The return of the multifamily residential complex

Hundreds of units planned to meet demand to be near schools, downtown

**By Joe Olivieri**

Six months after opening Abacus Southside, Property Manager Isaac San Miguel is optimistic about the future of the apartment complex.

Construction ended in November and the William Cannon Drive complex is already half full, he said.

He credits the high level of interest in Abacus to delivering the right product in the right place. Why spend $2,100 for a two-bedroom apartment downtown, he reasons, when you can get a similar place a few miles away for $1,500 to $1,600?

“I think we fill a niche by offering a luxury product in a good part of town,” he said. “We are very close to [downtown] but [can rent at] less of a cost because our land cost was a lot less expensive.”

Abacus is part of a trend of new and proposed multifamily housing developments in Southwest Austin. Real estate professionals count at least nine major projects actively under construction—including Jefferson South Congress’ 352 units, Landmark Double Creek Phase III’s 276 units and Legacy at Southpark’s 250 units—with more on the horizon.

Some of this development is a bounce back from the 2008–2011 lull in the multifamily housing

See Multifamily | 28

Council holds first meeting Jan. 29

Four new members to represent Southwest Austin in 2015

**By Kelli Weldon**

With Austin’s new City Council members taking their places at the dais Jan. 29, some residents are hoping positive changes are in store for Southwest Austin.

The city of Austin held its first City Council elections under the 10-1 districting system in November. Previously, all council members and the mayor were elected at-large, but in 2014 voters elected 10 City Council members representing discrete geographic areas, while the mayor was still elected at-large. Council members were sworn in Jan. 6.

Voters elected Ellen Troxclair, former Texas legislative Chief of Staff for Rep. Jason Isaac, as the representative for District 8.

“Troxclair said.
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BRODIE HEIGHTS CONDO
11543 Gun Fight Ln
2 BD 2.5 BA +/-1,334 SQ FT
Listed by Mitch Sundet
512.426.1981

PHEASANT RUN
2709 Firecrest
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512.280.7653

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1566 Grassy Field
4 BD 2.5 BA +/-2,927 SQ FT
Listed by Burt Dement
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1566 Grassy Field
4 BD 2.5 BA +/-2,927 SQ FT
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FROM THE EDITOR

I am not cut out to be a salesman. I had a sales job once for about two weeks, and I knew it wasn’t for me.

The one thing I did like about the job was the opening pitch. You have to describe why the product is valuable before you can discuss a price.

I was reminded of my ill-fated sales job when researching this month’s front-page story on multifamily housing developments in Southwest Austin.

We’ve all heard the reasons why Southwest Austin is a desirable location: It’s close to the city’s downtown and the Texas Hill Country, as well as great schools nearby.

What interested me is that the area is so valuable to so many people that developers are willing to go to great lengths to build here. Small infill properties are being bought up left and right. Developers are installing special groundwater protection measures, meeting aquifer regulations, holding several community meetings, offering amenities and in at least two cases, petitioning Austin City Council to change neighborhood plans—all to be able to build new apartments and condominiums.

Access to good schools alone did not create that demand. In my story I talk with real estate experts to learn what is behind this next phase of our area’s development and what residents can expect.

Since my sales job, I’ve stuck to products that sell themselves, and this month’s January Issue is no exception. This issue is packed with updates on local, city and regional issues.

Enjoy this issue, and a belated happy new year to you!

Joe Olivieri
EDITOR
jolivieri@impactnews.com

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

READER COMMENTS

Input sought for MoPac intersection proposal
(Volume 7, Issue 9)

“Let’s go with a solution that isn’t confusing, is used throughout the nation and gets rid of the traffic lights: [a] low-speed clover-leaf. It provides continuous access in all directions. “Low-speed” version[s] have a reduced turning radius to fit tighter spots but are still fully functional and can work in this area.”

—Jeff D.

“(A diverging diamond interchange) intersection has a problem of moving straight forward for drivers at a MoPac frontage road or side road. Please use a design of no traffic light. This intersection has a plenty of land for such [a] design!”

—Max

Chamber’s annual State of Education focuses on college enrollment, STEM opportunities
(Volume 7, Issue 8)

“There is no need to educate workers in the Austin area for STEM fields. There are already several thousand here unemployed. What employers are not telling you is that they prefer Austin ISD and taxpayers to pay for training and save money by not paying those here already with the skills more money. Congratulations Austin taxpayers—you’re suckers.”

—Regina

TAKING THE POLL

What issues do you want Southwest Austin’s new City Council members to work on?

Take the poll online at impactnews.com/swa-poll.

LAST MONTH’S POLL RESULTS

In our previous issue, Community Impact Newspaper reported on proposed improvements to the intersections at which MoPac crosses La Crosse Avenue and Slaughter Lane.

What part of the MoPac intersections project is most important to you?

45.45\% Reduced traffic
27.27\% Increasing capacity
18.18\% Improved safety
9.09\% I don’t use the intersection.

Results from an unscientific Web survey, collected 12/19/14–1/6/15.

For more information, contact the reporter:

—Kelli Weidon

For a copy of this edition, call us:

—Joe Olivieri

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About us

John and Jennifer Garrett began Community Impact Newspaper in 2005 in Pflugerville, Texas. The company’s mission is to build communities of informed citizens and thriving businesses through the collaboration of a passionate team. Now, with 18 markets in the Austin, Houston and Dallas/Fort Worth metro areas, the paper is distributed to more than 1.3 million homes and businesses.

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**Now Open**

1. **Bon Bon Macarons**, a bakery located at 3401 S. Lamar Blvd., Ste. 3128, opened Dec. 30. Owner Jade Browne said the new storefront only sells macaron cookies. Flavors will change daily, with options including peppermint bark, strawberry, coconut, pistachio, raspberry, and chocolate with salted caramel.

    512-387-1266.
    www.bonbonmacarons.com

2. **Taquerias Arandinas** opened a new location, called **Casa Arandinas**, in mid-December at 9001 Brodie Lane, Ste. A-3. Taquerias Arandinas also operates a location at 700 W. William Cannon Drive.

    512-292-1822.
    www.arandinas.com

3. **City Chapel at Slaughter Creek**, 9900 S. 1-35, Austin, opened Jan. 25. The nondenominational Christian church, which is led by pastors Harry and Rowena Fleming, provides separate Sunday services for children and adults at 10 a.m. in the Cinemark theater building at Southpark Meadows.

    512-213-8035.
    www.citychapelchurch.com

4. **J&J Worldwide Services** opened its new facility at 7710 Rialto Blvd. in mid-December, according to the company. The facility offers construction management and facility operations and maintenance among its services.

    512-444-7271.
    www.jjwws.com

5. **The Lice Place** opened in January at 4544 S. Lamar Blvd., Ste. 750. The business offers chemical- and pesticide-free manual removal of head lice for all ages.

    512-520-8360.
    www.theliceplace.com

6. **PRT Landscaping and General Contracting** opened its headquarters at the former site of Far Out Marketplace, 1705 FM 1626, on Dec. 3, owner Brian Rogers said. The business offers residential and commercial landscaping, hardscaping, xeriscaping and irrigation among its services.

    512-573-1135.
    www.prtlandscaping.com

7. **Ramen Tatsu-Ya** owners Tatsu Aikawa and Takuya Matsumoto opened a south location of the Japanese ramen restaurant Jan. 25 at 1234 S. Lamar Blvd. The restaurant serves traditional ramen, small plates, and local and Japanese draft beers.

    512-236-1115.
    www.ramen-tatsuya.com

8. **Rosa’s Cafe Tortilla Factory** opened Dec. 29 at 509 W. Slaughter Lane. The Mexican restaurant also offers catering.

    512-292-1195.
    www.rosascafe.com

9. **SALON by milk + honey**, a nail and hair salon, opened Nov. 29 at 4715 S. Lamar Blvd. The location offers haircuts, color, styling, extensions, hair conditioning treatments, manicures, pedicures, facials, peels, waxes and lash extensions among its services.

    512-236-1115.
    www.milkandhoneysalon.com

10. **Styles for Less** opened in October at 9600 S. 1-35, Ste. 1-100. The California-based retailer’s Austin location offers women’s clothing, accessories, fragrances and other products.

