

Landing Pad Program | 23
Austin Technology Incubator's new program helped 13 startups relocate to Austin in 2011



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NORTHWEST AUSTIN EDITION

Volume 6, Issue 1 | Feb. 29–March 29, 2012

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Housing market begins to favor sellers, Realtors say

Low inventory buoys housing prices as experts see uptick in demand

By Sara Behunek

As the housing market around the nation continues its slow mend, demand for residential real estate in Austin—particularly Northwest Austin—is through the roof, Realtors say.

Judith Bundschuh, chairman of the Austin Board of Realtors, said she recently began showing a house in the Canyon Creek neighborhood and within 10 days had three seriously interested buyers. One put in an offer at the top end of the price spectrum—higher than the house sold the previous time and at the full asking price.

“It’s like we are in a different environment altogether,” Bundschuh said.

The numbers tell a similar story. ABoR data show that sales of single-family homes in Northwest Austin were up 13 percent last year, compared with a 1.7 percent rise nationwide, according to data from the National Association of Realtors. In Austin,

sales rose 7 percent.

Meanwhile, the average price of homes in the northwest quadrant, although down about 1 percent in the past year, have been held in check at about \$250,000 on average, according to ABoR, because the houses that are selling are “top-notch,” Bundschuh said.

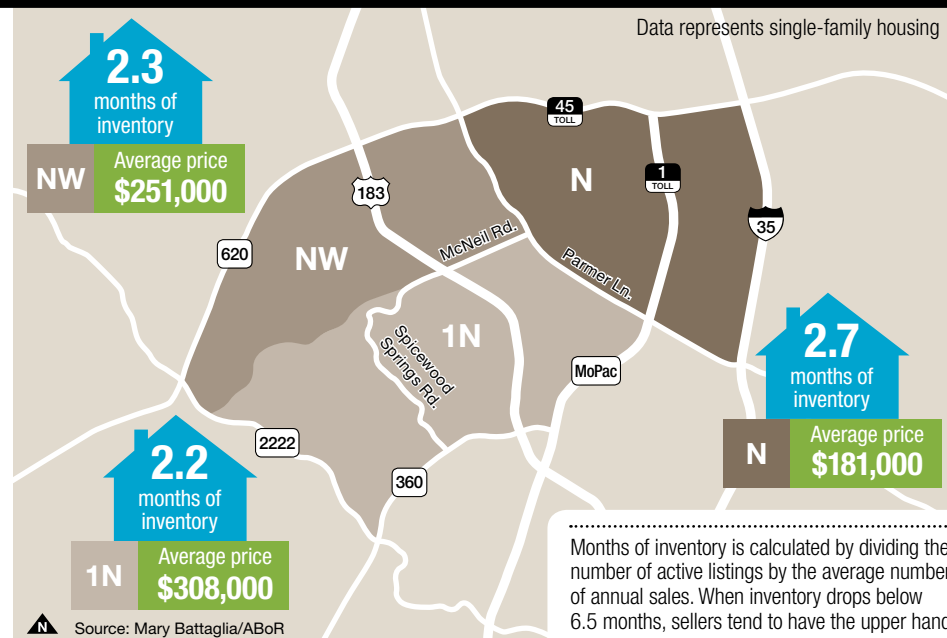
But perhaps the most notable force in the Northwest Austin residential real estate market—and what is exciting Realtors who focus on the area—is the low number of houses, or inventory, available.

Based on findings by the Real Estate Center at Texas A&M University, when housing inventory is at 6.5 months, the market is balanced. In Northwest Austin, single-family inventory is 2.2–2.7 months, one of the lowest in the city.

What all this points to is a shift in the market, experts said.

“For a long time, we had a buyer’s market. Now, the sellers are getting a taste of it,”

Northwest Austin is divided into three districts by the Austin Board of Realtors: NW, 1N and N



said Mary Battaglia, a real estate agent with Coldwell Banker United who focuses on Northwest Austin.

Adam Boenig’s company, Brohn Homes, is constructing and developing a 26-house subdivision on Cima Serena Drive near the intersection of Steck Avenue and Mesa Drive. He said he already has a waiting list

for the homes, which will range from about \$380,000 to \$480,000.

“We haven’t even done any marketing or advertising. They haven’t even seen our product. We are finalizing our architectural plans right now,” he said.

Bundschuh had a similar experience
See **Housing** | 17

Group: City ‘too diverse’ for an at-large council

Charter Revision Committee recommends Austin switch to geographic representation

By Mitzie Stelte

New life is being breathed into an initiative to change the way Austin is represented by its City Council—a proposal that has been rejected by Austinites since the 1970s, the last time being in 2002.

The 2012 Charter Revision Committee, a council-appointed group of 15 citizens tasked with studying the issue, voted Feb. 2 in favor of replacing the current at-large system with 10 single-member districts and one at-large mayor. The group will make a recommendation to City Council, which may ask residents to vote on the issue in the November election.

The committee, established in August, studied alternative representative options, such as single-member district systems or hybrid systems, with council members elected both at-large and geographically. Committee members acknowledged the rejection of single-member districts by voters in the past but agreed the proposal has a better chance at passage in 2012 due to the city’s rapidly growing population.

“The city is too large and too diverse for the type of



Committee member Richard Jung (left) debated Feb. 2 with other members about which system to recommend to City Council.

government it has,” committee member Fred Lewis said.

Hybrid versus single-member

The committee held regular meetings as well as several public hearings where, in addition to the 10-1 plan, various hybrid options were considered, such as the 6-2-1 plan proposed by Mayor Lee Leffingwell, made up of six single-member districts, two at-large representatives and one

See **Redistricting** | 19



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IDEA Public Schools CEO talks education, AISD

With the nonprofit charter school system gearing up to interview for 60 positions at IDEA Allan, IDEA Public Schools CEO Tom Torkelson made himself available to address issues raised during the December board and community meetings.

TxDOT takes first steps on passenger train between Austin, Houston

TxDOT has completed a feasibility study and is presenting key findings to various governmental bodies. Next, the transportation department will undertake a ridership analysis, though that is still a ways down the road, TxDOT said.



LCRA board approves water management and drought contingency plan

The plan, approved Feb. 22 following an 18-month draft and revision process, will be sent to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality for final approval.

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John and Jennifer Garrett began *Community Impact Newspaper* in 2005 in Pflugerville, Texas, with a mission to provide intelligent, unbiased news coverage with a hyperlocal focus. Now, with 12 markets in the Austin, Houston and Dallas/Fort Worth metro areas, the paper is distributed to more than 750,000 homes and businesses.

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As an avid shopper, I enjoy a little retail therapy from time to time, but I enjoy it even more when I get the chance to shop locally. I am a sucker for a local boutique that sells

unique shoes and clothing like at Devilish Thoughts Boutique on Pond Springs Road or for a restaurant with a laid-back atmosphere where the owner greets you, such as at In the Buns Burger Joint on US 183 and Lake Creek Parkway.

What's more, shopping locally also stimulates Austin's economy. When you spend \$100 at a local, independent business, it creates \$68 in additional local economic activity, whereas spending \$100 at a chain store produces only \$43 of local impact, according to a 2008 report by Civic Economics, a consultancy with an office in Austin.

So what can you do?

Believe it or not, with all of the large shopping centers in Northwest Austin—The Domain, Arbor Walk and the Arboretum, to name a few—it is easy for you to direct your money into both Austin's and Northwest Austin's economies because those centers contain a lot of locally owned shops.

We thought there was no better way for us to prove this than by focusing on the Arboretum in this month's Corridor, a section in which we feature locally owned businesses on a particular street corridor or shopping strip.

Next time you are looking for the perfect outfit or a scrumptious meal, know that in Northwest Austin, there are locally owned treasures everywhere. We will be your guide.

Katherine Kennedy
General Manager
kkennedy@impactnews.com

Reader Feedback

Which method of reducing traffic on Loop 360 would you support?

Turning Loop 360 into a controlled-access highway with overpasses
59%

Implementation of Michigan left turns or modified Michigan left turns
20%

Nothing, travel on Loop 360 is fine the way it is
15%

Other

6%

Results from an unscientific web survey, collected 12/16/11–2/22/12

Utility: WTP4 on time, on budget

www.impactnews.com

"It is ludicrous to say the project is on budget since the entire Forest Hills Transmission Main was eliminated from the project. There should have been a huge reduction in the project's cost, but through creative accounting, none was."

—Ted Moorman

Mailing schedule

Our mailing schedule varies slightly through the month of March. You can expect your copy of *Community Impact Newspaper* on March 30.



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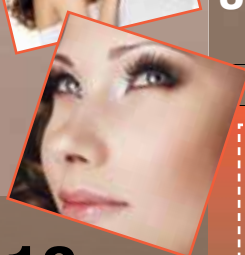
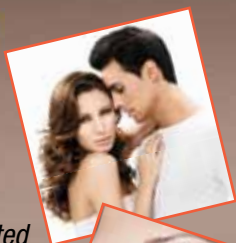
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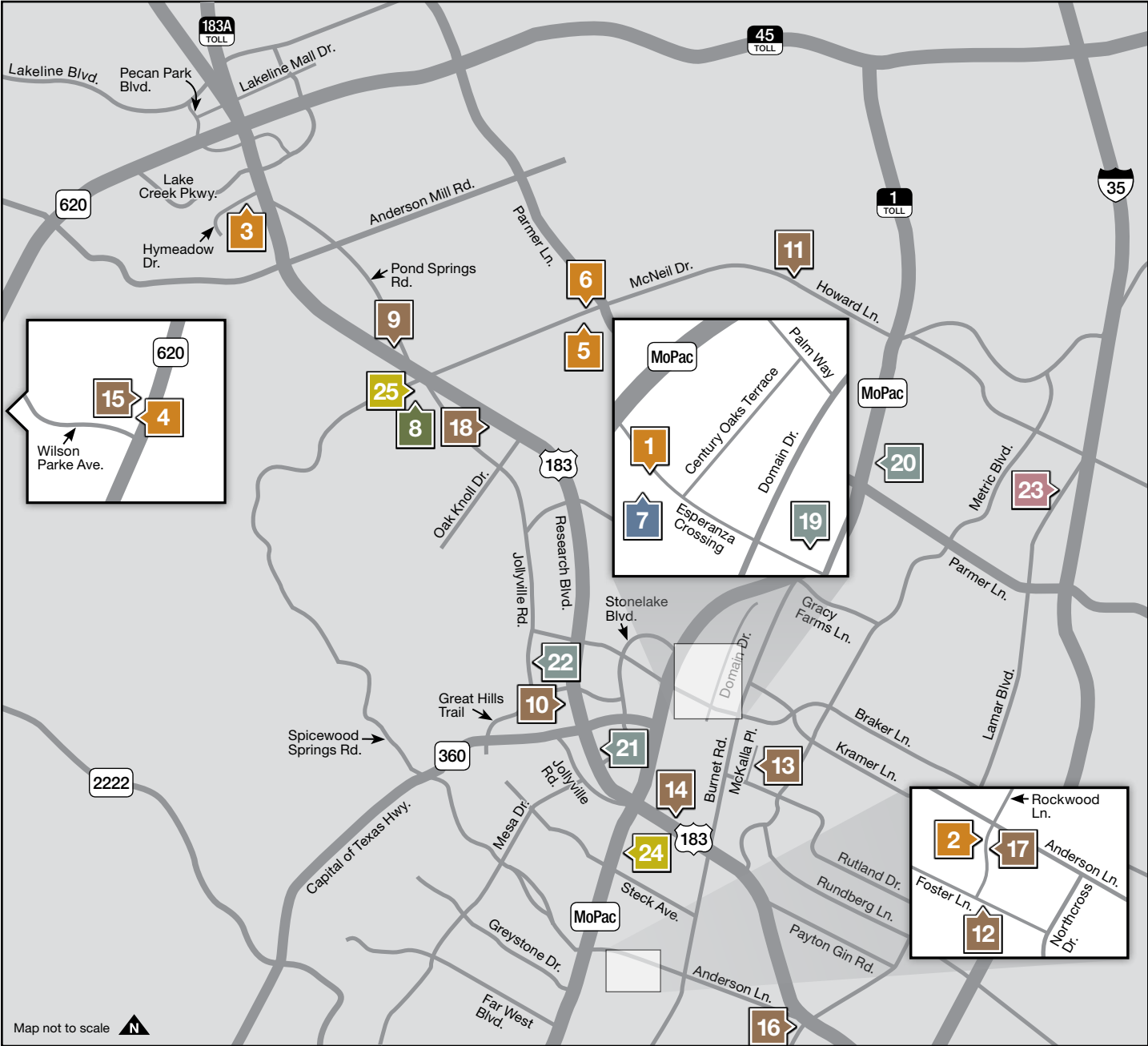
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IMPACTS



Now Open

- 1** Ben May opened **Austin Cake Ball Kitchen & Bar** on Dec. 13 at 3401 Esperanza Crossing, Ste. 104, at The Domain. May owns Austin Cake Ball and wanted to offer more retail with fine dining. The restaurant has wine, signature cocktails and a menu that includes grilled and braised meats as well as specialty cake balls for \$2.50 each. 215-3633, www.austincakeball.com/kitchenandbar
- 2** Austin's third **Fresh Plus Grocery** opened Feb. 3 at 2917 W. Anderson Lane in the former location of Sprouts Farmers Market. Fresh Plus is owned by Paul and Irene Beurskens and is a neighborhood grocery store that carries mostly organic products. The other locations are in the Hyde Park and Clarksville neighborhoods. 419-7379
- 3** In January, **WellMed** opened its sixth Austin-area clinic at 12505 Hymeadow Drive, Ste. 2C. Provider physician Dr. Abhilasha Gupta practiced medicine in Georgetown for nearly a decade before joining WellMed. 219-0129, www.wellmedmedicalgroup.com

- 4** **Whataburger** opened Feb. 1 at The Trails at 620, 8300 N. RM 620. Whataburger, headquartered in San Antonio, is known for its custom-made burgers. The new location is the 18th in the Austin area. 249-9664, www.whataburger.com
- 5** On Jan. 21, Aaron and Jessie Johnson opened **Bella Nova**, a high-end formal dress boutique, at 6001 W. Parmer Lane, Ste. 140, in the McNeil Crossing shopping center. Bella Nova sells a variety of eveningwear designed by Sherri Hill, La Femme, Tony Bowls and Jovani as well as shoes, clutches and jewelry. 382-5649, www.bellanovaaustin.com
- 6** **Schlotzsky's** at 6301 W. Parmer Lane, Ste. 608, opened a drive-thru Feb. 8. The drive-thru is operational 10 a.m.–10 p.m. The sandwich chain has 10 Austin-area locations. 918-2867, www.schlotzskys.com

Coming Soon

- 7** **Microsoft Corp.** announced Feb. 3 that it will open a retail store at The Domain in a portion of the former Borders, 3309 Esperanza Crossing. The

store will carry an assortment of Microsoft products, including software as well as products such as Windows phones. The store will also host complimentary tech training and events in a theater space. The Domain location will be the 16th Microsoft store in the nation and the second in Texas. www.microsoftstore.com

