

CITY OF AUSTIN - TRAVIS COUNTY

Northeast District Plan

(NEDP)

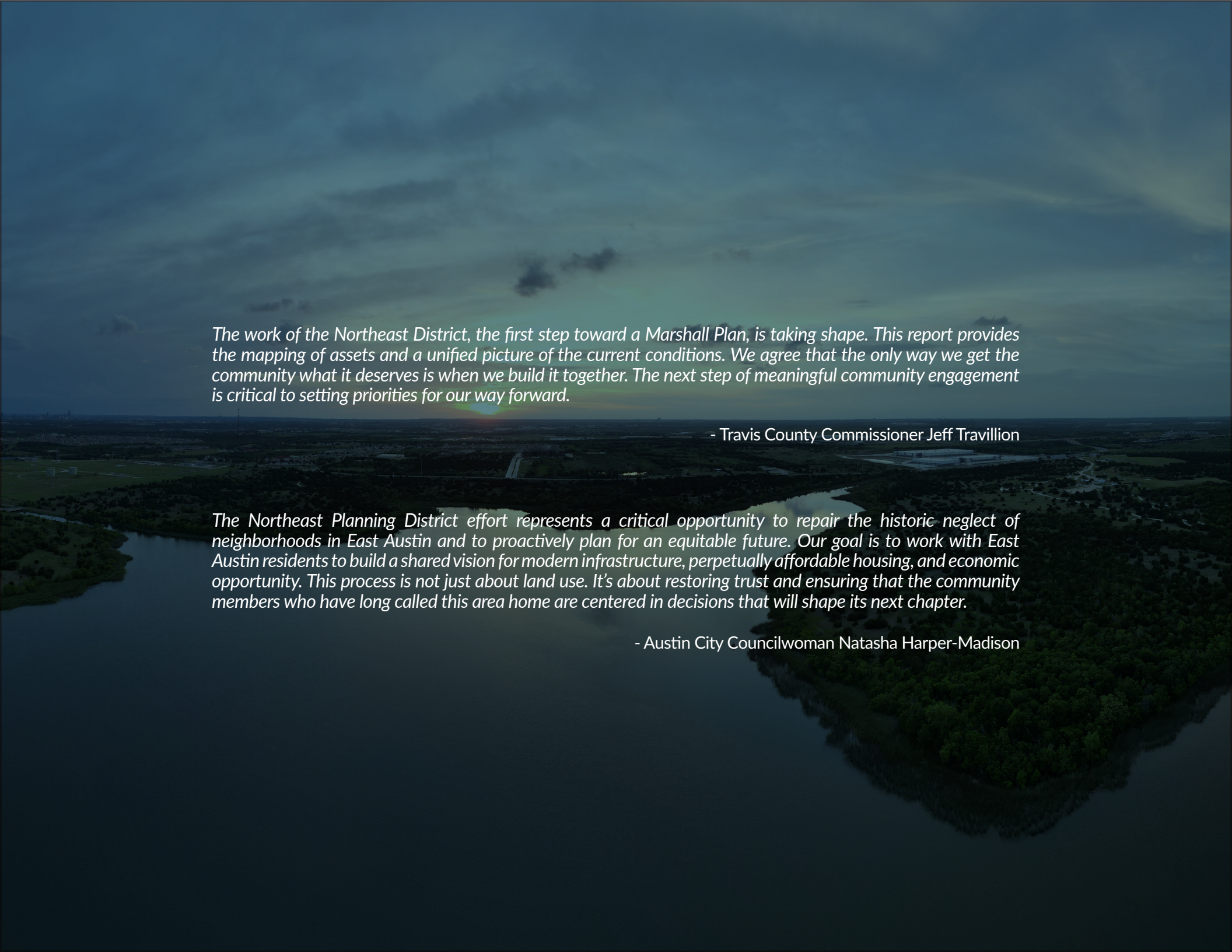
Existing Conditions
Summary Report
January 2026

Prepared by

able.city
Architecture • Community Engagement
Planning • Economic Development

 **CIVILITUDE**
ENGINEERS & PLANNERS





The work of the Northeast District, the first step toward a Marshall Plan, is taking shape. This report provides the mapping of assets and a unified picture of the current conditions. We agree that the only way we get the community what it deserves is when we build it together. The next step of meaningful community engagement is critical to setting priorities for our way forward.

- Travis County Commissioner Jeff Travillion

The Northeast Planning District effort represents a critical opportunity to repair the historic neglect of neighborhoods in East Austin and to proactively plan for an equitable future. Our goal is to work with East Austin residents to build a shared vision for modern infrastructure, perpetually affordable housing, and economic opportunity. This process is not just about land use. It's about restoring trust and ensuring that the community members who have long called this area home are centered in decisions that will shape its next chapter.

- Austin City Councilwoman Natasha Harper-Madison

A Note on Selected Terminology

For this report, the following naming conventions have been used:

“City” vs. “city” and “County” vs. “county” – Throughout this report, the words “City” and “County” are capitalized when referring to the governmental organizations themselves (e.g., “City staff” or “a County report”) and not capitalized when referring only to the geography (e.g., “outside the city” or “throughout the county”).

Racial and ethnic terminology – The County and City staff contributing to this report recognize that individuals often have strong preferences for the names of demographic groups with which they identify, and may not always agree on a preferred term. Generally, the demographic data used in this report to distinguish by race and ethnicity are from survey-based sources like the United States Census, on which respondents typically self-report their racial and ethnic identities by selecting among choices, and the data presented generally adhere to the conventions from those sources themselves. However, per agreement with City and County staff, the term “Latine” is used in the report as a gender-neutral term for people of Latin American ancestry, who might otherwise have been given a choice of “Hispanic” or “Latino” on the surveys. On some such surveys, individuals may identify as belonging to both a race (e.g., “White,” “Black,” “Asian,” “Two or More Races,” etc.) and an ethnicity (generally, “Hispanic” or “non-Hispanic”).

