

This profile summarizes the characteristics of the watersheds in District 9; provides an overview of flooding, erosion, and water quality problems; and discusses past, current, and upcoming solutions.

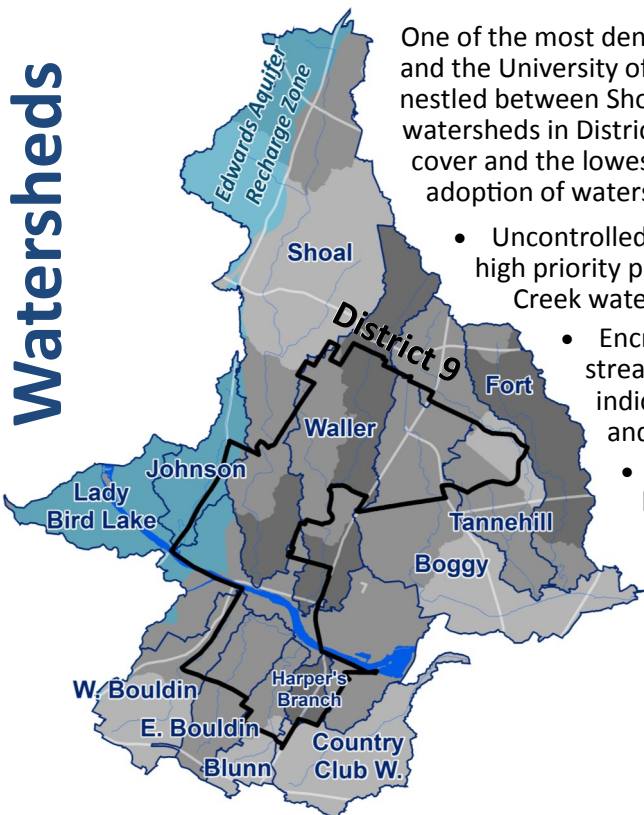


# Watershed Protection District 9 Profile

January 1, 2015

Photo: Lady Bird Lake at the Lamar Boulevard Bridge

## Watersheds



One of the most densely populated districts in the City, District 9 encompasses both downtown and the University of Texas. When Austin was founded in 1839, the original square mile city was nestled between Shoal and Waller Creeks, on the banks of the Colorado River. Today the watersheds in District 9 are extensively urbanized, with one of the highest levels of impervious cover and the lowest levels of undeveloped land of all the districts. Largely constructed before the adoption of watershed regulations, the development in this district is generally characterized by:

- Uncontrolled, polluted stormwater runoff and significant degradation of water quality, with high priority problems shaded green on the map below. [Harper's Branch](#) and lower [Waller](#) Creek watersheds have the highest ranked (worst) water quality problems in the city.
- Encroachment and alteration of natural waterways, which results in eroding stream banks and threatened property. High priority erosion problems are indicated in yellow on the map below. Portions of lower Waller, lower Shoal, and [West Bouldin](#) are among the worst erosion problems in the city.
- Placement of structures within harm's way in the 100-year floodplain, with high priority flooded structures and roadways shown in red on the map below. Lower [Shoal](#) is one of the highest priorities in the city for flooding.
- Undersized, deteriorating storm drain systems, which contribute to localized flooding of buildings, streets, and yards. Major clusters of drainage complaints are shown in blue on the map below.

