



## Travis County Commissioners Court Agenda Request

**Meeting Date:** February 5, 2013

**Prepared By/Phone Number:** Lee Turner, P.E. 512-854-7598

**Elected/Appointed Official/Dept. Head:** Steve Manilla, P.E.

**Commissioners Court Sponsor:** Commissioner Daugherty

### **AGENDA LANGUAGE:**

Consider and take appropriate action on the 2011 Bond Program El Rey Boulevard Sidewalk project, in Precinct Three.

### **BACKGROUND/SUMMARY OF REQUEST AND ATTACHMENTS:**

El Rey Boulevard is located in the Granada Hills Subdivision in southwestern Travis County, Precinct Three. The improvements involve installing one pedestrian sidewalk along El Rey Boulevard from US 290 West to Espanola Trail. The Travis County Citizens Bond Advisory Committee voted to include the El Rey Boulevard Sidewalk project in the 2011 Travis County Bond package that was approved by the Commissioners Court and then the voters in November 2011. After TNR got into the design of the project several property owners along El Rey objected to the project and indicated that they were not given the opportunity to express their concerns about the project. Several meetings between proponents and opponents of the project, as well as Citizen's Communications at Court, have occurred during the past few months and no consensus has been reached. TNR has suspended design work on the project and now seeks Court affirmation for the project prior to re-starting the design process.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:**

TNR recommends proceeding with the design and construction of the project for safety reasons. It has been reported, during the bond project selection process and after the project was approved and started, that pedestrians must share the roadway surface with motor vehicles. Some residents are concerned with the narrow width of the shared roadway surface and the lack of shoulders for pedestrians to step aside when confronted with motor vehicles, some of which routinely exceed the posted speed limit. The sidewalk will improve safety along El Rey Boulevard by providing a walkway that will eliminate the need for pedestrians to walk in the street. The sidewalk will be constructed in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Architectural Barriers Regulations of Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR).

AGENDA REQUEST DEADLINE: All agenda requests and supporting materials must be submitted as a pdf to Cheryl Aker in the County Judge's office, [Cheryl.Aker@co.travis.tx.us](mailto:Cheryl.Aker@co.travis.tx.us) by Tuesdays at 5:00 p.m. for the next week's meeting.

## **ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES:**

The El Rey Boulevard sidewalk project was included in the 2011 Travis County Bond package. The Commissioners Court approved a professional services agreement with Chan & Partners Engineers on October 16, 2012 to design the project. When TNR Staff and the Consultant started to work with the homeowners whose property directly connects to the sidewalk, several of them indicated that they were not aware that the sidewalk was in the bond package. They also indicated that they did not want it installed in front of their homes for a variety of reasons. Some of the area residents have appeared before the Commissioners Court to show support or to oppose the project. Their testimony was taken in December and January during Citizen's Communication. The most recent and comprehensive testimony was made on January 29<sup>th</sup>.

The basic safety issue is that currently vehicles and pedestrians must share the roadway surface. Homeowners who live on El Rey and support the project claim that walking in the street is unsafe because of the volume and speed of cars using the road. They report that when a car drives on the street they may need to step into the drainage ditch to allow the car to pass. Furthermore, at times they are forced to the middle of the road to pass around parked cars. They also report that a school bus picks up students at the community park, so students who walk to the bus stop must walk in the road.

The project is intended to mitigate the safety issue by separating pedestrians from motor vehicles on the road.

## **FISCAL IMPACT AND SOURCE OF FUNDING:**

Funding for the El Rey Sidewalk project was included in the 2011 Travis County Bond package.

## **REQUIRED AUTHORIZATIONS:**

None

AGENDA REQUEST DEADLINE: All agenda requests and supporting materials must be submitted as a pdf to Cheryl Aker in the County Judge's office, [Cheryl.Aker@co.travis.tx.us](mailto:Cheryl.Aker@co.travis.tx.us) by Tuesdays at 5:00 p.m. for the next week's meeting.