

May 20, 2008

Case Number: C814-96-0003.07
Pioneer Austin East Development

Commissioners,

My name is Joyce Thoresen. I am president of Walnut Place Neighborhood Association. Our neighborhood is located to the south and east of Pioneer Crossing. We are a neighborhood of just over 140 homes situated along Springdale Road and Walnut Creek.

Our major concern is traffic through our neighborhood. From the intersection of Sprinkle/Blue Goose and Springdale south on Springdale, we have 23 residential driveways and several cross streets. Our area is a designated no thru trucks area, and Travis County has constructed two traffic circles (roundabouts) to slow traffic and discourage trucks. The speed limit is 30 mph. Springdale cannot safely handle current traffic. Some mornings, southbound vehicles stack up from US 290 northward past Walnut Creek, forming a line of traffic more than .6 miles long. Walnut Place residents are unable to get out of our neighborhood or even exit some driveways under these conditions. In addition to our traffic concerns, we are worried about the possibility of denser development creating more runoff into the Walnut Creek watershed. Six homes in Walnut Place along Walnut Creek have already been brought and demolished by Travis County due to erosion and flooding. We are anxious about the possibility of losing more land and homes. Dense development upstream could have a damaging impact on Walnut Place property.

Our position is supported by the following points:

1. The 1997 Traffic Impact Analysis for this project is inadequate and outdated, and
2. Even this inadequate, outdated TIA does not support increased density in the area.

Outdated, inadequate TIA

- The 1997 analysis was done when the route for SH-130 was proposed as a parallel facility to Dessau Road. SH-130, as such, “provided congestion relief for Dessau Road and ample capacity to serve both background and site related traffic.” (p. 1) Obviously, SH-130 is not serving this purpose since it is located almost 4 miles east of this area.
- Even the update (2001) and revision (2002) of the analysis, are more than five years old. The explosive growth in northeast Travis County during the past ten years makes the validity of this traffic study suspect. A case in point, Colonial Place, a whole neighborhood of more than 200 homes, has been completed within the past 5 years. The only entrance/exit to this neighborhood is Springdale Road just south of Pioneer Crossing.
- The decision to analyze only roads to the west and north of Pioneer Crossing because of the assumption that 1-30 would be built immediately east, invalidates

some of the conclusions reached. Springdale Road, southeast of Pioneer Crossing, carries traffic directly to US 290 East and includes one of the few 290 intersections controlled by traffic lights. Springdale was not part of the analysis. Another road, Sprinkle, which runs along the south-most border of one of the parcels in question was also left out of the analysis.

- The analysis states, “Arterial A is projected to be built in 2007.” The reality is that in 2008 Arterial A is not even funded, and its fate hangs in the balance of whether or not Waste Management gets its expansion approved before it must fill up the pathway of Arterial A with trash.

Increased density not supported

Despite its inadequacies, the TIA 2002 update observes, **“The result of this analysis indicates that after relocating SH 130 to the easterly alignment, the remaining roadway network surrounding the Pioneer Crossing development is inadequate to accommodate even the background traffic in the area.”**

This area is in desperate need of infrastructure to support the already dense population and growing number of homes. It is my understanding from both staff and the developer that this more dense zoning request will not result in any additional units, which is why a new traffic impact analysis was not required. Our requests, then, are as follows:

1. Assurance, in writing, that SF-5 zoning will not result in more units than the current SF-2 zoning.
2. Consider changing procedures in the future whereby an 11-year old traffic analysis can not be used for zoning change requests of any kind.
3. Help us in any way you can to get new and better roads in northeast Travis County to accommodate the exponential growth in this area.