



AUGUST 2019 | VOLUME 25 | NUMBER 3 // NEWSLETTER OF THE CHERRYWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

A Brief History of Comprehensive Planning in Austin

by Dave Westenbarger

If you think the recent Code Next process to revise Austin’s land development code has been a confusing and difficult process, take heart! The history of comprehensive planning in Austin always has been tumultuous. A February 2010 Austin Chronicle article, “Austin Comp Planning: A Brief History” by Katherine Gregor, provides an excellent timeline of the city’s planning efforts, noting that Austin’s first truly comprehensive plan dates from 1928. The 1928 plan, notable for “encouraging” people of African ancestry to settle in east Austin, was the law of the land until the Austin Development Plan (ADP) was adopted in 1961.

Many additional plans have been adopted to address specific issues, but few are comprehensive. The comprehensive Austin Tomorrow Plan was adopted by City Council in pieces between 1977 and 1979. It wasn’t until the late 1990s, after almost two decades of failed attempts to develop new comprehensive plans, that the City decided instead to promote the development of neighborhood plans in lieu of a single comprehensive plan. Neighborhood planning initiatives delivered the Upper Boggy Creek Neighborhood Plan for Cherrywood and surrounding neighborhoods in 2002, and over the next decade and a half, other neighborhood planning areas developed their own plans, tailored to specific preferences of current, mostly property-owning residents.

Neighborhood-based planning resulted in an often bewildering patchwork of non-conforming exceptions to the current code or layers of additional restrictions beyond the current code when neighborhoods adopted or rejected different aspects of the planning and zoning tools offered to them (i.e., small lot amnesty, granny flats, mixed use zoning, corner stores, and more). Neighborhood planners had the rare opportunity to impose restrictions or offer entitlements on all prop-

erties within their boundaries, not just the ones they themselves owned. The resulting patchwork quilt of micro planning effectively tailored future land uses to match the preferences of current residents, typically property owners, and came at the expense of current non-property-owning residents and future residents.



Since the turn of the twenty-first century, initiatives like Envision Central Texas and Imagine Austin have contributed to the next phase of comprehensive planning. Both efforts were more “aspirational” than actual nuts-and-bolts code development, focusing on surveying residents on their preferences for future development. The Code Next code rewrite, begun in 2012, began as an attempt to codify these aspirational goals to formally guide Austin’s development toward residents’ expressed vision for the future.

Unfortunately, much of the aspirational part of Imagine Austin is at odds with what is currently allowed by city code, which was developed to achieve specific purposes. Often, those purposes have been to limit changes to existing rules, restrictions or entitlements, and behind each of these purposes or rules is a political interest supported by residents, businesses, or other entities. So, while Imagine Austin says that Austin residents who participated in the survey want a “compact and connected” city, this is difficult to accomplish with widespread single-family zoning and the current patchwork of exceptions.

As city leaders, city planners, and residents grapple with the complex and fraught task of revising Austin’s land development code, they confront the continuing legacy of decades of political decisions that made the code what it is today. Each iteration of Code Next and each opportunity for public comment has motivated residents and represen-

tatives of special interests to fight for the preservation of the status quo, often quite forcefully. So, there is little surprise that City Council put the

Code Next process on hiatus in 2018. Is there political will to try again?

Are you interested in zoning and development issues? Please join us at the monthly Cherrywood Land Use and Transportation Committee meetings, 7 p.m. on the first Wednesday of every month, at Taqueria los Altos. Bring items of concern, ideas, suggestions, or just listen in as we discuss development, traffic, sidewalks, and more.



Commemorating Mueller History

by Jim Walker

Anniversaries are important. They're opportunities to remember and commemorate the moments when everything changed. They may not always be positive memories, but sometimes we can create something that becomes bigger than us. Anniversaries are opportunities to remember how we got here.

Thirty-five years ago, in 1984, the core concepts of the Mueller Redevelopment plan were first put to paper as part of a neighborhood campaign. Twenty years ago, in May 1999, the last plane took off out of Robert Mueller Municipal Airport (RMMA), and the redevelopment began.

Before RMMA was constructed, the land was an open field beyond the suburbs of 1920s Austin. Austin residents approved a bond to build the airfield in 1928, opening for service in October 1930, named after City Commissioner Robert Mueller who had died in office three years earlier. Mueller Airport had already been in operation for more than a decade when the first houses were being built in Cherrywood.