“Northeast Planning District” or “NEPD” vs. “Northeast District Plan” or “NEDP” – The terms “Northeast Planning District” or initials “NEPD” are used to refer to the geographic area identified by City and County leadership that is the subject of this planning exercise, and includes areas in the City of Austin jurisdiction and areas under Travis County’s jurisdiction. The terms “Northeast District Plan” or initials “NEDP” are used to refer to the plan process authorized by City and County leadership and the eventual documents that will be produced following extensive community engagement.



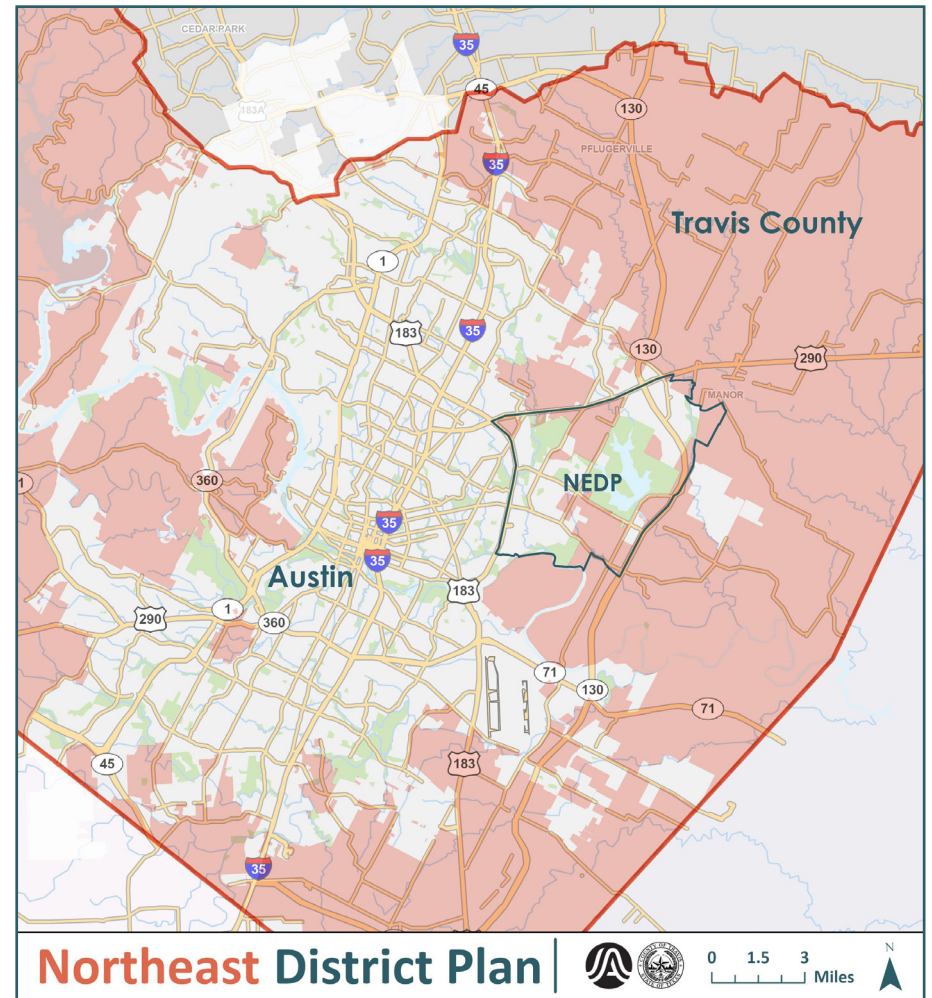
Executive Summary

Bounded by three major highways and the Colorado River, the Northeast Planning District (“NEPD” or “the District”) area is an approximately 30-square-mile geography that includes territories within the City of Austin and others outside the city in Travis County. Much of the District was annexed into the city in the 1970s, but as the area developed in the decades after, community members have noted that this neighborhood remains less economically abundant than other areas of the city and county.

This lack of resources and limited opportunity poses a significant equity issue, in particular because the NEPD has a high population of Black and Latine residents that have been historically burdened by past planning policies. Such policies included “redlining” that reduced access to housing mortgages and adopted city plans that have segregated their neighborhoods and suppressed opportunities to build wealth.

To acknowledge previous harms and work towards more equitable growth and outcomes in the future, the Travis County Commissioners Court and the Austin City Council each passed resolutions between 2020 and 2023 to commit to a collaborative planning effort for the Northeast Planning District.¹ Both jurisdictions came together to form a staff Working Group to lead the planning effort. An Interlocal Agreement was signed in 2024 to formalize the Northeast District Plan (“NEDP” or “the Plan”) as a community-driven effort that learns from and incorporates the lived experiences of the District’s most affected populations. The Plan is anticipated to identify needs and opportunities for quality public investments and funding mechanisms to support the area’s vulnerable and disenfranchised communities.

As a starting point to establish a shared set of information prior to the intensive community planning, the Working Group directed City and County staff to prepare this report on the District’s existing conditions. An existing conditions report summarizes past planning efforts, data, and trends on the current state of a planning area on topics like housing, infrastructure, economic development, or the natural environment. It does not propose new policies or action items for the NEPD or its stakeholders, as those are intended to be derived and prioritized through the engagement process.



