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

Date: August 8, 2017

Time: 6:00 PM

Subject: CAP Meeting 7

Location: Thurman's Mansion

Present: Hays County: Commissioner Whisenant and Commissioner Conley

CAP Members: David Braun, Don Bosse, Casey Cutler, Dennis Dement, and Shelby Echols

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

32 Public members signed in.

Meeting Summary

Commissioner Whisenant welcomed and thanked everyone for being involved and noted how important it is to involve citizens as we plan for the future. To provide safe, reasonable mobility will require change, and we work to preserve the lifestyle that is enjoyed here.

Commissioner Conley also thanked everyone and discussed how this process has given us a shot at having a large level of consensus on the best direction for safety and preserving our way of life as we plan for the future. He noted that this process is being observed by other counties and agencies as a positive process to work through potential changes in their communities.

Joe Cantalupo thanked everyone for attending and commented that it has been an honor to work on this project. He then introduced the project team K Friese, Kittelson, Hicks, and CD&P and the county's consultants Prime Strategies and HNTB. He then reviewed the agenda and began the presentation.

Results from the Public Meeting

Joe shared an overview of the public meeting, noting that there were over 71 attendees. He shared a high-level summary of the comments received.

- Most of the community arrived at the same time and stayed to visit with us before leaving.
- Comments were divided by section:
 - North – various comments, including questions as to why improvements can't be made within existing ROW; reconfigure ROW from 1926 to 12. ROW adjustments were shown to address comments from the previous CAP meeting; desire for reduced speed – speed does not have to be the same throughout the corridor
 - South – only comments related to improving safety and character
 - Bypass & Upgrade – some opposition to upgrading 967, extend 1826 (very late in phase 1 we toyed with the idea of extending parallel to Elder Hill, but removed so it could have its own process)
 - Overall – general concern about oak trees; don't want to do more than we have to. Until the full design is completed, we cannot know which trees can be preserved. Currently at 10% engineering to be able to talk to people about ROW and impacts and prove that the improvements can be done.
 - Still some folks that prefer signals over roundabouts. Roundabouts are generally better operationally and safety-wise with less maintenance costs.
- David Braun asked where the discussions of roundabouts by the CAP were tallied.
 - Joe explained this would be included in the final report, along with different opportunities for character details, and that TxDOT is not averse to roundabouts on FM 150.
- A member of the public noted support for the Public Involvement process
 - Joe noted people have expressed appreciation for the County's process which allowed the team to take time to learn about what people value and how to balance those values with the needs of the County.
- A member of the public noted concerns about insufficient environmental studies
 - Joe shared a reminder that the plan is at the conceptual level. We collected available data but have not completed any field work. More formal environmental studies will take place with the final design.
- David Braun asked if the maps would be updated based on comments suggesting the ROW should be reconfigured.
 - Joe noted the mapped and written comments were reviewed and that none warranted any changes to the concepts. Therefore, the maps would not be updated, but all input would be included in the final reports to be considered in the design process.
- A member of the public asked whether there had been discussions with property owners before lines were drawn, as he had not heard from the project team relative to the roundabout at Howard Ranch and FM 150.
 - Joe shared that the team worked with the City of Dripping Springs on future plans for the FM 150 and RM 12 intersection, near Howard Ranch, and that there is a conflict

between the plans. He noted there would be many future discussions to resolve this conflict.

