

Bond Advisory Committee

August 20th, 2014, 2:00 p.m.

Upstairs Conference Room – Civic Center

The Bond Advisory Committee met on Wednesday, August 20th, 2014 at 2:00 pm in the Upstairs Conference Room, Civic Center, 1100 North 6th Street, Abilene, Texas. Stormy Higgins, Chairman of the Committee was present and presiding with the following members: Carissa Platt, Jack Wilson, Sylvia Leal, John Hill, Shannel Anderson, Jason Smith, Dr. Allison Garrett, Mike Dunnahoo, Terry Johnson, Lt. Col. Michael Harner, Brent Casey, Rev. Iziar Lankford, Michael Hernandez and Robert Kern. Committee member absent was Sam Vinson.

Stormy Higgins called the meeting to order.

Board members Rev. Iziar Lankford and Michael Hernandez were sworn in by Danette Dunlap City Secretary.

Chairman Higgins stated that the committee has been given the minutes from the August 6th meeting, and there being no additions, corrections or deletions to the minutes as presented Dr. Allison Garrett made the motion to approve the minutes as presented. Rev. Iziar Lankford made the second, motion carried. All in favor.

Dates for the October meetings were set for October 8th and October 22nd.

Jon James Director of Planning and Development Services, briefed the committee on the Projects from the Planning Department.

Pedestrian & Bicycle Facilities

Many people can't or don't drive:

12% of Abilene citizens are over 65 (13,924 people)

- 1 in 5 Americans over 65 does not drive

22% of Abilene residents are under 16 (25,937 children)

Many low income families cannot afford automobiles.

- In Abilene: 5% of work trips are by walking, bike, or transit (that's 1 out of every 20 trips)
- In Abilene: 7% of households do not have a car (that's 1 out of every 14 homes)

Benefits:

Safety:

- Designing intersections for pedestrian travel can reduce pedestrian risk by 28%

Health:

- Walking and bicycling help prevent obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, depression, and other health problems.
- Residents are 65% more likely to walk in a neighborhood with sidewalks.

Safe Routes to School

According to the Federal Highway Administration:

- In 1969, over half of school children walked or biked to school
- By 2007, that was down to around 12%
- By 2012, the increased interest in walkability and walkable neighborhoods has turned that around and is up to 16% nationally
- 7-13% in AISD

Public Support

- In Abilene, 85% of respondents 'support' or 'strongly support' requiring "new development to construct sidewalks" City of Abilene Comprehensive Plan Survey, 2003 (2,454 respondents)
- In Abilene, 55% said that they "would be willing to contribute money towards the installation of sidewalks in their neighborhood"? City of Abilene Community Appearance Survey, 2006

Many streets are inadequate:

Having a safe place to walk is the number one reason people don't walk as much as they would prefer.

- Missing sidewalks
- Limited crosswalks or pedestrian signals at intersections
- No bicycle facilities (paths, lanes, routes)

How to solve this problem?

1. Update street standards to incorporate all modes of transportation
 - Pedestrian improvements are now considered in all street projects.
 - Bicycle Plan in progress that would do the same for bicycles.
2. Update development standards to ensure adequate accommodation
 - Sidewalk Ordinance adopted in 2006 for new development
3. Invest in transportation improvements to address deficient areas
 - proposed bond projects

Project 1: Pedestrian Improvements

- Description: Annual sidewalk construction and reconstruction program
- Funding to begin addressing "walkability" in highest priority areas of the City
- This is in addition to sidewalks constructed as part of street projects and as part of new development
- Emphasis will be on safe routes to schools, "Enhancement Corridors, and "Activity Centers", by creating connections between neighborhoods and schools, parks, and shopping areas.

Example projects:

- Multiple Safe Routes to School projects
- Ridgemont/Catclaw area sidewalks
- South 1st Street sidewalks & intersection safety improvements
- Funds as matching for neighborhood sidewalk projects (50/50 match with interested neighborhoods)
- Other projects to be identified through community input

To build out the sidewalks recommended in our Safe Routes to School Plan, it was estimated at about \$64 million.