Reopening

- 8** **Dynasty Chinese and Vietnamese Restaurant**, 8650 Spicewood Springs Road, Ste. 109, reopened Jan. 17 after damage from a fire on Thanksgiving Day at Sambets Cajun Deli, located next door, forced it to close. The owners completed repairs and remodeling, including improvements to the ceiling and carpet. Dynasty has been in business 35 years. 258-7587, www.dynasty183.com

Relocations

- 9** **Easy Tours of India** relocated Feb. 19 from 10000 Research Blvd., Ste. 250, at the Arboretum at Great Hills, to 12885 Research Blvd., Ste. 208. Sunil Trehan runs the family-owned business, which provides luxury tours and vacations

to countries in South Asia, including India, Thailand, Vietnam and Cambodia. 345-1122, www.easytourofindia.com

- 10** **Z Gallerie** is relocating its store in The Domain, 11401 Century Oaks Terrace, Ste. 137, to the Arboretum, 10000 Research Blvd., Ste. 118, in June. Z Gallerie is a lifestyle retailer that offers merchandise for the home, such as furniture, artwork, lighting, textiles and decorative accents. 339-1612, www.zgallerie.com
- 11** **M&M Engineering Associates** plans to move its Austin-area office, located at 4616 W. Howard Lane, Bldg. 2, Ste. 500, to Cedar Park. The company offers engineering services to clients, specializing in reducing operational risks and optimizing equipment availability. 407-8598, www.mmengineering.com

- 12** The Austin location of **Parker School Uniforms** relocated Feb. 18 to 7756 Northcross Drive, Ste. 111, from 5300 N. Lamar Blvd. Headquartered in Houston, Parker School Uniforms provides uniforms, shoes and coats for students attending private schools. The Austin shop serves 40 schools from Temple to San Marcos and has been in Austin for 24 years. 451-1667, www.parkersu.com

- 13** Home decor store **Star of Morocco** relocated its showroom from 3100 Industrial Terrace to 10109 McKalla Place, Ste. H, in early February. The new location has a larger showroom. Owner Adeal Benhayoun imports goods from Morocco, including lamps, furniture, tea sets, dishes and vases. 300-1006, www.starofmorocco.com

- 14** In April, **Crossroads Community Church** will start holding Sunday service at 9185 Research Blvd. The church, which currently meets at River Oaks Elementary School, 12401 Scofield Farms Drive, is a mobile church and sets up and tears down each Sunday. Service is at 10:30 a.m. The church has about 200 attendees each week. 491-0496, www.crossroadschurchaustin.com

- 15** **Flores Mexican Restaurant**, 7900 N. RM 620, is scheduled to relocate in early March to a bigger location at The Trails at 620. The new address will be 8300 N. RM 620. 996-9636, www.floresmexican.com

- 16** **Frankenstein Computers** relocated at the end of January to 7702 N. Lamar Blvd. from 7113 Burnet Road. The computer repair shop fixes PCs for the home or business and makes house and business calls. Owned by Tony Tudyk, Frankenstein Computers has been open since 1999. 419-9777, www.frankenstein-computers.com

- 17** Kyle Golden, owner of **Work It Personal Training**, relocated his studio

Jan. 30 to an expanded 8,000-square-foot space at 7817 Rockwood Lane, Ste. 102. He was previously located at 7323 Burnet Road. Golden offers one-on-one training and boot camps. Soon, he will offer weight training and mind and body classes, including Pilates. 426-2336, www.workittraining.com

18 Nonprofit thrift store **Nifty Thrift** tripled its square footage with a relocation Jan. 19 to 12636 Research Blvd., Ste. 109. The shop was located at 6610 McNeil Drive. Owned by Christa Graham, Nifty Thrift sells clothing, housewares and electronics, and also accepts donations. 432-5906

Expansions

Always Best Care Senior Services of Greater Northwest Austin now offers a free telephone reassurance program, Always in Touch, for seniors who live alone and disabled adults. The service, launched in January, is available in Georgetown, Northwest Austin, Round Rock and Cedar Park and provides daily socialization and the reassurance that the senior “is not alone.” 518-3979, www.greaternorthwestaustin.alwaysbestcare.com

Closings

19 **Technique Restaurant**, 3110 Esperanza Crossing, Ste. 100, near The Domain, closed in December because it was run by students in the Le Cordon Bleu College of Culinary Arts as part of their curriculum, which changed. The space was repurposed to train students in catering. The Technique Cafe will remain open and serve lunch from 11 a.m.–1:30 p.m. 837-2665, www.techniquerestaurant.com

20 In early February, **RoomStore** announced that it would close its two Austin locations, including one at 12611 N. MoPac, once it sells all existing merchandise. The company, which opened in 1992 in Dallas, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in December. 246-0311, www.roomstoreaustin.com

21 **Manny’s Uptown Kitchen**, also known as Manny Hattan’s New York Delicatessen and Restaurant, closed in early February after 10 years in business. The restaurant, located at 9503 Research Blvd., was a New York-style deli.

22 **Blockbuster** at 10407 Jollyville Road will close March 25. The video rental store is in the process of liquidating all merchandise, including movies, games and confections. The Blockbuster location at the Anderson Arbor Shopping Center, 13435 US 183, Ste. 311, will remain open. 338-0786, 335-0411, www.blockbuster.com

School Notes

23 **Connally High School** teacher Kristina Carssow received a \$25,000 National Milken Educator Award on Feb 15. She was the only Texas teacher to receive the award for 2011 and one of about 40 educators nationwide. www.mff.org/mea

In the News

24 **University Federal Credit Union** announced Feb. 3 that it had purchased 246,000 square feet of office space at 8303 MoPac to serve as its corporate headquarters. The credit union will consolidate support staff dispersed among four locations in North Austin. The credit union’s operations at 3305 Steck Ave. will remain open after the transition. UFCU will occupy 100,000 square feet of the building in 2013. The remaining space will be leased to other tenants. www.ufcu.org

25 Amy Brown, owner of **Cupprimo Cupcakery & Coffee Spot**, 8650 Spicewood Springs Road, Ste. 105, and head baker Monica Stelly, appeared on the Jan. 29 episode of the Food Network’s “Cupcake Wars,” which celebrated the 60th anniversary of “I Love Lucy.” The pair was eliminated in Round 2 but created cupcakes highlighting different “I Love Lucy” episodes. 335-7746, www.cupprimo.com



Photos by Amy Denney

Aaron and Jessie Johnson opened **Bella Nova**, a high-end formal dress boutique in the McNeil Crossing shopping center Jan. 21.



In addition to cake balls, **Austin Cake Ball Kitchen & Bar** has wine, signature cocktails and a menu that includes grilled and braised meats.



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CALENDAR

March



3 It's My Park Day

Volunteers pick up trash, repair trails and install playground equipment at public parks during this annual community service day. Last year, 2,000 volunteers helped with 72 projects. Find and sign up for projects online. • 9 a.m.–1 p.m. Free • Locations vary • 477-1566 www.austinparks.org/itsmypark.html

'Tenebrae-Shadows of France'

Nonprofit vocalist group Ensemble VIII, specializing in Renaissance and Baroque music, presents a compilation of songs including Couperin's "Trois Leçons de Ténèbres" and Charpentier's "Méditations pour le Carême" as well as "Le Reniement de St Pierre." • 7:30 p.m. • \$20–\$45 • St. Louis Catholic Church Chapel, 7601 Burnet Road www.ensembleviii.org

10th Annual Children's Health Festival

Williamson County & Cities Health District hosts the Children's Health Festival to encourage parents and children to "play for the health of it" and highlight the importance of physical activity, healthy eating and child safety. A Zumba class is also offered. 12:30–1:30 p.m., 10 a.m.–2 p.m. • Free • The Dell Diamond, 3400 E. Palm Valley Blvd., Round Rock • 248-3252 • www.wcchd.org

Worth the trip



3–4 Mellow Johnny's Spring Classic

Racers experience two days of action on 8 miles of single-track trails at Flat Creek Crossing Ranch. In addition to elite pro men and women categories, the event includes a Kid's Kup Youth Series. • First race starts at 9 a.m. • \$10–\$50 • Flat Creek Crossing 473-0222 • <http://mellowclassic.blogspot.com>

4 Purim Carnival

The Jewish Community Center hosts a family event featuring carnival games, a petting zoo, face painting, pony rides and more. Children who arrive in costume receive five free carnival tickets. • Noon–3 p.m. • Admission is free, carnival tickets are available for purchase 7300 Hart Lane • 735-8050 www.shalomaustin.org



4 Zilker Kite Festival

An annual tradition since 1929, the sky above Zilker Park is dotted with thousands of colorful kites at the nation's oldest kite festival. The event includes youth and adult homemade kite contests as well as a rock climbing wall and face painting. • Free • 10 a.m.–5 p.m. Zilker Park, 2100 Barton Springs Road 448-5483 • www.zilkerkitefestival.com

6 Community meeting with RRISD superintendent

Round Rock ISD Superintendent Jesus Chávez discusses the latest news and updates in the district with parents and members of the community interested in learning more. • 5:30–7 p.m. • Free • Morelia Mexican Grill, 9900 W. Parmer Lane 464-5022 • www.roundrockisd.org



6–18 South by Southwest Music and Media Conference

The annual festival, now with four installments—Education, Interactive, Film and Music—sets up shop in a host of venues in downtown Austin. Three consecutive nights of free concerts at Auditorium Shores begins March 15. • \$300–\$1,395 • 467-7979 Visit www.sxsw.com for a full schedule of events, performances and locations.

7 'Vertical: The Sequel to Sideways' book signing

Author Rex Pickett discusses his new book, "Vertical: The Sequel to Sideways." As its name implies, the book is the sequel to "Sideways," which was made into a critically acclaimed movie of the same name. • 6 p.m. Free • Barnes & Noble Arboretum, 10000 Research Blvd., Ste. 152 • 418-8985 www.barnesandnoble.com

10 Camp Gladiator 5K

Rotary Club of Austin Centennial and Camp Gladiator host a 5K family fun run/walk at Harper Park in Anderson Mill. Proceeds benefit local nonprofit organizations that assist veterans, children and the elderly. Activities for children and live music follow the run/walk. A donation of two books for Libraries of Love is encouraged. • 9–11 a.m. • \$15 (adults), free (age 18 and younger) • Harper Park, Lake Creek Parkway and Deerbrook Trail spiritofsharing@weebly.com, www.campgladiator.com

Aiana String Quartet



(From left) Hanna Hurwitz, Roseminna Watson, Jillian Bloom and Mario Anton Andreu comprise Aiana String Quartet, which will give a free performance at the North Village Branch library.

March 10

By Sara Behunek

Aiana String Quartet, The University of Texas' Young Professional Quartet in Residence, performs a free concert at the Austin Public Library North Village Branch, 2505 Steck Ave. The hour-long show begins at 3 p.m. and is the second in a series of three Aiana String Quartet concerts hosted by the library. The first show was at Faulk Central Library in February.

"The concert was on the first floor in front of the new books section, and as people came into or left the building they would pass it. All of them stopped for a minute or two, if not longer, to listen," said Jennifer Connor, reference librarian at Faulk Central Library. "It was wonderful."

The third concert will be held April 13 from 4–5 p.m. at Faulk Central Library. For more information, go to www.library.austintexas.gov or call 974-9960. For more information about the quartet, visit www.aianastringquartet.com.



14 'For the Record: Tarantino in Concert'

The critically acclaimed live concert is a fusion of music, theater and film that brings director Quentin Tarantino's work to life in a concert setting. The show is a collection of songs and scenes from the films "Reservoir Dogs," "Pulp Fiction," "Kill Bill," "Jackie Brown," "Death Proof" and "Inglourious Basterds." • 8 p.m. \$24–\$49 • The Long Center, 701 W. Riverside Drive • 474-5664 • www.thelongcenter.org

17 St. Patrick's Day at Cover 3

The Cover 3 stage features the Silver Thistle Pipes and Drums, Austin Brass Band, Jeff Moore and Billy McComiskey as well as the Clickety Cloggers and more. Cover 3 also offers workshops and film presentations that are free for ticket holders. The show is produced by the Celtic Cultural Center of Texas. • Noon–10 p.m. • \$10 (adults), \$3 (age 13 and younger) • 2700 W. Anderson Lane 374-1121 • www.stpatricksdayaustin.com



24–25 Junior 'Dillo Kids Run and Statesman Capitol 10K

The half-mile and 1-mile runs for youths age 15 and younger is March 24, and race proceeds go to local assistance programs sponsored by Assistance League of Austin. The Statesman Capitol 10,000, held March 25, is the largest 10K in Texas. • 9 a.m. (Junior 'Dillo Run), 8:30 a.m. (Cap 10K) • \$10–\$12 (Junior 'Dillo Run), \$17–\$40 (Cap 10K) • Auditorium Shores www.statesman.com/cap10k

Online Calendar

Find more or submit Northwest Austin events at www.impactnews.com.

For a full list of Central Texas events, visit www.impactnews.com.

To have Northwest Austin events included in the print edition, they must be submitted online by the second Friday of the month.

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Roger Beasley



Recent highlights



Sara Behunek

Somayya Rodriguez paints a henna tattoo on Samira Ghosh at the India Republic Day celebration, hosted by the Indian American Coalition of Texas, at Givens Recreation Center on Jan. 28.



Courtesy Kathryn Whiteley

Dancers entertain attendees of the Capital Area Asian American Democrats award ceremony and Lunar New Year celebration Jan. 19 at Satay Restaurant in Northwest Austin.



Amy Danney

State Sen. Kirk Watson (left); Rosie Mendoza, chair of the Central Health Board; and Austin Mayor Lee Leffingwell cut the ribbon Feb. 21 at the newest CommUnityCare Clinic, located at 1210 W. Braker Lane.



Sara Behunek

Tech Ranch co-founders (from left) Chris Scheetz and Kevin Koym, and director of business development Dave Michaels host a "ranch warming" Jan. 12 at their new office at 9111 Jollyville Road.



Sara Behunek

Adelbert's Brewery, Black Star Co-op, Circle Brewing Company, NXNW and Yeti Coolers team up with Austin Homebrew to throw a party in Austin Homebrew's parking lot Feb. 11.



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Thursday, March 1, 2012 4:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m.
O. Henry Middle School, Cafeteria
2610 West 10th Street
Austin, TX 78703

Tuesday, March 6, 2012 4:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m.
Dell Jewish Community Campus
7300 Hart Lane
Austin, TX 78731

No formal presentation will be given. Attendees are invited to come and go at their convenience.

If you plan to attend the open house and have special communication or accommodation needs, please contact Jon Geiselbrecht at (512) 832-7218.

For more information, please visit www.MopacExpress.com or contact the Mobility Authority at 512-996-9778.



