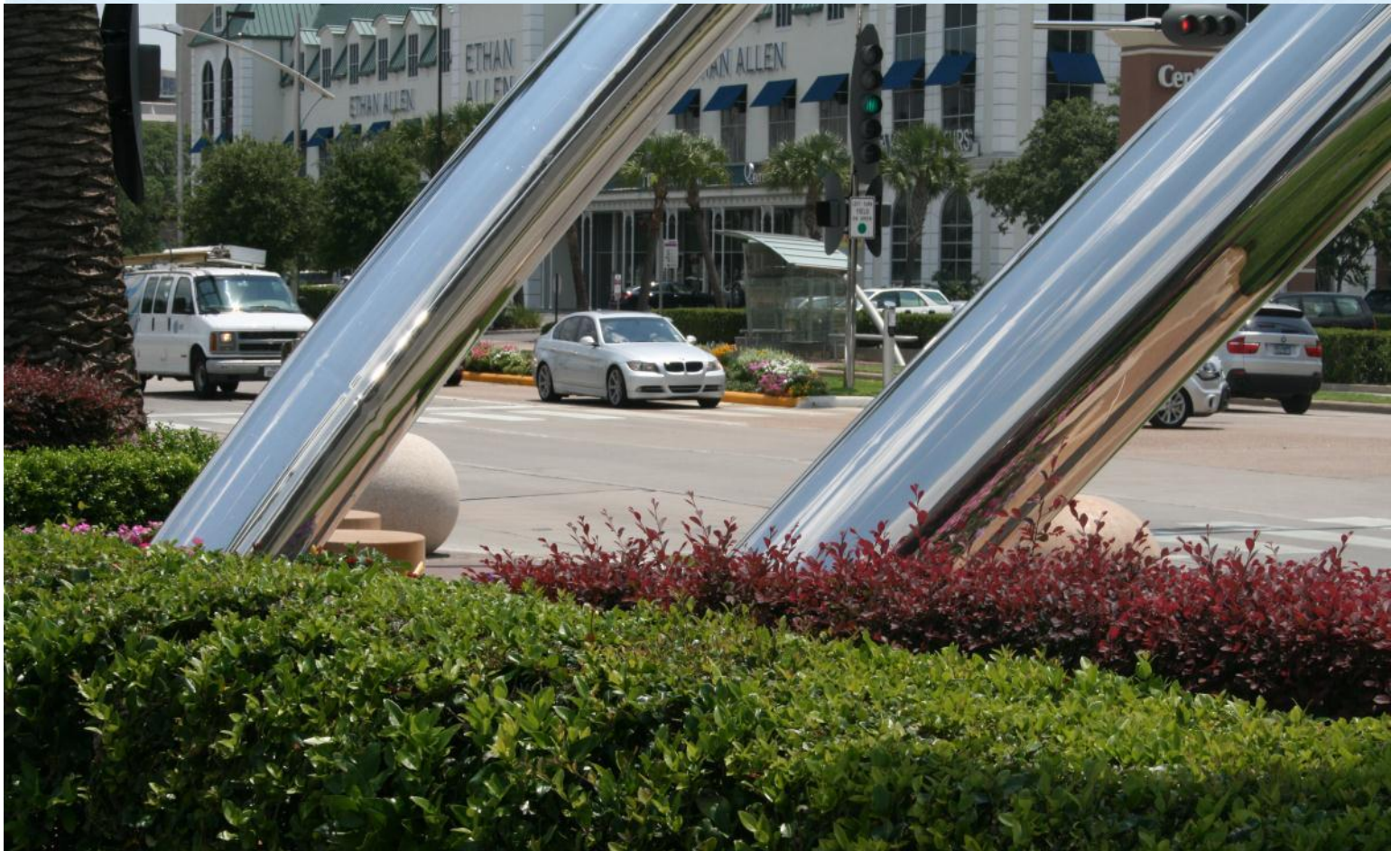

Advanced Planning Report

Fort Bend County Transit Facility

2/11/2015



**Lockwood, Andrews
& Newnam, Inc.**
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Chapter 1- Introduction

Fort Bend County Transit Plan

Fort Bend County, Texas is located southwest of the City of Houston and Harris County and is comprised of 562,560 acres. Fort Bend County is one of the fastest growing counties in the United States and is transitioning from being more rural to being a mix of rural and urban development. It is recognized as a county with a strong economic base, experiencing significant growth in the residential, commercial, and industrial sectors. An increase in traffic congestion in Fort Bend County has been a result of the extensive growth and development. This growth has created intra-county and inter-county mobility challenges. In an effort to respond to the growing demand for improved mobility and connectivity, Fort Bend County formed the Public Transportation Department in June 2005 to provide residents with safe and efficient public transportation services. Fort Bend County currently provides demand response and commuter routes. In 2014, demand response services are utilizing 19 buses performing 515 trips per day within Fort Bend County. Commuter park and ride services are utilizing 15 buses performing 1,100 trips per day into major business districts in Harris County Texas. Commuter service originates from 3 park and ride lots, 1 in Rosenberg and 2 in Sugar Land. Services operate Monday through Friday excluding county holidays. Buses leave the depots between 4:30 and 8:15 a.m. and return between 3:15 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. Under the New Freedom program Fort Bend County provides ambassador services to compliment bus services for elderly passengers or passengers who need special assistance due to cognitive or physical challenges. Ambassador services include assistance with boarding and alighting vehicles and hand to hand transfers for individuals with cognitive concerns.

Fort Bend County does not provide any bus service directly. Bus operations, including dispatching and maintenance are provided by a contracted private sector provider. The service contractor employs drivers, route supervisors, dispatchers, and mechanics. Ambassador services are also contracted to the private sector. This service provider provides the ambassadors and related supervision services. County staff provide reservation, scheduling and administrative activities.

Transportation related activities are performed from 4 locations in Sugar Land, Texas. Reservations, scheduling, and administrative staff are housed at 12550 Emily Court (Administrative Facility). The parking lot at this location is used in the evening for overflow bus parking and during the day for overflow employee parking. The building is a County owned office building also housing the County's Tax Office and Juvenile Courts. Reservations and scheduling staff are located on one side of the building while administrative staff are on the other.

Dispatchers and Drivers are located at a second facility on Eldridge Road (Operations Facility). This building is also owned by the County and serves as the primary depot for transit operations. The majority of the revenue fleet (62 buses) is stored at this location and approximately 75 people report to this facility on a daily basis. Ambassadors utilize this facility as well and on any given day there are at least 8 employees going in and out of the facility for these services.

Vehicle maintenance is performed at a leased site also on Eldridge Road (Maintenance Facility). The leased space has 2 bays and four staff are permanently assigned to this facility. The majority of bus fueling is done at a County owned fuel site on Dairy Ashford Road. Buses can use County owned fuel sites in other areas of the County however this rarely occurs because of operational policies prohibiting fueling while passengers are on board. Buses owned by our bus service contractor are fueled at regular retail locations.

Cash fares are counted at the Eldridge Operations Facility while Ticket book sales are done from the Administrative offices.

Existing Executive/Administrative Staff

Currently, the Executive/Administrative/Operating staff located at the Administrative Building totals 17 individuals. Staff members utilize individual offices that have adequate space or cubicles that are located on opposite sides of the building, with other County offices in-between. Access into the transit sections of the building is in or near the main entry. There is limited room for the addition of new staff members and no dedicated space for ITS repairs or storage.

