

**NOTES ON THE MEETING OF THE SITE SELECTION AND BUILDING PROGRAM  
COMMITTEE OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF AUSTIN (UCC) ON  
THURSDAY, AUGUST 24, 1999 AT 7:30 p.m. AT THE  
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF AUSTIN (UCC), AUSTIN, TEXAS.**

*(Author's note: these notes include, from time to time, Author's notes intended to clarify points; they are so designated and do not constitute part of the record of the meeting, itself).*

Members present: David Ashton (Chair), Jamie Adams, Michael Adams, Jean Appel, Vic Appel, Matt Blackstock, Paul Deisler, Yoshi Kaneda, *ex officio*, Sara Ross, Mary Sinclair.

Members not present: Fran Briggs, Sharon Brown, Cathy Hubbs, Suzanne Moore, Pat Oakes.

Call to order. Dave Ashton called the meeting to order. Paul Deisler, who had been acting as Chair, Pro Tempore, in Dave Ashton's absence, was asked to continue the meeting. Paul asked Yoshi Kaneda to offer an opening prayer.

Initial business. Dave Ashton noted that Paul Deisler had been serving as Chair, Pro Tempore but that he, Dave, was now more able to attend to the Chair's duties. However, he explained that a Co-Chair is needed because his own schedule continues to be heavy and because of the increased load on the Committee. He stated that Paul Deisler is willing to serve as Co-Chair if the Committee agrees. Paul said that he would be more than happy for someone else to serve. There were no takers; the proposal was approved by the Committee.

Paul noted that from this coming September 7 through September 23, inclusive, he would be out of town and would therefore not be present at Committee meetings during that period or involved in Committee business.

Informational reports and Committee conclusions deriving from them. Paul Deisler reported on a number of items, as follows.

The Committee having received a written summary of the principal ideas put forth by Rev. Mark Miller at the recent joint meeting of the Coordinating Council and the Relocation Oversight Committee, no report was required. No questions arose on this report.

The results pertinent to this Committee from the August 2, 1999 meeting of the Coordinating Council were reviewed next. **The pertinent results of the August 2 Coordinating Council meeting were as follows:**

1. Richard Jackson, in conversations with Mary Seymour and, later, with Gary Roberts, both at UCC headquarters, learned: that it is usual for a church to have selected a site before

requesting a loan; that Gary Roberts is willing to work with our "Relocation Committee"; that the BHM would make a loan of up to 100% of the site cost at 0% interest for a fifteen year term; and that there is no relaxation possible of the August 1 deadline for submitting our loan application. There was no indication that any of the other pending questions about the loan had been discussed. It was stated that Gary Roberts would be visiting with us sometime soon.

**ACTION:** Paul Deisler is to convey to the Coordinating Council this Committee's that a meeting with Gary Roberts will include at least the Coordinating Council members and representatives from the site relocation committees (Sale, Capital Fund Campaign, and SS&BPC).

2. A long-term plan will be developed to enable the Church to more clearly define its forward actions. As part of that, the Coordinating Council decided to organize "cottage meetings" for the whole Congregation for in-depth soundings and discussions on the relocation and other important matters coming up in the near future. **"Cottage meetings" are to be organized and held during September.**

3. As an initial step in long-range planning, the Coordinating Council developed a **draft timeline** of important, interconnected Church activities from the present through the fourth quarter of 2002 (copy attached). A plan is to be presented to the Congregation on October 14, incorporating feedback from the "cottage meetings", for the approval of the Congregation.

From the timeline and subsequent Committee discussions the following is particularly pertinent to our work even though the timeline is, at present, a draft to be succeeded by the later, approved plan:

o A capital fund-raising campaign will be held this Fall.

o We are to continue as rapidly as we can to find and select a site (with the approval of the Congregation) between now and **no later than** the end of January, 2000 (anticipating submission of a loan application by the Board of Trustees by February 1, 2000, the next possible date).

Yoshi Kaneda noted that several (three or four) possible sites need to be presented by this Committee to the Congregation for selection (with one particularly recommended) as soon as possible during the Fall.

o We must be in a position to close on the finally selected parcel of land when a loan is approved (ca. mid-April, 2000) and negotiations of time for due diligence, etc... on the site should proceed on the basis of the of timing described above.