- Our proposed pedestrian improvements project is
 - Approximately 2.0 miles of sidewalks and related pedestrian improvements per year; \$528,000 per year X 6 years = \$3.168 million
 - Plus, South First Safety Project = **\$638,000**
- Funds can be leveraged with available grant programs, such as:
 - “Safe Routes to School” program funded by TxDOT
 - Federal “Transportation Enhancements” program

Project 2: Bicycle Facilities

Bike Paths:

- Extend hike & bike path along ES 11th from Cal Young Park to Cedar Creek (\$640,000)
- Hike & Bike Path along Memorial Drive, Vaughn Camp Park to south end, 1.93 miles (\$1.02 million)

Bike Lanes:

- Bike lanes on Ambler from I-20 (where TxDOT bike lanes will begin) to Cedar Creek, Treadaway, Pine Street, or Hickory. (**\$219,000**)
- Bike lanes on Butternut Street (included as part of proposed street reconstruction and “road diet” project Public Works)
- Hickory Street bike lanes from downtown to HSU (**\$181,000**)

Sidewalk & Bicycle Facilities Summary

Project 1:	Sidewalks \$3.806 million
Project 2:	Paths & Bicycle Facilities \$2.16 million

South Downtown Plan Projects

Butternut Corridor

Coordinated with Public Works’ Butternut reconstruction.

- “Road diet” from 4 lanes to 3 with addition of bike lanes and center turn lane.
- Additional streetscaping would repair and construct sidewalks and plant street trees along the route.
(First Phase, S. 1st to S. 7th - \$874,000)

Two way conversion of Oak & Chestnut

Aesthetic & pedestrian improvements

Conversion of Pine Street Underpass

- Pine Street underpass improvements and conversion of Oak/Chestnut to two-way (**\$706,000**)
- Improve Pedestrian Underpass (**\$75,000**)

South Downtown Summary

- Butternut Corridor Streetscape \$874,000 (in addition to street project)
- South Downtown Projects \$781,000

TOTAL \$1,655,000

*Animal Shelter / Adoption Center
 Challenges for Shelter*

Environment

- A/C and Heating
- Noise Level
- Lighting
- Kennel Wire

Disease Transmission

- Outdoor Kennels
- Kennel Door Fronts
- Intake/Isolation/Sick Bay
- Medical Eval./surgical room

Animal Safety

- Kennel Wire
- Outdoor Runs
- No exercise area

Structural Concerns

- Asbestos
- Roof leaks
- Noise
- Need for Education Center

Solutions – Repair

- Remove outdoor kennels, install block \$45,000
- Install refrigerated air with floor level heating \$125,000
- Install kennel specific lighting \$45,000
- Replace kennel doors – See-thru doors \$58,000
- Install noise dampening ceiling tiles \$28,000
- Install weather resistant/shade OD kennels \$55,000
- Asbestos abatement \$325,000
- Structural inspection \$24,000
- Seal all walls sir/moisture infiltration \$35,000

TOTAL \$740,000

Solutions – New

- Outdoor play group areas **\$35,000 (included in project)**

FUTURE: New Intake facility **\$500,000**

- 75 dog kennels
- 25 cat kennels
- Medical Evaluation
- Surgical Suite

FUTURE: New Adoption Facility **\$825,000**

- 75 Dog kennels
- 25 Cat kennels
- Surgical/Medical Areas
- Play rooms – Meet and Greet
- Education Center

Multimodal Facility

- A feasibility study was conducted in August 2013 by the Goodman Corporation.

Partners include:

- CityLink (Abilene municipal transit agency),
- City and Rural Rides (CARR) in Coleman,
- South Plains Community Action Agency (SPARTAN) in Levelland,
- Double Mountain Coach (DMC) in Aspermont,
- Abilene Metropolitan Planning Organization,
- and potentially Greyhound.

Project Needs

- No multimodal facility serving the West Central Texas (WCT) region.
- Lack of common space where all transit providers can coordinate trips and passenger transfers.
- Existing poor condition of CityLink’s administration and operation facility.
- A bus terminal that can support passenger and driver amenities for other rural providers operating in the Abilene area.
- Terminal improvement potential for Greyhound Bus.

Estimated Project Cost

\$ 50,000	Phase II Environmental Study
\$ 212,000	Land Acquisition
\$ 169,000	Preliminary Engineering
\$ 506,000	Design
\$10,500,000	Construction (City Match 20%)
\$ 3,500,000	Pedestrian Enhancements
\$14,937,000	TOTAL PROJECT ESTIMATE

\$ 937,000 Total Design/Land Acquisition
\$ 2,100,000 Total construction match*

*funds would only be accessed with successful grant award

SUMMARY

- Project 1: Sidewalks \$3.806 million
- Project 2: Bicycle Facilities \$2.16 million
- Project 3: South Downtown \$1.655 million
- Project 4: Animal Shelter \$775,000
- Project 5a: Multimodal Design \$937,000
- Project 5b: Multimodal Const. \$2,100,000

TOTAL \$11.433 million

Staff and bond committee discussion included: 1) Sidewalks set back in the yards. Safety issues when sidewalks are too close to street; 2) safe routes to school and sidewalks; 3) bike routes and narrowing of road lanes; and 4) disability groups – the blind and wheelchairs.

