



North Central I-35 Neighborhood Coalition 2

20 June 2015

Fannie Mae Stewart Conservatory, 1902 E. 22nd Street

Meeting Notes

Meeting convened (2:00 pm)

Secretary not present at meeting; Chair calls a lack of quorum

Attendees:

Brendan Wittstruck, Delwood II NA (Chair)

Paul Byers, Mueller

Carol Eckelkamp, Delwood II

Kristen Fox, Windsor Park

Darrell Gest, Delwood II

James Howison, Delwood II

Stephanie Modlin, Cherrywood

Kevin Sweatt, Delwood II

Mark Rosholt, Delwood II

Marisa Tansil, Cherrywood

Guests:

Lauren Hardacker, Nancy Ledbetter & Assoc.

Alan Hughes, COA Transportation Dept.

Karen Lorenzini, TxDOT

Steven Miller, HNTB

Announcements

- Chair reports that latest TxDOT proposal for Upper Decks through Riverside issued last week by Press Release from Sen. Kirk Watson; Austin American-Statesman's Bear Wear, Community Impact and KUT reported
- Chair reports that By-laws have been amended per consensus agreement to correct a typographical error and allow for up to two consecutive one-year terms for Officers

Approval of Notes

- Discussion of notes is table due to lack of quorum

Neighborhood Updates

No neighborhood updates are offered

Review of Line-Item Concerns in Letter to TxDOT:

1. Does Manor Road bicycle lane factor into TxDOT plans for the rebuilt bridge and intersection at Manor and IH35?

Mr. Miller reports that 15th Street bridge proposal is the current working concept for all intersections and that the Manor intersection/bridge is expected to look similar; Manor right-of-way is slightly smaller but TxDOT current anticipates inclusion of buffered bike and 4+' sidewalk; Ms. Lorenzini reports TxDOT is currently negotiating contract for consultant on design of bridges between TX-183 and Riverside, to include public input sessions.

2. What is the current recommendation for right turns off the northbound frontage road at the Manor Road/I-35 intersection, regarding right turns on northbound frontage?

Chair describes concept of restricting right-hand turn access at nearest major intersection of off-ramps; Mr. Miller reports that TxDOT current does not plan to restrict right-hand turns from off-ramps at intersections including Manor Road and 38 ½ Street.

3. Are BRT lines on MLK Boulevard being considered in TxDOT plans and what are the current plans for the intersection of IH35/MLK?

Mr. Miller reports TxDOT is coordinating regularly with CapMetro but at this time has not been made aware of any Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) projects on MLK corridor; TxDOT would accommodate BRT plans if and when any plans emerge.

4. Will TxDOT provide comparative traffic studies of 38 ½ Street ramp?

Chair reports understanding that current Cherrywood NA (CNA) position is to neither support nor oppose the 38 ½ Street ramp until TxDOT provides comparative traffic analysis of ramp versus no-ramp; TxDOT has since provided UT Center for Transportation Research (CTR) analysis via NCINC2. CNA has not yet discussed review of the information. Ms. Lorenzini reports that right-of-way acquisition details would come in environmental process but some acquisition would be needed; pocket park is a possibility. Ms. Modlin inquires on proposals for 32nd Street intersection; Mr. Miller reports that 32nd street bridge proposal includes U-turn bridges and addition of bridge to allow movement from westbound 32nd to southbound IH35 frontage road.

5. Does TxDOT plan on presenting alternative configurations for the intersections of Airport/Parkwood and Airport/Rowood to address Delwood II access concerns?

Mr. Miller reports that current proposal includes and off-ramp from northbound IH35 which splits to access northbound frontage (via collector-distributor) or Airport Blvd (eastbound only); Flyover ramp from IH35 to eastbound Airport Blvd. would land in the median and merge into traffic already on Airport Blvd. from the left. This would prohibit straight passage or left-hand turns (to go eastbound on Airport Blvd.) from Parkwood Road. Northbound frontage road traffic using the collector-distributor and not turning onto Airport Blvd. would not have access to Fernwood Road. A concern expressed is over additional cars queuing to turn onto Rowood and conflicting with faster-moving traffic coming off new ramp. To make entry to Delwood II

