

RECOMMENDATION REPORT

H: Via Dora Drive

APPLICANT: LJA Engineering, Inc.

JURISDICTION: ETJ

PRECINCT: Harris County Pct. 3
COUNCIL DISTRICT: N/A

PROPOSAL:

LJA Engineering, Inc. – on behalf of Castlerock Communities, L.P. – is requesting the deletion of the proposed Major Thoroughfare Via Dora Drive from Golf Club Drive to Red Summit Drive in the Major Thoroughfare and Freeway Plan (MTFP).

APPLICANT’S JUSTIFICATION and HISTORY:

LJA Engineering, Inc., is requesting this amendment on behalf of the property owner, Castlerock Communities, L.P. The subject property is Pecan Estates: a subdivision located within the City of Houston’s Extra Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) in Harris County.

Pecan Estates is a residential subdivision, consisting of approximately 193-acres of mixed-use development situated north of Beaumont Highway, east of San Jacinto River, south of Diamondhead Boulevard, and west of FM 2100. The segment of Via Dora Drive is a proposed Major Thoroughfare that would traverse the northwestern portion of the applicant’s property.

The applicant states that the current alignment of the proposed Major Thoroughfare presents significant engineering obstacles that would make the construction of this portion of the corridor extremely challenging, if not impossible. According to the applicant, the location of the floodplain and floodway would require that the proposed Major Thoroughfare be constructed and elevated above the floodplain. The applicant states further that the elevation would be costly and could possibly create adverse flooding effects within the surrounding areas. Additionally, the applicant states that several portions of the alignment would cross Jackson Bayou, a segment of the Union Pacific Railroad, and the existing transmission line infrastructure. The applicant asserts that it would be necessary to construct a bridge to cross Jackson Bayou, as well as an above-grade crossing to cross the railroad to allow for the safe flow of vehicular traffic.

Additionally, the applicant states that to comply with typical above-grade crossing requirements, the railroad crossing should be at a 90-degree angle with a slope requirement of approximately 400’ in length from the beginning to the end of the transition. This, according to the applicant, would require the existing transmission towers to be relocated. Moreover, the applicant states that an additional engineering challenge of the proposed corridor includes the necessity to meet the required tangent of 2,000’ and radius standard of 100’ that is required for a Major Thoroughfare. According to the applicant, this distance requirement could result in unanticipated construction costs and potentially require environmental impact mitigation efforts. Additionally, the applicant states that the proposed alignment bisects an historical nineteenth century gravesite that cannot be removed, relocated, or disturbed.

The proposed alignment of Via Dora Drive first appeared on the MTFP in 1992. The applicant indicated that the existing alignment proposed in the MTFP would require right-of-way (ROW)

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STAFF ANALYSIS

Population & Employment Projections

A demographic analysis using projections provided by the Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC) was conducted for the MTFP amendment proposal area. According to the H-GAC data, between 2015 and 2045, the population is projected to increase, as jobs remain steady.

Year	Population	Population Density (Persons/Acre)	% Change	Jobs	Job Density (Jobs/Acre)	% Change
2015	579	0.17		657	0.19	
2020	752	0.22	29.9%	659	0.20	0.3%
2025	971	0.29	29.1%	659	0.20	0.0%
2030	1,334	0.40	37.4%	659	0.20	0.0%
2035	1,592	0.47	19.3%	659	0.20	0.0%
2040	1,712	0.51	7.5%	659	0.20	0.0%
2045	1,564	0.46	-8.6%	659	0.20	0.0%
Change (2015 to 2045)	985	0.29	170.1%	2	0.00	0.3%
COH Change (2015 to 2045)	919,984	2.14	40.2%	548,987	1.28	30.5%
COH ETJ Change (2015 to 2045)	1,530,387	0.3	58.7%	637,772	0.5	71.9%

Source: 2015-2045 Demographic Projections by H-GAC released in 2018. This represents the most current data available at the time of publishing.

Data represents population, jobs, and households in 4 Traffic Analysis Zones encompassing approximately 3,374 acres around the proposed amendment.

