



**PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COUNCIL
MINUTES**

**REGULAR MEETING
January 12, 2015**

The Pedestrian Advisory convened in a regular meeting on January 12, 2015 at Austin Energy Town Lake Center, 721 Barton Springs Road, 1st floor assembly room.

Elected Members in Attendance

Joe Almazan
Peter Baird
Janet Beinke
Ken Craig
Nancy Crowther

Valerie Fruge
Girard Kinney
Ramah Leith
Nic Moe
Marva Overton

Emily Risinger
Kathy Rock
Mike Sledge
Heyden Walker
Virginia Wilkinson

Guests in Attendance

Hatty Bogucki
Sam Day-Woodruff
Seth Goodman

Nevena Pilipovic-Wengler
Patricia Schaub
Tom Wald

Ed Wallace
John Woodley

Staff and Agency Representatives in Attendance:

Robert Anderson
Javier Arguello
Will Bozeman
Ken Cartwright
Caitlin D'Alton

Alan De Anda
Lawrence Deeter
Steve Hopkins
Christian Malanka
Katie Mulholland

Stephen Ratke
Ellen Ray
Diane Rice
Francis Reilly

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 6:05. Ms. Walker made a note to speak loudly to allow for the ADA device.

1. INTRODUCTIONS (6:00 – 6:05)

2. CITIZEN COMMUNICATION: GENERAL (6:05 – 6:08)

The first 3 speakers signed up prior to the meeting being called to order will each be allowed a three-minute allotment to address their concerns regarding items not posted on the agenda.

Ken Craig resigned as alternate member due to being hired as staff to Council Member Ann Kitchen. He thanked the PAC for the opportunity to participate and for the conversation that happens through the group. He said it has been educational for him and that the work has been great, especially at the subcommittee levels.

Virginia Wilkinson resigned due to her family relocating to Detroit. Virginia has accepted a position with the Economic Growth Division. Virginia said that the PAC has been a real highlight and she hopes to take that knowledge to the Motor City.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (6:08 – 6:10)

Joe Almazan moved to approve, Nic Moe seconded.
No opposition and no comments.

4. STAFF AND COMMISSION BRIEFINGS (6:10 – 6:15)

A. Bicycle Advisory Council / Urban Transportation Commission

No updates.

B. Surgeon General's Call to Action on Walking

No updates.

5. Staff Briefings (6:15 – 7:00)

A. MetroRail Red Line Improvements – Briefing and Possible Action

Presentation by: Javier Arguello, Capital Metro

Javier presented on the MetroRail Red Line Improvements. He said he has been with Capital Metro for about 1.5 years and that there are a lot of challenges now to create transportation alternatives for Austin.

This initiative started Spring 2014. The reason for the project is that downtown station was designed to be temporary. The conversation to begin with was to ultimately place station farther west. But, the station was left where it is and has been there for over four years.

The downtown platform is the busiest platform and smallest platform. The purpose is to integrate station for multi-modality. He said the idea is to have two platforms and three tracks for future expansion and to incorporate pedestrian elements.

Issues in the area: Convention Center, hotel, Brushy Square, fire station, lots of special events, etc. All of this makes this a significant area for urban improvements through parks, museum and residences, etc.

Goals of project:

9-10 years of build-out for reconciling multiple planning documents dealing with this area and this issue.

Project Connect is looking for best way to integrate transit in this area. Waller Creek Conservancy and other projects will coordinate visions and goal of improved downtown terminal.

They are trying to be aware of designing project for potential funds. Three workshops have been held during the last 8 months toward 10% project definition.

Partnered with TXDOT for \$50M local grant for improvements. There are still opportunities to compete for federal grants. (They have \$28M for additional vehicles, \$22M for station improvements)

They are preparing for 30% design.

Surveys indicate strong sense that this can improve Austin.

Stakeholders identified boundaries for the project. Stakeholders also identified the top five constraints: 1.) Relocate the fire station; 2) Multi-modal connectivity and future expansion; 3) Traffic circulation; 4) Lance Armstrong Bikeway (LAB) alignment and pedestrian connectivity; 5) Hilton and Convention Center goals.