The Morris Williams Golf Course was originally conceived as an area for the airport to extend runways to accommodate larger planes. But in the decades following the airport's opening, residential neighborhoods had



ROBERT MUELLER AIRPORT, 1998, AUSTIN HISTORY CENTER, AUSTIN PUBLIC LIBRARY.

been built on all sides of the airport, so when expansion was contemplated in the 1980s, the neighborhoods around RMMA were galvanized to protest airport expansion and propose a better vision for the site.

Although an initial plan to move the air-

port further northeast to Manor died in political scandal, the aspirations for repurposing RMMA had already taken root. In 1984, the Citizens for Airport Relocation (CARE) Plan was drafted, proposing density, mixed-use, and affordable housing long before it was trendy. Cherrywood's

own Girard Kinney, AIA, has been instrumental in Mueller preservation and redevelopment efforts. He is a co-author of the original CARE Plan and the current architect for the adaptive reuse of the control tower.

(Continued on next page)



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CHERRYWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

Meetings



Cherrywood Quarterly Meeting

Wednesday, August 21, 6:30 pm, at Servant Church



Agenda

- Patterson Park and Cherrywood Green Improvements
- CherryWoodstock Planning
- 3805 Red River Preservation
- Neighborhood Committee Updates

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UBC WEBSITE upperboggycreek.com

BUSINESS PROFILE

Mueller History

From page 2

In 1993, as if the universe were listening, Bergstrom Air Force Base was decommissioned, creating an opportunity to develop a new airport with room for future expansion. Not only could RMMA be closed, it could happen soon, so a new planning effort was launched in 1995 to update the ten-year-old CARE Plan concepts through the appointment of a RMMA Redevelopment Process and Goals Taskforce.

The taskforce drafted the Vision for Mueller Redevelopment, which informed the hiring of the ROMA Design Firm in 1997 to draft a Mueller master plan that would serve as the basis for soliciting developers. But a few hurdles still appeared. Non-Austin members of the state legislature made several attempts to keep RMMA open as a general aviation airport for small, mostly private flights. Neighborhood organizations and city management opposed these initiatives and were further galvanized into a cohesive coalition that proved invaluable over the next several years as the Mueller Redevelopment was negotiated.

The neighborhoods and residents who had organized to fight expansion shifted their focus to ensuring a positive rede-

velopment. This is arguably the most important lesson of the Mueller story—when neighborhoods and residents shift their collective energies and political power from what they don't want to what they do want, they become the lead change agent in shaping all potential futures rather than on resisting just one potential future.

Finally, in May 1999, the last flight lifted off from RMMA, circled Austin, and landed at Austin Bergstrom International Airport. Today, we commemorate transformation of an airfield, how it informed the genesis of unprecedented neighborhood collaboration, and all that the Mueller neighborhood is still becoming.

If you are interested in participating in the ongoing evolution of Mueller, the Mueller Plan Implementation Advisory Commission meets on the second Tuesday at 6 pm. For agendas, minutes, and other documents, visit austintexas.gov/rmmapiac.

Check out the history tab on the Cherrywood.org website for a birth photo of Duplex Nation in 1949 with the twin stripes of Airport Blvd and Mueller's ninety-degree runways clearly visible in the upper right.

Mum Food Opens in Cherrwood

We stopped into the light-filled and airy Mum Food on a recent Saturday for late lunch. We were greeted by the enticing aroma of smoked meats and folk music and old photos lining the walls lent a welcoming vibe. Our takeaways: Get the signature pastrami sandwiches—the original or the Rachel—to experience Mum's incredibly tender, savory, and succulent artisan meat. Treat yourself to a slice of the brown butter chess pie, which provides a perfectly sweet counterpoint to the piquancy of the pastrami. We say skip the vegetarian options for now—they were underwhelming during our visit. Take note: what our server described as a “large” sandwich (\$16 for a full-size original) is actually suitable for a normal adult appetite.



