

Final Plan as Adopted on June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016

# SOUTH CENTRAL WATERFRONT VISION FRAMEWORK PLAN



June 2016



Austin, Texas

# Acknowledgments

## **City Council**

Amended to set the affordable housing goal at 20% and adopted by City Council as an amendment to the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan on June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016

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*Ora Houston, District 1 Council Member*

*Don Zimmerman, District 6 Council Member*

*Delia Garza, District 2 Council Member*

*Leslie Pool, District 7 Council Member*

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### **Artist's rendering of the test scenario for the South Central Waterfront**

*This rendering is a "what if" illustration that imagines how the South Central Waterfront might appear twenty years from now. The rendering begins with a framework of a quality public realm and pedestrian-scaled blocks on the ground, and adds in new development with enough density to provide the incentives for developers to help pay for the public realm and hundreds of units of affordable housing.*



Stéphanie Bower | Architectural Illustration

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South Central Waterfront Illustrative Vision Plan



An aerial photograph of a waterfront area. In the foreground, there is a large, modern building with a white roof and a dark facade. To the right of the building is a body of water, and a small stream or creek flows into it. The background shows a mix of greenery and urban development.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Change is opportunity.

The South Central Waterfront (SCW) is bound for change. In fact, change is rapidly underway. The South Central Waterfront Vision Framework Plan is a roadmap for how the coming change can be guided to create the best possible outcome for all Austinites. The SCW strives to be a model for how a district-wide green infrastructure system paired with quality urban design and an interconnected network of public spaces, streets, lakeside trails and parks can provide a framework for redevelopment. A district approach can also coordinate public and private investments to leverage maximum impact and provide for district-wide value capture to fund affordable housing and other community benefits. A transformed South Central Waterfront District can not only become a great new neighborhood in the central city and a destination in itself, but will serve as an iconic gateway from South Austin into Downtown and the Texas Capitol, and an inspiration for the region.

The South Central Waterfront Initiative builds upon more than three decades of waterfront planning begun by the Town Lake Corridor Study. Since the Initiative was officially launched by City Council in 2013, the effort has engaged hundreds of Austinites and has combined community aspirations with the effort of numerous city departments, stakeholders and citizens. This document establishes a consolidated vision and provides a cohesive set of recommendations to guide public and private investment in the South Central Waterfront over the next two decades. The vision presented in this report is grounded in economic, environmental, and spatial analyses and provides a starting point for mutually beneficial collaboration between the City of Austin and its constituents: residents, property-owners, and developers. More importantly, this document will serve as the beginning of a larger city-led effort to ensure that, as this area evolves, every increment of investment by the city and its partners will contribute to making this a great new district by:

- **Establishing a lively, attractive pedestrian environment;**
- **Expanding open space and creating great public places;**
- **Enhancing connections to and along the waterfront; and**
- **Providing 20% new affordable housing units.**

# Context and Background

In 2011, the Waterfront Planning Advisory Board (WPAB) recognized the South Shore Central subdistrict of the Waterfront Overlay Combining District Ordinance and adjacent waterfront properties to the east as facing particular challenges and risks from increasing development pressures. In response, the WPAB supported city staff in a series of grant-funding and partnership efforts to provide consultant assistance and opportunity for public input in order to accomplish preliminary analyses, studies and recommendations on how to best achieve the principles of the 1985 Town Lake Corridor Study. Over the course of 2012-2013, these efforts led to a series of successful public engagement activities, involving hundreds of citizens and producing preliminary studies. Based on these preliminary planning efforts, the WPAB recommended in July 2013 that the City Council formally initiate a small area planning process for this area.

In August of 2013 the City Council passed a resolution to initiate a comprehensive small area planning process for the South Shore Central subdistrict and three adjacent parcels of the Travis Heights subdistrict of the Waterfront Overlay Combining District Ordinance. For simplicity, this 118 acre district was named the South Central Waterfront, and the planning process became known as the South Central Waterfront (SCW) Initiative.

In adopting the SCW resolution, the City Council cited key findings from preliminary studies which warned that zoning ordinances alone were not adequate to guide development in a way to achieve community values that date back to the Town Lake Corridor Study of 1985. These values include: enhanced public access to the shore, expanded open space, and ensuring quality design and the maximization of water quality. More recent public engagement, and the adoption of the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan, has expanded the list of community desires to include more affordable housing and sustainable technologies.

The urgent need to establish a coordinated plan was underscored by a 2013 study which projected up to \$1.2 billion of private investment through development projects in the South Central Waterfront over the next twenty years. Under current entitlements and conditions, this development will be fragmented and produce little benefit to the public. It is clear that the City and its partners must act quickly and decisively to anticipate and guide this new development and realize the vision that Austin has for the South Central Waterfront.



*The map above indicates properties currently being redeveloped (already underway), Planned Unit Development (PUD) entitled (redevelopment parameters have been decided), and the "tipping point" properties that are the most likely to redevelop over the next 20 years, given market trends.*



# The Process

In 2013-2014, Planning & Zoning staff conducted a vigorous public participation process and engaged over 600 Austin citizens through various workshops and public events. Staff also consulted with the Waterfront Planning Advisory Board (WPAB) and a SCW Stakeholder Outreach Committee, appointed by the WPAB, which includes representatives from neighborhoods adjacent to the SCW, major property owners in the SCW, and other stakeholders. Based on these efforts, best practices, and previous planning, staff developed and delivered the South Central Waterfront Interim Vision Framework Report to City Council in September of 2014. The 2014 report, which was a milestone towards completing a small area plan, established a vision for how public and private investments can be coordinated to promote positive transformation.

In September 2014, the City Council approved a FY 2015 budget with funds to hire finance, economic development, and urban design consultant services to assist staff with completing a full-fledged small area plan. In the fall of 2014, the City received a competitive award from the Environmental Protection Agency for an additional landscape architecture consultant. Over the course of 2015, staff has

engaged an additional 200 citizens in workshops, the continuation of a public waterfront lecture series, and other outreach activities. Staff and the consultant team have completed these cumulative efforts to conclude the small area plan and deliver the SCW Vision Framework Plan to the Council. The SCW Vision Framework Plan builds upon the 2014 Interim Report.

The 2014 SCW Interim Vision Framework Report outlined a vision to transform the SCW by building an attractive pedestrian environment, expanding open spaces, enhancing connections to and along the waterfront, and building significant affordable housing. Three interdependent requirements, or Frameworks, were highlighted to realize the Vision:

**Physical Framework** for a connected network of green streets, pedestrian connections, and open spaces that make a great public realm.

**Financial Framework** of strategic capital investments, development incentives, and public-private partnerships to fund the Vision.

**Proactive City Leadership Framework** to make investments, establish financial tools, create incentives, leverage city assets, and develop partnerships to implement the Vision and set aside 20% of new housing units as affordable.

The SCW Vision Framework Plan, presented in this document, details the designs, policies, tools and next steps behind these three frameworks in order to implement the Vision.



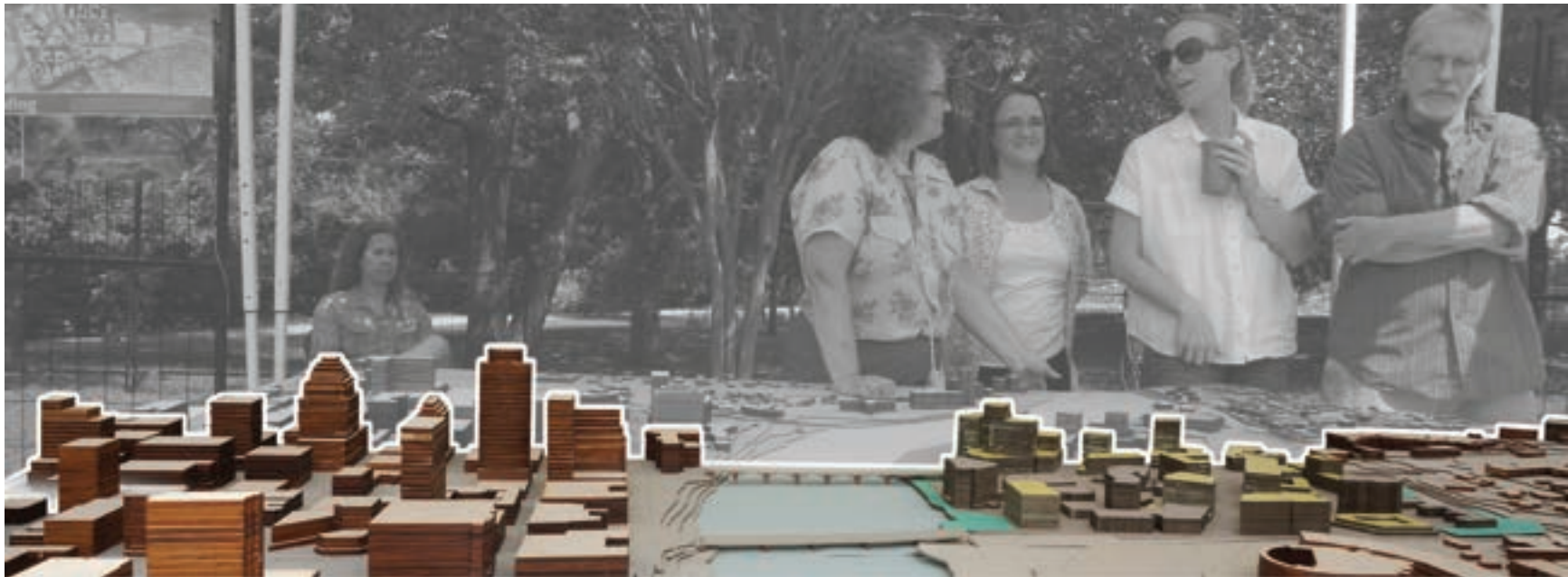
# Physical Framework

The SCW physical framework lays the foundation for a district-wide green infrastructure system paired with quality urban design and an interconnected network of public spaces, streets, lakeside trails and parks.

This physical framework is crucial because, as previous studies have observed, zoning and policy alone will produce a parcel-by-parcel approach to redevelopment and preclude this unique opportunity to create a cohesive district.

The key to the physical framework is an integrated approach to adding new streets that work with the existing street grid and property ownership to promote connectivity and walkability as the district redevelops. Existing streets are upgraded to Austin's highest standard for complete streets and retrofitted with green infrastructure and utilities that facilitate more sustainable development.

The elements addressed in the physical framework - circulation and connectivity, open space, sustainability and green infrastructure, and urban design - exist and function simultaneously as an integrated whole. However in this chapter, they are broken down into distinct elements to better explain how each component works, and which public and private entities might lead their respective implementation.







### 1. Existing open space

*Overall, the existing amount of open space along the shoreline in the South Central Waterfront is limited, constricted and mostly disconnected. Once away from the shoreline, green space is almost non-existent in the district.*



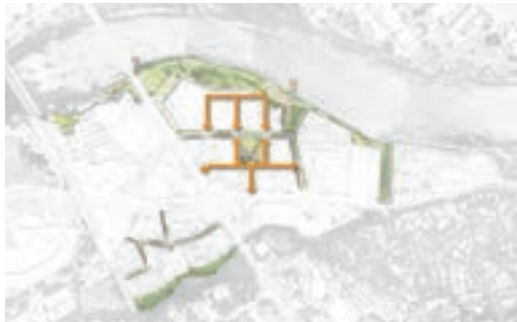
### 2. New waterfront park and trail connections

*Open space along the shoreline is expanded into a waterfront park as future redevelopment occurs. The size of the new open space goes above and beyond the requirements of the Waterfront Overlay District setbacks, and key open space links begin to provide improved connectivity from Riverside Drive to the Waterfront.*



### 3. City-led park and roadway catalysts

*New green streets and parks, built in partnership with properties owners and led by the city, create pedestrian links and begin to define the future network of streets and open space. These green streets include spacious landscaped sidewalks with green infrastructure to manage stormwater.*



### 4. Developer-led streets

*As properties redevelop, new streets continue to connect the street grid. Over time, the existing superblocs will be broken up into a district of pedestrian-scaled blocks. This plan includes specific design standards to ensure that each street contributes to the district, serves all modes of transportation, prioritizes people, and incorporates green infrastructure and sustainable utilities.*



### 5. City-led improvements to existing roads

*The South Central Waterfront includes conceptual designs for how all existing arterials should be upgraded and transformed into complete green streets. Where possible, new protected bike lanes are included, and sidewalks are expanded to include seating, landscaping, and a wider walkway. Green infrastructure is incorporated in the form of street trees, rain gardens, bioswales, and other innovative technologies.*



### 6. Incremental infill development projects

*The physical framework provides a network for coordinated redevelopment to occur. Urban design guidelines ensure that additional development complements the waterfront and surrounding neighborhoods, and that new buildings include active ground floor uses and designs that reinforce the public realm.*

# Financial Framework

The Plan's Financial Framework provides a roadmap for how the impending wave of private investments can be leveraged with incentives, innovative financing tools, and public-private partnerships to realize public realm improvements and affordable housing, as well as provide for the future management and maintenance for the district.

## Baseline Buildout

A baseline scenario was created to demonstrate the scope and scale of development that could happen over the next several years without any intervention from the City of Austin beyond planned capital improvements. The baseline determined that there is enough financial incentive under the current rules and regulations and current real estate market for a property to undertake constructing a new building.

The following criteria were used to determine which parcels are likely to redevelop – or “tip” – under current rules, regulations, and market demand:

- The site has significantly less development than what it is entitled, and/or the building value is far less than the value of the land.
- Short and medium term plans identified in conversations with property owners.
- The development adheres to existing zoning, entitlements, and neighborhood compatibility requirements, including those prescribed by the Waterfront Overlay Ordinance.

## Theoretical Baseline

For the purpose of this study, a development program was created for each of the tipping parcels that imagines a mix of buildings and uses that comply with existing entitlements as well as market needs. The result is a mix of office, mixed-use buildings, and multi-family residential buildings with ground floor retail known as the theoretical baseline scenario seen below.



### Theoretical Baseline

*Illustration showing potential redevelopment of “tipping” properties, applying existing zoning regulations.*



## Feasible Baseline

When evaluated for economic viability, several of the tipping parcels identified in the theoretical baseline do not provide enough return on investment when built under existing entitlements, and therefore do not redevelop without applying for a variance from current regulations. The result is a reduction in development potential for the district, also known as the feasible baseline scenario seen below.



### Feasible Baseline

*Market realities and development costs indicate that many "tipping" properties would not redevelop under current regulations.*

The feasible baseline reduces private investment from the theoretical \$786 Million to \$458 Million and total square footage of leasable space across the district from the theoretical 5.1 Million to a feasible 4.5 Million at full buildout.

## The Test Scenario

After conducting the theoretical and feasible baseline analysis, a final financial model was created, called the Test Scenario. The Test Scenario creates a parcel-by-parcel proforma financial model to calibrate the range of bonus development entitlements required to provide economic incentive for properties to redevelop and fund the community benefits (public realm and affordable housing) within a system of value capture financing tools. (See Financial Framework chapter for details)

District-wide, the Test Scenario modeled that 8.6 million square feet of mixed uses might be required to fund the community benefits and provide economic incentive for developers to, literally, buy-in to the Vision. The Test Scenario is not a prescription or recommendation on what should be built; it is a test to see how a set of financial tools could leverage the private market to fund the SCW Vision. The Test Scenario provides a foundation for the City to further explore the potential value-capture tools and offers direction for potential public/private partnership opportunities.

		Existing Baseline	Theoretical Baseline	Feasible Baseline	Test Scenario
Office	sf	1,225,332	2,252,274	1,874,631	3,405,306
Retail	sf	128,181	258,145	240,973	422,530
Residential	sf	1,258,637	2,022,892	1,818,637	3,963,392
	units	1,297	2,168	1,956	3,999
Hotel	sf	604,822	604,822	604,822	859,322
	keys	839	839	839	1,264
Total	sf	3,216,972	5,138,133	4,539,063	8,650,550
Parking	spaces	7,465	10,399	8,853	14,393

# City Leadership and Next Steps

To realize the SCW Vision, the City will need to be proactive in pursuing partnerships with private owners, developers, agencies, and other private and public entities. The City will need to establish an array of financial and district management tools, and share the risk with private developers by making strategic capital investments. The scope and combination of innovative finance tools and partnerships that are recommended for the South Central Waterfront represent a new level of public private partnership for the City of Austin, based on national best practices, as was detailed in the 2014 SCW Interim Vision Framework Report.

The SCW Vision Framework Plan addresses and defines goals, economics, desired public realm improvements, and the associated costs of funding the public realm, affordable housing, and other community benefits. The next steps toward realizing the plan involves exploring funding options, including, but not limited to: City contributions, increased entitlements to landowners, Tax Increment Funding (TIF), Public Improvement Districts (PID), and transfer of development rights. At the time that private redevelopment begins to take shape, each property will be evaluated separately for entitlement eligibility. Because of the current unknowns of how each community benefit will be funded, and the exact phasing of private development, there will be no increase in entitlements or zoning changes put into place until specific funding mechanisms are identified.

Adopting the South Central Waterfront Vision Framework Plan into the City's Comprehensive Plan – Imagine Austin – is a critical step, though not the final step, to achieving this Vision. Adopting the South Central Waterfront Vision Framework Plan into the Comprehensive plan does not change zoning entitlements or implement the funding tools. By adopting this plan, next steps, which include feasibility studies on specific financial tools, can begin. Each step will require their own approvals, with checks and balances along the way.

Adopting the South Central Waterfront Vision Framework Plan is not the end of a process, but the beginning. The SCW Vision Framework Plan points to the possibility of what we might achieve if we pursue the opportunity to shape the future of this district.



**Above:**

*Renderings of future parks in South Central Waterfront (from top to bottom): Performative Wetland in Crocket Plaza, Congress Avenue Bat Theater from the Great Lawn in the Waterfront Park, Boardwalk Trail overlooking Bouldin Creek.*





**Artist's rendering of the test scenario for the South Central Waterfront**

*This rendering is a "what if" illustration that imagines how the South Central Waterfront might appear twenty years from now. The rendering begins with a framework of a quality public realm and pedestrian-scaled blocks on the ground, and adds in new development with enough density to provide the incentives for developers to help pay for the public realm and hundreds of units of affordable housing.*

Stéphanie Bower | Architectural Illustration





### South Central Waterfront in 1952

*This aerial image from USGIS shows the site and downtown as it existed in 1952, before the completion of the Longhorn Dam. While Congress Avenue, Barton Springs Drive and the 'bow tie' intersection have already taken shape, the shoreline is in flux and much of the site remains in the floodplain.*



# Context: People and Place

The South Central Waterfront (SCW) is a 118-acre area that runs along the southern shore of Lady Bird Lake directly across from downtown, and is bisected by Congress Avenue, which runs to the State Capitol one mile to the north. The South Central Waterfront is bounded by South First Street on the west, Blunn Creek to the east, Lady Bird Lake on the north, and East Riverside Drive and East Bouldin Creek on the south. The area falls within portions of the Waterfront Overlay Combining District, including the whole of the South Shore Central sub-district and three adjacent parcels from the Travis Heights sub-district.

The District is currently structured around an unplanned framework of streets that is an accident of history and a piecemeal development process. Given the pressures for redevelopment, the need for a cohesive vision and plan to guide the future of the district is growing urgent. This situation also presents an historic opportunity to leverage the coming change. With a cohesive district-wide vision, Austin can expect this crucial area to become a cohesive waterfront district and destination with lively streets, beautiful parks and trails along Lady Bird Lake, and a distinct identity that channels Austin's natural environment and vibrant culture of music, arts, and innovation.

The SCW Initiative can become a model for how a district-wide green infrastructure system, paired with quality urban design, can provide an interconnected framework of public spaces – streets, streetscapes, lakeside trails, and parks – that provides the framework for redevelopment and district-wide value capture to fund other community benefits, such as affordable housing. A transformed South Central Waterfront district will not only become a great new neighborhood in the central city and a destination in itself, but will serve as an iconic gateway from South Austin to the downtown and the State Capitol, and an inspiration for the region.





# Historic Context

For the first 120 years after Austin's founding, the area now known as the South Central Waterfront was river bottom and floodplain. In contrast to the north shore of Lady Bird Lake, which was meticulously laid out in a grid by Edwin Waller as early as 1839, the south shore remained largely undeveloped and subject to flooding until the construction of the Longhorn Dam in 1960. With the creation of Town Lake, the South Central Waterfront finally had a stable bank and became developable. But unlike the downtown, which had a grid of streets and blocks from the beginning, the SCW had no physical framework to orchestrate development.



## 1887: First Permanent Bridge

The first permanent bridge across Congress Avenue replaced a series of pontoon bridges. The City of Austin invested \$74,000 to build the granite and iron structure.



## 1910s: Cattle on the South Shore

Because it was in the floodplain, the land was used for agriculture. Much of this land was purchased around the turn of the century by Moton H. Crockett, the Spinach King of Texas, to grow crops. A new bridge over Congress Avenue, visible in the background, was built in 1910 and still stands today.



## 1950s: Early Commercial Activity

Early development was limited to a small area of South Congress Avenue which was above the floodplain. Flood-prone areas were restricted to "industrial use," mainly the excavation of sand. These development patterns continued until the completion of the Longhorn Dam in 1960 opened up previous floodplains to development.



### **1965: Aerial Looking South**

After the completion of the Longhorn Dam and the creation of Town Lake, parking lots began to show up along the shoreline between Congress and South First Street.



### **1980: Congress Bridge Expansion**

The original 1910 concrete bridge was reinforced with concrete cantilevers to expand the roadway and accommodate more travel lanes. The new concrete coffered bridge reinforcement accidentally created the perfect urban bat habitat.



### **1984: Major Development**

With the stabilization of the shoreline and the expansion of the Congress Street bridge, the stage is set for development in the area. The construction of the Hyatt Hotel, in 1984, set off concerns about this and future development along the shore. As a result, the City launched the Town Lake Corridor Study.

# Historic Planning Context



## 1985: Town Lake Corridor Study

Created in 1985 as a response to new development along the lakeshore, the Town Lake Corridor Study was the first initiative to establish benchmark planning and goals to promote harmonious growth along the lakefront while preserving the unique quality of the river corridor. A defining element of the Study was the intent to establish a range of development intensity along the entire length of the corridor that reflected a more urban setting at the center of the corridor transitioning to a more natural setting towards both the Tom Miller Dam and Longhorn Dam and beyond, as the city grows. The Study also recommended developing an innovative, comprehensive land use plan and urban design framework for the central city.

The 1985 Study emphasized that it was not a comprehensive plan, and recommended a follow-up long-range comprehensive planning program for the waterfront. However, this comprehensive planning initiative was never undertaken, and many issues and policy goals identified by the Study still remain a challenge to be addressed.



## 1986: Waterfront Overlay Combining District Ordinance

The July 1986 Waterfront Overlay Combining District (WOCD) ordinance codified development regulations which were applied to fifteen sub-districts (now sixteen sub-districts) along north and south shorelines between Tom Miller Dam and Longhorn Dam. The WOCD ordinance outlined general provisions, sub-districts, building envelope, development regulations, zoning provisions, and the role of a Waterfront Planning Advisory Board. The WOCD ordinance referenced the goals and policies of the 1985 Town Lake Corridor Study and set its intention "to provide a more harmonious interaction and transition between the urban development and the parkland and shoreline of Town Lake and the Colorado River."

