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NEWSLETTER

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MARCH 2023

Winter Storm Debris Pickup by Austin Resource Recovery

Austin Resource Recovery (ARR), a department of the City of Austin, is collecting unprecedented storm debris from the 2023 winter storm. In just one week of collection, the total tonnage of material collected from the 2021 winter storm was exceeded.

With the combined forces of 70+ staff and contracted crews, ARR anticipates it will complete the first of several passes through the city collecting storm debris by the end of first week of March. Many areas will likely require a second or third collection to clear all storm debris, and ARR expects those will be completed by April 30, 2023. After that, ARR will change focus from broad passes through the city, and continue collections as needed, strictly through special storm debris collection requests made through Austin 3-1-1. This will continue through June 30, 2023.

By February 16, more than 34,828 tons of storm debris were collected through 4,985 truckloads. ARR estimates that its first pass through the city is roughly halfway completed.



Currently, storm debris collection routes are based on the volume of service requests in a given area. ARR uses 3-1-1 service requests in an area as a guide to determine which neighborhoods/regions have material set out and ready for collection and should be serviced first. Still, ARR will collect all storm debris from its customers – that is properly placed at the curb – on that same street regardless of a request being submitted for a

specific address.

Regardless of whether they are ARR customers, Austin and Travis County residents can also drop off storm debris (large tree limbs, small and large branches, shrubs and leaves) at Austin Water's Hornsby Bend Biosolids Management Plant (2210 FM 973, Austin, TX). Go to www.ausintexas.gov/brushdropoff to get operation times and drop-off details. More than 3,500 loads of storm debris have been dropped off at the facility by residents, weighing in at 1,382 tons through February 16.

ARR thanks Austinites for their patience as it works to restore our community.

City Hall Finally Released Its New Ordinance Reducing Compatibility.... and It Has Some Surprises

By Community Not Commodity

KEY POINTS:

- The Austin City Council waited more than a month before releasing its ordinance greatly reducing local compatibility standards and parking requirements
- The ordinance classifies many small neighborhood streets as “large corridors,” allowing tall structures to be built just 100 feet from existing homes
- It also favors the development of short-term rentals over affordable units, which could increase housing costs across the city

On January 6, the City of Austin finally released a copy of Ordinance No. 20221201-056, a major change to the Land Development Code that was passed more than a month earlier—after a hearing that was too confusing and chaotic for most residents to follow.

As we warned, the approved ordinance does two things:

- It weakens compatibility standards along dozens of roadways by a whopping 80%. Compatibility standards govern the height and setback of big buildings near residential areas, and the new ordinance will allow very tall structures to be built just 100 feet from existing homes (440 feet closer than before).
- It removes or reduces parking requirements along the same roadways, allowing the construction of multi-unit, mixed-used developments without adequate parking for new residents and businesses. Like compatibility requirements, Austin's parking requirements have protected our community's neighborhoods for decades—particularly those located near busy commercial districts.



See Surprises continued on page 2

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CNA Contact Information

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

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

Twitter: @CNAneighbors

Facebook: [CrestviewNeighborhoodAssociation](https://www.facebook.com/CrestviewNeighborhoodAssociation)

Neighborhood Email Groups

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

We're all aging, if we're lucky
enough to be north of the dirt line.

Carolyn Hax

It's so weird being the same age as
old people.

Seen on a T-shirt

The secret of staying young is to
live honestly, eat slowly and lie
about your age.

Lucille Ball



Surprises continued from page 1

We're still analyzing the text of the ordinance, but it's beginning to become clear why City Hall took so long to release a copy to the public. Here are a couple of provisions that are sure to shock some local residents:

The City Council's Nonsensical "Large Corridor" Designation

On October 28 of last year, city officials sent a half-page letter to more than 200,000 addresses across our community, announcing the proposed compatibility and parking changes on "certain roadways." There were no details of which roads would be included, or what the changes would be. More details surfaced in November, when Austin's Planning Commission recommended that the community's "large corridors" be treated the same way as light-rail corridors, with compatibility setbacks for the largest buildings reduced from 540 to 100 feet.

