



The Congregational Church of Austin

Affiliated with the United Church of Christ

408 West Twenty-third Street Austin, Texas 78705 (512) 472-2370 453-1800 (Parsonage)

May 8, 1983

Statement of the Trustees of the Congregational Church of Austin
concerning the closing of West 23 Street.

The Congregational Church of Austin has been located on West 23 Street for 60 of its 82 years. From this location, the church has served the community through six decades in a variety of ways. Currently, for example, (and for the past 13 years) the church houses the People's Community Clinic, which has served more than 100,000 patients at this location. The United Campus Ministry, with offices at the Congregational Church, reaches out to students at several Austin colleges and Universities. Also, two other organized churches worship at this location regularly, and many additional organizations arrange to use Congregational Church facilities for special events. Always, charges for such use are set so as to cover utilities and maintenance. The fact that charges are low is one of the reasons why so many groups turn to the church when they need meeting space. Another is the fact that the church has historically been the one place in Austin where unpopular groups did not find doors closed against them.

All this may change, if 23rd Street is closed permanently. How long can a church survive, when it has no street access? During the past year, we have seen our attendance drop, and we believe there are fewer "drop in" visitors, because newcomers to Austin cannot even drive by and see the church or its sign. Also, there is no place where people having business in the church -- making deliveries, and repairing equipment, for example, can legally park their vehicles. With the street closed, fire trucks would be unable to get to the church quickly and safely, in case of a fire.

An even more serious problem that results from the closing of the street is the lack of routine police patrols on the street and the consequent increase in illegal activity in the area. The people using this church, whether they be worshippers, students, or patients at the clinic, need to be protected from harassment from the vagrants and "street people" who appear to have set up residence in the area. Surely police patrols could prevent the following, all of which were seen last Sunday:

1. Vagrant sleeping on the church lawn
2. Another "street person" sitting on the church porch, at the entrance to the sanctuary, drinking from his bottle. He refused to move on, arguing that he was just reading his paper.

3. A group of street people congregated across from the church made lewd comments to young girls as they walked to the church school.

4. As usual, early arrivals discovered that someone had been urinating and defecating on church property.

5. During church services, motorcycles revved their engines and drove back and forth in the street in front of the church. With the street closed, they could use it for a racetrack or whatever they liked.

6. We are concerned that without police patrols due to the street being closed, other illegal activities can flourish with impunity along 23rd Street.

The Congregational Church is not opposed to vendor-craftsmen using 23rd Street. We note, however that there are 24 vendor spaces on the widened sidewalk between Guadalupe and the alley, and another 24 spaces between the alley and San Antonio Street. The maximum number of vendors that have been present since the first of the year has been only five (5) on weekdays and 25 on weekends. (Usually, there are even less.) We see a necessity for closing the street for purposes of accommodating vendors only when more than this number are present, and probably that would be only during the Christmas season. Even then, the street should be open, as originally stated in the ordinance granting the space to vendors, during those hours when it is not legal for the vendors to sell.

Closing 23rd Street permanently in order to turn the right of way into a park is a proposal that members of the Congregational Church oppose most vigorously. People who live in this neighborhood have a variety of parks close at hand to choose from: Pease Park and the green belt along Lamar Boulevard are less than half a mile from this point; within three quarters of a mile are House Park, Harris Park, and Waterloo Park. A mile and a quarter will get you to West Enfield Park. Also close by are the green areas of the Capitol Grounds and the entire U.T. campus, which many people enjoy every day.

We believe that the vendors and residents in this area can survive without 23rd Street being turned into a park. But this church may not survive. The trustees believe that our very life is threatened, and that means not only the Congregational Church of Austin, but the People's Community Clinic, the United Campus Ministry, the two other churches that meet in this building, and others who meet here on a regular or occasional basis would lose a home.

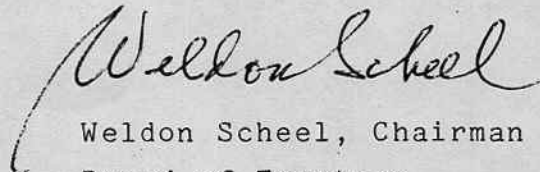
The trustees of the Congregational Church of Austin would like to make the following requests of the City of Austin:

1. Keep 23rd Street open at all times, with the exception of when 25 vendors or more are using the vending spaces. The street would always be open in the evenings and on Sundays.

2. Sign at least 2 15-minute parking spaces on the north side of 23rd Street for the use of delivery trucks and maintenance vehicles. The rest of the street between the alley and San Antonio should be one-hour parking except on Sundays, when it should not be restricted.

