

THE HANCOCK HERALD

Hancock Neighborhood Association



September 2014



Rafi Anuar and son, Oscar.

July 4th Parade and Party

The Fourth of July Parade was a great success thanks to a big turnout by the neighborhood, the help of the Police and Fire departments, and the hard work of neighbors.

Most notable among the volunteers was the person responsible for all the details, Melissa Linden. Melissa and her husband, Leigh, moved to Hancock when Leigh got a job at UT. They fell in love with Hancock's central location, the great mix of urban amenities and neighborhood feel. Leigh and Melissa have two children, Lila (4) and Carter (1).

Last year, Melissa volunteered to do the 4th of July Parade when Cynthia Smith was unable to continue with the duties.

Thanks to all those who participated in the parade!

INSIDE



Hot Topics

First Line of Urban Rail —
Planned Central Corridor
May Come Our Way

Hancock, Eastwoods and the
Urban Rail Bond Measure

CodeNEXT Update

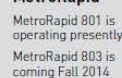
Shipe Pool Update

3805 Red River Update



Kids are entertained while they wait for their balloon animal.

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July 4th Parade pauses to pose for a snapshot before heading down Harris Avenue.



Fall is the time of year to divide your perennials and plant new bushes and trees.



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CODE NEXT

What is CodeNEXT?

"CodeNEXT is the City of Austin's initiative to revise the Land Development Code, which determines how land can be used throughout the City – including what can be built, where it can be built, and how much can (and cannot) be built"
(www.austintexas.gov/codenext).

The Land Development Code has not been revised in 30 years, and the revision is a priority program of Imagine Austin, adopted by City Council in 2012.

Why This Matters

"The Land Development Code has a significant impact on our

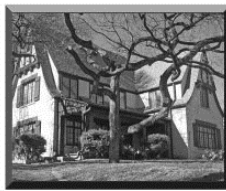
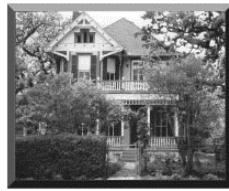
daily lives, from shaping the kinds of places where we live, work, and hang out, to influencing the design of our streets and public spaces. It is not just about simplifying the land development code."
(www.austintexas.gov/codenext).

The revision is also an opportunity for interest groups and citizens to applaud or target for elimination their favorite elements of the code.

Who's in charge?

In 2012, the City Council hired a consulting firm, Opticos, to lead Austin citizens in a process which will result in the adoption of a revised land development code in Fall of 2015 or Summer 2016. Opticos' process has included examining Austin's current land code, making a preliminary examination of the Planning and Development Review Department, and initiating outreach activities to engage neighborhoods, community, business, public officials, and Boards and Commissions.

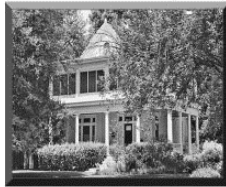
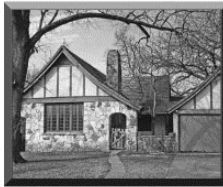
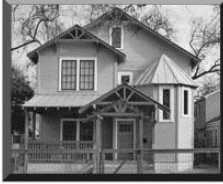
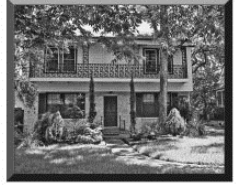
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photo by alison namo

First Line of Urban Rail cont'd from Page 2

such as Austin's growing downtown area, the State Capitol Complex, Lady Bird Lake, the Convention Center, the University of Texas campus, public venues and stadium, the future Dell Medical School and Hancock Center.

The project includes construction of a new bridge over Lady Bird Lake and a short tunnel near Hancock Center. The urban rail route would operate in mostly dedicated right-of-way (separated tracks from regular traffic flow) and would run on a 10-15 minute service frequency with 16 stations along the entire 9.5-mile alignment, four of the stations being designated park and ride facilities (Middle Fiskville, Hancock Center, Pleasant Valley and Grove). The project through downtown is estimated to carry an average of 18,000 people per weekday."

