4 TRAIL DESIGN VISION

Using the above site analysis and engagement with City stakeholders, the consultant team and City trail managers developed the following framework with which to unify future trail development under a common vision.

The framework breaks the system into six unique "Character Areas" which each will have unique aesthetic characteristics while also maintaining uniform quality standards and connectivity. Trail design specifications will be applied depending on the segment's intended "Trail Capacity," which was determined using an aggregate of factors including population density and frequency of trail usage. Finally, specific trail needs such as shade or flood infrastructure will be addressed using components specified in the system "Toolkit." The toolkit will allow trail managers to uniformly install appropriate trail amenities and infrastructure and eliminate the need to individually design solutions across the trail system.

4.1 THE VISION

HWP GREENWAY PROGRAM GOALS

The program goals of the greenway system are core to the vision of the Trail Design Strategy. The goals are as follows:

- Access to outdoor recreation
- Pedestrian and bicycle mobility
- Park system connectivity
- Open space and habitat conservation

TRAIL DESIGN STRATEGY OBJECTIVES

The Trail Design Strategy establishes design principles, criteria for application, and enhanced features; which combine city-wide branded elements, with other features entitled to reflect the unique character of the neighborhoods in which they will be placed.

- To provide an administrative vehicle to channel and harmonize current and upcoming design initiatives for the best possible impact on their surroundings and aligning them in a consistent way.
- To raise the quality of trails and make of this -already loved- infrastructure an even more valued city asset by residents, and eventually become an icon of San Antonio for visitors as well.
- To spark neighborhood revitalization, as a key component of urban regeneration, acting as a catalyst for infill redevelopment or neighborhood improvement in declining areas.
- To strategically apply Low Impact Development (LID) principles in an educational way, to showcase exemplary samples of best practices on water preservation and ecological design, for residents of all ages to enjoy and to get ideas from.
- To create a bolder city-wide vision for the entire Trail System, by thinking globally first, and acting locally then, in a coherent and consistent way, so each action/location speaks of the system and vice-versa.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The heart of the San Antonio trail system is the trail itself. Currently, newly constructed trail segments are made of 10' wide concrete. In the past, the City has experimented with other materials, such as asphalt, with various degrees of success. The linear trails team has expressed a desire to continue using concrete trails due to the ease of maintenance and overall cost effectiveness.

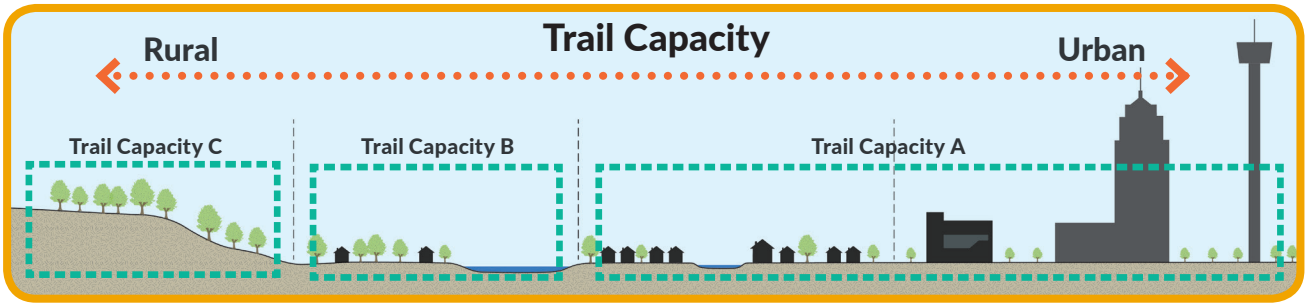
The linear parks team and stakeholders indicated challenges that must be considered as the trail system continues to develop:

1. The popularity of the trail system is growing every year and is attracting different types of user groups.
2. Historically, the trail had been primarily used by cyclists. In the past few years there has been an increase in the variety of users, including leisure walkers, tourists, long distance runners, families out for a weekend outing, and parents with strollers.
3. There are concerns about trail congestion and conflict between user groups (i.e. runners and cyclists).

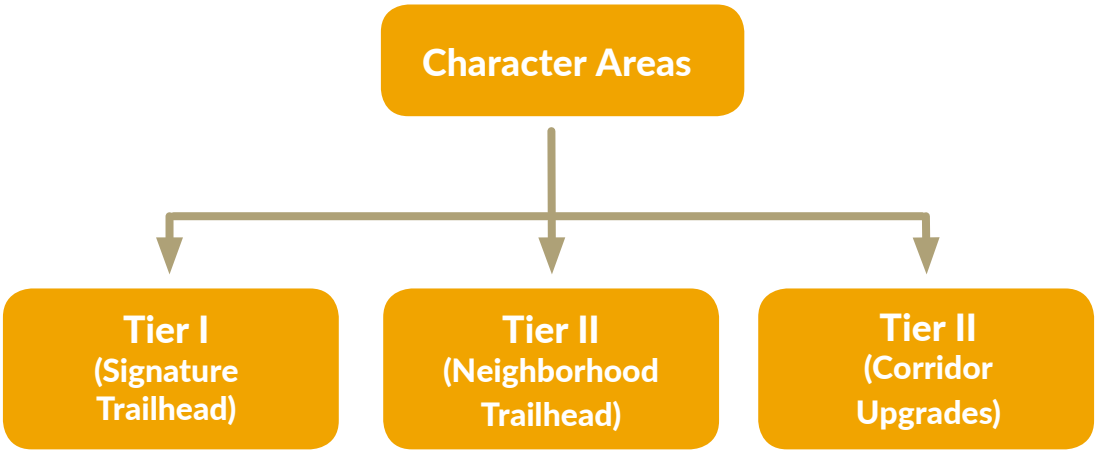
A TRANSECT METHODOLOGY

Transects were initiated as an effective tool for planners by many historic leaders in the planning and design professions including Patrick Geddes, Ian McHarg, and more recently, Andres Duany. Transects continue to be used by planners to describe changing conditions across a geographic area in a linear diagram. The Congress for New Urbanism (founded by Andres Duany), for instance, developed an influential transect that describes the changing conditions from wilderness to dense urban environments by breaking down the gradient

