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Cooper Street decision due soon

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After more than a year of city-school negotiations, Mayor Tom Vandergriff said Monday a decision on whether to depress or reroute Cooper Street is expected within 60 to 90 days.

"Once the decision is made," he said, "an educated guess can be made as to how long it will be before actual improvements begin."

President Wendell Nedderman has said it may be two years before any plan is implemented.

The street, which students will have to cross to reach the Fine Arts Complex, serves an estimated 25,000 cars a day.

Wayne Sherrell, Arlington director of traffic and transportation, said the city's 1990 master plan calls for a six-lane highway where Cooper Street is presently located.

Campus administrators, who oppose depressing Cooper Street because it would divide the campus, have asked that the street be rerouted.

Vandergriff said the city has met with UTA administrators and Texas Highway Department officials. "Cer-

tainly, our minds are open to any proposal," he said. "We have about six or seven plans that we are working on."

Cost of the road will be split between the city, the school and the highway department. "Costs would be hard to estimate," he said, "until a final decision is reached. The cost of excavation (depressing) would be offset by the cost of land acquisition (rerouting)."

Campus administrators and highway department officials have claimed little expense would be incurred by the city. However, before a state agency can begin work within a city's limits, the city's permission is needed.

Sherrell estimated it would cost about \$3 million to depress the street.

"A reroute is cheaper but you have to consider the traffic flow," he said. "We don't want to reroute to Pecan and we don't want to reroute to Center Street."

"Our traffic problem is such that you could justify a six-lane road where Cooper Street is right now. The traffic is that heavy."

"If you disrupt this flow by placing the burden on the neighboring north-south arteries . . . well, they're overcrowded already."

Vandergriff said a reroute wouldn't follow any specific street. "The route

would most likely go between existing streets," he said. "It would be constructed to swing around the campus."

Sherrell said traffic flow will require a six-lane street "wherever we put it."



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