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## **Quarterly Report – First of 2013**

We would like to tell everyone what your Greater San Antonio Community Association Board has been doing for the last four months.

Stephen Friberg is our President. He has been working on an area traffic analysis, presenting our positions at City Council and Environmental Planning Commission meetings, having conversations with Council members, carrying on our petition and membership drives quite successfully, and much more. Stephen reports:

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### **Good News! Progress at the City Council, the EPC, and talking to Merlone Geier**

Over the past several months, the Greater San Antonio Community Association has been active in a number of ways. Perhaps the main activity has been addressing the challenge presented by the Merlone Geier's Phase II San Antonio Shopping Center proposal. The proposal focuses on a high-density office park and a seven story hotel to be put in where Ross, the Milk Pail, and other San Antonio Shops are now located. The challenge is to ensure that the safety of our community and its children are not put at risk, that our quality of life is not damaged, and that highly valued community stores like the Milk Pail are not forced to leave. The larger challenge is to pursue a vision of responsible and intelligent growth for the Greater San Antonio Area and for the City of Mountain View.

There is good news - our voice has been heard. This is in large part due to those of us who attended City Council and Environmental Planning Commission (EPC) meetings, worked on petitions, or who strongly supported and encouraged those who did.

Most of the members of the City Council of Mountain View are now voicing concerns over the very high densities proposed for the development, the severe traffic problems it will create, the safety concerns for bicyclists and children going to school that it creates, and the dangers of excessive traffic crowding into the Crossings and Old Mill areas on Showers and Pachetti Way. And - more importantly - we are being told by council members to work with them and to join forces with other community associations in Mountain View to rise up and address issues where we have concerns.

One way to address our concerns is to work directly with Merlone Geier, the developer. Towards that end, the board has met with Merlone Geier's local executive team and established an open channel of communication.

Another way to address our concerns - one that we think needs to happen on a much larger scale - is to meet with or write to City Council and EPC members. Again, the board and its members have stepped up their activity level, meeting with Jac Siegel as a group and individually with Jack McAllister and John Inks. But, much more needs to be done and we need volunteers to help.

We have also been doing traffic studies to understand the impact of the new Safeway, the proposed San Antonio Phase II development, and all the new housing and recent housing development proposals. The results, to be shared on our website next week, show gridlock paralyzing the San Antonio-California



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intersection at peak traffic hours. This will drive traffic onto Showers and into area neighborhoods if all the high density projects are developed or if San Antonio Road's infrastructure is not upgraded.

### **Greater San Antonio Community Association Membership Drive**

The goal of increasing our membership is important if we are to better represent our community's need and interests. Board members have been knocking on doors and hosting tables at the food truck, asking neighbors to join the association - and not infrequently having the marvelous opportunity to get know someone.

Currently we have 128 members, 103 of whom live in the Crossings, 16 of whom live in Old Mill and 9 of whom live in Parc Crossings. We can reasonably expect to grow to greater than 300 members, but we need people, especially in the Parc Crossings and the Old Mill to help. Please encourage people you know in the community to join, or start an action group to enroll people. If you know someone who wants to join, contact Stephen Friberg ([stephen.friberg@greater-san-antonio.org](mailto:stephen.friberg@greater-san-antonio.org)) or direct them to our website (<http://www.greater-san-antonio.org/>), so they can sign up on our membership form on the Join the Association page.

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John Cumbers is our social events coordinator. He has put together two events so far and is in the midst of planning a third.

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The Old Mill & Greater San Antonio presented an Evening of Wine and Cheese on Saturday January 19<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm in the Old Mill Club House. All were welcome. There was a separate room available for children. Attendees brought a bottle of wine, beer or soft drink to share. This event was sponsored by Steve Rasmussen, the owner of the Milk Pail Market, who provided raclette and some very special cheeses from around the world, and by the Old Mill HOA and the Greater San Antonio Community Association.

John started a new community building activity for the Greater San Antonio Area, "Food Truck Fridays at the Old Mill!" Starting on Friday April 12<sup>th</sup> and every other Friday from 5.30 - 8.30 PM during the warm weather, there will be a different gourmet food truck to stop by the Old Mill Visitor Parking Lot at 49 Showers Drive. Please come out, meet your neighbors, eat delicious food and support one of your local businesses. The first truck, on April 12<sup>th</sup>, was Banjara Bistro, and they served Crepes (savory as well as dessert), Omelets, Sandwiches and some side items, along with some baked desserts (cookies, almond brittles, macaroons, etc.). They returned last week for the third Food Truck Fridays.

John and Paul Edwards are planning a Pop-Up Brunch on June 29<sup>th</sup>, from 10:00 to 1:00, in front of the Crossings Clubhouse on Showers Court. Look for the posters and reminders closer to the date. Please bring your blanket, or table and chairs, and a big appetite for tasty Crepes and other great food and drink, offered by Banjara Bistro.

