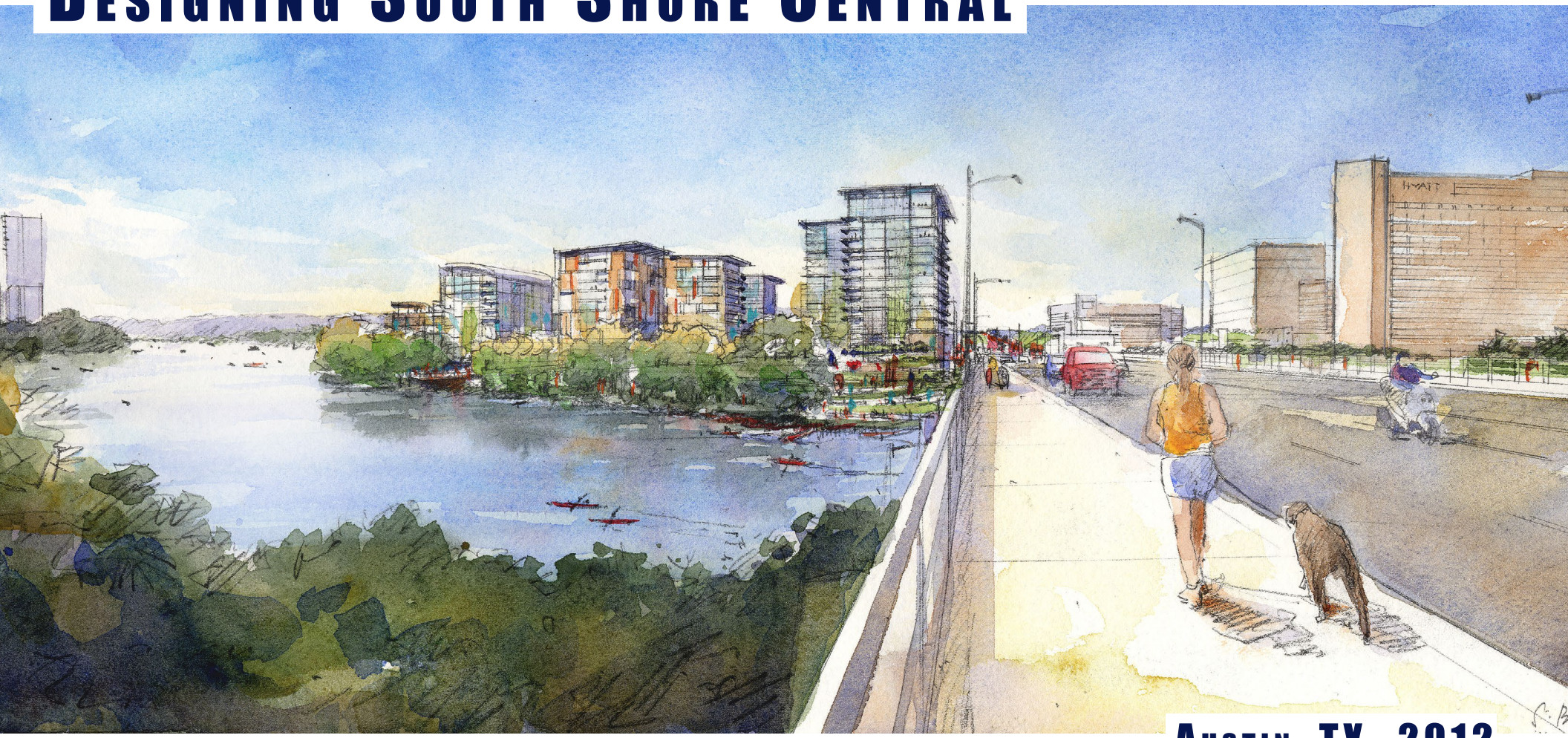
Designing South Shore Central



Austin, TX- 2012

AIA Communities by Design

ENVISION. CREATE. SUSTAIN.

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AIA Communities by Design

ENVISION. CREATE. SUSTAIN.

INTRODUCTION

In December of 2011, Austin, TX submitted a proposal to the American Institute of Architects (AIA) for a Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT) to assist the community and its citizens in addressing key issues facing the community. The issues included waterfront development, public realm improvements, affordable housing, urban design, and civic engagement. The AIA accepted the proposal and, after a preliminary visit by a small group in February, 2012, recruited a multi-disciplinary team of volunteers to serve on the SDAT Team. In June of 2012, the SDAT Team members worked closely with local officials, community leaders, technical experts, non-profit organizations and citizens to study the community and its concerns. The team used its expertise to frame a wide range of recommendations, which were presented to the community in a public meeting. This report represents a summary of the findings and recommendations that were presented to the community.

The Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT) Program

The Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT) program focuses on the importance of developing sustainable communities through design. The mission of the SDAT program is to provide technical assistance and process expertise to help communities develop a vision and framework for a sustainable future. The SDAT program brings together multidisciplinary teams of professionals to work with community stakeholders and decision-makers in an intensive planning process. Teams are composed of volunteer professionals representing a range of disciplines, including architects, urban design professionals, economic development experts, land use attorneys, and others. Today, communities face a host of challenges to long-term planning for sustainability, including limited resources and technical capacity, ineffective public processes and poor participation. The SDAT

approach is designed to address many of the common challenges communities face by producing long-term sustainability plans that are realistic and reflect each community's unique context. Key features of the SDAT approach include the following:

- **Customized Design Assistance.** The SDAT is designed as a customized approach to community assistance which incorporates local realities and the unique challenges and assets of each community.
- **A Systems Approach to Sustainability.** The SDAT applies a systems-based approach to community sustainability, examining cross-cutting issues and relationships between issues. The SDAT forms multi- disciplinary teams that combine a range of disciplines and professions in an integrated assessment and design process.
- **Inclusive and Participatory Processes.** Public participation is the foundation of good community design. The SDAT involves a wide range of stakeholders and utilizes short feedback loops, resulting in sustainable decision-making that has broad public support and ownership.
- **Objective Technical Expertise.** The SDAT Team is assembled to include a range of technical experts from across the country. Team Members do not accept payment for services in an SDAT. They serve in a volunteer capacity on behalf of the AIA and the partner community. As a result, the SDAT Team has enhanced credibility with local stakeholders and can provide unencumbered technical advice.
- **Cost Effectiveness.** By employing the SDAT approach, communities are able to take advantage of leveraged resources for their planning efforts. The AIA contributes up to $15,000 in financial assistance for each project. The SDAT team members volunteer their labor and expertise, allowing communities to gain immediate access to the combined technical knowledge of top- notch professionals from varied fields.







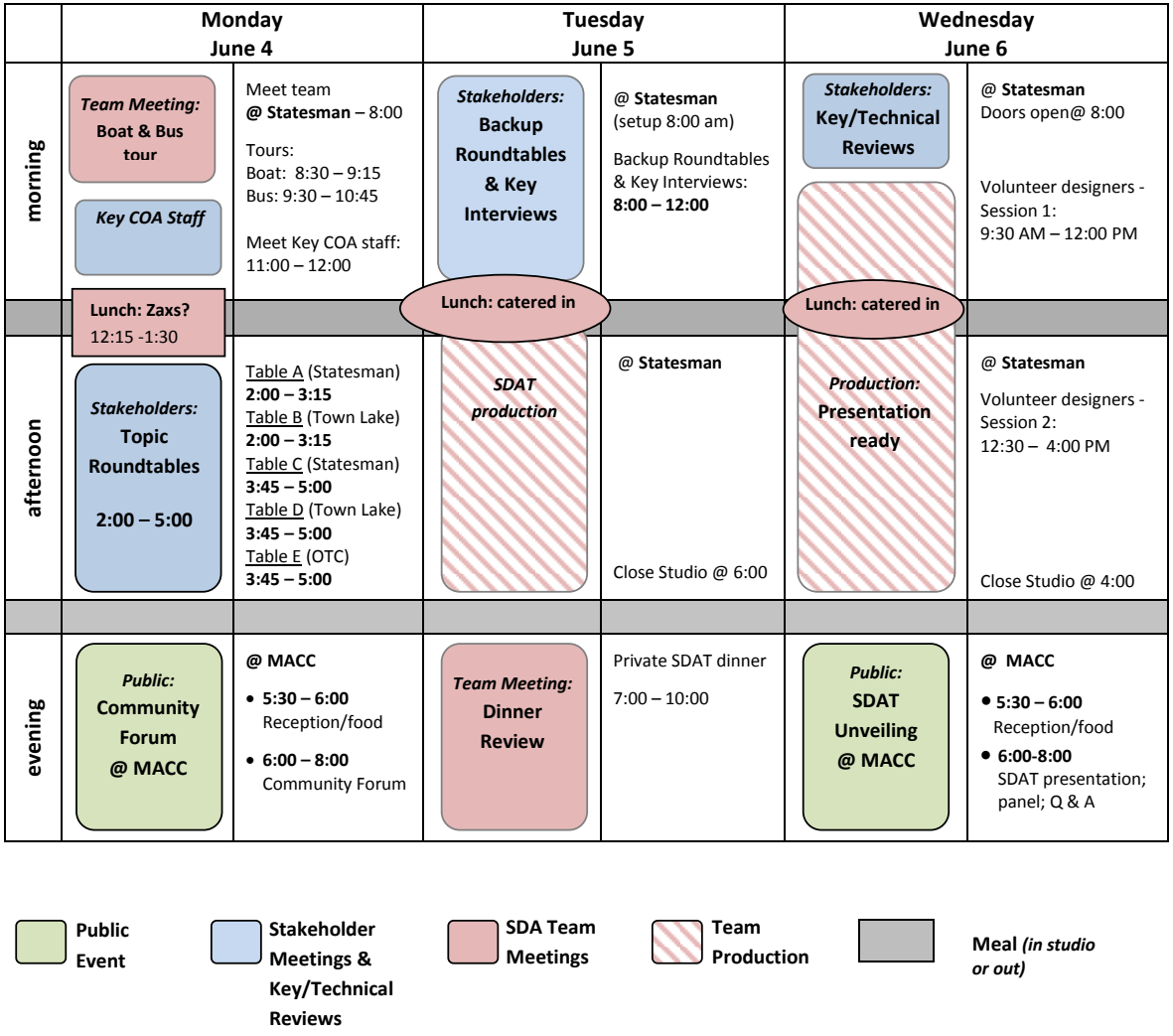

The SDAT program is modeled on the Regional and Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT) program, one of AIA's longest-running success stories. While the R/UDAT program was developed to provide communities with specific design solutions, the SDAT program provides broad assessments to help frame future policies or design solutions in the context of sustainability and help communities plan the first steps of implementation. Through the Design Assistance Team (DAT) program, over 500 professionals from 30 disciplines have provided millions of dollars in professional pro bono services to more than 200 communities across the country. The SDAT program leverages the pivotal role of the architectural community in the creation and support of sustainable livable communities.

The following report includes a narrative account of the Austin SDAT project recommendations, with summary information concerning several principle areas of investigation. The recommendations are made within the broad framework of sustainability, and are designed to form an integrated approach to future sustainability efforts in the community.

Executive Summary

In 2011, the City of Austin's Planning and Development Department successfully applied to the AIA's SDAT program for a grant to assist with creating development and public space guidelines concerning the future of the South Shore Central district of Austin's Lady Bird Lake. The purpose of the project was to conduct a sustainability assessment of the codes and plans for South Shore Central. To address the issues surrounding the future of South Shore Central, the AIA's Communities by Design program assembled a national team of experts in design, green infrastructure, public realm improvements, urban economics, affordable housing and civic engagement.

Team leader Harris Steinberg conducted a preliminary site visit from February 26 through 28, 2012 to meet with civic and project stakeholders. He presented a public lecture on the challenges of waterfront planning in Philadelphia at the Dougherty Arts Center on February 27, 2012 that drew more than 150 people. The full team was assembled in Austin from June 3 through June 7, 2012. In order for the SDAT team to put forward a series of recommendations concerning development of South Shore Central they had a full agenda which included site visits, meetings with stakeholders and public meetings.



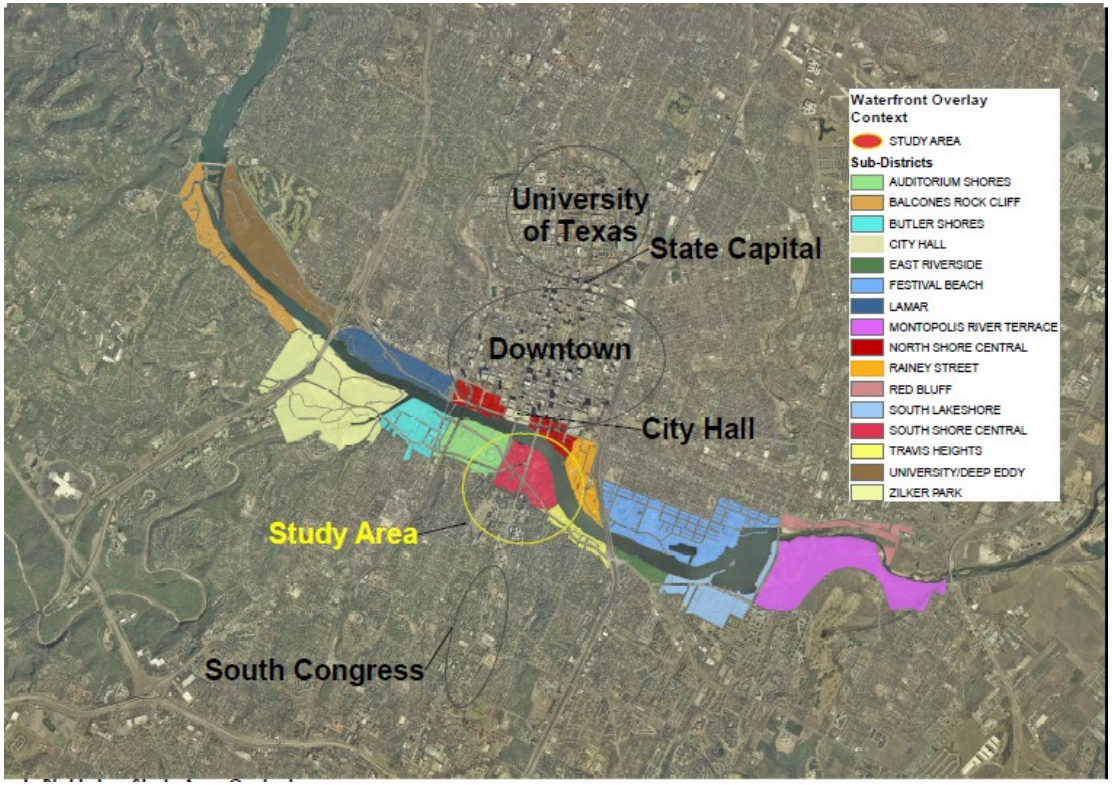
The SDAT received robust coverage from the local press and drew significant public interest. More than 150 people attended a public meeting on June 4, 2012 to help inform the project team about values, uses and potential users of Lady Bird lake. More than 200 people attended the presentation of findings and recommendations at the Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center on June 6, 2012.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Lady Bird Lake

Lady Bird Lake (formerly Town Lake) is an important natural and recreational resource in the center of Austin. The lake, created by damming the Colorado River, makes a 5.4 mile corridor through Austin and has been the subject of a number of planning and policy efforts over the past two and a half decades intended to protect the lake as a "…harmonious…transition between urban development and the parkland and the shore." These efforts include:

- 1985 Town Lake Corridor Study adopted
  - The study addressed environmental, parkland and development goals
- 1986 Waterfront Overlay Combining District (WOCD)
  - Created 15 sub-districts (now 16) around the lake and defined development regulations
- 1999 Plain Language Re-write of WOCD
  - Removed community benefits in exchange for development bonuses
  - Removed maximum height overlay
- 2007 Waterfront Overlay Taskforce appointed by City Council
- 2008 Waterfront Task Force Report
  - Response to increased development in the 2000s
  - Recommended re-established Waterfront Planning Advisory Board (WPAB)
  - Recommended the creation of clear development entitlements.
- 2009 Waterfront Planning Advisory Board re-established
  - Charged with providing recommendations to Council and city boards on development and other issues affecting the waterfront.



Population

Austin is the fourth largest city in Texas with a population of 790,390. It is the center of a metropolitan region of 1.7 million people. Austin has doubled in size every 25 years and is one of the fastest growing cities in the United States. It is the 14th largest city in the US with the 6th highest increase in population over the last decade. Austin is the capitol of the state of Texas.

Economics

High technology is a significant sector of the Austin economy with strong ties to the engineering and computer science programs at the University of Texas at Austin. Major employers include Dell, the City of Austin, the State of Austin and the University of Austin. Austin is an emerging life sciences and pharmaceutical center. Tax incentives in the 2000s drive the development of new residential towers in the city's urban core. The music industry is another major economic cluster with the South by Southwest (SXSW) festival having an estimated $167 million economic impact in 2010.

