

QUALITY OF LIFE

Quality of Life encompasses many topics, including housing choice, public facilities and services, a thriving economy with quality jobs, shops and services, healthy living, a safe and attractive neighborhood, and a general sense of community. The North Shoal Creek neighborhood plan aims to improve quality of life for the stakeholders identified during its planning process, including residents, property owners, businesses, workers, students, and visitors to the area.

The planning process consisted of six workshops held from October 2016 and April 2017, during which some ### stakeholders came together to identify the neighborhood's strengths, assets, needs, and concerns, and to establish goals and actions to improve its quality of life.

ADD HEADING: History and Current Conditions*

North Shoal Creek is a desirable north central Austin neighborhood with a strong sense of community and a variety of amenities. It began as five subdivisions built in the 60s and 70s, which was a time of growth in North Austin. In 1967 IBM established its campus on Burnet Road, marking the beginning of Austin's technology boom**. The expansion of Highway 183 (now the neighborhood's northern boundary) and the construction of Mopac Expressway (now the neighborhood's western boundary) provided the transportation infrastructure needed to support the area's growth. Buildout in the neighborhood was substantially completed by the end of the 80s, with the exception of a sixth subdivision of about 60 single-family homes and duplexes constructed in 1998-1999.

Today, North Shoal Creek faces some major challenges common to Austin as a whole, such as traffic congestion and housing affordability. Some of the neighborhood's challenges are unique, such as a deficiency of parks and natural spaces, and an aging population with fewer families with school-age children. A recent American Community Survey estimates its population to be 3,761. According to the 2010 Census, its largest age cohort is 25-29 year olds, followed by 30-34 year olds. Although North Shoal Creek has become more diverse over the last 30 years, it is still less so than Austin as a whole: Hispanic residents make up 18% of its population versus 35% of the city overall; African American, 4.6% versus ##%.

****Note: Stats for this section come from PAZ document background report: North Shoal Creek Conditions and Trends; **Source: Wikipedia article History of Austin, Texas***

It is a low to medium population density neighborhood, with from 6-12 persons per acre. Household size is 1.78 in North Shoal Creek versus 2.4 for Austin. The proportion of family households in North Shoal Creek has decreased over the last three decades and is significantly lower than the citywide average.

The items listed in this section (OR THE FOLLOWING ONE?) were identified as priorities through the neighborhood planning process. Several align with goals and policies in the Imagine Austin Comprehensive plan which identifies city-wide policies and programs that address quality of life issues which will have a positive impact on North Shoal Creek. Where applicable, those policies are cross-referenced. The chart below shows Imagine Austin's Complete Community aspects that are addressed in this section (OR THE FOLLOWING ONE?) of the North Shoal Creek Neighborhood Plan.

INSERT: Chart referred to above.

Photos from NSC area –people of all ages, green spaces, bustling coffee shop, community garden construction

Map – Key Goods & Services within 1 mile

Walk Score map

Housing Opportunity

North Shoal Creek hosts a mix of housing types. The missing middle is somewhat present, with 5.7% of housing units consisting of duplexes, triplexes or fourplexes. Citywide, condos are 5.2% of dwelling units but are 9.7% in North Shoal Creek. These condominiums offer affordable multi-family home ownership opportunities; current Zillow listings show several for sale in North Shoal Creek, priced from \$145,000 to \$230,000.

The majority of housing units within the planning area are apartments (57%). In North Shoal Creek, only 37% of dwelling units are single-family, compared to 56 % citywide. Most of the single family homes were built in the 1960s and early 1970s, and the housing stock is in good condition. As of the 2010 Census, 44.1% of North Shoal Creek's dwelling units were owner-occupied compared to 45.1% citywide.

North Shoal Creek contains eight apartment complexes built in the 1970s and 1980s. North Shoal Creek's average apartment rental cost for June 2017 was \$1,113 compared to \$1,442 for Austin as a whole (<https://www.rentjungle.com/average-rent-in-austin-rent-trends/>) North Shoal Creek's existing

inventory of cheaper older apartments represents an opportunity for affordability that should be maintained.

