

I-35 Capital Express Central Project
Section 106 Mitigation Meeting Notes
December 13, 2022
2:00-3:00pm
Microsoft Teams

Attendees:

Rebekah Dobrasko – Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) Environmental Affairs Division (ENV)
Michelle Marx – City of Austin (COA) Corridor Program Office/Our Future 35
Sarah Marshall – COA Parks and Recreation Department (PARC)
Kim McKnight – COA PARC
Tommy Abrego – TxDOT Austin District (AUS) Mobility35
Sonya Hernandez – TxDOT AUS
Shirley Nichols – TxDOT AUS
Meghan King – Preservation Austin
Tricia Bruck-Hoyt – TxDOT AUS Mobility35 General Engineering Consultant (GEC)
Pamela Owens – Six Square (joined during meeting)

2:00pm Welcome and Introductions Rebekah Dobrasko, TxDOT

Rebekah led attendee introductions. She welcomed Michelle Marx as a representative of the COA Corridor Program Office as a new Participant in the Section 106 process. Rebekah provided a summary of caps and stitches in relation to the CapEx Central project.

2:05pm Overview of Mitigation Rebekah Dobrasko

- Selection of Projects
- Budget
- Timeline

Rebekah explained mitigation in the context of historic resources. There are many types of project-related mitigation, but Section 106-related mitigation is focused specifically on the loss of, or effects to, historic properties resulting from the project. Section 106 mitigation is developed in conjunction with consulting parties. There is no set prescription on what is required in terms of specific activities or dollar amount. TxDOT is interested in understanding what consulting party projects, programs, or desires might benefit from mitigation.

We are coming to the end of the timeline now for Section 106 and for the environmental process. TxDOT will develop a plan to continue dialogue through the project, with some commitments. The plan will include some commitments now but will also have a plan for making more decisions and commitments later.

2:15pm General Mitigation Ideas Rebekah Dobrasko

- Elgin-Butler Brick Company (EBBC) Main Office
- Survey research and documentation
- Other ideas

Rebekah reminded the group that she sent ideas out in November that came from ideas from consulting party comments and brainstorming with Justin Kockritz at the Texas Historical Commission (THC). Accessibility of materials is important to consider. TxDOT's mitigation for the Harbor Bridge project in Corpus Christi was developed fully bilingual materials. Another consideration is making mitigation materials accessible for those who are hearing-impaired or vision-impaired.

2:25pm

Organization Needs/Wants/Plans

City of Austin Corridor Program Office
 City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department (PARC)
 City of Austin Historic Preservation Office
 Preservation Austin

Kim asked for clarifications on the geographic boundaries for this project. Rebekah explained that mitigation for this project is limited to CapEx Central only, between US 290 East and US 290 West/SH 71 (Ben White). Kim suggested an overall interpretive plan to craft the stories we want to tell related to I-35 – the good, the bad, the ugly – to tell the story of place. The plan could be an umbrella document that could include multiple partners, formats, exhibit locations, etc. It should be facilitated and community-oriented to gather actual community ideas and story lines on the front end. COA PARC has numerous community partners such as the Trail Conservancy, Oakwood Cemetery advocates, and Waterloo Greenway Conservancy. Kim highlighted the Pease Park Conservancy's interpretive plan as an example (<https://peasepark.org/interpretive-plan>).

Michelle agreed with Kim's comments. Michelle and Kim have been discussing ways to develop a master interpretive plan for I-35 corridor, through combining efforts and collaboration. The master interpretive plan would tie in with placemaking, wayfinding, and interpretation work. The cap-and-stitch program will already have a lot of community input and can provide good coordination opportunities. The caps and stitches can provide places to house installations and allow visitors to interact. Grant proposals have been submitted for cap-and-stitch funding through the federal Reconnecting Communities program, and an interpretive plan was included as part of that submittal.

Michelle said the cap-and-stitch program would be happy to find a way to reuse the EBBC Main Office bricks in a way to tell the story of that building. A stitch located near the area could be a good location for that. Rebekah added that TxDOT plans on a lot of public area at the Airport Boulevard intersection that may be good. She also noted that THC had asked TxDOT to investigate possible relocation of the EBBC Main Office building.

Kim asked about the possibility of having implementation funding as mitigation to carry out the recommendations of the overall interpretive plan. Other mitigation ideas could include static signage, apps, or temporary placemaking during construction.

