

CITY OF AUSTIN
BICYCLE ADVISORY COUNCIL (BAC)
MEETING SUMMARY

One Texas Center, 8th Floor Large Conference Room
505 Barton Springs Road
August 19, 2014
6:00 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS:

Mike Kase – BAC Chair
Christopher Stanton - BAC Vice Chair
Tommy Eden – BAC

Tom Thayer – BAC
Chris LeBlanc – BAC
Larry Murphy – Alt BAC

Tom Wald – Alt BAC
Noni Jarnagin – Alt BAC

GUESTS:

Michael Cospers
Ellen Ray – Cap Metro

John Woodley
Jolinda Marshall – Cap Metro

Stanton Truxillo – UTC
Ben Leffler

STAFF PRESENT:

Aleksiiina Chapman
Marissa Monroy

Nathan Wilkes
Alan De Anda

Robert Anderson - PAC

1. Introductions – Mr. Kase begins the meeting with introductions.
2. Review and Approval of June Minutes – **Mr. Stanton moves to approve the minutes with amendments. Ms. LeBlanc seconds. No dissent. The minutes are approved.**
3. Items from BAC –

Briefing and Possible Action: Elections Committee – Tommy Eden

There was a bylaw amendment passed where the chair would appoint a subcommittee coordinator. Mr. Eden has been appointed and has accepted. Mr. Eden would like to start thinking about elections. There have been a couple of resignations: Ms. Hunter has resigned and Ms. Warrenchuk has resigned. Mr. LeBlanc suggests that if there enough alternates to cover the resigned positions, filling those positions could wait until elections come at the end of the year for the sake of time. Mr. Kase thinks we could take a look at this again later in the year. Mr. LeBlanc agrees if we reach an extreme point we may want to look at it again.

Mr. Eden sent out an email yesterday to notify all members that a nominating subcommittee is needed for this year's election process and that committee is to be formed at this meeting. The committee will report at the September meeting and elections will be held in October. Mr. Eden suggests that members whose terms expire in 2015 should participate in the nominating committee. The elections committee will be comprised of: Mr. Stanton, Mr. LeBlanc, Mr. Kase, and Mr. Orr. Ms. Chapman will coordinate with Ms. Barrera for outreach to the public and soliciting applications.

4. Items from Staff –

Briefing and Possible Action: Cap Metro Proposed Improvements: Downtown Gateway Station – Jolinda Marshall

Ms. Marshall introduces the project (see backup slideshow).

Cap Metro has received a grant to upgrade the temporary rail station on 4th street into a permanent downtown station. The station location will not change. The existing station location has come challenges but also has some opportunities. A \$50 M grant has been awarded by the state of Texas for the upgrade. Train frequencies will increase to 10 minutes with an additional run in the evening. Of the \$50 million awarded, \$22 million will be used for a permanent station construction. Three platforms will be built for the downtown station. Two will operate permanently and one will operate mostly during special events. Mr. Woodley asks if the station length will be extended. Mr. Marshall says that there will be capacity for four trains side-by-side. There is general interest in relocating the fire station parking lot and the fire station is willing to relocate. There will be improvements to make the pedestrian crossings more predictable for bicycles; they are considering implementing raised crosswalks. There has been some discussion on lowering the rail tracks to bring everything farther down and closer to the street level. Mr. Stanton wonders about how the pedestrians are going to be managed if there will be three times more pedestrians than currently exist and if there will be a continuous stream of pedestrians crossing the bike lane. Cap Metro has been considering existing city planning documents to reach the point they're at now and they have begun stakeholder outreach efforts. They are at the 10% level and it will probably be a 3-4 year process. The pedestrian plaza would have a textured surface. Mr. Wald clarifies that the pedestrian plaza would have vehicle access through it. Mr. Stanton asks if jaywalkers are allowed to walk through the pedestrian plaza when there is a car in it. Mr. Marshall says that there will be designated areas for pedestrians, bikes, and cars. Mr. Eden doesn't think it makes sense to call it a pedestrian plaza if there are vehicles allowed to cross through it. Mr. Murphy asks why there would be auto traffic in the pedestrian plaza. It would be possible to cut off Neches. The auto traffic needs to be moved out of the way to accommodate the people moving through there. Mr. Stanton likes the idea of having a true multi-modal hub for bikes, pedestrians, and transit. Ms. Ray suggests that a workshop could be set up to get into the details of where a station could be placed and the technical details of the street. Mr. Kase asks if the reluctance over closing off traffic completely came from businesses' concerns over access. The concern came from the Hilton who wanted to maintain access in the same way that it currently does. Mr. Murphy says that if 5th street is 2-way then it eliminates the necessity of multiple right turns required to exit the Hilton currently. They also have a turn-around which the Hilton can use. Mr. Stanton thinks that the plaza could be an emergency access route only instead of having casual traffic through the entire plaza. Mr. Jarnagin asks about marked crossings of the LAB and what is going to divide the pedestrian plaza from the bikeway. Mr. Wilkes says that from a bikeway standpoint the current station works very well. Right now, you know when there is going to be a conflict and there is good visibility preventing anyone from jumping out without notice. In the future the same tools will be used: explicit crossings and with good visibility. The convention front door and the plaza and the park need to be able to access each other and the bikeway will need to be permeable. Mr. Stanton points out that none of the mock-ups show vehicles. Mr. LeBlanc says that calling the space a pedestrian plaza needs to stop if vehicle access is going to be permitted. Mr. LeBlanc asks what the timeframe of this project would be. Mr. Marshall says that in October a forum will be posted to start taking input to gather concerns. A 10% design will be completed and that will be used in the public input. Mr. LeBlanc asks if the bond for the light rail will affect the design of this station. Metro Rail will expand irrespective