Existing positions in this building include: :

- **Executive Office;**
 - Transit Director;
 - Deputy Director;
 - Director's Assistant;
- **Planning;**
 - Compliance Manager, DBELO;
 - Project Coordinator;
- **Administration/Support;**
 - Receptionist;
- **Finance;**
 - Finance Manager;
 - Budget and Grants Manager
 - Administrative Assistant – Accounts Payable;
 - Administrative Assistant/Accounts Receivable
 - Administrative Assistant – Grants;
- **Operations;**
 - Operations Manager;
 - Operations Assistant;
 - Scheduler;
 - Reservationist (2);
 - Trip Coordinator;
 - Software/Data Specialist (vacant);
- **Temporary Staff;**
 - Two positions that assist as needed on a temporary basis.

Contracted Operations and Maintenance Staff (First Transit)

Currently, the bus service Contractor employs 78 Operations and Maintenance staff. Contract staff related to bus operations are located at 1809 Eldridge Parkway and Maintenance staff are located at 1723 B Eldridge Parkway.

Existing positions for contracted bus operations staff are:

- **60 bus operators;**
- **5 technicians;**
- **2 bus cleaners;**
- **4 dispatchers;**
- **2 trip editors;**
- **1 lead dispatcher;**
- **1 maintenance manager;**
- **1 office manager;**
- **1 assistant general manager; and**
- **1 general manager.**



The cost of the 78 positions described above is built into the hourly rate that is charged to Fort Bend County for each hour of service operated on the street each day.

Contracted Ambassador Services

Ambassadors provide mobility assistance with boarding and alighting vehicles and hand to hand transfers for individuals with cognitive concerns. Currently the ambassador service provider employs 1 supervisor and 8 ambassadors. Because of parking constraints at the Eldridge depot the ambassadors park at the administration facility on Emily Court and buses travel from the Eldridge depot each day to pick up and drop off the ambassadors. The supervisor is officed at the administration facility.

Space Use of Existing Transit Facilities

Currently there are four facilities in use by Fort Bend County Transit. They are used to house the Executive /Administrative staff, Operations and Maintenance Staff and to store revenue and non-revenue vehicles. The four facilities and their locations are:

- **12550 Emily Court** – this facility is used to house the Executive and Administrative staff and the Operations Manager and staff. Supervisors for the contracted Ambassador program are located at this facility while ambassadors report in and out of the Operations Facility on Eldridge. This facility is also used as an overflow facility for the parking of transit buses. The administrative and operations staff are located on opposite sides of the building with other county offices in-between. The Administrative side has a small conference room (accommodates 10 people) and the Operations side has a larger conference room (accommodates approximately 20 people). Approximately 5600 sq ft of space is used in this facility to accommodate all administrative activities, reservations, route scheduling, ambassador

program supervision, and ITS equipment storage and maintenance. As a general rule, on the Administrative side of the building, Executive staff are housed in separate office spaces with administrative assistants sharing a larger common area. There is a small storage room that houses the copy machine and files with the small conference room doubling as the employee lunch area.

- **1809 Eldridge Parkway** – this facility is used to house the bus service contractors. The Site Manager and related staff which includes 60 bus operators, fleet maintenance personnel and ambassador contractor staff report in and out of this location. This facility serves as the depot for bus operations and the majority of the bus fleet is stored here in the evening. The office building is made up of approximately 2530 square feet of office space containing separate areas for supervisors, dispatchers, drivers and fare counting. The building has only 1 single stall men's and 1 single stall women's restroom and a small kitchen area. Vehicle storage is so inadequate that buses parked nose to tail in the evenings take up the entire bus parking area, with no room for expansion. Employee parking is as inadequate as the bus parking with several employees needing to double park vehicles in order to accommodate visitor parking and buses passing through the employee parking area.
- **1723B Eldridge Parkway** – this facility is used to house maintenance and repair operations for the Fort Bend County Transit bus fleet and is a leased space provided by the bus service operator. There is no office space at this site to accommodate a maintenance supervisor and only 2 bays are available for bus repairs.
- **12919 Dairy Ashford Road** – This is a County owned fueling facility located approximately 3 miles from the bus depot on Eldridge road. All County owned buses are fueled at this facility. This site includes other county offices that are secured behind a security fence which is only open between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Due to security policies only one access key is provided to the bus service contractor. After hours fueling requires someone on site to open and close the security gates as buses come in or leave for routes.

The first three facilities described above are currently operating beyond the maximum capacity of their design and considerable time and money must be spent each year to make these facilities "work". Examples of the difficulties associated with operating a transit operation between four facilities are:

- Considerable time and money are consumed each year transferring buses between each of the four facilities. For example, buses that cannot be stored at the Eldridge facilities must be driven to the Emily road office to be stored in their parking lot. If all of the vehicles needed to operate bus service were stored in one central secured facility, considerable savings could be realized;
- The costs of fueling vehicles at a location over 2-1/2 miles from the depot are significant. The bus service contract provides payment to the contractor for all service hours. Considerable savings could be realized eliminating travel to and from the fueling station by fueling the vehicles on the same site as the depot. The three County facilities that park revenue vehicles are not designed to provide that service. Entrances, exits and parking lots were designed to accommodate vehicle and not bus movement. These facilities have no extra capacity to park existing or future bus fleets.

The leased maintenance facility was not designed for transit bus repairs. The facility has no built in lift, parts storage or parking lot for employees or buses awaiting repairs. There is no bus wash facility and bus washing is currently done by hand.

Chapter 2- Demand Analysis

Background

Fort Bend County is the fastest growing county in the state of Texas and is one of the fastest growing counties in the nation. Fort Bend County's rapid population and employment growth have contributed to considerable increases in traffic congestion. Major roadways and highways in the urbanized portion of the county currently experience significant congestion during peak periods, resulting in declining transportation mobility and impacts to the air quality. Travel demand continues to outpace the region's ability to add vehicle capacity to the highway system. With the extensive amount of growth, it has become increasingly important to provide alternatives to the use of single-occupancy vehicles. Fort Bend County Public Transportation Department addresses some of the demand for improved mobility with existing and new Park and Ride/commuter service.

Fort Bend County has experienced tremendous growth during the past decade with continued growth projected for the next decade.

