

November 16, 2016  
University of Maryland  
PALS

# Report Writing Bootcamp

Planner

Editor

Author



When writing, the  
planner's job is—

to identify what is  
**significant**



give it **due measure**  
(shape, impact,  
potential)



and **give order** to  
actions that will  
shape the future



**colleagues**

**community**

**developers**

**boards**

**council**

**colleagues:** clear outcomes and actions

**community:** aspirational story, reassuring about change

**developers:** specific and accurate direction

**boards:** shortcut it, decision points

**council:** tight and supported argument, decision points

**PALS**

professor

community client



# PALS

professor: are you listening?!

community client: what should we do?

# how to start and how to finish

madman: author, ideas

architect: argument, paragraphs

carpenter: craft, sentences

judge: audience, mechanics

# madman finds ideas

explore ideas throughout the process

engage with complexity

avoid “guilt by association”

looking for story

keep calm  
and  
rewrite

# architect provides structure

that:

is obvious

avoids confusion

clarifies the essential

provides context

# structures

steps in a process

chronology

questions/answers

cause and effect

point of view

issues/solutions

compare/contrast

FAQs

hierarchy

appendixes, websites, cover memos

# structures

tables of contents

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# CONTENTS

# TOC

## Current Policies and Conditions

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## Analysis Process

Mapping and GIS Shapefiles	15
Measures and Indicators	20
Development Capacity Analysis	31

## Analysis Findings

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Consistency of Development Changes	16

# summaries

Exec Summary: I don't want to read the whole report

Abstracts: should I read this report

Introductions: I want to read this report

## **Introduction**

Cities across the country and around the globe are recognizing their responsibility to prepare for a changing climate, and the District is no exception. In recent years, we have seen how climate change is already impacting us with record-breaking heat waves, flooding caused by rising sea levels and heavy rains, and the destructive 2012 derecho storm.

These events are sobering reminders that without action, increasingly severe weather events will threaten to disrupt our power grid, harm our economy, and cost lives.

Recognizing the need to prepare and adapt, the Sustainable DC Plan established a goal to make the District more resilient to future climate change. Climate Ready DC is the District's strategy for achieving this goal while helping to ensure that our city continues to grow greener, healthier, and more livable.

# carpenter fills in details

refine elements to help the reader navigate

choose the right words

write unencumbered sentences

use simple and specific language

# plain language?

Critical Lane Volume is calculated mathematically using the following variables for a particular intersection: (a) throughput and conflicting movement traffic volume data, (b) geometric configuration information, and (c) traffic signal phasing specifications.

# speedbumps

Critical Lane Volume is calculated mathematically using the following variables for a particular intersection: (a) **throughput and conflicting movement traffic volume data**, (b) **geometric configuration information**, and (c) **traffic signal phasing specifications**.

# is this better?

Critical Lane Volume should be calculated using three traffic measures found in the Department's Intersection Traffic Count Database:

- traffic volume (including through and turn movements)
- number of lanes at an intersection
- traffic light timing.

(online at: [www.](http://www.) )



# jargon vs. technical terms

# jargon vs. technical terms

Jargon is **empty words**, to the point of cliché, that you might use in any topic, but that don't specifically advance understanding of a topic

Technical terms are the **terms of art** of a given profession that not everyone might know

# vague planning words

livability

connectivity

sustainability

amenity components

community centers

gateway

problem/issue

hierarchy

pedestrian safety improvements

security

quality of life

public realm

activity centers

the core

diversity

network

blueprint

# watch out for common errors

## check meaning

use/utilize

simple/simplistic

effect/affect

insure/ensure/assure

complement/compliment

continual/continuous

comprise/compose

economic/fiscal

alternate/alternative

**use neutral language**

**avoid redundant words**

**check spellcheck**

# judge questions and refines

punctuation, grammar, spelling

editing!

why edit?



