



# Allandale Neighbor

October 2024  
Vol 39, Issue 5

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Mayoral Candidate Forum

- » Tuesday, October 15
- » 7:00–8:30 pm
- » St. John's United Methodist Church (2140 Allandale Rd)

### It's My Park Day

- » Saturday, November 2
- » NW District Park, and throughout the city

### Election Day

- » Tuesday, November 5

### Key Voting Dates

- » Oct. 7 Last day to register to vote
- » Oct 21–Nov. 1 Early voting
- » Oct 25 Last day to apply for a ballot by mail
- » Nov 5 Election Day

## 411 For Election Day

Ranleigh Hirsh

**E**lection day is fast approaching on Tuesday, November 5. Visit [VoteTravis.com](#) to verify your registration, ballot-by-mail status, a sample ballot, and voting locations during early voting or Election Day. Travis County has 41 early voting locations and 174 Election Day locations. Voters registered to vote in Travis County can vote at any of these locations. Election Day hours are 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

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### Allandale Mayoral Contenders Forum

ANA Governance Committee

Don't miss your opportunity to engage directly with the candidates vying to lead Austin at the upcoming Allandale Neighborhood Association's Mayoral Candidate Forum. This hotly-contested mayoral race will likely go into a runoff between five capable candidates, each with different visions for Austin's and Allandale's future. As our city grapples with pressing challenges such as ethics and good governance, flooding, housing, public safety, aging infrastructure, climate change, taxes, city spending, sustainability, and other issues, your involvement has never been more crucial. It's your chance to hear firsthand from the candidates as they present their platforms and outline their strategies for addressing these critical issues.

### Six Candidates, One Seat: District 7

ANA Governance Committee

The Allandale neighborhood is part of Austin City Council's District 7, and this year's race is one of the most competitive in Austin. Voters in Allandale will choose from six candidates for the D7 seat, each hoping to succeed current Council member Leslie Pool. Eligible voters can vote at any vote center in Travis County where you see the "Vote Here/Aqui" sign.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10



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ALLAN  
DALE

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22

**The Allandale Neighbor**

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ANA Executive Committee meetings are held on the first Wednesday of the month at NW Rec Center. General Membership meetings are held in April and October. (Meetings are currently held via Zoom)

**Committees**

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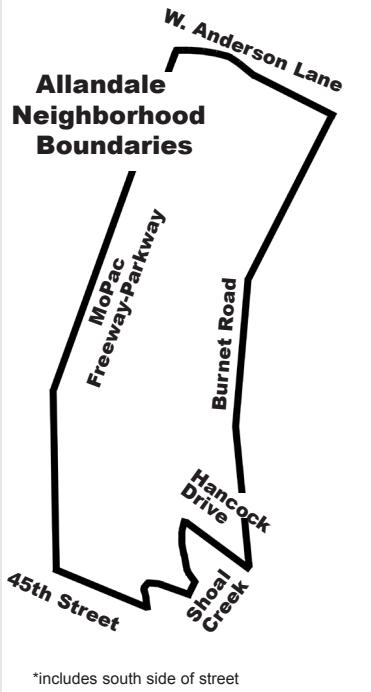
**Allandale Police District Reps.**

Ofcr. William Harvey, 512-974-8123

(Tuesday-Friday 6:00 am – 4:00 pm)

Ofcr. Willis Rounds, 512-974-8599

(Tuesday-Friday 6:00 am – 4:00 pm)



## President's Letter

Hans Magnusson, ANA President (512) 522-8773, [ana@hmvikings.com](mailto:ana@hmvikings.com)

You can feel that fall is coming—slower than a snail, perhaps—but leaves are dropping from trees, and temperatures are about one degree lower. With fall comes changes to the ANA board, with a new board being elected at the October general meeting. Please welcome the new board and give them your support to keep the 'hood in good shape.

Several properties along Burnet Road may be rezoned to DB90 (meaning ninety-feet-high) apartments. Don't we have enough apartments? It feels a bit like déjà vu "again" for those who experienced the housing slump in the late 1980s. Are dropping rents a leading indicator for a glut of apartments?

The part of Allandale bordered by Shoal Creek, 2222, Burnet Road, and Hancock is designated as an Enterprise Zone by our "friendly" city. According to state law, for an area to qualify as a reinvestment zone ("Enterprise Zone" in Austin-speak) described in Texas Tax Code Property Redevelopment and Tax Abatement Act Section 312.202, the area must:

"substantially arrest or impair the sound growth of the municipality creating the zone, retard the provision of housing accommodations, or constitute an economic or social liability and be a menace to the public health, safety, morals, or welfare in its present condition and use because of the presence of" (*my favorite item in the list of 'the presence of'*) "a substantial number of substandard, slum, deteriorated, or deteriorating structures."

If you own a million-dollar house in this Enterprise Zone, now you know that the city considers you to live in a slum dwelling ripe for development. What we have is the relentless and continued attack on single-family housing by our City Council. Voting matters!

*"Corruption is paid by the poor."*

- Pope Francis

hans



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# Document Water Flow on Your Property Now

ANA Governance and Zoning Committees

The Austin City Council is considering changing current water drainage management rules for new multi-unit developments (up to sixteen units). If passed, developers would no longer be required to manage water drainage on-site but could divert stormwater directly into city streets. These developments must only submit a drainage plan showing the stormwater runoff is directed into the street. There would be no requirement to assess whether existing drainage systems can handle the increased water flow, nor would the city review the plans to ensure that the new developments don't increase the risk of lot-to-lot flooding or harm local creeks. Basic information about this proposed ordinance (C20-2023-045 Site Plan Lite Phase 2 & Infill Plats) is available at Speak Up Austin's page at [speakupaustin.org/r6610](http://speakupaustin.org/r6610). We want to explain the context of this proposed ordinance and its possible implications here.

Lot-to-lot flooding, also known as informal or local flooding because it occurs outside of the floodplain, has already been documented in Allandale. With relaxed drainage rules, the possibility of property damage would potentially increase. This is a significant concern for residents of Allandale because changes in drainage from new construction can lead to local flooding, even outside floodplains.

Properties on Shoalmont Drive, Bull Creek Road, Fairlane Drive, Marilyn Drive, Richcreek Road, and Skylark Drive have already experienced lot-to-lot flooding between 2021 and 2023. Streets in many parts of Allandale, especially those south of Northland/Allandale Road, lack storm drains and/or sidewalks, making them more vulnerable to flooding if this ordinance passes.

The council's HOME initiative and Mayor Watson's Affordability First plans both encourage higher residential density on existing lots. Combined with simple water diversion to city streets, this could worsen local flooding issues far from creeks and streams.

