

Neighborhood Newsletter

An occasional printed publication of the South River City Citizens Neighborhood Association, established 1973



Long-time residents will remember the many years we celebrated the Fourth of July with a wonderful parade which started at St. Edwards Drive, traveled the entire length of Eastside Drive, and ended at Little Stacy Park with a potluck picnic party. The amazing volunteers who used to organize this event had to move on to other things, and no new volunteers have stepped up to take it over. If you miss this event, please consider helping to organize it in the future. Please contact Dan Fredine at vicepresident@srccatx.org.

CodeNext Moves Ahead to City Council

Amid mounting concerns among many different advocacy groups, the proposed new land development code known as CodeNEXT has cleared another hurdle in the process of being adopted: recommendations to the city council from the two land use commissions. Austin has two land use commissions, the Zoning and Platting Commission (ZAP) and the Planning Commission (PC). The PC is tasked with making or amending master plans, recommending approval or disapproval of proposed zoning changes, and controlling land subdivision within neighborhood planning areas. The ZAP also handles zoning changes and subdivisions, but in the parts of the city that are outside neighborhood planning areas.

On May 9, the ZAP made its report to council, in which they recommend terminating the CodeNEXT project and list proposed alternatives to CodeNEXT:

Be it resolved that the Zoning and Platting Commission urges the City Council to

1. Immediately terminate the CodeNext project, and
2. Digitize the current Land Development Code so that restrictions and entitlements are clear on each parcel, and administration of the code is streamlined

3. Determine the top 10 problems with the current code and its administration, and
4. Based on the agreed to list of problems, direct the City Manager to make changes to the current code as well as the way it is implemented and enforced, and
5. Immediately focus attention on ways to minimize displacement and provide affordable housing by implementing recommendations from the Mayor's Taskforce on Institutional Racism and the People's Plan, and
6. Preserve existing affordable housing by providing strong disincentives against the demolition of housing valued at \$300,000 or less per unit.
7. Create a code efficiency task force to provide input and recommendations to achieve items 1-6 by removing negative elements of our current code and integrating positive elements of CodeNext.

continued from page one

Their detailed recommendations go on to list all of the concerns which need to be addressed, such as:

CodeNEXT makes Austin more auto-centric and less pedestrian-friendly (walkable streetscapes not required, drive-thrus allowed throughout city, new suburban neighborhoods are zoned one unit per lot, does not improve parking garage requirements, etc.)

CodeNEXT makes the code more complex instead of less complex (increases the number of zoning categories, continues to rely on “Chapter 25” old zoning so we’ll have two sets of zoning instead of one)

CodeNEXT contains incomplete information, inconsistencies, and errors (sections of the code are still missing, it contradicts itself, crucial definitions are lacking, typos abound)

Flood mitigation task force recommendations not included, but should be

CodeNEXT reduces opportunities for income restricted affordable housing (too many new by-right entitlements means we lose leverage in negotiations, reduced percentage of affordable units in Housing Bonus Program)

Accessory Dwelling Units are not compatible with our neighborhoods (size allowed is greater than every major city in the US)

Compatibility protections are reduced (an 8-story building can be within 100 feet of a single family home, unprecedented in major cities in US)

CodeNEXT curtails public involvement and public transparency (fewer notifications to neighbors, shorter time periods, more entitlements decided by director without public input, fewer appeals)

CodeNEXT disregards the text and the maps of Imagine Austin, the city’s adopted comprehensive plan (meant to be implementation of Imagine Austin, not new planning exercise; does not follow Growth Concept Map)

CodeNEXT continues Austin’s history of institutional racism and income segregation (The CodeNEXT draft map is almost entirely

R1 on the west side of Austin while only the central and east Austin neighborhoods are zoned R3, communities of color have been largely left out of the IACP and CodeNEXT processes, new city Equity Office has not had a chance to review the proposed code)

