



An Overview of BISD's 2nd High School Discussion and Facilities Planning

Any planning of new facilities should coincide with current strategic and long range planning. The district's past practices have included: an analysis of demographic information and economic development, as well as a Board of Trustees review, with **community input**, of existing strategic plans and long range plans. Previous district planning involving community input can be found in the following efforts:

***1996 - development of Strategic Plan** that said BISD would plan for multiple high schools with populations of no more than 2200 to 2300 students. The community and the district did not want to consider MEGA High School configurations.

***2001 - Long Range Planning Committee** that first began looking into the phasing of a 2nd High School in our western zone of attendance...this is where we began considering the SH 812 and SH 21 (100 acre) site that the district owns for 2nd High School Planning. We would also ask voters to consider renovations and additions to BHS.

***2003 - High School Select Committee** was empanelled by the Board of Trustees after community voted against bond propositions for a 2nd High School for a 2nd time. This community/district committee reviewed previous planning and received input as to what voters might support in order for the district to tackle growth concerns. The result - voters voted against the 2nd High School and Renovations to the existing facility for a 3rd time, however, the Board would later table the 2nd High School and go back to the voters to ask for Renovations to the existing BHS which finally did pass in 2005.

***2007 - Long-Range Master Facility Planning Committee** was empanelled by the Board of Trustees to review previous planning for growth. This committee, along with community input put the 2nd High School back on track. This time however, the Board of Trustees began considering an alternative site to serve the Western Zone and we wound up with a locale at SH 71 and Pope Bend South.

During the most recent planning conversation the district also facilitated discussions with community members, business owners, and school officials. This is where the Board of Trustees and the district's architect guides discussion and provides information & cost estimates for planning purposes. Some of the topics covered included:

Site Selection - what do we look for in land use development?

- To ensure feasibility and to keep land use development costs manageable, this district focuses on
 - Suitability - is the location supported by the demographics? We have presented 11 (eleven) different properties to the board as possible High School sites to serve our western zone. Included in the 11 are the two properties we own today (812 at 21 and 71 at Pope Bend). You place schools in areas supported by the geography and demography...therefore no serious considerations have been given for sites east of our existing BHS campus—for example. Paige, Texas would not be supported by the demography at this time.

- Build-ability – for practical considerations as well as statute, any property considered by the Board of Trustees must have engineering studies done to ensure we are properly purchasing a property that is build-able. We do the following:
 - Antiquities and archeological studies
 - Geotech evaluations to explore the geology and soil types
 - Environmental assessment
 - Feasibility concerns as the property is consider in relation to floodplains, site drainage, topography and legal property reviews to ensure clear titles.
 - Accessibility – once we determine the demography (where the students live) we look for a site that is accessible. Of the 11 sites we’ve taken to the Board of Trustees, the majority of them have been on either SH 21 West or SH 71 West.

ACCESSIBILITY IS CRITICAL AS WELL...what we are look for in a site are:

- A site with safe access and good lines of site – after all we will be bringing car loads and bus loads of students to the facility we build and we want to be sure existing roadways can support the load.
- A site the preferably has two roadways fronting the property and both sites we presently own for HS development are bounded by two roadways.
- Generally county roadways and FM or Ranch Roads do not make for good access to a High School...we therefore then look to State Highways as they are better developed to handle larger volumes of traffic and in the case of SH 71, the protected median separating east & west travel was a good consideration.
- Ideally we would like to find a site that has existing traffic control features and protected intersections – this could be overpasses, caution lights, or red/green light operations. We work very closely with TxDot and the County to keep informed as to current and future roadway improvements.
- Proximity to utilities – since BISD is not entirely located within the confines of a municipality, utilities can be a concern. Does the property have water capacity and who will be our provider? What do we have in the way of power (electricity and gas)? Is there any wastewater support or what challenges & costs will the district have to consider for self-operated wastewater systems? ONE HUGE consideration in terms of saving the district taxpayers several hundred thousand dollars was the fact that we could partner with the LCRA at our Pope Bend/71 site for wastewater services in lieu of building our wastewater treatment plant.

SOME MORE THOUGHTS ON TRAFFIC SAFETY AND ACCESSIBILITY –

- The Pope Bend/71 Cedar Creek High School is bounded by 3 roadways that will enable the district to better distribute car and bus traffic: SH 71, Union Chapel, & Pope Bend South.
- SH 71 and Pope Bend is a major intersection that currently has a caution light warning east west travelers of a congested intersection. This intersection will have a red/green light operation by the time the new High School opens and according the TxDOT the intersection of Pope Bend and SH 71 will be slated for an overpass (at some point in the future) similar to the overpass at SH 21 & SH 71.
- Union Chapel – which fronts our property to the north – is a state roadway or state frontage road. This secondary road that runs parallel to SH 71 allows the district the opportunity to distribute traffic off of SH 71 at many different points such that we don’t have to load and unload at the new HS site directly off of SH 71.
- We have employed a Transportation Engineering Consultant to work with our Civil Engineer to design improvements on-site and access to our site to quickly and safely load and unload. These engineers use a variety of models to predict traffic behavior and they identify current & future traffic loads. They work very closely with TxDOT and the County to consider traffic flow and

*At BISD, we will have courage to do the right thing by providing **premium quality service** where the byproducts of trust and reliability are present in everything we do!*

safety concerns. As a result, the district and our county/state partners will be required to do the following:

- Create turn lanes and widen Pope Bend South along our frontage to allow access without disrupting thru-traffic.
- Our development (along with the Hyatt) has pushed the time-line for upgrading traffic safety features at this intersection to include the red/green light operations in two year's time....as well as the future overpass.
- Union Chapel will be widened slightly and improved by TxDOT. TxDOT will also work to improve the safety features and turning radius of the intersection of Union Chapel and Pope Bend South—this includes modifying the way an existing convenience store is accessed by the public on developed property that lies to our properties west.
- Internal to our property, our drives and parking configuration are designed to quickly receive traffic going to our school from off-site so that we eliminate and or relieve stacking concerns that could impact safety and thru-traffic travel.