



BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Urban Transportation Commission

Recommendation Number 20170711-5B: Bringing Equity Through Hike and Bike Trail in E. MLK Region

WHEREAS, transportation models influence econometric models which in turn affect all other models in modern society - one objective of the EMLK planning contact team is to facilitate the development of an "alternative" urban multi-modal transportation model in EMLK planning area which facilitates cycling, walking and alternate methods of transportation.

WHEREAS, for somebody who does not have an automobile, an alternate safe mode of transportation or mass-transit is not a choice but a "right". This is further reinforced by the new multi-modal street design guide developed and published by the city in June of 2017.

WHEREAS, there are 1 grocery, 5 parks, 4 schools, 1 community center, 3 swimming pools in EMLK planning area and close by neighborhoods there is no north south local safe route which connects them. The loss of opportunity, both social and economic is tremendous.

WHEREAS, Cap Metro Routes are East-West Direction along the main routes like MLK, 12th, Manor. There is not much way to move from North to South. EMLK Hike and Bike Trail Creates an opportunity of North-South Transit using alternate modes which are safe.

WHEREAS, Companies like "Austin B cycle" which provide multi-modal transportation do not exist in EMLK area – EMLK Hike and Bike Trail project creates an opportunity for them to create a network in far east (Eastern Crescent).

WHEREAS, much of the routes proposed in EMLK Hike and Bike Trail are already part of the Bicycle Master Plan or Austin Trails Master plan. Eastlink Bicycle Plan already exists north of Mueller Development. Complementing the "Eastlink" plan with EMLK bicycle route in the southside creates one of the largest comprehensive bike map pervasive though out East Austin.

WHEREAS, Mueller HEB, being the only grocery in the area is visited is all neighbors from the east & south side. Providing a safe route to the grocery to the locals should not be optional. Mueller Development is also the source of employment for many of the southside neighbors who must choose between paying their property tax and owning a car.

WHEREAS, MLK Jr. Blvd, one of the only routes to go to Mueller development from south and east Side, is neither bike friendly nor safe for pedestrians. A route through the Morris Williams Golf Course will not

only help this cause but improve the safety of bicycle travel by many folds. Majority of this particular trail through the Morris Williams golf course already exists in the form of an easement owned by City of Austin Watershed and Austin Energy. The travel distance through Morris Williams golf course is about 0.79 miles less than the route through MLK Jr. Blvd. This request was first made to city in 2012 from the contact team.

WHEREAS, Austin City Council has passed resolution to rezone all the land parcels within the Little Walnut Creek Park as "p" (public). This will ensure that PARD can develop the park though PARD does not have funding for any master plan. This is a 207 Acre park which is under PARD from 2002 and has not been opened to the public. EMLK Planning Contact Team and PSSNA (Pecan Spring Springdale Neighborhood Association) is working with several federal and private organization like National Park Foundation, Asakura Robinson to get a master plan done.

WHEREAS, the automobile access and connectivity to YMCA will be greatly reduced when the 183 crossing at 51st street is closed. A hike and bike trail through Little Walnut Creek Park will greatly enhance a safe access to YMCA, which is the destination of thousands of kids along with their parents. PARD has agreed to open the Little Walnut Creek Park by end of summer 2017 with signage. It is worth mentioning that this trail through the Little Walnut Creek Park will reduce the distance from various neighborhoods to YMCA by as much as 0.75 miles.

WHEREAS, City council has passed resolution to acquire 90 acres of land also known as "Red Bluff" under PARD to be a nature preserve. There is no connectivity to Southern Walnut Creek trail from southern EMLK neighborhoods. The red Bluff nature reserve allows a natural Hike and Bike trail from the eastern and southern neighborhood directly to the Southern Walnut Creek Hike and Bike trail.

WHEREAS, Public Works department has started the feasibility study of the La Loma trail near the Red Bluff area - there is currently no fund to build the trail. Safely connecting eastern crescent neighborhoods of Austin to quality schools, parks, and open space by accessible and active transportation is not just a quality of life issue, but also an equity issue we must stay committed to achieving.

WHEREAS, the Springdale, which is the only park in the Hog-pen neighborhood and Fort Branch area. Springdale park is completely inaccessible from these neighborhoods or from Fort Branch area. City has ample land next to the park through which an access can be created to the Springdale park.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Urban Transportation Commission encourages the Austin City Council to allocate funds and explore all available means, including the Safe Routes to School Program, so that projects mentioned below can be accomplished. Where ever possible we will request city to use parks and other green areas (like Morris Williams Golf course) for the hike and bike trail to reduce route lengths and improve bicycle safety. EMLK area has been historically one of the most underserved areas in the city – we want to change the situation.

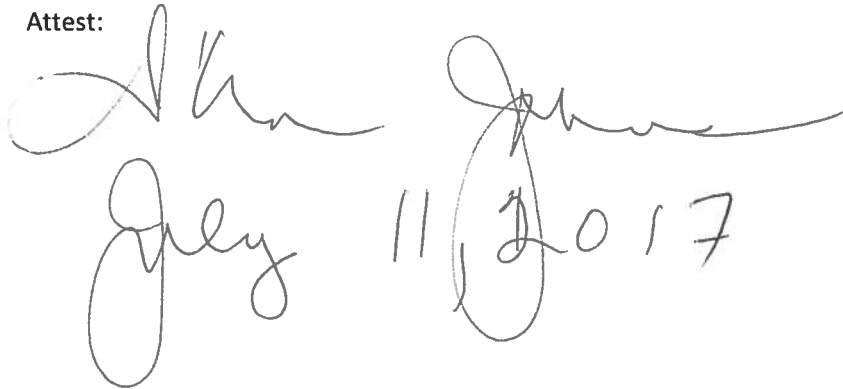
We urge Council to direct the City Manager to adopt EMLK area as a test bed for multi-model transportation as proposed by the Draft Street Design Guide (June 2017) with the following specifics

- Expedite the building of the La Loma Trail
- Explore building the hike and Bike trail through the Morris Williams Golf course.
- Increase the priority of the trail through the Little Walnut Creek Park from Tier 2 to Tier 1.
- Create a connectivity to Springdale park from the south side through Fort Branch.
- Bring companies like Austin B cycle, Bike Austin to EMLK area to facilitate the bike trail

Date of Approval: July 11, 2017

Record of the vote: 6-2 with Commissioners Rangel, Champion, Davis, Gins, Reyna, and Weatherby voting aye and Commissioners Hosek and Silas voting nay. Commissioner Johnson abstained. Commissioners Hennessey and Wilfley were absent.

Attest:



Handwritten signature and date: July 11, 2017