Northwest Austin News

SERVING THE NORTHWEST AUSTIN CIVIC ASSOCIATION COMMUNITY

Volume 17, Issue 1 February 2026

Noise Ordinance, APD Oversight Survey, NWACA Board Elections, etc.

By NWACA Board
Northwest Austin Civic Association

Most time sensitive – February 2 meeting

If you're among those troubled by noisy vehicles along RM 222, especially motorcycles, please check out the article on page 2 about proposed noise ordinance amendments. A hearing on the amendments on February 2 needs your input.

Event planning is underway

While the events are several months away, planning is underway now for both the April 19th Mick Koffend Earth Day festival and the 4th of July activities. You can see the "Save the Date" announcement for Earth Day elsewhere in this issue; please put it on your calendar. It's a great time to have fun at Hill Elementary Park and see interesting exhibits about Mother Earth. We promise to get rid of the chiggers this year, too!

Volunteers are needed for both Earth Day and 4th of July. Let us know you're up for it – info@nwaca.org.

NWACA BOARD, 2

Months After Voters Reject Prop Q, Austin Prepares Bond That Would Raise Taxes

By SAM STARK, Austin Current

Just months after Austin voters decidedly rejected Proposition Q, city leaders are preparing to return to the ballot, this time with a bond proposal they hope will be easier to justify and harder to reject.

City leaders say Austin faces roughly $4 billion in capital needs, from roads and drainage to parks and public facilities. Over the past two years, the city manager's office and a committee of appointed residents and staff have whittled that list to about $700 million in projects they believe could be funded without jeopardizing the city's credit rating or sharply increasing tax bills.

The effort comes amid lingering doubts about how City Hall manages taxpayer dollars after Prop Q's failure. Like that measure, the bond would raise property taxes if approved, but unlike Prop Q, the increase would be time-limited and tied to specific projects. City leaders are betting those differences, along with new transparency measures, will yield a different outcome at the polls. Historically, the city has limited bond elections to about once every six years to fund major infrastructure projects and new facilities, such as public libraries and police stations, and to create more affordable housing.

For longtime residents who feel those elections have come more frequently in recent years, that perception is accurate. Since 2016, the city has asked voters to approve four bond packages, amounting to over $1 billion in funding.

Another this fall would make five. Austin Capital Delivery Services, the department that oversees the city's infra-

BOND TO RAISE TAXES, 12

80+ Historical Project: 60+ Years on Marblewood

In March of 1965 Bill and Helen Ransom moved to their home on Marblewood Drive... and they have never left. While raising their children, working, and restoring Model A cars, the couple has seen decades of change around them in their peaceful neighborhood near Bull Creek. The Ransoms stand next to their 1930 Model A Cabriolet, one of three in their collection. Photo by Summer Weinstein, founder and photographer 80+ Historical Project.

RANSOM, 19

Improved Noise Ordinance to Help 2222 Problems?

By MARISA LIPSCHER
Northwest Austin Civic Association

If engine blasts and speeding cars or motorcycles on FM 2222 have ever disrupted your peace, now is the moment to speak up. The City's Public Safety Committee will hear a stronger, more effective sound ordinance at 2 p.m. on Monday, February 2 at City Hall. This ordinance must pass the Committee before it can reach City Council, so this hearing truly matters.

If City Council eventually passes this ordinance, noise violations would be enforceable as Class C misdemeanors with fines, giving law enforcement clearer authority to act.

We need strong neighbor turnout. You can speak, donate your time to another speaker, testify by phone, or simply attend. Every person counts.

Questions? Email marisatexas@gmail.com. A copy of the proposed amendment: https://tinyurl.com/noiseamendment

It's Time to Renew NWACA Membership

By NWACA BOARD
Northwest Austin Civic Association

To make it easy to remember when to renew NWACA memberships, January 1st is the renewal date for all members. Members can join NWACA throughout the year, but dues paid in a given calendar year cover just that year. If you haven't already done so, it's time to join or renew our NWACA memberships.

NWACA membership fees enable NWACA to:

- provide this newsletter to all single-family households in the NWACA area,
- host events for the whole community, such as the Earth Day Festival, 4th of July Parade and Freedom Fest, and Murchison Pool opening celebration, and block parties (organized by leaders, street by street)
- advocate for the interests of the NWACA area in matters of zoning, transportation, crime prevention, wildfire mitigation, and other civic matters.

NWACA has two types of members: business members and household members. Business members join at one of three levels – platinum, gold, or silver – with benefits that vary by those levels. Household members pay dues of $25, and those dues cover membership for all adults in the household. Each household and each business member has one vote in Board elections or members-only surveys. Any adult in a member household may join the NWACA Facebook group and may also sign up for the NWACA Notes weekly email news.

To join, renew, or check if you've already renewed for this year, go to www.nwaca.org, use the green Membership button at the top of the home page, then select the "Make a Payment (Join or Renew)" option. When you specify your email address, you'll be sent a login link in your email. Use that link to sign in and review the date on which your membership expires; then proceed accordingly.

While you can join or renew either online or by mail, we prefer that you do it online. That minimizes the chance of postal issues, and the online system provides a way to request automatic renewal. To join via U.S. mail, use the membership form available online or found elsewhere in this newsletter.

If you encounter any issues renewing your membership, please contact us at nwacaweb@gmail.com.

Consider Being on the NWACA Board

By NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE
Northwest Austin Civic Association

Would you be willing to volunteer your time and talents to serve on the 2026-2028 NWACA Board of Directors? If so, the Nominations Committee would like to hear from you! Please email your contact information (name, email, street address, and phone number), and your neighborhood interests to info@nwaca.org by March 20th.

The maximum number of Board members is 25. Nominees must reside within NWACA boundaries and either (a) have been members of the Association (household or business members) for at least one year prior to the nomination, or (b) have served on a NWACA committee for at least three months. We have big ideas for our special neighborhood and we'd welcome you to be a part of it.

NWACA Board Elections are held bi-annually in even-numbered years during the month of April. Each Board member attends the monthly Board meetings and serves on one or more of our committees: Business Membership; Civic Engagement; Communications; Crime and Safety; Events; Finance; Parks; Transportation; Tree, Wildlife, and Environment; Wildfire Prevention; and Zoning. See https://nwaca.org/committees/ for more details. The full Board currently meets on the first Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m.(subject to change). Please see www.nwaca.org to learn more about NWACA.

NWACA Special Projects Fund: Call for Applications

By NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE
Northwest Austin Civic Association

The Special Projects Fund is used by the NWACA Board to help fund projects that benefit the community/ neighborhood residents and are open to the public.

During recent years, NWACA contributed funds for development of a new soccer field behind Doss Elementary School, refurbishing the Anderson High School Gym, bike repair stations at Doss and Hill Elementary Schools, a picnic table at Allen Park, as well as portions of the Loewy Playground, the Murchison Community Garden, the Anderson High School Trojan Band equipment trailer, and outdoor musical instruments at Highland Park Elementary School.

Any group or individual can apply for Special Projects funds; just download an application online at www.nwaca.org using the link in the Hot Topics list on the home page.

Applications for a new round of project proposals will be accepted until March 20, 2026, and selected applicants will be encouraged to present their proposals at the next NWACA Board meeting. Submit applications, drawings, pictures, and estimated project costs to info@nwaca.org or by U.S. mail to: NWACA, P.O. Box 26654, Austin, TX 78755. If you have questions about the program, email info@nwaca.org

Some applicants may choose to submit an idea that is on City property or right of way in concert with the City of Austin Neighborhood Partnering Program (see details at www.austintexas.gov/department/neighborhood-partnering-program. Such applications are reviewed monthly. Other applicants may choose to team with the Austin Parks Foundation at austinparks.org/neighborhood-grants/ and austinparks.org/community-impact-grants/ .

NWACA BOARD, FROM 1

Surveys are awaiting your input

The Austin Police Oversight survey article is on page 5. They'd like your input about their Know Your Rights materials by January 31.

Mid-February, we'll be sending out the annual NWACA Neighborhood Interest Survey to everyone who's on our membership mailing list, and to all members who don't have internet access. We look forward to hearing your priorities.

Special projects funding

From now until March 20, we invite you to submit an application with your idea of a project that would benefit the NWACA community and be open to the public. See the article in this issue for more details.

NWACA Board elections this year

This April, NWACA members will vote on a Board of Directors for the two-year term 2026-2028. Anyone who is a member at least 30 days before the election, that is by March 1, may vote.

So that we have a full slate, we need candidates! If you're interested in helping keep NWACA and our neighborhoods vibrant and safe, please consider volunteering to be on the Board. There's more information about nominations to the Board in an article on this page.

The March primary elections are almost here!

March primary elections determine who appears on the ballot in Texas. Many important local and statewide races are effectively decided during the primary, yet participation is often low. In 2024, just four seats in the Texas legislature were not decided by the primary. It's really important to vote. Here are upcoming dates:

- February 2 - Last day to register to vote
- February 17-27 - Early Voting
- February 20 - Last day to apply for ballot by mail (received)
- March 3 - Election Day and last day to receive ballot by mail

For more information, go to votetravis.gov

And, of course, Happy Valentine's Day!

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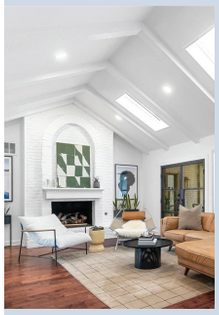
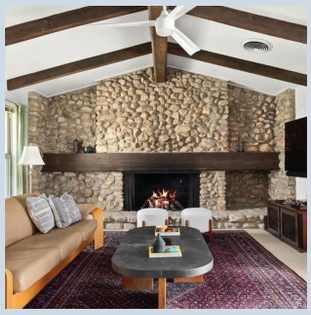


Want *actual* sold prices for our neighborhood?

Scan the QR code to receive updates on sold, active, & pending homes.