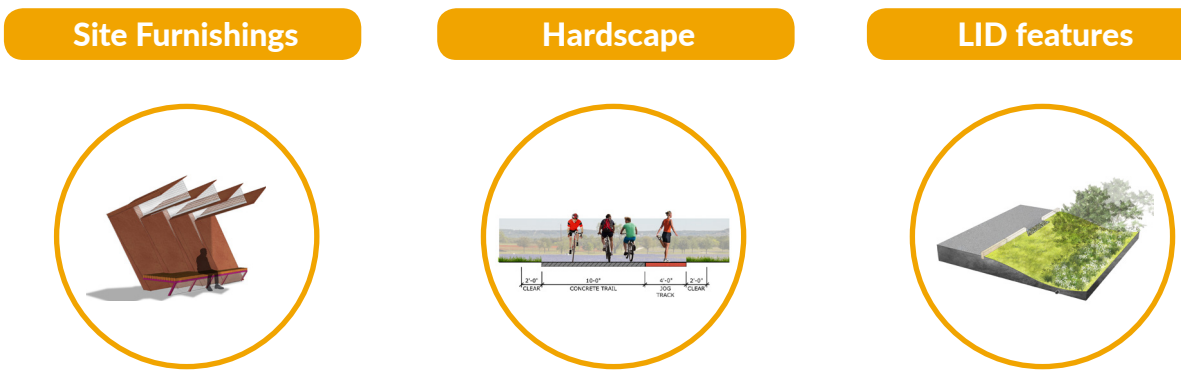
Density & Use



Trailheads and Upgrades



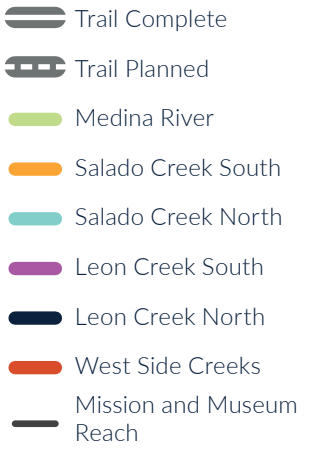
Toolkit



into distinct categories. While these categories tend to simplify otherwise complex urban fabrics, they make large scale planning much more feasible.

To address the disparate contexts of individual segments of the HWP Greenway system, the consultant team and City trail managers have used the transect methodology to break down the trail system into three distinct categories, each with a corresponding "Trail Capacity"; as well as to ascribe families of furnishings to specific Character Areas within certain Transect categories. The categories, described in detail below, are respondent to the varying degree of urban density, current frequency of use, and the role of each Transect Zone in the overall urban fabric of the City of San Antonio.

CHARACTER AREA MAP



CHARACTER AREAS

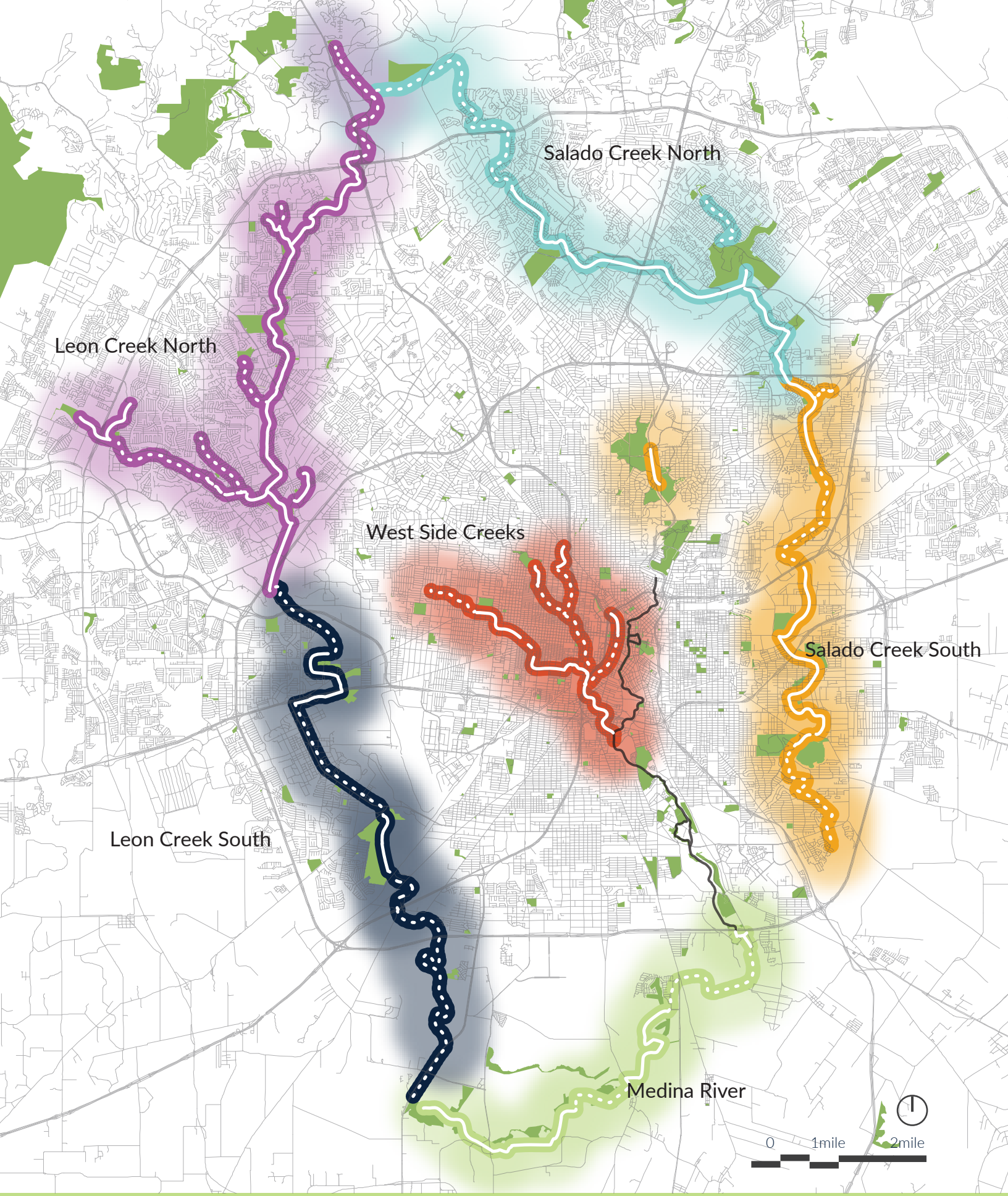
Character Areas are unique areas with both linear and spatial components across the trail system. Each Character Area was identified because of a variety of factors including its surrounding urban form, density, and use - i.e. its Transect Zone; the unique bioregion and corresponding landscapes each segment is within; and, carefully considered cultural and demographic differences across the region.

