

Ridgetop Neighborhood Association

RIDGETOP REPORTER

VOL 8 ISSUE 1
NOVEMBER 2008

NEXT MEETING:

November 10th

7:00 pm

First Workers

4916 North IH35

*New Members
Always Welcome !*

AGENDA:

Officer Elections

By Laws Vote

Jim Walker

Christmas Party

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Ear to the Rail— a Stop Near You?

Rail topics are vital for consideration by our community, and soon, since the first Cap Metro Rail service is slated to begin in March of 2009. The logic of a 51st Street station stop is a natural except for its proximity to Ridgetop Elementary school, the substandard infrastructure of 51st Street and its lack of available space for use as a stop or park & ride, narrow traffic lanes that become congested during periods of high traffic and a bizarre confluence of interlacing intersections at the railroad crossing and at Duval.

Additionally this area is fringed by single family zoning which makes 51st street a less than ideal candidate for a rail stop. The intersection of 51st & Lamar, the natural destination of much of Westbound 51st St traffic, is already problematic. With an expected increase in traffic from the Mueller redevelopment along with anticipated 4 story Travis County office and parking garage to be build at the former Chair King (Airport and North Loop) it is easy to imagine traffic backing up from Lamar to Avenue F at rush hour.

An alternate rail stop idea is to place the stop at 53rd and the rail, adjacent to the track, where "Jim's Discount Auto" and used truck yard is currently located. 53rd Street is a broad artery compared to the venial capacity of 51st and is already bordered by commercial zoning. 53rd Street progresses all the way to Shoal Creek with a minimum of lights. This area is ripe for increased commercial activity, including vertical mixed use. This is demonstrated by the increased traffic flow already occurring by those traveling east to the county offices and to IH35, and then Westward in the evening.

The "Jim's" site is an underutilized 3 acres and its car and truck sales business seems redundant in our increasingly urban community. "Jim's" is also adjacent to the extensive Leif Johnson Ford properties, a multi-family apartment complex, and the underused commercially zoned properties, along 53rd/North Loop route. Redevelopment of this site seems like a more natural choice and is exciting to consider. Imagine a CapMetro rail stop in a vertical mixed use setting with rapid transit buses to nearby Mueller development, to state offices, and even to the Triangle.

Our community of Northfield and Ridgetop neighborhoods could be best served by having an agreed on priority list and an understanding of negotiating and compromise in order to leverage our long sought amenities: sidewalks, a library, neighborhood center and a hike/bike trail along the rail.

- Martha Ward





Know Your Code!



In this recurring series of "Know Your Code" we want to promote community awareness by reviewing some basic City of Austin codes. This segment describes behavior that we sometimes see in Ridgetop and the surrounding communities:

§ 9-4-43 GRAFFITI PROHIBITED.

