



Newsletter of the
Zilker Neighborhood
Association

OCTOBER 2016

Austin, Texas
Established 1981

Traffic Sewers with Trees

What's in the transportation bonds for Zilker
by Lorraine Atherton, ZNA Newsletter Editor

CRITICS OF THE MAYOR'S TRANSPORTATION bond package have labeled it "deceptive, dishonest, and destructive," based largely on conflicting views of the corridor plans. Whether the bonds pass or not on November 8, the South Lamar Corridor Plan is important to ZNA; it may serve as a blueprint for the future of the neighborhood. It's time to remember what we wanted from a corridor plan and try to understand what was and was not recommended by the lead consultant, HDR Engineering.

The HDR recommendations seem to be based on the "traffic sewer" model of transportation planning, treating streets, bike lanes, and sidewalks as pipelines that must collect and carry away their load as quickly as possible. In the plan, HDR does not analyze South Lamar travel patterns or east-west circulation in any useful way, and it does not address the effect of thousands of new apartment units, intensified commercial activity, and changes in park and entertainment traffic on Barton Springs Road. Because of that, the plan was obsolete before the final report was published in April. Last month, Capital Metro announced plans to reroute the 803 Rapid buses around the big bus pullout recommended in the 400 block of South Lamar, at the busiest intersection in the corridor.

The primary recommenda- *(Continued on page 10)*

ZNA Election Meeting October 24

Monday 6:30-8:30 PM

at

Zilker Elementary School
1900 Bluebonnet



ZNA Officer Election (page 9)

Travis County Commissioner
Precinct 3 Candidates

District 5 Council Member Kitchen
and City staff on the South Lamar
Corridor Improvement Plan, traffic
congestion, and special event parking
in the neighborhood (page 5)

ACL Fest Feedback (page 5)

Holiday Families Program (page 8)

Foundation Communities
Welcome Home Baskets (page 6)



Newcomers, homeowners, renters,
business neighbors

❖ ❖ **All Welcome** ❖ ❖

Election Day is Tuesday, November 8.
Early voting is Oct 24-Nov 4.

Precincts 332 and 340 vote at
Zilker School (1900 Bluebonnet)

Precinct 342 votes at
Barton Hills School (2108 Barton Hills Dr.)

You may also vote at any other Travis County
polling place on election day.

Check election info at traviscountyelections.org or
call 512-238-VOTE.



Meet the Precinct 3 Candidates
ZNA has invited the two candidates
in the Travis County Precinct 3
Commissioner race to speak for
a few minutes at our Oct. 24 meeting.
Republican incumbent Gerald Daugherty
is being challenged by
Democrat David Holmes.

School Yard Updates: News from Zilker Elementary and Little Zilker Park

Zilker Principal Randall W. Thomson reports: **ENROLLMENT AT ZILKER IS UP!**

While some other schools and the district overall have seen a decline in enrollment over the past two years, Zilker is strong with 566 students—the largest enrollment in many years—perhaps ever! We appreciate the continued interest in and support of our school.

AISD is conducting preliminary work on another bond election, perhaps as early as November 2017. Neighbors should go to the district's main web site at austinisd.org to find a link there that includes more details and opportunities for community input in the coming months.

You've seen the flyers, you're hearing the buzz.

ZAMBOREE

Zilker Elementary's annual fall carnival is Saturday, October 22, noon-4 PM.

It is at the school, and it is super fun!

This year look for the human gyroscope, inflatable mazes and slides, dance floor for kids, Hat Creek Burger Co. and veggie burgers, Roppolo pizza, snow cones from Kona Ice and Flavalicious, CAKE WALK!!, carnival games and prizes, face painting, human foosball.

Wristbands \$20, tickets 50 cents.

Other school events:

General PTA meeting, Oct. 18, 7:50 AM, in the cafeteria

BookPeople fundraiser, Nov. 13-19
School will be out for the holidays
Nov. 21-25 and Dec. 21-Jan. 3

Keep up with school events through zilkerelem.org/calendar and ZEN, the Zilker Elementary Newsletter.

Campus Earthworks

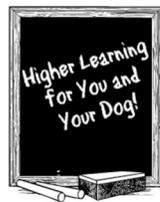
THE SECOND PHASE OF AISD's effort to stop flooding of classrooms, redirect water runoff, and prevent erosion behind Zilker Elementary School should be complete by the time you read this. Steps and terraces were built behind the gym last fall (see *ZNews* October 2015). A drainage channel to direct water to the north parking lot has been dug along the top of the bank behind the school and covered with sod.

