



## VIOLET CROWN AMPHITHEATER AND MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT

### WHITE PAPER



This document is intended to be responsive to questions raised concerning this project. It has been produced by the VCA development and project management team in conjunction with numerous technical consultants with specific subject matter expertise. All project participants available to provide additional clarification upon request.



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## **THE VIOLET CROWN AMPHITHEATER AND MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT**

The Violet Crown Amphitheater Mixed-Use Development (VCA) sits along state highway 71 in Travis County, Texas, within the Austin ETJ, and within an area covered by the Save our Springs (SOS) water quality ordinance, which is one of the toughest, if not the toughest, ordinance of its type in the United States. VCA is fully compliant (in many cases over-compliant) with SOS, with no need for variances or exceptions, of any kind whatsoever.

### **Program**

- 71-acre site with direct highway access
- Low impervious coverage
- 16,647-person outdoor amphitheater expandable to 20,000-persons, with 2,400 structured parking spaces
- 495 residential multifamily units, 140,000 sf Class A office space, and internal structured parking spaces

### **Amphitheater**

- Largest music-specific room in the region
- Stage is permanent and is the largest in the region
- Band shell will be one of the largest in the country
- General admission and mosh areas are flat grass lawns
- Orchestra and mezzanine are gently raked and seated with alternating Lueders limestone
- No plastic seats in the bowl
- Conformance with the objectives of the Austin 2040 zero waste initiative
- Unique design based on Red Rocks and Hollywood Bowl as the primary precedents
- Shows will take place in a healthy, outdoor, and aesthetically beautiful environment
- Well within the metropolitan area and therefore accessible to all
- Surrounded by thousands of acres of preserve
- Convenient highway access from all directions via Southwest Parkway, 290, 71, and 620
- Maximized use of natural and local building materials
- Maximized water quality controls
- Minimized atmospheric carbon emissions
- Serves the community philanthropically on a large scale
- Aesthetically beautiful, environmentally responsible, and socially conscious
- Solidifies Austin's position as "The Live Music Capital of The World"
- Significant employer during construction and operation
- Significant driver of local business revenues
- Significant driver of local ad valorem and sales tax revenues
- Coextensive of Austin's music, performing arts, social and environmental agendas
- Large scale demonstrator of the precepts of Social Enterprise

### **Economic Impact Analysis**

- \$439 million construction spend
- \$2.02 billion impact from operations
- \$12.5 billion impact from attendee spend
- \$731 million in new taxes receipts to county and subcounty taxing districts
- 54,309 full time equivalent jobs

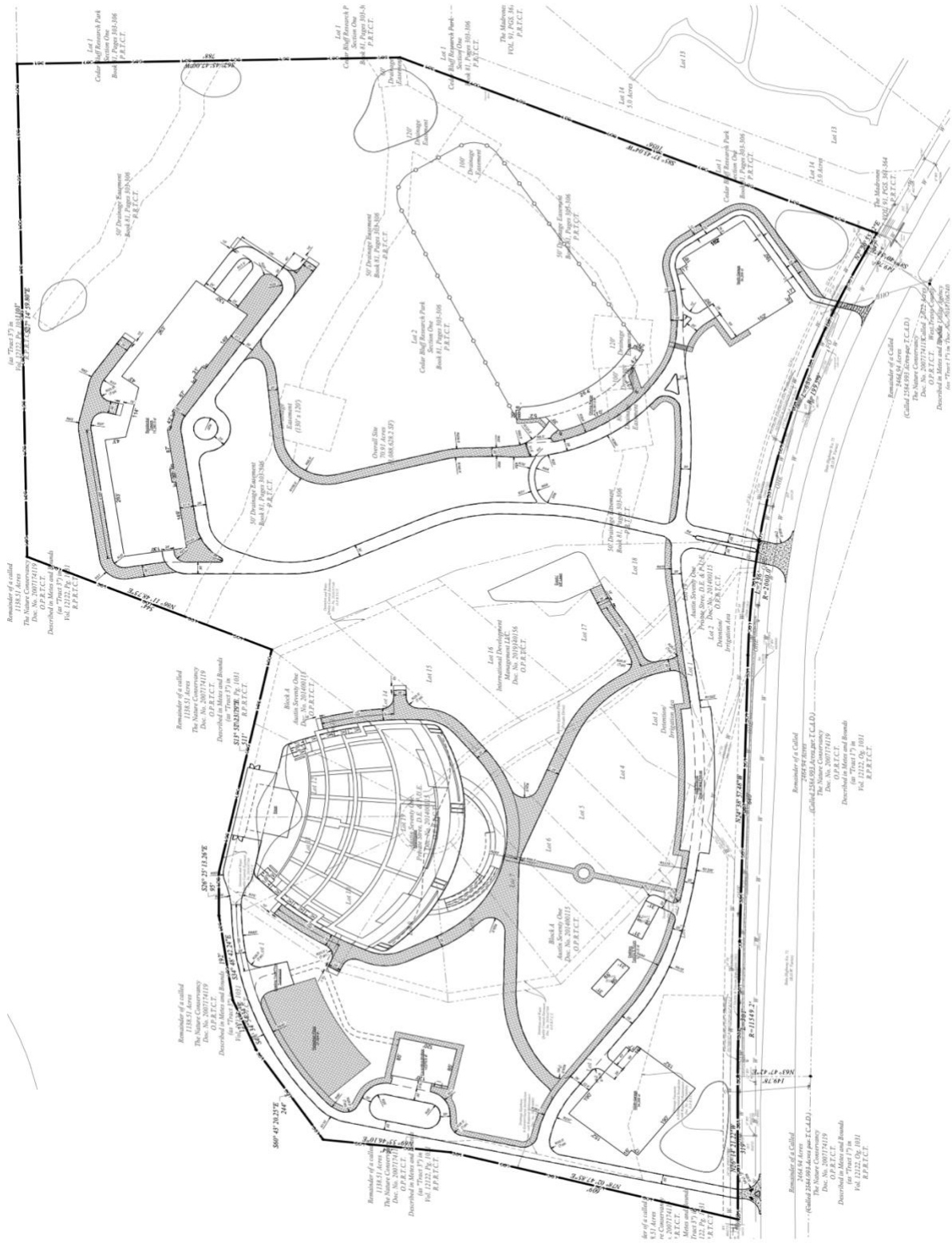
## MASTER PLAN

VCA sits at one of the highest elevations in Travis County. From the top of the bowl there are 360-degree views of the entire region. The site naturally lends itself to placement of the amphitheater on the west side of the hill facing the deepest point of the preserve. This provides the darkest backdrop for the audience, and the greatest isolation from highway 71. The residential towers are oriented in a similar way. The two free standing parking garages are set along highway 71 minimizing their impact on the site, helping shield the site from current high level of existing highway noise. The use of structured parking garages for all plan components minimizes impervious coverage and maximizes the effectiveness of storm water runoff controls.



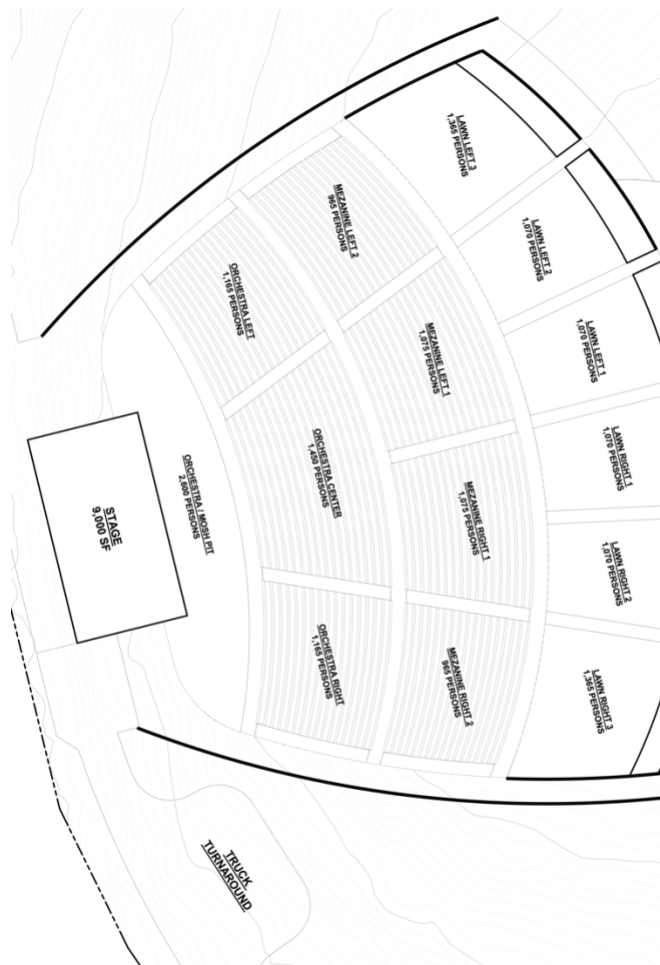
A cursory review of the site plan indicates clearly how little development is taking place, with 80% of the net site remaining pervious, with the developed areas split between buildings and roads. Follow this link for a full set of [Project Renderings](#). The amphitheater bowl will be open to the public when not in use for shows, hosting evening star-parties each week with permanent telescopes and plenty of room to bring your own. VCA is maximizing the use of natural and local building materials, maximizing water quality controls, minimizing the use of plastics, and atmospheric carbon emissions, while serving the community philanthropically at scale in an aesthetically beautiful and socially conscious environment.