# editing is a layered process

who, where, when

developmental, substantive, copy  
editing, proofreading

# developmental edit

sets up a framework that:

provides direction for the writer

ensures approach serves the purpose

exposes information gaps



# substantive edit

ask yourself:

is the intention clear and supported

is the intention met by language and style

are ideas presented in a logical sequence

# substantive edit

## **Mountainside Today**

The most significant new development in this area in the past 15 years has been the consolidation of the Family and Home Office (FHO) headquarters at the City Government Center (CGC) at White Rock (see Map 2). The FHO occupies 130 acres on the Market Street side of the CGC, and construction of the campus has been underway since 2001.

New residential developments include three townhouse communities built since 2000 – Gateswood and Parliament Square off James Lane and Seaton Square off Boxwood Drive.

The “big box” Orchard Center on Apple Tree Road opened in the late 1990s, the restaurant-oriented Eastech Village Corner on Tech Road opened in 2006, and there are two new hotels, Marriott Garden Inn and Hilton Courtyard. Two office buildings were built on Peach Orchard Drive in the Eastech Business Park in the 2000s.

# substantive edit

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# copy edit

to:

eliminate convoluted language

ensure language is not offensive

ensure proper and consistent usage

ensure data and facts are correct and illustrative

# style sheet

Project/Client \_\_\_\_\_

<b>A-M</b> spelling and capitalization	<b>N-Z</b>
<b>acronyms and abbreviations</b> short and long form on first appearance: spell out (abbreviate) capitalization	<b>names and titles</b>
<b>punctuation</b> hyphenating: single concept v modifying serial comma: x, x, and x	<b>numbers</b> spell out or abbreviate 1-10 spell out 11+ figures  treatment in tables, text  percent in text, % in tables decimal places
<b>addresses, street, town, project, building names</b>	<b>heading levels</b> titles, subtitles, text tables, charts, maps

As part of the CPC program—a cooperative agreement between the University of Easton and The City of Elmo—the Economics of Preservation class at the U conducted a broad analysis of the economic impact of the City of Elmo’s local historic district. Our investigation included such varied topics as the value of residential and commercial properties, the tourism industry, historic tax credits, rehabilitation projects and the City budget.

The City of Elmo’s population is currently 65,239. The City has grown over time and the local historic district has also grown with the City. The Elmo Historic District contributes greatly to the popularity of the Elmo as a tourist destination by creating a strong sense of place. Tourism adds variety to a public service oriented economy. The City should acknowledge its commendable reputation as a tourist destination.

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# proofreading

preps for production

checks grammar

checks punctuation

deals with mechanics

(e.g., page numbering, heading levels)



# proofreading

techniques:

read backwards

read aloud

divide and conquer

Traditionally, master Plans seek to balance the recommended land-use densities (at buildout) and the transportation infrastructure needed to support the planned development.

Butx traffic congestion in the eastern County—particularly on U.S 39 - has been a long-standing problem and previous master plans have acknowledged that difficulty of achieving balance. The 1981 Master Plan stated that” ...projected demand for roadway capacity in the planning area cannot be satisfied.” (see page 158) A wile later, the 1997 Mountainside Master Plan confirmed that this statement was still true and stated, “It will not be possible to add sufficient capacity through roadway improvements alone” (page 87).

