

DRAFT STAFF RECOMMENDATION REPORT

F3: Blue Bell Road

APPLICANT: Harris County Engineering Department / Planning and Development Dept.

KEY MAP: 412

JURISDICTION: Harris County, City of Houston

LAMBERT:5263, 5363

DISTRICT/PRECINCT:

Harris County Pct. 1

City Council District H

PROPOSAL:

The Harris County Engineering Department (HCED) along with the City of Houston Planning and Development Department (P&D), as co-applicants, is requesting the addition of the Minor Collector Blue Bell Road from I-45 to Airline Drive to the Major Thoroughfare and Freeway Plan (MTFP).

APPLICANT'S JUSTIFICATION and HISTORY:

The City of Houston is a co-applicant for this amendment because the road section between IH 45 to Sweetwater Lane is within the city limits of Houston. The other section from Sweetwater Lane to Airline Drive is located in unincorporated Harris County and is proposed to be amended by HCED. Last year, P&D conducted a "*Northwest Subregional Mobility Study*". One study recommendation was to designate Blue Bell Road as a Minor Collector between SH 249 and IH 45.

The City of Houston is currently coordinating with Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) regarding the "*North Houston Highway Improvement Study*." TxDOT is evaluating the potential of a Blue Bell Road underpass at IH 45. This will allow for the continuation of Blue Bell Road across IH 45, improving local connectivity. This connection prompts the request to extend Blue Bell Road as a Minor Collector to Airline Drive. Classifying this roadway as a Minor Collector is consistent with its current function to accumulate traffic from local streets for distribution to a Major Thoroughfare or a Major Collector. A Minor Collector typically has residential uses, however it may also serve commercial or mixed uses. Blue Bell Road would connect with Airline Drive, a Major Thoroughfare to the east and IH 45 northbound frontage road to the west.

From the above scenarios, it would make sense to upgrade Blue Bell Road as a Minor Collector which would create a Minor Collector corridor from SH 249 to Airline Drive. Looking to the east in the future, the city may consider upgrading Aldine Mail Route/Hawkins roads which are proposed to be constructed as Major Collectors. This would continue the collector designation to the east to Sweeney Road. This may in turn necessitate the need to eliminate the West Mount Houston thoroughfare section between Airline Road and Sweeney Road.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVE the addition of Blue Bell Road from IH 45 to Airline Drive as a Minor Collector to the MTFP.

Justification:

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This section of Blue Bell Road extends east from IH 45 to Airline Drive. Blue Bell Road to the west of IH 45 is currently classified as a Minor Collector and is proposed to extend west to SH 249. The proposed Minor Collector classification for this section of Blue Bell Road is consistent with the roadway’s current function to accumulate traffic from local streets to the Major Thoroughfare system. Additionally the City has requested TxDOT to evaluate the potential for a grade separated crossing at IH 45 and Blue Bell to improve local east west circulation across IH 45. This provides additional justification for classifying this section of Blue Bell Road as a Minor Collector, as the inclusion of Blue Bell on the MTFP will communicate the importance of this future connection in providing additional east-west connectivity in the amendment area.

STAFF ANALYSIS:

Population & Employment Projections:

A demographic analysis, using the Houston-Galveston Area Council (HGAC) projections, was conducted for the area surrounding the proposed Blue Bell Road MTFP amendment alignment. Population in this area is forecast to more than double from approximately 8,000 in 2015 to 21,000 in 2040. This pace of growth will far outpace the growth expected for the City of Houston and its ETJ. However, based on current trends, employment in this area is forecast to remain relatively low. As the gap between population and employment becomes greater, this area will further develop as a suburban bedroom community.

Year	Population	Population Density (Persons/Acre)	% Change	Jobs	Job Density (Jobs/Acre)	% Change
2015	8,346	4.9	-	4,456	2.6	-
2020	9,313	5.5	11.6%	4,551	2.7	2.1%
2030	14,291	8.5	53.5%	6,291	3.7	38.2%
2040	21,003	12.4	47.0%	7,737	4.6	23.0%
Change (2015 to 2040)	12,657	7.5	151.7%	3,281	1.9	73.6%
COH change (2015 to 2040)	644,968	1.5	27.7%	667,377	1.6	35.7%
COH ETJ change (2015 to 2040)	1,215,880	1.6	57.3%	399,919	0.5	63.7%

Source: 2015-2040 Demographic Projections by H-GAC

Data represents population, jobs, and households in 4 Traffic Analysis Zones (TAZ) encompassing approximately 1,600 acres around the proposed amendment. Population projections do not include projections for group housing.

