

BULLETIN

THE PROTECT LAKE TRAVIS ASSOCIATION

ISSUE 5

SPRING 1984

IMPORTANT MEETING

APRIL 2

The PLTA will meet Monday, April 2, at 7:00 p.m., to take action on runoff control options, Austin annexation, and on surface use regulations for Lake Travis to be promoted with the LCRA. Because of the potentially large turnout, we will *not* have food (only decaf coffee) and will meet at the Grisham Middle School Cafeteria near the intersection of US 183 and FM 620. The directions are as follows: From 183, turn west on Lake Creek Parkway (at Wendy's), turn right at first stop sign (Schoolhouse), and Grisham is a few blocks down Schoolhouse on the left. From 620, turn south on Deerbrook, and Grisham is on the left six blocks along.

Only paid-up members may vote on the issues. If your mailing label has a row of D's, then your dues are over six months delinquent and your membership and right to vote has lapsed. Use the form on this Bulletin to send your dues in now.



LIMITED PURPOSE ANNEXATION . . .

What Does It Mean?

The Charter of the City of Austin provides for two types of annexation:

- **Annexation for all purposes.** The city may extend its boundary limits with or without the consent of the people in the areas annexed. The property which is annexed bears its pro rata share of city taxes, and the people are entitled to all the rights and privileges of all the citizens, and are also bound by the acts, ordinances, resolutions and regulations of the city.
- **Limited purpose annexation.** The city may also annex territory for the limited purposes of "Planning and Zoning" and "Sanitation and Health Protection." The property must be within 5 miles of the city boundary.

Under the "Planning and Zoning" limited purpose, the city may control and regulate the use of property and the density of structures, require compliance with reasonable zoning regulations, control and regulate the subdivision of property, and control and regulate the construction of buildings.

Under the "Sanitation and Health" limited purpose, the city may adopt reasonable regulations pertaining to sanitation and public health and to require compliance with the regulations.

Citizens in the areas of limited purpose annexation are allowed to vote in city council elections and are subject to city ordinances and regulations applicable because of the limited purpose annexation.

The city does *not* have the power to levy taxes on the property or individuals annexed for limited purposes.

The city cannot spend funds in these areas except where reasonable and expedient for the limited purposes.

The city may collect reasonable charges from property owners and inhabitants for services rendered by the city in the accomplishment of the limited purpose or purposes for which the territory is annexed.

SHOULD AUSTIN ANNEX US?

L. Taylor Ollmann, President
Protect Lake Travis Association

If current trends continue, in 10 or 15 years Lake Travis won't be fit for swimming. It certainly won't compare to the clean, clear water we enjoy today.

The problem is urban runoff.

Rapid and intensive development is now occurring around Lake Austin and is imminent around Lake Travis. 3M Corporation is building a large plant two miles from Lake Travis and more will likely soon follow. With these employers will come large housing tracts and business centers to serve their employees.

We have discussed the severe pollution dangers of urban runoff in recent PLTA Bulletins. Even low density residential development could increase the amount of phosphorus carried by runoff into the lake by 25 times. That additional phosphorus would feed the growth of 30,000 tons of new algae per year in the lake (more or less). The number of fecal coliform bacteria carried by that runoff would increase hundreds of times.

Where medium density development occurs, the effects will be *five to seven times worse!* High density condominium developments and shopping centers will cause pollution many more times worse. Each small addition of impervious cover (paving) makes a progressively much larger increase in total pollution. Consider also the corresponding additions of pesticides, other nutrients, toxic metals, household chemicals and solvents, silt, road oil and general human filth and litter. It is evident that we may be passing from a lake that many drink untreated (and who can't avoid it while swimming) to one that most won't want to touch.

If you want to see the effects of urban runoff, look closely at Town Lake on a spring or summer day. Remember that the whole lake is flushed out through Longhorn Dam every few days: That murky, green, litter coated water you are looking at was sparkling clear in Lake Travis about a week ago. By contrast, runoff water flowing into Lake Travis will stay there an average of one year. During that year, much of the pollutants will settle to the bottom where they will continue to interact with the water for a much longer time. The off channel coves (e.g., Big Sandy, Cypress Creek, Hearst Creek, Cow Creek, etc.) take even longer to flush.

