South Central Waterfront Combining District & Density Bonus Program

City Council

May 30, 2024

South Central Waterfront
Vision Framework Plan
Adopted June 6, 2016

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City Council Resolution 20220915-090

Create a code for South Central Waterfront that:

- Maximizes the number of affordable housing units within and nearby the district

- Maximizes infrastructure investments

- Ensures enhanced environmental standards and protections

- Maximizes other community benefits

- Supports the Project Connect transit investment

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

Approach Since Council Resolution

■ The South Central Waterfront (SCW) regulations will be implemented by:

- Council adoption of an **optional** set of regulations and bonus program through the creation of a **Combining District _and_** a **Density Bonus Program** (spring 2024).

- City-initiated rezoning of non PDA, PUD, and Planned Development Agreement properties in the district (summer 2024).

■ First reevaluation within 1-2 years.
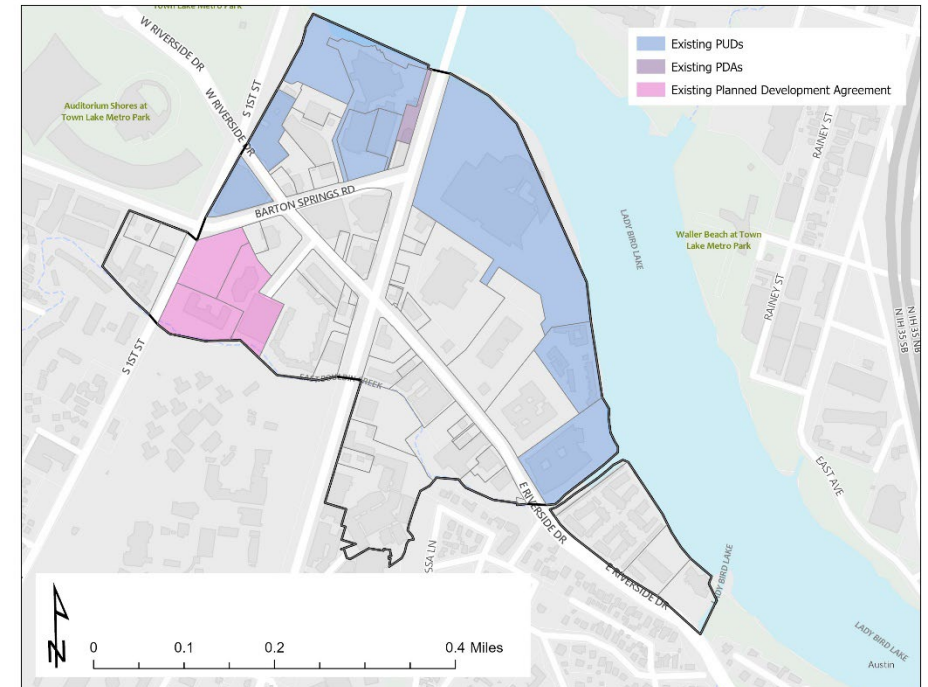
Combining District

General Provisions

(Policies, procedures, and who can participate)

Land Use Standards

(Permitted and conditional land uses)

Development Standards

(What can be built and where)

Design Standards

(How it will look)