Each aspect of the system-scale site analysis identifies differences in each Character Area. Understanding those differences is vital in establishing a community identity on the HWP Greenway that gives residents a sense of pride and ownership for nearby trails. A community should always be given the opportunity to provide input on how they would like their trail system built and which amenities are most desirable. Community input meetings are a good way to gather such input.

The system is broken down into the following Character Areas:

- **Medina River**
- **Salado Creek South**
- **Salado Creek North**
- **Leon Creek South**
- **Leon Creek North**
- **Westside Creeks**

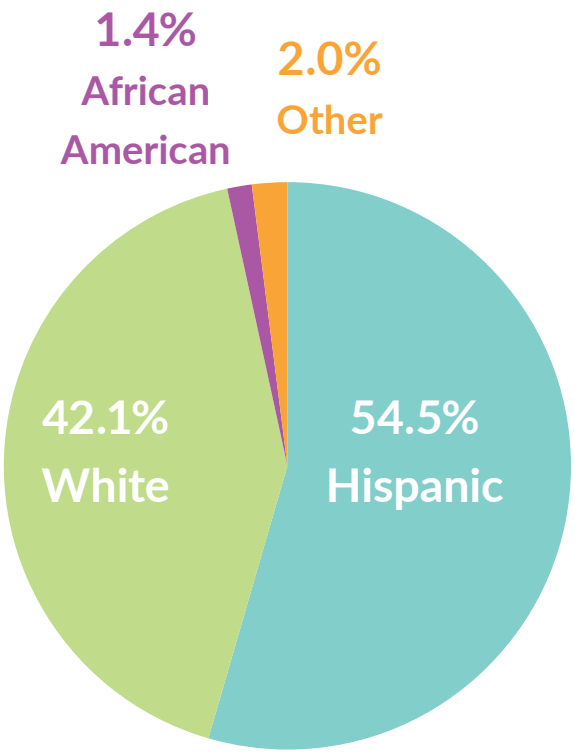
The following section outlines the unique characteristics of each Character Area in further detail than the previous Site Analysis. Both sections have informed the development and recommended application of the Design Toolkits (page 66)


Salado Creek North
Leon Creek North
West Side Creeks
Salado Creek South
Leon Creek South
Medina River
0
1mile
2mile

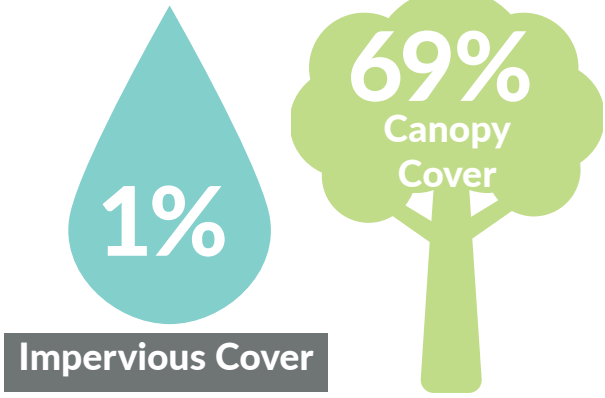
4.2 MEDINA RIVER

Situated far to the south of the City center, the Medina River trail is by far the most rural Character Area. With little urban development in the area, there is very little impervious cover, however an unexpectedly high portion of the trail is is not covered by tree canopy. The low population density mean this segment is almost exclusively a recreational destination, however demand will likely rise significantly if and when the trail is connected to the popular Mission Reach Trail.