        512-292-1325.
        www.stylesforless.com

**Coming Soon**

11. **A Civitas Senior Healthcare Community**

    **Hills of Bear Creek**

    512.288.8300
    www.Legacy-Oaks.com
    7501 W. Hwy 290, Austin, TX 78736
    A Civitas Senior Healthcare Community

    **The Lice Place**

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    512-520-8360
    www.theliceplace.com

    **PRT Landscaping and General Contracting**

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A Civitas Senior Healthcare Community
in early spring, according to the company. The community, located off RM 1626, opened Phase 1 in April and has almost sold all of its 77 homesites. Phase 2 will include another 80 sites. The community of single-family homes includes an amenity center, pool and clubhouse. 512-825-0213. www.mymilestone.com

12 Parker Ranch, a private development of single-family duplex homes, will break ground in February 2015 on a 6.11-acre wooded lot at 3015 Davis Lane. Plans for the site include 36 homes, and the first units will be finished in June or July; real estate broker Drew Tate said. 512-887-8283. www.parkerranchhomes.com

13 Goin’ Postal will open in February at 11601 W. Hwy. 290, Ste. 101. The business aims to be a one-stop shop for customers’ mailing, packing and shipping needs, owner Gray Butterfield said. 512-887-8283. www.goingpostal.com

14 A new location of the Golden Corral restaurant chain will open at 7300 S. 1-35 this spring, according to Bailey Harrington, project manager at Big Red Engineering. www.goldencorral.com

15 Jalapenos Taco Bar will open in the next couple of months at 1940 W. William Cannon Drive, according to the company. No firm timeline was available. The restaurant’s 6002 Burleson Road location recently changed its name to Casa Vallarta. 512-326-1213. www.casavallartadining.com

16 Civitas Senior Living LLC will begin construction in June on Ledgestone Senior Living, a senior lifestyle apartment community that offers independent and assisted-living apartments. The development at 13150 Four Star Blvd. is the seventh property in the Fort Worth–based company’s portfolio. 817-386-8888. www.civitasseniorthelife.com

17 Dennis and Anita Dunn of Austin Curling Center LLC will open The Pub at the Barn, a beer and wine bar, at their food trailer park, The Barn, at 6218 Brodie Lane in early spring. The Pub has received its license from the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission, and the Dunns are working on permitting. 512-694-1664.

18 Vincent Manguino will open VOX Table, a new American restaurant, by March at 1000 S. Lamar Blvd., Ste. 2140, in the Lamar Union community complex. The restaurant will feature a variety of American, French and Spanish/Basque cuisine developed by Executive Chef Joe Anguiano as well as a cocktail menu. General Manager Lisa Marie Pinder said. 512-375-4869. www.voxtableaustin.com. Twitter: @voxtable

19 World of Beer South Lamar will open in March at 3109 S. Lamar Blvd. The bar will serve craft beer, wine, craft cocktails and tavern fare. www.worldofbeer.com

New Ownership

20 Formerly a partnership, Little Tesoros Therapy Services at 4407 Monterey Oaks Blvd., Ste. 140, came under the sole ownership of Donna S. Smith in December. The practice offers pediatric physical, occupational and speech therapy. 512-248-2422. www.littletesoros.com

Anniversaries


22 Creative Side Jewelry Academy of Austin at 321 W. Ben White Blvd., Ste. 204, celebrated its one-year anniversary at its south location Dec. 1. The jewelry-making and metalsmithing school offers local artists classes each semester ranging from beginner to advanced levels. 512-799-0731. www.creativeside.org

23 Hill Country European Autoworks’ owners Brent Christensen and Rafael Garcia celebrate the first anniversary of the business in January. The company, located at 11190 Circle Drive, Ste. 400, offers car services and repairs and specializes in Audi, BMW, Mercedes-Benz, Mini Cooper and Volkswagen models. 512-375-4232. www.hceuro.com

Expansions

24 Point Community Church, a local non-denominational Christian church, will break ground in late spring on new buildings, which will be used for programs for children and the community. Lead Pastor Nick Shock said. The project, located at 11300 Old San Antonio Road, will be complete by the summer. 512-212-0220. www.pointaustin.org. Twitter: @pointatx

School Notes

Austin High School student Archer Hadley led a campaign that raised more than $87,000 as of mid-January for the installation of automatic doors on campus. The AISD community donated more than twice the goal amount, and extra funds will go toward other projects to increase accessibility on campus, according to AISD. www.austinisd.org

Closings

25 Bruegger’s closed its 3425 S. Lamar Blvd. location Nov. 13. The bagel chain directed customers to its 3267 Bee Caves Road location. 888-822-5379

26 Title Max Title Loans closed at 500 W. William Cannon Drive on Dec. 1, according to the company. Services have been transferred to the company’s 5419 S. Congress Ave. location. 512-362-6995. www.titelmax.com


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Debbie McCulloch, Texas Oncology Patient

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AISD debuts Performing Arts Center
District students’ artwork, performances get new home in 2015

By Kelli Weldon

Planning for a new fine arts center for Austin ISD was on the to-do list for Director of Fine Arts Greg Goodman when he joined the school district seven years ago, he said.

Austin voters approved the construction of the AISD Performing Arts Center as part of the $343.7 million bond program in 2008. In January the school district opened the newly completed facility, which allows students to work on many aspects of fine arts—from recording music to working stage lights as part of a production, or readying hair and makeup before a show, he said.

“There’s not a bad seat in the house,” he said, standing in the center’s 1,200-seat main auditorium.

The 68,000-square-foot PAC also features a black-box theater, a dance rehearsal space, dressing rooms, a 150-seat multipurpose room that will be used for music students’ sight-reading, and light and sound booths large enough to serve as demonstration classrooms for theater technology classes. Flat screens located throughout the PAC show what is happening on the main stage, and offices and professional development spaces are on-site.

The PAC’s parking garage has room for 440 vehicles.

The district broke ground on the PAC in the Mueller development on Barbara Jordan Boulevard on Aug. 6, 2013. Goodman said the project’s biggest delay was finding a site, and it took time to get plans approved.

Pfluger Architects designed the PAC with Miro Rivera Architects, according to AISD. American Constructors Inc. provided construction management at-risk services. The building is centrally located and designed to be pedestrian-friendly, said Miro Rivera architect Juan Miro.

“We see this as a building that probably will be a catalyst for more development,” he said.

Goodman said each of AISD’s 11 comprehensive high schools have auditoriums with approximately 500 seats; McCallum High School has two separate performance spaces.

The school district will host student performances, including all-city events, and display students’ artwork in the center. Starting in January, AISD has been offering two public tours a day: one at 11 a.m. and one at 6 p.m. on weekdays, with tours lasting through Jan. 30, he said.
Austin City Council proposes new structure to encourage more engagement at meetings

AUSTIN In a lead-up to its first meeting, City Council laid out details Jan. 8 about a proposed new structure it intends to implement in an effort to shorten meeting times and increase community engagement.

The new structure would require all ordinances and resolutions to go through at least one committee before being heard by the full council, Mayor Steve Adler said.

“The intent is to increase public participation ... and to make it much more effective and much more meaningful in terms of influencing the decisions made by this council,” Mayor Pro Tem Kathie Tovo said. “The other really specific intent is to make sure our meetings end at a reasonable time.”

The city held a public hearing on Jan. 22 to gather community feedback on the plans before finalizing the proposed restructuring.

A vote to formally adopt the new structure could take place at the first official council meeting Jan. 29.

City discusses 2014 resident feedback

SUNSET VALLEY leaders reviewed the city’s 2014 resident survey at its Jan. 6 meeting.

The city received 186 responses, up from 137 in 2012.

The largest percentage of respondents—29 percent—have lived in the city for six to 10 years.

Water topped the list of respondent concerns with 38.5 percent of those who answered the question listing it as the single most important issue facing Sunset Valley.

Almost 40 percent of respondents would support a leash law in all areas of the city, and 52.5 percent of respondents would like to see the underground utility project continued.

County asks district to delay agreement

TRAVIS COUNTY Commissioners asked the Barton Springs Edwards Aquifer Conservation District, or BSEACD, to wait before taking action on an agreement regarding the proposed SH 45 SW tollway during the court’s Jan. 13 meeting.

BSEACD is considering an agreement with the Texas Department of Transportation related to environmental protection measures for Flint Ridge Cave, which is located near the project.

Travis County leaders asked for time to review the agreement and provide comment.

The court approved a motion asking staff to clarify details related to the agreement.