of Project Connect. Mr. Eden asks what the timeline for the green line will be. Ms. Marshall says that there is no planned timeline and the green line is currently unfunded. Mr. Stanton urges strong feedback from the BAC on this project. Mr. Stanton feels that the Hilton is providing strong feedback and he would like to counter at an early stage.

Mr. Stanton moves that:

The BAC recommends that the proposed improvements to the downtown gateway station include removal of motorized vehicles on 4th street between Trinity and Red River except for emergency and special event vehicles so that 4th street can operate as a pedestrian plaza.

Seconded by Mr. Thayer. No dissent. Motion passes unanimously.

Briefing and Possible Action: Austin Bicycle Plan Update – Nathan Wilkes

The Bicycle Plan is not going to council on the 28th. However, the Urban Trails Plan will be going to council on the 28th. All the content of the Bike Plan has been presented to the boards and commissions and the BAC, but there still has not been a complete draft document produced. The Transportation Department also wanted the approval of the Planning Commission before going before Council. They plan to go to the UTC and request that the UTC ask the Planning Commission to re-hear the bicycle plan. They hope to be back at Planning Commission Mid-October and at Council Mid-November. If everything is in place, this could be adopted for the start of next year. In another week or two the plan should be in the hands of the BAC and the public. Mr. Wilkes would like to return next month for formal approval of the plan. A subcommittee meeting should be planned sometime before then- maybe in the first week of September- to dig into the details of the plan. A technical subcommittee will be held on September 9th to discuss the bike plan.

Briefing and Possible Action: Protected Bike Lanes to Hart Elementary – Aleksiina Chapman

Ms. Chapman presents a cycle track project on Furness and North Plaza between Rutherford and Rundberg. The cycle track serves Hart Elementary School and utilizes the North Acres Bridge. The installation of the bridge removed 10 buses this school year since the bridge provided a walking connection bringing many students into the 2-mile walkable radius set by AISD. The Child Safety Program saw an opportunity to provide bicycles to students so they can ride to school. Detail overview of cycle track.

The cycle track connects to the eastbound bicycle lanes on Rutherford but Ms. Chapman confirms that there is no viable connection street south of Rutherford. Mr. LeBlanc asks about parking demands on the street. Ms. Chapman explains that in most of the project there is almost no parking demand along the street. One exception is townhomes that are currently being developed on the east side of Furness. Parking observed could still fit on one side of the street. The townhomes also have driveways and garage parking but there are strong concerns from people who live in the townhomes. Others in the neighborhood are supportive including the principal of Hart Elementary. Mr. LeBlanc asks in relation to the discussion at Gullett Elementary and removing on-street parking. Mr. Wilkes explains that Gullett is a different situation since it is not also on a commuter route. There is general agreement that the connection is good and serves school traffic well. Mr. Wald requests for clarification that half the parking would have to be removed, this is confirmed. He also asks dimensions and barriers, dimensions

are given as well as barrier type. Question is asked about pickup and drop-off operation at the school. Ms. Chapman says that the Safe Routes to School Program is going to work with the school to manage any drop-off problems, if any come up.

Mr. Wald makes motion that the BAC supports the City's design. Mr. Kase seconds. Mr. Eden has an additional question, wants to know if we can bring this to subcommittee. BAC rejects Mr. Eden's proposal. Mr. Wald's motion passes unanimously.

Briefing and Possible Action: 51st Street Reconstruction Protected Bike Lanes – Nathan Wilkes

There is a 2012 Bond project to look at 51st street and there is a vision plan to make it a streetscaped street with improved bicycle and pedestrian conditions. There is around 2 million dollars allocated for this project. The vision plan has one-way cycle tracks, a center median, and a parking lane- which is being substituted for rain gardens where rain gardens are needed and for sight distance. In the south side the cycle track is recommended to be raised but at a different level than the sidewalks. There is a draft preliminary engineering report (PER) which advises the general scope which has cost estimates looking at quantities and utilities involved. The bike program asked that they look at Dutch intersections. Mr. Eden asks if there is potential to provide an optional maneuver to move over to the left turn lane. Mr. Wilkes says that the trick is to time the signal so that bicycles can get through easily. Mr. Eden says that there are many cases existing in Austin today where it is faster to merge into the left turn lane. Mr. Wilkes says that this will be an exclusive space for bicycles and there will be barriers to entering and leaving the protected bike lane. Mr. Christian asks if a similar design has been adopted anywhere in the United States. Mr. Wilkes says that this type of intersection design is not currently installed anywhere in the US. Mr. Christian asks if this will be adopted, if there will be an ordinance that will prohibit bicycles from driving outside of the bicycle lane. In the current ordinance you can ride outside the bike lane if there is a reason about not feeling safe. Mr. Wald thinks that in the foreseeable future you will still be able to make a left turn the way you want to. Mr. Stanton thinks that a big difference is that with the box turns you don't have any special signalization and asks if there will be special signalization for bicycles. Mr. Wilkes says that it's a possibility. Mr. LeBlanc asks if the current row accommodates this design. Mr. Wilkes confirms. Mr. Wilkes says that there will be a shared bicycle and pedestrian path for one block west of Lancaster. All the driveways would have appropriate treatments paired with them. This project is going to tie together the protected facilities on Mueller and Berkman. Mr. Stanton asks if there is a long term view of this project continuing on to the YMCA at 183. There isn't an opportunity right now for bike lanes of this quality but there are certainly opportunities for connecting the bike lanes to the YMCA. There is a public meeting approaching in the next 1-2 months. Mr. Murphy asks about sweeper access and if there are sweepers for bicycle lanes in the works. A narrow sweeper had not been budgeted for FY 14.

Pedernales Cycle Track Update – Nathan Wilkes

The reason that this project has not moved forward to date is because the bicycle program has been short staff. Ms. Beaudet left almost a year ago. With this last extension of the bicycle plan, Pedernales is estimated to happen in the next couple months. Mr. Jarnagin asks about cleaning up some of the part that is constructed so that you can use some of it. The whole southbound portion was initially closed down. The main reason is because there is no signalization at 7th street. It was thought that the second phase of the project would follow sooner and that the existing section was too short to warrant use with the first phase. Mr. Jarnagin asks about 7th and Pedernales where there is a gas station and people frequently turn into the cycle track. Mr. Wilkes says that the barrier curb is placed in the wrong place

and that is going to be changed as part of the improvements. Mr. Stanton questions the bandwidth of the bicycle program- there is a school up north where there was bandwidth to complete a cycle track on short notice- but this cycle track is still incomplete. Mr. Stanton asks that this be completed by the spring semester.

6. Announcements/Adjourn –

Mr. Anderson: The PAC is beginning work on a Vision Zero document. They will be holding a PAC technical subcommittee meeting next Tuesday. BAC members are welcome and encouraged to join.

Lt. Malanka: Violet Crown Conservancy will be holding a public safety workgroup meeting on August 28th at St. Davids Episcopal Church to consider safety along the Violet Crown Trail. The trail portion in Sunset Valley is done. The portion that would connect to Williamson Creek is incomplete but they are working on that.

Mr. Jarnagin requests that there is a reminder sent out about the Council date for the distracted driving study group recommendations. Related to the distracted driving recommendations, Mr. Stanton says some of the public sees the bike community as being protectionist and having a “don’t touch us” stance towards extending the regulations to bicyclists. Mr. Stanton says that an important distinction that restrictions to bicyclists needs to be included in a separate discussion if required. Mr. Anderson asks if the BAC saw the memorandum sent out by the PDR department. The distracted driving recommendations were compared against Imagine Austin. Mr. Truxillo asks that if we need to support either nothing passing or both passing which would the BAC choose. Mr. Murphy suggests that other state laws should be researched and the wording should be looked into.

Mr. Wilkes reminds the BAC that the urban trails plan is going to Council on August 28th. The South Austin Combined Neighborhood Plan is also going to council on that date.

Mr. Leblanc moves to adjourn. Mr. Jarnagin seconds. No dissent.