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Michael Doss, President-Round Rock



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NEWS REPORT

Amid outcry, Austin Energy works to offer compromise on rate hikes

By Mitzie Stelte

After 17 years of a stagnant base rate, Austin Energy said in September that a \$131 million shortfall necessitated a 12.5 percent system-wide rate increase that it hoped to have in effect by January. Now, at the end of February, the utility—as well as members of City Council—continues to work toward bringing residents an acceptable proposal.

Under AE's original plan, depending on usage, rates would have changed a residential customer's bill by as much as 60 percent or as little as 5 percent, and the fixed monthly fee would increase from \$6 to \$22. Commercial and industrial users would face a change as high as 22 percent or as low as 1 percent.

Opponents of the plan said the increase would burden residential customers in favor of industrial and commercial users.

"The proposal is upside-down and backward," said Carol Biedrzycki, executive director of Texas Ratepayers Organization to Save Energy, at Austin Energy's first rate increase public hearing held Jan. 12.

AE's modifications to this plan were presented to council on Feb. 2. The proposal outlined four main changes, including phasing in the 12.5 percent rate increase in two steps. The first phase would mean an 8.7 percent increase in 2012 and a 3.8 percent increase in 2014.

The utility stated that if the proposed increases are not in place by summer, it will lose \$77 million this year. To have the

rates solidified by summer, City Council would need to take action in March.

While the residential monthly fixed fee set in the original proposal would remain at \$22, the first 200 kilowatt-hours would be included. AE would also remove delivery and demand charges for small businesses as well as some small worship centers, which would also have a time-of-use fee option.

Although it was an attempt to resolve concerns, members of City Council still took issue with the modifications. On Feb. 9, Councilwomen Laura Morrison and Kathie Tovo proposed an interim 3.5 percent system-wide rate increase as an alternative measure that would begin in June and expire after one year.

"We've heard from the community loud and clear that the Austin Energy rate proposal will have too much impact on ratepayers, especially our families, our small businesses and our faith community, all of whom would experience very high rate increases," Morrison said.

At a special called meeting Feb. 22, council directed the city auditor to conduct a review of AE's revenue requirements with completion of the review targeted for late April. Council also began debate on an interim increase, but further discussion is set for its regular meeting March 1.

The next public hearing on the rate increase will be held at 6 p.m. March 1 at City Hall, 301 W. Second St.

Austin Energy's proposal process

Austin Energy's original plan

Presented to City Council on Dec. 14

Increase system-wide electricity rates by 12.5 percent

Residential customers charged for kilowatt per hour (kWh) usage based on a five-tier system, fixed monthly fee increases from \$6 to \$22

Worship centers charged as commercial users, includes demand charge and electric delivery charge

No suggestions for General Fund Transfer (GFT), customers outside Austin city limits are charged the same rates as those within the city

Austin Energy's modified plan

Presented to City Council on Feb. 2

Two-step, phased-in rate increase: 8.7 percent in June 2012 and 3.8 percent in October 2014

Residential customers charged for kWh usage based on a five-tier system and fixed monthly fee raises to \$22, but first 200 kWh are included

Remove demand charge and electric delivery charge for small worship facilities/ small businesses with less than 10 kilowatts of peak demand, make time-of-use rates available to all worship facilities

Cap GFT at \$105 million, a reduction of 6.1 percent for residents outside city limits

Councilwomen Morrison and Tovo's plan

Announced on Feb. 9

Interim (one-year) system-wide 3.5 percent rate increase

No discounted rates for users outside city limits

During interim, AE's financial status reviewed quarterly by City Council, and council helps draft new plan



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News Updates

In previous issues or online, we reported on the following stories. Here is an update on what has happened since then.

Compiled by Sara Behunek

ACC chooses architect for Highland Mall redevelopment

The Austin Community College District board of trustees has chosen local firm Barnes Gromatzky Kosarek Architects to head up the \$18 million renovation of the J.C. Penney building at Highland Mall.

ACC purchased the 205,000-square-foot property for \$15.7 million in August 2011. In accordance with the college's master plan, approved last year, the property will serve as swing space for classes that have been displaced by campus renovations.

In addition, the college will use the building for a math and science learning program modeled after the National



Austin Community College District purchased the former J.C. Penney store at Highland Mall last year for \$15.7 million.

Center for Academic Transformation's Emporium as part of a new initiative.

"It's not like a traditional classroom. It's larger, it has more technology and it's a collaborative space" said Jay Barnes, BGK principal for the project.

Developer abandons proposal for low-income housing complex, for now

John Boyd, vice president of Austin-based Realtex Development Corporation, said the developer had discontinued its efforts for the time being to build a 184-unit, low-income apartment complex between North Lamar Boulevard and I-35 south of Yager Lane in North Austin.

"That site has some potential," he said. "But we have other opportunities right

now that fit better with our pipeline."

Boyd said the company was focusing on sites in other parts of Texas.

Cedar Hills Ltd., an affiliate of Realtex, applied for housing tax credits with the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs on June 30.

The proposed location was 12220 Walnut Park Crossing.

IDEA Public Schools begins hiring process at new in-district charter

IDEA Public Schools plans to hire 60 positions for the new Austin Independent School District in-district charter school at Allan Elementary School, set to open in the 2012–2013 school year.

IDEA Allan, as the program is to be called, will be part of the Eastside Memorial Vertical Team—composed of Eastside Memorial High School and its feeder schools.

IDEA has not yet clarified whether teachers who currently work at Allan Elementary will have preference during the hiring process, but affected teachers and staff at Allan Elementary and Eastside Memorial are guaranteed an interview if they express interest to the district.

"Assuming they notified the district of their interest and they meet IDEA's standards, they will be offered a position," Senior Communications Manager Vanessa Barry said. "The truth is, we hope to fill several of the spots with current AISD staff to help marry the two cultures and provide the best transition for IDEA Allan students."

Teachers displaced as a result of the rehiring have been guaranteed by AISD jobs elsewhere in the district.

Construction update



The Cedar Bend Professional Center, now under construction, has one space left to lease.

Cedar Bend Professional Center

Workers have erected the frame of the Cedar Bend Professional Center on MoPac just south of Parmer Lane. The building will be the newest addition to the medical corridor, anchored by St. David's North Austin Medical Center.

Although construction is scheduled to conclude in August, the center is almost completely leased, said Steve Younkman, chief financial officer at real estate firm Live Oak Gottesman. Future occupants include Capital Otolaryngology Head & Neck Surgeons and the Nasal & Sinus Center of Austin.

Workers broke ground on the facility Oct. 25.

Conservation doesn't end when summer does...

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www.ci.austin.tx.us/water



TRANSPORTATION

Capital Metro awaits go-ahead on rapid-bus routes

Transit authority expects service to begin in 2014

By Amy Denney

Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority anticipates the Federal Transit Authority to green-light in March the implementation of a two-route, \$47.6 million rapid-bus system with the goal of starting service in 2014.

"This is going to be our premium service. We want it to run the most frequently out of anything we operate, and we want it to run the longest of anything we operate," said Todd Hemingson, vice president of strategic planning and development for Capital Metro.

The rapid-bus system will replace the transit authority's limited-stop Route 101. One route will run along North Lamar Boulevard and South Congress Avenue from the Tech Ridge Park and Ride to the Southpark Meadows retail center on Slaughter Lane.

Another route will run from the North Austin Medical Center south on Burnet Road to the Westgate Transit Center on South Lamar Boulevard. Between the two lines, there are 77 stops.

"One of the unique things about these two lines is they form kind of an 'X' shape, and in the center they share a common path from Lady Bird Lake to UT," Hemingson said. "Where we have really high ridership and demand for transit, they both will be operating. So instead of running every 10 minutes, they will be running every five minutes."

Capital Metro plans to run the buses daily from 5 a.m. to 1 a.m. with fewer service hours on Saturday and Sunday.

Fast bus, slow start

The idea for a rapid-bus system stems from a 2004 comprehensive transportation plan, which identified 10 possible routes. Capital Metro elected to move forward on its highest ridership route, the North Lamar/South Congress route, and the Burnet Road/South Lamar route

because of its close proximity to the first route.

"We had initially thought we could do these pretty quickly, but as it is not uncommon, there were budget challenges, and that budget shortfall was what really lead us to put in for the grant," Hemingson said.

In February 2009, the FTA notified Capital Metro that it would receive an 80/20 local matching grant in which the federal agency would pay for \$38.1 million and Capital Metro would fund the remaining \$9.5 million from its operating budget.

New features

The majority of the project cost—\$25.4 million of \$47.6 million—will fund the purchase of 40 new buses. The North Lamar/South Congress route will use 60-foot accordion-style buses, and the Burnet Road route will use 40-foot buses. The 60-foot bus holds 111 people with 56 seats, and the 40-foot bus has a 78-person capacity with 35 seats.

Capital Metro will also construct new shelters at every stop along the MetroRapid lines, with the exception of the park-and-ride locations, at a total cost of \$9.6 million, according to the transit authority.

Each shelter will have a bench, system map, standard route sign and a real-time digital display to show riders the anticipated arrival times of the next two buses. The information will be transmitted from a GPS device on the bus that also communicates with the City of Austin's traffic management system.

Getting there quicker

Ken Cartwright, strategic project management officer for Capital Metro, said that when one of the new buses approaches a traffic signal that is about to turn red, the bus' GPS system will communicate with the city's system to

keep the light green for up to five more seconds. Cartwright said the buses cannot change a red light green or run a red light, but the system would allow the bus to pass through the intersection instead of being stopped, thus allowing for faster service.

- **Route 1**
North Lamar/South Congress
- **Route 2**
Burnet/South Lamar
- **MetroRapid stops**

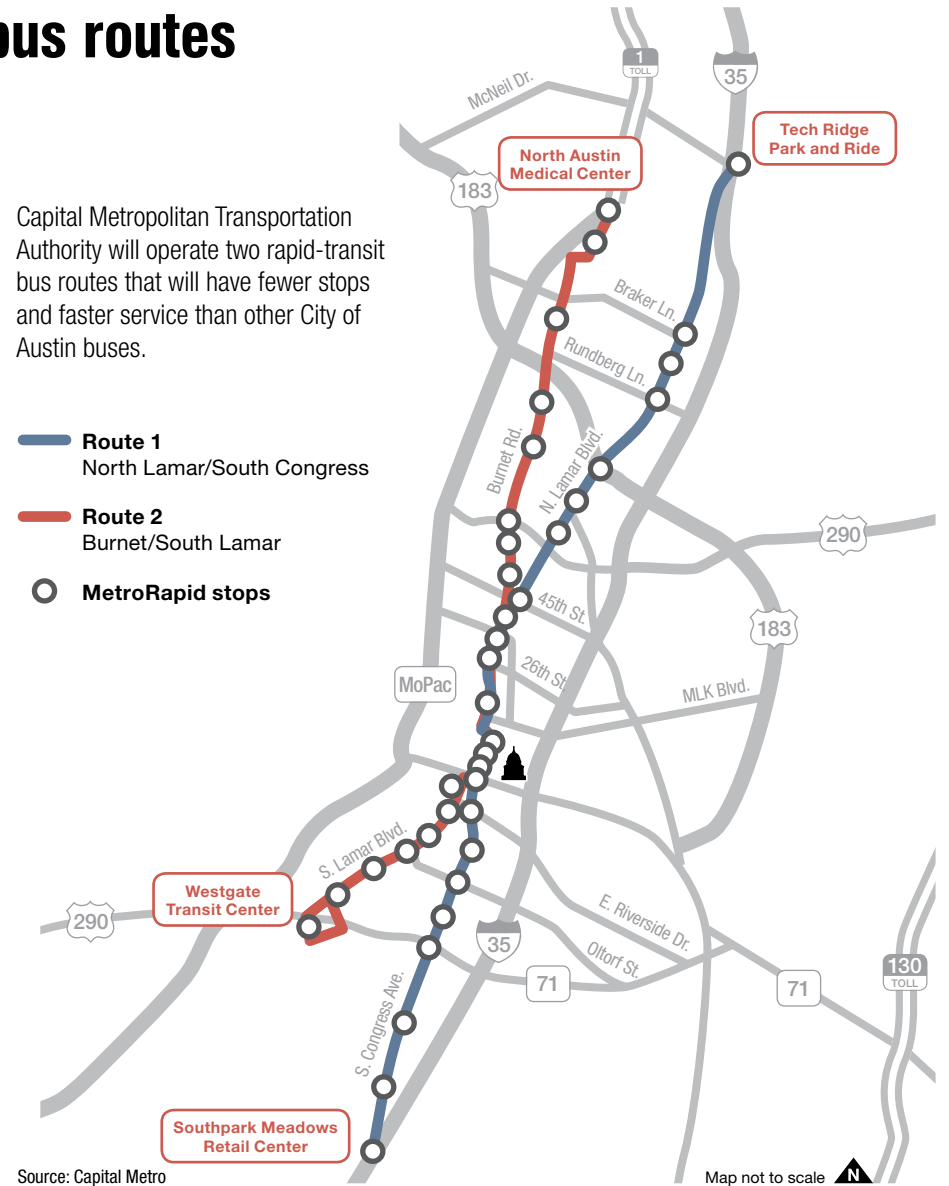
"It's not just a benefit for customers, it's a benefit for Capital Metro because it reduces our cost," he said. "Any time we can speed up our service, that's lower cost and more efficiency."

The rapid-bus routes also open the doors for Capital Metro to partner with

other cities and counties in the future to connect service, although Cartwright said nothing is set in stone as the primary focus is on the existing service area.

"We know, based on license plate surveys, for example, that a lot of people that access the Tech Ridge park-and-ride are actually from points farther north, so they will be able to access MetroRapid there," he said, adding those areas are mostly Round Rock, Georgetown and Pflugerville.

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CITY AND COUNTY

Austin



Residents provided input last year about improvements for North Lamar Boulevard and Burnet Road.

City unveils mobility improvements to two corridors

The Austin Transportation Department unveiled preliminary recommendations Jan. 19 for mobility improvements to North Lamar Boulevard between Howard Lane and US 183 and on Burnet Road from MoPac to Koenig Lane.

“The big picture is to have sidewalks on both sides, bike lanes, medians and landscaping with trees,” said David Freidenfeld, a transportation planner with Houston-based engineering and planning consulting firm CDM Smith.

Both stretches of road are maintained by the Texas Department of Transportation and do not have the appropriate drainage systems required by the City of Austin, said Alan Hughes, project manager with the city.

A portion of the improvements would be to install the drainage systems, level off the old drainage ditches and put in sidewalks.

Hughes said new curbs would provide a safer route for pedestrians to cross at busy intersections.

Committee to recommend faster bag ban timeline

The City of Austin Environmental Board will recommend to Austin City Council that it adopt the single-use plastic bag ban drafted by city staff but with a more aggressive timeline and the elimination of an exemption for beer, wine and spirit retailers, among other changes.

