

HARBOR BRIDGE PROJECT COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

June 23, 2022

The following notes are the Texas Department of Transportation's (TxDOT) summary of the meeting and are not designed to be an exact representation of proceedings. The Responses to questions posed during the meeting included in this document may be abbreviated and not constitute the full and appropriate responses for individuals' situations. Community Advisory Board (CAB) members and the public should contact the appropriate agency for complete and personalized answers to their questions.

Opening

Kimberly (Kim) Amy, TxDOT Liaison to the CAB, and Pastor Adam Carrington, CAB Chair, opened the meeting and welcomed attendees. The meeting was held in person at the Oveal Williams Senior Center. Kim provided an overview of the meeting agenda and reminded attendees of CAB ground rules.

Historic Bridge Materials

Kimberly Amy gave an overview of the Historic Harbor Bridge "Gateway to Corpus Christi" banners, introduced the "Building Harbor Bridge" video, then played the video for the CAB members. After the CAB meeting, the banners will be housed at the La Retama Central Library and the video is available online (<https://youtu.be/FWBHKwg1EyQ>).

Flatiron/Dragados LLC Construction Update

Lynn Allison, Public Information Officer (PIO) for bridge developer Flatiron Dragados LLC (FDLLC), provided an update on construction activities and community outreach efforts.

- Lynn shared her contact information, reminded the CAB of Traffic Advisory sign up and extended an open request for meeting with community groups.
- Lynn provided updates on the latest construction activities for the Harbor Bridge Project
 - An image was shown for the future US 181, IH 37, SH 286 Interchange
 - Two of the four direct connectors have been opened connecting SH 286 to IH 37 Northbound/Southbound lanes
 - Drainage issues are being addressed.
 - The Leopard Street corridor construction is underway.
 - Westbound frontage road from Port Ave to Nueces Bay has been completed.
 - Eastbound frontage road from Nueces Bay to Port Ave construction should be complete by the first week of July.
 - A significant traffic switch will occur at the end of the year, switching IH 37 and SH 286 westbound lanes.
 - South approach is 70-75% complete with the combined substructure.
 - North Beach embankment is being built up for the future alignment of US 181. No planned closures or traffic switches until after Labor Day.
 - North Approach is 85-90% complete. The last remaining spans will not be lifted by Gantry Crane but erected with false work.
 - Main Towers were completed last fall. North – 4 segments; South – 1 segment
 - Working on superstructure now. 26 total segments.
 - Next week, derrick crane on north pylon. By the end of the year, several derrick cranes on North pylons.
- Contractor procured for lighting features on the new bridge. RBG (red blue green) LED programmable light tubes, will be placed in the towers.

- Environmental Compliance and Stewardship – Project crews work around migratory birds. Rock filter dams are placed around the project. Old road material recycled for subbase of new road construction.
- A CAB member questioned how/who tests the concrete. Lynn said she would find out and let the CAB know. All recycled concrete material is tested before re-use is approved.
- Current construction schedule was released last fall. The new bridge is scheduled to be complete in 2024. Immediately following completion of the new bridge, the old bridge will be demolished.

Questions from attendees/CAB members following FDLLC presentation:

- To access Hillcrest, you have to go a mile and a half to go half a mile distance. When will you make the Oveal Williams Senior Center more accessible? Getting across Port Ave from Hillcrest to get to the center.
 - Working on the final design to open Lake Street to take the place of Winnebago. We were told – the question is, when will it happen?
 - Finalizing design right now. Hopeful to have Lake St. open late this year.
- How much funds are DBE or small businesses getting with this project?
 - Currently meeting DBE goal, 9% of the project. Actively pursue DBE contractors. Have you reached out to black chamber, NAACP to find out if there are contractors to include on this project?
 - FDLLC has a DBE coordinator; would be happy to speak with her and invite her to the next meeting.
- Why the name change of Winnebago to Lake Street?
 - Winnebago is permanently closed. Lake Street will be the new route to connect Sam Rankin to Port Ave.
 - Kim added that it's a completely different street; TxDOT could provide maps. The Livability Plan includes a map of which neighborhood streets will be closed and new streets that will be opened.
- Do you have an end date? Obviously, they are nowhere near done. Lots of safety issues. Nowhere for anyone to walk. No lighting. Do you know anything about that?
 - Nueces Bay Blvd (NB) is not a part of this project; it's not TxDOT. MLK at Antelope is, and new sidewalk is opening to Port Ave, but it can't open until overhead construction activities are complete. New sidewalk on MLK from NB to Staples. New sidewalks on eastbound frontage road from NB to Port Ave & NB to Staples
- You have \$5 million to fix any streets that you have torn up. We need to see numbers. This bridge should be done by now. No security driving across the whole project.
 - Lynn stated that FDLLC has 24/7 security monitoring the project and asked for citizens not to drive across the project. She will share feedback with the FDLLC team about their security concern.
- Not one project that's been started is done – left out beams, bumps along the road when we're coming out of the freeway. Underneath the overpass, there is no lighting and no sidewalks from northbound underpass to Hillcrest when going over to Stripes. When and where will they be there?
 - For any questions that went unanswered, FDLLC will get back to you. Currently, that sidewalk is underneath a bridge that is under construction.

- Kim asked if a timeline would be better. A timeline of when that construction will be completed. Let's meet after this meeting and get a detailed list of everything you are worried about.
- A park was promised right across from the church, and we have not seen any activity, and when will we see potholes on Sam Rankin repaired?
 - The trailhead park is still planned for that area.
 - Kim added that Sam Rankin is a city street. There is a way to report potholes. If there continues to be problems, we may be able to talk to the city. Oftentimes, they tend to wait until the end of the construction to repair.
- Is there no courtesy with TxDOT, the City of Corpus Christi, and FDLLC? No one cares.
 - That this is not the case. By bringing it up today, you are bringing light to it, and we can try to find a solution.

General attendees started to voice concerns. Discussion was turned back to the CAB. TxDOT CAB Liaison (Kim) explained that members of the CAB can ask questions first. We are not going to take questions from the general attendees until the end of the meeting per the agenda.

- Did you not know these questions? You should've had an answer to these questions? Are you going to wait for someone to be run over under the bridge? These are the same questions we've been asking for the last year and a half!
 - Your words are making an impact. You are in front of an audience and the media, we are hearing what you are saying.
- People are upset. Inaction. Environmental Justice, Environmental Racism. We don't matter. One of the first things talked about was working around the birds. Forget about the birds.
- I heard on the news the bridge has a completion date but has run out of money, so what is going to happen?
 - Lynn stated that the State (TxDOT) and the Developer are working it out. What if we don't get the money? Are we pushed back even more?
 - Lynn stated that Flatiron Dragados is not going to leave town until the project is finished, and they are working that out with TxDOT right now. Everything is being funded.
- Building/house stress tests should be completed for buildings on Sam Rankin. There have been heavy truck loads. With an additional two years, those buildings are under even more stress physically. It's been going on too long.
- Truck traffic is causing street damage and dirt in houses. We need dust control. Promises of someone looking over work being done are not true. I have lots of photos of all the damage.
 - Pastor Carrington noted that he wanted to see the photos, and to bring them to a Friday 6PM meeting at his church.
- We were told that Lower Broadway was no longer going to have access to Sam Rankin, Alameda, and Staples. We lost Winnebago, we lost Broadway, and we don't have signage that says these businesses are here. People get lost and give up.
 - Lynn stated that she would be happy to help work on signage with business owners.

- There should be some type of liaison to the city to ensure the people in this neighborhood don't encounter what we encounter. The deal was we were supposed to continue with our regular lives without interruption but that's not the case.

