

# Barton development limit suggested

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A consultant to the City Council has recommended that the city prohibit further development along Barton Creek within 400 feet on both sides of the creek's center line.

The report by Espey, Huston and Associates Inc. also recommends that new standards be adopted to

control development in less ecologically-critical areas of the Barton Creek watershed.

The report was delivered to the City Council and the Barton Creek Task Force Monday, but most city departments had not received and reviewed it by Tuesday.

Joe Beal, a vice president at Espey, Huston who helped compile

the report, said its recommendations tried to balance the concerns of two major groups: environmentalists who want Barton Creek left in its natural state and developers who view the picturesque creek as prime property for new subdivisions.

"The proposed regulations are much more strict closer to the creek

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than they are the further you move away from it," Beal said. "That was the whole theory behind the (recommendations). But they're fairly strict throughout the creek's watershed."

The council imposed a 180-day moratorium on further development along Barton Creek in July so an ordinance could be written regulating future construction activities on the creek. The moratorium will expire Jan. 17.

Espey, Huston included in its report a proposed ordinance that would put its recommendations into a legally enforceable form. It recommends that the council adopt the proposed ordinance.

In its report to the City Council, the consultant divided the creek into three zones: the critical water quality zone, defined as the area 400 feet on both sides of the creek's center line; the lowlands water quality zone, an area 300 feet from the outer boundary of the critical water quality zone; and the uplands water quality zone, all areas within the Barton Creek watershed other than the critical and lowlands zones.

It recommends that the critical water quality zone be "preserved to the greatest extent possible. Only essential construction such as street crossings and utilities that cannot be practically located elsewhere shall be located in this area."

The lowlands water quality zone can tolerate "only minimal disturbance," the report said. The zone can "accommodate a housing density of 0.3 unit per acre without the use of cluster housing," the report said.

The uplands water quality zone can "tolerate a reasonable degree of disturbance" because of its relative distance from Barton Creek and its "lesser ecological value" to the watershed, the report said. An average of 0.5 housing unit per acre could be built in the zone "without the use of control strategies," the report said.

The consultant said that if the Barton Creek watershed continues to be developed as in the past, "significant deterioration of the creekbed and its resources, and the water quality of Barton Springs to a lesser extent can be expected to occur at some point in the future."

Mayor Carole McClellan said she wants the council to schedule a work session for Jan. 3 to discuss the report's findings and recommendations, "and maybe we can get something adopted by Jan. 10."

Like other City Council members contacted Tuesday, McClellan said she hadn't had time to finish reading the voluminous report.

"I'll save final judgment (on the report) until the work session, but it really seems to have some tough re-

commendations," McClellan said. "I believe we've got something with some teeth in it."

But Ken Manning, a member of the Barton Creek Task Force, said the 2-inch thick report "just doesn't go near far enough."

"They've taken a conservative approach, a very timid approach in limiting their concerns to water quality," said Manning, who also is chairman of the Austin Sierra Club's committee on growth management and water quality. "We're going beyond water quality and looking also at the very fragile ecological systems adjacent to the creek."

When the Barton Creek Task Force makes its recommendations to the City Council, Manning said, he will try to persuade the Task Force to enlarge the water quality zones set out by Espey, Huston "as well as extend the overall scope of the recommendations."

The report also recommends that:

- The city ask the Texas Department of Water Resources to establish water quality stream standards for Barton Creek.

- The city acquire, through easements and dedication, land in the critical water quality zone.

- A sewer system be installed to serve development that might occur on the Edwards Outcrop. The report noted that use of septic tanks on the Edwards Outcrop "can be expected to have a serious detrimental impact on Barton Springs."

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was to discuss the church's role in desegregation.

Harris said, "I feel as responsible members of the Austin community all of us should work for a smooth transition. We can't put ourselves in a position of cooperating with white flight." Harris said he will issue a pastoral letter in early 1980 calling on Austin's Catholics to cooperate in the move toward court-ordered desegregation of the city's 80 public schools.

During the meeting, a committee of priests was established to explore how Catholics can actively aid in the transition. Its members are Reyes, the Rev. Richard McCabe of St. Theresa's Church, the Rev. Michael Fritzen of Holy Cross Church and the Rev. Peter Logsdon of St. Ignatius Church.

Of the 1,191 students attending the city's five parochial schools (first through eighth grade), enrollment figures indicate about 25 percent are from minority groups. There is no Catholic high school in Austin.