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# CRESTVIEW

## NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

### NEWSLETTER

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APRIL 2022

## Austin Strategic Mobility Plan (ASMP) Update

By Chip Harris, CNA Newsletter Editor

Thanks to residents of Tisdale Drive who rallied to preserve the integrity of their street! As a result of their efforts and many others around town, the City of Austin has, for now, decided not to upgrade the status of their street.

The proposed status upgrade on Tisdale was part of the City's process of amending the ASMP and involved upping the status of scores of neighborhood streets from level 1 to level 2 (out of 5). All of the streets in Crestview are level 1 with three exceptions: Woodrow, Arroyo Seco and Morrow, which are level 2. Given its narrow width, proximity to Anderson Lane and residential character, Morrow should also be a level 1 street. Surprisingly, the City is proposing to upgrade the status of part of it to level 3. Doing so would give that part of Morrow, between Burnet Road and Hardy Drive where it's called St. Joseph, the same designation as Anderson Lane and Burnet Road, both major arterials and level 3 streets. When asked why St. Joseph should be level 3, the city responds that the upgrade is a "technical correction" so that the ASMP and the City's Transportation Criteria Manual will be in sync. Hopefully, the City can craft some way to resolve this without resorting to classifying St. Joseph, the western segment of Morrow Street, to the same level as major arterials in the area.

Nothing is final yet. Tisdale was reset to level 1 during round 1. Now in round 2, we need to convince the City that Morrow/St. Joseph, a street lined with single family homes housing young families with children, should be classified in a similar way to all other Crestview streets: Level 1. Based on community feedback, the city staff will be revising the plan by the end of April, and it is scheduled to be discussed by the Planning Commission on May 10th and then will proceed to the City Council for a hearing in late May.

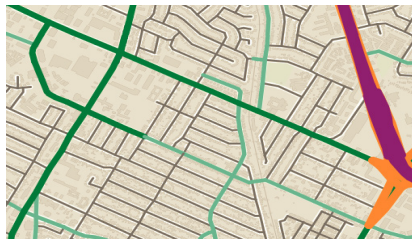
Your involvement will make a difference! Please provide your comments to staff and council member Leslie Pool using the following two addresses:

City staff: [ASMP@austintexas.gov](mailto:ASMP@austintexas.gov)

Council Member Leslie Pool: [Leslie.Pool@austintexas.gov](mailto:Leslie.Pool@austintexas.gov)

Additional information can be found at [www.austintexas.gov/ASMP](http://www.austintexas.gov/ASMP)

Thank you!



## Zoning Change Requests & Neighborhood Plan Amendments

By Chip Harris, CNA Newsletter Editor

### 6916 N Lamar (Downtown Comes to Crestview)

NPA-2022-0017.01 Zoning Case Number C14-2022-0035



In this neighborhood plan amendment (NPA) and zoning case, the owner/applicant, 3423 Holdings LLC, Peter Barlin, is requesting that the allowable building height on the 2.9-acre tract be increased from its current limit of 90

feet to 160 feet. The site is bordered on the east by Lamar and on the south by Justin and sits adjacent to the Ryan tract. 300 residential units have been proposed along with 45,000 sf of retail and 315,000 sf of office, generating 7,692 trips per day. The outcome of this zoning case may have implications for the eventual redevelopment of the Crestview Shopping Center. As it is very early in the design phase of Cap Metro's Orange rail line, it is difficult to tell how much additional right-of-way may be needed on this property.

The City of Austin is planning to hold a virtual community meeting for this case on Monday, April 18th from 6 pm to 7:30 pm. For information on how to attend, visit <https://www.speakupaustin.org/npa>

### 7301 Burnet Road (Centennial Shopping Center)

NPA-2022-0017.02

This NPA amendment, submitted by 7301 Burnet Road LLC, requests that the land use designation be changed from Commercial to Mixed Use, allowing a mix of residential and non-residential uses. The current zoning is CS-CO-NP which doesn't allow residential. A zoning change request is expected to be filed but had not been filed at press time. Based on current trends, this shopping center may be redeveloped as a large apartment complex.