“Looking at the environmental impact, this is an opportunity to do what’s best for the environment, to save the city taxpayers money and to really try to begin getting away from our throw-away society; that’s the main thing,” board member Mary Ann Neely said.

The Environmental Board, a committee of seven citizens elected by City Council members, debated at its Feb. 15 meeting one proposed modification that would have moved forward the date of implementation to Nov. 1.

As drafted, the ordinance requires that a full ban would begin March 1, 2014.

The modification was changed to say that implementation of the ban should begin 12 months after the ordinance is adopted. City Council is expected to vote on the ban in March.

For more information on the proposed bag ban, visit www.austintexas.gov/bags.

Travis County

County amends HP contract

On Jan. 31, Travis County amended its economic development agreements with Hewlett-Packard about how the computer company set up data centers.

Part of the agreements required HP to create and grow its number of employees over several years at its Tandem Boulevard site near MoPac and Wells Branch Parkway and at its Ed Bluestein Boulevard site.

“Since signing the agreements, HP has shifted their plans whereby most of the workers are at the Tandem site,” according to county documents. “If the requirements are combined, then HP has exceeded the employee requirements for both agreements. However, if they are not combined, they are not in compliance at the Ed Bluestein site.”

The Commissioners Court voted 4–1 to average the total number of full-time employees, salaries and property value.

The court did not vote on a sub-standard road agreement in which the county, HP and neighbors would work together to fund improvements to Tandem Boulevard.

Commissioners preview 2013 county budget

The Travis County Commissioners Court looked at some early numbers and guidelines in its 2013 budget process. Leroy Nellis, acting Planning and Budget Office county executive, said Feb. 14 that the county expects the tax rate to increase by 2.86 percent, from 48.55 cents per \$100 of property valuation to 49.94 cents per \$100.

A 2.86 percent rate increase would amount to a \$29.96 tax increase for the average property owner with a homestead valued at \$215,820 after exemptions. He said current economic forecasts are cautiously optimistic that the nation is now on a slow and steady path toward the end of the economic downturn.

Williamson County

Round Rock school board requests trustee investigation

The Round Rock Independent School District board of trustees voted 5–2 Feb. 2 to ask the Williamson County Attorney’s Office to investigate the actions of trustee Terri Romere concerning a forwarded email that may have violated the Texas Public Information Act.

The board discussed the issue in open session per Romere’s request after initially posting the discussion as a closed session.

The email in question was from a parent concerning school boundary changes, which Romere forwarded to another member of the community without redacting the parent’s email address. The email was forwarded to Erik Okerholm who publicly opposed current boundary recommendations and proposed a plan supporting vertical alignment at the Jan. 19 meeting.

“I wasn’t knowingly or intentionally breaking the law. There was nothing [in the district’s policy] that said you can’t forward an email,” Romere said.

According to the district’s legal policy, a person, including a board member, commits a criminal offense if the person distributes information considered confidential under the Public Information Act.

Meetings

- ▶ **Austin City Council**
Austin City Hall, 301 W. Second St.
974-2497, www.austintexas.gov/departments/city-council
Meetings in March are on March 1, 8 and 22 at 10 a.m.
- ▶ **Travis County Commissioners Court**
314 11th St., Austin
854-9425, www.co.travis.tx.us/commissioners_court
Meetings are every Tuesday at 9 a.m.
- ▶ **Williamson County Commissioners Court**
710 S. Main St., Georgetown
943-1550, www.wilco.org
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2012 ELECTION COVERAGE



Party reps: May 29 now earliest possible primary date

By Mitzie Stelte

Failure to reach agreements on all Texas redistricting maps has rendered an April primary virtually impossible, with the earliest possible date now set at May 29.

A settlement on the Texas Senate map was announced Feb. 15 after nearly two days of hearings in a San Antonio federal court, but a compromise was not reached on Congressional and state House maps.

Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott was able to reach an agreement with minority rights groups and state Sen. Wendy Davis, D-Fort Worth, on a map that would leave Davis' District 10 unchanged.

But with only a partial deal, the court told Democratic and Republican leaders a primary before May 29 was not likely and instructed them to submit proposed changes to election deadlines and procedures based on that date.

"Looks like April is out," Texas Democratic Party spokesman Anthony Gutierrez said. "May is the next realistic date."

Results of the 2010 census indicating the state's population had earned Texas four more congressional seats sparked

chaos in the already tricky redistricting process. Federal lawsuits have since halted the enactment of new maps drawn by the Republican-dominated state Legislature, originally delaying the primaries from March 6 to April 3.

"[Redistricting] has been chaotic since the 1960s, but this is first time the Supreme Court has been involved and actually heard the case in the election cycle," said Steve Bickerstaff, adjunct professor at The University of Texas School of Law.

Williamson County Republican Party Chairman Bill Fairbrother and Travis County Democratic Party Chairman Andy Brown agreed the delay in the primaries is a disadvantage as far as costs, scheduling and overall campaigning.

"Both parties really just want some certainty in the date," Fairbrother said. "The longer the uncertainty, the more expensive the elections will be."

Texas is among the states that must get preclearance on redistricting maps by the U.S. Department of Justice under Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act, according to the Texas Legislative Council. However, the state did not submit the maps to the

DOJ for preclearance and instead petitioned a U.S. District Court for a declaratory judgment validating the redistricting plans.

Meanwhile, separate lawsuits were filed in state and federal courts by opponents of the redistricting maps who claim the maps violate the U.S. Constitution as well as Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act by diluting minority voting power.

Some of the lawsuits were consolidated and heard in September by a U.S. District Court in San Antonio. The three-judge panel redrew the state's maps and submitted them to the Supreme Court as proposed interim plans.

On Jan. 20, the Supreme Court rejected the San Antonio court's maps citing the insertion of the judges' own preferences. The court instructed them to redraw the maps to more closely resemble the state's plan. The San Antonio federal court rejected interim redistricting maps proposed by Abbott on Feb. 6 as the deadline to reach a compromise in time to preserve an April 3 deadline passed. While the April 3 primary deadline passed, there had still been hope for a primary in April.

Texas redistricting

2010

December: U.S. census figures result in four new Texas congressional seats for a total of 36

2011

May-July: Legislature passes Texas redistricting plans; Gov. Rick Perry signs the plan without federal preclearance

Dec. 16: San Antonio district court orders revised election schedule, including changing the primary election date from March 6 to April 3, 2012

2012

Jan. 20: U.S. Supreme Court rejects replacement map drawn by San Antonio district court

Jan. 27: San Antonio district court vacates candidate filing deadlines

Feb. 6: Deadline passes to uphold April 3 primary

Feb. 15: Partial deal reached on interim maps

May 29: Earliest possible primary date

June 7-9: Scheduled state party conventions

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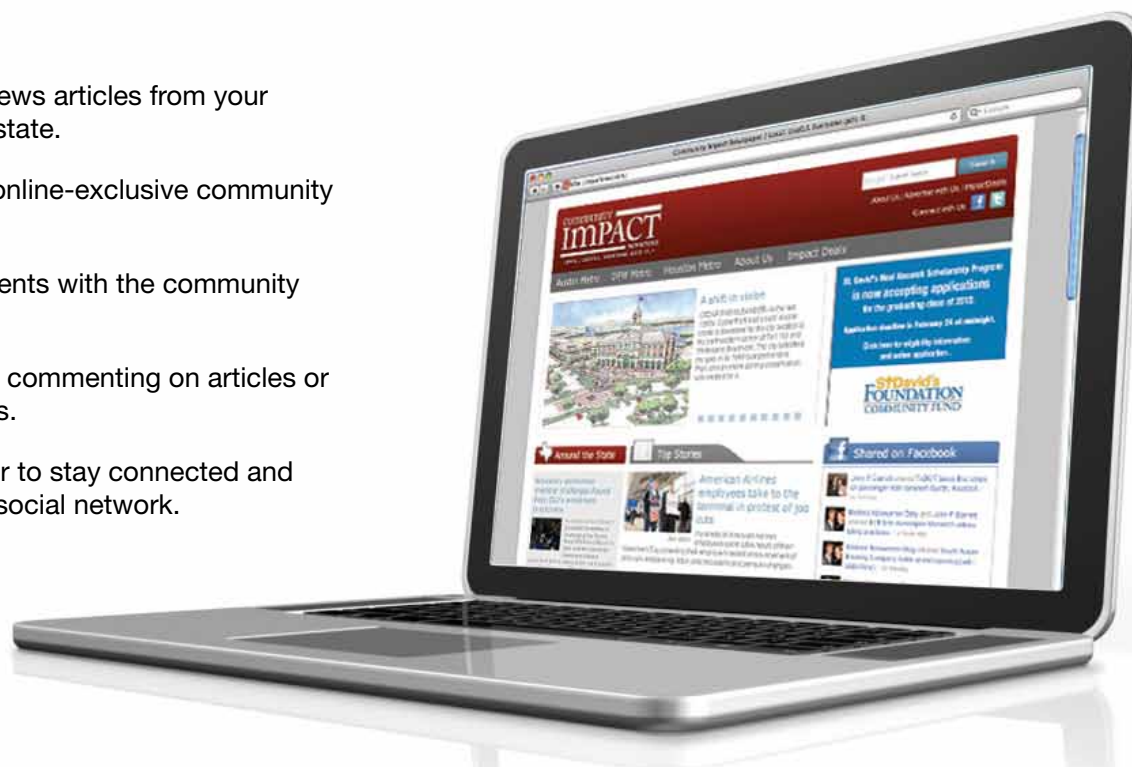
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EDUCATION

Round Rock ISD board of trustees approve controversial boundary changes

Parents, students protest moving children to different high schools

By Christine Bolaños

The Round Rock ISD board of trustees approved Feb. 16 a set of controversial school boundary changes for the 2012–13 school year meant to relieve overcrowding at Cedar Ridge High School and set boundaries for Elsa England Elementary School, a new school to be built in Round Rock.

For the high school boundary changes, students living in the northern Wells Branch Municipal Utility District who were previously zoned for Cedar Ridge High School will now go to McNeil High School, located on McNeil Drive near the intersection of Parmer Lane.

Affected students set to enter high school in the fall will have to go to McNeil High School, but current Cedar Ridge High School ninth through 11th grade students in the rezoned area may choose which of the two schools

to attend.

The boundary changes will affect about 120 current eighth graders and have sparked a wide range of emotional responses from the community.

“We can’t make everyone happy. I think we did our due diligence. I think the boundary committee did its due diligence, and I think it’s shameful to say that they didn’t,” trustee Diane Cox said.

At a Jan. 19 board of trustees meeting, a crowd lined up to share stories about the emotional toll the proposed high school boundary changes could take.

Michael Farris, a Wells Branch parent, talked about how the same group of students have endured several boundary changes in the last few years.

“I have not moved, but this will be our third high school in the last three years,” he said.

Cedar Ridge freshman Jordan

Farris shared the personal effect boundary changes have had on him in the past.

“I remember going to Cedar Ridge freshman orientation and how shocking it was because I had to do it all on my own. My grades suffered,” he said. “I lingered in the locker room because I didn’t have anyone to sit with at lunch.”

Board member Terri Romere said making decisions regarding boundary changes can be challenging because it can be an emotionally charged issue.

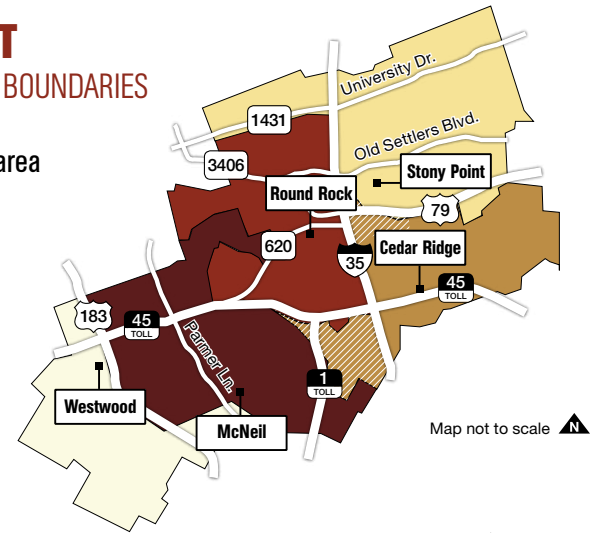
“[It pits] neighbors against neighbors and friends against friends,” she said.

According to district documents, a total of 53.63 additional staff will be needed to implement the boundary committee’s recommendation for an estimated cost of \$2.45 million.

[Comment at impactnews.com](#)

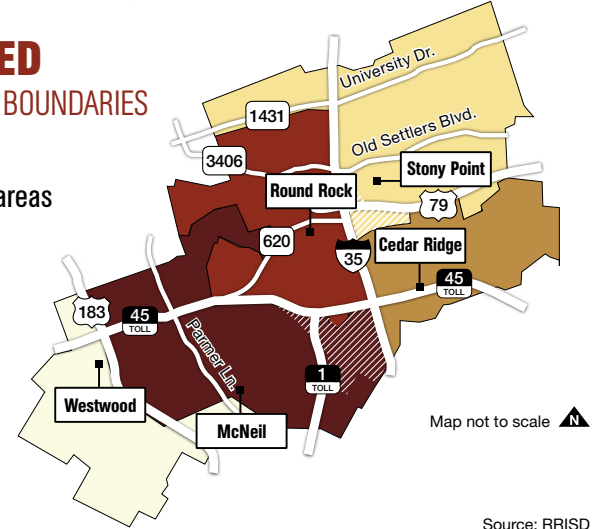
CURRENT HIGH SCHOOL BOUNDARIES

 Affected area



APPROVED HIGH SCHOOL BOUNDARIES

 Affected areas



Source: RRISD

Boundary changes approved by the Round Rock ISD board of trustees will affect students living in the northern part of the Wells Branch Municipal Utility District and in Round Rock. The changes will take effect in the 2012–13 school year.

Austin ISD exits financial crisis mode, considers staff salary raises

By Kevin Stich

Almost a year after the Austin Independent School District board of trustees made a declaration of financial exigency, the board voted unanimously to officially exit the state of financial crisis.

Board president Mark Williams said the action is a good sign, but not a complete relief.

“What it’s signaling is that over the next year and the next school year, we’re not going to have to go to a reduction in force,” Williams said. “There’s been enough financial planning to get us up to the next

legislative session. But who knows what the future is going to hold?”

Austin ISD Superintendent Meria Carstarphen presented her case to the trustees at the Jan. 30 board meeting, saying that the district is on sound financial footing for now. Much of what she said echoed her State of the District Address in November, when she announced that she would request that the board remove the declaration.

“When we were in the moment last year, it was really hard for people to see why it was important that we bring sound closure

and be smart about the elimination of positions and think through programs that perhaps weren’t the highest-quality programs,” she said in November.