traveling eastbound on Airport, a U-turn access near the fire station is a possibility, making a U-turn and then a right turn into Rowood possible. Discussion of channelized left turn for Rowood Road/Airport Blvd intersection. Mr. Byars reports concern that Airport Blvd's vehicle performance being prioritized over use by pedestrians. Mr. Hughes reports that City of Austin operates this stretch of Airport Blvd. Mr. Miller proposes option of including a connecting street between Delwood II and Mueller, and believes at least one house would have to be removed for such a connection. Opinions of Delwood II residents in attendance vary on idea. Concern is expressed over current difficulty in accessing frontage from Bentwood. Chair reports proposal by Delwood II representatives to configure Bentwood and Fernwood access as "in" and "out" (respectively) only to neighborhood; proposal could include a small auxiliary "slip" lane to protect accelerating and decelerating neighborhood traffic. Ms. Lorenzini reports that Burns & McDonnell has been retained as contractor for detailed schematic design in this segment through environmental process (CP&Y is contracted for segment north of 183); currently detailing scope, including number of public meetings and animations/representations. Mr. Howison inquires on next steps for engaging Delwood II neighborhood. Delwood II representatives request map focusing on and clarifying neighborhood area (and showing Airport Blvd. all the way to Aldrich Street); Ms. Lorenzini responds that TxDOT will provide this map to neighborhood via NCINC2 by August-September 2015 (to factor into 18-24 month study by pending new engineering consultant). Mr Howison confirms with TxDOT representatives that access to Delwood II remains one of the least resolved questions.

6. Is the Philomena to northbound frontage connection planned and would it include both ingress and egress into the Mueller neighborhood?

Mr. Miller reports that TxDOT considers this connection feasible but would be toward mobility within Mueller commercial areas and neighborhood and is not essential for IH35 mobility. TxDOT has looked into both "right-in/right-out" and "in-only" configurations and has no commitment at present. Mr. Byars reports less concern with traffic modeling than with providing a resilient grid and additional access options.

7. Will TxDOT commit to working with Bike Austin and the Pedestrian Advisory Committee to make sure that the 51st Street roundabout design meets best practices for this kind of intersection for bicycles and pedestrians?

Ms. Lorenzini reports TxDOT has met with Pedestrian Advisory Council and is working with Bicycle Advisory Council through Nathan Wilkes. TxDOT also looking at program-wide implications of this design feedback; currently have partial funding and would like to start construction in Spring of 2016, possibly with State Proposition 1 funding; Michael Baker International LLC has been retained to do design work; TxDOT exploring at raised crosswalks, textured paving and pedestrian hybrid beacons (PHBs) in roundabout, and will install conduit so that beacons can be installed at a later time. Mr. Byars expresses understanding that Mueller NA considers 12' lanes in roundabout to be excessively wide; General approval of raised crosswalk concept, with discussion of response to raised crosswalk by cyclists. Mr. Hughes notes this intersection already sees heavy bicycle traffic.

8. Will TxDOT commit to working with neighborhoods to make sure that designs facilitate safe and comfortable passage at Hancock Center and Airport Boulevard?

Mr. Sweat reports need to think about getting pedestrians and bicycles in/out of “landlocked” neighborhood, with specific interest in access to Hancock shopping Center. Mr. Wittstruck reports concern that high speed traffic flow is detrimental to pedestrians and bicycles. Ms. Lorenzini reports that TxDOT is committed to bicycle and pedestrian traffic, but cites right-of-way limitation as constraint. Mr. Miller reports that lower vehicle speeds allow higher vehicle volume. Mr. Wittstruck reports concern that IH35/Airport Blvd diverging diamond intersection will be burdensome to cross on foot, citing Imagine Austin Plan with specific reference to “compact and connected”.

9. What measures will be taken to protect neighboring areas from air pollution, particulates and noise pollution, specifically regarding the upper decks? How will TxDOT mitigate the increase in sound due to traffic volumes and speed increase.

Ms. Lorenzini reports air quality/noise studies will be done in environmental phase; Design responses will be limited by right-of-way restrictions, structural capacity of upper decks and retaining access for emergency rescues from the top deck.

10. Additional Discussion

Discussion of short-term pedestrian relief for IH35 crossings; concern over occupation by homeless persons. TxDOT committed to measures to avoid “bunkhouse” designs that allow occupation beneath underpasses. Airport Blvd rebuilding likely won’t be implemented until 2020.

Adjourn (4:10 pm)