- (A) In this section:
- (1) DIRECTOR means the head of the department designated by the city manager to enforce and administer this section.
 - (2) GRAFFITI means a mark, including an inscription, slogan, drawing, painting, symbol, logo, name, character, or figure, made in any manner on public or private property visible to the public, excluding commercial advertising or a mark placed in compliance with an ordinance, or state or federal law.
 - (3) MINOR means a person under 17 years of age.
 - (4) OWNER means the owner of record or the person contractually responsible for property.
 - (5) PARENT means a person who is the natural or adoptive parent of a minor, including a court-appointed guardian or other person 21 years of age or older, authorized by a parent, court order, or court-appointed guardian to have the care and custody of a minor.
- (B) Before prosecuting an offense for a violation under Subsection (C), the director shall:
- (1) give the owner written notice to remove the graffiti from the property not later than the 30th day after the date the notice is delivered; and
 - (2) shall review the defenses to prosecution under Subsection (G) to determine if a defense is applicable.
- (C) An owner commits an offense if the owner fails to cover or remove graffiti on the owner's property visible from public property or right-of-way, or other private property.
- (D) A parent commits an offense if the parent knowingly permits, or by insufficient control allows, a minor to create graffiti on public or private property.
- (E) The 30-day period prescribed in Subsection (B)(1) begins:
- (1) the day the notice is personally served on the owner;
 - (2) the day after the notice is mailed by certified mail; or
 - (3) the day after completion of an alternative method of notice under Subsection (F).
- (F) Notice under Subsection (B) may be served by personal delivery or certified mail, return receipt requested, addressed to the owner at the owner's address shown on the tax rolls. If the owner's address is unavailable or the notice is returned as undeliverable, the director may issue notice by:
- (1) publication two times within ten consecutive days in a newspaper of general circulation in the city;
 - (2) posting the notice on or near the front door of each building on the property; or
 - (3) posting the notice on a sign staked to the ground on the property if there is no building on the property.
- (G) It is a defense to prosecution under this section that:
- (1) the director failed to serve notice on the owner in compliance with this section;
 - (2) during the 12 months before a citation under this section, the property owner received notice and removed graffiti from the property not less than three times;
 - (3) before the director filed a complaint, the owner gave the director written authorization to enter the property to cover or remove the graffiti at no cost to the owner under to a program approved by the director;
 - (4) the owner has made a good faith effort to remove the graffiti, including obtaining an insurance policy; or
 - (5) the owner and director approved placement of the graffiti.
- (H) If the director denies an owner's request to approve placement of graffiti on property, the owner may appeal to the city manager.

Source: 1992 Code Section 10-1-23; Ord. 031023-13; Ord. 031211-11.

-Editor

Treasurer's Report



The current balance in our account is \$ 766.19! Thank You to all our neighbors and advertisers who continue to send in dues and advertising payments!

-Michael Suhanovsky, RNA Treasurer

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**Please Attend
our Next
Neighborhood
Meeting:**

**November 10th
First Workers
4916 North
IH35 Frontage
7:00 pm**

Mueller Redevelopment and Day Labor

Monday night, November the 10th at 7:00 p.m. Jim Walker, Chair of the Robert Mueller Municipal Airport Plan Implementation Advisory Commission, will speak to our neighborhood at the First Workers location about the various approaches to improving how day labor is to be managed at and around the Mueller Redevelopment.

Catellus has presented a two page summary of their Enhance, Education, and Enforce (EEE) Day Labor Outreach Strategy to the Mueller PIAC. These are their three plans of action:

Enhancing the effectiveness of the existing First Workers' (FW) site is crucial to the success of the overall effort. Issues of trust among some workers, evolving the lottery system, and a positive Home Depot presence at the FW site were all discussed as important components of the approach. A potential future step is extending the FW site to a smaller day-labor station at the Home Depot store, contingent on Home Depot willingness.

Educating both workers and employers about the FW site will possibly be the greatest challenge. Catellus indicated on 10/14/2008 that education efforts were either already or imminently underway with workers at the St. John's location. In addition, Home Depot has indicated a willingness to host FW informational materials at their store.

The Mueller PIAC observes that the Enforcement component must be multi-faceted, proactive and respectful of all affected parties, including the day laborers. We encourage the City to seek methods beyond regulatory, such as an investment in training for APD street patrols in best practices for interacting with day laborers and committing to consistent APD day shift personnel who can build relationships with all stakeholders (we note the challenge of coordinating across three APD districts). Related to the regulatory enforcement, the Mueller PIAC is staying silent on the question of expanding the Anti-Solicitation Ordinance zone as a component of Enforcement (we understand this ordinance to be on appeal in the courts as to its constitutionality).

As most all of us know, First Workers is located in Ridgetop and has a long history of challenges with the neighborhood. If you would like to learn more about the plans or become more involved in solutions, please attend our quarterly meeting on Monday night at First Workers. Hope to see you there!

-Kim Bernson



Are You Connected?



Got an email address? Do you care about your home, your street, your neighborhood? If so, you'll want to join the Ridgetop Yahoo email list. This is the best way to hear about neighborhood crime alerts, social events, city news, neighborhood meetings, and other Ridgetop news. As Ridgetop grapples with major Issues - such as an uptick in crime or solutions to traffic woes - we need everyone to be in the loop. Remember: Together we are a heck of a lot smarter than we are as individuals.