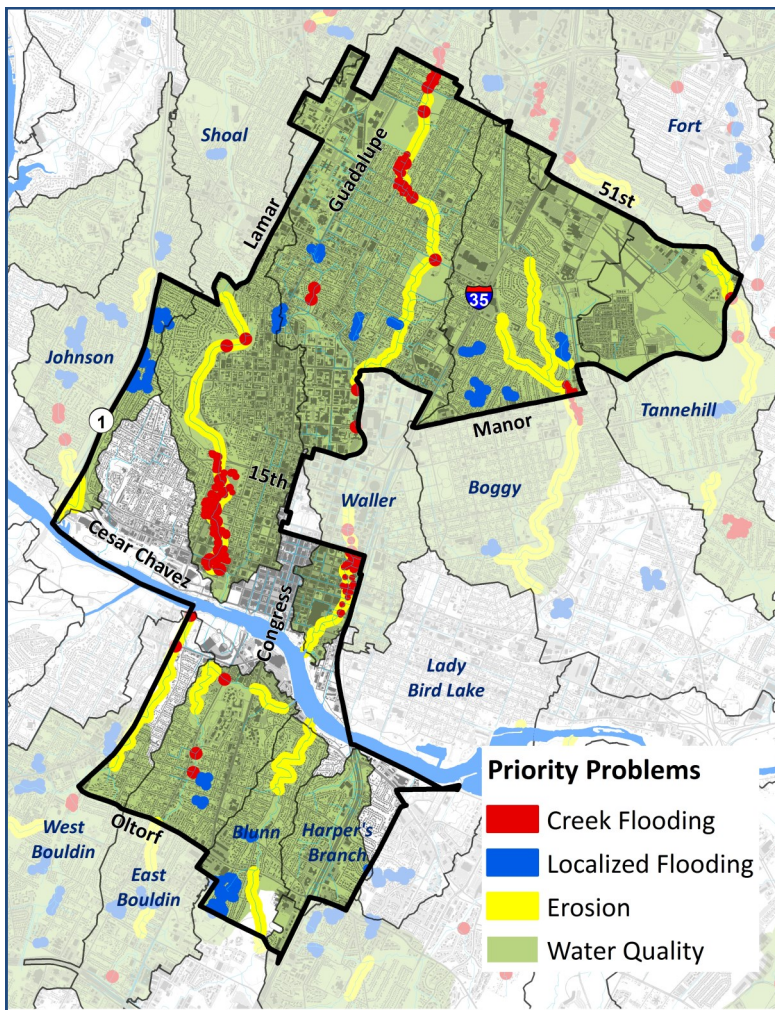
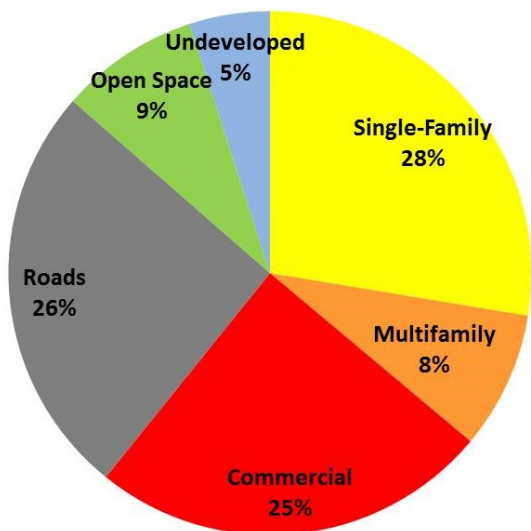
## Creek Health



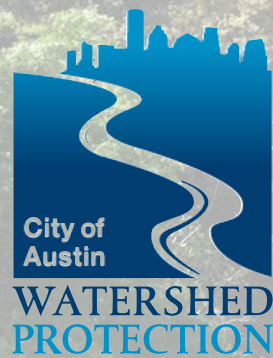
**53%** Impervious Cover

**28%** Tree Canopy Cover

## Land Use



For more information on a specific watershed, check out the [Find Your Watershed tool](http://www.austintexas.gov/GIS/FindYourWatershed): [www.austintexas.gov/GIS/FindYourWatershed](http://www.austintexas.gov/GIS/FindYourWatershed)



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Photo: Shoal Creek Greenbelt near 24th Street