Definitions

Density Bonus

Procedures/Requirements

"Gate Keeper" Requirements

Affordable Housing

Environmental Protection

Improved Streetscape and Built Environment

In-Lieu Fees and Dedications
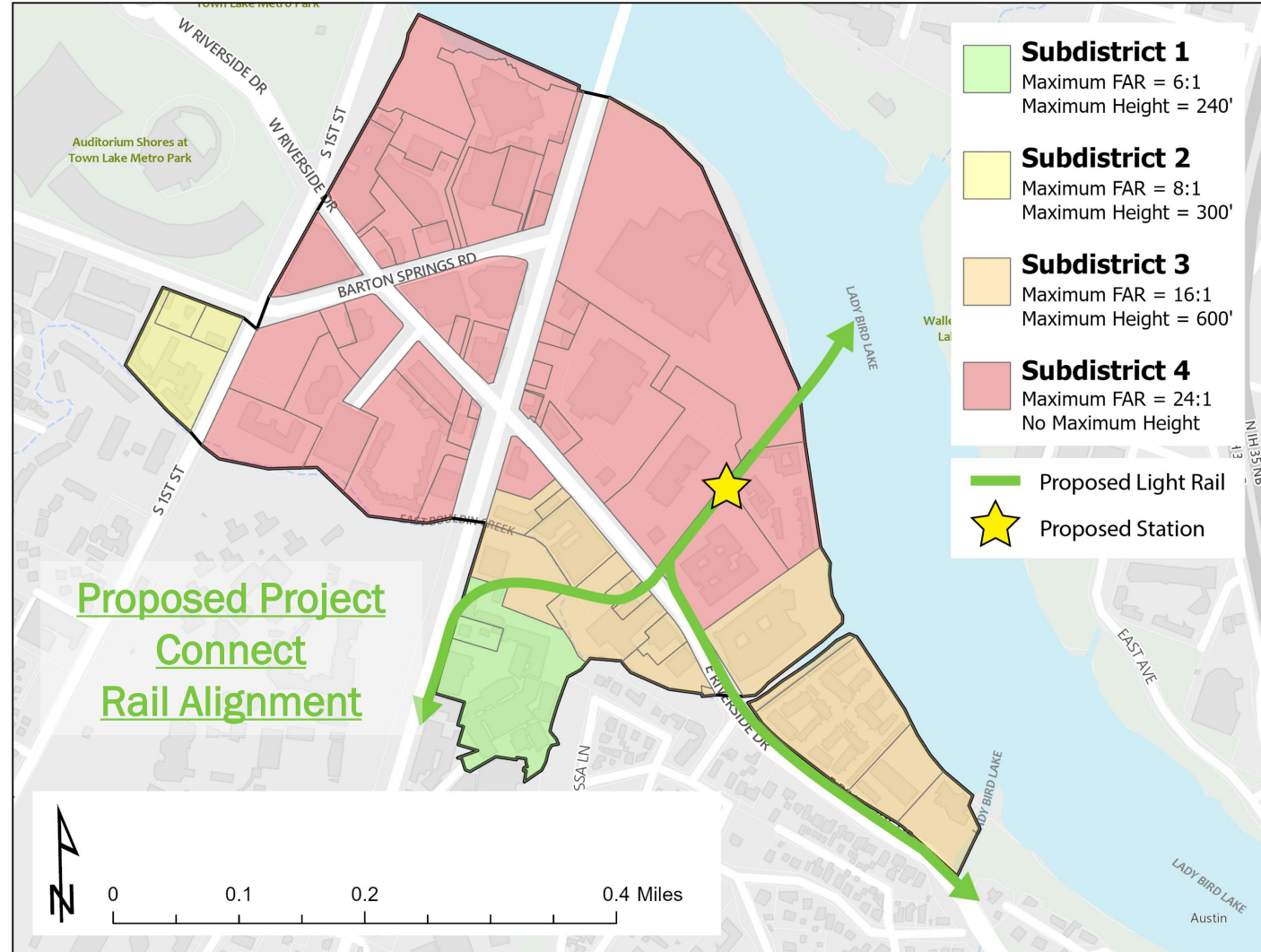
On-Site Community Benefits Eligible for Bonus Area

Subdistricts and FAR

Council approval is required to exceed FAR maximums and heights

Density Distribution Areas (DDA's)

- An applicant shall split sites into areas no larger than 90,000 sq. ft.

    - FAR maximums apply to each DDA separately.

    - Internal circulation routes are required along DDA divisions.

Proposed Project Connect Rail Alignment

Subdistrict 1
Maximum FAR = 6:1
Maximum Height = 240'

Subdistrict 2
Maximum FAR = 8:1
Maximum Height = 300'

Subdistrict 3
Maximum FAR = 16:1
Maximum Height = 600'

Subdistrict 4
Maximum FAR = 24:1
No Maximum Height

— Proposed Light Rail
★ Proposed Station

Bonus Program Structure

(To Reach Up to FAR / Height Subdistrict Maximums)

(For Additional FAR Beyond Base)

First

Gate Keeper Requirements

Onsite Affordable Housing
(Fee for Non-Residential)

Enhanced Environmental Protections

Streetscape & Built Environment

Then

70% In-Lieu Fees & Dedications

Affordable Housing
(extra on-site affordable units credited; Affordable Housing Investment Area)

Parks
(dedications credited; boundary as defined by typical Parks fees)

Infrastructure and Community Impact Benefit
(supports SCW directly)

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30% On-Site Community Benefits

Affordable Creative Space	Open Space
Child / Adult Care	Grocery Store
Park Buildout	Music Venues
Transit-Supportive Infrastructure	Public Art