According both the realtor and the architect, while 60 days after paying earnest money is normal for site investigations by a purchaser, 90 days can likely be negotiated; and extensions to 120 days might be possible. Under such arrangements, if the site is rejected for good reason within the allowed time period, the purchaser's earnest money is returned. If it becomes necessary to hold a site with an option to purchase instead of earnest money, there is a good possibility of losing some or all of the option money if the purchase is not completed within the specified time. An option is usually more costly than earnest money, but can be for a longer time as negotiated.

o The retirement of Yoshi Kaneda and the installation of a new pastor will make moving into interim, and then into permanent, quarters before that time very difficult, turbulent and risky. The timeline anticipates purchasing the land as soon as possible and waiting to complete the rest of the project until it is feasible to do so. Actual construction is shown as beginning in the fourth quarter of 2002.

Dave Ashton expressed concern at the overall length of the timeline. In particular, he noted that it should be possible to move more rapidly on the architectural and building portion of the project sooner than the draft timeline indicates. It was stated that the move should be delayed for the reasons stated above; however other matters might be advanced depending on the availability of funds for architects fees and other costs beyond those needed for land acquisition alone.

(Author's Note: the time indicated for permitting is on the low side, according to advice from our architects. However, with the land in hand, there is no reason to wait until the time indicated in the timeline to begin to complete the design and permitting; given the funds, these activities can proceed much sooner without creating turmoil. The thing to be avoided is the turmoil of an actual move during the pastoral interim period; and any interim move should be as short as possible).

Paul Deisler noted that the project timeline, no doubt with some necessary modifications, makes sense to him; it represents a more deliberate, planned pace which is likely to get us a better result. He agreed that any part of the project should proceed as rapidly as possible, however, within such serious constraints as availability of funds and the pastoral hiatus. He expressed the feeling that there may be a desire to solve current problems with the current location too quickly while overlooking the fact that when we build a new facility we should be looking at the long term. Michael Adams noted that the present building has served for around a quarter of a century and that the new might serve even a hundred years.

Paul also remarked on Rev. Mark Miller's desire to have, in the long term, four UCC churches in Austin as Austin grows. It was remarked that might be a fifty-year proposition. Nevertheless, Paul asked why this Church and should not be a leading one of the four; if this Church should outgrow its facilities, it could actually help in the establishment of another church.

The conclusion of this part of the discussion is, returning to the immediate tasks of this Committee:

**CONCLUSION:** Insofar as site acquisition is concerned, we should proceed as mandated. The timeline indicates the following order of action: A. seek sites, B. raise funds, C. select the site, D. seek the loan, E. obtain the loan, F. purchase the land. The remaining actions necessary for completing a facility come after that, with due allowance for the pastoral hiatus.

**CONCLUSION:** The above gives this Committee a clear path for executing the mandate given by the congregation in June.

o The Coordinating Council will report the results of their August 2, 1999 meeting to the Congregation on August 15, 1999.

The Coordinating Council has asked this Committee to give an approximately five minute report at the August 15, 1999 on the current status of the site search, informing the Congregation of the high costs of land and the expansion of the search to include essentially anything within the city limits (with due regard to the site selection criteria).

**ACTION:** Dave Ashton and Paul Deisler will get together and decide how this report might be most effectively made.

Further discussions by the Committee. Rev. Mark Miller in his recent remarks noted we have a vision statement but do not have a goal. We are divided, as a Congregation. Vic Appel suggested that before we settle on a site, we need to articulate a goal since the accomplishment of a goal might be dependent on location. It was suggested, however, that establishing an agreed upon goal could be a long undertaking and that we have a clear mandate before us which we should go ahead with. However, the point is a good one and we should raise it with the Coordinating Council for their attention and action, presumably as part of the long term planning effort now underway.

**ACTION:** Paul Deisler will convey to the Coordinating Council the urgent need to incorporate setting a goal into the planning efforts now underway.

Yoshi Kaneda explained that the efforts to examine

possibilities for "partnering" seem to be turning in the direction of establishing joint missions. Also, the effort to get to know other churches for such or any purposes, including, now, our near neighbor, the University Baptist Church, will take some time, perhaps as long as two years. It was noted that this is information of interest to this Committee; it indicates that the "partnering" effort should not deter us from seeking and purchasing a site. It was pointed out that a site is an asset, easily maintained and that, once secured, it can be sold or traded if building or location plans change or are abandoned in the future in preference to other alternatives. The time, effort and money spent in securing a site, now, while available, will not be wasted.