The South Central Waterfront planning area contains the whole of the South Shore Central Sub-district of the WOCD, plus properties within a portion of the Travis Heights Sub-district of the WOCD.





# Existing Conditions

## Built Environment

The built environment - streets, buildings, and other public spaces - of the South Central Waterfront reflects the fragmented nature of the parcels and the piecemeal evolution of the area. Each of these elements contributes to the sense that the South Central Waterfront is primarily a space that people drive through to get between South Congress and Downtown.

At a district scale, the lack of a dense street grid and small blocks discourages pedestrian activity and creates little frontage for retail and other active uses. The layout of the streets and the lack of landmarks makes the area confusing, whether on foot or driving.

At the level of individual streets and buildings, sidewalks are narrow and fronted by wide stretches of surface parking or blank walls. At almost every level, the built environment of the South Central Waterfront has been designed as an area that people drive through between the hours of 9 to 5, rather than a lively neighborhood with shops, homes and offices that feels safe and inviting 24 hours a day.



### Street Network

The 118 acres of the South Central Waterfront covers the equivalent of 33 downtown blocks but are only divided into a handful of superblocks. In comparison, Downtown Austin and the adjacent Bouldin Creek and Travis Heights Neighborhoods feature more connected street networks. The lack of a street grid hinders an orderly development of buildings within a patchwork of private parcels.



### Design Details

Narrow and cracked sidewalks that offer little shade or comfort, long stretches of asphalt and concrete, and the design of individual buildings and streets give residents and visitors little reason to explore the South Central Waterfront.

# Natural Environment

The South Central Waterfront is defined by water, with Lady Bird Lake to the north and Bouldin Creek to the south and Blunn Creek to the east. However, in between these two significant amenities and ecosystems, there is hardly any green space at all.

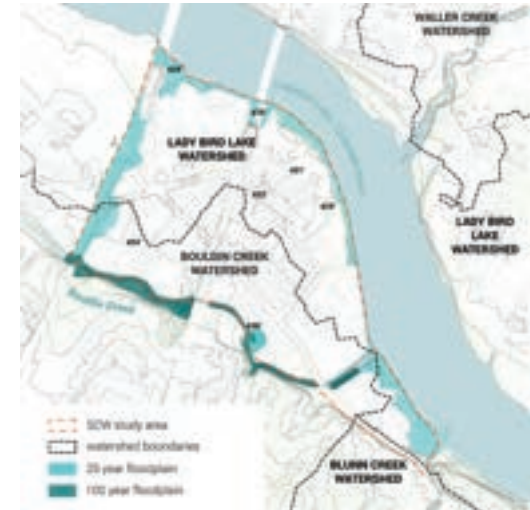
Almost all of the South Central Waterfront is paved, both riparian corridors are severely constricted, and there is very little consideration given to stormwater management. As a result the water quality and habitats around Lady Bird Lake and Bouldin Creek suffer, and the natural beauty of the district remains largely hidden.

The Congress Avenue Bridge is home to one of the largest Mexican free-tail bat colonies in North America. These bats emerge nightly during the summer and draw large crowds of Austinites and visitors.



## Impervious Surface

81% of the area is covered by impervious surfaces, with half of that dedicated to parking and roadways (50%). These hard surfaces paired with wide, fast moving streets make the SCW an unfriendly place for people to walk, bike, or take transit. The surface stormwater runoff creates water quality issues for Lady Bird Lake.



## Hydrology

The South Central Waterfront lies between two watersheds: stormwater in the southern portion flows into Bouldin Creek, and stormwater in the northern portion of the study area flows directly into Lady Bird Lake. The construction of the Longhorn Dam in the 1960s protected much of the study area from frequent flooding and initiated the pattern of development that we see today. A small portion of the area, particularly near the Congress Ave bridge, remains in the 100 year floodplain.

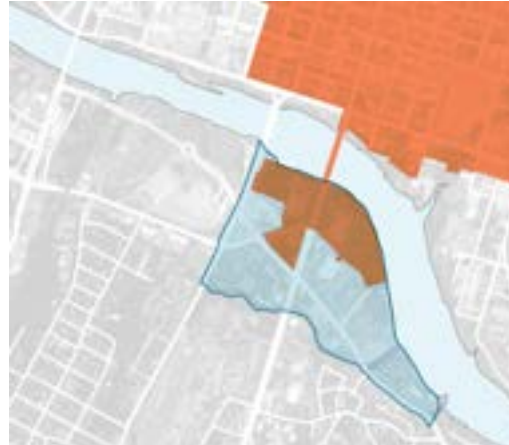


# Political and Administrative Jurisdictions



## Council Districts

The South Central Waterfront lies within District 9, which encompasses a large part of Central Austin. However, the waterfront and the improvements proposed by this plan are an amenity for all of Austin's citizens, particularly the immediately adjacent residents in districts 3 and 5.



## Downtown Public Improvement District

A significant portion of the study area is part of the Downtown Public Improvement District. This district was created in 1993 to provide a funding source for the Downtown Austin community's quality of life and the planning and marketing of Downtown. Properties within the district are assessed an additional \$.10 per \$100 assessed value. The district is managed by the Downtown Austin Alliance and is authorized through 2022.



## Neighborhood Planning Areas and Plans

The South Central Waterfront straddles two neighborhood planning areas, Bouldin Creek and South River City, both of which contain historic residential neighborhoods.

The SCW Goals include both neighborhoods' desires to create a transportation network that allows residents to walk, bike, and drive safely, to maintain established neighborhood fabric or character, and to protect and enhance natural assets and water resources.

The SCW Plan also seeks to respect both neighborhood's goals for new development. Bouldin Creek Neighborhood Plan seeks to manage growth by encouraging development on major corridors and in existing higher-density nodes, a goal that can be achieved by concentrating redevelopment in the SCW. The SRC Plan seeks to identify and develop criteria for density that result in a net benefit to the neighborhood. In this plan, careful attention has been paid to community benefits and the level of development required to afford improvements.

# Development Regulations

Properties in the SCW are subject to a variety of development regulations. Which regulatory provisions apply and how they impact a specific property vary from parcel to parcel. An analysis of how the existing development regulations apply to specific properties is included in the appendix (Appendix V: Scenario Evaluation; Attachment 1: Overview of Existing Entitlements). A brief description of existing regulations is listed below:

## Base Zoning

The SCW has the following base zonings:

- CS-1: Commercial-Liquor Sales: Commercial Services District (SC), liquor sales permitted (1)
- CS-1-V-NP: Commercial Services District (SC), liquor sales permitted (1), vertical mixed use permitted (V), and located within an approved Neighborhood Plan (NP)
- LI: Limited Industrial Services: No residential uses permitted
- The CS and LI zones do not currently permit residential uses, including condos and multifamily (the only residential uses allowed are two types of bed and breakfast).

Each of the base zonings set requirements for setbacks, FAR, impervious cover and building height.

## PUD: Planned Unit Development

Four properties in the SCW have PUD zoning in place. The properties that currently have PUD agreements in place include:

- One Texas Center, City of Austin
- Hyatt site
- Statesman site (PUD allowed use if specifically for a newspaper operation)
- CWS property at 300 and 222 E. Riverside Drive

## Commercial Design Standards

The SCW is bisected by four arterials which are Core Transit Corridors in the city code and trigger the Design Standards and Mixed Use Ordinance (Subchapter E of the Land Development Code) for adjacent properties.

The Standards require an additional layer of design application, one of which is breaking up large parcels in excess of 10 acres into smaller blocks. The Standards include large block size minimums (up to 600' to a side), which provide a suburban scale block for surface parking instead of an urban scaled block that provides walkability. The Standards also require minimal streetscape improvements for internal blocks, and do not assure that blocks and streets line up across parcels.

## Compatibility Standards

Single family homes trigger a Compatibility Standard which projects an angled height limit for 540' from the home. The properties in the SCW that are currently impacted by Compatibility Standards include two parcels at the eastern most end of the district (512 and 600 E. Riverside Drive). A few smaller parcels south of E. Riverside Drive are also impacted by compatibility standards.



## Waterfront Overlay Ordinance

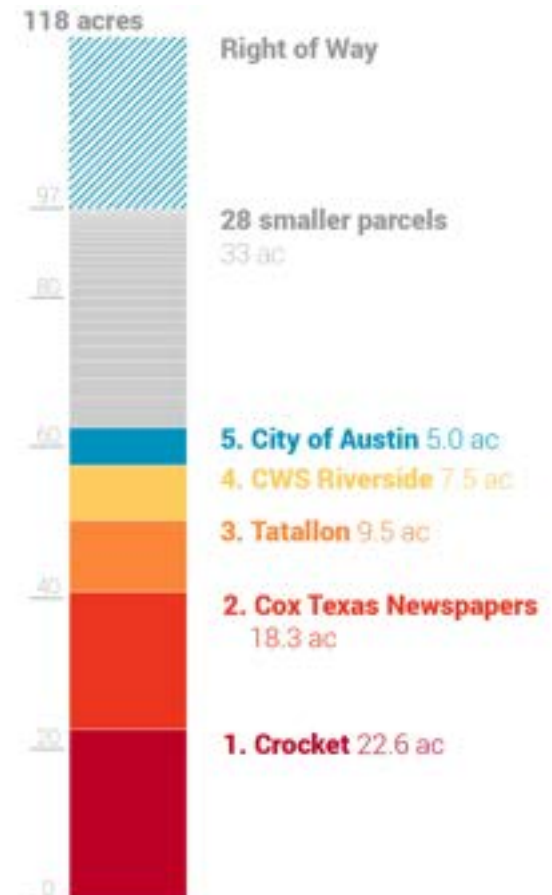
The Waterfront Overlay Combining District (WOCD) Ordinance establishes additional regulatory requirements on top of the existing base zoning with the intention to “provide a more harmonious interaction and transition between urban development and the park land and shoreline of Lady Bird Lake.” The WOCD Ordinance divides the lands along the lake, between Tom Miller Dam and Longhorn Dam, into sixteen sub-districts. Each of these have provisions regarding setbacks from the lake, creeks, and some arterials; height limits; impervious cover limits; and other development regulations. The South Central Waterfront area encompasses the whole of the South Shore Central Sub-district and parts of the Travis Heights Sub-district of the WOC D. (see pages 20-21 for history of the WOCD).

The WOCD originally established a Waterfront Planning Advisory Board (WPAB) which was charged with applying the ordinance for reviewing development projects within the WOCD, and for making recommendations to city boards and the City Council regarding waterfront planning in general. The WPAB, which was deeply engaged with the South Central Waterfront Initiative, was dissolved in June 2015. The duties of the WPAB have been assigned to a new Small Area Planning Joint Committee.

# A Patchwork of Private Ownership

The SCW is comprised of 31 privately-owned parcels (32 parcels counting the Riverwalk condominium complex, made up of 140 owners, at 500 E. Riverside Drive) and a single city-owned property: the 5 acres of the City's One Texas Center office tower and parking garage at 505 Barton Springs Road.

The significant portion of privately owned land, the number of landowners, and the irregular parcel and block shapes present a challenge to the coordinated redevelopment of the South Central Waterfront as a cohesive district. Unlike other recent City initiatives, such as the Seaholm and Mueller redevelopment plans where the City owned most, if not all, of the properties, the City only owns one 5-acre property in the 118 acre SCW.





# Reaching an Economic Tipping Point

Given its location in Central Austin, just south of downtown, the South Central Waterfront is experiencing tremendous and increasing market pressures to redevelop. The Sustainable Places Report of 2013 projected hundreds of millions of dollars in private redevelopment and identified properties likely to reach a financial “tipping point” over the next 20 years. The following criteria were used to determine which parcels are likely to redevelop – or “tip” - under current rules, regulations, and market demand:

- The site has significantly less development than what it is entitled, and/or the building value is far less than the value of the land.
- Short and medium term plans for each property were identified in conversations with property owners.
- The development adheres to existing zoning, entitlements, and neighborhood compatibility requirements, including those prescribed by the Waterfront Overlay Ordinance.



## Change is Coming

*The map to the left illustrates that many properties, representing over 50% of the land area, are at a tipping point and likely to redevelop within the next 20 years.*

# Baseline Buildout: A Lost Opportunity

## Theoretical and Feasible Baseline Buildout

A baseline scenario demonstrates the scope and scale of development that could happen over the next five to seven years without any intervention from the City of Austin beyond planned capital improvements. This means that there is enough financial incentive under the current rules and regulations and current real estate market for a property to undertake constructing a new building.

For the purpose of this study, a development program for each of the tipping parcels was created that imagines a mix of buildings and uses that comply with existing entitlements as well as market needs. The result is a mix of office, mixed-use buildings, and multi-family residential buildings with ground floor retail known as the theoretical baseline scenario seen above right.

However, when evaluated for economic viability, several of the tipping parcels do not provide enough return on investment when built under existing entitlements, and therefore do not redevelop in the next five to seven years without applying for a variance from current regulations. The result is a reduction in development potential for the district, also known as the feasible baseline scenario, seen below right.

The feasible baseline reduces private investment from the theoretical \$786 Million to \$458 Million and total square footage of leasable space from the theoretical 5.1 Million to a feasible 4.5 Million at full buildout.

Of course, owners of properties that cannot feasibly redevelop under current regulations may likely seek zoning changes through one-off Planned Unit Development (PUD) applications. Without an overarching plan for the district, further PUD development is not likely to contribute to a cohesive network of green spaces, and does not guarantee any affordable housing.



### Baseline and Feasible Baseline

*While the top image represents the development potential under existing entitlements, the bottom shows that a number of parcels would be financially unable to redevelop.*

## Minimal Public Benefits with Current Regulation

Current policy and regulatory strategies alone will do little to remedy the underlying causes that make the South Central Waterfront a fragmented and uninviting district. The graphic below presents a breakdown of what new development may bring to the area under current regulations in terms of expanding the public realm of open space and streets.

Under current regulations and market trends, the area will see a substantial buildout - from .9 FAR to 1.6 FAR, but a process of one-off negotiations and PUD applications will result in a scattered development pattern and realize few of the potential community benefits.

Any increase in open space will likely be fragmented and too small to be used for parkland or recreation. Public access to the waterfront will continue to be constrained to a narrow trail and be difficult to access from Congress Avenue and Riverside Drive.

Some developments may contribute to the district's identity and activate the street with shops or restaurants, but these will likely be too far apart to create the feel of a destination.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, there will be no guaranteed affordable housing, whether the new development is commercial or residential.





# Envisioning a Better Way

## Preliminary Planning

After undertaking studies with staff support in 2011, the Waterfront Planning Advisory Board (WPAB) identified the particular challenges and unique opportunities heading for the South Central Waterfront. In response, the WPAB supported staff in a series of grant applications and partnership opportunities to support analysis, studies, and community engagement in order to envision a better way.



### 2012: Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT)

Austin received a competitive award from the American Institute of Architects as part of their SDAT program. Austin hosted a team of national sustainable design experts who worked with over 200 citizens, City staff and officials, and other stakeholders during three days in June 2012.

The final SDAT Report in 2012 cautioned that “A Code is not a Vision” and warned that the provisions of the Waterfront Overlay ordinance would not, in isolation, lead to orderly redevelopment. Like the 2000 South Shore Central Study (see p. 21), the report underscored that a physical framework of open spaces, streets, and pedestrian connections was required. The SDAT went further, though, and proposed that this framework be designed as a green infrastructure network which integrates the natural and built environments to raise the environmental quality and beauty of a place. The SDAT also recommended that a target of 15% of new housing units should be affordable and that these units should be distributed throughout the district.



### 2013: Sustainable Places Project and UT Urban Futures Lab

During 2012-2013, the City of Austin participated as a regional partner in the Sustainable Places Project (SPP), funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Using Envision Tomorrow Plus, a computer-based analytic tool, the SPP assessed and compared the financial, environmental, and social impacts of three potential redevelopment scenarios. The first scenario followed the current trend and existing regulations; the second was based on the 2012 SDAT Study; and the third followed the UT Urban Futures Lab.

The Texas Urban Futures Lab (TxUFL) is an applied research initiative of the Graduate Program in Urban Design at the UT School of Architecture. For spring semester, 2013, TxUFL created a redevelopment scenario for the South Central Waterfront area. Like the SDAT, the TxUFL emphasized a green infrastructure network of streets and open spaces, and valued the inclusion of affordable housing development.

## City Council Resolution and the South Central Waterfront Initiative

Based on the preliminary planning that was accomplished through the SDAT and UT/SPP efforts, and acting on recommendations from the Waterfront Planning Advisory Committee, the Austin City Council passed a resolution in August 2013 to launch the official planning initiative.



### 2014 Interim Draft Vision Framework Report

The 2014 Draft Vision Framework Report developed goals for the SCW Initiative that included:

- 1) *Establish a lively, attractive pedestrian environment*
- 2) *Expand open space and create great public spaces*
- 3) *Enhance connections to and along the waterfront*
- 4) *Ensure that 10 to 20% of new housing units are affordable*

In 2014, Staff delivered the SCW Interim Vision Framework Report to Council. The Interim Report incorporated input from hundreds of Austinites, national best practices, and previous studies. The 2014 Report established three interdependent requirements to realize the goals:

- 1) **A Physical Framework** for a connected network of green streets, pedestrian connections, and open spaces
- 2) **A Financial Framework** of strategic capital investments, development incentives, and public-private partnerships
- 3) **Proactive City Leadership** to make investments, create incentives, leverage city assets, and develop partnerships

The 2014 Interim Vision Framework Report is the foundation for the creation of this plan: The 2016 SCW Vision Framework Plan.



### 2015 US EPA "Greening America's Capitals"

In 2014 the City won a competitive award to receive technical assistance through the US Environmental Protection Agency's "Greening of America's Capitals" program. Through this award, the EPA hired CMG Landscape Architecture to assist Austin with developing portions of the SCW Vision Framework Plan.

Over the course of several months in 2015, the City and CMG undertook a participatory design process, including extensive public charrettes and focus groups with key stakeholders, to develop conceptual designs for five key sites:

- 1) *The South Congress Avenue streetscape and bridge*
- 2) *A waterfront park adjacent to the Austin Statesman*
- 3) *A linear park and green Street*
- 4) *The streetscape along Barton Springs Road*
- 5) *Bouldin Creek, between South Congress and South First*

## Community Engagement

Throughout this process, the City of Austin conducted a robust community engagement effort to inform and receive input from residents, property owners, advocacy groups, staff and other stakeholders. The process included a diverse array of events including presentations from local and national experts, walking tours of the South Central Workshop, and intensive design and planning charrettes spanning multiple days. Fliers for many of these events can be found in Appendix VII.



### Waterfront TALKabouts

*Public lectures and panel discussions featured local and national experts on best practices for waterfront development.*



### Waterfront WALKabouts

*Guided walking tours of the district gave the public chances to explore and discover the challenges and opportunities in the South Central Waterfront first hand.*



### Vision + Design Intensives

*Multi-day events included meetings and workshops for neighbors, property owners, city staff and other stakeholders to interact with teams of designers, planners, economists, and artists.*

DATE	ATTENDANCE	EVENT
February 27, 2012	75	Waterfront Talk with SDAT leader Harris Steinberg
June 4, 2012	80	SDAT Roundtables
June 4, 2012	125	SDAT Kickoff
June 6, 2012	170	SDAT Final Presentation
May 13, 2013	155	Sustainable Places Project Presentation
January 11, 2014	174	WALKabout #1
January 21, 2014	116	TALKabout #1
February 12, 2014	73	TALKabout #2
March 24, 2014	78	TALKabout #3
April 5, 2014	55	WALKabout #2
April 25 - 28, 2014	170	Vision + Design Intensive
May 6, 2015	130	TALKabout #4
July 8, 2015	105	TALKabout #5
August 29, 2015	16	Artists Walkshop #1
September 1-3, 2015	125	EPA Vision + Design Intensive
September 24, 2015	15	Artists Walkshop #2
October 18, 2015	12	Artists Walkshop #3
May 1, 2016	120	Open Air Open House
May 23, 2016	30	TALKabout #6



*Clockwise from top right: 1) Waterfront WALKabouts makes the challenges and opportunities come to life 2) Artist-led WALKshops created the People's Guide to the Waterfront 3) Many public forums solicited community hopes and dreams for the waterfront 4) Open houses open up discussions 5) Fun, family friendly activities help make open houses welcoming for everyone 6) design forums provided opportunity for property owners, neighbors, and design professionals to explore ideas in real time*



## Engaging the Waterfront Planning Advisory Board, and the Stakeholder Outreach Committee.

From the beginning of preliminary planning in 2012, Staff worked closely with the WPAB. In January 2014, the WPAB appointed a SCW Stakeholder Outreach Committee (SOC) to assist with community engagement. The SOC included representatives from the WPAB, neighborhood leaders, property owners, affordable housing leaders, and other stakeholders. When the WPAB was dissolved in June of 2015, Staff continued working with the SOC to provide continuity and continued assistance with community engagement. The SOC members listed in the Acknowledgements section represent the membership as last appointed by the WPAB and individuals who remained active over the final year of the SCW initiative.

*Top: University of Texas architecture and planning students built a scale model of Central Austin to put the SCW designs in perspective. Members of the public discussed this model at a South Central Waterfront Open House.*

*Bottom: The community weighs in on design options at a design forum.*





## Community Values and Imagine Austin

Foundational planning for the waterfront, dating back to the 1985 Town Lake Corridor Study, emphasized the importance of expanding public access to the waterfront, protecting water quality, increasing open space, and promoting a lively pedestrian-oriented mix of uses. Recent community engagement since 2012 and throughout the South Central Waterfront Initiative underscores these long-held community aspirations and expands on them. Recent engagement also emphasizes the need to address affordable housing opportunities, take advantage of green infrastructure technologies, and promote the triple-bottom line of environmental, financial, and social sustainability.

The 2014 SCW Interim Vision Framework Report organized community aspirations gathered through the engagement process. These community values strongly align with Imagine Austin – the city’s comprehensive plan – core principles for action. And to make the Imagine Austin core principles place-specific, within a actionable plan to realizing these aspirations and principles, the SCW Vision Framework identified three interdependent “frameworks” that will be required to direct a successful transformation of the district. The table below shows this relationship:

	PHYSICAL FRAMEWORK	FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK	PROACTIVE CITY LEADERSHIP
<b>SCW FRAMEWORKS</b>	Build a districtwide network of green streets, pedestrian connections, and open spaces that make a great public realm welcoming to all.	Leverage districtwide value capture, coordinated public and private investments, and create development incentives to fund the public realm and target that 20% of the new housing units are affordable.	Make city investments, establish financial tools, leverage city assets, and develop partnerships to build the Vision and realize 20% of new housing units as affordable
<b>IMAGINE AUSTIN CORE PRINCIPLES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Grow as a compact, connected city</li><li>● Integrate nature into the city</li><li>● Sustainably manage water, energy and other environmental resources</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Provide paths to prosperity for all</li><li>● Develop as an affordable and healthy community</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Think creatively and work together</li></ul>

The SCW Vision Framework Plan is organized into these three framework. The pages which follow provide details for how each of these frameworks function.