Fortunately, the State of Texas has long recognized the dangers of non-floodplain, lot-to-lot flooding. According to Texas Water Code § 11.086, no person may divert or impound the natural flow of surface water in a way that damages another person's property by causing an overflow.

To preserve water rights established in state law, Allandale residents should begin documenting water flow on their properties

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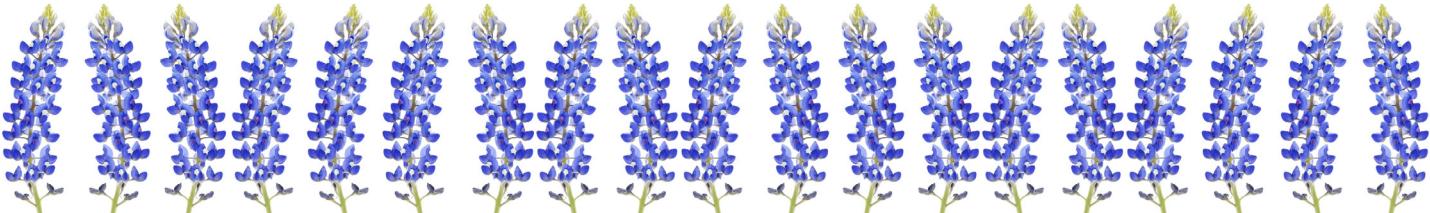
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now to form a baseline of comparison before any nearby new construction begins. Take photos with timestamps, note the amount of rainfall, and monitor for any signs of flooding, such as watermarks on siding. Once construction starts, pay attention to and document drainage changes after every rain event. If issues arise, try to address them with the builder or new property owners but, if necessary, seek legal advice from firms experienced in Texas Water Code cases. Formal complaints must be filed within two years from discovery of the flooding nuisance to meet the two-year statute of limitations.

This proposal is part of a broader trend in Austin, where City Council has increasingly granted variances allowing development in floodplains. For example, on July 18, Mayor Watson and City Council approved a variance to allow the construction of a 359-unit residential development in downtown Austin, next to Shoal Creek, within a 25-year floodplain. This variance was granted despite the city's Watershed Protection Department's recommendation to deny the request for several reasons, including their public safety finding that first responder safety personnel and building residents would not have safe access to and from the building during a 25-year or 100-year flood event. During the hearing, Kevin Shunk, Austin's floodplain administrator, warned that continuing to approve such variances could



affect Austin's ability to obtain federal flood insurance. Water-shed Protection provided a complete explanation to the Austin City Council prior to the public hearing, and you can read it here: [bit.ly/3XC7xI0](http://bit.ly/3XC7xI0). All City of Austin Council meetings are recorded and archived at [austintexas.gov/watch-atxn-live](http://austintexas.gov/watch-atxn-live), and this includes the July 18 hearing on Item 109.

If passed, the proposed water drainage ordinance could increase Austin's flood damage risks by shifting responsibility for drainage management away from developers. Initially scheduled for an August 27 hearing by the Planning Commission, the review

has been postponed to October 8. Mayor Watson and City Council are expected to address the ordinance after the November elections. Allandalers can find out about the City of Austin's Planning Commission meeting dates and agendas at [austintexas.gov/content/planning-commission](http://austintexas.gov/content/planning-commission) and the City Council's meeting dates and agendas at [austintexas.gov/department/city-council/council\\_meeting\\_info\\_center.htm](http://austintexas.gov/department/city-council/council_meeting_info_center.htm).

*Please note this article is for informational purposes only and should not be construed as legal advice.*



## WE LOVE OUR SCHOOLS!



## Neighborhood Schools Update

Tara Bowman

**Gullett Elementary** Book Fair begins Oct. 21 in the Gullett Library. The annual health and wellness fair, CATCH Night, is on Oct. 23rd at 5:00 p.m. Look for the 5th Grade Farm Stand on Oct. 28th at 3:30 p.m. at the marquee.

**Lamar Middle School + FAA** Have a band? Sing and play an instrument? LamarFest, brought to you by Lamar PTA, wants to showcase all current, future, and past Scottie musical talent at LamarFest on Friday, December 6, 2024, from 5-8 pm. Performances will be broken up into sets. If interested, contact [president@lamarpta.org](mailto:president@lamarpta.org) with as much information as possible.

**Highland Park Elementary** hosts their PTA-sponsored, family-friendly fall carnival, Hoot, on Sunday, Oct. 20, from 3:00-6:00 p.m. For tickets and wristband information, visit [hppta.org/hoot.html](http://hppta.org/hoot.html). Able to sponsor? Go to [hppta.org/sponsorship.html](http://hppta.org/sponsorship.html) for more info.

**McCallum High School** Parents of Class of 2025 seniors, order your yard sign to show your pride for your MAC student! Signs are \$40.00. Visit [macprojectgrad.square.site](http://macprojectgrad.square.site) to order. Purchases help fund Project Graduation's mission to provide a drug and alcohol-free graduation celebration for all seniors. Want to sponsor? Go to [macprojectgrad.square.site](http://macprojectgrad.square.site) and click on one of several donation options.

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# How Much Are 24 Seconds Worth?

Gail Dickinson

I often work from home and see drivers speeding down Bullard Drive, and many Shoal Creek residents complain that drivers speed on Shoal Creek. It's easy to forget that there's an elementary school in our neighborhood and that kids and pets can be unpredictable when they are playing or riding bikes. Now that school is back in session, maybe it's time to reconsider driving habits in our neighborhood.

According to the National Highway Administration, 87% of speeding-related fatalities occur on non-interstate roadways, including neighborhood roads. In accidents involving pedestrians, severe injuries happen in 30% of cases when vehicles are traveling 25 mph (the speed limit on most neighborhood streets). Speeding quickly increases the risk of serious injury and death. The average risk of severe injury for a pedestrian struck by a vehicle is 50% at 31 mph, 75% at 39 mph, and 90% at 46 mph. A pedestrian's average risk of death is 25% at 32 mph, 50% at 42 mph, and 75% at 50 mph (Tefft, 2011). In addition to increasing the force of impact, speeding reduces a driver's ability to see and react to pedestrians promptly. When drivers speed, their field of vision narrows, making it harder to spot pedestrians and cyclists. This is especially true in low light. [editor's note: Daylight Saving Time ends on November 3.]

If you are speeding when you hit a pedestrian or cyclist, you will likely be considered at fault for the accident. If you think that no one would be able to prove your speed, consider the prevalence of Ring cameras that may be recording traffic on our neighborhood streets. It would be very easy to calculate the speed of vehicles passing in view of these cameras. Additionally, car connection services like OnStar share data with insurance companies with or without a driver's knowledge. As of 2022, LexisNexis claimed it hosts data from over 10 million vehicles from 60% of automakers. That number is increasing every year. A good personal injury attorney would seek out this information if someone were injured.

