Report of the Trinity Parkway Advisory Committee

March 18, 2016

Councilmember Sandy Greyson

Jere Thompson, Jr.

Rep. Rafael Anchia

Mary Ceverha

Chancellor Lee Jackson

Hon. Ron Kirk

Bob Meckfessel

In January of this year, Dallas Mayor Mike Rawlings announced the formation of the Trinity Parkway Advisory Committee ("Committee"), whose members were appointed by Dallas City Councilmember Sandy Greyson (former City Councilmember Angela Hunt, Rep. Rafael Anchia and Bob MeckFessel) and former North Texas Tollway Authority Chair Jere Thompson, Jr. (Hon. Ron Kirk, Chancellor Lee Jackson and Mary Ceverha).

The Committee was asked to advise the Transportation Committee of the City Council on whether the latest findings by the Trinity Parkway Technical Team ("Technical Team") are consistent with the 20 project ideas originally presented in the Trinity Parkway Design Charrette Report ("Report"). The original Report and the work of the Technical Team had three primary objectives for the Parkway that were summarized to the City Council in April, 2015. They were to:

1. Maximize visual and physical access to the park;
2. Bring the park and key vacant sites close together to catalyze development; and
3. Facilitate auto bypass of downtown, if practical.

This Committee held several meetings where we evaluated the conclusions of the Technical Team and compared the 20 findings to the Charrette Report. While it should not be considered an endorsement of the Trinity Parkway by all members, the majority of this Committee believes that the Technical Team has carried these 20 points forward in a good faith attempt to implement them completely or in some cases suggest potential improvements.

The Committee recognizes that there are still important aspects of the Parkway design which must be refined and resolved in order for the Technical Team suggestions to fulfill the Charrette Report vision. These include issues that were directly addressed in the Report such as meanders, lane widths, roadway shoulders, acceleration/deceleration lanes, the floodwall, and the exact plan for trees. We also have comments on several broader issues which the City Council will need to address and are extensions of the central design issues; these include the challenging issues of posted speed, how to treat the existing Records of Decision, and, finally, citizen involvement and oversight.

Alignment with 20 Points from the Design Charrette Group

Technical Design Meets Charrette Vision

The Technical Team found that 12 of the original 20 suggestions were consistent with the original Report. They are:

1. Maintain corridor alignment, and end connections to other roadways as earlier proposed.
2. Create 15 pedestrian links across the Parkway at roughly ¼ mile intervals.
3. Create the widest and safest possible top-of-levee Bikeways and Pedestrian Paths.
4. Create other Service Roads/Bikeways/and Pedestrian Paths in the vicinity of the Parkway as needed to support the park uses and allow maintenance.
5. Maintain 4-lane meandering road within existing corridor.
6. Add U-Turn at mid-point.

7. Add Pull-off parking on bench in unused portions of meandering road within corridor.
8. Reunion and associated district development remain close to the park.
9. Design district development maintains pedestrian links to the park.
10. Build fewer ramps – 2 sets only, one each at North and South locations within park.
11. Design refinement of the landscape configuration to add a consistent linear tree pattern at about 20'-40' centers for character and beauty, particularly in the center of the bench area where widths will allow.
12. Wow views emphasized.

The Committee generally agrees that the recommendations of the Technical Team for these 12 items are consistent with the original Report as it was presented to the City Council and are desirable.

Technical Team Recommendations Vary from Charrette Vision – Choices

1. Soften necessary flood protection barriers (regardless of flood protection level) with landscaping, art, wall treatments, fountains, hillocks, berms to create character and interest and reinforce the ecological strategies.

The Technical Team has raised the issue of considering a lower level of flood protection for the Parkway, which we will address below. This recommendation applies to the significant opportunities to minimize the visibility of floodwall structures using berms and native grasses on the Parkway side with only minor exposed structures. The Committee agrees that the Technical Team recommendations to enhance the floodwalls on the Parkway side are consistent with the intent of the Report.

Three Future Matters Not of Technical Design

The Technical Team and original Charrette Report made three recommendations which are not primary Parkway design elements but are more policy related issues:

1. Ban trucks.
2. Provide for On-street parking in slow periods and for special occasions.

3. Tolls forgiven for longer-time park users.

The Committee agrees that these three goals seem worthy of additional exploration. The Committee cannot address the specifics of these three items since they are beyond the scope of the Technical Team and original Report and our assigned scope.

Four Matters Not Concluded – Technical Work Still Underway

1. Landscape with character and ecological strategy.
2. Locate transit stops for good transit user access to park.
3. Enhance the area around the sumps in the Southside District to create amenities that could be the focal point of unique development around water outside the levees.
4. Anticipate and facilitate development both under and over the roadway connections at the south and north ends of the proposed Parkway alignment.

The Committee agrees that these four goals seem worthy of additional exploration, and the Technical Team review sought to identify opportunities to carry these ideas forward. The landscape plan and the transit stops will be resolved at the 65% level of design. One ramp at Riverfront currently crosses over a sump diminishing its amenity potential, and further design options are being reviewed and should be clarified at the next stage of planning.

Three Continued Challenges

The Technical Team has proposed three items that need further refinement or modification:

1. Consider an amended Parkway and Levee alignment south of the Santa Fe Trestle to reduce the impact on the Great Trinity Forest.
2. Investigate further neighborhood economic development opportunities in the I35/183 corridor at the northern connection to the Parkway.
3. Improve the aesthetic treatment of the Bridge Deck outfalls to be consistent with elevated Park and Parkway design goals.

The Committee believes that the second two suggestions are worthwhile and may not present significant regulatory issues, but the first one is clearly a significant deviation. It appears to be worth pursuing and we would simply agree that it is not inconsistent with the spirit of the prior discussions and may have opportunities to improve the Parkway connection to the south in a more effective way, but it needs significant further work and community discussion.