WALLER CREEK

LADY BIRD LAKE

CONGRESS AVENUE

SOUTH FIRST STREET

BARTON SPRINGS ROAD

RIVERSIDE DRIVE

AUDITORIUM  
SHORES STATION

BARTON SPRINGS ROAD

BOULDIN CREEK



An aerial photograph of a waterfront area. A river flows from the top left towards the bottom center. A bridge crosses the river. On the left bank, there is a large, modern building with a white roof. The surrounding area is green with trees and some developed land. The text 'BLINN CREEK' is visible in the upper left portion of the image.

# Physical Framework

The first element of a district-wide Vision for the South Central Waterfront is a physical framework that provides a connecting network of streets, pedestrian access ways, open spaces, and green infrastructure. This physical framework is crucial because, as previous studies have observed, a zoning and policy solution alone will produce a parcel-by-parcel approach to redevelopment and preclude this unique opportunity to create a cohesive district.

The physical framework is an integrated approach to adding new streets that work with the existing street grid and property ownership to promote connectivity and walkability throughout the district. Existing streets are redesigned to the City of Austin's highest standard for complete streets and retrofitted with green infrastructure and utilities that will facilitate more sustainable development. Finally, recommendations are made for urban design standards that build on the new street grid to encourage the creation of a distinct design identity for the district.

The elements addressed in the physical framework - circulation and connectivity, open space, sustainability and green infrastructure, and urban design - exist and function simultaneously as an integrated whole. However in this chapter, they are broken down into distinct elements to better explain how each component works and which public and private entities might lead their respective implementation.



# A DISTRICT-WIDE APPROACH

Focusing on strategies that address Community Values in a balanced approach across the full SCW district requires a place-specific design approach. Most of the Community Values for the SCW have a direct relationship to the physical design and redevelopment of the SCW. If successful, the community will be able to see and experience the realization of these values in tangible ways through the design of streets, open spaces and buildings.

Collectively, the values illustrated in the design and arrangement of the physical environment are part of the Physical Framework for the SCW.

Likewise, the collective private redevelopment investments in the SCW can be considered a district-wide value to be harnessed, in tandem with public investments, as part of a district-wide Financial Framework to support the SCW vision.

## Each part of the district has a complementary role to play...



### 1. Riverside Gateway

The easternmost part of the study area is the main gateway from several neighborhoods and I-35. Redesigned roadway, sidewalk and crosswalks will increase access and safety.

### 2. Waterfront and Downtown Gateway

The imminent redevelopment of large properties makes this area a prime opportunity to create a Waterfront Park and a new district at the entrance to Downtown Austin.

### 3. South First Gateway

Infill development provides opportunities to strategically create smaller open spaces, strengthen the waterfront trail, and upgrade existing streetscapes.

### 4. Bouldin Creek and South Austin Gateway

Coordinated redevelopment of large parcels and the City-owned One Texas Center breaks up a superblock, provides permanent affordable housing, create a natural buffer around Bouldin Creek, and creates a gateway to South Austin.



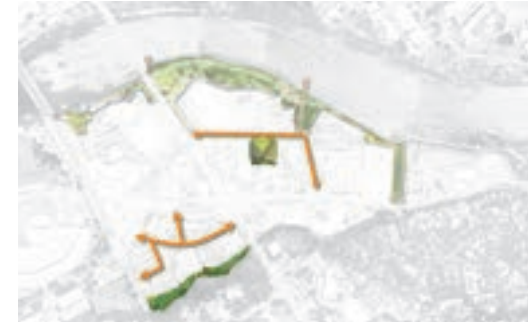
### 1. Existing open space

Overall, the existing amount of open space along and to the shoreline in the South Central Waterfront is limited, often constricted and mostly disconnected. Once away from the shoreline, green space is almost non-existent in the South Central Waterfront.



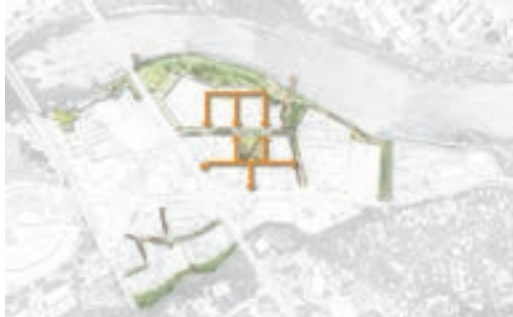
### 2. New waterfront park and trail connections

Open space along the shoreline is expanded into a Waterfront Park as future redevelopment occurs. The size of the new open space goes above and beyond the requirements of the Waterfront Overlay Setback rules, and key links open space will begin to provide improved connectivity from Riverside Drive to the Waterfront



### 3. City-led park and roadway catalysts

New green streets and parks built with city leadership, in partnership with property owners, will create pedestrian links and begin to define the future network of streets and open space. These green streets include spacious landscaped sidewalks with green infrastructure to manage stormwater.



### 4. Developer-led streets

As properties redevelop, the city will coordinate the addition of new streets. Over time, the existing superblocks will be broken up into a district of pedestrian-scaled blocks. This plan includes specific design standards to ensure that each street contributes to the district, serves all modes of transportation, prioritizes people, and incorporates green infrastructure and sustainable utilities.



### 5. City-led improvements to existing roads

The South Central Waterfront includes conceptual designs for how all of the existing arterials should be upgraded and transformed into complete green streets. Where possible, new protected bike lanes are included, and sidewalks are expanded to include seating, landscaping, and a wider walkway. Green infrastructure is incorporated in the form of street trees, rain gardens, bioswales, and other innovative technologies.



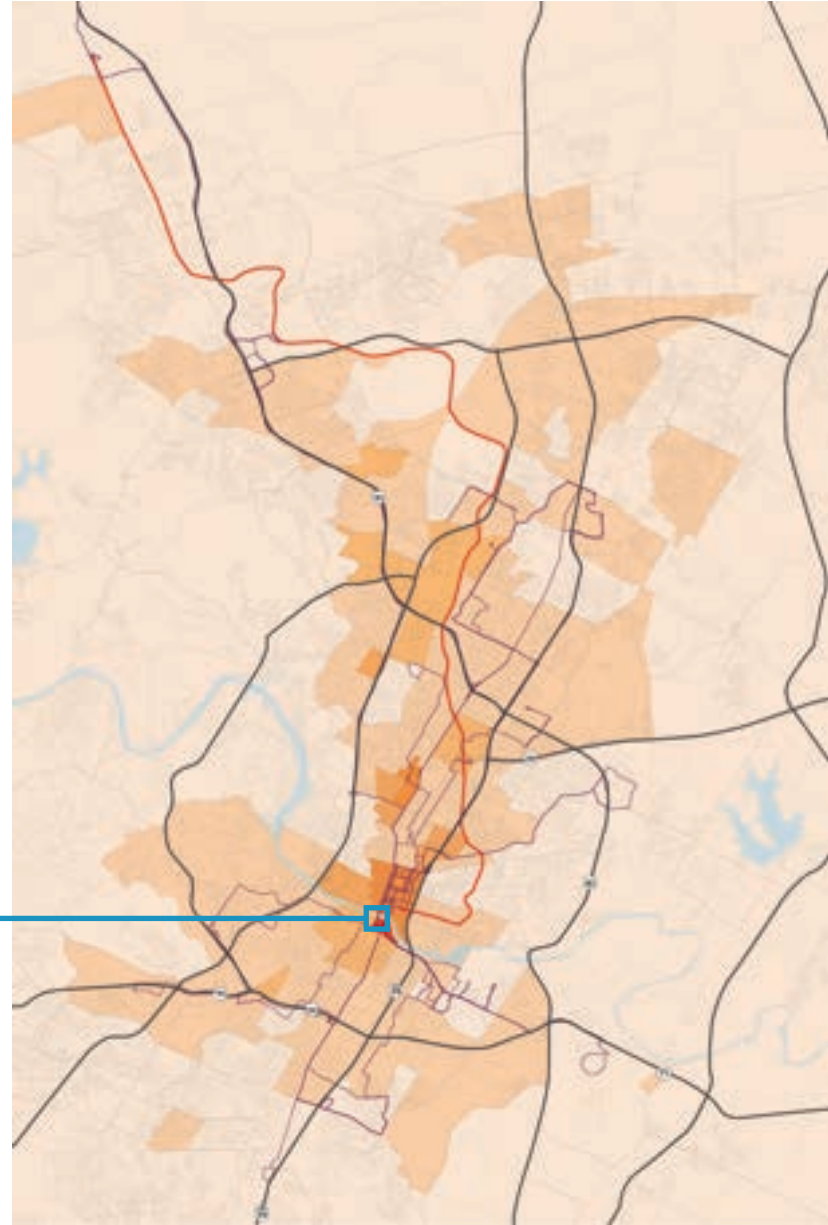
### 6. Incremental infill development projects

The physical framework provides a network for coordinated redevelopment to occur. Urban design guidelines will ensure that additional development is compatible with the waterfront and surrounding neighborhoods, and that new buildings include active ground floor uses and designs that reinforce the public realm.

# CIRCULATION + TRANSPORTATION

Transportation in Austin has become increasingly complex as the city experiences incredible growth. New developments that respond to the demand of this growth present an opportunity to play an influential role in how people move through the city by tying into the regional transportation system, designing streets that encourage active modes of transportation, and reinforcing innovative methods for achieving modal split for people's everyday trips. The South Central Waterfront redevelopment will benefit from its proximity to jobs and destinations that can promote walking, biking, transit use, in addition to abundant accommodations for automobile use. This section breaks down how design standards, important connections and programmatic tools will ensure that the development is integrated into the transportation network, while planning for future growth and innovation in how we move through the city.

*This map shows the South Central Waterfront in the context of Austin's transportation network and distribution of employment centers. The purple lines indicate bus routes that pass through the study area, the red line indicates light rail, and the shaded areas indicate job density throughout the city.*





### Compact Community

*"A compact community is one in which housing, services, retail, jobs, entertainment, health care, schools, parks, and other daily needs are within a convenient walk or bicycle ride of one another. A compact community is supported by a complete transportation system, encourages healthier lifestyles and community interaction, and allows for more efficient delivery of public services."*

- Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan

### Access to Jobs

One of the advantages of this district and its potential to change travel behavior is its proximity to downtown and access to jobs. According to a 2015 report by the think-tank City Observatory, *Surging City Center Job Growth*, Austin has the highest concentration of jobs in the urban core compared to other U.S. cities, where 29% of its jobs are located. Other comparable cities include Rochester at 28%, San Francisco at 26%, and New York City at 23%. This is a shift from historic trends of peripheral growth and decentralization of jobs.

The addition of office space in the South Central Waterfront, just south of downtown, will increase the number of jobs in the urban core that are easily served by transit. Residents of the South Central Waterfront development will be within a desirable proximity to one of the major job centers in the city, just one mile from the Texas

Capitol and everything in between – that's a twenty-minute walk and less than ten-minute bike ride.

### Urban Rail

A promenade on the east edge of the SCW Vision's Physical Framework is wide enough to accommodate potential infrastructure expansion projects, including a pontoon bridge that connects Waller Creek to the site across Lady Bird Lake, or the extension of urban rail from Trinity Street. Maintaining this public realm promotes future projects that can further connect north and south of the river.



# Street Classification

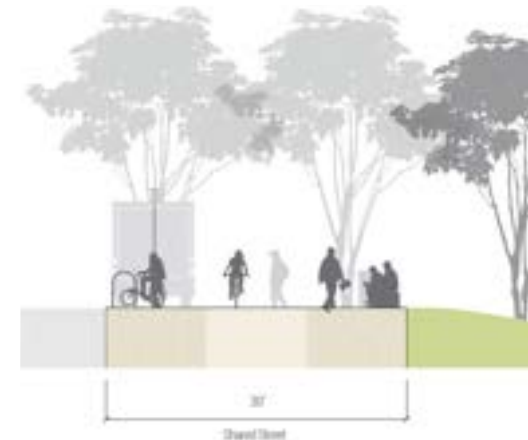
The street classifications exhibit a hierarchy of types that reflect the capacity and planned use of roadways: arterials, collectors, local, and shared streets.

Arterials are high-capacity urban roadways that deliver traffic to and from collectors and freeways. In the study area, these are also classified as core transit corridors, which are designed to prioritize transit use, both in the flow of transit vehicles and service to transit-oriented streetscapes. Collectors move traffic between arterials and local streets, while also serving adjacent properties. The primary purpose of local streets are to serve the adjacent land uses along the corridors. Shared streets are very low speed, where automobile and active transportation modes (walking, biking, etc.) share the same right-of-way. Automobile traffic may be excluded at certain times on shared streets, or may be exclusively for emergency and service access only. Detailed cross sections for each of the streets in the SCW District can be found in Appendix I.



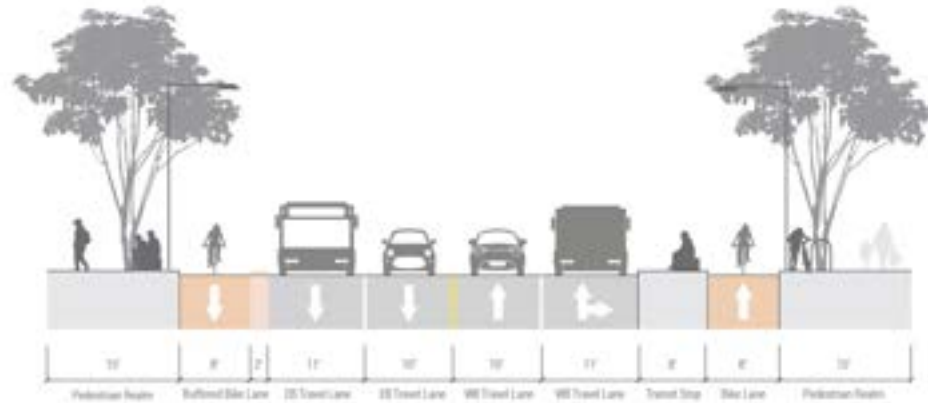
## Shared Streets

*A shared street is proposed on the north side of the development, running parallel to Lady Bird Lake. A shared street is a very low-speed corridor where all modes share the same right-of-way. Pedestrian and bicycle activity should be prioritized, where automobile access is limited to emergency and service vehicles.*



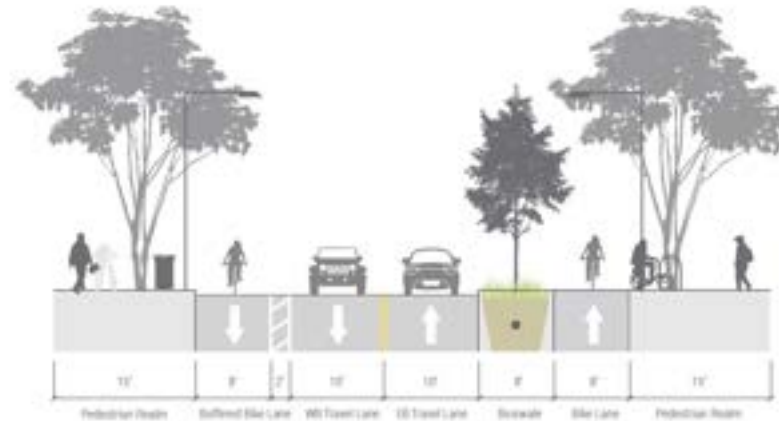
### Core Transit

Core transit corridors have densities that encourage transit use. Street design should emphasize comfortable walkways with a strong relationship between the pedestrian realm and adjacent buildings.



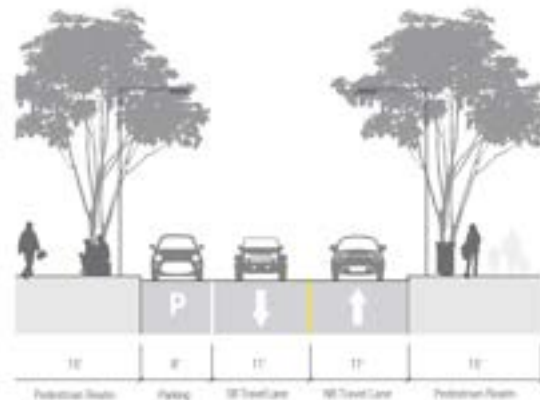
### Collectors

Collectors are low to moderate-capacity roadways that move traffic from local streets or arterials. They are typically wider and more active than local streets, and therefore, should adequately move automobile, bicycle and pedestrian traffic.



### Local Streets

Local streets provide access to adjacent properties and to the connecting collector roadway network. These streets are low speed and low capacity.





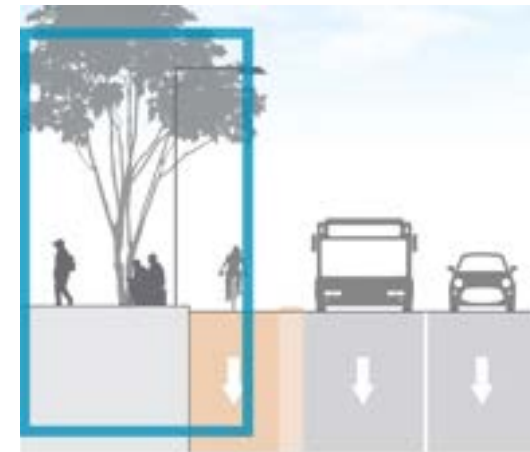
# Transportation Hierarchy

In line with the City of Austin's Complete Streets policy, street design for each roadway considers context-sensitive approaches to serving all users and modes. Working closely with Austin Transportation Department, the roadway configurations ensure appropriate performance measures, such as safety for pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and handling high capacity demands of major arterials.



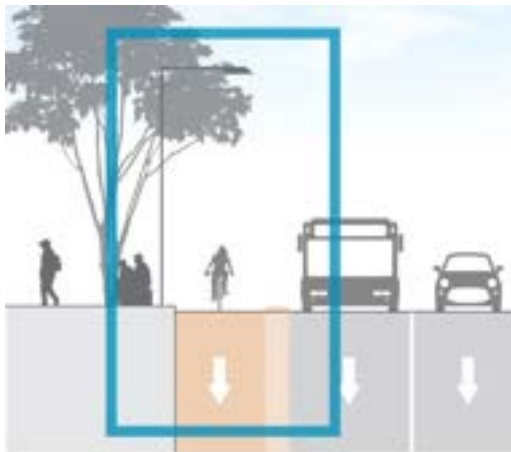
## Complete Streets

The transportation network established for the South Central Waterfront takes a complete streets approach, per the policy adopted by City Council in June 2014 and the vision established in the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan to “invest in a compact and connected” city. Complete Streets is an initiative within the Austin Transportation Department that ensures that roadways serve all users and modes of transportation regardless of their age, ability or mode choice. Roadways are public spaces that serve people walking, biking, driving, or taking transit. The balanced accommodations for all modes through this transportation framework is supportive of this effort for complete streets.



## Pedestrian Realm

South Central Waterfront is designed to be an active environment, where the pedestrian activity extends into the district from the Amy and Roy Butler Hike and Bike Trail and the surrounding urban context. Regardless of how one arrives at the district, the design of the public realm is intended to encourage people to walk between destinations and enjoy the surrounding environment, which offers a harmonious blend of natural and urban landscapes.



### Bicycle Facilities

The approach to planning bicycle facilities in the South Central Waterfront addresses one of the core objectives from the 2014 Austin Bicycle Master Plan: to create an all ages and abilities bicycle network that addresses the concerns of those who are interested in biking, but are concerned about safety. Investment in safer design standards for bicycle facilities is intended to capture a greater portion of short trips that are made.



### Transit

In January 2014, Capital Metro launched its MetroRapid service with greater frequencies and improved technologies to move through move green traffic lights, and transit priority lanes in several areas through central Austin. Riverside Drive serves multiple express routes, and other routes may experience improvements as Capital Metro implements its Connections 2025 study.



### Automobile

The addition of new roadways — including an extension of Barton Springs Road — and improvement of existing roadways will improve the street network. New development will include consolidated parking to prevent unnecessary circulation throughout the district.

# Trails

Trails are one of the most important points of waterfront access along the Waterfront. The South Central Waterfront Vision will bring existing trails up to current city standards, provide additional connectivity along the waterfront, and create additional connections to the adjacent neighborhoods.



**Trails and Bike Facilities**



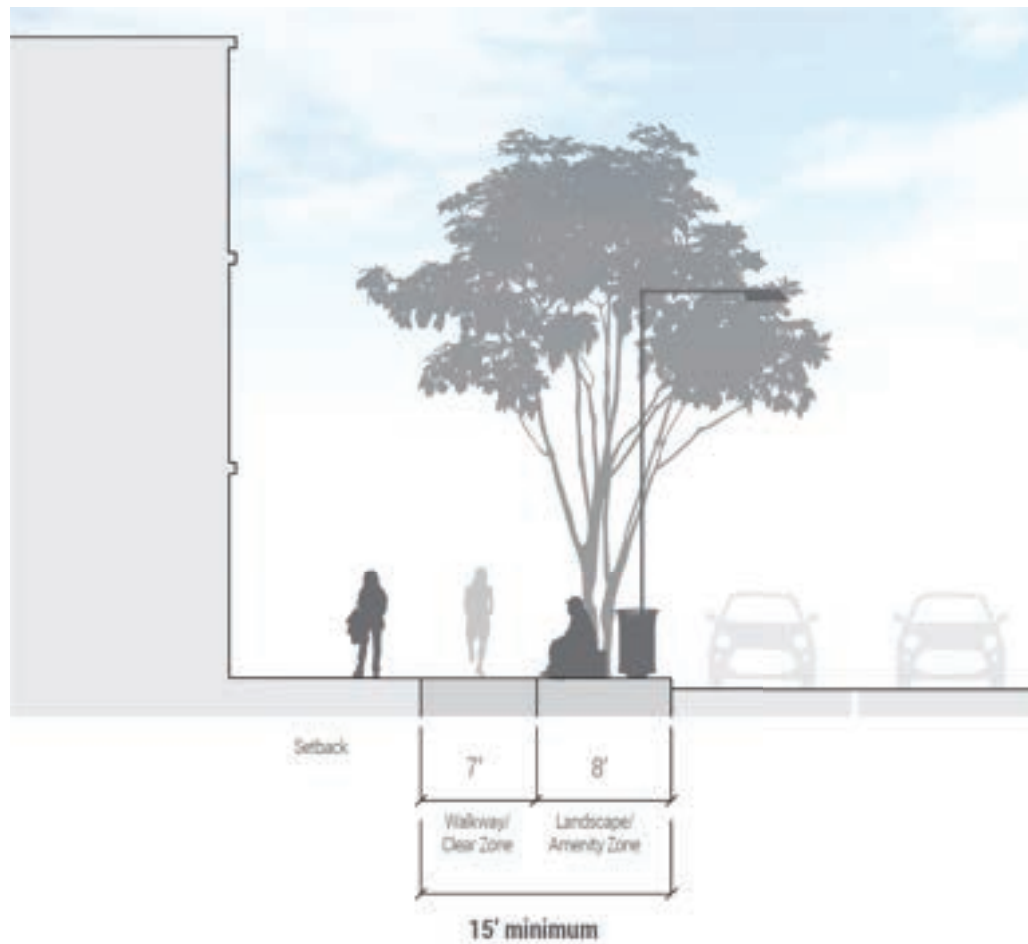


## Trail Design Standards

In accordance with the City of Austin Urban Trails Master Plan, trails should be a minimum of 12-feet wide (with 2 to 5-foot shoulder) to allow two-directional pedestrian and bicycle traffic to safely travel together. In areas that experience high traffic, dual tracks can improve safety by separating pedestrian flow from bicycle traffic, with a minimum width of 8-feet for the pedestrian walkway and 10-feet for the bicyclists.