For policymakers and community stakeholders, this document provides a starting foundation for “what is” and “what has been,” so that the community can more clearly imagine “what can and should be.”

This executive summary presents an overview of each chapter in the NEDP Existing Conditions Summary Report² and the main topics and findings that are discussed.

¹ <https://www.traviscountytexas.gov/planning-budget/economic-development-strategic-investments/northeast-project-overview>

² This report generally considers data, policies, and programs through 2024; new material or changes since 2024 affecting the Northeast District Plan can be reflected in future NEDP documents. Research material was provided by the Working Group, City and County staff, or analyzed from sources such as U.S. Census, CoStar, or ESRI.

In aggregate, this material finds that the NEPD is:

Diverse – Black, Latine, and other BIPOC individuals represent a much higher proportion of the population in the NEPD, though recent years have shown a marked increase in the area’s White population.

Socioeconomically Disadvantaged – The NEPD population has significantly lower income, education, and employment levels than the City and County more broadly, and both public and private investment in infrastructure, services, and job opportunities have lagged.

At Risk of Displacement – The NEPD’s housing stock and prices have grown rapidly as development has been encouraged in the area, creating pressure on longer-term residents to keep up with rents or property taxes and threatening established communities.

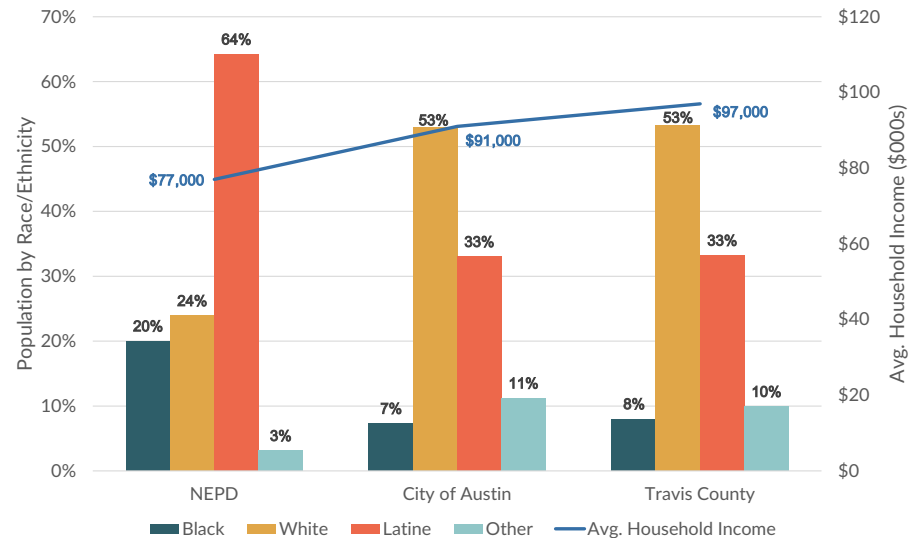
Chapter 1: Why the Northeast District Plan? succinctly explains why the County and City have identified the need for the Plan, including brief statements on the District’s history, recent and expected changes, and challenges and opportunities to respond to the area’s history of disenfranchisement.

Chapter 2: History and Demographics provides a broader history of the study area, explaining that historic redlining and segregation laws in East Austin led to the NEPD’s status today as a racially diverse yet economically disadvantaged area. Also, the piecemeal annexation of the Northeast Planning District may have contributed to inconsistent infrastructure investment.

The City’s designation of eastern Austin as a Desired Development Zone (DDZ) in the late 1990s steered development towards the east side, citing environmental reasons, and has resulted in changes to the demographic mix of the area. Since 2010, the population in the Northeast Planning District has more than doubled, and the proportion of Black households has declined while the proportion of White households has grown.

However, the area continues to be more socioeconomically disadvantaged compared to the City or County overall, primarily impacting Black and Latine households. The NEPD has lower household incomes and educational attainment levels than the City and County generally, and the area’s sizable Black and Latine communities are below average within the NEPD on these important indicators.

The NEPD is a diverse community with comparatively low incomes.



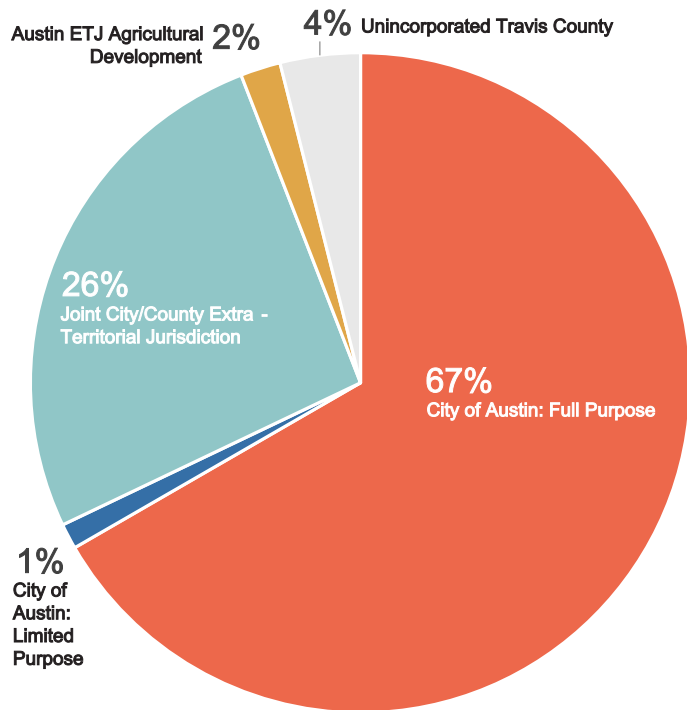
*Individuals self-identify their race and ethnicity in the Census and may identify as both Latine and Black, White, or other race(s).