# CIVIL SITE PLAN

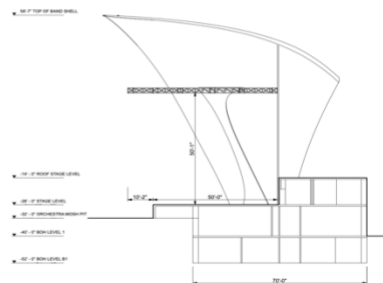
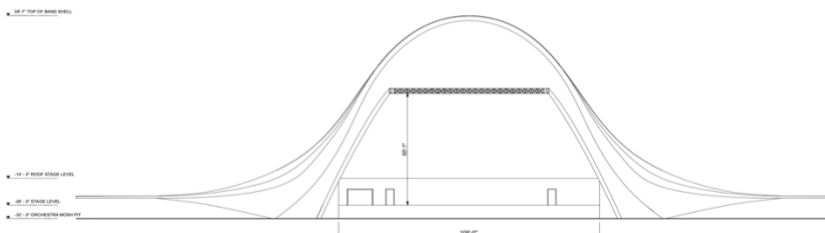
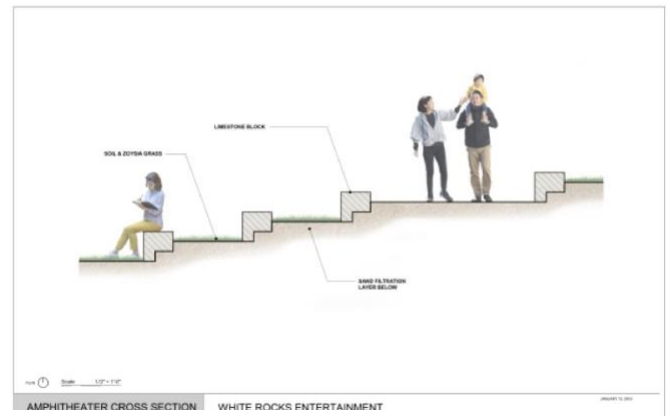


## AMPHITHEATER PROGRAM

The amphitheater has an ultimate capacity of 20,000 making it the largest music-specific room in the region. The band shell will be one of the largest in the country. There are general admission areas at the upper and lower parts of the bowl. The orchestra and mezzanine sections are seated with seating comprised of alternating bands of Lueders limestone. Concessions, merchandise, and sponsor areas are located at the top of the bowl with VIP above. Restrooms and storage are below. The stage is its own permanent building, and the largest stage in the region. It has been designed for efficient load-in, load-out, show production, recording, broadcast, artist, and crew support. You can follow this link to the website which contains a video and additional information [VCA](#).



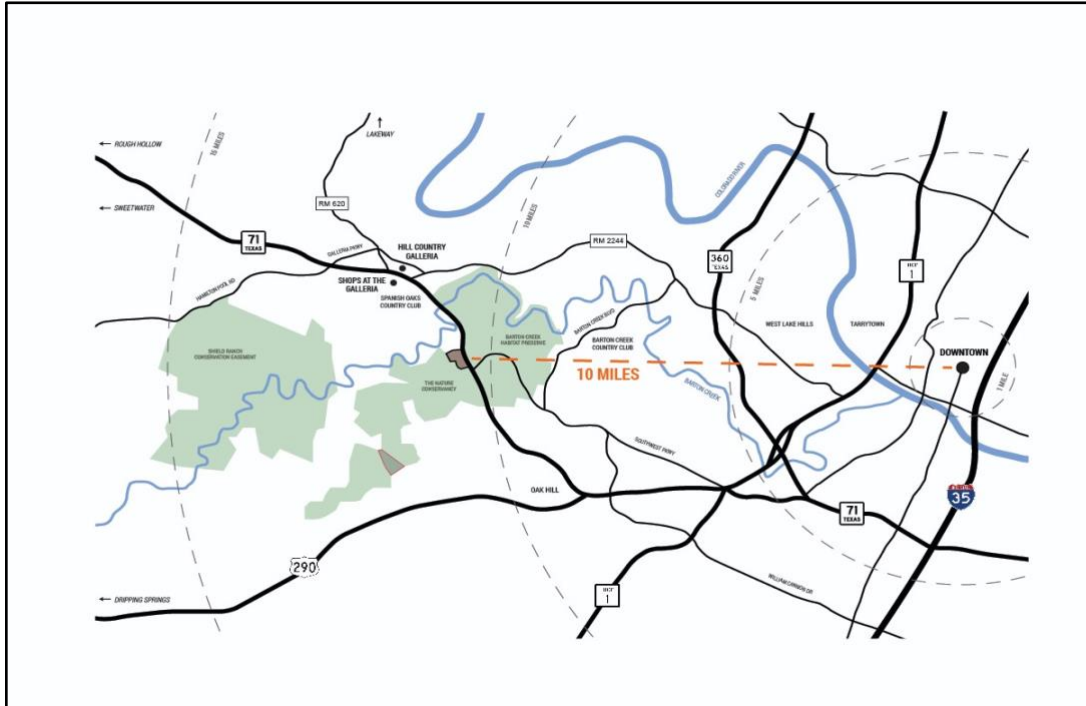
CAPACITY	AREA	CAPACITY
<b>GA Lawn</b>	26,131 SF	5,226 5 SF/p
<b>GA Mosh</b>	12,482 SF	2,496 5 SF/p
<b>GA Upper Deck</b>	20,000 SF	3,353 5 SF/p
<b>Mezzanine Seated</b>	6,405 LF	4,270 1.5 p/LF
<b>Orchestra Seated</b>	4,522 LF	3,015 1.5 p/LF
<b>VIP Concourse Boxes</b>	13,292 SF	886 15 SF/p
<b>VIP Bowl Boxes</b>	4,290 SF	286 15 SF/p
<b>VIP Interior Lounge</b>	7,011 SF	467 15 SF/p
	<b>216,710</b>	<b>20,000</b>





## REGIONAL HIGHWAY ACCESS AND THE HALF-BILLION DOLLAR OAK HILL FLYOVER

The site design simplifies traffic flow and parking and facilitates the use of ridesharing. The site plan has been designed to maximize the use of ridesharing with the goal of reducing the carbon footprint of the amphitheater relative to prior-generation venues. This is possible due to the widespread use of ridesharing technology and the desire by audiences to use it if ridesharing is made convenient with well-designed drop off and pick up areas.



Parking for the venue will be structured, minimizing the impact of automobiles on the site environment, minimizing impervious coverage, and providing for the best stormwater runoff controls. The site has three entrances to highway 71. The center or main entrance will be signalized. The project benefits from significant highway improvements regionally, including to the south where the half- billion-dollar Oak Hill Parkway grade separated interchange at 290-71 (commonly, the “Y”) has commenced construction. The Oak Hill flyover will land traffic back at grade a mile south of the main entrance.



## GROUNDBREAKING ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN

VCA will become an important anchor for the live music and performing arts in Austin and will remain so for many generations. We have given much thought to how it should reflect the ethos of Austin from a music, arts, environmental, and social perspective. The foundation for this is a forward looking and optimistic modernist design, derivative of prior successful facilities while being unique to Austin. Follow this link for a look at the [VCA Bowl, Shell, and Stage Sheets](#).

The architecture of the venue will become emblematic of the city's vaunted performing arts scene. There will not another promotional image of Austin published which will not include the venue's bandshell in it. Care has also been taken with the residential towers, where the outer walls have been designed as a vertical forest in keeping with the successful architecture of Stefano Boleri and the landscape agronomist Laura Gatti. Parking structures will be clad so that the site environment is not impacted by automobile light and noise.



## **EXTENSIVE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENTS**

### **Full Code Compliance**

The project is in Travis County, Texas within Austin's ETJ, and within an area subject to the SOS Ordinance. The project meets or exceeds all SOS requirements and is not seeking any variances. This is one of the toughest water quality ordinances in the country, employing extreme measures such as limiting land use to only 20%.

### **Limitation on the Sale of Single Use plastics**

In keeping with the city of Austin's zero waste goals for 2040 ([Zero Waste](#)), single-use plastics will be minimized. Preference will be given to vendors providing paper products which are demonstrated to be sustainably sourced and recycled, and which do not contain chemical additives.

### **Use of Natural Materials in the Bowl and Compliance with Austin's 2040 Zero Waste Initiative**

In keeping with its natural setting, the amphitheater seating is comprised of Lueders limestone blocks. There will be no use of plastic seating in the bowl.

### **Carbon Footprint Reduction**

The site plan has been developed with the use of ridesharing in mind, with the goal of reducing the carbon footprint of the amphitheater relative to prior generations. Ride-sharing and other forms of public transport increases vehicle utilization rates, taking cars off the road and reducing emissions and congestion. The 80% green site, green bowl and green planting on the residential walls will boost carbon dioxide absorption and emit significant amounts of oxygen.

### **Storm Water Runoff Controls**

We have employed industry leading professionals to design a state-of-the-art stormwater runoff and water quality management system to ensure full compliance with the SOS ordinance and all other applicable rules and regulations as they relate to design, construction, and operation. The VCA site is high, contains no critical water quality zones, no karst, and is more than half a mile from Barton Creek. Follow this link for a full copy of the current [Civil Set](#).

