

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
November 1, 2010

Subcommittee Members: Council Member Sheryl Cole, Chair
Council Member Laura Morrison
Council Member Chris Riley

Call Meeting to Order

1. Citizen Communication (3 minutes to speak).
2. Approval of Minutes from the October 18, 2010 special called subcommittee meeting.

Minutes approved by a vote of 3-0.

3. Progress Report from the Urban Park Stakeholders Group.

Lynn Osgood, Urban Park Stakeholder Group, spoke about the need for additional and accessible parkland. She said that four goals that need to be addressed are accessibility, acquisition, maintenance, and implementation of an action plan. She suggested a benchmark for park maintenance of \$19.00 per capita vs. the current \$9.00 which is below the national average. The recommendation is that funding be provided through a future bond package and also a monthly user fee similar to the current transportation user fee. The group also recommends entering into public-private partnerships for parkland acquisition.

Council Member Cole stated she would like to touch base with AISD about shared facilities and maintenance.

Council Member Morrison questioned the legality of charging a user fee and questioned whether any other Texas cities used a similar fee. Ms. Osgood stated that the user fee needs to be probed further, but noted that San Antonio currently assesses a user fee for parkland.

No action taken.

4. Staff Update on Morrow Street Traffic Analysis.

Molly Scarbrough, Planning and Development Review Department, provided an update from the May 3, 2010, meeting in which the subcommittee asked staff to meet with neighborhood representatives to give them an opportunity to reach a compromise. She noted that no compromise was reached, however, staff listened to each neighborhood's comments and concerns and have developed a recommendation in order to arrive at a solution.

Gary Schatz, Transportation Department, presented staff recommendations that will reduce the speed of traffic on Morrow. Those recommendations include relocating speed limit signs to make them more noticeable, adjusting the traffic signal timing at the intersection to allow for safe pedestrian crossing, constructing a sidewalk on the north side of Morrow, removing the traffic islands, completion of sidewalk gaps, and have approached TxDOT about making improvements to the Lamar/183 interchange. The challenge is that the desires of both neighborhoods conflict with each other.

Eddie Gary, representing Crestview Neighborhood, said they do not support staff's recommendation. He discussed the process to date and said they want to continue discussions, but the Highland neighborhood does not want to discuss any further. He did not agree to the traffic counts that have been projected by staff due to the number of development proposed for the area. The neighborhood does not recommend the construction of a sidewalk on the north side of Morrow, and recommend that left hand turns be allowed from Lamar, and that a crossover be constructed at Anderson Lane. He said their major concern is the amount of traffic on Morrow.

Damon Howze, Highland-Skyview Neighborhood Contact Team, said the neighborhood acknowledges that they use Morrow to reach their destinations within the Crestview neighborhood.

Council Member Riley said he was surprised that the Crestview neighborhood does not support a sidewalk on the north side of Morrow. Mr. Gary responded that their main concern is traffic volume and the speed of east/west traffic on Morrow. He added that there will be plenty of pedestrian mobility in the neighborhood due to new developments in the area. Their preference would be to close Morrow to traffic, but that he would be willing to discuss the sidewalk issue further with the neighborhood.

Council Member Riley questioned whether they would support any of the other proposed improvements.

Council Member Cole suggested that the sidewalk issue remain in the staff recommendation, but that it would be open to reconsideration pending feedback from the Crestview neighborhood. She asked staff to review the Sidewalk Master Plan to determine what is contemplated for the area and how it will be funded. She said she was pleased with the staff recommendation and suggested moving forward.

No action taken.

5. Staff Briefing on the Parking Benefit District.

Rob Spillar, Transportation Department, stated the program will create parking benefits throughout the city as a revenue option for neighborhoods within commercial districts that have difficulty in providing parking management and enforcement. The concept is to partner with neighborhoods through a management agreement to fund certain infrastructure projects through the use of parking revenue. The revenue can be used for improvements such as bicycle lanes, sidewalks, traffic calming and landscaping.

Jolene Cavazos, ANC Central Sector, suggested an overall strategy to address parking in commercial districts. She said these parking districts will not solve the parking problem, and instead forces the problem in to other neighborhoods. She said any action on these districts should be held pending revisions to the Residential Parking Permit program. She noted that a cost and benefit analysis is needed before the program is implemented.

Joyce Basciano, Brykerwood Neighborhood Association, said the neighborhoods are not familiar with the program and therefore there needs to be more outreach to the neighborhood to educate them about the program. She also expressed concern about placement of parking stations in the neighborhood,.

Council Member Morrison asked staff to meet with stakeholders to educate them about the program. She said her overall concern is about equity, and taking revenue from a neighborhood for improvements to that neighborhood. She added that she did not want the residential parking program to impact VMU, and that the residential parking permit program is an important element of a successful parking benefit district. She felt that revisions to the residential parking permit program need to be finalized prior to implementation of a parking benefit district program. She also questioned how valet parking fits into these programs. She expressed concern about the process for determining how the revenue from the parking district is spent and the formality of the agreement between the City and a neighborhood, and whether there would be adequate representation from a neighborhood that enters into an agreement.

Council Member Riley questioned the process once an agreement is reached between the City and a neighborhood. Mr. Spillar explained that all agreements would be considered for approval by the Urban Transportation Commission and the City Council prior to the establishment of a district. Each district may have its own terms, project size, investment, etc. Neighborhoods would have an opportunity to talk with surrounding merchants about parking and enforcement. He added that he would hope to continue discussions with neighborhoods and merchants to address long-standing issues such as enforcement and neighborhood improvements.

No action taken.

6. Staff Update on Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan.

Frank Herrin expressed concern about the population growth projected in some of the scenarios. He said if Scenario D is adopted, it would create a very compact and dense city and it would triple the density of the neighborhood planning areas.

Jeff Jack recommended that the process be suspended due to the limited number of participants, questionable data presented by staff, and a survey that was complicated and confusing. He recommended that the process be reviewed by a third party professional to ensure that it meets the test of context, understandability and consistency.

Perla Cavazos, Task Force Committee, provided an overview of the process to date and stated that they would continue to gather input on the preferred scenarios until December 3. They are continuing outreach and establishing work groups based on

elements of the plan. She added that workshops would be held in March to continue flushing out details of the elements.

Scooter Cheatham, Task Force Member, said that many people do not have the time to participate in work groups, and therefore the quality of information that is communicated is questionable. He questioned how the Analysis Committee would interact with the data that is provided to ensure that neighborhood plans are not disregarded.

Council Member Laura Morrison, noted that staff has been directed to work with the Analysis Committee to integrate data from the neighborhood plans to develop a preferred scenario. She said that from the beginning they have said that the plan will respect neighborhood plans, and she would have difficulty accepting a scenario that disregards the neighborhood plans.

Council Member Cole said that there is a balancing act of getting the job done with the funding that was allocated for the plan, and urged that work on the plan keep moving forward.

7. Staff Briefing on Current Planning Initiatives.

Postponed to December 6, 2010.

Meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.