Government

Austin is governed and managed by a city council of seven at-large members with an elected mayor and hired city manager.

Current Planning Context

The following initiatives were presented to the SDAT team as important to understanding the current planning context:

- **Imagine Austin**. Austin's draft comprehensive plan identified the South Shore Central sub-district as a regional growth area allowing for more urban and mixed-uses.
- **Urban Rail.** Austin was engaged in studying alternative routes for urban rail systems that would link the north and south shores of the lake.
- **Auditorium Shore Improvements.** Directly to the west of South Shore Central, this $2 million restoration of Auditorium Shores would shift the hike and bike trail away from the river and address shoreline erosion.
- **Boardwalk.** Due to be completed in 2013, the boardwalk would close the "missing link" in the continuous public access trail along Lady Bird Lake. The boardwalk was planned to start at the eastern edge of the South Shore Central lakefront.
- **Adjacent Neighborhood Plans.** Neighborhood plans were important planning tools over the past three 33 years since the last comprehensive plan was completed. The Bouldin Creek and South River City neighborhood plans both address the South Shore Central sub-district.

Study Area

South Shore Central includes 88 acres of assembled parcels in an area intersected by South Congress Avenue and East Riverside Drive. It is located on the south side of Lady Bird lake across from the Central Business District which is accessed via the Congress Avenue Bridge. Major parcels include:

- Austin American Statesman – 18.3 acres
- Crocket Holdings/State of Texas building – 12.3 acres
- Hyatt Hotel – 9.5 acres
- City of Austin/One Texas Center building– 5 acres

Key Issues

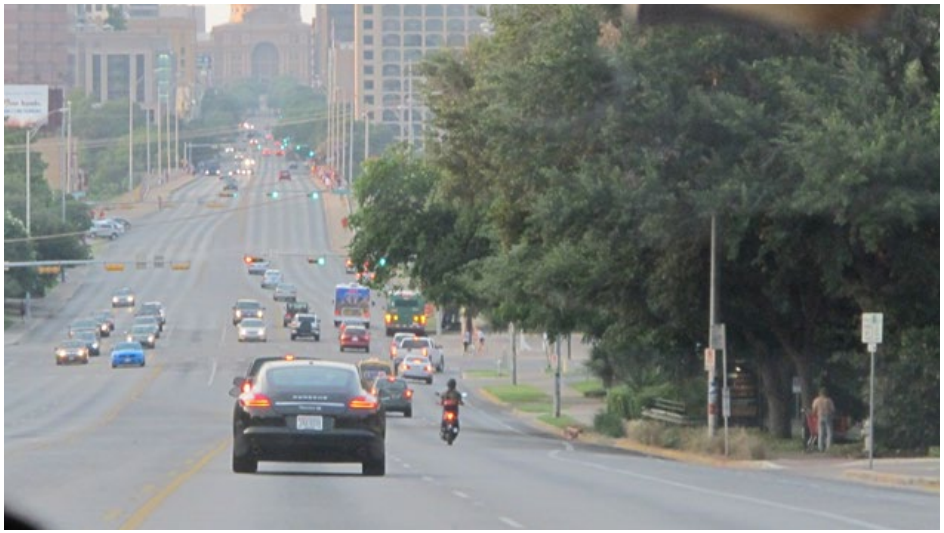
- Disrupted street grid and pedestrian connections
- Lack of infrastructure
- Lack of affordable housing
- Relationship to small-scale neighboring residential communities
- Three key parcels along the entire lakefront in the district have pre-existing entitlements (PUD) that leave little room for negotiation
- Confusing and unpredictable ordinances guiding development in South Shore Central

FINDINGS

Based upon the team's site visits, stakeholder interviews, public meetings and research, the following findings were presented at the June 6, 2012 public meeting. These findings informed the series of design, planning, transportation and economic development recommendations.

A Growing City

As Austin continues to double in size every 25 years, it is at risk of losing the human scale of its residential enclaves. It is the center of a sprawling metropolitan region with the automobile dominating Austin's landscape. The lack of pedestrian amenities and connectivity is noticeable.



A Lake Under Siege

Lady Bird Lake is a treasured natural resource that is beloved by all Austin. It is suffering from over-use, the impacts of adjacent development and the environmental challenges of flood control and water quality.

History at Risk

With growth comes development. With the absence of a strong historical preservation ordinance and controls, Austin runs the risk of obliterating its past. Historic bungalows razed for high-rise condominium projects are symptomatic of the lack of historic sensitivity and protection.

A Resurgent Culture

Austin has a rich cultural environment that includes a strong music sector and a fertile organic street life. Examples of this include dancing in parking lots and the wealth of food trucks along South Congress Avenue.

A Code is not a Vision

Current regulation guiding waterfront development is embedded in the Austin City Code. While the 1986 master plan for then-Town Lake created principles for public space development, it is not a substitute for a vision for Lady Bird Lake. The team found a lack of a common ground vision for the future of the lake.

Austin City Code

§ 25-2-175 WATERFRONT OVERLAY (WO) DISTRICT PURPOSE AND BOUNDARIES.

(A) The purpose of the waterfront overlay (WO) district is to promote the harmonious interaction and transition between urban development and the park land and shoreline of Town Lake and the Colorado River.

(B) The WO district applies to all property in its boundaries.

(C) The boundaries of the WO district are identified in Appendix B of this chapter.

Source: Section 13-2-160(a); Ord. 990225-70; Ord. 031211-11.

Division 6. Waterfront Overlay District Requirements for Town Lake Park.

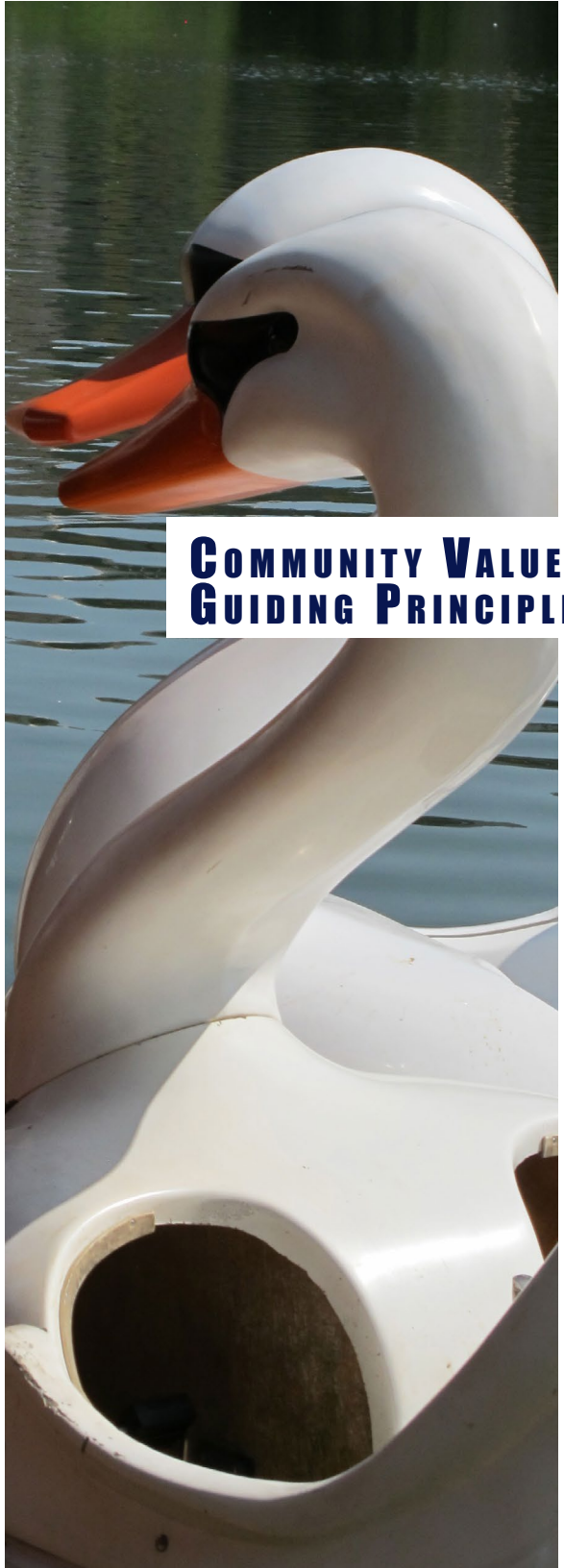
§ 25-2-671 TOWN LAKE PARK TERMS.

Lack of Connectivity

The team found a significant lack of connectivity between the South Shore Central District and the lakefront trail and between the adjoining neighborhoods and the lakefront.

There is no Clarity

The lakefront suffers from a lack of clarity surrounding waterfront development. A plethora of agencies and boards have review and advisory authority over waterfront development without any civic principles guiding the implementation of a lakefront vision. Importantly, the Waterfront Planning Advisory Board, charged with providing recommendations to Council and city boards on development and other issues affecting the waterfront, does not have jurisdictional oversight over waterfront development.



Community Values & Guiding Principles

COMMUNITY VALUES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Over two days, the SDAT Team participated in several spirited conversations held in a variety of forums including roundtable discussions, a community open house, site tours and meetings with city staff. They spoke with members of the community, surrounding neighborhood residents, design professionals, students, stakeholders, property owners, developers, and members of the City's various Boards and Commissions including the Waterfront Planning Advisory Board. During the community open house the team asked the participants to describe what they value about Austin, and the waterfront. They also asked who will use the South Central Shore District and what will be there. The SDAT team members heard reoccurring messages from the multitude of conversations which led to the following values that influenced the development concepts for the South Central Shore District.

Values

Nature in the City speaks to the community's sentiment to incorporate natural features into the South Central Shore District. Austin's natural assets when combined with development, equates to saving and promoting heritage trees and the significant tree canopy found in the city. Nature in the city touches lightly along the lake and embraces the natural buffer transition between the lake and future development. Nature in the city incorporates open space, both public and private, creating breathing room and views between buildings. There is also a desire to protect the water quality in the water shed by developing a green district in the South Central Shore Area.

Culture is at the heart of the community. It has broadened over time and taken on a casual personality. The Austin culture is very accepting of testing new ideas and inventions. Development culture is defined as friendly, safe, transparent, and welcoming. The culture of development in the South Central Shore District means allowing open space with connections to the lake without creating barriers.

Recreation is the backbone of Lady Bird Lake with the near shore hike and bike trail and the boating activities. Austin is an active community with strong ties to the Lake. Green open space is a key value in the future development of the South Central Shore District. Opportunities to incorporate recreation are numerous and a key factor to its success. Walkable neighborhood connections through the District to the lake will inspire a healthy community.

Weirdness is uniquely Austin. Its funkiness brings people together, brands the city and gives it identity. It is part of the accepting culture that is expressed through art, music, food and people. Welcome and encourage Austin's weirdness to penetrate the South Central Shore District. Make room for food trailers and ATMs'.

Community describes Austin's celebrations as they rally around events, festivals, and entertainment activities. Austin's community means having the ability to integrate these activities by blending their celebrations with the open space, plazas and streets both private and public in the South Central Shore District.

Creativity attracts creative minds, encourages explorations and provides a safety net for good and not so good ideas. Creativity in Austin is an invitation to express who you are. The design of the South Central Shore District needs to encourage this creativity by promoting art and entertainment in the public and private plazas and open space areas. Allow these spaces to become temporary festival gardens.

Diversity has broadened over time. The presence of the University and the growing technology industry moving to Austin attracts an international population infusing variety into the community. The community is open and accepting of diversity.

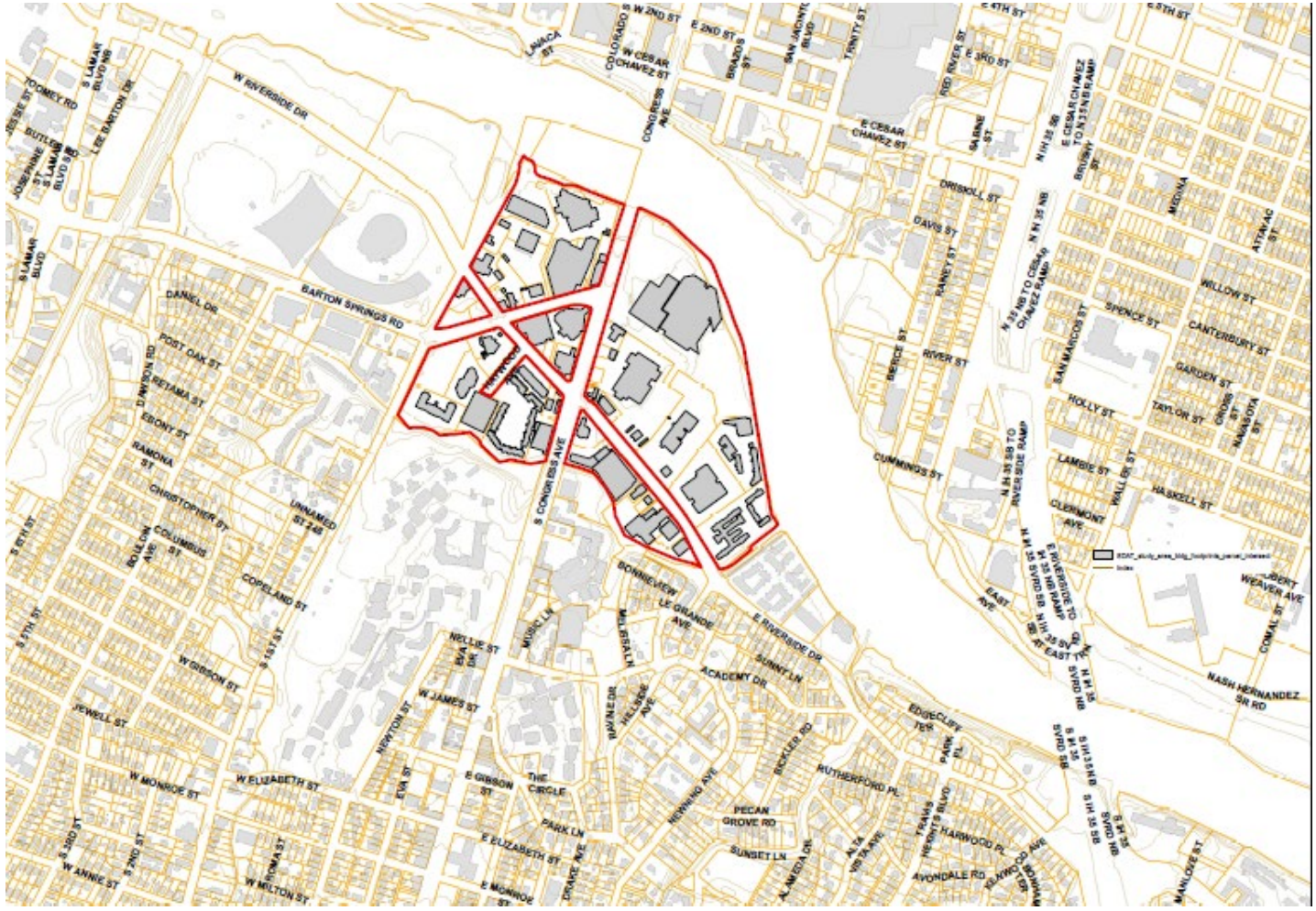
Guiding Principles

Combining the community's values with the South Central Shore District, the SDAT team arrived at three guiding principles:

1. Water as a Resource. Whether you drink it, view it, recreate and celebrate with it, water is one of Austin's most valuable resources. You must protect and respect it as the South Central Shore District develops over time.

2. Development offers Opportunity. Development is the catalyst to achieve the things the community values about the South Central Shore District. Open space, waterfront trail connections, public and private plazas can exist among the buildings in the district.

3. Place People at the Center. An all-inclusive welcoming creative community with people of diverse interests, skills and backgrounds. A place where people can celebrate, recreate, shop, live, work and enjoy the weirdness of Austin.

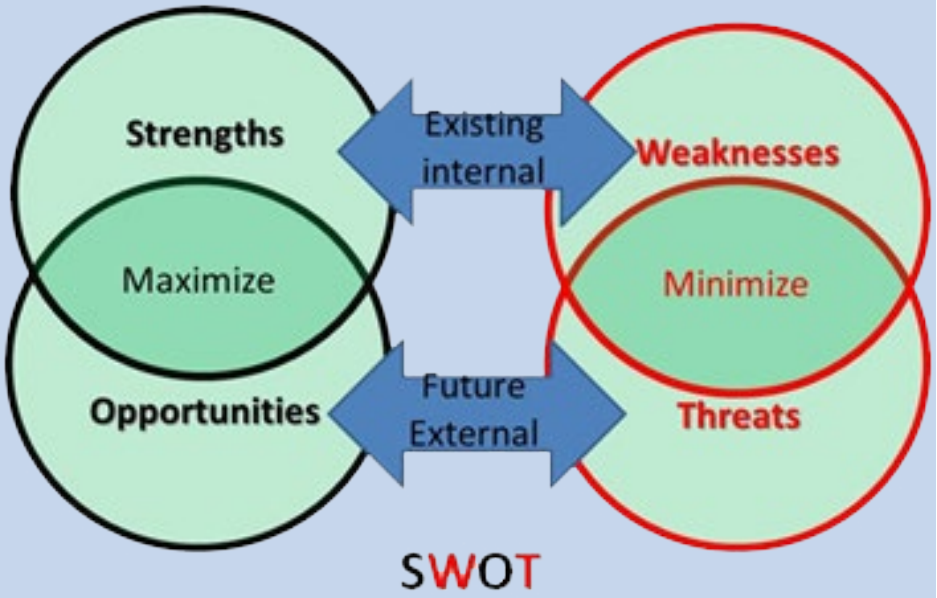


SWOT ANALYSIS

SWOT Analysis is the analysis of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats of an organization, place, or project. The analysis came out of the corporate planning but has been adopted for city planning.

