TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS ON INTERSTATE 820 FROM IH 35W TO
SH 121/SH 183/SH 26

PUBLIC HEARING

RICHLAND HILLS CHURCH OF CHRIST, NORTH RICHLAND HILLS,
TEXAS

TUESDAY, JULY 1ST, 2008

REPORTED BY: ROBYN WARD, CSR #8290

DOLORES STEWART & ASSOCIATES, INC.
CERTIFIED COURT REPORTERS
1701 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE
FORT WORTH, TEXAS 76104
(817) 810-0244 • (800) 676-2401 • FAX 810-0064

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PROCEDINGS

MS. CHAVEZ: Okay. Let's go ahead and get started. It is now, by the clock on the wall here, it's about two or three minutes after 7:00. I'd like to convene this public hearing for the planned improvements of interstate -- Interstate Highway 820 from IH 35W to State Highway 121/183 State Highway 26, the -- essentially, the Northeast Mall interchange.

Good evening and welcome to this public hearing. My name is Maribel Chavez, I am the District Engineer for the nine counties for Fort Worth District of the Texas Department of Transportation, also known as TxDOT. On behalf of the Department, I'd like to express my -- my thanks for everyone to -- for coming out to these -- this public hearing. I'd also, especially, like to thank the -- the Richland Hills Church of Christ for -- for allowing us the use of this wonderful facility. They've allowed us to use this facility for some of the public meetings that we've conducted in the past. And -- and so I -- I did thank the -- the -- the members of the church and the church for allowing us the use for this public hearing.

Today we're in the final stages of the public involvement, our public hearing. And we're making, both, audio and video recordings of the
hearing, so that your statements can be accurately
transcribed and understood. And those are available to
the public upon request. I'd like to give you some
background information concerning the proposed project
and the proposed implementation of the project due to
some of the funding constraints that we have.

We began looking into reconstructing
Interstate 820 as far back as 1992. We first brought a
plan to the public at a public meeting in June of 19 --
1993 to reconstruct IH 820 with express lanes. And
during -- upon further development of that plan, it was
determined that the projected traffic volumes for the,
then, design year, which is, typically, 20 years in the
future, but we -- we -- we -- we realized that the
projected traffic volumes for that design year could
not be accommodated within the lane configuration that
we had -- we had -- we had presented to the public. So
the Department, in conjunction with the Texas
Transportation Institute out of Texas A&M and the
Metropolitan Planning Organization or the North Central
Texas Council of Government for -- for this area, began
studying the facility to accommodate high occupancy
vehicles also known as HOV lanes.

This study, along with a Value
Engineering study that we coordinated with the local
governments, long before, in 1997, was well underway when -- when inflation of construction costs beyond -- beyond the -- beyond the historical averages really started to rise and -- and -- and -- and -- and cost us to have to relook at our project.

These -- these higher construction costs, then, impacted our ability to advance, not just this -- this project, but many of the needed infrastructure improvements. Funding shortfalls, have created the -- an inability for -- for us to -- to fund multiple large freeway projects in a reasonable timeframe.

And in recent years, the Texas Transportation Commission worked with the Texas Legislature and Texas voters to adopt funding strategies to help us expedite much needed transportation projects. Some of these funding strategies are -- are, as examples: Creation of regional mobility authorities to fund projects, also, the ability to sell bonds and the ability to enter into public-private partnerships to design, build and maintain some of these transportation facilities.

These public-private partnerships a -- allow TxDOT to enter into an agreement with a private -- private company called a Comprehensive
Development Agreement or CDA. TxDOT has pursued CDA's to help us deliver and maintain proposed highway improvements sooner by helping -- offering our -- our funding sources, our traditional funding sources.

The managed lane concept was incorporated into the IH 820 project. The managed lanes are dedicated lanes that users will pay -- pay a fee to use. A managed lane facility is one that increases freeway efficiency by packaging various operational and design actions. Lane management operations may be adjusted at any time to better match regional -- regional goals.

This IH 820 segment is part of what we call the North Tarrant Express, that is being developed as a CDA. Other portions of the North Tarrant Express are -- are along the IH 35W corridor, other segments of IH 820 and also along State Highway 121/183, also known as Airport Freeway. The North Tarrant Express project is a 36 mile -- 36-mile project, with a total project -- total project cost approaching about $4 billion.

The CDA would be a long-term agreement with all construction, maintenance, operation, design, right of way utilities and other items, such as, inflation borne by the private sector team.
It is TxDOT's belief that through the CDA process, projects like IH 820 and others will be able to move forward to construction with implementation coming far sooner than waiting to accumulate enough funding to implement these large corridor projects in a piece meal fashion over many years of construction time.

Typical traditional timeframes associated with implementation of a project, such as this section of IH 820, would be completion of the public involvement process similar to where we are today; then, approximately, after public involvement, that you -- then you have, about, two to four years of -- of right of way acquisition, utility relocation and a detailed plan -- plan development or the design of -- of the project. After -- after you complete these items, then, the proposed facility could begin construction, most likely in phases, due to funding constraints.

Through the CDA process, the activities associated with implementation are concurrent so that the right of way acquisition, the utility adjustments, the design and construction are continually ongoing, thereby, delivering the project sooner than the traditional sequential methods. It is anticipated that
through the CDA process, construction may begin as early as 2009.

I will now call on Judy Anderson, our District Programs Administration Engineer, to further outline, for you, the purpose and the procedures for this hearing and to provide you a project -- a project introduction. Judy.

MS. ANDERSON: Good evening. I am Judy Anderson, the Programs Administration Engineer for the Texas Department of Transportation Fort Worth District.

I want to give you an idea of about how much longer we have of presentation time. We're anticipating it'll be about 30 to 40 minutes more presentation before we get our break.

First, I want to emphasize the difference between a public meeting and a public hearing for -- for transportation projects. Meetings are informal in nature, and there's a gathering of information or exchange of information with questions being raised and answered in dialogue during the course of the meeting.

Hearings, on the other hand, are formal and are to present information to you, the attendee, about a recommended plan derived from input from previous public involvement activities and design
considerations. More specific information about hearings, your rights and your ability to make statements, will be given as -- later as we proceed.

The state and federal governments have various laws, regulations and guidelines that outline the processes whereby public awareness of system planning and project planning can be assured. The opportunity for public involvement in these developmental phases can be realized in conjunction with technical, social, economic and environmental conditions.

As a part of our public involvement process in developing highway projects, we have public meetings and hearings as a matter of in -- public information for those people who are going to be affected by a project, and for those who have a need to be aware of the project design. In addition, hearings are held to receive formal statements from the public regarding facets of the project that may be of concern to any individual or group. All of the oral statements, written statements and exhibits received will be careful -- will be given careful consideration in the final stage of the development of this project.

When TxDOT submits a plan for any project that involves significant right of way
acquisition, additional mobility or other potential significant impacts, regulations require that the department certify that it has held a public hearing or has afforded an opportunity for such a hearing; that it has considered the economic and social effects of such a project, its impact on the environment and its consistency with the goals and objectives of planning, promulgated by the communities involved.

In accordance with these processes, a notice of public hearing was published on Sunday, June 1st, 8th, 15th and 22nd in -- of this year in the Fort Worth Star-Telegram. A Spanish version of the notice was published in La Semana on Friday, June 6th, 13th and 20th of this year, and La Estrella on Sat -- Saturday, June 7th, 14th and 21st of this year. In addition, adjoining property owners and public officials were mailed individual notices.

Adjoining property owners are identified by using county tax rolls and previous public meeting sign-in sheets; therefore, if the tax rolls are updated after the department receives a list or you did not attend previous meetings held, you may not have been included on the list. Hopefully, everyone interested was made aware through their neighbors or other media notices.
As for the agenda today, I will outline procedures for this hearing and provide an introduction to the project. The project design engineer will then discuss the recommended project and bring out various aspects of the proposed plan. Following that, a representative from our District Right of Way office will discuss with you the right-of-way acquisition and relocation procedures. Local elected officials attending this evening will then be introduced.

We will then take a recess for about 20 minutes to allow everyone time to look at the displays in more detail. Several individuals involved in the project, will be on hand at the displays to assist you with questions you may have and to help you understand how the project will affect each abutting property.

After the recess, the floor will be open for statements so that we may have the benefit of your concerns about the project. This time will be strictly for statements only, with your stated concerns being responded to only in the written summary and analysis of this hearing.

In response to the statements, we may alter the plan, if a feasible and prudent adjustment is possible. If altered, we will meet with the affected property owners to discuss the alterations. Bear in
mind that statements should be made to tell us what you
like about the project as well as what you don't like.
There have been cases where the project was revised in
response to negative statements, only to learn that we
changed something that others wanted that had not
voiced their opinion. Help us to make as balanced of a
design as we can, that will accommodate the needs of
everyone by telling us about your needs, both pro and
con.

Written statements will be received
through July 14th, 2008 and may be submitted to the
address located on the back of the written statement
form. This form is located at the registration table.
If you did not receive one when you came in, please
feel free to get one during the break or after the
hearing.

If you desire to speak today, please
fill out a form at the registration desk before the
recess is over. However, if you do not register, the
floor will be open for other statements before
adjournment.

In order to move the hearing along, we
ask that all statements be limited to a maximum of
three minutes. If your oral statement will exceed
three minutes, please furnish us a written statement.
You may include any information you feel is necessary to explain your concerns, such as, graphs, charts, tables, drawings or photographs. Please submit all of this information in hard copy.

Now I would like to give you a brief introduction to the Interstate 820 proposed project. TxDOT has two concurrent processes underway, the procurement process for the CDA and the process of addressing the enviromental impacts associated with the recommended plan. Regardless of how we ultimately implement the project, all environmental impacts associated with the proposed project must be addressed per state and federal law. Today, we are presenting our findings for the recommended plan of the engineering and environmental studies for the proposed reconstruction and expansion of Interstate 820.

Highway planning and construction requires close cooperation among all levels of government. The proposed project is being developed by TxDOT in cooperation with the cities of Fort Worth, Haltom City, North Richland Hills, Tarrant County and the Metropolitan Planning Organization.

In 1961, a preliminary geometric layout for existing H -- IH 820 was approved. And in 1968, construction of the facility was complete. The
corridor, which remains much the same today, consists of a four-lane freeway with access entrances and exits and inter -- intermittent frontage roads. The existing right of way is, typically, 350 feet wide.

After nearly 40 years of service, local growth of surrounding communities has generated transportation demand that exceeds the existing facility's capacity. The freeway, with projected 2010 average daily traffic exceeding 214,300 vehicles per day, has become obsolete and in need of updating and expansion to accommodate the current standards and travel demand.

Studies began in 1992 to develop a -- a feasible and prudent -- feasible and reasonable plan for roadway improvements along the IH 820 corridor. There have been two previous public meetings. The first was conducted in June -- on June 3rd, 1993 and the second on April 27th, 2006. Yes, this is a large gap in time in which it appears nothing has happened; however, due to the traffic demand and the funding issues previously referred to, during this time, the proposed plan has been significantly altered and TxDOT has been seeking ways to implement the project in a more timely fashion than the traditional methods allow.

The projected 2010 traffic volume,
again, 214,300 vehicles per day. The traffic volumes for 2030 are projected to be 321,400 vehicles per day, an increase of, approximately, 50 percent. This increase is based on the development in the area as well as an expected population growth in the Dallas/Fort Worth region, which is currently around 5.6 million and is expected to exceed 9 million in 2030.

Interstate 820 is a regional corridor that impacts not only those adjacent to the facility, but those that use the facility to travel to other regions -- other areas of the region. The need to provide congestion relief by expanding the capacity of the facility and to also provide safety to the users by upgrading the facility are the primary goals of this proposed project, while minimizing the negative social, economic, environmental effects.

An environmental document for Interstate 820 has been prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act or NEPA. The document covers the social, economic and environmental effects of the proposed improvements to Interstate I 820 from I 35W to State Highway 121 to Highway 183/State Highway 26 or Northeast Mall interchange. These improvements include the interchange with I 35W, its connections to the north, south and west; the managed lane connections to
State Highway 121/183 or Airport Freeway to the east; and the managed lane connections from 121/183 to 820 south. The document includes information covering impacts associated with tolls, air quality, noise, water quality, vegetation, archeology, historical properties and other -- and along with other aspects of the project.

Tolls for the managed lanes will be based on regional toll policy developed by the Regional Transportation Council, a group of transportation officials from the area, including local governments.

