

MAY 25



TCSO TOWN HALL | WELLS BRANCH

MEETING BRIEF

OPEN CARRY LAW & LAW ENFORCEMENT DUTIES | [Captain Willie Taylor](#)

What are the plans (proposed requirements) for new signage related to local businesses and churches to prohibit guns in the likelihood of the passage of permit-less (constitutional) carry law?

We assume this question is related to HB 1927 which would allow permit-less carrying of firearms. Currently, TCSO does not have any signage information related to the possible passage of a permit-less carry law. This information is usually discussed at the inception of the law and signage verbiage requirements are usually written into the law itself once it is passed and adopted as we've seen in previous laws. Obviously, there is still a lot of work to do before this is all completed. TCSO is working closely with the County Attorney's office to help determine what the signage may look like in the future.

Can TCSO offer best practices on how to manage open carry at small businesses and churches?

This bill is still in the legislative stage and has not become law as of yet. Several amendments could be made before or if it becomes law that could change how it is viewed. It is understandable that open carry of firearms would be a concern for small businesses and churches. It will be important to understand what the law says and how it will restrict where and how weapons are carried.

Currently, there are laws in place that restrict license holders from carrying firearms on the premises of particular places (PC Sec 46.03, 46.035). There is also particular verbiage that has to be visible to the public if a business does not wish to have firearms brought in. However, historically we have not seen significant issues concerning open or concealed carrying of a firearm at businesses or churches, even when the license to carry law was first enacted.

Can TCSO comment on/provide background information about how current law enforcement duties will be/have been impacted by the recent legal changes from the DA's and Mayor's office in reference to how officers manage crimes perpetrated by the homeless population?

Our duties have not changed much concerning the decisions of the County and District Attorney's offices. There have been some procedural changes during the booking process that have affected the deputies concerning affidavit review but mostly things remain consistent. Concerning the homeless population portion of the question – we continue to support the citizens and communities we serve, and we will continue to take appropriate action if they become crime victims, whoever the crimes are perpetrated by.

With the homeless camping ban in effect, this population will be forced out and may relocate into other areas in unincorporated Travis County. How can our community work most effectively with TCSO to help address this problem?

It is no secret that the City of Austin has a significant homeless population. The city is also taking steps to address it with some progressive ideas. Since it is not illegal to be homeless and homelessness could happen to any one of us as life's circumstances change, we encourage compassion and understanding for this population. People may just need some time to get on their feet or a helping hand, or may need some type of social service but may not know how to engage that service. In those instances, we may be able to help guide them in the right direction. However, if you see someone that you believe to be violating the law please call 911 to report. We continue to need your help in spotting and reporting criminal activity in your community. We also want to be a resource and a partner as we continue to collaboratively address issues that arise.

PATROL & PUBLIC DISTURBANCES | [Sergeant James Moore](#)

Residents have observed officers parked at night but feel the visual of officers patrolling the streets might provide a greater deterrent to crimes of opportunity. Is greater visibility a deterrent?

Greater visibility is a deterrent and is always the goal. The reason you see officers parked is because they are required to write reports before the end of the shift. It is also common to see several units parked together for officer safety.

What is the current coverage of the night patrols throughout Wells Branch? Can that coverage be increased? Can foot patrols be added at night?

The coverage is 3 - 6 officers for both evening & night shift. There is a four hour overlap between 9 PM and 1 AM where evening and night shift work together. The Sheriff and the Commissioners Court constantly work on staffing for the agency. Although foot patrols can be useful, they are not the most efficient way to police the Wells Branch area. Unit in vehicle are much more responsive than officers on foot.

Almost nightly gunshots are heard throughout Wells Branch; while some may be fireworks, not all are. Is anything being done to address this?

Shot fired calls are taken very serious in the Wells Branch area. All available officers will usually respond to such calls and several arrests have been made recently.

What is the best way to report public disturbances such as loud/excessive, sustained noise from vehicles and homes and/or large group gatherings while they are still prohibited?