You can read the full ZAP report here:

http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Planning/CodeNEXT/ZAP_CodeNEXT_Recommendation.pdf

On May 21, the executive committee of SRCC voted to support the ZAP recommendation, and then subsequently wrote a letter to council indicating such. You can read our full letter here:

<http://www.srccatx.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/SRCC-CodeNext-Draft-3-Letter.pdf>

On May 25, the Planning Commission made its final CodeNEXT recommendation to council, which consists of a spreadsheet containing 117 specific amendments to the proposed code in an effort to try to correct all of the issues and concerns. You can read their full report here:

http://austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Mayor_and_Council_Memo_-_CodeNEXT_Planning_Commission_Report_5-29-18.pdf

The Austin City Council has heard two days of public testimony and now faces the arduous task of going through all of the concerns, errors, and amendments one by one.

The council has voted against putting the code rewrite to a vote of the people even though a citizen’s petition was validated by the city clerk. A coalition of advocacy groups has filed a lawsuit against the city asking that the courts make a determination as to the legality of the petition.

—Gretchen Otto,
SRCC Ad-Hoc Committee on CodeNEXT



Goodbye to Principal Robertson and Welcome to New Principal at Travis Heights Elementary



It is with sad but grateful hearts that we bid farewell to Lisa Robertson, who has been the principal at Travis Heights Elementary School for 17 years. She has worked tirelessly to improve the school, helping to create such innovative programs as Dual Language, Project-Based Learning, and Blended Learning (teaching with technology). Her support was instrumental in the school successfully becoming the first in-district charter school.

The new principal is Michelle Navarro, who was previously Assistant Principal at Oak Hill Elementary. Ms. Navarro was born and raised in Austin, attended AISD schools, and has degrees from UT Austin and Concordia University. She has 16 years of experience, including many years teaching in the classroom. Ms. Navarro is excited and honored to be named the new principal of THES, and she is looking forward to becoming a part of our community.

—Gretchen Otto, SRCC Schools Chair

Changes in the Works at Fulmore Middle School

The AISD Board of Trustees has voted to change the names of schools honoring confederate figures, and this includes Fulmore Middle School. Zachary Taylor Fulmore was a private in the Confederate Army. AISD is creating a School Renaming Task Force to make recommendations on new names for Fulmore and the other 4 campuses that will be renamed. For information on the district's renaming policy or the task force, please visit <https://www.austinisd.org/naming>.

Fulmore is also going through the process of hiring a new principal. Lisa Bush has been the principal there for 10 years and has made many improvements to the school during her tenure. The district is still working through the interview process for her replacement.

Fulmore Middle School has been educating Austin's students for over 125 years. The three story building, the "old building" that was built in 1911, recently celebrated its 100th anniversary. Fulmore is the oldest secondary school building still in use in Austin.



—Gretchen Otto,
SRCC Schools Chair

Volunteer Needs at SRCC

SRCC President: Do you have some great ideas for how to improve our neighborhood? Please consider volunteering to fill this extremely vital role. You will have the privilege of working with a fantastic group of people and you can really make a difference by helping your neighbors. The main duties of the president are to chair the monthly general meetings (and a handful of Executive Committee meetings), and to keep up with the president's email account (forwarding emails to the appropriate committee chair, responding to inquiries, and filing emails appropriately). A strong leader can also steer the priorities of our organization and suggest new initiatives and programming. We have a great team of volunteers in place who can provide lots of support and mentoring. There are currently two co-vice presidents, which means there are more officers than usual to share the work, and share the fun! This a great time to consider stepping into the role of president, as assuming the office in mid-year can provide for a more gradual transition.

Mobility Chair: The Mobility Committee doesn't just look at car traffic! It's so much more. The scope includes bicycles, pedestrians, vehicles, and other transportation, and they get involved in issues regarding streets, sidewalks, public transit and traffic, including parking, traffic calming, and road enhancements. If these interest you, consider stepping into the role of Mobility Chair and helping SRCC keep abreast of these important issues.