It also includes a segment down Red River Street. A pdf of the route can be found at: <http://tinyurl.com/CentralCorridorRecommend>

The Hancock Neighborhood Association is taking an active role to advocate neighborhood concerns about the integrity of single family properties along Red River and impact on Hancock Golf Course in the design of the urban rail should the bond for its construction be approved in November.

An Urban Rail Working Group has been formed comprised of the HNA Executive Committee, HNA Parks Committee, and the Chair of the HNA Transportation Committee to meet with the Project Connect Project Lead on the Central Corridor, Kyle Keahey. The purpose of the meetings is to be fully informed of the plans and provide input on the design based on neighborhood concerns to head off something neighbors don't want to see in the neighborhood should the bond pass in November.

The HNA President, Vice President, and Chair of the HNA Transportation Committee met with

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the Mayor at his invitation on August 5th to share neighborhood concerns and efforts to include those in the planning process. The Mayor endorsed our working with Project Connect.

The HNA Urban Rail Working Group held a meeting with Mr. Keahey and a report on findings was made to the HNA membership at the regular September meeting held Wednesday the 17th .

The HNA membership attending voted to hold a Special Meeting on Wednesday, October 8th to vote on a HNA position in favor or opposed to the proposed urban rail. Mark your calendar and come!

Carolyn Palaima, HNA President

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Rail Bond Measure cont'd from Page 2

matched 1-1, local highway funds can be leveraged with federal grants up to a 10-1 basis.

While federal funding is far from certain for either rail or roads, Austin Proposition 1 could enable local highway expansion on a scale not seen for decades. The result may be a down payment on another 50 years of sprawl, a direct benefit to suburban drivers of single occupant vehicles at the expense of transit users and the city they live in.

Together, they would raise property taxes by approximately \$250 a year on a \$400,000 home to cover the debt service on \$1 billion.

As with any bond measure, it will provide the opportunity for citizens to vote yes or no. It's a stark choice for or against, a drop dead binary decision on a route and roads bundle fraught with complexity and controversy.

Missing from the voting booth on November 4th is an implied third state to the political question, not just *whether or not*, but *where to* build the first light rail alignment. If it is voted down, it won't be an anti-rail vote; it will be an anti-plan vote that affirms that "*where*" was just as important as "*how much*". However, if the measure passes, steps will be taken to build a project that may damage the transit system for generations, spend hundreds of millions to widen highways, and irreversibly change the livability and affordability of our communities.

The debate over the last year among members of the mayor's Central Corridor Advisory Group (CCAG) which led to the recommendation was dominated by arguments of shaping future growth versus serving the existing population. Growth, not service, prevailed.

The route through the Eastwoods, Hancock, Northfield, Ridgetop and Highland neighborhoods was justified based, not on current land use, but on future population and jobs growth.

Continued on next page Rail Bond Measure continued

The changes to enable the projections in the plan include upzoning around stations, forecasts of increased property valuations to achieve value capture, and cost savings through cancellation of local bus routes like the #7. Due to a planned low farebox recovery ratio, that is, the proportion of operating costs paid for with fares, policymakers have discussed new taxing districts along the alignment such as TIFs and PIDs to help finance rail operations. Lanes from streets will be dedicated to urban rail vehicles, and private property would be acquired for building tunnels, stations, elevated crossings, parking garages, and road widening. Many of these local changes would be unnecessary along another route such as the Guadalupe-North Lamar Corridor. Indeed, they have been planned for decades and welcomed by community and business groups along that alignment.