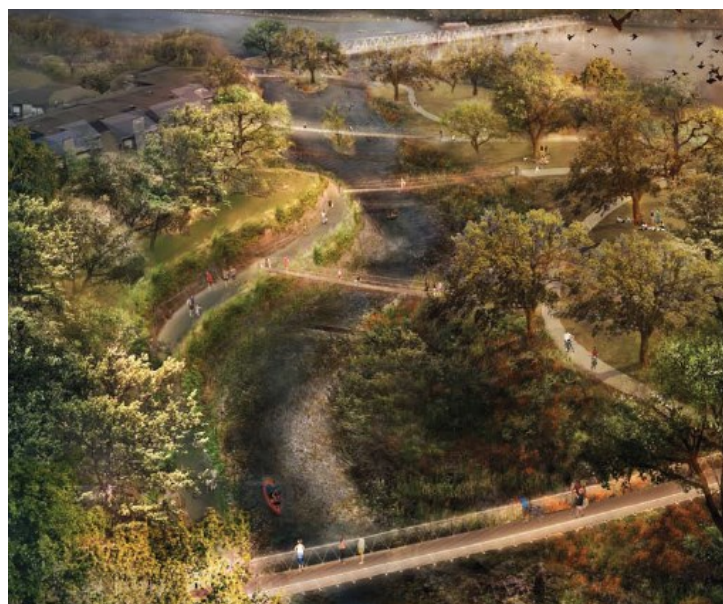
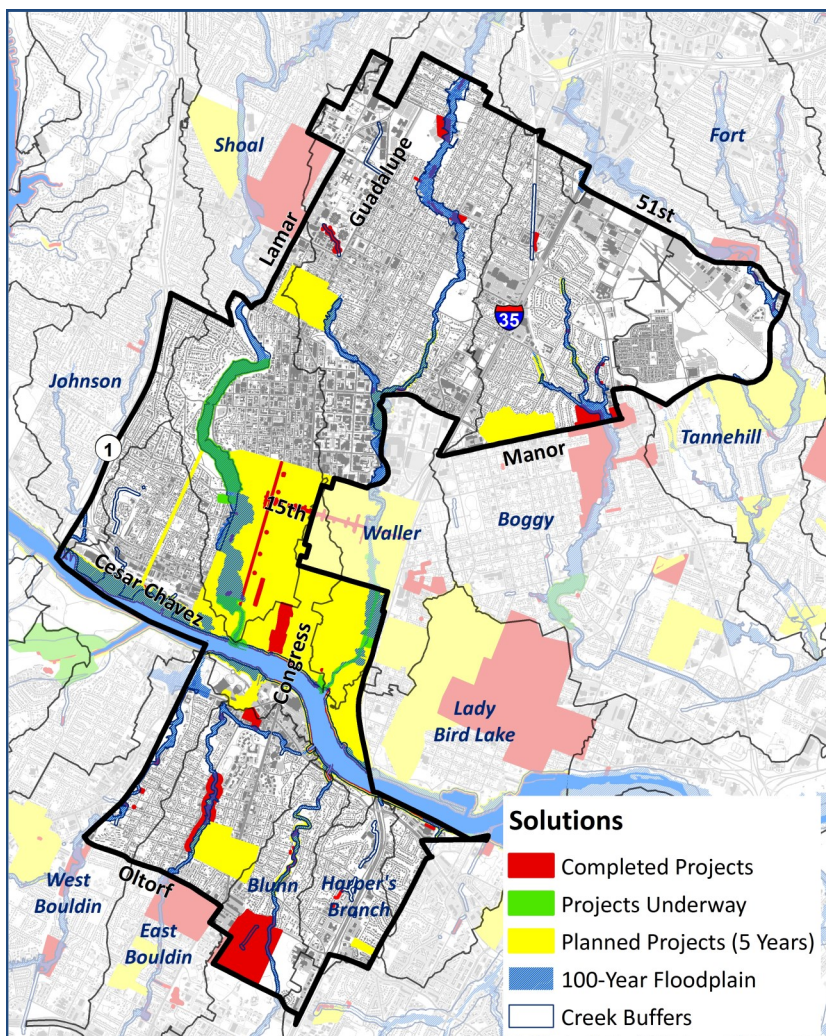
The Watershed Protection Department addresses drainage and environmental problems using a three-tiered approach of capital improvement projects, programs, and regulations. Examples of these strategies in District 9 include:

- Capital Improvement Projects:** Since the watersheds in District 9 were almost entirely developed before watershed regulations were in place, capital solutions are a critical tool for this district. Watershed Protection has already constructed numerous projects in this district over the years, including repairing eroding streambanks, upgrading storm drain systems, and building regional stormwater ponds. Restoration projects for Shoal Creek at Pease Park and below 5th Street are currently underway as well as the construction of the Waller Creek Tunnel. The Waller Creek Tunnel is a mile-long stormwater bypass tunnel that will capture and redirect flood waters south of 12th Street to an outlet lagoon on the shores of Lady Bird Lake, addressing problems of flooding and erosion along lower Waller Creek and removing nearly 28 acres of downtown land from the 100-year floodplain. Future plans for the Waller Creek District call for restoring the ecology of the creek, improving adjacent parks and open space, and enhancing pedestrian and bicycle connections between Lady Bird Lake, the University of Texas, and East Austin. Additional storm drain upgrades, rehabilitation of the Clarkson tributary of Boggy Creek, restoration of healthy vegetation along Lady Bird Lake, and a revised feasibility assessment of a diversion tunnel for Shoal Creek are planned for the next five years as well.
- Programs:** With a dense population and several creeks in degraded condition, the Adopt-a-Creek partnership between Keep Austin Beautiful and Watershed Protection is an important program for this district. Through the Adopt-a-Creek program, volunteer groups are making lasting commitments to preserve and improve an adopted waterway. With tools, seeds, and guidance provided by the program, adopters are moving far beyond cleanups; they are taking action to remove invasive species, plant native species, and control erosion, restoring creeks to a more natural, healthy state.

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More information on projects, programs, and regulations can be found at [austintexas.gov/watershed](http://austintexas.gov/watershed)



Illustrated vision for the mouth of Waller Creek, as adopted in the Waller Creek Design Plan.