Area 7 Coordinator: Area 7 is located east of I-35, between Woodland and Oltorf, west of Parker Lane. Do you live in this area, and are you interested in helping to ensure your concerns and those of your neighbors are heard? Area coordinators help to represent the interests of their area to the SRCC Executive Committee, and help in the distribution of the SRCC newsletter by recruiting block captains for newsletter delivery. It's an easy way to get involved and see firsthand how the executive committee works.

Volunteers will get the benefit of getting to know their neighbors better, gain an understanding of local issues, and how government works at the city level. Plus, they get to work with an excellent team in the SRCC Executive Committee. For more information, please contact Dan Fredine at vicepresident@srccatx.org.

The Heroes of Travis Park

In October of 2017, Travis Park Apartment residents formed a tenant association called *Heroes of Travis Park* to address repair and administration issues at their property. With the support of Building And Strengthening Tenant Action (BASTA), residents have been door knocking, documenting repairs, calling 3-1-1, and meeting regularly to strategize about solutions. They are working to support their diverse group of fellow residents, life-long Austinites, and refugees that make up Travis Park. Right now, leaders are working with code officers and Southwest Housing Compliance Corporation to improve administrative practices at Travis Park. BASTA is also working to send Travis Park leaders with other tenant leaders to national conferences this summer! It's a huge opportunity to bolster renter power in Austin and Texas.

You can support this growing movement at youcaring.com/BASTA! Be on the look out for an exciting campaign launch from the Heroes of Travis Park and properties across Austin. Find out more about BASTA at bastaaustin.org.

—Drew De Los Santos, BASTA



Crosswalk at Riverside and Alameda

Four years after Austin's boardwalk on Lady Bird Lake opened, runners, cyclists, and walkers in Travis Heights have a signaled crosswalk for crossing busy Riverside Drive. Known as a Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon (PHB), the crosswalk is located at the corner of Alameda and Riverside, near the Blunn Creek access to the trail. The signal can be activated from the sidewalk to stop traffic on Riverside.

According to Jared Wall, Traffic Signal Engineer with the city, the PHB should be operational by the end of June (perhaps by the time you are reading this article). Asked about concerns that the slope and curve on Riverside may be a problem, Mr. Wall said that the city would be trimming branches and bushes that may block the view, and the length of the yellow flashing light will be slightly longer. There will also be an additional signal head to make the lights more visible from the east.

When the button is pressed, the lights flash yellow, and then turn solid red. The solid red holds to allow pedestrians to cross, and then the red lights flash on and off for a few more seconds. Pedestrians should heed the walk/don't walk sign. Cars are required to come to a complete stop whenever there is a solid red light. After coming to a complete stop, they may move through a flashing red light, but only if there are no pedestrians in the crosswalk.

The neighborhood association began pushing for a crosswalk shortly after the boardwalk opened. At first, it appeared to be a very long shot because all money for this type of crosswalk had already been committed. The SRCC continued in its attempts, and with support from Mayor Pro Tem Kathie Tovo and her staff, the



crosswalk was added to a list of new crosswalks once new funding became available.

—Betty Weed, SRCC Communications Chair

Problems Continue with Code Enforcement at Auto Body Shop at Rebel and Oltorf

The Rebel Road neighborhood in SRCC frequently calls 911 requesting APD respond to a business's illegal use of their street, the emission of toxic fumes from that business and the blasting of music and machine noises at all hours of the day and night. The reason for this situation is an improper land use adjacent to a single-family residential neighborhood and the ineffective enforcement of existing city ordinances.

For over 25 years residents on Rebel Rd. and Sunrise Cr., have asked the city to force an auto body shop and a used car lot in the 2300 block of Rebel Rd. (intersects with E. Oltorf St.) to stop violating city ordinances. They have little to show for it. While the auto body shop is the greater violator, the used car lot does its share. This neighborhood has no rest from these violations. They have for years worked with the city's administration and Kathie Tovo's office, but the problems continue.