As described previously, managed lanes allow for flexibility in pricing to accommodate the traffic demands on the facility. In addition, per federal requirements, these facilities have been identified in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan which was presented to the public in public meetings held in October and November of 2006. In addition, there was a 60-day remove period for the Metropolitan Transportation Plan and a 30-day comment period that culminated in the Regional Transportation Council's adoption in June -- January 2007 with the Federal Highway Administration approval received in June 2007.

Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966 requires that the proposed
use of any land from a significant republic -- from a significant publicly owned park or recreation area, wildlife refuge or historic site that is listed in or is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places be given special consideration. Final action requiring the acquisition of such land must document that there are no feasible and prudent alternatives to its use and a full evaluation of measures to minimize harm to that resource must be made and documented.

This project will require right of way from two section 4(f) properties. They are North Richland Hills Tennis Center and North Richland Hills Athletic Center. Approximately, 0.58 acre of property is needed from the North Richland Hills Tennis Center; this area will not require the acquisition or displacement of any tennis courts, but will be limited to the green space between the tennis courts and the relocated frontage road. Approximately 0.52 acre from the North Richland Hills Athletic Center is required; this area will not displace the Athletic Center, but will require some reconfiguration of entrances and parking modifications to accommodate the relocated frontage road.

Vegetative impacts associated with this
The project would be minimal, but would occur due to the proposed right of way for the new facility; however, care will be taken to avoid trees that are outside the areas of conflict with the roadway construction and operation. Air quality may improve due to the reduction in congestion along the corridor; however, because nine counties in the Dallas/Fort Worth area -- region are classified as non-attainment for ozone, it is doubtful that the project, in itself, would substantially change the overall status of the air quality in the Dallas/Fort Worth region.

A noise analysis for the proposed improvements to Interstate 820 have been conducted. For this project, the model utilizes the 2030 traffic data for determining those noise impacts. The model indicates that there will be impacts associated with the expansion of Interstate 820 and indicates locations where the noise levels are projected to exceed the national -- excuse me -- the Noise Abatement Criteria set by the Federal Highway Administration. At this time, we anticipate use -- utilizing noise barriers. The following locations are proposed for noise abatement: A noise barrier between US 377/Denton Highway and Iron Horse Drive on the north side; a noise barrier between Vance and Holiday Lane on the south.

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side.

The final location of noise abatement will be determined during noise workshops that will be conducted during the detailed plan phase of the project. The abutting property owners will be given the opportunity to participate in these workshops. Noise barriers will be implemented during the project construction after all grading operations in the area of the barrier is completed.

Based on the studies thus far, the environmental document indicates that the preferred alternative would result in a finding of no significant impacts.

Now, I want to introduce our consultant project engineer, Mr. Darrell Thompson, with Jacobs Engineering, who will give you a brief overview of the preferred project improvements.

MR. THOMPSON: Good evening. The presentation tonight will cover the proposed improvements to Interstate 820 from 35W to State Highway 121/183 and 26.

This project is a portion of the North Tarrant Express. The improvements planned for the North Tarrant Express corridor include continuous managed lane improvements designed to enhance mobility.
throughout the area.

The existing IH 820 facility is a four-lane freeway with discontinuous frontage roads serving commercial and residential properties along the roadway.

It is not anticipated that improvements to Interstate 820 would substantially change any existing or future land usage in the project area.

The proposed IH 820 facility is a six-lane freeway with four additional managed lanes in the center and two-lane discontinuous frontage roads.

There is a traffic barrier separation between the managed lanes and the general purpose lanes indicated by the asterisks.

The existing IH 35 facility is a four-lane freeway, again, with discontinuous frontage roads.

The proposed IH 35 facility is an eight-lane freeway with four additional managed lanes in the center and two to three lane discontinuous frontage roads. There is a traffic barrier separation between the managed lanes and general purpose lanes. Again, it's indicated by the asterisks on the screen.

We will describe access within the facility as we go through a 3-D visualization of the
project.

Just to orient you as -- as we begin, on the upper, right-hand side of the screen will be a north arrow that adjusts as the visualization changes perspective. This will always let you know which direction the visualization is going. There is also a location map with a red circle that indicates where we are within the corridor. As the 3-D visualization model moves through the project, I will highlight some of the project's geometric design.

We start by traveling northbound on Interstate Highway 35W from Meacham Boulevard and the IH 820 interchange is on the horizon. Notice the four managed lanes in the center of IH 35W and three general purpose lanes in this location as we approach the interchange on either side. As you will see shortly, this is the same configuration as is on Interstate Highway 820. As we get closer to the interchange, you can see the direct connectors emerging from the managed lanes and the general purpose lanes to connect to the Interstate Highway 820 facility. You are now getting a bird's eye view of the interchange. The direct connections for the general purpose lanes provide access in every travel direction with conventional ingress and egress from the right. The managed lanes
on Interstate Highway 35W go through to the north of the interchange terminating near Eagle Parkway. Within the interchange, IH 35W goes over Interstate Highway 820. There are frontage roads in all four interchange quadrants.

The colored roadway plaques will indicate the roadway is either Interstate 35W or 820. Starting from Mark IV Parkway, we now travel eastbound and on Interstate Highway 820. There is a conventional diamond interchange serving Mark IV Parkway. The managed lanes begin here. Access into and out of them occurs just west of the interchange through slip ramps.

Continuing eastward, you can see the managed lanes in the middle and the direct connectors dropping down to the at grade general purpose lanes. The most outside roadways on either side represent frontage roads. The managed lanes are in the middle, again, the general purpose on both sides, and the frontage roads are on the outside. On the left, is a westbound exit ramp serving the westbound 820 frontage roads and the northbound 35W frontage road.

We continue east toward Beach Street which is served, again, by a conventional diamond interchange. IH 820 goes over Beach Street just as it does now. Note the eastbound exit to Haltom Road and
the westbound entrance ramp from Haltom Road. You can now see the wishbone ramps that permits managed lane entrance and exits prior to Haltom Road to and from the west. Haltom Road is served by a diamond interchange with jug handle access from the current Haltom Road to the frontage roads as you can see in just a minute, as you can see here. This allows Haltom Road to be grade -- grade separated from the frontage roads.

Continuing eastward, you can see the Union Pacific Railroad. The existing frontage roads in this area are discontinuous, but with the project, they will be made continuous under the Union Pacific Railroad ending at the 3 -- US 377/Denton Highway Interchange. Note the retaining walls on the eastbound and westbound frontage roads.

The animation will now change directions and proceed from the IH 820/State Highway 121/183 interchange and proceed to the west.

The first thing you'll notice here is that the four managed lanes are elevated over the existing IH 820 general purpose lanes. The managed lanes will continue through the interchange to 121/183 to the east. Managed lane connections have been added to and from the south connecting State Highway 121/183 to Interstate Highway 820.
On the right side is the westbound State Highway 26 entrance to the general purpose lanes and are -- and next to it is the westbound exit to Holiday -- Holiday Lane. On the left is the eastbound exit to State Highway 26, which is the portion of the State Highway 26 diamond interchange. From this point west, we are reconstructing Interstate Highway 820.

You can now see the op -- the managed lanes, again, operating in the middle and the general purpose lanes operating on either side as we approach Holiday Lane. We're now approaching Rufe Snow, which remains a full diamond interchange. There are slip ramps from the managed lanes to the general purpose lanes to and from the east at this location.

The existing Rufe Snow bridge will be utilized as it is today. Iron Horse Drive will be served with a diamond -- with a half diamond interchange to and from the east with an eastbound frontage road added between Iron Horse and Rufe Snow Drive.

Approaching Iron Horse Drive, you can see the drop ramps coming off the Iron Horse Bridge, allowing access into and out of the managed lanes. In the distance, you can see the Richland Hills Church of Christ, where we are now, the commuter rail line and
the Iron Horse Golf Course.

We are now passing over the Iron Horse Bridge and through the Iron Horse Golf Course there. You can see the US 377 general purpose and managed lane access. US 377 will be served by a diamond interchange. Approaching US 377, you can see the flyover ramps from the frontage roads that allow access into and out of the managed lanes prior to US 377. West of the US 377 bridges, you can see the half diamond interchange that accesses Haltom Road.

I'll now turn it back over to Judy Anderson.

MS. ANDERSON: Thank you, Darrell. At this time, we will have our District Right of Way Administrator, Scott Hall, explain the right of way acquisition and relocation assistance processes.

MR. HALL: Good evening. My name is Scott Hall and I am the Right of Way Administrator for the Fort Worth District. As it has been described, we will need to purchase additional right of way for this project. One of the fundamental rights of our constitution is to guarantee the right of private ownership of property. This right is documented in the first amendment to the constitution.

Many years ago, it became apparent that
supporting infrastructure would be necessary if our
country were to continue to grow and prosper. The land
requirements of this infrastructure are what prompted
the passage of the eminent domain laws as documented in
the fifth amendment to the constitution. These laws
provide authority for government entities to acquire
property for needed public works projects, provided the
owner is properly compensated for the rights he or she
is losing.

The eminent domain laws apply only to
projects with a demonstrated public need. The Texas
Department of Transportation demonstrates the need for
projects by identifying operational deficiencies
through long range planning tools and building
compelling community support through public hearings
and coordination with local governments. This meeting	onight is a part of that process.

To enhance and further ensure compliance
to the constitution, Congress passed the Uniform
Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Act
of 1970. This law establishes guidelines for the
acquisition of property and relocation of displaced
individuals and businesses in accordance with the
guarantees of our constitution. The first aspect of
this law deals with the acquisition of property. Our
procedures are structured to comply with all the requirements of this law.

The sequence of the acquisition process is as follows: A property owner must be notified in writing of the need for his -- his or her property, this usually is accomplished by one of our staff members who have met with the owner to discuss the need and a letter is sent to follow up the meeting. An independent appraiser is then hired to do a detailed appraisal of the property needed; these are independent business people who provide appraisal services to anyone in the community that has the need. The appraiser must have the experience in appraising properties similar to the subject property. Education, certifications and work experience are reviewed prior to making the work assignment.

The property owner will be given the opportunity to accompany the appraiser when the property is inspected. This is the option of the property owner, but is strongly encouraged because no one knows the property better than you. When the appraisal is complete, it will be reviewed by a second equally qualified appraiser who will certify that the standards of the uniform appraisal practice were used in determining the value.
A right of way agent will then make an offer to the property owner based on the value determined in the appraisal report. We make no attempt to acquire the property for less than the appraised value. The agent will then explain the impacts the right of way taking will have on the remaining property and try to answer any questions that the owner may have at that time.

The owner is given a minimum of 30 days to consider the offer. This can be extended, if needed, and if our project schedule allows it. If the owner -- if the offer is acceptable to the owner, a closing at the title company is arranged. If the property owner considers the offer unacceptable, the landowner will be presented the options available to him or her under the laws of eminent domain.

The second part of this law deals with assistance available to occupants of displaced properties. The basic procedures are as follows: At the time of the offer of purchase or shortly thereafter, a relocation assistance agent will meet with the property owner or occupant to explain the benefit of the program. This agent will work with the displacee until the move is complete. Business displacees are entitled to reimbursement of cost to
move personal property and inventories. Some business reestablishment expenses are eligible for reimbursement under this program.

Tonight, we have brought two brochures that provide additional information concerning the purchase of right of way and the relocation assistance. They're at the back table back here and you can find those pretty easily. In the months ahead, if you will review these brochures, you will have a better understanding of the process.

We anticipate that there will be about 122 parcels that will need to be acquired. We expect three residences and three businesses will be displaced. The information being presented tonight represents the right of way requirements as near as they can be determined at this time. It is possible minor changes will have to be made as our planning work is finalized. The Texas Department tran -- of Transportation has a policy that individuals impacted by the transportation expansion shall not be denied benefits, excluded from participation or otherwise be subjected to discrimination based on the grounds of race, color, sex, age, handicaps or national origin.

In the months ahead, if you have any questions or hear rumors about what's happening with
the project and right of way acquisition, please call
our office and we will get your questions answered as
quickly as possible. Thank you for your time.

MS. CHAVEZ: I was actually going to
call out and -- and recognize and thank all of the
elected officials in -- in various city and -- and
county staffs, but in the interest of time, maybe, I
won't call all of y'all out.

