



US 83/84 Stakeholder Workshop

Meeting Summary August 4, 2015

Stakeholder Meeting Summary

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) Abilene District, on Tuesday, August 4, 2015, hosted the second of three 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 meeting objective was to review comments from the June 30, 2015 Open House and the safety study and to discuss next steps.

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

Participants

1.	Neldon Watson	Mountain Shadows Ranch
2.	John R. Andrew	
3.	Dean Taggart	Lakes at Saddle Creek
4.	William Bedford	Lakes at Saddle Creek
5.	Alex Moore	Moore Property Group
6.	Dean Carter	Abilene MPO
7.	Jack Boyd	Property Owner
8.	Jan Bedford	Property Owner
9.	Jay Wise	Jim Ned ISD Transportation
10.	Brad Kerr	Jim Ned Fire Chief/STEMS Director
11.	Lee Moore	
12.	Chris Carnohan	
13.	Craig Bessent	Wylie ISD
14.	Byron Penrod	Homeowner
16.	David Ray	River of Life Church
17.	Daniel Richardson	TxDOT, Abilene
15.	Bobby Burke	TxDOT, Abilene
18.	Wayne Ekdahl	TxDOT, Abilene
19.	Mary Belle Turner	TxDOT, Abilene
20.	Michael Haithcock	TxDOT, Abilene
21.	Laura Cruzada	TxDOT, Austin
22.	Julie Jerome	TxDOT, Austin

1. Welcome/Introductions.....Michael Haithcock, P.E.

2. Stakeholder Issue Identification Julie Jerome, Office of Public Involvement, TxDOT

Review of comments from June 30 Open House—Of 187 comments received from the June 30 Open House and from emails after the open house:

- 28 were in favor of grade separations at major interchanges
- 43 supported turn lanes

- 17 mentioned improving and upgrading signage and signals
- 46 supported road realignments
- 40 recommended conducting a speed study
- 13 were miscellaneous comments

One of the stakeholders submitted a comment sheet at the meeting. *My wife and I are most aware of and troubled by the dangers involved at Stallion Road and its lack of an appropriate crossover. To enter 83/84 and head north, we must drive to the south for a short distance in the inside (passing) lane. The distance to the next crossover is so short that normal highway speed cannot be attained before deceleration is required to make the U-turn and head north. (The normal AM drive pattern for traffic [entering from and exiting] Stallion Road.)*

What is Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS)?—CSS is a collaborative, interdisciplinary, holistic approach to the development of transportation projects. It is both process and product, characterized by a number of attributes. It involves all stakeholders, including community members, elected officials, interest groups and affected local, state and federal agencies. It puts project needs and both agency and community values on a level playing field and considers all trade-offs in decision making.

Prioritize Issues—Those in attendance prioritized the following issues:

- 7 Grade separations at major interchanges (overpass)
- 7 Acceleration and deceleration lanes for merging onto US 83/84
- 7 Right turn lanes from US 83/84 to county roads
- 6 Improve/upgrade or close median openings
- 5 Improve and upgrade signage and marking
- 6 Reconfigure entrance and exit ramps on US 83/84
- 5 Conduct a speed study
- 4 Other
 - Crossover and acceleration north lane and deceleration lane south at Stallion Road, which is a county road
 - Access Roads—Iberis to Bell Plains
 - Control noise through Saddle Creek and Lakes at Saddle Creek Compound. Reduce speed from approximately 1 mile south of this meeting place to 65 mph up to where it is 70 mph at present time. Have sign “Through Traffic Stay Left” at same places the 65 mph speed limits are posted.
 - Widen shoulders

3. Data ShareMichael Haithcock, P.E.

Michael briefed the stakeholders on a corridor safety study conducted by the TxDOT Traffic Operations Division, with assistance from the Design Division and the Maintenance Division and released on May 28, 2015.

