

BRUSHY BEND PARK HOA DECLARATION
REGARDING
LOW WATER CROSSING & BRUSHY BEND DRIVE EXTENSION
9/23/2013

The Brushy Bend Park HOA considers the proposed elimination of BBP's Low Water Crossing (BBP's only southern access) and the proposed destruction of the Brushy Bend Drive Cul De Sac as two separate and independent issues.

The BBP neighborhood depends on the LWC daily, wants to keep it, and believes that this crossing can be made safer. We believe that it's possible to leave the LWC in place, as is, if the speed limit on Brushy Creek Road is lowered east of the BC Bridge, thereby providing a safe Sight Distance looking east from the LWC. A lower speed limit has the added benefit of providing a much needed safer environment for the area's Park system. Cars needing access to the park use six separate parking lots along this stretch of BC Rd. This part of the park is also heavily used by small children, youth, and adults (Swimming, Tennis, Strollers, Children playing, Bicycles, Creek Fisherman, Walkers, Joggers, Youth Sports, etc.). Navigating this stretch of BC Rd during the summer months (as well as warm fall, winter, and spring days) with cars parked on both sides of BC Rd from GO Dr through the swimming pool area, is a 20 mph task, at best, so as to avoid hitting someone crossing the road and hidden from view by parked cars. It is a dangerous situation at times. We note that the County's Southwest Regional Park road system uses a 25 mph speed limit because of the area's unpredictable pedestrian traffic and we believe that this stretch of the Brushy Creek Park system certainly has that busy/unpredictable feel to it at times.

We maintain that the proposed destruction of the Brushy Bend Drive Cul De Sac is unnecessary given the construction of the new Brushy Creek North Fire/EMS station. It's our belief that extending BB Dr east to GO makes an already bad speeding problem on Walsh Dr significantly worse, and will completely destroy the Brushy Bend Cul De Sac. We ask that the County direct the developer of Hidden Trails to eliminate ROW for the extension of Oak Ridge Drive past Hidden Ridge Court and instead create a Knuckle at this intersection.

Reasons for eliminating Low Water Crossing:

On State's List of Deficient Bridges
Flooding at lower level storm events
Traffic Sight Distance looking east not optimum
Difficult exit from the bridge onto Brushy Creek Rd

Reasons for constructing a connection to Great Oaks subdivision:

Faster Emergency Service Access to BBP
Replace BBP's southern access across BC
Road System Connectivity

Options:

Do Nothing (LWC Stays, No BBD Extension)
Eliminate LWC (BBP's southern subdivision access)
Eliminate LWC and extend existing BBD to GO
Eliminate LWC and Provide a Connection from BBP to GO at Mid-Walsh Drive

Discussion - Reasons given for eliminating the Low Water Crossing:

LWC is on State's List of Deficient Bridges: LWC is not a critical bridge to the County or BBP.

LWC floods at lower level storm events: LWC is not a critical bridge to the County or BBP. It does require the County's monitoring during flood events for barricade placement and removal.

Traffic Site Distance looking east not optimum: Sight distance to the east is a problem at the current speed limit. The available sight distance looking east is around 200' which according to TXDOT guideline supports a posted speed limit of 30 mph.

Difficult exit from the bridge onto Brushy Creek Rd: Exit ramp is steep and can cause tires to slip.

Discussion - Reasons given for constructing a connection to Great Oaks subdivision:

Faster Emergency Service Access to BBP: Williamson County Precinct 1 is currently leading the effort to construct a new Fire and EMS station north of Brushy Creek on Great Oaks Drive between Behrens & Park. We understand that plans for this station are in the final stages and that in near future both Sam Bass Fire and ESD no.2 EMS will begin operating from this location. This new facility will serve our community via Sam Bass to one of our two northern entrances, Walsh or Mayfield Drives, and therefore makes any new connection to GO non-critical.

Replace BBP's southern access to BC: Completion of the new Fire/EMS station changes the status of our southern entrance from that of a critical emergency access to one of convenience as the northern entrances will become the critical path for fast emergency service to BBP. There is no doubt that having access into the Great Oaks subdivision for residents wanting to use BC Rd would be welcomed but not at the expense of our safety. Here we need to be certain that we're not making already bad problem on Walsh Dr. worse when replacing the LWC access, and we would argue that extending BB Dr creates a dangerous mix of traffic & pedestrian conditions along Walsh Drive, eastern Brushy Bend Drive and probably Mayfield Drive. We maintain that there are opportunities for the replacement of the southern access closer to the mid-point of Walsh Drive that would not encourage "cut through" traffic via the BBP community.