I do very much appreciate all of the
representations here today and -- and so let me just
thank all of you. And then when we open it back up for
public comments, then I'll recognize all of those folks
that -- that have asked to speak.

Do you want to go ahead and -- and give
them the -- the rest of the information, Judy?

MS. ANDERSON: All information developed
concerning this project, including the environmental
documentation is available upon request for -- for
public inspection and copying at the TxDOT District
Office, located at I20 and McCart Avenue in south Fort
Worth, also at the local city offices in Fort Worth,
North Richland Hills and in Haltom City. We have also
brought us -- a copy with us of the environmental
document with us tonight for your viewing during the
recess and after the hearing.
As a reminder, if you did not sign in when you came in, please do so. This is for our records in determining attendance in the hearing.

Also, please register at the registration table during the recess if you desire to make a statement. We will -- when we reconvene, you will be given the opportunity to give your statement.

Before we recess, I would like to introduce personnel from our staff and our consultant staff that will be available at the display and in selected areas to assist with orientation on the drawings and to answer other questions in regard to this project.

With the design staff, we have -- and I'm going to have you guys wave your hand so folks can see you, and I'll try and point them out. Curtis Hanan, he's our TxDOT Transportation -- Advance Tran -- Transportation Planning Director. He's over there on the far wall. John Tillinghast, he is our TxDOT Project Manager. Darrell Thompson, who was up here earlier, he's our Consultant Project Manager with Jacobs Engineering. Rodger Clements. Rodger's way back in the back over here and he is Consultant Project Engineer with Jacobs Engineering. We have Maged Ghaly, he's our Consultant Project Engineer from Jacobs
Engineering, he's over here in the far corner. And Chris Hoff, where's Chris? Chris is right here on the front row. He's also with our Consultant Project Engineer from Jacobs Engineering.

From our right of way staff, we have: Mr. Scott Hall, who was, also, up here earlier and -- our TxDOT Right of Way Administrator. We have Frank Burroughs, they're -- our -- our right of way staff, these folks, are right back there in that corner. Frank is with TxDOT right of way staff. We have Jeny Houdman, she's also with right of way staff. And Jeremy Tyson. Our right of way folks will probably be located along that area. But most of y'all are probably wanting to point out some things on the maps. So they'll -- they'll go with you over to the maps, where ever you want to go so they can address any of your questions.

For the environmental side of the project, I have -- we have myself, and I'll be back there at this table right back in that -- right back over there (indicating). We have Sandy Wesch-Schulze, she's our Consultant Environmental Project Manager with Jacobs Engineering. Sandy's back over in the corner. And we have Nathan Drozd and he's also with the consultant -- Jacobs Consulting Engineering.
we'll now take about a 20-minute recess
and, based on that clock back there, will put us about
three minutes after 8:00 p.m. to reconvene.

(Recess from 7:42 p.m. to 8:07 p.m.)

PUBLIC COMMENTS

MS. CHAVEZ: Okay. At this time -- at
this time, I'd like to go ahead and reconvene our --
our public -- public hearing. And -- and how I'd like
to start the -- the public comment part is by
recognizing and calling upon the public and -- and
elected officials or their representatives who have
requested to make comments.

MS. CHATHAM: That's not really
very fair --

MS. CHAVEZ: So I would like to start --
first of all, the -- the microphone is up here, if you
could please, if you will come, if you will state your
name and your -- your position, and the city or county
that you represent. The first --

MS. CHATHAM: The public officials have
spoken --

MS. CHAVEZ: -- the first --

MS. CHATHAM: -- first before --

MS. CHAVEZ: -- speakers who have
requested --
MS. CHATHAM: -- the public --

MS. CHAVEZ: Pardon me, ma'am --

MS. CHATHAM: -- officials have --

MS. CHAVEZ: -- I -- I am --

MS. CHATHAM: -- spoken first before --

MS. CHAVEZ: -- conducting this public hearing --

MS. CHATHAM: -- and we never get a chance, they never stay and listen to what the citizens say --

MS. CHAVEZ: Ma'am --

MS. CHATHAM: -- that happened last time.

MS. CHAVEZ: Everyone has an opportunity to speak and I am going to try my best to give everyone that time. And I will stay here as long as it takes to hear you and everyone else.

MS. CHATHAM: But the public officials have --

MS. CHAVEZ: Let me -- let me start first with the Tarrant County Judge, Judge Glen Whitley from Tarrant County.

JUDGE WHITLEY: I'm Glen Whitley, I'm Tarrant County Judge. And come out here to speak tonight in favor of this project. You know, I would
have to say that this is the last part of 820 to be improved and it probably really should have been the first part of it. While we've actually been planning -- I know that it was mentioned that we started this process in '92. It's probably quadrupled in cost since that point in time, and the longer we wait, the more those costs continue to go up.

None of us are excited about paying tolls, but at the same time, we realize that we don't have very many options. We're not -- there's not enough funds either at the state or the federal level to make all the improvements that we need. And so that really leaves us with few options, tolls being one, taxes being another or really doing nothing. And doing nothing is certainly not the option.

We all probably sat in traffic tonight just to get here. The thing that I want to compliment on the project is the fact that we are adding three lanes at the same time that we are adding a managed toll lane. They're -- they're also improving the access roads. So that is at least in -- in my opinion something that we're -- we're not saying we're going to reduce in any way, shape or form the free access that we had before the project began, and we're moving forward.
This project right now, this road area right now is crippling our region, it's crippling it from an air quality standpoint, it's crippling it from an economic development and it's crippling it from a quality of life. We've really got to stop discussing this and we really need to move on as quickly as we can to get this portion finished and complete so that we can, then, move to the next portion, which is the 121/183 portion. Again, thank you very much. And, please, let's move forward as rapidly as we can.

Ms. Chavez: Thank you, Judge. The next speaker is Commissioner Fickes, Commissioner Fickes.

MR. FICKES: Thank you, Ms. Chavez, I appreciate the opportunity to be here. When you arrived tonight, did you notice anything different? I'm telling you, you didn't. It's the same congested freeway that we've had in Northeast Tarrant County for the past 20 years. The only real difference is it's getting worse every month. For the past 30 years, the population of Texas has doubled to 25 million. In the next 30 years, it'll double again to 50 million.

During that time, we have only added 15 percent of new lane miles. Each one of you here tonight spends 57 hours a year in congested traffic, this is over and beyond your normal drive time. This
equals almost one and a half weeks of work time, time that you could be spending with your friends and family. In the D.F.W. region, that congested cost is over 5 billion dollars a year.

This project, the North Tarrant Expressway is about drivers' choice. It offers hope to the 450,000 residents of Northeast Tarrant County that congested relief, and congested relief is on the way. The 820 portion of this project takes the second most congested area in the entire Dallas/Fort Worth region and expands the open three lane capacity by 50 percent to six free lanes with the additional four managed lanes, the entire capacity is increased by 150 percent. It's drivers' choice is what we're talking about.

If you choose to use the managed lanes, you free up more capacity in the free lanes. Again, it's your choice. We know the traditional funding methods for expansion are no longer an option. It would mean lining up against all the other projects where TxDOT actually can only complete one in every three projects that they get for funding and approved. Yes, that's only one third of projects actually get done in any kind of timely fashion.

In Texas, we only get 70 cents back for every dollar we send in on our gas tax. On a state
level, funding is limited for new construction because of the overwhelming cost to maintain the existing roadways due to congestion and overcrowding. The affect it has on you and your childrens' health and the annual cost from your budget in dollars and more importantly your time.

To say no to this project, is a slap in the face to the citizens of Hurst, Euless, Bedford, North Richland Hills, Richland Hills, Haltom City and Fort Worth. These citizens have been promised relief for decades. If we say no, we'll wait another couple decades. It's about drivers' choice and it's about time to do it now. Thank you.

MS. CHAVEZ: Next person that I'm going to call on is the Mayor of -- of the City of North Richland Hills, Mayor Oscar Trevino.

MAYOR TREVINO: Good evening. I'm Oscar Trevino, and I'm the Mayor of the City of North Richland Hills. I want to first thank the Richland Hills Church of Christ for, again, hosting this event as they do very -- very many other events.

Since I was first elected to sit as city council member back in 1999, I've heard residents complain about traffic on Northeast Loop 820. And they ask, When will something be done? I have consistently...
told them, It's in the works and to be patient, it's coming. Well, to be very honest, they're tired of waiting.

We've talked -- we've been talking about widening North Loop 820 since the early '90s. This project is long overdue and it's time we stop talking and start acting. We understand -- we understand that there's a funding issue that TxDOT is facing, but we cannot continue to accept the level of congestion that we see everyday on the North Tarrant Express (inaudible). The congestion from D.F.W. Airport from 35W and then north and south of 35W is in -- horrible. And the citizens of this section of the region deserve and demand better.

We've been working with so many and have the support of so many officials, just to name a few, Senator Kim Brimer, Senator Jane Nelson, Representative Hancock, Truitt and Smith, County Judge Whitley, Commissioner Fickes and the rest of the Commissioners, Mayor Mike Moncrief, the Fort Worth Council on the west, Mayor Saleh and her council to the east and all those in between to come up with help and address the needs of this congested artery.

We have solicited the support for this from throughout the region and have to -- have full
support of the Regional Transportation Council on
getting this problem addressed and resolved. The
widening of Loop 820 through North Richland Hills and
the successful implementation of the North Tarrant
Express is essential to protecting the economy, the
quality of life and the air for the residents and
businesses in this region.

If we fail to move forward with -- with
this project, we'll spend even more time in gridlock
and we'll have less time with our families. And as
time goes on, the cost will -- the cost of relief
continues to increase. We'll waste more fuel and force
more emissions into our already polluted air. If the
gridlock continues, fewer and fewer people and
businesses will consider moving to this region, which
will hurt us all economically. It is also very likely
that some current residents will move away because they
can't stand the traffic.

Two to three years ago, we were here in
this very room talking about the same thing. The time
for talk is over, we need action. On behalf of the
65,750 residents of North Richland Hills and hundreds
of thousands of residents who travel through our
community, I urge you to please move forward without
further delay. This project is essential to protecting
the economy and the quality of life of North Richland
Hills and all of Northeast Tarrant County. Thank you.

MS. CHAVEZ: Next we have Mayor Pro Tem
of the City of North Richland Hills, Scott Turnage,
Mayor Turnage.

@ MAYOR TURNAGE: I'm Scott Turnage, I'm
Mayor of Pro Tem with the City of North Richland Hills.
In my regular job, I travel throughout the Dallas/Fort
Worth metroplex on pretty much a daily basis. People
say to me, gee, I feel sorry for you having to drive to
Dallas all the time. Well, I tell you, Dallas is a
piece of cake compared to driving on Northeast Loop
820.

Sitting in traffic is no way to live.
Our families deserve better, they deserve more time
together, they deserve less time waiting on the highway
in route to both their jobs and their homes. We
deserve clean air to breathe, we deserve quality
infrastructure that supports and sustains our
communities.

I am in strong support of the widening
of Loop 820. This project is necessary to keep our
roads moving smoothly, to protect our local air quality
and preserve our quality of life. I urge the state to
complete this project as quickly as feasible. Thank
you.

MS. CHAVEZ: Next we have councilman with the City of North Richland Hills, Councilman Dr. Tim Barth, Councilman Barth.

MR. BARTH: It's a pleasure to be here this evening and have an opportunity to speak to y'all. I am Tim Barth the council member for the City of North Richland Hills. As much as I hate gridlock and sitting in traffic, I hate -- I hate even more all -- what all the traffic is doing to our air quality and our health. Other than in the Houston area, Tarrant and Denton County suffer from the worst air pollution in Texas, the rest of the metroplex is not far behind.

Prolonged exposure to ozone can damage the respiratory and immune systems, leading to lung disease, heart attacks and premature death. North Texas residents are constantly fighting this by the chronic exposure to high levels of ozone.

More than 55 percent of the increases to ozone pollution in North Texas are admitted from cars and trucks. In order to improve our air quality, we have to keep long overdue highway improvements moving forward. We have to eliminate the amount of time cars and trucks are stuck in traffic on 820, as well as 183, 121, 114 and I35. These improvements will result in
better air quality and better health. I am in strong
support of the Loop 820 project and urge you to move
forward. Thank you.

MS. CHAVEZ: The next speaker is
councilman from the City of North Richland Hills,
Councilman David Whitson, Councilman Whitson.
Councilman Whitman -- Whitson. Yes, sir.

