

# Bicycle Safety Task Force – Initial Meeting Notes

Friday, February 06, 2015, 2:00 – 4:45 p.m.

In attendance:

TNR Staff: Steve Manilla, Morgan Cotton, Wendy Scaperotta, Charles Bergh, Laura Seaton, Charlie Watts, Sara Dilbert, David Greear, Robert Armistead

Commissioners Court Representatives:

Commissioner Gerald Daugherty, Bob Moore, Sara Krause (asked to attend by Peter Einhorn), Peter Einhorn.

BSTF Members:

Erick Benz, Laura Dierenfield, Joe Gieselman, James Murff (unable to attend, Andrew Willis)

BSTF Advisors:

Preston Tyree, Doug Ballew, Tom Wald (unable to attend, Chad Crager)

Handouts: Commissioner Court agenda item from January 20, 2015, an edited version of the same document with additional notes, BSTF press to date.

Steve Manilla introduction. \$3.3 million was approved by voters to be spent on bicycle safety projects. A task force had previously convened in 2010 to identify needs prior to the 2011 bond process and election. This group will help determine where funds will be spent on in all four precincts.

Charge of the new task force group:

- A list of safety improvements for popular bike routes in unincorporated areas.
- Develop a list of bike projects for completing gaps in existing bikeway networks and completing entirely new bikeways.
- Design policy (e.g. shared-use paths vs. shared lanes; concrete vs asphalt; shoulder width).  
Task Force recommendations will be presented to the Commissioners Court for approval.

In addition, the recommendations of the group will be used to develop projects and cost estimates for future bond referendums. He hopes to see the group to meet for approximately three months. Staff are here to assist any way they can including providing data, maps, arranging site visits, providing administrative support, etc.

Introductions from those in attendance.

Introductions of maps from TNR GIS:

Maps of Travis County and highlighting each precinct with other jurisdictions and projects that were identified during the previous task force indicated by purple lines. Confirmation that all white areas on the map are unincorporated areas of Travis County and BSTF areas of focus. Other jurisdictions are indicated by colored areas. No contours currently on map.

Additional overlays and maps were requested: overlays of schools (primary and middle schools mandatory, “hot buttons” for safety), CAMPO route map, City of Austin route plans, Bastrop/Williamson (Hays?) Counties, Bike Austin (with citizen input) Map. Sara Dilbert, GIS, will make the TC map viewer available online.

We have created a BSTF website and contact emails for citizens, [bicyclesafetytaskforce@traviscountytexas.gov](mailto:bicyclesafetytaskforce@traviscountytexas.gov).

*(Note: TC WebTeam can create a BSTF web site that is “public, yet not available through a site search or through regular links, so it can be basically “hidden” and accessible by direct link.)*

Tom Wald: Do all projects have to be capital projects?

SM: Yes, including signage.

Erick Benz: Can funding be used for (The League of American Bicyclists) five E’s: engineering, education, encouragement, enforcement and evaluation?

SM: We will find out.

Staff will provide documentation from the previous BSTF convened in 2010/2013.

Commissioner Gerald Daugherty asked the group what are the top four or five projects/most popular bike routes in need of improvement?

TW: Old San Antonio Road. Different areas of TC, different needs.

James Murff: Most folks ride from home to routes on their bicycles, so everywhere. Parmer Lane, Southwest Parkway. Different types of cyclists have different needs.

EB: East TC, flat but rough roads; West TC, hilly. Further out (need?) more facilities. Safe Roads to Schools is a growing national movement. Walnut Creek Trail, 10 miles parallel to SH183. Austin, Manor Trail, no crossing facilities to cross Decker Lane.

Preston Tyree: Safe crossings, Decker Lane.

CGD: Do folks generally ride on roads or sidewalks?

PT: Many rural roads in Travis County, answer is context sensitive.

EB: Agrees that in three months is sufficient for the task force, yet they may not be able to create a master plan in that time frame.

Commissioner Daugherty committed to going to other commissioners and bring them to the table.

EB: Commissioner, what do we need to get this list/plan approved?

CGD: Have a list/plan acceptable to the Court and Judge.

JM: Imperative to know if we need to spend the funds equally in each precinct; choice of projects would be approached differently in each precinct due to different needs/geology.