Those of you with teenage drivers should know that in Texas, insurance follows the car, not the driver. Under Texas law, a car owner can be held fully liable for damages caused by another driver using their car. Some insurance companies offer discounts for the ability to track driving behavior. If you are concerned about your teenager's driving, ask your insurance company for this service. Usage-based insurance has been shown to improve driver behavior – especially among younger drivers (Soleymanian, Weinberg, & Zhu, 2019). Texas law also only requires \$30,000 in liability insurance, a drop in the bucket when serious injuries are involved. While injured parties can't go after your homestead, they can go after other assets.

**TIRIED?**

**SNORING?**

**NOT USING YOUR CPAP?**



**S** Do you **SNORE** or has your sleep partner told you that you snore?

**T** Do you feel **TIRIED** throughout the day or make multiple trips to the restroom at night?

**O** Has it been **OBSERVED** usually by your sleep partner that you stop breathing during sleep?

**P** Do you have High **BLOOD PRESSURE** or problems with memory and concentration?

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If you think pedestrian accidents just can't happen, you're wrong. In August, a woman was killed in an auto-pedestrian accident in Tarrytown. Just before I moved to Allandale in 2003, there was a fatal accident in my quiet Pflugerville neighborhood. A six-year-old boy was riding his bike just blocks from an elementary school on a quiet neighborhood street when he was struck and killed by a woman who looked away for just a moment to tune her radio. Over the years, I've witnessed some near misses on Bullard. My home is only four blocks from Gullett, but some drivers think they're already on MOPAC as they fly down the street.

How much time does speeding in the neighborhood save you? At the posted speed limit of 30 mph, it should take 48 seconds to get from White Rock to Northland on either Bullard Drive or Shoal Creek Boulevard. Doubling your speed in those sections would save you 24 seconds at most. Fortunately, most speeders are not that egregious, meaning they aren't saving even 24 seconds in their commutes. Given the increased chances of serious injuries or death in speeding accidents, it begs the question, "Why speed at all?"

Soleymanian, M., Weinberg, C. B., Zhu, T. (2019). *Sensor Data and Behavioral Tracking: Does Usage-Based Auto Insurance Benefit Drivers?* *Marketing Science*, 38(1), 1-192.

Tefft, B. C. (2011) *Impact Speed and a Pedestrian's Risk of Severe Injury or Death (Technical Report)*. Washington, DC. AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety.



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## Saint John's Pumpkin Patch: Year 32!

St. John's UMC

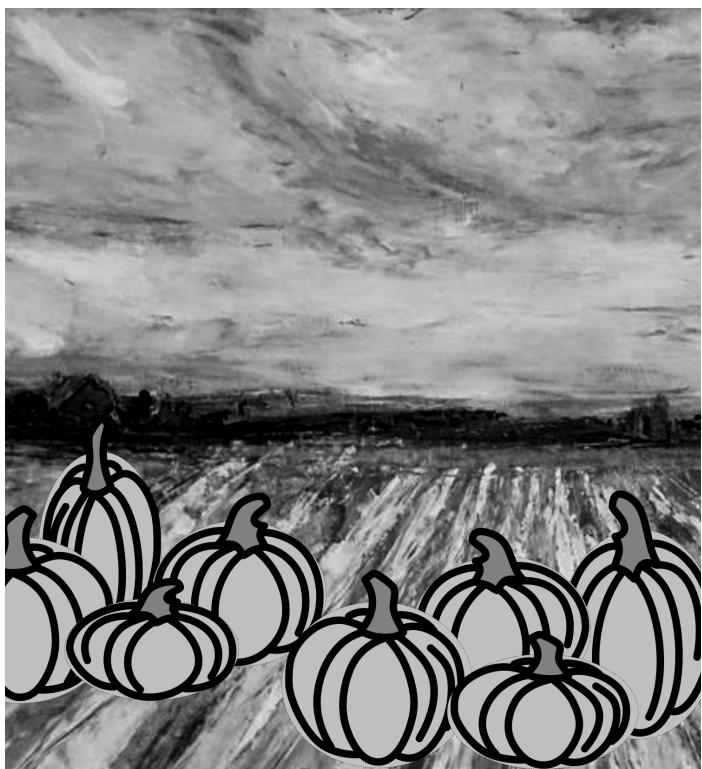
The thermometer may say otherwise, but our calendars whisper the promise of our long, hot summer finally turning to fall. One of the surest signs of the season is the appearance of Halloween decorations in stores and on porch steps across the neighborhood. Bright orange pumpkins catch our eyes and, for many, bring happy memories of spooky seasons past.

Another unmistakable sign of the season in our neighborhood is the annual reappearance of the pumpkin patch at Saint John's UMC (2140 Allandale Rd.). Now in its 32nd year, the Saint John's patch has been a seasonal fixture for generations. With its impressive selection of pumpkin varieties, inviting playground, excellent photo opportunities, and story times during the week, it's easy to see why the Saint John's patch has been featured as one of the top patches in Austin. The patch offers convenient hours and friendly volunteer workers. It is a great place to run into neighbors and friends in pursuit of the perfect pumpkin.

You can also feel good about shopping at the Saint John's patch: these pumpkins are grown on a Navajo Reservation in New Mexico. Funds raised from the patch each year support meaningful mission work for children, youth, and senior adult ministries.

The patch will be open from October 7 to 31 (or until the pumpkins are all gone). The hours are Monday through Thursday, 2:00-7:00 p.m.; Fridays and Saturdays, 10:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.; and Sundays, 12:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. On Halloween, the patch will be open from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m.

Questions? Contact [laura@stjohnsaustin.org](mailto:laura@stjohnsaustin.org) or call the church office at (512) 452-5737. See you at the patch!



A large, stylized graphic for the Saint John's Pumpkin Patch. The title "SAINT JOHN'S PUMPKIN PATCH" is written in large, bold, red letters. Below it, "OPEN OCTOBER 7 - 31" is written in a smaller, red font. The background features a repeating pattern of orange pumpkins and yellow autumn leaves. To the left, there is a list of operating hours: "Monday-Thursday: 2-7 p.m.", "Friday &amp; Saturday: 10 a.m.-7 p.m.", "Sunday: 12-7 p.m.", and "Halloween: 2-5 p.m.".



## Let Us Hear From You!

We love for readers to submit ideas and articles.

[newsallandale@gmail.com](mailto:newsallandale@gmail.com)

## Charter Amendments & Open Meetings Act Violations

ANA Governance Committee

Recently, Austin's charter has been in the news, along with many other issues. Why should we care? We should care because the charter is the governing document of Austin, comparable to the United States Constitution for the country. Now, the City Council wants to change it.

