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PLANNING  
DEPARTMENT

# South Central Waterfront Combining District & Density Bonus Program

COJC

April 1, 2024



# South Central Waterfront Vision Framework Plan

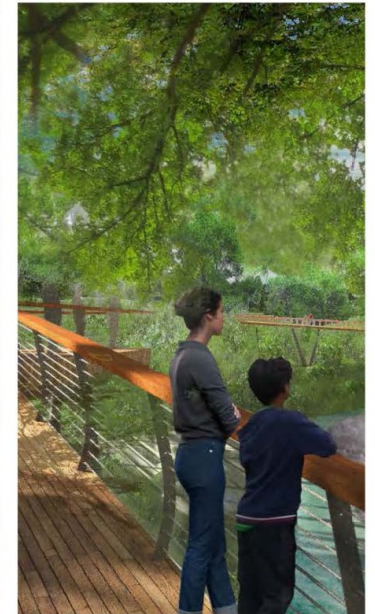
Adopted June 6, 2016

## City Council Resolution 20220915-090

Initiated the creation of an “Optional  
Regulating Plan” later changed to a  
Combining District and Density Bonus  
Program.

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

### SOUTH CENTRAL WATERFRONT VISION FRAMEWORK PLAN



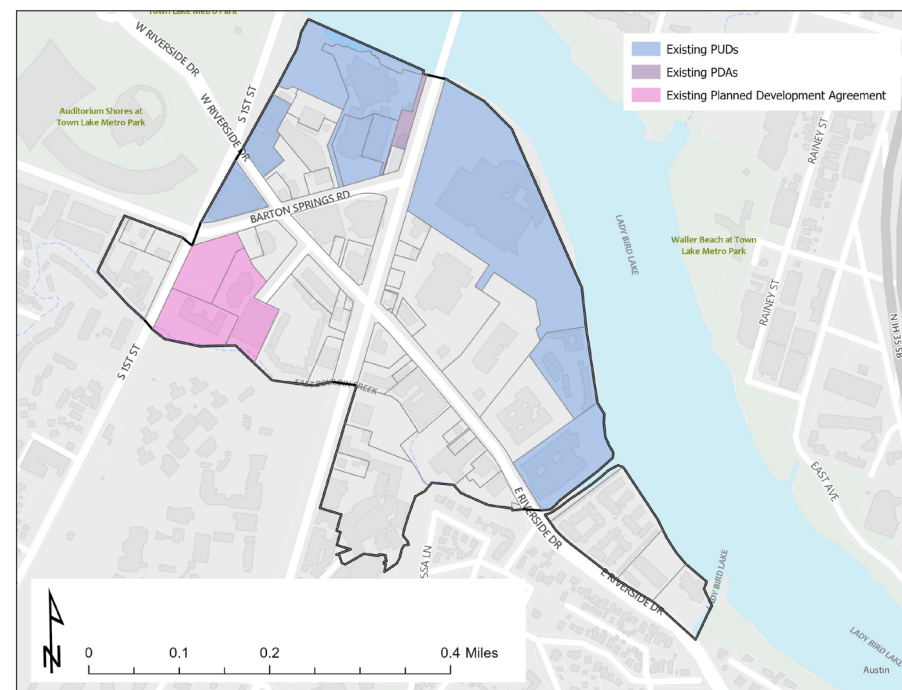
June 2016



Austin, Texas

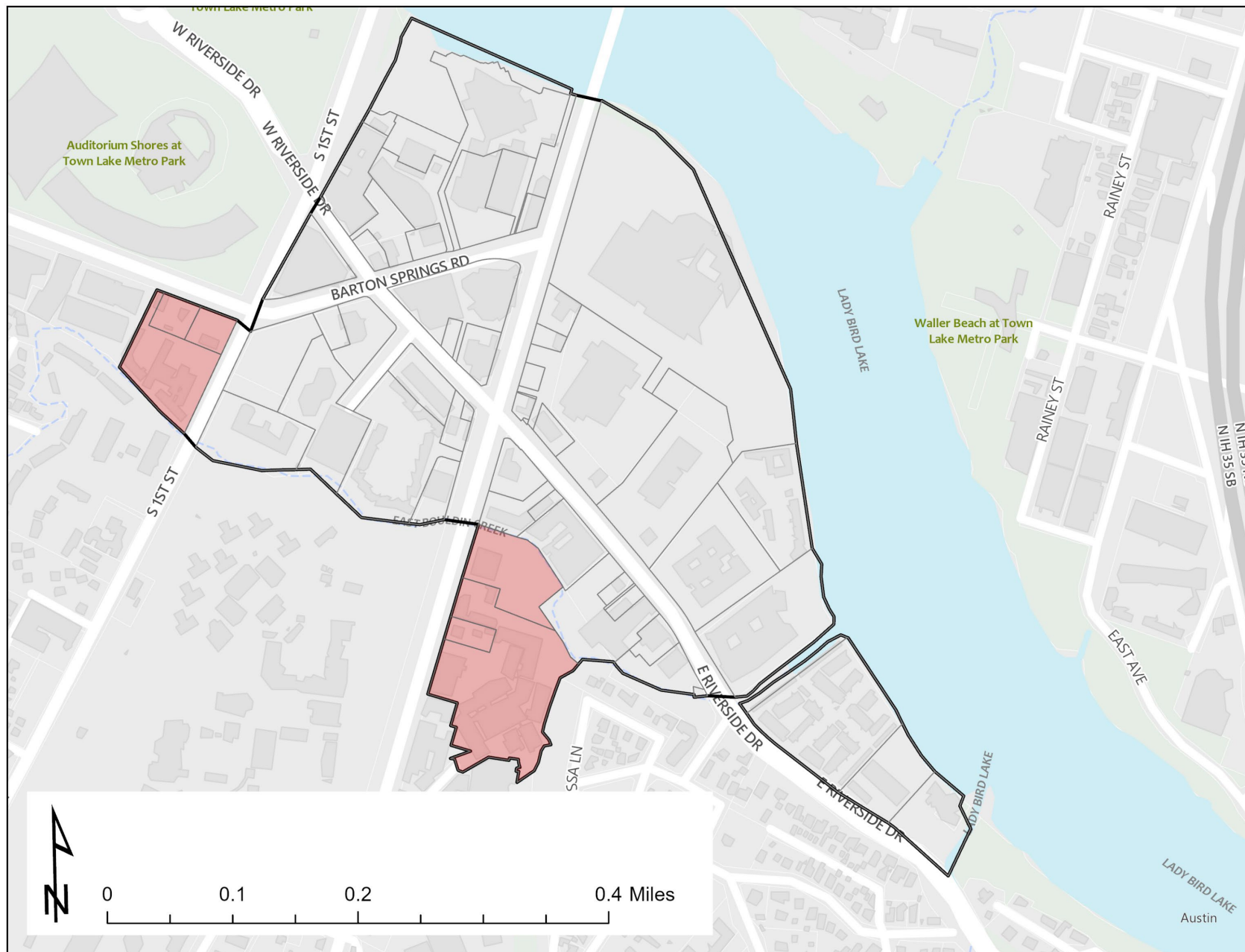
# Approach Since Council Resolution

- The SCW regulations will be implemented by:
  - Council adoption of an **optional** set of regulations and bonus program through the creation of a **Combining District *and* a Density Bonus Program** (spring 2024).
  - City-initiated rezoning of non PDA, PUD, and Planned Development Agreement properties in the district (summer 2024).
- First reevaluation within 1-2 years.





# District Boundary Expansion







# Combining District

## General Provisions

(Policies, procedures, and who can participate)

## Land Use Standards

(Permitted and conditional land uses)

## Development Standards

(What can be built and where)

## Design Standards

(How it will look)