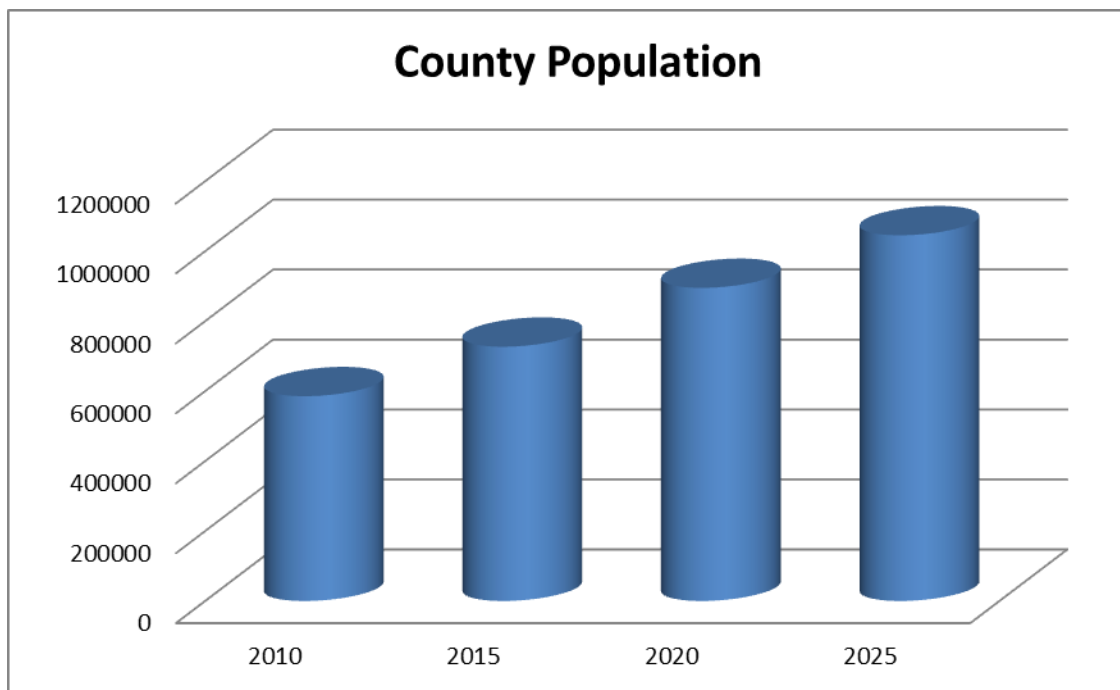


Figure 1 – Projected County Population Growth¹

The employment base in Fort Bend County also increased over the past ten years. The Bureau of Economic Analysis (US Department of Commerce) develops employment estimates for counties and states. The Bureau estimated that total nonfarm employment in Fort Bend County grew from 141,476 full-time and part-time jobs

¹ Texas State Data Center, Texas Population Estimates Program

in 2000 to 227,343 jobs by 2008. This represents an increase of approximately 61 percent over the eight-year period.

The population in Fort Bend County is expected to continue to grow at a stable rate over the next 25 years. Substantial population growth is anticipated through 2035, with Fort Bend County's total population nearly doubling in the 25 years between 2010 and 2035. It is projected that Fort Bend County will continue to attract new residential development and it can be assumed that improvements in area infrastructure and amenities will also grow with the increased development.

Future Transit Service

In January 2011, Fort Bend County Transit completed a **Long Range Transit Plan 2011 – 2035**. In that plan, **Section 4** discusses the County's development and transit development as the basis for future discussion. Various groups within Fort Bend County and the Cities of Sugar Land and Rosenberg and other municipalities either have conducted or are conducting transportation planning studies. Across every study the overall message conveyed by the public and elected officials is that expanding the transit system is important and that an integrated transportation system with multiple options for travel within the County and the region is important to develop.

The vision developed and reported in The County's Long Range Transit Plan contains the following proposed future plans:

- Continuation and expansion of demand-response bus and van service throughout the lower density portions of the County. These services are expected to become feeder routes to future fixed route transit;
- Development of fixed route local service in urban areas;
- The expansion of commuter bus service to major employment centers in Harris County. This will include the expansion of County-owned park and ride facilities;
- The introduction of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) along certain corridors that can accommodate higher speed travel;
- Local circulator service within the municipalities that may or may not intersect with other regional providers;
- Development of Suburban Light Rail; and
- Development of Commuter Rail.
- As the transit system grows, FBCT will need to purchase larger transit vehicles in the range of a 50' transit bus. These buses when purchased will not be able to be serviced at the facilities currently utilized. A larger facility will be needed to service these newer vehicles.

General Findings of the Long-Range Plan

- Fort Bend County's need for transit services is projected to grow over the next 25 years. This growth will be based on several factors including increased population, increased density of jobs, growth in employment centers adjacent to Fort Bend County and a growth in the overall transit need. Increased

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travel times will shorten the timeframe for future development as citizens will demand more transit the longer travel times become;

- The growth in demand for service is expected to be local/intra-county trips and commuter trips to urban centers outside of Fort Bend County.
- The demand for service within the cities of Sugar Land, Stafford, Missouri City, Richmond and Rosenberg will grow as well as demand for new service between these cities.

Although some of the proposals described above are still in discussion stages and firm dates of implementation have not been set, it is important to realize that any sustained level of expansion will require the pre-existence of a Command Center/Bus Operating Facility that will be able to service a near future bus need of approximately 100 revenue vehicles. It is recommended that a bus operating facility be in place that will capture the benefits (including cost savings) of having that type of County facility before any sustained increase in bus operations begins.

Future Staffing Levels

To efficiently and effectively accommodate a future bus fleet of approximately 100 to 125 vehicles, it will be necessary to have the capacity to add to the existing staff in all functional areas and to consolidate all of the activities currently provided in separate locations. It is estimated that a number of positions will need to be added in every department to accommodate growth in the system.



Chapter 3- Site Selection Analysis

Candidate Sites

19 sites were presented as candidates for the new transit facility. These sites contain locations in rural, urban and suburban areas of the county.

- ✚ Pink Taylor Run, Kendleton
- ✚ SE Corner of Bamore and Hwy 59, Rosenberg
- ✚ 2005 Cottonwood School Road, Rosenberg
- ✚ Hartledge Road, Rosenberg
- ✚ Blume RD, Rosenberg
- ✚ Stella Road Curve – South, Rosenberg
- ✚ Bamore Extension – NW, Rosenberg
- ✚ Bamore Extension NE, Rosenberg
- ✚ 14000 University Blvd., Sugar Land
- ✚ 11853 Addicks-Howell Road, Houston
- ✚ 1015 Harlem Road, Richmond
- ✚ SE Corner Owens & 99, Richmond
- ✚ SW Corner Hwy 6 & Hwy 90, Sugar Land
- ✚ McHard Road (2234), East of Ft. Bend Tollway
- ✚ NE Corner Hwy 6, Ft. Bend Tollway,
- ✚ Williams Way Near FBSO
- ✚ George Foundation, 762 East of 2977
- ✚ Hwy 36 Park & Ride Site
- ✚ 2000 Preston, Richmond

The following map shows the approximate locations of these 19 candidate sites.

