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MEMORANDUM

Alliance Transportation Group (ATG), City of Victoria, and Victoria MPO staff conducted the first set of key stakeholder interviews from December 14 to December 21, 2020 as part of the Public Involvement Plan (PIP) for the Victoria Thoroughfare Master Plan (TMP). Individual interviews were held with members of Victoria City Council, City Department Leadership, the Victoria MPO Policy Advisory Committee (including TxDOT, the Victoria Airport and other City planning partners), and Victoria County Commissioners’ Court. These one-on-one interviews were open-ended conversations with the goal of addressing each stakeholder’s vision for the plan and identifying important concerns regarding the Victoria thoroughfare network.

During each interview, stakeholders were presented with a map of local thoroughfare information such as roadway classification, congestion, crashes, and proposed alignments from previous TMP efforts. The map helped guide discussion around topics and areas important to the stakeholders. Key takeaways from the stakeholder interviews are described in the following sections.

Key Stakeholders

Table 1 displays all individuals that were contacted and asked to participate in the one-on-one interviews. This set of key stakeholders included elected officials, Victoria MPO Policy Advisory Committee members, and County Commissioners.

Table 1: Stakeholders Contacted

Name	Representative Body
Mayor Rawley McCoy	Victoria City Council
Rafael DeLaGarza	Victoria City Council
Josephine Soliz*	Victoria City Council
Jeff Bauknight	Victoria City Council
Jan Scott*	Victoria City Council
Dr. Andrew Young	Victoria City Council
Mark Loffgren	Victoria City Council
Michael Brzozowski	Victoria MPO Policy Advisory Committee – TxDOT Victoria Area Engineer
Jesus Garza	Victoria MPO Policy Advisory Committee – City Manager
Vinicio “Lenny” Llerena	Victoria MPO Policy Advisory Committee – Victoria Regional Airport
Sean Stibich	Victoria MPO Policy Advisory Committee – Port of Victoria
Ken Gill	Victoria MPO Policy Advisory Committee – Director of Public Works
Paul Reitz	Victoria MPO Policy Advisory Committee – TxDOT Yoakum District Engineer
Judge Ben Zeller	Victoria County Commissioners’ Court
Danny Garcia*	Victoria County Commissioners’ Court
Kevin Janak	Victoria County Commissioners’ Court

Name	Representative Body
Gary Burns	Victoria County Commissioners' Court
Clint Ives*	Victoria County Commissioners' Court
Darryl Lesak	City of Victoria, Director of Environmental Services

* Denotes an Elected Official that is also on the MPO Policy Advisory Committee

Table 2 indicates the stakeholders that were interviewed, when they interviewed, and whether the interview took place in-person or virtually via Zoom. Stakeholders were given the choice of in-person or virtual interviews due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 2: Key Stakeholders Interviewed

Name	Date of Interview	In-Person or Virtual
Clint Ives	12/14/2020	Virtual
Mark Loffgren	12/14/2020	Virtual
Lenny Llerena	12/14/2020	Virtual
Kevin Janak	12/14/2020	Virtual
Paul Reitz	12/14/2020	Virtual
Darryl Lesak	12/15/2020	In-Person
Jeff Bauknight	12/15/2020	In-Person
Jesus Garza	12/15/2020	In-Person
Rawley McCoy	12/15/2020	In-Person
Jan Scott	12/16/2020	Virtual
Gary Burns	12/16/2020	Virtual
Michael Brzozowski	12/21/2020	Virtual

Key Findings

Each stakeholder was asked a similar set of questions to understand their vision for the TMP and to gain insight that will help shape the TMP's recommendations and outcomes. The following questions guided the interviews:

- What are you looking for this plan to accomplish?
- What is the most important outcome you are expecting to result from this study?
- What are some of the unmet transportation needs identified by your district?
- What feedback do you hear from your constituency about the transportation system?