## Definitions

# Density Bonus

## Procedures/Requirements

### “Gate Keeper” Requirements

Affordable Housing

Environmental Protection

Improved Streetscape and Built  
Environment

## In-Lieu Fees and Dedications

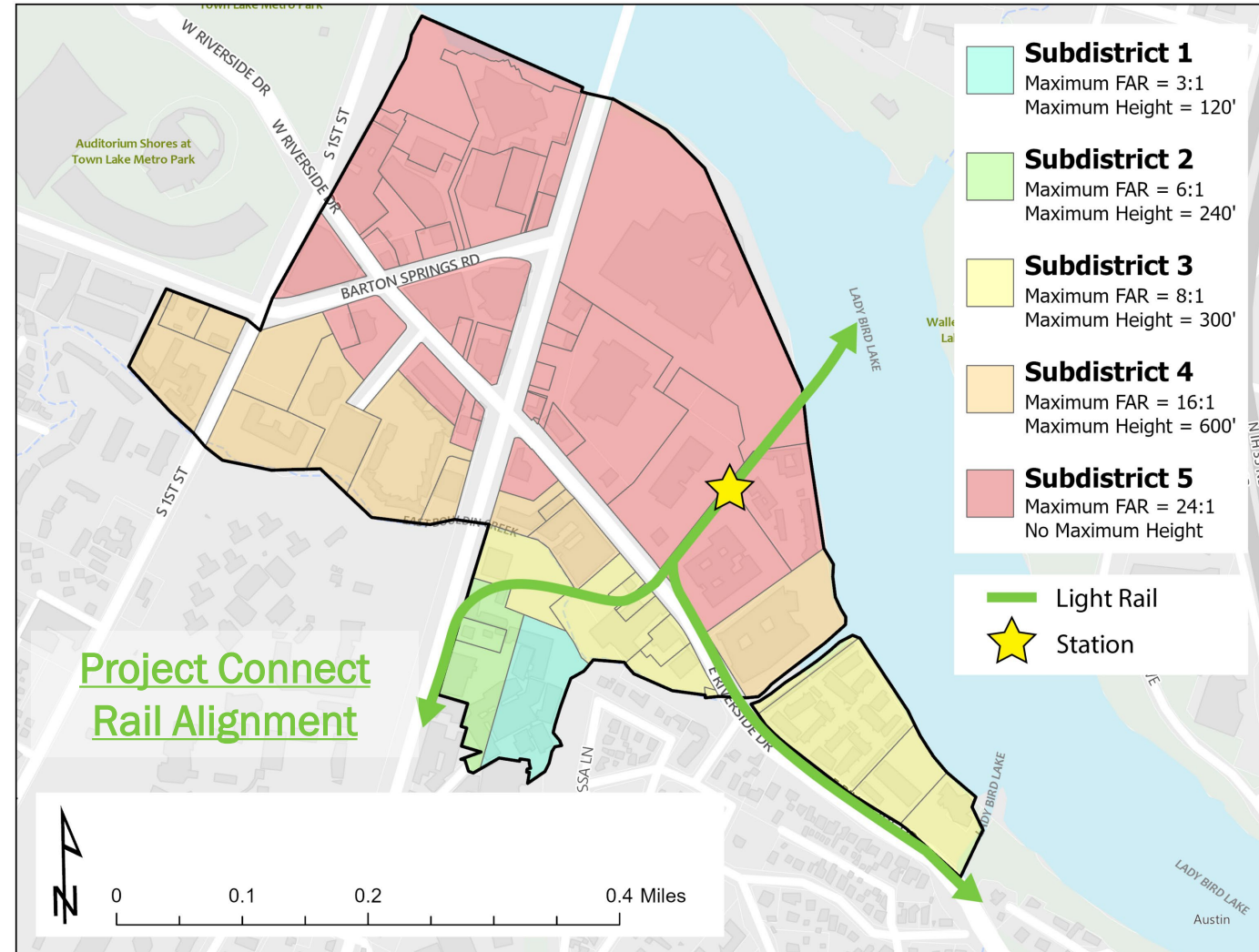
## On-Site Community Benefits Eligible for Bonus Area

# Subdistricts and FAR

Council approval is required to exceed FAR maximums and heights

## Density Distribution Areas (DDAs)

- FAR maximums apply to each DDA separately.
- No larger than 90,000 sq. ft.
- Internal circulation routes required along DDA divisions.





# Bonus Program Structure

*(To Reach Up to FAR / Height Subdistrict Maximums)*

*(For Additional FAR Beyond Base)*

## Gate Keeper Requirements

Onsite Affordable Housing  
*(Fee for Non-Residential)*

Enhanced  
Environmental Protections

Streetscape &  
Built Environment

*Then*

## 70% In-Lieu Fees & Dedications

Affordable Housing

*(extra on-site affordable units credited; Affordable Housing Investment Area)*

Parks

*(dedications credited; boundary as defined by typical Parks fees)*

Infrastructure

*(supports SCW directly)*



## 30% On-Site Community Benefits

\*Affordable Creative Space

Open Space & Park Buildout

Child / Adult Care

Grocery Store

Cultural Uses

Music Venues

Transit-Supportive  
Infrastructure

Public Art



# Affordable Housing

5% of housing on-site up to 3:1 FAR  
must be affordable.

May be:

- Affordable rental units at 60% MFI,
- Or if Condos:
  - Affordable ownership units (condos) at 80% MFI, or
  - A fee-in-lieu for ownership units.

