



BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Urban Transportation Commission

Recommendation 20240402-003: South Central Waterfront

WHEREAS, the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan aims to quadruple the number of Austinites commuting via public transit from 4% in 2017 to 16% in 2039, and identifies increasing “the number of people living and working within a 1/2 mile of the Transit Priority Network” as a key indicator of success;

WHEREAS, the South Central Waterfront District provides a unique opportunity to create a transit-supportive neighborhood centered around the future Waterfront Station as part of the Project Connect Light Rail;

WHEREAS, the existing road network proposed for the South Central Waterfront District was first proposed as in the 2016 South Central Waterfront Vision Plan, at a time when future transit connections were anticipated to be located on neighboring arterials and not in the middle of the district, and was later adopted in the ASMP Street Network Table;

WHEREAS, Council Resolution No. 20220915-090 acknowledged the shortcomings of the vision plan, noting that since its adoption in 2016, “many attributes of the District have changed, including approval of Project Connect” and directed the City Manager to develop a regulating plan to include increased development entitlement bonuses and regulations that, among other goals, “support the Project Connect transit investment the community is making and help create a connected, pedestrian-oriented, mixed use district where thousands more Austinites can live, work, and play”; and

WHEREAS, 16.6% of the Project Justification Score used by the Federal Transit Administration to evaluate Capital Investment Grant applications evaluates the land-use, density, affordable housing, and transit-supportive zoning within a half-mile radius of each station;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Urban Transportation Commission (UTC) recommends that the City Council direct the City Manager to consider and initiate amendments to the ASMP Street Network Table for the South Central Waterfront District upon the publishing of the Project Connect NEPA EIS Record of Decision to ensure the street grid and levels create a transit supportive environment; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the UTC appreciates staff's responsiveness to community concerns by increasing the FAR limit on the north side of East Riverside Drive, the UTC recommends that the City Council alter the South Central Waterfront Combining District and Density Bonus regulations to maximize access to the future Waterfront Light Rail Station by reclassifying all parcels located directly on Riverside Drive to the east of Congress Ave to Subdistrict 4 or 5;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the UTC recommends that the Bonus Program structure reflects a greater need for Transit-Supportive Infrastructure in the South Central Waterfront District by giving a greater weight to these improvements as compared to the other On-Site Community Benefits;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the UTC recommends that the internal circulation routes within the South Central Waterfront District all have public access easements to allow the public to move freely throughout the district; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the UTC recommends the City Council alter South Central Waterfront Combining District and Density Bonus regulations to allow fees-in-lieu to go towards the financing or production of affordable units outside of South Central Austin as long as they are located within a ½ mile of a Capital Metro rail stop or ¼ mile of a Capital Metro *high-frequency* bus stop.

Motioned by: Commissioner Schumacher

Seconded by: Commissioner Kavelman

Date of Approval: 4/2/2024

Record of the vote: 9-0 (Commissioner Ortiz absent)

Attest: 
(Staff or board member can sign)