

Northwest Austin News

SERVING THE NORTHWEST AUSTIN CIVIC ASSOCIATION COMMUNITY

Volume 14, Issue 5

May 2023



Meetings and More



Crime and Safety Meeting Speakers

By NWACA BOARD

In April NWACA hosted two community meetings; on May 11, we'll hold our annual neighborhood meeting.

On April 13th at a Crime and Safety Town Hall, attendees heard from Travis County Constable Sam Lindsey, who regularly patrols our neighborhood; Officer James Wyatt, the Austin Police Department (APD) District Representa-

tive for our area; and Christian Mendoza from the APD Office of Community Liaison. When Constable Lindsey patrols our neighborhoods, he watches for speeding and traffic violations; he also talks with residents to get an understanding of their concerns. In his role, Office Wyatt responds to our requests for information from APD about crime and safety. Mr. Mendoza's office takes part in public events, attending community meetings, handling safety fairs, and

NEIGHBORHOOD, 4

NWACA Earth Day Festival a Success!

By NWACA, Events Committee

On Saturday, April 22, NWACA hosted an Earth Day celebration for the first time. At Doss Elementary School, participants made earrings (by punching out a design from a favorite beverage can) and bird feeders, had their faces painted, tested their skills at Word Search, enjoyed snacks, visited with experts at various displays, and played corn hole. Attractions at the Murchison Community Gardens included garden tours, a scavenger hunt, and visits with The Butterfly Man. Celebrants also made egg crate gardens, picked up kitchen compost bins, enjoyed snacks, and checked out some electric vehicles at this site. More than 150 people attended the event; they appeared to enjoy all of the festivities, so we're sure to do it again!

Thanks to everyone who helped make it happen!



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Watershed Protection

Beware of Stinging Caterpillars

By TEXAS AGRILIFE EXTENSION

A story recently aired on KUT radio pointed out that caterpillars we see in Central Texas in the spring can give a powerful sting. Before picking one up or stroking what seems to be a soft furry surface, be aware of those that might sting.

This excerpt from an article at <https://tinyurl.com/stinging-caterpillar> urges caution:

“Spring foliage can bring on an abundance of caterpillars, a few of whom carry irritating or even venomous hairs that ‘sting,” said Janet Hurley, AgriLife Extension statewide integrated pest management specialist for schools, Dallas.

“We have fact sheets available for schools this time of year, and we want to make sure parents are aware that there are stinging caterpillars in Texas, what they look like, and how to avoid them,” she said.

Stinging caterpillar species include the buck moth caterpillar, spiny oak slug caterpillar, hickory tussock moth caterpillar, saddleback caterpillar and io moth caterpillar.



Perhaps the most painful caterpillar in Texas is the southern flannel moth caterpillar, also known as the asp or puss caterpillar. An encounter with a puss caterpillar is very painful and may even require a trip to the hospital, according to AgriLife Extension experts.

The photo here is of a puss caterpillar.



Birdfeeder



Earrings



Dana Epstein

Broker
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Dana is a wonderful connector and lover of all the things that make Austin such an incredible city. She loves helping people feel supported, informed, and at home. Dana works tirelessly on behalf of her clients and was recently recognized for her strong work ethic and proven success at the Austin Business Journal 2023 Residential Real Estate Awards.

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Greystone Speed Mitigation Meeting

NEIGHBORHOOD, FROM 1

coordinating activities like Blue Santa and National Night Out. His office also has programs focused on various segments of the population such as youth, refugees, and senior citizens. The panel of three fielded questions that covered a wide range of topics. It was interesting to note that half of the attendees were Neighborhood Watch block captains.

The focus of the April 19th community meeting was the Austin Transportation Department (ATD) speed mitigation plan for Greystone Drive using 15 sets of speed bumps between Valburn Drive and MoPac. Homeowners along Greystone Drive received notices from ATD weeks before; those notices were followed by a mailer from someone unhappy with the plan, encouraging people to contact Councilmember Alter's office to express their opinions. Subsequently, Ms. Alter's office reported getting about the same number of calls or emails in favor as opposed to the plan. Because there was concern and confusion about the plan, NWACA worked with Ms. Alter's office and ATD to set up the April 19th meeting; the meeting was publicized through the weekly email newsletter, NWACA Notes, as well as the NWACA Facebook page and website.

Two days before the meeting, a postcard appeared in many mailboxes on and near Greystone Drive. It carried the NWACA logo, as well as those of the City of Austin and Austin Mobility Bond. This card was not sent by any of those three entities. In fact, this was illegal use of the logos, and the person who distributed the postcards could be subject to legal action. Some people thought, based on the postcard, that NWACA was taking a negative stand on the speed bumps. This is not the case. NWACA does not take a stand; our bylaws prohibit such action. While individual members of the NWACA Board and committees may express their own opinions, those do not represent NWACA's position.

Five members of ATD, led by Assistant Director Anna Martin, and Melisa Markman, from Councilmember Alter's office, attended the meeting. More than 60 neighbors were present, and though there was some rowdiness, it went well. ATD (now Austin Transportation and Public Works after the recent reorganization) representatives did a short presentation about the plan and answered many questions (some submitted ahead of time, others written on cards at the meeting). There was not time for all the questions; ATD promised answers to all

of them in an FAQ document to be posted on the NWACA web site.

ATD was both surprised and impressed by the intensity of the attendee's response to the plan. Ms. Martin said quite clearly that based on the response, the proposal they presented should be reworked. When the revision is complete, ATD has agreed to hold another public meeting, to include large diagrams with which to discuss the details of the revised plan.

We are hoping to have a progress report, if not the revised plan, at the Annual NWACA Neighborhood Meeting, on Thursday, May 11. We'll also hear from Councilmember Alter, addressing key matters before the City Council and the Wildfire Division of the Austin Fire Department (and perhaps be able to host their "simtable" simulation of wildfire). There will be updates on recent and ongoing roadway improvements pertinent to our community. In addition to short presentations, there will also be tables with representatives from several City of Austin departments, law enforcement groups, NWACA business members, and NWACA committees. Come learn about NWACA activities and events for this year.

The meeting will be held in Huffman Hall at St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, starting at 6:30 PM; please use the parking lot at 4121 Steck Avenue. Light snacks will be provided; much information will be shared! Everyone in the neighborhood is invited to attend.

Enough about meetings – at least for the time being. In this issue of our newsletter, you'll see a summary of the results of our 2023 Neighborhood Interest Survey. You'll also find an article which addresses requests for information submitted by survey respondents. (If you have other questions, please send them to info@nwaca.org.) Further, the "Leave no Trace" article addresses a request for how to encourage better handling of dog poop and Merriessa Anton's monthly column on recycling answers a request for more information on recycling. This column pertains to our green composting bin. A pleasant surprise is that shredded paper goes into the green bin. By the way, if you have a large amount of paper that you need shredded, keep it for our upcoming shredding event on Saturday, August 19, from 2-4 PM. Both paper and computer hard disks will be accepted; more details will be forthcoming in future newsletter issues.

