



**PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COUNCIL
MINUTES**

**REGULAR MEETING
April 6, 2015**

The Pedestrian Advisory convened in a regular meeting on April 6, 2015 at Austin Energy Town Lake Center, 721 Barton Springs Road, 1st floor assembly room.

Elected Members in Attendance

Joe Almazan
Janet Beinke
Julio Carillo
Nancy Crowther
Valerie Fruge

Girard Kinney
Ramah Leith
Zakcq Lockrem
Nic Moe
Carmen de la Morena-Chu

Emily Risinger
Kathy Rock
Mike Sledge
Luke Urie
Heyden Walker

Guests in Attendance

Mateo Barnstone
Hatty Bogucki
Lisa Hinely
Kevin Lewis

Steve Miller
Daniela Radpay
Jessica Salazar

Jody Trendler
Tom Wald
John Woodley

Staff and Agency Representatives in Attendance:

Robert Anderson
Caitlin D'Alton

Karen Lorenzini
Christian Malanka

Steve Ratke

CALL TO ORDER

1. INTRODUCTIONS (6:00 – 6:05)

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

Kevin Lewis with Bouldin Creek Neighborhood Association asked to speak regarding the Bouldin Court Subdivision. He said Council has heard two cases for Right of Way vacation. Council sent to the case to the Open Space Committee and will probably return to full Council in May or earlier.

Mr. Lewis is the President of the neighborhood association.

He said the first right of way vacation is on S. 1st near Texas School for the Deaf. Christopher street dead ends.

The other case deals with “unnamed street.” PSW wishes to build condos and build over unnamed street and build subdivision on cul de sac to the west. Neighborhood is okay with the SF4-A density, but has issue with the lost connectivity.

He said that the trees could be kept with neighborhood street proposal.

Currently, there are multiple curb cuts onto S. 1st, resulting in safety problems.

Mr. Lewis said the problem with Copeland are issues with houses preventing widening of ROW. Also traffic information sign would obstruct signal device desired.

Mr. Lewis said PARD should never had signed off on this plan. Director Hensley hadn’t heard about the plan until Council members asked about it. Neighborhood didn’t receive notification until two weeks after Planning Commission approved the vacation request.

Ms. Walker asked if there are questions. She mentioned that her office was involved and had to recuse herself.

A member asked whether the group could take action on citizen communication. Staff clarified that they have done this before.

Ms. Crowther asked about emergency access given the cul de sac. Mr. Lewis said there is a gate on the north side that used to be a crash gate and would need to be returned to that. He believes the neighborhood proposal would enable more access and service provision. Currently, unnamed street provides services.

Ms. Rock asked if there are other neighborhood concerns that haven’t been presented. Mr. Lewis said there are 43 neighbors signed off in opposition to developer proposal.

Mr. Almazan asked if the developer has filed a subdivision plat. Mr. Lewis said there has been statutory disapproval.

Mr. Kinney said it is completely unacceptable to have a cul de sac in an urban context. He said there should be a street grid to facilitate all modes of traffic for inner city development.

Mr. Lewis said there should be two points of connection and future pedestrian connection across the street. Both of these points argue against right of way vacation.

Ms. Morena-Chu moved to support connectivity for Bouldin Creek Neighborhood.

Mr. Lewis said they are trying to bring about a complete streets solution. Ms. Walker said that is interesting because the city has a policy to support creation of complete streets.

Mr. Kinney said his concern with regard to connectivity is with connectivity *through* the subdivision, not *to* it. His suggestion is to include connectivity through and not use a cul de sac. He said as a developer, he would want more east-west vehicular connection through the development.

Mr. Lewis said a vehicular connection across the creek would be very unpopular and financially challenging. He said there is enough of a challenge to get pedestrian connectivity across the street.

Mr. Lewis said there is also a parkland dedication issue.

Ms. Walker moved to place on May 2nd and to ask City Council to not consider until after May PAC meeting.