Austin's proposed charter amendments have raised concerns about reducing public influence and favoring those in power. These amendments, which the City Council attempted to place on the November ballot, would have altered various processes, including making it more difficult for residents to mount citizen petitions and recall efforts by increasing the number of required signatures.

Despite the significance of these amendments, the public was given little notice. At the July 18, 2024 hearing, Mayor Watson and City Council grouped all fourteen amendments—intended to appear separately on the ballot for voters to consider—into a single item, Item 96, on the meeting agenda. See: [bit.ly/4dpH46q](https://bit.ly/4dpH46q)

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

\* **We ❤️ Allandale! \***

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## District 7

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

The candidates, in the order they'll appear on the ballot, are:

- **Gary Bledsoe:** bledsoeforaustin.com
- **Pierre Nguyen:** nguyenforcitycouncil.com
- **Todd Shaw:** toddshawforaustin.org
- **Edwin Bautista:** edwinfordistrict7.com
- **Mike Siegel:** siegelforaustin.org
- **Adam Powell:** adamforaustin.com

Note: Gary Bledsoe entered the D7 race in July. His campaign started fundraising after the latest reporting deadline.

These candidates all participated in the D7 Candidate Forum, hosted by the League of Women Voters and the City of Austin's Ethics Review Commission, on September 5. You can watch the full video of this forum on the City of Austin ATXN video archive [austintx.new.swagit.com/videos/314296](http://austintx.new.swagit.com/videos/314296) or on YouTube at [youtube.com/watch?v=ZObdmm3qymY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZObdmm3qymY). Both platforms offer transcripts.

It's important to know what these candidates have to say about key issues affecting our community. Allandale voters will be listening closely to what these candidates have to say about the city's good governance and transparency, responsiveness to constituents, transportation policies, equitable affordable housing and land development policies, taxation, public safety,

homelessness, flood control, infrastructure planning, economic growth, sustainability and the environment, child care, and many other matters important to Allandale residents.

This is a competitive race. If no candidate wins over 50% of the vote, a runoff election will be held between the top two candidates. If needed, a runoff will take place on Saturday, December 13. Early voting for a runoff will run from Monday, December 2, to Tuesday, December 10.

Those interested in campaign finance reports can be accessed through the City of Austin Campaign Finance Data Search portal here: [austintexas.gov/cityclerk/cfdi/index.cfm](http://austintexas.gov/cityclerk/cfdi/index.cfm).

Remember, Austin's city elections are nonpartisan. The candidates' names and political party affiliations will not appear next to each other on the ballot.

Make your voice heard in this hotly contested race that is pivotal for Allandale's and Austin's future!

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The September 5th District 7 Candidate Forum was recorded and can be found on the ATXN website or on YouTube

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### The Ghost

Charles Baudelaire

*Softly as brown-eyed angels rove  
I will return to your alcove  
And glide upon the night to thee  
Treading the shadows silently.*

*And I will give to you, my own  
Kisses as icy as the moon  
And the caresses of a snake  
Cold gliding in a thorny brake.*

*And when returns the livid morn  
You will find my place forlorn  
And chilly, till the falling night.*

*Others would rule by tenderness  
Over your life and youthfulness  
But I would conquer you by fright!*

# HOME Ordinances Risks

Susan Morrison

The City Council and Mayor Watson have promoted Home Options for Mobility and Equity (HOME) ordinances that eliminated our single-family zoning designation in Allandale. They justified the action by claiming that increased housing density in central Austin would lead to more affordable housing. However, councilmembers Alison Alter and MacKenzie Kelly have expressed doubts about this claim and voted against HOME.

While our district's City Council member Leslie Pool sponsored and endorsed HOME, research from universities and public interest groups indicates that increasing density without maintaining zoning regulations can result in crowding, displacement, flooding, and environmental degradation, but not more affordable housing. HOME requires no mandate that actual "affordable" residences be built (i.e., below market or costs less than 30% of the buyer's income). A similar California state law ending single-family-home-only zoning was struck down as unconstitutional on April 22, 2024, a decision that could lead to the law being invalidated in California's largest cities. The appellate court found no evidence to support the assertion that the upzoning permitted by California's SB 9 would increase the supply of below-market-rate housing. See: [bit.ly/3zoWH0e](https://bit.ly/3zoWH0e)

Cities like Portland, Seattle, San Francisco, and Houston demonstrate this pattern: urban density does not lead to affordability. "Zoning reform is not a magic bullet to create supply, as its advocates seem to believe, with their 'rezone it and they will build' mantra," says Alan Mallach, senior fellow at the Center for Community Progress and the National Housing Institute. He served as director of housing and economic development for Trenton, New Jersey, from 1990 to 1999 and teaches in the City and Regional Planning program at Pratt Institute.

See: [bit.ly/3BdILaQ](https://bit.ly/3BdILaQ) and [bit.ly/47FYB9b](https://bit.ly/47FYB9b) and [bit.ly/4dmLH12](https://bit.ly/4dmLH12)

According to Steve Mim's documentary Zoned Out: The Legacy of Code Next, over 60% of homes sold in 2023 were bought by investors, making it challenging for regular homebuyers to compete with cash offers from investment firms and developers. Texas led all states with the highest share of institutional buyers, at 28%, and the Travis County percentage as of April 2023 was 41%, as reported by Glenn Hunter of Texas Monthly.

Austin is known among watershed engineers as Flood Alley. Allandale and its proximity to Shoal Creek is at the heart of it. Our councilmember has claimed that HOME ordinances will not increase impervious cover. However, impervious surfaces such as concrete prevent rainwater from being absorbed into the ground and filtered, leading to more runoff and elevating flood risks.



*Image credit: Adela Mancías, The Austin Independent*



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## Charter Amendments

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

Austinites who wanted to speak on each of the proposed amendments had only 12.85 seconds per amendment, as current City Council rules allow each citizen only three minutes to speak on a single item. Additionally, several amendments were added at the last minute by city staff, giving Austinites little time to evaluate and analyze these changes.

Further complicating the situation, our council violated the Texas Open Meetings Act (TOMA) three times this year. Most recently, in the charter amendment matter, it violated TOMA by failing to provide adequate public notice and opportunities for comment before passing an emergency ordinance to place the proposed charter amendments on the November ballot. Judge Maya Guerra Gamble ruled that the City Council had violated the law by not properly informing the public of the subjects of the amendments and by not allowing sufficient time for public input. Following an emergency hearing, the judge's decision forced the City Council to remove the charter amendments from the ballot.

This ruling was a significant setback for Mayor Watson and the council, who now have to wait until either May or November 2025 to bring these proposed charter amendments to voters.