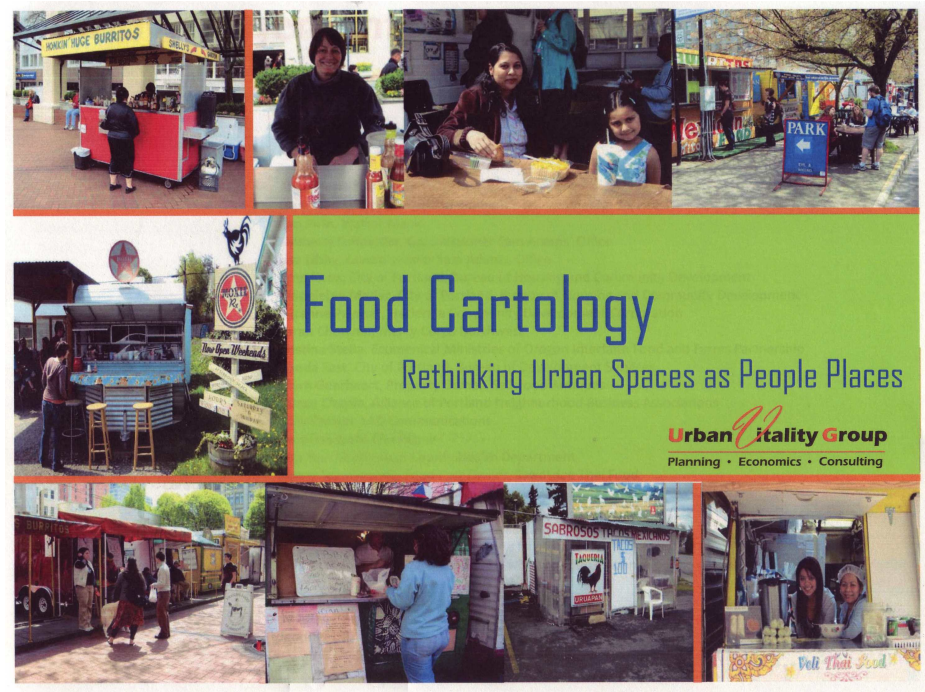
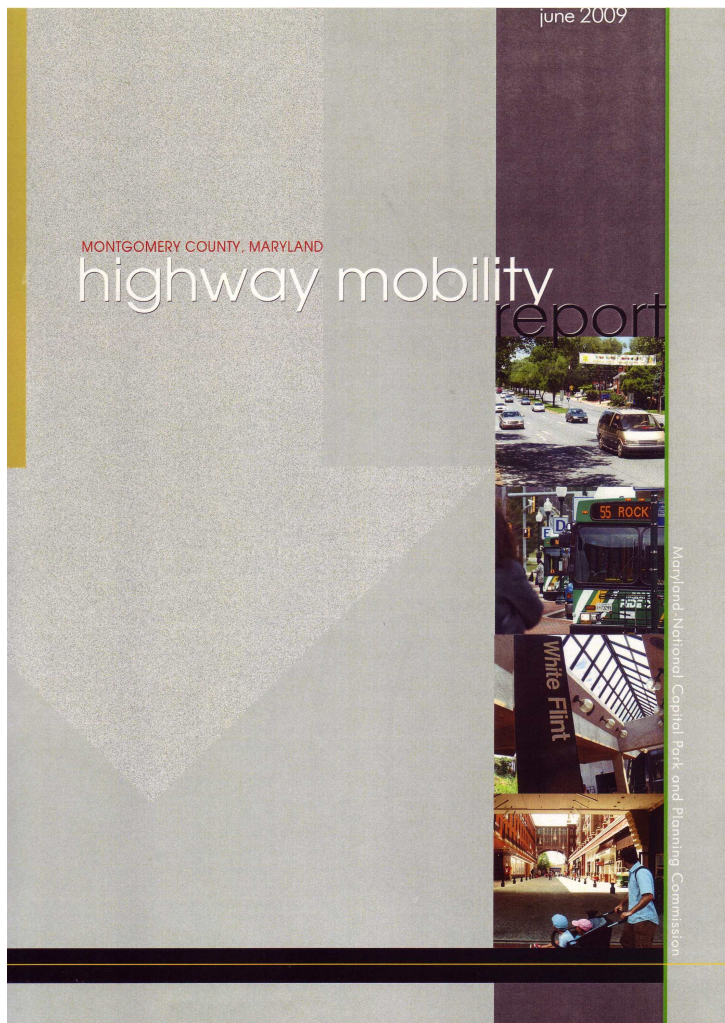
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# document elements

layout, trim size, fonts, cover, logos,  
title, TOC, pages, headings and  
subheadings, chapter breaks, pull  
quotes, charts, tables, sidebars, photos  
and illustrations, maps, captions, web  
links and appendixes

# document elements titles



# document elements layout

## FOREST GLEN

Forest Glen is the only Metro station in the County that has no commercial land use around it. Holy Cross Hospital, one of the major health providers in the County, is located in Forest Glen

Allow adequate pedestrian crossing time at marked crosswalks. Currently the north crosswalk at Dennis Avenue is timed at 4.58 feet per second

