

Monday, May 20, 2002



Kelly Daniel

Getting there

Close part of Riverside? Well, maybe

The campaign to change several downtown Austin streets from one-way to two-way traffic is ratcheting up over keeping Riverside Drive open by Town Lake.

City transportation officials who have worked on an extensive traffic analysis of downtown streets say that closing Riverside Drive completely between South First Street and Lamar Boulevard overly harms traffic flow.

But they do recommend a \$2.2 million project to remove two lanes and alter Riverside so it becomes a meandering road with one lane in each direction and scenic landscaping touches as it travels by the planned Town Lake Park.

That's not good enough for the park promoters, who argue that no vehicular traffic ought to be allowed to enter what they're hoping will be an entirely green oasis in Austin.

And yes, that means they face the prospect of convincing commuters that one fewer east-west route in a terminally north-south city is a good thing.

The Town Lake Park contingent pushed to have Riverside included in the city's analysis to begin with.

Now that the study warns against closing the Riverside section, the groups want the city to take another crack at it.

work, relied on a computer model that shows how downtown traffic changes if streets are altered. It also considered parking, emerging developments and making streets more pedestrian friendly.

The analysis is the basis for city officials' recommendation that Second, Seventh, Eighth, Ninth, 10th, Colorado, Brazos and Trinity streets and San Jacinto Boulevard switch from one-way traffic to two-way travel, among dozens of potential changes.

Major one-way thoroughfares Guadalupe, Lavaca, Fifth and Sixth streets would not be touched, however.

The city's analysis showed delays spiking on the Congress Avenue, South First and Lamar bridges if that Riverside section were closed.

Delays jumped 17 percent to 53 percent on the bridges, the model showed.

But the park folks are not giving up just yet.

They're the only ones among a broad collection of community groups, civic boards and city committees briefed about the plan in the past two months who have recommended significant changes to the city's model.

"The gist of it is we are just trying to find ways to improve traffic flow so that we can accommodate the park," said Larry Akers of Friends of Town Lake Park.

Park advocates propose adding, altering or eliminating turns at intersections near Riverside to see if traffic conditions improve enough to bolster their close-the-road argument.

The city could decide this week if it will run that extra analysis but will back off if the price tag is too high, said Austan Librach, the city's transportation planning director.

"Anything over \$5,000 would be too much," he said.

The entire proposal for the streets is expected to go to the City Council sometime in June.

Getting There appears Mondays. For questions, tips or story ideas, contact Getting There at 912-5977 or commuters@statesman.com

Gerald Gafford, I
in the Internatio

The

Activists: 'N
still a proble

By Janet Jacobs
AMERICAN-STATESMAN

Carrying cand
ple whose lives
AIDS gathered fo
rial service Sund
Square Park in d

Sunday's cerem
national observan
19 years ago in Sa
York, was the thir

Complacency a
address the reali
still problems, s
event said.

Young people n
death sentence, s
Lonny Stern of
Transitions. "Mo
refuse to acknowl

CAMPAIGN 2002

ACC bo focus o

By M.B. Taboada

AMERICAN-STATESMAN STAFF

Austin Community
is back in the black,
college must still sell a
image to voters if trustee
to win permission next
a tax increase.

That is the main c
among the four can
seeking two trustee s
ACC's runoff electio
support a tax increa
broadening the schoo
base.

Only residents who
the Austin, Leander an
or school districts pay t
the college. The tax rate,
for each \$100 of assess
erty value, has remain