Red Swing Anniversary, p. 3 · Stay Cool! Check on your neighbors!



MAY 2022 | VOLUME 29 | NUMBER 2 // NEWSLETTER OF THE CHERRYWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

I-35 CapEx Update

by Brandy Savarese

As has been often mentioned, Cherrywood's engagement in and response to the I-35 CapEx Central project is a marathon, not a sprint. As TxDOT inches closer to submitting its final design alternatives for environmental review, we wanted to update neighbors on the project's recent news and remind you of CNA's advocacy efforts, to update you on CNA's evolving position, and remind neighbors how to stay (or become) engaged.

A megaproject like CapEx typically has a lifecycle of five phases: (1) planning, (2) preliminary design and environmental review, (3) final design and right-of-way (ROW) acquisition, (4) construction, and (5) operation. For the last few years, Cherrywood residents and the CNA have been deeply engaged in the first half of stage two, submitting four

response letters to TxDOT and City of Austin officials (find them Cherrywood.org/ Resources/I-35). CNA reps have had numerous meetings with TxDOT officials, have presented a good-faith effort to at least hear the neighborhood's concerns.

CNA

recog-

nizes there are other orga-

ALTERNATIVE 3

TxDOT's Alt 3 Modification design showing concentration of access ramps between 32nd and 38 1/2 Streets.

nizations calling for changes and improvements to the CapEx project. We acknowledge the important work of groups like Reconnect Austin and ReThink Austin, which have been consistently advocating for higher-level reenvisioning of the entire project.

CNA has struck a measured tone in its response to TxDOT alternatives, making a strong case for reducing the highway footprint and mitigating ROW expansion into Cherrywood, pushing for a boulevarded frontage road, and encouraging extension of highway "caps" as far north as Airport Boulevard. Although CNA has seen small gains from our letters, we continue to believe that Cherrywood is being unduly ignored, not only by the project on the whole, but also by the concentration of highway caps in the downtown area.

The Cherrywood section is arguably the densest residential section along the CapEx corridor. The half-mile section between 32nd and $38\,1/2$ Streets is exactly the type of area that should be fully capped.

With the west side of the highway seeing significant development of new high-rise condominiums in recent years, population density in the area is increasing rapidly. What better way to alleviate the highway's impact on folks who live in the city than to create a highway deck park like Dallas's Klyde Warren Park? But, TxDOT's current plans do not accommodate any such creative element, rather they add more lanes and additional access ramps between 32nd and 38 1/2 Streets, effectively preventing the section from ever being decked. We believe there is still opportunity within the CapEx process to be creative and add an iconic, person-oriented element to this project. While City of Austin officials have been largely unresponsive to CNA's calls to mitigate the impact of the I-35 highway project on our neighborhood to date, CNA

will turn up the volume on advocacy for the same creative solutions City officials are promoting in the downtown area.

Facilitating
a deck in the
Cherrywood section is a win for all
involved: city officials will showcase
their commitment
to improving quality of life for those
who live in central Austin;

TxDOT can demonstrate it prioritizes people and innovative transportation solutions; and urban-core residents will have access to a highway deck that could provide seriously needed open space. A deck in this area would also benefit the broader Austin community by reducing noise, mitigating air pollution, and reinvigorating a largely unrealized central commercial area.

Please join CNA at the upcoming general meeting on June 1 to continue the discussion of CNA's vision that decking the half-mile segment bordering our neighborhood is a critical public good, not only for Cherrywood residents but for the city of Austin and all its residents.

"We believe there is still opportunity within the CapEx process to be creative and add an iconic, person-oriented element to this project [so] CNA will turn up the volume on advocacy for the same creative solutions City officials are promoting in the downtown area."

Updates and Quarterly Meeting

The redbuds came and went quickly this year, as did the mystical season of "spring", and all as the pandemic lingers on. Time seems to be I-35 CapEx renovation project (see cover artiloosening as a dependable frame of reference, cle and available at cherrywood.org). We also so you would be justified in annoyance that reported out on the 2021 holiday fundraising you, please let us know via email below or the even the dependable quarterly Cherrywood campaign, and ratified the 2022 neighborhood General Meeting schedule got bumped a association budget (see meeting Feb meetcouple weeks. Just raise a glass to the universe and join us on Wed, June 1 at 6:30 pm.

We'll be back in-person at Cherrywood out monthly as a gentle reminder. Coffeehouse for this meeting. We'll have sent us.