### **Event Traffic Management**

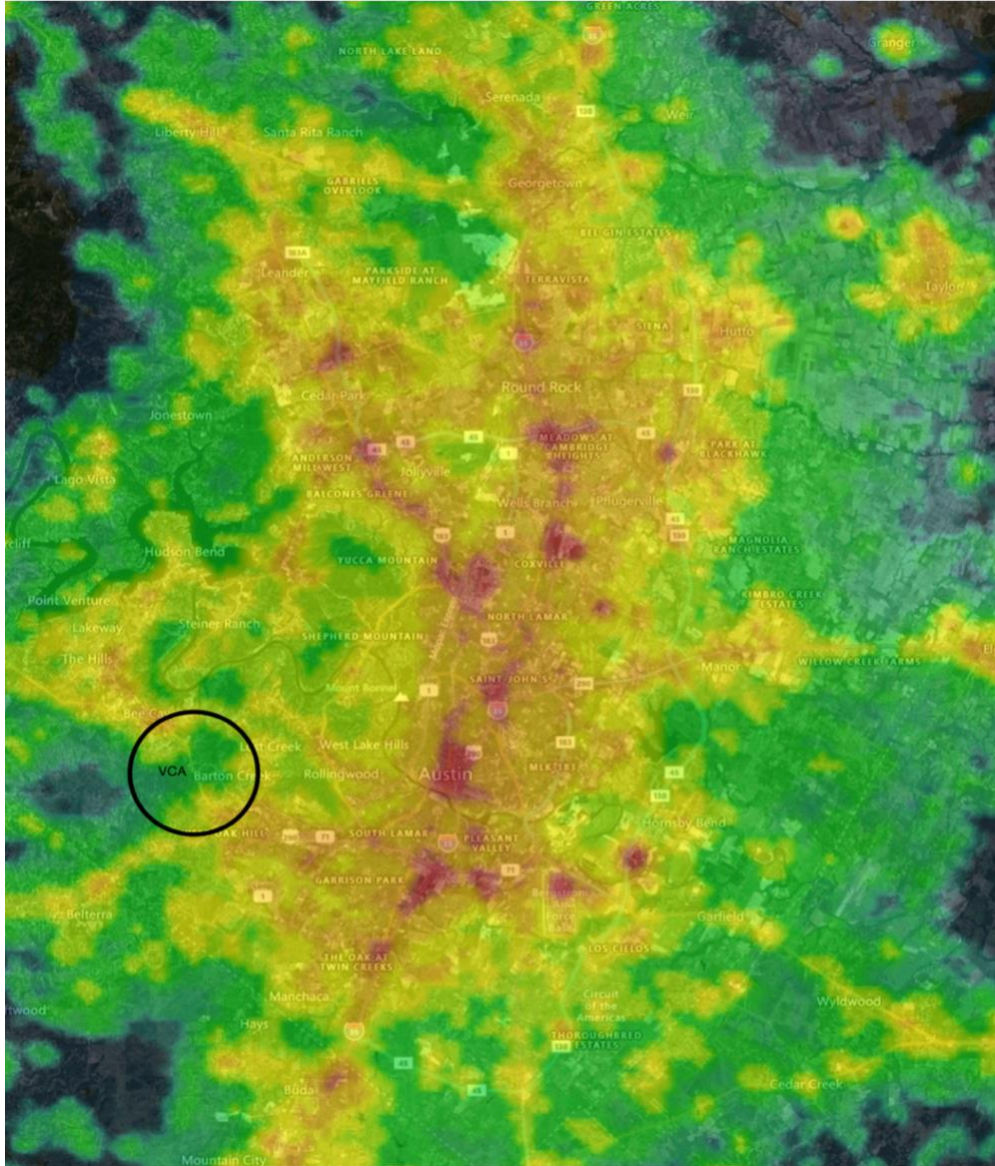
VCA sits on private property along highway 71 and is surrounded by preserves. It is served by several major highways with little other development for several miles in each direction. This provides an optimal base from which to design traffic management systems to minimize delays. The effective management of vehicular traffic is essential to a positive fan experience and community acceptance. Consequently, we have employed industry leading traffic management professionals to prepare both a Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) and Event Management Plan (EMP) even though the requirement to so was waived by TxDOT.

### **Protection of Our Dark Skies**

The maintenance of dark skies is essential to the project's success. We have employed industry leading site lighting professionals and are working directly with Starry Sky Austin (<https://www.starryskyaustin.com>), and the International Dark-Sky Association (<https://www.darksky.org>) to implement the best technology and best practices to ensure maintenance of the darkest skies possible in and around the VCA.

The Austin metropolitan area is considered a high light environment, as can be seen from the following map. The area around the project site is considered an urban light environment, although relatively dimmer than the areas immediately north and south of the VCA. The project benefits from this relative darkness of the surrounding preserve land as well as its own low-density design, even while being considered urban.

VCA will implement systems in all areas of the project to minimize artificial lighting, use downlighting, and shield lighting. Our objective is to garner an IDA award in this area. On this link are the IDA UNSP [Guidelines](#). Having a relatively darker sky in such a close-in location is rare and is essential to the venue. Consequently, great care is being taken in this area. As you will read in other parts of this narrative, the VCA bowl will be open to the public on certain non-show nights for star parties ([MSOP](#)) with permanent fixed telescopes or bring your own.



### Protection of Our Quiet Environment

The effective control of sound generated by VCA is essential. We have engaged industry leading sound analysis and design professionals to map the site and buildings to ensure compliance with all Travis County sound ordinances. VCA benefits from the fact that it is large at 71 acres and is a very low-density development internally. Currently, highway 71 produces significant noise on a continuous basis. The decibel level of the sound generated by VCA will be less than that produced by the highway. The project will be fully compliant with respect to all applicable sound ordinances.

### **No Impact on the Golden-cheeked Warbler**

The Texas A&M University Institute of Renewable Natural Resources prepared a study for the Texas Department of Transportation, related to the potential impacts of highway noise on the reproductive success of the Warbler. As it transpires, the area of the study (the intersection of state highway 71 and Southwest Parkway) is the area surrounding the VCA. Follow this link for a full copy of the [Texas A&M Study](#).

The Texas A&M Study found no effect on the breeding success of the Warbler related to noise generated by highway 71. It also found the birds to be highly adaptive and unaffected by noise in general. The current decibel levels generated by highway 71 far exceed any sound which will be generated by the VCA.

Additionally, and importantly, the study produced the map, shown on the following page, which indicates the specific location of actual Warbler nesting areas. The Warbler is known to prefer nest in areas of steep slopes, all of which are far away from highway 71 and the VCA project.

The location of actual Warbler nesting areas confirms prior research that they prefer nesting in areas of steep slopes where they feel more protected. The privately owned VCA site has been known for some time to not be bird habitat; and large areas of the surrounding privately and publicly owned preserves, far back from 71 in both the easterly and westerly directions, has also been known for some time to not be bird habitat.

Even if areas near the highway and VCA project were suitable for Warbler nesting, which they are not; and even if the Warbler was found nesting near the highway or the VCA site, which they are not; the Texas A&M Study conclusively indicated that sounds generated by highway construction and operation, which are much higher and much more continuous than any sounds produced by the VCA, does not negatively impact the successful mating of the birds.

By way of further example, Warblers proliferate at the Fort Hood military base in the vicinity of live artillery firing. Finally, concerns that evening and nighttime concerts might impair the ability of Warblers to establish territories and attract mates are unfounded because Warblers are active during the day, particularly in the morning, with concerts taking place primarily during the evening hours.

### **Similar Venues in National Wilderness, State Parks, and Local Parks**

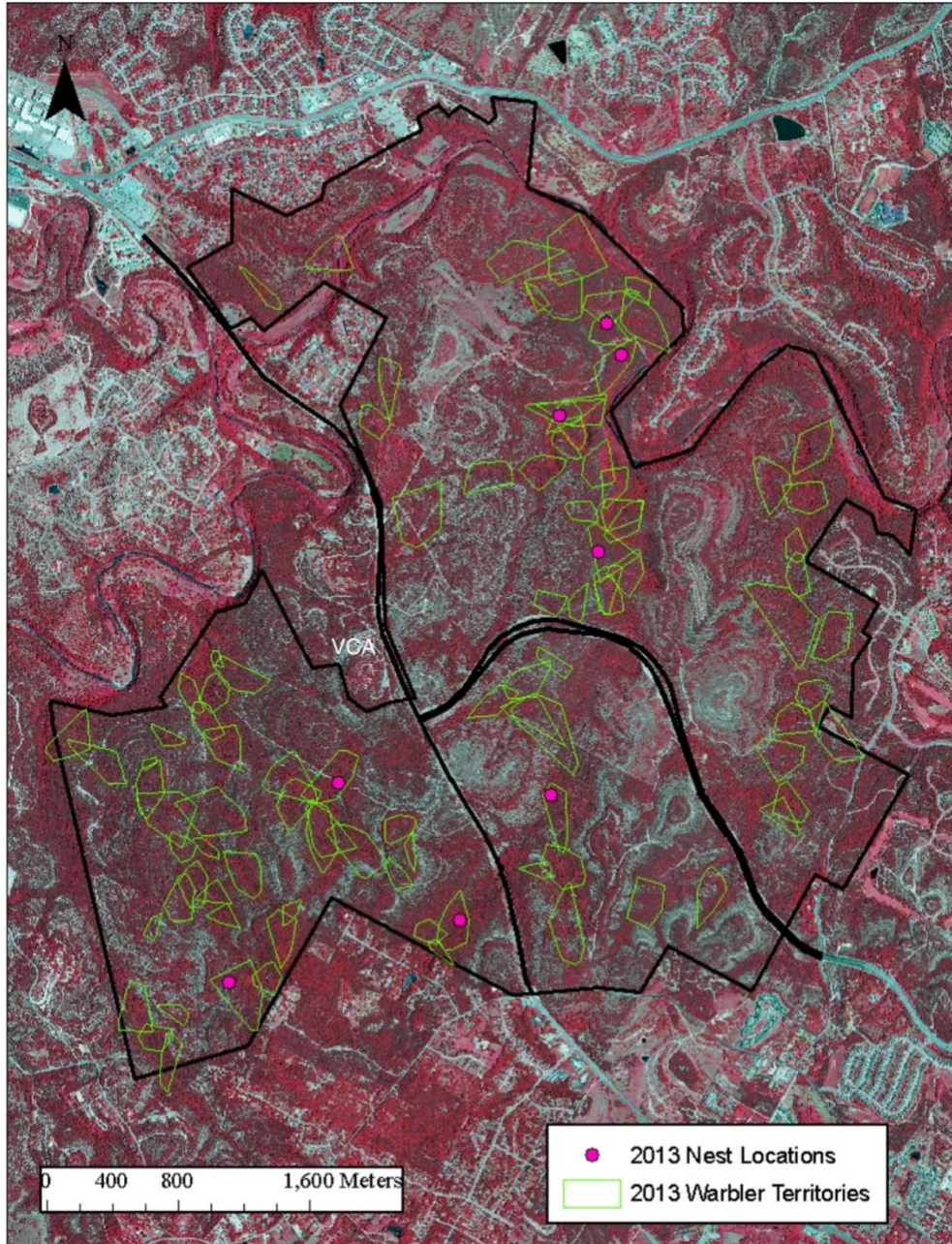
The VCA is modeled after other great venues in the United States. Chief among them are Red Rocks (<https://www.redrocksonline.com>) which is sited in a city park, Wolf Trap (<https://www.wolftrap.org>) which is sited in a national park, Ravinia (<https://www.ravinia.org>) which is sited in a city park, and the Hollywood Bowl (<https://www.hollywoodbowl.com>) which is sited in a county park. The list is long and includes other well know venues such as the Santa Fe Opera, and dozens, if not hundreds, of lesser-known local venues.