While our southern link was the dominant access point to BBP in the past, this may not be the case today. Now all of life's necessities (Food, Clothing, Healthcare, Gas, etc.), which were once only available to the south of the Creek, are readily available north of the Creek off of FM 1431. Most all of them are more accessible than their southern counterparts, and our guess is that they are now the more preferred destination by many BBP residents. The only remaining exceptions are the RR elementary and high schools which serve part of our community. However school buses which serve BBP also serve Brushy Creek North and Tonkawa Springs and therefore have always accessed BBP from north anyway.

We want to emphasize that our discussion regarding the replacement of the LWC does not mean that this crossing is not used by a significant number of BBP residents nor that we want it removed. In fact the neighborhood depends on this crossing daily, wants to keep it, and maintains that it can be made safer.

Road System Connectivity: In this case road connectivity between other communities and BBP appears to be strictly a Williamson County issue, as BBP residents don't seem to consider it as much as they do fast easy access to the needed services previously discussed. Services which today are numerous and easily accessible without extending BBD thru to Great Oaks. Many of the rural subdivisions located along Brushy Creek in this area have no connectivity between communities. Most like it that way and excepting the need for faster emergency services access has not caused, to my knowledge, any serious problems.

While we recognize the importance road connectivity plays in the planning of a community, an established, mature community such as ours also has to be concerned with their community's character. We believe that providing connectivity through the extension BBD will change the nature of our community. A quiet community where neighbors can be seen walking with other neighbors, riding bicycles, walking dogs and enjoying the occasional horse ride.

Discussion of Options:

Do Nothing (LWC Stays, No BBD Extension): **This is our preferred option.** Under this option it is likely that the speed limit on BC Rd between the BC Bridge and GO Drive would have to be lowered to allow for the limited eastern Sight Distance when going to and from the LWC. This stretch of Brushy Creek is also in very close proximity to the trails and swimming pool activities as well as a higher density of children using the park, and for this reason alone the County may want to consider a significantly lower speed limit than exists now. In the past we've heard mention that the County was considering making this area a "drive through linear park" with a much lower speed limit, and we would agree with that idea. Maybe something akin to a school zone along this stretch of Brushy Creek Road would be appropriate. Pedestrian and bicycle traffic from BBP also use the LWC area to access the Park and Trails and some kind of delineated signaled crossing is needed at this location even today. Under this option the developer of Hidden Trails would eliminate ROW for the extension of Oak Ridge Drive past Hidden Ridge Court and instead create a Knuckle at this intersection.

Eliminate LWC (BBP's southern subdivision access): This is our second preferred option as we would prefer to lose the southern connection entirely rather than risk what we believe will be a significant increase in traffic and along with it speeders, should a faster and less torturous route to BC Rd be constructed. Many BBP families and individuals use the current LWC to access the area park, and we would either want the current LWC to remain in place and modified to limit it to pedestrian and bicycle traffic or want a new park access bridge built to replace it. Under this option the developer of Hidden Trails would eliminate ROW for the extension of Oak Ridge Drive past Hidden Ridge Court and instead create a Knuckle at this intersection.

Eliminate LWC and connect BBD to GO: We take serious issue with this option and resolutely oppose it. Walsh Drive already has a serious speeding problem and this connection will only make it worse still. We have no doubt that with this connection; the Walsh-BBD-GO route will become the best route between Sam Bass and Brushy Creek Road, and earnestly believe that GO traffic will become Walsh traffic overnight. Worse yet is that the destruction of the Brushy Bend Cul De Sac, which currently sees minimal traffic will be instantly transformed from a Cul De Sac serving 6 homes to an area collector street carrying all of the BBP traffic trying to connect with BC Rd plus the traffic that would have otherwise taken GO.

The BBP community is experiencing a renewal of sorts and younger families with children are moving in. Speeders today create a very real safety risk for all residents, not just the people who live on Walsh, but all who like to walk and ride bikes and especially for those families with kids who like to do so. Providing a faster "cut through" to BC Rd will only bring significantly more traffic and with it, increased risk. The short cut created by this option is dangerous and will do irreparable damage to the neighborhood.

We also want to remind the County that Brushy Bend Drive along the creek was under water during the 2010 Flood and that this connection does not altogether solve the southern access flooding problem.

Eliminate LWC and Provide a Connection from BBP to GO at Mid-Walsh Drive: Also not a preferred option, but significantly better than creating a mile and half raceway down Walsh to GO because it creates a more convoluted path to Brushy Creek. Under this option the developer of Hidden Trails would eliminate ROW for the extension of Oak Ridge Drive past Hidden Ridge Court and instead create a Knuckle at this intersection.