



# Allandale Neighbor

Feb 2022  
Vol 37, Issue 1

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS



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## Parks Board Approves Vision Plan for Sheffield Northwest District Park

Mary Fero, ANA Parks Committee

**B**everly Sheffield Northwest District Park is on the path to new and upgraded amenities, after the Austin Parks and Recreation Board approved the final draft vision plan at their January 25 meeting.

Adoption of the plan comes after a year of public engagement, with the final plan incorporating suggestions from Allandale neighbors and the greater park community. Proposed park improvements will be implemented in phases, along with other major infrastructure projects taking place over the next several years.

The first projects on the horizon for the Parks and Recreation Department are the playground and pool.

New playscapes for ages 2 - 5 and 5 - 12 are currently funded and will be constructed in the same location as the existing playground. Replacement of the swimming pool and upgrades to the

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## The Pond in Northwest Park—Call for Pictures 1956 - 1985

David Riskind and Gordon Thompson

**O**ur beloved Baldcypress-lined pond has been in place since 1986, and was built as part of the park redevelopment associated with construction of the Shoal Creek flood mitigation dry-detention project.

The original pond, as depicted in a 1973 aerial photograph, occupied the natural meander channel of Shoal Creek. That earlier pond, like the current pond, was built primarily as a catchment for swimming pool operations and secondarily as a park recreational feature. Kid-

fish tournaments were popular here into the late 1970s.

There are numerous accounts of this pond being spring-fed, with the "spring" located near where the current sidewalk from the parking lot accesses the play/picnic grounds. Gordon recalls observing water welling up from a sand bed, and others, Don Huff among them, recall a small boil of water.

Gordon and I have found what appear to be remnants of a mortared limestone

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## The Allandale Neighbor

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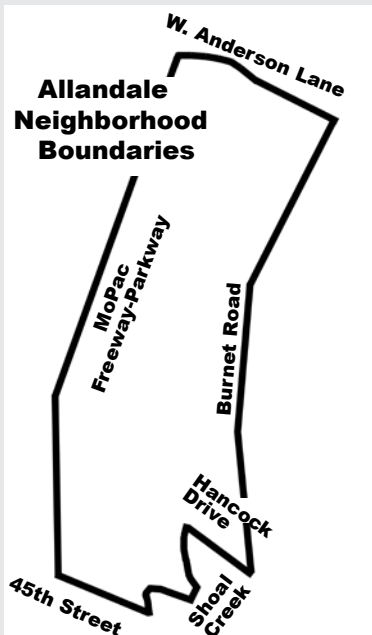
ANA Executive Committee meetings are held on the first Wednesday of the month at NW Rec Center. General Membership meetings are held in April and October. (Meetings are currently held via Zoom)

### Committees

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william.harvey@austintexas.gov



## President's Letter

Hans Magnusson, ANA President (512) 522-8773 ana@hmvikings.com

Dear Allandale Neighbors:  
Early in-person voting for the primary elections starts on February 14, and it is open until February 25. Election day is on Tuesday, March 1. The state legislature was successful in making voting more difficult, but it did nothing to improve our natural gas and electrical infrastructure. The number of permits to add backup generators in the neighborhood has skyrocketed since last February. We will find out in the next snowmageddon if there will be enough gas to keep the generators running.

This year it is very important to keep in mind Ben Franklin's response when asked, after the Constitutional Convention, what form of government did we get: "A Republic, if you can keep it." To keep the Republic, we the people must elect candidates who commit to competent and efficient governance. Every elected office in every branch of government is important to maintain a constitutional republic and functional state and local governments. So go out and vote early!

Our city has amended the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan (ASMP) with short notice and a brief period for public input. Several streets in our 'hood were reclassified in the proposal as wider than they are today. Members of ANA are working to resolve what exactly is going to be implemented. Condemnation of private property is about the only method to make a street wider. Yes, that means part of your front yard could disappear. We have been assured that until a major redevelopment happens on one or both sides of a street for a substantial length of the street there will not be any condemnation. ANA believes that the plan for street modifications should only take place within the existing right-of-way and with consideration of the use of the street by the people who lives along the street.

L'Chayim,  
Hans ☚

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# Parks Board Approves Vision Plan for Sheffield Northwest District Park

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

changing rooms will be funded as a separate project under the Aquatics Department. Community meetings and an online survey to solicit feedback specifically for those projects are projected to begin in late spring.

