

MEETING SUMMARY

Austin Neighborhood Bike Network
Neighborhood Taskforce Meeting #2

Wednesday, April 14, 2021

4:30 – 6:00 pm

Virtual meeting; Microsoft Teams

ATTENDEES

CDOT Representatives

David Smith – Bicycle & Pedestrian Program Manager
Amanda Woodall – Divvy Program Manager
Alonzo Owens – Assistant Commissioner
Brad Huff, TY Lin – Bikeways Program Manager
John Pickering, TY Lin – Bikeways Planner
Ethan Lassiter – Department of Planning
Romina Castillo, MUSE – Vision Zero
Sid Shah, Sam Schwartz Engineering – Pedestrian Program
Shameka Turner, Sam Schwartz Engineering – Program Manager SAFE Ambassadors
Jane Wilberding, Sam Schwartz Engineering – Divvy

Taskforce Members

Alderman Taliaferro – 29th Ward
Alderman Mitts – 27th Ward
Alex Perez – Active Transportation Alliance
Bradly Johnson – BUILD
Derrick Faulkner – Chicago Parks District
Ethan Ramsay – Austin Coming Together
Tina Augustus – Resident of Austin/Austin Chamber of Commerce
Nicole Marcus – Austin Coming Together
Cassandra Norman – South Austin Neighborhood Association
Assata Olugbala – Chicago Police Department
Maretta Brown-Miller – Chicago Parks District
Lauren Price – 29th Ward Representative

PROJECT UPDATES

David Smith, Bicycle & Pedestrian Manager, from the Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT), welcomed back the Taskforce and recapped highlights and goals from the previous meeting. New members to the taskforce voiced support for the Neighborhood Bike Network and the Divvy Bike Share expansion. Since the last meeting, CDOT has begun implementing other initiatives including:

- Contacted additional stakeholders to join the Taskforce
- Held targeted meetings with additional stakeholders to discuss the Neighborhood Bike Network
- Coordinated resources to provide more bike parking locations which will be installed in 2021 & 2022
- Coordinated bike education resources for future events in Austin
- Developed outreach material & an online survey

NETWORK INTRODUCTION

To determine a potential network of bicycle routes, CDOT, using feedback regarding opportunities and destinations from the first Taskforce meeting, scoped 23 miles of streets for potential bike routes. This draft bike network was sorted into short- and long-term potential projects. Short-term projects can begin installation in 2021 whereas long-term projects are more complex and require further analysis and coordination, including with the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT). 12 miles of streets within the network are options for short-term installations while the remaining 11 miles are long-term due to complexity and coordination required. CDOT noted that this does mean bike routes cannot at some point be installed, rather they will take more time, coordination, and support from the community.

Short-term projects will be evaluated over time to understand where upgrades can be incorporated including concrete and traffic calming improvements. CDOT reiterated that the Neighborhood Bike Network is an ongoing effort and installations and route scoping will continue past 2022 to strengthen the network. The potential network discussed at the taskforce meeting reflects only those streets identified under the short-term bucket.

Neighborhood Routes

Two types of streets were identified as part of the Neighborhood Bike Network: Neighborhood and Connector routes. Neighborhood routes are low-stress, low-volume residential streets, generally with existing signals at major intersections and can serve as an alternative to busier nearby streets. On these types of streets, people biking are prioritized and traffic calming measures are implemented to encourage safe driver behavior. Bicycle signage, green pavement, and pavement markings are installed on neighborhood routes, signaling the presence of people biking. Traffic calming which can include, shortened crossing distances, elevated crosswalks, bicycle-friendly speed humps, and traffic diverters are among some of the options that can be implemented. **No legal on-street parking will be affected by neighborhood routes.** By creating space for people biking and driving, streets become safer and more comfortable for everyone, including people walking.

