ST. JOHN

REVITALIZATION STRATEGIES_

POLICIES AND PROCESSES FOR TRANSFORMATION IN
THE ST. JOHN NEIGHBORHOOD

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The University of Texas at Austin
Center for Sustainable Development
School of Architecture

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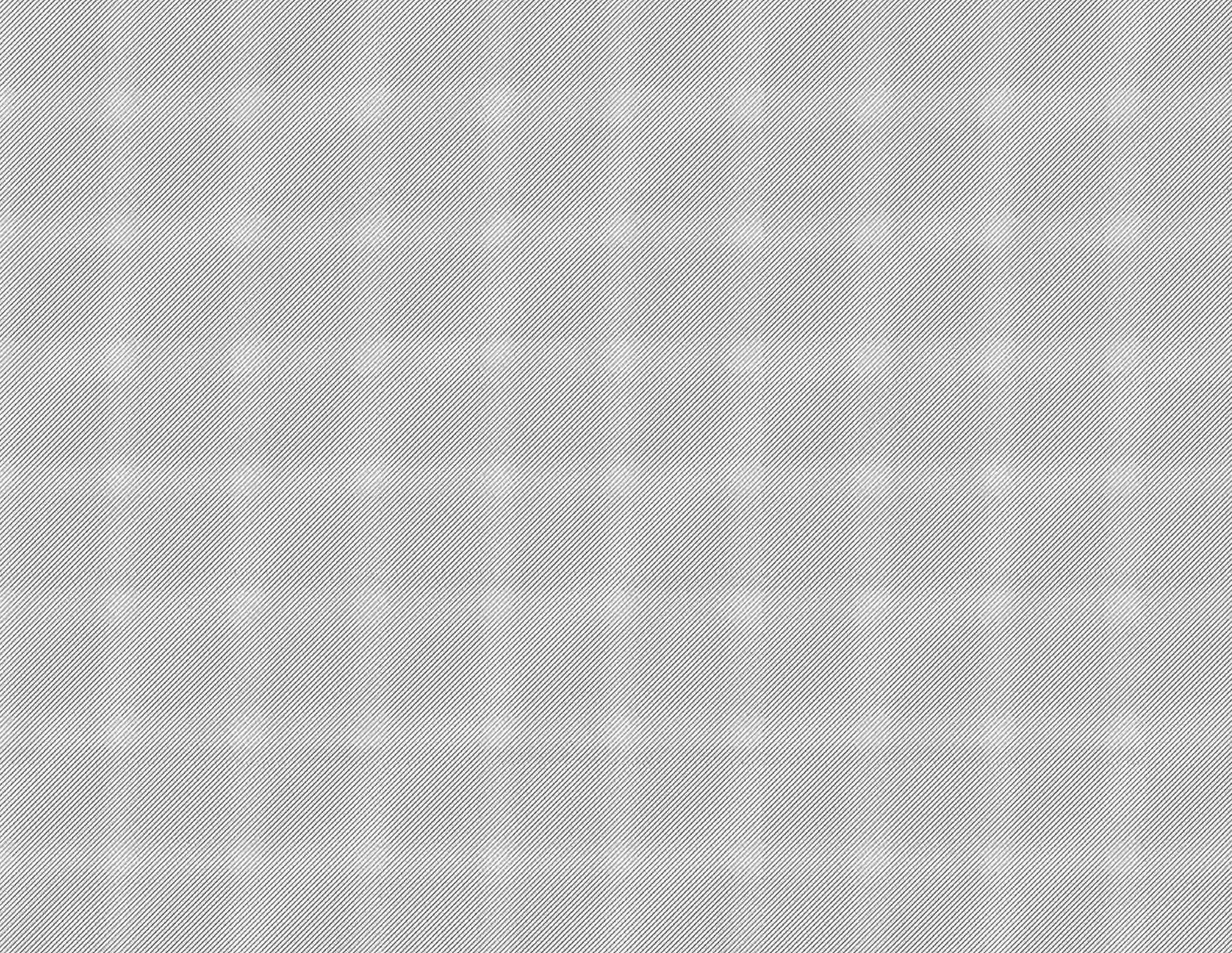
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Executive summary

The 19-acre Home Depot/Chrysler parcel sits at an important site within the St. John neighborhood in Northeast Austin. Because it consists of parking lots and derelict, vacant buildings, and because it is owned by the City of Austin, it offers substantial opportunities for new uses that could benefit the surrounding community and the city as a whole. These include housing, public spaces, retail, and human services. A previous proposal for the site to contain a new public safety facility for the City of Austin has been abandoned. Today, there is a need for a new vision for the parcel.

This new vision will be shaped by St. John community members, Austin's elected officials, and the broader public. This report is an effort by The University of Texas at Austin's School of Architecture, at the request of the City of Austin, to provide useful information and plausible alternative scenarios illustrating tradeoffs that will help inform this vision-shaping process. The report is in turn shaped by ideas generated through a public engagement process led by St. John community leaders and the office of Councilmember Gregorio Casar (District 4), through 650 door-to-door surveys and a series of community meetings.

Constraints

The site's location poses challenges as well as opportunities. St. John as a whole is a community encircled and separated over many decades by the construction of three limited access highways: IH-35, US-290, and US-183. This highway development has isolated the area from the rest of Austin and harmed the local environment and nearby residents' health. The highways' location is no accident. As was true for most predominantly African American and Latino neighborhoods in Austin, St. John for decades suffered a dearth of investment from the city in community institutions, such as schools, and an excess of noxious land uses, such as highways.

The Home Depot/Chrysler parcel is immediately adjacent to IH-35; this necessitates ensuring that the western portion of the site remains free of residences or uses that would serve children or elderly people for whom

exposure to highway air pollution is hazardous. The site must be examined in the larger urban context as a case study in how to address the transition from the residential neighborhood scale to the scale of highway infrastructure within one 1,100-foot urban block. It can set an important precedent in a city where long stretches of highway abut residential areas.

Other challenges stem from the nature of the site itself. This includes a drop of about 16 feet in elevation from south to north. Also, any reuse or demolition of the existing buildings will likely require some environmental cleanup due to the past release of noxious substances in and around them. These are not insurmountable challenges, but they must be taken into account in any plan for redeveloping the Home Depot/Chrysler tract.

There are financial as well as environmental and site-specific challenges. As a result of the city's previous plan to build a public safety facility on the parcel, the city will need to repay between $9.4 and $10.1 million in bond funds for a redevelopment to proceed.

HIGHWAY AIR POLLUTION EXPOSURE_IMPACTED RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Scenarios

This report includes five scenarios, each of which outlines a possible future for the Home Depot/Chrysler site. The scenarios should not be viewed as exact visions for the parcel; rather, they serve to illuminate the types of uses that could be included in a redevelopment and the tradeoffs that must be weighed in order to formulate an eventual plan for its future. As much as possible, these scenarios respond to the site's surroundings. For example, the presence of IH-35 dictates that housing and facilities for children be kept out of a 500-foot buffer adjacent to the highway, and for strategic placement of buildings to block the flow of pollutants and noise. Meanwhile, the scenarios also take into account the presence of existing small-scale single-family houses to the east. The St. John Park that already exists on the site is a hard-won community asset that the scenarios, in different ways, build upon.

Each of the five scenarios consists of two parts: first, they use one of three infrastructure frameworks (A, B, or C). These help to organize the overall Home Depot/St. John site into a number of new, subdivided parcels. Second, each scenario includes, in different configurations, components, or "plug in" pieces, that can be developed on the individual parcels over time. These components can be pursued at different times rather than simultaneously, making the execution of the plan more achievable. The result is a mix and match strategy of five scenario sets (infrastructure framework + components): A.1, B.1, B.2, C.1, C.2, where the letter refers to the infrastructure framework used and the numbers refer to different mixes of components within that framework. Despite their differences, all five scenarios strive to deliver different mixes of public benefits for the community. Another consistent principle is placemaking, or an effort to create an enjoyable, outdoor public realm that is welcoming to all, particularly existing St. John residents.

Scenario A.1 is the most straightforward, entailing minimal changes to the existing site. With minimal infrastructure and new highway-related commercial development, it makes the least fiscal demands on the city. An economic analysis projects that it would not require net subsidy from the City of Austin. The primary public benefit would be a green buffer between the neighborhood and the western (highway-impacted) portion of the site, amounting to a major expansion of the existing St. John Park.

The remaining four scenarios are more ambitious, delivering more public benefits to the neighborhood, while also requiring a more complex redevelopment process, and levels of net subsidy from the city estimated to range from $41 million (Scenario C.2) to $72 million (Scenario B.2). Scenarios B.1 and B.2 are based on a grid of new residential streets, while C.1 and C.2 are organized around a new north-south civic boulevard. Scenarios B.1, B.2, C.1, and C.2 include varying mixes of for-sale and for-rent affordable housing, retail space, a grocery store, new open space, a vocational training center, and other uses. They also include, again in varying combinations, for-profit uses that help reduce the levels of subsidy needed from the city, including hotels, offices, and market rate housing. These for-profit uses are viable under current market conditions in Northeast Austin. The five scenarios are summarized below.
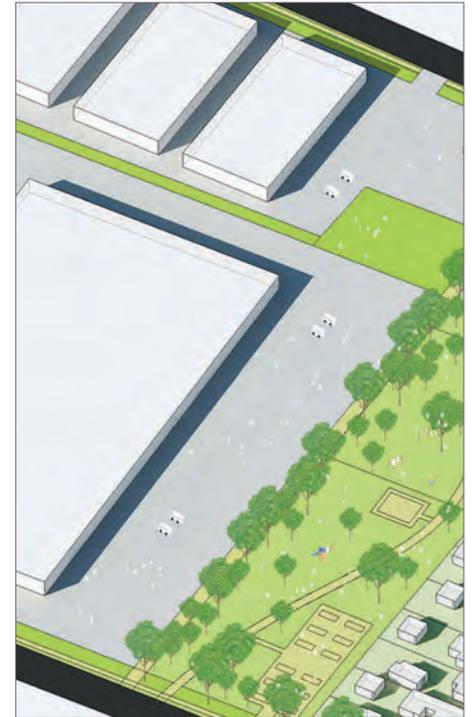
SCENARIO A.1

- Main public benefit is expansion of existing St. John Park to 166,000 sf continuous green space.

- Rest of site devoted to for-profit uses—mini-storage and warehousing—and their parking.

- No housing.

- Total development cost: $71 million.

- Annual property taxes generated for city: $360,000.

- No subsidy required from city.
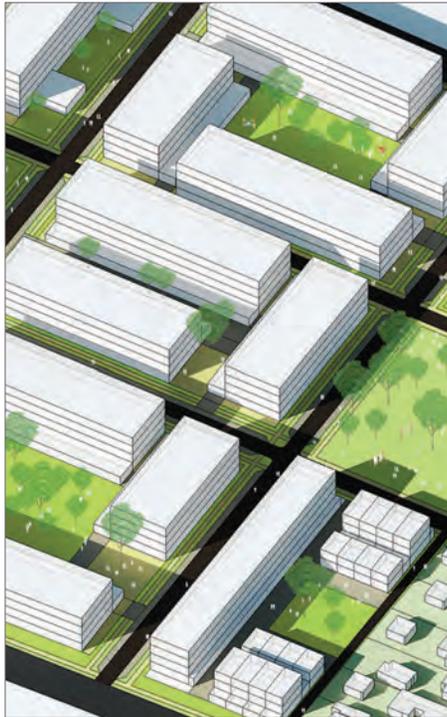
SCENARIO B.1

- Emphasizes medium-density housing in a neighborhood-friendly street grid.

- Includes hotel, office, and 80,000 sf of community space.

- ~295 for-sale and rental housing units (~48% below market rate).*

- Total development cost: $216 million.

- Annual property taxes generated for city: $590,000.

- Required total subsidy from city: $62 million.

SCENARIO B.2

- Uses street grid to provide an expansion of existing St. John Park (125,000 sf total).

- Includes hotel, office, and 108,000 sf of community space.

- ~239 for-sale and rental housing units (~49% below market rate).*

- Total development cost: $245 million.

- Annual property taxes generated for city: $770,000.

- Required total subsidy from city: $72 million.

SCENARIO C.1

- Organized around north-south civic boulevard with civic uses and public space.

- Includes office and maximal community space (246,000).

- ~153 for-sale and rental housing units (~52% below market rate).*

- Total development cost: $214 million.

- Annual property taxes generated for city: $630,000.

- Required total subsidy from city: $67 million.
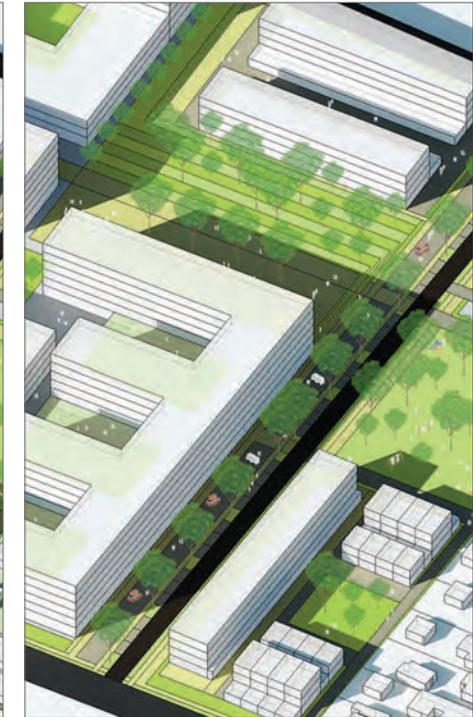
SCENARIO C.2

- Uses more intensive development along civic boulevard to maximize affordable housing and minimize public subsidy.

- Includes office development (450,000 sf) and substantial community space (206,000 sf).

- ~373 for-sale and rental housing units (~75% below market rate).*

- Total development cost: $313 million.

- Annual property taxes generated for city: $1.12 million.

- Required total subsidy from city: $41 million.

NOTES: Exact final housing unit count and below market share of total depend on mixture of unit sizes and configurations.

VACANT HOME DEPOT SITE

Supportive policy

To realize the full potential of the Home Depot/Chrysler site for the surrounding community, a well-designed and executed redevelopment of the site is necessary but not, on its own, sufficient. There is also a need for supporting policies and programs implemented by the City of Austin. These should build upon existing city programs, particularly those focused on economic development and public spaces, such as the city's Box Bazaar initiative to foster entrepreneurship via micro-retail in East Austin or the city's Art in Public Places program, to engage residents and honor neighborhood history. A redeveloped Home Depot/Chrysler site also offers the opportunity to work with many community organizations to ensure the community spaces on the site serve the community well and are actively used.

Achieving the housing goals desired by community members will require significant investment by the City of Austin and presents a chance to create a meaningful "right to return" housing program, so that newly built below market rate housing can directly benefit existing and former St. John residents. In order to achieve the kinds of benefits that community members envision, it will be important to identify and bring in community partners with relevant expertise and experience.

The way forward

St. John began as a freedmen's community, founded by emancipated slaves in the decades following the Civil War. It grew up around and was supported by the St. John Regular Missionary Baptist Association, which developed an orphanage and school in the neighborhood. A strong sense of community and belonging arose among the predominantly African American residents, and has continued even as the neighborhood has shifted to be majority Latino. However, efforts to sustain local institutions and foster development for the community were often thwarted by city leaders, in the context of de jure and de facto segregation in the 20th century. For instance, an earlier attempt to build housing affordable to the community in the neighborhood was blocked because it threatened racial boundaries, and the neighborhood's segregation-era school was moved to the project site to make way for IH-35, only to close several years later.

Change is coming to St. John in the form of rising housing prices and other harbingers of gentrification. The city-owned Home Depot/Chrysler parcel represents a one-of-a-kind opportunity for the St. John community to harness these coming changes and use them to secure meaningful benefits for the long-term future of existing residents who wish to stay and invest in their beloved neighborhood. This will mean honoring the simultaneously proud and troubled history of the neighborhood while also embracing change and growth. This report will be judged a success if it provides some useful information and ideas towards an inspiring yet achievable vision, shaped by the people of St. John, that strikes this delicate balance.

NEW PUBLIC SPACES_SCENARIO C.2
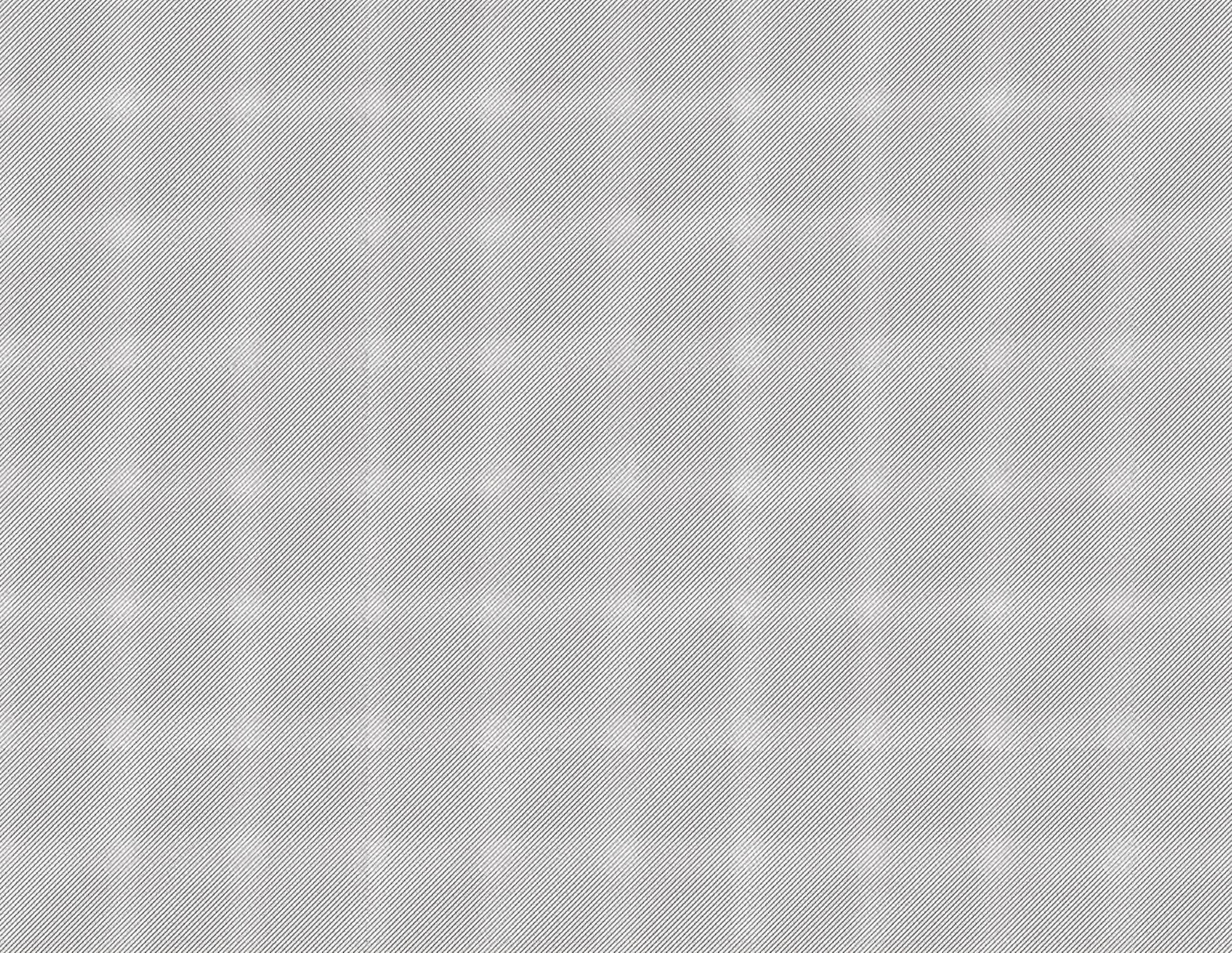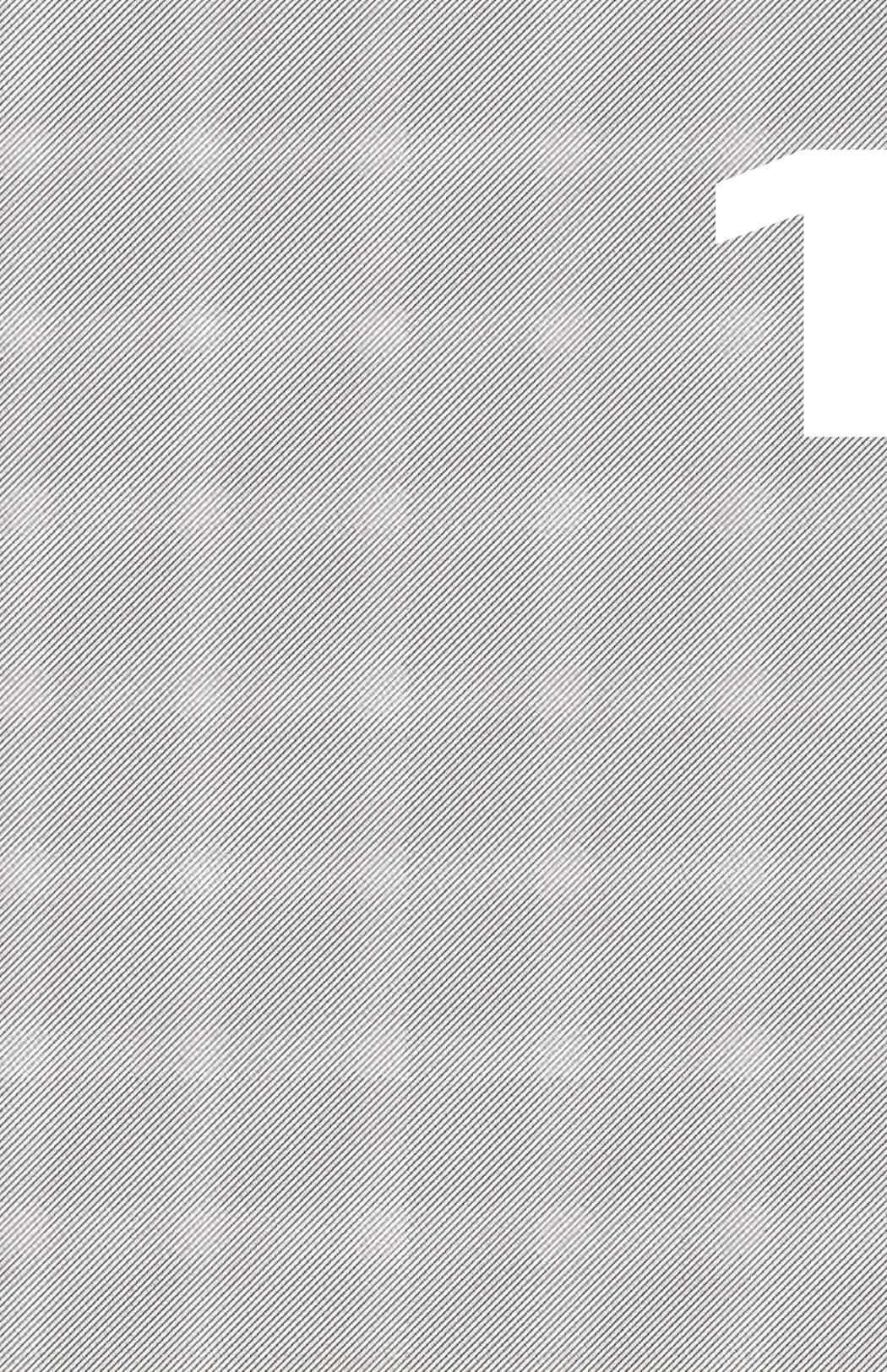
Introduction and History of St. John Neighborhood

INTRODUCTION

Settlement in the St. John neighborhood began in the late 1890s and although the area was officially annexed in 1951, it has continued to lack access to adequate city services and infrastructure. Despite these challenges, the community has thrived, and St. John is an integral part of the geography and history of Austin.

Since the late 1990s, Austin has seen a dramatic rise in housing costs and decrease in overall affordability. The impacts of Austin's rising housing costs have been particularly dramatic in the city's "eastern crescent," where historically low housing costs, produced in part through the city's history of publicly-supported racial and ethnic segregation, now combine with broader social and economic trends to make these neighborhoods more desirable to higher-income households.[1] In 1994, Home Depot purchased the property located at IH-35 and St. Johns Avenue. The Home Depot was closed in 2008 due to building code violations. The City of Austin puchased this property in 2008, and the adjacent Chrysler

property in 2013, with 2007 general obligation bond series for $6.9 million. However, once city officials realized the project budget exceeded those costs, the funds were reallocated and the project halted. In December of 2017, the Austin City Council approved a resolution directing the City Manager to work with community members to create a new vision for the city-owned property located at IH-35 and St. Johns Avenue, located within the St. John neighborhood. The Council members voted to authorize a community-based visioning process for the site and passed a budget to fund community outreach and analysis of possible redevelopment strategies.

In Resolution 20190606-098, adopted on June 6, 2019, City Council approved a resolution "directing the City Manager to negotiate an interlocal agreement with The University of Texas for the redevelopment planning of the City-owned property located at IH-35 and St. Johns Avenue within the St. John neighborhood." The resolution articulated a strong commitment to the

ST. JOHN PARK_ST. JOHN

_CITY SCALE MAP

▼ IH-35

◀ US-290

ST. JOHN

DOWNTOWN
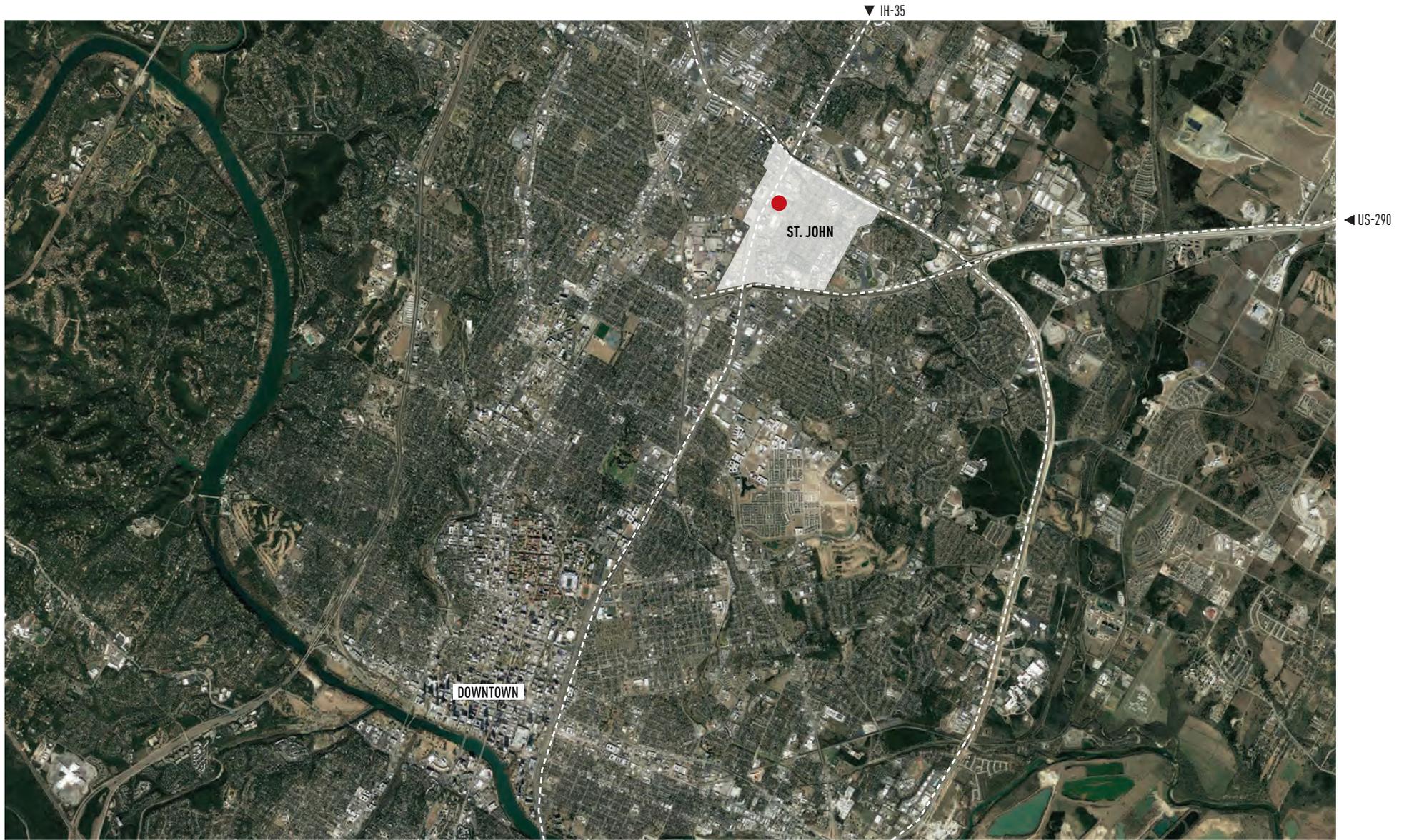
▲ US-183

residents of the St. John neighborhood and tasked the research team to assist City Council and the Economic Development Department in assessing site planning options related to 906 E. St. Johns Avenue and 7211 N. IH-35 in order to redevelop the site in a way that achieves community benefits while mitigating the negative potential impacts of gentrification.

The 2018 report *Uprooted: Residential Displacement in Austin's Gentrifying Neighborhoods and What Can be Done About It,* which was led in part by School of Architecture faculty members Elizabeth Mueller, Ph.D. and Jake Wegmann, Ph.D., identified the St. John-Coronado Hills neighborhood as being in the early stage of gentrification. Area residents were disproportionately from groups known to be vulnerable to displacement as housing prices rise: 81% of area residents were people of color; predominantly Latinos; 80% were renters (compared to 55% citywide); only 22% of residents over 25 held college degrees (vs. 48% citywide); and over two-thirds of households had incomes below

80 percent of the regional median (vs. 39% citywide). At the same time, there were signs of change consistent with gentrification. Since 2000, the share of white households in the area has grown modestly (while declining citywide), and the share of college-educated residents has risen nine percentage points, exceeding the city's five point change. In this predominantly non-white, renter district, the majority of mortgages issued in recent years have been to white borrowers. But while there were some signs of demographic change, the housing market showed little evidence of change. Despite comparatively low property values, a large share of both owners and renters continued to be housing "cost burdened," paying well above 30 percent of their gross monthly income for housing costs. Large households were particularly likely to pay a high percentage of their incomes for housing costs. Only 6% of the total housing stock was income restricted. Yet since 2015, there is evidence of coming change: the total value of permitted construction has risen by over 1,000 percent between 2015 and 2017 (vs.

ST. JOHNS AVENUE_ST. JOHN NEIGHBORHOOD

_INTRODUCTION

81% citywide). Recent transportation improvements are likely contributing to the change: the advent of rapid bus service to the area and nearly completed upgrades to nearby US-183 are improving the area's access to employment centers.

Given this context, the St. John property provides a significant opportunity to leverage a city-owned asset to advance public goals.

As decisions about the future of the St. John project site will be decided by the community and city council, it is not the role of the research team to select or prefer one outcome over another. Rather, as professionals operating within an academic institution, the team's contribution is to synthesize and summarize an enormous variety of existing information, and to put forward new information by creating and thoroughly analyzing several distinct scenarios. The hope is that this information can allow residents and elected officials to base their opinions and positions on analysis that is reasoned, thorough, and accessible.

As a research team with a strong grounding in the disciplines of urban planning and urban design, particular attention was given to planning for the site in a way that achieves community benefits and mitigates the negative potential impacts of gentrification. As scenarios were developed, the team constantly asked whether and how the scenarios were contributing to enriched community benefits.

The Research Team and Approach

The team is made up of university-based researchers, urban designers, urban planners, faculty, administrators, and graduate students, all within the School of Architecture at The University of Texas at Austin. Austin's City Council passed a resolution selecting the team because of the independence and academic freedom enjoyed as a result of its association with a major research university. Although some of the team frequently receive funding for research, design work, and other activities from outside entities, none of the team has any vested interest, financial or

otherwise, in the findings of this study, nor from any public decisions that it may eventually influence. This study is a major undertaking, and one that has been approached with the utmost seriousness; however, the team's respective career trajectories do not depend on what is reported here. This work was performed under the condition that there would be no pre-determined outcomes. Indeed, the research team was determined to approach the work with an open mind, and to let the work be influenced by the widest possible range of viewpoints, as expressed by prior reports, written comments, and meetings with a variety of stakeholders. None of the team members claim to be free from all bias; however, team members have done their utmost to live up to the title of "honest brokers" in the production of this report.

This report is intended to provide information to Austin's elected leaders, as well as to city staff, other interested parties, and the public as a whole that will be useful in deciding how to proceed. It reviews the current state of the city owned property and proposes various options for reconfigurations of the site, while also including provisions for associated private development; and provides an overview of the economic considerations of development.

HISTORY

Settlement in the St. John neighborhood began with the work of the St. John Regular Missionary Baptist Association (SJRMBA), which established many African American churches in Travis County and was known to be the largest association of churches in the area for African Americans. In 1894, the SJRMBA purchased 350 acres in North Austin, just outside the city limits. In 1906, under the leadership of L.L. Campbell, the SJRMBA constructed the St. John's Industrial Institute and Orphanage. [2] The orphanage and school served hundreds of children every year. Rev. Dr. Campbell served as Moderator of the SJRMBA for thirty-three years, and his funeral service is said to have been attended by over 5,000 people.[3]

Land in the neighborhood was subdivided in the 1930s by Reverend A. K. Black and plots were sold to African American sharecroppers migrating from rural counties. Similar freedmen's settlements were created throughout Texas after the Civil War; during this period an estimated one-quarter of the state's African American population moved to urban areas.[4] St. John settlement joined other freedmen's communities in Austin including Wheatsville, Clarksville, Pleasant Hill, Robertson Hill, and Masontown. Freedmen's communities were typically located at the city's edge, in low-lying, flood-prone areas, and began with the establishment of a church and neighborhood schools, followed later by social enterprises, such as the St. John's Orphanage.

The St. John community expanded after passage of the City of Austin's first comprehensive plan in 1928, which denied city services to African American residents outside of an Eastside "Negro district." This led many African American residents of West Austin settlements to move east, with some settling in St. John.[5] Although the St. John neighborhood was officially annexed in 1951, it continued to lack access to adequate city services and infrastructure.[6] The neighborhood dealt with substandard drainage, unpaved streets, and educational facilities. Moreover, the community lacked bus services and had insufficient sewage infrastructure.[7]

In 1949, the SJRMBA asked to develop the 300 acres in the area west of the neighborhood (where the orphanage stood

ST. JOHN'S ORPHANAGE_1945

and Highland Mall was later developed) into more housing for African American Austinites. The Mayor, the North Austin Civic Club, and nearby property owners opposed the plan and threatened to condemn the property. The NAACP, led by Arthur DeWitty, the Baptist Ministers Union, and the Progressive Party of Austin testified in favor of the housing.[8] Nonetheless, a commercial development was built. A push to provide services was made in the 1960s, and in 1964 the Austin Statesman reported that the city had awarded a contract for construction of a pool in the St. John School playground for the following summer. Nonetheless, in 1968 the Daily Texan reported 126 homes in the area were not connected to a sewer and 64 homes lacked indoor plumbing.[9] Longstanding tensions continued to exist between community leaders in St. John and local and state officials, fueled by decades of racial discrimination and Jim Crow. Despite these challenges, the community thrived, and St. John was an integral part of the geography and history of Austin.

ST. JOHN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL_1972

ST. JOHN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Students from both The University of Texas at Austin and Huston–Tillotson University, got involved in the community through the University YMCA community development program. Students assisted with educational work such as tutoring sessions, study halls, recreational programs, and youth clubs. Additionally, the program helped the community increase street lighting and add a school bus route.[10] The construction of Interstate 35, beginning in the 1950s, split the community in half. Following the completion of the highway in 1962, the portion of the neighborhood west of the highway became more commercial. In 1956, the SJRMBA sold 296 acres of its land in this area for $600,000, where the Highland Mall later opened in 1971.[11] The highway also forced the relocation of the St. John School, which had opened in 1942, replacing two "Negro" schools in the area.[12] In 1958, the school was moved from its location west of the highway (700 Delmar Avenue) to 906 St. Johns Avenue. St. John Elementary school officially re-opened for the 1959-60 school year.[13]

In the 1970s, the St. John neighborhood began to see physical improvements and take on a more urban character. Many of these improvements can be attributed to the development of a community plan that identified specific changes needed. The St. John Neighborhood Development Program was developed with the assistance of The University of Texas at Austin School of Architecture professor Reynell Parkins and urban planning students.[14] Students and community members prepared a plan that proposed a shopping center, street lighting, traffic control, a park, and funds to rehabilitate housing. Improvements began to be implemented in 1976.

In 1970, long after the Supreme Court's 1954 decision in Brown vs. Board of Education that de jure racial segregation was unconstitutional, the federal government sued the Austin Independent School District (AISD) for failure to comply with desegregation guidelines and a federal judge ordered the district to close St. John Elementary, along with two other predominantly African American schools.[15] Many parents expressed their dissatisfaction with the integration plan

through lawsuits and protests. Parents in St. John worried about their children having to cross either Interstate 35 or Highway 290 to get to the other schools and demanded that either their school be kept open or buses be provided. St. John Elementary was closed in August 1971. The school remained abandoned until 1980, when it reopened to serve K-3 students only. It later became an alternative school for pregnant teenagers, until it closed in the early 90s.[16]

During the 1980s, the demographic make-up of the neighborhood began to change. The population of African American residents began to decline, while the population of Latino residents began to grow. The reasons behind the decline of the African American population are debated. Factors that likely produced this decline included the loss of the community school and dissatisfaction with the district's approach to school desegregation, leading some to move to northern suburbs, and rising housing costs in the community that priced out some long-time residents. At the same time, the boom in apartment construction in parts

of the neighborhood brought more renters to the community. During the 1990s, community residents began pushing for a new neighborhood school and community center, following a fire that destroyed the St. John neighborhood center.[17] In 2001, a new school and community center opened in the neighborhood. Pickle Elementary School and the St. John Community Center (later renamed for community leader Virginia Brown) were developed to bring the school and services together in a new, "community school" model. They were jointly developed by the City and AISD. The center provides the neighborhood access to a public library, health center, a public gym, and a senior center.

In 1994 Home Depot purchased the property that included the site of historic St. John School, leaving no trace of the school. Eventually, the Home Depot was closed in 2008 due to building code violations. The City of Austin purchased this property in 2008, and the adjacent Chrysler property in 2013 with a 2007 general obligation bond series for $6.9 million dollars to build a new municipal court building and an Austin Police

Department substation. After city officials realized the project would cost more than the budget allowed, the remaining money was reallocated and plans were halted.[18] After this decision, the site has functioned as a storage facility for Austin Resource Recovery, along with other city departments. Thousands of composting bins and miscellaneous materials were stored on the site until 2018 when residents of the area voiced their opposition and the bins were removed.[19]

One of the last remnants of the original school site is the St. John neighborhood pocket park. The park contained a pool built in the 1960s that was closed due to code violations in 2010 and subsequently filled in.[20] After the establishment of the single-member district form of local representation, and by the advocacy of the St. John Neighborhood Association, the park received an upgrade in 2017, and then, in 2019, the park was redeveloped with support of Austin Parks Foundation, Dell Match Play, and the City of Austin. The St. John Park reopened in March of 2019 and features a new entry plaza, pavilion, playscape, and swings.[21]


1-04

ST. JOHN HOME DEPOT SITE_REMOVAL OF BINS

1894
St. John Regular Baptist Association purchases more than 300 acres in North Austin with Dr. L. L. Campbell's Leadership

1906
St. John Industrial Institute and Orphanage for African American children opened

1931
Rev. A.K. Black subdivdes his land and sold plots to African American sharecroppers

1940s
Rev. A. K. Black pressured to sell land

1942
Orphanage closed

1951
Portion of St. John community annexed

1956
Orphanage burns down

1957
Land owned by the St. John Regular Baptist Association sold by Rev. Black(not including St. John neighborhood)

1960
St. John Elementary School opens for 1959-1960 school year

1971
St. John Elementary is closed as a result of desegregation efforts in Austin

1973
University of Texas team works with residents to identify neighborhood improvements

1974
Physical neighborhood repairs intiated

1970s - 80s
Increased urbanization, apartments, subdivisions, lack of infrastructure

1970s
St. John neighborhood begins to see physical transformations including street paving and creek channelization

| 1890 | 1900 | 1930 | 1950 | 1960 | 1970 |

2008
Home Depot closes and land is purchased by the City of Austin

1994
Home Depot acquires St. John Elementary School site from AISD

2011
New St. John Community Center built - later renamed Virginia L. Brown Recreation Center

2017
Councilmembers votes to authorize community-based visioning process for Home Depot site

2017-2018
Public meetings, surveys and charettes conducted to inform development proposals.

1980 ── 1990 ── 2000 ── 2010 ── **2019**

1980s
Increase of Latino immigrants in the St. John neighborhood

1990s
St. John Community Center burns down

2013
Chrysler Tract purchased by City of Austin

2010
Austin Parks and Rec closes St. John pool

2018
Trash bins removed from Home Depot

2019 Council Resolution
UTSOA brought in to conduct a study to assess site planning options

2019
Austin Parks and Rec reopens St. John Park

RESEARCH AND ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

The City of Austin moved forward on its efforts to redevelop the Home Depot-Chrysler site in 2017 with the support of community members and activists from St. John. Council members voted to authorize a community-based visioning process for the site and passed a budget to fund community outreach and analysis of possible redevelopment strategies. Prior to the research for this report, residents submitted over 600 survey responses and participated in design charrettes in order to inform development proposals.

Surveys were administered by the office of District 4's representative, Councilmember Gregorio Casar. Community members were able to complete the survey either online or on paper in either Spanish or English. A total of 644 residents participated in the survey, with 481 completing it online, and 163 on paper. Of the 163 paper responses, 64% were completed in Spanish, while 99.8% of online responses were in English. The survey allowed community members to select up to five options of uses to be included on the site from a list that included a range of choices in topics under the headings of affordable housing,

community services, parks/recreation, and retail businesses. The most common selections within respondent's top five choices are as follows:

ALL RESPONSES:
Green Space - 48%
Culture And Arts - 45%
Pool/Aquatic Center- 45%
Grocery Store - 43%
Youth Development - 41%
PAPER RESPONSES:
Pool/Aquatic Center - 59%
Youth Development - 58%
Culture And Arts - 55%
2-Bdrm Apt @ $733/Month - 47%
Grocery Stores - 44%

1-05 **DISTRICT 4 COMMUNITY SURVEY SUMMARY**

Respondents were also asked two open-ended questions that allowed them to describe their vision for the site in their own words. The first question asked respondents what would bring them and their family to the site and a second asked them what type of redevelopment they thought would benefit the community as a whole. From responses to the first question, seven main topics emerged:

recreation (40%), retail (18%), community services (9%), programming for children (7%), entertainment (6%), affordable housing (4%), and police (1%).The responses regarding uses that would provide benefit to the community overall showed a similar pattern with the following topics coming to the forefront: recreation (28%), retail (16%), affordable housing (12%), programming for children (9%), community services (8%), community spaces (3%), and police (2%).

In December of 2017, the Austin City Council approved a resolution directing the City Manager to work with community members to create a new vision for the city-owned property located at IH-35 and St. Johns Avenue, located within the St. John neighborhood.[22] The Economic Development Department has issued a Request for Proposals for a "due diligence and repositioning strategy" for this site and another city-owned property in town which is currently ongoing. While that study will develop a strategy for the St. John site, it is important that issues of gentrification, residential displacement, and housing affordability be addressed and

that economically and racially just options be provided for the neighborhood. The St. John property provides a significant opportunity to leverage a city-owned asset to advance public goals.

In June 2019, a team from The University of Texas at Austin School of Architecture was brought in to conduct a study to assist City Council and the Economic Development Department in assessing site planning options related to 906 E. St. Johns Avenue and 7211 N. IH-35 that redevelops the site in a way that achieves community benefits and mitigates the negative potential impacts of gentrification. A public kickoff meeting was conducted in September of 2019.

As The University of Texas team concluded its initial site analysis and developed preliminary scenarios, the team described its findings about challenges and opportunities presented by the site and solicited feedback from the community on a few key questions through small group discussions. The event took place on November 4th at the People's Community Clinic in the St. John neighborhood. Over

PUBLIC MEETING_NOVEMBER 2019

100 community members and stakeholders attended and interpreters ensured the discussion was accessible to the many Spanish-speaking community members present. Small group discussions allowed participants to discuss the different potentials of the redevelopment and balance trade-offs associated with each option.

Small group discussions focused on three primary issues: 1) who residents imagined living in the redevelopment and in what type of housing, 2) the public uses or services they would like to see located on the site, and 3) the private uses they would support as a means to fund community benefits. Groups were facilitated by members of UT research team as well

as staff from Councilmember Casar's office and the Economic Development Department of the City of Austin. Results are summarized below:

Discussions featured heavy support for affordable housing, at a variety of affordability levels, with particular interest in housing that would accommodate the needs of families. Participants indicated support for retaining existing community members and also policies that could allow recently displaced residents to return to the neighborhood. In terms of housing types, participants supported a wide variety of housing models for either renter or homeowner households, including housing cooperatives and community land trusts. Notable comments included support for housing for teachers and veterans and interest in opportunities for residents to build generational wealth.

Participants discussed a wide variety of potential public uses for the site with large support for green space and public plazas. Options to increase the availability of fresh food, including urban farming, farmers' markets, and community gardens were

brought up in several of the groups. A number of groups also discussed providing a community center of some sort on the site such as a youth center, multicultural center, senior center, or workforce development facility.

The discussion of private, revenue-generating uses for the site yielded mixed results with residents hesitant about the impact that these uses might have on neighbors. Some participants indicated a willingness to support private uses on land adjacent to IH-35 as a buffer for the neighborhood. There was also support for office space geared to the rising technology sector in Austin, provided this use would include workforce training opportunities and job placement for local residents.

Feedback received from the community during this process, including responses to the scenarios presented in this report, will be used to guide the drafting of a Request for Proposals for the redevelopment of this site.

PUBLIC MEETING_NOVEMBER 2019

PUBLIC MEETING_OCTOBER 2019

SCHEDULE_TIMELINE

	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4	Phase 5

1 Input

Dec. 2017 Council Resolution: Creation of a vision for Home Depot / Chrysler Parcel

Council Outreach / Survey / Community Conversations

2 Documentation

Data Collection / Research

Documentation and Assessment_ Site and Urban Context

Public Kickoff

Best Practices_ Research and Documentation

3 Analysis / Scenario Development

Research Team

Site and Relationships

Development of Scenario Components ("Building Blocks")

Progress Update / Community Input

Scenarios_ Development and Evaluation

Scenario Development

Scenario Evaluation

4 Production

Production of Final Report

Final Report

5 Implementation

Community Vote on preferred scenario

Development Partners chosen, project implementation

August	September	October	November	December	January	

2017 - 2019

Wed._Sept. 25

Mon., Nov. 4

2020

January 2020

Constraints and Site Analysis

URBAN CONDITIONS

The St. John neighborhood's current condition of isolation from much of the rest of Austin has its roots both in its social history as well as in planned and unplanned processes of urban development. The street grid of the original freedmen's settlement was laid down in the isolation of a relatively untouched Central Texas landscape. The only connections to the City of Austin were the arteries of East Avenue and Cameron Road, as shown in the 1954 map of Austin.

Today, this condition of isolation persists, although its causes have shifted over the last 70 years. With the construction of the major corridors of IH-35 and US-183 and the gradual buildout of US-290, the original settlement became increasingly encircled by roadway infrastructure. The current core of St. John is bounded by highways on three sides (IH-35 in the west, US-183 in the north, US-290 in the south) while Cameron Road forms the eastern edge. These corridors brought with them a significant jump in scale of the built environment: Developments along highway corridors consist predominantly of big box type buildings,

warehouses, and parking lots. Oriented towards the frontage roads, and designed for maximum infrastructural efficiency, the large scale and horizontal expanse of these developments stands in sharp contrast to the intimate street and building scale of the neighborhood. The result is a roughly U-shaped buffer zone between the neighborhood core and the surrounding traffic arteries, open only to the north, where the neighborhood abruptly meets the elevated roadway of US-183.