- Commissioner Whisenant noted that there are three affected property owners as well as a cemetery in this area, and this process starts with the best transportation solution for the community. The team evaluated safety in addition to character options. The Commissioner felt this configuration should still be considered conceptually.
- The member of the public replied that there are 150 property owners that should also be considered, and this design would destroy the character of their subdivision.
- Commissioner Whisenant noted that this is a preliminary conceptual design that would be adjusted. He also pointed out that there was a CAP member from this subdivision who had been involved in discussions of this concept.
- Joe added that this intersection needs more work, but the team did not want to hold up the report and process as the preliminary design only represents a concept.
- Commissioner Whisenant noted it is very important to continue working with property owners.
- The member of the public shared details on the concept plan for the subdivision, noting that it is based on a historical cottage town square. He felt that the preliminary design for the intersection leads to the type of intersection that one would see in South Austin, which invites commercial development.
- Joe shared that there were several considerations in refining these concepts, including impacts to property owners and the overall mobility and safety of the configurations.
- Commissioner Whisenant committed to meeting with the property owners and the City.
- A member of the public noted that the comments summary shows two people wanted bike lanes, but she remembers that most members of the public were opposed to bike lanes. She asked why those comments were not depicted.
 - Joe noted that all comments from throughout the public engagement process have been considered and documented. He noted that this is not a vote, and that all comments received would be included in the final report for consideration by the design team.
 - Commissioner Conley asked for clarification from the property owners as to why they were not supportive of bike lanes.
 - The member of the public noted that this is a busy road and no one would use bike facilities. Another member of the public noted that bike facilities would require more ROW to be used, which would be wasteful if the facilities were not in use.
 - John Kuhl explained that TxDOT and/or shared TxDOT/County NEPA projects require bicycle and pedestrian accommodations to be considered; however, dedicated bike lanes are typically not constructed in rural areas such as this. The assumption is often that a sufficiently wide shoulder would allow for such uses.

- Joe added that it is a good idea to consider these facilities when planning, and that we will document where people had preferences.

Corridor Character Details

Brian Ray reviewed the character zones and discussed that the overall goal was not to increase speed, but to reduce variation between high and low speeds along FM 150 to provide consistency. He reviewed the guiding principles on the variance in speeds along the corridor with an overall slowing down in community zones, and the preferences we heard from the CAP and the public. He then shared information on speed concepts and considerations for roundabouts that had a reduced footprint.

He then shared information on transitioning between rural and community zones and that different design elements, such as narrowing roadways and raised medians, could be included to signal upcoming changes for decreased speeds. Brian noted that there were many options to signal these changes, such as signage, landscaping, gateway treatments, and lighting. He recommended that a “theme” be chosen for these types of transitioning features, so that the overall character is maintained throughout.

- A CAP member asked how we planned to share these details with TxDOT.
 - Brian noted that the feature and themes report would describe input in as much detail as possible.
 - Joe answered that this project could be completed by TxDOT, the County, or through partnerships between different entities. He reminded the group there have been initial discussions for TxDOT to pick up the Bypass, and the County retain FM 150.
 - We have documented what the community felt was important and what should be considered going forward.

Joe shared that in this process the community showed a preference for remaining heavily involved in the piece of road through Driftwood. This section of the road was removed from the Phase 2 planning process once the bypass was included, but the final report would still document community preferences for the area.

As an example of aesthetic character elements that signal transition zones, CAP member Casey Cutler and Driftwood Historical Conservation Society (DHCS) member Mark Rutledge shared the history of developing the Driftwood Community Sign (pictured below). Mark noted that several property owners have committed to posting the sign on their properties. He also shared examples of lighting choices that use dark sky principles. Casey shared additional details that there are 7 roadways that come into the area, and the community group hopes these signs can be placed there to help create transition zones and share details of the community.

- A public member asked how far down FM 150 these signs would be.

- DHCS would prefer to take it to the western edge of RM 12.
- A public member asked if Charro Ranch was considered.
 - Mark noted there were two different maps.
- Casey Cutler complimented the process for educating the public and teaching them how to take things into their own hands.

Final Report Process

Joe shared that the final report would document the public and CAP input, conceptual schematics, data collected (such as traffic and crash data), character context zones, and intersection concepts. The preliminary planning alignments would be included with the proposed cross sections and cost estimates. He noted that the report would be completed in mid September and presented to the Court in October.

- A public member asked when the final report would be public.
 - Joe noted it would be available after the presentation to the Commissioners Court.
- A public member asked when the crash data was updated for the Hays City Store intersection.
 - Joe explained that the data was originally pulled at the beginning of Phase 1, then updated again at the beginning of Phase 2 in late 2016. He noted that the data pointed to traffic increases and similar crashes, and he expected the figures to be updated before the design phase.
- Don Bosse complimented the process and recommended anyone interested to visit the project website and review the KMZ files online.

Joe closed by thanking everyone for their participation.



Driftwood Historical Conservation Society - Community Sign Rendering