

Crestwood / Glen Cove Neighborhood News



A Publication of Crestwood Civic Club

Volume 15, Issue 1

The City of Houston Bike Plan has been making its way through departments and committees on its way to adoption by City Council. The article on page 2 gives an overview of what has happened in the last six months and how cycling has evolved in Houston.

Jane Cahill-West will be at the neighborhood meeting to tell us what the Super Neighborhood Alliance and other neighborhood organizations have done to modify the administration of the bike plan once it is adopted by Council.

The article on minimum lot size designations tells the story of how we started, what's been done, and what these designations mean to our neighborhood.

The Crestwood Civic Club board is looking for people who would like to help organize a neighborhood block party. These have been family oriented events, and a good opportunity to get together in a relaxed manner and talk about what's going on in and around our neighborhood. If you are interested, please contact me:

president@crestwoodglencove.org

Finally, the Bayou City Art Festival, held in Memorial Park, will start March 24th and run through the 26th. The festival does not provide on-site parking, so don't be alarmed when you see more traffic and parking around our neighborhood.

I hope to see you at the meeting!

Mike VanDusen

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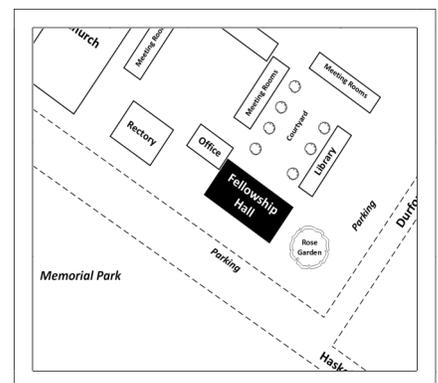
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All-Neighborhood Meeting is April 4th, 7pm !

April						
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Residents are invited to our next All-Neighborhood Meeting to be held Tuesday, April 4, at the Fellowship Hall at St Theresa Catholic Church. The meeting will begin at 7pm.

Street parking is available on Haskell, next to the hall, or in the church parking lot on Durford.



The Houston Bike Plan Update

by Mike VanDusen

In the Spring of 2016, residents learned that the Public Works and Engineering Department of the City of Houston was considering changing Blossom to a one-way street, prohibiting street parking, and dedicating one of the existing lanes to the exclusive use of bicyclists for easy access to Memorial Park. This alarmed many in Crestwood/Glen Cove.

After letters, emails, and phone calls to the Mayor and City Council Members, Mayor Turner had a letter drafted stating that Blossom was currently a “Shared On-Street” bikeway, and that this designation would not change. But this does not mean that Blossom might not see future impacts from the cycling and park community.

In February 2016, I met with a group of people representing nearby neighborhoods and an urban planning group named Houston Tomorrow. They showed a plan for modifying Blossom into a Neighborhood “Greenway” that would support connectivity between Buffalo Bayou Park and Memorial Park.

Note that this treatment is in keeping with the Mayor’s statement of keeping Blossom a shared on-

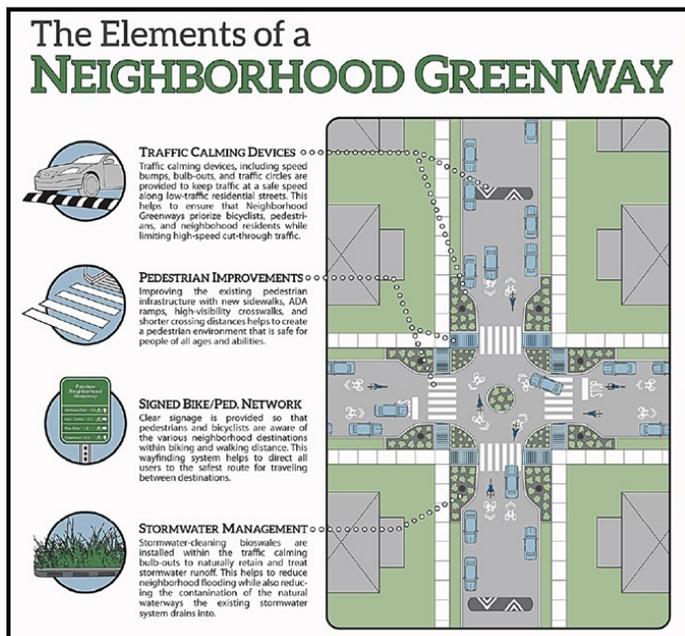
street bikeway.

