

Rainey Street Open House

City staff is here to seek feedback from the community concerning pedestrian safety, traffic congestion, and parking issues in the Rainey Street neighborhood. Below is a brief synopsis highlighting the challenges each City department is seeking to address to meet the needs of the community.

Your input in both identifying the challenges, as well as possible short-term solutions, is the first step in a collaborative process to create a more unified urban neighborhood.

PUBLIC WORKS

The challenges we face: Addressing the need for more pedestrian, bike friendly options on the road.

Potential short-term solutions:

- Improve access from the Cesar Chavez parking lot by constructing ADA improvements at the Cesar Chavez/Red River intersection

Potential mid-term solutions:

- Improve access for pedestrian/bicycle traffic
- Pending community notice and review, bike facilities included in the Bicycle Master Plan will be installed, including: Red River, Davis, Rainey Street, River, Cummings, and East Avenue

PARKS & RECREATION

The challenges we face: As participation in MACC programs rises, the MACC parking lot is struggling to accommodate its own participants, let alone traffic from nearby condos and bars. In the future, the boathouse, opening in 2012, will bring additional users.

Potential short-term solutions:

- Free shuttles for participants in the MACC concert series, March 11-13 & 18-20
- Parking to residents with proof of residency during street closures March 17-20; MACC permit required
- Enforcement to prevent SXSW parking traffic

Potential mid-term solutions:

- Extension of MACC parking lot
- Add meters to the MACC parking lot
- Prohibit parking after 10 p.m. if no MACC programming is taking place

TRANSPORTATION

The challenges we face: Creating a balance to meet the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers.

Potential short-term solutions:

- Create plan to manage SXSW traffic for cars, pedestrians, and commercial vehicles
- Restrict on-street parking in some areas to improve mobility while minimizing impacts to parking
- Improve visibility of signs/markings

Potential mid-term solutions:

- Possible addition of on-street/ off-street parking
- Study possible conversion of Rainey St. to one-way traffic to create walkways
- Consider parking meters/Residential Parking Permits
- Create Parking Benefit District
- Redesign traffic circle at Rainey and River streets

AUSTIN POLICE

The challenges we face: Addressing pedestrian and driver safety concerns in the Rainey St. area due to narrow streets and large crowds.

Potential short-term solutions:

- Create barricades during SXSW to restrict vehicle traffic to local/resident access only. This has proved successful in the Bouldin and Barton Springs neighborhoods during larger events at the Long Center and Zilker Park.

Potential mid-term solutions:

- Assist the Transportation Department to enforce parking regulations, and parking issues during special events

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

The challenges we face: As Rainey Street transitions to a more urban district, it is important to examine current Land Development Code requirements, and identify potential code amendments that may address the unique needs of the Rainey Street district.

Current Zoning Regulations of Rainey St.:

- Predominately zoned as Central Business District (CBD) which permits cocktail lounge use without a conditional use permit
- Within the Convention Center Overlay which does not allow for commercial off-street parking
- Several properties are zoned as historic and require no parking for properties under 4,000 sq. ft.
- Properties zoned CBD are required to provide a min. 20%/max. 60% of code required parking
- Within the Waterfront Overlay

Potential mid-term solutions:

- Initiate potential code amendments
- Adopt the Downtown Austin Plan

AUSTIN ENERGY

The challenges we face: Creating a well-lit environment to ensure better visibility and improved safety in the area.

Potential short-term solutions:

- Intall four additional street lights in the area

Potential long-term solutions:

- Continue to work closely with the Public Works Department on a comprehensive plan to ensure adequate lighting exists in the area.

What's the next step?

The City of Austin will be hosting the next public meeting at 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., Wednesday, March 30, 2011 at the Mexican American Cultural Center in which we invite citizens to provide their input regarding mid-term and long-term solutions to the challenges facing Rainey Street.

Prior to the March 30 meeting, City staff will meet with representatives from various interest groups in the Rainey Street district to continue discussion of the challenges and possible solutions. At today's meeting, there will be a sign-up sheet welcoming 2 to 3 volunteers from various interest groups within the district. Staff asks that this working group not exceed more than 9 members total.

For comments, information: raineystreet@ci.austin.tx.us

RESOLUTION NO. 20110127-035

WHEREAS, on February 12, 2004, the Austin City Council approved a resolution to initiate rezoning of the Rainey Street area and to direct the City Manager to review the regulations of the Rainey Street Subdistrict of the Waterfront Overlay District; and

WHEREAS, the intention of rezoning properties in the Rainey Street District was to spur redevelopment of the area with a mix of uses; and

WHEREAS, most recently the redevelopment has been dominated by cocktail lounge and restaurant uses; and

WHEREAS, cocktail lounge and restaurant uses tend to generate high traffic counts; and

WHEREAS, this type of redevelopment in the Central Business District is not required to provide sidewalk and parking infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, as stated in the Waller Creek Master Plan, the Convention Center Overlay District was established to limit the construction of surface parking lots in the area surrounding the Convention Center; and

WHEREAS, the increased traffic and commercial activation of the Rainey Street District has raised concerns about pedestrian safety and congestion by residential occupants of existing single-family homes and those in recently constructed multifamily/condominium units; and

WHEREAS, Austin Transportation staff has been working to address these issues; **NOW, THEREFORE**,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

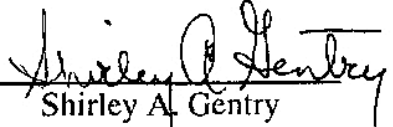
The City Manager is directed to develop short and long-term recommendations on how to address pedestrian safety, congestion, and parking issues in the Rainey Street District while continuing to encourage redevelopment of the area and supporting the Waller Creek Master Plan and present his recommendations to Council within 60 days. Residents and business owners in the Rainey Street District should be engaged to provide input for potential solutions.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

Transportation staff should consider the creation of a Parking Benefits District (PBD) as a potential tool for addressing on-street and off-street parking and to determine if any City-owned property could be used in conjunction with the PBD.

ADOPTED: January 27, 2011

ATTEST:


Shirley A. Gentry
City Clerk