



**PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COUNCIL
MINUTES**

**REGULAR MEETING
*January 06, 2014***

The Pedestrian Advisory convened in a regular meeting on January 6, 2014, 721 Barton Springs Road, Austin, Texas.

Guests in Attendance:

Lauren Bennett
Jennifer Bennett-Reumuth
Janet Beinke
Charlsa Bentley
Mark Bentley
Hatty Boguck
Stacey Cauvin

Lisa Hinely
Steve Hopkins
Girard Kinney
Ramah Leith
Jess Lowry
Joel Meyer
Carmen de la Morena

Nic Moe
Marva Overton
Cynthia Riley Loera
Eduardo Riley Loera
Emily Risinger
Heyden Walker

Staff in Attendance:

Robert Anderson
Jim Dale
Lawrence Deeter

John Eastman
Kristy Hansen
Renee Orr

Mike Rios

CALL TO ORDER

Staff called the Board Meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

1. CITIZEN COMMUNICATION: GENERAL

There was no citizen communication.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes were approved without comment.

3. STAFF AND COMMISSION BRIEFINGS

A. Bicycle Advisory Council/Urban Transportation Commission

No briefings were offered from representatives of the BAC or UTC. Staff to the PAC mentioned passage by City Council of a Complete Streets Resolution that specifically called out the BAC/PAC/UTC as stakeholders to be incorporated into the process, among other stakeholder groups.

4. NEW BUSINESS**A. Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons (PHBs) Location Criteria – Discussion and Possible Action**
Presentation by: Jim Dale, Austin Transportation Department

Staff handed out a document containing locations of all requests for PHB's. Mr. Dale gave some background on the Arterial Management Division, how PHB's work, the history of PHB's in Austin, why we need criteria in order to prioritize PHB locations, and the process for requesting a PHB. Mr. Dale noted his job is to balance the needs of all modes in a collaborative manner and that there are over 80 requests for additional PHB's. He said he is looking into resources to be able to do 10 studies every 6 months. Funding possibilities include bond dollars, CAMPO and certificates of obligation. Mr. Dale elaborated on the rationale for developing criteria for new PHBs. He said Pedestrian volumes were not included for several reasons: Unclear what time a peak volume would be (looking into ways to address that); difficulty in recording volumes; if on a high speed/volume arterial the pedestrian demand may be suppressed because of unsafe conditions. An eleventh criterion was included to permit engineering judgment so that a location that doesn't score well, but has a clear need for a PHB, can be selected.

Jess Lowry asked if public transit was taken into consideration. Mr. Dale answered it is, they work closely with CapMetro.

Gerard Kinney asked what to do if a PHB previously requested is not on the list. Jim answered to let him know or call 311.

Janet Beinke asked about median space available, is that for having a refuge? Jim says that they want to compare locations with medians and without, giving priority to those without because the medians act as a pedestrian refuge. Janet also asks if Austin Transportation Department (ATD) communicates with the neighborhood associations about their requests. Mr. Dale says ATD does not, but does take into consideration if there is a neighborhood plan.

Ms. Orr mentions the request list will be put online and available to neighborhoods.

Mr. Dale notes that if a request doesn't meet PHB criteria, it still gets attention from ATD, just won't get a PHB.

Q: How does a citizen know or set their expectations about whether they get a PHB or not?
Each request gets a CSR# (citizen service request) that can be used to track their request. That info will soon be on the public website in July.

Q: Will TXDOT and Austin criteria manuals ever conflict?

A: There is that potential; if ATD wants a PHB on a txdot road they will need to be notified and given a reason for the PHB; txdot will require ATD to prove the request meets the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD).

Q: What other options are out there if PHB doesn't work.

A: Rectangular flashing rapid beacons, strobe lights that are activated by pedestrians;

Q: Are there criteria to match up bus stop and PHB locations

A: Yes, that is a scoring criteria

Q: Is there a top speed for PHB's?

A: Not really, it is context sensitive.

Q: In terms of ADA, do you factor in curbs (for example) that prevent wheelchairs?

A: We have criteria for special needs; also the definition of median has many variables; but will take that into consideration.

Q: Why, on the median criteria, do we jump the number of points so high? Why no intermediary option? There could be a middle point for ADA accessible.

A: That is something to think about. We will get with PAC staff about that.

Q: How many crashes trigger the points?

A: One crash.

Q: What happens when you have more than one crash? The scoring criteria are not capturing the full weight of crashes.

A: We will look into changing criteria for increased number of crashes.

Q: Is there a way to evaluate near misses?

A: No. If alcohol is involved in the crash, that crash isn't counted. If a fatality is involved (w/o alcohol) that location is moved to the study list.

Q: Can you use cameras to monitor study locations?

A: We don't have the resources in terms of cameras and then staff to monitor in order to study for PHB's.

Q: It seems like surveillance could verify near misses. In our neighborhood we were encouraged to report near misses. Is that the case?

A: Near misses aren't part of the criteria for evaluating PHB locations.

Q: How do you capture those who are "special needs" but don't show up in this category? E.g. mom w/ kids.

A: Don't have a good way to call them out.

