots groups (NACCP, PODER, Save Montopolis Negro School Coalition, Eastern Crescent Right to Stay Coalition, LULAC and Community Not Commodity). On January 15, 2018 (Dr. Martin Luther Kings' birthday). The Peoples Plan was referred by the City Council for review by the City Manager. To date, the City has failed to act and implement such recommendations endorsed by many boards and commissions including the city's Anti-Displacement Task Force.
The Peoples Plan recommendations are as follows:

- Create Low income housing trust fund and appropriations.
  Establish a separate, dedicated low income housing trust fund in which all City housing funds are placed. Allocate 1% of City's Budget each year to the trust fund to construct or subsidize housing for low income families. 20% of all future general obligation bond elections will be included for low income housing.
- Adopt right to Stay and Right to Return Programs for east Austin residents. Develop policies to reduce or freeze property taxes for low income residents and seniors; create home repair programs. Use public owned land property to build new land-banked and land trust homes for low income former families of East Austin.
- Use City Owned Land for Low Income Housing. Identify eight properties owned by the City of Austin that can be quickly made available for building low income housing.
- Expand use of Neighborhood Conservation Combined Districts and Historic Districts. Apply tools to help conserve and preserve our neighborhoods and prevent gentrification and displacement.
- Establish Interim Development Regulations in Areas with Inadequate Drainage.
- Implement Austin Environmental Quality Review.

Creation of deeply affordable units at 20% and 30% MFI and below (recommendation alignment with Anti-Displacement Task Force Report & Austin Strategic Housing Blueprint).

City right of first refusal/right to purchase for rent-restricted properties being sold. Purchase ordinances provide cities or tenants, or both, with a right to purchase a rental property when the owner decides to sell the property or convert it to market rate. A "right of first refusal (ROFR)" provides a right to match a private offer to purchase the property during a set period of time. A "purchase right" gives the city or tenants the right to purchase the property at fair market value when the property is exiting the affordability program. ROFR and purchase rights can extend to: (1) all subsidized apartments requiring city funding or approval (such as 4% LIHTC/tax-exempt bond projects); (2) all subsidized apartments, regardless of the source of funding; or (3) all apartments, regardless of whether the property is subsidized (recommendation from the UT Uprooted Report should be instituted to protect the apartment units along the East Riverside Corridor).

This report has shown that the adoption and implementation of the East Riverside Corridor Master Plan and regulating plan has negatively impacted low-income and people of color. Austin must reexamine its existing policies and adopt new measures to assure that the diversity and character of East Austin along the East Riverside Corridor Master Plan area can be protected and preserved.

East Riverside Corridor Master Plan Produces White In-Migration Growth

Introduction

Systemic gentrification in the form of zoning and planning have been described by many scholars as, not only as one of the root causes enabling disproportionate burdens of economic, cultural and environmental injustice upon people of color, but also the fundamental and potentially most powerful of the legal weapons deployed in the cause of systemic and institutional racism (National Academy of Administration July 2003 Report).

Austin has a long history of segregated housing dating back to the adoption of the city's Master Plan of 1928. This city's Master Plan staged the setting for relocating African and Mexican American communities along with undesirable industries into East Austin. Before this mandate, these communities were in west Austin such as the historic Clarksville neighborhood and "Mexican Square" now known as "Republic Park" in downtown Austin

In 1931, the zoning regulations required industrial uses to be placed in East Austin. East Austin became the section of Austin where people of color were relocated to. This racial, ethnic, and industrial segregation was physically reinforced when Austin was bisected by the construction of Interstate 35 in the 1950s, creating both a physical and visual barrier between East and West Austin.

Background

Housing

In 1931 the Austin Housing Authority presented a housing plan before the Planning Commission. The housing plan was approved by the Planning Commission and later the Austin City Council adopted the Austin Housing Authority plan. The plan was to locate three racial public housing projects. This plan began the segregation of three ethnic groups; Chalmers Court for Anglos, Rosewood for African Americans and Santa Rita Courts for Mexican Americans. From 1938 to 1967, it was the official policy of the Housing Authority to segregate Anglos, African Americans and Mexican Americans into the different housing projects. This plan would dictate the settlement of African Americans and Mexican Americans in East Austin.

African Americans who once lived in the Waller Creek neighborhood, Clarksville, and Wheatsville neighborhoods were gradually forced out of west and central Austin and into East Austin. Mexican Americans who lived downtown and in the University of Texas area were also relocated to East Austin.

The City of Austin was forced to give up its official overt discrimination in the area of housing in 1968 by Federal legislation. It had to comply or lose large amounts of Federal housing dollars.

For the last 20 years, East Austin has completely transformed into high density housing with trendy restaurants and bars catering to in-migration of educated, young-adult, and higher-income Whites, who live alone or who live with other unrelated individuals. East Austin neighborhoods are no longer predominantly low to moderate income African American and Mexican American communities. According to a 2017 study by University of Texas at Austin, East Austin saw a 442 percent increase of white residents between 2000 and 2010, while its African-American population dropped by 66 percent.

Zoning

The adoption of the City's Master Plan in 1928 led to the segregation of Austin. The zoning regulations that required industrial uses to be placed in East Austin were adopted in 1931. Historic zoning practices created the base for many environmental justice problems, such an as unwanted land uses and disproportionate pollution.

Austin has a legacy of historical patterns of racism in land use and planning dating from 1870's to present. A snapshot of the gentrification timeline can be seen in the Appendices (City of Austin's Displacement and/or Gentrification Timeline).

The East Riverside/Oltorf Combined Neighborhood Plan, which encompassed Riverside, Parker Lane and Pleasant Valley planning areas, was selected by Austin City Council to undergo neighborhood planning during the fiscal year of 2003-2004. The 2000 US Census dated showed a 42.6% Hispanic population living in the combined plan area (see Boundaries Map of East Riverside/Oltorf Combined Planning Area). Most of the residential zoning in the area in 2005 was Single Family (SF-3) to Multi-Family (35 feet to 40 feet height). Most of the Multi-Family zoning ranged from MF-2 to MF-3 (40 feet height), which is considered medium density development. Much of the East Riverside Corridor area was zoned Community Commercial (GR), to provide offices or commercial uses serving neighborhoods and

community needs (see 2005 Current Zooning Maps for East Riverside/Oltorf Combined Neighborhood Plan).

In November 2006 the East Riverside/Oltorf Combined Neighborhood Plan was adopted by the Austin City Council and most of the 2005 current zoning remained the same, with a few zoning changes.

On February 25th, 2010 the Austin City Council adopted the East Riverside Corridor Master Plan (ERCMP) and adopted new design and zoning regulations for the area on May 9th, 2013. The ERCMP trumped the 2006 adopted East Riverside/Oltorf Combined Neighborhood Plan zoning. The East Riverside Corridor Master Plan includes the area East of IH 35 at E. Riverside Drive and continues to East Riverside at Hwy 71. The Council adopted the plan as if the Riverside Corridor was vacant of human life. Over 1,700 low-income and working poor, mostly people of color, were displaced to make room for the new higher density, high class wage earners. The displacement continues along the corridor. The Montopolis Neighborhood Contact Team (MNPCT) which is designated by the City of Austin to review neighborhood plan amendments and Future Land Use Map (FLUM), was denied the right to review the East Riverside Corridor Master Plan because the ERCMP was exempt from being reviewed by the Montopolis Neighborhood Plan Contact Team. The adoption of ERCMP, cast-off the Montopolis Neighborhood Plan 2001 adopted zoning for areas within the ERCMP.

The regulating plan for the East Riverside Corridor Zoning District was approved by the Austin City Council in May 2013. The area was divided into five subdistricts: Corridor Mixed use, Industrial Mixed Use, Neighborhood Mixed use, Urban Residential, and Neighborhood Residential (see ERC Boundary Map).

The East Riverside Corridor regulating plan identified four “Hubs” or areas where the City of Austin encourages the most intensive development. Properties within a hub boundary are eligible for development bonuses in exchange for a specified community benefit. That development bonus allows developers to build from 60-feet to a maximum of 120 feet (See Designated Hub Map).

The new ERCMP zoning regulations have created an increase in housing prices and a change in the character of residential development. The new ERCMP zoning regulations have caused direct and indirect displacement.

Education

Through quality education people learn the tools to participate in the policy process decisions that impact their communities and daily lives. When one investigates the education system in Austin, one can see that the Austin school system has fought and invested large amounts of money to keep its discriminatory practice in place. In 1954 the Supreme Court decision of Brown v. Board of Education ordered the communities of our nation, "to effectuate a transition to a racially nondiscriminatory school system". The Austin school system did not comply with the Supreme Court decision. In 1970, 15 years after Brown, the United States Government was compelled to file suit to eliminate racial discrimination in the Austin school system. It wasn't until 1983 that the Court was able to hold that the Austin school system had become a unitary system.

Even today, we can see the long-term educational impact of this discriminatory system. Numerous schools located in East Austin, have been labeled "low-performing" or "clearly unacceptable" by the Texas Education Agency. In 2019, due to displacement and gentrification, numerous East Austin Schools will be closed or consolidated due to under-enrollment.

Environment

The East Riverside Corridor Master Plan calls for higher density development. A higher density development for an increase of units (targeted for individuals) but not necessarily an increase of families. Vacant lots filled with trees, plants and animal life and current developed lots are being redeveloped with the allowance of 80% impervious cover.

