



Allandale Neighborhood Association ▪ Bryker Woods Neighborhood Association
Highland Park West / Balcones Area Neighborhood Association
Oakmont Heights Neighborhood Association ▪ Ridgelea Neighborhood Association
Rosedale Neighborhood Association ▪ Westminster Manor Association

TO: Mayor and Council
Mr. Rodney Gonzales, Director, Development Services Department
Mr. Rob Spillar, Director, Austin Transportation Department

RE: The Grove PUD Traffic Impact Analysis

The Bull Creek Road Coalition (“BCRC”) sincerely appreciates the work of all City staff reviewing The Grove at Shoal Creek PUD zoning application (“Grove PUD”). Mr. Gonzales and Mr. Spillar provided a memo update on the traffic review to the Mayor and Council on May 9, 2016. This memo appears to be intended to address questions and concerns regarding the traffic review from the BCRC and residents surrounding the proposed development. However, we believe this memo fails to address the substance of these various concerns.

First and foremost, The Grove PUD is unprecedented in its traffic impacts and, therefore, deserves an unprecedented level of review. These traffic impacts include an unprecedented amount of traffic on Bull Creek Road. This 2-lane neighborhood street currently has about 7,000 trips per day, and with The Grove PUD it will have to handle over 26,000 vehicle trips per day. This congested residential street has a maximum desirable operating level of 4,000 trips per day per the City Code.

The Grove PUD proposes over **600%** of the maximum traffic level prescribed in City Code for residential collector streets like Bull Creek Road, and over **400%** of the maximum operating level per City Code on Jackson Avenue.

For these reasons alone, the TIA should be rejected by the Austin Transportation Department as City Code requires. Per the Land Development Code §25-6-141, “the council or director SHALL deny an application if the traffic impact analysis or neighborhood traffic analysis demonstrates that: (1) the projected traffic generated by the project, combined with existing traffic, exceeds the desirable operating level established in Section 25-6-116 (*Desirable Operating Levels for Certain Streets*)...”

However, after the March 22nd meeting between the applicant and department managers, the traffic review was apparently ended and the TIA was approved in contradiction with City Code requirements and with unresolved City traffic comments. This approval violates City Code, which specifically states that only the City Council has authority to override the Code limits, and even then only under specific circumstances.

Extension of Jackson Avenue Thru 2627 W 45th

The most significant outcome of the March 22nd meeting was the recommendation by City staff to demolish a single family home at 2627 W 45th for the extension of a new street. This extension of Jackson Avenue to 45th was unexpected to neighbors since, only a month earlier, City staff claimed “there is no direct vehicular connection planned or proposed at 2627 W 45th Street.”



This street extension was also described by City staff as having “profound implications for the site’s traffic,” and “any proposal for this direct access would need to be proposed by the applicant and analyzed in the Traffic Impact Analysis in order to be approved with the PUD zoning application.” To this date, The Grove PUD’s TIA has not evaluated the impacts and implications of constructing this new street between 35th/Mopac and 45th.

The May 9th memo states that the “applicant provided an analysis of the 45th Street connection, and staff was able to determine this provided measurable improvement for traffic circulation.” The May 9th memo also compares the proposed street extension to “other local streets in the area.” We don’t believe this explanation is entirely accurate for the following reasons:

- The applicant’s TIA data – the basis of a traffic network analysis – indicates that the extension of Jackson Ave to 45th has not been properly studied for full network impacts.

City staff characterized the traffic model as “incomplete” the *same day* as the meeting between the applicant and department managers that resulted in the end of the traffic review and approval of the TIA.

- The cursory analysis provided in the applicant’s TIA shows that the only measurable benefit to the 45th Street connection is to the developer’s private driveways. In fact, the priority intersection of 45th Street and Bull Creek Road sees a *13% increase in vehicle delays* with the addition of the 45th Street connection.
- This street extension is anticipated to carry thousands of vehicles per day from a 3 million square foot mixed-use development. Surrounding local streets carry only hundreds of vehicles per day and serve mostly single-family homes, so the comparison of right-of-way requirements in the May 9th memo is not appropriate.