MR. WHITSON: Hi.

MS. CHAVEZ: Microphone's right up here.

MR. WHITSON: Thank you. Some people
call me Tiny, that's why it takes a little bit longer
to get to the mike, I apologize.

My name's David Whitson, I'm a city
council member, City of North Richland Hills. I'm a
hometown boy. I was raised in Haltom City and
eventually ended up in North Richland Hills, and proud
to be a resident of this city.

When I was growing up in Haltom City, I
saw a lot of pastures, a lot of cows, a lot of
livestock, a lot of animals. Guess what is in place
now? Loop 820. And guess what, we're not moving too
quickly either there. As a resident of -- of and city
council member of City of North Richland Hills, I
strongly support the swift implementation of the Loop
820 widening project.
This project has been on the drawing boards for many years, it's time for action. Our residents are tired of waiting for these improvements. We have already delayed this critical project too long. If this project is delayed any longer it will only cost us more in terms of actual construction cost.

Additional delays will also negatively impact our economy, the air we breathe and our quality of life. The Dallas/Fort worth region has added 1.5 billion people in the last ten years, that's more than all of the people in the entire State of New Hampshire. We have every reason to believe that the growth will continue at a steady pace over the next several years, and more people means more cars on the road.

With our population growth expected in our region over the next 20 years, our existing transportation infrastructure will, without question, fail the people of this region. Moving forward with the Loop 820 widening project will help to relieve the gridlock we are already experiencing and it will help prepare us for the continued growth this region is facing. I strongly encourage you to make this project a top priority and move forward as quickly as possible. Thank you.

ROBYN WARD, CSR #8290
DOLORES STEWART & ASSOCIATES, INC. (817) 810-0244
MS. CHAVEZ: Next with the City of North Richland Hills, Councilman Tim Welch, Councilman Welch.

MR. WELCH: Thank you very much. I've got two comments here. First off, my name is Tim Welch with the City of North Richland Hills. As you're well aware, the cost of gasoline is at a all-time high. When you combine the high price of gas and traffic congestion and -- and -- in Tarrant County, we are simply throwing money out the window. We are in desperate need of relief. Many of us have cut down on the number of trips we have made and switched to more fuel efficient vehicles.

If we can get from point A to point B in a reasonable amount of time, instead of spending hours tied up in traffic, it would be a tremendous help for all of us. The widening of 8 -- 820 would help -- being suggested, reduce the overall traffic travel time, improve our fuel efficiency. I strongly urge you to move forward with this project.

My second letter right here is from the Mayor of Roanoke who cannot be here tonight. The letter says: Dear Ms. Chavez, I regret that I am unable to attend the public hearing this evening, but I would like to express my support of the expansion of IH820/IH35/State Highway 121/State Highway 183/State...
Highway 26.

With the high cost of fuel today and the traffic congestion so bad and numerous delays so extensive, it's imperative the travel times improve for this area. The conditions in this corridor have be -- become intolerable for citizens traveling to and from work and business travelers to (inaudible) their commodities. It is our responsibility to help sustain the quality of life for our citizens and starting out with our regional state. We require that passing the improvements of IH 20 -- 820, which are vital to this corridor, we ask that this be initiated without further delay. We fully support proceeding with this improvements project immediately.

Please enter this letter into the official record of July 1st public hearing of this project. Thank you, Carl Gierisch, Jr., Mayor of Roanoke. In full support. Thank you.

MS. CHAVEZ: For the City of North Richland Hills, Councilman Ken Sapp, Councilman Sapp.

MR. SAPP: Thanks for the opportunity to speak. I am Ken Sapp councilman for the city -- City of North Richland Hills. You know, in the past months, we've seen articles in the Dallas Business Journal and the Fort Worth Star-Telegram. They have now reported
that Dallas/Fort Worth is the fifth most congested region in the country, this is worse than San Francisco, Houston, Boston, Seattle and Atlanta. Even more significant is that among all of the cities here in North Texas, these statistics show that 820 is the worst bottleneck in Texas. Topping the list with most terrible connection -- congestion in D.F.W., is Loop 820 at Highway 26, worst in Texas, number two, 820 at Denton Highway, number three, 820 at Rufe Snow Drive, number 6, 820 at Holiday Lane, number 9, 820 at Haltom Road. If you've been keeping count, you will see that five of the most congested areas in Texas are right here in North Tarrant County.

The worst congestion in Texas is not on the North Central Expressway, it's not on the Dallas North Tollway, it's not on 635, it's right here on Loop 820. Northeast Tarrant County is a great place to live. In North Richland Hills, we count ourselves as leaders in many areas. Leaders in congestion is not one which we are proud of. We have a plan, the citizens deserve it, let's build it and let's build it now. Thank you.

MS. CHAVEZ: With the City of North Richland Hills, Councilwoman Compton, Councilwoman Compton.
MS. COMPTOM: Good evening. I'm Suzanne Compton, North Richland Hills City Council as well as Public School Administrator in the Birdville Independent School District.

In 1987, my husband and I moved into an apartment complex across the street on the north side of Northeast Loop 820 behind Wal-Mart. Sitting in that apartment one evening, more than 20 years ago, that evening news report said unless something was done, we would be experiencing gridlock on stretches of Loop 820 and Interstate 35 West. I remember this news report vividly as the news station showed -- showed footage of cars sitting in traffic.

Twenty years later, the relief is still in just the talking stages with no visible street action of anything being done to create relief for our citizens, residents, visitors and travelers through our wonderful community.

North Texas -- north Texas area is a wonderful area for people to live, work and play. Our city is in the heart of this area and so taunted by the traffic that remains at a stand still right in the middle of our community. Additionally, one of the finest school districts in the state of Texas, the Birdville Independent School District is nestled right...
in the middle of the traffic gridlock.

As a public school administrator, who recruits teachers to our school district, it will become harder to convince potential employees that this is a great place to live when their first experience is nothing but traffic at a stand still. Not only that, but we are short-changing our students, our future, if we are not able to provide, for them, the best teachers because traffic jams turn them away from interviews.

Currently, our district enjoys the luxury of being very selective in who we hire. As this year alone, we have already had more than nine -- more than 9,000 teachers -- potential teachers apply with our district, and currently, as of today, less than 168 openings.

We have already -- we have -- have already delayed our most critical transportation projects too long and we cannot afford to delay them any longer. Our transportation infrastructure will no doubt fail the people of this region, negatively impacting our economy, the air we breathe and our quality of life.

In fact, our current transportation infrastructure already fails the people of this region. By actively beginning the Loop 820 widening project,
will help relieve the gridlock we experience daily and
will help prepare us for the continued growth this
region is facing. Not only that, the quality of life
will increase as citizens will have easier access to
get to and from their destination with less stress and
emotional turmoil.

I strongly encourage you to make this
project a very much top priority and to move forward as
quickly as possible. Thank you.

MS. CHAVEZ: Mary Saleh, Mary Saleh,
Mary Saleh. With the City of Fort Worth, City
Councilman Sal Espino, Councilman Espino.

MR. ESPINO: I'm going to keep my
remarks very short, then, I do have a letter from the
Mayor of City of Fort Worth, Mike Moncrief that I would
like to read into the record.

Good evening. My name is Sal Espino.
I'm the City of Fort Worth Council Member for District
2 North Fort Worth, which stretches from north of
downtown through some of Fort Worth's historic
neighborhoods, Meacham Airport, the stockyards area,
enclose north of Loop 820 right by this 35/820
interchange, all the way up to the Texas Motor Speedway
and one of the Alliance corridors. Represent over
90,000 residents in the city that is the fastest
growing city with a population of over half a million. The City of Fort Worth now as 700,000 residents. And we know, just coming here today, about the congestion. A trip that should have taken me ten minutes from where I was along I35, took me 35 minutes. I got off I35, came up North Beach, then, I hit traffic on Beach, traffic on 820 and then exited Rufe Snow. I am also the chairman of our city council's Infrastructure and Transportation Committee and also one of three city board representatives for the Regional Transportation Council, which is our regional entity in moving forward regional improvements through our transportation system.

And this project, the North Tarrant Express, the segment one, is the number one priority for my constituents and along with the Southwest Parkway is the number one improvement in the City of Fort Worth. If we cannot move goods and services in our city and in our region, we're going to choke economic development. We will hurt developments along the lines of corridor. I am blessed to represent many wonderful new communities that are north of Loop 820. And the number one calls that I get from those citizens is the lack of being able to move around in our city, and this is just one part of the puzzle. We are
looking at the commuter rail, we're looking at streetcar light rail system.

And so I urge that TxDOT move forward with this project, this is very critical to the vitality of our region. I want to thank our state representatives for fighting for this project in Austin, I want to thank TxDOT, I want to thank the -- the Regional Transportation Council, COG, I want to thank Mayor Trevino, County Judge Whitley for fighting hard for this project because this is so critical to our city and to North Tarrant County.

And now I will read a letter from the Mayor of the City of Fort Worth, The Honorable Mike Moncrief: These comments are intended to provide you with my support of the North Tarrant Express, a project that I, and my fellow city council members, believe is critical to the continued success for our city, our county and our region.

The North Tarrant Express is by far the most critically needed transportation improvement. Time is of the essence and we must complete this planning process, approve these environmental documents and turn dirt as soon as humanly possible.

We indeed favor this plan for which this hearing was called. We simply cannot wait any longer.
to move forward with this project in its entirety. I cannot overstate how much this project affects Fort Worth's quality of life, economic vitality and safety. From the very beginning, we, our commercial leaders, our resident groups and our surrounding local government partners have been united. And we continue to speak with one voice about our frustrations with the current roadways and our desire to fix a broken highway system.

We in Tarrant County are literally choking, choking from pollution resulting from traffic congestion. It's frustrating, it's costly to commuters, to commerce and it's dangerous. I don't have to tell you all the reasons we need this project to you as you have documented them well. Keeping up with those ever increasing population numbers in Fort Worth and the surrounding cities to the north and east, have proven difficult at best. I know you and our transportation colleagues understand that our metropolitan region is the fifth most congested in the country. And there's no question that Fort Worth and Tarrant County, a large reason why, the (inaudible) word bottlenecks for a region as alluded to earlier are in the North Tarrant Express System.

The message I leave for you is quite
simple: We support moving quickly as much possible of this project and support quick implementation. We and our residents have waited a long time and we cannot afford to wait any longer. Let's keep 820 moving and let's keep I 35W moving north. Thank you very much.

MS. CHAVEZ: With the City of Fort Worth, City Council Member, Danny Scarth, Council Member Scarth.

MR. SCARTH: My name is Danny Scarth, Fort Worth City Council District 4. I represent the northeast part of Fort Worth that wraps around many of the cities of council members who have already spoken here tonight. I also sit on the Board of the Area Metropolitan Ambulance Authority, MedStar. And the Metropolitan Ambulance Authority provides ambulance service for 15 neighboring cities, almost a million people.

I have sat in a conference room with a young mother who was asking me as a -- as a member of the City Council as a member of the Area Metropolitan Ambulance Authority, why did it take so long for an ambulance to come see my daughter. Thankfully, that little girl was okay. But when her mother called at 4:30 in the afternoon, on a Thursday, it happened to be a very busy day for ambulance calls. And that
ambulance had to work through the traffic that we all sit through everyday.

It brings a much different perspective to me than -- than simply -- many of the -- the quality of life issues that we've talked about, certainly, commuting through that is not fun, air quality is an issue, economic development. But I just would ask you, how would you like to be holding a loved one in your arms with a telephone in your hand, waiting on an ambulance and knowing that they have to get through the intersection of State Highway 35 and 820 and go east?

All of the citizens, the many people that are represented by the ambulance authority, as well as the City of Fort Worth, really deserve to know that we are doing everything we can to keep them safe and to make sure that our emergency vehicles, fire, police, ambulance can respond to them in a method and -- and in a means that -- that they have put their trust in us to provide.

And -- and I'm not a huge fan of tolls either, and I understand the prospective that many people bring when they have a problem with -- with paying for a road, but they are user fees that help pay us for other lanes that will not cost us anything to be in.
And I don't want to have to sit across a conference room from another mother who might tell me that the ambulance didn't get there in time for her little girl. And say that I didn't do everything that I could have to provide the transportation that she needed. And so I, like so many others before me, urge everyone who has an opportunity to push this project forward and make it possible just as soon as we can.

Thank you.