While VCA is unique in that it is a private development requiring no public funds to assist in its construction, it is surrounded by preserve land which will protect it. It is the single best site for this type of project in the country on so many levels.

Other communities have recognized the appropriateness of these developments in these types of environments and have not seen any detriment, rather massive cultural and spiritual enrichment. Certainly, none had in place an ordinance so restrictive as SOS, with which VCA is fully compliant.

Texas A&M University Institute of Renewable Natural Resources  
Actual Warbler Nesting Map

On the following map, the steeper slopes with denser vegetation are indicated in darker red, with the nesting polygons indicated in green. The overlaying of the nesting areas with steeper slopes in a U shape following the steeper terrain within the preserves is as anticipated, and far east and west of the VCA site. Actual nests are the pink dots.



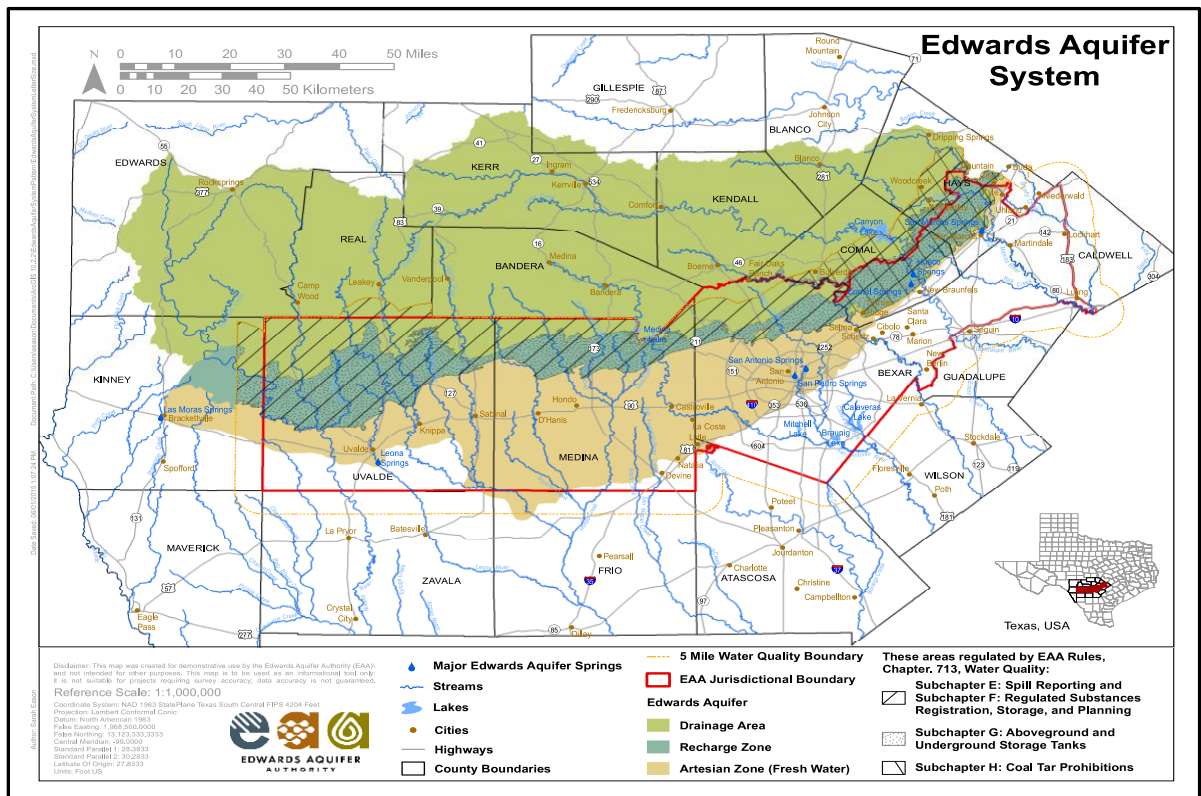
**Appendix 3.** Map shows location of golden-cheeked warbler territory polygons, and warbler nest points in 2013 across Barton Creek Habitat Preserve within Travis County, TX.

## GENERAL ENVIRONMENTAL AND NEIGHBORHOOD CONCERNS

### Edwards Aquifer Alliance

The Technical Director of the Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance expressed concern given that VCA is surrounded by preserve land, and due to a perceived proximity to Barton Creek. As discussed in the foregoing section, the preserve provides permanent protection for VCA, and is not impacted by VCA, especially with respect to the breeding success of Warbler, but also with respect to sound, light, and traffic. With respect to proximities, the Texas A&M study concluded there is no known habitat for Warbler nesting near VCA, and no demonstrable nesting areas have been found outside of the steep slopes well back into the preserve, which is consistent with the science. Irrespective, breeding success was found to not be impacted by roadway noise from highway 71 which generates significantly higher decibel levels than would be produced by VCA (which is also limited in duration as opposed to the continuous nature of roadway noise).

The project is far from Barton Creek, being at its closest more than a half mile away from the site boundary. Nonetheless, the site is covered by, and is fully compliant with, the SOS ordinance, likely the strictest ordinance of its kind in the country. This ensures proper capture and treatment of stormwater, along with the imposition of many other constraints. VCA is low-density, and all parking is structured (no large surface parking lots, these being a primary concern of NPS flows from stormwater). The main spine road and parking garages are positioned along highway 71, keeping most vehicles well away from the preserve, and in fact blocking roadway noise from the interior of the site. The free-standing garages for the venue, and the internal structured garages within the residential towers, are to be clad, blocking sound and light from within, and fully securing these areas from stormwater flows. It should be noted for clarity that VCA does not sit over any of the Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone as indicated on the attached maps provided by TCEQ, pursuant to EA Section 713, Regulated Zones.



### **Nature Conservancy of Texas**

The Director of Land Protection for the Nature Conservancy of Texas has expressed concern over scale and general environmental impact. The project site is 71 acres and is limited to 20% impervious coverage on the net site area, making it very low density (only 10% of the net site contains structures). It is fully compliant with the SOS ordinance.

It should be noted that the amphitheater is modeled after venues including Red Rocks, Wolf Trap, Ravinia, and Tanglewood, among others; many of which are within national wilderness areas, state, county, and local parks. These are beautiful settings for these venues, which properly planned and operated, cause no harm to the surrounding environment, while immeasurably enriching the local arts and society.

### **Madrones Neighborhood**

The small Madrones neighborhood containing larger homes is near VCA. From published reports, a homeowner has expressed concern over traffic, sound, and light. VCA sits on 71 acres, is low density, and has three access points to highway 71. With preserve land stretching for several miles in all directions, it will not pose a problem for local traffic flows. Further, the interior of the site has been designed to bring traffic off the highway and onto internal roads and parking garages immediately parallel to highway 71 but within the site boundaries minimizing the stacking of traffic off site. The project has two large, fully clad, parking garages, and has limited surface parking to only a few areas intended for ride share pick up and drop off. While almost everyone owns one or more cars and wants to drive and park them as their needs dictate, we have made every possible effort to reduce the unwanted impacts of the automobile.

Importantly for the Madrones, the northern end of the VCA site is programmed with a driving range. We have been very careful here with the design. The main building of the range contains open bays which may generate a low level of sound, but has been effectively blocked behind the northern garage, which is fully clad. The driving range will be down lit, conforming to dark sky precepts related to light shielding. Other commercial driving ranges are needlessly over lit. No one can really see where their ball went among the thousands on the range, especially at night. Tracking the arc of the ball and its disposition is wholly determined by a combination of technical resources including RFID, radar, and laser systems. Bright lighting is unnecessary.

In summary then the VCA driving range will be partly obscured from the Madrones by the fully clad northern garage, will be under lit, down lit in conformance with dark skies, and terraced with the existing terrain. VCA in general should pose minimal concern for the Madrones, since concerns have been identified and mitigated during design. VCA should significantly enhance residential property values.



## **EXTRAORDINARY SOCIAL COMMITMENTS**

VCA is placing an assessment on ticket sales to fund its endowment, the beneficiaries of which have been selected from among private sector non-profits with well-defined missions focused on natural resource preservation, the performing arts, and the mental, physical, and spiritual health, welfare, safety, and education of our community at large. Once selected based on relevancy, apportionment among the beneficiaries was predicated on the depth of other funding sources available to those organizations, not their current level of outreach. In other words, those organizations with less opportunity to secure funding elsewhere were given a higher relative percentage participation in proceeds generated by VCA. This is an approach we call "Social Enterprise", where philanthropic giving is built into the fabric of the business from the outset. A description and list of initial beneficiaries is on the following pages.

### **Environment (In support of regional and national natural resource conservation)**

The Nature Conservancy and the Hill Country Conservancy have worked throughout the years to secure specific tracts of land for preservation. In the present case this has created a backdrop of near perfect natural conditions (still, quiet, dark, and beautiful) which will permanently protect the amphitheater. The National Resources Defense Council (NRDC) for its part acts on a national basis helping form the basis for conservation policy at the federal level.

### **Health (In support of the mental health and wellness of our local performing artists)**

The Health Alliance for Austin Musicians (HAAM) aids musicians and other performing artists with respect to healthcare which is otherwise unavailable primarily due to a lack of revenue to pay for expensive private individual health insurance policies. The Sims Ellison (SIMS) Foundation fulfills a similar role for mental health in recognition of the challenges which artists and performers face disproportionately. Black Fret has established itself as a music accelerator/incubator, helping up and coming local bands with needed capital and mentor relationships.