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Austin Homicides Fell Sharply in Five Years

By SAM STARK, Austin Current

Austin's homicide rate has fallen sharply from its pandemic-era peak, marking a notable shift after years of elevated violence.

The Austin Police Department recorded 55 homicides in 2025, a 25% drop from the year before and about 60% fewer killings than was reported in 2021, when there were a record 90 murders. The local decline mirrors a broader national trend. An analysis from the Real-Time Crime Index found murders nationwide fell by about one-fifth year over year, based on data from the first 10 months of 2024 and 2025.

Community advocates, prosecutors and law enforcement say the downturn reflects a combination of post-pandemic stabilization and expanded investments in programs aimed at preventing violence before it occurs. After a surge in killings that followed the pandemic shutdowns, Austin's falling homicide numbers have renewed debate over what drives violent crime and what reduces it. From community-based intervention programs to changes in prosecution strategies and increased public investment, city leaders and advocates point to a range of efforts they believe are contributing to making Austin less violent, even as they caution that continued progress is not guaranteed.

"People had too much downtime [during the pandemic] and not enough access to resources," said Anthony Smith, the executive director of Cities United, a nonprofit focused on reducing homicide rates of Black and brown men. "When we opened back up, it took us a while as a field to get back into the groove and back into the work."

Cities United helps bolster local efforts aimed at reducing gun violence in high-risk communities and works directly with Austin advocates fronting those initiatives. Smith sees a direct correlation between lower homicide rates and investment in community violence interventions.

"Community violence intervention [is] where you have credible messengers, trusted messengers…who are from a community, who can go into those communities and do the intervention work," Smith said. "It's bigger than just keeping people alive. You also have to create a space for them to thrive, which means we have to create new pathways for them to get to education and into employment."

Some organizations doing that kind of work in Austin are Life Anew Restorative Justice and Jail to Jobs, Smith said. He also credited the Travis County District Attorney's Office for investing in these programs.

"In 2021, it became clear to me that [gun violence] was going to be the central challenge of our first term," Travis County District Attorney Jose Garza told Austin Current. In 2021, about 84% of homicides involved guns, according to the Austin American-Statesman.

When he took office, Garza laid out a plan to holistically address gun violence in the county. Community violence interventions were a part of it, but "gun violence is not monolithic," Garza said.

"Domestic violence, random acts of gun violence, gun violence related to street crime, like drug dealing… are all very different challenges that require different solutions," Garza continued.

Garza's office has followed a four-pronged strategy to combat the various types of gun violence:

Using traditional and innovative prosecution strategies for sentencing people charged with gun crimes.

Working with community members to prevent gun violence by creating, supporting, and implementing intervention and prevention programs.

Taking guns out of the hands of those at high risk for committing an act of gun violence, especially in intimate partner relationships involving violence.

Supporting programs to help survivors and families of the victims of gun violence.

"We've worked to build an entire ecosystem that can address each of these unique challenges that can lead to gun violence and build solutions that are tailored to those particular challenges," Garza said.

Garza said he does see a link between these investments and the decline in killings. He pointed to Travis County programs targeting gun violence in domestic partnerships as being particularly effective.

"We won't be satisfied until we can drive those numbers down as low as possible. But I am really optimistic about our progress," Garza added.

Texas Gun Sense says gun homicides are down more than 31% from the 2021 peak,

Austin Police Homicide Sergeant Nathan Sexton theorized Austin homicides spiked in 2021 due to political unrest and general pandemic restlessness.. He said he and his colleagues struggled to manage the work associated with the violent surge.

"[2021] was double what our norm had been just a couple of years prior," Sexton said. "That was causing people to leave the unit in droves.".

Now that the homicide rate in Austin is coming closer to pre-pandemic levels – the FBI reported 33 murder victims in 2019 – it allows Sexton's unit to look back at some of Austin's unresolved homicide cases. Three of the 55 murders from 2025 remain unsolved, Sexton said.

Experts say in recent years, federal, state and local leaders have demonstrated their support for community violence intervention programs with a bump in funding for the organizations on the ground. Gov. Greg Abbott allocated in June 2025 $2 million in state funding for state community violence intervention programs.

SpotCrimes Northwest Austin Area Include DWI, Burglary, Disturbances

01/24/2026 7:02 PM
THEFT/LARCENY
193XX FM 969 RD
01/24/2026 10:17 AM
SHOPLIFTING
34XX GREYSTONE
01/22/2026 5:55 PM
BURGLARY/AUTO
68XX WOOD HOLLOW
01/22/2026 6:34 AM
BURGLARY
35XX HYRIDGE
01/21/2026 1:15 PM
AUTO THEFT
35XX NORTH HILLS
01/21/2026 12:59 PM
AUTO THEFT
72XX WD HOLLOW
01/21/2026 9:34 AM
THEFT/
39XX SIERRA DR
01/20/2026 6:17 PM
THEFT/
41XX FAR WEST
01/20/2026 2:46 AM
DWI
67XX MOPAC
01/20/2026 2:07 PM
BURGLARY/Auto
67XX LAKEWOOD
01/20/2026 12:56 PM
BURGLARY/Auto
67XX LAKEWOOD
01/20/2026 11:38 AM
CRIMINAL MISCHIEF
40XX CIMA SERENA
01/20/2026 9:33 AM
BURGLARY/Auto
76XX WD HOLLOW
01/20/2026 9:28 AM
ASSAULT W/INJURY
64XX HART LN
01/20/2026 8:21 AM
AUTO THEFT
81XX FOREST MESA
01/19/2026 3:54 PM
BURGLARY/Auto
76XX WD HOLLOW
01/19/2026 10:16 AM
THEFT OF SERVICE
92XX JOLLYVILLE
01/18/2026 7:25 PM
THEFT/LICENSE PLT
53XX BALCONES
01/18/2026 5:02 PM
THEFT/LICENSE PLT
76XX RUSTLING
01/18/2026 5:27 AM
AUTO THEFT
35XX FAR WEST
01/18/2026 1:43 AM
ASSAULT W/INJURY
89XX CURRYWOOD
01/18/2026 1:05 AM
DATE DISTURBANCE
35XX NORTH HILLS
01/16/2026 9:36 PM
AUTO THEFT
89XX BUSINESS PARK
01/16/2026 6:14 PM
FAM DISTURBANCE
68XX WD HOLLOW
01/16/2026 5:49 PM
P CONTROLLED SUB
82XX MOPAC EXPY
01/16/2026 4:55 PM
THEFT/LICENSE PLT
71XX WD HOLLOW
01/15/2026 1:08 PM
PUB INTOXICATION
57XX WESTSLOPE
01/15/2026 12:40 PM
AUTO THEr FT
47XX GREYSTONE
01/15/2026 12:04 PM
THEFT/
86XX HONEYSUCKLE
01/15/2026 9:24 AM
THEFT/
34XX EXEC CENTER
01/15/2026 8:26 AM
THEFT/ CATALYTIC CONVERTER
87XX MOPAC
01/14/2026 3:21 PM
DATE DISTURBANCE
40XX STECK
01/14/2026 9:18 AM
ASSAULT/ INJURY
35XX GREYSTONE
01/13/2026 9:55 AM
THEFT/
68XX AUSTIN CENT
01/13/2026 8:26 AM
Vandalism
65XX EAST HILL
01/10/2026 12:41 PM
DISTURBANCE
36XX GREYSTONE DR
01/10/2026 12:00 AM
THEFT/
34XX PERRY LN
1/10/2026 11:34 AM
THEFT/BICYCLE
65XX EAST HILL DR
01/10/2026 11:28 AM
AUTO THEFT
36XX GREYSTONE
01/10/2026 9:42 AM
DISTURBANCE
38XXWILLIAMSBURG
01/10/2026 8:59 AM
DISTURBANCE
52XX OLD SPICEWOOD SPRINGS
01/10/2026 1:22 AM
FAM DISTURBANCE
66XX HART
01/09/2026 5:35 PM
AUTO THEFT
71XX WD HOLLOW
01/09/2026 5:16 AM
AUTO THEFT
71XX WD HOLLOW
01/09/2026 4:35 AM
DISPLAY GUN
76XX WD HOLLOW
01/08/2026 5:07 PM
BURGLARY/Auto
36XX NORTH HILLS
01/08/2026 1:56 PM
BURGLARY/Auto
71XX WD HOLLOW
01/08/2026 9:56 AM
AUTO THEFT
84XX ADIRONDACK
01/07/2026 10:36 PM
BURGLARY/UNIT
77XX CAPITAL TX
01/07/2026 3:52 PM
GRAFFITI
52XX OLD SPICEWOOD SPRINGS RD
01/07/2026 3:38 PM
BURGLARY/Auto
40XX MYRICK DR
01/07/2026 1:25 PM
HARASSMENT
35XX HYRIDGE DR
01/07/2026 12:17 PM
CRIMINAL MISCHIEF
53XX BALCONES DR
01/07/2026 12:02 PM
BURGLARY/Auto
57XX FAIRLANE DR
01/06/2026 9:24 PM
PUBLIC INTOX
34XX FOOTHILL TER
01/06/2026 2:39 PM
Vandalism
74XX MESA DR
01/06/2026 2:39 PM
HARASSMENT
74XX MESA DR
01/06/2026 10:18 AM
HARASSMENT
59XX BALCONES DR
01/06/2026 9:01 AM
BURGLARY/Auto
52XX CAPITAL TX
01/05/2026 12:34 PM
BURGLARY
68XX WD HOLLOW
01/05/2026 12:19 PM
HARASSMENT
38XX DRY CREEK DR
01/04/2026 9:32 AM
DEBIT CARD ABUSE
59XX NORTH WEST
01/04/2026 12:27 AM
ASSAULT W/INJURY
44XX SPICEWOOD SPRINGS RD
01/03/2026 3:15 PM
SHOPLIFTING
70XX VILLAGE CENT
01/01/2026 7:22 PM
TRESPASS
N MOPAC EXPY
01/01/2026 2:57 PM
HARASSMENT
76XX MESA DR
12/31/2025 10:58 PM
CRIMINAL MISCHIEF
95XX JOLLYVILLE RD
12/31/2025 6:40 AM
DWI
57XX MOPAC EXPY
12/30/2025 10:58 PM
FAM DISTURBANCE
85XX CAPITAL TX
12/30/2025 9:30 PM
FAM DISTURBANCE
73XX VISTA MT
12/30/2025 10:23 AM
HARASSMENT
82XX NEELY DR
12/29/2025 11:10 PM
FAM DISTURBANCE
95XX JOLLYVILLE RD
12/29/2025 10:40 AM
AUTO THEFT
84XX CIMA SERENA
12/28/2025 5:31 PM
HARASSMENT
35XX NORTH HILLS
12/28/2025 12:29 PM
HARASSMENT
34XX GREYSTONE DR
12/27/2025 4:09 PM
CRIMINAL MISCHIEF
55XX CAPITAL TX
12/27/2025 12:06 PM
FAM DISTURBANCE
35XX GREYSTONE
12/26/2025 5:59 AM
POSS/MARIJUANA
43XX MT BONNELL
12/25/2025 9:50 AM
AUTO THEFT
40XX EDGEROCK DR
12/25/2025 9:18 AM
CRIMINAL MISCHIEF
35XX GREYSTONE
12/25/2025 1:45 AM
DWI
XX WOOD HOLLOW
12/23/2025 10:06 AM
BURGLARY/HOME
35XX NORTH HILLS
12/22/2025 9:33 PM
HARASSMENT
84XX ETIENNE CV
12/19/2025 12:45 AM
DWI
93XX RESEARCH
12/17/2025 12:04 PM
FRAUD
70XX MOPAC EXPY
12/16/2025 4:36 PM
FRAUD
40XX DOMINION
12/16/2025 2:31 PM
FRAUD
79XX MESA TRAILS
12/14/2025 11:28 AM
HARASSMENT
40XX GREYSTONE DR
12/14/2025 6:27 AM
HARASSMENT
72XX HART
12/13/2025 4:48 PM
COUNTERFEITING
70XX VILLAGE CENT
12/12/2025 9:53 PM
INJ TO ELDERLY
34XX NORTH HILLS
12/12/2025 5:05 PM
DISTURBANCE
36XX NORTH HILLS
12/10/2025 7:30 PM
TERROR THREAT
35XX NORTH HILLS
12/10/2025 4:20 PM
IMPERSONATING PUBLIC SERVANT
67XX OLD QUARRY
12/10/2025 12:28 AM
CRIMINAL MISCHIEF
35XX NORTH HILLS
12/10/2025 11:03 AM
SUSPICIOUS PERSON
47XX SPICEWD SPG
12/07/2025 3:39 PM
CONTROLLED SUB
FRAUD
36XX FAR WEST
12/04/2025 8:06 AM
CRIMINAL MISCHIEF
36XX GREYSTONE