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\$1,385,000
MEDIAN SALES PRICE



\$20,791,500
SALES VOLUME



\$456
MEDIAN LIST PRICE/SF



\$468
MEDIAN SALE PRICE/SF



\$1,350,000
MEDIAN LIST PRICE



8
MEDIAN DAYS ON MARKET



15
CLOSED SALES

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HILLS
AND
WESTOVER
HILLS**



SOURCE: ABOR MLS INCLUDING DATA FROM MARCH 1- APRIL 21, 2023 FOR SINGLE FAMILY HOMES. BASED ON NWACA BOUNDARIES: MOPAC/HWY360/2222/HWY 183

JULIE WAIDELICH



YOUR NEIGHBOR. YOUR REALTOR.

THINKING OF SELLING YOUR HOME?

The spring selling season is upon us! It's no secret that the warm weather and end of the school year tend to draw out sellers and buyers in droves!

Here are a few helpful tips to ensure your home is well-maintained and appealing to buyers should you find yourself in the market to sell.

IMPROVE YOUR CURB APPEAL

Trim overgrown trees, plant flowers, mulch flower beds, and repaint your front door.

DECLUTTER LIVING AREAS

Less is more when it comes to selling.

DEPERSONALIZE YOUR SPACE

Remove distractions so buyers can visualize themselves living in the property.

LIGHTEN IT UP

Light, neutral colors will make your home look bigger, brighter and more appealing to most buyers.

TOUCH UP SCUFF MARKS

Touch up baseboards, walls and doors to make sure your home sparkles.

IT'S THE LITTLE THINGS

Fix loose handles & ensure closets are tidy.

CLEAN, CLEAN, CLEAN

Deep clean your home and ensure it smells inviting to potential buyers.

CONSIDER STAGING

Professional staging will ensure you make a great first impression and will often lead to a faster sale and higher price.

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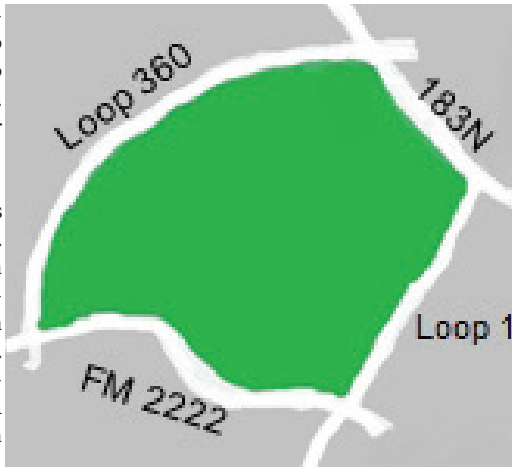
Key Contacts

Austin Citywide Information Center	512-974-2000 or 311
Emergency, Police	911
Non-emergency (coyote sightings, compliance issues)	311
APD District Representative Officer James Hyatt	512-974-6894
District 10 Councilmember, Alison Alter	512-974-2110
To get the District 10 monthly newsletter	district10@austintexas.gov
Northwest Austin News Publisher	512-483-1708
	Lynette@FourPointsNews.com
Northwest Austin News Co-Editors	Joyce Statz and Julie Rawlings

New to the Neighborhood?

If this is your first copy of our newsletter, welcome to the NWACA neighborhood! The map shows our boundaries – Mopac, RM 2222, Loop 360, and US Highway 183 (Research Boulevard). There are about 13,500 households who are your neighbors and are happy you're here!

This newsletter is one way to know what's happening in NWACA, but there's much more. Check out the quick link For New Neighbors on the home page at www.nwaca.org. Use the Membership button on the home page or use the form in this newsletter to become a NWACA member. Members have access to the weekly email NWA-CA Notes and the ability to join the NWACA closed Facebook group, to keep in touch with each other and with the latest news about NWACA.



2022 – 2024 NWACA Board of Directors

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Julie Rawlings, Vice President
Mick Koffend, Treasurer
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Each of the Board Members can be reached at info@nwaca.org or by phone at 737-235-7325

The NWACA Board meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month except July and December. Please visit our calendar at www.nwaca.org to see the specific time and location. If you want to speak at a Board meeting, please send email a week before the meeting to info@nwaca.org so that we can put you on the agenda.

NWACA is bordered on the north by U.S. Highway 183 (Research Boulevard), on the west by Loop 360, on the south by RM 2222, and on the east by Mopac (Loop 1).

Special Thanks to Members

By NWACA MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

NWACA thanks members who generously contributed to the 4th of July Parade Fund, the Park Fund, and the Constable Fund, between March 22 and April 21, 2023.

Donations to the 4th of July Parade Fund help NWACA to host the best 4th of July parade in Austin! The Park Fund helps us do events in our parks and revitalize parks in the NWACA area. The Constable Fund helps us provide the patrol activities of the Travis County Constable.

- JoAn Baird
- Arthur Cook
- John and Katherine Foster
- Robert and Nanette Sechler
- Karon and John Scott Simpson
- Dotson Smith
- William and Don South
- Jay Stewart
- Ardyce and Rodger Walser
- (and, apologies to anyone whose donation we might have missed!)



ARE YOU A NWACA MEMBER?

Receiving the newsletter does not guarantee membership.
Not sure? Visit nwaca.org to confirm!

Here are 5 great reasons to join today!

GREAT NEIGHBORS = GREAT NEIGHBORHOOD

Together, we can continue to do great things for our neighborhood!

STAY INFORMED ABOUT ISSUES THAT AFFECT YOU

We are actively involved in our community and advocate for our residents.

GET TO KNOW YOUR NEIGHBORS

We encourage friendships among residents through our events - July 4th parade, National Night Out, Recycling Collection, Garage Sales, and more!

PROTECT AND IMPROVE OUR COMMUNITY

Learn about fire safety, crime prevention, oak wilt, environmental concerns, park development, wildlife management, zoning/planning, and more!

SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL BUSINESS COMMUNITY

We are deeply invested in building strong relationships within our business network to positively impact our neighborhood.

Together we can make a difference!

JOIN TODAY @ NWACA.ORG/MEMBERS

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name: _____ Phone: () _____

Address: _____ Zip: _____

Email (confidential): _____



Annual dues \$25

Optional Contributions:

Fourth of July Parade \$10____\$20____Other____
Constable \$10____\$20____Other____
Parks Fund \$10____\$20____Other____

To join:

go to www.nwaca.org and pay online via credit card
or send this form and payment to:
NWACA P.O. Box 26654, Austin, TX 78755

Volunteer!

Please check a committee on which you would like to participate:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Business Membership |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crime & Safety | <input type="checkbox"/> Tree, Environment, and Wildlife |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Events | <input type="checkbox"/> Wildfire Prevention |
| <input type="checkbox"/> History | <input type="checkbox"/> Zoning and Transportation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood Watch | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parks | |

Members, please request to join our **Facebook Group** and sign up for **NWACA Notes**, our weekly email.

For more info email us at: info@nwaca.org

Mark Your Calendars

These events are as planned as of April 22. As you consider participating in one of the events listed, please check first with the organizer.

