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# Bryker Woods

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Newsletter of the BrykerWoods Neighborhood Association

Fall 2006 Vol. 24

## Annual Meeting of the BrykerWoods Neighborhood Association

**Saturday November 18th**

**10:00am at BrykerWoods Elementary**

Featured speakers Council Member Brewster McCracken and  
TxDOT Planner/Engineer Mark Herber

Topics of discussion: Neighborhood Planning and MoPac

Refreshments will be provided! Share your thoughts and concerns about the  
Various issues affecting the quality of life within the neighborhood.

Visit <http://www.brykerwoods.org> for additional information.

### MoPac/MONAC Update

The Loop 1 (MoPac) corridor is currently undergoing a study that is a joint effort by DM JM Harris, an engineering consulting firm and the Texas Dept. of Transportation (TxDOT). This past year the Loop 1 study team conducted interviews and surveyed residents in neighborhoods along MoPAC. The results of this survey should be ready soon. Most recently, the Loop 1 study team held public Open Houses to give a bit of background on MoPAC's history and to get more citizen input. They reported a good turnout for their Open Houses. The next round of Open Houses will be in early December 2006 or January 2007. For more information visit the Loop 1 website <http://www.mopac1.org>. The Loop 1 team has not yet finalized any plans for MoPAC improvements. The plans for the redevelopment of the MoPAC transportation corridor do call for the construction of sound walls. And at this time plans for sample sound walls are almost finalized. Sample sound wall construction should begin in January 2007 at the

TxDOT campus on Bull Creek Rd. The sample sound walls are intended to demonstrate the aesthetics and magnitude of the proposed sound walls and not their noise reduction capabilities. Last month, Mike Shearer, TxDOT's noise expert, held noise forums to explain the physics of sound and noise reduction. If the sound walls prove to be "reasonable and feasible," then property owners directly along the TxDOT ROW will vote on the sound walls. To learn more and follow the activity within the MoPac transportation corridor, attend the quarterly MoPAC Neighborhood Coalition (MONAC) meetings. Meeting information and archived minutes can be found at <http://www.main.org/hpwbana/MoNAC.htm>

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The BrykerWoods neighborhood continues to evolve. As Austin grows and the desire to live in the central city increases, our neighborhood becomes even more desirable. Associated with such attraction however comes the pressure of redevelopment. And while redevelopment can be a good thing, redevelopment can also harm aspects of a neighborhood that make it such a desirable place to begin with.

There are many reasons why our neighborhood is attractive. Great schools, and access to parks and greenbelts for example. The BrykerWoods neighborhood is also a central city neighborhood and a member of the Old West Austin National Register Historic District, a distinguishing characteristic considered by many worth preserving. Many prospective home buyers are as interested in the charming tree-lined streetscape of BrykerWoods as they are the neighborhoods' proximity to downtown. Within the last several years however central Austin neighborhoods have seen the influx of massive homes AKA McMansions. Such houses are frequently intrusive to neighboring properties and disrupt the contextual neighborhood streetscape. It is for this reason that BrykerWoods residents have become very concerned about the nature and type of some residential redevelopment projects.

Regardless, residential redevelopment will occur as any neighborhood evolves. Frequently good for the city's tax base, redevelopment can be good for the neighborhood if the redevelopment is done in keeping with the scale and context of the neighborhood. The BrykerWoods neighborhood was developed in the 1930's as a collection of single family homes, most of which were built as wooden cottages with 3 bedrooms or fewer. To this day BrykerWoods still has many homes that retain the scale of the period in which they were originally built. Interestingly, an option now exists for parts of a neighborhood to establish a City of Austin recognized "Local Historic District." Such owner-initiated designation is a way for residents to engage and protect period neighborhood characteristics, a choice emphasizing preservation over that of more conventional forms of redevelopment. Within the next year, more information on Local Historic Districts will become available to interested neighborhoods seeking such city zoning designation.