If the applicant’s cursory analysis indicates possible negative effects of the 45th Street extension and the TIA data file shows an incomplete network study, why would The Grove PUD’s TIA be approved and the traffic review ended based simply on the March 22nd meeting between the applicant and department managers?

The feasibility, safety, and geometric considerations of the street connection to 45th through the 2627 W 45th property has also been a significant concern of neighbors around The Grove PUD. City staff has recommended a “right-in/right-out” only approach to the new intersection with 45th. However, the proper due diligence has not been performed to ensure the feasibility and safety of such an intersection approach.

Industry guidance on right-in/right-out intersection approaches discourages this design when proper channelization cannot be achieved. City staff stated that the “preliminary design still needs to be submitted by the Applicant and reviewed by the City,” and they are “awaiting a response from the Applicant regarding these issues.” How can City staff approve the TIA and recommend this street extension through an existing home when nearly all aspects and consequences of this proposal remain unknown? We believe continued review and due diligence is absolutely warranted.



45th & Bull Creek Road Improvements

Most of City staff's review focused on the intersection of 45th and Bull Creek Road. Although traffic going to and from The Grove will need to drive through other neighborhood streets to get to Mopac, Burnet, or other activity corridors, the 45th and Bull Creek Road intersection is viewed as the most critical component of the traffic network surrounding the future development.

The following concerns remain regarding The Grove PUD's impact to this intersection:

- As recently as March 9th, City staff stated they "still have some significant issues to work through." However, after the March 22nd meeting between the applicant and department managers, and without any new proposals for this intersection, these concerns were apparently ignored and the TIA was approved.
- The applicant has yet to show they have the right-of-way or easements required to complete the proposed improvements. City staff echoed this concern when they stated "if the concept cannot accommodate all the intended transportation facility, the City might be left with an approved PUD with no ROW to build the road to accommodate the development."
- Both neighbors and City staff have expressed concerns about the applicant's proposed 45th and Bull Creek Road improvements relating to feasibility and safety. City staff previously described the proposed intersection improvements as a "non-standard design" and expressed concern about the ability of a "single-unit" truck to safely traverse the dual left-turn lanes. How will large trucks and buses get to and from The Grove PUD if they cannot safely travel through the expanded 45th and Bull Creek Road intersection?

These are only a few of the many significant concerns the BCRC and residents around The Grove at Shoal Creek have regarding the traffic impacts of the proposed PUD. For the City, having an incomplete traffic and transportation review of this PUD could lead to decades of avoidable and expensive traffic problems surrounding this development. For neighbors, having an incomplete traffic and transportation review of this PUD will impact the safety of our families' daily commutes to and from our homes and neighborhoods.

We implore City staff and Council to complete and enforce a comprehensive traffic review of this unprecedented PUD proposal and hold the applicant to the highest standards of superiority for recommendation and approval. Please keep in mind that once granted, the proposed PUD entitlements will be irrevocable; it does not make sense to grant this privilege *prior* to reviewing the intersections for compliance with the City's standards. The leverage to ensure that this gets done correctly only exists before the zoning is approved.

The Grove PUD includes over 2,100 residential units, 225,000 square feet of office, and 158,000 square feet of retail totaling to 3 million square feet of development on this former State tract surrounded by single-family home neighborhoods and 2-lane residential streets. The BCRC strongly believes that this level of development with limited connectivity, inadequate park space, and insufficient flood controls is

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not compliant with Imagine Austin and needs to be scaled appropriately by City staff and Council in order to gain a superiority ranking and ultimate approval.

Please visit bcrcATX.org or contact bcrc_communications@googlegroups.com for more information.

We appreciate your consideration on this important matter,

/s/Sara Speights, President
/s/Grayson Cox, Vice President
Bull Creek Road Coalition

cc: Marc Ott, City Manager
Sue Edwards, Assistant City Manager
Robert Goode, Assistant City Manager