MS. CHAVEZ: With the City of Haltom City, Mayor Bill Lanford, Mayor Lanford.

MAYOR LANFORD: Good evening. My name is Bill Lanford. As Mayor of Haltom City, I'm speaking today on behalf of the 40,000 residents and 1700 businesses that make Haltom City home. I'd like to take a moment now to recognize members of the city council, city boards as well as any Haltom City citizens and owners of property or business in attendance by asking them to stand, please. Stand, if -- if you live in Haltom City, work in Haltom City, whatever, thank you, thank you.

Let me first say I acknowledge the very difficult task before you, as you strive to promise all kinds of tugs and pulls and roadways very much needed, North Texas Express the stakes are high. In
recognition to that, Haltom City has worked diligently for the last three years with TxDOT, Tarrant County on the North Central Texas COG in ongoing collaborate efforts to balance local and regional access needs along 820 and Haltom City.

Throughout these efforts, COG has led the way in development of collaborative plan -- plans to build a backage road system in Haltom City in order to accommodate managed lanes, on and off ramps, that then locate in Haltom City, and request neighboring cities who desire to be linked to the managed lanes in I35 via the managed lanes in I -- in 820, so their citizens can travel to and from the last corridor in Downtown Fort Worth entirely on managed lanes.

The current TxDOT plan was proposed based on traffic volume numbers that were changed in late 2006 and made available to Haltom City in March of 2007. At which time, we first raised the issue of the need for a different access approach. Since then we have faithfully worked to restore appropriate and balanced access.

The resulting collaborative plan incorporates connection solutions to link the proposed backage roads to 820 in such a way as to compliment managed lanes con -- connectivity and better serve
traffic volumes, access and Haltom Road.

These connections have no negative impact on TxDOT's proposal to consolidate main lane ramps and grade separate -- grade separate frontage roads to give proper access to managed lanes. Without provision of the current plan -- proposed plan, however, the City of Haltom City must oppose the current TxDOT plan as a detriment to the people and welfare of our city.

Haltom City, therefore, requests that TxDOT responds to our comments by entering into an agreement with us to revise the preliminary schematics to incorporate the access connections proposed in our collaborative plans presented to TxDOT on June 21st.

We will extend our comments and provide additional plan documentation prior to July 14th.

Thank you.

MS. CHAVEZ: For the City of Haltom City, Tom Muir.

MR. MUIR: Thank you. My mayor -- council -- Mayor Lanford said it very well and the -- and the council members who were here tonight, certainly echoed it. The similar concerns that have been voiced by other people, preceding council members.

Again, my name is Tom Muir, as the city
manager of Haltom City during the last four years, it's been my responsibility to evaluate the impact of TxDOT's planned improvements on the future access needs of Haltom City. About a year ago, TxDOT relocated the jug handle connectors that had previously been proposed for Haltom Road.

These planned provisions caused several concerns, free of conflict with plans of the city and affected the property owners that made based on the previous location that TxDOT had established for these vital connectors a year and a half earlier.

The city and affected property owners relied on TxDOT to use jug handle locations to plan and hear developments to compliment these connector locations. Also, we're -- we're concerned to learn that TxDOT had projected new traffic volumes that -- that raise serious concerns regarding the feasibility and safety of TxDOT to rely on forcing all of Haltom City traffic -- Haltom -- Haltom Road, rather -- rather to use single two-way, two-lane jug handles on each side of IH820. Complementary, we asked for COG to assist us in the evaluation of the new TxDOT traffic projections and developments of appropriate access solutions to accommodate these new traffic volumes. Collaboration, mainly, mentioned solutions that we have
incorporated in the collaborative plan referred to by Mayor -- Mayor Lanford and submitted to TxDOT last week.

This collaborative plan connection solutions responds to our concerns and objections to the TxDOT plan in the following ways: Collaborative plan is -- is consistent with these Haltom City (unintelligible) plan and ensures community profusion. It does not change proposed access in the main lane or the managed lanes, nor does it negatively impact the design of the main lane or managed lanes.

However, the plan also provides better access to Haltom Road and it provides better access to westbound managed lanes. And, finally, it -- it also has multi-jurisdictional support, (unintelligible) funding of $15 million for Northeast cities, Haltom City and Tarrant County.

We are opposed, but yet very supportive of the North Tarrant Express project and the managed lanes connectivity. But at this point, Haltom City cannot support the proposed TxDOT schematic due to the rule of nature of the jug handle design at Haltom Road.

As -- as I stated, collaborative effort has developed a plan that maintains the integrity of the IH 820 schematic and at the same time approves the access to
and from Haltom Road to, both, one, the public as well as emergency vehicles.

In conclusion, the bad news for Haltom City is that our city is the only city along the brink of the North Tarrant Express that has been asked to give up four existing ramps, two Texas U-turns and allow us frontage roads to be grade separated from this main thoroughfare in order to accommodate managed lane on and off ramps.

The good news for TxDOT is that Haltom City is willing to employ four engineering firms over the -- over a period of three years to investigate a plan, constructive access solutions and collaborative efforts to balance the local and regional access needs along IH820.

Haltom City respectfully requests that TxDOT partner with us in these solutions by agreeing to provide this plan that access for -- to Haltom Road and the RTC supportive of the backage roads to incorporate connection solutions of the collaborative plan that we presented to TxDOT on June 24th. We will provide a complete package of -- of the plans and data on or before July 14th. Thank you for the consideration on our request.

MS. CHAVEZ: For the City of Hurst,
Richard Ward.

MR. WARD: Ms. Chavez and your staff, thank you very much for allowing us to speak tonight and for the time that you've put into this project.

One of the real advantages of growing old, as I am, as you can all see is I don't have to put up with this traffic very much longer. But the real disadvantage is I'm probably not going to get to see it finished unless we get started now. So I'm hoping that -- and -- and pleading with you to get this started as quickly as possible.

On behalf of the Hurst City Council, I would like to express our support for the Loop 820 expansion project, projects not stop at Highway 26, however, but must be funded and expedited through Hurst, Euless and Bedford (inaudible). Congestion is at an all-time high in this area and will only get worse as our region grows. 820 is a start let's make it -- let's make sure we continue the rest of it. And, again, thank you very much.

MS. CHAVEZ: For the City of Fort Worth, Cinde Gilliland.

MS. GILLILAND: Good evening. I am Cynthia Weatherby Gilliland, and I've been the Regional Transportation Coordinator for the City of Fort Worth,
a position that serves the city manager as a special assistant for transportation.

When hiring me and North Tarrant Express improvements were the top priorities on the list of transportation issues that the mayor and the manager gave me, in fact, this project was the primary reason that the city created this new position in the manager's office. While we are also very interested in other major regional projects, as councilman has alluded to Southwest Parkway being one of them, this project remains my top priority.

I happen to know that our municipal staff has worked diligently, along with our citizens and community, business community to perfect these project plans. Our elected leaders have been briefed often on the progress underway on the transportation project, they have been very actively engaged in all levels of review and interactions with the constituency being this corridor. The con -- constituencies are active, organized, well-informed and at the point of not taking excuses for this project implementation not being underway.

The Fort Worth Mayor and council provided leadership and supported our area's state senators and representatives when fighting for our
ability to continue on this project. The entire
region, west, north, south and east pulled together and
took our message to Austin and that message was heard.
And today, we're at another critical juncture and
there's no question that the City of Fort Worth
endorses these plans provided tonight, and request
approval of the environmental documentation by TxDOT
and the Federal Highway Administration.

We pledge our continued assistance in
getting these interstate improvements completed as soon
as possible.

MS. CHAVEZ: (Inaudible) Larry Hodge,
Mr. Hodge.

MR. HODGE: I'm Jerry Hodge and I'm
Director of Transportation projects for the City of
Grapevine. The city -- city manager and mayor and
council asked me to come tonight to support your
project.

You know, for many years, Grapevine has
been a big supporter of transportation projects. Over
about a 20-year period, they spent $250 million
building thoroughfares in the community to be able to
handle city traffic.

When highways developed and they're
congested, as this section of the highway is, what you
get into is all those thoroughfares are taken up from
the -- the cut-through traffic from the highway system.
The neighborhoods are full of traffic, the
thoroughfares are full of traffic, the economic
development starts to slow down because you can't get
there, ergo, the 635 scenario in Dallas where you got
all the empty buildings today because of traffic, the
people can't get there.

It's important that we keep moving
ahead. This project is one of many projects that needs
to be carried through in a timely manner. And we need
to look at our air quality because the air quality is
not good in this region, in the metroplex, and it's
never going to be good if we don't get rid of all this
congestion and the bottlenecks that we have in this
area.

The traffic safety is a big issue. Any
time you drive the highways like we do, my family, you,
you see many accidents on the highways. The way this
road has been designed and -- and the schematic has
been laid out, traffic safety is going to be enhanced
tremendously.

But it makes a difference to people that
have to work everyday, that have to travel these
corridors and that sit in the traffic. When you look
at how many hours they're sitting in -- in -- sitting
in traffic congestion and what they're being paid,
their salary goes down per hour because of congestion.
We -- we wholeheartedly support this project and ask
you to move forward.

MS. CHAVEZ: The Mayor of Trophy Club,
Mayor Nick Sanders, Mayor Sanders. Representing the
City of Keller, Keith Fisher, Mr. Fisher.

MR. FISHER: Good evening. My name is
Keith Fisher, and I'm the city engineer for the City of
Keller. I'm here tonight representing Mayor Pat
McGrail and Dan O'Leary, our City Manager, both were
unable to be here tonight because of schedules with
councilman. I'll keep this brief. We'd just like to
go on the record of being in full support of the
expansion of 820 corridor as presented and move forward
with the project. Thank you.

MS. CHAVEZ: (Inaudible) Council Of
Governments, Barrien Barks, Mr. Barks.

MR. BARKS: Good evening. I'm Barrien
Barks here. And I'm here this evening representing
Regional Transportation Council and the North Central
Texas Council of Governments, together serving as the
Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Dallas/Fort
Worth Area.
The North Texas region continues to experience significant growth, and this trend is expected to continue into the future. A significant share of the regional growth is occurring right here in northern Tarrant County, aggravating the already intolerable congestion on area roadways. Needed improvements on -- on Loop 820, Interstate 35W and State Highway 183, known collectively as the North Tarrant Express has been identified for several decades.

The recommended improvements to this section of Loop 820, including the addition of general purpose lanes and tolled managed lanes, are consistent with Mobility 2030, the region's Metropolitan Transportation Plan. Mobility 2030 recognizes that active management of regional transportation corridors through auto occupancy and tolls is critical in combating congestion.

In addition -- in addition, toll revenue can help offset -- offset maintenance and -- maintenance operations cost for the entire corridor. The addition of general purpose and managed lanes in this corridor will work in conjunction with other modes of transportation planned for the northern Tarrant County, including the proposed commuter rail line from
Dallas/Fort Worth to DFW Airport and beyond.

Because of the critical nature of this project, the North Central Texas Council of Governments is willing to provide any assistance in the planning, design, funding and implementation of this project.

Thank you.

MS. CHAVEZ: I'm going to ask Ms. Anderson to come up and -- and help me with -- with continuing the public comment and continuing to call on you, as -- everyone that has signed up to -- to speak. So, please, Judy, if you'll continue calling on -- on -- on everyone that has signed up.

MS. ANDERSON: I'm going to call on the ones that have signed up. And, again, like I said earlier, if there's any -- somebody that did not sign up, the floor will be open before we adjourned. First one I have on the list is Brinton Payne.

Please state your name and address.

MR. PAYNE: Hi, I'm Brinton Payne. With the Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce and I'd like to just paraphrase the letter from Ben Loughry, our chairman and Bill Thornton our President and CEO. Fort Worth Chamb -- Chamber of Commerce would like to thank Texas Department of Transportation for your attention to the need for added capacity along 820 and supports TxDOT --
TxDOT's efforts to move forward with this plan to achieve this additional capacity.

As you know, increasing mobility in Fort Worth/Dallas regions through improvements to the region's surface transportation infrastructure is a top priority -- priority of the Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce. The efficient movement of people and goods, both within and through the metroplex, is essential to support the continued economic growth through the North Texas Region.

We actively support your efforts to engage all of these state holders in the planning, financing, development of critically needed facility improvements throughout the region. Sincerely, Ben Loughry and Bill Thornton.

MS. ANDERSON: Mac Churchill.

