# TRAVIS COUNTY CENTRAL CAMPUS STUDY

## FOR STRATEGIC NEEDS ANALYSIS & FACILITIES MASTER PLAN

Presentation to the Commissioners Court – June 15, 2010

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# AGENDA

- Introduction / Project Update
- Public Outreach Listening Sessions Outcomes
  - Overview of Outreach Plan
  - Observations & Discussions Recap
  - Key Take-Aways
- Draft Scenario Evaluation Matrix
- Next Steps
- Questions & Discussion

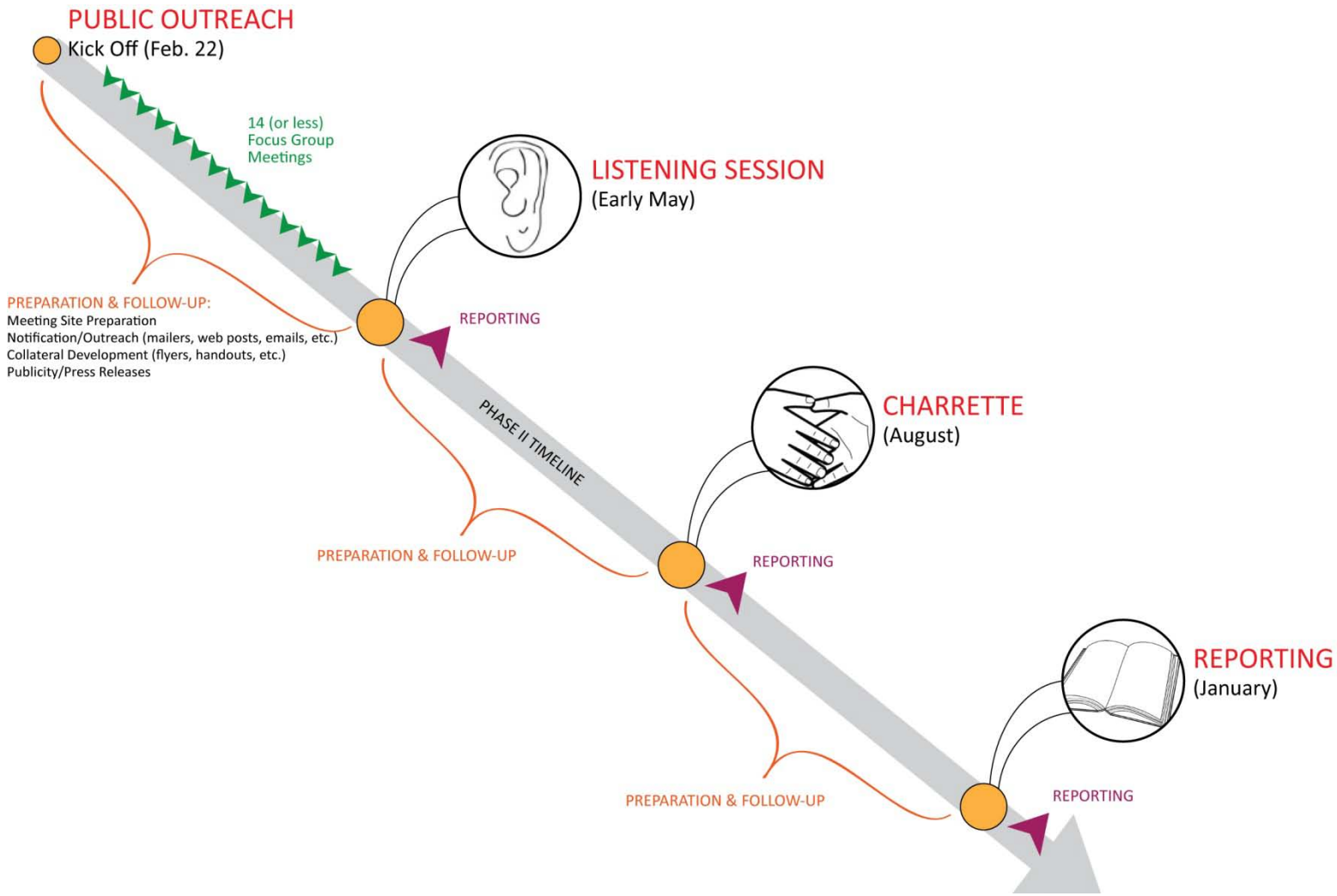
# PROJECT UPDATE

# PHASE 2: FACILITIES MASTER PLAN

# PUBLIC LISTENING SESSIONS - OUTCOMES

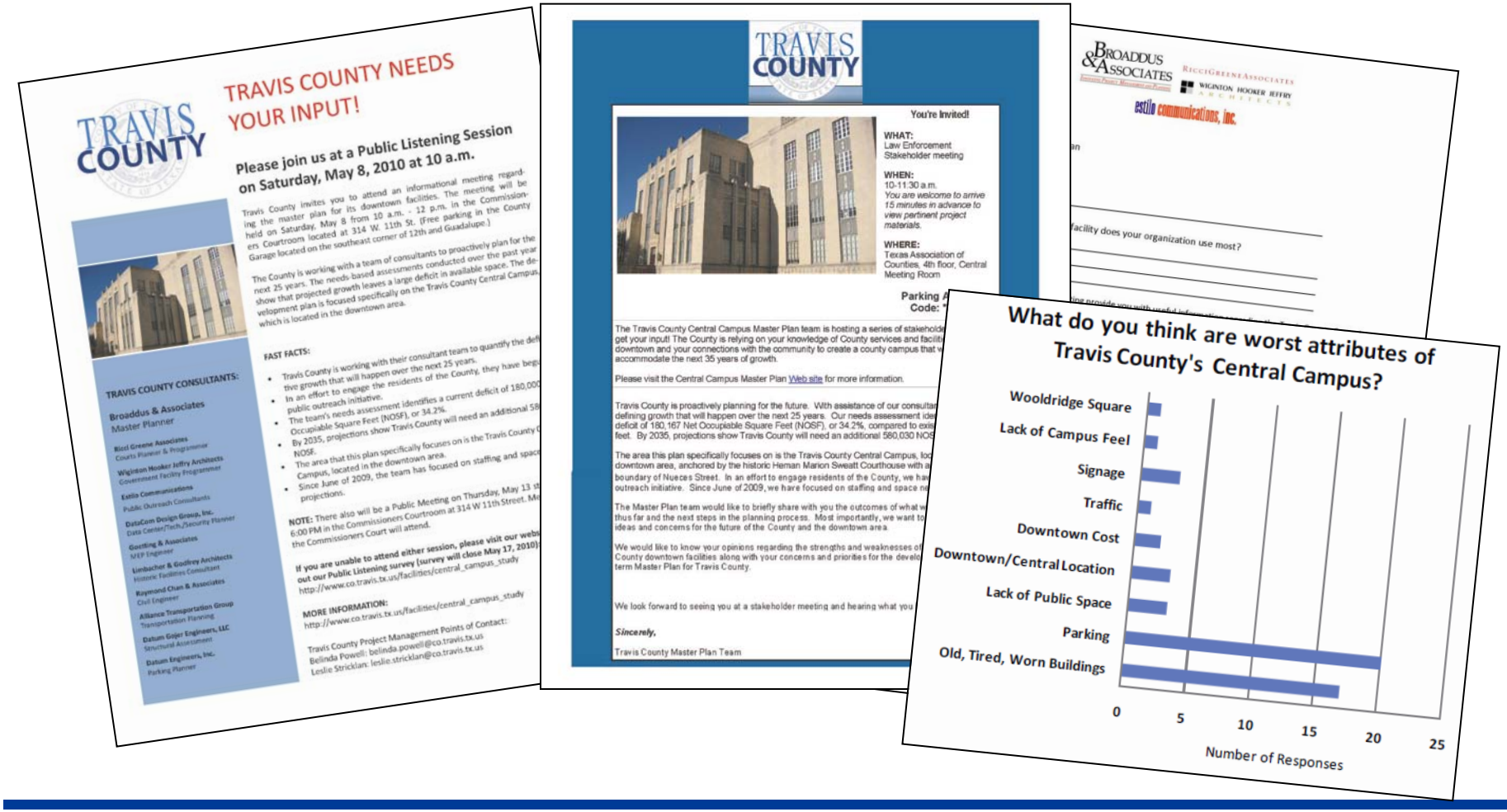
# PUBLIC OUTREACH PLAN

- COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT



# OUTREACH MATERIALS

## Fliers, E-vites, Surveys engaging 115 stakeholders, 275 media contacts, posting 120 fliers, 50 online responses



# FOCUS GROUPS & PUBLIC SESSIONS

## Questions asked of each group:

1. Best & Worst Attributes of Central Campus?
2. Current Problems with Central Campus Facilities?
3. Major Concerns about County's Development Downtown?
4. Top Priorities for the Plan?
5. One Key Issue that the Plan should Consider?

# WHAT WE HEARD

## Group #1: Civil/Family

- HMS is Outdated & Inefficient
  - no private meeting spaces
  - jurors treated horribly (outside of e-juror check-in)
  - no parking
  - no space to do business
  - no assembly area
  - no children's area
- In general, they thought the HMS gives a bad first impression of the County, whereas it should be a point of pride
- "Wish list" for a New Courthouse
  - private meeting spaces
  - on-site child care
  - "war rooms"
  - food at the courthouse, franchises
  - lawyers lounge with wifi
  - business centers