Meetings

- Austin City Council Meets Thursdays at 10 a.m. Austin City Hall, 301 W. Second St. 512-974-2000 • www.austintexas.gov/department/city-council
- Sunset Valley City Council Meets Feb. 3 and 17 at 6 p.m. Sunset Valley City Hall, 3205 Jones Road 512-892-1383 • www.sunsetvalley.org
- Travis County Commissioners Court Meets Tuesdays at 9 a.m. 700 Lavaca St., Austin www.co.travis.tx.us/commissioners_court

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Session to usher in new leadership, large projects

By Karen Brooks Harper

AUSTIN — Call it a session of big projects—with the potential for some big fights.

Lawmakers convened Jan. 13 for the 84th Texas Legislature, and they did so with a host of new state leaders and what may be the most conservative group of lawmakers the state has seen in decades.

Statewide issues, such as transportation infrastructure, water management, property taxes and public education, loom large. In addition, an upwardly mobile revenue number means more money for the state budget than in recent years—and more fights over who gets the cash.

“We cannot look at the overwhelming victory as a mandate to do nothing,” said Steve Munisteri, chairman of the Republican Party of Texas.

Democrats said they are prepared to pass their priorities but are by no means immune to a Democratic Party ready to play defense.

“We cannot look at the overwhelming victory as a mandate to do nothing,” said Steve Munisteri, chairman of the Republican Party of Texas. “We need to take care of these things.”

Democrats said they are prepared to do battle.

“We’re still seeing some folks working together because Republicans don’t have a supermajority,” said Emmanuel Garcia, former Texas Democratic Party communications director who stepped down in December. “The minority can still hold a position.”

A defining characteristic of the 84th legislative session is that Texas will have a new governor and new lieutenant governor for the first time in more than a decade.

Gov. Greg Abbott and Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick are both conservative Republicans ready to make a strong impression early on.

“All eyes are on them,” Munisteri said.

After backsliding in the 2012 elections, Texas Republicans regained a few seats in both chambers in November. As of Jan. 23, the House has 96 Republicans and 51 Democrats. The Senate has 20 Republicans and 10 Democrats. Runoffs from January special elections will decide who fills three open House seats and one open Senate seat.

Growth issues

Ranking third nationwide in state population growth rate by the U.S. Census Bureau in 2013, Texas has many large-scale issues facing it.

“We have the highest rate of uninsured people in the country, and we are tied with California for the largest number of adults who lack a high school degree. Those are just two [issues],” said Ann Beeson, executive director of the Center for Public Policy Priorities, a progressive Austin think tank.

Lawmakers in 2013 secured voter approval of $2 billion in loan funds for water plans but will continue to seek conservation on privately owned lands, among other issues.

The need for better road maintenance and new highway construction is expected to spark numerous plans to redirect and raise funds.

Texas ranks 15th highest among states in per capita property taxes, and relief is a top priority for conservative groups.

“We really want to focus on how much [property taxes impact] families at the dinner table,” Quintero said.

With nearly 5 million children in the public school system, education remains at or near the top of priority lists all along the political spectrum.

Among the fights expected in the session is the battle over school choice, a system in which the state subsidizes—through vouchers, tax credits or similar plans—private and parochial schools.

Those plans top the list of education priorities for Patrick, who said that allowing parents to choose private or religious schools allows them the opportunity to find the best education for their children.

Opponents believe such programs negatively affect the children who stay in public schools and focus state resources in the wrong place.

“They’re a scheme to defund public education and funnel it into private schools,” said Jose Medina, deputy communications director of the Texas Freedom Network, which advocates for public education.

Social divide

Republicans have filed bills that would allow Texans to openly carry weapons, fire gay employees or refuse gay customers and would also repeal the DREAM Act, which allows undocumented students to pay in-state college tuition and otherwise derailed sessions.

Democrats said they are prepared to file their own bills.

“We need to take care of these things,” said Munisteri.

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Those plans top the list of education priorities for Patrick, who said that allowing parents to choose private or religious schools allows them the opportunity to find the best education for their children.

Opponents believe such programs negatively affect the children who stay in public schools and focus state resources in the wrong place.

“They’re a scheme to defund public education and funnel it into private schools,” said Jose Medina, deputy communications director of the Texas Freedom Network, which advocates for public education.
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Projects take shape along corridor

Housing, office space set to come to Southwest Parkway

By Kelli Weldon

The 6,500-square-foot Austin Aquatics and Sports Academy on Southwest Parkway, which has been under construction since June, opened to triathletes and professional swimmers Jan. 20, owner Kevin Thompson said.

“It has taken longer than we thought it would, and it’s very difficult to build in that part of Austin,” he said, citing environmental regulations. “I think in the end we built a great facility.”

The $6.5 million academy and pool are among many projects along the corridor moving forward in 2015.

Stratus Properties Inc. broke ground in early January on the first phase of a development tentatively called Tecoma, with its first multifamily units slated to open by October, Stratus President and CEO Beau Armstrong said.

The first phase consists of about 300 multifamily units and 200,000 square feet of commercial space. Stratus is working with potential commercial users, Armstrong said. Stratus developed plans in the ’90s for the $700 million project north of Southwest Parkway, which will include 1.5 million square feet of commercial space, about 1,860 multifamily units and an extension of William Cannon Drive.

Framing work began in January on the fourth phase of Escondera Condominiums, The Enclave at Escondera, said Vicki Reed, real estate agent with Ultima Real Estate. Construction started in the summer on the project, which includes seven buildings and 35 units at 8200 Southwest Parkway on the development’s 60 acres, she said.

Construction on another project, the first building in the Encino Trace office park, is slated to be complete by July 1, said Ralph Bistline, senior vice president of Brandywine Realty Trust Co. The two buildings on the 54-acre suburban office campus at 5707 Southwest Parkway will each bring 160,000 square feet of office space to the area.

“It has become a preferred technology corridor … and I think that will continue,” Bistline said.

Construction is slated to be complete in March on Landmark Conservancy, a four-story, 240-unit apartment project on 22 acres. Oden Hughes LLC finished two apartment buildings and the clubhouse, said Mac McElwrath, Oden Hughes managing director.

“Construction is slated to be complete in March on Landmark Conservancy, a four-story, 240-unit apartment project on 22 acres. Oden Hughes LLC finished two apartment buildings and the clubhouse, said Mac McElwrath, Oden Hughes managing director.

“We are just finishing construction on the final four buildings,” he said. Zapalac/Reed Construction Company began site work on All Saints Presbyterian Church’s first building Jan. 19 on Terravista Drive off of Southwest Parkway. David Breeding, All Saints director of finance and operations, said the $10 million construction project is the culmination of a 10-year search for a site. All Saints holds its services at St. Gabriel’s Catholic School at 2500 Wimberly Lane as well as at Park Hills Baptist Church on MoPac. The church bought the property in March 2013 and plans to debut its building by March 2016.

“Our church members are spread across the entire Austin area and surrounding areas, so the site’s accessibility was [and] is very important to us,” he said.
South Austin seeks stewards for now-approved neighborhood plan

City: Contact team slated to be assembled by this spring

By Kelli Weldon

Residents of the South Manchaca, Garrison Park and Westgate neighborhoods are preparing to form a contact team to help guide the use of the South Austin Combined Neighborhood Plan.

Austin City Council approved the plan—a document outlining land-use options for the South Manchaca, Garrison Park and Westgate neighborhoods—unanimously Nov. 6.

"There are a lot of people who are interested in moving the plan forward, so this is really exciting," said Francis Reilly, senior planner with the city’s Planning and Development Review Department’s Comprehensive Planning Division.

Neighborhood plan contact teams include residents and business owners, Reilly said. The city utilizes the plan when it reviews zoning and development proposals, and the team will help keep the plan up-to-date over time, he said. The team will be assembled by this spring, he said.

The SACNP planning process kicked off Jan. 12, 2013, bringing residents together to discuss the vision for their area, Garrison Park–area resident Laura Bucaro said.

"I ended up in the workshops meeting a bunch of neighbors and getting to know them," she said. "My neighbors and I realized we don’t have a neighborhood association. … So we actually started one.

Many residents supported the SACNP, but others opposed it citing concerns about infill guidelines that would result in rezoning. The city posted the plan online and hosted an informational meeting about forming the SACNP contact team Jan. 28.

Market and lofts to open in 2018

By Joe Olivieri

Now that it has Austin City Council’s blessing to build, GroundFloor Development will spend 2015 working on site development and permitting for the proposed St. Elmo’s Market and Lofts project, GroundFloor founder Brandon Bolin said.

Bolin said he expected to break ground on the project in mid-2016 and open for business in early 2018.

The Saxon Pub has announced plans to move to the site when construction is complete.

