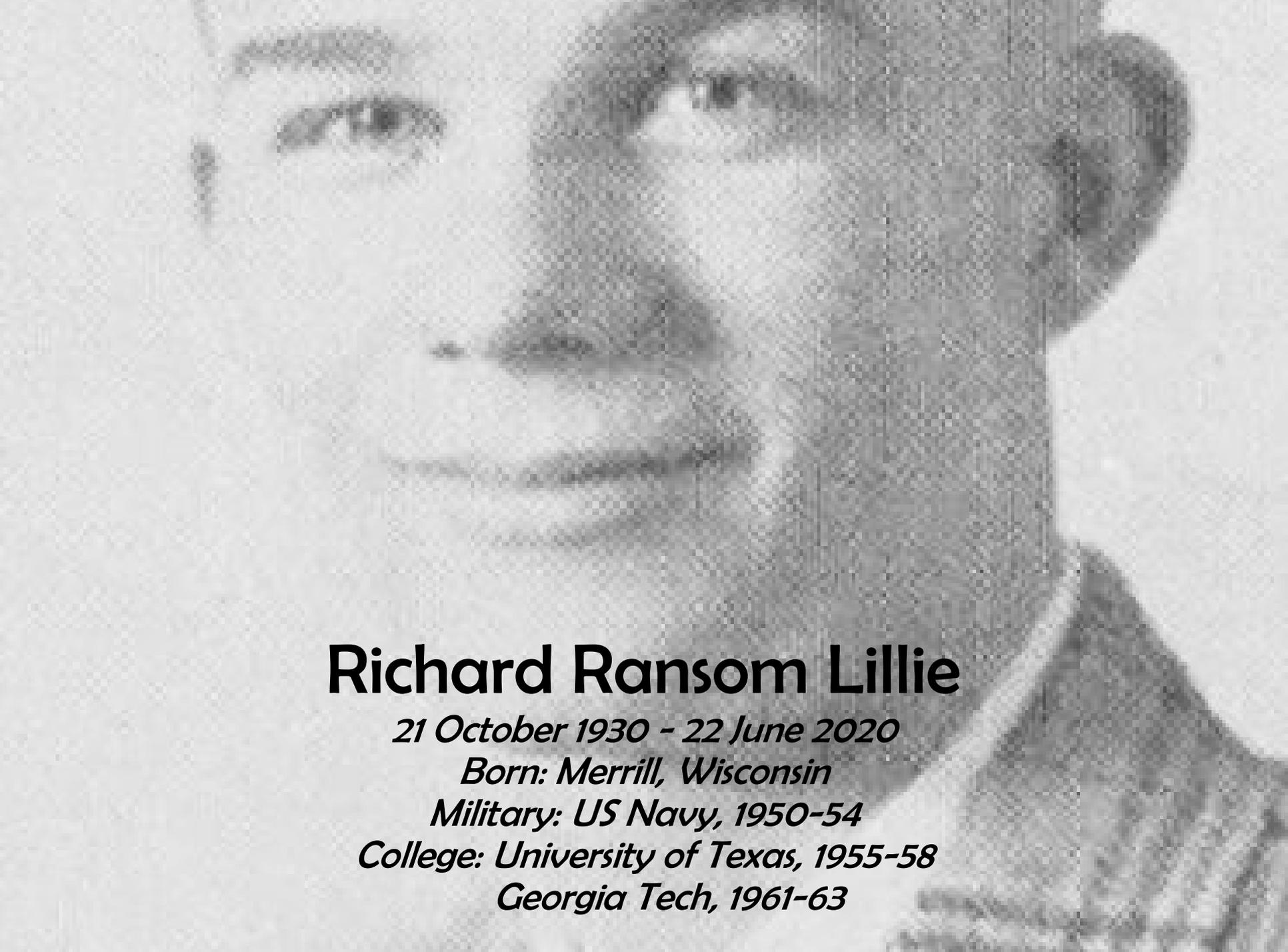




**Planning in Austin:  
The Lillie Legacy**



# **Richard Ransom Lillie**

*21 October 1930 - 22 June 2020*

*Born: Merrill, Wisconsin*

*Military: US Navy, 1950-54*

*College: University of Texas, 1955-58*

*Georgia Tech, 1961-63*

## In Memoriam

*It was on a hot August afternoon in Austin in 1961 when I first met Dick Lillie. As a recent UT graduate, I was checking out job possibilities in city hall. And as it turned out, Dick was leaving for graduate school and his position as a research analyst in the planning department was open. I was hired and Dick spent the next several weeks teaching me the basics of his job.*

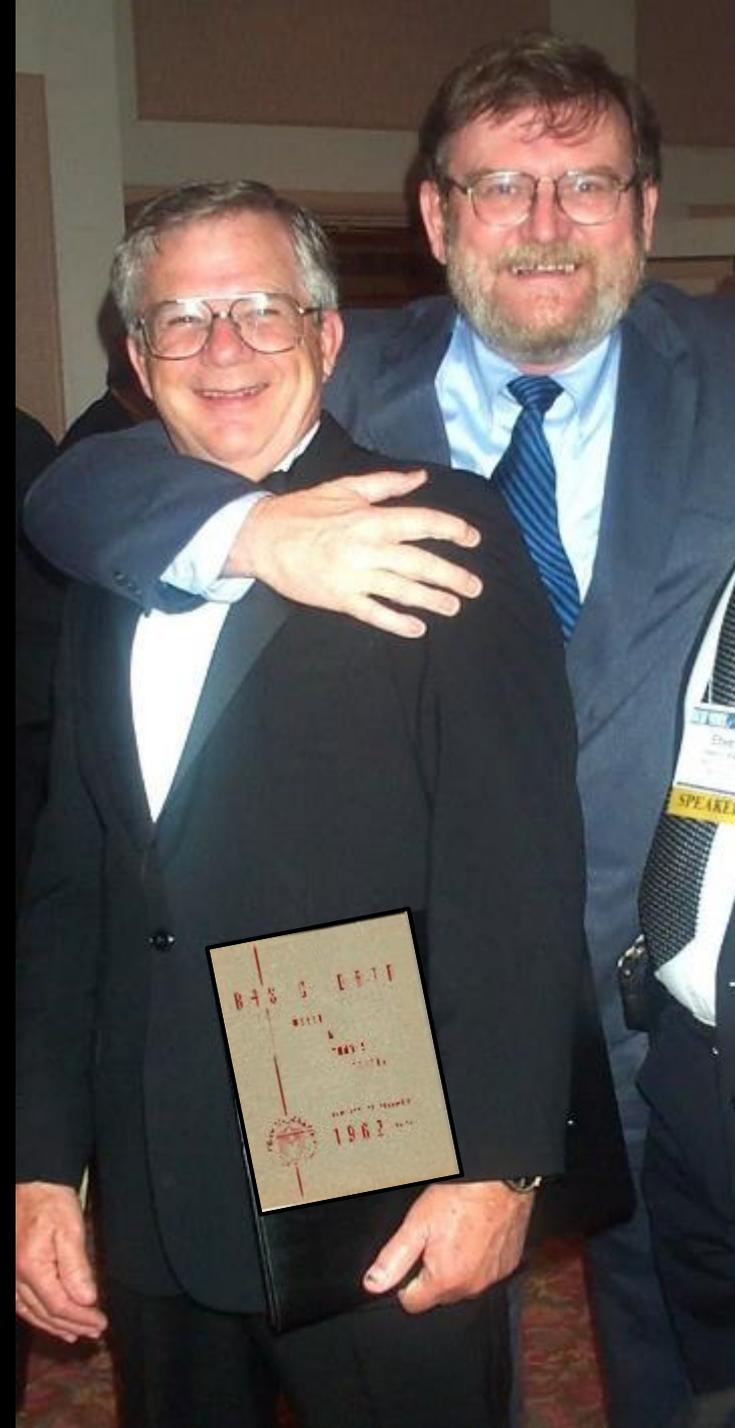
*Dick returned to Austin to continue his career in 1965 and when he finally decided to leave almost two decades later, I was again honored to assume his job responsibilities. And he was again there to ensure my smooth transition.*