The Corridor has undergone a tremendous increase of traffic. The higher density development is transforming the corridor into a transportation nightmare. The increase of higher density development has triggered the need to take public park land and transform it into additional street access for redevelopment.

The City of Austin is proposing to give away public parkland so that a private developer from California (NRE ION LLC/Presidium Group) can construct 5,000+ new housing units, hotel, office and commercial space. Over 1,300 affordable units will be demolished along the 97-acre tract on E. Riverside Drive (zoning case C14-2018-0026,0027, & 0028), to construct their luxury development, referred to as "Project Catalyst" and known as the "Domain on Riverside". Developers and City

staff want to extend Lakeshore Boulevard through Roy Guerrero Colorado River Park (363 Acre Park) to service this luxury development.

The construction of the road through the park will lead to habitat destruction of many species in the park and the clearing of dozens of trees. Roy Guerrero Colorado River Park is an important part of Austin's urban ecosystem, containing over 500 recorded plant species and 230 unique Bird Species. The critical Environmental feature within the park is a group of instream wetlands running along the tributary. It is critical to maintain the health of these wetlands due to the ecosystem services they provide including sedimentation prevention downstream, nutrient retention, and pollution retention. The construction of this road would lead to further contamination of the Colorado River, both in toxic chemicals and sediments. The road would impact not only water pollution, but also air pollution. Noise pollution is another item that an Environmental Commission will need to look at. Noise pollution is considered by the World Health Organization to be the third most hazardous type of pollution, yet we have failed to account for it in the proposed building of this road.

Roy Guerrero Colorado River Park is a place of solace for many people and it is well known in the scientific community that contact with nature reduces stress, improves attention, increases longevity, reduces the risk of cardiovascular diseases and obesity, and provides a vast assortment of other restorative effects.

Methodology

With the assistance of Gabriel Amaro, Ph. D and Edwin Sanchez from the University of Texas at Austin Latino Research Initiative, we gathered census data for the East Riverside Corridor Master Plan area. The East Riverside Corridor, southeast of downtown Austin, Texas. The Corridor extends from Inter-State Highway 35 to State Highway 71, including the East Riverside/Oltorf and Montopolis Neighborhood Planning Areas. Demographic and housing affordability changes from 2010, the year the East Riverside Corridor Master Plan was adopted, to 2017, the year the most recent Census data is available was examined. Demographic data was obtained from the 2006-2010 U.S. Census American Community Survey (ACS 2010) and 2013-2017 American Community Survey five-year datasets (ACS 2017). Census block group boundaries using ACS data with the lowest geographic level were used to isolate the changes to areas within and directly adjacent to the Corridor. To selectively identify Corridor block groups to include in the analysis, ArcGIS software and shapefile data from the City of Austin Open Data Portal was used. The analysis was restricted from 2010 to 2017 since Census geographies may realign

each decennial year. Census 2000 block groups may not align with Census 2010 block groups just as Census 2010 block groups may not align with Census 2020. In between decennial Census's, census geographies remain stable, thus the 2010 block groups will align with 2017 block groups. The location and frequency of City of Austin funded, or incentivized affordable housing was incorporated into the analysis. The location, construction date, and affordability end date for all affordable housing units in the area comes from the affordable housing data.

By examining several characteristics, demographic changes were capture. In the Corridor, we examine population growth by race and ethnicity; population changes by age; change in the number of family households; and change in the number of people enrolled in school. Housing affordability changes were captured by examining changes in per capital incomes, homeownership, housing values, median income, and change in the number of affordable housing units. Results include an overview of findings in the Corridor and, in some occurrences, a select number of block group changes had a detailed discussion. Some of the finding below will show positive growth from 2010 to 2017 while the overall share in the Corridor decreases, due to the increase in the number of residential units available in the Corridor in 2017 (16,050) relative to 2010 (13,276). Located in the Appendices, you can find the map of the corridor block groups that are referenced in the results discussion.

To compliment the census data, qualitative analysis was done from interviews of affected individuals by independent sources. Insightful information was revealed for factors that too often are not included in the equation of displacement. These factors include psychological and emotional feelings on forced displacement.

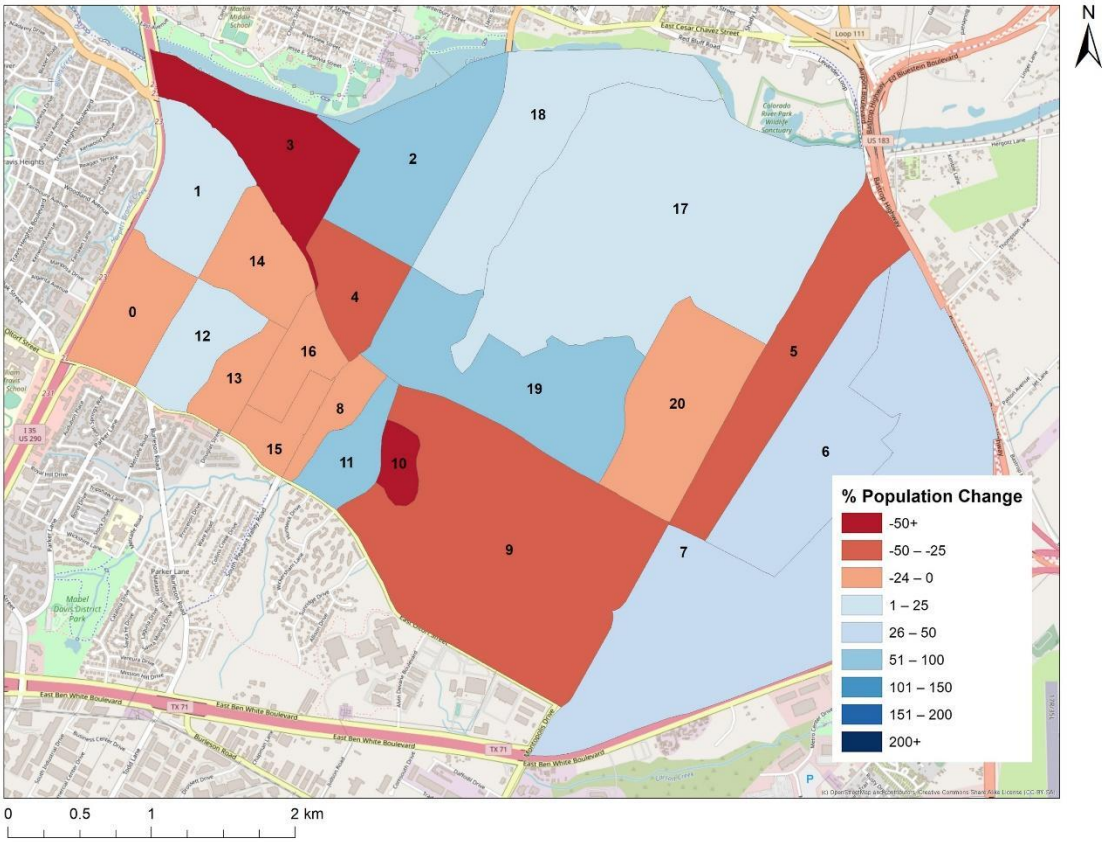
Findings

<u>Race and Ethnicity, Population Changes</u>

The Latino share of the population declined from 64% in 2010 to -56% in 2017. Blocks 3, 4, 10, and 16, all experienced proportional decrease in Latino population from 25% to -56%. Block groups 2, 6, 7, 11, and 19 account for growth of the Latino population. These neighborhoods consist of market-based affordable units, such as Connection Apartments, Paradise Oaks Apartments, and River Crossing Townhomes. Latino family households decreased from 59% in 2010 to 53% in 2017. Block group 16 and block group 5 attributed to the family household decreases. 12 Blocks had negative changes. No areas with over 100% change.