Considered likely components of Phase 2, improvements to pedestrian and bicycle circulation are planned, with six- to eight-foot concrete paths along the park perimeter and through the park's interior. Vehicle routes through the park will be adjusted, and the number of parking spaces and overall amount of impervious cover will be reduced.

Current facilities, such as tennis and basketball courts and the baseball field, will be maintained. Pickleball courts and a popularly supported youth bike track are slated as new additions to the park in Phase 3. The youth bike track is currently proposed to be located at the Ardath entrance, where parents expressed a preference for congregated play areas. Recent-

ly received recommendations from the bike community may offer further design options for this feature.

A "great lawn" is planned for the area near the northern edge of the pond as a central gathering spot in the heart of the park. New restroom facilities will be located across the great lawn toward the swimming pool. The dog-trot style restrooms will feature design elements and materials influenced by the current pool facility. Picnic shelters, entry markers, and informational signs would be further enhancements.

Plans for the pond, which received wide community support and feedback, will require in-depth studies to document current conditions and to develop the best options for improving water quality, increasing water intake, and protecting the aquatic habitat.

Funding for those studies has not yet been identified, but a pond maintenance plan will be requested in the FY23 budget (October 2022), with the addition of aerators considered in the short-term.

The proposed boardwalk was discussed, with questions about options for achieving accessibility and assurances given that any changes would continue to provide direct access to the water's edge.

The various components of the vision plan will be implemented in coordination with the park's other independent infrastructure projects. The community will have input on the specifics of each project, and plans may change accordingly.

## The current schedule for the three major infrastructure projects guided by other city departments is:

Sewer Line Construction (Water Utility) – begin fall 2023; complete winter 2023

Aquatics Center Construction (Aquatics) – begin August 2023; complete December 2024

Dam Construction (Watershed Protection) – begin fall 2023; Complete fall 2025

Cost estimates of the entire vision plan range from \$4.6 million to \$6.1 million, not including design permits and contingencies, and the separately funded swimming pool replacement.

Nancy Barnard, Parks Board member representing Allandale and District 7, offered the motion to approve the vision plan with the following contingency language:

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involve and solicit community feedback when 30%, 60% and 90% of the design processes have been completed;

2. That PARD will conserve the integrity of the current pond layout and structure and maintain it as a park amenity; and
3. That PARD will commission the following studies of the pond: bathymetry, water quality assessment, hydrology, and geophysical studies.

Chair Dawn Lewis expressed support for the comments made by board member Barnard, and board member Sarah Faust seconded the motion, which was supported by all members present and voting.

Thanks to all Parks and Recreation Board members and Vision Plan team members who oversaw the development and adoption of this plan, and to everyone whose interest helped carry the plan forward. We'll keep you posted on what comes next. ☘

## The Pond in Northwest Park—Call for Pictures 1956 - 1985

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

low wall in the area that we now refer to as the slough. The rockwork is similar to that found on the original pool structure. We believe this wall was part of the landscape feature, and was designed to protect the bank. We have looked at PARD and the Austin History Center, and accessed drawings at Public Works, but none of these archival materials show any of these features, nor anything resembling a spring.