MR. CHurchill: Hi, I'm Mac Churchill, I'm the chairman of the I35 Coalition and 820. Let me read a quick letter that we'd like to enter into the book. On behalf of the I35 Coalition Board of Directors, we would like to strongly urge TxDOT to move forward with the immediate implementation of the North Texas Express project.

As you know, the 35W Coalition is made up of more than one hundred businesses, business
leaders, owners, affected citizens, city organizations and elected officials along the I35 corridor. TxDOT must provide for the effective movement of the people and goods throughout our region in order for us to remain competitive, and for our region to continue to attract new business. Congestion has a huge impact on our employees whose commutes are becoming unbearable. Worsening congestion levels also delay deliveries and increase the overall cost of operations in terms of lost productivity and wasted fuel. In addition, as the Tarrant County area continues to experience tremendous growth without alleviation of the traffic problems, traffic delays become a huge quality of life issue for our residents.

Our region has remained strong economically despite the conditions elsewhere in the United States. However, without self-immediate congestion relief, we will see a precipitous drop in economic development as companies choose to locate their offices and distribution centers in other regions where there are fewer transportation challenges.

The successful implementation of the North Tarrant Express is an important step towards solving the looming mobility prices. For the good of our region and our business, we must move forward on
this project without further delay.

As a personal note, I have 17,000
customers that must try to do business with me and they
constantly are complaining about how they're getting
caught in traffic, unable to make kids' soccer games,
how my employees -- I only have 60 of them, but
Countrywide has 3,000, BNSF has several thousand,
American Airlines has several thousand. All of these
people must travel and live their lives. So for the
effort of quality of life for business, let's make the
project go.

MS. ANDERSON: Next I have Russell
Laughlin.

MR. LAUGHLIN: Good evening. Thank you
very much. My name is Russell Laughlin, I'm the senior
Vice President of Hillwood -- Hillwood Development
Corporation. I'm here this evening speaking on behalf
of the 35W Corridor Coalition and the Alliance Texas
Community.

As Mac just indicated, the 35W Coalition
represents over 100 business owners. Those business
owners are located up and down, along 35 and the 820
corridor. The very reason they located along these
corridors are for all the reasons Mac just outlined for
you. It's mobility, it's region mobility, most
importantly, it's region mobility throughout the metroplex. We forget that because we're talking about a local project that is some 70 miles in length. You need to think about region mobility.

35W Coalition was formed over three years ago, and today we have over a hundred business owners and elected officials and land owners coming to our meetings on a regular basis saying to us, This is your number one job, get it done. And I'm reminded of a mentor of mine who once told me that if you're early, you're probably on time, if you're early, you're probably on time, if you're late, you're just dead in the water. And I'm suggesting to you that we're dead in the water on this project if we do not make a move now.

Now, I'd like to step back and speak about the Alliance Texas corridor. We can talk to the economic prosperity with some authority. I've been with Hillwood Development for over 17 years, region mobility, State Highway 170, 35 and 820, are the very reason that Burlington Northern Santa Fe, City of Fort Worth, FAA, Department of Transportation and our Federal Department of Transportation located the Alliance Texas Program for the Alliance Texas Airport, The Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad. Today that
economic prosperity has generated over seven and a half billion dollars of private investment, created over 28,000 jobs and created 28 million square feet. That region mobility that I'm talking about drove that economic investment.

If we do not solve this transportation facility today, the first segment, then, the second segment and then the third segment, 35 North, we will stop our economic prosperity and growth for this region.

I submit to you today, we're late, it is time to go. I was struck by the -- the screen earlier that said we began planning this in 1992, that's 14 years ago. It is our duty and our obligation, folks, to make this project happen now. Thank you for much.

MS. ANDERSON: Next I have Gail Cooksey.

MS. COOKSEY: I'm Gail Cooksey, I'm a resident of Colleyville and I'm a small business owner who drives these parts everyday and there's one part that I won't drive and that's 820 and 35W because of the traffic. And I can't drive it and my employees cannot drive it. I applaud you all, TxDOT, for the proposal that you've come up with, it's a combination of tolls and un-tolls. We all have a choice now. We can choose to pay a toll and move faster or we can not
pay a toll and -- and -- and go a little bit slower, 
but get there without having to pay the tolls. 

I, personally, will pay whatever it 
takes to get to my (inaudible), my place of business, 
my home or where ever I'm going. We must move forward 
with these projects now. The time is now. We just 
cannot wait one more moment. Thank you. 

MS. ANDERSON: Next I have Chris 
Utchell. 

MR. UTCHELL: Hi, I'm Chris Utchell. 
I'm -- I -- I live in Watauga and I'm currently a 
candidate for State Rep for District 91. I am all for 
expanding 820, but I'm opposed to any new toll roads. 
It comes out to be a toll tax, to me it's an unfair 
toll tax. When you figure it out, the Star-Telegram 
print, published the proposal for the toll tax for $4 
for one way. If you add that up, $8 a day, round trip, 
you're looking at $40 a week, over the course of the 
year, you're looking at over $2,000. What that does is 
for two thirds of the lanes, four out of the six 
proposed lanes, only the privileged few are going to be 
able to drive on it. Most of us cannot afford an extra 
$40 a week to drive on -- on our highways. On top of 
that, if this is built, I've got a question, why the 
companies that are being proposed to manage it or the
partners are foreign companies? You'd think that if
nothing else, they can be Native American companies and
if worse comes to worse, I don't see why we can't have
Native Texas. Thank you very much.

MS. ANDERSON: Next I have Byron Sibbet.

MR. SIBBET: I'm Byron Sibbet, I live at
7620 Beaver Drive, North Richland Hills. From 1988 to
1998 I was on the City Council of North Richland Hills,
three of those years was Mayor of Pro Tem.

If TxDOT had started this project in
1996, after several years of supposed engineering, we
would probably be -- and I believe Tommy Brown, the
Mayor, while I was there, we'd probably be out of here
before (unintelligible), unfortunately, we're not even
anywhere near that. This area is the 800-pound gorilla
that is waiting to be released and it needs to have
this -- this highway completed immediately, somewhat,
like we did on the schedule to complete West I30 in
Fort Worth, that got done in record time. And this
needs to be done in record time.

The only concern that I really have with
this project is the funding, and it's the toll roads
and the way that this -- this was done. I pulled up a
guide book for Identifying, Measuring and Mitigating
Environmental Justice Impacts of Toll Roads. It was
produced by the Center for Transportation Research, University of Texas, it's sponsored by TxDOT. This number is 0-5208-P2.

In that, it gives the description of how a house bill for the Texas legislator in 2003, House Bill 3588 was provided and then some of the concerns that it had in there the conversion of existing non-toll roads to toll roads, the conversion of a planned non-toll roads to toll roads. This was done by -- the author was Mike Prozzi, Republican out of District 92 Little Rock, Thornton area.

This type of -- of funding and especially if Mr. Utchell is correct, $4 per trip is excessive for the majority of people that -- that travel 820. I did that as a senior systems engineer, before I retired from a large aircraft manufacturer on the west side that will go unnamed. But the problem is: Is that I drove that thing everyday with a lot of my friends that work out there and each of us had the same complaints: Traffic, traffic, traffic, congestion, congestion, congestion.

We have got to get this thing stopped, we have got to get it resolved and we've got to build this thing fast. Thank you.

MS. ANDERSON: Next I have David Nelson.
MR. NELSON: My name is David Nelson and I'm a citizen and business owner of North Richland Hills. The -- the point was brought up about the -- the money that we might pay in the toll tax, well, the money we're spending sitting around waiting to move two miles an hour through 820 is a lot more than what you're talking about in this toll tax. We call, in my family, sarcastically and -- and fondly that's an idiot zone between Rufe Snow and 820 and 35W because you have to be an idiot to drive it and you have to be an idiot to -- to let it stay the way it is. There's no way that it's wise to allow this to stay the way it is. It's better for our businesses, I'm a former member of the Board of Directors and Chairman of Northeast Tarrant Chamber of Commerce.

Our members need good mobility. We need to be able to get around Northeast Tarrant County. Our customers need to be able to get around Northeast Tarrant County. We can't do it now. We bring in commercial (inaudible) to our area to try to get them to move their businesses here, we won't drive them on 820, we have to work around that, to try to hide the fact that when you bring your business here, you're not going to be able to move anybody.

We've got to get this done, we've got to
get it done now. You have a choice, Mr. Fickes
mentioned that, you have a choice. We'd expand it --
we will expand the free lanes. You have a choice, stay
on those free lanes, you're an idiot, if you do, but
stay there. I want to get where I want to get and I'm
willing to pay the money. And the money I'm spending
in gas is a lot less than the money y'all spend on
those tolls.

MS. ANDERSON: Next we have Bill Speer.

MR. SPEER: Good evening, I'm Bill
Speer. I'm the National Director of Facilities
Planning and Real Estate for TTI Incorporated a
Berkshire Hathaway Company, we're located at 2441
Northeast Parkway in Fort Worth. We have three
facilities that provide over 500,000 square feet of
warehouse and office space, and we employee over 700
employees within these facilities, and they're located
within one and a half miles of I 35W and 820.

We appreciate all the efforts of the
TxDOT employees and other government employees who were
involved in this project. It's a critical project and
it must be done. It's at least 15 years past due, it's
greatly needed by the community and specifically by TTI
employees. So we urge you to continue with the project
as quickly as possible.
I've only been actively involved in the project for about 18 months so I'll admit some ignorance of details and fully understanding the process including the funding and the -- and the CDA, but I have learned a little bit during this time.

Again, we fully support the project, it needs to be done. We urge you to consider adjusting the Meacham exit so the commuters coming from -- from the east on westbound 820 can merge on I 35 south and then exit Meacham.

And we also oppose the managed lanes and -- and the toll, and really we should call them toll lanes. But as -- but as I'm here tonight, I -- you know, I'm continuing to learn that it's probably a critical part and -- and, you know, perhaps this project can't move as -- as -- as quickly if that is opposed. We think selling the lanes or -- or leasing them long-term to a private corporation is fundamentally wrong and we think that the additional entrances and exits create a lot of unnecessary cost for the project.

If -- if -- if the lanes have to be done, could there be technology taken advantage of, such as, toll tags to monitor the moving of -- of the vehicles (inaudible) these lanes instead of having them
been divided. In -- in general, we're okay with --
with toll lanes that are controlled by the North Texas
Transportation Authority, but we -- we just find it --
It's hard to believe that -- that foreign companies
need to own -- own the lanes or -- or lease them long
term.

We also have no issue with private
companies building the roads and being incentivised to
get done ahead of schedule. We know that's been done
throughout the country, California, San Francisco is an
example where following the '89 earthquake
where those roads were finished much quick -- quicker
because the contractors were incentivised for every day
that they finished early. Thank you so much, we
appreciate your work.

MS. ANDERSON: Next I have Faith
Chatham.

MS. CHATHAM: I'm Faith Chatham, and I'm
co-founder of DFW Regional Concerned Citizens. And
with Hank Gilbert, I co-founded the Transportation and
Public Infrastructure Caucus (inaudible) 2008
Democratic Convention. We call it a Pork Barrel
Caucus. And those of you with TxDOT, I would like to
acknowledge that many of y'all are receiving grief for
projects that originated before many of you even went
to college. Y'all have come in, like, many of our
elected officials and y'all have inherited a disaster.
And you have made the best that you can. There's some
people with TxDOT who have not done good enough. But
I'm not necessarily saying that would be the situation
here.

The citizens of this region deserve
timely, efficient, economical, appropriate
transportation solutions. And it is obvious that this
project doesn't meet that category. If it were timely,
it would have been built at least 20 to 30 years ago.
I feel your pain, even though I do not commute in this
part of town regionally, but I used to. And I know how
bad it was ten years ago. But my big problem with this
project is that for years, during the -- the
administration of George Bush as governor and during
our current governor, we have had government officials
transfer transportation dollars out of the budget to
create artificial surpluses so they could justify
spending the money on non-transportation projects.
This is the reason that people in this region are going
to be asked to pay for tolls, and this is not fair,
it's not fair.

There's some of you who say I can afford
the HOV lanes. But there are many mothers, working
people, that need to get to their children after school, they shouldn't have to be stuck in the traffic on the free lane because some people can't afford them. The other big problem is the funding acknowledgement. The funding plan for tolls, it means that your grandchildren and your great-grandchildren, who aren't in this room, who are not being able to participate in this dialogue will pay the highest tolls when they're using the oldest most (inaudible) infrastructure.

