

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES  
December 3, 2012

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

Call Meeting to Order

**1. Citizen Communication**

Frank Harren, spoke on the Austin Water Supply. The LCRA board had a meeting in November and stated there is a problem. The LCRA stated we have not released any Agriculture water in 2012 for the first time in history. Please understand the severity of the situation. LCRA also stated for 28 months we are now down to 23 months is when Austin will run out of water completely. These are based on actual LCRA publishes. At this point, I am asking you to enter act with the Senate and House Representatives regarding this topic. We must begin to do something as a community.

Andre' Suissen, President of the Shore Condominium HOA and Treasury of the Rainey Neighbors Association, thanked staff for spending much needed time on the issues pertaining to Rainey Street. They have had working group meetings over the past several years regarding these items, which involved a lot of people within the neighborhood including business owners. Turning Rainey Street into a one Way Street is not something the group has accepted, especially the business owners. Mr. Suisse applauds the staff for wanting to put parking meters there because that would really solve the issue with parking and thank you for doing the conditional use overlay. If the group had to support something they would look more at alternative #2. They do not want a one-way,

Sonny Poole, Manager, Public Involvement of Real Estate for Austin Energy, stated Austin Energy just recently completed the transfer action with Public Works in getting the Right of Way transference to them. This gave Austin Energy a much larger site. This also allows movement of the sub-station more to the center of that track. Our commitment is to the Council and the Design committee to work with the community in depth regarding this process.

Joseph Reynolds, asked Council to delay the Central Austin State Owned Land item because he thinks Council should question the negotiation regarding

this agreement. Specially, the statement that TFC (Texas Facilities Commission) would follow the local rules and development. During a meeting with the Executive Director of TFC making a statement that they constitutionally are prohibited from following these rules. It is important because these rules that you plan on is about the same rules you execute under. Please look at the basis of these negotiations. TFC is requested to notify the city but do not have to accept their comments to act on.

John Eastman, President of the Ridgeway Association and Bullcreek Neighborhood Association. We agree that the City should be working with the State to have a seat at the table as they discuss about private facilities development on state land. The problem is the table hasn't been set nor been built yet. There has been a lot of information that has come out within the last month in the Sunset report.

Gina Allen, Residential Neighborhood Committee, recommend that Council take their time and think through this interlocal agreement between the City and TFC. Maybe wait until September, 2013, since the State doesn't know how the P3 are going to work within our communities. Allowing the state to make those decisions and then the City step in.

**2. Approval of December 3, 2012 minutes**

Approved by a vote of 2-0 (CM Morrison absent)

**3. Update on Rainey Street (Parking/Sidewalks/Street Connectivity/Street Lighting)**

Howard Lazarus, Director, Public Works and Robert Spillar, Director, Transportation, along with other staff from Austin Energy and Planning and Development Review Department to answer any questions Council Members may have. The area of review is South of Cesar Chavez, West of IH-35, North of Lady Bird Lake and East of the Mexican American Culture Center (MACC). This has been a multi-department effort between Austin Energy, Austin Transportation, Economic Growth and Redevelopment Services Office, Planning and Development Review, Public Works and Real Estate Services to try and address these issues. Today's objective is to present a recommendation for discussion and approval.

There are approximately 72 properties in the Rainey Street District, current mix of uses: Mixed use, Residential, Restaurant and Cocktail Lounge. It is also part of the Central Business District, Convention Center Overlay District, Waterfront Overlay/Rainey Street Subdistrict and National Historic Register District. Some of the existing challenges are inclusion of Rainey Street in

CBD has resulted in proliferation of restaurants and cocktail lounges. This leads to a lot of traffic on Thursday – Saturday nights, both on foot and vehicles. Improperly managed parking, missing and non-compliant sidewalks, and poor lighting have created safety issues. Residents of the district have raised concerns about degradation of access and quality of life. The work in progress is street lighting which a lot of the work has been done. Austin Energy has upgraded roadway lightning. The Code Changes, Parking and Infrastructure Improvements. The Rainey substation site has been secured and will provide opportunities for designs compatible with the goals of the neighborhood. Projected date for the substation is 2017. Transmission lines are currently located at the substation site; additional lines will not be required and Austin Energy will work with Public Works on the design, approval, and purchase of a combination street/pedestrian light that will meet the safety requirements for the neighborhood.