Morgan Cotton: We would like to see short/long term list of projects, identify aspects that will help projects float to the top. We can cost out the projects for you.

SM: Maybe 20 miles of roads in each precinct, maybe the Court will pass.

Bob Moore: Perhaps look at connectivity that links precincts?

SM: Yes and with a safety perspective.

Sara Krause: Suggests they make a prioritized the list and then make the argument to the Court about what is best.

EB: Create a list by importance first and then identify the precincts.

Joe Gieselman: Let's see a list of what others are doing, TxDOT and RMA projects.

Charlie Watts: Transportation Alternative Program, TAP, applications are due in May. Ed Collins is the contact. We have three projects approved: Decker Lake sidewalk/973, US290W from Fitzhugh Road to Circle Drive and SH71E to Kellam Road.

TW: He recalls in 2010, priorities, distribution was pretty even.

JM: Andrew Willis will know the P1 (?)

Laura Dierenfield: Suggests we look more into partner funding opportunities like TAP.

CW: TAP has \$52 million overall this cycle, projects will be funded 80% grant/20% local, looking for "shovel ready" projects as a priority.

JG: Don't we have any?

CW/SM: (above projects) Will see if we can use bond funds for TAP. SM will find out.

LD: In the ETJ? Onion Creek Trail, FM969, an opportunity to work with TxDOT?

SM: No.

JG: Under the toll road at Onion Creek, under SH71?

CW: We have already talked to TxDOT about the connection, SH71 to the "new" Maha Road (Kellam Road.)

TW: And FM969? Improved corridor? Decker/3177 to Hunter's Bend.

SM: Are you talking about what we had in Colorado River Corridor Plan?

CW: That is part of the current FM969 pass-through project, which is already in the design phase.

When to Meet?

Every 2 weeks, 2 hours, end of day Friday.

Bike Education – Budget ask, yet signage is under the purview of the bond.

At this time, County staff left except for Morgan (and Laura to take notes. *General ideas and requests are noted, not the conservation detail - LFS*)

Cost of full bike/ped road improvements to existing roads cost approximately \$1 million a mile and if that was the choice to spend the \$3.3 million, bond funds would cover between three and four miles of road improvements.

Cannot finalize a Bike Master Plan in three months yet can begin one.

There are timelines: grant \$ (TAP, others?) timeline, budget (FY2016 budget submission) timeline and now is the time to ask. The \$3.3 million will never go away yet the opportunities to use other funds from state, etc., will go away.

General consensus to not have a chairman of the BSTF, yet a liaison would be a good idea. Laura Dierenfield volunteered for that role. Morgan said he will provide all the support for the group he can.

Request for full list of previous projects with rough cost.

Major Multipliers – major projects in relationship to current projects, i.e. plans around projects already underway like Weiss Lane, Old San Antonio bridge projects.

Tom Wald happy to be a resource on the 2013 projects.

Bring back/brainstorm new areas of concern, new safety issues, i.e.:

- dangerous, “squeezed” turn at the intersection of Southwest Parkway and SH71,
- “Dam loop,”
- safe ways to get out of the city.

Morgan shared that most major (CIP) projects *are* arterials that lead out of town.

Maps to post online for BSTF use (not on the public BSTF website. *Note: TC WebTeam can create a site that is accessible to the public yet not searchable and not readily available through Traviscountytx.gov site links.*): CAMPO Map, Bike Austin Map with public input, TNR created maps of county, precincts with new overlays of schools (primary, middle schools with high schools optional), new developments (residential, proposed, permitted, under construction, etc.) outside of city limits.

James Murff shared that he lacks knowledge of jurisdictions; “who is responsible for what” information, how have bike/ped concerns been incorporated already into current development?

Morgan shared that it is the Commissioner’s Court directive to accommodate access/safety for citizens; use of the City of Austin’s criteria in the ETJ; seeking of public-private partnerships with developers and that this is already happening, shared use paths, etc.; keeping regional connectivity also in mind, acquiring right-of-way, etc., and the Court is looking for direction.

Preston will not be available in person for the next meeting yet can call in.

Laura will send notes from meeting, contact list, work to gather requested materials.

## Requests of TNR Staff:

Below are the requests of staff that I identified. Most mapping requests will be available through an online map viewer we are developing with various data layers. We will report out at our next meeting, 2/20/2015. Online map and document resource website currently being built by TC ITS.