*While I have often said that I twice replaced Dick, that is actually not true because Dick Lillie was not replaceable! In both 1961 and 1984, all I did was continue his work.*

*Over the past 60 years I have been associated with many many planners and, without hesitancy, I can say that none matched Dick's caring, competency and character.*

*Dick personified the perfect professional planner. Period!*

*Jim Duncan, FAICP*



# Homecoming

Planning Coordinator

Assistant Planning Director

Planning Director

8 May 1965

## Planning Job Goes To Richard Lillie

Richard Hanson (Dick) Lillie, 34, has been named to the new position of planning coordinator for the City of Austin.

Lillie has resigned effective May 28 as planning director for Waco to return to Austin where he worked in the planning department as research analyst and in senior planning from 1958 to 1961.

Osborne said he hopes Lillie will be able to start work in Austin by mid-May. He said the new position opened up as pressure for accelerated planning came from community redevelopment and urban renewal expansion.

The new Austin planning coordinator graduated from The University of Texas in 1958 with a business degree. He received his master's degree in city planning at Georgia Tech in May 1964, just before he took the Waco position.

He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Hanson Lillie, 3508 New Haven Court. His father is a linotype operator of 30 years experience, the last 14 years of the Austin American-Statesman. His mother, Mildred Lillie, works for BuPeep shop in Lamar Center.

Lillie has three brothers. Two are in the Navy at Corpus Christi. They are Lt. Robert B. Lillie, 27, an instructor in aerodynamics, and Wayne E. Lillie, 25, a chief at the Navy school. John Lillie, 19, is winding up his sophomore year at The University of Texas, where he also has worked in the computation center. John will be the fourth brother to graduate from UT.

The Lillie family moved to Austin 14 years ago from Madison, Wis., where the father since he would never spend another winter after his car fuel pump froze driving home from work at 2 a.m. one day.

Osborne said Lillie meets all professional qualifications for the new position and will do a fine job. His record as a beginner was excellent and his work at Waco has been highly praised.

"He has done a wonderful job for the City of Waco," Roberts told the Waco News-Tribune. "I have received many favorable comments on his work from people with whom he has been associated in city hall, members of the Planning Commission, and other citizens. We wish him well in his new position."

Lillie's letter of resignation at Waco read:

"Of the many pieces of correspondence I have written to you the past nine months this is by far the most difficult. One always hates to berminate employment when a positive atmosphere for the planning program appears to be increasing. However, I have been offered and have accepted the position of planning coordinator for the City of Austin.

"This past year has indeed been a rewarding and most satisfying planning experience. I wish to thank you and the city of Waco for allowing me to be of service."

Lillie's wife is the former Nelda Ruth Starler of Hamilton. They have two young daughters. The family will probably stay with Lillie's parents at Austin until they find a home.

12 Apr 1966

## Lillie Gets Position On Planning Board

Dick Lillie has been named assistant director of planning for the City of Austin.

The appointment of the 35-year-old Lillie, now planning coordinator with the city, was announced Monday by Planning Director Hoyle Osborne.

Lillie succeeds Alfred Davey, who left the \$10,000 a year job

for a position with the City of Houston planning department.

The new No. 2 planner will work mainly on long-range planning and application of long-range designs on current development, Osborne said.

As planning coordinator, Lillie has worked on the Community Renewal Program, urban renewal coordination, transportation plans, and Planning Department coordination with other agencies.

Lillie has been with the city on two stints since receiving his bachelor's degree in business administration at The University of Texas in 1958.

He was with the city as an associate planner following his graduation. He then went to Georgia Tech where he received his master's degree in city planning.

He then worked in Atlanta with the Federal Housing Administration and with a private consulting group.

In 1964 he was named planning director for the City of Waco. He returned to Austin as planning coordinator in June of 1965.

A native of Wisconsin, Lillie and his wife Nelda and two daughters live at 2208 Enfield Road.



American-Statesman/UPI  
**DICK LILLIE**  
Asst. Planning Director

4 Dec 1970

## City Planning Chief Chosen

Richard Lillie, assistant director of planning, was named director of the city's planning department, City Manager Lynn Andrews said Tuesday.

Lillie replaces Hoyle Osborne who resigned two weeks ago to go into private consulting work in January. Osborne will serve until late January as director of the Capital Area Planning Council.

Lillie, 40, has been with the city's planning department for five years. Before coming here, he served as planning director of Waco and was with a private consulting firm and the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

He graduated from the University of Texas and received his master's degree in planning from Georgia Tech.

# Austin Tomorrow

*"We are not concerned about whether growth, but we want to know when, where and how."*

Dick Lillie

*"Neighborhood planning ... allows ...a planning system tailored to ... individual areas."*

Dick Lillie

*"(Residents want) elimination of public and private policies which encourage growth."*

Dick Lillie

*"If it wasn't for Dick Lillie, the whole thing (Goals Program) would have folded by now."*

Dan Love, Mayor Pro Tem



24 Jul 1974

## Planning Director Faints At Meeting

By JOHN O'CONNELL  
Staff Writer

City Planning Director Dick Lillie collapsed Tuesday night during a meeting of the Austin Tomorrow goals assembly.

He was rushed to Brackenridge Hospital and released about an hour later. Officials at the scene speculated the cheerful, athletic, director fainted from anxiety and tension over the Austin Tomorrow program he has overseen more than a year.

Wednesday morning, city public information director Glenn Coates said Lillie was "okay," and would be back in his office Thursday.

City Manager Don Davidson, who "just happened to stop by" the meeting at the Joe C. Thompson Conference Center at the University of Texas, took over temporary chairmanship and continued the meeting. Davidson said he dropped in to see how easy persons appeared for the organizational meeting, the first for the assembly since May.

More than 100 of the approximately 300 goals assembly members attending the meeting elected neighborhood members from

assembly are Carolyn Osborne and Jim Wells (Zone 1), Francis Breynogle, and Dr. Juan Lujan (Zone 2), Sandra Wenslock and Allen McCree (Zone 3), Cathy Bonner and Alan Locklear (Zone 4), Joan Bartz and Don Sullivan (Zone 5), Valentino Perez and Sara Ann Robertson (Zone 6), Cary Jones and Cathy Brannon (Zone 7), D.P. Johnson and Carrie Yancey (Zone 8), Eugene McKee and Margaret Hoffman (Zone 9), and Bob Tinsman and Robert Mather (Zone 10).

Mrs. Bartz, a 45-year-old mother of five, said her intention as president is to produce "a guideline for a master plan for Austin that will be the very best for business, government and people."

"The end result of the assembly must reflect the thinking of all those persons who had a part in this program," she said, referring to the recently completed mass of analyzed data from over 50 neighborhood meetings.

Mrs. Bartz is employed in UT's purchasing department, but she said she would have time to execute her job as president of her children

to get the idea of the assembly translated into viable elements in the CIP (Capital Improvements Program) and the master plan.

"It's going to take some compromises on both sides, but it can be done," he continued.

"It doesn't make any difference what I think. I'm a mandat for the assembly," he said.