  - mediation rooms
  - full blown legal library
  - paperless (pro se cases)
  - drug lab on-site

# WHAT WE HEARD

## Group #2: Criminal Justice

- CJC Inefficient
  - terrible parking
  - small courtrooms
  - no waiting area
  - No private space for victims or consultation with clients
  - no disability access to the building
  - access to holding cells is via elevator is terrible
- Like convenient location of Downtown Courthouse
- Agreed that most if not all of the County facilities should stay downtown
- "Wish List" for CJC
  - provide more space to speak with their clients
  - increase the grand jury room square footage
  - add more parking

# WHAT WE HEARD

## Group #3: Chambers of Commerce

- Facilities are outdated and unattractive
- Plan should create a sense of space, a “campus feel”
  - Implement design standards
- The look and appeal of the County facilities should be enhanced
  - Facilities are a symbol of business practices
- Support idea of moving the jail to the Del Valle site out of downtown
- Would like to see County (maximize current real estate) versus taking up more real estate from private, taxpaying businesses
- Would like to see a change to the current Travis County’s parking policy, change the mindset of employees and the community to use public transportation or carpool

# WHAT WE HEARD

## Group #4: Law Enforcement

- Central Booking Inefficiently Configured
  - Booking and filing requires running between two buildings
  - Central Booking's layout makes getting in/out difficult of the facility a problem
  - Cars line up around the block
- Parking is inadequate
- Downtown may be too crowded for Central Booking
