

Kendall County – Boerne – Fair Oaks
Transportation Committee Minutes

06 July 2021
2:01 – 3:13 p.m.

In Attendance:

Don Durden, Bob Manning, John Kight, Ben Eldredge, Bitsy Pratt, Northern Hendricks, Gary Louie, Jeff Carroll, Jonah Evans, Del Eulberg, Rankin D'Spain, Stephen Zoeller, Tim Bannwolf, and scrivener Erika Yount.

Not In Attendance:

Henry Acosta, Bryce Boddie, Josh Limmer, Kim Blohm, Marcus Garcia, Rich Sena, and Steve Sharma.

Public Attendees:

There were approximately 6 members present from the public.

Item 1: OPENING REMARKS

Don Durden thanks everyone for attending this meeting. He explains that they had planned to hear a report from the Projects Subcommittee, but due to a lack of attendance, they decided to push the report back. He says Bitsy Pratt may make a few comments and refers attendants to the back of the agenda packet where a series of maps can be found.

He explains that another agenda item they had planned on discussing was about getting an AAMPO contact, and they did do that since the last meeting. He says that AAMPO is more than happy to help. They would like to set up a meeting early next week to assess where the committee currently stands and refresh memories. He says Jonah Evans had expressed interest in being a part of this project and offers a place for anyone else interested in participating in the GIS studies. He says that Marcus Garcia is still interested in being a part, and he would be a possible GIS resource.

Gary Louie chimes saying he thought the GIS and Projects Committees were combined. Durden responds saying that this is just an initiative to get things in a useable form.

Pratt speaks up and says that the GIS information is for the crowd sourcing desires and preferences. Bob Manning replies and says yes, the people who obtained that data worked very hard and that information will be useful to the committee. Durden also adds that they have more information to add to the GIS data, and they hope to package the information in a way that is useful.

Evans clarifies that these three maps exist: one for vehicle transportation, one for pedestrian traffic and biking, and one that shows environmentally sensitive areas. The room nods in agreement.

Item 2: CONSIDER APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JUNE 29, 2021

Durden opens the floor for approval but says since there was not much time to review, they will vote at the next meeting to approve the minutes.

Item 3: PUBLIC COMMENT

Durden opens the floor for the first public comment opportunity. There were no comments made by the public at this time.

Item 4: CONSIDERATION OF COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Manning opens the discussion saying the committee has had issues meeting a quorum. He says he and Durden have contacted people that were valuable to the committee but have not been able to participate. He explains that the real issue is that when it comes time to make decisions as a committee, they will not be able to make their recommendations if they cannot meet a quorum.

Durden says he spoke with Dan Banks who has withdrawn from the committee. Marcus would like to still be involved but has significant pressures, but Durden gave him some options, and Marcus plans to decide soon. Durden says they plan to contact Comfort ISD and the Superintendent for the County.

Northern Hendricks speaks up and says if anyone is not receiving emails pertaining to the committee meeting, let her know and she will get them set up.

Evans agrees the committee cannot operate long-term without being able to vote on recommendations, and he offers his thoughts which include setting basic attendance requirements. He says that there should be a clear reason why members cannot attend and when they plan to return. He also suggests having a certain number of meetings that each member should attend per quarter or appoint an alternate. He explains also that there should also be a level of flexibility and understanding for personal matters.

Durden likes the idea of providing alternates.

John Kight speaks up and says he thinks if a member misses three meetings, that member should notify their sponsor and appoint someone else in their stead.

Del Eulberg suggests setting a time frame. Evans says there are 6 meetings in a quarter. If a member misses three meetings, that's half of the meetings missed. He suggests a formula to figure this out.

Durden says he has a general idea of how to forge forward on this matter. He tables it until the next meeting since there is no quorum for this meeting.

Item 5: DISCUSSION REGARDING TRAFFIC DATA

Kight kicks off the discussion by saying this is not a good time to be collecting traffic data with school being out and all the construction taking place with TxDOT. He says TxDOT has some traffic counts, but their numbers might not be sufficient for what they are hoping to find out. He says the important information is to find out where traffic is coming from and where they are going, not just the gross amount of traffic. He suggests sending cards to residences asking for survey information on how often a driver is going to a particular destination. In jest however, he says that that could cause issues within the home. He says if they could figure out a way to get that information in a discrete way, it would be helpful, but he considers that it is difficult with all the construction.

Durden says that school will not be out for much longer, but Pratt says TxDOT will be here indefinitely.

Durden notes that the idea is that if the committee is met with cynicism, they want to be able to defend their decisions, and have information to back up their recommendations.

Jeff Carroll chimes in to say that the City has traffic counters. Every week, they count one of their collector roads and have been doing that for years. They do not count the TxDOT roads, but he says he can share what the City counts are. They determine whether patrons are going north bound, east bound, etc. He says their data will reflect direction. These are the roads on the Major Thoroughfare roads though, they are not TxDOT roads.

Pratt asks Jeff if there is anything available for the downtown area. Carroll responds and says not Main Street because it is a TxDOT road.

Durden asks if they have correlated the data. Carroll responds and says there was a 3-4 lane conversion discussion for Blanco Road. The counts between the City and TxDOT were very close. He explains that the City purposely tried to correlate with TxDOT. Durden asks if they count on John's Road. Carroll replies yes.

Manning chimes in and says another aspect of downtown would be to deal with the myth of who is on Main Street. How many want to be there? How many 18-wheelers are there? How many are headed to Kerrville?

Carroll says TxDOT did a Bluetooth study from Highway 46 to Seguin. He said it was interesting to see how many trucks and cars were pinged in each surrounding area and the outer loops of San Antonio.

Ben Eldredge inquires whether it distinguishes commercial trucks, and Carroll replies no.

Durden notes that just because they ping in those areas might not mean very much, but it would be nice to have that data. He also mentions that Steve Sharma had discussed a streetlight program with video on an area for 24 hours.

Carroll says nowadays, lots of companies will not send someone out to do a traffic count. Instead, they will leave cameras rolling and have someone go back to watch the video to get the count.

Durden says TxDOT authorized a study along Main Street and he says they gathered data using the streetlights. He says it was interesting, provides useful data, and saves time. He hopes Steve will be able to get some of that information.

Tim Bannwolf chimes in and asks how many are turning at River Road and Main Street? He says that most traffic that comes into Main goes toward Kerrville and I-10. How much traffic is coming into Highway 46? He says those are the big intersections to gain information from.

Carroll says they are expecting a developers TIA that will study Herff Road and River Road. The plan is to begin that study once school starts back up. But he notes that any signal within two miles of their project locations will be beyond their scope of study.

Evans loves the idea of doing more research but wonders whether the committee is at a point where they can take what they already have and make some decisions. How much time do they have as a committee to do this?

Pratt says the conversation has fallen apart because the gateway issue was distinct from all historical data. Has something changed?

Bannwolf agrees that is the kicker—things have changed.

Carroll says Herff Road changed a lot of things.

Durden says his casual observation is that traffic going west has increased significantly over the years. Circling back to Evans' question, he hopes the committee will exist long enough to get their goals as a committee met.

Public commenter Adlestein says maybe the bigger plans it would be important to know where the traffic is going, but for short-term solutions he thinks things can be moved along quickly.

Durden notes that is a good point. The committee will not be able to solve all the traffic issues in Kendall County.

Stephen Zoeller says the targets for where traffic goes changes every day.

Adlestein responds saying some people may even be changing their normal routes to avoid the TxDOT projects and messes around town.

Carroll says people are making new shortcuts and finding back roads to get to where they are going now to avoid the TxDOT projects.

Evans agrees with Pratt—there were some challenges with the data, and it would make sense to look at it again. He says if traffic is coming to Main Street and turning right, maybe the drivers' purpose is to avoid getting caught in traffic messes elsewhere. He also notes that if we have regional truck data, what is there to be done with it after obtaining it? Either the committee does something to create a regional truck route, or they find ways to discourage it and find solutions in some other way. He says more studies would be helpful.

Eldredge says it seems like nothing anyone has ever tried to solve traffic problems has worked. Once capacity is created, all that happens is people move in to take it up. He notes that people are willing to commute, but he adds that when creating solutions, problems also arise with that. He worries that any solution the committee come up with will just result in there being more issues to solve later.

Evans says the only thing he has researched and seen work to solve problems is metering every road as a toll road, and the meter gets more expensive during the peak times. He says this is just a suggestion as a solution that does solve problems.

Kight chimes in and says for the committee to be wary of getting perceptions mixed up with reality.

Manning points out that the foreseeable future suggests the County will be doubling in size.

Durden says regarding traffic counts and data, he thinks the committee ought to assemble the best data they have and take TxDOTs counts, get it all on a logical record and try to analyze it and see where it falls. He says they can get new data from selected locations to answer any nagging questions. One lingering question would be what is the traffic composition on Main Street and River Road? How much is local and how much is thru traffic? He hopes this information will correlate with the committee recommendations.

Pratt chimes in with two thoughts—she says she thinks historical data is good to look at because of all the construction right now. She also asks if there is an available data cruncher?

Carroll says when it comes to transportation, the City hires consultants because none of the staff have any time.

Durden asks if the City hires for specific projects. Carroll responds that the City has a traffic engineer consultant that helps with a wide scope of projects. Durden notes that the County will hire for traffic estimates. He says that person could also help with data and crunching numbers.

Louie asks if the issue with the analysis of data would fall within tasks that could be taken on by a consultant.

Durden says the County has some traffic counts they could combine with the City traffic counts. He also asks about a travel demand model.

Northern says there is an interactive map with DDM data.

Durden responds and says this correlates with the travel demand per account, and the model can be tweaked.

Louie says it is important to think about what they will do with the numbers once they have them in hand.

Manning speaks up and says he thinks if they can quick gather and sort the data that the information they find can become part of their recommendations.

Evans adds that he thinks one of the things to consider is sometimes a company can hire all these researchers only to find in the end that the information they started with was sufficient to get the job done. He suggests maybe they do not need to know everything they are talking about; perhaps the answers are already within the data scope they have obtained.

Kight agrees and says that doing more research will more than likely tell the committee what they already know. He thinks moving ahead with what they have is logical. Address the issues that are here and now and continue looking at long-term solutions.

Eulberg also concurs, saying that the BISD and past studies information would be good to continue moving forward with. He explains that the way the projects subcommittee is approaching this is looking at the current problems, and then project what the next 10 years will look like. He says he could not tell you where the trucks are going, but he knows the school buses are having a hard time with connectivity in the subdivisions.

Durden agrees with his statement except that he notes part of the committee's commission is to address long-term congestion issues as well. It is just not the first thing the committee is focused on.

Kight says Old San Antonio needs attention. He suggests looking at options for expansion of that road, looking at both short-term and long-term solutions simultaneously.

Eulberg suggests that could be done in phases.

Eldredge also suggests looking at how to make the infrastructure more efficient.

Durden says he has heard the comments of the committee, and he asks for clarification on whether that is in response to his earlier mentioned plan.

Evans says maybe. He says he has a lot of nagging questions that might require more research and data.

Pratt chimes in and asks about 3351. Is it sufficient? What will make it a sufficient option? If it is not a viable option, does the committee have enough information to determine whether the area needs a new road?

Evans says he was just grand standing. He is happy with the plan Durden laid out. Durden says he is just trying to gauge a consensus.

Kight notes that one thing needed in Bergheim would be a turn for I-10. It is far from any entrance ramp. He says that could potentially start with turn lanes and flashing lights. If traffic gets bad, consider making it a 4-lane road. He thinks the ROW is ready for expansion.

Pratt says she knows the area needs sidewalks, crosswalks, thru-traffic options in neighborhoods, and a 3rd middle turn/median lane for turning to keep traffic flowing.

Durden opens the floor to Pratt to make any comments on the projects subcommittee. He refers the room to the agenda packets and the maps that can be found in the back. Pratt notes that having those maps in color would be very helpful. She says these maps highlight the places where the most growth is expected to happen which is confined mostly to areas along I-10. Does it make sense to expand Scenic Loop Road? She says the ROW that extends beyond that could connect to Upper Balcones. She says the projects subcommittee is looking at the growth within the quadrants. They are also looking at potentially building sidewalks on Main Street. She says perhaps there are other opportunities on Johns Road and I-10. She goes back to the maps saying those will be easier to understand if they can get them in color. She ends her statements by asking if Dr. Veni's presentation will be available in full?

Eldredge says he put it up on YouTube, and he sent it to Northern to see about getting it up on the committee website.

Pratt says she was amazed at how fragile parts of the county are. She says that Veni offered more and taking him up on his offer would be wise. She thinks it would be helpful for the committee in understanding the surrounding geology.

Eldredge says he also plans to follow up with Andy Glusenkamp on his presentation.

Kight asks about getting more information on karst in the east quadrant.

Pratt says they have good information and that there is a whole system that goes up toward Kreuzberg.

Evans says the TSS database is not exhaustive by any means. There are a lot of caves on private lands, but no one has been able to really look at those areas. He hopes any surveying can be done before purchasing land to build roads on.

Manning agrees, saying a trained eye should be surveying those grounds carefully.

Pratt she is more interested in getting an overview from Veni to see if there are further actions to take.

Manning tells her there is a slide for solutions and that Veni made an offer to do some brainstorming on general suggestions. He also says that having all data, information, and presentations from speakers that have come in to help them would be great resources to put on the website.

Louie chimes in saying that even though there is focus on learning more about the east quadrant, he says there will be some response. He also notes his intrigue on Veni's presentation, saying it was very compelling. He thinks that would be great to have on the website.

Eldredge closes with another thought on clarifying with developers how they can facilitate creating connectors between subdivisions.

Item 6: PUBLIC COMMENT

Durden opens the floor for any member of the public hoping to comment. No comments from the public attendees were made at this time.

Item 7: ADJOURNMENT

The committee adjourned at 3:13 p.m.