

A Strategy for Getting Transit Parks on Corridors

Steven Zettner

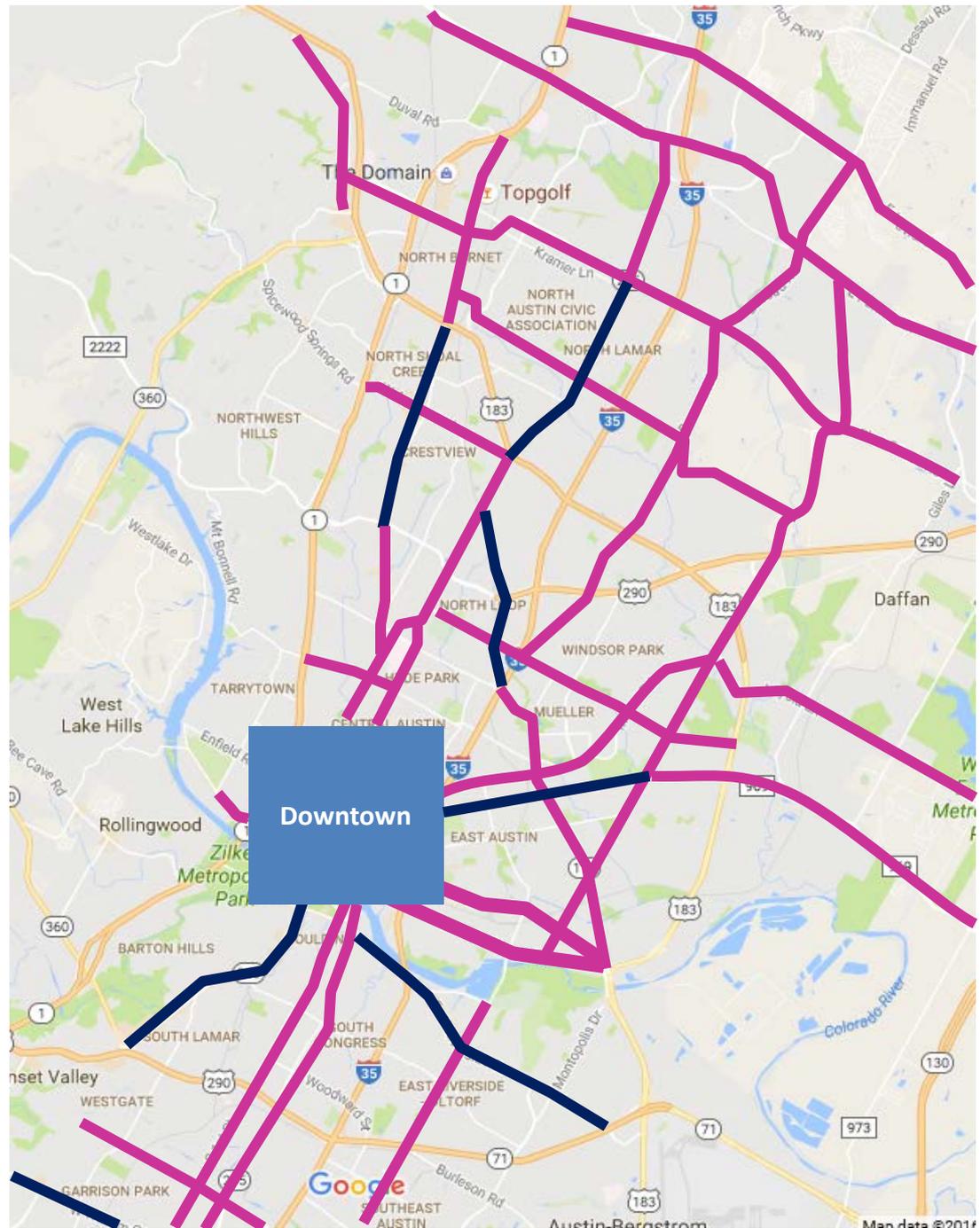
Sustainable Neighborhoods

December 13, 2016

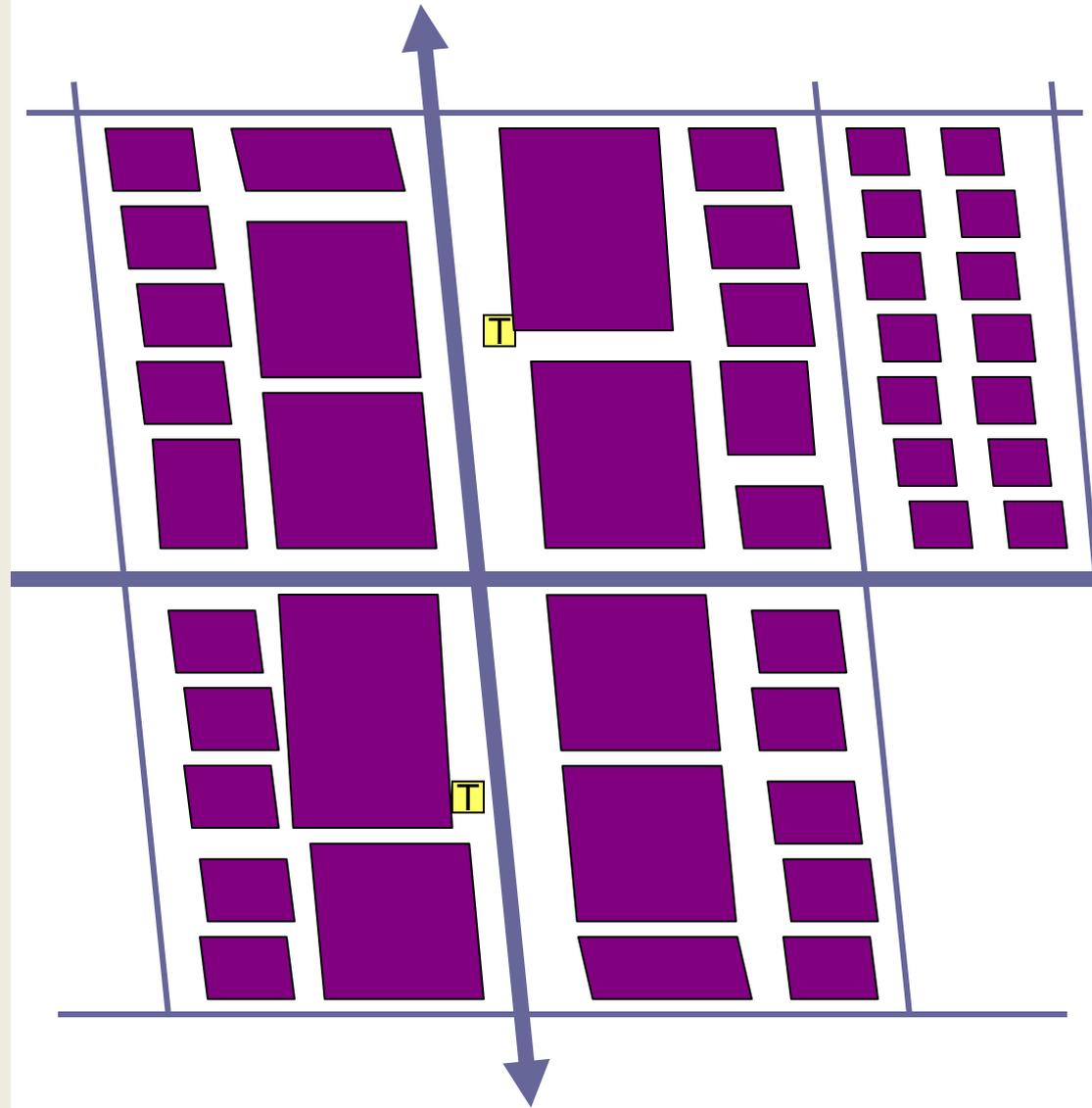