The illegal activity includes:

- Industrial land use levels of noise—seven days a week, day and night—often after midnight
- Inoperable vehicles dropped off day and night in front of their residences, and left in the public ROW for weeks, and worked on while in the street, preventing proper flow of traffic
- Trespassing of private property while vehicle repairs are done on the street
- Toxic paint fumes from a paint booth—allowed by the city to operate without a permit for over 10 years
- Trash in the neighborhood from an open dumpster in the public ROW for 22 years
- The auto body shop's guard dog getting loose and attacking neighbors
- Unsocial behavior by staff and customers of these businesses (including soliciting women)

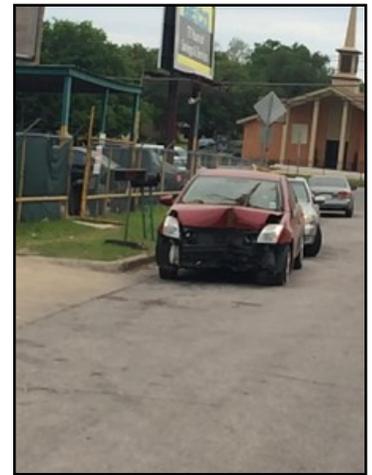
Our neighbors have attempted to address ROW and noise issues by calling APD, but often no relief or only short-term relief is achieved. The neighbors feel the existing definition of an "inoperable vehicle", or its application, is inadequate as patrol cars drive by but fail to tag vehicles that appear to meet the definition. APD responds to complaints of noise after hours, but this too is ineffective as the auto body shop often violates the ordinance the following night. The neighbors are requesting a meeting with Kathie Tovo's office and the appropriate department to discuss:



Tagged vehicles illegally parked on Rebel Rd.



Man performing illegal repairs in the street



Vehicle with flat tires and front end damage illegally parked on Rebel Rd.

- The existing city definition of an inoperable vehicle
- The city's authority, and practice, to enforce the pertinent ordinances and fine violators
- The rights of Austin citizens against such repeated violations
- The designation and installation of "Residential Permit Parking" signs as requested by the impacted residents.

SRCC will participate in the meeting and monitor the situation over time. We welcome any help from neighbors who may have suggestions or applicable knowledge or expertise, especially attorneys willing to donate their time. Any SRCC resident wishing to participate in the meeting, please contact the SRCC Co-Vice Presidents at vps@srccatx.org.