In Chapter 3: Land Use Characteristics and Regulations, the report examines the current zoning and land use regulations and conditions common in the NEPD. The NEPD area has a patchwork of jurisdictional authority between the City and County. Out of the roughly 18,500 acres of land area that make up the NEPD, around two-thirds are under the City of Austin’s full-purpose jurisdiction.






Private land in the District area is primarily low-density residential. There are limited commercial and industrial uses. There is also an abundant amount of public land use, due to the presence and size of large parks and open space such as the Walter E. Long Metropolitan Park, the John Treviño Jr. Metropolitan Park, and the Big Walnut Creek Nature Preserve.

This chapter also identifies the major landmarks that are assets in the area, such as Lake Walter E. Long and Walter E. Long Metropolitan Park, the Travis County Expo Center, and the recently initiated Colony Park Sustainable Community development.

The NEPD is roughly 18,500 acres in total size.



Most NEPD land is under residential or public use

City of Austin Land Use Designations	Total Acres*	Percent of City of Austin NEPD Land Use
 Residential Includes zoning for single-family, multi-family, mobile homes, and Planned Unit Developments (PUD)	2,953	33%
 Commercial Land for retail and office.	1,334	15%
 Industrial Light industrial warehouses or manufacturing, with limited office (flex) uses.	829	9%
 Public Designated for civic uses, including public parks and recreation spaces.	3,757	42%
 Development Reserve Areas set aside for future development, pending zoning and land use planning decisions.	30	0%

*Based on land use zoning in within City of Austin full-purpose jurisdiction. See Chp. 3: Land Use Characteristics & Regulations. Source: City of Austin and Able City

Chapter 4: Infrastructure considers the state of existing infrastructure in the NEPD area and identifies deficiencies. Overlapping jurisdictions in the NEPD create mismatching infrastructure offerings and service gaps. Portions of the NEPD lack critical infrastructure such as wastewater pipeline capacity, sidewalks, and curbs and gutters along roadways. The presence of landfills and hazardous pipelines is another challenge in the District. Without upgraded or functional basic infrastructure, development may be hindered and current residents lack community resilience against extreme weather events or major system failures.

Chapter 5: Transportation discusses the existing transportation infrastructure network in the NEPD. Multiple agencies, including TxDOT, the City of Austin, Travis County, and CapMetro, oversee portions of the transportation network and each develop their own plans and priority improvements to keep roadways safe and accessible.

Longtime residents and community leaders in the NEPD area have reported that the District has seen limited public investment and that promised infrastructure improvements following annexation have not been delivered.

Chapter 6: Public Investment examines this and finds that while residents have noted the lack of public infrastructure and municipal services in the past, the recent capital projects pipeline for the City and County involves large efforts taking place in the NEPD area. Large projects like Colony Park, the Central Health East Austin Health and Wellness Center, and John Treviño Jr. Metropolitan Park represent recent efforts to establish new developments and resources in the District.

However, without efforts to implement and modernize infrastructure and amenities across the entire planning area, the patchwork of inconsistent public infrastructure offerings would only deepen. This is one area that the NEPD may seek to directly address by providing a roadmap for prioritization of overall public infrastructure and investment needs.

Chapter 7: Social and Municipal Services discusses NEPD area residents' access to resources and amenities like fresh groceries, healthcare, public safety, education, and recreational spaces. For each, it considers the existing services or facilities, identified needs in the NEPD area, and upcoming projects or plans to expand services in the District, if any.



Food Access

The NEPD has very few full-service grocers and residents desire a greater number and variety of options. New options may emerge with continued development.



Recreation

There are 3 major parks, plus trails and the newly opened Colony Park Pool. Identified needs include enhanced connectivity and improved infrastructure & programming.



Libraries

There are no public libraries within the NEPD, limiting access for residents. Austin Public Library has noted this gap and hopes to add a branch at Colony Park.



Healthcare

Several health & wellness services serve the NEPD. However, residents continue to face systemic health disparities, including mental health access issues and chronic health conditions.



Public Safety

The City and County provide fire, police, and emergency management services to the NEPD. There are no current plans to expand or build new facilities.



Education

Three school districts serve the NEPD, where public schools are rated below average in performance. A 2022 school district bond may fund some facility upgrades & curriculum updates.

Transportation Infrastructure

Transit

Bus, rail, and on-demand “pickup” services provided by CapMetro. The Green Line in progress via Project Connect.

Roadways

TxDOT, City, and County all have jurisdiction. Some service and connectivity gaps from mixed jurisdictions and areas of minimal development.

Bike lanes

Austin’s Adopted Bicycle Plan identifies bike lane projects near Colony Park and the northern Walnut Creek Trail.

Urban trails

The City adopted Urban Trails Plan map in 2023 as part of the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan.

Traffic signals

City maintains and maps where traffic signal projects are needed.

Sidewalks

City and County manage sidewalk improvements and identify high-priority sidewalk gap projects.

Utilities Infrastructure

Electricity

Electric service is available throughout. The NEPD contains the Decker Power Station, with generation capacity for up to 50,000 homes.

Gas

Many households in the NEPD are serviced by gas. Hazardous liquid pipelines in the NEPD present a risk to be considered in future planning scenarios.

Broadband

The NEPD has fewer cell towers, less broadband coverage, and fewer households with Internet access.

Water

The NEPD is mostly within the Austin Water service area. Public water mains may require extension with further development and buildout.

