



# 2017 Bryan District Active Transportation Hearing Summary Report

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April 19, 2017

## Bryan City Hall Council Chambers

Maury Jacob, Bryan Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator  
Benjamin Miller, LA Bryan District

## Notices

Public Hearing notices were purchased in two newspapers; *The Eagle* and the *SHSU Houstonian* and ran on April 30, 2015. In addition, on March 26<sup>th</sup> a TxDOT News Release was sent to a wide variety of media throughout the District including Bryan Broadcasting, KBTX, KAGS, KEOS, WTAW, and KSHU. Email notices were also sent out to bicycle advocacy groups, bike shop owners, and related industry groups.



**Texas  
Department  
of Transportation**



# Active Transportation Public Hearing

**5:30 p.m.  
Wednesday  
April 19, 2017**

**City of Bryan Council Chamber  
300 South Texas Avenue  
Bryan, Texas 77803**

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) will hold a public hearing to discuss the planning and development of Active Transportation (bicycle and pedestrian facilities) in the ten county Bryan District. The hearing will include presentations by Texas A&M University, the City of College Station, the City of Bryan, and the Bryan/College Station Metropolitan Planning Organization.

The public is invited to attend this hearing. Learn about recent local developments and upcoming projects. There will be ample opportunity for public comment at the hearing. Following the hearing, presentations will be posted online at: <http://www.txdot.gov/inside-txdot/get-involved/about/hearings-meetings/bryan/032117.html>

Written comments may also be submitted in writing to Mr. Maurice Jacob, L.A., Bryan District Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator, TxDOT, 2591 North Earl Rudder Freeway, Bryan, Texas 77803-519 or e-mail comments to: [maury.jacob@txdot.gov](mailto:maury.jacob@txdot.gov). Comments received before June 1, 2017 will become part of the Hearing record.

Any person requiring special accommodations to attend the hearing is encouraged to contact our office at (979) 778-2165. Si desea información en Español, puede llamar al (979) 778-9615.

## *Attendance*

*Seven citizen attendees were listed on the sign-in sheet, four from College Station, two from Bryan, including three citizens with Texas A&M University email addresses. Also included was one local bike shop owner. There were others that did not sign in. The grand total citizen attendance count was ten.*

*Presenters included TxDOT, BCS/MPO, City of Bryan, City of College Station, TAMU Transportation Services, and a special presentation by a group of Aggie students representing ASLA and Land Planning Student Groups.*

*A head count of presenters and staff during the event showed fourteen total in attendance including four representatives from TxDOT.*

## *Open House*

*An informal open house began the event. TxDOT, City of Bryan, City of College Station, and the MPO manned tables with various projects and programs highlighted. Public comments and questions were accepted on any active transportation or ADA topic. The TxDOT table had a plan of the FM 60 DDI project. City of Bryan included information and sign sheets for four TASA project proposals. City of College Station displayed the program for their Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. BCSMPO highlighted information on University Drive Corridor Study. In addition to the above hearing partners, TTI had a table with materials and comment cards for the Wellborn Bush Grade Separation Study.*

## *Hearing*

*The hearing was conducted and formal presentations made by;*

- ***Maury Jacob**, RLA Bryan District Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator for TxDOT*
- ***Dan Rudge**, P.E. Executive Director of Bryan/College Station Metropolitan Planning Organization*

- *Maury Jacob for Ron Steedly, Alternative Transportation Coordinator for TAMU Transportation Services (Ron was absent)*
- *Venessa Garza, College Station Greenways Program Manager*
- *Paul Kaspar, P.E. City of Bryan City Engineer*
- *Phillip Hammond, ASLA student chapter President*

*Formal presentations were followed by a public comment period. Formal presentations were made by:*

- *Don R. Gilman*
- *Barrett Ochoa*
- *Chris Malloy*
- *Robert Rose*

*Additional open house time discussion by each entity group individually. Attendees were free to observe each entities exhibit to make comments and suggestions for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure improvements.*

*Presentations*

- 1. Maury Jacob, TxDOT- Recap of results of previous bicycle and pedestrian hearings (Refer to 2015 Bicycle and Pedestrian Hearing Summary)**
- 2. Dan Rudge, BCSMPO- MPO Report**
- 3. Maury Jacob, TxDOT -Recent Projects and policy Changes, Upcoming Projects and Opportunities**

TxDOT has made progress on many of the projects and policy work we presented in previous meetings. A lot of the bullets listed in the PowerPoint will be discussed in more detail by the MPO and local entities.

