

DAA Brush Square Subcommittee
Special Meeting Focusing on Capital Metro Plans
July 31, 2008

Attending: Joe Bolash (Hilton Austin), Matt Curtis (Capital Metro), Randy Fortenberry, Sharon Fortenberry (Avenue Lofts residents), Marshall Jones (DANA), Sharon Miller (Fire Studios), Sam Schonzeit (Dick Clark Architecture), Mike Shea (SXSU), Marty Stump (CoA Parks & Recreation), Tonya Swartzendruber (CoA Neighborhood Planning & Zoning) **Staff:** Julie Fitch, Charlie Betts, Dane Sullivan (Austin Downtown Rangers)

Construction Schedule

- Matt will keep everyone updated.
- 4th Street between Sabine and Red River to remain closed for staging area.

Trees

- The existing sweet gum trees (some are not in good health) to be removed in September. These trees are near the curb line and will be replaced with trees inside Brush Square. The sidewalk will intrude about one foot into the park.
- CoA Great Streets program staff recommended live oak trees because they match other area street trees and are used in other downtown squares.
- Concerns regarding live oaks
 - Wide canopy – interaction with buses solved by locating within park boundaries
 - Roots buckle sidewalks – sidewalks to be notched at each tree location
 - Attract grackles – According to Hilton sources, once you have grackles, you can't repel them by planting a different tree species; Charlie Betts noted that the DAA is working with the City of Austin on an RFP for an annual bird control contract (DAA and the Convention Center have committed \$20,000 each; they have requested the remaining \$20,000 from PARD).
- With all concerns addressed, the consensus was to go forward with the planned live oak trees as replacements.
- Since there is not yet a master plan for the park, some expressed concerns about tree placement.
- Mike Shea requested an additional meeting with PARD to discuss accommodating SXSU tents under the new plan.

Amenities

- Trash cans by canopies and at street corners
- Plans call for standard Capital Metro bike racks, trash cans, and benches.
- Capital Metro is willing to consider more innovative amenities if they receive proposals and supplemental funding.
- Texas Cultural Trust may be a funding source.
- Charlie Betts reminded the committee of the DAA's plans to have artists create public art that functions as bike racks. Julie will touch base with DAA staff liaison Lacy LaBorde to get a proposal to Capital Metro.

- Even if standard amenities are installed, they can always be modified or replaced later. This includes a possible art project on the electric cord reel box.
- Capital Metro's Travis Hausmann is the point person for adding to any standard fixtures. They have worked with UT and private developers on upgrades recently.

Canopy Alternatives

- Matt showed the group two alternatives for canopies. One is a standard Capital Metro peaked roof canopy, and the other has a glass cover, with the edges slightly higher than the center (drains through support poles instead of dripping off edges).
- Maintenance: Capital Metro would power wash the glass cover, but no commitment on how often. Concerns about this option looking filthy very quickly.
- Give any feedback to Matt Curtis.

Benches

- The subcommittee would like to have area benches standardized. PARD, Great Streets, Capital Metro, and other benches are possibilities.
- All public representatives willing to standardize.
- Marty Stump, Tonya Swartzendruber, and Matt Curtis will send bench specs to Julie, who will send them on to Sharon Miller.
- Sharon will consider options in order to make a recommendation to the group.

Next Meeting

- No August Meeting
- Regularly scheduled September meeting – September 11, 2008, 8:30 a.m.