A future Kensington-Wheaton Master Plan amendment should explore allowing multiple units by-right in existing single-family houses facing Georgia Avenue

Allow no new non-residential special exceptions along Georgia Avenue unless specifically recommended in the master plan

Require all sidewalks to have a green panel separating the roadway from the sidewalk

Study the feasibility of a pedestrian tunnel under Forest Glen Road connecting the east side of Georgia Avenue to the Metro station

Labels on map: Pyers Mill Road, Evans Park, Dennis Avenue, Forest Glen Road, Forest Glen Metro, 495 Capital Beltway

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Map | Purple Line Alignment and Stations in Montgomery County

Bethesda South   Connecticut Avenue   Lyttonsville   16<sup>th</sup> Street   Silver Spring Transit Center   Fenton Street   Potential Dale Drive   Manchester Place   Atlas Street   Cibart Street   Takoma/Langley Park

Note: The Takoma/Langley Park Station is in Prince George's County.

# document elements fonts

## Typography

### Print

Futura and Scala are the official fonts of the University. Specific versions include Futura Book, Futura Book Italic, Futura Bold, Futura Bold Italic, ffScala, ffScala Italic, Bold.

A few general notes on using this typography:

- Always avoid condensing, or horizontal scaling.
- Use an all-uppercase style sparingly, for emphasis only.

### FUTURA BOOK

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz  
1234567890

A very legible sans serif typeface. An effective choice for large amounts of body text. Also works well for heads, subheads, and captions.

### FUTURA BOOK ITALIC

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz  
1234567890

Works well for short blocks of text that require emphasis, such as heads, subheads, and captions.

### FUTURA BOLD

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ  
YZ abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz  
1234567890

Because of its strong, blocky form, works especially well for titles, heads, and subheads that must command attention.



*National Education and Research Center  
for Outcomes Assessment (NERCOA)*

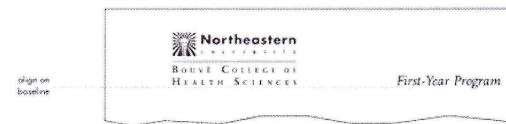
Northeastern/Bouvé College logo  
with third-level graphic (double line)



*School of Health Professions*

Northeastern/Bouvé College logo  
with third-level graphic (single line)

