



Community Work Group Meeting Notes #1

IH 30/US 80 Meeting
TxDOT - Dallas District

To: Project Record

From: Melissa Wolff - HNTB

Subject: November 2004 Community Work Group Meeting

Meeting Date: November 1, 2004

Location: Samuell Grand Recreation Center – Dallas, TX

Meeting Attendees: See Attached List of Attendees

The meeting held on November 1, 2004 was the Community Work Group kick-off meeting for The East Corridor.

I. Introductions

T. Nesbitt welcomed the group to the meeting. He emphasized that this project is a group effort among the consultants, TxDOT and the communities.

II. Study Context

T. Nesbitt began the presentation by stating that this project is a 30 mile corridor that runs along IH 30 from IH 45 to Dalrock Rd. and US 80 from IH 30 to FM 460 in Kaufman County. The project is a continuation of a planning process that has been initiated by DART's prior Major Investment Study (MIS) research and analysis for the corridor.

Our next step is to prepare and complete the Environmental Analysis in association with a detailed geometric design, and only after all of the appropriate approvals are received by the sign-off agencies, the construction process can begin at some unknown future date, pending availability of funding.

The State of Texas is currently under funded on its current transportation projects, such that this project (like others in the region) will likely have tolled (managed) HOV lanes on the added capacity only in order that dollars can be bonded to initiate construction. In other words, the 8 free-lanes that we have today on IH 30 are expected to be there in the future alongside the new tolled lanes. If we don't have these toll lanes or any toll funding, construction and transportation improvements should not be expected for this project until 2030. Managed lanes will help to facilitate earlier construction on portions of the project, possibly by 2015.

III. Public Involvement

T. Nesbitt explained the Work Group involvement process.

Staff Work Group (SWG) – staff members from cities, county, and transportation agencies receive information concurrently, so everyone is on the same page at the same time (no surprises).

Community Work Group (CWG) – Involved members are interested members of the public. The meetings will be held on a bi-monthly basis.

Executive Work Group (EWG) –Consists of elected officials and department heads from cities, county and transportation agencies and meets on a bimonthly basis. Dallas County Commissioner Mike Cantrell is chairing the group.

The Work Group process can filter, critique and iron-out info and issues in a hierarchical series of scrutinization: first with the SWG – then EWG – followed by the CWG – and finally the Public Meeting input process.

Other Public Involvement (PI) tools used on this study include:

- Work Groups
- 2 series of Public Meetings, dual locations
- Newsletters
- Website – use the website to catch up on information, look at plans and sign-up for the mailing list.
- Info packets – already hand-distributed to property owners located immediately adjacent to each freeway.
- Briefings – the project team would be happy to make presentations to group organizations, etc.
- Media – all Public Meetings/Hearings are fully advertised.

IV. Regional Mobility Plan & East Corridor MIS

T. Nesbitt introduced Matt Craig, Project Manager, Halff Associates.

M. Craig first spoke about congestion levels, and how we must design for the year 2030 and beyond. The Mobility 2025, 2004 Update of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan lays out the long-range proposed improvements to the corridors, including multiple modes. He then discussed improvements within the project limits, which extend from IH 45 east to Dalrock Road on IH 30, and US 80 from IH 635 east to FM 460:

- Rail: no rail lines in near future but, some DART by 2030
- Managed HOV lanes proposed on 30 and 80; corridor traffic is very directional, reversible lanes possible from downtown to future PGBT extension

Preliminary recommendations in The East Corridor MIS (via DART):

- Congestion Management Strategies
- Bicycle and pedestrian system improvements
- Improved facilities management
- Transit improvements
- Arterial, signal and intersection improvements
- IH 30 capacity improvements
- US 80 capacity improvements

V. Scope of Current Work

The project goals:

- Designing traffic solutions for the year 2030 and beyond
- Improve mobility
- Improve Safety
- Maximize environmental opportunities
- Minimize any possible negative effects
- Develop affordable and cost-effective improvements

Meet Current Design Standards – the current highways were built in the 1950s and 60s, and do not meet current design and operational standards. Some substandard elements on 30/80 include:

- Vertical clearances need at least 16.5 feet
- Lane/shoulder widths need widening
- Ramp spacing needs to be increased because of short weaving distances
- Curvature on roads need improving

Major Project Integration – other on-going studies within the East corridor include:

- Project Pegasus; blending work on interchange at IH 45/ IH 30
- LBJ - IH 635/IH 30 interchange already has a FONSI (Finding of No Significant Impact) and Design Schematic approval.
- PGBT Extension – the FEIS and its targeted Record of Decision are under ongoing FHWA review for subsequent approval.
- SH 190 (The East Branch) – Major Transportation Study/DEIS process is now initiating.
- Loop 9 – Dallas County outer loop, MTS/DEIS is now being processed by Dallas County.