Major Themes

The following key themes were identified in the feedback that was provided by stakeholders concerning Victoria's thoroughfare network and should be considered in the development of the plan's analysis and recommendations. These themes include:

- New Roadway Alignments or Extensions
- Planning for Future Growth
- Future Freight Movement
- North-South Access
- Safety Concerns
- City/Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ)/County Overlap
- Navarro Corridor
- Drainage Issues

- Pedestrian and Bicycle Considerations

New Roadway Alignments or Extensions

The following section details information provided by stakeholders related to new alignments for the Victoria thoroughfare network:

- Airline Rd. continuing to the Victoria Regional Airport
 - Would provide better connectivity to the airport
 - Provide congestion relief on current routes to the airport
- The extension of Guy Grant Rd. to Ben Jordan St.
- Extension of John Stockbauer to Placido Benavides
- Parsons Rd.
 - Capacity expansion and extension to US 77 as a way to divert traffic from Northside Rd.
 - Further extension to create a second loop route to US 59
- Glasgow St./Placido Benavides extension south of Salem Rd.
 - Provides an alternate route to relieve congestion on other roadways
- Extend Northside Rd. south to Salem Rd. and/or Loop 463
- Extend Berkman Dr./Clay Dr. to US 77 Frontage Rd. with access to shopping center
- Extend Bingham Rd. or Larkspur St. to Mallette Dr.
- Continue Loop 463
 - Creates access throughout Victoria
 - Needs continuous 4-lane divided with frontage roads, ramps
 - Expressway classification
- 5 points (i.e., Rio Grande St., North St., Moody St.)
 - Severe congestion due to intersection design
 - Suggest closing access to Moody St.
- Need connection between US 77 and US 87
 - Parsons Rd., Ball Airport Rd., and Oliver Rd. should be considered as potential extension options

Planning for Future Growth

Areas to be conscious of future growth include the following:

- Northeast Victoria surrounding Victoria Mall; Placido Benavides provides access to developable land/design district
- Victoria Regional Airport area; potential industrial/freight development
- Southeast along future I-69 corridor (freight development)
- County Precinct 2 and 4; Mission Valley, west of US 77 are strong residential growth areas in the ETJ
- Parsons Rd., Levi Sloan Rd., Oliver Rd.
- Frontage roads on US 59 once finished are anticipated to attract commercial activity

Stakeholders also expressed the following considerations related to future growth:

- The TMP should identify corridors that are fully built out/cannot be further expanded
- Prioritize existing roads that need upgrading/improvement
- Developers closely consider the TMP for future development; recommendations can influence future land uses

- Old Victoria has narrow streets with on-street parking; causes issues for trash pickup as trucks end up blocking traffic flow
- Infill development should be a priority; consider what infrastructure is already in place before developing outside of city limits
- Need for additional ROW standards for developments and an emphasis on ROW preservation
- Emphasis on developers paying for new roads over taxpayers
- Ben Wilson St. needs better access to University of Houston-Victoria (UHV)
- TMP should be consistent with Comprehensive Plan
- Issue with people bypassing the city because loops carry higher volume of traffic and there is nothing to pull them into Victoria; consider gateway into downtown from South Victoria
- All new developments should have to consider installation of lighting
- Mallette Drive carries heavy traffic and has signal issues. The Northside, Mallette, Glasgow Street dynamic should be examined

Future Freight Movement

The following details information provided by stakeholders regarding freight movement within Victoria:

- The future I-69 designation will have major impacts on the freight network and needs to be considered
- Loop 463 will be four lanes and will have a direct connection to I-69

Stakeholders also discussed the need for freight access to the city from I-69 and identified the following as potential thoroughfares for enhanced access:

- Lone Tree Rd.
- Hanselman Rd.
- Delmar Dr.

North-South Access

Many stakeholders offered alternative north-south connectors to Navarro including those listed below:

- Main St.
- Laurent St.
- Delmar Dr./Sam Houston Dr.

Other considerations for improving north-south connectivity included:

- Traffic currently diverting from major thoroughfares to cut through neighborhoods; consider traffic calming and/or other ways to mitigate traffic spillover into residential areas
- Need to consider more underpass/overpass possibilities at railroad tracks south of and parallel to Business 59. As more development comes west of Main, underpasses/overpasses over the rail east of and paralleling Main may need thought as well.

Safety Concerns

The following details information provided by stakeholders regarding safety concerns within the Victoria thoroughfare network:

- At-grade railroad crossing on Nursery Dr./US 87 causes congestion and safety concerns
- Briggs Blvd. consistently poses safety concerns
- Both high schools have access/safety issues

- Northcrest area traveling back roads because they do not want to use state roads/loop to get children to school
- Desire for added exit connecting West High School onto Loop 463 frontage road; need to extend frontage road onto 463 Loop
 - Flow of traffic coming onto US 87, turn onto Loop 463 to get back to Mission Valley
 - Something to allow school buses and teachers to exit school property on feeder road/move west without accessing US 87; help the congestion on US 87
 - Reference MTP medium-term project
- US 77 just west of US 87; U-Turn for Victoria West High School could help safety aspects to get high school traffic off US 87
- Dairy Rd. should be considered as one-way
- Long distances between cross walks causes pedestrians to cross the road illegally
- Aloe Field/US 59; US 59 lack of controlled access; need to signalize or control access
- US 87 to US 77 out to Nursery on the northwest side of Victoria; 4 fatal crashes within a quarter mile of one another
- US 59 by river bottom (FM 185 to US 59 spur); site obstruction and lacks lighting, most crashes happen when its dark; narrow median