Mr. Moe moved to place on the May agenda and for City Council to not hear until after. Ms. Risinger seconded. No opposition.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (6:08 – 6:10)

Ms. Beinke moved to approve the minutes as presented. Ms. Crowther seconded. No opposition

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

A. Bicycle Advisory Council / Urban Transportation Commission

Mr. Wald said March BAC meeting was cancelled.

Ms. Walker said the City is accepting applications for all boards and commissions and encouraged those interested to apply.

5. TXDOT I-35 at 51st Street – Briefing and Possible Action (6:15 – 6:45)

Presentation by: Steve Miller, HNTB

Mr. Miller said at this point, there have been over 200 meetings to the I-35 improvements. What started as a project involving bond dollars in 2011 has evolved into a 65 mile improvement project through the corridor, including 35 active projects. Those projects have captured and involved some funding partners to make improvements.

Since 2011, they have had the same goals: 1.) More capacity along I-35; 2.) Better manage traffic. 3.) Improve safety; 4.) Optimize existing right of way; 5.) Minimize additional right of way; 6.) Improve east-west connectivity; 7.) Improve neighborhood compatibility, 8.) Enhance pedestrian, bicycle and transit options.

Phase 1 was very conceptual, while phase 2 was coming up with plan. This is nearly complete for Travis and neighboring counties. Phase 3 is environmental studies and preliminary design.

The 51st Street roundabout project focuses on west side of road and to improve connectivity across the highway. Mr. Miller discussed the confusion of the u-turn for traffic heading south that then head back north.

To fix the bottleneck they primarily want to keep vehicles out of the intersection. They are proposing a bypass lane from frontage road that would take vehicles under highway and then back onto the frontage road avoiding the intersection. This allows the intersection to be used by local traffic which allows TXDOT to reconceive how the intersection works. A roundabout is a design solution.

Would like to move exit ramp back so that 51st street to airport to better use entrance and exits for vehicles.

Mr. Miller discussed the points of a roundabout, for continuous vehicle movement but at lower speeds. They modelled the intersection for a signalized intersection as well as for a roundabout. He said with a signalized intersection, they can't deal with the number of lanes needed for turning traffic. He said that turning lanes are problematic for traffic signal time. He said roundabouts are a solution to that.

The other benefit of roundabouts, he said, is that they are safer than traditional intersection because they eliminate head on vehicle crashes. He said maximum speed through an intersection is 20 – 25 mph, so any collision would be less dangerous.

Roundabouts accommodate all modes, and the proposal would include flashing pedestrian signals. The continuous direction allows more predictability for pedestrians crossing.

Mr. Lockrem asked how this would accommodate bicyclists. Mr. Miller said they would always have right to occupy lane. He said the shared use path for pedestrians would also be open to bicyclists. Mr. Lockrem said he would be very interested in how the buffered bike lane on the bridge would transition into the shared use path.

Ms. De La Morena Chu asked if there would be signs indicating to cars to yield to pedestrians. Mr. Miller said, yes. Ms. De La Morena Chu said vehicle-bicycle conflicts exist for vehicles exiting roundabouts.

Mr. Wald asked if Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons would work in this design. Mr. Miller said he would hope they don't need to install them and that pedestrians would feel comfortable using the roundabout and crossing without them. The challenge is that a PHB is a signal and that would mitigate the benefits of a roundabout but that they are committed to exploring that option if needed.

Mr. Lockrem asked if the through traffic that receives a dedicated lane are intended to slow to the same speed as the rest of traffic. Mr. Miller said yes.

Mr. Kinney asked why the same solution isn't proposing the same solution for people going east on 51st to go south. Mr. Miller said they didn't see the traffic volume demanding that solution. Mr. Kinney said this works great for cars. But, he said as we have more and more pedestrian and bicycle traffic, he's worried vehicle traffic could be adversely impacted by signal use and higher ped-bicycle volumes. Mr. Miller said that, yes, that would be the case with significant enough use, but that pedestrian and bicycle volume doesn't exist yet. He would like to see that be a problem and for them to need to address that in the future. Mr. Miller said that also pedestrians might have to wait a little to get their turn to cross.

