



COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MINUTES

The Comprehensive Planning and Transportation Committee convened in a regular meeting on Monday, June 2, 2014 at 301 W. Second Street, Room #1101, Austin, Texas.

Subcommittee Members in Attendance: Mayor Pro Tem Cole (Chair)
Council Member Morrison
Council Member Riley

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Pro Tem Cole called the Comprehensive Planning and Transportation Committee meeting to order at 2:07 p.m.

1. CITIZEN COMMUNICATION

Ms. Lisa Hinely with the North Lamar Neighborhood team stated that the Transportation Department has been really great with the communication and Public Works as well. Emphasized that the people that this really matters to we have a lot of folks with disabilities and it is really important that we affordable housing and access to transit. We know this is a TXDOT controlled road which makes the process a little more complicated, so we are asking that you pull this into City control.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

June 30, 2014 – Approved the June 2, 2014, minutes on a 2-0 vote with Council Member Morrison off the dais.

3. OVERVIEW ON THE STATUS AND WORK PLAN FOR THE HOUSING/TRANSIT/JOBS ACTION TEAM, INCLUDING AN UPDATE ON HOMESTEAD PRESERVATION EFFORTS, AFFORDABLE HOUSING PRESERVATION POLICY, AND THE COUNCIL MICRO UNITS RESOLUTION. THE ACTION TEAM WAS TASKED BY COUNCIL TO ALIGN CITY PROGRAMS AND POLICES WITH THE FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION NEW STARTS GUIDELINES.

Mr. Scott Gross, Austin Transportation Department, began with the action team missions and how they have organized the program and proceeding thus far, but still a work in progress. The Mission to align City programs and policies with Federal Transit Administration (FTA) New Starts program guidelines in support of a Central Corridor high-capacity transit project, urban rail. Provide recommendations to other city initiatives, program policies including CodeNEXT. The FTA New Starts goals align with Imagine Austin and City Council goals. The New Starts process, 2013 final policy guidance result of major overhaul, new federal commitment to multiple “bottom lines”, emphasis on building and sustaining great cities, develop transit projects with land use plans and policies (transit-oriented development, meet needs of the transit dependent and directly address affordability).

The New Starts Evaluation, 3 project justification criteria cover affordability are mobility, economic development and land use. The New Starts Mobility Improvements focus on trips instead of travel time savings. What has been added are double ridership credit for transit dependent persons and transit dependent persons, zero car households and from households in the lowest bracket as defined locally? The Housing/Transit/Jobs (H+T+J) Work Plan as far as the resolution the focus initially on the areas of affordable housing, job preservation, and economic development; make recommendations towards implementation of Imagine Austin and educate and inform. The H+T+J process is catalog, identify gaps and deficiencies, prioritize, and recommend strategies to improve the effectiveness of, and/or fill gaps, implementation strategies and ACTION by Council. We do plan to come back to CPTC in August to get direction on how to advance toward Council.

Ms. Erica Leak, Neighborhood Housing and Community Development Department, stated on the resolution Council ask about contracts on Affordable Housing Preservation Strategy. Currently, we are partnering with Housing Works and UT Community and Regional Planning, assembling baseline data on aging rental housing, mapping aging rental housing (unsubsidized), developing criteria for targeted preservation strategy and report to Council by end of June.

Mr. Gross, discussed the next steps as complete New Starts-related programs and policies inventory and assessment (June 13th action team work session); identify best practices (June 17th Housing Works “virtual” workshop with other cities) and return to CPTC in August.

Council Member Morrison, thanked staffs for the work and those involved are doing a terrific job. Asked about Austin Resource Recovery and their role in this project?

Ms. Christine Freundl, stated that Christine Whitney with the Brownsfield Program was invited because she is actually searching out Federal Funding

herself and we thought that we may be able to find some overlaps between the two efforts. Christine Whitney has a lot of experience and hoping she can bring a little perspective from the federal side.

Council Member Morrison, asked what is the Brownsfield Program?

Ms. Christine Freundl, stated that the Brownsfield Program for the city that looks at all of our Brownsfield sites they analyze and provide and recommendation that needs to happen or any funding that needs to be applied for.