Declaring financial exigency allowed the district to terminate contracted teacher positions without the risk of unlawful termination lawsuits. The situation that allowed the board to lift the order was in stark contrast from when the board—by way of a 7–2 vote—implemented it in March 2011 after the state Legislature cut \$4 billion in education funding, forcing more than 1,100 job cuts district-wide. Of

those cuts, roughly 650 of those employees have been rehired, according to staff data.

The direction also shows progress toward a staff salary increase that the superintendent advocated in the November address, which could be as much as 3 percent. According to numbers provided by AISD, the cuts made in the past year have helped to build up reserve funds that could pay for an increase in wages, though sustaining such a raise could mean a tax-rate increase in future years.

[Comment at impactnews.com](#)



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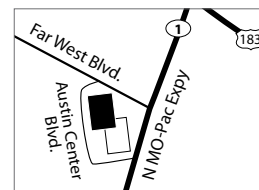
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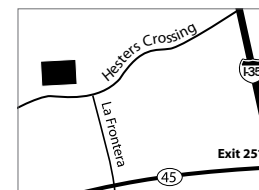
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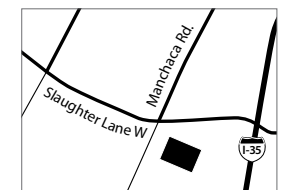
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Housing

Continued from I 1

when construction started last year on Pearson Place at Avery Ranch, a new neighborhood at the intersection of Parmer Lane and Avery Ranch Boulevard.

"They haven't even put roads in there yet, and I am getting calls from clients wanting to buy in there," she said.

Why northwest?

The public schools located in Northwest Austin are at the center of the area's appeal, the Realtors said.

"I get calls from people who are relocating [to Northwest Austin], or moving from one area of Austin to another, primarily because the schools in the Northwest area have a really good reputation," Bundschuh said.

Battaglia estimates that 90 percent of her clients are interested in living in Northwest Austin because of the quality of the public schools, which are primarily in the Round Rock and Austin school districts.

"If they're not going for the schools, they are going for the resale value. Either way, it's about the schools," she said.

Also driving demand is the fact that interest rates are historically low.

On a day in early February, Kendall Garrison, senior vice president of lending at Amplify Credit Union, said he was quoting a 3.75 percent interest rate on a 30-year fixed rate loan.

"I have been in the lending industry for 30 years, and never during my lifetime have interest rates been this low," he said.

Favorable interest rates would likely last another year or so, Garrison said, though he added that they are determined by the market, and therefore, unpredictable.

Scoring a loan

While rock-bottom interest rates are piquing buyers' interest, Realtors say mortgage loans are still tough to get.

"You have to be an A-plus borrower to get a loan. And not only that, [lenders] ask you a million questions before they are willing to give one to you," Bundschuh said.

She argues that this rigidity is hampering the market: "Getting a loan is what drives the market. You can make the argument that

the bust happened because there was free money, which was absolutely the case, but I feel like the pendulum has swung too far the other way."

Kenton Brown, president of the Austin Mortgage Bankers Association, disagrees.

"It's not as hard as it sounds," he said. "It is more difficult than it was four years ago. Then, you had a fog and mirror, and you got a loan. But 10 years ago, this wasn't unusual."

Moreover, Brown said, lending standards are slowly loosening up and mortgage insurers, which guarantee mortgage payments to lenders in the case that a borrower defaults, are providing more policies.

Garrison, too, said money was flowing. In fact, 2011 was a record year at Amplify, with \$95 million worth of single-family real estate loans approved. That number represents a 20 percent increase from 2010.

And so far, 2012 is looking even better, the bankers said.

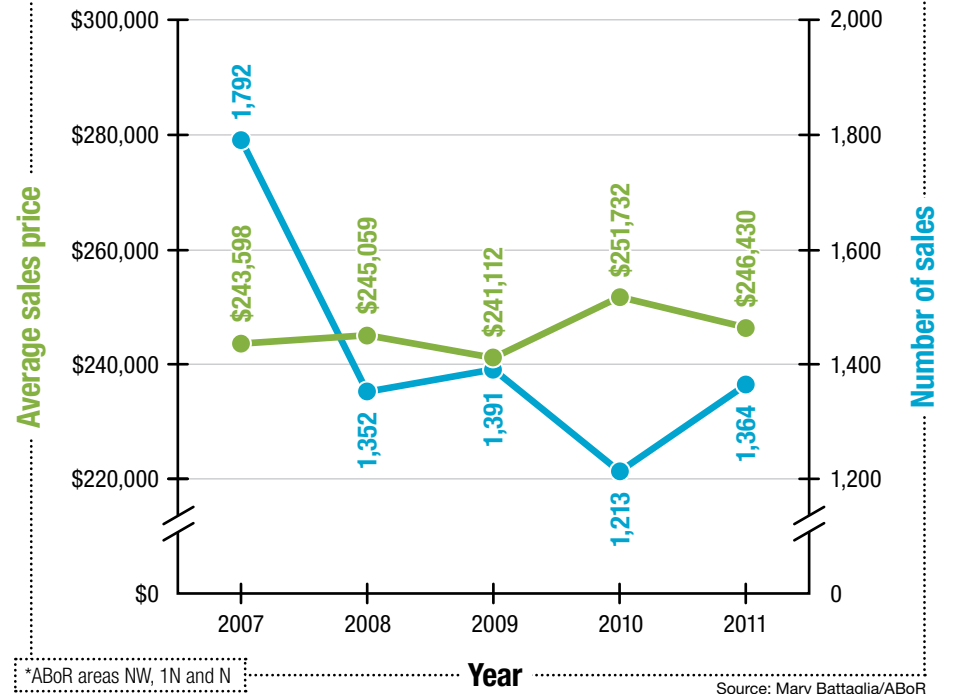
"I'll be honest," Brown said, "February may be a record month for me."

Comment at impactnews.com

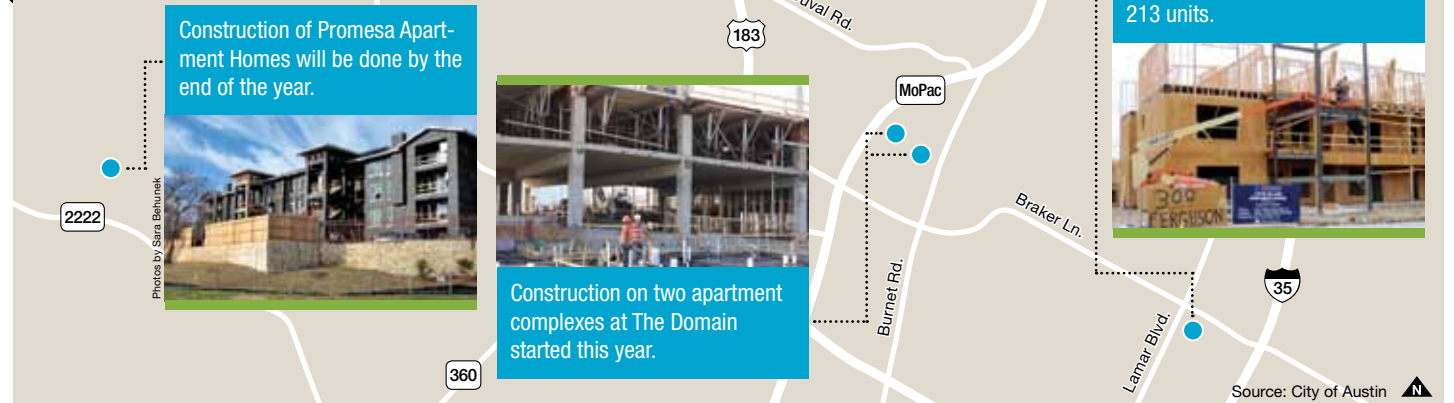


Northwest Austin* single-family homes sales 2007–11

While sales volume of single-family houses dropped after the real estate market crashed in October 2007, average sales prices stayed relatively stable.



Rental units increase as demand for housing rises



While Austin's residential real estate market is relatively strong, the rental market may be even better, Realtors said.

In Northwest Austin, occupancy of rentals hovered around 97 percent to 98 percent in 2011, according to the Austin Board of Realtors.

Realtor Mary Battaglia said demand for multifamily housing has increased because of the difficulty for potential borrowers to get loans. In turn, that demand has been putting upward

pressure on the price of leases.

In Northwest Austin, the median per-month cost of an approximately 1,700-square-foot apartment has risen from \$1,100 in 2010 to \$1,200 in 2011, ABOR data shows. Meanwhile, available units fell 28 percent citywide last year.

However, as more leases become available, rental costs may go down, Battaglia said.

Two multifamily residential developments at

The Domain will add 543 units to the market; the Lotus Village apartment complex, under construction near Braker Lane and North Lamar Boulevard behind the Chinatown Market, will add 213 units; and Promesa Apartment Homes, near RM 2222 and RM 620, will add about 289 units.

"Builders are starting to hit the ground running again because they are gearing up for summer," Battaglia said.

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Redistricting

Continued from I 1

at-large mayor.

Other hybrid plans considered were the 8-4-1 plan, made up of eight single-member districts, four at-large representatives and one at-large mayor; and a 10-2-1 plan with 10 single-member districts, two at-large districts and one at-large mayor.

Local advocacy group Austinites for Geographic Representation provided testimony and displayed posters at public hearings in support of the 10-1 plan.

AGR member Roger Borgelt said he felt the at-large system is an unnecessary anomaly not found in many other systems of government.

“Effective representation requires enlargement of the council,” Borgelt said.

Throughout the process, proponents of single-member districts said the system would result in more equality for under-represented minority populations, an increase in voter participation and a reduction in campaign costs allowing for those

with fewer resources to run for office.

Meanwhile, opponents cited the possibility of electing members who only care about the needs of their district and concern over infighting among City Council members. In addition, several members of the Asian-American community testified in favor of a hybrid system stating that it would better serve the Asian-American population, which is spread out across Austin.

While Leffingwell said he favors the 6-2-1 option, he emphasized to the committee during its Jan. 5 hearing the importance of compromising on one geographic representation plan, whether it be single-member or hybrid, to put before voters in November.

The committee came to an unofficial consensus in January on the need to do away with the current at-large system but was split on the best alternative.

Final recommendation

Two options were part of the committee’s final discussion—the 10-1 and 10-2-1

plans—with the single-member only plan ultimately passing by one vote.

Committee Vice Chair Ann Kitchen had proposed the 10-2-1 plan because she said she thought it would bring forth a consensus on the committee’s recommendation.

But several members were strongly opposed, including committee member Delia Garza, who likened at-large representatives to “mayor-in-waiting” positions.

“There is an inherent imbalance in power,” Garza said.

The committee also voted to recommend the establishment of an independent citizens commission to draw the new districts.

Next steps

In addition to the committee’s final recommendation, those who voted for 10-2-1 planned to submit a minority statement to City Council supporting a hybrid system.

The recommendations will not affect the May municipal election. If approved by council, the issue would go on the November ballot, and if passed, the first election under the new system would be in 2013.

Kitchen expressed disappointment that the committee could not unite behind one plan, and said she hopes City Council will find a compromise, giving geographic representation a better chance at passage by voters.

Councilman Mike Martinez, who was instrumental in establishing the committee, said he wholeheartedly supports a change in the current at-large system, but said he is waiting to form a final opinion on the best option until he hears more from the committee, especially the minority opinion.

Martinez said that whichever concept is proposed, the way the districts will look needs to be made absolutely clear to voters. He said not being clear is why he believes proposals failed in the past.

A date has not been set for City Council to discuss the recommendations. The issue must go before the dais this spring if the city seeks to put it on the ballot in time for the November election.

Comment at impactnews.com

Geographic representation plans considered by 2012 Charter Revision Committee

Hybrid: single-member districts and at-large districts

Single-member only districts

The 10-1 plan passed as the final recommendation for City Council

6-2-1



Single-member districts



At-large seats



At-large mayor

Favored by Mayor Lee Leffingwell

8-4-1



Single-member districts



At-large seats



At-large mayor

10-2-1



Single-member districts



At-large seats



At-large mayor

10-1



Single-member districts

At-large seats



At-large mayor

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Instructor Vanessa Heilman leads a sing-a-long with students at Heartsong Music.

BUSINESS

Heartsong Music
North Austin center brings love of music to families

By Gene Davis

Musically, American children are years behind children in cultures where singing at home is common, said Carey Youngblood, founder of Heartsong Music on West Anderson Lane in Northwest Austin.

“There is nothing like singing together to bond people,” Youngblood said. “People are so in need of community and connection in America, that you bond with the group you are in, and it becomes a part of your extended family.”

Youngblood opened Heartsong in 2004 to help children and the adults who care for them interact and develop in a playful and nurturing musical environment. The center combines family music classes, community-based learning and Montessori-style teaching. More than 500 children come to Heartsong every week.

Heartsong Music’s best-known offering is its Music Together classes, an early childhood program taught internationally. Youngblood taught Music Together classes in downtown Austin before opening the center.

Heartsong Music spokeswoman Stephanie Puente said the benefits of Music Together classes go beyond nurturing a love of music in families; the classes also help children develop social skills because they are learning how to share and interact with their peers. Meanwhile, parents get the chance to see how other parents interact with their children, she said.

Heartsong Music holds four Music Together sessions, or semesters, throughout the year. Each session lasts eight to 12 weeks and features a new set of songs.

Each class has the same basic framework with hello and goodbye songs, a lullaby, hands-on instrument play, singing and body movement.

“Everything we do in class is designed to facilitate, nurture and support a child’s musical development,” Puente said. “We are trying to focus on creating musical experiences for the children as opposed to teaching them about music.”

Heartsong has three music rooms and nine instructors, each of whom must complete a three-day intensive training course and do a semester of observation and student teaching with Youngblood before running his or her own class.

“We have developed loving teachers that love what they are doing, love children and love the adults,” Youngblood said. “It all just makes it work.”

“There’s nothing like singing together to bond people.”
—Carey Youngblood, founder of Heartsong Music

Registration and other classes

Heartsong Music’s 10-week, mixed-age spring session goes from April 2 to June 11. Pre-registration starts March 5. Families register for the same day and time for the entire 10-week session. Heartsong offers two make-up classes during the session.

In addition to the mixed-age Music Together class, Heartsong Music also has:

- Babies Class for children up to 8 months old and their guardians
- Big Kids Class for children ages 5 to 7 that guardians do not attend
- Intergenerational Mixed-Age Class at which children age 5 and younger and their guardians attend class at an assisted living facility along with seniors

Families can sign up on Heartsong Music’s website and go to a free sample class.



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Ironi DaRosa, a native of Brazil and the owner of Northwest Austin steakhouse Estância Churrascaria, worked at a Brazilian steakhouse in Dallas for 15 years before becoming a restaurateur.

DINING

Estância Churrascaria

Brazilian steakhouse opens Northwest Austin location

By Amy Denney

Ironi DaRosa has worked in the restaurant business since he was 16 years old. But it was only five years ago that he invested his savings and life experience into his own restaurant.