2022, we welcomed our State Rep. Sheryl Cole and a presentation from Austin Police Dept representatives on property crimes. APD reps also addressed two incidents occurring just the week before the General Meeting – car break-ins leading to an attempted mugging at and expect to have this summer, and on those gunpoint, and a spew of hateful flyers. While the car break-ins/mugging case was success- for their own reasons – never hurts to knock fully closed, there is no resolution on the fly- on a door to say hi or leave a note with an offer ers, but neighborhood leaders do not believe it to help if needed. should go unaddressed (see page 6).

In February we also revisited the 4th letter from Cherrywood to TxDoT regarding the ing minutes also online). And we discussed updated listsery guidelines which are now sent

The last several Steering Committee meetupdates on the I-35 renovation project ings (open to all, monthly on the 2nd Wed) and solicit additional issues important to featured speakers on the Art-In-Public-Places Cherrywood residents as we plan ahead for a project coming to the Pharr Tennis Center, candidate forum in the fall for the next Mayor a matching donation during Amplify Austin and District 9 Councilperson who will repre- for Patterson Park, and a presentation about proposed changes in the classification of sev-At the last General Meeting in February eral streets in the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan update, which we'll share out again at our meeting on June 1. Materials from these presentations are available on request.

Remember to check in on your neighbors during the heat waves like we had in early May who may still be avoiding in-person gatherings

All of these issues (and more!) are threaded on the cherrywood.groups.io list so you oughta join that if you haven't already, and if any of these issues pluck a particular tune for Cherrywood Facebook page.

Flea Seeking Authors and Editor!

Interested in writing for or editing the Flea neighborhood newsletter? We are looking for enthusiastic people to write and document neighborhood stories, news, and features with our Flea team. Reach out if this sounds like YOU! Contact us at flea@cherrywood.org.



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Contact us: steering@cherrywood.org

FLEA MANAGING EDITOR Jim Walker LAYOUT EDITOR Gabi Williams AD MANAGER Allen Hah Contact The FLEA: flea@cherrywood.org

CHERRYWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION





Wednesday, June 1 @ 6:30 pm in-person at Cherrywood Coffeehouse!



- I-35 renovation project
- additional issues in preparation for future candidate forum

Stay Connected

CNA WEBSITE www.cherrywood.org NEIGHBORHOOD LISTSERV Cherrywood at https://groups.io FACEBOOK www.facebook.com/cherrywood78722

UPPER BOGGY GREEK PLANNING TEAM WEBSITE upperboggycreek.com

Red Swing Project Anniversary

by Julio Carreon-Reyes

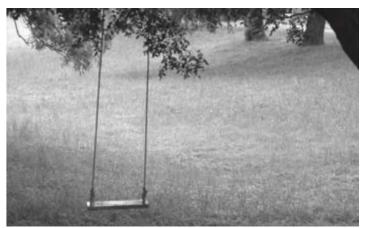
Perhaps you remember the day in 2007 when the Red Swing appeared, hung from a just high enough pecan branch at the intersection of two footpaths in the Willowbrook reach. Maybe ask Judy Birdsong, she might know something about how the 2x8 came to be drilled with one half-inch hole offset one inch from each edge, painted a warm primary red designed reach into the earliest of our childhood memories, looped through with retired high strength climbing rope and finally slung over a sturdy horizontal member to create the swing.

It could have been that you were in New Orleans, in the area of St. Bernard Parish, in the first years after Katrina, when you noticed the bright Red Swing, floating in an archway, flying piloted by smiling neighborhood chil-

Or maybe you were wandering on one of the small foot paths in the Parque Güell near the Mirador de l'Adrià when you came upon a grandmother being pushed by her grandchildren on a bright Red Swing hanging from one of Gaudí's oaks.

I recently spoke with the person behind the Red Swing project, seated on the wood and steel bench that was installed close to the radius of the Willowbrook Reach Red Swing. "What's here now is not what I did." The swing has been rebuilt and maintained over the last fifteen years and that is typical according to the founder. "If people love something, they will put love into it." According to the founder, the Red Swing in our greenbelt survived as long as it has due to the "in-between" nature of the reach, being governed primarily by the

neighborhood with little official city oversight. Between sips of Topo Chico, the founder recounted how they installed a swing in the middle of the day in Washington Square Park, only to see the infamous NYC Parks Department strike it down less than 24 hours later. "This is the most fulfilling work I have done. I enjoy the engagement. Even a deinstallation is an engagement." The founder wishes to remain anonymous. They see themselves as a catalyst to a larger project meant to inspire others to action to bring wonder out of the everyday. See for yourself next time you are walking the greenbelt or find yourself on the grounds outside the Menil Collection or at www.RedSwingProject.org.





