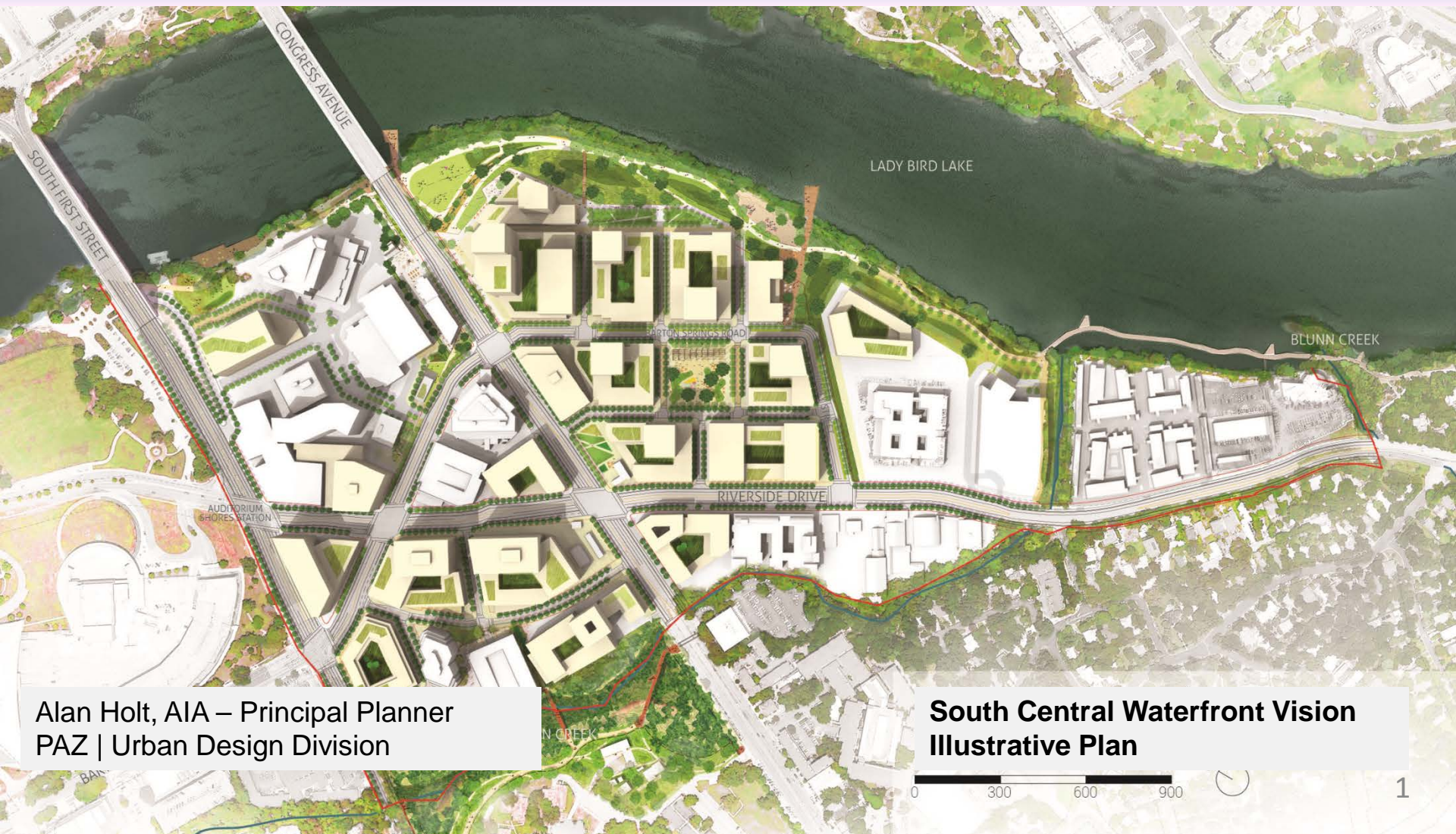


# South Central Waterfront Advisory Board

## August 21, 2017

### Briefing: Texas School for the Deaf



Alan Holt, AIA – Principal Planner  
PAZ | Urban Design Division

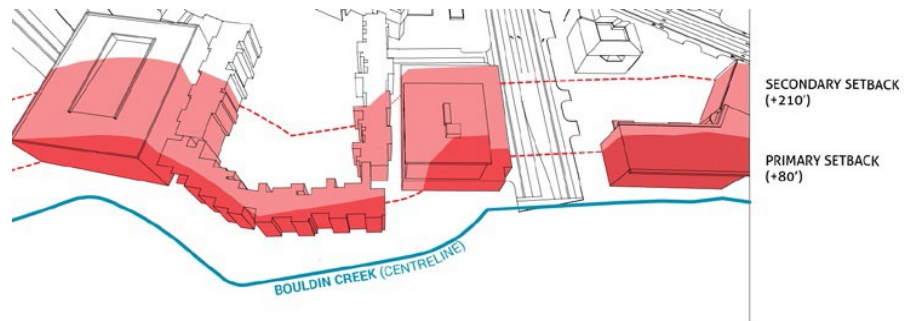
**South Central Waterfront Vision  
Illustrative Plan**

