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## FM 150 West Character Plan Citizens Advisory Panel Meeting Notes

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Date: June 18, 2015

Time: 6:00 PM

Subject: CAP Meeting 5

Location: Driftwood Community Center

Present: Hays County: Commissioner Whisenant and Commissioner Conley

CAP Members: Mr. David Braun, Mr. Casey Cutler, Mr. Dennis Dement, Ms. Sharon Michaelis, Mr. Mark Oechsner, Ms. Maile Roberts, and Mr. Bruce Turbow

Project Team: Joe Cantalupo and Greg Blackburn with K Friese & Associates; John Kuhl and Julie LeClaire with Hicks Environmental; Paula Gruber with PSI; Laura Harris and Stephanie Russell with HNTB; Arin Gray and Albert Castro with CD&P

Public members that signed in: Mr. Jerry Allen and Ms. Kathy Nickel

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### Meeting Summary

Joe Cantalupo began the meeting with follow-up from last meeting, project schedule review, and a discussion on needing more time to work with the CAP in July and the decision to meet two nights in a row in July.

Joe gave a brief presentation covering the need for the project focusing on projected growth in Hays County as the 3<sup>rd</sup> fastest growing county and as San Marcos as the fastest and Kyle as the 5<sup>th</sup> fastest growing cities. Then he covered the County philosophy for the improvement of FM 150. It was noted the County needs 4 lanes of capacity but this process will determine how and where it happens. Improvements on other roads will be needed and are also being considered by the County as separate processes in addition to FM 150.

He then covered that the CAMPO 2035 Plan had population doubling by 2035 and since then projections have increased in the CAMPO 2040 Plan with population more than doubling by 2030. The population is expected to occur in urban areas along I-35 and farther west. During the presentation questions were asked on where the growth was occurring and why FM 150 was the road that needed improvement. Brian Ray noted that with this new growth traffic wouldn't only be going to and from Austin, but rather moving around and through the County, with the employment projections and activity centers identified in the County.

Joe covered that the County is addressing this now in an effort to protect Hays County values. He noted several challenges, including most of the roadways in the County are 2 lane, along with the geology, history, and environmental considerations. Joe mentioned that tonight, we want to work through ideas in the Driftwood area in an open and transparent process.

Joe and Brian gave an overview of where we are in the process, sharing that the County is very early in the project and working to develop ideas. The presentation was ended with a summary of the County's commitment to the project to work toward a community based solution that preserves what is important.

Casey Cutler shared an 8-minute video flyover of FM 150 in the Driftwood area and noted that if anyone had details to add to please share it with him.

### **Work session**

Brian led a work session starting with an overview of the draft context zones. He also shared ideas of transition zones and intersection safety. He defined a community zone as an area where people gathered, and that context zones were longer areas connecting the community zones. He also shared that there will be areas where interim safety improvements are needed earlier and we want to identify those along with ultimate plans.

### **Summary of Discussion and Questions**

- CAP member noted the design of the roadway will affect the nature of the communities.
- CAP member asked if possibly FM 150 would just be safety improvements.
  - Replied that we would be identifying the ultimate plan for 4 lanes, but depending on when and where growth occurs first, we may identify immediate safety needs.
  - Commissioner Conley replied that this is a similar concept to RR 12.
- CAP member acknowledged process, but that all the input he's receiving from the people he is talking with is that the team should be looking at another route and not what is being presented as discrete, specific projects, which will not maintain the character of the roadway.
  - Commissioner Conley noted that we could keep the two lanes and add two lanes in a different area to get to the total 4 lanes.
- The project team noted that it says we need 4 lanes but not identified where or how. How are we going to create a 4 lane divided with a 150 feet of ROW?
  - Commissioner Conley mentioned we need added capacity on 150, maybe 20 years down the road. We have the opportunity to plan for this now.
- A CAP member noted that Joe mentioned core urban areas are going to grow and the rest will stay rural, but we are seeing new sub divisions in rural areas. It is hard to see how we can do this within these bubbles on the maps.
  - Commissioner Whisenant mentioned that other routes have been looked at even within 2 miles, but the City of Austin owned the land and were not open to the project at the time.

- Asked about 967 improvements.
  - Commissioners noted that it will probably be updated first, but that isn't all that needs to be done in the future.
- Joe led a discussion of what has been talked about in the past that we need to look at this area as well as other areas. We need to understand all of this detail about the areas and zones to make a plan for the corridor as a whole.
- CAP member noted the community wants us to look at a different route and we need to look at an extreme different alternative.
  - Noted we need to remember this road is part of our state system and it needs to be connected.
  - Commissioner Conley asked if they were asking us to abandon this section of the corridor completely. Noted that we could think through this and make safety improvements and preserve ROW.
  - Commissioner Whisenant noted that we want to work with the State and also that looked at a route 2 years ago and involved the City of Austin on the land they owned and they were opposed.
- CAP member noted public feel the character and heritage of the Driftwood is the most important aspect. The community wants updates but wants to protect area.
  - Commissioner Conley shared they want to protect the area as well.
- Noted bubbles made it feel too constrained and the question was as to whether the project team could look at other alternatives.
  - County noted we can go outside of the bubbles and that yes, we could and should look at other alternatives that involve more greenfield development.
- CAP member asked what a "green field" project was and Commissioner Conley responded that it meant a new location.
- CAP member asked how we get to the next level of looking at new alternatives.
  - Joe mentioned we will step back and evaluate before the next work sessions.
- CAP member commented that we compare this to Napa Valley and a 150 foot corridor will completely change all of the character.
- CAP member asked why we are not taking comments on a wider area.
  - Noted that we could address this and receive comments.
- CAP member noted that 35 and 290 were the only road more than 4 lanes. This community would like a way to get between 35 and 290. Noted that a north connection could be further north and connect to Buda.
- Brian asked if the group was comfortable with the context and community zones.
  - Group felt comfortable with the identified zones within the context of looking at other alignments as a supplement to the plan being developed for FM 150.
- Commissioner Whisenant noted the importance of sharing the historical aspects of this area.
- CAP noted history of the area was written in 1969 and needs to be maintained and shared.

#### **Action Items:**

1. Schedule the next two longer work sessions and confirm with CAP.