NOTE: Please add some NSC specific stats on Austin's existing multi-family apartments.

The following example compares the 31-year old Woodchase Apts. (8524 Burnet, built in 1986) to the newly constructed Marq on Burnet (6701 Burnet, aka Burnet Marketplace, constructed in 2016), and shows a savings of about \$300/mt. for a 700 sq. ft. apt. to around \$600 for a 1,000 sq. ft. unit.:

Woodchase Apts.

1 bd/1ba 700 sq ft \$995

2 bd/2ba 1,000 sq ft \$1000

2 bd/2ba 960 sq ft \$1,220

Average: \$1.23/sq ft

Marq on Burnet

Studio 715 sq ft \$1,321-\$1,510

1 bd/1ba 896 sq ft \$1,846-2076

2 bd/2ba 989 sq ft \$1,779-2260

Average: \$1.89/sq

Zillow chart

Like most other Austin neighborhoods, North Shoal Creek lacks affordable single-family home ownership opportunities. In May 2017, the median home value in Austin was \$321,600; in North Shoal Creek it was \$340,000. According to Zillow, Austin home values have gone up 7.3% over the past year and are predicted to rise 3.0% within the next year. In North Shoal Creek home values have gone up 7.3% over the past year and Zillow predicts they will rise 2.3% within the next year.

Median home values –heat map, NSC compared to nearby neighborhoods

North Shoal Creek is home to two subsidized housing developments. One 92 unit development is owned by Foundation Communities and targets families at 80% of MFI. Fourteen of its units are required to be leased to families earning 30% or less of Austin's Median Family Income (MFI) until the year 2109 (check date for accuracy? Sure it's not 2019?). There is also a retirement community that receives HUD funding within the neighborhood. This retirement community, which has 105 units, is a Section 2 project-based rental assistance property for residents 62 years old and above. These two subsidized developments account for 5.5% of the neighborhood's housing units. (ADD: How does NSC compare to other Austin neighborhoods in percentage of subsidized affordable housing? Also, here are the rental rates for Crossroads, the apartment complex owned by Foundation Communities: 1 bd \$775; 2 bd \$915; 3bd \$930 This an example of affordable housing that we want to maintain).

A more comprehensive look at affordability includes both housing and transportation costs. Housing experts recommend spending less than 45% of gross income on housing and transportation combined.

Transportation costs include things like car payments, gasoline, insurance, and public transit costs. As shown on the adjacent map, housing and transportation costs combined can average from to within North Shoal Creek. (ADD: same stat for Austin citywide for comparison purposes.)

Housing + Transportation map (QUESTION: Is map specific to North Shoal Creek?)

Map out housing types – sf/dup/3-4-plex/multi-fam (QUESTION: Is it specific to North Shoal Creek? How does NSC compare to other neighborhoods?)

Call-out box: Strategic Housing Blueprint

The North Shoal Creek Neighborhood Plan aims to allow for increases in housing supply within Activity Corridors and especially near high-capacity transit (mention the Burnet 803 specifically), while maintaining the overall character of the residential core. This is reflected in the Character Districts (**DEFINE this term**) shown on the Future Land Use Map, and will be implemented through the adoption of changes to the Land Development Code.

Goal: Maintain a balance of housing types for a variety household sizes and incomes.

Priorities:

Encourage and support a range of affordable housing in appropriate locations.

Meet the housing needs of people of different ages, abilities, and other protected classes with a variety of housing options.

Promote new dwellings along Imagine Austin Activity Corridors served by transit and near goods and services.

ADD NEW PRIORITY: *Promote family sized multi-family units by retaining existing ones as well as requiring inclusion of multiple bedroom units in new construction.*

ADD NEW PRIORITY: *Develop programs to allow elderly residents to successfully age in place and to prevent gentrification from displacing existing families and residents.*

Actions (with Potential Partners):

*QL-1 Coordinate with NHCD to implement the Strategic Housing Blueprint in appropriate portions of the neighborhood while preserving the existing single-family core and existing multi-family affordable housing.