Asked whether he would have the time to devote to vice-presidency, because of the bi-weekly assembly meetings and more frequent executive meetings, McCree said, "I'll take the time."

He said one of his aims is to "preserve the quality of life in Austin, in spite of whatever growth occurs."

McCree, a tall, spare individual who frequently flashes a toothy grin, explained Austin's recent rapid growth.

"We have a paradise here and it's inevitable. I don't think it (Austin) needs to be actively promoted in order to grow. I think the internal economics will take care of that."

The assembly is scheduled to meet August 5.



Staff Photo by G. S. ...

**AUSTIN TOMORROW GOALS MEMBERS RUSH TO FALLEN DIRECTOR**  
City Planning Director Dick Lillie collapsed at meeting, but recovered moments later

*"All my vital signs were vital. When you are anxious about an occurrence or event and you have been working on it hard and you haven't eaten just right sometimes this happens. "*

Dick Lillie

# Housing

*"There is a segment of almost any community that doesn't have access to the advantages the majority enjoy."*

Dick Lillie

22 May 1973

**City Planner Lillie Views Equal Opportunity As Goal**

By DAVE MAYES  
Staff Writer

City Planner Dick Lillie says the real "urban crisis" facing Austin and other metropolitan areas is the challenge of providing equal opportunity for all urban residents.

In a recent interview, the city planning department director departed from the more traditional notions of "urban crisis" — usually expressed in terms of congestion, pollution and blight.

"These kinds of problems, all technically solvable, deal more with our comfort, convenience, energy or business advantage."

While it may be desirable to rank along the "ten most beautiful cities," Lillie contended that a city should really be judged "by its ability to produce desirable citizens."

One of the ways to underwrite the good health of a society is to insure that all its members have the same opportunity to compete, the planner explained.

"There is a segment of almost any community, however, that doesn't have access to advantages the majority of residents enjoy."

Due to poverty, ignorance, or other factors, the lot with some trees, a fairly isolated. Lacking large



**DICK LILLIE**  
City Planner

population has little chance at home ownership, the planner said.

These are the families with incomes near the poverty level. They form between 20 and 25 per cent of the city's population.

"What chance do they have, when the average building permit on new houses now runs at \$23,000?" Lillie asked.

Their housing options are few, and every year they are getting fewer, he said, explaining that annually 250 to 300 dilapidated structures are declared substandard and demolished by the city.

For the very poor, there is public housing, Lillie said. The rest are usually left with deteriorating rent houses.

"Presently this housing need is not being met by private homebuilders," Lillie said, "so they are an area where the city may be of help."

One of the ideas being considered, he said, is a city loan fund that would underwrite loans made by lending institutions to low-income people for housing repairs.

Another suggestion involves an urban renewal-type program in which the city would purchase a deteriorating house, repair it

# Preservation

*"It would be tragic to lose all of our older buildings."*

Dick Lillie

23 May 1973

**Lillie Wants Old Homes To Be Saved**

By CAROL NECKOLS  
Staff Writer

City Planning Director Dick Lillie told more than 100 residents of Clarksville neighborhood Tuesday night the City of Austin is considering a loan program to guarantee repayment of loans from banks for repair of older homes.

"It would be tragic" to lose the older buildings, he told community residents at Mathew School on West Lynn in West Austin.

He also told residents that although no action has yet been taken on a crosstown expressway through the area, "We're learning toward deleting the expressway."

He emphasized the need for other forms of transportation, including "no-fare" bus service and a "dial-a-bus" system which would provide flexible routing.

"The day of the expressway is gone forever," he said.

Residents in a discussion group on housing and zoning expressed a desire to obtain zoning changes from high-density residential to low-density areas.

The possibility of obtaining deed restrictions to prevent building of multifamily units on a lot in the future was mentioned as one way to halt the proliferation of apartment complexes.

Several residents signed up to work with Lillie on a master plan for the neighborhood and to be considered for membership on the Goals for Austin committees which will work with city officials on a long-range plan for city growth.

"The key is citizen participation," Lillie told the group. At one time officials didn't care if citizens were involved, "but now they're going to listen," he said. "The people are responding because they're being threatened," he added.

Jose Camacho of Austin Drug Central spoke on the need for drug education and met with a discussion group on the subject.

Other groups discussed neighborhood center projects, child care and a real estate cooperative to bring together home buyers and sellers.

# Capitol Views

*"The views are rapidly disappearing."*

Dick Lillie

9 May 1965

**CAPITOL VIEW**

## Criticism Rises High With Austin Building

By JACK KEEVER

AUSTIN — The word of protest from any legislator to prevent Austin from having a new high-rise building under construction near the capitol.

At issue is whether the height of Westgate will ruin the view. Legislators lost their chance by not speaking up when the Austin delegation and city council members inspected the land two years ago, says Austin Rep. Wilson Ferrans.

**Council Defeated**

He was extending the council's decision of refusing zoning re-

building would damage the view, but one word of complaint would have stopped the council from giving the company the go-ahead," Ferrans said.

Because of the city terms, even two-story buildings already block the view, as does the garage at the governor's mansion, says Austin Mayor Lester Palmer.

Grover said the capitol deserves a better neighbor.

Asking that the state buy the land where Westgate is being built, Grover said.

**Word of View**

"We always see, at similar respective apartment buildings, the way the balconies, and railings and things that are on the railings. This is the type of thing we see here."

building having to grow upward to handle increasing demand, but light height restrictions as buildings are erected.

Grover and Arledge have received support from the Texas State Historical Association and the State Building Commission.

"To look around at old apartment houses to know that a modern one today will seem dry to the water, perhaps originally or a terrace. Proof or counterproof, the capitol and its grounds will endure with dignity and beauty for generations to come," the association said.

The Houston Chronicle, with circulation against the building. The majority of the state capital should be protected," the paper said.

10 Oct 1982

## New View in Capitol battle seeks to draw shield zone

By PROUD VLEBERGHE

A NEW CONCEPT has been introduced into the political battle over height of downtown buildings, one that seeks to draw a shield zone around the capitol.

The plan is to create a shield zone around the capitol building to draw the eyes and height of downtown buildings away from the capitol.

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# Aesthetics

*"We have no voice in architectural design. There is really a need for (better) aesthetic design."*

Dick Lillie

16 Aug 1973

## Planning Chief Sees Need For Aesthetic Guidelines

This is the third in a five-part series examining zoning and planning in Austin.

By CAROLYN BONO Staff Writer

It's the first Thursday of the month, and the city council chamber's 86 seats are filled. There's a crowd in city hall corridors, and descending from the third floor are Planning Department employees, laden with charts and maps, ready to explain a zoning recommendation.

Zoning day at city council meetings, once a compendium of routine decisions, now attracts a crowd, all with definite opinions about what should be built, and where.

The man who finds himself on the spot, charged with providing answers to questions from citizens, council members and developers, is Planning Director **DICK LILLIE**.

Lillie occasionally finds himself in a bind, since zoning applications need only meet city specifications to receive his department's approval.

"We have no voice in architectural design," he says, "only in spatial aspects."

liberally with apartment complexes.

"Everything to that point had been denied, until an application adjacent to Baker School was approved by the council, overruling the department and the Planning Commission. Both feared there was danger of precedents being set."

Before an application goes all the way to council, however, the staff submits a written recommendation to the Zoning Committee, composed of five members of the Planning Commission.

They hold a public hearing and make a recommendation to the full commission, who can accept, reject or amend that recommendation, then send their decision on to the council.

A second public hearing is held by council, at the first meeting of each month, and then comes a near-final decision, subject only to citizen appeal.

