



US 83/84 Stakeholder Workshop

Meeting Summary May 12, 2015

Stakeholder Meeting Summary

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) Abilene District, on Tuesday, May 12, 2015, hosted the first of two planned stakeholder workshops regarding potential projects on approximately six miles of US 83/84, from Iberis Road to where US 83 and US 84 split. The agenda of the meeting was to:

- Present the need and purpose
- Share data
- Identify stakeholder issues
- Discuss next steps

The meeting was from 9:30-11 a.m. at River of Life Church in Abilene.

Participants

Bill Bedford	Lakes at Saddle Creek HOA
Dean Taggart	Lakes at Saddle Creek HOA
Steve Walken	Homeowner
James Alexander	Homeowner
Marie Martinez	Homeowner
Byron Penrod	Homeowner
Joey Light	Wylie ISD
Pam Davis	River of Life Church
Patrick Poradek	Homeowner
Ben Bailey	U.S. Rep. Randy Neugebauer
James M. Rogge	City of Abilene
Jan Bedford	Resident
Blake Woodall	Texas Senate
Bobby Burke	TxDOT
Daniel Richardson	TxDOT
Wayne Ekdahl	TxDOT
John Clayton	Abilene Police Department
Kelly Willis	Abilene Police Department
Michael Haithcock	TxDOT
Kym Martin	Mad Coffee & More
Ken Wells	Taylor Electric Coop
E'Lisa Smetana	Abilene MPO
Logan Chandler	Abilene MPO
David Allman	South Taylor EMS

David Ray	River of Life Church
Stan Egger	Taylor County
Neldon Watson	MSR Developers LLC
David Thomas	Taylor Electric Coop
Dean Carter	Abilene MPO
Sue Ball	Ball Ranch
Dave Perry	Town of Buffalo Gap
Randy Williams	Taylor County
Brad Kerr	Jim Ned Fire Department
Jack Boyd	Retired
Jerry Hallmark	Landowner
Keely Abor	Resident
Gary Penn	Resident
Downing Bolts	Taylor County
Stan Swiatek	TxDOT
MaryBelle Turner	TxDOT
Julie Jerome	TxDOT

1. Welcome/Introductions..... Stan Swiatek, P.E.

2. Need and Purpose..... Stan Swiatek, P.E.

Over the next six to nine months, TxDOT will be listening and talking to the community about possible solutions to US 83/84 from FM 707 to the “Y,” where the two roads split. Stan encouraged everyone in attendance to visit with their constituents with the goal of achieving consensus on the best solution to improvements.

He noted some of the challenges of the roadway, including increasing accidents, increasing volume of traffic and development in the area. A number of the accidents are occurring as vehicles enter and leave the roadway, access management.

He said that it is a fine road, but can be a better road. TxDOT is poised to receive additional funding, which will help facilitate improvements to this roadway. He said that the process, which will be taking place over the next six to nine months, represents a way to spend the funding wisely.

3. Data ShareMichael Haithcock, P.E.

Michael noted that the study of US 83/84 is first on the Abilene District’s list because of growth in the area, combined with citizen concerns and information obtained through site visits.

He noted four concerns

- The speed limit of the corridor as it approaches the City of Abilene
- The high number of at-grade crossovers from CR 707 to the US 83/84 split

- The high growth of residences and neighborhoods along the corridor
- The projected growth rate of this portion of Taylor County

Data research reveals the following information:

- 2010 – 6 Crashes
- 2011 – 7 Crashes
- 2012 – 7 Crashes
- 2013 – 9 Crashes
- 2014 – 14 Crashes
- First five months of 2015 – 10 Crashes

Average Daily Traffic is around 10,000 vehicles per day. In 2010, there were two fatalities.

Direct and Indirect impacts may include:

- Property
- Environmental
- Mobility and Daily Routine
- Impacts to Livelihood and Employment
- Quality of Life

He emphasized that the purpose of the stakeholder workshops and open houses/public meetings is to obtain meaningful public input. He encouraged as many people as possible to attend the open houses.