DELETE; NOT APPLICABLE TO THIS SECTION: QL-2 Engage neighborhood association through speakers or events focusing on the importance of economic, racial, and ethnic diversity as a core value. (NHCD, NSCNA)

QL-3 Include a wide variety of zoning in the commercial AREAS along Burnet and Anderson Lane, including medium density residential uses where appropriate. (PAZ)

QL-4 Promote more affordable units in mixed-use and multi-family residential zoning through affordable housing bonus provisions in the Land Development Code. (PAZ) (NOTE: NSC would support this if the base entitlements are lowered to 40' and the Density becomes 6')

QL-5 Allow for accessory dwelling units in low-medium density residential districts to help homeowners reduce burden of mortgage payments and property taxes.(PAZ) NOTE: In our previous draft, we changed the wording of QL-5; now we're going back to the original wording.)

QL-6 Educate residents about home repair and down payment assistance programs currently available to low to moderate-income households through neighborhood association newsletter or web site (links to fifth priority above). (NSCNA, NHCD)

QL-7 Encourage locating residential units near transit through a wider variety of transect zones along corridor to improve overall housing + transportation affordability. (QL-3:)(ATD)

QL-8 Explore partnerships with employers for workforce housing. (Who does this? Seems like a difficult task for the neighborhood; would need to be done citywide, right?)

ADD NEW: QL 9 Appropriately define transition buffers between commercial/industrial/ large multi-family uses and residential properties.

GENERAL QUESTIONS & COMMENTS

1. Why does the format of the plan not follow the structure laid out in the planning meetings: Community Character, Economy, Environment, Mobility and Connectivity, Quality of Life?

2. Why is the first goal from the Community Character section included in Quality of Life element but the second Community Character goal ("Preserve and enhance the character of the North Shoal Creek Neighborhood") left out? Isn't the character of the neighborhood part of Quality of Life?

Public services/facilities

North Shoal Creek's major public facilities are Pillow Elementary School and the North Village Branch Library. There are no houses of worship within the neighborhood, but one congregation meets weekly at the elementary school. There is one public park, at Pillow Elementary School, but it is not accessible during school hours. However, regional parks and recreation centers are located not far from the neighborhood, such as Sheffield Northwest District Park and the Northwest Recreation Center. Providing

safe access to these regional amenities and expanding access to the parkland at the Pillow Elementary School campus should be priorities.

North Shoal Creek contains no police or fire stations, but there is a fire station just outside the planning area. This nearby station allows for low response times, with 87.5% of calls responded to in less than 8 minutes in 2016. The City's service target is to respond to 90% of calls within 8 minutes or less. City services that residents identified as high priority during the planning process include pedestrian safety; filling in gaps in the neighborhood's sidewalk network; excessive traffic volume and speed along with stepped up enforcement of speed limits on neighborhood streets, and better maintenance of drainage ditches.

Photo of school, [Link to school web page](#)

Photo of library/events, [Link to library web page](#)

Map of public facilities in extended region (school, park, library, fire station)

Photos of fire, utilities

Goal: Maintain quality public facilities and services.

Priorities: Promote resources such as the North Village Branch Library and Pillow Elementary.

Actions (with Potential Partners):

QL-9 Promote North Village Branch Library events and resources through flyers, online presence, and traditional media for large events. (APL)

QL-10 Complete needed maintenance of Pillow Elementary School, including replacement of roof. (AISD)

QL-11 Resurface and improve Pillow Elementary School track. (AISD)

QL-12 Promote use of Pillow School facilities such as new library, remodeled gym, recently updated playground, and community garden currently under construction. (NSCNA, PTA)

ADD THESE NEW ACTIONS:

QL-## Upgrade drainage system to account for added density (Capital Improvements Program)

QL-## Participate in trail building efforts (Anderson Urban Trail, and the North Shoal Creek segment of the Shoal Creek Conservancy's Shoal Creek Trail)

QL-## Enter into a public partnership with KVUE and other business owners for use of land along Shoal Creek as a neighborhood park

QL-## Enter into an (DELETE Master Interlocal) agreement with Pillow to facilitate consistent community access to Pillow's facilities for recreation, education, and community meetings, such as civic classes, ESL, financial education, etc.