Help out a neighbor ■ Pick up litter ■ Spay/neuter your pets ■ Plant flowers ■ Volunteer ■ Use our trails, parks, and greenways ■ Conserve water ■ Drive carefully ■ Have a block party ■ Attend a neighborhood meeting ■ VOTE! ■ Flip over an upturned turtle ■ Observe the speed limit ■ Take walks around the neighborhood ■ Pick up after your pets ■ Keep bicycle lanes open ■ Join ANA ■ Donate household items ■ Report potholes 3-1-1

### Take Pride In our Neighborhood

■ Say hello to your neighbor ■ Help out a neighbor ■ Pick up litter ■ Spay/neuter your pets ■ Plant flowers ■ Volunteer ■ Use our trails, parks, and greenways ■ Conserve water ■ Drive carefully ■ Have a block party ■ Attend a neighborhood meeting ■ VOTE! ■ Flip over an upturned turtle ■ Observe the speed limit ■ Take walks around the neighborhood ■ Pick up after your pets ■ Keep bicycle lanes open ■ Join ANA ■ Donate household items ■ Report potholes 3-1-1 ■ Say hello to your neighbor ■ Flip over an upturned turtle ■ Use our trails

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Attorney Bill Aleshire, an expert on TOMA, called the actions “lawless” and accused the council of undermining transparency and public trust in local government.

As Austin moves forward, it is clear that these proposed charter amendments will resurface in a ballot election next year, either in May or November. Austinites must carefully study and analyze these amendments to fully understand their potential impact on democracy and governance in the city. It is crucial that voters recognize how these changes could limit their ability to participate in the democratic process and hold their elected officials accountable.

To help facilitate this, the Allandale Neighborhood Association’s Governance Committee will be organizing discussions and forums leading up to the election. These events will provide residents with an opportunity to learn about the proposed charter amendments and broader topics like ethics oversight, governance, and transparency in public policymaking. By engaging in these conversations, Allandale residents can ensure they are informed and prepared to make decisions that protect the integrity of our local government.

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# ALLANDALE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION MAYORAL CANDIDATE FORUM

**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 15 • 7:00 PM**  
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**ALLANDALENEIGHBOR.COM**

## It's My Park Day: Sat., Nov. 2

Ranleigh Hirsh

It's My Park Day (IMPD) is Austin Parks Foundation's biannual, community-led day of service which occurs on the first Saturday in March and November. Volunteers all over Austin work in parks and green spaces to pick up trash, mulch trees, remove invasive plant species, do riparian zone restoration work, trail management, and more. We hope you join us to "Reclaim Beverly S. Sheffield Northwest District Park!" on Saturday, November 2nd.

Please join fellow park and trail lovers at Northwest Park for our bi-annual park love fest. Our goal for November 2nd is to clear the footpaths in the natural areas of the Davis/Green Acres Branch of Shoal Creek of overgrown Giant Ragweed (*Ambrosia trifida*). This is the forested area adjacent to the playscape, behind the picnic area bathrooms. There will also be a Shoal Creek/park clean-up for those not removing plants. Search for 'Beverly S. Sheffield Northwest District Park' at [austinparks.org/impd](http://austinparks.org/impd) to sign up.

Joining in? Bring a water bottle, gloves, and tree loppers if you have them. Wear long sleeves and pants that can get dirty and protect you from poison ivy in the area. If you plan to participate in the creek clean-up, tall rubber boots will be helpful. Plan on meeting the crew in the pond parking lot, on the far side of the park, for a 9:00 am start on November 2, 2024.

Volunteers will split into two groups; one group will focus on the invasive plants, while the second group will focus on trash pickup in Shoal Creek and around the park.



Schematic view of Beverly S. Sheffield Northwest District Park

## 3D Game Development

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If you sign up early, you will receive an AWESOME It's My Park Day t-shirt designed by local artists, day-of treats from local businesses, and the satisfaction of reclaiming our park from the trash and overgrown plants. Plus, you will be giving back to your very thankful community.

## Allandale Quick Bites: Dog day, Ling Wu, and Tzintzuntzan

Robert Mace

Since I last wrote, Dog Day Coffee is now open at 8840 Burnet, featuring a full array of espresso drinks but also bites from Quack's and the vegan anarchists Zucchini Kill. They specialize in nitro and even have a nitro flight if that's your thing (it certainly is ours!). They've closed up their long-time pop-up in Nosh & Bevvy, farther north on Burnet. The award-winning Ling Wu is now open for business in The Grove. Driving around the hood, I saw the Fusion Halal Kitchen trailer parked next to the Red Apple Smoke Shop at 5100 Burnet and the Veracruz Antojolitas Mexicanos at the Chevron at 2909 Anderson.

Area caff-addicts caught a spell of the shakes when they saw that Cheri Coffee & Flowers was gone from their location at 6722 Burnet, but Cheri was due for an inspection, and trailers are required to roll into the city for the deed. The brews are back! The auctioneers sold everything in our Foxtrot, so I don't think our 'trot will refox. Fonda San Miguel announced the name of its new breakfast-lunch joint next door in the Frida building, and it's a doozy: Tzintzuntzan. The name is pronounced zin-zoon-zhan and means "place of hummingbirds" in Purépecha. We're still waiting for Keso Tacos at 3901 Spicewood Springs, Black Gold Craft Meats & Cocktails at 1521 West Anderson Lane, H-Mart at 5222 Burnet, and ChefSuite at 8023 Burnet to officially open.



Tzintzuntzan construction underway next door to Fonda San Miguel

I fondly remember my first trip to Torchy's back when it was just a trailer on South First across from El Mercado South. As we stood in a long line, I squinted at the menu and saw a Democrat taco and a Republican taco. "I wonder what's in them?" I said. "Red meat in one and bean sprouts in the other?" A young lady behind us growled, "I don't know what's in 'em, but I suspect they're both full of [feces]." So it's with great sadness that I report that in the further corporate castration of Torchy's, they've taken the Ace of Spades, the Republican, and the MoFaux off the menu, replacing the latter with the family-friendly Fo Sho. Maybe I understand why they retired the Dirty Sanchez (maybe...), but these changes cause concern. Furthermore, the Q-Anoners will have a field day of leaving the Democrat on the menu, but, on the other hand, they might like how that sounds.

Until next time, keep eatin'!



## Election Day

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

Can't wait that long? Early voting begins on October 21. Early voting locations are open seven days a week, from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., with shorter weekend hours.

### Nearby Early Voting & Election Day Voting Locations

- » Ben Hur Shrine Center (7811 Rockwood Lane)
- » Northwest Recreation Center (2913 Northland Dr)

### Nearby Election Day-Only Voting Locations

- » Lamar Middle School (6201 Wynona Ave)
- » North Village Branch Library (2505 Steck Ave)
- » Rosedale School (7505 Silvercrest Drive)
- » Yarborough Branch Library (2200 Hancock Drive)

**Bring one of the following forms of photo ID with you to vote:**

- » Texas Driver's License
- » Texas Election ID Certificate
- » Texas Personal ID Card
- » Texas Handgun License
- » U.S. Citizen Certificate with photo
- » U.S. Military ID Card
- » U.S. Passport (book or card)

Call Travis County Elections at 512-238-8683 if you have questions or have lost your photo identification.

