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

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Date: July 15, 2015  
Time: 5:00 PM  
Subject: CAP Meeting 6  
Location: Driftwood Community Center  
Present: Hays County: Commissioner Whisenant and Commissioner Conley

CAP Members: Casey Cutler, Dennis Dement, Shelby Eckols, Sharon Michaelis, Mark Oechsner, Maile Roberts, Judge Bob Shannon, Mike Steinert, Bruce Turbow, and Cassie Gresham (for David Braun)

Project Team: Joe Cantalupo, Joe Skidmore 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; Julie Richey and Albert Castro with CD&P; Brian Ray and Kelly Laustsen with Kittelson & Associates

Public members that signed in: Kathy Nickel, Jerry Allen, Dale and Patti Caudill, Sylvia and Carl Frandsen, Jerry and Shirley McKee, Joel and Melodie King

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### Meeting Summary

Joe Cantalupo began the meeting with follow-up from last meeting, project schedule review, and a discussion on the two-night meeting format which would include a presentation and a work session on night one and a work session on night two. Joe noted that the reason for the double session was to work through concepts for the broader study area in response to the request to look at off alignment concepts, and to look more in-depth at what is being referred to as the Driftwood Heritage Trail segment and the remaining segments on alignment concepts.

Brian Ray gave a presentation with an explanation and discussion of: desired speed and the relationship to roadway geometry, cross sections for context zones, and supporting other modes of travel such as bike and pedestrian. Brian noted that sections where there are deliberate choices on speed of travel would have implications on other sections of the roadway to create consistent and safe transitions between speed changes.

He then lead a discussion of cross section design noting that there could be a variety of cross section options, depending on the context of the section of roadway. There is also flexibility in design relative to right of way and overall width. The example of laying a ribbon down on the landscape was given –

the design could be one wide ribbon which might inhibit some of the flexibility of the roadway and its design features, or in some places two narrower ribbons with a divider in between (grassy median for example) which would allow greater flexibility in design because the two “ribbons” aren’t bound to one another.

The context of the area would contribute to which option might be more desirable. Choosing a preference between these two concepts is an opportunity for the community and impacts overall right of way needs.

Further discussion of cross sections included illustrations of sample cross sections and was intended to give an overview of options of how the roadway could look with various improvement options:

- A safety section may have improvements such as standard 12 foot lanes, a small paved shoulder, and a grassy or gravel section beyond the shoulder
- A new section might consist of 12 foot lanes and slightly larger shoulders
- A divided cross section might include two 12 foot lanes in each direction, a center turn lane, and wider shoulders
- A rural cross section might include two 12 foot lanes in each direction, a center median, small inside and outside shoulders, a grassy or gravel section beyond the shoulder, and an additional space beyond the shoulders
- An urban cross section might include all of the divided cross section features, plus bike lane and sidewalk sections

### **Presentation Questions and Discussion Highlights**

- A CAP member noted that you wouldn’t use this rural cross section design for the entire length of FM 150
  - Brian noted that is correct and is the reason the CAP has worked on determining context zones so that appropriate preferences can be identified
- A CAP member noted that many of the MAD 4 roadways in the Hays County Transportation Plan are noted as 100’ of ROW – why isn’t this one
  - Joe explained that the HCTP is a high level representation of needs and that ROW is determined at a more focused study level; there is room for variation in the eventual design of FM 150
- Brian noted that many comments assert that 150’ of ROW is too much, and explained that different stretches of the roadway and their context along with accommodating the preferences learned through this process, would help guide how much ROW is needed. Various design preferences require various widths for design.

### **Work Session**

Joe Skidmore led a work session where the CAP members were invited to draw potential off-alignment routes on a large map. A few conceptual lines were printed on the map to act as a launching pad for discussion on how different alignments might offer different advantages and disadvantages. This would also offer the opportunity to illustrate opportunities vs. constraints and potentially yield some basic concepts and preferences for the roadway.

The exercise resulted in a few off alignment options as well as improvements near Elder Hill, 1826, and RR 12.

### Summary of Discussion and Questions

- CAP member noted there is a lot of truck traffic in the area
- Question as to whether 150' ROW is set in stone
  - Joe indicated no, that the ultimate solution should include 4 lanes of capacity from end to end of corridor, but how that capacity is added can vary. It may be two lanes with safety improvements or minor modifications along existing alignment in some spots, with additional capacity being carried on one of the other roads in the area, or in some areas four full lanes, etc. This process will identify both preferences and trade-offs.
- CAP member noted a potential southern connection of RR 12 and FM 3237, south of FM 150, to potentially relieve traffic coming from Wimberley
- CAP member noted Ranch Rd. 12 and Hwy 290 is a very busy intersection that needs improvements
- Improvements to FM 150, Darden Hill, Sawyer Ranch, and Nutty Brown were all included in the HCTP
- Several CAP members noted the continuation of FM 1826 with a connection Elder Hill Road or RR 12 is needed and would help traffic flow
- CAP member noted a norther connection bypassing FM150 and connecting to Darden Hill Road
- CAP member noted that several community members consider FM 1826 from 967 to FM 150 as a culturally sensitive area
- CAP member noted the section of Onion Creek from Ben McCullough Park to the double-dip low water crossing is considered to be one the most pristine river areas in the state
- CAP member noted that adding bike lanes to FM 150 is consistent with what the community values
- CAP member suggested expanding RR 12 to a 4 lane road and using a southern connection through Lone Man Mountain Road and 3237
  - Joe noted that as part of the HCTP, the expansion of RR 12 or 967 are not substitutes for the expansion of FM 150 as all roads will need improvements at some point in the future
- Commissioner Whisenant noted that while the HCTP was being written, the County coordinated with TxDOT and looked at CAMPO projections and traffic studies to conclude that FM 150 was the next major corridor that would need improvements within the next 25 years
- Attendees noted several northern bypass routes of FM 150 up to 967/1826 as well as going further norther with an eventual connection to Darden Hill Road
  - Joe Skidmore noted that having previously worked on Darden Hill Road there is only 60 feet of ROW which is barely enough room for a 2 lane rural road and any expansion of Darden Hill Road would cause a large impact to property owners