If 29 per cent of the property owners within a 200-foot radius of the zoned property sign a petition appealing the council decision, the issue is rescheduled for hearing.

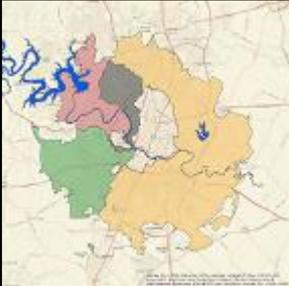
Six of the seven council members must vote to overrule a decision of the Planning Commission.

In the past year, zoning days have filled the council chambers with increasing regularity, and Lillie applauds the growing citizen involvement.

DIRECTOR **DICK LILLIE**  
heads planning staff

# Watersheds

1974 Waterways



1980 Lake Austin



1980 Barton Creek



1980 Williamson



1981 Lower



*“Despite a history of floods, there wasn’t a city ordinance addressing creeks until 1974; no rules for building on flood plains until 1975, no requirements for runoff until 1976.”*

American-Statesman

26 May 1981



# Watersheds

*The Memorial Day flood occurred only three weeks after Dick warned that the City should be spending more on enforcing watershed development.*

1 May 1981

## Preservation funds cut for Williamson Creek

By PEGGY VLEREBOME  
American Statesman Staff

An ordinance to protect the environmentally sensitive Williamson Creek watershed was in effect ditched Thursday when the City Council refused to appropriate money to implement it.

"We put ourselves and the staff in an interesting position" by passing an ordinance but not enforcing it, Mayor Carole McClellan said after she and Ron Mullen were on the losing side of a 3-2 vote.

"Let's either take the ordinance off the books or fund it," McClellan said.

Planning Director Dick Lillie said he would "inform developers that we will not be reviewing or monitoring" developments in the watershed.

David Bodenman, chairman of a council-appointed panel that wrote the ordinance, was shocked that the council did not approve money for employees and equipment to enforce it.

"If they really want to enforce the ordinance they could reorder their priorities"

and have existing city staff members take on the duty, Bodenman said.

Council members Betty Himmelblau and Lee Cooke objected to where the money would come from. The proposal was to take \$75,782 from the general fund ending balance. The money would have paid for enforcement through Sept. 30, the end of this fiscal year.

Councilman John Trevino joined Himmelblau and Cooke in voting against using the ending balance. Councilman Richard Goodman had left the meeting, and there's one vacancy on the council.

The financing request could be considered again by the council any time.

Trevino said he would agree to including enforcement money in the budget for the next fiscal year. Waiting until fall would be a little late, said Bodenman, who wasn't at the meeting.

The Williamson Creek watershed is south and west of the city and includes rapidly growing areas. Water that drains from it eventually flows into Barton Springs.

# Environment

*"A problem is getting us out of cars."*

Dick Lillie

18 Oct 1972

## Environmental Group Formed

By CRISPIN JAMES  
Women's Staff

Members of We Care Austin Women's Environmental Action Group accepted the challenge of Speaker Dick Lillie, director of planning for the City of Austin, to voice their concerns about Austin's environmental future at the first general meeting of the organization in the Memorial Church Tuesday.

The group of about 50 women divided into goal-setting task forces of land use; legislation; noise, air and sound; recreation; and environmental education. These task forces will aid Lillie and other city planners in a "goals program" at the "grass roots level."

Lillie said he hoped to meet with the mayor and city manager before the end of the month to undertake a goals program for the updating of the Austin Master Plan which was originally adopted in 1961.

"Most of the change in Austin has happened in the last 10 years," said Lillie. "We have 6,000 new people, 20,000 new

a master plan almost 12 years old." The period for development of a master plan is to be 18 months, said Lillie, with the second phase of study beginning in January.

During the first six months of study, said Lillie, the economic base, employment, income, ethnic density, mobility, housing quality, transportation, age ratios of the population and the effect of urbanization on the environment during the last 15 years are being studied.

The second phase of the plan will "identify growth alternatives," said Lillie.

He told the women that the 18-month period also was to provide opportunities for "power structures" in Austin "to participate in establishing the framework for future growth."

"There is a great deal of local pride and character to Austin power structures which results

in a lot of background work before decision making," he said.

But, he added, "There is no



# Utilities

***"If the bond issue doesn't pass, there will be no more permits."***

Dick Lillie

21 Nov 1976

*What if they gave an election and almost nobody came? That's the way it looked Saturday at precinct 332, at right. But voter turnout, though light, was heavier than expected.*

## Voters okay water bonds

By MIKE KELLEY

By a 67 percent margin, Austin voters Saturday approved issuance of \$78,327,500 in water and sewer bonds.

Proposition 1 — water bonds — won with 61.8 percent of the vote. Proposition 2 — sewer bonds — took 62.21 percent.

Voter turnout, though light, was greater than most observers had predicted. City Clerk Grace Monroe had been looking for 25,000 to 30,000. Final figures showed that 30,377 Austin residents — 17.6 per cent of registered voters here — showed up to the polls.

government city bond committee — which opposed the bonds — said dollars made the difference. "Look at the money that was spent on bond propositions," she said.

Waste Halloran, who chaired the ad hoc "Task Force on Water and Sewer Bonds," said by the time all reports are collected, he expects that group will have spent about \$2,000 in supporting passage of the measure.

Halloran said the group ran a poll before the election and found "voters were not aware of the implications of not passing these bonds. So what we needed to do was get that message to them." He said most of the circum-

"Very clearly," said an elated Mayor Jeff Friedman, "we got the point across that the necessities of Austin as a quality city depended on passing these bonds."

City Councilman Lowell Leberknecht agreed with that. "I think we did a better job than in last year's bond election, when a \$182 million bond was financed by voters, of making the public aware of the crucial necessity of these bonds. As I moved around the city today (Saturday) and visited with voters, it was clear they had a better understanding of why the bonds were needed."

Doc Casey, head of the University of Texas student life's group, was spent on advertising and as brochures mailed to various neighborhoods.

Casey said also that her group had held all in announcing its opposition until shortly before the election because of efforts to make a compromise with Mayor Friedman.

Friedman has charged that Casey reneged on her pledge of support, and she has said Friedman didn't move toward setting up the commission as he'd promised.

(See BONDS, Page A1)

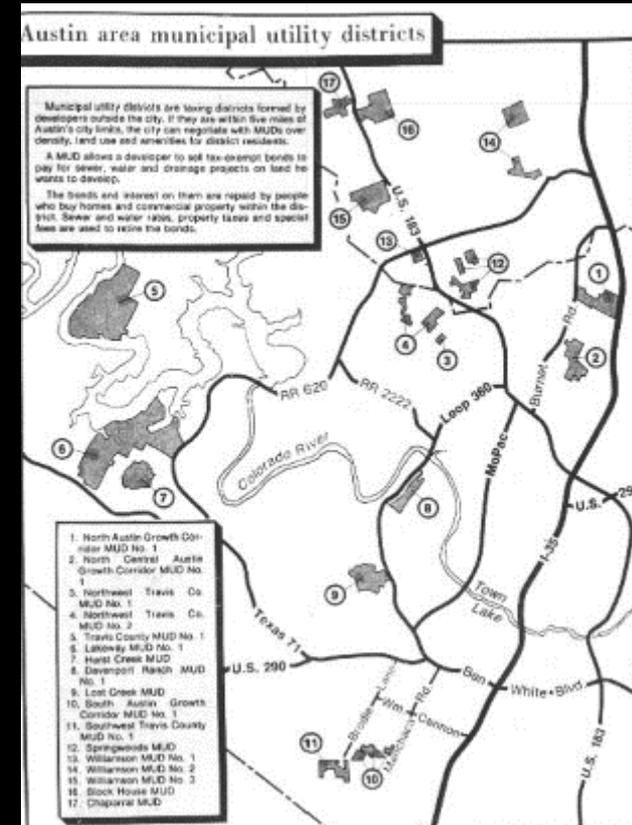


# Utility Districts

***"Eighteen months ago, we had no process for the review of municipal utility districts. Now, we've got the best in the state."***