# Pedestrian Realm

The importance of pedestrian connectivity and comfort is emphasized by wide sidewalks on all streets that allow space to accommodate various amenities like benches and street trees that promote active street life. People moving through the site will also benefit from access to both natural and urban environments. With the trail connections along Bouldin Creek and Lady Bird Lake, the site becomes integrated into the natural landscape, creating an enhanced experience that encourages people to walk to and between destinations.



## Design Standards

The pedestrian realm should be 15-feet wide to accommodate both pedestrian traffic and various amenities. The sidewalk or clear zone should be a minimum of 7-feet, where the remaining 8-feet may be used for landscaping and street trees, green infrastructure for stormwater runoff, and pedestrian amenities (benches, trash receptacles, lighting, signage, and bike racks).

# Transit

South Central Waterfront is well connected to existing transit service, and benefits from its close proximity — a short quarter-mile walk — to several stations. The comfort and high quality of transit in the South Central Waterfront will also encourage potential riders. Transit stops feature shelters, seating, and other pedestrian amenities to serve the high levels pedestrian activity that are expected. Riverside Drive offers MetroRapid service which arrives more frequently than regular local service, and has distinctly designed stations that are easily recognizable to transit riders.



## Design Standards

*The pedestrian realm along core transit corridors should feature the upgraded stations designed for MetroRapid, which have lighting and an awning to provide protection from the sun and rain.*



## Existing Transit

*The SCW is already an important transit hub. As it gains greater connectivity, the SCW can work efficiently with existing transit and accommodate future transit options.*



# Bicycle Facilities

According to U.S. Census American Community Survey data, Austin has seen a 77% increase in bicycle commuting between 1990 and 2013. In 2015, Austin became the first Texas city to be awarded a gold-level Bicycle Friendly Community (2015) by The League of American Bicyclists, attributed in part to the improved design standards for bicycle facilities. Bicycle transportation is an important component to circulation at South Central Waterfront, where high comfort on-street bike lanes are planned for on all major streets. Simple accommodations like wider bike lanes and physical separation from motorist traffic contributes to making bicycling a safe and attractive option for people of all ages and abilities.

## Design Standards

Bike lanes on Barton Springs Road, Riverside Drive and Congress Avenue should be 8-feet wide with a 2-foot buffer from motorist traffic with physical separation when possible, including elements like raised curbs, flexible bollards, or planted areas. Bicyclists share the roadways with low-speed traffic through the local roadways of the South Central Waterfront.





### End of Trip Facilities

End of trip facilities include a wide variety of bicycle amenities, from short-term bike parking to showers. Each block face should include bike racks in a visible location. Property managers should explore opportunities for other appropriate facilities, including secure indoor racks for tenants and showers and lockers for employees. Other potential end of trip facilities are listed in the Transportation Demand Management section.



### Bike Share

There are approximately 50 B-Cycle bike share stations around central Austin, and the network is expected to grow. Coordination with Austin B-Cycle is important to ensure that bike share stations are located at prominent, visible destinations, with safe access from a bike route.



### Waller Creek Pontoon Bridge

The Waller Creek Pontoon Bridge is part of a vision from the Waller Creek Conservancy to connect Waller Creek to the south shore Lady Bird Lake boardwalk. Connecting to the northeast edge of South Central Waterfront, this bridge would serve as a gateway for many visitors to the district.

# Toolkit:

## Transportation Demand Management

### Benefits of Transportation Demand Management

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) provides opportunities to decrease trip generation on a district level and lower the burdens of increased density and development on surrounding communities. The South Central Waterfront's proximity to downtown, mix of uses, and coordinated development program is uniquely situated to take advantage of these opportunities.

Within the South Central Waterfront, it is recommended that all multi-family and mixed-use developments will be required to participate in the Transportation Demand Management program. A development receives reduced parking requirements when it provides at least four elements from the TDM toolkit.

A developer will appoint a transportation coordinator to monitor the effectiveness of the program and the status of each strategy employed from the toolkit. The transportation coordinator will submit an annual monitoring report to the Transportation Department.



#### Parking

*Reduced and shared parking strategies are one of the main requirements of Transportation Demand Management. In addition to these strategies, the TDM toolkit includes unbundled parking (separating the cost of parking spaces from the cost of housing units) and shared parking between complementary uses.*



#### Transit

*A property may provide monthly transit passes to corporate employees or to housing units in lieu of parking. Real time transit monitors can be installed in building lobbies to help residents and employees plan trips.*





### Car Sharing

*A property should provide dedicated parking spots for existing car sharing systems, may provide shared cars or trucks for residents, and may provide memberships or monthly stipends for existing car share systems.*



### Bike Accommodations

*A property may provide bike share memberships to Austin B-Cycle. Dedicated bicycle parking should be included in parking garages, on each floor of residential buildings, or within each unit. A property may also provide cargo bicycles for residents or employees to check out for larger shopping trips. Office uses should provide showers and lockers.*



### Education for Residents

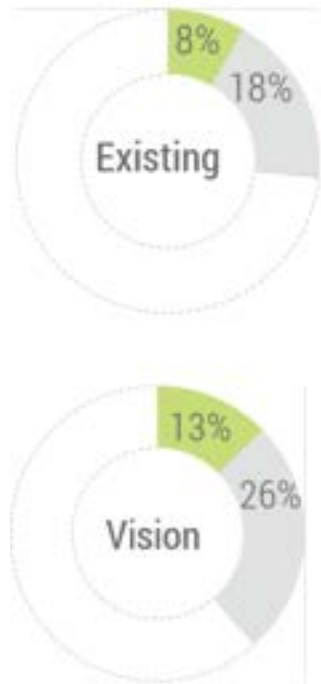
*Each building should have a “transportation concierge” to assist residents, employees and visitors in making transportation choices. These employees should undergo training on best practices for and availability of transit, bicycle, and pedestrian options.*

# OPEN SPACE

The SCW Framework Plan will add approximately 20 acres of open space to the South Central Waterfront. These new parks, plazas and trails serve as destinations for recreation as well as amenities for people who will live and work in the neighborhood. In addition, each park incorporates innovative strategies coordinated across the district to ensure that stormwater is managed and treated before flowing into Bouldin Creek and Lady Bird Lake.



Austin won a competitive award from the U.S. EPA's "Greening of America's Capitals" program. Through this program, the US EPA, in partnership with the City of Austin, commissioned designs for key components of the open space and green infrastructure within the South Central Waterfront. A substantial amount of the open space vision presented in this section was generated as a result of 'Greening the South Central Waterfront.' The full report, which provides more detailed designs for the Waterfront Park, Barton Springs Rain Gardens, and Bouldin Creek TSD Trails, is available online at [www.austintexas.gov/waterfront](http://www.austintexas.gov/waterfront).



Open Space	1. Waterfront Park	2. Bouldin Creek	3. Crocket Plaza	4. Rain Gardens
Size (ac)	9.6	6.6	1.8	1.2
Key Features	Bat Viewing Pier Amphitheater Terrace Cafe Kayak Launch & Rentals Pavilion Deck & Cafe Water Quality Ponds Wetland Preserve	Trails and Boardwalks Canopy Walk Bridge to One Texas Center Disc Golf Course Bus Shelter and Bouldin Creek Overlook	Performative and Educational Wetland Green Lawn and Amphitheater Marketplace and Cafe Fountain Plaza and Splashpad	Rain Gardens Ground Floor Retail and Outdoor Seating Sculpture Enhanced Pedestrian and Bike Crossings



# Statesman Waterfront Park

The Statesman Waterfront Park transforms this section of the 10 mile Anne and Roy Butler Hike and Bike Trail around Lady Bird Lake by adding a park that is unique among Austin's parks. Framed by a lively pedestrian market street to the south and a natural wetland habitat along Lady Bird Lake to the north, the park embraces Austin's natural beauty as well as its vibrant and quirky energy.

At its eastern edge, an outdoor amphitheater, called the Bat Observation Theater, provides an ideal vantage point for Austinites and visitors to watch the iconic spectacle of Mexican Free-tailed bats emerging at sunset. At the same time, the amphitheater enhances access to the waterfront by creating a gentle vertical transition from the Congress Street Bridge to the trail at waterfront trail below.

The center of the park serves as a Great Lawn that integrates stormwater ponds with active and passive recreation opportunities and access to the Cox Martketplace promenade.

The western portion of the park, called the Pontoon Landing, features a boardwalk that could serve as a landing for a pontoon bridge across Lady Bird Lake connecting to the Waller Creek greenway. Finally, the middle portion of the park becomes a tranquil space with a series of rain gardens that filter and purify runoff from nearby streets and development before releasing it into the Lake.

## Congress Avenue Bat Colony

The Congress Avenue bridge is home to one of the largest urban bat colonies in North America. This outdoor amphitheater is designed for the crowds of Austinites and visitors to watch the nightly emergence of Mexican free-tailed bats from beneath the bridge in the summertime.

We often think of the bats as an iconic part of Austin, but forget the important part they play in Austin's ecosystems and the delicate balance between city and nature that keeps them in Austin. It will be critical to ensure that this habitat is conserved by including Bat Conservation International as a stakeholder in any development occuring near the Congress Avenue Bridge, paying careful attention to bat-compatible standards both at the design and construction stage of the buildings. More information can be found in Appendix VI and at [www.batcon.org](http://www.batcon.org).







### Bat Observation Theater

*A pedestrian plaza extends from Congress Avenue over the parking lot at the Statesman site to create an overlook to the lake. The plaza ramps down to the park and an amphitheater steps down to provide for viewing the bats and other events.*



Existing view from Congress Avenue Bridge and Statesman parking lot



Proposed viewing area and entrance to Waterfront Park





### **Great Lawn**

*Better integrating the stormwater ponds into the park design creates more space for viewing Lady Bird Lake, the city skyline, and the Mexican free tail bats. This view shows the Bat Observation Theater along the northwestern length of the park which incorporates the amphitheater at the base of the Congress Avenue Bridge.*



### **Pontoon Landing**

*The Pontoon Landing includes a pier where the proposed Waller Creek pontoon bridge could land on the south shore. A naturalized beach provides recreational water access. A pavilion at this location could serve the neighborhood with amenities such as restrooms, refreshments, and bike and kayak rentals.*

# Barton Springs Plaza Rain Gardens

A combination of streets trees and raingardens define walking and bicycling paths that will connect South Congress to the lake edge and trail system. Using green infrastructure as a signifier for connections between the street and lake is key to addressing the major grade change challenge between the elevated Congress Avenue and water's edge.

This system of green passage is highlighted by the removal of the "free right" turn lane from southbound Congress Avenue to Barton Springs Road. The existing lane encourages higher vehicle speeds and impairs safe pedestrian movement. Its removal also transforms this portion of the right-of-way into a highly-visible small public space. A natural landing place for pedestrians along Congress Avenue, this new plaza serves as a threshold between the streetscape and the lake trails and boardwalks.

The potential of this area for additional mixed-use and small infill development presents additional opportunity for rich, pedestrian-focused uses, including outdoor seating and dog-walk areas. Moreover, the raingardens and street trees provide invaluable environmental benefits, including stormwater treatment and detention, pedestrian shade, and heat island reduction.







Existing view turning right from Congress Avenue



Proposed Rain Garden and Streetscape



# Crockett Square and Cox Marketplace

Crockett Square provides the South Central Waterfront with a public plaza counterpart to the lake edge and a social space for district workers, residents and visitors. Its edges are highlighted by street trees and raingardens.

The Square's primary circulation paths define three key areas of program within the square. An urban demonstration wetland in the southeast corner is both a display of district-level water strategies and a play-and-learn discovery garden for kids and kids-at-heart. To the north, a bermed central lawn gently sculpts four small amphitheater spaces, places where people can gather, eat, sunbathe, or take in a movie from a small bandshell. The plaza also includes a large tree-lined plaza, gridded with small fountains that entice play and contact with water or are turned off so that a farmer's market or other vendor events can regularly enliven the plaza.

The Square has both grand spaces for congregation as well as smaller spaces for friends, lovers or quiet reflection. Small look-outs edge over the wetland area for views across the water to the park and forested cloister seating creates more intimate seating moments. A lengthy pergola along the Square's primary walking path also serves as a canopy for the Cox Marketplace, where food trucks and other entrepreneurial innovations and events can spring up periodically.





## Bouldin Creek

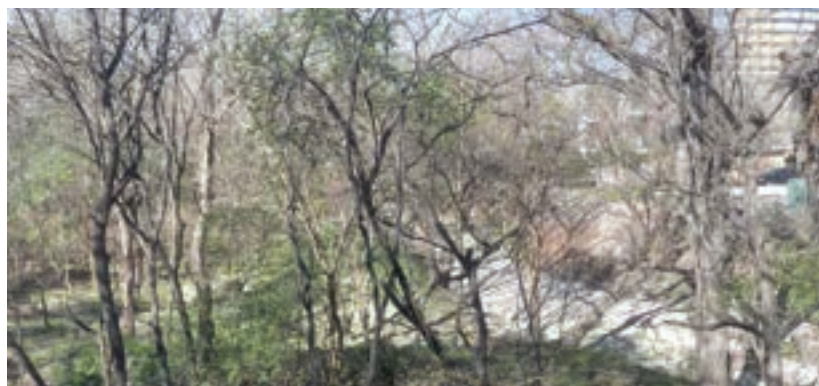
The southern boundary of the South Central Waterfront planning area is roughly defined by the east branch of Bouldin Creek as it flows into Lady Bird Lake. Bouldin Creek defines the area in many ways, both topographically and in identity, yet the creek itself is mostly invisible to the public eye.

Inviting the public into the creek area by way of constructed boardwalks and walking paths encourages walking connectivity between the sides of the creek and fosters local stewardship over this natural resource. Concentrated public access on these paths also maintains a protected natural environment for the many plant and animal species who make the creek their home.

These paths connect South First Street to Congress Avenue and the South Central Waterfront area to the historic Texas School for the Deaf campus.







Existing view of Bouldin Creek from Congress Avenue

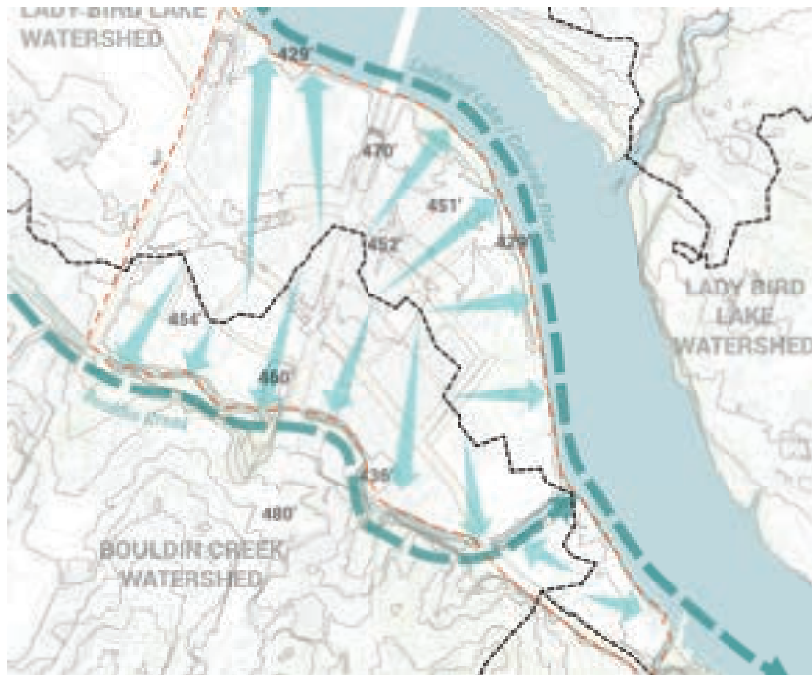


Proposed Proposed Boardwalk and Trail Connection

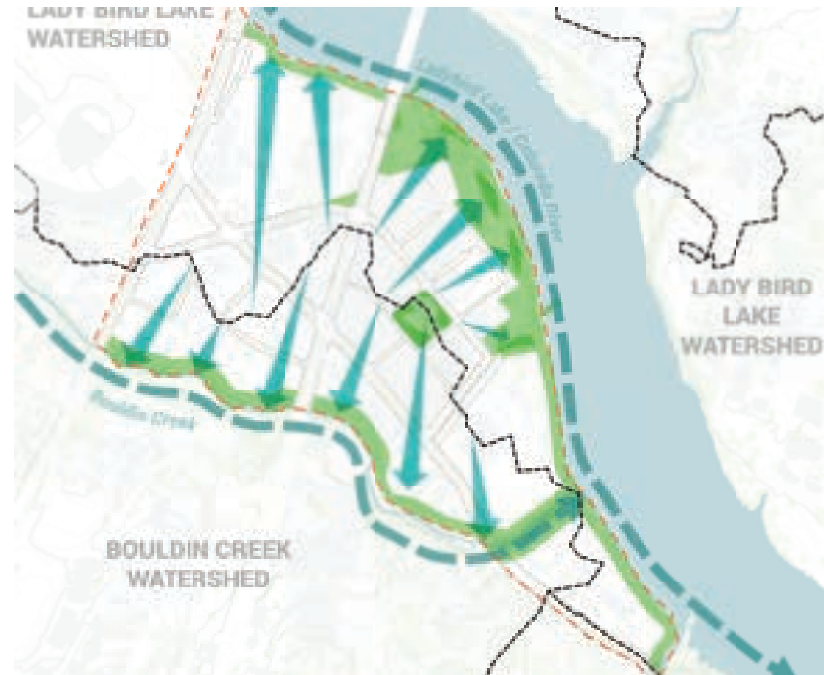
# SUSTAINABILITY

## District Thinking: Water

Water is a part of Austin's identity. With creeks interweaving through downtown and many of our city's neighborhoods, most Austin residents identify with water and creeks as a point of city pride, a focus of fond family memories, and as beautiful and meditative natural spaces. Water is also a big part of the South Central Waterfront. The district is divided by the Bouldin Creek watershed to the south and the Lady Bird Lake watershed to the north. With erosion on Bouldin Creek's margins and water quality issues in both the lake and creek, these systems suffer from common environmental issues in urban environments. The SCW Vision has an opportunity to ensure impactful benefits by planning how water moves through the district. The diagram on the left shows overall waterflow on site based on watershed distinctions and site topography. On the right, green space along Bouldin Creek and Lady Bird Lake act as the last line of defense for those water bodies against pollutants. These riparian areas are vital to the overall ecological functioning of the site and surrounding area.



**Existing: Runoff flows directly into Bouldin Creek and Lady Bird Lake**



**Envisioned: Rain gardens in trails and parks ensure that water flowing into Bouldin Creek and Lady Bird Lake is properly treated.**

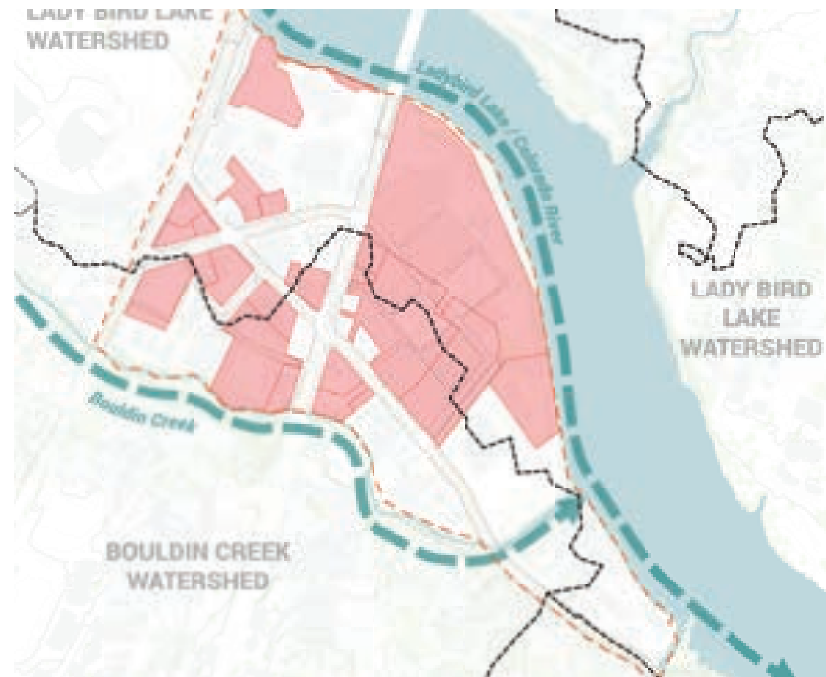


Street level green infrastructure both enhances the aesthetic for pedestrians of the South Central Waterfront and increases the district's capacity to manage and filter water that falls onsite. The diagram to the left illustrates how elevation and gravity drive water flow through the South Central Waterfront's street grid. Green strips along streets were located based on their ability to mitigate these on-site flows. This primary level of green infrastructure is the first line of defense in a process that filters out pollutants and enhances the water quality of both Lady Bird Lake and Bouldin Creek.



**Envisioned: Bioswales and other green infrastructure along roadways filter and direct runoff from streets and buildings.**

Owners of individual properties can use a variety of innovative strategies to complement green infrastructure in the public realm. Reducing impervious surface to a minimum and introducing bioswales, rain gardens, pervious paving, and detention ponds can reduce runoff and manage stormwater at the ground level. Green roofs and greywater reuse can mitigate wastewater generated by buildings and the people that use them. Often, these improvements pay for themselves over time, but the City can also provide incentives to encourage adoption. These strategies should be integrated with systems in the public realm to truly manage stormwater at the district level.