### **Welfare (In support of our local at-risk communities)**

The SAFE Alliance (the merger of Safe Place and the Austin Children's Shelter) provides a wide range of assistance to at-risk women and children in our community. Concurrently, CASA provides legal assistance to at-risk children who would not otherwise have representation in the system. The SAFE and CASA roles are analogous to the HCC/TNC efforts in respect to the NRDC for the environment. In a complex world both are necessary components to achieve the best outcomes in their respective areas of concern.

### **Safety (In support of our local first responders)**

The Violet Crown Amphitheater has been designed to a 21<sup>st</sup> century specification with respect to all life safety considerations. Nonetheless, the burden in an individual or collective emergency ultimately rests with our EMTs, law enforcement, and fire departments. In support of the first responder community, VCA supports the 100 Club of Central Texas, and the National Fallen Firefighters Association. Additionally, VCA will be providing a host of physical facilities, including landing and ground handling for Starflight, permanent emergency response command centers in the stage building at the bottom of the bowl and in the concourse building at the top of the bowl, and has committed to permanently host full-time an Austin-Travis County EMS vehicle within the VCA equipment services building, with overnight facilities for paramedics.

### **Media (In support of well researched and unbiased reporting)**

KLRU and KUT have long played a vital role in our community by providing reporting which is well researched and free of the editorial content. Even more so, both outlets have deep roots in the Austin music scene, having participated materially in its founding and continued growth over many decades. For its part, the Tribune is a rare professional media organization operated as a non-profit which has demonstrated its commitment to high quality and apolitical reporting on issues of specific importance to Texans.

### **Arts (In support of our local fine arts community)**

VCA's support of the big-four fine arts organizations goes without need for explanation. It is our hope that these organizations will grow to a point where they can expand their repertoires to include summer programs under the stars as is the case at the Hollywood Bowl (LA Philharmonic), Red Rocks (Colorado Symphony), Ravinia (Chicago Symphony Orchestra), Tanglewood (Boston Pops) and Wolf Trap (National Opera).

### **Education (In support of an appropriate natural philosophy for the 21st century)**

VCA intends to host its own lecture series focused on music, the performing arts, and a broad arts and sciences program with a focus on cosmology and astronomy. The bowl will be open on certain non-show nights at no cost to the public for star parties like those held at the McDonald Observatory in Ft. Davis. In concert with this, VCA has lent its support to Starry Sky Austin and its affiliated national operation the International Dark-Sky Association.

### **Current List of Future VCA Endowment Beneficiaries**

Natural Resources Defense Council  
Hill Country Conservancy  
Nature Conservancy of Texas  
HAAM  
SIMS  
Black Fret  
SAFE  
CASA  
100 Club of Central Texas  
National Fallen Firefighters Association  
KLRU  
KUT  
Texas Tribune  
Austin Symphony Orchestra  
Austin Opera  
Ballet Austin  
Zachary Scott  
Starry Sky Austin/International Dark-Sky Association  
Planetary Society  
TED/TEDx

### **Positive Beneficiary Response and Unwavering Commitments**

While the response to the VCA has been overwhelming positive in the arts, business, and philanthropic communities, a few of the beneficiaries in the environmental sector have been hesitant to engage in discussions out of concern this will give the appearance of alignment with a commercial property development. We fully understand their concern, although we would like to add that we do not need, and have not asked for, the assistance of any organization, nor any public funds to assist the project. A wait and see approach by the environmental community is not unexpected and will in no way undermine our willingness to keep them as beneficiaries and to generate revenues for their causes post-completion. We are all conservationists in this closed ecosystem, and we honor those responsibilities in the context of a balanced and informed humanism. Their work has created the opportunity for VCA to exist in an unparalleled natural environment. A closer examination of what we are doing, and how we are doing it, in an ultra-low density, tightly managed, continuously controlled, and fully compliant way, will assuage concerns. The existence and good work of these organizations has provided Austin the opportunity to have this venue and for it to be protected for centuries to come.

## CHART OF VCA ENDOWMENT TICKET ASSESSMENT INITIAL ALLOCATIONS

Austin is the most valuable market for consumer spending on live music entertainment, and the Violet Crown Amphitheater will be the largest music-specific room in the region. This ensures the success of the venue which in turn ensures material levels of proceeds for the beneficiaries of the ticket surcharge funded endowment.

The anticipated amounts indicated in the following chart are for an average annual sold-out-equivalent of 30 and 60 ticketed shows. Comparable venues of the scale and technical complexity of VCA are producing as many as 120 ticketed performances annually. Commitments are for an initial 10-year period, providing a high degree of revenue stability for the planning by the development officers at each of the beneficiaries.

ORGANIZATION	URL	SURCHARGE PER TKT	TKD SHOWS	TKD SHOWS
			PER YEAR	PER YEAR
			30	60
			<i>Probable Initial</i>	<i>Probable Stabilized</i>
<b>Environment</b>				
The Nature Conservancy	<a href="http://www.nature.org">www.nature.org</a>	\$0.50	\$249,705	\$499,410
Hill Country Conservancy	<a href="http://www.hillcountryconservancy.org">www.hillcountryconservancy.org</a>	\$0.50	\$249,705	\$499,410
Natural Resources Defense Council	<a href="http://www.nrdc.org">www.nrdc.org</a>	\$0.50	\$249,705	\$499,410
<b>Health</b>				
HAAM	<a href="http://myhaam.org">myhaam.org</a>	\$0.50	\$249,705	\$499,410
SIMS	<a href="http://simsfoundation.org">simsfoundation.org</a>	\$0.50	\$249,705	\$499,410
Black Fret	<a href="http://blackfret.org">blackfret.org</a>	\$0.25	\$124,853	\$249,705
<b>Welfare</b>				
SAFE	<a href="http://www.safeaustin.org">www.safeaustin.org</a>	\$0.50	\$249,705	\$499,410
CASA	<a href="http://www.casatravis.org">www.casatravis.org</a>	\$0.50	\$249,705	\$499,410
<b>Safety</b>				
100 Club of Central Texas	<a href="http://www.the100clubcentex.org">www.the100clubcentex.org</a>	\$0.25	\$124,853	\$249,705
National Fallen Fire Fighters Assoc.	<a href="http://www.firehero.org">www.firehero.org</a>	\$0.25	\$124,853	\$249,705
<b>Media</b>				
KLRU Public Television	<a href="http://www.klr.org">www.klr.org</a>	\$0.50	\$249,705	\$499,410
KUT Public Radio	<a href="http://www.kut.org">www.kut.org</a>	\$0.50	\$249,705	\$499,410
Texas Tribune	<a href="http://www.texastribune.org">www.texastribune.org</a>	\$0.50	\$249,705	\$499,410
<b>Arts</b>				
Austin Symphony Orchestra	<a href="http://www.austinsymphony.org">www.austinsymphony.org</a>	\$0.25	\$124,853	\$249,705
Austin Opera	<a href="http://www.austinopera.org">www.austinopera.org</a>	\$0.25	\$124,853	\$249,705
Ballet Austin	<a href="http://www.balletaustin.org">www.balletaustin.org</a>	\$0.25	\$124,853	\$249,705
Zachary Scott Theater	<a href="http://www.zachtheatre.org">www.zachtheatre.org</a>	\$0.25	\$124,853	\$249,705
<b>Education</b>				
Starry Sky Austin/IDA	<a href="http://www.starryskyaustin.com">www.starryskyaustin.com</a>	\$0.25	\$124,853	\$249,705
TED/TEDx	<a href="http://www.ted.org">www.ted.org</a>	\$0.25	\$124,853	\$249,705
Planetary Society	<a href="http://www.planetary.org">www.planetary.org</a>	\$0.25	\$124,853	\$249,705
		<b>\$7.50</b>	<b>\$3,745,575</b>	<b>\$7,491,150</b>

## APPLICABILITY TO LOCAL PERFORMING ARTS AND ARTISTS

It was recently reported that “a member of the Austin Music Commission and its former chair, said he does not think the Violet Crown Amphitheater would do much for rank and-file Austin musicians who constitute much of the city’s live music scene. “In general, those big venues have such a high overhead just to open up that they are not bringing in local musicians (to perform), because local people can’t fill it up. They are bringing in big-name acts that can draw huge crowds.” He said, “The project appears to be more of a play by real estate developers to capitalize on the city’s vaunted reputation for live music, rather than an effort to bolster it.”

Everyone involved in the VCA project is a fan of the live music scene in Austin, for decades going back into the 1980s, have invested in live music venues, have operated live music venues, promoted shows, worked with, or as, the talent, and have sponsored important local events such as the Austin Music Awards (AMA). Certainly, there are other ways to develop the site in the current property market which are less difficult to execute, and more profitable. It is the passion we have for the music which has driven us in realizing VCA.

Contrary to the statements in the article, the Violet Crown Amphitheater is not a high-cost venue to operate. It is not an enclosed arena with a roof on it, with all that entails. It is an open-air amphitheater. The interior of the bowl is subdividable to allow for shows of any size without undo operational cost. The project also includes a smaller daily use venue near the base. VCA will also support local acts through several annual internally promoted festival format performances which will see hundreds of bands cycle through the main venue. VCA also incorporates five separate indoor clubs including those focused on spinning (DJs are certainly artists creating music), blues/jazz, and traditional Texas popular country music.

With respect to classical performances, VCA opened discussions more than a year ago with the Austin Symphony Orchestra, Austin Opera, Ballet Austin, and Zachary Scott (theatrical) about expanding their repertoires to include permanent summer seasons utilizing VCA, in the same vein as the CSO in Ravinia, the LA Philharmonic in the Hollywood Bowl, and the Boston Pops in Tanglewood, as only a few examples. Each ticket sold to a show will include a surcharge which will fund the VCA endowment, the funds from which will be distributed amongst relevant charities in the community both for direct support of local arts, and indirectly through the support of artist health and welfare; at scale and built into the fabric of the business from the outset.

