

Bouldin Bulletin

President’s Message

South Central Waterfront Plan Failing

— Jesse Moore, BCNA Prez and Cory Walton, former BCNA Prez and current Member of South Central Waterfront Advisory Board

The South Central Waterfront Plan was a promising City redevelopment plan that would provide more parkland along Ladybird Lake, access to that waterfront parkland by foot, bike, bus, and car, and truly affordable housing in and near that area. Unfortunately, the plan is teetering toward failure. The City will likely move ahead in the next few months with permitting a giant 400-foot tower to be built on the former site of the Austin-American Statesman without enacting the measures necessary to ensure that the community receives the parkland, connectivity, and affordable housing components of the Waterfront Plan in exchange for that increased building height.

Since its 2016 adoption by Council, little progress has been made on the public improvements envisioned by the Waterfront Plan. The long-term funding for the Waterfront Plan needs to come from a Tax Increment Financing fund (TIF), which grows as the value of each plan-area property increases. The City has not yet devoted the time or staffing to create the TIF. Instead, the City gave the new owner of the Hooter’s tract a 315% height increase for an office tower without the TIF in place, which means that that funding source for the Waterfront Plan has been irretrievably lost.

Meanwhile, the new owner of the Statesman site has hired lobbyists to work the backrooms at City Hall to maximize the value of that waterfront property. Hopefully the City will make a fair bargain for the people of Austin this time - although recent Council votes are not cause for optimism; (see ‘Affordability Unlocked’ below.)

More information on the Waterfront Plan, and what we can do to save this unique space from being squandered, will be provided at the June 11 BCNA meeting. Hope to see you there.

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“Affordability Unlocked” Falls Short: Five-Story Hotels Coming to a Lot Near You

— Jesse Moore, BCNA President

On May 9, 2019, the City Council unanimously passed the “Affordability Unlocked” ordinance, which enables significantly larger structures to be built in residential areas as long as some token “affordable” units are “provided.” As indicated by all the quotation marks, the law is full of loopholes.

Smart land use lawyers (like Mayor Adler) will find many ways to take advantage of the law. For example, the affordable units do not need to be equal to other units - they can be very small and undesirable tokens. The income and wealth of the buyers or renters of these affordable units does not need to be verified on a regular, ongoing basis - developers can sell to their retired parents or temporarily unemployed friends, who can then flip the formerly unaffordable units for significant profits. The law has very weak enforcement mechanisms and no funding for enforcement.

In exchange for sham affordability, developers can build five-story towers in Bouldin and other central neighborhoods. Parking is not required, even though Austin remains a city of missing sidewalks and crosswalks, and cutting down even more trees in favor of air-conditioned McMansions will turn up the heat in our neighborhoods. Adding insult to injury, an amendment to prohibit these new buildings from being used for non-owner-occupied short-term-rentals (aka hotels) failed, with one council member even arguing that dedicating residential space to tourist rentals somehow helps residential affordability.

The vote concluded with several council members agreeing with each other about what a good job they had done. So it goes.

The disappointing results of "Affordability Unlocked" likely foreshadow what will happen in coming months as the City resurrects CodeNext. Expect more quick, aggressive, and significant changes without much public input or deliberation or benefit.

Brown Sector – *Stephanie Scholten*

Game time: Guess which year each of these Brown Sector places were built!

- (A) Whataburger
- (B) The Willows Apartments
- (C) McPhail Florist (closed)
- (D) Timbercreek Apartments
- (E) The house containing The Art of Shoes
- (F) Viewpoint Condos
- (G) Oak Knoll Condos

Bonus question: Before the WeWork building was constructed, what wildly popular food truck sold icy treats to help ward off the summer heat?

Answers: (A) 1979 (B) 1969 (C) Store in 1939, house behind in 1947 (D) 1972 (E) 1926 (F) 1985 (G) 1968 (BONUS) Sno Beach

Blue Sector – *Ryan Gullahorn*

Bouldin is a neighborhood that still projects friendliness amongst neighbors due to its walkability, and many of the houses having open front porches and sparse fencing out front. The new sidewalks in the Blue Sector have greatly increased foot traffic.