Comments on Broader Issues

Design Speed, Posted Speed, Actual Speed

The original Charrette Report and the latest Technical Team findings have made general assumptions about future roadway speeds, but the issue was not specifically addressed or decided. Speed has been the subject of much speculation.

Some believe that the design considerations, when made carefully to create an attractive roadway serving the park, will result in an acceptable de facto speed decision based on customary engineering considerations. Others foresee a need for a direct policy decision to slow roadway traffic speeds to enhance compatibility. We believe the proposed Trinity Parkway is at the juncture where the City Council will need to address this issue itself and with future funding partners.

Our Committee includes some members who would be comfortable with a gently curving attractive park-enhancing roadway with a posted speed of 55mph and others who feel strongly that even the technical assumptions of an acceptable 45mph design go too far. They prefer a parkway road posted for 35mph.

At the heart of this difference on traffic speed is a different view of project purpose. One view is that the speed of vehicular traffic on the parkway is the primary determinant of whether the road is compatible with the Charrette Vision and Trinity Park. From this point of

view, physical elements to deliberately constrain speed are desirable to ensure a low-speed park road. These proponents advocate for a posted speed of 35 mph as most appropriate for this park setting.

The other view is that the Parkway will serve multiple purposes, increasing sight views into the park, providing users better access to the park, relieving congestion, and adding mobility choices around the central core of Dallas.

Traffic models forecast that a 45 mph speed on the Parkway will attract approximately 52,000 cars per day, a mobility opportunity that would reduce traffic on I-35 and I-30 around downtown Dallas by about 25%. This is a significant reduction in projected volumes from previous plans for the Trinity Parkway. With a travel time difference between 45 mph and 55 mph on a nine mile road of only two minutes, we believe these design enhancements provide an acceptable compromise that will allow our community the opportunity to move past prior battles.

A 45 mph design speed is a compromise for all members of this Advisory Committee. The majority of the Committee recommends that the City Council should strongly endorse a maximum 45 mph design speed for the Parkway and make that a central planning assumption when negotiating with other agencies.

Meanders

The Charrette Report proposed a meandering park road, enhancing access to the park and still providing some mobility benefits to motorists passing and viewing the park. The meanders are the most prominent physical features reducing that actual speed of traffic on the roadway. The Technical Team has made this concept more specific, with ten "purposeful" meanders that have been included in the latest design to enhance the character of the space and to remain consistent with the Charrette Report. These gentle meanders are designed purposefully to aim visitors into the five scenic "Wow" views of the park and downtown along the 2 mile bench of the Parkway. The Technical Team did not attempt to maximize the number

of meanders in the roadway believing that additional curves would face vehicles away from the park or move the entire roadway away from the park side, reducing park views without achieving a significant traffic calming effect.

A 35 mph design speed roadway could have curves with a radius as small as 510 feet, and a 45 mph design speed roadway could have curves with a radius as small as 1,039 feet. The Technical Design alignment, which meets a 45 mph design speed, has curves with radii of 1,600 feet or greater in some places. These horizontal curves are greater than the minimum allowable radii but other design criteria (such as super elevation, sight distance, etc.) result in an effective design speed of 45 mph.

Those Committee members who are advocates for a 35mph roadway believe that more and tighter curves would require drivers to maintain a lower speed, which they believe is more appropriate to a park setting. They believe a road with a 35 mph design speed should have curves with a radius of 510 feet, and a 45 mph road should have curves with a radius of 1039 feet. In the Technical Design, they are concerned that some road curves are straighter with radii of 2000 feet or greater in some places, allowing for higher actual speeds. The 35 mph advocates believe that the meanders as designed do not ensure a low-speed park road but make a higher-speed transportation facility likely. They recommend that the Technical Design Team revise the meanders.

The majority of the Committee supports the 45 mph design speed.

Lane Width

The Charrette Report recommended roadway lane widths of 10 and 11 feet, while the Technical Team supported a different configuration with 11 and 12 feet lanes. They indicated that "the outside lanes were made slightly wider than the inside lanes to accommodate transit and occasional on-street parking."

This issue also affects safety and speed. The 35 mph proponents feel these widths are indicative of high-speed roads appropriate for trucks, not a park access road. Narrow lanes may help constrain speed while wider travel lanes may enable higher vehicle speeds. They recommend that the Technical Team be directed to design the road with 10 and 11 foot lanes and eliminate the 2 foot separation between the road and the shoulder, as originally proposed.

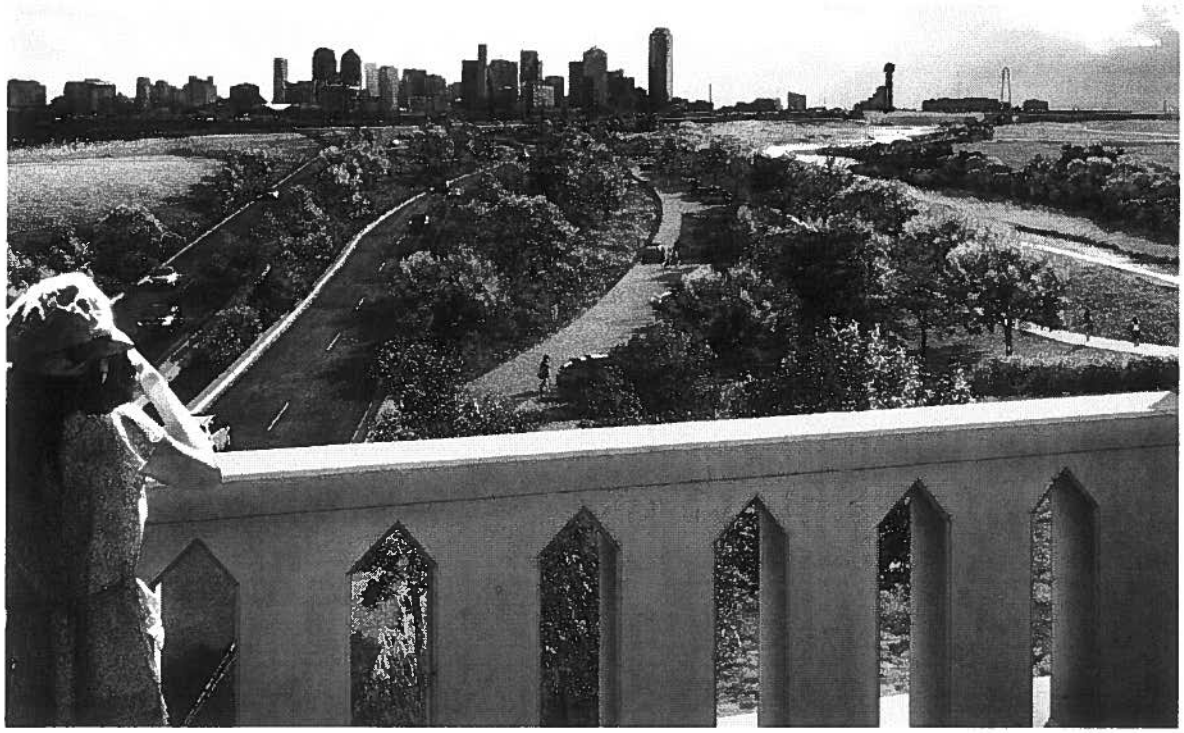
The 45 mph proponents feel safety is of paramount importance especially with the meanders and additional trees that have been designed.