Q: How does the East Corridor fit into the funding hierarchy?

A: Project Pegasus will also have managed lanes. But, funding for that project is pending. Project Pegasus will have priority over TEC such that we need to eliminate the downtown bottleneck first before the TEC can tie-in. The Trinity Parkway is intended to be in place before Pegasus to relieve construction woes. Project Pegasus could possibly break ground by 2015. The PGBT Extension will probably begin construction in 2009 and the East Branch and Loop 9 might be nearer 2030.

Q: I asked about a year ago how Project Pegasus affects TEC. Will it have to happen first? Will it delay TEC if it doesn't happen first?

A: It could delay the start, but pieces of TEC could possibly happen before the I-30/downtown area. Sunnyvale and Mesquite would like to see portions of 80 begin quickly in that local development and traffic demand keeps occurring. but, as always, we do need the dollars, ideally cost-sharing on the part of cities helps speed up projects. It is just a matter of when any type of funding becomes available.

Q: There is currently construction on US 80 near Terrell. Is that a maintenance project?

A: That would be outside our project area. It is very likely a maintenance project, as we do not know of any capacity improvements (added travel lane plans) in that area.

“When?” decisions on many local projects such as this can be driven and/or championed by elected officials, so ideally we do need elected official input and support for TEC fruition.

Mesquite is already initiating (and entirely funding) an interchange project (design and subsequent construction) for the portion of Loop 9 at IH 20, which in itself is an example of a city fully backing speedier improvements. The same can be said for Mesquite's cost-sharing with TxDOT which recently got the IH 635 portion at Town Centre Drive constructed, sooner than any other IH 635 portion, to date.

Mr. Craig then discussed the five study segments within this project, each with unique characteristics. Study Segments included:

- Loft area (IH 30/IH 45 interchange/Downtown)
- Park area (Inner portion of IH 30 including Fair Park, Tenneson Park)
- Town area (US 80 and IH 30 from split to IH 635, including Big Town, Town East Mall)
- Farm area (US 80 from IH 635 to FM 460, Samuell Grand Farm, Windmill Farm)
- Lake area (IH 30 from IH 635 to Dalrock Rd. at Lake Ray Hubbard)

Alternatives will be evaluated for:

- Mobility Benefits
- Environmental Effects
- Social & economic effects
- Cost effectiveness & affordability
- Compatibility with other projects
- Effects during construction

Freeway Alternatives are being developed. The corridors' demand obviously exceeds capacity, as witnessed by the miles of bumper-to-bumper traffic each morning and evening. Nevertheless, our goal is moving people, not just cars. This is best addressed with the Managed/HOV Lane component. Toll revenues and feasibility will be considered/investigated by TxDOT. DART Bus Rapid Transit system will utilize the Managed lanes in moving people.

Managed Lanes were then explained. They will:

- Improve freeway efficiency,
- Manage demand in the corridor,
- Offer choices that provide travel time savings and reliability,
- Improve safety, and
- Generate revenue.

Matt gave an example of managed lanes in California. On IH 15, they have a reversible facility, and SR 91 has dynamic pricing that changes depending on the time of day and congestion levels by using a supply and demand theory. Katy Freeway in Houston is set up to allow for 3+ people to ride for free, while cars with only two in a vehicle have to pay a toll. Currently DFW doesn't have any managed lanes although there are many proposed.

The IH 30 Interim HOV it isn't a managed lane, but has worked well to date. It will be expanded from Jim Miller to IH 635 (currently under design). The Zipper machine creates a lane from the off peak travel direction. This HOV lane has 16,000-19,000 daily users currently, and is the oldest HOV lane in the area. Ultimate managed HOV lane improvements will in all likelihood incorporate fixed barriers. Dallas does lead the nation in carpool users.

