



# South Central Waterfront

2020 South Central Waterfront Vision Implementation Update

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# 1 Introduction

The SCW District today is a patchwork of 34 private properties, and 1 City-owned property (OTC), encompassing 97 acres in properties (118 acres w/ ROW included). The district is characterized by a Lack of connectivity - Could drop 33 downtown blocks in district of superblocks and surface parking. It is Pedestrian-hostile, with a limited walking grid, narrow sidewalks, few street trees, and fewer streetscape amenities. Scarcity of Greenery - ~20% of district is surface parking. Sparse tree canopy. Lack of open space. No Affordable Housing guaranteed.

As a response, the now-retired Waterfront Planning Advisory Board, with staff support from the Urban Design Division, began initial planning and community outreach in 2012. Building on this early effort, The City Council passed a resolution in 2013 to create an official small area plan. Capping this four-year effort, the South Central Waterfront Vision Framework Plan (SCW Plan) was adopted by Council in June 2016.

The SCW Plan established a vision to guide redevelopment in this district over the next 20 years. The adopted SCW Plan is based on a district-wide, public/private partnership model that will transform the district by:

- Retrofitting 17 acres of new connected parks, trails, plazas, and open spaces across a patchwork of 34 private properties.
- Adding over 2 miles of refurbished or new streetscapes, expand the street grid, and promote transportation options to create a lively, walkable and transit-friendly district.
- Enhancing connections and open spaces to and along the waterfront.
- Incentivizing affordable housing to ultimately equal 20% of the district's new residential units.

## WHAT IS IN THIS UPDATE

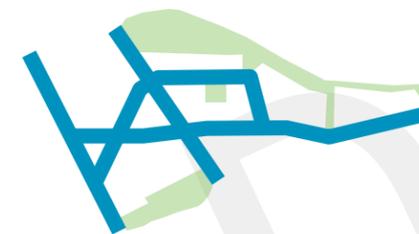
- In order to achieve the Vision, the 2016 SCW Plan set up three “frameworks” to guide future policy, programs, redevelopments, and public and private investments. These three frameworks - Physical Framework; Financial Framework; City Leadership Framework - provide clear directions while also offering flexibility to adapt to and incorporate future best practices, changing financial conditions in the public and private sector, and strategic linkages with future public initiatives.
- The 2016 SCW Plan recommended the “Next Steps” to be undertaken to ensure the viability of the Vision. This 14-point implementation plan lays out recommendations on developing and adopting a series of interdependent policies, programs, agencies, tools, and methodologies.
- Since the 2016 SCW Plan the City has made strides in accomplishing some of the recommendations laid out in the implementation plan, though progress has been uneven. Meanwhile, other changes have taken place since 2016. The City has incorporated new best practices and updated policies in mobility, sustainability, equity, and other arenas. New game-changing strategic opportunities have arisen, such as Project Connect. The private development community has moved forward, outpacing the City’s implementation targets. The financial realities for the public and private sectors shifted remarkably since 2016 and are shifting again.
- City staff in the Urban Design Division, which led the official small area planning effort, has continued to work on implementation efforts with ad hoc support from other departments. The Council’s establishment of the South Central Waterfront Advisory Board (SCWAB) in 2017, a key recommendation from the SCW Plan, has provided momentum to push forward on implementation recommendations.

- Responding to recommendations from the SCWAB and staff, in summer 2019 the City authorized hiring consultant services to assist staff with updating targeted portions of the 2016 SCW Plan. This document provides an overview of the work accomplished with staff and consultants over the past year:
  - Physical Framework: Update and refine the schematic designs and associated costs for the SCW Plan’s Physical Framework (streets and street sections; parks, trails; plazas and open spaces; green infrastructure; and utilities infrastructure).
  - Financial Framework: Update and refine the financial modeling for the SCW Plan.
- The narrative over the following pages provides an overview of what has been accomplished, or not, since 2016 with moving forward with the 14 point implementation recommendations. The narrative highlight how the Physical and Financial Frameworks have been modified in response to new best practices, public and private initiatives, and policy initiatives. And, this narrative highlights how the Frameworks have been refined with a deeper level of analysis than was done for the 2016 plan.
- Collectively, this narrative and the associated appendices are called the 2020 South Central Waterfront Plan Update (2020 SCW Plan Update). This book uses the convention of calling out the 2016 SCW Plan and the 2020 SCW Update to compare the two documents.

# 2016 SCW VISION FRAMEWORK PLAN

The 2016 SCW Plan 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 the 2016 SCW Plan 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, the 2016 SCW Plan served 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.