SpotCrime.com

City of Austin Short Term Rental Update

By BEN LUCKENS, Northwest Austin Civic Association

A Short Term Rental (STR) is a rental unit that is rented for less than 30 consecutive days. All STRs are subject to city of Austin regulations and must be licensed annually by the Austin Development Services Code Compliance Office.

In February 2025, the City Council adopted changes that made STRs an additional (accessory) use to all residential uses in all zoning districts, as long as they have a valid operating license. Zoning and licenses notwithstanding, the use of a property for an STR is still limited by deed restrictions. Check your deed restrictions, if there is a question.

Most complaints regarding STRs concern noise and parking. City regulations regarding STR operations are contained in Chapter 4-23 of the City Code.

Noise limitations are as follows:

- An operator or guest of an STR may not use or allow the use of sound equipment that produces sound in excess of 75 decibels at the property line between 10:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m.
- An operator or guest of an STR may not use or allow use of sound equipment that produces sound audible beyond the property line between 10:00 p.m. and 10:00 a.m.
- An operator or guest of an STR may not make or allow another to make noise or play a musical instrument audible to an adjacent business or residence between 10:30 p.m. and 7:00 a.m.

As for parking, the city no longer has parking requirements.

To report a violation, call Austin 311 or contact Development Services Department Code Compliance at 512-974-2633 and talk to a facilitator. To report loud and/or drunken behavior at an STR, call APD while the activity is underway.

In September 2025, Austin City Council adopted additional regulations which will go into effect July 1, 2026. Under the new rules, Airbnb, VRBO, and other platforms must include a city license number for each listing, provide quarterly documentation of hotel occupancy taxes, and de-list unlicensed properties when the city asks. They are barred from collecting fees from unlicensed rentals. For the first time, tenants can apply for a license if their lease allows it. Owners of rental property need to check the leases if this is a concern.

The new STR ordinance has density caps. Individual operators cannot operate rentals within 1,000 feet of each other, though multiple residences may be listed on a single lot. On lots with three or fewer units, only two may be used as STRs. In apartment complexes, up to 10% of units may be STRs. Mixed-use buildings with commercial space may have up to 25% of the units listed as STRs. Our Council Member Marc Duchin proposed neighborhood-level density limits, but unfortunately the measure failed 8-3

If you have an STR enforcement inquiry, contact supervisor Eric Gardner at 512-974-2362 or eric.gardner@austintexas.gov

APD Input Sought on Knowing Your Rights

By AUSTIN POLICE OVERSIGHT
Public Service Announcement

Austin Police Oversight (APO) is updating Austin's Know Your Rights materials for 2026 and is seeking input from community members. Your experiences and insights will help ensure these resources are easy to understand, culturally relevant, and accessible. The KYR community input page includes more information about the project, a short survey to share your experiences, and opportunities to participate in focus groups or other engagement activities.

Your voice matters — visit this page to learn more and get involved: publicinput.com/KnowYourRights

Respond by January 31 to the survey at www.surveymonkey.com/r/KYR2025

Parents Sucked in by Scammers, Logic Didn't Kick in Initially

Republishing from Nextdoor with permission from the author Jennifer M. in Great Hills

This is embarrassing to write about, but it's important to make others aware.

My husband received a phone call at 10:20 a.m. (while at work, deeply focused) on the morning of December 10 from our "son," who was sitting in jail. It was our real son's voice, personality, mannerisms, everything perfect.

"He" had hit someone's else's car at 7:45 a.m. this morning and they had arrested him. "He" had a broken nose, 6 stitches in his lip, and was completely distraught.

My husband then talked to the arresting officer, got more details, and asked for his name and badge number. Our "son" had tested .01 over the legal limit.

The other driver had been taken to Seton for observation because she was six months pregnant and was experiencing heavy bleeding.

Then my husband was put in touch with our "son's" new lawyer who had already talked to our "son." The lawyer described his conversation with our "son," gave us all the reasons that he thought our "son" was innocent, which all lined up with who we know our real son to be. My husband asked if they had looked at our son's dashcam video, but the lawyer said our "son" hadn't mentioned that, but he would ask him. Our "son" was probably just rattled and forgotten, but also that our "son" had told the "lawyer" that there had been a camera at the intersection. There's hope!

They had set the bond at $10,000 because the other driver was pregnant and he had tested over the legal limit. The lawyer said that was unusual. He had looked at our "son's" record and it was squeaky clean. He (the "lawyer") was shocked that the bond amount was that high. He was doing his best to stall them from booking him (mug shots, fingerprints), and if we were able to get the bond paid, they could release him before any of that happened.

I was waiting at the eye doc when I got my husband's text. They kindly rescheduled me, and I rushed home. We immediately went to the bank. Right after my husband got back into the car from withdrawing the money, the lawyer called back and said that the case had taken a turn for the worst. The other driver had suffered a miscarriage.

Besides my heart breaking for the other mother, I now have visions of my child going to prison and I'm praying that his dashcam had caught the whole thing because the lawyer thinks she ran a red light and I'm mentally making a note to order everyone I know a dashcam.

The lawyer tells us to go to our local municipal court office, which happens to be in Randall's on Mesa.

My husband rushes in, still listening to the lawyer giving him instructions in his ear, when the "municipal court" turned into a crypto machine.

My husband's fingers blindly clicked through all the warnings about bail bond scams, his hands began feeding the machine money even as his brain was going this isn't right. Stop. Stop! STOP!

He finally did stop.

He dialed our real son's phone number, and our son answer, "Hey Dad, what's up?"

Thankfully, the scammers only got a fraction of that $10,000, but they put us through emotional hell.

Why am I posting this?

Because I, like every other middle-aged woman in America, listens to true crime podcasts. I know all these red flags.

My husband has worked on a voice to text to speech AI thing for a previous company.

We are both youngish, well-informed, not particularly naive, and we completely and utterly fell for it.

After experiencing a complete takeover of our brains by our parental emotions, I am not 100% confident that I wouldn't fall for it again tomorrow.

When you hear your child's voice in mortal peril, your brain switches to primal mode. Period.

When your spouse tells you that your child is in mortal peril, you are in lock step with them to rescue.

We have a family code word now and we warned our extended family members (the scammers might have started going down the list of our son's closest connections), but I do not have much faith in my ability to stop and think logically in the heat of the moment if this happens again.

So, I'm posting this because it really could happen to you, too.