Jerry Rusthoven, Manager, Planning and Development Review Department, stated there are currently (2) pending code amendments related to the Rainey Street area. One is related to the cocktail lounges and the other related to the Historic properties. The cocktail lounge amendment was brought about because the entire Rainey Street area is zoned Central Business District (CBD) and within that zone a cocktail lounge is a permitted use and does not require a conditional use permit. The Planning Commission earlier this year initiated a code amendment to make cocktail lounges a conditional use with the Rainey Street area even with CBD zoning. This amendment is going to a Planning Commission subcommittee in December, the full Commission in January and will be before the City Council in early February.

Alyson McGee, Deputy Historic Preservation Officer, Planning and Development Review, stated in regards to the Historic Structures of the District, Rainey Street from Driskill Street to River Street was designated a National Register Historic District in 1985. Existing Rainey Street Subdistrict Regulations provide incentives for relocation of historically significant structures within the Subdistrict. The Historic Landmark Commission adopted a resolution requesting initiation of a code revision expanding the incentives to encourage relocation outside of the Subdistrict to increase the change that projects will pursue relocating historically significant buildings to appropriate locations vs. demolishing those buildings. This amendment is going to a Planning Commission subcommittee in December, the full Commission in January and will be before the City Council in early February.

Howard Lazarus stated for the Rainey Street area the Public Works and Transportation Department has looked at (3) Infrastructure Alternatives. Minimum Investment, Two Way Traffic or One Way Traffic. These alternatives would have advantages and disadvantages. Other considerations are to provide promenade to link Rainey Street to Sabine Street, Implement parking management district or realignment of intersection at Red River and

Cesar Chavez Street. Other proposed next steps are immediate parking, implement parking improvements to East Avenue, install pay stations at the MACC parking lot, install pay stations on Rainey Street, initiate parking management district process and initiate limited residential parking permit program. After SXSW in March 2013, convert Rainey to one-way northbound from River to Driskill, remove traffic circle at Rainey and River, install contraflow bicycle lane and shared lane and construct sidewalks and bump-outs. On-going steps are to negotiate installation of pedestrian/bicycle promenade and negotiate realignment of intersection at Red River and Cesar Chavez Streets.

Robert Spillar expressed concerned of coming back to Council about the conversion to one-way. This is a major change in terms of the operations of an important street and Council would want to weigh in on this in regards to this traffic decision.

Howard Lazarus stated, in addition to providing a better method for addressing safety concerns, the one-way alternative does result in a gain of 22 parking spaces in the district.

Council Member Cole, asked staff to discuss what is the incentive for Historic Preservation?

Alyson McGee stated, currently the Rainey Street sub-station regulations provide a system where developers can accumulate points to get additional height and FAR (floor to area ratio). It currently provides 5 points or a maximum of 35 points for each property. This is either preserved in place or relocated within the sub-district.

Council Member Riley, thanked staff for all of their hard work and the presentation they provided. In regards to the request for the potential code amendment making cocktail lounges a conditional use. Does this mean that anyone that wants to have a cocktail lounge will have to file a conditional use site plan and require some improvements on the site as well?

Jerry Rusthoven, stated it would not by itself trigger a conditional use permit. What it would do is preclude the possibility of someone doing a site plan exemption where they may not be required to do a sidewalk.

Council Member Riley questioned the three alternatives that were discussed during the presentation especially #1, of the reverse angle parking. Would those spaces be metered?

Howard Lazarus, stated yes. Also, that is a very wide right-of-way there right now. By putting in parking and better stripping it will improve safety and access to the neighborhood as well.

Council Member Riley asked about alternative #2 – add sidewalks and shared use bicycle/vehicle lanes?

Howard Lazarus, stated we would look at taking out some of the speed cushions and the markings. The challenge with putting the sidewalks in is that you would lose parking on one side of the street. A better way to put it is we would make it more visible and mark them with the shared lanes markings.

Council Member Cole asked staff if the plans with the Waller Creek Conservancy being taken into consideration with the design competition?

Howard Lazarus, stated he can't say if these plans have been presented to the Conservancy regarding the design competition, but is something that can certainly be done.

Council Member Cole, stated that would be a good idea.

Council Member Morrison, asked Alyson about the incentive for relocation that will be built into the Rainey Street program we currently have. Will that be a stand-alone or part of the waterfront overlay?

Alyson McGee, stated that is part of the Rainey Street sub-district regulations. This is a stand-alone.

Council Member Morrison, asked how is that going to merge into our Downtown Density Plan Program?

Alyson McGee, stated that is separate because it will only deal with the one National Register District.

Jim Robertson, Manager, Development Services of Planning and Development Review, stated as Howard pointed out in one of the first slides this is a Waterfront Overlay.