While many homes within BrykerWoods have received improvements, there remain many small homes that have yet to experience remodeling efforts. It is these homes that are frequent targets of the "tear-down/McMansion" phenomenon. All homes within BrykerWoods are zoned as SF-3 and recently the zoning has been tightened to help prevent the construction of such massive/intrusive houses. The BrykerWoods Neighborhood Association (BWNA) respects the rights of property

*(President's message continued on page 3)*

### **BWNA Board Membership - 2006**

President: Edward Tasch (478-1337)  
Vice President: Greg Chico (482-8755)  
Zoning Chair: Joyce Basciano (454-0207)  
Secretary: Polly Lanning Sparrow (495-9568)  
Treasurer: David Boenisch (453-0304)

### **Members at Large - 2006**

Michael Curry (453-7512)  
Eldarose Cardenas (477-2178)  
Irene Pickhardt (451-6820)  
Randy Schrecengost (472-7952)  
Tom Shefelman (477-9176)  
Margaret Tenny (236-8356)  
Tracy Warren (476-0518)  
Bill Woods (454-9180)

The BrykerWoods Neighborhood Association (BWNA) is now 23 years old and serves as an advocate for protecting and maintaining the quality of life within the BrykerWoods neighborhood.

### **Top ten reasons to join the BWNA:**

- The City is considering a light rail station at 35th & MoPAC
- MoPAC could possibly be widened
- A Neighborhood Plan can help keep BrykerWoods livable
- Shoal Creek and Greenbelt clean-ups
- Traffic-calming advocacy
- McMansion ordinance enforcement
- Get to know your neighbors at events like 4th of July parade
- Sidewalks in Brykerwoods
- Historic Zoning advocacy
- Learn what's happening with noise walls along MoPAC

### **Historic and recent calls to action:**

- Limit encroaching commercial development in sections of the neighborhood bordering the 35th street corridor.
- Fought to keep a 6th grade class at BrykerWoods Elementary
- Had installed neighborhood traffic calming devices on Jefferson to help reduce cut-through traffic speed
- Protect the neighborhood from the expansion of the MoPAC and 35th street corridors
- Had installed neighborhood sidewalks such as the one along 29th street down to Lamar.
- Contributed and actively defending the historical character of the neighborhood
- Created a website respected city wide for informative and rich historical content

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# BrykerWoods Neighborhood Association

## 2007 Membership Form

Yes! I want to join the BWNA       I want to renew my BWNA membership!

**I have enclosed my 2007 annual dues for:**

\$5 retiree household membership       \$10 regular household membership  
 \$50 BrykerWoods Friend       \$100 BrykerWoods Supporter

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please indicate which topic or topics are of interest to you:**

Communications/Newsletter     Trees     Neighborhood social gatherings  
 Traffic/Safety     Neighborhood parks & greenspaces     Zoning Issues  
 Historic Preservation     Transportation & Sidewalks     Neighborhood Plan

Please mail this form  
along with a check to  
the following address:

<p><b>Bryker Woods Neighborhood Association (BWNA)</b> <b>c/o Bill Woods</b> <b>3211 Funston Street</b> <b>Austin, Texas 78703</b></p>
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*(President's message continued from page 2)*

owners to redevelop their property as they see fit within city regulations. The BWNA also encourages the preservation of old homes and remodeling/redevelopment that respects the neighborhood streetscape. Fundamental to any good design are scale and context. Moreover, the BWNA adamantly supports the enforcement of SF-3 building regulations, which include explicit references to height, setback, and impervious cover restrictions.

Traffic continues to be a problem for BrykerWoods and it appears that traffic problems will get worse before they get better. The BrykerWoods neighborhood lies between UT and MoPAC, and the root of the neighborhood's traffic problem is cut-through traffic. At this time plans for the redevelopment of the central Austin MoPac transportation corridor remain uncertain, however the redevelopment of the west campus area is well underway. It is the intensified redevelopment of west campus (witness the huge parking garages under giant apartment complexes) that will create even more cut-through traffic on our neighborhood streets. While there is no single or easy solution to our traffic problem, it is quite

fair to say that the BrykerWoods neighborhood is long overdue a traffic analysis. Such a study, perhaps associated with an official neighborhood plan, will provide data and suggest ways to help better control the volume and speed of our neighborhoods' cut-through traffic.