# 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.

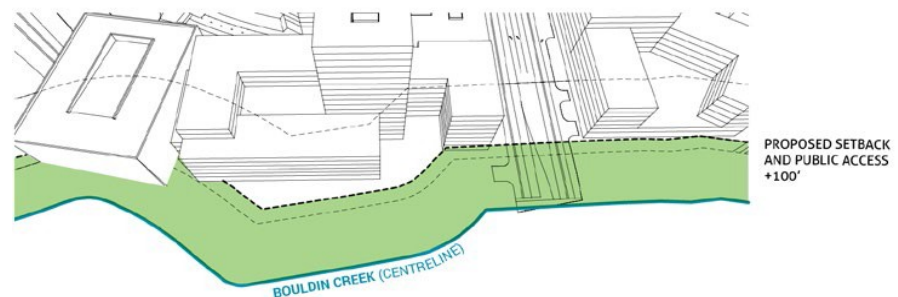
## Existing Conditions

*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.*

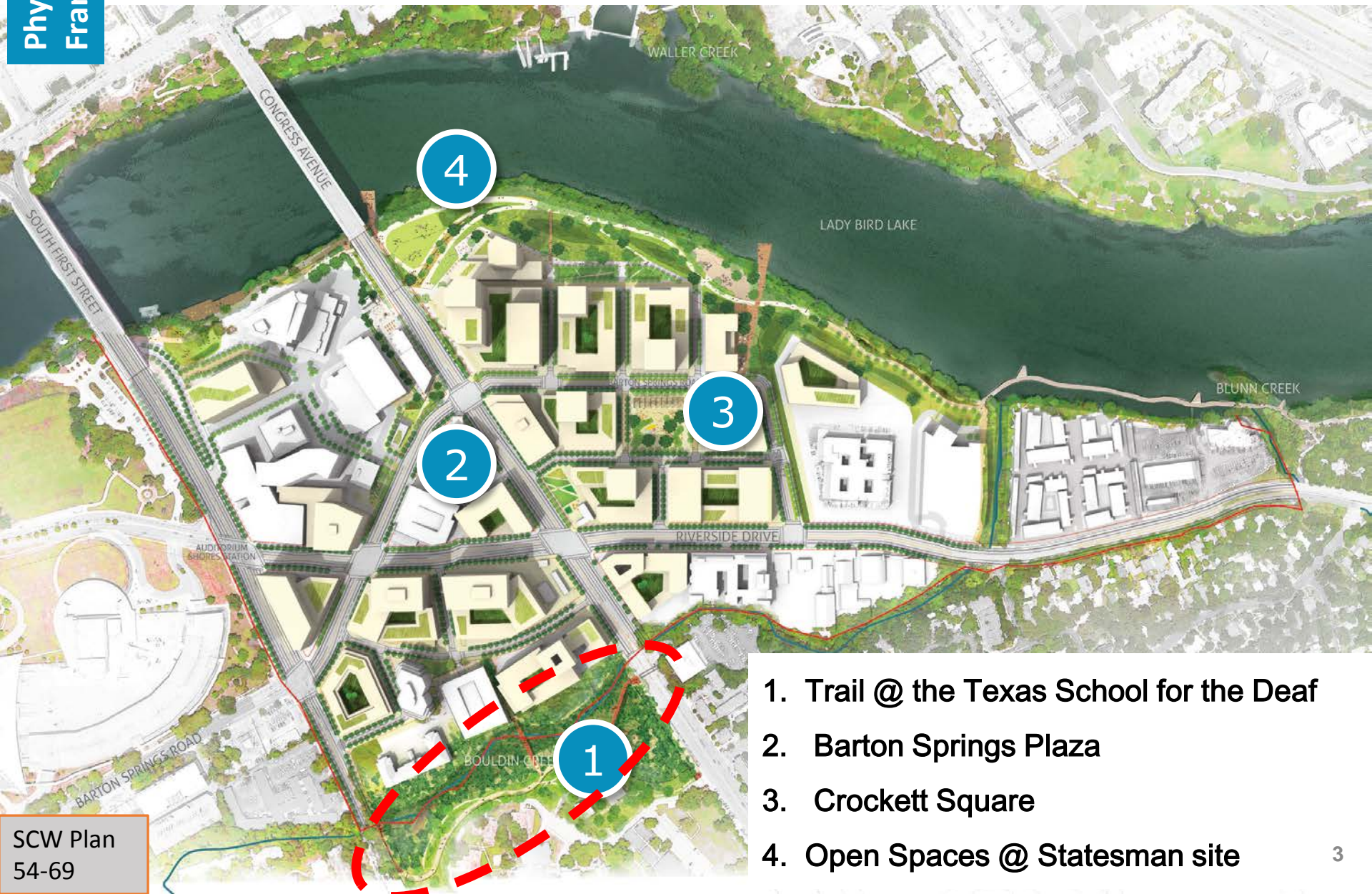


## Vision

*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.*



# Key Placemaking Prospects: Catalyst Anchors

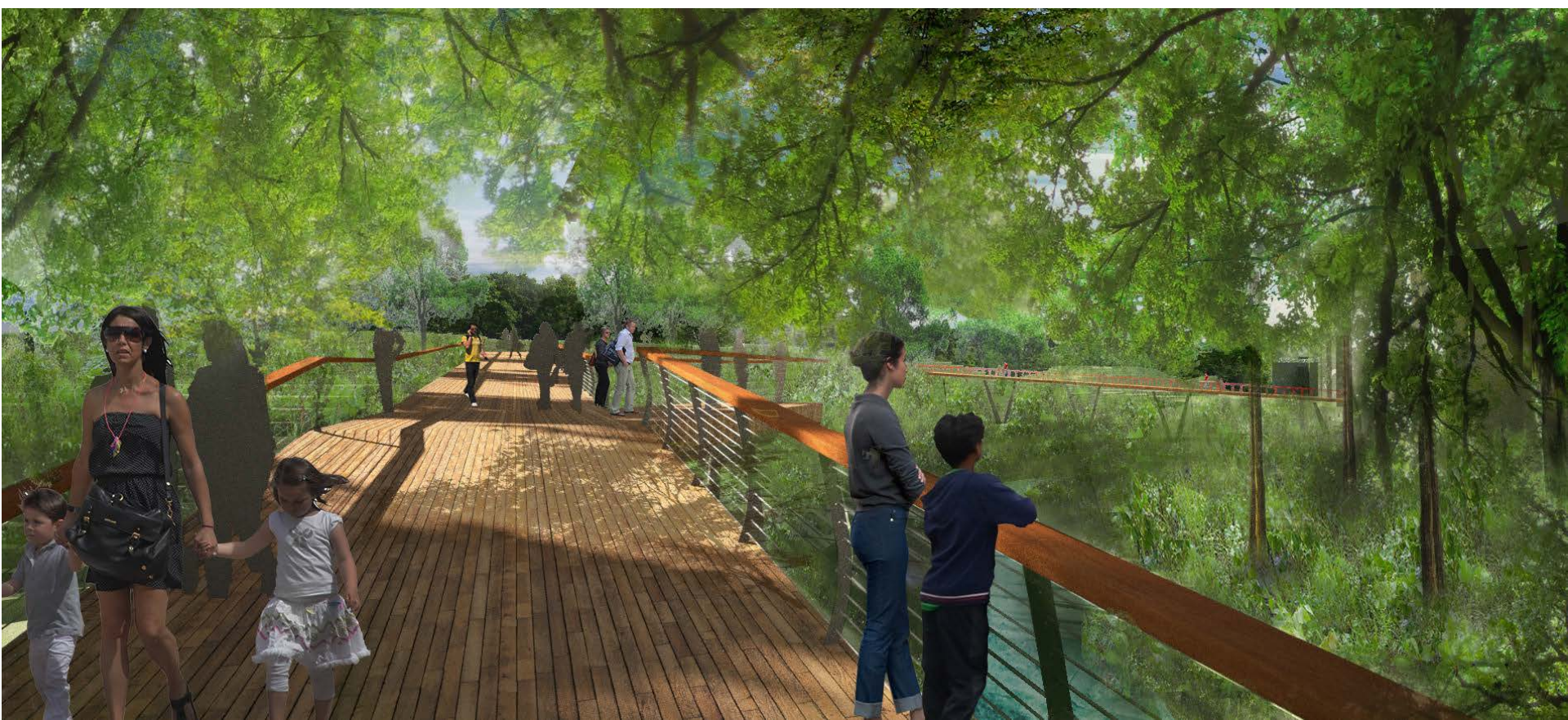


1. Trail @ the Texas School for the Deaf
2. Barton Springs Plaza
3. Crockett Square
4. Open Spaces @ Statesman site

# Key Placemaking Prospects: Bouldin Creek Trail



## Key Placemaking Prospects: Bouldin Creek Trail



Looking from Congress Avenue to the Texas School for the Deaf  
(Bouldin Creek @ right)