The Zilker PTA's Sustainability Committee has scheduled workdays in Jabo's garden on October 20, November 17, and December 8, at 2-4 PM. Look for updates on the school's web site, zilkerelem.org. Please stop in at the front office to check in if you are on campus during school hours (until 2:57 PM).

Because of other work on campus and in Little Zilker Park, no official fall workday is planned, but see page 4 for info on the Austin Parks Foundation volunteer day on November 5. The PTA and Friends of Little Zilker Park will be participating in the Spring It's My Park Day.



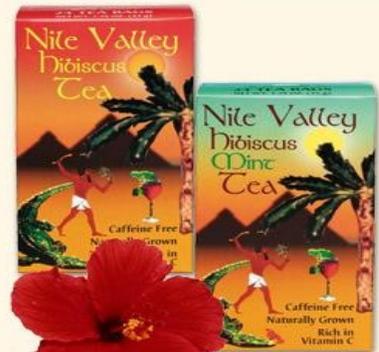
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**Little Zilker Park
Bluebonnet Entry Project
Wins Funding,
Breaks Ground**

THE LONG-AWAITED WORK on the Bluebonnet Lane entrance to Little Zilker Neighborhood Park, adjacent to Zilker Elementary School, will begin this month.

The Friends of Little Zilker (FLZP) has received word from the city parks department that the contractor is lined up and the materials have started to arrive. The project will remove the upper part of the railed ramp, between the playscape and the tennis courts. A more open design will make more room for people to be near the playscape, protect the playscape from storm runoff, reduce pavement over the tree root zone, and add a new area with benches.

The concept started back in 2007, when ZNA and the Zilker PTA joined forces to create a park and school campus master plan and established FLZP to implement it. FLZP gathered community support signatures in the summer of 2015, ZNA contributed \$10,000 for matching funds, and FLZP applied to the City’s Neighborhood Partnering Program last fall. In February, the Cost Share Award was approved. The work, managed by Austin Parks and Recreation Department, will start the last week of October and run through the end of the year.

When the hardscape and drainage changes are done, FLZP will be organizing several volunteer events to complete the new entry landscape. Sign up with the Friends of Little Zilker Park now to help refurbish the park entry and make the tree planting efforts possible.

Support the Friends of Little Zilker Park now. Help refurbish the park entry and make the tree planting efforts possible. Contact FLZP@yahoogroups.com or littlezilker@gmail.com to keep up with park projects, planning, and events. Or donate to the Friends of Little Zilker Park through the Austin Parks Foundation. Visit austinparks.org/sfaform/support-little-zilker-neighborhood-park/

Editor’s note: Thanks to Gina Diehl, Jill Rhoden, Kristin Galindo, Patrick Aziz, and Randy Thomson for contributing FLZP, PTA, and school news to these reports.

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Award for Zilker Park South Grow Zone
by Gail Rothe, ZNA Parks Committee

THE FRIENDS OF ROBERT E. LEE TRIBUTARY was formed in the fall of 2014 to support the City's grow zone project in a way that also addresses concerns raised by neighbors and park users (austintexas.gov/blog/grow-zones). The tributary borders the road along the sidewalk and captures rainfall runoff from our neighborhoods that then flows into Barton Creek. In 2015 we added a second channel in the "south" Zilker Park area: Old Little Zilker Channel, which starts at Barton Hills Drive and ends at Barton Creek, but now carries little flow.

The Friends group consists primarily of residents of Zilker and Barton Hills neighborhoods, although we have participants for workdays from all over Austin and beyond. To date we have held 19 workdays and many smaller work efforts that total over 500 hours.

A major goal this fall and winter is to cut down ragweed between the sidewalk and the tributary and in and around the adjacent detention pond. This project involves planting these same areas with relatively low-height native grasses and other plants that (1) provide greater diversity of native plants in the riparian area, (2) stabilize the channel bank, which receives considerable flow from the nearby hillside, and (3) provide a more aesthetic look to the grow zone in response to neighborhood concerns.

The efforts to restore and beautify the channels in "South" Zilker Park have been recognized by Keep Austin Beautiful.