Demographic Population Change,
East Riverside Corridor by Race, 2010 - 2017

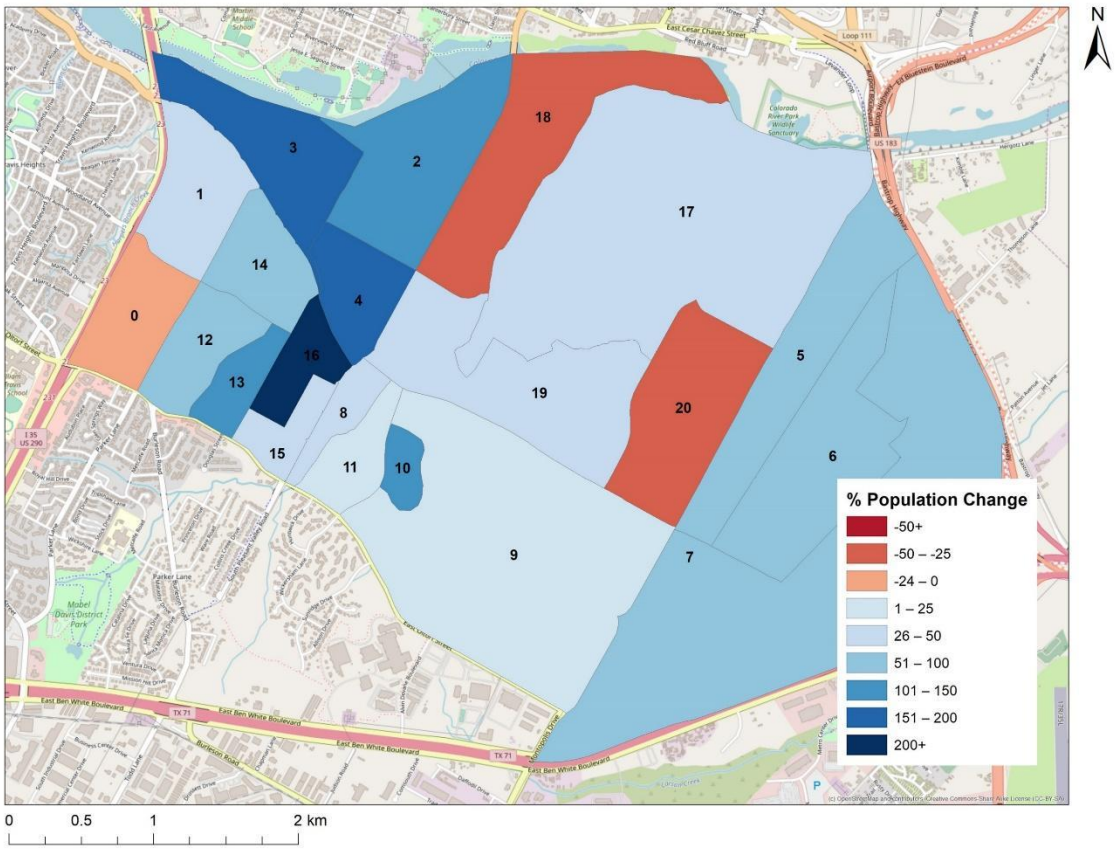
Latino Population Change



Block group 3, which is the location of the Oracle campus, experienced significant proportional growth of the White population. The White population relative to the rest of the Corridor increased 183%. The White population in block group 16, also experienced significant proportional growth by 490%.

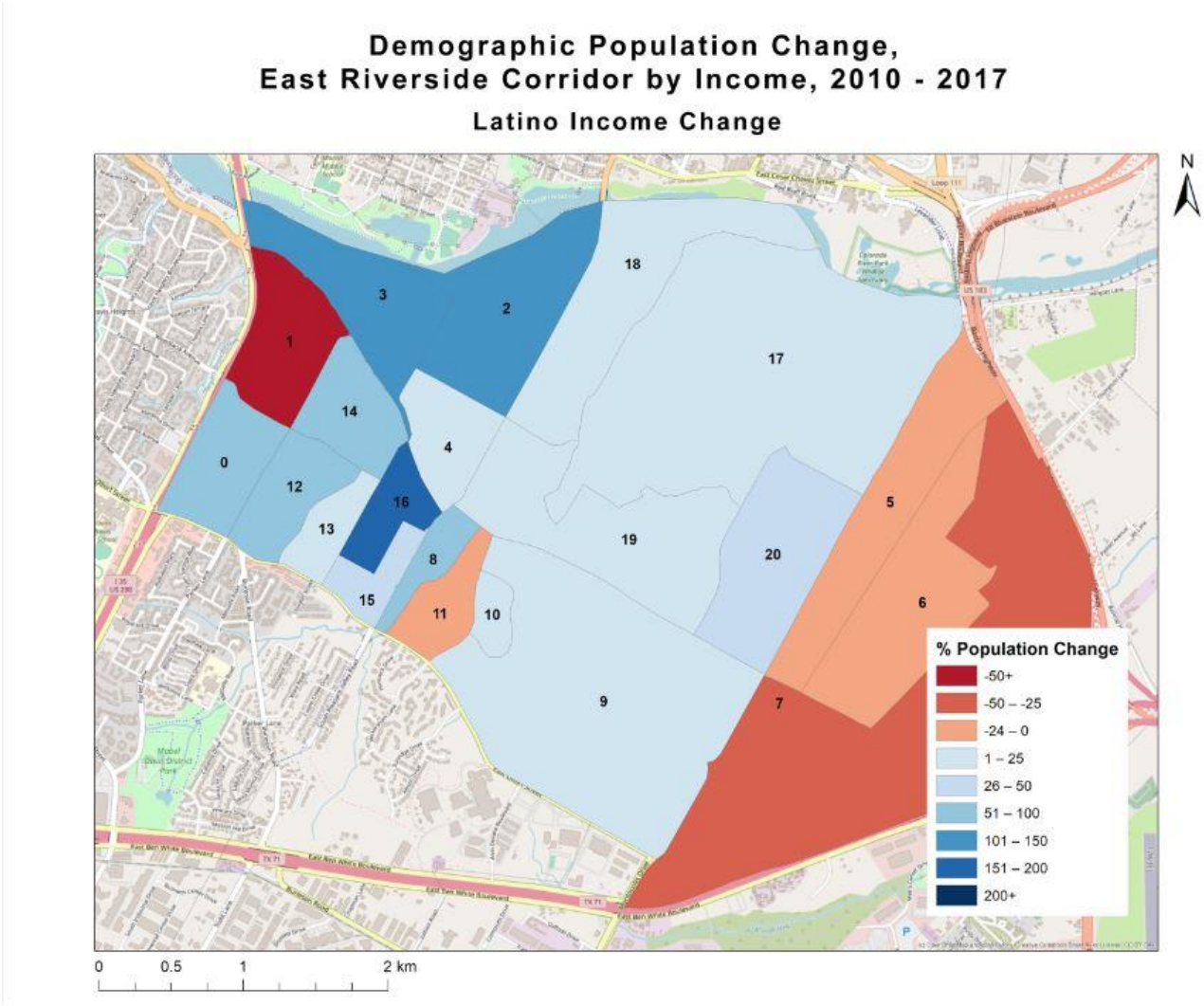
Demographic Population Change,
East Riverside Corridor by Race, 2010 - 2017

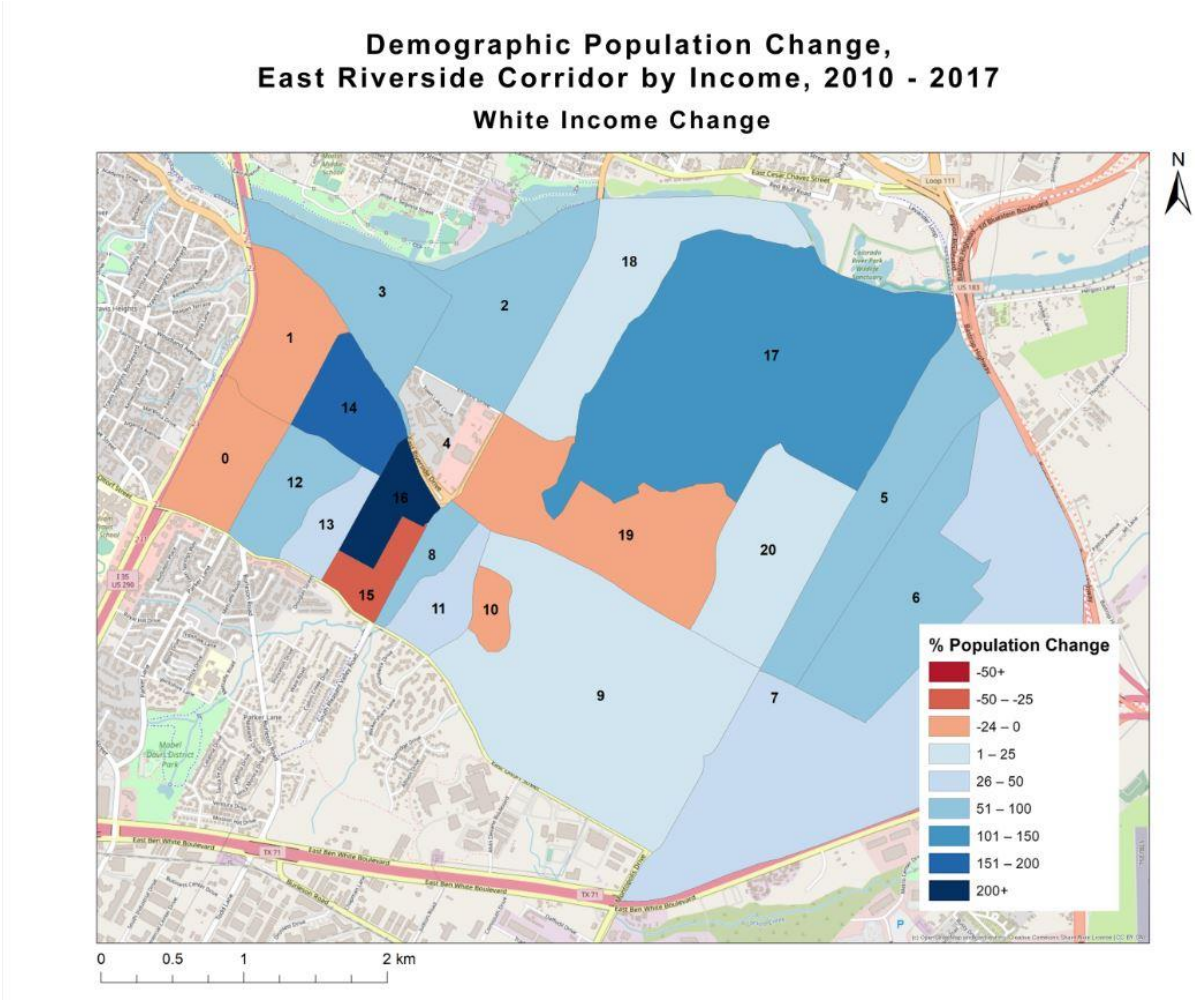
White Population Change



Income

East Riverside Corridor per capital income increased significantly between 2010 and 2017. The per capita income for Whites increased 20% while the per capita income for Latinos increased 9%.





