



PLANNING
DEPARTMENT

South Central Waterfront Combining District & Density Bonus Program

City Council Work Session

April 30, 2024



South Central Waterfront Vision Framework Plan

Adopted June 6, 2016



City Council Resolution
20220915-090

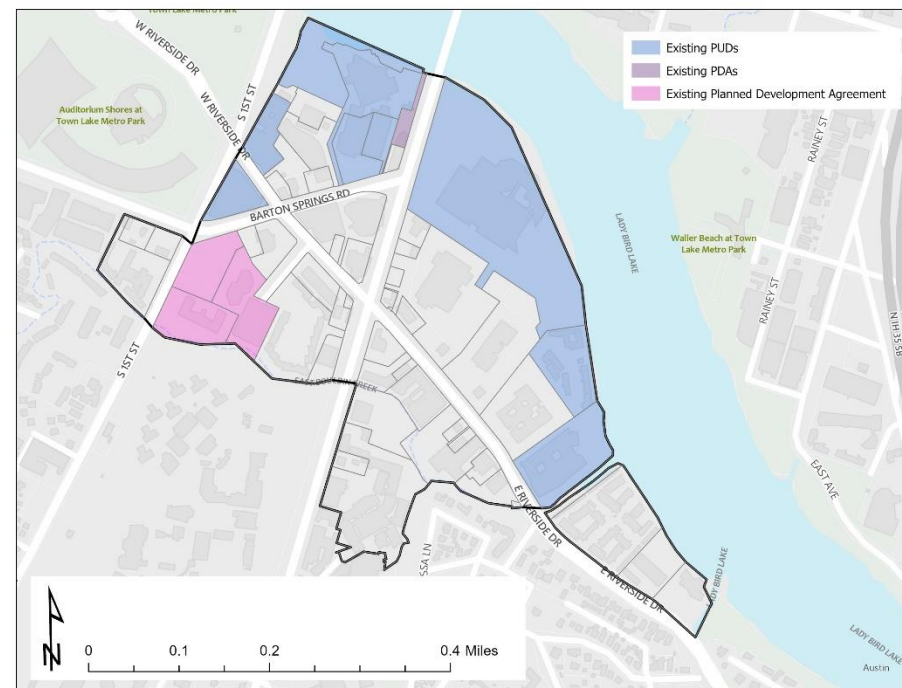
Create a code for South Central Waterfront that:

- Maximizes the number of affordable housing units within and nearby the district
- Maximizes infrastructure investments
- Ensures enhanced environmental standards and protections
- Maximizes other community benefits
- Supports the Project Connect transit investment

Helps create a connected, pedestrian-oriented, mixed use district where thousands more Austinites can live, work, and play.

Approach Since Council Resolution

- The South Central Waterfront (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.





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

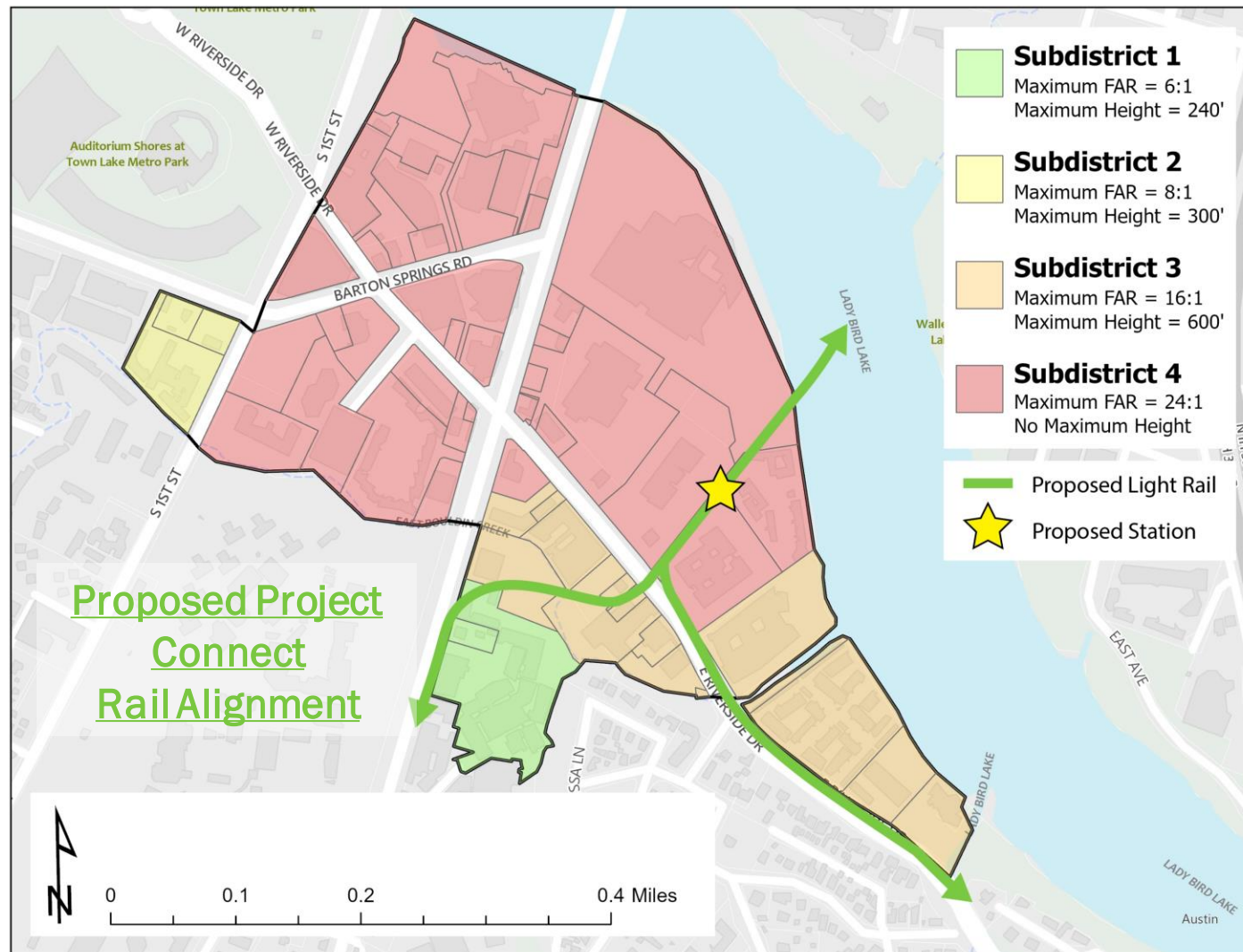
On-Site Community Benefits Eligible for Bonus Area

Subdistricts and FAR

Council approval is required to exceed FAR maximums and heights

Density Distribution Areas (DDA's)

- An applicant shall split sites into areas no larger than 90,000 sq. ft.
 - FAR maximums apply to each DDA separately.
 - Internal circulation routes are required along DDA divisions.





Bonus Program Structure

(For Additional FAR Beyond Base)

Gate Keeper Requirements

Onsite Affordable Housing
(Fee for Non-Residential)

Enhanced
Environmental Protections

Streetscape &
Built Environment

First

Then

(To Reach Up to FAR / Height Subdistrict Maximums)

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 and Community Impact Benefit
(supports SCW directly)



