



Austin City Council MINUTES

For

JANUARY 20, 1982 - 7:00 P.M. - PALMER AUDITORIUM
SPECIAL CALLED MEETING - MOPAC

Council Chambers, 301 West Second Street, Austin, Texas

City Council

Carole Keeton McClellan

Mayor

John Treviño, Jr.

Mayor Pro Tem

Council Members

Larry Deuser

Roger Duncart

Richard Goodman

Ron Mullen

Charles E. Urdy

Nicholas M. Meiszer

City Manager

Grace Monroe

City Clerk

Memorandum To:

Mayor McClellan called to order the Special Meeting of the City Council for the purpose of conducting a public hearing on a proposed amendment to the Austin Metropolitan Roadway Plan relating to MoPac. She noted the presence of all Councilmembers.

Dr. Benson, Director of Urban Transportation, reviewed the history of MoPac and showed slides.

Sally Wittliff, Chairman, Urban Transportation Commission, reviewed the Roadway Plan and a history of public hearings. She said they feel the transportation system should be fixed where it is broken rather than extend MoPac north and south.

Mayor McClellan read into the record a statement from the University of Texas from President Peter Flawn: "This statement is offered with the full concurrence of Chancellor E.D. Walker, University of Texas System and reads as follows: The University of Texas strongly supports the northward extension of MoPac Boulevard. This project should be undertaken and completed at the earliest feasible date. Improved highway access is important to the successful development of the University's Balcones Research Center and its role in expanding research and development in Texas. The Balcones Research Center was established more than 35 years ago when in May, 1946, the University entered into an agreement with the United States Government to lease with purchase option 382 acres of land widely known as the old magnesium plant site. The purchase option was exercised in 1949 with payment to be made in the form of research and education to benefit the public. In recognition of two decades of productive research at the Center, full title was conveyed to the University by the U.S. Government in 1971. Since that time Balcones Research Center has continued to grow. In 1980-81, research conducted at Balcones Research Center was funded from Federal, State and private sources and exceeded \$21,000,000.00. At the present time more than 1200 individuals, some part time, are employed at Balcones and more than 25 various research enterprises. The long standing commitment of the University's development of Balcones Research Center and the planning for an efficient traffic system to serve the Center is made clear by the action taken by the

Board of Regents on July 19, 1874 to purchase 82.68 acres of land adjacent to and west of Balcones. The Minutes of that Board meeting read as follows: 'for the purchase of this land, \$950,000.00 was advanced from available University funds with the understanding that a portion of this sum will be repaid with the proceeds of sale of approximately 50 acres of land out of the Balcones Research Center Tract to the Texas Highway Commission for the extension of MoPac Boulevard and the West Loop. The land acquired is to be used for educational research purposes of the Balcones Research Center. It will provide access from that portion of Balcones Research Center line west of the Missouri Pacific Railroad right of way to U.S. Highway 183 and will provide additional frontage for Balcones Research Center on the proposed extension of the MoPac Boulevard.' In the seven years subsequent to that action major studies in the long range future of the Balcones Research Center were undertaken by the University. This effort led the Board of Regents to approve on October 9, 1981 a \$52,000,000 first phase development plan for Balcones Research Center. In that phase to be completed over the next three years, new and modern facilities will be constructed for the Bureau of Economic Geology, the Center for Electro Mechanics, and the Center for Energy Studies as well as for a centralized common service. From this project employment at BRC by 1987 is expected to exceed 1750 people in comparison with the current 1250. By 1990 more than 2,000 employees will be located at this center. The traffic between BRC and the main campus should grow correspondingly. Development at BRC is an integral part of UT-Austin's effort to maintain and expand its contribution to the state and region as a world class research university. Impediments to this development, among which are rejection of the proposed northward extension of MoPac, would certainly be included and involve cost beyond concern of traffic flow and neighborhood impact. A recent Congressional study points out that today's investment in research and innovation is at the core of economic well being (I will skip some of this that goes into the good benefits of the Research Center itself and the benefits to the State of Texas) Since no institution is more committed to insuring high quality of life than the University of Texas at Austin and Balcones Research Center, the Austin community particularly and the State generally benefits from BRC's expansion and the attraction this will have for high technology private research industry. The traffic congestion that already characterizes access to the Balcones Research Center will surely grow. To delay construction of MoPac north of Highway 183 would have the affect of confining high level research scientists to their cars during traffic jams when they should be in their laboratories.The other alternatives have the disadvantage of delaying improvements to traffic flow to this area and such improvements are obviously needed. It is therefore the position of the University's administration governing board that approval should be given as soon as possible to the northward extension of MoPac Boulevard."

The following people spoke in favor of the MoPac extension: Lee Conard, Steve Austin, Sereatha Henry, Doren Eskew, Arthur Perlman, Bernie Kullach, Nick Brown, Charles Ramsey, John Isom, Dr. Caste, Bill Bode.

The following people spoke against the MoPac extension: David Carson, Roger Baker, Frank Cooksey, Jim Butler, Ruby Goodwin, Gary Witt, Philip Blackerby, Bill Emery, Jackie Bloch, Mrs. Browning, Bert Kromak, Richard Blackhart, Merle Moden, Ann McAfee, Connie Moore, Dave Dobbs, Shudde Fath, Louise Jarrell, Carol Strickland, Joe Riddel, Jean Mather.

ADJOURNMENT

Council adjourned its meeting at 12:00 midnight.