Mr. Gross, stated those are redevelopment sites.

Council Member Morrison, asked if this were lands that the City owns or just in our boundaries?

Ms. Christine Freundl, stated she believes this is for City own property, but Christine Whitney does provide assistance to people outside the city as well.

Council Member Riley, pointed out that the resolution stated that the New Starts goals are aligned with the Imagine Austin and to comment on the work that is being done through this effort might be applicable to corridors in particular to the Urban Rail lines that will be on the ballot in November?

Ms. Christine Freundl, stated that one of the items that began this discussion in January was of the corridors and the fact that we don't have Land Use associated with those corridors yet. So one of things we have been looking at are ways to expand our current programs.

4. BRIEFING ON THE BICYCLE AND URBAN TRAILS MASTER PLAN, WHICH FOCUSES ON UPDATING THE EXISTING 2009 BICYCLE MASTER PLAN AND THE CONTENTS OF THE NEW URBAN TRAILS PLAN, INCLUDING INFORMATION ON ALIGNMENT WITH IMAGINE AUSTIN, PUBLIC INPUT AND SCHEDULE.

Mr. Nathan Wilkes, Austin Transportation Department spoke on the 2014 Bicycle Plan Update. The last plan was updated in 1998 and at this point changing the vision of the plan "to maximize the contribution of bicycling to Austin's quality of life." The Bicycle Plan is a 5 E's approach, Engineering, Education, Encouragement, Entertainment and Evaluation. There are four types of transportation cyclists in Austin and less than 20% of Austinites will ride in Bicycle Lane and more than 55% of Austinites will ride in protected bicycle lanes.

The plan is made of protective bicycle tracks (on-street bicycle facility with physical separation from vehicle traffic and pedestrians, a smooth asphalt surface is ideal; concrete with smooth joints is acceptable, conflict areas are addressed with appropriate tools to provide safe and clear guidance to all users. Tools include visual cues such as changes in surface type, coloring or markings. Physical separation from motor traffic is created by raised medians, on-street parking, bollards or planters), quiet streets (are traffic calmed corridors that provide a comfortable environment for all ages and disabilities, route guidance is provided through pavement markings and signage) and, intersection treatments (help users comfortably cross major streets on key routes, crossing times should account for all ages, median refuges make tricky crossings a simple two-step process).

The benefit of the short term network is that the draft analysis shows of the 160K passenger vehicle trips that enter the “ring of congestion” daily, 36% are less than 3 miles. If only 15% of these trips 0-3 miles and 7% of trips 3-9 miles are converted to bicycle trips that would be a total reduction of 7% all motor vehicle trips to the Ring of Congestion. In moving forward, June 17th present to Bicycle Advisory Council, June 24th Planning Commission and June 26th City Council.

Ms. Nadia Barrera, Public Works spoke on the Urban Trails Master Plan. Council asked Public Works and Parks and Recreational Department to work together on the trail plan. Urban trails will avoid heritage and protected trees and will use applicable techniques to protect and preserve trees of all sizes. Some of the goals of the plan are to implement existing plans/policies, create urban trail design guidelines, and plan for an implement Urban Trail maintenance, and encourage active transportation by building and connecting to appropriate facilities.

During the public input process cyclists were asked the question how comfortable do you feel riding your bicycle on a path or trail that is separate from the street? There was a total of 85% that stated they felt very comfortable on a separate path or trail. The path or trail should be hard surface, all-weather, for recreation and/or transportation and for bicycles, pedestrians, rollerblades, skateboarders and those with disabilities. Also, adding lighting where appropriate and design with nature. We are currently working with the Parks Department for security & emergency access and wayfinding. The next steps are preliminary engineering report includes: environmental assessment, impact statement, cultural assessment, critical environmental features, geotechnical reports and more, and at least two stakeholder open houses. Permitting includes, interdepartmental review and design includes, interdepartmental review.

Mayor Pro Tem Cole, asked about the prioritization criteria and how it related to our Parks?

Ms. Barrera, stated that is part of the attraction destination.

