

## **Shoal Creek History**

*Carl H. Tepper*

07-05-2000

Mr. Richard Kroger, Engineer with the Department of Public Works and Transportation, presented the proposed re-stripping plan Shoal Creek Boulevard. He described how it had been previously striped and described the new plan. Mr. Kroger stated the new plan was presented at a June 17, 2000 meeting with many of the neighborhood residents, and it was decided a public hearing was needed.

Mr. Kroger stated when Street and Bridge proposed resurfacing Shoal Creek Boulevard from 45th Street to Anderson Lane, it was decided this would be a good time to look at re-stripping Shoal Creek Boulevard to allow for prohibition of parking in bike lanes while maintaining a lesser, but adequate, amount of on-street parking. He stated this is considered an operational improvement and the public is not typically asked for permission to make these types of changes. Mr. Kroger stated the Department feels that for bicycling to be treated seriously, as a viable mode of transportation, you cannot allow parked cars to block their lane.

Mr. Kroger said at four different times parked vehicles were counted on both curbs of Shoal Creek Boulevard. Based on the counts, and the fact that the street is 40 feet wide, it was decided to restrict parking to the east side of the roadway. Mr. Kroger stated the streets are for transportation purposes and are not intended to store parked vehicles. He stated we serve transportation purposes first and then if there is room for parking after that, then we provide parking. He stated this proposal will provide parking on one side of the street and this is what is recommended.

Ms. Curba Lampert, Shoal Creek Boulevard resident, handed out and discussed neighborhood alternative to the proposed plan. She described the plans and the reason they felt the alternatives were better than the proposed plan. Ms. Lampert stated the plans utilize chicanes currently being used in the traffic-calming program, which would benefit the neighborhood in that it would also slow the traffic on Shoal Creek Boulevard.

Ms. Lampert stated that she and other residents met with City staff on Friday, June 30, 2000 to discuss a proposed alternative. City staff agreed to do the investigation if the residents can show a neighborhood majority. She feels the choices are the City's plan or a neighborhood generated alternative, and that there should be a compromise, that the days of getting one way/one side are over.

Ms. Lampert stated the neighborhood is interested in getting one of the plans implemented. She stated the neighborhood would work to get many of the landscaping materials to one of the neighborhood alternatives donated from neighborhood businesses, therefore allowing the work to be done sooner.

Ms. Brinkman asked if there was something that could be used to assure drivers stayed between the lines. Mr. Kroger stated raised pavement markers were tested in the

neighborhood traffic calming program and it was found they did not keep drivers in their lane. He said it might discourage some drivers from leaving their lane, but not all.

There were 70 citizens who signed the public hearing sign-up sheets, 48 who wished to speak on the issue. 44 stated they were for one of the new neighborhood alternatives, seven were for the City's proposed plan, and 11 were against the City's plan. Some citizens stated they liked the original plan, others stated they felt it is important to have parking, and others wanted unobstructed bike lanes. Many citizens talked about the high speeds witnessed on Shoal Creek Boulevard, wanting to slow the traffic, and wanting enforcement of the speed limits. Some spoke of wanting sidewalks and safe ways to walk in the neighborhood, or of moving the bike lanes off Shoal Creek Boulevard and routing bicyclists onto Great Northern Boulevard.

Mr. Kroger stated staff would work with the Allandale and Rosedale neighborhood representatives, try to meet once a week and let the representatives take the information back to each neighborhood.

Mr. Goetz stated he feels the main issue for most residents is slowing the traffic on Shoal Creek Boulevard, which the neighborhood alternatives would accomplish. He also feels landscaping would increase the property values and he likes the look. Mr. Goetz stated he supports no parking in bike lanes, as do many of the speakers.

Motion by: Michelle Brinkman

Seconded by: Patrick Goetz

Motion: The Urban Transportation Commission directs staff to work with the neighborhood representatives to achieve the most workable neighborhood proposal with the provision that car-free bike lanes is an essential element of whatever plan and if they fail to achieve a workable proposal that they can move forward with in 30 days then it returns to this Commission to recommend a plan that prohibits parking in the bike lanes.

Ayes: Wyatt/Lockler/Brinkman/Dahmus/Eden/Goetz/Tepper

Nays: None

Abstain: Johnson

Absent: None

09-18-2000 - Update

Mr. Richard Kroger, Engineer with the Department of Public Works and Transportation, stated they were planning to stripe the test section from Greenlawn to Pioneer. When the test section plan was laid out, they encountered a problem with one of the transitions. He said this one area has a sight distance problem and once another place is found for this transition, then the test striping section will be completed. They will observe the section, day and night, with cameras in the area. There is concern about vehicles not following their lane markings and crossing into bike lanes and oncoming traffic. Mr. Kroger also

discussed putting raised pavement marking at the transitions to enable motorists to better stay in their lanes.

#### 07-15-2002 - Recommendations

Ms. Meghan Wieters, Principal Planner with the Transportation, Planning and Sustainability Department, stated this project began about three years ago when the roadway was repaved and City staff began discussions with the residents about the striping of the roadway. Staff was trying to preserve the bikes lanes along with providing the on-street parking requested by the residents. Due to problems resolving the striping of the roadway, Mr. Charles Gandy of Livable Communities Consulting was hired to work with both parties and come up with a plan.

Ms. Wieters stated Mr. Gandy submitted a report to the City in June 2002. Staff reviewed the report and the distributed draft staff assessment is the result of their review. She then discussed various items such as safety concerns related to lane configuration for bicyclists, motorists, and emergency vehicles, desired outcome, safety guidelines followed, ADA issues, what other cities have done, and the problems associated with the planting of trees in curb extensions.

Mr. Dahmus stated it was originally presented that the 40-foot roadway would be divided into two 10-foot lanes, with 4-foot bike lanes on each side and 6-foot parking lanes on each side. However, this is deceiving in that it does not factor in the width of the stripes. Each stripe is four to six inches wide, which is subtracted from the width of each lane, making the lanes less than acceptable in width.

Mr. Charles Gandy expressed his concerns on the public process associated with this project and stated he had not seen the staff assessment until arriving at the meeting tonight. He discussed that there is no way to please everyone and for them to have everything they want.

Mr. Gandy stated that with the high-speed vehicular traffic currently on this roadway, pedestrians and inexperienced cyclists may have difficulties. He said he would not put his 10-year old child on the roadway right now, but he feels it can be made safe for everyone. Mr. Gandy stated there are not enough vehicles parking on the roadway to be concerned about, that the lanes should be measured from the middle of the stripes, and that crepe myrtle trees could be planted instead of oak trees.

Mr. Gandy stated the City of Waco has just installed a plan similar to what he proposes. He further stated that Pike Street in Seattle has a similar plan with similar lane widths. Mr. Dahmus stated he was just in Seattle, and on Pike Street, and the lanes are not the width of the plan presented. Mr. Dahmus further asked for a copy or picture of the plan installed in Waco. Mr. Gandy stated he would gladly provide a copy. Mr. Gandy said he also has some ideas not on the proposed plan that he would like to discuss with the City.

Mr. Wyatt suggested this item be taken to a subcommittee for discussion. He stated after city staff, the neighborhood residents, and Mr. Gandy come to some type of agreement, then it can be brought back to this commission.

Mr. Eden stated he would like to thank city staff for bringing this item back to this commission before the final decisions have been made. He feels a presentation at this time that shows what has been going on with this project is a good thing.

Mr. Dahmus agreed this presentation is a good thing. However, he further stated that he feels this draft prioritizes on-street parking over bicycles and that is a problem. This roadway is a major north south route for bicyclists in the city, and a major collector or minor arterial, should not be primarily concerned with on-street parking. He feels there may be too much togetherness and not enough decision-making. On some route the cars have priority, and on some route the bicyclists should have priority, and that will cause some parties to not be completely happy.

Motion by: Michelle Brinkman  
Seconded by: Carl H. Tepper

Motion: The Urban Transportation Commission requests that staff delay whatever triggering mechanism used that goes to Mr. Gandy and forces the finalization of this report until there is an opportunity for the subcommittee to work.

Ayes: Wyatt/Lockler/Brinkman/Dahmus/Eden/Goetz/Tepper  
Nays: None  
Abstain: None  
Absent: Hernandez

There were five citizens who signed up to speak on this issue. Four spoke in support of Mr. Gandy's proposal, and one did not wish to speak but stated he supported the proposal.

Mr. Wyatt again discussed this item being taken to a subcommittee and stated Mr. Tepper had agreed to chair the subcommittee. It was decided the subcommittee would meet on July 23, 2002 at 6pm in this room. City staff, concerned residents, and Mr. Gandy would all meet to work out a proposal to be presented to this commission.

#### 08-19-2002 - Recommendations

Mr. Tepper stated the Shoal Creek Subcommittee met on July 23, 2002. There were five Commissioners and four City staff present. Also present was Mr. Allen, from the neighborhood and Mr. Wimberley. Mr. Gandy gave his presentation and there were 12 citizens supporting his plan. Mr. Tepper stated that following a discussion by the subcommittee, a resolution was drafted, and unanimously approved. Mr. Dahmus stated he just started a new job and was sent to London, or he would have been at the meeting and the vote would not have been unanimous.

Mr. Forrest, Assistant Director of the Transportation, Planning and Sustainability Department, stated they met with Lisa Gordon and Mr. Gandy last week and went over some of the issues. He stated staff has some safety concerns about the proposal Mr. Gandy submitted. They had another meeting with Mr. Gandy on Thursday to go over some of those issues. He feels the plan is putting parking of a few vehicles over the safety of the bicycles, and in the straight areas where there are no parked cars the bicycles are being used as traffic calming. He doesn't think this is a good idea, and he doesn't think there is an engineer in the state of Texas that would approve this plan. He understands that the UTC is probably tired of this issue but we keep working with the hopes of finding some kind of consensus for traffic calming and a safe situation for bicycles. He stated we also still have some issues related to emergency services.

Mr. Gandy, of Livable Communities Consulting, stated that since the last meeting with Mr. Forrest he received a letter from Mr. Wallwork, a nationally known traffic engineer supporting the plan. He also stated the biggest risk on Shoal Creek Blvd is speeding cars. He encourages the Commission to consider the working group's proposal and also continue to have discussions.

Mr. Dahmus states that Shoal Creek Blvd has been designated a collector street, which is one above a residential street. This roadway is for the use of the entire city, both cyclist and vehicles, not just this neighborhood. It is irresponsible to let the neighborhood have 100% of what they want for this street, and disregard the needs of the rest of the city.

Mr. Forrest states the problem here is traffic calming, just like it is with other streets. He thinks there are some things they can agree on, such as that they need to reduce the speed of the traffic on this roadway. However city staff does not agree that Mr. Gandy's plan is safe.

Mr. Dahmus states there is more bike traffic than parking on the street. Because of this fact parking on one side of the street should be satisfactory, and the bike lane should take a higher priority than parking. He feels this plan tells us that parking is number one, car drivers are number two, and cyclists are number three.

Ms. Jackie Goodman, City Council Member, says safety is not necessarily measured in feet and inches. She stated the standards of today are not the standards of yesterday, and will probably not be the standards of the future. She said we always cater to speed and to fuel burning, high-speed traffic going from point A to point B. There are multiple uses of roads throughout a city. There are many people that would ride bicycles, but do not feel they can safely do it. Ms. Goodman stated safety depends on awareness, education and training. She said if you don't like all the issues and plans brought up, then we need to work on them. She said we have been working on a plan for about five years, and it is time to resolve the problems and stripe the roadway. Ms. Goodman wants this to move forward.

Mr. Eden stated he contacted the engineer in Waco, Texas where Mr. Gandy said a similar plan has been used. He stated because the dimensions Mr. Gandy recommended

are the minimum, he would be concerned. He said he has concerns about combining the minimum parking spaces, the minimum bike lane spaces, and the minimum travel lane. Mr. Eden reported the Engineer said the striping done in Waco was a mistake, and that they planned to re-stripe in the next few weeks.

There were five citizens who spoke on this proposal. They discussed issues such as this being a neighborhood with a mile long residential street and that if we give it the appearance of a thoroughfare, then there goes the neighborhood. They also discussed the balance between cyclist, emergency traffic, vehicular traffic, pedestrians, the resident's desires, and the safety issue.

Mr. Wyatt asked Mr. Forrest what he would change about this resolution. Mr. Forrest said this is not a good design with the curbs and straight a ways. He thinks we should work on the curves, and he wants to postpone this until the next meeting.

Mr. Tepper says it is all just recycled ideas from the original staff plan, but the Commissioners in the subcommittee meeting liked the plan the community came up with.

Mr. Forrest said the reason he recommended the delay is because of the meeting they had last week with the Assistant City Manager, and the things brought up that staff wanted to study. The safety of the bicyclist is vital, and traffic calming should increase the safety of the bicyclist.

Mr. Tepper says they wrote the resolution and they would like to see it move forward. It's been two plus years and the street has yet to be striped.

Motion by: Carl Tepper

Seconded by: Michelle Brinkman

Motion: To accept the resolution as presented. (See Attachment A)

Ayes: Wyatt/Lockler/Brinkman/Eden/Tepper

Nays: Dahmus

Absent: Hernandez/Goetz

Abstain: None

## URBAN TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION RESOLUTION

### Shoal Creek Striping & Traffic Calming Plan

WHEREAS, Shoal Creek Boulevard is a cherished neighborhood in the City of Austin, and is heavily utilized by alternative modes of transportation, including bicycle commuters and pedestrians; alternative transportation that is encouraged by city mandate for many reasons, and

WHEREAS, consultants from Livable Communities; in coordination with input from engineering experts, neighborhood residents, bicyclists, bicycle safety experts,

pedestrians, and emergency services representatives; determined that the traffic patterns of the boulevard are light residential, and in consideration of this the width of this boulevard can reasonably incorporate parking and bicycle lanes, and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Urban Transportation Commission approves the plan as presented on July 23, 2002, provided that improvements should apply to sections of the boulevard where safety may be excessively compromised. These safety concerns may be due to curves, and/or hills, and/or diminished width, and/or other. These improvements may require parking restrictions, or other, to enhance the safety of these sections of the boulevard.

Furthermore, in the interests of public safety the Urban Transportation Commission recommends implementation of this plan without delay.

Passed this day August 19, 2002

Chairman: \_\_\_\_\_  
Joneth R. Wyatt

Secretary: \_\_\_\_\_  
Michelle Brinkman