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NEWSLETTER

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AUGUST 2021

City Hall Seems to Be Restarting Its Rezoning Plan. Are Local Residents Shut Out of the Process?

by Community Not Commodity

It looks like the City of Austin may be ready to restart its revision of our community's land development code—a process that started with the doomed CodeNEXT initiative and continued with the city's controversial "transition zone" plan, which was put on hold by a local court.

In an exclusive interview in early June, Mayor Steve Adler told the *Austin Business Journal* that his goal was to make individual changes to the land development code that the city council is in agreement on. He proposed more density on the corridors, and went on to say:

"That was something that pretty much Council across the board was in agreement we should do."

He also brought forward the concept of removing or reducing existing compatibility standards that now limit the height of very tall buildings where commercial lots abut homes.

While he feels he has agreement on the council, those discussions have not been shared with the public, and people are left wondering when they will be asked for their opinion. While the doors always seem to be open at City Hall for real estate development's interests, genuine public involvement has always been fraught, with even more limited opportunities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Around the same time Adler gave his interview to the *Austin Business Journal*, the council passed a resolution



calling for the creation of transit-oriented districts along train and even bus corridors. Resolution No. 20210610-093 contained a grab bag of justifications for land use changes

throughout the city and called on the city manager to get on this task. We, the public, don't know if the resolution was passed to justify coming land use changes, but we do know that we have not been part of the conversation.

Community Not Commodity will continue to provide updates as soon as we know more. At this point, all we know for certain is that City Hall seems more interested in keeping land developers and the local business community informed, rather than the public at large.

Stay tuned!

(Community Not Commodity is a local organization that advocates for land development policies that support community values over developer profits.

<https://communitynotcommodity.com/who-we-are/>)

Heat-Related Illnesses and Tips to Avoid Them

With summer upon us and as thermometers rise to historic levels in some areas, many are at risk for heat-related illnesses, from children attending camps to people exercising outdoors in the heat of the day to elderly persons in poorly ventilated apartments or homes without air conditioning.

Heat-related illnesses can mean heat exhaustion or heatstroke. Heat exhaustion is a milder form of heat illness that can happen after a person is exposed to high temperatures without drinking enough water. Heatstroke occurs when the body's internal temperature reaches 104 F (40 C). Heatstroke can cause seizures or comas, and if left untreated, it can lead to heart attacks, damage the brain and other organs and death.



People prone to heat illnesses include those who exercise in hot and humid environments. This could be children in summer athletic training and camps, hikers, joggers or anyone who engages in any strenuous workout in hot weather without drinking enough water beforehand. Heatstroke can also happen when the body's temperature regulation system has failed, which is more likely to happen in elderly people who may have chronic health conditions. Anyone who takes medications used to treat high blood pressure and heart problems (beta-blockers and diuretics) and allergy symptoms (antihistamines) are also at a higher risk. Obesity is a risk factor as well because carrying excess weight can cause the body to retain more heat. Also, people who aren't used to high heat, such as those living in cold climates year-round, are at higher risk. Other high-risk groups include people of any age who don't drink enough water, have chronic diseases, or who drink excessive amounts of alcohol.

See Heat, continued on page 3

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P. O. Box 9505, Austin, TX 78766
www.crestviewna.com

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Monday of every month at 7:00 PM at the
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Delta Dawning: The Latest COVID Variant is Among Us

The Delta variant is the fastest, fittest and most formidable version of the coronavirus that causes COVID-19 the world has encountered, and it is upending assumptions about the disease even as nations loosen restrictions and open their economies.

Vaccine protection remains very strong against severe disease and hospitalizations caused by any version of the coronavirus, and those most at risk are still the unvaccinated. But evidence is mounting that the Delta variant is capable of infecting fully vaccinated people at a greater rate than previous versions, and concerns have been raised that they may even spread the virus. As a result, targeted use of masks, social distancing and other measures may again be needed even in countries with broad vaccination campaigns.

The major worry about the Delta variant is not that it makes people sicker, but that it spreads far more easily from person to person, increasing infections and hospitalizations among the unvaccinated. In the United States, which has experienced more COVID-19 cases and deaths than any other country, the Delta variant represents about 83% of new infections. So far, unvaccinated people represent nearly 97% of severe cases. Many vaccinated people are “so disappointed” that they are not 100% protected from mild infections, but the fact that nearly all Americans hospitalized with COVID-19 right now are unvaccinated demonstrates pretty astounding effectiveness.

