

**DRAFT FOR APPROVAL - Minutes for the Travis County
Citizens Bond Advisory Committee
PUBLIC OUTREACH MEETING
Wednesday, June 22, 2011, at 6:30 P.M.
Travis County East Service Center
6011 Blue Bluff Road, Austin**

Attendees:

Committee Member:	Representing:	Travis County Staff:	Affiliation:
Joyce Thoresen	Precinct 1	Steve Manilla	TNR Staff
John Williams	Precinct 1	Wendy Scaperotta	TNR Staff
Thomas Fritzingler	Precinct 1	Charlie Watts	TNR Staff
Jeffery W. Travillion, Sr.	Precinct 2	Stacey Scheffel	TNR Staff
Carolyn Vogel	Precinct 3	Steve Sun	TNR Staff
Joe Gieselman	Precinct 4	Randy Nicholson	TNR Staff
Celia Israel	Judge	Laura Seaton	TNR Staff
Terrence L. Irion	Judge	Robert Armistead	TNR Staff
Nell Penridge	Judge		
Commissioner Ron Davis	Commissioner Precinct 1		

Guests:

Keith Stone	Dave Gunlock	Kristina Kubeck
Jack Gullahorn	Joann Gunlock	Anne Brockenbrough
Charles Schnabel	Nelda Escobar	Ron L. Kinney
Audrey Dearing	Tina Walker	Feli Chavez
Gerald Thurman	James Whiteley	Ray Thoresen
Carolyn Thurman	Deone Wilhite	Melia O'Dell
Sharon Bramblett	Karen Ford	
Claud Bramblett	Mike McNamara	

Commencement of Meeting

Meeting called to order at 6:40 P.M.

Presentations by TNR Staff

Mr. Charlie Watts, Roadway, Safety and Bike/Pedestrian Projects
 Ms. Stacey Scheffel, Drainage and Bridge Safety Projects
 Ms. Wendy Scaperotta, Parks and Land Conservation Projects

Citizen Communication

Mr. Keith Stone, RE: Cameron Road – west of SH130

A landowner on Cameron Road, spoke in support of the Cameron Road improvement west of US 130 project. Leads to the new commercial Executive Airport which opened June 7, 2011, which will bring a lot of commercial development to the area. The road is part of CAMPO plan to be eventually a six-lane road, this plan is for initial four-lanes of the CAMPO recommendations. Meets connectivity criteria, has secured 60% of the right-of-way, and one small section of the project is in the City of Austin limits and is being improved as part of their Howard Lane improvement project. Service to two future school sites and NE Metro Park. Shared current photographs of several sections of the road to show various aspects of the road today, highlighting it's inadequacies.

Mr. Jack Gullahorn, RE: Cameron Road – west of SH130

Spoke in support of Cameron Road west of US 130. Talked of how this is the most expensive project on the list of current proposed projects. Northeast Travis County has been a "desired development zone" for awhile now; growth in the unincorporated areas are not zoned and has limited environmental concerns, and this project leverages the County's investment in many ways. Cameron Road provides linkage to many major transportation arterials, projected business and residential development centers and is a key connector for many present and future communities.

Mr. Charles Schnabel, RE: Cameron Road – west of SH130

Agrees with Jack Gullahorn's testimony. His property is at the corner of Pecan Street and Cameron Road. In 1980, he would wave at the couple of trucks that went by. Now there is a stream of cars and a very dangerous intersection there. Concerned about the additional 2000 houses being built in the coming Carmel (Karma?) housing development, It is important to have the infrastructure in place before future development. It is happening now and it is their (the Committee's, government's?) job to make sure we are prepared for it.

Mr. Gerald Thurman, RE: Cameron Road – west of SH130

Some of his points have already been expressed by previous speakers; will share his thoughts about the lack of improvements to Cameron Road since the 1920s. His uncle farmed the area and his mules and wagons hauled the gravel to build the original road. He moved there when he was seven years old. When waiting for the school bus he would watch three cars go by and he knew all three of them and those three cars came back in the afternoon. Not that way now, he thinks literally thousands of cars go by. His property is at Gilliland Creek and Cameron Road. If he tries to pull out of his driveway at 7:30 a.m. he will have to

wait for about 40 cars to go by before he can get a break. Cameron Road draws traffic from all around the area for access including off US130 to get to other places. Wells Branch will be expanded. Cameron Road is basically the same road it was in the 1920s other than new asphalt. There is a blind corner on the bridge, right by his house. He sees often cars coming to the blind curve at a high rate of speed. Just sharing a picture of what is out there on Cameron Road. Give this project a real serious look.

Ms. Audrey Dearing, RE: Cameron Road – west of SH130

Very little I can add and everything they have said is valid. Been there since 1959. Lives at the end of the runway of the new airport so I have seen some changes since then including all the cut through traffic. It has been difficult to get out of my own driveway. Would very nice to have this road improved. Appreciate your consideration and that you do it.