May 11, 6:30 – 8:30 PM

NWACA Annual Neighborhood Meeting
Huffman Hall, St. Matthew’s Episcopal Church
8134 Mesa Drive/4121 Steck Avenue

May 16, 7pm

Parks Committee – virtual

May 20, 9 AM to noon

Monthly cleanup at Bull Creek District Park – sign up at <https://www.givepulse.com/event/336685>

May 23, 5 PM

NWACA Zoning and Transportation Committees - virtual

May 24, 6:30 – 8:30 PM

NWACA Board Meeting – Location TBD

June 10, 9 AM to noon (tentative)

Cleanup at Murchison Pool Park, assuming June 12 opening
Email info@nwaca.org if able to help

June 17, 9 AM to noon

Monthly cleanup at Bull Creek District Park – sign up at <https://www.givepulse.com/event/336685>

June 20, 7pm

Parks Committee – virtual

June 27, 5 PM

NWACA Zoning and Transportation Committees - virtual

June 28, 6:30 – 8:30 PM

NWACA Board Meeting – Location TBD

Help Keep our Wildlife Wild!

NWACA advises residents to NOT feed wildlife. Many well-intentioned individuals do so out of concern for the wildlife they are feeding. However, intentional and unintentional feeding of wildlife attracts predators to the wildlife being fed. Additionally, an association with humans and food contributes directly to habituated be-

haviors of animals like coyotes and feral hogs, which then become aggressive in pursuit of a food or prey attractant. Please eliminate food attractants from your yards for the safe enjoyment of our streets, parks and playgrounds for neighbors and pets.

Leave No Trace

By J. FORREST

The “leave no trace” principle in camping refers to the idea of leaving the campsite as clean and undisturbed as possible. This principle can also be applied to neighborhood etiquette when strolling with dogs. When owners clean up after their pets and dispose of the waste properly, they help to protect our environment. Even if it seems like it’s in a secluded area, leaving waste behind can be harmful and can even cause disease.

Here are some ways to apply the “leave no trace” principle to neighborhood dog waste:

1. When walking your dog, make sure to carry a waste bag, or three, with you. This way, you can quickly and

easily pick up your dog’s waste and dispose of it properly.

2. Unless there is a designated dog waste trash can (one exists by Epoch on Far West), dispose of the waste in your regular (brown or gray) trash can. Filled bags, regardless of how colorful, are not appreciated when left on a curb, nor are they appropriate in yard waste bins.

3. Lead by example, encouraging other dog owners in your neighborhood to follow the “leave no trace” principle when it comes to dog poop.

With a few simple steps, you can help keep your neighborhood clean and your pet healthy. Leave no dog trace behind when enjoying walks with your furry pal. No matter where or why you get outside, nature is yours to protect.



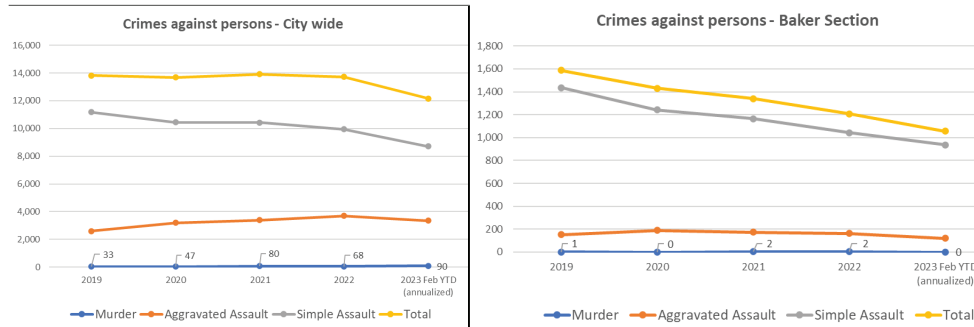
Crime Statistics Summary

By KEVIN KOTT, Co Chair
NWACA Crime and Safety Committee

In past newsletters, we republished Austin crime statistics from the Austin Police Department (APD) Chief's Monthly Report. We included comparisons of the most current month with the earlier month. In this issue, we are looking at the annual statistics to detect trends. We show both the overall Austin City statistics and the Baker Sector ("BaS") statistics. Note: the area NWACA serves is about 1/3 of the area that APD refers to as Baker Sector. And, while the Chief's report includes many crime categories, we are focusing on the crimes likely to be of most concern to NWACA residents.

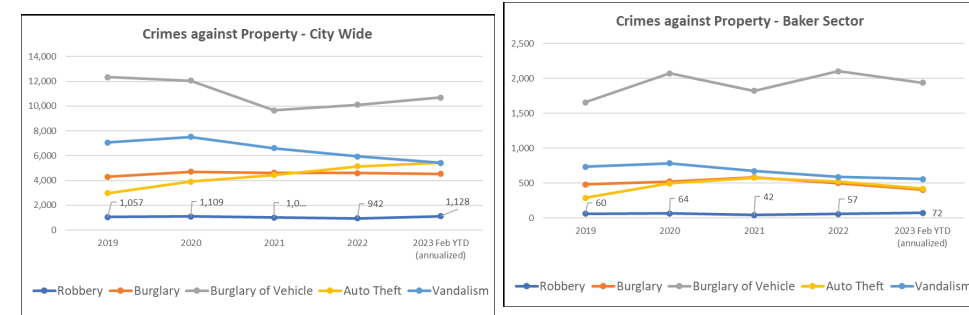
Crimes against persons

Three types of crimes are highlighted in this section of the report: murder, aggravated assault, and simple assault. Simple assault is a less serious crime than aggravated assault (a felony) where the criminal intended bodily harm. Simple assaults have declined city-wide, while the number of aggravated assaults rose between 2019 and 2022 (but decreased in 2023**). In BaS there has been a continuous decline in simple assaults. There have been between zero and 2 murders per year in BaS since 2019.



Crimes against property

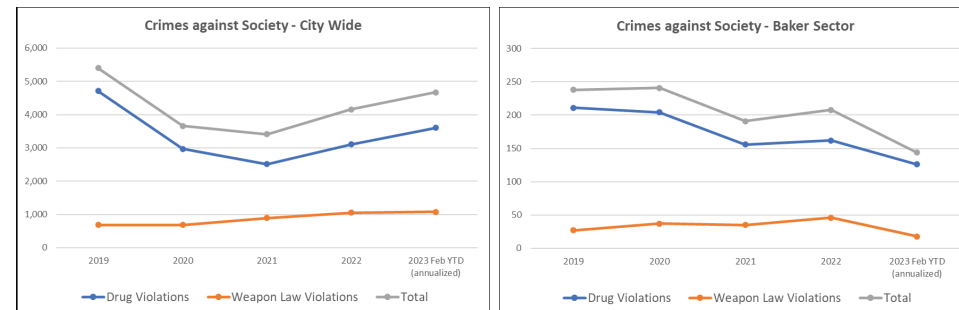
There are five types of crimes in this group: robbery (of a person), burglary (building or habitation break-in), vehicle burglary, auto theft, and vandalism. The most common of these City wide and in BaS is burglary of vehicles. Burglary of vehicles, auto theft, and home burglary numbers have declined slightly since 2021 in BaS.