Wastewater

The NEPD is mostly within the Austin Water service area. Parcels in the ETJ or at the edge of the service area do not have access to public wastewater mains.

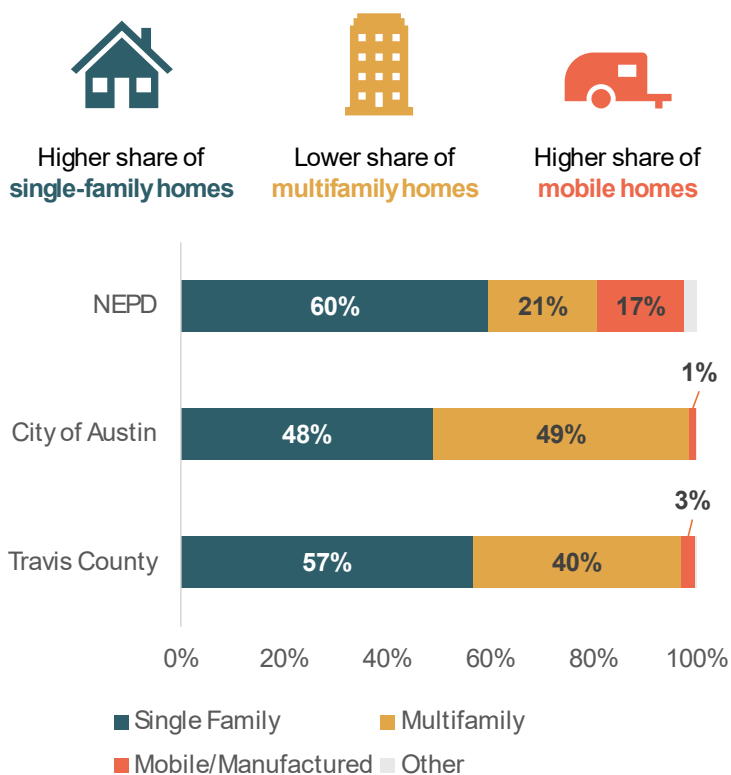
Stormwater

Some roads lack curbs and gutters, affecting storm drain function. Development must consider the area’s topography and environmental features.

Chapter 8: Housing covers the housing stock, pricing trends, and patterns of gentrification observed in the area. In the NEPD, the housing stock is predominantly single-family homes. The share of mobile homes in the planning area is notably higher than the city or county and the multifamily proportion is also distinctly lower.

Citywide pressures on housing demand and rising prices have led to new residents moving into the NEPD, where homeownership opportunities are greater and housing costs have generally been lower. The median home value in the NEPD is around \$342,000, while in Austin and Travis County, home values exceed \$500,000. However, this dynamic is increasingly displacing the area’s vulnerable populations, particularly observed in the declining share of Black owner-occupied households over time.

The NEPD has lower density housing than the City and County overall.*

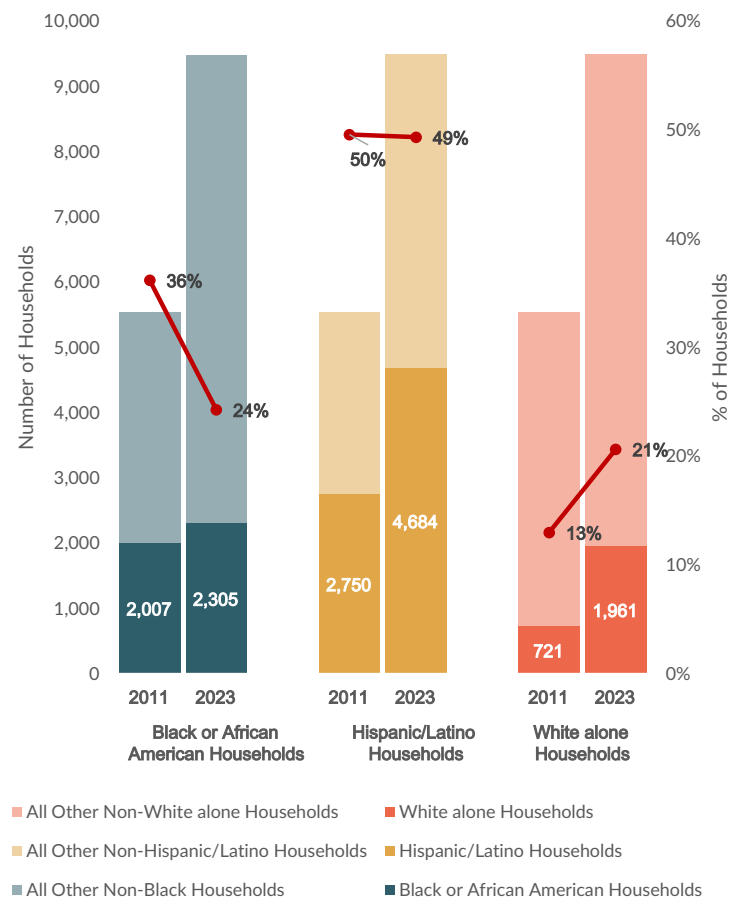


* Based on number of units in specified geographic area

From 2011 to 2023, the NEPD added nearly 4,000 households, but the share of Black households declined from 36 percent to 24 percent, while White households increased from 13 percent to 21 percent.

Acknowledging these issues, the City and County have plans and policies to build more housing across the region, and there has been an increase in the number of affordable housing units in recent years, such that 30 percent of multifamily unit deliveries in the NEPD since 2010 have been below market-rate. This chapter also discusses programs or initiatives that help residents afford to stay in their homes (tenant protections, weatherization programs) or to construct more housing overall (housing bonds, community land trusts).