A native of Rio Grande Do Sul, Brazil, DaRosa opened Estância Churrascaria Brazilian Steakhouse in March 2007 in Southwest Austin. It was the first Brazilian steakhouse to open in Austin, he said.

Last October, DaRosa opened a second location in the Arboretum at Great Hills after many requests from his customers.

"They are so thankful we are so close to them and they don't have to travel as far," DaRosa said.

The Brazilian steakhouse concept arose from Brazilian farming communities where families would raise cattle and chickens and cook meat over a fire, DaRosa said. The name Estância Churrascaria means "ranch" and

"steakhouse" in Portuguese.

Guests are provided with a double-sided card that has green on one side to indicate to servers that they want more food and red to stop. Staff rotate around the dining room carrying the different cuts of meat on skewers. A customer may choose any type of meat and any amount.

Meals are all-you-can-eat for \$22.50 at lunch and \$35.50 for dinner. Estância Churrascaria offers complimentary meals to children age 5 and younger and half-price meals for children ages 6 to 10, although the price may vary depending on how much a child eats.

Customer service manager Tony Gonzales said the restaurant encourages families to bring their children and try new foods.

"Children step outside of their comfort zone, and we can let kids have free range to choose what they want," he said.

Prepared meats

Customers consume between 20,000 and 25,000 pounds of meat each month at Estância Churrascaria's Arboretum location, owner Ironi DaRosa said.

A different chef is assigned to prepare each of the 14 types and cuts of meat, which include Picanha, the prime cut of sirloin, seasoned with sea salt or garlic.

"It's beautiful and is our most requested," DaRosa said.

The lamb is seasoned with lemon pepper, white wine, mint leaves and basil while the pork is seasoned with paprika and white wine.



(From left) Lamb chop, filet mignon and the Picanha, or the most popular cut of sirloin at the restaurant, are displayed on skewers.

Salad bar

The 30-plus-item salad bar showcases an array of fresh vegetables, such as asparagus and artichoke hearts, cheeses and prepared meats, including salami.

Other salad bar options include mozzarella and basil, sun-dried tomatoes, chicken salad and green beans.

DaRosa said he has many vegetarian customers who enjoy eating from just the salad bar (\$16.50).

DaRosa said having a salad bar is an original concept for Brazilian steakhouses.



The salad bar has prepared meats and a variety of cheeses, such as manchego and a large wheel of padano grana.

Wine selection

Estância Churrascaria carries about 200 wines from around the world that are stored in a wine cellar overlooking the dining area.

The wine cellar is chilled to 59 degrees Fahrenheit, and each wine is sorted into a bin labeled with a number corresponding to the wine list to avoid confusion.

DaRosa said Malbec, a red wine, is a popular choice among customers, although servers are able to provide recommendations to pair with food.



Owner Ironi DaRosa selects each wine, pairing and adding to the menu whenever he can.

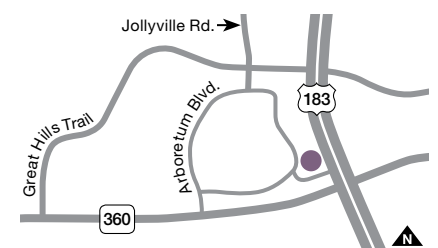
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SXSW

IMPACT

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SXSW catches on to Austin’s ‘growth’ trend

Festival adds more venues, activities to March lineup

By Andrea Leptinsky

One of the fastest-growing festivals in the world will set up shop in Austin in March, attracting thousands of visitors to Austin’s central core. From March 6–18, the South by Southwest Music and Media Conference will bring its four festivals—Education, Interactive, Film and Music—to a slew of venues throughout downtown Austin.

The festival, which first began in 1987, has grown so much that Interactive Director Hugh Forrest said organizers have attempted to increase badge prices to help control the growing number of attendees for its now largest festival, Interactive.

“We have increased the badge prices a lot over the last few years for Interactive in hopes that it will scare some people away and calm some of the growth, but unfortunately that hasn’t had quite the impact we wanted there,” Forrest said, adding that SXSW collectively has also injected

a sizable amount of money into Austin’s economy. In 2011, the festival produced \$167 million in revenue for the city of Austin.

“These figures have steadily increased over the last few years, and to put that in context, that’s about half of the revenue of a Super Bowl,” Forrest told a crowd at a Leadership Austin event Feb. 8. “SXSW certainly brings in a lot of hotel revenue and restaurant revenue—it generates a lot of money, and that’s a good thing. I think these revenues will increase in 2012 as we grow across the board.”

Several big announcements have already been made for 2012’s installment of SXSW. Legendary rocker Bruce Springsteen, *The Onion* Digital Director Baratunde Thurston and visionary Ray Kurzweil will serve as keynote speakers during the festival, among others.

SXSW will also host the second year of one of its newest festivals, SXSWedu, to provide a forum for education-related discussions, panels and events. The Hilton Austin Downtown will host SXSWedu, which will also feature keynote speeches

by actor LeVar Burton and U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan.

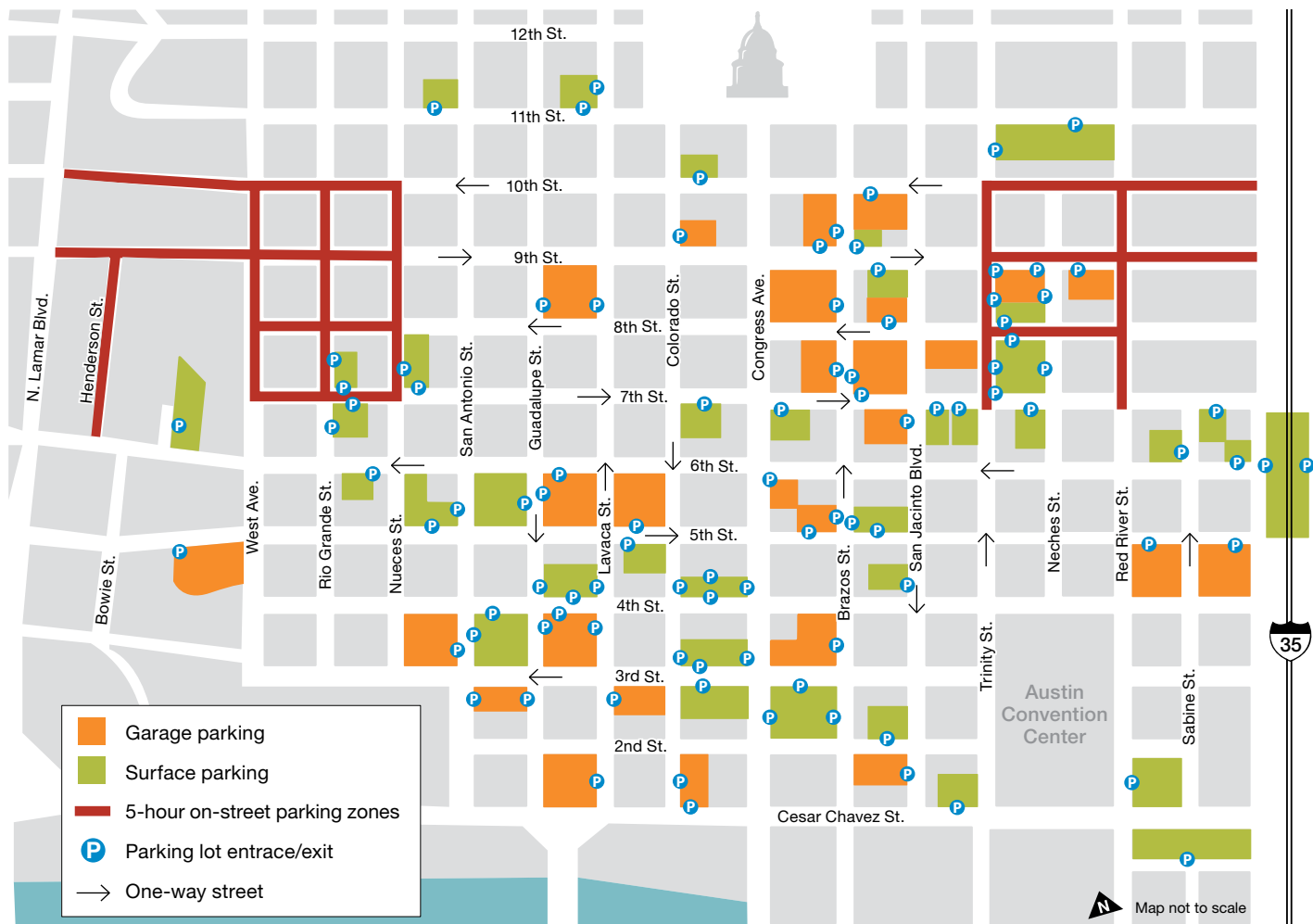
In all, more than 2,000 musical acts from 55 countries around the world will entertain attendees on 90 stages throughout Austin during the Music festival, which originally began in 1987 to help bring Austin’s club scene out of a slump during spring break, Forrest said.

“Twenty-five years ago, the founders of the company had seen this event in New York called the New Music Seminar, and they wanted to do this in Austin, but they couldn’t get anyone to support it,” Forrest said. “They went around to the clubs to get their support, and they decided to do it spring break week because it’s the worst week for clubs in Austin. [Now], typically these clubs make 30 [percent] to 40 [percent] to 50 percent of their yearly revenues in one week.”

ONLINE SXSW COVERAGE

Bookmark *Community Impact Newspaper’s* website to stay updated on SXSW happenings. We will post schedule, event and transportation updates online at www.impactnews.com as they become available.

PARKING DOWNTOWN



ATTENDING SXSW

BADGE WALK-UP RATES

If you are just now deciding to attend SXSW, badge prices range from \$300 to \$1,395 and can be purchased online at <http://sxsw.com/attend>.

- Education: \$300
- Film: \$595
- Music: \$750
- Interactive: \$950
- Gold (Interactive and Film): \$1,150
- Platinum (Interactive, Film and Music): \$1,395

MUSIC WRISTBANDS

While a Music badge allows access into Music panels, keynotes and the tradeshow, wristbands provide entry only into showcases after badge holders have entered. Presale wristbands sold out in February. The next batch of wristbands will be available for purchase on a walk-up basis for \$225. More details will be unveiled at <http://wristbands.sxsw.com>.

FREE EVENTS

SXSW hosts three nights of free concerts for the public at Auditorium Shores that begin March 15. The Shins and Troubadour M. Ward will perform March 15, Counting Crows will perform March 16 and British rock group The Cult will take the stage on March 17. Food and drinks are also offered at each concert as well as shuttle service for badge holders from the Austin Convention Center. Updates are posted online at http://sxsw.com/music/shows/auditorium_shores.

SXSW Interactive’s ScreenBurn Arcade, held at the Palmer Events Center, is also free and open to the public. The event, which runs from March 9–11, will serve as the host space for gaming announcements, product demos, cosplay competitions and gaming tournaments. Learn more online at <http://sxsw.com/interactive/screenburn/arcade>.

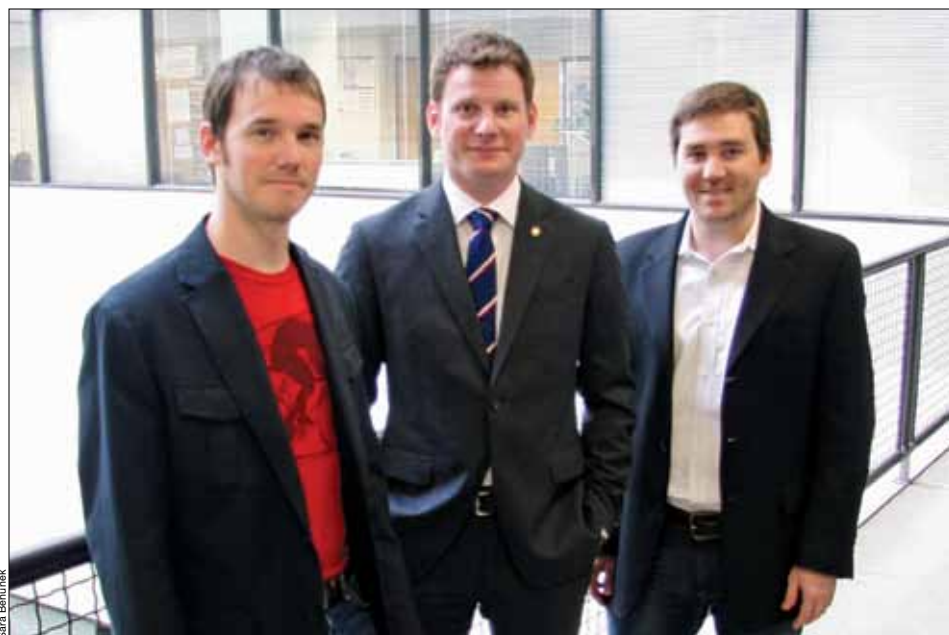
FILM PASSES

Like Music wristbands, Film passes allow attendees to pay one price to attend movie screenings only rather than purchase a Film badge for entry into the entire Film conference. Film passes sell for \$80 and allow access into screenings at all venues after badge holders have entered. A limited number of passes are available for purchase at Alamo Drafthouse Ritz, South Lamar and Village locations, as well as at Waterloo Records.

SHUTTLES

Interactive and Film registrants staying at a downtown hotel can use SXSW’s free shuttle service to get to festival events. A list of serviced hotels can be found at http://sxsw.com/shuttle_list.

Registrants who are staying at an Austin hotel that is outside of walking distance from SXSW’s downtown venues can purchase a pass for unlimited travel on the R&R Hotel Shuttle. Available passes include a five-day pass for either March 9–13 or March 13–17 for \$70, and a full nine-day pass for \$110. Passes can be purchased online at <http://rrlimobus.com> or onsite at the Austin Convention Center.



Sara Behunek

Robert Reeves (center) serves as a mentor to Michael Maniscalco (right) and Stuart Rench, who relocated their company, Ihiji, to Austin from West Palm Beach, Fla., with the help of ATI's Landing Pad Program.

TECH REPORT

Landing Pad Program

Technology incubator lures promising startups to Austin

By Sara Behunek

When Michael Maniscalco describes moving his tech company, Ihiji [uh-HEE-gee], to Austin from West Palm Beach, Fla., in one weekend in 2010, the co-founder still betrays a hint of exasperation.

"In the weekend that we moved, we sold [another] business, launched our product at a trade show in Orlando, moved our families and picked up Monday morning and kept running with the new business, all in a three-day period," he remembers.

What helped make it possible for the Ihiji team to transition in such a short amount of time, and since flourish in Austin, was the Landing Pad Program, an initiative formally launched last year by the Austin Technology Incubator, a division of The University of Texas' IC² Institute.

Companies apply to the program, and, if accepted, rent space at ATI's office in UT's West Pickle Research building on Braker Lane and MoPac for about \$250 per month. After six months, the company may become a full-fledged member of the incubator.

"It's turnkey," said Robert Reeves, director of ATI's wireless and IT portfolio. "We have furniture, Internet, coffee, security, a receptionist; you just show up with your laptop and you get to work."