Highlights include:

- Annual average daily traffic (AADT) on US 83/84 estimates for 2033 range from 12,060 (CR 154 to Y-intersection) to 14,790 (FM 707 to Bell Plains Road). Estimates for 2013 range from 8,616 (CR 154 to Y-intersection) to 10,569 (FM 707 to Bell Plains Road). 24-hour truck percentage for the corridor study area is approximately 13 percent.
- There were 62.93 traffic crashes per 100 million vehicle miles on US 83/84 safety study area in 2011, 83.82 in 2012 and 131.68 in 2013. The 2013 rate is nearly double the statewide average for a similar type road. The fatal and serious injury crash rate per 100 million miles (three-year average) was 32.66 on the safety study area, compared to the statewide average of 19.80.
- Observations and recommendations from the study:
 - Bar B Trail—Install left turn deceleration lanes for northbound and southbound US 83
 - Stallion Road—Close crossover and install a new median crossover that aligns with Stallion Road; install left turn deceleration lanes on northbound and southbound US 83
 - FM 204—Intersection is inconspicuous and does not have the appearance of a major intersection; shoulder drop off along east side of northbound 83 is indicative of trucks using the shoulder as acceleration lane; During the PM peak hour, heavy vehicle turns from southbound US 83 to eastbound FM 204. During the AM peak hour, heavy vehicle turns from westbound FM 204 to northbound US 83; consider lengthening the existing deceleration lanes on US 83 and installing an acceleration lane for westbound FM 204 to northbound US 83
 - Bell Plains Road—High percentage of right turn movements from southbound US 83 to westbound Bell Plains Road during PM peak hour and eastbound Bell Plains Road to northbound US 83 during AM peak hour; lengthen the existing deceleration lane for northbound US 83 and install a left turn deceleration lane southbound US 83; install a right turn deceleration lane for southbound US 83 to westbound Bell Plains Road. In order to install a right turn deceleration lane, there is an existing culvert that will need to be extended to meet clear zone requirements; install safety lighting

- Deer Valley Drive—Not an existing direct crossover; close dirt path crossover and install a new median crossover that aligns with Deer Valley Drive; install left turn deceleration lanes on northbound and southbound US 83
- County Road 149—Existing vertical curve on northbound US 83 just south of CR 149 causes some sight distance concerns; close two crossovers and lengthen the existing left turn deceleration lanes for the third crossover
- Divide Avenue—There is not a northbound left turn deceleration lane for this crossover; install a left turn deceleration lane on northbound US 83; lengthen the existing left turn deceleration on southbound US 83
- Y-intersection—Consider installing a merging lane to create one thru lane for westbound US 84 prior to the Y-intersection to create a natural free acceleration lane for northbound US 83. This would eliminate the merging conflict on US 83 that is currently present
- 1 mile north of FM 707 to ¼-mile south of Mesa Rim Drive—4-lane divided controlled access freeway with one-way frontage roads
- ¼-mile south of Mesa Rim Drive to north of Y-intersection—4-lane divided roadway; all median crossovers to include, at minimum, left turn deceleration lanes that serve both directions
- Y-intersection—US 84 thru traffic has all free movements; flyover for eastbound US 84 over northbound US 83 to eliminate a primary conflict point in the Y-intersection

4. Next StepsMichael Haithcock, P.E.

Michael opened the floor for comments and questions. Among the comments/questions:

- We must balance what the public wants with sound engineering judgement.
- Build a bridge over Remington/Clark. Gravel trucks and long horse trailers block the crossovers. That intersection will get worse before it gets better.
- The accident rate is two times the state average. That backs up what the comments have been saying.
- Speed and signage are very important.
- School bus pick-up and drop-off is a dangerous time, especially at the crossovers. Cars blow by the flashing red lights on the buses. There are certainly speed issues. In many cases, we are using the smaller buses, which is not efficient, but it reduces the challenges at the crossovers
- Q. Why is it so hard to lower the speed limits? A. There is a natural speed that people drive on a road, no matter what the speed limit is. Studies have shown over and over that if we lowered the speed limit, people would still go that natural speed. Also, one thing to think about, has enforcement made that road more dangerous or less dangerous?

- Putting in acceleration and deceleration lanes would make it much safer.
- Some crossovers, we need to eliminate. Those that we don't eliminate, we need to upgrade, for example, with a longer deceleration lane. We need to look at all of the crossovers.

The second open house/public meeting will be Tuesday, September 29, 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, mailed postcards, social media, changeable message signs and other communication vehicles.

Attachments

- Agenda
- Comments from June 30 Open House, grouped by 7 topics
- CSS Fact Sheet
- US 83/84 Prioritization
- US 83/84 Corridor Safety Study
- US 84/84 Stakeholder Workshop Meeting Summary, May 12, 2015
- US 83 Corridor Study Memo