The City of Austin is planning to hold a virtual community meeting for this case on Wednesday, April 20th from 6 pm to 7:30 pm. For information on how to attend, visit <https://www.speakupaustin.org/npa>

### Morrow and Easy Wind

The third case involves changing the zoning for the northern portion of Crestview Station in order to remove the condition prohibiting vehicular access to Morrow Street. Because this does not require a neighborhood plan amendment as the use is not changing, the city will not be holding a virtual community meeting. If this zoning change is approved by the City Council, then access will be allowed from Crestview Station at the intersection of Morrow and Easy Wind.

# CRESTVIEW

## NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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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](mailto:joincrestview@gmail.com)

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### Neighborhood Email Groups

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## What Is the South Central Waterfront? Is It Worth \$278 Million in Property Taxes?

by Fred Lewis

A little noticed, but very important matter is coming before the City of Austin sometime this spring. It is whether the City Council should approve re-directing over time \$278 million in property taxes from city coffers to subsidize a private development called the South Central Waterfront (SCWF). The SCWF District contains 118 acres of prime real estate that lies adjacent to downtown, just south of Lady Bird Lake. City plans envision the SCWF as Austin's "Second Downtown," which would add an additional 6.2 million square feet in high-end office, retail, and residential towers. The city projects that the SCWF, which is currently valued at \$825 million on the tax rolls, would be worth \$8.5 billion when completed over the next ten years or so. The well-known Statesman property at 305 South Congress constitutes 18.3 acres of the district. This parcel is owned by the Cox Family Trusts, and its developer, Endeavor, is the largest in Central Texas.

The SCWF developers are asking the city to establish a tax increment reinvestment zone (TIRZ) to provide their development \$278 million in city property taxes for infrastructure. Texas law authorizes cities to use TIRZs, a finance tool, to subsidize private development if an area is underdeveloped and redevelopment would occur only with the public tax subsidy. Texas Tax Code, Section 311.003(a) provides: "The governing body... may designate... a reinvestment zone to promote development or redevelopment of the area if the governing body determines that development or redevelopment would not occur solely through private investment in the reasonably foreseeable future."

On December 20, 2021, the City Council passed unanimously a preliminary plan to set up a TIRZ for the SCWF. But the Council did not set at that time the amount of the tax subsidy for the SCWF TIRZ. City staff is recommending that \$278 million in increased property taxes from the SCWF's redevelopment be redirected from general revenue to the SCWF's infrastructure.

Council will decide the amount of tax subsidy later this spring. The current SCWF differs from the city's 2016 plan. In 2016, the city staff recommended only \$73 million in infrastructure for the SCWF and that its private property owners, not taxpayers, pay for it. They proposed a public improvement district (PID) where the developers would pay for their infrastructure, rather than a TIRZ.

The SCWF TIRZ proponents and opponents have much different views of the property tax subsidy. Proponents contend that the tax subsidies are necessary for the development to occur and that developers will not redevelop the property without the TIRZ. They maintain the subsidies are needed so Austin can have a beautiful, walkable space near Lady Bird Lake with landscaping, new roads and parks. See the Cox Family Trust's arguments for the SCWF TIRZ at <https://305southcongress.com/>.

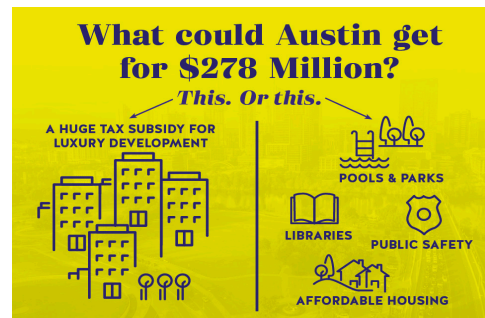
Opponents, such as the local nonprofit Taxpayers Against Giveaways (TAG), maintain the 118 acres is prime real estate and that the developers will redevelop the property, and make reasonable profits, without a massive tax subsidy. They note that this massive, luxury project is supposed to increase ten-fold the property's value to \$8.5 billion. TAG says there are better uses for our tax dollars, such as libraries parks, pools and public safety. Its website is at <https://taxpayersvs giveaways.org/>.

