

Liveable City E-Newsletter
December 2006

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Austin City Council's Big Vote on Big Box This Thursday, December 14.

It's showtime for the "big box" ordinance! The culmination of two years of policy research, community outreach and plain hard work heads to a full City Council hearing on Thursday, December 14, 6pm, at City Hall.

This common-sense code update would expand the notice range for massive retail projects larger than 100,000 square-feet and require a public hearing that could include consideration of impacts to the community and to local independent businesses. Liveable City is working hard to help pass it - along with the Austin Independent Business Alliance (325 member businesses), Austin Neighborhoods Council, Austin Central Labor Council, AFSCME 1624, the Austin Area Human Services Association (65 member organizations) and hundreds of community leaders and individuals.

The big box ordinance gained increased attention last month when outraged neighbors learned the city had approved a 24-hour Wal-Mart supercenter for Northcross Mall, without any public process. At 220,000 square-feet, the new supercenter will be 2.5 times larger than Texas Memorial Stadium, making it the largest retail outlet in Travis County and the second largest in Central Texas, behind only Round Rock's new Ikea.

Read the policy report on big box retail here (LC link), email City Council or get details about the ordinance here (www.austinfullcircle.org), support the Northcross neighbors here (www.rg4n.org). For a great read on the local business angle, be sure to check out Austin Chronicle publisher Nick Barbaro's letter here (link to Nick's letter),

LC is Ready to Party – All We Want This Holiday is YOU!

Man, are we ready to party after this year! Between the Prop Wars, bond elections, big box-ing matches and the Las Mas melodrama, it's more than time

to live it up a little. And who better to let loose with than you...our friends and members?

Liveable City's annual holiday celebration takes place this Wednesday, Dec. 13 5:30pm-7:30pm, at the new Lambert's, in the historic Schneider Building at 2nd & Guadalupe. Please join us for complimentary chef's snacks, live music and stellar schmoozing (don't forget free parking under City Hall). We'll be raffling off some great holiday prizes, too: a pair of SXSW wristbands, an electric bike from Alien Scooters and one ultra cool Lounge Chair from Your Living Room. Raffle tickets are just \$20 so snap one up now at ([link to LC site](#)). You don't need to be present to win...but don't you want to be?

Affordable Housing: Don't Toss it Away!

Keeping housing affordable is one of Liveable City's top priorities. That's why the LC Board voted on Saturday to join signers of this important letter opposing the City's Housing Authority's Draft 2007 Plan. The Housing Authority's plan calls for demolishing some of the only low-income housing stock west of I-35. The letter asks for a one-to-one replacement – a logical request at a time when finding affordable housing is next to impossible for many Austinites.

Shout Out Section

LiveableCity sends a mistletoe kiss to:

- Shield Ayers Foundation for giving LC a three-year grant so we can keep our lights on and our ideas flowing. These folks are so humble they don't have a website, but if you see conservationist/rancher/poet Bob Ayers please hug him for us!
- Matt Whelan, new VP at Catellus, for lighting the control tower at Mueller Airport for the holidays, the first time in seven years. Notice the "Noel!" at www.Muelleraustin.com.
- Louis Lambert, for hosting our holiday party this Wednesday and for generously donating a sampler of his delicious food (www.lambertsbbq.com.)