Currently there are 212 members in this group but our goal is for EVERY RIDGETOP RESIDENT WITH A COMPUTER to JOIN this list! How to join? It's easy: Send an email to kijaso@austin.rr.com to request an invitation, or go to: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/RidgetopNA/> and create your Yahoo! I.D. There's not much more to it, so why not do it right now?



A Nifty National Night Out!



NNA's Prez Jody Horton invited RNA neighbors to come celebrate and co host with NNA the National Night Out at Bruning Green Park. Divvying the duties for food - Ridgetop received a gracious dozen **Austin Pizza's** which were greeted "swarmingly" by the attendees, and was followed up by Carlos, **El Michoacano** set up chaffing dishes w/ wonderful puffy tacos with fresh rice and yummy cheese sauce.

In addition, bubbles of amazing dimension were looping through a Wonder Will Wand - donated by Will Asay. Meanwhile Kim Bernson, RNA Prez, was lighting up the night with glow bracelets, which were enjoyed by both the girls and the boys. It was good to renew our fellow biking buddies as well.

The Cheney / Obama debate was available on television propped on the roof of Jody's car, yet it was tricky to get the attendees to light and watch - it was a meet and greet event of the highest order. We hope for reciprocal opportunity in the spring for both neighborhoods. The idea of a fall neighborhood bike ride were tossed around - waiting for a date to be set. Perhaps organized by NNA this go around.

-Martha Ward

RNA Christmas Party & Donation Drive



Don't miss this year's RNA Christmas party and donation drive! We plan to party at Red River Church (4425 Red River), on December 8th, 2008 from 7:00 to 9:00pm. Red River Church and their members have become an integral part of our association by supporting many community and neighborhood projects. Now it is our turn to pay forward some of the goodwill we have received. We suggest all who are able to attend this party donate some items to Red River Church for distribution through their charitable affiliations (Caritas and Manos de Cristo food pantries).

Here are some donation ideas: Household cleaning supplies such as Lysol, Windex, etc; toilet paper, laundry products, dish liquid, towels, blankets, non-perishable food items (peanut butter, dry pinto beans, cereal, microwavable lunches etc), *new* clothing items (children's socks and underwear, sweaters, sneakers etc). Please bring any donations to the party. If you are unable to attend but would still like to make a donation please contact your sector VP and we can arrange to transport the donations for you! Red River Church will make sure these donations get to the right people.

Refreshments at the party will be provided by Red River Church but please feel free to bring some goodies to share! -Editor



A Cool Community Connecting— UPDATE

August at Phara's Christophor Casbah hosted the 20 + persons attending and interested in various Cool Community connecting in conversation about a variety of subjects - including:

Rail Crossings -unsafe crossings on foot or on bicycle, particularly for Ridgetop elementary students. For months out of the school year, young children living in Ridgetop neighborhood must cross Airport and the tracks in the dark in order participate in the breakfast and later the lunch programs.

Meeting CapMetro Matt Curtis on several occasions and working on what 3 top needs do we specifically want addressed - safe crossing for the school children is essential, and routing the bus away from the front of Ridgetop Elementary School.

Next week Council member Laura Morrison will be touring the neighborhood, focusing on 51st from I H 35 to Caswell -followed by lunch in the neighborhood. Marty Bier, RNA member and Staff Director for Randi Shade, welcomed the idea of her council person coming to the hood for a tour and a lunch as well. Slowly we will build a case around addressing the 51st rail crossing needs and then expand to other crossings, such as Koenig.

Due to multiple meetings of the North Loop Planning Team and project activities needed to prepare for funding, September and October went w/out Cool Community Connecting. Once RNA holds it officer meeting, vote in the by-laws and respective officers, expect renewed activity of the Cool Community Connecting. Stay turned, or feel free to contact Martha Ward. Convener - Cool Community Connecting.

