

Z NEWS

JULY 2019

Newsletter of the
Zilker Neighborhood
Association

Austin, Texas

Established 1981

Where Transit Corridors Meet Transition Zoning

by ZNA President Dave Piper

THE PACE OF CHANGE to the Zilker neighborhood is likely to accelerate with the reconstruction of South Lamar Boulevard and the presumed passage of a new Land Development Code. Final engineering for South Lamar will begin this fall and take about a year, according to the Austin Transportation Department. After that, construction will take a few more years. Preliminary drawings for the entire road can be seen at the ZNA web site (zilkerneighborhood.org/south-lamar-corridor.shtml). After the dust settles, the city's primary goal is for the road and streetscape to be safer, easier for us to use on foot and on bicycles, with better bus service.

In May, the City Council issued directives to the City Manager for the content in the ongoing rewrite of the Land Development Code (LDC), which is supposed to be ready for Council by October 12. The Council's directives extend the housing density that was prescribed in the CodeNext project before Council abandoned it last year in the face of opposition from most segments of the community. The rewrite, which builds on CodeNext, will determine the type and scale of all structures that are allowed or not allowed on every property in the city. It also determines how all land (including the land under our homes) may or may not be used (for example, allowing or prohibiting craft breweries next to homes). The City Council's stated goal is to increase the supply of "affordable" housing in Austin. Affordability is usually measured as a percentage of Median Family Income (MFI), which varies across the United States. (In Austin it's \$86,000, but there is wide disparity across the city.)

The City Council directed that the new

Spotlight on Solar Energy

Many Austin residents want to install solar energy systems on their homes but do not have the tools they need to sort through the available information. Austin Energy's solar team will conduct a class at the ZNA meeting on July 29 to help Zilker neighbors make the best solar investment possible, with guidance on subscription options, system design, choosing a company, and more. The presentation is about 30 minutes long, and there will be time for questions afterward. Austin Energy customers who complete the course are eligible for a \$2,500 rebate to apply toward a qualified solar energy system installation. See Green Power at austinenergy.com

zoning plan yield 135,000 housing units in Austin in the next 10 years, 75% of which should be within half a mile of transit corridors such as South Lamar and Barton Springs Road. One half mile from those streets includes most of the Zilker neighborhood. The 135,000 number of needed housing units was derived by applying the growth rate for the five-county Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) to Austin proper, although the MSA outside of Austin is growing much faster than Austin itself. There is no sound basis for applying such a simple methodology to so wide an area in order to determine these crucial numbers for Austin itself. Many people, including myself, continue to question this methodology. The rationale is that the people living outside Austin really want to live here, so we need to apply the MSA growth rate to the central city. While I'm sure there is some truth to that, I'm also sure that a lot of those people who work and play and send their children to school in communities outside Austin don't want to move into

ZNA General Meeting Monday, July 29

at Nowlin Rehearsal Studio, Zach Theater Center, 1426 Toomey Road

6:30 PM, Meet and Greet

7 PM, ZNA Business

Zilker Park Working Group recommendations

Butler Shores PUDs and other development updates

CodeNext resurrected

After 7:30 PM, Solar Education

Solar Education Class, presented by Austin Energy Renewable Solutions

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NEW MEETING PLACE

On July 29 ZNA will meet at the Nowlin Rehearsal Studio, 1426 Toomey Road, directly behind the Schlotzsky's on South Lamar. It's convenient to the bus, and there are five free parking spots at the building. The parking lot for the Zach theaters and on-street parking are metered (\$1 an hour).

After 4 PM, the parking to the west, by the ballfields, is free.

Newcomers, homeowners, renters, business neighbors

❖ ❖ All Welcome ❖ ❖

smaller houses inside a crowded city. I'd like to see a proper survey of residents in those outlying areas to better understand the demand.

The City Council directives to the City Manager can be found on the ZNA web site at zilkerneighborhood.org/codenext4.shtml. One of the main features is establishing a "transition zone" into the neighborhood that extends 2 to 5 lots behind the properties facing South Lamar and Barton Springs Road. Check the map on the ZNA web site (codenext4) to see if your Zilker property is in the possible transition zone. There are several ways to map the transi-



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Next ZNA social will be
Wednesday, August 7, 5-7 pm
Location to be announced.

The next Executive Committee meeting will be
August 5, 6:30-8:30 pm,
at the Umlauf Museum
on Azie Morton Road.

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tion zone, and there will always be pressure to extend the boundary, so if your house or apartment is near the zone on our map, you still could be affected. Within the transition zone no new single family structures will be allowed, including at teardown sites. The Council directive (page 12i) says, "Four units within a house scale should be the least intense zone within a transition area," which is taken to mean that property owners will not be permitted to rebuild single or duplex housing on any lot within the transition zone.

A six-plex with 50% extra height, less distance from the street, and no parking places may be built on *any* lot if at least three units are 80% MFI (Ordinance 20190509-027, passed May 9). Generally, no parking spaces will be required for residential and commercial structures anywhere within a quarter mile of a transition corridor (page 13-2a). This concept has always distressed me because most of the neighborhood consists of narrow streets without sidewalks. The streets are the walkways, and it's unsafe to park them up completely. (Interior neighborhood sidewalks will not be added, according to City Council.)