## Physical Framework

Green Streets, Pedestrian Connections & Open Space for a great public realm



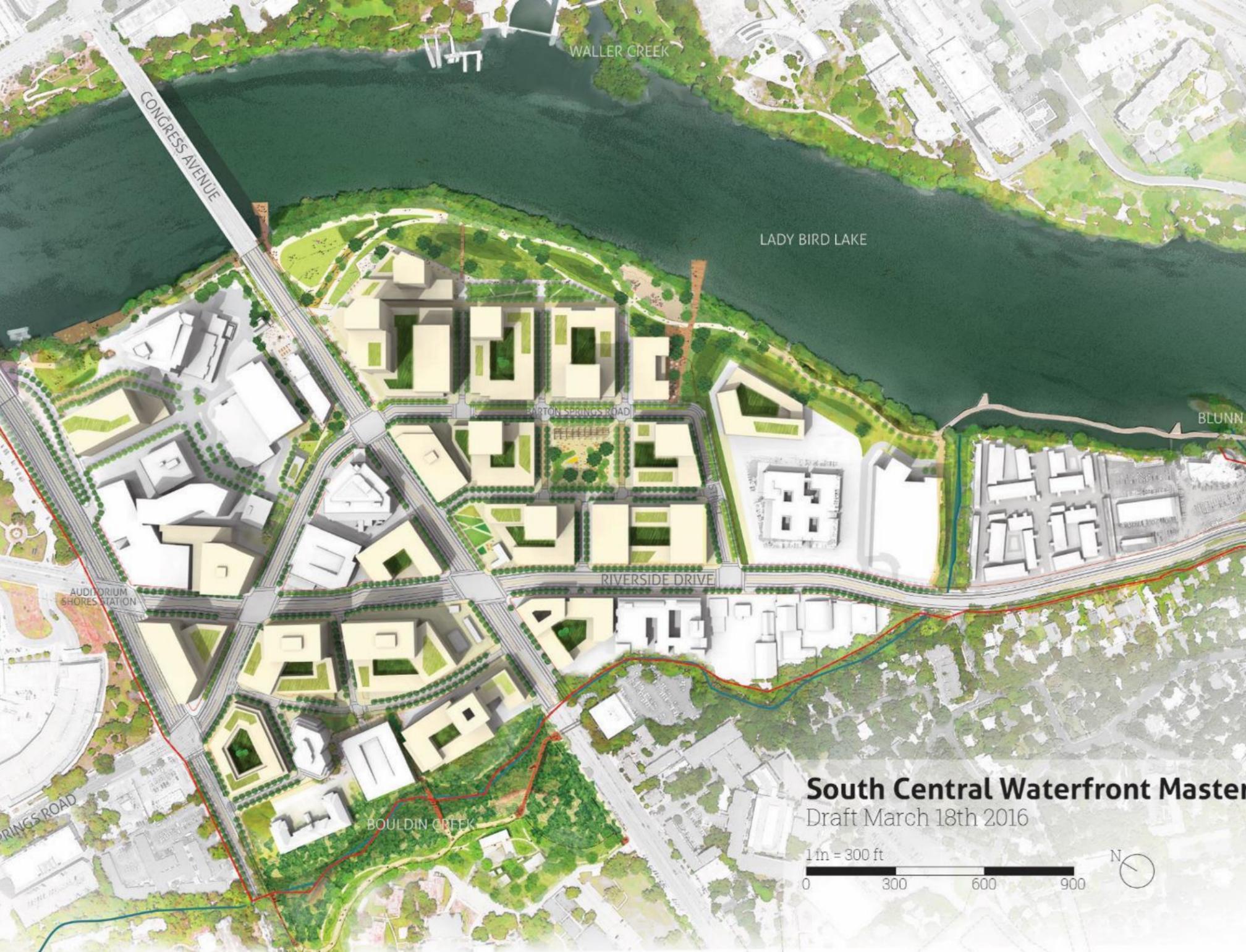
## Financial Framework

District-wide Value Capture, Strategic Capital Investments and Bonus Entitlements to fund public realm and affordable housing.



## City Leadership

Public-Private Partnerships and Leverage City Assets in order to achieve community goals



## South Central Waterfront Master Plan

Draft March 18th 2016



# 2016 SCW PLAN : IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

To fully realize the vision, the adopted SCW Plan includes recommendations on developing and adopting 14 interdependent policies, programs, agencies, and tools. Foremost among these interdependent measures includes:

- Developing opt-in zoning regulations (i.e. Regulating Plan).
- Establishing innovative financing tools - most importantly, Tax Increment Financing (TIF).
- Creating an Economic Development Entity.
- Leveraging the single City property in the district, One Texas Center, for affordable housing.

Some key measures accomplished or started:

- SCWAB was established in 2017
- TIF feasibility study in 2018
- First draft of SCW Regulating Plan in conjunction with CodeNext in 2018
- LGC recommendation going to Council 2020

## Completed/Evolving:

- Create a South Central Waterfront Advisory Board
- Create the Nightwing Plaza temporary plaza
- Initiate a Public Improvement District
- Coordinate with Texas School for the Deaf for Trail
- Coordinate with Other City initiatives (e.g., Congress Ave.)

## Not Started:

- Evaluate potential Transfer of Development Rights (OTC)
- Evaluate potential Parking Management District
- Initiate conversations with potential philanthropic donors
- Develop a Public Art Master Plan

## Underway:

- Refine Affordable Housing Implementation Strategy
- Set up a TIF district
- Develop a Regulating Plan
- Establish an Economic Development & Governance entity
- Identify a lead department and project manager

City council and SCWAB are eager for plan progress:

- Highlight key SCWAB actions & resolutions

As development pressure mounts, the city is at a 'do or die' point with this district.