Crimes against Society

Here, the numbers of drug and weapon law violation crimes are reported. City wide, drug violations decreased during the pandemic, but more recently, have been on the rise (although numbers remain lower than 2019 totals). In BaS, drug violations account for only 5% of City-wide incidents. City-wide weapon violations have increased somewhat since 2019; weapons violations in BaS accounted for only 4% of city-wide weapons violations in 2022.

** Note: The current APD Chief's Monthly Report's February 2023 data has been annualized (i.e. Feb YTD multiplied by six) to extrapolate the level for the full year. Data quoted from: <https://www.austintexas.gov/page/chiefs-monthly-reports>





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The Vista Residence at 3407 Monte Vista is a breathtaking architectural masterpiece nestled in Balcones Park, West Austin. The home was designed by award winning Miró Rivera architects and constructed by J. Pinnelli Company, a leader in green building. The property features outdoor spaces defined by form board concrete walls, steel rod custom fencing, floor-to-ceiling German windows, and cantilevered metal roof profiles. Showcased inside; a three-story plate steel staircase, warm quarter-sawn white oak millwork, and an Oculus Rooflight opening to a Zen Courtyard. The main floor primary bedroom offers northern-facing garden views, while the open kitchen, dining, and living spaces are designed for entertaining and large events. Downstairs are two ample bedrooms, a full shared bath, a living/media room, and a spacious gameroom/gym area. The lower level also includes a "pet room" with direct access to the backyard and an outdoor pet shower. Upstairs, the office (a possible 4th bedroom) and living area enjoy breathtaking panoramic views of downtown Austin's city skyline from the covered balcony. With automated security monitoring and surveillance, app-based home systems management, lighting, solar, AV equipment, life is easy in this smart home.



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Poor Farm Pest Camp

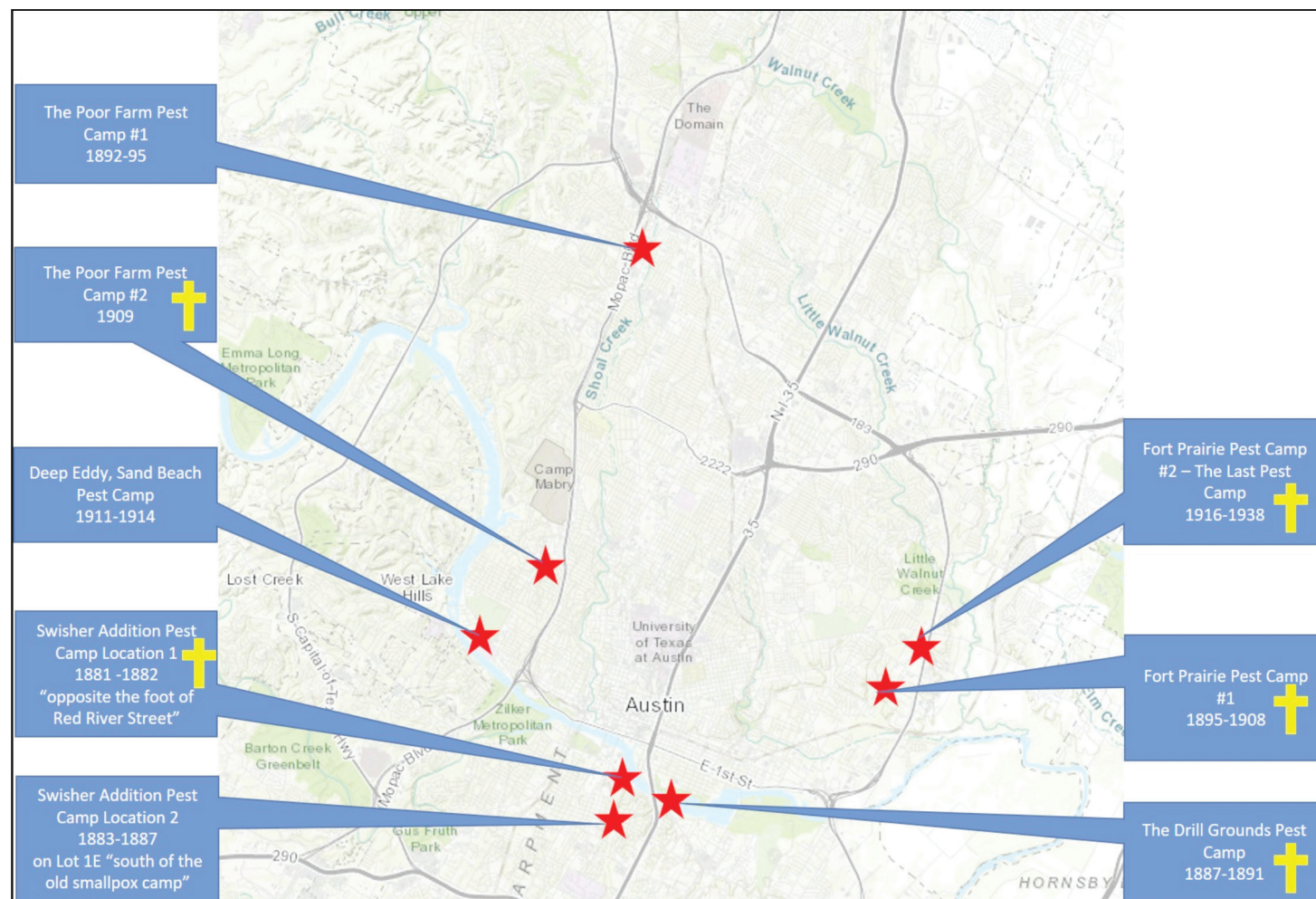
By RICHARD DENNEY

In a previous newsletter article (February 2022) I wrote about Travis County's first poor farm east of our neighborhood, roughly bounded by today's Mopac, Anderson Lane, Burnet Road, and Greenlawn Parkway. The County also purchased a roughly 0.16-mile-wide strip of land south of Spicewood Springs Road that extended from the farm northwest to near Mesa Drive; it provided timber and other resources for the farm. The poor farm was in operation from 1879 until its closure ca. 1905 when it was relocated south to the Tarrytown area.

Recent research by Travis County Historical Commission's Lanny Ottosen reveals the poor farm may have also served as a "pest camp."

From Ottosen's report: "Quarantining those stricken with contagious diseases has been a common practice since ancient times, and continuing into the 20th century, these temporary quarantine camps were commonly identified as pest camps. Sometimes referred to as a quarantine camp, pest house, pest grounds, smallpox camp, tubercular camp, yellow fever camp or any other infectious disease, the quarantine was intended to confine its inhabitants. They all had the same attributes in common; they were temporary impoundments hastily assembled when a community believed an epidemic was emerging, and they were normally placed outside of a town's limits in less populated areas."