—José E. Martinez, neighbor on Rebel Road

Norwood House Renovation Update

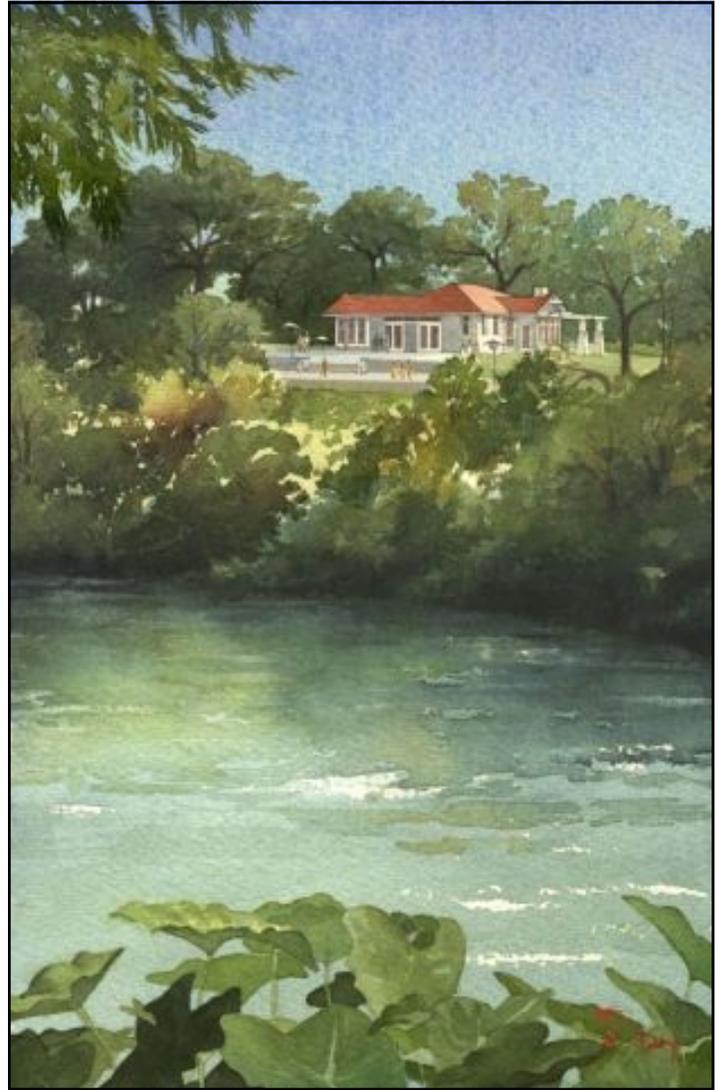
The Norwood project is moving forward! We are happy to have reached the important milestone of launching into SDP (Site Development Permitting). This will be a challenging journey that we're told takes 8-10 months or more as a project winds its way through city departments and byzantine regulations. At the end, we'll be shovel ready for Phase 2 construction at the site. We'll start turning dirt then if fundraising allows!

If neighbors haven't seen it yet, the state historical marker for Norwood Park is also now in place on the hill just west of the Norwood House, lending its gravitas and unmistakable message that *this place matters*. Come by, read the plaque, and enjoy the view from the cliff—it's lovelier than ever since a third round of tree care and view maintenance.

Norwood has been recommended on the upcoming bond for the city's portion of funding. Please consider emailing or calling the mayor and *all* the city council members, tell them you want to see this project finished NOW, and ask them to keep Norwood on the bond at the full amount requested of up to \$2 million. It's a one-time ask, and then we are off the City's platter for *good*. That's the truly remarkable thing about Norwood House, and was very convincing for the bond task force. The stunning view of the city from the cliff will forever ensure that operation of the venue is self-sustaining, a no-brainer for return on a minimal investment!

We are working hard to get all our materials updated, including posting of the final renderings on our website, so thank you for all your patience. Watch for news of any future open house sessions for our nearby SRCC/South Austin neighborhoods, and our thanks to all who came out for the first session held on Saturday, June 2nd. We need your help, we welcome your help, and we're happy to answer questions. Go to norwoodparkfoundation.org to contact us or learn more about the project.

Our thanks to the SRCC for continued support of the project. We are keeping a vision of that first SRCC meeting on the terrace of the restored Norwood House—working together, we can do this!



—Colleen Theriot,
Norwood Park Foundation President



Illustrations by
Elizabeth Day

The First Local Historic District in SRCC

The Mary Street Local Historic District is officially Austin's first historic district south of the river! It passed on consent by city council on May 10. Many thanks to everyone who helped and wrote letters of support.

The Mary Street Historic District was developed from 1929 to 1939 as part of the Blue Bonnet Hills Addition. At the time, the district's location deterred wealthier families who preferred to live in closer proximity to downtown. Consequently, early residents were working class, with many WWI veterans, government employees, and other white-collar and blue-collar workers who commuted downtown. Residents were predominantly homeowners, with a few renters. Many initial residents lived on the street for many decades. The scale of the buildings reflects the district's working-class beginnings: most buildings are one story tall and modestly sized, with no architects identified for any building. More than half of the buildings within the district are designed in the Craftsman style, with other buildings designed in the Tudor Revival, Minimal Traditional, Colonial Revival, and Neoclassical styles. The district includes all properties on the 500 block of East Mary Street with primary facades facing the street.

