



# Information for National Environmental Policy Act Notice (NEPA) & Public Meeting to be held January 30, 2020, 6 PM

Arts, Performing Arts, and Conference Center Project

Funded by the Economic Development Administration



**Comments** received in the EDA Regional Office by 5:00 pm eastern on March 1, 2020 will be considered. Please provide comments in writing to:

Corey Dunn  
Regional Environmental Officer  
Department of Commerce  
Economic Development Administration  
903 San Jacinto Blvd., Suite 206  
Austin, Texas 78701



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
Economic Development Administration  
AUSTIN REGIONAL OFFICE  
Economic Development Administration  
903 San Jacinto Blvd., Suite 206

## PUBLIC NOTICE

The U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA) has awarded grant funding to the Rockport Center for the Arts and the City of Rockport to construct an Arts, Performing Arts, and Conference Center in Rockport, Aransas County, Texas. Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), EDA is conducting an assessment of the potential of the proposed project to affect the environment and/or historic properties.

The project includes construction of approximately 22,000 s.f. of arts, arts gallery, education, lecture, performing arts, conference, and associated ancillary space on approximately one acre of land, including an adjacent 7,277 square foot tract with an existing building. The project will be located at 106 South Austin Street and 204 South Austin Street. The project scope includes evaluation and consideration of an alternative that would include relocating the Kline building to 504 S. Magnolia Street in downtown Rockport, at the corner of St. Mary's and Magnolia Street. Project information is available for review at 2751 State Highway 35 Bypass, Rockport TX 78382 (City of Rockport Service Center at 361-729-2213) and Rockport Center for the Arts at 638 East Market Street, Rockport Tx 78382 (361-729-5519).

If you have any information regarding potential impacts to historic properties or environmental resources including wetlands or floodplains associated with this proposed project please provide it in writing to:

Corey Dunn  
Regional Environmental Officer  
Department of Commerce  
Economic Development Administration  
903 San Jacinto Blvd., Suite 206  
Austin, Texas 78701

Comments received in the EDA Regional Office by 5:00 pm eastern on March 1, 2020 will be considered. A copy of the NEPA/NHPA decisional document will be available upon request at the above EDA Regional Office.

### **Note:**

**This notice will be published in the Rockport Pilot on January 18, 22, and 25, 2020**

## NOTICE OF MEETING

### PUBLIC MEETING TO RECEIVE INPUT ON

#### **CONSTRUCTION OF AN ARTS, PERFORMING ARTS, AND CONFERENCE CENTER TO BE LOCATED AT 106 AND 204 SOUTH AUSTIN STREET AND RELOCATION OF THE KLINE BUILDING**

The Rockport Center for the Arts and the City of Rockport have jointly been awarded grant funding from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration to construct an Arts, Performing Arts, and Conference Center in Rockport, Aransas County, Texas at 106 South Austin Street and 204 South Austin Street.

The project includes construction of approximately 22,000 s.f. of arts, arts gallery, education, lecture, performing arts, conference, and associated ancillary space on approximately one acre of land. This project site includes the 7277 square foot tract where an existing building (Kline Building) is currently located. Multiple site layout alternatives for the Kline building and proposed improvements have been evaluated. The Rockport Center for the Arts is considering relocating the existing building to another site (504 S. Magnolia Street) in the downtown Rockport area.

Project information is available for review at 2751 State Highway 35 Bypass, Rockport TX 78382 (City of Rockport Service Center at 361-729-2213) and Rockport Center for the Arts at 638 East Market Street, Rockport Tx 78382 (361-729-5519).

The public input meeting will be held at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 30, 2020 at 638 East Market Street, Rockport Texas. Representatives of the Rockport Center for the Arts, City of Rockport, and the Economic Development Administration, and the Texas Historical Commission will be available for comment, concerns, and questions.

**Note:**  
**This notice will be  
published in the Rockport  
Pilot on January 18, 2020**

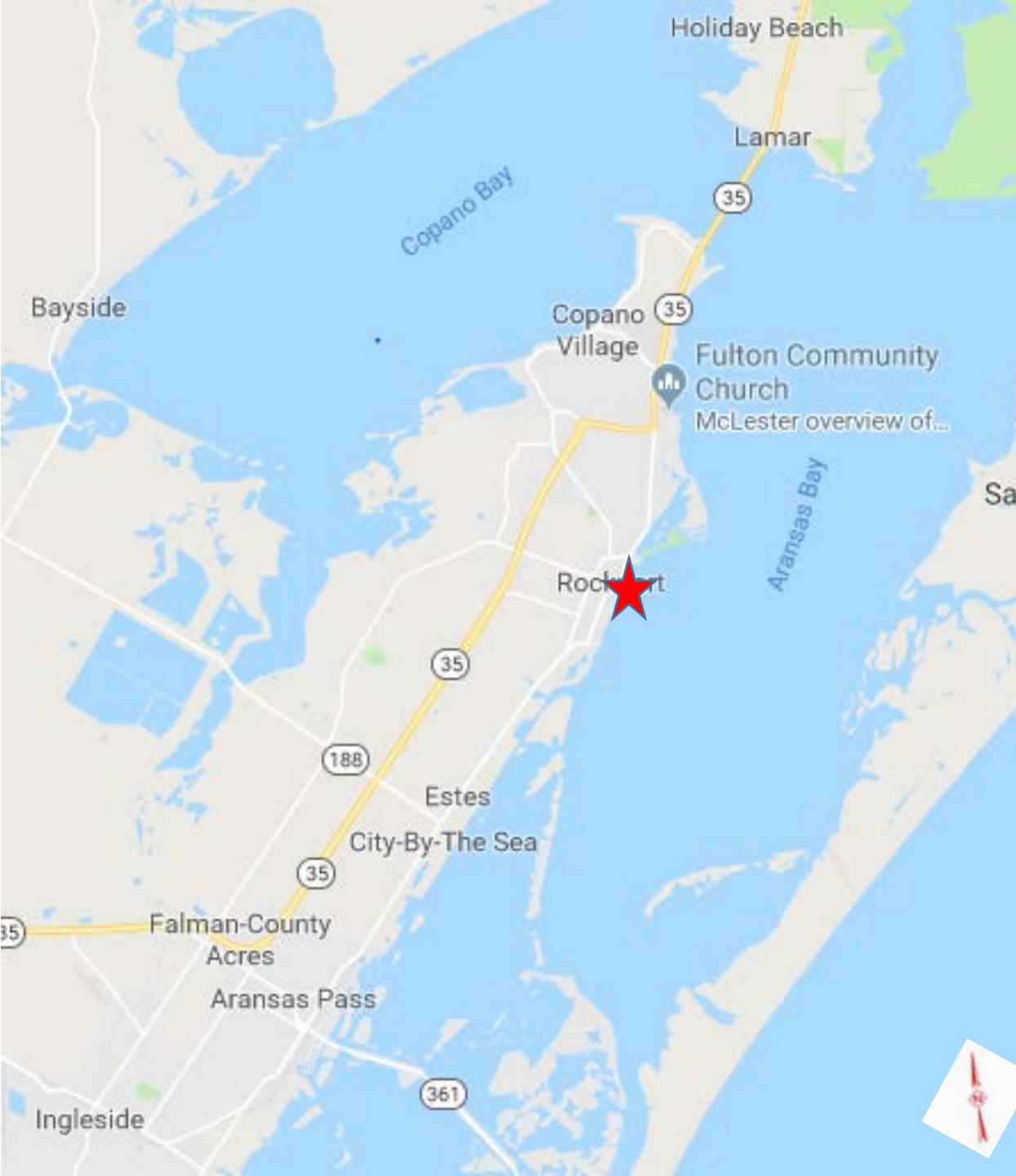
**Proposed Rockport Center for the Arts, Performing Arts, and Conference Center**  
**Economic Development Administration Grant Funding**  
**Project Description**

