



**City of Denton**  
**MINUTES**  
**TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMISSION**

City Hall  
215 E. McKinney Street  
Denton, Texas  
www.cityofdenton.com

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**Monday, March 4, 2019**

**5:30pm**

**City Council Work Session Room**

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After determining that a quorum of the Traffic Safety Commission of the City of Denton, Texas is present, the Chair of the Traffic Safety Commission will thereafter convene into an open meeting on Monday, March 4, 2019 at 5:33 p.m. in the Council Work Session Room at City Hall, 215 E. McKinney Street, Denton, Texas

**Commissioners:** Chair, Patrice Lyke; Vice Chair, Daniel Krutka; Jim Owen, Jeff King, Clay Thurmond, and Melissa Carr

**Staff Members:** Pritam Deshmukh, Deputy City Engineer/City Traffic Engineer; Trey Lansford, Deputy City Attorney ; Tracy Beck, Senior Engineer; Becky Owens, Review Technician and Michael Smith, Senior Engineer

**REGULAR MEETING**

- A. TSC19-014** Consider the approval of the Traffic Safety Commission meeting minutes of February 4, 2019.

Clay Thurmond made a motion. Jim Owen seconded the motion.

The Traffic Safety Commission Recommends approval of the minutes (6-0).

- B. TSC19-015** Receive a report, hold a discussion and give staff direction regarding capital improvements to downtown Mews Streets (Pecan, Austin, Walnut and Cedar).

Michael Smith, Senior Engineer with City of Denton CIP Engineering gave a presentation on Mews. Essentially we are in the conceptual phase of this project. A lot of the effort on this project has been reaching out and getting feedback from the community. Tonight we will discuss the project status and goals, existing conditions, public engagement activities, proposed improvements and beautification options solid waste and project elements and costs.

From the inception the main goal was to provide beautification and pedestrian accessibility of the Mews streets. The Mews streets are defined by an archaic term that came out of the 1700's and essentially refers to a row of houses, stables or carriage houses with living quarters above them. They were usually around a courtyard or square. In our case they are around a very large square being the streets just outside the square. We finished the public engagement portion and have a few recommendations we are moving forward on.

A pilot project was done on Cedar Street using an \$800,000 grant that was given to us. Cedar Street is now complete as far as it was envisioned to us a number of years ago. Cedar Street is on the West, Pecan Street on the north, Austin Street on the east and Walnut Street on the south. Pictures were shown as reference to the existing conditions with the Mews streets being utilized as the alleys behind the on square businesses. They have been used this way for a number of years and what we have is a number of dumpsters all along the streets with no sidewalks and steps limiting accessibility in these areas.



The path of where we started off and where we are going was shown. We started off with web site and social media to get the information out on the project. We hosted office hours with staff members inviting all of the businesses on around these streets to have a discussion to find out what their needs and issues were ways to address their comments. Then we had a public open house and received feedback from about two dozen people. This small number does not really give you a firm grasp of what people really want. Then we went out and did an online survey broadcasting that out wide and received 687 responses which added to the information already received. We have planned City Council presentation on March 19<sup>th</sup>.

Some of the public feedback received was for two-way streets. It was originally proposed to have one-way streets going counter clockwise around the inner square streets but feedback received indicated it would be better for the businesses and have less adverse impact. The proposals are now for two-way streets. Safety improvements needed were a focal point from the online survey. The lack of lighting and the safety concerns on the sidewalks were a major concern for those in the late night after business closings. Valet Service was expressed request for the solid waste and the interest in the loading schedules for deliveries.

The proposed street cross-sections are for traffic in both directions with parallel parking on both sides of the street. The basic would include a couple of lights and a few trees with accessible sidewalks on both sides of the street.