Q: Are grocery stores special needs generators

A: No, they are under pedestrian generators; look at land use, where pedestrians will be coming from and going to, e.g. parks, grocery, multi-family residential, etc.

Q: How are the pedestrian generator points distributed?

A: Using a distance of 300 ft. to calculate the generators.

Q: Why do educational institutions receive so little points?

A: Schools may have school zones, cross guards, etc.

Q: How are you calculating the pedestrian generators? Are you counting just within 300 ft. of the proposed PHB location? Or, are you counting all “attractors” along the stretch of road between crossing points that would theoretically benefit from a PHB?

A: Within 300 ft. of the proposed crossing location.

Q: How do you define major office retailer?

A: This one will have a bit of judgement, same goes for multi family residential; one person will be scoring all of these.

Q: Why are so little points assigned to bus stops. Buses are inherently carrying pedestrians and should count for more than an office building.

A: ATD works with capmetro to get daily boarding info, so 10pts per 100 boardings per day.

Q: Are there more civic uses included than the ones listed? Are they all taken care of?

A: It’s hard to name all types of civic uses, there is some judgment in this category

Staff suggests giving more weight to Imagine Austin activity centers.

Mr. Dale will take the PAC comments from today, discuss and make any necessary changes and report back to the PAC. Then they will present to Urban Transportation Commission, then get this information out to the public. These criteria can be improved continuously as more data are collected.

Q: How much does a signal cost?

A: It varies but average is \$125-150k, PHB’s average \$60k.

Q: Should we go to Council to ask for money to install new PHB’s

A: Staff can’t lobby Council, but individual citizens can.

Q: Are there any public/private partnerships to fund PHBs

A: That’s definitely a possibility if it meets certain criteria. Apple is doing one currently.

Q: Are there any plans for traffic studies to be required for pedestrian generators being built? For instance, if the site warrants a signal or PHB, the developer must install. We should move toward

studying the entire environment that looks at all modes and needs. We do that with cars now, why not with pedestrians.

A: May have been discussed, it should be discussed. We can bring in other departments to talk about that.

Q: Have you applied the new criteria to the locations you already have in order to test the proposed criteria?

A: Yes, we did test against some PHBs already installed; some scored high and some low, and that led to the judgment criterion.

Q: Besides PHB's, what does your department do to increase walkability in Austin?

A: Pedestrian count down timers, any new signal technology, school zones; we invite everyone to come to the new transportation management center.

B. Subcommittees – Discussion and Possible Action

Postponed until future meeting.

5. OLD BUSINESS

A. Bylaws – Discussion and Possible Action

Emily Risinger presents on the work she and the group has been doing on creating the PAC bylaws. Emily notes that there are some issues that need input:

Citizen Engagment: How would the group like to handle this?

Marva Overton likes and wants the PAC to report to the community. She wants to add language to the frequency and wonders if we need to clarify that we are reporting back to citizens.

Location of meetings:

- There is concern we need to have flexible meeting locations. Do we need to incorporate other parts of town?

Staff notes the group has the Austin Energy location (721 Barton Springs) booked through June.

Jess Lowry wonders about having a live video stream of the meetings? Another person likes this idea - more options will attract more people.

It is suggested that the moving meetings might only need to happen a few times per year.

It is asked whether other groups routinely change meeting locations. City Council and Imagine Austin have done this. Staff suggests the Imagine Austin process is slightly different because it was a project of limited duration and set geographic meetings specifically to solicit feedback, not to perform work.

It is desired to build in flexibility. If there is demand, let's go to them.

We Need to broaden citizen engagement definition.

Q: Who is appointing the leadership members?

A: Staff answers since this is a citizen group, members of the group vote on leadership, not council appointed.

Q: Are there any ideas for having formal relationships with the neighborhood groups/planning teams?

A: Staff notes he communicates through contact team list serves, ANC, PAC, WalkAustin, PAC interest list.

Carmen says she will work to obtain information and how the PAC can align its efforts with neighborhood groups.

Removal of voting members: what does the group think the number of meetings missed should be? The group wants to clarify that the period for counting absences will be one year. There is a preference for members to attend 75% of meetings. It's suggested that alternates should be held to the same standard if they are going to be voting members. Group opts to apply a 75% attendance requirement for alternate

Question regarding what counts as being present (streaming online, in person)?

Question about whether the attendance rules apply to everyone. Staff clarifies that the attendance rules would be for the appointed full members and alternate members (the voting members). The public, as now, can attend at will and everyone can provide comments and participate in the conversation.

Question about what we do with the first year membership to stagger terms?

It's common, in order to stagger, for some first members to serve 50% of a term. Staff says we'll continue to explore this.

How many and what type of subcommittees are appropriate?:

The bylaws working group asked whether we should define the subcommittees?

The group clarified it is typical to define the number of required subcommittees. Some bylaws include 'bylaws' and 'nominations' subcommittees.

It is suggested to define subcommittee (vs. task force).

The group likes the 2 subcommittees, technical and project (and membership when necessary).

6. FUTURE BUSINESS

A. Urban Trails Master Plan – Discussion of Draft Master Plan

Postponed until a future meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Staff adjourned the meeting at 8:24 p.m. without objection.