Although ATI has provided similar services to companies since the incubator was founded more than 20 years ago, the services were not unified into a specific program until recently. In 2011, Landing Pad helped 13 early-stage companies relocate to or establish their national

headquarters in Austin.

Maniscalco and his business partners considered relocating to Atlanta, Raleigh-Durham and the West Coast, but Austin stood out for its talent and specialization in software development.

"It's very hard for engineers in this town to explain to their mom what they do for a living," Reeves said, jokingly. "This is the town not where the Xbox or PlayStation was created, but where the chip that runs them was designed." He adds: "It's not very sexy, but it's what we do best."

And adding to Austin's charm was Landing Pad, Maniscalco said.

"I think the Landing Pad Program was something nobody else really offered," he said. "The way that they work with their portfolio companies stood out. They're not just leasing office space, which is what we found with some incubators."

Reeves and his colleagues all have backgrounds in starting and growing businesses. Reeves co-founded Phurnace Software in 2005 and sold it to BMC Software four years later. But now he likes spending his time working with startups and scouting for prospective ATI members.

"The talent is moving here, jobs are being created here, people to fill high-tech jobs are in demand and the market is going to grow," he said. "We are doing our part by bringing in the smaller guys and giving them a place to land."

"It's very hard for engineers in this town to explain to their mom what they do for a living."

—Robert Reeves, director of ATI's wireless and IT portfolio

Austin Technology Incubator
3925 W. Braker Lane
305-0000
www.ati.utexas.edu



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STAGE 2 WATER RESTRICTIONS



| | | | |
|--|-----------------------------|---|--|
| RESIDENTIAL ODD ADDRESS | RESIDENTIAL EVEN ADDRESS | COMMERCIAL, MULTIFAMILY ODD ADDRESS | COMMERCIAL, MULTIFAMILY EVEN ADDRESS |
| AUTOMATIC IRRIGATION SYSTEMS: BEFORE 10 A.M. HOSE-END SPRINKLERS, SOAKERS: BEFORE 10 A.M. or AFTER 7 P.M. | | | |
| Saturday | Sunday | Tuesday | Friday |

REPORT VIOLATIONS TO 3-1-1

Conserve water in the winter months and see savings all year long!
Austin Water calculates wastewater costs based on the amount of water used during three winter billing periods between mid-November and mid-March. You can lower your wastewater costs for the next year by conserving water use during these billing periods.

For more information, visit:
www.ci.austin.tx.us/water

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| 4. Arthritis | 10. Numb Hands |
| 5. Dizziness | 11. Bursitis |
| 6. Carpal Tunnel | 12. Muscle Spasms |

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Dr. Daphne Savedra is a contributing author to the book, "Neck Pain, Neck Pain... Why Your Neck Hurts and What You Can Do About It."



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*Due to Federal Regulations, this does not apply to Medicare/Medicaid.

Tax laws slated to change soon

By Dale Ross

With tax law changes passed in 2010 set to expire after 2012, it can be important for individual income taxpayers to understand just what changes are taking place and when.

After 2012, many provisions in the tax law revert back to what they were before 2001. Several even expired in 2011.

Tax rates on both pay and investment will be set to spike, especially for those at the bottom rungs of the tax ladder, and the estate tax exemptions will drop dramatically unless new laws are passed before the old ones expire.

Taxes on investments

Rates continue at historic lows for both long-term capital gains and dividends. For taxpayers in the 15 percent income tax bracket and below—tax brackets are based on income—the rate is zero. For those in the 25 percent bracket and above, the rate is 15 percent.

If Congress makes no changes by the end of 2012, the long-term capital gains tax for those in the 15 percent bracket goes from zero to 10 percent, and the 28 percent and 39.6 percent brackets rise from 15 percent to 20 percent.

Short-term capital gains would also rise across the board.

Estate and gift taxes

The system has been overhauled, with a maximum rate of 35 percent and one exemption of \$5 million per individual for estate, gift and generation-skipping taxes alike. For those who can stand to part with assets, it's now possible to shift large amounts of wealth.

If Congress makes no changes by the end of 2012, the estate tax will revert back to the 2001 rule, which is a \$1 million exclusion and a 55 percent top rate.

The annual exclusion for tax-free gifts remains at \$13,000 per donor. A giver may give an unlimited number of \$13,000 gifts as long as they are to different individuals. Gifts of tuition and payments for medical care are also exempt.

Payroll taxes

One of the most significant changes in 2011 was a temporary 2 percent cut in the employee's share of Social Security taxes, saving a maximum of \$2,136 per worker. For someone making \$50,000, this amounted to approximately \$1,000 during the course of the year. Though this item was scheduled to expire at the end of February, Congress granted an extension through the end of the year.

Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT)

The "patch" enacted by Congress sets the AMT exemption at \$47,450 for single filers and \$74,450 for married couples.

The AMT expired at the end of 2011. However, Congress has traditionally and consistently extended it each tax year and will most likely extend it for tax year 2012 in December 2012.

ROTH IRA conversion

The income limit for conversions has been permanently removed, so for 2011, all taxpayers may still convert ordinary IRAs into Roth IRAs. But taxpayers who converted Roth IRAs in 2011 no longer have the option of deferring conversion income into later years, as was true for 2010 conversions. Those who converted in 2010 had until October 17, 2011, to decide whether to use this deferral.

Energy tax credits for homeowners

Lawmakers extended the credit for energy-efficient improvements from 2010, but tweaked it. The amount of the credit has shrunk to a maximum of \$500 per taxpayer per lifetime, so those who took 2010's \$1,500 credit don't qualify.

Other changes

The \$250 deduction for teacher classroom expenses, a deduction for state sales taxes in lieu of state income tax deduction, and the tax-free donation of IRA proceeds to charity are still available to taxpayers for tax year 2011.

WHERE TO GET FREE TAX PREPARATION SERVICES

Community Tax Centers through Foundation Communities

Free tax preparation is available for households that earned less than \$50,000 in 2011. All locations accept walk-in customers, but appointments may be made by calling 610-7371.

Goodwill Community Center

1015 Norwood Park Blvd.
Through March 4 and April 2–17: Mon.–Thu. 1–8 p.m.,
Fri. 4–8 p.m., Sat. 9 a.m.–4 p.m., closed Sunday
March 5–April 1: Mon.–Thu. 1–8 p.m., Sat. 9 a.m.–4 p.m.,
closed Sunday and April 8

Workforce Solutions Capital Area

6505 Airport Blvd.
March 5–April 6: Mon.–Thu. 12:30–5:30 p.m., Fri. 12:30–
4:30 p.m., Sat. 9 a.m.–1 p.m., closed March 12–17 and April 8

St. John's Community Center

7500 Blessing Ave.
Through April 12: Mon.–Thu. 3–8 p.m., closed March 12–15

AARP Tax-Aide sites

No age or income restrictions

Austin

North Village Library, 2505 Steck Ave. • Through April 17
Tue. noon–4 p.m.

Little Walnut Creek Library, 835 W. Rundberg Lane
Through April 17 • Tue. 1–5 p.m.

Yarborough Library, 2200 Hancock Drive • Through April 16
Mon. 10 a.m.–2 p.m.

Cedar Park

Cedar Park Library, 550 Discovery Blvd. • Through April 11
Wed. noon–4 p.m.

Pflugerville

Pflugerville Library, 102 S. 10th St. • Through April 13
Fri. 10:30 a.m.–4 p.m.

Taxpayers must bring:

- Valid driver's license or photo ID
- All W-2s and 1099 Forms (if any)
- Social Security cards for taxpayers and all dependents
- Birthdates for all dependents
- Day care receipts and provider ID number
- Education receipts (if any)
- Your spouse, if filing a joint return
- Interest and dividend statements from your bank/savings
- Mortgage property taxes or interest (if any)
- Bank account number and routing number for direct deposit (a voided check is best)

For additional information on Community Tax Centers, visit www.communitytaxcenters.org or call 610-7371.

For additional information on AARP Tax-Aide sites, visit www.aarp.org/money/taxes/aarp_taxaide or call 480-9799.

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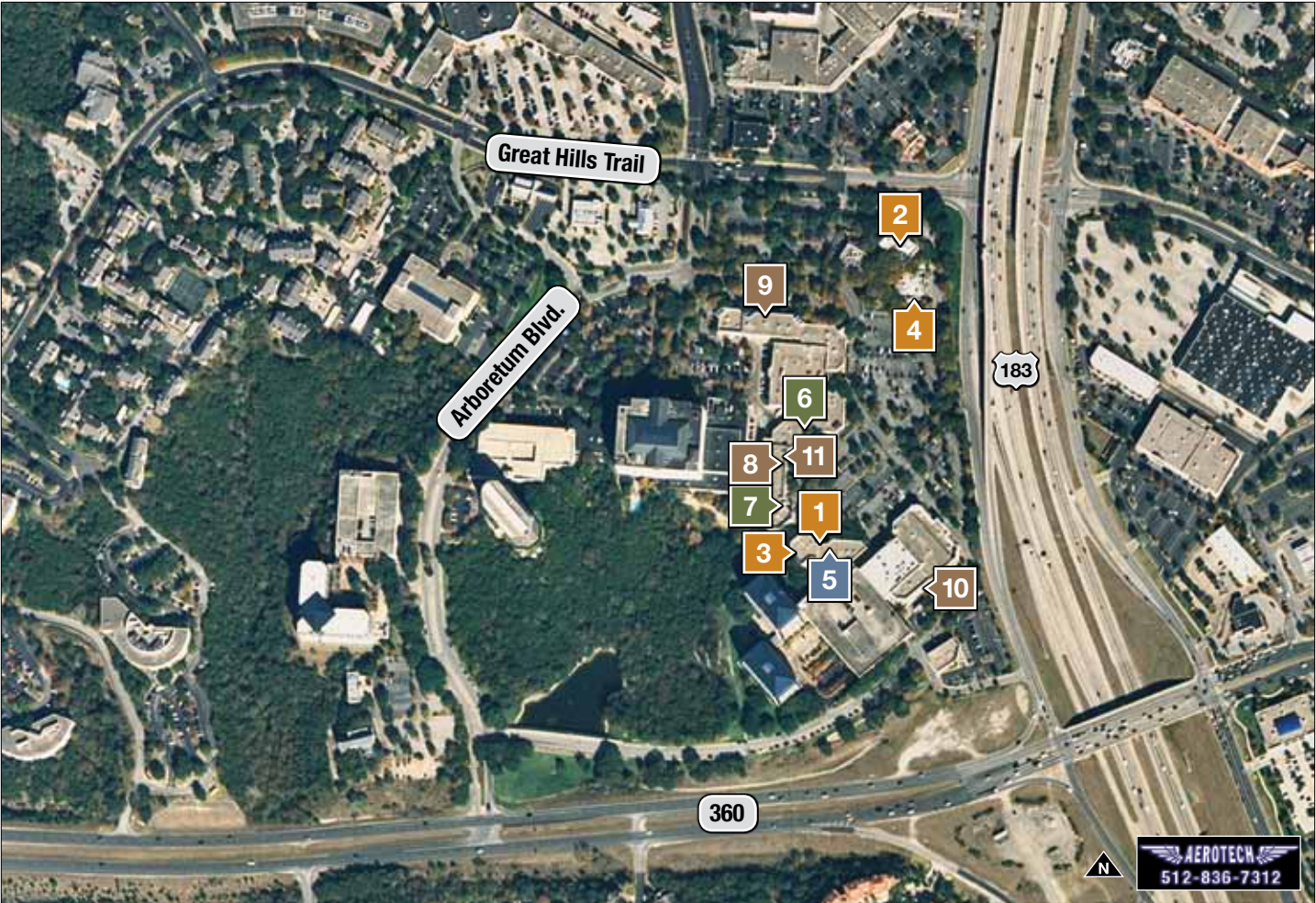
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CORRIDOR

Arboretum at Great Hills



The Arboretum at Great Hills opened in 1985 and is now one of Austin’s top shopping and dining centers, featuring many mainstay retailers. However, about a quarter of the Arboretum’s businesses are locally owned and operated. The property also includes a detention pond that is home to many ducks, turtles, geese and fish.

Food

1 Steve and Amy Simmons own 13 **Amy’s Ice Creams** locations in Austin, including the one at 10000 Research Blvd., Ste. 140. The Arboretum store has 14 flavors of ice cream, such as the popular Mexican vanilla, one frozen yogurt and one sorbet. Amy’s Ice Creams opened its first store in 1985. 345-1006, www.amysicecreams.com

2 College Station–based bakery and cafe **Blue Baker** will open its first Austin location by April at 10000 Research Blvd., Bldg. A. The shop carries artisan breads, pastries, sandwiches, salads and soups that are made from scratch daily. The bakery will also offer tours of its facilities so patrons can see where the baked goods are made. Blue Baker has two locations in College Station. 346-2583, www.bluebaker.com

3 For four years, Jong Hwa and Sun Park have served sushi at **Drunk Fish**, 10000 Research Blvd., Ste. 139. The small eatery seats only 19 customers, but the

Parks offer take-out. The menu includes specialty rolls such as the Rainbow Roll with salmon, tuna, white tuna, red snapper and shrimp. The menu also includes a selection of ramen dishes, including one topped with potato chips. 349-9454, www.drunkfishusa.net

4 **Estância Churrascaria**, a Brazilian steakhouse, opened in October at 10000 Research Blvd., Ste. B. Owned by Ironi DaRosa, the Aboretum location is the second in Austin. The all-you-can-eat steakhouse offers a variety of cuts of meat, including sirloin, filet mignon, leg of lamb and pork tenderloin as well as a 30-plus-item salad bar. 345-5600, www.estanciachurrascaria.com

Health

5 Doctors Erik Haselhorst, Stephanie Colorado and Emil Fadel offer comprehensive eye exams at **Arboretum Eye Professionals**, 10000 Research Blvd., Ste. 150. Exams test for glaucoma and other eye diseases using an optical coherence tomography machine, which provides detailed images of the retinal and optic nerve. The doctors also fit patients for contacts and glasses. 345-5642, www.arboretumeyepro.com

Jewelers

6 For 30 years, Kirk Root has been making custom jewelry designs in Austin. He opened **C. Kirk Root Jewelry**,

10000 Research Blvd., Ste. 126, in 1989 and has spent the last nine years at the Arboretum. Root is known for creating Texas-inspired jewelry such as pieces that resemble bluebonnet flowers or the State of Texas star in blue topaz. He also provides jewelry repair and appraisals. 346-1780, www.kirkrootdesigns.com

7 Ray Garza opened Ray’s Watch and Jewelry Repair, 10000 Research Blvd., Ste. 258, eight years ago but moved his business from Highland Mall in 2010. Garza offers watch repair, battery and watchband replacement, ring sizing and chain and bracelet repairs. He can also replace stones and restring beaded jewelry. Garza has 20 years of experience repairing watches. 419-1662, www.rayswatchandjewelry.com

Retail

8 Since November 2009, Jeff and Tabatha Conarko, owners of **Con’ Olio Oils and Vinegars**, 10000 Research Blvd., Ste. 130, have been importing fresh olive oils and aged balsamic vinegars from around the world. They also host demonstrations, tastings and classes, at which attendees can learn more about Con’ Olio’s oils and vinegars, which come from Italy, France, Spain, Australia and countries in South America. 342-2344, www.conolios.com

9 Husband-and-wife team Heather and Scott Harkovich opened **Heather Scott**

Compiled by Amy Denney and Katherine Kennedy



Home & Design, 10000 Research Blvd., Ste. 103, in 2007. They offer furnishings for the kitchen, dining room, bedroom and other living areas as well as art and accessories. Scott said the style fits somewhere in between contemporary and modern. Heather Scott is the exclusive Austin dealer for Barclay Butera Lifestyle and Lilly Pulitzer Home lines. 342-6899, www.heatherscotthome.com

10 Once a sports memorabilia store, **Heroes and Legacies**, 10000 Research Blvd., Ste. 214, now sells cigars and has a walk-in humidor. Richard Hutcheson opened the first location in Austin and now has two others in Lubbock. Heroes sells cigars, pipe tobacco and accessories and gifts. The store also sells fragrance oil lamps by French company Lampe Berger. 343-6600, www.heroesandlegacies.com

11 Offering 400 spices and 140 hand-blended seasonings, **Savory Spice Shop**, 10000 Research Blvd., Ste. 129, caters to every type of chef. Customers may taste any spice or seasoning and purchase as little as half an ounce. Categories of spices include Texas barbecue, curry and Cajun. Savory Spice Shop also carries gift sets. Alicia Phipps owns this franchise. The store hosts classes, parties and other private events. 795-0770, www.savoryspiceshop.com

This is a sample of businesses and organizations in the area. The list is not comprehensive.

