



Travis County Commissioners Court Agenda Request

Meeting Date: September 17, 2013

Prepared By/Phone Number: Edith Moreida

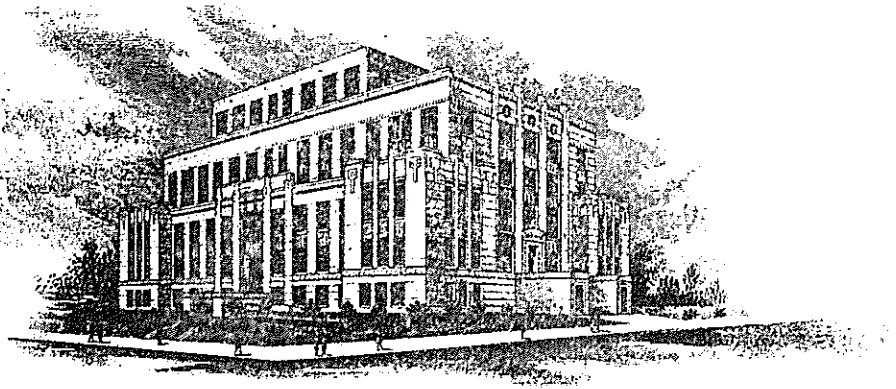
Elected/Appointed Official/Dept. Head: Commissioner Margaret J. Gómez

Commissioners Court Sponsor: Commissioner Margaret J. Gómez

AGENDA LANGUAGE:

DISCUSS AND TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION ON PHASE I OF THE ACCELERATED ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AND MOBILITY/ TRANSPORTATION STRATEGY FOR SOUTHEASTERN TRAVIS COUNTY (PRECINCT 4), INCLUDING:

- A. Approval of the construction of a five (5) lane road from Pearce to SH 71 effectively extending Kellam to SH 71 .
- B. Approval of the expansion of Elroy Road to a four(4) lane road from McAngus to Kellam.
- C. Approval of a Resolution for an Interlocal Agreement with Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority (CTRMA) for Planning, Design, Engineering and Construction of the road plan.
- D. Discussion of the County's Intent to Issue Certificates of Obligation to fund the planning, Right of Way Acquisition, Engineering and Construction of the roads.
- E. Direct the County Executive for Transportation and Natural Resources to work with the City of Austin, and other necessary entities to expand Kellam by adding two additional lanes and discuss improvements to and expansion of Pearce lane.



MARGARET J. GÓMEZ
COMMISSIONER, PRECINCT 4

700 LAVACA, SUITE 1510
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78767
P.O. Box 1748
854-9444

To: Commissioners Court

From: Margaret J. Gómez, Commissioner, Precinct 4

Date: September 9, 2013

MOTION: DISCUSS AND TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION ON PHASE I OF THE ACCELERATED ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AND MOBILITY/ TRANSPORTATION STRATEGY FOR SOUTHEASTERN TRAVIS COUNTY (PRECINCT 4), INCLUDING:

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- B. **Approval of the expansion of Elroy Road to a four(4) lane road from McAngus to Kellam.**
- C. **Approval of a Resolution for an Interlocal Agreement with Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority (CTRMA) for Planning, Design, Engineering and Construction of the road plan.**
- D. **Discussion of the County's Intent to Issue Certificates of Obligation to fund the planning, Right of Way Acquisition, Engineering and Construction of the roads.**
- E. **Direct the County Executive for Transportation and Natural Resources to work with the City of Austin, and other necessary entities to expand Kellam by adding two additional lanes and discuss improvements to and expansion of Pearce Lane.**

BACKGROUND/SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

County governments are statutorily limited in many areas, but they have statutory authority with regard to the construction and maintenance of roads in the unincorporated areas of the county. Fundamentally, the lack of road infrastructure and connectivity is a disincentive for economic expansion and business attraction that would lead to job creation.

This plan starts with an aggressive plan for road construction beginning in the areas in SE Travis County that have the highest potential for attracting new or expanded businesses most quickly.

(A) Approving the construction of a five (5) lane road from Pearce to SH 71 will take financial advantage of the offer of landowner contributions for total donation of Right of Way, open up significant opportunity for economic development and increased values on that roadway, and increase the safety of school children by offering a bypass from Ross Rd (3 DVISD schools and School Administration Offices) to SH 71, increase mobility of residents and improve traffic management of event traffic. This road needs to be completed expeditiously. The project is shovel ready and will enhance commercial development in the area with access to SH71. In addition, due to the location of Circuit of The Americas and its ability to grow and attract feeder businesses, the greatest potential for near term development and job creation as well as increased property values will be in this region. The road is needed and both interest rates and construction costs are escalating.