Council Member Riley, thanks both Nathan and Nadia for their hard work on this project.

Council Member Riley, asked Mr. Wilkes about the smooth asphalt surface or concrete with smooth joints is acceptable for cycle tracks and if we would get to the point where we will see asphalt being used for these trails?

Mr. Wilkes, stated yes and that a lot of these are related to the Mueller cycle tracks. But, as far as usefulness ability the top goal is smoothness and a really nice ride. Ms. Barrera added the Upper Body Trail that is currently under design now will be asphalt and are looking at that design for other trails.

Council Member Riley, asked Mr. Wilkes about the implementation with development and that is a concern for a lot of people. What do we need to do to get some measures in place sooner rather than later?

Mr. Wilkes, stated they have been hearing a lot about the space problem on South Lamar where it doesn't support for the vehicle volume and space volume for bicycle and have been looked that since it is such a hot spot for development and have been looking at ways to widen the street.

Council Member Riley, asked Ms. Barrera about signage and that there has been some improvements. What is the vision for signage in the future and what department will be assuring that there will be signage in place?

Ms. Barrera, stated that she believes it will take collaborative effort with the Parks Department to be able to decide where that signage will be located. Any project that has a trail will be subject to the same guidelines.

Council Member Riley, asked if we would revisit other trails and provide them with the appropriate signage?

Ms. Barrera, stated that will be a great summer intern project and we will be looking into providing better signage.

Council Member Riley, asked why the City of Austin doesn't have bike signage like other cities?

Mr. Robert Spillar, stated he can't comment on why San Antonio or Chicago prioritize that higher than here but, now that the Bicycle program is moving into the Transportation that we can formulate a more holistic approach of the bicycle and pedestrian programs. We will have a retreat this summer to really brainstorm and would like to add that to the list.

Council Member Morrison, asked how much have we invested in achieving the element of our plan within the past five years and what is the updated cost of achieving the whole thing?

Mr. Wilkes, stated there are a lot of elements of what we have spent money on. We have gotten things in expensively for street resurfacing so the number varies. The easiest way to track it is what dedicated bicycle/trail intermingle bond funding from 2010/2012.

Council Member Morrison, asked about the surface trail and if they are meant to serve pedestrians, runners and bikes down by the lake. Do we get into an issue where runners do not prefer to run on hard surfaces?

Ms. Barrera, stated it is defiantly contextual especially in the parks, we have had an agreement with the Parks Department and they have a preference and first call as to what type of surface we will use. They have found out from the Watershed Department that the aggregate material that is often used for the trails is really bad for the drainage and causes erosion. Currently, looking at different technology and surfaces.

Mayor Pro Tem Cole, asked about the plan costing between \$180-200M. What is in the current yearly budget?

Mr. Chad Krager, Division Manager for Community Service's Division which includes Urban Trails, stated that most of the on-street network is accomplished through Street and Bridge doing maintenance. In the past anything above that is through bond project. From the 2012 bond received \$12M for example for the Urban Trails. Currently, we have three projects and they currently funded through the 2012 bond.

Mayor Pro Tem Cole, asked if we are working with the grant funding and the 2012 bond and we will not see any of this doing the budget process.

Mr. Chad, stated that is current.

5. BRIEFING ON THE CORRIDOR STUDIES CONDUCTED AS PART OF THE AUSTIN TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT'S STRATEGIC MOBILITYPLAN FOR AIRPORT BOULEVARD, BURNET ROAD, NORTH LAMAR BOULEVARD, FM 969 AND RIVERSIDE DRIVE.

Mr. Alan Hughes, Project Engineer, Austin Transportation Department, through teaming with Consultants staff have managed to finish four Corridor Projects on five roadways which consist of: Airport Blvd., N. Lamar Blvd., Burnet Road, FM 969 and Riverside Drive.