The character of Austin's population growth is debatable, but it is clear that new housing will be needed. The Council directives, however, do not consider the amount of housing that our existing zoning is delivering now or that it would deliver in the near future. Quite a lot of the houses in Austin will come onto the market in the next 10 years. Rather than aggressive re-zoning within transition zones, I think the city would be better served to determine the amount of housing we would get with the zoning in place now. Then any additional new housing can be distributed over a larger area, to be served with buses and neighborhood circulators where needed.

We hope to have updates on the progress of the LDC rewrite and Zilker-specific data at the ZNA meeting on July 29. See you then. *Your neighbor, Dave Piper*

On the ZNA Agenda

THE ZILKER PARK WORKING GROUP (ZPWG) was formed by the City Council last summer, largely in response to Environmental Commission hearings where ZNA opposed using parkland along Stratford Drive as a rock-covered staging area for the Austin City Limits Festival. The ZPWG studied traffic and parking and other planning issues for the entire park, not just the Stratford Drive area. Over nine months, they reached consensus only on some short-term traffic solutions; otherwise the Final Report simply postpones the major issues to a master planning process. That is why ZNA joined with the Barton Hills Neighborhood Association, Save our Springs Alliance, and the ZPWG representatives for Council districts 5 and 7 to recommend that Council take immediate steps to protect Zilker Park as a "natural experience" rather than "highly developed, overprogrammed, semi-privatized parking lots." Bruce Wiland, ZNA's rep on the ZPWG, will summarize the alternative recommendations at the ZNA meeting on July 29, but you can read them and the Full Report for yourself on the ZNA web site (zilkerneighborhood.org/zpwg.shtml). Background on the Stratford Drive proposal is posted at [/zilker-stratford.shtml](http://zilker-stratford.shtml).

The ZNA zoning committee is reviewing two cases on Butler Shores, a 96-foot tall hotel proposal at 211 S. Lamar and an office tower (more than 100 feet) at 218 S. Lamar. Both projects represent a loss of potential multifamily housing on the corridor, inconsistent with Austin's comprehensive plan. They are scheduled to be presented to the Small Area Planning Joint Subcommittee on August 14.

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ZNA is in District 5, represented by Council Member ANN KITCHEN, at district5@austintexas.gov or 512-978-2105. Email the Council at www.austintexas.gov/email/all-council-members

Our Austin Police District Rep is Officer Shawn Rougeou, at 512-974-5490 or Shawn.Rougeou@austintexas.gov

2019 ZNA Executive Committee

- President: Dave Piper
- Vice Presidents
- Executive: Gary Hamilton
- Communications: Open
- Parks and Environment: Gail Rothe
- Social: Pat Cramer
- Zoning: Bill Neale
- Secretary: James Russell
- Treasurer: Bruce Wiland
- ANC Delegate: Bobby Rigney

Email ZNA@zilkerneighborhood.org

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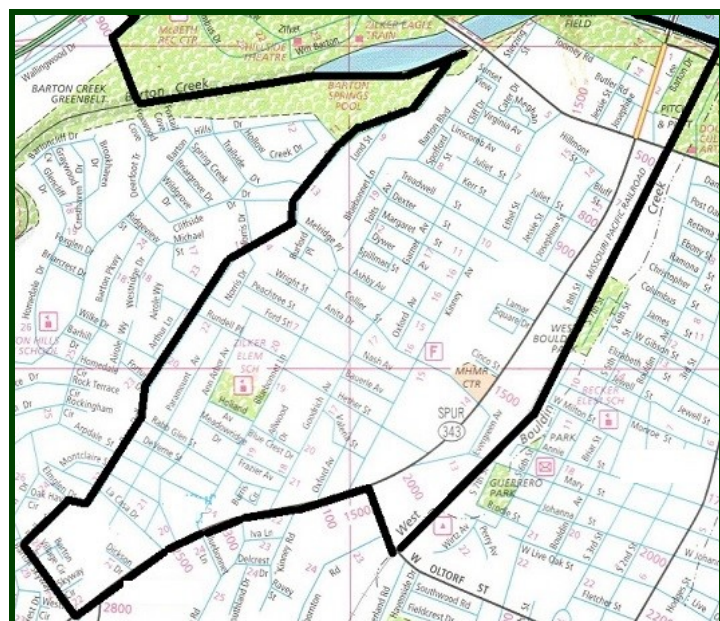
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The Executive Committee meets the first Monday of most months at the Umlauf Sculpture Garden and Museum, 605 Azie Morton, 6:30 PM. Watch zilkerneighborhood.org for updates.

For ZNA bylaws and to join online, visit www.zilkerneighborhood.org



ZNA boundaries include Zilker Park and Rabb Road on the west, from Lady Bird Lake to Barton Skyway, and the railroad on the east to Oltorf and then S. Lamar.

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Advertisers: ZNA reserves this newsletter's limited advertising space for businesses based within the boundaries of the association.

BECOME A ZNA MEMBER TODAY

Membership is open to Zilker residents (renters or homeowners) 18 years old or older. Nonresident property owners are not eligible for membership.

Annual dues are \$7 per person. Please list each member's name and e-mail address below.

Name: _____ E-mail: _____

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Please make checks payable to Zilker Neighborhood Association and mail with this form to:
ZNA Memberships, 1510 Oxford St, Austin, TX 78704
or bring this form with you to the next ZNA meeting, or join online.