Rebekah discussed other mitigation opportunities that TxDOT is considering. She said that Mead & Hunt has prepared a lot of information and one goal is to think of way to incorporate that into mitigation so the information is not lost on a shelf in technical reports. TxDOT could partner with COA

in more survey and designation work such as developing historic landmark applications, updating National Register nominations, or conducting surveys. TxDOT would not submit applications or nominations but could provide to COA or the community to do so. Specific locations could include the survey of the Summit/Woodland area, East Cesar Chavez landmark application, 6th Street Historic district update if feasible politically, and/or boundary extensions for National Register-listed Willow Spence or Swede Hill historic districts. Another idea is to expand existing historic walking/driving tours. Kim agreed updating surveys for neighborhoods close to I-35 would be crucial, especially those that are most vulnerable to development.

Meghan said a possibility would be a Mexican American heritage tour. Preservation Austin has a lot of information already gathered from interns' work including oral histories, that is housed at the Austin History Center. Preservation Austin would also support updating nominations and conducting new surveys. For the East Cesar Chavez area, some business owners have taken an interest in getting a historic district designation. Preservation Austin's board member Miriam Conner is involved with that and could be a good resource to get more information on how to get involved. Preservation Austin doesn't have the resources to lead the placemaking efforts but can support and help in any way.

Kim and Meghan both recommended investigating the CIA equity-based preservation plan to find possible opportunities for intersecting goals. Phase I of the plan was a small Certified Local Government grant. Phase II will involve more implementation and toolkits. The community engagement phase won't start until spring 2023 so there is some time to coordinate. Cara Bertron is now with the COA anti-displacement office and is the person to contact regarding the equity plan. Kim will forward links to the plan to the chat group.

Pamela Owens joined the call and provided a summary of Six Square's activities that might tie into mitigation. The "What Once Was" program is interpreting the history of what happened on the east side in a way that builds bridges for moving forward. Six Square and other organizations are focusing on "course correction" of misinformation and inaccurate information on what is happening around growth. They have also been working to clarify the differences between National Register and local landmarks for the community. Pamela felt Six Square's role can be to help build trust and to center and lift up the voices of the community. For this effort, the group should always keep in mind and check in about intentions vs. impacts – good intentions can have unintended impacts.

2:57pm

Next Steps

Rebekah Dobrasko

Rebekah told the group that Mead & Hunt is taking notes during the meeting and will send out minutes/notes. Rebekah will also follow up with Bob Ward/Travis County Historical Commission, contact Cara Bertron, and look at the Pease Park interpretive plan.

TxDOT is still collecting input and ideas and will be doing more research on some of the ideas. TxDOT is researching feasibility of THC request to investigate moving EBBC Main Office, Haster House, and Roberts House.

The public hearing for the project will be held in February 2023. Consulting parties will be notified with more information. At the public hearing and during the comment period for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), TxDOT will solicit additional input for mitigation ideas from the public as well as from stakeholders. Through winter 2022/2023, TxDOT will continue to work

through how to implement mitigation and will continue to gather information on potential impacts, such as noise and vibration, to historic properties

The DEIS will be the next big step in the process. Consulting parties will have an opportunity to review the DEIS. The DEIS will announce the preferred alternative and its potential impacts on environmental subject areas. TxDOT will then work with consulting parties to finalize the mitigation plan and Programmatic Agreement (PA). The PA will spell out that TxDOT is going to create a plan and may include who will be involved and how it will be implemented. The PA will also include measures to minimize impacts during construction. The last step in the formal environmental process will be the Final EIS and Record of Decision which will include environmental commitments.

The next step for TxDOT relating to historic properties is to develop a mitigation plan and send out to consulting parties to get thoughts and input. Michelle asked if consulting parties would be reviewing the mitigation plan before the DEIS. Rebekah replied that the mitigation plan review would be towards the end of the DEIS review period or just after the DEIS review period so that the mitigation plan could reflect any public input.

Anticipated Timeline:

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| Winter 2022/2023: | TxDOT to publish the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for review and hold a Public Hearing. Part of the hearing will involve requesting the public's input and ideas for mitigation. The Draft EIS will identify a Preferred Alternative. |
| Winter 2022/2023: | Continue to solicit mitigation ideas from organizations not in this meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travis County Historical Commission • Six Square • Other project stakeholders |
| Spring 2023: | Finalize mitigation plan and document in programmatic agreement. |
| Summer 2023: | TxDOT to publish the combined Final EIS and Record of Decision. This will include all mitigation commitments from TxDOT |