You can bring paper materials for reference during voting, such as the League of Women Voters Austin Area printed voter's guide ([lwvaustin.org](http://lwvaustin.org)). However, your phone cannot be used in voting locations, so it is best to write down your choices before arriving.

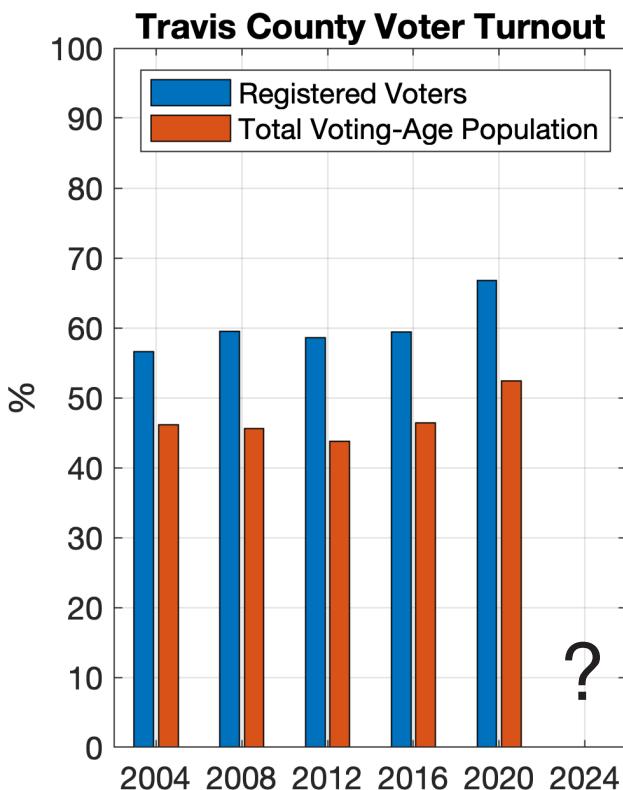
Curbside voting is available at all voting locations in Travis County. It is for voters who are physically unable to enter the polling location without assistance or who are likely to be injured by the voter's health. You can vote in your car with the aid of a trained election officer. Look for the curbside voting signs at each location or call Travis County Elections at 512-238-8683 for assistance. In addition, each voting location has accessible equipment for voters with disabilities.

### What to expect while voting in Travis County

1. Prepare to show a valid photo ID to the Election Officer.
2. Sign in. Receive your ballot card.
3. Take your card to any ballot-marking device.
4. Use a touch screen to select your candidates and position on propositions. Remember, you don't have to vote on every race or proposition listed.
5. Check your selections. Press print.
6. Check the printed ballot. Insert it into the scanner. It's a paper backup of your vote.
7. Take an "I Voted" sticker, step outside the room, and post a selfie with your sticker to remind your friends to vote!

### Did you know?

The Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired was established in 1856! Though it wasn't until 1916 that it was moved to its current location on Burnet Road.





As your Mayor Pro Tem and as a Council Member, I stood with neighborhoods and fought for everyday Austinites. I led on initiatives like the Water Forward 100-year conservation plan, the Austin/Travis County Food Plan, the Sobering Center, resilience hubs, and negotiations to bring Major League Soccer to Austin. I also advocated for our public schools and passed many policies to support working families.

Austin needs a Mayor committed to transparent government and one who will collaborate with the community on decisions that put people first. With your support, I will be that Mayor.

As Mayor, I will champion:

- **Affordable housing** in all parts of the city & access to high quality **affordable childcare**
- A more **sustainable, resilient Austin** in the face of climate change
- Reproductive health rights
- A voice for neighborhoods in environmentally-sound planning & development
- **Long-term solutions to homelessness** instead of costly temporary measures
- **Public safety**, including a well-trained and staffed police force accountable to the public

I respectfully ask for your support and your vote!



 - Kathie  
[kathieforaustin.com](http://kathieforaustin.com)



Pol. Ad. Paid for By Kathie Tovo Campaign, P.O. Box 300873, Austin, TX 78703; Joseph Pinnelli, Treasurer. This campaign has not agreed to comply with the contribution and expenditure limits of the Austin Fair Campaign Chapter.

## Suzi's Chinese

Robert Mace

Suzi Yi has been a multi-decadal fixture in Austin's Chinese-American food scene. So when she retired in 2018, many were sad when she closed her last restaurant on Shoal Creek and Anderson Lane. But time makes the heart grow fonder for the old days and ways, so when the Old Thousand space came up for rent on Burnet, she jumped at the chance to restart her old standard.

I have to confess that I hadn't been to Suzi's previous places (as far as I can recall), so trying Suzi's Chinese was my first experience. First off, the best thing about Suzi's is Suzi herself. That's not an underhanded dig at the food—that's simply recognition of the benevolent hurricane that is Ms Yi. She's friendly, and she's everywhere, like Santa Claus delivering dishes instead of presents, bringing joy down every grease flue. The website states, "Suzi treats you like family," which she does, making you feel comfortable, checking in on your meal, and whatnot. Given how well she works the crowd and cares for your well-being, I wish she was on the ballot this fall instead of some of our other choices.

For a lunch visit, I tried the special of Jalapeño Chicken (lightly breaded chicken sautéed with jalapeño, black beans, and garlic) with a small bowl of Egg Drop Soup (the two together for \$15). The plate arrived with an ice cream scoop of fried rice and a fried egg roll, so a lot of chow for the money. The quality of the ingredients, presentation, and attention is a step up from the usual Chinese-American fare around town. My seat at the bar gave me lots of face time with Suzi, who has rock-star energy and charisma.

I brought The Bride for dinner on my second trip, and we ordered the Chicken Lettuce Wraps (sautéed spiced chicken with cool lettuce; \$9) as an appetizer. Worthy of entrée status, the chicken came stir-fried with a colorful collection of veggies. For entrées, I ordered the strangest item on the menu, the Crispy Shrimp with Walnuts (cooked in a tangy tomato sauce; \$18), while she chose the Sweet & Sour Chicken (battered chicken breast with pineapple, bell peppers & onions; \$16). The walnut dish was quite good, with large chunks of everything. The Sweet & Sour had too much emphasis on the sweet for our teeth, but again was chunky good.

Spicy ain't spicy here, but fresh ingredients, hip decor, and a smiling Suzi back from retirement make for the best stir fry in town!