Black households represent a diminishing share of the NEPD population.

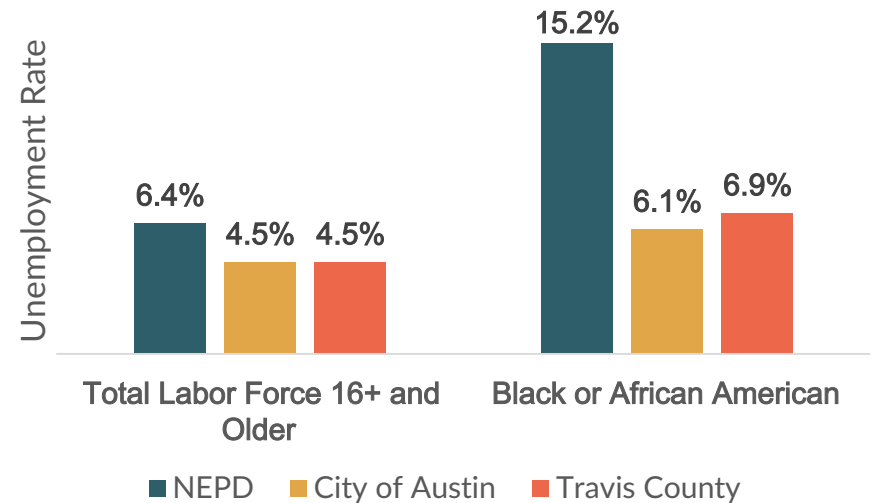


Chapter 9: Economic Development discusses major employment sectors plus non-residential land use trends. Citywide and regionally, economic development efforts have focused on promoting high-growth innovation sectors like biotechnology, semiconductors, or aerospace engineering. However, such efforts have limited benefit or impact to the NEPD, where traditional industries like Construction, Manufacturing, and Wholesale Trade are the leading employment sectors.

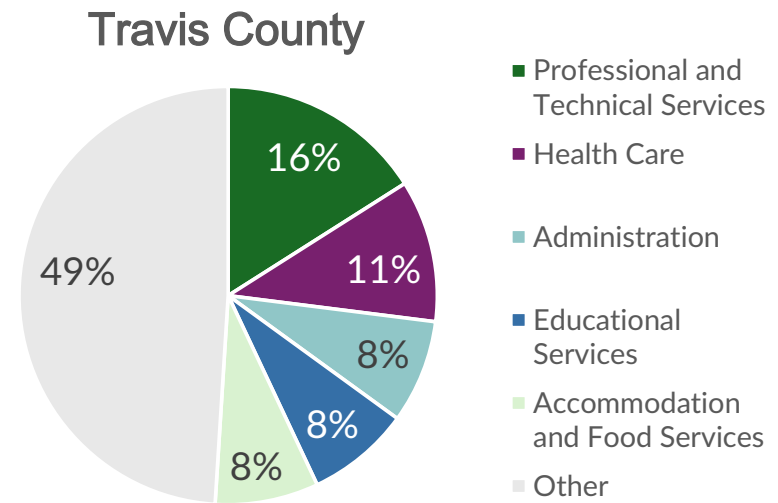
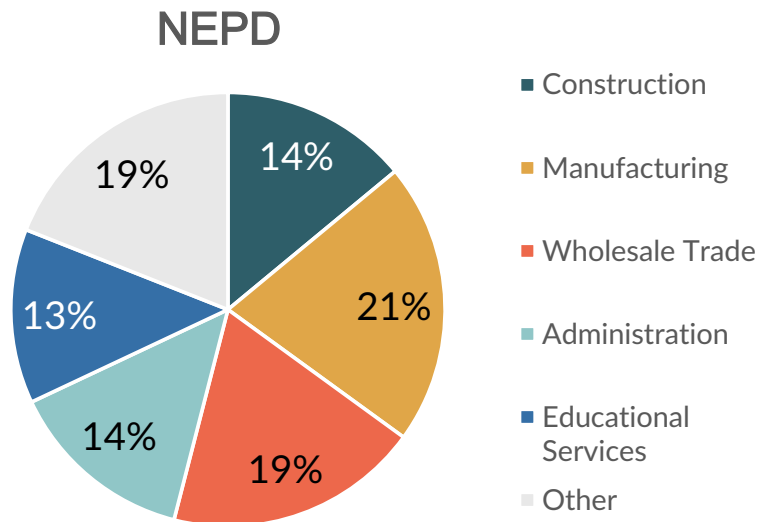
In the NEPD, there are fewer jobs than workers, while the opposite is true for the city and county, demonstrating that the NEPD is a jobs-poor area in a jobs-rich environment.

Compared to the city or county, residents of the NEPD have a higher percentage of employment in service-oriented industries such as Retail or Healthcare. The number of jobs in the NEPD area has grown in recent years, suggesting positive economic growth, but unemployment remains particularly high among the Black labor force, which has more than double the unemployment rate of any other racial or ethnic group in the NEPD.