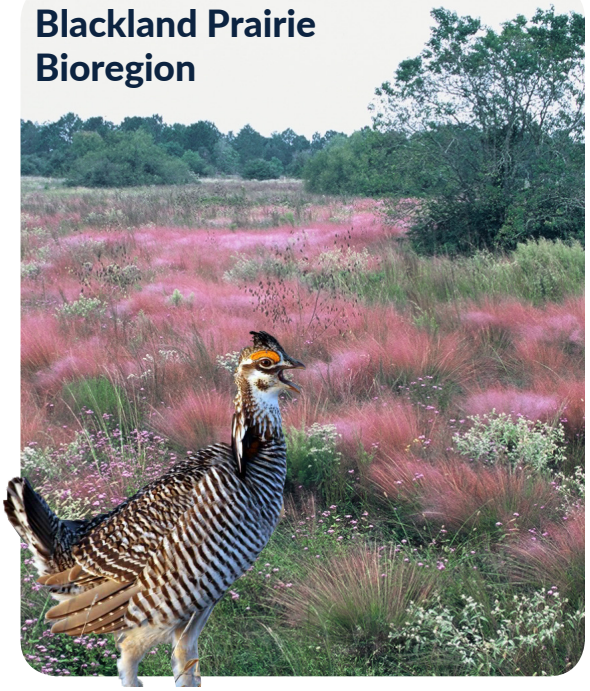
PEOPLE



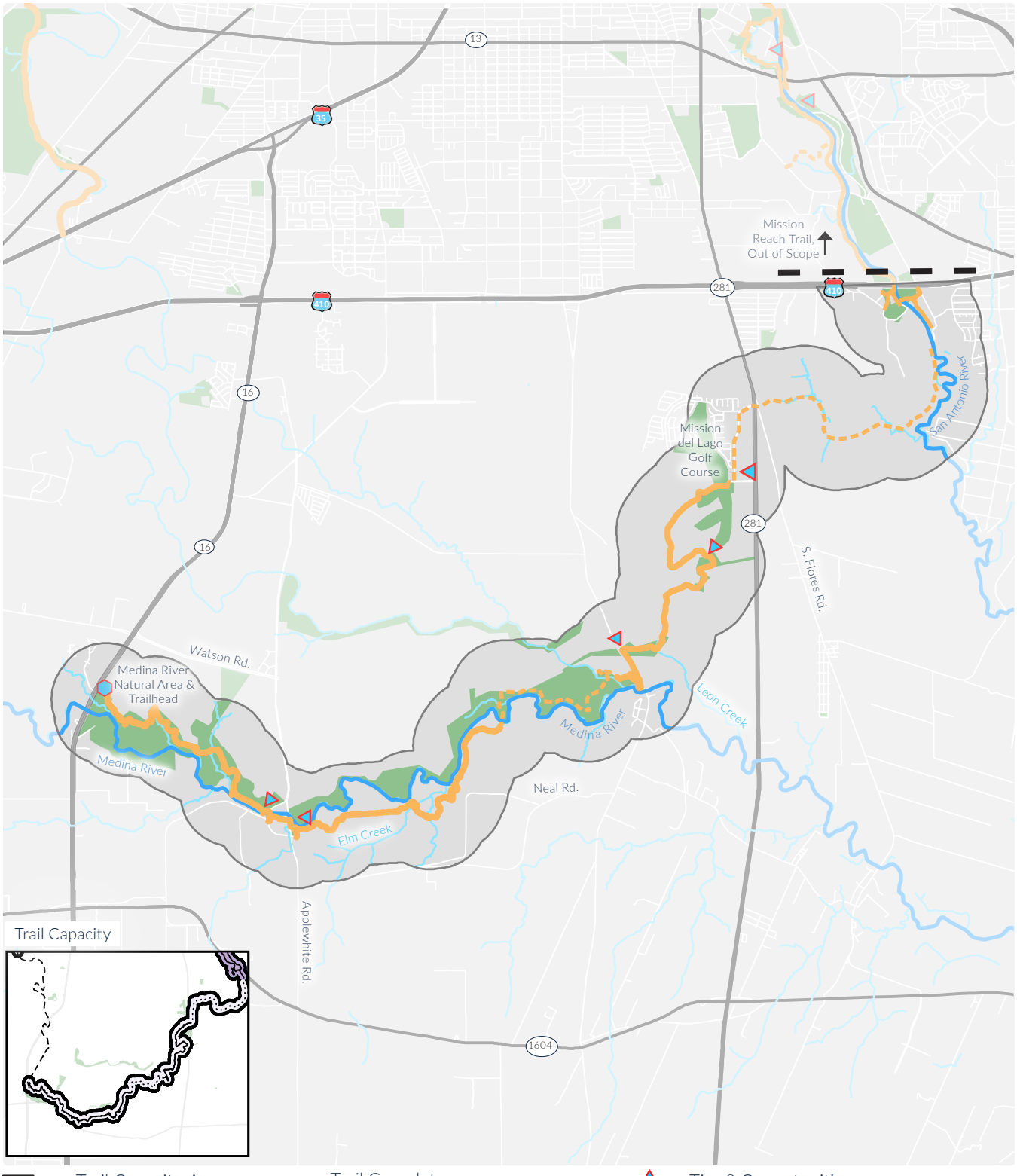
ENVIRONMENT



Blackland Prairie Bioregion



MEDINA RIVER



Trail Capacity A

Trail Capacity B

Trail Capacity C

Trail Complete

Trail Planned

Tier 1 Opportunities

Tier 2 Opportunities

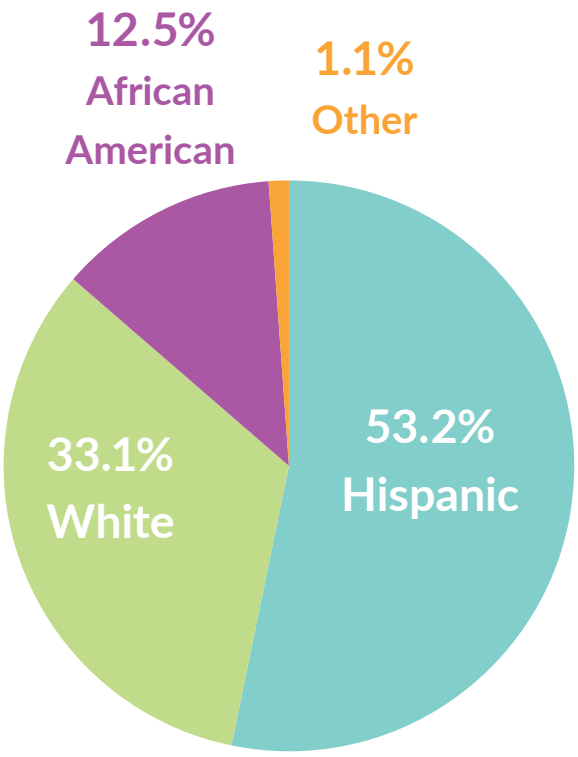
1 Mile Buffer

0 1 miles 2 miles

4.3 SALADO CREEK SOUTH

The Salado Creek South Character Area is currently disconnected from the north segment, leading to its relatively low use despite its urban setting. The trail is characterized by a highly forested setting and a natural creek beds. It connects users to Southside Lions Park, as well as the AT&T Center, home of the Spurs basketball team. There are significant opportunities to improve neighborhood connections and restore riparian function in this Character Area.