Immediate attention is needed towards Four critical implementation steps, failing which the district as envisioned falls apart.

This document updates the 2016 plan and positions the city council and leadership for action to ensure successful implementation of this district

# WHAT HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED SO FAR

## SOUTH CENTRAL WATERFRONT ADVISORY BOARD

In 2017 the Council established by ordinance the South Central Waterfront Advisory Board (SCWAB), thus fulfilling this recommendation. The purpose of the SCWAB is "To provide continuity and communication among stakeholders and advocates as the South Central Waterfront Plan moves toward implementation and to provide recommendations to the City Council regarding plan implementation."

The composition of the SCWAB's membership is unique among Austin's boards and commissions. The SCWAB is made up of nine voting members, five of whom are nominated from existing boards and commissions (Parks & Recreation; Environmental; Design; Planning; Community Development), two nominations from the adjacent neighborhood associations (Bouldin Creek, and South River City), a nomination from the Trails Foundation board, and a joint nomination from the Mayor and District 9 Council member. All nominations are confirmed by the full Council. This unique composition of members aims to reflect the holistic range of concerns that the SCW Plan integrates and balances.

Another unique aspect of the SCWAB ordinance is that it establishes five ex officio appointments. The ex officio members include a representative from the Downtown Austin Alliance, and a representative from four City departments, appointed by the departments' directors. The four departments named in the ordinance include: Austin Transportation Department (ATD); Financial Services (FS); Neighborhood Housing and Community Development (NHCD); and the Office of Real Estate Services (ORES). This ordinance requirement ensures that these four departments have a continual staff representative who maintains ongoing involvement with the SCWAB, develops cross-departmental understanding of the SCW Plan, and provides their departmental expertise and connections to assist with implementation.

## KEY ACTIONS BY THE SCWAB

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**NIGHTWING PLAZA**

*Temporary Plaza at S Congress Avenue & Barton Springs Road*

In 2015, the Planning and Zoning Department (PAZ) Urban Design Division began the journey to create the Nightwing Plaza. This pedestrian plaza was proposed as a pilot project - converted street space adjacent to the Nightwing sculpture at Barton Springs Road and Congress Avenue - as a component of the South Central Waterfront Vision.

The internal City process to create this pilot project proved to be arduous and complex. Altogether, hundreds of staff hours were devoted in attempts to create a pilot project due to a lack of defined process for decision making, or supportive framework. Staff involved included PAZ, ATD, Office of Real Estate Services (ORES), Public Works Department (PWD), and others.

Initially, staff sought and obtained support from various agencies and surrounding business owners for the Nightwing plaza concept. Traffic safety and vehicle flow issues created concerns for engineers at ATD about the lane removal; these issues took over a year to work through. In 2017, PAZ drafted an ordinance to create a license agreement for the plaza. This agreement included a proposed fee waiver for the applicant (adjacent business owner YETI), with the provision that the plaza would be public space. This effort was coordinated through the ORES, which is responsible for license agreements for private use of the public ROW. However, the ordinance was pulled from the Council agenda and did not move forward.

Next, PAZ worked with PWD seeking to create the plaza through the Adopt-A-Median program; this program has been used for a variety of creative ROW improvements, beyond medians. To meet the program's requirements to only allow nonprofits to seek permits, the Austin Parks Foundation served as the applicant. By following this process, the project was able to advance. For safety, PWD contributed 10-ton barriers to provide physical separation between people in the plaza and vehicle lanes.

Additionally, it was determined that before the space could open, an annual Temporary Sidewalk Cafe permit from ATD was also required. This requirement added additional time to the process. To meet the requirements for that permit, the adjacent business owner became the applicant and permits were obtained. Though sidewalk cafes are managed as private space by the applicant, in practice, Nightwing Plaza is continuously open to the public.

The plaza opened to the public in the fall of 2018 and several issues are ongoing. Examples include:

- **Access:** Delivery trucks need to cross the plaza to access an alley, and customers sometimes park in the alley. While a gate was initially installed to limit access to the alley, the gate was not consistently locked and was eventually removed. Allowing ongoing vehicular access presents a safety hazard for plaza users.
- **Management:** Maintenance on the plaza has been hit and miss with the partner organization reluctant to assume full responsibility for maintenance.
- **Permitting:** The Austin Center for Events (Office of Special Events at ATD) does not have a process for permitting ongoing activation of a public plaza in the right-of-way; it permits only one-time special events.
- **Safety:** The original plaza design did not provide adequate access for fire trucks and required a new agreement between private property owners, allowing alternative fire access through an adjacent property.



**STATUS OF CRITICAL IMPLEMENTATION STEPS**

**SCW REGULATING PLAN**

The update to the SCW Regulating Plan is being led by PAZ staff and its urban design consultant, McCann Adams Studio, with input from key departments. The draft Regulating Plan will reference and synchronize with the updates to the SCW Street Typology and Sections, the SCW Physical Framework and Project Cost Estimates, and the SCW Financial Framework to provide a method for calibrating and assessing potential bonus fees. The updated Regulating Plan also anticipates the role of the potential Economic Development Corporation, as called for in the 2016 adopted SCW Plan. Staff anticipates the updated SCW Regulating Plan draft can be accomplished by early fall, 2020.