Mr. Dave Gunlock, RE: Road projects eastern Travis County, Precinct 1

Vice-president of the Park Springs Neighborhood Association yet here representing himself. Lives on Brown's Cemetery Road off Blake Manor Road. Connector 973- Blake Manor around the Wildhorse subdivision is needed now but is really needed in the future because we have a lot of subdivisions coming on in the area. In support of the Old Highway 20 Bridge project. A few years ago they did build the longer bridge, but neglected the short bridge and it is a one lane bridge. All the school buses use that bridge, not just east but also west. We do need that bridge – maybe not rebuilt because it is a historical bridge – with additional lanes. The traffic is heavy right now due to five subdivisions currently built and lived in. Those people come right through Manor to the one lane bridge to get to Parmer Lane and 290. They are all heading to work. Five more subdivisions coming on, 13,258 rooftops, which doesn't include apartment buildings. All of them are feeding 973, up Taylor Lane to Blake-Manor, a two-lane farm to market road. The road is breaking up real bad. Lady sued the County, she was bike riding along the road, her tire got stuck in a crack and she fell, and she won. The County doesn't have the money to pay for these suits and neither do I as a tax payer. I am supporting the connectors and the bridge; they need to be upgraded immediately.

Ms. Sharon S. Bramblett, RE: Bond Projects

Supports everything Dave just said, except that it is very important that the Blake-Manor Connector and the Wildhorse Connector be approved. I know they are separate but they are really a unit. Standing alone will not do the job. Since this area is where the County and City are putting all the development, it makes sense to do it now so you don't wind up with another Cameron Road. Up to you to make that decision. There will be deaths. There is already one school and there are plans for a high school near East Metro Park so it makes sense to do

this now because it will be much more efficient until waiting until after there are deaths and wrecks. The high school and middle school is at Hog Eye, land is already purchased. The Old Highway 20 Bridge is also very important. When we were coming in today, we saw an 18 wheeler try to get over it and got off the highway by the school since there is room for him turn around. We all had to wait for him coming here today. Dangerous for the kids, the school buses all have to cross this bridge to get in and out of the base yard. Also very interested in conservation easements, particularly at Wilbarger Creek. Makes sense to do it now. Avoid the problems Gilliland Creek has now.

Ms. Nelda Escobar, RE: Secondary entrance/exit Austin's Colony

Lives in Austin's Colony, supports the secondary access project so please approve it. She has no children and wondered why one day it took her 45 minutes to get out of her neighborhood. She knew there was a new school being built yet had not realized it had opened. Need improvements to FM 969. People are moving out to the area because it has the best of both worlds; close to the city yet far enough away for peace and quiet. Now it is a problem. Also need the secondary access to Austin's Colony. Always worried when she hears of a brush fire. Only way one way out to FM 969, what are we going to do? Questioning the secondary access. Could there be an alternate route that doesn't go to 969, again if there is a brush fire, both routes would be going the same way, yet would be grateful for anything that helps.

Mr. James Whiteley, RE: Cameron Road West

Lives a half mile east off Cameron Road. I think I know why the traffic is so bad: 2008, 2009, 2010 I had to go to Austin fairly frequently and it is the shortest way to get there. That is why people use it. Traffic is very bad. Agree with the previous speakers: wavy bumpy road, dangerous T-intersection, dangerous bridge. Ask for your consideration.

Mr. Mike McNarama, RE: Arterial A, Tuscan Extension

In support of Arterial A and Tuscan South. Lived in Walnut Place, past president of the HOA. Lived there almost 20 years. They have watched things change over the years. Because of the location between 183, 290 and Cameron Road it has become a cut-through. Commissioner has helped by putting part of Tuscan Way through. Just yesterday I was coming home right there and good thing that new intersection was there because as I looked up there was an 18-wheeler doing a 180 turning around in that intersection so he wouldn't pass through the neighborhood where it said no trucks. We have a lot of pass through traffic there and it is a safety issue for the neighbors there. We have a lot of speeding traffic, even with the speed circles. Some of them look like a bomb hit it because folks hit them and blow up the curbs and the signs. Please keep the funding for Arterial A because I know the residential areas will be built above there, forcing

more traffic back down through our neighborhood if we don't have an adequate release valve. It is a beautiful neighborhood, built between two creeks, lots of nature, but if we don't protect it will be wiped out and we've got to fight for the livability of our neighborhood. Look at the high priority of public safety and the pass through traffic leads to more crime. If he had to choose between the two ... you need to do them both, but do the roads.

Ms. Kristina Kubeck, RE: Tuscany South, Arterial A

Also from Walnut Place since 1976. Support Tuscany South and Arterial A. Both important for different reasons. Greatly needed for the neighborhood and businesses. Tuscany needs to be completed. US290 upgrade with fleets of trucks will use Tuscany Way to get in and out. Tuscany South will give them another route to 183. Arterial A has been desperately needed for many years. Homes have multiplied but new roads have not been built to keep up. Arterial A will give some relief to all the cut-through traffic. Walnut Place was built in the 1960s and 1970s, not protected like modern neighborhoods are now. Springdale Road has 23 dangerous driveways. Only road from the east, Springdale Road. Problem during rush hours, constant, can't get out, it's a mess. Keep Arterial A moving forward.

