



Meeting Report

PROJECT: SH 190 (The East Branch)
IH 30 to IH 20

PROJECT NO: 022522

PRESENT:

DATE: 3/30/2006

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.

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) conducted a Public Meeting (open house format) to present the proposed purpose of soliciting public comment on the proposed State Highway (SH) 190 (The East Branch) from Interstate Highway (IH) 30 to IH 20 within southeast Dallas County. The meeting was held in Ballroom C of the Mesquite Convention & Rodeo Center located at 1700 Rodeo Drive in Mesquite, Texas on Thursday, March 30, 2006. The meeting was scheduled from 4:00 pm to 8:00 pm. However, persons were allowed into the meeting beginning at approximately 3:30 pm and the meeting was concluded at approximately 8:10 pm.

A total of 1,621 public meeting notices were mailed to persons listed on the mailing list (to include adjacent property owners, elected officials, and interested parties). Newspaper ads for the open house meeting were published in four newspapers:

- *The Mesquite News*
 - Legal notices in classified section on March 2 and March 23, 2006
 - General ad (1/8 page) on March 23, 2006
- *Al Dia*
 - Legal notices (in Spanish) in classified section on February 28 and March 20, 2006
 - General ad (1/8 page, in Spanish) on March 23, 2006
- *The Dallas Morning News*
 - Legal notices in classified section on February 28 and March 20, 2006
 - General ad (1/8 page) on March 23, 2006
- *The Garland News*
 - Legal notices in classified section on March 2 and March 23, 2006
 - General ad (1/8 page) on March 23, 2006

A registration table was set up at the entrance of Ballroom C with sign-in sheets for attendees and elected officials. Handouts made available to the attendees included a fact/information packet, blank written comment form, a SH 190 alignment survey, and a potential alignment map. The East Branch Update newsletter (dated March 2006) was also made available to meeting attendees. The registration of attendance totaled 210. Eight elected officials registered.

Exhibits displayed at the open house meeting included preliminary alignment map, typical cross sections, environmental process boards traffic boards, and matrix analysis boards. Viewing of the project exhibits and informal discussions sessions were held throughout the duration of the meeting to give attendees an opportunity to view the displays and to ask questions regarding the proposed project with project team members present. No formal presentation was given at this meeting. Thirty-nine written comment forms and 183 surveys were received at the public

meeting. The written comments have been reviewed and will be considered during the development of the project. Of the thirty-nine written comments received:

- 25 written comments indicated a possible alignment
- 12 written comments indicated concerns for impacts to residences and properties
- Four written comments indicated concerns for noise
- Two written comments indicated a choice for the No Build alternative

A comment period was given after the meeting to allow comment forms to be submitted to TxDOT. Five additional comments were mailed to TxDOT after the Public Meeting. Again, the written comments have been reviewed and will be considered during the development of the project. Of the five comments received:

- Three written comments indicated a possible alignment
- One written comment indicated concerns for impacts to residences and properties
- One written comment indicated a choice for the No Build Alternative

The written comments also included other specific comments regarding the project. The following represents written comments, questions, and concerns that were received at the Public Meeting or in writing as of April 25, 2006. Due to the overlap and repetition in many comments, similar comments were consolidated and paraphrased to reduce duplication. As a result, the comments that appear are often not precise words found on the comment forms. This has been done to reduce duplication of similar comments that elicited a common response and in no way are intended to obscure the substance of a comment.

Comment 1: We were never informed of this project until today. There was no Spanish literature on this project.

Response 1: Previously, a public scoping meeting was held on July 26, 2005; over 18,600 notices and surveys were sent out to notify the community of the project in June 2005. Numerous articles have been published in local newspapers and presentations made to local groups. The March 2006 newsletter (in both English and Spanish) was sent out to persons on the project mailing. Meeting notices for this public meeting were published in four newspapers, including one in Spanish, on three separate occasions, twice in the legal section and one general ad per newspaper. Additionally, the project has an active website (www.theeastbranch.org) in both English and Spanish.

Comment 2: I would like SH 190 to bridge over Lake Ray Hubbard.

Response 2: Many possibilities and alignments corridors were considered early on in the environmental process. Any route crossing over Lake Ray Hubbard was considered unfeasible due to engineering practicality and the cost of a bridge over the lake only to move back westward to avoid the lake dam.

Comment 3: I would like to see noise and light abatement measures take for SH 190.

Response 3: A noise analysis and visual impact analysis will be completed as part of the environmental process. Mitigation will be considered where reasonable and feasible.

Comment 4: I am concerned that air pollution from SH 190 would cause problems for Dallas water purification plant.

Response 4: An air quality analysis will be completed as part of the environmental process. If it is determined that an air impact would occur, a mitigation plan would be prepared.