  - Relocation could alleviate costs of bussing to Del Valle and traffic/parking congestion
- However, downtown location may be best configuration b/c it's central
- Support expansion of the CJC/Central Booking block
- Wooldridge Square:
  - Enhance / Use more

# WHAT WE HEARD

## Group #5: Neighborhoods - Government

- Look of Central Facilities should be Improved
  - Incorporate more green areas
  - Great Streets to improve the pedestrian's environment
  - Create a campus identity
- Less surface parking, but more parking overall
- Transportation
  - Lack of transportation options to the downtown – suggested parking could be provided by the State with a shuttle running between facilities
- Concerned about County's current space deficiency coupled with the view corridors
- County should use current space and buildings more efficiently
- Wooldridge Park shape (bowl) lends to deactivated edges
  - County should activate the edges of the Square to make it a benefit to county employees and users (vibrant park = vibrant area surrounding it)

# WHAT WE HEARD

## Group #6: Neighborhoods - Private

- Too much surface parking, and it doesn't lend to the success of the park and pedestrian experience
- No parking for visitors (and no direction leads to them incorrectly parking in neighboring businesses parking area)
  - Mass transit for the occasional user isn't a reasonable expectation
- Wayfinding is an issue - public needs to know where to go and how to get there
- HMS is old, outdated, and should be repurposed and used by the public
  - Space could be leased to business such as restaurants and copy/printing
- Need better civic space for County users and the general public to feel that it's open for them to use and enjoy