Update at Press Time: We're really disappointed that Council approved the PUD on 1st reading at their April 7th meeting with NO ordinance text available. But encouraged that Council Members Alter, Kelly, and Tovo asked for considerably more plan details and several weeks to review before the item comes back to council. Please stay tuned into this very important issue.

"When an old person dies, it's like a library burning down." – Alex Haley

"I think we risk becoming the best-informed society that has ever died of ignorance." – Ruben Blades

"Most of us can read the writing on the wall; we just assume it's addressed to someone else." – Ivern Ball





## Briones House - Casa de Sueños

Preservation Austin recently released a self-guided tour and blog site that features 25 sites in East and Central Austin. The East Austin Barrio Landmarks Project honors the historic and cultural significance of East Austin's Mexican American community in an area that is rapidly being lost to redevelopment and gentrification.

One of the houses featured on the tour is the *Casa de Sueños* (House of Dreams) built by Genaro P. Briones at 1204 East 7th Street. The home is the best-preserved example of his work.

Raised in New Mexico and El Paso, Genaro eventually settled in Austin in the 1930s where he worked as a bricklayer and plasterer. However, the Great Depression forced him to seek work in other places. While in Memphis, Tennessee, Genaro collaborated with the Mexican-born craftsman Dionicio Rodriguez resulting in a major influence on Genaro. Rodriguez was based out of San Antonio and was best known for his expertise in concrete *faux bois*, literally meaning "false wood" in French, a style he learned while in Mexico. *Faux bois* (or *trabajo rústico* as it is sometimes called in Mexico and Texas) is a technique in which concrete structures resemble rustic wood or pieces of fallen or decaying trees. While very popular in the 1940s, few of the beautiful objects of this style remain and are prized by collectors as there are not many experts in its practice in existence today. Examples of Rodriguez's work can be found in San Antonio (another day trip!), Houston and Arkansas.

In the late 1940s, Genaro undertook the building and decoration of a home on East 7th Street entirely on his own, working nights and weekends. Dionicio visited from San

Antonio while Genaro was constructing the home to give him advice on the design and building. Dionicio was quite secretive about how he achieved exceptional tinted concrete effects, but he must have shared his knowledge with Genaro to create a beautiful collage of colors resembling natural wood and simultaneously rustic and vibrant tones on the façade of his new home. In style, Genaro drew not only from *faux bois* but also Art Deco, stucco décor introduced from Mexico in the 1920s, and Mexican-American folk art.



While the floor plan was the Four-Square style known for its box shape and simple design, Genaro used it as a building block, adding a wide external staircase and countless decorative elements inside and outside the home to make it distinctively his own. His use of Art Deco appears in artistic interpretations of natural forms such as flowers, trees, and stones. He was influenced by anything that he found interesting and fit

with his desired aesthetic. For instance, the railing enclosing the second-floor balcony was inspired by a photograph that he saw in Life magazine of a house in the Philippines. There are multiple sculptural elements in the home, including one by the doorway of the guest wing entrance which Genaro referred to as his "tree".

The original house remains just as he built it, and at least until the 1990s the color-tinted surfaces remained brightly colored despite never being repainted. All of Genaro's other projects in the city have been either remodeled or demolished, accentuating the home's importance in maintaining his artistic legacy.

To learn more about the Briones House and the other homes on the East Austin Barrio Landmarks Project tour see <https://www.preservationaustin.org/east-austin-barrio-landmarks>.



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# Proposal to Create a New Zoning Overlay: VMU 2

by Barbara McArthur

An automatic new zoning overlay - VMU-2 ordinance - has been proposed in a resolution by Council Member Ann Kitchen, and co-sponsored by our City Council Member Leslie Pool. It is tentatively scheduled for the April 21 council agenda. Vertical mixed use (VMU) is an overlay that goes over existing zoning requiring a mix of residential and commercial uses for the purpose of increasing density on corridors. With VMU-2, the city is proposing to allow 30 feet of additional height for what is a small amount of affordable housing on current VMU properties. Compatibility standards control the height and setback of a building next to residences. Ann Kitchen pledged that compatibility would not be waived and the amendment would reflect consensus. However a staff presentation suggested that compatibility would impact this new policy significantly.