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School Enrollment and Educational Attainment

Two significant factors, school enrollment and educational attainment are additional descriptive factors utilized and brought forth to show the dramatic shift in the East Riverside Corridor (ERC). Utilizing school enrollment data from 2000, 2010, and 2017 provide another avenue to highlight the changing composition of households in the area. In addition, educational attainment is a factor that has strong correlation with income, that is higher educated persons are more likely to have higher incomes.

First educational data was reviewed from the Texas Educational Agency for school enrollment in the ERCMP area, Metz and Sanchez Elementary. The other two schools are in the extended area, Linder south of the ERC and Allison, in the Montopolis area.

A comparison of student enrollment from 2000 to 2010 show an increase at Allison, Sanchez and Linder. However, between 2010 and 2017 there was significant change in student enrollment with Linder losing 69% of students followed by Sanchez at 57% and Metz at 48%. Only Allison had the lowest loss in the number of students at almost 10%.

The free lunch for students is an indicator of the number of family households that are limited income. As is revealed in the selected schools, most students enrolled at these schools are from low-income households that qualify for free lunch.

YEAR	*DISTNAME*	*CAMPNAME*	*Black*	*Hispanic*	*White*	*Asian*	*American_In*	*Two_or_more_races*	*FREELUNCH_STUDENTS*
2000-1		ALLISON	43	437	11	0			348
		METZ	19	587	17	-999			417
		SANCHEZ	-999	440	19	-999			310
		LINDER	78	512	62	-999			448
2010-11	AUSTIN ISD	ALLISON EL	-999	507	-999	0	0	0	499
2010-11	AUSTIN ISD	METZ EL	31	447	12	14	0	0	442
2010-11	AUSTIN ISD	SANCHEZ EL	18	550	-999	20	-999	0	551
2010-11	AUSTIN ISD	LINDER EL	36	791	32	-999	0	-999	838
2017-18		ALLISON	23	450	N/A	N/A			
		METZ EL	20	234	8	22			
		SANCHEZ EL	7	234	N/A	11			
		LINDER	25	245	19	15			

The ERC population school enrollment was reviewed by categories of Pre-K to 12 grade and college. The demographics are reflected in the fact that 9 out of 21 blocks areas showed zero school enrollment of White children. The most telling are blocks 11, 14, 19, and 20 that had a -100 change for Latinos in PreK-12 grade. Overall, the school enrollment percent change for PreK-12 grades between 2010-2017 was -19.57 for Whites and 6.79 for Latinos.

In the category of College degree/enrollment, the ERC population had a significant increase between 2010 and 2017. According to the Latino Research Initiative from the UT-Austin, each block group in the Corridor except 3 areas experienced a 204% average increase in the population with a college degree.

Qualitative

While the previous section provided the reality of the changing demographics along the East Riverside Corridor, the investigator felt it important to highlight the "voices" of those impacted by gentrification. The following section is a compilation from various sources including a focus group interview and individual interviews conducted by news media.

Too often, studies do not examine the psychological and emotional factors that are part of the equation during and after displacement. Displacement is a traumatic experience that can have long lasting affects not only mental but physical.

Descriptive factors identified during focus group interviews included: stress, depression, financial burden, loss of community, fear of further displacement, insomnia.

Residents' loss of community and housing instability was a traumatic experience expressed by numerous members of different trailer parks. Parents expressed concern for their children's mental health with disruption of school and friends. Overall, residents felt the most impact on the additional financial burden caused by displacement. Having to move to the outer boundaries of Austin conflicted with transportation, work and other activities such as access to grocery stores and general medical needs (doctors/clinics, pharmacy).

Recommendations

This report provides the foundation for further discussion on the negative impacts of the adopted East Riverside Corridor Master Plan and regulating plan. The next steps will be to develop policies to mitigate displacement and gentrification. The following is a review of recommendations that should be given top priority considering the findings of this report.

Solutions to the problem: urban planning and gentrification

Austin City Council should incorporate consideration of potential displacement/gentrification and negative impacts of land use decisions into the fabric of their planning and zoning activities. Use the University of Texas report, *Uprooted: Residential Displacement in Austin's Gentrifying Neighborhoods and What can Be Done About It*, as priority target areas to protect.

Austin City Council should use their full legal authorities to enact appropriate ordinances, issue policies, develop guidance, and develop accountability measures to ensure that, all core government functions are authorized and required to address displacement/gentrification.

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20% of all future general obligation bond elections will be included for low income housing.

- Adopt right to Stay and Right to Return Programs for east Austin residents. Develop policies to reduce or freeze property taxes for low income residents and seniors; create home repair programs. Use public owned land property to build new land-banked and land trust homes for low income former families of East Austin.
- Use City Owned Land for Low Income Housing. Identify eight properties owned by the City of Austin that can be quickly made available for building low income housing.
- Expand use of Neighborhood Conservation Combined Districts and Historic Districts. Apply tools to help conserve and preserve our neighborhoods and prevent gentrification and displacement.
- Establish Interim Development Regulations in Areas with Inadequate Drainage.
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Support the creation of deeply affordable units at 20% and 30% MFI and below – recommendation alignment with Anti-Displacement Task Force Report & Austin Strategic Housing Blueprint.

The following recommendation from the UT Uprooted Report should be instituted to protect the apartment units along the East Riverside Corridor. City right of first refusal/right to purchase for rent-restricted properties being sold. Purchase ordinances provide cities or tenants, or both, with a right to purchase a rental property when the owner decides to sell the property or convert it to market rate. A "right of first refusal (ROFR)" provides a right to match a private offer to purchase the property during a set period of time. A "purchase right" gives the city or tenants the right to purchase the property at fair market value when the property is exiting the affordability program. ROFR and purchase rights can extend to: (1) all subsidized apartments requiring city funding or approval (such as 4% LIHTC/tax-exempt bond projects); (2) all subsidized apartments, regardless of the source of funding; or (3) all apartments, regardless of whether the property is subsidized.

Conclusions

Austin can no longer continue its legacy of historical patterns of racism in land use and planning. As a community, Austin is at the crux of righting the wrongs of the past. Austin has incredible potential to make strides in improving racial equity by addressing institutional racism and systemic inequities in their own practices. Austin should become known for confronting gentrification and poverty instead of contributing to displacement and total relocation of the intergenerational families of East Austin. It will require city leaders to acknowledge and declare that there is a low-income housing crisis and it is a serious emergency matter affecting all of Austin. The Mayor and Austin City Council must have the courage to confront and regulate Austin's powerful real estate interests and not allow the top incomers to continue and influence the perception of its fairness through the media and elected officials. We now can correct over a century of laws, regulations and government practices that intentionally inflicted segregation and gentrification in East Austin. Austin's land development code and regulations must preserve and promote family-based cultures.

This demographic analysis is a key first step to examining the impact of transit-oriented sustainability redevelopment plans on communities. These types of sustainability plans are typically based on the desires of developers wanting to increase development and city officials wanting to increase the local tax base (Mueller and Dooling 2011). These plans also often target people of color and low-income neighborhoods, such as East Riverside, and are framed around the environmental conditions for future residents rather than current conditions existing populations (Mueller and Dooling 2011).

The adoption and implementation of the East Riverside Corridor Master Plan and regulating plan has negatively impacted low-income and people of color. Austin must reexamine its existing policies and adopt new measures to assure that the diversity and character of East Austin along the ERC can be preserved.