We looked at the bare minimum of what we needed to get and an intermediate plan adding additional features as we go along. The bare minimum plan is for sidewalks and curb ramps, pedestrian and street lighting, crosswalks and traffic calming, trash receptacles and bike racks and wrapping of the electrical transformers. Photo examples were reviewed for several of these elements. Options to make it look a little better included increasing the amount and level of landscaping with trees and planters and paving accents, the bike racks could be the musical note D, string lighting, and street furniture such as benches and other elements. Picture references were reviewed to illustrate these options.

Solid waste currently has issues with dumpsters in the streets. These include: service is inefficient, competes with available parking, odors/aesthetics, illegal dumping, capacity/overflowing, safety and cannot be serviced during special events. Current capacity was reviewed along with the counts required to get to current capacity. A concern with the current capacity is we are anticipating the number of people visiting the downtown area to increase with the new university campus. Three different options were presented in both the public meeting and the online survey. Option 1 is Valet Service where a private company collects trash and recycling at a business back door or consolidation area and transported to a centrally located compactor with one trip per week for each to service recycling and trash. Option 2 would have employees of each business transport their own trash and recycling to a consolidate trash compactor location downtown. The third, Option 3 would be to install one recycling and one trash dumpster at the corners of the Mews Streets and have businesses take their own waste for a total of 8 dumpsters with 2 services per day. Based on the survey and open house, the Valet was the preferred option. Options 2 and 3 were not that far behind from the online survey results but were significantly behind in the Open House scores. Patrice Lyke asked who pays for the Valet Service. Michael Smith responded the idea behind it would be that the businesses do pay. Right now they are paying for those services on their electric bill. An additional study would need to be done to figure out the percentage or proportional based cost for the type of business and usage volumes. A satellite image of the public parking lot on Cedar was shown to identify the proposed location for the trash compactors and recycle containers. Solid Waste is envisioning an all-terrain type vehicle with small utility trailer for this service. A lot of this was conceptual and once we have direction we can do a full design and investigate the usage in other cities. Valet Service is becoming more popular especially in areas where they have a lot of pedestrians and want to draw in more people. Melissa Carr asked about the possibility to help businesses to save money by eliminating the illegal dumping. Michael Smith confirmed that it would eliminate illegal dumping because the containers would be in remote locations with limited or control access. There would be two containers at each site and the size was



estimated to be 15 to 20 feet in length and 6 to 8 feet wide. Solid waste recommendations is the Valet Service has been a long time in the coming of events. The number of dumpsters is not sufficient for the activities currently on these streets and we need to add more. The Valet Service is working in a number of other cities right now and we are very interested in exploring that for the City of Denton. As part of this service, they could do the sidewalk cleaning and grease trap service. Landscape or screen walls would be around the compactor locations.

The Cost implications were reviewed. Cedar street would remain as-is since it was recently upgraded with the use of the grant money. There are different options for Pecan, Austin and Walnut Streets from the basic with the fewest aesthetic applications to the enhanced and the Luxury. Construction could begin as early as 2020 with design through the balance of this year and these cost estimates include inflation and construction contingency costs.