The PLTA has been researching ways to control this pollution. Strong runoff abatement ordinances will be necessary over a wide area: limitations on density and impervious cover are essential. So are good development design with drainage patterns, vegetative cover and runoff control structures all designed to trap the runoff, slow it down, soak it in and filter it clean all the way from where the raindrop falls to the lake.

One way is to have the legislature create an elective regional agency with strong ordinance making authority, and the capital for water and wastewater development. It could have jurisdiction in the watershed of the Highland Lakes or in the entire lower Colorado basin. The problems are regional, and a regional solution would be fairest and most effective.

Another way is to obtain ordinance making authority for the surrounding counties. The problem is getting either through the legislature and into operation before much of the Lake Austin and Lake Travis area is subdivided and platted with streets and buildings already in place. The quantity and quality of runoff will then have been permanently determined.

Without such legislative action, there is currently only one governmental entity at any level that can control the City of Austin. For over a year, the city council has been seriously discussing annexing Lake Travis and varying widths of its shoreline. Ron Mullen advocated it publicly while he was running for Mayor. The council's concern has been intensified by the announcement of the 3M complex and the prospect of more industrial sitings in the lake area.

The type of annexation contemplated is *limited purpose*: Residents of the annexed area *pay no city taxes and do not receive city services*. Residents do vote in city elections, but not for bond issues. The area is subject to city ordinances, in particular, zoning and watershed development ordinances. Some of the area around Lake Austin is already annexed in this fashion. The people who live there that I have talked to seem to think it gives them the best of both worlds.

Annexing Lake Travis and a narrow strip of land around its shoreline is a terrible idea. That would put most of us in Austin's extra-

territorial jurisdiction (ETJ) and under Austin's control without giving us any vote in what is done. Formation of a city or village in Lago Vista or Jonestown would be more difficult and such a city could not even control its own water. It would also not solve the pollution problem: To be effective, runoff control ordinances must extend miles from the lake itself. Five hundred feet just won't cut it. In the expanded ETJ, only subdivision review would be available to control pollution and that is simply inadequate. Baseline was in Austin's ETJ!

On the other hand, there are currently no controls on land use or pollution prevention around most of the lake. Where they exist, they have proven so weak as to be largely ineffective. Most lake residents have no say at all whether land near their homes is used for a gravel pit or an auto junkyard, let alone whether it contributes excessively to runoff. Remember that around these lakes most of the good commercial sites are uphill from most of the good residential sites. If runoff is to be controlled, it would appear that right now only Austin can do it. Whether Austin would be another question. It will depend on how and how much we press. If you know any alternative solutions, *please tell us*.

At its March 1 meeting, the Protect Lake Travis Association voted unanimously to use all means to encourage Austin to annex the entire watersheds of Lake Austin and Lake Travis or as much of them as possible. Because the issue had such diverse and far reaching consequences and because the question had not been announced prior to the meeting, it was made a straw vote. PLTA will have a formal vote on the matter at our next general meeting on April 2. If this matters to you, please come. If you aren't yet a member, please join.

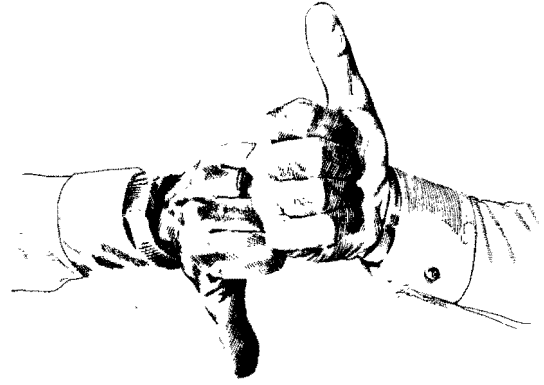
If your mailing label has a row of D's, then your dues are over six months delinquent and your membership (and right to vote) has lapsed. Come on back! We need your participation and support.

In the meantime, we are trying to encourage as much thought and debate on this issue as possible. It won't go away and, if we do nothing, it will be decided without us.