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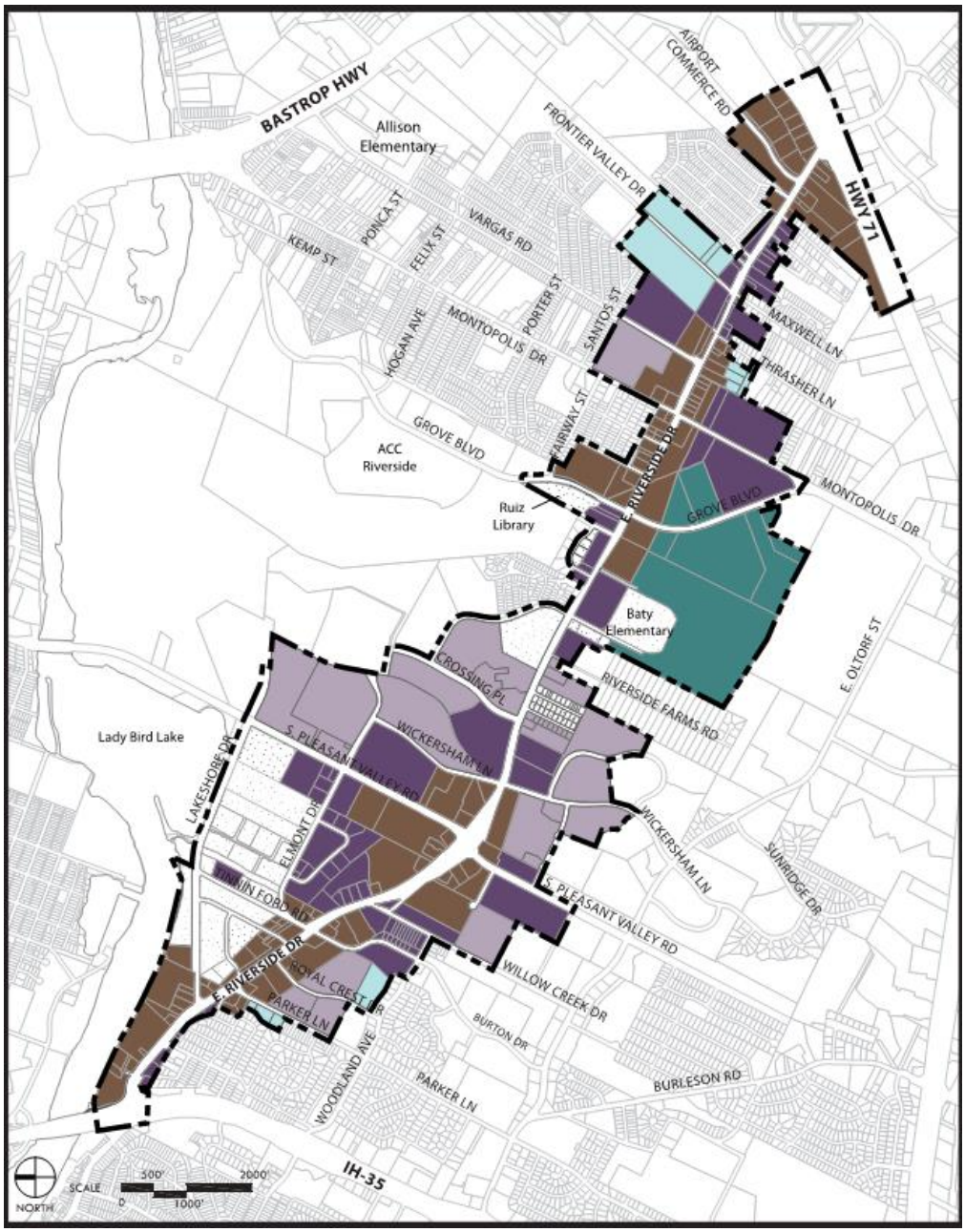
Appendices

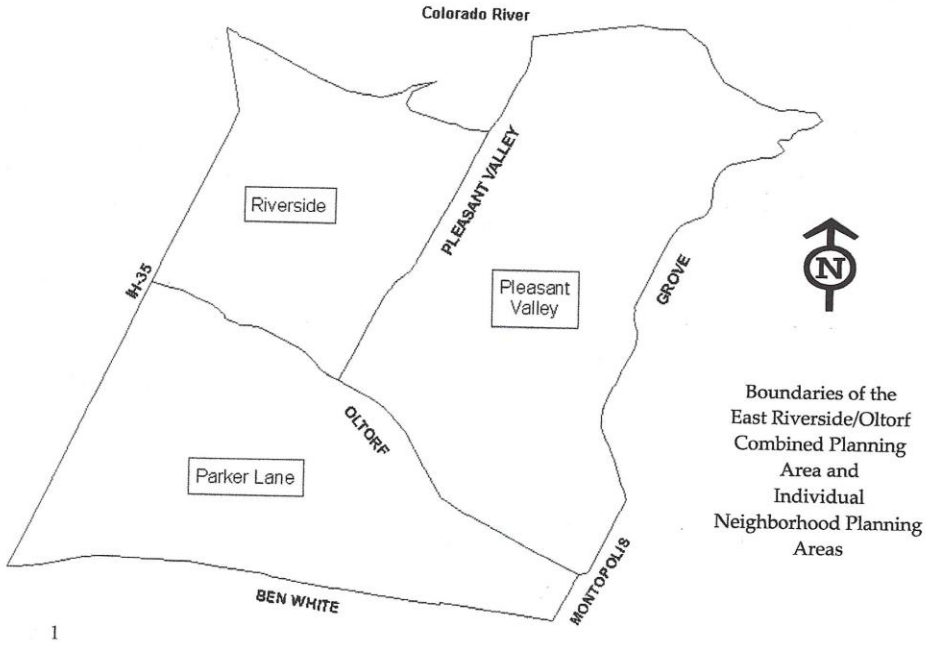
East Riverside Corridor Boundary Map

The East Riverside Corridor encompasses East Riverside Drive located southeast of downtown Austin, Texas. The Corridor extends from IH-35 to SH-71, includes the East Riverside/Oltorf and Montopolis Neighborhood Planning Areas.



ERC Subdistricts: Corridor Mixed Use (brown), Industrial Mixed Use (bluish green) Neighborhood Mixed Use (dark purple), Urban Residential (light purple), and Neighborhood Residential (light blue). Source: City of Austin

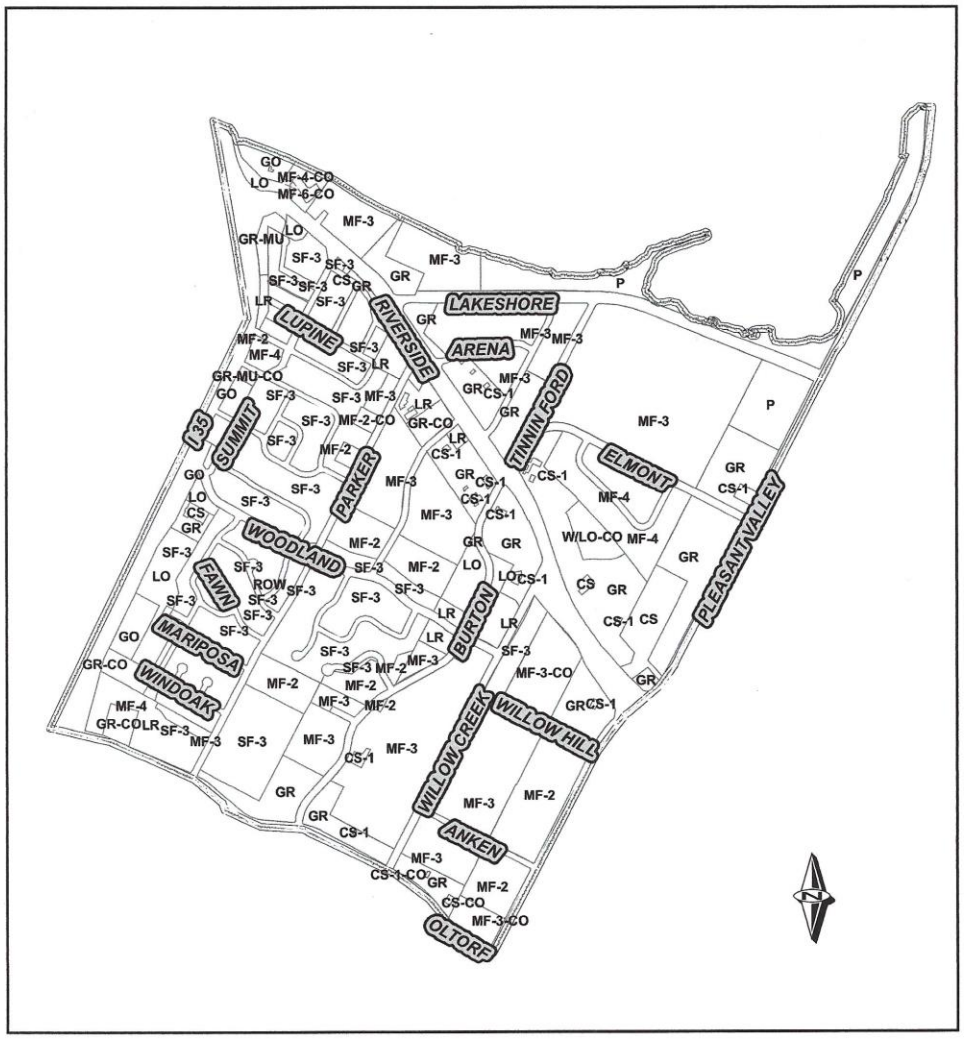
Boundaries of the East Riverside/Olorf Combined Planning Area



Source: City of Austin East Riverside/Oltorf Combined Plan 2006

2005 Zoning Designation for East Riverside Drive
East Riverside/Oltorf Combined Plan Area

East Riverside/Oltorf Combined Neighborhood Plan



Riverside Neighborhood Plan Area
Current Zoning Map

1,000 500 0 1,000 Feet

This map has been produced by the City of Austin Neighborhood Planning & Zoning Department for the sole purpose of facilitating neighborhood planning. It should not be referred to as an official source of land use or zoning and is not warranted for any other use. No warranty is made regarding its accuracy or completeness.

