



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Howard Lazarus, Director, Public Works Department
Mike Trimble, Capital Planning Officer
Robert Spillar, Director, Austin Transportation Department

DATE: November 27, 2013

SUBJECT: CIUR #1080 Response – Hyde Park Plaza

Resolution #20130808-051 directs the City Manager to prepare a cost estimate for the public features, as well as a feasible timeline for implementation of the “Hyde Park Plaza” Project (the Project), to identify potential sources of funding, and to present these items to Council.

BACKGROUND

1998 - 2011: The Hyde Park Neighborhood Association held a workshop led by Project for Public Spaces for neighbors and business owners. The project was envisioned to enhance the overall safety for all modes of transportation and to provide additional outdoor seating and gathering space. The 1999 Hyde Park / Hancock Neighborhood Traffic Calming project included some of the improvements to the intersection and at that time was funded. However due to issues with meeting the dedicated parking requirements, vacation of the street right-of-way, and lack of buy-in from all adjacent property owners, the project did not proceed.

The Hyde Park Neighborhood Conservation Combining District (NCCD) was adopted in 2002 and allowed for a reduction in the required dedicated parking spaces for the adjacent properties, which removed one of the obstacles to the Hyde Park Plaza concept. In 2010, Project proponents discussed reviving this plan to achieve its goals and to renew this local shopping and gathering spot. New scope was added to the original concept.

Under the new concept scope, public infrastructure elements may include:

- Switching sidewalks and streetside parking to enhance sidewalks and pedestrian safety.
- Creating “bulb outs” at the intersection to slow traffic and narrow crossing distances.
- Install paved and marked crosswalks for pedestrian safety at “bulb-outs”.
- Install 43rd Street crosswalk at Avenue H for pedestrian safety and to delineate district.
- Relocate the north part of the Avenue H/Duval alley for pedestrian safety.
- Enhance bus stop facilities.

The Transportation Department also requested that the angle parking on Duval Street be changed to reverse angle parking to enhance bicycle safety.

2012: Project proponents presented the Hyde Park Plaza concepts to the Bond Election Advisory Task Force seeking funding for the project. The 2012 Task Force indicated the project was a good idea, but had concerns about the lack of cost estimate, and ultimately in the face of an overwhelming number of urgent city infrastructure needs and other high priority projects arising from community planning processes, was not able to include it their recommendation to Council.

2012-13: After unsuccessful attempts to have the Project placed on any of the municipal bond elections in 2010 or 2012, Project proponents sought assistance through the Public Works Department to determine a possible alternative for funding of the project.

PROJECT ASSESSMENT

Staff from the Public Works, Transportation, and Planning & Development Review Departments have reviewed the revised Hyde Park Plaza concept plans and agree conceptually that the public elements of it are feasible and in line with City standards.

However, several issues have been identified that would need to be resolved before moving forward with the full Project. These include:

- Addressing potential drainage issues as demonstrated in the topography survey.
- Much of the work required to accomplish the concept is on private property and so public access easements will be needed from private property owners.
- Owners of the Mother Café property on the opposite side of Duval Street are not in agreement with the proposal.
- The estimate from project managers and engineers is approximately \$500,000. No sources of funding are currently identified for the full cost of the Project.

Because of these issues identified with moving forward on the full Project, Public Works Staff began working with Project proponents on how the City could assist in creating the feel of the concept on the property without the major street work. This work included:

- Temporary back-in angle parking was offered on the west side of the street to pilot how well it would work. This solution will require the private landowners to provide a public access easement for the sidewalk and parking, which they have verbally agreed to do.
- Moving an Austin Energy pole to allow a different route for Austin Resource Recovery trucks to exit out of the alley through their rear parking lot, so the alley could be closed to through traffic except bicycles and pedestrians. Staff from Public Works made calls to the involved departments to request assistance for the project proponents.
- Suggestions were made on how they could decoratively close the private driveway (large planters, etc.) into the space being used as a parking lot between the buildings, to convert it to outdoor seating.

These short-term solutions were in the works when the Council Resolution was passed.

COST ESTIMATE

An estimate of \$500,000 for design and construction of the public infrastructure elements of the Project is the best number that can be offered at this time without additional field work, design work and cost estimation from both. The factors that can increase the cost estimate include:

- Further drainage assessments need to be done in order to understand the impact of the street work on already occurring drainage issues that would impact the east side of the street, especially Mother's Café.
- Utility location would need to be assessed to determine whether there would need to be relocation due to reconstruction.
- Possible easement issues.

In order to do a true cost estimate, some additional design work will need to be completed. Design and preliminary engineering for the project is estimated to cost \$125,000, which is 25% of the cost estimate for the Project.

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

Short-term Improvements

The short-term improvements suggested by the Public Works Department to Project proponents previously (listed above) are in process. Austin Transportation Department road maintenance/stripping funding may be used to complete the temporary reverse-angle parking pilot project, if the necessary public access easements can be procured from the private property owner. The cost estimate of this pilot project is \$8,000 to \$10,000. Staff will continue discussions with the private property owner to move forward with this pilot project.

Long-term Improvements

As part of the FY14 Budget approval process, City Council directed staff to fund additional design of the Project. \$125,000 of 2012 Bond funds designated for "design of new projects" will be used for the design and preliminary engineering of the public infrastructure elements of the Hyde Park Plaza project.

Construction of the public elements of the concept will require significant road and streetscape work to complete, as it will require construction of new sidewalks, street pavement, curbs, drainage, etc. Public access easements will also be needed from private property owners before the Project can move forward, once funding for construction is identified.

Based on the estimate, construction of these long-term improvements cannot be easily absorbed into department day-to-day budgets. When approached by the project proponents prior to the Council Resolution, Public Works staff explored whether the project, or elements of the project, could be considered for funding through several of the City's existing programs, including the Neighborhood Partnering Program, use of sidewalk mitigation funds, etc. The Project does not meet the requirements for funding through these programs, and each program has a long back-log of community projects that would be further delayed if this Project were to be funded outside of the established procedures.

Because of the cost of this community-based project, Staff recommends completing the more detailed cost estimate in order to provide a more complete picture of future funding opportunities for

construction. Within a constrained budget, re-allocation of funds to a new project could have an impact on the progress of other priority projects. Once additional design and a more detailed cost estimate are completed, Staff will be better able to provide Council with funding options and any potential impacts.

NEXT STEPS

Staff will work with project proponents to secure the public access easements needed for the temporary reverse angle parking pilot project. This pilot project can be completed within six to eight weeks after securing the easements.

The Public Works Department will complete additional design to in order to determine the full cost estimate of the public infrastructure elements of the Project. Design and preliminary engineering will take approximately six to nine months to complete.

Staff will provide a subsequent update to City Council on long-term project funding opportunities and associated timelines for implementation by June 2014, or sooner if possible. In the meantime, feel free to contact us with any questions.

CC: Marc A. Ott, City Manager
 Robert D. Goode, P.E., Assistant City Manager
 Ed Van Eenoo, Deputy Chief Financial Officer
 George Adams, Planning & Development Review Department