Bolin said GroundFloor would announce more future tenants during the first quarter of 2015.

"We are extremely excited," he said. "... We want this project to be part of the cultural fabric of Austin.

St. Elmo’s Market and Lofts will include up to 200 condominiums, a food market, music venue and hotel on Industrial Boulevard. City Council approved changes to allow the project during its Nov. 20 meeting.
THE BARN

The Barn is home to food trailers and a hair salon.

By Joe Olivieri

The owners of food trailer park The Barn plan to open an on-site bar to complement their four tenants.

Dennis and Anita Dunn opened the trailer park on Brodie Lane in Sunset Valley’s extraterritorial jurisdiction in August after abandoning plans to open the Austin Curling Center on the property. They host trucks Fishey Bizness Seafood Co., Hey Cupcake, Nutter Buster BBQ & Comfort and Flair Style Lounge.

The Dunns intend to serve wine and beer and name the bar The Pub at The Barn. They host trucks Fishey Bizness Seafood Co., Hey Cupcake, Nutter Buster BBQ & Comfort and Flair Style Lounge.

The Dunns intend to serve wine and beer and name the bar The Pub at The Barn. They host trucks Fishey Bizness Seafood Co., Hey Cupcake, Nutter Buster BBQ & Comfort and Flair Style Lounge.

Fishey Bizness owner Dennis White said business has been good since he moved his truck there from Oak Hill.

“People have responded well,” he said. “New people are always coming out. We have live music.”

The 704

By Joe Olivieri

New businesses are coming to the ground-level commercial suites of apartment complex The 704.

Bon Bon Macarons opened Dec. 30, and River Rock Dental and World of Beer are under construction.

The first wave of businesses at The 704 opened in the fall. Those stores include Boardwalk Fresh Burgers and Fries, EyeRis Vision, Toastie’s Sub Shop and aRoma Italian Kitchen.

Bruegger’s Bagels closed its shop at The 704 on Nov. 13, a sign directed customers to its Bee Caves Road location.

STASSNEY CROSSING

By Kelli Weldon

A few new businesses are coming to Stassney Crossing, the shopping center located on East Stassney Lane.

A gas station and two strip centers were completed by the third quarter of 2014, said David Simmonds, principal at brokerage firm Retail Solutions.

“That’s a very dense, underserved area from a retail perspective. There are a lot of households,” he said.

Two more buildings will be added to the site depending on future leasing.

Cricket Wireless, Fred Loya Insurance, Party Nail, River Rock Dental and the Texaco gas station opened on the property in 2014. A barber shop, a discoteca called La Furia, a Pizza Patron restaurant and a meat market have signed leases but have not opened, Simmonds said. There is also a 11,083-square-foot space still available for lease, Simmonds said.

“We want to have highway visibility but have a neighborhood setting,” he said.

NOTABLE OPENINGS IN 2014

Alamo Drafthouse South Lamar (reopened)
1120 S. Lamar Blvd.
512-476-1320
www.drafthouse.com

Deep Eddy Vodka Distillery
2250 E. Hwy. 290, Dripping Springs • 512-994-3354
www.deepeddyvodka.com

First Choice Emergency Room
9312 Brodie Lane
www.fcerc.com

Independence Fine Foods
1807 Slaughter Lane, Ste. 100
512-363-5672

Juiceland
9901 Brodie Lane, Ste. 110
512-373-8731
www.juicelandaustin.com

Luci and Ian Family Garden
4801 La Crosse Ave.
512-232-0100
www.wildflower.org

North by Northwest Restaurant and Brewery
5701 Slaughter Lane, Bldg. D
512-301-6969
www.nxnbrew.com

Radio Coffee & Beer
4208 Manchaca Road
512-394-7844
www.radiocoffeeandbeer.com

Stouthaus Coffee Pub
4715 S. Lamar Blvd., Ste. 102
512-721-0030
www.stouthauscoffee.com

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ALL PHYSICIANS ARE BOARD CERTIFIED IN ENDOCRINOLOGY AND METABOLISM
Here is a recap of last year’s big news and updates on what is happening now with area schools.

**Data: Austin student population to decline**

**AUSTIN ISD** Following two years of enrollment declines, Austin ISD expects to see further population declines of about 4,043 students by the 2024–25 school year based on its latest annual demographic report presented Jan. 12 to the board of trustees.

Interim Superintendent Paul Cruz noted student population is not the same thing as enrollment; enrollment represents the number of students who actually attend AISD schools.

“It is important to keep in mind that [student population] is about where students reside,” Cruz said.

From fall 2015 to 2024, AISD student populations are expected to decline annually. According to the report, the number of residential students is projected to be 80,385 by the start of the 2024 school year, which would be a 5.8 percent decline compared with SY 2014, representing 4,043 fewer students.

The biggest declines will be in elementary and middle school grade levels, according to the report.

**New leadership appointed to board**

**AUSTIN ISD** The board of trustees swore in five members and named its officers at its Jan. 6 meeting, and at press time the board was slated to vote Jan. 26 to formally hire interim Superintendent Paul Cruz as superintendent.

New trustees Edmund Gordon of District 1, Julie Cowan of District 4, Kendall Pace of At-Large Position 9 and Paul Saldáñ of District 6 took their oaths of office Jan. 6. District 7 trustee Robert Schneider was re-elected in November and took his oath for his fourth term. Board members serve four-year terms.

Trustees elected At-Large Position 8 trustee Gina Hinojosa as board president in a 7-2 vote. In an 8-1 vote the board also elected District 5 trustee Amber Elzen as vice president. Trustees unanimously re-elected District 2 trustee Jayme Mathias as secretary. AISD’s board named Cruz as the sole superintendent finalist Dec. 15 and held forums with members of the community throughout January.

**Bond oversight committee created**

**AUSTIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE** A 13-member citizen committee will oversee how Austin Community College spends nearly $386 million in bond money approved by district voters last November.

ACC board members on Jan. 20 established criteria for a bond oversight advisory committee. The committee will meet at least twice per year—and likely more often—and monitor the timing, progress and scope of changes to the projects voters agreed upon. The board agreed to increase the committee to 13 members, with one appointed by each of the nine board members and four appointed by board officers—newly appointed Chairman Vic Villarreal, Vice Chairman Allen Kaplan and Secretary Barbara Mink.

Trustees will make appointments before the board’s Feb. 2 meeting, at which time a vote will occur on who will serve on the oversight committee.

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—Steven J. Hughes, PhD, NIPsyD, Pediatric Neuropsychologist and Director of The Center for Research on Developmental Education
Big decisions made in 2014

- **Comprehensive water plan**
  In December the city updated its goals for creating more solar energy resources and reducing Austin’s reliance on non-renewable energy plants. Austin Energy must now purchase 110 MW of local solar by 2020 with 70 MW coming from customers—usually through residential rooftop panels. Also, council in 2015 may approve the construction of a new natural gas plant in Austin to replace the Decker gas plant, which will be retired in 2018.

- **More comprehensive leash law**
  As of Jan. 1 drivers in Austin can no longer have a device in their hand unless stopped. Motorists and bicyclists who use an electronic device while driving could face fines of up to $500.

- **Comprehensive water plan**
  City leaders continued working on water capture, use, conservation and sourcing issues, including taking action on the city’s groundwater system.

- **Developing courthouse proposal**
  The architect of the proposed civil and family courthouse, Consultant URS Corp. assessed the county’s space needs and created cost estimates.

- **New land use plan**
  Commissioners Court adopted the Land, Water and Transportation Plan in December. The plan will be a blueprint to develop infrastructure so they will be in place as the county grows.

Top issues for 2015

- **New governance structure**
  The new 11-member council will help lead a new governance structure that places more emphasis on committee meetings, more council meetings and opens the door for more community involvement, Mayor Steve Adler said.

- **‘Deep dive’ into larger issues**
  Adler said he intends to change the methods through which council addresses city issues. Instead of issues being addressed “crisis-by-crisis” and decisions being made after visits from lobbyists, Adler said he wants “deep dives” into problems that arise during committee meetings to limit how much repeat legislation is needed to correct short-term fixes.

- **Preserving quality of life**
  Many council members during campaigning promised to preserve Austin’s quality of life by fixing ongoing traffic, transportation and affordability issues. Adler said he expects these issues to be tackled by the new council as a whole despite each district’s differing interests.

Southwest Austin Edition • January 2015

**AUSTIN CITY COUNCIL**


**Meetings**

Austin City Council meets at 10 a.m. most Thursdays.