- Strengths are the existing strengths of a place, including both the place itself and the entities involved with making that place what it is.
- Weaknesses are the existing weaknesses of a place.
- Opportunities are the external forces that can help drive improvements.
- Threats are the external forces that can create new challenges.

Obviously, planning involves building on strengths, taking advantage of opportunities, and converting weaknesses and threats into new opportunities.



SWOT

As with all neighborhoods, South Shore Central shares some strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats with the City of Austin in its entirety and has some of its own. The SDAT focused on those that can and should help shape South Shore Central and the surrounding neighborhoods (South River City and Bouldin Creek).

Strengths As They Exist Today

South Shore Central's location at the edge of downtown, adjacent to Lady Bird Lake, abutting rich vibrant neighborhoods (especially South River City and Bouldin Creek), and bisected by high volume arterials provides it with the basic bones of a vibrant mixed use neighborhood.

1. Waterfront: Lady Bird Lake helps define and anchor South Shore Central. Today, it is the primary placemaking feature of the neighborhood. It draws in a huge number of users who arrive on foot, by bicycle, and by car, creating guaranteed traffic and wonderful views.

2. Unique environmental attributes: In a small area, the natural and human-built environmental features are varied and interesting: relatively flat shoreline on the west, bats under the South Congress Avenue Bridge, steeper shoreline on the east, tributaries to the lake, and of course different views of downtown. These features provide diversity and create opportunities for people to have different "special places of the heart" within this area.

3. Access to downtown: Vibrant downtown Austin, with all of its cultural, civic, recreation, commercial and economic functions is easily accessible, both physically and visually.

4. Not downtown: South Shore Central is not downtown and fills a different niche for its residents, workers, and visitors, providing a diversity of opportunity within commercial Austin.

5. Rich and vibrant neighborhoods: Residential and mixed use neighborhoods to the east, south, and west (South River City and Bouldin Creek) are very healthy, strong, diverse, and relatively affordable. There is an existing and potential synergy between those neighborhoods and this district.

6. Austin's economic engines: Austin, both downtown and elsewhere, has a vibrant and growing economy with strong growth pressures which provide customers and demand for redevelopment.

7. Strong surface transportation: Highways and surface roads, while congested during rush hour, provide relatively easy access within the city and the region and provide extra capacity that can serve a growing South Shore Central.

8. Skilled city staff and community expertise: With a clear consensus vision, city staff and city public and private institutions have the expertise to do the follow through to implement that vision.

9. Imagine Austin: Austin's new Imagine Austin comprehensive plan, in the final stages of adoption at this writing, creates a strong broad based consensus for a big picture vision of Austin. Its tag line, "Vibrant, Livable, Connected," applies to Austin and could, eventually, apply to South Shore Central.

Weaknesses As They Exist Today

Today, South Shore Central is not "Vibrant, Livable, or Connected." In spite of its incredible resource (the lake, downtown, and neighborhoods) it is an urban area largely devoid of street life or amenities, except along the water. In spite of its easy access, it is surprisingly unconnected to the water, downtown, and the neighborhoods.

1. Unfriendly streetscapes: The streetscape of South Shore Central is dominated by parking lots, asphalt, obsolete buildings, buildings with no porosity or otherwise with a poor street presence facing the street, sidewalks with no green strips separating them from traffic, very limited street trees and street furniture, and a transportation system that doesn't connect to the area.

2. Superblocks: South Shore Central has discontinuous streets and large distances between street intersections instead of the kind of urban interconnected grid that makes downtown Austin and other successful urban areas to thrive. This creates a lack of connectivity, isolation between the streets and uses, and a general lack of sense of place.

3. Limited riverfront access: It is hard to access Lady Bird Lake, one of the most valuable resources in South Shore Central, either visually or physically. Residents know how to get to the lake, and there is directional signage, but the need to walk through unattractive and undesirable streetscapes to reach to lake creates a barrier. While many nearby residents do walk, the difficult access reduces the amount of pedestrian access and increases the number of people who live nearby but still drive to the lake instead of walk. The planned Lady Bird Lake boardwalk will complete

access around the lake, but there does not appear to be an equivalent effort to create access to the lake.

4. Environment and stormwater: Large expanses of asphalt, very limited built and natural stormwater renovation facilities, parking lots built to the edge of tributaries to the lake, and a general lack of green infrastructure cause significant amount of nutrients and pollutants to reach the lake every time it rains.

5. Unsafe and undesirable for bicycles and pedestrians: The road network is clearly designed for and optimized around motor vehicles. Bicycle and pedestrian access is secondary and poor. This makes such access both unsafe, but even more undesirable.

6. Weak transit: Transit availability and frequency is limited, buses and transit stops are often unprotected from the elements, and front doors a long undesirable walk from bus stops. The weakness, however, is not simply the frequency of service but, more critically, an urban landscape designed around the density and needs of cars, with an overlay of buses added at the end. The system is not designed around what would encourage transit use.

7. Zoning that doesn't support the community vision: The existing zoning is confusing and doesn't automatically lead to the kind of outcomes and development patterns that either neighborhoods or developers want. In fact, there is a lack of clear vision statements as to what the community wants, which makes it impossible for zoning to achieve any clear vision. In addition, variances, Planned Unit Developments (PUDs), and existing entitlements all create challenges to creating a consensus supported comprehensive land use system.

Opportunities From External Pressures That Can Make The Area Great

1. A growing and vibrant city and regional economy that can help drive redevelopment: Austin in general and South Shore Central in particular are growing and have the opportunity to attract new capital to get it right this time. It is possible to get the kind of quality urban environment that many cities can only dream of.

2. Opportunity and support for new access to and along the lake: It is possible to create many new physical and visual access corridors to the lake with public investments and in conjunction with redevelopment. The City can offer the potential new density that will attract quality development while enhancing the resource.

3. Potential density that can make transit viable: There is no level of subsidy that can make transit attractive in a low density area where buildings are set back from the street and the streetscape makes it unattractive for users to walk the last 500' (maximum) from a transit point to their destination. South Shore Central can attract and support the density and the street layouts to make transit attractive.

4. Land available for redevelopment: There is a once in a lifetime opportunity to get it right in South Shore Central. The amount of land available for redevelopment now or coming available over the next decade is staggering, creating exciting opportunities for great development and amenities to serve the community.

5. A new pedestrian-scale street grid within South Shore Central: Given the amount of land available for the development and the layout of those parcels, it is possible to get a true pedestrian-scale street grid, albeit not quite as regular and symmetrical as in downtown Austin.

Threats From External Pressures That Must Be Addressed To Make The Area Great

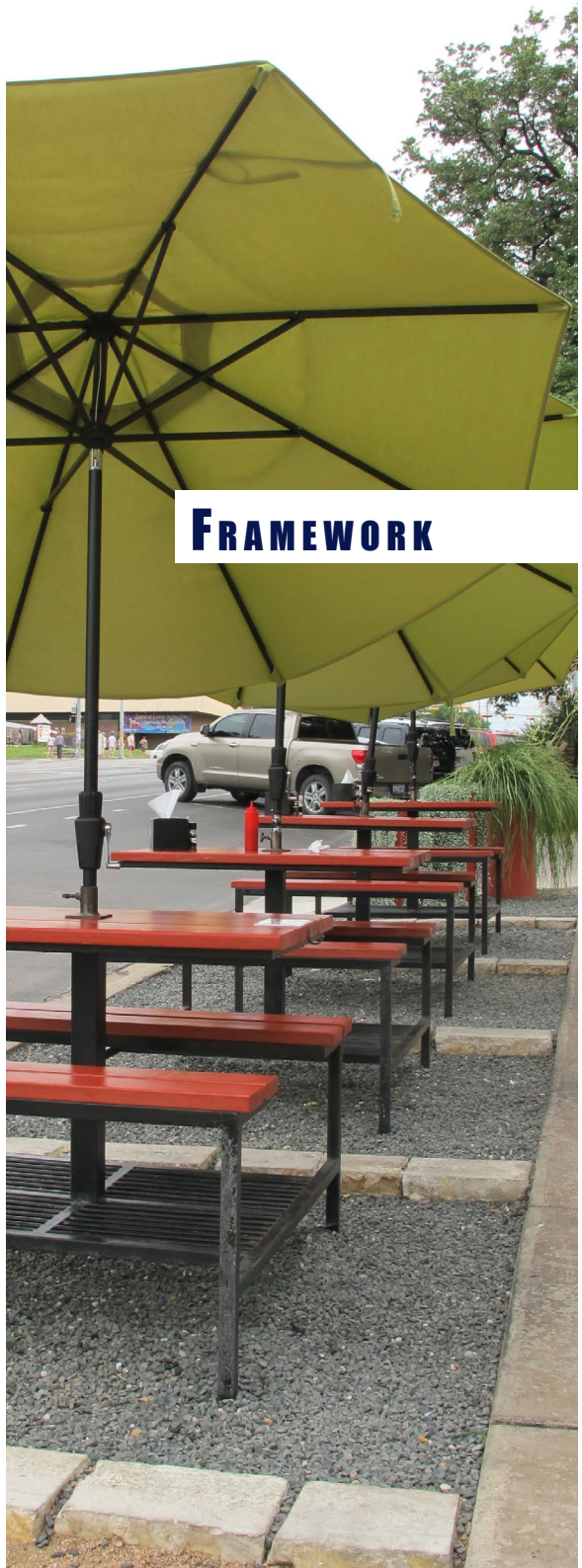
1. A walled lake: If there is no clear vision and consensus, some projects will go through the current ad-hoc approval process (especially PUDs and variances) and at least some projects will emerge that will create a new visual and physical wall separating significant areas of South Shore Central and the surrounding neighborhoods (South River City and Bouldin Creek) from the lake.

2. Lost development opportunities: Good development can drive the urban remaking that can make South Shore Central great. If good projects are driven away (by poor vision, regulations, and investment strategies) these opportunities may be lost, possibly for decades if bad projects take their place.

3. Lack of consensus leading to non-rational ad-hoc decision making: If there is a lack of clear consensus and development choices are framed as "developer versus neighborhood" there will be no clear path forward for projects, no dependable guarantees of approval, and only decisions that being made on an ad-hoc basis. This unnecessary conflict inevitably leads to less than optimal "win-win" solutions and instead creates projects where there are winners and losers, or sometimes just losers.

4. Lack of trust leading to rejection of all projects, good and bad: If there is a lack of willingness to find common ground and a lack of trust in "them" there is a risk that good projects will be tossed out with bad projects or that good projects will never even be proposed.

5. Unreasonable expectations about what the economy can drive: Ultimately, a project has to pencil out for a developer in order to move forward. The most expensive unit rental or sale price may not be able to support all the demands of the community. If community members expect every project to be a community Christmas tree and if City government is unwilling to invest in infrastructure that will provide dramatic returns on that investment, good development will not move forward.



Framework

THREE CRITICAL GUIDING PRINCIPLES HELPED TO DEVELOP RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AUSTIN

I. Water as a Resource

As South Shore Central redevelops, investments in water management, landscape and infrastructure design should incorporate the guiding principle that water is a resource.

Functional Landscapes

All landscapes should be functional. Some examples of functional landscapes that catch, convey, clean and distribute water include rain gardens, multi-functional retention ponds, swales in urban streetscapes, and storm water planters. These landscape features help to reduce downstream flooding, hold storm water for reuse, reduce pollutant loads through filtration, and promote groundwater recharge through infiltration. They can also serve a traffic calming function, reduce heat islands and provide shading.

Water Management Systems

Water management systems should accompany functional landscapes to achieve the best results in water conservation and reclamation for example (See the "Green Infrastrcture" section for additional details).

EcoDistrict Resource Management

Looking more broadly at water as a resource in the South Shore Central area, "EcoDistrict" resource management including water is as important as site specific landscape and water management design.

An EcoDistrict is a neighborhood or district with a broad commitment to accelerate neighborhood-scale sustainability through technologies and strategies such as energy and water management systems, green streets, and resource conservation. EcoDistricts commit to achieving sustainability performance goals, guiding district investments and community action, and tracking the results over time. Applied to the South Shore Central, the Eco-District approach may attempt to balance water consumed in the area with water produced or reclaimed.


Stormwater Streetscapes
Wide Riparian Buffers
Stormwater Treatment Landscapes
Water Receiving Landscapes
Active Recreation
Active Agriculture

II. Re-Development Offers Opportunity

A second guiding principle for in the re-development of South Shore Central is that redevelopment offers an opportunity. This re-development could provide more green space that is accessible and usable, improved connections to the downtown area, increased jobs and tax base, increased retail in the area with more corner lot space for businesses, and improved transportation connections including improved walkability.

Site Design

Incorporating sustainability principles in site design has demonstrated benefits of reducing negative impacts on the environment, improving the health and comfort of building occupants, and improving building performance. In addition to valuing water as a resource, consider the following:

- minimize non-renewable energy consumption
- use environmentally preferable products
- enhance indoor environmental quality
- optimize building and infrastructure operational and maintenance practices
- balance pedestrian needs with auto access

Using a sustainable site design approach encourages decisions at each phase of the design process that will reduce negative impacts on the environment and the health of the occupants, without compromising the bottom line. Sustainable site design positively impacts all phases of a building's life-cycle, including design, construction, operation and at some point decommissioning.

Accessing Green Space

In addition to the evident environmental benefits, green space has been proven to increase property values, business attraction and retention, and retail and tourism activity. The following summary of findings from recent studies details these benefits.

- There is a significant link between the value of a property and its proximity to parks, greenbelts and other green spaces. Studies of three neighborhoods in Boulder, Colo. indicated that property values decreased by $4.20 for each foot away from a greenbelt.
- Roadside Studies by the University of Washington stated that drivers indicated it was easier to locate roadside businesses when they were framed by trees and vegetation, rather than having this green material removed.
- A recent study in Los Angeles finds that employment opportunities are associated with the creation and long term maintenance of urban open space, as well as tourism dollars of visitors from parks, gardens and civic areas
- Small businesses choosing a new business location rank the amount of open space and proximity to parks and recreation as the number-one priority in site selection.


Live Music Venue
Transit Density
Great Greenways
Contiguous Frontage
& On-street Parking
Dense Housing
Mix of Uses
HAYWOOD AVE

III. Place People at the Center

Citizen participation in planning helps ensure efficient targeting of resources to community needs. Plans and designs that are citizen-based, reflecting citizen intents and visions for their communities' futures, have the highest probability of success.

Balancing Regional Travel and Neighborhood Connectivity

Austin is at a key point in the evolution of the City's transportation system. Like many US cities today, Austin is facing difficult decisions that involve making tradeoffs between regional travel and neighborhood connectivity. Each transportation improvement project offers the opportunity to improve pedestrian and bicycle connectivity, especially important in residential areas, around commercial centers and near community facilities such as schools, parks, and community centers such as the court house, health care facilities and public agencies.

Redevelopment of the South Shore Central area could transform an auto oriented area in the core of Austin and create a safe and accessible area for pedestrian, transit, and bicyclists.

A number of traffic and congestion studies in booming business centers are finding that too much traffic congestion can gridlock economic development. These studies are reinforcing that people will pay a premium to live in walkable communities by correlating pedestrian infrastructure investments, new business development, and drops in business vacancy rates resulting in increases in commercial tax revenues.

To address variations in weather, topography, and the need for longer distance trips, it is important that pedestrian and bicycle connector routes be interfaced with transit routes and incorporate comfort elements like shade trees, benches, and lighting (see the "Making Connections" section for more details).


Public Space
Statesman Repurposed for Hotel
Human Powered Travel
Bicycle Training Park
Food Trailers & Public Space
Market Space
Repurposed Buildings for Bars/Hotels/Restaurants
OPEN
hey cupcake!
i love you so much.