City/ETJ/County Overlap

The following details information provided by stakeholders regarding roadways overlapping jurisdictions within the Victoria thoroughfare network:

- FM roads are carrying heavy freight from large corporate farms (some within 5 miles of the ETJ); overweight traffic spilling over to county roads hurts road lifetime expectancy
- City should consider design standards/pavement strength along roads within the ETJ that connect to the county

Navarro Corridor

Navarro St. serves as one of the most critical corridors within the City of Victoria. Accordingly, stakeholders provided concerns and solutions for the corridor listed as follows:

- Concern over shifting traffic patterns due to newly constructed median
- Identified as the most heavily congested corridor in study area
- Limited access to neighborhoods
- New median has caused divers to increase u-turn maneuvers
- Lights are not synchronized well which adds to congestion
- Existing pedestrian crossings are dangerous
- Should continue median all the way to Rio Grande St.

Drainage Issues

The TMP study area contains large swaths of environmentally sensitive land. Due to existing environmental features, stakeholders provided information on drainage issues occurring on the following roadways:

- Ben Jordan St.
- Sam Houston Dr.
- Lone Tree Acres
- Parsons Rd.

- US 87

Pedestrian/Bicycle Issues

The following lists information provided by stakeholders concerning existing active transportation infrastructure:

- Lack of pedestrian facilities; “way behind the times”
- Long distances between cross walks causes pedestrians to cross the road illegally
- Median upgrades could potentially help with pedestrian crossing concerns
- Bicycle facilities are also “way behind the times”
- Victoria could be very conducive for walking and biking because of proximity and flat land
- The areas within and around Victoria College and Citizens Hospital need pedestrian facilities

Conclusion

Stakeholder interviews allowed city and county leadership, as well as relevant planning partners in the TMP process to provide technical expertise and local knowledge to help inform thoroughfare and policy recommendations. Key takeaways from the December meetings are summarized as follows:

- There is a consensus that several new alignments should be recommended in the final Victoria TMP, as well as enhancements to existing corridors to help mitigate deficiencies (e.g., congestion, safety, drainage) in the existing thoroughfare network. Specific areas include:
 - East and West High Schools
 - Victoria Regional Airport/ETJ area for secondary loop development
 - Major corridors (e.g., Navarro St., Main St., Sam Houston Dr., US BUS 59T)
- The Navarro St. corridor is a general concern for stakeholders; the TMP should focus on mitigating existing congestion issues as well as providing recommendations to create a strong additional north-south corridor to help relieve the strain on Navarro St.
 - The TMP should also consider policy recommendations to help mitigate current and prevent future spillover traffic through residential areas.
- Northern Victoria hosts the majority of new and planned growth and should be a focal point in the TMP. The I-69 corridor provides opportunity for growth in the south and adjacent corridors should be considered for industrial development and future freight movement.
- TMP policy and street context recommendations need to consider standards for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, as the area is conducive to such modes due to the existing geography and relatively small municipal boundary size.
- Signal timing and signal coordination should be reviewed throughout the roadway network but with specific consideration to major throughfares including Navarro, Mallette, and Main Street.
- Many stakeholders would like the TMP to be efficient with resources by focusing on key issues to optimize return on investment.



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MEMORANDUM

Victoria TMP – January Stakeholder Meeting Key Findings Memorandum

Alliance Transportation Group (ATG), City of Victoria, and Victoria MPO staff conducted a set of group interviews on January 25 and 26, 2021 as part of the Public Involvement Plan (PIP) for the Victoria Thoroughfare Master Plan (TMP). These meetings were conducted with the goal of gathering input on the Victoria thoroughfare network from key transportation stakeholders representing a variety of fields and drawing on the stakeholders’ experience as members of the Victoria community.

Stakeholder meetings were held virtually via Zoom due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. During each interview, stakeholders were shown a map of local thoroughfare information such as roadway classification, congestion, crashes, and proposed alignments from previous TMP efforts. The map helped guide discussion on topics and areas important to the stakeholders. General meeting information and key takeaways from the stakeholder interviews are described in the following sections.