EXAMPLE from
500 S Congress Development
Assessment Application

Not representative of official site plan
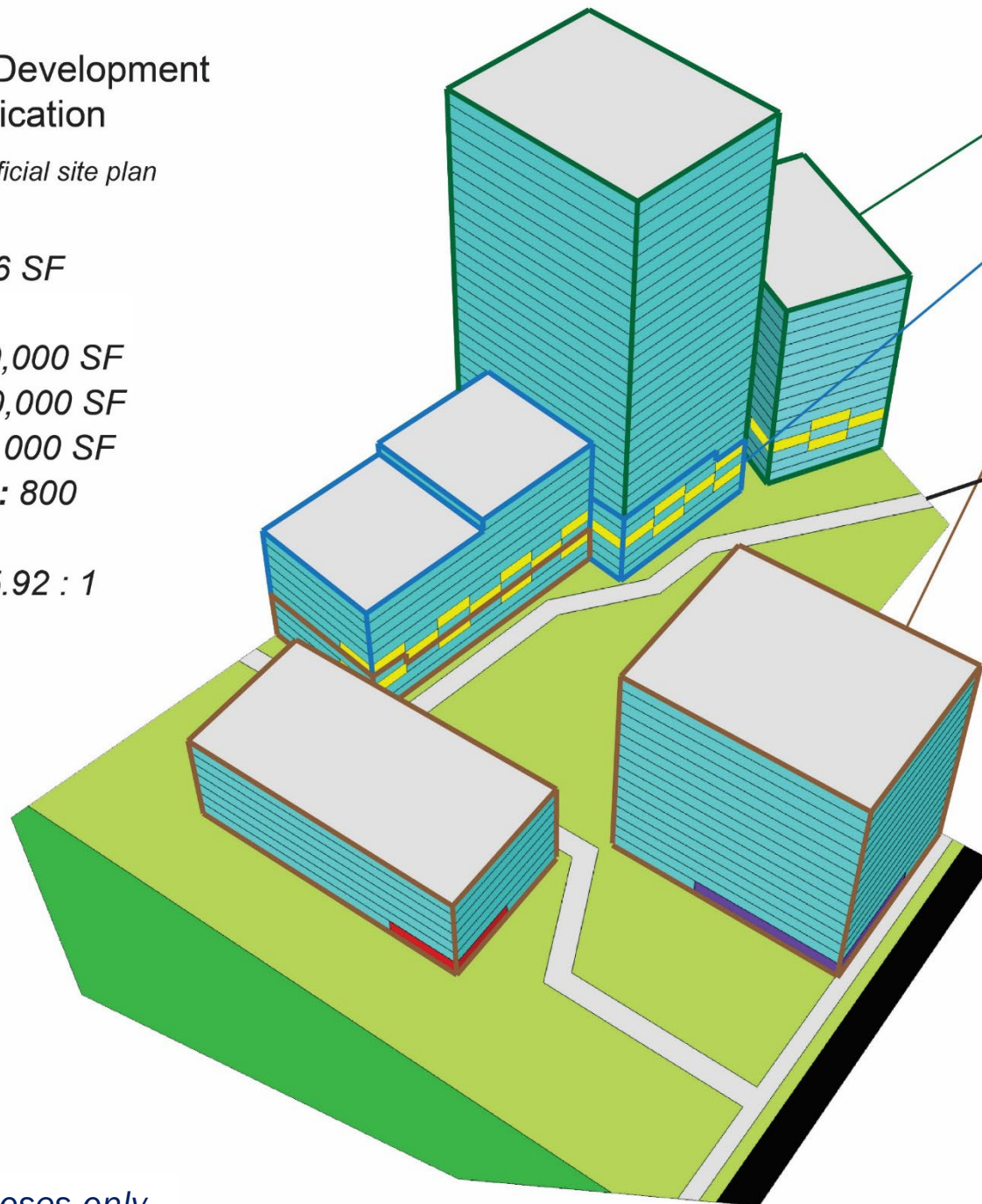
Site Area: *261,796 SF*

Retail Space: *150,000 SF*
Office Space: *400,000 SF*
Hotel Space: *200,000 SF*
Residential Units: *800*

Estimated FAR: *5.92 : 1*

For artistic rendering purposes only

FAR from Fees and
Community Benefits

FAR Boost to 3:1 from
Gatekeeper Requirements

Base Entitlement under
SCW Combining District

Site divided into 3 Density
Distribution Areas with
walkways along divisions

**Community Benefits
Overview**

21 On-Site Affordable Units
Required

$7,132,306 paid in Fees for
Housing, Parks, and Infrastructure

229,384 SF of Bonus through
Community Benefits such as:

9,000 SF of Open Space
In addition to **13,090 SF** required

8,000 SF of Grocery Store

2,500 SF of Music Venue

$17.1K for Public Art

April 9, 2024 PC* Recommendations

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

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

* Back up for Council will identify all PC recommendations and staff's associated recommendation / rationale