The Committee recommends a compromise with lane widths kept at 10 and 11 feet as recommended in the Charrette Design along with a 2 foot paved separation between the road and the shoulder as recommended by the Technical Team.

Grass Shoulders

The Charrette Report proposed grass shoulders, and the Technical Team replaced the grass shoulders with gravel or asphalt primarily to accommodate service vehicles. All members of this Committee would request the Technical Team to return to grass shoulders, as recommended in the Charrette Report, using alternate technologies or materials to provide a firm subsurface base that will support the weight of vehicles in wet conditions.

Acceleration/Deceleration Lanes



This illustration in the Charrette Report demonstrated that pull-off areas were proposed to be immediately adjacent to the roadway to provide new park-related opportunities with safe parking for visitors to enjoy the park and possibly walk down into the park or enjoy the views on the bench.

The majority of this Committee believes that these pull-off areas will add value and enhance the use of the park and need to be designed with safety as a paramount concern. All members agree that the lanes should be and can be reduced in length.

Parkway Floodwall

Charrette Report Language on Flood Protection and Landscaping:

"An optimal solution would be to refine the design to a 10-year flood standard, acknowledge the occasional flooding of the parkway, in order to open up major views for parkway users. If the experience of occasional flooding of the Parkway (probably about once in a decade for a day or so) is not found to be acceptable to the people of Dallas, then an acceptable solution would be to refine the design to a 50-year flood standard or even stay with the 100-year flood standard but using berms and other methods other than blank walls wherever practical, thus at least creating close-in attractive views of park character for parkway users."

Technical Team Conclusion: "Design to a lesser flood standard was reviewed, which would open up views and make camouflaged berms easier on both sides of the wall, but this configuration opens the Parkway to more frequent flooding and lowering down to as low as 10-year flood protection only reduces the wall height by seven feet.....Pursuing a flood standard of less than the 100-year protection will almost certainly challenge the ROD, representing a high risk in moving the project forward. The Technical Team's recommendation is to uphold the use of the 100-year flood standard for the Parkway."

The Committee is aware that many major roadways flood occasionally and a lower flood protection standard might mean that the Parkway would flood a few days every 20 or 50 years instead of once every 100 years. The Committee believes this would be an acceptable compromise given the unique location and given that most or all park activities will be suspended during such a flood event in any kind of significant flooding. The Committee is unanimous in supporting an effort by the City to seek every opportunity to lower flood walls wherever possible, but we are divided on whether or not to abandon the existing ROD approvals and start over, if that is required.

The Records of Decision from both the Federal Highway Administration and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers were based on a Parkway design with flood walls at the 100 year flood level, a common federal standard for transportation facilities. The Committee was advised that this is a major assumption underlying the approvals received, and it may be difficult to

negotiate a change at this stage. In fact, it is not clear if a lower flood standard would be permitted even in a new review.

Reducing the flood level from 100 years to 50 years would decrease the wall height by approximately four feet. In some areas, this height reduction would open improved views to the park. In other areas travelling beneath downtown bridges, views would still be blocked but the tunnel effect would be scaled down.

Those who are willing to re-open the ROD process, if necessary, feel the Charrette Report proposed that the floodwall separating the roadway from the park be designed at a relatively low flood protection level -- the 10-year flood standard -- which would reduce the height of the wall by 7 feet. The Charrette Report noted that this would open up improved park views for motorists. More importantly, a low floodwall would reduce the visual impact of the 2.25-mile long wall as perceived by park users.

The Technical Team, however, was guided by the City Council's Resolution on April 16, 2015 which reaffirmed "its commitment to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Dallas Floodway Record of Decision and permitting action." The ROD approved floodwalls designed to the 100-year flood level. This will result in a more significant structure within the park. Some members believe that such a flood wall conflicts with the natural surroundings and adversely impacts enjoyment of the park, and they recommend that the Technical Design be directed to return to the Charrette Report optimal plan for a floodwall designed to the 10-year flood level. The majority of the Committee supports further exploration of flood-level options.

Records of Decision

Some of the Committee members are opposed to any Technical Design change that would trigger reconsideration of the Records of Decision ("RODs") already received. They feel that every major capital project includes compromises, that achieving a large portion of these enhancement goals would be a valuable accomplishment, and that they would not support a

return of the planning process to its starting point of several decades ago just to attempt to achieve further incremental enhancements.

