

Kendall County – Boerne – Fair Oaks Transportation Committee Minutes

**05 October 2021
2:01 – 3:56 p.m.**

In Attendance:

Don Durden, Bob Manning, Jeff Carroll, Bitsy Pratt, Bobby Balli, Northern Hendricks, Bryce Boddie, Gary Louie, Rankin D’Spain, Rich Sena, Jonah Evans, Tim Bannwolf, Ben Eldredge, Stephen Zoeller, Del Eulberg, and Steve Sharma.

Not in Attendance:

Kim Blohm, John Kight, Henry Acosta, Marcus Garcia, and Josh Limmer.

Item 1: OPENING REMARKS

Don Durden calls the meeting to order at 2:01pm. He says Denise Dever passed along a note that Bob Hartwig who used to be involved with the committee is in hospice in Santa Fe. He is still interested in what the committee is doing, and Durden gives out his phone number for any members who would like to contact him.

Durden also notes that John Kight is out for this meeting. He is scheduled for a surgery and wanted to be safe due to Covid regulations, so he is passing on this meeting. Ben Eldredge says he talked to Kight and wants to find a way for him to observe the meetings while he is out.

Item 2: CONSIDER APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 21, 2021

Durden opens the floor for comments or revisions for the minutes of September 21, 2021. There are no objections, and the minutes are adopted.

Item 3: PUBLIC COMMENT

Durden opens the floor for public comment.

Dever chimes in saying that she had listened to the last City Council meeting and if members of this group have not listened, she says Jeff Carroll's update was wonderful. However, she says there is a communication hole between the committee and the council. She is seeing things come out of the committee that are good, but council is moving forward with their own ideas. She concludes her statement and says that the committee needs to find a way to better communicate with the council members.

Lance Kyle chimes in next saying that the Kendall Gateway Study is getting a lot of air time in various places. He implores members of the committee to look at the Kendall Gateway Study on the TxDOT website. He suggests looking at the 25-page initial traffic summary and the Appendix A 60-page online survey. He notes that the committee has a very eye-opening engineering and technical approach, but he wanted to mention this before anyone adopted the study because most of the data seems to be flawed. He also mentions that he notices that much of the traffic on Main Street is headed for the shopping and retail or for construction-related purposes, not to Comfort. He also notes that the ROW information is lacking. Finally, he says the legends on some of the final maps have limited environmental impact data. He suggests that there is new data that is needed.

Jonah Evans responds to Dever's comments saying that he recently listened in on a council meeting and he will agree that the committee could be doing a better job communicating to the council members. He has had some conversations with some of the members and wanted to share. He talked to Councilwoman Woolard, and she had indicated that she felt like they have been in the public eye less since the Covid shutdown. Councilman Macaluso brought up that he was very concerned about the financial costs of traffic and building roads and doing upgrades. He explained that if the committee presents a list of 40 projects to the council that it would not be helpful, and they really need a short list that addresses the congestion—possibly to address those 4 key problem areas. Closes statement by saying that he wants to encourage the committee that even if it takes a little longer for them, it would be worth taking the time to narrow down the list.

Bitsy Pratt says that it will be hard to make decisions without any financial data. She explains that the projects subcommittee would throw ideas out and then inquire with road engineers to narrow it down. She thinks having that information would be helpful in making the tough decisions.

Eldredge says they never really have defined the process and they have not tackled the controversial projects. What is the DNA of the current infrastructure and how can they use that to their advantage to make for highly efficient mobility? He expresses his frustration when complaints come about that the committee is not doing enough simply because they haven't drawn lines on a map. His point is that if they are not making efficient use of the current infrastructure, then they will only be perpetuating *inefficiency*.

Bobby Balli chimes in and says that while he has not been with the committee for very long, he believes they have adequate information to proceed on finding short-term and long-term solutions. The data is there; they just have to make the tough decisions. The crowdsourcing is not dead data. They can hang onto anything they do not use for future committees.

Rich Sena adds that he understands the sensitivity about comments made at City council. There are not a huge number of projects that they have so far. He thinks they should just finish their process of going through the crowdsourcing information and keep going. He thinks people will get snippets and start getting emotional.

Bryce Boddie says his biggest fear was that the council members would not hear all the hard work the committee has put in. They have studied and gathered—even with the Covid outbreak. He was ready to speak during the meeting they mentioned earlier, but he did not get called on to speak. It is important to communicate that to Council and the Commissioner's Court. He would hate to see all the hard work be lost.

Sena also notes that the ideas they have come up with were all ideas that came from the people of Kendall County as opposed to ideas from outsiders.

Evans says one comment that was made at the council meeting was how people who have attempted to solve these issues in the past have been afraid to make the hard decisions. Pushing back on that narrative, he says he believes that is what the committee is currently doing.

Durden thanks all for their input. He can tell there is a unanimous concern that the work of the committee be respected. He wants to note that there are people in the community who do want the Kendall Gateway; they have a voice at the table. He also says that there have been 6 or 7 committees before this one that have made difficult decisions without consulting the community and if they have to take an extra 1-6 months, the most important thing is that they create a report that the community can live with. Lastly, there has been a lot of discussion about what short-term and long-term indicate, and he says they need to rethink that. Short-term can be addressed for congestion, but it will not necessarily solve long-term problems. He says if they will stay the course, they can come up with something that will serve the community for years to come.

Bob Manning chimes in and says that he looks forward to the presentation they will make in front of the council. He hardly feels like they are hiding and that the committee is doing great work. He likes the sense of urgency which is helping to drive what Northern Hendricks is doing. A lot of what is being discussed can go in the policy bucket and they can be just as meaningful as the projects they recommend. The ideas of the committee are innovative and shining through.

Tim Bannwolf speaks up and says that they need to maximize the current infrastructure and that the community will continue to grow as long as the school system remains excellent, and that will require additional capacity. He hopes to see more connectivity to help with those capacity needs. He says if there is missing information regarding the Major Thoroughfare Plan, they can ask outside consultants—he clarifies with Jeff Carroll if that's Kimley Horn. Carroll responds to that comment and says the City has used Kimley Horn for traffic impact assessments. He also explains that he has received statements of qualifications and are looking for a consultant for the Major Thoroughfare Plan right now. They should have a consultant in the next 60-90 days. Bannwolf notes that the committee should piggy-back on that.

Eldredge asks if this effort will also be looking to improve intersections. Carroll says he has a list of 15 different things which included the map, the policy, and reviewing street cross sections. He is currently reviewing the new UDC to make sure everything measures up.

Item 4: CONSIDERATION OF CERTAIN PROJECTS – NORTHERN HENDRICKS

Hendricks begins her discussion by saying that at the last meeting, they went through the automotive comments for Blanco Road, but they have some bike/ped suggestions.

She notes that the City of Boerne is working to install a Hawk Beacon signal at Old No. 9. Carroll says construction for that will start in the next two weeks. Therefore, Hendricks does not include it in the review for the final report.

She says next that there is a suggestion for road calming that would reduce Blanco Road to two lanes with one turning lane and protected bike lanes. Manning suggests collapsing all the comments for this project to basically say that they want safer work to be done on this road; the community wants something done. Pratt notes that there are no suggestions for bike/ped lanes. Hendricks marks this as a duplicate.

Currey Creek Crossing is next on the list for review. Bannwolf says if this is an extension behind Village Drive, that area is owned by the neighborhood, not the City. The greenway would need to be extended. Evans notes that extending the greenway would upset homeowners and they would not be on board for that. Manning notes also that there is a lot of opposition for that from previous suggestions in years passed. Hendricks does not include this project in the final review pile.

Another suggestion for a floating sidewalk is unanimously considered dangerous and unsightly and is not included in the final review pile.

Moving on to Main Street: The River Road and Main Street intersection. Studies show there are high rates of accidents there and it needs

improvements like pedestrian crossing. There is also a two-lane roundabout suggestion by TxDOT involved with the Kendall Gateway study. There is another suggestion to slow the speed on Main Street to 25 mph. Carroll notes that speed studies are based on average speeds of car that drive on the road. The only way for the speed to be reduced is if people start driving slower on the road. There is another suggestion for making the downtown area for walking only.

Another, which is more of a plea for the City to take over ownership of Main Street. Carroll notes that that is a Master Plan item. Eldredge suggests compiling all the Main Street suggestions and placing them in one big suggestion pile to say these are the things they would do if they had ownership of Main Street. Evans agrees with Eldredge that it would be okay to include all suggestions for Main Street in a pile that would explain what they would do with it if they had control. The item is moved into the pile for final review.

A suggestion for moving parking on Main Street since cars tend to block the view of cars turning onto the street. Hendricks asks if that can be solved with a simple repainting of the curbs, and Carroll replies that they did that last year and the curbs were marked up again within a week. Manning notes that this has been a controversial topic since the time he was a council member. He says a parking garage is needed. Durden notes that traffic is good for business and the merchants are generally against that. Pratt asks if allowing parking only during certain times of the day would be helpful. After all discussion, Hendricks moves the item into the pile for final review.

The suggestion for making Main Street into a walk-only territory is not included for final review.

A flashing light at Rosewood Avenue after 9pm is the next suggestion. Balli says this would be worth something to the City maybe, but not for the committee. Carroll says that the City can provide suggestions to TxDOT about what to do with Main Street. An example would be syncing the traffic lights. The suggestion is included in the pile for final review.

The suggestion for a roundabout at Main Street and River Road is included for final review.

A suggestion for a light at Oak Park and Main Street is included for final review.

A suggestion for a roundabout at the intersection of Highway 1376 and Highway 87 is not included for final review.

A suggestion for a dedicated right turn lane on Main Street near the Dog and Pony Grill for Herff Road. Evans notes that Kight drew a roundabout for that intersection. It is included in the pile for final review.

A suggestion for a roundabout where Bandera and Main Street intersection is not included in the pile for final review.

A suggestion for a roundabout at Walmart is rejected.

A suggestion for underground tunnels is rejected.

The committee moves onto pedestrian related traffic suggestions. Beginning with a suggestion for mid-block pedestrian crossing, it is included in the pile for final review.

A suggestion for attention near Kelani Yogurt and the sidewalk is included in the pile for final review.

A crosswalk at Bear Moon Bakery and Theissen Street is included in the recommendations for the final report.

A crossing at Highland and Main Street is included in the recommendations for final review.

Improvements for sidewalks south of the creek are included in the recommendations for final review.

Pedestrian scramble crossings at Blanco and Main and Rosewood and Main are a suggestion but are rejected for final review.

A suggestion for a sidewalk needed on the bridge at Christus Parkway is up next. It is marked as a duplicate.

A crosswalk near the fire department crossing Main Street is suggested and is included in the pile for final review.

Sidewalk improvements on Main Street down to the town square are next up and included in the pile for final review.

Sidewalks along Main Street from Bandera Road to I-10 are next and included in the pile for final review.

A suggestion for fixing the limestone sidewalk (deemed a safety/tripping hazard) on Main Street is included in the pile for final review also.

A suggestion for a sidewalk on Main Street up to Sisterdale Road is included in the pile for final review.

A suggestion for handicapped parking near Main Street is included in the pile for final review.

Nearing the end of the time for the meeting, Hendricks says if she can get help to whittle down the suggestions that would be great. Evans suggests maybe setting up a subcommittee structure to help; some looking at automotive suggestions and some looking at bike/ped suggestions. Balli says they should start with the suggestions that focus on traffic congestion. Many of the members volunteer their help for Hendricks.

Item 5: CONSIDERATION OF SELECTED SECTIONS OF THE DRAFT REPORT

Durden asks the committee to take the latest drafted report home for review. He says there a couple of sections that are not difficult and that they can go ahead and wrap up. He says the transportation planning history needs to be pulled and describe when those efforts took place and what the outcome was. Another section that needs to be addresses is maximizing aesthetics. He feels in general there is a lot that could be

eliminated, but he wanted to ask the committee about that. There is also some information about funding and costs. He says he will be working on section 3 before the next meeting. Sections 4 and 5 are being addressed with Hendricks' help. In the meantime, they will begin to move on to chapters 6 and 7. He opens it up for anyone who would like to write those to take it on if they so desire, but to let him know so they are not duplicated.

Item 6: PUBLIC COMMENT

A Ms. Pearson who is a public attendee just asks for clarification on which two lights are run by the City of Boerne. The room responds that the lights are on Oak Park and Herff Road and Old San Antonio and Herff Road.

Tom Adlestein commends the committee on all their hard work. He also agrees with Dever that the conversations at City Council regarding the committee meetings are not reflecting what is happening. Perhaps if the committee has not completed their process by December, a couple representatives can go before Council and give a detailed update. He notes that he thinks there are a lot of strong personalities on the Council Board moving in a direction that doesn't include the work of the committee.

Pratt agrees, saying that the committee could do a better job in communicating with the Council members. Boddie, a current councilmember, concurs as well.

Gary Louie says as they are moving through the public comments, he says the committee needs to take a proactive approach in telling both the public and Council where they stand.

Durden says he and Manning will take that under advisement and consider a message to be sent.

Sena tags onto what Adlestein and Pratt said, saying that the projects subcommittee broke down the county into quadrants and pie slices and got down to the minutia. Carroll was a big resource for them, and after they finished with their project, he could see why the recommendations for the Major Thoroughfare Plan were present.

Evans mentioned his presentation from last week and a positive article he wrote concerning the work that the committee has done. He notes some cool information that he received from Carroll, saying that a single lane has a traffic capacity of about 1,800 vehicles per hour, which would be mean that the current condition of the intersections in and around Boerne/Kendall County is only carrying about a third of that.

Dever says she likes the idea of Manning and Durden going before the council. She says that one council member did not even know there was a website, that there were meetings taking place, or that the meetings were open to the public and they are actively participating. Her last note is that the Kendall Gateway was brought up, and she hopes the committee will remind the council that if they decide to touch it, the map becomes part of the City, and there is marked land there.

Lucas Hyler is a new face and introduces himself. He says that he is a planning and zoning commissioner, and many of the decisions he makes in his position have to do with traffic. The information discussed in this meeting was helpful for him. He thanks the committee for what they are doing, noting that public service can be tough. He also notes that trying to cross Main Street with 3 children can be difficult and that it's easier to do that than walk down Blanco Road.

Larry Picasso is not a new face but speaks up to give encouragement to the committee. He says that he has enjoyed coming to the meetings to hear everyone's take on things. He wanted to note that as a spectator he thinks everything the committee is doing is great and he is excited to see where things go.

Item 7: ADJOURNMENT

The committee adjourned at 3:56 p.m.