BrykerWoods is scheduled to undergo the formal City of Austin neighborhood planning process within the next year. The last neighborhood plan for BykerWoods was carried out in 1987 (see [brykerwoods.org](http://brykerwoods.org) for a copy) and while many issues remain the same, new issues too are pressing the BrykerWoods neighborhood. Our neighborhood planning area east of MoPAC is now referred to as the Windsor Road Neighborhood Plan and includes the neighborhoods of Old Enfield and Pemberton Heights. Issues of particular interest to BrykerWoods are potential Vertical Mixed Use along the 35th street corridor, a train station planned at the 35th Street & MoPAC interchange, commercial encroachment from the Seton medical complex, and the potential expansion of MoPAC. And of course inappropriate residential redevelopment and issues associated with cut-through traffic

*(continued on page 4)*

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*(President's message continued from page 3)*

will remain of extreme interest to all of the Windsor Road planning area. Neighborhood plans are extremely important as neighborhoods undergo the pressure of redevelopment. As the city leads BrykerWoods and the other Windsor Road neighborhoods, look for ways to participate. The city and BWNA will notify residents of informational meetings and workshops. The city's neighborhood planning process is a process of inclusion and your participation helps guarantee an accurate assessment of the direction neighborhood residents desire BrykerWoods to evolve.

Your BWNA is committed to preserving qualities of BrykerWoods that will continue to make the neighborhood one of Austin's best. However, we can use your help. To maintain a strong neighborhood association, we need active membership. Please consider subscribing to the BrykerWoods neighborhood list-serve at the [brykerwoods.org](http://brykerwoods.org) website and officially joining the neighborhood association. Dues are quite reasonable, and subscription to the neighborhood email list-serve is easy. By staying abreast of neighborhood issues, together we can remain vigilant in protecting our quality of life. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,  
Edward A. Tasch (BWNA President)

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*A very special thanks to Allegra Printing, Polly Lanning Sparrow, Bill Woods, Irene Pickhardt, Michael Curry and Andy Jones for thier helping producing this edition of the BrykerWoods Hearld newsletter.*

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### **BrykerWoods Elementary a 'Go Green' School**

Austin is to host the 2007 summit and BrykerWoods Elementary School will be the showcase school. The Go Green Initiative is a comprehensive program designed to create a culture of environmental responsibility on school campuses across the nation. Founded in 2002, the Go Green Initiative unites parents, students, teachers and school administrators in an effort to make real and lasting changes in their campus communities that will protect children and the environment for years to come. Last year's Go Green Earth Summit played host to 200 conference participants from 14 states and the District of Columbia. For the 2007 conference, BrykerWoods Elementary School will serve as the showcase school. Conference participants will tour the campus and see the principals of Go Green in action during a regular school day. For more info see <http://www.brykerwoodspta.org>

### **Shoal Creek Greenbelt and ACWP update**

Shoal Creek Wastewater Improvements between 38th downstream to the dog park are part of the Austin Clean Water Program (ACWP). This project consists of the replacement of the existing interceptors that are partially exposed within the banks of Shoal Creek. These lines will be replaced with a single interceptor installed via tunnel construction methods through shafts constructed at both ends of the project limits. The depth of the tunnel ranges from 35 to 55 feet deep. Connection of six lateral lines is included, three of which will be installed via directional drill methods to the tunnel. The lateral connections will include: pipe installed by directional drilling; pipe installed via jack and bore; pipe installed via open-cut methods; and cured-in-place pipe lining. The existing wastewater interceptors shall be abandoned in place with exposed portions to be removed. Project completion date is Fall 2006. At this time stream bank erosion mitigation is taking place along with efforts to restore vegetation. A new pedestrian bridge has been completed downstream of the 29th Street bridge and the city has promised that the trees removed will be replaced with the plantings of smaller trees. For more info see <http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/ca/central.cfm>

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### **Recent Neighborhood Improvements**