The Friends group was nominated for a Keep Austin Beautiful Award, and the panel of judges chose it as a winner in the Beautification Achievement category. Each year Keep Austin Beautiful honors the most outstanding environmental efforts of individuals, schools, and organizations in eight categories. Winners will be recognized at the annual awards celebration November 17. The 2016 Beautify Bash celebration will be at the Umlauf Sculpture Garden, 605 Robert E. Lee, right across the road from the REL tributary.

See the complete list of winners on the KAB website. Thanks to all of them for helping to clean, beautify, and protect our Austin environment.

Grow Zone workdays will be scheduled over the coming months. If you are interested in participating, please contact Gail Rothe at grothe@austin.rr.com or 512-659-7955.

A New Day for It's My Park Day

You asked, the Austin Parks Foundation delivered. Join parks friends for APF's first-ever Fall It's My Park Day on Saturday, November 5. APF Friends groups are hosting projects like clean-ups, tree mulching, and planting in parks all over the city. We need YOU to help us spruce up Austin's parks trails and green spaces, so grab your friends, neighbors, co-workers and family, and join us in making this inaugural Fall volunteer day a huge success! Contact austinparks.org.

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Festival Feedback Goes Beyond Austin City Limits

FOR THE AUSTIN CITY LIMITS MUSIC FESTIVAL and other events, ZNA volunteers meet regularly with the City and promoters to develop and implement strategies to mitigate and monitor parking, traffic, and noise problems in and around the park, and that includes gathering post-festival feedback from neighbors.

To provide feedback about the festival—what worked this year, and what didn't work—please send your comments to sdking9999@yahoo.com or attend the ZNA meeting on October 24 at Zilker Elementary School.

Last year, the City Council created the Parkland Events Task Force (PETF) to develop recommendations regarding events on parkland, particularly Zilker Park, Auditorium Shores, and Festival Beach. For neighborhoods close to these parks, major events are now routine. Residents of Barton Hills, Bouldin Creek, and Zilker must deal with four months of large events that require a week or more to set up and then more time to restore the park after the event.

The PETF has completed its work and will publish its final report and recommendations later this month on the PETF web site. Look for them at austintexas.gov/petf.

*Your neighbor,
David King
PETF Co-Chair and Council
District 5 Appointee*




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Welcome Home to Bluebonnet Studios on South Lamar

Dear Neighbors,

Foundation Communities has a new opportunity for you to help prevent homelessness and support our new neighbors. Since 1990, Foundation Communities has been providing attractive, affordable homes and support services for thousands of low-income families and individuals, empowering them with the tools they need to succeed.

Bluebonnet Studios, Foundation Communities' 20th affordable housing complex, is nearing completion at 2301 South Lamar Blvd. Soon it will be home to 107 single adults, including low-income workers, veterans, individuals with disabilities, and seniors. They'll get a new beginning with an affordable place to call home in the heart of Austin and support services right at their doorstep.

The Zilker neighborhood is full of thoughtful and giving people. I hope you all will join me in rolling out the red carpet to our new neighbors by donating **Welcome Home Baskets** filled with household essentials.

Cost of each basket is approximately \$225. We must fill 107 baskets with the items listed on this page, so your help is greatly needed.

Our target date to fill all the baskets is **October 31**. If you have questions, contact Holly by phone (512-484-9721) or email (hollybell1955@gmail.com).

Sincerely,

*Nancy Maclaine, Judy Schneringer,
Skyler Stewart, Kim McKnight, Holly Bell
Bluebonnet Neighborhood Team Leaders*

Welcome Home Baskets include (bold indicates most commonly needed items): **Full/double bed size sheets, blanket, pillow; bath towel set, shower curtain and rings, bath mat; plates and bowls, glassware, eating utensils; pots and pans, kitchen utensils, kitchen towel, can opener; cleaning supplies, sponge, mop, broom, paper towels, small trash can; laundry basket and detergent, toilet paper, toilet brush; desk lamp, alarm clock**

Contributing is easy!

Please consider donating \$225, \$150, \$75, \$50, \$25, or \$10.

Donate online at <https://foundcom.org/get-involved/donate/>. Be sure to write "Bluebonnet Welcome Home Baskets" in the comment box.

Send a check made out to *Foundation Communities* or **gift cards** (Visa Gift or Wal-Mart, HEB, Target) to Holly Bell, Bluebonnet Neighborhood Team, 2203 Euclid Ave., Austin, TX, 78704.