The need to relocate the park, and the opportunity to create a gateway into the City were also pointed out as functional goals. Relocating the fire station are not within the final program for this project but they are committed to continuing to find facilities and funding to achieve the relocation.

It was stated that the Transportation Department wants to convert 5th street to 2-way. Capital Metro also wants to do this. Capital Metro wants to close certain segments for pedestrian but to maintain limited access travel lane on 4th and to maintain Red River for delivery.

Other issues include the LAB alignment, access from the Convention Center and the Hilton hotel, repurposing Brushy Square Park, valet circulation that the hotel wants to maintain, and maintaining outdoor event space.

Base Concept 1

The station would be split into two platforms, with four train positions. Capital Metro thought this was pretty good. But, there would be a bigger impact for pedestrians with the number of crossing points. Capital Metro decided this is not a good pedestrian solution and also exacerbates 4th street barrier.

Base Concept 2

This proposal would maintain three tracks and two platforms, but would encroach upon Park space. That was not a workable solution according to Capital Metro. It also exacerbates 4th street barrier.

Criteria established and concepts 3 and 4 perform better, according to Capital Metro.

Base Concept 3

This proposal would move station a half block to the east to allow space to be opened where the station is currently located. Currently the tracks are at-grade requiring a raised platform. This proposal would depress tracks beginning at Sabine in order to achieve at-grade crossing and to eliminate pedestrian barriers.

A second positive element addresses queuing vestibule for crowd management. Currently there is no way of managing the crowds for large events and people trying to use platform. A pedestrian plaza begins to achieve a system to do that. Also, it can be used as public space. Capital Metro is also looking to improve all pedestrian facilities east to I-35 for a pedestrian approach to station.

Base Concept 4

This concept comes with some concerns about disrupting the street grid. The Hilton did not want to lose the valet parking. Capital Metro is committed to helping each stakeholder. Concept 4 addresses this and ATD's concern for a limited access street for traffic lane by moving the LAB to the north side of the street and forcing them to share the right of way with vehicles along one part. The bike staff are considering design options but want it to be a limited access street and not open to public through traffic.

Base Concept 5

This concept considers moving the platform away from the right of way. The conclusion is that it was not really feasible due to issues with privately owned property and major issues with Waller Creek Conservancy if the track was to be re-aligned.

Elements of Concepts 3 and 4 are moving forward. More detailed design work is needed.

Mr. Arguello addressed more elements of the two proposals being forwarded for consideration.

Concept 3 – move station to east.

Concept 4 – maintain bicycle and vehicular circulation. Complaints of mode conflicts have less to do with the train than with bicyclists hitting pedestrians. Local bus service exists on Trinity. Capital Metro planning east west connector route on 3rd Street.

Design Considerations:

- Designing memorable place
- How tracks approach stations.
- Sidewalk improvements in this area with forestry

By depressing tracks, there are utility issues. Capital Metro is working with Public Works and it is possible that some utilities will be replaced. They are also coordinating with Parks Department to keep the park.

Initial design concept for connecting the Convention Center to the Hilton goes against the City's Design Guidelines.

Sabine Street Promenade to connect west to east, adjacent to Waller Creek.

Aim to improve connections across I-35.

Don't have final design. Possible canopy design competition. The 22\$M is for basic elements. Any architectural statement to be incorporated into the project will have to come from other funds.

Questions:

Mr. Kinney said he was Chair of the Design Commission when they developed the Design Guidelines. He asked if one of the issues with the proposed pedestrian overhead connection is that one hotel already has one. He asked if that creates an expectation to allow others to have one. He said it would be better to have a good street-level connection.

Mr. Kinney also expressed the thought that at some point he saw a design that would permanently stop the train from extending west, preventing it from fulfilling the past goal to connect ultimately to Seaholm.

Lastly, he said the Austin Area Regional Transit has been arguing for 15 years to develop a subway. He said he wants to see it happen for his children. He said he has a hard time seeing this as a gateway into the city. And, it is especially problematic to transition between modes, from train to pedestrians.