Jim Bryan Emergency Management Coordinator reviewed the proposed project for Outdoor Warning Sirens for the City.

Siren History in Abilene

Previous Outdoor Warning System

- ✓ Air raid sirens installed in the 1950s (9) and 1980 (15) were designed to warn citizens of nuclear attack or bad weather
- ✓ Local siren system deactivated in 1993 – unreliable
- ✓ All 24 sirens removed from service by April 2000
- ✓ Relied on NOAA radio alerts from deactivation until 2011 CodeRED Weather Call

CodeRED@

- Current Warning System (Weather call)
- Telephonic and geodatabase
- Automatic call
- Extremely accurate, warning ahead of the storm
- Drawback: Citizen opt-in based
- Can be tied into a Outdoor Warning System

Proposed Siren System

508 Siren System

- 128db @ 100' = 7300 @ 70db (500hz Low Frequency)
- AC with battery backup
- Three (3) Standard Warning Tones
- 2-Way Status monitoring allows instant verification that siren system is ready to go when needed
- Five (5) year factory warranty on siren head. Two (2) year factory warranty on all siren controls

Project Costs

(35) 508-128 AC/DC Rotating Siren Units

- Includes 50' Class II Wooden Poles
- Includes Batteries
- Includes Labor and Site Optimization
- Includes Interface of Customer supplied radios

(1) Activation Point

- Includes Dell Desktop PC w/22" Monitor
- Includes Desktop or Rackmount Encoder
- Includes Commander Status Monitoring Software
- Includes Install, Setup, Testing and Training Package

Total Project Cost: \$783,078.72

Staff and Bond Committee discussion included: 1) expandability into areas like the mall, colleges and the civic center; 2) expected life is 20 years; and 3) CodeRED – has lots of options for citizens to choose from for their notifications.

James Childers Director of Community Services briefed the bond committee on the proposed projects for the Civic Center and the Zoo.

Capital Needs Assessment and Proposed Bond Projects **ABILENE CIVIC CENTER**

History

- The original facility (Auditorium, Foyer, Exhibit Hall, Small Meeting Rooms, Kitchen and Offices) was completed in November 1970
Cost of \$3,488,864 100,000 sq. ft.
- Conference Center addition (Conference Center, Service Alley, Kitchen and Plaza) was completed in October 1990
Cost of \$3,150,000 30,000 sq. ft.

Modernizing the Facility

- Over two thirds of this facility is 44 years old and the “newer” parts of the facility are 24 years old
- Most of the facility is in need of considerable upgrades
- Continued capital investments are essential to ensure that the Civic Center remains a viable and recognized venue for not only our region, but the entire state
- There are two principal projects that we feel are necessary to accomplish that goal

Automated Fly System

Installation of automated fly system for the Auditorium Backstage
Cost - \$1,490,000

Counter-Weight Fly System

- The current counter-weight fly system is used to move rigging in our theatre set up
 - Curtains
 - Lights
 - Set pieces
- The current system is as old as the facility itself (44 years)
- This set up is absolutely necessary to meet the varied needs of the stage shows and events that we host
- The counter-weight system requires a considerable amount of manpower to operate

Benefits of an Automated Fly System

- The most immediate benefit of the automated fly system is that one person can do the work that is currently being performed by as many as 8 people
- The use of an automated system drastically reduces the risk of injury
- The increased safety and cost savings will continue to place the theatre in a position to attract exciting events for our auditorium

Impact of Not Upgrading Fly System

- There are several negative impacts of not upgrading the fly system:
 - ✓ As current stage personnel retire, it will become increasingly difficult to find personnel with the experience to operate the current system
 - ✓ Many have been with the theatre since it opened in 1970
 - ✓ Most high school and college theatre programs operate with an automated fly system, so the next generation of stage personnel will not be trained on how to operate this type of system
- The current manual counter-weight system will need to be replaced in the next five to ten years
 - ✓ Will cost \$600,000
- Automated system not a “phaseable” project, must be installed all at once

