

# PODER

*People Organized in Defense of Earth and her Resources*



*Defending peace, justice, la familia and mother earth every day.*

*Todo los Dias defediendo paz, justicia, la familia y la madre tierra.*

# *PODER Herstory/History*

*PODER was formed by a group of chicana/o East Austin activist and community leaders, regarding issues affecting our community. Local community activists realized the need to form an organization to address the social, economic and environmental impacts of industries and potential health hazards on East Austin's communities of color.*

*Our mission is redefining environmental issues as social and economic justice issues, and collectively setting our own agenda to address these concerns as basic human rights. We seek to empower our communities through education, advocacy and action.*

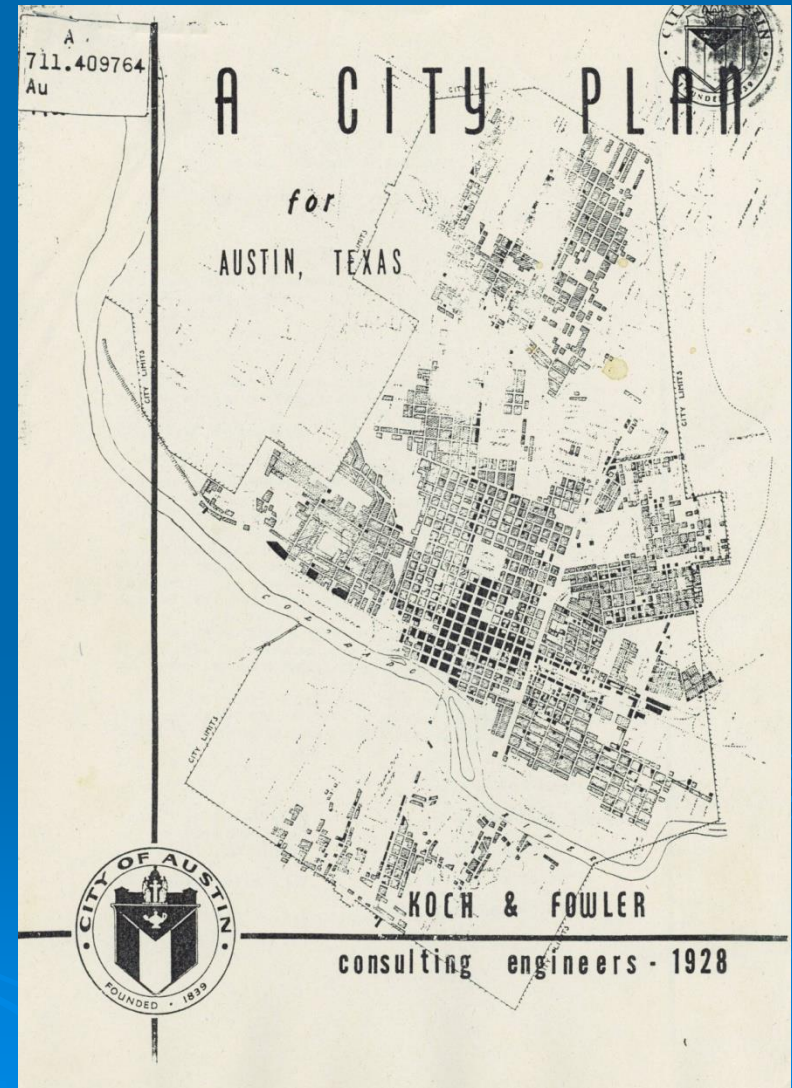




# Zoning/Planning

1928 City of Austin  
“Master Plan” relocated  
African American and  
Mexican population  
along with industries to  
East Austin

1990 City of Austin Smart  
Growth Initiative  
designates East Austin  
as the Desired  
Development Zone





# Industrial Zoning in East Austin





# Holly Power Plant in Residential Area







1801 E. 4TH St.

**Chalmers Court**



**477-7475**







2341 Corta St.

Santa Rita Courts



477-1420







# Education

- 1955 Supreme Court decision of Brown v. Board of Education transition to a racially nondiscriminatory school system
- 1970 United States Government files suit to eliminate racial discrimination in AISD, 15 yrs after Brown v. Board of Education
- AISD continues to Appeal (\$\$\$\$)- 1978 Court of Appeals holds AISD discriminatory
- 1983 Court declares AISD a unitary system, 29 years after Brown and after 13 years of litigation.
- Long term educational impact of this discriminatory system can be seen today