Photos: (L) The Red Swing in August 2007, (R) The Red Swing now.

Construction underway on the Next Phase of Cherrywood Neighborhood Bikeways



The Austin Transportation Department has begun construction on Phase 2 of the Cherrywood Neighborhood Bikeways project. The improvements are designed to provide a comfortable route for people walking and bicycling to, from, and through the Wilshire Wood, Delwood, and Cherrywood neighborhoods. Once complete, this portion of the project will connect the All Ages and Abilities Bicycle Network across IH-35 from Wilshire Boulevard to Clarkson Avenue and East 43rd Street.

This project is the result of a public process that began in 2019. Public comment periods on draft project designs were held in Fall 2019 and Summer 2020. Diagrams of the final designs for Cherrywood Road and the intersection of Wilshire Blvd / Scheiffer Ave are available online at https://www.austintexas.gov/page/cherrywood-bikeways. Email mobilitybonds@austintexas.gov or call 512-974-2300 and leave a message for a call back.

GREEN SPACES

Grackle Green

by Lindsay Olinde

Recent events at Grackle Green have ranged from first steps, birthdays, coffee meetups, and even learning new palindromes. Have you seen the palindrome or encouragement bricks yet? Spring sights at GG included a few bluebonnets and evening primroses along with some lesser-known blossoms like golden leadball and Anacacho orchid. Keep an eye out for fiery flora showstoppers coming in over the summer, like Mexican flame vine, firewheel, tangerine crossvines. The neighborhood is responsible for maintenance. If you can spare 15 to 20 minutes a month to help with watering or mowing, email gracklegreenatx@gmail.com Please remember that dogs are not allowed in the fenced area. Kiddos give some GG some TLC by picking up sticks and rocks off the playground surface. GG posts pop up on social media @gracklegreenatx Thank you neighbors for taking care of this lil nook of Cherrywood!

Patterson Park

by Jennifer Potter-Miller

After a quiet two years Friends of Patterson Park had an action-packed spring. We kicked it off with a Mardi Gras Celebration on February 16. This was the first gathering since 2019, and it was amazing to see old friends and new neighbors together. There were beads and king cake to share, and masks to decorate. There may have been too much glitter (and sugar). Selena Melançon said "our boys had so much fun making Mardi Gras masks, and eating pizza and king cake. I love that our community does things like this!" We also got to see the first drawings of the new art installation Rakhee Jain Desai and Melissa Knight are creating for the renovation of the Pharr Tennis Center.

The annual Amplify Austin fundraiser held on March 3 was an unprecedented success. Thanks to the generosity of close to 100 neighbors, sponsors, and the Austin Parks Foundation we raised \$12,795 to host community celebrations and make improvements to our neighborhood park.

The campaign puts us in an excellent position to host more community celebrations at the park and make the significant financial contribution we committed as our match for the Neighborhood Partnering Program grant from the City of Austin. This three-year old project is finally moving forward, and the first part (new benches behind the baseball backstop, more boulder seating along the trail, and trash cans to replace the last of the cement "trash coffins") should be installed this summer.

We are proud to have such a wide base of support, and grateful for the generosity of APF, Nature's Treasures, Franklin Barbecue, Jade Construction, Cherrywood Coffeehouse, Cherrywood Neighborhood Association and Mueller Foundation

The first It's My Park Day since 2019 was on March 5, and it was a blast. 42 volunteers, including neighbors and a team from Giant Noise, moved 20 yards of mulch to trees all around the playground. This will help with soil compacted by little feet, as well as nourish and protect the mature post oaks and younger trees.

Next up, the annual Patterson Park Egg Hunt returned on Saturday, April 16. This was our 6th hunt and the first time partnering with park neighbors Genesis Church, New Covenant Fellowship and Clearview School. A team of awesome volunteers planned, shopped, and set up not one but THREE egg hunts, separating out toddlers, 4-8 and 9+ so that all the kids could enjoy the mad dash for eggs stuffed with treasures and candy, even the super cool tweens.