# Texas School for the Deaf | 2017 Campus Master Plan

## Community Analysis

### Community Activity Diagram Key (Diagram to the left)

The following is a review of the keyed activities noted in the opposite diagram of the immediate Austin community that surrounds TSD:

- A. Palmer Events Center and the Long Center for the Performing Arts at Butler Park
- B. Elements in consideration for the South Central Waterfront Vision Framework Plan call for a long-term transition from large footprint, more corporate-aligned development between TSD and Lady Bird Lake to more mixed-use, open space-friendly development
- C. The same South Central Waterfront plan mentioned in B above also proposes a public urban creek “Canopy Walk” which follows Bouldin Creek through the north edge of the TSD Campus
- D. The South Congress Avenue entrance to the TSD Campus, though large and visible, has functionally become a secondary entry that is closed much of the time
- E. The Elizabeth Street Gate has become a vital entry and egress point into campus
- F. Decentralized commercial development over the past 15 years has transformed this stretch of South Congress Avenue into a cultural mecca of Austin. Shops and restaurants, continued development and mixed-use activity continue to be built along this arterial thoroughfare.
- G. Less prominent than South Congress Avenue, but nonetheless busy, commercial activity on South 1st Street has made this area beginning south of W Gibson St a vibrant area, with shops, cafes, and food truck venues prominently seen.



*A rendering of the proposed elevated linear park trail envisioned in the ongoing South Central Waterfront Vision Framework Plan for the northern boundaries of the TSD Campus over Bouldin Creek (Image courtesy of The City of Austin, the U.S. EPA, and CMG Landscape Architects)*

#### Regional Neighborhood Associations and Districts

The TSD Campus is bounded by two of Austin's most active neighborhood organizations — to the north and west lies the Bouldin Creek Neighborhood, while to the east of South Congress Avenue lies the Greater South River City Neighborhood, which is represented by three key associations: South River City Citizens (SROC), South Austin Commercial Alliance (SACA), and Area Merchants. These groups were contacted through the course of this master planning exercise to gain insight and input, most notably through stakeholder engagement events.

Through these stakeholder engagement activities, the most common point of feedback received from neighborhood representatives is how little daily engagement occurs between TSD and the surrounding businesses and community. While much of this detachment is unavoidable due to the functional nature of an education institution and the otherwise largely residential and commercial activities that surround TSD, it is hoped that interface opportunities identified in this master plan and allied efforts such as the South Central Waterfront Vision Framework Plan may “lift the veil” that inadvertently exists. That being said, both neighborhood associations support efforts proposed in this master plan, such as continued campus development, proposed safety and security improvements, sustainability initiatives, and the stabilization and qualitative improvement to the Bouldin Creek watershed as it bounds the TSD Campus.

#### Regional Businesses and Commercial Districts

One area of sweeping change in the community that surrounds the TSD Campus since the 1991 Master Plan has been the influx of commercial and mixed-use development along South Congress Avenue, and to a lesser degree, similar development along the South 1st Street corridor. Interestingly, this development begins on both thoroughfares approximately at the intersecting bounds of the TSD Campus, and from there continues south. The common denominator to these developments, at least from the retail and

restaurant standpoint, has been indigenously-developed local businesses which naturally cater to Austin's independent and unique culture. Mixed-use multi-family development has also proliferated along South Congress Avenue. The effects of this have strained vehicular and parking resources of the immediate arterial roadways, and those few nearby parking resources, as well as limited residential side-streets and thoroughfares which have been granted permits for public parking. The potential exists that, should TSD be able to extend the presence and expanded public use of its on-campus athletic and cultural facilities, that these could be successfully marketed to the public as a popular venue, given their proximity to dozens of Austin's most popular restaurants and shops.

#### Ongoing and Enhanced Community Use of Facilities

TSD already partners with over 50 regional for-profit and not-for-profit partners, school districts, and other community partners for their use of TSD athletics, indoor student life and cultural facilities. TSD recognizes this as an unrealized, potentially larger source of revenue and outreach to the surrounding community.

