

US 290 Fredericksburg Feasibility Study

Meeting Minutes

Gillespie County Relief Route Task Force Meeting #2

March 28, 2018, 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Fredericksburg City Hall

- **Opening Remarks, Introductions, and Approval of Task Force Minutes for January 31, 2018**
Kory Keller, Chairman, Gillespie County Relief Route Task Force

Kory Keller welcomed attendees and started the meeting with the approval of the Jan. 31, 2018 meeting minutes. The task force members approved the minutes unanimously

- **Traffic Data Presentation**
Andy Atlas, CP&Y

Andy Atlas transitioned into a presentation on traffic in and around Fredericksburg.

Atlas first discussed existing and projected traffic data:

- He explained that the data came from three sources: tube counts (tubes installed in the road which count traffic), hourly volumes obtained specifically for the study in December 2017, TxDOT State Planning Map average daily traffic (ADT) volumes, and the StreetLight InSight tool (origin-destination information to determine local vs. through trips).
- He discussed existing traffic figures: Approximately 16,000 vehicles go through Fredericksburg on US 290 / Main Street per day, with approximately 1,600 of those vehicles being trucks. Data from the tube counts and State Planning Map were compared and found to generally be in agreement on the average daily volumes.
- He explained that over the next 20 years, traffic is expected to double on US 290 / Main Street if nothing is done.

Atlas then explained that a southern relief route that extends from US 290 south/east of Fredericksburg to US 87 north of Fredericksburg, and which has been labeled Southern Route B, would divert about 60% of the existing truck traffic from Main Street which was significantly more than a northern relief route around Fredericksburg or a southern relief route that extended only to US 290 west of Fredericksburg.

Atlas also explained that the team modeled the anticipated travel demand for three relief route concepts (labeled Southern Route B, Southern Route A, and Northern Route). He described these routes that were considered and the anticipated percentage of trucks and trips that would be diverted by each relief route.



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Atlas then described four maps of the Southern Route B, which showed the number of vehicle trips per day from each of six state highway segments that enter Fredericksburg and the anticipated percentage split of these vehicles that would either take the relief route (diverting traffic away from Main Street) or continue on the state highway into Fredericksburg and Main Street. The four maps included this data for the number of truck trips on 1) weekdays and 2) weekends and the number of personal trips on 3) weekdays and 4) weekends.

Members of the task force asked questions regarding the map data, and Atlas clarified as follows:

- Atlas explained that the data presented was an approximate average based on all three data sources researched for the study.
- Atlas said that regardless of the number of trips that would be diverted by a relief route, the traffic data show that Fredericksburg is a hub.
- A question was asked about the outbound number of vehicles from Fredericksburg. Matt Best, HDR, said he would provide that information at a later date. Atlas added that this is preliminary traffic data that would be developed in more detail later in the study. He explained that the data from all three sources agreed with each other. Best explained what StreetLight data is and that the data can be queried for a certain time and place to show origin and destination information.
- Keller asked Atlas how comfortable the team was with the data. Atlas said that since the data is pulled from multiple sources and it is consistent between each source, it provides useful and accurate information. He clarified that there is agreement between the tube counts and statewide numbers even though they were taken on different days of the week, different times of year, and over multiple years.

➤ Identification of Goals and Objectives

Stacey Benningfield, CP&Y

Lynda Rife, Rifeline

Stacey Benningfield started her discussion with an explanation of how goals and objectives were developed. She explained that they were created using data from the questions the task force was asked in the previous meeting on January 31. She made it clear that the goals and objectives were preliminary and that one purpose of today's meeting was to ask the task force to challenge, confirm, add to, or modify the goals and objectives as presented.

For the goal of "Protect and Preserve Environmental Resources" Benningfield explained that although several items listed under this goal were not particularly important considerations identified by task force members, the group would have to consider them per federal requirements (NEPA) in future steps of the project and to ensure the route recommended by this study would be feasible.