CHERRYWOOD CALENDAR of CULTURAL EVENTS

CHERRYWOOD COFFEEHOUSE

Weekdays, 8 am

Free yoga

August 20, 9:30 pm

Mystery Box Open Mic

October 6, 10:30 am

Oh Antonio Kids Show

BATCH BEER & KOLACHES

September 9, 8–11 pm

Free Tango Lessons and Social Dancing

THE THINKERY

September 13, 5:30–10 pm

Parents' Night Out

AUSTIN FILM SOCIETY

August 23, 24, 26

Erasherhead

August 27

The Queen

VORTEX REPERTORY CO.

August 24–31

Butterfly Bluegrass

August 23–September 7

The Mamalogues

MUELLER FARMERS MARKET

Wednesdays, 5–8 pm

Sundays, 10 am–2 pm

NATURE'S TREASURES

August 17, 11 am–7 pm

Jewelry Bazaar

October 11–14

Denver Trunk Sale

CHERRYWOOD

October 31, 6 pm

Halloween Parade

SKYLARK LOUNGE

Sundays

Soul Sundays

Mondays

Emily McCoy

MAPLEWOOD ELEMENTARY

August 20

First Day of School

PATTERSON PARK

September 7, 10 am

Celebration of Park Improvements

HAYMAKER

August 24, 11 am–1 am

Sixth Anniversary Party

L'OCA D'ORO

September 22, 11 am–3 pm

Feast of San Gennaro

Patterson Park Improvements to Make Big Impact

by Jennifer Potter-Miller and Friends of Patterson Park

So far in 2019, three big projects have been executed at Patterson Park. The playground addition funded by an Austin City Limits Community Grant from the Austin Parks Foundation was completed in May. In August, additional furnishings will be added or updated with support from the Neighborhood Partnering Program, including new benches near the tennis courts, a picnic table and boulder seating near the *Dance of the Cosmos* lotus sculpture, a kiosk with an illustrated map of the park by neighborhood artist Caitlin B. Alexander, and cedar trail markers by Chris Levack, among others. We will celebrate the completion of these projects with city officials on September 7. Neighbors are invited to join us!

Austin's Department of Transportation built a fantastic new bicycle crossing and sidewalk at Airport Boulevard and Schieffer Avenue, with new curb cuts on Schieffer to connect to the trail. The improvements were identified as community priorities in the 2018 Neighborhood Park Plan.

So, what's the next action item for the park? FoPP is applying for funding to complete two ambitious projects: the first is to resurface the basketball court's blacktop, replace the baskets, add two nine-foot



NEW BICYCLE CROSSING AT SCHIEFFER AND AIRPORT.



OPENING DAT AT PATTERSON PARK POOL.

baskets at court-side, and install a shade structure. This will not only improve a long-neglected popular park feature, but expand its use to summer months and younger players.

The second project is spearheaded by the Cap City Cobras, the sandlot team that has been practicing at the baseball field for three years. The Cobras have added a pitcher's

mound and made other improvements with their own time, energy, and funds. They propose replacing the backstop to control foul balls, adding a shaded bench for players, a shaded four-row bleachers for spectators, and installing informational signage. These improvements would not make the field suitable for formal games (the field lacks netting along the exterior) but would greatly enhance safety and playability for groups using the field to practice. With any luck, we can make both projects a reality in 2020. To learn more about Friends of Patterson Park's projects and community events, visit friendsofpattersonpark.org.

News from Grackle Green

After a snafu in scheduling, Grackle Green's construction is back on track with construction expected to start in September. The micropark's boundaries remain the same—about fifteen feet east of the Dancy-Dean Keeton bus stop to slightly east of the heritage pecan trees. Cherrywood-resident Caitlin B. Alexander has finished a gorgeous neighborhood-nature design for the entrance gates.

The play structure, located on the west side of the Green, will feature a shade canopy, climbing features, and slide. An herb garden, picnic table, and boulder seating will be placed under the trees on the east side. Stay tuned for park planting events and calls for volunteers,

or find more info at gracklegreen.org or on [@gracklegreenatx](https://www.instagram.com/gracklegreenatx) Instagram and Facebook.



Willowbrook Reach Ninth Anniversary

The restoration project at Willowbrook Reach is turning nine years old in 2019, and Watershed Protection has asked if neighbors would be interested in celebrating its ten-year anniversary next year. This could be a great opportunity to share how far the greenbelt has come with other Austin groups thinking about restoring their neighborhood waterways.

