

## 2006 Bond Oversight Committee Questions/Answers

March 21, 2008 Meeting

### Overall

1. Given significant increases in construction costs (up to >200% increase in some materials), it is likely that all of the initial projects submitted under this bond package cannot receive funding. How does the City plan to prioritize which projects should be carried forward to completion? (Dave Anderson)

*Overall: All 2006 bond projects are scheduled in priority order and the entire bond program is reviewed annually to make necessary adjustments. All project estimates included allowances for inflation. Projects scheduled for the later years of the bond program may have to be adjusted if current rates of inflation continue.*

*Watershed Protection: The prioritization of drainage bond projects is based on the concepts and priorities established in the Watershed Protection Master Plan. The Master Plan prioritizes solutions based on problem severity. This method (recommended by the Master Plan Citizens Advisory Group) utilizes a “needs-based” approach whereby the worst problem areas threatening the most critical resources will be considered first for project implementation. Other criteria such as available funding, targeting funding (such as Urban Watershed Ordinance [UWO] or Regional Storm Management Program [RSMP] monies), and opportunity-based issues (land availability, joint projects with other entities), and Council priorities also weigh into the final decisions on project funding. The bond projects placed an emphasis on drainage infrastructure and included “order of magnitude” cost estimates. As preliminary engineering studies and designs are completed, there have been increases in project costs over the original estimates. Lower priority bond projects that may not receive funding due to other bond project cost increases have been included for consideration in the annual WPDRD capital budgeting process for drainage utility, RSMP and UWO appropriations.*

2. I have great admiration and respect for the City staff and contractors working on infrastructure projects such as the road repair and Austin Clean Water Program. Citizens should expect to be inconvenienced by projects like this. I am, however, concerned when frequently no steps are taken to provide bike/ped alternatives when a path or route is closed. For example:

1. West Lynn is closed at Enfield road, and the barricades prevent a cyclist or wheel-chair user from getting to the sidewalk to cross north south. There is no signage providing information about the nature of the project.
2. The W. 3rd St bridge at Shoal Creek has been closed sporadically recently because of work on a new apartment/condo project and on the Austin Music Hall.
3. Part of the north side of the Town Lake Trail is now closed at the Drake Bridge forcing joggers, pedestrians, and cyclists to vie with motor vehicle traffic during the Cesar Chavez 2-way conversion.
4. From late 2005 to mid 2007, part of the Shoal Creek Trail was closed between W. 38 and W. 34 and trail users created their own informal trail to go around the project, whereas if ACWP had worked with PARD, a better, safer arrangement could have been worked out.
5. In 2002-2003 (I think), sanitary sewers were installed in a newly annexed neighborhood in far north Austin, shutting off the only neighborhood street access to the TCEQ. Bike-commuters had to trespass through private property to avoid riding the wrong way on the IH 35 access road.
6. The Johnson Creek trail is closed while work is done in the creek to address drainage issues.

Let me be clear that these are problems I know about - there must be many more in the City that I do not know, and that is my concern. I am an "insider" who knows how to complain and I often get problems addressed. I am afraid that there are many other folks inconvenienced or placed at risk who suffer in silence. I believe the bike/ped program and ADA specialists should review plans and work-sites to address issues like this, and contingency funds associated with the projects should be tapped to correct access/mobility problems. (Dave Sullivan)

*To be addressed at the March 21, 2008, meeting.*

## **Prop 1**

### *Street Reconstruction*

3. This should be shown to us geographically. How do we know the most needed repairs are being completed first? (Dave Anderson)

*(Map will be available at the March 21, 2008, meeting) The 2006 Bond Street Reconstruction Program was developed by the Street and Bridge Division of the Public Works Department using the Pavement Management Information System (PMIS). The PMIS is used to collect, integrate and analyze data points on the condition of the City's entire roadway system. Streets in most need of repair were initially identified by this system. Streets were then grouped into projects of*

*various sizes by the project management team. These streets were then visually inspected and driven by City staff to ensure that the bond funds are being spent where they are needed most. The severity of the need for reconstruction was distributed essentially equally around the city, with a slight concentration in the central city areas which are older and more heavily traveled. There are also projects included which were identified for reconstruction in the 1998 Bond program but were not completed due to lack of funds. When determining which projects to complete first, several factors were considered, including the severity of the need for reconstruction, the location relative to other public and private construction projects, the impact on the community and traveling public and the geographic distribution of the projects. Every effort was made to ensure that projects are distributed equally throughout the City and that the projects are coordinated with other work to minimize public inconvenience. We are currently reevaluating the schedule for the later years of the program to ensure that we are using the most recent bids and construction pricing in our project estimating and planning. The program schedule will also be adjusted as necessary as preliminary engineering is performed on the projects and individual project schedules and scopes are further defined.*