Other members of the Committee disagree, believing that several crucial design elements presented in the Charrette Vision and Technical Design may trigger either a NEPA review or necessitate changes to the Records of Decision ("RODs"). They believe we should be prepared to endorse these changes regardless of their ultimate impact on project schedules. These key design features which might trigger reconsideration of approvals include reducing the number of lanes to four, eliminating several massive entry and exit ramps, adding trees along the roadway, changing the flood protection level and reducing the height of the road's floodwall, berming the park-side floodwall, and banning trucks. These features are important enough to some members that they would approve the submittal of any necessary NEPA reviews, amendments to the RODs, or requests for new RODs to realize their preferred options to remain consistent with the Charrette Vision.

Parkway Trees

The Charrette Report proposed a tree-lined parkway with trees planted in a dense configuration close to the roadway. This not only creates a more pleasant driving experience, but impacts safety by encouraging lower driving speeds. The Technical Team carried this intent forward in alignment with the Charrette Report, proposing trees at 20-foot to 40-foot centers.

The Committee supports the recommendation of the Technical Team to retain the density of the trees at 20-foot to 40-foot centers. Some members recommend that these trees be planted within 10 feet of the outer lanes of the Parkway consistent with a curbed, urban arterial road. The Charrette Report parkway section illustrated a 30 foot setback of the trees from the parkway edge. Other members of the Committee believe that the trees should be planted at a safe and appropriate distance from the shoulder's outer edge, to be determined by design professionals in the next stage of project design, not specified by this non-technical Committee.

Citizen Involvement and Oversight

Our Committee members are not asking to have our mission prolonged. Instead, we feel very strongly that a citizen oversight committee continues to be needed through the design and construction periods. In particular, such a Committee could be asked to provide another formal report to you when the project design work reaches the 65% stage, a critical decision point on many key elements, and be given such other advisory and oversight roles as you determine.

Conclusions

Last year, the Charrette Report brought the city together around a newly designed, context-sensitive Trinity Parkway predicated on serving an incredible urban park. Now, through the efforts of the Technical Team, we are all better able to identify where additional work is needed and where specific direction from the Council is critical. We appreciate the opportunity to serve as members of the Trinity Parkway Advisory Committee and urge the Dallas City Council to remain true to the Charrette Vision, which was to put the park's needs and opportunities for our City at the heart of the design of the Parkway.

On all sides of this debate, we at least agree that achieving the greatest possible park, flood control, and mobility enhancements for our residents is a wonderful opportunity for our City. Having looked again at the technical issues, we also know it is going to be a continuing challenge for the Mayor and Council and City staff to maintain trust on all sides as this project moves forward.

Probably no capital project in our history has ever had the challenge of being designed by technicians during such a prolonged policy disagreement. Regardless of the decisions of the City Council and other involved agencies, the well-intended professional staffs who are being

asked to work on this project need focused direction and consistent oversight throughout the remaining design stages.

We also want to thank the creative contributions of the Technical Team who gave us many helpful ideas to evaluate.

Closing Statement

Councilmember Sandy Greyson

Rep. Rafael Anchia

Bob Meckfessel

Larry Beasley, leader of the "Dream Team" whose report was presented to the City Council in April of 2015, has stated that "the park is the client" and that the parkway must be designed to serve the park. We completely endorse this perspective and firmly agree with these key principles.

Therefore, the single most critical priority for the proposed road must be that it is, in fact, a true parkway and that it looks, functions, and feels like a true parkway (not a high speed highway labeled as a parkway). A true parkway will meet two criteria — it will provide effective visual and physical access to the park and, equally important, its engineering and design will not be detrimental to the character of the park nor to the enjoyment of citizens and visitors using that park.

One of the most important factors in determining the true character of the road is its speed, considered both as design speed and posted speed. Speed on a road is determined not just by speed limit signs, but by the design geometry of the road as well. This geometry includes a number of factors — lane widths, meanders, curbs and shoulders, acceleration/deceleration lanes, location and spacing of trees, and more.

The Technical Team reports that their design has resulted in a de facto design speed of 45 mph. However, after much research and discussion with city staff and consultants, it is clear to us that several aspects of the current road design will allow speeds much higher than 45 mph. Since we believe there will always be the possibility of speed "creep" throughout this project and that only the geometrics of the road will keep that from happening, we feel strongly that the physical parameters of the road must be such as to clearly restrain speed now and in the future.

In particular, we are concerned about the radii of the meanders, the lengths of acceleration and deceleration lanes, and the location of the trees.

As shown in the 30% design drawings, the radii of the meanders are much larger — almost twice as much — than is required for a 45 mph road. The lengths of the acceleration and deceleration lanes — up to 1,000 feet — are several times the length needed for a 45 mph road, and are far longer than is seen on other 45 mph roads in Dallas (such as Mockingbird Lane at the White Rock Dog Park). And the proposed trees are located 30 feet or more from the road, much too far to be effective at reducing the actual driving speeds of those using the road.

It is our recommendation that each of these critical factors (and others) be re-visited now, prior to moving ahead to the 65% design milestone. They should be adjusted so that Dallasites of today — elected and appointed officials and citizens — have confidence that the proposed road design will clearly restrain speed now and in the future to no more than 45 mph. It should be noted that the highly praised April Charrette Report illustrated a road with exactly these characteristics — tighter meanders, shorter acceleration/deceleration lanes, tree location closer to the road, and more.

We are — at this 30% design milestone — at a critical juncture in the process of re-envisioning the road, and it is vitally important to get these fundamentals right before moving ahead to 65%. To accomplish this expeditiously and effectively, there must be an ongoing Citizen's Oversight Committee to ensure that the Charrette vision is not compromised in any way as the road design is refined now, and as it advances through future design stages. The committee must have the authority to call a stop to the work until any concerns they raise are adequately addressed.

Finally, we acknowledge the fervent desire of some to avoid invoking a NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) review or a reopening of the Records of Decision (RODs). However, it should be noted that a great many of the Technical Team's recommendations already raise both possibilities, and that there is no guarantee whatsoever — by any party or agency — that the Charrette vision can be achieved without doing so.