Staryn Wagner, an Environmental Scientist with the City of Austin, will speak about Willowbrook Reach at the CNA meeting at Servant Church on August 21. If you're interested in helping to plan this celebration, email flwr78722@gmail.com.



AISD to Reimagine, Reinvest, and Reinvent

by Dusty Harshman

After decades of managing the rapid growth of an urban school district, the Austin Independent School District (AISD) has spent much the last decade evolving to address new challenges of budgetary shortfalls due to declining enrollment and aging facilities.

AISD's thirty-year Facility Master Plan adopted in 2017 and its Budget Stabilization Report from 2018 were offered to holistically address this evolution. Both inform the district's most ambitious transformation in recent memory, plainly entitled "School Changes 2019," through which AISD seeks to reimagine, reinvest in, and reinvent itself to best serve students and families.

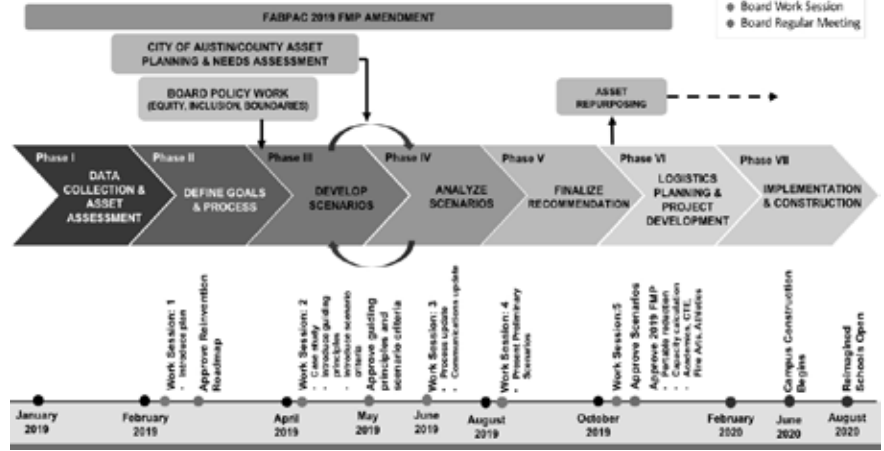
What might "school changes" mean for AISD families and surrounding communities? Part academic reinvention, part financial efficiency, and part equity study, AISD explains School Changes 2019 as "committed to providing better learning environments and inspiring academic opportunities for all students. This means working together to reimagine how our schools could be used to benefit students and communities, reinvesting resources to bring the visions into reality and reinventing how students are educated in Austin ISD. While this process involves tough decisions like school consolidations and boundary changes, it will also make way for opportunities such as new, specialized programs more equitably distributed across the district and repurposed facilities to meet other community needs." AISD has published a "Reinvention Roadmap" to guide the School Changes process.

Spring 2019 began with a series of discussions, with AISD and Austin

civic leaders leading roundtables on district's current operating landscape and its potential to evolve in new directions. This was followed by early summer visioning sessions where campus data was presented and community-driven changes were discussed openly.

The public's first look at proposed school changes is on tap for September. The public will have an opportunity to review and comment on the proposals before the AISD Board of Trustees finalizes changes in October. It is projected that many of the school changes would be enacted for the 2020–2021 school year, while others would be phased in over in the following years.

Visit AISD's School Changes website to get involved, or stay tuned to *The Flea* for important updates.



AISD REINVENTION ROADMAP.

HAPPENINGS

KAREN OLSSON PUBS THIRD BOOK

VERTON MEMORIAL HIGHWAY

Airport Boulevard (from I-35 to US 183) has been named the Richard Overton Memorial Highway, honoring Austin native Richard Overton. Overton was the nation's oldest World War II veteran when he passed away in December, 2018.



CONGRATULATIONS!

Local Cherrywood resident and elder statesman Girard Kinney, AIA, has been inducted into the Austin Arts Hall of Fame for his contributions to urban design and commitment to public service.



Karen Olsson's third book, *The Weil Conjectures: On Math and the Pursuit of the Unknown*, was published in July. The book cover features original art by Cherrywood neighbor Jessica Halonen. Described as "Personal, revealing, and approachable, *The Weil Conjectures* eloquently explores math as it relates to intellectual history, and shows how sometimes the most inexplicable pursuits turn out to be the most rewarding." Olsson will be at Book People on August 27.

