

Name: Master Street Plan Amendment

Location: Kanis Road, Chenal Downs Blvd. to Walnut Grove Road

Request: Modify the design standard to two 10.5 foot lanes with no shoulders

Source: Michael Mitchell

PROPOSAL / REQUEST:

To amend the Master Street Plan design standards for the Arterial section of Kanis Road from Chenal Downs Boulevard to Walnut Grove Road to two travel lanes of 10.5 feet each and no shoulders from two 11-foot lanes with two 4-foot gravel shoulders.

ANALYSIS:

Ordinance 18510 approved June 19, 2001 reduced the design standard for Kanis Road west of Stuart Road to two 11-foot lands with two 4-foot gravel shoulders. Kanis Road was and is classified as a Minor Arterial. This was not changed in 2001 and is not proposed for a change currently. The amendment 14 years ago was an attempt to maintain the rural character of the road as it develops. This amendment's intend is to further protect the tree canopy along Kanis Road through 'Fletcher Hollow'.

The stretch of Kanis Road, between Walnut Grove Road and Chenal Downs Boulevard, has ridges along either side of the road making development difficult. The zoning pattern and future Land Use Plan designations both call for single family development along this corridor. The traffic volumes along this stretch of Kanis Road have been from 1900 to 2300 trips a day for several years. MetroPlan projects the traffic will increase to between 4000 and 6000 trips per day by 2040. Due to the development pattern, current and projected, in the area and location beyond the City, the range of possible volumes is greater than typical for this segment.

Kanis Road has always been a route for traffic coming to Little Rock from areas to the west. The applicant and Staff agree that this will continue in the future and that the functional classification of Arterial is appropriate. The area south of Kanis Road through this corridor is now developed or proposed to be developed as large lot residential with no direct access to Kanis Road from the residential tracts, only three street access points along this two plus mile corridor would exist.

A typical minor arterial street is 59-feet wide with 5-lanes in a 90-feet of right-of-way similar to Markham St. between Shackelford Rd and Bowman Rd. Approximately 2000 vehicles per day travel on this portion of Kanis Rd today. It is expected the

number will increase as more land is developed west of Little Rock. Staff is concerned that the current reduced standard for Kanis Road will be insufficient in the future.

The current City of Little Rock 'Minor Residential Street' design consisting of 2 – 11 foot lanes is the narrowest street section at 24 feet total width. The service volume on a Minor Residential Street is 400 vehicle trips per day. With the proposed Master Street Plan amendment, Kanis Road with its current traffic volume is proposed with a street section that is narrower than a Minor Residential Street. This section of Kanis Road will operate at a level of service E (LOS-E) at the best. Street section designs found in the Master Street Plan are for a LOS C or better based on the expected traffic volume.

Streets with 10-foot lanes and no shoulders are less safe than wider streets with shoulders. The typical lane width of a street is 11 feet. The minimum allowed street width per the latest version of the International Fire Code is 20 feet.

Shoulders are constructed for drivers to safely find refuge during times of crisis and not obstruct the travel lanes. Kanis Road is on the Master Bike Plan as a Class 2 Bike Path. A Bike Path along a shoulder road is typically the paved shoulder.

Pulaski County Planning has informed the City that they have classified this road - the Kanis Road Scenic Corridor. The standard they would recommend is two (20) 10 foot lands with two five foot shoulders (which could be used as bike lanes) within a 60-foot right-of-way with no sidewalks. They do not recommend any further design reductions for the corridor.

Both the City and County regulations require a 30-foot wide road consisting of two-travel lanes and two shoulders. Both staffs recommend no further reduction to the design standard.

NEIGHBORHOOD COMMENTS:

The applicant notified 16 adjacent property owners. Staff has received 17 emails and 1 phone in support and one against the amendment as of this writing.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

Staff believes the change is not appropriate and recommends denial.

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PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION:

(NOVEMBER 5, 2015)

Walter Malone, Planning Staff presented the item to the Planning Commission. Mr. Malone reminded the Commission that the City in 2001 approved a standard of 2 11-foot lanes with 4-foot shoulders for Kanis Road from Burlingame Road to Stuart Road. The proposed amendment would change that to two lanes (10.5 foot lanes) with no shoulders. Staff believes that shoulders should not be removed from the standard for this over 2-mile stretch of road from safety reasons – assure there is a place to get

out of traffic (pull over). The standard proposed is about the same for a Minor Residential Street in the Master Street Plan which is a loop or cul-de-sac street not a through street like Kanis Road. Staff cannot support the proposed amendment.