The Rockport Center for the Arts (RCA), in cooperation with the City of Rockport intends to reconstruct and expand the previous arts center that was completely destroyed by Hurricane Harvey. The project will be located on approximately one acre. The physical address is 106 South Austin Street and 204 South Austin Street.

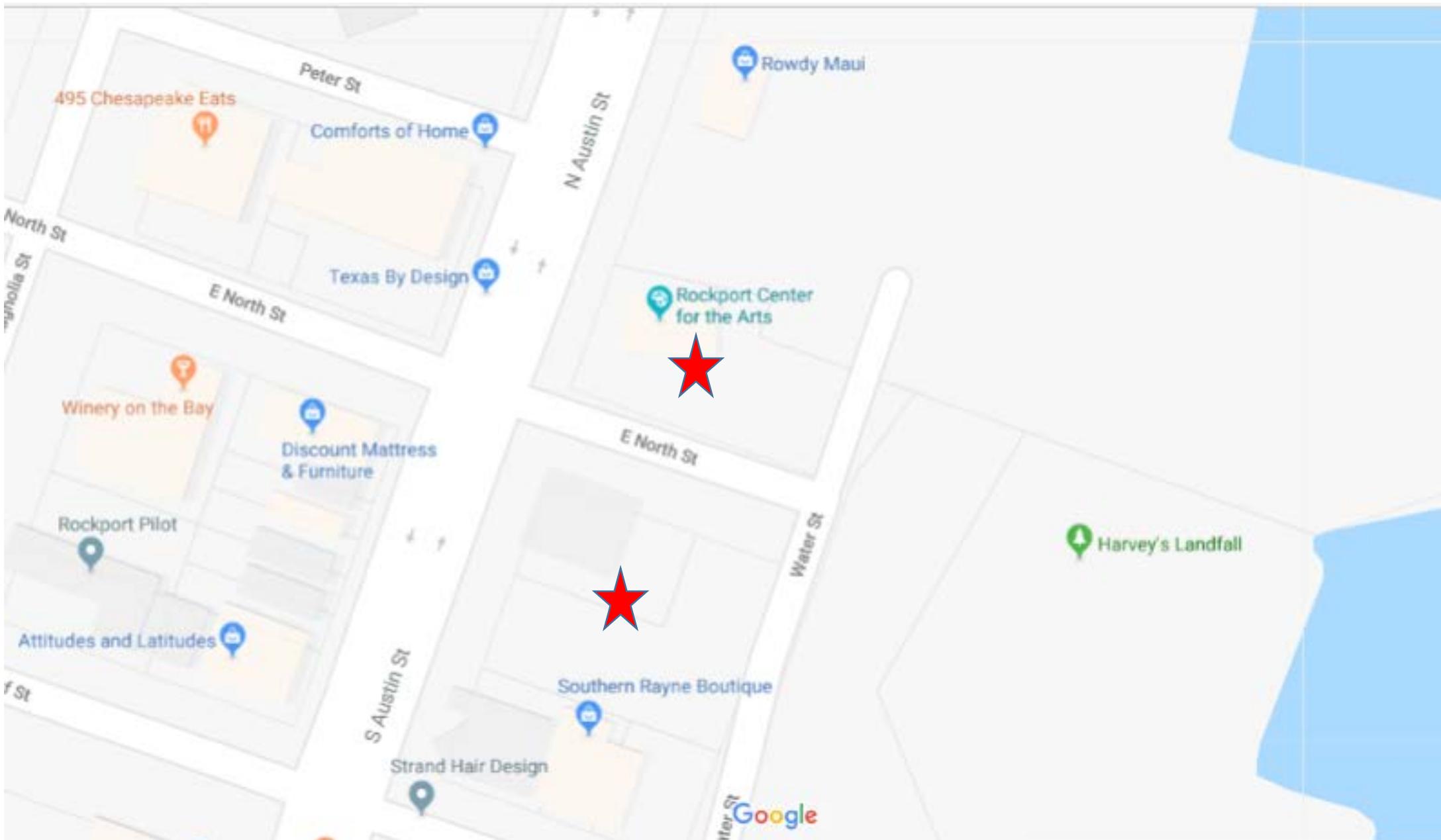
The proposed buildings will be approximately 22,000 square feet with added facilities to include performing arts, mixed use, and conference space. The facility will be at a site located in the Cultural Arts District, Heritage/Downtown, and Harbor front. The Sculpture Garden will also be located at this site. **Multiple site layout alternatives for the Kline building and proposed improvements have been evaluated. The RCA is considering relocating the existing building to 504 S. Magnolia Street.** For details, please see “Building a Robust Future for Downtown Rockport Together” Q&A.

