

RECOMMENDATION REPORT

C: Miller Wilson and Unnamed Collector

APPLICANT: LJA Engineering

PRECINCT: Harris County Pct. 2

JURISDICTION: City of Houston ETJ

COUNCIL DISTRICT: None

PROPOSAL:

LJA Engineering – on behalf of Woodmere Development Co., Ltd – is requesting the realignment of major thoroughfare Miller Wilson Road and the addition of a minor collector (MN-2-60) where Miller Wilson Road is currently proposed between Wolf Road and FM1960.

APPLICANT’S JUSTIFICATION and HISTORY:

This realignment will impact a future phase of a residential development project currently underway. Approval of this request would push Miller Wilson to the east to align with Scott Road and extend north and south to rejoin where the Major Thoroughfare and Freeway Plan currently extends Miller Wilson Road. This will take advantage of the undeveloped properties and bypass the large-lot single family residences north of Wolf Road which are currently directly within the path of the major thoroughfare. This shift will positively impact the MTFP by aligning the thoroughfare with the built environment.

In addition to the shift in the thoroughfare, is the request to add a new collector road into the MTFP network. This collector road will be placed where the current major thoroughfare is mapped – running from Wolf Road to FM 1960 and taking advantage of a County-constructed culvert. This change will increase the connectivity of the area and create a higher quality roadway network. If this request were not considered this year development of this project will be halted. To date no discussions have been had with adjacent property owners.

RECOMMENDATION:

DENY request to realign Major Thoroughfare Miller Wilson Road and DENY the request to add an unnamed minor collector (MN-2-60) on the MTFP.

Justification:

The request to realign Miller Wilson Road, a proposed major thoroughfare (T-4-100), and add a minor collector (MN-2-60), do not align with the Major Thoroughfare and Freeway Plan policy to maintain maximum mobility and accessibility. In its current alignment, Miller Wilson Road establishes appropriate intersection spacing between adjacent major thoroughfares, provides access to commercial and residential areas, and maintains grid-based connectivity. Its designation as a Major Thoroughfare allows for traffic to accumulate from local streets for distribution through the thoroughfare and freeway system. Such characteristics closely align with the Major Thoroughfare and Freeway Plan policy, whereas the amendment request departs from the afore mentioned characteristics. Additionally, the amendment request shifts right-of-way dedication to the Luce Bayou Interbasin Transfer Project and realigns portions of Miller Wilson Road directly into the floodway.

Intersection Spacing

In this area of northwest Houston, major thoroughfares are widely spaced. The amendment requests deleting portions of proposed major thoroughfare Miller Wilson Road and realigning it further east, which would increase intersection spacing between major thoroughfares. This has the potential to negatively impact accessibility and connectivity.

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The applicant proposes deleting portions of Miller Wilson Road north of Wolf Road and south of FM 1960, increasing intersection spacing between adjacent major thoroughfares by 2,662ft and 3,428ft respectively. North of Wolf Road, deleting Miller Wilson Road and realigning it further east, would make a 1.5-mile stretch between north-south major thoroughfares Crosby Huffman Road and the requested realignment of Miller Wilson Road. South of FM 1960, deleting Miller Wilson Road would create a nearly 2-mile stretch between north-south major thoroughfares. Chapter 42 codifies a major thoroughfare shall intersect with a public local street, a collector street or another major thoroughfare at least every 2,600ft.

Street Classification and Context

The current designation and alignment of Miller Wilson Road as a major thoroughfare (T-4-100) is appropriate for distributing traffic and providing access to commercial and mixed-use land uses in the amendment area. The amendment requests adding a minor collector (MN-2-60) two miles in length, in place of a portion of Miller Wilson Road. A minor collector of this length is not typical of the MTFP and a minor collector is characteristic of mostly residential uses.

Realigning Miller Wilson Road to the east, as a major thoroughfare with 100' right-of-way, places it directly adjacent to two schools, Hargrave High School and Huffman Middle School, and L.T. May Park. Both public amenities are more appropriately accommodated by existing local street Willy Lane. The MTFP policy states that "local streets form the street network that provides access to residential properties, private development, and other neighborhood amenities such as parks, schools or grocery stores." Neighborhood amenities necessitate collectors or local streets designed to decrease vehicle speeds and serve destination-based, rather than thru, traffic.

Grid Street Network

The current alignment of Miller Wilson Road maintains grid-based connectivity in an area projected to grow considerably in both employment and population size. A street grid is an important feature for intuitive mobility, accommodating changing land uses and demand for commercial, residential, and open space stemming from increased population and job density.