At full buildout, it is estimated:

**The SCW Bonus Program**  
*could produce*

**481 On-site Affordable Units**  
*compared to*

**527 Affordable Units**  
*anticipated in  
the 2016 Vision Plan.*

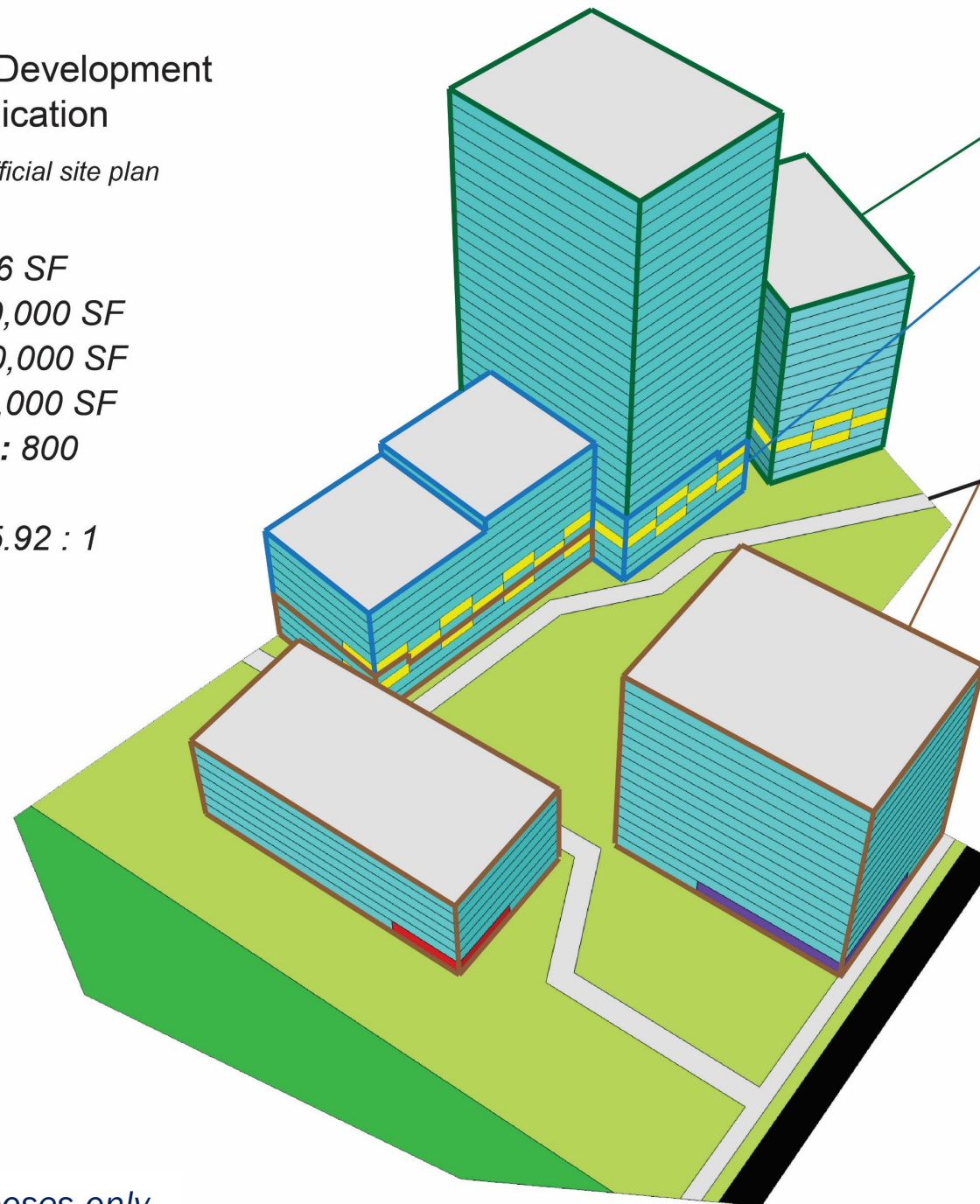


# EXAMPLE from 500 S Congress Development Assessment Application

*Not representative of official site plan*

**Site Area:** 261,796 SF  
**Retail Space:** 150,000 SF  
**Office Space:** 400,000 SF  
**Hotel Space:** 200,000 SF  
**Residential Units:** 800

**Estimated FAR:** 5.92 : 1



**FAR from Fees and  
Community Benefits**

**FAR Boost to 3:1 from  
Gatekeeper Requirements**

**Base Entitlement under  
SCW Combining District**


**Site divided into 3 Density  
Distribution Areas with  
walkways along divisions**

## Community Benefits Overview

 **21 On-Site Affordable Units  
Required**

**\$7,132,306** paid in Fees for  
Housing, Parks, and Infrastructure

**229,384 SF** of Bonus through  
Community Benefits such as:

 **9,000 SF** of Open Space  
In addition to **13,090 SF** required

 **8,000 SF** of Grocery Store

 **2,500 SF** of Music Venue

**\$17.1K** for Public Art

^ Required dispersion of affordable units throughout the  
residential units

*\*For artistic rendering purposes only*



# Key\* Recommended Changes

- Expanded boundaries
- Height limits added to Subdistricts 1-4.
- Properties proximal to rail station adjusted to higher FAR.
- PARD can require up to 25% property dedication.
- Added affordable creative space community benefit.
- Bird-friendly design criteria required in bonus for light pollution reduction and collision deterrence