Features of the greenway are speed bumps, bulb-outs near corners, and mini-traffic circles in the middle of intersections. The goal is to reduce motor traffic speed, making it more bicycle friendly. This meeting happened after the outreach request to the neighborhood I made in January regarding the dedicated lane on Blossom. Based on the feedback from residents, I told the group promoting the greenway proposal that it would probably not be well received in Crestwood.

There are several groups and organizations promoting various plans for the City of Houston. The Houston Parks Board is promoting park connectivity with their Bayou Greenways initiative. The Houston Tomorrow group’s Neighborhood Greenway plan can help achieve that connectivity. Memorial Park Conservancy has a master plan that shows the Blossom entrance to the park as the main bike and pedestrian entrance. It should be obvious that many people outside of Crestwood/Glen Cove have ideas about what should happen inside the Crestwood/Glen Cove neighborhood.

This is one of the concerns expressed by the Super Neighborhood Alliance regarding the Houston Bike Plan. The plan was developed by bicycling enthusiasts with little engagement of the non-cycling public that will be impacted by the plan.

The plan is extensive in scope, and will affect streets and neighborhoods throughout the city. Many of the on-street shared and dedicated bikeways proposed will be implemented by the Public Works and Engineering Department as streets are rebuilt. The Alliance has asked Public Works that no detail street design that includes bikeways be undertaken without prior engagement of the neighborhoods directly affected by the design.



The Houston Bike Plan Update, cont.

Since these capital improvement rebuild projects use Rebuild Houston funds, several city council members are expressing concern about spending Rebuild dollars to build bikeways.