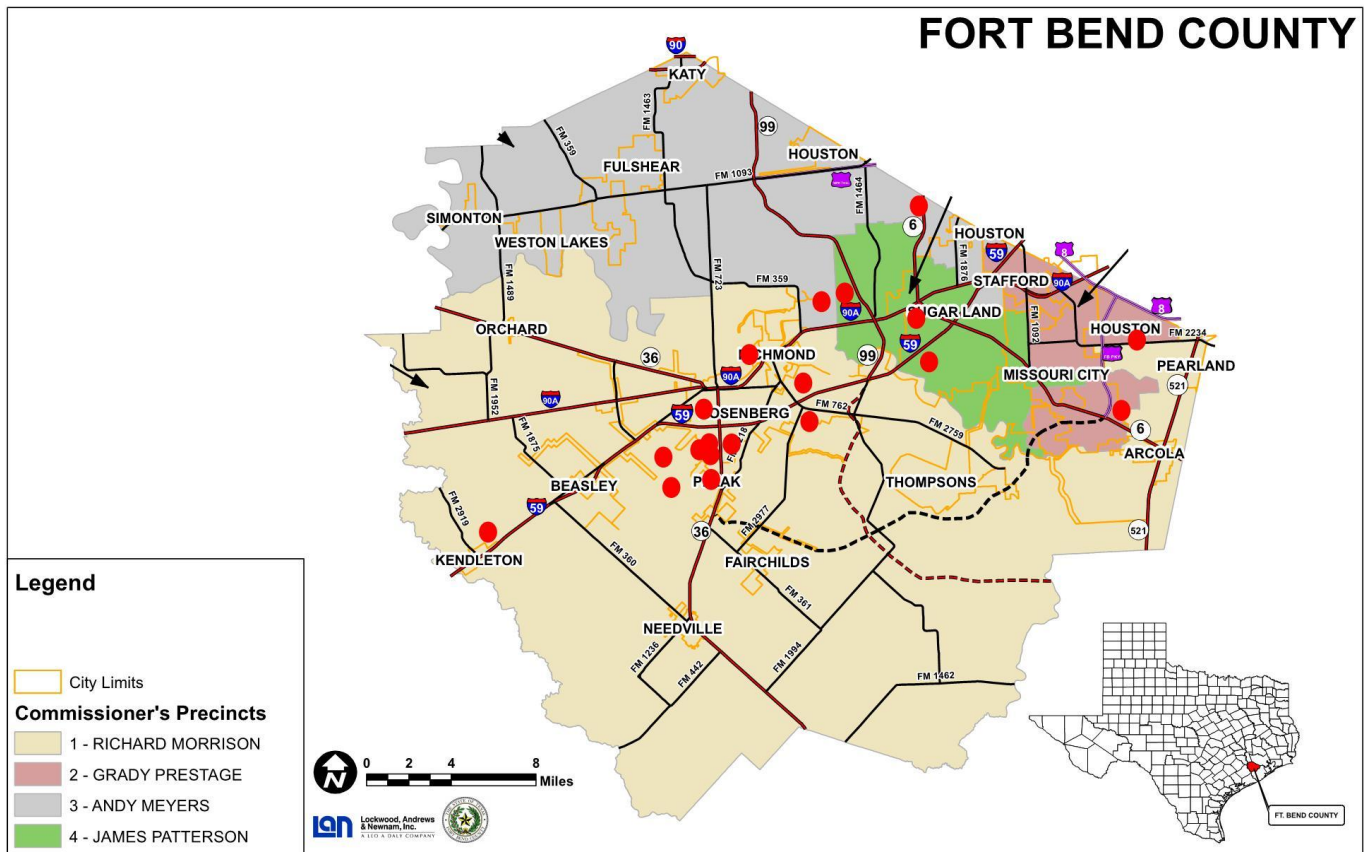


Figure 2 – Candidate Sites

Evaluation Criteria

To evaluate the sites the county assembled a team comprised of:

- Director of Transit
- Transit Operations Manager
- County Engineering
- Facility Consultant
- County Judges Office
- Precinct Representatives
- General Public Representative
- Passenger Representative
- Elderly/Disabled Representative

An initial focus group consisting of the director, operations manager, engineering and the consultant defined the criteria for evaluation and generated a first pass scoring sheet for all of the sites listed above. The sites were evaluated against a list of criteria and scored to provide suitable candidates for further investigation. The criteria used for each site are listed below. Once the initial evaluation was completed, the county assembled the entire team to receive the focus groups findings and to review and comment on the evaluations and to provide any new information. At the conclusion of this activity the county had identified the highest scoring four (4) sites. These four sites are evaluated in this report.

- **Physical**
 - Size – 20 Acres +/- 5%
 - Shape – Rectangular, 3:1 Aspect Ratio
 - Cost - \$/Acre
 - Availability – Ease of acquisition, on the market
 - Adjacent Property Available – Potential for future expansion
 - Topography/Terrain - Cost to mitigate hills, ponds & other features
 - Zoning – Appropriately zoned
- **Amenities**
 - Utilities – Proximity of required utilities
 - Environmental Justice
 - Rural/Urban/Other – Good Neighbors, Employee Commute, etc.
- **Environmental**
 - Hazardous Materials
 - Wetlands/Neighborhood/Other
 - Native Trees
- **Operations**
 - Location - Proximity to Thoroughfare
 - Operational Cost Impact

- **Other**
 - Public/Private Partnership (PPP) Potential
 - Marketing Potential
 - Additional Costs for Split Site

Evaluation Findings & Rankings

Nominated Sites

The sites scored from 71 to 130 points, out of a possible 150, with the average being 103. The median score was 115. The seven sites scoring 120 points or more were presented to the entire team for vetting and discussion. Figure 2 shows the scores for all sites.

2000 Preston Richmond, Texas	71.00
Hwy 36 Park & Ride	121.00
George Foundation 762 East of 2977	116.00
NE Corner Hwy 6, Ft. Bend Tollway,	118.13
Michard Road (2234), East of Ft. Bend Tollway	97.91
SW Corner Hwy 6 & Hwy 90 Sugar Land, TX	125.37
SE Corner Owens & 99 Richmond?	112.08
1015 Harlem Road Richmond, Texas	110.90
14000 University Blvd. Sugar Land, Texas	127.00
Bamore Extension NW Rosenberg, TX 77471	123.00
Bamore Extension - NE Rosenberg, TX 77471	130.00
Strella Road Curve - South Rosenberg, TX 77471	120.00
Blume RD, Rosenberg, TX 77471	110.00
Hartlecke Road, Rosenberg, Texas	115.18
2005 Cottonwood School Road, Rosenberg, Texas 77471	115.35
SE Corner, Bamore & 59, Rosenberg, Texas	122.62
Pink Taylor Run, Kendleton, Texas 77451	92.90

Figure 3 – Vetted Scoring; Top 4 Sites Highlighted

The top four scoring sites are discussed in more detail as follows.

Site 1- Bamore Extension NE, Rosenberg (Fairgrounds)

Description of Site

This site is located south of Highway 59 and west of Highway 36 in Rosenberg. The site is part of a rural, 50 acre tract currently owned by the county. Requiring only 20 acres the transit facility could comfortably occupy a portion of the land furthest away from the nearby subdivisions. The site is adjacent a County fuel depot as well as bulk fuel storage.