- ⇒ Sidewalk installation on 29th Street and Kerby Lane
- ⇒ Installation of an "all way" stop at the Westover/Northwood MoPAC interchange
- ⇒ New #19 bus stop and public green space improvements
- ⇒ BrykerWoods residential ACWP sewer project
- ⇒ Shoal Creek ACWP tunneling project (restoration and revegetation scheduled to be completed in spring 2007)
- ⇒ tightened SF-3 building regulations to help prevent massive and intrusive "McMansions"

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### Building Permits and Historic Districts

One of the positive things about living in BrykerWoods is that we are part of the Old West Austin Historical District. As such, one benefit includes living in a neighborhood of period homes recognized by the National Register. This frequently is associated with an increase of property value. However, with the increase of property value, pressure for redevelopment -- especially that of speculative real estate developers -- is tremendous. It's impossible for the City of Austin to know everything that may violate the zoning/building codes, so each neighbor has the responsibility of protecting our neighborhood. For instance, that construction work behind you could lead to water run-off problems onto your property if it isn't addressed properly. If you notice a demolition or building project and don't see permits posted outside, call 311 immediately and report the address. You don't have to give your name and 311 will send out a Code Enforcement employee to check it out. If permits have been obtained, the owner will have no problem; if permits have not been issued, the work will have to stop until the required permits are obtained, assuring that the work will be in keeping with our city neighborhood building code and hopefully also within our historic neighborhood character. Encourage

your neighbors to be on watch for massive redevelopment projects. Neighborhood residents play a vital role in helping the city monitor residential redevelopment. Without zoning and building codes, how do you think BrykerWoods will look in 10-15 years? Will the neighborhood still be a place you want to live?

### Problem dogs in the neighborhood

There have complaints of loose dogs and dogs barking well into the evening. Neighbors have asked what actions can be taken. Dogs in the City of Austin are required by law to be safely leashed or confined on the owner's property at all times, except when a dog is in a designated leash-free area. Cats are not required to be confined or leashed. If a dog, unsupervised and unleashed, in your area, please call 311 to make a report. Regarding excessive and "unreasonable" barking, Austin City Code specifically addresses "noisy animals." Section 3-2-2 states: "An owner may not keep an animal that makes frequent or long, continued noise that is disturbing to a person of normal sensibilities." Many cities and towns have similar ordinances. If after approaching the owner about the issue, call 311 to make an official report.

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## Mills Avenue to Stay Open!

Over the years there have been proposals to close Mills Avenue the small street that runs in front of the Gallery at Shoal Creek and the BrykerWoods Veterinary Clinic. The Neighborhood Association has opposed the closure of Mills Ave. because it is used as a passage way between 34th and 35th Street, it serves the alley that runs behind the homes that front on 34th Street, and its closure would permit the development of larger commercial structures near the school, neighboring homes, and Shoal Creek. At the same time, the businesses were concerned because they did not have adequate parking without using the city-owned land adjoining Mills. Recently, BWNA, the City of Austin, and the adjoining landowners hammered out an agreement that requires the landowners to improve and lease the parking strip on the eastside of Mills Ave. prohibits any further expansion onto City land and precludes the construction or expansion of structures onto the area occupied by Mills Ave. This will work to improve Mills and keep it open for the foreseeable future. At the same time it will help the parking situation for the businesses.

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## Call for BWNA Board Members

The BrykerWoods Neighborhood Association works actively to keep our neighborhood safe from crime, cut-through traffic, MoPAC noise, and inappropriate/intrusive build-up, thus assuring it's a great place to live and to raise our families. Ever notice how safe it is to walk around our neighborhood, and how nice everything looks? Lots of trees, lovely old homes, fairly quiet? Your neighborhood association works all the time to keep it that way. If you have time to serve on the BWNA Board of Directors, please contact the neighborhood association. Without active involvement of neighborhood residents, the quality of life we enjoy in the BrykerWoods neighborhood will erode and before we know it the things we love will have experienced irreparable harm.

**Interested in advertising in the next  
BrykerWoods Herald Newsletter?**

Contact Edward Tasch (edward@brykerwoods.org)  
for pricing and availability. The next newsletter is  
scheduled for delivery in the Fall 2007.