PEOPLE



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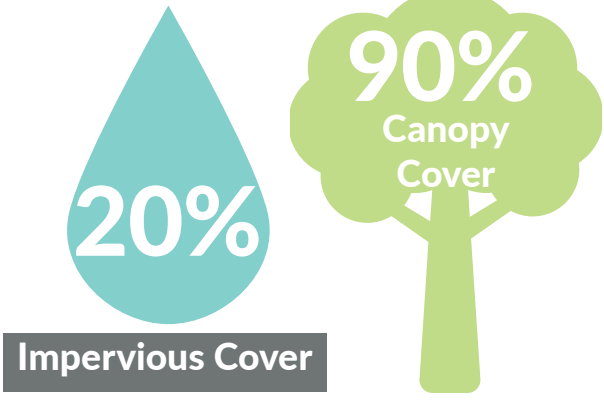
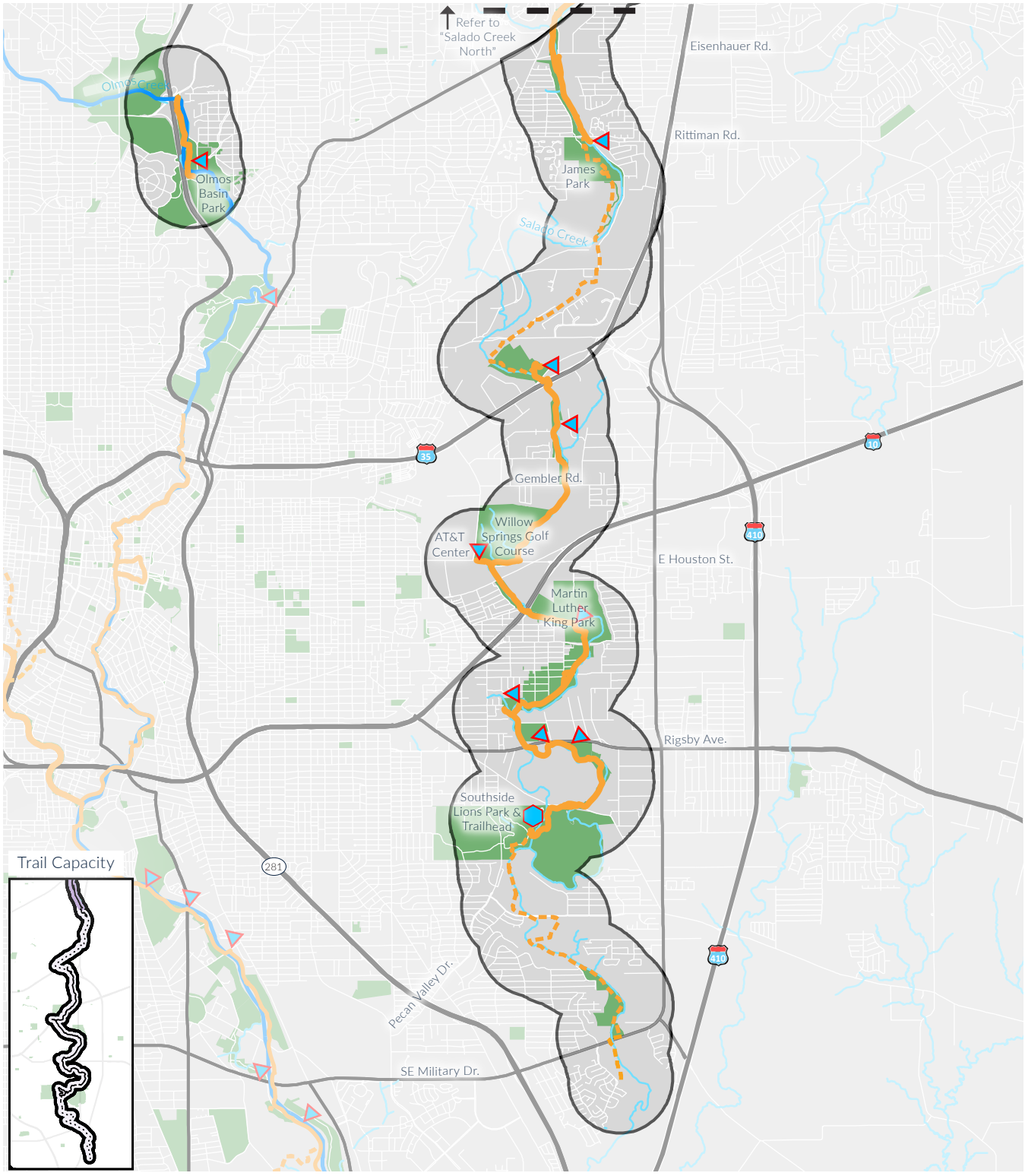


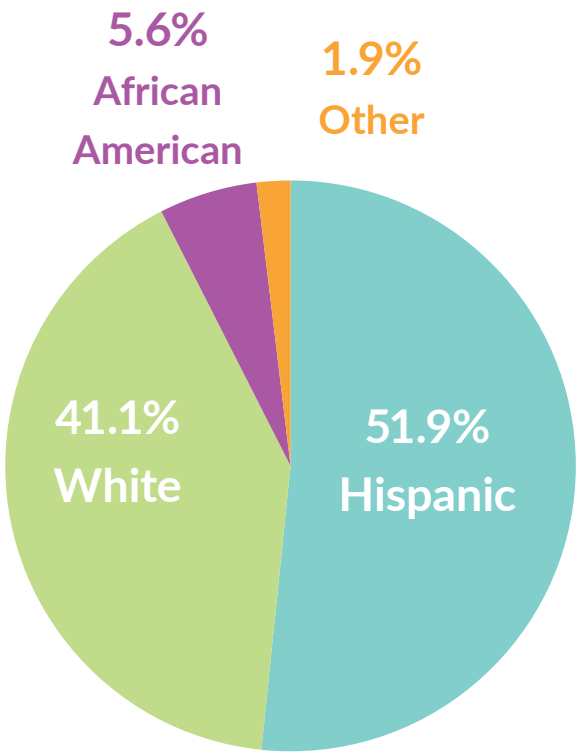
SALADO CREEK SOUTH



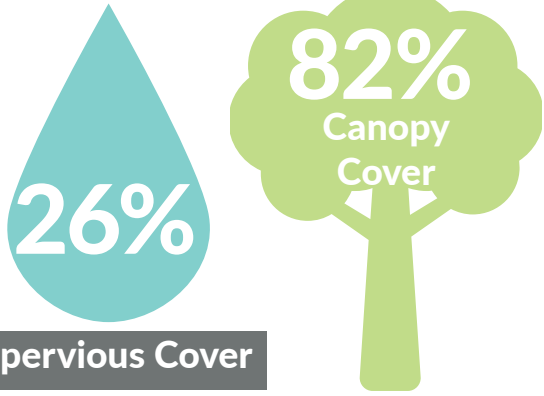
4.4 SALADO CREEK NORTH

The Salado Creek North Character Area includes the system's most northerly segment, and follows the Salado Creek south through mostly low density suburban neighborhoods, interspersed with areas of high density mixed-use activity. The trail passes through a number of historic homestead sites, and connects regional destination parks such as Eisenhower, Phil Hardberger, and McAllister Parks. It is highly forested, but includes a number of major road crossings.