Dick Lillie

10 Jul 1983

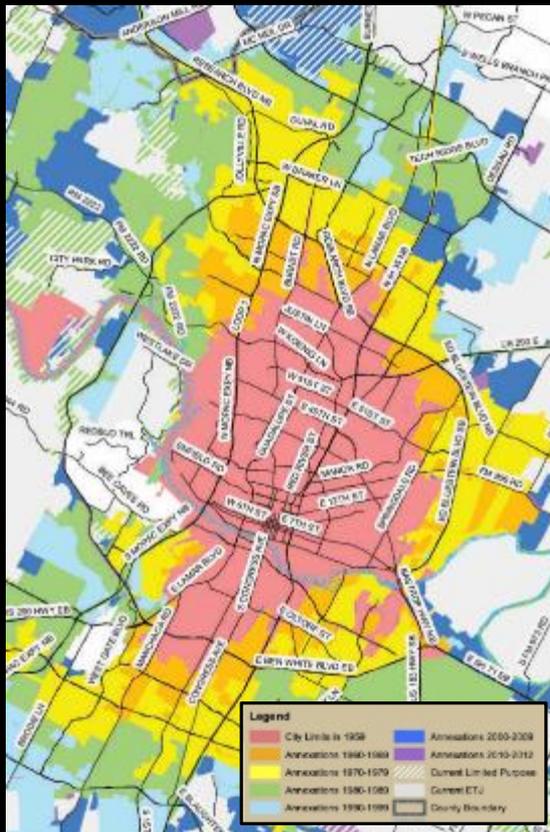


## Annexation

*“The (183 Corridor) is bursting at the seams to develop.”*

Dick Lillie

17 Oct 1978



Austin doubled in area during Lillie Years

## Interim Zoning

*“(Eliminating) interim zoning is a massive procedural task, but one I asked the city council to fund on an area-by-area basis.”*

Dick Lillie

25 Jun 1982



# Zoning

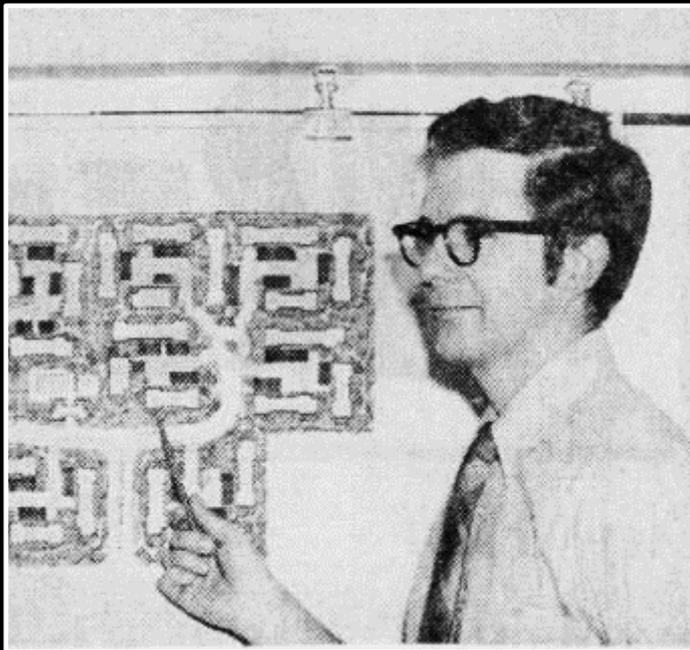
*“Cluster housing in planned unit developments can minimize the negative impact of growth.”*

*Dick Lillie*

*“The ordinance should cut down on speculative zoning and speculative buying of property.”*

*Dick Lillie*

7 Feb 1971



25 Jul 1980

## City okays stricter zoning law

By BRUCE HIGHT  
American Statesman Staff

The City Council adopted without debate Thursday a new ordinance aimed at preventing Burnet Road-like strip development along the city's thoroughfare.

Similar to an earlier ordinance along U.S. 183, the new city law extends development rules to MoPac, Interstate 35, RM 2222, Loop 360, Ed Bluestein Boulevard and Ben White Boulevard.

Councilman Ron Mullen predicted that the new ordinance would mean "enhanced values." Mayor Carole McClellan said she thought it "will prevent the access to a side road."

Major provisions of the new

have to have at least 10 feet of buffering, and light industry must have 50 feet.

- The size and placement of commercial signs are limited. For example, each business is restricted to one freestanding sign. Other restrictions involve the use of billboards and require that signs on buildings be no higher than the roof line.

- Driveways off designated roads must be at least 200 feet apart. If traffic is heavy enough, right-turn lanes are required. This provision means that if a developer has a lot only 150 feet wide, he must join with the owner of an adjacent lot to build a single driveway or provide access to a side road.

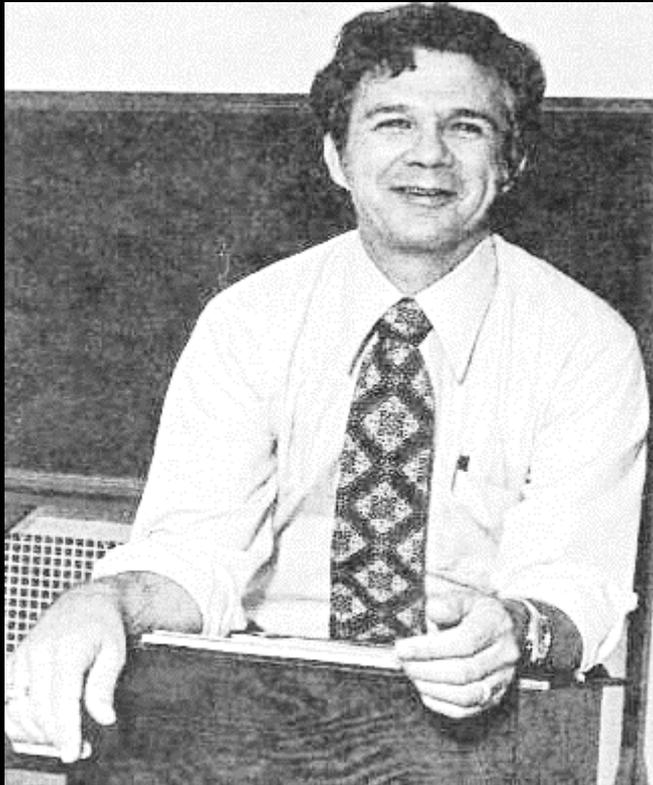
planning director, said the driveway restrictions would prevent too

# Growth

*“Even if we had two million people, if the right decisions were made, Austin's quality of life could be maintained”*

*Dick Lillie*

16 Oct 1974



*“We need a larger planning staff. We get so bogged down in routine processing that we don't have the time for important issues.”*

*Dick Lillie*

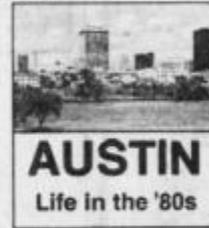
19 Nov 1979

## Planning 'in a vacuum' blamed

By BILL COLLIER  
American Statesman Staff

Austin developers say they would like to see more, not less, city planning. But they are critical of the city staff for formulating growth management controls "in a vacuum" and then being overly defensive about them.