Land Use and Platting Activity

Land use surrounding the proposed deletion of Via Dora Drive is mixed. The alignment traverses agriculture production with industrial and commercial uses primarily situated to the east. To the west and south of the alignment, land use is predominately undeveloped commercial. A summary of platting activity that has occurred within the study area is shown below. There have been 6 plats filed in the area of the proposed amendment since 2014, with over half of them filed since 2021. The plats are primarily distributed east of the proposed amendment area.

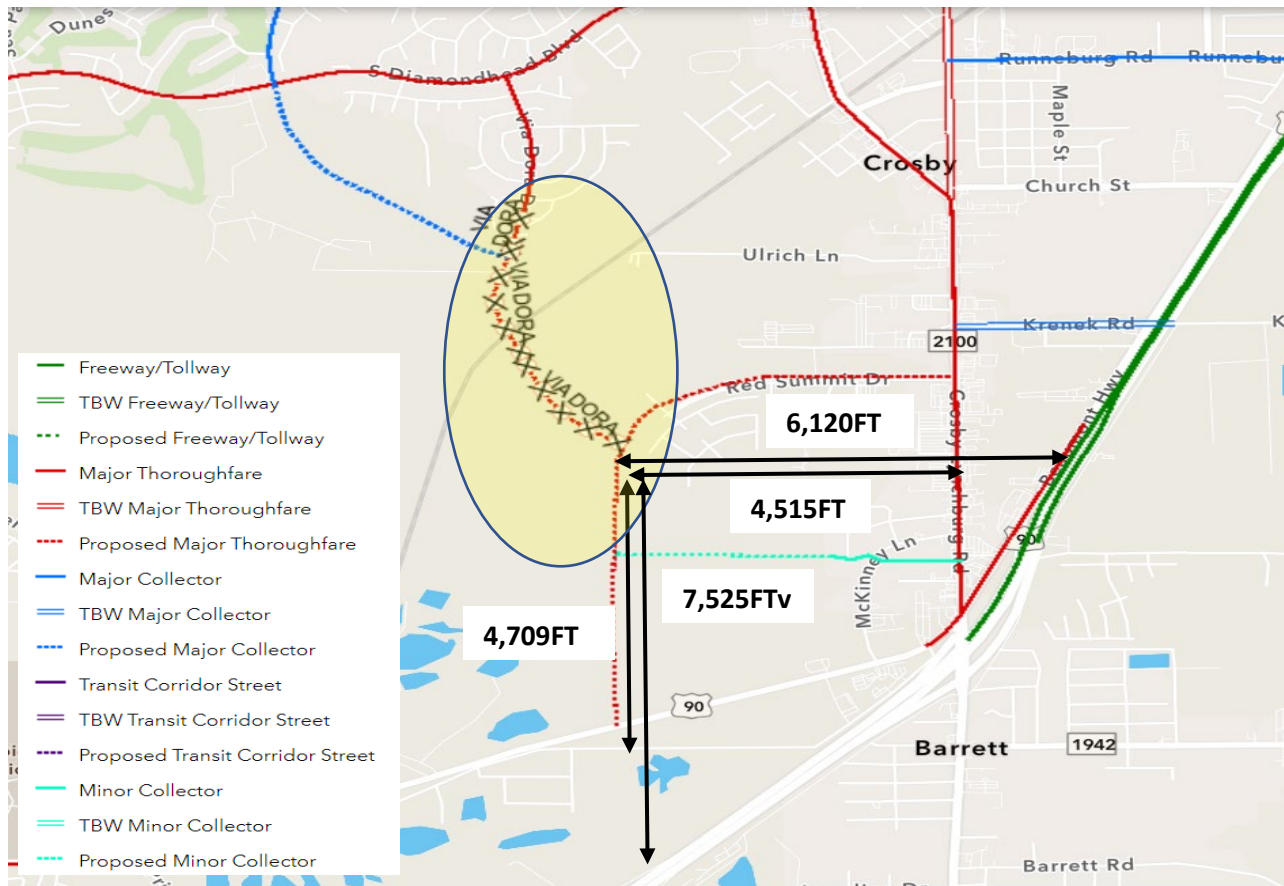
GP or Subdivision Plat Name	PC Action Date	Land Use	Property Size (acres)	Lots
Dell Creek Sec 1	03/30/2023	Park and Open Space	9.5200	0
Dell Creek GP	03/30/2023	Industrial	27.5357	0