QL-## Work with Pillow in a pilot program for shared school parks under a Cities Connecting Children to Nature grant (CCCN)

QUESTIONS:

Should it be noted that the North Austin Soccer Alliance also uses Pillow's campus?

DELETE: *If at some point AISD closes Pillow Elementary School, what happens to the land Pillow sits on? Can it be turned into a park + community center?

Flooding—North Shoal Creek residents are concerned about 2 types of flooding: flooding that occurs when Shoal Creek floods nearby homes (which in our area is pretty well contained) and localized flooding resulting from a combination of heavy rain, increased impervious cover, and an old and undersized drainage system. Is this the section where drainage infrastructure needs should be addressed?

Thriving economy/services

North Shoal Creek is bordered by two highways (Mopac and Hwy 183) and two major roadways (Burnet Road and Anderson Lane). All of these host businesses that serve the larger region along with smaller retail, service and industrial concerns. There are many uniquely Austin businesses,* as well as a few national chains. During the planning process, stakeholders voiced support for local and small businesses (INSERT some quotes; see samples below**). They also expressed concern about being able to access those businesses, wanting better pedestrian connections and **adequate parking** for those arriving by car.

SUGGESTED CHANGES:

***Add examples such as Alamo Drafthouse, Terra Toys, Hopdaddy, Precision Camera, Vert's, Zen**

****Add Sample quotes from the Public Input Walk-Through's Economy section (p. 27)**

- **"Promote diversity of business....":**
- **"Smaller businesses along Burnet, Anderson and Shoal Creek"**
- **"We have plenty of big retail space. Less big places...moresmall/medium"**

. Photos of local businesses

Map of jobs near the area

Link to EDD programs web page

Goal: Provide a diverse range of shops and services for neighborhood residents and other Austinites .
CHANGE “other Austinites” to “visitors to the neighborhood.”

Priorities:

CHANGE from “Ensure businesses have adequate access...” to “Ensure businesses can be adequately accessed by vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians.

CHANGE from “Support and encourage more local businesses’ to “Protect, support, and encourage local businesses.”

Provide new and renovated spaces for businesses of all sizes” Do Not Eliminate; Delete comment:” Do not see stakeholder support for larger businesses, just local businesses which is addressed in the priority above.”

Goal: Provide quality jobs

CHANGE TO: “Provide quality jobs in commercial areas so residents can walk or bike to work; continue to provide job opportunities along Shoal Creek Boulevard.”

Priorities:

Retain the strong base of office and low-intensity industrial uses. Is this a staff goal or a neighborhood goal? Where did this goal come from? Who is promoting this?

Actions (with Potential Partners):

QL-13 Promote Locally Austin program among local businesses in the planning area. (NEEDS POTENTIAL PARTNERS)

QL-14 Promote small business programs through online outreach. (NEEDS POTENTIAL PARTNERS)

*QL-15 Allow for live-work development in appropriate areas. (PAZ)

CHANGE TO: “Explore live/work development in appropriate areas:

NOTE: Live/Work is a CodeNext concept that wasn’t introduced during our Planning Process. Needs to be discussed more and better defined. What does live-work look like in North Shoal Creek? What are the effects on noise and potential code violations? What are “appropriate areas”?

QL-16 Allow for shared/district parking and/or **reduce parking requirement for outdoor spaces.** (PAZ) **NOTE: Who is supporting reductions in parking when stakeholders are requesting more parking and improved accessibility? What are the “outdoor spaces” this refers to?**

Health and Food Access (Note: Much of this ties in with and should be cross referenced to Mobility, Safety, Public services and facilities)

CHANGE TEXT TO: North Shoal Creek residents understand the importance of healthy lifestyles and support improving the walkability of the area along with providing convenient access to nutritional food and to health care. During the planning process, residents placed high priority on filling in gaps in the

neighborhood's sidewalk network, increasing safety for pedestrians and bicyclists, and encouraging the creation of a dense tree canopy in the commercial/multi-family edges of the neighborhood as well as within its residential core.