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Benningfield passed the discussion over to Lynda Rife. Rife explained that it is important for the task force members to provide feedback. Questions were asked about the following goals and objectives, and some changes were made as follows:

- Enhance safety
 - A task force member asked: How will the “enhance safety” goal be accomplished without considering additional pedestrian crossings or other improvements downtown?
 - Another member suggested that the word “minimize” be changed to “reduce” to clarify what can be accomplished by a relief route, and to clarify that the number of large trucks on Main Street will be “reduce(d)” rather than “divert(ed)” away.
- Accommodate Existing and Projected Traffic Volumes
 - A task force member noted that there are a lot of people commuting for work, or that park there and walk. They asked if multimodal ways to reduce vehicular traffic on Main Street will be considered, such as a parking garage and shuttle system. CP&Y staff clarified that, while important, doing so is outside the scope of this project. Roger Beall, TxDOT, explained that Main Street improvements could be evaluated later in a different study.
 - The task force suggested that “Help mitigate (relieve) congestion on Main Street” should be changed to “Help reduce congestion...”
- Preserve Unique Character of Downtown
 - Mayor Linda Langerhans asked: Will the diverted traffic keep potential tourists out of Fredericksburg? Andy Atlas responded that the traffic data regarding local trips takes this into account. He explained that traffic is projected to double over the next 20 years. Whereas this plan will likely divert some traffic that might have stopped, the overall growth will make up for those who choose to take the relief route instead of stopping in town. He also noted that the reduction in the number of trucks downtown might help maintain and grow the appeal of downtown.
 - TxDOT anticipates transferring ownership and maintenance of Main Street to the city once the relief route is in place. The city would then have control over decisions regarding Main Street in the future.
 - The task force suggested that “and business center” should be added to “Maintain Main Street as a tourist destination.”
- Enhance Accessibility and Mobility: there was some discussion about potentially removing accommodation of bicyclists (for the same reason as the earlier pedestrian discussion), but it was decided to leave it in the goals and objectives.
- Support Economic Development
 - The task force suggested the addition of the word “negative” to the following, thusly: “Minimize **negative** impacts to existing businesses.”
 - They also suggested that “Increase accessibility for deliveries to businesses” should be changed to “Maintain accessibility...”
 - They suggested that “Minimize (negative) impacts to existing businesses” should be moved up to the top of the list to reflect its importance.



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Rife reviewed all six goals and asked if anything was missing on the goals and objectives. Mayor Langerhans asked: Will the route affect the airport?

- CP&Y staff noted that it could actually improve accessibility to the airport.
- Rife noted that the task force would have opportunities to mark up maps again. Atlas also noted that the relief route would potentially increase airport traffic – so it can go two ways.

Rife asked the task force to indicate if they thought the goals and objectives were headed in the right or wrong direction or if they needed more information. The task force indicated that they believed the team is moving in the right direction. She asked the task force if they would take ownership of the goals and objectives; they indicated that they would.

One task force member asked about historic/century farms. Discussion was as follows:

- Benningfield explained that it is important to note that “Century Farms” and “Century Ranches” are not necessarily protected, but they are considered. A task force member brought up the potential local importance of historic places that are not registered or eligible to be registered and suggested that they be identified and considered as a constraint.
- A task force member suggested that when working with the public, the project team should clarify how local access would be considered.
- A task force member suggested that “including historic properties” be added to the last statement under “Protect and Preserve Environmental Resources”

All members approved goals and objectives, along with the amendments listed above.

➤ **Study Area Boundaries Discussion**

Stacey Benningfield, CP&Y

Lynda Rife, Rifeline

Benningfield introduced a map activity for the task force members. She showed them a constraints map and asked members to identify constraints that the team missed and to help to modify the study area. She explained that it is important to agree upon the study area in order to show it to the public at the upcoming workshop. The study area will help to direct the public in drawing potential relief route alignments. Members were given the opportunity to draw modifications on the preliminary constraints map.

After discussion, the task force was split into two groups, each of which reported what they discussed.