The block of the former Home Depot / Chrysler site, which is the subject of this report, is part of this U-shaped buffer around the neighborhood. While unique in topography and constraints, the site must also be examined in the larger urban context described above. One of the central questions that arise is how to address the transition from a residential neighborhood to a major highway.
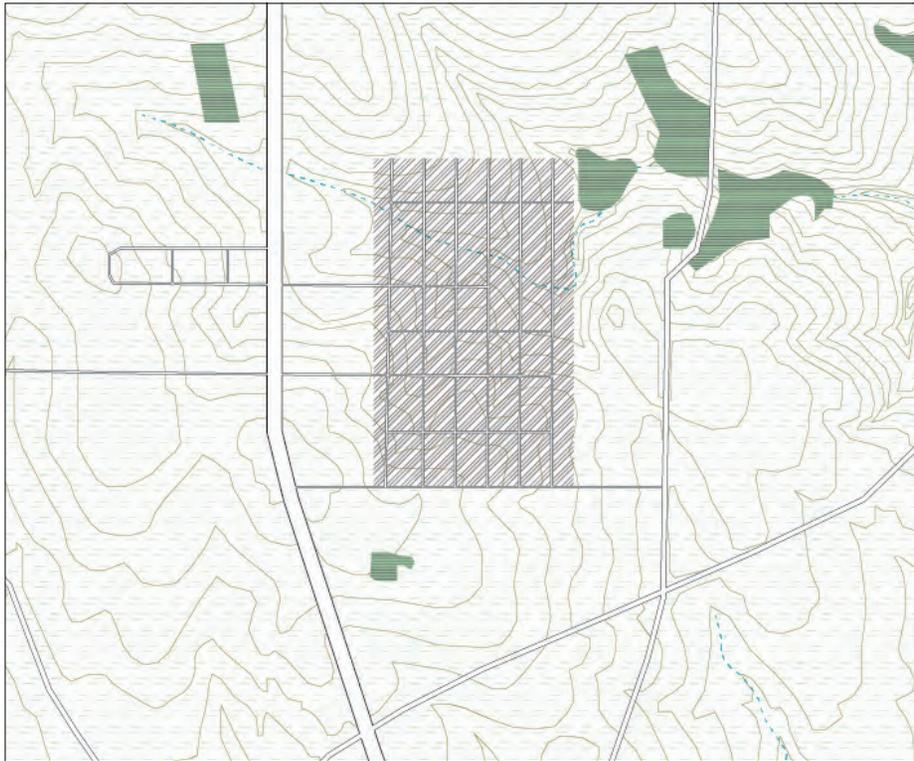
St. John as Urban Island (1954)

The street grid of the St. John settlement floats in a relatively untouched Central Texas landscape, connected to the city by only two roads.
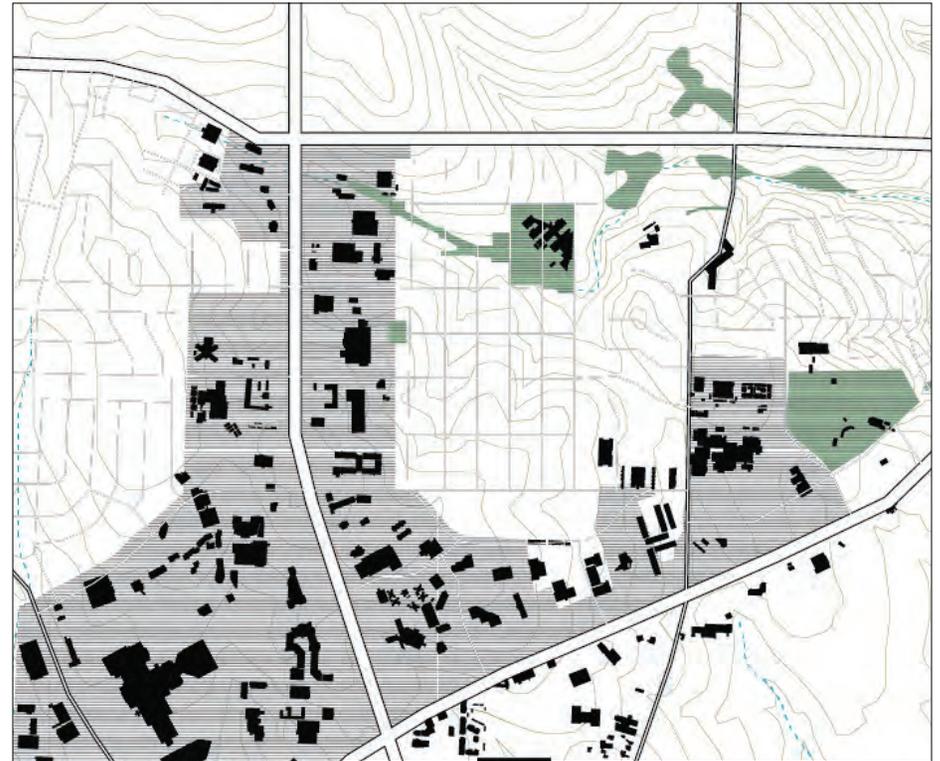
St. John as Urban Island (2019)

Encircled by a U-shaped "wall" of large-scale infrastructural and commercial development, the "island" of St. John remains largely isolated from the rest of the city today. The city has grown around St. John without forming new connections. Access today still remains largely limited to the same two corridors.

_URBAN CONDITIONS

Expansion of Road Infrastructure

1954

1966

1973

1988

Growth of Urbanized Area (City Neighborhoods)
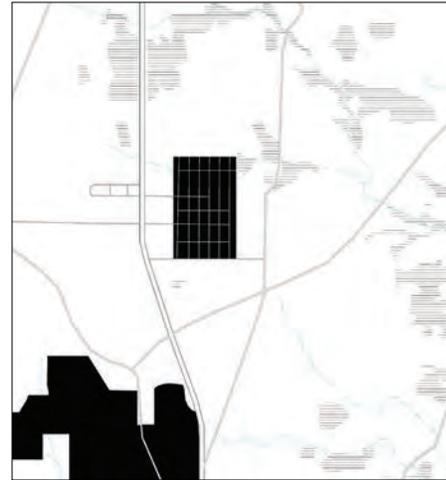
1954
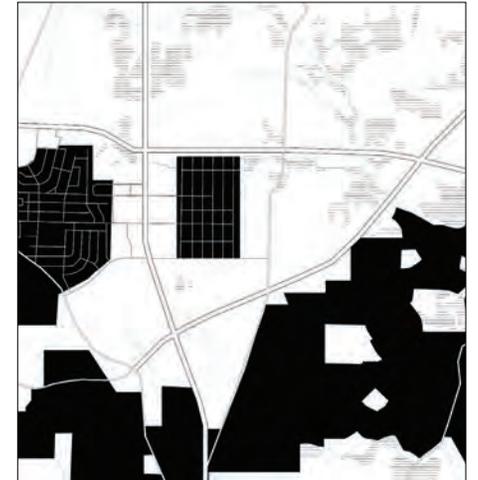
1966

1973

1988

The series of diagrams shows the development of the St. John neighborhood in relation to the growth of the City of Austin in increments based on historic maps from 1954 to 1988.

Road Infrastructure

The most significant shift occurs between 1954 and 1966 with the construction of both IH-35 and US-183 with the former reinforcing the western boundary and the latter effectively creating a new boundary to the north. The progressive buildout of US-290 completes the southeast boundary. At the city scale Cameron Road to date remains the main north-south connector. At the neighborhood scale, the east-west axis has over the years increased in importance. St. Johns Avenue has become the main connector between the area around Highland Mall (constructed in 1971), Crestview, the western part of St. John, and, eventually, Coronado Hills to the east (1973).

Urbanized Areas

The series of diagrams shows urbanized residential areas growing up from the south, eventually enveloping the original St. John neighborhood (1966-1988). Yet, few of these areas connect directly to St. John, with the exceptions of West St John/ Crestview and Coronado Hills. In both cases, however, connectivity is hindered by the north-south traffic corridors of IH-35 and Cameron Road.

Natural Landscape

A steady decline of natural landscape untouched by urban development such as roads and neighborhoods can be seen between 1954 and 1988. The green belt along Little Walnut Creek becomes increasingly fragmented and shrinks in size.

Decline of Natural Landscape

1954

1966

1973
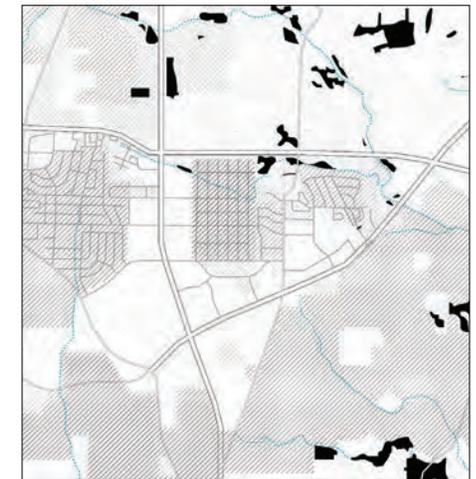
1988
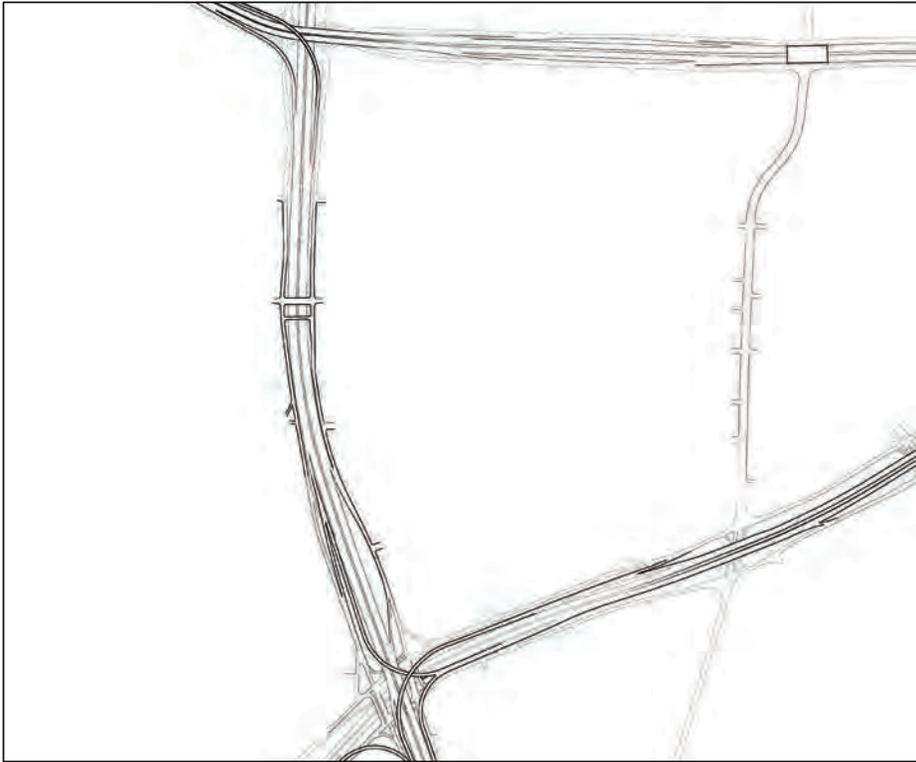
Infrastructure

The core of the St. John neighborhood is bounded by three major highways (IH-35 to the west, US-183 to the north and US-290 to the south) while the eastern edge is formed by the major thoroughfare of Cameron Road The presence of these major roads affects all levels of urban life, from noise to pedestrian and car accessibility to particulate matter as a result of heavy traffic, to land uses and property values.
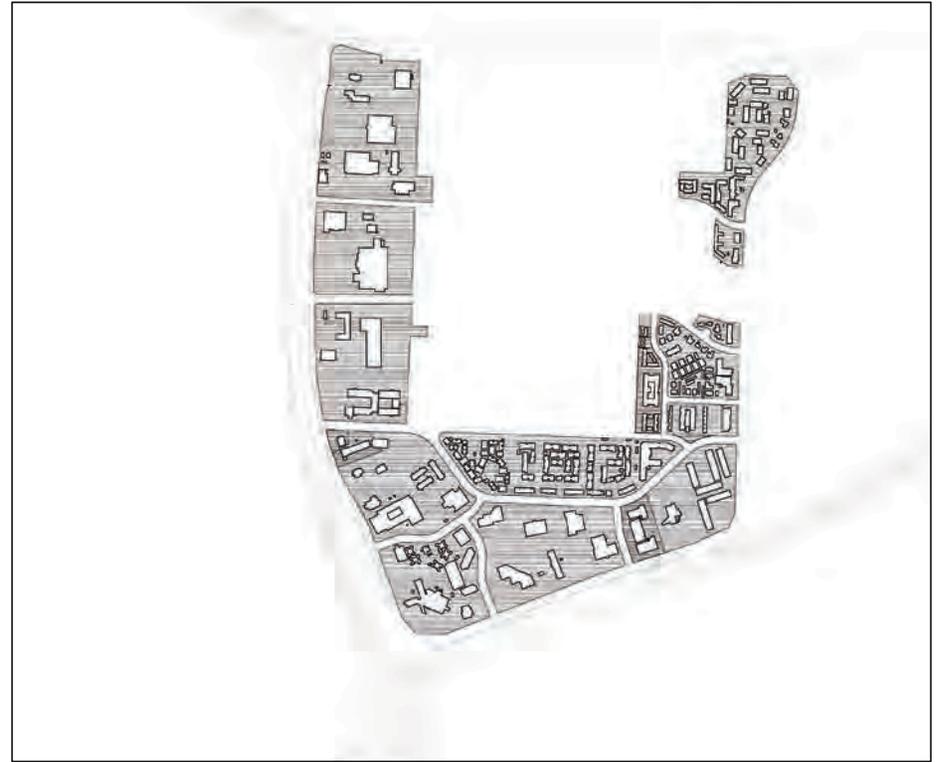
Commercial Buffer

A wide buffer of large scale and traffic-oriented uses envelops the core of St. John towards the surrounding traffic corridors. Towards the west uses tend to be predominantly commercial, in the south commercial and large-scale residential uses overlap, while the eastern portion is predominantly residential with a thin layer of commercial towards Cameron Rd. Common to this scale of development – residential and commercial – is the large amount of surface area given over to the car.

Residential Core

The residential core of the St. John neighborhood east of IH-35 is based on a street grid resulting in blocks of about 330 x 450 feet which are subdivided into individual lots and predominantly occupied by detached single story homes. The neighborhood has a typical density of about 4.7 units/acre.
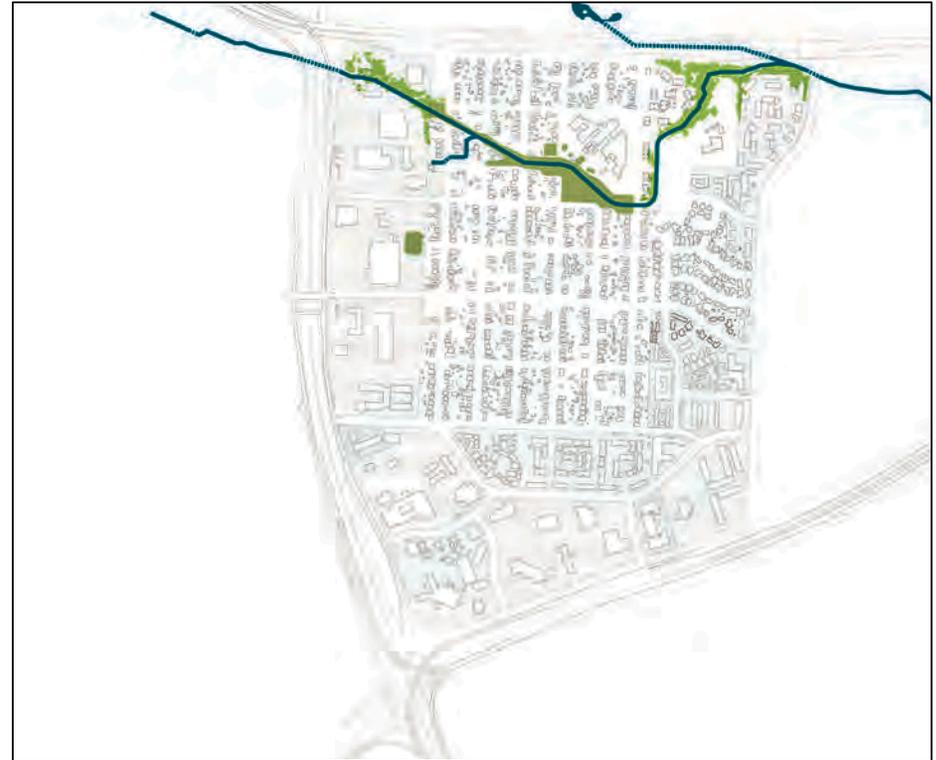
Landscape

Towards the northern edge, Buttermilk Branch Creek intersects with the gridded street pattern, forming a narrow greenbelt that bisects the neighborhood from east to west. Part of the creek has been made accessible to the public between Blessing and Bethune Avenues via the Buttermilk Branch Creek Greenbelt, including Buttermilk Neighborhood Park adjacent to the Virginia L. Brown Recreation Center/ Pickle Elementary complex.

MOBILITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The following section describes the impacts of infrastructure systems on the community through various angles and at different scales. The development and current condition of the St. John neighborhood cannot be separated from its location at the center of the intersection of three major national and regional highways: IH-35 stretching from the Mexican border to the Great Lakes, US-183, another major north-south highway, and the regional US-290 east-west connector in the state of Texas. These large scale infrastructural systems have the arguably strongest effects on both the neighborhood and the former Home Depot/Chrysler site, with implications for both the built (size of buildings, impervious cover) and unbuilt environment (air quality, noise pollution). At the neighborhood scale, St. Johns Avenue stands out as an emergent east-west axis. Capped by the new developments around Crestview Station at the intersection of Airport and Lamar Boulevard to the west and Nelson Field at the northern end of Berkman Drive, St. Johns Avenue's importance both as a thoroughfare and a commercial corridor is expected to increase over time. The development of viable strategies for the site that take into account this development could help determine the future character of St. Johns Avenue.

IH-35_ST. JOHN

SCALE COMPARISON_HIGHWAY INTERSECTION AND THE NEIGHBORHOOD

▼ IH-35

US-183 ▶

ST JOHNS AVENUE ▶

2,150 FT

2,500 FT

2,500 FT

The Intersection of IH-35 and US-183

	0%	50%	100%
AREA 123.4 ACRES			
HIGHWAY 33.5 ACRES			30%
BUILDINGS 15.7 ACRES			
PARKING 39 ACRES			
EXTRA 35.3 ACRES			

St. John Neighborhood

	0%	50%	100%
AREA 123.4 ACRES			
ROAD 15.8 ACRES			
BUILDINGS 20.5 ACRES			
EXTRA 87.2 ACRES			
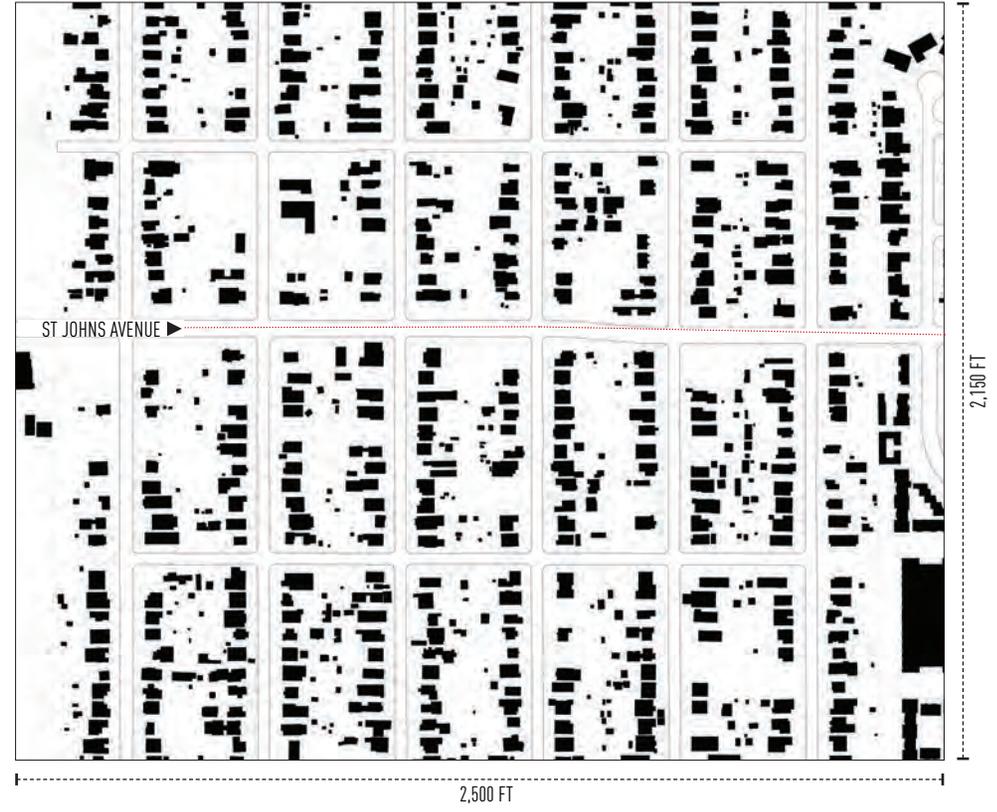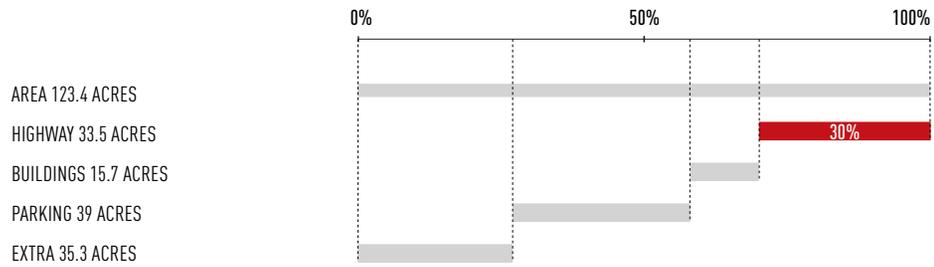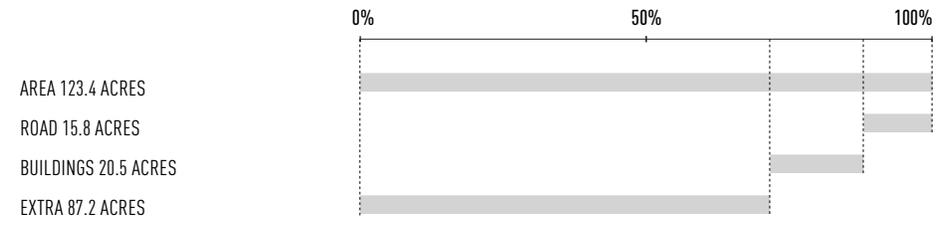
INFRASTRUCTURE SCALE_IH-35 LOOKING NORTH TOWARDS US-183 INTERCHANGE

NEIGHBORHOOD SCALE_ ST. JOHN PARK LOOKING EAST

The block of the former Home Depot and Chrysler sites marks the transition between two very different worlds.

The western edge is defined by spaces tailored to the automobile: the soaring flyovers at the intersection of IH-35 and US-290, the impervious surfaces of parking lots, and an abundance of signage meant to be viewed at 60 mph.

On the eastern edge, the newly established St. John Park transitions to a smaller scale of neighborhood streets, houses, and slow moving traffic, suitable for pedestrians, with streets framed by ample vegetation.

Despite their stark contrast, both worlds exist within the roughly 1,150-foot depth of one block. One of the challenges for any plan for the site will be how to take into account both realities, deriving innovative strategies from the inherent friction of the site.
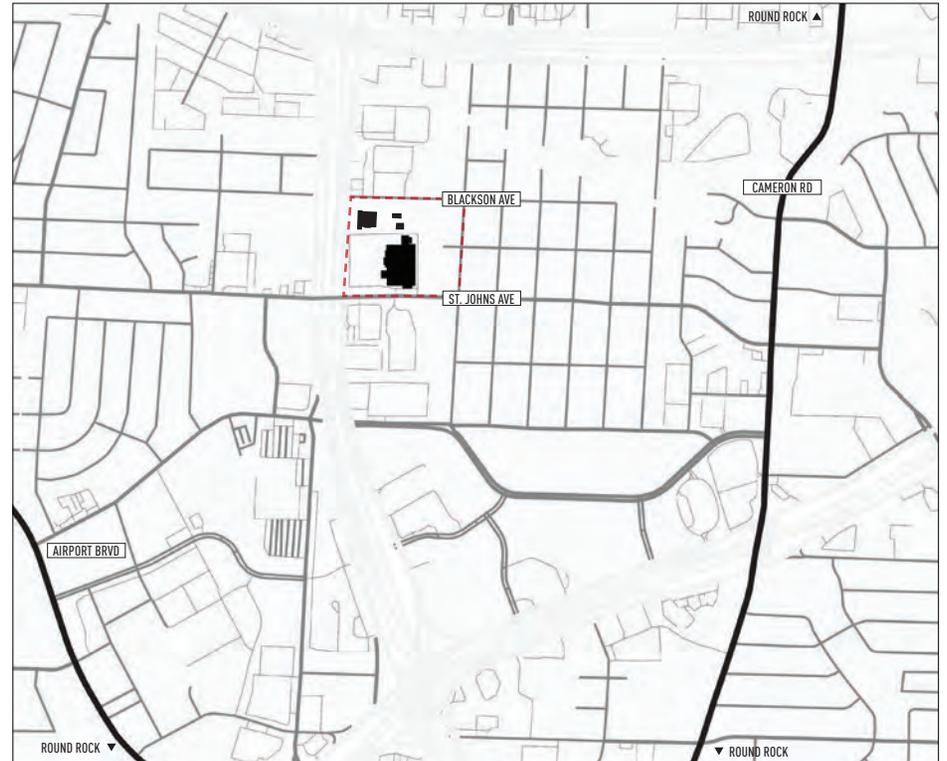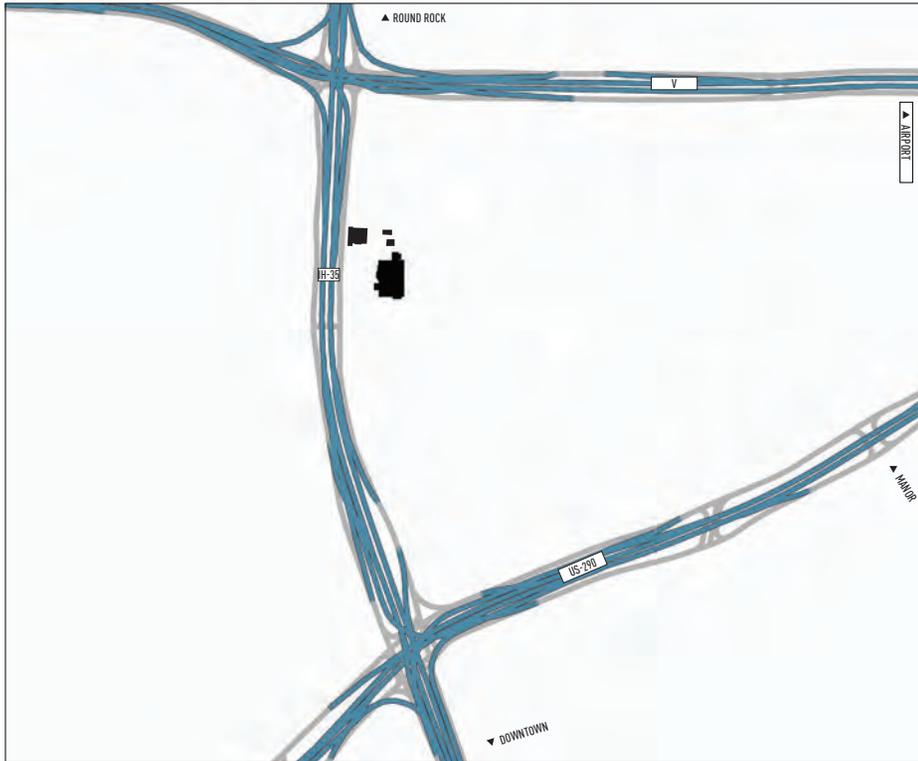
Highway and the Connections

The site is located at the intersection of some of Austin's major highway: IH-35, US-183, and US-290.

Neighborhood Roads

Despite the proximity to major roads such as Cameron Road and Airport Boulevard, the site is connected to the rest of the neighborhood by Blackson Avenue and St. Johns Avenue.

Public Transportation _Bus and MetroRail Stops

St. Johns Avenue and Cameron Road are important roads in the public transportation system for the neighborhood, connecting St. John to major transit systems, such as Airport Boulevard, and to the rest of Austin.
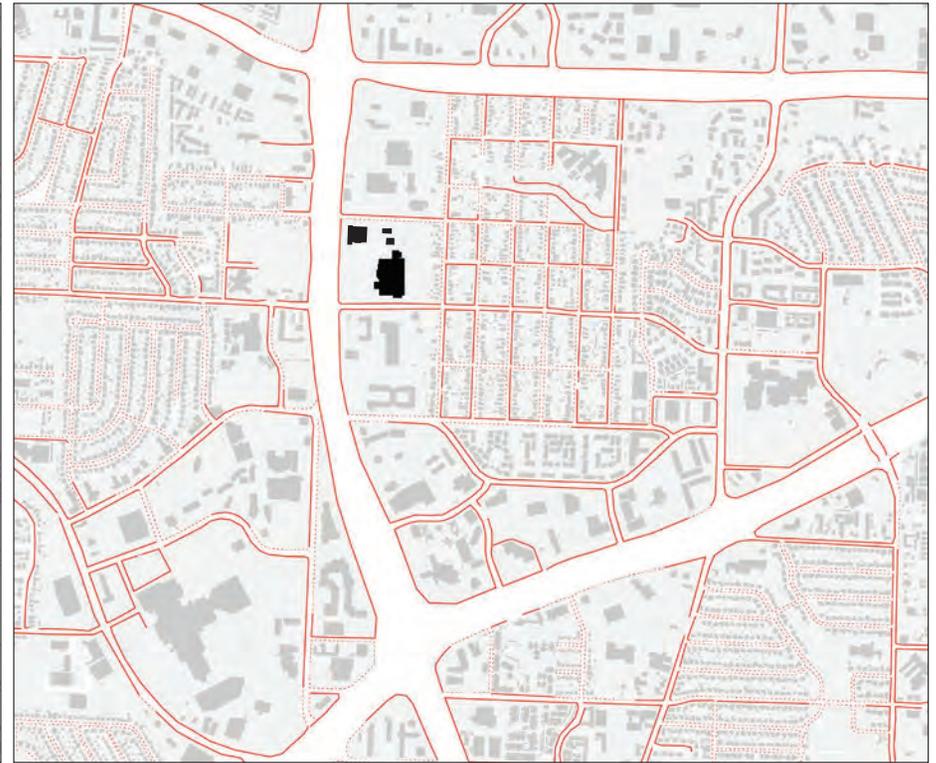
Sidewalk

Sidewalks allow for pedestrian movement in the neighborhood. It is important that the site have pedestrian access through improved and extended sidewalks.

URBAN EXPANSION _EAST WEST CONNECTION

The site is located at the intersection of two important traffic axes.

In the north-south direction, IH-35 is flanked by a corridor of large scale commercial developments on either side, accessible from the frontage road, which effectively turn their backs towards adjacent neighborhoods.

In the east-west direction, St. Johns Avenue is likely to increase in importance as a local thoroughfare connecting the rapidly developing areas around the intersection of Airport Boulevard, Lamar Boulevard, and Crestview Station with the eastern destination of Nelson Field and Northeast Early College High School. Not fully articulated yet, the St. Johns corridor presents both dangers and opportunities to the St. John community. An increase in traffic volume and focus on street improvements favoring through traffic could all too easily result in a new dividing line – this time slicing the neighborhood in half along the east-west axis. On the other hand, the emergence of St. Johns Avenue as a major street holds the possibility of it becoming a destination in itself, providing a center to the neighborhood that is now missing.

_NORTH SOUTH CONNECTION
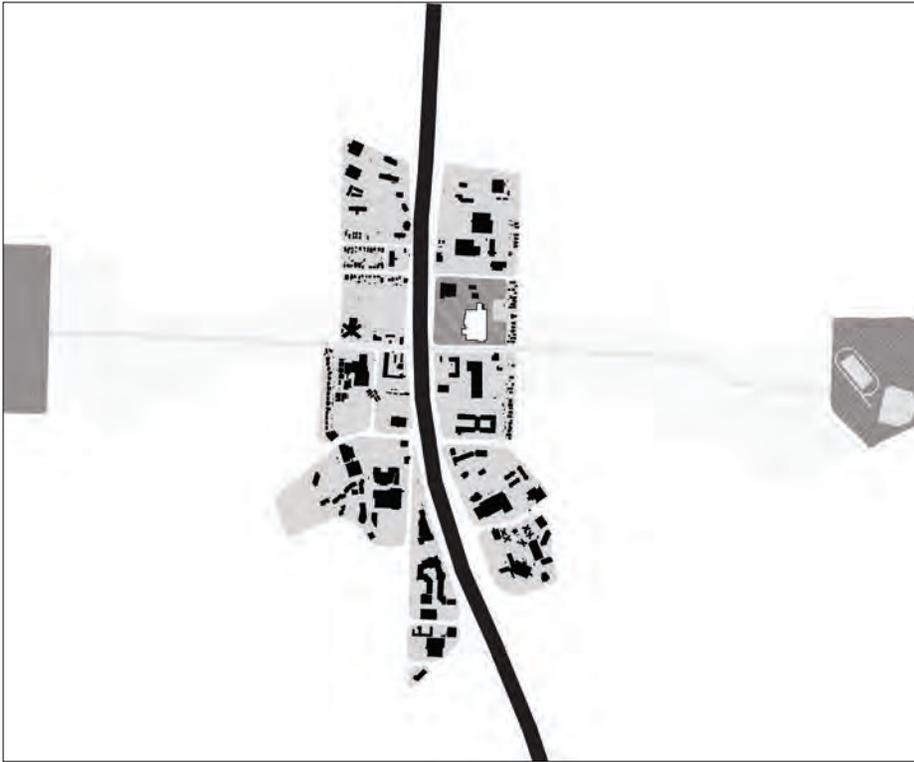
North-South Connection:
Regional Highway Corridor and Large Scale Commercial Buffer
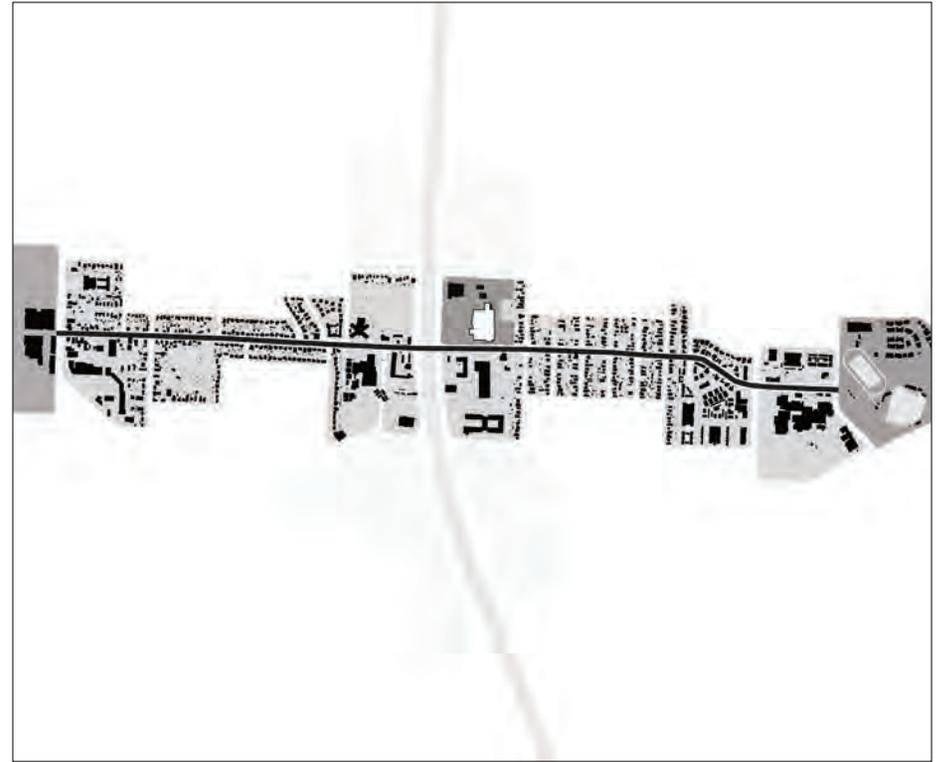
East-West Connection:
Local Corridor through Varied Urban Fabric

HIGHWAYS AND AIR QUALITY

Health Problems Associated With Poor Air Quality

The connection between urban environmental conditions and health outcomes is increasingly recognized in the field of public health. Improvements in pollution control regulations and technologies in recent years have been unable to counter the growth in the number of vehicles in use due to population growth, the expansion of metropolitan areas, and the increasing dependence on motor vehicles as residents move farther away from their workplaces. As a result, a growing share of urban populations likely are exposed to air pollution produced by traffic. A growing body of research documents the particular health problems associated with living near roadways with a high volume of traffic. Motor vehicles spew out a mixture of air pollutants, including carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, and particulate matter, as well as hydrocarbons that react with these chemicals and sunlight to form ground-level ozone. Each of these pollutants is either known or suspected to cause adverse health effects by

health researchers. A 2010 review found that there was sufficient evidence to conclude that exposure to traffic-related air pollution exacerbates asthma. The report also found evidence suggestive of a causal relationship between exposure to highway pollution and the onset of childhood asthma, non-asthma respiratory symptoms, and conditions such as impaired lung function and cardiovascular disease.[1]

Measuring Exposure

Because it is hard to measure traffic-related air pollutants directly, studies rely on measures of the intensity of traffic on nearby roads to estimate exposure to pollutants. They consider both the intensity of the flow of traffic on roads and the distance from the road of those exposed. Roads traveled by at least 10,000 vehicles per day have been linked to health problems for nearby residents in studies.[2] Most rural interstate highways reach such volumes. Urban highways are often traveled by more than 30,000 vehicles per day. A 2015 study by the Texas Transportation Institute found that *more*

2-01

IH-35_AUSTIN

than 220,000 vehicles travel on Interstate 35 in the Austin area on a daily basis.[3]

Exposure to pollutants is generally highest when close to the source. However, how quickly exposure declines with distance varies by the particular pollutant and local weather conditions. Thus, exposure zones for pollutants can range from roughly 160 to 5,000 feet from highways and major roads.[4] Scientists generally use 500 feet as the distance, since most of the pollutants produced by motor vehicles have been found to disperse substantially by this distance from the highway.[5] However, a review of studies connecting air pollution and health outcomes published in 2010 recommended a zone of 1,000 to 1,600 feet.[6]

Disparities In Exposure

Based on existing evidence, it is now widely accepted that economically disadvantaged populations of color are disproportionately exposed to air pollution.[7] In particular, evidence documents that these groups more often live in locations that expose them to traffic and traffic-related air pollution than whites and higher income groups. While being poor or having low levels of education are both associated with higher exposure to air pollution, the association is stronger for people of color, foreign born residents, and non-English speakers than for indicators of socioeconomic status. Environmental justice scholars describe the way that communities of color are affected by environmental threats as a form of "triple jeopardy," since they are more likely to face a variety of social factors that endanger their health (such as psychosocial stress, or poor access to health care), and are more likely to be exposed to environmental risks (such as living near a highway), and since the interaction between these two factors produces larger adverse health effects than would occur otherwise.[8]

St. John Site

The Home Depot/Chrysler site sits adjacent to IH-35, a highway with a high volume of traffic like those used in studies of the health effects of air pollution. As shown on the graphic, part of the site lies within 500 feet of the roadway.
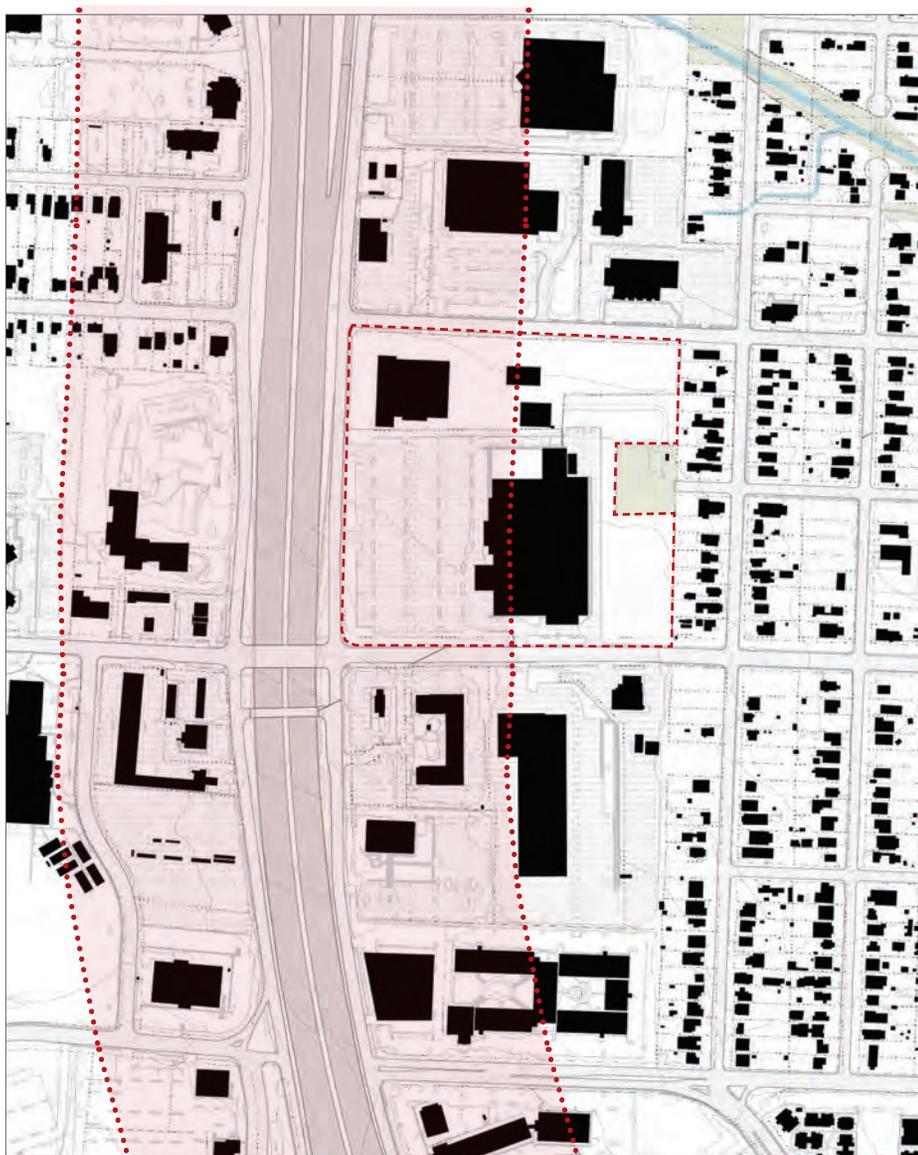
500' BUFFER IMPACT ON HOME DEPOT SITE

Mitigation Strategies and Evidence

In response to growing concerns about the effects of exposure to traffic-related air pollution, cities are considering strategies for both reducing the risks faced by current residents and preventing exposure of future residents. Strategies vary by scale. At the city or regional scale, governments and/or transit agencies can collaborate to reduce pollutants by reducing driving or the effects of driving by encouraging alternative modes of transport, reducing congestion, retrofitting vehicles, or encouraging use of electric or low emissions vehicles (though even electric vehicles create pollution from the wear on their tires). They can also work to align land use, transportation and affordable housing policies and programs to make it possible for more residents to live closer to their jobs.

To prevent future residents from being exposed to pollutants, cities can require land use buffers between highways and residential neighborhoods. These might be green spaces, with vegetation designed to reduce dispersion of pollutants[9] or physical barriers such as noise walls or structures whose use does not expose occupants to pollution.[10] These might include parking structures that are not occupied during the day, or buildings with ventilation systems that prevent pollutants from entering the building. Cities could mandate the use of buffer zones for particular uses that would likely expose residents or those visiting the site to the most risk, such as schools, housing, vegetable gardens, or active recreation. Or, they could deck over highways and use ventilation systems to clean pollutants from highway air before it is released.

For existing residents, strategies focus on air filtration to prevent pollutants from entering the home, placing air conditioning intake units as far from the highway as possible, preferably on the far side of the building. To remove ultrafine particles from the air, filters for residences should have a Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value (MERV) of 13 or higher.[11] Proper maintenance of such units is critical to their effectiveness.

Physical barriers can also offer some protection to existing residents. Noise barriers can reduce air pollution levels, and should be placed downwind from the highway. However, they can be harmful if used in an area with substantial pollution from other streets in the neighborhood. Such barriers can be used to protect an entire neighborhood.

Vegetative barriers are generally less effective at stopping pollution. They must be dense to be effective. Planting of trees or other vegetation can help reduce the transport of pollution into the neighborhood but they must not entirely block ventilation, particularly on streets.[12]

The scenarios presented here include several strategies for preventing exposure to air pollution from the highway including avoiding placement of homes, parkland, or active recreation sites within 500 feet of the highway, using placement of non-residential buildings to block pollutants from the site, and including vegetation in the public spaces on the site.
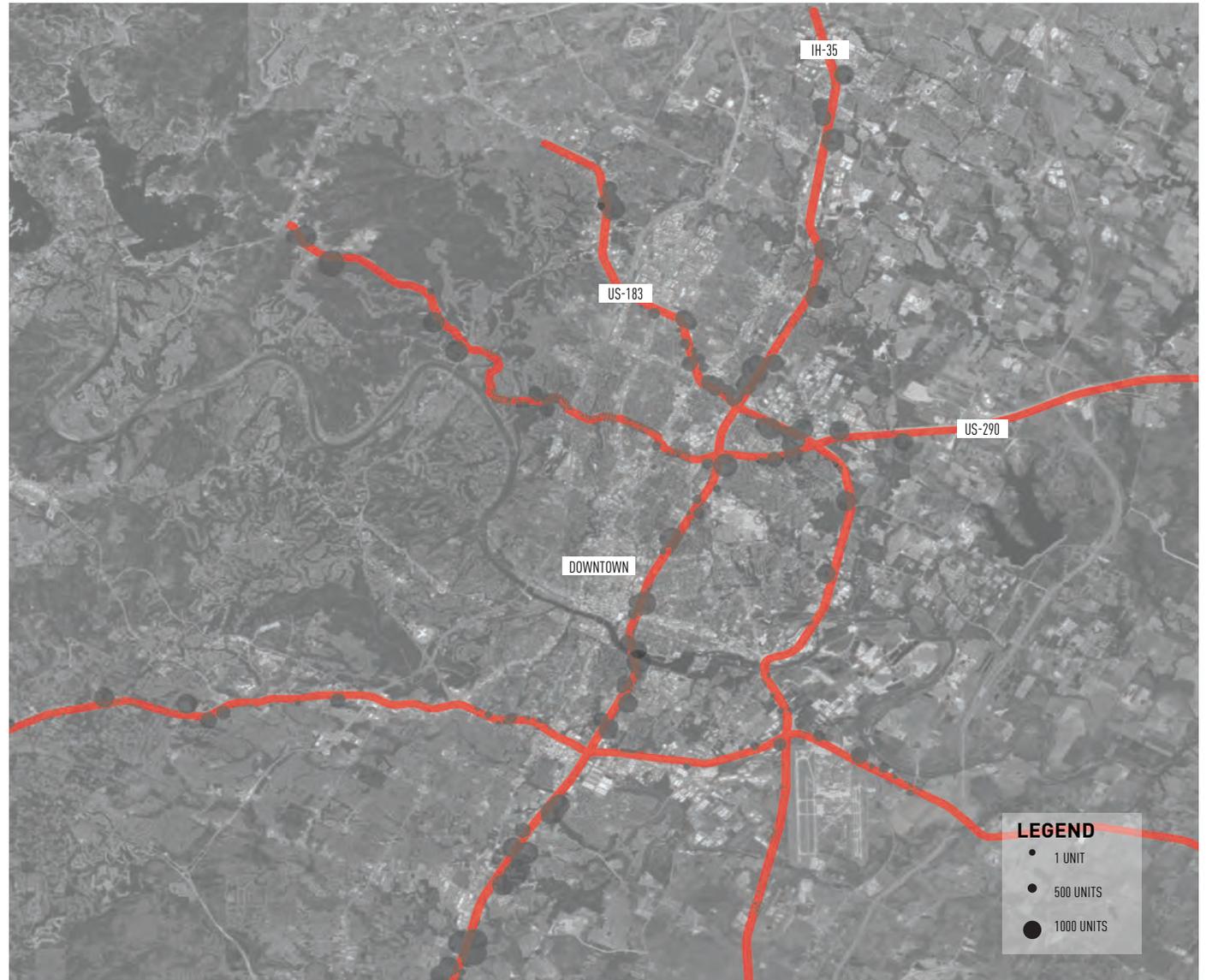
AUSTIN_ IDENTIFIED RESIDENTIAL PARCELS AFFECTED BY 500' BUFFER FROM HIGHWAY

ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEMS

When addressing environmental systems, it is critical to understand that it requires a system of interconnected parts working together to create a healthy network. Therefore, this section discusses environmental systems present on the site as well as systems within the greater context of the St. John neighborhood and even the wider ecology of Austin. By doing so, the ecological systems will be situated within a larger system, demonstrating its value and potential to strengthen the neighborhood's resiliency against stormwater and flooding as well as its value and potential for quality public space.

One of the key aspects of the environmental systems present in the neighborhood is Buttermilk Creek, which runs adjacent to Pickle Elementary School. Interconnected to the water system, the creek is also a host to the flourishing green ecology surrounding it. This green system not only provides a habitat for wildlife, but is also an important source of public space for the community. Buttermilk Creek provides green space and outdoor recreation for the residents, including Buttermilk-Branch Greenbelt Trail, a basketball court, and several Buttermilk

Neighborhood Parks. It is also an anchor to critical community facilities, such as Virginia L. Brown Reaction Center and the St. John Branch of the Austin Public Library.

Despite the social and ecological importance of this green system, it is limited to the north-east part of the neighborhood. Enhancing and further integrating green systems in other parts of the neighborhood, especially on the Home Depot/Chrysler tracts, can greatly benefit the neighborhood in various ways.

First, it can create a larger system of green, providing open spaces for residents and children to enjoy. Second, it can function more efficiently as an environmental system and provide ecological services to the neighborhood such as stormwater management. The green buffers will not only soak up the excess water from the creek but also the increase in pervious cover on site will act as a sponge, mitigating flooding, and reducing damage to the neighborhood. Last, a continuous green system can also increase the walkability in the neighborhood, creating safer trails for everyone while also improving access to public amenities.