4. Stakeholder Issues..... Julie Jerome, Office of Public Involvement, TxDOT

Participants brainstormed and discussed a series of questions relating to the roadway. The questions that were discussed and the thoughts and ideas associated with those questions are captured below.

What problem(s) are you trying to solve?

- Safety
- Capacity
- Congestion
- Mobility
- Gaining public support
- Public understanding how we choose and prioritize projects
- Passenger/residential vs Commercial
- Extend access roads
- Congestion in the mornings (Buffalo Gap, schools)
- All crossovers, especially the “Y”
- Speed
- Access points
- Exit at FM 707, next off-point is Lakes of Saddle Creek
- Signage; entry is not clearly identified
- Clark Road has limited access. There is a delay to enter the street. Overpass?

- No crossover at Mountain Shadows Ranch. It is scary to pull out. There is no turning lane into subdivision
- More prominent signage needed, “Left lane passing only”
- Speed limit too high; safety is compromised
- Crossovers, turn lanes, up-to-speed access lanes
- Crossover in front of River of Life Church is very dangerous. It feeds a church and a business (Ball Ranch) and residents
- Need to plan for the future...20 years and 10 years
- Why not an extension of access roads? Including north of FM 707 to Antilley Road to keep slow, heavy traffic from residential to Antilley. Extend access roads south to major housing areas. Build overpass at Clark Road with light and turnaround, so fast traffic can continue on and slower traffic is out of the way
- Work with City of Abilene on the FM 707—Antilley for recreation access—bike paths along FM 707 and Lake Kirby). And stop all those idiots that are destroying the land with trucks around the lake
- Reduce speed limit to 65 and enforce it
- Stop light at Clark Road; traffic actuated
- Reduce number of crossovers. Have turn lanes (acceleration and deceleration) at all of them
- Improve northbound FM 707 exit to make existing traffic slow down
- Lakes of Saddle Creek entrance from 83/84 turn lane is 90-degree turn and raised island
- FM 707 exit only has yield signs so you have to look back over your left shoulder to see 70 mph traffic

What are the consequences of No-Build Alternative?

- Safety of traveling public
- Lack of economic development (better mobility helps business)
- Cost of delay
 - Upset customers
 - Quality of life issues for “workaround”
 - Frustration of motorists

How do we establish the legitimacy of our problem-solving and decision-making process?

- Demonstrate history of doing the right thing
- Grassroots, 1-on-1, small group meetings
- Strategic
- Meeting logistics
 - Make them feel welcome
 - Incentives
 - Speakers Bureau
- Commitment
- Decisions reflect public input
- Building and hearing supporters
- Include potential opposition
- Timing—Do it fast
- Studies—Examples of best practices from other states and districts

Who is affected?

- Schools
- Property owners
- Medical response/law enforcement
- Rural transit or mass transit
- Churches
- Truckers
- Hospitals
- Commuters
- Fire response
- Business owners
- Lake/recreation access
- Farm equipment mobility
- Utilities

What will they see as their issues?

- Develop now because of added value
- Ramps
- Driveway access
- Late to school (students and staff)
- Noise, light pollution, traffic that comes with new business
- Remaining property may not be as appealing
- Safety
- Access during construction
- Equity
- Bike/pedestrians paths
- What does it look like in 20 years?

5. Next steps..... Stan Swiatek, P.E.

This is the beginning of a nine-month study on the US 83/84 corridor by the Abilene District and TxDOT's Traffic Operations Division. Over the coming months, TxDOT will gather input from a stakeholder committee and from the general public to determine the need for future improvements along this stretch of roadway.

The first open house/public meeting will be Tuesday, June 30, from 4-8 p.m. at River of Life Church. This meeting will be advertised and communicated through local news media, www.txdot.gov website, social media, changeable message signs and other communication vehicles.

6. Attachments

- Attachment 1: Agenda
- Attachment 2: Sign-in Sheets
- Attachment 3: Flyer
- Attachment 4: Timeline