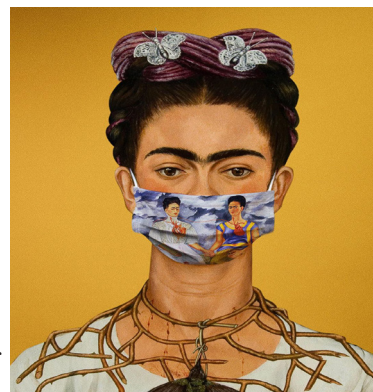
A study in China found that people infected with the Delta variant carry 1,000 times more virus in their noses compared with the original version. Genomics expert Eric Topol, director of the Scripps Research Translational Institute in La Jolla, California, noted that Delta infections have a shorter incubation period and a far higher amount of viral particles. In the United States, the Delta variant has taken hold just as many Americans - vaccinated and not - have stopped wearing masks indoors. Topol said, “The last thing you want is to loosen restrictions when you’re confronting the most formidable version of the virus yet.”

“When the vaccines were first developed, nobody was thinking that they were going to prevent infection,” said Carlos del Rio, a professor of medicine and infectious disease epidemiology at Emory University in Atlanta. The aim was always to prevent severe disease and death, he added. The vaccines were so effective, however, that there were signs they also prevented transmission against prior coronavirus variants. “We got spoiled,” he said.

It also appears that in some areas more people are dying at home from COVID. These were people that weren’t necessarily appearing, based upon their symptoms, to be in need of going to the hospital or an ambulance to be called, but people ranging in age from their 30s to the 70s who had stable conditions and then deteriorated very quickly and were found by family members or roommates only a few hours later. Exactly why this may be is still being investigated, but it is notable that more people in some instances are suffering serious consequences in the form of death in a quicker period of time than we saw in the past.

Numbers: As of July 25th, the positivity rate for COVID in Texas was 13.98% (up from the lowest this year on June 9th of 2.77%) and Travis County’s positivity rate has jumped from 1.9% on June 18th to the current 13.7%. The number of people hospitalized for COVID-19 in Texas is nearing 5,000. Since February 8,744 unvaccinated Texans have died of COVID and 43 vaccinated Texans have died. That means 99.5% of people who died due to COVID-19 in Texas were unvaccinated, while only 0.5% were the result of “breakthrough infections.”

On another note, an underused tool that could make a significant difference in identifying and countering the virus’s spread without disrupting anyone’s life or surroundings is environmental testing. Any person who produces virus — symptomatic or asymptomatic — spreads viral particles into the environment. By



See Delta continued on page 4

Heat stroke is strongly related to the heat index, which is a measurement of how hot you feel when the effects of relative humidity and air temperature are combined. A relative humidity of 60% or more hampers sweat evaporation, which hinders your body's ability to cool itself. The risk of heat-related illness dramatically increases when the heat index climbs to 90 degrees or more. So it's important -- especially during heat waves -- to pay attention to the reported heat index, and also to remember that exposure to full sunshine can increase the reported heat index by 15 degrees.

The signs of heatstroke and heat exhaustion are different in some ways. Heat exhaustion will often cause heavy sweating and pale skin, dizziness or fainting, headache, muscle cramping or weakness, nausea or vomiting, and a rapid pulse. While heatstroke is marked by most of the same symptoms, the primary difference is that the skin shows a lack of sweat, and is red, hot, and dry.

Preventative Steps You Can Take

- Drink plenty of liquids, but avoid excess coffee, tea and alcohol. Hydrate throughout the day and do not wait until you feel thirsty. Eating salty snacks with fluids will avoid diluting your salt levels.
- Limit your exercise in hot and humid environments. Avoid midday and early afternoon outdoor workouts.
- Wear lightweight, light colored, breathable clothing.
- Wait until you acclimate if you're not used to high temperatures.

Tips for Someone Suffering From Heat Exhaustion

- Drink cool fluids (not cold ones which can cause stomach cramps), specifically sports drinks and water.
- Rest in a cool place such as in air conditioning or a shady spot outside on your back with your legs higher than your heart.
- Try taking a cool shower or bath, placing wet towels on

your skin or standing in a body of water.

- Loosen or remove any clothing you don't need.

Call 911 for Medical Help for Heat Stroke Victims

While waiting for help to arrive, do the following:

- Follow the tips for heat exhaustion
- Monitor body temperature. Take the victim's temperature, and continue cooling measures until their body temperature drops to 101 F.

What Heat Can Do to your Body		
	SWEATING	It's your natural cooling system.
	HEAT EXHAUSTION	You get pale and clammy, and your temperature often goes over 100 degrees.
	HEATSTROKE	Your skin gets warm and dry. You might get confused or agitated, and have a fast pulse, nausea, and a headache.
	DEHYDRATION	When it's very hot, you can sweat away too much fluid, along with essential minerals like sodium and potassium.
	HEAT RASH	When your pores can't get rid of built-up sweat, you break out in tiny red bumps.
	SUNBURN	Bare skin burns if it's in the sun too long.
	FAINTING	Heat can dehydrate you and make it harder for your brain to get enough blood.
	HIGHER HEART RATE	When you get hot, your heart may beat faster.
	LOWER BLOOD PRESSURE	Sweating makes you lose fluids and electrolytes. Together, this may lower your blood pressure.