-Martha Ward

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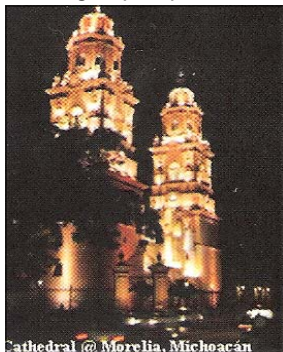
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North Loop Planning Team Meeting

Don't miss the next NLNPT meeting on Thursday, December 11th at Ridgetop Baptist Church 781 E. 51st Street from 7 to 9 pm.



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Ridgetop NA Community Resource and Reference

2008 Ridgetop Neighborhood Leadership Roster

President: **Kim Bernson**, kijaso@austin.rr.com, 689-0660

Co-Secretaries: **Jessica Galloway** and **Bryan Dore**

Treasurer & Membership: **Michael Suhanovsky**

Sector Co-Vice Presidents:

Morningside

Steve Barney, barneyalt@earthlink.net, 929-8155

Dick and Laura Smith, rsmith8549@hotmail.com, 453-1350

Red River Sliver

Ann Cook, acook@dot.state.tx.us, 371-3072

Harmon Triangle

Scott Richardson, srr03@hotmail.com, 459-9714

Ryan Parks, ryankparks@gmail.com, 791-6998

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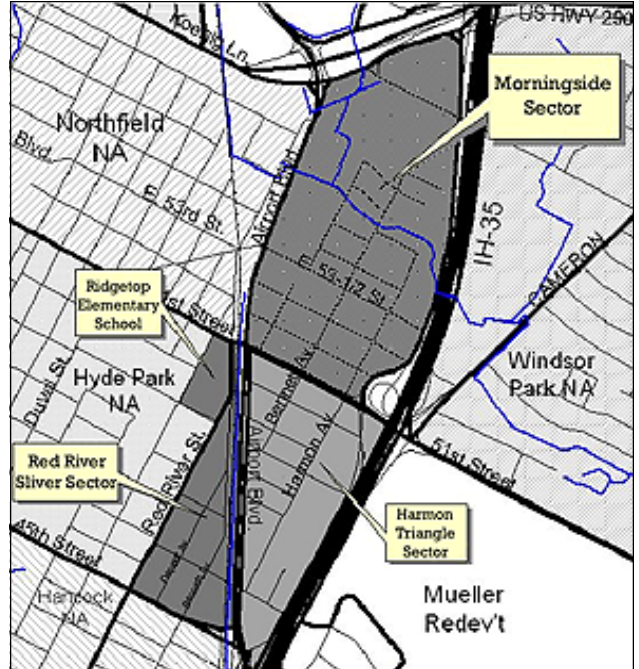
Airport Blvd. ABLE projects: 45th Street to Koenig

Martha Ward, koockward@yahoo.com
206-5669 or 452-1151

Ridgetop Elementary School, Principal **Juaquin Gloria**,
51st street & Caswell 414-2002

Northfield Neighborhood Association (NNA) President:

Sebastian Wren



**Criminal or suspect activity?
Please call 911 for officer response.**

**Community Police Officer:
A.J. Rodriguez 974-4527
armando.rodriguez@ci.austin.tx.us**

**Report All Graffiti to:
Jack Massey
459-8479**

North Loop Neighborhood Planning Team (NLNPT): handles zoning changes and conditional overlays for RNA and NNA, plus some shared initiatives. Meets quarterly on 2nd Thursday at Ridgetop Baptist Church.

NLNPT Chair: **Patrick Goetz**, pgoetz@mail.utexas.edu

NLNPT Vice Chair: **Patricia Borowicz**, patricia Borowicz@gmail.com

City of Austin contact for NLNPT: please call the City of Austin for current contact

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.. **Enjoying the newsletter? You can support this publication and other Ridgetop Neighborhood Association activities by completing this form and sending it along with the suggested annual membership fee of \$10 per household to: Ridgetop Neighborhood Association, 1002 East 46th Street, Austin, Texas, 78751. Please make checks payable to Ridgetop Neighborhood Association.** ..

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