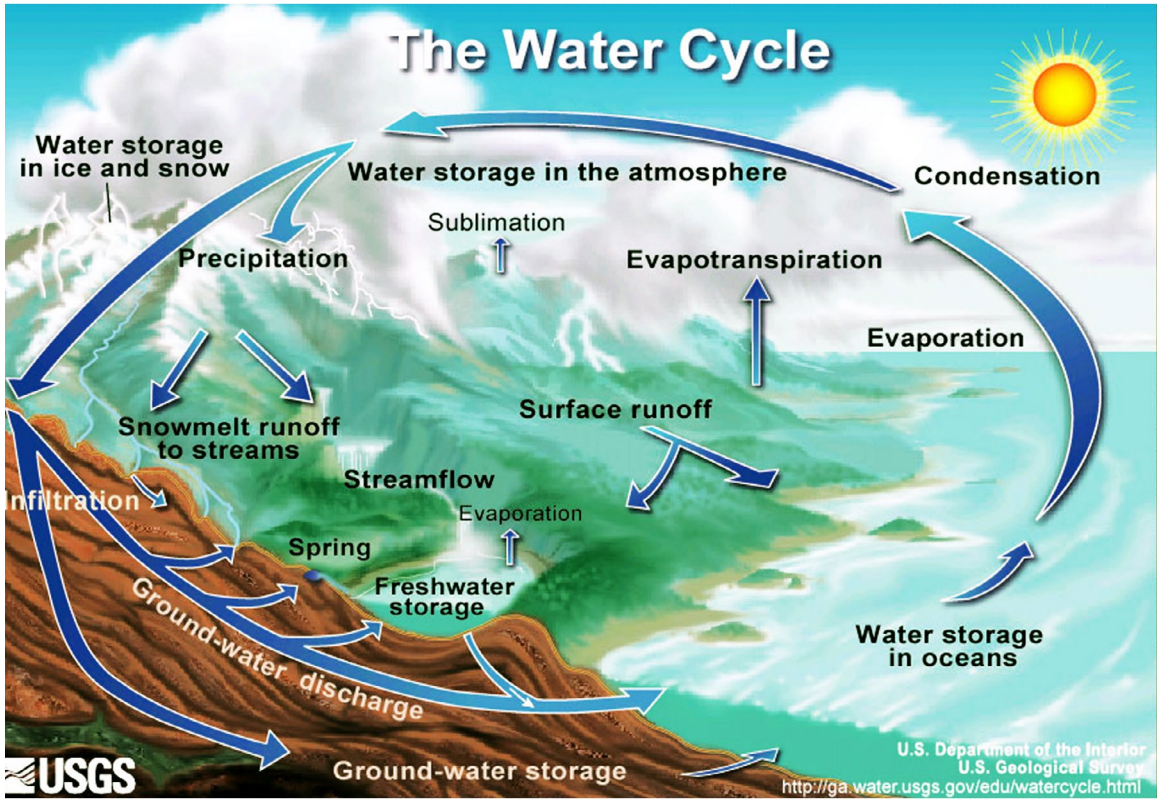
Green Infrastructure

WATER AS A RESOURCE

An Introduction to Green Infrastructure

In support of ecological sustainability, green infrastructure addresses the root cause of pollution exposure to water sources. Whether the pollution source is combined sewage overflow from an inundated storm sewer, heavy metals from vehicular traffic washed from road surfaces by precipitation, or an increase in sediment and temperature of water due to increased runoff from impervious development, urban environments are often in direct conflict with the health of the water systems that flow through them. As Austin commences with redevelopment throughout South Shore Central, green infrastructure can help embrace clean water as a critical resource and address pollution at its sources.

As meadows and forests are cleared for farmland… and as farmland is overtaken by building development… and as development grows into the towns and cities we know today… each step of this succession sees a decrease in land permeability where precipitation meets the earth. The plants and soils that existed in predevelopment times intercepted, absorbed, and cleaned the water that fell to earth. Human development historically has removed the majority of this plant matter where we have built cities, thus compromising soil health and substituting permeability with impermeable roofs and roadways. These actions subsequently have shifted the responsibility of stormwater management from nature to us.



Nature knows water best. In nature, stormwater management is a decentralized practice, where most precipitation becomes a resource at the point which it contacts the earth. Plants use it. Soils absorb it. Common human practice since the advent of plumbing and grey infrastructure is to capture as much water as possible with impermeable surfaces and dispose of it through a more centralized system of pipes. This, however, is no longer an effective approach for the three key facets of stormwater management:: water volume, water quality, and the rate of water discharge. For example, a community needs only to surpass the threshold of greater than 10% impervious cover to see the health of its watershed's aquatic habitats begin a rapid decline. Most urban areas commonly approach 50% imperviousness. Traditional

grey infrastructure fails where green infrastructure can help at maintaining healthy aquatic systems.

The Value of Green Infrastructure

Green infrastructure can reduce development costs. It decreases the need for inlet devices, the need for clearing and extensive grading and paving, the size and quantity of storm drain and sewer piping, and the size or need for stormwater detention basins. Green infrastructure can also provide opportunity for community engagement and empowerment. Prime sites for green infrastructure implementation are often schools, parks, and in the public realm – where homes meet the street. The ownership such sites imbue and inspire translate into opportunities for outreach and stewardship. Costs and resources related to implementation and maintenance of green infrastructure can be shared with the support and labor of an engaged community.

Green infrastructure can provide many ecosystem services–the benefits that humans receive from ecosystems. Without street trees, parks, the urban forest, and the daylit streams that might run through them, cities would have more air and noise pollution, hotter microclimates, more polluted water, and far fewer opportunities for active and passive recreation. With guidance from the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, dollar values can now be applied to the direct services that healthy urban ecosystems provide. As an example, for every dollar spent on a new street tree, New York City receives $5.60 worth of benefits, including energy savings from shade, improved air quality by absorbing pollutants, carbon sequestration to combat climate change, a reduction in stormwater runoff and required infrastructure, and an increase in private real estate property values. In addition, there is an inverse relationship to the values of green infrastructure versus grey infrastructure over time. As ecosystems and their components mature and grow healthier, they improve their provision of services. Conversely, as grey infrastructure grows older, the need for investment and repair increases.

Green Infrastructure and Low Impact Development

Water quality issues are related to many means of contamination related to land use, from the heavy metals in air pollution and roof shingles, to an overload of nutrients and bacteria from lawn fertilizers and pet waste. Additionally, the design of urban and suburban North America is predominantly a car habitat. Development is commonly driven by the placement and generous sizing of roads and parking lots for personal vehicles. This further feeds into a culture of convenience where speedy independent travel and adequate parking have become the desire of the user. With this comes more pollution as oil and gas inevitably leak from aging vehicles and heavy metals such as copper from brake dust pollute runoff and poison aquatic habitats.

All of these sources can be mitigated before their impacts become irreversible. Low Impact Development is a means to maintain or re-establish the predevelopment hydrology of a site by creating performative landscapes. These landscapes are designed to promote evaporation, filtration, infiltration, and reuse of rainwater and runoff to capture and sequester pollution while maintaining an appropriate

water balance to promote the health of natural systems. They begin at the site scale with the user experience, but bridge the neighborhood and regional scales as well. Water connects each and is the driver for both their form and function.

Where impermeability of cities is the underlying disorder, what is known as the first flush can be seen as its primary symptom. During any storm event, the first ½" to ¾" of precipitation is what delivers the collected cocktail of pollutants to receiving water bodies. In Austin, 90% of storms produce 1.4" of rainfall, so green infrastructure management tools of Low Impact Development should be designed to address the volume produced by these storm events and intercept that first flush. Green infrastructure subsequently should be implemented as a means to manage the large number of cumulative small storms, not solely the major infrequent storm events as grey infrastructure does.

The green infrastructure tools needed to decrease the volume, increase the quality, and decrease the discharge rate of water in a stormwater management system, are designed to mimic the predevelopment hydrology of the site. Therefore, they are primarily designed for evaporation, infiltration, filtration, and storage (where the primary driver of conventional stormwater

SITE STRATEGY 1 SOCIAL FABRIC
SITE STRATEGY 2 PRODUCTIVE LANDSCAPES
SITE STRATEGY 3 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

BUILDING TYPE 1 RETROFIT
BUILDING TYPE 2 GUT AND REHAB
BUILDING TYPE 3 NEW CONSTRUCTION

management is conveyance). To achieve this, the kit of integrated management tools that is needed embodies multifunctionality, with many of the tools addressing each of the three key facets of stormwater management. The combination of the management tools used will depend entirely upon the parameters of the site in which their implementation is proposed.

Addressing Volume, Quality, and Rate of Runoff

The role of grey infrastructure is to encourage impervious cover to provide fast and effective drainage. Its role is to deliver water received by a site quickly away from that site as to prevent flooding events and therefore is not typically designed to restrict volume. Controlling the volume of runoff from a site can be achieved in one of three ways: capture for reuse, infiltration, and evapotranspiration. These three considerations help restore water balance to a site by responding to the other 90%, non-flood prone, storm events and encouraging intended flow and use of stormwater. They consider the daily reality and ecological needs of a place, and not only the anticipation of the worst-case scenario of a large, infrequent storm event (e.g. a 100-year storm).

Green infrastructure achieves a control of volume runoff primarily by decreasing the imperviousness of a site and returning it to its predevelopment condition. Beginning with the planning phase of a project, development in areas of a site with a floodplain, streams and riparian buffers, wetlands, steep slopes, and well-draining soils should be avoided. To encourage interception – the capture of precipitation by leaves and branches – mature plant matter, especially trees, should be preserved wherever possible or replaced and enhanced if removed. To encourage evapotranspiration – the integral component to the hydraulic cycle where the sun's rays and the transpiration of plants work together to create evaporation (that eventually becomes precipitation) – plant matter should not only be preserved, but enhanced wherever possible.

When roads are built, effective impervious widths should be kept to a minimum. In places where paving is necessary, such as with surface parking lots, a combination of pervious paving and subsurface detention should be implemented. Further, the disconnection of impervious surfaces from one another, while connecting them to such management tool as a raingarden or infiltration basin, encourages

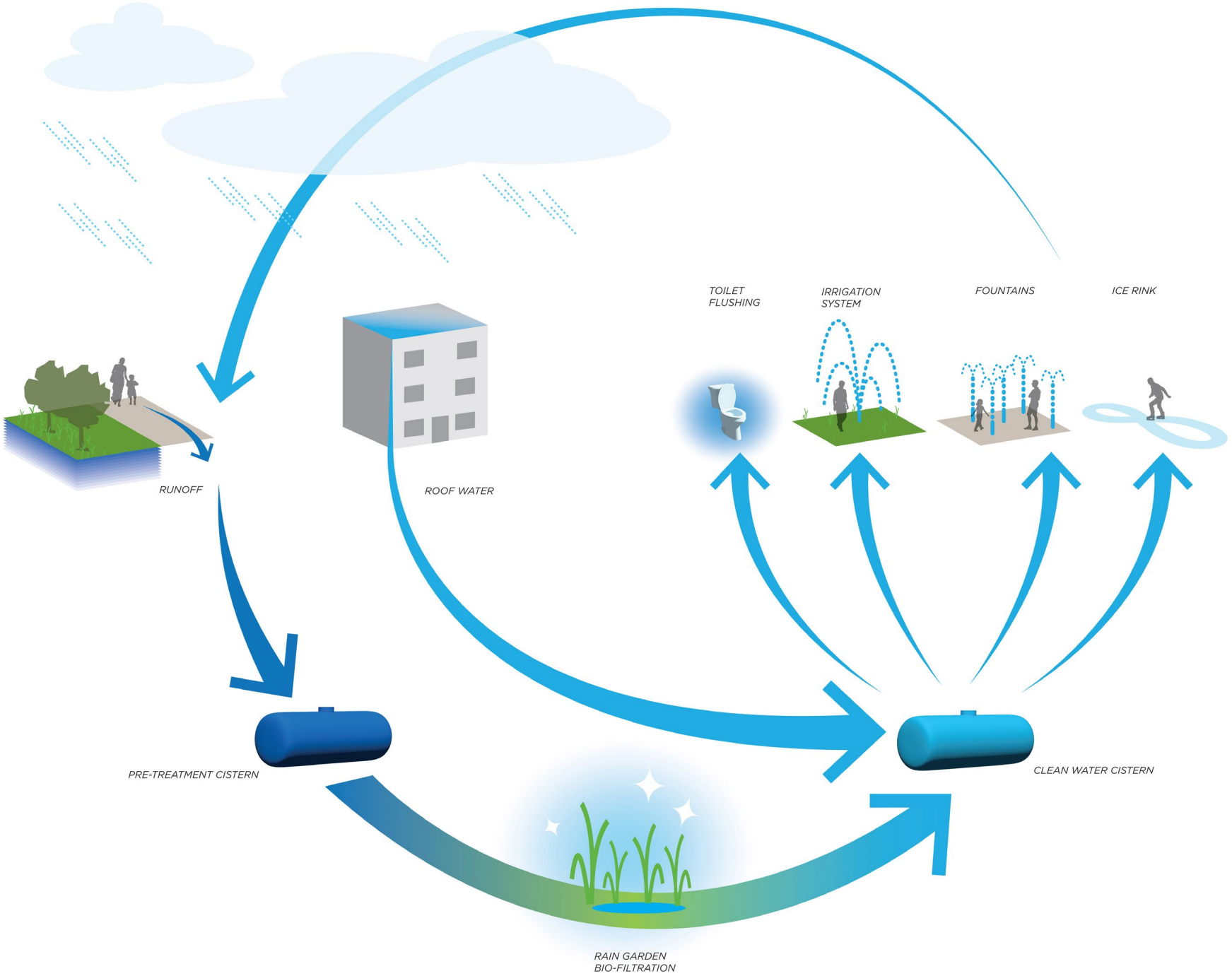
opportunities for infiltration while also helping to decrease runoff rates. When considering the building, the roof is the culprit and requires intervention. Cisterns and rain barrels can capture rainwater and use it for irrigation and building services such as toilet flushing and heating and cooling.

As mentioned, grey infrastructure is often designed to accommodate increased runoff rates from developed sites to encourage water to flow off site as quickly as possible and avoid the risk of flooding. This method works as long as cities do not outgrow their storm sewer pipe capacity, and as long as all water is captured and is suitably treated prior to release. Otherwise, the problems are simply being conveyed downstream. With exponential population growth taking place all over the world, cities are growing at rapid rates, and further outgrowing the capacity of their storm sewer systems the more they are developed. Subsequently, water quality in and around cities continues to degrade, the banks of receiving streams face severe erosion, and aquatic habitats are greatly compromised or eradicated.

Controlling runoff rates can also be achieved returning a site to its predevelopment discharge condition, but with a stronger focus on opportunities for detention and retention in urban areas where development density is a principal driver. During the design phase, consider the cross section of street verges, boulevards, and planted building setbacks not as mounds, but inverted as swales and trenches. These forms are designed for the capture, detention, and cleansing (with the proper plant and soil profile) of runoff from impervious surfaces. Further, the thresholds between permeability and impermeability should be equipped with flow control devices such as check dams and curb inlets with filtration strips. When considering the building, vegetated roofs and walls slow runoff rates. In addition, cisterns and rain barrels can capture and detain overflow and further help to regulate flow back into the system, while providing a supplemental and free volume of water.

Grey infrastructure solicits the help from mechanical solutions to control water quality by capturing the first flush. Devices range from simple sediment trenches to sequester sediment, to others as complex as hydrodynamic separators that capture a range of suspended pollutants from water flows. Each requires varying levels of maintenance to remove what was captured and guarantee functionality. These systems are still relevant and useful, however, without the added benefits to volume control and water cleansing that green infrastructure can provide, grey infrastructure cannot stand alone in the realm of sustainable development.

Water quality can be enhanced by biological assistance from plants, soil, and bacteria. Filtration, infiltration, and treatment are the three water quality control methods provided by green infrastructure. Filtration commonly occurs horizontally and at the intersection of permeability and impermeability and sequesters sediment with such devices as sand, filter fabric, or the root system of plants. Infiltration occurs vertically in devices such as bioswales and raingardens, when water passes through and is cleaned by plants and soil, while helping to recharge aquifers and groundwater flows. In the cases where wetlands are compromised, or removed altogether, constructed wetlands


TOILET FLUSHING
IRRIGATION SYSTEM
FOUNTAINS
ICE RINK
RUNOFF
ROOF WATER
PRE-TREATMENT CISTERN
CLEAN WATER CISTERN
RAIN GARDEN
BIO-FILTRATION

are necessary to account for the valuable phytoremediation, or the metabolizing of pollutants the colonies of bacteria populating them can provide. When considering the building again, the power of bacteria, as well as some plant species, can also be harnessed to provide cleansing services in additional green infrastructure, namely greywater and blackwater systems.

The Case for Austin

The Austin Watershed Protection Department has begun to harness means to protect the water sources of Lady Bird Lake and those that flow into it by focusing various projects on reducing the impact of flooding, erosion, and water pollution. The primary of the three guiding principles adopted for this project is to recognize water as a resource and progress the work of the Watershed Protection Department with green infrastructure. Whether you drink it, view it, recreate and celebrate with it, water is one of Austin's most valuable resources; it must be protected and respected as the South Central Shore District develops over time.