Here's what our brains did in real time:

- "7:45 a.m. accident" Logical Brain: He should already have been at work for hours. And why didn't he call us when it happened? Primal brain: You don't know his schedule. He's an adult. Maybe he had today off and was out at an abnormal time for some other reason. They don't let you make calls right away when they arrest you, right?
- "assigned lawyer" Logical Brain: He already has a lawyer? Primal Brain: You don't have any experience with the legal system. What do you know? Trust the authorities
- "Son forgot dashcam" Logical Brain: Our son wouldn't forget that he has a dashcam. Primal Brain: Geez, he must be completely rattled to forget something that he cared so much about installing for this exact reason.
- "over legal limit" Logical Brain: Our son doesn't drink like that, certainly not on a Tuesday night. Primal Brain: He's a adult. Maybe you don't know him as well as you think you do?
- "20 minutes to pay" Logical Brain: Is this how bonds are paid? Is it this fast? This doesn't seem right.... Primal Brain: We don't have any experience with the legal system!!! For fuck's sake, HURRY!
- "municipal court office" Logical Brain: In Randall's??? Primal Brain: HEB has a bank. Randall's must have a municipal court office.
- "crypto" Logical Brain: Wait... what??? Crypto? This doesn't feel right... why doesn't it feel right? Why are there so many text boxes for me to click through? Why can't I remember why this doesn't feel right? Primal Brain: Click away the box! Click away the box! Feed the machine! Feed the machine! Feed the machine!

Saving our child from his life as he knew it ending right then and there became our only focus.

I can't in good faith tell you that my primal brain wouldn't hijack my logical brain again, and it would be hubris to think so.

My husband said his logic slowed down to molasses speed. And he's the smartest guy I know.

So, you know, heads up.

P. S. Tip from the comments: ask several security questions that only your imperiled loved one would know the answers to.

Valentine's Day and the Healing Power of Touch

By REENA KAVEN, Mantra Wellness
Northwest Austin News Contributor

Valentine's Day has a funny way of putting pressure on us: finding the right flowers, making reservations, and requiring cards to be both poetic and profound. But if you strip all that away, the heart of Valentine's Day is actually very simple: connection. And perhaps one of the most potent yet generally underappreciated ways we connect with one another is through touch. Touch is not a luxury, it's a biological necessity - right up there with sleep, hydration, and remembering to unclench your jaw. When we experience safe, loving touch - like a hug that lasts longer than two seconds or when a partner gently holds your face - that tells your nervous system You're okay.

An appropriate hug (not a short pat on the back) can alleviate anxiety, decrease blood pressure, boost mood, and heighten feelings of belonging. Fact is, most adults don't get enough hugs; We are touch-deprived. Consider hugging your friends and loved ones a little longer this Valentine's Day. Count to ten, breathe, and let your shoulders drop. That's not romance, it's regulation. Touch signals your body that it's safe. And safety is where healing is found.

If you're not a hugger, even a massage, facial, or pedicure can offer the healing touch we so desperately need. It too reduces muscle tension, improves circulation, supports immune function, improves sleep, and decreases symptoms of depression and anxiety. And emotionally? That massage is telling you, You don't have to hold everything together right now. I've got you. That's a very strong message for your muscles and your brain.

Touch is especially important right now. We live in a world of screens, stress, burnout and chaos. Touch takes us back into our bodies. It reminds us we're human, not just a productive cog. And here's the part we don't talk about enough: you don't have to earn touch. You don't have to wait to be less stressed, more put-together, or more deserving. Touch is not a reward. It's nourishment.

This Valentine's Day consider a softer approach to love: longer hugs, slower moments, touch that communicates care - not urgency. Intentional touch is a powerful way to support your nervous system and your heart. Because love isn't just an ethereal feeling, it's also a physical need.

Jerry's Green Chili Chicken Soup

By JERRY MANKOVSKY, Northwest Austin Civic Association

Despite our near record temperatures on Christmas Day, it really is winter in Texas, and that was obvious this week. There's no better time for a hot, hearty bowl of soup.

Put all ingredients in a pot and cook on low heat for at least one hour to integrate the spices. Stir frequently. No additional salt or pepper is needed.

If you like more spice, use medium green chili salsa and/or add a sliced large jalapeno. For wimps, use mild green chili salsa. I like to use yellow hominy for the color, but white hominy or whole kernel corn works also. As a shortcut, use store bought rotisserie chicken.

This is a quick and easy soup for a cold, damp day.

Enjoy!!

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 can Cream of Mushroom Soup
- 1 can Cream of Celery or Cream of Chicken Soup
- 1-7oz can of Green Chili Salsa, mild/medium
- 3 cups of water
- 2 large, boneless, skinless, cooked chicken breasts or thighs cubed
- 12-14oz can of hominy, drained.

MARKET UPDATE

NORTHWEST HILLS AND WESTOVER HILLS

$1,102,500
MEDIAN SALES PRICE

$33,691,292
SALES VOLUME

$410
AVG LIST PRICE PER SF

$422
AVG SALE PRICE PER SF

$1,017,500
MEDIAN LIST PRICE

118
AVG DAYS ON MARKET

28
CLOSED SALES

ABOR MLS including data from Dec 1, 2025 - Jan 20, 2026 for single family homes. Based on NWACA boundaries: Mopac/Hwy 360/2222/Hwy 183.

nest
PROPERTIES AUSTIN

JULIE WAIDELICH

Love Where You Live

The new year brings renewed optimism and heightened activity in the residential market, an exciting time for buyers and sellers alike! Every day, I celebrate the opportunity to help people make their dreams come true, whether it's finding the perfect home or moving on to exciting new adventures.

If your plans for 2026 include buying or selling, let me put my experience and the resources of Nest Properties Austin to work for you. May your homes and hearts be filled with love, laughter, and peace throughout the year!

Julie Waidelich

BROKER | OWNER, REALTOR® | 512.784.1990 | julie@nestpropertiesaustin.com

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Beverly S. Sheffield Northwest District Park Update

By RICHARD DENNEY
Northwest Austin Civic Association

The Beverly S. Sheffield Northwest District Park located just east of the Northest Austin Civic Association area across MoPac has been under renovation since last year. If you are a fan of this park and swimming pool, you know it's been quite a mess. But according to Sarah Marshall, Historic Preservation and Tourism Program Manager with Austin Parks and Recreation (APR), renovation should be completed by summer, 2026. The Travis County Historical Commission has worked with Sarah to ensure historic sites in the park have been protected.

Some history about the park from the APR website: "On July 28, 1956, the Northwest Pool and Bathhouse opened to the public ... The pool was the first 50-meter regulation Olympic-sized pool in Austin, which allowed the city to qualify for national swimming meets. The Northwest Park Bathhouse was a modern-design circular bathhouse with open-air dressing rooms ... In its first full month of operation in August 1956, attendance at the new Olympic-size pool eclipsed that of Barton Springs. The name of the park and pool was later changed to honor former Parks and Recreation Director Beverly S. Sheffield." In response to the Memorial Day Shoal Creek floods of 1981, the city did a fair amount of renovation to allow it to function as a stormwater retention "pond".

The park is located on Travis County historic property. In 1841 George Washington Davis received a land grant of 3,154 acres from the Republic of Texas for service in the Texas War for Independence at the Battle of San Jacinto. His grant straddled today's MoPac, and a good chunk of our NWACA neighborhood lies in the old grant.

Davis lived just south of the park near the intersection of Pegram and Vine Streets, and the Davis Cemetery dating to ca. 1845 is located on Vine. The old house was extant and in use until about 1944 when it burned.

The park is in an old limestone quarry. The historical marker there reads: "Old Quarry Site. Limestone quarried at this site was hauled to Congress Avenue by oxen and used in constructing the 1853 Texas Capitol Building…". Remnants of the quarry can still be found in the park.

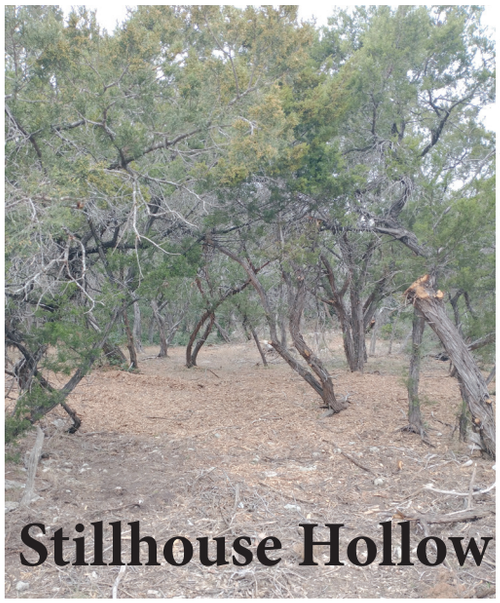
The first poor farm in Travis County, established in 1879, was on Davis' grant just north of the park bounded by today's Mopac, Anderson Lane, Burnet Road, and Greenlawn. It was in operation until its closure ca. 1905, when the farm was relocated south to near today's Tarrytown. The poor farm also served as a "pest camp," used to quarantine people with infectious diseases like smallpox and tuberculosis.

And in January 1990, an amateur paleontologist and his five-year-old son discovered an estimated 90-million-year-old plesiosaur skeleton in Shoal Creek near the park.

Richard Denney is a history steward with the Texas Historic Commission. For more on this topic and other local history, visit traviscountyhistorical.blogspot.com/

Shaded Fuel Breaks Underway at Stillhouse Hollow

By JOYCE STATZ and TERI SCHOCK
Northwest Austin Civic Association



If you've walked through the Stillhouse Hollow Nature Preserve lately, you've noticed a lot more open space among the trees than months ago. These photos show areas that have been cleared of downed branches and dead trees, much from recent years of ice storms. Most of the material has been made into thin layers of fine mulch you see on the ground. This work was part of the Austin Parks and Recreation Land Management Plan; the plan includes creating shaded fuel breaks in preserves, parks and trails as part of their wildfire mitigation efforts. While this work cannot prevent wildfires, it can lessen their intensity and inhibit spreading.

Although the area may look sparse now, the remaining trees will fill in the canopy over the next several years, since they can now reach the sunlight. The area will need to be revisited in about five years, to see how it has changed; some removal of understory may be required again.

