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REMINDER! Member Survey on Neighborhood Developments 🏠

2 messages

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Mon, Aug 12, 2024 at 7:13 PM

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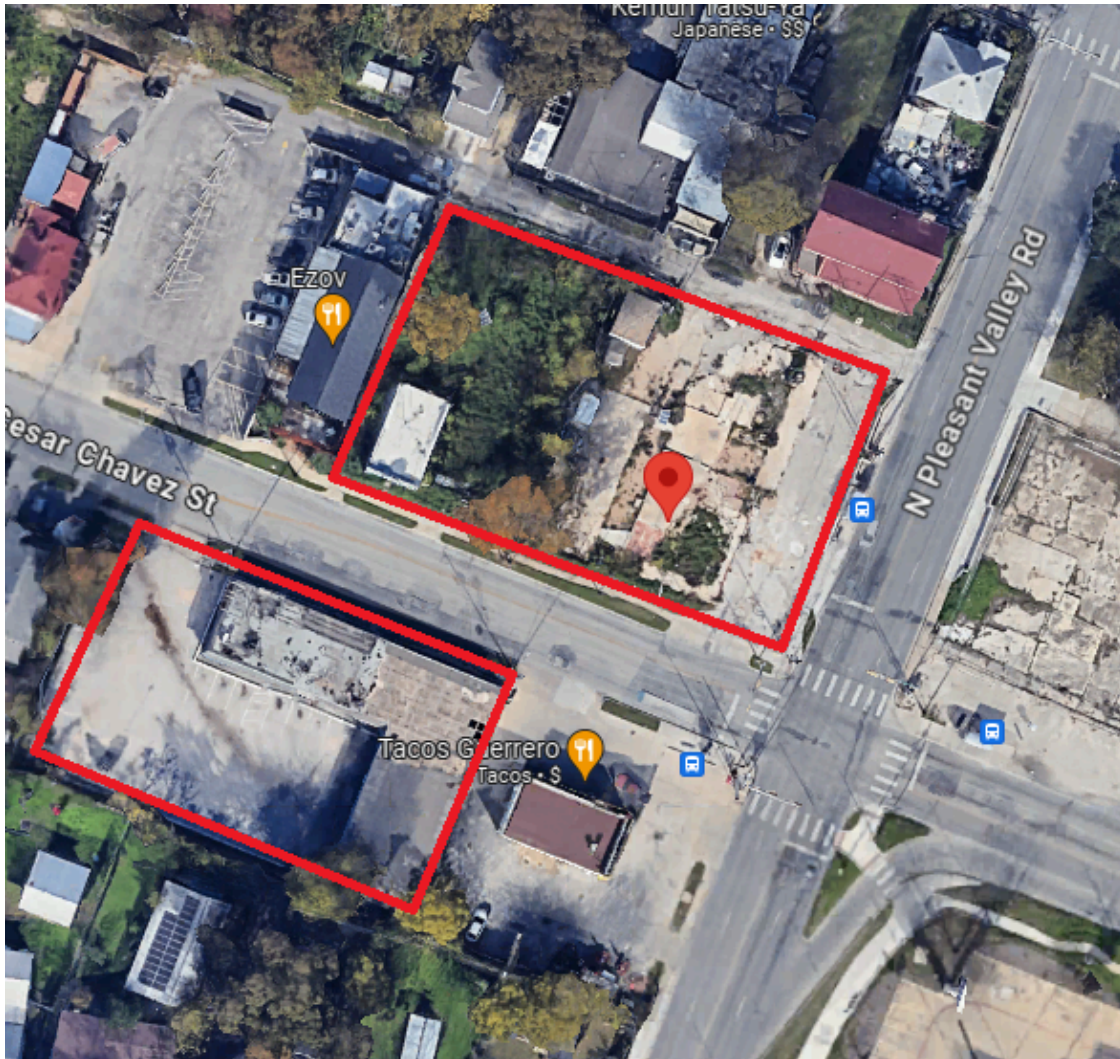
Holly Members,

The board and development committee of The Holly Neighborhood Association has identified two development items in our neighborhood in which we would like to poll our members before taking a stance on the projects. As a non-profit seeking to represent our neighbors, we are asked time to time by various parties to express an opinion related to a development. In many cases we abstain, and instead do our best to share information with our members so that their inclinations can be expressed privately. However, we believe these two projects are impactful enough that taking a collective stance on the development would be beneficial to the residents of Holly. Below, we have a link to a quick survey and detail surrounding both projects - we'd love to get your feedback!