The Corridor Development Program purpose is identify roadway needs, develop a multi-modal transportation system, support mixed use, establish a vision, plan, and implementation plan for improvements, identify short, medium, and long term projects, improve safety, increase vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle mobility and improve quality of life along the corridors. The process for each corridor included: a comprehensive Public involvement component, analyzing each corridor to identify key issues and needs, defining or building on the community vision for the corridor, land use and urban design recommendations to improve function and appearance of the built environment, transportation analysis and recommendations for creating a safe, multi-modal, transit-supportive corridor, identification of improvements for better circulation or connectivity, identification of infrastructure improvements that would be required to implement the plan, defining and prioritizing short-term solutions, designing, costing out and evaluating medium-term solutions and identifying and recommending long-term solutions.

The Corridor Details for Airport Boulevard short term improvements, focus on intersection improvements, low cost solutions within the existing right-of-way, provide for the efficient movement of all users along and across the corridor. The Medium term improvements are design the remaining sections of the corridor and construct the pilot projects designed as part of the short-term recommendations. The Long term improvements are construct the entire multi-modal corridor in conjunction of the overall vision.

The North Lamar Boulevard and Burnet Road short-term improvements are focus on intersection improvements, low cost solutions within the existing right-of-way, provide for the efficient movement of all users along and cross the include. The Long-term improvements are constructing the entire multi-modal corridor in conjunction of the overall vision.

The FM 969 short-term improvements are focus on bicycles, pedestrians, and intersection safety, low cost solutions within the existing right-of-way, provide for the efficient movement of all users along and across the corridor. The interim long term improvements are design and construct FM 969 in accordance with the Pass through Finance agreement between Travis County and TXDOT. The long-term improvements construct the entire-multi-model corridor in conjunction of the overall vision.

The Riverside Drive short-term improvements are lane reconfigurations, installation of new traffic signals, add turn lanes at various intersections, provide sidewalks corridor-wide and bicycle lanes and markings on cross streets. The long-term improvements are center running high capacity transit, 7 to 8 foot buffered cycle tracks, 15-foot wide sidewalk area per Riverside

Drive Regulating Plan, pedestrian hybrid beacons and landscaping along medians and sidewalks.

In moving forward implementation funding 2012 bond, Lamar/Burnet \$15M Public Works currently working with consultant to determine project scope and public outreach included in process. Riverside Drive \$1M, design beginning for Riverside/Lakeshore intersection and new Corridor Studies, South Lamar Boulevard – Riverside Drive to Ben White and Guadalupe Street – MLK to 29th Street.

Mr. Robert Spillar, Austin Transportation Department added these Corridor plans will serve as division plans and as they go into actual engineering block by block many of the detail decision will continue to be vetted. All of the plans were initiated with the concern about the safety in those Corridors and certainly with the concerns from the surrounding communities and how those roadways will operate within their communities.

Mayor Pro Tem Cole, thanked staff for the presentation and informing them as to what is going on in the major corridors.

Council Member Riley, asked if the \$15M worth of work will address safety access across Lamar and an update on the latest pedestrian death?

Mr. Spillar stated that he believes that pedestrian death was fairly recent and they are still gathering data and in the research process. Also, the recommendation had been to take the Lamar/Burnet concept and build a final block of that to see what it looks like and to capture the support of the neighborhoods as we go forth. There is currently an effort to address the immediate sidewalks as well and we are working with TXDOT for us to gain the ability to that instead of them.

Council Member Riley, stated with us losing 1 to 2 pedestrians a year it really does led us to a sense of urgency to get this done and he appreciates their continued attention to it.

Mr. Spillar and Mr. Hughes both stated you are absolutely correct.

Council Member Riley, asked is there any transportation bond funds for the short-term improvements?

Mr. Hughes, stated the 2012 bond funding's included two allocations one for Riverside Drive \$1M and for Lamar/Burnet \$15M and the consultant's estimated somewhere between \$50M to build the short sections on both Burnet and Lamar. That is why we are asking them to go back and look at it.

Council Member Riley, asked staff to help him understand the interim long-term improvements.

Mr. Hughes, stated maybe it's a mid-term, but is being built now. It will be on the ground for quite a while before anything is moving to the final long-term improvements. The interim means it doesn't actually meet what is in CAMPO, but what is being built by Travis County and the State.

ADJOURMENT

Mayor Pro Tem Cole adjourned the meeting with no objection at 4:05 p.m.