

Meeting Minutes

To: IH 35E Stakeholders

From: Matt Craig, P.E., Halff Associates, Inc.

Subject: IH 35E Stakeholder Meeting No. 1

Meeting Date: August 6, 2008 – 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM

Location: Lewisville City Hall

Minutes Date: August 8, 2008

Project: IH 35E Preliminary Engineering & Environ. Assess.
TxDOT CSJ: 0196-03-137, etc.; Halff AVO 26211

Attendees: 39	
Nasser Askari (TxDOT)	Fred Gill (City of Corinth)
Chris Behnke (TxDOT)	Doug Cox (USACE)
Bob Brown (TxDOT)	Roger Mangum (Town of Hickory Creek)
Stan Hall (TxDOT)	Tom Hammons (City of Carrollton)
David Hensley (TxDOT)	Jerry Murawski (City of Farmers Branch)
Janice Zimmerman (The U.S. House of Representatives)	Scott Neeley (DCTA)
David Lehle (The U.S. House of Representatives)	Emery C. (DCTA)
George Campbell (City of Denton)	Koorosh Olyai (DART)
Bernad Vekoun (City of Denton)	John Polster (Innovative Transportation Solution, Inc.)
Diana Palacios (U.S. Senate)	Shane Walters (HDR)
Matt Craig (Halff Associates)	Barry Steele (Hickory Creek)
Whit Friend (Halff Associates)	Jennifer Halstead (HNTB)
Rick Thomas (Halff Associates)	Chad McKeown (NCTCOG)
Donald Holzwarth (Dallas County)	Berrien Barks (NCTCOG)
Earl Berner (City of Lake Dallas)	Jeff Neal (NCTCOG)
Pat Howell (UNT)	Scott Booth (ITS Lewisville)
Raymond Kearbey (UNT)	David Davie (Farmers Branch)
Claude King (City of Lewisville)	Robert Kennah (URS)
T.S. Kumar (City of Lewisville)	Israel Crowe (URS)
Michael Leavitt (City of Highland Village)	

1. INTRODUCTION

Bob Brown, P.E., Deputy District Engineer for the Dallas District of the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) called the meeting to order. Mr. Brown stated that the purpose for this and future meetings would be to provide information and get feedback.

2. PROJECT OVERVIEW

Nasser Askari, P.E., TxDOT Project Manager for the IH 35E Corridor reviewed the history and limits of the 28 mile project. Mr. Askari presented existing and previously evaluated typical sections for the northern, middle and southern segments of the Corridor. Mr. Askari pointed out that the existing northern section did not have managed/HOV lanes, but had a wide median to allow a single reversible managed lane. Mr. Askari then outlined the current status of each section. A Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) had been received from FHWA for the northern segment and will need to be reevaluated. Ongoing Environmental Assessments (EA) will need to be revised for the southern and middle segments.

3. REASONING FOR POSSIBLE MODIFICATIONS

Bob Brown reviewed the present condition of the funding for the IH 35E Corridor. While there is \$535 million dollars dedicated from the 121 Toll concession and \$10 to \$20 million dollars in funding from the Regional Transportation Council (RTC); there is no federal funding for this project. Mr. Brown stated that this capital is only enough to fund the design and construction of 5 miles of the total 28 mile corridor.

Mr. Brown outlined reasons and the process for modifying the previously evaluated schematic. The addition of Managed Lanes would provide a superior alternative route while generating enough revenue to help fund the project. The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) is currently amending their Metropolitan Planning, therefore now is the time to proceed with finalizing the plan for improvements. Mr. Brown stated that the next action will be for TxDOT to work with the cities and other entities to finalize the plan.

4. DRAFT/INITIAL MODIFIED CONCEPTS

Matt Craig, P.E., Halff Associates Inc., Consultant Project Manager for the IH 35E Corridor explained how Halff and HDR are working together with TxDOT to develop the south, middle and north segments of the IH 35E Corridor from IH 635 to US 380. Mr. Craig described the draft conceptual typical sections for the three segments and the advantages over the previously proposed typical sections. Major considerations for the segments are transitioning at the northern and southern limits and providing the necessary access to managed lanes and interchanges.