Land Use and Platting Activity:

The land use along the corridor is mixed. On the north and south sides of the road, there is a mix of single family residential and commercial properties. Recorded plats called Blue Bell Place Sec 1 and Sec 2 created lots on the north and south side of Blue Bell Road between IH 45 and Airline Drive for residential and commercial use. Platting activity in the general area is indicated in the table below.

Subdivision Name	PC Action Date	Land Use	Property Size-Acres	Lots
Hill Vista	6/20/2013	Commercial	2.00	

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Aldine Heights Drive Street Dedication	10/3/2013	Street dedication	0.58
Al Hardware	10/3/2013	Unrestricted	1.15
Blue Bell Terrace	11/14/2013	SF Residential (private streets)	25.02 94
Hawkins Heights Drive Street Dedication Sec 1	12/5/2013	Street dedication	0.58
Greens Landing Victory Packaging Facility	2/6/2014	Commercial	9.09
Blue Bell Vista	3/6/2014	Commercial	1.06
Harris County ESD 17 Airline Drive	8/21/2014	Unrestricted	14.58
Aldine Heights Drive Street Dedication Sec 1	9/4/2014	Street dedication	0.58
Blue Bell Terrace GP	5/28/2015	General plan	33.76
EAST HELMS CENTER	4/14/2016	Unrestricted	2.55
Aldine Career and Technology	5/12/2016	Unrestricted	54.81
Aldine ISD Senior High School	5/26/2016	School and related uses	76.52

Right-of-Way (ROW Status):

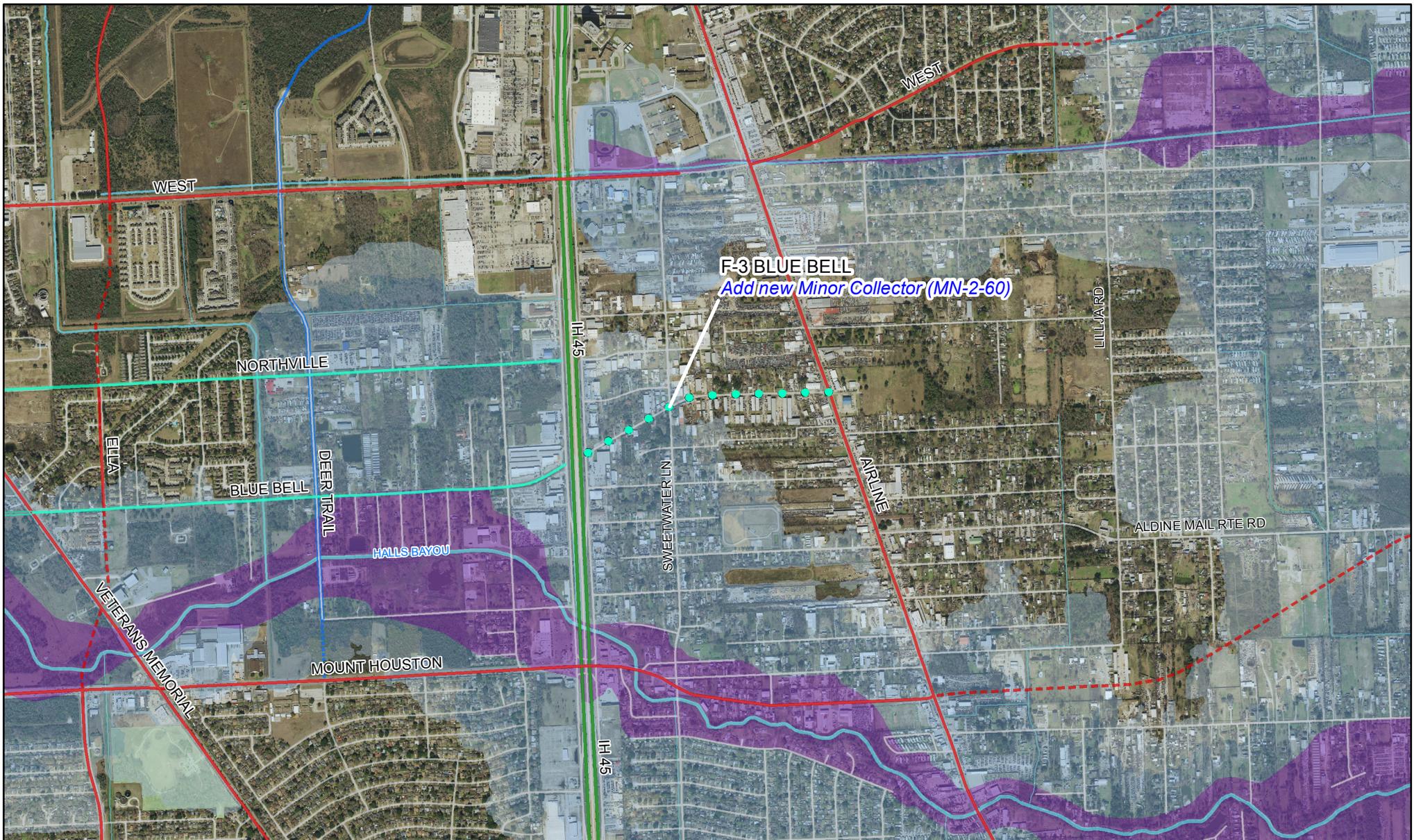
Blue Bell Road has an existing 60-foot ROW from IH 45 to Airline Drive. Blue Bell currently exists as a 60-foot road ROW west of IH 45. The majority of the 60-foot ROW between IH 45 and Airline Drive was dedicated by the recorded plats Blue Bell Place Sec. 1 & 2 in the early 1940's. The portion of Blue Bell in unincorporated Harris County is currently maintained by Harris County as a 60-foot ROW. The pavement width and type along the entire corridor from IH 45 to Airline Drive is a 20-foot asphalt roadway.