Similar treatment is planned for part of the Steck Valley Greenbelt this spring as well. Members of the NWACA Parks Committee met with experts from Austin Parks and Recreation and from the Austin Parks Foundation recently to learn about the work. Fuel breaks in this greenbelt will be done along established trails, attempting to clear an area up to 100 feet from either side of the trail. The trails are used because they are relatively flat, enabling the crew to bring in a chipper on tracks. It can move over this terrain to clear the understory and mulch the debris in place. Removing understory fuels minimizes the risk of ladder fuels taking a fire into the canopy, where the fire becomes a source of embers. It's the embers from wildfires that cause fire to spread elsewhere in the green spaces and to nearby homes. More than 80% of homes destroyed by wildfires were ignited from embers.

Another benefit to the fuel break is to restore diversity of trees. Invasive species like Chinaberry may be removed as the crew does its work. Stands of small unhealthy trees will be removed, leaving the healthier ones to thrive.

The chipper is accompanied by a crew of professional sawyers (tree trimmers with saws) who take down dead trees, cut up large branches, and limb up the remaining trees to about six feet from the ground. The logs that are larger than the chipper can handle are left in place; they are not easily ignited in a fire, so they are not dangerous.

As the chipper and its crew does its work in the Steck Valley Greenbelt, the trail is likely to be disturbed a bit. We expect this work to be noisy and to take the better part of a week to two weeks. Planned quarterly workdays will be used to clean up the trail, as the NWACA Parks Committee continues its work on building and maintaining trails in this greenbelt. Watch for opportunities to help on the second Saturdays of February, May, September, and November!

Delores Visits Far West

By ALL SORTS OF NEIGHBORS
Northwest Austin Civic Association

Have you seen our neighborhood turkey Delores? Her story in the March edition of Northwest Austin News.

Then

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Over twenty years ago, we were newlyweds helping others find their first homes. Today, we still help Austinites find “the one,” or move on with confidence. From strategic home searches for buyers, to design and renovation services for sellers, we love to play home matchmakers.

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BOND TO RAISE TAXES, FROM 1

structure projects, has said this should be the last bond election until 2032.

"Clearly, that six-year program has been violated over time," Mayor Kirk Watson said at a recent Audit and Finance Committee meeting.

City staff and a citizen advisory committee have held more than 500 meetings since 2024 to shape the proposal. On Wednesday, the City Manager's Office and Capital Delivery Services released a draft set of recommendations for the 2026 bond. The committee's recommendations are expected in the next several weeks.

One thing is clear: the proposed projects fall into five categories: transportation, watershed protection, parks, community facilities and public safety. Under the current plan, voters would be asked to approve funding for each category through separate propositions on the November ballot.

Bond packages work much like home mortgages. Austin borrows money to fund projects and repays that debt over several decades, even as it aims to complete all projects approved in a bond election within six years.

The central question for many voters is what this means for their tax bills. Regardless of whether a new bond is approved this year, city staff projects property taxes will continue rising slightly through 2030 to pay for debt from earlier bond elections.

At a recent Audit and Finance Committee meeting, Kim Olivares, the city's director of financial services, said the typical Austin homeowner is expected to pay about $450 a year in city property taxes in 2026 to cover the city's existing debt. Even if a new bond does not go forward, that amount is projected to rise to roughly $615 annually by 2030.

If voters approve a hypothetical $750 million bond package in November, Olivares said the typical homeowner would pay about $722 a year in 2030, a little more than $100 higher than in the no-bond scenario.

City Manager T.C. Broadnax speaks with Austin Mayor Kirk Watson during the first city council meeting of the year at City Hall. KAYLEE GREENLEE FOR AUSTIN CURRENT/CATCHLIGHT LOCAL

That raises a key question: why would voters approve a bond just one year after rejecting a tax rate election? Capital Delivery Services staff say bond packages often succeed because they fund visible projects, including roads, sidewalks and libraries, that residents use every day.

Unlike Prop Q, a bond is not a permanent tax increase. Some city staff believe the services funded under Prop Q were less tangible, making them harder for voters to support. By contrast, a bond would finance concrete projects with defined timelines.

Transparency is also central to the pitch. Beyond the lengthy process, voters would be able to review a clear list of projects their bond dollars would fund.

After the failure of Prop Q, Watson introduced a series of measures aimed at restoring voter confidence in how the city stewards public funds. One is a decision tree, designed to help voters understand why a bond election would, or wouldn't, be called.

Watson also proposed new guidelines for how city council offices could spend taxpayer funds. Watson said his goals are to make those rules easier for the public to understand and to better clarify what offices are allowed to purchase.

The Austin City Council approved the new guidelines on Thursday, but didn't add as many restrictions as some city leaders felt necessary, per KUT reporting.

"It wasn't very long ago that, in part because of questions about council spending, the voters gave us a clear signal," Watson said, referencing Proposition Q before the Thursday vote. "I'm disappointed in that. I think we have better ways to achieve the goals we all want to achieve."

The bond task force and some city staff are expected to meet several more times before delivering a final recommendation to the City Council in May, setting the stage for a decision that could send Austin voters back to the polls a year after they last said no.

Austin Current is a nonprofit news organization committed to community-centered journalism. We provide Austinites the information they need to navigate daily life, understand the issues shaping our future and hold leaders accountable.

Austin Current is part of The Texas Tribune's network of editorially independent local newsrooms. aimed at filling information gaps on the community level and building trust, and collaborating with other media organizations to strengthen Austin's news ecosystem. The Current is partnering with KUT News on "Austin Signal," a new 30-minute news show, and Austin PBS' "Austin Insight," a weekly program covering local people and issues.

Austin Ordinances on Picking up After Your Dog

By MERRIESSA ANTON
Northwest Austin Civic Association

I walk my dog daily with a bag ready to pick up my dog's poop. I notice that there is fresh dog waste left on a neighbor's property almost every time we walk. The sad part is that the property is rarely that of someone who has a dog. Why does this happen? Did you know it is against the law, according to the following sections of the City of Austin Ordinances?

Section 3-4-6 DEFACATION BY A DOG OR CAT: An owner or handler shall promptly remove and sanitarily dispose of feces left on public or private property by a dog or cat being handled by a person, other than property owned by the owner or handler of the dog or cat.

Section 15-6-112 ACCUMULATIONS AND DEPOSIT OF WASTE PROHIBITED: A person commits an offense if the person deposits, causes to be deposited, or permits to accumulate any dry or solid waste upon any public or private premises within the city in such a manner as to emit noxious or offensive odors or to become unsanitary or injurious to public health or safety.

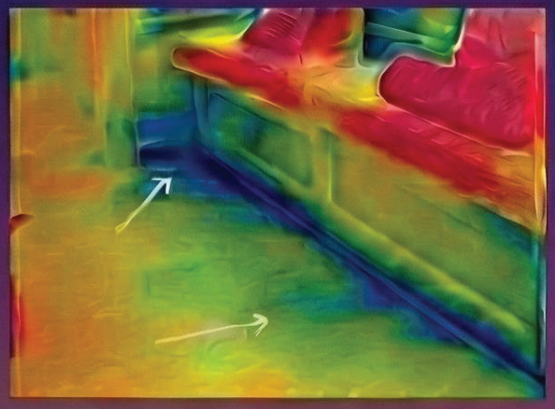
Section 3-2-11 ENCLOSURE REQUIRED: Maintained in a sanitary condition that does not allow flies to breed or cause an odor offensive to an adjacent residence or business.

There are more than 250,000 dogs in Austin and about 150,000 pounds of waste every day. When pet waste is left on the ground, it causes serious health problems for people and pets. Harmful bacteria and parasites such as giardia, roundworms, and salmonella are found in contaminated areas. Pet waste that washes into creeks and rivers creates unsafe areas for swimming, wading, and fishing; allows algae and weed overgrowth; and lowers oxygen levels for fish.

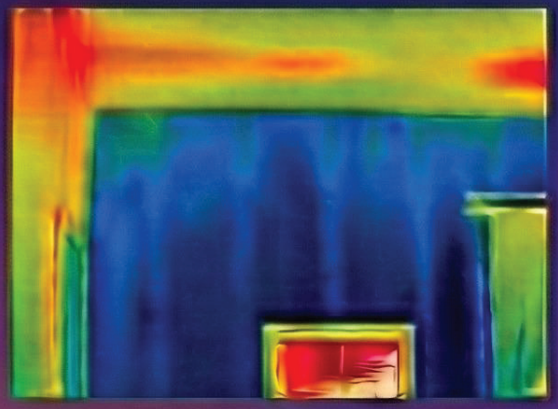
Please be sure to carry a bag (or two!) when you walk your pet. Never leave it on the ground or throw it into a storm drain. Put it inside the bag that is in your brown or gray trash bin. And please, take your poop bag home to your own trash can. There is no need to throw your bag in a neighbor's bin. Some people find that rude.

The City of Austin has free Scoop the Poop signs that are available for Austin residents. You can order your sign by going to www.scoopthepoopaustin.org.

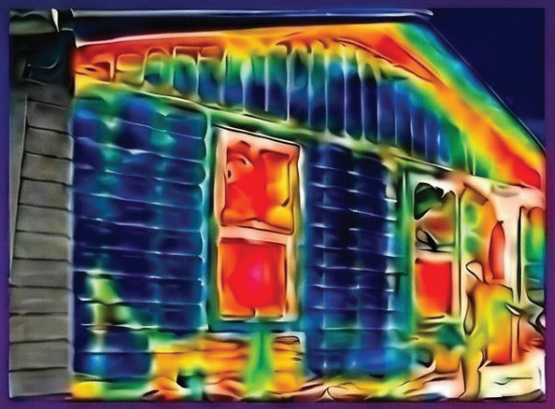
STAY WARM, STAY READY—DISCOVER WHERE YOUR HOME LOST HEAT BEFORE THE NEXT STORM.



COLD DRAFTS REVEALED.

