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If Ordinance Passes, Ashby High Rise In Doubt

Houston's City Council will consider an ordinance when they meet today that could be an early "treat" for residents of Southampton and Boulevard Oaks.

The ordinance would require traffic impact studies of high density projects whose traffic exits onto two lane, two-way roads and which will have at least 100

dwelling units and increase density 100 percent or more. The ordinance will be on Tuesday's meeting agenda for possible adoption.

City Council Member

Anne Clutterbuck, who represents Southampton on Council, says if the ordinance passes, a proposed development at 1717 Bissonnet, as it

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is currently proposed, will not be able to continue.

The ordinance was fast-tracked for council consideration after developers Kevin Kirton and Matthew Morgan began initial preparations for a 23-story high rise at 1717 Bissonnet at Ashby. Both Ashby and Bissonnet are two-lane, two-way streets.

The developers voluntarily submitted a traffic study which said the new building would generate an additional 2,000 vehicle trips daily, but that those trips would have little impact on traffic. Although the city initially OK'd the traffic study, they later rescinded that approval and asked for a new study.

The ordinance is one of several tactics which may have a negative impact on construction of the building.

Last week, the city installed a "No Thru Trucks" sign at the corner of Ashby and Bissonnet.

"This will ensure that no matter what kind of development eventually occurs at 1717 Bissonnet, Ashby will not be open to thru traffic, protecting this small residential roadway from cut-thru traffic by commercial trucks in either direction," says Clutterbuck.

Clutterbuck says all permits requested by Buckhead Investment Partners, Inc. developers Morgan and Kirton have been placed on hold. Permits will not be issued unless they are approved by Deputy of Public Works and Engineering Director Andy Icken.

She says at this time, the only permits that have been issued to Morgan and Kirton are sewage disconnection permits for a few buildings on the property.