Spacing:

This portion of Blue Bell Road is located approximately two miles south of the intersection of IH 45 and Beltway 8, running east to west from IH 45 to Airline Drive. Blue Bell runs parallel to two existing major thoroughfares, West Road approximately 0.6 mile to the north and Mount Houston Road approximately 0.5 mile to the south. North-south and east-west major thoroughfares in this area are spaced approximately 1.0 to 1.5 miles apart.

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Street	From	To	Classification	Direction	Spacing
Airline Drive	Fallbrook Drive	West Road	T-4-100	N-S	1.19 mi
	West Road	Blue Bell Road	T-4-100	N-S	0.57 mi
	Blue Bell Road	Mount Houston Road	T-4-100	N-S	0.78 mi
	Mount Houston Road	Gulf Bank Road	T-4-100	N-S	0.56 mi
Blue Bell Road	Ella Blvd	Deer Trail Drive	MN-2-60	E-W	0.51 mi
	Deer Trail Drive	I-45	MN-2-60	E-W	0.62 mi
	I-45	Airline Drive	MN-2-60	E-W	0.62 mi
Deer Trail Drive	West Road	Northville Street	MJ-4-70	N-S	0.45 mi
	Northville Street	Blue Bell Road	MJ-4-70	N-S	0.29 mi
	Blue Bell Road	Mount Houston Road	MJ-4-70	N-S	0.45 mi
I-45	Fallbrook Drive	West Road	Freeway	N-S	1.15 mi
	West Road	Blue Bell Road	Freeway	N-S	0.67 mi
	Blue Bell Road	Mount Houston Road	Freeway	N-S	0.50 mi
	Mount Houston Road	Gulf Bank Road	Freeway	N-S	0.62 mi
Mount Houston Road	Veterans Memorial Drive	Deer Trail Drive	P-6-120/180	E-W	0.40 mi
	Deer Trail Drive	I-45	P-6-120/180	E-W	0.62 mi
	I-45	Airline Drive	T-4-100	E-W	0.83 mi
Northville Street	Ella Blvd	Deer Trail Drive	MN-2-60	E-W	0.51 mi
	Deer Trail Drive	I-45	MN-2-60	E-W	0.62 mi
West Road	Ella Blvd	Deer Trail Drive	T-4-100	E-W	0.41 mi
	Deer Trail Drive	I-45	T-4-100	E-W	0.67 mi
	I-45	Airline Drive	T-4-100	E-W	0.45 mi
	Airline Drive	W. Hardy Road	T-4-100	E-W	1.68 mi



2016 Major Thoroughfare and Freeway Plan Recommendation: F-3 Blue Bell Road

2016 MTFP Amendment

- | | | | | |
|---------|---|------------|--------------|---|
| Add | ● | Reclassify | Street Class | ■ |
| Realign | ⊙ | | ROW Width | ▲ |
| Remove | ⊗ | | No. Lanes | ◆ |

2015 MTFP

- | | | | |
|-------------------------|------------------|--------------|----------------|
| Freeway | — (thick green) | Local Street | — (thin black) |
| Major Thoroughfare | — (thick red) | Railroad | — (dashed red) |
| Major Collector | — (thick blue) | Waterway | — (light blue) |
| Minor Collector | — (thick cyan) | Park | ■ (green) |
| Transit Corridor Street | — (thick purple) | | |