# WHAT WE HEARD

## Group #7: Historical

- County facilities are not a "campus"
  - Poor identity, streetscape, & feel (with the exception of the HMS Courthouse)
- Park has potential to be restored
  - County should place active uses around the park to enhance it
- Lacking parking, transportation alternatives, Dillo, ADA access, meeting facilities, signage and wayfinding, historic photos and renditions.
- Contribute to the Urban Fabric
  - Quality of buildings
  - Streetscapes
  - Compatibility w/Historic Structures
- Alternative uses for the HMS building
  - Food, community services, archival space
- HMS a historic and symbolic center of County development

# WHAT WE HEARD

## Group #8: Social Services

- Lack of pride in County facilities
  - Should instill a sense of greatness through art, environment, and architecture
  - New facilities should be like City Hall: reflective of the values of Austin/Travis County
  - County should "set the bar" for Design – energy efficiency, quality
- Buildings aren't easily accessible, confusing, old and bureaucratic, stuffy
- County's responsibility to go beyond the Criminal: County should improve quality of life by making their facilities user-friendly
  - Open
  - Easy access
  - Easy to navigate
  - Family-friendly for inmate/patients of the system
- County should be transparent in their actions and their buildings should reflect this openness

# WHAT WE HEARD

## Group #9: Transportation & Access

- Downtown location is convenient
- Buildings aren't attractive, and their conditions are terrible
- Guadalupe & Lavaca: Transit-rich Corridor
  - Bus
  - Bus rapid transit
  - Bike
  - Urban Rail
- County development should support alternate transport modes
  - i.e. shower facilities for bikers
- County facilities could be mixed-use destinations, which would help revitalize the park &surrounding area
- Coordination & Partnership between City, County, CapMetro, others

# WHAT WE HEARD

## Public Listening Session #1

- Downtown Campus not Cohesive – Image / Identity
- Respect the View Corridors
  - Build Below Grade
- HMS building should a center point for image and identity
- Security necessary for some of the facilities
  - Security in direct opposition w/notion of neighborhood-like campus
- Use landscape as a way to tie the campus together and give public appeal and a pedestrian aesthetic
- Campus a “dead zone” after 5 pm and on weekends, could be improved
- New buildings need to be great, not mediocre
  - Recognize that public may not support the expense

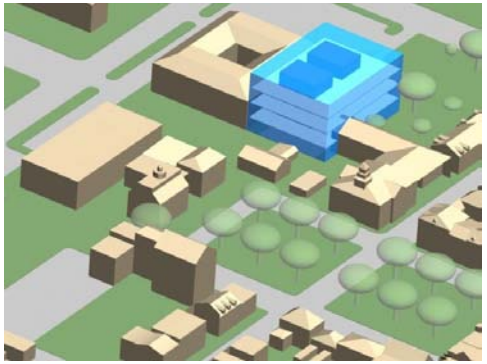
# WHAT WE HEARD

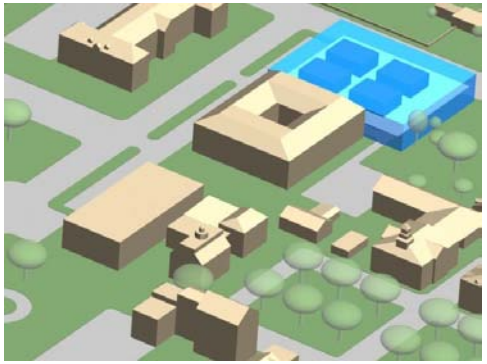
## Public Listening Session #2

- Well attended by members of the Austin Bar Association (ABA)

- Need for a new Civil Courthouse
  - Family-friendly
  - Meeting Rooms
  - Conference Rooms

