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NEWSLETTER

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FEBRUARY 2022

City's Proposed Road Designation Changes Met With Alarm

by Chip Harris, CNA Newsletter Editor

In the not-to-distant past, the city's traffic management policy prioritized minimizing cut-through traffic in neighborhoods and improving arterial roads like Lamar, Burnet and Anderson to facilitate non-local traffic flow around neighborhoods. Then, a few years ago, the city reversed that policy and discontinued using traffic volume in their safety analysis of neighborhood streets. The proposed amendments to the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan (ASMP) expand upon that policy by proposing various streets in Austin neighborhoods to be reclassified to a higher level, generally from tier 1 to tier 2. Accompanying the upgraded classification is a larger right-of-way (ROW) requirement. While many Crestview streets currently have a ROW of 50' (30' street width with 10' of ROW on each side), those proposed to be changed to tier 2 would have a "suggested" ROW of 72 to 84 feet. So instead of a 10' ROW setback, tier 2 streets with an 84' ROW would have a 27' setback. In addition, the city's diagram depicts tier 2 streets with an 84' ROW designed to have four (4) vehicle traffic lanes. Generally speaking, tier 2 streets would also have a greater expectation of redevelopment with higher densities. Changes proposed for Crestview include the western portion of Morrow Street where it changes from Morrow to St. Joseph (from tier 2 to tier 3), and all of Tisdale (from tier 1 to tier 2). The information on the city's website shows the suggested ROW for Tisdale to be 84' and would be configured with four vehicle traffic lanes.

Community Not Commodity, a neighborhood supportive organization, has additional information available in an article entitled "*Is City Staff Covertly Promoting Transportation Amendments That Will Bring Back Transition Zones?*" In their article, they explain how the city staff's proposed changes to the transportation plan could pave the way for residential upzoning across our community. To read the article, visit <https://communitynotcommodity.com/2022/01/11/is-city-staff-covertly-promoting-transportation-amendments-that-will-bring-back-transition-zones/>

To view a map and list of the proposed changes, visit the city's interactive website where you can say if you support or oppose the changes and make comments: <https://austin.maps.arcgis.com/apps/CrowdsourcingPolling/index.html?appid=38ac0c9ef69f4e19bb172a0e861edbd3#>

The city is taking comments through January 30th but may extend that deadline. In addition to providing feedback on the city's website, you may also wish to contact your council member.

Ever Wonder What's in that Dust?

by Julie McIntosh, Crestview Resident

As more and more of our original 1950's homes are being demolished across our neighborhood, I began to wonder what could be in that dust swirling around the earth movers. The list I came up with was really scary!



Many of our homes are clad in asbestos, which is not harmful as long as it is left undisturbed. The dust containing asbestos fibers can have serious long-term health

consequences. That asbestos is not safely contained in a large majority of the demolitions I have seen.

Lead will also be in that dust. Not until the 1970s was lead banned from paint. All our homes were painted with lead-based paint at some time.

Another contaminant we don't want to think about is rodent droppings. We all know that mice and rats are in our city. Their feces can carry diseases such as Hantavirus which involves breathing in the dust of rodent droppings.

Last on my scary list is mold. One house recently demolished across the street had been abandoned years ago because of mold. That mold can be quite harmful as well.

Many times, a company will spray water on the structure to keep the dust down. But if you and your children are standing for long periods watching the tear-down, there is a chance you will carry dust home with you.

You might think about the following tips:

- Watch from a safe distance. 400 feet is one recommendation.
- Wear a mask if you must be near the construction dust.
- Clean your home with a damp cloth to try to avoid stirring up the dust.
- Use an air purifier and keep your windows closed on demo day.
- Change your clothing and shower immediately when coming in. Leave shoes outside.
- Never let your children play in a demolition site.

Let's try to mitigate our exposure to harmful substances as best we can while enjoying the performances of bobcats and bulldozers!

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CNA General Meetings are held the second
Monday of every month at 7:00 PM at the
Crestview United Methodist Church,
1300 Morrow St.

