



**PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COUNCIL
MINUTES**

**REGULAR MEETING
May 4, 2015**

The Pedestrian Advisory convened in a regular meeting on May 4, 2015 at Austin Energy Town Lake Center, 721 Barton Springs Road, 1st floor assembly room.

Elected Members in Attendance

Peter Baird
Janet Beinke
Nancy Crowther
Girard Kinney

Ramah Leith
Zakq Lockrem
Nic Moe
Emily Risinger

Kathy Rock
Luke Urie
Heyden Walker

Guests in Attendance

Hatty Bogucki
Tony Buonodono
William Burkhardt
Veronica Castro De Barrera
Glen Coleman

Jarred Corbell
Kevin Lewis
Ben Martin
Melanie McNearney
Daniela Radpay

Magdalene Rood
Patricia Schaub
Tom Wald
Brian Wells
John Woodley

Staff and Agency Representatives in Attendance:

Robert Anderson
Amanda Couch
Caitlin D'Alton

Laura Dierenfield
John Eastman

Christian Malanka
Alexa Muraida

CALL TO ORDER

- 1. INTRODUCTIONS (6:00 – 6:05)**
- 2. CITIZEN COMMUNICATION: GENERAL (6:05 – 6:08)**

Mr. Woodley said that because City Staff is failing to configure his accommodations, he has no accommodations for this meeting, which he considers a violation of the State Open Meetings Act. He is being asked to setup and configure his own internet access to receive accommodations and to sign a standard City of Austin form for Liability to gain online access.

Staff clarified that the City’s ADA Office made a determination on this issue. Individuals requesting accommodations are still expected to do that which another member of the public would be required to do. In this case, any member of the public would be required to establish a WiFi account.

The Chair responded that City of Austin staff have, at each meeting, provided equipment and assistance for his accommodations and will continue to better these efforts so that he may participate more fully.

No action was taken on this agenda item.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (6:08 – 6:10)

Corrections to be made to page 3 top of the page to clarify meeting on May 4th. Correction to top of page 4. Ms. Rock did not say should would not use the facility.

Peter moved to approve with the changes. Ms. Beinke seconded. No opposition.

4. STAFF AND COMMISSION BRIEFINGS (6:10 – 6:15)

A. Bicycle Advisory Council / Urban Transportation Commission

Mr. Wald discussed the ¼ cent sales tax fund from Capital Metro. City Council is considering the approximately \$21 million. Mr. Wald says the PAC could make a recommendation, too. Presentation was given to BAC by James Snowe of the Public Works Department. The Bicycle Advisory Council has a technical subcommittee meeting tomorrow, 6-8 pm, One Texas Center, room 325. Mr. Baird asked if the BAC is making a list of recommendations. Mr. Wald said yes. Ms. Walker asked if City Council is making the final decision. Mr. Wald said he wasn't sure of the mechanics. He said there are some criteria. There was discussion regarding whether a special meeting might be necessary depending on the timeline.

5. BOULDIN COURT SUBDIVISION – (6:15 – 7:00)

Presentation by: Glen Coleman, PSW

Presentation by: Kevin Lewis, Bouldin Creek Neighborhood

Ms. Walker recused herself from this item. Ms. Risinger to lead the discussion on this item.

Jared Corbel, project manager, thanked the PAC for the opportunity to present. He said the project has been going on for a couple years. He said there are some right of way (ROW) vacations and wanted to clarify how those relate to pedestrian connections.

Primarily at 900 S 1st and 2nd Street, unique property bordered by Bouldin Creek to west, unnamed street, and Texas School for the Deaf. Copeland is primary street into the area, it is a substandard street, approximately 17', no sidewalks. H said streets like this won't provide safe access. 2nd street would be the primary street to serve subdivision, but it is also substandard, and there is no pedestrian walkway but not too many vehicles. Unnamed street is 10-12' wide with limited site distance.

The project is 5.2 acres consisting of 22 single family homes, and condominiums along s 1st. They are requesting 4 ROW vacations, and poised to go to City Council. S 2nd will be retained as 30' public easement; unnamed street will be located to the south not quite to the same width. Working with PARD, ATD, and neighborhoods, they've arrived at what they believe are solutions. They are proposing 15' pedestrian connection from S. 2nd Street to S. 1st. Sidewalks will be included as required in the City Subdivision Regulations.

Mr. Corbel said they have been working with PARD for a couple years to satisfy dedication requirement and their trail goals. There is a landlocked park area. They are proposing park access from cul de sac and park improvements. This is a pocket park, not a destination park. He said there are benefits to the neighbors to west as well as residents. They are proposing public recreation easement along entire western boundary of project. PARD's ultimate goal is a trail to connect to Nicholas Dawson Park to the south. The trail will allow residents to connect to S. 1st Street.

PARD wants 10' gravel path to connect from south of cul de sac.

Kevin Lewis is president of Bouldin Creek Neighborhood Association. He showed a preferred gridded conceptual plan, with a real street for connectivity for pedestrians and drivers. He said a new unnamed street is an improvement as it doesn't put all vehicles on Copeland, and that gives two points of access. He said he is concerned that a 15' pedestrian crossing point between two fences of that length is uninviting. He said PSW is proposing no street improvements south of their property and there will be pedestrians using the street in those sections.

Mr. Lewis said the benefit of a grid system is that it fits the pattern of the neighborhood and is safer. He said it should accommodate the same number of units as a cul de sac style pattern of development.

Mr. Lewis said he wants to maintain Copeland access to park greenway. Since there are steep slopes, could grant along south edge but still maintain Copeland Street. That would achieve a connection at both ends of the park to the greenway.

Mr. Lewis invited Mr. Burkhardt to speak. Mr. Burkhardt said the streets should be available to be used and should maintain the connectivity and increase connectivity potential. He said it is inviting because it appears to be in the public domain, rather than antiquated notion of cul de sac, which has its own connotations of privacy. He said they would like to keep it open to the community at large. He said it also acts as a buffer to the greenway, so would like there to be a transition without having to cross someone's yard.

Mr. Coleman discussed some elevation problems along the south side of the property which is a problem for vehicular access. Originally, PSW proposed only ped/bike connection, but can see both points of view. He said there is no question of need for enhanced connectivity. He said they are neutral on that as long as both property owners can share easement.

Mr. Coleman said said PARD surprised them with something. He said PARD proposed a pedestrian connection between S 2nd to greenbelt along fence and backyards of houses along cul de sac. He said there wouldn't be a tall fence. He said buyers this close to downtown want connectivity and stated this was preferred. He asked for PAC's support for opposing this proposal and instead to keep pedestrians traveling along north side of cul de sac and a connection from sidewalk to greenbelt between houses.

He said their first proposal was to connect from Unnamed Street. He said there is a building and some heritage trees. He said they are open to a traffic light at a different point.

Mr. Coleman said they don't want a pedestrian pathway along condominiums and privacy fences.

Mr. Lockrem asked about the actual design of path. PSW clarified it is a 15' easement, 6' natural path. He said the trail is a temporary connection to utilize the park because PARD wants to ultimately extend the trail but it doesn't connect at this point.

Ms. Risinger asked for discussion from the PAC.

Mr. Kinney asked for developer's response to Mr. Lewis' conceptual plan. Mr. Kinney said as a new urbanist he is much more in favor of gridded streets. Mr. Corbell said significant retaining walls could be necessary and they would prefer more privacy.

A citizen asked if retaining walls were already necessary to support the houses. PSW said yes, but they wouldn't have to engineer it along the entire length of the property.

A citizen asked if this is the highest and best use of the property, or does this only benefit the developer.

PSW said they are giving to the city nearly twice what they are asking the city to vacate. They are asking the city to vacate about a half-acre, and are dedicating through easements about an acre. He said there is also cash involved and critical environmental features to consider. He said the bank is also eroding so without stabilization there is a significant cost to the public.

Mr. Baird said the group's focus is primarily on connectivity. He said the two schemes are similar in terms of connections, with the primary difference being whether one is a full road or a pedestrian-only connection.

Mr. Moe asked about the amount of land fronting S. 1st. He said the area is bad. Mr. Corbel said they have to comply with Subchapter E and so there will be improvements.

Mr. Lewis said there are 3 or 4 curb cuts that could be removed if there was a vehicular connection from S 2nd to S 1st. PSW said those curb cuts would also be removed with their proposed connection.

A citizen said that as a realtor, a connection between homes feel uninviting if one can't see where it goes.

Mr. Lockrem said he totally agrees with the previous comment. He said it is undesirable to lose the pedestrian connection across the creek to Christopher Street.

Mr. Wald asked about total units to be constructed. PSW said there are 60 units total and the traffic study didn't show the need for signals due to increased vehicle trips.

Ms. Crowther said her concern is access for emergency vehicles and other city vehicles. PSW said this subdivision has been approved by the Fire Department for turning radii.

No motion was made.

6. Staff Briefings (7:00 – 8:00)

A. Sidewalk Master Plan Update – Peer Cities Report

Presentation by: John Eastman, Public Works Department

John Eastman and Brian Wells from MWM Design presented.

John Eastman thanked the PAC for their hard work. He said there are 97,000 places where roads intersect sidewalks. The city's policy is that those are the landowners' responsibility. He said we are missing about 3,200 sidewalks (about half the city's sidewalks).

He said the sidewalk infrastructure is basic infrastructure for the city. He said 80% of Capital Metro's riders walked to bus stops and over 22 Million boardings per year were done by people who had no option to drive a car. He said we need to move to the point where the sidewalk is a basic piece of infrastructure like a utility.

1969 is when sidewalks were placed within the Subdivision Regulations. 1991 was when ADA federal regulations came into being. He said the Sidewalk Master Plan is the physical infrastructure side and is intended to complement many efforts already going on in the city.

Mr. Eastman said about \$824 million in absent sidewalks and another \$120 Million in missing sidewalks required. About \$5-\$9 M annually through bonds. The Transportation User Fee (\$250 K for 2015) is another source of funds.

He said the City of Austin uses innovative project delivery. There are in-the-field engineers to design facilities to save cost and deliver services faster, saving 25% in design costs according to studies.

Since the plan was adopted 6 years ago, there are things that worked well. Staff uses a data-driven prioritization process and the maps make it easy to show and explain. The citywide gap and rehabilitation cost estimates help decision makers. The ADA Transition Plan Funding Target is also helpful.

Mr. Eastman said there are also opportunities for Improvement. Maintenance and rehabilitation assessment and prioritization could use improvement. Stable funding sources, particularly for maintenance, also needs to be improved.

L.A. recently settled a \$1.4 Billion Dollar ADA lawsuit. The Public Works Department, years ago, accepted the responsibility to build and maintain the city's sidewalk facilities. He said if we don't do this we face a situation like L.A.

Mr. Eastman spoke to the need to update the priorities. The Sidewalk Master Plan update process will update and simplify the GIS, incorporate latest ADA rulings, incorporate best practices with report, reference international peer cities as well as Imagine Austin and the City's Complete Streets Policy, and identify improvements based upon lessons learned.

Brian Wells from MWM introduced Veronica Castro De Barrera and Tony Buonodono, also from MWM. Mr. Wells is the Project Manager for the City of Austin Sidewalk Master Plan update. He said MWM has been working for the City for years. He said that improvements to how sidewalks are constructed come from groups like the PAC.

Mr. Wells addressed the Peer City Report. He said it helps to find out what Austin is doing well, and what we needs to improve. Seattle, Minneapolis, Dallas, Houston, San Antonio, Charlotte, Nashville were identified as peer cities. He said the cities were chosen due to similarities to Austin. Cities like New York are less relatable. And, they chose cities they knew we could learn from.

Seattle and Minneapolis rank much higher on Walk Score and are also more dense cities. Austin has nearly same land area as New York City, but is less dense.

Ms. Crowther asked if public transit played a role in determining peer cities. Consultant said, yes, their criteria included public transit.

All the peer cities with the exception of Charlotte also have Pedestrian Advisory Councils (some are Ped-bike advisory councils).

Mr. Wells said questionnaires were distributed to peer cities and interviews were conducted after they were returned. Two interviews still need to be completed. (Research of cities done before hand)

A question was asked about how correct person was identified from other cities. Ms. Castro De Barrera said multiple phone calls were made to find the right person. She said they made commitment to share findings with all participants. The questionnaire was 10 pages.

The peer cities report will include the questionnaire.

Mr. Wells said Dallas and Minneapolis are still gathering information, so most slides and content are missing for those cities.

Minneapolis and Seattle have smaller overall network and also much higher rates of percentage of sidewalks constructed.

Existing sidewalk maintenance – budget per mile. Austin has \$106 per mile but it is sometimes hard to separate out whether dollars are new sidewalk construction dollars or maintenance dollars.

Mr. Wald asked about the \$5M per year. Mr. Eastman clarified that is for new sidewalk construction and ADA Transition Plan.

Mr. Kinney asked about the peer cities that don't maintain all sidewalks.

Mr. Moe said there has been difficulty in identifying a single number for Austin due to variable rates of allocated funds. He pointed out that it is difficult to compare to cities due to different years of dollar amounts available and whether the dollar amounts represent an average.

New sidewalk budget per capita (average over 5 years). Budget per capita is a way to normalize for cities with different populations.

Absent sidewalk construction costs per mile. Seattle is performing poorly in this area. Mr. Eastman said they don't know why but Minneapolis is performing much better for maintenance costs per mile than we are and we can learn a lot from them.

Mr. Woodley asked how wide are the peer cities sidewalks for dollar amounts. Mr. Eastman said cities average between 4-6 feet.

Condition Rating System. New system is being piloted to assess for condition of sidewalk and other data. A letter grade rating with A represents a fully ADA compliant sidewalk.

Mr. Wells addressed the data collection process for assessing sidewalk condition through a sample of the city's sidewalks. He said they are geographically distributed according to Council Districts, with 150 miles chosen of varied roadway types. City staff created a collector APP and data collected in the field with a tablet. Pilot system is measuring efficiency of this method and process will be refined. The ultimate goal is to develop system so consultant or city staff can assess condition of all sidewalks throughout the City.

Sidewalk prioritization. This phase of the work just began.

Master Plan Update. Plan to come back to PAC in late summer/fall and hopefully be adopted by the end of the year.

Mr. Eastman said there will be a lot of data in the next couple months. The PAC will receive the full report soon and will have opportunity to submit comments online.

Sidewalk Condition Rating System is being developed and will be state of the art – no one else in the nation is doing this. It will be able to be performed in the same way, using the same analysis, as the absent sidewalk prioritization in order to help determine where dollars are spent.

Mr. Eastman said this will help to determine whether the City continues with a bond funded approach or whether we wish to go in a different direction.

Mr. Eastman asked for questions.

Ms. Nancy asked about whether some of the funding identified in the peer cities is capturing their transit agencies contributions. Mr. Eastman said that is coming out in the questionnaires and interviews. He said they have been trying to remain consistent with peer cities with standalone sidewalk project funds, and not consider such things as sidewalk costs that come about with other street reconstruction or developments.

Ms. Crowther asked about whether there are other sidewalk accessibility issues in northern peer cities and how they deal with snow clearance. Mr. Eastman said sidewalks stand up to snow and salt, as long as the steel is installed in sidewalk correctly. He said snow clearance responsibility is placed on property owners. Mr. Eastman said the cities don't have effective system for implementing collections for failure to comply with sidewalk maintenance.

Ms. Rock asked what is responsible for the greatest damage to sidewalks. Mr. Eastman said poor soil and then driveway-sidewalk interface. He said this latter represents 15% of sidewalks but it is an expensive section to install because it is thicker than other sections of sidewalk.

Mr. Baird asked if it is possible to include age of sidewalk to assess over a longer term whether sidewalks are achieving a shorter life expectancy. MWM said age of the sidewalk was assumed to be related to condition of sidewalk but they also needed these criteria to be captured within GIS and they haven't been able to figure out how to do that yet.

Ms. Rock asked about difference in the quality of the sidewalk material between developer constructed and city constructed. Mr. Eastman said it is rare to see a sidewalk physically degrade. He said the quality control of sidewalk mixtures is pretty well established.

Mr. Woodley asked if they included the number of driveways of peer cities and whether they City does de-icing of sidewalks to access transit. Mr. Eastman said he doubts whether Capital Metro does this given the rarity of ice events in Austin. Mr. Eastman said no other city does as well as we do tracking the data. He said they have two interns every summer collecting data.

Mr. Eastman said there will probably be several meetings with the PAC on this subject.

7. OTHER BUSINESS (8:00 – 8:05)

A. CAMPO 2014 Plan

Ms. Walker said that she sent an email to the full group today. She said only 1% of CAMPO's budget is allocated to pedestrian and bicycle projects and there are plans to cut that funding even further.

She said the proposed Mopac project would impact pedestrianism.

City Council will look at it this Thursday and CAMPO board will address on May 11.

Ms. Walker said the Park Board voted against it due to relation to Zilker Park. She said Council could consider symbolic vote. Mr. Wald said a PAC resolution would help for the city to make symbolic vote against.

Mr. Kinney moved to support the Transportation Department's position (April 1 memo) regarding the CAMPO 2040 plan. Mr. Bair seconded. No opposition.

Ms. Walker said she will send out draft language for the group in attendance. (Emily, Heyden, Peter, Nic, Girard, Luke, Daniela, John, Patricia, Robert, Veronica).

Ms. Schaub said she is able to go to the BAC Technical Subcommittee meeting to discuss the Capital Metro ¼ cent sales tax.

8. FUTURE BUSINESS (8:05 – 8:10)

9. ANNOUNCEMENTS / UPDATES (8:10 – 8:15)

- **Webinar** -The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center (PBIC) will discuss shifting agency culture to prioritize pedestrian safety:

Agency Leadership and Pedestrian Safety

- **Tuesday, May 5**
1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. Eastern Time

To register, visit <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/7742358826800533506>.

The session will focus on how state, local, and regional agencies have raised the profile of pedestrian safety issues and launched programs to prioritize pedestrian safety as a focus area and influence cultural changes within their agencies and departments.

- **Call to Action on Walking and Walkability**, expected for release by the U.S. Surgeon General's Office in late May or early June 2015.
- **City Council Calendar**
 - Council is scheduled to consider the CAMPO 2040 Plan on May 11.
 - [Mobility Committee](#) meets on June 3, 3pm. The meeting is held at City Hall Boards and Commissions room.
 - [Planning and Neighborhoods Committee](#) meets on May 18, 4pm. The meeting is held at City Hall Council Chambers.
 - [Public Safety Committee](#) meets on May 25, 4pm. The meeting is held at City Hall Boards and Commissions room.
- [Urban Transportation Commission](#) meets on May 12, 6pm. The meeting is held at City Hall Boards and Commissions room.
- [Bicycle Advisory Council](#) meets May 19, 6pm. Location to be determined. See agenda.
- [CAMPO Calendar](#)
 - CAMPO Transportation Policy Board Meeting meets Monday, May 11, 6pm. The meeting is at Joe C. Thompson Conference Center, 2405 Robert Dedman Drive.
 - CAMPO Technical Advisory Committee Meeting meets May 27, 2pm. The meeting is at One Texas Center, 505 Barton Springs Road, Suite 300.
- ADA Access and Sidewalk Task Force – No May meeting scheduled.
- [Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities](#) meets on May 11, 12pm. The meeting is held at City Hall Boards and Commissions room.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Pedestrian Advisory Council – 2014/2015 Regular Meeting Attendance

	Name	Oct 6	Nov 3	Dec 1	Jan 12	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept
F	Joe Almazan	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	✓				
F	Peter Baird	●	●	●	●	●	●	✓	●				
F	Nancy Crowther	●	●	●	●	●	✓	●	●				
F	Valerie Fruge	●	●	○	●	●	●	●	✓				
F	Girard Kinney	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				
F	Ramah Leith	●	●	●	●	●	○	●	●				
F	Nic Moe	●	●	●	●	●	✓	●	●				
F	Emily Risinger (Vice-Chair)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				
F	Heyden Walker (Chair)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				
A	Janet Beinke	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				
A	Ken Craig (resigned 1.12.2015)	●	●	●	●	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
A	Dan Keshet (informed of resignation 2.02.2015)	✓	✓	✓	✓	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
A	Jessica Lemann (informed of resignation 2.27.2014)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
A	Nathan Lynch (informed of resignation 2.02.2015)	✓	✓	✓	✓	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
A	Joel Meyer	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	●	✓	✓				
A	Carmen de la Morena-Chu	✓	●	●	✓	✓	●	●	✓				
A	Marva Overton	✓	●	●	●	✓	●	✓	✓				
A	Kathy Rock	●	●	●	●	✓	●	●	●				
A	Mike Sledge	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	✓				
A	Luke Urie	✓	●	●	✓	●	●	●	●				
A	Virginia Wilkinson (resigned 1.12.2015)	●	●	●	●	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
F = Full Member, A = Alternate Member ● Present ○ Excused Absence ✓ Unexcused Absence													