The amendment requests to realign a 4.5-mile segment of Miller Wilson Road to the east with reverse curves at the north and south ends of the segment. The request deletes the grid connection established between Miller Wilson Road and FM 1960 (4,572ft deletion) and Miller Wilson Road and Wolf Road (5,783ft deletion). The applicant proposes to curve Miller Wilson Road by about 3,500ft to the east. Both deletions decrease grid connectivity in the amendment area.

Luce Bayou Interbasin Transfer Project

The request to realign Miller Wilson Road shifts right-of-way dedication from one area of parcels to another. This is especially noteworthy because of the Coastal Water Authority's Luce Bayou Interbasin Transfer Project (LBITP). In its plans to provide additional surface water supplies to people who utilize water from Lake Houston, the Coastal Water Authority's LBITP accounted for the existing alignment of Miller Wilson Road.

The Coastal Water Authority built Canal Segment 1, the southeast most portion of the LBITP, with the inclusion of a north-south bridge to accommodate Miller Wilson Road as a major thoroughfare with 100' right-of-way. At this location, the applicant requests to reclassify Miller Wilson Road to a minor collector with 60' right-of-way. It shifts 100' right-of-way dedication to the east, placing it adjacent to another portion of Canal Segment 1. Currently, this north-south portion of the canal is adjacent to Scott Road,

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an existing local street with approximately 20ft in pavement width. Thus, adjacent property owners, including the Coastal Water Authority, would be required to dedicate 100ft right-of-way.

Floodway and Floodplain

The amendment requests to realign Miller Wilson Road to the east, placing southern portions of the thoroughfare directly in the Harris County floodway. Near the intersection of FM 1960, a 1.25-mile segment of Miller Wilson would be within the floodway. It is in the best interest of the public health, safety, and welfare to reserve the floodway to discharge the base flood without cumulatively increasing the water surface elevation.

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, the population of the surrounding area is expected to grow by 960 percent from 2015 to 2045, which is much higher than the expected population growth for the City of Houston and the ETJ. Job density is projected to increase by 227 percent.

Year	Population	Population Density (Persons/Acre)	% Change	Jobs	Job Density (Jobs/Acre)	%Change
2015	1,534	0.2		657	0.1	
2020	1,454	0.2	-5.2%	669	0.1	1.8%
2025	1,687	0.2	16.0%	674	0.1	0.7%
2030	2,156	0.3	27.8%	1,049	0.1	55.6%
2035	7,928	0.9	267.7%	1,655	0.2	57.8%
2040	12,859	1.5	62.2%	1,990	0.2	20.2%
2045	16,262	1.9	26.5%	2,147	0.3	7.9%
Change (2015 to 2045)	14,728	1.8	960.1%	1,490	0.2	226.8%
COH Change (2015 to 2045)	919,984	2.1	40.2%	548,987	1.3	30.5%
COH ETJ Change (2015 to 2045)	1,532,230	1.3	58.9%	635,399	0.5	73.1%

Source: 2015-2045 Demographic Projections by H-GAC released in 2018

Data represents population, jobs, and households in 3 Traffic Analysis Zones (TAZ) encompassing approximately 8,891 acres around the proposed amendment

Land Use and Platting Activity:

Land uses surrounding the amendment requests are a mix of undeveloped, agriculture, and single-family development. A high school is located along the requested realignment of Miller-Wilson. Platting activity within the last five years in the immediate area of the amendment requests are listed below.

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GP or Subdivision Plat Name	PC Action Date	Land Use	Property Size (acres)	Lots
Zacartys Complex replat no 1	10/15/15	Single Family Residential	4.6	1
Wolf Road Tract Sec 1	04/02/20	Drainage or Detention, Landscape or Open Space, Single Family Residential	18.2	64
Wolf Road Tract	04/02/20	General Plan	347.9	-
Huffman Business Park	04/27/17	Commercial	13.38	-
Wolf Trot Properties	04/28/16	Single-Family Residential	426.19	49

Right of Way (ROW) Status:

Miller Wilson Road is a proposed major thoroughfare with four lanes and 100' right-of-way. The request is to reclassify a portion of Miller Wilson Road to a minor collector with two lanes and 60' right-of-way. This request reclassifies an approximate 1.9 mile segment of Miller Wilson Road from Wolf Road to FM 1960. The applicant is naming this to an unnamed collector. The current designation is aligned both along property lines and within property boundaries.

The amendment requests a realignment of Miller Wilson Road approximately 0.7 miles to the east. The realignment request maintains the current MTFP designation of T-4-100. Of the 4.5-mile realignment request, 1.4 miles is proposed along existing Scott Road which has approximately 25' of pavement width.

Spacing:

