



ENVIRONMENTAL BOARD MOTION 050102-C2

Date: May 1, 2002

Subject: Near Term Downtown Transportation Projects

Motioned By: Matt Watson

Seconded By: Dr. Ramon Alvarez

Recommended Action

The Environmental Board recommends conditional approval of the staff proposal, with exceptions as noted below. Further, while recognizing the need for comprehensive transportation planning, the Board wishes to convey reservations regarding the scope and breadth of the body of projects.

The Board recommends the City proceed with these projects in an order not dictated merely by the availability of funding but, rather, in a deliberate order based on logical timing.

The Board further recommends the City begin categories of projects (e.g., conversion of one-way streets to two-way streets) on a limited basis such that their effectiveness and desirability may be assessed prior the implementation of all proposed projects within a particular category.

Conditions

1. Riverside Drive between South First St. and Lamar Blvd. should be eliminated from the plan and permanently closed to motor vehicle traffic. The Board provisionally recommends that if the road segment is not closed, bicycle lanes, pedestrian crossings, traffic calming features and a prohibition against on-street parking be included in the design.
2. The West Avenue and 3rd Street extensions into the Seaholm area should be eliminated from the plan. The Board provisionally recommends that, if these extensions are necessary for connectivity, access be limited to pedestrian and bicycle use only.
3. Bicycle lanes should be added on 2nd Street.

Continued on back

Rationale

The Board endorses Council's hierarchy that begins with pedestrians and puts vehicles last. The Board is concerned that the proposals of staff may not be consistent with that hierarchy.

The Board recommends closure of Riverside Drive through the park so as to maximize the future development of the park and eliminate the safety hazards that necessarily come from roadways running through pedestrian areas.

The Board's rationale for not extending West Avenue and 3rd Street is that they diminish future park amenities and threaten water quality.

The Board recommends bike lines on 2nd Street so as to maximize the potential for the planned mixed-use corridor there and to facilitate alternative modes of transportation.

Dissenting Opinion - Board Member Almanza

As a native East Austinite, I have witnessed the downtown streets become two-ways and one ways. I can't support spending millions of dollars to return to a prior system we spent money on to change and now want to return. I especially am concerned about spending millions of dollars downtown, while East Austin is still waiting for sidewalks, speed bumps, appropriate drainage and needed street repairs. It is for the above reasons that I voted no to the Downtown Transportation Proposal.

Vote 5-1-1-2

For: Alvarez, Ascot, Jones, Leffingwell, Watson

Against: Almanza

Abstain: Moncada

Absent: Maxwell, Seibert

Approved By:

Lee Leffingwell, Chair