With respect to ensuring diversity, VCA intends to establish an advisory council which will ensure management level decisions related to hiring and show promotion take into consideration that we are a diverse nation of people. This not only applies to skin color but to the gender, sexual orientation, religious, political, and any-and-all other ways people differentiate themselves as unique individuals. This diversity is a root source of the art and the talented artists who create it. This however is an entirely different matter from whether the VCA will be good for local musicians, as per the published comments. It will be essential to local musicians, popular and classical. It will also be very important to the local businesses which technically support shows through provision of all manner of gear and skilled labor. This latter point is addressed further in the following section.

## POSITIVE ECONOMIC IMPACT AT SCALE

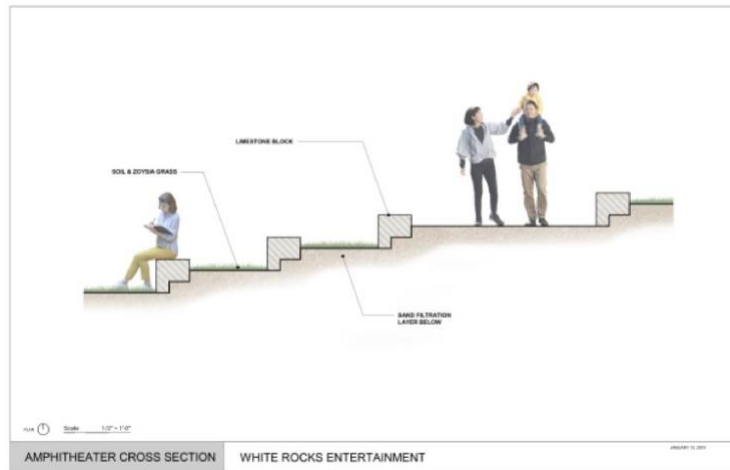
The following estimates have been compiled by experienced third-party professionals with a long term demonstrated ability to accurately reflect the economic impact of new businesses on the Austin community. In all respects the underlying assumptions behind these figures are conservative. The team looked at 20 comparable venues throughout the United States. Using the available data, we were able to put together estimates for consumer spending and have employed this as a reference. We have made no adjustments for Austin having the largest per-capita spend of live music entertainment of any city in the country.

Impact	Employment	Economic Impact	Tax Receipts
1 – Construction	2,741	\$439,000,000	\$10,000,000
2 – Operations	18,658	\$2,020,000,000	\$126,100,000
3 – Attendee Spend	32,907	\$12,500,000,000	\$594,400,000
	54,306	\$15,010,000,000	\$731,000,000

## PUBLIC HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS

It is incumbent upon all of us to recognize and respond to the current public health crises with a renewed recognition of the need to manage the risks associated with infectious diseases. Covid-19 has been a dramatic reminder of the speed with which highly contagious diseases can spread. It has also been an excellent opportunity to renew our efforts aimed at stopping the spread of such diseases.

With respect to Violet Crown Amphitheater, we are first and foremost an outdoor facility. There is no roof over the audience. The venue is always open to sunlight and fresh air; not florescent light and chilled recirculated air as is the case in an enclosed arena. VCA also sits in a suburban location high atop a hillside surrounded by ten-thousand acres of nature preserve. Even the overall masterplan, at 71-acres is very low-density with only 20% impervious coverage on the net site area, half of which is roadway.



VCA has been intended as a low-density venue even before the advent of Covid. Front to back, seating depths are nearly 5' at VCA vs less than 2' in a typical enclosed arena. There are no fixed plastic seats, allowing groups and families who know each to sit close together and for those who don't to naturally create more separation. This is as opposed to typical arena seating which is fixed giving only a few inches of separation between seats. The general admission upper lawn and mosh pit are open grass areas by design, naturally allowing for free form grouping.



## AMPHITHEATER PRECEDENTS

### Red Rocks

Red Rocks is the number 1 rated amphitheater in the country. It has a capacity of 9,524 and is in Morrison, Co about 25 miles west of Denver in the front range. Seeing a show here is life altering. This venue was the primary basis in the design of VCA.



### Hollywood Bowl

The Hollywood Bowl is the number 2 rated amphitheater in the country. It has a capacity of 17,500, essentially the same size as VCA. This Southern California landmark is a stunning venue for concerts of all types. The more formal band shell and technical design of this venue was also an important precedent for VCA.



## RESIDENTIAL PRECEDENTS

The design objective for the exterior walls of the residential towers has been to achieve maximum greenery against the surrounding nature preserve. Each building will contain approximately 250 residential units of varying sizes and plans, all with spectacular views of the Texas Hill Country and the city. The towers benefit from the presence on site of a truly world class performing arts complex.

In keeping with the foundational ethos of the venue, the towers have been designed with large balconies, sufficient planting depth, and integrated irrigation to support a vertical forest of several acres, absorbing CO<sub>2</sub> and emitting O<sub>2</sub>. The precedent below is not CGI, but a completed project in Milano which was designed by architect [Stefano Boeri](#) with the assistance of the landscape agronomist Laura [Gatti](#) who's TED lecture on the topic can be found here [TEDx](#).



**GENERAL DESIGN PRECEDENTS**

The detailed architecture and interior design objectives have been to blend central Texas modern into the natural environment using natural stone and wood, with more modern materials such as steel and glass.





## ETYMOLOGY OF THE NAME

### Ancient Athens

In one of the surviving fragments (64), the lyric poet Pindar writes of Athens "City of Light, with thy violet crown, beloved of the poets, thou art the bulwark of Greece." The climate of Athens is characterized by low humidity and a high percentage of dust in the air, making sunsets display hues of violet and purple and the surrounding mountains often appear immersed in a purple haze.

### Modern Austin

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, residents began to call Austin the "Athens of the South" due to the aspirations of the University of Texas. With this connection established in the minds of residents and similar purple sunsets as in Pindar's description, Austin became the modern era's City of the Violet Crown. The phrase first appeared in the Austin Daily Statesman (now the Austin American Statesman) on May 5<sup>th</sup>, 1890. While humidity levels are higher in Austin than in Athens, global wind patterns bring dust into the region high in the atmosphere giving local sunsets this same violet and purple hue.

Scientifically, this atmospheric phenomenon is one of an anti-twilight arch visible shortly after sunset (and before sunrise) near the anti-solar point when a purple glow appears above the horizon. Sunlight is refracted by the fine particles high in the atmosphere with the color due to the backscatter of reddening light from the rising or setting Sun. As twilight progresses, the arch of color, or violet crown, is separated from the horizon by the dark band of Earth's shadow.

Mythologically, the common name for this dark band is the Necklace of Aphrodite or Belt of Venus, respectively the Ancient Greek and Roman goddesses of love. Inside this necklace or band was kept the power over the heart. The greatest elongation between the planet Venus and the Sun is only 46 degrees, so Venus, even when visible, is never located opposite the Sun relative to the Earth, and hence never actually in the Belt of Venus. The inference is not astronomical, rather purely symbolic, or allegorical in equating the eternal beauty of the Earth's twilight and the ancient gods who once inhabited those heavens, albeit in all their intense humanity.

The Violet Crown Amphitheater sits on the western slope of one of the highest elevations in the region surrounded by dark and still nature preserves. With most shows beginning to seat around twilight, the colorful Central Texas sunsets will be on display with the Violet Crown and Necklace playing out in the mind's eye as they have done for eternity.

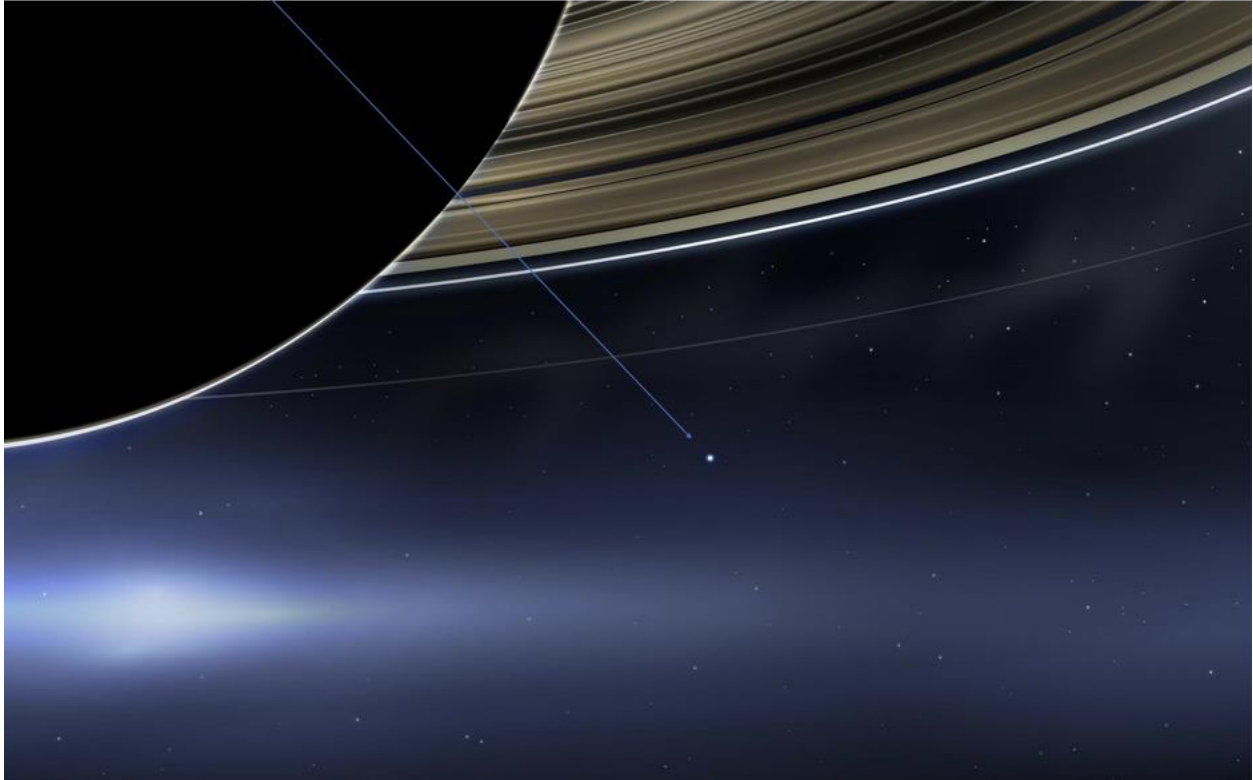
### Trademark

There were recent published reports related to a complaint filed against the VCA for incorporation of the words Violet Crown in its name. There are many businesses in Austin which utilize these words in their name, and it is not possible to claim a trademark or exclusive status on them, any more than one can prohibit, by way of example, a business from using the words Alamo City in San Antonio. The complaint was filed by a small local cinema operator.

