
FM 150 West Character Plan – Phase 2, Nature & Character Master Plan Citizens Advisory Panel Meeting Notes

Date: March 23, 2017
Time: 6:00 PM
Subject: CAP Meeting 4
Location: Dripping Springs High School, Cafeteria
Present: Hays County: Commissioner Whisenant

CAP Members: David Braun, Casey Cutler, Shelby Eckols, Mike Pruitt, Bob Shannon

Project Team: Joe Cantalupo, Ryan Bell, and Eric Virag with K Friese + Associates; John Kuhl and Julie LeClair with Hicks & Company; Brian Ray and Kelly Laustsen with Kittelson & Associates; Arin Gray, Haley Partin, and Jacqie Wilson with CD&P; Laura Harris with HNTB

17 Public members signed in

Meeting Summary

Joe Cantalupo started the meeting with introductions, review of the meeting agenda, meeting purpose, the project schedule, and public notifications made over the previous month.

- A CAP member asked for a briefing on the funding possibilities from CAMPO in the last CAP Meeting and Joe provided a short summary.

Brian Ray began presenting intersection concepts for the intersections along the bypass/upgrade sections and the intersection of FM 150 at FM 3237. At each intersection, Brian began by summarizing the input received previously for each intersection. Below are highlights of discussions and questions for the intersections.

FM 150 at FM 3237

- Brian presented a diagram showing the footprint of a roundabout near the existing alignment of FM 3237 and FM 150 that keeps the FM 150 to FM 3237 as the emphasized alignment. This footprint results in impacts to the Hays City store and limited access for the property northeast of the intersection.
- Brian also presented two sketches for roundabout options that minimize impact to the Hays City Store and provide access to the northeast property. The two options both shift the intersection to the northeast and keep FM 150 as the emphasized alignment.

- CAP asked if the property owners near the intersection had seen the options
 - Noted the team has coordinated with the property owners but had not shown the updated concepts yet.
- Noted scenario 2 seemed like the best choice
 - Brian shared that it impacts the northeast property more, but it does allow for possible access to the Hays City Store from FM 150.
- Noted that scenario 2 didn't utilize the triangle that was already owned by the State
 - Brian noted this is feasible (as shown in scenario 3), but it is more tight from an engineering perspective
- Noted scenario 1 (using the existing roadway right of ways) doesn't provide access to the northeast property and has more impacts access to Hays City Store
- Felt that scenario 2 and 3 should be further explored and discussed with adjacent property owners
- Asked if the stubout to the NE in scenario 2 and 3 was for a road
 - This stubout is intended to show potential access to the property, not another roadway, but would be required to be configured the same as the other legs of the roundabout
- Asked if the live oak tree in the triangle could be saved
 - From an engineering perspective, we don't see how we could save it regardless of scenario chosen

FM 150 at Potential Bypass

- Brian presented the scenario 1 sketch, similar to the scenario 1 presented at the FM 150 and FM 3237 intersection
- Brian also presented sketches for scenarios 2 and 3 similar to the scenarios 2 and 3 presented for the FM 3237 intersection which would make the FM 150 to Bypass the through alignment
- Noted CAP members preferred scenario 3 and still like the idea of a roundabout at this location

FM 967 at Potential Bypass

- Brian presented diagrams for two scenarios, one that lines the intersection up at a "T" to the existing FM 967 and one that makes the bypass alignment continue to FM 967.
- Asked about the property south of FM 967
 - Public member noted it was a ranch from 1868 and the building was a house
 - Brian noted this would be important information to consider as we look at all alternatives
- Asked if the area shown is generally where we would connect to FM 967
 - This was the preferred alternative coming out of the last discussion with the CAP, but we also considered a connection to FM 967 further east
- CAP member noted preference for the roundabout and liked the location, but we need to consider and protect the history of the area.
- Asked if the electrical facility could be moved (noted it is the LCRA transforms and PEC owns the site)
 - Brian noted it would be very costly

- Asked how gravel trucks would get around roundabouts
 - Brian noted all roundabout designs would be adequate for gravel trucks and large trucks to travel through
- Noted a stoplight there might help slow down traffic
- CAP member asked Brian to explain the benefits of the roundabout and noted he felt the roundabouts slowed traffic down and preserved the character more than a traffic signal
 - Brian explained that a conventional intersection could also work at this location due to the flat curve.

FM 967 and FM 1826

- Brian presented two scenarios for the intersection, one that emphasizes the bypass route and one that keeps the roundabout at the existing intersection.
- Asked if FM 1826 was changing to a 4-lane section and how a roundabout would work there
 - Commissioner Whisenant noted TxDOT has scheduled improvements to move the guardrails back but not scheduled to add lanes
- CAP and other attendees preferred scenario 2 to maintain the existing roadway alignments and minimize impact
- Noted concern for gravel trucks that downshift at the roundabout intersections and potential to prohibit downshifting
- Asked if the County has the authority to regulate downshifting
 - County can regulate noise that crosses a property line at 85 decibels; most signs are posted as an ordinance from a municipality and neither the County nor the State has this authority.
- Asked if traffic coming from Buda on FM967 could turn left into property driveways before roundabout and noted this access would be important
 - Brian noted we could design the roundabout approaches to consider local access

FM 150 at FM 1826

- Brian presented three scenarios that all curve FM 150 to FM 1826, with varying levels of curvature.
- Noted scenario 3 was preferred as it has the smallest impact on neighboring properties
- Asked about roundabout etiquette and about what happens if someone does not know when to yield and crashes into another driver
 - Brian noted he could discuss this further after the presentation

Brian gave an overview of ROW preservation. The intent of the project is to identify ROW preservation for long-term corridor needs to preserve flexibility. Then Ryan Bell gave an overview of the different sections: FM 150 from Arroyo Ranch Rd. to FM 3237, potential bypass and the connections at FM 150 and FM 967 (he noted the team would be looking at adjusting the connection at FM 967), and FM 1826 and FM 967 upgrade sections.