Clay Thurmond referenced a dumpster behind Denton Community Theater on Cedar Street and asked if that would stay or be removed if the Valet Service Option was selected. Michael Smith responded it would be he guess if we went to Valet this would be removed but there is a lot of flexibility in how the Valet is set-up. Daniel Krutka also noted the recent upgrades are quite nice but it still seems a little dark and asked if new lighting had been added also. Michael Smith commented the lighting that is there now is the aggregate pole lighting. The ones we are looking at now are the more historic style lights. It would be easy to add more lights of this style to Cedar Street if needed. It was further confirmed in answer to Jim Owen's question that Cedar was previously constructed with upgrades to a level allowed by the grant funding. There are additional enhancements that would could do. Images were displayed to show the current configuration with the previous upgrades and Michael also confirmed the majority of the questions in the survey related to the Mews streets. There were 3-4 questions about remote parking being available. We were trying to gather information from the survey to find out if there was an interest in getting better turnovers in the parking spots if we put in meters around the square. Jim Owen asked if there was any consideration of cameras or video for security. Michael Smith responded that it was not included. As far as security, it was increasing the lighting and providing sidewalks. People were very passionate about the parking spots. It was the main goal for a number of people was to keep them free. On the other hand there were people that shared the opinion that we don't have a parking problem but we have a walking problem and we need to be willing to walk a couple of blocks. Maybe we do meters and more handicapped on the square. Daniel Krutka asked if it were the businesses that tended to oppose the free parking or the idea of metered parking. Michael further replied there were a few businesses that opposed it but there were also some that said it did not impact them one way or the other. Daniel Krutka disagreed stating that it would impact them and increase their business if it were metered and he is always surprised that they advocate against their own interest and people park their cars there who are not their customers for extended periods of time. Patrice Lyke asked if a potential recommendation may have been received for paid parking on the square. Michael Smith responded with a no answer as we are just putting our feet in the water to see what might happen. This was not supposed to be part of the Mews but felt it was a good opportunity since we were doing the survey to ask. Patrice Lyke commented on the Park Mobile app that she used in Dallas making specific reference to the time allowance and rate charge with comparison city wide to all of the Denton sites being significantly more expensive. This could be hurting the overall perception of paid parking. If we re-evaluate the fee structure maybe more people would agree to having paid parking on the square. Daniel Krutka further added that it could potential move the employees and potentially people who are familiar with the area to the remote parking as good options to start using that as opposed to the people that don't know the areas as well and would be willing to pay to park. Michael Smith stated with all of the new signs in the downtown area, people have commented that it is much easier to find the remote parking because they are directed to it. There are eleven sites within two or three blocks of downtown to park. Clay Thurmond asked if new or additional handicap spaces would be added with the Mews plans. Michael Smith responded that he would imagine that more spaces would be added similar to those on Cedar Street. As part of doing the design phase after conceptual, those are the types of things we would look at. There is criteria for how many handicap spots are required and the design engineers would factor that into the plans.



In response to a questions asked by Jim Owen it was further noted this parking would remain with the two hour time limitation and enforcement would be the responsibility of the City. The City has limited number of people assigned to enforcement and the frequency to the square area is minimal. If we went to paid parking, it would create its own enforcement with an additional revenue stream that we could add additional parking or do something else with.

The older style lighting on Cedar Street was previewed and talked about as being similar to the proposed new style. Any replacements will be made to a newer plain white concrete pole. Clay Thurmond asked if there were any dark sky style lights that could fit into the new design. Michael Smith was unsure of the selection criteria for these lights other than a historical appearance but DME would need to be comment on any options or changes. Pritam Deshmukh added there was a selection process. At the time it probably went before the business owners and these were selected as part of the historical district or area which includes the downtown square. This is the only part of the city where these area installed. They are not consistent with our dark skies at this time but could be modified incorporated into the criteria when we move to the design phase. Consideration was also expressed for tenants in the apartments around the square to direct the light down to the actual sidewalk areas. Some of the physical enhancements implemented on Cedar Street are good examples of what is proposed. Some things we cannot do much with because they are actually the back of a buildings. This would increase the opportunity for people to open a business on the Mews streets making it a much more likely prospect because it now looks more appealing, cleaner there are no more bad smells or appearances from the trash and grease traps. Adding additional lighting and upgrading the lighting on Cedar could be included as we enter the design phase.

The recommendations are to do the Enhanced Option or middle of the road option. Depending on funding, we could add in some of the other features from the Luxury Option such as trees, pavers, additional planters, string lights or other decorative elements.