Connector Routes

Connector routes are streets with higher vehicle volumes, CTA routes, and/or commercial activity where the goal is to separate people driving and people biking as much as possible. Depending on width and street characteristics, various forms of bike lanes can be installed without reducing any on-street parking. However, due to the limited street width, physically separating people biking from people driving requires tradeoffs which can include on-street parking consolidation. If protected bike lanes cannot be installed in the Short-Term, there are still opportunities to upgrade but will require community support and an understanding of the benefits and tradeoffs.

Forms of Bike Lanes that can be installed on Connector routes:

- **Marked shared lanes (or Sharrows):** Pavement markings (a bicycle symbol with a chevron) that denote shared bicycle and vehicle travel lanes and remind motorists that bicycle travel is prioritized. The markings encourage proper positioning by bicyclists by placing them where the bicyclist is expected to ride. Additionally, these markings can help reinforce the route along with wayfinding signage.
- **Bike Lane:** Exclusive space for people biking located on the street and designated with pavement markings and signage. Bike lanes are adjacent to the vehicle travel lane and travel in the same direction.
- **Buffered Bike Lane:** Similar to *Bike Lanes* but paired with a designated striped buffer between the travel lane and/or the parking lane to allow more space for people biking.
- **Protected Bike Lane:** Exclusive and protected space for people biking that physically separates them from people driving and/or the parking lane through the use of vertical protection that can include: concrete curbs, bollards, or parking lanes. Protected bike lanes can either be one-way, typically with the flow of traffic, or two-way, where bicycle movement is allowed in both directions on one side of the street.

Feedback

Taskforce members when asked about feedback regarding the potential Neighborhood Bike Network were receptive and liked that the neighborhood routes were good alternatives to busier streets. Alderman Taliaferro remarked how this network could be a great resource for residents to reach their destinations and to businesses without having to get into a vehicle. Members noted that street condition and poor driver behavior will need to be addressed and asked about any on-street parking removal. **CDOT explained no high-impact changes or loss of residential parking would occur on neighborhood routes** and that all street conditions would be surveyed ahead of time. Additionally, CDOT noted, traffic calming measures and bike routes help slow and calm all forms of transportation and improves the comfort of the street. Other members mentioned holding targeted meetings especially with those around La Follette Park & Columbus Park to inform them of the effort.

PROPOSED DESIGNS

With feedback regarding streets and destinations from the taskforce, CDOT presented on some of the potential short-term installations that could be installed in 2021 & 2022 and their benefits and tradeoffs.

Protected Bike Lanes

- **Jackson – Austin to Central** – Taskforce members remarked how this street experiences lots of speeding due to the low traffic volumes and excessive width. CDOT noted observations have been conducted and they reveal traffic volumes warrant one lane in each direction. Taskforce members liked how the project would improve conditions for people walking. Others recommended hosting targeted outreach efforts to inform nearby homeowners of the installation.

Neighborhood Routes

- **Lavergne – Harrison to Hirsh** – Taskforce members confirmed the street would be a good neighborhood route as members remarked how they prefer to bike on neighborhood streets as they are more comfortable than arterial streets.
- **Menard – Jackson to Bloomingdale** – Taskforce members were receptive of the route and thought it would make a good connection into the proposed bike route on Jackson as well as into Columbus Park. They asked how operations would function as Menard cul-de-sacs just north of Madison. CDOT explained that markings and signage could guide people biking across the short distance of the parking lot to sidewalk and an existing pedestrian opening. This movement, CDOT noted, will require further coordination.

Other routes mentioned by the taskforce was Kilbourn, which CDOT had identified as a long-term route.

Connector Routes

- **Harrison – Central to Kostner** – Taskforce confirmed this is a good Connector route as it's quiet and does not have a lot of traffic.

OUTREACH

CDOT has developed an online survey and printed materials to be shared and promoted through each taskforce members contacts and neighborhood events. This survey will focus on understanding the state of bicycling in Austin and take about 10 minutes. Printed materials can be sent to anyone on the Taskforce who requests them.

CDOT will also reach out to the Taskforce to begin coordinating additional outreach events and efforts in the neighborhood.