30% On-Site Community Benefits

Affordable Creative Space

Open Space

Child / Adult Care

Grocery Store

Park Buildout

Music Venues

Transit-Supportive
Infrastructure

Public Art

EXAMPLE from
500 S Congress Development
Assessment Application

Not representative of official site plan

Site Area: 261,796 SF

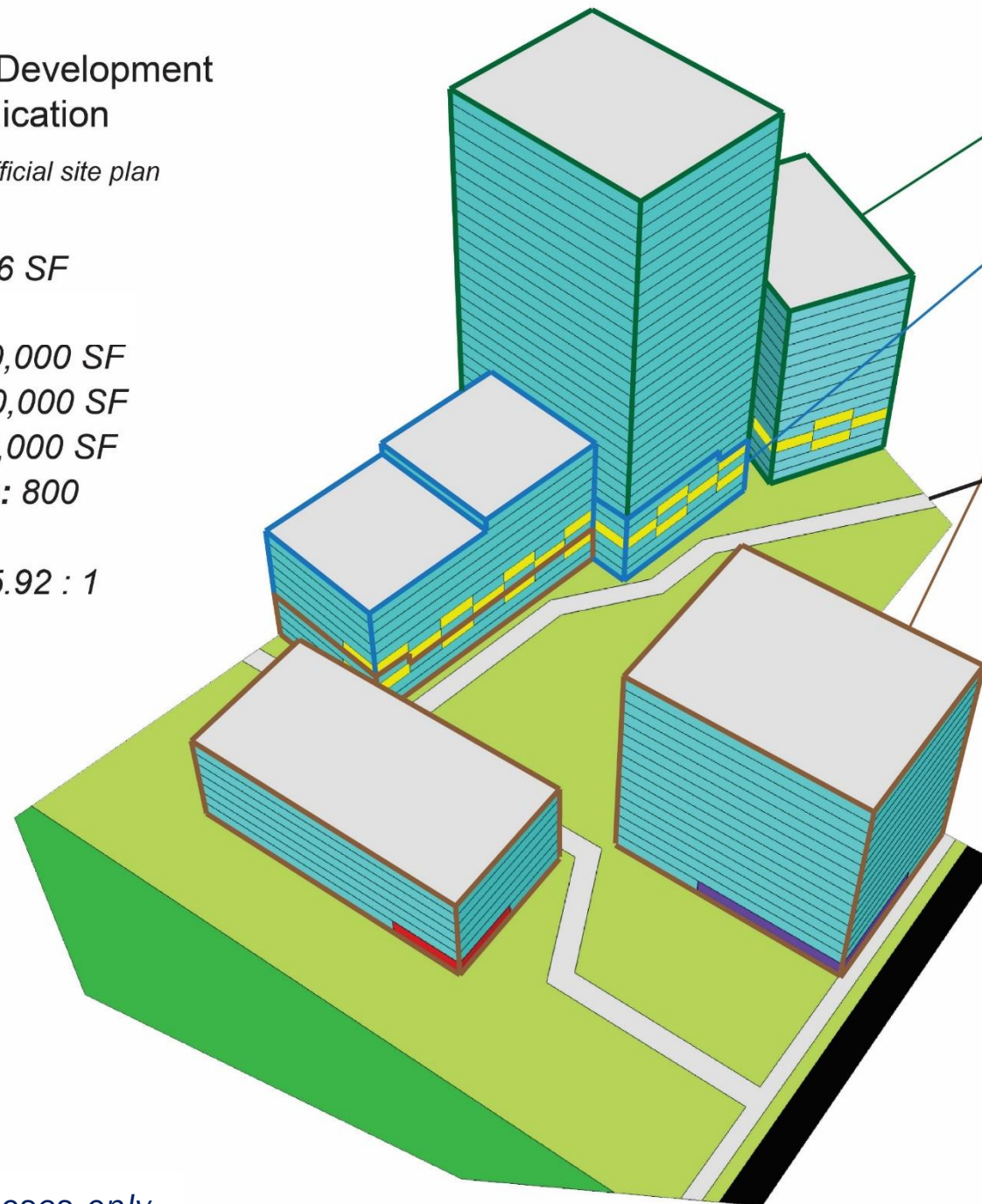
Retail Space: 150,000 SF

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

**For artistic rendering purposes only*



April 9, 2024 PC* Recommendations

PC Amendment/ Recommendation		Staff Response
1	Modify fee-in-lieu distribution	Not recommended
2	SCWAB is advisory body for future projects	No action required
3	Amend FAR calculation for structured parking	Not recommended
4	Modify internal circulation routes encouraging walking, biking, and being outdoors	Included with changes
5	Modify Subdistrict and FAR map	Included
6	Include adapted rental multifamily redevelopment requirement	Included
7	Modify SCW DBP to be Part 1 of Downtown DBP	Not recommended

PC Amendment/ Recommendation		Staff Response
8	Require extended bridge option for Project Connect within SCW	Not included
9	Create Parking and Transportation Management District	Not included
10	Adjust planning documents (like ASMP) to include critical mobility infrastructure elements	Not included
11	Create buy-down provision for SCW	Underway
12	Prioritize preservation and homelessness initiatives for housing fees gained in SCW	Included
13	Permit 30% of housing fee-in-lieu for on-site condos	Not recommended



