

Congress tries solution to Cooper street puzzle

by Greg Teer

Staff Writer

An amendment requesting a special 20-mph "school zone" along Cooper Street through the campus received backing Tuesday night from members of a Student Congress committee at the first SC meeting since recent elections.

The amendment to Resolution 83-60 suggests vehicle traffic be limited to 20 miles per hour from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. weekdays. Community Affairs Committee members said they consider it only a temporary, stop-gap measure.

"We wanted the 20-mph thing as something they could do right away," said committee Assistant Chairman Robert Fugate. "We still hope they can do something more permanent."

Resolution 83-60 had called for closing Cooper to all vehicles. Committee members considered the proposal unworkable for several reasons. First, the university does not own or control Cooper. Then, considering the lack of alternate routes, members voted disapproval and substituted the "school zone" concept.

"It is a state highway (FM 157) and a truck route, so there is no way we could get it closed," said committee Chairwoman Dana Childers.

"Rerouting it ... there's no street in the area that can handle the load, like big trucks," Fugate said.

Cooper Street — specifically what to do with it, short of double-decking or thermonuclear attack — has been a hot topic here for years. Last month a student pedestrian was struck by a car as she attempted to dart across against the light.

Committee members know a permanent

solution will not come cheap. Fugate said he's willing to wait for the administration to choose the best solution but wants it known that congress is concerned about pedestrian safety. "I think the administration is aware there is a problem there. I'm sure they're probably working on it.

"I have heard it will cost about \$8 million. Only the administration can decide how that much money can be spent," he said. "We can only tell them it's a priority."

The purpose of the amendment, Fugate said, is to move the issue off dead center. "We'd like to get them (administrators) thinking about it," he said. "Just so they realize something needs to be done."

In other actions, the committee voted to report favorably on Resolution 83-65, which calls for left-turn signal lights on Cooper at Border Street. The signals would provide protected turns from Cooper onto east- or westbound Border. "It's a madhouse trying to turn there, especially in the morning," said one committee member.

The committee, its ranks swelled with new members, also favored Resolution 83-55, calling for several additional campus pay phones in the Dallas 214 area code. "A great deal of the UTA population lives in the 214 area code," said Fugate. "There are just not enough phone lines to serve the need."

A committee member was assigned to look into the cost of adding new phones or changing some existing phones to the 214 area code.

The resolutions will be considered at the next congress meeting at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday in the Student Congress chambers, University Center basement. Approved resolutions go to the administration for further consideration.

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