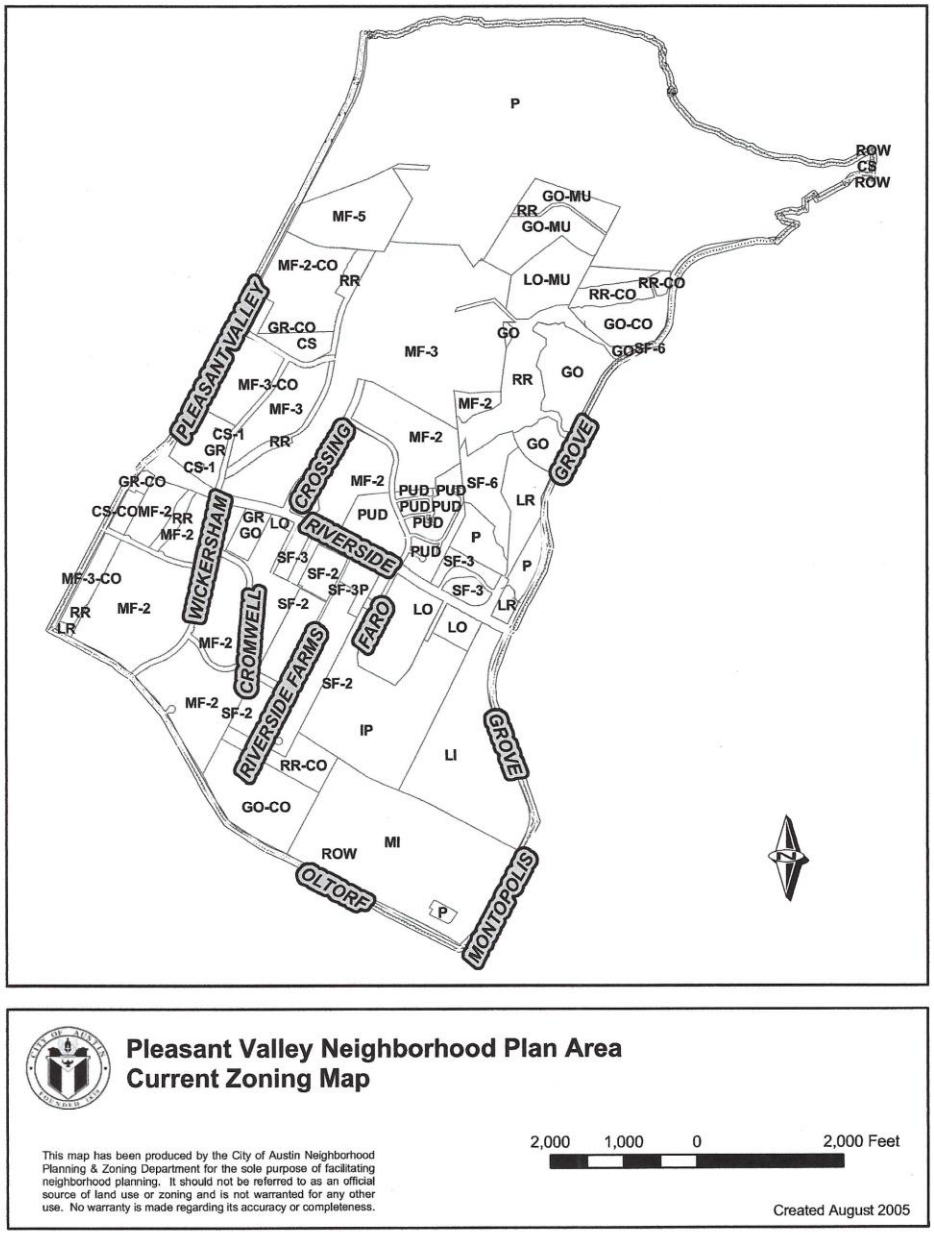
Created August 2005

172

Source: City of Austin East Riverside/Oltorf Combined Plan 2006

2005 Zoning Designation for Pleasant Valley East Riverside/Oltorf Combined Plan Area

East Riverside/Oltorf Combined Neighborhood Plan



Pleasant Valley Neighborhood Plan Area
Current Zoning Map

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2,000 1,000 0 2,000 Feet

Created August 2005

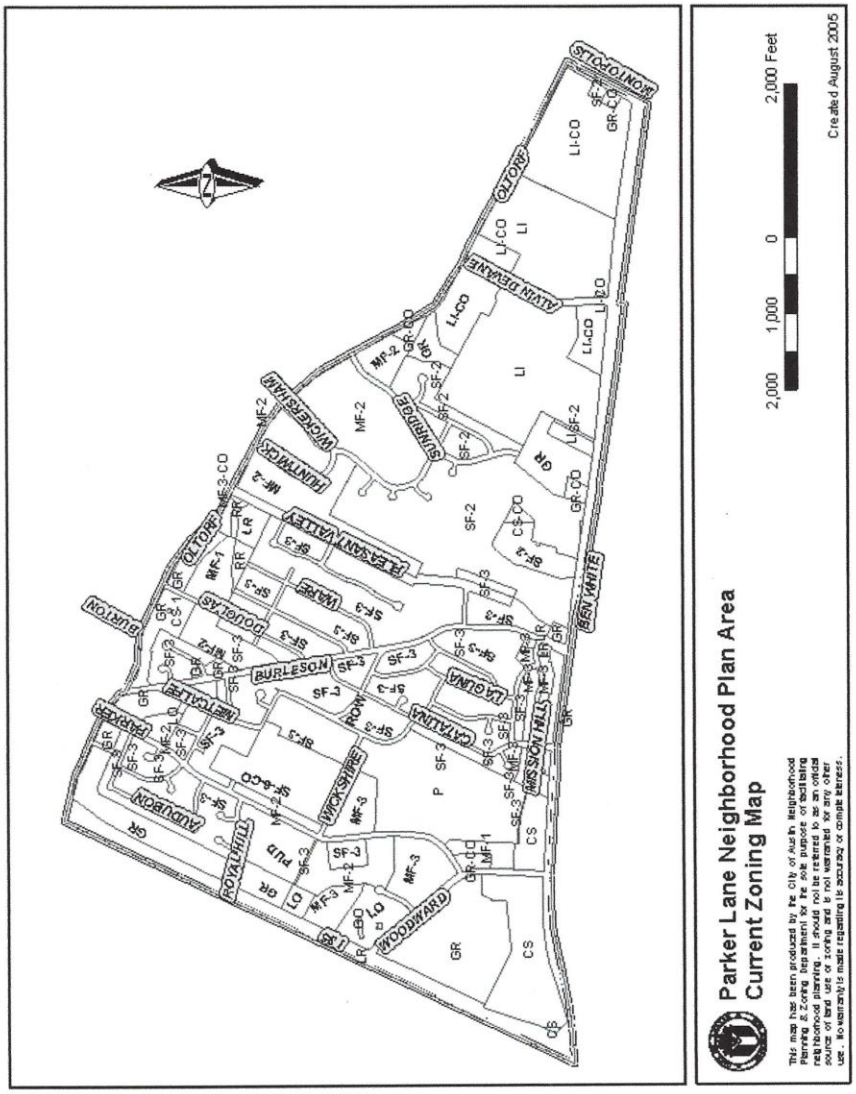
171

Source: City of Austin East Riverside/Oltorf Combined Plan 2006

2005 Zoning Designation for Parker Lane East Riverside/Oltorf Combined Plan Area

East Riverside/Oltorf Combined Neighborhood Plan

CURRENT ZONING MAPS



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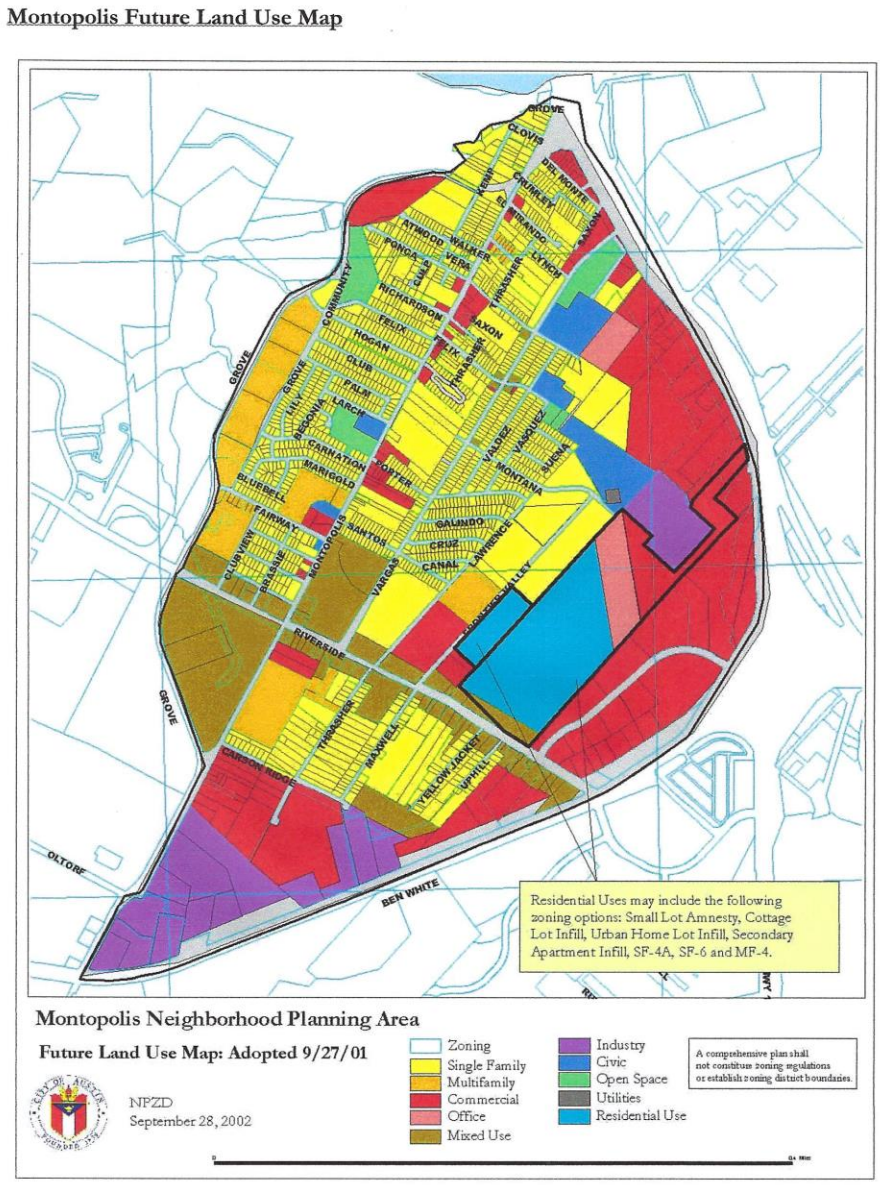
Source: City of Austin East Riverside/Oltorf Combined Plan 2006