3. Institute regular police patrols -- that the citizens who use these facilities are entitled to -- to discourage the illegal and destructive activities now going on within view and hearing of visitors in the church buildings.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Weldon Scheel". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Weldon Scheel, Chairman

Board of Trustees

Congregational Church of Austin

It Has Been Said That:

1. The voters overwhelmingly supported the creation of a 23rd Street Renaissance market and closure of 23rd street for a pedestrian mall.

fact: The \$20,000 voted for Renaissance Market-23rd St. basic pedestrian amenities was less than one-tenth of one percent of the \$27,800,000 Proposition Number 13 on the September 11, 1982 bond election. Proposition Number 13 was overwhelmingly supported by the voters. The Renaissance market was only one tenth of one percent of that decision. On September 11, 1982 there was not even a completed plan for the voters to support. The voters also approved a much larger amount for pedestrian amenities on Congress Avenue, but no one has suggested that this implied that the voters overwhelmingly approved that Congress Avenue be closed for a pedestrian mall.

2. Closing the East half of 23rd Street does not limit access to the Church's main entrance because the street in front of the church will not be closed.

fact: 23rd Street is a narrow one-way street. Closing off the end of 23rd street means that the church entrance must be reached by way of a narrow alley. Approaching the front of our church by way of an alley is not only degrading to our image as a place of worship and community service, it severely curtails our physical access to the building. It must be remembered that the purpose of an alley is to service delivery vehicles, and for this reason, the alley is frequently blocked by delivery trucks.

3. Thousands of pedestrians use 23rd Street every day. Therefore 23rd Street should be closed because of extremely heavy pedestrian usage.

fact: At a normal walking pace it takes about one minute to walk the 400 block of West 23rd Street. If 20 people walk down 23rd Street in one minute, that is equal to 1,200 people walking down 23rd street every hour, or 12,000 people in a 10 hour day. 12,000 people a day sounds like a lot of people doesn't it, but it is no more than 20 people on the block at a time. A recent pedestrian count made by Save University Neighborhood Association found the actual pedestrian flow to be much smaller than 20 per minute. The maximum pedestrian flow was 348 per hour from 12 noon to 1:00, or about 6 per minute. The total daily count, from 10:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. was 2,603 or "thousands per day".

4. There will be no problem with fire access.

fact: A September 5, 1985 memo to Richard Ridings Director of Public works and Engineering from Bill Roberts, Fire Chief indicates that 23rd Street has been in violation of the Uniform Fire Code since the North sidewalk was extended in August 1983. I quote from his letter: "Since the City Code was indeed violated when the West 23rd Street width was reduced it is our opinion that it is incumbent on the city to bring the street into compliance." Since there have been three fires set on church property since the market opened, we do not consider these fire code violations to be of trivial importance.

5. There is no need for vehicular access to the church except on Sunday.

fact: The church building is used constantly almost every day of the week from morning until night. The United Campus ministry is housed on the third floor, and the People's Community Clinic uses all the rest of the building except the pastor's office and the Sanctuary. The clinic has a case load of about 11,000 lower income patients, most whom do not live in the University area and must come by car. The demand for space not in use by the Clinic, United Campus Ministry, or for Church functions is very high, and the building is used by a wide variety of groups on first come first serve basis.

6. The street needs to be closed from Thanksgiving until Christmas because of the large number of vendors and shoppers at this time. The vendors need more selling space on the North side of 23rd street.

fact: There have rarely, if ever, been enough vendors at the market to fill the spaces on the South side of the first half block of 23rd Street in the last year. This is because shoppers are not plentiful, the weather has been terrible or both. No vendor has set up a booth in the west half of the block for an even longer time, and the area designated for vending on the south sidewalk of the 500 block of 23rd Street has not been used for almost ten years. Chief of Police Jim Everett opposes allowing booths to be set up on the north side of the street. He feels that this would create back and forth pedestrian traffic which would interfere with vehicles and pose a hazardous condition for pedestrians (memo to Glenn Cootes, Communications Dept. August 6, 1985.)

Slide Presentation

Pictures showing visual impact of the only vehicular access to the main entrance of the Congregational Church if 23rd Street is closed.

1. Alley between 22nd and 23rd street travelling north.
2. Alley between 22nd and 23rd street travelling north.
3. Congregational Church, view from alley facing north.

The following pictures were all taken Friday October 14, 1983. The number of vendors and pedestrians present is typical for a sunny weekday noon.

4. West Mall, 11:40.
5. 23rd Street, 11:50.
6. 23rd Street, 11:55.
7. 23rd Street, 11:56.
8. West Mall, 12:30.
9. Co-op, 12:45.
10. 23rd Street, 12:50.
11. 23rd Street, 12:54.
12. 23rd Street, 12:55.
13. 23rd Street, 1:00.
14. 23rd Street, 1:02.
15. West Mall, 1:12.