Growth Corridors in Imagine Austin

 Imagine Austin growth corridor

 Imagine Austin growth corridor, funding in 2016 mobility bond



Activity Corridor

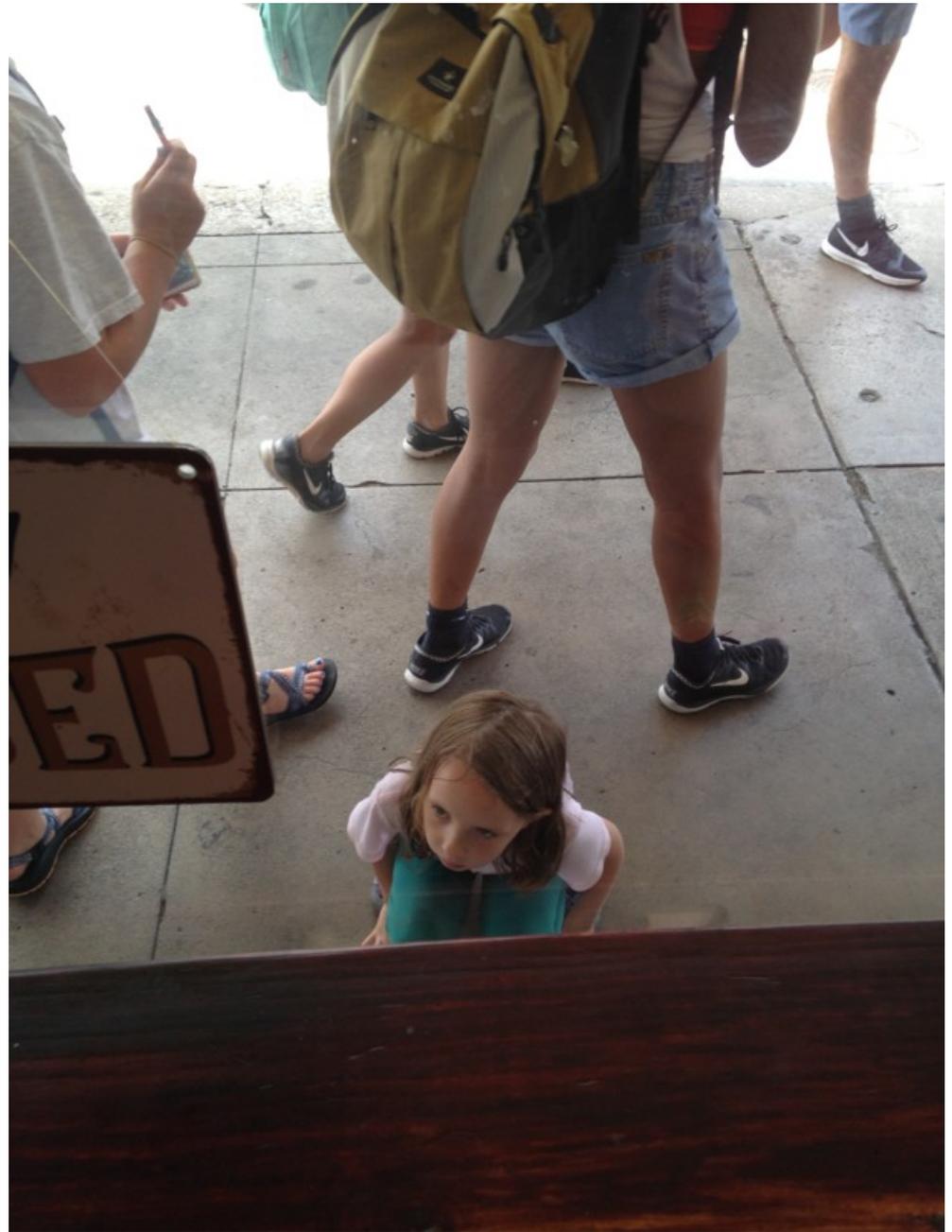


One vision of an “Activity Corridor” under CodeNext – buildings arranged up and down the corridor, with pedestrian focus on the side of the road.



Transit Platform. The conventional shelter and seating for riders waiting to take a bus or train