The arts, performing arts, and conference center project is approximately 22,000 s.f. with 12,000 s.f. of arts space comprised of four art instruction/education classrooms with a capacity of 500, exhibition area, library, art galleries and instruction kitchen for culinary arts. The event, seminar/lecture, and performing arts space will be approximately 10,000 s.f. and will accommodate 350 plus conference attendees, 400 plus auditorium seating, and 300 plus banquet seating. Both spaces will be served by the catering kitchen, reception area, event porch; retail space, and approximately 15,000 s.f. sculpture garden. A total of 13 major monuments and sculptures are ready for placement in this area; part of RCA’s permanent collection.

## Proposed Project Location



## Proposed Project Location



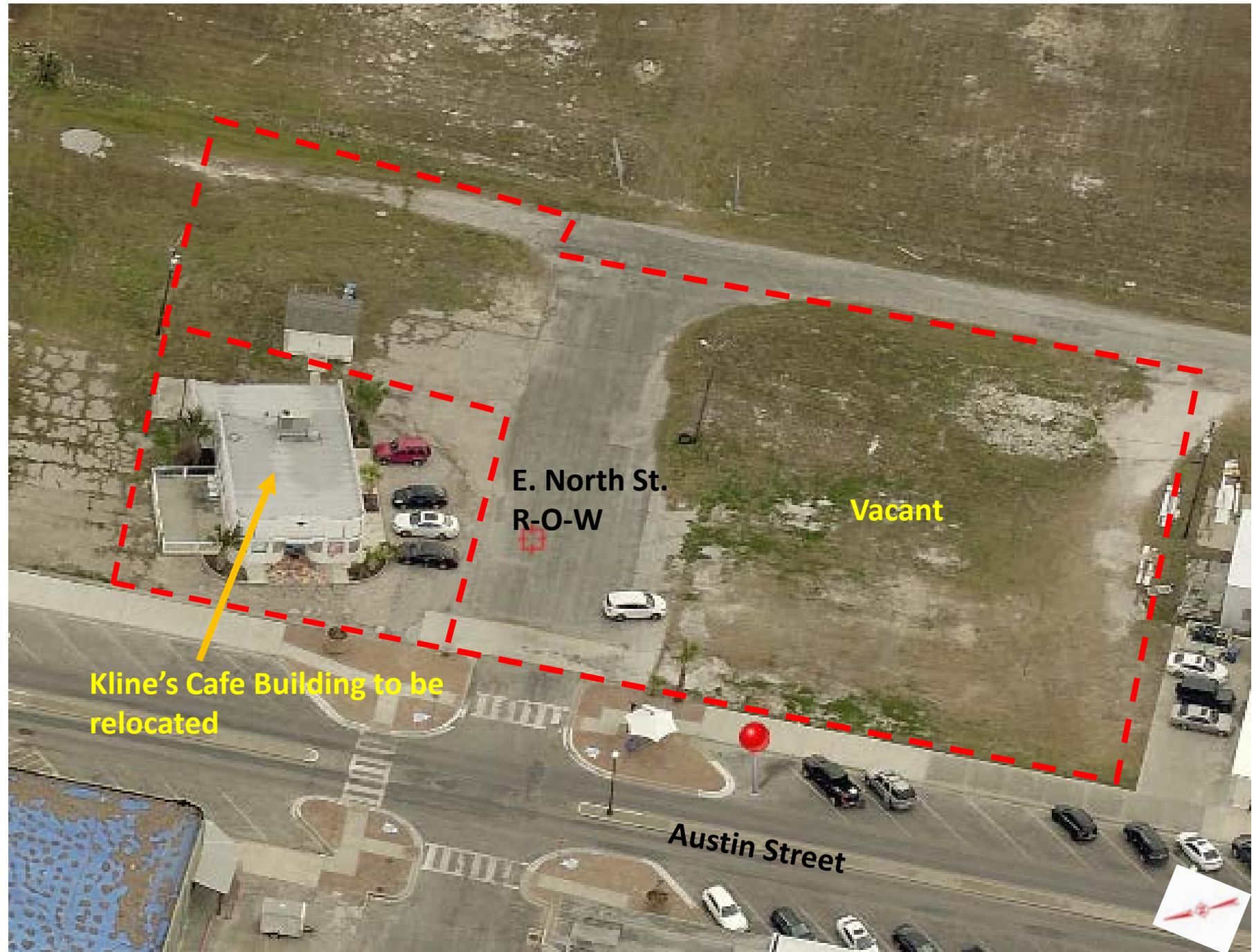
## Project Location



Google

## Proposed Project Site

Approximately  
1+ acre site



## Image of Proposed Site - View from S. Austin Street, south of North Street



**Image of Proposed Site – Limited View from S. Austin Street, north of North Street**



## Image of Proposed Site - View from S. Austin Street, north of North Street



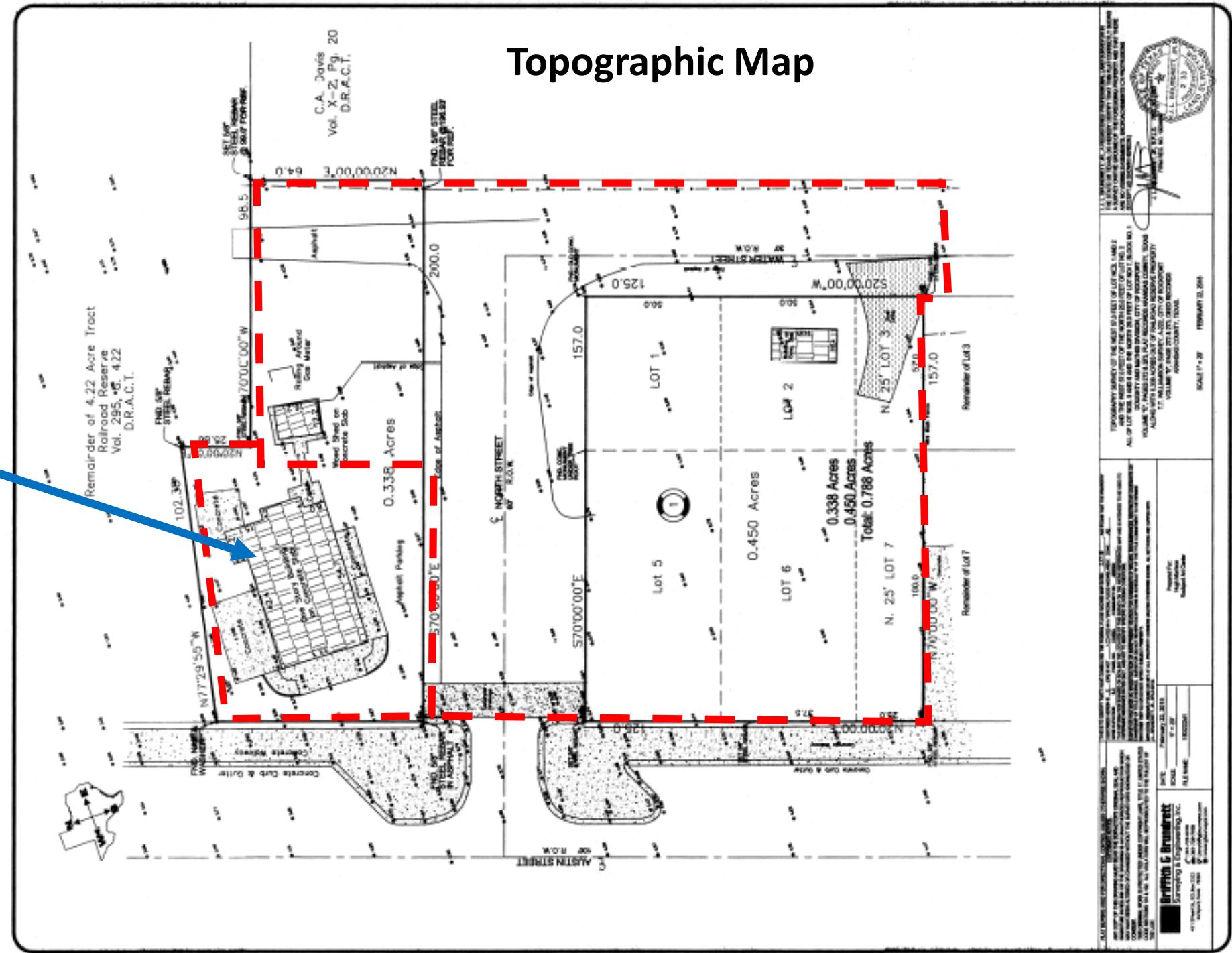
Kline Cafe Building  
Relocation Site:

504 S. Magnolia  
Rockport, Texas  
(corner with  
St. Mary's St)



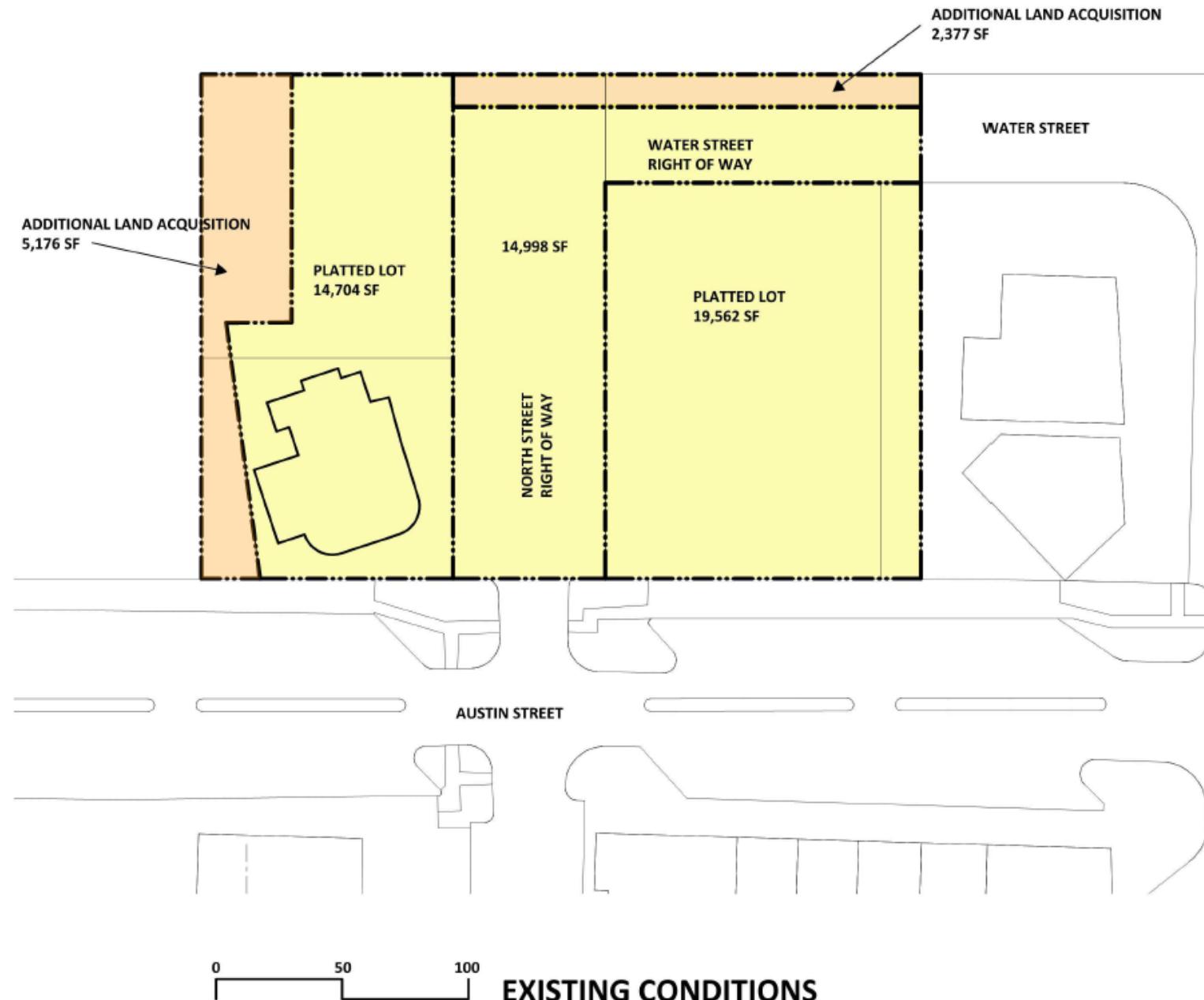
# Topographic Map

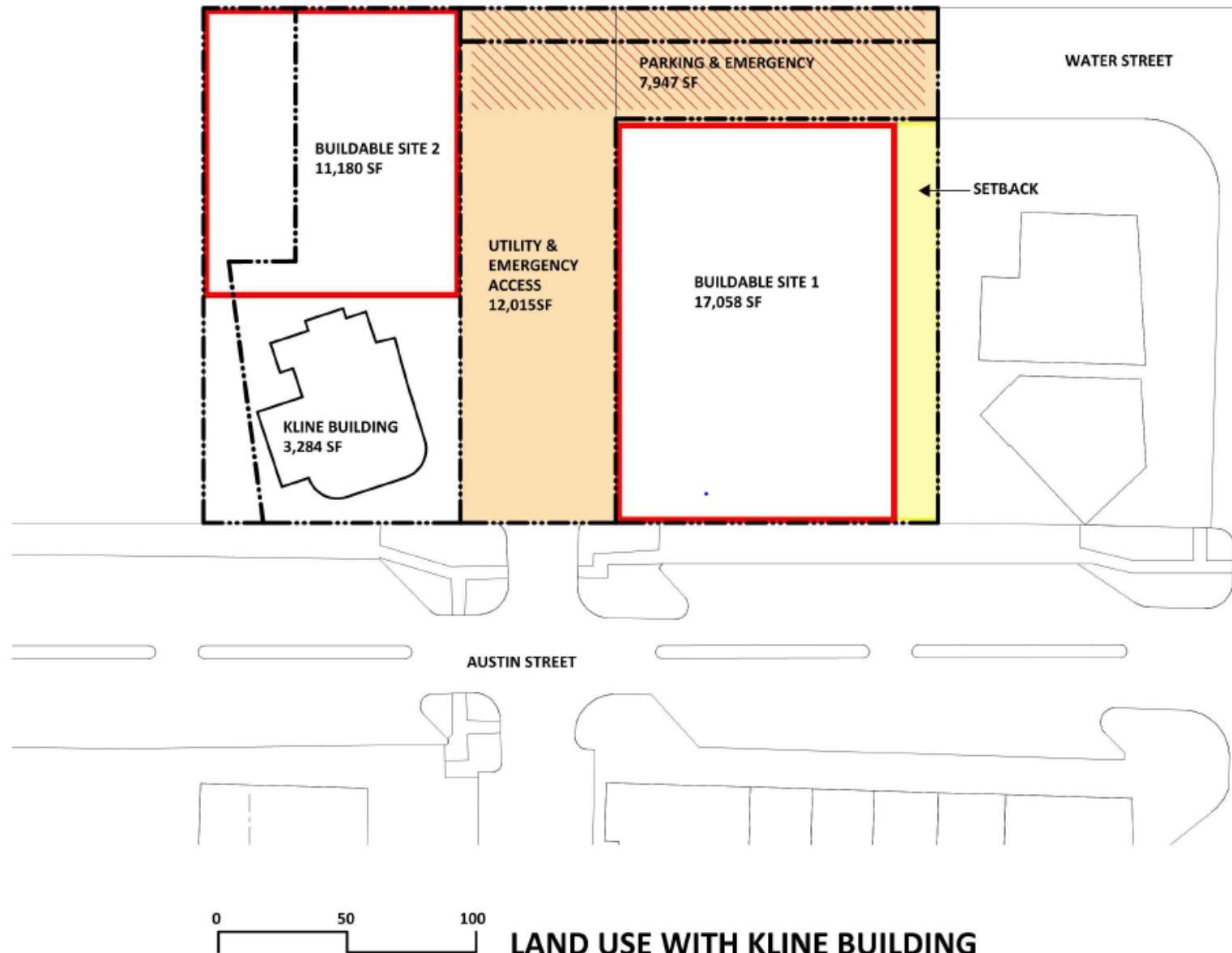
## Building to be relocated



# **Kline's Café Building Feasibility Study**

**Richter Architects**





#### ANALYSIS NARRATIVE (cont.)

##### LAND USE INCORPORATING THE KLINE BUILDING

The bifurcation of the site by the street right of way creates two buildable sites with the Site 1 (south of the ROW) more sized and suited for the project Phase One - the Rockport Center for the Arts and Site 2 (north of the ROW) suited for the project Phase 2 - the proposed Community Center.

Site 1 yields adequate area for the Arts Center with necessary loggias, porches and open space for outdoor activities, but is not large enough to accommodate both phases without compromising important outdoor functions and creating such design density to reduce critical natural light to gallery and studio spaces.

Site 2, therefore, is necessary for Phase 2. If the Kline Building is to remain, restrictions result to three critical program components.