Ms. Rock said there is a lot of concern for east west connectivity around Mueller and asked if that is part of the thinking. Ms. Rock asked if car is at the top of the hierarchy for this design. Mr. Miller said this design serves all users. Ms. Rock said as a pedestrian she wouldn't use the facility.

Mr. Moe said it is a great plan for motorists, but the bypass is a concern for vehicle speed. He said he doesn't believe reduced vehicle speeds will be achieved. He also said he has concern with the fact that pedestrians have to cross three different times. For this reason, he believes there are increased safety concerns. For bicyclists, there is a safety concern due to vehicles behind as well as to the right.

Mr. Malanka clarified yield signs. Mr. Lockrem said that pedestrians are just expected to walk into traffic. Mr. Malanka said he does see some safety concerns. He also said there are long approach issues.

Mr. Lockrem said there are poor sight-lines and the difference in bicycle and vehicle speeds will demand a bicycle defensive maneuver. Mr. Miller said that he would expect bicyclists to stop and yield to vehicles.

Ms. Leith said she is on the Council because she is legally blind. She said this would “scare the crap out of her.” She said there has to be a light and there has to be a stop. She said she would not be able to use this.

Mr. Woodley said the design does not appear to be accessible to people who are blind. He also said that if one is on a bicycle, they would have to be in left lane to continue straight. Mr. Miller clarified that an individual would be able to continue straight from the right lane.

Mr. Malanka asked if pedestrian tunnels are an option. Mr. Miller said that option would have to pass a high threshold because they are perceived as unsafe.

Ms. Morena-Chu said TXDOT needs to consider the 8-80 standard to ensure the design meets the needs for all users. She said a pedestrian-bicycle bridge would also be an option.

Mr. Moe asked about lighting at night. He said the video is shown during the day. He is interested in ensuring there is sufficient lighting for pedestrian conflicts. Mr. Miller said there are certainly plans to do that but that it is a later phase.

Mr. Wald said that people shouldn't feel trapped in their neighborhood. And, if people say they don't feel safe crossing an intersection that is a failure of the intersection. He asked if there is a consideration for raised pedestrian crosswalks. Mr. Miller said they are trying to capture that with the textures but whether the crosswalks would be raised is a later design consideration.

Mr. Wald also said there are some sharp turn radii, too. Mr. Miller said that could also be a consideration for later design work.

Mr. Lockrem said the video demonstrates vehicle stacking would block pedestrian crosswalks. Ms. Crowther asked if 18-wheelers are allowed on this. Mr. Miller confirmed this latter point but said the design is to encourage stacking of vehicles on opposite sides of crosswalks.

Mr. Barnstone said the intersection should present enough deflection to guarantee cars slow their speeds. He said with 3 lanes, it is conceivable that vehicles will cheat lanes in order to maintain speeds. Mr. Miller said that the goal is to encourage people to slow to about 15 mph. Mr. Barnstone said the raised crosswalk would also help with that.

Mr. Barnstone said the roundabout vehicle lanes are 16', while the approach lanes are 12'. Mr. Barnstone said that while those lane widths may be more forgiving, but they are also more inviting.

Mr. Miller said the greatest factor for encouraging slow speed is the roundabout approach, through such things as deflection, and designed to accomplish 25 mph speeds in roundabout.

Ms. Morena-Chu said that roundabouts feel safer if the crossing points are outside the roundabout. TXDOT staff said that her assumption would be that pedestrians would prefer to not be detoured, so she appreciates that comment.

Mr. Moe said the southbound front is still his greatest safety concern due to motorist speed. He asked if it is possible to do vehicle rumble strips in the approach lanes. TXDOT staff said that is a new suggestion and they will look into it.

Ms. Crowther said other roundabouts obstruct sight lines which make her feel unsafe because she can't see a vehicle coming. Mr. Miller said the intention is to obstruct sight lines so people understand they cannot continue as if it is a normal intersection.