South Congress
Street Scape –
Too Loud to Linger



Better Burnet Block event

City of
Austin
sponsored
event

Sunday
afternoon,
9/11/16



Better Burnet Block event

Space arranged along side of corridor was underutilized



Better Burnet Block event



Better Burnet Block event

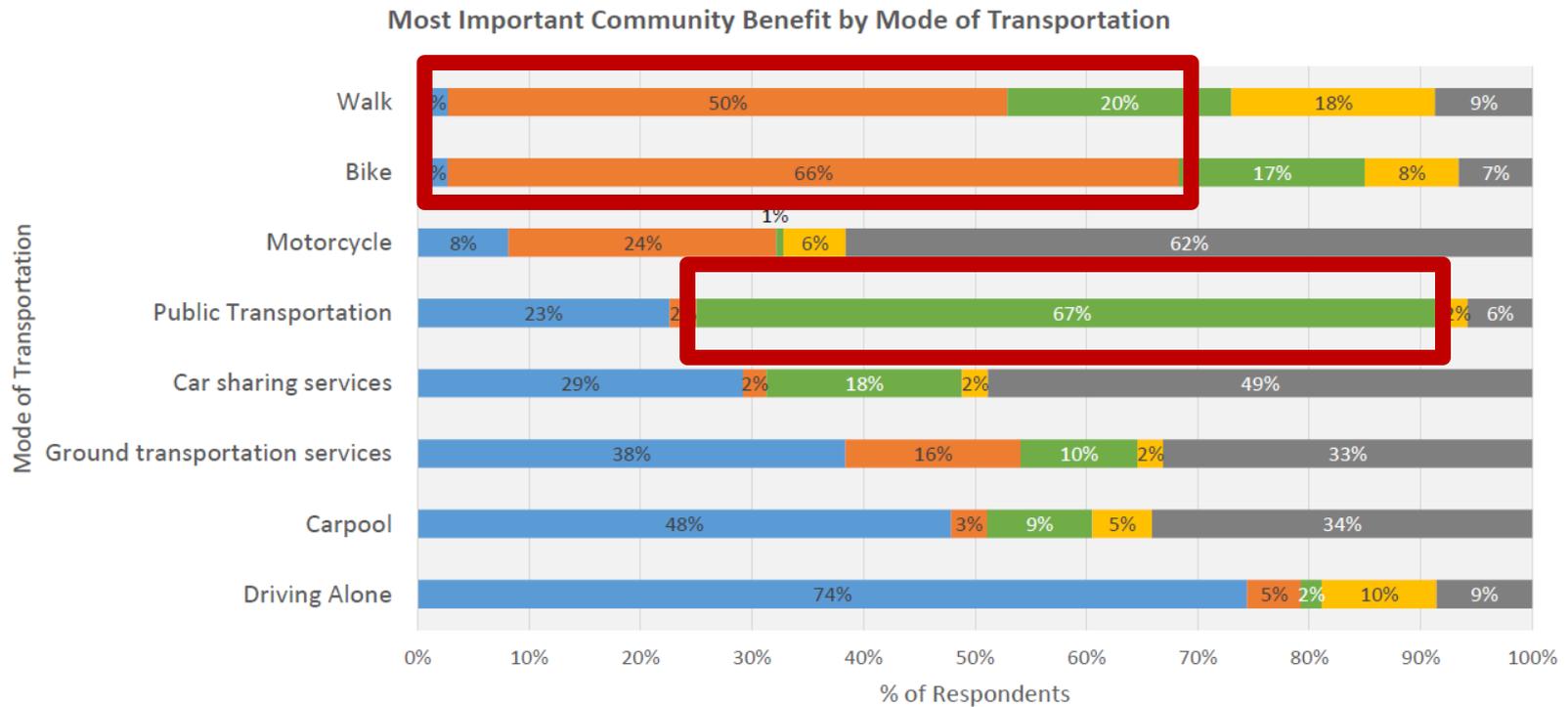
People gravitated to shaded space away from the street