In all, Ottosen's research identified eight pest camps scattered around Travis County from 1881 until 1938. The poor farm pest camp adjacent to our neighborhood appears to have opened as early as 1892. What is known for sure is its closure; the newspaper in 1895 announced "THE PEST CAMP. The pest camp at the poor farm has been broken



Pest camp locations 1881-1937. Crosses indicate burials reported in the camp. Map courtesy Lanny Ottosen, TCHC.

up. There was but one case of smallpox and it was fatal." (Austin American-Statesman, April 23, 1895). While there was only one case of smallpox, the fact that a pest camp was established might indicate other diseases were being contained. For example, the CDC reports tuberculosis (TB) killed as many as one in seven people in the U.S. in the late 1800s; the reporting of "but one case of smallpox" may have been reassurance to the community, smallpox being the most

dreaded of diseases. The first TB sanatorium didn't appear in Austin until 1938; that building exists today as the Shelter for Women and Children on Tannehill Lane. That 1938 marked the end of the pest camps may not be a coincidence; the sanatorium was the site of the Fort Prairie pest camp from 1916 - 1938. Of the eight pest camps, at least five are known to have had onsite burials. Ottosen found no evidence of pest camp burials on the poor farm east of NWACA. But as noted

in my previous article, there is some evidence of poor farm residents having been buried onsite, though where is unknown, or if burials were reinterred later.

Richard Denney is Vice-Chair of the Travis County Historical Commission. For more on this topic and other local history, visit <https://traviscountyhistorical.blogspot.com/>



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Spotlight: Austin Natural Funerals

By JANICE GREEN

Mitzi Chafetz, founder of Austin Natural Funerals (ANF), was enjoying a bagel at a Far West eatery while pondering a relocation of her business, then in a “traditional” stand-alone location. That’s when she noticed an Available sign in a nearby commercial strip. She thought, “Why not? Death is a part of life.”

That was not the first time Mitzi had thought outside the box in a field that gives rise to cultural fears and superstitions. In 2001 Mitzi began working for the Texas Funeral Service Commission. Because she wanted to change how consumers view and experience death, funerals, and cremation, she studied and acquired her mortician license and became one of the few female funeral home directors/owners. She worked for several years at a local private funeral home, but as corporate acquisitions made the world of individually owned funeral homes a thing of the past, she became increasingly resolute about providing a more caring and creative way to honor and remember those who pass and address the needs of those left behind.

ANF provides traditional services but also natural options within the scope available in Texas (i.e., burial or cremation). Options that minimize the impact on the environment include biodegradable (not metal) caskets or even no casket, choosing not to embalm, burial in a “green” cemetery such as the Eloise Woods Natural Burial Park in Cedar Creek, also managed by ANF. For details of what a “green” cemetery uniquely offers (including provisions for pet burial), check out the Eloise Woods extensive website at eloisewoods.com.

No matter the religious (or non-religious) affiliations of the deceased or the deceased’s family, ANF encourages and accommodates personalized creative and memorable services. These include personal tending to the loved one, wakes, home visitations and viewing, and practical and economical celebrations of a life anywhere and any way.

Pre-paid services are also available and secure. ANF works with an A-rated third-party prepaid funeral company to ensure that the consumers’ funds are safe and protected, regardless of whether a family changes their plans and moves from the area.

ANF provides extensive grief-counseling resources to aid during and after events. Because traditional newspaper obituaries are being replaced by memorial websites, ANF has memorial sites that are not just a temporary place for photos and remembrances but also has web tools that connect family and friends.

When I prepared to meet with Mitzi Chafetz, my head was full of images of the old TV series “Six Feet Under,” plus a mix of curiosity, trepidation, and skepticism about what her business was doing in our neighborhood. Her graciousness and frankness in the home-like setting put me at ease from the outset. No questions were off the table.

Whether you are seeking information for pre-planning, responding to the loss of a family member, or are simply curious, you will find Mitzi Chafetz and her staff to be informative and attentive to all your inquiries. While nothing is more intimate than death, nothing is more universal.

Contact Info: austinnaturalfunerals.com; 512-851-1236; 3742 Far West Blvd #104; austinnaturalfunerals@gmail.com



Mitzi Chafetz

What Can I Put in My Green Compost Bin?

By MERRIESSA ANTON

Last month, I wrote about how to influence climate change by using our green compost bins to dispose of compostable materials. This month I want to discuss which items can (and cannot) be put in your compost bin. Austin Resource Recovery writes, “IF IT GROWS, IT GOES” in the green bin. Food scraps (including meat, dairy, seafood, seafood shells, bones, and more), yard trimmings, food-soiled paper, and natural fibers are all items that belong in your green compost bin. In Austin these materials are processed at a commercial facility which heats the compost to high temperature. (Many cities do not utilize high temperature processing and can only handle raw vegetables and eggshells.) Liquids, oils, fats, plastic, glass, metals, Styrofoam, and grease, however, do

not go into the compost bin.

Yard trimmings can be a large part of your green bin collection, especially now as we clean our yards after the winter. Items that go into your compost container are grass clippings, small branches, tree limbs, tree roots, flowers, leaves, plants, and straw. Rocks, soil, and tree stumps need to be kept out of the compost bin.

Food-soiled paper, such as paper bags, napkins, paper towels, paper plates, paper cups, paper take-out boxes and containers, can be placed into the green bin. Pizza boxes, coffee filters, microwavable popcorn bags, newspapers, and tissues are also compostable. Glossy paper or window envelopes belong in the recycle bin. Please put clean paper products in your blue recycle container as new paper

products are made from these items.

Compostable natural fibers include clothes dryer lint, dog hair, sawdust, toothpicks, popsicle sticks, shredded paper, and untreated wooden chopsticks. Cotton balls, cotton swabs, and treated wood are not appropriate compostable material.

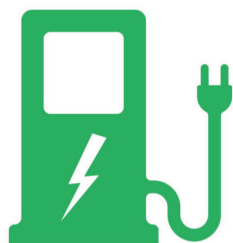
Please note that organic material, such as food waste, in our landfills releases 25 times more methane gas than carbon dioxide. Composting is just one way to keep organic waste out of the landfill. Next month I will share creative ideas about repurposing food.



Austin Energy embraces EVs and transportation sector

By KALI BRAMBLE
Austin Monitor

As new battery-powered car models from General Motors and Ford roll into the market, Austin Energy is racing to ensure the city's infrastructure is ready for them.



The utility's electric vehicle and emerging technologies team stopped by last week's work session to bring City Council up to speed on pending improvements to its charging network and service programs. Executives Richard Genece and Cameron Freberg said electric vehicle drivers can look forward to an increasingly efficient, affordable and reliable charging experience.

"In the history of this program, the first 10 years we were focused on growth," said Genece. "We want the next 10 years to be focused on reliability and performance."

As an increasing number of consumers, corporations and administrations pivot to ditching gasoline, Austin has become a hotbed for the booming industry, exceeding both the national and state averages for electric vehicle registrations. In 2022, EVs constituted 11 percent of the city's vehicle registrations, compared to 5 percent in Texas and 9 percent nationwide.

The trend has launched Austin Energy into a pivotal role in the transportation sector, making it the steward of a vast new infrastructure to power the growing electric fleet. The utility currently oversees a network of 1,542 public charging stations, 81 percent of which are privately owned and managed by investors like ChargePoint, Tesla and EVgo. Still, Freberg said there are kinks to be ironed out, with plans to begin a preventive maintenance schedule program this month.