As stated in our opening paragraph, we remain in concurrence with the key principles that "the park is the client" and that the parkway must be designed to serve the park. If achievement of these principles requires revisitation of the RODs or a NEPA review, we believe this is acceptable if the end result is a great Trinity Park — supported by a true parkway — for the citizens of Dallas.

Closing Statement

Jere Thompson, Jr.

Mary Ceverha

Chancellor Lee Jackson

Hon. Ron Kirk

We agree that the proposed Trinity Park and Parkway should be designed in harmony, and we believe that the Technical Team has offered many good suggestions to achieve that goal. We agree that the Trinity Parkway can be designed with the new park as its most important client, but it can and should serve other needs in our City. It can enhance views of the Park, expand access to the Park, and also give motorists in and around Downtown Dallas another vital opportunity in a growing, thriving city.

We were asked to advise the City Council whether the Technical Team recommendations are consistent with the Charrette Vision, and we believe they are. This Committee was not asked to lay out our own design requirements for a vision of a smaller, neighborhood park access road, beyond what was detailed in either the Charrette Report or Technical Team proposals. The original Balanced Vision Plan was scaled down by the Charrette Report, and it has been further refined and, we believe, improved in the Technical Team work. Neither report suggested that the only way to serve the Park was to build a 35mph park access road, and it is not our place to suggest to the City Council that you further reduce the scope of this project.

The most important development in the Technical Team work is just beginning, which is to flesh out the details of remarkable landscape and amenity planning along the parkway corridor. Our city has been divided for years about this project, arguing about concepts in the absence of enhancement details. We believe it is time to encourage the staff and planners to do this next stage of work to see if the results can inspire us to come together as much as the first Charrette Report did. If so, the Trinity Parkway will be the most attractive roadway in the North Texas region, joining a small handful of excellent examples of compatible and supportive roads that line parks and lakes across the United States.

With its meanders and trees, berms and pull off parking areas, the proposed Trinity Parkway is finally approaching the key design stages where we can see what this roadway can become if we allow the professionals to continue to give us their best ideas and innovations.

The ten meanders proposed by the Technical Team and the significant trees and berms and ecological landscape enhancements promise, we believe, to create an improvement that Dallas will be proud of. It will benefit the Park by its access and benefit the City overall. It will bring

tens of thousands of us into the Trinity River floodway to see the park, use the park, and support activity where there has been little for over 100 years.

It would be a mistake, we believe, to impose additional sharper turns and twists to try to force people to slow down, when the design team stated that this would detract from the views into the Park and would not change any requirements for posted speed.

We believe that it would be a mistake to try to establish an "artificial speed restriction" on a road with no traffic lights or to make that the central focus of our debate from this point forward. This Parkway, with a 45mph speed limit, is projected to carry about half of what the higher speed Trinity Parkway was originally proposed to carry. We believe this design compromise is a reasonable choice for a limited access road that will coexist with and complement the park.

We believe that a Citizens Oversight Committee should inform the City Council about the reasonableness of further design details and their compatibility with the overall purposes of the project. The Committee should report as often as the City Council wishes as this roadway goes from 35% design to 65% and then to full construction drawings. The Committee and the City Council should expect the staff and planning team to strive to achieve 100% of the beneficial design enhancements proposed by the Technical Team and endorsed in this report, and to report on any elements that are changed. It is unrealistic to expect to prevail on 100% of the issues in a major public works project, and we are confident that the City Council will be able to establish a reasonable standard of compliance to guide the negotiations. We do not believe a new Citizens Committee should be given "veto power" over a project that has been discussed for more than 20 years, nor should they be asked to enforce a non-negotiable position on every potential design, operating, or financial negotiation. No other major public works project in our history has had such an inflexible and, we believe, unrealistic expectation, prior to achieving construction plan detail and final financing agreements.

The City Council will always retain the opportunity to withdraw from negotiations with federal and state agencies and decide to build its own park road if the City decides it wants a facility to serve no other purpose than park access. This is, after all, what all cities do with local park roads. But we do not believe that any external agency will provide funds for a road with no other transportation purpose than local access to a local park.

As a result, we do not believe the City should prematurely ask to reopen any federal approvals of this project (the ROD or Records of Decision) until and unless the Technical Team and City staff and Citizens Oversight Committee conclude that the Charrette Vision and Technical Team improvements cannot be satisfactorily achieved within the current framework. The City should seek to obtain as many of these design improvements as possible. That is what the Technical Team has recommended, and they believe that many of these refinements are highly possible,

while some are more difficult to predict, given long standing federal standards, particularly with regard to flood control. We agree with the Technical Team that the City has the opportunity, if we are persistent and negotiate in good faith, to achieve many of these goals. This, we believe, is preferable to entering a discussion with these external agencies with a set of absolute demands and requirements to prevail on each and every point.

Even with these disagreements in our Committee, we note how much agreement there was among us about most of the design enhancements in the Charrette Report and the Technical Team. We believe that Dallas is closer than ever before to achieving a grand and practical vision to finally bring our residents into active use of the Trinity River corridor through the heart of our City and to fulfill its fullest opportunity to serve and enhance our City.

TRINITY PARKWAY ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

by Angela Hunt and Rep. Rafael Anchia

March 21, 2016

Larry Beasley, leader of the "Dream Team" whose report was presented to the City Council in April of 2015, has stated that "the park is the client" and that the parkway must be designed to serve the park. We completely endorse this perspective and firmly agree with these key principles.[1]

Therefore, the single most critical priority for the proposed road must be that it is, in fact, a true parkway and that it looks, functions, and feels like a true parkway (not a high speed highway labeled as a parkway). A true parkway must meet two criteria — it must provide effective visual and physical access to the park and, equally important, its engineering and design must not be detrimental to the character of the park nor to the enjoyment of citizens and visitors using that park.