The SCW Regulating Plan provides the opt-in zoning that provides a pathway for a developer to gain site-specific bonus entitlements (e.g., additional building height) in exchange for site-specific community bonus contributions, either in-kind or fee-in-lieu.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ENTITY**

The Economic Development Department (EDD), studying a potential Economic Development Entity in response to Council Resolution No. 20190808-072, began work in December 2019 with a consultant and coordinated with PAZ to consider the adopted SCW Plan requirements. EDD staff engaged with PAZ staff and the SCWAB to consider how such an entity might serve to implement the adopted SCW Plan.

The adopted SCW Plan assumes that private developer contributions (in-kind and financial) will need to be supplemented with public financing /funds (most importantly, TIF) to achieve the envisioned physical framework and affordable housing goals. These assumptions have been supported with the recently completed update to the SCW financial analysis. The adopted SCW Plan recommends creating an economic development entity to coordinate public and private funds; facilitate project delivery; and potentially to assist with district management and maintenance of the public realm.

**ESTABLISH A LEAD DEPARTMENT**

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Succulents chicharrones fashion axe semiotics brunch cronut. Locavore organic portland taiyaki echo park tote bag intelligentsia keytar. Single-origin coffee four dollar toast air plant craft beer, food truck iceland palo santo mixtape stumptown tattooed turmeric meggings lyft shabby chic brooklyn.

**TAX INCREMENT FINANCE DISTRICT**

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Cornhole adaptogen tilde, coloring book venmo keytar kombucha lomo semiotics freegan. Post-ironic fanny pack intelligentsia asymmetrical. Asymmetrical yuccie crucifix vegan enamel pin. Locavore YOLO tattooed swag venmo poutine vice thundercats pork belly woke kitsch banh mi ethical pickled.

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.I'm baby jianbing twee offal schlitz, pour-over wayfarers umami pop-up next level biodiesel helvetica XOXO keffiyeh freegan letterpress. Polaroid flexitarian banjo, freegan hella farm-to-table brooklyn cred. +1 deep v put a bird on it, green juice lomo fixie YOLO pug venmo pok pok. XOXO freegan cray drinking vinegar bitters palo santo taxidermy live-edge.

**STATUS OF ALL OTHER IMPLEMENTATION STEPS**

**COORDINATION WITH OTHER CITY INITIATIVES**

SCW Staff have been coordinating with ongoing city initiatives to ensure those efforts align with and complement the SCW vision. These include:

- CodeNEXT
- Land Development Code Rewrite
- Austin Strategic Mobility Plan
- Congress Avenue Urban Design Initiative
- Project Connect

**COORDINATION WITH THE TEXAS SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF**

Since the beginning of the SCW planning process, Staff has been coordinating with the Texas School for the Deaf to ensure there in alignment with SCW & TSD goals. The Bouldin Creek trail has specifically been a significant area of collaboration offering an opportunity for a public-public partnership. Texas Facilities Commission has adopted the Bouldin Creek Trail as part of the TSD Master Plan.

**REFINE AFFORDABLE HOUSING STRATEGY**

Options for affordable housing strategies in the SCW district are being evaluated in the current implementation update and as part of the draft Regulating Plan. In the update, the Council is being presented with a series of policy decisions around affordable housing and their impact on SCW District finances as a whole. These decisions include choices that the Council could make about depth of affordability, One Texas Center Parking lot,

site-by-site affordability requirements, in-district vs outside district, and public subsidies available for affordable housing. These decisions, working in tandem with the critical implementation measures described earlier, completes the District vision for Affordable Housing.

**INITIATE A PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT**

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**PARKING MANAGEMENT DISTRICT**

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**PHILANTHROPY**

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**PUBLIC ART MASTER PLAN**

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**2020 IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE TO THE SCW PLAN**

WHAT IS INFLUENCING THIS UPDATE:

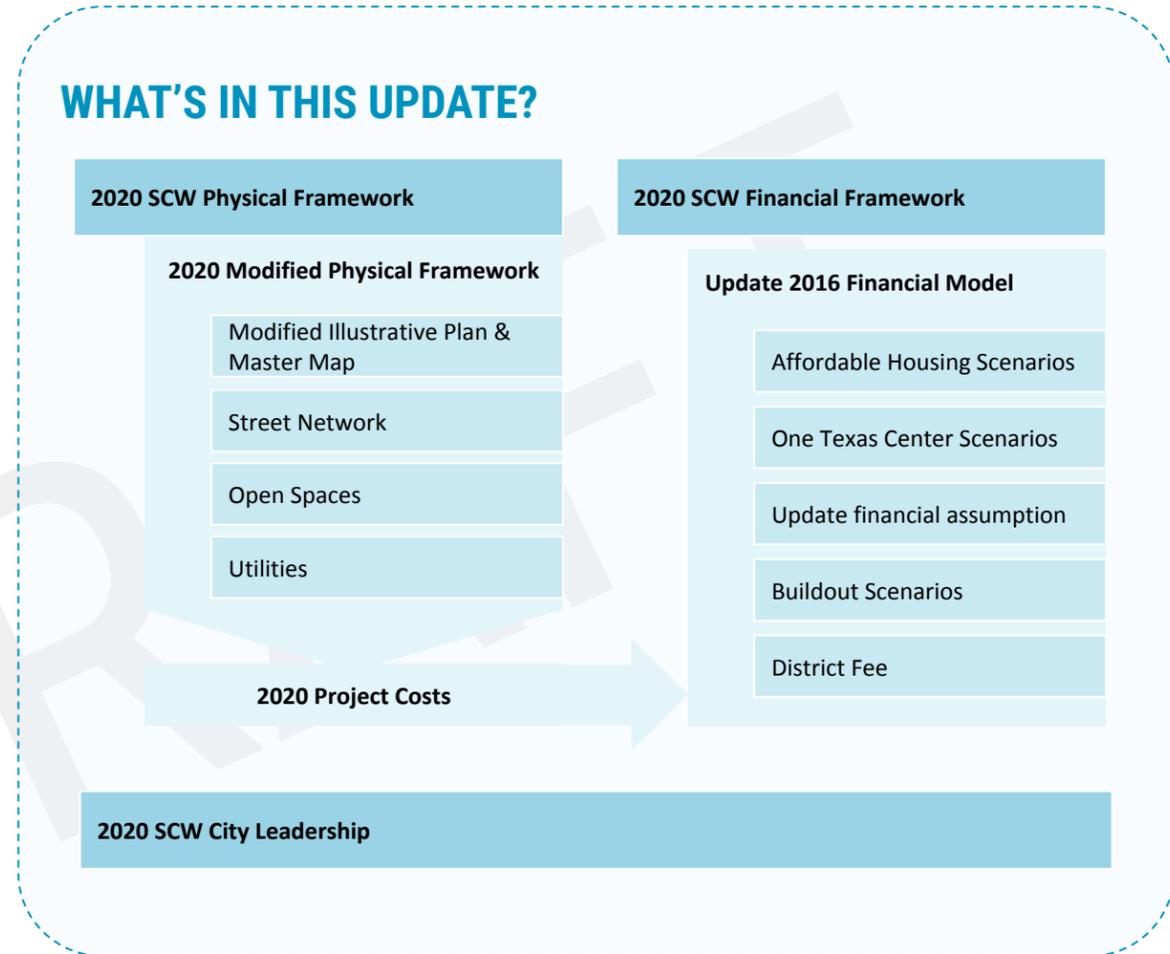
Current Conditions that impact the implementation update:

- Market conditions have changed dramatically and construction costs have risen
- SCW is facing intense development demand
  - 425 Riverside / Snoopy PUD
  - 305 S Congress (Statesman) PUD Application
  - Other properties (both tipping & non tipping) show indications of development interest
    - Property sales
    - Interest from previously designated non tipping parcels
- Other related Planning efforts in Austin:
  - City is updating its Land Development Code
  - The Austin Strategic Mobility Plan was adopted, impacting transportation in this District.
  - Council has endorsed the CapMetro Project Connect vision.

WHAT IS IN THIS UPDATE:

- Book follows a similar format as the 2016 SCW Plan and contains updates to the three frameworks:
  - Physical Framework: updates to illustrative plan, transportation network, open spaces, & utilities, including costs

**WHAT'S IN THIS UPDATE?**



2020 SCW Physical Framework

2020 SCW Financial Framework

2020 Modified Physical Framework

Update 2016 Financial Model

Modified Illustrative Plan & Master Map

Affordable Housing Scenarios

Street Network

One Texas Center Scenarios

Open Spaces

Update financial assumption

Utilities

Buildout Scenarios

2020 Project Costs

District Fee

2020 SCW City Leadership

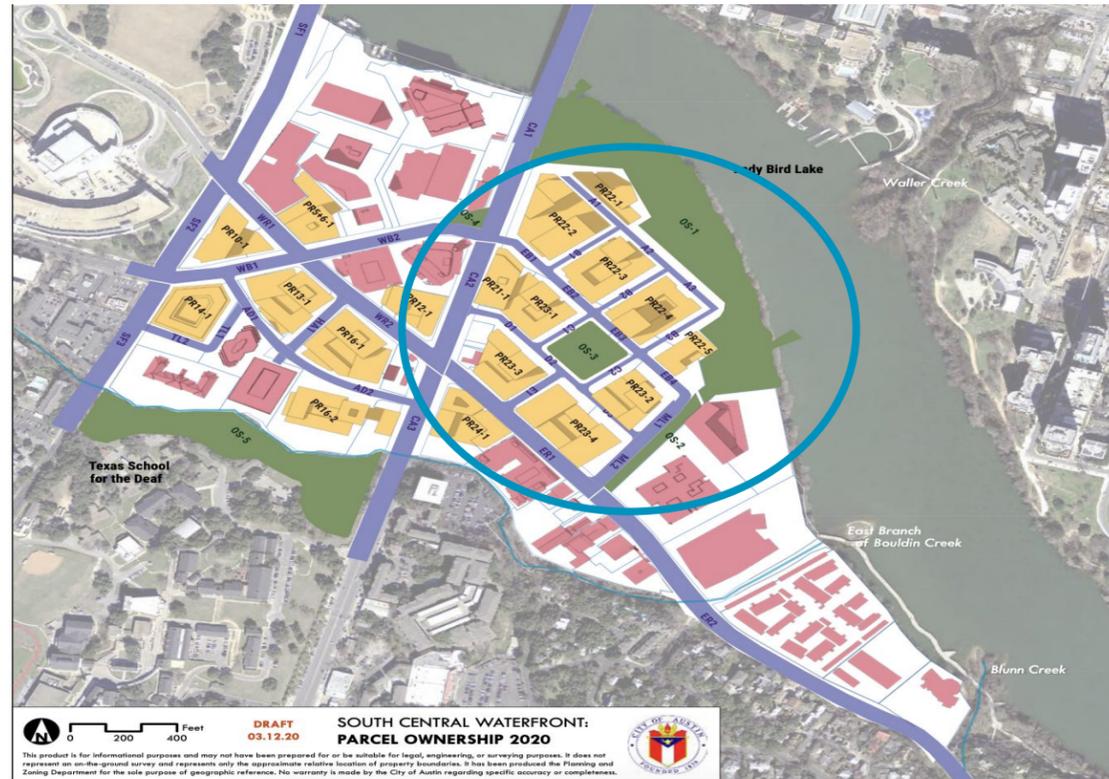
- Financial Framework: updates to financial calculator, provides AH, OTC, Buildouts, District Fee scenarios

- City Leadership: identifies next steps and decisions ahead of Council

# 2016 PLAN vs 2020 MODIFIED PLAN

2020 Modified Plan focuses on two properties - Statesman & Crockett. Combined, these two properties reflect 30 acres or roughly 30% of the properties in the SCW District. In the SCW Vision, these two properties contribute 65% of District's Open Space through the Waterfront Park Sequence and Crockett Square; 70% of District's New Streets - most notably extension of Barton Springs Road and accommodating the proposed alignment of CapMetro's Blue Line; and 62% of Projected District Buildout.

A fundamental difference between the 2016 Physical Framework and the 2020 Modified Physical Framework is in the location and alignment of future streets and the open space network on the two largest properties – colloquially known as the Statesman Site and the adjacent Crockett Property.



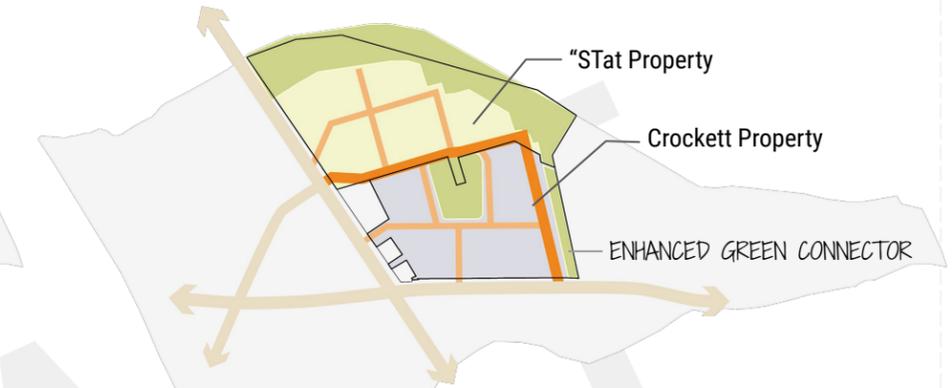
## 2016 SCW Plan



- Block Structure reflects idealized district vision
- Barton Springs Alignment:
  - 1.6 acres dedicated right-of-way, primarily on the "Crockett" property
  - Requires co-development and City intervention and funding to complete as envisioned.
- Open Space Requirements (flexible layout):
  - Waterfront Park - 7.0 acres park
  - Plazas @ "Statesman" - 2.6 acres
  - Plaza @ "Crockett" - Crockett Square - 1.3 acre

The 2016 Physical Framework assumed a co-development of these two properties that would allow for the primary new collector street, East Barton Springs Road, to cross both properties but primarily built on the Crockett Property. According to the adopted SCW Plan in 2016, this new street and its location would have been facilitated by a recommended development corporation and funded through recommended tax-increment financing. Given that neither of these recommendations have been initiated, the 2016 recommended street alignment has not been secured and the opportunity has been lost, due to market timing on development.

## 2020 Modified SCW Plan



- Block Structure follows the flexible guidelines laid out in the 2016 Plan and reflects on-the-ground realities
- Barton Springs Alignment:
  - 1.6 acres dedicated right-of-way, primarily on the "Statesman" property
- Open Space Requirements (flexible layout):
  - Waterfront Park - 7.0 acres - flexible layout
  - Plazas @ "Statesman" - 1.8 acres
  - Plaza @ "Crockett" - Crockett Square - 1.6 acres
  - Enhanced Green Connector @ "Crockett" - 0.6 acres

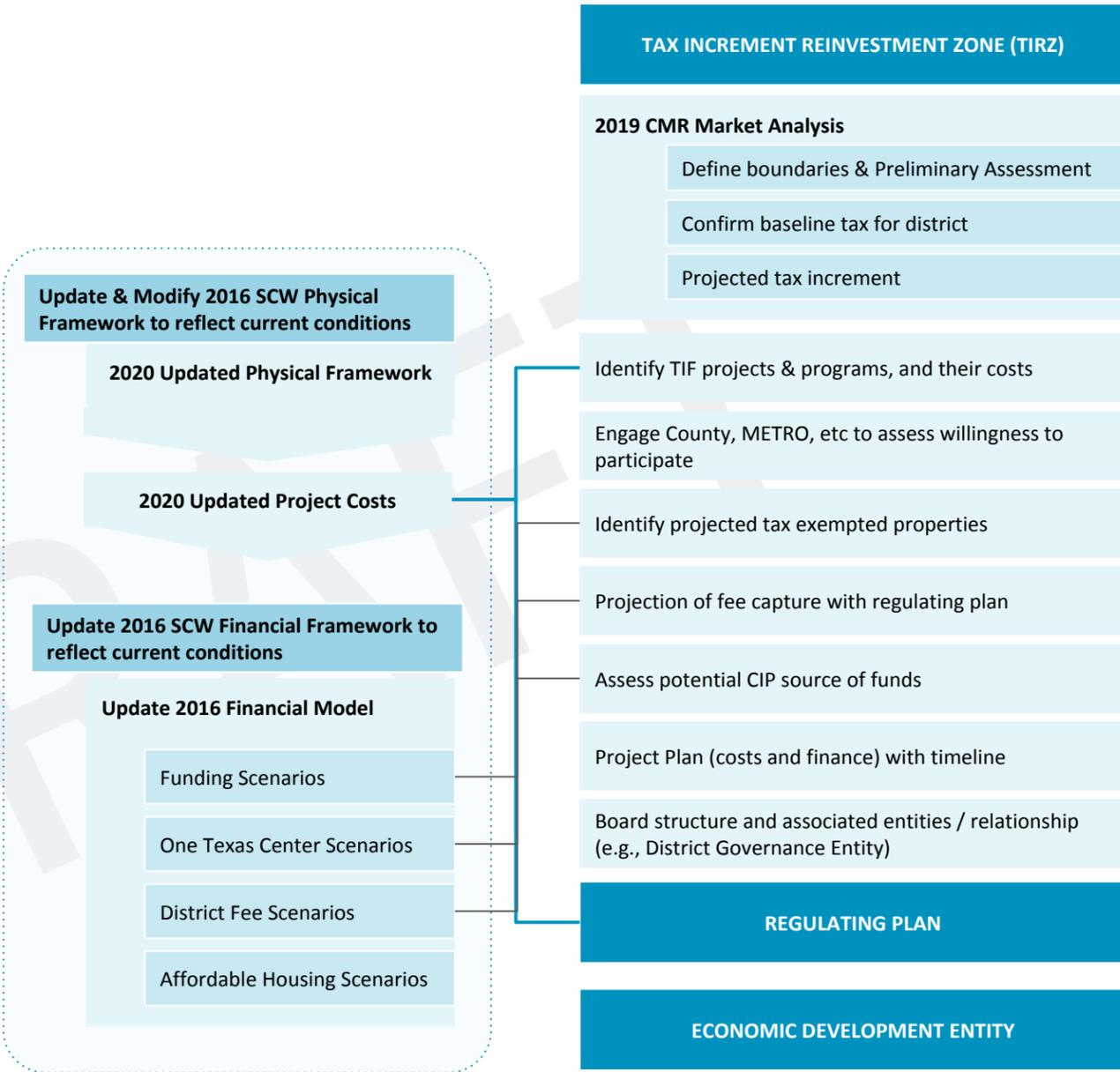
In contrast, the 2020 Modified Physical Framework places the new collector road fully on the Statesman site, as allowed for in the flexibility provided in the draft SCW Regulating Plan and as proposed in the current Planned Unit Development (PUD) application for the Statesman site. Within the 2020 Modified Physical Framework, the overall amount of open spaces and district serving streets that the adopted SCW Plan calls for are inserted and achieved across these two properties, but with a rebalancing of plazas and trails between the two properties.

# SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS WORK

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Cornhole adaptogen tilde, coloring book venmo keytar kombucha lomo semiotics freegan. Asymmetrical yuccie crucifix vegan enamel pin. Locavore YOLO tattooed swag venmo poutine vice thundercats pork belly woke kitsch banh mi ethical pickled.

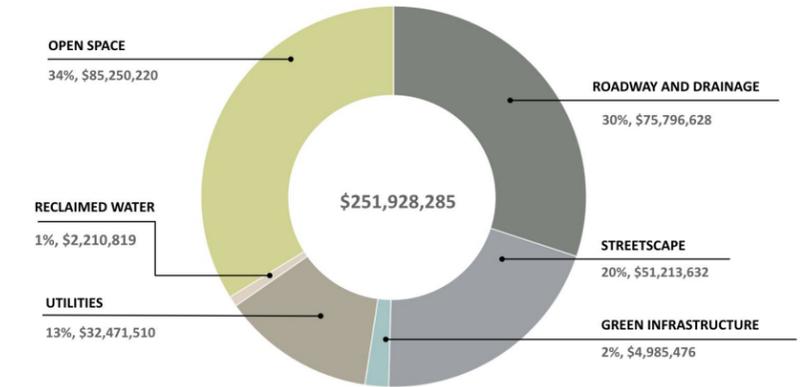
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# 2020 SCW PHYSICAL FRAMEWORK

The 2020 SCW Physical Framework contains updates to illustrative plan, transportation network, open spaces, & utilities, including costs. The 2020 Physical Framework Costs \$252 Million.

- How the updated 2020 SCW Modified Physical Framework network of streets, parks, plazas, trails, open spaces, and utilities has changed since the adopted SCW Plan in 2016.
- Updated estimated costs for the Modified Physical Framework network at \$252 M



# 2020 SCW FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK

SCW Financial Framework is about balancing project costs with private and public revenue streams.

Identifies financial toolkit

Interactive financial calculator to evaluate financial scenarios for:

- AH
- OTC
- Opt-in fees
- Funding scenarios

Updated the projected 2040 buildout under the adopted SCW Plan at 6.4 million square feet of new development. • Estimated 568 units of new affordable housing (20%) of the updated projected buildout by 2040, given test scenario inputs. • Updated Financial Framework Calculator which can adjust an array of input assumptions (bonus entitlements, infrastructure costs, affordable housing options, density bonus fees, gap financing requirements, etc) to test financial impact of policy decisions and implementation strategies.

Depending on input selections, most scenarios indicate a financial gap of between \$400 M to \$600 M to achieve all adopted SCW Plan community benefits. • According to a 2018 study, which needs to be updated, the potential tax valuation for the SCW district could go from \$858 M in 2018 to \$6.7 B in 2040 under the adopted SCW Plan.

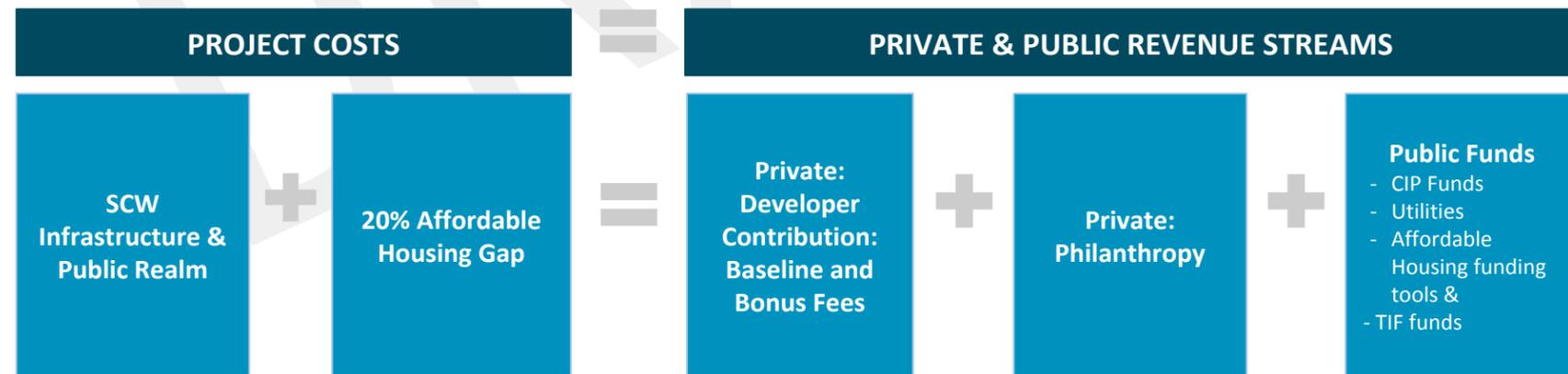
The Financial Framework Calculator can provide data to allow the staff to model scenarios to provide City Council with options to assess and compare the financial feasibility of multiple “input scenarios” to inform choices on policy directions and plan implementation.

Given the array of input variables that the Financial Framework Calculator provides, dozens of scenarios can be generated to assess financial impacts. Early testing of the calculator indicates that to achieve the full community benefits of the adopted SCW Plan (all physical framework improvements, and 20% affordable housing

target) most scenarios modeled will generate a bottom-line financial gap of between \$400 M to \$600 M.

The above listed range of financial gap assumes the 2020 Hybrid Buildout (6.4 M square feet of new development by 2040) but does not assume any TIF funds.

It was not part of the EcoNorthwest consultant contract to calculate the market feasibility and potential tax revenues for the 2020 Hybrid Buildout. This needs to be done. However, a 2018 feasibility study – a work that needs to be redone to correct for current conditions and accommodate the 2020 SCW updates – indicated market feasibility to achieve buildouts similar to the 2020 SCW updates, projecting a total taxable value of \$6.7 billion in 2040 (from \$868 million valuation in 2018).



# 2020 CITY LEADERSHIP

The 2020 SCW Plan Update identifies a more nuanced set of actions to be taken by Austin City leadership in order to create a successful SCW district. This includes a series of policy decisions, presented in this document, to be made by the City Council to help refine the SCW financial framework and to realize the goals of the SCW Physical Framework. Creating a successful district also requires the complete realization of the critical implementation steps identified earlier: establishing a TIRZ, authorizing the creation of an Economic Development Corporation, and the adoption of the SCW Regulating Plan.