I commend everyone who has worked to move this project forward and I especially commend the elected officials who remain here tonight to hear the people, because that hasn't happened at previous hearings. It is important to solve the problem. I do not think that a CDA is the answer. A CDA is the most expensive way you can build a public infrastructure.

We have proven in Texas that Texans habitually will pay, will vote for bond issues, we will vote for -- for transportation because we know we have to pay for it. And we also know that some of the premises on which we have been told, Mr. Trevino, Judge Whitley, y'all have had it pounded in your head, that you wouldn't get any transportation solutions unless you bought the public-private partnership CDA, swallow,
and unless you agree that market valuation was appropriate. We have to hold our state legislators accountable. We had more of the Texas Transportation Code change from 2002 to 2006 than was enacted in 50 years. And a lot of those changes were not in the best interest.

675 miles of more toll roads in the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex between now and 2030 is a sat -- oversaturation. That means that when we shop, we'll be paying tolls to get there, it means when we ship goods and services, they will be having tolls added to it. It means that we will become less dependent. We need to go back to the old way of doing things and look at the responsible grade and hold our elected officials accountable. And I'm not talking about our local officials, but I'm talking about we have to get by our elected officials locally and hold the state and the federal accountable because this is just not fair. Thank you.

MS. ANDERSON: Next I have Harriet Irby.

MS. IRBY: My name is Harriet Irby and I live in Pantego, Texas. And -- now, I knew 820 was congested, but I also read the newspaper this morning and, I don't know, it's kind of funny that there are a bunch of people here from Fort Worth and Sal Espino was
here and he did say some magic words, he was the only
elected official who even used the term mass transit,
but I thank him for that because our future is really
involving -- evolving around mass transit because we
can't rely on the automobile forever. We just simply
can't afford it.

I want to submit my remarks tonight in
two parts. There been a lot of developers here who --
that said we need this road for business, we've got
traffic congestion. If we build a lot of land -- if we
build it, they will come. And they'll drive a little
faster and the air will get better because they're
moving faster, even though there's much more cars on
the road. Well, the logic of that one escapes me
totally, but back to that later.

I'm a small business owner and I set up
my business so I didn't have to drive, because I knew,
20 years ago, transportation was expensive. So my
business is close to my house, I don't hit the
highways, I avoid them whenever possible because
automobile maintenance, payments, insurance, gasoline
has, actually, always been expensive.

Now, will I come to North Richland Hills
to do business? No, actually, I won't. Because I've
got to pay too much to get here. I'm probably the only
person in this room who has tickets to mass transit in their purse. This is over 65 mass transits that a friend of mine put in for folks over 65, who live in Arlington, Texas. It's called Handy Trans, two bucks a trip. I can take this, go to Centre Port and I can take the train to Dallas for a buck and a half. And I can come back from Dallas on the same pass. Why would I come here? I'm not paying an $8 toll here and back. I don't have that kind of money, and even if I did, I wouldn't spend it anyway, because once it's gone, it's gone. I don't have anything to show for it. So I'm going to Dallas because there is a transportation option that the citizens of Dallas and the public leaders came up with.

The editorial in today's star telegram says they're having conversations about transportation in Tarrant County, but they're 30 years too late. Thirty years ago, they should have been talking mass transit and why didn't they do it? It was a failure of their elected political leadership. Amen. The only elected official here that said the magic words was Sal Espino and I thank him for that.

Okay. The second half of my remarks, air quality. There's been a lot of, oh, if we get the cars going faster, it doesn't matter we've got a
hundred thousand more cars on the road, our air quality
is going to improve. Come on, now. I don't have
enough money to buy the Brooklyn Bridge. Come on.

People who have congestive obstructive
pulmonary disease of the type that I have, get it
because they're overexposed to, A, ozone, B,
particulates, particularly the type found in diesel
unintelligible. Now, I look at your
schematics, oh, boy, hallelujah, we're going from eight
lanes to twelve and we're gonna charge the rich people
who go barreling down the center. What you doing
about the diesel trucks? They're still on the
schematic, they're still belching the diesel, the air
is still bad, we're still out of a payment. Old folks
are getting COPD in droves and there's a huge childhood
asthma epidemic.

Our automobile, today's transportation
system, does not well serve us. Folks like me who have
mass transit where we live, we're not coming here,
we're not going to use your toll booths because we
don't have to. We're not gonna use your business,
we're not even coming through this part. So, please,
look at alternative options, do it quickly, yes, you
probably need this, but you're 30 years too late on the
other options.

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MS. ANDERSON: Next I have Juanita Adam.
MS. ADAM: I decided not to speak.
Thank you.
MS. ANDERSON: Thank you. Next, Don Holloway.
MR. HOLLOWAY: My name is Don Holloway. And I've lived in Haltom City for the last 24 years. And for the last 24 years, there have been promises they're gonna get the freeway fixed. They keep moving more and more businesses into Haltom City, more and more residents moving in. And I got in an argument a while ago with a -- with a -- with a judge, which I never thought I'd do. And told him that I didn't -- I didn't go for the -- the tolls and all this. But all I got to say now is: Get 'er done. Thank you.
MS. ANDERSON: Next I have John McCrish.
MR. MCCRISH: My name's John McCrish, I'm from Austin. I'm a lawyer who represents land owners and (inaudible). And I want to applaud and congratulate you all for getting after this project. I don't know if you remember, but the first acquisition for what was Mr. Pack Ford Dealership next door, that acquisition was initiated eight or nine years ago. And from what I've heard here today and what I've read, the congestion has gotten almost twice as bad in that eight
or nine years since the -- since this began. So I urge you, on behalf of a number of land owners along the road that -- that I represent, to get the project done, whatever you have to do to pay for it, get it done.

I'm speaking tonight to ask you to address a specific right of way concern that I have in -- in the -- in the report. It appears to me that there is almost universal denial of access between the frontage roads and the remaining properties that are going to be left after the takings. There's a lot of access denial where there's no design criteria that would require -- as far as I can see, there's no safety concern that would be addressed on behalf of my clients and other land owners along the road. (Inaudible) I would like to ask you to reconsider those denials of access that are not an -- an exit ramp or an entrance ramp (unintelligible) Haltom City. Thank you.

MS. ANDERSON: Next I have Pat Coyle.

MR. COYLE: My name's Pat Coyle. I was born here in Fort Worth, I live in North Richland Hills, Texas. I travel the State of Texas. I've traveled Dallas, Houston, (inaudible), El Paso, Amarillo, down south, every where. I know what a problem is. I know what free roads are. And I have several problems tonight, and number one is: We need
help. It is an embarrassment. I'm from Fort Worth, and I'm proud. And tonight everybody is begging for help. We're the worst spot in the State of Texas as far as congestion and we're begging our own State for help, that's an embarrassment. And I'm embarrassed to say that I'm having to come up here tonight and say, would you, please, help us?

TxDOT, you should be ashamed. I travel Texas, I know what the roads are. And a neglect that has been done in Tarrant County is an embarrassment. And to say that I can travel all over Dallas, I can go to Houston and not pay a toll unless I want to get on certain (inaudible), but in my own neighborhood, and every where else in 820 that I need to go somewhere, if it's gonna get improved, it's gonna have to be a tollway. I don't like that, because I can go elsewhere in the state without doing that. I don't understand that. I don't understand why my own backyard is being targeted for tollways. And tonight, on behalf of everybody else here, yes, we need help, but your help is giving one free lane. And you're gonna double the capacity for one free lane. I'm not a business owner, I'm a citizen and I'm embarrassed tonight. But we need your help. Thank you.

MS. ANDERSON: Next I have Jared Miller.
MR. MILLER: My name's Jared Miller. I live at 7933 Spring Run in North Richland Hills. I want to make a couple of quick notes real quick before I read a couple statements. The Fort Worth Council Member John (inaudible) and County Judge Glen Whitley, Commissioner Fickes and Mayor Trevino are all working on Railroad Texas, just to talk about the -- the necessity of rail.

Actually, I rode on -- on the TRE today to Dallas. The developer is -- as far as public-private partnerships, the developer is not gonna own the project. It's going to continue to be a state asset, just like any other TxDOT highway. And if you can't tell, I'm in favor -- much in favor of the project. There's going to be six free lanes, six free lanes, four managed lanes, four lanes where a toll's going to be paid.

The toll rates are gonna be adjusted by the (unintelligible) only in accordance with guidelines of TxDOT, which is consistent with guidelines set by the Regional Transportation Council. Tolls are also -- important to note -- that it's going to be 50 percent off during peak periods if you have more than one occupant in the vehicle. I think that's an important thing to note, it hasn't been mentioned tonight. The

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developer must meet the maintenance standards set by
txDOT, failure to do so is gonna be a contractual
default, the developer could his rights and his
investment.

The public-private partnerships for
infrastructure are relatively new in the United States,
but they've been common in Europe and Australia for
decades. Once they become more established here, which
is beginning to happen, then United States' companies
will become active with infrastructure PPP's,
public-private partnerships, just like European and
Australian companies are now.

And, finally, the PPP's are necessary to
provide the supplemental funding to move forward now
with projects like IH 20 -- IH 820. Because
traditional highway funding sources, gas tax, vehicle
registration, they're no longer sufficient to generate
enough funding to both maintain and build these highway
projects. Thank you.

MS. ANDERSON: Next I have John

MR. MILAKOVIC: My name is Nick
Milakovic. I live at 7525 Brentwood Court, North
Richland Hills, I've lived there for 16 years, I've
been in North Tarrant County for 24. I think the meat
of this has been well established and I want to address
a small part of that.

      This traffic goes seven days a week,
it's not just Monday through Friday, rush hour, it's
not only Saturday rush hour, it's on Sunday, coming
home from church. And people -- there -- I'm sure
there are people here who attend one of the churches
along Northeast 820. And by 12:20, it's bumper to
bumper from Rufe Snow to Beach Street and it continues
afterwards.

      I'd like to address some other issues.
I -- with HOV lanes, what is the objective? Is it the
benefit of (unintelligible) or is it to reduce
congestion. I think the issue is here is to reduce
congestion, and that's the number one (inaudible) been
addressed here tonight. As far as managed lanes, I
oppose it. They require ship lanes, right of way land
and man (inaudible), additional ramps, materials,
labor, all this raises cost and all this increases the
time to construct this project.

      As far as the tolls, it's not just for
some people one way to work and then coming back home.
There are schools along here, there are business owners
that -- and business users that have to make multiple
trips, that can multiply several times during the day.
If you have all free access facilities, this would alleviate Haltom City's concerns.

I look at this as a less is more, it would facilitate an earlier project completion. This is an existing roadway, it's not like the George Bush Turnpike, the 121 toll, where there's new land and more construction. This is just an expansion of an existing facility. I do understand that (unreadable)

materials.

Last month, Texas added 16,000 jobs, NAFTA is growing in this area. There's a populationship in Texas, not just -- we're increasing population, there is increase in a relative percentage -- relative to other states, this in -- increases the congressional representation, it increase -- increases our electoral votes in presidential elections. We've got political muscle and we have increasing political muscle.

If there's money for Iraq and there's money for Alaska to build Bridge Snow there and that's in the neighborhood of $475 million in a state we know is larger in terms of (inaudible) land area compels in comparison of Texas. So I think Texas can get federal money. And I think we need to use our political muscle to get the money required to build this road. Thank
you for your time.

MS. ANDERSON: Next I have Mike Curtis.

MIKE CURTIS: Good evening. My name's Mike Curtis. I live in the City of Arlington and work in North Richland Hills. So five days a week, I must travel along Loop 820, sometimes six days, depending on how much work I get done during those five. But I have no choice as to how I get to work, but I like this project and I'm in support of it. Because I do have a choice if I want to take the managed lane or if I'm wanting to take one of the general purpose lanes. I like this plan.

Currently, Loop 820 has four general purpose lanes, this plan will add two additional. So we will have six, we'll have more general purpose lanes. And if for those days that I'm running a little late and I need to get to work a little quicker, I've got the choice of managed lanes.

I also have a little toddler in preschool or -- or daycare, and I -- I know that for those of you out there that have your child in daycare, you know, what these late fees can amount to. So on those days that I'm running late and I really need to -- to -- to get to -- to -- to the place to pick up my child, I know I'm not having to pay five dollars a
minute for that late fee, when I can pay and -- and
I've got the choice, again, for the managed lanes to
get to where I'm needing to get to quicker.