Now that the approved ordinance is publicly available, we can see exactly which roadways are impacted by the council's plan—but the list makes little sense. Council members treat IH-35, SH-45, and US 290 as large corridors, but they have also labeled two-lane neighborhood streets like Clarkson Avenue, Crystalbrook Drive, Pecan Brook Drive, and Manor Road with the same designation. In contrast, six-lane arteries like Airport Boulevard and William Cannon Drive are classified as "medium corridors," with less intensive compatibility changes in the surrounding areas.

Community Not Commodity is currently working on a citywide map showing all compatibility changes, and we'll update our readers as soon as it's completed.

Short-Term Rentals Get a Bigger Win Than Affordable Housing

Supporters of the city council's plan repeatedly cited a shortage of affordable housing as rationale for the compatibility changes, but the final ordinance actually does more to help Austin's short-term rental industry, which experts believe is hurting local affordability.

In order to take advantage of extra bonuses in the new compatibility rules, developers must ensure that 10% of new residential units meet affordability requirements (or pay a "fee-in-lieu" to the City of Austin's affordable-housing fund). But the ordinance gives those same developers the freedom to devote a greater percentage of units in new buildings (15%) to the construction of short-term rentals. According to one recent study, an increase in a community's short-term rentals as small as 1% leads to a corresponding increase in both rents and housing prices.

Community Not Commodity (<https://communitynotcommodity.com>) envisions a diverse Austin with neighborhood-based planning, effective anti-displacement programs, and respect for current residents' property and neighborhoods.

Together we can build an Austin for everyone!

Free Income Tax Help Available Through Prosper Tax Help

Prosper Tax Help will be providing free tax help for low-income families and individuals in Austin this year.

Currently and until the filing deadline on April 18th this year, their IRS-certified tax preparers will be providing free tax preparation at several sites in Austin and Round Rock by appointment. Their closest location to Crestview is at 5900 Airport Blvd. For more information and to set up an appointment, go to www.prospertaxhelp.org.

Eligibility: To qualify for Prosper Tax Help, your 2022 annual income must be less than \$60,000 if you are a single filer and below \$85,000 if you have a household of 2-4 people. The annual limit goes up by \$5,000 for each additional household member (e.g., \$90,000 for a household of 5).

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



13th Annual Brentwood Rocks! Concert

Austin ISD's Brentwood Elementary School Presents the 13th Annual Brentwood Rocks! Concert on Saturday, March 25th from 3 pm to 6 pm. This year's fundraiser will feature live performances by Matthew Logan Vasquez (Delta Spirit, Glorietta), the Lamar Dance Team, the School of Rock Austin, and others. Come hungry, as there will be food booths from Top Notch, Kona Ice and Mister Softee!

Proceeds from the event will benefit the PTA, which provides funding to support the school's literacy, math and cultural activities. The event is for the whole family. The suggested donation is \$10 per adult and kids are free. The event is public and all are welcome. To purchase adult wristbands go to <https://www.brentwoodpta.com/brentwood-rocks-support-event-1>.

"We cannot wait to gather with the entire community and bring this wonderful event back to Brentwood's beautiful new campus. We are excited to gather our community and rock out to celebrate all students, teachers and staff," said Luke McHenry, Brentwood Rocks! co-chair. "The new campus is amazing and we want to invite everyone to see the beautiful new school, hear some live music and celebrate together," said Brooke Gunning, Brentwood Rocks! co-chair.

Haven't Renewed Your 2023 CNA Membership Yet?

There's no time like the present! (And a big thank you to those who have already renewed.)

Since the early 1980s when the Crestview Neighborhood Association was formed, CNA has been 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) are 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 2023, 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.



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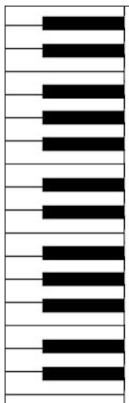
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No Big Jump In 2023 Property Values

Fewer property value protests expected this year

By Ken Martin (*The Austin Bulldog*)

In what should be good news for property owners, Chief Appraiser Marya Crigler told board members of Travis Central Appraisal District February 17th that she is not seeing the big increases in property values that were experienced last year. She said some areas will be up in values and some will be down. The end result is that she is not expecting the record numbers of value protests experienced in recent years.