[Start Survey!](#)

EV Charging Stations

Voltera conditional use permit appeal to City Council to allow for commercial electric vehicle charging stations



HISTORY: EV charging company Voltera is seeking City Council support to build charging stations for commercial vehicles on their properties at 2711 E Cesar Chavez and 2730 E Cesar Chavez. [In April, Voltera's initial application](#) was denied by the Planning Commission, citing the lack of fit a charging station would have in our neighborhood, and resident opposition. The vote was 7-3-3, seven opposed, three in favor, and three abstaining. Following this ruling, Voltera initiated an appeal of the Planning Commission decision.

CONSIDERATIONS: The Holly NA board has expressed concerns over the degree of fit a commercial charging port has in our neighborhood, the persistent on-site lighting and potential noise from the generators, the quoted/expected number of vehicles to pass through the site daily, the upkeep of the landscaping over time, and the small number of public charging spaces currently available. [Here is a short presentation from Voltera](#) on the proposed sites, [and this link](#) details a California project designed by Voltera for trucks (Cesar site for sprinter vans or smaller only).

ADDITIONAL DETAIL: Following the Planning Commission hearing, Voltera has proposed changes to their project plans to include two public EV charging spaces, a Metrobike station, a combined drinking water and hand-washing station, a community seating area, and educational signage. These changes are included in the design linked above. The stations would include 24/7 security with overnight downward lighting and enhanced landscaping of the sites. The included equipment will generate a hum (not louder than the sound of a refrigerator or a passing car). Voltera's projection for vehicle trips added to the intersection/roadways surrounding the development is approximately 100 per day. Statements made by

the Planning Commission regarding their votes, as well as a statement from the law firm representing Voltera, can be found in the Austin Monitor article linked above.

Expedition School Boat Dock

Proposed dock for use by The Expedition School in the lagoon at Edward Rendon Park



HISTORY: [The Expedition School](#), founded in 2006, has provided the community at large and the Holly Shores neighborhood safe, fun, and transformative outdoor experiences and safety training classes for Austinites of all ages and ability. The School offers free and/or low cost programs to low socioeconomic status (SES) populations, AISD, non-profits, youth, elders, and adaptive participants. The School originally operated their SUP, canoe and kayak programs in the shared space with the Lorraine Grandma Camacho Center dock and shoreline. The School was (temporarily) moved to the Nash Hernandez boat ramp in 2020, and now seeks a permanent home on the western edge of the lagoon. [Information on the proposal can be found here](#), which includes a more detailed history of the site planning process, a comparison to The Texas Rowing Center, and site plan detail.

CONSIDERATIONS: The Holly Board has expressed concerns related to the commercialization of the park and concession allowance, the proposed size of the dock, the environmental impact and additional traffic to the area, and ownership rights to the dock should the Expedition School go out of business. The

board also expressed concerns over the process by which the city decided to amend the Holly Shores plan, and the fact that the construction of the dock may make parts of that plan unrealizable. The board takes care to note that the construction of the dock has neighborhood support from the Holly coalition, and that The Expedition School has been operating for many years in the Holly neighborhood at a nearby location to the proposed dock.

ADDITIONAL DETAIL: The dock, as we understand it, would allow for residents of Holly to rent SUPs, kayaks, or canoes during School operating hours. Residents may launch their own watercraft from the dock during operating hours - as long as there are no reserved programs that are currently utilizing the space (adaptive programs for intellectually developmentally disabled, blind and visually impaired, programs for youth, etc.). No motorized boats will be operated or are being added. No food concessions are being added, and no alcohol will be sold. The dock would also not be accessible outside the Expedition school's operating hours due to theft and vandalism - all challenges they have faced historically throughout the night in the area.

City Council voted in 2019 an ordinance authorizing a boating concession on Lady Bird Lake for The Expedition School and to amend the Holly Shores/Edward Rendon, Sr. Park Master Plan. The amendment was to indicate the location of The Expedition School's boating concession given 1) The support for this project by Holly residents at the time; 2) The School being the only boating rental in the north shore, Eastside; and 3) The positive, sustainable, and impactful mission and community benefit of the School continues to bring to the area.



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Tue, Aug 13, 2024 at 8:03 AM

[Quoted text hidden]

Question 1 has 25 answers (Radio Buttons)




“Judging only the Voltera project as proposed, which of the following options describes your level of support most accurately?”