One of the most important factors in determining the true character of the road is its speed, considered both as design speed and posted speed. Speed on a road is determined not just by speed limit signs but by the design geometry of the road. This geometry includes a number of factors — lane widths, curves, curbs and shoulders, acceleration/deceleration lanes (if any), location and spacing of trees, and more.

The Technical Team reports that their design has resulted in a de facto design speed of 45 mph. However, after much research and discussion with city staff and consultants, it is clear

[1] For that reason, we believe it would have been more appropriate to undertake any redesign of the Trinity Park prior to redesigning the road. That way, that the road could actually be designed to accommodate park elements. Although that was not accomplished, we believe the underlying philosophy of "putting the park first" must be the lens through which the Technical Design is evaluated.

to us that several aspects of the current road design will allow speeds much higher than 45 mph. Since we believe there will always be the possibility of speed "creep" throughout this project and that only the geometrics of the road will keep that from happening, we feel strongly that the physical parameters of the road must be such as to clearly restrain speed now and in the future.

In particular, we are concerned about the radii of the meanders, the lengths of acceleration and deceleration lanes, the width of the travel lanes, the quality of the shoulders, and the location of the trees.

As shown in the 35% design drawings, the radii of the meanders are much larger — almost twice as much — than is required for a 45 mph road. The lengths of the acceleration and deceleration lanes — up to 1,000 feet — are several times the length needed for a 45 mph road. The travel lanes have been expanded to typical highway widths. The gravel shoulders will encourage higher travel speeds than grass shoulders. And the proposed trees are located much too far from the road to be effective at reducing actual driving speeds.

It is our recommendation that each of these critical factors (and others) be re-visited *now*, prior to moving ahead to the 65% design milestone. They should be adjusted so that Dallasites of today — elected and appointed officials and citizens — have confidence that the proposed road design will clearly restrain speed now and in the future. It should be noted that the highly praised April Charrette Report illustrated a road with exactly these characteristics — tighter meanders, narrow lanes, near-non-existent acceleration/deceleration lanes, grass shoulders, tree location closer to the road, and more.

We are — at this 35% design milestone — at a critical juncture in the process of re-envisioning the road, and it is vitally important to get these fundamentals right before moving ahead to 65%. First, it is critical that the public be actively engaged in this process. Second, there must be an ongoing Citizen's Oversight Committee to ensure that the Charrette vision is not compromised in any way as the road design is refined now, and as it advances through future design stages. The committee must have the authority to call a stop to the work and bring the matter back to the City Council until any concerns they raise are adequately addressed.

Finally, we acknowledge the fervent desire of some to avoid invoking a NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) review or a reopening of the Records of Decision (RODs). However, it should be noted that a great many of the Technical Team's recommendations already raise both possibilities, and that there is no guarantee whatsoever — by any party or agency — that the Charrette vision can be achieved without doing so.

As stated in our opening paragraph, we remain in concurrence with the key principles that "the park is the client" and that the parkway must be designed to serve the park. If achievement of these principles requires revisiting the RODs or undertaking a NEPA review, we believe this is acceptable if the end result is a great Trinity Park — supported by a true parkway — for the citizens of Dallas.

SPEED

Of all the factors discussed, the speed of vehicular traffic on the parkway will be the primary determinant of whether it is fundamentally compatible with the Trinity Park. There will be considerable pressure to raise the speed limit on the parkway, both to increase the financial productivity of the toll road and to respond to drivers' preference for a quick bypass of downtown. It is our conclusion that a moderate speed of 35 mph is appropriate for the park setting.

While the Dream Team's Charrette Report purported to be "neutral" on the matter of posted speed[2], a low-speed roadway is the only facility that accommodates the Charrette Vision which mandates meanders, narrow lanes, grass shoulders, and virtually non-existent deceleration/acceleration lanes for pull-off areas. As explained more fully below, the Technical Design deviates from each of these critical factors that constrain the speed of the road:

Meanders Have Been Straightened, Enabling Higher Speeds

The meanders proposed in the Charrette Vision are the most prominent physical characteristic constraining the speed of the road. Tighter curves require drivers to maintain a lower speed, which is more appropriate to a park setting. The Technical Design has straightened the meanders, thus allowing for higher travel speeds.

Although the Technical Design's meanders ostensibly result in a design speed of 45 mph, further investigation of the geometry of the curves indicates that they would actually support much higher speeds. A design speed of 45 mph correlates with a curve radius of 1039 feet,[3] yet the radii of most of the curves in the Technical Design are 2000 feet or more.[4] To put this in perspective, a low-speed park-adjacent road like Turtle Creek Parkway has meanders with an average radius of 400 feet, resulting in a posted speed limit of 30 mph.

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[2] During the Charrette, several members of the Dream Team argued that the design speed should be no more than 35 miles per hour; however, the majority view was not to endorse a specific speed, but instead to address design elements. *Charrette Report*, p. 15.