The Cost implications were reviewed. Cedar street would remain as-is since it was recently upgraded with the use of the grant money. There are different options for Pecan, Austin and Walnut Streets from the basic with the fewest aesthetic applications to the enhanced and the Luxury. Construction could begin as early as 2020 with design through the balance of this year and these cost estimates include inflation and construction contingency costs. We do have a breakdown of the cost elements that can be made available on request. This was initially bond funded a few years ago. Cost have gone up since that bond was done and we would have to locate the additional funding source. This is part of the special taxing district for the square and some of the design funding did come from this fund.

Patrice Lyke requested additional information on the reasoning or why it was considered to have the Mews streets to be one-way in a clockwise direction. Michael Smith responded the discussion was to do one-way with a bike lane all the way around in the clockwise direction. The idea there was that it would be a safer option and a good opportunity for people to circle the single block a little easier with a greater visibility of the crosswalks adding additional safety with the greater open space visibility. A number of people were strongly against it. A lot of people wanted two lanes. So if a truck is there blocking one making a delivery, they wanted a way to go around or get through. Once we went back to two lanes it did not really make sense to keep it in one direction and a number of others felt it would hurt their business if you had to go around the block multiple times. There was additional conversation about the close or tightness of the lanes and reduced speeds in the short segments it was already beginning to creating a sense of a safe environment for bicycles to interact with cars. The additional enhancements would improve pedestrian safety and comfort levels. An ordinance would be required to adjust the current 30 mph speed limit. Daniel Krutka asked if there had been any discussions about having a common downtown speed limit. Pritam Deshmukh commented that it is the other way around. People think if we set the speed limit, everyone will start driving that limit. But it is not that way. It is more of what people are driving currently and feel comfortable with based on the surrounding environment. In order to calm traffic it is more than putting up a sign but adding features that actually narrow the street down. The people feel more intimidated by the cars that are parked,



structures encroaching in the drive way and automatically slow down. If the proposed elements are added along with the added parking will help. It was also confirmed these streets would be marked with sharrows. It was also stated that you are more comfortable to share the road given the way the features and elements are laid out on the street.

Patrice Lyke also inquired about the sidewalk on Pecan Street having stairs and how they could or would be mitigated the rise while taking into consideration that it is right up against a building. Would that sidewalk become an at-grade sidewalk or would this be worked? Michael Smith replied that essentially the sidewalk in this area would be much wider and we would have some differential elevation with ramps going to the doors and beyond that would be the actual sidewalk.

Questions about the type and quantity of trees would have to be deferred to the Urban Forester or Landscape Architect.

Patrice Lyke noted in her review of the written comments for the web survey information, there were a lot of comments about perceived safety. There is always a discrepancy between perception and reality and she is interested in the reality of what crime is on the square. There were a lot of comments from people saying that didn't want to park in the remote lots because of their perception of safety. She added this was not her perception and did not personally share these feelings of being unsafe. However the frequency of which people commented upon a feeling of or they think they are going to feel unsafe getting away from the square is of interest. In order to encourage people to park in the remote lots, then we must play to that perception of public safety. Whether it is a reality or not we have to make people feel safer. So we do need to look at super enhanced lighting to make people feel like they are going to be safe. She is interested in the stats and whether we can start advertising that you are safe on the square or whether there is a chaperon service after closing times. She notice that women expressed concerns about walking to a remote lot with tips etc. Is there any way that we can mitigate the potential fear that maybe unjustified but still have to deal with that perception. Michael Smith noted the police department does have statistics that could be looked at. People tend to feel safer when things are more illuminated. It was expressed there is an advantage of the square to encourage people to park in the remote parking lots and an advantage to the businesses if people will do it and feel comfortable doing it.

Michael Smith further noted we do have a Tax Increment Fund (TIF) project underway where we are doing sidewalks and lighting. On Oak and Hickory we are doing lighting from the square to Carroll. Lighting is also being added on Elm from the square north to Parkway and on Locust we are going all the way to McKinney.

There was additional discussion among the commissioners regarding the Enhanced Option and adding additional items features selected from the Luxury Option.