RETENTION POND_ST. JOHN

City of Austin Open GIS Portal.

City of Austin Open GIS Portal.
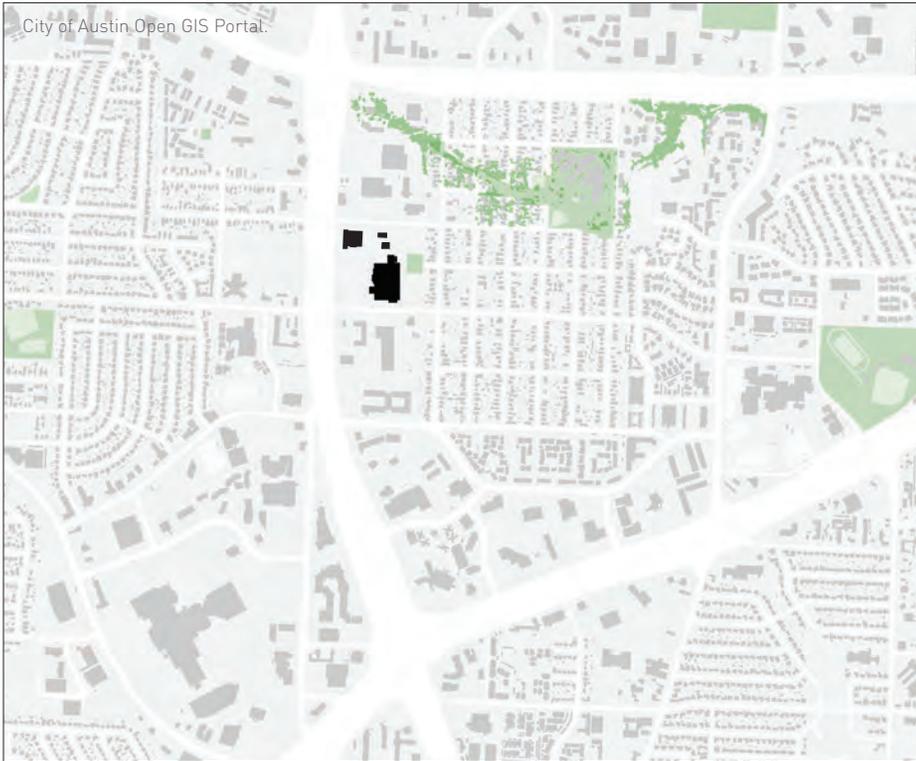
Parks and Public Spaces

There are several parks and public spaces present in the St. John neighborhood, including Buttermilk Creek, St. John Neighborhood Park, and Nelson Field. While Buttermilk Creek is predominantly in the north-eastern corner of the neighborhood and Nelson Field is situated far from the site, St. John Neighborhood Park presents a potential connection between the neighborhood and the site.
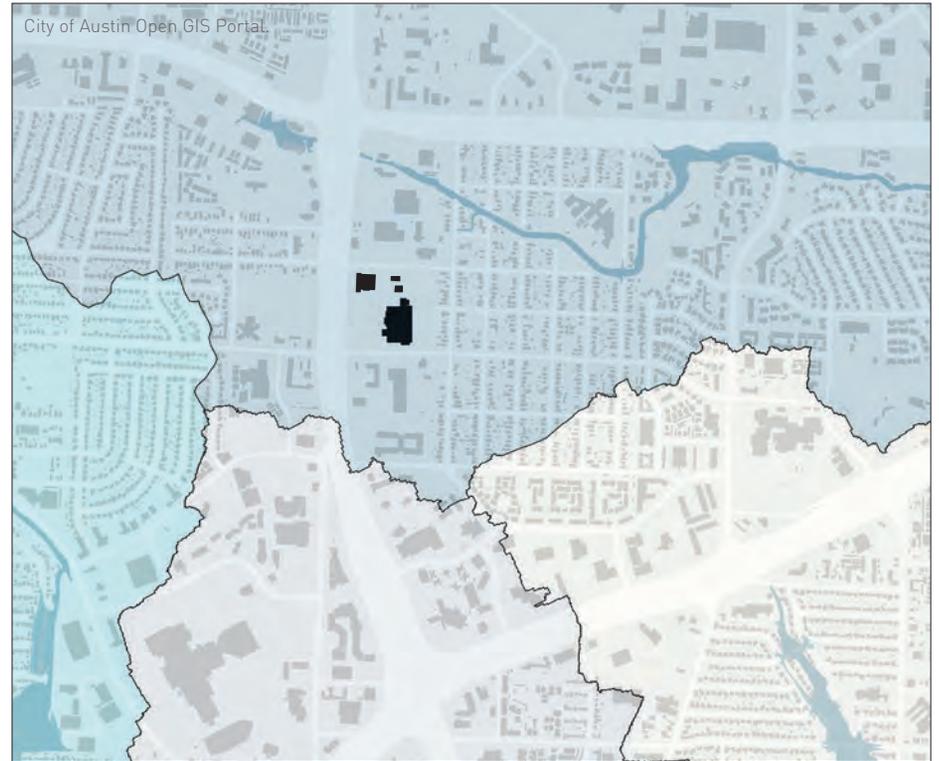
Watershed and Floodplain

Watersheds are land areas channeling surface water runoff to different creeks, rivers, or other bodies of water. The St. John Neighborhood has four watersheds: Fort to the south, Little Walnut Creek to the east, Tannehill to the southwest, and Buttermilk to the north. With the majority of the neighborhood and all of the site in the Buttermilk watershed, Buttermilk Creek plays an important role in mitigating flooding and stormwater management.
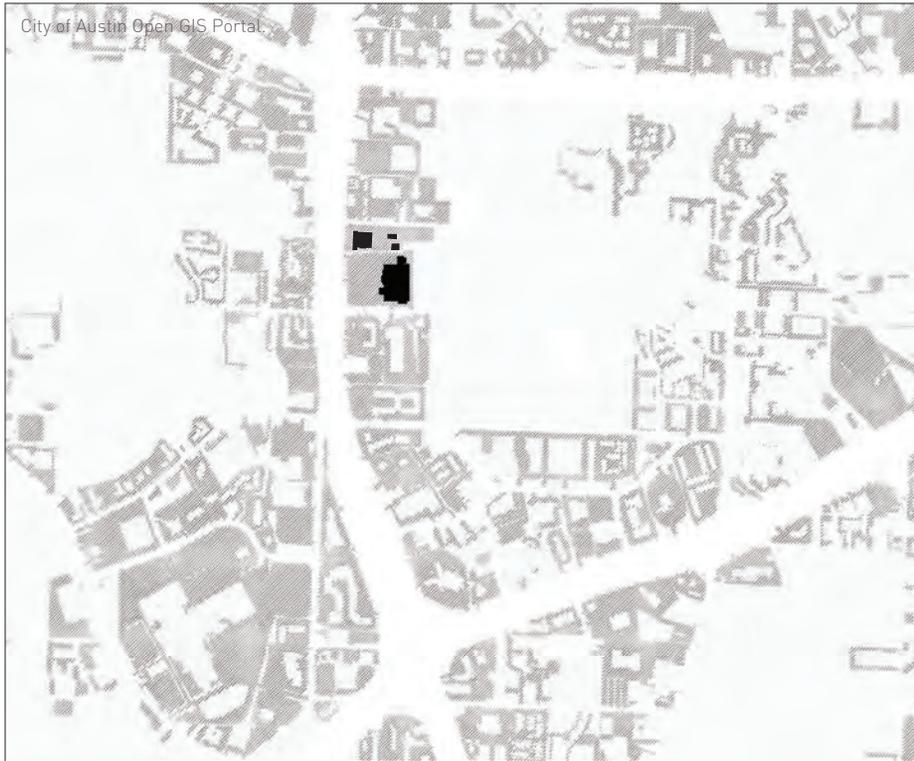
Paved Area

The St. John neighborhood, and especially the Home Depot/Chrysler tracts, consists mostly of impervious cover, which exacerbates flooding and water run-off. Impervious cover, like the concrete parking lot surrounding Home Depot, does not allow the water to soak into the ground. This causes consistent flooding problems within the neighborhood and necessitates the construction of large detention ponds to hold stormwater. Due to the size of the parking lot, the site alone creates 13 million gallons of rainwater run-off annually.
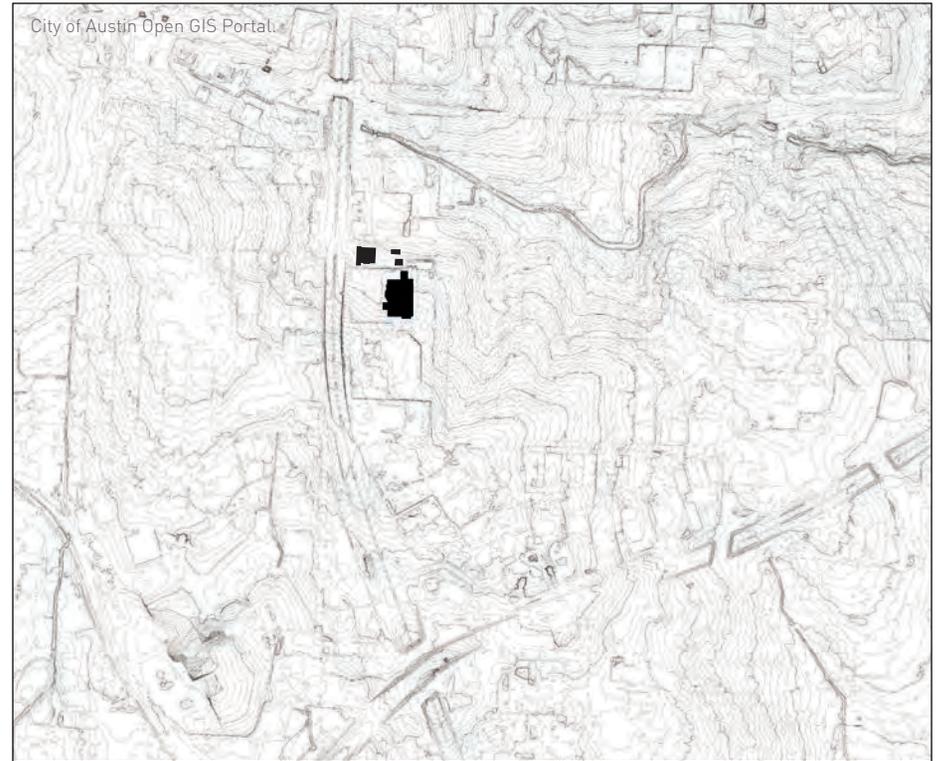
Topography

The site gradually slopes to the south, with a 16-foot drop between the former Home Depot and Chrysler sites. The gradual slope holds potential in draining water from the site into a retention pond or to connect with the Buttermilk Creek system. Even though the 16-foot elevation difference poses challenges to the site, it also offers opportunities for public space and potential placement of buildings.

SOCIAL SYSTEMS

This section provides an overview of the social systems in St. John. Analysis of the demographic trends of the neighborhood and greater metro region provides a framework of the social conditions which impact the neighborhood. Mapping social infrastructure -- necessary services such childcare, youth development, and fresh food -- illustrates the current supply deficiencies within the community. Development activity in the neighborhood contributes information on market conditions, what is being built, and how this might negatively or positively impact residents.

The University of Texas at Austin research team looked to a number of key indicators to better understand the social infrastructure and context of the St. John community. Demographic data for analysis was compiled from the American Community Survey at the census tract level (St. John falls within Census Tract 18.12) and data published by the Austin Independent School District. [13] [14] As is shown, St. John is overwhelmingly inhabited by people of color, most of whom are Latinos, with a notable African American population. Education levels and incomes are low in comparison to the city as a whole

ST. JOHN — **CITY OF AUSTIN**

82% people of color — 48% people of color

22% with bachelor's degree — 85% — 54% with bachelor's degree

85% renters — 55% renters

72% households earning less than 80% MFI — 39% households earning less than 80% MFI
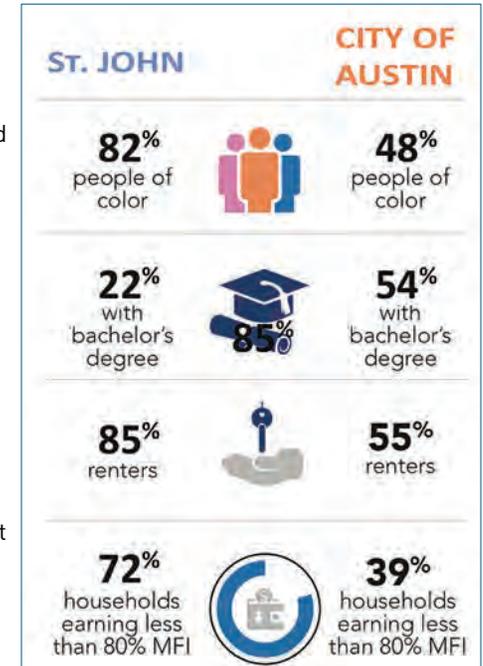
2-02   **AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY DATA 2018**

and have dropped in real terms over time. There are high percentages of families who experience linguistic isolation with 80% of students learning English as a second language. The particularly vulnerable subpopulations of elderly households and large families are both, not surprisingly, struggling with high housing costs. The neighborhood is largely renters, at 85%, who are more vulnerable to rising real estate markets and displacement.

2-03

ST. JOHN PARK_ST. JOHN NEIGHBORHOOD

SOCIAL SYSTEMS_DEMOGRAPHICS

LEGEND

INSUFFICIENT DATA	25% TO 40%
< 1%	40% TO 60%
1% TO 5%	60% TO 75%
5% TO 10%	75% TO 90%
10% TO 25%	>90%
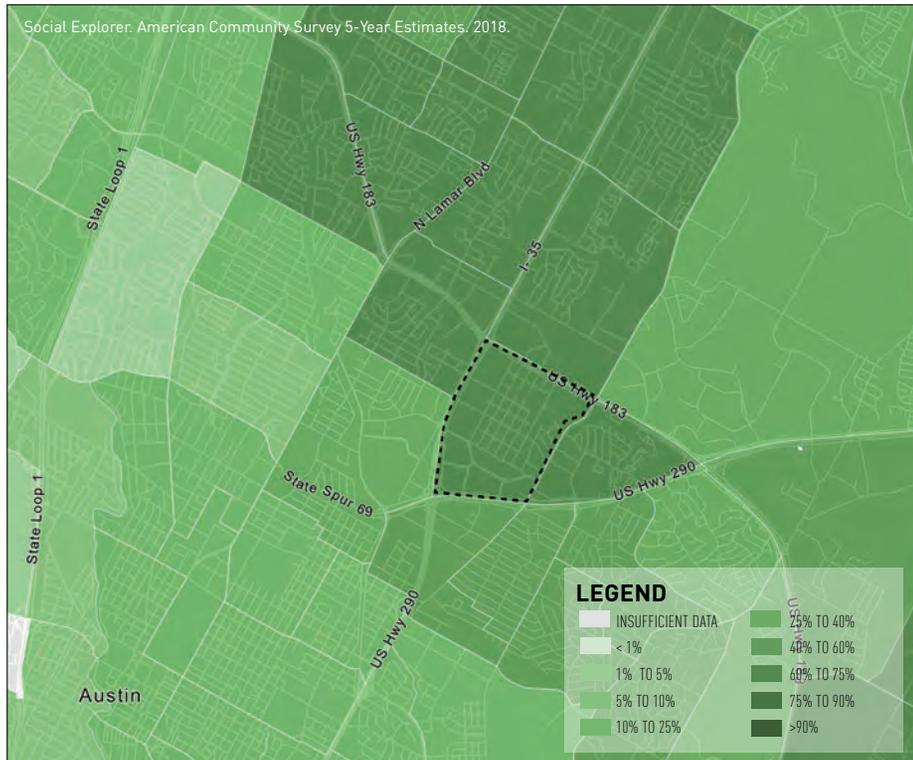
Majority People of Color

St. John falls within the Eastern Crescent, a collection of neighborhoods that stretches from Rundberg in the north to Garrison Park in south Austin through the city's eastern neighborhoods. This area is largely comprised of lower-income residents, people of color, and family households. St. John has a 69% Latino population, much higher than the 32% citywide figure. This population's share of the total has grown over time, increasing by three percentage points since 2000. However, recent figures show that over half of new mortgage borrowers are white, indicating shifts in demographic trends.[15]

LEGEND

INSUFFICIENT DATA	47.5% TO 50%
< 30%	50% TO 57.5%
30% TO 40%	57.5% TO 64%
40% TO 42.5%	64% TO 69%
42.5% TO 45%	69% TO 79%
45% TO 47.5%	>80%
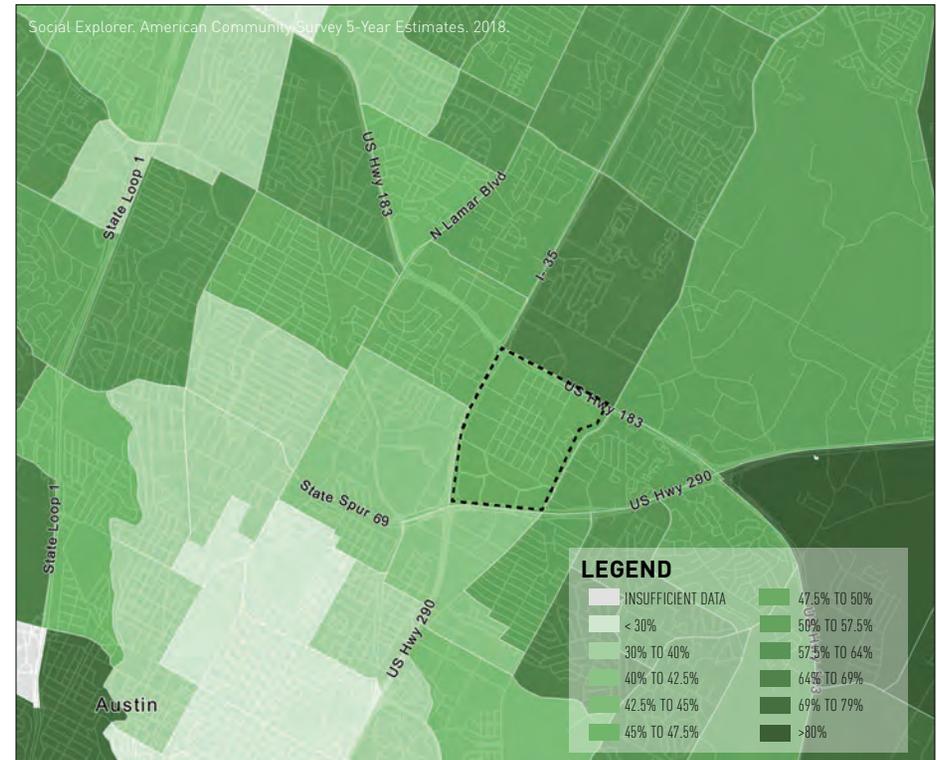
Family Households

In the St. John neighborhood 50% of households meet the statistical definition of a family household. A family household is defined as a household with two or more people related by birth, marriage, or adoption. The daily activities of families in St. John and connections to Webb Middle School and Pickle Elementary are important features of the social structures in the neighborhood. The neighborhood has expressed a desire to see further accommodations for the youth population that calls the neighborhood home.

_HOUSING ECONOMY

Homeowner Costs

LEGEND
<10%
10% TO 11%
11% TO 12%
12% TO 15%
15% TO 20%
20% TO 30%
30% TO 40%
40% TO 50%
>50%

Renter Costs

LEGEND
< 15%
15% TO 20%
20% TO 23%
23% TO 27%
27% TO 30%
30% TO 33%
33% TO 37%
37% TO 40%
40% TO 45%
45% TO 50%
>50%

Poverty

LEGEND
INSUFFICIENT DATA
0% TO 1%
1% TO 5%
5% TO 10%
10% TO 15%
15% TO 20%
20% TO 25%
25% TO 30%
30% TO 40%
40% TO 50%
50% TO 75%
>75%

Income

LEGEND
<$15
$15 TO $20
$20 TO $25
$25 TO $30
$30 TO $35
$35 TO $40
$40 TO $45
$45 TO $50
$50 TO $75
$75 TO $100
>$100
In $1,000s
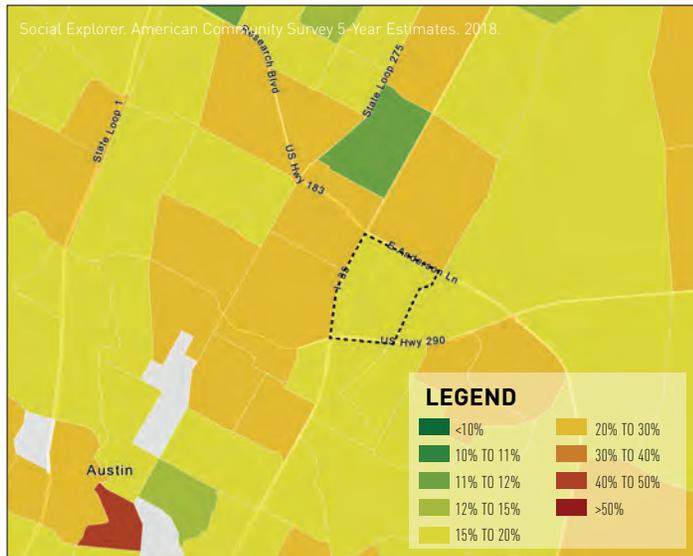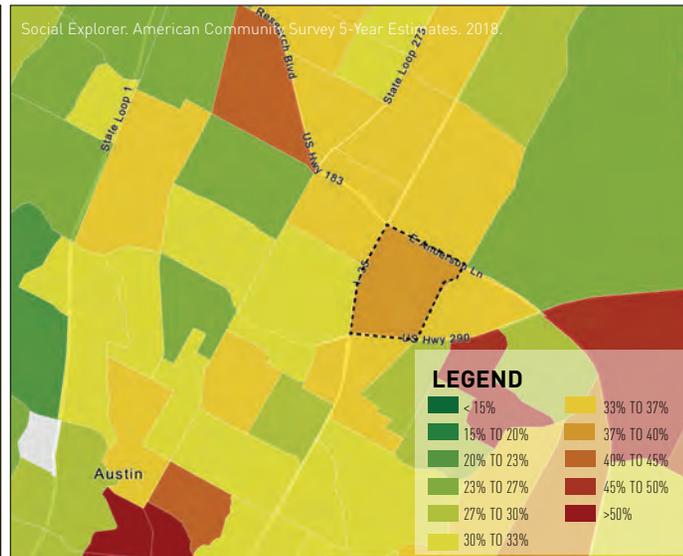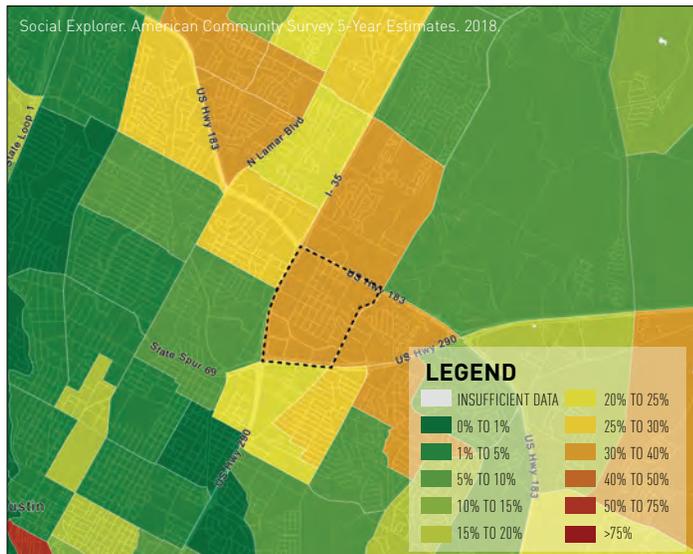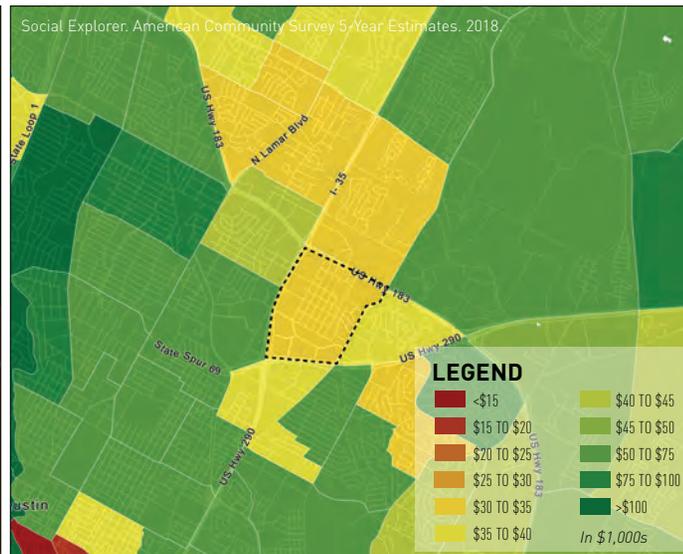
In St. John the median costs associated with homeownership comprise 18% of a household's income. While this level is below the Housing and Urban Development cost burdened threshold (30%) and below the Austin median at 19%, there are still 15% of households who are severely cost burdened (spending 50% or more of their income on housing expenses). Renters are much more heavily cost burdened than homeowners with a median rent at 37% of monthly gross income. In addition, a striking 36% of the neighborhood is severely cost burdened. Meanwhile, rent restricted affordable housing represents only a scant 6% of the total housing units in St. John.

This high cost burden comes as a result of both high housing prices and low economic opportunity in the area. Lower levels of education attainment in St. John decrease residents' access to higher income occupations. The median household income in St. John is just above $30,000 but well below Austin's median income of $64,000 for a two-person household. This equates to 31% of households currently living below the federal poverty level of $25,750 in annual income.

SOCIAL SYSTEMS_ASSETS

Food Assets. Food Access in Austin. City of Austin. 2016.

LEGEND

- PUBLIC SCHOOL
- WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
- COMMUNITY CENTERS
- CHILDCARE

LEGEND

- FOOD PANTRY
- SUMMER MEAL
- COMMUNITY GARDEN
- SENIOR MEAL
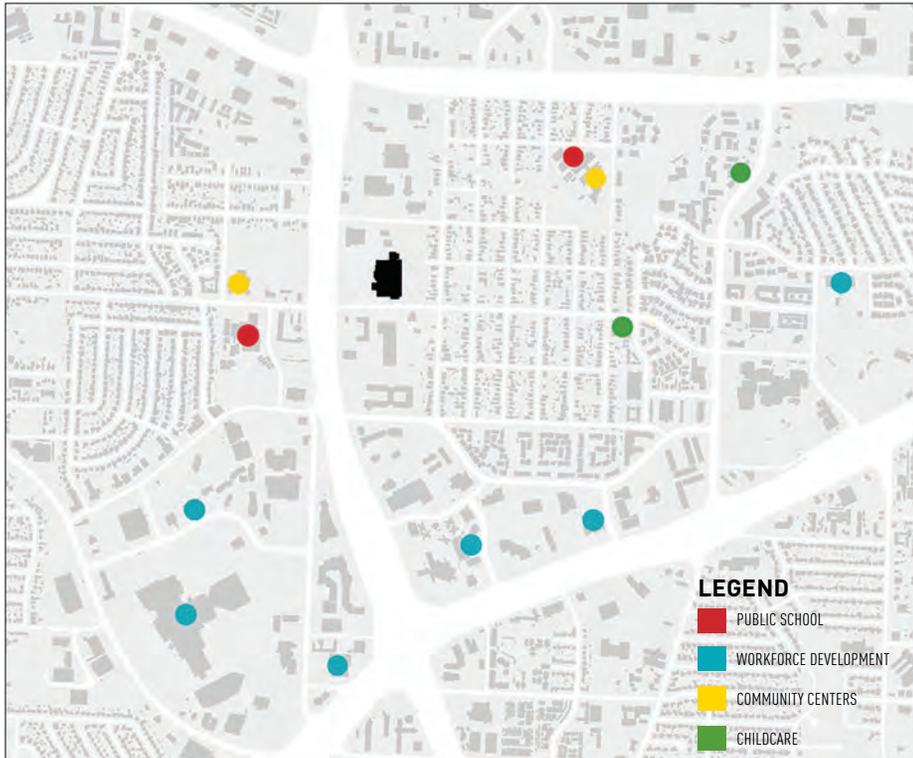
Human Capital

Notable hot spots of the social infrastructure near St. John include the Pickle Elementary School, Webb Middle School, Virginia L, Brown Recreation Center, The For the City Center, and Austin Community College's Highland Campus. There are two small scale daycares currently in the neighborhood.

There are quite a few workforce development and vocational training facilities in the area. However, a majority of these locations are for-profit institutions, such as Austin Code Academy and the Aveda Institute, that are not designed to serve the needs of the nearby community.
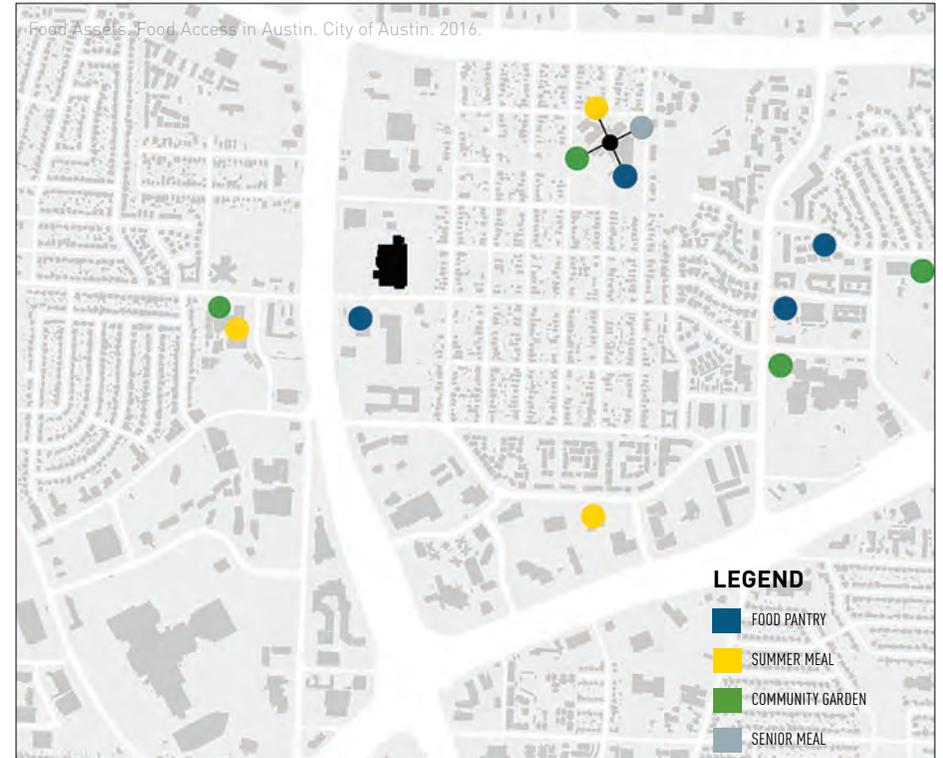
Food Assets

There are no full-service grocery stores in St. John and the area is primarily served by convenience stores and meat markets. Food insecurity is a rising concern in St. John, with 97% of Pickle Elementary qualifying for free and reduced lunch. Austin Independent School District

operates summer meal programs out of both Pickle Elementary and Webb Middle School in order to provide meals for students while school is not in session. There are also four food pantries operating in the area.

_DEVELOPMENT

.5 NEW UNITS PER ACRE

2.5 NEW UNITS PER ACRE

LEGEND

LEGEND

- MULTI FAMILY
- OFFICE
- STORAGE
- HOTEL
- MEDICAL
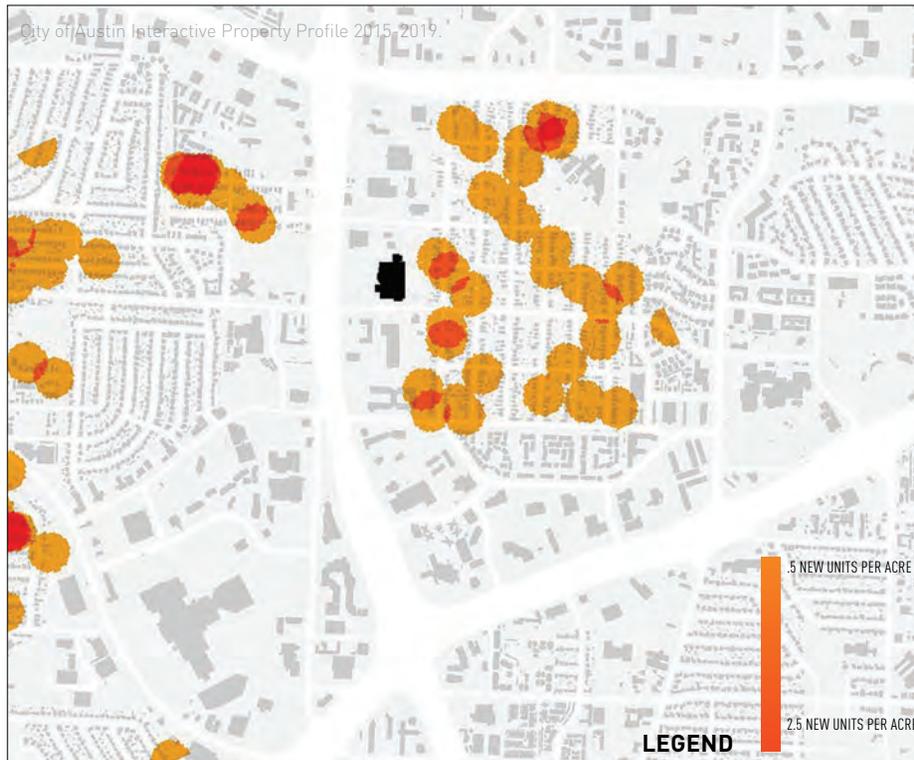
New Residential Construction

There has been considerable residential development activity in St. John with the construction of 167 new single-family houses, duplex units, and accessory dwelling units since 2015. In total, the value of related permits since 2015 is $15 million, with 87 building permits issued. In most cases this development has consisted of a single-family house being replaced by two new units separated by a yard but sharing the same lot.
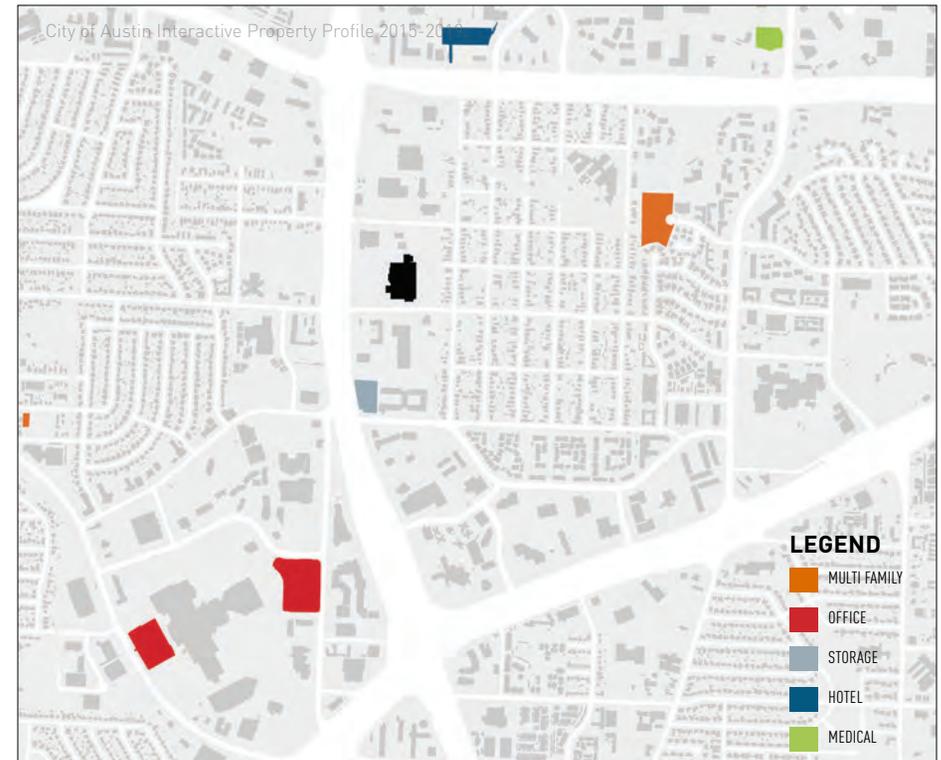
Commercial Pipeline

Commercial development has also seen significant activity in the St. John area with many projects underway and planned for the future. Much of this development has taken place near the redeveloped Highland Mall along Airport Boulevard. Approval has been granted for phase 2 of an office park and is complemented by the relocation of the City's Planning Department headquarters to a new office development just north of Highland Mall. The Santa Rita multifamily development has received planning approval to construct a multifamily building on its 4-acre site.

SITE CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The site provides a number of specific constraints and opportunities that are examined in the following pages. Most obvious among the conditions impacting the immediate site are the different ways in which the block bounded by the IH-35 frontage road to the west, Blackson Avenue to the north, St. Johns Avenue to the south, and Bennett Avenue to the east interacts with its surroundings on each side.

The eastern strip along Bennett Avenue is occupied by detached houses, typical of the current makeup of the St. John neighborhood. In the east-west direction Wilks Avenue dead-ends into St. John Park which occupies part of the site, effectively positioning it beyond the current outer edge of the neighborhood. The only access to the park is currently through Wilks Avenue. To the south the busy thoroughfare of St. Johns Avenue is characterized by a higher traffic volume than the neighborhood streets east of the site, making it one of the major access roads to the site. To the west, the site faces IH-35 and its frontage road, effectively setting up a 500-foot highway impact zone within which certain uses

such as housing or childcare cannot be placed without potential risks for the health and well-being of their users. The northern edge is characterized by an irregular arrangement of big box and warehouse type buildings and their parking lots north of Blackson Avenue, lacking a clear definition of a street edge. In the northern portion of the site, a 16-foot drop currently divides the site between the former Home Depot and Chrysler tracts.

A majority of the site surface was used as a parking lot, resulting in a large percentage of impervious cover, causing an approximate runoff of 13 million gallons of rain water per year. Water runoff is partly managed by a large retention structure at the intersection of St. John Park, the Home Depot, and the Chrysler tracts. Another potential environmental factor is the possibility of soil contamination as a result of the light industrial use of the site in the past. The last constraint on the site is the city's need to repay the bond it used to finance its purchase.

ST. JOHN PARK_ST. JOHN NEIGHBORHOOD

Connection to neighborhood

St. John Park is isolated at the end of the neighborhood and is connected only via Wilks Avenue.

CONDITION 2_SOUTH: ST. JOHNS AVENUE

St. Johns Avenue

St. Johns Avenue is a central east/west road in the neighborhood with notable destinations in each direction.

CONDITION 3_WEST: HIGHWAY IMPACT ZONE

Highway Impact Zone

In order to protect against air and noise pollution, it is important to locate sensitive uses such as housing and childcare 500 feet or more away from the highway.

CONDITION 4_NORTH: BLACKSON AVENUE/GRADE CHANGE

Blackson Avenue and Drop

There is a 16-foot drop that divides the site, disconnecting the side along Blackson Avenue from the remainder of the area.

Impervious cover

The large parking lot associated with the Home Depot building does not allow stormwater to be absorbed into the ground causing 13 million gallons of rainwater to run off the site into surrounding area.

CONDITION 6_INTERIOR: POTENTIAL REMEDIATION AREAS

Potential Remediation Areas

Previous light industrial uses on the site have the potential to have caused contamination of the soil. Further testing is required to determine the extent of any necessary remediation.

$12.1 Million $11.8 Million $ 0.3 Million

Current Land Value* **Needed to Retire Existing Debt** **Net Proceeds to City**

Bond Defeasance

The land was purchased using bond money for public safety which must be repaid before the land can be developed for other uses.

*Travis County Appraisal District appraised value for 2019 excludes demolition and envrionmental cleanup costs.

SITE CONDITIONS_SUMMARY

500ft

500ft

Buttermilk Creek

Water Runoff

Blackson Avenue

Potential Contamination

16ft Drop

Neighborhood Connection

Impervious Cover

St Johns Avenue

Bus Stops

Webb Middle School
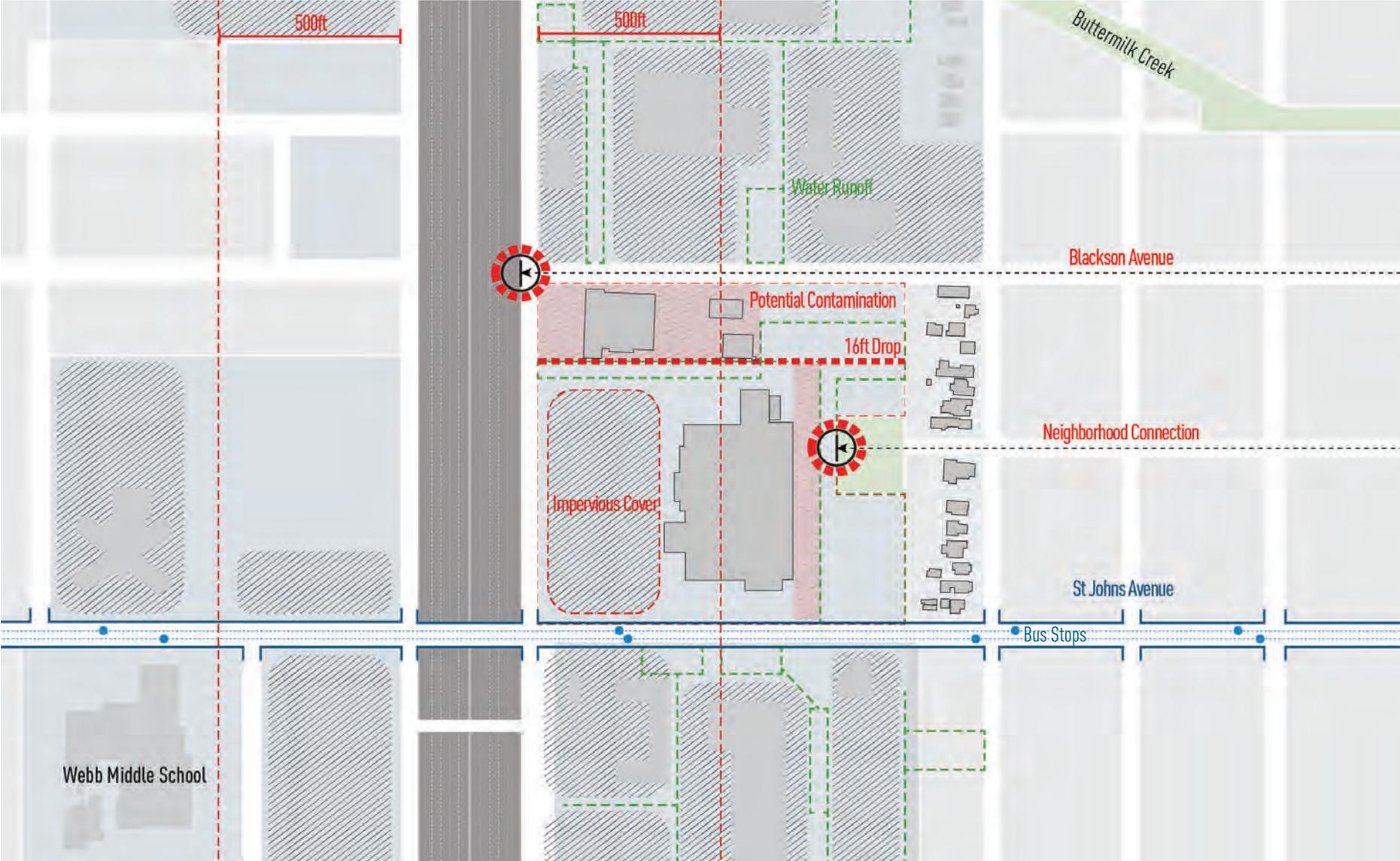
SCENARIO COMPONENTS

Based on community feedback, a review of site constraints and opportunities, and urban analysis, the team developed a preliminary catalogue of scenario components. Each component is to be understood as a unit that is evaluated independently regarding ecological sustainability, economic viability, and community impact and may or may not find its way into one or several of the final scenarios.

Scenario components were developed according to three main categories to be addressed on the site:

1. Ecologies: How to create a healthy community
2. Economies: How to create economic opportunity for the city and the community
3. Communities: How to engage the community on the site

Each category responds to a particular demand on the site and its development, but it is important to note that the components in each category are not mutually exclusive. The ambition for all scenarios developed in Section 3 of this report is to develop a mix of categories, although particular scenarios may foreground a particular category. Some of the scenario components may not exclusively fit a certain category, and therefore already provide benefits that are both of an economic nature and beneficial to the community or can be adjusted through policy tools to be one or another category (such as market rate vs. affordable housing).

M STATION APARTMENTS_AUSTIN

CATEGORIES_ SCENARIO COMPONENTS

Ecologies

The question of how to create healthy communities in light of the proximity of the site to IH-35 takes on particular importance independent of who and what uses these communities ultimately support. The scenario components assembled in this part present first sets of ideas on how the negative effects of the highway can be mitigated on the site, and how environmental site constraints (such as the 16-foot drop) could be transformed into potential community assets, and be used to expand urban green spaces.

Economies

Scenario components in this group address the preliminary question of how economic benefits for both the city and the community can be generated on the site. The proposed uses (which are not mutually exclusive) span the range from large-scale revenue-generating programs such as hotels or warehouses to the scale of micro-economies supporting neighborhood retail, and commercial exchange.

Communities

Components in the communities category span a wide range; some, such as a green boulevard, address questions of how meaningful urban public space can be generated to serve a diverse community of both outside users and local residents. Others present ideas for uses such as childcare facilities or vocational training schools that directly tie into community needs. Housing affordability – independent of the architectural type – is regarded as another important asset to help create economically diverse and therefore healthy communities.