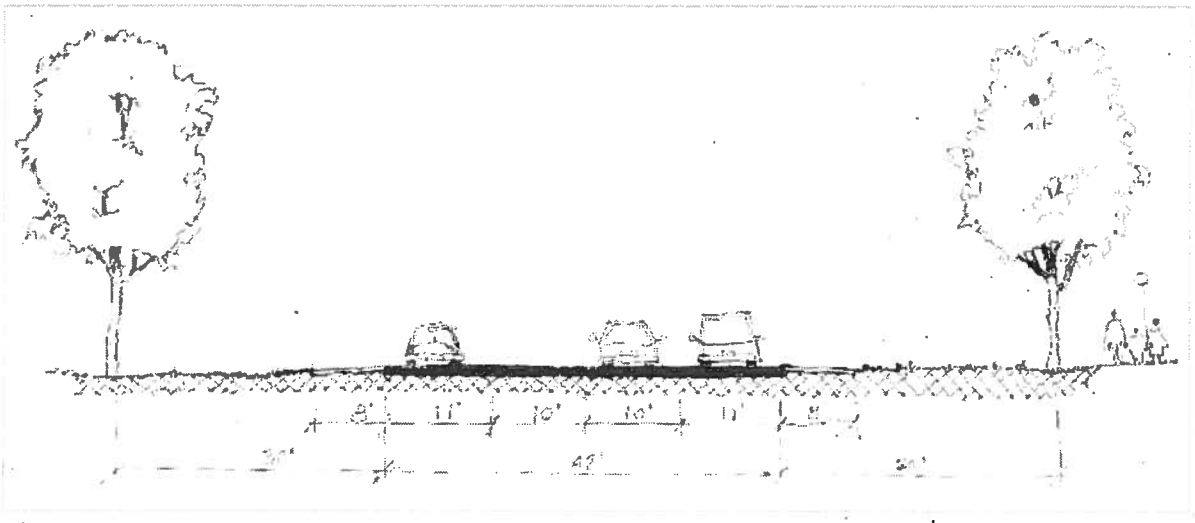
[3] *Roadway Design Manual,* p. 2-14, Table 2-5, Texas Department of Transportation.

[4] The radii of the meanders in the Technical Design are as follows: Set 1: Tangent - 2,000'; Set 2: 2,000' - 2,000'; Set 3: 1,750' - 1,600'; Set 4: 4,500' - 2,000'; Set 5: Tangent - 3,350'; Set 6: 2,000' - 2,000'; Set 7: 2,000' - 1,800'.

RECOMMENDATION: *Direct the Technical Design Team to revise the meanders to reflect an anticipated 85th percentile speed of 40 mph and a posted speed of 35 mph.*

Narrow Lanes Have Been Widened to Typical Highway Width

Narrow lanes constrain speed while wider travel lanes are correlated with higher vehicle speeds.[5] The Charrette Vision showed roadway lanes with widths of 10 and 11 feet, with 42 feet of total pavement:



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In the Technical Design, however, the lanes grew to 11 and 12 feet, plus 2 more feet of pavement between the road and the shoulder, resulting in 50 feet of pavement. These widths are indicative of highways and other high-speed roads appropriate for trucks, not a park access road.[6]

RECOMMENDATION*: Direct the Technical Design Team to design the road as presented in the Charrette Vision, with 10 and 11 foot lanes, and without the additional 2 feet of pavement.*

[5] *Urban Street Design Guide*, "Lane Widths," National Association of City Transportation Officials, http://nacto.org/publication/urban-street-design-guide/.
[6] *Id.*

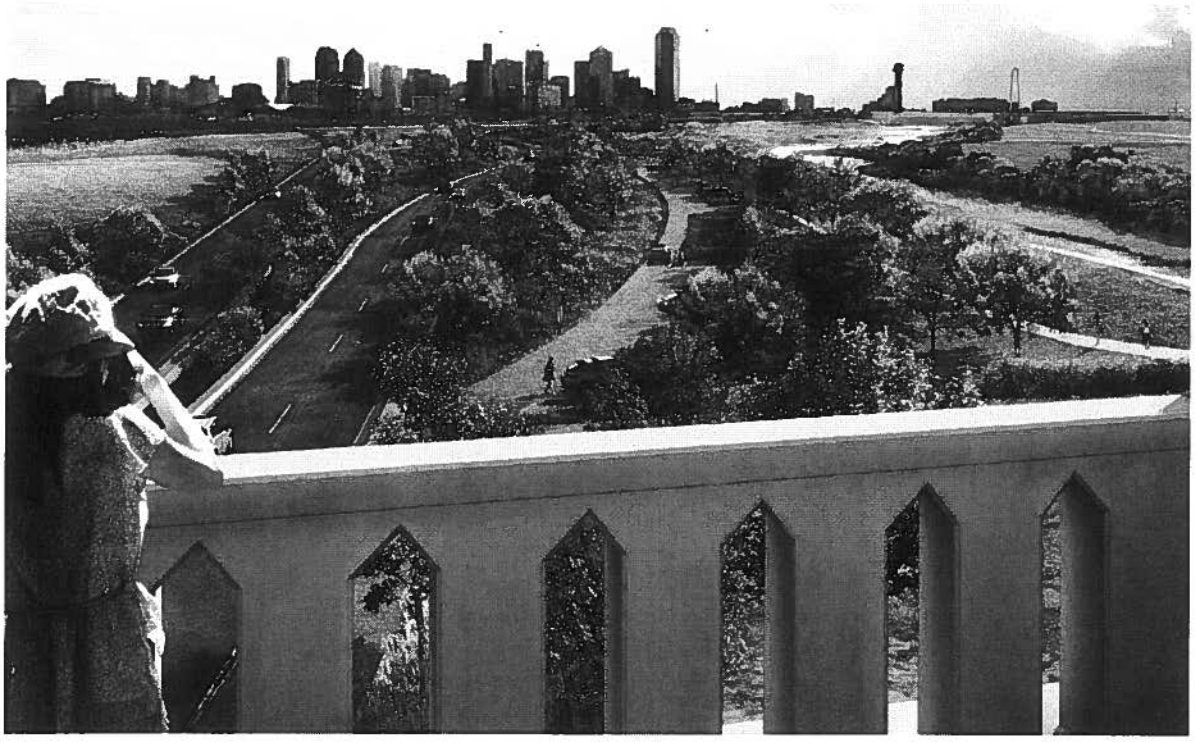
Grass Shoulders Have Been Eliminated

The Charrette Vision provided for grass shoulders, which are not only more appropriate for a parkway, but also encourage lower travel speeds. The Technical Design replaced the grass shoulders with gravel or asphalt. This additional hard surface will enable higher speeds and reduce the park-like nature of the road.