Mobility.org is still open for individuals to comment on this project.

Mr. Miller said this project is in Phase 3, with environmental process to be completed later this year.

Ms. Walker asked if there will be another opportunity to look at the final design. Mr. Miller said they would be happy to give another presentation. TXDOT staff said they are scoping to move into final design. She said comments are needed ASAP, so don't wait. She said the goal is to have this project potentially be funded as funds become available.

Mr. Lockrem said there were requests for other information such as traffic counts and pedestrian collisions, and asked if there would be follow-up on those points.

6. Staff Briefings (6:45 – 7:45)

A. Urban Trails - Briefing

Presentation by: Nadia Barrera, Public Works Department

Staff was not here. The item is postponed to a later meeting.

B. Sidewalk Program Construction Projects – Quarterly Update – Briefing

Presentation by: John Eastman, Public Works Department

Mr. Eastman said this has been in discussion with staff for months and the intention is to help to share information with the PAC and other community stakeholder groups. Mr. Eastman said the plan is to do this quarterly.

In 2009 the city adopted a Sidewalk Master Plan. Approximately half the frontages are missing sidewalks and another \$120 million in necessary repair work for ADA compliance. The Master Plan has a prioritization matrix.

At any given time there are 8-10 crews installing new sidewalks. Highlights right now include retrofit on North Lamar nearby the Triangle. The inset map shows bus stop installation in partnership with Capital Metro. Another project is east and west Powell.

Map shows completed projects in last quarter and planned construction projects. Gains are often made by coordinating with the bicycle program to move curbs, remove parking, capture right of way, etc.

The quantities shown in graphs will always lag by a quarter. The last quarter for 2014 shows large numbers, reflective possibly of some larger projects finishing, but also larger funding available.

Total costs for sidewalk is about \$24/foot. Only about \$4/foot is for cost of concrete, remainder is for things such as right of way management.

Mr. Eastman made clear the potential projects list is just a rolling needs assessment. Some of the projects may not be feasible, whereas others will definitely be pursued. The map is published.

Mr. Eastman said it may not be viewed that the program is pursuing construction in the most logical places. Mr. Eastman said things such as development are not always reflected.

Ms. Crowther thanked Mr. Eastman for the maps that show the district boundaries and breakdowns. Mr. Eastman said Mr. Dusza in his program did all the mapping.

Mr. Kinney made a recommendation for map coloration. He said there may be too many colors to convey the right information.

Ms. Morena-Chu asked if there is shared funding with Capital Metro to align and connect sidewalks to bus stops. Mr. Eastman said absolutely. They have intergovernmental agreement for \$2 million dollars per year for bus stop improvements. Mr. Eastman said they will complete up to a couple hundred feet to connect East MLK. Beyond a couple hundred feet, sidewalk construction becomes a full-fledged sidewalk project.

Ms. Morena-Chu asked how they can help to enhance the coordination. Mr. Eastman said it is a resource issue. He said the city's obligation for construction and maintenance is progressive but when the city took on that responsibility, no new funding source was identified. In the Sidewalk Master Plan update, this is part of the consideration.

Mr. Eastman said the \$25 million to implement the Sidewalk Master Plan is about to expire and is now being done with bond dollars.

Mr. Moe said the Technical Subcommittee is looking for creative funding sources to provide the Sidewalk Master Plan update.

Mr. Woodley asked about creating a separate bond election for sidewalks. Mr. Eastman said the bond decisions are made at a senior administrative and policy-maker level. Ms. Walker said this is the role of advocates to communicate needs and desires to decision-makers.

Mr. Kinney said the PAC needs to be speaking to the bond committee when that gets initiated and as early as possible.

