SOUTH CENTRAL WATERFRONT ADVISORY BOARD
RECOMMENDATION 20240104-03

Date: April 1, 2024

Subject: South Central Waterfront Combining District & Density Bonus Program – Green Community Benefits

Motioned By: Seconded By:

Recommendations

The stipulated list of community benefits should be expanded to include increased green building ratings and green roof community benefits to align with the environmental stewardship goals in the Vision Framework Plan.

Description of Recommendation to Council

.1 Add the following option in Section 6.5: Green Building Community Benefit

An applicant may achieve bonus area by constructing a project to green building standards that exceed the requirements in section 6.2/D/2. The amount of bonus area that may be achieved is listed in the DBSCW Bonus Schedule. The requirements are as follows:

1) The applicant shall execute a restrictive covenant committing to achieve a specified rating under the Austin Energy Green Building (AEGB) program using the ratings in effect at the time the ratings application is submitted for the project or Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) program using the most recently launched version of the LEED for New Construction rating at the time of the project's registration.

2) The applicant shall also provide the director with a copy of the project's signed Austin Energy Green Building Letter of Intent for projects seeking AEGB rating or a copy of the completed LEED registration for projects seeking a LEED rating before the director may approve bonus area for a site.

3) An applicant must submit an AEGB or LEED checklist indicating the measures the project intends to complete to meet the applicable green building requirement before the director may approve bonus area for a site.

4) A project seeking an AEGB rating will be subject to at least one inspection during construction and an inspection at substantial completion. A project seeking LEED certification must submit the LEED design review results and an updated LEED checklist or scorecard indicating the project will be able to obtain LEED certification by substantial completion**.**

5) If the specified AEGB rating or LEED certification is not achieved within nine months from time of occupancy, an owner must pay into the Affordable Housing Trust Fund the applicable development bonus fee for the bonus area initially granted for this community benefit. The owner's payment will be based on the development bonus fee in effect when the owner pays.

.2 Add the following option in Section 6.5: Green Roof Community Benefit

A project may achieve bonus area by providing green roofs. The amount of bonus area that may be achieved is listed in the DBSCW Bonus Schedule. The requirements are as follows:

1) Green Roofs must be built to the Vegetated ("Green") Roof Performance Standards in Appendix W of the Environmental Criteria Manual. The percent of vegetated roof cover is calculated as a portion of total roof area excluding mechanical equipment, photovoltaic panels, swimming pools, and skylights.

2) If the green roof fails to meet the Vegetated ("Green") Roof Performance Standards for more than 180 consecutive days or for 180 days in any 365-day period, the owner must pay into the Downtown Open Space Fund the applicable development bonus fee for the bonus area initially granted for this community benefit. The payment will be based on the development bonus fee in effect when the owner pays.

3) Green roof areas used to achieve bonus area through the Green Roof Community Benefit may not be used to achieve bonus area through the Private Common Open Space Community Benefit**.**

Rationale:

A commitment to environmental stewardship was a hallmark of the Vision Framework Plan. Increased green building ratings and green roof systems offer proven community benefit and have been enshrined in the DDBP for over a decade. Their absence in this SCWCD Program is inconsistent with long-held city and stakeholder goals for Austin's built environment.

.1 Projects with enhanced sustainability ratings produce significant reductions in water, energy, carbon, and nonrenewable resource usage. They also improve indoor air quality, access to light/views, and improved thermal comfort for building occupants.

.2 Green roofs provide shade and vegetation, remove heat from the air, and reduce temperatures at the roof surface that contribute to the urban heat island effect. They also slow rainfall runoff and filter airborne pollutants. This filtered runoff can be harvested in cisterns for use in landscape irrigation and greywater plumbing systems.

Vote

For:

Against:

Abstain:

Absent:

Attest: *[Staff or board member can sign]*