# Land Use Issues

- Zoning/ Land use
- Polluting Industries
- Housing Affordability
- Property Appraisals
- Taxation



# Tank Farm Airport and Springdale



Six Major Oil Companies located at Tank Farm Site



# BFI Recycling Facility Bolm and Gullett Rd.



350,000 Household Recyclables sent to  
Gardens Neighborhood Association Area

# Holly St. Power Plant



Largest Stationary Source of Nox Emissions



# Matheson Tri - Gas Company

3519 E. 5<sup>th</sup> St.



# Pure Casting Facility

## 2110 E. 4<sup>th</sup> St.





# Community Accomplishments

- Relocation of Tank Farm: Fuel storage tanks owned by 6 major oil companies (Chevron, Mobil, Exxon, Star Enterprise (Texaco), Citgo, and Coastal States.
- Relocation and city of Austin buyout of Browning Ferris Industries (BFI), a recycling center for over 350,000 households located in Gardens neighborhood.
- Historic Rezoning of over 600 properties, mostly industrial, located in the Govalle/Johnston Terrace planning area.
- Closure of the Holly Street Power Plant





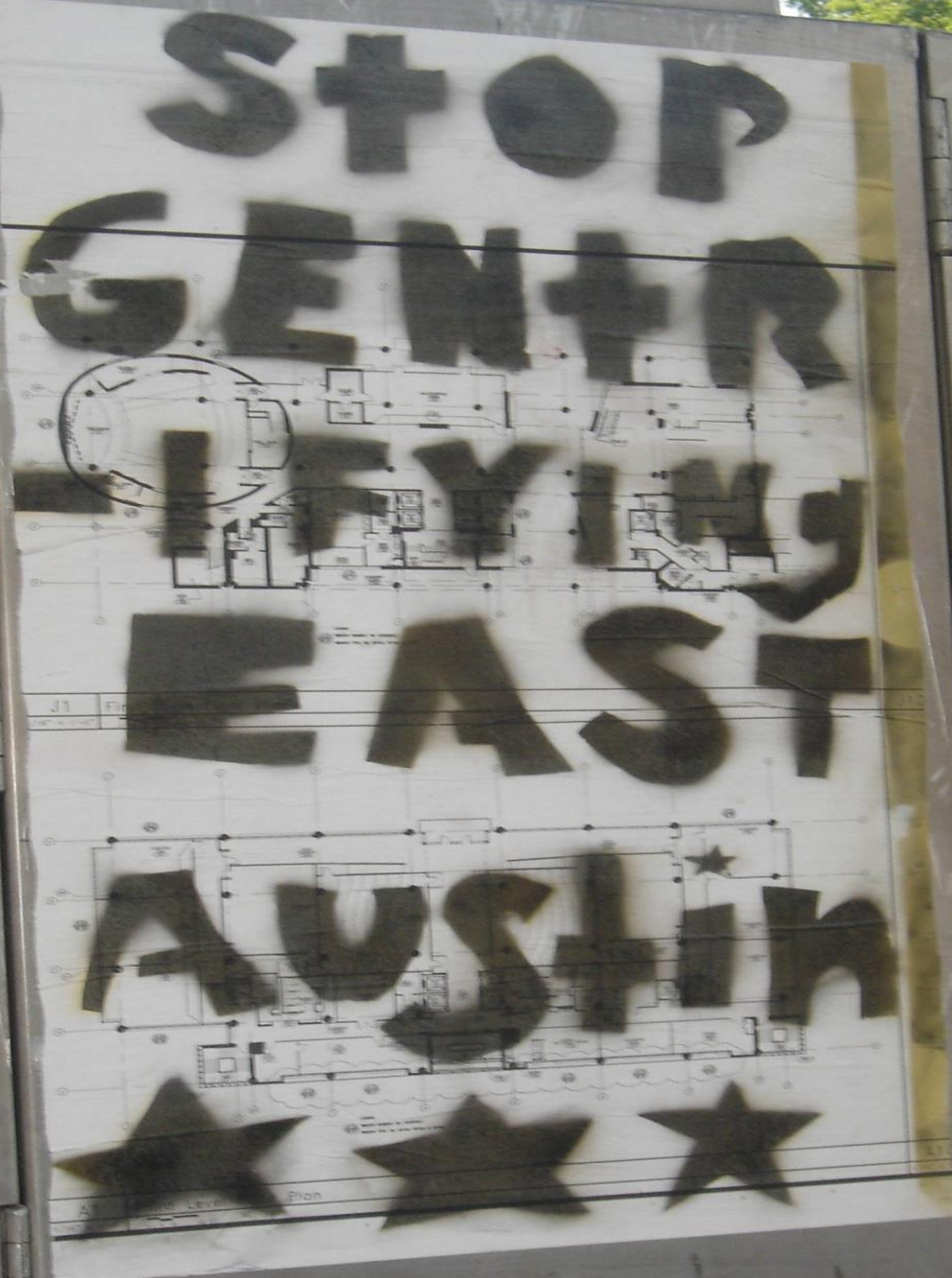
# Spiritual Connection to the Land











Roe







# Nahui Ollin / Healthy Communities & Climate Justice Project



Nahui – Nahuatl word meaning four elements & four directions and Ollin is the energy created by movement

# PODER's Young Scholars for Justice (YSJ)

Our main goal is to engage youth living in East Austin in community and youth concerns that impact their lives through education, advocacy and action.





# Health Surveys

- YSJ - Follow ups: Tank Farm & Holly Power Plant neighborhoods
- YSJ –Survey Pure Casting Foundry
- Presented findings at City Council

# Bus Riders Union

- In 2001 PODER started a bus riders union
- In the summer of 2002 the YSJ expanded the membership of the bus riders union
- In 2003 the YSJ did a survey to bus riders on how they thought capital metro could improve its services
- The bus riders gave us their opinions where bus stops could be added and where bus shelters were needed
- In 2004 the YSJ attended several Capital Metro meetings where they were able to voice their opinions on how to better their service





# Austin Parks and Recreation

In 2002 PODER's YSJ surveyed many youth at several Austin Recreation centers. Later we were to find that there were 100% male park director staffing throughout all the recreation centers we visited. With many of the activities and sports catered to males, there was very little female youth participation.