(B) Approving the expansion of Elroy Road to a four(4) lane road from McAngus to Kellam will enable mobility of residents and event traffic and replace a 2 lane bridge that is too low and is subjected to flooding. It is a narrow 2 lane road with deep ditches on both sides of the road. This expansion was approved on CAMPO prior to COTA. The need for this road is compelling and waiting will only perpetuate the unsafe conditions. Waiting will also cost taxpayers more money as both the interest rates and construction costs are escalating.

(C) Approval of a Resolution for an Interlocal Agreement with Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority (CTRMA) for Planning, Design, Engineering and Construction of the road plan allows us to partner with the CTRMA which has expertise in planning and executing regional transportation plans. There are tremendous opportunities for the residents and businesses in this region if the planning and execution of those plans are successfully and expeditiously implemented.

(D) Discussion of the County's Intent to Issue Certificates of Obligation to fund the planning, Right of Way Acquisition, Engineering and Construction of the roads. Certificates of obligation are a viable method for financing road construction. In addition, because of the county's excellent AAA bond rating interest rates will be on the lowest end of market rates.

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES:

This strategic initiative will focus primarily on three basic economic opportunity areas- Roads, Education and Jobs. Focusing attention on these three fundamental areas that the county can directly and/or indirectly impact has the greatest chance of success in providing the foundation for meaningful economic opportunity in both the short term and the long term.

Precinct 4 has a disproportionate number of citizens that are economically disadvantaged. 27% of the population is living in poverty compared to 15% in Travis County and 17% in the State of Texas. The average per capita income is only \$19,293 compared to \$25,548 in

the State of Texas. 30.2% of Precinct 4 residents did not graduate high school compared to 19.6% in the State of Texas.

When it comes to children, the numbers are even more dire. 85% of the students in Del Valle ISD are considered economically disadvantaged. 80% of the students are Hispanic/Latino.

In the Elroy area because of the lack of development, residents do not have access to basic services that residents in other parts of the county enjoy. This is an area of the county that needs immediate help. Some of these strategies will have to be implemented not consecutively, but concurrently. Business as usual is not good enough. In terms of prioritization, it is time for SE Travis County Precinct 4 to be in the front of the line—not at the end.

A large concentration of Hispanic /Latino residents live in SE Travis County. “The Hispanic Quality of Life Report” although commissioned by the City of Austin and related to the City of Austin, certainly documents that there is a need for action and that the Hispanic/Latino community feels left out. In the introduction to the Report it states “ When it comes to the economy, we can feel marginalized when we see new construction, development and prosperity around us, yet don’t feel this progress reflected in our neighborhoods or communities.” The Report further goes on to say “Hispanics sometimes say they feel invisible, on the outside looking in.” It is time for this to stop. Unfortunately, there is no instantaneous magic bullet. The longer we wait and do little or nothing, the longer the cycle of invisibility persists. The cycle of invisibility for children is especially damaging.

This plan provides an accelerated economic opportunity and mobility plan for the residents of SE Travis County in which a foundation is created for economic growth and development including the quality of life for constituents by assessing the assets the area currently has and leveraging those assets.

Assets in the unincorporated areas of SE Travis County that can be leveraged quickly to get results--

- ✓ Residents with a strong willingness to work and entrepreneurial spirit
- ✓ Landowners committed to economic opportunity that have voluntarily come forward to donate Right of Way to build a major 4 lane road plus a turn lane
- ✓ Circuit of the Americas, an internationally recognized entertainment and motorsport venue, providing resources, jobs, and educational partnerships chose to locate in Precinct 4
- ✓ Circuit of the Americas, an economic catalyst for attracting new ancillary businesses
- ✓ A significant amount of underutilized undeveloped land
- ✓ Proximity to SH 130 section 4
- ✓ Proximity to SH 71 and potential to connect
- ✓ Proximity to Austin-Bergstrom International Airport

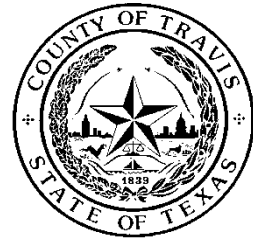
The spin-off developments specifically because of the proximity to COTA will likely generate sales tax and property taxes for DelValle ISD, Travis County, the Central Health District, Austin Community College, and The Elroy Library. This leverages the County's and States' investments in road infrastructure. This heightened interest in development is a momentum that needs to be capitalized upon before it dissipates.