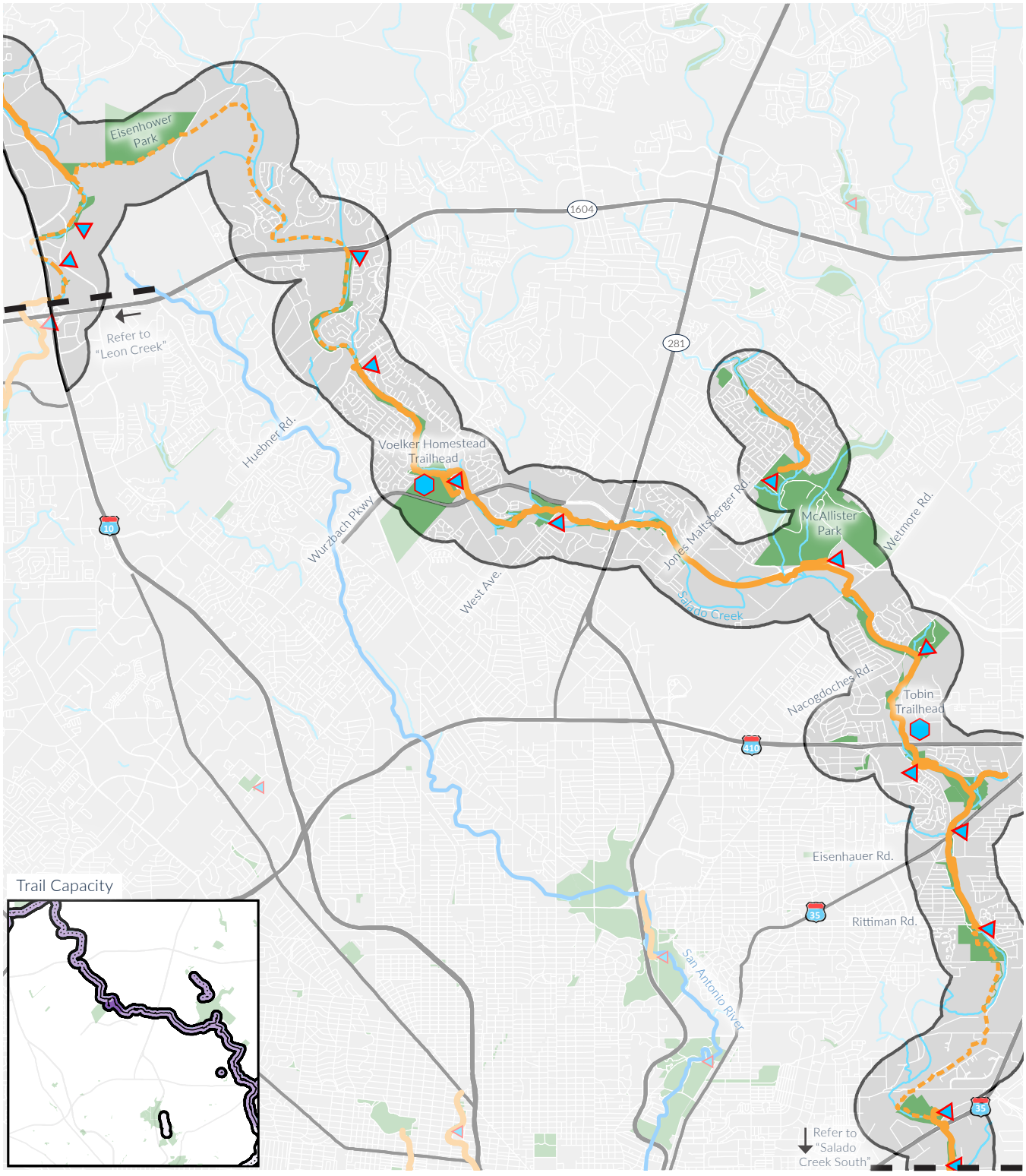
PEOPLE



ENVIRONMENT



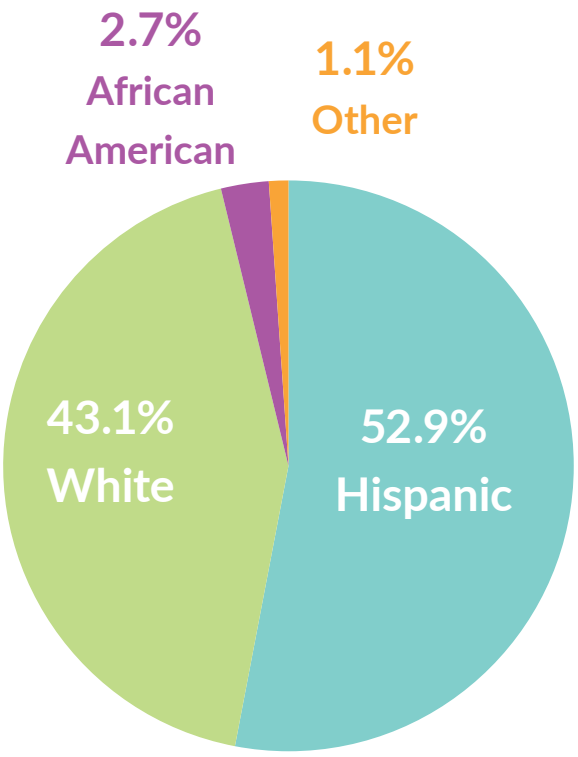
SALADO CREEK NORTH



4.5 LEON CREEK SOUTH

The Leon Creek South Character Area is the least developed to date and will require substantial investment in both solidifying trail alignment, working with stakeholders to ensure buy-in, and securing the land necessary to construct new segments. There is substantial growth pressure in SW San Antonio and Leon Creek South is uniquely situated to pre-emptively accommodate the areas new residents for years to come. The adjacency to Lackland Air Force Base certainly should be considered as both an asset and a location of key stakeholders.