ADD QUOTES: "Walkability is key!"

"To improve [the]pleasantness of neighborhood walking – complete sidewalks and develop a dense tree canopy"

"Promote clean, clear and beautiful walking areas."

Map of nearby parks, PARD facilities, gyms

Although there is no full service grocery store within the planning area, there are two just south of Anderson Lane, plus several supermarkets within two miles of the neighborhood. There are some specialty physicians and dentists within the neighborhood, but no urgent care center. While the planning area contains only one pharmacy, on the southern border of the neighborhood, two additional pharmacies are located across the street on the south side of Anderson Lane. Residents need safe and convenient access by foot or by bike to these facilities; elderly and disabled residents need safe and convenient access via public transit.

Healthy foods access map

Call-out box: community garden. Site design, photos of other CGs

CHANGE: Goal: Promote health throughout the neighborhood by promoting active lifestyles, improving access to recreational spaces and opportunities, and increasing the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists.

Priorities:

CHANGE: Encourage walking by adding trees to make a consistent, dense tree canopy throughout the neighborhood. (Cross reference Environment?)

Construct the Anderson Urban Trail to provide pedestrian access to the Anderson Lane corridor from Ashdale.

Work with the Shoal Creek Conservancy to build the North Shoal Creek section of the Shoal Creek Urban Trail.

Work with Austin Public Works and Austin Transportation Departments to complete the neighborhood's sidewalk network and to add bicycle lanes to Rockwood and Ashdale

Actions (with Potential Partners):

- QL-17 Complete construction of the community garden at Pillow Elementary School. (NSCNA, NPP)
- QL-18 Coordinate workshops on organic gardening at the new community garden. (NSCNA, SFC, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service)
- QL-19 Encourage composting through education and a compost cooperative/exchange. (NSCNA, ARR)
- QL-20 Coordinate with Pillow School to use the Community Garden for food production and education (NSCNA, AISD)
- QL-21 Encourage parent or faculty participation in the Austin Area School Garden Collaborative (greeningyourschoolyard.com). (AISD, Pillow PTA, OoS)
- QL-22 Promote programs to provide healthy food to seniors. (APH)
- QL-23 Explore options to provide healthy foods and produce within the neighborhood, such as a farmer's market, through the Fresh For Less programs. (APH, OoS, NSCNA)
- QL-24 Explore ways to educate families about healthy cooking through outreach and student curricula (SFC Happy Kitchen, AISD CATCH, Common Threads?)
- QL-25 Explore potential community events related to promotion of health, such as bike rides, tai-chi, etc. (NSCNA, local fitness groups)
- QL-26 Coordinate with PARD to promote programs and activities for healthier youth, adults and seniors. (NSCNA, PARD) Example of current one: North Austin Soccer Alliance (NASA) uses Pillow for soccer training and games
- QL-27 Promote and expand access to fitness and recreational facilities in the areas surrounding North Shoal Creek. (PARD)
- QL-new Explore opportunities to fund and implement the North Shoal Creek Trail and codify the Anderson Urban Trail
- QL-new Initiate partnership with CCCN Pilot Program for "school park" use with Pillow Elementary
- Delete: QL-28 Promote awareness of online options to mitigate lack of health care facilities and pharmacies within the planning area. (APH?)

Community (GENERAL COMMENT/QUESTION: Might this section fit better with the Quality of Life Element Goal 2 "Preserve and enhance the character of the North Shoal Creek Neighborhood"?)

The North Shoal Creek Neighborhood Association (NSCNA) is an active group that holds social events and organizes projects to improve the neighborhood. ADD: In 2016, the Association applied for and received an Austin Parks Foundation grant to build a community garden. In January 2017, the Association was approved for a Neighborhood Partnering Program (NPP) project by Austin Public Works. In addition to partially funding the community garden, the NPP project funds filling in some gaps in the neighborhood's sidewalk network and beautifying areas of the neighborhood, including adding a tile mosaic to the Steck Avenue bridge.