Treasurer: joincrestview@gmail.com

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Neighborhood Email Groups

crestview-gardeners@googlegroups.com
crestview-parents@googlegroups.com

Human beings, who are almost unique
in having the ability to learn from the
experience of others, are also remarkable
for their apparent disinclination to do so.

- Douglas Adams

Monsters exist, but they are too few in
numbers to be truly dangerous. More
dangerous are [those] ready to believe and
act without asking questions.

- Primo Levi



Free Income Tax Help Available Through Foundation Communities

Foundation Communities will be providing free tax help for low-income families and individuals in Austin this year. (website: <https://foundcom.org/prosper-centers/austin-tax-help/>) From January 18 to April 18, 2022, their team of IRS-certified tax preparers will provide free in-person tax preparation at 6 sites in Austin and Round Rock by appointment only. Due to COVID-19, they will have limited capacity the first few weeks of tax season and will only be able to open 2 tax sites. They will open more locations and more appointments as Austin returns to Stage 3 of the COVID-19 risk-based guidelines. Thank you in advance for your patience. To select an appointment location, go to <https://booknow.appointment-plus.com/yqtk8x74/>.

To qualify for Prosper Tax Help, your 2021 annual income must be less than \$50,000 if you are a single filer and below \$75,000 if you have a household of 2-4 people. The annual limit goes up by \$5,000 for each additional household member (e.g., \$80,000 for a household of 5).

They are offering two types of appointments this year, Tax Preparation and Drop-Off Intake.

- Tax Preparation: You will come in-person to complete the entire tax preparation process: Intake, Tax Preparation, and Review. Please allow 2-3 hours for the entire process. This appointment type is available at all 6 locations.
- Drop-Off Intake: You will come in-person to complete the intake interview and make copies of your tax documents. They will call you when your tax return is ready so you can come back to review it, usually within 1 week. Please allow 30-45 minutes for the Drop-Off Intake appointment.

Unable to find an appointment? Join the waiting list at https://booknow.appointment-plus.com/yqtk8x74/waiting_list to receive an update when new appointments are added.

For any type of appointment, you must bring all your documents or they will not be able to honor your appointment:

- Photo ID for you and your spouse (if applicable)
- Social security card (or ITIN letter) for everyone on the tax return
- All tax documents (W-2, 1099, 1095-A, etc.) and bank information.

They require that all visitors to their tax sites wear a mask to help protect against the spread of COVID-19.

If you have questions about Prosper Tax Help or need help scheduling an appointment, please call 211.

*****All CNA Memberships Are Due for Renewal for 2022*****

Thank you to the many folks who have already done so.

CNA is dedicated to preserving and promoting the quality of life, safety and residential character of our neighborhood. Any resident living within the boundaries of Crestview (Lamar, both sides of Justin, Burnet Road and Anderson) is eligible to join the association. Dues are \$10 per year per household (up to 4 adult members) and are paid on a calendar year basis. To join the association or to renew your membership through December 2022, please use the form below. Make checks payable to Crestview Neighborhood Association or CNA. Or you can use PayPal by going to <https://crestviewna.com/join/>. Any questions regarding your membership can be directed to the Treasurer at joincrestview@gmail.com



Crestview Neighborhood Association
PO Box 9505, Austin, TX 78766
www.crestviewna.com

All residents are invited to join
Annual dues are \$10 per household

Date: _____ New Member [] Renewing Member []

Household Members (List up to 4): _____

Address: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Ways You May Be Catching (and Spreading) COVID Without Realizing It

Nearly two years into the pandemic, you might think you know all the best practices necessary to avoid contracting and spreading COVID. But the Omicron variant, vaccines, booster shots and the resumption of normal life have changed—and continue to change—the safety equation. Add a bit of COVID fatigue all of us are suffering from, and it's entirely possible you might catch COVID without knowing it.

From Vaccinated People in Your Household – A study published in the Lancet found that fully vaccinated people, even if they have no symptoms, have a 38% chance of transmitting COVID to unvaccinated housemates, and a 25% chance of transmitting it to fully vaccinated housemates.

If You Haven't Gotten a Booster Shot - Although vaccines remain highly effective in preventing severe illness, hospitalization and death, the effectiveness declines over time. One study found that the Pfizer vaccine's effectiveness against symptomatic COVID-19 infection declined from 94% to 70%.