Figure 4 – Site Plan



Figure 5 – Site Aerial Image

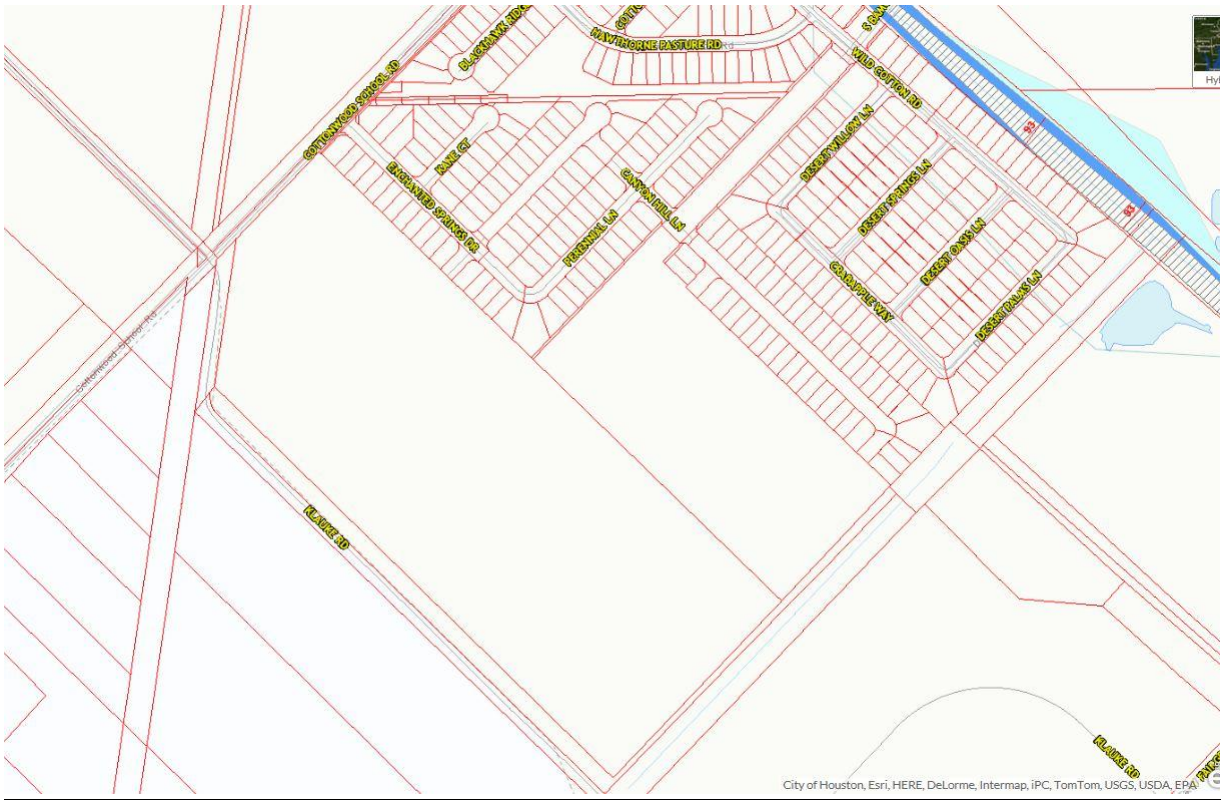
Observations

The property is currently owned by the county so acquisition and purchasing activities would not be necessary. The current access to the property from I-69 will improve greatly as the Bamore Road extension project completes the expansion of Bamore road to the southwest under I-69. This new connection will provide an additional route to I-69. The I-69 upgrade project will also improve access by adding entrance and exit ramps near the intersection of Cottonwood School Road and highway 59 (I-69). Both of these projects are expected to be completed within the next 5 years.

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Electric utilities exist on the site. A line of poles follows the the drainage ditch on the southwest side of the property. The property resides in Ft. Bend MUD #148 which provides water and sewer through the City of Rosenberg.

The map below shows the site lies outside of any currently defined flood zone. Flood zones are defined as either light blue or dark blue areas depending on the level of flood exposure.



Site 2- 14000 University, Sugar Land (U of H; Admin Only)

Description of Site

The site is located near the intersection of Highway 59 and University Blvd. in Sugar Land. This site is currently home to the University of Houston's Sugar Land campus. The university owns approximately 245 acres at this location. The exact location for the facility has yet to be determined. The caveat for this location is the restriction that this be the administrative arm only. The maintenance facility will be required to be located elsewhere due to zoning and land-use restrictions by both the city of Sugar Land and the University of Houston System.