By any measure Guadalupe-North Lamar is a mature transit corridor with 200,000 jobs and 54,000 residents. In 1999, an FTA study projected 37,400 weekday riders for Guadalupe. Its land use has been planned for decades to support a future light rail corridor. It already has the dense re-zoning that several councils enacted with ordinances, including the Central Austin Combined Neighborhood Plan in which Hancock and Eastwoods neighborhoods are also planned. Guadalupe-North Lamar received the density, but it did not receive the transit to support it. For every day that goes by, Capital Metro is losing money by serving that corridor with inefficient rubber-tired vehicles. There is an opportunity after November 4th to change that. We oppose Austin Proposition 1 by bringing a cost-effective and operationally self-sufficient solution to the table.

Whether you support or oppose Austin Proposition 1, or just haven't made up your mind, one thing will remain constant:

The opportunity of Guadalupe-North Lamar is not going away.

It is not a speculative opportunity that requires changes in land use and local taxation, it is a certain opportunity with known land use, transit utilization, and concentrations of economic activity that are without peer in the city. For every year that passes without addressing the needs along this north-south backbone of our city, the citizens shoulder the costs of a decision deferred. Austin Proposition 1 builds light rail in a non-existent transit corridor, while ignoring our city's best. The opportunity costs to build light rail in the wrong place, and not where a first alignment would be a certain success, are a gamble our community can ill-afford. The voters' trust is not infinite. There are no do-overs for a \$1.38 billion expenditure, and we've got one shot to get it right. 2016 is well worth the wait.

Scott Morris is the director of the Central Austin Community Development Corporation and the treasurer of Our Rail, a political action committee opposed to Austin Proposition 1. He can be reached at smorris@ourrail.org or by phone at 512-371-7961.

PUT YOUR
HANDS UP
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Thank you to this issue's contributors:

Carolyn Palaima	Anne Hebert
Mary Sanger	Cliff McSparren
Scott Morris	Linda Guerrero
Alison Young	Carol Moczygmba

CodeNEXT Continued from Page 4

A Code Advisory Committee, appointed by Council and the City Manager, is charged with giving guidance and supporting outreach activities. See (www.austintexas.gov/codenext).

Outcomes Thus Far

The most recent product of Code Next is the Code Diagnostic Report issued in May, which outlines 10 "overarching" issues identified by Opticos, city staff, public officials, and Austin residents:

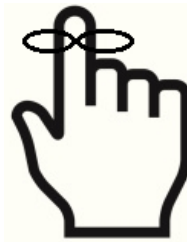
- ineffective base codes: allow undesirable building forms
- competing layers of regulations: well intended but need clarity
- complicated opt-in, opt out system: good intentions but need clarity
- lack of housing affordability and choices: need clearer permitting process to reduce costs, and Code needs to encourage more housing choices
- auto-centric
- Code not always in line with Imagine Austin
- a lack of usability and clarity of digital and printed Code

Note: See short YouTube videos on each topic listed above at www.austintexas.gov/codenext Responses

Business interests, not-for-profits and neighborhood groups have responded to the Diagnostic Report's analysis. One organization has called for the elimination of all SF-3 zoning, declaring it to be in support of the status quo. It also claims that the 50-year old neighborhood planning process is undemocratic.

(See AURA in Feedback blog www.austintexas.gov/codenext)

The powerful Real Estate Council of Austin has called for the end of the neighborhood



Important Dates

- **Hancock Native Plant Swap**

Oct 4th dawn at Mother's
Free milkweed seeds
(Antelope Horn & Tropical)

- **HNA VOTE – Urban Rail**

Oct 8th 7:30pm

opt in/opt out process whereby individual NA's can choose certain "in fill" tools. It has also called for the end to the McMansion ordinance, passed to create neighborhood housing compatibility.

Additionally, there are calls for the densification of Central Austin through the elimination of occupancy limits on the number of unrelated people housed in duplex and rental properties in single family neighborhoods; the reduction of lot sizes in single family neighborhoods; and building height increases.