The road situation for visitors and residents is just "make do". If we want robust economic opportunities, we need to invest in a road system that serves our citizens as well as providing mobility and a platform for new businesses and business expansion. Our road system should signify that we are proud of SE Travis County and that we welcome visitors to it.

FISCAL IMPACT AND SOURCE OF FUNDING:

The county could issue CO's in March at its usual issuance date. This would result in no tax increase for FY 2014 in that the first debt service payment would be due in 2015.

Bruce Todd
TRAVIS COUNTY COMMISSIONER - PRECINCT 2
TRAVIS COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
700 LAVACA STREET, SUITE 2.300
AUSTIN, TX 78701



September 10, 2013

To: Judge Sam Biscoe

CC: Travis County Commissioners Court

From: Commissioner Todd

RE: Transportation needs in Precinct 4

Southeast Travis County is becoming a hub of activity and growth that has County-wide and regional importance. We are realizing this growth through the expansion of the Austin-Bergstrom International Airport, the addition of State Highway 130, new home construction, interest from developers to provide retail and hotel opportunities, and the international attraction, Circuit of the Americas. This activity all points to a need to address transportation in an area that has an increasing regional presence.

The proposal recently brought by Commissioner Gomez to the Commissioners Court has reminded us of the need to focus on and plan for the transportation needs in Southeast Travis County. In order to do this, I propose that we appoint a stakeholder committee with the purpose of developing a roadway plan and, more importantly, *identifying potential funding sources for that plan*. There is no doubt that COTA is an amenity with the ability to generate economic benefits to the region. The County, which has responsibility for COTA area roadways, should move forward with the implementation of a hotel-motel occupancy that could support infrastructure needs. Other funding sources should also be evaluated.

Attached to this memo is a list of questions that I would like staff to address in Commissioners Court. The answers to these questions can assist us in finalizing objectives for a stakeholder committee. That said, I propose that the specific objectives of the working group should be to create a comprehensive roadway implementation plan to achieve the following:

- A recommendation to the Commissioners Court 6 weeks from the inception of the group to include, but not be limited to:
 - Best alignments for long-term regional and local benefits
 - Potential phasing to provide immediate and long-term congestion relief for area residents
 - Funding sources including the evaluation of motel-hotel taxes

- Funding and funding partners evaluated on the basis of direct economic benefit based on participation on roadway improvements
- Partner participation including City of Austin

As these are Travis County Roadways, the work group should be chaired by Travis County Staff. The working group should include senior staff from the following entities:

- Travis County Transportation and Natural Resources
- Travis County Planning and Budget
- City of Austin Transportation Department
- Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority
- Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Texas Department of Transportation Austin District

In closing, I want to thank Commissioner Gomez for bringing this issue forward. I think we can all agree that road investments in South Eastern Travis County benefit the County as a whole. I encourage this Court to take this step towards addressing the needs of Precinct 4.

Attachment:

Questions for Travis County Staff regarding South East Travis County Roadways

1. Has TNR developed any roadway proposals for the area bounded by SH 130, SH 71, and FM 812? If so:
 - a. Are maps of these roadways available?
 - b. Have preliminary cost estimates been developed?
 - c. What considerations (i.e. area population) were taken when creating this plan?
 - d. Is there a proposed funding source?
 - e. Is there a proposed timeline/schedule for implementation?
2. Has TNR worked with any other regional interests or stakeholders on roadway plans in this area, (ie TXDOT, CAMPO, COA, CTRMA)? What, if any, input was taken into consideration?
3. What roadway alignment does TNR staff recommend for this area, why and how would they be phased for implementation?
4. Are there any environmental or engineering concerns of which the Court should be aware relative to the construction of roads in this area?
5. Have there been discussions with land owners about Right-of-Way contribution?
6. Has County staff analyzed potential utilization numbers beyond major event days?
7. Has CAMPO been asked to do any projections about new road construction in the impact on population and future land-use patterns?
8. Are there any projections about future value of development in the area around COTA and the impact on the County tax base?