"It's an industrywide known issue that charging infrastructure has experienced severe outages over the last 10 years," said Freberg. "In January of 2023, we were looking at 28 percent outage rates in our network, but since then have reduced that to 17 percent through replacing legacy hardware, performing regular maintenance and working with our maintenance contractors to make repairs."

Austin Energy also hopes to increase the availability of DC fast chargers, which currently constitute only 30 of its 1,542 charging stations. DC chargers can provide a full charge in 15 to 45 minutes, in contrast to the several hours it takes Level 2 chargers, the most common currently offered in the market.

Austin Energy is also exploring new grid integration technology, with plans to launch a smart-home charging program that leverages real-time data to strategically time vehicle charging to manage overall grid load. Staff said the move

toward more flexible grid-to-vehicle and even vehicle-to-grid exchanges can provide cost-saving efficiencies and greater reliability during peak demand, both for customers and for the utility.

Lastly, Austin Energy is continuing to support electrification of the city's fleet, which currently boasts 275 battery-powered vehicles projected to provide \$3.5 million in savings over the next decade. As the supply of needed models catches up with demand, the utility is working with the city's Development Services Department to codify an expedited charging station permit. Partnerships with the Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority and the Austin Independent School District are also in the works as electric city and school buses come down the pipeline.

"I think the game changer with EVs, and the important aspect for us on the dais, is the fact that we're converting from fuel-powered engines to clean engines," said Council Member Leslie Pool. "But if it's hard to get to those chargers, then that transformation will lag in time. ... I'm hoping that in five to 10 years, fast chargers will be ubiquitous the same way that gas pumps are, and the gas pumps will eventually be something we're nostalgic about."

Austin Monitor, an online, nonpartisan, 501(c)3 nonprofit publication that covers local government and politics in and around Austin.

Business leaders eye contract, jobs in \$25B in transportation projects

By CHAD SWIATECKI
Austin Monitor

With \$25 billion in road, rail and airport infrastructure projects on tap for Austin over the next decade-plus, business leaders are starting to shape how the regional economy and its workforce can get the most benefit from the far-reaching changes in local transportation.

The demands and opportunities for Austin businesses of all sizes, and the need to provide thousands of construction and other workers for years at a time, were among the central topics of last week's Regional Mobility Summit hosted by the Austin Chamber of Commerce.

Greg Canally, executive director of Austin Transit Partnership, said his organization is already working with Workforce Solutions Capital Area and other local resources that are in place to train area residents. He said ATP and other transit groups, such as the Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority, the Texas Department of Transportation and the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority, realize they need to work together to reduce the risk of cannibalizing each other in their search for needed workers.

"We want to make sure that we are all leveraging the abilities of the work that we have from a training perspective that's

already in place. Where do we need to amplify that? Where can we invest more in that so that we not only are we ready, but the airport is ready and the TxDOT stuff is ready," he said. "We can join forces, and that's really where we are headed, because it's a long haul of construction we're in for. We know the firms that are going to come in are going to be accessing our local talent. We want to make sure our local talent is ready." ATP leaders have also been in introductory talks with dozens of local businesses that can take part in the contracting that's expected to begin by the end of the year.

"We have spent probably the last nine or 10 months having kind of informal meetings with a lot of folks in industry ... and having meetings with folks in our peer agencies as well," said Casey Burack, executive vice president of business and legal affairs for ATP.

During the summit, it was explained that the ongoing public feedback period for the possible configurations of the downtown Blue Line light rail closes early next month. ATP is expected to make recommendation on which rail route to construct by the end of May, and present that option to City Council for approval in June.

If approved, that would allow for the comprehensive environmental impact study to begin as a precursor to engineering, architecture and other contracting opportunities.

Businesses interested in competing for contract opportunities related to Project Connect – including fields outside of construction and engineering, such as public engagement – can attend the transit industry expo that ATP has announced for May 25 at Distribution Hall, 1500 E. Fourth St.




Manan Garg, ATP's vice president of project delivery and construction, said a call for industry feedback that opened in March and concluded earlier this month provided an early look at how much interest there was from local businesses, with more than 60 inquiries made.

"We want to make sure that they get involved early on, so they can have conversations among themselves to get them enough time to formulate those partnerships," he said, noting that initial contracts could be bundled and available for proposal submissions by the end of the year. "Those relationships are going to be very vital for success ... so we want to make sure everybody is coming to the table understanding the importance of this project."

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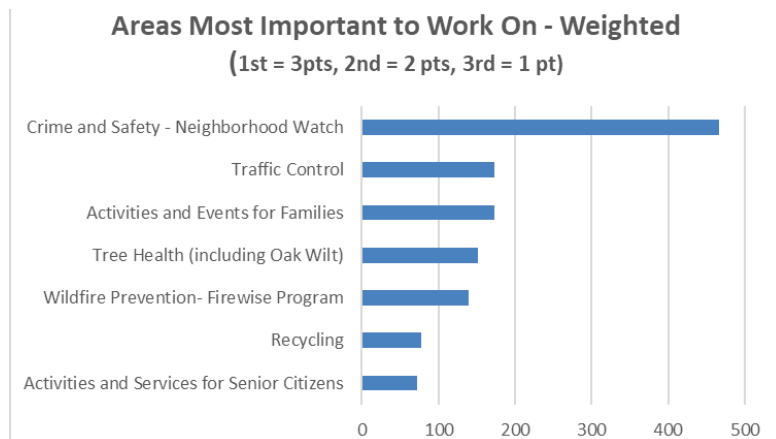
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2023 NWACA Neighborhood Interest Survey Results

During the month of March NWACA conducted its annual survey to identify issues that are most pressing for the neighborhood. Survey Monkey was used and anyone in the neighborhood could participate. Paper surveys were sent to NWACA members without internet access. There were 323 responses, five of those from members without internet access. Note that this is about the same number as responded last year. Responses are summarized below.

Q1: What areas do you think are most important for NWACA to work on in the coming year? [choose only 3, rating them first choice, second choice, third choice] (323 responses)

A weighted rating was computed to be able to see the overall responses to each of the items.