Austin City Hall, 301 W. Second St. 512-947-2000 www.austintexas.gov/ department/city-council

**Terms and compensation**

The mayor serves a four-year term, and council members either serve an initial two- or four-year term. Compensation is $70,074 for council members and $82,388 for the mayor. This is the first Austin City Council in more than 100 years to have representation based on geographic districts.

**TRAVIS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT**

Judge Sarah Eckhardt Commissioner Gerald Daugherty Commissioner Ron Davis Commissioner Margaret Gomez Commissioner Bridget Shea

**Meetings**

The council typically meets at 9 a.m. the first and third Tuesdays of the month.

3205 Jones Road 512-922-8183 www.sunsetvalley.org

**TV coverage**

Meetings are broadcast live on the city’s website.

**Big decisions made in 2014**

- **Putting courthouse on the ballot**
  Commissioners Court plans to refine and reduce its cost estimate for the proposed facility. The county is expected to put the courthouse project on the ballot in May and will issue debt to build it if voters approve the measure.

- **Flood plain buyout program**
  The county must create a strategy for completing the program, former Judge Sam Biscoe said. Some residents refuse to relocate from the flood zone, and the county opposes condemning properties.

**Terms and compensation**

Court members serve four-year terms. The judge’s pay is $116,373. The commissioners’ pay is $98,463. Commissioner Gerald Daugherty has requested that his pay be $90,109.

**Big decisions made in 2014**

- **Preserving quality of life**
  Many council members during campaigning promised to preserve Austin’s quality of life by fixing ongoing traffic, transportation and affordability issues. Adler said he expects these issues to be tackled by the new council as a whole despite each district’s differing interests.

- **Building city facilities**
  Sunset Valley took steps toward building a permanent home for the city’s Public Works and Police departments.

**Top issues for 2015**

- **Acquiring the Kennedy property**
  Sunset Valley bought the Kennedy property on Country White Lane using dedicated green tax funds. The city will protect much of the property and sell the remainder as a single-family lot, Mayor Rose Cardona said.

- **More comprehensive water plan**
  City leaders continued working on water capture, use, conservation and sourcing issues, including taking action on the city’s groundwater system.

- **Building city facilities**
  Sunset Valley took steps toward building a permanent home for the city’s Public Works and Police departments.

**Meetings**

- **Examining property appraisals**
  According to the motion. Some residents were being overtaxed.

- **Tackling tax inequities**
  In June the court decided not to fight or appeal the decisions of Travis Central Appraisal District, future debt issuance and overlapping debt when working on Travis County’s 2015–16 budget, Biscoe said.

- **Balcones Canyonlands Conservation Preserve**
  Travis County has been acquiring tracts in the preserve through purchasing properties and receiving conservation easements for several years. Biscoe said the county will work to complete the preserve.

**Terms and salaries**

The mayor and City Council are volunteers who serve two-year terms. There are no term limits.

**TV coverage**

Meetings are televised live on cable Channel 6 and streamed online at www.austintexas.gov/ department/channel-6.

**Sunset Valley City Council**

The Sunset Valley City Council, from left: Mayor Pro Tem Forrest Arnold, Councilwoman Mickie Powers, Mayor Rose Cardona, Councilman Walter Jenkins, Councilwoman Rudi Rosengarten and Councilman Jeff Burdett.

**Meetings**

The council typically meets at 10 a.m. most Thursdays.

Austin City Hall, 301 W. Second St. 512-947-2000 www.austintexas.gov/ department/city-council

**TV coverage**

Meetings are televised live on cable Channel 6 and streamed online at www.austintexas.gov/ department/channel-6.

**Big decisions made in 2014**

- **New future land-use plan**
  Commissioners Court adopted the Land, Water and Transportation Plan in December. The plan will be a blueprint to develop infrastructure so they will be in place as the county grows.

- **Developing courthouse proposal**
  The court hired engineering firm HOK as the architect of the proposed civil and family courthouse. Consultant URS Corp. assessed the county’s space needs and created cost estimates.

- **Examining property appraisals**
  In June the court decided not to fight the appraising of county commercial and industrial property values, opting instead to study the issue and look for “legislative and legal remedies for inequities in the property appraisal system,” according to the motion. Some residents claimed commercial properties were undervalued, and residential properties were being overtaxed.
In summer 2015 the airport will finish the east wing expansion’s upper level, which will include more Transportation Security Administration screening lanes to improve passenger flow.

2 Austin Executive Airport
The Pflugerville-based airport finished an additional community hangar in 2014. More than 100 aircraft are now based out of the airport, Manager Jodie Kaluza said.

In 2015 the airport has no plans for development but will continue to build business among transient flyers and assess needs within the community, Kaluza said.

3 Georgetown Municipal Airport
Georgetown Transportation Director Ed Polasek said work continues on safety improvements, including a lighting project and the addition of a taxiway, at the Georgetown Municipal Airport. Design plans for a new fueling area known as a fuel farm and the taxiway have been submitted to the Texas Department of Transportation for approval. Once approved a construction timeline can be set, he said. TxDOT commissioners are also expected to select a contractor in March or April to complete the airport’s master plan update.

4 San Marcos Regional Airport
As part of a rebranding effort the airport’s name was changed from San Marcos Municipal Airport in 2014, said Cassidy Berenato, director of marketing and administration for airport manager Texas Aviation Partners. TAP also presented its five-year strategic plan for the airport to San Marcos City Council. The plan includes helping the city market the airport for non-aviation uses.

TxDOT approved $350,000 for a safety fence and access gates along Airport Drive, and the city appropriated $100,000 for a new parking lot. Both projects will start construction in 2015.
The Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority is an independent agency that oversees several toll road projects in the region—including those listed below—and coordinates with other transportation agencies, including the Texas Department of Transportation.

### Toll Increases

In December the Mobility Authority and TxDOT announced toll rates would be increasing on all Austin-area toll roads effective Jan. 1. The increases range from 1 to 3 cents per tolling station. For new rates visit www.mobilityauthority.org or www.txdot.org.

#### Manor Expressway

The completed project opened to traffic May 17 from US 183 to Parmer Lane east of SH 130. The 6.2-mile project added three tolled lanes in each direction along with three nontolled frontage road lanes. Tolls will be adjusted based on real-time traffic volumes and will increase when traffic grows. www.manorexpressway.com

**Timeline:** Completed  
**Cost:** $242 million

#### MoPac Improvement Project

Construction began in December 2013 on the 11-mile project that stretches from Parmer Lane to just north of Lady Bird Lake. The project will add one toll lane in each direction. Tolls will be adjusted based on real-time traffic volumes and will increase when traffic grows. www.mopacexpress.com

**Timeline:** Late 2015 completion  
**Cost:** $204 million

#### MoPac South

The Mobility Authority began an environmental study in 2013 on MoPac from Cesar Chavez Street to Slaughter Lane. Options for improving mobility include adding express toll lanes. Community meetings are underway and will continue throughout the study. www.mopacsouth.com

**Timeline:** Study to be complete by 2016  
**Cost:** TBD

#### SH 71

TxDOT is working on a design-build project that will add one toll lane in each direction from Presidential Boulevard to SH 130. The project will feature a bridge over FM 973 and SH 130. Upon completion of construction, the Mobility Authority will operate the toll facilities.

**Timeline:** Late 2016 completion  
**Cost:** $141 million

#### SH 45 SW

TxDOT launched an environmental study on the limited-access, four-lane, 3.6-mile toll road connecting Loop 1 to FM 1626 in Hays County in June 2013 and released a draft environmental document in June 2014. Construction will only occur if a build alternative is approved.

**Timeline:** Final environmental impact statement expected to be released in February  
**Cost:** TBD

#### Bergstrom Expressway

A decision to move forward with rebuilding US 183 from US 290 to SH 71 is anticipated this spring. The project would include adding a new, six-lane tolled expressway as well as reconstruction and widening of the existing US 183—which would remain toll-free.

www.bergstromexpressway.com

**Timeline:** Study to be complete in 2015  
**Cost:** Estimate is about $750 million

#### 183 North

An environmental study began in 2013 to consider adding one or more express toll lanes on US 183 in the grassy median from MoPac to RM 620. The Mobility Authority expects to host community open house meetings in early 2015.