Suzi's Chinese; 4805 Burnet Road; (512) 291-6637

HECHO EN TEJAS

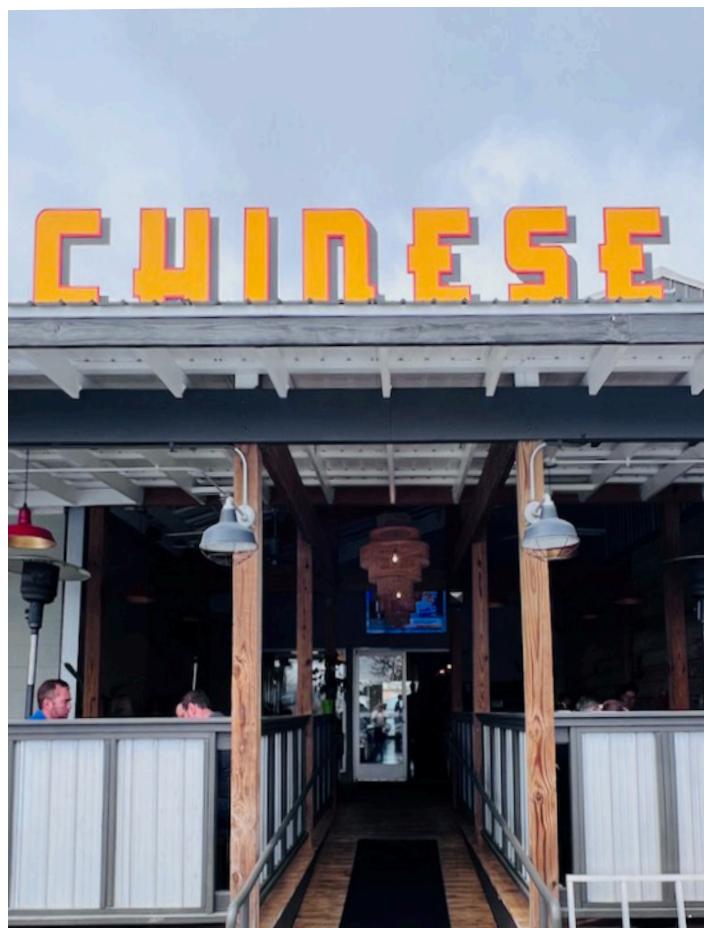
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*The back patio at the new Suzi's*

# HOME

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

When natural ground cover like grass or trees is removed, runoff travels faster, collecting street pollutants before ending up in streams, contributing to flash floods. This runoff is visible downtown, where Shoal Creek overflows during heavy rains.

HOME ordinances allow greater build-out on formerly single-family lots, permitting developments of up to six units and three stories without driveways or on-site parking. Front yard setbacks could shrink to as little as six feet from the curb, especially if they include sidewalks required by ADA standards.

Councilman Chito Vela (D4) suggested this would still allow room to grow a tree. However, fewer trees mean a loss of Austin's tree canopy, exacerbating heat and reducing the city's natural beauty. As trees disappear, so do habitats for birds, further altering the environment. Increased impervious cover in neighborhoods like Allandale, Crestview, and Brentwood will raise the risk of creek flooding and water quality issues.

Journalist and former City Council member Daryl Slusher, who founded The Austin Independent online local news publication, has investigated the financial backing behind the push for both Project Connect and HOME ordinances (see

[theaustinindependent.org](http://theaustinindependent.org) for more information). Why would billionaire transplants testify in favor of these measures? Airbnb investors and real estate developers see the economic potential in maximizing profits by converting single-family (SF-1 and SF-2) lots into multi-unit dwellings. However, the infrastructure in most Austin neighborhoods was designed for single-family homes, not the density that these new developments require. Water, sewer, and drainage systems are not prepared for such a population increase.

Moreover, properties converted into Airbnb rentals may bring a rotating stream of temporary residents, impacting neighborhood stability and safety. According to Slusher, investors such as Luke Nosek, co-founder of PayPal and investor in Airbnb, contributed significant funds to the campaigns of current council members, except for Alison Alter and Mackenzie Kelly. Alter and Kelly both voted against HOME.

HOME Ordinances have also raised concerns about the enforcement of single-family deed restrictions. As more multi-unit developments occur in a neighborhood, homeowners may face difficulties upholding these restrictions in court. Legal battles over deed restrictions can be prohibitively expensive. One Allandale resident found this out after spending over \$50,000 to defend property rights, only to have the developer appeal the ruling. Fortunately, the judge granted the neighbor's request for attorney fees. For more, see: [bit.ly/4gG7nbC](http://bit.ly/4gG7nbC)

Is this New Urbanism or urban opportunism? Having studied New Urbanism for decades and co-founded the first local chap-

ter of the Congress for New Urbanism (CNU), I can say that what the council has adopted under HOME strays far from the principles of true New Urbanism. The New Urbanism movement prioritizes compatibility between old and new development, ensuring that neighborhoods maintain character while integrating new housing. In contrast, Austin's urban opportunism removes compatibility standards, potentially allowing high-rise buildings next to single-family homes. This not only affects the aesthetic of neighborhoods but also devalues existing homes.

While mixed-use developments along transit corridors make sense, placing such density in the heart of established neighborhoods without adequate transitions is problematic. Developments like The Domain succeeded because they were built on largely undeveloped land. Furthermore, even Andres Duany, CNU's founder, says city regulations should not force people into a government-pre-agreed-upon design, acknowledging that some buyers want a single-family home with a yard. True New Urbanism balances density with green spaces, but HOME ordinances must account for new parks or open spaces to offset increased density.

Density does not guarantee affordability. See citations in a comprehensive article by Dr. Rich Heyman, The Flawed Logic and Lack of Evidence Behind Austin's HOME Initiative (2024).

See: [bit.ly/4dfCGqE](http://bit.ly/4dfCGqE)

While there is no simple solution to the issues raised by HOME, a few steps could help address the concerns of HOME's divisiveness:

**Deed Restrictions.** Deed restrictions are a powerful tool to help preserve the character of a neighborhood. Right now, the COA website states, "If a building permit application complies with the Land Development Code, then staff must approve the application whether or not it conforms to a deed restriction." Austin could pass an ordinance recognizing and respecting deed restrictions in zoning decisions and permitting. Other cities have done this to protect homeowners' property rights instead of inciting litigation.

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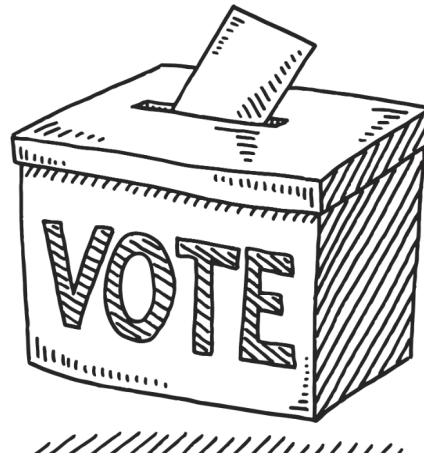
**Owner-Occupancy.** Requiring buyers of multi-unit properties to live on-site could help maintain neighborhood stability and prevent properties from being converted into Airbnb-style rentals.