If it is just a noise complaint, please call Non-emergency Dispatch at 512-974-0845. Option 3, but if there is any type of disturbance call 911.

CRIMINAL ACTIVITY | [Lieutenant Alan Howard](#)

When is it appropriate to make a report to TCSO and not be directed to the MUD or HOA?

If the event is dangerous or an emergency call 911. Additionally, if the concern is criminal or related to public spaces call 911. For non-emergency reports, you can call Dispatch at 512-974-0845. Option 3. You can also [file a report online](#). Violations listed in the HOA by-laws are a good guide as to when to call the HOA.

We have seen an increase in random individuals walking/driving into the neighborhood trying to open car doors and/or house doors, possible increase in foot traffic from nearby homeless population, packages stolen from front porch, etc. What does TCSO suggest for best practices to prevent or deter these actions to include mailbox break-ins and burglaries of vehicles and/or vehicle theft (entire cars or car parts)?

The vast majority of vehicles are taken from gas stations when the driver leaves them running with the keys in the car- always turn the car off and lock it. The vast majority of burglaries occur from unlocked cars or cars with property visible- hide your belongings and lock the cars. As for other thefts, graffiti, etc.- the public is our best help. If you see suspicious activity please call 911. We catch the majority of these suspects based on a citizen getting involved.

TRAFFIC | [Lieutenant Jason Jewert](#) & [Brian Burk, Transportation and Natural Resources](#)

Note on TNR: In 1987, the Commissioners Court approved the consolidation of seven existing departments into what was later reorganized into the Transportation and Natural Resources (TNR) Department. TNR contains several Divisions. The Public Works Division includes several service areas. Road and Bridge Maintenance Services includes a Traffic Program. As Traffic Program Manager, Brian Burk manages the installation and maintenance of signs and markings and roadside barrier.

Why aren't the parking/storage violations actively enforced on streets where "no parking signs" have been placed (notably Shoreline)?

Unfortunately, West Special Ops has limited resources and we generally try to drive our forces towards issues that are safety related, i.e. moving violations, speeding, running red lights, etc. Specifically, for the Shoreline Dr. area, the no parking zones are in front of the MUD entrances and by the school in the 3700 Blk; rarely do we find violations in either of those areas. There are several cars, trailers & boats parked in the 3100 Blk of Shoreline Dr. that are not in a "No Parking" zone. Please feel free to contact us at trafficrequests@traviscountytx.gov to share a concern and we will do our best to address it.

How can the community change the speed limits on the main "through streets" within the community (Bratton Ln., Wells Port, Wells Branch Pkwy, Shoreline, Merriltown, etc.)?

Contact TNR Public Works Road Maintenance Requests at TNR.Roads@traviscountytx.gov to request a speed zone traffic and engineering study on a road open to public travel and maintained by the county.

A county is authorized to establish a reasonable and prudent maximum speed limit. State law states an operator may not drive at a speed greater than is reasonable and prudent under the circumstances then existing.

If speed limit signs are posted and circumstances affecting speed have not changed, it is unlikely that another study will result in a different reasonable and prudent maximum speed limit. TNR follows well established procedures for conducting speed zone studies.

When will the speed limit signs and the traffic lights be enabled on the new portion of Grand Avenue Pkwy?

Once a road open for public travel has been accepted for maintenance by a county, the county can regulate traffic on that road.

Not all of the most recently constructed portions of Grand Avenue Parkway have been accepted by the commissioners court for maintenance. Once the road is accepted for maintenance, a speed zone study and warrants recommending operation of a traffic signal can be completed. It is anticipated that traffic data, used to complete these studies, will be requested within the next two weeks.

What is the correct process to add speed bumps, radar signs, more crosswalks, or controlled crosswalks?