BUTTERFLIES

Maplewood Elementary has been awarded a Monarch Heroes grant by the National Wildlife Federation and will be planting two pollinator-friendly rain gardens in the fall. Come by to look for Monarch butterflies and other bugs!



CONGRATULATIONS!

Filmmakers PJ Raval and Andrew Bujalski have been invited to join the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. The Cherrywooders will vote in next year's Oscars.

Wild Hare Abbey Offers a Lesson in Co-housing

by Evie Kling

Since she was a teenager, Cindy Ybarra has been enamored with communal living. Now, a few short decades later, her vision of living among friends has been realized in the form of Wild Hare Abbey. The Abbey is a hidden Eden: Five households encircle a labyrinthine garden, dinner table, firepit, chicken coop, and pond. Residents congregate most Wednesdays to share a few beers. You'd dearly love to call it home.

The group recently hosted an open house to share their community with others. On that rainy afternoon in June, I stopped in to speak with Cindy about the draw of communal living and what's still to come for the Abbey.



I hadn't been to Wild Hare before the Open House, so I wasn't sure what to expect. I talked my friend Eunice into coming with me and, together, we headed south on Hollywood toward the cul de sac. At the given address, the fence sports a prominently painted hare, which we took as a "Come on in" sign.

Once through the fence, we found ourselves in a shimmering, lush garden, causing both of us to involuntarily exhale "Whoaaa." We joined the ongoing group tour and, as we walked, Cindy regaled us with stories from the previous night's summer solstice celebration—fueled, we learned, by her signature brew. She told visitors the story of Wild Hare's evolution, a journey rooted in her longstanding desire to share life with friends of all ages. This community began with her moving into a house on Hollywood, getting to know her neighbors, and eventually removing their shared backyard fence. While the shared area is now larger and slightly more complex, she remains adamant that anyone can start with that small step. "Whether you rent or own, everyone can get to know their neighbors." In such a setting, it's hard to find an excuse for why one wouldn't.

When asked what comes next for Wild Hare, Cindy smiled. She envisions backyard concerts, family movie nights, and early morning breakfasts with groups of friends. "I want this to be here for everyone," she said. It's a dream she may come to regret when she finds me raiding the chicken coop for eggs every morning.

I left the Abbey considering the improbability of its existence. Our city, newly nicknamed "Silicon Hills," hosts companies obsessed with efficiency and scale. But,



RESIDENTS AND FRIENDS AT WILD HARE ABBEY.

right down the road, it also hosts Wild Hare Abbey, a small group of neighbors committed to sharing life with kindness and without haste. For such a community to survive in this city, her co-housing neighbors must believe the result will be precious and worth the work—and, of course, they must begin the good work by tearing down a few fences. May we all do the same.

Manor Road and Sidewalk Plan updates from the LUT

by Girard Kinney, AIA

While there have been several false starts at updating the plans for the Cherrywood portion of the Manor Road Corridor (IH35 to Airport Boulevard), only the establishment of the MLK Transit Oriented Development District (MLK TOD) has changed the Corridor Plan since the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) was published. The MK TOD now trumps the original plan for properties at the east end of Manor Road.

Both Cherrywood and the Upper Boggy Creek (UBC) Planning team want to under-

take an intensive investigation into preferred future land uses and transportation facilities for the neighborhoods. The teams propose to involve not only the UBC neighborhoods that abut Manor Road (Cherrywood, Blackland, and Holy Cross), but also to include Austin Heights (south of Manor Road, extending from Alexander Avenue to Airport Boulevard) and perhaps neighborhoods east of Airport Boulevard, adjacent the Airport/Manor Road intersection.

Stay tuned for updates, meetings, proposed ideas, and more.

The Cherrywood Sidewalk Master Plan has been in place for more than seven years. Although the UBC plan has not been updated to adopt it, it codifies the LUT's philosophy and vision for sidewalks in Cherrywood, and has served the neighborhood well in that the city has utilized the plan to guide its construction of sidewalks in the 'hood. The LUT has recently been working on an update to the Sidewalk Master Plan and will soon unveil a version for Cherrywooders to review and provide input before the LUT adopts a final update.