The VCA project incorporates the words Violet Crown into its name in association with the word Amphitheater and its related businesses, always with its mark which is its unique artwork. We do not show movies and do not use the word cinema in our name. Others who use the words Violet Crown in their name include, but by no means are limited to, the Hill Country Conservancy's new Violet Crown Hiking Trail, Violet Crown Realty, Violet Crown Heights, Violet Crown Social Club, Violet Crown Spring Festival, Violet Crown Winery, Violet Crown Climbing Center, Violet Crown Landscape, Violet Crown Room (Four Seasons), Violet Crown Follies, and Order of the Violet Crown, among countless other past and present.

## COMPARABLE NATIONAL VENUES

You are located here.



Violet Crown Amphitheater has been designed for a 21<sup>st</sup> century Austin which is to say unique from the experiential, architectural, environmental, and social perspectives. It nonetheless has its roots in the great venues of the past; being specifically modeled on aspects of Red Rocks and the Hollywood Bowl which were recently rated in Rolling Stone as the No 1 and No 2 in the Country. The following are links to these and other venues we feel are indicative of what we hope to achieve.

Comparable venues are,

**Red Rocks** - <https://www.redrocksonline.com>

**Hollywood Bowl (LA Phil)** - <https://www.hollywoodbowl.com/>

**Ravinia (CSO)** - <https://www.ravinia.org>

**Wolf Trap (National Opera)** - <https://www.wolftrap.org>

**Santa Fe Opera** - <https://www.santafeopera.org>

**Tanglewood (Boston Pops)** - <https://www.bso.org>

## LOCAL AUSTIN VENUES

### **Moody Theater (ACL Live)**

#### **Long Center for the Performing Arts**

#### **Bass Concert Hall**

The Moody Theater, Long Center and Bass Concert Hall are among the most outstanding small urban fine and performing arts venues in America. These small, enclosed venues have capacities of approximately 2,400, 2,600 and 3,000 respectively depending on how shows are seated.

<https://acl-live.com>

<https://thelongcenter.org>

<https://texasperformingarts.org>

### **Moody Waller Creek Amphitheater**

With a capacity of 5,000, the Moody Amphitheater in Waterloo Park (Waller Creek) is a publicly owned outdoor facility intended to add to the downtown Austin live music experience.

<https://www.moodyamphitheater.com>

### **Germania Insurance Amphitheater**

With a capacity of 13,700, the amphitheater at COTA has held many of the larger concerts in Austin. Most of the seating is on the lawn with traditional fixed plastic seats close to the stage.

<http://germaniaamp.com>

### **Moody UT NCAA Basketball Arena**

The Moody UT Basketball Arena is under construction on the UT Austin campus. While acoustics will likely be better than the Erwin Center which it's replacing, it will likely reflect its primary purpose as an arena for basketball. This enclosed facility will have a seating capacity of 10-15,000 depending on the type of event and how it's seated.

<https://moodycenteratx.com>

### **Austin FC MLS Soccer Club Stadium**

With a capacity of 20,500, the FC Austin MLS Stadium (Q2) east of the Domain in north Austin. It is one of the finest stadiums in the MLS. Dimensionally, soccer stadiums provide less than optimal audience engagement and acoustics which reflects their primary purpose, in this case for soccer matches.

<https://www.austinfc.com>

## THE INHERENT DIFFICULTY AND COST IN DOING THE RIGHT THING

### Project Team

The developer of the project, IDM is medium sized locally based developer whose principals have significant development experience in the US and Europe over the past four decades. The company develops only a limited number of projects which have interest or meaning to, and are owned and controlled by, its principals. In Austin, the firm developed the Hill Country Galleria and Shops at the Galleria, both in the city of Bee Cave. The company specializes in larger more complex developments with high aesthetic and social value.

The primary team on VCA is exemplary by any measure, including but is not limited to, Bercy Chen Studio as Architect and Engineer of Record, Blyel Engineering as Civil Engineer, Kimley Horn as Traffic Engineer, BAI as Sound Engineer (site and venues), SWCA as the Environmental Consultant, EvokeLD as Lighting Designer, HWA as Parking Consultant, Thornton Tomasetti as Structural Engineer, FPCG for Fire and Life Safety, Land Answers as Permitting Consultant, ATS as Building Code Consultant, ARUP for Venue Acoustics, Technical Systems and Infrastructure, ME Engineers as MEP Engineer, Starry Sky Austin and the International Dark-Sky Association for Night Skies compliance, Angelou Economics for the Economic Impact Analysis, EPS for Show Promotion, Production and Talent Buying, Superlative for Naming Rights Valuation and Sales, Land& for Residential Leasing and Management, SiteinSight and Watersed5 for Digital Media, Christine Haas for Public Relations, and Don Martin for Government Affairs. Special thanks Arlyn Studios for the use of their recording facilities. In addition to the foregoing there are many additional specialized sub-consultants.

### Hill Country Galleria - Shops at the Galleria

The Galleria sits on land once planned for a Walmart and Sam's Club with all surface parking lots and 95% impervious coverage. The prior landowner had filed 1704 litigation against the then Village of Bee Cave, was grandfathered, and likely to prevail. IDM stepped in, settled the litigation, purchased the land, and developed what has become an award-winning outdoor town center, of proper scale and aesthetic for Bee Cave. The project was designed by Larry Speck of PSP, then Dean of the UT School of Architecture, production design was handled by RTKL, with Opus as the general contractor.

IDM reduced onsite impervious coverage significantly as well as purchased and gifted to the city what is today the Bee Cave Central Park. IDM also gifted the land under, and provided the capital, to construct and furnish the Bee Cave City Hall, which is in the center of the Galleria. IDM, through Larry Speck as the senior design professional, created a place, where there was previously no place, only sprawl, and eliminated the real risk that Bee Cave would become another Sunset Valley. IDM concurrently invested in new local roadway infrastructure which continues to well serve the community and developed a significant and extensive water quality control infrastructure which has worked flawlessly for the past 15 years. It is one of the most outstanding projects in the country of its type and is an excellent representation of IDM's work, and its willingness to keep its commitments.

The land on which the Shops sits today was not originally intended to be a part of the Galleria development. It became apparent during work on the Galleria (which consisted of anchors and inline retail, office and residential) that several big box retailers were trying to locate near it. IDM arranged to purchase the land on the southside of 71 to control, aesthetically and logistically, the way in which these larger retailers were organized. The Shops to this day, does not feel like a power center, having been fully integrated into the aesthetic, as well as surface and subsurface infrastructure, which constitutes the overall development.

Economically, the Galleria, which now belongs to the California Teachers Retirement System Pension Fund, and the Shops constitute nearly \$500 million in asset value and generate millions of dollars in property and sales tax revenue annually. So much in fact that that the city of Bee Cave portion of the ad valorem (property) taxes has been reduced to near zero for any years. For all the concerns about these two projects at the time they were developed, they now form the social, commercial, and political center of the region, are aesthetically attractive, and are the main driver of home location desirability and home values in the area.

## **Backyard - Terrace**

Nearby VCA, we had once acquired and attempted to re-develop the Backyard (old and new) and its sister property, the Terrace. Unfortunately, we were unsuccessful in that effort. The Bee Cave city council member who was the principal obstacle to the project was later removed from office by his fellow city council members based on the findings of an internally commissioned report which indicated this member had engaged in serious violations of the city's home rule charter (without further elaboration). IDM had previously filed a complaint against both the city and the same council member, believing that he was granting commercial favors through his public office to developers with competing interests. This in obvious disregard for his duties and obligations as an elected official in so many ways.

That suit was later settled out of court, with the internal investigation and removal from office of this council member following sometime afterwards. His removal was later overturned by the courts, not because of a change in the findings, but due to a lack of authority in the city's charter for the council to remove a member. The Backyard and Terrace properties are beautifully designed, with well-integrated entertainment, office, hospitality, and for sale residential uses. The smaller size of the venue component is appropriate for local and regional touring acts. It is complementary to, not competitive with, VCA. We are fully supportive of it and want to see the development completed. The citizens of Bee Cave deserve to retain the historical Backyard venue.

## **Other Relevant Experiences Where Doing the Right Thing Was Necessary if Costly**

In a situation oddly like the foregoing, we once found ourselves confronted by unsettling demands from the family of the late Sen. Harry Reid, then Leader of the US Senate, to turn over to them land we had successfully bid to acquire from the BLM. Reid had long been under investigation for ties to organized crime and campaign finance violations. The Reid's had a history of co-opting land and businesses using the power inherent in public office. Reid had gone to DC poor and returned 40-years later with a significant net worth, all made on seemingly perfectly timed Las Vegas land deals. We were having nothing of the intimidation, ended up in litigation with Henderson (Reid's son had been put in place here as their city attorney) in both Nevada state court and later the DC district court; prevailing in both cases, albeit after many years and much capital expended on legal fees. Both courts had biting remarks relative to the abuse of public office by elected officials for private gain. None of this was well reported, we assume out of a fear at the time of retribution. How a known mob boss rises to the level of Leader of the United States Senate is still beyond our ability to comprehend, even in the context of DC politics. We suppose that, from the local municipal level, to the highest federal level, there's nothing we like less than a corrupt politician. Of Sen. Reid's recent passing we can only feel that none was more richly deserved.