Better Burnet Block event



To Improve Public Transportation, Offer Safe Connections from the Neighborhood



Manage Congestion

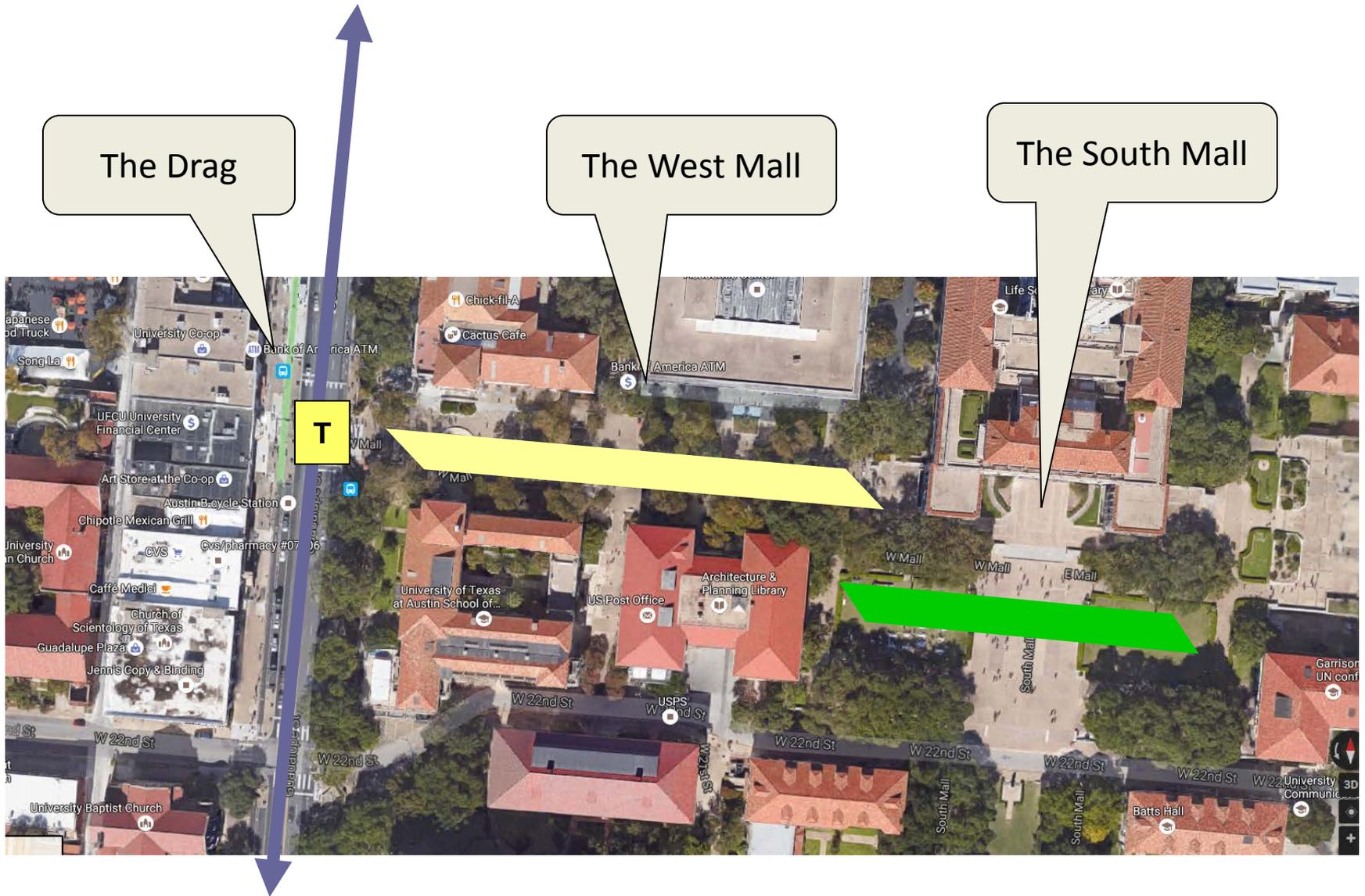
Improve Safety

Improve Connections in my Neighborhood

Improve Quality of our Streets

I don't know / Unsure

You've Probably Experienced the Benefits of a "Transit Park" Right Here in Austin



A Second, Community-Oriented Corridor Vision:

“Village Centers” at Transit Hubs, Anchored by Transit Parks

A **transit park** is publicly accessible space, extending off the corridor from a high capacity transit station to provide quality pedestrian and cyclist connectivity, and a community gathering space.

Elements include:



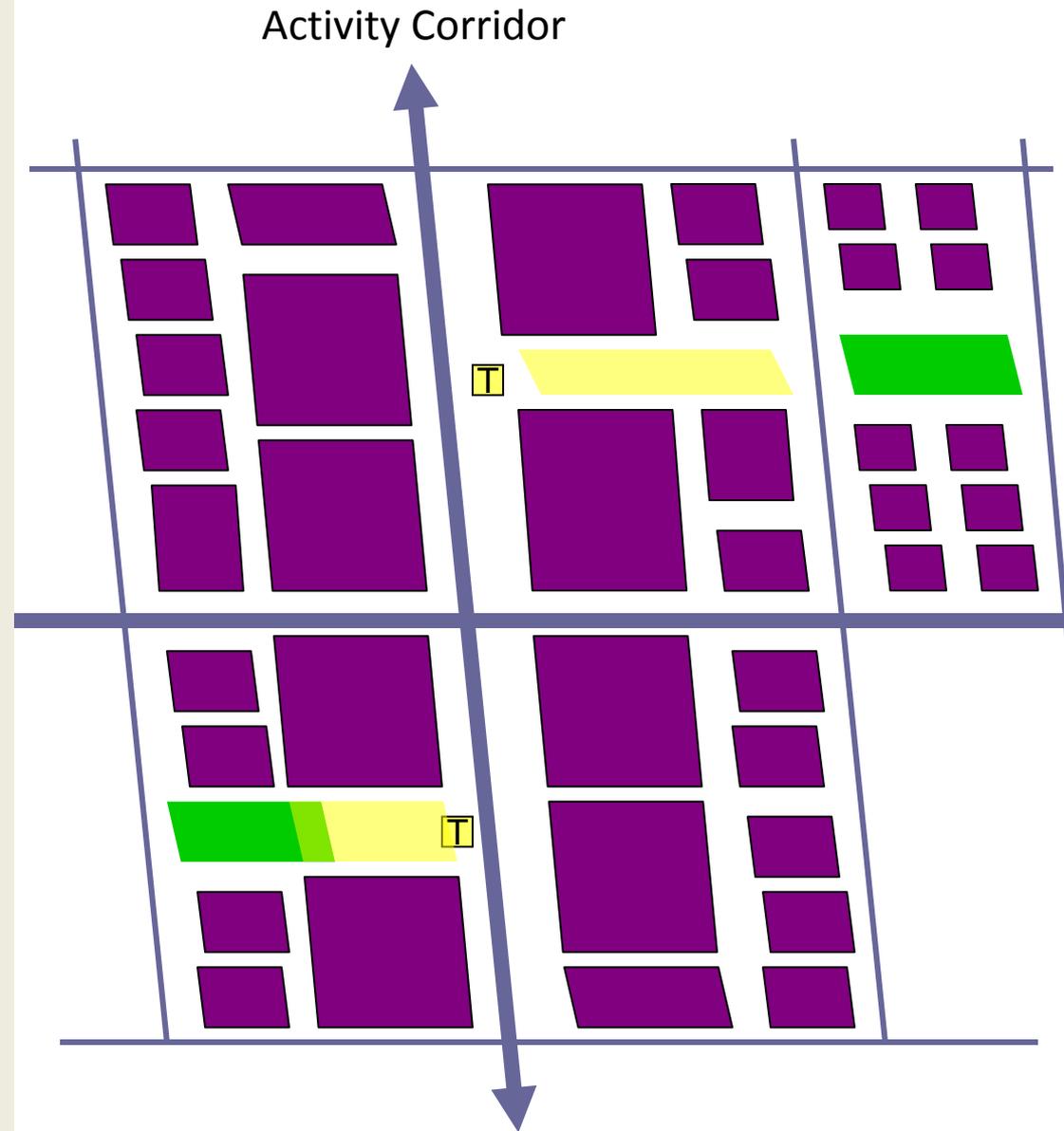
Transit Platform. The conventional shelter and seating for riders waiting to take a bus or train



Transit Plaza. Public space closest to the transit platform. Generally hard-scaped for high foot traffic. Safe and comfortable for all ages.



Pocket Park. Public space one or two blocks off the corridor. More recreational and relaxed, but still contributing directly to pedestrian or bicycle connectivity.



Burnet Rd at North Loop

Village Center

CONCEPT ONLY

Key



Rapid Bus platform



Linear Mall



Transit plaza



Pocket park



Creek



Imagine Austin: use parks and trails to connect transit-oriented communities

- 2008 - Allandale, Brentwood, Crestview, Highland, North Shoal Creek, Wooten, neighborhood associations pass resolutions calling for minimum open space in support of corridors
- 2009 – City Council adopts resolution calling for park space within a ¼ mile of every residence in the urban core. However, the resulting parks are often away from expensive land along corridors where they would contribute to mobility and serve more residents
- 2012 - Open space is not an obvious priority for the Airport Blvd corridor plan. Partly as a result, PARD subsequently struggles to win commitment for space at Highland Mall
- **2012 – Imagine Austin adopted. Calls for “integrating nature into our city”, using creeks and open space to put the “connected” into “compact and connected”**
- 2012 - The City’s 2012 bond package designates only \$4 million for pocket park acquisition across the entire city
- 2013 - City Council amends the Vertical Mixed Use ordinance to require plazas for developments adjacent to rapid transit stations, but the space required is symbolic
- 2015 - Parks Department redirects parkland dedication funds to acquisitions far away from the corridor development that generated the funding
- May 2016 - CodeNext open space prescription paper doesn’t prioritize open space for transit hubs
- July 2016 - CodeNext mobility prescription paper doesn’t discuss open space at all

We Need a Strategy That Marries Public Space to Mobility

- **CODENEXT:** more robust requirements for transit plazas and parkland dedication in development adjacent to a rapid transit station
- **PARD:** prioritize pocket park acquisition within 1-2 blocks of transit stations, arranged to achieve high quality pedestrian and bicycle connectivity to transit
- **PARD:** develop a land bank
- **CITY COUNCIL:** revise City rules to allow PARD to bid at market rate on parkland
- **CITY COUNCIL OR CITY MANAGER:** direct staff to undertake a transit park pilot program on at least two corridors, funded by the 2016 mobility bond package