PEOPLE



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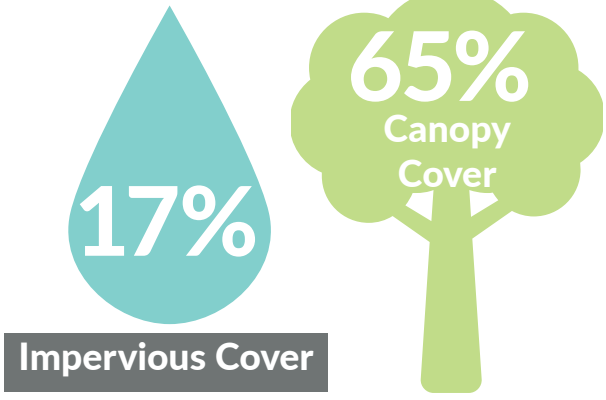
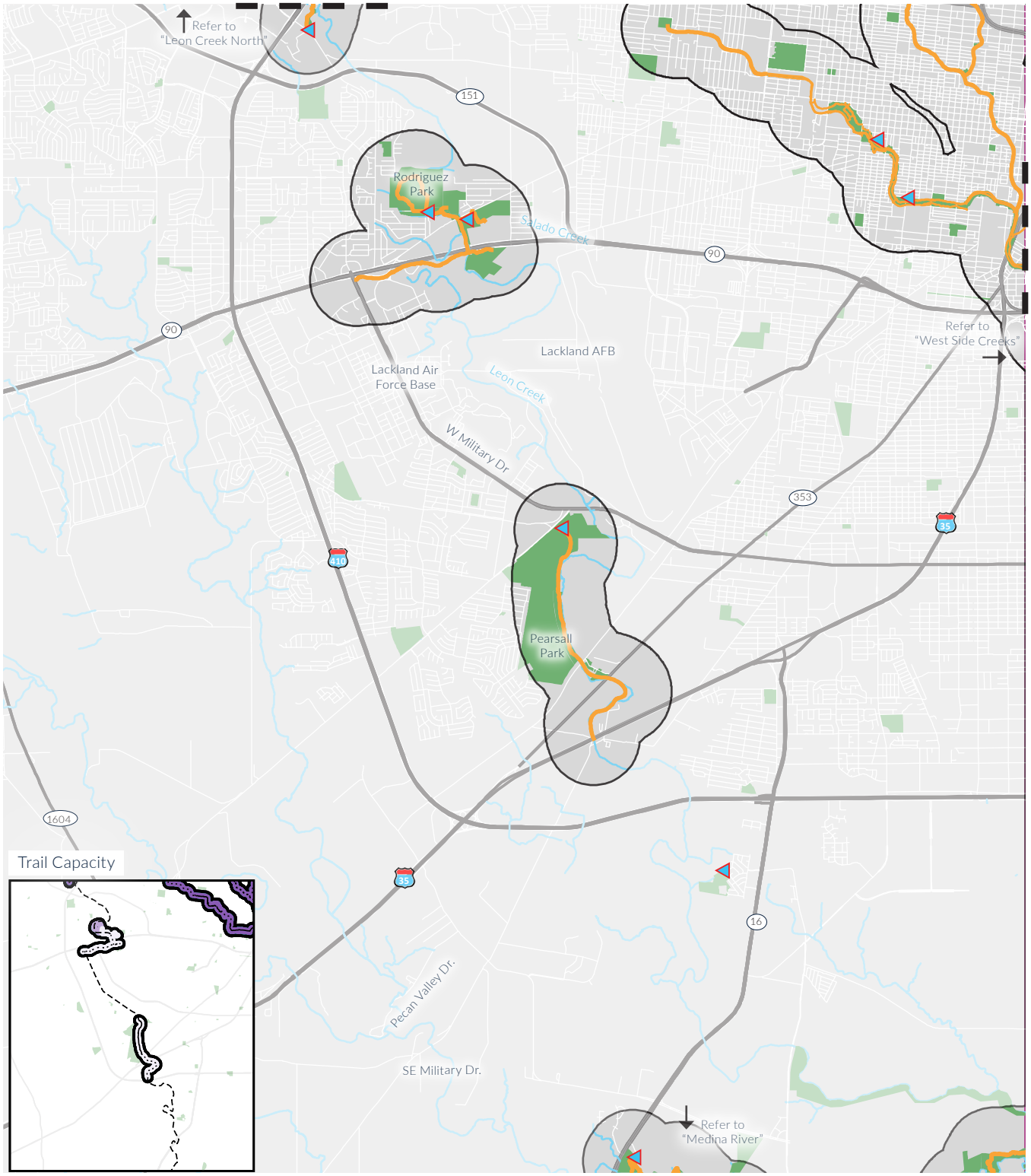


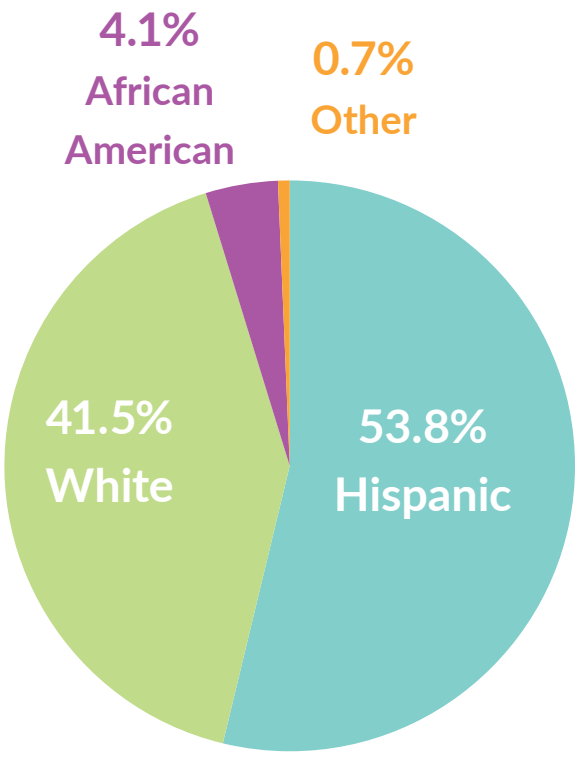
LEON CREEK SOUTH



4.6 LEON CREEK NORTH

The Leon Creek North Character Area is the systems most highly trafficked, as it connects heavily residential areas to major destinations such as UTSA, O.P. Schnabel Park, and Ingram Park Mall. Its suburban context affords it high amounts of canopy cover and natural creek beds. The high population density and high traffic demand mean the Leon Creek Character Area should have the highest Trail Capacity of any Character Area in the system.