To recognize water as a resource, one must first acknowledge that all water that falls onto Austin and becomes runoff eventually finds its way into the lake. Enclosed is a list of three principles for South Shore Central (SSC) to guide its development with green infrastructure:

Green Infrastructure Principles for SSC Development

1. Consider water as a resource, not a burden

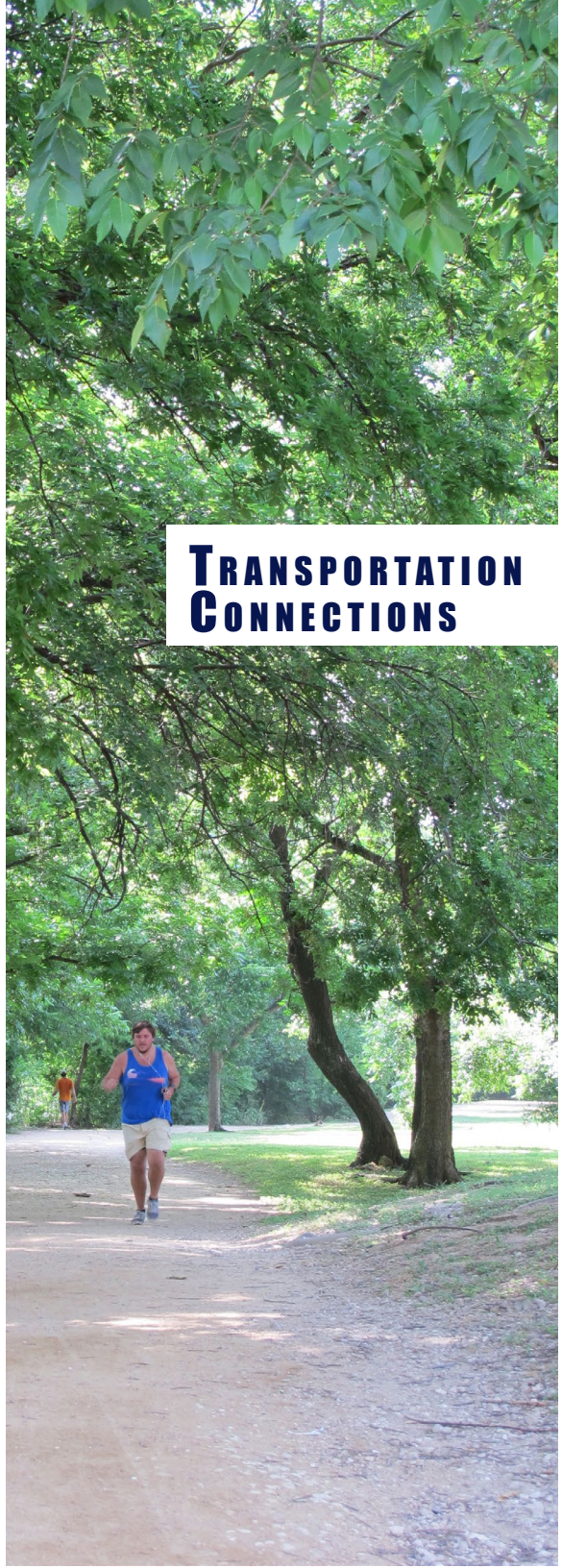
- Establish the Lady Bird Lake and its waterfront as a culturally valuable and performative landscape as well as the heart of Austin
- Improve human health and well-being through restorative effects of exposure to natural systems and through opportunities for active recreation
- Establish urban agriculture to provide connection to the land, an understanding of natural systems, and access to healthy eating

2. Protect all water sources

- Identify and entity to purchase and protect all waterfront land and identify it as public open space and protection for the water
- Establish an entity to purchase and protect all waterfront land
- Build active water management systems such as greywater and blackwater systems at the site scale and reclaimed water and living systems at the district scale

3. Preserve and restore ecological function through redevelopment of SSC

- Establish wide riparian buffers to support healthy habitat, and promote biodiversity and soil conservation
- Maintain water balance by considering the flows that enter and leave the site and managing these flows to work with natural systems
- Improve soil health by reducing soil compaction and capping, decreasing runoff to lessen erosion and pollution flows, and promoting nutrient cycling through maximized planting
- Design landscapes as "water receiving landscapes" to encourage water management and cleansing functionality



Transportation Connections

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Rail and Street Car Connections

Over the past 30 years, Austin leaders have worked to build a strong technology cluster, a diverse group of technology companies that complement each other, to augment other sectors of the City's economy, state government and the University of Texas. Each of these primary employment sectors are reliant on air travel and communications.

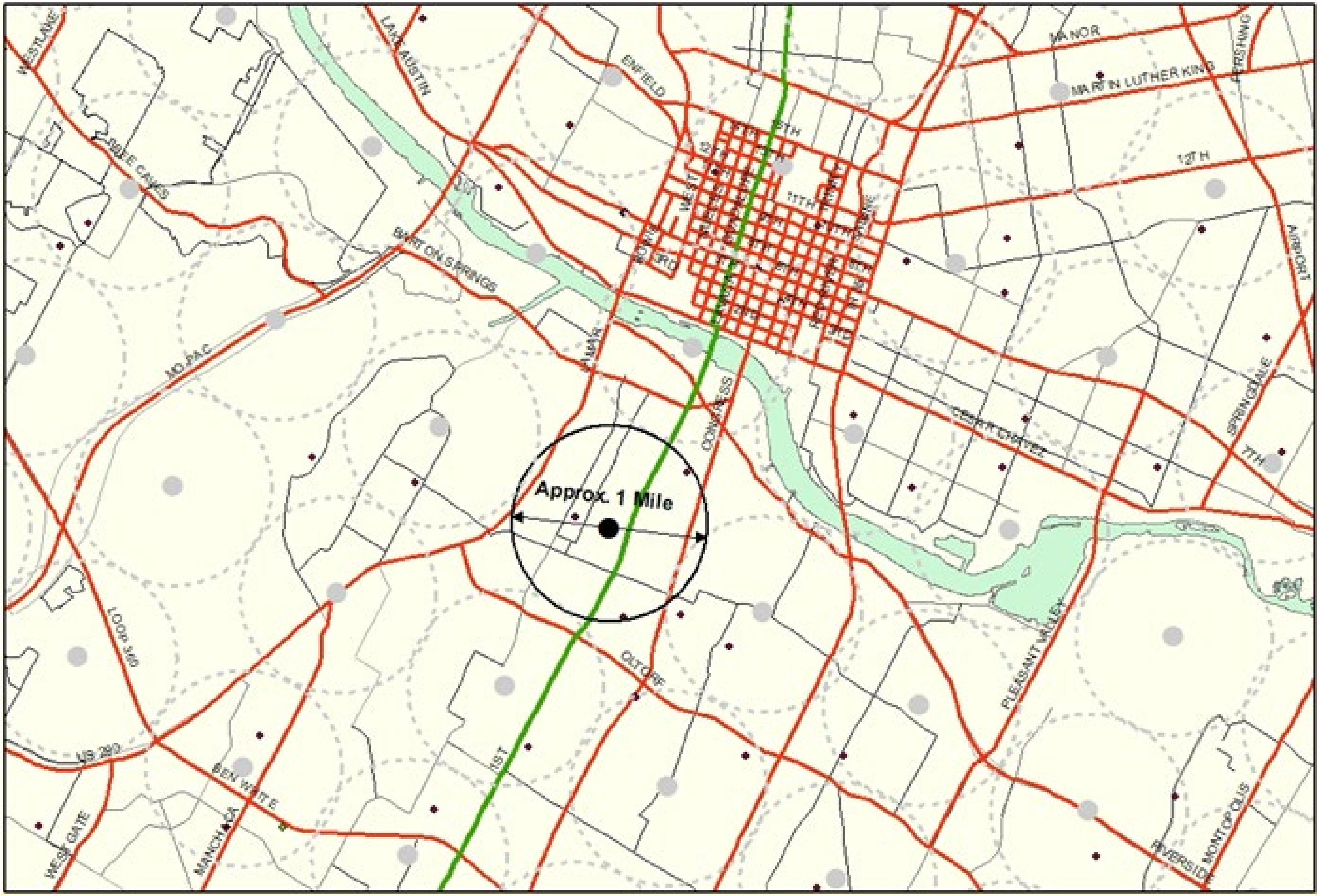
Austin currently lacks reliable multi-modal transportation connections to the International Airport located southeast of the City center. Travel from the airport to the downtown core and business locations in the region are highly susceptible to traffic conditions on the main highway routes, State Routes 71, 183, and 973. Business travel delays to and from the airport due to congestion and limited travel options cost employers millions annually with well over half the non-agricultural workforce employed in travel and communications dependant sectors (Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics). Based on these needs, it is important to develop more reliable and multi-modal airport connections in particular. Rail connections are available in many similar sized cities across the US and worldwide that will be competing with the Austin region for sought after technology jobs.

Street cars can provide additional north-south connectivity needed between the South Shore Central area, the downtown core and points north as well as helping the City to accomplish its goals by supporting infilling of compact, mixed use development along the Congress Avenue corridor.

It is important for the City to consider rail investments carefully as they are expensive and shown to have limited impacts on traffic congestion. The primary benefits of the rail and street car investments outlined in this report may be quality of life, the potential to support business attraction and retention, and re-development and revitalization of auto oriented areas to create a more compact, connected and walkable city.

Optimizing Bicycling for Transportation

A growing body of research and planning studies conclude that "low stress" connections or connections that minimize biking close to motor vehicles moving at higher speeds, noise, and exhaust fumes are necessary to attract people to use the bicycle for transportation. Taking the lessons of European cities, several cities across the US are applying criteria for classifying roads in terms of their level of traffic stress depending on characteristics like road width, traffic speed, bicycle facilities, on street parking, etc). After determining stress levels for the transportation system, further



Approx. 1 Mile
LAKE AUSTIN
ENFIELD
MANOR
MARTIN LUTHER KING
PERSHING
12TH
11TH
BARTON SPRINGS
MO PAC
LAMAR
CONGRESS
AIRPORT
7TH
OLTORF
PLEASANT VALLEY
LOOP 360
US 290
1ST
MANCHACA
RIVERSIDE
MONTOPOLIS

analysis determines connectivity. This is often evaluated using a one mile or two mile grid. Many of these studies are finding that arterial connections are vital for urban bicycle connectivity.

Applying a modified version of this analysis to the Austin city limits yields finding similar to those of Portland, San Jose, and others. Accommodating bicyclists in a way that lowers stress on key arterials, especially north-south arterials, will be necessary to improve bicycle connectivity in the City. A primary corridor for improving bicycle connectivity and serving as a 'spine' for bicycling north and south, based on initial analysis of Austin, appears to be the 1st Avenue Corridor that connects to the Guadalupe/Lavaca couplet. This corridor moves from the South Congress area through downtown providing a connection to the University area and points north. It also connects to the Lance Armstrong bicycle corridor that provides east-west connectivity.

Improving the 1st Avenue/Guadalupe/Lavaca couplet for bicycle connectivity can be achieved by installing dedicated bicycle facilities that separate cyclists from high speed traffic, by making improvements that reduce traffic speeds, and/or by making other improvements that create lower stress bicycle networks, a relatively low cost and high benefit solution that has the potential to impact traffic congestion far more than other higher cost options currently under consideration by the City.

Many cities across the US are finding that tradeoffs to improve bicycle and pedestrian connections are paying off in terms of increased biking and walking, decreased traffic congestion, improved safety, and increased retail activity. A recent study conducted by the City of Toronto, Canada indicates that pedestrians, cyclists and transit users account for the bulk of retail spending on Bloor Street West, a major commercial corridor in downtown Toronto. The study also finds that, contrary to popular belief, improved street designs that attract more pedestrians and cyclists will have a more positive economic impact on businesses than maintaining the existing parking on the street. Replicating this Toronto study for both 1st Avenue/Guadalupe/Lavaca couplet as well as Congress Avenue would help the City with difficult tradeoff decisions.

Combining the Elements

Throughout the SDAT process, the team has considered the community context, developed a number of findings, suggested guiding principles, looked at a range of opportunities, and considered several different directions for the site informed by fundamental points of view. The team examined all of this information and these ideas through a sieve of critical frameworks, and then produced recommendations that combine the best of everything we heard and discussed. Our recommendations can be broken down into a number of directions.

Super blocks are car oriented, with high traffic, pedestrian barriers, and lower tax base and jobs.

Street and Block Pattern

The district should be divided into more manageable urban blocks sizes. This allows for modules of development to proceed independently. It increases choices of circulation for vehicles, thereby reducing the stress on major streets. It increases the exposure of buildings to passing traffic, enhancing the economic value. It allows for sidewalks and street trees to serve as a glue to bind the district together visually and extend the urban tree canopy.

Soften the super blocks to make them more pedestrian friendly, and less of a barrier.

An important recommendation is to eliminate the current "X" intersection, with its acute angles and confusing turning

.

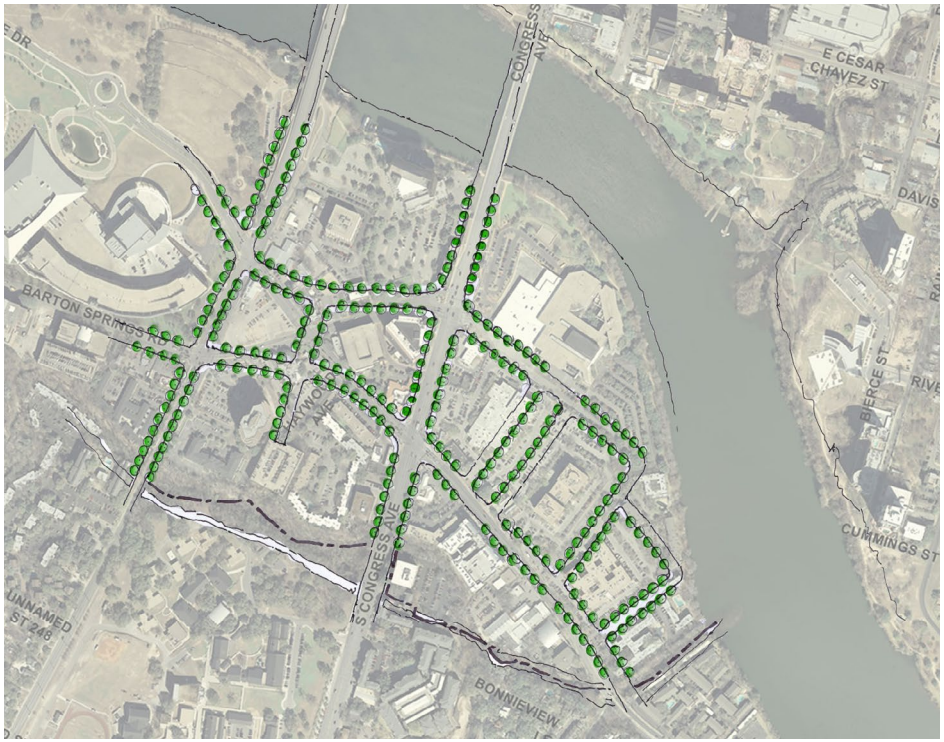
Ultimately, the super blocks will be fully redeveloped, creating a pedestrian friendly urban center.

movements. The reorganization of the right of way creates two blocks with shapes more useable by conventional development. Some right of way can actually be turned back to adjacent owners for income-producing and tax-generating activity.

Over time, we see the current pattern of free-standing buildings surrounded by parking lots replaced with a pattern of building lining streets and sidewalks, in which the public realm is the element of continuity and connectivity.

Greenways, Public Spaces & Pedestrian Connections

The district should be infused with a number of major green spaces and linkages. First the greenway along Lady Bird Lake should be extended, widened and enhanced



Street and block pattern with street trees and landscaping.

Greenways, public spaces, and pedestrian connections.

across the northern edge of the district. This should be a broad public way that offers views of downtown and several choices of exposure to the sun or enjoying the water's edge. East of the Congress Avenue Bridge, the greenway should be expanded into a great sloping and terraced park, allowing people to sit and watch the bats come out in the evening and perhaps be a site for concerts and other public events.

The greenway should be extended southward to become a "green finger" for the district –a central organizing element that can add value to surrounding development. As it moves toward the south, this feature would become a linear plaza that could host outdoor festivals, food and crafts markets and temporary or permanent art. This

would be a location to include objects and aspects that reinforce the quirkiness of Austin.

There should be a vegetated buffer along the south edge of the district to create a transition between new development in the district and the adjacent neighborhood. This buffer could contain trails and pathways that would provide for connectivity into and through the district. One connection, in particular, would pass alongside the large parking structure that serves city offices. This would require realigning the access road to the garage slightly and making it a greener lane.

Finally, a planting median should be placed within the middle lane of Congress, both to channel traffic and turning movements and to break down the width swath of pavement. The median could be designed to include a pedestrian refuge at major crossing points so that walkability is enhanced.