Group 1 noted the following considerations:

- A school inside of the study area
- Settlers Ridge – big development
- Try to stay away from the river as much as possible
- Expand tie-in to US 87 in the Southeast



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Group 2 noted the following considerations:

- Make a scenic/riverview/bluebonnet route if you go along the river, especially south of the river – the downside to this is that it might make the relief route too long.
- There are fewer houses on the south side of the river, expanded the study area south

Atlas noted that the team will update the study area per these recommendations.

A question was asked about traffic data projections further into the future. Does the project team have figures for 100 years on? Also, why isn't the project team considering Friendship Lane?

- Atlas noted that traffic data can only be accurately projected for approximately 20-30 years into the future.
- TxDOT staff noted that Friendship Lane is still in the city limits and traffic would still become congested within the city. It's better to divert the traffic further around the city instead.

Rife asked the task force if they were okay with the study area including changes; they said yes.

➤ Public Involvement Discussion

Lynda Rife, Rifeline

Rife noted that the next step would be to move this discussion to the public at the public workshop. Several topics were covered. They include:

- The project team is considering mid- to late- May for the public workshop. Are there any date restrictions to be aware of?
 - City council election – May 5
 - Commissioners going out of town from May 14-17
 - Coop meeting on one of the Thursdays in May
 - High school Graduation is June 1
 - Memorial Day is May 28
- Would the Hill Country University Center would be a good location?
 - The task force members agreed that yes, it would.
 - Expect 75-100 people.
- What should the timeframe be for the meeting?
 - Tuesdays or Thursdays from 4:30 to 7 p.m.
 - Kent Myers said he would be able to provide information about dates that might have conflicts.
 - The local newspaper is delivered on Wednesday, so a Thursday meeting would allow for a last-minute reminder in the paper.
- Rife explained that the meeting would give the public the opportunity to draw potential relief routes. She said that the more people who attend and provide input, the more buy-in the task force will have



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from the public. Atlas also said that the task force would later have the opportunity to approve the routes drawn by the public.

- How should the workshop be advertised?
 - Newspaper advertisement – the local paper comes out on Wednesdays
 - Keller noted that the task force was designed to go out into each of their respective portions of the community
 - Flyers in utility bills for city residents, county residents could probably get them in their bills as well through Central Texas Billing. Tim Lehmsberg said he would talk to Bob Loth about this. Bills go out in the beginning of May – they need to be letter size; a local printer could print the flyers.
 - Brochure size flyers
 - Social media and county websites
 - Note: Make sure the public knows that the workshop is come and go
- Rife pointed out the stakeholder database list and asked for the members to check for missing or incorrectly listed stakeholders and let the team know of additions or changes. The task force noted that the remaining wineries need to be added to the list (there are 48).
- Rife then began a discussion about the online survey. She noted that the team will bring laptops to the workshop so that people can complete the surveys there. She asked the task force members if there were any places that the map could be left so people who are unable to attend the workshop could leave comments. The following locations were suggested:
 - City Hall
 - County Courthouse
 - If rooms in City Hall or the Courthouse are difficult to book, maps might be able to be placed near the utility payment area, or near the entrance/security desk.
 - TxDOT maintenance office (Mon-Thurs)
- Rife said the information from the workshop would be gathered and shown to the task force at the next task force meeting so they can work on narrowing down options based on the goals and objectives. She reiterated the importance of knowing what the community wants early on in the process.

➤ Next Steps

Andy Atlas, CP&Y

Atlas thanked the task force for their time and asked if the team left out anything during the meeting. A task force member asked when the next task force meeting would be. Atlas said a coordination call before the workshop would be helpful and the team would coordinate a conference call. After the workshop, the next task force meeting would be held probably in early August – about six weeks after the workshop. Atlas reiterated that the study objective would be to have a locally recommended alternative.

➤ Wrap Up

Kory Keller, Chairman, Gillespie County Relief Route Task Force



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Keller adjourned the meeting.