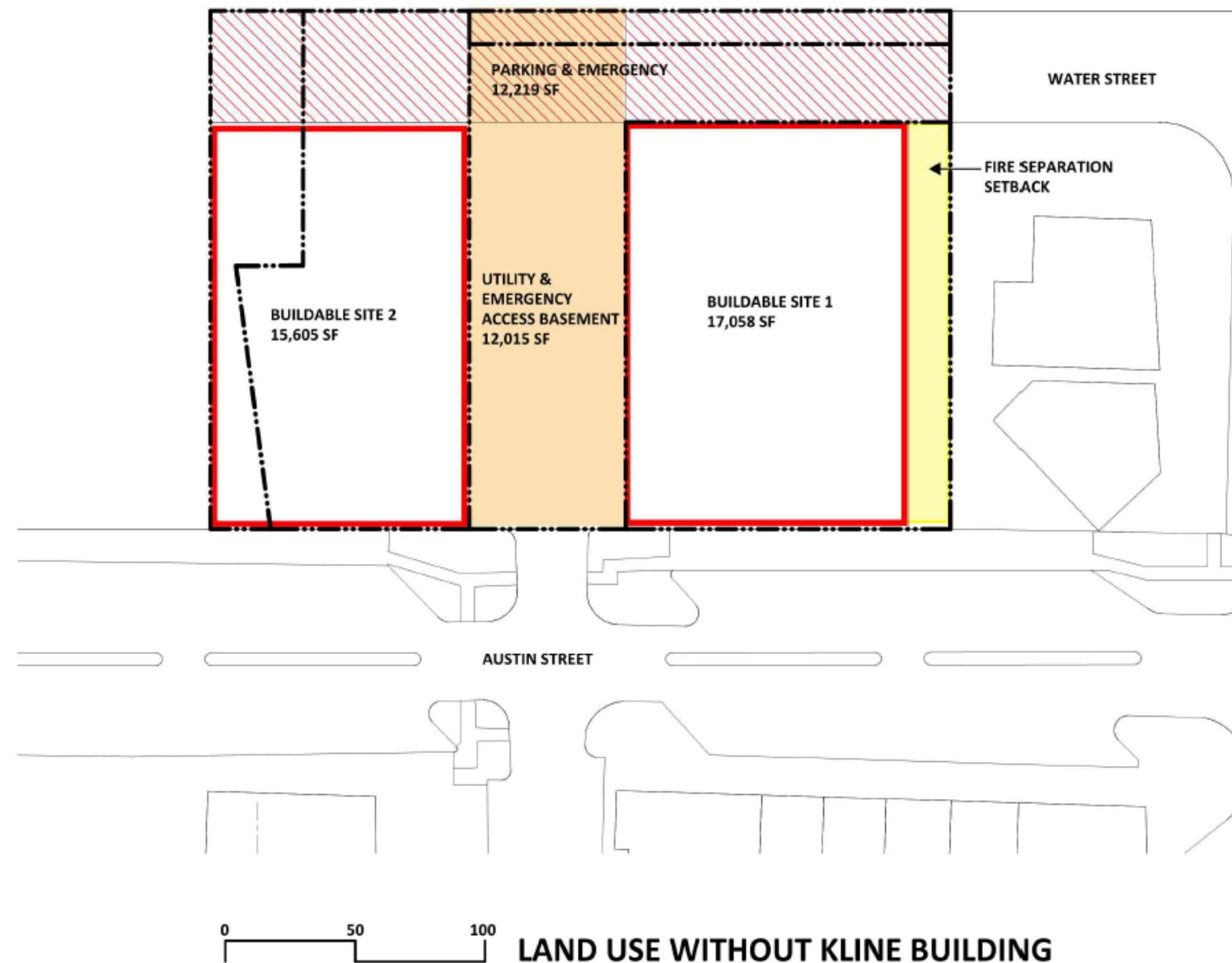
- 1) Parking capacity is reduced.
- 2) Sculpture Court size and capacity is reduced.
- 3) Community Center public and services access to the public right of way is more distant and less convenient.

#### ANALYSIS NARRATIVE (cont.)

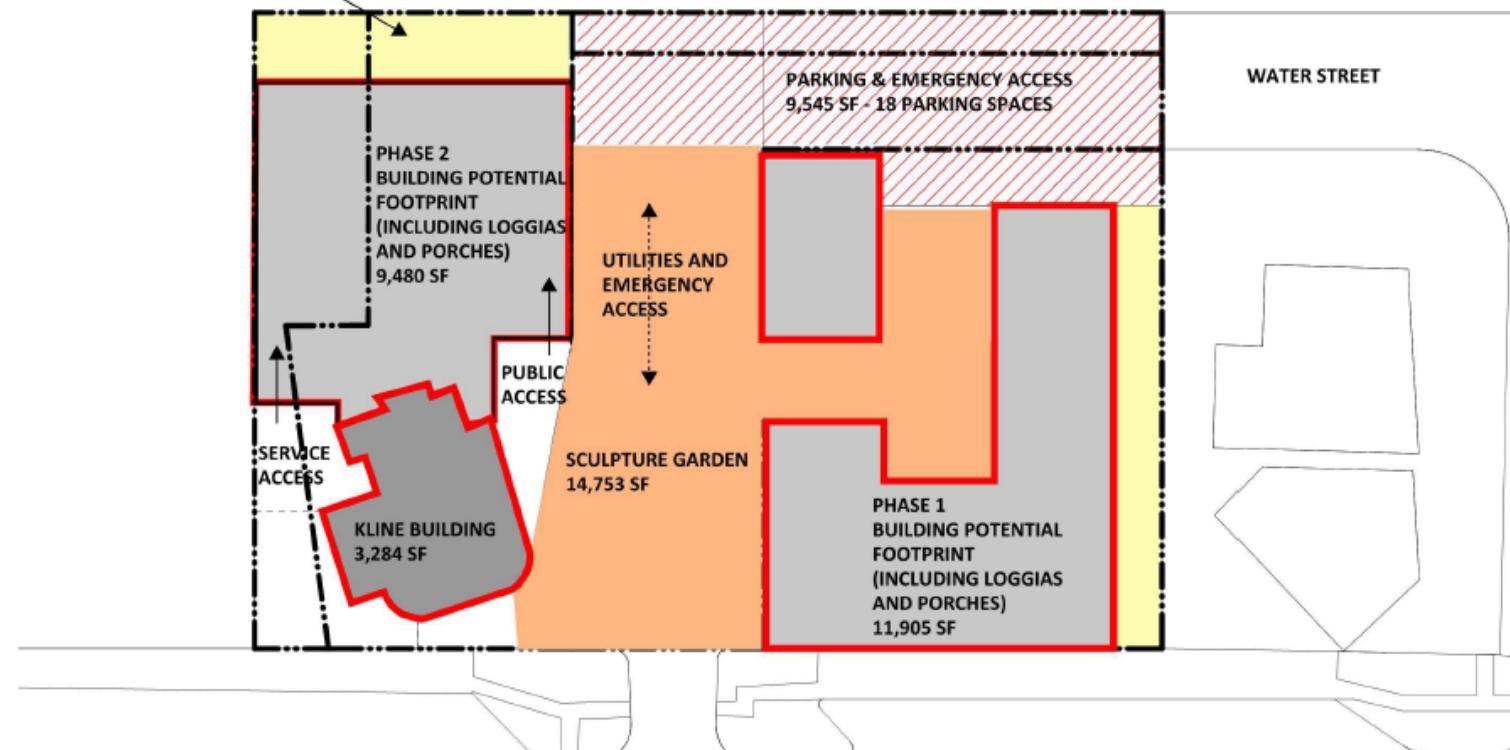
##### LAND USE WITHOUT KLINE BUILDING

With the Kline Building relocated to a more appropriate downtown location, the collective site becomes significantly more open, flexible and appropriate for a unified project development.

