



**PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COUNCIL  
SEPTEMBER 14, 2015 – 6:00 PM  
CITY HALL – ROOM 1029  
301 W. SECOND STREET  
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78701**

**MEETING SUMMARY**

**CALL TO ORDER**

**1. CITIZEN COMMUNICATION: GENERAL**

Robert Anderson – Mr. Anderson spoke on the issue of connectivity and mobility along East Cesar Chavez at Red River. He cited a lack of crosswalks or signals in this area as well as a large retaining wall to the south side of Cesar Chavez that hinders pedestrian travel east to west. Mr. Anderson said that recent construction in the area has further limited pedestrian access. Mr. Anderson asks the City to address improvements to east-west pedestrian connectivity in this area during construction and thereafter.

Carmen de la Morena-Chu – Ms. Morena-Chu spoke on efforts to improve the commute to school for students at Eastside Memorial High School. She asked others to contact her if they would like to get involved.

Girard Kinney – Mr. Kinney shared that he met with the East Sixth Street Ibiz district (where he said his business is located) regarding concerns about the status of sidewalk improvements on the south side of Chicon from I-35 to Pecan Street following recent improvements to the north side of the street. Mr. Kinney said these business owners thought the south side improvements were going to be done after the north side improvements were completed. Mr. Kinney told them he promised to raise this issue with the PAC.

**2. APPROVAL OF AUGUST MINUTES**

Mr. Kinney moved to approve, Ms. Fruge seconded. Minutes were unanimously approved.

**3. STAFF AND COMMISSION BRIEFINGS**

- Bicycle Advisory Council / Urban Transportation Commission

Ms. Schaub shared that the Bicycle Advisory Council passed a resolution on electric bikes and drafted a resolution on the Mobility 35 project. She shared that the Bicycle Advisory Council will discuss these issues at their next meeting on October 20<sup>th</sup>.

#### **4. PROPOSED AMMENDMENT TO THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE**

Mr. Girard Kinney presented on a proposed amendment to §25-2-513 of the Land Development Code to allow porches to intrude into side yards at corner lots. Mr. Kinney is asking the PAC for a letter of support for a proposed amendment to §25-2-513 of the Land Development Code to allow porches to intrude into side yards at corner lots. Mr. Kinney said he has a letter of support from the Cherrywood Neighborhood Association. Mr. Kinney stated that the reason for the amendment was to allow for entries on the side of a home as well as wrap-around porches. Mr. Kinney stated that current setbacks make it difficult to build porches on side yards. Mr. Kinney considers this a simple fix to the current ordinance.

Greg Dutton, Planner with the Planning and Zoning Department shared that the amendment process for something like this would take the Planning Commission approximately 4-6 months to deliberate. At this point, City staff would not be making a recommendation. Proposed language could change from the recommendation proposed. Mr. Dutton offered to return to the PAC when the matter comes up for adoption by the Planning Commission.

Ms. Walker clarified that should the PAC approve a letter of support, that the letter would be supporting language that Mr. Kinney proposed knowing that the language could change.

Ms. Beinke made a motion to provide a letter of support and Mr. Almazan seconded. Mr. Anderson asked if there is a chance language could be modified to undercut the motivation to provide side porches. Mr. Kinney clarified he is proposing this amendment be a citywide initiative. The motion passed unanimously. Ms. Walker will draft the letter of support.

#### **5. SIDEWALK MASTER PLAN UPDATE**

Presentation by: John Eastman, Public Works Department, Sidewalk Program, Website: <http://austintexas.gov/departments/pedestrian-program>

Mr. Eastman introduced staff assisting with the update to the Sidewalk Master Plan: Justin Norvell and Eric Dusza of the Public Works Department, Brian Wells of MWM Design Group, and Laura Dierenfield of Austin Transportation. Mr. Eastman then presented a PowerPoint

presentation that covered the purpose of the update and the two major focuses of the update effort: existing sidewalk maintenance and new sidewalks. Please see the PowerPoint accompanying this meeting summary for further detail on the presentation.

Mr. Eastman shared that the Sidewalk Master Plan Update began with a Peer Cities Report that discusses sidewalk programs from other US cities comparable to Austin.

Peer Cities Report:

<http://austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Public Works/Street %26 Bridge/Sidewalk Peer Cities Report and Appendix.pdf>

Mr. Norvell provided an overview of the existing sidewalk maintenance component of the update which includes a new condition rating system and maintenance assessment process. The assessment process is currently being piloted throughout the City. Mr. Eastman shared the current funding needs and potential funding mechanisms for sidewalk maintenance. Details are available in the PowerPoint presentation that accompanies this meeting summary.

Mr. Eastman then discussed the new sidewalk component of the update including the current need, the Access Austin initiative and possible funding mechanisms.