Q: Is the zipper machine a problem?

A: It is mechanical and in operation daily, so it is prone to breakdowns, as opposed to a typical stationary barrier. The machine itself is rather expensive and requires maintenance. Also, if a

car breaks in the lane next to the zipper barrier (which has occurred in the past), the machine cannot work around it and the system is in limbo.

Q: Will the managed lanes be reversible or continuous, concurrent flow?

A: HOV lanes will be permanent installations, We have both reversible and concurrent flow options proposed for consideration. However, reversible lanes, have higher operational costs.

DART's prior MTS recommendations for lane usage included:

- 30 Park – 10 general purpose lanes and 3 reversible managed Lanes
- 30 Town – 6 general purpose lanes and 2 reversible managed Lanes
- 80 Town – 6 general purpose lanes and 1 reversible managed Lane
- 80 Farm – 6 general purpose lanes and 0 reversible managed Lanes
- 30 Lake – 8 general purpose lanes and 1 reversible managed Lane

The team has developed many cross-section options to be considered because of the varying widths of right of way and varying traffic demand. After the cross sections are evaluated, the team will develop and carry forth a short list of just a few alternatives.

Environmental Assessment (EA) for the project is being handled by HNTB Corporation. It is a formal process that covers many environmental issues. There are over 30 criteria and will include:

- Potential noise impacts/necessary mitigation
- Visual/aesthetic considerations
- Historical sites
- Parks
- Cemeteries
- Ecological impacts
- Fair Park
- Environmental Justice
- Effects to public facilities/services

Q: In section 1, will restoration be taken into consideration or just impacts?

A: We must figure out how to mitigate any impacts or minimize as much as possible. Noise for example, may increase in some areas; we'll have to look at putting in noise walls, which in themselves have pro-con issues we'll need input on. We'll look at impacts on a case by case basis.

Q: When noise levels increase, how do you look at those numbers, in comparison to today or the future?

A: We have to compare current decibel readings and and future reading levels. Some places today may already exceed impact levels.

Richard Mason: One of the issues we'll look at are trade offs. On page 2 of the cross sections, you'll see depressed lanes and elevated lanes. More cost is required for the depressed lanes, but you'll have fewer noise impacts.

M. Craig: If you look at our evaluation table, you'll see that all of these items will be evaluated including drainage, right-of-way (ROW), mobility, etc. If you have any other evaluation measures to add, please let us know.

Q: What is the impact of project integration on the alternatives?

A: With any geometric solution, the travel lanes will have match up evenly and not just randomly merge. That shouldn't be a problem; but in order to balance lanes, etc. some ramps may have to move some, but (at this time) no major problems are anticipated.

T. Nesbitt noted Urban Design generally occurs in latter stages, but the TEC project will initiate aesthetics and community planning that hopefully can accomplished a neighborhood friendly design...and one which once again produces cost-sharing opportunities.

Environmental Constraints – The team has identified major constraints such that we have created a map that will help evaluate the alternatives.

Urban Design - M. Craig handed the floor to T. Nesbitt to discuss urban design elements.

Aesthetics provide an opportunity for municipalities and transportation agencies to work together and not just redesign but redefine; promote communities, and accomplish the same via cost-sharing. Freeways are typically designed once (originally) and then redesigned once more as in the case of Central Expressway. Aesthetics were championed early for Central, and we prefer that that happen likewise with the TEC. We plan to create renderings that show just how cost-shared aesthetics can change the entire look. We will also create 3D animation to show what some of the possibilities are for TEC.

Q: On IH 30 in Fort Worth at Beach St., the city is in the process of beautifying that area. Did TxDOT have anything to do in securing the funds with the Corp of Engineers (1135 Funding)?

A: R. Mason: We have limited knowledge of the internal Ft. Worth operations, but locally we have worked with the City of Mesquite to secure landscaping funds on other projects.

T. Nesbitt: I'm sure that TxDOT-Ft. Worth may have had in some way, involvement. It may have been part of the mitigation package.

Q: Can we do something similar?

A: Mike Preston: The aesthetic design and related funding needs will be part of the final design. Here we are only doing the schematic and concept urban design. We have the opportunity for further, subsequent design and development. There are trails in the area of Ih 30 and White Rock that are part of the city's long-term plan.