- *Bonnie Lister from TxDOT will be joining us to answer all TAP program questions.*

Maps online – county, precinct maps presented at meeting.

- *Will be included in GIS on-line map, currently under development.*

Can funding be used for (The League of American Bicyclists) five E's: engineering, education, encouragement, enforcement and evaluation?

SM: We will find out

Map view with school overlay – elementary, middle schools for sure, high school? Large employers. Development projects.

- *Will be included in GIS on-line map, currently under development.*

Spreadsheet of 2013 Bicycle Task Force Plan and rough costs? Details about currently identified bike/ped already in CIP project design plans? Project, precinct, length, cost (ballpark)

- *Will be included in GIS on-line map and available through resource website; costs being researched by staff.*

*2013 projects already completed or design work begun – Hamilton Pool Road Safety Improvement Alternatives (RM 12 to Reimers Park, \$.5 million), Weiss Lane Improvements (Pecan Street to Kelly Lane), Replace Weiss Lane Bridge #229 (\$8.5 million), Old San Antonio Road Bridge #302 Replacement (\$2.4 million).*

Recently adopted TC Land/Water/Transportation Plan?

- *LWTP layers will be included on GIS on-line map.*

TAP funds – can use bond funds for our share? What does “shovel ready” mean exactly? Triage, immediate scoping – are projects there?

- *Bonnie Lister of TxDOT will give a TAP presentation at next meeting, 2/20/2015.*

Will maintenance and repair qualify? Morgan agreed that is relatively affordable.

- *Yes, see below.*

Major Multipliers – major projects in relationship to current projects, i.e. plans around projects already underway like Weiss Lane, Old San Antonio bridge projects.

- *Will be included in GIS on-line map, currently under development.*
- *Bonnie Lister of TxDOT will be able to speak on current projects in Travis County.*

Travis County Commissioners Court  
Bicycle Safety Task Force  
Agenda Item Language – Question answer by PBO

Meeting Date: January 20, 2015

Prepared By: Steve Manilla/Morgan Cotten Phone #: 854-9434

Division Director/Manager: Public Works Director

Policy questions regarding the use of 2011 voter approved bonds for various purposes have been received by TNR and forwarded to PBO, the County Attorney's Office, and the County Auditor's Office for analysis.

Responses to those policy questions are as follows:

- 1) Can 2011 Voter approved Bond Funds be used to improve State Highways; such as adding bike lanes to FM 3238?

**RESPONSE:** As long as the State is agreement with the projects we suggest, then it is acceptable to use the 2011 Prop. #1 Bond Funds on State Highway improvements that make it safer for bikes.

- 2) Can Prop 1 2011 Voter Approved Bond Funds be used for bike facility improvements in County parks?

**RESPONSE:** It cannot be supported to use 2011 Prop I funds for these types of improvement in County parks.

- 3) Can 2011 Voter Approved Bonds for Bike Safety projects be used to add paved shoulders, seal pavement cracks, re-stripe roadways, provide roadway surface treatments to improve skid resistance and riding comfort, cut back vegetation that may obscure visibility for motorists, and install bike warning signs? Also, can 2011 bike safety funds be used in conjunction with other funds? For example, can 2011 bike funds be used to install paved shoulders on up-hill grades and use other funds to install bike lanes on downhill grades? (Bicyclists have indicated that they only need widened shoulders on up-hill grades but there are safety benefits to motorists for having them on both sides of the road).

**RESPONSE:** Yes. This is the clearest use of the funds for bike purposes. Each of the examples described in the question are road construction or in aid thereof.

- 4) Can 2011 Voter Approved Bond Funds be used for city-county participation on projects and county- non-profit participation (Thinking of the Austin to Manor Trail and the Hill Country Conservancy's Walk for a Day Trail)? if a precinct has an interest in seeing projects like those completed, can we use 2011 bond funds to participate?

**RESPONSE:** Yes, with the permission of the City given by an Interlocal Agreement, allows the County to spend road bond money on road improvements, including improved shoulders, striping for bike lanes, and similar improvements. Cost sharing would be encouraged. Off road projects like bike trails within a city would not be allowable using the road bond funds.