Both sites have adequate land area for the building program including critical covered loggias and porches, as well as additional land to contribute to parking and the sculpture court. Limited street frontage is mitigated by the potential to utilize Site 2 frontage on Austin Street for direct access to the Community Center. Entirely new construction and the open site allows the very limited land available for development to be more efficiently utilized to the benefit of both phases of the project. Issues of parking capacity, sculpture court size, and public access to the Community Center are all three enhanced by moving the Kline Building.



NOT PRACTICAL FOR PARKING OR  
SCULPTURE, NOT IDEAL FOR  
SERVICES DUE TO RESTRICTED  
VEHICLE ACCESS



#### ANALYSIS NARRATIVE (cont.)

#### CONCEPTUAL DESIGN FOOTPRINT - WITH KLINE BUILDING

##### PROS

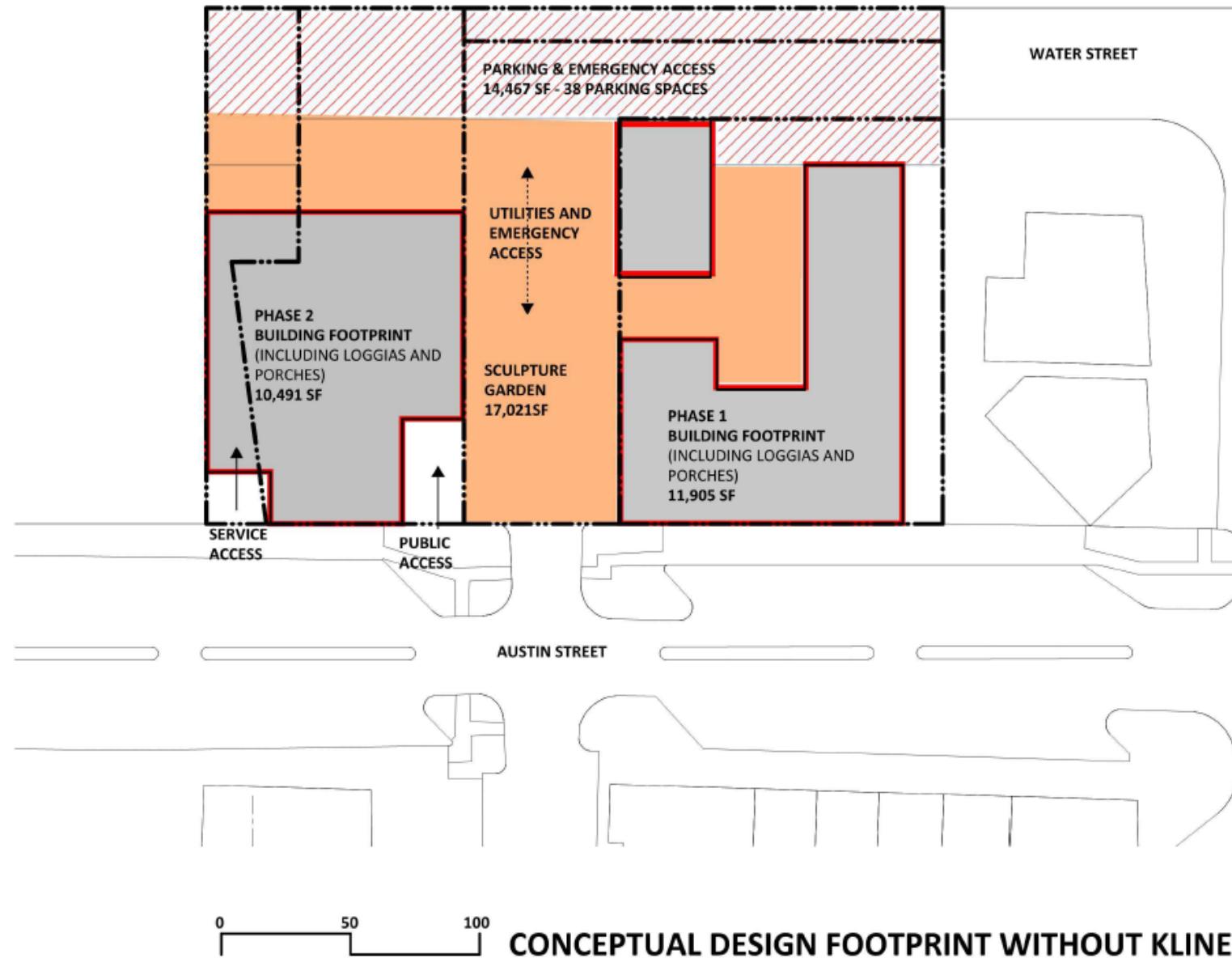
- Historical integrity of the Kline Building is uncompromised.

##### CONS

- Reduced parking capacity
- Reduced sculpture garden
- Inconvenient public access to the Community Center
- Challenge in design integration
- Some land portions not well utilized
- Flood risk with Kline Building

0 50 100

#### CONCEPTUAL DESIGN FOOTPRINT - WITH KLINE BUILDING



#### ANALYSIS NARRATIVE (cont.)

##### CONCEPTUAL DESIGN FOOTPRINT - WITHOUT KLINE BUILDING

###### PROS

- Increased parking capacity
- Larger sculpture garden
- Better public access to the Community Center
- Better integrated and coordinated design
- More efficient use of land
- Mitigation of Art Center flood risk at the Kline Building
- Mitigation of Art Center windstorm risk at the Kline Building
- Opportunity to remedy the relocated Kline Building flood risk via a higher elevation at a new site
- Opportunity to better utilize Kline Building's historical character

###### CONS

- Potential argument that historical integrity of the Kline Building is compromised.