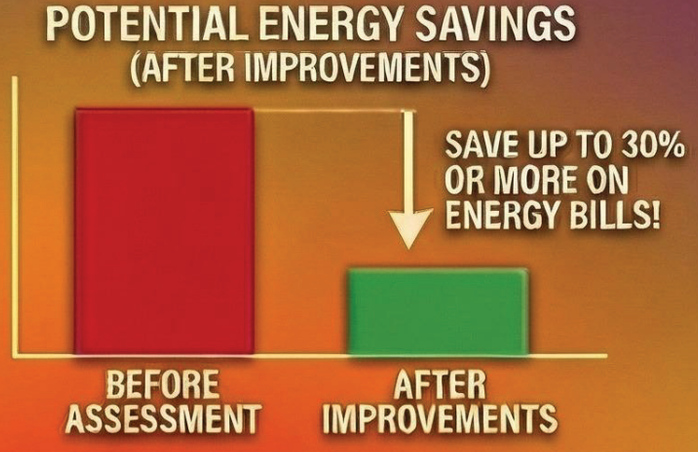


HIDDEN ENERGY WASTERS.



MAJOR HEAT LOSS DETECTED.

UNDERSTANDING THERMAL IMAGING: Bright areas (Red, Orange) represent HEAT ESCAPING your home. Dark areas (Blue, Purpie) indicate COLD SPOTS and drafts.



A major winter storm can expose your home's weaknesses. Don't let the cold linger or your money disappear.

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Austin's Light-Rail Plans get Federal Environmental OK

By NATHAN BERNIER, KUT 90.5

Austin's long-delayed light-rail project just got a crucial green light from the Trump administration, clearing a major checkpoint after years of lawsuits and political fights over the city's 9.8-mile starter system. If built, the light-rail line would have 15 stations and all-electric trains arriving as frequently as every five minutes with service estimated to start in 2033.

Federal transportation officials on Friday issued what's known as a Record of Decision, formally signing off on the project's lengthy environmental review.

The approval allows the Austin Transit Partnership to move into more detailed design work, begin relocating utilities and start the process of using eminent domain to acquire property along the rail corridor.

"It's a big milestone from the federal process side," ATP executive vice president Jennifer Pyne said in an interview ahead of the Federal Transit Administration's announcement. "It's a significant hurdle that we're completing and really allows us to get to the next level of work on the project."

The federal approval also locks in several changes to the project's design since last year's draft environmental review.

Among the changes, ATP no longer plans to build a parking garage at the northern end of the line at 38 1/2 and Guadalupe streets. The structure had drawn concern from nearby residents and would have required additional property acquisition.

"There was concern about structured parking, so we're not including that in our concept," Pyne said. "So there should still be a parking facility there, but we've moved away from a parking structure."

The new park-and-ride facility would have fewer parking spaces.

Pyne said planners were able to move a station near the eastern end of Riverside Drive and eliminate the need to seize up to three nearby homes in the Montopolis neighborhood. Dozens of businesses could still have their property expropriated.

With the environmental review complete, ATP is preparing to award major contracts that will shape how the system is built. Pyne said the agency is on track to bring its first team of contractors as early as next month.

The FTA decision doesn't settle one of the biggest questions hanging over the project: Will the federal government agree to pay for up to half the cost of building it?

The full price tag of Austin's light-rail system, including interest on loans, is currently estimated at more than $8 billion. The figure includes not just the tracks and trains, but also a new bridge over Lady Bird Lake, elevated rail along a section of Riverside Drive, a 62-acre operations and maintenance facility near the airport, utility relocations, bike lanes, sidewalks and an estimated $1 billion in property acquisitions.

Since 2020, ATP has amassed more than $400 million in cash reserves from the voter-approved property tax increase and investment income. But without major federal support, the project wouldn't have a clear financial path forward.

ATP officials don't expect any deal on a federal grant to be locked down until late 2027 or early 2028, well after construction is scheduled to begin, Pyne said.

"It's tough to speak clearly about that because we still need to finalize that overall schedule with FTA, but we're moving through the gates," she said. "That's how these big projects go."

The first phase of the system was already scaled back once, shrinking from a 20.2 mile network with downtown subway to the current 9.8-mile surface line. City officials blamed the cost overruns on factors such as inflation and design creep, like the ever-lengthening underground transit tunnel.

But some disgruntled taxpayers were unconvinced by the explanations and filed a lawsuit in state court, accusing the city of pulling a "bait-and-switch."

That suit was combined with a separate legal challenge by ATP seeking court permission to take out large loans known as bonds. The ATP lawsuit was a pre-emptive attempt to stop the Texas Attorney General from using his oversight authority to prevent the bond sales.

The Texas Attorney General has challenged the ATP's authority to seek such court permission, and a hearing on that issue is set before the Texas Supreme Court on Feb. 10.

Northwest Austin Civic Association News

2024 – 2026 NWACA Board of Directors

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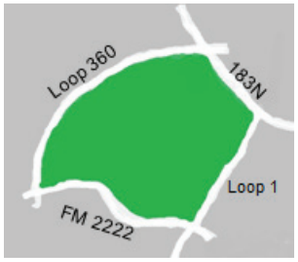
The NWACA Board meets on the third Tuesday of the month except July and December. Please visit our calendar at www.nwaca.org to see the specific time and location. If you wish to speak at a Board meeting, please send email a week before the meeting to info@nwaca.org, so that we can put you on the agenda. Board Members can be reached at info@nwaca.org or by phone at 737-235-7325



Key Contacts

Austin Citywide Information Center
512-974-2000 or 311
Emergency, Austin Police Department
911
Non-emergency (coyote sightings, compliance)
311
APD District Rep Officer, Andrew Kabbah
andrew.kabbah@austintexas.gov
APD Crime Report:
internet search APD Chief's Monthly Reports
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512-974-2110
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DON'T PRUNE FEB-JUNE

OAK WILT CARRIER BEETLE PEAK SEASON
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Here are 5 great reasons to join today!

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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.

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MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name: Phone: ( )
Address: Zip:
Email (confidential):

Join NWACA

Annual dues $25

Optional Contributions:

Fourth of July Parade	$10____ $20____	Other____
Parks Fund	$10____ $20____	Other____
Mick Koffend Earth Day Fund	$10____ $20____	Other____

To join:
go to www.nwaca.org and pay online via credit card
or send this form and payment to:
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Volunteer!

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

- ☐ Communications
- ☐ Crime & Safety
- ☐ Events
- ☐ History
- ☐ Neighborhood Watch
- ☐ Parks
- ☐ Business Membership
- ☐ Tree, Environment, and Wildlife
- ☐ Wildfire Prevention
- ☐ Zoning and Transportation

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

NWACA 2026 Calendar of Events

These events are as planned as of January 20. As you consider participating, please check first with the organizer.

February 4, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.
NWACA Board Meeting
Dell Jewish Community Center Friedel Board Room

February 14, 9 – 10:30 a.m.
Quarterly Cleanup at Steck Valley Greenbelt
Steck Avenue entrance

February 24, 5 p.m.
NWACA Zoning & Transportation Committees virtual

March 3, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.
NWACA Board Meeting
Dell Jewish Community Center Friedel Board Room

March 7, 9 a.m. to noon
It's My Park Day for NWACA
Allen Park, 6413 Westside Drive

March 15
Applications Due for Special Projects

March 18, 7 p.m.
Parks Committee – virtual

March 21, 9 a.m. to noon
Monthly cleanup at Bull Creek District Park

March 24, 5 p.m.
NWACA Zoning & Transportation Committees virtual

March 25, 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Exhibits open about 6:00 p.m.
NWACA Annual Neighborhood Meeting
St. Matthew's Episcopal Church,
Huffman Hall, 4121 Steck Avenue

Special Thanks to Members

By NWACA MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Donations to the 4th of July Parade Fund Donations to the 4th of July Parade Fund help NWACA to host the best 4th of July parade in Austin! The Parks Fund helps us do events in our parks and revitalize parks in the NWACA area. The Constable Fund allows us to have a random patrol of the neighborhood by a Travis County Constable. The Mick Koffend Earth Day Fund helps us run the annual Earth Day Festival.

NWACA thanks members who generously contributed to our various special funds between December 16, 2025 and January 20, 2026.

- Jill Gentry
- Valerie Laubacher
- Patricia Tippie
- Leon and Kay Whitney
- (and, apologies to anyone whose donation we might have missed!)

To Avoid Takeover, AISD Likely to Cede Control of 3 Middle Schools

By ACACIA CORONADO, Austin Current

Three struggling Austin middle schools will likely come under the operation of charter schools after a detailed review of testing scores and projections showed the schools are unlikely to improve enough to avoid a district takeover.

Austin ISD board members are to vote in in January whether to seek the charter partnerships and relinquish control of Dobie, Webb and Burnet middle schools as part of a scramble to maintain control of the district. These schools are in northeast Austin.

At a board meeting on January 15, Superintendent Matias Segura confirmed the schools were showing meaningful academic gains but not enough, or at least fast enough, to escape Texas' accountability clock. Without dramatic improvement this year, the campuses could trigger a chain reaction that allows the state to close the schools or seize control of the entire district.

What a fifth failing rating could trigger

Under Texas policy, if any of the three schools receive a fifth failing accountability rating after this year's standardized tests, the state education commissioner could order the campuses closed or overtake the district entirely, replacing elected trustees with a state-appointed board of managers and diminishing local input on district decisions. Test scores weigh heavily in the accountability ratings.

Segura told board members the district relied on an internal data review as well as an analysis by a technical partner, Steady State, which showed especially strong academic growth at Burnet and Dobie.

"In reality, that great work is leading to improvement, and we're excited to share some of that, but we also recognize that there are lots of challenges with the types of growth we need in the time period that we have," Segura said after commending teachers and staff at the three schools, which he said he visited recently.

Trustee Arati Singh highlighted double-digit gains in reading and math scores among seventh and eighth grade students at Dobie and Burnet middle schools.