While developers seem to feel the city has improved its processing of subdivision plans, once a sore and costly point with them, they are still unhappy with the city's inflexibility on subdivision regulations. What works northeast of Austin may be asinine southwest of town, they say.



Bill Milburn, one of Austin's biggest developers, said he believes the city should be doing more advance planning and more planning in areas outside city limits that one day will become part of the city.

One of the first builders in the U.S. 183 North corridor, Milburn said there were clear early signs that growth in the area would be explosive. When a new Safeway went up on land he sold for the Barrington Oaks shopping center, Milburn said, the store overnight became the highest volume Safeway store in town.

At the same time, traffic volumes on key streets were doubling each year, he said. "That should have told them something," he said. "I've felt like they could have planned it better."

Gary Bradley, developer of Rob Roy, a low-density development planned on the Lake Austin Peninsula, said that most of the city planning effort "seems to be reacting to the problems, rather than being comprehen-

# Accolades

*"... instrumental in ... Barton Creek Plan."*

Environmental Council

## Ecologists Laud City Planner

New City Planning Director Richard Lillie got a vote of confidence from local conservationists in the latest issue of the Austin Environmental Council's newsletter.

The bulletin says Lillie has "demonstrated tremendous ability in the orderly, fair and nondestructive development of the city."

It mentions Lillie as "instrumental in the development of the Barton Creek Plan," a program for development of the Barton Creek area as a preserved natural resource of Austin.

Lillie, who has earned a masters degree in city planning from Georgia Institute of Technology, moved up from assistant city planner after Director Hoyle Osborne stepped out of the post to go into private consultant work last month.

*"... most competent planning director in the Southwest."*

Austin Association of Homebuilders

## Growth of Austin AAHB Meet Topic

Austin's past, present and future growth will be the subject under discussion when Austin Planning Department Director Dick Lillie, City Planning Director, addresses members of the Austin Association of Homebuilders Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. in the Country Club of Austin.

In making the announcement L. A. Felder, AAHB president, called attention to the fact that the meeting had been moved back one day from its original schedule.

The evening's social hour will be sponsored by Concrete Co.

Lillie received a BBA degree from UT in 1958, a MCP degree from Georgia Tech in 1964 and has been in city planning work

The information to be covered will include changes which have taken place in Austin's history and how these changes have affected the city's growth.

Growth estimates for the next ten years, and constraints that affect growth patterns, will be identified.

Lillie will also give a brief outline on how individuals can become involved in the planning process and decision making that affect our city.

*"... backbone of the Austin Tomorrow program."*

Austin Junior Bar Association



Dick Lillie

## Lillie Wins Bar Award

City Planning Director Dick Lillie is the 1974 recipient of the Liberty Bell award, given by the Austin Junior Bar Association for outstanding service to the community.

Lillie was tapped for the honor for his work in the Austin Tomorrow Program.

"He has been the backbone of the Austin Tomorrow Program. Lillie has given generously of his time and his energies to ensure the development of the city's Master Plan which reflects the wishes of Austin's citizenry," Paul Davis, secretary-treasurer of the junior bar said, in presenting the award.

Under Lillie's direction the city planning department was responsible for administering the Austin Tomorrow Program, an effort that ultimately involved some 3,500 individual citizens during the three phases of the program.

## City Council

*"(Lillie) is a capable confident fellow. ... I never heard of anyone on the council dissatisfied with him, though a lot of the more conservative people felt he was too liberal. He did have his share of beards and Volkswagens working for him."*

Mayor Roy Butler



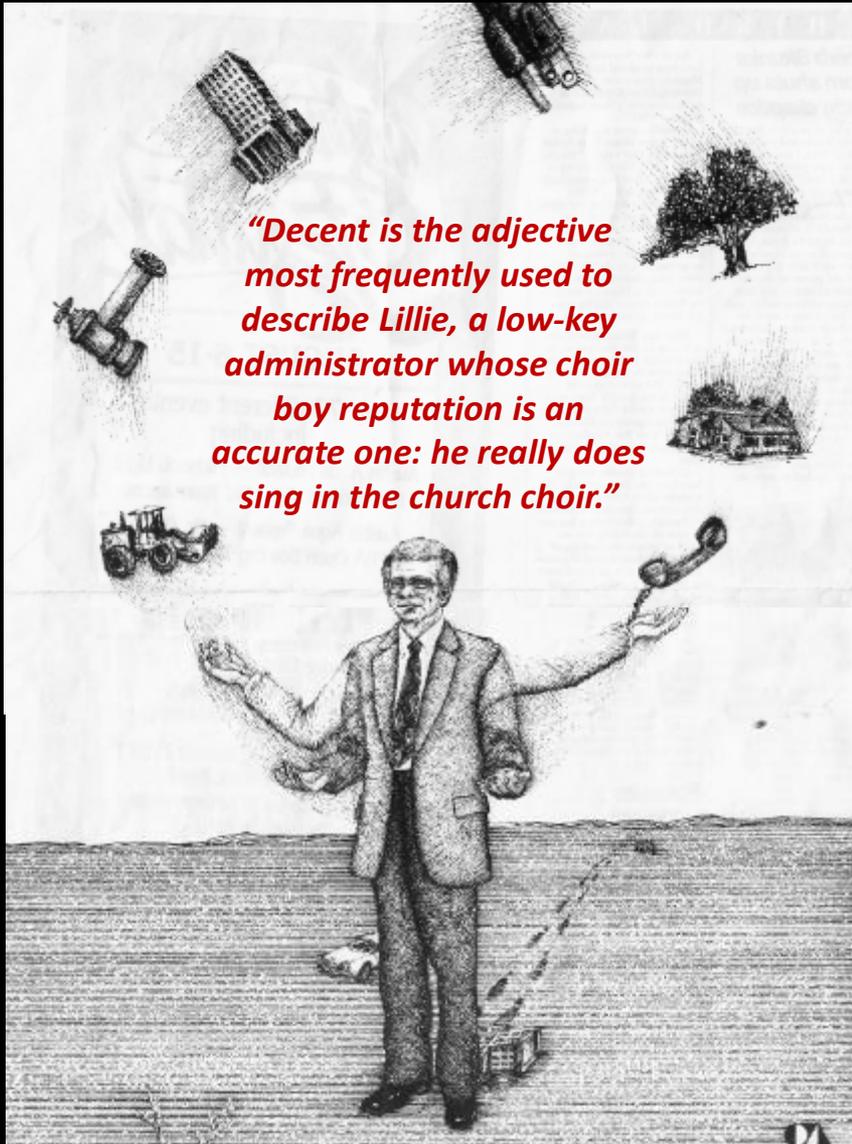
*"The most unique thing about Dick Lillie is that he has survived in Austin through some very innovative planning efforts. He's a very diplomatic person, very talented in the art of negotiation. He has the ability to get along with everyone."*

Sally Shipman, Councilmember

# Reputation

August 1982

***"Decent is the adjective most frequently used to describe Lillie, a low-key administrator whose choir boy reputation is an accurate one: he really does sing in the church choir."***



# AUSTIN'S BEST Laid PLANS ...

## Dick Lillie & the Politics of City Planning

...Department head. He serves as the pleasure of the city manager, who in turn is at the beck and call of the city council. It is a position of Lillie's exceptional versatility that he is now on his third city assignment, and that more of the 30 council members under whom he has served, are their respective constituents, are the developers the department is charged with assisting, has ever called for Lillie's head on a platter.