What is a Local Historic District?

Local Historic Districts are geographically defined areas possessing high concentrations of buildings, structures and objects united by the significance of their history and/or architecture. Cities with historic zoning ordinances, such as Austin, can designate local historic districts in which the contributing historic buildings are protected from demolition and radical alteration by a public review process. Districts may also choose to regulate the design of additions and new construction to maintain the district's high-quality standards. Because of this, the designation process requires the signatures of a majority of the district's property owners. A set of district-specific Design Standards, based on the Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings, outline the criteria and process by which the city judges whether alterations and additions are "appropriate." Property owners in Local Historic Districts must obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness from the City of Austin Historic Landmark Commission when undertaking any construction project covered by the Local Historic District's Design Standards. These Design Standards also act as a guide for district residents to understand how to protect their historic resources and build new construction in a quality worthy of the district.

To contribute to a local historic district in Austin, a building must:

- be at least 50 years old

- have been built during the period of significance for the district and retain its appearance from that time. An altered structure may be considered a contributing structure if the alterations are minor and the structure retains its historic appearance and contributes to the overall visual and historic integrity of the district.

To qualify for designation as a local historic district, the following conditions must be met:

- at least 51 percent of the principal structures within the proposed district must be contributing
- at least 51 percent of the owners of the land, by land area, in the proposed district; or at least 51 percent of the owners of individual properties in the proposed district must consent to the designation

The proposed district, in consultation with a preservation professional, must present the following application items:

- Context and Narrative History of the District
- Tax Parcel maps and maps showing district boundaries, original subdivision boundaries, contributing and non-contributing buildings
- Survey form for every building within the district, including photographs, determination of contributing or non-contributing status, legal description, current owner name and address, and tax parcel identification number, and architectural information for all contributing buildings
- Preservation Plan outlining the goals of the local historic district and the Design Standards

LHDs help to stabilize development trends in rapidly-changing neighborhoods by preventing the rampant demolition of historic-age buildings and the construction of incongruent new development. They provide a framework of Design Standards that educate and guide property owners towards making compatible changes to their buildings that respect the historic character of the property and the district. If you are interested in creating a district on your block, we can help!

—Angela Reed,
SRCC Historic Preservation Committee
reed.as@gmail.com



SRCC Meetings

1st Monday of most months at 7:15pm at
Life in the City United Methodist Church, 205 E. Monroe

We thank all of our officers, area coordinators, committees, and representatives for their dedication to our community!
Call your area coordinator for SRCC questions, volunteer opportunities, or to help deliver newsletters.

Area Coordinators

Area 1		
Claudette Lowe	512-447-1514	
Marilyn Orton	512-440-7770	
Lee Schneider	451-250-5936	
Area 2		
Russell Fraser	512-771-9736	
Eugene Kubelka	512-441-9262	
Area 3a		
Jo Webber	512-441-3117	
Sara Newsom	512-444-8292	
Area 3b		
Brooks Kasson	512-444-8100	
Marc Davis	512-656-2841	
Area 4a		
Sam Martin	512-441-5222	<i>Additional Volunteer Needed</i>
Area 4b		
Kris Asthalter	512-443-4963	
Area 5		
Neal Nuwash	512-462-9093	
Elloa Mathews	512-442-6986	
Area 6		
Rachel McClure	512-326-5572	
Laura Gass Weaver		<i>gassweaver@sbcglobal.net</i>
Area 7		
		<i>Volunteers Needed</i>
Area 8		
Kim Lanzillotti	512-658-8565	
Vicky Moerbe	512-442-5678	

Ad Hoc Committees

Norwood House		
Wolf Sitrer	512-447-2150	
CodeNext		
Tom Fitzpatrick	fitz@prismnet.com	