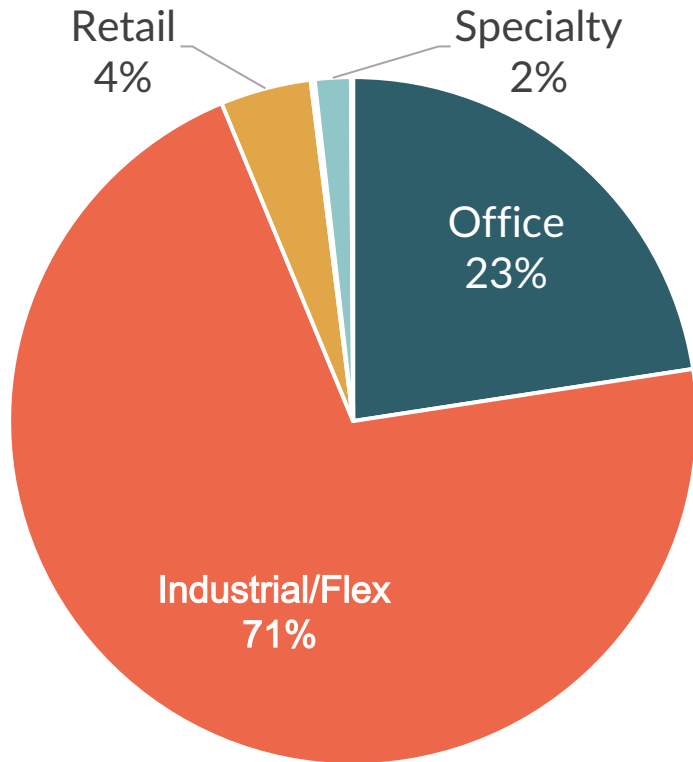
Unemployment is higher in the NEPD overall, with Black workers in the NEPD having a particularly higher rate.



Jobs in the NEPD are more industrial in nature than those in the County overall.



Industrial & Flex are the leading non-residential building types in the NEPD.



Industrial and Flex buildings represent over 70 percent of the non-residential built space in the NEPD. There was significant growth in Industrial and Flex space beginning around 2015, with multiple new warehouse buildings opened earlier in 2025. Vacancies are lower and rents are competitive with the city and county. Meanwhile, there has been limited growth in Office and Retail development and high vacancies, suggesting weaker demand for these sectors.

This chapter also lists existing economic development and workforce development programs that may benefit residents of the NEPD. Of particular interest in the NEPD are employment re-entry services for formerly incarcerated individuals and programs to train workers with lower education levels for the jobs of the future.

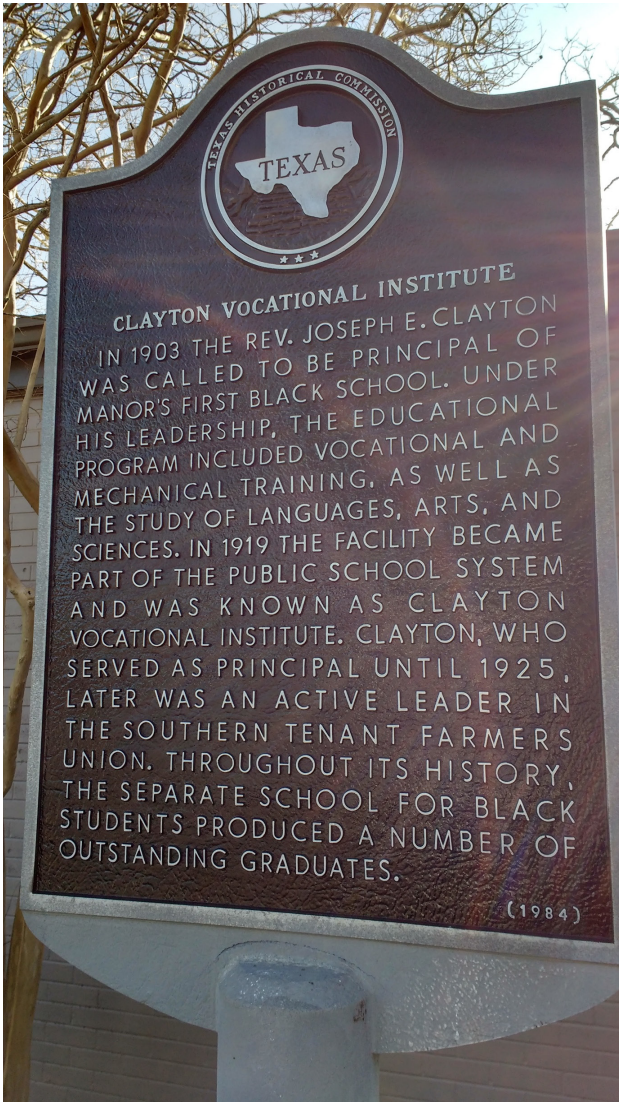
The NEPD area is characterized by a rich history that has yet to be formally acknowledged or preserved. This is detailed in

Chapter 10: Cultural and Historic Assets. For example, freedom colonies, or settlements of former African American slaves after the Civil War, made significant contributions to the local culture and community of the NEPD area. To date, the NEPD area has not been comprehensively surveyed for historic resources but there are some known cultural and historic landmarks in the area, such as the Clayton Vocational Institute, a school serving the Black population in Manor, Texas. The Historical Marker Database identifies two additional historic sites within the NEPD area.

