



## **Citizens' Advisory Committee Meeting**

### **Harbor Bridge Replacement Project Improvements to US 181 at the Harbor Bridge over the Corpus Christi Ship Channel**

**October 18, 2012 – 6:00 – 8:00 pm  
Oveal Williams Activity Center, 1414 Martin Luther King Drive, Corpus Christi, TX**

#### **Meeting Summary**

##### **Display Items**

1. Preliminary design drawings (schematics) on an aerial photo background
2. Preliminary right-of-way lines for the four reasonable alternatives

##### **Welcome and introductions**

Victor Vourcos, TxDOT project manager for the Harbor Bridge Project, opened the Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting, welcomed participants, and asked each member to introduce themselves. He introduced the project team and then introduced the meeting facilitator, Susan Springer. Sixteen CAC members signed in at the meeting and were introduced. In addition, two members of the public were in attendance.

Ms. Springer reviewed the CAC meeting agenda and meeting ground rules. She explained the format of the meeting—group discussions of each of the four alternatives based on a review of the design drawings.

##### **Hands-on group review of preliminary schematics (design) for the four project alternatives**

CAC members were divided into four separate groups to review and discuss the four alternatives, one at a time. Two project team members sat at each table to facilitate and take notes on the table discussions. To initiate the table conversation, the table facilitator asked CAC members the following questions:

1. What effect (positive and/or negative) would this alternative have on your neighborhood:
  - a. How you get into and out of the neighborhood (going to schools, shopping, downtown Corpus Christi)?
  - b. The residences in the area?

- c. The local recreational facilities?
  - d. The churches in the area?
  - e. The schools in the area?
  - f. The environment in the area (e.g., air, water, green spaces)?
  - g. The overall character of the area?
2. Can you think of anything or anyone else that this alternative might affect?
  3. Are there any other issues associated with this alternative that TxDOT should consider?
  4. Based on what you're learned today, which alternative would you prefer and why?

## **Results of table discussions**

### ***Red Alternative:***

In general, CAC members saw the red alternative in a positive light. The members noted that this alternative would benefit businesses and tourist attractions in North Beach and would allow larger ships into the Port of Corpus Christi. This alternative also would reduce the barriers to the Hillcrest neighborhood. Although the Oveal Williams Center would be taken, its replacement in another location would be a positive effect.

The red alternative, in their view, would provide a shorter route for evacuation and would provide a good transition to existing roadways.

Negative effects would be the taking of the clinic and Oveal Williams. The alternative would be very close to the Leathers housing project and would have a negative impact on EJ neighborhoods/populations. CAC members thought that this alternative might reduce air quality and make the neighborhoods more isolated from North Beach and tourist attractions than they currently are.

Other issues that the CAC identified in association with the red alternative are the exit/entrance ramps on Nueces Boulevard, the possible worsening of congestion at the Crosstown Expressway, and the need for adequate mitigation. Access to Buck Stadium is needed.

Someone suggested that the Joe C Fulton corridor be considered as an alternative.

### ***Orange Alternative***

CAC members raised both positive and negative issues associated with the orange alternative, which generally was considered to be less favorable than the red alternative.

Positive effects of the orange alternative included the opportunity for redevelopment and mitigation. CAC members noted that displacements may be acceptable if they are replaced. Another positive is that this alternative has a limited impact on Hillcrest.

Negative effects include the taking of parking for Kelsey Memorial UMC church, and impacts on Elliot Grant homes, the Oveal Williams Center and the clinic. Hillcrest would lose access with this alternative and there would be potential impacts on Ben Garza Park, TC Ayers, Navarro Place, and other community facilities. This alternative would cut the community in half.

CAC members also noted that this alternative has complex ramps on SH 286 south (reduced access) and merging onto 286 takes too long.

### **Green Alternative**

In general, CAC members viewed the green alternative as having both positive and negative impacts.

The positive effects of the green alternative according to CAC members would be that it would require less construction, and would cause less displacement than the other alternatives. It would have a minimal impact on residents and would preserve the Oveal Williams Center and Winnebago St. This alternative could lead to redevelopment in the North Beach area and would provide better access for commuting.

Negative effects identified by CAC members include the fact that this alternative does not correct safety issues (curves) and does not solve the isolation of Hillcrest and the Northside. It may adversely affect the entertainment district. A higher bridge and more large ships may result in reduced air quality. This alternative does not provide good connectivity to school from the north and does not have a direct exit into the entertainment area (leading to congestion during events).

### **West Alternative**

In general, CAC members considered the west alternative to have the most negative effects and to be the least desirable of the four alternatives.

A positive effect of this alternative would be to allow people to get to downtown, south, and east destinations more easily. This alternative would be a good use of the Port's dredge spoils site and would improve access to Whataburger Field. It would not impact the Northside and Hillcrest areas, and recreational areas in those locations.

CAC members identified a number of negative effects including their belief that this alternative would make it more difficult to access downtown Corpus Christi and would isolate North Beach. There would be no access to Port Avenue or to the bridge from Hillcrest. There would be sharp curves moving north to south. They also indicated that they thought this alternative would be more costly, and would present safety and security issues because of its proximity to the refineries.

CAC members noted that the west alternative would have a longer hurricane evacuation route and would limit access to the public transit system. This alternative would have greater noise impacts on the neighborhoods and would be dangerously close to the Hillcrest neighborhood.

### **Update on neighborhood meetings taking place this fall**

Nancy Gates reviewed the neighborhood meetings currently taking place. The objective of these meetings, held throughout the project area, is to listen to community members, show design drawings and latest project information, and have people complete a community survey.

Seven of these meetings are planned and two have been completed:

- CC Beach Association: 9/20
- St. Paul's: 10/15
- Kelsey Memorial: 10/23
- Garcia Arts Center: 11/5
- Oak Park Elementary: 11/8
- Portland Community Center: 11/12
- Refinery Row: to be scheduled.

Meetings have been well publicized through direct mailers (postcards), posters, and flyers displayed in various community buildings and meeting places, church bulletins, and posters on local buses. The pastor of St. Paul's church organized a group that distributed meeting flyers throughout the Northside community.

CAC members were encouraged to invite community members to participate in these meetings and were given posters to place in appropriate locations.

### **Community Survey**

The project team has developed a community survey designed to give local residents an opportunity for meaningful input on the Harbor Bridge project. The information gathered by the survey will be used in completing the community impact assessment for the Harbor Bridge Environmental Impact Statement.

The survey may be completed on paper or online at the project website ([ccharborbridgeproject.com](http://ccharborbridgeproject.com))

### **Public meeting planned for December 4, 2012**

A public meeting for the Harbor Bridge Project will be held on December 4, 2012 at a location to be determined. The Solomon Ortiz Center is a potential meeting location because it was used previously for the public and agency scoping meetings. This meeting will be used to gather additional public input on the preliminary design drawings that were reviewed by the TAC and CAC.

**Meeting summary and plans for next meeting**

The next CAC meeting will be held in the first quarter of 2013.