

Summary

The work of the TPCC should be commended in important areas. Conducting traffic counts, identifying problems associated with growth and dialogue about perceived future needs are useful products of the TPCC Report. This minority opinion should not be construed as a personal criticism or implying a lack of time and dedication by members of the TPCC.

In response to the task given by Commissioners Court, the TPCC has proposed 15 mobility projects. The stated goal of this task was to identify existing and future mobility needs and propose solutions. The constraints included giving priority to existing roadways and rights of way.

In order to do this, the Committee, as non-professionals, tried to estimate load capacity projections. Accuracy in projection is necessary to identify mobility needs. In the case of this Report, the TPCC used its assumptions to recommend solutions. As the Report states:

“These load projection maps formed the foundation of the model the Committee used to quantify its analysis and to determine the additional road capacity needed.”

There were so many variables involved in this process that the Committee itself recommends that they not be relied on without further research. In spite of this admission of the need for further study, professional input, consultants and other caveats included in the Report, the recommendation is still made to *“immediately begin acting on the recommendations of this Report,”* adopting it as the County thoroughfare plan.

The scope of projects with their undetermined costs and potential impacts has been problematic throughout this process. Accuracy in projection and land use planning are vital to determining mobility solutions, yet this Committee was only able to approach this process in a subjective way, with limited capabilities to evaluate different scenarios and alternatives.

Experienced professional transportation planners utilizing software programs such as Synchro and CORSIM, have the capabilities to evaluate complicated mobility needs much more accurately. Synchro software has the ability to model existing and future traffic conditions and present the impact of various design alternatives. It can evaluate scenarios that illustrate the impacts of future development and various access and lane configuration alternatives. CORSIM is able to do a corridor simulation model.

As an example, a professional study on Main Street in Boerne by HDR/WHM and TxDOT, utilized these programs and reported in March that basic improvements such as medians, turn lanes, moving 90 parking spots and improved light signalization, would achieve an acceptable level of service for the next ten years. The TPCC had just spent over a year calculating it would take several multi-million dollar projects in added capacity and new routes to accomplish this same goal. According to the TPCC, the largest proposed ‘bypass,’ the NE Connector, is projected to only contribute 9% more capacity to a small portion of Main St., which remains congested due to local traffic. This professional study by HDR indicates that the application of certain alternatives would produce a significant capacity improvement that members of this Committee were

either unable to calculate accurately, overlooked or had eliminated as an alternative for citizens to consider.

This Minority Report provides background information on:

- 1) Implications of accurate projections for the NE Connector and the HDR/TxDOT Study of Main Street
- 2) Level of expertise and accurate evaluations
- 4) Master Plan application
- 5) Environmental issues

In order to secure an accurate, cost responsible and equitable process for Kendall County citizens, we support the following order of recommendations:

1) Have the City and County conduct professional studies to determine the current and future potential capacities for key roads.

This work would allow for the complicated process of analyzing intersections and running various scenarios for land use and traffic patterns. One of the most critical roadways, Main in Boerne, is already under going study. This better supports one of the original mandates given to the TPCC to utilize existing roads wherever possible.

2) Using information from these studies, engage in a joint process to identify the most effective solutions, including ones identified by the TPCC. The costs of various options should be identified.

This is important to insure that all alternatives are considered and that further participation and prioritization by citizens is allowed. Given the political nature and community concerns, this should be facilitated by an objective planner.

3) Adopt a Master Thoroughfare Plan

The TPCC recommends adoption of their Report as quickly as possible, in spite of significant problems. Up until the last hour, the Report contained the recommendation to: 1) adopt a thoroughfare plan quickly based on this Report; 2) conduct traffic impact studies; then 3) hire a consultant. This rationale appears faulty. What are the implications of adopting a plan that by its own admission is not comprehensive enough in its scope; is based on limited knowledge, resources and ability and departs from standard procedures due to their level of complexity?

Adopting a master thoroughfare plan after verification of need and consideration of a full range of alternatives will prevent several consequences that would be detrimental to the citizens of Kendall County. Roads on maps begin to create their own dynamic that impacts decisions by property owners. This approach has a proven history of creating a domino affect, influencing people's lives and decisions about their future. It creates anger, worry, grief and misunderstanding. It clouds people's property and raises questions of disclosure laws in selling real estate, which in turn raises issues of 'takings'. Some members of the TPCC have spent time with landowners privately negotiating routes from the beginning of this process. This approach fuels speculation for development, which leads to pressure on decision makers from speculators to follow

through on 'suggested' routes that have not been supported by professional evaluation as to their need or environmental and other impacts. The urgency cited for an immediate need to preserve ROW should be evaluated more closely as to time frames and development agreements. This is urged as the main reason for adopting a plan now, and doing a more thorough analysis later. New developments associated with this concern are under the oversight of the City of Boerne. Traffic impact and feasibility studies will be conducted for these potential developments. There is no reason why this process cannot be integrated into a larger process of transportation planning.

These realities speak strongly to the need for a high standard of thoroughness, accuracy and credibility- qualities that I believe the TPCC Committee values for its neighbors. The County would do well to apply the information and wisdom gained from this process and prudently recommend that these studies should take place first, then confirm correct solutions and finally, have the Court adopt a plan.