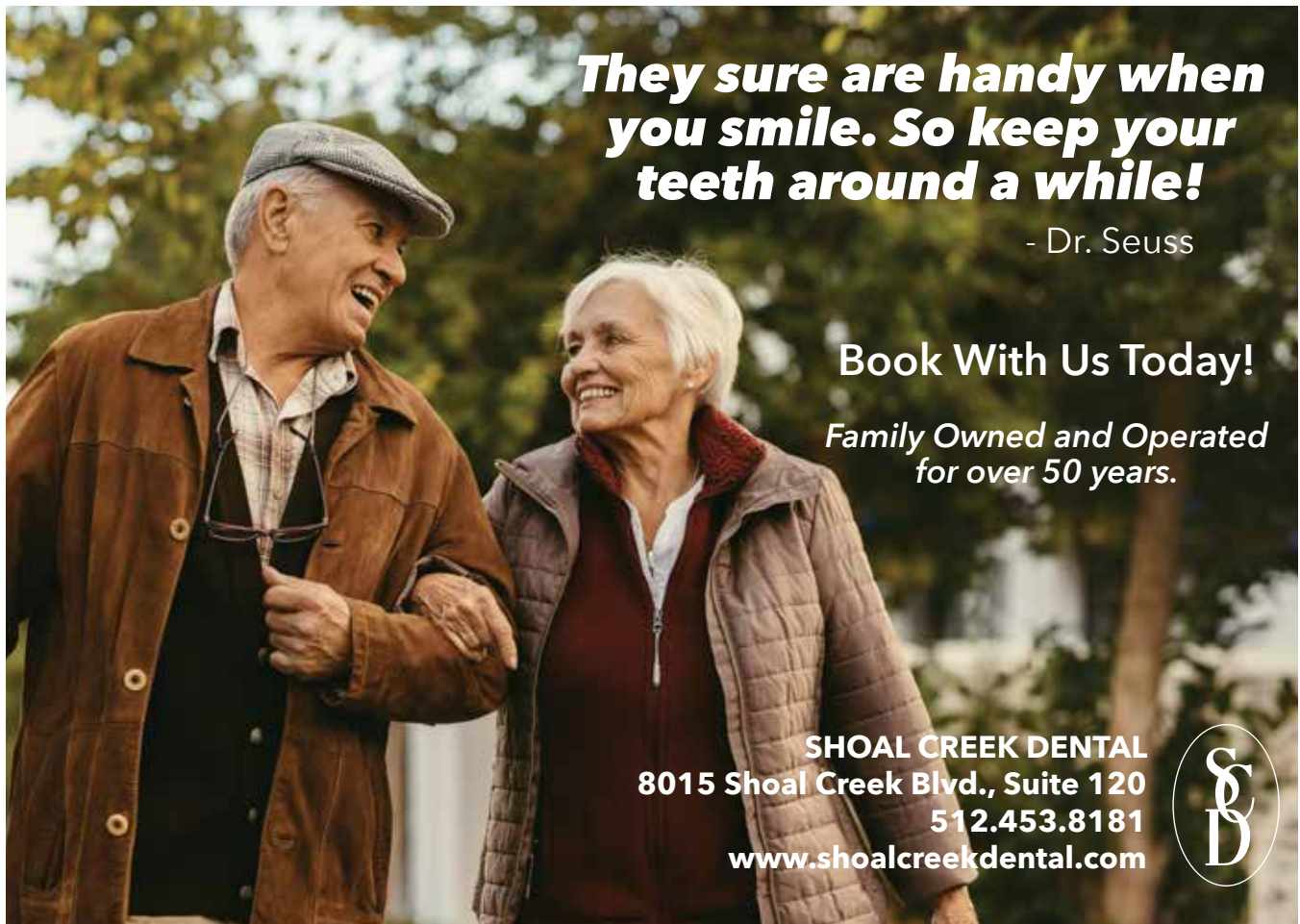
Accordingly, we would like to ask neighbors if you have any memories of this area or better yet, photographs dating from 1956-1985. If you do, please contact us and we can make arrangements to record your recollections or scan your photographs. You can email us at [pizzomojado@gmail.com](mailto:pizzomojado@gmail.com) or call or text (512) 517-8879. ☘

## Travis County Emissions Reductions

Brigid Shea, Travis County Commissioner Precinct 2, (512) 854-9222 [Comm2@traviscountytx.gov](mailto:Comm2@traviscountytx.gov)

**H**ello Neighbors and Constituents! I'm very proud to have led Travis County's bold telecommuting policy, and would like to share with you the significant impacts we've seen since its implementation. By adopting a goal to have 75% of eligible employees telecommuting on a permanent basis, Travis County is dramatically reducing greenhouse gas emissions, alleviating traffic congestion, and significantly saving on utility costs. In 2019, employee commutes were the second largest source of greenhouse gas emissions for Travis County. As a result of the telecommuting policy, Travis County's total CO2 emissions decreased by 5,500 TONS from FY19 to FY20 -- that's like removing 1,200 cars from the road for the entire year and avoiding the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6




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- Dr. Seuss

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## Travis County Emissions Reductions

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use of nearly 406,000 gallons of gasoline! What's more is that we saved a whopping \$1.3 MILLION in utility costs! As the telecommuting policy continues, those numbers keep growing. As an added benefit, there's been a rise in employee morale. The policy allows employees to stretch paychecks further by reducing transportation costs and improves their work/life balance, while maintaining productivity.