Comment 5: Concerned with the SH 190's impact to schools.

Response 5: Impacts to community facilities such as schools will be analyzed during the environmental process to determine impacts and any possible mitigation required.

Comment 6: The proposed project would break up many families and neighborhoods; I would like as little impacts to residences.

Response 6: As part of the environmental process, community impacts will be reviewed. Impacts to houses and existing communities would be kept to a minimum.

Comment 7: Is there anyway to predict what this will do to the value of the homes in the area?

Response 7: Impacts of new roadway construction on residential property values are difficult to assess conclusively. Continuing population growth and a strengthening of local economies within the project area have contributed to the demand for housing and steady rising property valuations. These and other components of property value are likely to have a greater influence on future calculations for residential properties with the property area than would the proposed roadway. There are several negative effects commonly associated with roadways (e.g. noise, pollution, dust, and decrease privacy) that may decrease the value of property immediately adjacent to the roadway. Of these, noise is usually the most objectionable effect, although some people may perceive other problems such as aesthetics and proximity. These potentially negative influences on residential property values may be offset by the advantage that accompanies transportation mobility and ease of access, as a result of the proposed project and other transportation improvements in the vicinity, the residential neighborhoods located along the corridor will be able to offer current and future residents the advantage of convenient access, adequate roadway capacity, and easy access to major commuting and travel routes. The value of these properties may appreciate more with the construction and operation than under the No-Build Alternative. Overall, the proposed project is expected to have a beneficial effect on the area's economy and employment.

Comment 8: The Mesquite Airport should not be considered an avoid zone.

Response 8: The Mesquite Airport is a major infrastructure element and is considered an avoid zone for this project.

Comment 9: Will my house be acquired from this project or will it remain?

Response 9: We are still in the process of selecting a preferred alternative for SH 190. It is unknown at this time whether your house would need to be acquired. The preferred alternative should be decided by the winter of 2007. More public information updates and newsletters will keep you updated on the latest project development.

Comment 10: I would prefer the No Build Alternative and/or to use an existing facility for SH 190.

Response 10: No existing roadway in the study corridor would satisfy the projected year 2030 north-south travel demand. Because no current facility exists, new location alternatives are being reviewed via The East Branch project.

Comment 11: I would prefer a non-tolled facility

Response 11: Tolling, freeway, and a parkway are all viable options that will be studied during the environmental process.

Comment 12: How are we compensated if our house or property is taken

Response 12: Any property required for this project would be acquired based on an appraisal of current market values. TxDOT hires independent fee appraisers to determine their opinion of the value of the needed property as it currently exists (without SH 190 insertion) as well as damages to any property remaining. TxDOT then reviews these findings, not to change them, but to assure nothing has been omitted and the appraised value is consistent with similar properties to be acquired. A copy of the appraisal report will be presented to the owner with the offer. Additionally, any household or business that would be relocated or displaced would be eligible for assistance under the requirements of the Federal Uniform Relocation Act. Qualified displaced persons are entitled to reimbursement for moving cost and certain related expenses such as packing and unpacking, temporary storage, transportation, moving insurance, etc., incurred in moving.

Comment 13: When will the Eastern Extension of the President George Bush Turnpike (EE PGBT) be constructed?

Response 13: At this time, it is anticipated that construction of the EE PGBT could begin in late 2006 and be open to traffic from SH 78 to IH 30 by 2010.

Comment 14: Why are there alignments from IH 30 that do not align with the EE PGBT?

Response 14: The City of Garland requested TxDOT consider an offset alignment at IH-30 to evaluate the impacts of an alignment that would not align with the EE PGBT to help respond to questions from South Garland residents.

Comment 15: How long will the preliminary environmental process take?

Response 15: This study includes the development of an EIS that will provide information on displacements, access, etc. Dependent on city/town input, TxDOT hopes to select several viable alignment options for further study in late 2006 and complete the Draft EIS in Spring 2000.

Survey forms were completed at the public meeting to rank the alignments that were presented at the public meeting. Over 180 survey forms were completed at the public meeting. Due to the possibility of skewing the ballot totals, survey forms were only accepted at the public meeting. Two additional survey forms were mailed in with comments during the comment period, but their results were not tallied. From IH 30 to US 80, alignment N2-M3, PGBT/East of Lawson, received the highest score (1,130) and was ranked first for this section, N1-M1, Roan/Collins was ranked second (score of 539), and N2-M1b, PGBT/Collins (RR), was ranked third (score of 515). For the alignments from US 80 to IH 20, M3-S3, East of Lawson/East of Falcon's Lair ranked first (score of 725), M3-S2b, East of Lawson/Falcon's Lair ranked second (score of 475) and M3-S1, East of Lawson/West of Falcon's Lair, ranked third (score of 444).

REPORTED BY: Nathan Drozd