Site search status and necessary actions. Paul Deisler reported that the high cost of sites and lack of success in the supposedly preferred central areas of Austin caused the expansion of the site search to include all of Austin. An equally important reason for extending the search is that if we do not look "outside of the box" we do the Congregation a disservice, offering them no comparisons as bases for their decision-making.

Since the last meeting the three-person site inspection team (Paul, Matt and Vic) have not had to inspect further sites, none having been located by the realtor which were worthy of an inspection trip.

The realtor has found three potential sites, one near MLK and Springdale, one near the Travis State School on Webberville Road, and one on South Congress between Ben White and Stassney. The first one turned out to be too small to be worth looking at (only part is for sale); the second one is in a very beautiful area, not yet developed, part of an 89 acre tract now in the process of being sold and whose purchaser has indicated to our realtor a possible willingness to set aside some acreage for sale to us; this one is being further pursued for further information. And preliminary information has been obtained on the third site including exact location (almost exactly half way between Ben White and Stassney, with frontage on the east side of South Congress, in an area of small businesses (e.g., repair shops, restaurants, etc...); the acreage is 4.06 and the price an astoundingly low \$325,000 (or, \$1.84/ft<sup>2</sup>). Our realtor will inspect this one personally to determine if it is a viable site (the price is well below what other sites in its vicinity have sold for, raising the question "what is wrong with it?"). If at all suitable, it will be inspected by the inspection team.

As with all sites, it is essential to determine any indication of how much impervious coverage might be allowed.

Our realtor has been following up on the list of possible sites listed by Paul and Ellen Deisler as a result of a drive-

around (reported in writing to the Committee a week ago). Information on several sites is still pending: many people are on vacation and obtaining the information from the various realtors is not easy now. Information obtained on several sites shows that they are highly priced (as much as \$10/ft<sup>2</sup>). One beautiful site (6.94 acres) is on Pleasant Valley Boulevard at its juncture with Lakeshore Drive, next to a major recreation park is being pursued, at least to determine price as another benchmark. The realtor stated that prices there are not necessarily high (note: even a low price of \$100,000 an acre would require nearly \$700,000 for purchase). Michael Adams remarked that this location is within what is considered one of Austin's high crime areas and, despite its specific, very attractive appearance (and accessibility and visibility), this specific area is a high crime area. .

The realtor suggested that several additional areas need to be considered and that he will seek sites in them: southwest Austin (in the William Cannon area) where development is still underway, there is still open land, and the area is attractive); far east Austin (Ed Bluestein near Motorola, out toward Webberville, along 290 toward the main post office, etc...), and the far southeast (some but not all of it has problems, but some of it is attractive -- and low-priced). We also should bear in mind such areas as along Anderson Mill Road, among others.

There is no intention to abandon our search in the central, central-north or central-south areas; something good might still appear: the above refers only to extending the search.

The realtor welcomes any suggestions we might make as to **specific pieces of land**. When Committee members make such suggestions, **please do it through Paul Deisler** so he can keep track of the overall search; **also, supply at least the following:** a description of location and the name and telephone number of the realtor (if given) and of the realty company).

We need to avoid areas too close to the United Christian Church, our half-sister.

In extending the search as widely as it is now extended, the Committee agreed that different neighborhoods need to be examined in the light of our site criteria so as to decide where we might and **might not** search. The Committee agreed, too, that those present at this meeting would each undertake to examine different areas and report back before or, at latest, by, the next meeting, to ascertain general quality as compared with the site selection criteria.

**ACTION:** Those present at this meeting committed themselves to make inspections of specific areas near their homes and/or in the areas mentioned above and/or in other areas

of their own choosing and to report back by or before -- but no later than -- the next meeting.

The Committee agreed that a meeting at the right time with the realtor, at one of the Committee's meetings, would be very desirable. Paul Deisler reported that the realtor would like to meet with us sometime in September (he cannot do so before that and will have more to discuss in September).

**ACTION:** Dave Ashton will arrange a meeting with the realtor in September.

Committee concerns about the actual purchase of a site and the price-range it should be examining: A constraint on any purchase is how much one can afford to pay, a figure we do not have. Having such a figure would help screen out sites, however attractive, that are beyond our reach.

It was reported that after paying the architects for their recently completed work, the funds available from the early contributions and the subsequent pre-pledge effort in April of this year are (as of the end of July): in cash, just over \$37,000; and in pledges yet to be paid in, nearly \$90,000.