PEOPLE



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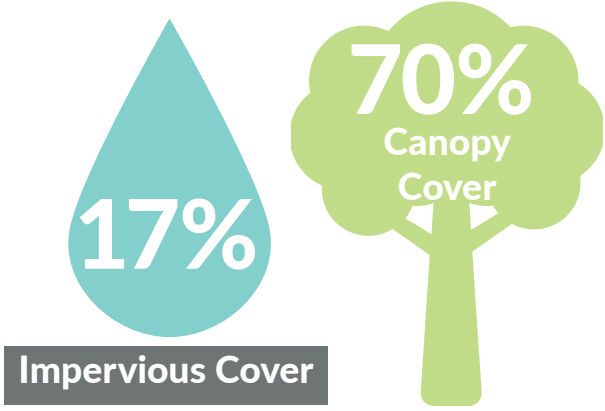
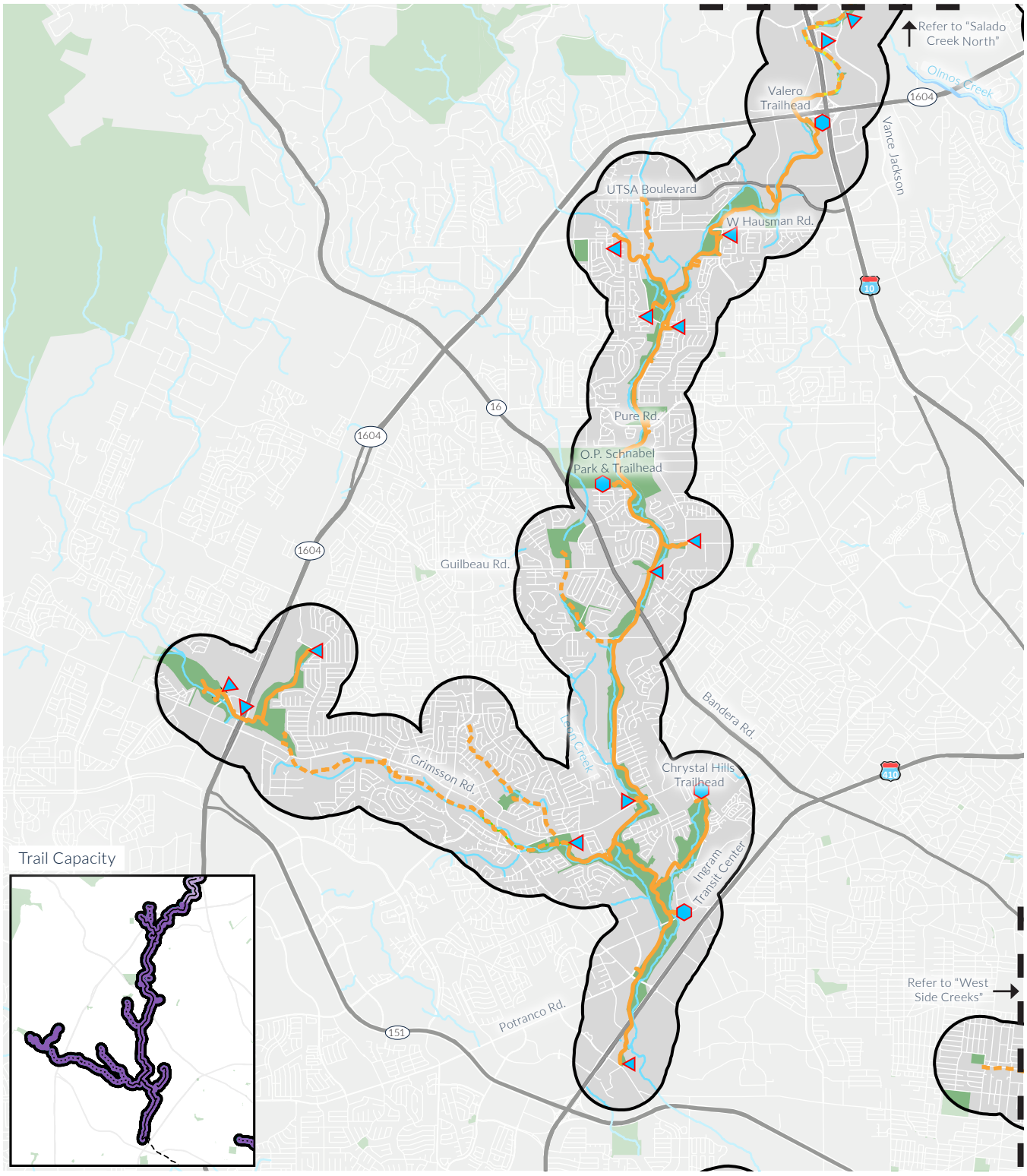


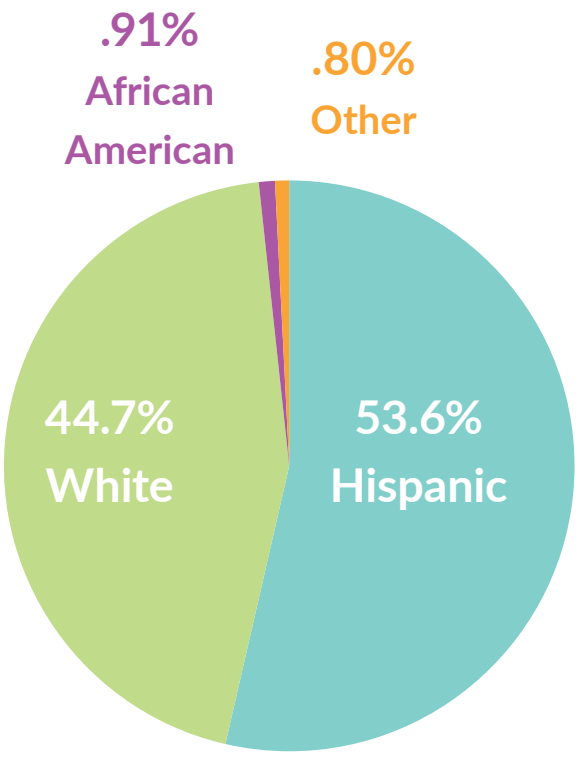
LEON CREEK NORTH



4.7 WEST SIDE CREEKS

The West Side Creeks are a network of small, mostly channelized creeks that penetrate the highly urbanized, densely populated West side neighborhoods. This Character Area has by far the most opportunity for improvement in terms of canopy cover and impervious cover, due to its urban setting. The trails also represent a significant opportunity for active transportation as they connect residential neighborhoods directly to major employment and transit centers in the downtown areas.

PEOPLE



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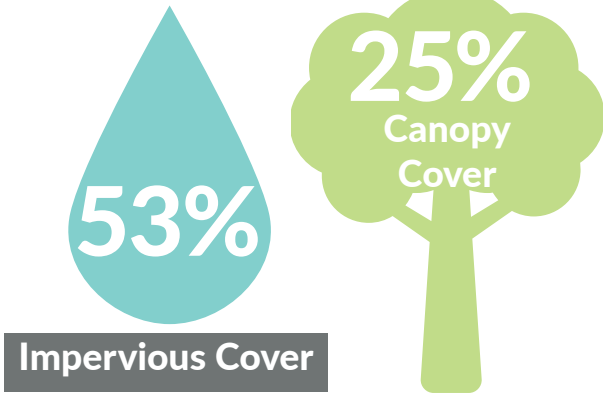

WEST SIDE CREEKS