I am so pleased with the work Travis County is doing to both save taxpayer dollars and improve our environmental health with our telecommuting policy, and I look forward to the continued progress in this area. As always, I am honored to serve you. Please reach out to my office any time.

Best regards,  
Brigid Shea ☘

## Shameful

Neena Husid

Shock, anger, and disgust were the emotional body blows experienced by both my partner and I when we first spied the hate-mongering stickers. It was early morning on Tuesday, November 16, and we were almost out of Northwest Park, headed toward Shoal Creek, when we noticed them slapped onto a trash can, stuck onto the basketball hoop poles, and glued to the posts on the side of the stairs leading up toward the pedestrian bridge.

Our weekday walk is always a little hurried across the park. (One of us is trying to get work.) Still without discussion, we stopped and in unison scraped off the offending decals: those demanding Israel be nuked, those calling for a race war, those heralding white pride with an eagle grasping a swastika, and those making completely erroneous claims about who and what spreads AIDS.

Heavy-hearted, we continued our walk, wondering what those stickers might have to do with the most recent acts of hate in Austin: the torching of Congregation Beth Israel synagogue, Nazi banners unfurled on the MoPac overpass, or the ugly, racist, and

anti-Semitic graffiti scrawled across parking spaces at Anderson High School. In the past, around the time of the 2020 election, I'd seen similar sentiments graffitied on sidewalks and signage on Far West Boulevard and North Hills Drive, as well as on the pavement and crossover bridge at the Great Northern spillway. From these incidents, I'd learned the protocol for reporting property defacements and possible hate crimes. Continuing my walk, I began putting my plan in place.

I'd taken photos of the stickers before we'd torn them off and was on the phone getting instructions on how to send them to 311 when, homeward bound, I passed through the playscape area of Northwest Park. The 311-operator heard me gasp. Fifty or more of those same awful labels were affixed to every flat surface in the part of the park most frequented by families and by children old enough to play on their neighborhood swings and slides unaccompanied by an adult. It was horrifying,

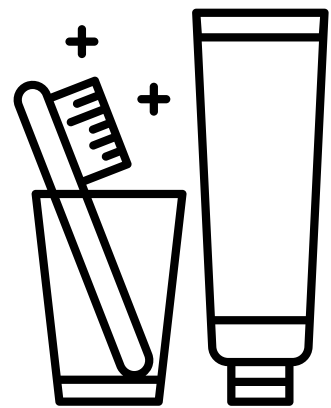
I took more pictures, and received promises from 311 that City workers would be there shortly to remove the

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offending stickers. (Kudos to the City; removal had begun within an hour of my call, and workers returned the following day to check for more stickers and continue the cleanup.) Once home, I promptly filed a report with the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) and contacted ADL Austin as well. Then, wanting to warn the parents in our close-knit neighborhood community what was awaiting their children in the park, I wrote an email describing what I'd seen and what action I'd taken, and sent it to about 25 or so folks in our book club, our supper club, and our pandemic check-on-one-another club. Knowing these neighbors well, with their heads, hearts, and their yard signs pleading for justice and decency, I shouldn't have been surprised by what happened next. My email dinged throughout the day with shows of sympathy, promises of solidarity, and suggestions of actions we should or could take as a neighborhood. By nightfall, we'd had a park patrolling plan set in place, a protocol for reporting repeated hate-filled incidents (we learned other neighborhood parks, such as Brentwood, Ramsey, and Zilker had suffered similar attacks), such as contacting 311's mobile app and filing a report with the ADL. Also, we reached out to our councilmember, Leslie Pool, and to Shalom Austin security, who assured us that they, along with the FBI and APD, had a lead on those who'd slimed our park.

Several of us began discussing the need for a sign of some kind, proclaiming how abhorrent we found these hate-filled lies and showing that we were unified in this conviction. With little solicitation, donations for seeding a yard sign project appeared, and the artists and wordsmiths among us got working.

As it would happen, two weeks after the initial incident in Northwest Park, Ellise Avenue residents woke up to find more despicable -- albeit ridiculous -- racist propaganda printed on flyers stuck underneath the windshield wipers of cars they'd left parked on the street in front of their homes during the night. The dot org signature on the previous park stickers was listed on these flyers, too. Neighbors followed the reporting protocol, but there was more to come. That same morning, taking our trip through the park, my partner and I found the playscape area again strewn with stickers. This time, the offending decals were primarily racist and anti-vaccine, and all were chock-full of outlandish fabrications.