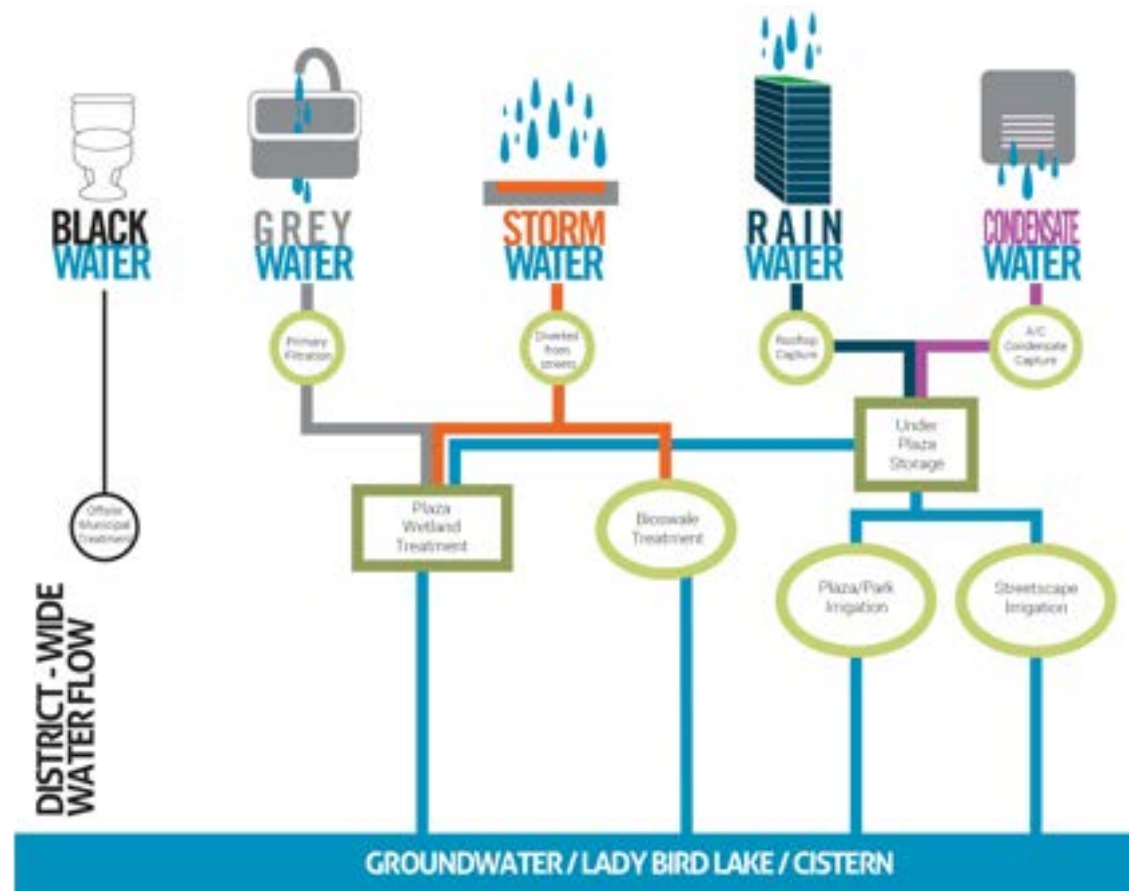


**Envisioned: Green infrastructure is integrated into new developments to reduce impervious surfaces and mitigate runoff.**



# District-wide Water Management

Rainwater, stormwater, greywater, and air conditioning condensate are integrated into the district's water management concept. Rainwater and condensate are collected and stored to irrigate green roofs and district right-of-ways and open space. Stormwater is diverted to green infrastructure in the right-of-way where it can be filtered before reaching open space in the riparian area of Lady Bird Lake. Greywater is treated on each building site using an underground sand filter before being stored and then released to contribute to district wide irrigation. Stored rainwater, condensate, and treated greywater can all be utilized by buildings where double piping allows for reuse for flushing toilets.

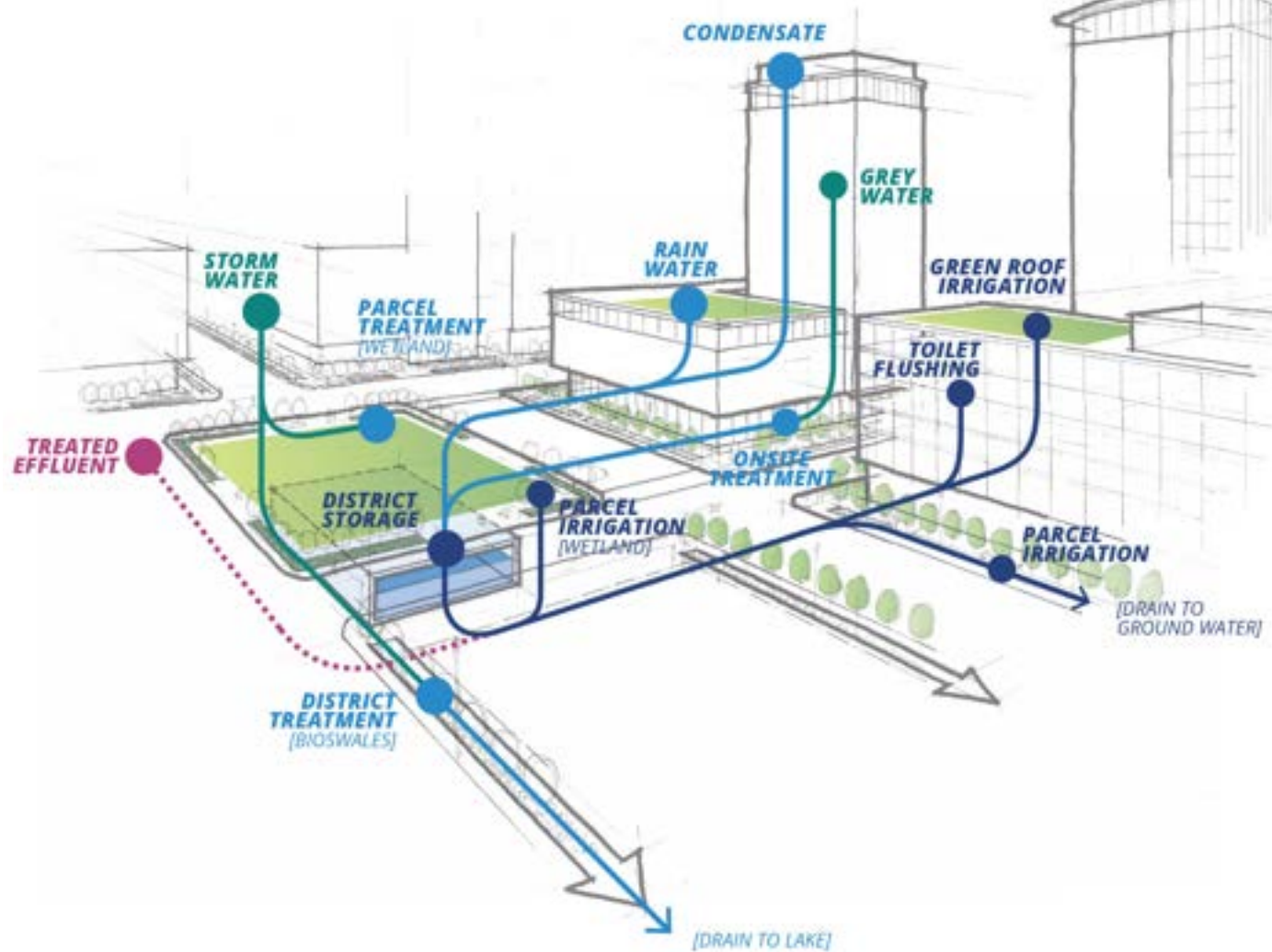


## District-wide water flows

The diagram above illustrates how different sources of water flow through the district, and how each type of water source can be accounted for by various green infrastructure strategies to ensure treatment before reaching the City's aquifers and waterways.

### Conceptual District Water-cycle

The diagram below illustrates how sustainable infrastructure and stormwater management strategies can be integrated into new development at a district-wide scale



Greywater is water that comes from sinks and showers.

Treatment of greywater and management of rain and stormwater on site are important and innovative sustainability measures.

Before entering the wetland filtration stage, particles that increase the nutrient load of greywater are filtered out using an underground sand filter.

# City of Austin Auxiliary Water (Purple Pipe)

## What is Purple Pipe

Reclaimed water is recycled from greywater generated by homes and businesses and treated for virtually any use not requiring higher-quality drinking water. Such uses may include irrigation, cooling towers, industrial uses and toilet flushing. More than 50 miles of reclaimed water runs in specially colored purple pipes beneath Austin streets—and that number is continuing to grow.

## Benefit to developer

Reclaimed water is less expensive to use and can be as little as one-third the price of drinking water. Users can see a reduction in water fees.

## Benefit to city and community

Reclaimed water is less expensive to treat, and reduces the demand on potable water. This reduces the community's risk to climate variability. Plus, the city can make additional profits for a product that is usually discarded





# Rainwater Capture

## What is Rainwater harvesting

Harvesting of rainwater and condensate is the collection of water for future use. Rainwater and condensate can be collected in pressurized systems with large cisterns. The most common use of harvested rainwater is landscape irrigation, but it can also be used for watering indoor plants, washing equipment, and filling fountains.

### Benefit to developer

Using captured rainwater is less expensive than potable water for the building operator and the tenants. Water efficient features can differentiate the building against non-green and water intensive users.

### Benefit to city and community

Using on-site water reduces the demand on potable water. This reduces the impact of climate variability for the city, community and property. Water reuse also saves energy associated with pumping the water from more distant sources.



# Watershed Protection: Raingardens

## What is a Raingarden

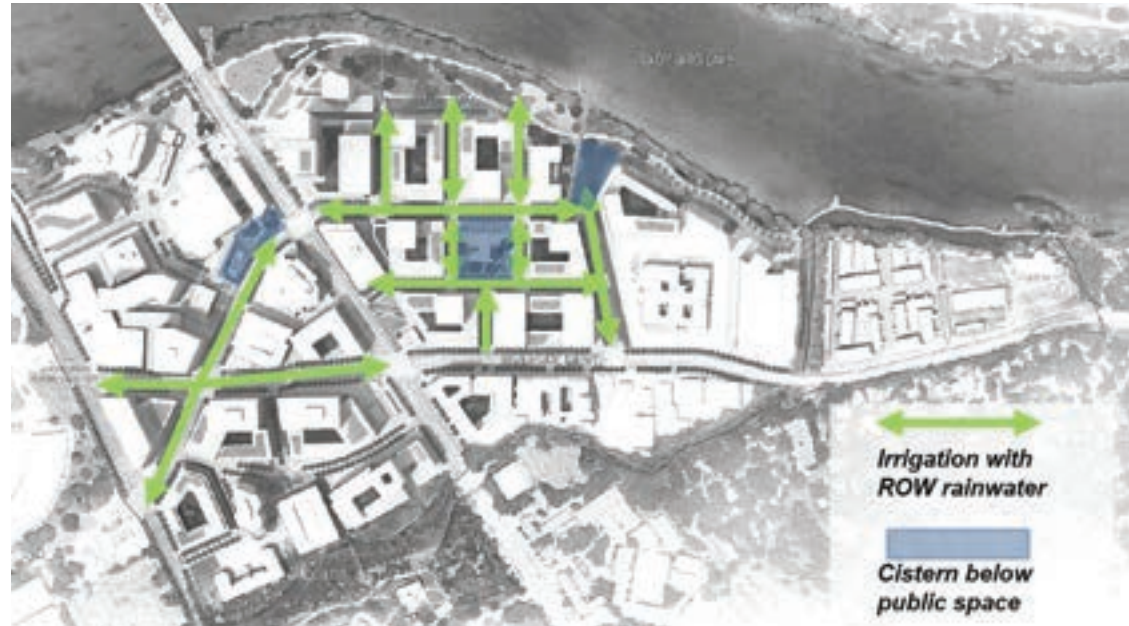
A rain garden is a low area that absorbs and filters rain water runoff that comes from roofs, sidewalks, and driveways. Rain runs off the hard surfaces, collects in the shallow depression, and slowly soaks into the soil. They are usually planted with colorful native plants and grasses. Water is collected below the vegetation with perforated pipes and sent to a cistern for later use.

## Benefit to developer

Raingardens using water that would otherwise flow into storm drains, thus reducing the need for irrigation.

## Benefit to city and community

Carefully selected plants help filter pollutants, including chemicals from roofing tile, fertilizer and litter from sidewalks. This reduces the potential for fish kills and other ecological impacts. It also reduces flooding and erosion by collecting runoff in the low area and letting it soak into the soil instead of rapidly washing into creeks.



# District-wide Cooling

## What is District Cooling?

District cooling provides customers with HVAC requirements through a network of underground pipes that serve multiple buildings within a particular service area. A district cooling plant distributes chilled water (approximately 42 to 44 degrees) to the customer's building through a set of heat exchangers located in the customer's mechanical room.

## Benefit to developer

District Cooling provides substantially reduced initial capital investment and lowers operational and energy expenses. In addition to stabilizing long-term costs, the developer does not need to provide a space for a mechanical room and other on-site HVAC dependent spaces.

## Benefit to city and community:

District Cooling allows Austin Energy to manage peak demand in the summer and provide an added value to customers. All costs of the program are recovered through chilled water customer's fees and charges.





# Building Solar

## What is District Solar Photovoltaics (PV)?

Solar PV systems use the sun's natural, renewable energy to generate electricity.

### Benefit to developer

Solar PV systems are reliable, durable, and require little maintenance. Using solar PV systems to generate electricity reduces utility bills and can be a selling point for tenants.

### Benefit to city and community

Solar PV helps protect the environment by reducing dependence on fossil fuels. Local Solar photovoltaics also reduce the need for long-distance transmission and can help improve local resiliency and energy self-sufficiency. Local solar also creates jobs and keeps energy dollars local.



# District Charging

## What is a plug-in electric vehicle (PEV) charging station

Electric vehicle charging stations supply electric energy for the recharging of electric vehicles, such as plug-in electric vehicles, including electric cars, neighborhood electric vehicles and plug-in hybrids. Level 2 (240V) charge about twice as fast as a typical wall socket. A DC fast charge delivers power up to 45 times faster than a typical wall outlet.

## Benefit to developer

Installing PEV charging stations helps developers attract customers and tenants. This also benefits employees who own electric vehicles.

## Benefit to city and community

Increasing the number of electric vehicles on the road improves air quality and decreases dependence on fossil fuels. In addition, the charging stations are powered by 100% renewable energy from Austin Energy's GreenChoice® program.



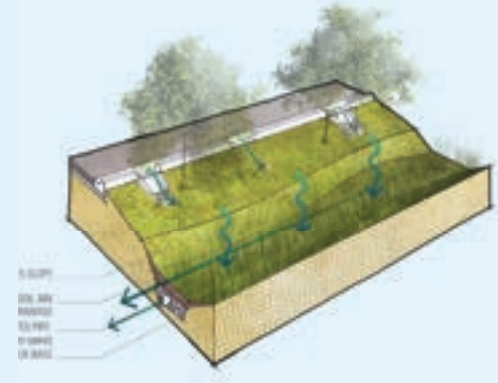
# Toolkit: District wide water management

To develop a networked, district level drainage and stormwater quality plan, the following green infrastructure techniques are recommended to be incorporated into both public and private property development. This toolkit of green infrastructure techniques are considered best management practices for stormwater, or BMPs. All of the BMPs are designed to detain and cleanse stormwater of pollutants, heavy metals and suspended solids, infiltrate water back into the soil, replenish groundwater and aquifers, minimize trash floating into water bodies, and provide dual uses as district amenities.



## Permeable Pavement

Permeable pavement options include special mixes of permeable concrete or permeable asphalt as well as paver systems which allow stormwater infiltration through gravel filled spaces between pavers into gravel layers below.



## Bioswales

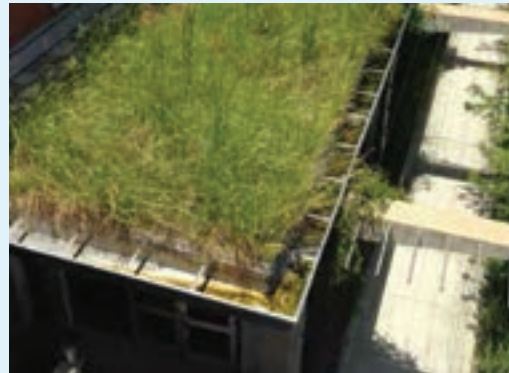
Bioswales are vegetated depressions layered with engineered soil media and perforated drainage pipes that filter pollutants and provides stormwater storage. Bioswales are typically planted with native trees and plants that perform well in Austin's soils and weather patterns.





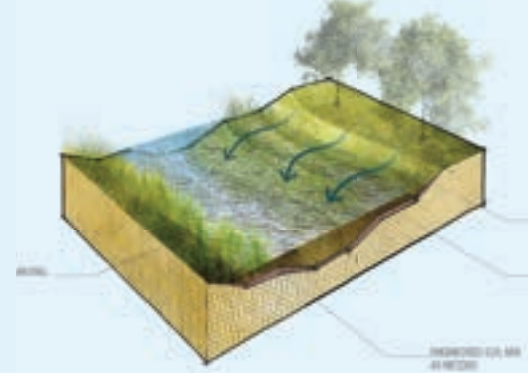
### **Rain Gardens**

*Rain gardens provide depressed, contained areas that also utilize engineered soils and perforated pipes to provide a slow, calculated drainage rate. Drainage is typically designed to infiltrate all stormwater within 48 hours in order to prevent mosquito breeding gestation.*



### **Green Roofs**

*Green roofs provide soft, green vegetation on roof tops that slow rainfall runoff and filter airborne pollutants. This filtered runoff is often harvested in underground or above ground tanks for uses in landscape irrigation and greywater within buildings. The vegetated surfaces reduce area temperatures inside the building and on the rooftops as well.*



### **Constructed Wetlands**

*Constructed wetlands are man-made shallow-water ecosystems designed to treat and store stormwater runoff, mitigate flooding and increase stormwater quality by allowing pollutants to settle out or to be treated by vegetation. Aeration should be provided to prevent water stagnation. Wetlands provide excellent plant and wildlife habitat as well as educational opportunities.*

# Sustainability Certifications

The following certification programs are available to stakeholders at either the building or district scale. Land owners and developers are encouraged to integrate these certifications into their projects. LEED has become the standard in green building and is recognized globally by both policy makers and consumers as the gold standard. LEED programs suitable for this site include LEED for Building Design and Construction and LEED for Neighborhood Development. Sustainable sites offers a certification program for landscapes that meet sustainable criteria. Other programs include Green Garage - a certification for sustainably performing parking garages; WELL building, a program certifying a building's positive effects on human health and well-being; and, Green Roads, a certification program promoting sustainable transportation projects.



## LEED ND and LEED BD+C

*Leaders across the globe have made LEED the most widely used green building rating system in the world with 1.85 million square feet of construction space certifying every day. LEED certification provides independent verification of a building or neighborhood's green features, allowing for the design, construction, operations, and maintenance of resource-efficient, high-performing, healthy, cost-effective buildings. LEED is the triple bottom line in action, benefiting people, planet, and profit.*

## Sustainable Sites

*SITES is a sustainability-focused framework that ushers landscape architects, engineers, and others toward practices that protect ecosystems and enhance the mosaic of benefits they continuously provide our communities, such as climate regulation, carbon storage, and flood mitigation. SITES is the culmination of years of research and development by leading professionals in the fields of soil, water, vegetation, materials, and human health.*



### **Green Garage**

*Green Garage Certification is the world's only rating system defining and recognizing sustainable practices in parking structure management, programming, design, and technology. An industry-driven, field-tested road map for high-performing new and existing parking garages, Green Garage Certification recognizes the forward-thinking facilities shaping tomorrow's sustainable mobility network.*

### **WELL Building**

*WELL is a performance-based system for measuring, certifying, and monitoring features of the built environment that impact human health and well-being, through air, water, nourishment, light, fitness, comfort, and mind.*

### **Greenroads**

*The mission of Greenroads is to benefit communities and the environment by recognizing sustainable transportation projects and by promoting sustainability education for transportation infrastructure.*

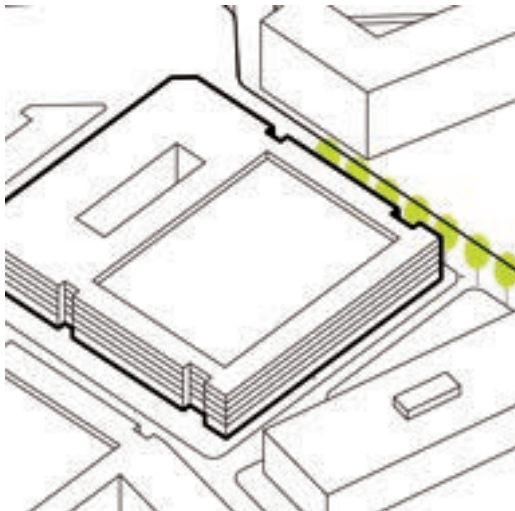


# URBAN DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT

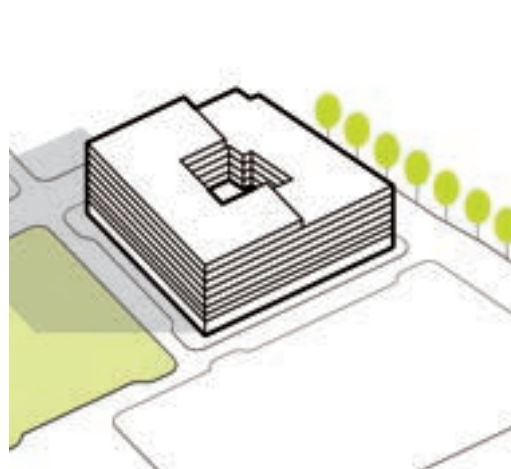
The design of the public realm laid out in previous sections of the physical framework are the foundational components to creating a district, but the physical form and massing of the buildings also play a substantial role in creating the South Central Waterfront's identity.

Ultimately, the design decisions made by architects and developers on their respective projects give the district a variety of architectural styles. At a district-wide level, the city's leadership is needed to set a high standard to ensure that together these individual developments create a vibrant, walkable district that complement the neighborhoods to the south and upholds the South Central Waterfront Vision.

The building massing and design principles presented in this Vision are the result of a comprehensive review of existing urban design guidelines, an extensive public outreach process, and a thorough financial feasibility study of the area's projected development. Some of these design guidelines are aimed at the ground level, ensuring new development contributes to an active, walkable pedestrian realm, whereas others are aimed at shaping the building envelopes to encourage new development that contributes to this iconic location along South Congress Avenue and the Lady Bird Lake.



*In the baseline scenario, with no intervention, new development is fragmented, does not facilitate an adequate public realm, and does not help to fund new parks, public spaces, and affordable housing.*



*With the physical framework in place, new development helps to activate a cohesive district and new parks and public spaces. Both of the diagrams above conceptually illustrate the amount of new development needed to fund public infrastructure improvements. The drawing to the left illustrates a basic massing without urban design guidelines, whereas the drawing to the right illustrates a typical block with the same amount of development, but more stringent design guidelines.*

### Transitioning from Downtown to Neighborhoods

*This physical model, constructed by a University of Texas architecture class, was used for a public open house in Spring 2016. The model illustrates how the urban design of the South Central Waterfront creates a smooth transition along South Congress Avenue between Downtown Austin, with buildings over 600 feet tall, and then steps down across the lake on the south shore and transitions to the neighborhoods to the south of the study area. The precedent images below illustrate neighborhoods with a similar scale of development.*



*Cherry Creek North (Denver, CO)*



*Seaport District (Boston, MA)*



*Pearl District (Portland, OR)*

# Designing for Nature

The South Central Waterfront is defined by water, and the stewardship of Bouldin Creek and Lady Bird Lake has been a central pillar of this initiative from the very beginning. The SCW Initiative seeks to define the relationship between development and the water in a way that current policy alone cannot. Bouldin Creek in particular is hemmed in by buildings and impervious surfaces despite the efforts of previous studies, organizations, and rules. Based on the economic and urban design analysis from the SCW Initiative, many of the properties that abut Bouldin Creek - some as close as 20' - are virtually impossible to redevelop because of several existing overlays. In practice, this means that the existing buildings will continue to encroach on the creek and waterfront setbacks and prevent public access in the foreseeable future. Recalibrating the existing guidelines to allow more development and consolidate setbacks in exchange for permanent public access and green infrastructure to manage runoff may be the best way to realize the vision of the original Town Lake Master Plan and create a green corridor along Bouldin Creek.

