

# Meeting Notes

**PROJECT:** SH 34 Corridor Study **Proj #:** 0173-04-026  
**ATTENDEES:** SH 34 Technical Advisory **LOCATION OF MEETING:** Kaufman, Texas  
Committee  
Refer to Sign-in Sheet  
**DATE/TIME OF MEETING:** July 27, 2006  
2:00 PM

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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.

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Stephen Endres, Project Manager for the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), welcomed the SH 34 Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) attendees. He asked everyone to be sure to pick up copies of the handouts provided. He requested TAC attendees to read over the minutes and to let him know if there are any changes.

Matthew Craig with Halff Associates, referred to the sample resolution for cities/communities to consider in the selection of Alignment K. Because the April Public Meeting as well as TAC responses favored Alignment K, he requested that the cities consider using this resolution. The resolutions may be subsequently used in the environmental document for submittal to the TxDOT Environmental Affairs Division (ENV) in Austin, Texas. Stephen Endres interjected that he also sent TAC members an email regarding the resolution. Matthew Craig mentioned that TxDOT is on the Terrell City Council Meeting agenda for the September 5, 2006 City Council meeting.

Mathew Craig indicated that they were proceeding with schematic development. He referred to the alignments presented at the front of the meeting room. TxDOT completed the aerial photography fly over back in May of this year. Detailed mapping and photography will be available sometime in mid-September.. Another four months will be needed for the schematics to be finalized/approved. Matthew Craig further stated that a Value Engineering (VE) Study would take place in September and that he would talk more on that a little bit later on in the meeting. The intent is to have the Environmental Assessment (EA) submitted to ENV by the end of the year. They are still waiting on traffic data. TxDOT has a consultant working on the data and they should be completed in 1 to 2 months.

Regarding the EA, Matthew Craig indicated that they are currently working on the right-of-entry (ROE) for the field surveys. Shane Valentine of Halff Associates briefly discussed the status of the ROE. There are still some ROE letters that have not been returned. As soon as they get all the letters, they can get field crews out to do the surveys. The types of surveys to be conducted are:

- Archeological
- Biological
- Wetland
- Hazardous Materials
- Historical

Lenny Vollinger of Halff Associates briefly described the process of the EA. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process assembles the survey data into one document; tracks permits licenses, etc. The intent is to have the EA NEPA process completed by October/November 2006 and then submit the EA to TxDOT by the first of the year. The EA will go to Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for final approval; with about a six-month comment period. A Public Hearing will follow approval of the EA and schematics. Final approval of the project should be in September 2007. Lenny also stated that he had some blank ROE forms if any of the attendees know some of the property owners that have not responded.

Matthew Craig discussed the layout of the interchange at IH 20 and the proposed SH 34. He mentioned that the ramping is not the typical diamond interchange. Rather, it is more of an "X" ramp configuration. Each cross street will have a ramp and to do that, frontage roads will be needed.

A question was asked if TxDOT has pinpointed utility interruptions with regard to FM 2578 and SH 34. Matthew Craig indicated that although utilities were mapped back in the fall of 2005, it is too soon to know what utilities will have to be moved. Brenda Callaway, Assistant Area Engineer (Kaufman County Area Office) said that information is determined when the schematics are at 60 percent completion. Matthew Craig said he would provide the Utility Map that was prepared back in the fall at the next TAC meeting.

Matthew Craig discussed the VE Study that will take place in September. For any project greater than \$25M, FHWA requires a VE Study. The VE Study is usually conducted at the 60 percent stage of schematic completion. The intent of the VE Study is to ascertain where extra value can be added to the project. The dates for the VE Study are September 25 – 29, 2006, with the location to be determined. The VE workshop will comprise a team of approximately 15 individuals from TxDOT ENV, TxDOT Dallas District, Kaufman Area Office, FHWA, and Halff Associates. A certified VE specialist will be part of the group. Matthew indicated that if anyone from the TAC would like to be a part of the workshop, to let him know.

A question was asked if hike and bike trails were VE worthy or is it just bridges and culverts? Matthew Craig said that the VE Study will look at everything, and if particular projects make sense, they will develop ideas for implementation.

Matthew Craig briefly discussed the right-of-way (ROW) acquisition process. There were numerous questions regarding ROW at the CAG meeting. He indicated that pamphlets describing the ROW process were available in the back of the room with the other handout materials. A TxDOT ROW Specialist will be at the next CAG meeting.

Matthew Craig briefed the TAC on the Trans Texas Corridor. He said that 350 persons attended the July 19, 2006, Public Meeting in Terrell. The public comment period ends on August 21, 2006. Up to that time, comments can be submitted on-line or via postal exchange.

Regarding Public Involvement, Matthew Craig indicated that the April Public Meeting Minutes and pdf copies of maps and alignments are located on the SH 34 project website. He informed the TAC that they are free to download any of the information from the website that is of interest. The next CAG meeting is scheduled for August 26, 2006. The next TAC meeting is scheduled for October 26, 2006.

Mathew Craig asked for questions.

Question 1 – Is there a map of the cemeteries in relation to alignment K? Matthew Craig indicated that

there is a map of all the alignments laid out to specifically avoid the cemeteries.

Question 2 – Has there been any cities or persons opposed to Alignment K? Stephen Endres said only those individual property owners directly impacted by the project have voiced concern.

Question 3 – What happens if you do not receive ROE from all of the affected property owners? Matthew Craig said if that is the case, site reconnaissance can only be performed from adjacent public ROW.

Question 4 – Please review the Kaufman area. How will Alignment K impact the area? Matthew Craig said that it ties in with the old railroad alignment and heads due north to Kings Creek. There will be a median opening at East 1<sup>st</sup> North Street to get across SH 34. TxDOT will need to acquire one house, one gas station, and a Wings restaurant.

There were no additional questions. Following the informal meeting, Stephen Endres of TxDOT thanked everyone for coming.

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

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**REPORTED BY:** Jonathan Stewart – Civil Associates, Inc.

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