A county-wide consensus to establish a traffic calming infrastructure program, including speed bumps, has not been attained in the unincorporated areas. The county commissioners court has not established a program, including personnel, standards, and funding, to install traffic calming infrastructure. More than one public hearing has been held on this topic. The last public hearing was held on 8/30/2011 and discussed as Agenda Item 23. The testimony for this agenda item may be reviewed at https://www2.traviscountytx.gov/commissioners_court/agendas/2011/08/vs110830.asp.

Contact TNR Public Works Road Maintenance Requests at TNR.Roads@traviscountytx.gov or trafficrequests@traviscountytx.gov to request temporary installation of a radar speed feedback sign. TNR Road and Bridge Maintenance Services has a limited number of radar speed feedback signs for temporary (7 days or less) installation under an existing speed limit sign. The Sheriff's Office also has radar speed feedback signs mounted on a trailer.

Contact TNR Development Services Permit Program at Travis_County.Permits@traviscountytx.gov for a property owners' association to complete a permit application to obtain consent to install a speed feedback sign for a longer term. A permit application can be completed on-line at <https://www.mypermitnow.org/login.aspx>.

Transportation Code Section 430.002 authorizes a property owners' association to install a speed feedback sign if the association 1) receives consent of the governing body maintaining the road and 2) pays for the installation and is responsible for the maintenance of the sign.

Travis County Code Section 482.210 allows an object, such as a sign, to be placed in the right of way. In accordance with Section 482.210(i) and (j), a basic development permit, as described in County Code Section 482.901, and a license agreement, as described in County Code Section 482.701, is required for Travis County consent.

Contact TNR Public Works Road Maintenance Requests at TNR.Roads@traviscountytx.gov to request a traffic and engineering study on a road open to public travel and maintained by the county for a marked crosswalk and/or a regulatory control device for a marked crosswalk.

[TNR Road and Bridge Maintenance Services](#) places traffic control devices, such as crosswalk signs and markings, in accordance with the Texas Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices. The manual states that crosswalk markings should not be used indiscriminately. A traffic and engineering study is recommended for a marked crosswalk.

Crosswalk markings provide guidance for pedestrians by defining and delineating paths. In conjunction with signs and/or signals, markings may alert vehicle operators of a pedestrian crossing point that may not be obvious.

Can “No Truck” (commercial traffic) signs be added to residential streets, including the “through streets”?

A regulation prohibiting trucks is rarely necessary or recommended on local residential streets. Roads dedicated for public use include use by trucks. While a commissions court has general authority to regulate traffic, prohibiting use of a public road is generally prescribed by state law. A traffic and engineering study is needed to recommend a regulation to prohibit use of a public road.

Contact TNR Public Works Road Maintenance Requests at TNR.Roads@traviscountytx.gov to request a traffic and engineering study on a road open to public travel and maintained by the county for a regulation to prohibit trucks.

MISCELLANEOUS CONTACT INFO

Travis County Non-Emergency Dispatch: 512-974-0845, Option 3

TCSO:

www.tcsheriff.org | [File Online Report](#)

TCSO Community Outreach Unit: TCSOCommunityOutreach@traviscountytx.gov | 512-854-7786

Precinct Two Commissioner:

Travis County Precinct Two Commissioner Brigid Shea: brigid.shea@traviscountytx.gov | 512-854-9222

TNR:

[Transportation & Natural Resources](#) | 512-854-9383

For roads outside city limits in the unincorporated area of Travis County:

Travis County TNR Roads Dispatch: TNR.Dispatch@TravisCountyTx.gov | 512-854-9433

[Precinct and Municipality Boundary Maps by Sector](#)

[Travis County TNR ArcGIS Hub Site](#)

TNR Public Works Road Maintenance Requests: TNR.Roads@traviscountytx.gov or trafficrequests@traviscountytx.gov

TNR Development Services Permit Program: Travis_County.Permits@traviscountytx.gov

Texas Transportation Code: <https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/SDocs/TRANSPORTATIONCODE.pdf>

Animal Control is managed by [Austin/Travis County Health and Human Services Department](#) | 512-974-2000