RETENTION POND_ST. JOHN NEIGHBORHOOD

2ND STREET DISTRICT_AUSTIN

ST. JOHN PARK OPENING_ST. JOHN NEIGHBORHOOD

ECOLOGIES_ NOISE/POLLUTION MITIGATION

HIGHWAY | FRONTAGE RD | BIG BOX RETAIL

NEIGHBORHOOD

500' BUFFER
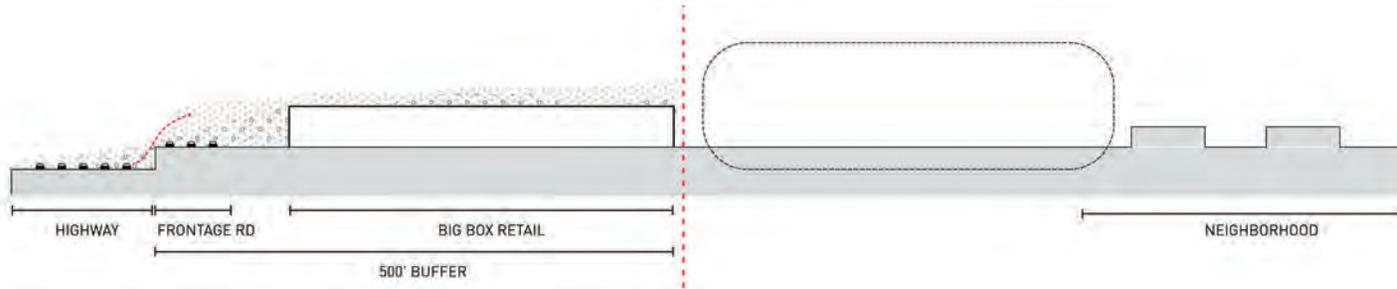
TYPE 01_Mitigation Through Distance - Big Box Retail

HIGHWAY | FRONTAGE RD | BUILT BUFFER

NEIGHBORHOOD

500' BUFFER
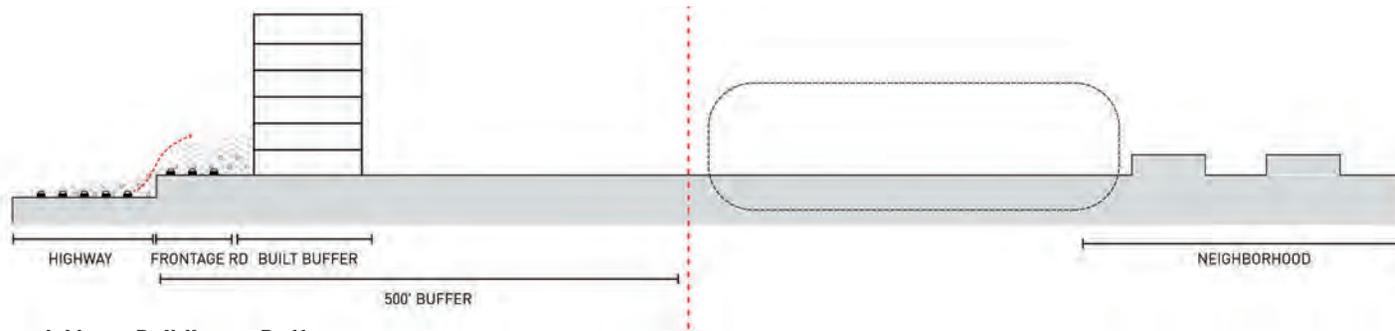
TYPE 02_Mitigation through Mass- Building as Buffer

HIGHWAY | FRONTAGE RD | URBAN FOREST | BUILT BUFFER

NEIGHBORHOOD

500' BUFFER
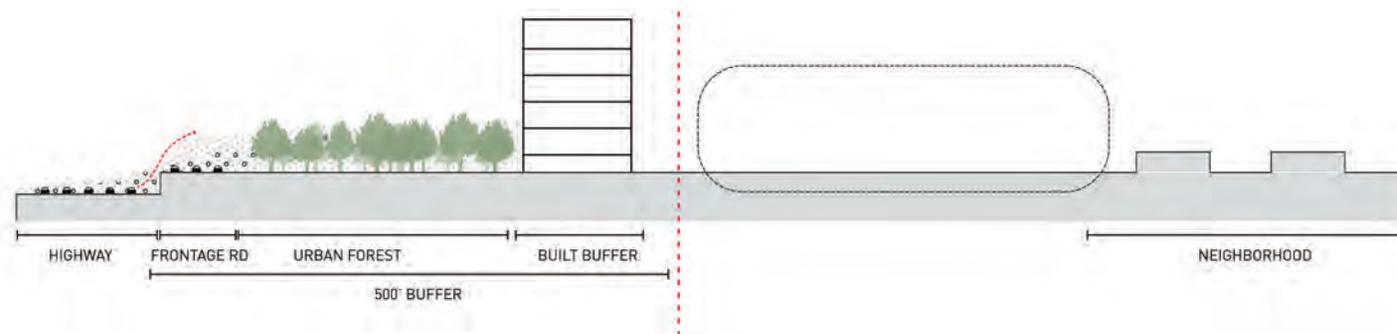
TYPE 03_Mitigation Mix: Urban Forest and Building as Buffer

2-07

GREEN BUFFER ALONG HIGHWAY_LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

ECOLOGIES_ EXPANSION OF GREEN SPACE

A number of options were considered to achieve the goal of creating additional recreational space to benefit both a healthy community and restore the ecological balance of the site wherever possible. The current void around the existing St. John Park provides one opportunity for a park expansion to be integrated from the beginning. Possible directions for this expansion are to the north and south, or to the west. The 16-foot drop on parts of the site was viewed as a constraint that has the potential to be transformed into an asset to create unique public and green spaces, or utilize the elevation difference to accommodate usable indoor space.
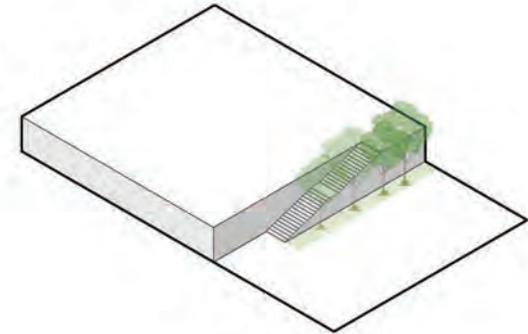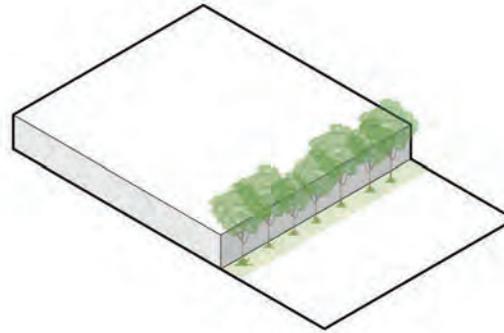
Type 01_Wall

Maintaining a hard edge, lower part is activated as a public space

12th and Chicon Mural_ Austin

Type 02_Stair

Creating access from a lower level green strip to the top platform

Riverside Park_New York City
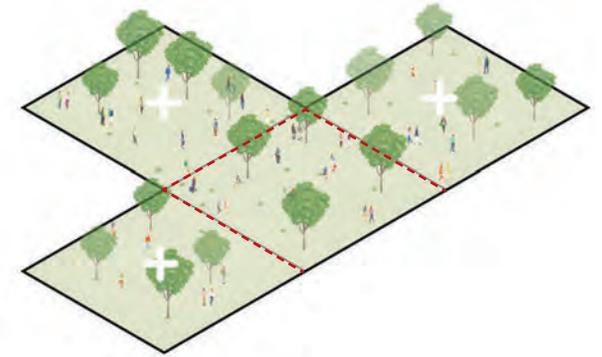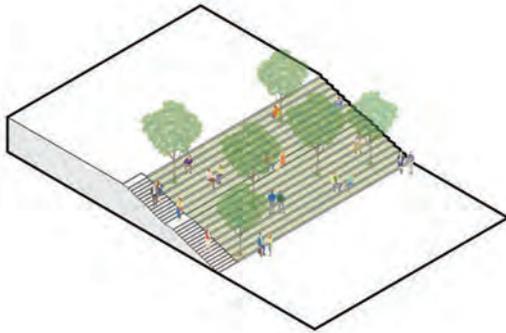
2-10

Type 03_Stepped Park

Design of the entire site drop as a stepped public park

Nasher Sculpture Center_Dallas

2-11

Type 04_Green Roof Park

A combination of stepped park and public uses (small commercial/community) inserted under the park

Southern Alberta Institute of Technology_Calgary, Alberta

2-12

Type 05_North-South Expansion

Expansion of existing St. John Neighborhood Park for one larger park and connection to site and neighborhood

Mueller Park_Austin

ECONOMIES_ REVENUE GENERATING PROGRAMS

Due to its proximity to IH-35, the site remains attractive for car-related uses such as warehouses, hotels, or storage facilities. Most of these uses were considered not for their immediate contributions to the community, but for the objective to generate revenue for the city to support the repayment of the bond with which the site was purchased. Some cases such as hotels, however, could benefit both the community and the desire to generate revenue through overlapping programs such as restaurants or cafes. Some of these uses, such as a hotel restaurant, could be accessed through the site on foot from the east or south as well as via car from the west.
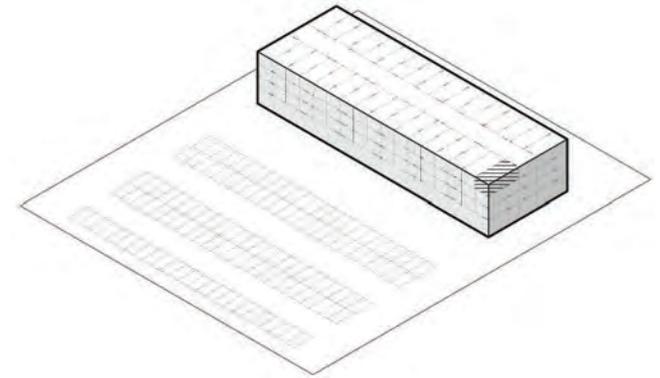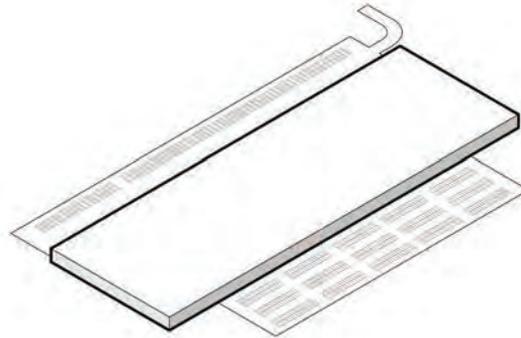
Type 01_Distribution Center

Prologis Warehouse_ Seattle

Type 02_Economy Hotel

Hotel Indigo_Athens, Georgia
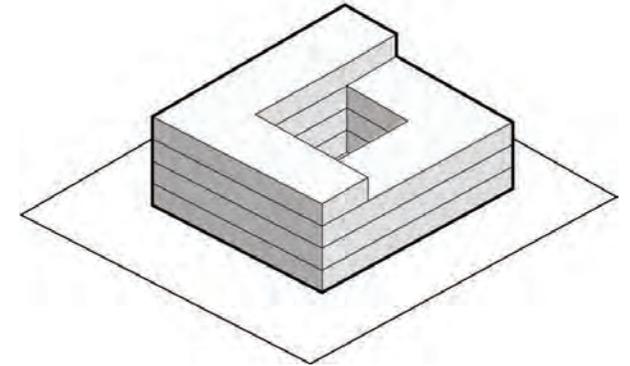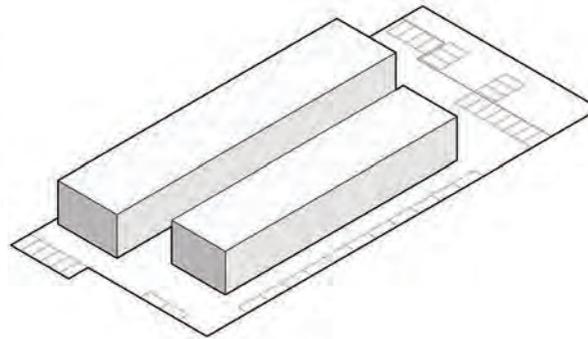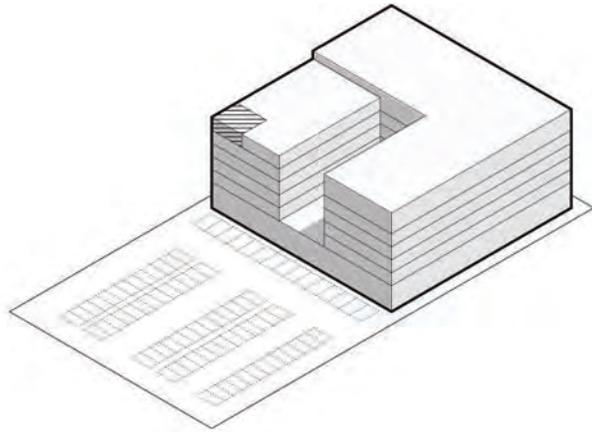
Type 03_Suite Hotel

Hampton Inn & Suites_Santa Monica, California

Type 04_Storage Facility

U-Haul Storage_Austin

Type 05_Office Space

BP Office Building_Austin

ECONOMIES_MARKET RATE HOUSING

A particular category of revenue generating uses is market rate housing, in that it directly impacts the social makeup of the existing community. A focus on particular types of medium density housing types (which fall between the free standing single family house and the large apartment complex) was seen as a way to ease pressures on the housing market while at the same time providing a critical density of inhabitants to activate existing and new public spaces.

2-18
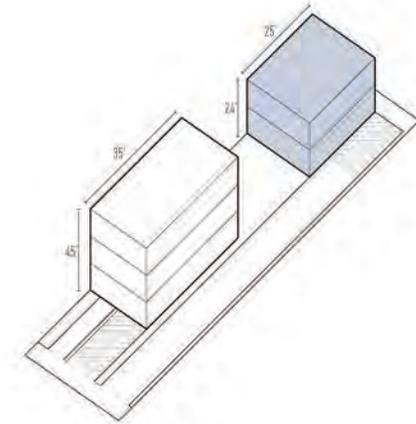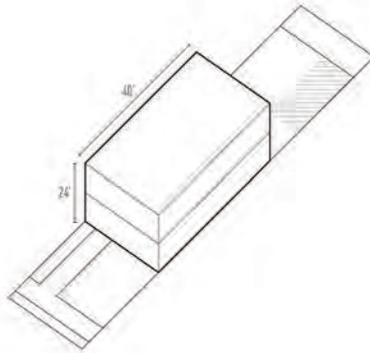
Type 01_Townhouse

Mueller_Austin

2-19

Type 02_Townhouse + ADU

Mueller_Austin

LEGEND

PARKING   UNIT 1

PATIO   UNIT 2

CIRCULATION

Type 03_Stacked Townhouse

Donnybrook Quarter_London, United Kingdom



Type 04_ Garden Style Apartments

Durango, Colorado

Type 05_Garden Style with Tucked Under Parking

Lincoln Las Colinas II_Irving, Texas

ECONOMIES_ SMALL SCALE

Small scale economic development was one particular need repeatedly mentioned during the community engagement process. The category of small scale economies proposes options for spaces that would bolster the local economy of the neighborhood. Leasable spaces would both serve and be run by members of the community, and could range from temporary (food trucks) to brick-and-mortar storefronts or startup offices, or include the option for a small neighborhood grocery.
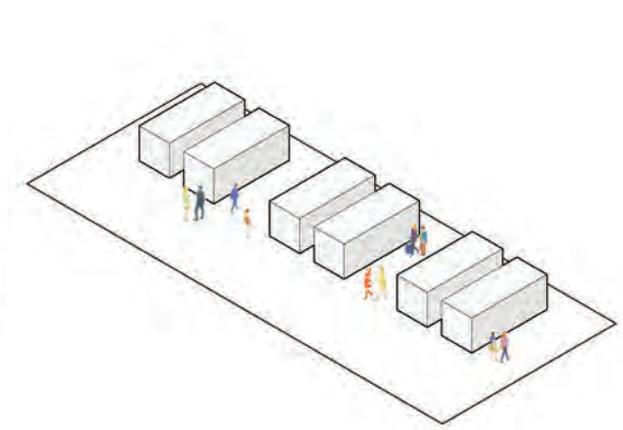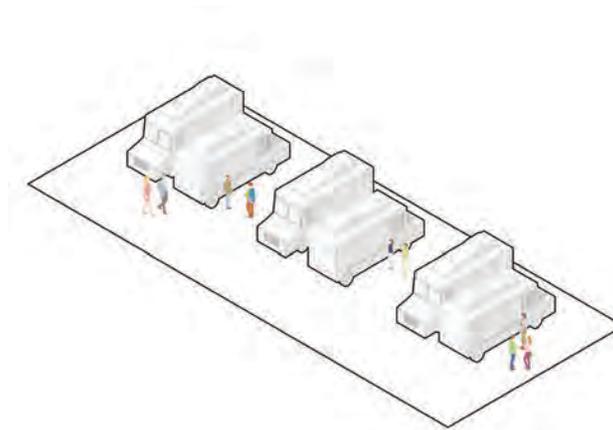

Type 01_Food Trucks

Food Trucks_Austin

Type 02_Box Bazaar

Portland Mercado_Portland, Oregon
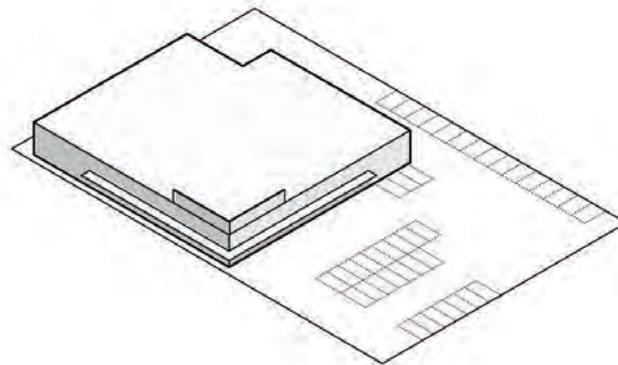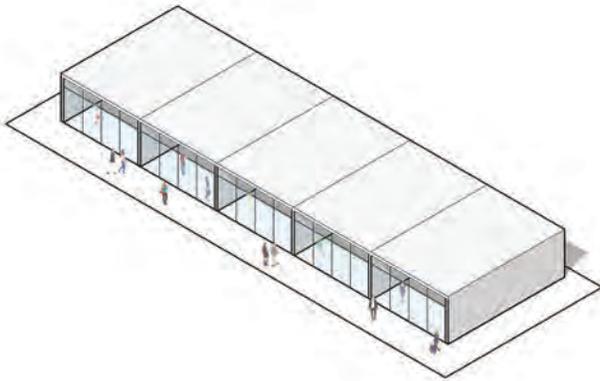
Type 03_Storefront

South Lamar_Austin

Type 04_ Neighborhood Grocery

Wheatsville Co-op_Austin

COMMUNITIES_ COMMUNITY ORIENTED PROGRAM
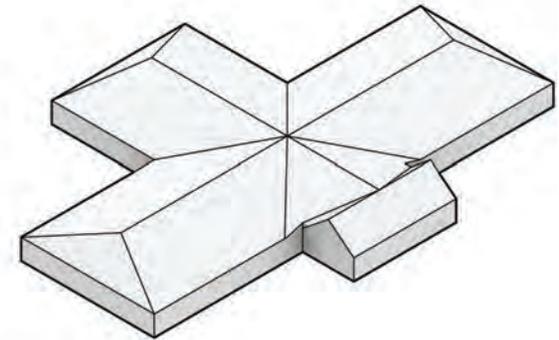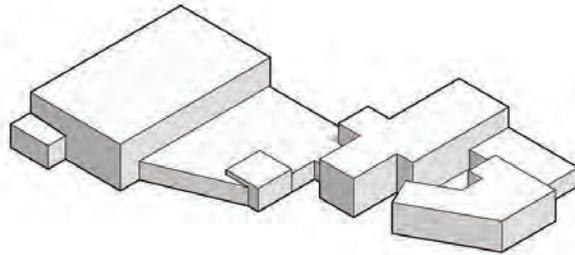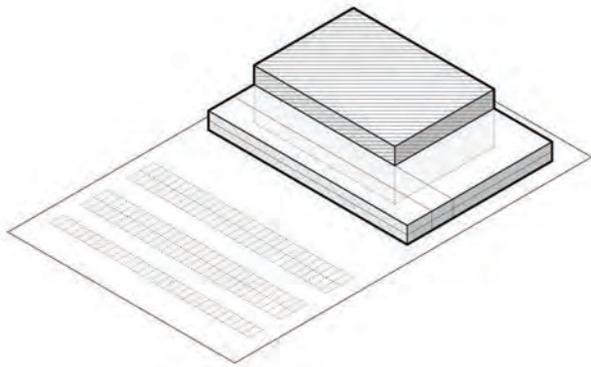
Type 01_Trade School

Life Works Sooch Foundation Youth & Family Resource Center_Austin

Type 02_Youth Development

East Oakland Youth Development Center_Oakland, California

Type 03_Childcare

Stepping Stone School, Austin

_BOULEVARD
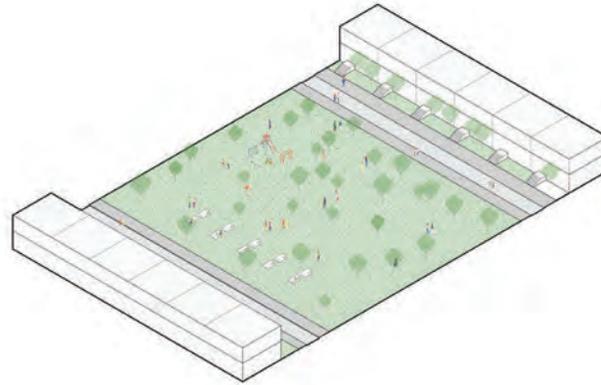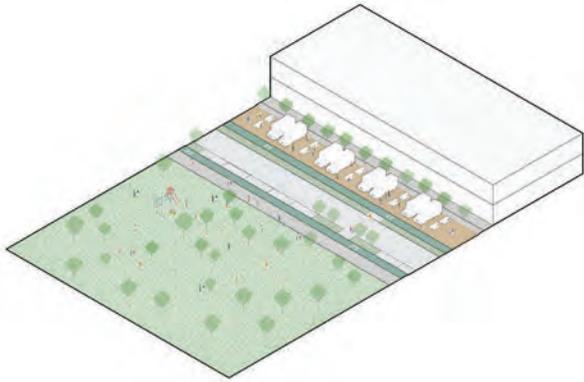
Community oriented program includes uses that provide spaces for community life. Included in this category are two types, the first focused on creating spaces for community services, such as daycares and vocational training. The viability of community oriented space is dependent on public and/or private partner organizations' involvement in their on-going operations. The second aims to activate streets and boulevards to provide a high-quality public realm. This includes a safe environment for walking and space for vendors.

2-30

Type 01_Green Boulevard

EATS Philly_ Philadelphia

2-31

Type 02_Neighborhood Street

Bagby Street_Houston

Building	Sidewalk	Public Space	Bikelane	Parking	Drive Lane	Rain Garden	Bikelane	Sidewalk	St. John Park
	8'	24'	6'	9'	20'	6'	6'	10'	

_NEIGHBORHOOD STREET

Building				Sidewalk	Drive Lane	Sidewalk	St. John Park	Sidewalk	Drive Lane	Sidewalk				Building
	4'	6'	4'	6'	10'	8'		8'	10'	6'	4'	6'	4'	
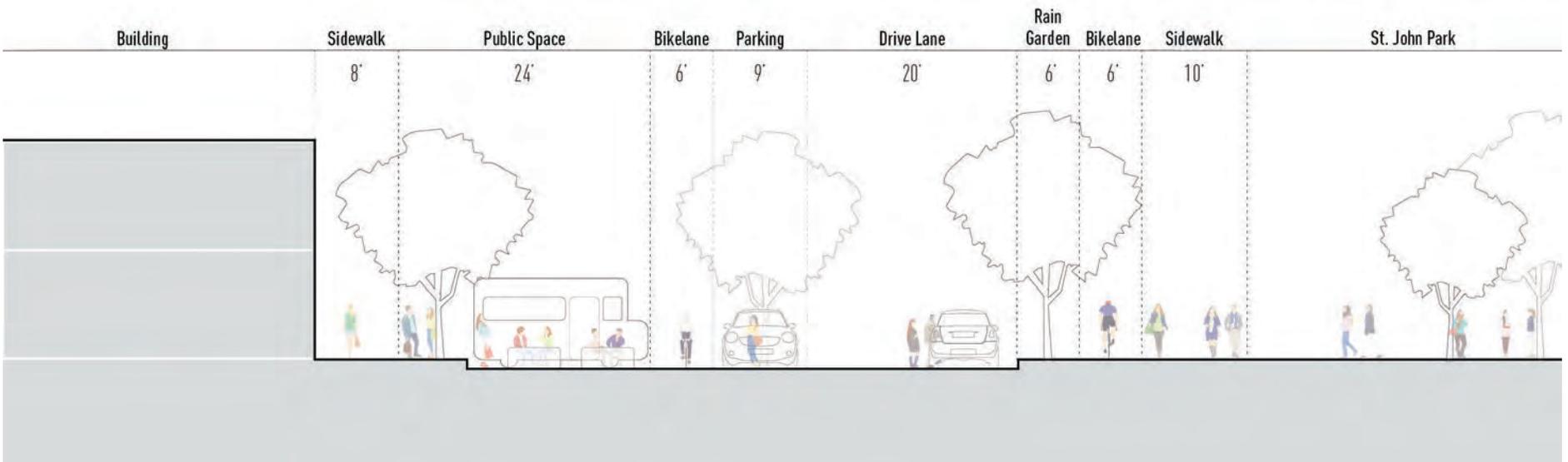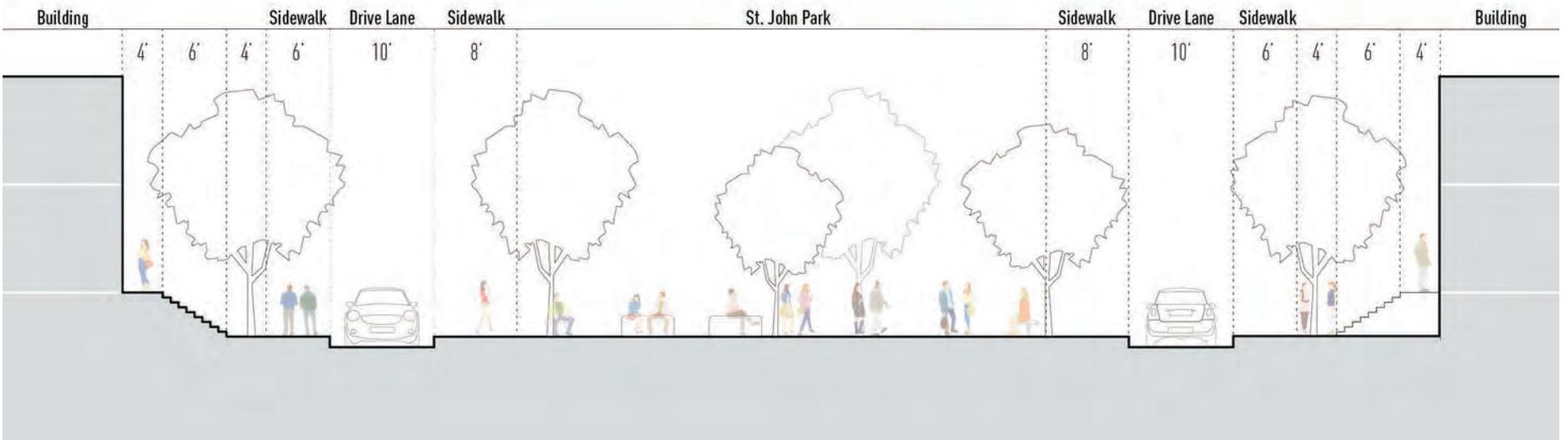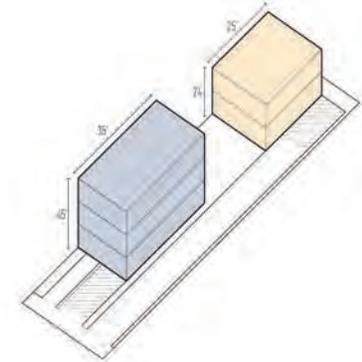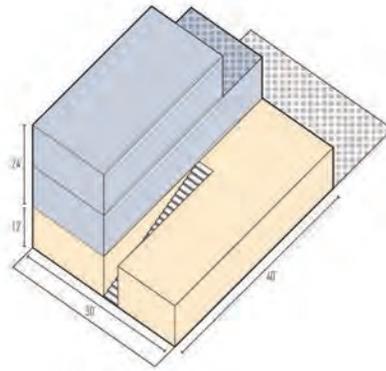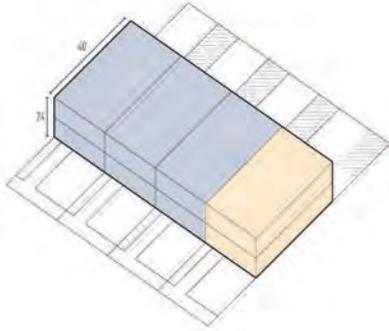
Type 01_Townhouse

David Weekly affordable townhouse development within the Mueller community.

Mueller_Austin

Type 02_Stacked Townhouse

A stacked townhouse creates units of various sizes to meet the housing needs of a diverse population.

Donnybrook Quarter_London, United Kingdom

Type 03_Townhouse + ADU

Guadalupe Neighborhood Development Corporation's neighborhood features affordable homes with accessory dwelling units or ADUs.

Solutions Oriented Living_Austin

_RENTAL UNITS
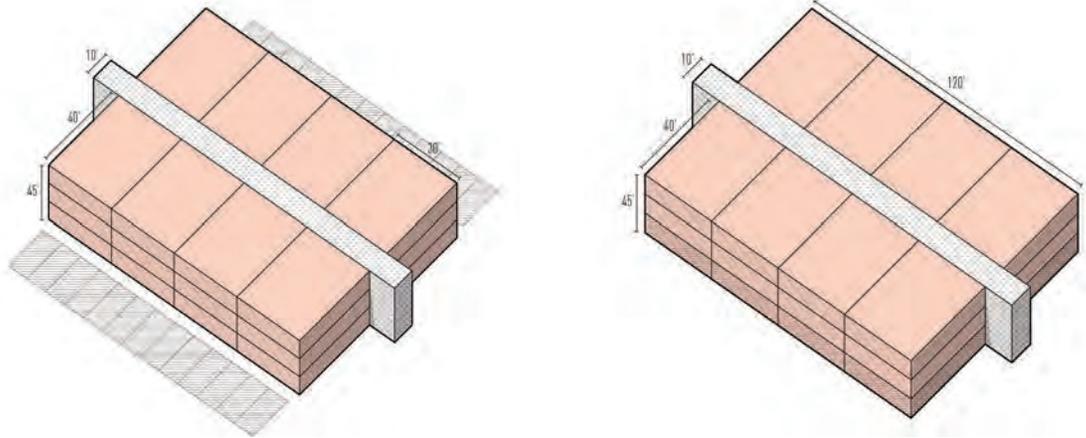
Providing affordable housing is crucial for supporting socially and economically mixed communities. The research team emphasizes that the provision of housing below market rate is requiring on several factors, and makes a point to not categorize affordable housing as dependent on certain architectural or spatial types. Generally, with some exceptions, many housing types that work at market rate can also be made affordable through a range of policies discussed later in this report. The target range of medium density housing types (between the free-standing single-family house and the apartment building, including various types of walkup apartment buildings and town houses) holds particular promise to provide affordability not as a single category but rather a combination of different sizes, price ranges, and tenures (i.e., rental vs. homeownership).

OWNERSHIP		RENTAL	
2-Person Household	MFI 80%: $60,400 MFI 120%: $92,050	2-Person Household	MFI 50%: $37,850 MFI 60%: $45,420
4-Person Household	MFI 80%: $75,500 MFI 120%: $115,100	4-Person Household	MFI 50%: $47,300 MFI 60%: $56,760

2-37   **HUD INCOME THRESHOLDS_**AUSTIN METRO AREA (2019)

2-35

Type 03_Garden Style Apartment

Foundation Communities' Live Oak Trails development offers 1, 2, and 3 bedroom units with surface parking.

Live Oak Trails_Austin

2-36

Type 04_Garden Style with Tuck Under Parking

Guadalupe Neighborhood Development Association's Vista de Guadalupe features shared parking tucked under the building.

La Vista de Guadalupe_Austin

LEGEND

| PARKING | MARKET RATE |
| PATIO | RENTAL |
| | AFFORDABLE |

3 Scenarios

OVERVIEW

The purpose of the scenarios for the St. Johns site is to help the community visualize and compare alternative futures for the neighborhood. As a set, the scenarios call attention to relationships among fundamental issues about redevelopment and allow for discussions on preferred options, including how some goals might be prioritized and combined. The scenarios have been developed based on information from the community and analysis of the site. The stated interests of the many area stakeholders who have completed surveys and participated in public meetings over the last several years provided the basis for the scenario components or "building blocks." As described in detail in Section 2, the components were grouped into three categories: economies, ecologies, and communities. Individual scenarios emphasize some components over others, but each contains a mix of components.

The creation of the scenarios was also influenced by analysis of the site. Three distinct frameworks for providing infrastructure were identified and the choice of framework is critical to the kinds of component combinations that can be used for redevelopment. Additionally, if the redevelopment will be done over a long period of time, then the time frame in which the infrastructure framework is implemented is important. An infrastructure framework that is implemented in a first phase of redevelopment across the entire site lays the groundwork for a second phase of incremental redevelopment of the individual plots over many years. This phasing approach ensures that the respective qualities of public space (such as access to lots and amenities) and functions related to health, safety, and welfare (such as storm water management) are available to all new users and current residents as a shared asset. Additionally, a 500 foot highway exclusion zone also affects the types and locations of buildings in each framework. In this zone, certain uses (such as housing, child care, and recreation) cannot be responsibly placed without negative effects for both users and inhabitants.

The three infrastructure frameworks are called A, B, and C. Variations that explore different combinations of scenario features are noted by an additional number. The set of scenarios is A.1, B.1, B.2, C.1, and C.2.

Site
(existing conditions)

no infrastructure   additional infrastructure

Infrastructure Frameworks

A	B	C
Minimum Intervention	Urban Block Structure	Public Armature

+

Possible Development Scenarios

| A1 | B1 | B2 | C1 | C2 |

+

Scenario Components ("Building Blocks")

| A1	B1	B2	C1	C2
Park Expansion	Neighborhood	Park Expansion	Park Expansion	Park Expansion
Market Pad	Streets	Neighborhood	Green	Green
Self Storage	Economy Hotel	Streets	Boulevard	Boulevard
Offices	Offices	Suite Hotel	Storefront	Storefront
Distribution Center	Town Houses	Offices	Suite Hotel	Suite Hotel
	Apartments	Market Pad	Offices	Offices
	Affordable Housing	Town Houses	Market Pad	Town Houses
	Vocational Training	Apartments	Town Houses	Apartments
		Affordable Housing	Apartments	Affordable Housing
		Vocational Training	Affordable Housing	Vocational Training
			Vocational Training	Child Care
			Youth Development	
			Child Care	

INFRASTRUCTURE FRAMEWORKS_A+B+C

Existing Conditions

Site with Dimensions

790'

180' 160'

300'

610'

500' buffer for I35

192,000 sf.

54,000 sf.

473,000 sf.

65,000 sf.
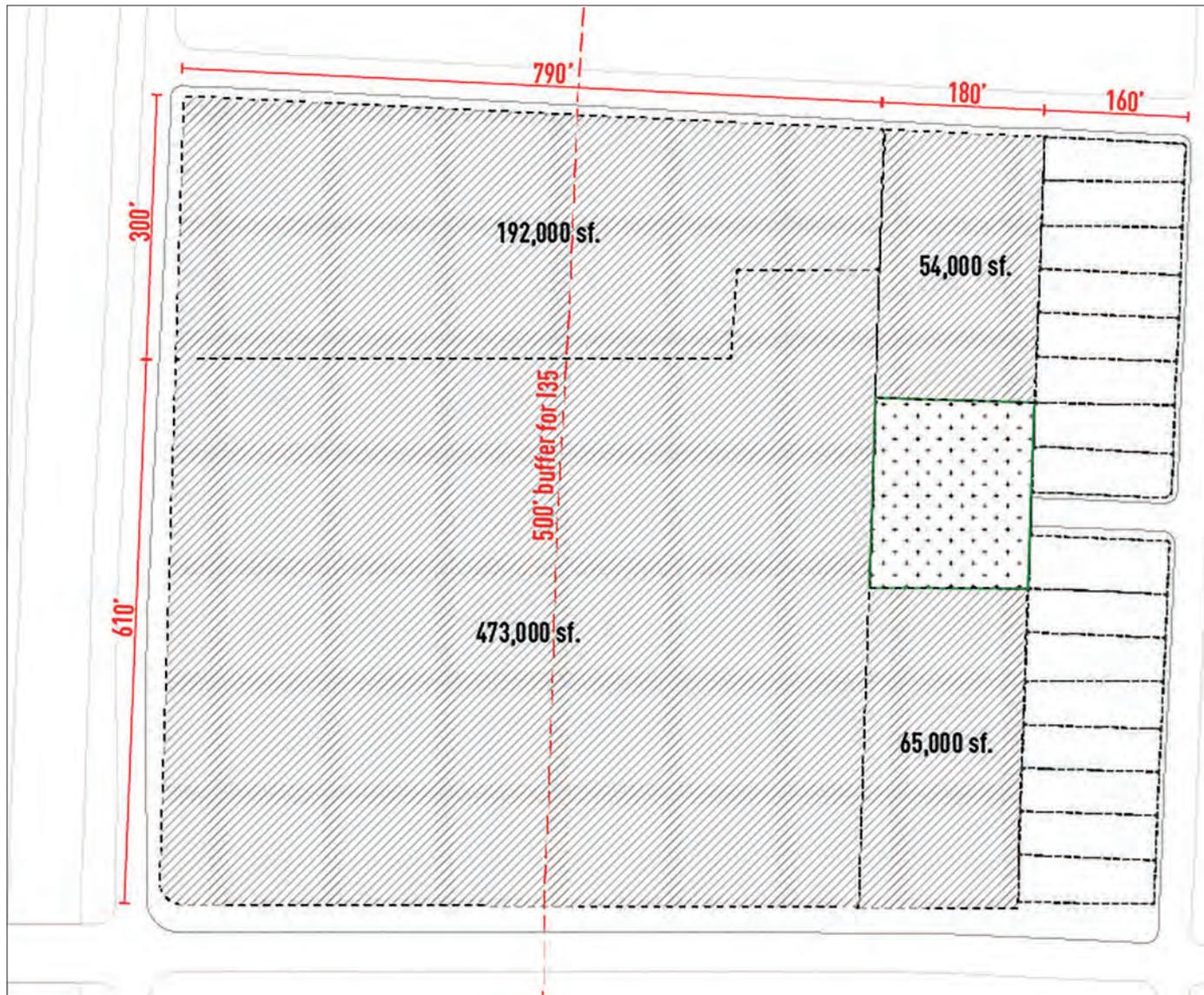
Infrastructure Framework A
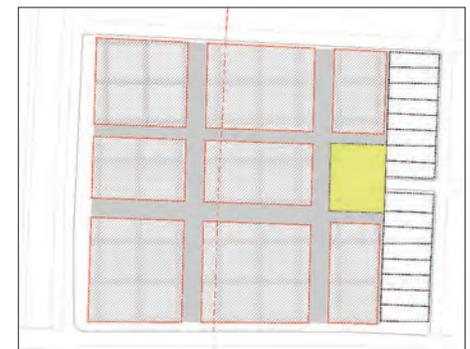
Infrastructure Framework B

Infrastructure Framework C

INFRASTRUCTURE FRAMEWORK A_ BUFFER FROM COMMERCIAL REDEVELOPMENT
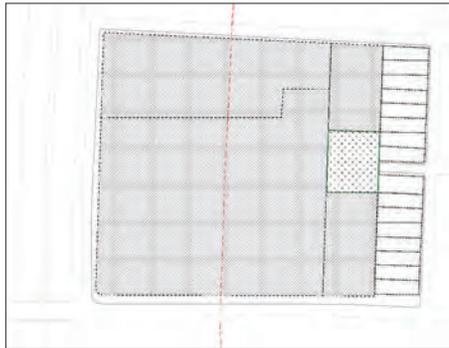
Original Site
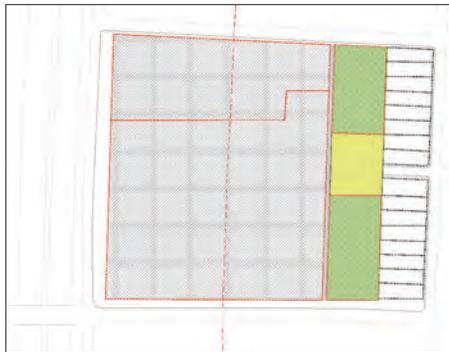
Infrastructure Framework A

Framework A expands the existing park along the eastern edge of the site to buffer current residential development from the highway related redevelopment. It provides the most economical approach to continued commercial reuse. The existing St. John site is currently characterized by two very different conditions. On the west side, there is large scale, car-related, big box development that takes advantage of access to IH-35 and its connections to the larger region. On the east side, there is a traditional neighborhood of one- and two-story single family homes. Infrastructure Framework A supports the same kinds of commercial uses on the west side, with the former Home Depot and Chrysler tracts redeveloped as new traffic-dependent commercial uses. The amount of impervious surfaces (roads, parking lots, and rooftops) will be very similar to what it is today. To better accommodate stormwater runoff, a system of rain gardens is created along the lot lines. While Framework A maintains a large commercial area, it also provides greater separation for the eastern residential area by expanding the existing St. John Park to the north and south. This new buffer will significantly improve the green infrastructure capacity of the entire neighborhood. It will also allow a number of new small scale public amenities to be developed. The green band is accessible to pedestrian and bicycle traffic and connects the existing park to public transportation along St. Johns Avenue. This framework holds the potential of a gradual expansion to the north across Blackson Avenue and could ultimately link to Buttermilk Branch Greenbelt.

LEGEND

EXTENDED PARK		LOT LINES ---
EXISTING PARK		WATER RUN-OFF ---
RAIN GARDEN		PUBLIC ACCESS ---
		GREEN BUFFER —

30' 745' 15' 180' 160'

295'

615'

192,000 sf.

54,000 sf.

500' buffer for I35

473,000 sf.

65,000 sf.
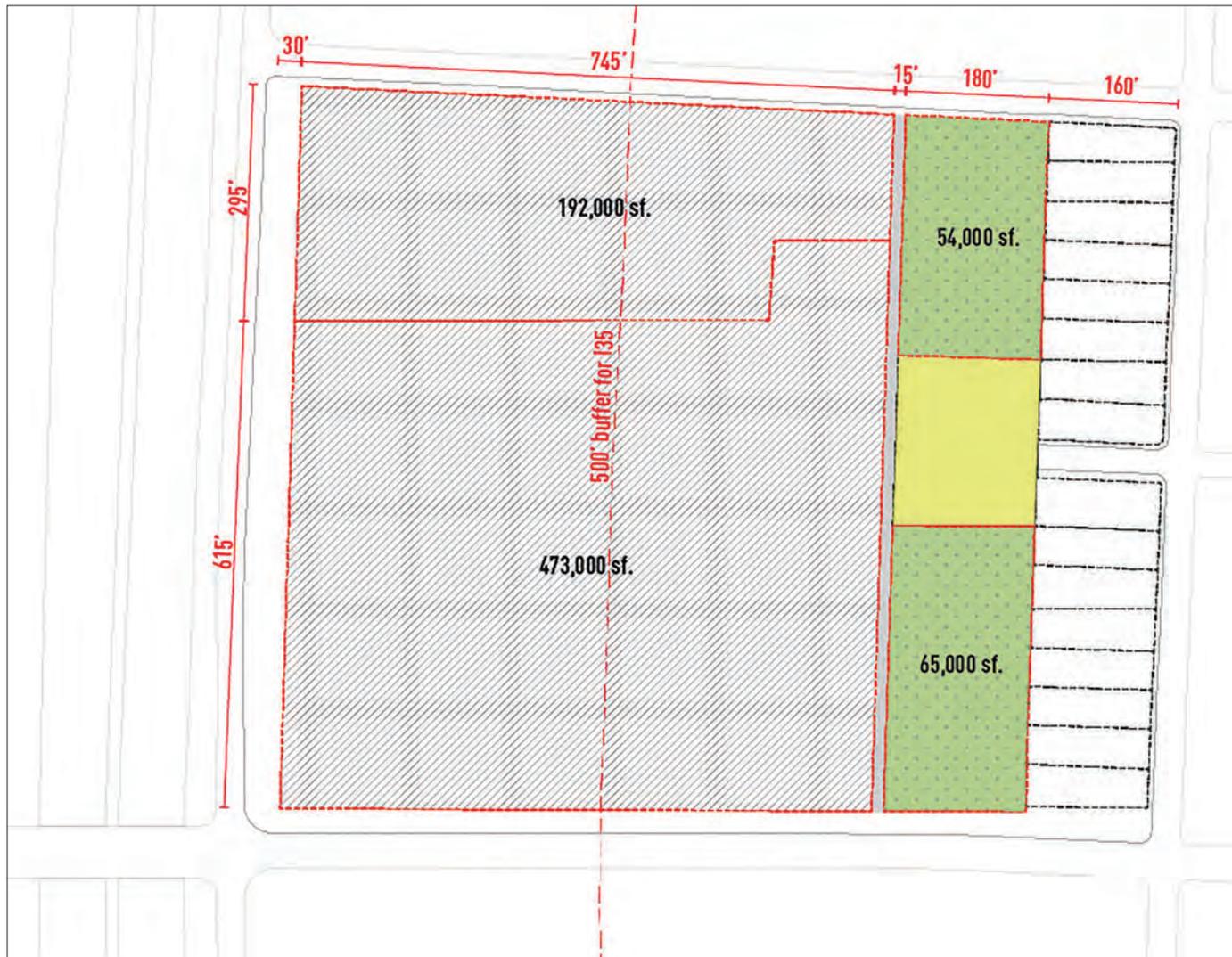
Buffer from Commercial Development

Lot Division
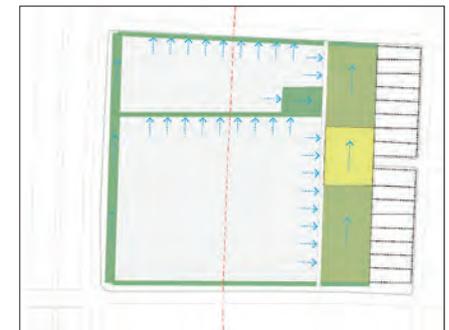
Green System
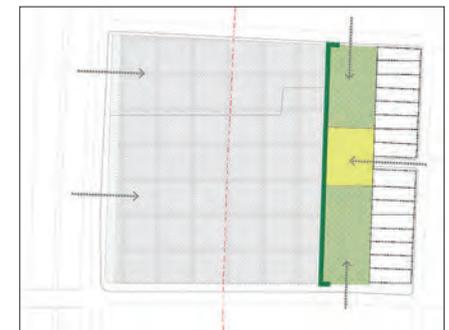
Public Interface

INFRASTRUCTURE FRAMEWORK A_ BUFFER FROM COMMERCIAL REDEVELOPMENT

30'

745'

500' buffer for IH-35

Highway Buffer

Development Parcel

Retention Pond

15'

180'

30'

140'

Existing Park

Rain Garden

Park Extension

Neighborhood Green Buffer

ADU Buffer

Existing Neighborhood

LEGEND

— LOT LINES

--- WATER RUN-OFF | | EXTENDED PARK

--- PUBLIC ACCESS | | EXISTING PARK

— GREEN BUFFER | | RAIN GARDEN
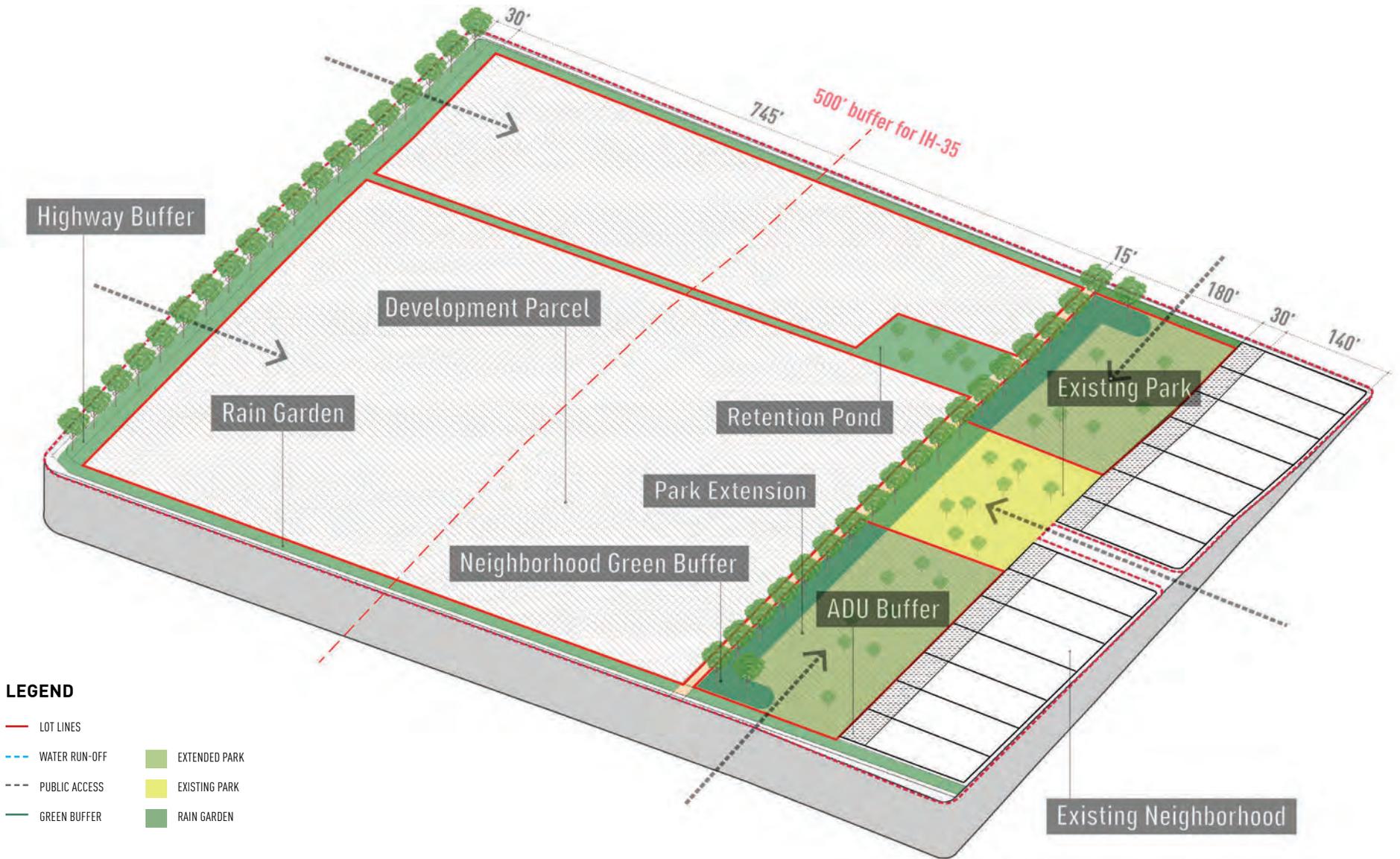
GREEN BUFFER ALONG HIGHWAY
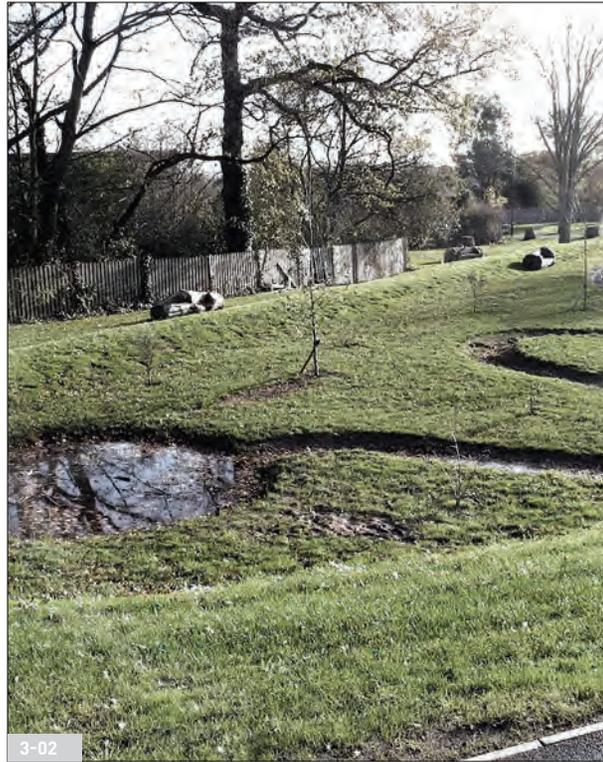
RETENTION POND

PEDESTRIAN GREEN BUFFER

INFRASTRUCTURE FRAMEWORK B_ STREET GRID / BLOCK STRUCTURE
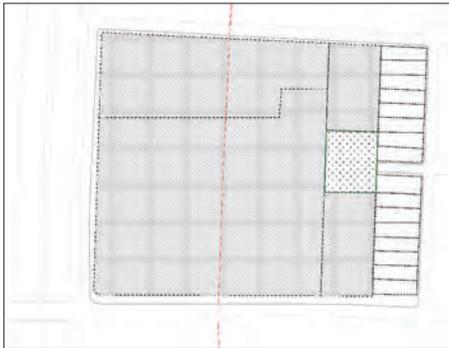
Original Site

Infrastructure Framework B

Framework B adds a new street grid to subdivide the site into nine blocks, including the existing St. John Park. It provides an efficient way to organize individual, small-scale development. Adding two north-south and two east-west streets on the site creates nine roughly square blocks. They range in size from about 45,000 sf to 110,000 sf, with a total of 605,000 sf of developable land. The existing St. John Park becomes an easily reached feature across the site. Public streets are developed in accordance with Austin's Complete Streets guidelines, and are envisioned as Level 1 neighborhood streets, which have an approximate right of way of 60 feet to accommodate on-street parking, green zones, sidewalks, and a 5 foot setback within each block. Both the green zone and the setback are intended to improve water management and the green zone could be developed as rain gardens. The street grid layout allows for a certain flexibility, and slight adjustments to the precise character of the street can be made to meet the needs of each future scenario. The current elevation change of the site presents a challenge that will

result in a re-grading effort to provide a continuous slope for the north-south streets. The three western blocks facing IH-35 fall within the 500 foot highway exclusion zone, so it is recommended that they not be used for housing, daycare, or recreational facilities. The grid/block infrastructure framework layout allows for maximum flexibility with regard to both the private development of each block and the combination of blocks and phasing. Public streets provide on-street parking, while off street parking requirements will have to be accommodated per use within each block as either surface parking or parking garages that support upper story offices, which could take advantage of the sloping site.

LEGEND

EXTENDED PARK

EXISTING PARK

RAIN GARDEN

LOT LINES - - -

WATER RUN-OFF - - -

PUBLIC ACCESS - - -

HIGHWAY INTERFACE

AVENUE INTERFACE

NEIGHBORHOOD INTERFACE

30' 295' 60' 345' 60' 170' 10' 160'

275'

40'

195'

65'

335'

81,000 sf.

93,000 sf.

44,000 sf.

58,000 sf.

67,000 sf.

99,000 sf.

110,000 sf.

50,000 sf.

500' buffer for I35
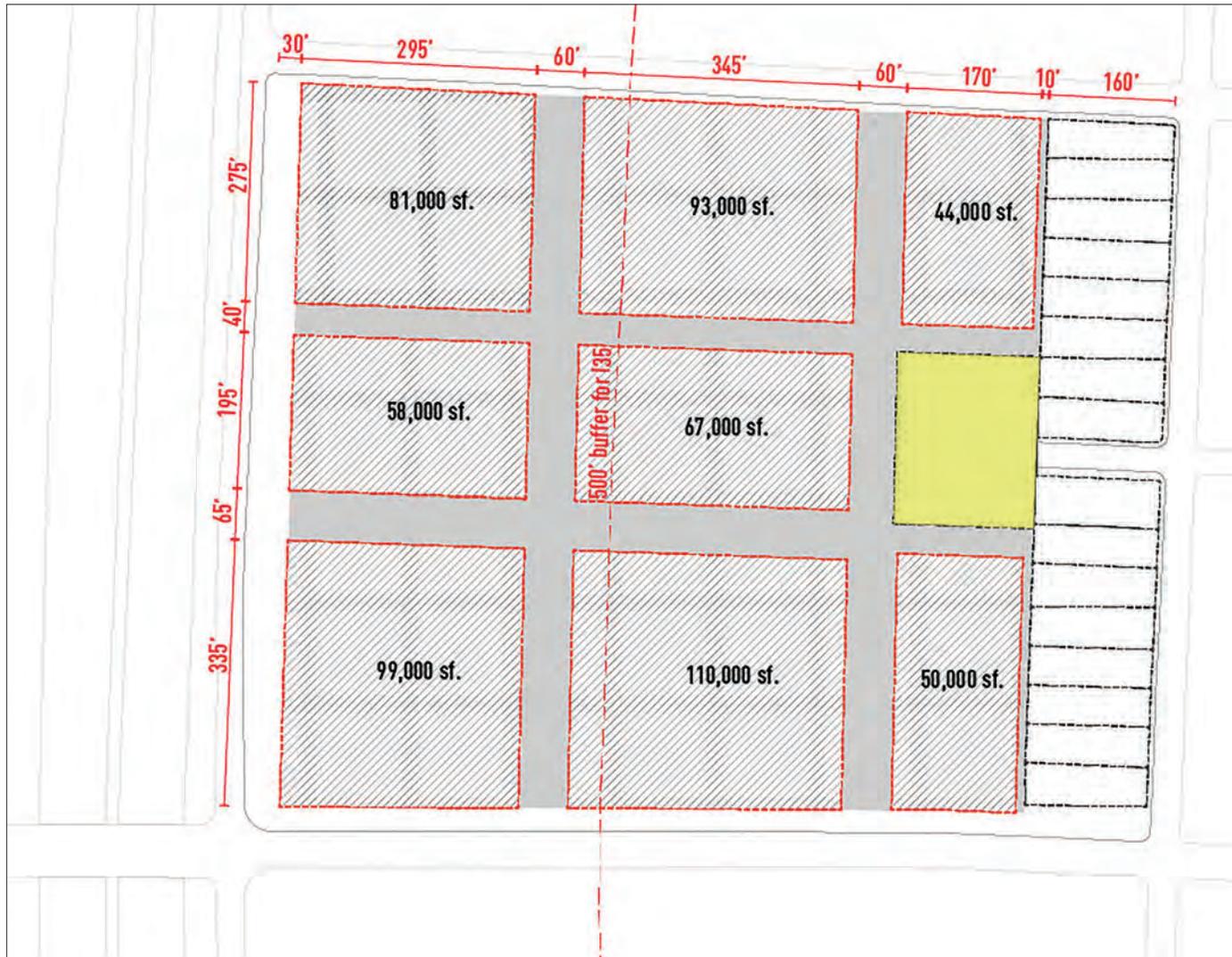
Green Block Structure

Lot Division
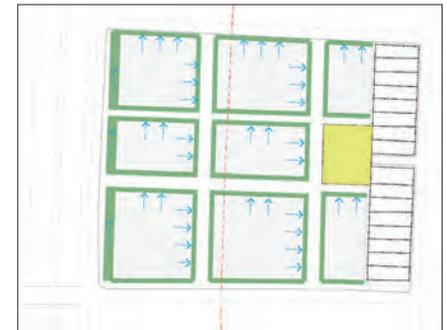
Green System
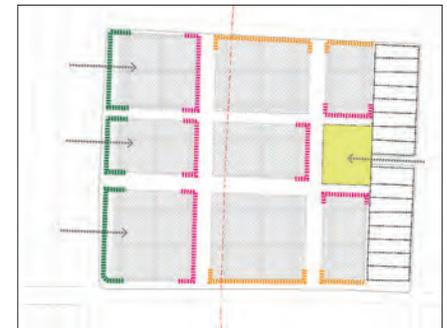
Public Interface

INFRASTRUCTURE FRAMEWORK B_ STREET GRID / BLOCK STRUCTURE

Green Block Bioswale

Highway Buffer

Rain Garden

Development Parcel

ADU Buffer

Existing Park

Existing Neighborhood

30'
295'
60'
500' buffer for IH-35
345'
60'
170'
40'
130'
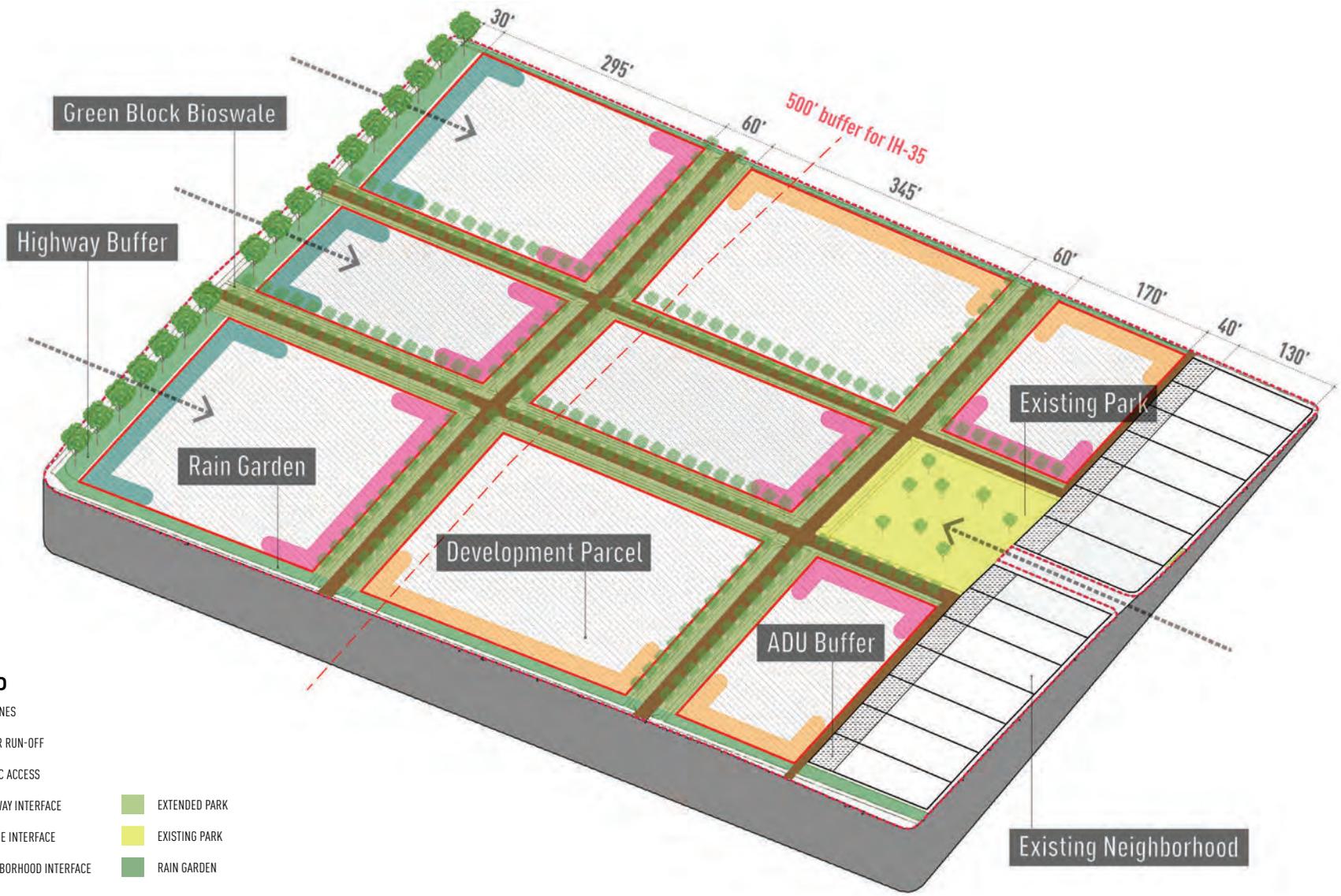
LEGEND

— LOT LINES

--- WATER RUN-OFF

--- PUBLIC ACCESS

▬ HIGHWAY INTERFACE
▬ AVENUE INTERFACE
▬ NEIGHBORHOOD INTERFACE

▬ EXTENDED PARK
▬ EXISTING PARK
▬ RAIN GARDEN

3-04

NEIGHBORHOOD STREET

3-05

ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT

3-06

GREEN PARKING LOT

INFRASTRUCTURE FRAMEWORK C_CIVIC BOULEVARD + PARKS
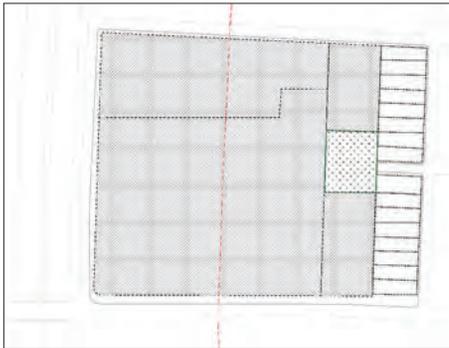
Original Site
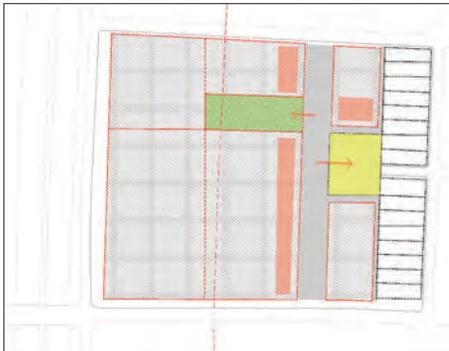
Infrastructure Framework C

Framework C concentrates activity around new public spaces. The most prominent feature of this option is a Green Boulevard that runs north-south between St. Johns Avenue and Blackson Avenue that combines commercial and public life. The boulevard aligns with the western edge of the existing St. John Park. It also aligns with the eastern edge of a new second park that takes advantage of the existing steeply sloped topography. Combined, these three elements create a connected public space system. This configuration results in two plots on the east side of the boulevard (north and south of the existing park) and a large plot on the west side, which can accommodate larger scale mixed use developments. The proposed boulevard has a 100-foot right of way and combines a variety of uses and modes of transportation, including on-street parking, rain gardens, a bicycle lane, and a 24-foot wide activity zone for neighborhood events such as markets or gatherings. The position of the boulevard allows for a potential future extension across Blackson Avenue to the north and a link to the Buttermilk Branch Greenbelt. The boulevard is conceived with the

possibility of varying slopes (ranging from 1.7% – 5.5%) in order to work with the existing topography of the site. The overall grading of the western two-thirds of the site, where the elevation change is currently most pronounced, would remain largely unchanged and provide a distinct edge between the upper and lower parts of the site.

LEGEND

STEPPED PARK	LOT LINES
EXISTING PARK	WATER RUN-OFF
RAIN GARDEN	PUBLIC ACCESS
PUBLIC PROGRAM	HIGHWAY INTERFACE
	AVENUE INTERFACE
	NEIGHBORHOOD INTERFACE
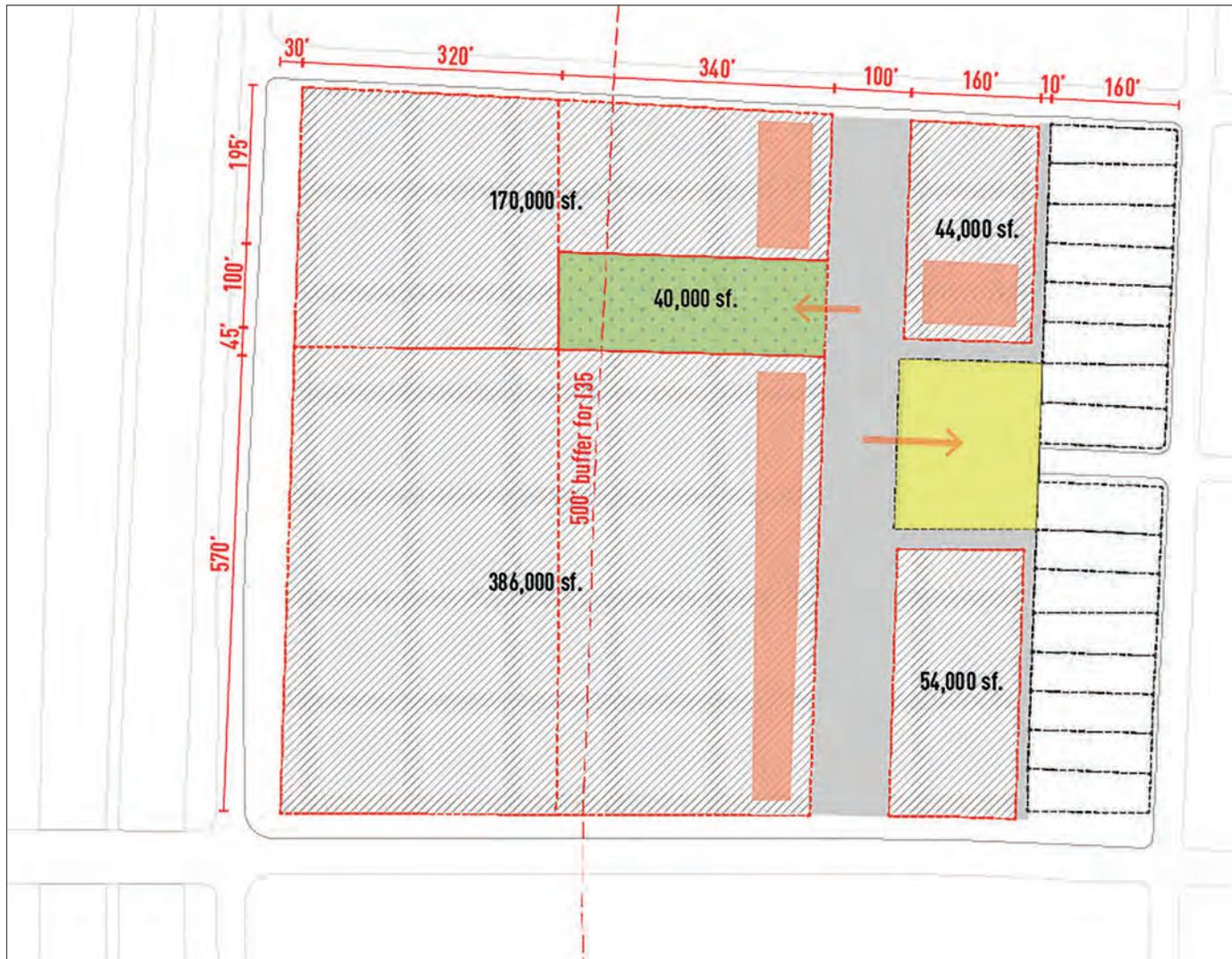
Civic Boulevard + Parks

Lot Division

Green System

Public Interface

Labels on main diagram: 30', 320', 340', 100', 160', 10', 160', 195', 100', 45', 570', 170,000 sf., 44,000 sf., 40,000 sf., 386,000 sf., 54,000 sf., 500' buffer for I35

INFRASTRUCTURE FRAMEWORK C_CIVIC BOULEVARD + PARKS

30'
320'
500' buffer for IH-35
340'
100'
160'
40'
130'

Development Parcel

Highway Buffer

Stepped Park

Market Pad/Food Truck

Rain Garden

Green Boulevard

Storefront/ Small Business

Existing Park

ADU Buffer

Existing Neighborhood

LEGEND

— LOT LINES
--- WATER RUN-OFF
--- PUBLIC ACCESS
— HIGHWAY INTERFACE   STEPPED PARK
— AVENUE INTERFACE   EXISTING PARK
— NEIGHBORHOOD INTERFACE   RAIN GARDEN
                           MARKET PAD/FOOD TRUCK

PUBLIC STREET

GREEN NEIGHBORHOOD STREET

BIKE LANE

SCENARIOS

INFRASTRUCTURE FRAMEWORK A

_SCENARIO A.1

INFRASTRUCTURE FRAMEWORK B

_SCENARIO B.1

_SCENARIO B.2

INFRASTRUCTURE FRAMEWORK C

_SCENARIO C.1

_SCENARIO C.2

SCENARIO A.1

Scenario A.1

Scenario A.1 is based on minimally changing the existing site. The eastern portion of the existing lots on the site, aligning roughly with the western edge of St. John Park, would be appropriated for public use and the creation of a continuous green buffer between St. Johns and Blackson Avenues. The expansion of the existing park in this scenario would be implemented in two parts. The northern portion is about 58,000 sf and the southern portion is about 70,000 sf, effectively adding an additional 128,000 sf of public park space to the existing 38,000 sf of St. John Park. All development efforts are focused on this buffer and park zone with the addition of pedestrian and bike infrastructure to allow for a north-south connectivity between Blackson Avenue and St Johns Avenue. To improve connectivity to public transport, a relocation of the current CapMetro Bus Stop 800 located at St. Johns Avenue and IH-35 to the southern end of the new green belt could be considered.

The new park is envisioned to house a number of public amenities in addition to the existing playground and pavilion, such as a splash pad, bathroom pavilion, basketball court, and a multi-use surface for neighborhood markets and events. This marked pad, which is located at the southern edge, is serviced from St. Johns Avenue to allow for setup of equipment such as market stalls or food trucks.

The reduced western portion of the site remains largely unchanged, inviting market-rate private development. Likely uses in the near future on this portion include a warehouse or small distribution center, office space/building, self-storage facility, and associated parking/traffic surfaces. These initial uses do not preclude the possibility of further and higher density development at a later time. Given the highway and car traffic related nature of these uses, the percentage of impervious cover would likely not change on these lots. To account for this, Scenario A.1 proposes a system of rain gardens along the edges of the new lots to improve natural water infiltration, as well as the redesign of the current detention pond located at the intersection of the Chrysler and Home depot tracts and St. John Park.
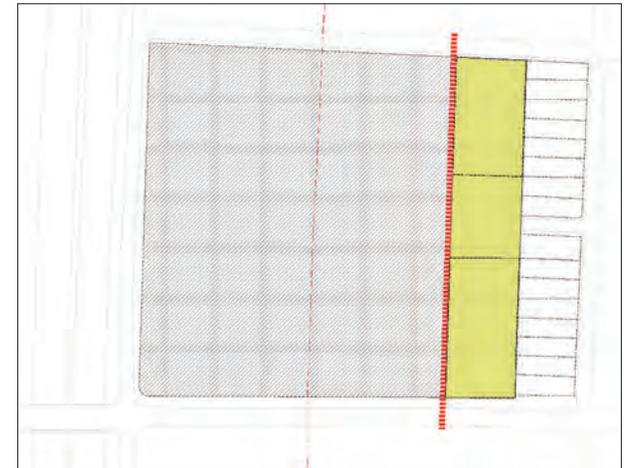
Infrastructure Framework A
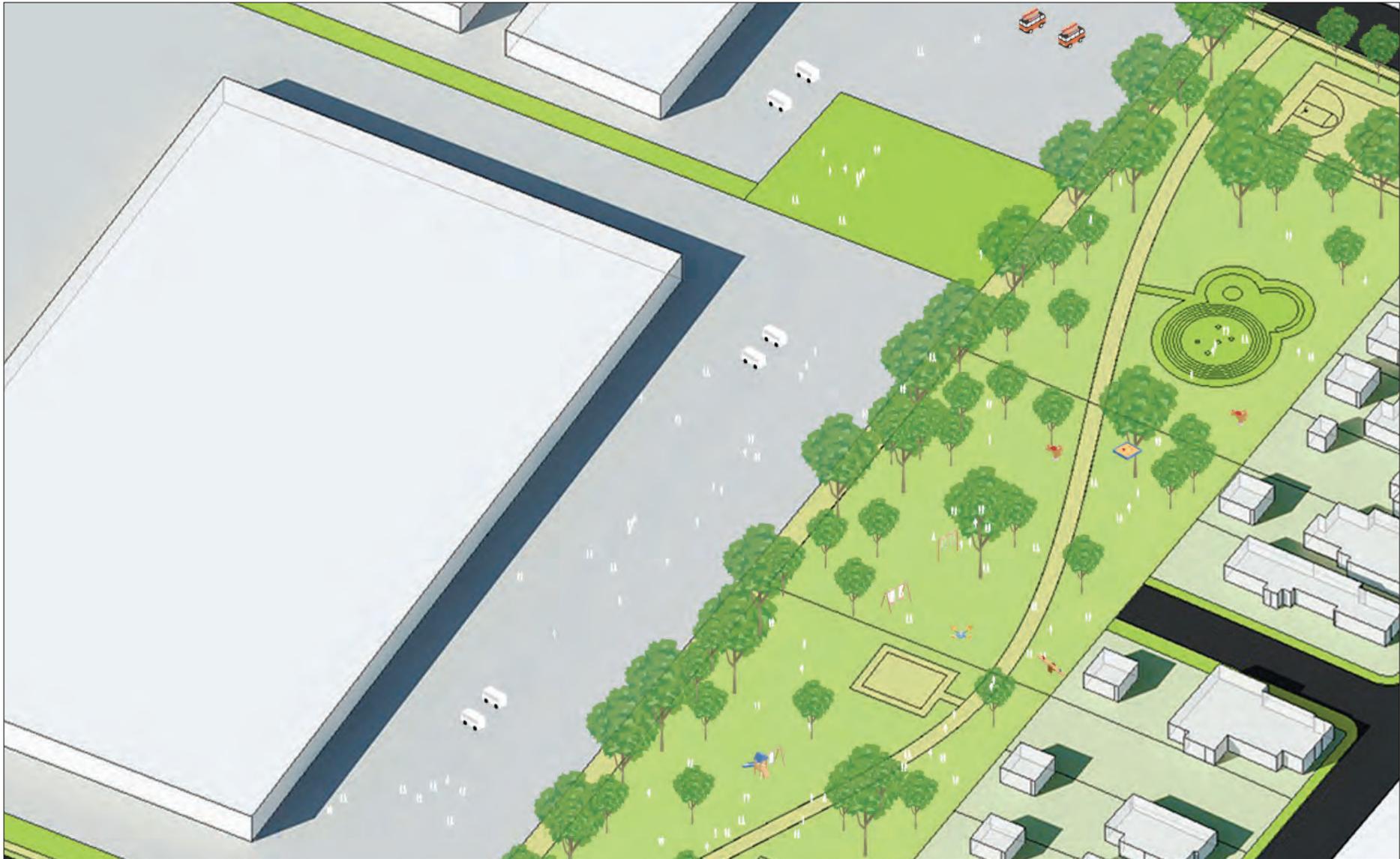
Scenario A.1

SCENARIO A.1_SITE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

LEGEND

1. Rain Gardens
2. Existing St. John Park
3. Park Extension
3a Basketball Court
3b Splash pad
3c Bathroom Pavilion
3d Market Pad/Food Trucks
4. Market Rate Development
   (Warehouse/ Distribution Center)
   or
   (Office)
5. Market Rate Development
   (Self Storage)

0 25 50 100 200 400 feet

SITE PLAN_SCENARIO A.1
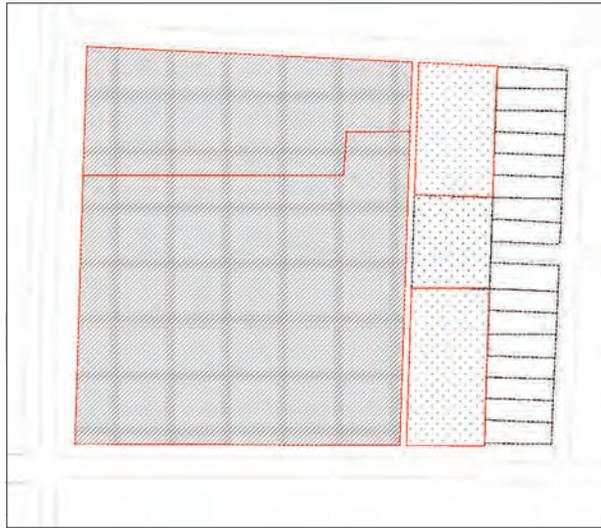
Lot Division
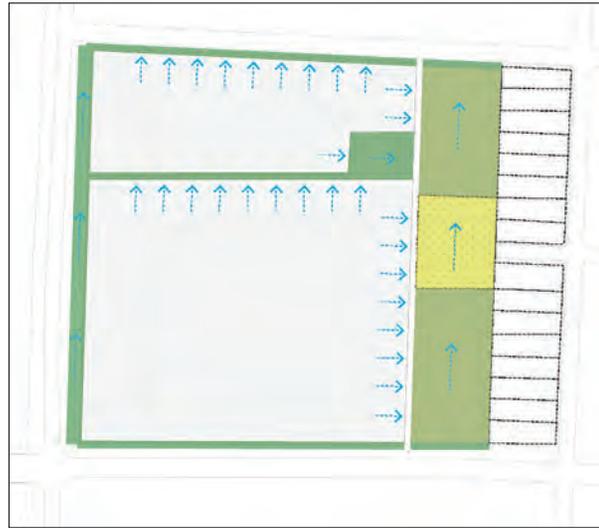
Green Infrastructure
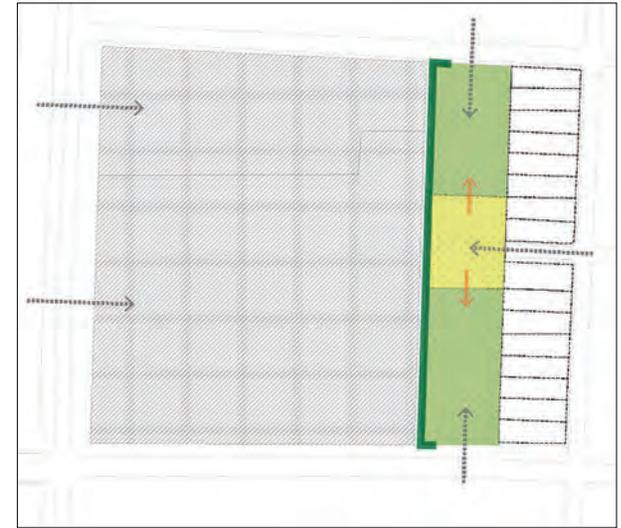
Public Interface

LEGEND

■	EXTENDED PARK	---	LOT LINES
■	EXISTING PARK	---	WATER RUN-OFF
■	RAIN GARDEN	---	PUBLIC ACCESS
■	WAREHOUSE	—	GREEN BUFFER
		·····	EXIST. TOPOGRAPHY

SITE SECTION_SCENARIO A.1
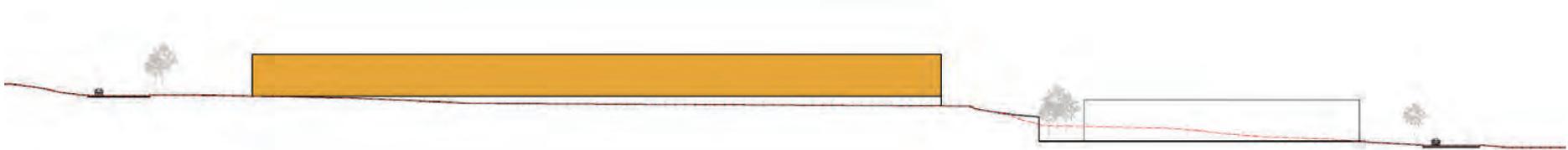
SCENARIO A.1_PROGRAM TYPE

Type 02

Type 01

Type 03

SITE AERIAL VIEW_SCENARIO A.1

Type 01_ Distribution Center

Type 02_Self Storage
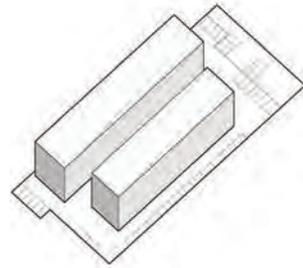
Type 03_Park Expansion
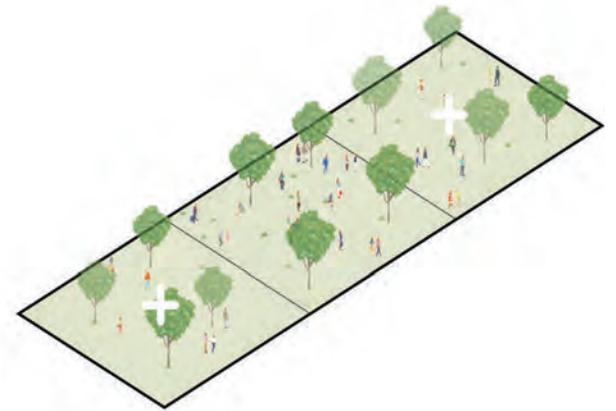
SCENARIO A.1

EXTENDED PARK_SCENARIO A.1

_SCENARIO PROGRAM

Box Bazaar: 10,500 sf
Splash Pad: 6,000 sf
Basketball Court: 4,700 sf

Public Space

Existing Park
38,000 sf

North Park Extension
98,000 sf

South Park Extension
70,000 sf

Rain gardens
10,000 sf

Total: 236,000 sf

Economies

Option 1:
Warehouse:
290,000 sf

Self Storage:
240,000 sf

Option 2:
Office:
460,000 sf

Total:
530,000 - 700,000 sf

SCENARIO B.1

Scenario B.1

Scenario B.1 presents a basic possible outcome of the street grid/urban block framework. Two north-south neighborhood streets are developed as Level 1 streets in accordance with Austin's Complete Street guidelines. One east-west street is also developed as a full Level 1 street. The northern east-west connection and the two segments north and south of the existing park take on the character of a shared street that combines pedestrian activity, bicycle, and (light) car traffic, and social activities. All fully developed Level 1 streets have a right of way of 60 feet, combining drive lanes, parallel street parking, green zones, and sidewalks to provide a complete public street for the new neighborhood. An additional north-south alley is inserted between the existing half block of Bennett Avenue. The new development enables car access to the two new blocks north and south of St. John Park as well as anticipates the possibility of Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) development on the existing lots on the western side of Bennett.

The scenario components for B.1 foreground the development of medium density housing types on the site. Five of the eight new blocks fall outside the 500 foot highway exclusion zone of IH-35, and provide a total of 483,000 sf (gross) of new housing (+ 10,000 sf of Garage Apartments) in 295 units of various configurations with a goal of approximately 50% affordable units. The three center blocks propose a perimeter arrangement of 2 levels of balcony-access apartments over two-story units with private entrances that are accessible at ground level. There is a shared collective garden at the center of each block, and tuck-under parking accessible from

a covered street at the interior of the block. The two eastern blocks share a U-shaped arrangement of walk up apartments and town houses with garage apartments. A collective green space and tuck-under parking is accessible from the new north-south alley.

All housing developments maintain a street façade with an entrance patio zone 5-10 feet deep to support the activation of the new neighborhood streets. While no additional public park space is proposed in this scenario, the framing of the existing St. John Park on three sides has the potential to activate the existing park and make it the social center of the neighborhood.

The three western blocks fall within the 500 foot highway exclusion zone. The proposal envisions the individual development of these blocks in an economical way through 4–5 story bar buildings with a height up to 60 feet and open lot parking accessible from the frontage road of IH-35. Proposals for an economy hotel (southern block), class A office space (middle block), and a vocational training facility (northern block) combine the desire for economic activation on the site with the possibility of community benefits through the activation of the north-south street at ground level through the public face of these buildings. Small scale cafés or leasable meeting spaces could present opportunities for shared benefits between the community and private development of these blocks.
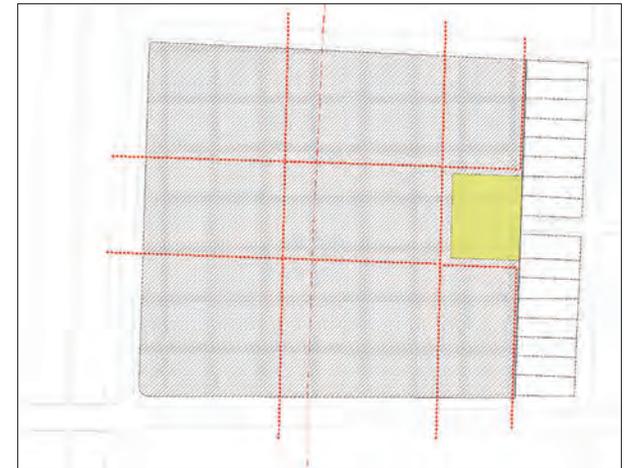
Infrastructure Framework B
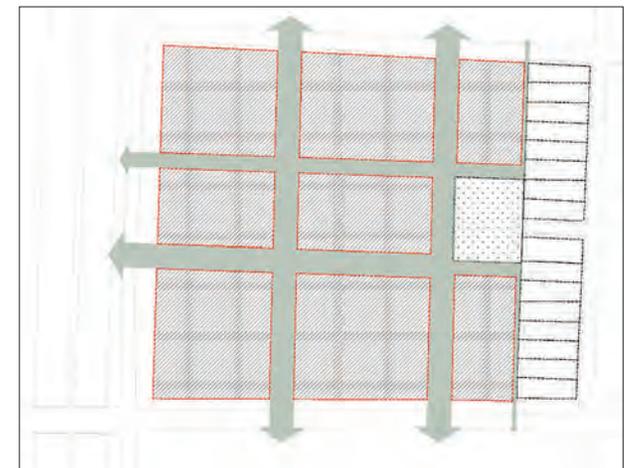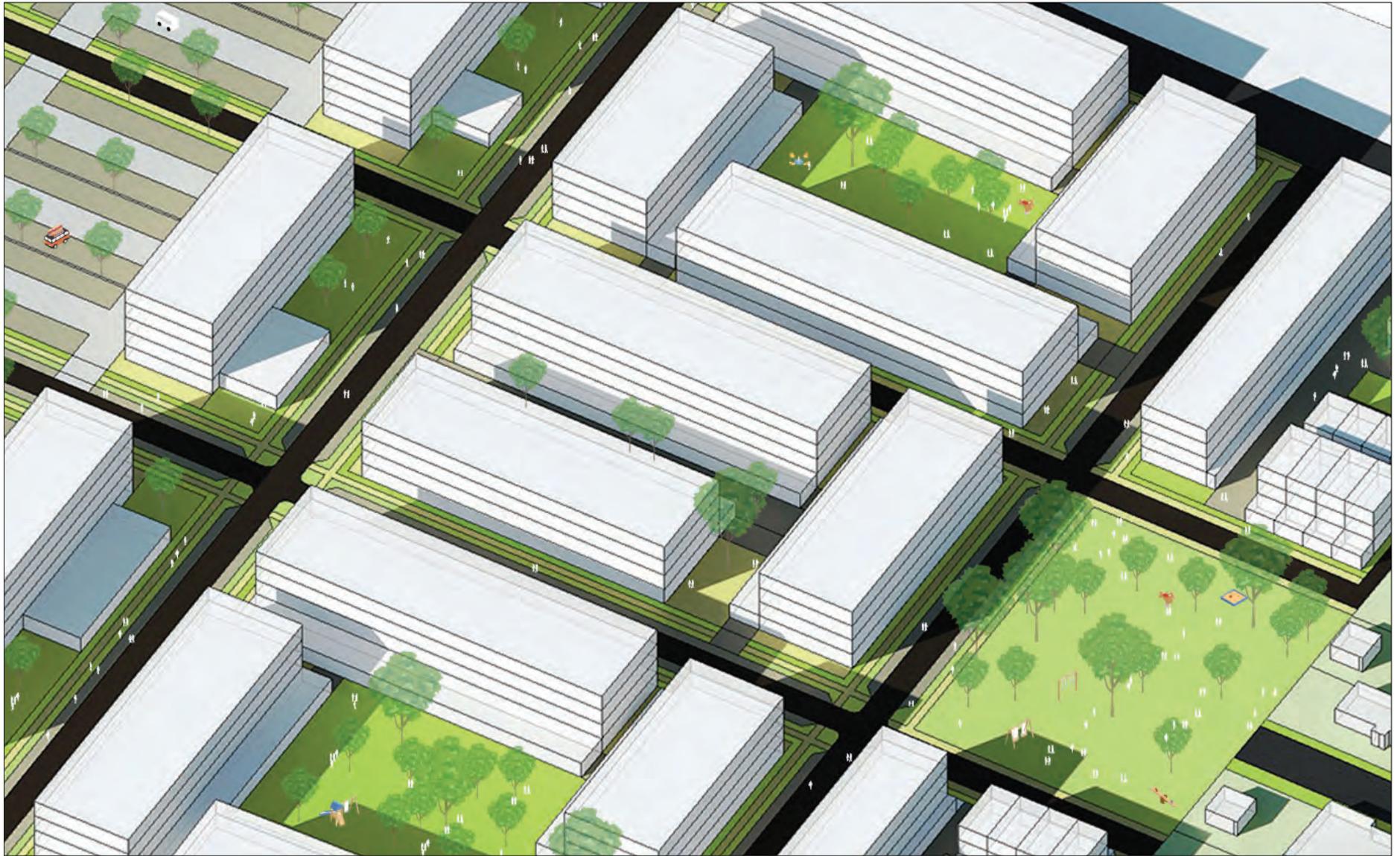
Scenario B.1

SCENARIO B.1_ SITE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

LEGEND

1. Rain Gardens
2. Existing St. John Park
3. Neighborhood Street
4. Neighborhood Alley
5. Economy Hotel
   with open lot parking
6. Office (Class A)
   (with open lot parking)
7. Vocational Training/Trade School
   (with open lot parking)
8. Townhouse Type 2
   (with Garage Apartment)
9. Apartments Type 1
   (Walkup, truck-under parking,
   affordable or market rate)
10. Apartments Type 2
    (Walkup, truck-under parking,
    affordable or market rate)
11. Optional Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU)

0 25 50 100 200 400 feet

SITE PLAN_SCENARIO B.1
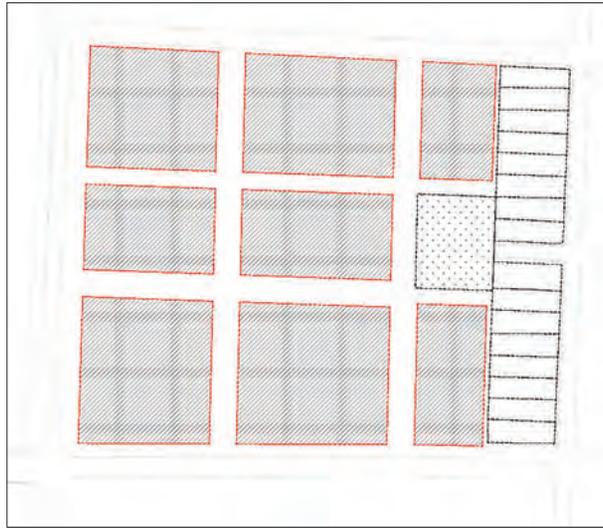
Lot Division
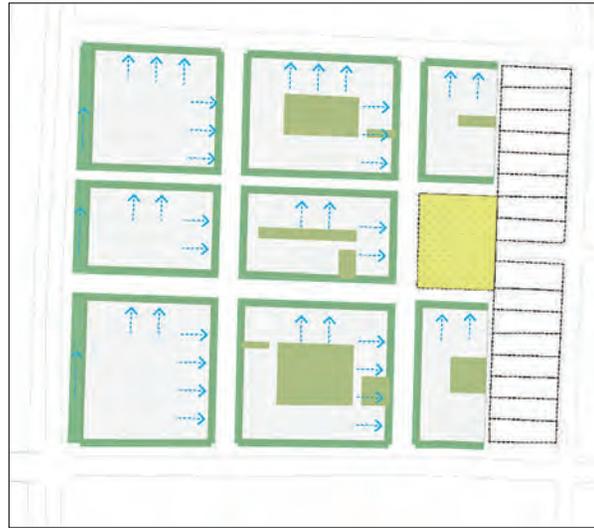
Green Infrastructure
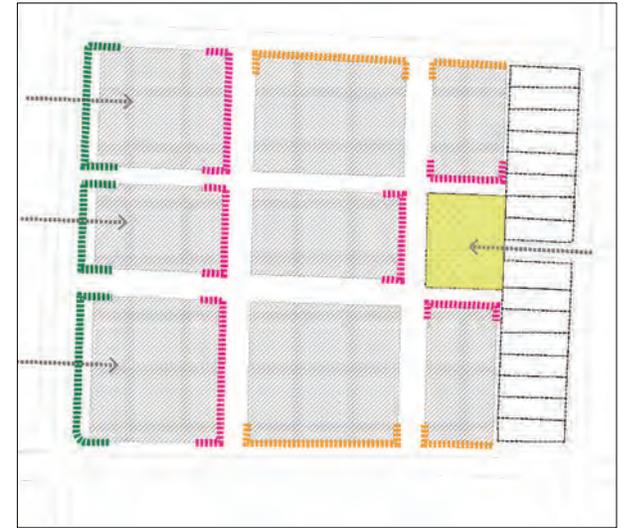
Public Interface

LEGEND

▪ SHARED COURTYARDS	- - - LOT LINES	▥ HIGHWAY INTERFACE	
▪ EXISTING PARK	- - - WATER RUN-OFF	▥ AVENUE INTERFACE	
▪ RAIN GARDEN	- - - PUBLIC ACCESS	▥ NEIGHBORHOOD INTERFACE	
▪ APARTMENTS (AFFORDABLE)	—— GREEN BUFFER		
▪ APARTMENTS (MARKET RATE)	- - - EXIST. TOPOGRAPHY		

SITE SECTION_SCENARIO B.1
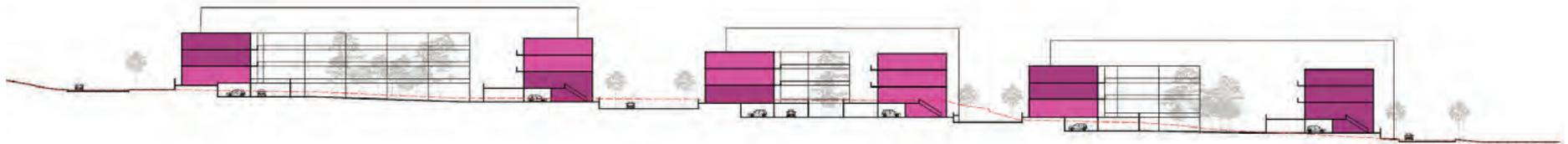
SCENARIO B.1_HOUSING TYPE

Type 02

Type 03

Type 01

Type 01_Townhouse + Garage Apartment
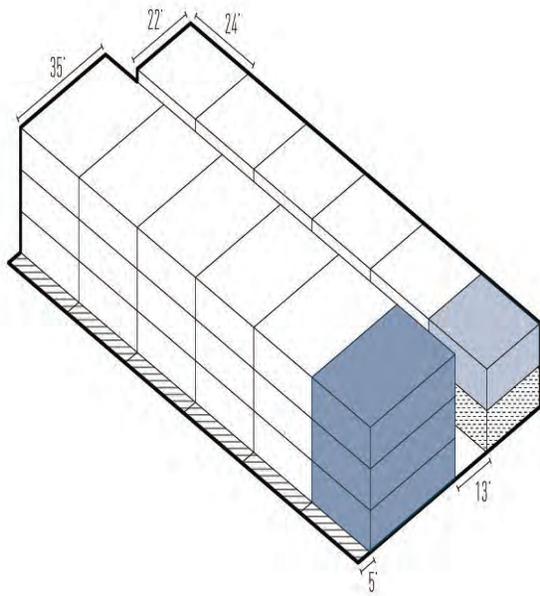
Type 02_Townhouse + Flats
(with access to shared courtyard)

Type 03_ Townhouse + Flats

PARKING   UNIT 1
PATIO   UNIT 2
   UNIT 3
   UNIT 4
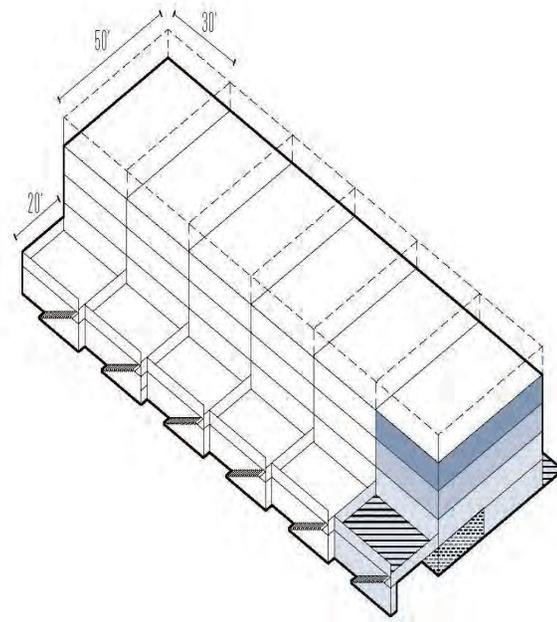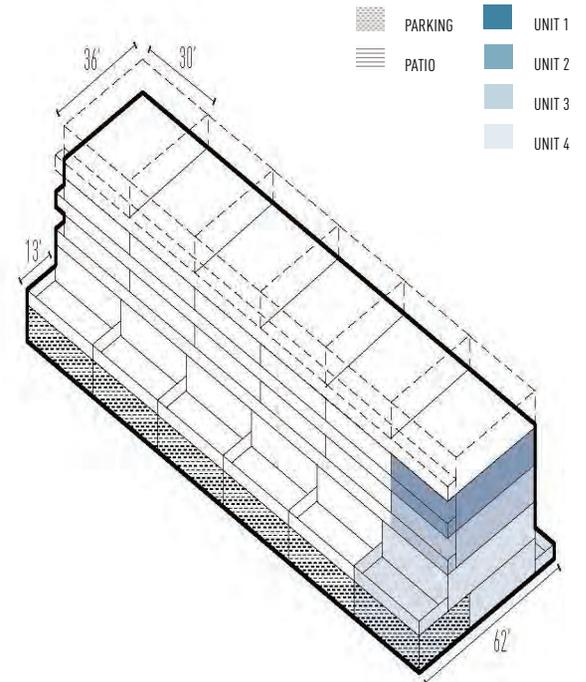
SCENARIO B.1

GREEN BLOCK STREET_SCENARIO B.1

_SCENARIO PROGRAM

Public Space

Existing Park: 38,000 sf
Rear Gardens: 50,000 sf
Shared Courtyards: 62,000 sf

Total: 150,000 sf

Economies

Economy Hotel: 82,000 sf
Office: 54,000 sf

Total: 136,000 sf

Community

Vocational Training: 80,000 sf

Total: 80,000 sf

Housing

Town Houses (Type 2, including garage Apts.): Market rate: 43,000 sf
Apartments (Type 1, Walkup) Market rate: 191,000 sf
Apartments (Type 1, Walkup) Affordable: 191,000 sf
Apartments (Type 2, Walkup) Market Rate: 34,000 sf
Apartments (Type 2, Walkup) Affordable: 34,000 sf

Total: 493,000 sf

SCENARIO B.2

Scenario B.2

In contrast to B.1, Scenario B.2 uses the street grid infrastructure framework to significantly expand public park space. The center block within the grid is kept open, providing an 87,000 sf expansion of the existing St. John Park to the west. The new "central park" is bounded by a street grid of Level 1 streets in accordance with Austin's Complete Street guidelines with a 60 foot right of way, parallel street parking, green zones, and sidewalks. The easternmost north-south street is not continuous for vehicular traffic, instead, the segment between the existing park and the western extension is treated as a multi-use area for communal gatherings, neighborhood markets, or food trucks. As in B.1, a north-south alley is inserted between the existing half block of Bennett Avenue and the new development, north and south of St. Johns Park to provide additional access to the two new eastern blocks and enable the development of ADU's on the existing lots on the western side of Bennett. The insertion of a park at the center of the site significantly reduces the difficulties associated with re-grading the existing slope, as much of the grading can be taken up by the landscape development of the two park blocks.

The central park is framed by two blocks of housing to the north and south, totaling 410,000 sf (gross) in 239 units, with a goal of 50% affordability. C-shaped multi-story apartment blocks are placed along Blackson Avenue and St. Johns Avenue. A stacked arrangement of two levels of apartments over ground floor units with private entries would frame the edges of the site, while the inner layer of housing is townhouses with a maximum of three floors. Townhomes are accessed either from the new east-west streets or a semi-public green space, while apartments are oriented towards the site's perimeter, facing Blackson and St. Johns Avenues. Parking is tucked under elevated patios and accessible through private access alleys on the interiors of the blocks.

The three western blocks within the 500 foot highway exclusion zone are developed similar to scenario B.1, with proposed developments of a hotel on the south west corner, offices in the northwest, and a vocational training facility as the end cap and focal point of the central park axis. In contrast to scenario B.1, surface parking is exchanged for usable floor area, and parking for all three blocks is tucked under the buildings in a single-story plinth. Commonly seen in downtown Austin, a parking plinth is an above ground garage at the base of the building and is entered at street level. Residential units or offices units are placed on floors above the garage levels. Steep slope conditions, like on the western side of the St. John site, allow cars to enter on the low side and pedestrians to enter on the high side. In this scenario, each parking plinth is accessed from the north and the top of the plinth would be largely level with the street on the south sides.
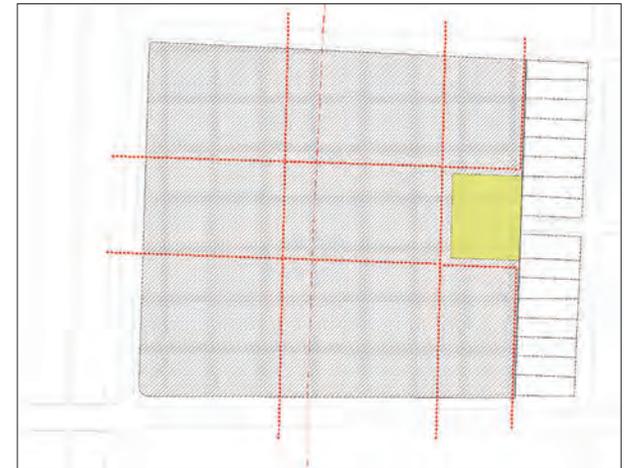

Infrastructure Framework B
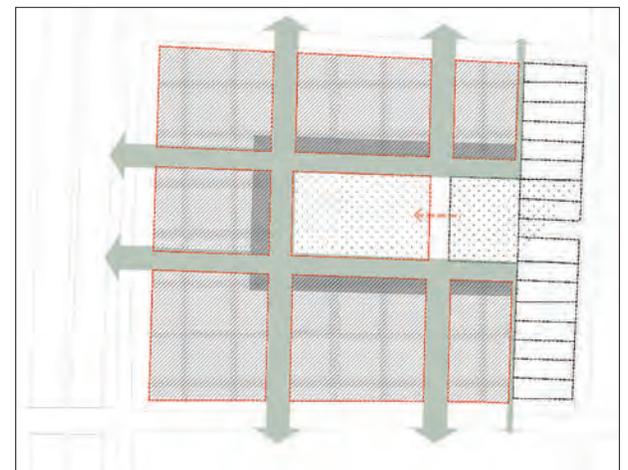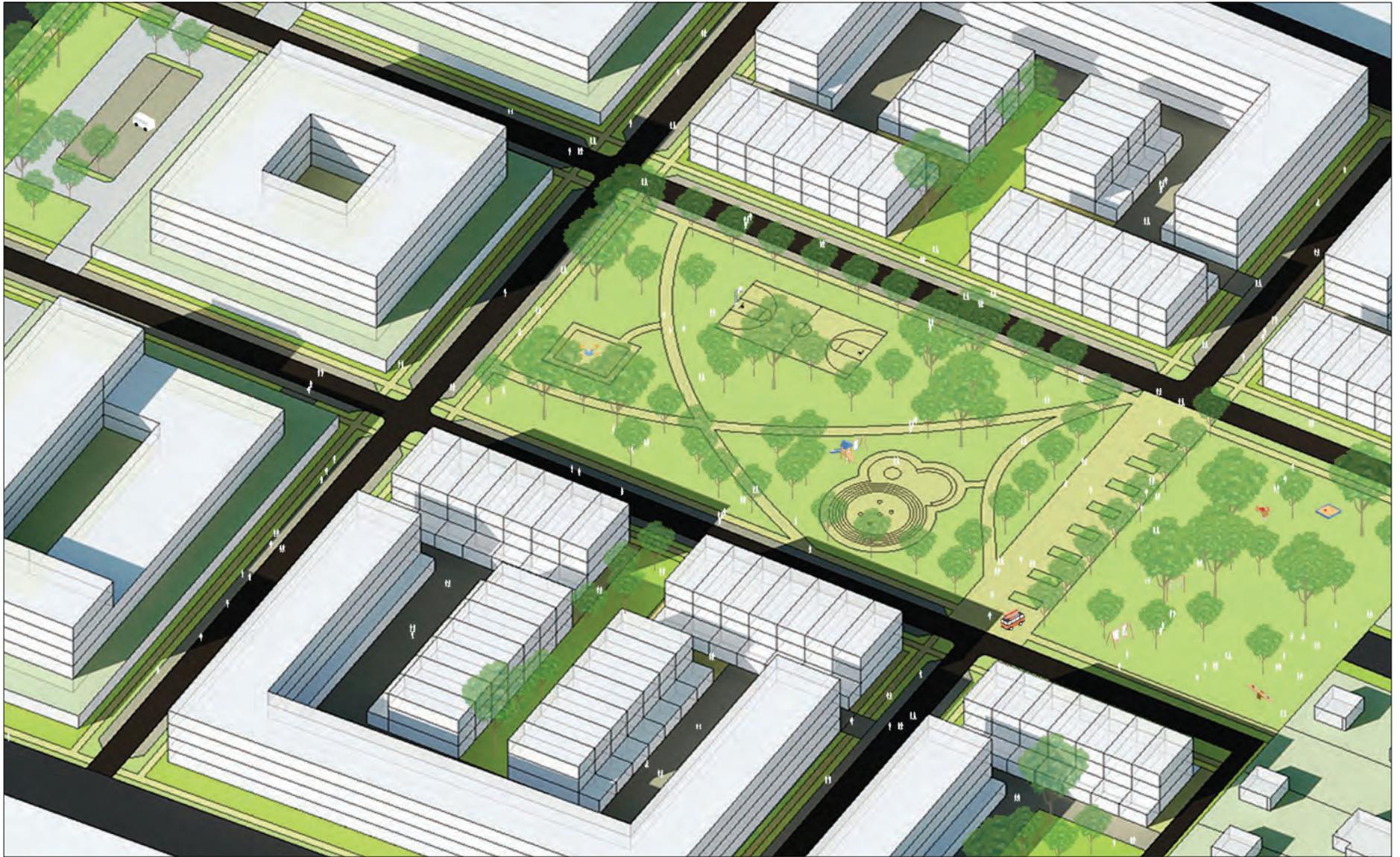
Scenario B.2

SCENARIO B.2_ SITE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
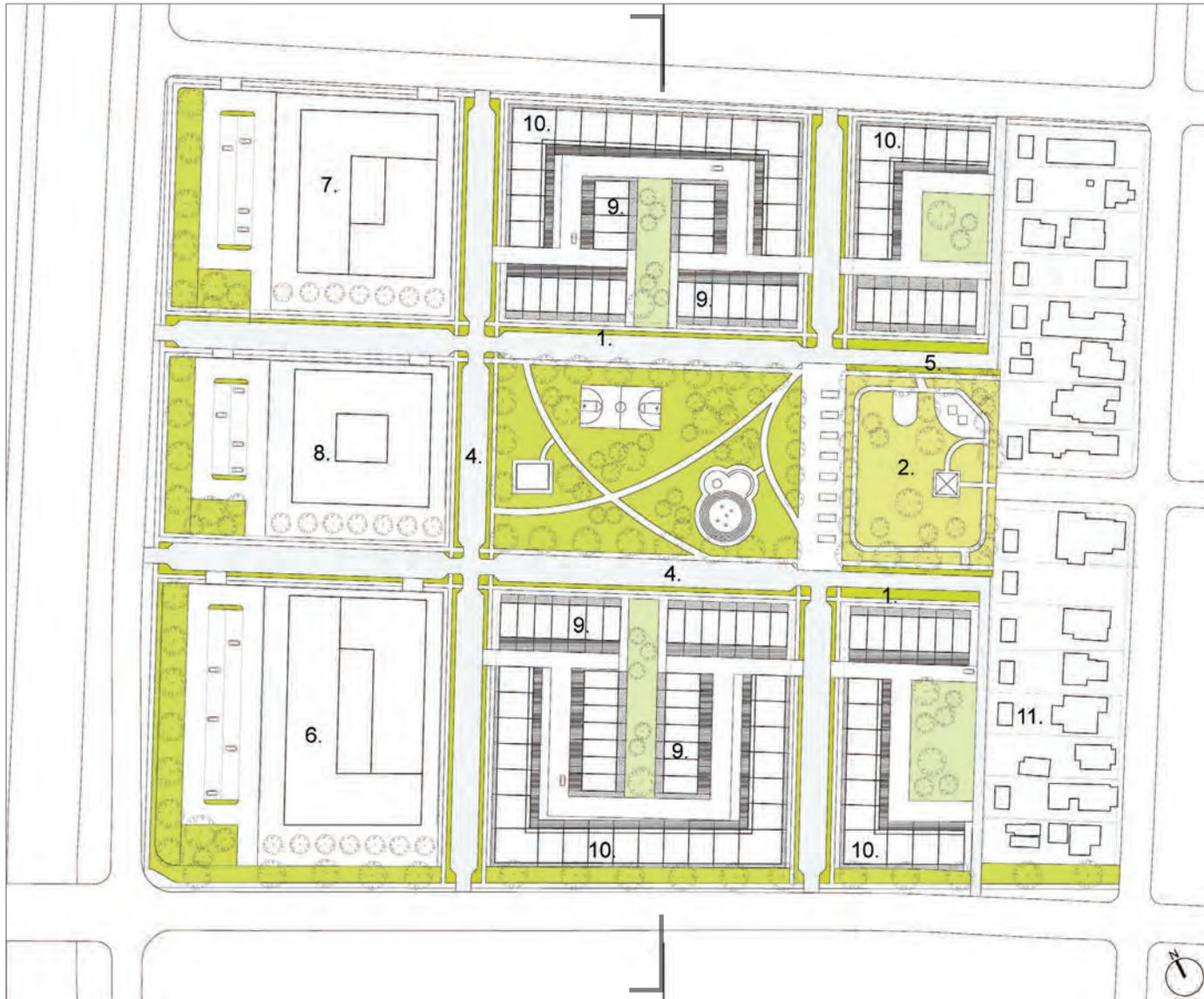
LEGEND

1. Rain Gardens
2. Existing St. John Park
3. Park Extension West
3a. Basketball Court
3b. Splash Pad
3c. Bathroom Pavilion
3d. Market Pad/Food Trucks
4. Neighborhood Street
5. Neighborhood Alley
6. Suite Hotel
   (on parking plinth)
7. Office (Class A)
   on parking plinth
8. Vocational Training/Trade School
   on parking plinth
9. Townhouse Type 1
   affordable or market rate
10. Apartments Type 1
    (Walkup, truck-under parking,
    affordable or market rate)
11. Optional Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU)

0 25 50 100 200 400 feet

SITE PLAN_ SCENARIO B.2
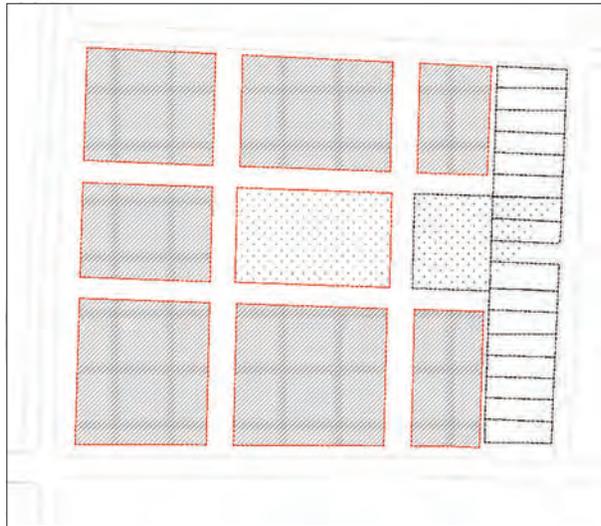
Lot Division

Green Infrastructure
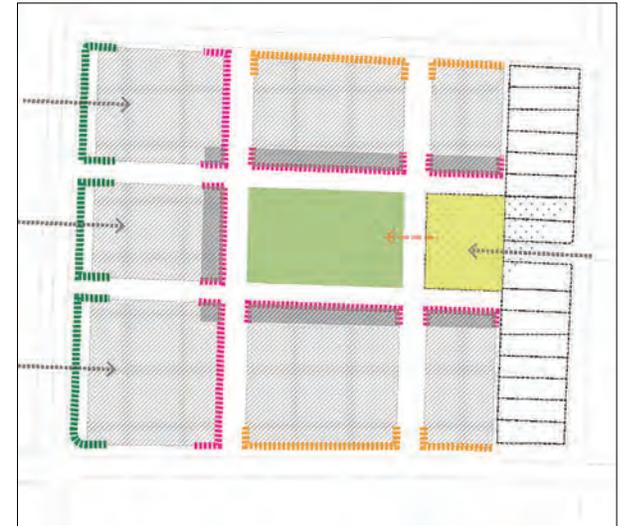
Public Interface

LEGEND

▮ ADDITIONAL PARK	- - - LOT LINES	‖‖‖ HIGHWAY INTERFACE	
▮ EXISTING PARK	- - - WATER RUN-OFF	‖‖‖ AVENUE INTERFACE	
▮ RAIN GARDEN	- - - PUBLIC ACCESS	‖‖‖ NEIGHBORHOOD INTERFACE	
▮ APARTMENTS (AFFORDABLE)	─── GREEN BUFFER		
▮ APARTMENTS (MARKET RATE)	- - - - EXIST. TOPOGRAPHY		
▮ TOWN HOUSES (AFFORDABLE)			
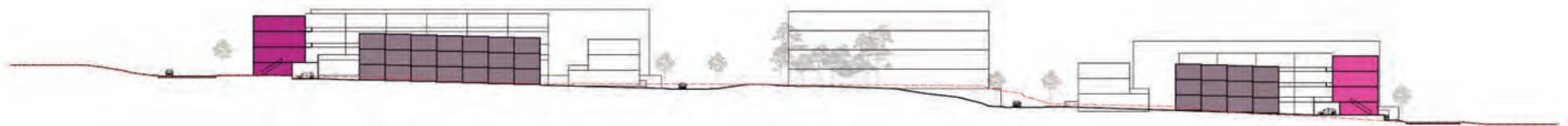
SITE SECTION_SCENARIO B.2

SCENARIO B.2_HOUSING TYPE

SITE AERIAL VIEW_SCENARIO B.2

Type 01_Townhouse with Tucked Under Parking

Type 03_Apartments

PARKING	UNIT 1	
PATIO	UNIT 2	
	UNIT 3	
	UNIT 4	
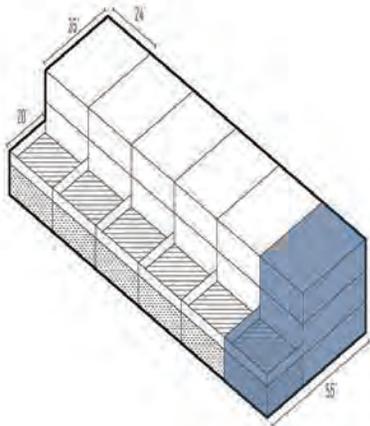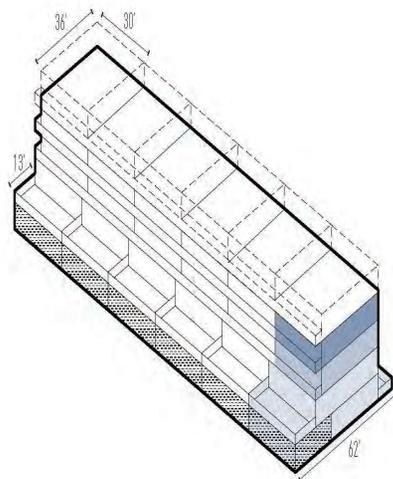
Type 02_Townhouse + Flats
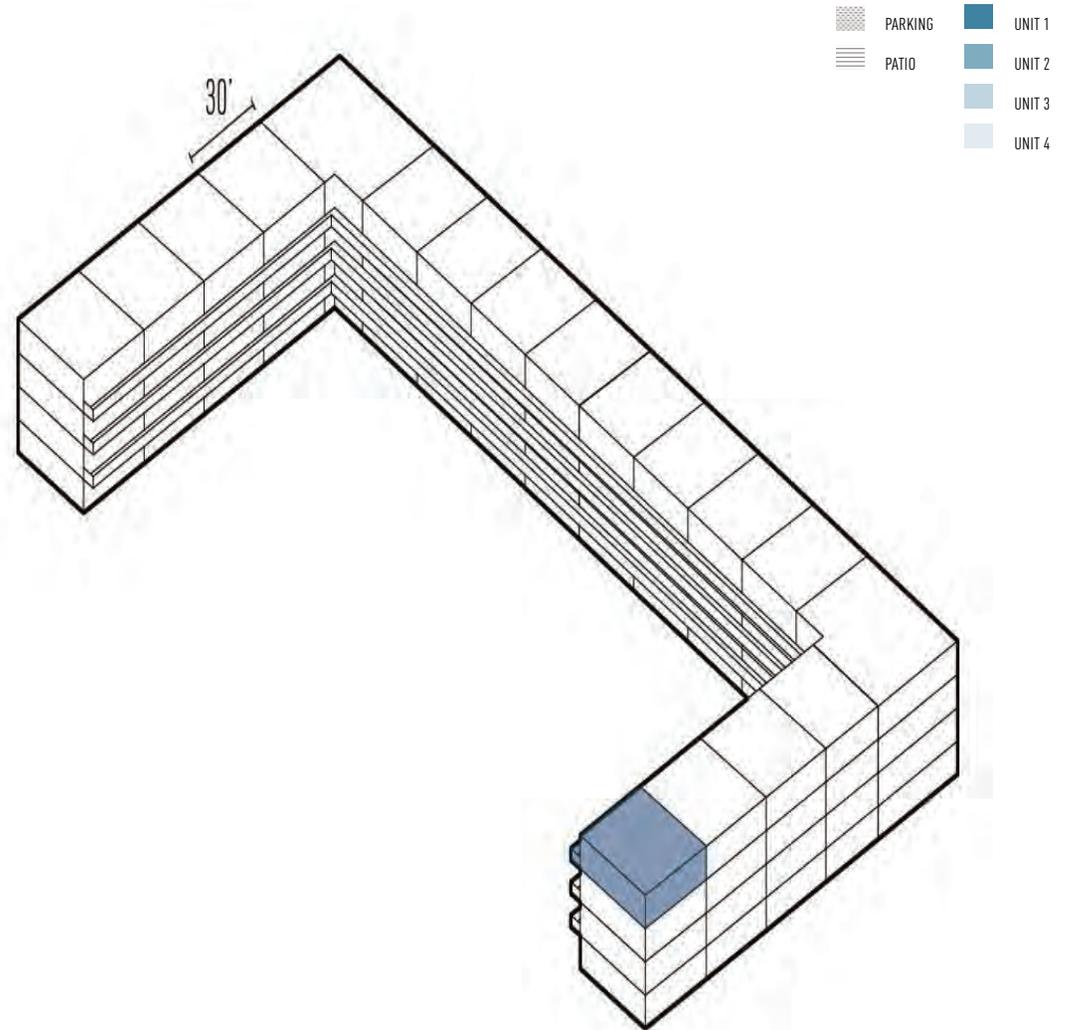
SCENARIO B.2

RAIN GARDEN STREET_SCENARIO B.2

_SCENARIO PROGRAM

Public Space

Box Bazaar:12,500 sf
Splash Pad: 6,000 sf
Basketball Court: 4,700 sf

Existing Park: 38,000 sf

West Park Extension: 67,000 sf

Home Gardens: 53,000 sf

Shared Courtyards: 25,000 sf

Total: 207,000 sf

Economies

Suite Hotel: 82,000 sf

Office: 110,000 sf

Total: 192,000 sf

Community

Vocational Trainings: 108,000 sf

Total: 108,000 sf

Housing

Town Houses (Type 1) Market Rate: 71,000 sf

Town Houses (Type 1) Affordable: 63,000 sf

Apartments [Type 1, Walkup] Market Rate: 160,000 sf

Apartments [Type 1, Walkup] Affordable: 115,000 sf

Total: 409,000 sf

SCENARIO C.1

Scenario C.1

Infrastructure Framework C organizes the site with a green north-south boulevard that connects St. Johns Avenue with Blackson Avenue. It is a multi-layered public space that serves both traffic needs (cars, parallel parking, bicycle lane, sidewalks) and provides space for a variety of activities. Particular attention is given to both the ecological and the community aspect of this boulevard. A rain garden strip runs its entire length and parallel parking is interspersed with street trees. Within its total 100-foot right of way, an additional layer of multi-use activity surfaces for neighborhoods markets and gatherings is provided. As the central public street and new face of the neighborhood, all community related new uses are located along the boulevard, including the existing St. John Park and an additional stepped park on the west side. There is also a small 5,000 sf daycare center, which is positioned adjacent to St. John Park and offers the possibility to extend (supervised) children's activities into the park. A strip of two-story small scale retail and/or office storefront runs along the western side of the boulevard, creating a storefront condition aimed specifically at small neighborhood businesses.

Scenario C.1 provides an additional 293,000 sf of housing in 153 units of various configurations and sizes. To the west, a series of facing rows of 3-floor townhomes share an elevated access patio with parking tucked underneath. This configuration allows for an effective management of off-street parking and provides each group of townhomes with a shared collective patio space, further strengthening the community

focus of scenario C.2. To the north and south, these rows are capped with 4-5 story apartment blocks, increasing the built height to about 50 feet towards St. John Park and the new stepped park. The blocks adjacent to the existing half block of Bennett Avenue (with the exception of the child care location are reserved for townhouses with a height limit of two to three stories to connect to the scale of the existing neighborhood. The block north of the new stepped park is occupied by two rows of townhomes with access from the park side (southern row) and Blackson Avenue (northern row) and parking accessed by an inner block alley. All housing is located outside the 500-foot highway exclusion zone.

Scenario C.2 seeks to strengthen the community aspect through the choices of scenario components, which is reflected in the proposed uses for the strip falling into the 500-foot highway exclusion zone.

The western edge of the site is occupied by a smaller scale youth development center that directly serves the neighborhood, a vocational training/trade school facility, and a 200,000 sf office block. To achieve the desired density in this scenario, a shared parking garage, which can provide approximately 200,000 sf of shared space for all three western buildings if executed as a single parking level, is tucked under the trade school and the office block. Toward St. Johns Avenue, this parking structure is at grade with the existing street level and then drops one floor towards the north, where access is provided from the frontage road.
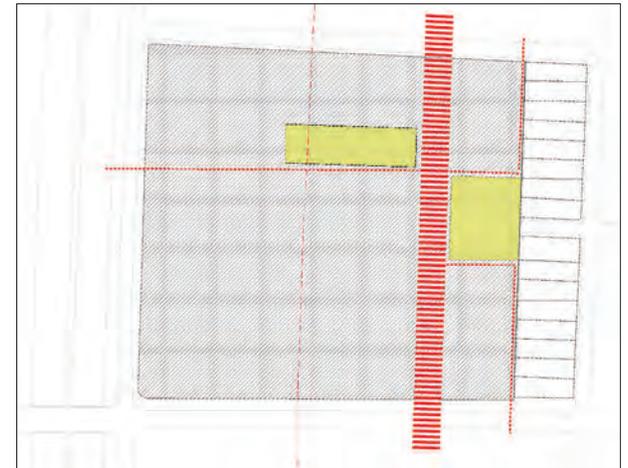
**Infrastructure Framework C**
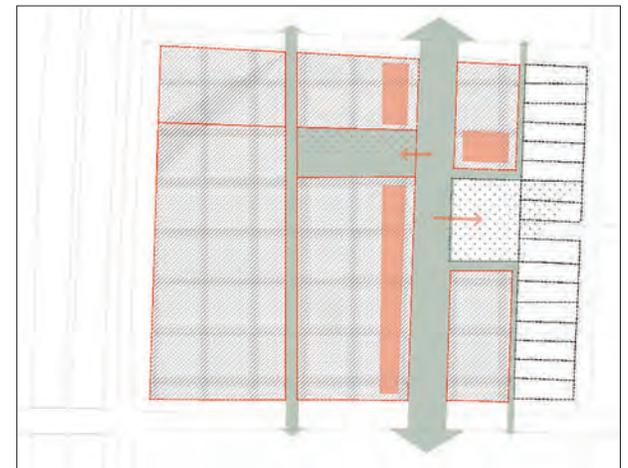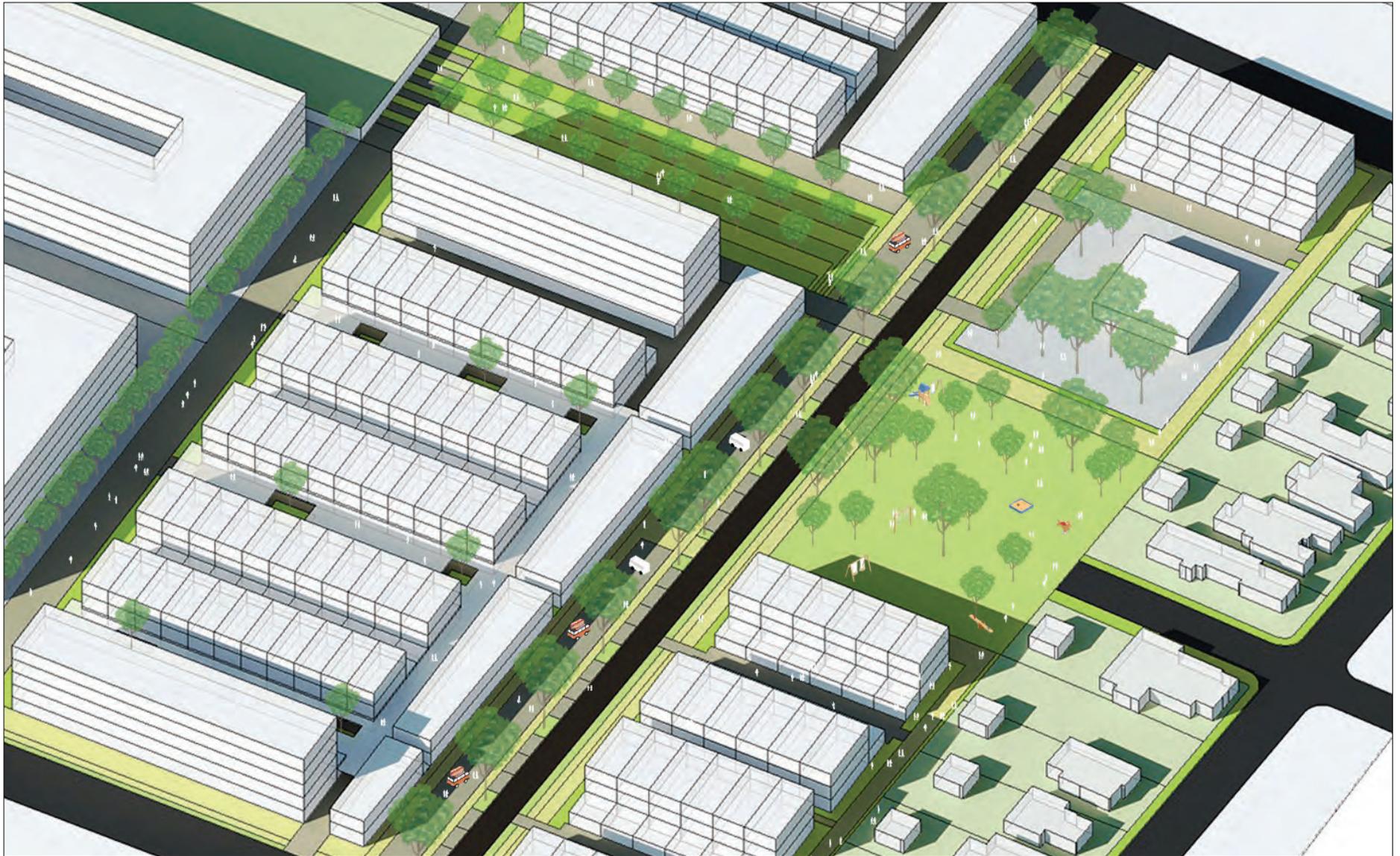
Scenario C.1

SCENARIO C.1_ SITE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

LEGEND

1. Rain Gardens
2. Existing St. John Park
3. Stepped Park
3a. Single Story Parking with Rooftop Park
4. Green Boulevard
4a. Market Pad/Food Trucks
5. Neighborhood Alley
6. Office (Class A) on shared parking plinth
7. Vocational Training/Trade School
   on shared parking plinth
8. Youth Development
9. Childcare
10. Storefront/Small Business
11. Townhouse Type 1
    affordable or market rate
12. Townhouse Type 2 (with Garage Apartments)
13. Townhouse Type 3
    with shared access gallery over parking
    affordable or market rate
14. Apartments Type 1
    (Walkup, truck-under parking,
   affordable or market rate)
15. Optional Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU)

0 25 50 100 200 400 feet

SITE PLAN_ SCENARIO C.1
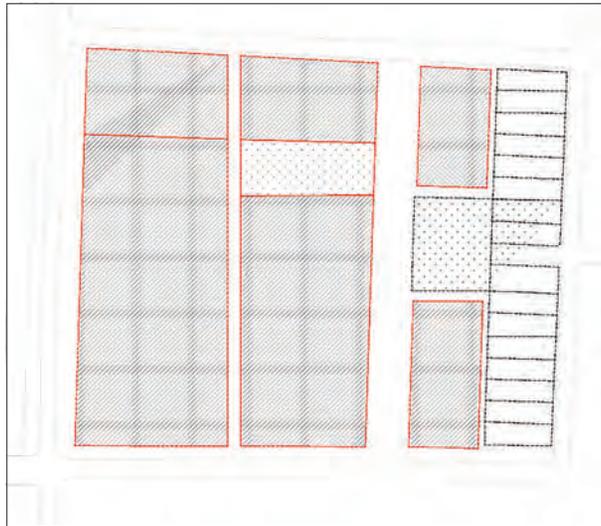
Lot Division
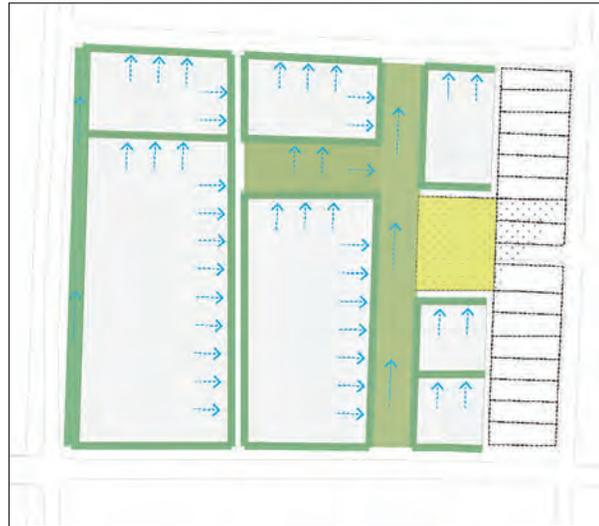
Green Infrastructure
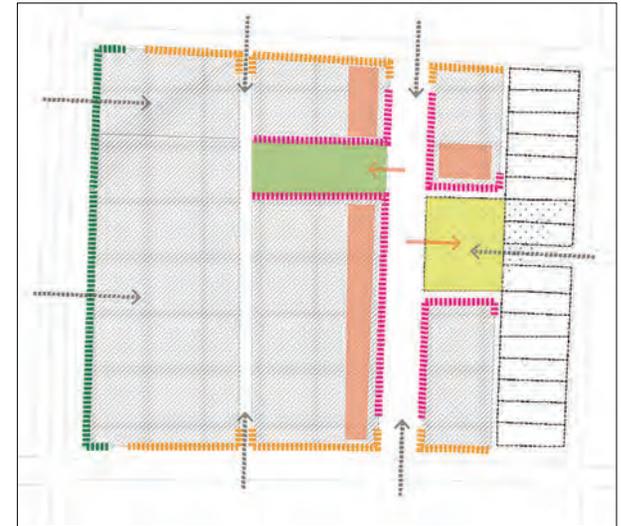
Public Interface

LEGEND

EXTENDED PUBLIC SPACE	LOT LINES	HIGHWAY INTERFACE	APARTMENTS (AFFORDABLE)
EXISTING PARK	WATER RUN-OFF	AVENUE INTERFACE	TOWN HOUSES (MARKET RATE)
RAIN GARDEN	PUBLIC ACCESS	NEIGHBORHOOD INTERFACE	TOWN HOUSES (AFFORDABLE)
PUBLIC PLAZA	GREEN BUFFER		
PUBLIC PROGRAM	EXIST. TOPOGRAPHY		
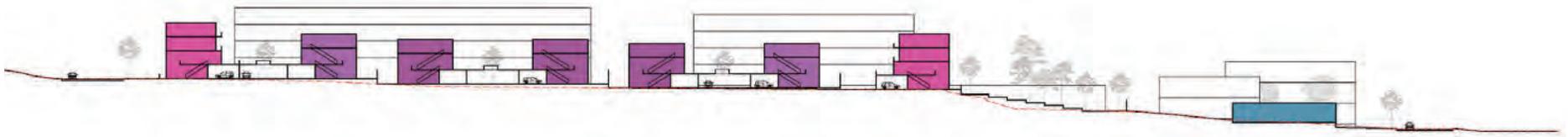
SCENARIO C.1 _HOUSING TYPE

Type 02

Type 01

Type 03

Type 01_Townhouse Complex
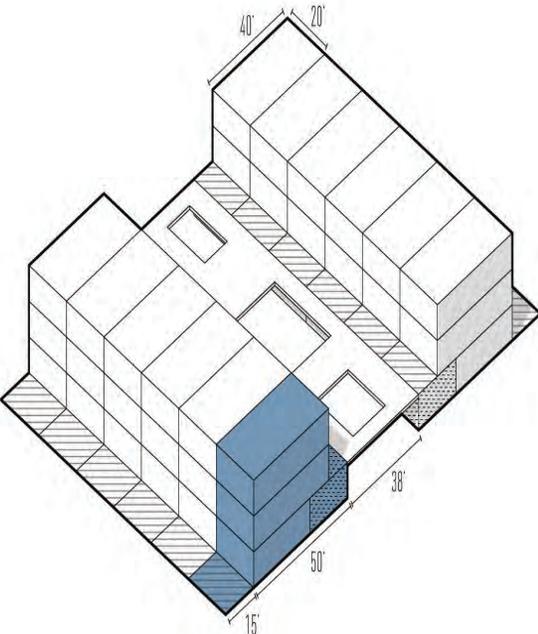
Type 02_Townhouse + Garage Apartments
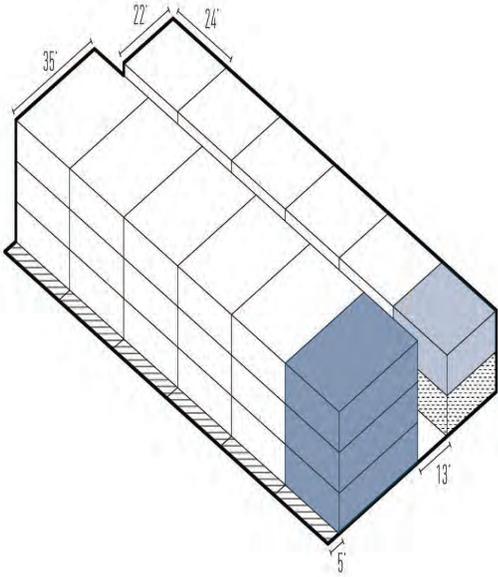
Type 03_Townhouse + Flats
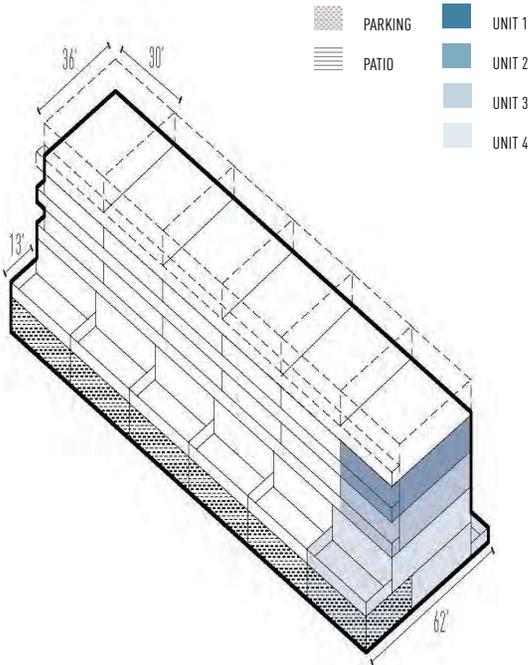
PARKING

PATIO

UNIT 1

UNIT 2

UNIT 3

UNIT 4

SCENARIO C.1

_SCENARIO PROGRAM

Public Space

Existing Park
38,000 sf

New Stepped Park
51,000 sf

New Gardens
50,000 sf

Shared Courtyards
42,000 sf

Box Bazaar
20,000 sf

Total: 201,000 sf

Economies

Office 200,000 sf

Total: 200,000 sf

Community

Vocational Training:
154,000 sf

Small Business /
Storefront: 56,000 sf

Youth Development:
30,000 sf

Childcare: 5,500 sf

Total: 245,500 sf

Housing

Town Houses (Type 1)
Market Rate: 27,000 sf

Town Houses (Type 1)
Affordable: 20,000 sf

Town Houses (Type 2,
including Garage Apts.):
Market Rate: 76,000 sf

Town Houses (Type 3,
Collective Courtyard)
Market Rate: 60,000 sf

Town Houses (Type 3,
Collective Courtyard)
Affordable: 50,000 sf

Apartments
(Type 1, Walkup)
Affordable: 60,000 sf

Total: 273,000 sf

SCENARIO C.2

Scenario C.2

Scenario C.2 uses Infrastructure Framework C to achieve the densest development of the site. The blocks east of the new Green Boulevard and north of the stepped park are developed in a similar way to scenario C.1, but in C.2, the housing density is increased. Scenario C.2 also includes a mix of townhomes and apartment blocks. These residential buildings gradually step up in height from three floors for townhomes to four stories for apartments to six floors for mixed use buildings. This proposed height increase takes into account the transition from the residential fabric of the existing St. John neighborhood to IH-35. The most significant difference between C.1 and C.2 is the treatment of the southwest portion of the site. In C.2, the entire area west of the Boulevard and south of the stepped park is treated as a single mixed-use development block created by two C-shaped buildings. At the center of the block is a shared garage that provides approximately 260,000 sf of parking on four levels. The uses of C-shaped buildings take into account the 500 foot highway exclusion zone. The eastern block, which is toward the Boulevard, is outside the 500 foot zone. It is envisioned as an apartment development over ground floor retail to activate the street level of the Boulevard. The western block, which faces the highway, is imagined as 450,000 sf of office space. At the northern end of the apartment block by the stepped park, a small neighborhood plaza provides additional space for outdoor seating and food options.

Leasable retail is seen as a significant way to support an active neighborhood along the Green Boulevard. With an estimated ground floor retail area of 100,000 sf, this mixed-use development would be able to accommodate a small neighborhood grocery store in addition to smaller-scale stores. The northern corner at the intersection of Blackson and the IH-35 frontage road is developed as a standalone block, including parking at the ground level. Potential uses for it include a trade school/vocational training facility as well as additional office space. One of the advantages of development of the highway edge at the high density proposed in this scenario is that it will buffer highway noise disturbance and potentially reduce the effect of particulate matter pollution associated with large volumes of traffic. The massing of the mixed-use development with a height of up to 75 foot provides a protective layer for the public outdoor areas at the heart of this scenario.
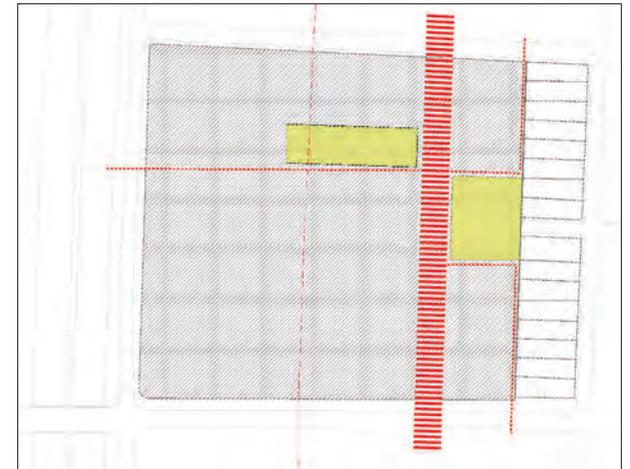
Infrastructure Framework C
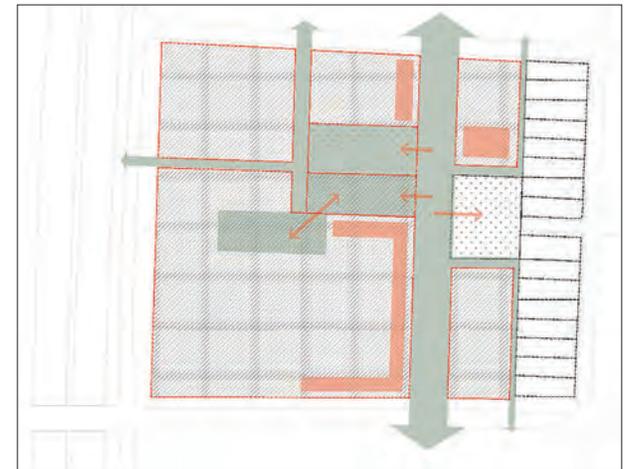
Scenario C.2
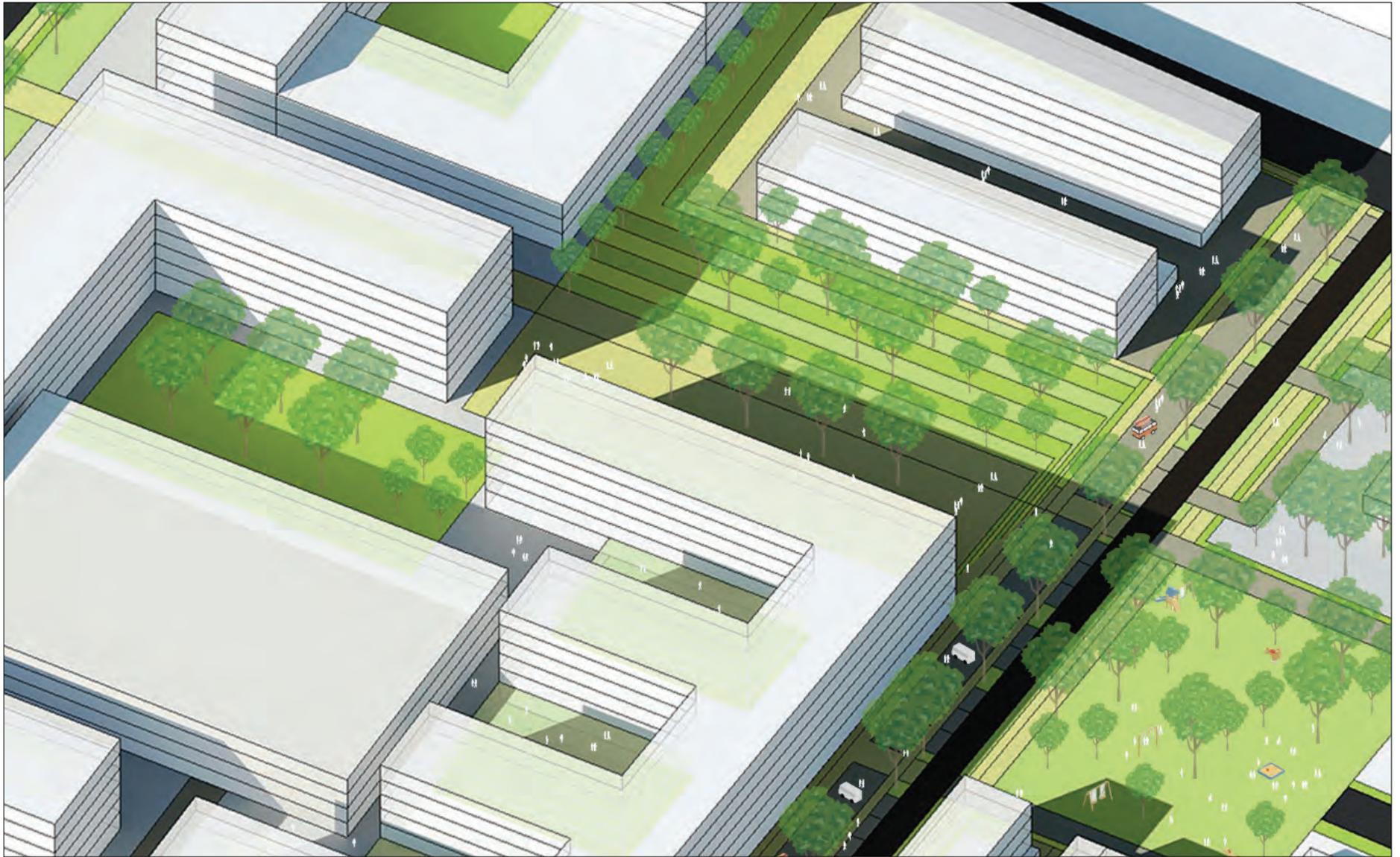
SCENARIO C.2_ SITE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
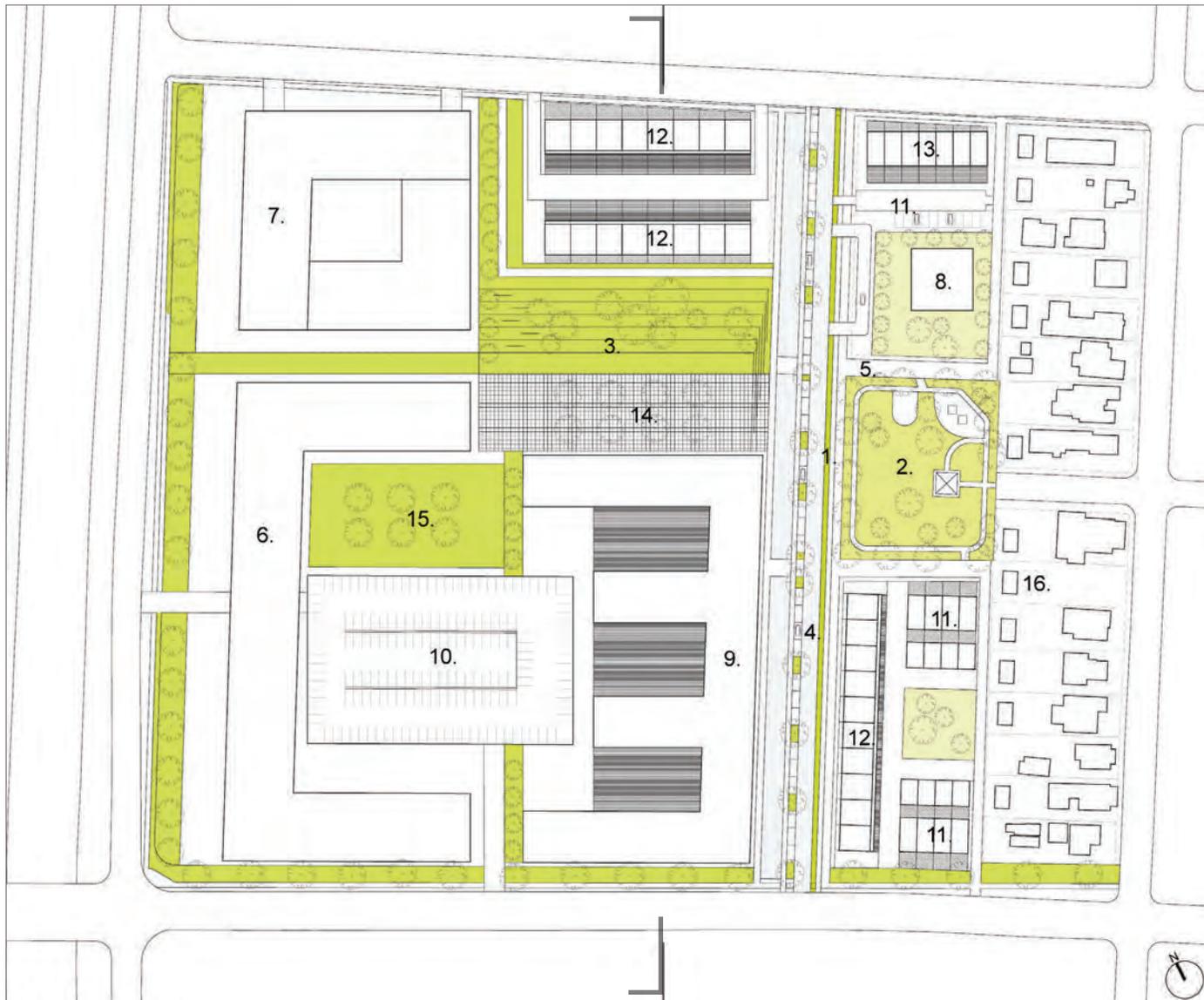
LEGEND

1. Rain Gardens
2. Existing St. John Park
3. Stepped Park
4. Green Boulevard
4a. Market Pad/Food Trucks
5. Neighborhood Alley
6. Office (Class A)
7. Vocational Training/Trade School
8. Childcare
9. Mixed Use Building:
   - Affordable Housing: Apartments Type 3
   Apartments over commercial
   - Storefront/Small Business
   - Neighborhood Grocery
10. Shared Structured Parking
11. Townhouse Type 2 (with Garage Apartments)
12. Apartments Type 1
   (Walkup, truck-under parking,
   affordable or market rate)
13. Townhouse Type 1 (affordable or market rate)
14. Neighborhood Plaza
15. Possible Park/Plaza Extension
16. Optional Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU)

0 25 50 100 200 400 feet

SITE PLAN_ SCENARIO C.2
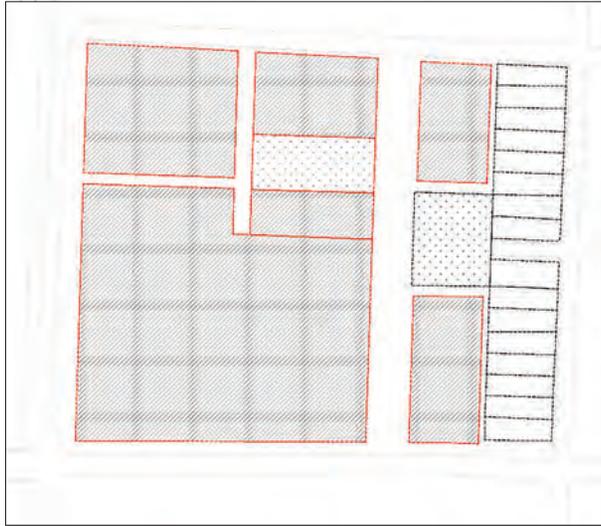
Lot Division
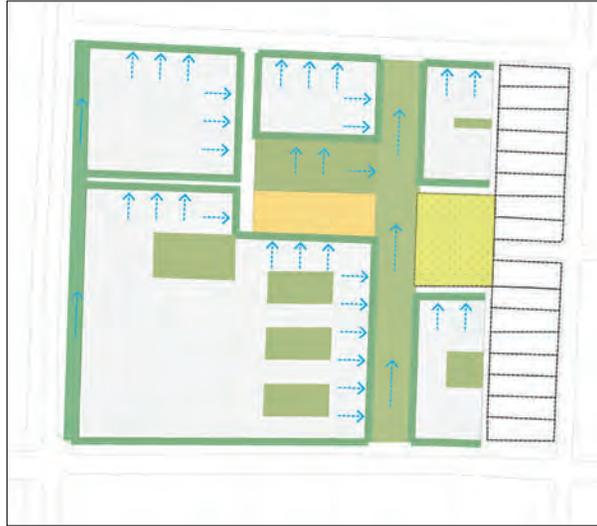
Green Infrastructure
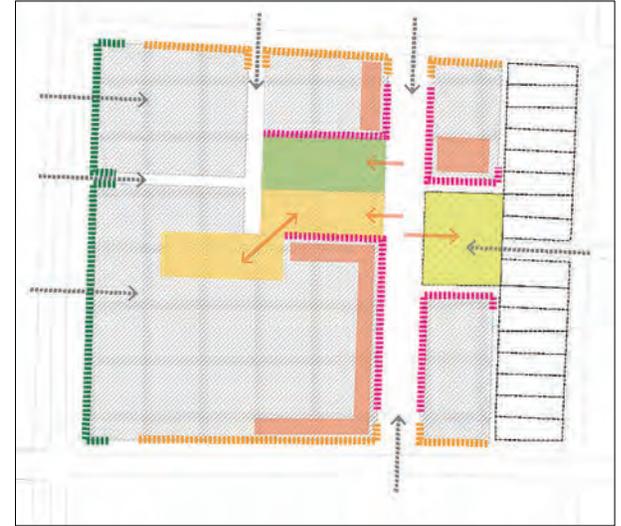
Green Space + Circulation

LEGEND

▨ SHARED PUBLIC SPACE	--- LOT LINES	▦ HIGHWAY INTERFACE	▨ APARTMENTS (AFFORDABLE)
▨ EXISTING PARK	--- WATER RUN-OFF	▦ AVENUE INTERFACE	▨ TOWN HOUSES (MARKET RATE)
▨ RAIN GARDEN	--- PUBLIC ACCESS	▦ NEIGHBORHOOD INTERFACE	▨ RETAIL / STOREFRONT
▨ PUBLIC PLAZA	— GREEN BUFFER		
▨ PUBLIC PROGRAM	--- EXIST. TOPOGRAPHY		
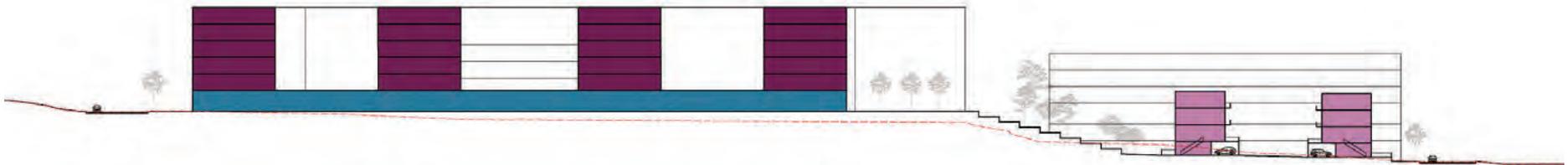
SITE SECTION_SCENARIO C.2

SCENARIO C.2 _HOUSING TYPE

Type 03

Type 01

Type 02

SITE AERIAL VIEW_SCENARIO C.2

Type 01_Mixed Use
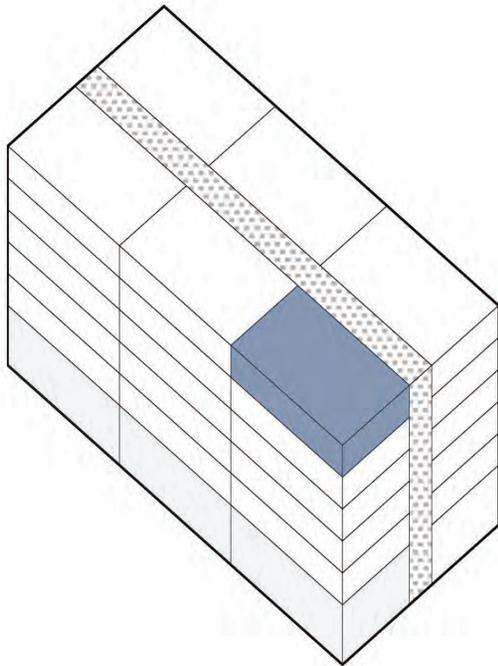
Type 02_Townhouse + ADU

Type 03_Townhouse + Flats

PARKING
PATIO
RETAIL

UNIT 1
UNIT 2
UNIT 3
UNIT 4

35'
22'
24'
13'
5'

36'
30'
13'
62'
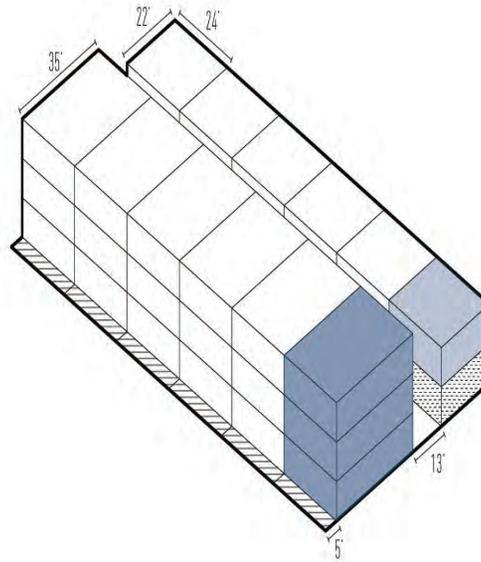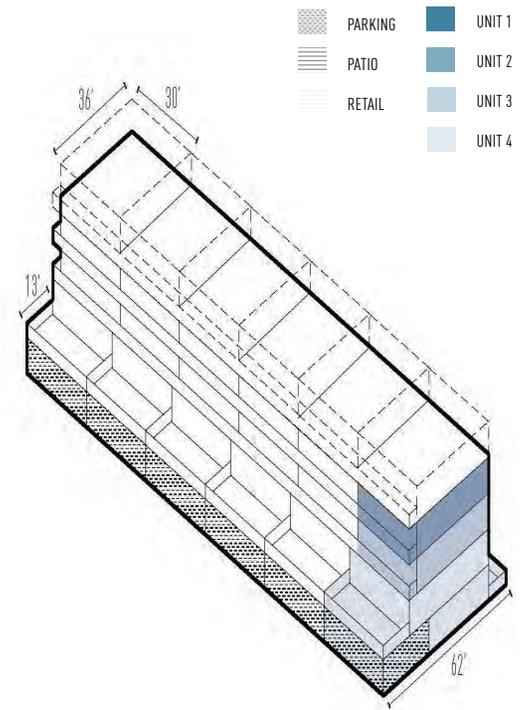
SCENARIO C.2

PUBLIC PLAZA_SCENARIO C.2

_SCENARIO PROGRAM

Public Space

Existing Park: 38,000 sf
New Stepped Park: 63,000 sf
Public Plaza: 30,000 sf
Palm Gardens: 50,000 sf
Shared Courtyards: 35,500 sf
Box Bazaar: 20,000 sf

Total: 236,500 sf

Economies

Office: 450,000 sf
Neighborhood Grocery: 30,000 sf

Total: 480,000 sf

Community

Vocational Training: 100,000 sf
Small Business / Storefront: 70,000 sf
Childcare: 5,500 sf

Total: 175,500 sf

Housing

Town Houses [Type 1] Market Rate: 14,000 sf
Town Houses [Type 2, including Garage Apts.] Market Rate: 21,000 sf
Apartments [Type 2, Walkup] Market Rate: 110,000 sf
Apartments [Type 3, Mixed Use] Affordable: 340,000 sf

Total: 485,000 sf

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS_REDEVELOPMENT SCENARIOS

Scenario A.1

Scenario B.1

		Scenario A.1	Scenario B.1
PUBLIC SPACE	(sqft)	166,000	38,000
COMMUNITY SPACE	(sqft)	0	80,000
MARKET RATE, FOR SALE	(units)	0	16
MARKET RATE, FOR RENTAL	(units)	0	138
BELOW MARKET RATE, FOR SALE	(units)	0	0-35
BELOW MARKET RATE, FOR RENTAL	(units)	0	105-140
HOTEL	(sqft)	0	82,000
OFFICE	(sqft)	0	54,000
STORAGE/WAREHOUSE	(sqft)	530,000	0
TOTAL DEVELOPMENT COST	($)	70,600,000	215,600,000
CITY SUBSIDY	($)	-9,700,000	62,000,000

Scenario B.2

125,000	110,000	151,000
108,000	246,000	206,000
34	70-75	15
85-90	0	78
30	35-40	0
85-90	40-45	280
115,000	0	0
110,000	200,000	450,000
0	0	0
244,700,000	**214,200,000**	**312,700,000**
71,500,000	**67,200,000**	**41,000,000**
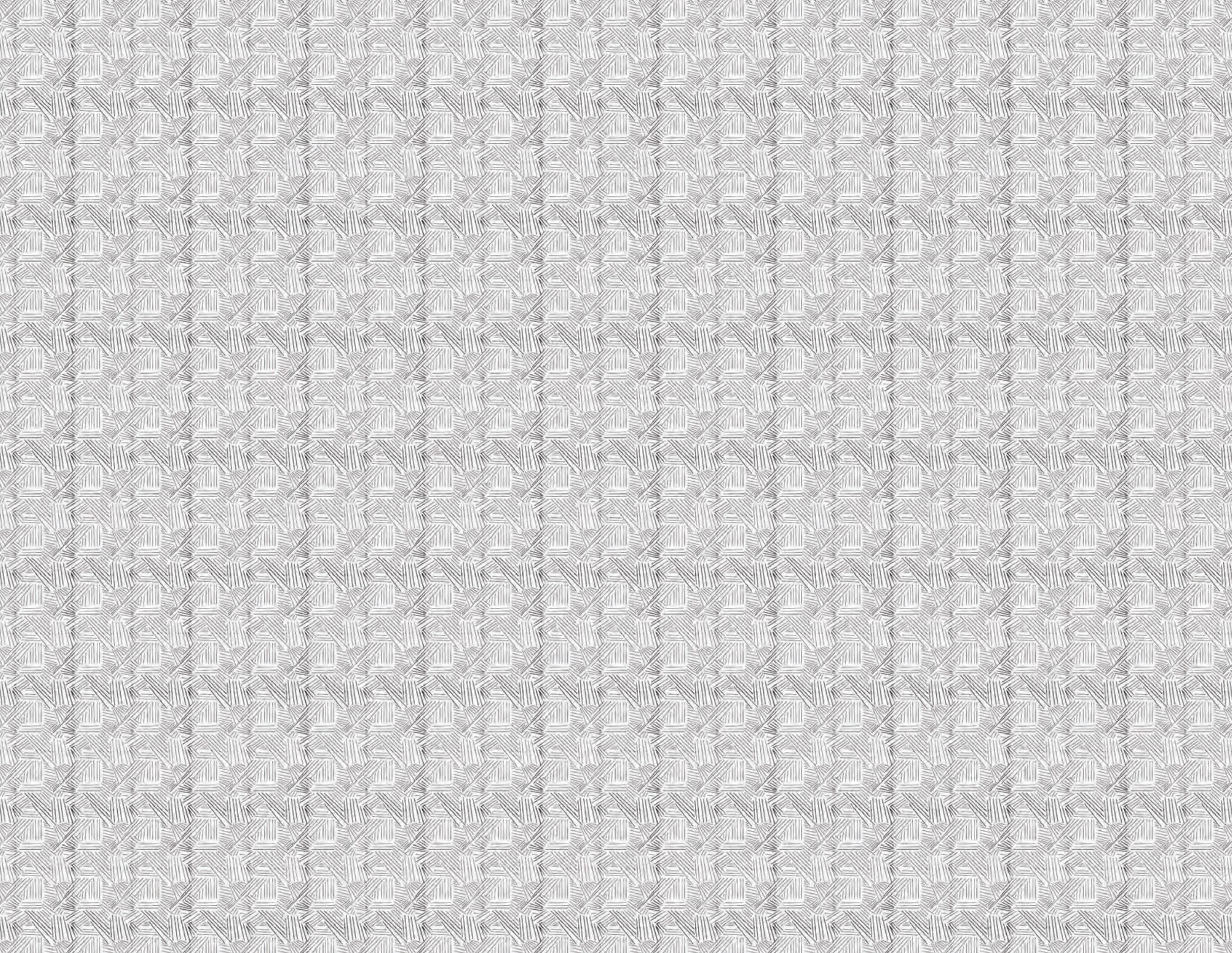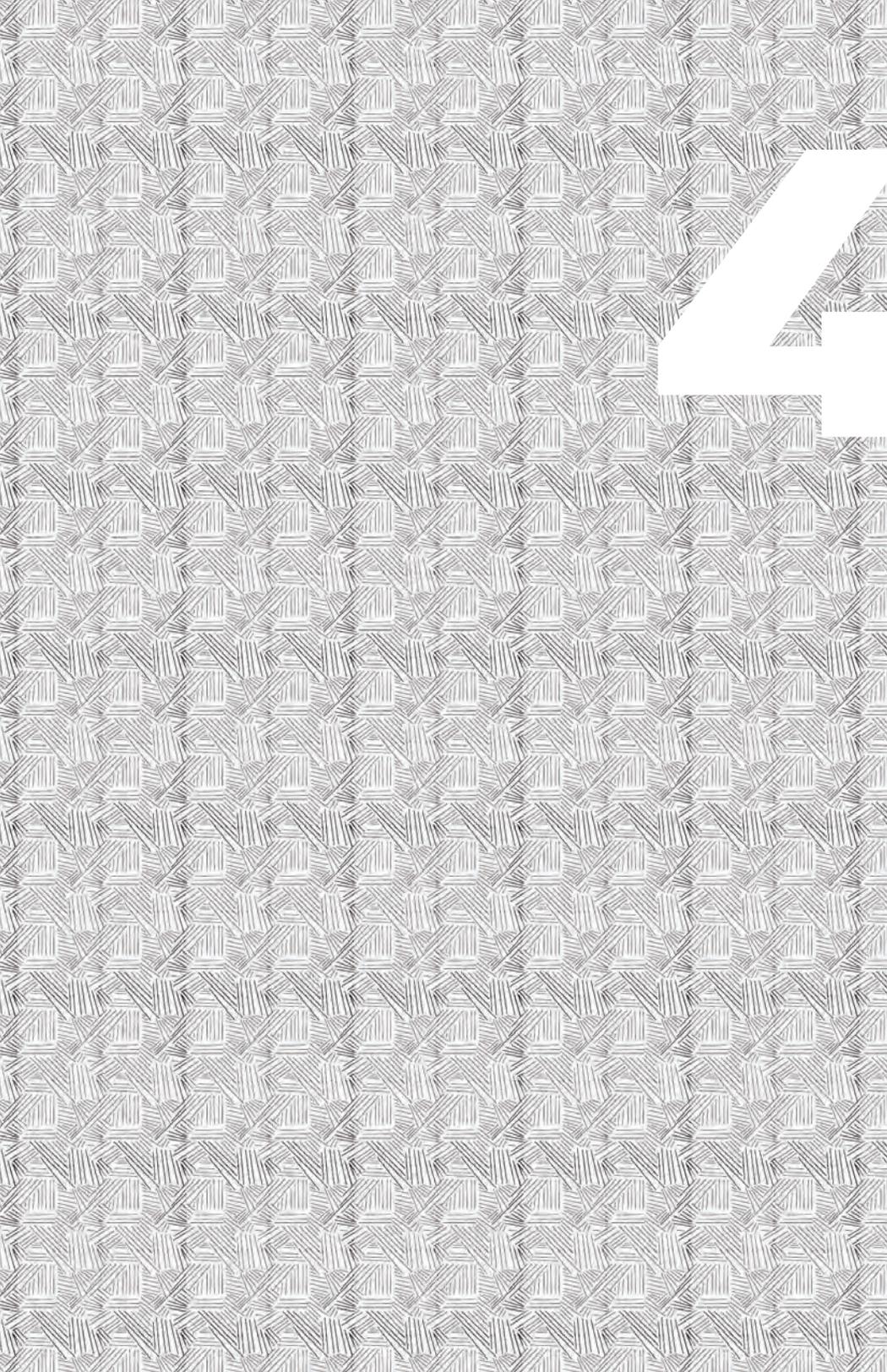
Economic Analysis

OVERVIEW

This section details the economic analysis featured in this report. Although some of the underlying details are unavoidably technical, our discussion in Section 4 is intended to be readable by anyone regardless of their background in economics or real estate. The Overview begins with the philosophy underpinning the analysis that the research team used for its economic analysis. Next, Key Assumptions provides an overview of assumptions embedded in the model. Finally, Section 4 closes with a comparative discussion of the model results across the scenarios, as well as a discussion on possible subsidy sources that could be used to close funding gaps.

Overview

It is important to state clearly, up front, that the model described in this report (referred to from here on as the "Pro Forma Model") *is only intended to provide rough order of magnitude ("ROM") estimates as a tool for decision-making.* Creating a detailed, precise model that accurately represents one of the scenarios in detail is beyond the scope of this report. Instead,

the Pro Forma Model uses a large number of assumptions to simplify complex scenarios into ROMs of their costs and revenues. Even the best pro forma is at best an educated guess at a single point in time that attempts to predict a future uncertain state. The list of factors that could cause any of the projections embedded with the Pro Forma Model to deviate from future reality is long, starting with the simple fact that the scenarios are not detailed designs. The scenarios are loose conceptualizations of different combinations of land uses and supporting infrastructure that could plausibly be deployed on the site. Inevitably, developing and especially redeveloping land is a long, uncertain process, during which any number of factors can force a course correction. These include changing conditions in the wider economy, shifts in demand for one type of real estate over others (e.g., office versus multifamily rental versus hotel), unexpected physical challenges in the parcel that arise from further soil or environmental testing, changing community preferences, and the like. It should be noted that the urban economics consulting firm EPS, which

provided some of the market research data incorporated into the Pro Forma Model, also reviewed the research team's methods and key assumptions. The research team incorporated EPS' written comments into the final version of the Pro Forma Model.

With those caveats, the Pro Forma Model for each scenario is one tool among several that decision makers, including elected officials with input from community leaders, can use to decide how to proceed with the redevelopment of the site. There is a saying in economic modeling, attributed to the statistician George Box: *All models are wrong, but some are useful.* By using the best information available at present, by making defensible yet conservative assumptions, by walking the right line between incorporating too much detail and not enough, the hope is that the Pro Forma Model is of some use in examining the tradeoffs between different possible futures for the site.

KEY ASSUMPTIONS

A typical pro forma model used to evaluate the feasibility of a proposed for-profit, private real estate investment, however complex, ultimately arrives at a single bottom line: What rate of return will the investment generate for the project's investors? The Pro Forma Model presented in this report arrives at a similar, but slightly different, bottom line: what approximate amount of subsidy from the City of Austin would be needed for a given Scenario to be realized? The goal of the city, as owner of the site, is not to maximize profit, but rather to ensure that a redevelopment of the parcel that fulfills city and community goals moves forward. All else equal, the lower this subsidy amount, the less difficulty there will in implementing the redevelopment. There are, of course, many complexities surrounding which specific funding mechanisms could be deployed to pay which costs, which are discussed in the subsequent sections. However, it is important to not let the complexities of municipal finance mechanisms distract from the bigger picture: The fewer city subsidy dollars needed to make a given redevelopment plan work out, the better.

In the Pro Forma Model, the research team is careful to avoid what might be called the "cavalry fallacy." This is the assumption that some external source of dollars, from the state or federal government, or from private philanthropy will be the cavalry that will ride to the rescue of a redevelopment plan that otherwise does not "pencil out." Assuming that the plan will be able to attract such dollars is risky and decreases the chance that the project will succeed. Any contribution of external funds is uncertain and rests on factors that are beyond the city's control, and could have the effect of jeopardizing all of the public benefits that could result from a redevelopment. Thus, the calculations presented here conservatively assume the use of only private investment dollars, contributed by profit-motivated entities, with public subsidy dollars from the City of Austin making up any remaining shortfall to allow the project to proceed. There is one exception: As explained in *Possible Subsidy Sources*, two of the Scenarios assume the use of federal 4% Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTCs) to subsidize below market rate multifamily rental housing.

LAND REDEVELOPEMENT

Land Redevelopment Versus Vertical Development

The Pro Forma Model analyzes *land redevelopment* and *vertical development* as related but separate processes. Land redevelopment, sometimes referred to as *horizontal development*, refers to what is needed to convert the St. John parcel from its current state to one where it has been subdivided into separate parcels, supported by a web of infrastructure, that are each ready to receive *vertical development*, or individual components of the overall project. (These are described as "vertical" since they are generally buildings that rise out of the ground.) Land redevelopment can be thought of as the precondition for vertical development to take place. In other words, without first subdividing the St. John parcel and building out its streets, utilities, and other essential infrastructure, the vertical development (e.g., housing, vocational training center, etc.) that is the end goal of the overall project cannot take place. Once infrastructure is in place, the St. John parcel is converted into a series of "shovel ready" parcels that can accept

separate vertical developments, many or all of them pursued by separate entities, and without the need for them to be built out in any particular order.

Implied Land Costs

The Land Redevelopment Budget (summarized for each Scenario in Appendix B) tabulates the projected costs of land redevelopment for all five scenarios. It includes all costs needed to prepare the parcel for vertical development, such as environmental cleanup, demolition of existing buildings, grading (adding and removing soil), the cost of building streets and utilities (e.g., water and sewer lines), as well as public-serving amenities (such as public parks—*semi-private* parks that primarily serve individual developments are not included in this budget, but are assumed to be paid for by private developers). Also included is a 2% budget allotment for public artwork, a figure derived from the City of Austin's guidelines for capital improvement budgets.[1]

_KEY ASSUMPTIONS

KEMPELEN'S OWLS COMMISSIONED THROUGH ART IN PUBLIC PLACES_ AUSTIN

In a typical private redevelopment project, land cost must be included in the land redevelopment budget. In the case of the site, the city's ownership of the land removes the need to account for land costs. However, any redevelopment of the site requires that the City's bonds (debt) that were originally issued to pay for the previously anticipated public safety facility must be "retired" (paid off). The cost of retiring these bonds is therefore absorbed into the land redevelopment budget. *Vertical Development Budgets* further discusses the pay-off of the bonds.

Having tabulated all of the costs of land redevelopment, the research team then allocates those costs to each of the developable parcels according to its share of the total developable land area. In this way, each vertical development component absorbs its fair share of the land redevelopment cost. For example, in the case of a mixed-use building in Scenario C.2 combining retail on the ground floor and residential above, the land cost is shared among the various components on the basis of anticipated interior square footage. This fair share

is referred to as the *Implied Land Cost* for that particular vertical development component.

The research team does not take a position as to what entity should eventually take on the role of land redeveloper. There are several possibilities, each with distinct advantages and disadvantages. First, though very uncommon, the city could directly act as redeveloper. Alternatively, the city could directly hire a private entity to carry out land redevelopment activities on its behalf, in a public-private partnership arrangement. Still another possibility is for the city to sell the land to a private master redeveloper that would take on the business risk of completing the redevelopment, but with a strict agreement regulating the master redeveloper's obligations to build infrastructure and sell land so as to achieve the city's objectives for the parcel. This last arrangement is what the City of Austin used, with Catellus serving as master land redeveloper, to convert the former city-owned Mueller airport site into today's extensive Mueller

neighborhood. For this arrangement to succeed, a master redeveloper would likely require various subsidies from the city for it to be willing to take on the risk and cost of redeveloping the relatively small St. John parcel (far smaller than Mueller) into a complex, multifaceted mixed-use development with various nonmarket components.

Vertical Development Budgets

For each scenario, the research team summarizes the economics of each individual vertical development component in what is referred to as a Vertical Development Budget, included in Appendix B. This budget shows the cost to build and the resulting market value of each component of the Scenario (hotel vs. market rate multifamily rental vs. vocational training center, etc.). The budget for each component can be thought of as having two sides: how much it costs to build, and how much it is worth on the open market once it is built. The former is referred to as *Total Development Cost* (TDC), while the latter is referred to as *Market Value*.

As noted above, each Vertical Development Budget component for a given scenario includes an Implied Land Cost. The developer pursuing a given vertical development component does not need to prepare the site for development—instead, by paying the Implied Land Cost to the entity that carries out the land redevelopment, its sponsor acquires a fully developable, "shovel ready" site that is ready to start construction.

The Vertical Development Budget accounts for five components of the TDC. The first, Implied Land Cost, was discussed earlier in this subsection. The remaining four, hard costs, soft costs, and developer profit and overhead, are discussed in turn in the succeeding subsections.

The Vertical Development Budget for each component also reports the team's estimate of that component's Market Value. The Market Value is a projection of what the component might sell for on the open market upon completion and stabilization (i.e., lease-up in the case of

MUELLER AUSTIN LAKE PARK_AUSTIN

a rent-generating property). For example, the Market Value of an office development quantifies what the new office building is likely to fetch from property investors once it is completed and filled with office tenants. The team calculates Market Value for all profit-generating real estate uses so that they all can be put on an equal footing. It should be noted that some uses, such as a vocational training center, are assumed to generate no revenue at all; the safest assumption is that these will be owned and operating by either the city or by a nonprofit entity in perpetuity.

With the TDC and the Market Value of a given component, the team is able to calculate the difference between them; this is the "hole" or gap that the city or some other entity must fill with subsidy dollars. If, for instance, an office building has a TDC of $9m but a Market Value of only $8m, a profit-motivated developer will in principle not choose to build the project unless it receives subsidies—likely from the city—that total $1m. In some cases, the subsidy is negative. This means that a given project component is generating a positive cash flow after paying all required project

costs, which can be used to financially support other components of the overall scenario that require a subsidy. By totaling the subsidy from all components within a scenario, one arrives at a "bottom line" subsidy number for the overall scenario. This is an estimate of the total number of city dollars that, in one way or another, will need to be injected into the overall project for it to happen.

Hard Costs

Hard costs are what most people think of first when they think of the cost of developing real estate. They are not the only costs, but usually they are the lion's share of the project's TDC. Hard costs are the costs of physically building a project— sometimes referred to as "sticks and bricks." These costs include construction materials and labor, but other associated costs, such as the general contractor's profit and overhead, costs of surety bonds to guarantee completion and payment of subcontractors, and so forth.

In the Pro Forma Model, the team uses very simple estimates of hard costs by

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BUILDING UNDER CONSTRUCTION_AUSTIN

multiplying a project's square footage by a per-square foot cost that the team derived from a publicly-available industry source. As much as possible, the team uses a per-square foot cost that is from a project as similar as possible to the one proposed for the site. Ideally, the comparable project is similar in terms of geographic location, construction type, and quality level to what is being proposed. In some cases, the team uses prototypical pro formas from the Envision Tomorrow scenario planning software as a source for per-square foot hard costs. Sources for per-square foot hard costs can be seen in the Pro Forma Model for the various Scenarios shown in Appendix B.

When comparable projects have been built earlier, the team uses a historical cost index provided by RS Means to inflate their costs to year 2020 costs.[2] Adjustment factors are also used in some cases to account for the differences in construction labor and materials that exist for projects built in other metropolitan regions than Austin with a locational index published by real estate service firm CBRE.[3]

A more precise estimate would require architectural work, and detailed construction cost estimating, that are both beyond the scope of this report. Estimates are, as mentioned above, intended to be ROM quantifications that allow for comparisons between different options.

Soft Costs

Even after considering the costs of buying land and providing a profit to a developer, not all development costs are hard costs. These remaining costs are referred to as "soft costs." Soft costs cover the fees paid to the small army of consultants that must be hired for a typical project, such as architects, various types of engineers (civil, electrical, mechanical, structural, etc.), attorneys, title companies, and the like. Soft costs also cover the "carrying costs" of developing a property, or the various costs that accrue over time as a function of how long the project takes to develop. These include property taxes, construction loan interest, possible land acquisition loan interest, and others.

The research team calculated soft costs using simple ratios applied to hard costs (e.g., soft costs equal to 17% of hard costs). These ratios are extracted from either pre-construction estimations of real projects or else from pro forma prototypes from Envision Tomorrow. The ratios that are assumed are shown in the Pro Forma Model for each Scenario in Appendix B. In the real world, the soft cost ratio will vary from project to project, since there is no such thing as a routine development project built on already-developed land. Notwithstanding this variation, the team's approach is to use typical and defensible ratios grounded in real projects to the extent possible.

Agents' Fees

When developers build for-sale housing, such as single-family houses, townhouses, or condos, they must budget for real estate agents' fees. Typically, the seller in a residential real estate sales transaction pays the fees for two real estate agents, one of whom represents the seller, and the other the buyer. The typical fee typically totals 6% of the sales price (3% for each).

This analysis includes a budget category to account for this cost (6% of projected Market Value for for-sale residential units). Note that real estate agents are typically involved in the sales of below market (income-restricted) residential units as well as market rate units.

Developer Profit and Overhead

Any developer, to take on a project, must be compensated for their time ("overhead"). This is as true for nonprofit-sponsored projects such as affordable housing developments as it is, for example, for a for-profit hotel development. Projects do not manage themselves; they must be managed by professionals who expect to receive a salary and benefits for their efforts. Further, these professionals typically work in offices, and are supported by support staff, all of which entail further costs. Even in the case of projects managed by City of Austin personnel, those projects must be managed by city staff who must either be hired or diverted from other work. For these reasons, the team assumes developer overhead in all projects in the Pro Forma Analysis. For nonprofit or

city-sponsored projects, a rate of 8% TDC is assumed, based on past experience in nonprofit-sponsored projects.

For-profit developers expect to realize a profit margin and not simply be compensated for their overhead costs. How large this profit margin must be to persuade a developer to pursue a particular project depends on a variety of factors, including the type of development project, its perceived risk, and market conditions, including the market demand for that type of real estate as well as the appetite of investors to buy the type of asset that the developer proposes to develop.

For every for-profit project modeled, the team computes a "markup" factor, or the profit margin that a developer would expect as a function of its TDC. In the real world, of course, the details of how a developer and her investors and lenders are compensated by a project are complex. Some developers use large amounts of debt from sources such as commercial banks to finance their development projects; in some cases, the developers sell the real estate asset as soon as it is "stabilized" (leased up). In

others developers have a "long term hold" strategy, where their goal is not to sell the asset following stabilization, but rather to maintain ownership and benefit from rental income over time.

To flatten all of this variation and complexity, the team uses a procedure detailed in Appendix B. For each project, the team estimates developer overhead and profit as a percentage of four of the other five major cost categories comprising TDC (i.e., Implied Land Cost plus hard costs plus soft costs plus agents' fees). Thus, if for a given project Implied Land Cost, hard costs, soft costs, and agents' fees total $1m, and it is estimated that a developer needs a 17% markup over these costs to be persuaded to take on the project, it would then be assumed that the developer needs to be compensated $170k for it to move forward. The TDC would then be $1.17m.

Market Value

To estimate Market Value for each project component, the team uses sales prices for for-sale real estate products, and either actual sales from similar

projects or the *capitalization rate method* for income-producing (rental) real estate products. In the case of for-sale real estate, estimating market value is quite straightforward: The team simply multiplies the number of square feet of sellable space (for for-sale townhouses, for example) by the estimated price per square foot that such a product is currently fetching in St. John and surrounding neighborhoods. These sales prices are quite location sensitive—thus, the research team relies on estimates produced by the consulting firm EPS, for what for-sale housing would sell for per square foot in the vicinity.

For rent-producing real estate, the team begins by estimating a common industry metric known as Net Operating Income (NOI). They calculate gross revenues by multiplying leasable square feet (of office space, for example) by the estimated rent per square foot from EPS or other industry sources. Next, they apply a vacancy factor based on the vacancies reported by EPS in the market area surrounding the site. This factor is used to account for the fact that rental real

estate almost always has vacancy (for instance, a 5% vacancy rate is considered healthy for a "balanced" market in rental multifamily).

After calculating expected revenue, one must account for operating expenses. Some types of commercial real estate, such as hotels and warehouses, typically use so-called "triple net" leases (often written as NNN). These are leases in which the tenant assumes its pro-rata share of all operating expenses such as property taxes, utility costs, and the like. In these cases, there is no need to estimate operating expenses. In other cases, the research team uses typical operating expense ratios, i.e., the typical share that operating expenses comprise of the revenue. They derive typical ratios from industry averages and comparable properties in the Austin area and denote their sources in Appendix B.

Deducting any expenses from estimated net revenue yields an estimate for NOI. NOI can easily be converted into an estimated Market Value via the use of capitalization rates, commonly referred to as "cap rates." Cap rates are widely reported industry

metrics that essentially sum up how much NOI per square foot an investor expects an income-generating property to produce in relation to how much it will be willing to pay for that square foot. The formula is (Market Value) = (NOI)/(cap rate). Appendix C reports the sources used for cap rates for various types of real estate, and shows how Market Values are estimated for different real estate products via the use of NOI and cap rates.

Unlevered Assumptions

The research team, quite simply, ignores debt in its calculations. In the real world, of course, most developers use debt, sometimes at very high rates of 80% or more of TDC, to finance their projects. As a simplifying assumption, the research team make all calculations assuming no debt, i.e., that all of the real estate development is *unlevered,* meaning that developers pay for 100% of the TDC of a project with their own cash. This allows the research team to place all different types of real estate development on an equal footing and to make "apples to apples" comparisons between them.

Thus, for instance, when estimates for developers' required overhead and profit margins to pursue a project are computed, it can be assumed that they are investing entirely their own cash (no equity capital from other sources, and no debt from banks or other sources). In the real world, developers almost always use debt to increase their expected return on their investment (but at the cost of increasing the level of risk in the investment). However, the return generated by a project will be the same regardless of the amount of debt used. Whether debt is used and how much will affect whether the returns go entirely to the developer, or whether they are shared between the developer (overhead and equity return), outside investors (equity return), and lenders (principal and interest on debt), but it will not strongly affect the overall rate of return. Thus, the research team uses the simplifying unlevered assumption for the analyses.

Ignoring Operating Costs

The analyses reported herein only focus on capital costs (the costs to redevelop the St. John parcel); operating costs (the cost to maintain it) are ignored.

Revenue-generating vertical development components (e.g., hotels, offices, warehouses, etc.) on the parcel will, one would hope, cover the costs of their own maintenance. Homeowners who have bought condos or townhouses will be expected to cover their own maintenance costs, as will the nonprofit owners of Below Market Rate rental apartments.

While these details are important, the research team does not believe that it is likely that they could "make or break" the feasibility of the various scenarios. As a result, the researchers do not attempt to model ongoing operating costs. In short, the level of detail and effort required to make a speculative projection of ongoing operating costs is not, in their judgment, justified by the light the results would shed on decision-making processes needed to move St. John parcel redevelopment forward. Organization of on-going maintenance is discussed in Section 5.

ECONOMIC ANALYSIS DISCUSSION

This final portion of the economic analysis section of the report provides some interpretation of the results of the Pro Forma Model, and some discussion of the subsidy sources that the City of Austin could mobilize to fill the gap between Market Value and TDC for the scenarios in which such a gap arises (i.e., all but Scenario A.1).

Comparison Across Scenarios

Briefly stated, the five scenarios represent differing program mixes, as well as levels of ambition, required subsidies from the City of Austin, and property tax revenue generating potential for the city. Scenario A.1 is the least ambitious, with a TDC of only about

$71 million. It would generate roughly $400k in annual property tax revenues for the city (not including the additional property taxes that accrue to the Austin Independent School District, Austin Community College, and Travis County). Notably, it is the only scenario that does not require subsidy from the City of Austin to complete, i.e., the required subsidy indicated in the table is negative.

Scenarios B.1, B.2, and C.1, while distinct from the standpoint of program emphasis and design (as discussed at length in Section 3), are relatively similar from the standpoint of their economic "bottom line" indicators. TDC ranges from $214 million (C.1) to $245 million (B.2), and required subsidy levels from

Scenario	Total Development Cost	Required Total Subsidy from City of Austin	Annual Property Tax Revenue Generated for City of Austin
A.1	$70.6	-$9.7	$0.4
B.1	$215.6	$62.0	$0.6
B.2	$244.7	$71.5	$0.8
C.1	$214.2	$67.2	$0.6
C.2	$312.7	$41.0	$1.1

All figures in millions of USD.

4-05   **SCENARIO SUMMARY TABLE**

the City of Austin range from roughly $62 million to about $72 million. In return for these subsidies, these scenarios deliver differing mixes of substantial public benefits, such as vocational training and affordable housing. They generate property tax revenues for the city ranging from roughly $600k to $800k per year.

Scenario C.2 can be thought of as the most ambitious of the scenarios, with the highest TDC at about $313 million. It delivers about $1.1 million in property tax revenue annually for the city, by far the highest among the scenarios. In essence, because it is the scenario that builds up on the St. John site most densely, and thus uses its site infrastructure most intensively and cost effectively, it requires less subsidy than scenarios B.1, B.2, and C.1: $41 million (as compared to $62-72 million).

Possible Subsidy Sources

There are myriad ways that the City of Austin could choose to fill funding gaps needed to make B.1, B.2, C.1, or C.2—or another scenario like them—viable.

Rather than attempt to exhaustively list all of them, this subsection focuses on three particularly valuable mechanisms that may be worthy of consideration.

4% Low Income Housing Tax Credits

Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) are a federal tax benefit for affordable rental housing that has existed since 1987. Both for-profit and nonprofit developers—typically via the use of complex partnership structures involving outside investors—have used LIHTCs as the backbone subsidy to build or preserve millions of housing units in the more than three decades of their existence. Units subsidized via LIHTCs must, at a minimum, be rented to households earning at or below 60% of the Area Median Income for a given area (in this case, the five-county Austin-Round Rock Metropolitan Statistical Area centered on Travis County).

There are two types of LIHTCs: 9% and 4% LIHTCs. The 9% LIHTCs are a more powerful form of subsidy that is competitively allocated by the state of

4-06

M STATION APARTMENTS FUNDED WITH LIHTC_AUSTIN

Texas; the 4% are less powerful but are awarded "over the counter," i.e., to all qualifying projects. (LIHTC subsidies are allocated by the State of Texas, rather than by the City of Austin, although coordination with the city is desirable for purposes of obtaining other needed subsidies.) The 9% variety of LIHTC is more or less out of the question for the St. John parcel; in Texas, the rules of the competition for 9% LIHTCs make it highly unlikely that a project in a relatively high-poverty area with low-performing public schools, such as St. John, would be competitive. That leaves 4% as a viable source of federal subsidies for below market rate (BMR) rental housing.

The 4% variety of LIHTCs are typically paired with Private Activity Bonds (PABs) issued by the city or another governmental entity; PABs allow further subsidy since their investors are able to treat their bond payments as nontaxable income, thus enticing the investors to accept a lower interest rate than they otherwise would. The 4% type of LIHTC is often described as a subsidy designed to pay 30% of the TDC of a BMR rental

project. In reality, this share varies according to the specific circumstances of a given project; however, in keeping with the ROM orientation of the Pro Forma Model, the calculations in this report assume that 4% LIHTCs would pay this 30% share. Any remaining shortfall is assumed to be covered by other City of Austin subsidy sources, such as those administered routinely by the Austin Housing Finance Corporation for various BMR developments.

Property tax recapture mechanisms

At present the St. John parcel generates no property tax revenue whatsoever, because it is owned by the City of Austin. Under the scenarios presented in this report, that could change. It is possible that newly-created parcels could be transferred or sold to private entities. To varying degrees, these private entities would be obligated to pay property taxes like any other private landowner in Austin. Roughly a quarter of this revenue would end up in the city's coffers, with the lion's share of the remainder going to the school district, community college district, and county.

WALLER CREEK TUNNEL FUNDED THROUGH TAX INCREMENT FINANCING_AUSTIN

ROY G. GUERRERO PARK UPGRADED WITH BOND MONEY FOR PARKS IMPROVEMENT_AUSTIN

City elected officials may decide that this extra property tax revenue should go towards strengthening the city's fiscal position. They may also decide, however, to deploy one or more *property tax recapture mechanisms* to direct some or all of this new revenue back to the project. These monies could be used for project elements that have a public purpose, such as open space or new roadways. By issuing bonds backed by the stream of expected revenues over a period of many years into the future, as is routinely done in Austin, Dallas, Houston, and elsewhere for a period of as long as 30 years, these expected future revenues could be converted into an upfront lump-sum that could be used to defray some of the costs of the redevelopment of the St. John parcel.

The mechanism widely used in Texas is Tax Increment Financing (TIF), implemented in Texas via a mechanism known as Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones (TIRZ). The total city property tax revenues generated by the redevelopment could be, over a 30-year period, as high as $33 million in the case of Scenario C.2. The potential for a TIF or similar mechanism to defray upfront infrastructure costs on the site could therefore be quite considerable.

Citywide funding of infrastructural components

One possibility for enticing a private entity to step into the role of land redeveloper would be for the City of Austin to pay for portions of the infrastructural costs for the St. John parcel. If great enough, these subsidies could tip a redevelopment from unprofitable to profitable for such a redeveloper. Some of the infrastructural elements contemplated in the various scenarios fit well into existing citywide funding sources routinely used in Austin to fund capital projects. These could be used to defray the costs of building or expanding parks, constructing new roads, and so forth.

Policy and Programming

POLICY OPTIONS

Right to Remain/Return Policies

To maintain diversity, prevent displacement, and help remedy prior forced displacements, a handful of cities have developed *right to remain* or *right to return* policies. Such policies give preference to those who have lived in a particular neighborhood for a specified period of time, or whose neighborhood is under gentrification pressure, or those displaced as a result of eminent domain associated with urban renewal or other initiatives. Such policies must be carefully constructed to comply with the Fair Housing Act and supported by statistical analysis documenting how the policy will impact groups protected by the Act. The Austin City Council passed a resolution calling for a pilot program to begin as early as Spring 2020.[1] The proposed program would reserve affordable rental units and home-ownership opportunities for applicants with generational ties to gentrifying tracts identified in a recent study conducted by The University of Texas.[2] This policy incorporates recommendations from the Mayor's Task Force on Institutional Racism (MTFIR)[3]

and the 2018 *Right to Remain* plan[4] developed by local nonprofits Guadalupe Neighborhood Development Corporation and Community Powered Workshop with residents of Montopolis. In 2017, the MTFIR called for a policy similar to one adopted in Portland, Oregon, giving people displaced or at risk of displacement from a determined geographic area priority access to affordable housing. The MTFIR also proposed adoption of a "Right to Stay" policy similar to the City of Houston's, which offers one-time mortgage assistance programs, increased property tax exemptions for seniors,and home repair programs, and prioritizes services using a historical needs metric. In addition, the *Right to Remain* plan proposed the use of community land trusts (CTLs) to create long term affordability and the development of a community resource center to connect residents with services.

In designing such a policy for St. John, the first step will be to clarify the intended beneficiary group(s). In addition, it will be important to take into account several potential barriers that might prevent the
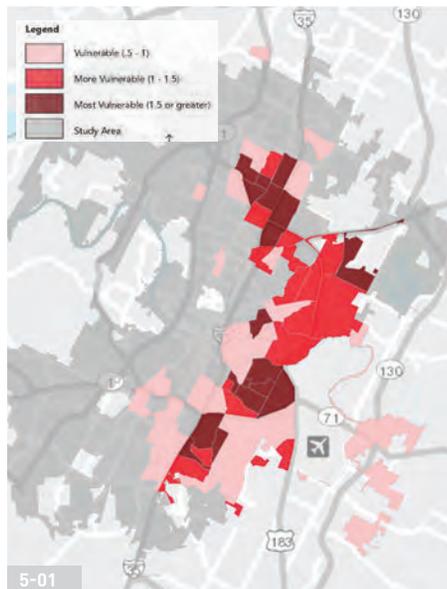
CENSUS TRACTS WITH CONCENTRATIONS OF VULNERABLE RESIDENTS_2016

intended beneficiaries from accessing benefits. Such barriers might include rejection of residents applying for housing due to background checks that reveal past evictions or criminal convictions; the difficulty of meeting criteria for a private mortgage for an affordable home; and distrust of CTLs. Best practices for addressing these issues include holistic review of rental applications; allowing enough time and identifying

partner organizations to work with residents to ensure they meet lending standards (e.g, credit repair, saving for a down payment and/or applying for down payment assistance); conducting marketing campaigns to ensure that intended beneficiaries know about and can apply for benefits, and working with resident groups to increase awareness of the affordability benefits of CTLs and also the ways that residents can be involved in their governance.