Ms. Beinke said she called 311 for sidewalk needs and asked if she also needs to contact Capital Metro. Mr. Eastman said, no, it is sufficient to call 311. She said her sidewalk was recently replaced and it was expensive and wondered if the city has any program to ask contractors to pitch in for cheaper rates. Mr. Eastman said that has been done previously on an ad hoc basis. He said there is also the Neighborhood Partnering Program which helps to achieve completion of projects that rank lower on the prioritization list. Other projects have been funded 100% by neighborhood groups. In those cases the Sidewalk Program has managed the programs. Mr. Eastman said Dallas has a program like that and that they will probably explore in the Sidewalk Master Plan Update.

Mr. Almazan said there is a June 1 deadline for new projects through the Neighborhood Partnering Program.

Laura Dierienfield said the mobility committee is meeting this Wednesday and she is presenting to discuss such things as Pedestrian Hybrid beacons, sidewalk improvements, etc.

7. TECHNICAL SUBCOMMITTEE (7:45 – 7:50)

A. Sidewalk Master Plan – Briefing

Presentation by: Peter Baird, Technical Subcommittee Chair

Mr. Baird was not present.

8. OTHER BUSINESS (7:50 – 7:55)

A. First Annual Report – Discussion and Possible Action

Ms. Walker asked for comments. There were none. Ms. Walker and staff thanked Ms. Risinger for her significant work to produce the report.

Mr. Kinney moved. Mr. Moe seconded. No opposition.

9. ANNOUNCEMENTS / UPDATES (7:55 – 8:00)

- City Council Calendar
 - [Mobility Committee](#) meets on April 1, 3pm. The meeting is held at City Hall Boards and Commissions room.
 - [Planning and Neighborhoods Committee](#) meets on April 20, 4pm. The meeting is held at City Hall Council Chambers.
 - [Public Safety Committee](#) meets on April 27, 4pm. The meeting is held at City Hall Boards and Commissions room.
- [Urban Transportation Commission](#) meets on April 14, 6pm. The meeting is held at City Hall Boards and Commissions room.
- [Bicycle Advisory Council](#) meets April 21, 6pm. Location to be determined. See agenda.
- [CAMPO Calendar](#)
 - CAMPO Transportation Policy Board Meeting meets Monday, April 13, 6pm. The meeting is at Joe C. Thompson Conference Center, 2405 Robert Dedman Drive.
 - CAMPO Technical Advisory Committee Meeting meets April 22, 2pm. The meeting is at One Texas Center, 505 Barton Springs Road, Suite 300.
 - May 11 for adoption of 2040 plan.
 - Ms. Morena-Chu moved to place on May 4 agenda. Mr. Kinney seconded.
- April 22, 10:00 for ADA access and sidewalk Task Force.

Nic gave update on Vision Zero task force. He wants to invoke the project subcommittee to hold joint meeting with other community groups to engage community groups for what they want to see happen, for media coverage, for policy recommendations, scheduling, etc.

Mr. Almazan reminded that there is a City of Austin Rainey project where the PAC was invited.

10. FUTURE BUSINESS

A. Sidewalk Master Plan Update – Peer Cities Report

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 8:07.

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	○	●	●	●	●	●	●					
F	Peter Baird	●	●	●	●	●	●	✓					
F	Nancy Crowther	●	●	●	●	●	✓	●					
F	Valerie Fruge	●	●	○	●	●	●	●					
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 (informed of resignation 2.02.2015)	✓	✓	✓	✓	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
A	Jessica Lemann (informed of resignation 2.27.2014)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
A	Nathan Lynch (informed of resignation 2.02.2015)	✓	✓	✓	✓	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
A	Joel Meyer	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	●	✓					
A	Carmen de la Morena-Chu	✓	●	●	✓	✓	●	●					
A	Marva Overton	✓	●	●	●	✓	●	✓					
A	Kathy Rock	●	●	●	●	✓	●	●					
A	Mike Sledge	○	●	●	●	●	●	●					
A	Luke Urie	✓	●	●	✓	●	●	●					
A	Virginia Wilkinson (resigned 1.12.2015)	●	●	●	●	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
F = Full Member, A = Alternate Member ● Present ○ Excused Absence ✓ Unexcused Absence													