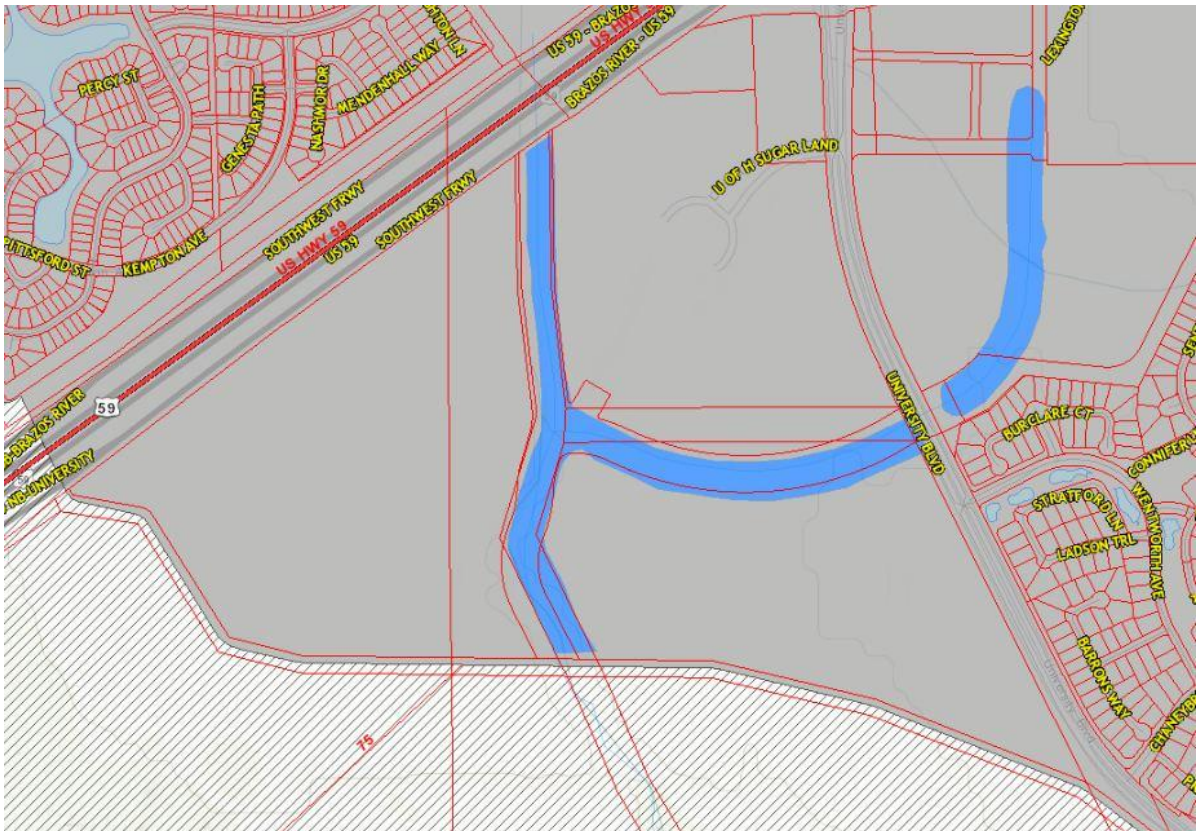


Figure 6 – Site Map

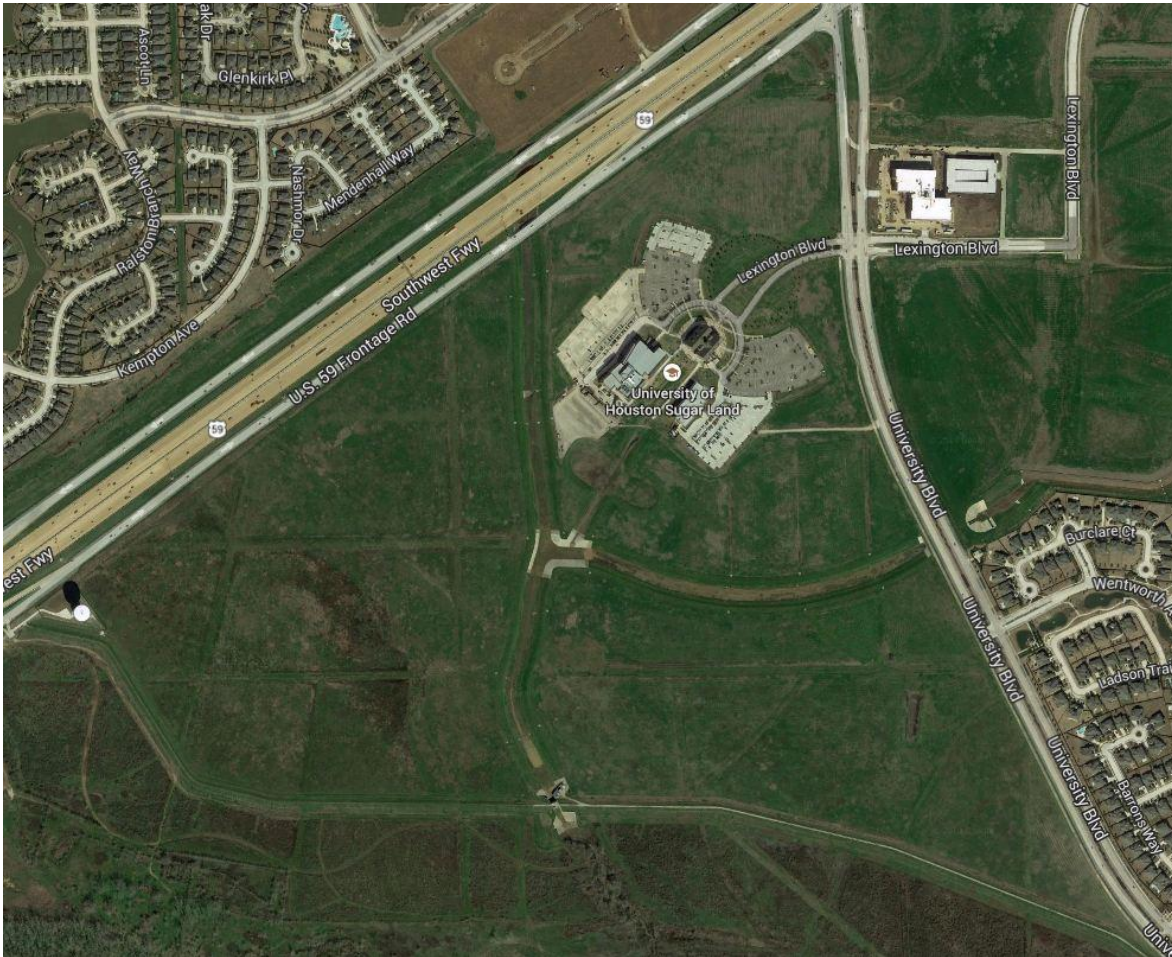


Figure 7 – Site Aerial Image

Observations

Although large, the site is split into three parts by a pair of drainage ditches shown in figure 7. This leaves the parcels likely to be provided for this facility largely undeveloped and in need of infrastructure. Connector roads would be needed to either the I-69 frontage road or University Blvd. TxDOT is currently planning additional entrance and exit ramps from I-69 in this area. Final placement of these ramps would affect the location of the connector roads to maximize efficiency. This site also offers advantages by being located near an existing park and ride lot providing added convenience to passengers. This site, and the partnership with the University of Houston offer some unique opportunities in joint training, internships and college programs in transportation and urban planning.

The site lies in Ft. Bend County MUD #139 serviced by the City of Sugar Land. Electrical utilities are also nearby.

Concerns

The restrictions placed on the use of this site will require the county to construct the maintenance facility elsewhere. This split-site configuration carries additional costs of construction as well as preventing the transit department from being co-located in a single facility.

Flood Plain

The site lies in an area protected by a levee system as shown by the gray shaded area.