The words "complex" and "complexity of the code" are the most used in the Diagnostic Report and in comments by interest groups and citizens. Some organizations cite the complexity of the code to justify elimination of certain longstanding codes, such as zoning overlays, the McMansion ordinance, and neighborhood plans. Some attribute the lack of affordable housing to the complexity of the review and permit process and the organization of the Planning and Development Review Department.

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CodeNEXT cont'd from previous page

Opticos has plainly stated that the intent of most of Austin's current codes are good and should be preserved, but, along with most interests, agree that Austin's Planning and Development Review Department's organization and process is not functioning effectively. According to the Opticos team, a "thorough evaluation of the [PDRD] organizational structure " must be concurrent with revising the code.

Others believe that technological applications and the reorganization of the Legal Department, Planning and Development Review Department and reorganization of the current code should be the first steps taken before any code revisions.

(See Comments from the Residential Design and Compatibility Commission and comments from ANC and neighborhood leaders on Code Next's feedback blog at www.austintexas.gov/CodeNext).

Larger Concerns

Of particular concern to all Austinites is household affordability and housing choices. The Opticos team provides several ideas, including simplifying and clarifying the building permit process to reduce the cost to developers and homeowners, providing more housing choices, such as condos, duplexes, cottage style housing aka "missing middle housing" in the transportation corridors and new developments. George Zapalac, of the City's planning dept said, "The code itself can't fix all the housing affordability problems that we have. The private market does not build housing that can be afforded by a large part of the population. About 30 [percent] to 40 percent of the population is never going to be able to afford housing built by the private sector." (Also read Jeff Jack's viewpoint [www.austintexas.gov/code next](http://www.austintexas.gov/code%20next))

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3805 Red River photo by Cliff McSparran

3805 Red River: Demolition vs Historic Zoning

The historic debate goes on with a conflict between two structural engineering reports. The owner's report recommends the house be demolished. A report created by S. Patrick Sparks found the house to be structurally safe. The Historic Officer, Mr. Sadowsky, agrees that the structure of the house can withhold a slab replacement without disturbing the exterior walls. The owner of the property protests that the required repairs and upgrades will make the house financially unfeasible for the future.

The Preservation community and significant local architects oppose the demolition of the house and argue that the house contributes to the character and community value of the neighborhood. Hancock NA has not taken an official position on the historic significance of this 1947 structure. This property is located on a fragile and important corner that will impact the neighborhood's land use depending on future site plans.

The Historic Landmark Commissioners voted 5-0 to initiate historic zoning. The zoning process moved on in August to the Planning Commissioners with a vote of 5-2 not to recommend the house to be deemed historic zoning. Next stop is the City Council.

Reported by Linda Guerrero



Lee Elementary 75th Anniversary Celebration

Thursday, October 2 – 5:30-7:30

Lee Elementary will mark its 75th anniversary with a community-wide celebration on Thursday, Oct. 2 from 5:30-7:30 pm. This event is open to current, former, and future Lee students and their families, current and former teachers and staff and neighbors/community members.

All are welcome to enjoy a free mini-concert outside on the Lee playground at 6:15 by Lee parents and Texas music icons Hayes Carll and Bruce Robison.

The school will be open so that visitors can tour the original 1939 building and auditorium, revisit old classrooms and enjoy themed bulletin boards created by students. Old class photos will be displayed in the hallways.

The event is free and open to the public, and there will be opportunities for visitors to get involved and/or support Lee. Canned food items can be donated for the Capital Area Food Bank, you can sign up to help teachers with their “wish lists” or purchase 75th anniversary t-shirts.

The PTA will provide water and soft drinks, and food trucks will be on site for those wishing to purchase food. Visitors can enjoy a Lee-themed anniversary cake by Lee parent Paloma Efron of Coco Paloma Desserts and French macarons in Lee’s school colors by Lee parent Tracey Cole of Cookie Peace. Lee parent Steve Lawrence, from The Chocolate Makers Studio, will provide truffle-like lollipops.