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Paul Edwards, our Vice-President, has been presenting our positions at City Council and Environmental Planning Commission meetings, holding exploratory conversations with Council members, being interviewed by newspaper and TV reporters, helping with design and content of our web site, and generally organizing the Association. He says:

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Our current focus issues are building our membership and strengthening our community and developing good relationships with City Council and City Commission members. We are deeply concerned about the density of the intense infill developments in the San Antonio Change Area and the projected traffic congestion, bicyclist and pedestrian safety, getting the correct balance and mix of retail in San Antonio Center, the lack of parks in our area (required by the General Plan 2030), and the potential for school over-crowding from all the large-scale residential development underway and planned.

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Anthony Shortland is our technology tools go-to guy, and he did the initial development of our web site and set up the online petition to City Council that produced 670 signatures. He also creates our Google Groups, like [announce@greater-san-antonio.org](mailto:announce@greater-san-antonio.org), [discuss@..](mailto:discuss@...), [board@..](mailto:board@...), and [planning@...](mailto:planning@...)

Rolf Stroessner is our Treasurer. He has organized all of Concord Circle into a Neighborhood Watch team. We need to do the same thing in the rest of The Crossings and the Old Mill. Rolf and Paul Edwards have been trying to get our GSA residents and local small business employees into Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training, but it has proved hard to persuade residents to take time out of their busy lives for that training. Paul Edwards has been attending the quarterly MTV CERT Committee meetings and is participating in SPECS Net Emergency Radio Service weekly check-ins and trainings.

Nancy Morimoto is our Chair of the Greater San Antonio Planning Committee. It is working with the City and developers to ensure that the seven or more major projects in our area produce something that we will enjoy using and living with. She reports:

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The GSACA Board, and in particular it's planning committee, has been very busy this past quarter communicating with the city council, the city's planning staff, the Environmental Planning Commission, Merlone Geier representatives, and the general public, to raise awareness of the potential problems associated with the implementation of the General Plan concept of the high density village center for San Antonio. Although most members are quite excited about the possibilities from this redevelopment, there are very well-founded fears that this "large scale experiment" could be a big disaster, especially in terms of traffic and safety. The Board and planning committee members, as well as many general members, have been meeting with and sending emails to council members, attending city council meetings, writing opinion pieces for the Mountain View Voice and the Mountain View Patch, and canvassing the area for new members and for petition signatures. The Board also came up with a logo and started a website for Greater San Antonio Community Association.

The two city-hosted community visioning workshops (which came directly out of our first petition drive to prioritize the precise plan) held in October and December 2012, were the starting point for trying to come to some sort of consensus among stakeholders on a big picture for the whole area. Our petition



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drive next came to continue the overall planning via the community exercise of creating a precise plan for the area before continuing further with individual developments. While that was technically unsuccessful, as Merlone Geier's Phase II is proceeding before the precise plan, as well as several other new gate keeper projects, it was a success in that the council is now taking the precise plan process, which is moving along on a parallel track, much more seriously. The council now seems intent that the proposed projects meet the requirements of the developing precise plan, rather than the mindset that the precise plan would basically be for much later developments.

Now that GSACA is a confirmed important stakeholder in the area, the next quarter will bring a new strategy with two brand new directions:

1) Participating actively in the precise plan process, just starting this month. The consultant's first step is to document the current conditions. Be on the look-out for announcements to participate in surveys or other ways that will come up to make sure our voices are heard in this vital process.

2) Using our new power to effect needed changes right now and for the future of our neighborhood. We're excited to give the opportunity for our members to participate on small action teams to interact with the city on more levels and for very specific issues. One group has already started their own traffic study analysis and will be an active participant as the city begins to monitor current traffic conditions and begin the traffic study for Merlone Geier's Phase II EIR (Environmental Impact Review). They will be very involved in the traffic-related portion of the creation of the precise plan. Another group will be working with the city to bring to their attention some current dangerous pedestrian/bike hazards. It's also a time to push for a neighborhood park (3+ acres) in San Antonio. Many hands make light work, and there is a lot to do. Please let us know your area of passion for the neighborhood and send any ideas you have via the discuss group or directly to the Board. We can connect you to like-minded people already working on this, or help facilitate the creation of an action team to start working on it.

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Charles Bransi has been presenting our positions and concerns at the City Council and Environmental Planning Commission meetings, participating in conversations with Council members and San Antonio Center developers, attending LASD meetings and having conversations with LASD parents and school officials, presenting a balanced viewpoint on school issues in local email groups, and has been very active in the petition to City Council drive and our membership drive.

Johanne Corbeil has attended Council meetings to advocate for development of the San Antonio Caltrain station to handle the anticipated increased riders.

Please contact us with any issues of interest to you or comments for us and visit our web site at <https://sites.google.com/a/greater-san-antonio.org/community-association/home>  
If you go to *Directory* you will find a list of our Board and Committee Chair with email addresses.