"He was unique among those I've known in that he's served in Austin and served through some very intensive planning efforts," says zoning commissioner Dale Shipman, a neighborhood activist who is campaigning a bid for the city council. "It's a very diplomatic person, very talented in the art of negotiation. He has the ability to get along with everyone."

"Decent" is the adjective most frequently used to describe Lillie, a low-key administrator whose choir boy reputation is an accurate one, he really does sing in the church choir. "I really like Dick Lillie, and I know that most sincerely," says Mayor Cook McClellan. "He was one of the first persons I asked to whom I was thinking about naming for mayor, because he's one of the most knowledgeable people about where the city is going."

For all his savvy and apparent success, Lillie remains something of an enigma. In a profession that skulks on the ground level, the shaping of man-made cities, who works behind the scenes, Lillie is renowned for keeping his name to himself. His life in the Austin American-Statesman magazine contains only one snippet from an 17 year career here, including a self-labeled, retirement story from 1965, when Lillie resigned as planning director of Swan to become Austin's planning coordinator, a new position under then-planning director Fred Johnson. No further mention of the "Decent Man, Lillie, though his department has been at the eye of Austin's continuing struggle for the past eight years, over area, the matter of growth and how to manage it became the headline at one point.

By Brenda Bell

Illustration by Don Albert

While debate has escalated over sewer lines and growth corridors, cracks in the city and industries in the century as one massive development after another has crowded Austin's famed "hobby heaven," the hill country hills, west of the city. Lillie has kept a safe distance from the fray. In contrast with former city manager Dan Flavin, whose downfall was in part the result of his being perceived not as a neutral administrator, but a pro-development party man, Lillie has successfully avoided all that.

"In as doing, he's acquired critics who think he's too soft on developers, too reluctant to lead his department in taking tough stands on growth issues. When the going gets rough, they say, Lillie gets going — out the back door."

"He doesn't like to make people mad, and he's not good at avoiding that," says a staff member. "You can't be aggressive without stepping on people, and most people are used to developers and politicians."

"Somebody once said to me, 'Dick, you ought to be more aggressive.' That's probably right," Lillie replies. "I don't know how to tell people what to do. I'm just sure there are people out there who expect the department to be more of an advocate. But as a city department, we don't have the luxury of being a strong advocate of any one cause."

Recognizing that history has helped undermine Lillie's success, "they tell you to 'blow it off.' If you are an advocate planner, you won't survive," says Shipman. "It's a real tragedy. Planning directors who pursue things in the public interest don't last."

One need not look very far for evidence of this reality. In Dallas, planning director Jack Schepers is on the way out after he clashed with one of the city's most powerful developers, and his department failed to plan for north Dallas and also problems with the city council. Schepers came from San Francisco only three years ago. In the past 12 years, Dallas has had three planning directors.

"No experience is that a planning director will last three to five years before making it to retirement, unless he's got some special ability," says Shipman. "I've worked at a few cities, have been able to stay, and I find that as a temptation. They're becoming so accustomed to one another's actions, whether they're good or bad, that they're afraid to change."

No one, it seems, has ever questioned Lillie's supply of marble. A conservative Democrat, he is usually seen in the company of a member of Quality Austin in an argument over doing good by real estate interests and a neighborhood centering around, but in a baroque and highly and demagogic as usual Lillie makes his head in pin down — it's like taking jelly on a wall.

"I will don't know where he's coming from, he's so cautious, I can't decide whether he's one master politician or just follows orders," says a member of the planning commission.

"It's just a difficult job," says David Arribas, an attorney for some of the city's largest and most controversial developments, including the Neo, Phillips, Copeland municipal utility district, the Mopac reconstruction, and developer Derek Wilson's Sheppard's Mountain project. "Obviously in the city he has to be flexible and responsive to change. I know he has his own ideas on how growth ought to occur, but he has the ability to set those ideas aside. I don't think he ought to be in the position of setting public policy on growth."

"Lillie's just a regular cookie-cake. I don't think he knows what you want to hear and he just says it to you," says former mayor Roy Butler. "I never heard of anyone on the council disagreeing with him, though a lot of the more conservative people like Lillie and me, actually, he did have his share of back-seat voters who were waiting for him."

"Do you think he's here to stay?" asked a member of Lillie's staff with amusement. "You're wrong, you make your mistakes. His job is to absorb the demands, the interests, and the anger of all the people in the downtown area process who are being sacrificed by the city. As long as he does a pretty well."

The staff member smiled. "Our job is to keep people from firing me if I'm in a bad plan."

# Resignation

*"This office has never been controversial in my opinion. We have always taken the objective role. We never play favorites. We try to inform everyone who comes through the door what the rules are, if they want to play by them."*

Dick Lillie

29 Apr 1984

## Retiring 'referee' lauded for fairness in city planning game

By ROBERT CULLICK  
American-Statesman Staff

A testament to Dick Lillie, who ended 23 years as a planner of Austin growth Friday, is that developers and neighborhood groups, lobbyists and environmentalists all say the same thing about him — he always lent a friendly ear and was somewhat sympathetic to their cause.

In Austin, where growth has been the center of public debate for a decade, the city Planning Department is often the arena of bitter disputes.

Lillie, planning director for 11 years, arbitrated those disputes. Most observers considered him a fair referee.

**"HE DID NOT** seem to alienate any group in the city, and that's a statement in itself," a former planning commissioner said.

"This office has never been controversial, in my opinion," Lillie said. "We have always taken the objective role. We never play favorites. We try to inform every one who comes through the door what

the rules are, if they want to play by them."

Lillie begins work this week for Barnes/Connally Investments, a development company with plans to develop 3,000 acres of the Barton Creek watershed.

Lillie said that unlike other city officials who have gone to work for developers, he will not lobby city departments and citizen boards for approvals.

**"THE ONLY APPOINTMENTS** I make up here will be social," Lillie said.

Gilbert Martinez, chairman of the nine-member Planning Commission that makes recommendations to the City Council on planning and zoning cases, said, "I think Dick gave the Planning Department a lot of leadership, but he was not flamboyant. He didn't try to push his own programs."

A longtime observer of city planning called Lillie a "survivor" who rarely put his name on controversial recommendations. "That's how he managed to get along for such a long time," the observer



Ex-planning chief Dick Lillie is called a 'survivor' who rarely backed controversial ideas.

said. Martinez said Lillie has faced a difficult situation: The City Council has demanded more long-range planning.

**"THE PROBLEM** with long-range planning is that we have always planned an ideal situation without voting the money to pay for it. Dick has had to wrestle with this problem," Martinez said.

The comprehensive growth plan of the city was the result of a grassroots education campaign that involved 3,500 Austin residents.

That widespread public involvement was the result of the philosophy of open citizen access that Lillie incubated in Austin for two decades.

Public access was central to Lillie's ideas about city government. He said the central goal of the city was not construction of roads, sewers and libraries. Instead, "I think what we have to worry about is the welfare of the individual in the

community. It seems to me we ought to make sure the environment can be protected so that people growing up and growing old can have protection."

Lillie thought the best way to do that was to allow public participation in decisions of government.

**"I THINK THIS** city government is very sensitive to the concerns of individuals," Lillie said. "In how many cities can citizens go to the council with their problems and get them taken care of. This government is wide open."

Citizen concerns about the preservation of the quality of life during the Austin boom have led to lengthy reviews of proposed developments. Developers have complained to the City Council, though, about delays caused by what they see as endless bureaucracy and reviews of their projects by citizen boards.