**Timeline:** Study to be complete in 2016  
**Cost:** TBD

#### SH 45 N and Loop 1

The final phase of the O’Connor Drive extension/toll interchange project was completed in August after several delays. The project is designed to alleviate traffic on RM 620 by adding new connections to SH 45 N, Loop 1 and McNeil Road via O’Connor Drive. The project includes a bridge on O’Connor over SH 45 N, entrance and exit ramps, and frontage roads.

**Timeline:** Completed  
**Cost:** $31 million

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### Public Transit

#### CARTS

The Capital Area Rural Transportation System’s interurban bus service added new communities to its routes, which already include several Central Texas cities such as Georgetown, Pflugerville, Round Rock and San Marcos. The interurban coach added stops in LaGrange, Giddings, Paige, Smithville and Elgin starting Jan. 5.

www.ridecarts.com

#### Urban Rail

On Nov. 4 city of Austin voters turned down a $1 billion urban rail and road bond by a vote of 57 percent against. The bond would have helped build the city’s first urban rail line. Urban Rail Lead Kyle Keahey said the next steps will involve further analyzing the route, transit mode, size of the bond and funding plan. It is likely the Austin-area’s public transit agency, Capital Metro, would take the lead in planning any future urban rail projects.

#### Lone Star Rail

In late 2014 the city of Austin committed 50 percent of all new property tax generated in the specified zones surrounding the Lone Star Rail District’s proposed Austin stations to help fund the regional commuter rail system, which would service cities between Georgetown and San Antonio. The district reached similar agreements with the city of San Marcos and Austin Community College in 2014. In 2015, Joe Black, Lone Star Rail District director, said he anticipates working on similar agreements with other cities and continuing the work’s environmental impact study.

The total cost of the project is estimated at $1.8 billion.

#### MetroRail

In June the Texas Transportation Commission awarded Capital Metro a $50 million grant to double the capacity of its commuter rail line. The grant will allow the agency to purchase four rail cars and replace the downtown station with a permanent one. Additionally, Capital Metro received a $11.3 million federal grant in 2013 and will spend $18 million of its own funds to improve MetroRail. These monies will enable the agency to add a second set of railroad tracks at three of its existing stations and realign part of the track in East Austin. All of the upgrades will lead to shorter headways—the distance between trains—of about 15 minutes. Construction on the upgrades will begin in 2015. Additionally, Capital Metro expects to finish the location of the MetroRail tracks near the Plaza Saltillo station in the summer.

#### MetroRapid

Capital Metro’s bus-rapid transit system launched in January 2014 on North Lamar Boulevard and South Congress Avenue. A second line launched in August on Burnet Road and South Lamar. During peak hours, the buses run about every 12 minutes. The $47.6 million project was funded partly by a $38.1 million federal grant.
**Feral**

Kitchen workspace offers hunting package, meat processing classes

By Joe Olivieri

In late 2014, Feral began offering hunting package tours, giving customers the opportunity to hunt wild game that can be turned into sausage at Feral’s workspace. “It is for people who may have a little bit of experience hunting and are interested in harvesting some meat but may not have a place to hunt or are not confident in their ability to field dress an animal,” owner Chris Houston said.

Feral partners with a ranch in Caldwell where customers can hunt deer and feral hogs. “We are there to guide them on how to do the basic butchering of the animal,” he said.

Deer season ends in January, and Feral plans to announce new sessions that focus on feral hogs. “It’s a pretty good time of year for them,” Houston said. “They’ve been eating acorns and natural foods, so there is a lot of meat and fat on the animals.”

Feral rents out its kitchen workspace and holds group classes for customers interested in learning about meat processing. The business also offers one-on-one instruction. “It’s much easier to clean than your own kitchen,” he said.

**Brodie Homestead**

Sunset Valley events venue eyes expansion

By Kelli Weldon

Brodie Homestead has held more than 20 events since it hosted its first wedding ceremony Aug. 9 in Sunset Valley, Events and Sales Manager Juliana Ross said.

“The historic barn located on Brodie Lane provides space for corporate events, holiday parties and charity fundraisers as well, she said.

Ross said by the end of 2015 the business plans to add an outdoor ceremony location in the city-owned lot behind the venue’s parking area. “It’s a 7-acre piece of land that was donated by the original owners of our property to the city [of Sunset Valley],” she said. “It’s on a conservation easement so it can’t be landscaped, but we could use it for outdoor ceremonies.”

Some longtime residents have scheduled weddings and other events at the new venue, she said. “There always seems to be new businesses and development in [Southwest Austin], and I just think [the area is] going to continue to grow sort of as another centralized hub of the Austin area,” she said.
**VIA 313**
Pizza makers prepare to open Oak Hill location

By Joe Olivieri

Via 313 will bring its Detroit-style pizzas, as well as a new tavern-style pizza, to Oak Hill in March, co-owner Zane Hunt said.

The food truck’s first brick-and-mortar location will be in Flores Mexican Restaurant’s former location in the Oak Hill Centre shopping center.

The location will feature Via 313’s full menu of pizzas, as well as a rotating list of seasonal pizzas, such as Sicilian-style pizzas.

Hunt described the tavern-style pizzas as 12-inch pies with thin, chewy crusts. Via 313 previewed the new menu item at various pop-up events in November and December.

The new location will also serve beer and wine as well as desserts.

“We are pizza lovers,” Hunt said. “We are not in it to get a quick buck. We grew up in southeast Michigan. There was a terrific regional style of pizza there in Detroit-style pizza. We want [the restaurant] to be a celebration of pizza. I know it sounds cheesy, but that’s what we want.”

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**ST. PHILIP**
Uchi’s Sunset Valley spot aims to do ‘unexpected’

By Kelli Weldon

Since pizza parlor and bakeshop St. Philip opened in October, its menu and aesthetic have been updated and refined, said John Baydale, president of Uchi Restaurant Group, which owns St. Philip.

“We’re running new items as specials to see how the guests like them,” Baydale said. “The root beer and sas-safra ribs … started as a special and everyone loved them, so we put them on the permanent menu.”

In terms of pizza, the NYC ($12) with pepperoni is a top seller, he said. Ricotta dumplings ($13.50) with wild mushrooms, corn and Serrano ham are popular, as well as its cauliflower side ($6), which features herbed yogurt, pine nuts and golden raisins.

“We want to do the unexpected to the expected,” Baydale said.

St. Philip added more seats and a tenting enclosure to the patio in December. Philip Speer, Uchi’s director of culinary operations, resigned effective Jan. 31, he said. In mid-January Uchi rehired chef Page Pressley, who was chef de cuisine of Uchiko two years ago, Baydale said.
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**January**

**31 Austin Gorilla Run**
Participants can suit up in gorilla costumes in the annual fun run and 5K. The race starts and finishes at the Mueller Browning Hangar, and an afterparty includes music. Gorilla suits are included in the cost to participate, and runners can keep their suits after the event. Proceeds from the race directly benefit the Ruth Keesling Wildlife Health and Research Center in Kampala, Uganda. 9 a.m. $15–$40 (children age 12 and younger), $40–$109 (adults). Mueller Browning Hangar, 4550 Mueller Blvd. 720-524-0272. www.austingorillarun.com

**February**

**05 Oak Hill Business and Professional Assoc. luncheon**
The local group for entrepreneurs and area professionals holds its monthly membership luncheon. 11:30 a.m. $20. Mandola’s Italian Market, 4301 W. William Cannon Drive. www.ohbpa.org

**07 Deal for a Cure**
Celebrity poker players, Texas Hold ‘em tournament enthusiasts and casino gamers can join with Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation Austin to raise funds for a cure. JDRF also offers dinner as well as a raffle as part of the event. 5:30 p.m. $125 (casino ticket), $200 (poker individual ticket), $1,800 (poker table for 10). Renaissance Austin Hotel, 9721 Arboretum Blvd. 512-343-0663. www.jdrf.org/deal

**15 Austin Marathon and Half Marathon presented by Freescale**
The event takes place on a scenic course with rolling hills. The start line is at Second Street and Congress Avenue this year, and the finish is at 10th Street and Congress Avenue, with an expo held at the Palmer Events Center. 7 a.m. $120 (half marathon), $140 (marathon). www.youraustinmarathon.com

**15 Significant Blooms’ opening**
The exhibit, featuring Sherri Jones watercolors, will run until May 31. 9 a.m.–5 p.m. (Tue.–Sun.) Free (age 4 and younger), $4 (ages 5–17), $8 (seniors and college students with ID), $10 (adults). Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, 4801 La Crosse Ave. 512-232-0100. www.wildflower.org