###### SUMMARY

While it is certainly possible to incorporate the Kline Building into this project, it is Richter Architects' opinion that, given the opportunity to appropriately relocate the Kline Building, keeping the building is neither the preferred design strategy for the Art Center project nor for the Kline Building as a community historical asset.

**Rockport Center for the Arts Rendering**  
**Utilized for Fundraising**  
**(New Concepts and Construction Drawings are Being Developed)**



## Building a Robust Future for Downtown Rockport Together

# Frequently Asked Questions



*Artist Rendering of Kline's Café Building potential site located at 504 S. Magnolia, Downtown Rockport*

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **When did the Art Center acquire land in downtown Rockport?**

Rockport Center for the Arts (RCA) acquired an acre of land at the intersection of North St and S Austin St in the summer of 2016. The land is comprised of two lots divided by North St. The land contained one building – the Kline's Cafe Building (KCB). The land was purchased for a planned expansion that had been envisioned in strategic planning sessions that started in 2014.

### **What happened to the Kline's Cafe Building (KCB) after it was acquired?**

Between 2016 and 2017, RCA leased the KCB to two different tenants. The building was occupied at the time Hurricane Harvey made landfall in Rockport.

### **Was the KCB damaged in the hurricane?**

Yes. Like most buildings in Rockport, the KCB sustained damage during the storm: an air conditioner installed on the roof rolled over impacting and damaging the roof; the air conditioning unit was completely destroyed; several broken windows; a large opening in the roof, together with the broken windows allowed water and debris to enter; damages to all of the doors; a storage shed was completely destroyed; and plumbing was non-functioning after water was restored.

## **What happened to the KCB after the storm?**

Upon their request, the existing tenant was released from the lease. RCA restored the building since its property on Aransas Bay was completely destroyed. The 2,100 sq. ft. building was turned into a functioning gallery, a gift shop, two offices and one classroom ahead of a planned art exhibit scheduled for December 2, 2017- 99 days after the hurricane.

## **How was the convention and performance facility project born?**

After the hurricane, Aransas County Long Term Recovery identified a funding opportunity through the Economic Development Administration. Long Term recovery hosted several community meetings with government entities, area non-profits and the Chamber of Commerce. A need to build-up the mid-week tourism market was identified as a goal. This spawned the idea of a convention center that could host meetings organized by business associations and groups from across Texas. Because RCA had the land, and, had the financial resources to provide a required match for a capital project, the Long Term Recovery Team requested the project be submitted by the RCA, with the City of Rockport as a sponsoring government entity. The grant was submitted in May 2018 and awarded in March 2019; adding \$5M to a capital project in downtown Rockport, a sector in desperate need density and economic revitalization. Before submission, this project was vetted by economists at Texas A&M Corpus Christi.

## **What is the reason the building needs to be relocated?**

In order for RCA to be able to build its entire program, which includes a 12,000 sq. ft. complex for the visual arts and art education, a 10,000 sq. ft. convention and performance facility, and a 15,000 sq. ft. sculpture garden, all of the land, [approximately 1 acre], is required.

## **Who would move the KCB?**

Ram House Movers of Sinton, Texas, under the skillful guidance of Lily Wilkinson, will be charged with moving the building. Ram House has worked on many significant projects in Texas; most notably relocating the History Center to its present location on Cedar Ave. They also relocated the Stillman House from Corpus Christi to its present location in Brownsville. Ram House Movers also did the foundation of the R. H. Wood House.

## **What is the estimated weight of the KCB?**

It is estimated that the KCB weighs 90 tons.

## **Will moving the KCB will cause damage to the structure?**

All moving projects contain varying degrees of risk. Ram House Mover's great care and experience moving other concrete foundation buildings will be a major benefit for this project, which is expected to be successful. Lily Wilkinson has already visited the building on two separate occasions to assess the method for movement and to affirm her company's ability to move the building.

## **Is it riskier to move a concrete foundation building or a wood frame building?**

Experts state that moving a wood frame building has a higher risk.

## **Will the entire KCB be moved?**

A portion of the building that was added on, presumably in the 1960's, that became a functioning kitchen for the various eateries that occupied the KCB in its 70 year history will not be relocated. That portion is roughly 400 sq. ft. of space.

## **What is the estimated time frame for the move?**

Preparations for the relocation would commence in March 2020. It is anticipated that 30 days are required to complete the operation.

## **Is the KCB eligible for historical designation?**

Yes. The new owner of the KCB and the RCA have entered into an agreement that a request will be made to the State of Texas. RCA will pay for the application. Depending on the moving date, either RCA or the new owner will file the application with the help of local history groups.

## **Who will own the KCB?**

The KCB will transfer to a commercial interest owned and managed by Ron Meyeres, proprietor of Upside Ventures LLC of Austin, Texas. Upside Ventures LLC will pay for the relocation in exchange for title ownership of the KCB.

## **Who is Upside Ventures LLC?**

Upside Ventures LLC owns and manages commercial interests in Rockport, mainly the old Comforts of Home, now leased to Oh My! and Goin' Coastal Outfitters, and the old Nancy's Boutique, now Coastal Mercantile. Upside Ventures LLC plans to do additional restoration to the building and then lease it. The KCB will return to City of Rockport's property tax rolls, and its commercial activity will garner sales taxes-something that will benefit the entire community.

### **Where will the KCB be moved to?**

Upside Ventures LLC purchased the empty lot behind Coastal Mercantile, on the corner of St. Mary's St. and Magnolia for the KCB. The exact address is 504 S. Magnolia. The building's front will face St. Mary's St. so people driving south on Austin St. will be able to see KCB.

### **What improvements will be made to the KCB?**

The building improvements include raising the elevation of the building to comply with current codes and making it ADA accessible. The look and integrity of the "Art Deco" exterior of the building will be preserved and the current landscaping will be relocated as well, giving the Kline's Cafe Building an established presence on the new site.

### **Where is RCA in its capital project plan?**

RCA has finalized an agreement with an architect. The entire project will be built in two phases. It is projected that the complex for the visual arts and art education will be inaugurated in the in 2021.

For additional information contact Luis Purón at 361-729-5519 or [luis@rockportartcenter.com](mailto:luis@rockportartcenter.com)



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