The Traffic Safety Commission recommends the Enhanced Option and with funds available the Luxury Option is the overall preference giving first choice consideration to additional trees, lighting and pavement upgrades.

## **C. TSC19-016 Staff Reports**

### **1. Street Construction Report**

Mayhill road was planned to be switched to the newly constructed northbound lanes this morning but due to the temperatures it was postponed and rescheduled for tomorrow Wednesday, March 5<sup>th</sup>). With the traffic switch to the new lanes, they will begin the demolition and replacement of the old lanes with new pavement and bridge construction.



I-35E has another traffic lane switch at Brinker in front of Buc-ees this month. The entire freeway traffic both north and south bound lanes are switching to the new bridges at Brinker and Loop 288. They are working to wrap up the approaches at Loop 288.

Once these to lane changes are made they will start working underneath the bridges at Loop 288 and Brinker to make the connection to Brinker and upgrading the drainage under the Loop raising the actual street level. They will be working under the bridges through the summer. Their next deadline most likely will be to open up Brinker connection to make it a full interchange.

Jeff King asked if there was any anticipation of positive traffic flow changes, no change or negative changes. Pritam Deshmukh responded there would be both positive and negative. For I-35 it should be a positive change for those using the freeway. The section between the Loop and Mayhill has been old pavement for many years even after the completion of the widening project. With the switch it will all be fresh and new pavement and the lanes will not merge or be dropped or have ramps that are short eliminating the associated safety concerns for freeway riders. The Brinker connection opening will reduce some traffic off of the Loop. The entrance and exit ramps will be standard TxDOT ramps at the appropriate locations.

## 2. Matrix

#3 – Presentation was made today and can be removed.

#5 – The addition of the stop bar is happening this week and can be removed from the list.

#2 – We are working on this data collection activity. We have begun to identify intersections talking about light as being one of the easiest and quickest ways to address some of these concerns. We are looking at intersections to pull collision data where visibility at night may have been a factor. Funding will need to be identified to increase the wattage of existing lighting or to add new light. The two intersections on Carroll at Hickory and Oak have been identified as a priority to increase the intensity of light. There are others on University to be upgraded as well.

Daniel Krutka asked about the possibilities of getting a pedestrian crosswalk on the north side of Hickory at Bell. There is one currently on the south side only. Pritam Deshmukh responded this intersection is currently under design for replacement of a new signal. We are going out to bid on the signal contract in the next few weeks. This is among 11 signals to be upgraded to new equipment and once the redesign is complete there will be a crosswalk at that location.

Daniel Krutka also inquired about the area of a new coffee shop called the Golden Boy on Elm. While walking from this coffee shop down Elm towards McKinney there are cars being parked on the perceived sidewalk area at Hercules Muffler and Radiator similar to the situation previously addressed at Station Motors just a block over on Locust. This makes it again difficult for pedestrians, wheelchairs or people with strollers or disabilities to navigate without going into the lane of traffic. This was submitted through the Engage Denton app.

Jim Owen commented that we have been very accommodating to allow UNT to take over the parking on a number of streets but they are not enforcing the limitations. As a bus driver he notices specifically they are not towing cars parked too close to the corners and most of the accidents they have are hitting fixed objects. He would like to invite Chief Reynolds to come and speak to the commission about what his plans are. It was agreed and noted that it is good timing to make this request for someone from the Police and Transportation Departments from UNT to come and make



a presentation. We must be specific about the topic of discussion to be identified on the future agenda because we cannot discuss anything that is not specifically included on the published agenda.

Melissa Carr inquired about an area on Locust that is missing a sidewalk connection. There is a missing connective piece of sidewalk that should cross the drainage channel between the residential subdivision (McKamy Evers) and the street by the park and school (Cobblestone). There is nothing connecting this sidewalk to the newly created drainage ditch bridge crossing for the bike/walk lane. She is curious if there is any plan for this or if this is an old missing link that was created by the newer construction.