If that wasn't discouraging enough, the company had once interjected in a custody dispute on behalf of a mother (an employee) who was concerned about her child's treatment by the father, who she'd never married but shared custody. The father's visitation had been reduced to supervised only. The response from the other side was to levy back similar accusations, which however ludicrous, resulted in our being investigated. No good deed goes unpunished, as someone once said. This was something akin to stopping at a motor vehicle accident to render assistance and being accidentally run over by the patrol car. The ordeal was ultimately resolved, then grossly misrepresented in published reports in the local press. The reality didn't fit their established narrative, so we were compelled to file suit against two local corporate media outlets. That suit was later settled out of court.

In each part of this section, the point we're making, is that we have always done the right thing, and we will continue to do so, regardless of the professional, reputational, and financial costs. Everyone must do what they believe is correct, in every circumstance, regardless, if others are unwilling to assist; and with the knowledge that proving the veracity of a position or action may take significant additional time and effort.

The costs may be further compounded in that complex decisions may be perceived by readership through the lens of a presently highly editorialized and seemingly hyperpolarized media business, which may at times harbor malevolent intent. Nonetheless, in taking this hardened approach we've found ourselves to be right the majority of the time, as will be the case with anyone who strives to do the right thing. — "God will not have his work made manifest by cowards." Ralph Waldo Emerson

## **DEBILITATED SOCIAL DISCOURSE**

Much has been written and said about the state of social and political discourse in America today. Many people are offended by many things, prejudice, in all its forms, appears rampant, facile accusations are taken as-if convictions resulting in many good people being sacrificed on the altar of social justice by companies and agencies unwilling to spend the time or money to seek the truth. The 10 sec on-air sound bite, 20 sec Tok-tok video, limited character Tweet, and online meme, dominate the dissemination of complex and critical information essential to carry on a large-scale democracy. Wealth inequality is growing along with frustration. Conspiracy theories and rumors are presented, and consumed uncritically, as fact. The jerrymandering of election districts by established parties has driven increasing polarization of both the electorate and their elected officials. And there is little remaining of professional journalism in face of this onslaught due to both overt editorial position-taking and financial realities. We can say it no better the following prognostication made many years ago:

“I have a foreboding of an America in my children's or grandchildren's time -- when the United States is a service and information economy; when nearly all the manufacturing industries have slipped away to other countries; when awesome technological powers are in the hands of a very few, and no one representing the public interest can even grasp the issues; when the people have lost the ability to set their own agendas or knowledgeably question those in authority; when, clutching our crystals and nervously consulting our horoscopes, our critical faculties in decline, unable to distinguish between what feels good and what's true, we slide, almost without noticing, back into superstition and darkness... The dumbing down of America is most evident in the slow decay of substantive content in the enormously influential media, the 30 second sound bites (now down to 10 seconds or less), lowest common denominator programming, credulous presentations on pseudoscience and superstition, but especially a kind of celebration of ignorance”

— Carl Sagan, *The Demon-Haunted World: Science as a Candle in the Dark*

Much has now been written about VCA in the popular media. All the concerns raised have been addressed over the past two years by intelligent, dedicated and professionally knowledgeable participants who anticipated the impacts and built into the fabric of the project the necessary solutions and mitigations. We take exception with the characterizations in some of these articles which seem to be more oriented towards adversarial fear mongering to generate controversy, in turn generating more click throughs, which ultimately support ad rates. We ask only that the public look at what we've done technically, and examine the actual science, before making judgments; and for those judgements not to be prejudiced by salacious reporting based on underlying, if unspoken, commercial imperatives and editorial bias.

## **COMMON APPROACHES TO DEVELOPMENT**

We would like to take a few pages here at the end to address suggested alternatives. These are what we are not doing; but what almost everyone else is doing, and what others would do here, were it not for our attempt at manifesting a rather spectacular legacy for our community. The Violet Crown Amphitheater sits on the western facing slope of what is historically known as Dittmar Hill. It is one of the highest points in Travis County, with spectacular views, and was within the original boundaries of the Bohl's ranch.

Topographically, western Travis County is rolling hills, which limits what can be developed pursuant to the 4' cut and fill restriction. Except that this limitation does not apply under structure. Therefore, throughout western Travis County, the hilltops are being cut away and replaced with large apartment complexes or office buildings with structured parking within, beneath or beside them. We cannot count the number of times prospective partners have approached us about doing just this, being astonished as to why we were not doing this while using the northern 40 acres (which is currently grandfathered at 35% impervious coverage) as a septic drain field, hidden behind the requisite additional useless tilt wall concrete strip center, ministorage, and gas station.

This first image is of the abomination off 2222 near Jester.  
Great views from the place, not great views of the place.



This next image is a more recent example in the Lantana area off Southwest Parkway, not far from VCA. Some of the apartments have nice views of the skyline. But everyone else must look at the cheap stick and brick construction and large surface parking lots, completely denuded of vegetation.



These two beauties extend into the BCP on the east side of 620 north of 71. We find these particularly offensive given they flattened the ridge lines, removed the trees, and replaced them with unattractive apartments. A trifecta.



Let's take a quick look at Rough Hollow.  
There's nothing left of it, so we can move on.





Across the highway from Rough Hollow is another jewel, Sweetwater.

This looks like a couple thousand of the same house. Somewhere between 80-100% of the trees also appear to be missing. This might be a good time to point out that VCA is not obliged to preserve trees but given that 80% of the VCA site remains pervious, we are naturally preserving most of the hardwoods.



Following is one of those ministorage deals.

We include this because it has been suggested numerous times that we do exactly this along 71. Economically they are highly productive, being cheap to build, cheap to maintain if maintained, and consume almost no water and wastewater. And everyone needs a place for their extra stuff, right. Typically seen in association with a redundant strip center and a gas station, except here where they appear to have filled the site with concrete, directly adjacent to what we believe is Bee Creek.



We close with this horror which needs no introduction, and for which there is no excuse. It was a different time.



#### **A MORE INFORMED APPROACH TO LAND USE**

None of the projects on the foregoing four pages are anything we would ever do. It's just that they're all very doable, it is what everyone is doing, because it's permissible, lowest risk, highest return, and least expensive. It provides in many cases the best (view from) for residents or occupants, but the poorest (view of) for everyone else. What you are seeing is therefore demonstrably what the investment community prefers because it maximizes the internal return on investment. By this we mean internal to the investment proper, without regard for the poor aesthetics, the environment, and so on. These social costs remain as difficult today to price into development as they've ever been.

The VCA sits on a 71-acre site which is subject to the SOS ordinance, technically being applied through site plan review, given that the site, while in Travis County, is also within the Austin ETJ. SOS was put in place predicated on watershed protection, is likely the toughest such ordinance in the United States, and VCA is in full conformance with it. Policymakers cannot put in place strict land use and technical constraints, have applicants fully conform, then be opposed. Conforming land use applications should rather be lauded as exemplary.

These regulations resulted in VCA becoming a development with a small footprint (the buildings plates constitute less than 10% of the net site area), with an extensive NPS/stormwater control system. The ordinance has naturally driven the use of parking garages for automobiles rather than sprawling parking lots, and the use of height with small footprints rather than buildings with a large spatial extent. We expect that VCA will be award winning with respect to land use, water quality, light and sound controls, as well as public use/social value, directly as regards land use, and indirectly as regards the nature of the business at so many levels.

There is no reason why this approach to land use could not be considered in more suburban places. Application of SOS-like codes does not need to be driven by an underlying watershed. While it's not the right policy everywhere, there are certainly areas where a limitation of impervious coverage, as a matter of general land use policy, could yield very interesting results. Of course, policymakers cannot deny their constituents the use of, and benefit from, their private property, subject to fair and balanced regulation, consequently, a politically successful implementation of such a policy likely comes with a corresponding increase in permitted height and/or density.

The Galleria (reviewed earlier) is exemplary in this regard. It is much larger in area terms than the Walmart/Sam's Club which it prevented, yet it has much lower impervious coverage and much higher community and social impact. In the present case, VCA includes nearly 500 residential units, on a footprint of less than 2 acres, surrounded by 71 acres which, excepting for the also small footprint and low-rise amphitheater and driving range, is green and represents a common public space. Those same 500 multifamily units, executed as single family detached residential, would consume, inclusive of roads and common areas and net of slopes, something on the order of 400-500 acres of land, with a colossal amount of tree removal, as well as cut and fill scarring, given the large percentage of roadway and utilities required for such low-density sprawling development.

The single family detached home in the suburbs is, or at least was for the better part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a staple of the American Dream. Consequently, a more consolidated, efficient, approach to non-urban land use is not for everyone or every place. But it does, or should, have a place in an evolving social and environmental landscape. The benefits to the environment are significant as opposed to horizontal sprawl, the realities of which are evident in developments such as Rough Hollow and Sweetwater. It should also be noted that we have entered the age of the ubiquitous high rise. Once the domain of the centers of large cities, we've now reached the point where the high rise can be constructed quickly and affordably. These buildings are by nature higher quality, aesthetically more pleasing, and can have a myriad of environmental protections designed into them.

The case in point for VCA is the integration of vertical forests pursuant to the work of Boeri and Gatti. The integration of parking into the buildings significantly reduces stormwater runoff concerns from parking lots and roadways, which are also naturally (dramatically) minimized. The residential at VCA also incorporates two floors of office space in each tower, reducing to zero the carbon footprint of the commute for residents who chose to establish their offices there. And finally, there is a significant landscape (and public art) plan being developed for the vast majority of the VCA site which will remain green; some of which will remain natural, some of which will be groomed; and all of which will be available for use by anyone living, working or visiting the site. None of this is new of course, having its modern origins in the social movements in Vienna in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and naturally adopted by 20<sup>th</sup> century urban planners in the social democracies of western Europe. Building technology continues to advance and no doubt we have implemented these basic principals in our own way. Having been mostly sidelined in the US due to the ubiquity of the single-family house, it is probably time to look at this approach to land use again, given myriad pressures, ranging from environmental, to quality of life, affordability, aesthetics, and the impact of the forgoing on mental health. We always include aesthetics because we believe that not enough attention is paid to how the built world looks and the impact that has on the people who inhabit it.