



BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Robert Mueller Municipal Airport Plan Implementation Advisory Commission

Recommendation Number: (20171010-003A): Street Widths and Safety

Impact of Proposed Fire Code Amendments on Mueller and Other Austin Neighborhoods

WHEREAS, public safety is an issue of utmost importance in the City of Austin; and

WHEREAS, the City Council-approved Mueller Master Development Agreement and the Mueller Design Book envision Mueller as an “urban village” to be compact and pedestrian oriented; and

WHEREAS, Mueller streets are designed to both distribute traffic and serve as cyclist and pedestrian-friendly public spaces, including narrower streets with parking and cycle tracks; and

WHEREAS, Council has previously recognized the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) guidelines that similarly promote safer multi-modal distribution of traffic in a densely populated urban environment, as guidance on the development of streets in Austin; and

WHEREAS, the City of Austin is interested in exploring techniques to reduce cyclist and pedestrian deaths and injuries in all neighborhoods. According to Austin Police Department data, there were 28 pedestrian fatalities and 2 bicycle fatalities in Austin in 2016; and

WHEREAS, the proposed 2015 International Fire Code Local Amendments eliminate the previous Council-approved exceptions to the 2012 Local Amendment requirement of 25-foot street widths; and

WHEREAS, while many Mueller streets are designed to efficiently circulate vehicle and pedestrian traffic but may not meet the Local Amendments to Fire Code’s street width restrictions; and

WHEREAS, other older neighborhoods in East and Central Austin also contain streets that do not meet the street width restrictions; and

WHEREAS, the goal of maximizing public safety in a densely populated urban environment requires a creative collaboration to balance the needs of traffic safety and emergency responders; and

WHEREAS, the Robert Mueller Municipal Airport Plan Implementation Advisory Commission advises Austin City Council on implementation of the Mueller Master Plan, including traffic and street and urban design-related items;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Robert Mueller Municipal Airport Plan Implementation Advisory Commission respectfully requests the Austin City Council delay approval of sections 503.2.1 and 503.2.2 of the proposed ordinance to adopt the 2015 International Fire Code and Local Amendments. We also request that Council direct City staff to engage in a robust process that includes public input from Mueller and other affected neighborhoods and stakeholders regarding the impact of the code’s street width limits, while also exploring options for improving first responder access to existing streets.

Date of Approval: 10/10/2017

Record of the vote: Unanimous on a 7-0 vote

Attest: Michael Jones