Council Member Morrison, asked in terms of the parking meters at the MACC. Has that already been discussed at the Advisory Committee?

Robert Spillar, stated that is correct.

Council Member Morrison, asked if the hours would be the same as to what we have in the downtown area?

Robert Spillar, stated he believes they will still be the same. Being that it is an off-street lot. There are a few other things that you have to think about. There

may be some lock periods during the middle of the night to provide for street cleaning. Typically, he assumes they would be the same.

#### **4. Parking Cash-Out Pilot Program (Next-Steps)**

Robert Spiller, Director of Transportation and Pharr Andrews, Environmental Program Coordinator, Transportation, discussing the results of the Cash-Out Pilot Program. The presentation overview will consist of the definition of parking cash-out, implementation of pilot, pilot results and lessons learned. This Cash-Out program was implemented as a response direction from Council. The parking Cash-Out is employees are paid a subsidy or stipend to give up access to dedicated parking, For this program staff looked into best practices review, by reviewing other programs all over the country, stakeholder groups and previous experiences. The elements of Cash-Out Program are online tracking, guaranteed ride home program, training components, streamline process across departments, marketing plan and informative website. The Pilot Agreements for the employee requirements are commute training, commute log book, drive alone only 4 days/month and have supervisor authorization. The City of Austin will provide a \$50 a month stipend, Capital Metro transit pass, access to van pool, commute consultant, guaranteed ride home for emergencies. We found there were both environmental and financial benefits, as well as barriers to participation for this pilot. The lessons learned are ride home option valued but rarely used, program can be revenue positive, participation varied across job types, training useful but not always necessary, opportunities for increased participation and online tracking increased efficiency/effectiveness

Council Member Riley, thanked both Robert and Pharr for their work on this presentation. What is the status of those individuals that were participating in the program?

Robert stated, he believe they would need a resolution from Council generating by staff asking for permission to continue or something from Council directing us as to why we have funds remaining with the current pilot to continue in its current condition, pending the recommendations. Within the next week or so, staff will submit a memo with their recommendations to Council to move forward.

Council Member Riley asked about the Best Practices in Review, in respect to charging for parking?

Pharr Andrews, stated staff looked at a number of examples. Quite a few from California and Settle. Many of the examples they reviewed were for voluntary programs.

Council Member Riley stated to Robert that he would be happy to work with him regarding a Resolution to make sure the current program stays in place while those remaining funds are available.

5. Central Austin State Owned Land to include discussion relating to the proposed interlocal agreement between the City and the Texas Facilities Commission.

Council Member Morrison, questioned the Interlocal Agreement (ILA) based on the November 8, 2012 meeting. During this meeting there were a lot of confusion on roles and responsibilities and how the P3 proposal was going to work.

Council Member Cole, stated to Council Member Morrison, that the City/staff has no direct control over what TFC, GLO or TxDot can do. The TFC is statuaryly charged under the government code with the redevelopment of state owned facilities. Council Member Cole feels we should focus on what role will the City play and is it better to sit this one out or just be part of the process for this study.

6. Elizabeth Mueller, Professor, University of Texas discussed the paper she wrote that focused on the East Riverside Corridor process. Her presentation is to focus on what we can draw from it. How we may re-think these as we implement Imagine Austin. We frame these plans as being about physical transformation of corridors. We are often engaged in consultants with expertise in visual representation of physical change. Community Outreach strategy and engagement activities. This plan is focus on the desired future as to what it is we are trying to create moving forward.

There are three main themes and implications, social and ecological change always happens in tandem, making sure we don't recreate those problems in other areas, understanding and valuing what exists should be the start point of planning and we must integrate analysis of current conditions and their productions throughout the planning process. Through recent research we have found that minority and low income communities are the ones most affected by environmental hazards. We have noticed a pattern of displacement of lower income residences. If we want to internalizing sustainability we must think about these cost rather than displacing them to other areas. We must think about how we are going to deal with them. We need to identify the existing vulnerabilities of the communities, establish balanced community advisory and public deliberation for future goals. Focus on key elements and relationships to avoid the checklist approach. We are the appropriate partners, provide a more purposeful approach to community engagement and align larger goals with mitigation of local vulnerabilities.

Council Member Morrison, asked that Professor Mueller provide information as to where to find this particular article for those interested.

Professor Mueller stated, the article was published in the Journal of Urbanism and you usually have to get to it through the U.T. website. At this point she doesn't have the URL memorized but will send it to Council Member Morrison.

**Meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.**