Question 2 has 25 answers (Open Text)

“Given your previous answer, what concerns or considerations did you weigh to come to your decision? If you chose “support with concessions”, what kinds of things would you like to see added to the plan?”

 said:
"This project is led by a private-equity owned (EQT is the private equity fund), California-based company that clearly has never been to Austin if they think this site is suitable for the project. This project takes away from the community without giving anything back - it won't be accessible to the public in any meaningful way. This is land that should be used for housing, restaurants, or offices - only uses that are not industrial. A project like this would never fly in a major corridor of other neighborhoods - Tarrytown wouldn't allow this on Enfield road, Deep Eddy wouldn't allow this on Lake Austin Blvd, Zilker/Bouldin Creek wouldn't allow this on S Lamar or S 1st - so why would East Austin / Holly allow this on Cesar Chavez & Pleasant Valley?

What happens if this company goes bankrupt, as often happens with private equity? Once they've transformed this land and run ultra-high voltage lines everywhere, can it ever be used for anything like housing or retail? A project of this type is only suitable on land that is already zoned for industrial purposes."

██████████ said:

"The proposed use is incompatible with the intent of the 'Community Commercial' corridor to encourage neighborhood-oriented businesses and mixed-use residential units. Development as a single-use, vehicle-oriented business for commercial vehicles discourages local pedestrian traffic at a critical node on the proposed Pleasant Valley Project Connect route and anchor of the future pedestrian bridge. Limiting pedestrian use and active user occupancy at this intersection will decrease eyes on the street and reduce safety in an area already dealing with opportunistic property crime. This is a gateway to our neighborhood plan's designated Community Corridor and shouldn't be converted from neighborhood-oriented food options and small businesses to a new commercial automotive-oriented use that will be inflexible for any future change of use more oriented to the community. "

██████████ said:

"We need to encourage the EV transition to take care of the planet, and charging is a prerequisite. "

██████████ said:

"traffic on pleasant valley and cesar chavez is already so congested, we don't need a place that will create additional gridlock. Sounds of traffic and construction are also quite pronounced, so adding frequent large trucks driving in and out will only make the surroundings more chaotic."

██████████ said:

"This project is not a fit for the city or the neighborhood's goals, and prevents the public from participating in the use of this land in any meaningful way.

As mentioned in the monitor article, we're making significant investments in multi-modal transportation in this area, and this car-focused opportunity is at odds with those investments. It fences off what is otherwise high-potential land on a major corridor for both the Holly neighborhood and the City of Austin. By using the land as a private charging station, we are preventing the public from any enjoyment in it - this won't be a cafe, bar, workplace, housing, or any establishment where the public can access or benefit from the space.

This project makes sense in more industrial areas, but it doesn't make sense in a high-profile location on a major intersection, just a few dozen feet from our neighborhood homes. I am very opposed to this project in this location."

██████████ said:

"public charging access"

██████████ said:

"In a downtown community that is growing more dense, we do not need to invest in infrastructure for cars. We need to invest in public transit. Our neighborhood does not need more cars."

██████████ said:

"I think this location adds additional traffic to the area; reduces potential community space - these were both spots of restaurants and were community areas. I'm not necessarily always opposed to commercial EVs, but the location they chose does not work for this community."

██████████ said:

""The stations would include 24/7 security with overnight downward lighting and enhanced landscaping of the sites. The included equipment will generate a hum (not louder than the sound of a refrigerator or a passing car)." - That sounds fine. "

██████████ said:

"Too close to residential / small business areas for a substantial commercial service."

██████████ said:

"Parking is a bad use of a prominent, walkable corner in the neighborhood. The fact that the parking is only for commercial vehicles with no benefit to the neighbors makes this even worse. "

██████████ said:

"Nothing to add. Wrong place for such development "

██████████ said:

"too industrial for neighborhood "

██████████ said:

"Pleasant Valley is a high crash roadway that we need to take steps to make safer. Adding 100 vehicles per day to an already high crash area stands in opposition to our Vision Zero goals. It would be much better to attract more multimodal options to this area that has the potential to become even more walkable and foster more active transportation options. The more cars and trucks we introduce to this area, the less friendly we make it to active transportation options. We would also be counteracting some of the benefit we would see from having the new Wishbone Bridge."

██████████ said:

"It prevents more residential units, and neighborhood-friendly retail that should go on this transportation corridor intersection in our historic neighborhood."

██████████ said:

"I think that switching to green energy is important to protecting the interests of the neighborhood in the long run, and if the noise involved is truly no louder than the hum of a bus (of which there are plenty in that area), then I don't feel like that would impact things any more than they are now.

I also am skeptical that it would bring significantly more traffic. In theory, you can object to opening anything because it would bring more traffic. That is already a highly trafficked intersection. I think that it's more likely to appear to people who are already in the area rather than encouraging people to drive across town to this destination, and even if there is some of that, it would go away as these continue to open all over the city as we transition over to EV's.