Here is a link to a map to see if there is a proposed VMU zoning change near you: <https://www.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?webmap=cfe866a7ff0445c7bf9afcd95588a15&extent=-97.7656,30.3161,-97.69,30.3528> You can type your address into the query box.

Clicking on a property gives you additional information. Green on the map means compatibility standards would



be triggered by any nearby commercial or high-density residential development. The dark overlay shows homes that trigger compatibility with current VMU zoning. Other colors are VMU properties, which range from NO (neighborhood office) to CS (commercial services). You can find the zoning by clicking on the property. Below is the height chart showing the existing height and the proposed VMU-2. For example, if you enter the address “5350 Burnet Road” and click on the property, you would see that it is zoned CS-MU-CO-V, and that it has both MU an V in the zoning. Looking at the chart it means the height would be increased from 60 to 90 feet.

	NO	LO	GO	LR	GR	CS
Height	35	40	60	40	60	60
VMU-2 Height	65	70	90	70	90	90

## Another Fuel Tank Farm Approved for East Austin

Decades after a gasoline tank farm in East Austin near residences was finally shut down after benzene contamination, the City of Austin has decided to place jet fuel storage tanks in close proximity to many homes. While there is no argument that the airport needs additional fuel storage, the placement selected for the tanks on the east side of the airport close to homes is concerning. At the April 7th City Council meeting, Council Member Vanessa Fuentes proposed a resolution to consider other locations for the jet fuel storage facility. Council voted 5-5 on the measure, and without a majority, it did not move forward, and as a result, the new jet fuel tanks at the Austin airport will be built as planned. Council members Jose “Chito” Vela, Kathie Tovo, Sabino “Pio” Renteria and Ann Kitchen voted with Fuentes in favor of the resolution. Austin Mayor Steve Adler, Council Members Alison Alter, Leslie Pool, Paige Ellis and Mackenzie Kelly voted against it. Council member Natasha Harper-Madison was off the dais for the vote.

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## Lawsuit: All 10 Council Seats Should Be On The November Ballot

According to an article in the Austin American Statesman, a lawsuit is seeking to require that all 10 Austin City Council seats be on the ballot in November, claiming that otherwise 24,000 residents shifted in redistricting would be denied an opportunity to vote on their council representative. The lawsuit, if successful, would have the extraordinary effect of preemptively ending the terms of five council members whose districts are not expected to be up for election until 2024: Vanessa Fuentes, Chito Vela, Leslie Pool, Mackenzie Kelly and Alison Alter.

Five other council seats would not be affected because they already are set to be on the November ballot, as is the mayor's race.

Austin attorney Bill Aleshire filed the lawsuit in Travis County state District Court on behalf of 12 registered voters whose residences are shifting into other districts. Some of them last voted in a council district race in 2018, and it will be six years by the time they get to vote again.

Aleshire, a former Travis County judge, focuses on government transparency in his private law practice and has a long record of bringing legal action against public agencies he believes are violating the law or misleading residents.

The issue raised is unprecedented in Texas. Aleshire is requesting a quick decision so that any appeals can be



resolved ahead of an Aug. 22 deadline for candidates to get on the ballot for the November election.

The city recently redrew City Council district boundaries with an independent group of volunteers, a process required every 10 years to balance district populations using U.S. Census Bureau data.

According to Aleshire's research, nearly 24,000 people are shifting from districts that will appear on this year's ballot to districts that will not. An additional 16,675 voters were shifted from being represented by one council member to another without an opportunity to vote, according to the lawsuit.

## City Renews Lease for Recycled Reads Book Store

The City has renewed the lease for their library bookstore located at 5335 Burnet Road. The lease, which started on April 1st, 2022, extends the term for 48 months, with one extension option for an additional 12 months. The City has leased this space since March 2008.

The store is stocked with books and materials withdrawn from the Library's collection and the community's donations. Currently Recycled Reads program handles a monthly average of 25 tons of books, CDs, records, DVDs and other materials that appeal to all ages and interests.

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