

January 11, 2006
Item # 86



MEMORANDUM

To Mayor and Council

From Sondra Creighton, P E , Director
Public Works Department

Date January 10, 2007

Subject Lakewood Drive at RM 2222

This memo is to provide an update to my memorandum of December 11, 2006 regarding the "underpass" option for the RM 2222 / Lakewood Drive project that would connect between Lakewood Drive and Fire Station 31

Since that time, Austin Fire Department (AFD) staff has reviewed this option. Although it is viable and would maintain their response times, they have serious concerns about the reliability of a gate system that would be required to control unauthorized access. To meet the requirements of AFD, the gate system design would have to open quickly, not impede water flow, and be capable of withstanding multiple flooding events over the years with minimal maintenance.

AFD expressed concerns to us that a gate malfunction during an emergency response could force a unit responding from the station to either crash through the gate or use an alternative route that would increase their response time. They also noted that if a unit had crashed through the gate or the gate malfunctioned and remained in an open position, any vehicle could access the underpass and pose a safety issue for emergency and daily operations at Station 31.

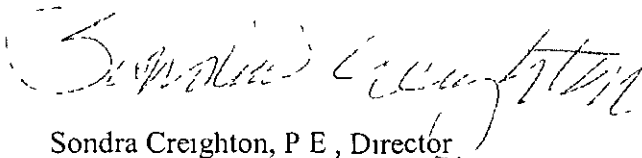
AFD also advised us that the closed end may encourage parked or abandoned vehicles, and dumping of trash and junk materials that could block the access road. This could result in a responding vehicle having to reverse its course and take an alternative route that would increase their response time. The low traffic volumes at the end of Lakewood Drive may also encourage individuals to congregate in the area and promote activities that are detrimental to the safety and security of both the neighborhood and Station 31.

AFD's recommendation is, therefore, to support the original TxDOT design that connects Lakewood Drive to RM 2222.

The City's Watershed Protection and Development Review Department (WPDRD) was asked to consider the environmental impacts of the options under consideration. WPDRD's response to this review is that both the original and the alternative "underpass" options involve in-channel excavation, floodplain excavation adjacent to Bull Creek, and disturbance of the riparian habitat within the TxDOT right-of-way. WPDRD staff determined that there was no significant

difference in impact between those two options. Obviously, from the environmental perspective, the solution with no ramp has the least impact.

Based on the review of the underpass option by AFD and WPDRD, Public Works continues to support the original TxDOT design connecting Lakewood Drive to RM 2222 with a ramp. This design maintains current response times and access for emergency services, maintains existing connectivity and the number of travel routes, avoids shifting traffic to adjacent neighborhood streets, and preserves public access to Bull Creek Park.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Sondra Creighton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "S" and a long, sweeping underline.

Sondra Creighton, P E , Director
Public Works Department
City of Austin