Ms. Anne Brockenbrough, RE: To encourage Travis County to support land conservation in eastern Travis County

Supports land conservation and green space and grateful for the foresight to preserving land. Texas leads the nation in acres lost to development and Travis County is one of the fastest growing Counties, and eastern Travis County is a desired development zone so the east is most at risk. With neighbors she formed the Wilbarger Creek Conservation Alliance to preserve historic farmland. First lands settled in Travis County: has historic sites, is a wildlife corridor, willing to preserve the farms and ranches for the wildlife and water quality. Bikers use the area. Keep it green for the public. Keeping the land in Ag makes the County money as opposed to development which costs the County money. My neighborhood, Wilbarger Creek, Parks Springs Neighborhood Association. Trying to preserve between Parson Road and Biting Springs Road. Seven creeks converge, wildlife preserve, post oak meets the black land prairie. Example, in Portland, Oregon, kept farm land, taxes went down 22% compared to Atlanta where sprawl went unchecked and property taxes went up 29%. Major public benefit to persevering the land, using County money for conservation easements: the Federal government will multiply, will keep everyone's property taxes low, plus the scenic aspect, animals, water quality, and keeping food sources near the city.

Mr. Jeremiah Jarvis, RE: Conservation Easements

With the Pines and Prairie Land Trust. All the 52 new people coming into town every day will need food. Current subdivisions have been the buffer between the City and the food-producing people. The buffer is now being filled out will soon be urban, then rural. Folks still farming the east, the most fertile farm land in Texas. If they leave their land to their children, they will be forced to pay inheritance tax based on the more expensive developed land. Yet if they conserve it, sell their development rights, the value of the land is reduced, they can continue to farm it, and can leave it as farm land and keep producing food. \$7.5 million in there so far and it can be leveraged a great deal. And those talking about the roads that are needed for the new folks, talk about the beauty, peacefulness and quite and this a great way to keep it that way. In everybody's interest to keep this fertile land viable to keep producing food and let the development happen in the areas that are not so good at that. It is among the best in Texas.

Ms. Melia O'Dell, RE: FM 96 improvement bonds

In favor of improvements to FM 969. She is on the Austin's Colony Board of Directors not officially representing them yet have heard a lot of others who are in favor as well. More affordable homes, starter homes with young families with children, parents may work two jobs, can't be here tonight. Has lived there almost 12 years, travels FM 969. A few years ago her neighbor, who drove a little tiny car, was broadsided not too far from here. Driving on FM 969, someone pulled out and T-ed into another car with three kids in the car. A family was StarFlighted, hit at the church at the dangerous curve. Mother and two young children were killed when a vehicle came off the toll road and hit them on FM 969. She has 16-year old son getting his permit soon and is scared to death about letting him drive FM 969. Also there is an elementary school, a middle school, the Kip Academy. All these kids (families) use FM 969 to get to school everyday. Some improvements have been made and grateful for those. Asked for clarification of why the plans to improve FM 969 are not in the bond package due to alternative funding? How we can guarantee it is funded? Committee explained this to her. Also believes that traffic on 969 will increase with the new 290 toll road as folks avoid that area. Rio Davida area, poised for development. Even more traffic on 969.

Ms. Karen Ford, RE: Pass through Financing, Conservation easements - importance

She has pass through financing experience in Hays County. They had a bond in 2008 that was passed that paid for a pass through financing project. It actually helped them sell the bond, the pay back from the State. US 290 project, they completed fairly quickly, their experience was they got paid back quickly, too. She thinks it was tied to traffic counts. Also supports conservation easements and protecting the waterways and watersheds. There are economic benefits, the conservation agreement tool and how it can help the County. She can answer any questions. Reviewing the benefits: drinking water quality, protect

watersheds, wildlife habitat, buffer to parks, farmland conservation, floodplain protection. So much leverage for the money in comparison to purchasing land outright. No M&O (maintenance and operation), very little management if any, a stewardship agreement, land stays on the tax rolls. Hays County example, they paid \$4 million for a \$22 million dollar piece of land, 2300 acres, protected forever, will remain working land, plus 375 acres for public access, too. If not public access, some landowners host education programs, etc., shoring it up for the future, a visionary thing. If you are going to put any more money in, put it in conservation easements.

Action Items

Discussion on Other Items and Next Steps:

No Discussion. Next meeting will be held Thursday, June 23, 2011, at the Del Valle High ISD Opportunity Center at 6:30 p.m. The Proposed 2011 Bond Property Tax Impact Calculator will be up the web site soon. The Chairman thanked all citizens who presented testimony and emphasized this was the main purpose of this evening's meeting.

Adjourned

Meeting adjourned at approximately at 8:30 P.M.

Note: Above items summarized from the verbatim minutes. Due to the background noise, audience comments, and the levels at which constituents/representatives were speaking into the microphone, verbatim minutes of the meeting are transcribed as best as possible. Please refer to the tapes of the meeting for specific questions regarding the contents in this document. You can call TNR's open records request line at (512) 854-7683.