## Existing Conditions

*Buildings are set as close as 20' from the Creek, leaving little or no space for stormwater management or public access. Primary and secondary setbacks of 80' and 130', respectively, are intended to protect the environment around Bouldin Creek. The practical effect, however, is that these rules hamper feasible redevelopment at many locations, which perpetuates an undesirable situation.*

*It should be noted that the 2008 Waterfront Overlay Task Force (see p. 21) discovered that the original 1986 Waterfront Overlay Ordinance prescribed a secondary setback of 50' for East Bouldin Creek, rather than the current 130' secondary setback. The Task Force recommended that the code be revised to make the primary and secondary setbacks total 130', as per the 1986 code, instead of the current 130' secondary setback and 210' total setback. This recommendation was not put in place.*

## Vision

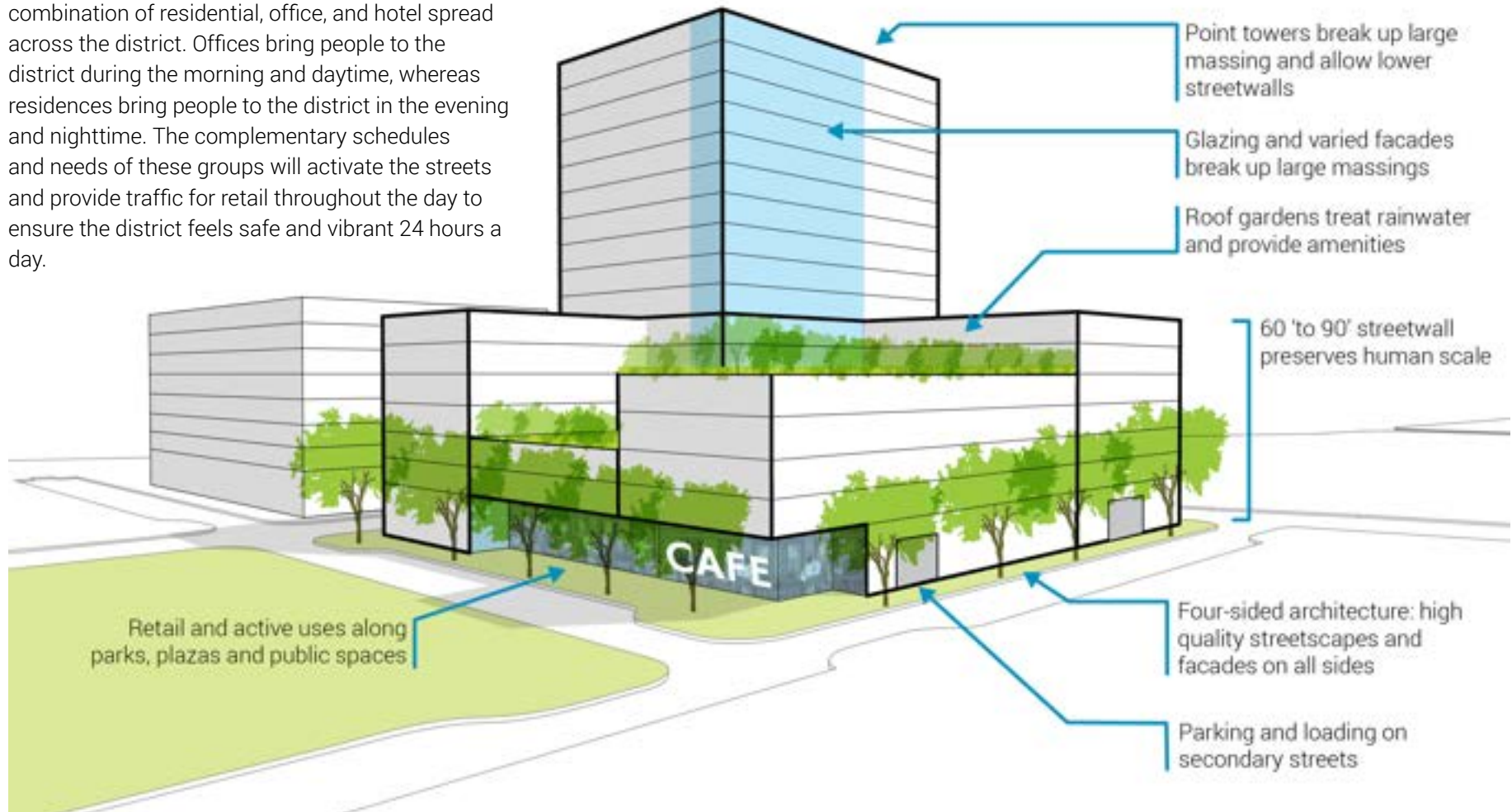
*An opt-in provision that consolidates the existing setbacks with a 100' primary setback respects the water quality zone while making redevelopment feasible for properties along the creek. These new developments would be required to ensure public access within the entire water quality zone, provide stormwater management plans, and design the facade facing the creek to the same level as those fronting a public plaza or street.*





# Designing for People 24 / 7

Mixed use redevelopment is encouraged in the South Central Waterfront, with shops, restaurants and other active uses at the street level, and a combination of residential, office, and hotel spread across the district. Offices bring people to the district during the morning and daytime, whereas residences bring people to the district in the evening and nighttime. The complementary schedules and needs of these groups will activate the streets and provide traffic for retail throughout the day to ensure the district feels safe and vibrant 24 hours a day.



# Public Art

## Engaging with Artists

The SCW Initiative invited public artists to work aside planners, designers and residents, in a variety of workshops to lend an artists' eye to envisioning the future. Additionally, the SCW Initiative worked with Austin artists to provide arts-oriented engagement activities, which helped involve those who don't usually come to planning meetings. This engagement highlighted the importance of integrating public art into the landscape and infrastructure to lend a unique identity to the SCW as the area transforms.

## The Value of Public Art

Public art can address economic prosperity, creating work for professional artists and associated trades, such as fabricators, materials suppliers, design support professionals, insurance agencies and transportation companies. It can also address economic prosperity by affecting how people view the importance of art, by developing an audience of art lovers and future art owners.

Public art can contribute to ecological health of an area by shining light on an environmental issue, by creating infrastructure to facilitate a needed physical process, such as removing pollutants from runoff before it goes back to a waterway, and by providing ecological services such as shade or reduction of the urban heat island effect.

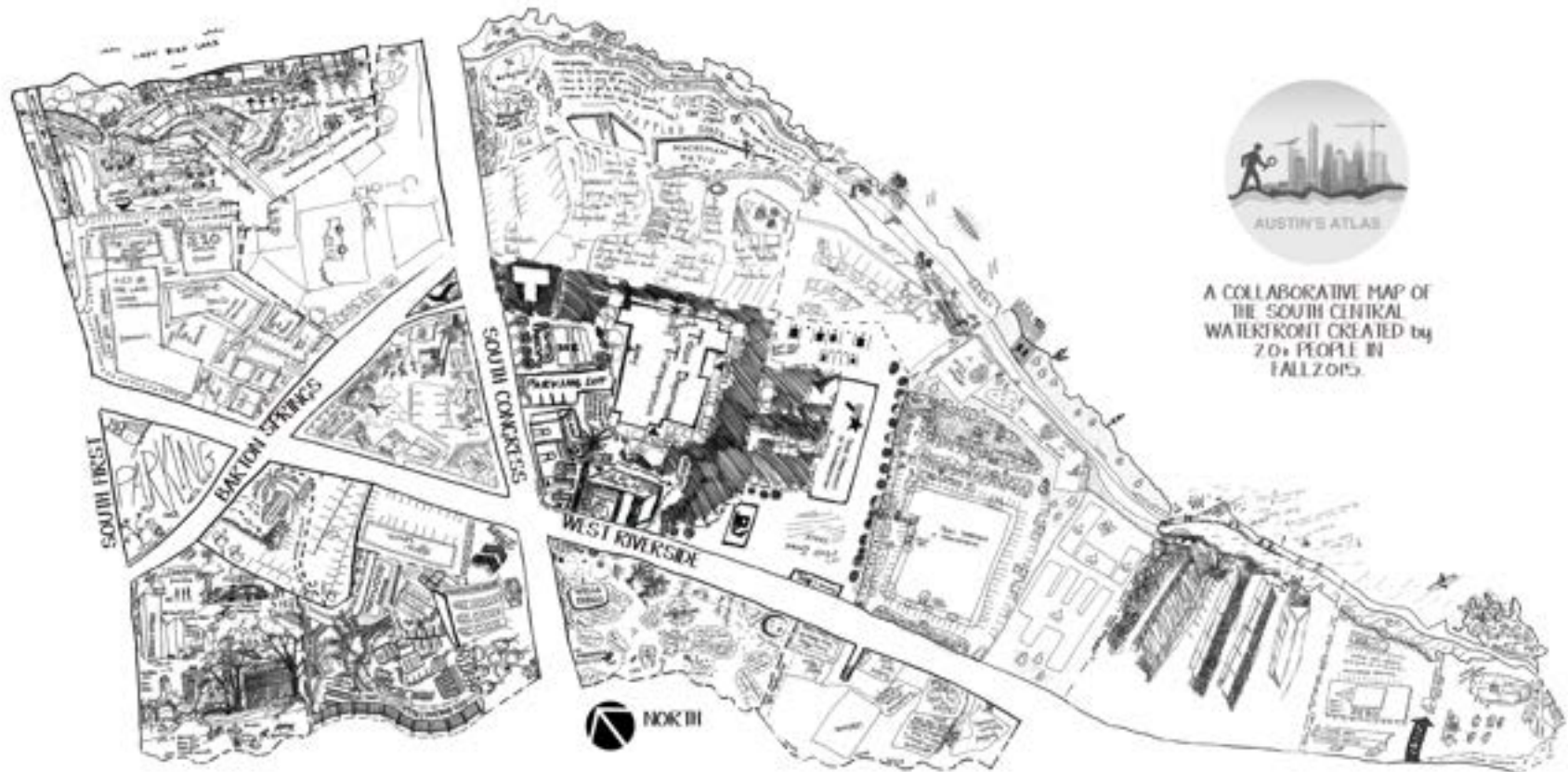
Public art can address social equity through participation in the political and cultural life of a community, addressing community issues and perhaps facilitating discussion and solution. Public art contributes to the identity of a place through artwork as cultural touchstones. Small interventions, such as an unexpected mural or an iconic sculpture, become opportunities for conversation and photos. Larger pieces can become place-making installations, or even icons of their neighborhoods or business locales. Art creates a place to meet,

a moment of reflection or humor and/or a chance for interaction in a way few other public amenities can.

## Public Art Master Plan

Because of the valuable contributions public art can make to the civic engagement, policy goals, sustainability and cultural identity of an urban area, public art is recommended for inclusion the South Central Waterfront Vision Framework Plan, using the City of Austin's 2% of capital improvement project budgets as a model. Public art should be included in the master agreements with developers who execute the public right-of-way or other public amenities. In addition, developer incentives for public art based on a percentage of private construction budgets should be established. A master planning framework for public art should be completed and amended to the SCW Vision Framework Plan.





#### Left: Public Art that invites people to socialize

*Open Room Austin by R+R Studio, located between Cesar Chavez and Electric Drive in the Seaholm District. The artwork installation includes approx. 50 crepe myrtles, a 40' table with an aluminum 'lace' tablecloth, benches and four tree-like lamps.*

#### Above: Crowdsourced People's Map of the SCW

*The SCW Initiative worked with Austin artist Ann Armstrong of Austin Atlas to provide Art Walkshops which invited people to look closely and draw their impressions of the waterfront as it exists today.*



# Site Specific Design Considerations

## Riverside Gateway

The Riverside Gateway lies between Blunn Creek and the east branch of Bouldin Creek, and between East Riverside Drive and the lake shore. This location contains the Riverwalk Condominiums (composed of 140+/- separate owners), County Line Properties (offices for County Line BBQ), and River Crab LTD (location of Joe's Crab Shack).

**Riverwalk Condos:** The SCW Initiative recognizes the Riverwalk Condominiums as a stable entity that is not likely to change. The SCW Vision Framework Plan recommends streetscape improvements to include street tree plantings and sidewalk improvements to upgrade appearance, safety, shade, and water quality to the extent that improvements can be made within the existing right-of-way.

**County Line & Joe's Crab Shack:** The SCW Initiative identifies these two properties (1.9 acres for County Line, and 1.8 acres for Crab Shack) as potential "tipping" properties for future redevelopment. Currently, the collective 3.7 acres is almost completely impervious with aging buildings and vast parking lots that are ripe for redevelopment. However, these properties are also constrained from multiple regulations which include:

- The Waterfront Overlay Ordinance (Travis Heights sub-district) applies a 100' primary setback from the lake (no secondary setback in this sub-district), which impacts both properties.
- An 80' Blunn Creek setback, which impacts the "Crab Shack."
- The 100' Flood Plain encroaches on the "Crab Shack" beyond the Waterfront Overlay setbacks.
- Both properties are impacted by Compatibility Standards.

The SCW Initiative recognizes that the existing conditions do not contribute to the goals of increasing open space, public access,

and green water quality infrastructure. The Initiative explored the potential of the two properties working together with a horizontal development agreement to jointly develop the combined 3.7 acres. Under the scenario explored, most of the "Crab Shack" site would be turned into a "green infrastructure" park space that accommodates the flood plain and provides much needed open space at the lake for the Travis Heights neighborhood. The scenario then modeled what level of development would be required on the remaining joint land to make economic sense for the redevelopment. However, the density and height that would be required to make this scenario financially feasible would violate existing Compatibility Standards.

It is beyond the scope of the SCW Initiative to propose adjustments to Compatibility Standards. However, the SCW Plan recommends that the CodeNEXT process explore this case specific situation to see if an alternative approach to compatibility might be designed to provide an economically-viable redevelopment opportunity for the Riverside Gateway that fits within the SCW Vision.



## One Texas Center

The block that contains the single city-owned property at One Texas Center (OTC), the so-called OTC Block, is dominated by two owners: the City of Austin with its 5-acre site, and adjacent Crockett parcels which include a mix of use and total 6 acres. The remaining smaller owners/parcels for the block include the Extended Stay America Hotel (2.5 acres) and the Chevron station at Congress and Riverside (.5 acres).

Even though the City's property is only one among 32 properties in the district, the City could leverage use potential future development at OTC to guide the physical framework for the superblock (creating streetscapes within its parcel, making cross-block connections in partnership with the adjacent owners, and providing trail/bridge connections to a potential trail at the Texas School for the Deaf). These design potentials are explored in other sections of this Plan.

The OTC property also provides other opportunities for the City to provide leadership for the SCW Vision. OTC is regulated by a Planned Unit Development (PUD) agreement which entitles a second office tower on the OTC parking lot (1.5 acres). The PUD would allow this second building at the scale of the current office tower (approximately 200K square feet and 186' height). A city-staffed work group has studied building a needed city office building at OTC. However, through the direction established by the Strategic Facilities Plan, the City is now focused on soliciting development proposals to build city offices at another location (to be determined in the proposal process) through a public-private partnership. This initiative to provide expansion of city office needs at another location opens up the potential that the entitlements at OTC might be used for other city purposes.

A potential use of the OTC parking lot could be to contribute to the affordable housing goals of the SCW Vision. The SCW Initiative modeled this potential in the Plan's Test Scenario. Under the scenario, the 1.5 acre parking lot would be developed for affordable housing. The Test Scenario assumed the construction of a 150 unit family-friendly affordable housing complex, with parking, through a public private partnership. (See #1 below).

For the Test Scenario, the housing development was designed to a 60' height limit. In order for the City to retain the full value of its PUD entitlement, the remaining entitled height/density might be realized through a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) mechanism. TDRs, as explained in the Financial Framework section, might allow the City to transfer unused entitlements to a receiving property(s) in exchange for equivalent value contributions to public purposes, including infrastructure and/or affordable housing in the SCW, or other city-designated areas.



## Hyatt Block

The block defined by South First Street, West Riverside Drive, Barton Spring Road, Congress Avenue, and the lakeshore is comprised of nine properties in a patchwork of parcels totalling 16.4 acres. The block is dominated and largely defined by the Hyatt Regency Hotel (Tantallon property @ 9.5 acres), and two recently completed/nearly completed residential developments (the Catherine, on 1.6 acres, and the 422 Riverside Apartments, on 1.5 acres). Squeezed in between these larger developments is the nearly landlocked building/parcel addressed at 210 Barton Spring Road (Ogle property @ 1.2 acres).

This block also contains two small properties that the SCW Test Scenario modeled as too constrained to develop on their own but could potentially redevelop under a cooperative horizontal development agreement (Mossler Liza property, location of Zax's with .3 acres; the Bible Trust property, location of Aussie's with 1 acre) – that scenario development is shown on the illustrative plan below. The property at 300 Barton Springs Road (Associated General Contractors, with .4 acres) is shown unchanged/not “tipping” in the illustrative plan, though future market dynamics and/or a potential horizontal development agreement with adjacent properties could make this financially feasible for redevelopment.

The remaining properties at 200 S. Congress Avenue (Sherry Matthews/Bathaus LTD with .8 acres) and 220 S. Congress Avenue (acquired in 2015 by Cielo, with .3 acres and now undergoing extensive renovation) are not shown to redevelop under the modeled financial scenario.

This so-called Hyatt Block is mostly built out and the overall physical framework for the block is mostly set in place. The block serves as a cautionary tale on what happens when redevelopment takes place

on a parcel-by-parcel approach without an overarching master plan. The block lacks through-block connectivity, has poor public access to the lake, the existing trail is constrained, there is limited, almost nonexistent, open space and views, and the development has not contributed to affordable housing. Nonetheless, the SCW Vision Framework Plan envisions a key place-making opportunity for this block, which can be achieved with cooperation among property owners and the city, and the SCW Plan sees opportunity to improve the trail along the Hyatt's shoreline.

**Barton Springs Plaza:** The SCW Plan details the opportunity to transform Barton Springs Road into a complete-and-green street, and highlights a particular place-making opportunity at the corner of Barton Springs Road and Congress Avenue. To be fully achieved, the current driveway access from Barton Spring Road to the parking lot for 200 S. Congress would need to be eliminated. Currently, the access to the parking lot for 200 S. Congress is being satisfied through a nonbinding agreement that provides access from the Hyatt. (see # 4 on map) The SCW Plan encourages that this arrangement be made permanent in order to provide certainty that the community benefit of the Barton Springs Plaza can be secured. This recommendation would require an amendment to the current Hyatt PUD.

**Trail Improvements:** The shoreline trail along the Hyatt property is constricted with pinch points, competing activities, blind sight lines. The SCW Plan encourages the Hyatt to work with community partners to make improvements to the trail. These trail improvements could include upgrading the boat dock area with an extended boardwalk or floating dock that expands public access and separates the competing activities of trail uses with recreational water users (see # 1 on map).



Also, the SCW Plan encourages that the trail be expanded to 18' wide, where possible. Particular opportunity to expand the trail could be realized along the eastern side of the Hyatt (see # 2 on map), which could be accommodated with a repositioning of the retaining wall. Trail improvements would require amendments to the existing Hyatt PUD, and may require additional easement amendments.

**Small building on the Hyatt property at Barton Springs Road:**

Currently, the Hyatt site, which is regulated by a Planned Unit Development (PUD), is entitled to building a tower on the western portion of the site (PUD phase 2). This entitled tower, at 200' height, is shown on the illustration and was calculated into the SCW baseline and test scenario.

The Hyatt has also expressed interest in building a small building on their property along Barton Springs Road. At issue, however, is that the construction of a small building at this location may violate the impervious cover limits. Building at this location would require an amendment to the PUD agreement.

The SCW Vision Framework Plan suggests that the above listed site improvements – providing permanent easement between the Hyatt and 200 S. Congress; improvements to the trail, as outlined; inclusion of green roofs on both the PUD entitled tower and the desired building on Barton Springs; limits on the footprint of the Barton Springs Road building to preserve adequate open space to contribute to Barton Springs Plaza; and active pedestrian ground floor uses in the new building could together form the basis of a potential agreement that could further the goals of the SCW Vision Framework Plan.







WALLER CREEK

LADY BIRD LAKE

CONGRESS AVENUE

SOUTH FIRST STREET

BARTON SPRINGS ROAD

RIVERSIDE DRIVE

AUDITORIUM  
SHORES STATION

BARTON SPRINGS ROAD

BOULDIN CREEK



An aerial photograph of a waterfront area. In the foreground, there's a body of water. A small creek, labeled 'BLINN CREEK', flows into the water. On the left bank, there are some buildings and a parking lot. The right bank is covered in green trees and vegetation. The overall scene is a mix of urban and natural elements.