- Need to preserve HMS Courthouse as Civic Icon

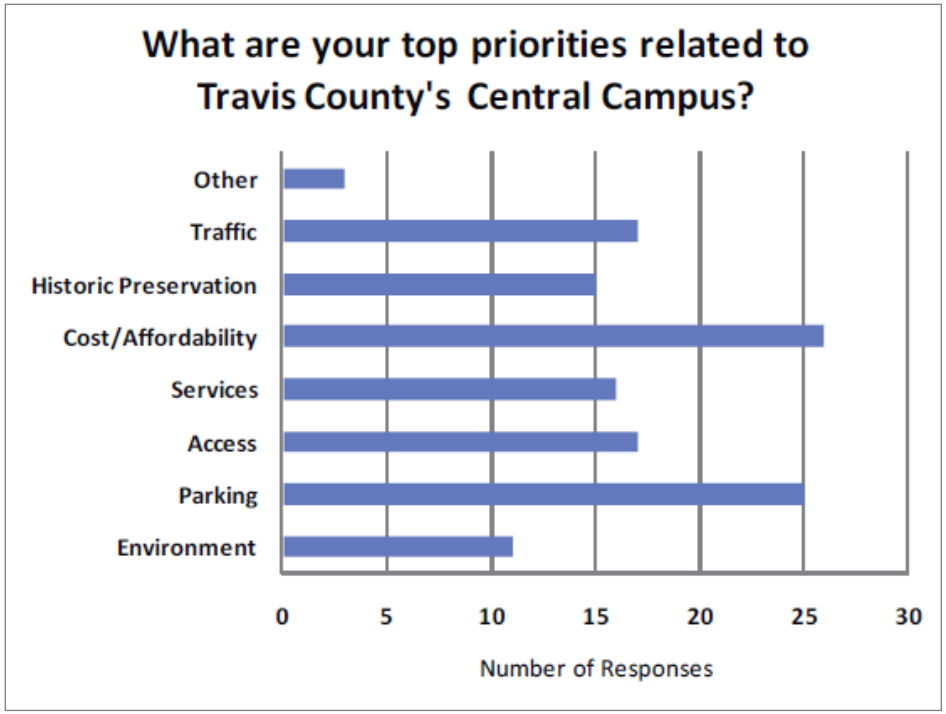




# WHAT WE HEARD

## Online Survey

- Mixed Response re: Downtown Location (Cost vs. Convenience)
- Cost and Affordability a major concern
- Parking named the worst attribute of the central campus
- Civic pride an issue
  - old and worn buildings
  - preserving the HMS
- Other responses:
  - After hours use of facilities
  - Create a campus feel
  - Sustainable / Green development



# KEY TAKE - AWAYS

## Campus:

- Creating a campus will be a challenge
- Existing buildings are worn & ugly

## Aesthetic Quality:

- Should Represent Austin/Travis County & Civic Pride & Arts, Environment, Nature, Preserving Energy, Collaboration, Government Transparency

## Partnerships:

- City/County/CapMetro/State/ACC /Private

# WHAT WE LEARNED

## Historic Preservation:

- Keep the View Corridors
- Respect the Adjacent Neighborhood
- HMS Courthouse as a focal point

## Woodridge Square Park:

- Engage the Square
- Activate the “Edges”

## Transportation

- Transit-rich Corridor

## Access:

- Parking situation terrible
- Not visitor-friendly

## Priorities:

- Need new civil courthouse now

# KEY MESSAGE

- County Master Plan – and County Facilities – should address more than just “nuts and bolts” offices, courtrooms, and storage space.

- Common vision that County Facilities should:
  - Contribute to the urban environment
  - Facilitate gathering and collaboration
  - Support after-hours & weekend activities
  - Facilitate inclusion of missing neighborhood “amenities” like retail, restaurants, & convenience
  - “Set a high bar” for quality & aesthetics.