Building Patterns

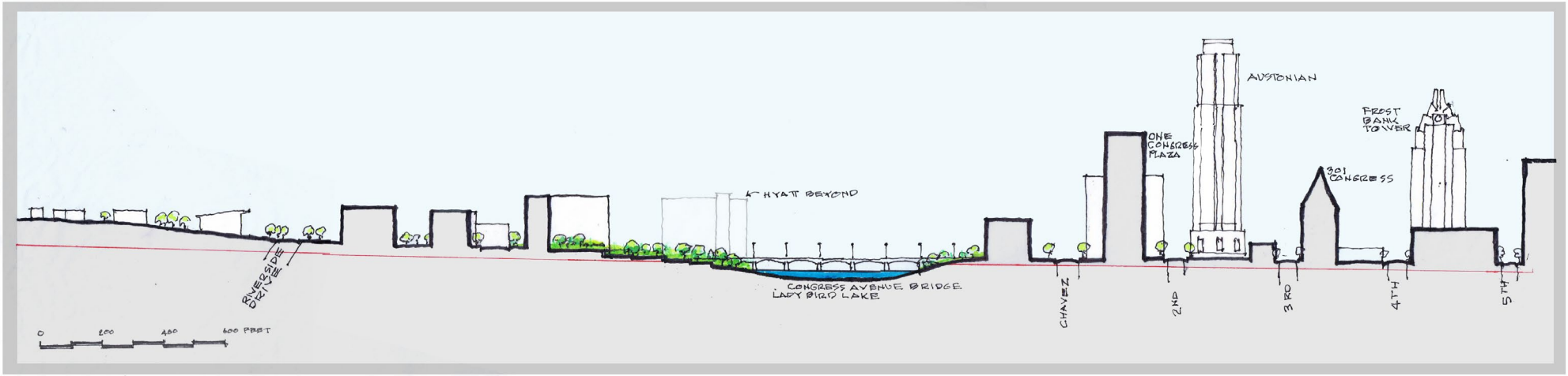
A full range of uses will emerge in the district over time, including additional hotels, office buildings, residential buildings, and shops and restaurants on the street level of many major streets. New office buildings and hotels, some of which would be in mid-rise structures, should be clustered near the Congress Avenue bridge, while the southeast sector would tend to be more residential in nature with multistory buildings tapering down toward the east and south. Mid-rise residential buildings would flank the waterside greenway and the east side of the plaza, but there would be ample separation between them to allow for views and access to the water's edge..

A regulatory system of standards and design guidelines should be in place to ensure that new development provides public spaces, frames the streets with active facades, and reflects a character that speaks to unique character and high quality. New developments should each contribute to the neighborhood, not merely be a real estate deal.

Building patterns.

Longitudinal Section, Looking West

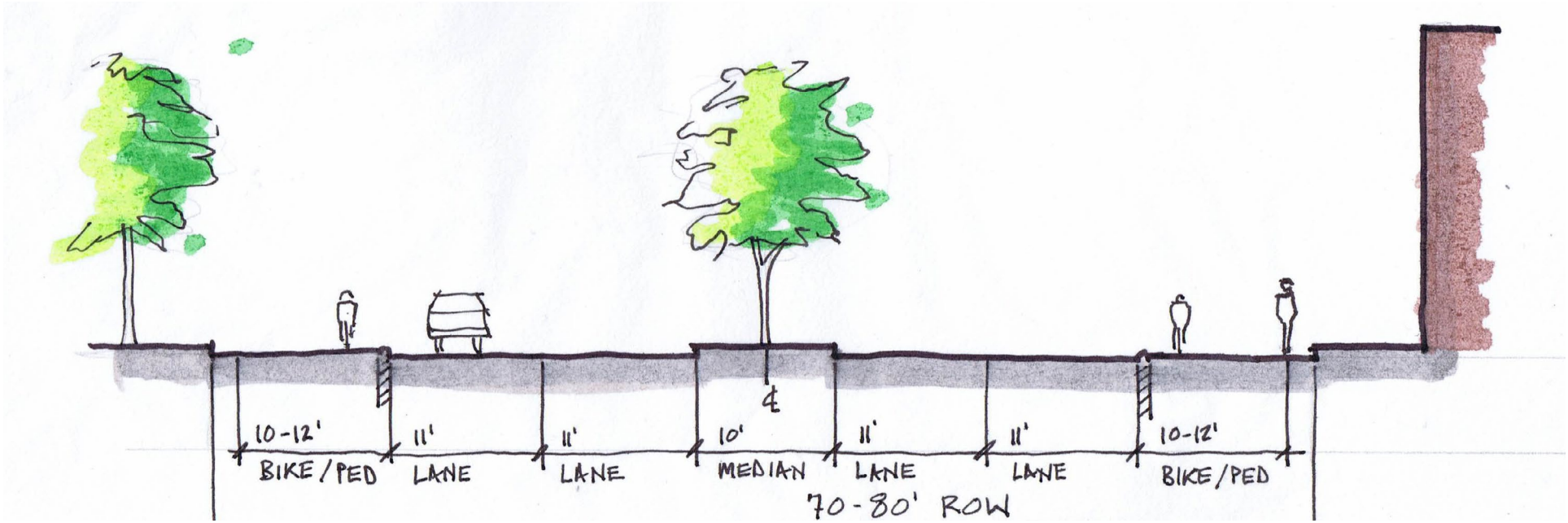
The below cross section illustrates the dramatic difference in height and bulk between the South Shore district and downtown Austin. The South Shore district features more modest, mid-rise buildings that help create a distinctly different district apart from the downtown core. Partly this is also to not shade new public spaces, but it is also meant to reflect a careful regard for the finer grain and scale of the neighborhoods on the south side of the river. While land economics do suggest higher buildings in the range of 3 to 12 stories for the district, that is still a major departure from the towers that have been built downtown that are many times that height.



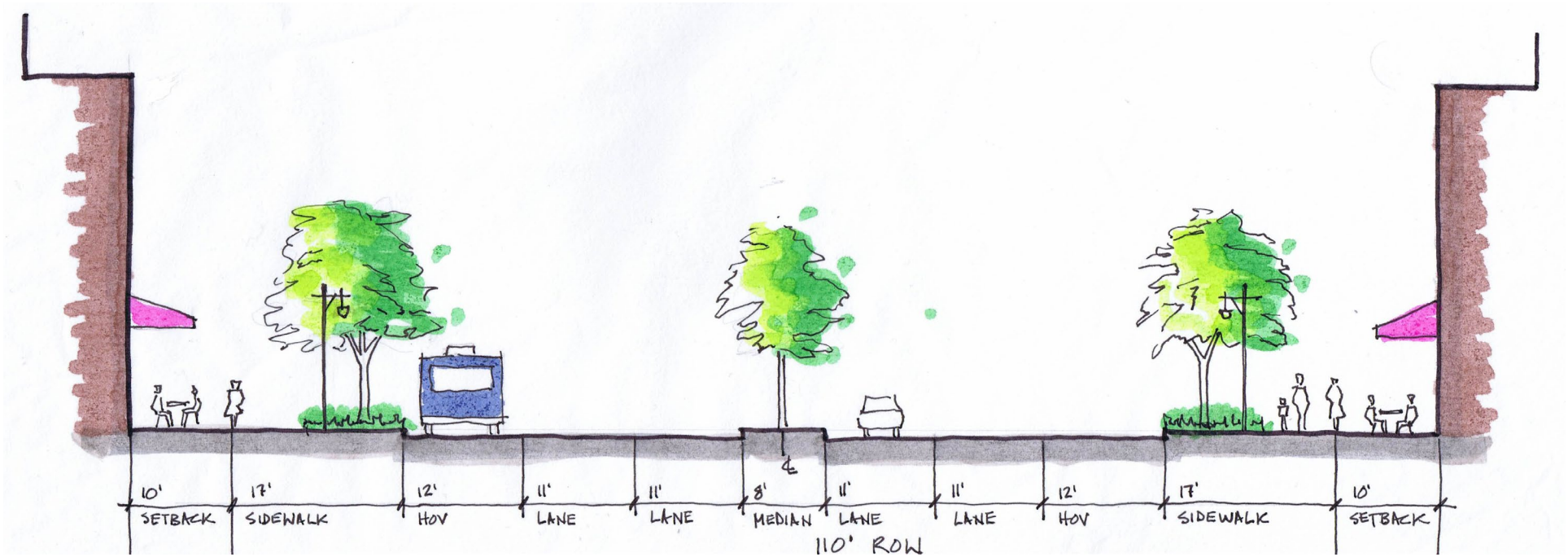
South First Street and South Congress Avenue

Both South First and South Congress should be converted into urban boulevards, with wider sidewalks, street trees and planted medians. Travel lanes should be narrowed to 11' as that is the greatest width that is necessary for city streets. Congress Avenue should be the more dramatic boulevard, with wide outboard plating strips to buffer walkers from the high volume of traffic. Congress Avenue should also have an HOV lane.

South First would be a boulevard, but should be somewhat less busy than South Congress. It would offer a location for a bike lane that could connect neighborhoods on the south side of the river with downtown, the university and other major destinations on the north side.



South First Street



South Congress Avenue.

Illustrative Rendering of the View South on the Congress Avenue Bridge

The below vignette provides an overview of the district as seen traveling south, leaving downtown. The building heights are stepped down toward the east, with the greatest intensity abutting Congress. The existing Hyatt Hotel already provides a similar vertical mass, although the east side of the street would be somewhat lower. This creates a visually distinct gateway for the district.. The rendering also shows the substantial green esplanade along the water's edge. This mirrors a similar green space on the north side of the lake.

Closer View from the Congress Avenue Bridge

The below illustration shows the terraced public space just east of the bridge approach. It also shows the spacing between buildings. Although the tower adjacent to Congress

Avenue might be a new hotel, the other buildings in the image are predominantly residential.

South Congress, looking South

The below view is shown from a point at the base of the proposed new hotel abutting South Congress Avenue. It shows a urban sidewalk with cafes and shops lining the street within setback areas. A stairway connection is to the left, linking the street to the terraced green below.

New Street Life

The below vignette illustrates the ambiance of the central plaza that connects with the greenways on the east side of Congress Avenue. This linear public space would contain a central square for food vending. At times, the lanes flanking the space could be closed for events. Overhead catenary lights could be a permanent fixture, providing a year-round festive atmosphere in the evenings.

Codes & Regulations

REGULATORY AND CODE ISSUES

City staff and public and private institutions have the ability to create quality rational code to direct the redevelopment of South Shore Central. They just need a community and political consensus to direct them.

The SDAT identified a few key areas that could support new regulatory tools:

1. NO PUDs or variances.
2. By-right certainty for developers
3. Street location
4. Bonus densities and height limits
5. Rethink parking requirements
6. Encourage affordable housing

NO PUDs or Variances

A clear vision for South Shore Central, like the one offered in this report, should be reflected in Austin's zoning and regulatory structure. All development in this area should be developed consistent with that zoning and not through any ad-hoc process, such as Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) and variances. An ad-hoc approach to planning and development compromises the overall plan and community vision for an area.

As long as the zoning is broken, as it is today, and doesn't allow reasonable urban density, requests and approvals for PUDs and variances are inevitable. This should be fixed by first fixing the zoning and then demanding no more PUDs or variances are granted.

Fixing the zoning will reduce the number of requests. Once that is done, it is reasonable to expect a political consensus, enforced by neighborhood, media, development interests, and the Austin Planning Department, Planning Commission, and City Council, that no PUDs or variances will be granted.

By-right Certainty for Developers

The time to build a consensus vision for South Shore Central is through the planning process, today, and not during applications for specific projects. The zoning should spell out exactly what Austin wants and what is realistically achievable, similar to the sketch in this report.

Once that vision is codified, the standards should be clear enough that developers will be absolutely certain of project approval and that no political challenges, neighborhood lobbying, or other unknowns will challenge that approval. Site plan and design approval should still be required to work out the details of building design, landscaping and similar details, but the location of streets, and the uses, bulk, density, and height of every project should be certain.

Street Location

As part of creating a walkable interconnected street grid, Austin should adopt a clear master plan of exactly where streets should be located within South Shore Central, even streets that are unlikely to be developed for years. No development should be allowed on these areas and all projects should be designed to face, front on, and respect this future street grid.

Bonus Densities and Height Limits

The recommendations elsewhere in this report on height are designed both to allow for a critical mass of development in South Shore Central that tells an urban design story, while at the same time avoiding walling in the lake or shadowing adjacent neighborhoods. Rather than a level plateau, this approach would set different height limits are different locations. In order for this approach to work, the allowable heights need to remain predictable for developers and for neighborhoods alike.

At the same time, there is a need to provide for bonus densities for developers, to incentivize provision of affordable housing and donations of additional park land.

Large cities often provide additional height as part of a bonus density option for desired public goods such as affordable housing, LEED certified buildings, parks, day care (e.g., New York, Chicago, Seattle, Sydney). Many cities provide other bonus densities, usually increases in the total allowable floor area ratio (FAR), the ratio of the total floor area of a building over the total size of the parcel, without necessarily allowing increased building height.

FAR and height bonus are both legitimate, but predictability for the community and a consistent plan for the skyline at build-out is critical. This means that any height bonus option must be very carefully crafted so that buildings not using the bonuses are not shorter than desirable and buildings using bonuses are not taller than desirable. Within this narrow band, however, height bonuses can be are appropriate. Likewise for FAR, based requirements absent any bonuses should still allow and in fact require near continuous façade along streets, to create an urban street grid, regardless of whether developers use the bonus FAR.

Rethink Parking Requirements

Austin should rethink its parking requirements and approach for South Shore Central. There is an opportunity to reduce unnecessary regulations, maximize shared use parking, create economic incentives for parking facilities, and lower the cost of development.

There is a continuum of parking standards from car-oriented suburban communities to urban downtowns:

- Areas with segregated land uses (e.g., separate parcels for offices, retail, restaurants, and residential): Because there are no overflow parking options available, developers are often required to accommodate the peak parking demands of their site, even though that means that some parking sits empty year round and most parking sits empty for long stretches of time (e.g., an office parking lots sit empty 15 hours a day). Parking requirements for office parks, for example, are typically 3 to 4 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet of office, with peak parking occupancy averaging 2.4 spaces per 1,000 square feet and occupancy rates over all the hours in a year at less than 20%.
- Downtowns and mixed use areas: Parking requirements are typically dramatically less (e.g., 1 parking space per 1,000 square feet of office) with much higher occupancy rates. A parking space typically services different uses at different hours of the day, other parking facilities are availability to accommodate parking overflow demand, there is an economic incentive for developers to develop new parking facilities if there is unmet demand, and a higher proportion of trips are generated by transit, bicycle, and foot.
- Other downtown and mixed use options: Some communities set maximum number of parking spaces allowed to avoid excess parking areas that detract from more vibrant uses. Many communities simply set no parking standards, in essence privatizing the requirements. Developers will build enough parking spaces to meet their tenants' demand (or their financier's demands). If there are parking shortages, there will be greater economic incentives for shared use of other parking lots, greater incentives for investors to create additional parking facilities, greater incentives for transit, bicycle, and walking alternatives, and a willingness of tenants to walk slightly further from where they park to where they walk.

On this continuum, the current standards for South Shore Central are closer to the suburban segregated land use model to that of a mixed use center. While the majority of journey-to-work trips to South Shore Central are likely to be by automobile, the vehicle usage will be lower than in a suburban area. More dramatically, residents of the area will own dramatically fewer vehicles per residential unit than in a suburban area, both because of other options and because there will be fewer residents per unit. There will also be a far greater shared use of parking lots.

Even absent any City parking requirements, developers probably develop parking in the neighborhood of 1.0 space per dwelling unit, 2.0 spaces per 1,000 square feet office, 2.0 spaces per 1,000 square feet retail, and 0.75 space per bed hotel. With some on-street parking spaces available, opportunities for greater shared parking utilization (especially using the performing arts center parking garage largely unoccupied during weekdays and the One Texas Center parking garage largely unoccupied on weekends). Zoning requirements should either not require parking spaces or require in the range of 0.75 space per dwelling unit, 1.0 spaces per 1,000 square feet office, 2.0 spaces per 1,000 square feet retail, and 0.5 space per bed hotel, with credit provided for on-street parking spaces in front of a building and valet parking provided.

Encourage Affordable Housing

Residential development in South Shore Central will be expensive, reflecting the high cost of land, of new construction, and of midrise and high-rise development. Very high per square foot construction costs will be partially balanced by smaller residential

units, but even factoring that in dwelling unit costs will be high. To continue the social integration that currently exists within the Austin urban core and to balance the loss of existing affordable units that will occur as the southern portions of South Shore Central are redeveloped, it is important to include affordable housing within the area.

We recommend a target that 15% of new housing units should be affordable and that those units be distributed throughout South Shore Central. With a projected build-out, based on the SDAT's recommendation, of 3,500 units, this would create 525 affordable units.

Affordable housing units should be encouraged through a combination of public investment and bonus densities:

1. Austin Office of Neighborhood Housing and Community Development should reach out to developers and publicize their programs to encourage affordable housing and encourage federal affordable housing tax credits.

