

April 7, 2024

From: Bouldin Creek Neighborhood Association
To: Mayor Watson and Council Members of Austin City Council
Re: South Central Waterfront combining district

Mayor and Councilmembers,

The BCNA membership has reviewed the draft document for the new South Central Waterfront combining district and would like to offer our conditional support of the plan if a few specific requirements can be met.

1. We believe the multi-decade development of the region will span many elected officials and city staff who will be inundated in the constant evolution of the city, but the people who live closest to this district will have a unique connection to the region and a consistent pulse on its evolution. As such, **we are asking that a board of stakeholders in the region, such as the current SCWAB or a new group similar to the Downtown Design Commission be formed to interact with the property owners and developers as they prepare site plans to provide needed continuity as the area develops and the city grows.**
2. We oppose the addition of the 3 lots west of S First, particularly if included in Subdistrict 4 which allows for a FAR of 16:1 and maximum height of 600 ft. We believe this to be inconsistent with the rest of the area immediately to the west of S First St as it would be the only corner allowing this anomalous height. It is also not in line with the soon-to-be-proposed ETOD plan which includes these 3 lots as well as most of the lots west of them along Barton Springs Road and all lots south of them along S. First Street with a maximum height of 120 ft (see next page for maps). We agree with the inclusion of these lots in the ETOD. If there is a strategically beneficial reason for the inclusion of these lots in the SCW, they should be placed in Subdistrict 1 with a maximum height of 120 feet to be consistent with ETOD. To be clear though, ETOD has no maximum FAR, and **we believe that appropriately high densities can be met under the ETOD program by simply excluding this region from the SCW.**
3. We understand that the city is facing changing legal requirements about density bonus programs. Consequently, many of the visionary elements of the original vision plan have been stripped in what feels like an overzealous attempt at avoiding legal issues. We believe that the South Central Waterfront could be one of the most important places in the city due to its proximity to various parks, trails, and waterfronts. It is also effectively an extension of Downtown, will likely become one of the most important transit stations in the city, and will likely be the first place many visitors to Austin will experience our city after landing at the airport. We cannot afford to squander the opportunity to do something great here. The current bonus structure appears to support small and disjointed pocket parks and the creation of short-lived benefits in the form of specially designated retail uses. What the community would truly benefit from is transit-supportive connected green spaces that enable the area to become a beautiful confluence of natural green space, a transit hub, and an amazing place for living, work, and play. Due to the possibilities of getting this right, particularly since the entire region is set to be redeveloped, **we believe the city should exhaust all legal avenues to ensure that we get high-value green spaces and multi-modal transit-supportive infrastructure.**
4. **We believe that the entire region should be rezoned into the bonus plan at once by council action as opposed to it being opted-in by the developers on a lot-by-lot basis to disincentivize PUDs as a way to sidestep the combining program requirements.**

Relevant maps for lots west of S First.

On page 21 of the ETOD document we see the three of the lots west of S First St included, along with most of the rest of the lots along Barton Springs Road and lots on the west side of S. First St., but strangely excluding the 2 lots that already have buildings on them. (<https://services.austintexas.gov/edims/document.cfm?id=425918>)



On page 20 of the latest SCW document, only 3 lots at the corner are included in the waterfront district. (<https://publicinput.com/Customer/File/Full/053909e0-14f6-46b4-b107-cc9dcb09c090>)