These funds have come from a small number of "core" givers and most of them are pledges stretching beyond this current year. This item raised concern as to how much more a capital campaign might raise since it might have to rely primarily on the rest of the potential givers. (Author's note: only a campaign can respond to this concern).

It was also mentioned that we do not actually know how much we may be able to borrow. The report of Richard Jackson's recent discussions on this matter leaves out any maximum on lending (previously, for the UCC, via Barbara Reynolds (formerly with the UCC), the limit was \$500,000). Nor was mention made of any maximum borrowing ability of this Church as assessed according to UCC guidelines, previously discussed by and with Barbara Reynolds (on which the assumption of our ability to borrow \$300,000 is based: only, at this time, an assumption).

A key question of the committee is, then, what kind of upper limit might we apply in searching for land so that we don't waste valuable time and effort to bring in some fine sites for consideration at too high prices? (Author's note: here are some examples to illustrate this point. For example, if the total cash and pledges raised were to be as little as \$200,000, including the cash and pledges now in hand, and if we could, in fact, borrow \$300,000, we should be looking for land valued at no more than \$450,000 (not \$500,000, allowing for the fact that the acquisition costs money and that we should have a "kitty" to begin repayment of the loan -- or else, include those repayments

in our operating budget, for example). A \$450,000 upper limit on land purchase would severely restrict what we can buy and where we can buy it. And if the guidelines should, today, only permit us to borrow even less, the stricture is even greater on what we can purchase. On the other hand, if prospects are good for obtaining pledges and the loan can be higher, an upper limit of \$600,000 or, even, \$700,000 might be possible and the search can bring home much better prospects).

The Committee, in discussions, pointed out that we must be careful not to overburden ourselves with debt: whatever we borrow we must pay back at the rate of 1/15 of the total each year. (Author's note: If small, it can be fitted into our operating budget; larger amounts must be the subject of repeated pledge drives).

The Committee was in favor of not burdening current and future members with too great a debt and expressed a need to have a price or price-range guideline to aid in the search and focus it rightly.

**ACTION:** Paul Deisler will ask the Coordinating Council to consider this matter with the Board and committee resources available to it and give us some at least tentative guidelines on the upper limits of spending for a site as soon as possible.

Paul Deisler remarked that even if all overall financial needs are met for the purchase of land (loan and pledges) we have an inherent financial disadvantage compared to other purchasers: at closing, (next Spring or at any time before all pledge payments have been made) we cannot give the seller the full price then. Some will be in cash (the loan amount plus some of the cash available from pledges -- holding some back as a loan repayment "kitty") but the rest over the pledge payment period (up to three years, for example). While some seller might be willing to wait for payment, most certainly would not; at best some form of interest would be required, or an equivalent increase in price. (Author's note: the question of what security a seller might want in exchange for a deferred payment plan could run us into some difficulties since we are required to give a first mortgage to our lender, the UCC).

Considerations on site/facility interactions. Much of our site selection strategy has been based on the need to place on record, for eventual permitting purposes, a master plan (to be built, over time, in phases as the congregation grows). The master plan is based on data from the Boards and committees of the Church, collation and proposals by the architects, and discussions of such proposals within this Committee, with the architects, and with participation of representatives of the Boards and committees as to what can be left out or modified. The resulting

master plan, for a 17,000 ft<sup>2</sup> building (to eventually serve 300 members with Sanctuary seating for 250) is the basis for calculating, according to City of Austin requirements, how much parking and associated impervious cover is required as a minimum for the eventual facility. The facility would be built in stages as the Congregation grows; however, the final, master plan should be permitted for at the time construction of phase one is to get underway if the total is later to be built).

These considerations and Austin's restrictions on how much impervious cover is allowed on any specific piece of land, constitute major factors in seeking a site. Too small a site would require changes in the master plan, possibly restricting eventual growth. However, to remain within feasible financial constraints, if a site is otherwise desirable, a modification of the master plan, including lowering the goal for growth (set by the Deacons) may be necessary.

It was pointed out that with the information now on hand such adjustments can be programmed without having recourse to the architects (and with the attendant costs). However, the Committee, and the Congregation, needs to be prepared to compromise to obtain a site which, overall, is as satisfactory as possible.