T. Nesbitt: We must finish the schematic first, the design and landscaping comes along in later phases, pending funding availability. After schematic design, interaction between the cities, communities, organizations ideally takes place when the associated organizations and agencies work financially closer together when the construction prospects start to mature and be realized. As always though, and unfortunately, designs and solutions do not happen overnight.

A. Baker: I'm working on the East Dallas Trail project. There is a public meeting in December. The proposed trail will begin at Exposition and extend to White Rock Trail. We must all work together on these projects to get them accomplished.

T. Nesbitt: I hope those projects generate interest from the city and the public. That will be a good sign for our TEC project too.

Q: About four months ago, someone from the Trinity project wrote a letter to the Corps about 1135 funding.....?

T. Nesbitt: We will look at these solutions, but we need input from many people and sources. We first need a right-of-way and typical section footprint for the roadway. We will try to find balance to revitalize traffic movements and image in and of the corridor.

Q: What about property lines?

A: The area is very tight the closer one gets to downtown. We'll definitely need to purchase ROW in some places, especially near the Fair Park area of the freeway.

Q: What about the Motley and Gus Thomasson areas?

A: We may need some ROW at intersections for turn lanes. In many places we have the outdated jug-handle ramps. We may need some ROW to convert those into modern-day diamond ramps. We won't know for sure until we get to that part of the planning.

Planning Schedule – We are in the evaluation stages right now.

- Evaluation refinements in late '04 and early '05
- March 2006: EA and Design Schematic drafts delivered to TxDOT-Austin
- FONSI: hopefully by early 2007
- By mid to late 2005, we should have a good idea of the recommended improvements.

If you need to reach the study team, our contact information is in the handouts.

VI. Questions and Comments

T. Nesbitt asked the group if there were any other comments or questions.

Q: Are we bringing in experts with national experience to help reconnect the neighborhoods across the freeways?

A: Rich Mason some national experience as does Mike Preston and his knowledge of national projects pursuant to his firm's nationwide offices.

Q: I need examples....

A: Mike Preston does have examples shown on the wall. M. Preston: I have worked on projects in Maine, Detroit, Seattle, St. Louis, etc. One of our primary goals is to reconnect neighborhoods. Locally we are working on the Southern Gateway project on IH 35, and we have worked on the successful Central Expressway.

Q: Will you look at TEC with the same goals?

A: That is one goal. If we try to depress the area like Central so there isn't a visual obstruction, it may cause major drainage problems. ie. Trade-offs. We'll do the best we can, but we'll need the city's support because of the complexity of the project and all the issues. DART comes into play as well. Some of the the efforts can get very expensive.

A. Baker: The CWG and Study Team must rally interest from the city. They may not understand the history to the same degree what we know about the neighborhood. The Study Team needs to work on the historic areas too, like Deep Ellum, etc., and talk to city council members to make sure they understand what we would like to do.

T. Nesbitt: We also have been very involved thus far with Craig Holcomb from Friends of Fair Park to help with that effort.

Q: How far does TxDOT look for impacts?

A: About 150 to 300 feet beyond the right of way. Noise is generally measured for the first row receivers, within 500 ft.

Q: What will we see in February?

A: We will have a condensed version of the alternatives and cross-sections, possibly some travel lane line configurations on a map. We will also have the evaluation matrix filled out. We should have an internal draft of the same next month.

Q: Will the community be shut out of that process?

A: This is not a shut out project. We'll have technical (multit-agency) drafts and technical recommendations yet the community will be able to see and be a part of the evaluation process.

Impacts typically cannot be all-inclusively avoided, but we are working to make TEC the best solution as possible.

Attendees were thanked for attending. The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Next CWG Meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 7, 2005 at 6:00 p.m. at the Samuell Grand Recreation Center.

November 1, 2004 Community Work Group Meeting Attendees

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|---------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Richard Mason | TxDOT |
| 2. Tim Nesbitt | TxDOT |
| 3. Matt Craig | Halff Associates |
| 4. Nelson Underwood | Halff Associates |
| 5. Kelly Dlouhy | HNTB Corporation |
| 6. Mike Preston | HNTB Corporation |
| 7. Melissa Wolff | HNTB Corporation |
| 8. Alva Baker | St. Luke UMC |
| 9. Silas Bryan | Bryan Enterprises Inc. |
| 10. Neely Kerr | |