Spurred by the flyers, the return of the stickers, and another act of anti-Semitism occurring in the 78731 zip code a week later, we stepped up our yard sign production. Our first printing produced 100 of the whimsically serious, "NEIGHBORS UNITED AGAINST HATE" yard signs you've most likely already seen on lawns in Allandale and other neighborhoods. The \$10.00 offerings sold so quickly, we immediately printed more. Funds collected allow us to afford additional print runs. Clearly, our message says Austin neighbors are united in their refusal to be defined by hate, lies, ignorance, and intolerance. If you'd like to take a stand against hate and show your neighborly support, follow this link: <https://forms.gle/6kWj7gR4HgRs7ETcA>. ☹



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# Gullett Good News

Diane Hurtado

**H**appy New Year, Gecko community! We've had a great start to 2022, and couldn't have done it without the amazing teachers, staff, and administration at our school. They work tirelessly to provide a safe and welcoming learning environment for all our kids. Thank you, teachers!

There is a lot happening at Gullett over the next few months. The following are some important events:

**Online registration is open for the 2022-2023 school year.** Registration information is critical in helping to determine how many teachers and support staff are required for every grade level. To register your student, please go to the AISD parent portal ([portal.austinisd.org](http://portal.austinisd.org)) and select AISD registration. Please contact Gullett ([gullettgeckos.com](http://gullettgeckos.com)) with any questions and help with Pre-K registration.

**Save the Date!** The Book Fair is coming! Gullett will have an in-person Scholastic book fair February 14-18. Show some love for books and the school library during Valentine's week.

**Mark your calendars for March 5.** The Spring Gullett Plant Sale AND It's My Park Day are happening on the 5th. Volunteers are greatly appreciated! There will be lots to do. Tasks include general clean-up activities like mulching, clearing dead plants, and tilling gardens, as well as building tasks such as rebuilding the fence around the Pre-K and first-grade gardens, and repairing benches around campus.

**Viva Gullett**, the annual school fundraiser, is scheduled for April 23. The planning committee would like to promote and gain support from locally owned businesses as part of this event. If you (or your employer) would be interested in making a tax-deductible donation of goods or services to VIVA Gullett, it would be appreciated. Donations can be mailed directly to: VIVA Gullett Committee, 6310 Treadwell Blvd, Austin, TX 78757 or you may contact Natasha Ulack ([natashaulack@gmail.com](mailto:natashaulack@gmail.com)) or Kim Snyder-Jackson ([snyderjackson512@gmail.com](mailto:snyderjackson512@gmail.com)) to arrange for pickup. Thank you for your support!

Gullett is always looking for volunteers, helpers, and community partners! If you have a student in the school or are looking to connect with the Gullett community, please contact the PTA president, at [president@gullettgeckos.com](mailto:president@gullettgeckos.com).

**Upcoming Important Dates:**

**February 7:** PTA monthly meeting, 7:00 p.m.

**February 11:** Extra student & staff holiday

**February 14-18:** Scholastic Book Fair in the library

**February 21:** Parent conference day (no school for students)

**February 23:** CAC monthly meeting, 3:30 p.m.

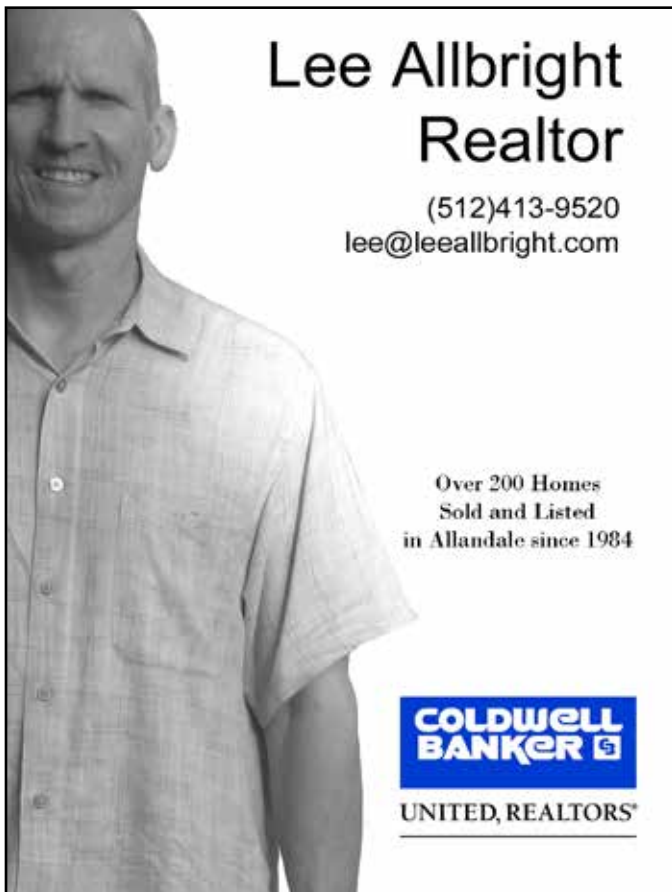
**March 4:** Extra student & staff holiday