"I don't know if I have really seen these kinds of gains," Singh said. "Thank you to the staff of our schools for doing this and the students and our families for really focusing in. I wish we could continue this trajectory."

Tight timeline for high-stakes decision

Following Segura's presentation, board members questioned the timeline for the decision, stressing a district-wide communication should come well before any application is submitted. Segura said he also wanted to meet with teachers and staff at the affected schools before communicating the plan to the entire district.

Multiple trustees suggested holding a public community meeting ahead of the board's Jan. 29 voting meeting if board members seek to meet the state's Jan. 31 priority deadline.

Segura said the state would have up to 60 days to approve, deny or request additional information on the district's application. If the district is allowed to enter into the partnership, a 2017 law would pause accountability ratings at the campuses for the 2025-26 and 2026-27 school years.

A decision from the state would come no later than the end of May. If the proposal isn't accepted, and the schools receive a fifth failing rating, a state takeover would remain a possibility.

If board members move forward, a vote on which charter operators would run each campus would take place in February.

In the last five years, the Texas Education Agency has taken control of large districts, including Houston and Fort Worth. In December, the agency announced plans to take over Lake Worth, Connally and Beaumont school districts.

State takeovers vary across Texas but can include changes in curriculum, staffing and student programs.

When a district partners with a charter school to operate a campus, some responsibilities, such as transportation, remain with the district, while instructional decisions shift to the charter partner.

Weighing risks of charter control and state takeover

Outside of Dobie Middle School, Hidekel Garcia, whose daughter attends the campus, said on Jan. 9 that she remains dissatisfied with the education her daughter is receiving but is conflicted about the school being turned over to a charter, fearing additional teacher losses while hoping the change could bring improvements in discipline.

Garcia said her opinion of a state takeover would similarly depend on whether the state has a clear plan to help students succeed and how it would affect the school community, including existing career pathway programs.

"If the state has a plan that will actually be good for the kids, go for it, but if it is going to be worse than what they have now, might as well leave them as they are," Garcia said.

Segura told trustees during the meeting that each charter partnership varies and board members would consider whether potential charter partners have a history of retaining staff, working with existing administrators and aligning with the district's values.

February Library Events

By MARTHA MILLER
Northwest Austin Civic Association

All locations will be closed Sunday and Monday, February 15th & 16th in honor of President's Day!

Stay tuned to library.austintexas.gov for updates regarding the reopening of the Old Quarry branch. The reopening is currently anticipated for March 2026.

Events at the Yarborough Branch

Wednesdays, February 4 & 18 - Sound Bath Meditation (6:30 - 7:30 p.m.) Enjoy this gentle yoga and sound bath meditation class open to all fitness levels. Adults (18+) only.

Wednesday, February 27 - Bilingual Chair Yoga with Sana Yoga (10 - 11 a.m.) Enjoy a gentle form of yoga that can be done seated in a chair. Ages 18 and up

Saturday, February 21 - Crafty Adult (2 - 4 p.m.) Do you enjoy crafting or wish to learn? Come and learn with us!

Monday, February 23 - Mending Circle at Yarborough (6- 7:30 p.m.) Bring your favorite garments that need some tender loving care. Intended for ages 18 and up

Fridays, February 13 & 27 - Adult Morning Social (10 a.m. – noon) Join neighbors and make new friends at this casual social.

Saturday, February 28 – Seed Gathering (12:30 – 2 p.m.) Bring your own seeds to share or help us process donations for the Seed Collection.

Events at the Spicewood Springs Branch

Monday, February 2 - Yarn and Yammer (6 - 7:30 p.m.) Bring your latest project and join our social group while we all work on our projects and chat!

Thursday, February 5 - Spicewood Springs Cozy Social Hour (10:30 a.m. – noon) Join us for casual conversation. Bring your own craft or enjoy one of our puzzles.

Fridays, February 6, 20 & 27 - Qigong Meditation (2-3:15 p.m.) Reconnect mind and body through meditation. Wear comfortable clothes. Bring a towel, cushion, or yoga mat if you wish.

Sunday, February 8 - Mending Circle at Spicewood Springs (noon - 2 p.m.) Bring your favorite garments that need some tender loving care. Intended for ages 18 and up

Mondays, February 9 & 23 - Memoir Writing Adult Workshop featuring Aubrey Cofield (6:15-7:45 p.m.) In this memoir writing workshop, we'll learn to bring to life our personal stories.

Thursdays, February 12 & 26 - Yoga with Tracy (9:30 - 10:30 a.m.) Please bring a thin yoga mat if you have one and wear comfortable clothes. Ages 18 and up.

Thursday, February 19 - The Crafty Adult (2-4 p.m.) Do you enjoy crafting or wish to learn? Come and learn with us!

Sunday, February 22 - Black History Month: Pamela Allen & Co Band (1-2 p.m.) Come enjoy an all-ages music performance as we pay homage to some great musical pioneers and weave in some Black History as well!

Saturday, February 28 - Lunar New Year Celebration (2-3:30 p.m.) Join us and the Texas Dragon/Lion Dance Team to celebrate! We will have crafts, games and more to learn about the history and traditions of Lunar New Year.

Events at the Howson Branch

Tuesday, February 3 -The Crafty Adult: Lunar New Year (6:15-7:45 p.m.) Rita Wang will guide us as we make a craft for the New Year!

Wednesdays, February 4, 11, 18, 25 - Gentle Yoga and Sound Bath Meditation with Collette Ouseley-Moynan (4:30 – 5:30 p.m.)

Fridays, February 6, 20, 27 - Prime Timers: Morning Mah Jong! (10 a.m. - noon) Join us for a fun and friendly gathering for older adults who enjoy games, conversation, and community! Come play, learn, and connect

Saturdays, February 7, 14 & 21 - Sound Bath Meditation: Relax and Restore with Yvonne Stull (11 a.m. - noon)

Monday, February 9 - Writing Workshop with Rosa Latimer (1-3 p.m.) Join us for our new monthly writers' group. All experience levels welcome.

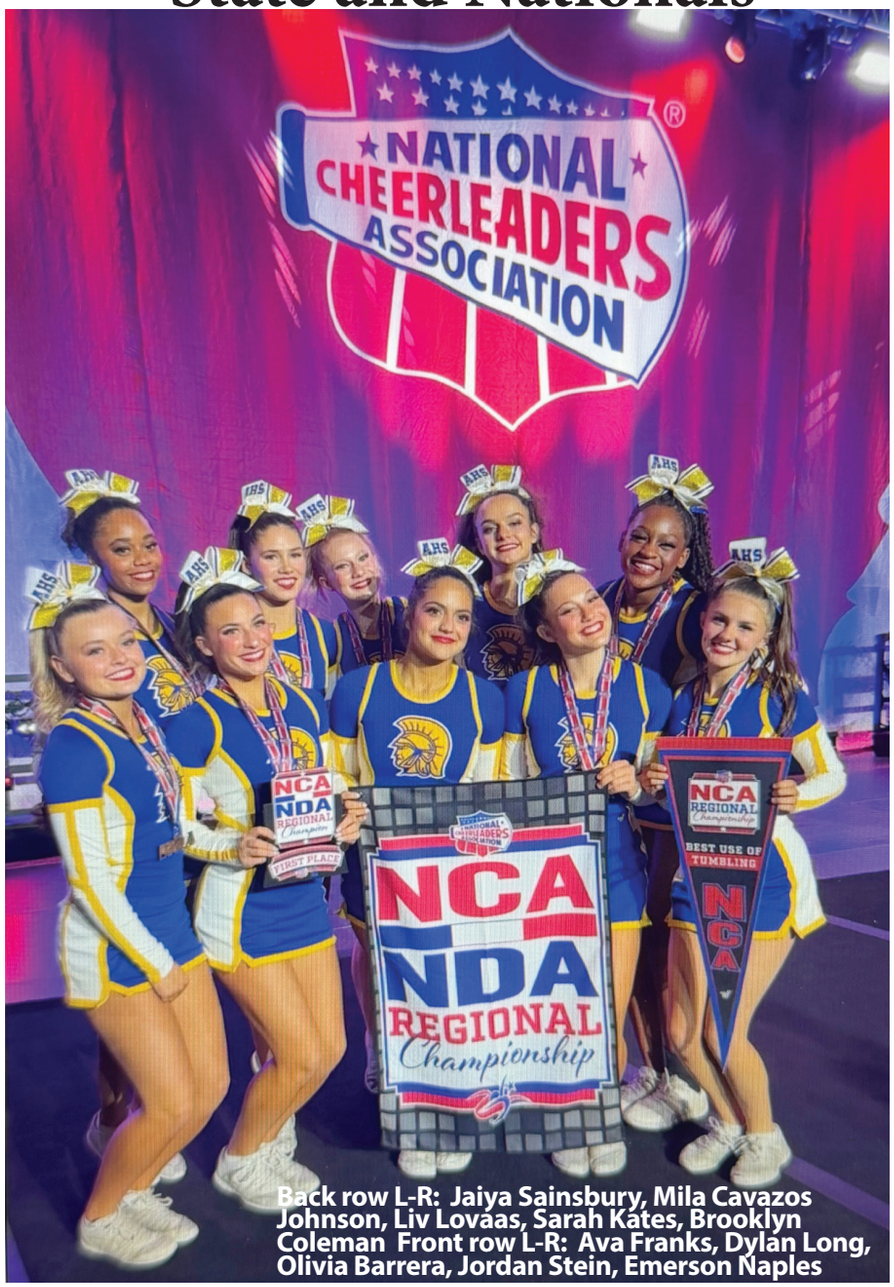
Thursday, February 12 - Fraud & Scam Prevention for Older Adults (10-11 a.m.) Learn to recognize and avoid fraud and scams!

Thursday, February 12 - Family Film Night (5:30 – 7:30 p.m.) Join us for a viewing of Raya and the Last Dragon.

Tuesday, February 17 - Dig It! Tomato Time! (6 - 7:45 p.m.) Learn tips and tricks to grow tomatoes with Austin Davenport!