Of particular note is all progress in bicycle facility design guidelines that has been made over just the last few years. As a result we have our first bicycle lanes along University Drive East of Earl Rudder Freeway. These are likely the first of many along with other state of the art projects.

The MPO will provide details on many of the policy initiatives that have taken place. The work of the newly created MPO Active Transportation Advisory Panel has helped define the scope and depth of development over the last few years and many of the projects discussed tonight are a direct result of that effort.

This year we will see the results of TxDOT's Transportation Alternative or TAP Program come to fruition in Huntsville and Bryan including a Shared Use Path along South College Avenue.

One of the most interesting projects just beginning construction is the FM 60 University Drive Diverging Diamond Interchange. This facility will include bicycle and pedestrian facilities that safely and comfortably cross a bridge over FM 2818 Harvey Mitchel Parkway that currently has no room at all for these modes.

While our local partners are busy in Bryan and College Station, TxDOT is working to improve our facilities throughout our ten county district. New and improved sidewalks in downtown Caldwell begin construction this week and a major update to the statewide ADA transition plan will add to phase one of eliminating barriers to many pedestrians by bringing our curb ramps into ADA compliance, but begin connecting them with accessible sidewalks as we move forward. Bryan District is at the forefront of these efforts.

Today our local partners will also present proposals for the newest version of that, the Transportation Alternative Set-Aside or TASA Program.

Public meetings like this one help our disabled community make contact with us.

Efforts to include accessible active transportation facilities are spread throughout the area and on all types of roads. IH 45 in Huntsville will include bicycle and pedestrian facilities on frontage roads and across bridges.

*“Bicyclists and Pedestrians are considered throughout our project development process. TxDOT’s Bryan District works closely with our local partners to reimagine our roadway corridors and best facilitates these Active Transportation travel modes.”*

#### **4. Venessa Garza, City of College Station**

Venessa discussed the 2010 Master Plan and the current update process. The presentation showed a map of projects in Design or under construction throughout College Station. A schematic of the University Drive Pedestrian Improvements Project (Phase II) was also shown. The plan is to create a safer environment for biking and walking with bicycle facilities, wider sidewalks and safer crosswalks.

Also highlighted was a map showing Southside Safety Improvements. Open ditch section on streets highlighted in red would be updated with bike lanes and sidewalks on both sides of Anna, Glade, Timber, Holik and Park Streets.

Lick Creek Park Multiuse path and trails was also shown in map form. This 4 year project is 5 total miles including 3 miles of trails and connects Creek View Elementary and Cypress Grove Intermediate Schools all the way to Lick Creek Park Trailhead. Photographic examples of some of the completed portions were shown.

#### **5. Matt Dawson, City of Bryan- Discussion of TASA Project Proposals**

Matt discussed the five Active Transportation projects under development in Bryan. The first two were 2015 Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) projects.

South College Avenue Phase 1 will be constructed in 2018. FM 158 Safety Lighting is already under construction.

Upcoming projects are planned as 2017 Transportation Alternative Set-Aside program (TASA) projects. SOUTH College Phase 2 could be nominated in May along with a Safe Routes to School project along Earl Rudder Freeway at Sam Rayburn School and an East 29<sup>th</sup> St. shared use path. All five of the above listed projects are detailed in the presentation.

A final slide outlined four future projects in Bryan: A separated shared use path (MPO – FY20) along William J Bryan (FM 158) from SH 6 to Coulter Drive; Buffered Bike Lanes (HSIP – FY17) on Finfeather Road from Groesbeck Street to City Limits; Two Way Cycle Track (Unfunded) along Wellborn Road from

Natalie Street to Tee Drive; Clay Street Extension (COB – FY17), a Bike Lane / shared use path from Wellborn Road to College Main.

**6. Ron Steedly, TAMU Transportation Services- TAMU Transportation Master Plan and the Dutch Crossing**

Maury Jacob stood in for Ron and made a short presentation. The first slides were from the Mobility and Safety portion of the TAMU Master Plan Update showing a focus on bicycle and pedestrian mobility. Another slide showed the new Dutch Junction, an experimental use of separated facilities for motor vehicles, pedestrians and bicycles.