**Compatibility Requirements.** The City Council should restore compatibility requirements to ensure that new developments fit within the context of existing neighborhoods. The Planning Commission proposed several conciliatory amendments to HOME at the unusual joint session of the commission and council. Still, all amendments were rejected by Mayor Watson and majority of the council. Council hearings at July and August City Council meetings provide clear illustrations of a council deaf to the concerns of homeowners impacted by the recent zoning changes. Parents complained about an office building behind their backyard fence. The building's rooftop air conditioners emitted 70 plus decibels of excessive noise 24/7. The parking lot exhaust fan blew directly into their backyard, making the space unusable. Security lighting and other issues were also described.

**Transparency.** Austin's city government should follow the Open Meetings Act and ensure public participation in major decisions like HOME. Since January, judges have ruled that the City Council has violated the Texas Open Meetings Act three times. This is shameful. The council receives annual OMA training, and several council members are attorneys. With a commitment to transparency, it is easier for residents to maintain confidence that this City Council is following the law and doing the right thing for the community.

Most of us moved to Allandale because we value its single-family character, parks, trees, and community. As the city evolves, our elected officials must stop ignoring homeowners and neighborhoods. Get involved! Attend City Council meetings and vote for candidates who will take a legal, transparent approach to land development.

Watch Zoned Out @ [bit.ly/3BkCKIm](https://bit.ly/3BkCKIm)  
Affordability terms defined @ [bit.ly/3MYg7Mn](https://bit.ly/3MYg7Mn)



## Mayoral Forum

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### 2024 Mayoral Candidate Forum

**Host** Allandale Neighborhood Association

**Moderator** Ron Oliveira, *renowned broadcast journalist*

**Date** Tuesday, October 15, 2024

**Time** 7:00 – 8:30 pm

**Location** St. John's United Methodist Church, 2140 Allandale Rd. (across from HEB)

**Cost** Free

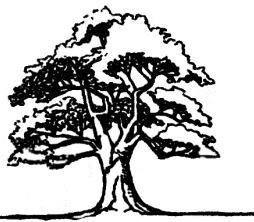
This pivotal event is designed to inform and empower Allandale residents with the information needed to make well-informed decisions ahead of Austin's mayoral election. It's a unique opportunity to experience a direct presentation from the mayoral candidates as they discuss their platforms and strategies for tackling Austin's most urgent issues. While attendees will not have the opportunity to ask questions during the event, you are encouraged to submit any questions or concerns to [allandale.neighborhood@gmail.com](mailto:allandale.neighborhood@gmail.com). The ANA's Governance Committee will work diligently to ensure that the most relevant questions for the Allandale community are addressed within the available time.

Note that we ask that all attendees maintain a respectful and positive atmosphere throughout the evening to ensure a productive and fair platform for all candidates and a thoughtful, deliberative experience for everyone involved.

Why should you attend? Your participation is vital to fostering important community dialogue that will influence the future of Allandale and Austin. Plus, you will be a more informed voter. Whether your concerns lie in housing, ethics, public safety, or city governance, this forum offers a valuable opportunity to hear directly from those who seek to lead.

Join us on October 15 for this historic and essential civic conversation. Let's come together as a community to learn and make a meaningful impact on the future of our neighborhood and city.





# Take Pride in Our Neighborhood



## Allandale Neighborhood Association New or Renewal Membership.

All residents within Allandale's boundaries are welcome to join the Allandale Neighborhood Association. Annual dues are \$20 per household or \$10 (over age 55 household). Dues may be paid in advance for multiple years.

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**Membership rates:**  \$20 dues per household  \$10 dues per age 55+ household

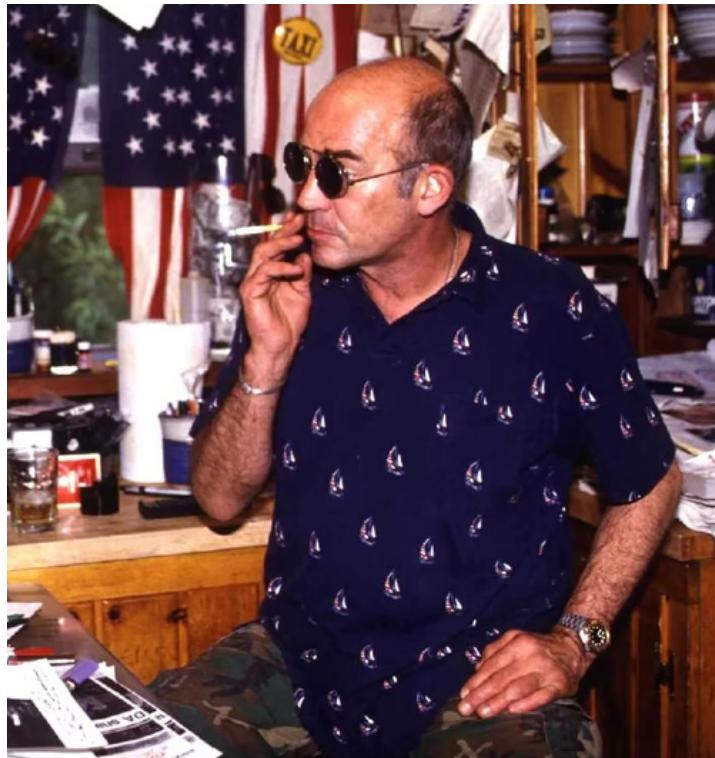
**Please make checks payable to:** ANA ■ PO Box 10886 ■ Austin, TX 78766-1886 ■

Or join online via [www.allandaleneighbor.com](http://www.allandaleneighbor.com)

I am willing to serve on the following committees:  Bylaws  Communications  Finance  Membership  
 Nominating  Parks  Safety  Zoning and Planning  Other \_\_\_\_\_

## Get Involved with your Allandale Neighbor Newsletter

Allandale Neighborhood Association



**Newsletter Submissions:** Do you want to submit an article to our newsletter on a subject of community interest? Here's what you need to know!

- All submissions require the approval of the Allandale Neighborhood Association president.
- Submissions are due November 15 for our December edition, January 15 for our February edition and March 15 for our April edition.
- Articles may be lightly edited for grammar, spelling, length, or clarity. Do not add any special formatting or bold text. Headings, subheadings, and paragraphs are fine.
- Google Drive submissions are preferred. Email [newsallandale@gmail.com](mailto:newsallandale@gmail.com) if you need guidance on document formats and we will assist you.

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