It was also pointed that while a logical and participative process was followed in arriving at the master plan, the Congregation as a whole has had no inputs to it and, in the final analysis, will have to agree with and approve any final plan to fit any specific site.

**ACTION:** Paul Deisler will draft an article, discuss it with Dave Ashton, the result to be submitted for publication in the next Visitor to inform the status of the site search, its interaction with building plans, and the cost constraints that exist in the market for land.

Paul noted that this would very likely be a relatively long piece. (Author's note: the timing of such a piece should help to provide input for the planned "cottage meetings").

Dave Ashton suggested that we might contact the South Central Conference to see if a joint building program with the Conference might be desirable, a new church and Conference offices, together.

**ACTION:** Dave Ashton will contact the South Central Conference to probe this possibility. Tommie Pinkard, a member of the South Central Conference, should be contacted to see who Dave might talk to.

Other items of information or discussion.

o In discussions with the realtor Paul Deisler learned that, in Austin, the usual rule that the purchaser pays the portion of property taxes in the year of purchase for the period of ownership of the property by the purchaser in that year applies to tax exempt organizations; the question is whether such taxes can be recovered from local authorities. This question needs to be investigated. The tax exemption does begin, in any case, at the first of the year after the year of purchase.

**ACTION:** The realtor will look into the matter and let us know the result.

o Paul Deisler reported as a matter of general information that an inquiry this week of the architects disclosed that, at this time, an estimate of costs would be based on the same costs as before; there has been no increase so far as is now known. The architects will advise if there are significant changes. They should have new information sometime in September. They also said there are, at the moment, signs of some slackening in the construction market: some but not all constructors are so busy that they cannot consider new work while others are looking for jobs.

Old, new or other business. No old, new or other business was brought up.

Next meeting. The next meeting of the Committee was scheduled for 7:50 p.m. on Thursday, August 19, 1999. Reports of surveys of different areas of Austin and any new developments on site finding will be taken up then.

Adjournment. The Committee adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

**DRAFT TIME-LINE FOR LONG TERM PLANING  
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF AUSTIN, UCC**

1999

1	2	3	4
		Long Term Planning	Approve Long Term Plan
		Install Parish Educator	Nomination: Pastor Search Committee Centennial Celebration Committee
		Specify Area Search	Start Capital Campaign

2000

1	2	3	4
Install Pastor Search Comm Cent. Celb. Comm	Pastor Profile Ready		Pastor Selected
		1 <sup>st</sup> Cut in PE Funding	
Select New Site	Loan Approved	Buy New Land	

2001

1	2	3	4
New Pastor Start	New Pastor Install Yosh Retires		
		2 <sup>nd</sup> Cut in PE Funding	
Centennial Celebration through April 15			
		Reactivate Sale	

2002

1	2	3	4
		3 <sup>rd</sup> Cut in PE Funding	
Start Facility Design	Facility Permitting		Start Building

Safety

# In poll, police in Austin get good marks

In survey paid for by officers' lobby group, most residents so say they feel safe

**BOB BANTA**  
American-Statesman Staff

A police lobbying organization used results of a survey showing that most residents feel safe in their neighborhoods and believe the Austin Police Department is doing a good job.

Asked to rank the job performance of the police department, 81 percent of the respondents said "good" or "excellent," according to a survey, conducted by Opinion Analysts Inc., and paid for by the Austin Police Association. The association represents about 97 percent of the city's 1,000 police officers.

The poll's release comes as the city is mulling whether to create a focus group to study establishing a citizens review board to monitor police activities.

Some council members said they fear that authorizing such a study might violate the City Charter or indicate a lack of confidence in Police Chief Stan Knee.

In the poll, Knee's performance was described as good or excellent by 57.7 percent of those respondents, with 24.2 percent saying they don't know or had no opinion.

A total of 15.2 percent said he was doing a fair job, and 2.8 percent said he was doing a poor job. Knee has been chief for about 18 months.

Opinions on how well officers respond to the community vary by neighborhood. Betty Edgemon, president of the Far South Austin Community Association, said she believes the police "are indeed doing a good job."

*'The one criticism I have is that the officers don't get out of their cars enough and talk to the people in the neighborhood.'*

Betty Edgemon

in the neighborhood," said Edgemon, who has lived in her Cooper Lane home in south central Austin for nearly 30 years. "The officers could also do a better job of preventing graffiti and getting cars jacked up on blocks off the streets."

