

CITY OF AUSTIN
BICYCLE ADVISORY COUNCIL (BAC)
MEETING SUMMARY

City Hall, Staff Bull Pen, Room 1029
301 W 2nd Street
May 19th, 2015
6:00 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS:

Christopher Stanton – BAC Chair
Tom Thayer – BAC Vice Chair
Erin Katribe – BAC
David Orr – BAC
Tommy Eden – BAC

Samuel Day-Woodruff – BAC
Mike Kase – BAC
Pete Wall – Alt BAC
Kathryn Flowers – Alt BAC

Tom Wald – Alt BAC
Stanton Truxillo – Alt BAC, UTC
Liaison
Rebecca Brenneman – Alt BAC

GUESTS:

John Woodley
Gonzalo Camacho
Thomas Butler

Patricia Schaub, Bike Austin
JD Simpson, Austin B-Cycle
Hilary Andersen

Malcolm Yeatts, EROC
Michael Cosper

STAFF PRESENT:

Nathan Wilkes
Nadia Barrera

Laura Dierenfield
Neil Kopper
Justin Golbabai, NPP

Aleksiiina Chapman
Mario Porras, ATD

1. Introductions – Chair Stanton begins the meeting with introductions. Ms. Brenneman and Mr. Truxillo will serve as voting members.

2. Review and Approval of April Minutes – Mr. Orr moves approval of the April minutes with corrections. Mr. Truxillo seconds. No dissent. The minutes are approved.

3. Items from Public Works

Informational Briefing: Overview of Neighborhood Partnering Program – Justin Golbabai, Presenter

Mr. Golbabai introduces the Neighborhood Partnering Program (NPP). NPP is a community-based program that matches City funds with community funds to complete neighborhood improvement projects, including bicycle facilities. Volunteer hours, materials, or professional services can be used as the community's match for City funding. Projects have to be submitted by community groups. The sponsoring group has to go door-to-door to obtain signatures from

60% of neighbors that support the project. All projects have to be on city right of way. Neighbors have to maintain the project for the life of the project, which doesn't include upkeep of concrete work but includes landscaping and other things within their power. The application process starts by calling or emailing Mr. Golbabai and he then vets the project through city staff. If the project seems do-able, NPP staff helps the neighborhood develop a cost estimate. The application then goes to a board of directors, which is made up of 5 city directors and they decide which projects to award funding to based on the NPP core values.

NPP tries to ensure that their projects are accessible for all of Austin. The program outreach is tailored to reach all districts and all socioeconomic classes. The NPP has AmeriCorps interns who focus on making sure this program is accessible to low-income neighborhoods.

Mr. Stanton asks what the cost share splits are. Mr. Golbabai says that any project under \$150K is a 30% match from the neighborhood. Above \$150K it's a 50-50 split. NPP staff will calculate the cost, the city share, and the match. Up to 2 years of maintenance can be included in the match. The maximum total project value under the NPP is \$500K.

Link to Presentation:

https://austintexas.gov/cityclerk/boards_commissions/meetings/110_1.htm

4. Items from BAC

Briefing and Possible Action: Review of Traffic Calming Devices – Tommy Eden, Facilitator; Special Presentation from Local Area Traffic Management (LATM) Program, Mario Porras

Mr. Eden is concerned about locations where traffic calming devices do not include bicycle lanes. There are locations where traffic calming requires bicycles to merge in with mixed traffic. Mr. Eden states that once traffic speeds get up to 30 mph, merging into mixed traffic doesn't work. Mr. Eden would like the city to consider redesigning traffic calming devices which require people on bicycles to merge with moving vehicle traffic. Mr. Eden wonders if they don't have other alternatives and perhaps should only use speed cushions. There is an example of traffic calming on Davis and Rainey Street which has a separate channel for bicyclists to use; this could be a way to provide bulb outs and still allow bicycles to pass through comfortably.

Mr. Porras, Manager of the Local Area Traffic Management (LATM) program speaks to the traffic calming devices typically used. Mr. Porras says that from post-installation studies, horizontal deflection isn't as effective as vertical deflection (speed humps and cushions). In an effort to curb costs, the city is re-evaluating the devices used in the program. Bulb outs were previously installed along emergency response routes. The devices along emergency response routes have been revisited and the City is now starting to use speed cushions and speed humps as speed mitigation devices along these routes. Moving forward, LATM is moving away from bulb outs. Some of the older traffic calming devices that preclude bicycle lanes could have been installed before 2012. 2012 was when the modern LATM program was started and when the program started to coordinate with the bicycle program and other departments. The LATM

program is also using traffic circles as speed mitigation devices. Mr. Eden asks about projects which have been done since 2012 and if improvements can be made so that bicycles can navigate the devices appropriately. Mr. Porras says that devices need to remain installed for two years for a post-installation evaluation period. Mr. Porras says that there could be a period after this where there could be a re-application. There currently isn't much budget for LATM projects but the Transportation Department is looking for additional funding for the program. Moving to using speed humps and speed cushions exclusively will save the program a lot of money. Mr. Thayer prefers the speed cushions than the speed tables as a cyclist because they have spaces and cyclists don't have to mount the humps. Mr. Woodley has noticed that on streets with a median and speed cushions people then drive into the bicycle lane to avoid the cushions. Mr. Porras says that they are trying to not install this type of device any more. Mr. Kase asks if there are standards for speed humps and cushions in terms of the height and the lead up to the height. Mr. Porras says that there are standards. It's approximately 4" tall and with a 1:12 slope. Older devices may have other designs. The current designs were adopted in 2012. Mr. Porras says that unfortunately they can't get to all the requests that are submitted. They have about 350-400 requests in the database and about 6 million dollars in needs.

Briefing and Possible Action: Technical Subcommittee Review on Quarter Cent Funding – Christopher Stanton, Presenter

Mr. Stanton says that Capital Metro had a quarter cent tax that was levied to fund mobility projects around town years ago. There is more background and information on this funding source in the April minutes. The BAC wanted to work with the Transportation and Public Works Departments to determine appropriate recommendations for this funding. A Subcommittee meeting was held from which four projects which were selected and prioritized. This list, if approved by the BAC, will go to the Urban Transportation Commission (UTC) and the Mobility Committee.

The Subcommittee identified the Upper Boggy Creek Trail as the number one recommendation. It includes an improved crossing at 12th Street. This trail is part of a larger plan which is included in the Bicycle Master Plan. Mr. Orr adds that this trail hits all of the items that Cap Metro is looking for. It's already been designed and it also has a private dedicated easement from a property owner.

The second recommendation is an Austin B-Cycle expansion. This would fund 32 additional stations for \$1.6 million. Austin B-Cycle has a quarter million dollar match. Ms. Simpson presents a package that Mr. Elliott McFadden brought to the technical subcommittee meeting (see backup material). B-Cycle is a public-private partnership between the City of Austin and Bike Share of Austin. They have been in existence for about a year and a half. The original system investment came from federal funding with a private match from bike share of Austin. B-Cycle currently covers about 90% of their operating funds through memberships. What B-Cycle is missing at this early stage is the capital funds to further expand. The expansion would serve regional mobility, support transit, and it also leverages match funding. Ms. Simpson says that this system is also "shovel ready". Stations can be installed within 8 weeks of being

ordered and they already have license agreements for approval of space within the right of way with the City. Many of their sites do not require construction. They are looking at the impact to be about 100-125K additional trips per year. The Enfield, Rosewood, Clarksville, and Govalle neighborhoods will be included in the expansion. Mr. Kase asks if there is neighborhood approval with new station installations. Ms. Simpson says that because they are in the right-of-way they mainly work with neighborhood only under special circumstances. On E 11th Street there was collaboration with the neighborhood and all feedback has been very positive. Mr. Woodley asks what B-Cycle's rate of expansion is. Ms. Simpson says it all depends on funding. Mr. Woodley asks where they are getting funding. Ms. Simpson says that this investment would give them 32 new stations. B-Cycle hasn't been able to get their operational funding to cover anything beyond their own operation. Mr. Camacho doesn't think the system is really "shovel ready". Mr. Camacho says that we just saw that there are \$6 million in traffic calming needs that are safety related and people are being hit by cars and he wonders if a B-Cycle expansion is a good recommendation from the BAC for Quarter Cent funding. Mr. Stanton says that this type of earmarking is more likely to succeed with large discrete projects. Mr. Wald says that when you put more bikes on the street you get more people interested in improved infrastructure, this ends up making our roads safer for all users. Mr. Wald doesn't think there's any question that this expansion will improve bike safety. Mr. Wilkes says that the city is looking at B-Cycle expansion for several grant calls; the shovel ready part is largely related to the turnover time for getting these projects on the ground.

The third recommendation is for Pleasant Valley Road over Longhorn Dam safety and mobility improvements. This is a \$3 million request. This would include near term improvements and design funding for long term solutions. Ms. Flowers asks if there is anything major planned to happen to Longhorn Dam structurally in the next 5 years. It was originally built for the power plant and the power plant has now been decommissioned. Mr. Cosper got a flyer that said that the Longhorn Dam is in good shape. Mr. Wilkes says that there was recently work done on the lift gates but that this discussion is focused on the transportation improvements needed over the dam along Pleasant Valley Road. A notable part of this recommendation is that there still has not been a public process for improvements. This is a placeholder which shows that it is understood how much short term solutions would cost and also that the cost and magnitude of a large scale construction requires further study and public involvement.

The last recommendation for funding is the County Club Creek (CCC) Trail project. The CCC trail is an extensive trail which spans from Guerrero Park to south-west Austin. It's lower on the list because it's not yet shovel ready. Mr. Yeatts is a community leader on the advancement of this project if members of the BAC have further questions.

Another project which was not included on the list of recommendations was the trailhead connector from Pedernales Street to the Boggy Creek Trail; it was not included because it's too small of a project to be considered for this type of funding. Mr. Wald says that many other projects were also considered but for various reasons those projects wouldn't work as recommendations for Quarter Cent funding.

Mr. Truxillo moves to support the recommendations from the technical subcommittee by Resolution. Mr. Eden seconds.

Mr. Thayer asks why improvements to Pleasant Valley are only ranked third. Mr. Stanton says that the main reasons that Upper Boggy Creek was ranked first was because it was already previously earmarked for this money, there is a threat of losing a private easement, and it's less politically contentious. With regards to the bike share expansion recommendation, Mr. Kase understands that one of the goals is to connect low income neighborhoods but lots of low income folks don't have credit cards. Ms. Simpson says that part of the outreach is working on getting unbanked people on the system. Mr. Kase says that there is often no money for maintenance and asks if this money couldn't establish a general maintenance fund. Mr. Stanton understands that this is for new projects.

Mr. Stanton asks if anyone is opposed to the motion. No opposition. Motion passes.

Mr. Truxillo would like to applaud the technical subcommittee for the work they did. Mr. Stanton says that Ms. Louviere-Lignons had a huge part in this work.

Informational Briefing: 4th and Red River Bicycle Signal Phasing – Kathryn Flowers, Requester; Nathan Wilkes, Presenter

Ms. Flowers lives just east of 4th and Red River and sees that when cars have a green light, pedestrians have a walk, but bicycles don't have a green. Mr. Wilkes says that because a car can turn left across the bicycle path, the City's signal department is keeping the two westbound movements separate. Part of the funding from the signal grant will be dedicated to bicycle signal heads and more importantly the signal will get set into free-mode which will trip the signal as soon as somebody pulls up. Ms. Flowers thinks that it's confusing for the vehicles to have the green and pedestrians to have a walk and bicycles to have to stop. Often people don't understand why the signal is like this and they run the signal. The pedestrian phase is shared because the pedestrian speed is much lower. Mr. Orr likes to know when he's been detected and he is a lot more patient. He wants to put in a plug for some kind of simple, universal, feedback that the bike has been detected. Mr. Wilkes says that that's a great tool when cycle lengths are long but it's much better when signals just detect you. Mr. Wald asks if there's any indication of how many cars turn left on Red River. There isn't really any reason for anyone to go left. Ms. Flowers thinks that the signal timing of this light encourages people to run the light and then this encourages people to run lights at other locations.

Briefing and Possible Action: North Loop Striping Changes – David Orr, Requester; Neil Kopper, Presenter

Mr. Orr says that a lot of the feedback he heard came in the first couple of days when there was a lane configuration which looked like a straight bicycle lane to the right of a right turn only lane. Mr. Orr said that the signage changes have helped a lot. However, the number of cars that turn right at this intersection still provides a lot of potential for bikes getting right hooked and

it's not as safe as it was when bikes were to the left of the right turning cars. Mr. Kopper says that Mr. Orr is right in that the signs and the striping could have been better coordinated. Staff are working to improve that in the future.

North Loop used to be configured so that between Lamar and Guadalupe there were two lanes in each direction. The city was waiting for the street to get resurfaced so that it could be reconfigured to add bicycle lanes. Instead of waiting for resurfacing the outside lanes were converted to bicycle lanes. Approaching the intersection, the outside lane got changed to a right-only lane. Recently when we revisited the street because it was being resurfaced, staff observed back-ups in the PM peak. Today there is a through-right and a through and a left only. The changes need to settle before they are reviewed. A guest shared that she has two coworkers who are legally blind bicycle commuters. These two colleagues have memorized their routes and predictability is really important.

4. Items from Staff

Informational Briefing: Review / discussion of Pedernales two-way protected bicycle lane – Nathan Wilkes, Presenter

The current status of Pedernales is as follows: south of 2nd hasn't been striped because they paused in order to add a signal at Cesar Chavez. The striping and signal should be in the ground in the next month or two. There have been some sight distance concerns raised due to the landscaping at Esquina Tango and at the 5th street intersection. The City is looking at ways to elevate potential conflicts. There will be three chevron sets on the ground per intersection. Warning signs are also being considered similar to the ones that say "yield to peds" but these ones would say "yield to bikes". Diamond warning signs are also being contemplated. At the signal crossings, the northbound bike movements are like other bike lanes where you are moving with vehicle traffic. Southbound bicycle movements are phase separated.

Mr. Wilkes would like to hear general thoughts/sentiments or particular areas of concern. Mr. Wilkes says that there have been many discussions about protected bicycle lanes and there is a reason that we bring all protected bicycle lanes to the BAC. Mr. Wall likes the configuration on Pedernales. When he rode it he approached it from the north. There was plenty of indication of where he should go. Mr. Wall said it felt a little weird because he's not used to it but that it was clear. Mr. Truxillo is uncomfortable with two-way bicycle lanes. He is wary of motorists when approaching intersections in a contraflow direction. Mr. Woodley is concerned about two-way bicycle lanes as well. Mr. Wilkes says that every conventional bicycle lane has the critical flaw that you can get right hooked. Mr. Wilkes says that there is an element of defensive cycling and part of the adaptation to two-way facilities is getting used to one more conflict. Mr. Truxillo brought up that there needs to be a compelling reason to do a two way protected bike lane instead of one-way. Mr. Wilkes explained that the only option for Pedernales other than two-way bike lanes was no bike lanes at all. Under the constraints, the City felt like it was the best balance to create a facility that is high quality. Ms. Flowers says that Pedernales is not a wide street and asks if this creates any traffic issues. Mr. Wilkes says it doesn't. Mr. Thayer asks if the

narrow lanes help to calm traffic. Mr. Wilkes says that there are many studies that support this finding. Mr. Stanton says that he frequently uses this facility with children and that he is pleasantly surprised about cars not intruding into the bicycle lanes past the stop sign. Mr. Wald asks what signal timing is used to accommodate for someone who is accelerating very slowly. Mr. Wilkes says that we are able to make adjustments to timing. Mr. Orr thinks that because of pushback we get from a variety of riders about protected bike lanes, if this group felt like supporting this all ages and abilities solution, it would give it some additional support for these types of facilities and Mr. Orr would personally support this. Mr. Stanton asks if the BAC wants to make a general statement of support for protected bike lanes. Mr. Eden does not think that the BAC can make a motion since this item was listed as an informational briefing in the minutes.

Informational Briefing: San Jacinto Protected Bicycle Lanes – Neil Kopper, Presenter

The City is going to start a public process shortly to add protected bicycle lanes to San Jacinto Street between Dean Keeton Street and Speedway. The City will propose putting a southbound protected bicycle lane between parking and the curb and a northbound paint-buffered bicycle lane. There is more space on San Jacinto than on the drag, which has a similar existing configuration. There is some available space on the street in which the bike program is investigating options to incorporate rain gardens. There is a potential bike left turn lane onto Dean Keeton Street that is possible to install using excess street space. Ms. Brenneman asks how fast the traffic is on this street. Ms. Flowers says it's not so bad because the light breaks it up. Ms. Brenneman asks if you have young riders if the box left can always be used. Mr. Wilkes says that you can always use the box-left maneuver. Mr. Woodley believes that CapMetro uses this route and wonders if they would have 6' of clearance. Mr. Kopper says that technically the safe passing law only applies when both vehicles are in the same travel lane. In this proposal, the bus and the bicycle have their own lanes. The existing head in angle parking is not proposed to be changed to back-in angle parking, but there will be more space than there is now. Ms. Flowers asks how big the buffer is and how is it different from Guadalupe. Guadalupe is 7' bike lane and 2' buffer, San Jacinto is closer to 7' bike lane and 4' buffer. Mr. Eden asks how to make a left turn on Duval while going south on San Jacinto and then adds that this would be a very rare movement.. Mr. Kopper acknowledges that this maneuver is difficult to message due to the unique geometry of the intersection. A variant of the two-stage turn queue box is currently proposed to facilitate this turn. Cyclists would be able to either enter the motor vehicle lanes prior to the intersection or enter the turn queue box after reaching the intersection. Mr. Kopper notes the opportunity for further discussion of this feature during the public process and welcomes additional ideas.

4. Announcements/Adjourn – 7:50 – 8:00

- Open House for Proposed Improvements on Comal Street from 5th to 7th – Thursday May 21st from 6-7pm at the Carver Museum at 1161 Angelina Street.

Mr. Thayer moves to adjourn. Mr. Orr seconds. Meeting adjourns.