You're Wearing Your Mask Wrong or Worse Yet, Not Wearing One at All Even if You're Vaccinated - Remember that a face mask should fit snugly and cover your nose and mouth at all times. If you wear a mask below your nose, you can catch—or transmit—the virus readily.

You're Wearing the Wrong Kind of Face Mask - Because the highly contagious Omicron variant now accounts for almost all new COVID cases in the US, experts now recommend that you wear a high-quality face mask—such as an N95 or KN95—or a surgical mask for the most protection against the virus.



One study found that K95 or KN95 masks are 95% effective at filtering virus particulates, while cloth masks are only about 37% effective.

You're Forgetting to Socially Distance and Spending Time in Busy Public Places – Airports, bars, restaurants and indoor social and entertainment venues all make it more difficult to keep a space between each other and could be the perfect breeding ground for COVID.

Although there is no guarantee that doing the right thing will prevent one from getting COVID (every trip out the front door carries some amount of risk), we can make choices that will greatly reduce the chances of contracting COVID or bringing it home to loved ones. Simple things like wearing a mask and wearing it properly and social distancing benefits us all. Curbing some of the more risky activities could keep you healthy. Getting vaccinated or getting your booster could help protect you or if you get COVID, could reduce your symptoms, keep you from being hospitalized or even dying.

Free At-home COVID Tests Now Available by Phone

Following the launch of the federal government's website - [COVIDtests.gov](https://www.covidtests.gov) – there is now an option to order free at-home COVID tests by phone. The phone number (1-800-232-0233) is available for those who may have difficulty accessing the internet or need additional help to place their orders. The phone line is open from 8 a.m. to midnight ET seven days a week, and offers assistance in more than 150 languages. Each residence can obtain four tests to be shipped through the US Postal Service. As this newsletter goes to press, tests are still available.



Thank you, Crestview!



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Howdy Neighbor!

by Mike Lavigne, CNA President

I was helping Lilah with her Texas History homework this evening, and it was a fun one. They are just getting into the Texas Revolution, and we got to talk about the Battle of Gonzales. For those of you who didn't get here in time for 7th grade or work at the Capitol, this is the "battle" (a skirmish really) where Texians, in a sign of defiance, hoisted a flag above the mission at Gonzales that read "Come and Take It" above a crudely drawn picture of a cannon that the Mexican Army had showed up to retrieve for fear that it would be used against them. The cannon was originally installed by the Mexican government as a defense against Commanche raids.

You see, the Mexicans were convinced that the United States was less likely to invade if the northern part of Mexico (now Texas) was settled by Anglos and former US citizens. They also benefited from the new tax base and protection from the Indigenous tribes that had been pushed out of the US.

Of course, the original real estate speculators to whom the land was granted ("Empresarios") would eventually revolt once they made the land more desirable and got tired of the Mexican government's efforts at taxation. Also ironic, most of the fighters who gave their lives for "freedom" didn't stand to benefit nearly as much as the real estate mavens who doled out the land. Those guys got some 23,000 acres for every 100 families they settled. Stephen F. Austin being one of 'em.

My point is this: Real estate speculation is probably the second oldest profession. Eddie Wilson tells a story in his "memnoir" about a young boy who runs up along the side of the first train to roll through Austin and asks the conductor if he'd like to buy a squirrel. "How big a squirrel?" the engineer asks. "Well hell I ain't caught it yet!" the boy fires back. A classic Austin speculator!

Our current frustrations with city government pre-date CodeNEXT and transition zones. Developers have always complained that it is too hard to build. That it's easier to build everywhere else. Well, they say the same thing everywhere else. And we are building at breakneck speed. We literally couldn't build any faster. And the cost of housing isn't going to get any better no matter how many houses we tear down. Material costs and labor are rising every day. And on top of that, so are the salaries offered by the new jobs bringing in the new residents.

So, when the city starts to try and slip through things like the new Austin Strategic Mobility Plan that would reclassify streets like Woodrow in an effort to spur increased development under the guise of transportation today, and next month, affordability, let's remember that it is for neither.