Anyway, I'm in support of the project, I
also play golf at the Iron Horse Golf Course every now
and then and I know that the access underneath Loop 820
is the access to the northern part of the golf course,
so I certainly don't want to interrupt my golf game the
one or two times that I go a year. So I (inaudible)
with construction. Thank you.

MS. ANDERSON: That is all the names
that I have that have previously signed up to make a --
make a statement. However, if there is anybody that
has not at this time, if you would like to step
forward, give us your name, address, make a statement,
we'll be happy to take that. One at a time.

MR. CHANDLER: John Chandler, Fort
Worth, business owner. I think the issue is real
clear. I think the -- the thing that strikes me is
after -- I don't know, Bob, how many years together
partners in mobility to TXDOT to implore them to fix
this. And it feels like it's largely been ignored,
this is -- this is a decent solution, but we can't
ignore what it does to our friends. You know, you've
actually pitted neighbors against neighbors because
whether they know or not, of all the -- the worse that
goes along with this, it actually -- it actually hurts
our neighbors in Haltom City, we need to fix that and
you guys can do that.

And so, you know, on a broad spectrum,
you want to support this, but you can't fully so I
would request that you address the issues of our
friends, but, again, move quickly on this and quickly
is not fast enough. We needed this for a long time,
and you know that. So thank you.

MS. ANDERSON: Next.

MR. THOMPSON: Good evening. I'm
Stewart Thompson, I'm southern manager for Pension Wide
Financial's Peach Tree Facility. And as Mac and
Russell have said before, we have just under 3,000
daily commuters to the Beach Street area. And this
project is critical to continue mobility in this area.

I'm also here as a resident of Northeast
Tarrant County. My commute from Grapevine, which
should take about 20, 25 minutes on the highway is 45
to 50 on North Tarrant. I'm also here as a member of
the 35 W Coalition, and as they stated previously, it's
a regional transportation issue. We can inform
coalitions, we can sit in board meetings, we can vote
on bonds, we can do all of the above, we cannot please
everybody, we can please most people, we can solve
these problems, but we need to do it now. It's been,
obviously, way too long.

I'm coming from San Antonio, working in
San Antonio and Houston. And moving to the metroplex
five years ago, I do have to tell you that the biggest
disappointment is the highways, it's pretty bad.
Compared to those cities, that's saying something. We
really need to get this done. The point I would like
to emphasize tonight is that, if I'm not mistaken, this
is phase one of a multi-phase project. How long is it
going to take to get the rest done? Thank you.

MS. ANDERSON: Next.

MR. SUTTON: Thank you, ma'am. I'm Jim
Sutton, Haltom City Councilman. By all accounts, we
need to do it. I've listened to the testimony tonight.
I grew up in Chicago area, where they also faced this
back in the 1960's and '70's. And that was whenever
the 1994 Tri State tollway was implemented where you
would put in 30 cents to go about five miles. And that
was because they could do it at that cost because back
then it's cheaper to build than it is now. The cost is
going up extremely so because of the economic situation
we face in this world.

I think that we could have done it a
long time ago, but I think that our leaders exercise prudence, temperance and they wanted to have the best plan in mind whenever they implemented this and for that I applaud them.

The (inaudible) had their chance, they have had their chance for the last 13, 14 years, it's time to go ahead with this project. It's time to get this on the -- on the books, set down in place, the engineers get their job done and it's time to start construction.

I wish that we could allocate more money from the state to help with this so that we could do it without managed lanes, but there are things in the state budget that I wish we could have changed also. For instance, in public welfare, from 2004 to 2006, our state legislator increased that number by 22 percent, 11 million. Streets and highways in that same period were only increased 11.7 percent at 5.7 million. I believe that for Texas and for this area, those priorities should have been shifted. But I appreciate the legislator and I respect the compromises that they make in -- in doing that. And I will respect that and go with that. And it's the same thing with the managed lanes, it's the best compromise for the situation we need to fund this. So I'd like to close with -- with
Don Holloway said, let's just do it and do it right for Haltom City too. Thank you.

MS. ANDERSON: Okay. Next.

MR. WEBB: My name is Roger Webb. And I'd like to present a little bit of re--respect because I'm a retired teacher from Birdville School District that taught in the district 28 years and also drove the school bus. Has been more than eight years since retirement, so it's 36 years driving the school bus. My desire, my hope is to spend 14 more years (unintelligible). I -- I probably can get those 14 years in sitting out there on the freeways waiting, you know, might -- that might take care of that.

But, seriously, I think we all know the school bus transportation is one of the safest forms of transportation in the nation, fewer fatalities and -- and -- for the number of people that's transported. However, it's getting more and more dangerous each year. On -- on -- in all of our schools basically have to go either 35 or 820 or whatever (unintelligible).

Mainly, I drive after school activities, those are athletics and fine arts. Some people may not think those are important. Because as an academic teacher, I taught English for 28 years and I,
obviously, think academics are extremely important. But it's a know fact also that students involved in -- in an extra curricular activity, fine arts, athletics, are much more successful in school.

And I don't -- and I'm also a fan of -- of mass transit, I'll say that right off but I don't know too many mass transit trains that stop at different schools, you know, they're ready to get from point A to point B. But as far as taking students to different locations, it's just not practical. So I would -- I could say, generally, what (inaudible) said, let's just get 'er done as fast as possible.

MR. MARTEL: Okay. I'm Jim Brusca Martel [phonetic]. I live at 6921 Victoria, North Richland Hills. I was going to tell a story about the whole thing. In 1972, I had the privilege of bringing in 3,500 head of Mexican steers from Mexico. We worked those cattle for six hours trying to get them through this 12-foot gate. So we thought, well, we're here sucking up all this dust, our air quality is not very good and we're having problems. So, anyway, I had a Mexican young man -- cowboy -- Mexican cowboy, you know, he said, let me go rope that post over there and I'll open this gate a little wider. Okay. He did that, we got those cattle in in four hours instead of
six. If a Mexican cowboy has enough sense to take out
the (inaudible) we ought to be able to do the same
thing.

MS. ANDERSON: Is there anyone else that
would like to make a statement?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Who's gonna
follow that?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible). The
thing I was disappointed about when I looked at the
film was the dislocation of service roads that goes
over parts of (unintelligible). And I looked at it and
said, well, they're going to build a bottleneck there.

And that's interesting the word he just
used, because at 4:30, when they start coming off 377
and coming down there and putting into both the -- the
toll road and into the other roads, right off of 377 at
4:30, the side road fills up, guess where they're
going, they're gonna pile up the toll road too.

So it's okay if you don't build it now,
but right up there is the dark rail, if you don't build
it now, where they can add it on later, you'll never
put a service road there. So I would like for you to
think about that, at least make the bridge or the dark
rail along that (inaudible) put in a continuous lane.

MR. PHILLIPS: Hi, I'm Jerry Lee
Phillips. I live at 245 West Willow Drive in Hurst, Texas. I'm a candidate for County Commissioner Precinct 3. I had a comment about the video that we saw earlier this evening. What I noticed was the little cartoon cars that were going down the free lanes were going about as fast, in fact, as fast as the cars going on the toll lanes. And there was a guy who spoke earlier and said that if you were stuck in a free lane at a stand still, and if you didn't get into a toll lane, you're an idiot. Well, that little cartoon, if you were in a toll lane and you could go just as quick in a free lane, maybe, he would say that he was an idiot, I don't know.

But it appears as though the whole idea that all the cars would be going the same speed doesn't make sense to me. It seems to me like the idea is that at some point, probably at rush hour, the free lanes would load up with cars and then the toll lane begins to build with traffic and the fees on those toll lanes would begin to increase. So the question is: When will the toll lanes be used, at peek hours, probably for high dollars. And to me that doesn't seem right.

We can go to northwest of 820 and all those lanes are free, we can go to southwest Loop 820 and all those lanes are free, we can go southeast Loop
820 and all those lanes are free. It seems to me like something is fundamentally unfair about the lanes in Northeast Tarrant County having toll lanes.

So I'll appeal TxDOT and our local leaders to appeal to Austin. The state is running a budget surplus and, perhaps, this project could be implemented quicker if Austin were to dip into the state's surplus to fund the project instead of using toll roads. Thank you.

MR. LEWIS: Hi, I'm Dan Lewis. I live at 4812 String View Court, Haltom City, Texas. I'm the President of the Haltom City Economic Development Corporation. And I -- my main point is: I object to the way Haltom City basically has been stranded from access to the improvement. Having said that, I fully support the get 'er done statements from Jim and Don and the Vaquero, can't follow his eloquence, but I'd like to say -- and for the record, please note that all that get 'er done stuff is, in my view, in support of the toll.

Now, with those speakers that have spoken against the toll have suggested other people pay for it. But I -- I don't see anybody here with an open checkbook waiting to pay to make this over -- long overdue improvement.
So the toll is -- is, I think, necessary. I have philosophical objections to getting funding from the federal government. But according to Mr. Fickes, we're paying a dollar into D.C. and getting 70 cents back. So we're not really going there with hat in hand begging, we pay our -- our share of money in -- in tolls, in Texas, that is.

And if we can get it done with tolls, which is a sure usage of (inaudible), I think that's an important thing to do. But please reconsider the stranding and isolation of Haltom City exits. Thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: All right. One last thing, I'm (inaudible) I live in Bedford. Thank God I don't have to drive over here very often, but I had to today. So I do occasionally get stuck in this. I would submit to the last gentleman that spoke that every time you buy a gallon of gasoline, you are paying a gasoline tax to build and maintain roads. Tarrant County is not giving its fair share back to build and maintain our roads.

And -- and Councilman Sapp, I believe it was, of North Richland Hills was talking about the worst congestion in Texas. Cited the most congested areas in Texas are Northeast Tarrant County and TxDOT
won't do anything about it.

And I would like to know from Judge Whitley, but I think he's already left, how much of a toll --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: He's right here.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: -- do they have to pay --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: He's still here.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: -- how much of a toll do they have to pay around other parts of 820 and -- and --

JUDGE WHITLEY: Same amount I told you earlier, none.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: None. But Northeast Tarrant County is going to have to have a toll to get improvements.

MS. ANDERSON: I think that's everyone. If you didn't get a chance, please provide us with written comments. Each statement made at this hearing and each written statement received on or before July 14th, 2008, will be carefully analyzed in writing in the Summary and Analysis. Where appropriate, changes will be incorporated in the project design, and the analysis will be attached to the environmental document. In addition, property owners that are in the
area that may have a change made -- made will be
contacted and coordinated with concerning proposed
changes.

After review of the transcript of these
proceedings and addressing of all concerns and concepts
contained in the statements, environmental approval is
anticipated. Once approval is received, the
acquisition of right of way and utility relocation may
begin. Construction can begin when right of way has
been obtained, detailed plans are completed and
utilities are relocated and funding is available.

MS. CHAVEZ: I'd like to thank everyone
for coming out and again your -- your comment is
important to us. If you did not make a public comment
or oral comment, we are taking your written comments
and that is very important for us. So, please, if you
did not provide a comment, and you want to make a
comment, please do so by writing us. We have the
addresses and the information in the -- in the -- out
in the foyer in (inaudible), if you would like some
particular information. Again, thank you very much for
(inaudible) the most important part of any -- any
public project is the public involvement process.
Thank you very much for coming out tonight. And I now
call this meeting to order. Thank you.
(Proceedings concluded at 9:51 p.m.)
STATE OF TEXAS

COUNTY OF TARRANT

This is to certify that I, ROBYN WARD, a Certified Shorthand Reporter in and for the State of Texas, reported in shorthand the proceedings had at the time and place set forth in the caption hereof, and that the above and foregoing 107 pages contain a full, true and correct transcript of the said proceedings to the best of my ability.

Certified to on this the 8th day of July, 2008.

Robyn Ward, CSR
Texas CSR 8290
Expiration: 12/31/2009
DOLORES STEWART & ASSOCIATES
1701 Pennsylvania Avenue
Fort Worth, Texas 76104
(817) 810-0244
| 1987 [1] | 48/5 |
| 1988 [1] | 75/7 |
| 1994 [1] | 97/19 |
| 1996 [1] | 75/11 |
| 1997 [1] | 5/1 |
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| 20-minute [1] | 33/1 |
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