**March 5:** Gullett Spring Plant Sale, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00p.m.

**March 5:** It's My Park Day at Gullett, 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

**March 14-18:** Spring break

**April 1:** Staff professional development day ☘



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# Real Estate Round-Up

Debbie Trominski

Those of us in Allandale are probably aware that our homes sit on expansive clay soil, which makes our foundations prone to shifting. This can result in what a friend of mine affectionately refers to as “Allandale cracks” in the walls. As a real estate professional, when I’m walking a house, I’m attuned to potential trouble spots. Years of experience have taught me what to look for. It starts as I walk up to a house and notice if the driveway is cracked or has dropped away from the garage, which are signs of soil movement. My eyes scan for mortar cracks in brickwork. I also look for patched concrete on the driveway and front porch, which is an indicator of previous foundation repairs. Once inside, I am looking for wall cracks and floor tile cracks, and I can sense a sloping floor that might warrant investigation.

If you have concerns about your foundation shifting, it’s common that you might call in a foundation company to evaluate your house for free. One thing to keep in mind is that, while a foundation repair is an expensive undertaking (I’ve seen them cost anywhere from \$3,000 to more than \$30,000), the repair is only a part of the overall cost of the process. The cost of the repair itself must be considered, but often numerous ancillary costs come into the picture. For example, sometimes wallboard problems occur as a house is leveled, impacting plumbing and flooring, or the process of leveling a foundation can take a significant toll on landscaping. These hidden costs could be scary, but they might end up being completely avoidable with expert-level due diligence.

Recently, I was involved in a real estate transaction where a foundation company was the first party to assess the foundation and gave a \$10,000 repair bid. Foundation companies are perfectly legitimate and indispensable businesses that I work with on a regular basis; however, it’s their mission to fix foundations and make them as level as possible—not necessarily to assess whether a foundation needs repair in order to maintain the structural integrity of the home. For that, you need a structural engineer, and that’s the first call I make when I suspect foundation problems.



A licensed structural engineer has the training, expertise, and experience to determine whether a foundation is indeed in need of repair. That is something you absolutely want to determine before dropping thousands of dollars on a fix. The engineer will come in, take measurements, and make a thorough assessment before making the call as to whether a foundation repair is warranted.

And guess what? Hiring an engineer costs about \$600. Compare that to diving headfirst into a \$10,000 repair. It’s a no-brainer!

Another no-brainer is that our neighborhood is amazing, and the 2021 real estate numbers from the Austin Board of Realtors back that up. Last year, our neighborhood appreciated by an eye-popping 26%, as compared to 2020. Average days on market dropped by 47% to a mere nine days, and the number of units sold fell by 22%. ☘

## Quick Bites

Robert Mace

Not much new in the way of places, but a few changes of note. **JewBoy Sub Shop** is now serving brunch on Saturdays and Sundays, and it’s amatzoballs, with Jewish migas (aka matzo brie), pastrami hash, and more. The sammich magicians at **Local Foods** have moved its pop-up over to Kitchen United, suggesting that, contrary to other food press, they are sticking around the ‘hood after they open up downtown. An Italian sammich and pizza shop, **Bevolios**, also fired up at Kitchen United. **Fajita Pete’s** fresh fajitas and fixins’ is fixin’ to open up at 5523 Balcones Drive. A few openings of note in our neck of the cedars include **Garbo’s Lobster** at 12709 North Mopac, **Rosen’s Bagel Co.** at 11101 Burnet Road, and **Taquero Mucho** (from the folks at **Gabriela’s**) also at 11101 Burnet. We still hungrily await the openings of **Pflour Shop Bakery**, **East Side Pies**, and **Rise Souffle**.