Portland's North/Northeast Preference Policy

The City of Portland's right to return policy, formally referred to as the North/ North East (N/NE) Preference Policy, created a point-based application process for affordable rental and ownership housing, funded in whole or in part by the Portland Housing Bureau (PHB).[5] The preference points are awarded based on current or historic residency in specific neighborhoods identified in which the city had, decades earlier, used eminent domain to forcibly displace residents from the area. Households must also meet the income and screening eligibility

requirements for the housing unit or development in order to be accepted. Points are used to prioritize applicants on the waitlist for housing developed under the larger N/NE Housing Strategy adopted in 2015.[6] The N/NE Housing Strategy was intended to mitigate gentrification-induced displacement in vulnerable neighborhoods in North and Northeast Portland and address displacement of residents decades earlier due to city-led urban renewal initiatives.[7] The N/NE Housing Strategy also includes funding for home repair grants, down payment assistance, and construction of new affordable rental and ownership housing. The North/Northeast Neighborhood Strategy Oversight Committee is charged with reviewing and monitoring implementation of the policies and programs included in the strategy as well as use of the funds dedicated to it.

Portland's experience with its program offers important lessons. In particular, the homeownership programs proved difficult to implement. The city intended for the initiative to help at least 65 families purchase homes but only 12 succeeded

as of 2018, with a majority of applicants unable to meet mortgage requirements. Lack of detail regarding eligibility gave the most vulnerable residents a false impression they could become homeowners when there was not a large enough subsidy to make that a possibility. There were also many barriers created in the application process, in particular the requirement to provide proof of current or historical residency, as well as the need to complete an application update form for each round of consideration. These issues were exacerbated by lower than expected construction of affordable rental units, which would have been attainable for more potential applicants. Review by the Oversight Committee resulted in important changes in program implementation.[8]

The Portland model makes apparent that ensuring a clear application process and a sufficient supply of housing opportunities meeting the needs of potential applicants is crucial to early success of a right to return policy.

LAKELINE STATION_AFFORDABLE RENTAL HOUSING IN AUSTIN

Financing the construction of below market rate (BMR) housing, and maintaining its affordability over the long-term, requires the use of various mechanisms. These mechanisms differ according to whether a given BMR housing development is to be operated as a rental or a for-sale property.

Rental housing

Any BMR new-build rental housing development of sufficient size (typically at least 40 units) is likely to warrant the use of federal Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTCs). As explained in greater detail earlier in the report, in Section 4 there are two varieties of LIHTCs, 4% and 9% LIHTCs. A BMR rental development in St. John is likely to succeed only in attracting 4% LIHTCs, the less potent of the two varieties. LIHTCs of the 4% type are typically paired with Private Activity Bonds (PABs) floated by a governmental entity, such as the City of Austin, for a private purpose with a public benefit—PABs usually help finance permanent debt for the project at a lower interest rate than would otherwise be possible.

LIHTCs of the 4% type, on their own, will not be enough to subsidize the capital funding gap for a BMR rental housing development. City funds will almost certainly need to be contributed as well. One possible mechanism for the city to provide a financial boost to such a BMR development is for it to redirect property taxes towards it. This could be done in two days: via a property tax recapture mechanism (as discussed in Section 4), or else via maintaining public ownership of the land on which the BMR development is built, with a ground lease paid by the partnership entity the project to the City of Austin. The latter structure would allow the BMR development's property tax burden to be zero.

Although BMR rental developments have lower property tax burdens than otherwise similar to market rate developments, lowering the burden to zero would provide a boost to the project's operating budget, in turn would allow it to support a higher level of permanent debt than it otherwise could. Thus maintaining city ownership of the land, would amount to a subsidy granted by the city and the other property tax-collecting entities to the BMR development.

Maintaining public ownership of the land would be a more powerful subsidy because it would essentially allow for the potential redirection *all* property taxes otherwise paid by the development to its benefit, rather than simply the city's portion of those taxes (roughly a quarter), as would be the case if property tax recapture mechanisms were used.

Long-term affordability for BMR rental housing is easily achievable. Because the LIHTC imposes a minimum affordability period of 30 years, because the city could require long-term affordability in exchange for its financing for the project, and because the project could end up under the direct control of a nonprofit (possibly one controlled by the city) with a mission of providing permanently affordable housing, the city is in a strong position to require a developer to legally commit to a lengthy affordability period of 50 or even 99 years.

For-sale housing

In some ways structuring BMR for-sale housing for success over the long-term is less straightforward than for BMR rental housing. Because for-sale housing is by definition sold at a lower price than otherwise comparable market rate housing, there must be a mechanism to prevent its initial buyer from reselling the housing unit at market prices and thus pocketing a windfall and ending the long-term affordability of the unit for future households of moderate or low incomes. In the case of rental housing, the LIHTC stipulates, at a minimum, a 30-year period of restricted rents. It is a well-known mechanism that has seeded the formation of an entire housing development industry that relies on it. There is no comparable level of standardization for BMR for-sale housing. What is more, in for-sale BMR housing, there is a tension that must be resolved between the objective of wealth building for the beneficiary household and a desire for the unit to be affordable to future buyers to whom the initial buyer may later sell.

Various mechanisms are used around the United States, including cities holding a deed of trust on the property, which gives them the right to insist that a new buyer for the property must earn below a certain income, and that the sales price must be appropriately low. Another mechanism, used in Austin's Mueller development, gave the Mueller Foundation the legal right of first refusal to purchase a property at market rate upon sale by its initial owner. This led, for a time, to BMR for-sale units being appraised by the Travis Central Appraisal District as though they were market rate housing, even though the Foundation later planned to resell at a lowered price to a new buyer and absorb the difference. Although this situation was ultimately resolved, for a time it threatened the viability of BMR homeownership by facing BMR homeowners with very high taxes. In a city such as Austin, where property taxes are among the highest in the nation, this led to considerable difficulties.

One solution that is gaining increasing favor is a CLT structure, where the homeowner owns her housing unit but not the land underneath it, and leases the land from a CLT entity. A CLT is a nonprofit entity that owns and collectively manages a series of properties, and uses its control over land to dictate the terms of price appreciation for the housing units under its purview and assures that any resale will be made to a low or moderate income buyer. Crucially, the CLT's nonprofit status allows it to pay reduced property taxes on the land it owns, savings that can be passed along to the homeowners, thus helping BMR homeownership to remain viable over the long term. CLTs also function as a collective governance mechanism that can step in when homeowners encounter difficulties and that also fulfill an educational function in helping new home buyers transition into homeownership. For all of these reasons and others, CLTs are gaining favor in Austin; the city currently manages a CLT whose mission could be expanded to include BMR homeownership housing created as part of a St. John redevelopment. This would have the added benefit of raising the profile of CLTs and furthering their growth in Austin.

There is no analogue of LIHTCs in BMR for-sale housing. Any capital budget shortfalls will have to be filled with City of Austin or philanthropic—not federal or state—dollars.

The City of Austin's Strategic Plan, *Strategic Direction 2023,* outlines six major outcomes to pursue over the next five years.[9] One of those outcomes is Economic Opportunity and Affordability, or having economic opportunities and resources that enable residents to thrive in their community. The City of Austin's Comprehensive Plan, *Imagine Austin,* identifies increasing job opportunities and small business programs and affordability for live and work spaces as a priority for the city.[10]

Within the St. John project site, several scenarios include micro to small scale retail in various forms. There are several possibilities for retail and micro economic development within the project site and surrounding neighborhood. In general, small businesses have higher possibilities of survival, success and growth when support is available. Opportunities for small scale retail in some scenarios include affordable physical space to allow businesses to become established and to allow for networking with nearby small business entrepreneurs. There is also the opportunity to create maker spaces for small craft, art, and food businesses.

Small business incubators are another tool to explore for the site. Small business incubators nurture the development of young companies, helping them survive and grow during the start-up period when they are most vulnerable. Incubators can often provide support services and resources tailored to small businesses, ideally working to create jobs in a community, retaining businesses, and diversifying local economies.

Some specific City of Austin initiatives which currently exist and could be considered for the St. Johns neighborhood include:

The Box Bazaar is a temporary neighborhood installation that will activate a piece of city-owned land in East Austin by housing six business incubator spaces for small, local businesses in retrofitted shipping containers and it will create a bustling neighborhood center with programming designed to benefit the surrounding community. The Box Bazaar is a joint effort between many City of Austin departments including Planning and Zoning, Public Works, Development Services, Economic Development, Austin Transportation Department, Building Services, and the Office of Innovation.[11]

FARMERS' MARKET_AUSTIN

Souly Austin is a place-based economic development program focused on creating and retaining strong, vibrant, culturally rich, and diverse neighborhood business districts throughout Austin. Under the initiative, business owners receive a flexible set of tools to assist in the formation of merchants, associations and organized commercial districts.[12]

The City of Austin Transportation Department's Streets as Places initiative supports programming such as sidewalk cafes and street patios as well as artboxes and street banners, all of which enhance public streets and help activate economic opportunities on the site.[13]

POLICY OPTIONS_PARK MAINTENANCE/OWNERSHIP

Maintaining the public spaces on the site will be important to the success of any scenario. When parks are publicly owned, they are maintained by the City's Parks and Recreation Department (PARD). When parks sit on land purchased using bonds, full public ownership is required; however, the City can enter into an operations and maintenance agreement with an outside entity[14]. Some city parks have private, nonprofit partners that help maintain these parks and plan for future improvements and programming. For example, following renovations funded by the Austin Parks Foundation, the Downtown Austin Alliance took over operations and management of Republic Square Park in Downtown Austin, with oversight by PARD.[15] In 2015, nonprofit and park conservancy partners invested nearly $9 million in parks improvements and programs. Ownership of park space built at the St. John site and responsibility for maintenance would be negotiated in the development agreement between the City and a future master developer. A desire for partnerships focused on supporting park space could be included in the Request for Proposal eventually issued by the city.

No matter the final arrangement regarding ownership and maintenance, public spaces will need to be sufficiently programmed in order to be successful. Systems of passive and active programming can provide amenities and activities that are available to community members to fully enjoy. Passive programming is available to guests at all times and might include splash pads, lawn games, and park furniture. Active programming includes the larger, planned events that take place within the park and can include activities such as live music, farmers' markets, and fitness classes. The menu of passive and active programming will need to be tailored to the needs and preferences of community members as well as seasonal changes. In addition, care will need to be taken to avoid active uses, especially for children or the elderly, on the portion of site within 500 feet of IH-35. For small parks in residential areas, support for such programming may come from partnerships between local organizations and PARD. For example, through the City's *Adopt a Park* program, neighborhood associations, nonprofits, or "Friends of" groups can receive support as they

PARK MANAGEMENT_MUELLER, AUSTIN

work to activate or improve their parks, in partnership with PARD and the Austin Parks Foundation.

As discussed earlier, living or engaging in outdoor activity within 500 feet of a heavily travelled highways can expose residents to forms of air pollution associated with serious illness. Part of the site studied here lies within this 500-foot zone. In addition to avoiding the placement of housing, recreational, or other uses for children or elderly people in this zone, the scenarios employ various strategies to reduce the impact that proximity to IH-35 will have on air quality on the site. First, some scenarios place large buildings on the portion of the site adjacent to IH-35, thus partially blocking the flow of polluted air further into the parcel. Second, we have not included buildings designed especially for uses that would expose particularly vulnerable groups to air pollution. Such uses might include day care or senior centers. Since the large buildings performing the air blocking function will likely be used as office space, a hotel, storage, or warehouse space, and will be of a size to require building systems capable of filtering air to remove pollutants, we are less concerned with the health effects of the IH-35 on their occupants. Third, spaces that might be used more actively (such as playgrounds or community

gardens) have been placed on the portion of the site that is farthest from the highway. Finally, there are other strategies that can be implemented on the site to protect residents including: 1) the placement of air intake units on the side of the building away from the highway (estimated to reduce fine particle pollutants entering interior spaces by up to 90 percent); 2) use of filtration systems with a Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value (MERV) of 13 or higher, thus removing virtually all remaining fine particle pollutants; and 3) the use of vegetation to reduce infiltration of pollution onto the site.

This site is but one of many abutting heavily traveled highways in Austin. There are also strategies to minimize the health risks of development in these areas.These can be placed in two groups: 1) strategies aimed at addressing risks for current residents or visitors to these sites, and 2) strategies preventing future development from exposing new residents or visitors to health risks.

The research team's mapping identified 27,559 housing units on 2,100 acres of land laying either completely or partially within

the 500-foot exposure zone throughout Austin. These maps were overlaid with data showing the share of nonwhite residents living in affected census tracts, and also the share of Latino residents. Both reveal troubling patterns: the census tracts adjacent to these highways are disproportionately home to residents of color—especially Latino residents.

To inform policy, it will be important to generate better data on exposure to pollutants:

- Adopt and routinely update a map identifying air pollution exposure zones to target through policy (as San Francisco has done, based on health outcome metrics)[16];

- Partner with Dell Medical School and local health departments and other researchers to gather primary data on pollution exposure along highways (taking into account actual site conditions).

For existing residential areas, policy options include:

- Ensure that homes or buildings serving vulnerable populations on these sites are using air filters of MERV 13 or higher (meeting ASHRAE standard 52.2) and that HVAC units are operating properly; explore collaboration with Austin Energy's energy efficiency programs;

- Ensure windows are doubled glazed;

- Fund relocation of air intake units to ensure placement away from highways;

- Build noise barriers along highways to reduce penetration of polluted air into existing neighborhoods.

For new construction, additional policy options include:

- Prevent location of residences or sensitive uses (eg, for populations with special vulnerability to air pollution health risks) within 500 to 1000 feet of major highways[17], or other land uses generating air pollutants;[18]

- Ensure non-residential buildings within 500 to 1000 feet of a highway include

LEGEND
- > 20%
- 21-30%
- 31-45%
- 45-60%
- >60%
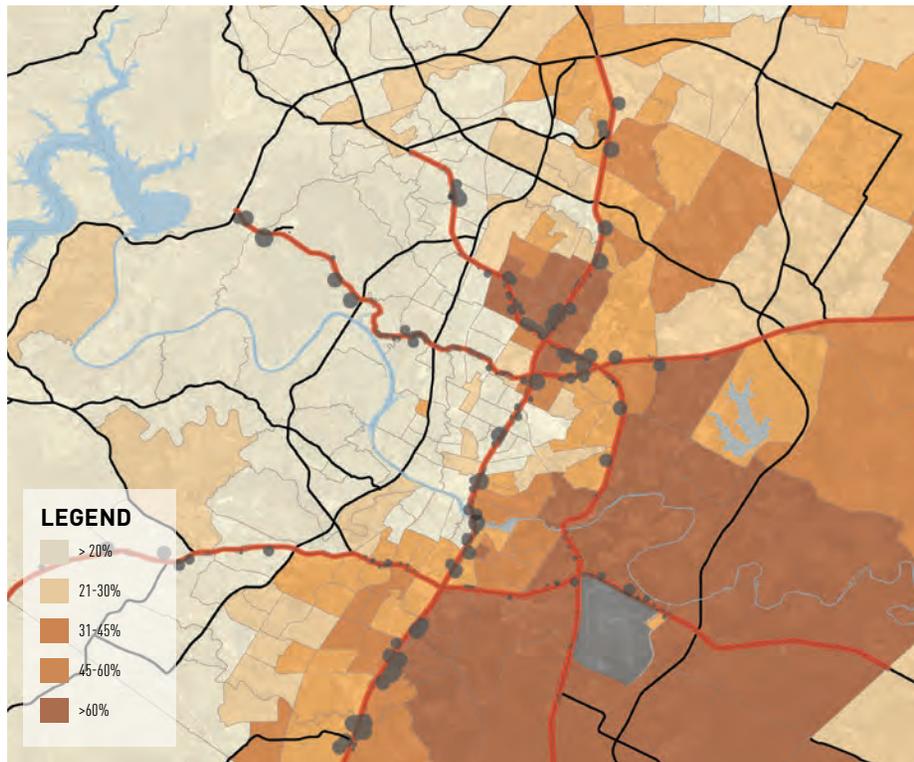
Lantinos as share of total population by Census Tract

LEGEND
- > 10%
- 11-20%
- 21-35%
- 35-50%
- >50%

People of Color as share of total population by Census Tract

proper filtration, properly sited air intake units, double-glazed windows and do not place balconies facing highways;

- Require setbacks around pollution-generating uses (distance determined by use/risk);

- Work with the Texas Department of Transportation to incorporate sound barriers and vegetative barriers into highway edges and frontage roads.[19] Plant additional trees on neighborhood streets to further mitigate air pollution.[20]

These recommendations respond to existing conditions near highways (and do not consider other sources of air pollutants). Clearly, efforts to reduce diesel emissions and to redirect heavy truck traffic away from residential areas within cities would reduce the need to counter exposure.

A key recommendation of studies is for agencies charged with monitoring air quality (often at the metro or state level), and those concerned with local land use, to collaborate.

In order to incorporate some of the benefits envisioned by residents, it will be important to partner with local organizations. Here we briefly discuss options for pursuing such partnerships, matched to particular goals.

Economic development/Workforce development

Many community members expressed a desire for the site to include spaces that would support local businesses or provide training or support for youth or others wishing to improve their economic prospects. Ideas included ranged from space for weekly markets (whether selling food or other items), to job training programs for youth, to efforts to encourage businesses on the site to hire community members. Possible partners for weekly markets could include the Sustainable Food Center, or organizations that support small businesses that might sell products at markets such as BIG Austin, People Fund, or the youth-focused Start Up Kids Club. The Sustainable Food Center works to improve the long term health of Central

Texans through programs that support food gardening, relationships with area farmers, interactive cooking classes, and nutrition education. It currently manages two farmers' markets in Austin. BIG Austin provides small business support for underserved entrepreneurs in Central Texas. PeopleFund's mission is to create economic opportunity and financial stability for underserved people by providing access to capital, education, and resources to build healthy small businesses. Start Up Kids Club offers K-8 students a 14 week entrepreneurship program. These programs could provide assistance to local residents wishing to sell their products in the local market.

For job training, potential partners would include the Urban League, Capital IDEA, and Austin Community College (ACC). The Urban League is a historic civil rights organization serving African Americans and other underserved populations in Central Texas. Their programs include workforce development and career readiness, and education and youth development. Its leadership has expressed interest in moving to a larger

APIARY AT SUSTAINABLE FOOD CENTER'S TEACHING GARDEN_AUSTIN

space in St John and co-locating with other community services. The city could explore opportunities to negotiate with office developers and landlords to provide space for the Urban League (or other community services) on the site. Capital IDEA currently collaborates with regional employers and ACC to design training programs aimed at placing graduates in well-paying entry level jobs with career ladders. It could be engaged in efforts to develop training for jobs at businesses moving to the site or at other employers in the greater St. John's area. These might include city agencies, such as Austin Energy and the city departments currently housed at One Texas Center.

Honoring the history of St. John

Many participants expressed a desire for the history of the community to be honored in some way on the site. While this report earlier discussed strategies for offering residents with historic ties to the neighborhood the opportunity to move back to the site, here the focus is on ways to incorporate physical markers of area history into the development. City

Ordinance requires that works of art be included in city construction projects through the Art in Public Places Program. Construction projects meeting the criteria for inclusion of public art include infrastructure improvements such as those that will be necessary to prepare the St. John site and also park development.[21] The budget for the public art should be equivalent to 2% of the costs associated with construction.[22] Local groups that might be partners for the development of public art reflecting local history could include Forklifts Danceworks, CivicArts, or Creative Action. Forklifts Danceworks' mission is to "activate communities through a collaborative creative process."[23] Forklifts most recently developed My Park, My Pool, My City, dance performance commenting on the future of East Austin's pools. CivicArts (formerly GO Collaborative) worked to help district residents in the newly created council districts to identify their communities' cultural assets and commissioned artists to create artistic expressions of the districts' character and diversity. Both of these groups use the power of the arts to engage community

members in discussion of the value and history of aspects of their lives. Such a process can be particularly valuable when incorporated early into the development process.

NEXT STEPS

The office of Councilmember Casar will host two public meetings in March 2020 and April 2020 to obtain input from the St. Johns community on the redevelopment scenarios created by The University of Texas at Austin School of Architecture team. These spring meetings will also serve as a call to action for the community and allow residents to voice their position on the redevelopment of the St. John Project site to the City Council. It is anticipated that during the month of April 2020, City Council will vote upon the release of a Request for Proposals for development of the site.

This report includes five scenarios, each of which outlines a possible future for the Home Depot/Chrysler site. The scenarios should not be viewed as exact visions for the parcel; rather, they serve to illuminate the types of uses that could be included in a redevelopment and the tradeoffs that must be weighed in order to formulate an eventual plan for its future. Despite their differences, all five scenarios strive to deliver different mixes of public benefits for the community. Another consistent

principle is *placemaking,* or an effort to create an enjoyable, outdoor public realm that is welcoming to all, particularly existing St. John residents.

Change is coming to St. John in the form of rising housing prices and other harbingers of gentrification. The city-owned Home Depot/Chrysler parcel represents a one-of-a-kind opportunity for the St. John community to harness these coming changes and use them to secure meaningful benefits for the long-term future of existing residents who wish to stay and invest in their beloved neighborhood.

6
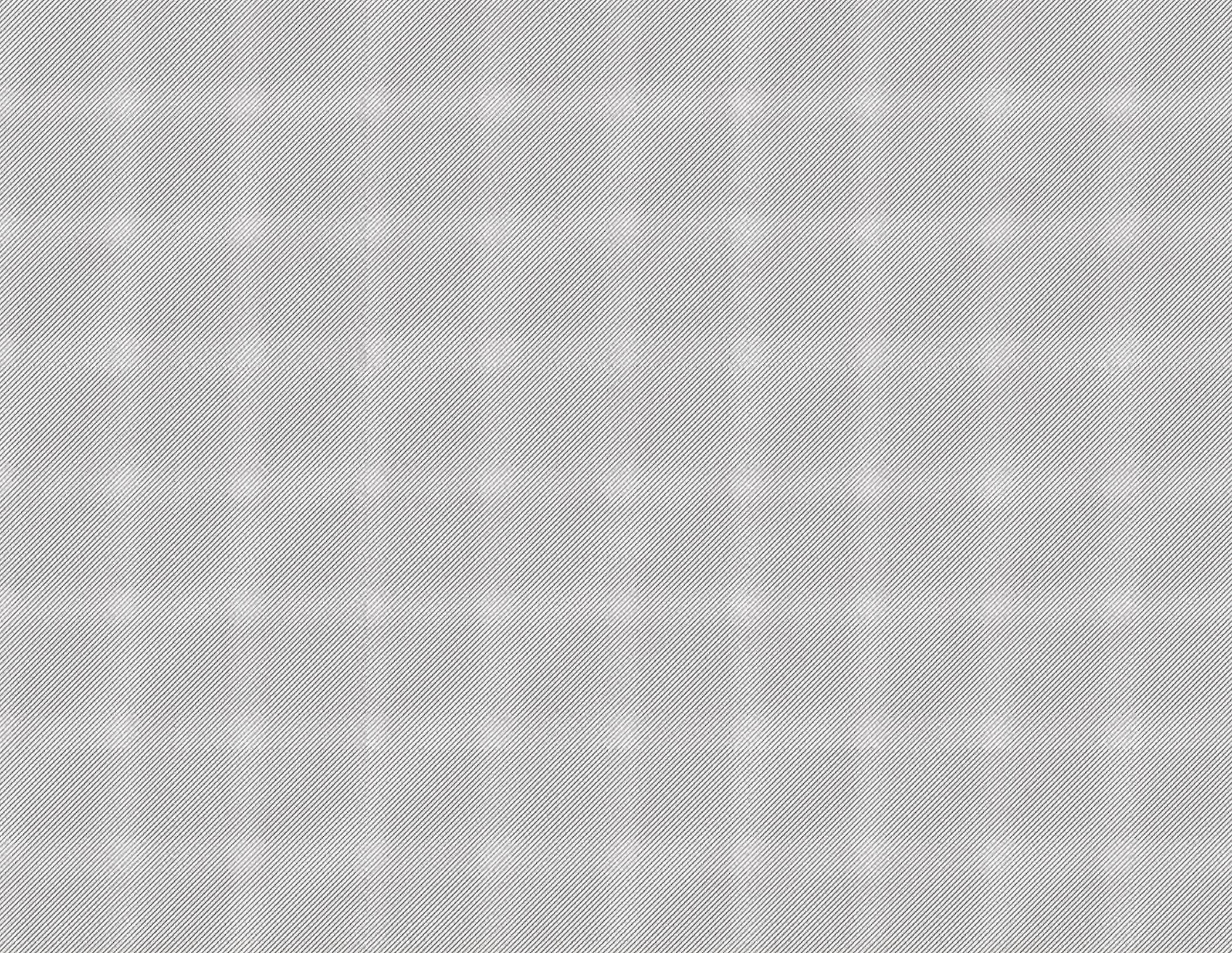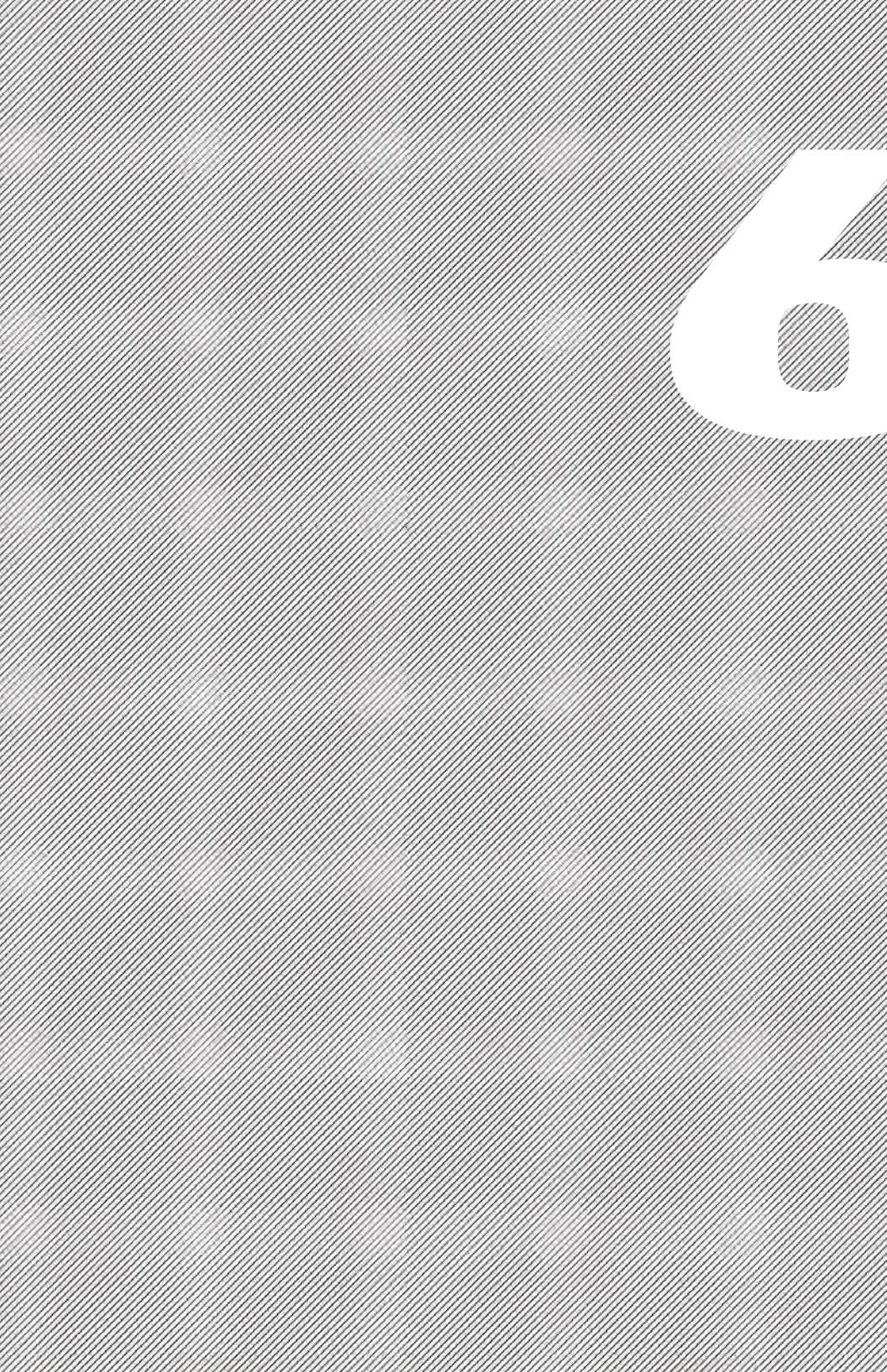
Appendices

A_ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND EXTERNAL FEEDBACK

The University of Texas at Austin School of Architecture Center for Sustainable Development would like to thank the **residents of the St. John neighborhood for their valuable time and contributions** to this study. Special Thanks to Council Member Casar and District 4 Staff for their time and efforts. The team would also like to thank the following individuals and organizations for their time and/or input:

Austin City Council

Mayor Steve Adler

Council Member Natasha Harper-Madison, District 1

Council Member Delia Garza, District 2

Council Member Sabino "Pio" Renteria, District 3

Council Member Greg Casar, District 4

Council Member Ann Kitchen, District 5

Council Member Jimmy Flannigan, District 6

Council Member Leslie Pool, District 7

Council Member Paige Ellis, District 8

Mayor Pro Tem Tovo, District 9

Council Member Alison Alter, District 10

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Sobeyda Gomez-Chou, District 4

Christine Whitney, Austin Brownfields Revitalization Office

City of Austin, Office of Real Estate Services

Others

Civilitude Engineers and Planners

Economic & Planning Systems, Inc.

This report supports the effort to provide the Austin City Council and staff with information to assist in assessing site planning options related to 906 E. St. Johns Avenue and 7211 N. IH-35 in order to redevelop the site in a way that achieves community benefits while mitigating the negative potential impacts of gentrification. Provided within these pages are our efforts to synthesize and summarize information that already exists, and create new information through several analyzed scenarios. Our hope is that this information can allow for members of the public and elected officials to base their opinions and positions on analysis that is reasoned, thorough, and digestible.

In order to address this charge, fact-finding information sessions with relevant community experts and stakeholders took place throughout the project timeline. External feedback, collected via meetings, phone calls and emails, comes from both individual and neighborhood organizations that represent a broad range of stakeholder interests. A detailed list of individuals and organizations who provided input into this study is included in this section.

In addition, a short, Web-based portal was opened for broad public comment from individuals and groups to draw attention to concerns they have and to call our attention to any materials they thought the research team should consider. Participants were given the option to remain anonymous. The survey link was posted on The University of Texas at Austin Center for Sustainable Development website. Participants were asked the following questions:

Question 1: What is important to you about this neighborhood that the research team should be aware of?

Question 2: Are there any resources you believe the research team should consult?

The specific responses received from these questions are listed in the Feedback Table on the following pages.

What is important to you about this neighborhood that the research team should be aware of?

Are there any resources you believe the research team should consult?

What is important to you about this neighborhood that the research team should be aware of?	Are there any resources you believe the research team should consult?
there are multiple city offices in the neighborhood	Consult anyone who lives, works, owns a business or goes to school in the area
The voters approved bond money to buy the property in 2006, under the belief that a police substation and municipal court at this location would help reduce crime in northeast austin. The neighborhoods of northeast austin continue to have a crime rate several times the rate of the city overall. Parts of St John are most affected by the site, because they're very close. However, it's important that community benefits from this taxpayer-funded site serve all of northeast austin. It's also important to respect the original intent of reducing crime. The evaluation of any proposed community benefit must include consideration of the impact on city strategic goals of safety and justice.	AISD is proposing to close Webb MS, just a couple of blocks from this site, and redevelop _it_ for community benefit. They are conducting a parallel process, with people from the same stakeholder population.
Gentrification is good, but we also need to maintain a level of value for the existing culture already present. I didn't grow up in St. John's, but I appreciate the sense of community and culture in the neighborhood.	Providence House, Austin Stone - St. John's Campus, Precision Custom Build Homes.
It is at the crossroads of two major roads	Austin TX initiatives for homeless
There are many low income neighborhoods with schools around. Dont want to gentrify the area.	
Proximity to downtown, I35, 290, 183. Location. It's important to clean up the drug and prostitution problem. It's a food desert. There are very little options for healthy produce. The schools are horrible and get an F rating.	You should consult more retail and fresh food options. Restaurants, too. Retail should not include more pawn shops, pay day loans, discount mobile phone providers, churches, etc, discount insurance companies, etc.
A public arena available to all kinds of physical activities and local "pick-up" style athletic teams would be wonderful, with equipment that can be checked out as long as it stays on the facility. There are lots of young people who are required to jump into jobs immediately in order to earn money for their families. They won't be able to pay dues at a golf course or the Y. They won't have much in the way of equipment. They might not have the skills to be on a sponsored team. They will, however, still profit greatly from exercise and enjoyable interaction with other people. Oh, and this goes for the not-so-young, too.	Yes, they should request local East Austin anthropologists, who have been participant-observers, to conduct an ethnography. You can find some faculty members of, and PhD's produced by, The University of Texas, Austin.

What is important to you about this neighborhood that the research team should be aware of?

Are there any resources you believe the research team should consult?

We need a grocery store, side walks and green space to relax. A YMCA type community center could be amazing.

Its history and how the city has promised for years to help the blacks.

Homelessness and education

The area is a food desert. We need a grocery store. And some affordable housing.

This neighborhood is where I bought my first house and where I hope to raise my family. Safety is my concern first and foremost. I don't want things that will bring dangerous people to the neighborhood. I live in the home that was my spouse's grandmothers house. We love the old trees, original homes, walkable neighborhood, and way we use to feel safe. I say use to because crime has been on upswing in last 6mo to year!

Multiple open discussions, surveys. Put info in highland neighborhood newsletter regarding meetings/surveys.

We need a grocery store in this area. Please let a vibrant business fill that space, possibly with some green space with a stage for events similar to the stage at Zilker park hillside theater for community arts events for something for the neighborhood to join together and enjoy.

What is important to you about this neighborhood that the research team should be aware of?

Are there any resources you believe the research team should consult?

Home Depot site could be used to house homeless. It could house many more and cost far less to convert the building than the $80,000 per bed spent on Ben White site.
We're surrounded by highways so anything that is built needs to help mitigate that fact/buffer against it.

Home Depot site could be used to house homeless. It could house many more and cost far less to convert the building than the $80,000 per bed spent on Ben White site.

This is kind of a food desert. An HEB would be incredible to have nearby. We do need more green space that feels safe - the St. John's Park is so tucked away behind houses it feels unsafe to visit alone. We would love to see "nature play" nearby with loose parts, stuff to explore, and a walking/running path. See Ramsey Park for ideas for kids' play areas. A splash pad would definitely get used.

It's important to be aware that there are many low income residents without access to reliable transportation so more community spaces where folks can recreate together would be ideal. I know the St. John's Park got a new playground but it just feels not open enough/unsafe still.
While portions of this site face a neighborhood, a lot of it is overwhelmed by close proximity to highway. What is a suitable use for the site should not ignore this fact, just because it touches a neighborhood.

Talk to the rec center staff at Virginia Brown and the library staff at St. John Branch to know more about the user population - lots and lots of unsupervised kids.

Ensuring safety of those who are currently in the neighborhoods surrounding

This site should be used for a large homeless shelter modeled after Haven for Hope in San Antonio. Initially it should be set up in the same manner as shelters after disasters are set up.. Social service agencies should be co located to provide assistance. The previous recommendations for this site were prior to a decision led by CM Casar to allow widespread camping, lying and sitting throughout the city. This has proved dangerous for the homeless and non homeless population . Moving all of these people to a central site can facilitate solutions and accommodate a large number of people. The $8 million for the Ben White shelter could more effectively be used for this shelter and service more people. This would be a win-win for Austin.

Yes, consult with Haven for Hope in San Antonio to see what has been effective for them.

What is important to you about this neighborhood that the research team should be aware of?

Are there any resources you believe the research team should consult?

What is important to you about this neighborhood that the research team should be aware of?	Are there any resources you believe the research team should consult?
I live nearby in Coronado Hills. This neighborhood lacks a grocery store and fresh food options.	
Considerable need for health care services in the area focused on those with low-income and no insurance.	Central Health and CommUnityCare
Use Home Depot site for homeless shelter and camping	
Lack of green space/parks for the community.	The Austin parks department and landscape architect firms re what kind of innovative green space this could turn into for the community to enjoy.
Green space reduces runoff and provides a place for kids and families to be together.	Austin parks, Austin water, environmental groups
There doesn't seem to be enough green spaces/parks overall.	Not sure.
Historic context and demographics	The community members and neighbors who live nearest to the facility and property.

B_ADDITIONAL
FINANCIAL INFORMATION

_SUMMARY TABLE

Scenario	Total Development Cost	Required Total Subsidy from City of Austin	Annual Property Tax Revenue Generated for City of Austin
A.1	$70.6	-$9.7	$0.4
B.1	$215.6	$62.0	$0.6
B.2	$244.7	$71.5	$0.8
C.1	$214.2	$67.2	$0.6
C.2	$312.7	$41.0	$1.1

All figures in millions of USD.

_ST. JOHN LAND REDEVELOPMENT BUDGET

All figures in thousands of US dollars.

	Option A	Option B.1	Option B.2	Option C.1	Option C.2
Demolition - Buildings	$ 940	$ 940	$ 940	$ 940	$ 940
Demolition - Asphalt	$ 1,110	$ 1,110	$ 1,110	$ 1,110	$ 1,110
Environmental Remediation	$ 400	$ 400	$ 400	$ 400	$ 400
Earthwork	$ 8,280	$ 8,280	$ 8,280	$ 8,280	$ 8,280
Park and Park Facilities	$ 1,340	$ -	$ 1,170	$ 1,090	$ 1,820
Street Infrastructure	$ -	$ 16,690	$ 16,690	$ 7,810	$ 7,810
Bond Payoff*	$ 10,160	$ 9,370	$ 9,370	$ 9,370	$ 9,370
Soft Costs	$ 3,560	$ 5,890	$ 6,070	$ 4,640	$ 4,760
Project Management	$ 1,550	$ 2,560	$ 2,640	$ 2,020	$ 2,070
Public Artwork	$ 550	$ 900	$ 930	$ 710	$ 730
Total	**$ 27,880**	**$ 46,140**	**$ 47,610**	**$ 36,360**	**$ 37,280**

* Sum of current balance and estimated cost of defeasance.
Assumes bond is repaid in full
on 3/1/2023, except for Option A (assumed repayment on 9/1/2021).

_SCENARIO A.1

All figures in thousands of US dollars.

	Implied land costs	Soft costs	Hard costs	Developer profit and overhead	Brokerage Fee	Total Development Cost	Total market value	Required subsidy	City of Austin property tax revenue/yr
Self Storage	$ 8,050	$ 1,730	$ 10,150	$ 4,090	$	$ 24,010	$ 31,840	$ (7,820)	$ 140
Distribution Center	$ 19,830	$ 2,710	$ 15,930	$ 7,890		$ 46,350	$ 48,430	$ (2,080)	$ 210
Micro Retail	$ -	$ -	$ 240	$ -		$ 240	$ -	$ 240	$ -
Total	$ 27,880	$ 4,430	$ 26,320	$ 11,970	$ -	$ 70,610	$ 80,270	$ (9,670)	$ 360

_SCENARIO B.1

All figures in thousands of US dollars.

	Implied land costs	Soft costs	Hard costs	Developer profit and overhead	Brokerage Fee	Total Development Cost	Total market value	Required subsidy	City portion of subsidy	City of Austin property tax revenue/yr
Economy Hotel	6,840	1,240	8,760	4,210	1,620	22,660	26,950	(4,280)	(4,280)	120
Office	4,010	1,950	11,450	3,310		20,710	24,470	(3,760)	(3,760)	110
Townhouses w/ADU (For Sale)	3,940	660	3,860	1,490	710	10,660	11,880	(1,220)	(1,220)	50
Walkup Apartments (Rental)	12,880	6,390	37,580	9,270		66,110	50,400	15,710	15,710	220
BMR Walkup Apartments (Rental)	12,880	11,730	37,540	5,410		67,560	19,680	47,870	27,610 *	90
Vocational Training Facility	5,590	2,920	17,170	2,230		27,920		27,920	27,920 **	
Total	46,140	24,880	116,360	25,920	2,330	215,630	133,380	82,250	61,980	590

"BMR" = Below Market Rate

* Assumes that 4% Low Income Housing Tax Credits cover 30% of TDC.
** Capital costs only; ongoing operating costs are not included.

_SCENARIO B.2

	Implied land costs	Soft costs	Hard costs	Developer profit and overhead	Brokerage Fee	Total Development Cost	Total market value	Required city subsidy	City of Austin property tax revenue/yr
Suite Hotel	$ 7,180	$ 3,270	$ 19,300	$ 9,910	$ 2,270	$ 41,930	$ 37,790	$ 4,140	$ 170
Office	$ 4,520	$ 5,210	$ 30,630	$ 7,670		$ 48,020	$ 61,170	$ (13,150)	$ 270
Micro Retail	$ -	$ -	$ 240	$ 20		$ 260	$ -	$ 260	$ -
Townhouses (For Sale)	$ 5,290	$ 1,200	$ 7,090	$ 2,400	$ 1,180	$ 17,150	$ 19,640	$ (2,480)	$ 90
Walkup Apartments (Rental)	$ 11,850	$ 4,540	$ 26,690	$ 7,020		$ 50,100	$ 35,840	$ 14,260	$ 160
BMR Townhouses (For Sale)	$ 4,670	$ 1,390	$ 5,320	$ 990	$ 530	$ 12,890	$ 8,750	$ 4,140	$ 40
BMR Walkup Apartments	$ 8,520	$ 6,000	$ 19,190	$ 2,930		$ 36,630	$ 10,060	$ 26,570	$ 40
Vocational Training Facility	$ 5,590	$ 4,230	$ 24,910	$ 3,020		$ 37,760	$ -	$ 37,760	$ -
Total	$ 47,610	$ 25,840	$ 133,370	$ 33,960	$ 3,970	$ 244,740	$ 173,250	$ 71,500	$ 770

"BMR" = Below Market Rate

_SCENARIO C.1

All figures in thousands of US dollars.

	Implied land costs	Soft costs	Hard costs	Developer profit and overhead	Brokerage Fee	Total Development Cost	Total market value	Required city subsidy	City portion of subsidy	City of Austin property tax revenue/yr
Office	$ 7,440	$ 8,320	$ 48,950	$ 12,300		$ 77,010	$ 70,680	$ 6,330	$ 6,330	$ 310
Retail Shell	$ 1,560	$ 1,330	$ 7,840	$ 930		$ 11,670	$ 18,760	$ (7,090)	$ (7,090)	$ 80
Townhouses (For Sale)	$ 1,980	$ 460	$ 2,680	$ 900	$ 440	$ 6,470	$ 7,360	$ (890)	$ (890)	$ 30
Townhouses w/ADU (For Sale)	$ 3,690	$ 740	$ 4,350	$ 1,550	$ 830	$ 11,150	$ 13,760	$ (2,610)	$ (2,610)	$ 60
Townhouses w/Gallery (For Sale)	$ 4,330	$ 1,230	$ 7,250	$ 2,260	$ 990	$ 16,060	$ 16,560	$ (500)	$ (500)	$ 70
BMR Walkup Apartments (Rental)	$ 2,340	$ 1,700	$ 10,010	$ 2,290		$ 16,340	$ 5,250	$ 11,090	$ 6,190	$ 20
BMR Townhouses (For Sale)	$ 1,560	$ 1,720	$ 6,580	$ 860	$ 580	$ 11,290	$ 9,690	$ 1,600	$ 1,600	$ 40
Vocational Training Facility	$ 4,290	$ 5,620	$ 33,050	$ 3,740		$ 46,700		$ 46,700	$ 46,700	
Youth Development	$ 3,780	$ 1,090	$ 6,440	$ 980		$ 12,300		$ 12,300	$ 12,300	
Childcare	$ 3,480	$ 190	$ 1,120	$ 420		$ 5,200		$ 5,200	$ 5,200	
Total	$ 36,360	$ 22,400	$ 128,260	$ 26,230	$ 2,840	$ 214,190	$ 142,060	$ 72,130	$ 67,220	$ 630

"BMR" = Below Market Rate

_SCENARIO C.2

	Implied land costs	Soft costs	Hard costs	Developer profit and overhead	Brokerage Fee	Total Development Cost	Total market value	Required city subsidy	City portion of subsidy	City of Austin property tax revenue/yr
Office	$ 12,900	$ 17,920	$ 95,430	$ 23,990		$ 150,240	$ 159,030	$ (8,790)	$ (8,790)	$ 700
Retail Shell*	$ 910	$ 1,670	$ 9,800	$ 1,080		$ 13,460	$ 23,450	$ (9,990)	$ (9,990)	$ 100
Neighborhood Grocery*	$ 1,650	$ 710	$ 4,200	$ 1,250		$ 7,810	$ 10,050	$ (2,240)	$ (2,240)	$ 40
Walkup Apartments	$ 3,190	$ 3,120	$ 18,350	$ 4,020		$ 28,690	$ 24,640	$ 4,050	$ 4,050	$ 110
BMR Mixed Use Apartments*	$ 7,490	$ 14,480	$ 37,550	$ 5,180		$ 64,700	$ 25,560	$ 39,140	$ 19,730	$ 110
Townhouse	$ 900	$ 250	$ 1,460	$ 460	$ 230	$ 3,300	$ 3,850	$ (550)	$ (550)	$ 20
Townhouse w/ADU	$ 1,930	$ 330	$ 1,930	$ 740	$ 340	$ 5,270	$ 5,720	$ (450)	$ (450)	$ 30
Vocational Training Facility	$ 6,330	$ 3,650	$ 21,460	$ 2,740		$ 34,170		$ 34,170	$ 34,170	
Childcare	$ 1,660	$ 440	$ 2,580	$ 410		$ 5,080		$ 5,080	$ 5,080	
Total	**$ 37,280**	**$ 42,570**	**$ 192,760**	**$ 39,850**	**$ 570**	**$ 312,720**	**$ 252,300**	**$ 60,420**	**$ 41,010**	**$ 1,120**

"BMR" = Below Market Rate
* Land costs for mixed use building distributed based on internal sf.

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_DEVELOPER OVERHEAD AND PROFIT CALCULATION METHODOLOGY

To keep the Pro Forma Model analyses relatively simple, the model for each component within each scenario is treated as though a development is built, then sold as soon as possible upon completion. In the case of for-sale real estate development, such as market rate or below market rate (BMR) for-sale townhouses, this is a realistic assumption. For rental real estate development, where the asset that is built is intended to produce rental income over the long term, this may not be realistic. In some cases, developers build rental assets, such as multifamily rental buildings or office buildings, with a "long term hold" strategy; in other cases, they sell off the completed project following completion.

This simplified approach requires the computation of Developer Overhead and Profit—in essence, a "mark up" over the other costs of developing the project that form the profit margin for the developer. In the case of real estate that is not to be sold following its completion, the anticipated stream of payments is converted into a one-time Developer Overhead and Profit payment immediately following "stabilization" (lease up) of the project that would leave the developer equally well off as in the case where they held onto the asset. The purpose of this appendix is to detail the procedure for making this computation.

Step 1: Build a simple discounted cash flow (DCF) model, in which the project begins development in Year 0, is developed and constructed during Years 1 and 2, and is sold for a single lump sum in Year 3. (Note that this approach, for simplicity, assumes a two-year construction period regardless of the circumstances of the project.)

Step 2: For the DCF model, use a discount rate and going-out cap rate that are regarded as typical for the particular category of real estate being analyzed (e.g., suburban office, suite hotel, warehouse, etc.), using the most recent published data available.

Step 3: Assume an arbitrary Total Development Cost (TDC) that is expended equally during Years 0, 1, and 2. If, for example, the TDC is assumed to be $100, then just over $33 is expended in each of those three years.

Step 4: Select a Reversion (sale) Price for Year 3. Adjust the Reversion Price until the Net Present Value (NPV) calculated by DCF model is zero.

Step 5: Use the Reversion Price to compute a Percent Markup over the TDC. For instance, in the case of a type of commercial real estate (such as Urban Multifamily) in which the typical discount rate is 6.75% and the going-out (reversion) cap rate is 5.5%, if the TDC is 100 then the Reversion Price will need to be about 114 to yield NPV = 0. The Percent Markup is then (114-100)/100 = 14%.

Step 6: Use the formula (Percent Markup as Share of All Other Costs) = (Percent Markup)/(1 – Percent Markup) to calculate the Percent Markup as a share of TDC less the Developer Profit & Overhead. In the example above, this is equal to 14%/(1-14%) = 16.3%. The 16.3% can be multiplied by the sum of the four components of TDC in the Pro Forma Model excluding TDC (i.e., Implied Land Value + Hard Costs + Soft Costs + Brokerage Fee). Thus, if for a given Urban Multifamily project Implied Land Value + Hard Costs + Soft Costs + Brokerage Fee = $1 million, then the Developer Overhead & Profit is assumed to be $1 million x 16.3% = $163k. TDC is then $1 million + 163k = $1.163 million.

	Discount rate	Going-out cap rate	Percent Markup	Developer Profit & Overhead as % of TDC excluding Developer Profit & Overhead	Sources for discount rate and going-out cap rate
Suburban Office	7.75%	7.00%	16.00%	19.05%	1
Urban Mutifamily	6.75%	5.50%	14.00%	16.28%	1
Community Retail Center	7.75%	7.00%	16.00%	19.05%	1
Select Service & Extended Stay Hotel	10.04%	8.30%	20.00%	25.00%	2
Nonprofit Uses	N/A	N/A	8.00%	8.70%	3
Mini Storage	8.05%	5.20%	17.00%	20.48%	4
Warehouse	8.11%	6.50%	17.00%	20.48%	5, 6

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