Key Adjustments in April 19 Draft Code

Public Comment (Feb 20 - Mar 20, 2024)	Planning Commission* (Apr 9, 2024)
Boundaries expanded & height limits established in all but one Subdistrict	Support preservation of affordable housing and support homelessness initiatives with fee-in-lieu
Added multimodal internal circulation route option	
Added affordable creative space community benefit	Further adjusted FAR map to reduce complexity, support potential for development along light rail, and lower density as the district extends west
Affordable Housing Investment Area adjusted to ensure proximity to transit	
Bird friendly design criteria added	Modified internal circulation routes to “encourage walking, biking, and being outdoors”
Require public access easements	

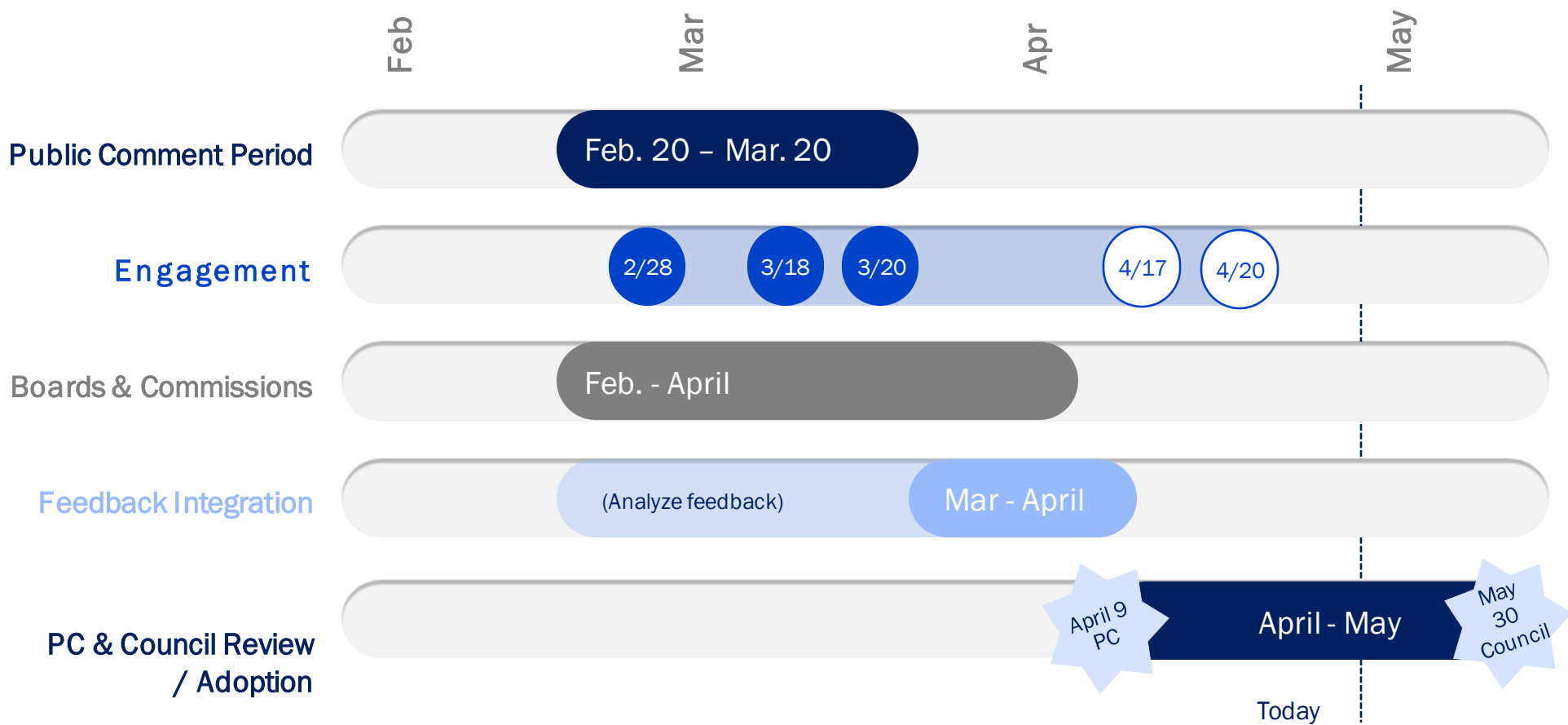


Future Considerations (within 6 months - 2 years)

- 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.