**WHEN METRO AUSTIN**, an association of business leaders and

professionals, called last fall for splitting the Planning Department to separate long-range planning from the development permit process, the City Council reacted enthusiastically. Soon after the council selected Jorge Carrasco to replace Nicholas Meisler as city manager, Carrasco split the departments to streamline the development process.

That is when Lillie resigned, citing a desire to leave the public spotlight for a job in private industry.

Lillie, 53, said he has never been disappointed in his job. "One has got to understand the political process as a planner and your role in it. The process calls for the political leadership to make decisions.

"It's been fun. I have found every day to be different and I have mixed emotions about leaving. But I'm going to do it anyway. This family around me is going to be different on Monday, and I'm going to miss that terribly."

*"I sincerely regret your decision to leave the city... I appreciate your many contributions over the past twenty-two years."*

Jorge Carrasco, City Manager

# The Mentor

*“What I have to offer is what most classes don’t have – that which comes out of real life, the approach of how it really happens.”*

Dick Lillie

## Dick Lillie:

By SUSIE STOLER  
Texas Staff Writer

As director of planning for the City of Austin, Dick Lillie worries about a lot of gaps to bridge.



### City Director of

However, more challenging to him than bringing together citizens and City Council or seeing project plans turned into reality is the bridge he crosses every Thursday at 7 p.m.

Once a week, after a usually grueling City Council meeting, the coat and tie come off, the sleeves are rolled up and the 42-year-old city administrator becomes instructor of a University graduate course on community and regional planning, CAP 991. An interdisciplinary mixture of a dozen students from schools and colleges such as engineering, business and law, cluster around him as he outlines the course content which emphasizes “bridging” technical theory and actual accomplishments of plans.

“What I have to offer is what most classes don’t have — that which comes out of real life, the approach of how it really happens,” he explained in his office in the Planning Department’s new downtown home at Second and Lavaca Streets.

As head of the 45-member department which is operating on a budget of more than \$30,000 this year, Lillie extracts new alternatives and ideas from his classes which he has taught for two years.

“I don’t know all the ways to accomplish the purpose of a program. All the things you can share, I’m going to share with my staff,” he tells the novice planners.

How does a planning director find time and interest to devote to an academic environment?

Lillie finds the latter part of the question easier than the first.

“I was invited to do this as a guest lecturer and really enjoyed

## profile

it. So, now I’m a lecturer in the community and regional planning program.

“Students are the best group in the world to test you. They’re better than anybody. They think things through with brand new options.”

An alma mater nostalgia may have influenced his enthusiasm as he received his undergraduate business degree from the University and later earned a master’s in city planning from Georgia Tech.

His schedule, which he terms “terrible,” must yield to four night meetings a week, including the class, Zoning Commission, Planning Commission and City Council meetings.

However for some of those meetings, Lillie will be absent

### Planning Learns by Instructing Students



Lillie leads a discussion in community and regional planning.

—Texas Staff Photo by David Mee

ment, he drives around the city to get re-educated in an area of the community and involved.

Involvement becomes a two-way street many times as citizens, including students, were directly solicited to produce alternatives to planning problems.

“Take the five students who drew up plans for the Walker Creek development, whose 2000 blocks following the creek are being developed now according to their plans. There’s just an awful lot of talent to compute. It’s all there to be drawn from, and they’re ready to work.”

Lillie recommends that other city department heads get up from their office desks and move into the classroom once in a while.

# Dick and APA



*Reception in Seattle*



*Limo in San Francisco*



*Award in Austin*



*Fellows in DC*

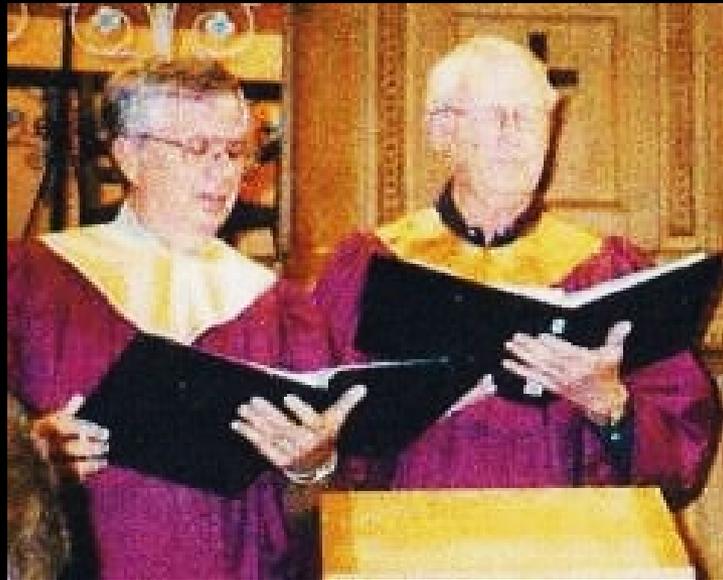
# The Singer

26 Sep 1954

## SHORT TALES ON LONGHORNS

More than any other University singing group, the A Cappella Choir, under the direction of DR. ARCHIE JONES and famous across the United States, must decide upon its members at the earliest possible date.

Auditions were held last week and these Austin students are now members of the choir: PEGGY GREGORY, JO ANN HALE, SISSY JOHNSON, JANELLE JOSEPH, JULIA KNIKER, **LILLIE**, **LILLIE**, HUGH SANDERS, PATCH SHAW, G. H. WHEELER and PAT WILLIAMS.



# The Sailor

9 Dec 1959

## First Methodist Choir To Sing

The sanctuary choir of First Methodist Church combines with an orchestra of 24 pieces Sunday at 7:30 p.m. to present "The Christmas Story."

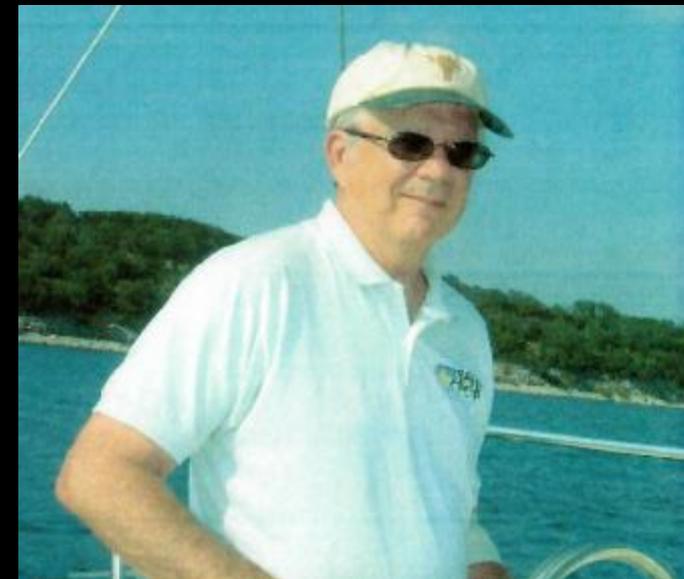
Soloists will be Norma Newton, Ross Hise and Jack Cantrell. Passages of Scripture will be narrated by Jim Farr and Sigred Berg, Joyce Brewer, **Dark Lillie** and Roland Cole will join the soloists in the trio numbers.

The public is invited to attend this service. First Methodist Church is located at 12th and Lavaca Streets. Marvin Soward, minister of music for the church, will conduct the choir and orchestra.

1951



1993



# The Lillie Legacy: 1965-1984

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- *Austin Tomorrow*
- *Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance*
- *Growth Policy*
- *Watershed Ordinances*
- *Capitol View Ordinance*
- *Loop 360 Ordinance*
- *Historic Preservation Ordinance*
- *Annexations*
- *Municipal Utility Districts*



Downtown 1968