REAL ESTATE

Austin Hills

Austin – 78759

Data compiled by
Betsy Gallagher
Coldwell Banker United
431-8265
bgallagher@cbunited.com

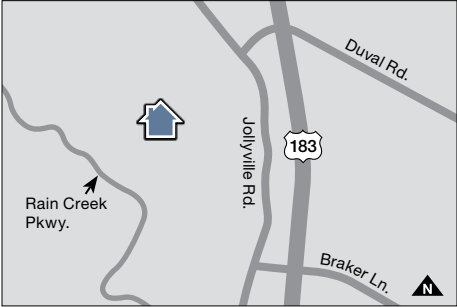


Overview



Build-out year: 1985–94
Builders: David Weekley Homes, Custom Classics by Jim Rado
Square footage: 1,680–3,840
Home values: \$221,000–\$482,000
HOA dues (estimated): \$18 per month
Amenities: Great Hills neighborhood park, playground, playscape and trails
Nearby attractions: Great Hills Golf Course, Bull Creek Greenbelt, the Arboretum at Great Hills
Property taxes:

| | |
|--------------------------------|---------------|
| Austin ISD | 1.2420 |
| City of Austin | 0.4811 |
| Travis County | 0.4855 |
| Central Health | 0.0789 |
| Austin Community College | 0.0948 |
| Total (per \$100 value) | 2.3823 |



On the market (As of Feb. 20, 2012)

| No. of homes for sale | No. of homes under contract | Avg. days on the market |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| 4 | 2 | 43 |

Home sales (Feb. 1, 2011–Feb. 20, 2012)

| No. of homes sold in the last year | Square footage Low/High | Selling price Low/High |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| 8 | 2,036/3,018 | \$293,000/\$450,000 |

Featured homes



5910 Sierra Grande Drive \$399,000
4 Bedroom / 2.5 Bath 3,046 sq. ft.
Agent: Vincent Farelli, Farelli and Associates
796-6682



5904 Trabadora Cove \$374,900
4 Bedroom / 2.5 Bath 2,670 sq. ft.
Agent: Seth Koppel, TexHomes Realty
535-2980



5301 Hanging Cliff Cove \$365,000
4 Bedroom / 3 Bath 2,439 sq. ft.
Agent: Jo Carol Snowden, Moreland Properties
657-4441



5828 Tributary Ridge Drive \$434,900
3 Bedroom / 2.5 Bath 2,500 sq. ft.
Agent: Brad Brown, RE/MAX Austin Skyline
797-0626

Because a woman's heart speaks its own language.

Heart disease is the No. 1 killer of women in the United States, and its symptoms are sometimes unexpected—jaw pain, cold sweats and nausea, to name a few. The Seton Heart Institute Women's Heart Program is dedicated to helping women identify their risk factors for heart disease and providing care that is tailored to their unique needs.

To schedule an appointment, please call (512) 345-8888 or visit SetonHeart.com/women.

WOMEN'S HEART PROGRAM

Mary J. Borses, MD • Fotini M. Chalkias, MD
Caitlin M. Giesler, MD • Charlie Simpson, ACNP

Seton Heart Institute

REAL ESTATE

Market Data Northwest Austin

Market Data provided by
Austin Board of Realtors
454-7636
www.abor.com

On the market (January 2012)

| Price Range | Number of homes for sale/Average days on the market | | | | |
|---------------------|---|---------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|
| | 78727 | 78729 | 78750 | 78758 | 78759 |
| Less than \$149,999 | 17 / 47 days | 3 / 168 days | 15 / 91 days | 53 / 84 days | 9 / 164 days |
| \$150,000–\$199,999 | 22 / 144 days | 34 / 56 days | 17 / 91 days | 11 / 87 days | 4 / 39 days |
| \$200,000–\$299,999 | 20 / 66 days | 21 / 123 days | 21 / 110 days | 3 / 22 days | 21 / 88 days |
| \$300,000–\$399,999 | 5 / 82 days | 3 / 0 days | 13 / 88 days | - | 19 / 62 days |
| \$400,000–\$499,999 | - | - | 10 / 48 days | 1 / 5 days | 18 / 60 days |
| \$500,000–\$599,999 | - | - | 5 / 75 days | - | 3 / 68 days |
| \$600,000–\$799,999 | 1 / 16 days | - | 1 / 98 days | - | 4 / 23 days |
| \$800,000–\$999,999 | - | - | 1 / 185 days | - | 1 / 105 days |
| \$1 million + | - | - | - | - | - |

Monthly home sales

| Month | Number of homes sold/Average price | | | | |
|----------------|------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| | 78727 | 78729 | 78750 | 78758 | 78759 |
| January 2012 | 19 / \$160,362 | 19 / \$177,497 | 17 / \$274,179 | 12 / \$130,077 | 31 / \$290,753 |
| January 2011 | 23 / \$192,739 | 19 / \$191,845 | 21 / \$253,913 | 12 / \$112,208 | 21 / \$282,868 |
| December 2011 | 21 / \$186,498 | 21 / \$181,519 | 21 / \$263,419 | 18 / \$139,032 | 36 / \$320,464 |
| November 2011 | 13 / \$159,350 | 15 / \$191,398 | 21 / \$331,014 | 21 / \$87,598 | 21 / \$322,527 |
| October 2011 | 24 / \$192,736 | 22 / \$199,759 | 27 / \$247,396 | 14 / \$122,786 | 31 / \$280,311 |
| September 2011 | 16 / \$162,622 | 22 / \$198,173 | 24 / \$369,392 | 17 / \$156,924 | 24 / \$286,583 |
| August 2011 | 32 / \$172,322 | 21 / \$187,749 | 40 / \$248,511 | 20 / \$118,989 | 40 / \$346,541 |
| July 2011 | 33 / \$202,492 | 31 / \$191,331 | 34 / \$300,541 | 20 / \$141,332 | 56 / \$312,512 |
| June 2011 | 33 / \$187,971 | 40 / \$191,960 | 38 / \$303,755 | 26 / \$118,543 | 62 / \$290,148 |

Property Listings

| ZIP code | Subdivision | Address | Bed/Bath | Price | Sq. ft. | Agent | Phone | Agency |
|----------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------|-----------|---------|---------------------------|----------|--------------------------------|
| 78726 | Canyon Creek | 9405 Savannah Ridge Drive | 4br/3ba | \$314,900 | 3,487 | Allen Norwood | 289-9546 | Keller Williams Realty |
| 78727 | Milwood | 5911 Jacob Glen | 2br/1ba | \$126,000 | 920 | Tammy Templin | 796-5559 | Coldwell Banker United Realtor |
| 78727 | Milwood | 12810 Covington | 3br/2ba | \$169,900 | 1,455 | Rebecca Wooten | 662-4020 | Spencer Properties |
| 78727 | Northwood | 3803 Burr Oak Lane | 3br/2ba | \$195,000 | 1,684 | Diane Kennedy | 750-2950 | Coldwell Banker United Realtor |
| 78727 | Scofield Farms | 12917 Meehan Drive | 3br/2ba | \$146,000 | 1,300 | Perry Henderson | 791-7462 | Prudential Texas Realty |
| 78727 | Switch Willo Condo | 4400 Switch Willo | 2br/2ba | \$162,900 | 1,292 | Debbi McCall | 691-6772 | Coldwell Banker United Realtor |
| 78729 | Anderson Mill Village | 9713 Anderson Village Drive | 3br/2ba | \$145,000 | 1,380 | Marvin Filla | 750-3205 | Coldwell Banker United Realtor |
| 78729 | Anderson Mill Village South | 9511 Woodvale Drive | 4br/2ba | \$177,000 | 1,658 | Forrest Higdon | 573-5733 | Keller Williams Realty |
| 78729 | Forest North Estates | 13011 Broadmeade Ave. | 4br/2ba | \$189,900 | 1,875 | Patrick McGinley | 784-2142 | Keller Williams Realty |
| 78729 | Forest North Estates | 13401 Perthshire St. | 3br/2ba | \$159,000 | 1,405 | Robert Kauffman | 853-0110 | Keller Williams Realty |
| 78729 | Milwood | 12904 Humphrey Drive | 4br/2ba | \$206,000 | 1,740 | Stephanie Wolslager | 547-0604 | Avalar Austin |
| 78729 | Milwood | 12921 Humphrey Drive | 3br/2ba | \$159,990 | 1,157 | Kathy Chappell | 914-8859 | Pacesetter Properties |
| 78729 | Milwood | 13404 Athens Trail | 3br/2ba | \$225,000 | 2,347 | Bryan Greenleaf | 695-8739 | Realty Austin |
| 78729 | Parmer Village Condo | 13524 Oystercatcher Drive | 3br/2ba | \$185,000 | 1,597 | Thomas Williamson | 731-4649 | Keller Williams - Lake Travis |
| 78729 | Springwoods | 9007 Frostwood Trail | 3br/2ba | \$224,600 | 2,492 | Janette Friend-Harrington | 844-3331 | Coldwell Banker United Realtor |
| 78750 | Arbor Village Condo | 8340 Fathom Circle | 2br/1ba | \$114,900 | 1,316 | Julie Pratt | 250-1540 | Coldwell Banker United Realtor |
| 78750 | Balcones Place Condominiums | 9518 Topridge Drive | 3br/2ba | \$225,000 | 1,944 | Cyndi Cummings | 423-6782 | Keller Williams - Lake Travis |
| 78750 | Grey Rock Village at Anderson Mill | 12012 Acorn Creek Trail | 3br/2ba | \$171,900 | 2,150 | Marian Derks | 659-1642 | RE/MAX Capital City |
| 78750 | Jester Estate | 7106 Fig Vine Cove | 4br/2ba | \$446,000 | 3,075 | Kent Redding | 306-1001 | Prudential Texas Realty |
| 78750 | Lake Creek at Anderson Mill | 10903 Cobblestone Lane | 5br/3ba | \$225,000 | 2,171 | Julie Pratt | 250-1540 | Coldwell Banker United Realtor |
| 78750 | Lakewood | 7310 Cave Hollow | 3br/2ba | \$225,000 | 1,700 | David Raesz | 794-6635 | Keller Williams Realty |
| 78750 | Lakewood | 6502 Twin Creek Hollow | 3br/2ba | \$389,000 | 2,176 | Bob Wolk | 372-9494 | Keller Williams Realty |
| 78750 | Spicewood at Bullcreek | 10303 Pickfair Drive | 4br/3ba | \$484,000 | 3,326 | Christina Harmon | 417-5234 | Coldwell Banker United Realtor |
| 78750 | Spicewood at Bullcreek | 10807 Winchelsea Drive | 5br/4ba | \$615,000 | 3,534 | Cynthia Reed | 901-9800 | Keller Williams Realty |
| 78750 | Village at Anderson Mill | 12301 Old Stage Trail | 3br/2ba | \$135,000 | 1,282 | Nason Hengst | 775-7900 | Keller Williams Realty |
| 78758 | Gracy Meadow Condo | 1609 Braker Lane | 2br/1ba | \$93,500 | 988 | Jerome Rumsey | 431-7531 | Goodwin Partners Inc. |
| 78758 | Gracywoods | 12022 Lincolnshire Drive | 3br/2ba | \$227,500 | 2,149 | Sherri Revier | 769-6000 | ERA Colonial Real Estate |
| 78758 | Marbella Villas | 2100 Pipers Field Drive | 2br/2ba | \$127,500 | 1,193 | Douglas Young | 762-7761 | Coldwell Banker United Realtor |
| 78758 | Orange Grove Condo | 8900 Parkfield Drive | 3br/1ba | \$87,500 | 1,415 | Michelle Sheehan | 251-4950 | Gaston & Sheehan Realty |
| 78758 | Park at Quail Creek | 915 Silver Quail | 2br/1ba | \$74,900 | 1,034 | Patricia Smith | 637-8277 | Keller Williams Realty |
| 78758 | River Oak Lake Estates | 12329 Blue Water Drive | 4br/2ba | \$234,900 | 2,182 | Bryan Rivas | 769-4549 | Coldwell Banker United Realtor |
| 78759 | Barrington Oaks | 8107 Pilgrims Place | 4br/3ba | \$259,900 | 2,116 | Mary Battaglia | 767-6787 | Coldwell Banker United Realtor |
| 78759 | Mesa Park | 11715 Shoshone Drive | 3br/2ba | \$234,900 | 1,957 | Betsy Doss | 744-4555 | RE/MAX Capital City |
| 78759 | Oak Forest | 7411 Fireoak Drive | 3br/2ba | \$319,900 | 2,284 | Mary Battaglia | 767-6787 | Coldwell Banker United Realtor |

ZIP code guide

78726 Four Points
78727 West Parmer/MoPac
78729 Anderson Mill/McNeil
78758 MoPac/Braker
78759 Great Hills/Arboretum



9511 Woodvale Drive \$177,000



13524 Oystercatcher Drive \$185,000



6502 Twin Creek Hollow \$389,000



7411 Fireoak Drive \$319,900

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To read more about why Jules trusted Seton to deliver her baby, please visit SetonBabyTalk.com/safety.



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