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

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Date: July 16, 2015

Time: 5:00 PM

Subject: CAP Meeting 6

Location: Driftwood Community Center

Present: Hays County: Commissioner Whisenant and Commissioner Conley

CAP Members: Casey Cutler, Dennis Dement, Shelby Eckols, Sharon Michaelis, Mark Oechsner, Maile Roberts, Judge Bob Shannon, and Cassie Gresham (for David Braun)

Project Team: Joe Cantalupo, Joe Skidmore and Dan Cryan with K Friese & Associates; John Kuhl and Julie LeClaire with Hicks Environmental; Paula Gruber with PSI; Laura Harris and Stephanie Russell with HNTB; Julie Richey and Albert Castro with CD&P; Brian Ray and Kelly Laustsen with Kittelson & Associates

Public members that signed in: Kathy Nickel, Jerry Allen, Dale and Patti Caudill, Nica Echols, Don Bosse, Scott Roberts

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### Meeting Summary

Joe Cantalupo began the meeting with a follow up from what we heard from attendees at the previous CAP work session. Joe noted several themes discussed during the previous work session:

1. Traffic flow from Elder Hill Road to FM 150 – as it affects driftwood and FM 1826, part of this project but also can be a separate project for further study
2. Bypass of FM 150 (off alignment) near FM 3237, going east and connecting to FM 967
3. Potential need to connect FM 1826 to RR 12 – look at a potential expansion of FM 1826 from FM 967 to FM 150
4. Not many suggestions discussed for a southern alignment

Joe also noted the August CAP meeting would again be another two-night working session.

John Kuhl gave a background and overview on the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and how it affects the FM 150 Character Plan Project. John noted that this project is in the Pre-NEPA stage, which means we are currently defining projects. John discussed the general goals of the NEPA project, the levels of NEPA projects, as well as, what factors contribute to the higher costs of projects.

- CAP Member asked John what the attendees should consider as they worked through the information presented to them through the work sessions
  - The length of the project tends to add cost and affects more citizens and landowners; it also has an effect on resources such as surface water, recharge zone, and Gold Cheek Warbler and Karst populations.
- An attendee asked if this project is a forgone conclusion and is slated to occur regardless of the CAP and public input and process
  - This project is not a foregone conclusion. This is a pre-NEPA planning effort and no design has been selected. The team is working with the CAP members and the community to develop concepts that may be further developed.
- The attendee asked if these concepts, would move cross town traffic from developed area to developed are in the rural/undeveloped areas
  - The County is continuing to grow at a rapid pace, at the time of the development of the HCTP, the County's population was projected to double, now it is projected to quadruple in 20 years. Currently, all of this growth would use the major 2 lane roads which will not be able to sustain the continued growth, and that all of these roads need major improvements at some point in the future.

### **Work session**

Brian Ray led a work session where the CAP members were invited to view potential alignment scenarios close to the existing alignment. A few conceptual lines were provided to attendees and were asked to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each. Brian and attendees reviewed the Context Zone map of the corridor. He noted that along FM 150 there are different qualities and characteristics on various sections of the corridor that should be considered throughout this process. Brian showed several maps with several conceptual variations of the current alignment and bypass sections in certain context zones.

- CAP member noted a concern of isolated sections creating cross street connections which would be counterproductive to the preservation of the community
  - When looking at bypasses for isolated sections of the corridor, not having a connection to the current FM 150 alignment at the double dip low water crossing, would cut off access to this section and would not be preserving it for the community. Having a bypass and connection to the current section, would help preserve the area as people wishing to visit it would have to make a conscious decision to visit it.
- CAP member noted that in creating a bypass with an isolated section would hurt the heritage of the community and asked if doing so would create additional environmental impacts to the area including water quality, additional traffic, and noise
  - All new creek crossings come with additional environmental impacts but can be designed to minimize them as much as possible
- CAP member asked if a bypass at the double dip crossing was created, what would the designation of the current alignment be
  - The new bypass section would be FM 150 and the current aligned section would have a new designation that the county would decide

- CAP member asked if new improvements made to FM 150 and other roadways in the County, be built above the floodplain
  - TxDOT on system roadways need to meet certain hydraulic criteria required by the state and would have to meet a minimum design frequency
- An attendee asked why the county was not working on projects that would direct traffic to FM 1826 and SH 45 as opposed to looking at the expansion of FM 150
  - Looking at population projects for the County show a future need for expansion to FM 150 along with the other major roadways in the County
- Commissioner Whisenant noted that 2 years ago, the intersections of 967 and FM 1826, and FM 1826 and FM 150, were about 80% to warrant levels for traffic signals
- CAP member asked if these conceptual improvements mean FM 150 will be a four lane roadway
  - Yes, eventually FM 150 will need to be a four-lane roadway to accommodate growth; through this process, we are looking at all alternatives to reach capacity while maintaining the culture and heritage of the corridor

**Action Items:**

1. Schedule the two night working sessions for August and notify CAP members