

NEWS AROUND AUSTIN AND SURROUNDING AREA

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SINGLE MEMBER DISTRICTS

A fourteen member commission will be formed to draw the ten newly approved City Council districts, with the city auditor's office overseeing the commission application and selection process. It is currently anticipated that district representation will take effect with the November 2014 election.

PROJECT DURATION

The office of the Attorney General of Texas has issued an opinion that a court would rule Austin's Project Duration Ordinance void to the extent that it causes projects to expire in conflict with Chapter 245 of the Texas Local Government Code.

[Click here for more info](#)

SALAMANDER LISTING

House Bill HR 6219 (Rep. John Carter) and Senate Bill 3446 (Sen. John Cornyn) would block listing of the four Central Texas salamander species: the Austin Blind Salamander; the Jollyville Plateau Salamander; the Georgetown Salamander; and the Salado Salamander. Both bills are still in committee and given less than a 1% chance of adoption. The City of Austin and Travis County Commissioners support the listing. US Fish and Wildlife is expected to make a decision in early 2013.

AUSTIN DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS

Staff is auditing the process to evaluate efficiency and timeliness, anticipated to be done in March 2013, with a consultant expected to be hired by April 2013. Paul Linehan has asked to be a stakeholder in the process. Landmarks in the process include the appointment of a steering committee in December 2012, the implementation of a community outreach strategy in Summer 2013, City Council approval of an annotated outline of the new code in June 2014, and a preliminary draft of the code presented to City Council in March 2015.

In a November 30, 2012 memorandum, Greg Guernsey (Director, Planning & Development Review) said that City staff is currently a minimum of eight weeks behind in the mandated review periods of seven (7) days for new construction and two (2) days for remodels and addition. As of November 27, the backlog was 652 applications.

OPEN SPACE ORDINANCE

Austin's requirement for common open space was increased to 5% of the gross site area for commercial projects, and for multifamily and condominium projects with 10 or more units.

Exempted multifamily and condominium projects may provide personal open space in lieu of common open space. There is a fee-in-lieu option applicable to projects within the Urban Roadway boundary on which provision of on-site open space is impractical or unreasonable.

URBAN FOREST PLAN

A City Council resolution calls for the development of pilot program to identify, maintain, and preserve prominent trees in the urban core and along transit corridors. A brief statement of vision, mission, and guiding principles for the plan has been prepared.

[Click here for more info](#)

MY PERMIT NOW

MyPermitNow is a web-based project tracking application intended to streamline submittal, review, and tracking of plans and permits. The system includes the option for 100% digital submission, review of staff comments, email notification of status and other updates, and scheduling of inspections, and will eventually include online payment and submittal of documentation. Jurisdictions using MyPermitNow pay fees based on the number of applications processed, but there is no fee for an applicant to register with MyPermitNow as a user. Based on the June 2012 CAPCOG newsletter, jurisdictions currently using MyPermitNow include Georgetown, Lago Vista, Cedar Park, San Marcos, Hutto, and Hays County.

AUSTIN WATERSHED PROTECTION ORDINANCE

Changes to the watershed setbacks have been proposed and are under consideration. Changes being considered include reducing the watershed acreage for a minor tributary to a uniform 64 acres in all watersheds. Critical Water Quality Zones would be replaced by a system of buffers. The stream buffers are defined differently in Eastern and in Western watersheds, but closely resemble the current Critical Water Quality Zones both in size and development constraints. Water Quality Transition Zones are expected to be eliminated in the Suburban watersheds, but to remain in place in watersheds identified as being part of the Drinking Water Protection Zone.

Most areas of the current water quality regulations are under review for potential revision, simplification, expansion, and redirection. The overall intent is to coordinate with the new Travis County Water Quality Rules. Drafts for Chapter 25-8, subchapter A, and Section 25-1-23, were posted December 12, 2012.

[Chapter 25-8, subchapter A](#)
[Section 25-1-23](#)

BARTON SPRINGS ZONE REDEVELOPMENT

The Austin City Council considered a resolution on December 13, 2012, directing the City Manager to consider the impact of expanding the applicability of the Barton Springs Zone redevelopment exception to all watersheds within the City of Austin's jurisdiction. The resolution also directs consideration of expanding the application exceptions in the City Code to include redevelopment of a portion of a site, and to consider other code amendments that could encourage

redevelopment while providing environmental benefits.

