

Chapter 5: Interagency Coordination

Process of Coordination

Coordination with the different agency stakeholders both locally and from a regional standpoint is critical to the success of this initiative. These organizations include TxDOT, NCTCOG, and FHWA. Each has played a critical role in developing the initial recommended cross-sections and strategies for the City of McKinney. Moving forward into implementation, these agencies will continue to play a key role as focus moves to final design and reconstruction.

Communication has been vital to making sure all agency stakeholders have been actively involved in the process. Regular outreach and communication kept these stakeholders aware of the issues and opportunities identified throughout the process. Regular communication also created an informed context in which major decisions were considered. Not only did this approach promote communication, but it also created a brainstorming opportunity that led to a comprehensive outcome greater than the sum of the parts.

One tool for increasing communication between the City and the agency stakeholders was regular conference calls with the project team and Project Review Committee. Predominantly comprised of the City of McKinney, TxDOT, and NCTCOG, this committee helped steer the project to achieve the greatest value for the goals set from inception of the Study. These calls enabled dialogue on the progress on the Study as well as key discussion points that arose along the way. Also included was discussion on the issues impacting the recommended cross-sections, the influence of the ITE *Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares* manual on the project, and the foundation of coordination in regards to the schedule of the project.

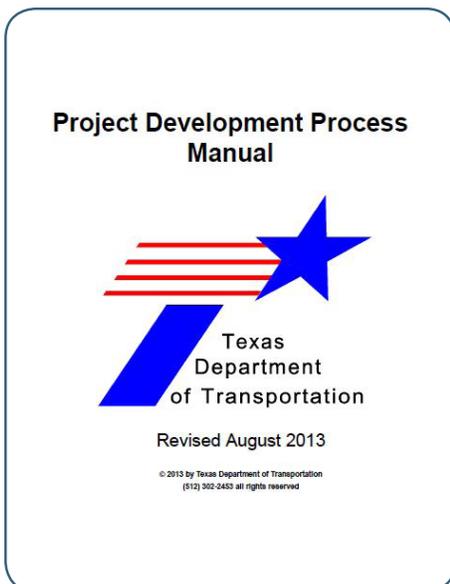
Throughout the process, the project team used these conference calls for informal and formal oversight. This encouraged a thorough understanding of the project paths and goals.

After initial outreach to FHWA, the federal agency opted to utilize the role of TxDOT as a means by which to remain informed about the project. With this in mind, TxDOT has committed to bringing FHWA into the process at the appropriate time moving forward.

Corridor Plan Integration

SH 5 is a complex regional corridor with varied conditions and implications for development potential on surrounding parcels and neighborhoods, as well as for regional traffic. Accordingly, each stakeholder agency holds priorities and interests in the corridor that are intrinsically important, but that also relate to other areas of responsibility as held by their agency. For example, NCTCOG is interested in both sustainable development patterns but also the related regional transportation network. Similarly, TxDOT has an interest in the corridor because of the State and U.S. Roadway System, but has also taken a stronger interest in supporting local economic development, and integration of CSS solutions.

Finally, the City of McKinney has been focused on redevelopment and sustained investment on the east side of the city including the Town Center, thus defining a new vision for the corridor. SH 5 has been a main corridor through the City for many years. The vision for the corridor has recently changed due to the Town Center Initiative (2008) which identified a conceptual cross-section to consider near the city's downtown area. This vision and the initial conceptual cross-section was the genesis for this Corridor Study. The Town Center Initiative created a vision for economic development that included SH 5 as a key mechanism for the growth and development of the City as it grows substantially in population.



TxDOT's Project Development Process Manual includes a context sensitive process

Chapter 5

In the context of those multi-agency interests, while this project sets up SH 5 for future implementation, it should also respect the fact that SH 5 is an on-system facility and will need to be delivered in a manner consistent with TxDOT’s Project Development Process. The ultimate funding source(s) for various sections may drive the exact process, but the project objectives certainly respect, and are consistent with, setting up this corridor to allow for future TxDOT or local implementation.

The TxDOT project development process includes steps that are designed to address and integrate all issues as early and as comprehensively as possible. The following is a key step suggested in the Project Development Process: *“Early coordination with resource and regulatory agencies and other stakeholders is vital in obtaining concerns and opportunities for a proposed project. Sometimes opportunities may be identified to perform joint activities with a project planned by an agency.”*

Memorandum of Understanding

Accordingly, the City worked early to secure full participation by TxDOT and NCTCOG. This early engagement resulted in a Memorandum of Understanding (provided in **Appendix 4**) that establishes agreement among the City, TxDOT and NCTCOG to work together to consider all factors in a context sensitive approach so that all of the respective agencies’ needs are met in an organic way in the details of the engineering and final design. This will provide better shared outcomes; a more complete understanding of the project from the public’s perspective; and a set of conceptual cross-sections that will form the basis of the design strategy during the final design process.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN
THE CITY OF MCKINNEY, TEXAS and THE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL OF THE NORTH CENTRAL TEXAS COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS and TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FOR
STATE HIGHWAY 5 CORRIDOR IN MCKINNEY, TEXAS

I. Purpose & Authority

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to develop a cooperative partnership between the City of McKinney (City), Regional Transportation Council (RTC) of the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG), and Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) in establishing a preferred approach for integrating Context Sensitive Solutions into future design and engineering level schematics for the SH 5 (McDonald Street) Corridor through the City of McKinney, Texas.

This partnership will facilitate the integration of regional transportation needs, local public and private development plans, economic development opportunities, redevelopment considerations, multimodal integration, transit-oriented development, safety improvements and a leveraging of limited public resources into a comprehensive project.

Memorandum of Understanding for SH 5