Additional greenery would be welcome, and we badly need a water fountain in this neighborhood. The only other one I know of is at the trailhead to the hike and bike trail.

My points of interest in supporting this would be if their claims on the noise levels are accurate.

My two concessions that I would strongly recommend asking for are that the water fountain put out actually cold water (as opposed to the warm and sometimes hot water that comes from the one in the park), and that the benches *not* have anti-homeless features."

██████████ said:

"This is a neighborhood. We don't need commercial charging"

██████████ said:

"This is not an appropriate place for charging stations, it should be further east on Cesar Chavez where there are more industrial sites vs neighborhoods. "

██████████ said:

"Will a semi tractor trailer be able to use this area? There is a HIGHLY congested area and it should be declined. The minuscule 2 public charging stations have no value compared to the community charging needs. Every morning and evening this area is backed up, is the plan to push more commuter traffic on to residential streets like Willow and Canterbury? What a terrible thing to do to homeowners. Speaking of homeowners- why should a person's house on Willow suddenly have a 'humming' power plant in their back yard?"

aid:

"I don't think this fits the future development patterns of either E C Chavez or Pleasant Valley.

This is especially true of the BRT that will run along Pleasant Valley.

The traffic estimate feels low relative to the size of the site.

Traffic along both streets is high during peak hours, and I see this making matters worse.

I would generally be more supportive of a use for that site that is not car-centric (or at least one that doesn't solely cater road traffic).

It won't be a significant place of employment for people living in/around the neighborhood.

It feels like there are many better suited sites not far away, such as the former Cruise base on 5th."

aid:

"This doesn't benefit the area. It's for commercial use and should be in a commercial area. "

aid:

"Not a priority development per the neighborhood plan "

aid:

"industrial business in our neighborhood"

aid:

"The space is best served as a residential or commercial space. The area nearby has added so many great bars and restaurants in the last three years and this would kill that momentum. Further east on Cesar Chavez offers ample opportunity for a project like this "

aid:

"I don't think a commercial EV charging station belongs in Holly, regardless of how pretty it looks. If the corridor is going to be commercialized, I would prefer a project with greater availability for public use - a retail store, yoga studio, restaurant, etc."

Question 3 has 25 answers (Range) Avg rating: 1.5



“On a more granular sale, how would you rate your level of support for the Voltera EV development as proposed?”

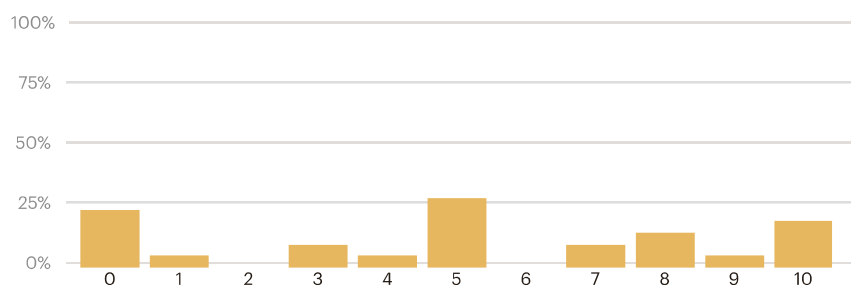
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Question 4 has 25 answers (Range) Avg rating: 5.1



“If this project were not taking place in Holly, how likely is it that you would support a commercial EV build-out like the one proposed by Voltera?”



Question 5 has 25 answers (Radio Buttons)



“Judging only the Expedition School project as proposed, which of the following options describes your level of support most accurately?”



Question 6 has 25 answers (Open Text)

“Given your previous answer, what concerns or considerations did you weigh to come to your decision? If you chose “support with concessions”, what kinds of things did you have in mind?”

[REDACTED] said:

"We need more projects like this in Holly. Gives neighborhood kids something good to do outside."

[REDACTED] said:

"Neighborhood access to the lake is somewhat limited - the boat ramp can be a bit crowded at times. Existing empty off-street parking nearby currently seems pretty plentiful. The school's mission is valuable to the community and complimentary to the Camacho rec center. "

[REDACTED] said:

"Amenities are good.

"

[REDACTED] said:

"it seems like a program that is good for the community and has been contributing for many years. The proposal also is proximate to existing location and I have no issues with it as it currently stands."

[REDACTED] said:

"We need more businesses like this on the East Side - this is something lower cost that much of the public can access and benefit from. "

[REDACTED] said:

"This development does not align with the Holly Shores master plan, nor does it provide pubic access/use of the dock facilities."

[REDACTED] said:

"The Expedition School will get people into Lady Bird Lake that aren't just there to drink and party, and that is a positive thing. It's women owned, and safety and nature focused. Seems worthy of support."