Mr. Arguello said they talked about this a lot in the stakeholder meetings. Regarding the permanence of design, there is no verticality to the construction. Also, the City did not want Capital Metro to continue the Red Line farther west. He said, in his opinion, Capital Metro doesn't have the right infrastructure. But, he said There would be nothing that would preclude raising the tracks again in the future to extend west if that was desired.

Mr. Baird asked about modal connectivity. Mr. Arguello said they plan to develop an exhibit to show this.

Mr. Moe said his preference was to spend part of the \$22M for bus shelters for pedestrians rather than architecturally beautiful components used for only a few.

Mr. Moe also asked about the possibility of capping I-35 and how that impacts the project. Mr. Arguello said the tracks will stay in same location as far as I-35 is concerned and they are coordinating with that project.

Mr. Wald asked about extending the tracks west and how the \$28M would be used. What percentage of the funds are identified for the various tasks? Mr. Arguello said he has cost breakdowns, and almost all of the dollars are identified for spending with conservative estimates for overages. He said significant pedestrian enhancements, safety and security are included.

Ms. Walker expressed a concern. She said the Convention center wants to close Trinity to take over businesses on that side. She said the Convention Center disrupts connectivity for several blocks and asked what sense does it make to spend all this money on improved pedestrian realm for this project if the Convention Center is then going to impair it? What is the way to provide public input on that? Mr. Arguello said there are a lot of challenges for the Convention Center's plans to expand (on the order of 5 or 6 years). They have been working closely with Convention Center Staff.

Ms. Walker's last concern is with I-35. If the City is talking about 4th street becoming primarily pedestrian and 5th Street become two-way, it becomes even more imperative for Capital Metro to take position for depressed interstate option.

6. PROJECT SUBCOMMITTEE (7:00 – 7:15)

A. Vision Zero Update – Discussion and Possible Action

Presentation by: Nic Moe, Project Subcommittee Chair

Mr. Moe and staff reported on the nearly formed Task Force. They communicated the first meeting of the Task Force will take place on January 23.

7. TECHNICAL SUBCOMMITTEE (7:15 – 7:35)

A. Construction Barriers – Briefing

Presentation by: Peter Baird, Technical Subcommittee Chair

Ms. Risinger wrote memo regarding construction barriers. The group should have comments by next meeting on that. Then we will submit to the Transportation Department.

B. Sidewalk Master Plan – Briefing

Presentation by: Peter Baird, Technical Subcommittee Chair

Mr. Baird presented on the Sidewalk Master Plan update. He said questions were developed to pose to Public Works staff for Sidewalk Master Plan update. Mr. Moe asked question about where responses go. Mr. Baird said responses will come back to full PAC.

Mr. Kinney said Stevie Greathouse is addressing some of these questions for the Cherrywood meeting.

Mr. Kinney also asked about how to change (lower) speed limits.

Shared Streets Presentation:

Mr. Baird presented on shared streets as a part of the Sidewalk Master Plan update.

Typically streets are modally segregated. Traffic in Towns (book by the UK Ministry of Transport) came about introducing shared streets as a concept.

The goal of shared streets is to encourage social interactions.

Mr. Wald pointed out that shared streets in the example listed 20 mph and thought that was too fast. Mr. Baird brought forth example of street with 7 mph and 10 mph (in America). Mr. Wald said in Germany typical speeds are 3-5 mph so pedestrians don't always feel like a secondary user and have to get out of the way.

Mr. Kinney complimented Mr. Baird on the presentation

Mr. Wald said Viva Streets also good for some local examples. Ms. Schaub said 21st and Speedway on UT campus is another example. Ms. Bogucki said UT doesn't really work well as example of shared streets because the pedestrians aren't being mindful.

Ben Hamilton Bailey CNU presentation mentioned as useful.

Mr. Kinney suggested filming and observing where these shared interactions are happening because this is the conversation for Austin over the next several years.

Staff to upload presentation and Peter to send out link to list serve.

8. OTHER BUSINESS (7:35 – 7:55)

A. Bylaw Amendments – Discussion and Possible Action

Presentation by: Robert Anderson, PAC Staff

Staff suggested that recent leadership conversation surrounding the Vision Zero effort and the Project Subcommittee will require a re-consideration of the bylaw language. The thought was the project subcommittee members currently serving on the Vision Zero Task Force would keep that effort as their sole project rather than seeking out more work to perform.