**15 Valentine’s Fun at The Art Garage**
The local art studio hosts this event for families and individuals to make Valentine’s Day crafts. The business also offers a sale on Valentine’s Day–related pottery. 2–4 p.m. Free. The Art Garage, 11190 Circle Drive, Ste. 202. 512-852-9900. www.theartgarageaustin.com

**15 Feria Para Aprender**
The ninth annual learning fair is the largest Spanish-language education fair in Central Texas, according to Austin ISD. Since launching in 2007 the event has served more than 200,000 parents and students districtwide. 9 a.m.–4 p.m. Free. Highland Mall, 6001 Airport Blvd. www.communitykey.org

**18 Dining for a Cause**

**18 Dripping Springs Wild Game Dinner**
The dinner, along with entertainment and a silent auction, is organized by the United Methodist Men from the Dripping Springs United Methodist Church and is recognized as one of the biggest and longest-running events in Hays County. Participants can try wild game dishes, with past options including venison carne guisada, peashant enchiladas and elk chili. 6 p.m. $10 (age 4–fifth grader), $25 (per dinner), $100 (family sponsor). Dripping Springs High School cafeteria, 940 Hwy. 290, Dripping Springs. 512-894-7123. www.dswildgamedinner.com

**21 Guitars Under the Stars**
Austin Classical Guitar hosts its annual fundraiser, which includes dinner, a full bar and live music by the Assads and Brazilian jazz musician Romero Lubambo. The cocktail attire-themed event also includes a post-concert dessert reception. 6:30 p.m. $135. One World Theatre, 7701 Bee Caves Road. 512-300-2247. www.austinclassicalguitar.org

**21 CASAblanca Gala**
At the annual black-tie event, participants can partake in food, casino games and auctions to raise funds for the local nonprofit Court Appointed Special Advocates of Travis County, which aims to help children in the community who have experienced abuse or neglect. 5:30 p.m.–midnight. $200. AT&T Hotel & Conference Center, 1900 University Ave. 512-539-2677. www.casatravis.org

**21 Carnaval Brasileiro**
Now in its 38th year, the annual event in Austin offers locals the opportunity to celebrate the nationwide Carnaval festival that takes place in Brazil. The indoor Brazilian-style Mardi Gras party features samba music, dancing and a variety of costumes, according to the event organizer. 8 p.m. (Doors open), 9 p.m. (Music begins). $38 (in advance), $45 (at the door). Palmer Events Center, 900 Barton Springs Road. www.sambaparty.com

**February Calendar**

- **28 Carnaval Brasileiro**
  - Now in its 38th year, the annual event in Austin offers locals the opportunity to celebrate the nationwide Carnaval festival that takes place in Brazil.
  - The indoor Brazilian-style Mardi Gras party features samba music, dancing and a variety of costumes, according to the event organizer.
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  - Palmer Events Center, 900 Barton Springs Road.
  - www.sambaparty.com

**Online Calendar**

Find more or submit Southwest Austin events at www.impactnews.com/swae-calendar

To have Southwest Austin events considered for the print edition, they must be submitted online by the second Friday of the month.
PEC’s cost-of-service/rate design study needs you!

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Tribe Comics and Games
South Austin store seeks to create community

By Kelli Weldon

Tribecomics and Games co-owner Eric Burke carefully opened an issue of the comic book “Mouse Guard,” gesturing at details and the ink drawings that bloom across the page.

In the comics, a group of mice protect trade routes between mouse cities, Burke explained. A mouse—however brave it might be—may not be what springs to mind when some think of comic books, but Burke said a variety of genres are wedged onto the shelves of Tribe, with mice alongside billionaires, zombies, spacemen and gods.

“I have many, many favorite comics,” Burke said. “And I have many comics that used to be my favorites that are being badly written right now that make me cry.”

Still, Burke said the love of witnessing the evolution of characters, as well as storytelling and imagination, is one thing that draws him and business partner Roy Carter, co-owner of Tribe, to comics.

“Anything is possible in a comic book,” Carter said.

In 2008, South Austin residents Burke and Carter opened Tribe to offer residents south of Lady Bird Lake a convenient place to find their favorite new comics and games.

In terms of games, Burke explains the store carries role-playing varieties, for example, for every 100 Batman comics a shop orders there might be one cover featuring drawings by noted comic book artist Alex Ross—and some shops will increase orders and sell those special issues for higher prices. Tribe instead selects its comics randomly and sells those covers at regular price, he said.

**Popular titles**
While superhero comics reign, books without masked or caped protagonists have attracted readers as well, said Eric Burke, Tribe Comics and Games co-owner.

“Batman is still the No. 1-selling comic in the nation, and it was the No. 1-selling comic here until about two months ago,” Burke said. “There is now a book called ‘Saga,’ … which is the No. 1-selling book here, and it has now climbed up pretty high on the charts. And it’s not put out by Marvel or DC [Comics].”

“The Walking Dead” and “Avengers” comics are also popular options, he said.

**About the shop**

- **100+ role-playing games**
- **300+ Different board games**
- **10 tables set up for gamers**
- **Open since Nov. 1, 2008**
- **4 employees**

The popularity of “Settlers of Catan” has maintained throughout the years, Burke said.

**Weekly gaming schedule**

- **Monday:** Miniatures night
  Games such as “Star Wars X-Wing” involve miniature figures.
- **Tuesday:** Board game night
  Players can play games such as “The Downfall of Pompeii,” “Dominion” and “Settlers of Catan.”
- **Wednesday:** Open play
  Players can play a variety of games.
- **Thursday:** Role-playing game night
  Visitors can play RPGs such as “Dungeons and Dragons,” and the store runs a featured game.
- **Friday:** Collectible card game night
  Games such as “Magic The Gathering” are popular.

Tribe stocks individual issues of comic book series as well as compilations.

**Tribe Comics and Games**

3005 S. Lamar Blvd., Ste. D-113
512-693-4300
www.tribecag.com
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Flores Mexican Restaurant

New location ‘bigger, better’ than original site

By Joe Olivieri

Dec. 30 was the last day of business at Flores Mexican Restaurant’s Hwy. 290 location, and it was bittersweet for co-owner Maria Flores. She said she and her brother, Jose Gonzalo Flores, helped their parents, Maggie and Jose Flores Sr., open the Tex-Mex restaurant in Oak Hill in 1993, and the place holds many memories for her.

“We are super excited about the new store [on William Cannon Drive], but it’s kind of sad—the end of an era,” she said. “We’ve had over 21 years at [the Hwy. 290 location]. It was the beginning of it all. It gave us the start for all of the other stores.”

On Jan. 17 the Flores family opened its new restaurant near the Shops at Arbor Trails. Maria called it “bigger and better”—it features homemade flour and corn tortillas and a sprawling mural.

The bar can seat 120 patrons and is separate from the dining area.

The new location is the next step in Jose Flores Sr.’s dream of owning a restaurant. Jose Flores Sr. started in the industry as a dishwasher and worked his way up to be a chef, Maria said. He has worked at Trudy’s, Serranos and Matt’s Famous El Rancho.

She said the family was well-received in Oak Hill and opened a location in Lakeway in 1994.

“Lakeway chose us,” Maria said. “We had regulars living in Lakeway, and they really encouraged us to open [a] location there.”

Today there are four Flores locations, including restaurants in Dripping Springs and Four Points.

Flores serves some interior Mexican food, but it is best known for its Tex-Mex dishes, Maria said. The fajitas and combination plates are among the restaurant’s best sellers.

“Some of our newer dishes, such as the red pork, have been growing in popularity,” she said. “Even the pozole [a traditional Mexican stew]—which is very Mexican … people are loving it.”

“Everyone always comments that the salsa here is the best and the spiciest,” Jose Gonzalo said. “It’s spicier [in Oak Hill] than at the other stores. This was the original recipe. We modified them a little bit for the other stores, but this is the original.”

The Flores family takes pride in making everything fresh and having high standards for their food, Maria said.

“For the quality and the amount of food you get, you aren’t going to find a better deal,” she said, adding, “I know a lot of my customers personally. That’s my joke: I used to serve them milk. Now I serve them a beer.”

Flores Mexican Restaurant

4625 W. William Cannon Drive, Bldg. 4
512-892-4845
www.floresmexican.com

Hours: Mon.–Thu. 11 a.m.–10 p.m., Fri. 11 a.m.–midnight, Sat. 9 a.m.–11 p.m., Sun. 9 a.m.–10 p.m.