*Yelp* bequeathed **Bird Bird Biscuit** as the fifth best restaurant in the country. The *Austin Chronicle* gave **Madam Mam’s** a shout-out for comfort food. Those blood-eyed, rabid racoons at Eater recognized **Ichiban** as an essential Austin sushi

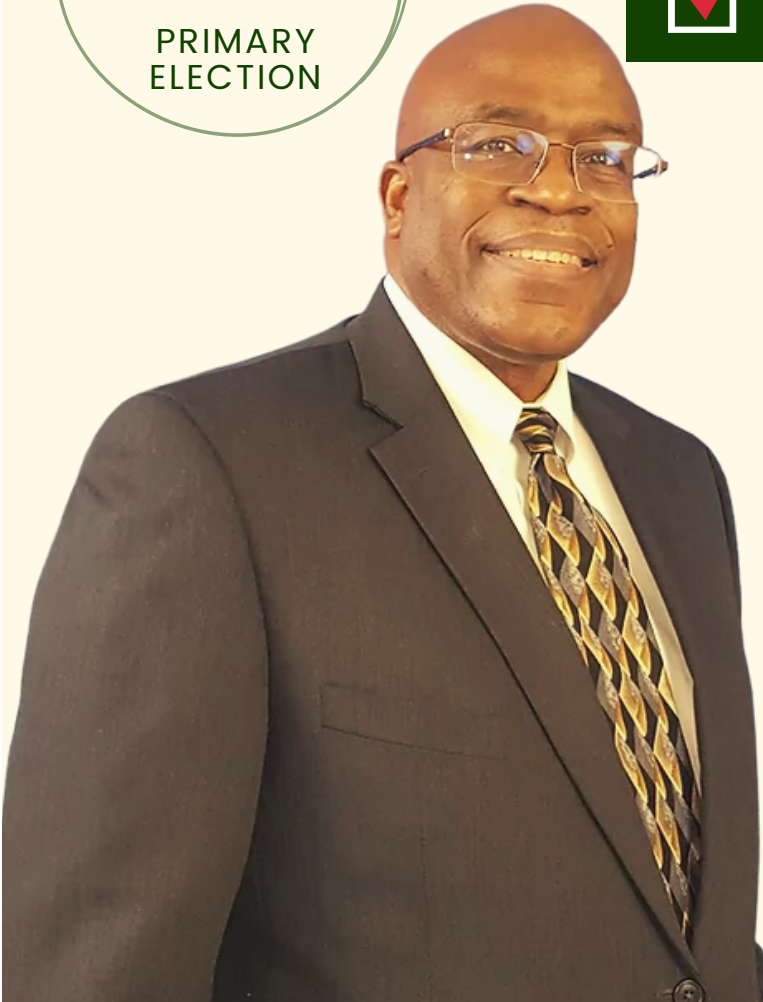


Jewish Migas from JewBoy Sub Shop

joint, recommended **dipdipdip tatsu-ya** and **Barley Swine** for upscale dinners, mixed **Lala’s Little Nugget** and the **Yard Bar** as hot cocktail destinations (literally hot, as in hot toddies and whatnot), and baked **Brentwood Social House** and **épicerie** as among the best bakeries. Also of note in the area are the **Tigress Pub** and **Drink.Well** for hot bevs and **Zucchini Kill** and **Tous Les Jours** (French-Korean) for bakeries.

For links and color photos, please visit [www.austinwanderlist.com](http://www.austinwanderlist.com). ☘

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# Project Pollo

Robert Mace

The fake meat movement is not only fake moos: fake chicken is also squawking into the barnyard, as demonstrated by Project Pollo, an outfit out of San Antonio, led by Lucas Bradbury. Bradbury's mission is to put people over profits and offer (fake) pollo with a purpose. He also sees the future of mass food production as plant-based, hence his drive to promote plant-based chicken, called chickn without the e (and without the cluck).

As a scientist, I'm fascinated with the great leaps forward in fake meats, and I devour articles on this topic with dedication. As a foodie, I've only been mildly impressed so far. For example, the Impossible Burger is impressive in that if you fed me one, I wouldn't know that it was fake. However, it only makes for an adequate and therefore unimpressive (fakeness aside) burger. Fake chicken is in the same, if not more challenging, territory. With burgers, the beef is ground up, so it's easier to match the texture. With chicken, non-parts-is-parts people expect

meat and muscle, so the challenge is greater, akin to creating a steak instead of ground beef.