# DRAFT SCENARIO EVALUATION MATRIX

# CRITERIA CATEGORIES

- SPACE PROGRAM
- ADJACENCIES
- SITE SELECTION / URBAN DESIGN
- COST / EFFICIENCY / ECONOMY

*"DRAFT working document for review and discussion: NOT FOR PUBLICATION."*

# SPACE PROGRAM

- Accommodates Projected 2035 Space Needs
- Allows for Anchor Tenant Expansion Beyond 2035
- Accommodates Projected 2035 Parking Needs - Employee
- Accommodates Projected 2035 Parking Needs – Visitors & Jury
- Includes Building Amenities
- Includes Campus Amenities
- Enables Optimal Functional Layouts for Criminal & Civil Court Floors

# ADJACENCIES

- Achieves Optimal Functional / Operational Adjacencies - Department to Department
- Achieves Optimal Functional / Operational Adjacencies – Department to Building
- Functions Support / Enhance Adjacent Neighbors – Wooldridge Square Park, Governor’s Mansion, Historic Neighborhood (Building to Neighborhood)

# SITE PLANNING / URBAN DESIGN

- Building Forms Contribute to Urban Environment (Create Street-Edge)
- Key Civic Buildings Provided Prominent Site / Building Form
- Capital View Corridors & Scale of Neighbors Respected
- Encourages Campus – All Buildings w/in Walking Distance
- Accommodates Urban / Neighborhood Amenities (i.e. Retail, Restaurants, Convenience)
- Accommodates Civic Amenities (i.e. Meeting Spaces, Gathering Space)

# SITE PLANNING / URBAN DESIGN

- Provides Setbacks for Civil & Criminal Courthouse Structures
- Contributes to the Pedestrian Experience

# COST / EFFICIENCY / ECONOMY

- Highest & Best Use of Real Estate
- Efficient Circulation Factors/Departmental Layouts to minimize overall space required
- Implementation & Phasing: Solution is Workable at Each Planning Horizon
- Overall Capital Cost

# NEXT STEPS

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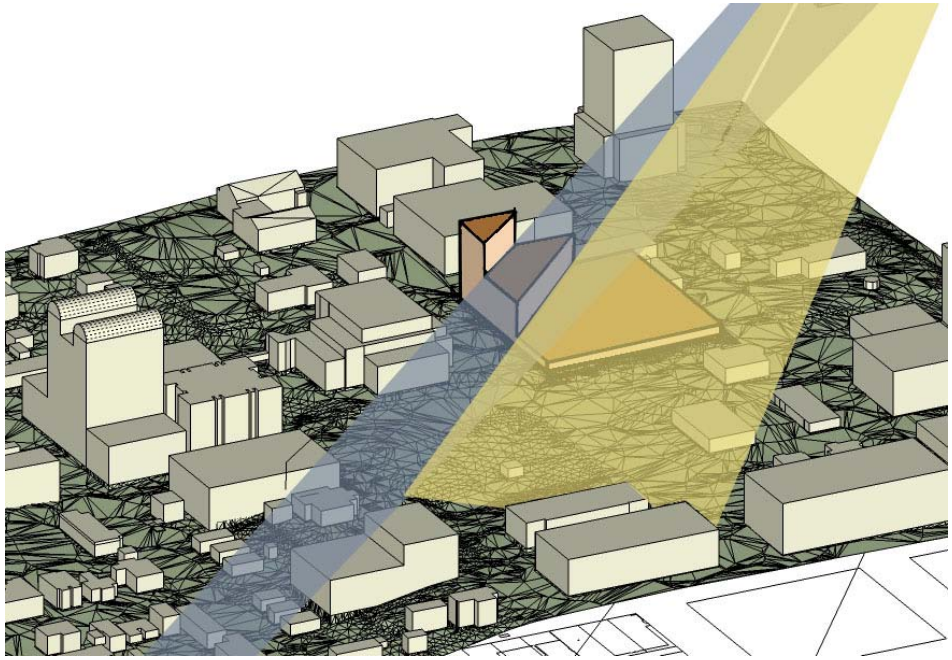
- Finalize Draft Scenario Evaluation Matrix
- Develop +/-3 Development Scenarios
- Present Scenarios to Public in August
  - Day 1: Commissioner's Court Work-session
  - Day 2: County Officials, Steering Committee Members, County Staff
  - Day 3: Public Charrette



# QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION