

# **Kendall County – Boerne – Fair Oaks Transportation Committee Minutes**

**02 November 2021**

**2:00 – 4:04 p.m.**

## **In Attendance:**

Don Durden, Bob Manning, John Kight, Stephen Zoeller, Bryce Boddie, Gary Louie, Bitsy Pratt, Northern Hendricks, Marcus Garcia, Rich Sena, Ben Eldredge, Steve Sharma, Jeff Carroll, Jonah Evans, Bobby Balli, Del Eulberg, Tim Bannwolf.

## **Not in Attendance:**

Henry Acosta, Josh Limmer, Kim Blohm, and Rankin D’Spain.

## **Item 1: OPENING REMARKS**

Don Durden opens the meeting at exactly 2:00pm. He thanks the City of Boerne for their hospitality in offering an alternative for this meeting to be held in the City Council Chambers as an election is taking place on this date in the Staff Training Room. He offers a copy of the October 5<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes to anyone who would like one. He also requests that any public commenters approach the lectern and speak into the microphone if they have anything to contribute to the meeting.

Bob Manning makes a comment encouraging everyone to vote.

## **Item 2: CONSIDER APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF OCTOBER 5, 2021**

Durden opens the floor for consideration of the minutes from the meeting held on October 5, 2021. The meeting minutes from October 19, 2021 will be considered at the next meeting.

Gary Louie makes a motion to approve the minutes from October 5, 2021. Stephen Zoeller seconds the motion. With no objections, the minutes are adopted.

## **Item 3: PUBLIC COMMENT**

Nolan Keuhn steps up to the lectern. He introduces himself and says he is an interested citizen and a cyclist. He noted there was another cycling death at Liberty. The last time he spoke at one of these meetings he discussed safety and is asking for dedicated hike/bike trails. He turns the floor over to his friend Lee Wheeler.

Wheeler makes his way to the lectern and introduces himself before making a proposal. He says he has been a long-time resident of Fair Oaks Ranch. He explains that there never used to be very many traffic problems, but with changes in the community over the years (new schools, population increase, etc.), it's time for those issues to be addressed. He discusses reckless drivers, trash on the roads, and an incident where a female cyclist he knew was struck by a vehicle while out for a ride. His proposal is a suggestion for a bike trail in this area like the nature trail that is near the Drury Inn off I-10. He closes his statement and thanks the committee for listening.

Keuhn introduces George Hall, another fellow cyclist. Hall explains that he has been hit twice while cycling. He understands that not everyone rides a bicycle, and constructing a safe trail is not a priority for many. He notes that he has been cycling in the area for 24 years and there is not an instance that he knows of where a person has been ticketed for hitting a pedestrian, and maybe it is time to start taking a different approach. He suggests holding people who hit pedestrians accountable with a license suspension or fines. Everyone drives, so he thinks this would be a good way to keep pedestrians safer.

Lance Kyle steps up to the lectern next. He says he sent an email to the committee earlier regarding Wurzbach Parkway in San Antonio which he says has been mentioned during these meetings a couple of times as a possible template for building in environmentally sensitive areas around Boerne. He asks the committee to consider that a parkway of this nature may not be beneficial for Kendall County's needs. He says the parkway is not limited access and has 20 exits, it is not an elevated parkway (it is primarily surface he says), the width is between 4-6 lanes (as opposed to 2 lanes), it is not in a true greenfield space, and it does not connect directly to I-10 or I-35; he says it is primarily a service road. He notes that he rode the

parkway recently and does not find it reminds him of a *true* parkway. He says the parkway through the Blue Ridge mountains would be more accurate, noting that those roads are truly limited in width and access. He says that Wurzbach is more urbanized.

John Kight says that much of Kyle's statement is misleading, and since he played a role in building Wurzbach Parkway, he'd like to respond. Durden reminds Kight that typically the committee members do not respond to public comment, but he gives Kight a few minutes to speak to it. Kight clarifies that "limited access road" means no driveways. The only access points are from the major streets that were grade separated—so there would be 2 entrances and 2 exits for each major grade separation. He says second, Wurzbach Parkway is a super arterial which is how he designed it; it's not a freeway, but it's not just a normal street. It is a grade separated superstreet. Third, no it does not connect to IH-10 or IH-35. The east end connects to O'Connor Road which connects to 35, and Wurzbach does connect to I-10 on the west end. He tied it into existing streets so there would not be a need for more streets—why build more streets if you don't have to? It is a surface road because it is an environmentally sensitive recharge area. He also says that the Blue Ridge Parkway is in a rural area, whereas they are discussing an urban area here.

#### **Item 4:      CONSIDERATION OF CERTAIN PROJECTS – NORTHERN HENDRICKS**

Durden opens the floor for Northern Hendricks to begin her presentation. He says that he and Manning have some conceptual outlines of policies to discuss if there is time afterward. He notes that they will hear from the City of Fair Oaks Ranch at the next meeting. Bobby Balli says they will begin to consider some controversial projects and hopes that if anyone has concerns, they will attend and make their thoughts known.

Hendricks takes the floor. She says that the projects they will be reviewing are not related to Fair Oaks Ranch or any greenfield areas. She thanks the members that were able to spend some time whittling down more projects with her and got the comments reduced to 25 automotive suggestions to discuss. She mentions that there are some pedestrian suggestions in the mix as well.

The first public comment is at Highway 46 East and Pleasant Valley. There is a general safety concern in this location. The committee agrees it should be something to make TxDOT aware of. With that, it is included in the recommendations for further review.

Next up is a comment concerns the widening of Highway 46 West. The suggestion is for a 4-lane highway and turn lanes. Jonah Evans notes that the discussion that took place in the subcommittee breakout concerned the congestion at the intersections. Rich Sena says that with the rapid growth in the area, he worries what the road situation will be like considering the houses that will eventually be built along that area. Kight chimes in and says there isn't enough ROW to widen it anyway. He suggests concentrating on turn lanes. Durden thinks they should consider it and put it in a bucket for TxDOT suggestions; it's important to take a stance on. With that, this suggestion is included in the recommendation for further review.

The area of discussion is Highway 1376 north of high 474 in the County. The recommendation is for a center passing lane and shoulders. Evans notes that this area is very rural and never struck him as a place that would be a top priority for congestion issues. Bryce Boddie notes that it can be particularly dangerous for trailers and cyclists. With that, this suggestion is included in the recommendations for final review.

Guardrails on Highway 1376 is next on the list. This comment has already been addressed and is not included in the recommendations for final review.

Next up is a long-term plan to widen 3351 and the stops at Highway 46. Bitsy Pratt chimes in to note that there is not a lot of growth happening in that area. Balli says the crowdsourcing concern is for 4 lanes and a turning lane with on-off ramping to I-10 through Fair Oaks Ranch. He explains that a lot of Boerne traffic would disappear. Durden says they will table this one for now and discuss it at the next meeting.

A suggestion for Boerne Stage Road for improvements for future congestion. Jeff Carroll notes that this was on the Interim Report. Marcus Garcia asks Carroll if the north/south corridor will tie into the existing

development. Carroll says there will be a gap between Regent Park and Buc-ee's. With that, it is included in the recommendations for final review.

There is some discussion about connectivity between subdivisions by opening subdivision gates. Carroll mentions that the HOA's of the subdivisions are against keeping their gates open because they do not want any thru traffic making their way through the neighborhoods. Evans notes that it seems to be the norm that HOAs of neighborhoods keep their gates closed for that reason, but the community is in favor of connectivity. Boddie notes that keeping gates closed slows emergency vehicles down. He points out that the crowdsourcing information is in favor of connectivity between the subdivisions. Manning asks about keeping the gates open for school hours to which Carroll replies that there have been many conversations about that, but there have been no changes to make that happen. Durden asks if the problem is legal or political, and whether City Council would be able to mandate that the gates remain open. Balli says that they should pose this as a policy issue. Evans notes that from a public transportation perspective, this makes sense. The committee agrees to move this forward in the recommendations for final review.

There is another comment for connectivity between the Bentwood Subdivision and Champion Heights. Carroll says that this is part of the Major Thoroughfare Plan, but he wants to make everyone aware that Champion will extend all the way north to the East/West Adler connection. Durden asks if extending Champion would create a connection to Bentwood, and Carroll says yes—it would create a vehicular connection. There is some discussion on whether a pedestrian connection would be helpful for kids on their way to and from school. Carroll says there is a detention pond located where there could be a connection made. Garcia chimes in and says that if there are more connections, there will be less traffic congestion in that one location alone. This suggestion is included in the recommendations for final review.

The next recommendation from the crowdsourcing comments is for a connection from City Park Road to Herff Ranch Blvd with dual lanes, bike lanes, and sidewalks. Evans says that this would be a hard sell considering that City Park Road is iconic to the community. This suggestion is not included in the recommendations for final review.

The next recommendation is for speed bumps on City Park Road because teens will drag race through that area and drive irresponsibly. Carroll reminds the committee that the City's policy is not for speed bumps because they do not really work. Pratt suggests that police could be the answer instead. Manning suggests that perhaps City policy needs to change. He thinks if the committee wants speed bumps there, they should move the suggestion forward. Donna Taylor in the audience speaks up and suggests raised crosswalks instead. Carroll says that is something they can look at if they can acquire the easement from the fairgrounds. This is included in the recommendations for final review.

A request for slower speeds on Fuller Drive is up next. It is included in the recommendations for final review.

A suggestion for drop-off locations for buses at HEB is up next for discussion. Pratt notes that there have been other discussions for that at places like Walmart and Walgreens as well for the ART buses. Manning thinks they should move it forward to make a statement that the community is pushing for something like this. He says he would be optimistic for HEB to listen to that request. With that, it is included in the recommendations for final review. Pratt suggests making a note for the suggestion to be extended to other businesses as well.

A suggestion for Frontage Road coming off I-10 W needing to get to Ranger Creek Road—it is very difficult for vehicles exiting the freeway to come to a stop on the steep hill. Hendricks says there are no TxDOT plans that go this far north that she knows of. It's a tricky turn but a sensitive area because of the nearby Cibolo Creek. Del Eulberg says there is a brand-new road as soon as you turn off the exit right before the left turn that goes to the right. Kight says there is limited ROW. Hendricks says the folks at Shoreline Park would use this exit. Boddie says as a planning effort they should keep it. With that, the suggestion is included in the recommendations for final review.

A comment about the north exchange from IH-10 to Business 87 where the blinking light is at is up next for discussion. Boddie notes that the light is not very old, and it blinks on both sides of the road. How well a person can

navigate the intersection depends on how familiar they are with the area. The committee agrees to address it, and it is included in the recommendations for final review.

A comment about backed up traffic on Johns Road from Fabra is up next. Hendricks says she does not know if the projects subcommittee's recommendation will fully address the issue. Pratt suggests a roundabout. Carroll says the recent adoption of the EDC added stacking and staging with the hope that future schools would not run into this problem. This is included in the recommendations for final review.

A turn lane from IH-10 to Tapatio Springs Resort is next on the list of suggestions. Kight says you could squeeze a turn-lane in there but Pratt notes there is not a lot of development happening out there. Hendricks notes that the BISD report projected that several thousand homes could fit in that area. Sena expects more density in that area at some future point. It is included in the recommendations for final review.

The next comments says that the Ranger Creek Subdivision is very dangerous for bike/ped. There are no streetlights or shoulders, and vehicles tend to speed through the area. Unfortunately, it is a County road and not a City Road. It is not included in the recommendations.

A recommendation for traffic fixing traffic congestion at Scenic Loop and Frontage Road is determined to have already been addressed and is marked as a duplicate.

Improvements for Upper Balcones for future developments in the southeast quadrant. Hendricks says the idea is for improvements for the connectors. Pratt mentions a center turn lane for that road. It is included in the recommendations for final review.

A comment about the backed-up traffic on Upper Balcones where Starbucks sits at the IH-10 access road is up next. Steve Sharma says that area has been addressed and it is a lot better now with the recent improvements. Sena notes that anything to improve Upper Balcones is critical. Durden opts to move it forward. It may fall out at some point, but eventually it will need to be upgraded to be a 3-lane road.

Traffic back-up at Waring Welfare Road out near Don Strange Ranch is the next comment. Durden says this is not a transportation issue, it's an event and issue that circles back to the business. It is not included in the recommendations for final review.

Hendricks concludes and says that is all for auto-centric comments that are not in Fair Oaks Ranch.

#### **Item 5: DISCUSSION OF POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS TO DATE**

Evans poses a question about controversial projects and asks if there is some form of outreach they can create for landowners. He says that the future intentions of the landowners might be an important factor on whether the committee will support a particular project.

Ben Eldredge agrees, saying that it would be good to hear feedback from potentially affected landowners since they are working to be as transparent as possible.

Durden says that if there are landowners who want to come and express their side, the committee welcomes that, but the committee must make the best decisions they can for the community. He notes their efforts to consider the developmental, environmental, and other factors to make their recommendations. There may be additional discussion to be had once the recommendations become more specific.