[Click here for more info](#)

TRAVIS COUNTY WATER QUALITY RULES

Travis County has adopted new rules for water quality protection, all found in Chapter 82 of Travis County Code. These rules apply to subdivisions that are under County jurisdiction. New rules pertain to impervious cover, minimum lot size, cut and fill, and setbacks from streams.

[Standards for Construction, Chapter 82](#)

WILLIAMSON COUNTY SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS

Williamson County's proposed new subdivision regulations include several changes that will directly impact site design, including changes to right-of-way requirements for certain street types, as well as requiring that all road and drainage construction be completed before recording a final plat. Additionally, the definitions of urban vs. rural would be clarified so that an average driveway spacing of over 100 feet in a quarter mile would be defined as a rural subdivision, and any curb and gutter street would be considered an urban street.

ROUND ROCK SIGN ORDINANCE

The Round Rock Planning and Zoning Commission acted on the new sign ordinance at their December 5, 2012 meeting, and a public hearing before City Council is expected in early 2013. The proposed ordinance consolidates all sign standards into a single chapter, adds maintenance standards for signs, and sets standards for measurement of sign height and display area. The proposed ordinance also changes the basis for sign standards from zoning to

basis for sign standards from zoning to roadway type. The number and size of signs will be based on the road type and length of the street frontage, with a minimum distance set between freestanding signs. Pylon signs would be permitted only on IH-35, SH-45, and SH-130, or within 500 feet of the main lanes of those highways.

[Click here for more info](#)

SOUND MITIGATION

In Austin, off-site noise levels are currently controlled by limiting the sound level as measured at the property boundary of the facility generating the sound. In a proposal under review, standards would be set based on the sound level inside nearby structures.

WEST TRAVIS COUNTY PUBLIC UTILITY AGENCY

WTCPUA has adopted a new rate structure for water and wastewater capital recovery fees. Fees are set by region within their jurisdiction. In the Highway 71 water rate district (which includes Highway 620), water fees are set at \$5,992 per LUE, and at \$8,809 in the Highway 290 water rate district area. At their November 1 public hearing, it was also stated that the LCRA had been undercharging wholesale customers for water services by approximately 31%, with the retail customers making up the shortfall by overpaying.

For the City of Bee Caves, water and wastewater fees have been set at \$4,120 per LUE for water, and \$5,250 per LUE for wastewater, according to the September 10, 2012 Tariff Schedule for the West Travis County Public Utility Agency. It is anticipated that these rates will increase to a combined water and wastewater fee of \$17,492 or \$20,309 (for the Bee Cave

and Bee Cave South subdistricts, respectively) for new projects initiated after November 1, 2013. Water fees in other districts are currently \$5,992 for the Highway 71 system, \$8,809 for the Highway 290 system area, and \$4,180 for the 290/HPR district.

AUSTIN WATER UTILITY IMPACT FEES

To generate more revenue, Austin Water Utility has two mechanisms available: rate increases (paid by rate payers), and increases to impact fees paid by developers. Currently, only impact fee increases are under active consideration. New information concerning proposed changes to fees and rates was made available at the October 8, 2012 meeting of the City of Austin Impact Fee Advisory Committee. (The following link is from the RECA web site.)

[Click here for more info](#)

AUSTIN WATER UTILITY COST PARTICIPATION AND COST REIMBURSEMENT

The current system of cost reimbursement for water and wastewater cost participation agreements and cost reimbursement is under review. The proposal under consideration would eliminate the cost reimbursement program entirely. Cost participation would be based on a percentage of the size differential between the size of mains required for a project, and the actual oversized mains installed. There would be no cost participation for wastewater infrastructure in the Drinking Water Protection Zone.

The Austin Homebuilders Association would prefer that cost participation agreements be approved by staff instead of City Council, and that if the cost reimbursement program

is to be eliminated, then the City of Austin should be more aggressive with its capital improvement program.

COMMERCIAL DESIGN STANDARDS AMENDMENTS

The most recent amendments to the Commercial Design Standards consist primarily of clarifications, with additional information regarding what is considered a remodel and what is considered a tear down.

HERITAGE TREE MITIGATION

In October 2012, a number of potential measures for mitigating Heritage Tree removal were discussed at a meeting of the Development Committee of the Environmental Board. Potential measures discussed included:

- Replacing at 3:1 planting in nearby park sites.
- Contributing to the City of Austin tree mitigation fund (keeping funding in the downtown area) or an urban tree enhancement program at 3:1 or \$600 per inch.
- Donating land that benefits the City's green infrastructure objectives.
- Creating a safe harbor green space for tree preservation or replacement in a sector of downtown or a transplant site.