Port of Corpus Christi (the Port) Update

Sam Esquivel, Director of Real Estate Services with the Port of Corpus Christi, gave a final update on the Voluntary Acquisition and Relocation (VARP) Program:

- 386 eligible participants, 175 owner-occupied, 211 off-site owners
- Provided offers to all 386, 82 were declined. 304 were accepted.
- 150 residential owners were relocated; 129 mandatory tenants relocated; 25 elective tenants relocated; 4 businesses relocated; 21 tenants relocated became homeowners.
- Total expenditures \$54 million
- Port-owned parcels in the neighborhood – 362
- Zero eminent domain – agreement with TxDOT

Questions from attendees/CAB members following Port presentation

- After the program was over, were property owners still allowed to sell their land to the port?
 - Yes, landowners are allowed to sell to anyone they want to, not just the port.
- No one cleaned up the buffer zones. It's in the City ordinance.
 - If that is a city ordinance, then it is their responsibility.
- Are all the structures demolished already?
 - All of those in the voluntary program are demolished, and we are still working through the others.
- Is the opportunity still available if somebody wants to sell? Who do they need to contact?
 - Yes, Sam Esquivel or the Port office

Sam Esquivel explained the map provided in the presentation slides further:

The bulk of the red is owned by Flint Hills. What you see in blue is all Port-owned property and parcels we acquired outside of the program. What you see in pink is commercial property. What you see in orange is Green Field Trust property classified as industrial. The light blue is industry as well.

- Why isn't the Port taking care of the buffer zone? The Port is under the City's watch, and no one is saying anything about it. You have the interest to protect all the properties.
 - Flint Hills acquired that property as a buffer zone. I don't believe there is a mandate to specify it as a buffer zone.
- What is the Port's intention with the property that has been acquired?
 - Right now, there is no intention to do anything with the property. There are no contiguous blocks. All we're doing is entertaining anyone who wants to sell property.
- Port is going to just hold onto the property until the bridge is built? At the last minute, you're going to let the residents know what the plans are?
 - There is no intended use. It's still currently zoned residential.
- What about the deal?
 - That's between Flint Hills and the City.

- When are they going to honor their contracts? No one is being held accountable, and now you're telling me that they don't have the money. It's the same thing. We come in here, and we tell you the same problems.
- You built a bridge for larger (vessels). The Port is buying all this property and saying nothing will happen, that it will stay residential?
 - At some point, it will move to industrial, so the question is when it will happen. For all the parcels we acquired, we have a restrictive covenant that doesn't allow the property to be used for residential purposes in the future.

City of Corpus Christi Update

Robert Dodd, new Corpus Christi Parks and Recreation Director, gave an overview of his background. He briefly explained that a consultant was working on plans for the parks in the neighborhood. Mr. Dodd's contact information was shared.

Questions from attendees/CAB members following City presentation:

- Are we going to be included in all your plans? Have the studies been done? What are you planning? Are you selling them [the parks]?
 - Yes sir, you will be included once we get them from our consultant. It's in a consultant phase. We don't plan on selling any of the properties.
- We'll be able to contact you regarding Hillcrest Park? Fix up the basketball court, etc.?
 - Yes sir, please contact me and I will do my best to take care of it.
- Have they scrapped the plans they had already?
 - Kim stated that the consultant was provided the letter that the CAB wrote, and the city and consultant both have a copy.
- Why doesn't anyone tell us? Why are we the last to know?
 - Kim mentioned that information was included in the newsletter.
- None of the things the people on the advisory board ask for have to be implemented but have they identified items that they will include in the plan? When will the final decision be made? It's just important that people realize that as an advisory committee the city does not have to do what we say, it would be very gracious of them to implement some of the ideas, but they don't have to.
 - Kim explained that the final EIS and associated agreements included mitigation that the CAB helped identify. These commitments, like the improvements to the parks, are required. Any changes to these commitments would require approval from FHWA Civil Rights Division. We understand your frustration. You all have put in many years of your time and energy.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:33 p.m.

Pastor Carrington advised we will reverse the order and include public questions at the start of the next CAB meeting.