Evans says that if they called landowners, they could get started on creating a map that would help them plan a route that would have a lesser impact on landowner's and their properties. Balli notes that is a bit premature whether they are looking at green fields or crosswalks, these ideas are very preliminary. He says this is the most open he has seen a committee be.

Manning weighs in by saying if they are talking about generalities, such as a north/south connection between Hwy 46 and I-10, those can go in the policy bucket. He recalls that drawing lines on green field spaces was how they had discussed distinguishing their work from previous efforts.

Balli chimes in again and says that one of the things that happens when lines start being drawn on a map is that there are all kinds of uncertainty created for the landowner. He urges that the committee needs to think about that.

Durden says they are only discussing green field projects at this point, but he asks for clarification: if the committee gives a recommendation for improvements on Scenic Loop Road, are they to contact landowners even before they include it as a recommendation? None of the committee members speak up in agreement to that, but Evans chimes in and says that it would be a matter of scale. If there is a recommendation for the widening of a road in a very rural area, there are people who may be disappointed by that, but it could have a minor impact. He says it would be about a “gut feeling” of the community.

Louie chimes in and says the committee has no authority to do that; the committee are just formulating recommendations. It is premature for them to be knocking on doors, but perhaps this could be something they include in the policy recommendations for better public awareness when it comes to road improvements.

Pratt explains that perhaps they need to begin a conversation about defining the needs of the community. She says the projects subcommittee made a lot of recommendations based on need.

Durden says there has been trouble with traffic counts. TxDOT has gathered traffic data and he has spent the last two weeks digging through their findings and discovered good patterns. He'd like to present that information. He says he was surprised to find how little traffic there is on Highway 3351 compared to Herff Road. He explains that looking at the numbers will help drive some of their decisions.

Pratt says they need to sort through what the traffic is doing.

Durden suggests these things for the policy bucket:

1. That there are recommendations from the community to expand and upgrade existing roads before implementing green field projects when other considerations are more or less equal.
2. That the County adopt a Major Thoroughfare Plan within the ETJ.
3. That the City and County adopt consistent roadway classifications and geometries for ROW and roadways.
4. That developments have more options for vehicle and pedestrian connections to adjacent developments.
5. That the City should:
  - Pursue a downtown development plan that includes assuming responsibility for Business 87 from Point A to Point B
  - Develop public parking facilities
  - Improve pedestrian facilities
  - Consider trolley/shuttle from remote parking areas
6. The City should develop a public transportation plan that is financially viable.
7. Develop policies that limit density and provide protection in environmentally sensitive areas.
8. That the City incorporate a mass transit parking spot/drop off location for shuttles.

He urges the committee to consider these things and have more discussion as they continue.

Balli chimes in and says there was talk of developing policies that allow private participation of development of roadways and infrastructure relating to pedestrians and vehicular traffic, but not just within the footprint of a subdivision. He talks about forming a policy recommendation that allows an entity to go to a developer and team up to create a development and split the costs. Durden tells him to go ahead and form some wording, and they can include it.

Evans says an idea he has been thinking a lot about dealing with pinch points at intersections to address congestion before addressing the widening of roads.

Durden says that Garcia approached him with thoughts about subject matter experts. Garcia says that he has been working with the City of Fredericksburg on a downtown parking analysis and turning it into a grant application with Goodman Corporation. Eldredge says they work with cities on operating parking structures as hubs for transportation. It is a general interest of the committee, and Durden suggests hearing more about them later this year.

Eldredge says Mr. Keuhn reached out to him suggesting that they hear from a gentleman at Bike Texas about some ideas and things they are doing down in McAllen, Texas. They are putting in extensive trail networks and it has increased tourism and the city is benefitting from that.

#### **Item 6: DISCUSSION OF SELECTED SECTIONS OF THE DRAFT REPORT**

Durden decides to skip this segment and review later as adjournment time approaches. He wants to ensure time for a second round of public comments.

#### **Item 7: PUBLIC COMMENT**

Durden opens the floor for public comments.

Vialissa Gerhard steps up to the lectern to express her concern for the landowners that will be affected by the committee's decisions. She says this committee has a responsibility to ensure that landowners are aware of items and changes being discussed before putting any "lines" on a map. She says these committee meetings are at 2pm on Tuesdays which makes it tough for people who work to attend. She explains that she did not know these meetings were available until this past summer, which was when she began attending. She also says her neighbors do not attend meetings like this because they do not think they will ever be directly affected. She closes by saying she believes landowners should be directly informed.

#### **Item 8: ADJOURNMENT**

The committee adjourned at 4:04pm.