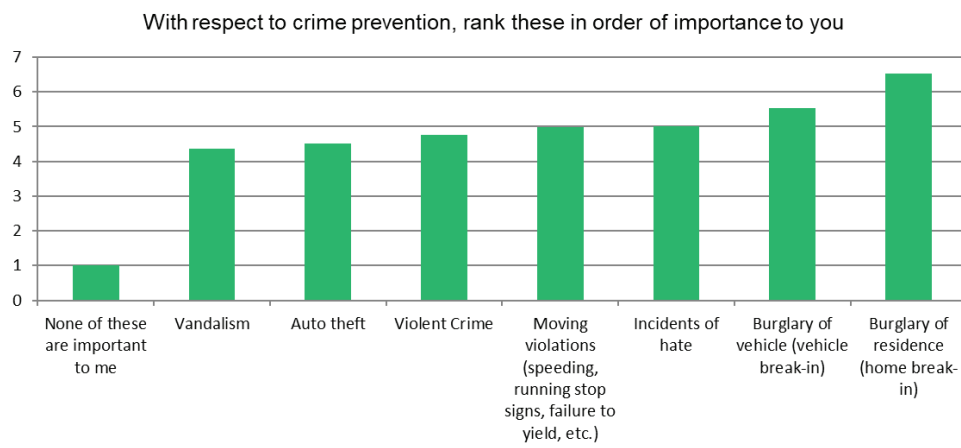


Among the “other” responses, these were most prevalent:

- 6 – zoning, development, historic/neighborhood preservation
- 5 – Parks-related items
- 5 – traffic-related items
- 2 - too many deer/deer control

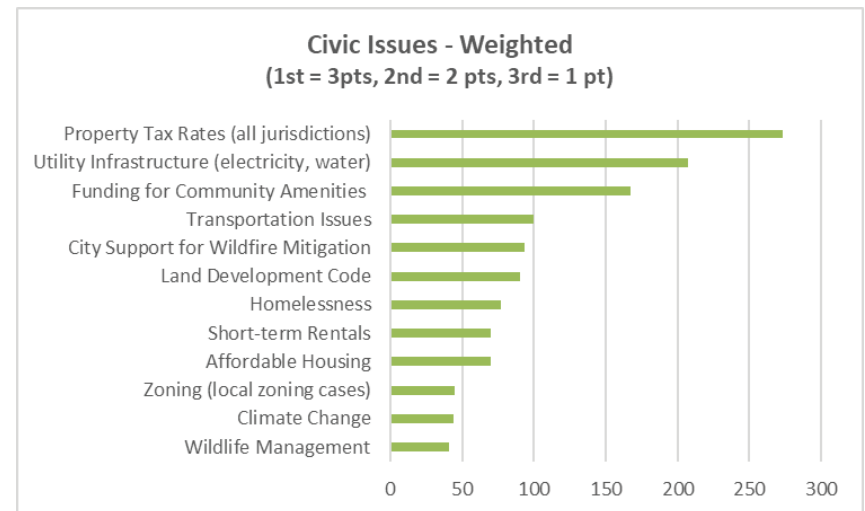
Others mentioned: car break-ins, homelessness, litter, neighborhood amenities, power outage, public transit, short term rentals, support for schools, activities for families and seniors

Q2: With respect to Crime Prevention, rank these in order of importance to you. (322 responses)



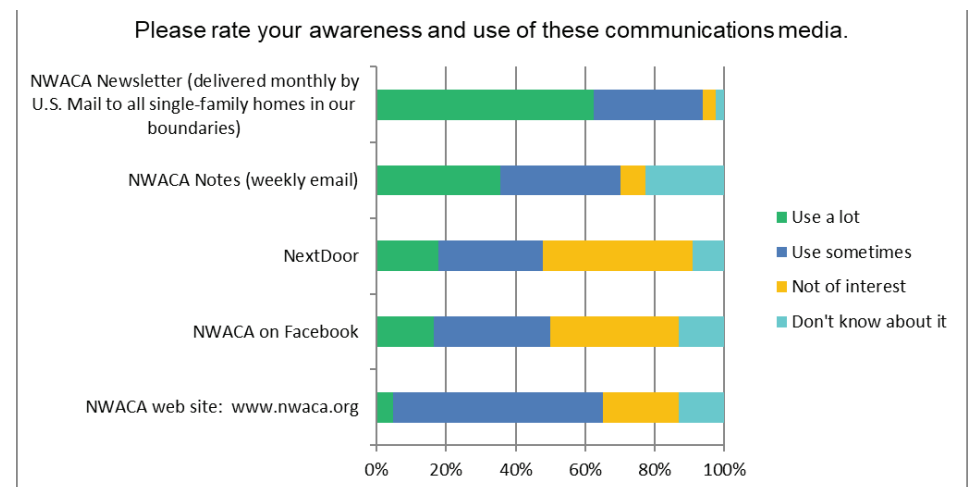
Q3: Which civic issues would you like NWACA to provide information on and to advocate for your concerns? [Choose no more than 3, rating them first choice, second choice, third choice.] (323 responses)

A weighted rating was again computed, showing how interest varied among the items. Since this survey was done shortly after an ice storm that took out power and trees, that event may have contributed to the strength of the response on utility infrastructure.



Among the 8 “other” responses were one each on speeders, speed bumps, policing, deer, wildfire prevention, litter prevention, tree health, and development.

Q4: Please rate your awareness and use of these NWACA communications media (323 responses)

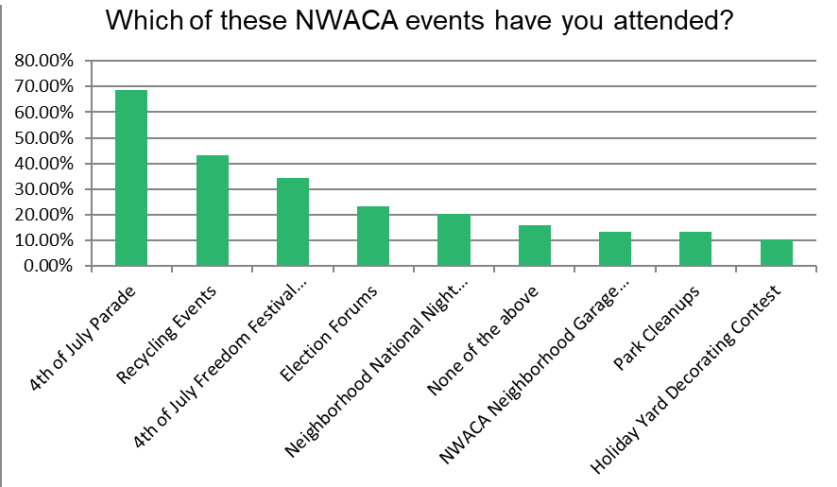


Among the six “other” comments were one who used these media rarely, two negative comments about NextDoor, one about not using social media, and two who weren’t getting the newsletter.

2023 NWACA Neighborhood Interest Survey Results

Q5: Which of these NWACA events have you attended? (323 responses)

Given that the 4th of July Parade has been around the longest, it’s no surprise that it’s in first place, and on the other hand, the new Holiday Yard Decorating Contest isn’t well known yet.



Q6: Are you a current member of NWACA? (323 responses)

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	82.04%	265
No	8.05%	26
Don't know/Don't remember	9.91%	32

Q7: What is your zip code? (323 responses)

Answer Choices	Responses	
78731	78.33%	253
78759	21.05%	68
Other (please specify)	0.62%	2

One “other” response was 78757; the other was “U.”

Q8: What type of household is yours? (323 responses)

Answer Choices	Responses	
Own our home	97.83%	316
Rent a single-family home	0.93%	3
Rent an apartment	0.62%	2
Other (please specify)	0.62%	2

Among the “other” responses were one replied “condo, and on “HOA.”

Q9: What is your age? (optional) (298 responses)

Answer Choices	Responses	
under 18	0.00%	0
18 to 29	0.34%	1
30 to 49	15.77%	47
50 to 64	31.54%	94
65 or over	52.35%	156

Q10: Please provide other suggestions and comments you have on NWACA activities or services. (72 responses, some with multiple items)

The most common categories of responses were these, along with 12 individual comments or suggestions. All comments were provided to the NWACA Board for their review and response.