RECOMMENDATION: *Direct the Technical Design Team to include grass shoulders, as provided in the Charrette Vision.*

Highway-Length Acceleration/Deceleration Lanes Have Been Added

The primary image for the Charrette Vision indicated that pull-off areas were immediately adjacent to the roadway:



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The Technical Design instead proposes long deceleration and acceleration lanes into and out of the parking areas.[7] If the parkway is intended to be a low-speed, park access road, large deceleration and acceleration lanes are unnecessary. Entry to park access areas should be perpendicular or near-perpendicular to the parkway as in typical park settings.[8]

RECOMMENDATION: *Direct the Technical Design Team to stay true to the Charrette Vision and eliminate deceleration and acceleration lanes.*

PARKWAY TREES

The Charrette presentation and Report proposed a tree-lined parkway with trees planted in a dense configuration close to the roadway.[9] This not only creates a more pleasant driving experience, but impacts safety by encouraging lower driving speeds. While the Technical Report indicates that trees will be spaced at 20' to 40' centers, we have received conflicting information regarding the distance of the trees from the road. For urban streets with a speed of 45 mph or less, trees may be placed as close as 4' to 6' from the inside median, and 10' to 12' from the outside curb. We endorse such a configuration for the parkway.

RECOMMENDATION: *Direct the Technical Design to retain the density of the trees at 20' to 40' centers, and plant them 4' to 6' from the inside median, and 10' to 12' from the outside curb.*

PARKWAY FLOODWALL

The Charrette Vision proposed that the floodwall separating the roadway from the park be designed at a relatively low flood protection level — the 10-year flood standard — which would result in a 16-foot tall wall along the northern boundary of the park.[10] The Technical

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[7] The Technical Design's deceleration lanes are 500' in length, while the acceleration lanes are 580', 1,000', 760', 610', and 560'.

[8] For example, access to White Rock Lake Dog Park from Mockingbird Lane — a six-lane divided roadway with a posted speed of 40 mph — is nearly perpendicular. Likewise, there is perpendicular access to E. Lawther Dr. (a White Rock Lake park road) from Northwest Highway — a six-lane divided roadway with a posted speed of 45 mph.

[9] *Charrette Report,* pp. 21, 25, 30.

[10] There is a distinction between flood protection of the levees, which is a 1500-year protection, and flood protection of the road. The more flood protection that is provided for the road, the higher the flood walls. When

Design proposes floodwalls designed to the 100-year flood level, producing a 23-foot tall floodwall. The wall will run continuously along the northern boundary of the park for 2.25 miles. Regardless of whether it is 16 feet or 23 feet tall, this massive concrete structure is an unacceptable intrusion into the park that will damage the natural surroundings and adversely impact enjoyment of the park. This does not "put the park first."

The Beasley Team has proposed berming the wall to hide the concrete. This is the only possibly acceptable course of action. It has been noted that berming may trigger additional federal review, and we strongly endorse whatever reviews or evaluations are necessary to ensure that this floodwall, which is designed solely for the toll road, does not negatively impact the park.

RECOMMENDATION: *Direct the Technical Design to return to the Charrette Vision of a floodwall designed to the 10-year flood level and obtain any federal approvals necessary to allow berming of the entire structure from the park side.*

RECORDS OF DECISION

Several crucial design elements presented in the Charrette Vision and Technical Design may trigger a NEPA review, necessitate changes to the Records of Decision ("RODs"), or require new RODs. These design features include reducing the number of lanes to four, eliminating several massive entry and exit ramps, adding trees along the roadway, reducing the height of the road's floodwall, berming the park-side floodwall, and banning trucks. These features are central to the realization of the Charrette Vision.[11] In addition, the RODs are predicated on the full build-out of Alternative 3C. Larry Beasley informed the Committee that traffic analysis reviewed by the Dream Team proves that the additional capacity provided by Alternative 3C is not needed for at least twenty to thirty years, if ever.

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the flood standard of the road is reduced, the size of the flood wall is reduced resulting in more contextual integration with the natural environment.

[11] We were disappointed that after nearly a year, it remains unknown whether or not the many design changes proposed in the Charrette Vision and resulting Technical Design will be permitted under the current Records of Decision. In one sense, there is no real parkway design for us to evaluate, since we do not yet know whether the most fundamental characteristics that improve upon the design of the Trinity Parkway are even possible.

Because so many critical design elements may trigger new federal approvals, and because Alternative 3C is not necessary, we recommend that the Council withdraw Alternative 3C as the locally preferred alternative and seek any necessary federal approvals predicated on the a four-lane, 35 mph, park access road as set forth in the Charrette Vision.

RECOMMENDATION: *Withdraw Alternative 3C as the locally preferred alternative. Approve the submission of any necessary NEPA reviews, amendments to the RODs, or requests for new RODs to ensure the Technical Design remains consistent with the Charrette Vision.*

CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT, OVERSIGHT, and TRANSPARENCY

We strongly urge the Council to inform and consult the public on this project. Too much of this project has been undertaken behind closed doors. The original design Charrette, the efforts of the technical working group, even the work of this Committee, have deliberately excluded the public. Public input and involvement will not only improve the project but will also encourage public trust. The Technical Design should be presented to the public and modified in response to public comment.

The Charrette Report recognized that the Balanced Vision Plan had been undermined by the lack of citizen involvement, oversight, and transparency. Its specific recommendation to counter a repetition of that failure was to appoint a robust citizen oversight committee. To this point, no such committee has been created. To ensure the Technical Design remains true to the Charrette Vision, we support the creation of a citizens' oversight group, as originally suggested in the Charrette Report, to monitor the ongoing design of the parkway.

RECOMMENDATION: *Immediately release to the public all of the recorded deliberations of the Trinity Parkway Advisory Committee, all design work and related work product of the Charrette group and city staff, and all data relied on by those groups. Present the Technical Design to the public and invite public comment. Form a citizens' oversight group to monitor the parkway design process at every stage. Endow the group with the authority to halt the design process and return the project to the Council if the Technical Design deviates from the Charrette Vision.*