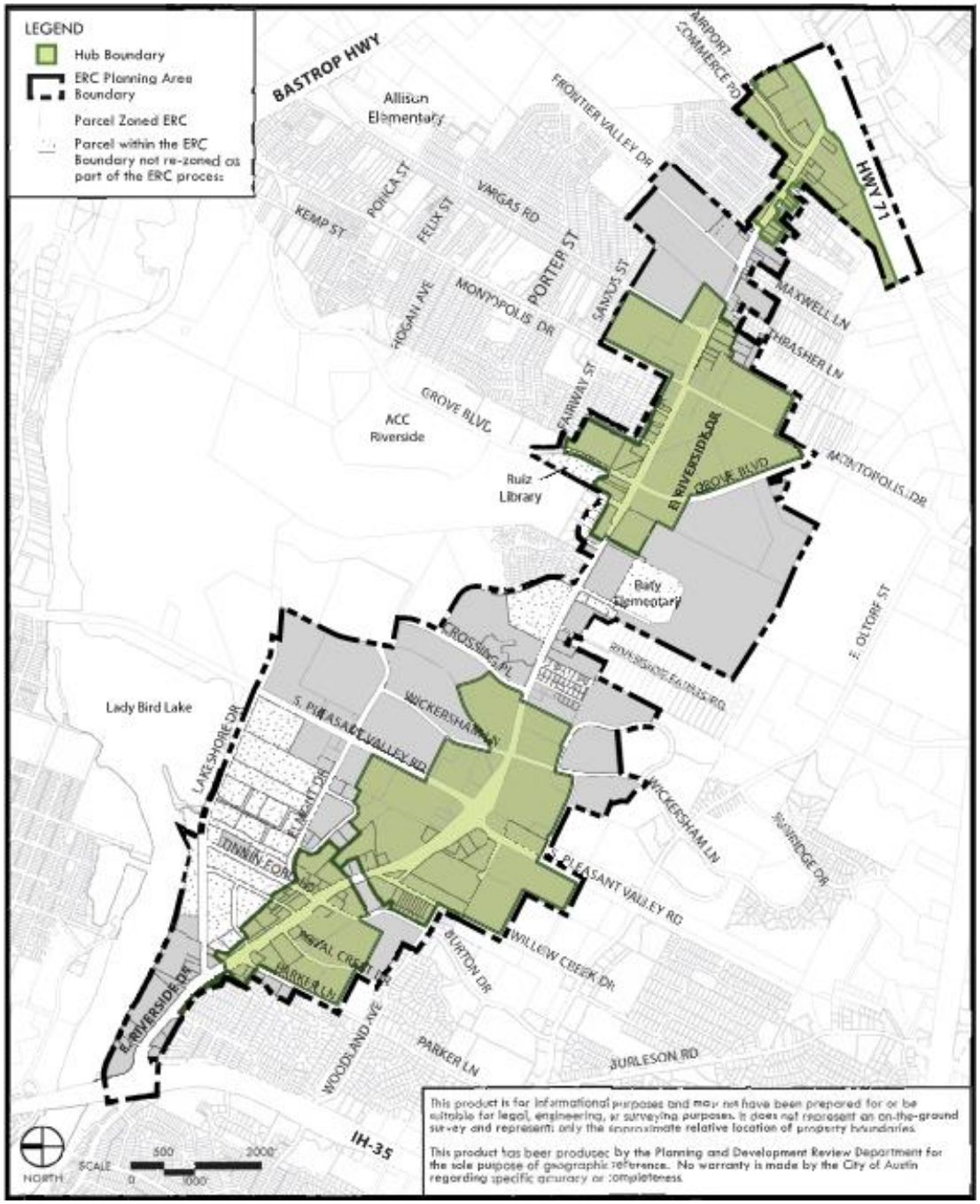
Montopolis Neighborhood Plan Boundaries – Adopted in 2001



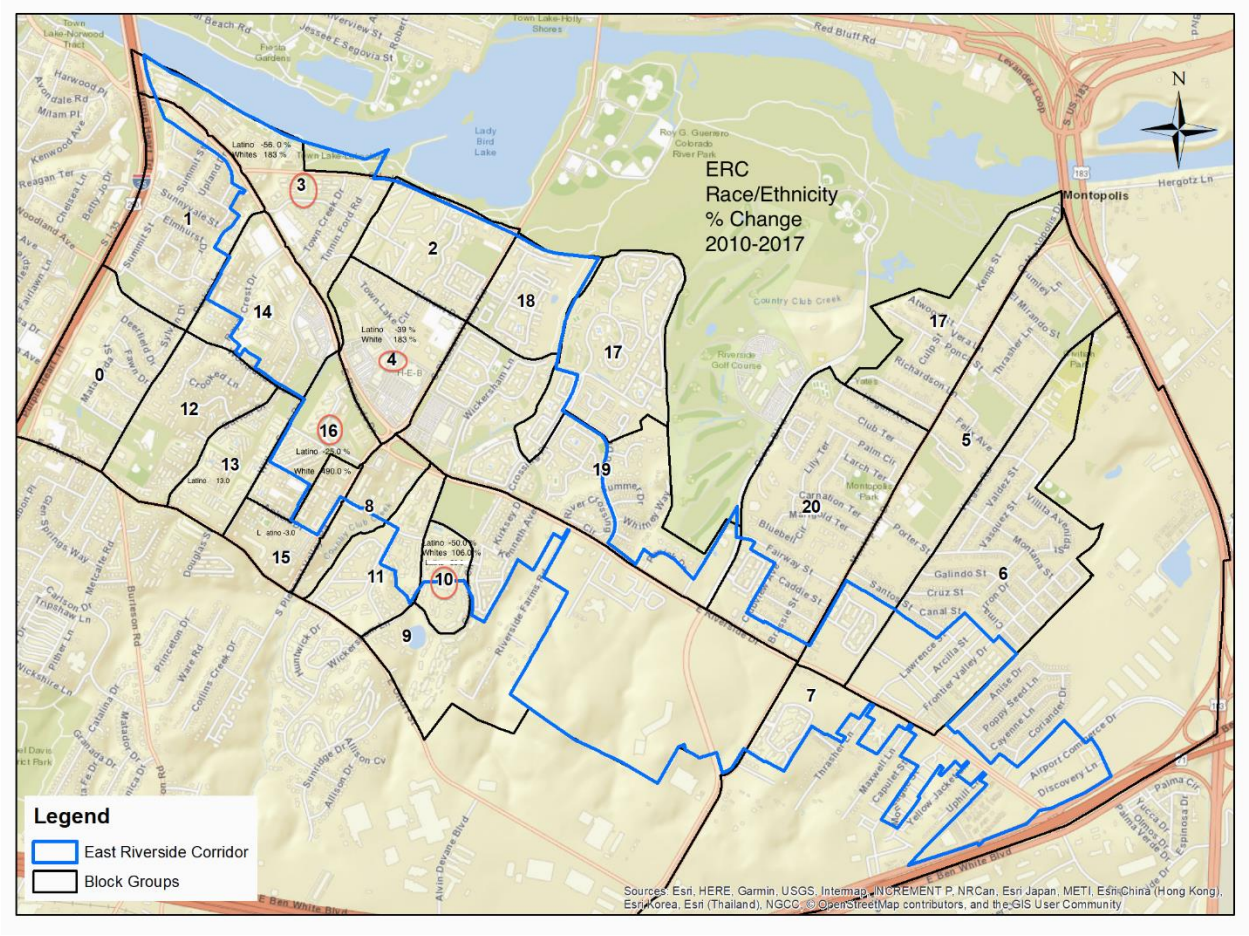
Source: City of Austin Montopolis Neighborhood Plan 2001

Four Hubs Map

There are four "Hubs" or areas where the City of Austin is encouraging the most intensive development. Properties within a hub boundary are eligible for development bonuses in exchange for a specified community benefit. Gives developers the right to build a 60-foot building but could also double height, going up to a maximum of 120 feet.



