

St. Edwards permit application-SP-2016-0026C ROW variance at 401 St. Edwards Drive

Meeting with City of Austin staff, Friday, August 5, 10:30 – 11:45 AM

Present: Ivan J. Naranjo, MBA, CNU-A, Senior Transportation Planner

Anna Martin, COA Transportation Engineer

Nikki Hoelter, Case Manager (joined meeting in the last 10 minutes)

Joi Harden, policy aide for Council Member Kathie Tovo

Ashley Richardson, policy advisor for Council Member Sabino (Pio) Renteria

Elloa Mathews, South River City Citizens Area 5 Coordinator

Robert C Stewart, resident, 2616 Carnarvon Lane, former Precinct 433 Chair, Travis County Democratic Party

Summary of information received at meeting:

Ms. Mathews provided staff with a copy of technical and administrative questions submitted by neighbors. Mr. Naranjo provided Ms. Mathews a copy of the complete site plan for the St. Edward's University Operations Building.

- 1) Ms. Hoelter advised that the University's official business address of 3001 S. Congress was appropriate for the original application and is carried on the complete site plan. The site plan depicts the actual building site on the map(s) included in the site plan. Ms. Mathews asked for a list of all property owners who received notice. Ms. Hoelter explained that the COA is only required to notice property owners within 500 ft. of the Limits of Construction (LOC) due to the site plan being consolidated.

Staff pointed to the legal notice listed (3001 S. Congress) as the posting address in the text but on the reverse side of the notice a map showed the actual location at 400 St. Edwards Dr. Staff had no response to the comments about the confusion that this legal notice having two different addresses could create.

- 2) The May 6 “Master Comment Report” by the several city departments required to review the site plan specifies the actual street address of the proposed building as 401 St. Edward’s Drive.
- 3) Information was requested as to how the number of 18 wheelers using the site was determined. Ms. Martin advised that staff accepted the university’s email from SEU attorney Micheal Whalen on July 28 stating that the university ANTICIPATES that 18-wheel truck deliveries would occur no more than once per week when construction of the building was complete. When asked how this would be enforced, staff reported that it could not be enforced due to St. Edwards Dr. being a public street. Because this is unenforceable, there was no inquiry by staff to the university as to how they determined this number of 18 wheelers or the number of smaller trucks making delivery to the site.
- 4) It is the department’s assessment that the large 18 wheel trucks are the only ones that will involve the Right of Way variance in that these trucks will have to block the Carnarvon intersection to back into the site to unload at the loading docks. The extent of the impact on traffic on St. Edward’s Drive and the intersection with Carnarvon Lane is considered by the department to be minimal and not presenting a traffic safety hazard on St. Edward’s Drive. Ms. Mathews requested that the dept. provide the data used to make this decision. The information was provided on August 12 via email and was noted that the COA traffic engineers used no new data, relying on the data compiled for the traffic counts taken in Feb. 2014 for St. Edwards Dr. The decision did not consider more recent traffic counts completed for traffic mitigation requests for Carnarvon Ln.

Ms. Martin noted that the fact that St. Edward’s Drive ends in a “dead-end” to the west of the intersection with Carnarvon Lane was a factor in approving the request for variance.

Mr. Stewart and Ms. Mathews informed staff that most of the traffic from Carnarvon on St. Edward’s Drive is not from neighborhood residents, but from vehicles traveling from South Congress Avenue, via Long Bow Lane and Carnarvon Lane to St. Edward’s Drive in order to access IH 35 South, avoiding heavier traffic on Oltorf Street. This considerable traffic

from Carnarvon eastward counters any consideration that St. Edward's Drive ends west of Carnarvon Lane.

- 5) Speed limits and signs on St. Edward's Drive. Ms. Mathews asked whether the transportation engineer had done a sign inventory of the street. Staff had not. Ms. Mathews asked whether anyone from the Transportation Dept. had done a site visit. They had not. Joi Harden stated that a site visit is not required in a ROW request!