Donate items directly by emailing hollybell1955@gmail.com
All contributions are tax deductible.

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City Council denies homeowners relief from McMansion carport issues

EARLIER THIS MONTH the City Council voted 5-5 to keep the McMansion ordinance exactly as it is, with its absurd set of garage and carport exemptions. Two years ago the Residential Design and Compatibility Commission, along with City staff, recommended that the ordinance be simplified by treating garages and carports the same. Builders were taking carport exemptions for doorless garages, which allowed them to build houses well over the McMansion size limit. When new owners tried to install a garage door or enclose the carport, they were stuck with code violations. In the Zilker neighborhood, the gaming has escalated this year. Builders are trying to take two exemptions, one for a carport and one for a garage. These houses can be hundreds of square feet over the size limit.

As a result, the ZNA zoning committee is reviving its

“McMansion Buyer Beware” alert from the July 2014 newsletter. If you are thinking about buying a house with what looks like an unfinished garage, or with both a garage and a carport, be aware that you probably will not be permitted to enclose your parking area or add to the house without removing at least some of the parking structure.

If you are worried about an oversized house being built near you, the ZNA zoning committee (ZilkerNA@austin.rr.com) can help you track permits, show you how to register with the City, and teach you to read the Subchapter F worksheet and communicate your concerns to review staff.

MAUDIE'S TEX-MEX

COME ON GET HAPPY

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Find the LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS guide to all the local election info online at lwvaustin.org/voter-guide/.

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Make the Holidays Happier for Our Neighbors Become a Zilker Neighborhood Elf

by Harmony Grogan, ZNA Holiday Families Program Coordinator

THE HOLIDAY SEASON is truly the time for sharing, and the Zilker Neighborhood Association will again provide a special holiday for families who need assistance within our community. All families are selected from Zilker Elementary School, and each family will complete a wish list with the help of the school counselor. From these lists, volunteers, known as ZNA Elves, shop, wrap, and deliver gifts to families for Christmas.

We need your help and holiday spirit! Please consider making a donation to the ZNA Holiday Families Program through monetary do-

nations, gift cards, or purchasing a gift directly from the wish lists. Local businesses can give a helping hand too!

If you would like to make a contribution or learn more about volunteering as a ZNA Elf, please complete and mail the form below or send an e-mail to ZNAHoliday@gmail.com for more information. Or come to the ZNA meeting on Oct. 24. You may also donate online through www.zilkerneighborhood.org, the ZNA web site. Any money received for the program will be used to purchase gifts for the families. Gift cards (in any amount) will be given directly to a sponsored family.



ZNA Holiday Families Program Volunteer Sign Up 2016

Yes, I want to help make the holidays happier for Zilker families.

Name: _____

E-mail: _____ Address: _____

Phone: _____

- I would like to purchase a gift from a family's gift list. Please contact me when the lists arrive.
- I would like to become a Zilker Elf. Please contact me with more information.
- I have enclosed a check for \$_____ (Write "Holiday Families" in the memo line.)

Please make checks payable to Zilker Neighborhood Association and mail with this form to:

ZNA Holiday Families Program, 2009 Arpdale, Austin, TX 78704

To donate online, visit zilkerneighborhood.org

BECOME A ZNA MEMBER TODAY

Membership is open to Zilker residents (renters or homeowners) 18 years old or older. (Map on page 9.)
Nonresident property owners are not eligible for membership.

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

Name: _____ E-mail: _____

Name: _____ E-mail: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

Dues amount: _____ Additional contribution: _____ Total Enclosed: _____

Please make checks payable to Zilker Neighborhood Association and mail with this form to:

ZNA Memberships, 2009 Arpdale St, Austin, TX 78704

or bring this form with you to the next ZNA meeting

For ZNA bylaws and other information, visit zilkerneighborhood.org.

Nominations for Next Year's ZNA Officers

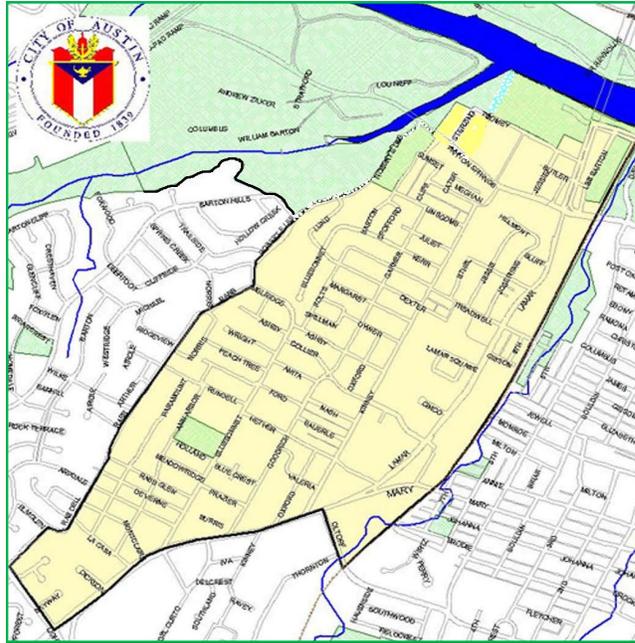
ON OCTOBER 24, the Zilker Neighborhood Association will elect officers to serve from November 1, 2016, through October 2017. ZNA's by-laws allow the executive committee to accept nominations for the eight elected positions up to a week before the fall election meeting, so you have until Monday, October 17, to volunteer to serve or to nominate someone else. Call any of the executive committee members on page 12, or e-mail them through the ZNA Web site, ZilkerNeighborhood.org.

The ZNA executive committee has nominated the following slate of officers:

- President:* Jeff Jack
- First VP:* Dave Piper
- Second VP:* Bobby Rigney
- Secretary:* Gary Hamilton
- Treasurer:* David King
- Social Chair:* Open
- ANC Delegate:* Katy Fendrich
- ZNews Editor:* Lorraine Atherton

ZNA Membership and Voting Privileges

All ZNA memberships run from Nov. 1 to Oct. 31. To be eligible to vote at the October election or any other ZNA meeting, you must be a member of ZNA for at least 30 days before the date of the vote. If you were a ZNA member in 2015, you may pay your 2016 dues at the Oct. 24 meeting and still be eligible to vote at that meeting. Your membership, however, will expire at the end of the month, and you will have to renew your dues to retain voting privileges in 2017. For first-time members, dues paid after Sept. 24 will be credited to the membership year beginning Nov. 1.



ZNA includes Zilker Park and Rabb Road on the west and extends to the railroad on the east, Barton Skyway on the south, and Lady Bird Lake on the north. Residents on both sides of boundary streets may join ZNA.

Zilker is in City Council District 5, represented by Council Member ANN KITCHEN
Contact district5@austintexas.gov

Responsive Office

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DORA ANGUIANO, Constituent liaison;

dora.anguiano@austintexas.gov

DONNA TIEMANN, Chief of Staff;

donna.tiemann@austintexas.gov

KEN CRAIG, Senior policy advisor;

ken.craig@austintexas.gov

JASON LOPEZ, Policy advisor;

jason.lopez@austintexas.gov



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(Continued from page 1) tion, to replace the chicken lane with a landscaped median, would be a good start, if it were designed as well as the median on Barton Springs Road. It isn't. The favored arrangement is a wide median in the center, two travel lanes for cars in each direction, a bike lane on each side divided from the car lanes by a curb or another planted median, and finally a wide sidewalk divided from the bike lane. All those rows of street trees look pretty in the sketches, but they take up space that South Lamar doesn't have. There are more than 60 small businesses that have buildings or parking in the right-of-way on South Lamar, and any widening of the street is likely to conflict with new streetscapes at close to 50 recently redeveloped properties, including the new Lamar Union and the latest Foundation Communities housing.

Let's Move Toward Health

The only thing I would salvage from the final South Lamar Corridor report is the Health Impact Assessment in Appendix E, written by a different consultant. It does try to look at actual travel behavior on South Lamar, and it admits that the corridor was in the midst of massive changes during the period of the study. Many of the policy recommendations in Appendix E have already been implemented and, most important, do not require bond funding. Measures like lowering speed limits, restricting left turns, closing unsafe curb cuts, and requiring new construction and remodeling projects to meet current design standards do not require bond funding, but they are transforming South Lamar right now.