Picture demonstrating the need for 23rd Street to conform to Uniform Fire Code.

16. Remains of fire on Church porch.

Bond ballot format approved by council

EVENINGS

This is the ballot format and wording for the Sept. 11 bond election approved Thursday by the Austin City Council:

AUG 6 1982

Proposition Number 1

The issuance of \$28,000,000 utility system revenue supported bonds for electric light and power system distribution facilities.

Proposition Number 2

The issuance of \$26,000,000 utility system revenue supported bonds for electric light and power system reliability improvements.

Proposition Number 3

The issuance of \$10,300,000 utility system revenue supported bonds for electric light and power system street lighting, facilities and alternate power production systems.

Proposition Number 4

The issuance of \$40,300,000 utility system revenue supported bonds for improvements to Green Water Treatment Plant, the main source of water for North and Central Austin, and construction of the initial phases of a water line and reservoir to improve and expand water service to the Northeast quadrant of the city.

Proposition Number 5

The issuance of \$28,300,000 utility system revenue supported bonds for improvements to the Govalle Wastewater Treatment Plant, the main sewage treatment facility for near North and South Central Austin and construction of two sewer lines and improvements to a sewage pump station to serve parts of South Central and North Central Austin inside the city limits.

Proposition Number 6

The issuance of \$57,000,000 utility system revenue supported bonds for the Onion Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant and sewer lines for the South Growth Corridor.

Proposition Number 7

The issuance of \$49,100,000 utility system revenue supported bonds for an addition to the Ullrich Water Treatment Plant, a water line to serve South and Southwest Austin, both within and outside the city, and the initial phases of water lines and a reservoir to serve the South Growth Corridor.

Proposition Number 8

The issuance of \$40,800,000 utility system revenue supported bonds for improvements to the Davis Water Treatment Plant, the main source of water to North and Northwest Austin, and the initial phases of a reservoir and water lines to serve North Central and Northwest Austin.

Proposition Number 9

The issuance of \$20,700,000 utility system revenue supported bonds for two sewer lines to serve North Central Austin inside the city limits and to provide sewer service to areas in North Central Austin.

Proposition Number 10

The issuance of \$20,400,000 utility system revenue supported bonds for an addition to the Walnut Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant for the North Growth Corridor, the north city limits, and the entire Walnut Creek basin.

Proposition Number 11

The issuance of \$12,800,000 utility system revenue supported bonds for waterwork system rehabilitation and improvements.

Proposition Number 12

The issuance of \$4,800,000 utility system revenue supported bonds for sewer system rehabilitation and improvements.

Proposition Number 13

The issuance of \$27,800,000 tax supported general obligation bonds for municipal parks.

Proposition Number 14

The issuance of \$1,800,000 tax supported general obligation bonds for the Blunn Creek Wilderness Park.

Proposition Number 15

The issuance of \$3,200,000 tax supported general obligation bonds for the Lake Austin Metropolitan Park-South.

Proposition Number 16

The issuance of \$18,400,000 tax supported general obligation bonds for street improvements.

Proposition Number 17

The issuance of \$14,000,000 tax supported general obligation bonds for drainage and flood control improvements.

Proposition Number 18

The issuance of \$1,500,000 tax supported general obligation bonds for fire station and Emergency Medical Services buildings.

Proposition Number 19

The issuance of \$500,000 tax supported general obligation bonds for an addition to the South Austin Public Health Center.

Proposition Number 20

The issuance of \$5,800,000 tax supported general obligation bonds for parking facility for Brackenridge Hospital.

Proposition Number 21

The issuance of \$2,400,000 tax supported general obligation bonds for traffic signalization.

Proposition Number 22

The issuance of \$1,400,000 tax supported general obligation bonds for transit system facilities.

Proposition Number 23

The issuance of \$4,300,000 tax supported general obligation bonds for municipal maintenance and service center facilities.

Proposition Number 24

The issuance of \$3,100,000 tax supported general obligation bonds for municipal library facilities.

Proposition Number 25

The issuance of \$200,000 tax supported general obligation bonds for Robertson Hill public parking facilities.

* Renaissance Market, 23rd Street included
in Proposition No. 13.

CITY OF AUSTIN

DEPARTMENT: Parks and Recreation
 FUNCTION: Facility Development
 PROJECT TITLE: Renaissance Market - 23rd Street

DATE: March 5, 1982
 SERIAL NUMBER: 81/86-30

HISTORICAL DATA

CIP PRIOR YEARS (IN 000's)

CIP	77-78	78-79	79-80	80-81	81-82	82-83	83-84	84-85	85-86	FIVE YEAR TOTAL
77-82										-0-
78-83										-0-
79-84										-0-
80-85										20
81-86					20	20				20

Explanation of CIP Prior Years Budget Changes:

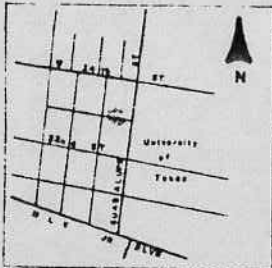
FUNDING INFORMATION

Prior Years Appropriations \$ -0-
 Funding Sources for Prior Years Appropriations:

Current Status:

Recommended in the 1981-86 CIP, but unfunded.