There was discussion about creating a list of groups that would serve for alternate attendance requirements.

Staff said that alternate bylaw language could be suggested by next meeting by reconvening the bylaw group.

Mr. Kinney asked what happens when another project comes about that requires attention of project subcommittee.

9. FUTURE BUSINESS (7:55 – 8:00)

Recommendation received to add alternate member elections as agenda item due to resignations.

10. ANNOUNCEMENTS / UPDATES (8:00 – 8:05)

- [Urban Transportation Commission](#) meets on January 13, 6pm. The meeting is held in Board and Commissions at City Hall.
- [Bicycle Advisory Council](#) meets January 20, 6pm. Location to be determined.
- Proposed changes City Council Committees includes replacing the Comprehensive Planning and Transportation Committee with a Mobility Committee to include all transportation aspects, including pedestrianism. Council will hold a public hearing on January 22 and plan to take up this (among many proposed changes) proposed change at the first meeting, set for January 29, 2015.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 pm.

Pedestrian Advisory Council – 2014/2015 Regular Meeting Attendance

	Name	Oct 6	Nov 3	Dec 1	Jan 12	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept
F	Joe Almazan	0	•	•	•								
F	Peter Baird	•	•	•	•								
F	Nancy Crowther	•	•	•	•								
F	Valerie Fruge	•	•	0	•								
F	Girard Kinney	•	•	•	•								
F	Ramah Leith	•	•	•	•								
F	Nic Moe	•	•	•	•								
F	Emily Risinger (Vice-Chair)	•	•	•	•								
F	Heyden Walker (Chair)	•	•	•	•								
A	Janet Beinke	•	•	•	•								
A	Ken Craig (resigned 1.12.2015)	•	•	•	•	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
A	Dan Keshet	✓	✓	✓	✓								
A	Jessica Lemann	✓	✓	✓	✓								
A	Nathan Lynch	✓	✓	✓	✓								
A	Joel Meyer	✓	✓	✓	✓								
A	Carmen de la Morena-Chu	✓	•	•	✓								
A	Marva Overton	✓	•	•	•								
A	Kathy Rock	•	•	•	•								
A	Mike Sledge	0	•	•	•								
A	Luke Urie	✓	•	•	✓								
A	Virginia Wilkinson (resigned 1.12.2015)	•	•	•	•	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
F = Full Member, A = Alternate Member • Present 0 Excused Absence ✓ Unexcused Absence													

Pedestrian Advisory Council – 2014/2015 Technical Subcommittee Attendance

	Name	Oct 15	Nov 20	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept
F	Peter Baird (Chair)	•	•	NA	NA								
F	Girard Kinney	•	•	NA	NA								
F	Nic Moe	•	•	NA									
F	Emily Risinger	•	•	NA	NA								
F	Heyden Walker	•	✓	NA	NA								
A	Carmen de la Morena-Chu	•	✓	NA	NA								
A	Kathy Rock	•	•	NA	NA								
A	Luke Urie	✓	✓	NA	NA								
					NA								
C	Gwen Jewiss	•	✓	NA	NA								
C	Alix Scarborough	•	✓	NA	NA								
F = Full Member, A = Alternate Member, C = Community Member • Present o Excused Absence ✓ Unexcused Absence													

Pedestrian Advisory Council – 2014/2015 Project Subcommittee Attendance

	Name	Oct 6	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept
F	Ramah Leith	•	NA	•	NA								
F	Nic Moe (Chair)	•	NA	•	NA								
A	Janet Beinke	•	NA	•	NA								
A	Virginia Wilkinson	•	NA	✓	NA								
C	Hatty Bogucki	•	NA	o	NA								
C	Capital Metro (Lawrence Deeter or Caitlin D’Alton)	•	NA	•	NA								
C	Christian Malanka	•	NA	✓	NA								
F = Full Member, A = Alternate Member • Present o Excused Absence ✓ Unexcused Absence													