**7. Guest Student Presentation by ASLA and ASP Student Chapters**

The students presented a Video introduced by Phillip Hammond. The video focused on Active Transportation needs of students to get to and between schools and classes in Bryan / College Station including discussions of Transit needs. The presentation concluded with suggestions for focussing at specific locations including George Bush Drive, University Drive, Harvey Mitchel Parkway, and development of an Active Transportation route between Downtown Bryan from TAMU Campus. Transit improvement suggestions included more busses to Rock Prairie Road and loop routes. They also mentioned ride-share facilities for inter-city travel.

The presentation was created by: Phillip Hammond (Team leader), Alaina Parker, Breanna-Lynn Montalvo, Shannon Valkovich, Andie Andreotti, Tarun Kumar Potluri, Pranjal Dixit, Kaveh Forghanparast and Saima Musharraf.

Faculty advisors: Dr. Eric Bardenhagen and Dr. Teresa Qu.

**8. Public Comments**

**8.1 Don Gilman**

We have made good Progress since 1980. Coming to meetings Don has connected the dots on how tax payer money is being put to use in the College Station and Bryan area Don looks forwards to 10 years from now. Don asked we take the time to raise the general question on the topic of the recreational cyclist. How can we improve the interaction between those cyclist and vehicles? What we can do to improve the safety of everyone involved. Don suggested designated cycling routes that can be addressed with enhancements such as smoother shoulder pavement and greater

care and standards for placing rumble strips between outer traffic lane and shoulder. He stressed low cost ways to help the bicycle/motor vehicle interaction.

## **8.2 Barrett Ochoa**

Barret focussed his comments on bus frequency, pedestrian access to stops, and bus shelters especially. He also comments on a perceived separation of agencies- the “Not my job” syndrome. Requests at the state level for better sidewalk service get the response that it is the cities job. The separations of “it’s not my job” will lead to us never fixing the problem. Work together! Connect facilities: Walk-Bike-Bus. So many buses running must mean that we have a lot of pedestrians to account for therefore we need better pedestrian facilities.

Paint on the road provides a perception for facility users. Barrett wants more green paint to make sure cars keep out of the cyclist areas.

## **8.3 Chris Malloy**

Chris is in the Courteous Mass group of cyclist that go on organized bike rides through campus, Northgate, and downtown Bryan to help promote bicycle safety, to help spread the idea for bicyclist to share the road with transportation modes already in place. He wants to educate cyclist and drivers on how to interact with each other.

Chris believes there is still a lot that has to be done to improve facilities for bicycle and pedestrian modes. One concern is places in Bryan that have discontinuous walkways for pedestrians. Such areas that need infrastructure badly are Tarrow Street, South College (Hensel Park area), and Finfeather. Trying to squeeze around in certain areas, specifically Highway 6, it is hard to go east to west. It is easier to ride bicycles and walk north to south than go east to west in College Station. Chris proposes more protected crossing from east to west across major thoroughfares like Texas Ave, South College, and Wellborn Road.

We need more infrastructures since cars don’t know how to interact with cyclist. Laws that define passing clearances between motor vehicles and bicycles and pedestrians should be considered. 21 states have a “3 foot passing law” that helps reduce accidents. Texas is in a grey area with no passing laws in regards to drivers and pedestrians. Chris wants to advocate on how to educate the public to drive more safety.

## **8.4 Robert Rose**

Robert Rose, owner of Cycles Etc., commented about the long standing problem for local bike commuters with lack of adequate bike detection at signalized intersections. He talked about telephone conversations with planners at fabled bike cities such as Davis, California asking which cameras they were using for bicycle

detection that worked well and suggested Bryan and College Station follow up and improve our bicycle detection and add it to more signals in the future.

## **9. Comment Cards and Email Comments**

### **9.1 Anonymous**

As shown in the presentations & information shown at the tables in the Lobby, several projects are in the works to address concern areas for bicycle and pedestrians. It is important to get input on these projects so that they are designed to meet the needs and concerns. Example: Northgate, George Bush-Wellborn, South College projects on the MPO list,...) FM 2818.

