

# HARBOR BRIDGE PROJECT COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

March 23, 2023

*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, opened the meeting, welcomed attendees, and gave a moment of prayer. 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.

## **New CAB Chair Election**

Kimberly Amy, CAB liaison read the steps for picking a new CAB chair. Lamont Taylor and Henry Williams were nominated. Staff tallied the votes. After counting the votes Lamont Taylor was elected as the new CAB Chair.

## **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 sheet, and listened to concerns.
- Lynn provided updates on the latest construction activities for the Harbor Bridge Project
  - Lake Street opening targeted for April 30<sup>th</sup> - May. 10 feet wide sidewalks on both sides. Construction is close to being finished.
  - Lighting at Port Ave underpass back online as of today.
  - Nueces Bay Blvd under bridge lighting to be turned on in November.
  - Significant clean-up efforts beginning November 2022. Over 300 bags of trash were picked up. Keeping up with sidewalk maintenance.
  - Working to keep access to the senior center clear.
  - More directional signage. Currently have added 50 signs from Leopard Street down to the SEA district Bayfront area.
  - Leopard Street Bridge to be opened in the Fall (October target) with luminary lighting leading up to the bridge for pedestrian traffic and motorists.
  - Plan to coordinate with City to open a full corridor (CoCC) to accommodate new bus stops once Lake Street opens.
  - DBE FDLLC job opportunities – invite anyone to call the office. DBE coordinator designated to these efforts.
    - 9% goal exceeded and still welcoming new applicants.
    - Current hiring campaign ongoing
    - Job training programs for new hires
  - Traffic Switch on IH37 occurred one week ago
  - Finishing demolition of previous structures to begin building the southwest loop ramp (SWLP)
  - Drainage work in the area as part of the drainage package
  - New exit ramp to Port Ave for westbound IH 37
  - Opened turnaround at Nueces Bay

- South Approach Gantry progress – Completion by Summer
  - All northbound mainline segments completed. 5 remaining spans to complete south approach construction.
  - Decommissioning gantry planned for the end of May
- Cable Stay Bridge anticipated to be completed in 2025
  - Specific questions about design changes can be found on TxDOT CC district website (txdot.gov keyword search “Corpus Christi District”)

**Questions from attendees/CAB members following FDLLC presentation:**

- When are you planning on addressing the Buddy Lawrence lighting?
  - I will have to get back to you on that. I don't think that is in our right-of-way.
  - Buddy Lawrence is outside the scope of the Harbor Bridge Project. It is used as a detour sometimes when we have road closures.
- Is the reconfiguration at Nueces Bay temporary? In the middle of Nueces Bay and Louisiana.
  - We have a map. We can look at a map later to discuss the details.
- Nueces Bay Bridge is marked with two different signs on each side.
  - We had several of our power source boxes at the individual stations. Just the other day they were vandalized and had all that copper tubing stripped down. Currently reconfiguring some security to prevent break-ins. We're addressing it immediately.
- Concerned about the height of the Nueces Bay Bridge overpass
  - The height is 16 feet. We went two feet higher than the original existing bridge for our industry partners, The clearance is for wide-load vehicles.
  - Lynn will follow up on the exact height.
- Dust concerns in the neighborhood
- HWY 286, as it curves into I37, there's a right exit to MLK, there's Peabody St and Stillman, we don't have signs? Something needs to be done quickly or there is going to be an accident.
  - We follow guidance code for traffic, signage, and street markings. Changes may be a deviation from standard traffic practices. You're talking about three-lane traffic so when you turn right on the Peabody, to cover three lanes, there is an illegal crossing of the double white lane.
  - We are looking into that right now we're going to address.
  - We also are willing to coordinate that with a CCPD and monitor traffic control.
- I thought MLK drive they were supposed to straighten that curve out at Port and Nueces Bay (near the church)
  - Would need to follow up. Not aware.
- Getting the college involved in helping construct these models for the project. We are not seeing the big picture. We need projections.
  - This is all on our website. Project PDF's, every road closure, every road opening is detailed on our website.
  - We post monthly and weekly updates on all traffic movements
  - We also post it to our social media.
  - Lynn to coordinate with TxDOT on more visuals.

- Turnaround at Nueces Bay. Went from 3 lanes to 2 lanes. People don't have a place to park at the apartments nearby. There was parking and now there is no longer parking. The same area as the curve concern.
  - Lynn to follow up.
- Nueces Bay underpass – tight turn for the trucks. Not going to widen? Any lighting?
  - We do have lighting.
  - Crews were working two days ago. Going back to re-wire the conduit.
  - Lynn Allison to follow up and look at the plans
- MLK, in front of Oveal Williams Senior Center, left from Staples trying to get from Port, US 181 traffic coming off to get to NWLR. Left lane not open.
  - Lynn Allison - I understand what you're talking about. I've heard this has come before. And I think that our technical team is working on addressing this. I don't have the answers for you now. But it's not the first time we've heard this. It's being evaluated.
  - There is a yield sign, but I do understand that there is a lot of bottlenecking at times.
  - We are going to open that second lane to open up the flow of traffic. Not sure why it has yet to be opened on MLK heading westbound.
- You're already practically built and there are a lot of faults. TxDOT needs to do a better job of communicating traffic updates and changes.
  - It is not a final traffic configuration right now. The final traffic configuration will change in several ways when the project is finished.
  - Still several changes to come. Several issues will be eliminated once the final traffic configurations occur.
  - 286 is going to shift over.
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- Flooding on MLK. Flooding on Sam Rankin. Flooding in places that used to never flood. Lexington and Kennedy as well.
  - We will have our team look at the drainage to see what can be done.
  - Lynn asked CAB members to email her photos to look and see if it is related to the Harbor Bridge Project.
- Scale model – Chris promised a long time ago. We are not engineers it is difficult for us to visualize.
- No progress at the park by St. Johns. Nothing but dirt and abandoned buildings.
- Lynn - Drone video of the project every month that flies over the entire project and it can be shared at the next CAB meeting

### **Review CAB concerns from the previous meeting**

- What projects have been finished?
  - Meaning – activities on the HBP; looking for specifics related to the Project.
- Project timeline/schedule after the final design issue is resolved.

### **New Concerns from CAB members**

- On any construction site, the setting up of the barriers is the most important thing. I don't think the public has to be aware of the pictures, I think the workers are responsible for having that in place before the work starts. In other cities, the setup does not come after the fact. Port to MLK.
  - Lynn understands the frustrations, most of that work is not Harbor Bridge construction. It is a project managed by the City of Corpus Christi.
  - Kimberly Amy - Let's figure out the specifics. Where exactly are you seeing the traffic concerns?
  - CAB member expressed that there should be coordination between the city and TxDOT
- I'm not saying when they are going to wrap up. I'm just saying when jobs start, signage itself should be in place for everybody in the community. that's supposed to be in place before. Not that we have to come and tell you how the signage is supposed to be set up.
  - That's something we need to discuss with the city.
- There should be a safety plan in place from the city, and the county. Coordination between the city and TxDOT hasn't been done.
- Signage has not been done – been asking for clear signage for everything, on ramps/off ramps; traffic signage. Not business signage.
- We talk about the same things over and over and nothing gets done. We never have the answers.
- We need to figure out was FDLLC is responsible for and what the City of Corpus Christi is responsible for.
- Where is the \$ 5 million that is supposed to fund the project?
- If we had a model, we would know something is coming and see where the changes are going to be.
- Would like a table of construction activities so we can see where they're at in the process and when things are getting finished. A checkoff list.
- More communication/improved communications
- We need a model that shows what partners are responsible for what and we need a completion date for that. We need to bring this to the next CAB meeting to communicate what has happened in the area.
- There was a question about a flooding issue on the Northwest Loop Ramp. How are you dealing with the flooding? There was never a ditch in the first place and now there's a ditch.

### **Public Comments and Questions**

- What is the necessary quorum of the board to make a resolution or statement? Request to make a statement against eminent domain. There is a house bill for the Port to practice for

eminent domain in the area. I would encourage the board expressly to make a resolution to the house that you are not in favor of that. And I think amongst yourself you should decide how many people are necessary for a Senate Resolution vote in the resolution because what they're going to do is try to slip away without notice. There's no point in these security measures if you're not able to live there.

- CAB Chair - we are going to take a vote and send that resolution.
- CAB member - what would constitute them to use eminent domain?
  - Audience member - First, they have to show the public purpose. The problem is there wouldn't be a public purpose. The same problem is this bill continues to expand and to develop a domain for an economic purpose. So right now, they don't have a public purpose that they can articulate, which is why we change the law. So, we need to actively fight it, because they're going to come and all these changes will be taken from a payment that must be adjusted fair compensation, and this area will be rezoned. And the value will go down compared to what they turn it into, which is why this board needs to make an affirmative resolution to fight that bill.
- We don't need or want desalination in our area.
- For folks that must go to the website to look at these visuals is a travesty. The idea of having a model is an excellent idea because a lot of folks cannot manipulate that website to get what they want to know.
- The Port and the City are integral parts of this process, and they are not here. These meetings need to be held regularly, especially during the legislative session
- Questions for TxDOT and the City: On 8/15/18 Pastor Adam sent a letter on behalf of the CAB to talk about what wasn't happening here. A week after he passed away, 2/1/23 a letter was sent to the Secretary of the Department of Transportation demanding that measures to enforce the mitigation that was supposed to occur sent – we haven't heard from them yet.
- For TxDOT and the City of Corpus Christi I want to know what is keeping y'all from mitigating and getting the Booker T Washington park going?
- Nothing's happened in Hillcrest – nothing from the letter. The Parks should already be there.
- We want TxDOT and the City to respond to the letter and give us a timeline for getting the parks going.
  - Kimberly Amy - TxDOT, FHWA, and the city are committed to getting those parks built. It's been challenging. There will be parks built by the time the project is complete.
- Is the Port still purchasing homes?
  - Kimberly Amy - Yes, they are.
- CAB Chair – We need some stuff done in this area. We need to protect these areas. This is history. And you guys are wiping out my history. But change is going to come.
- There were conversations about city services not being provided or at least not consistently being provided. So, I wanted to see if there was an update on that, and in that respect, you are taxpaying residents, you should still have services for all your services from the city.
  - City CAB Liaison - that is the wrong department you need to go to the correct department. So, one of the things you need to do is you need the utilities, and you need to call a number - Call [311](#) or [\(361\) 826-2489](#).

- City CAB Liaison - I do have some updates that I can provide. Just so you know what is going on. If you haven't heard, we are trying to get back on track and I had a 30% design that came in this month. So, we are working very hard.

**Comments from the CAB chair**

- CAB meeting will need to be sooner than every 3 months.
- CAB chair to follow up with city services on what the city isn't doing.

**Adjournment**

- The CAB Chair asked for a vote on a resolution to oppose the bill supporting the Port of Corpus Christi. Moved and seconded. The next CAB meeting will be on the second Thursday in May.