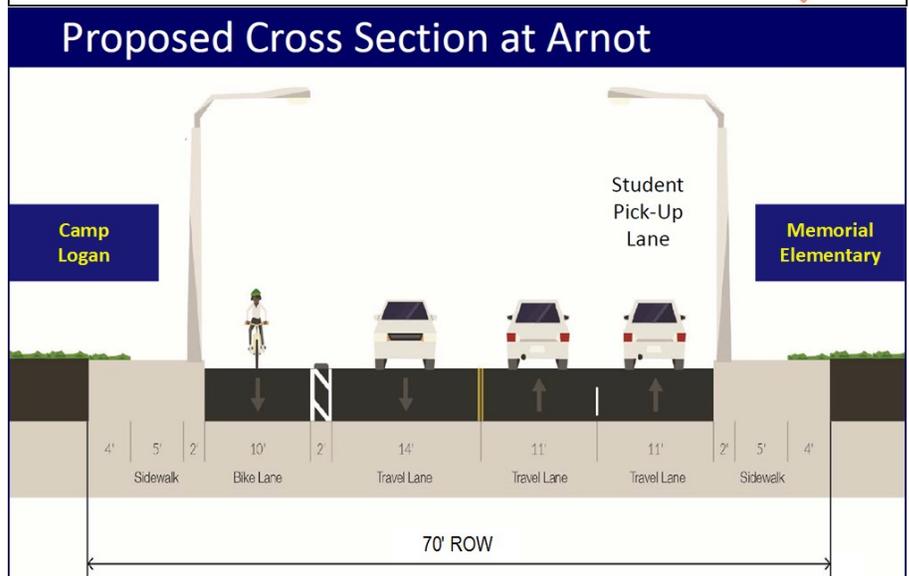
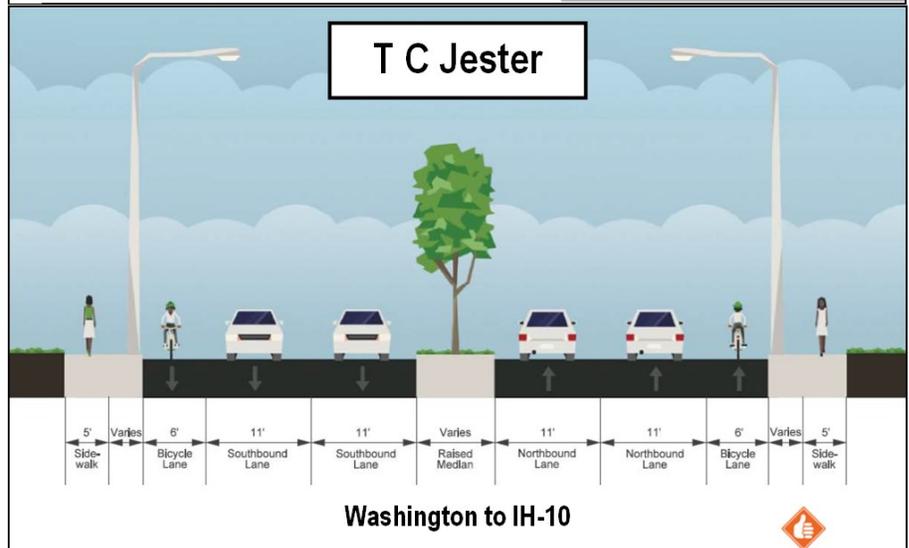
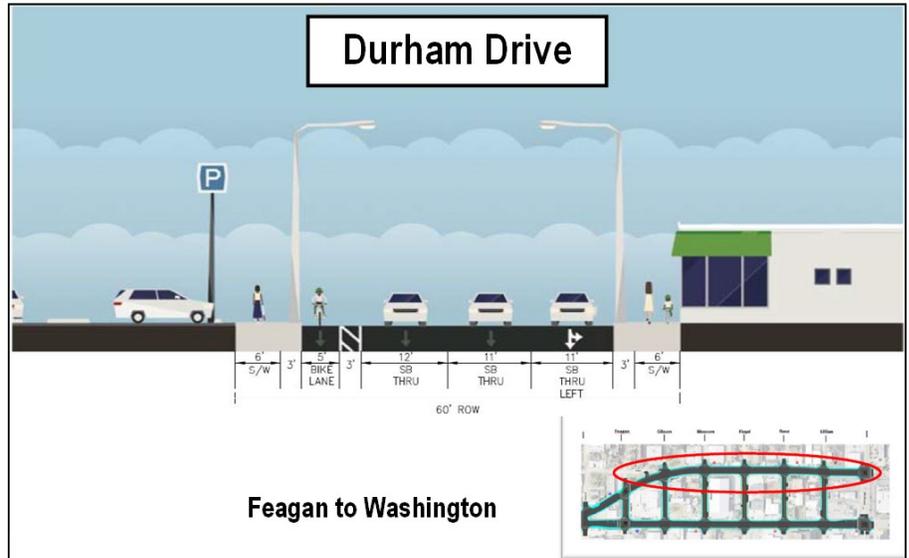
Mayor Parker issued an executive order to develop a Complete Streets and Transportation Plan in 2013. This plan provides for all modes of transportation in city roadways, including bicyclists. Public Works has been incorporating this plan into current street design with little public engagement.

The Shepherd/Durham and TC Jester designs are complete and awaiting construction. The original schedule was to begin rebuilding Shepherd and Durham this year, and TC Jester in 2018. I learned at the recent District C Capital Improvement Projects meeting that both projects have been pushed back an additional year.

The Arnot rebuild is being considered, but no design has been started.