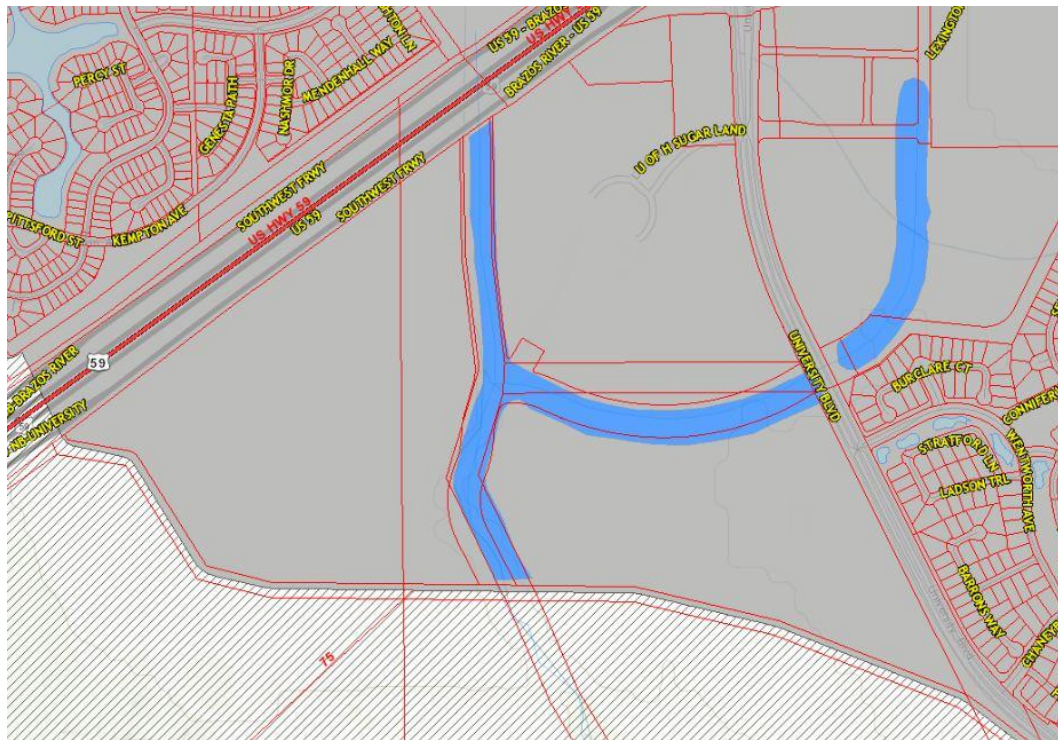


Figure 8 – Flood Plain Map

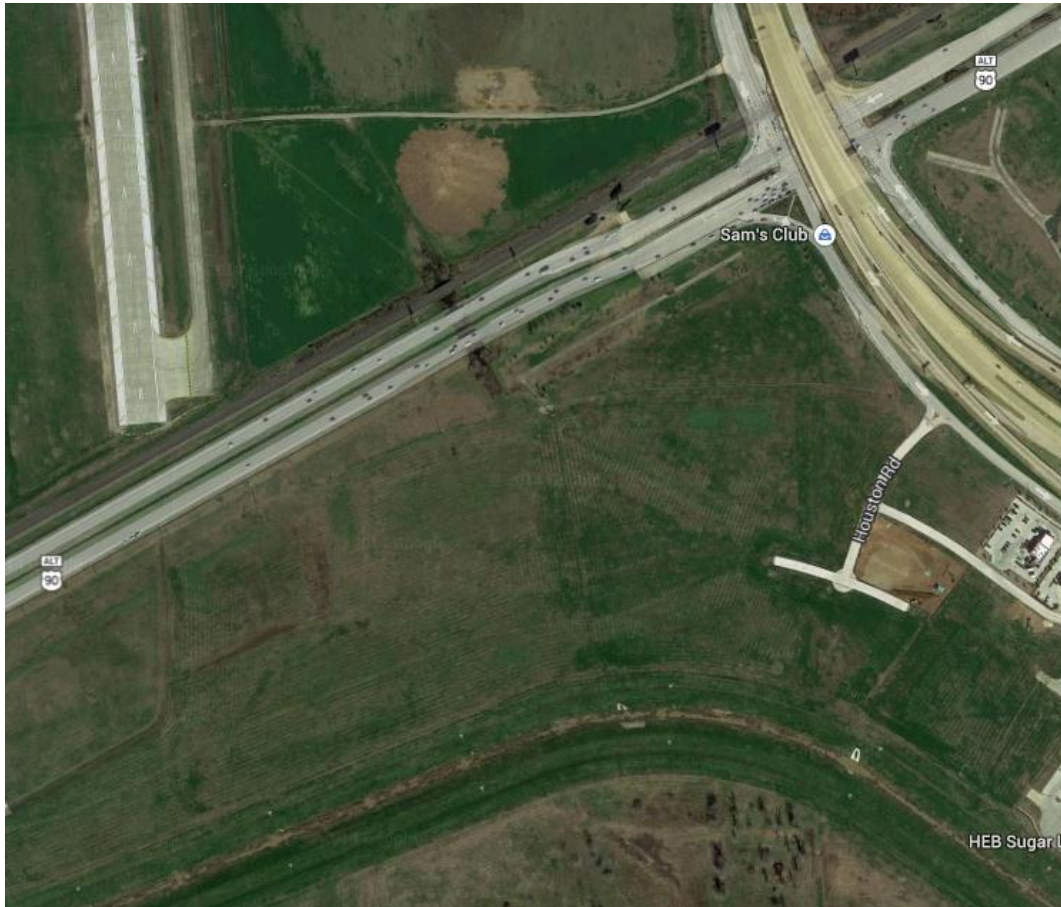


Figure 10 - Site Aerial Image

Observations

The property is currently not up for sale and the current parcel layout may not exactly match the county requirements. The county may have to acquire additional land in the direct avigation area that would be difficult to develop in the future.

The location does offer intermodal opportunities due to the proximity with the Sugar Land Regional airport.

There is currently no direct access from the site to either Hwy 6 or Hwy 90. The county would need to petition TxDOT for direct access, or create surface street infrastructure to access one or both of these thoroughfares.

Electric utilities exist on the site. A line of poles follows the contoured edge adjacent to the state owned parcel. Water and sewer utilities are nearby on both sides currently serving adjacent developed properties. This site is a greenfield site and would require development of a complete installation including a fuel depot.

The map below shows the flood zones in the area, shaded in blue, and the site lies outside of any currently defined flood zone.



Figure 11 - Flood Plain Map

Access

TxDOT defines the minimum distance from the intersection the county would be allowed to create a driveway. The distances available at this site allow for full compliance with these requirements. In fact the driveway could be as much as 1000' away from Hwy 90 on the Hwy 6 frontage road and as much as 3000' away from Hwy 6 on Hwy 90 providing ample room for vehicles to enter and exit the highways.

Concerns

- The property is likely to be expensive to obtain.
- Even with driveways being allowed on both Hwy 90 and Hwy 6, the available directions of travel are limited. In order to go northbound on Hwy 6 a bus will have to travel southbound, approximately 0.4 miles to University Dr. to U-Turn and head north. Buses wishing to travel westbound on Hwy 90 will have similar issues but without the benefit of a U-Turn lane they will be subjected to as many as four traffic lights to make the U-Turn. TxDOT would have to approve a connection between the east and westbound lanes of Hwy 90 to mitigate this condition. The county would likely bear this cost.
- Buses travelling north on Hwy 6 are subject to delays and inherent safety issues from train traffic.



Figure 13 – Site Aerial Image

Observations

The property is currently owned by the county so acquisition and purchase would be trivial. The current access to the property from I-69 will improve greatly as the Bamore Road extension project completes along with the I-69 upgrade project.

Electric utilities exist on the site. A line of poles follows the the drainage ditch on the southwest side of the property. The property resides in Ft. Bend MUD #148 which provides water and sewer through the City of Rosenberg.

Chapter- 4 Site Layout

Three of the four sites allow for a combined operation including an administration building, a maintenance facility and bus parking and servicing areas. Figure 14 shows a typical representation of this type of facility. Site #2 precludes all of this except for the office building and associated employee parking. The remaining facilities would be located on the sister site.