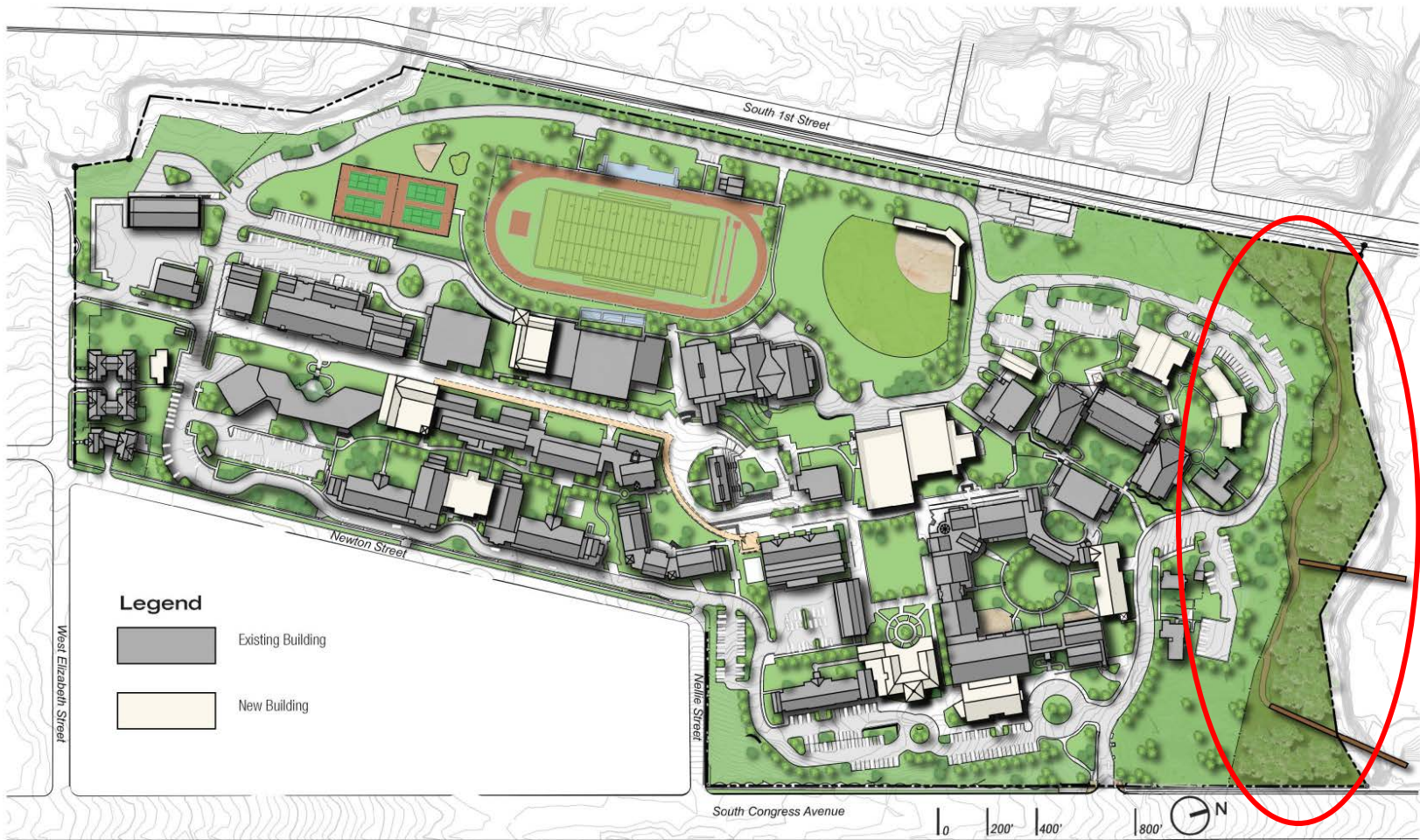
That being said, increasing community use of TSD facilities and resources cannot be solved solely by facility planning solutions. In addition to improved on-campus and public campus perimeter wayfinding, and facility improvements proposed to athletics, cultural, and student life facilities, it is proposed to

TSD Administration that increased marketing, social media interface, and direct engagement with the surrounding community will result in a marked increase in public use of facilities.



*Disused buildings and properties along South Congress Avenue have seen a massive rebirth in the past 15 years, as adaptive reuse and mixed-use development have transformed the drag into one of the most vibrant areas of Austin.*

# Texas School for the Deaf | 2017 Campus Master Plan



Proposed Campus Master Plan, n.t.s.