Breakfast options

- Huevos rancheros—Eggs served with beans and potatoes ($5.79)
- Pozole—Tender pork with hominy in a guajillo pepper broth served with cabbage, onions, jalapenos, cilantro, lime and oregano ($7.59)
- Fajita omelet—Choice of beef or chicken with onions and peppers, topped with shredded cheese and served with beans and potatoes ($9.49)

Lunch specials

- All lunch specials are $6.59
  - Two cheese enchiladas, Tex-Mex sauce, rice and beans
  - One cheese enchilada, one crispy beef taco, rice and beans
  - Beef burrito, Tex-Mex sauce, rice and beans
  - Spicy chicken burrito, green sauce, rice and beans

Dinner menu items

- Grilled beef fajitas—Served with lettuce, guacamole, sour cream, cheese and pico de gallo ($14.99 for one, $24.99 for two)
- Jose’s Pollo—Marinated chicken breast, mushrooms, tomatoes, onions, peppers and Monterey Jack cheese ($11.99)
- Norma’s Tampiquena Plate—Charbroiled tenderloin, cheese enchilada, rice, guacamole salad, pico de gallo and choice of beans ($17.59)

From left: Jose Gonzalo Flores, Maggie Flores, Maria Flores and Jose Flores Sr. stand in the Oak Hill store.
market, CBRE Inc. sales associate Michael Wardlaw said. The rest is all new, spurred on by low-interest rate loans and the promise of long-term returns.

The demand for housing is so strong citywide that tenants are securing leases on the new supply as it soon as it comes onto the market, said Charles Heimsath, president of Capitol Market Research.

“The question that often comes up is, ‘Are the number of new units too many for the market to absorb? Are we doing too much?’ and the answer is no,” he said. “We seem to be meeting the demand, and with very few exceptions, not exceeding it.”

Southwest Austin’s apartment occupancy rate remains at around 95 percent, city of Austin demographer Ryan Robinson said.

**Supply and demand**

Southwest Austin has some of the lowest housing density in the city because of regulations limiting development over groundwater resources, Wardlaw said.

“The impervious cover rules are generally closer to 20 percent—meaning you can only build on 20 percent of your property—whereas they are generally around 40 percent elsewhere in the city,” he said.

There is limited residential development potential along Southwest Parkway, thereby increasing the demand for properties there, said Brian Talley, real estate broker and owner of Regent Property Group LLC.

Impact developers are including granite countertops, stainless steel appliances as well as resort-style pools to entice residents.

Impact’s customers want to own their homes but do not want to move to the suburbs or have the responsibility of owning a yard, Brown said.

“Our population is growing every day,” she said. “It’s about [building] infill housing, giving more options to the community and utilizing the space that is around.”

**Future growth**

Proposed future projects include Stratus Properties Inc’s 1,860-unit Tecoma project, LedgeStone’s 273-unit project, GroundFloor Development’s 200-unit St. Elmo’s Market and Loft project and Foundation Communities’ 123-unit Garden Terrace project.

Talley said Southwest Austin is not yet at the point where builders are tearing down existing properties to redevelop.

Builders and remodelers are having difficulty finding great deals on the land they buy, but they are still earning a premium on what they bring to market, he said.

Meanwhile, investors who purchase aging complexes are attempting to compete with the new complexes.

“[Investors] are really trying to renovate and revitalize the property to more luxurious standards [to match] what the new construction is delivering,” Wardlaw said.

Robinson said 3,000 new housing units were proposed citywide in the third quarter of 2014 alone.

“Not all of them will make it to market. A lot of them will die on the vine. But it makes the point that we have not seen the top of this market,” he said.
Council takes shape

Community Impact Newspaper defines Southwest Austin as the area south of Southwest Parkway, east of FM 1826, west of I-35 and north of FM 1626. The Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission that created Austin’s voting districts divided that area into four districts: 2, 3, 5 and 8.

During the 20 years local automotive shop owner Charles Coleman has lived in Austin, there has been little representation for Southwest Austin, he said. “Southwest Austin is neglected as far as tax dollars are concerned,” he said. “… I’m hoping that with the 10-1 [system] that the rest of the underserved districts will begin to get their fair share of tax dollars distributed to [their] area.”

Troxclair said the council has an opportunity to make impactful policy changes and improve communication with the public.

“We are paying a huge amount of the [property] tax burden for the city; we have the highest rate of home ownership in District 8. … And I think there is a feeling that we were not getting our return on investment in the form of road infrastructure and public safety resources and things like that, but also that there was no one on the other end listening to [residents],” he said.

Bradley Dartez, past Oak Hill Business and Professional Association president, said as a resident he is excited to see whether having council districts: 2, 3, 5 and 8.

The city of Austin held its first City Council elections under its new geographic representation system in November. Council members were sworn in Jan. 6, and four individuals will represent constituents who live in Southwest Austin neighborhoods, such as Oak Hill, Circle C, Cherry Creek, Garrison Park and Westgate.

Councilwoman Delia Garza said one of her primary goals on council will be to help establish an affordable housing committee with representatives from entities such as Travis County and AISD to examine Austin’s cost of living.

“Every time there is a bond measure, it affects everybody. When Travis County taxes go up, it affects your monthly bill. And for your average person, they want to know, ‘How is this going to affect my monthly bill?’”

She said an ordinance to establish the committee is slated to be part of the council’s Jan. 29 agenda.

Districts 2 and 3 and are among the districts with the lowest median family incomes, District 3 Councilman Sabino “Pio” Renteria said. “We need to plan to come up with more housing for these people. And right now, with gentrification and the high value of homes, the value of the land itself has gone up so high. … We need to have more density-type family apartments built in Austin,” Renteria said.

Renteria said he is familiar with the needs of East Austin because he has been a community activist there for years. However, he plans to communicate with organizations on the west side of District 3 to ensure they are heard as well. Residents can email, call or write to council members or set up in-person meetings at council offices, Renteria said.

“[Residents in each district now] have a contact at City Hall that is actually going to be looking out for their needs,” he said.
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The neighborhood is served by Austin ISD schools Kocurek Elementary School, Bailey Middle School and Akins High School.

FEATURED NEIGHBORHOOD

Bauerle Ranch

Recent listings

10501 Beard Ave.  $289,000
3 Bedroom / 2 Bath  1,873 sq. ft.
Agent: Sandy Trumbo
Ultima Real Estate  512-695-4974

10501 Beard Ave.  $289,000
3 Bedroom / 2 Bath  1,873 sq. ft.
Agent: Sandy Trumbo
Ultima Real Estate  512-695-4974

3324 Tavistock Drive  $295,000
4 Bedroom / 3 Bath  2,310 sq. ft.
Agent: Debbi McCall
Coldwell Banker United, Realtors  512-343-7500

2908 Lynnbrook Drive  $275,000
3 Bedroom / 2.5 Bath  2,190 sq. ft.
Agent: Mitchell Sundet
Realty Austin  512-426-1981

2612 Blake St.  $264,900
3 Bedroom / 2 Bath  1,826 sq. ft.
Agent: Jeff Kaplar
Gateway Realty Inc.  512-431-2567

Build-out year: Not built out

Builders include: David Weekley Homes, Meritage Homes, Newmark Homes, Scott Felder Homes, Standard Pacific Homes, Wilshire Homes

Square footage: 1,826–3,377

Home values: $264,900–$355,000

HOA dues (estimated): $39 per month

Amenities: Swimming pool, playscape, basketball court

Property taxes (in dollars):

Austin ISD  1.2220
City of Austin  0.4809
 Travis County  0.4563
 Central Health  0.1364
 Austin Community College  0.0942

Total (per $100 value)  2.3798

Median home value  $289,000
Median price per square foot  $125.57
Median annual property taxes  $9,966
Homes on the market*  7
Homes under contract*  6
Average days on the market*  18

Neighborhood Data provided by
Marc Warshawsky
Realty Austin
Southwest Austin Market Manager
512-658-2128
www.realtyaustin.com

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<th>Price</th>
<th>Sq. ft</th>
<th>Agent</th>
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<tr>
<td>78735</td>
<td>Amara Drive</td>
<td>8613 Acurela Court</td>
<td>4br/4ba</td>
<td>$2,250,000</td>
<td>5,153</td>
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<td>Turnquist Partners, Realtors</td>
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Price vs. December 2013

- $590,000
- $450,000
- $400,000
- $350,000
- $300,000
- $250,000
- $200,000
- $150,000
- $100,000
- $50,000

House prices increased from December 2013 to December 2014.

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