PROJECT LOCATION



CODES: Primary Secondary
 Planning Districts 6
 Annexation Areas N/A
 Comprehensive Plan
 Priority Areas 1

NOTES:

Parks and Recreation Department
 Master Plan Zone 5

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM

CITY OF AUSTIN

DEPARTMENT REQUEST (IN 000's)

FUNDS	FY82-83	FY83-84	FY84-85	FY85-86	FY86-87	FY87-88	6-YEAR TOTAL	PROJECT TOTAL
CITY (COA)	20						20	20
OTHER								
TOTAL	20						20	20
CASH FLOW	20						20	20

PLANNING COMMISSION (IN 000's)

FUNDS								
CITY (COA)						20	20	20
OTHER								
TOTAL						20	20	20
CASH FLOW						20	20	20

CITY MANAGER (IN 000's)

FUNDS								
CITY (COA)								
OTHER								
TOTAL								
CASH FLOW								

CITY COUNCIL (IN 000's)

FUNDS								
CITY (COA)	20						20	20
OTHER								
TOTAL	20						20	20
CASH FLOW	20						20	20

DESCRIPTION: This project will provide for basic pedestrian amenities for an arts and crafts marketplace identified as a unique urban cultural resource.

PROJECTED OPERATING COST

FY82-83
 FY83-84
 FY84-85
 FY85-86
 FY86-87
 FY87-88

SEE
 EXPENSE
 FORECASTING
 ADDENDUM

PRIORITIZATION/JUSTIFICATION [3]:

The project will provide basic pedestrian amenities to support a unique urban activity that is a prototype for revitalization efforts.

PROJECT COST

Env. Assess. Eng. Survey Insp. Testing Const. Equip. Matl. Furn. Land Misc. Indirect
 2,000
 15,000
 3,000
 TOTAL 20,000

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM



MEMORANDUM

To: Richard L. Ridings, P.E., Director
Public Works and Engineering
From: Bill Roberts, Fire Chief
Date: September 5, 1985
Subject: 400 Block of West 23rd Street

This correspondence is in response to your memorandum of August 28, 1985 regarding the existing condition of West 23rd Street in the 400 block.

Portions of West 23rd Street, as it now exists, are in violation of the currently adopted 1982 edition of the Uniform Fire Code. These conditions also violate identical provisions of two previously adopted editions of the Uniform Fire Code dating back to July, 1978. There has been no variation from these requirements since that time and, to our knowledge, no other form of relief. The requirements have been affirmed by the City Legal Department.

Since the City Code was indeed violated when the West 23rd Street width was reduced, it is our opinion that it is incumbent on the city to bring the street into compliance.

If you have any questions, or need additional information, please call.

Bill Roberts
Fire Chief

BR:ML:fa

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COMMUNICATIONS



MEMORANDUM

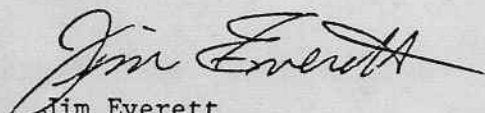
To: GLENN COOTES, COMMUNICATIONS DEPT.
From: JIM EVERETT, CHIEF OF POLICE
Date: AUGUST 6, 1985
Subject: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RENAISSANCE
MARKET COMMISSION

The police department has reviewed the changes to the vending ordinance which may be proposed to Council by the Renaissance Market Commission.

It is our opinion that West 23rd Street between Guadalupe Street and San Antonio Street should not be closed to vehicular traffic. Any traffic needing access to San Antonio or the west alley will have to go to West 22nd Street. Emergency vehicle access will also be restricted. Closing the street would also force the vendors to use Guadalupe or San Antonio for loading and unloading, causing traffic problems on those streets.

A check of the area reveals that on Monday through Friday there are very few vendors in the market area. Saturday is a busy day and the area is filled. On Sundays no one is there. It does not seem feasible to close the street Monday through Saturday for just one busy day.

We feel that vendors should not be allowed to set up booths on the north side of the street. Vendors on both sides of the street would cause more people to move back and forth across the street. Heavy pedestrian traffic would interfere with vehicles and pose a hazardous condition for pedestrians.


Jim Everett
Chief of Police

JE:pm