That would be welcome news for the Travis Appraisal Review Board (ARB) because in December TCAD's board of directors voted to reduce the number of ARB members to 74 for the 2023 protest cycle. That was a 40 percent reduction from the 124 who were on hand to conduct formal hearings in 2022.

As the *Bulldog* reported, home values jumped more than 50 percent in 2022. As a result, a record 167,869 protests were filed that year, an increase of some 28,000 from 2021.

Crigler said staff appraisers are currently finishing field work and she anticipates that annual Notices of Appraised Values (NOAV) will go out on April 15th. Property owners and their agents have until May 15th to file a protest of appraised values. As the NOAV form states, "The governing body of each taxing unit decides whether taxes on the property will increase and the appraisal district only determines the property value."

To assist homeowners in understanding their rights and TCAD's procedures, Crigler said she will host two upcoming webinars. The next will be offered March 15th starting at

11:30am on Appraisal Information for New Homeowners. The last webinar will be held in late April or early May on how to protest property values and get in line for informal hearings with staff appraisers.

Legislation could shake things up

Chief Appraiser Crigler presented a big-picture summary of key bills that have been introduced in the 88th session of the Texas Legislature that began January 10th and runs through May 29th.

She said, "Property taxes are a major focus of the governor and lieutenant governor." Most the bills filed deal with appraisal limitations for homesteads. "I'm tracking 45 bills on homestead exemptions" as well as several dealing with property value studies."

She said an overall goal of proposed legislation is to "inject more accountability." To that end, there are bills that would require chief appraisers to be elected, rather than hired by the appraisal district board, and bills that would require that members of the board of directors be elected.

Three bills introduced by Representative Will Metcalf of Conroe, would require:

- HB 808 - Election of the chief appraiser to serve a two-year term. To be eligible an individual must be a resident of the county for at least four years before taking office. If enacted, this would cause a major turnabout in appraisal districts, given that chief appraisers are generally deeply experienced and thoroughly familiar with the intricacies of the work that goes into setting property values, steering the process for conducting valuation protests, and complying with myriad applicable laws. Crigler is among the most experienced chief appraisers, having gone to work for TCAD in 1990 soon after graduating from the University of Texas at Austin at a starting pay of \$6 an hour. Her current annual pay is \$235,000.

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- HB 809 - Election of four appraisal district board members from the county commissioners' precincts and one director elected at-large to serve two-year terms. The county tax-assessor collector would serve as a nonvoting director, as is currently the case.
- HB 810 - Election of five members of the appraisal review board, four from commissioners' precincts and one at-large, for terms of two years.

HB 1294, introduced by Representative Sergio Muñoz Jr. of Mission, would require one director be elected from each of the four commissioners precincts in the county, with a fifth member being the county's tax assessor-collector or a director elected at-large. Terms would be for two years.



New Taxpayer Liaison Officer

Travis County property owners will have a new person to contact when they need more information or want to complain about how their property values are assigned or how their protests are handled.

The TCAD board appointed Betty Thompson as the new Taxpayer Liaison Officer, a part-time position. Although Thompson was appointed by the board and her salary is set by the board, she will operate independently of the board, the chief appraiser, and the Appraisal Review Board.

To read the full article, go to <https://theaustinboxdog.org/good-news-no-big-jump-in-2023-property-values/>.

Special Interests Want Lawmakers to Take Away Homeowners' Property Rights

By Community Not Commodity

Earlier this year, two bills supported by powerful special interests were filed in an attempt to gut the property rights of urban homeowners and rob the state's big cities of local control over land use.

Senate Bill 491 takes aim at compatibility standards, which govern the height and setback of big buildings near residential areas. If it passes, Austin land developers will be allowed to build large, multi-story structures just 50 feet from homes.

House Bill 1514 targets zoning protest rights, which have been enshrined in Texas Law for nearly a century. If it passes, it will make it next to impossible for the state's property owners to protest rezonings—including those that allow wildly incompatible buildings next to their homes and small businesses.

Stay tuned! Community Not Commodity will soon provide further information on these bills, their supporters, and how Austin residents like you can stop them.

In the meantime, contact State Senator Sarah Eckhardt (sarah.eckhardt@senate.texas.gov) and tell her Senate Bill 491 and House Bill 1514 are bad for Texas property owners, bad for Texas communities, and bad for Texas.



Thank you, Crestview!



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