Key Adjustments in April 19 Draft Code

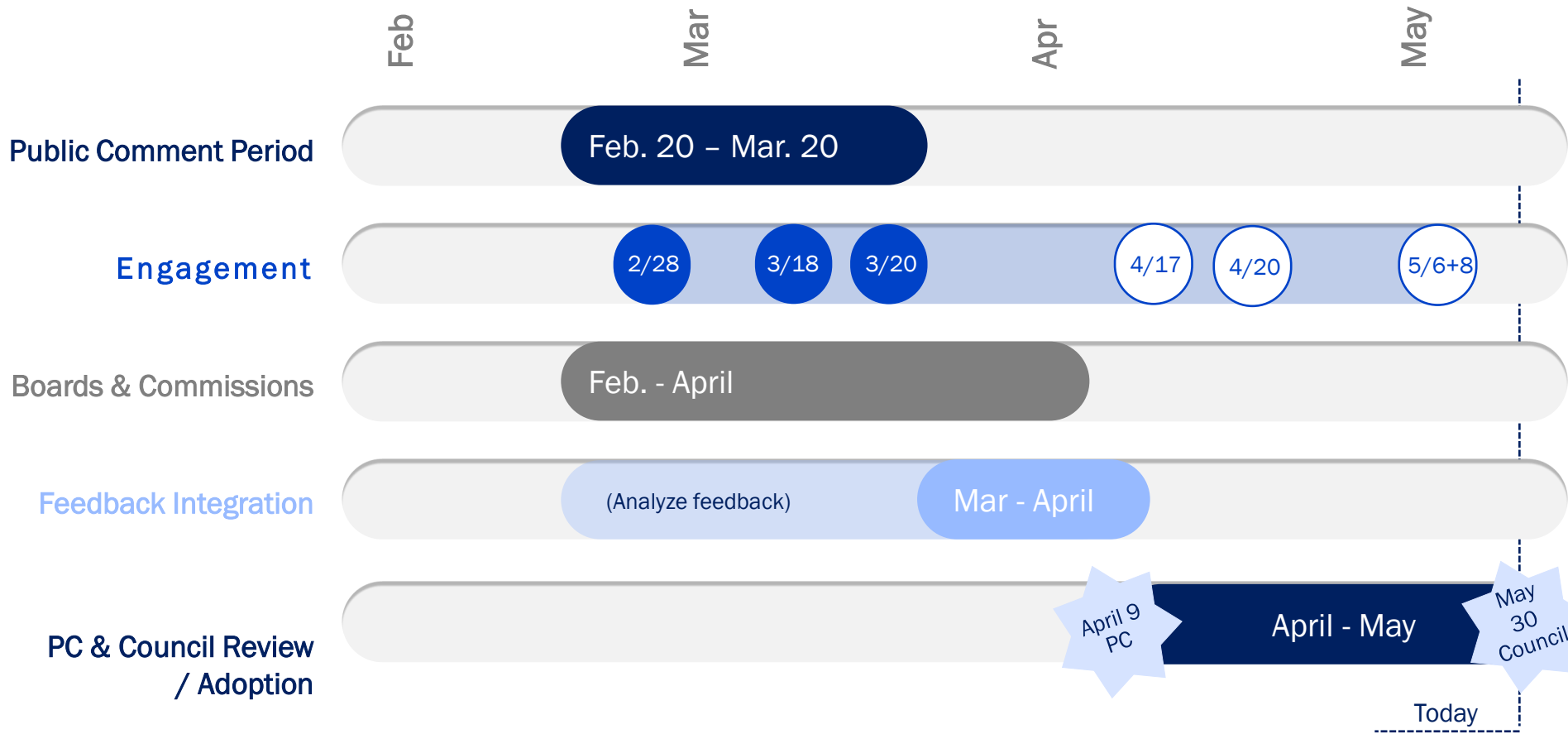| Public Comment (Feb 20 - Mar 20, 2024)	Planning Commission* (Apr 9, 2024)
Boundaries expanded & height limits established in all but one Subdistrict	Support preservation of affordable housing and support homelessness initiatives with fee-in-lieu
Added multimodal internal circulation route option	
Added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

Future Considerations (within 6 months - 2 years)

- For certain non-residential community benefits, re-examine density bonus once compliance options have been determined by staff.

- Explore all financial tools to achieve the vision.

- Re-evaluate fees once citywide density bonus analysis is complete.

- Explore the addition of Transfer of Development Rights.

Staff Recommendation

As written, staff believes this code provides the regulatory tools necessary to be one financial component to dynamically transform the South Central Waterfront from an underutilized neighborhood into a connected, pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use district.

Through an extensive effort between various city departments, property owners, and the general public, staff believes that the draft code fulfills the intent of the 2016 Vision Plan and 2022 Council resolution to the greatest extent possible.

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

CITY OF AUSTIN
FOUNDED 1839

PLANNING
DEPARTMENT

Thank You

www.SpeakUpAustin.org/SouthCentralWaterfront