STATE HIGHWAY 45 SW AND THE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The City of Austin has adopted a resolution to withdraw its request to CAMPO that State Highway 45 SW be removed from the Regional Transportation Plan. However, the same resolution stated the City's intent to resubmit that request at a later date.

WATER WELLS IN AUSTIN

October 11, 2012, the City of Austin passed an ordinance that requires registration of private wells in the City, but does not regulate their use.

LCRA SALE OF WATER/WASTEWATER SYSTEMS

Sales to date include:

- Corix Infrastructure Services: Lake Buchanan Water System; Spicewood Beach Water System; Smithwick Mills Water System; Ridge Harbor Water System; Ridge Harbor Wastewater System; Paradise Point Water System; Sandy Harbor Water System; Quail Creek Water System; Camp Swift Wastewater System; McKinney Roughs Wastewater System; Alleyton Water System; Alleyton Wastewater System; Matagorda Dunes Water System; Matagorda Dunes Wastewater System; Lometa Water System; Lometa Wastewater System; Windmill Ranch Wastewater System; and Windmill Ranch Raw Water System.
- the City of Liberty Hill: Liberty Hill Wastewater System
- the City of Sunrise Beach: Sunrise Beach Water System
- the City of Elgin: Elgin Wastewater System
- the City of Leander: Sandy Creek Water System
- the City of Austin: the Glenlake Water System
- Lakeway Barge Participants: Lakeway Regional Water System.
- West Travis County Public Utility Agency: West Travis County Water and Wastewater systems.
- the City of Rollingwood: Rollingwood Wastewater Utility System
- the City of West Lake Hills: West Lake Hills Wastewater System
- Whitewater Springs Water Supply Corporation: Whitewater Springs Water System.
- Systems remaining at this time include: Tahitian Village Wastewater System; Bonanza Beach Water System; and Tow Village Water System.

TOWN CENTER REZONED

The Town Center, a ±230 acre property located in Pflugerville at the

intersection of SH-130 and Pfluger Lane, was originally zoned for multifamily and commercial development. The City of Pflugerville redesignated the zoning of the property to Urban Level 4 (CL4) to create a high-density development corridor along SH-130. In cooperation with the City of Pflugerville, which wanted less intense zoning on the property, Land Strategies, Inc. secured rezoning of the tract from Urban Level 4 to General Business 1 (GB-1) and Multi-Family Urban (MF-U) on November 13, 2012.

CP 57 REZONED

The 57 acre property located in Cedar Park near the intersection of East Whitestone Boulevard and Ronald W. Reagan Boulevard, was successfully zoned for townhome and commercial development, with a significant portion of the property designated as open space. The townhome zoning in particular was challenging because the City of Cedar Park has expressly stated that they do not want any more residential development at this time. The townhome zoning was only gained by proving that the area surrounding the 57 acre property was underserved with residential development.

WINDMILL HILL

Land Strategies, Inc. has obtained initial entitlements for the ±95-acre Windmill Hill property, located on the north side of Westinghouse Road (CR 111) east of IH-35 in the City of Georgetown. The property has been rezoned to multifamily, commercial, and business park, with the creation of two new roadways for connectivity through the property. Additionally, a preliminary plat has been approved by the City, and Land Strategies, Inc. is currently processing a final plat on the

first development phase, the multifamily tract. This project helps to extend development east of IH-35 in the southeastern quadrant of the City of Georgetown, which we believe is a future growth corridor benefitting from existing development in northeastern Round Rock.

MADISON AT GEORGETOWN

Land Strategies, Inc. has worked on the Madison at Georgetown project, comprised of approximately 596 acres along Highway 195 and Ronald Reagan Boulevard in northwestern Georgetown, since 2008. During that time, we have obtained approval of a Development Agreement for the overall property, as well as Annexation, Zoning, and Preliminary Plats for two of the three sections, comprised of approximately 780 single-family lots, with 2 multi-family lots and 2 commercial lots. The overall subdivision (three total sections with multiple phases in each section) will include primarily single-family residential development (of varying lot sizes), as well as multi-family and commercial development. Additionally, a site for a future Jarrell I.S.D. elementary school is included in Section Two of the subdivision. We also processed the sale of karst land for mitigation of the Highway 195 construction improvements with the Williamson County Conservation Foundation and through the Williams County attorney's office. Parkland areas were designed around the karst features for further protection of the karst areas.