Thursday, February 26 - Howson Book Club (6:30 – 7:45 p.m.) Join us to discuss North Woods by Daniel Mason.

AHS Competition Cheer at State and Nationals



Back row L-R: Jaiya Sainsbury, Mila Cavazos Johnson, Liv Lovaas, Sarah Kates, Brooklyn Coleman Front row L-R: Ava Franks, Dylan Long, Olivia Barrera, Jordan Stein, Emerson Naples

The Anderson Trojan Competition Cheer team finished a very successful season, according to Gayla Stuart, Anderson head cheer coach.

"They won 1st place at the NCA State of Texas Regionals in December and 2nd place at NCA High School Nationals; the largest competition in the country for high school cheerleaders which took place last week," Stuart said.

The Competition Cheer team is a select group of 10 athletes representing the three Anderson Cheer teams (freshmen, JV and varsity) which totals 56 athletes.

They learned their routine in August and worked tirelessly all school year in addition to cheering at Anderson sporting events like football, basketball, etc.

In addition to Stuart, the Anderson cheer program is coached by Lily Zachry, assistant coach. Both Stuart and Zachry are Anderson Trojan Cheer alumnae.

"We are beyond proud of these athletes as they made Anderson history by placing that high at NCA Nationals," Stuart said.

Tryouts for next school year's teams are in March. Tryouts for the competition team will take place in August with a goal of continuing the successful legacy of Trojan Cheer.

Anderson Soccer Spotlight

Q&A Ryan Burrow
Anderson Soccer Head Coach

1. What are your team's strengths and concerns as you head into the season?

Our biggest strength this year is leadership. We have a strong group of upperclassmen who understand what it takes to have a successful season and set the standard for everyone else. This team really comes together as one, and there isn't a clear weakness across the group.

Our main concern is how we handle adversity during games. When we face challenges—like going down by a goal—we want to make sure we respond the right way, stay composed, and trust each other to fight back.

2. How do the Trojans stack up in district?

We believe the Trojans are in the top tier of our district. There are several strong teams we'll face this season, but we're confident in what we bring to the table. We believe we have a top-level team and will be one to watch as the season goes on.

3. What are some key strategies for you this season?

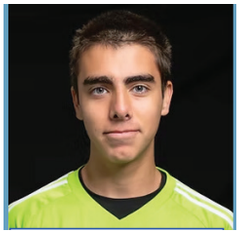
Relentless Effort, We want to compete at a high level every night and stay true to the standard of play we know we're capable of, regardless of the opponent.

4. Any up and coming stars that we should know about?

There are a few underclassmen who will play key roles for this team this year, alongside a strong senior class.

5. Tell us one thing many don't know about you as a coach and/or one thing about your team.

This is a special group—one of the best I've had the pleasure of coaching. They've fully bought into the way I coach and have a clear understanding of what I expect from them.



Trojan 2026 Soccer Roster

1 Joseluis Diaz
2 Benjamin Meachum
3 Luca Chizzonite
4 Kyler Sharp
5 Brooks Butterfield
6 Andrew Halpern
7 Dax Popelka
8 Nicolas Castano Ortiz
9 Trevor Rener
10 Hugo Sanchez-Lopez
11 Mathias Ripoll-Duran
12 Reymundo Rodriguez
14 Jack Andrews
15 Andrew Saeger
16 Rafael Dos anjios
17 Josh Mazar
18 Kean Olles
19 Austin Eckermann
20 Kian Cherlopalle
21 Sammy Meurer
31 Jake Roberts
34 Nikolai Chachanashvili

80+ Historical Project: 60+ Years on Marblewood

By LYNETTE HAALAND, Northwest Austin News

Bill and Helen Ransom have lived on Marblewood Drive for six decades. They raised their family, worked hard, added on to their home, and watched (and heard) Austin grow over these decades. They have also greatly enjoyed Model A cars – acquiring them, fixing them up and driving them in parades.

Austin bound

Bill got out of the U.S. Army in March 1959. His family lived in Port Arthur then so he returned there and worked at a shipyard. It was there that Bill met Helen at church. She was working at Du Pont Company, and soon after Bill got hired at Du Pont. They were married in October 1960. Bill always wanted to return to his childhood city of Austin so he applied for a job as a machinist at Jefferson Chemical on North Lamar and was hired in January 1965.

"We quit our jobs at DuPont, sold our home, packed up and moved to Austin," Helen shared. "We rented a house for one month looking for a home to buy and in March 1965 we found the home we are living in today."

House on Marblewood

The couple remembers when they first spotted the house on the corner of Marblewood Drive and Driftwood.

"It was so impressive to us as the lot was large and had beautiful large pecan trees – eight trees at one time but one had been uprooted when Hurricane Carla came through Austin in 1961," Helen recalls.

The neighborhood was peaceful.

"From our house you could actually hear Bull Creek water flowing, not to mention that we actually heard whipperwills singing," Helen said.

In 1970, they bought the neighboring lot to create their one-acre lot. They added a swimming pool in 1976, remodeled the house in 1979, built a machinist shop on the back corner in 1986, and added onto the front of the house in 1992.

Austin mid-1960s onward

When they first moved to Austin, "it was a quiet, sleepy little town. A person could buzz around town from one end to the other in 20 minutes," Helen said.

The Ransoms daughter and son were born and raised in their Lakewood community of Northwest Austin.

"Our children growing up could go anywhere in the neighborhood and Bull Creek playing, riding bicycles, go-karts, etc., and we did not worry about their safety," she said.

RR 2222 was a two-lane highway when the Ransoms moved in but the next year in 1966 construction began widening the highway to what it is now.

"In the early years, to go into town from our home, we would go through three low water crossings of Bull Creek and if there was a hard rain, you could not cross and would then have to go to town via RR 2222," Helen recalled.

Another asset to the community was the Boy Scout Camp nearby. "We could utilize their boat ramp to launch and retrieve our boat in order to get to Lake Austin rather than to drive to City Park on Lake Austin to launch," she said.

The Bull Creek Lodges at Bull Creek and RR 2222 was another neighborhood essential.

"It had a neat little store as well where you could grab a loaf of bread quickly… and other small items. Also, it was a great place to go and sit and order a pitcher of beer for $1 and the pitcher held seven glasses," she remembered. The County Line eventually bought the property and is still there, some 50 years later.

One other thing that was very significant was the making of Highway 360 Capitol of Texas.

"This began in 1971 and the blasting going on was tremendous--it would rattle the dishes in the kitchen cabinets, our son was a baby at the time and the blasting would wake him up from naps but after that was completed, it was fantastic in getting places from this area," Helen shared.

They were out of the city limits for 17 years before the city of Austin annexed the neighborhood.

Cutting the road through from Lakewood and merging into Far West Boulevard enabled easier access to schools for the community including the Ransoms.

Both Ransom children attended Redeemer Lutheran Elementary, Anderson High School and Texas A&M University. Three grandsons lived in the area too and attended Hill and Doss Elementary Schools, Murchison Middle School (like their mom) and Anderson.

While the children were growing up, Helen worked part-time for Texas Nuclear Corp. which changed to Columbia Scientific Industries. She then worked full time for the executive director of Texas Workers' Compensation Commission and retired in 1999.

Bill also retired in 1999 as the sole machinist at Jefferson Chemical, which was later renamed Texaco Research before being sold.

For six decades, the Ransoms have treasured their community.

"It was – and is – a close-knit neighborhood," Helen said, "everyone knew everyone on all of the streets."

Ransom and the Model A

When Bill Ransom was 14 working at the Texaco filling station at 45th and Burnet Road in Austin, a customer came in and said he needed to sell his Model A Ford car. Bill's parents did not want him to buy the car and Bill did not have enough cash to purchase the car, so the owner of the station loaned him the rest of the money to buy the car – a 1929 Blind Back 4-door Model A. In that time, a person could get a hardship driver's license at age 13 and a driver's license at 14, which Bill had.

"I sold the Model A at age 16 and bought a 1949 Ford Coupe when I was at Austin High," he said.

Some years ago, Bill and Helen joined the local Model A club, Capitol City A's. The club participates in local parades around Austin, and the group also drives the cars on tours throughout Texas.

These are the Model A's Bill has now: 1929 Model A Phaeton, 1930 Model A Cabriolet and 1931 Victoria Model A.

1929 Model A Phaeton

"Bought this car from a childhood friend in Florence, Texas," Bill said. "I told my wife about the car being for sale and she said she really liked that body style… and see if you can buy it."

The engine was rebuilt and installed but the body has not had any restoration work and that is how they purchased it. This is a 4-door convertible, basically a phaeton. The top can lay down which made it unique in its day, Bill said.

1930 Model A Cabriolet

"We obtained this car in about 2005 from a friend in Seguin, Texas. The majority of parts were in boxes, the car was not in one piece –in other words, a basket case," Bill said. He began restoring the car little by little and at times had help from others. It was completely restored to its original beginning with a rumble seat.

"Ford designed this car for women because they liked to ride in a closed car and it has windows that roll up," he said. "Another feature of this car, the top can lay down and be like an open car. This feature is more favored with men."

1931 Victoria Model A

"This car was acquired from another member in the Capitol City A's," Bill said.

Ford made this car as an upper end style for people who wanted a 4-seater closed car. This unique 2-door car features the front passenger seat that lays forward for easy entrance and exit to the back seat.

Bill and Helen Ransom, in their 1930 Model A Cabriolet, have lived on Marblewood Drive since March of 1965.
Photo by Summer Weinstein (682)-551-6226 srpp1976@gmail.com @summerpiercephotography

summerpierce Photography

I love my clients!

"Dawn, We appreciate you and all the work you put into selling our home more than we can say. You've been awesome and have made a tough situation so much better with your optimism and professionalism. We are eternally grateful."

— Julie Kniseley and David Lancaster

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