



Urban Transportation Commission Meeting Minutes

**Regular Meeting
12 August 2008**

The Urban Transportation Commission convened in a regular meeting on 12, August, 2008 at the Boards and Commissions Room located at 303 West 2nd Street, Room 1101, Austin, Texas.

Commission Members in Attendance:

Richard MacKinnon – Vice-Chair	(Place 3 – Shade)
Allen Demling	(Place 1 – Leffingwell)
Ed Easton	(Place 6 – Cole)
Sara Krause	(Mayor)
Dustin Lanier	(Place 5 – McCracken)
Dana Lockler	(Place 2 – Martinez)
Brian Thompson	(Place 4 – Morrison)

Commission Members Absent:

None

Staff in Attendance:

Ronnie Bell
Joana Perez
Steve Grassfield
Annick Beaudet
Eric Dusza

4. Presentation and possible action on the City's Sidewalk Master Plan

Mrs. Annick Beaudet, Project Manager, Bicycle and Pedestrian Program, presented an update to the final version to the City's 2000 Pedestrian Master Plan, which has been renamed as the City's Sidewalk Master Plan. The Sidewalk Master Plan is a long range planning, prioritization, construction and maintenance tool for the pedestrian infrastructure system, and a tool for the Public Works Department to get a handle on the city's sidewalk needs, not only from an able body perspective but from a disabled perspective pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Mrs. Beaudet also provided information on the Bicycle and Pedestrian Program and gave an overview of the goals, projects and accomplishments since 2005, and introduced Julie Hastings, Consultant for Lockwood, Andrews and Newman Consulting Engineers (LAN), who worked on the project for the City. Ms. Hastings talked about the sidewalk cost and the three different programs currently in place. The Absent Sidewalk Infrastructure Build-out includes the sidewalks that need to be built around the City; the Existing Sidewalk ADA Repairs, which covers what it would take to repair current sidewalks to make them in compliance with ADA; and the Existing Sidewalk Maintenance Repair, which covers all sidewalks that are not ADA compliant but need to be repaired.

Ms. Hastings explained the Sidewalk Master Plan Project Scope. She said LAN was contracted by the City of Austin to update the Sidewalk Master Plan including an update of the ADA transition master plan, which is required by the Americans with Disabilities Act. LAN also developed a Pedestrian Infrastructure Management System, conducted field assessment in priority corridors, created a web based interactive map viewer for accessible routes, updated the 2000 Pedestrian Master Plan, and developed and assigned City of Austin data maintenance. Ms. Hastings also said the ADA Transition Plan requires an inventory of physical barriers in the Right of Way, a schedule for improvements, person responsible for implementation, proposed funding source, and an opportunity for community input. She also presented a status / inventory for the entire City based on aerials photos and explained there are approximately 2,400 miles of sidewalk and driveways in the City of Austin. During the assessment period it was also discovered that about 13 % of the existing sidewalks had ADA compliance issues and the estimated cost to upgrade non-compliant infrastructure is \$15 million. The projected grand total Citywide is \$115 million.

Vice-Chair MacKinnon asked how that amount relates to the \$750 million dollar price that was presented earlier. Ms. Hastings said that the \$750 million was an estimated cost to build new sidewalks for the entire City and pointed out that the ADA Transition Plan only applies to existing sidewalks and bringing those sidewalks to compliance, and it does not require the city to build new sidewalks. Ms. Hastings reviewed the recommended funding and scheduling, utilizing the 2006 bond package. Of the 2006 bond package, \$1 million is put aside every year for the next five years for ADA repairs.

Commissioner Lanier asked clarification on the meaning of being ADA compliant. Mrs. Beaudet said that it is a legal requirement and the City is at risk of being sued. Ms. Hastings furthermore explained that the ADA Plan was supposed to be in place in 1996, and the City did have a transition plan, but this plan did not provide recommendations for schedule and funding. Mrs. Beaudet said the transition plan had a sunset clause, which stated that the City had to be in compliance within 5 years. That plan was very aggressive and hard to pass, but in the legal perspective as long as the plan is kept up to date and it shows progress and understanding of the importance of the plan, the City is protected.

Ms. Hastings explained that aerial photos were used to determine what sidewalks were currently in the inventory, but a field assessment was actually utilized. Commissioner Thompson asked if there is any federal funding available for this project. Mrs. Beaudet replied that there is federal funding available but the sidewalks would have to be related to areas in and around elementary and middle schools. Ms. Hastings explained that their goal is to get the project finalized, obtain approval and then maintain the database.

The Sidewalk Matrix updates supersedes the matrix developed and adopted in 2000 with a GIS based tool to help prioritize new sidewalk projects, objective based system for scoring and ranking candidate absent sidewalks, with points generated on a 0-100 scale with higher scores representing higher needs. Ms. Hastings explained the main components when using a scoring system: Pedestrian Attractor scores-base weights 50%, Pedestrian Safety scores-base weights 40%, and Fiscal Availability score-base weights 10%.

Vice-Chair MacKinnon asked for information regarding the core transit corridors. Ms. Hastings said that the corridors are actually accounted for in several of the other elements. There are

going to be in areas with a lot of detractors, and a lot of them are within the ADA Task Force as well, probably in areas with dense population. Health status scores give additional points to sidewalks that are located in areas of town known to have a high concentration of health issues. Vice-Chair Mackinnon asked clarification on which areas of the city have these types of problems. Mrs. Beaudet answered that there is a program called Steps to a Healthier Austin that does surveys to collect this type of data, but there are also other means of collecting data, such as census, and door to door surveys, with the best data collected by going out to the field. She also said there will be a viewer available on the front page of their website where a citizen can enter an address and see if where they get off their bus stop there is an accessible sidewalk and a curb ramp leading to their destination.

Motion by: Alan Demling

Seconded by: Ed Easton

Motion: Recommend approval of the City of Austin Sidewalk Master Plan as presented with 3 clarifications:

- Add language on updating the Sidewalk Master Plan yearly
- Review the matrix and look at the weights to make sure that the focus on the transportation element is weighted more heavily
- Incorporate into plan some type of usage metrics

Ayes: MacKinnon/Demling/Easton/Krause/Lanier/Lockler/Thompson

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None