MANOR ROAD CORRIDOR. GRAPHIC COURTESY JULES VIEAU

Gabe's Guide to Summer in Cherrywood

Gabriel Lund

Have you ever wondered what kids in Cherrywood do over the summer? This neighborhood is full of opportunities for kids to do more than just play video games and watch TV in their rooms! Here are a few great things for kids to do over the summer.

Cherrywood has several bus lines that run in and around it. Local buses are completely free every day for anyone under 18. Older kids and teenagers can use the Google Maps app on their phones to see when and where buses stop, and if they don't have a phone, or prefer hard copies, they can check on board buses for individual route maps. Riders can also visit the Transit Store downtown for route schedules, brochures, and maps or to buy a Destinations schedule book for \$3.00.

On bus line 350, which runs on Airport Boulevard, fun places like Austin Bouldering Project, Toy Joy, and Sweet Ritual are all just a few stops away. Bus line 322 stops at the corner of 38 D and Cherrywood and can take riders to HEB to get art supplies or snacks, or down to Manor Road to get Amy's Ice Cream.

Biking can also get kids to many local summer spots. New, protected bike lanes make it safer for kids to ride into Mueller by crossing Airport at Scheiffer Avenue or Wilshire Boulevard. Quacks and Lick Ice Cream are only a few minutes away by bike. Alamo Drafthouse, which is also within biking distance, allows teens ages 15–17 to enjoy movies without a parent or guardian if they have joined the Victory Vanguard Club. Parents: Make sure your child has a helmet, safety lights, and a bike lock before they go for a bike ride!

Patterson Pool is probably the heart of any Cherrywood kid's summer routine. Patterson is open only until August 17, so get there while you can! The pool is home to the Patterson Piranhas swim team, which practices there during the summer and competes around the city. Teens

ages 15 and up looking for a summer job might consider lifeguarding at Patterson Pool after completing a training and application through the Austin Aquatics Department.

And lastly, on the days that it is just too hot to explore outdoors, perhaps your kids can earn their screen time by reading. The Austin Public Library's Youth Summer Reading Program rewards kids for their reading—all they have to do is fill out a reading log and turn it in at any of APL's 21 locations. BookPeople also runs a reading rewards program, giving kids a \$5.00 gift certificate when they have read five books over the summer.

With so many opportunities for lazing around and adventuring, Austin's Cherrywood neighborhood just can't be beat for summer vacation!

Gabriel Lund, 12, is a junior reporter for *The Flea*. When not on the Cherrywood beat, the cycling enthusiast plays Little League baseball and mows lawns. He is currently enjoying the young adult novel *Hideout*.



Cherrywood Celebrates Independence Day



A toasty morning didn't keep neighbors from celebrating Cherrywood's Fourth of July tradition. An enthusiastic bunch of red, white, and blue marchers paraded in record numbers. *The Flea* sends a shout out to the volunteer mowers of Cherrywood Green and to those who donated cookies, oranges, lemonade, ice cream, watermelon, and relief items for Casa Marianella's refugees.



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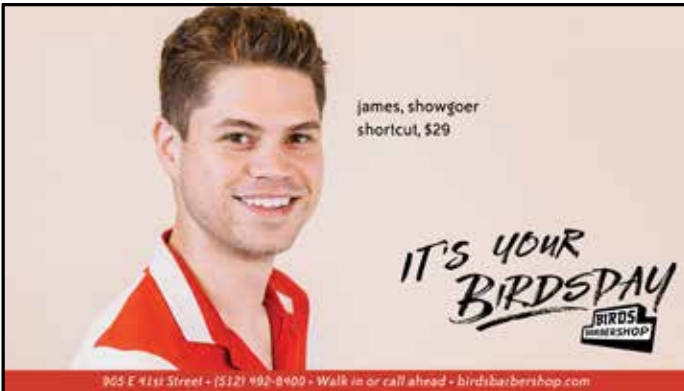
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"We've been welcoming guests on Manor Road since 2009 at Thunderbird Coffee. Now we have a new dream: **biscuit sandwiches for breakfast and lunch**. If you like biscuits, it's pretty dope. Hope to see you soon, Cherrywood!"

--Ryan and Brian

2701 Manor Road