4. I would like a large map of construction projects funded by prop 1. (roadways and sidewalk) (Jennifer McPhail)

*A map of the Prop 1 Street Reconstruction Projects is provided. At this time, there is not a separate map showing sidewalk projects, but sidewalks will be constructed or repaired as part of the street reconstruction projects. We will evaluate the possibility of producing a map showing the sidewalks that are improved as part of the Concrete Repairs Program*

#### *Sidewalks*

5. Also, I would like to know how the sidewalk reconstruction projects scored in the sidewalk master plan process. (Jennifer McPhail)

*There were no funds for new sidewalks not associated with street reconstruction projects included in the 2006 Bond Program; only funds for repairs which are being prioritized by the Street and Bridge Division (more information on this provided in response to #7). The street reconstruction projects will include construction of new sidewalk and/or will bring existing sidewalks into compliance with current ADA standards where possible. ADA compliance may not be achievable for some existing ramps where existing topographical constraints preclude construction of the ramp within the allowable slope. Work is ongoing on the prioritization matrix and the final result is expected later this year*

6. The sidewalk reconstruction projects are supposed to address any curb ramps that do not comply with the ADA. The Oltorf to South First Project has several existing ramps that don't comply with the ADA and they have never been improved. I talked with Rick Colburn in January and he told me that they would get with the contractor about it but, it looks like it has never changed. When are getting to it? This needs to be done before the warranty runs out. (Jennifer McPhail)

*This issue was revisited in January and 6 additional ADA ramps were replaced that were not part of the original scope of work. Everything that could be constructed to meet current ADA standards was replaced. The remaining ramps cannot be constructed to meet current ADA standards due to the existing slopes. For these cases, the policy has been to leave them as is.*

7. The sidewalk repairs being made citywide. I know that staff from the Public Works Department has meet with community groups to get feed back about how this portion of the money is spent. Is there any money left? If so, how much? (Jennifer McPhail)

*We have about \$1.2 million per year cash flowed for the Concrete Repairs Program funded by the 2006 Bonds. The original intent was to spend 50% on sidewalk and 50% on curb and gutters, resulting in a commitment of \$600,000 per year on each through 2013. However, the demand for sidewalk repairs and upgrades has been significantly higher than for curb and gutters. This year alone we are projected to spend at least 75% of the available funding on sidewalks. It appears that this trend of higher demand for sidewalk repairs and ADA upgrades will continue. As such, there will be at least \$600,000 and as much as \$900,000 allocated each year to sidewalk repairs through 2013. Unfortunately, many of the requests received are for completely new sidewalks or upgrades to facilities which are not associated with repairs. These types of activities are not funded under the current repair-oriented program that was funded by the 2006 Bonds. The current program includes upgrading non-ADA-compliant sidewalk components, including adding missing ramps, when they fall within 25' of a prioritized repair.*

*The 2006 Bond Street Reconstruction program will be spending about \$4.4 million on new sidewalks, upgrades, repairs, and bicycle route improvements associated with the street reconstruction projects. Although this is a substantial investment in sidewalks, these funds are limited to use in the project area and cannot be reallocated elsewhere.*

*In addition, of the 400 or more sidewalk repair or upgrade locations identified since 1998 where asphalt level-ups were performed, 90 to 95 percent have been completed.*

## Prop 2

8. Need geographic distribution of projects (map) as well as note indicating if any projects on list have become time critical. (Dave Anderson)

*Map is attached. Currently, no project is time critical.*

9. Where is the \$30m acquisition? (Dave Anderson)

*Map is attached. A presentation on the open space acquisition will be made at the March 21, 2008 meeting.*

10. Voluntary buyout- Onion Creek at Dixie Dr. During the Bond Advisory Committee process homeowners being affected in the buyout expressed concerns about the \$2,397,000 not being enough money to help them relocate. That amount of money split between 11 families doesn't seem to go very far. We had talked about there additional assistance for them. Did they get additional assistance to relocate? (Jennifer McPhail)

*Nine of these properties will qualify for a 65 percent federal match from the Corp of Engineer's grant.*

11. Why was the boggy creek project delayed so many times? What parts of the process need to be improved? The longer this project takes to implement the more expensive it becomes (Jennifer McPhail)

*In 2004, the City of Austin established a policy that preliminary engineering projects and studies are separated from design projects whenever feasible. The intent is to ensure that the study phase performed by a consultant is completed without an expectation that it will turn into a large design contract – that the resulting project is not “over-designed” to inflate the work for the consultant performing the study.*

*This project was necessarily lengthened in order to accommodate the new policy. After the preliminary study was completed, a RFQ was developed and issued in September 2007 to select a new firm to provide final design and construction phase services. The RFQ process resulted in the preliminary engineering firm (URS) being selected, and approved by Council in January 2008.*

*The City has begun negotiations with URS for the proposed scope of services. However, due to the time that has elapsed since the preliminary phase, and because the project is being completed under a new contract, the consultant labor rates have increased, resulting in a cost proposal that exceeded the project authority from Council. Thus, we have had to re-evaluate the scope of design*