[REDACTED] said:

"Seems reasonable - I just would want to make it very clear that residents can use the boat launch at nearly all times (can wait until after a program embarks for example)."

[REDACTED] said:

"I don't think NIMBY serves anyone, especially for climate-supporting initiatives.

"

[REDACTED]aid:

"Reassurances about growth and disposition if ES goes out of business."

[REDACTED]aid:

"With the limited information available, generally activating the waters edge (even if it's not a 100% public benefit) would be positive. "

[REDACTED]aid:

"Absolutely nothing to add except it violates master plan and against city charter. "

[REDACTED]aid:

"they need a better space, and I've used them for years in full support"

[REDACTED]aid:

"Adding water access and resources for physical activity in our neighborhood will almost always get my vote. I imagine The Expedition School would have a lot of motivation to clean up the trash that tends to collect in that area also."

[REDACTED]aid:

"move it so it doesn't interfere with bringing the boat dock to the lagoon, opening up the water flow to the lagoon, and the family-friendly beach entrance to the lagoon. Move it off the lagoon."

[REDACTED]aid:

"I'm not necessarily against their having a better dock, but I am 100% against having a commercial rental business. I walk along the hike and bike trail almost every day for peace, and one of the things that I love the best about it is how minimally trafficked the water is.

When I think about all of the people out on the water by the Lamar pedestrian bridge, I absolutely don't want that over here. Also, as opposed to the EV charging station, this I think actually would bring people over here from across town and increase traffic and parking issues while ruining the peace of a wonderful community resource.

If the rental aspect is removed, I'd be ok with it as long as it's not built in a way that leaves the door open for turning into a commercial rental location later."

[REDACTED]aid:

"It sounds like a positive thing. "

aid:

"The area in question is currently not being used & this organization has supported the neighborhood for many years. I see no issues "

aid:

"It's a public park, not a concession to be auctioned off to a private business. Just look at the fiasco in Zilker park with the kiddie train. If a private company can't afford the real estate, then they should not be subsidized because they do a few 'good deeds' whilst stuffing their pockets with green ."

aid:

"I think clear guidelines from PARD/TTC about how concessions will be handled around the lake long term is a prerequisite for support, with an emphasis on long term transfer of ownership/leases will be handled.

The lagoon is currently underused, as a large portion of it is inaccessible to the public (e.g. the north side is used as a parking lot.

It is visually separated from the neighborhood by elevation changes and extensive trees.

I am aware of the sensitivity of history and process, which is less than ideal.

Counter to what some fears have been about impacting traffic in the neighborhood, the site has parking near it as well as access to/from I-35 without passing through the heart of the neighborhood.

The lake and trail are one of the city's greatest assets and should be open to all; Expedition School provides access to many that would otherwise not."

aid:

"Just read an article about the car guys who use that parking lot and are worried the boat dock will prevent them from using the space. It would be great to find a solution to keep the space open for them. "

aid:

"Process NOT followed
Conflicts with Holly shore master plan. The plan had input from 650 neighbors and their wishes and opinions are being ignored!"

aid:

"private business on public parkland"

aid:

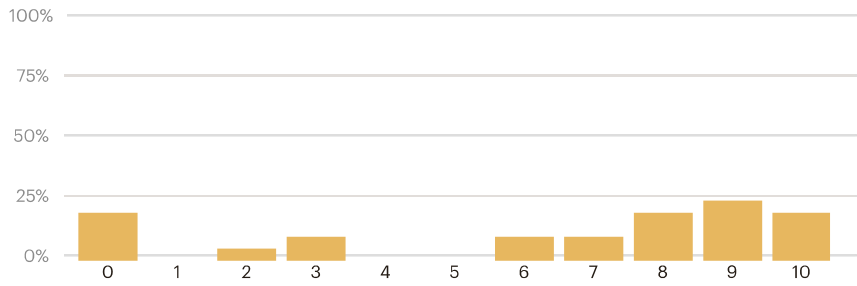
"Ensure rights if the school ceases to exist"

 said:

"The Expedition school does excellent work, and has been a good neighbor for years. They are a value add. Concerns about increased traffic seems unwarranted. I think if there ever was to be a special concession for parkland operation it should go to TES."

Question 7 has 24 answers (Range) Avg rating: 6.3 

“On a more granular sale, how would you rate your level of support for The Expedition School’s proposed dock?”



Question 8 has 22 answers (Range) Avg rating: 7.6 

“If this project were not taking place in Holly, how likely is it that you would support a dock for use by The Expedition School?”