East Riverside Corridor block groups map



City of Austin's Displacement and/or Gentrification Timeline

Zoning and land use planning have been described by some scholars as not only as a root enabling cause of disproportionate burdens and environmental injustice, but also the most fundamental and potentially most powerful of the legal weapons deployed in the cause of racism. The history of land use planning and zoning in Austin helps to explain how the unequal distribution of environmental burdens has occurred, and why these historical patterns have been the source of many environmental justice problems that confront people of color and low-income communities in East Austin.

The following is a snapshot of the continuation of racist land use zoning and policies which have caused displacement and/or gentrification:

- 1870's – Displacement of "Freedman Towns" - Wheatsville, one of the earliest settlements of former slaves and their descendants, in west Austin, from which Black families were removed to make room for the new designated "white" neighborhoods. Due to race segregation and the Constitution, zoning would prove difficult. So, the City removed African American services – schools, parks and libraries to the segregated Eastside of Austin. And prohibited Blacks services in West Austin. By 1940 most of the African American community had been relocated to the Eastside.

- 1870's – Displacement of "Freedman Towns" – Clarksville, the oldest free African American community in Texas, had no access to municipal facilities and the city made no improvements there until well into the 1970s. Most of the remaining Black families were removed to make way for MoPac Freeway.

- 1870s – 1920s - Blacks and Hispanic/Latinos were also forced to move into settlements outside of what was then the city of Austin into communities such as Clarksville, St. John's, and Montopolis.

- In 1922 Congress Passed the Standard State Zoning Enabling Act. This Act cleared the path for Cities to create their Master Plans and segregate cities throughout the United States.

- 1870s – 1940s- Mexican American households were concentrated in a neighborhood in the southwest of downtown and remained downtown through the 1940s. The completion of the Tom Miller and Longhorn Dams that protected the city from major floods help raise the land values and help push the Mexican American community from the downtown area. Other measures such as; deed restrictions and city ordinances prohibited both Mexican Americans and Blacks from buying or renting homes anywhere in Austin outside of East Austin.

- The 1928 City of Austin Master Plan and the creation of a segregated "Negro District." The creation of the Negro District compelled most the city's Blacks to move to the segregated eastside of Austin, and policies denied them the right to live in other parts of the city. The historic Black neighborhood in east Austin became that area east of East Ave/IH 35, north of E. 7th Street, west of Airport Blvd., and south of Manor Rd. The city's slaughterhouse was located in this area.

- In the 1930s, the city also voted to build housing projects in ways that would reinforce segregation by building separate segregated housing projects. Also, in the 1930s, "Mexican American" residents were pushed to move from "Old Mexico" (downtown area) in order to make room for City and related office buildings. Many of them were placed in the neighborhood bounded by East Ave., /IH 35 on the west, the river on the south, Airport on the east, and 7th Street on the north. The City's Holly Power Plant was built in this area during the 1950s.

- Early Chinese immigrants to Austin were prohibited from owning property. Discriminatory laws denied Chinese immigrants (who were prohibited from citizenship under federal law) the right to own property in Austin. The spouses of these immigrants were often stripped of their U.S. citizenship and its various benefits.

- The 1957 Industrial Development Plan led to environmental racism. The City Planning Commission zoned all property in East Austin "industrial," including single family residential uses. Cumulative zoning allows any use "lower" than that defined in the category to be built; the basic zoning categories, ranked from highest to lowest use, are industrial, commercial and residential. Under cumulative zoning, residential homes could be built on land zoned industrial, but an industrial facility could not be built on land zoned residential. This zoning ensured that the most polluting industries and future polluting industries would be located in East Austin. Furthermore, because of this zoning, few residents could get banks loans (red lining) for repairs or replacement of their original homes, leading to deterioration, which in turn laid the groundwork for gentrification. In 1986 the city abandoned cumulative zoning.

- In 1962, the building of Interstate Highway I-35 created the clearest physical barrier between East Austin and the rest of the City, deepening the racial segregation of the city.

- In the late 1960s Urban Renewal ("Urban Removal"), which began and continued through the 1970s, was a federally funded program focused primarily on areas with majority Black and Hispanic/Latino populations. Brackenridge (1969), University East (1968), Kealing (1966), and Blackshear (1969) urban renewal areas displaced people of color from large areas and turned formerly residential land into parks and schools without providing adequate opportunities for displaced households to return. The urban renewal programs therefore became known as "urban removal".

- 1979 – Council passes Austin Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan which allowed a series of ordinances and initiatives implemented in the decades of the 1980s and 1990s that resulted in greater protection of water quality, endangered species, and other environmental resources. Other initiatives were designed to strengthen neighborhoods and direct growth into the desired development zones (DDZ- East Austin).

- In 1984 the City adopted the Inner-City Neighborhoods Ordinance. This ordinance designated several inner-city Austin neighborhoods (Bryker Woods, Heritage, North University, Old West Austin, Hyde Park, and Fairview Park as "protected inner-city neighborhood(s)".

- After 1986, the city abandoned the cumulative zoning ordinance for a restrictive zoning ordinance. Changing the zoning ordinance from cumulative to restrictive negatively impacted some residents of East Austin by restricting their access to home improvement equity loans and/or federal programs. Some homeowners in East Austin were unable to obtain these loans and/or grants because their current existing use of their residential property was still zoned industrial. The city did not automatically correct the zoning.

- In 1991, the City continues to permit higher uses in lower zoning categories in the eastern part of the city than elsewhere. The City rezoned large areas of the western portions of the Robertson Hill and Guadalupe neighborhoods along with East 11th Street. This zoning is so intense that the Senior Planner reviewing the application commented, "Nowhere in the city, with the exception of the CBD (central business district), are these generous FAR's (floor to area ratios) used".

- In 1992, Save Our Springs (SOS) becomes major watershed ordinance passed by Austin City Council. This Ordinance further protects land in West Austin and drives up the land values in West Austin and continues to shift development to East Austin.

- In 1994, the East 11th and 12th Street urban renewal program started and contributed significantly to the gentrification of Central East Austin with little effort to mitigate the displacement of households with low-to-moderate income.

- In 1996, Smart Growth initiatives and Desirable Development Zone and Drinking Water Protection Zone established. East Austin continues to be target for industrial polluting facilities. The term "Desirable" means unwanted development for West Austin.

- From 1987 – 1999, over twenty-one (21,000) single family housing units are built within the Drinking Water Protection Zone (DWPZ). Over twelve thousand (12,000) are built in the Desired Development Zoning (DDZ).

- May 1997 – City of Austin initiated the neighborhood plan process. The city was divided into 54 neighborhood planning areas.

- May 1999 – The Austin City Council adopted the East Cesar Chavez Neighborhood Plan. A Valid Petition against the plan was squashed. The adoption of this plan opens the flood gates to gentrification/displacement of residents from East Austin. The East Cesar Chavez Plan blanket zoned certain corridors from a variety of mix use zoning to the new designated zoning of Commercial Service Mix Use (CS-MU). This plan allowed high-priced condos in the neighborhood. In 2004, the University of Texas School of Architecture released a study of the rapid escalation in appraised property values accompanied with an increase in property tax burdens for the East Cesar Chavez Neighborhood Planning Area. Property values covered the years of 1998 to 2004 which revealed a 400% in land values and 123% increase tax burden for single family homes in a low-income working-class neighborhood. This neighborhood has been highly gentrified.

- February 25th, 2010 the Austin City Council adopted the East Riverside Corridor Master Plan and adopted new design and zoning regulations for the area on May 9th, 2013. The East Riverside Corridor Master Plan includes the area East of IH 35 at E. Riverside Drive and continues to East Riverside at Hwy 71. The Council adopted the plan as if the Riverside Corridor was vacant of human life. Over 1,700 low-income and working poor, mostly people of color, were displaced to make room for the new higher density, high class wage earners. The displacement continues along the corridor. The Montopolis Neighborhood Contact Team which is designated by the City of Austin to review neighborhood plan amendments and Future Land Use Map (FLUM), was denied the right to review the E. Riverside Corridor Plan because the Master Plan was exempt from being reviewed by the Montopolis Neighborhood Plan Contact Team.

- November 21st, 2013, the Austin City Council adopted a revised Urban Farm Ordinance which would continue to allow individuals to purchase single family zoned land in East Austin and transform them into urban farms (although this was a city-wide ordinance the transformation of land was only happening in East Austin). The Urban Farm Ordinance also allowed single family zoned land to be used a Commercial Service Mix Use (CS-MU) category; allowing the selling of products from single family zoned land.

- November 19, 2015, the Austin City Council passed an ordinance which lessen restrictions on accessory dwelling units, or ADUs. This ordinance was promoted as a tool to bring in affordable housing and to provide a second income for low-income residents in East Austin. The Council did not provide loan programs and/or grants for low-income residents to build these ADUs. It would cost nearly $100,000 to build an ADU on a property. How many banks will loan a low-income person $100,000? The ADUs just draw developers and make property values soar, pushing out longtime residents. Although this was a citywide ordinance, exception was made for areas zoned single-family standard lot, or SF-2, and single-family large lot, or SF-1 (most homes west of IH 35).