Standing Committees

Planning & Zoning		
Russell Fraser (Chair)		<i>russell_fraser@msn.com</i>
Jean Mather		
Kent Anschutz		
Marc Davis		
David Swann		
Historic Preservation		
Michele Webre (Co-Chair)	512-422-1262	
Angela Reed (Co-Chair)		<i>reed.as@gmail.com</i>
Melanie Martinez		
Ian Reddy		
Bob Gee		
Finance		
Sam Martin (Chair)	512-441-5222	
Will Andrews		
Mobility		
<i>Chair Volunteer Needed</i>		
Mike Sledge		
Jeff Kessel		
Public Safety		
Tom Groce (Chair)		<i>tgroce@gmail.com</i>
Parks & Environment		
David Todd (Chair)	512-416-0400	
Schools		
Gretchen Otto	512-227-1507	
Communications		
Betty Weed (Chair)		<i>communications@srccatx.org</i>
Gretchen Otto		<i>(Newsletter Editor)</i>
Maia Reeves		<i>(Newsletter Designer)</i>

Representatives

Austin Neighborhood Council		
James Bilodeau		<i>ancrep@srccatx.org</i>
City District 3		
Kim Lanzillotti	512-658-8565	
City District 9		
James Bilodeau		<i>ancrep@srccatx.org</i>
East Riverside (EROCC)		
Toni House	512-447-8090	
Greater South River City NPCT (GSRC)		
Elloa Mathews	512-442-6986	
South Central Coalition		
Elloa Mathews	512-442-6986	
South Central Waterfront		
Wendy Todd (Chair)		<i>wendypricetodd@gmail.com</i>
St. Edwards		
Elloa Mathews	512-442-6986	
Travis Heights Art Trail		
Charlotte Bell	512-447-2150	
Travis Park Apt/Austin Interfaith		
Terry Franz	512-447-8786	

SRCC Officers

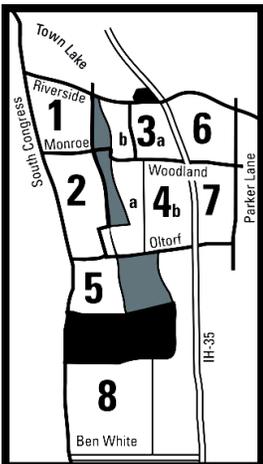
President		
<i>Volunteer Needed</i>		<i>president@srccatx.org</i>
Co-Vice Presidents		
Dan Fredine		<i>vicepresident@srccatx.org</i>
Eric Cassady		<i>covicepresident@srccatx.org</i>
Secretary		
Mary Friedman		<i>secretary@srccatx.org</i>
Treasurer		
Oliver Caruso		<i>treasurer@srccatx.org</i>
Membership Secretary		
Carol Martin		<i>membership@srccatx.org</i>

Membership Levels		
# of Years	Individual	Family
1	\$20	\$35
2	\$35	\$65
3	\$50	\$95

Become a member and be eligible to vote! Join or renew online (www.srccatx.org) or at meetings. To pay via PayPal, go to www.srccatx.org/membership-dues/. You can also send a check made payable to SRCC, along with this completed form to:

SRCC, Attention: Treasurer, P.O. Box 40632, Austin, TX. 78704

Notes—for family memberships, please provide the names of each family member (adults residing at the same address). When paying via PayPal, you can include the names of family members in the *Instructions to Merchant* or *Shipping Details* areas. Dues are **not** tax-deductable. If dues lapse, renew at a SRCC meeting and be eligible to vote. New members can vote after 28 days.



Number of Years (*circle one*)

1 2 3

Membership (*circle one*)

Individual Family

Membership Fee Due:	\$ _____
Additional Donation to SRCC General Fund:	\$ _____
TOTAL:	\$ _____

Date: _____

Name (s): _____

Address: _____

SRCC Area (*see map*): _____

Phone (s): _____

Email (s): _____