## Public Comment Stats

Outreach to **80+** Stakeholder Groups

**489** Survey Participants

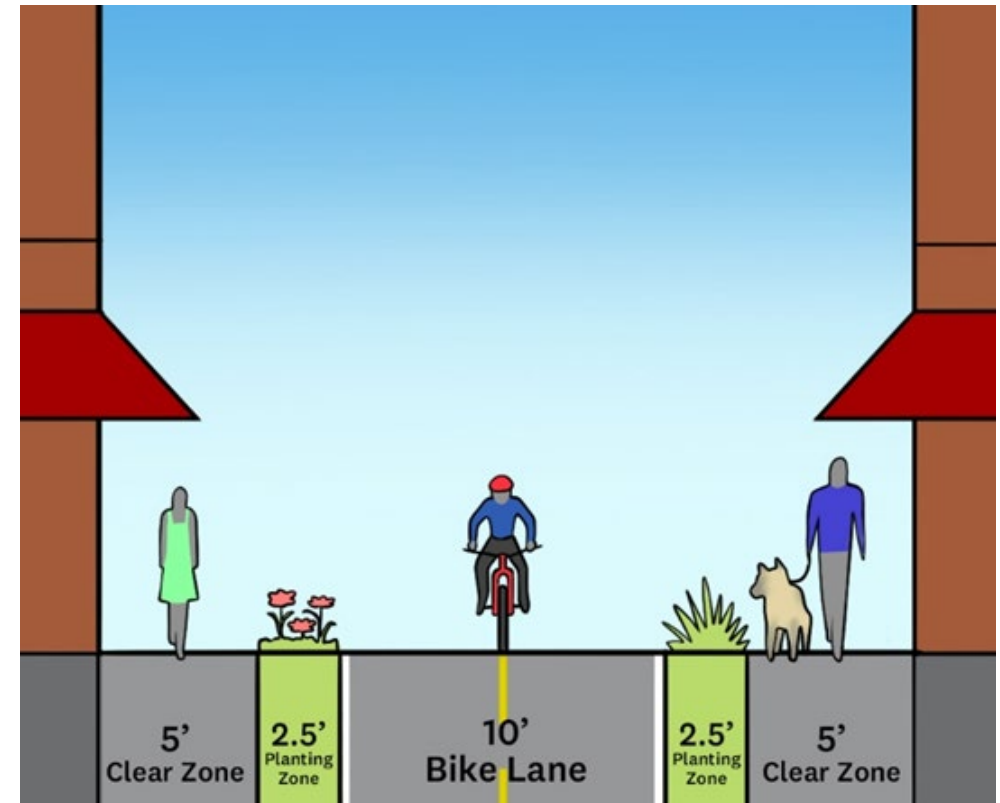
**3 Public Meetings** during public comment period

**5** presentations to Boards and Commissions to date  
**4** B&C presentations remaining (3 “Actions” will be requested)

\* High level change log with additional explanations available for review

# Key Recommended Changes (continued)

- Added mobility options to internal circulation routes.
- Shade provisions increased for open space.
- Require public access easements for publicly-accessible open space.
- Affordable Housing Investment Area adjusted: expanded boundary, limits investment within reach of public transit.
- (Temporarily) Modified certain non-residential community benefits to 0 SF Bonus while city establishes compliance practices.





# Future Considerations (within 6 mo. - 2 years)

- For certain non-residential community benefits, re-examine density bonus once compliance options have been determined by staff.
- Explore all financial tools to achieve the vision.
- Re-evaluate fees once citywide density bonus analysis is complete.
- Explore the addition of Transfer of Development Rights.
- Explore opportunities for below market rent with adjustments over time for Council priorities.
- Explore construction code adjustments for South Central Waterfront (to mimic CBD)



# Timeline







# Staff Recommendation

As written, staff believe this code provides the regulatory tools necessary to be one financial component to dynamically transform the South Central Waterfront from an underutilized neighborhood into a connected, pedestrian-oriented, mixed use district.

Through an extensive effort between various city departments, property owners, and the general public, staff believes that the draft code fulfills the intent of the 2016 Vision Plan and 2022 Council resolution to the greatest extent possible.

**Staff recommends a recommendation of approval for the code amendment as proposed and for council to initiate zoning and rezoning for all non-PUD, PDA, and Planned Development Agreement properties.**



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Thank You