The YSJ gathered all the information from the surveyed recreation centers and presented recommendations to the Austin City Council

In the summer of 2005, the YSJ are planning to follow up on our recommendations for increasing Austin Parks budget and improving their services.



# Youth Electoral Empowerment

- Started a series of workshops entitled Youth Electoral Empowerment
- Conducted a series of workshops and talked about the history of voting
- We discussed all the presidential candidates and researched their backgrounds
- The youth were able to learn about the struggle of people of color trying to vote throughout the years





# Voter Registration Drive



- The YSJ had a voter registration drive and held a press conference in the community
- All the television stations came out and spoke to some of our youth
- The main point of our drive was to reach out to the disenfranchised youth and ex-felons

# YSJ's City Council Candidates Forum



The Young Scholars for Justice held a community forum in East Austin for the Austin City Council Candidates. The YSJ had a few planned questions for the candidates, then the floor was opened up for anyone to ask questions.

Questions were about:

Closing the Holly Power Plant sooner

Funding for Austin Parks and Recreation Department

How they would deal with Gentrification





# Repeal Zero Tolerance Campaign

- 2 Community Forums around ZT recommendations were conducted by YSJ
- YSJ conducted ZT workshop at the Highlander Research and Education Center for their Young and Restless Seeds of Fire Activism Training Seminar
- Co-sponsored a local Youth Encuentro and conducted ZT workshop
- ZT workshop at the Alternative Learning Center in Austin, TX
- Became part of the Criminal Justice Network for Youth (CJNY) and the Texas Coalition Advocating Justice for Juveniles (TCAJJ)
- The YSJ is scheduled to facilitate a workshop about Zero Tolerance at the Youth Action National Gathering

# Living and Learning With Mother Earth

- The Living and Learning with Mother Earth Project was done for YSJ and for a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classroom at Allison Elementary.
- YSJ helped conduct a tour of the Colorado River Park and environmental workshops.
- The 3<sup>rd</sup> graders read poetry about the CO River at our annual Festival de las Plants.