All of these designs incorporate bikeways that did not previously exist, and some require the removal of motor vehicle lane to implement. The proposed Houston Bike Plan overlays each of these street designs and extends their implementation.

Public engagement means that residents have to stay aware of the plans being proposed before they are implemented. And we have to be ready to have our voices heard.



Special Minimum Lot Size Designations

by Mike VanDusen

Residents are probably aware that most of the neighborhood is within several special minimum lot size areas designated by the City of Houston. This journey began in the Fall of 2013 when I was contacted by Tom Tynan, a resident living on Glenwood.

After a brief discussion, Tom and I prepared two applications; one for each side of Glenwood. Tom and a neighbor, Chris Dittmar, began the process of getting supporting signatures on each of the applications. Both applications were completed, and presented to the City on December 13 (Friday the 13th).

Ordinance 0577, for the east side of Glenwood, was passed on June 11, 2014. And ordinance 0866, for the west side, was passed on September 24.

A lot has happened since then!

The Designation; What is It?

A designation is granted by the City when City Council passes an ordinance creating a special minimum lot size designated area. A designation has three features, important to home owners:

1. It identifies a lot size and does not allow the creation of new lots smaller than this size. This effectively stops high density development because typical townhome development is only economically feasible on small lots.
2. It requires that single-family

residential lots must continue to be used only for single-family residential purposes. This prohibits converting a lot to commercial or industrial use.

3. The City enforces these restrictions on behalf of the designated property owners. The Planning Department will not support lot subdivision or a change of property usage prohibited by a designation ordinance.

A weakness of deed restrictions is that enforcement must be done by property owners against an errant property owner that may be a neighbor. This is why many neighborhoods in Houston no longer have enforceable restrictions.

The rule of thumb for a residential property owner is that if you like your home and the neighborhood you're living in, a lot size designation is beneficial to you because it helps to maintain the character of the neighborhood.

Keep in mind that the designation does NOT prohibit all subdivision of property. The owner of a very large lot can subdivide the lot if each resulting lot meets the size criteria.

The owner of two, or more, adjacent lots can sell individual

lots, even though they may not meet the size criteria. This is because no new lots are being created and the existing lot definitions antecede the designation.

Furthermore, any property not being used for single-family residential purpose can be used for any legal purpose, even though it is within the designation area. This grandfathers the condominium structure on Westcott.

Since the Glenwood designations, seven more designations have been enacted by City Council in our neighborhood. This makes most of the residences north of Memorial designated properties.

What's Left?

The 6200 block of Haskell, next to the school park, has no designation, and neither does Crestwood, south of Memorial.

If residents on Haskell or Crestwood want to pursue a lot size application, please contact me.

resident@crestwoodglencove.org



NOTICE OF SPECIAL MINIMUM LOT SIZE AREA APPLICATION

The Planning and Development Department has received an application for the establishment of a Special Minimum Lot Size Area (Sections 42-197 of the Code of Ordinances) for

Blocks 1-5 in Glencove III subdivision
Block 3 in Glencove II subdivision
6000 block of Feagan, south block face

For information, contact the
Houston Planning and Development Department at
(713) 837-7701
or the applicant at
(713) 203-5746

Board Members

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Board Member	Christine Kirschner		board3@crestwoodglencove.org
Board Member	Tom Tynan		board1@crestwoodglencove.org
Architecture Committee Liaisons	Gail Baxter Lon Stern Alan Svoboda Mike VanDusen	(713) 864-0221	architecture@crestwoodglencove.org



Blockheads

Street	Blockhead	Email Address
Arnot, Byway, Haskell	Carole Lopez	Arnot.Byway.Haskell@CrestwoodGlenCove.org
Blossom	Pilar Schneider	Blossom@CrestwoodGlenCove.org
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Terrace, SOB	Mary Christ	Terrace.South@CrestwoodGlenCove.org
West Cowan	Rebecca Marvil	WCowan@CrestwoodGlenCove.org

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