Environment

River Corridor Analysis in Relation to Parks Master Plan

General:
The site is generally unencumbered by sensitive environmental features that would be apparent by a visual field survey. There are very few protected trees within the area north of Williams Drive, however there are some that should be saved in this area. There are currently two gas stations within the area whose sites would require underground fuel storage remediation if they were to be redeveloped in the future.

The area to the south of Williams Drive presents the most interesting environmental features as this area fronts the North San Gabriel River. The river is separated from the developable areas by a steep limestone cliff averaging approximately 20 feet in height. The river bottom, while all within the floodplain, provides an excellent location for a linear trail that would tie into the City’s existing North San Gabriel trail system. The river bottom should be dedicated to the City of Georgetown as parkland when the property is developed.

Trees:
On the north side of Williams Drive, the only protected trees appear to be some large live oaks. A key consideration in the redevelopment plans should be the addition of native trees throughout the new developments. Currently the area is mostly free of any trees other than the few large live oaks and significant numbers of scrub cedar.

On the south side of Williams Drive, there are also a number of large live oaks and groves of live oaks outside the river bottom. Within the river bottom there are a variety of large native trees that should be protected if a trail and park are developed.

Water:
A key environmental feature of this area is the North San Gabriel River. Any development that occurs should respect the long term health of the river. In addition to the River, there appear to be a number of active springs and plant species related to the springs whose health may be jeopardized by development of the property on the south side of Williams Drive. Any development that may take place on the south side of Williams Drive should be handled in a way that protects the river, the contributing springs and the native flora and fauna of the river corridor.

Artifacts and Cultural Resources:
The area beneath the limestone cliffs on the south boundary of the study area appears to be probable sites for Native American artifacts. A cultural resources survey should be conducted to identify and protect any potential sites of artifacts.
Noise:
One of the negative aspects of the study area from an environmental perspective is its proximity to IH-35 and the noise that the interstate generates. Any development projects should consider the impacts of noise and design and orient the projects to mitigate those impacts.

Parkland and Trails:
As mentioned above, the property within the study area that is in the river bottom should be dedicated to the City for parkland. A linear trail along the north side of the North San Gabriel River should be constructed and tied into the existing trail on the south side of the North San Gabriel River. The connection should initially be made at the parking area under IH-35 with a future connection at the first low water bridge west of Rivery Blvd. The river bottom area needs significant clean up as it appears to have been used over the years as a dirt bike course and as a dumping ground.

Any development projects on the south side of Williams Drive within the study area could take advantage of the adjacency to the proposed parkland by connecting to the park and trail system. There are also possibilities to provide overlook seating and recreation areas at the top of the cliffs.