Mr. Michael Mitchell, applicant, addressed the Commission. He indicated that he has been involved with issues related to this road for 38 years and Fletcher Hollow for at least 15 years. The request is for 2-miles, to preserve the natural beauty and history of the Hollow. This is a case for a 'rare exception'. Mr. Mitchell reviewed some of the history related to Thomas Fletcher (Pulaski County and State). The Hollow and stream are both named for him. There are steep ridges on both sides of Kanis Road, with no utility lines or houses in this stretch (a couple of driveways and pull off stops only). There is a natural beauty with the woods for each season which Mr. Mitchell reviewed. There are seven places where one could pull over currently (in each direction). Mr. Mitchell stated in the years he has traveled the corridor he has never seen a traffic problem. Adding a four foot shoulder would have a greater impact than just four feet on the trees due to topography. (There would have to be large cuts or fills that would affect the trees in order to construct a four foot shoulder.) Please delay the possibility of any changes to the canopy by making this change. If necessary, in the future, a change in standard could always be made due to changed conditions.

Mr. Allan Finne, resident since the 1970s, spoke to the Commission. The topography for the area does not allow for expansion of the road. We should not be trying to look at this as a one size fits all.

Mr. Drew Kelso, Resident of Chenal Downs, asked for a show of hands of those for the amendment, most of the audience raised their hands. He indicated he was part of the Citizens of West Pulaski County with over 250 members. They wish to preserve the character of the hollow. The group would be willing to talk about things that make sense for the area. They have chosen to live in the area for the rural character – larger lots, wooded areas, wild life. This area should be designated a scenic corridor as the county has done with a lesser or reduced standard. If the canopy could not be destroyed, some widening or shoulders might be appropriate. The addition of some paved areas for pull offs might be appropriate. He called for the City to designate this a scenic corridor and to protect the tree canopy in the hollow.

Cathy Morrison spoke to the Commission. Ms. Morrison indicated this was a beautiful area. It is unique with its curves and hills and wooded surroundings. There are places to pull off the road and in all the years she has traveled it she has seen only one accident which was due to high speed. Even with shoulders access speed will be a problem. There is not a safety need for the shoulders and it would be a shame to lose the canopy. The best answer is to approve the amendment.

Lolly Honea, after saying she did not have anything further to add, asked the Commissioners if they had not driven the corridor to please drive it prior to acting.

Judy Hampton stated that for 61 years she has driven through this area. There has only been one accident and that has 50 years ago. Speaking for her family (Miles'/Hampton's/Lester's) the amendment should be approved.

Gerry Shire, spoke to the Commission, She has lived on 12<sup>th</sup> and Kanis Street all her life (she noted several different locations along the corridor). Ms. Shire noted the problem of representation for those outside the City – no voice. She supports the desire to preserve the history and natural beauty of the corridor. She noted how family members had used the corridor to travel from points west to Little Rock via covered wagon in the past.

Teri Drennan spoke to the Commission of her families' history in Ferndale and Fletcher Hollow. She noted the damage caused by a tornado. But this would be man-made destruction of trees that could not be replaced and asked that the amendment be approved.

Wayne Richie, addressed the Commission. He is and has been a property owner in the area for many years. Safety is important but keeping the tree canopy is also important. He does not support the shoulder but did suggest paving some for the flat areas along the road for pull-outs. There are six flat areas in the right-of-way on each side. They are large enough for an SUV and could be paved. He offered to do this as part of his development rather than construct the shoulders as proposed in the Master Street Plan.

Commissioner Bubbus asked about the idea of having pull overs rather than a shoulder and impacts of widening. Mr. Bozynski, Planning Department, indicated that the County had suggested use of the shoulders for other modes of transportation which could not be done without a shoulder. Mr. Mike Hood, Public Works, did indicate that there would have to be some cut and fill and that the stream would have to be moved in some places, this would cause the loss of some trees in the corridor. The exact impacts are unknown at this time. It was noted by Staff that the design is an ultimate design and that at the time of development variances could be requested (such as the pull outs). Any changes to Kanis Road would be done as part of a development along the road, there are no moneys for any public projects at this time.

Commissioner May noted there will be subdivisions and changes in the area in the future. Mr. May noted that tracts will be subdivided by heirs, so everyone is going to have to be ready for some give and take. For now, he will vote to amend the Master Street Plan.

Commissioner Berry stated that the biggest benefit toward preserving the area was done in 2001, when the City amended the standard from 4-lanes to 2 lanes with shoulders. He does not believe that the change requested tonight would be of a benefit to justify the change.

A motion was made to approve the amendment as filed. By a vote of 7 for, and 4 against the motion was approved.