Continued on next page

CodeNEXT cont’d from previous page

Of particular interest to our core neighborhoods are several appraisals made repeatedly by Opticos:

- 1) older Austin neighborhoods, such as Hyde Park, NUNA, West University, Bouldin, Travis Heights and Hancock are walkable, compact neighborhoods with a range of housing opportunities, aka “missing middle housing”;
- 2) the neighborhood planning process is a fundamental tool for planning;
- 3) one size does not fit all -- a reflection not only on the neighborhood planning process, but on the opt in/ opt out process for in-fill tools;
- 4) housing compatibility standards are necessary;
- 5) density should be thoroughly thought out and targeted.

Reported by Mary Sanger

Inherit Austin's Somewhere in Time Dinner Elisabet Ney, Nov. 16

Inherit Austin, a membership group within Preservation Austin, will host its fifth annual “Somewhere in Time” fundraising dinner at Formosa, the home and studio of sculptor Elisabet Ney, 304 East 44th Street. The event will take place at 5 pm on Sunday, Nov. 16. Enjoy drinks and dinner under the stars and tour the historic property, purchased in 1892 by Ney. At the turn of the 19th century, Formosa became a salon, or a gathering place for influential Texans drawn to “Miss Ney” and to the stimulating discussions of politics, art and philosophy that took place there. Following Ney’s death in 1907, her friends preserved the studio and its contents as the Elisabet Ney Museum. Since 1941, Formosa has been a property of the City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department.

Tickets are \$100 per guest. Purchase tickets and sponsorships (with generous benefits) at <http://preservationaustin.org>

Reported by Anne Hebert

Lee Elementary cont'd

The Oct. 2 community event is part of a week-long school-wide celebration.

About Lee Elementary

Robert E. Lee was built in 1939 among large, old Live Oak trees on Waller Creek. The first students attended Lee in September of 1939. It was the first AISD school fueled by natural gas instead of coal. During the 1940's the school became overcrowded as the community grew. In 1952, the adjacent "White House" was purchased by AISD to be utilized as a permanent building for Lee students; it is now used for sixth grade (Lee is one of the few AISD elementary schools still offering sixth grade).

Over the years renovations/additions have been completed:

- 1952 Gym and cafeteria added
- 1986 Three new kindergarten classrooms
- 1988 Library, computer lab, classrooms
- 1999 New play equipment
- 2001 Third playscape added
- 2006 Elevator and major electrical
- 2012 Outdoor classroom

That Lee is bounded by Waller Creek means expansion into portable buildings has not been an option, so the school size has remained small.

Some of the programs that Lee provides include a Fine Arts focus with a variety of drama, music and dance performances in the auditorium for all Lee students. Lee is the only elementary school with an auditorium that will house all the students at one time. Every student becomes a performer twice each year during programs that extend the curriculum.

Reported by Anne Hebert

Shipe Pool Closes for the Season

Shipe Pool closed for the season on Aug. 24th. An enthusiastic crowd put the "jewel of a pool" to sleep for a well deserved winter nap. There were beach balls, chicken fights and the crowd lined up along the pool's edge to slip in an "after the final whistle cannonball" amid cheers and good hearted jeers. New tradition, perhaps? The lifeguards were thanked as folks watched the pool get locked down... Some with a tear in their eye...wondering if the pool would reopen next summer.

A City Council mandated "third party" Aquatics Facilities and Programs Assessment identified Shipe Pools as two of 7 pools determined to have mechanical or structural failure in 5 years. We have been working closely with PARD to find solutions to keep the pools open.

In a surprise "Hail Mary" pass during the final hours of City budget negotiations, PARD Director Sara Hensley made a special request for money to replace some of the pools and our Shipe Pools and Govalle pool were selected and fully funded with \$6.3 million dollars!! Because the design and bidding phase will likely take a couple of years, our new focus is to find out what our community wants in a new pool.

Check the HNA group, the Friends of Shipe Park FB page or www.shipepark.org for updates.

Alison Young
Friends of Shipe Park