Civic Center Enhancement Package

- Exhibit Hall and Kitchen Renovation
 - ✓ This 20,000 sq. ft. exhibit space was part of the original construction and remains one of the most utilized parts of the facility
 - ✓ Some of the events that historically used the Conference Center have increased in size and transitioned to using the Exhibit Hall
 - ✓ The need for a larger space for banquets and luncheons has placed more “non-exhibit events” in this space
 - The goal of the renovations would be to enhance the aesthetics of the Exhibit Hall to make it more accommodating for more formal events while still servicing exhibit events
 - The examples on this slide show the new features: No ceiling tiles (painted black)
 - Upgraded lighting features
 - Professionally stained concrete floors
 - ✓ Upgrades will be made to the Exhibit Hall Kitchen to better service the increasing amount of formal events that are being held in this space
 - ✓ The current kitchen was not designed for these type of events

- ✓ There is currently no buffer visually or audibly for the activity that takes place in the kitchen

- ✓ A service alley will be constructed to provide the needed buffer

Total - \$1,318,900

- Conference Center interior doors and sound system

- ✓ After 24 years of constant use, the Conference Center needs replacement in two important areas:

- ✓ Replacement of Sound System

- ✓ Current system is showing it's age and is not working to the high standards that our customers require

- ✓ Replacement of interior doors

- ✓ Current doors showing the wear and tear of 24 years

Cost - \$120,000

- Terrazzo floor and staircase repairs

- ✓ Repairs must also be made to the two staircases located in the foyer

- ✓ Additionally, much needed electrical upgrades must be made to accommodate the needs of our customers

Floor and Staircase repairs - \$30,000

Electrical Upgrades - \$30,000

Total Costs - \$60,000

Total Conference Center Cost - \$1,538,900

Benefits of Capital Investment

- Making these needed investments to the foyer, exhibit hall and conference center will place the Civic Center a preferred destination for local, regional and statewide events

- We will address some of the few complaints we receive from our customers

- The aesthetics of exhibit hall

- The poor sound in the conference center

- Stay competitive in an increasingly competitive meeting/convention space market in the state

Impact of Not Funding Improvements

- Not making these improvements will impact our ability to draw regional and state-wide events and conferences
 - Impacts tourist dollars brought into the City
- Our “Competitors” (other cities) are building new facilities and renovating existing ones
 - Tyler, Midland and Waco have either built are in the process of building new or renovating facilities
- We would not address the few consistent complaints we receive from our otherwise happy customers

Staff and board discussion included: 1) roof damage from hail storm – being handled through self-insurance fund.

Capital Needs Assessment and Proposed Bond Projects

ABILENE ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS

The #1 Attraction in Abilene

- The Abilene Zoological Gardens has enjoyed the long standing distinction of being the #1 Attraction in the City and the Region
- Over 225,000 visitors annually
- The Abilene Zoo is the only zoo between Ft. Worth and El Paso, San Antonio and Oklahoma City
- The above facts reinforce the responsibility on the operation in educating a sizable region about the animals of the world and how to protect them and their habitats

Zoo Operations Overview

- The Abilene Zoological Society (AZS or “Society”) and the City have enjoyed a long standing and successful relationship in making our Zoo one of the best in the nation

In the simplest terms:

- The City owns the land and the facilities
- AZS owns the animals and operates the gate
- The Society reimburses the City operational budget **\$557,000**
 - This reimbursement has allowed the zoo to bring on much needed new staff members to support expanding exhibits

Zoo Master Plan

- The AZS recently commissioned a Master Plan which was completed in spring of 2014
- The AZS Board and staff identified priorities that were divided into a four phase plan that gives a clear direction for the future development of the zoo

Phase I - New Giraffe Exhibit

- The AZS recently broke ground on a \$3.8 Million Giraffe Exhibit renovation and expansion

- This project was privately funded by the Society with a \$60,000 contribution from the City
- This project represents phase 1 of the zoo strategic plan

Phase II

- Phase II of the Zoo Master Plan is focused on upgrading critical “behind the scenes” zoo operation facilities (Maintenance Facility and Animal Hospital)
- Also includes creating two new exhibits, one of which will create a much needed zoo entry exhibit

