

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Mark Graham, Planning and Zoning

**FROM:** Bryan Golden, Austin Transportation Department

**DATE:** March 18th, 2020

**SUBJECT: Findings of Feasibility for Pedestrian Connectivity Between Blanco and Baylor Street (C14-2019-0151)**

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The Applicant proposes to rezone 0.67 acres from MF-5-CO-NP to MF-6-NP. In consideration of this zoning request, the City Council provided additional direction for the City Manager to convene staff from multiple departments, including Austin Transportation Department (ATD), Public Works Department (PWD), Parks and Recreation Department (PARD) and Watershed Protection to determine if there is a feasible solution to providing pedestrian connectivity on city ROW by way of the alley located between 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> streets; and, if a feasible alternative does exist, bring a recommendation for what might be an appropriate cost-share for the applicant.

*“To direct the City Manager to convene staff from different departments, including the Transportation Department, Public Works, PARD and Watershed Protection to address this option of pedestrian connectivity, in particular, to see if there's a feasible solution to providing pedestrian connectivity on the right-of-way. And if a feasible alternative exists, to come forward with recommendations about an appropriate level of cost share between the developer and potentially the City of Austin.”*

Following this directive, city staff from ATD and PWD convened on February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020. The general consensus from this meeting was that pedestrian connectivity through either the alley right-of-way or public utility easement (north side of the property), would not be feasible, primarily due to a significant 30% grade change.



To verify existing conditions and discussion points, this meeting was followed by an on-site visit conducted by Mark Cole (PWD) and Mike Schofield (ATD) on March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020. The findings of the site visit, in consideration of the requested Council action to determine if use of the public alley (right-of-way) for pedestrian connectivity is feasible, were as follows:

- ATD and Public Works found this connection to be infeasible.
- A significant elevation change of over 55' between Baylor Street and the western property line presents extremely challenging conditions. This is only compounded by the narrow 15' width of ROW.
- This 15' alley width would not be sufficient for the switchbacks likely needed for ADA compliance.
- Existing trees would likely be problematic.

As part of this exercise, staff has explored other options for potential trail connections in the adjacent area. Based on the assessment, a trail connection along Baylor Street, south of W 10<sup>th</sup> Street appeared to be a feasible connection, despite grade challenges. This potential trail connection would create a continuous connection for pedestrians and bicyclists along Baylor Street from 3rd Street north to Pease Park. According to the zoning change request, the applicant proposes 10 multi-family residential units. Based on this conceptual assessment, the roughly proportionate impact of this development would be approximately \$31,000. If it is the Council's decision to have the applicant contribute towards a potential pedestrian and bicycle connection, it is ATD's recommendation that this be reassessed as off-site mitigation at the time of site plan review when more accurate and detailed land uses, intensities, and site plan information become available .

If you have any questions or need more information on this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me at [Bryan.Golden@austintexas.gov](mailto:Bryan.Golden@austintexas.gov), 512-974-5691.

cc: Upal Barua, Transportation Development Officer (Austin Transportation Department)