### **9.2 Douglas Shaw (by Emails)**

Thanks Maury,

I meant to ask that night, is it the view of some in the community that bikers should share sidewalks with pedestrians? If so, I wanted to comment on that.

Sharing the sidewalk is better than having no sidewalk and no bike lane, but it creates a dangerous situation quite often. When cyclists are on the sidewalk they are out of the field of vision of motorists who might be turning into them. And cyclists often become careless and think they are immune from cars turning into them.

Adding to those issues are incidents between pedestrians and cyclists. Boulder, CO has some of the nation's finest bike paths, but unfortunately it seems clear that each group feels they have the right of way, and cyclists have been known to hit pedestrians and injure them. That's probably more likely in a bike path situation than a sidewalk because of greater speeds of the cyclists, but it nevertheless can happen in shared sidewalks too.

As I say, the first point holds — better to have a sidewalk than nothing. But perhaps some carefully placed signs as reminders will help. In the long run the bike lane is the better option.

Best, Douglass

Dear Mr. Jacob:

I am writing to you to provide some comments. I am an avid cyclist, and bike both for fun/recreation, and to get to work and back. In the 12 years I have lived in College Station/Bryan, I have only driven to work 3 or 4 times. I am also a professor and have published in the leading journals in transportation economics and risk analysis.

I believe the area here has the potential to be truly excellent for biking. The country roads surrounding the city provide interesting and pleasant biking. There remains a

large degree of mortality and injury risk that bikers face because so few roads have bike lanes, or even wide shoulders that could be used by bikers.

Unfortunately, one of my long-standing bike routes (in the area south and west of town) has gotten more and more congested with automobile traffic, as there has been extensive housing developments and no road improvements to speak of. I have begun to explore areas east of town, but getting through the city safely to get to those routes is quite dangerous. An exception is the good shoulder on University, east of route 6. This is exactly what is needed.

College Station/Bryan is growing rapidly and it is already obvious that transportation accidents are on the rise because of increased congestion and little investment in infrastructure. It is only a matter of time before a significant number of cyclists are killed each year, or before bikers are forced to discontinue commuting to work, out of concern for this situation.

Regards.

W. D. Shaw

### **9.3 Rajesh Miranda**

Dear Maury, I appreciate all of the planning the you are doing to promote walking and bicycling in Bryan. To give you a little bit of my background, I started being a commuter bicyclist approximately 14 years ago, when I suddenly realized I was clinically obese and had a serious conversation with my doctor about my future health. I decided that by putting physical activity between myself and work (bicycling ~7 miles each way), I could turn things around. 14 years later, things have changed for the better and I have come to believe that people need to include activity as part of their daily life to promote health. We cannot simply buy gym memberships (as I did) and think that will change things.

Anyway, a little about my experience. I bicycle now both during the day and at night time. I have discovered that I'm better off behaving at all times like a car. My experience with bicycle paths in Bryan/College Station has not been good. Debris (anything from car parts to half-live snakes) accumulate near the edges of the road where bicycle paths are often located. Cars and trucks often block the bike paths. Paths often end when you need them the most, at intersections. At 'T' intersections, cars often pull up beyond the stop sign, into a bicycle path before stopping. All of these mean that a cyclist has to re-negotiate with cars to enter the road.

The bicyclist has to swerve into traffic to avoid obstacles. My own solution is to be a car at all times, and to use an entire lane. That allows me to seamlessly change lanes (for example a three lane interchange between Briarcrest and Villa Maria just past

the HEB). I think that it would be better to emphasize shared use of roadways by placing bicycle signs in the road. If you want to implement bicycle pathways, you should make allowances for left turns from a left lane and emphasize the continuity of bike-ways through traffic crossings. I'd be happy to share more details of my experience with riding in this community if you like.

All the best

Rajesh

Rajesh C. Miranda, PhD Professor,

Texas A&M Health Science Ctr., College of Medicine

**9.4 Phillip Hammond, ASLA TAMU Student Chapter (Comment to College Station Table)**

We talked briefly about comparison infrastructure, comfort, and perceptions of students. The major points of improvement should be applied to areas/routes of high use, especially intersections (G. Bush-Wellborn). I'm excited to see a two cycle track, more "green stripe" intersections, and improved conditions for pedestrians and cyclists.

**9.5 Shannon Valkarich, ASLA**

More bike buffers.

Larger sidewalks.