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Howdy Neighbor!

By Mike Lavigne, CNA President

I have a crazy idea. I love a parade. Specifically, participating in a parade. More specifically, second line parades. I've organized several in the neighborhood over the years. Some with purpose but mostly randomly because there's nothing better than dancing like a fool in front of or behind a brass band as they belt out "When the Saints Come Marching In". Perhaps the only better thing is the unbounded smiles of neighbors as they poke out their front doors to see what heck is going on. Even better? When they join in!

I want more parades in our neighborhood. Via the Violet Crown Clubhouse I've been fortunate to meet and host many talented musicians living in our neighborhood. I believe we could muster enough musicians between Crestview and our surrounding neighbors to form our own community marching band. The Violet Crown Community Marching Band has a nice ring to it, no?

This idea started over beers at Lala's with Billy Tweedie. We've done a couple of parades between the VC Clubhouse and the Episcopal Church. It's a perfect route for a 20 minute parade. We were plotting the next one, and this idea formed. What if we had a go-to rag-tag community marching band for events, funerals, weddings...whatever.

You know how every month or so in this newsletter there is a remembrance of someone in the neighborhood who passed? What if we did a quarterly second line parade in celebration of our neighbors who passed on?

Here's the thing - I don't play an instrument. But I have a clubhouse/rehearsal space and some other resources. Do you play an instrument? Are you interested in this? I've got a few folks who have volunteered already. If you are into this, send me an email, and I'll get a list going. Maybe we can turn

this into something really unique and cool. Imagine being the neighborhood known for regular second lines!

OKTOBERFEST IS COMING

September 19th is shaping up to be something very special this year. It looks like we've got plenty of servers already. But here's a new twist: Would you like to organize a group or your block to host a keg? If so, email us at violetcrown-clubhouse@gmail.com, and sign your group up. Or if your business would like to sponsor a keg, let us know, too.

If we get enough blocks/groups we'll have a contest to see which can raise the most for our charity and have some pretty cool prizes. We'll have the usual petting zoo, Czech Melody Masters, bratwurst and some VERY SPECIAL GUESTS I can't announce just yet. We will start selling cups a couple of weeks before, so look for the announcement of where to get them in next month's newsletter.

Per usual, I'm easy to find. Like many of y'all, I'm usually at the Clubhouse on Thursday nights and Saturday afternoons if you'd like to chat.

Delta, continued from page 2


sampling and measuring the presence of virus within a given community, environmental testing can identify viral presence weeks before other measures, such as contact tracing. Sewage sampling across college campuses and cities, for instance, has been demonstrated to act as the proverbial canary in the coalmine, revealing the silent presence of viral particles. Despite its potential to pinpoint problem hot zones of transmissions, so far there has been no push to incorporate viral sampling into the national viral surveillance strategy. The primary obstacle preventing widespread environmental testing is a lack of investment in the development of sensitive detection methods. This could be overcome with the same ingenuity that our scientific minds brought to bear in developing Covid-19 rapid testing, antibody tests and, ultimately, vaccines.



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The Days Are Just Packed

By Marilyn Querejazu

Pease Park

Kingsbury Commons, at the southmost tip of Pease Park has been revived! It is a lovely outdoor experience complete with the “Treehouse,” a metal and rope structure that gives you a bird’s eye view of the park. Pease Park is part of Austin’s history, and thanks to the Pease Park Conservancy, will continue to thrive as a beloved urban forest. It has endured Austin’s population explosion, severe erosion, drought, floods and too many Eeyore’s birthday parties.



The Treehouse at Pease Park

Kudos to the Pease Park Conservancy for their vision and success at finding a perfect balance between human use and preservation. Check out their plans for the rest of the park: <https://peasepark.org/kingsbury-commons>

Did you know that the shade from trees can reduce the temperature of your property by 10 degrees? It just makes good sense to protect our trees.

Waterloo Park

Waterloo Park east of the state Capitol is set to reopen after 10 years of closure. In partnership with the City of Austin, Waterloo Greenway will hold an inaugural all-day event on August 14 called COMMUNITY Day — a free, family-friendly festival with dozens of performances from around the world, all in the reimagined 11-acre park.

Look for the mural by Venezuelan artist Arturo Herrera on the exterior of the Waller Creek Tunnel Inlet Facility. Herrera lives and works in Berlin and his abstract paintings are collected widely.

French Legation

After 4 years of renovation the beautiful, historic French Legation is reopened with a fresh look and an updated mission.

New interpretive panels sprinkled around the property offer a history that acknowledges the indigenous people of the area, information not previously mentioned in the museum’s literature. The outside panels are permanent while the interior of the historic home will have changing installations of art, history and more. Much is still being developed with community feedback directing the programming. 802 San Marcos Street, Austin, TX 78702. Tuesday through Saturday 11am-5pm.



French Creole cottage (the French Legation), in 1934, while still a private residence.



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