Key Stakeholders

Table 1 displays the stakeholder groups, names, and organizations of individuals who participated in each of the meetings.

Table 1: Stakeholder Meeting Attendees

Stakeholder Group	Name	Organization
Education & Community	Brook Garcia	United Way
Education & Community	Jesse Pisors	University of Houston-Victoria
Freight	Keith Landry	Keen Transportation
Freight	Pete Trimble	Keen Transportation
Freight	Mike Lewis	Keen Transportation
Freight	Dave Jennings	Keen Transportation
Safety, Law Enforcement, & Medical	Mike Hernandez	Victoria Police Department
Safety, Law Enforcement, & Medical	Tom Legler	Victoria Fire Marshal
Safety, Law Enforcement, & Medical	William ‘Billy’ Bernard	Victoria Police Department
Safety, Law Enforcement, & Medical	Preston Wilson	Citizens Medical Center
Safety, Law Enforcement, & Medical	Ryan Fishbeck	Citizens Medical Center
Developers	Ben Streiff	BPEC Enterprises, LLC
Developers	Ben Galvan	CivilCorp, LLC
Environment, Historical, Cultural, Business & Tourism	Jason Alfaro	Victoria Parks & Recreation

Stakeholder Group	Name	Organization
Environment, Historical, Cultural, Business & Tourism	R Lange	Texas Parks and Wildlife
Environment, Historical, Cultural, Business & Tourism	Danielle Williams	Main Street Program
Environment, Historical, Cultural, Business & Tourism	Tracy Graves	RE/MAX Land & Homes
Planning Commission	Brittanie Dierlam	Mason-McDuffie Mortgage Corporation
Planning Commission	Dr. Derek Hunt	Your Business Umbrella LLC
Planning Commission	Cynthia Staley	Habitat for Humanity
Planning Commission	Gail Hoad	Prosperity Bank

Key Findings

All stakeholders were asked a similar set of questions to understand their vision for the TMP and to gain insight that will help shape the TMP's recommendations and outcomes. The following questions guided the interviews:

- What are you looking for this plan to accomplish?
- What feedback do you hear from your constituency about the transportation system?
- What changes to the thoroughfare network are needed to improve your work or area of expertise?
- What specific thoroughfares do you think need improvement?
- What parts of the city are experiencing growth?

Major Themes

The following key themes were identified in the stakeholders' feedback concerning Victoria's thoroughfare network and should be considered in the development of the TMP's analysis and recommendations. These themes include:

- Congestion
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety and Connectivity
- Sidewalk Connectivity
- Navarro Corridor and Median Project
- Peak-Hour Traffic Around Schools
- Emergency Response
- Connecting Residents and Visitors to Downtown

Congestion

The following key points regarding traffic congestion and roadway capacity were discussed across stakeholder groups:

- High-volume thoroughfares and areas that were consistently described as congested included:
 - Navarro St
 - Loop 463/Zac Lentz Pkwy
 - Intersection of Rio Grande St, North St, Moody St (5 Points)

- Northside Rd
- Locations where stakeholders identified growth and development as a potential cause for increased congestion in the future included:
 - Navarro St and Loop 463/Zac Lentz Pkwy
 - Loop 463/Zac Lentz Pkwy to Mockingbird Ln
 - Development on outer side (east) of Placido Benavides Dr
 - North of US 77
 - Ball Airport Rd and Bianchi Dr
 - Between FM 236 and US 77
- Some participants expressed a need for more signage to distinguish roads that trucks can drive on.
- Participants noted that it is common for drivers to cut through neighborhoods to avoid congestion on major corridors, especially around schools and shopping centers.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety and Connectivity

Stakeholders expressed interest in how the TMP will improve conditions for cyclists and pedestrians.

- As the University of Houston-Victoria (UHV) grows, students' ability to get from campus to Downtown Victoria, Riverside Park, and other popular locations without driving will become more of a question for university administration. Stakeholders shared interest in potential for multimodal connections to key destinations from the UHV campus.
- Many stakeholders expressed interest in on-street bike paths. People looking at buying homes in Victoria ask about parks and biking often.
- The wide sidewalk on Placido Benavides Dr was identified as an asset that helps runners and pedestrians feel safer.
- Concerns were raised regarding the safety of pedestrians crossing Navarro St and potential need for additional crosswalks, signage, and/or signalization.