Access Austin Program Summary:

<http://austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Public Works/Access Austin Program Summary.pdf> and Access Austin Map: <http://arcg.is/1INuB9M>

Mr. Moe asked why there was an increase in very high priority sidewalks. Mr. Eastman explained that we have better data than in 2009 that better captures very high priority areas. Ms. Dierenfield then shared information about the proposed shared space component of the update. Mr. Eastman concluded the presentation with a summary of the ways the Master Plan Update is addressing component of the PAC Technical Subcommittee's briefing note including: (1) Integration with other city plans; (2) Exploration of alternative pedestrian facilities, i.e. shared streets; (3) Criteria for Maintenance; (4) Goals and Performance Measures; (5) Alternative Funding Sources; and (6) Integration of GIS Software.

Discussion from the audience:

- Mr. Lockrem voiced support for the concept of shared streets but cautioned that he felt some shared street treatments such as bulb outs could be more expensive than conventional sidewalks due to

- drainage issues and that walkability tools should be driven by design of the street. Mr. Kinney said that bulb outs pay off in many ways, i.e. safer crossings, impervious cover, etc. and can save money in law enforcement, signage costs and other indirect benefits.
- Will TxDOT streets be included in this update? Yes, all frontages are included.
  - Mr. Kinney asked if the figures for sidewalk maintenance include costs for repairs of future sidewalks? Answer: It is based on the inventory we have now and it is difficult to say what the maintenance program will look like in 10-15 years. For example, Minneapolis is a great example of a City that has been able to bring maintenance costs down significantly over several years.
  - Mr. Kinney asked what might be the projected funding amounts for sidewalks from parking meters. Answer: We need to first determine what may be appropriate funding sources, including parking meter revenue as a possible source.
  - Mr. Kinney asked for more information on the proposal to require landowners to maintain driveways. Answer: If approved in the plan, a likely scenario might be that a notice would go to the property owner giving them three choices: 1) Do it yourself, 2) Pay the City a percentage of the total cost, 3) Apply the Minneapolis model where homeowner have the option to pay back over time (i.e. years if less than \$2,500 or 10 years if less than \$5,000). Mr. Kinney said that some property owners built sidewalks to city standards and now it has changed so he expects some push back. Commercial and multifamily may be more acceptable. Commercial frontages that are currently 100% driveway could be consolidated and actually save the property owner money. Mr. Moe suggests that since the majority of residents are renters that cost sharing should be for all property owners.
  - Mr. Kinney asks if maps will be available. Answer: Maps are online now.
  - Mr. Anderson expressed concern about the Access Austin focus on schools, parks and bus stops. He feels this is a small segment of pedestrian attractors. Mr. Anderson suggests building a more sophisticated rubric around a more comprehensive set of pedestrian attractors. Response: Access Austin is intended to be a thoughtful prioritization of need and high and very high priority sidewalks are already prioritized based on a comprehensive set of metrics including area median income and others.

- Mr. Kinney asks how existing gaps fit into the prioritization. Answer: the existing sidewalk prioritization process accounts for project that complete the sidewalk network.
- Ms. Walker points out that “Slow Streets” in the Urban Trails Master Plan support the concept of shared space. She said Austin has some neighborhoods that are already walkable. She suggests doing more of a public education campaign about slowing people down. Others support this idea, emphasizing that drivers need to be reminded all the time about slowing down through signage and police presence in neighborhoods. The ‘Don’t Block the Box’ campaign is a good model.
- Mr. Anderson asks if there are plans for a more holistic pedestrian plan. Answer: Imagine Austin provides guidance for pedestrian planning and the City is finalizing the Pedestrian Safety Action Plan.
- How do you work with neighborhoods? Answer: Neighbors are notified ahead of sidewalk work which is mandated under the ADA.
- What are the standard locations for tree planting? Answer: Our preference is to have at least another 5’ behind the sidewalk.
- In the case of new construction, is there a way to negotiate building to the next available sidewalk? Answer: This is being updated through the Code Next process as well as updates to the rough proportionality process. More information on rough proportionality is available here (see Item 5): <https://austintx.swagit.com/play/08052015-659>. Others remarked they have had success negotiating this on a case by case basis.
- Mr. Kinney noted that he felt there was some misplaced concern that people don’t know how to behave in shared space yet parking lots provide a setting where people driving cars and people walking routinely interact at slow speeds with very few conflicts.

Mr. Eastman encouraged people to comment on the Sidewalk Master Plan update through the comment webpage found here: <http://austintexas.gov/online-form/feedback-sidewalk-master-plan-and-ada-transition-plan>

## 6. PROJECTS SUBCOMMITTEE

**Vision Zero Update – Briefing** - Presentation by: Nic Moe, Projects Subcommittee Chair

Mr. Moe provided an update on the Vision Zero Task Force. The Task Force’s next meeting is Friday the 18<sup>th</sup>. The data team is looking at APD data and the causes of crashes 2010-2014 for incapacitating

injury/fatality and all injuries. The entire task force will develop action plan.

**7. MEMBERSHIP AND NOMINATION SUBCOMMITTEE FORMATION**

Ms. Dierenfield asked for volunteers to serve on the Membership and Nomination Subcommittee. Ms. Shaub, Mr. Almazan, Ms. de la Morena-Chu and Ms. Beinke agreed to serve.

**8. FUTURE BUSINESS / ADJOURN**

None.

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