2. Neighborhoods and City officials should be clear that affordable housing components of larger projects is encouraged and there will be no "not in my backyard" backlash against such projects.

3. The City should consider some kind of partial property tax exemption for affordable housing units.

4. The City should make public investments to encourage affordable housing funded by Tax Increment Financing (TIF), or in essence by a portion of the increased property tax that new development will be paying to the city.

5. Zoning should create bonus density for affordable housing, consistent with the bonus density recommendations made above.

Economic Development

The South Shore Central district (SSC) is well positioned to take advantage of its many assets as it implements a sustainable mixed use redevelopment strategy. Among the significant competitive advantages present in this district we find:

- Proximity to Lady Bird Lake and a vibrant, growing downtown that has a growing residential and commercial population
- Being in a city that has a highly educated workforce, good household incomes and is increasing in ethnic diversity
- A number of larger land owners that have interest in more urban, denser, mixed use development
- Active citizens that are engaged in wanting to preserve pivotal amenities the district has but also are willing to embrace quality redevelopment that would enhance the areas livability for a broader cross section of the community
- Public agencies that are experienced in public private partnerships and have access to a redevelopment tool kit that can help make early quality redevelopment projects more attractive and economically viable

Development Program

Based on these and other economic indicators, the SSC has the potential to accommodate a considerably more robust array of uses and people while improving the area's transportation systems, walkability, access to the river and active ground level commercial and environmental experiences (restaurant/retail as well as parks/open space). The development program suggested by the AIA team over a ten plus year period could bring about a district that has about six million square feet of new and replacement building for multi family residential, office, retail/service and hotel uses. This build out program would populate the district with approximately 5600 residents, over 9000 jobs and bring estimated property taxes of about $32 million/year (this includes an assumption that a portion of the commercial spaces would be tax exempt). Not factored into these costs is one or possibly two free standing public parking garages (with ground floor retail) that could support these uses and potential reduce some of their inherent costs (e.g., below grade structure parking). The below chart provides a more detailed breakdown of uses.

New and Replacement Uses

USE	SIZE	JOBS	PROPERTY TAX
Residential	2,800,000 sq. ft. 3,500 DUs 5,600 people	105	$1.9 million
Hotel	1,200,000 sq. ft. 2,000 rooms	1,200	$10.6 million
Office (some tax exempt)	1,600,000 sq. ft.	6,400	$20 million
Retail/Service	400,000 sq. ft.	1,360	W/above
TOTAL	6,000,000 sq. ft.	9,065	$32.5 million

Uses and Costs

Desired uses that are most likely to make financial sense in the district include multi- family apartments (with room for condo substitution as market conditions change), office, hotel and ground floor retail/restaurant

in many of the previously mentioned buildings. Many of the new buildings would be mixed use, and while as a whole they would bring additional density as well as vibrancy to the area, their height would not exceed 16 stories. We also sought to use relatively small land footprints for each building thereby enabling more open space options within the district. There is room to accommodate public and institutional uses such as schools, library branches, religious institutions – all of which can further enhance an areas desirability – but we did not model these at this time.

Residential

The team suggested a mix of mid-rise (5 to 6 story) and higher rise (9 to 16 story) apartments most with active ground floor uses and all with below grade structured parking. As the market changes some of these buildings could be converted to or developed as condos, though we did not model that option. Total housing buildout over ten years could add 3500 units to the district with 15% of these being affordable (assuming that some mix of funding sources to support affordable production such as low income housing tax credits, tax exempt bonds, tax increment, density bonusing, property tax exemptions, and others remain available).

Working with local property owners and developers as well as other land use data sources, the team assumed land costs in the district at $125/SF and development hard and soft costs for each construction type. We also estimated below grade parking for residential at $30,000/space. Based on these assumptions we generated two prototype residential buildings, mid and higher rise, to generate a total development cost. We then evaluated acheiveable rents in the area to and ran a pro forma for each option utilizing current lending practice assumptions for equity and debt. The below tables illustrate the cost breakdowns for each of the two housing types.

Mid Rise Apartment

ITEM	UNIT COST	UNITS	TOTAL COST
Land	$125/SF	45,000 SF	$5.6 Million
Development	$140/SF- hard $21/SF- soft	6 stories @35,000/story 210,000 SF 18,000 SF retail 215 units	$33.8 Million
Parking (below grade)	$30,000/space	251	$7.5 Million
TOTAL			**$49.9 Million**

High Rise Apartment

ITEM	UNIT COST	UNITS	TOTAL COST
Land	$125/SF	40,000 SF	$5 Million
Development	$250/SF-hard $ 38/SF-soft	16 stories @10,000/story 160,000 SF 188 DU	$46 Million
Parking (below grade)	$30,000/space	188 for DU plus 10 for retail	$6 Million
TOTAL			**$57 Million**

Office

For an office prototype the team produced one option (a 10 story structure with 20,000 SF floor plates and below grade structured parking). Being able to retain existing office tenants and bring new ones enhances the work – live balance of the district and stimulates more day and night time activity throughout the week. As with the residential developments, we reviewed office rents in the area as well as those downtown (since the district is so close to downtown, we think that as it improves by adding a richer mix of uses, it will be able to capture stronger rents). The below table breaks out the office prototype in more detail.

High Rise Office

ITEM	UNIT COST	UNITS	TOTAL COST
Land	$125/SF	30,000 SF	$3.8 Million
Development	$225/SF- hard $34/SF- soft	10 stories @ 20,000 SF/story 200,000 SF	$52 Million
Parking (below grade)	$30,000/Space	400 for DU	$12 Million
TOTAL			**67.8 Million**

Hotel

Given proximity to Lady Bird Lake and being within the city's heart, as SSC further evolves its mix of use there will be place for more quality hotel rooms. Of the three product types we modeled a higher rise (16 story) hotel presented the most significant financing challenge. Quality hotels cost more per square foot to build and expected equity needed to secure a band or other lender loan is currently more demanding. There are various federally enabled tools (e.g. EB5 – a foreign investment program that can help reduce early financing burdens) that may make hotels in the next few years more viable. The below table illustrates the cost and element assumptions used for a 400 room prototype hotel.

Hotel

ITEM	UNIT COST	UNITS	TOTAL COST
Land	$125/SF	60,000 SF	7.5 Million
Development	$300/SF-hard $ 45/SF-soft	16 stories @15,000/ story 240,000 SF 400 rooms	$82.8 million
Parking (below grade)	$30,000/space	300	$ 9 million
TOTAL			**$99.3 Million**

Shared Parking Structure

Unfortunately, it is virtually impossible for most cities to create denser, more vibrant urban environments without structure parking. Having a robust set of alternative modes such as mass transit, bike trails, extensive sidewalks and others help a great deal but do not displace the need for parking structures. Since below grade parking is a more ideal place to park cars, it is usually the most expensive alternative (and sometimes not possible for soils or water table reasons). It would be helpful for the city (and its public and private partners) to consider one or more shared parking structures for the area. These would be above grade facilities with active ground floor uses so that they enhance the pedestrian experience of the area. They would also cost less per space than below grade garages and would be open to shared

use arrangements (supporting retail, office, recreation and some residential). Such garages could be owned and operated by the public, private or non-profit sector or some combination of these. We assessed the costs of one prototype four story 500 space garage in the table below.

Shared Parking Structure

ITEM	UNIT COST	UNITS	TOTAL COST
Land	$125/SF	43,800 SF	7.5 Million
Development	$20,000/Space	4 Stories 500 spaces 15,000 SF retail	$10 Million
TOTAL			**$17.3 Million**

KEY ELEMENTS TO HELP ACHIEVE THE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Parking Recommendations

To help both keep parking expenses in check and to increase the available built and natural environments for people, we would encourage the city to adopt parking maximums for various uses. This is an approach that has been successful in other cities, but to succeed needs to be supported by a reliable range of alternative modes. Increasing reliance on new on-street parking as well as shared parking and valet (especially for hotels) will also help achieve desired goals. Suggested parking maximums for consideration are:

- 1.0 space per dwelling unit
- 2.0 spaces per 1,000 square feet of office and retail
- .75 space per hotel room

Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

TIF is a formidable public financing vehicle that has been used successfully in many Texas cities. It can help pay for needed infrastructure such as streets/sidewalks, open space, structured parking and affordable housing. In this way it helps reduce the private burden of financing quality buildings while at the same time ensuring a more sustainable environment that continues to foster more private investment and consequently more property and sales taxes that can be used for other community needs.

TIF also has potential to leverage other resources that can help cover costs for public infrastructure (e.g., general fund, local improvement district) as well as private development (e.g., EB5, HUD section 108, etc.). For this district we would encourage the city to explore crafting a new TIF district that aligns the project needs with

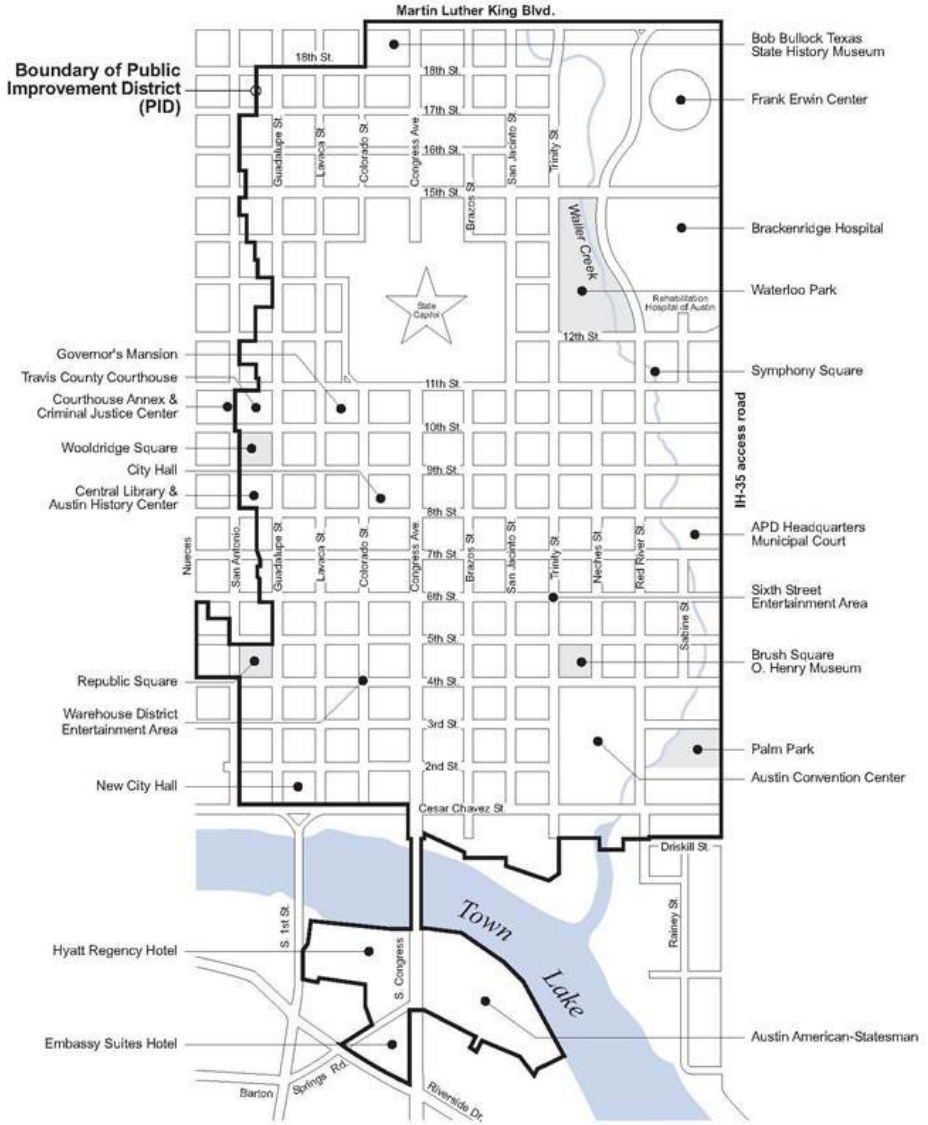
projected ability to generate sufficient TIF to pay for agreed upon portions of those costs.

Density Bonus

A number of cities that have high demand for more intense urban uses (Seattle, Portland, Minneapolis, etc.) use density bonuses to help achieve community benefits as private development occurs. By providing certainty through "by – right" development standards that enable the densities and site plans that the city wants to achieve, the development community and city can work out a system of density bonuses that can further realize the goals of both sectors. Considering establishment of bonuses for greater density can help a developer achieve a stronger economic return on a project while at the same time providing public benefits such as money of space for parks, or for residential development, inclusion of affordable housing units.

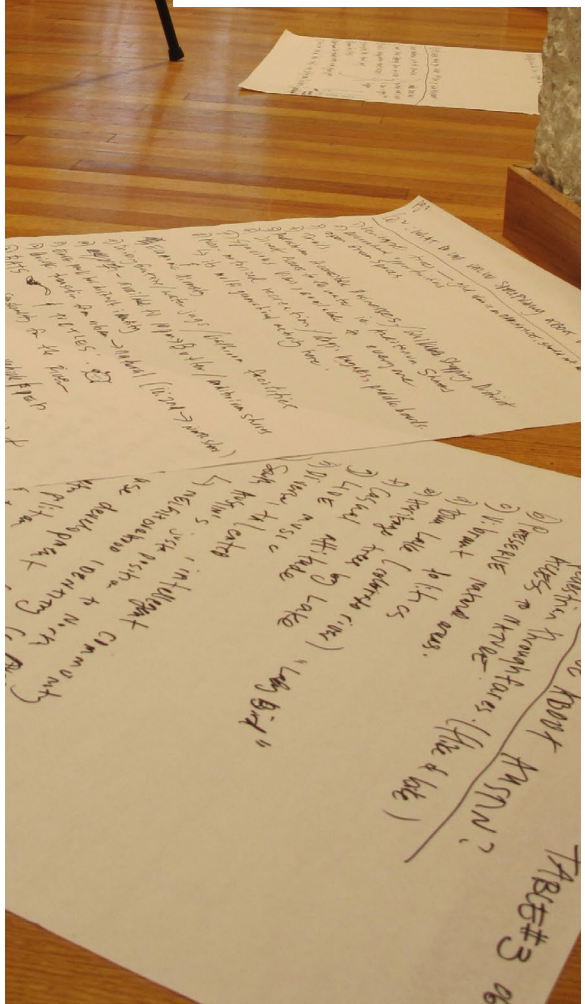
Public Improvement District (PID)

A large portion of SSC is already within the downtown PID. The team suggests the city evaluate the benefits and costs of creating a new PID to help address eligible projects such as road, parks, drainage, etc. for the entire SSC, against the capacity of the existing district to deal with these. PIDs are, like TIF, powerful tools that can help build momentum for successful redevelopment of an area.



Downtown Austin
Public Improvement District (PID)

Making it Happen



CREATE A VISION FOR THE WATERFRONT WITH REGULATORY TEETH

To fully capitalize on the future potential for the waterfront and to preserve and protect the public realm from Austin's intense development pressures, Austin should create a long-term civic vision for Lady Bird Lake. The vision should be based on robust city-wide civic engagement designed to produce a set of values-based principles that balance public interest and waterfront access with private development. Following the creation of the vision, Austin should create the regulatory and governance mechanisms required to implement the vision for this and future generations. A waterfront regulatory authority, empowered to approve waterfront projects in keeping with the guiding principles of the vision that is not subject to politics, will ensure that the lakefront remains central to Austin's identity as a city in nature. An example of a public interest waterfront authority is the Battery Park City Authority in New York. Other governance models include Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), city waterfront agencies and non-profit organizations.

ENGAGE PHILANTHROPY TO FUND A MODEL PLANNING PROCESS AND SUPPORT LONG-TERM STEWARDSHIP

Without independent funding for a planning process and the creation of a long-term plan to implement the vision, Austin will continue to suffer from the constant tug-of-war between the civic and development communities over the future of the waterfront. Local foundations can afford to take the long view and help establish a vision for the waterfront that is based on sound planning, economic, environmental and social practices – and not politics and special interests. Austin would benefit from the creation of a model planning process that can demonstrate how to engage multiple constituencies in the creation of a shared vision. Additionally, Austin would benefit from the cultivation of long-term stewardship of the river as vital to Austin's future. Examples of foundations committed to the long-term health of their cities and regions include the Gund Foundation in Cleveland, the Lyndhurst Foundation in Chattanooga and the William Penn Foundation in Philadelphia.

APPOINT A NEUTRAL CONVENER AND HONEST BROKER

Austin suffers from lack of trust among all players involved in waterfront development. These include citizens, neighbors, developers, professionals, property owners and public officials. In order to create a successful vision for the lakefront that can be implemented, a neutral convener and honest broker should be appointed. This civic ombudsman could be housed at the School of Architecture at the University of Texas at Austin - perhaps affiliated with UT Austin's city and regional planning program. Or, the honest broker could be a non-profit organization empowered to convene, facilitate and encourage public dialogue about the future of the waterfront based on best practices. The civic ombudsman could be charged with leading the planning process designed to create the vision for the waterfront. Examples of good government groups empowered to shape progressive land use and development polices include SPUR in San Francisco, the Regional Plan Association of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut, the Commercial Club of Chicago and PennPraxis of the School of Design at the University of Pennsylvania.