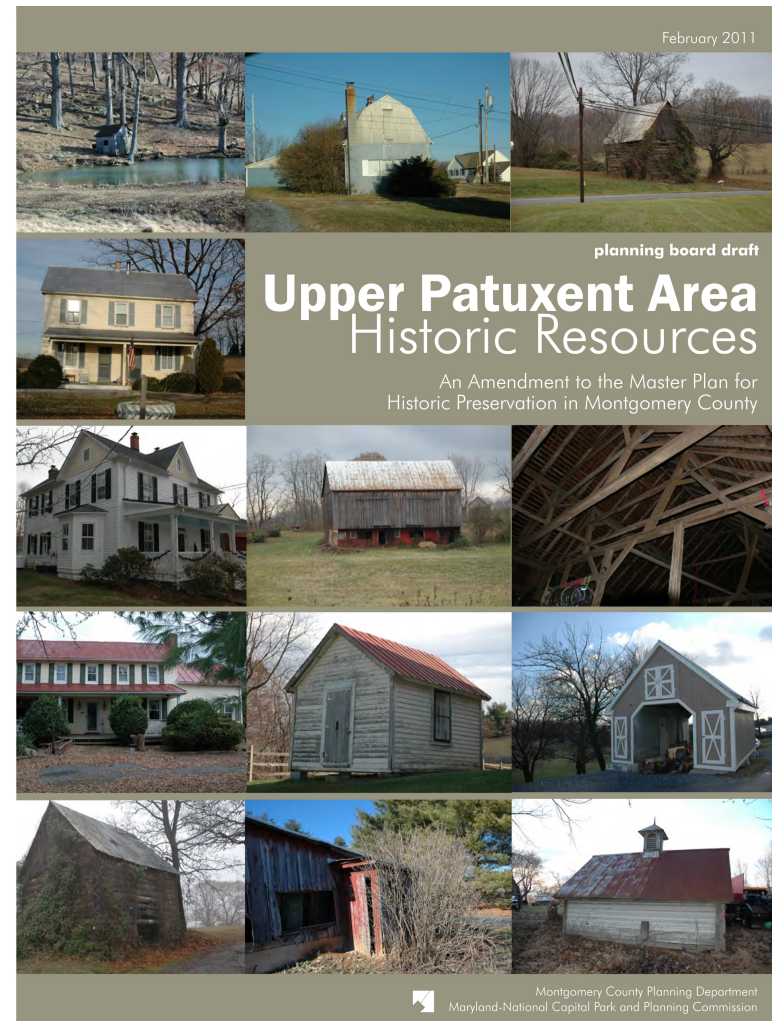
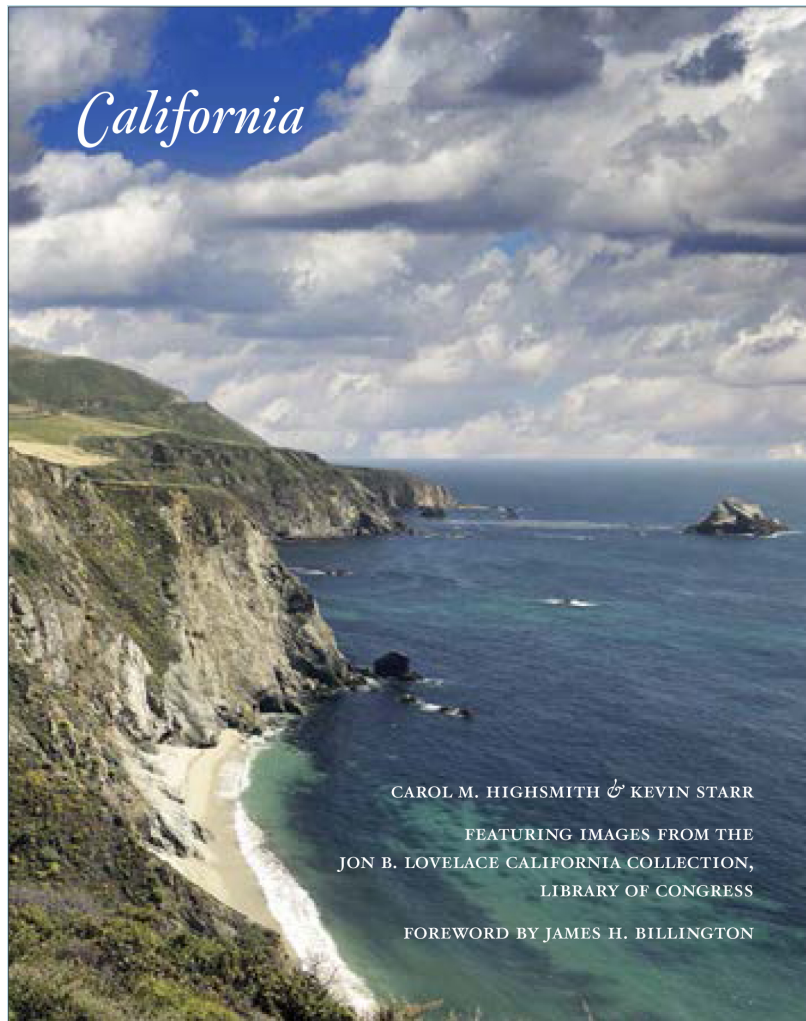
It is also acceptable to place the Northeastern/college logo and the school, center, department graphic side by side, in layouts in which space does not allow a staggered treatment. In this case, the bottom of the graphic should align with the bottom of the Northeastern/college logo.



Example of layout with Northeastern/Bouvé  
College logo and school graphic placed  
side by side

You may also place the Northeastern/college logo and the school, center, or department graphic in a staggered formation, in layouts in which a centered treatment is not appropriate.