And in case you were wondering, in the Battle of Gonzales two Mexican soldiers were killed and one Texian suffered a bloody nose from falling off his horse. The Texians touted it as their first victory and would refer to it as "Lexington on the Brazos". In reality, the Mexicans decided the cannon wasn't worth the fight and backed off. That cannon would later end up at the Alamo, where it was likely melted down by the victorious Mexican army.

2022 Brings New Property Tax Homestead Exemptions

Homeowners are now eligible to file homestead exemptions as of the date they own the property instead of having to wait for the next calendar year. County and city authorities increased tax benefits to those 65 and older as well as people and veterans with disabilities. Last June, City Council approved increasing the tax exemption from \$88,000 to an amount not to exceed \$113,000. This coming May, voters could approve an increase in school district exemptions for the same group from \$25,000 to \$40,000. City council also approved an increase in the residence homestead exemption for city property taxes from 10% to up to a maximum of 20%.



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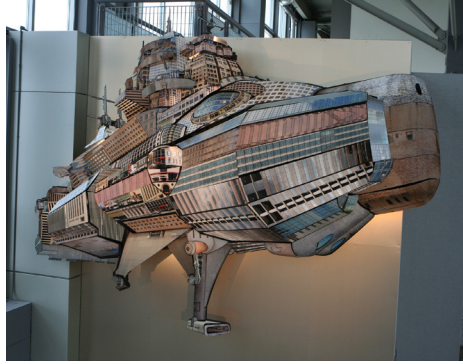
by Marilyn Querejazu

I'm the last person who would recommend a trip to the airport. But if you find yourself at Austin Bergstrom International Airport with time on your hands, there is very good art throughout. Just keep your eyes open and your spirit intact. There are five temporary exhibit areas that feature local and international artists. Galleries are named after notable Austin neighborhoods: Zilker (across from gate 18), Jollyville (across from gate 20), Moore's Crossing (across from gate 12), Clarksville (across from gate 10), and Colony Park (across from gate 10).

The airport's permanent public art collection includes the eight ten-foot-tall guitars in the baggage claim area, Young Min-Kang's Austin Downtown Cruiser and a jaw dropping statue of bigger than life Barbara Jordan.

We have an opportunity through March 31, 2022 to view the Banksy exhibit, a collection on loan to the airport by local private art collectors. On view in the airport's Clarksville Gallery the exhibit includes Banksy's well-known image of Balloon Girl, as well as other thought-provoking artwork.

Before you travel, look at the ABIA's online guidance to their permanent and temporary artwork displays. <https://www.austintexas.gov/department/art-barbara-jordan-terminal-airport>



Austin Downtown Cruiser by Young Min-Kang

Davis Gallery - 837 W 12th St - Paperback Rodeo, New Works by B Shawn Cox

A playful take on cowboy art with fancified and polka-dotted versions of this iconic image. See the latest creations by B Shawn Cox through February 26th. You can view some of his art online or visit Davis Gallery. They book no more than 15 people per thirty-minute interval and ask that masks be worn at all times



Red Rider, 2022 by B Shawn Cox

inside the gallery. Please contact the gallery for more info: Call 512-477-4929 or email contact@davisgalleryaustin.com
LBJ Presidential Library – Ladybird: Beyond the Wildflowers

She "beautified" our roadsides and founded the National Wildflower Research Center. A temporary exhibit focuses on Claudia Alta Taylor (Lady Bird) Johnson's many accomplishments apart from her love of nature. The LBJ Library and Museum is an Austin treasure that should not be overlooked. The Library is surrounded by lovely oak trees, perfect for a picnic. And on Tuesday admission is half price!

There is also a recent bestseller *Lady Bird Johnson: Hiding in Plain Sight* by Julia Sweig and an ABC news podcast *In Plain Sight: Lady Bird Johnson*.

What's Going on at the Blanton?

Well, in short, the museum is coming outside. Over the next year, the museum will more fully utilize the outdoor areas through architectural and landscape improvements and art. Look for the elegant shade canopy, native landscaping, an expansive mural by noted Cuban American artist Carmen Herrera, a sound gallery and more. Good things are coming.




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