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Dear Client:

**The decision was made this week to recommend the newest chunk of big mobility bucks be spent in the Central Corridor, including downtown Austin -- an area already the focus of other initiatives.**

Capital Metro's **MetroRail**, combined with planned initiatives such as **MetroRapid** (due to launch in 2014), **Lone Star Rail**, and **express MoPac/Loop1 traffic lanes** are in various stages of development. Now comes a plan for the next investment in "**high capacity**" transit that will run in this Central Corridor.

The sectors that will be included in this next "high capacity" effort run from **East Riverside Drive** along the south banks of Lady Bird Lake *north* paralleling IH35 through **downtown Austin**, past the **State Capitol** and **state office buildings**, **UTAustin** and the proposed **Dell Medical School**, and on to the emerging Highland area where **Austin Community College is expanding a major campus out of the old Highland Mall.**

**Right now, this is just a recommendation** from the city's Central Corridor team. The plan will be posted online at [www.projectconnect.com](http://www.projectconnect.com), where residents may comment. The Central Corridor Advisory Group (CCAG) will review the public comments and recommendation and is **likely to make a decision in December**. If accepted, **Phase 2 will continue in January and focus on streets, stop locations and high-capacity mode (bus, rail).**

This is part of a larger area wide Austin-generated effort called Project Connect. Its plan is to connect people, places and opportunities within the fastest-growing region in the country. Mayor **Lee Leffingwell** points out the overall plan "**runs from Georgetown to Round Rock and Leander, takes several routes through the City of Austin and then continues on to Oak Hill and San Marcos.**"

The Central Corridor is a key sub-corridor of Project Connect. Why? According to the City of Austin approximately **269,000 commuter trips are made *into* the Central Corridor** each weekday. And an additional **47,000 commuter trips take place *within* the corridor** itself. **Presently 23% of the entire Central Texas regional workforce work within this area.** These figures grow each day.

**Fifty years ago today (11/22/1963), when President John F. Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, Austin reacted similarly to the rest of the nation – yet differently, in important ways.**

Because JFK was due in Austin for dinner that evening, the anticipation was felt throughout the city. **It was to be a big day in Austin's history**, with leaders from all around the state poised to greet the president and first lady, along with Vice President and Mrs. **Lyndon Johnson** and Governor and Mrs. **John Connally**, at a sold-out fund-raiser in Austin's Municipal Auditorium (now the Long Center). Then the following day, JFK was to be treated to a Texas BarBQ, along with hundreds of specially-invited Texans, at the LBJ Ranch on the banks of the Pedernales River. But history changed in a murderous instant on a street in Dallas.

**The immediate and continuous reaction in the Austin area was the same as elsewhere in the US.** Stunned, grief-stricken residents rushed to their TV sets and reached out to comfort one another. As events played out over the next week, **it became almost too much for people to bear:** the shocking killing of presidential assassin Lee Harvey Oswald while in protective custody, then President Kennedy's funeral procession, services and burial.

**But Austin was invested more heavily in the event than most anywhere else.** A longtime neighbor, **Central Texas born-and-raised LBJ assumed the presidency** during this moment of tragedy. **And Austin's own Governor of Texas was near death, being treated in a Dallas hospital for severe gunshot wounds** fired by Oswald.

Personal note: as a young News Director/Anchor for Austin's TV station, it was our job to **direct coverage of every possible angle of the assassination from the particular perspective of those in the hometowns of LBJ and Connally.**

The national TV networks focused their wall-to-wall coverage from a *national* perspective on the assassination and justifiably so. **But Central Texans were eager to find out all they could about their neighbor LBJ who assumed the tragedy-driven responsibilities of the presidency, as well as news of their stricken governor.** (Interestingly, LBJ's home county, Gillespie, had not voted for him. But now, he was "one of their own.")

Even when Governor Connally's condition was finally upgraded, his doctors would not authorize his discharge from the hospital. **So, his loyal Austin staffers and volunteers "moved" the governor's office to Parkland Hospital.** A Dallas supporter moved his WATS telephone long-distance line to the hospital (and his wife answered the phone) to help facilitate communication back to state government operations in Austin.

You can learn more Austin angles from those who were intimately involved 50 years ago by tuning to The Longhorn Channel's "Arts & Culture" at 2 pm, 7pm or midnight 11/22/2013.

**For only the third time in its history, the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) this week began the process to cut water to downstream rice farmers – to protect Central Texans' drinking water. There are two takeaways that could be important for you.**

The LCRA will ask the state for permission to cut off Highland Lakes water to most farmers in 2014 unless the combined storage of lakes Buchanan and Travis improves significantly in about 90 days. The LCRA Board vote was close (8-7) and acrimonious. And with this vote, 1) the **LCRA raised the bar considerably** and 2) **set tighter future restrictions for residential water use in Austin** and other nearby communities.

The action would cut off water from the Highland Lakes to most farmers if the **combined storage of lakes Travis and Buchanan is less than 1.1 million acre-feet (about 55% of capacity) at 11:59 pm, March 1<sup>st</sup> 2014**. This raises the bar significantly. In the two consecutive prior years when water was curtailed, the **previous benchmark was set at 850,000 acre-feet** of reservoir storage.

So where do the two lakes stand today? **As of mid-week, lakes Travis and Buchanan together hold about 727,900 acre-feet of water**. Put it another way, the combined storage capacity is 36%. This is way below the previous benchmark (860,000 acre-feet) and a much greater distance to the new standard (1.1 million acre-feet).

Rice farmers downstream from Austin are understandably distraught, even claiming **this will put them out of business and severely impact small rice-farming towns**. The critics claim the LCRA has gone from water conservation to water hoarding.

On the other side, **some businesses along the lakes have already been forced out of business due to low lake levels**. Residents complain about a diminishing drinking water supply. One pointed out crop insurance is available, but there is no such thing as drinking water insurance. You get the drift.

Now, the second takeaway. The higher 1.1 million acre-feet bar also applies to certain residential and commercial use. In other words, if the benchmark is not reached by 3/1/14, **residences and businesses in cities such as Cedar Park, Pflugerville, Dripping Springs and Lago Vista will be limited to lawn watering one day a week**. Austin already follows this guideline.

“We understand how painful this drought has been from one end of the Colorado River basin to the other, but **we have to protect the drinking water supply for more than a million Central Texans**,” said LCRA Chair **Tim Timmerman**. “Today’s decision was difficult, but it does just that.” The LCRA pointed out further that “even with water being cut off to most farmers for two consecutive years, **the lakes have failed to significantly recover. They remain near historic lows.**”

**Some guys have a problem coming up with a memorable way to ask girlfriends to marry them. Well, Austin's Paramount Theatre has come up with a unique way to pop the question. But this is not for shy or private persons.**

Here's the deal. If the guy makes a reservation, he can drive up Congress Avenue, get out and open the door for his intended (I know, I know, this is really old-fashioned!) and tell her to look up at the **historic Paramount marquee at the illuminated large-type words that display the question: "Will You Marry Me?"**

It doesn't stop there. The couple will have a dedicated, 10-minute proposal time under the marquee complete with a professionally-staged romantic scene, a **photographer to capture the moment and a floral bouquet from Ben White Florist**. Then, as they enter the majestic theater's lobby, **complimentary champagne will be poured**.

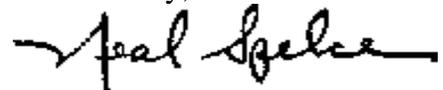
That's not all. **Kruger's Diamond Jewelers**, just across the street, will give the couple a **\$500 gift certificate** toward the purchase of a single item by December 31, 2013. And, since the Paramount is a theatre after all, there will be admission for two to a screening of a chick flick, "*Love Actually*," starring **Hugh Grant** and **Emma Thompson**.

Now for the particulars. This offer is for **Sunday, December 8<sup>th</sup> only** at 2 times: noon to 2pm, or 4 pm to 6 pm. **Reservations are \$250**. And if friends want to share in this very public event, they can buy tix to join the newly-engaged couple at the chick flick Sunday for \$11.

The Paramount says this is a big deal. "This is our answer to the **hundreds of requests we receive each year** to use the Paramount marquee for personalized messages and marriage proposals," reports the theater. For more info, contact The Paramount Theatre.

Speaking of marriage, **Dr. Louis Overholster** notes that love may be blind but marriage is a real eye-opener.

Sincerely,



Editor/Publisher