# Financial Framework

Realizing the vision for the South Central Waterfront will require coordinated partnerships among many different players. The SCW Vision Framework Plan proposes an implementation approach that builds upon the following tenets:

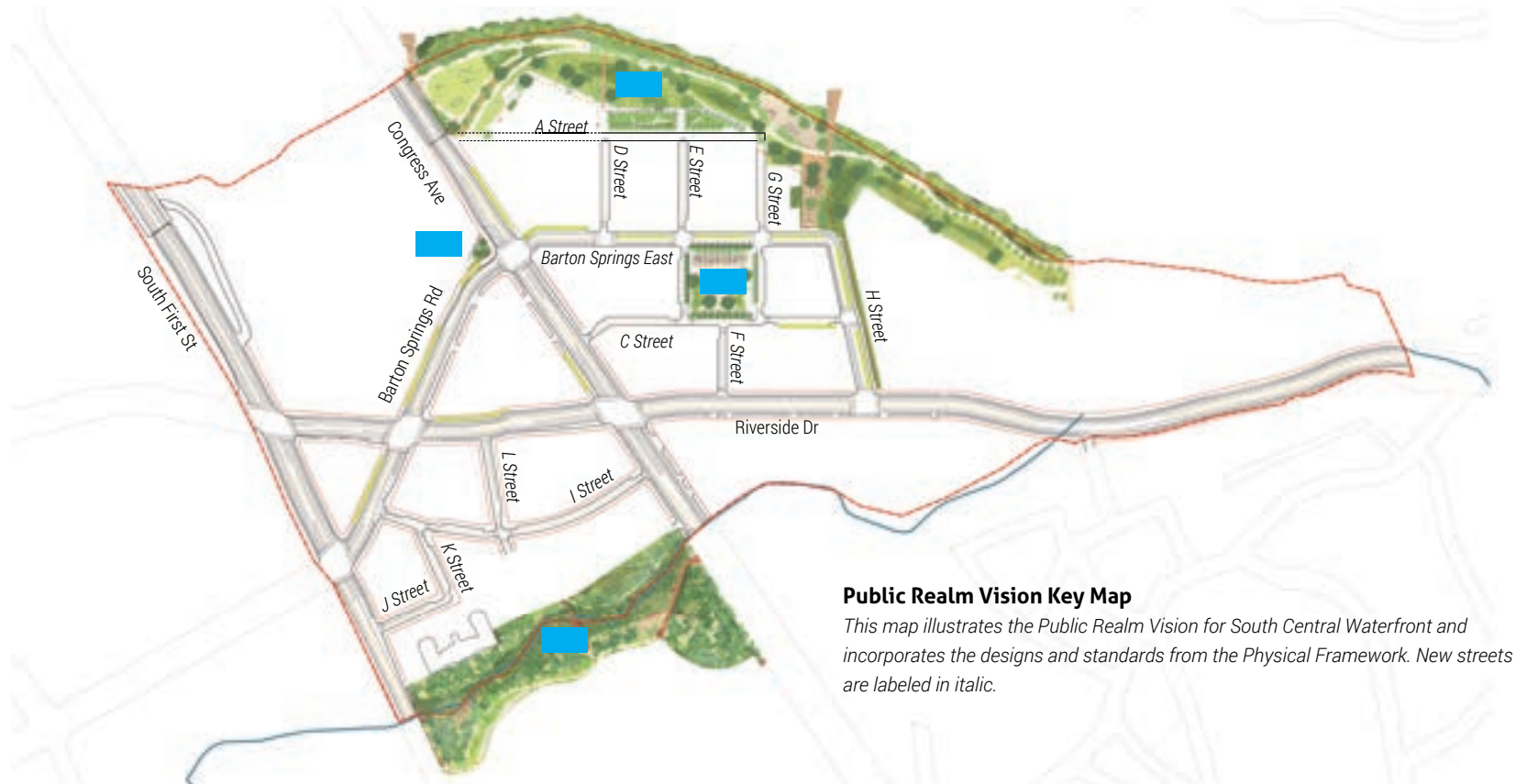
- A shared vision: Buy in on shared vision for the area among key stakeholders: property owners, neighborhoods, the City, vested interest groups (e.g., affordable housing providers, open space entities). This includes the recognition that enhanced entitlements will be required to enable more robust private development that then provides a primary resource base for public realm and public purpose improvements, and expansion of affordable housing opportunities.
- Partnerships: The City envisions partnerships with developers to help pay for public realm improvements. This includes financial incentives and binding development agreements between City and property owners/developers about which parties are responsible for providing which public realm improvements.
- Phased Implementation: The City anticipates that improvements will be built in phases based on which owners/developers are prepared to redevelop as well as the City's ability to craft mutually beneficial development agreements. The potential implementation strategy could give preference for public resources to those property owners/developers prepared to move forward.



# Value of Community Benefits

## Public Realm

Based on the conceptual designs for the parks, plazas, roadway improvements, and other public realm improvements presented in the physical framework chapter, a rough opinion of probable costs was calculated. Every effort was made to be as precise as possible, for example incorporating information from recent great streets project in Austin, but these are still only planning-level figures and include a 35 percent contingency. The chart on the opposite page summarizes potential costs for each improvement identified in the Vision, with a total estimated cost of just under \$100 million. A more detailed breakdown can be found in Appendix II.



## Summary of Probable Costs for the Public Realm Vision

Open Space Summary						
Name	Code	Area (SF)	Area (ac)	Unit	Unit Cost	Total Cost
Waterfront Park	OS2	418,619	9.61	SF	\$ 15.62	\$ 6,537,119
Bouldin Creek / TSD	OS3	286,189	6.57	SF	\$ 15.80	\$ 4,521,908
Cox Crocket Plaza	OS4	60,548	1.39	SF	\$ 59.36	\$ 3,594,075
Barton Springs Rain Garden	OS5	36,590	0.84	SF	\$ 21.07	\$ 771,026
<b>Open Space Total</b>		<b>801,947</b>	<b>18.41</b>	<b>SF</b>	<b>\$ 19.23</b>	<b>\$ 15,424,128</b>

Streets and Green Infrastructure Summary											
Name	Code	Length (LF)	MFTP	Transit	Bike	Total Cost	Civil Cost	Amenities Cost	Landscape Cost	Transit / Bike Cost	Utilities Cost
<b>Existing Streets (Total \$)</b>						<b>\$ 23,957,590</b>	<b>\$ 10,214,990</b>	<b>\$ 600,000</b>	<b>\$ 497,600</b>	<b>\$ 360,000</b>	<b>\$ 12,285,000</b>
<b>Existing Streets (\$/LF)</b>		<b>7,787</b>				<b>\$ 3,076.61</b>	<b>\$ 1,311.80</b>	<b>\$ 77.05</b>	<b>\$ 63.90</b>	<b>\$ 46.23</b>	<b>\$ 1,577.63</b>
Barton Springs Drive	B5-6	989				\$ 3,418,430	\$ 1,647,300	\$ 100,000	\$ 111,880	\$ -	\$ 1,559,250
Riverside Drive	M	3,575				\$ 13,735,270	\$ 7,554,890	\$ 200,000	\$ 191,880	\$ 150,000.00	\$ 5,638,500
Congress Avenue	N	1,624				\$ 3,653,200	\$ 729,860	\$ 150,000	\$ 116,840	\$ 105,000.00	\$ 2,551,500
South First Street	O	1,599				\$ 3,150,690	\$ 282,940	\$ 150,000	\$ 77,000	\$ 105,000.00	\$ 2,535,750
<b>New Streets (total)</b>						<b>\$ 33,974,460</b>	<b>\$ 22,211,050</b>	<b>\$ 1,150,000</b>	<b>\$ 459,160</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 10,154,250</b>
<b>New Streets (\$/LF)</b>		<b>6,177</b>				<b>\$ 5,500.16</b>	<b>\$ 3,595.77</b>	<b>\$ 186.17</b>	<b>\$ 74.33</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 1,643.88</b>
A Street	A	881				\$ 1,953,660	\$ 411,660	\$ 150,000	\$ 42,000	\$ -	\$ 1,350,000
Barton Springs Drive East	B1-4	1041				\$ 7,699,590	\$ 5,953,920	\$ 200,000	\$ 98,920	\$ -	\$ 1,446,750
C Street	C	323				\$ 5,170,140	\$ 3,678,910	\$ 150,000	\$ 74,480	\$ -	\$ 1,266,750
D Street	D	323				\$ 1,797,910	\$ 1,283,910	\$ 50,000	\$ 14,000	\$ -	\$ 450,000
E Street	E	539				\$ 2,930,240	\$ 1,996,740	\$ 100,000	\$ 28,000	\$ -	\$ 805,500
F Street	F	236				\$ 1,384,750	\$ 942,750	\$ 50,000	\$ 14,000	\$ -	\$ 378,000
G Street	G	547				\$ 2,589,070	\$ 1,580,540	\$ 100,000	\$ 42,280	\$ -	\$ 866,250
H Street	H	539				\$ 4,075,800	\$ 3,063,820	\$ 100,000	\$ 61,480	\$ -	\$ 850,500
I Street	I	923				\$ 4,327,750	\$ 2,736,750	\$ 100,000	\$ 42,000	\$ -	\$ 1,449,000
J Street	J	244				\$ 673,890	\$ 231,890	\$ 50,000	\$ 14,000	\$ -	\$ 378,000
K Street	K	250				\$ 662,590	\$ 204,840	\$ 50,000	\$ 14,000	\$ -	\$ 393,750
L Street	L	331				\$ 709,070	\$ 125,320	\$ 50,000	\$ 14,000	\$ -	\$ 519,750
<b>Streets and GI Total</b>						<b>\$ 57,932,050</b>	<b>\$ 32,426,040</b>	<b>\$ 1,750,000</b>	<b>\$ 956,760</b>	<b>\$ 360,000</b>	<b>\$ 22,439,250</b>

<b>Public Realm Total</b>	<b>\$ 73,356,178</b>
Total With Contingency	35% \$ 99,030,841

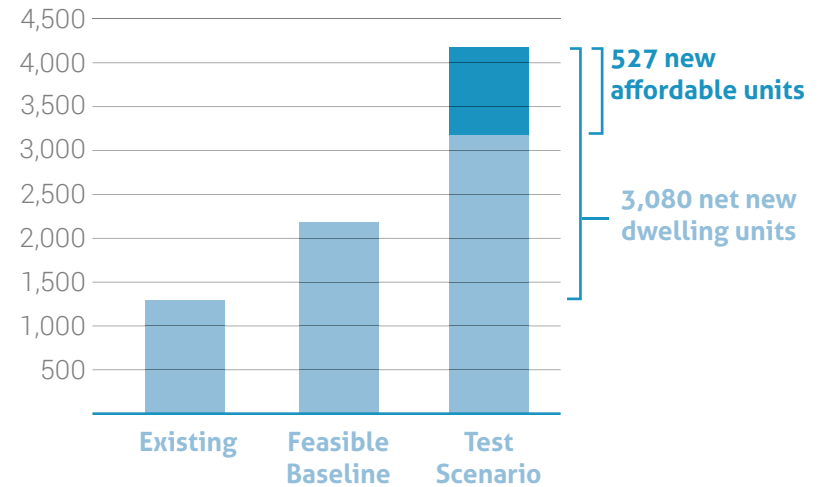
# Affordable Housing

South Central Waterfront offers a unique and unprecedented opportunity to help the City turn one of its most vexing challenges into an opportunity. The City faces an enormous shortage of affordable housing. Many close-in neighborhoods as well as downtown provide only limited capacity (for a variety of reasons) to accommodate close in affordable units that are accessible to transit. The South Central Waterfront district offers the potential to set and achieve a target of making 20 percent of future housing units developed in the area affordable to households at 60 to 80 percent of Area Median Income for rental and 100 to 120% AMI for ownership. Achieving this goal will require partnerships between the City and private property owners, participation by various affordable housing providers, and a strong portfolio of affordable housing tools. The district's close proximity to downtown employment and public transit also reduces the transportation cost burden for households by increasing commute options, including the ability to walk, bike, or take transit to work instead of owning and operating a personal vehicle.

## Partnerships

Financing for both public realm infrastructure and affordable housing will require a shared contribution from the public and private sectors. One of the underlying challenges of this Vision is that a very small amount of the district is public land, thus only a few projects can be completely financed and implemented by the City of Austin alone. Some projects will be implemented by the public sector with financial or in-kind contributions from private-sector partners, while others will be built by developers and reimbursed by the City of Austin, either directly or through development bonuses. The diagram to the right illustrates how a large development at the Cox and Crocket properties might be reorganized into many smaller parcels to provide a development bonus for developers in return for a dedication of right-of-way and parkland to the City.

### Housing Potential in the SCW District



	Existing (ac)	Vision (ac)
Open Space	4.3	10.6
Right-of-Way	0	7.5
Parcels	26.8	13.1



# Funding Toolkit

The project team evaluated possible funding tools based on a set of evaluation criteria developed specifically to fit the South Central Waterfront context. The process of developing this evaluation criteria and narrowing the set of applicable funding tools is outlined in more detail in Appendix IV: Funding Tools Evaluation. The evaluation criteria included:

- Economic feasibility: Can the tool create and maintain revenues?
- Fairness: Who pays for the tool in relation, and who benefits from the projects?
- Legality: Is the tool legal in the state of Texas?
- Political acceptability: How likely are elected officials and the public at large to support the funding source?

The primary toolkit identifies local funding tools that can fund public realm and infrastructure improvements in the area. In addition to the toolkit identified in this section, the City will explore state and federal funding tools for development and infrastructure projects on a project by project basis including New Market Tax Credits, TIGER grants, HUD discretionary grants, Section 108 loans, and other state/federal grants and loans as applicable. The City will remain open to other potential funding tools that become available after the adoption of this Plan.

	ra sportatio rastr t re	arks a d pe pa e	orda e o si
<b>i y F ded</b>			
<b>Tax Increment Financing (TIF)</b>	X	X	X
<b>Parking Partnership</b>	X		
<b>CIP Funds</b>	X	X	
GO Bonds	X	X	X
Tax Abatement			X
Housing Trust Fund			X
Vertical Housing Development Program			X
<b>ri ate y F ded</b>			
<b>Public Improvement District (PID)</b>	X	X	X
<b>Philanthropy</b>	X	X	X
<b>Transfer of Development Rights</b>		X	X
Low Income Housing Tax Credit			X
Real Estate Investment Trust			X

**Blue: Preferred tool**

Black: Other tool to be considered

# Public Funding Tools

As a result of this evaluation, the team identified a preferred funding toolkit. This section provides information on a set of tools which can be bundled to meet the goals of the SCW Plan. It is not meant to be an exhaustive list (e.g., discretionary state and federal grants are among resources are not included), but rather a pragmatic approach that lays out a set of potential tools that could be bundled for selected projects.

## Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone

### How it works:

Tax increment financing allows a jurisdiction to finance infrastructure improvements and other projects using a portion of proceeds from property and sales tax within an established boundary, a Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ). Revenues pay back upfront bonds for large-scale improvements including parks, street improvements, as well as for strategic site acquisitions and eligible economic development projects.

### Applicable SCW projects:

Parks, plazas, street improvements, utility upgrades, structured parking, and site acquisition. Explore the potential to support affordable housing.

### Preliminary assessment:

Austin has experience creating Reinvestment Zones. The preliminary capacity estimates that the District can pay for significant portions of many key projects using TIF. In addition, the potential for the Reinvestment Zone to raise significant revenue looks promising, as there are several projects that are on the cusp of redevelopment that could help to jumpstart the district.

### Next steps:

Conduct a study with a public process and financing plan that includes: boundary determination, findings of blight, projected frozen property and sales tax base, defined projects, duration of the zone, projected development absorption, projected property and sales tax revenues, maximum indebtedness, and project and bonding timelines.

## Capital Improvement Program

### How it works:

The City of Austin has identified a variety of infrastructure deficiencies in the South Central Waterfront District. Most of these projects provide enhancements to existing facilities. The City could coordinate its projected CIP efforts with other efforts identified in the Plan to optimize the use of public resources.

### Applicable SCW projects:

Parks, plazas, street improvements, and utility upgrades.

### Preliminary assessment:

The City's CIP capacity is somewhat limited in this area, and may not be able to support the development of new transportation and open space amenities.

### Next steps:

Work with City departments to determine applicable projects that could be implemented through existing CIP processes.

## Public-Private Partnerships for Parking Facilities

### How it works:

The City receives revenues from on street and publicly owned parking garages. A portion of these revenues can be used to float revenue backed bonds to construct new district serving public parking structures that achieve multiple benefits which include: reducing the need for more single use parking spaces, generating revenues for the City, providing more shared parking spaces within a district, and enabling for and non-profit developers to invest more in uses that provide housing and jobs.

### Applicable SCW projects:

Provide district parking as part of public and privately owned facilities or strictly public structures.

### Preliminary assessment:

Engaging with private and non-profit developers early in the redevelopment process to make them aware of the benefits of such parking partnerships can result in helping make more redevelopment projects viable, particularly those that are poised to proceed but still have funding gaps.

### Next steps:

Assess the capacity of this program and initiate discussions with developers about potential interest and utilization of this resource.

# Private Funding Tools

## Public Improvement District

### How it Works:

A Public Improvement District (PID) is a special assessment district where property owners voluntarily commit to assess themselves a fee to fund capital improvements and affordable housing assistance programs. The City would work with property owners to establish the PID, and would then sell bonds to finance the identified improvements and programs. Property owners within the PID would repay the bonds through annual payments tied to their property taxes or other selected assessment measure.

### Applicable SCW Projects:

Parks, street improvements, utilities, marketing/branding, and affordable housing

### Preliminary Assessment:

The revenue capacity for PIDs is dependent upon property owners' willingness to self-assess to cover infrastructure and other project/program costs, and the size of the PID boundary. The City would need to work with property owners to generate support for the projects or programs identified in the plan which could include infrastructure, operations, and affordable housing projects.

### Next Steps:

Evaluate whether to expand the existing downtown PID or create a new PID for the SCW district. This evaluation should make detailed PID projections on project/program costs and identify the assessments required to achieve PID goals. The City or a group of property owners could then initiate a petition that calls for the SCW district to be declared a public improvement district.

## Transfer of Development Rights

### How it Works:

Transfer of development rights (TDR) is a market-based technique that encourages the voluntary transfer of growth from places where a community envisions less development (called sending areas) to places where a community would like to see more development (called receiving areas). There are likely several possible "sender" and "receiver" properties. TDR receivers (senders and buyers) could include for or non-profit developers, or a public entity such as the City.

### Applicable SCW Projects:

Parks, plazas, affordable housing sites.

### Preliminary Assessment:

There are a number of privately held and publicly owned parcels that could serve as TDR senders enabling those owners to receive payment for development rights that would be transferred elsewhere. Determining potential receiving areas will require more work (e.g., size of the TDR boundary). Among the private tools, TDRs are the most subject to a variety of market conditions (e.g., interest from senders in selling, needs of potential receivers, costs of the TDR, development cycles). This makes them a less predictable, but nevertheless, helpful, resource for public realm and affordable housing.

### Next Steps:

The City would need to work with local property owners to gauge interest in a TDR Program. The City should create a legal document that 1) defines the TDR area area, and 2) develops a sender and receiver structure.

## Philanthropic Sources

### How it Works:

Other cities have engaged in successful capital campaigns to raise private money to fund streetscape and park projects as well as for affordable housing. These efforts typically fund plaza construction, street furniture, plantings, and light installations, and ongoing maintenance, as well as various aspects of affordable housing that may include site acquisition and participation in construction.

There may be several players interested in a philanthropic contribution, naming rights, or sponsorship to public realm elements and affordable housing in the South Central Waterfront.

### Applicable SCW Projects:

Parks, public art, and affordable housing.

### Preliminary Assessment:

The current interests for philanthropic contributions are unknown, but could include civic-minded individuals, local foundations, conservancies, and SCW developers that support the vision for the area. Philanthropic commitments can also help leverage investments in redevelopment efforts by the public and private sectors.

### Next Steps:

Initiate conversations with existing conservancies, foundations, and others about potential interest in philanthropic contributions for the first SCW projects.



# Affordable Housing Strategies

The City and its partners have developed a preliminary toolkit for affordable housing in the district that includes, but is not limited to the following tools:

## Housing Trust Fund

*In 2015, Austin City Council made a decision to increase the amount of revenue directed to the Housing Trust Fund. Previously, only 40% of the increment from formerly publicly-owned properties was going into the fund. Now, 100% is going into the HTF. That could produce a significant, sustainable source of funding for affordable housing.*

## Public Improvement District

*The development, rehabilitation, or expansion of affordable housing is an allowed use in a PID, and should be further explored in a PID Feasibility Study.*

## Vertical Development Program

*This program allows for additional height in exchange for the commitment to include a percentage of affordable units at 80% of Median Family Income. If combined with other incentives (like low interest loans through a PID financing program), this bonus would produce more units or a different mix of units.*

## Preservation Strike Fund

*In 2014, the City recommended implementation of a preservation strike fund that was identified in Housingworks 2014 report, "Taking Action: Preservation of Affordable Housing in the City of Austin." The fund can be used to acquire sites for affordable housing. The City is working on development of a sustainable economic model for the fund, a determination of a fund structure and a framework for the housing portfolio, and options for seeding the fund. This fund could provide seed money for the development of housing that meets fund criteria within SCW.*

## Tax abatements

*The City allows tax abatements for non-profit owned affordable housing, limited to the City's portion (20%) of the total property tax. The City will continue to explore expanding tax abatements for privately developed/ owned affordable units that are part of mixed-income developments.*

## Low Income Housing Tax Credits

*This program directs private capital toward the development and preservation of affordable rental housing for low-income households. Tax credits are awarded to eligible participants to offset a portion of their federal tax liability in exchange for the production or preservation of affordable rental housing. Both the 9% and 4% credits can be pursued for affordable housing in SCW. These credits can also be supplemented with TIF participation. For example: The Housing Authority has been successful with securing 4% tax credits and partnering with private developers to create more affordable housing (through its subsidiary, Austin Affordable Housing Corporation). HACA typically owns the land, thereby securing tax exempt status, and leases to the partnership. Exemption can reduce operating expenses in the 20% range, thereby enabling lower rents.*

## Real Estate Investment Trust

*The Trust is a vehicle that allows local investment in the SCW's affordable projects.*

## Tax Increment Financing

*Tax increment financing allows a jurisdiction to finance infrastructure improvements and other projects using a portion of proceeds from property and sales tax within an established boundary.*

# Financing and Public Return on Investment

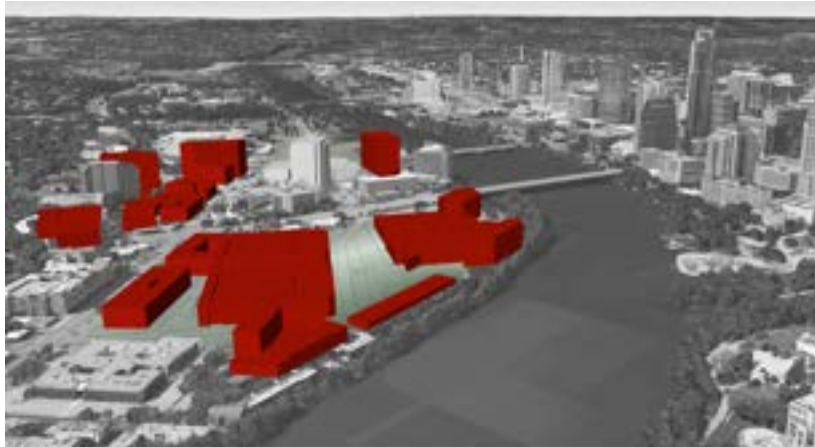
## Development Scenarios:

To better understand how new development might help realize the public realm envisioned by the South Central Waterfront Initiative, two development scenarios were modeled: a Feasible Baseline Scenario and a Test Scenario. The Feasible Baseline Scenario modeled what would likely happen with no specific interventions under current regulatory and economic environments, while the Test Scenario modeled what might be possible with a city-led effort to realize the public realm and the affordable housing goals that are envisioned by the South Central Waterfront Initiative. Please refer to Appendix V: Scenario Evaluation, for more detail about the scenario modeling.



### Existing Conditions

Currently, the South Central Waterfront is comprised of 32 privately-owned parcels and a single city-owned property. Unlike other recent City initiatives, such as the Seaholm and Mueller Redevelopments where the City owns most, if not all, of the properties, the City only controls one 5-acre property in this district. Having this many property owners and existing patchwork of parcel shapes presents challenges to coordinating an orderly redevelopment of the area. The area contains an overabundance of parking lots and aging auto-oriented development; superblocks that impede pedestrian access to the waterfront; unfriendly streetscapes; three-quarters of the area is impervious cover; outdated and inadequate infrastructure for addressing water quality and new development needs; and poor mobility connections.