Edgemon said she agrees with the 85.4 percent of the poll respondents who said they feel generally safe in their neighborhoods. "I don't think anyone is afraid to walk at night in this area," she said.

Detective Mike Sheffield, president of the Austin Police Association, said he believes the survey proves Austinites are pleased with the department and that a citizens review board isn't needed. "Our police got more than three-quarters of a million calls last year, and we generated less than 450 complaints against officers," said Sheffield. "It's important to show that we are doing a very good job and are being highly responsive to the community. I see no evidence that we need a civilian review board."

Council Member Bill Spelman announced his intention to create the focus group last month, saying it should be racially and ethnically diverse and include police officers and residents who would research

## Austin Police Association Poll

Do you feel safe?

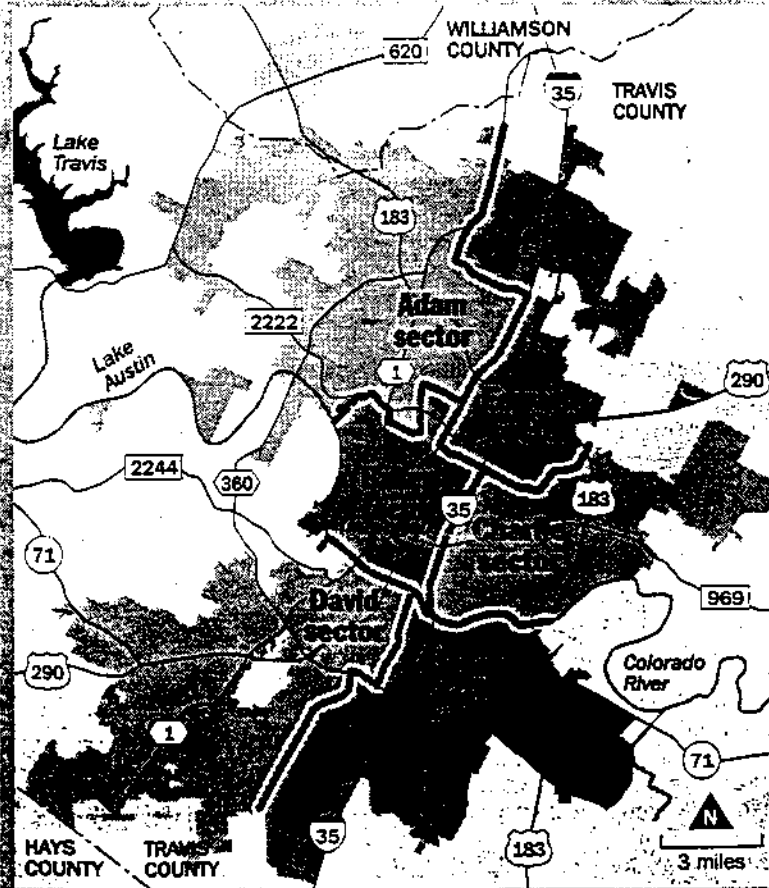
Do you feel Austin is generally a safe place to live, or do you personally feel threatened by crime in your daily life?

	Adam	Baker	Charlie	David	Edward	Frank
Generally safe	87.3%	89.9%	84.0%	88.1%	64.1%	88.6%
Depends	9.1	6.3	5.3	7.3	10.3	5.7
Feel threatened	3.6	3.8	9.6	4.6	25.6	5.7
No opinion	0.0	0.0	1.1	0.0	0.0	0.0

### Rating Austin's police

On a scale of "excellent," "good," "only fair," or "poor," how would you rate the job the Austin Police Department is doing?

	Adam	Baker	Charlie	David	Edward	Frank
Excellent	11.8%	10.1%	16.0%	12.8%	23.1%	20.0%
Good	75.5	59.5	55.3	61.5	53.8	65.7
Fair	11.8	25.3	22.3	20.2	17.9	11.4
Poor	0.0	3.8	5.3	4.6	5.1	2.9
No opinion	0.9	1.3	1.1	0.9	0.0	0.0



Source: Austin Police Association, the lobbying group for officers of the Austin Police Department. The survey, for the APAs, was conducted from among 500 registered voters of Austin. The poll was conducted on April 13 and April 25. The margins of error are plus or minus 3.5 percent.

about 100 cities across the country. They investigate complaints against police and recommend discipline. They also advise on

in Austin have said that an independent review board is the best way to ensure that police are held accountable for their actions