

The Highland Park West Balcones Area Neighborhood Association, Inc. Neighborhood Plan 2004-2005

2004 Board Committees

To address issues identified in the 2002 Neighborhood Survey, the Board organized the following Committees:

- Neighborhood Planning
- Development/Zoning
- Transportation
- Crime/Safety
- Membership/Events
- Parks/Beautification
- Business Sponsorship
- Communications/Web Site
- Communications/Newsletter
- Finance

These Board Committees have prepared the following issue analyses and action steps, which constitute the June 2004-June 2005 Neighborhood Plan:

Neighborhood Planning Committee

Board Committee Member: David Pharis, Chair

The full HPWBANA Board operates as a planning committee to revise the Neighborhood Plan on an annual basis. The Neighborhood Plan represents the current priorities of the association in conjunction with feedback from its members. This is a living document which will evolve and change based on current issues facing the association.

Development/Zoning Committee

Board Committee Member: David Pharis

Issues:

- HPWBANA should serve as a sounding board for concerns about new building in the neighborhood.
- The association should not encourage additional development in the neighborhood, but if new businesses do come to the neighborhood, respondents would prefer (in descending order of interest) parks, restaurants, bookstores, hardware stores, post office services, gyms/health clubs, copy services, and drugstores. Respondents do not want bars/pubs, dry cleaners, general retailers, or grocery stores.

- Most respondents support Camp Mabry as an active military installation and are not interested in having it move out of the neighborhood.

Actions:

- The Board supports new development, both new residential and commercial, only when it complies with the current plat and deed restrictions and zoning requirements.

Transportation Committee

Board Committee Member: Frances Allen

Issues:

The HPWBANA should work to:

- Reduce cut-through traffic in the neighborhood
- Reduce speeding on neighborhood streets
- Improve access to public transportation
- Update and replace traffic signage (stop or yield signs, etc.)
- Reduce the volume of traffic on MoPac
- Play a forceful role in state, city, and county activities related to MoPac planning
- Prevent home loss if MoPac is redesigned
- Reduce noise pollution from MoPac traffic
- Encourage development of commuter rail along MoPac
- Establish a commuter rail terminal in the area if commuter rail is built along MoPac
- Accept the proposal for building HOV lanes in the existing right-of-way on MoPac

Actions:

- The Board will present concerns about traffic signage and the need for traffic calming to the City's transportation planning department; and work with APD to regulate driving speeds in the neighborhood.
- The Board will increase signs requiring speed reduction and/or warning motorists of locations requiring speed reduction, and alerting motorists to caution areas (pedestrian areas, children's play areas, crosswalks, intersections, etc.) in efforts to persuade cut-through drivers to seek non-neighborhood routes. The Board will also contact the appropriate entity to replace existing signs that are faded, missing, or in disrepair.
- The Board will work with Capital Metro on neighborhood concerns, such as improving bus stops and sidewalk access to bus stops.
- HPWBANA will continue working with MONAC to improve the traffic situation on MoPac, which could eliminate some of the neighborhood cut-through traffic; continue to support the progress of the Commuter Rail District; and support the installation of a precast concrete wall, for noise abatement, by working with City Council.
- HPWBANA will continue to enforce neighborhood zoning laws to prohibit the addition of businesses in residential structures, which would eliminate the additional traffic, these would create.

Crime and Safety Committee

Board Committee Member: Susan Rauch and Drake Besheer

Issues (Crime):

- HPWBANA should increase awareness of neighborhood crime.
- An increase in residential and automobile burglaries in the neighborhood has prompted interest in a neighborhood watch program. Because research shows that the most effective programs are those that involve neighbors in small, localized groups, the HPWBANA Board proposes to act as an initiator and resource for neighborhood watch groups within our boundaries.

Actions:

- Provide neighbors with timely information about crime in the neighborhood, especially when distribution of this information could prevent other crimes. The Board will publicize the link to APD's crime information page on the HPWBANA website, and will consider publishing a condensed version of APD's crime listing in the newsletter in order to reach neighbors who do not have access to the Internet.
- The Board will also publicize, via its e-mail list, "Alert" notices when these are received from APD. We will publicize contact information for the neighborhood's APD representative; publicize and encourage neighborhood attendance of APD Commander's Forum meetings; and continue promoting the Neighborhood Watch Program, including the posting and maintenance of existing Neighborhood Watch signs.
- Assist groups of neighbors interested in implementing neighborhood watch groups by providing start-up information, including contact with Austin Police Department officers for presentations at initial meetings.
- Maintain contact with elected Block Captains and utilize them as contact points for distributing information to neighbors. This includes the forwarding of "Be on the Lookout For" and other urgent communiqués from our Austin Police Department liaison officers.
- Include information on the website about established watches in our neighborhoods, including contact information for block captains. Also, provide basic safety tips and suggestions for neighbors.
- Support neighborhood watch groups by possibly hosting an annual neighborhood-wide social event focusing on crime and safety, such as a National Night Out or other gathering.

