

KDC Grant Proposal notes

Overview

This application is being submitted by Mike Librik, the owner of Easy Street Recumbents, a bicycle shop.

The Keller Place shopping center is at the SE corner of Tarrant Parkway and Rufe Snow Drive. Little Bear Creek Linear Park and the LBC Trail are adjacent to this shopping center, but do not directly serve this destination, which is an important destination due to the major grocery store positioned close to the trail. Trail users can access the grocery store by the sidewalk on Rufe Snow and the parking lot in front of the grocery store, but this route has problems.

Easy Street Recumbents is a bicycle shop from Austin that is seeking to open a shop in the Fort Worth area. Key to our choice of location is access to recreational trail for our customers to test our products. We are considering the Keller Place shopping center due to its proximity to the LBC trail, but we need to develop a trail connection that is suitably dignified and comfortable for our customers. We do not consider the parking lot in front of the grocery store and the sidewalk on Rufe Snow to be satisfactory and we are seeking a direct connect from the Keller Place parking lot to the trail. While our motivation is for our customers' benefit, this proposed spur off the LBC trail would benefit all trail users.

An existing spur of the LBC trail reaches up to Tarrant Parkway two blocks from Keller Place, but this requires the use of three foot wide sidewalk that is constricted and uninviting.



Description and exact location

Keller Place owns the stretch of open land between their parking lot and the trail. We could site our trail connection on their land, but they intend to eventually develop on that property. We know we'd lose our trail access during construction, which is unacceptable to us. Also, we see trails a

transportation infrastructure that should, as much as possible, belong to the public and use public land.

Little Bear Creek Linear Park, at this location, is undeveloped due to drainage problems caused by the Keller Place parking lot. Not much can be done with that space, but the main floodway runs from a point near the rearmost point of the parking lot. We propose to create an 8-10 foot wide concrete trail as close as feasible to the property line between the parkland and the Keller Place undeveloped property. The farther we can locate it from the floodway the better, but we'd also want to be far enough from the property line to not be affected by potential construction work, should Keller Place require an easement onto the parkland during construction.

A portion of the Keller Place parking lot projects south into LBCLP. I propose that the spur we create comes off of this extension. It is not marked for parking, but mainly serves as a draw from runoff to clear the drive that accesses the loading dock. By building the trail extension off this area, trail users would come off the trail in a more protected location before entering the right of way. Admittedly, traffic is very light at this point, but why not make use of that area?

I expect that this trail extension would be about 200 linear feet. Assuming \$7.50 per square foot, this trail would cost roughly \$12,000 to \$15,000. I do not expect the City of Keller to contribute to trail on any portion of land owned by Keller Place, or the curb cut to the parking lot. I'd foresee a slight hump at the curb cut area to discourage floodwater from flowing onto the trail area via the curb cut.



Since this trail would be used regularly by Easy Street's customers, we'd have a strong motivation to keep the trail maintained and attractive. While little else can be done with LBCLP due to flood concerns, Easy Street would do whatever we could make this area attractive and inviting for all trail users.

Problems with existing trail connection

One may argue that this connection is redundant because trail users can proceed up to the sidewalk on Rufe Snow and then access the parking lot at the ramp at Rufe Snow. Speaking as a long time cyclist with a background in advocacy, this approach has problems.

Besides creating a non-direct route to the front of the grocery store, the intersection between the sidewalk and the curb ramp puts the cyclist in an ambiguous, odd situation relative to other traffic moving through that intersection. Left turning southbound traffic off Rufe Snow may be moving hastily to beat northbound opposing traffic, and can overlook (or simply choose to ignore) a cyclist coming off the sidewalk. Cyclists coming from the parking lot would need to make an unexpected left turn onto the sidewalk creating a complex right of way situation. Most cyclists aren't skillful enough to manage traffic under ordinary circumstances, and conditions like these leave them at more of a disadvantage.

Additionally, conditions in the parking lot would be uncomfortable for less experienced cyclists. The grocery store creates a relatively heavy flow of traffic from Rufe Snow that would be uncomfortable

for most cyclists to manage effectively.

Cyclists prefer quieter, less trafficked “back way” access, to their destinations when possible. A trail connection as proposed would let cyclists access the grocery store from the side, moving directly up to the dismount area near the front of the store and any bicycle racks placed there. This trail connection would create a more comfortable and inviting access.

I use the terms “comfortable” and “inviting” because cycling, in this culture, is a discretionary, though desirable, activity. Few people *must* bicycle for transportation, though increasingly cities recognize that it is desirable for residents to do so. If you want it, you need to make it inviting.

Budget and funding

Funding from my side would come initially from the \$106,000 Easy Street has on hand for this new shop. In the interest of expediency I'd expect that Easy Street would pay the contractor in full for the trail up front from our own funds. Reimbursement from this grant could follow in due time.

Project evaluation questions

1. Is the project location on public property?
Yes. This trail extension would be placed entirely within Little Bear Creek Linear Park. The short section of trail that extends onto Keller Place property would be paid entirely by me
2. Is the project related to a currently funded Capital Improvement Project?
Yes, under the “Trail System Expansion” line item budgeted for every year.
3. Is the project related to a project in the adopted 5-year CIP
Yes, under the “Trail System Expansion” line item budgeted for every year.
4. Does the project benefit Keller residents?
Yes, insofar as the LBC Trail connects to Keller residents. Keller Place's location at the south end of Keller limits its centrality, but improved trail access across Rufe Snow or Tarrant Parkway would directly benefit residents of the Highland Oaks and Ridge Gate Dr neighborhood areas. Improved development of Keller's trails would further improve and expand this access. Arguably, any automobile trip that can be replaced by bicycle benefits everyone, but some will recognize this benefit more than other.
5. Does the project enhance a current Parks and Recreation system asset?
Yes. It improves connection from the Little Bear Creek Trail to an important commercial destination. While this isn't specifically a parks and open space goal, recreational trails cross a boundary between recreation and transportation infrastructure.
6. Does the project assist with the acquisition of a capital purchase?
No.
7. Does the project have a useful life of at least five years?
Yes. I'm not sure what the expected lifespan of paved trail is, and the floodwaters in LBCLP would likely diminish its lifespan, but I'll wager it will last much longer than 5 year, especially since Easy Street would be invested in its upkeep.
8. Does the project accelerate the complete of a CIP or Parks, Recreation & Open Space Master Plan project?
Not directly. The Master Plan calls for more amenities along the Fall Creek area of trail which I'd be happy to help develop and maintain. This particular spot is prone to flooding and the City has avoided putting amenities here for that reason. The Master Plan does not call for a connection to Keller Place since it does not address practical cycling destinations. Should the City develop a bicycle master plan as other Texas communities have then it would seek out opportunities to connect the trail network to important destinations like Keller Place.