

Liveable City
Community News
May 2008

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Mark Your Calendar for May 21: The Annual Liveable Vision Awards Party!

Please join us for our annual Liveable Vision Awards Party, Wednesday, May 21, 6 pm-7:30 pm, at the Carver Museum, 1165 Angelina Street. Expect schmoozing galore in a festive Austin atmosphere, with hors d'oeuvres by Big Night Catering and wine by Glazers. Ticket and sponsorship information is below.

This year's Vision Awards will recognize outstanding achievements in the five E's of sustainability that create a livable community:

- Equity – **Austin Voices** Education Initiative www.austinvoices.org
- Engagement – The **Create Austin** Cultural Plan www.createaustin.org
- Esthetics – **Butler Park** (Town Lake) www.ci.austin.tx.us/parks/butler.htm
- Economy – **HelioVolt** Solar Manufacturing www.heliovolta.net

• Environment - **Texas Campaign for the Environment & Dell's Computer Recycling Program** www.texasenvironment.org or visit Dell's recycling program at www.dell.com/content/topics/segtopic.aspx/dell_recycling?c=us&cs=19&l=en&s=dhs

Tickets to the event are \$25 (current LC members at the Friend Level or higher will receive complimentary admission at the door). For tickets or to join our wonderful group of sponsors, please visit us at www.liveablecity.org, call 326-3331, or email wwhite@liveablecity.org.

The Vision Awards would not be possible without the great support of our visionary sponsors: Austin Chronicle, KUT Radio, Capital Metro, Southwest Strategies Group, Earth Tech, Family Connections, Fisterra, Glazer's, Ignite Consulting, Little City, Momark Development, People Fund, Perry Lorenz, Rick Cofer, Rodney Gibbs, AB Porter, Stubb's Legendary Kitchens, Texas Disposal Systems, Dwyer Realty, Baer Engineering, Big Night Catering, and the Institute for Community, University, and School Partnerships. For sponsor information, please visit www.liveablecity.org.

Building A More Sustainable Economy: Liveable City Examines City Incentives Policy

Liveable City has wrapped up a major study about Austin's economic and incentive policies, to be released mid-May. [Building a More Sustainable Economy: Economic Development Strategy and the Use of Public Incentives in Austin](#), authored by Dr. Michael Oden, examines Austin's overall economic development landscape and the role incentives play in this larger picture. The report includes an overview of Austin's economic development policies, identifies key players, and uses recent case studies to illuminate the strengths and weaknesses of our current system. It concludes with a series of best practice recommendations to better position Austin for the challenges ahead. The report will be available at www.liveablecity.org following its mid-May release.

A Public Voice for Public Schools: Committee on Neighborhoods and Schools Sends Final Report to AISD Board

On April 28, the Community Committee on Neighborhoods and Schools (CCNS) concluded nearly a year of work with its final report to the AISD Board of Trustees. Tasked with developing policies and processes for major decisions affecting public schools in Austin, the committee made specific recommendations in three main areas: improving ongoing communications; adopting a specified criteria and process for decision-making; and strengthening collaboration with other local governments. The committee's 280-page report represents an exhaustive public outreach effort and a synthesis of best practice research. Now it's up to the AISD board to decide whether and how to implement the committee's recommendations.

Liveable City was represented on the CCNS by board members Susan Moffat and Jim Walker. Download the committee's full report at <http://www.austinisd.org/inside/initiatives/ccns/report.phtml>

There's No Place Like Home: HousingWorks Tour and Reception

Mark your calendars now for June 11 for HousingWorks Austin's Second Annual **"There's No Place Like Home" Tour and Reception**. This year's tour for event sponsors will venture to the Mueller Redevelopment and various neighborhoods throughout Austin for a look at the latest affordable developments in both private and public sector housing.

The bus tour will run from 2pm – 4pm, leaving from Stortini at 1917 Manor Road, and will be followed by a reception from 4:30 pm– 6:30pm at The Red House at Stortini.

Tickets are \$35 per person for the reception, including appetizers & one complimentary drink. Tickets for the bus tour are available separately as part of sponsorship packages at \$100 and \$250 levels. To sponsor or buy tickets, please visit www.housingworksaustin.org or call 326-3356.

Say Cheese: Liveable City's Annual Snapshot

Take peek at Liveable City's annual Snapshot, which includes a look back at highlights, our 2007 achievements and short list of major agenda items for 2008. Find out what we've been up to and what's in store at www.liveablecity.org

Got Tunnel Vision? Speak Up on Waller Creek by May 31

Sometimes a little tunnel vision can be a good thing. That's why city planners are asking what *you'd* like to see in the area surrounding the massive Waller Creek tunnel project. Natural landscaping? A bike and pedestrian trail? Creekside cafes? How about a climbing wall? Weigh in with your view on the survey at www.cityofaustin.org/wallercreek. Deadline for survey responses is May 31, but expect more meetings and workshops as the public vision for this major project continues to be refined.

AISD Middle School Initiative: Liveable City and ICUSP Weigh In

This past January, the Austin Independent School District (AISD) began fast-tracking a new Middle Level Education Plan Initiative, intended provide urgent improvements to the district's middle schools. Liveable City board members have been actively engaged in this process, helping to formulate recommendations that may be phased in as early as this fall.

In late April, Liveable City joined with The Institute for Community, University and School Partnerships (ICUSP) from the University of Texas at Austin to present additional recommendations to AISD designed to strengthen the current initiative and ensure the long-term success of our students. Recommendations focused on two main areas: (1) developing effective processes for communication, evaluation and feedback as new plans are implemented; and (2) expanding the objectives and measurements of the current

initiative to acknowledge the importance of all academic areas, including the arts, and to develop methods to gauge progress beyond the single yardstick of the state accountability system (TAKS). Read the full report at www.liveablecity.org.

Liveable City and ICUSP share a strong interest with AISD in providing a challenging, enriching and productive middle school experience for all students. We applaud the AISD board for its leadership in making middle school improvement a priority.

Gas Pains: BusinessWeek Takes the Long View

In a spate of recent stories, BusinessWeek magazine looked at how the sudden spike in gas prices may change the way we live and travel. For the BW view, check these links:

Suddenly, It's Cool to Take the Bus

http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/08_18/b4082000049320.htm

Not Guzzling Quite So Much Gas

http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/08_18/b4082000518114.htm

Good-Bye, Cheap Oil. So Long, Suburbia?

Author James Kunstler says the Automotive Age is almost history

http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/08_18/b4082056979063.htm?campaign_id=rss_null

Shout Outs

- To John Fregonese of Fregonese Associates for his inspiring keynote address at Envision Central Texas' 2008 Community Stewardship Awards. Download his comments at <http://www.envisioncentraltexas.org/>
- To the Pearce Middle School community for standing together in support of their school.

Food for Thought

“The name of our *proper* connection to the earth is “good work” for good work involves much giving of honor. It honors the source of its materials; it honors the place where it is done; it honors the art by which it is done; it honors that thing that it makes and the user of the made thing.” - Wendell Berry

And now, a word *for* our Sponsors...

Building a more Liveable City ain't cheap! Special recognition goes to the Shield-Ayers Foundation, the Rather Family Trust, the Trull Foundation, and the Greater Houston Family Foundation's Gray Family Fund whose generous help makes our work possible. For a complete list of our wonderful partners and supporters, please visit www.liveablecity.org. See you at the 2008 Vision Awards May 21st!