## Feasible Baseline Scenario

The purpose of the Feasible Baseline Scenario is to show the scope and scale of development that might happen in the SCW without any intervention from the City of Austin, beyond planned capital improvements. The scenario assumed that existing entitlements stay in place and that existing trends continue. Please refer to page 29 for more information about the Feasible Baseline Scenario.

### Development Program

The Feasible Baseline Scenario assumes 2.2 million square feet of new development in a mix of low to mid-rise office towers, mixed-use office buildings, and multi-family residential buildings with ground floor retail. This new development, added to the existing development that remains stable, brings the district total to 4.5 million square feet of usable space. Of the approximately 97 total parcel acres in the study area, the Feasible Baseline assumes that 49 acres have potential to develop and 47 acres would remain stable. Heights range from three to six stories, except for sites with an existing Planned Unit Development where heights could go to 15 stories. The feasible baseline scenario assumes no additional funding for infrastructure

in the district, beyond few internal roads required by Subchapter E to split up some of the largest parcels.

### Development Feasibility

Analysis of the feasibility of this development program found that there is not much inducement to redevelop larger sites under current code conditions. The current market does not support new development of low density office and residential product types. This development would not be able to support the public realm or affordability targets envisioned for the area. Please refer to Appendix III for a market overview of the South Central Waterfront District.

Of course, the reality is that properties which are not financially feasible for redevelopment under the current regulations could likely apply for zoning changes under the Planned Unit Development (PUD) provisions, as has been the case in the past. However, without the provisions of the SCW Plan, further PUD development is not likely to provide for integrated public realm improvements and do not hold any guarantee for additional affordable housing.





## Test Scenario

The purpose of the Test Scenario is to show the scope and scale of development that could occur in the SCW if the City and private partners participated in a shared investment in the public realm Vision of the South Central Waterfront and committed to an ambitious affordable housing target. The scenario assumes a higher density district that would include significant public open space, streetscape enhancements, and affordable housing.

### Development Program

The Test Scenario, which illustrates one way to help achieve public realm and public purpose goals, assumes a total of 8.5 million square feet of total space in the district in a range of a range of scales and uses, and over 2 million square feet in required parking structures. Heights in the area range from five stories for some wood-frame apartment buildings to 26 stories for high-rise point towers. The density of the test scenario could be built with shorter, stockier buildings, but narrower, taller point towers open up views and light, and create a more distinctive skyline. Some existing Planned Unit Developments remain, and development continues to adhere to and exceed the setbacks from the Lady Bird Lake Shoreline.

### Development Feasibility

The current market could support new development of higher density office and residential product types. While this Test Scenario assesment was not able to complete an absorption study (which will be necessary as part of subsequent process steps), it does demonstrate that achievable rents for various product types are sufficient to encourage property owners to redevelop their land and secure viable returns for developer investments as well as generate significant public resources via TIF and PID, the latter of which, can play a pivotal role in helping to achieve public realm and public purpose goals.

### Contribution to District Projects and Programs

Property tax revenues were estimated for full buildout of the Test Scenario to understand the potential of what new development in the district could generate. This does not assume sales tax revenue or appreciation from property tax on stable parcels, nor did it include an absorption schedule for new construction for bonding purposes.

### Implications

The Test Scenario reflects the finding that better quality development on larger sites is more likely to occur with enhanced entitlements (Floor Area Ratio and height). The alternative is a series of separate Planned Unit Developments that would likely will result in piecemeal projects that fail to achieve the public objectives of high-quality open spaces, affordable housing, and connectivity.

## Test Scenario Development Program

The Financial Framework requires private properties to "buy-in" to the Vision by building the public realm on-site, as well as financially contributing to city-led improvements. To incentivize property owners to contribute, their costs must be offset through increased development allowances. The Test Scenario is a "what if" financial model to calibrate the additional development needed beyond existing entitlements to incentivize private properties to participate in the Vision. The map below shows the Test Scenario on "tipping parcels" – properties most likely to redevelop within the next 15 years. Under the Test Scenario, private properties ultimately pay for the whole public realm vision through on site improvements and the recommended Funding Toolkit on page 97. Please refer to Appendix V: Scenario Evaluation for more details about the scenario modelling.



## Financial Implications of the Scenarios

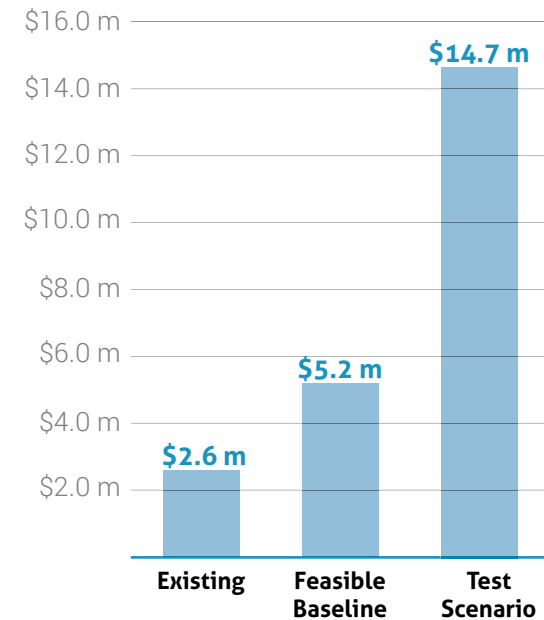
The results of the scenario models are compared with existing conditions in the table below. The Theoretical Baseline scenario revealed that while current zoning and urban design regulations would legally allow a full buildout of approximately 5 million square feet, much of this is not economically feasible. Therefore a second scenario was modeled, the Feasible Baseline, which projected how much development would realistically occur given the economic conditions in Austin. This Feasible Baseline model shows that under current regulatory and financial conditions, it is not financially viable for the private sector to dedicate any land towards new right-of-way or parkland, making it prohibitively expensive for the City to realize the full Vision without these contributions. The Test Scenario demonstrates how much new development would be necessary to enable both the private sector -- through public realm and affordable housing dedications -- and the City -- through increased tax increments -- to realize the coordinated development and public realm envisioned by the South Central Waterfront Vision Framework Plan.

		Existing Baseline	Theoretical Baseline	Feasible Baseline	Test Scenario
Office	sf	1,225,332	2,252,274	1,874,631	3,405,306
Retail	sf	128,181	258,145	240,973	422,530
Residential	sf	1,258,637	2,022,892	1,818,637	3,963,392
	units	1,297	2,168	1,956	3,999
Hotel	sf	604,822	604,822	604,822	859,322
	keys	839	839	839	1,264
Total	sf	3,216,972	5,138,133	4,539,063	8,650,550
Parking	spaces	7,465	10,399	8,853	14,393
Building Cost			\$786,804,612	\$548,405,162	\$2,053,083,362
Total Value		\$612,668,503	\$1,250,619,723	\$1,177,427,155	\$3,245,748,978
COA Tax		\$2,552,352	\$5,514,032	\$5,178,152	\$14,669,680
Total Tax		\$12,976,526	\$27,990,541	\$26,261,403	\$74,683,984

\*sf is leasable square footage, and does not include sf for parking

\*\*current tax valuation remains constant for properties that do not redevelop

City of Austin Tax Revenue





# Case Study: Portland South Waterfront

Portland's South Waterfront is an example of how a district-wide approach to redevelopment can be achieved. Public-private partnerships and serious commitments from the community and property owners turned this new waterfront district into a success story that is on track to realize the ultimate vision of the 1999 North Macadam District Framework Plan.

Many similarities exist between Austin and Portland's waterfront districts before development, including the size (130 Portland - 118 in Austin), number of private property owners (34 in Portland, 31 in Austin), and the lack of a street structure and connectivity to surrounding neighborhoods. The previous land uses in Portland included industrial and warehouse uses, while Austin includes industrial and commercial along with limited multifamily and hotel uses. This makes the Portland Waterfront an important case study for developing and implementing a financial plan for Austin's South Central Waterfront District.

## Silver Buckshot, Not a Single Silver Bullet

Portland's Waterfront district was not built by one "silver bullet" tool but rather a complex combination of funding, zoning, negotiations, commitments, and salesmanship to create a new neighborhood on once disconnected and underutilized land.

A variety of public and private stakeholders actively participated in the implementation of this plan since its inception – that is a fifteen-year and counting commitment by public and private stakeholders to realize this vision.



## Public Return on Investment:

### Portland Commitment:

- Up-front investment in infrastructure
- Revised zoning district
- Park site acquisition
- Urban renewal financial risk
- Political support
- Staffing resources

### Portland Received:

- District "jump start"
- Affordable housing and jobs creation
- Higher quality development
- LEED building commitments
- TIF generation
- "Gap payment" obligation
- Infrastructure cost-sharing
- First right of refusal

## Private Return on Investment:

### Private Commitment

- Infrastructure investment
- Development by a certain date
- Greater investment in public amenities
- LEED-certified buildings
- Land for affordable housing
- Cover TIF risk

### Private Received

- Policy/political support
- Amenities for private investment
- Cost sharing for infrastructure
- Increased return on investment

### Public investment is Key

Nothing along Portland's waterfront happened on the ground until the City stepped in with commitments totaling over \$100 million. These commitments funded and built infrastructure components of the plan, such as key streets, property acquisition for a public green, a tram stop, and an affordable housing fund. This public investment provided enough certainty for a critical mass of private property owners to pledge over \$1 Billion in redevelopment investments to build their development in accords to the agreed urban design framework. Through Tax Increment Finance, The City of Portland is on-track to recoup its initial investments.



### Portland Central Square

*Acquiring land for the Central Square in Portland's South Waterfront was a key component to gaining support and agreement to the framework plan. This land was bought with public funds and the park was created through a public-private partnership.*

### Along Austin's Waterfront

The SCW Vision Framework identifies several catalyst projects, seen below, that could serve as the City's commitment to the SCW Vision. These projects include key streets and parks built to the standards specified in the Public Realm Framework, as well as a down payment on the affordable housing goal through redevelopment of the City's One Texas Center property. As with the Portland example, the City can lead the public-private coalition to achieve the Vision.



### Potential Catalyst Projects in the South Central Waterfront.

*Strategic public investment defines the future of the South Central Waterfront and catalyzes future redevelopment. A new public plaza on the TxDOT site, an extension of Barton Springs Road, and new internal streets within the One Texas Center block are all potential catalyst projects.*





Stéphanie Bower | Architectural Illustration





# City Leadership

To accomplish the Vision, the City will need to be proactive in pursuing partnerships with private owners, developers, agencies, and other private and public entities. The City will need to make strategic capital investments to share the risk with the private community. The City will need to establish a suite of financial and district management tools, as outlined in this Plan. The scope and combination of innovative finance tools and partnerships, which builds on national best practices, will allow the South Central Waterfront to be a inspirational first example of district planning for the City. The South Central Waterfront Vision Framework Plan is based on the confidence that if other cities can accomplish this, then the City of Austin can do so as well.

Adopting the South Central Waterfront Vision Framework Plan into the City's Comprehensive Plan – Imagine Austin – is the critical next step, not the final step, to achieving the Vision. Adopting the South Central Waterfront Vision Framework Plan does not change zoning entitlements or implement the funding tools. However, adoption does set in motion a series of Next Steps to move the Vision forward. Many of these Next Steps, which include recommendations such as completing follow-up feasibility studies on specific financial tools, will require their own process, timeline, and approval, with the appropriate checks and balances along the way.

Adopting the South Central Waterfront Vision Framework Plan is not the end of a process, but the beginning. The SCW Vision Framework Plan points to the possibility of what we might achieve if we pursue the opportunity to shape the future of this district while there is still a chance.

## **Artist's rendering of the test scenario for the South Central Waterfront (Left)**

*This rendering is a "what if" illustration that imagines how the South Central Waterfront might appear twenty years from now. The rendering begins with a framework of a quality public realm and pedestrian-scaled blocks on the ground, and adds in new development with enough density to provide the incentives for developers to help pay for the public realm and hundreds of units of affordable housing.*

# Implementing the Plan

## Phasing Considerations

The SCW Framework Plan presents a holistic redevelopment program for the area and envisions a vibrant, sustainable mixed-use waterfront urban neighborhood. The SCW Plan provides a path to transforming the district with vital streetscapes, enhanced connectivity through the area and to surrounding neighborhoods, a range of open space amenities, and hundreds of units of affordable housing. Reorienting a district at this scale will require phased implementation, most likely triggered by private property owners as they move forward with redeveloping land and enter into binding development agreements with the City. Given market conditions that continue to encourage new development in the area, the City expects the first phase of development to occur within the next few years.

## Governance and Organization

### **Establish a South Central Waterfront Development Corporation**

A development corporation could provide the district with a suite of predevelopment and development services to assist the execution of both public and private projects within the district. This development corporation could facilitate and advocate for necessary public approvals, champion city-building public infrastructure to support development, and package a range of incentives and funding tools necessary to achieve the aspirations of the South Central Waterfront Vision. A development corporation can be structured as a public entity, a non-profit or a private venture, and can include public and private partners in either option. Upon adoption of this plan, the City should take the necessary steps to research the feasibility and potential structure of a South Central Waterfront Development Corporation. Recommendations and an ordinance to implement should be returned for City Council consideration as soon as possible.

### **Establish a SCW Public Improvement District**

A public improvement district (PID) could provide funding for projects in the district, as identified in the Plan, including infrastructure and affordable housing. The PID could also provide management for programs, district services and additional maintenance of the public realm. The City should take the necessary steps to evaluate the feasibility of a PID, including evaluation of whether to expand the existing downtown PID or create a new SCW PID. This evaluation should make detailed PID projections on project/program costs and identify the assessments required to achieve the PID goals.

### **Mandate a SCW Advisory Group Appointed by City Council**

The SCW Initiative benefited from ongoing engagement with the Waterfront Planning Advisory Board (WPAB) up until the WPAB was dissolved in June 2015. Moreover, the WPAB created a South Central Waterfront Stakeholder Outreach Committee (SOC) in January 2014 to provide additional representation and expertise to the SCW Initiative and the SCW Initiative has benefited from this informal committee. The SCW SOC included representatives from the WPAB plus representatives from adjacent neighborhoods to the SCW, SCW property owners, real estate professionals, affordable housing professionals, and the Texas School for the Deaf. Staff has informally continued to work with the SCW SOC to facilitate dialogue and outreach. The currently active membership of the SCW SOC, as last authorized by the WPAB, is listed in the Acknowledgments section of this document. A Council authorized SCW Advisory Group could provide continuity and communication among stakeholders and advocates as the SCW Plan moves towards implementation, as well as provide recommendations to the city council and city boards as Next Steps proceed, outlined in this Plan.

### **Coordinate City government to effectively implement the plan**

The City Manager should identify a lead city department and staff to implement the SCW Plan, and key City departments should assign point individuals to an interdepartmental work group with a central oversight role for plan implementation. This group should coordinate efforts of all affected City departments, and act as the liaison to the SCW Advisory Group, the South Central Waterfront Development, and other entities which may be formed.

## Regulatory Amendments

### **Adopt the South Central Waterfront Vision Framework**

Upon adoption, this Vision Framework Plan will become an amendment to the City's Comprehensive Plan and amend the growth concept map to add a regional center to the area covered by the plan.

### **Make amendments to other plans**

Adoption of this Vision Framework Plan will set in motion due process and the necessary steps to amend any existing plan affected.

### **Coordinate with CodeNEXT**

The creation of a Regulating Plan for the South Central Waterfront District will be assigned to the CodeNEXT Initiative.

## Capital Improvement Projects

### **Coordinate with Projects Identified in the Capital Improvement Program Pipeline and Rolling Needs Assessment**

Several infrastructure projects in the South Central Waterfront district are already identified in the City's Five-Year Capital Improvement Program Pipeline and Rolling Needs Assessment. Most of these projects provide enhancements to existing facilities and will need to coordinate with any improvements recommended by the SCW Vision Framework Plan. These projects are described in more detail in Appendix V. Notable planned projects include streetscape improvements to Congress Avenue, shoreline restoration of Lady Bird Lake, and ongoing programs to rehabilitate and reconstruct arterial and neighborhood streets, install bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and address water quality problems identified by the Watershed Protection Master Plan.

### **Waterfront Park and District Open Space**

The waterfront park is a pivotal feature for the area. Its realization must be tied to and integrated with the redevelopment of the Statesman site. That said, if the City wants to complete the park before the Statesman site is redeveloped, it could take either of two approaches, each conditional on reaching a development agreement with the Statesman property owners:

- 1) Build the entire park at once by floating a general obligation bond, using philanthropic sources, or a combination of the two.
- 2) Phase construction over time. If phasing is required due to funding and redevelopment issues, then the City could use a combination of tax increment revenues, a public improvement district, and/or philanthropic sources.

## Expand Funding Toolkit

To achieve the public realm and affordable housing vision, the City of Austin and other providers need to enact tools such as a public improvement district, tax credits, TDRs, and land write downs to help secure sites for affordable units and to finance new affordable and mixed-income developments on publicly-owned and private sites. The adoption of this plan will set in motion the required next steps to initiate feasibility studies and potential ordinances for Council to consider for the creation of a Public Improvement District, Transfer of Development Rights ordinance, and Tax Increment Finance District.



# Next Steps

City Action	Timeframe		Key Partners	
	0-1 yr	2+ yr	City	Other
<b>Identify lead entity in City to coordinate efforts moving forward and assign lead person</b>	X		CMO	
<b>Create cross-departmental City team with assigned departmental points of contact</b>	X		Multiple Departments	
<b>Create a South Central Waterfront Advisory Group</b>	X		Council	
<b>Coordinate with ongoing city initiatives</b> The adoption of the SCW Vision Framework Plan includes recommendations that should be coordinated with the following initiatives (not a complete list): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Congress Avenue Urban Design Study</li> <li>CPO Strategic Capital Planning</li> <li>ATD Transportation Criteria Manual</li> <li>Bicycle and Sidewalk Master Plans</li> <li>CodeNEXT</li> <li>Revision of Watershed Ordinance and update of Watershed Master Plan</li> <li>Downtown Austin Parking Strategy</li> <li>Movability Austin</li> <li>Project Connect</li> </ul>	X	X	ATD, CPO, Planning, PWD, Watershed, NHCD, Others	Downtown Austin Alliance, Downtown Austin Transportation Management Assoc., CapMetro
<b>Closure of free-right turn lane and creation of Barton Springs Rain Gardens</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue coordination with key properties and multiple departments to implement SCW Vision.</li> <li>Develop Policy and program for Council consideration to facilitate conversion of ROW from transportation to public space.</li> <li>Develop and implement tactical, interim, and long -term implementation to realize Barton Springs Rain Gardens.</li> </ul>	X		Planning, Transportation, Public Works, Water Energy, Real Estate, Legal	Affected Property Owners
<b>Develop a SCW Public Art Master Plan</b>	X		Art in Public Places, Economic Development	Artists and arts groups
<b>Coordinate with Texas School for the Deaf / Texas Facilities Commission</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordinate with the Texas Facilities Commission and the TSD to incorporate the SCW schematic designs into the TSD Master Plan.</li> <li>Explore public/private partnerships, State and Federal funding, and other grants and philanthropic donors to realize the trail along Bouldin Creek.</li> </ul>	X		Parks, Planning, Public Works, Watershed	Texas School for the Deaf, Texas Facilities Commission

City Action	Timeframe		Key Partners	
	0-1 yr	2+ yr	City	Other
<b>Initiate Public Improvement District evaluation</b> <p>To evaluate the feasibility of a Public Improvement District, the City will need to engage property owners in a similar process to the tax increment study. The process should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with private property owners and the Downtown Austin Alliance. Since part of the area is already within a PID, the City will need to 1) assess the benefits and costs of expanding the PID or creating new one.</li> <li>Identify potential PID eligible projects and programs and conduct detailed PID projections on project/program costs.</li> <li>Identify assessments required to achieve PID goals</li> <li>Complete the steps required for PID adoption, detailed in the Local Government Code Chapter 372. Improvement Districts in Municipalities and Counties (<a href="http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/LG/htm/LG.372.htm">http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/LG/htm/LG.372.htm</a>)</li> </ul>	X		Economic Development, Finance	Coordinate with taxing jurisdictions, Downtown Austin Alliance. Potential consultant support
<b>Initiate Development Corporation / Authority Evaluation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluate potential structures for a South Central Waterfront Development Authority</li> </ul>	X		Economic Development, Finance, Legal	Potential consultant support
<b>Transfer of Development Rights.</b> <p>Evaluate the potential of a TDR ordinance that defines TDR areas and develops a sender and receiver structure. The structure would address among other factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How to value development rights.</li> <li>How the development rights can be used by the receiving entity (e.g., more FAR and/or height as well as other conditions such as possible affordable housing commitment either on site or a fee-in-lieu).</li> <li>Who is eligible to buy the rights (e.g., private property owners and developers, the City, non-profits). There are several possible "sender" properties. Three of these could include One Texas Center (related to affordable housing), the Cox properties (related to the waterfront park), and the Crockett properties (related to the plaza).</li> </ul>	X		Legal, CodeNEXT	Potential consultant support
<b>Develop a Regulating Plan</b> <p>The City should aim to set up regulatory conditions that lead to changes in the entitlements to the area over time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incorporate incentives and form-based code provisions to provide clarity for public realm and urban design intentions</li> </ul>		X	Coordinate with CodeNEXT staff and consultants	

City Action	Timeframe		Key Partners	
	0-1 yr	2+ yr	City	Other
<b>Evaluate the feasibility of Tax Increment Financing in the SCW</b> Prepare a TIF/TIRZ feasibility study that builds on the preliminary projections in the SCW framework plan. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• clarify that the area meets statutory blight requirements</li> <li>• assess projected absorption potential for varying product types</li> <li>• factor in possible sales tax increment in addition to property tax</li> <li>• evaluate alternative boundaries</li> <li>• make assumptions about projects that may be tax-exempt</li> <li>• identify desired TIF eligible projects and programs</li> </ul> Additional information on the process to set up a TIRZ are summarized in the Local Economic Development Handbook.[1]	X		Transportation, Economic Development, Finance	Coordinate with taxing jurisdictions. Potential consultant support.
<b>Evaluate the potential of a Parking Management District.</b> The City should evaluate the potential for investment in district parking options that can provide public parking to support area uses.	X		Transportation, Economic Development, Finance	
<b>Refine affordable housing implementation strategy</b> This includes refining MFI target goals, identifying phased opportunities for site acquisition and implementation of various product types. Identify key partners and lead roles for each component of the toolkit.	X		NHCD, Real Estate	Potential affordable housing partners.
<b>Initiate conversations with potential philanthropic donors.</b> The City has had initial discussions with existing foundations and trusts such as The Trail Foundation, and the St. Davis Foundation about potential partnership. As part of continuing conversations, the City will discuss the feasibility of developing a South Waterfront Conservancy.	X	X	City Council, Departments TBD	







June 2016 Austin, Texas