- 6) St. Edwards Dr. east facing from Carnarvon has been missing a speed limit sign for many years and Ms. Mathews advised staff that our APD officer was unable to run radar or cite drivers for speed limit violations since the speed limit wasn't posted. Joi Harden, CM Tovo's aide asked if this could be quickly remedied. Ms. Martin said that the department would see to the placements of speed limit signs on St. Edwards Drive. The Aug. 12 email stated that a field review was done, meaning someone from the transportation department visited the site and inventoried the missing signs and that the signs would be installed within two weeks. Requests between SRCC and APD to replace date back to 2007.

- 7) A discussion of whether the street had zoning on it occurred due to St. Edwards Dr. being added long after the neighborhood was built and the COA levied homeowners to pave the street. Staff explained that St. Edwards Drive, like all public streets, is not subject to property zoning classifications. However, Ms. Mathews informed staff that original residents believe that because the street was not original to the neighborhood, it may have been part of land that was zoned as part of the neighborhood. St. Edwards Drive is specified as a "Collector Roadway" urban street. The speed limit is the same for all vehicles, including trucks. The "No Trucks" signs apply only to through traffic, such as trucks "cutting through" from South Congress to IH 35. *(This applies to the earlier comment of cut through traffic using Carnarvon that staff was unaware the extent of.)* All truck traffic is permitted for local deliveries in the area and the 18 wheeler deliveries are considered local.

- 8) Mr. Stewart asked about extra lighting since there would be so much extra activity in this dead end area and staff replied it would be the responsibility of the Public Works Department.
- 9) A 12 foot wide sidewalk will be erected on the south side of St. Edward's Drive, with 7 feet of the width between the street and the sidewalk being a "planting zone". The sidewalk will only extend for the length of the construction site, as far as the western edge of the present soccer practice field. The length of the sidewalk will be [approximately 120 feet]. When questioned about the site plan statement that this sidewalk which connects to nothing meets "connectivity requirements", staff replied that they did not have authority to require landowners to connect to existing sidewalks.
- 10) The north side of St. Edward's Drive opposite the building site and the sidewalk will be designated as a 120 foot "No Parking" zone eastward from the intersection of Carnarvon Lane in order to accommodate the 18 wheelers backing up in the intersection.
- 11)
- 12) In response to Mr. Stewart's request, staff replied that no other parking restrictions were planned for St. Edward's Drive.
- 13) Ms. Martin advised that speed mitigation devices, in the form of rubber pads, funded as Request 14A-0040, St. Edward's Drive from Carnarvon Lane to IH 35, are projected for installation in January 2017. Funding is designated as "15B", criteria score 195.82.
- 14) Mr. Stewart noted that the present double center stripe extends only from East Side Drive as far as Friar Tuck Lane, and Ms. Martin advised that the presence of center stripes increases even more speeding of vehicles; therefore they don't consider a stripe helpful.
- 15) Ms. Mathews cited safety concerns about speeding near the parked AISD school buses and other vehicles at the entrance to the Blunn Creek Wilderness Preserve farther east on St. Edward's Drive, noting that there have been serious collisions with parked vehicles in that area. Staff was

unaware of the use of the entrance to the preserve by AISD or volunteers staging work days in the preserve.

- 16) Ms. Mathews presented photographs of the extensive parking on St. Edwards Drive, particularly during the school year and during athletic and other events on campus. The department advised that this issue be discussed with St. Edward's University staff and that the transportation dept. has no influence over the University using the public neighborhood streets for off site parking and pointed out that with the consolidated site plan, the University has a surplus of parking spaces and will only be providing 3 parking spaces for the new building at the site. All other staff at the new building (30 plus) are expected to park in other lots that are as close as three blocks uphill near Premont Hall or in the parking garage on Woodward St, over one mile away.

In general, the meeting resulted in the COA Transportation staff finally responding to neighborhood requests for a speed limit sign that dated back almost a decade. When asked if city staff would discourage development that was obvious to lay people as creating or adding to public safety issues on public streets as well as described in the request by the applicant as inappropriate due to site constraints, staff replied no.