Sidewalk Connectivity

Most stakeholder groups described the City of Victoria as difficult to walk due to lack of sidewalk connectivity and pedestrian crossings on major thoroughfares.

- Stakeholders discussed the fragmented nature of sidewalks in many neighborhoods in Victoria:
 - Many of the isolated sidewalk segments exist in part due to requirements for those rebuilding homes following Hurricane Harvey.
 - One stakeholder described these sidewalk developments as “sidewalks to nowhere.”
- As the UHV student population has grown, student housing has expanded on either side of Ben Wilson St. Although this is a walkable distance to campus, limited crosswalks create issues for pedestrians and many people cross at unsafe locations.
- Some schools lack sufficient sidewalks making it difficult for kids to walk to school.
- Stakeholders mentioned the following streets with limited sidewalks:

- Guy Grant Rd near Chandler Elementary School/HEB
- Guy Grant Rd between Salem Rd and Mockingbird Ln
- Between Laurent St and Citizens Medical Center
- Neighborhoods on the south side of town

Navarro St Corridor and Median Project

Because Navarro St is one of the largest thoroughfares in the city, the road was mentioned in each stakeholder meeting.

- Many commercial land uses are located along Navarro St. However, stakeholders noted that trends in commercial development suggests a shift from Navarro St. corridor to Northeast Victoria near the Placido Benavides Dr area.
- There are various alternative routes taken by some stakeholders to avoid heavy traffic on Navarro St, including Placido Benavides Dr and US 87/Main St and Loop 463/Zac Lentz Pkwy.
- Many stakeholders expressed that the median addition will hopefully cause crashes to decrease, while some said that it may be more of an aesthetic improvement. Concerns were addressed regarding a need for increased U-turns and issues with limited access to commercial destinations.

Peak-Hour Traffic Around Schools

Several stakeholder groups discussed local schools as a common source of congestion.

- The West High School parking lot only has one entrance and exit point.
- Traffic around East High School causes people to cut through surrounding neighborhoods in order to avoid it, resulting in speeding and congestion on neighborhood streets.
- Turning onto Mockingbird Ln from Guy Grant Rd is difficult when approaches to Rowland Elementary School are congested.

Emergency Response

- Roads that can cause issues for law enforcement and emergency response vehicles due to physical constraints included:
 - Airline Rd between Navarro St and Laurent St
 - Colorado St turning onto Navarro St; this is a tight corner for ambulances and is a primary entrance to the emergency room
 - Railroad crossings at Ben Wilson St and Del Mar Dr
 - John Stockbauer turning right onto US 59T Bus
 - Burroughsville Rd
- Thoroughfares primarily used by emergency response vehicles included:
 - Anthony Rd (recently improved)
 - Lone Tree Rd to access Loop 463/Zac Lentz Pkwy

Connecting Residents and Visitors to Downtown

Due to the historic and economic value of Downtown Victoria, many stakeholder groups expressed that they are interested in ways to make the area more accessible.

- The University community is looking for ways to improve students' access to downtown from campus. This is currently limited without access to a car.
- Many people who need to access the services provided by nonprofits located downtown are not able to get there.
- Stakeholders expressed that many people do not want to try to go downtown because they know it will be difficult. Bus routes that connect to downtown are indirect.
- A Downtown Master Plan is currently in progress, which will prioritize connectivity from downtown to Riverside Park, traffic calming measures, wayfinding signage in downtown, and more conspicuous signage along major corridors that direct transportation users from the north side of Victoria to downtown (Navarro St, US 87/Main St, Rio Grande St).

Conclusion

Stakeholder group interviews allowed members of groups with unique perspectives on the transportation system to provide technical expertise and local knowledge to help inform recommendations for the TMP. Key takeaways from the January meetings are as follows:

- Most stakeholders agree that new alignments will help reduce congestion on major thoroughfares as growth continues. Major corridors such as Navarro St, Loop 463/Zac Lentz Pkwy, and US 59T Bus are high priority thoroughfares given their heavy use and safety implications.
- A key concern for stakeholders is multimodal connectivity. Many want to have access to a variety of ways to navigate Victoria such as by foot or by bike but many parts of the city lack the infrastructure to support them. UHV was a consistent topic regarding need for multimodal connectivity.
- Safety is related to all issues with the roadway network and permeated a variety of topics of conversation.
- Navarro St and Placido Benavides Dr were consistently discussed as major commercial hubs in need of consideration during the TMP development. Stakeholders noted that current trends in land use and development suggest growth to more likely occur in the Placido Benavides area over the Navarro St corridor.