Some reasons for asking Austin to annex the whole area are:

1. Having one agency in control of the entire watershed would result in a more uniform, effective and fair code than if the authority were divided among several cities and uncontrolled areas. Although Austin's record on protecting the environment leaves much to be desired, it is better than that of most other governmental entities in Texas. We can at least have hope with them: The lakes are upstream.
2. Austin already has expert staff in engineering and environmental resource management that would be needed to develop and execute a good ordinance program. A new organization would have to start from ground zero.
3. If you live in the annexed region you can vote in city elections. If you live only in the ETJ, you cannot. Haven't there been times when you wished you could vote for city council or on how to improve US 183? At least we in the annexed region would have a forum for setting our priorities and establishing policy — and a mechanism for carrying it out.
4. Lake Travis and its outflow is the only viable water supply Austin has or can reasonably develop. The lake is also a cornerstone of Austin's quality of life as it is our own. The city council would be very foolish to leave it long unprotected. They do not require our blessing to annex us. Better that they annex enough land to really control pollution and give us a vote in what is done than leave us disenfranchised, without adequate controls and no means of controlling our own destiny.
5. The annexed area would not pay city taxes. Because of the distances and terrain, full city services would be prohibitively expensive to Austin. No services: no taxes.
6. In spite of Item 5 above, Austin has shown a willingness to assume some road maintenance in other areas it has (limited purpose) annexed. As Austin requires roads to be constructed to higher standards, the county has pressured them to provide the extra maintenance. Depending on the arrangement made, the annexed area could end up with improved roads and maintenance but lower county road bills.

Straw Vote Supports Annexation



7. I checked with the home office of my insurance company. If my home and property were within the city limits, my insurance premiums would be reduced considerably. In fact, my savings would amount to more than I pay in county taxes! After considering federal tax, it would be more yet. Check your own situation with your agent.
8. Those living outside Austin's electric power supply area would not take on any liability for the STNP or other city debts. Water, sewer, power, fire protection, schools, etc. would be unaffected — provided and paid for just as they are now.
9. If we want to continue being proud of our lakes' appearance, good zoning practice will be essential. Annexation will make it possible. Compare Bee Cave Road with FM 1431.

Waiting with our head in the sand and hoping that this will all go away won't make it do so. The development is occurring now and the city is coming. We will pull our head out to find that our choices are gone and that we have no pond in which to paddle. I would rather be a duck than an ostrich.

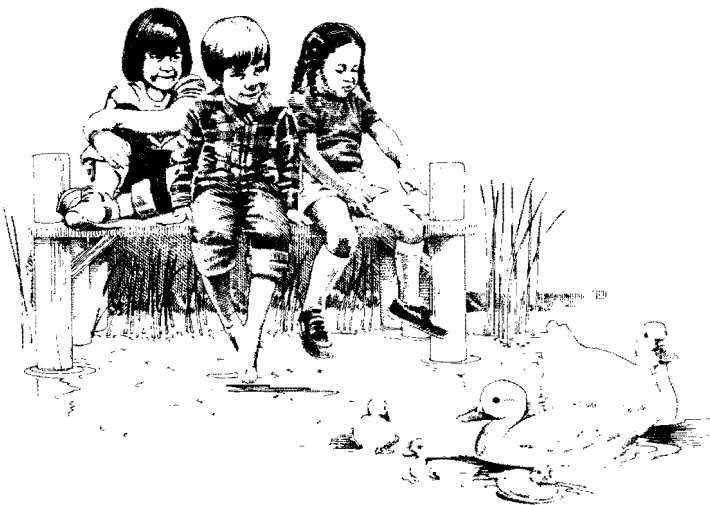
We requested arguments against annexation from several community groups. The Lago Vista Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors was kind enough to supply some good ones:

The officers and directors of the Lago Vista Chamber of Commerce thank you for giving us the opportunity to express our views concerning the proposal for annexation of Lake Travis by the City of Austin as a means of controlling pollution of Lake Travis. In our deliberations of this matter, we have concluded as follows:

1. *The people of developing communities such as Lago Vista do not want to abrogate to the City of Austin their right of self determination for future growth and development of the community. It is our understanding that once this area comes within the City of Austin's extraterritorial jurisdiction, that in order for the community to incorporate, it would be required to have the permission of the City of Austin. This would place the future destiny of our community at the whims of the Austin City Council. Sometime in the future Austin could deny Lago Vista the right to decide whether to incorporate as a village or township, and yet the City of Austin would not be obligated to provide normal city services to our area.*
2. *We question the advisability of making the City of Austin the "watchdog" for control of the pollution of Lake Travis since it is probable that the city of Austin is the worst polluter of the Colorado River watershed in the area.*

In summary, we believe that the proposal for petitioning the City of Austin to annex Lake Travis is ill advised, and not in the best interest of Lago Vista, and that such proposal is much too high a price to pay since it would require forfeiting to the City of Austin our right of self-determination for future growth and development.

*Sincerely,
Board of Directors
Lago Vista Chamber of Commerce*



At their meeting on March 1, PLTA members supported limited purpose annexation as the most effective means of keeping Lake Travis clean. The vote followed discussion of various strategies for enlisting the help of public officials. PLTA President Taylor Ollmann outlines the reasons for annexation in another article in this newsletter. He said, however, that since the vote was not announced ahead of time we would wait until the April 2 meeting to have an official vote. If this vote is in favor of annexation, the board members will take action to get the City of Austin to annex for limited purposes the lake and areas around it.

Some reasons for limited purpose annexation are as follows:

- Strong ordinances will be necessary to prevent unacceptable levels of pollution from urban runoff. This means control of density and impervious cover.
- One agency in charge of the watershed would result in a fairer enforcement of water quality standards.
- Austin has the expert staff for a good enforcement program.
- People in limited purpose annexed areas may vote for city council members.
- People in annexed areas would not pay city taxes.
- Home insurance would cost less.

Some reasons opposing annexation are as follows:

- People in developing areas want the right of self-determination.
- The City of Austin itself pollutes downstream areas.

Come to the meeting on April 2 and vote on what you think PLTA should do.

DOCKOMINIUMS

The building of large marinas extending far into Lake Travis was discussed at the March 1 meeting. Problems associated with such dockominiums were identified as follows:

- Large structures with many owners will concentrate waste from machines and people in one area of the lake, with diffused responsibility for prevention and cleanup.
- A structure extending across the lake would be in the public's way.
- It would have a visual impact on the lake.
- It may not be anchored to the ground. In the case of damage during a storm, how will absentee owners deal with their property which has been scattered around the lake?

A committee was appointed to study the issue and report to the general membership at the April 2 meeting. Committee members are Lee Hagy, Mary Schultz, Wayne Popham, Jack Lindsey, Jay F. Powell, Russell E. Panton, and Rusty Johnson.

HELP US HELP YOU — JOIN THE PLTA

PLTA has obtained a tax exemption from the IRS. All your contributions, past and future, are officially tax deductible. Be sure to give your first name and telephone number on the form. An extra form is included below to make it easy for you to recruit another member. It's up to you!

We need your contribution in any amount to join the Lake Travis Navy:

FRIEND	\$ 25.00 +
SEAMAN	\$ 50.00 +
MATE	\$ 100.00 +
CAPTAIN	\$ 250.00 +
ADMIRAL	\$1,000.00 +

THANK YOU!

To join the Protect Lake Travis Association, fiscal year dues are:

Individual	\$ 5.00
Couple	\$ 9.00
Over 65	\$ 7.50

Fiscal Year: July 1 - June 30

Send To: Ms. Janet Hagy, Treasurer
Protect Lake Travis Association
8400 MoPac, Suite 304
Austin, Texas 78759

CONTRIBUTION AND MEMBERSHIP FORMS

Use one for your dues for the new fiscal year. Give one to a friend.

Yes! I care about the Highland Lakes.

Here is my contribution of \$ _____

ALSO

Here is my/our membership fee(s).

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Yes! I care about the Highland Lakes.

Here is my contribution of \$ _____

ALSO

Here is my/our membership fee(s).

Name(s) _____

Address _____

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THE PROTECT LAKE TRAVIS ASSOCIATION

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