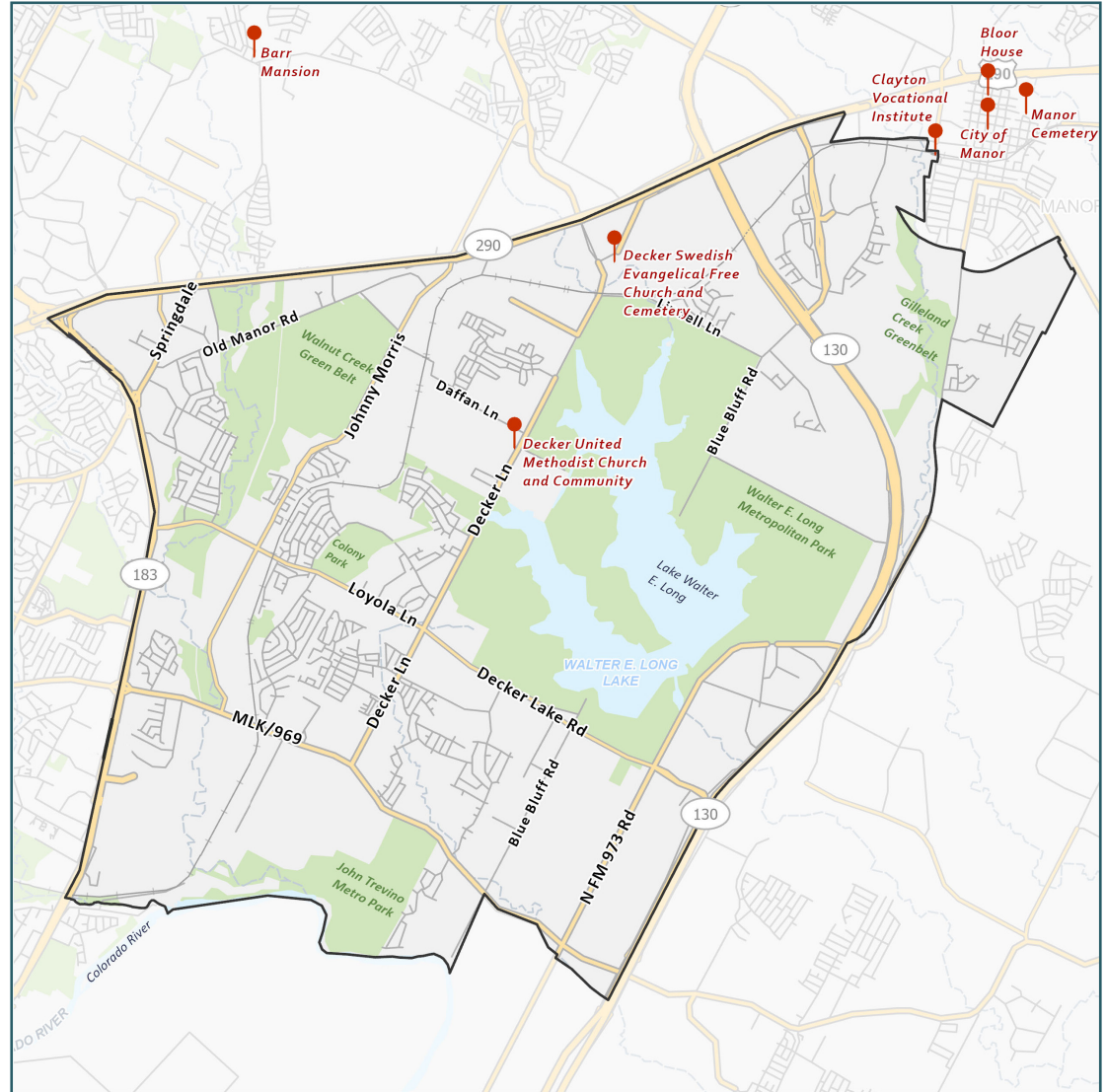
Change in Square Footage in the NEPD, 2015-2025




Several cultural and historic assets can be found in and around the NEPD.



Source: The Historical Marker Database



Northeast District Plan | Cultural-Historic Assets

 Cultural and Historic Assets







Finally, the NEPD is susceptible to a number of environmental and climate risks, as summarized in **Chapter 11: Environmental Sustainability and Resilience**. Such risks include:

- Extreme heat, augmented by the urban heat island effect and lack of tree canopy
- Wildfires as a result of proximity to wildland-urban interface (WUI) zones
- Loss of prime farmland without conservation and climate adaptation efforts.

The impacts of climate change and environmental damage will more severely affect NEPD residents, and in particular, socioeconomically disadvantaged residents who are primarily people of color.

This chapter identifies and reports key policies from several City and County plans that aim to address these environmental and climate issues, including the 2021 Austin Climate Equity Plan, the Austin Urban Forest Plan, Austin-Travis County Community Wildfire Protection Plan, and the Watershed Protection Master Plan.

The Appendix for the summary report provides supplemental material, including infrastructure maps and exhibits in **Appendix A** and electricity-related data from Austin Energy in **Appendix B**.

Climate Risk	Description	Applicability to NEPD	
	<h3>Extreme Heat</h3>	<p>Climate change would increase the number of extreme heat events, with severe health impacts on vulnerable populations. This is augmented by the urban heat island effect in areas with low tree canopy coverage and high impervious surface areas.</p>	<p>The NEPD has below-average tree canopy coverage (22%) compared to citywide (41%). The City’s goal is 50% coverage by 2050.</p>
	<h3>Flooding</h3>	<p>Austin faces significant stormwater challenges due to its mix of older infrastructure and rapid development.</p>	<p>Areas with high impervious surface coverage and poor stormwater infrastructure and maintenance are especially vulnerable.</p>
	<h3>Wildfires</h3>	<p>Approximately 51% of Austin’s land is designated at elevated wildfire risk.</p>	<p>The NEPD’s proximity to wildland urban interface (WUI) zones make it especially vulnerable to wildfires.</p>
	<h3>Land loss or erosion</h3>	<p>Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance is designated by soil quality, topography, and climate. They are a valuable natural resource.</p>	<p>Prime farmland throughout the NEPD is threatened by ongoing development pressures.</p>