Mr. Craig gave an overview of various types of access to managed lanes including: slip ramps, wishbone ramps, and direct connections or t-ramps. The objective is to utilize these methods and still stay within the previously proposed Right of Way (ROW) and general purpose lane access design. Starting the week of August 25th individual meetings will be held with the counties, cities and different agencies to establish the best possible configuration.

5. OVERVIEW OF POSSIBLE DELIVERY OPTIONS

Bob Brown reviewed the payment alternatives for constructing the corridor. The current funding would only allow for development of a portion of the corridor with the traditional design-bid-build option. However, TxDOT has the ability to pursue options that would leverage the current \$500 million dollars in funding to cultivate a \$3 billion dollar project. In addition, these options would not infringe on the current moratorium against CDA's. Mr. Brown then described different methods to develop the project including public debt, design-build and availability payment options. Advantages of these options include abbreviated construction time and that any surplus revenue would be directed towards TxDOT programs.

6. STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH

Bob Brown described the scheduled meetings and interaction for the groups involved in the development of the IH 35E Corridor as detailed on the slide presentation.

7. SCHEDULE

Mr. Brown then outlined timeline objectives for the IH 35E Corridor. The schedule is aggressive, with a goal of a schematic submitted by December 2008 to Austin for review and a FONSI by December 2009.

8. WORK WITH NTTA TO DETERMINE RESPONSIBLE AGENCY

TxDOT is developing a preliminary financial feasibility study that will be delivered to NTTA in September. NTTA will then have the opportunity to decide whether to undertake the IH 35E Managed Lanes Project.

9. OTHER ISSUES/NEXT STEPS

Bob Brown described how the IH 35E Corridor project will move forward. Matt Craig or Nasser Askari will contact the entities involved to schedule individual briefings and future regular meetings of this IH 35E Stakeholder Work Group.

10. QUESTIONS

- Q: The previously approved schematic showed a 3-lane frontage configuration, why is it now 2-lanes?
- A: Based on the traffic demands, the schematic will likely retain 3-lanes in many areas. The 3-lane frontage configuration will likely remain in areas such as Lewisville, where there is adequate ROW. The 2-lane configuration will be used to reduce ROW needs.

- Q: What will happen if the managed lanes do not generate enough revenue to cover the costs of the corridor?
- A: TxDOT and the RTC will be responsible. If a private entity were to become involved then it would be their responsibility.

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- Q: Why are there elevated managed lanes?
- A: The managed lanes are not elevated, only grade separated wishbone ramps in some cases. One difference between the two lane-balance diagrams involves accessibility. The at-grade alternative has the most access where as the grade-separated alternative has the least access.

- Q: What is the difference in cost between the two alternatives and which alternative is more effective?
- A: Both alternatives are effective. The slip ramps cost roughly \$2 to \$3 million dollars each to construct where as the wishbone ramps cost \$20 to \$30 million dollars each. The slip ramps require more ROW, so there is less of a cost difference between the two options. The grade separated option generates more revenue, though.

- Q: Why does the grade separated alternative create more revenue?
- A: The wishbone ramps allow travelers direct access to the managed lanes.

- Q: The Corps of Engineers (COE) is working directly with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). If your goal is a FONSI by December 2009 then you are three months too late.
- A: The impact to the areas controlled by the COE will be the same as what was previously approved. There is still coordination that will need to occur.

- Q: What impacts will this project have on the FM 2499 project?
- A: Initially there may be increases in traffic, but this will eventually level off.

Mr. Brown stated that there was staff available after the meeting if anyone had any other questions.

Materials Distributed at the Meeting:

- IH 35E Stakeholder Meeting No. 1 Agenda - Halff
- IH 35E Stakeholder Meeting PowerPoint Presentation - Halff
- Two Preliminary Lane Balance Diagrams – One of each Alternative – Halff (displayed at the meeting and one copy given to each city/agency)

This concludes the Meeting Minutes. Our goal is to provide a complete and accurate summary of the proceedings of the subject meeting in these minutes. If you feel that any of the items listed above are not correct, or that any information is missing or incomplete, please contact Halff Associates so that the matter can be resolved, and a correction issued if necessary. These minutes will be assumed to be correct and accepted if we do not hear from you within ten (10) calendar days from your receipt.