Timeline & Engagement



Public Comment Stats

Outreach to 80+ Stakeholder Groups

489 Survey Participants

3 Public Meetings during public comment period

9 presentations to Boards and Commissions



Staff Recommendation

As written, staff believes 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 approval for the code amendment as proposed in the staff recommendation version and for Council to initiate zoning and rezoning for all non-PUD, PDA, and Planned Development Agreement properties.



PLANNING
DEPARTMENT

Thank You

www.SpeakUpAustin.org/SouthCentralWaterfront











April 9, 2024 PC Recommendations*

PC Amendment/ Recommendation		Staff Response	
1	Modify fee-in-lieu distribution	Not recommended	<p>There has been strong public support of parks and pedestrian friendly spaces in SCW in addition to affordable housing.</p> <p>This adjustment would reduce the dollars collected for 1) parks, and 2) infrastructure and community impact benefits.</p>
2	SCWAB is advisory body for future projects	No action required	<p>Staff agree that a body to provide recommendations to fulfill the intent of the vision plan is beneficial.</p>
3	Amend FAR calculation for structured parking	Not recommended	<p>Staff encourage a “soft” parking cap to avoid penalizing property owners for a parking entitlement they would have access to under base zoning.</p>
4	Modify internal circulation routes encouraging walking, biking, and being outdoors	Included with changes	<p>Staff agree with intent and recommend a 20-foot minimum width (rather than eliminate per Planning Commission), with options adjusted to meet intent of encourage walking, biking, and being outdoors.</p>
5	Modify Subdistrict and FAR map	Included	<p>Staff have incorporated changes as recommended by PC.</p>
6	Include adapted rental multifamily redevelopment requirement	Included	<p>SCW is subject to Chapter 4-18 Article 2 which accommodates all legally sound suggestions in the recommendation.</p>
7	Modify SCW DBP to be Part 1 of Downtown DBP	Not recommended	<p>Downtown DBP cannot achieve council and community priorities for SCW (see next slide).</p>



Staff Recommends Against Replacing SCW DBP with Downtown DBP (PC Recommendation #7)

SCW Needs & Council Priorities	Downtown Density Bonus Program	South Central Waterfront Density Bonus Program
Accommodates lot size and irregular shapes of SCW	 Designed for downtown block structure and infrastructure	 Density distribution areas create pedestrian-friendly environment
Requires onsite affordable housing	 Optional, however rarely selected over fee-in-lieu	 5% onsite required for first 3:1 FAR (rental)
Requires onsite parks / open space	 None required; Bonus for on-site plaza	 5% required; Bonus for park buildout
Provides support for in-district parks and infrastructure / community impact benefits	 Off-site open space fee; no infrastructure/ community impact fee	 Parks and infrastructure/ community impact benefits fee supports district



April 9, 2024 PC Recommendations (cont'd)

PC Amendment / Recommendation		Staff Response	
8	Require extended bridge option for Project Connect within SCW	Not included	This is beyond the scope of a zoning code amendment. Following the public comment period of the NEPA review of options, ATP and City staff will continue to collaborate as the preferred option for this area is identified.
9	Create Parking and Transportation Management District	Not included	This is beyond the scope of a zoning code amendment. A transportation management district was identified in the 2016 Vision Framework Plan for South Central Waterfront. Council could direct the City Manager to further review concept for viability.
10	Adjust planning documents (like ASMP) to include critical mobility infrastructure elements	Not included	This is beyond the scope of a zoning code amendment. Staff is not opposed to the concept generally as planning consistency is essential in planning efforts.
11	Create buy-down provision for SCW	Underway	The City currently has several programs to increase affordable housing in the district, including the right to subsidize on-site affordable residential units.
12	Prioritize preservation and homelessness initiatives for housing fees gained in SCW	Included	Staff recommends incorporating this language aligned with the approach within other codes.
13	Permit 30% of housing fee-in-lieu for on-site condos	Not recommended	The City has identified barriers to securing long-term affordability and stability in income-restricted for sale units in market rate developments (e.g., condo. association fees, condominium assessments, rising property taxes).