- Asked if we were proposing 200 feet of ROW
 - Joe answered yes and noted we are planning for a 3 lane road for the foreseeable future on most sections. The pavement would not be 200 ft., but a larger ROW allows us to deal with drainage and bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, and provides more flexibility for the cross-section.
 - Joe also shared we are working to preserve ROW now to have more flexibility in the future
- Asked where the 200 feet of preservation would come from and what are we expanding from
 - The additional ROW comes from one or both sides of the existing ROW (which is typically around 80 feet on FM 150)
- Asked if the 200 feet would only be near intersections or throughout
 - Throughout except the FM 1826 section where 150 feet is proposed with curb and gutter

Then two different groups were formed to work around large plots of the different pre-schematic layouts for the roadway segments. The CAP was in one group and joined by a few members of the public, and the remaining members of the public were in another group.

CAP Working Group Comments and Discussions

Arroyo Ranch to FM 3237

- Asked about the decision to go to the south
 - Noted there are fewer property owners impacted, and it avoids impacts to Michaelis Ranch
- CAP agreed that this was a good start
- A member of the public noted he has never heard of this Bypass
 - Team noted that the bypass was developed through the first phase and the project team would make sure he receives all information going forward
- Asked if the City of Austin agreed to this layout since it was purchased to be a preserve
 - We have met with them and are looking for ways to reduce impacts there
- Asked if they could have a version to share with community members
 - Yes, will provide access to KMZ files on the website

Southern Section of Bypass at FM 150

- Asked about the sensitive warbler habitat and if we could avoid it; noted the preference would be to shift this to avoid the potential habitat.
 - Noted the majority of warblers live near creeks and that there would be more research and evaluation for this
- Asked about the impact of the bridge

- Would design this to accommodate 100-year floodplain
- A member of the public asked when will this be built and whether it will be a bond issue
 - Noted probably a minimum of 10 years and it may be a bond or may be other funding, but we are working now to preserve ROW
- CAP member noted desire to avoid habitat northwest of onion creek

North Section of Bypass at FM 967

- Member of the public noted the Texas Registered Historical Rogers Ranch and he preferred the bypass follow the Rutherford Ranch
 - Shared some of the history of Rogers Ranch and that 3 of the great grandchildren now live there
- Member of the public asked why we wouldn't widen existing FM 150
 - CAP member explained how the plan evolved from working meetings through Phase 1 work
- Asked if the connection to FM 967 could move to the east to preserve the Rogers Ranch
 - David noted the CAP thought this route would be a smoother connection but we can definitely look into this
- CAP members noted that the County has explained the roads would not be built before needed.
- CAP member suggested placing a roundabout east of 967 and north of HCC private preserves

1826 and FM 967 Upgrade Section

- Asked about plans for the property that was just sold
 - Noted many different stories ranging from equestrian center to development, but the County did not have any information
- Noted the Old Wilhelm historical house and desire to avoid any impacts
- Noted concern for maintaining driveway access near 1826

Public Working Group Comments and Discussions

General Questions and Comments

- A member of the public expressed concern that roundabouts do not require a complete stop, might not slow traffic enough
- Expressed concern about education and signage for roundabouts so drivers understand how to use them properly
 - Team explained that signs would warn drivers that a roundabout is coming, and a yield sign would be included at the roundabout
 - Team noted that the roadway design can help signal to drivers that they are approaching a roundabout (splitter island, curbing, curvature)

Arroyo Ranch to FM 3237

- Team noted that shoulders and crossings will be improved in this section
- Member of the public asked about the bypass location in relation to river crossings
 - Team noted that the river crossings and potential impacts to homeowners were both factors in choosing the location
- Members of the public expressed concern about transition from two-lane to three-lane sections and the effect this would have on traffic
- Some expressed difficulty using intersection of FM 3237 & FM 150, because the right-turn to stay on FM 150 is not intuitive
 - Some noted that crash data doesn't include the high number of near-misses in that area
- Team made the distinction that property owned by City of Austin is not conservation land in the area where the bypass is shown to connect to FM 150

Southern Section of Bypass at FM 150

- Some members of the public noted confusion about concept of split level and a need to explain
- Members of public expressed desire to consider bird habitats

Northern Section of Bypass at FM 967

- Members of the public asked about sections of FM 967 east of the bypass that do not have planned improvements
 - Team members noted that they are showing to retain existing conditions in some areas despite changes to other road sections

1826 and FM 967 Upgrade Section

- A member of the public noted concern for maintaining driveway access southwest of 1826 & 967 intersection
- Team noted that this area is a center of community development and that the proposed improvements are intended to accommodate future growth and development
 - Public member noted that the area has a rural feel and prefers to retain this aesthetic
 - Public member noted that there are plans to build a vineyard on the southwest side of FM 1826 & FM 967 intersection
- A member of the public expressed a desire to include water utilities in 200 foot section of ROW
- A member of the public noted areas that might not accommodate 200 feet of ROW
 - Team explained that area near Salt Lick and Camp Ben McCullough ROW would be reduced to 150 feet through the use of curb and gutter

FM 3237 at FM 150 Intersection

- A member of the public noted preference to keep area natural northwest of FM 150 & West Sierra Rd. intersection
- Noted desire to retain dark sky south of FM 3237

The meeting was wrapped up with a reminder of the next meeting and the team noted the KMZ files would be available on the project website.