One of the friendly front yard activities that was more prominent in the past is the beautiful game of washer tossin'. Many Bouldin neighbors who used to have seemingly daily matches in their front yard have moved on, and even the restaurant versions have been paved over for more seating.

To set up your own yard with this fun cultural pastime, all you need are 2 PVC or tin "cups" in the ground, and some common washers. Then you just call up a few friends, turn up some old country music, and turn the world off for a couple hours. In Austin we generally throw 4 washers each and also count "lippers" or

"hangers" as 3 points; in addition to the other scoring and setup detail you can find online.

If you are walking the hood and come upon a washer match, feel free to call "next" and then join your neighbors for some friendly competition. Washers is a great Texan tradition meant to be played anywhere/ anytime, whereas cornhole (bags) and other wannabes were popularized in large northern cities with lots of concrete and bad weather. Each "pit" you come across may have its own house rules, dimensions, and quirks.

My personal tossin' style centers on a well balanced stance - where the washer tossin' hand is balanced out with an ice cold Lone Star in the other. Enjoy!

Enhancing Neighborhood Safety By Creating A Safe Pathway

— From City of Austin – Public Works Department

Know The Right Of Way, Clear The Right Of Way

To protect public health and safety, it is important to keep streets, sidewalks, bicycle lanes and other public areas free of overgrown vegetation. Green spaces transform the city and provide many benefits that influence the health and well-being of our community. Property owners, both public and private, need to be conscious about managing vegetation on their property to address visibility and safety concerns.

It is important to meet the standards below and keep the following areas free of obstructions:

Sidewalks: For a clear pathway, keep tree limbs and vegetation trimmed back from the edge of the sidewalk and at least 8 feet above sidewalks.

Streets/Alleys: Keep tree limbs and vegetation trimmed back from the edge of the street or alley and at least 14 feet above streets, bicycle lanes and alleys.

Corner Lots: Maintain vegetation at a maximum of 2 feet above ground within a 10 foot setback from the

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curbline (edge of street) and 40 feet along the curbline from the street intersection.

Effective ways to enhance neighborhood safety:

- Trim trees and vegetation to increase safety for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles.
- Maintain care and health of the trees on your property. Well-maintained trees provide shade, improve air quality and keep Austin looking beautiful!
- Dial 3-1-1 to request care for trees in the public right of way.

Property Owner Responsibility: Property owners are responsible for the care and maintenance of trees, plants and grass on private property. Overgrown trees and plants can pose a threat when they block the path or view of traffic signs, signals, fire hydrants, vehicles and people. Prune trees and trim or remove any vegetation that blocks the pathway of sidewalks, streets, alleys, bicycle lanes and trails. Keep in mind, the strip of land between the street and sidewalk is public property but the maintenance of vegetation (with the exception of trees) is the property owners' responsibility. Trees in the public right of way are maintained by the City of Austin.

City Responsibility: The public right of way includes streets, sidewalks and alleys. This land is public property and is owned by the City of Austin. It typically extends 10 feet back from the edge of a street, but can vary across the City. While property owners are responsible for mowing the grass and maintaining vegetation that grows in the public right of way, the trees that grow in this area belong to the City and are maintained by trained crews. If a tree growing in the public right of way is in need of maintenance, dial 3-1-1 to report the tree.

For more info: austintexas.gov/cleartherow

Sector Information

View a neighborhood sector map at:
<http://www.bouldincreek.org/sector-map/>

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General Association Meeting: 2nd Tuesday, every other month
Steering Committee Meeting: 1st Monday, each month
Zoning Committee Meeting: 3rd Monday each month
Newsletter Publication: 2 weekends before General Meeting

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The Bouldin Bulletin, published every two months, is hand-delivered by your neighbors to approximately 2500 households. Please reach out if you would like to contribute to the distribution effort or if you would like to place an ad. (Ads are due one month prior to the GA Meeting.)

MEMBERSHIP

If you would like to join the Neighborhood Association to be able to vote or pledge a candidacy, please send your name, address, phone, and email to:

Jeff Seiden treasurer@bouldincreek.org
 BCNA Treasurer
 PO Box 3683
 Austin TX 78764-3683

If you would like to make the optional dues payment, please include \$25 payable to BCNA.

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