

Subject: Memo from Sylvania Holt-Rabb, dated July 31, 2020, with the subject line “Recommendations for Creating the Austin Economic Development Corporation”.

Mayor and council,

After reviewing the above-mentioned memo, the South Central Waterfront Advisory Board (the Board) has determined one of the recommendations outlined in the report to be premature to implement at this time, and perhaps indefinitely. On page 20 of this report, Under Task 4, the consultant states *“The President, CFO and interim COO will petition COA for a contract to immediately pursue approval of relevant plans for South Central Waterfront, with AEDC fulfilling the roles contemplated by the SCWAB for the LGC.”* Further, on page 8 of Appendix 8, the consultant states *“The City of Austin should contract with AEDC to manage the day-to-day of these particular entities [the Board included] and make them part of the “family” of organizations. It may make sense to disband some of them.”*

As discussed in our meeting on April 24, 2020, the Board is generally supportive of the recent work performed by the Economic Development Department and its consultant QBL Partners, with regard to the formation of an Austin Economic Development Corporation. We received a briefing from both of these entities prior to their full report being released to the public or the Board. In an effort to ensure the process was not slowed down, we agreed to support their work, generally, but reserved our right to make any sort of recommendations which may be needed based on the details of the full report, after its release.

The recommendation to disband the Board and leave future implementation recommendations solely to city staff is of particular concern to the SCWAB members, given our mandate to *“provide continuity and communication among stakeholders... and to provide recommendations to the city council regarding plan implementation”*.

Our board is made up of not only experts in their field but community members which live nearby the project area. Our input has been and will continue to be imperative to this process. More importantly, we feel that it is critical to the success of the project that we continue to foster meaningful community engagement through a process that is transparent and in the best interest of not just the residents of the immediate surrounding area, but the city as a whole. There are many community benefits, such as affordable housing and parks outlined in the plan that our group has been working hard to implement. The disbanding of the South Central Waterfront Advisory Board may put in jeopardy these community benefits moving forward if this group does not exist to ensure that any actions taken in the future which may affect the South Central Waterfront Plan’s vision or benefits are in line with the same.

Respectfully,

Samuel Franco  
Chair – South Central Waterfront Advisory Board