In addition, both the North Village Library and Pillow Elementary School have volunteer programs that neighborhood residents can participate in. Pillow Elementary School also recruits mentors, presenters, and sponsors from neighborhood residents and businesses. There is an active Next Door North Shoal Creek social media site where residents post alerts, classified items, events, lost-and-found, and local fund-raising efforts. Currently, some 880 residents are members.

Link to NSCNA web site, nextdoor.com page

Photos from NSCNA meeting or newsletter screencap

Profile NSCNA: The North Shoal Creek Neighborhood Association (NSCNA) is a non-partisan, non-profit corporation whose purpose is to promote and protect the quality of life, safety, residential characteristics, and property values of the North Shoal Creek neighborhood primarily, and all neighborhoods generally. Originally formed in 1979/1980, NSCNA was incorporated in 1998 as a Texas corporation. It holds 5 membership meetings annually on the first Tuesday of January, March, May, September, and November with additional membership meetings called as needed.

Goal: Encourage a sense of community.

Priorities:

Encourage interaction and collaboration among community stakeholders.

Expand opportunities for interaction among the community.

Actions (with Potential Partners): PRECEDE QL-29, 30, 31, 32, and 33 with the words "Continue to"

QL-29 CONTINUE TO promote participation in NSCNA meetings and events. (NSCNA)

QL-30 CONTINUE TO organize community-wide celebrations and events to encourage neighbors to meet each other. (NSCNA)

QL-31 CONTINUE TO Keep residents informed of City projects and zoning/FLUM amendment requests (NPCT, NSCNA).

QL-32 CONTINUE TO Support informal community-building interactions such as block parties through neighborhood association and online platforms. (NSCNA)

QL-33 CONTINUE TO Promote social support programs and life-long learning opportunities to residents through neighborhood association and online platforms. (NSCNA)

QL-34 Create a sense of place/identity around the neighborhood through unique public art on the Steck bridge over Shoal Creek. (NSCNA, NPP)

NOTE: Leaving out "Continue to" makes it sound like NSCNA isn't doing any of those things but we are.

Safety & Maintenance (Might this be combined with Public Services/Facilities and renamed Community Assets/Public Facilities)?

North Shoal Creek is a safe and well-maintained neighborhood. The planning area's crime rate is fairly low compared to the rest of the city. For example, in 2012 there were 29 burglaries in the neighborhood out of 7,237 city-wide (see map). Violent crimes rates have been very low. The city's struggle with homelessness affects North Shoal Creek, especially along Anderson Lane and Burnet Road.

Crime map (of thefts, assaults)

<http://www.austintexas.gov/GIS/crimeviewer/CrimeReportSearch.html>

Photos of police and/or NNO

In terms of property maintenance, the Austin Code Department has received **fewer** complaints from North Shoal Creek than many other neighborhoods. The most cited issues are common to the city as a whole, such as accumulation of excess trash or failure to abate weeds. The only issue of note in commercial areas is the tendency for illegal signs to crop up along arterial and frontage roads.

Map of code complaints from 311.

Photos of typical code violations.

Goal: Promote safety and maintenance

Priorities:

Increase awareness of safety and maintenance issues and prevention.

Actions (with Potential Partners):

QL-35 Invite speakers from APD, Code, or other departments to address the neighborhood association about programs and reporting issues. (NSCNA, APD, Code)

QL-36 Alert neighborhood association and/or Nextdoor web site when a pattern of crime or vandalism is detected in the area. (APD, Code)

QL-37 Promote reporting of code violations via 311 to ensure minor issues don't become major problems. (NSCNA, 311)

QL-38 Explore re-activation of Neighborhood Watch program, reaching out to residents of apartment and condominium properties. (NSCNA, APD).

QL-39 Explore partnership opportunities for Adopt-a-street program? (Keep Austin Beautiful)

QL-40 Participate in public safety events such as National Night Out. (NSCNA, APD)