It was a gorgeous morning and people were so happy to be at the hunt with kiddos - both littles who had never been and bigs who remembered it from pre-pandemic. Jen Davies shared that "we were thrilled to go to the Patterson egg hunt this year. My five-year old Lily was excited to be on the "big kid side" this year. The potluck brunch is my favorite part; food is always a great way to bring our awesome community together! Our hearts were full at being able to see old friends and neighbors again at this special spring event." We hope you enjoy the park this summer!

Willowbrook Reach

by Adam Sparks

Spring is in full bloom in Willowbrook Reach! Mulberrys were plentiful this year, peaking around the beginning of May, and the Mustang Grapes (which can be turned into jelly) will be ripe soon. Wildflowers are springing up from last year's seeding, but we can expect the full results of the reseeding effort by next year.

A landscaping crew nearly mowed the entire Reach again, like they did last fall, but alert neighbors were able to stop them before too much damage was done. We have spoken with the Watershed Protection Department, and they informed us that A) The Reach was not supposed to be mowed by this crew, and B) Watershed has just hired their own landscaping crew that will be trained on how to care for Grow Zones, of which Willowbrook Reach was the inaugural member.

There is a lot of poison ivy in the Reach currently, which a few neighbors have been spray painting for easy identification. The Friends and Lovers of Willowbrook Reach (FLWR) group is in discussion to organize a poison ivy pulling event. If you are interested in helping out (especially if you are not allergic!), or if you simply want to be on the FLWR listsery, please contact Adam at AdamESparks@gmail.com.





hotos of Patterson activities by J. Potter-Miller.

FUN FRESH NEWS

Walking and Parking Safely in Cherrywood

by Girard Kinney

As Austin grows to be a more and more dense urban city, how we walk and park in the streets becomes more and more important with respect to the safety of drivers, bikers and especially pedestrians. Over twenty years ago, in a well planned Visioning process, "Safe Walkable Streets" was identified as Cherrywood's overall highest ranking goal. That goal has been reaffirmed by both Steering Committees and the General Membership several times in the years since it was first established.

Safe Walking in Cherrywood

Walking in the street is perfectly legal when there is not an accessible sidewalk available and, in fact, many Cherrywooders prefer to walk in the street, even when there is a sidewalk available, especially on streets that are not corridors (although, technically, state law says that if there is an accessible sidewalk available, you must use it). But when there is no accessible sidewalk available, the only choice is to walk in the street.

When walking in the street, the law requires and best practices dictate that pedestrians should walk facing the traffic; i.e. walk on the left side of the street. There are several reasons for this, among them:

- Pedestrians (especially when in a group and/or with dogs on leashes) do not have to negotiate with oncoming pedestrians when those, too, are walking facing the traffic (i.e. on their side, across the street)
- Encounters with oncoming vehicles are safer, night and day and
 especially in this day of super quiet vehicles, when the driver
 and the pedestrian can see one another as they approach; i.e. the
 pedestrian does not have to look over their shoulder to see if a car
 is coming.
- In the daytime eye contact between peds and drivers is more easily made when the ped is walking facing the traffic.
- When walking with dogs on leashes it is much easier to have a pleasant, safe-encounter with others walking with their dogs.

Safe Onstreet Parking in Cherrywood

With more and more Cherrywood changes in code allowing Short Term Rentals, more dwelling units per lot and more tenants per dwelling unit, one result is a lot more cars parked on the street. With more pedestrians, bikes and cars on our streets, there are a few basic rules (some of which are documented in State law (refer to Title 7, Chapter 545, Section Title 7, Chapter 545, Section 404) which, if followed, can make our streets more friendly and walkable:

- Park close to the curb, right wheel to curb.
- It is illegal to park farther than 18" from curb, and it makes the street even safer if one parks as close as possible to the curb thus leaving more space in the street for cars, bikes and pedestrians in the street, and allowing passengers to disembark directly onto the sidewalk or other surface beyond the curb.



Hyperlocal Shopping Extravaganza

by Jennifer Potter-Miller

Twenty-one neighbors signed up to host sales as part of the 4th Cherrywood Neighborhood Yard Sale on Saturday, May 7, and a few more jumped into the action. From Lafayette and Robinson to E.40th and Crescent, people brought out things they no longer needed to find a new home. There were lots of clothes, toys and household goods, plus finds like a kayak, an espresso maker and handmade earrings by metalsmith and neighbor Cori Wilbanks.

