

A Brief History of The Original Austin Neighborhood Association

V12/7/09 by Ted Siff (with minor edits by Mark Holzbach)

Community comment and suggested modifications to this text are welcome and encouraged via the online forum topic at:

<http://www.citicite.com/oana/index.php?module=Forums&op=posts&ForumID=48&TopicID=3006&page=1#Post14232>

The Original Austin Neighborhood was formed in 1978, under the name "Old Austin Neighborhood Association (OANA)" by Rod & Carolyn Bucknall and Ted Siff, and registered as an official neighborhood association with the City of Austin's Community Registry.

OANA initially formed to oppose the proposed extension of West 9th Street from West Avenue through Duncan Park to Lamar, and the widening of West 9th & 10th Streets from 40' wide neighborhood streets to 80' wide one-way arterials. OANA failed to stop the extension of West 9th Street, but succeeded in keeping West 9th & 10th two-way neighborhood streets. This success prevented these streets from becoming alternative routes to downtown, like West 5th and 6th, and saved the neighborhood's residential character. The fight took about two years, and was one of the few political battles the late mayor Roy Butler, who had extensive property holdings in the area, ever lost.

For the next 20+ years, from 1980 – 2002+, OANA continued as an unincorporated informal association of neighbors focused on the preservation of OANA's historic and residential character. In the late 70's and early 80's numerous OANA residences were demolished to make way for surface parking lots. In an effort to save OANA's historic residential infrastructure, OANA supported the zoning change requests to allow for professional office uses of residential property, which almost completely eliminated the economic pressure to demolish these old homes. OANA's flexibility in working with property owners to preserve economic value as well as residential character, saved the neighborhood again.

By the turn of the century, downtown Austin began to get its current influx of new residents, reversing a 40 year long downward trend. Chris Riley, an OANA resident and lawyer, used this momentum and new base of residents to start the Downtown Austin Neighborhood Association. DANA was incorporated in 2004, and since then DANA and OANA have worked together to promote residential growth in greater downtown.

Since the beginning of 2008, OANA has also become a much more robust organization. In 2009, through almost monthly meetings of OANA property owners and residents, OANA adopted its first by-laws; filed Articles of Formation;

set membership criteria; attracted over 100 dues paying members; and, elected its first formal board of directors.

OANA's members and board are now in the process of forming committees and identifying ways OANA property owners and residents can help make Original Austin a great plan to live, work and play. To join, please fill out and submit the attached membership flyer. And, add your voice by posting or replying to a post in our online community forum at [http:// www.citicite.com/oana/](http://www.citicite.com/oana/). A non-interactive website including a historical survey of the neighborhood and other documents to download is on view at <http://www.originalaustin.org>

Boundary Issue Pros and Cons – by Mark Holzbach

The boundary issue will be voted on at the OANA meeting on January 20th, to be held at the Regency Apartments. Please check this website and the <http://www.citicite.com/oana/> pages for confirmation of this meeting's location and time. Community comment and suggested modifications to this list of pros and cons are welcome and encouraged via the online forum topic at: <http://www.citicite.com/oana/index.php?module=Forums&op=posts&ForumID=48&TopicID=3005>



Boundary Map color shaded areas together are within the existing OANA neighborhood boundaries on file with the City of Austin since 1978. Northern blue shaded region represents proposed constricted new OANA region, that would exclude the southern red shaded region. I believe the proposed dividing line between the regions is halfway between sixth and seventh street. Please correct me if this is incorrect.

*** Pros to keeping original boundary:**

- i) southern region of OANA has large, energetic, and prosperous population (potentially willing to donate their time, talent and treasure)
- ii) would not require actually rejecting and possibly alienating current OANA members that reside or own property in southern region
- iii) strong evidence that the noise control issue is very important to both southern and northern regions of OANA - and southern region residents have already had some successes
- iv) southern region residents & property owners may share interests with northern region in zoning, historic preservation, pedestrian issues, green space, open space, and bike issues - although how many is not known
- v) southern and northern region proximity creates a opportunity to cooperate and fuse our downtown community together
- vi) The Shoal creek greenway and numerous streets naturally connect the northern and southern regions together.
- vii) keeping OANA boundary as is will retain and may increase OANA political power
- viii) many of the people mix between the northern and southern regions - we share many obvious natural concerns including safety, noise, traffic/transportation
- ix) the county and ACC have large projects that will significantly impact northern region in the short term -- keeping the southern region and northern regions together now could likely help and will not likely hinder dealing with this

*** Cons to keeping the original boundary**

- i) keeping original boundary may continue the fear and uncertainty whether lack of historically contributing properties in the southern region might result in interests misaligned with northern region especially around historic preservation issues
- ii) keeping original boundary may continue the fear and uncertainty whether southern region business owners and property developer interests might dominate OANA
- iii) keeping original boundary may continue the concern that OANA can not properly address the character differences between the "new" southern region

and the "old" northern region (not a concern when the original boundary was created)