Glossing Over a Flawed Plan

The critics are right about the Move Austin Forward campaign to pass the bonds. Its glossy mailers proclaim "A modern high tech transportation plan" and then offer a list of tired old myths and broken promises from 30 years ago, without even a nod to the effect that fiber optic and wireless communications are having on how, why, and when we need to travel. At the top of the list in my mailbox was "Building up to 50 miles of new sidewalks." Sounds impressive if you're looking at just one district, but the City's latest master plan estimates that Austin has 2,580 miles of missing sidewalks, and it

Interested in problem-solving and alternative transportation here in Zilker?

Join the ZNA Transportation Committee
(ZilkerNA@austin.rr.com) or

WaBuCy Zilker (Walk, Bus, Cycle) = neighbors working to increase walking, bus riding, and cycling for transportation and to advocate for related infrastructure improvements in the Zilker area.

find WaBuCy on Facebook, wabucy@yahoogroups.com, or e-mail wabucy@gmail.com

sets 390 miles as the 10-year target for new sidewalks. From 390 miles to 50 miles? That sounds like the plan is moving us backward.

The promise to "reduce peak congestion delays" by "improving intersections to speed traffic" reminds me of the congestion-management fad of the 1990s, when cities across the country used grants meant for public transit to "improve" failed intersections. After the money ran out, the Surface Transportation Policy Project concluded that congestion and pollution were the same or worse in those cities, but better in the cities that had invested in transit. A local example is the intersection of South Lamar and Barton Springs Road; it's been widened at least three times, and it still scores an F. No, we can't build our way out of congestion. "Computerizing" traffic signals won't make a difference; nor will building pullout lanes "for buses so they don't block traffic." And linking faster traffic to greater safety is simply irresponsible. The question is, do those mailers accurately reflect what is in the corridor plans? If the corridor plans are better than the Move Austin Forward ads, are they likely to be built? Will they be worth the expense?

Certainly Not Carved in Stone

At the July ZNA meeting, several speakers insisted that the South Lamar corridor plan had been thoroughly vetted. I'm not sure what they meant by that, but according to the City's Transportation Department staff, "none of the plans will be formally presented or adopted by Council." The executive summary, report, and recommendations are not signed; there is no title page or cover letter identifying the responsible persons, either with the consultant HDR or with City staff. When it comes to competing for capital improvement dollars, recommendations with no author might as well be written in disappearing ink.

Traffic Is Falling and It Can't Get Up

In Appendix C (Travel Demand Forecast) of the corridor plan, HDR compares 2001 traffic counts with 2013 counts and concludes that traffic volumes along S. Lamar "have not significantly increased over time." In fact, the counts have *dropped* significantly. For example, vehicles per day north of Riverside Drive dropped from 47,954 in 2001 to 39,900 in 2013. The study's count from September 2014 is even less, 38,500 vpd, a decrease of 20% from 2001 and 27% from the peak in 1992 (52,980 vpd). Counts between Oltorf and Manchaca peaked at 43,700 vpd in 1992; by 2014 it was down 18% to 35,807.

Instead of asking why traffic counts on South Lamar dropped back to 1980 levels, HDR instead uses old TxDOT and CAMPO forecasts to predict "an overall 23 percent growth" in automobile traffic by 2035, reversing the demographic and travel-pattern trends of the last 25 years.

Someday Austin planners will consider the possibility of growth without cars. Meanwhile, the best we can do is keep driving less.



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**Newsletter of the
Zilker Neighborhood
Association**

www.zilkerneighborhood.org

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**2016 Executive Committee of
the Zilker Neighborhood
Association**

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2nd Vice President: Dave Piper

Secretary: Bobby Rigney

Treasurer: David King

Social Chair: Dave Floyd

Austin Neighborhoods Council

Delegate: Jeff Jack

Newsletter Editor:

Lorraine Atherton

Other executive members:

Parks and Environment Chair:

Gardner Sumner, 512-468-6200

Zoning and Code Chair:

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The Executive Committee may be contacted by e-mail through www.zilkerneighborhood.org

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About the Zilker Neighborhood Association

ZNA holds quarterly meetings on the last Monday of January, April, July, and October, at Zilker Elementary School, 1900 Bluebonnet Lane. The Executive Committee meets at the Umlauf Museum, 605 Robert E. Lee Road, 7 PM the first Monday of most months. Watch the Web site for updates.

Our Purpose: To improve the quality of life in the neighborhood in matters of land use, environmental protection, public services, consumer protection, preservation of the historic and unique character of the community; to provide support in other matters of neighborhood concern; and to promote and participate in the civic life of the city.

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