The day started out swampy and ended up crushing temperature records, but the folks hosting and shopping still had a good time. Mimosas and lemonade available at a few stops helped keep people safely hydrated. Steve D. said "the best part of the day was meeting new neighbors from different parts of the hood!", and Steve W. said "my whole family got something out of the experience. For instance, my son learned that nobody's willing to pay \$50 for a used Nerf gun." Cyrus T. spent the morning biking around with his daughter, and in addition to scoring some Mexican paper flowers and garden trinkets, enjoyed seeing old friends and making new ones. "I'm so glad she gets to experience growing up in a neighborhood where people actually know and talk to each other!" See you all again next year!



Photo by J. Potter-Miller

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NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

No Place For Hate

by Jim Walker

In response to hate speech flyers strewn on about 250 Cherrywood driveways, and elsewhere across central Austin in mid-February, the Upper Boggy Creek Neighborhood Plan Team drafted this response to be shared by member neighborhoods through their channels such as the Flea Newsletter in the Cherrywood NA:

The Upper Boggy Creek Six-Neighborhood Planning Teamis aware of the recent hate-speech flyers placed in some neighbors' driveways. We denounce the offensively hostile messages and the ideologies behind the racist and antisemitic flyers. Hateful rhetoric leads to dehumanizing our neighbors and often encourages or precipitates violence toward them. We do not forget historical and present-day lessons of discrimination, nor the suffering endured by oppressed people.

We are heartened by our neighbors' encouragements to those whom the letters targeted and are proud to have neighbors who respond with kindness in the face of such ugliness, showing hate has no place in our neighborhoods.

Check Out El Mana

by Heather Baade

El Mana Authentic Mexican, located in the parking lot of the Monarch Food Mart (1402 E 38th 1/2 St, Austin, TX 78722), offers delicious Mexican food six days a week. The food truck was started by Chef Norma in 2011. In 2014, her daughter joined her in the kitchen, and together they serve up tacos, gorditas, tamales, and other favorites. The mother-daughter duo takes pride in using quality meats, hand-making corn and flour tortillas, and making fresh red and green hot sauces.

Chef Norma moved the food truck to Cherrywood in 2019. El Mana customers appreciate the tasty food—prepared fresh daily—and her warm and friendly personality. "I love the people here. They are so nice and appreciate our food," she bubbled, adding that she would not want to be anywhere else

As grocery costs have rapidly increased in recent months, Chef Norma began to consider closing up shop. Her supplier even suggested she purchase cheaper cuts of meat. But Norma is unwavering in her commitment to quality, noting that both she and her customers will know the difference. Because she loves cooking and serving the best quality dishes, so she made the difficult decision to remain open but raise her prices.

Whether you are a regular or looking to try something new, you can help ensure that El Mana continues to thrive and provide the neighborhood with delicious Mexican food. Now is a great time to support a great asset to the Cherrywood food landscape!

El Mana Authentic Mexican is open Monday through Saturday, 7am to 3pm, for breakfast and lunch. They also offer catering services for parties and special events.



The Mustang Dispatch

hy Manlewood Flementary PTA

The Maplewood community congratulates Vickie Jacobson on her upcoming retirement! Vickie, we are so grateful for your 12 years of service and for making our kids feel safe and cared for while at school so they could have the confidence to walk through the world as Peacemakers. We wish you all the best in the future! A search for the new principal of Maplewood is underway.

Mustang families would also like to celebrate our fantastic Physical Education Coach Becca Lambdin-Abraham-Knipe who was just named Elementary P.E. Teacher of the Year at the SHAPE National Convention in New Orleans. Congratulations Coach L-A-K... our own Revolutionary P.E. Teacher!

Welcome, new Maplewood families, and thank you for registering early! Registering early helps the community secure funding for wonderful teachers and staff for next year. For those who have not registered yet, there's still time!! Login at portal.austinisd.org to register. If you would like to schedule a tour of campus, please call (512) 414-4402 to sign up or email president@maplewoodelementary.com during the summer months for more info. We will be posting some incoming PreK and Kinder playdates over the summer on the Maplewood PTA social media

accounts, and the Maplewood School Community Group, so click over there for more information!

Visit MaplewoodSchool on Facebook, MaplewoodSchool-ATX on Instagram, or join the community on Konstella!

Congratulations Maplewood 5th Grade Graduating Class of 2021-22! No matter where you land for middle school, your Maplewood community wishes you well. Study hard and don't forget that you will always be a Peacemaker at heart. Please come back and visit!

Finally, a big thank you to Austin Public Health for the 2022 Healthy Living Mini Grant. These funds enabled Maplewood Elementary parent volunteers to paint two beautiful new butterfly hopscotch areas and update four-square and existing nature activity circuit courses for our students to enjoy at recess. New soccer goals courtesy of this grant are coming soon too!



NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS ——

Reverend George V. Clark Memoriam

Reverend George V. Clark, who was a pastor at Mt. Zion Baptist Church on E. 13th for more than 50 years, passed in late April. Rev. Clark and his family lived on E. 40th in Cherrywood/Scheiffer-Willowbrook for several decades. We share this excerpt from the Austin American-Statesman, April 28, 2022 by Luz Moreno-Lozano.

"He is remembered for his time in the church community, but Clark was also a leading voice in the fight for civil rights across the country, and he never forgot what he was called to do in helping guide his students, young pastors and the community.



Photo: Mt. Zion Baptist Church

Clark graduated from Huston-Tillotson University in East Austin in 1958 after a tour of duty in the military. He earned a master of divinity degree from the Episcopal Theological Seminary of the Southwest.

Through the years, Clark worked as a teacher; a Texas Rehabilitation Commission program specialist for alcoholism, chemical abuse and mental health programs; an equal opportunity coordinator for the Rehabilitation Commission; and served as director for the commission's civil rights office.

He then turned his efforts to the church, where he worked as pastor at St. Mary's Baptist Church in Pflugerville and Sweet Home Baptist Church in Round Rock.

Clark joined Mt. Zion Baptist Church in March 1970, and helped lead the congregation through growth: from the move to its current East 13th Street location to the construction of the Family Life Center, which when completed will be a place where parishioners and community members can gather for education, worship and support services.

After 51 years of service, Clark retired and was named pastor emeritus in June 2021. He was also involved in local and national organizations, including the NAACP, Boy Scouts of America and Big Brothers Big Sisters."

Beauty, Calm (and Orange Cones) in the Chaos

by Becky Pastner

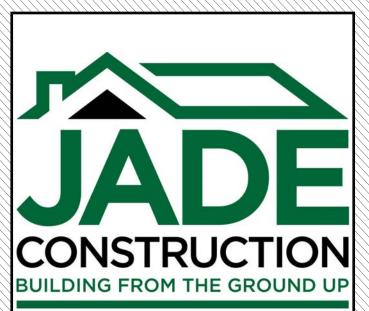
At the wedge of the world created by Manor, Airport, and 38th is the eastern corner of Cherrywood, made up of Banton Road, Basford Road, and Grayson Lane. Our neighbors are renters, owners, retired, empty nesters, single professionals, and families of all ages and sizes. Between us we have many, many pets (of every imaginable species). We have marked the life milestones of births, deaths, job changes, elections, and countless holidays together. Front yard gatherings – planned and impromptu – have always been a fun way to keep up with each other, but became a mental health necessity during the heat of Covid. Emerging from our homes zombie-like after endless hours of Zoom work/school, we could rely on a real-life smile or conversation to lift our spirits. During the ice storm we checked in on each other, shared kitchen staples, and concocted magical winter memories for the kids. What do we love about our neighborhood? A crowdsourced, partial list includes:

- The Banton, our very own Really Small Museum in Marianne Newsom's front yard on Banton
- Paul's front yard sculpture garden and Sonya's fairy garden on Banton
- · Thriving front yard gardens on Basford
- Impromptu orange "Cones Out" on Grayson so kids can ride, scoot, and play safely (despite our sidewalk-less streets)
- Halloween Scavenger Hunt (invented during Covid, but now an annual tradition)
- Kids creek tromping (and occasional trash clean-up)
- Proximity to Bobo's Snack Bar and Oddwood Ales

The drone of Airport Blvd traffic, never-ending construction on Manor Road, and occasional crime on or near our blocks are reminders of the growth, change, and inequity that defines life in Central Austin in 2022. At our corner of Cherrywood, we've created a tiny oasis of beauty and calm amidst the chaos of a booming city, and the chaos of life.



Photo: @ reallysmallmuseum_atx



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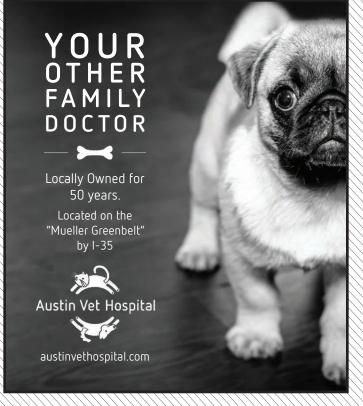
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