- 22 – thank you for the work being done
- 11 – requests for information of various types; article in May issue of monthly newsletter will address these
- 5 – don’t want more speed bumps
- 4 – concerned about speeding, especially on RM 2222
- 4 – development concerns, most wanting less of it
- 3 – concerns about rising crime
- 3 – newsletter issues – late, not going to condos, questioning cost [note: it’s paid for by ads]
- 2 – appreciate the recycling events, some want more often
- 2 – deer need to be controlled
- 2 – comments on dogs; dog park wanted; dog poop needs to be picked up; dogs on leash
- 2 – pedestrians need to be more visible, aware, less aggressive
- 2 – police – supporting them, would like to see more of them
- 2 – appreciate recycling events
- 2 – concerned about taxes
- 2 – concerned about trees

Answers to Some Questions and Responses to Some Opinions

By JOYCE STATZ

Respondents to our 2023 neighborhood interest survey raised several issues, including:

1) What can be done about loud motorcycles on RM2222?

At NWACA's Crime and Safety Community Meeting on April 13th, Officer James Hyatt said that APD is aware of the complaint and to address the issue, the Texas Department of Public Safety will increase its patrolling on RM2222.

2) What is NWACA Notes? What is the NWACA Facebook Group?

NWACA uses various methods, including this newsletter, NWACA Notes, the NWACA Facebook Group, and the NWACA website, to provide information to members. Many survey respondents didn't know about NWACA Notes, our weekly email newsletter. When you join/rejoin NWACA, your invoice has a link that allows you to subscribe to NWACA Notes. If you are an association member, would like this weekly newsletter, and didn't yet sign up, send an email to info@nwaca.org and we'll add you to the list of recipients.

Your membership invoice also provides a link to join NWACA's Facebook group. If you are a NWA-CA member and would like to join the group, go to

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/299472207877>.

3) How can I get information about upcoming NWACA meetings?

The calendar in this newsletter cites the upcoming meetings. We also have short announcements about community-wide meetings and events in NWACA Notes, on Facebook, and on our website. If you want to be part of a committee and attend committee meetings (all of which are virtual), use the Be Involved tab at www.nwaca.org. If you are a NWACA member and want to attend a Board meeting, let us know at info@nwaca.org. We're evaluating location options for in-person meetings and can let you know our current venue.

4) Some issues raised should be handled by an HOA.

- Can we do something to prod our neighbors who don't take care of their front yards?
- Can we look into utility equipment that seems to fail with every harsh storm?
- How do I contact you to transfer ownership of my home?

Other issues should be handled by the City of Austin.

- I'd like notices of properties that are short term rentals.

- We need new, clean City of Austin street signs.
- Can we get the brush in the middle of Spicewood Springs Road thinned out?

NWACA is a civic association, rather than an HOA, so we don't have and can't enforce rules about appearance or use of property. For City of Austin issues, it's best to make a report to 311.

We do provide information about some City regulations, though, on the NWACA website as FAQs under the Resources tab.

5) We need more information about recycling.

Our monthly newsletter, The Northwest Austin News, now has a regular column dedicated to recycling written by Merriessa Anton. Her focus this month is on food waste.

6) I've had trouble renewing my membership online.

If that happens, please send an email to info@nwaca.org and we'll help solve the problem.

7) How can I get more involved in this community?

We probably have a committee that's working on something of interest to you. If you're an outdoors person, join the Parks Committee and help with park

cleanup events and our efforts to get a City-sanctioned trail through the Steck Valley Greenbelt. If you enjoy planning or running events, sign up for the Events Committee. If you want to help people become more aware of local issues dealt with in elections, join the Civic Engagement Committee. See the whole list of committees on the NWACA website to find one that interests you, and use the option to join a committee under the Be Involved tab.

We also have openings on the NWACA Board. Come help us plan and coordinate our activities and events throughout the year. We need people from all demographics. If interested, send email to info@nwaca.org.

8) I think the newsletter can be let go because of the cost.

This newsletter is funded by the ads that are placed in the newspaper.

9) We need more warnings about pedestrian traffic, especially for those who walk on the wrong side of the street.

We periodically run a safety article reminding people to walk facing the traffic, and we will do that again. It may be helpful for neighbors to remind each other, though; it seems that those who don't follow that safety rule don't read the articles, either!

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MoPac Sound Wall Changes

By RICHARD GRAYUM

Sound walls. Some of my neighbors hate them and others really hate them. I like them because they reduce the ambient noise levels in my house. The MoPac sound walls are not aesthetically pleasing: the panels warp, and the paint is starting to fade from repetitive sand-blasting. But these are not the reasons that a portion of the sound wall was removed just north of Spicewood Springs Road and near Far West Boulevard along the southbound lanes of Mopac. Instead, it was removed to make room for a new “collector distributor” road that can bypass the signal at Spicewood Springs Road.

Let me explain. The Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority’s 183 North Mobility Project will bring managed toll lanes along US 183 from MoPac to RM 620. The columns being constructed near the Doubletree Hotel at 183 and MoPac will support the northbound and southbound flyover (also called direct connector) exchanges from MoPac managed lanes to US 183 managed lanes. Traffic will move from US 183 southbound onto MoPac in three ways.

Drivers will be able to utilize the existing non-tolled mainlanes from US 183 to MoPac as they do today. Or, they will have the option to travel seamlessly between the MoPac Express Lane and the 183 North Express Lanes utilizing the new flyover. Finally, those heading southbound on US 183 will have a third option – driving a collector-distributor road from the flyover to the southbound MoPac frontage road until Far West Boulevard.

Collector-distributor roads are extra lanes between mainlanes and frontage roads. Their primary purpose is to move vehicles in a more efficient way. In the case of the 183 North Mobility Project, the collector distributor road will allow 183 North Express Lanes traffic heading southbound onto the MoPac frontage road to bypass traffic signals at both Steck Avenue and Spicewood Springs Road.

This portion of the project could be completed as early as November 2023 or as late as March 2024. The entirety of the 183 North Mobility Project is not anticipated to be completed until 2026.



I want to spotlight an organization that is near and dear to my heart. We are **[Re]building Together Austin**. Our mission is to [re]pair homes, [re]vitalize communities and [re]build lives. Rebuilding Together Austin is proud to be

a partner in the solution to providing safe homes and communities. Thank you to all of our [Re]Builders for your generous support and we look forward to a healthy, impactful year ahead!

This year we celebrate our 10 year anniversary of serving Austin Area homeowners. Contact me if you'd like to become a [Re]Builder too.

-Albert Allen - Board President Rebuilding Together Austin

www.rebuildingtogetheraustin.org

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Dawn is not only a treat to work with, but she's kind and someone I'd like to keep around as a friend! I hope that her hard work is continually recognized as she's a gem in this industry and we're all lucky to have worked with her.

If you have any questions for me about our experiences with Dawn, please don't hesitate to reach out. I genuinely cannot express how grateful we are to have worked with her again."

~Noah Maney



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