# document elements covers





# document elements

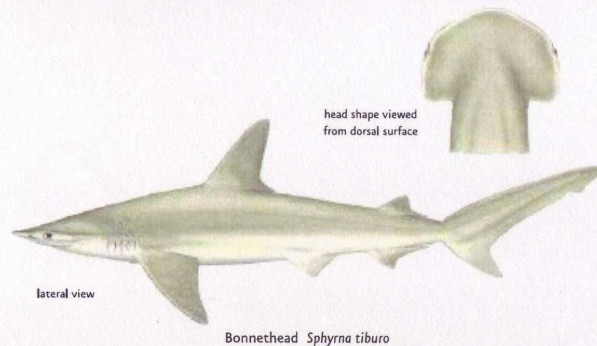
## headings and subheadings

32

HAMMERHEAD SHARKS - FAMILY SPHYRNIIDAE

### Bonnethead - *Sphyrna tiburo* (Linnaeus, 1758)

**KEY FEATURES:** Spade-shaped head, with lateral expansions of head relatively short. **COLOR:** Gray to gray brown above, light below. **SIZE:** Maximum adult size 1.5 m (4.9 ft) TL, typically about 1.3 m (4.2 ft) TL. **RANGE:** In the western Atlantic, bonnetheads occur regularly in summer as far north as North Carolina (occasionally to southern New England) and throughout the southeastern United States, the Gulf of Mexico, and Central America to southern Brazil. Bonnetheads also occur in the eastern Pacific from southern California to Ecuador.



**HABITAT AND HABITS:** Bonnetheads are a shallow inshore species found along the coast, from the surf zone to depths of 80 m (260 ft), in estuaries and channels, and on reefs and in seagrass beds. They spend the nighttime hours on shallow grass flats searching for nocturnally active invertebrate prey and move into deeper water during the day. Bonnetheads migrate north in the summer and south in the autumn and winter and usually occur in small (fewer than 15 individuals) schools. During migrations schools of hundreds or perhaps thousands may form. Sexual segregation is common. **OCCURRENCE IN THE CHESAPEAKE BAY:** Bonnetheads are occasional summer visitors to the lower Chesapeake Bay, particularly in and near Lynnhaven Inlet near the bay mouth.

**REPRODUCTION:** Bonnetheads are livebearers and produce 4–16 pups after a 4-month gestation. Pups are 35–40 cm (13–16 in) at birth and pupping occurs in

HOUND SHARKS - FAMILY TRIAKIDAE

33

shallow water in late summer and early fall. Bonnetheads take three years to mature. Females apparently produce litters every year.

**FOOD HABITS:** Bonnetheads consume mostly crustaceans, including crabs, mantis shrimp, and other shrimps. They have molar-like teeth in the back of their jaws that are particularly well-suited for crushing hard-shelled prey. Bonnetheads also feed on mollusks, octopuses, and small fishes.

**IMPORTANCE:** Bonnetheads are taken in all manner of inshore fisheries throughout their range and are eaten fresh, dried, or smoked. In the United States, bonnetheads are taken mostly as unwanted bycatch. They are the second most abundant small coastal shark (sharpnose sharks are first) in both the commercial and recreational fisheries of the United States.

### Smooth dogfish - *Mustelus canis* (Mitchill, 1815)

**KEY FEATURES:** Teeth small, arranged as tiles in the jaws; first dorsal fin just behind pectoral fin, and second dorsal fin smaller than first; both dorsal fins with rounded apices; anal-fin origin at midpoint of second dorsal fin. **COLOR:** Uniformly grayish dorsally, with pale belly; can change its color with change in substrate (one of only a few sharks able to do so). **SIZE:** Maximum adult size 1.5 m (4.9 ft) TL. **RANGE:** Warm-temperate and subtropical waters of the western North Atlantic from the Gulf of Maine (occasionally) to the Gulf of Mexico and Antilles and in the western South Atlantic from southern Brazil to Argentina.