Issues (Sidewalks):

- HPWBANA should work to increase the quantity of sidewalks and pedestrian crosswalks.

Actions:

- Current City of Austin resources are dedicated primarily to the repair of existing sidewalks rather than building new ones. Instead of trying to increase the quantity of sidewalks,

HPWBANA's efforts would be better spent on improving the quality of existing sidewalks. Therefore, the Board will identify neighborhood sidewalks that currently need repair and report them to the City's sidewalk repair program. (This program provides repair with blacktop material only.)

- Contact Capital Metro regarding the timeline of the project to connect the Balcones Dr bus stop (by Randalls) to the bus stop on Hancock Dr (by providing a sidewalk on south side of Balcones Dr) and to register neighborhood support for this project.
- Invite Linda DuPriest from the City of Austin's Bicycle and Pedestrian Program to attend a future Board meeting and update the Board on the status of the city's plans to re-lane Balcones Dr. and add bicycle lanes.
- Pursue non-City of Austin sources for construction of new sidewalks; identify other areas within the neighborhood that access bus stops in order to qualify for Capital Metro attention and creation of new sidewalks; and follow up with the "Safe Routes to School" program (although this program is billed as a "traffic hazard elimination" program, not a "neighborhood enhancement" program, there may be funds available for creation of new sidewalks in areas immediately accessing school property).

Membership/Events Committee

Board Committee Members: Carolyn Robinson, David Seaton, and Susan Rauch

Issues:

- Increase net membership by 20% (50 new people) (GOAL).

Actions:

Increase awareness of neighborhood association (STRATEGY) through

- Events
 1. July 4th parade
 2. Easter Egg Hunt
 3. Annual Meeting
 4. National Night Out or other event
- Outreach to new neighbors
 1. Develop welcome packet
- Increased circulation of newsletter, reminder cards, web page
- Utilize signs throughout neighborhood to promote events, meetings, membership drive
- Board member acquisition of three new members each

Parks and Beautification Committee

Board Committee Members: Nadene Morning and Jessica Winslow

Issues:

- The Beautification Committee was formed in September 2002 in response to interest expressed in the neighborhood survey.

- The Committee's goal is to promote beautification within the neighborhood and to increase community involvement within the area.
- The Committee aims to organize at least one beautification project or clean up per month. Project ideas come from the neighborhood survey and input from residents.

Actions:

- HPWBANA will use the newsletter to solicit requests for clean-ups in specific areas and also help coordinate a springtime clean-up of Perry Park. Clean-ups have already occurred in several areas. Abandoned vehicles, downed street signs and tree branches hanging in the street have been reported to the appropriate authorities. Information about the appropriate City organization and the phone number to call for various problems is provided on the HPWBANA website.
- The Beautification Committee will also work on improving specific green spaces in the area as projects. One completed project involved replacing the rough grasses on the Balcones/Parkcrest median with native Texas landscaping. Another project in process is at the Ridge Oak triangle, where the committee surveyed residents to identify problems and get ideas for improvements. The Committee will be planting trees, positioning rocks as barriers, and addressing the grass problems. Another project is at the Foothill Terrace median where the Committee is planning a spring planting of native Texas landscaping along with the installation of a stone path.
- The Committee also works with various Life Scouts in the area by offering some of the beautification projects to work on as Eagle Scout projects.

Business Sponsor Program Committee

Board Committee Members: Frances Allen and Jessica Winslow

Issues:

- To make neighborhood businesses aware of HPWBANA's purpose and projects
- To identify businesses within HPWBANA's area
- To offer businesses the opportunity to participate
- To give the participating businesses recognition

Actions:

- Identify and list businesses in HPWBANA area
- Prepare a letter to send to businesses asking for a \$50 contribution and describing
 1. HPWBANA's purpose, activities, and proposed use of the contribution; and
 2. Business benefits of listing in the newsletter and on the web site

Communications/Newsletter Committee

Board Committee Members: Jessica Winslow

The Newsletter Committee has decided to publish a succinct newsletter this year, using a four-page format with a "newsy" story on page one. The Committee will solicit new feature stories from residents and businesses. The names of business sponsors will be published, in accordance with USPS regulations for non-profit bulk mail. Due to cost considerations, in 2004 the first two issues of the newsletter will be mailed to members only, unless funds become available to mail the newsletter to all residents. The third issue (fall) will be sent to all residents.

Communications/Web Site Committee
Board Committee Members: Nadene Morning

HPWBANA Web Site: www.hpwbana.org

In response to interest expressed in the survey, a web site for the HPWBANA organization was created in the summer of 2003. The goal of the web site is to communicate activities of the HPWBANA Board and to provide information that is of interest and relevance to the residents of our neighborhood.

The web site is hosted free of charge by MAIN.ORG. Web pages are currently grouped in the following general areas:

- HPWBANA organization
- Communications to residents
- Neighborhood Plan and plans for improvements
- Helpful phone numbers and web links
- Local businesses/sponsors in the area
- Involvement in city/local issues