

Meeting Notes

PROJECT: SH 34 Corridor Study
ATTENDEES: Refer to Sign-in Sheet

Proj #: 0173-04-026

LOCATION OF MEETING: Kaufman, Texas

DATE/TIME OF MEETING: January 26, 2006
6:30 PM

The following is our understanding of the subject matter covered in this meeting. If this differs from your understanding, please notify us within five working days.

Stephen Endres, Project Manager for the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), welcomed the SH 34 Community Advisory Group (CAG) attendees and asked if there were any questions/comments regarding the October 27, 2005 Minutes. Following Stephen Endres, the attendees introduced themselves and briefly explained their interest in the project.

Matthew Craig, with Halff Associates, provided a brief summary of the November 8 and 10, 2005, Public Meetings. Approximately 150 persons attended each meeting and there were 20 written comments received. The majority of comments were against improving the existing SH 34; one was in favor. There were also numerous comments sensitive to the wildlife preserve areas.

Matthew Craig expressed his appreciation to the CAG for their time and involvement in the process of selecting the best alignment. He referred to the SH 34 Alternatives and Constraints Map (hand out) and introduced a 'new' alternative alignment (Alternative K) as a result of the CAG review/comments: Combination of Alternatives "E" and "G". Refer to the SH 34 Alternatives and Constraints Map for the location of Alternative "K". He also referred to the *Draft Analysis of Conceptual Alternatives* (DACA) and briefly discussed Alternative "K". This new alternative has the lowest impacts of the other alternatives and is the lowest cost option. It falls within the range of impacts with the other alignments, with the exception of the floodplain (See DACA). Matthew Craig said he was hopeful this alternative would minimize impacts and avoid displacements altogether. He indicated they would be meeting with the City of Terrell Engineer with regard to "fine tuning" the northern portion of the alignment.

Matthew Craig asked if there were any questions regarding the new alignment. The questions by the members of the CAG and responses by Matthew Craig are as follows:

Question #1: What will be done at the location where FM 2578 crosses IH 20?

Answer #1: The alignment will tie into that area somehow. We need to look at the conceptual line drawing regarding the workings of the IH 20 interchange, ramp locations, etc.

Question #2: What do we do to make the Alternatives and Constraints Map have less clutter? Do we vote off some of the alignments, i.e. the East and West Alternatives?

Answer #2: The East and West alignments were the least preferred. As we proceed with the project, we can spell out the middle alignments more clearly and eventually drop off the East and West alignments.

Question #3: Don't we need to leave all of the alignments on the Map to demonstrate that they were

indeed considered in case there are questions?

Answer #3: We will be able to demonstrate that we looked at the conceptual alternatives and winnowed the number down to the viable alternatives. For example, the four middle alternatives plus alternative "K" (five). Then we can demonstrate the selection from the five viable alternatives to the preferred alternative plus the 'No-Build Alternative'.

Matthew Craig briefly reviewed the project approval process. He indicated that the schematics show information that will be used as a tool for ROW acquisition. They will be receiving a resolution from the Cities and County, then plan a Public Meeting in April in order to obtain final concurrence to proceed with the schematics and Environmental Assessment (EA). When the schematics are about 30-60% complete, the EA can be prepared which will evaluate 27 environmental items. Once completed, the EA will be reviewed by the TxDOT Dallas District, and the TxDOT Environmental Affairs Division (ENV) in Austin. Once ENV is satisfied with the EA, it is sent to FHWA and other agencies for review. All comments will be addressed, and the EA will be revised accordingly. The project can then advance to the Public Hearing. The Public Hearing will be the final opportunity to get public comments. When the FHWA is satisfied with this process, they will issue a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), probably in Spring/Summer of 2007. The final approval of the schematics establishes the ROW need, and TxDOT can proceed with ROW acquisition after the FONSI, subject to availability of funds.

Trans Texas Corridor update – The public hearing and release of the Environmental Impact Statement should be in the spring of 2006. It is still going through the environmental review process. An announcement regarding the Public Hearing on the corridor should be forthcoming next month. Notices will be sent out when once the Public Hearing has been scheduled.

Public Involvement – Matthew Craig reiterated that the Project Website was accessible online and provided the web address [www.34corridor.org]. He mentioned that the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) met on December 22, 2005, at 2:00 pm. The next CAG meeting will be March 23, 2006, at the Kaufman Fire Station. He indicated that the next Public meeting will be held in early to mid April at the Kaufman and Terrell High Schools. Following the Public Meetings, the CAG and TAC will meet quarterly rather than monthly.

Following the presentation, Stephen Endres of TxDOT asked for additional questions, input, and thanked everyone for coming.

These notes are only summaries of key points of the meeting and are not meant to be used as a transcript of the meeting.

REPORTED BY: Jonathan Stewart – Civil Associates, Inc.

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