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GP or Subdivision Plat Name	PC Action Date	Land Use	Property Size (acres)	Lots
Salazar Partition	10/28/2021	Industrial	5.6100	1
Newport Wastewater Treatment Plant	06/24/2021	Commercial	21.2340	0
Newport Sec 8 partial replat no 4	06/09/2016	Commercial	19.9820	43
Crosby High School Sec 1	09/04/2014	Industrial	80.0790	0

Right of Way (ROW) Status

This segment of Via Dora Drive does not currently exist and is proposed as a Major Thoroughfare with 100' ROW. The section of Via Dora Drive proposed to be deleted from the MTFP is approximately 8,800' in length. In the amendment area, Via Dora Drive exists just north of the proposed deletion, with 100' ROW. The existing segment of the Major Thoroughfare is approximately 2,359'.



<https://mycity.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=54b1132148c540a9ae8a88d461d84d8b>

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Travel Demand Analysis

To better understand the potential effects of the deletion request, H-GAC provided the City of Houston with a Travel Demand Modeling (TDM) scenario, with the base year of 2015 and long-range plan to 2045. As shown in the table below, the proposed deletion request would result in a significant increase in traffic volume shifting to South Diamondhead Boulevard, Crosby Huffman Road, and Red Summit Drive. Moreover, the deletion of the proposed Major Thoroughfare would impact north/south connectivity, from South Diamondhead Boulevard to Red Summit Drive, as the absence of the corridor, would affect access to and from Crosby Independent School District (ISD) facilities, commercial development, and residential properties.

Segment	2020 Volumes	2045 Volumes per MTFP	2045 Volumes with Proposed Amendment
South Diamondhead Boulevard: Via Dora Dr., to Crosby Huffman Rd.	5,220	10,662	20,865
Via Dora Drive: South Gangway Dr., to Red Summit Dr.	N/A	33,153	N/A
Crosby Huffman Road: South Diamondhead Blvd., to FM 2100	21,615	36,707	51,267
Red Summit Drive: Heckler Dr., to Crosby Lynchburg Rd.	N/A	7,729	13,503

RECOMMENDATION:

DENY the request to delete the proposed Major Thoroughfare Via Dora Drive from Golf Club Drive to Red Summit Drive.

APPROVE staff proposed alternative to reclassify the proposed Major Thoroughfare Via Dora Drive as a Minor Collector, from South Diamondhead Boulevard to Red Summit Drive.

Justification

Deleting the proposed Major Thoroughfare Via Dora Drive will not have a significant impact on population, employment, land use, or platting. However, deletion of the proposed Major Thoroughfare would increase travel demand on South Diamondhead Boulevard, Crosby Huffman Road, and Red Summit Drive, as these corridors will have to accommodate travel shifting from parts of the roadway network. Additionally, neither City staff nor Harris County support the deletion request, as the proposed Major Thoroughfare will serve as an important connection to the Crosby Independent School District facilities, and two residential communities in the area. However, to reduce the required ROW for the proposed infrastructure, staff support reclassifying the proposed corridor to a Minor Collector. The reclassification of the corridor will serve two functions: 1. Preserve the transportation network by accommodating future connectivity and mobility in the area; and 2. Reduce the ROW width requirement by 40' (20' on both sides of the corridor). The reduction in ROW width will have a positive affect by reducing the impact in the area, causing the corridor to bypass the historic grave site, and therefore negating the necessity of the deletion request. Finally, the proposal to extend the Minor Collector classification from South

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Diamondhead Boulevard to Red Summit Drive maintains the safety and integrity of the street grid, by not dividing the Major Thoroughfare in the middle of the corridor. There were no public comments received on this proposal.