Clay Thurmond shared inputs from a few citizens. One concern was for someone who walks and bicycles to the shopping center via the signalized intersection of University and Alice Street. Recently she (the citizen) was having a lot of difficulty crossing and was nearly hit by three cars as she attempted to cross from north to south because cars were making a left turn to go west on University from Alice. He asked if there was anything we might could do to allow people a little more time to cross University. The problem was with her being seen by cars while attempting to cross. Patrice Lyke added there is a lot of turning in multiple directions at this intersection, it is currently poorly lit and even with the pedestrian signal there it is difficult to cross if you are not sprinting. It does not call attention to itself as an important place for people to safely cross as a pedestrian or on a bike. Daniel Krutka added all of University is bad for pedestrians and bikes. Perhaps a good starting point would be to pick the most logical intersection to really make one friendlier and more inviting as a crossing point for people coming from TWU or from the Kroger shopping area and maybe Carroll would be the best place. It might be that we should just pick one and make it walkable doing all the little things we can with the hope that people would start using that one as the primary crossing point if they are even in the vicinity. Melissa Carr added what is tricky about this is all of the businesses between Alice and Carroll because it is mostly fronted with parking lots and a lot of cars. Daniel Krutka added that perhaps creating shield spaces might add a level of comfort while waiting to cross because you feel vulnerable waiting while cars are speeding by. He just thought picking one intersection might be a more viable option versus fixing it all because it just seems unrealistic. Pritam Deshmukh replied that we can look into some options.

Clay Thurmond's second citizen concerned was shared for discussion. The corner of Congress of is extremely dangerous. There is a really bad blind spot where a lot of people speed and are unaware by Emily Fowler Library. If you know the area Quaker Town Park is across the way. Lots of kids, dogs, pedestrians, bikes and cars. From the other direction (north) is TWU students that are parking and blocks the view also. I have lived by this spot for six years. I and many people I know have almost been hit many times. There needs to be a stop sign before someone is hurt or killed. I am really surprised there has not been anything done in such a busy traffic area.

It was noted in the discussion there is a stop sign on Congress but Oakland does not and may not be the right way to go. There is no sidewalk in front of the library on Oakland. As a pedestrian you have to walk directly into the parking lot. Pritam Deshmukh commented that we do have long term plans for Parkway and Oakland to be road diet. Once we have the road diet, there will be a center lane for cars to cross one lane and have a refuge area before entering the through traffic. We are aware of this situation and concern and working to collect some data as well. Part of the long term project includes removing signals at Parkway at both Elm and Locust because we have to deal with TxDOT. Once we prove these intersections do not need to be signalized and can be stop signs on Parkway, then it is a matter of restriping the whole thing. Daniel Krutka asked about Oakland being the most logical bike path/lane to the square from TWU and Pritam Deshmukh confirmed.

## CONCLUDING ITEMS

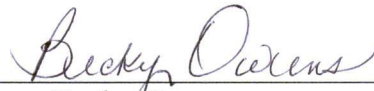
Under Section 551.042 of the Texas Open Meetings Act, respond to inquiries from the Public Utilities Board or the public with specific factual information or recitation of policy, or accept a proposal to place the matter on the agenda for an upcoming meeting AND Under Section 551.0415 of the Texas Open Meetings Act, provide reports about items of community interest regarding which no action will be taken, to include: expressions of thanks, congratulations, or condolence; information regarding holiday schedules; an honorary or salutary recognition of a public official, public employee, or other citizen; a reminder about an upcoming event organized or sponsored by the governing body; information regarding a social, ceremonial, or community event organized or sponsored by an entity other than the governing body that was attended or is scheduled to be attended by a member of the governing body or an official or employee of the municipality; or an announcement involving an imminent threat to the public health and safety of people in the municipality that has arisen after the posting of the agenda

APPROVED



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Patrice Lyke  
Chair



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Becky Owens  
Administrative Assistant