**HABITAT AND HABITS:** Smooth dogfish are demersal and coastal and migrate inshore seasonally into the Mid-Atlantic Bight in the spring. Adults can be found in summer from New Jersey to Massachusetts, where they typically inhabit waters less than 18 m

# document elements photos

## Gathering Places



Option 1

*Top choice*



Option 2



Option 3

Wisconsin South Visual Preferences Survey



Gathering Spaces For this district, what type of gathering space would you like to see? Pick one option (click on circle to select your choice).

	Response Percent	Response Count
Option 1	60.0%	39
Option 2	4.6%	3
Option 3	1.5%	1
Option 4	26.2%	17
Option 5	7.7%	5
answered question		65

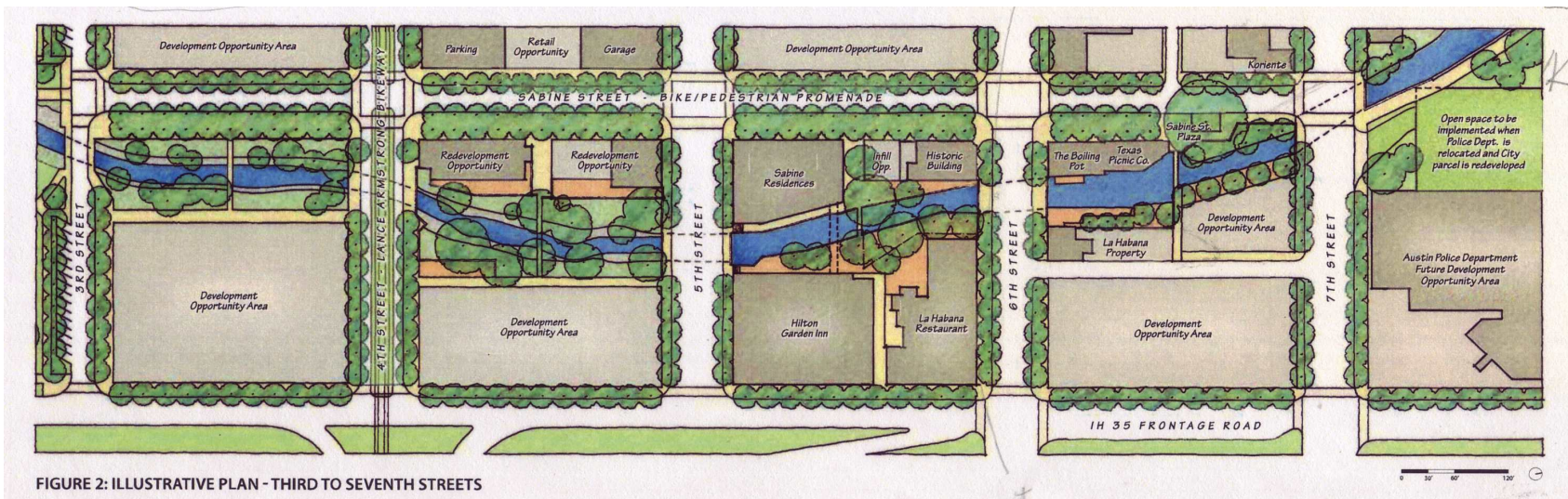
Option 4



Option 5



# document elements maps



# document elements tables

ACREAGE	
Gross Acreage of Properties.....	99.07 ac.
Crawford Property.....	29.52 ac.
O’Keefe Property.....	69.55 ac.
Area of 100-year Floodplain.....	15.84 ac.
Area of 25% or Greater Steep Slopes.....	7.74 ac.
Net Tract Area.....	75.49 ac.
DENSITY – Cluster Subdivision	
Total No. of Lots Allowed By Right (Base Density).....	23 lots

Acreage	
Gross	99.07
Crawford	29.52
O’Keefe	69.55
100-year floodplain	15.84
25% or greater slopes	7.74
Net	75.49
Cluster Subdivision Density	
By right lots (base density of 1 du / 4.35 gross ac.)	23

to identify what is **significant**—be open, be flexible, find the story—be a **madman**

give it **due measure**—wrestle with your information and express the relationships—be an **architect** and **carpenter**

and **give order** to actions that will shape the future—assemble, edit, be consistent and clear—be a **judge**