Total Cost Estimate for Phase II - **\$1,750,000**

Phase II – Support Facilities

- Maintenance Facility - **\$447,104**
 - ✓ The new maintenance facility would replace the current facility that only has 1,300 sq. ft. and will enhance the staff’s ability to properly care for the 16 acres in the park
 - ✓ Facility would also provide much needed covered parking for Zoo vehicles and equipment
- Animal Hospital - **\$725,600**
 - ✓ While the existing hospital meets the minimal standards of the Department of Agriculture and the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), a new facility would allow for sterile surgery, appropriate drug storage room, and treatment and recovery room
 - ✓ Improved care and treatment of the Zoo’s expanding animal collection provides the best experience for the animals and zoo visitors alike

Phase II – New Entry Exhibit

- Two smaller exhibits will be introduced as part of phase II

Anteater Exhibit - **\$278,676**

- ✓ Would be part of a South American Exhibit and would allow the zoo to exhibit and breed this unique species

Entry Exhibit - **\$298,620**

- ✓ Would feature a colony of African lesser flamingos and would include a shady rest area and gathering spot for visitors

Phase III

- Phase III of the Zoo Master Plan is focused on introducing all new exhibits focused on the animals of Madagascar while expanding our popular jaguar exhibit
- Renovations to fish pier and a new Bird Rehab facility

Total Cost Estimate for Phase III - **\$1,500,000**

Phase III –Madagascar Exhibit

- Madagascar Exhibit - **\$1,054,200**
 - These exhibits would encompass the south west corner of the zoo, an area that is currently underutilized and a bit of an eyesore
 - A variety of threatened and endangered species from the island would be displayed

Lemurs, Fossa, Radiated Tortoise

Phase III – Fish Pier & Bird Rehab

- Upgrades to Fish Pier - **\$105,000**
 - The fish pier is one the most popular areas of the zoo, but has begun to show wear and tear
 - The renovations will introduce shaded cover and guest seating
 - The updated pier would be available for rent for additional revenue source
- Bird Rehab Facility - **\$206,400**
 - A new facility would be constructed to replace the approximate 150 sq. ft. that is currently allocated for our wild bird rehabilitation efforts
 - The Zoo currently rehabilitates over 250 birds annually as part of the its mission to protect and promote the native species of our region

Phase III – Jaguar Facility

- Jaguar Facility - **\$134,400**
 - This renovation and expansion project would include off exhibit space for breeding and rearing this highly endangered cat
 - The breeding and propagation of jaguars is a high priority conservation objective for the AZA

Phase IV

- The 4th and final phase of the Zoo Master Plan would introduce an Australia exhibit, a komodo dragon exhibit and improvements and expansion to the parking lot

- This phase is the furthest down the line

The total cost for Phase IV - **\$2,617,000**

Phase IV – Australia Exhibit

- Australia exhibit would place a large new exhibit on the undeveloped east side of the zoo (old entrance area),
- A komodo dragon exhibit would be placed across from the reptile house
- Expanding the current parking lot to include additional spaces for a growing number of zoo visitors
 - The growing popularity of the dog park and splash pad have made parking difficult during peak times

AZS Proposal

- The AZS funded 75% of the \$4.4 Million project in the 2006 Bond
- The Society would like the Phase I \$3.8 Million, obtained from Society funds and private donations, to be considered as the Society’s “portion” of zoo improvements in the Master Plan
- They would like to see Phases II through IV funded through a potential bond program to meet their initial commitment to funding he plan
 - Phase II - \$1.75 Million
 - Phase III - \$1.5 Million
 - Phase IV - \$2.62 Million
 - **TOTAL - \$5,867,000**
- The phases can be considered for inclusion on a proposition all together or individually

Benefits of the Capital Investment

- The continued expansion of the zoo will bolster the mission of the zoo of stressing the importance of education and conservation
- Will create more family entertainment opportunities in the City
- New exhibits will increase the percentage of out of town visitors
- Currently, 9.6% of people visiting Abilene visit the Zoo

Impact of Not Funding Projects

- Not funding these improvements, especially those “behind the scenes” projects could potentially jeopardize the Zoo’s USDA License and AZA Accreditation
 - The standards for these two groups continue to go up
- The AZS must be sensitive to the generous private donations of foundations, corporations and individuals that have been made in recent years for the Giraffe Exhibit
- Private fund raising is always a challenge for critical “behind the scenes” projects

Staff and board discussion included: 1) Society receives the gate receipts; and 2) proposed hospital and the animals from other zoos.

Chairman Higgins adjourned the meeting at 4:06 p.m.

Danette Dunlap, TRMC
City Secretary

Stormy Higgins
Chairman