*services to avoid the need to return to Council for additional authority, and the proposal negotiations are taking more time than expected.*

### **Prop 3**

13. Infill Parks: Have we acquired these (*status is circled*). Not clear. (Dave Anderson)

*For infill parks, to-date we have closed on the Del Curto tract.*

14. Need geographic distribution for all PARD projects. Also need to know if any live items have become time critical. (Dave Anderson)

*Map is attached. Currently, no project is time critical.*

### **Prop 4**

15. African American Heritage and Cultural Facility: Is this project on schedule? (Dave Anderson)

*No. Before any work could begin on this project, title issues had to be resolved on the property and that process took approximately 9 months. Since that time a structural assessment has been completed on the property and we are working with the stakeholder groups and the URB to chart a course of action.*

### **Prop 5**

6. What are goals? I would envision a matrix by geographic region specifying goals for number of units per Affordability period, MFI%, etc. Where is this? (*He has circled the information under the columns "Afford. Period" and "MFI%."*). (Dave Anderson)

*Question will be answered at the March 21, 2008 meeting.*

7. As a member of the Planning Commission, I am nearly overwhelmed by the growing variety of approaches the City is pursuing to secure more affordable housing. We have the \$55M in GO bonds. We have the density bonus programs with TODs, VMUs, Downtown, plus the Design Commission's city-wide proposal. We have the pending TIF for the Homestead Preservation District in East Austin. We have the nominal funding under the SMART Housing program and tax credit housing, and numerous private operations. I am helping UT with the "alley flat" initiative. The City Council just approved a set of the AHITF recommendations.

Thus, I have become increasingly sympathetic to having a consultant or a dedicated staff person (David Potter?) master plan the use of the \$55M to factor in all the other approaches and the come up with a rough estimate or goal for an ultimate yield in societal utility. I say "societal utility", because folks will latch onto the numbers in the table I provided to say that \$55M to provide a couple thousand units to help a few thousand individuals is inefficient. The actual societal utility comes from not just providing housing, but lifting people up. So for instance, SRO housing that combines residences and job placement/training, medical services, counseling, etc. can help tens of thousands of folks who will move through a program over 99 years. Land-banking and selling some property after it appreciates can lead to more money available for more cheap land acquisition, stretching the available funds. I can come up with numerous other examples and benefits, as could you or Ms Shaw. Overall, we need talk more broadly about what we are getting from the \$55M in the context of all the other programs and all the other societal issues. Sorry for all the "LBJ-School speak". (Dave Sullivan)

*Question will be answered at the March 21, 2008 meeting.*

## **Prop 6**

8. New Central Library: How is this project impacted by the new Green Development RFQ? Is this project on schedule? (Dave Anderson)

*Based on City Council Resolution 20080214-054, the new central library will be a stand alone building on the location of the Austin Energy South Substation on Cesar Chavez. It is not a part of the RFP for the redevelopment of the Green Water Treatment Plant.*

*A schedule for this project cannot be established accurately until City Council approves of the Design Team Selection process. City Council will be briefed on this process on March 20, 2008, and is scheduled to take action on it on March 27, 2008. On March 6, 2008, City Council approved Construction Manager at Risk as the project delivery method for the project.*

## **Prop 7**

9. Animal Shelter: Is there any contingency planning for the lawsuit? Is the project on schedule? (Dave Anderson)

*At this time, the lawsuit has not impacted the project schedule and the feasibility study phase of the project is proceeding as planned. We anticipate that the results of the lawsuit will be known by May of 2008, which is also when the feasibility study is scheduled to be completed. At that time, we will have a better*

*understanding of the impact of the lawsuit on the project schedule and we can evaluate alternatives for moving the project forward.*

10. Is the Municipal Court/Police Substation on schedule? (Dave Anderson)

*The project is on schedule. Real estate acquisition is proceeding on schedule for an act of sale in Oct/Nov. 2008. The Design Criteria Manual will be completed in mid-April in time to start the 6 month RFQ process for a Design/Builder selection, award and execution by Oct/Nov 2008.*

11. Is the Joint Public Safety Training Facility on schedule? (Dave Anderson)

*Response - The project is on schedule. We are scheduled for Council action for the selection of the Design-Build team on March 20. We anticipate that contract negotiations will be initiated immediately and completed by mid to late May. Once the team is under contract we will begin by reviewing the building program and initiate the design phase by late May.*

12. Is the EMS Station on Schedule? (Dave Anderson)

*Response - Design of the EMS#33 Station is underway but is a few weeks behind schedule due to some challenges that developed during the consultant procurement process. We plan to compress design work in order to bid as close as possible to the scheduled date this fall and start construction early in 2009. The severely restricted site presents design challenges and will affect constructability, cost and sequencing. Special attention will be paid to construction sequencing in order to maintain temporary access and parking for the existing Fire Station. Barring any major delays, construction should be complete in spring of 2010.*