# Border Mobilization Action

PODER attended an Action Protest in Matamoros, Mexico against the border that segregates Mexico and its peoples from the US. People in the protest congregated on the boarder bridge and held the rally over the Rio Grande River.



Many people from Mexico and the US border states attended the Action Protest to show their support for International Human Rights. At least 1/3 of the 400+ attendees were youth 20 or younger from Mexico.

# Youth Allies

- The Young Scholars for Justice has become a partner organization with Youth Action in Albuquerque, NM
- Youth Action is a network org of youth run/led orgs and will do site visits with the YSJ
- The YSJ is also working with a local youth group called Austin Youth Voices
- Throughout the year we continue to build relationships with other youth groups we meet





# Youth Trips

- The YSJ have attended many trips nationally
- We have been to Washington D.C.; Denver, Colorado; Phoenix and Tucson, AZ; Albuquerque, New Mexico; Chicago, Illinois; NewMarket, Tennessee; New Orleans, Louisiana; Los Angeles, California; Atlanta, GA; Matamoros, Mexico and of course all throughout Texas
- When the youth attend trips they go to attend trainings and different workshops



# Intergenerational





# Pure Casting Industrial Facility



Location: 2110 E. 4<sup>th</sup> St. Across from Zavala Elementary,  
Pan American Recreation Center and hundreds of homes

# PODER's Community Questionnaire

The Young Scholars for Justice surveyed over 40 homes in the neighborhood surrounding the Pure Casting Facility, and found that many of the community's residents were not aware that Pure Casting was using hazardous chemicals in such close proximity to their houses. An overwhelming majority of the residents believe a facility like this one should NOT be located near Zavala Elementary or in a residential community, and most support the idea of affordable housing in its place should Pure Casting be relocated.





# Chemicals Found

The following chemicals are used in the Pure Castings Facility:

- **Sodium Hydroxide**

Swelling, inflammation of lungs

- **Chromium**

nosebleeds, runny nose, lung cancer  
bronchitis, coughing, resp. tract irritation

- **Nickel**

allergic skin, eye, resp. tract reactions,  
loss of smell, asthma, bronchitis

- **Arsenic**

irritation of stomach and lungs, infertility,  
miscarriages, heart disruptions, brain damage,

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- **Mercury**

poisoning, pneumonia, mood and mental  
changes, problems with nervous system

- **Selenium / ICP**

stomach pains, difficulty breathing,

- **Silver / ICP**

irritation of respiratory tract, allergic  
reactions of the eyes

- **Barium**

hypertension





















# Future Land Use: Affordable Housing

## Future Land Use: Affordable Housing

The City of Austin has over 8,000 people on the waiting list for public housing and Section 8 housing.

The Pure Casting facility is an ideal location to build affordable housing.

Relocating the Pure Casting facility and building affordable housing in its place is the most sensible and safest solution for surrounding residents.



# Next Steps and How you can Help:

1. **Fill out the community questionnaire**
2. **Participate in meetings to relocate Pure Castings and build affordable housing.**
3. **You can also call your City Council member and let them know you want affordable housing built at 2110 E. 4th St.**

## **Make 7 Calls**

Tell the **Austin City Council** to relocate Pure Casting Industrial Facility from 2110 E. 4<sup>th</sup> St. and to build affordable housing in its place.

## **Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem:**

- Mayor Lee Leffingwell : 974-2250
- Mayor Pro Tem Sheryl Cole : 974-2266

## **Council Members:**

- Laura Morrison- 974-2258
- Chris Riley – 974-2260
- Kathie Tovo — 974-2255
- Bill Spelman – 974-2256
- Mike Martinez — 974-2264