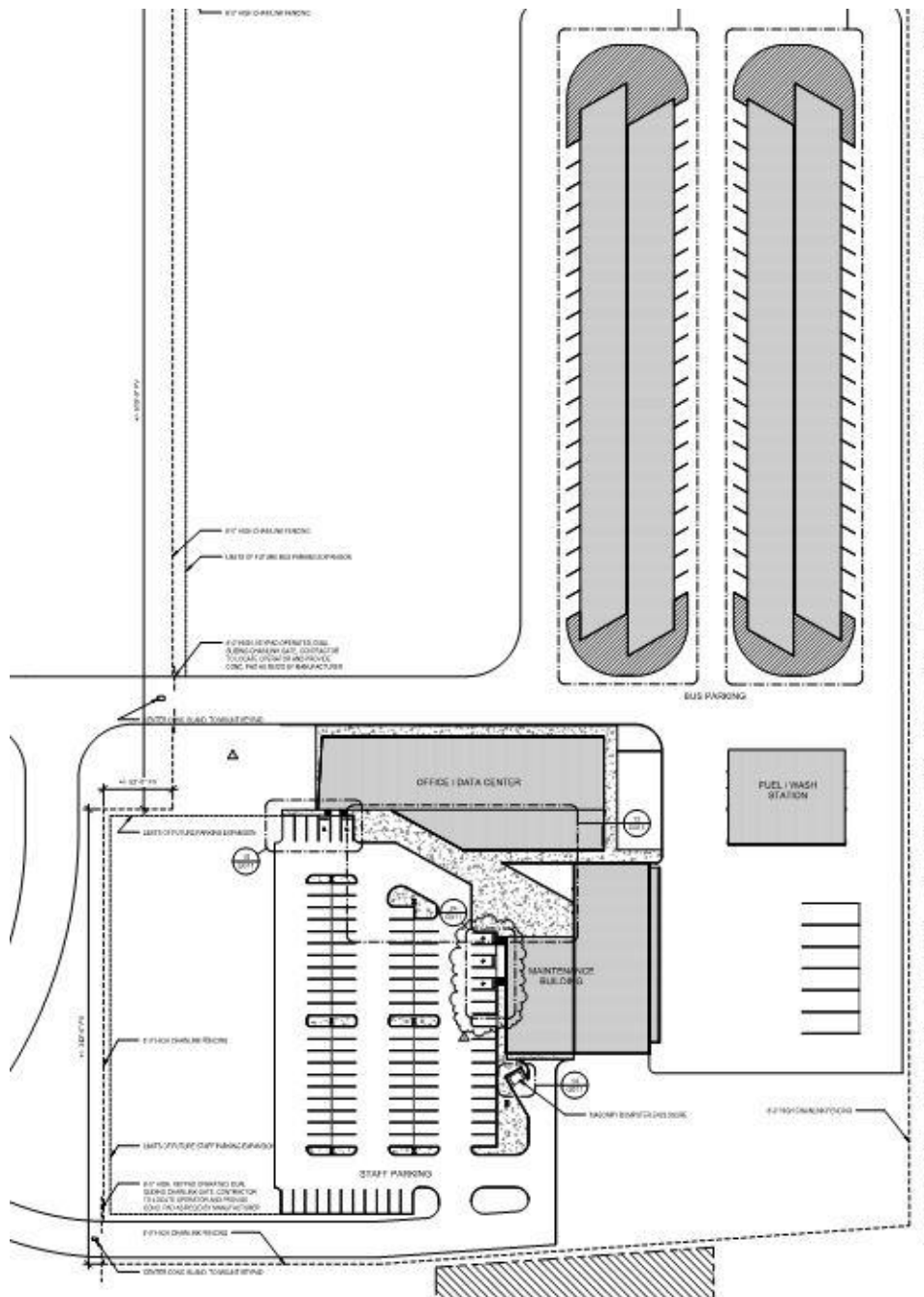


Figure 15 – Typical Site Layout

Chapter 5-Operating Plan

Current Operations

Fort Bend County Transit currently operates from three locations, two on County owned properties and one leased warehouse space being used for vehicle maintenance. There is also a fourth location that our transit vehicles drive to for refueling before returning to the yard at the end of the routes. Transit operations from these multiple locations present several factors that affect daily costs of operations and prevent efficient use of equipment and staff.

Buses are stored and pull out from our County facility located at 1809 Eldridge Rd., Sugar Land. That property is too small to handle parking for the current fleet, drivers and operations staff. Several staff members are dedicated each evening and morning to the task of moving buses around to make room to get all buses on the lot at the end of the day and to make scheduled pullouts each morning. Some drivers are required to pull their bus out and park their personal vehicle in the bus space. Mechanics coming from the shop are frequently required to move other buses to get to the vehicle they need for maintenance work and to relocate other buses when a vehicle is returned to the lot after maintenance work is performed.

The building does not lend itself to efficient use with drivers having to pass thru the Dispatch area to get to managers or to pick up or deliver route paperwork. Temporary walls separating supervisory personnel and other functions challenge productivity, confidentiality and efficiency. The building has two small, single-stall restrooms for a staff of over 60 employees.

Fort Bend County also operates an Ambassador Program to provide assistance for elderly and disabled passengers. Due to the lack of room for employee parking at the Eldridge Rd. location, the ambassador employees park at our Emily Court offices and a bus pulling out from 1809 Eldridge must drive 2 miles to Emily Court at the beginning and end of each route to pick up and drop off the ambassador assigned to the route.

Bus maintenance is currently being performed in two rented warehouse bays located at 1723 Eldridge Rd., Sugar Land. This property is adjacent to the Bus storage facility but requires street travel to get from one location to the other. Buses being returned to the parking lot must be driven a distance of one mile through a residential neighborhood behind the bus facility. Combined with the need to shuffle buses to get in and out of the parking lot additional mechanics time is spent moving buses between the facilities instead of performing repairs

Bus fueling operations occur at a location on Dairy Ashford Rd. , 2.5 miles from where the buses are housed. That location contains other County equipment and is secured behind a closed gate after regular business hours. A transit supervisor is assigned to monitor, open and close the gate for buses to refuel at the end of their route. This adds unnecessary miles and hours to the operations.

Savings For Unified Location of Operations

Placing all transit operations in a unified location would alleviate all the operational issues noted above. Some savings are easy to “quantify”. Others are a bit more subjective.

Removing the need for staff to relocate buses for parking would save approximately 10 employee hours per day. Onsite fueling would remove the need for a supervisor at the fuel site, saving approximately 3 hours per day. Buses parked adjacent to and having direct access to the maintenance bays would save approximately 4 hours per day for maintenance staff.

The current operations agreement pays for contracted service based on “Service Hour” which is gate-to-gate. With fueling being done offsite re-fueling time is part of the billed hours of service. Having on-site fueling would reduce that cost of contracted operations. With 38 routes, estimating 15 minutes per bus to drive to the fuel site and fill up, with 252 annual service days, on-site fueling would save approximately \$120,000 per year in non-revenue Service Hour costs.

Currently 6 routes scheduled for Ambassadors operate an additional 20 minutes per day picking up and dropping off the employee at our Emily Court location. A unified site with sufficient space for these employees would save approximately \$25,000 per year in non-revenue Service Hour costs.

These savings are related to a unified transit operations site versus current operations. These savings can be realized without regard to the transit facility site location. Bringing these portions of the daily operations into one shared location will enhance efficiency, improve overall operations and cut non-revenue related costs.

Implementation Plan/Timeline

The current implementation plan shows facility design completing in the summer of 2015. Construction could potentially start in the late fall with approval of federal funding or a letter of no prejudice, LONP, from FTA. The project is included in the transportation improvement program, TIP, and the environmental recommendation for a categorical exclusion is provided as a supplement to this document. Both of these are required for a LONP approval. With an environmental concurrence and LONP approval the county could consider phasing the construction using bond funds already committed to the projects local match requirement. Phase 1 could address bus storage and maintenance concerns with immediate construction of those facilities. Phase 2 which would include the administrative facilities could then be completed once federal resources were secured.

Chapter 6 – Financial Plan

Operating and Maintenance Costs

Fort Bend County utilizes a Contracted Bus service that is paid a turn key rate by the “Service Hour”. Fort Bend County operates and maintains the Emily Court and Dairy Ashford facilities. The contract service provider is responsible for operating and maintaining the Eldridge Depot and leases the maintenance facility on Eldridge.

The turn-key rate includes routine costs to maintain the county-owned depot. Major structural, utility or other concerns are borne by the county. The county expects to continue this operating model at the new site.

Chapter 7 – Public Outreach

Public Meeting and Comment

In keeping with guidelines suggested by FTA, FHWA and NEPA, the county advertised a meeting to solicit public comment. The advertising period began in early December 2014 and ran through mid-January of 2015. Flyers were distributed to the businesses and residences surrounding the selected site as well as placed on all transit buses. Advertisements in both English and Spanish were published in local newspapers.

A public meeting was held on January 15, 2015 at the Fort Bend County Fairgrounds Site to provide additional public awareness and collect any comments.

The meeting was lightly attended and no comments were received on this project.

Two local papers published follow up articles on the project.

Conclusion

The county recognizes the need to consolidate the transit services into a single, streamlined and efficient operational facility. The site selection analysis allowed the commissioners to select the fairgrounds, site #1, as the preferred site to develop for this facility. The environmental assessment, provided as appendices to this document, also support this location. Moving forward with this project allows the county to achieve key elements of the long range transit plan:

- Continuation and expansion of demand-response bus and van service throughout the lower density portions of the County. These services are expected to become feeder routes to future fixed route transit;
- Development of fixed route local service in urban areas;
- The expansion of commuter bus service to major employment centers in Harris County.
- The introduction of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) along certain corridors that can accommodate higher speed travel;
- Local circulator service within the municipalities that may or may not intersect with other regional providers;
- Support for larger transit vehicles i.e. a 50' transit bus.