RAISE FUNDS DEDICATED TO PURCHASING AND MAINTAINING WATERFRONT LAND

As the land surrounding Land Bird Lake is largely held in private hands, Austin should create a fund dedicated to purchasing and maintaining waterfront land for future generations. Land could be acquired through purchase in fee simple or through granting of conservation easements. Funds could be raised through bond issues, dedicated taxes, fundraising, personal philanthropy, grants, and the creation of a tax increment financing district. Tie the creation of a waterfront trust fund with other long-term preservation strategies such as conservation easements, storm water management fees, development impact fees, transfer of development rights and federal and state funds for green infrastructure. Examples of state programs dedicated to public waterfront land acquisition include the state of Maine's Land for Maine's Future Water Access Fund and North Carolina's Waterfront Access and Marine Industry Fund.

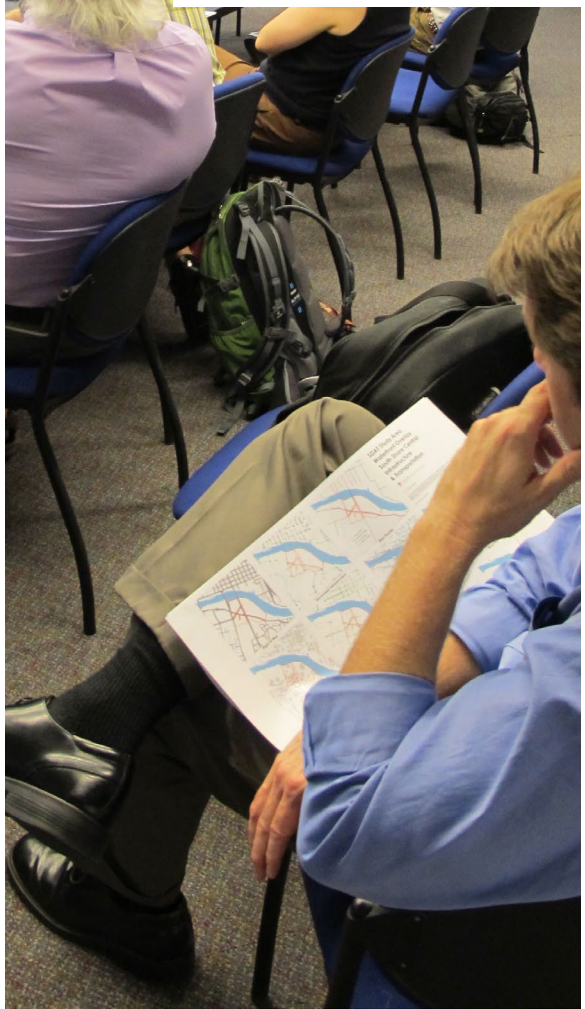
CREATE AND SUPPORT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES THAT PROTECT AND PRESERVE THE WATERFRONT AND AUSTIN'S HERITAGE.

Cut through the maze of confusing policies, agencies and practices that currently inform and guide development along Lady Bird Lake. Create clear and predictable policies and procedures that are designed to preserve the waterfront and Austin's historic buildings and landscapes. Both the current waterfront board and the city's historic commission are advisory. Empower these agencies as regulatory bodies that can review and approve applications for building permits; thus creating a clear forum for waterfront and heritage protection that is predictable and transparent. An example of a strong development review board is the work of the Boston Redevelopment Authority and cities with strong historic preservation ordinances include Charleston, SC and Philadelphia, PA.

ESTABLISH PARTNERSHIPS – PUBLIC, PRIVATE, PHILANTHROPIC, ACADEMIC, AND CIVIC – THAT ENSURE THAT THE FUTURE HEALTH OF THE WATERFRONT IS A CIVIC PRIORITY

Creating a vision for the waterfront and the civic society required to implement the vision and ensure the long-term protection of the public interest, requires active partnerships between the public, private, philanthropic, academic and civic sectors. Cities with robust partnerships include New York City and the Brooklyn Bridge Park Conservancy and the public-private Waterfront Development Corporation of Louisville, KY. The work of the Urban Design Studio of the University of Tennessee at Knoxville is a good example of an academic-based design practice that has helped catalyze progressive urban development.

Team Roster



Sustainable Design Assessment Team Members

HARRIS STEINBERG, FAIA- TEAM LEADER

Harris M. Steinberg, FAIA, is the founding executive director of PennPraxis, the clinical arm of the School of Design at the University of Pennsylvania, whose mission is to foster faculty and student collaboration on real world projects across the five disciplines of the school: architecture, landscape architecture, city and regional planning, historic preservation and fine arts.

From 2003 until 2006, Harris was the Director of the Center for Innovation in Affordable Housing Design. He was a lecturer at PennDesign from 1998 to 2003 and an adjunct assistant Professor in PennDesign's Architecture Department from 2003 to 2006. Harris' professional experience includes work at Venturi Raunch Scott Brown and Geddes Brecher Qualis Cunningham. He was the founding partner of Steinberg & Schade Architects and Steinberg & Stevens Architects.

Harris led the process for "Creating a Civic Vision for the Central Delaware Riverfront," which brought more than four thousand Philadelphians together to build a vision plan for seven miles of Philadelphia's Delaware riverfront. His prior civic engagement work includes the 2003 Penn's Landing Forums with the Philadelphia Inquirer and the 2006 casino forum with the Philadelphia Daily News. The riverfront vision plan was released in 2007.

Harris has had chapters in Rebuidling Urban Places after Disaster, The Deliberative Democracy Handbook, and The Sustainable City II: Urban Regeneration and Sustainability. His articles appear regularly in The Philadelphia Inquirer, the Philadelphia Architect, and City Space. He has been published in the Wharton Real Estate Review, Architectural Record, and Mid-Atlantic Construction.

COLIE HOUGH-BECK, ASLA

Colie Hough-Beck has practiced landscape architecture and urban design in the Pacific Northwest for 34 years and is a founding Principal of HBB Landscape Architecture in Seattle. Her practice has focused on urban infrastructure projects with an emphasis on transportation and waterfront projects. Prior to her private consulting work, Colie was an associate planner with the City of Bellevue at a time when land use and transportation policies were forming the foundation for Bellevue as the urban center it is today. Throughout her career, Colie has participated as a member of the University of Washington College of Built Environment's Professional Advisory Council, where she served on the education/curriculum committee. The College's Landscape Architecture Department presented her a "Firm Honor Award" for significant works and deeds to the Department and profession. She holds a Bachelors degree in Landscape Architecture from the

University of Idaho. Colie has successfully participated in the development of over 110 transportation and waterfront projects that accommodate multiple modes of travel including vehicular, transit, pedestrian and bicycle facilities. By using community-based design as a guiding principle, she creates a sense of place and character that is sensitive to the local context and enhances economic development. She has received awards from the American Planning Association, American Society of Landscape Architects and Puget Sound Regional Council and was recognized in Ronald Lee Fleming's book The Art of Place Making: Interpreting Community Through Public Art and Urban Design for her work on the Mercer Island Downtown Streetscape Project. Colie is an active member of the Seattle Planning Commission where she served as co-chair of the land use and transportation committee, and currently serves as an at-large-member on the Commission's Executive Committee.

MARK HINSHAW, FAIA, FAICP

Mark is an architect and the director of urban design and a principal at LMN Architects. He has had an influential career spanning architecture, planning, and journalism. His consulting practice at LMN Architects spans design and planning. For 35 years, Mark has combined his background as an architect with his skills as a city planner to help communities understand growth and development choices. He has gained increasing prominence and regard as a speaker and writer, in a variety of local, national, and international media. While his popular column in The Seattle Times has brought Seattleites a fresh look at the phenomena of their own city, designers from around the nation and the world have gained their impressions of Seattle's urban achievements from his writings in Architecture, Architectural Record, Landscape Architecture, and other professional journals. Mark has described the influences that have shaped his unique way of looking at cities, as observer and problem-solver, in a wide-ranging view that spans the urban horizon "from public policy to social psychology." Mark holds Bachelors in Architecture from the University of Oklahoma and a Masters in Urban Planning from Hunter College/CUNY. Mark was inducted into the AIA College of Fellows in 1994. He was inducted into the AICP College of Fellows in 2000. He served as AIA Seattle President 1992-93.

PAULA REEVES, AICP

Paula Reeves has been developing transportation projects for the State, cities, counties and transit agencies for 18 years. She currently manages the Community Design Assistance Branch at Washington State Department of Transportation and serves on the Board of Directors for the American Planning Association Washington Chapter. In both these roles she provides a range of transportation planning and engineering services to cities, counties and transit agencies including: expert advice regarding transportation and livable communities, pedestrian and bicycle facility design expertise, safe routes to schools, scenic byways and transportation planning support relative to Washington's Growth Management Act. She has a broad transportation background that includes

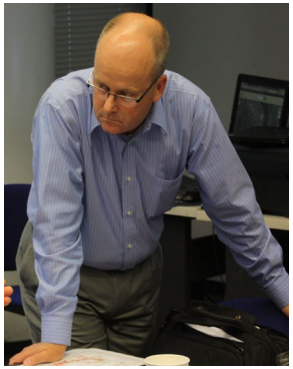
urban design, engineering, environmental experience and is a practicing mediator in Thurston County. She serves on the National Transportation Research Board's Pedestrian Committee and American Institute of Certified Planners' Community Planning Committee. She earned her master's degree with engineering and law school course work in urban and regional planning from the University of Florida.

WAYNE FEIDEN, FAICP

Wayne is director of planning and development for Northampton, Massachusetts, with a focus on land use, planning, downtown revitalization, sustainable transportation, greenways, open space, and the environment. He has led that city to the highest "Commonwealth Capital" score, the Massachusetts scoring of municipal sustainability efforts. Wayne also has a small consulting practice focused on municipal planning and sustainability. Wayne serves as an adjunct faculty at the University of Massachusetts and Westfield State College. Wayne's publications include three American Planning Association's PAS Reports, including Assessing Sustainability: A Guide for Local Governments, and other peer-reviewed and research papers. Wayne has participated on or led 13 design assessment teams. Wayne has a BS in Natural Resources from the U. of Michigan and a Master's in City and Regional Planning from the U. of North Carolina. His Eisenhower Fellowship to Hungary and Fulbright Specialist fellowship to South Africa both focused on sustainability. Wayne was inducted into the AICP College of Fellows in 2008. He was awarded an honorary membership in Western Massachusetts AIA in 2010. He was awarded an American Trails National Trails Advocacy Award in 2010 and earned his city a bicycle friendly community designation in 2011.

ABE FARKAS

Abe Farkas is the development services director with ECONorthwest. Farkas has nearly three decades of experience in structuring successful public-private partnerships that have improved urban neighborhoods, business districts, and university environments. Farkas is the former Development Director for the Portland Development Commission; Planning and Development Director for the City of Eugene, OR; Economic Development Manager for the City of Seattle; Director of Community Development and Planning for the City of Fort Wayne, IN; and Assistant Professor of Housing and Public Policy at the University of Tennessee. Most recently Farkas was President of the Farkas Group, a development services company in Portland, OR. Several mixed-use, public-private partnerships projects, which Farkas helped structure, have been transit-oriented developments, achieved LEED certification (silver to platinum) for sustainability, and were recipients of regional or national awards.



STEVE BENZ, PE, LEED AP

Steve Benz, PE, LEED® AP, Partner and Director of Green Infrastructure, is a nationally-recognized expert in green infrastructure and sustainable site engineering. Steve has over 30 years experience in civil engineering and construction, with a focus on creating sustainable and performative landscapes.

At OLIN, we believe that landscape design and planning requires deliberate stewardship and environmental sensitivity. Building on our rich legacy of ecologically-responsive design and planning, we strive to craft designs that will positively contribute to our ecology rather than compromise it. Traditional and conventional infrastructure practices may facilitate land development, but all too often at the expense of the land itself and its ecosystem services. We are committed to the legitimate advancement of a green infrastructure approach and sustainability in our work.

"Done right, landscapes are inherently adept at mitigating the adverse effects of land development," notes Steve. "By deliberately weaving ecological function into their form, landscapes can contribute to the healing of a site that is often otherwise degraded by conventional development. The green infrastructure approach promotes the concept that man-made changes to land can be mitigated through the integration of design and engineering practices. By using natural systems as part of our solutions for site development challenges, we can develop truly sustainable solutions for the places we create."

Steve is an immediate past Chair of the U.S. Green Building Council's (USGBC) national Sustainable Sites Technical Advisory Group, where he directed the development of sustainability metrics and criteria for landscapes and site designs for the LEED® program. He was also the founding Chair of the Massachusetts Chapter of the USGBC. Most recently, Steve was appointed to the USGBC's Water Efficiency Technical Advisory Group and the Sustainable Site's Initiative's Technical Core Committee. He is a frequent speaker and author on green infrastructure topics and has lectured at Harvard's Graduate School of Design, MIT, the University of Massachusetts and many other institutions.

STEPHANIE BOWER

After graduating from the School of Architecture from the University of Texas at Austin, Stephanie worked in San Antonio, TX for the firm of Ford, Powell, and Carson. She later moved to New York and earned a Masters degree in Interior Design from Pratt Institute in New York City.

In New York City, Stephanie worked for the offices of HOK, Beyer Blinder Belle, and Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer and became a licensed Architect in New York State. In addition, she taught drawing to undergraduate and graduate students for ten years at Parsons School of Design in both the Environmental Design/Architecture and Interior Design departments. Eventually, she started a free-lance rendering practice and worked

for many architecture and interior design firms in the New York region, including Gwathmey Siegel, Vignelli Associates, Naomi Leff, and Rockwell Group.

In 1995 she moved to Seattle and opened the office of Stephanie Bower, Architectural Illustration. She also continued teaching at the University of Washington with Frank Ching followed by several years at Cornish College of the Arts, as well as providing drawing classes to architectural offices. Stephanie continues to provide architectural illustrations and participate in concept design and design charrettes for many offices in the Pacific Northwest, including the firms of Olson Kundig, MITHUN, and Jones & Jones.

In addition, Stephanie was a 2012 finalist for the Gabriel Prize, and her painting work can be seen in the 2012 Northwest Watercolor Society juried exhibition.

JOEL MILLS- DIRECTOR, AIA CENTER FOR COMMUNITIES BY DESIGN

Joel Mills is Director of the American Institute for Architects' Center for Communities by Design. The Center is a leading provider of pro bono technical assistance and participatory planning for community sustainability. Through its design assistance programs, the Center has worked in over 200 communities across 47 states. Its processes have been modeled successfully in the United States and across Europe. In 2010, the Center was named Organization of the Year by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) for its impact on communities and contributions to the field.

Joel's 18-year career has been focused on strengthening civic capacity and civic institutions around the world. This work has helped millions of people participate in democratic processes, visioning efforts, and community planning initiatives. In the United States, Joel has worked with dozens of communities in over 25 states, leading participatory initiatives and collaborative processes that have facilitated public-private partnerships and led to hundreds of millions of dollars in new investment. His work has been featured on ABC World News Tonight, Nightline, CNN, The Next American City, Smart City Radio, The National Civic Review, Ecostructure Magazine,The Washington Post, and dozens of other media sources.

In December 2010, he was elected to the Board of Directors for the IAP2-USA. He is also a member of the International Association of Facilitators (IAF), the American Planning Association, the National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation (NCDD), and the Mid-Atlantic Facilitators Network.

ERIN SIMMONS- DIRECTOR, AIA DESIGN ASSISTANCE

Erin Simmons is the Director of Design Assistance at the Center for Communities by Design at the American Institute of Architects in Washington, DC. Her primary role at the AIA is to provide process expertise, facilitation and support for the Center's Sustainable Design Assistance Team (SDAT) and Regional and Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT) programs. In this capacity, she works with AIA components, members, partner organizations and community members to provide technical design assistance to communities across the country. Through its design assistance

programs, the AIA has worked in 200 communities across 47 states. In 2010, the Center was named Organization of the Year by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) for its impact on communities and contributions to the field.

Erin is a leading practitioner of the design assistance process. Her portfolio includes work in over 50 communities across the United States. A frequent lecturer on the subject of creating livable communities and sustainability, Erin contributed to the recent publication "Assessing Sustainability: A guide for Local Governments". Prior to joining the AIA, Erin worked as historic preservationist and architectural historian for an environmental and engineering firm in Georgia, where she practiced preservation planning, created historic district design guidelines and zoning ordinances, conducted historic resource surveys, and wrote property nominations for the National Register of Historic Places. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in History from Florida State University and a Master's degree in Historic Preservation from the University of Georgia.

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