Visually, Project Pollo has it down. Their products appear as delicious fried-chicken sandwiches. I tried the Nashville Hot (breaded chikn, spicy garlic buffalo sauce, house ranch, and pickled jalapeño; \$7.5) while The Bride went with the Original Project (but dry with pickles and lettuce; \$7.5). We also ordered fries (\$2.5 each) and the Mac & Cheese (shells smothered in credo cashew queso; \$2.5).

Similar to my hamburger experience, my chickn sammich probably would have faked me out if I didn't know it was fake, but it also wasn't memorable (outside of its fakeness). The Bride, ever the picky eater, especially with chicken, noted that Project Pollo somehow managed to reproduce the icky parts of real chicken, parts she picked out despite my hollering that it was all plants. The Mac & Cheese had the color of cashew and not the (oddly) comforting atomic day-glo orange of traditional mac & cheese.

Although we were not impressed as foodies, we also recognize that Project Pollo (and other fakers like it) are not intended for us meat-eaters. Vegans and



The Original Project from Project Pollo

vegetarians who miss hamburgers, chicken sandwiches, and mac & cheese are prolly as happy as in situ clams to have these guilty pleasures back on their dinner plates, not to mention that this is a place they can order anything off the menu without a Spanish Inquisition of waitstaff.

It's important to note that this low-carbon (but not low-carb...) stuff is getting

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## Project Pollo

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better all the time. The scientist in me plans on checking back in from time to time to see how the chickn business is progressing, with the hope of the chickn getting better with time; the foodie in me also honestly hopes the chickn gets better as well.

Project Pollo, 2438 West Anderson Lane ([www.projectpollo.com](http://www.projectpollo.com)); full color review at [www.austinwanderlist.com](http://www.austinwanderlist.com)

## 5280 Burger & Tap House

By Robert Mace

The 5280 serves up gourmet burgers, salads, and sides, carefully concocted and prepared by a chef (he kindly greeted us during our first meal), with beers, cocktails on tap, and boozy shakes. “Burgers” include a lobster roll, a few chicken choices, tuna, the Impossible, and a house-made black bean and quinoa patty, in addition to Colorado



The Fly Fisher from 5280 Burger Bar & Taphouse

Black Angus, which can be subbed with Texas-raised prime wagyu (+\$3). They have bartops, regular, and outdoor seating, and super-friendly staff. Clay McPhail, who co-started El Arroyo before selling it and moving to Denver, is co-owner of this Mile High City restaurant (hint, hint...).

On our first trip, I went with the 5280 (Angus beef, American cheese, tomato, shredded lettuce, red onion, kosher dill pickle, house-made 5280 sauce; \$11) while The Bride chose the Fly Fisher (sushi-grade ahi tuna, arugula, coconut scallion ginger marinated vegetables, and sesame sriracha aioli; \$16), both accompanied with a small basket of hand-cut fries (\$4). On a second trip, I went with the Texican (Angus beef, red chili, sharp cheddar cheese, diced red onions, and fritos; \$14).

The Fly Fisher was a tower of perfection with a thick, juicy slab of expertly grilled tuna with a buzzy sriracha burn. The burgers I had were good, but, being something of a burger snob, I wasn't blown away. The 5280's basic burger was, well... basic. Nicely executed, but not memorable. The Texican was fun—and a good burger—but nothing that would have me galloping back for another one. Perhaps unfairly, I compare gourmet burgers to my fave patties provided by Dai Due and Justine's. To be fair, those burgers run \$22 and \$30

(with fries), respectively, so perhaps you get what you pay for.

If you are wondering about the name, it sources from the number of feet in a mile, a reference to Denver, the Mile High City, about 5,280 feet above sea level. The part-time geography professor in me kinda wishes that, as they expand, they reflect the local elevation, which is 800 feet above sea level at the Wood Hollow location. But maybe The 800 Burger Bar doesn't quite have the same buzz to it.

5280 Burger & Tap House, 7032 Wood Hollow Drive ([www.5280burgerbar.com](http://www.5280burgerbar.com)); full color review at [www.austinwanderlist.com](http://www.austinwanderlist.com) ☼



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— Laurie Eiserloh

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