



**Trails End Edition**

**PROJECT UPDATE**

**October, 2007**

About 75 residents attended a meeting at Mason Elementary on September 25, 2007 on the raw water pipeline planned for construction in late spring or early summer of 2008 in the Trails End Road right of way. This was the second of two neighborhood events to provide information and solicit input from Trails End residents. An open house was held on June 26.

Round Rock City Manager Jim Nuse welcomed attendees and gave a project overview. Chris Lippe, Brushy Creek Regional Utility Authority General Manager, Drew Hardin with Carter & Burgess, and other team members provided technical expertise, and Jonestown Mayor Deane Armstrong served as a moderator. James Cowis of the LCRA also attended to answer questions regarding management of Lake Travis.

A comprehensive list of questions, answers and comments from the meeting can be found on the project website ([www.bcrua.org](http://www.bcrua.org)). For purposes of this project update, we're addressing the key issues we heard not only at this meeting, but also at other meetings and during interactions with residents over the past several months.

#### **PROJECT SUMMARY AND NEED**

The cities of Round Rock, Cedar Park and Leander have formed a partnership as the Brushy Creek Regional Utility Authority (BCRUA) to build a new water treatment plant, pipelines, intake and other infrastructure. Even with water conservation measures, the three cities will run out of water for people, emergency services, schools, industry and other uses unless they act soon to expand their water supply. Without a new system, the cities' supply of water will be inadequate in as few as three years. By working together, the cities will reduce the cost of the project (expected to cost approximately \$350 million) and avoid a vast amount of duplication.

Currently, the project team is in the design phase for the treatment plant, which will be located in Cedar Park. Consultants are preparing to begin a re-evaluation of potential sites for a deep-water intake on Lake Travis in the Volente area, and the team is in the 30 percent design phase for the pipeline along Trails End Road. It is anticipated we will be holding a public meeting in February with Trails End residents to discuss 60 percent design plans.

We thank you for your input to date. Some of you have let the project team know of topography issues that might impact the alignment. We appreciate that. Others have suggested formats and locations for public meetings, which we've incorporated into our outreach plans.

#### **ISSUE: Other Route Alternatives**

Many Trails End residents have let us know in no uncertain terms they oppose the pipeline going up Trails End Road and believe we should have found another route for the pipeline. Residents have asked, "Why haven't you explored other options?" In fact, we have done so. The project team conducted an exhaustive analysis, and, until this past spring, believed four routes were feasible. Unfortunately, the final analysis eliminated the three routes traveling through the environmentally sensitive Balcones Canyonlands Preserve (BCP) because of karst features and protected environmental species.

Placing utilities in an existing road and right of way is an industry best practice. However, we recognize the inconvenience to nearby residents. We've heard and explored alternative ideas. For example, some Trails End residents have asked why we can't run the pipe aboveground in the BCP. Placing a 6-½ foot pipe aboveground would not be acceptable to BCP conservators and would introduce a major risk for damage to the pipe. Some residents suggested reducing the size of the pipe and using a City of Austin-owned quarry to store water. We considered this but determined the option was not viable because the quarry would have to be in the range of 140 to 150 feet deep throughout its entire surface area to provide

significant enough storage to just reduce the pipe size to 54 inches. Plus, there could be obstacles to acquiring the quarry from its municipal owner.

#### **ISSUE: Lake Travis Levels**

There's been a great deal of concern expressed over the idea that this project will drain Lake Travis. We believe some of that concern has come from simple misunderstanding as well as misinformation. While we should all be aware of the need to protect this beautiful resource, it's important to note that Lake Travis is a variable level reservoir, created decades ago for the primary purposes of providing water, electricity, and flood control. The cities of Round Rock, Leander, and Cedar Park have legal contracts with the LCRA, which manages the lake according to state regulations. Lakes Travis and Buchanan have a combined capacity of about 650 billion gallons. This project will use only a fraction of the water the LCRA has rights to sell. If the reservoir were full, as it is at present, and you took all the water the three cities are allowed in a year out of Lake Travis instantaneously (that is, you took 67,000 acre feet out at once) it would drop the lake level by about four feet. Granted, as time goes by and more water is used in this region due to population increases, it will affect lake levels. That's why it's important to manage this resource wisely. We believe the BCRUA project is a responsible use of water intended first for public consumption.

#### **ISSUE: Tunneling Versus Trenching**

Some of you have asked why we're not tunneling instead of trenching along Trails End Road. We are tunneling for the 6-½ foot pipeline under the Sandy Creek Arm of Lake Travis to the south end of the right-of-way of Trails End Road. Open cut and cover methods will be used within the right of way of Trails End Road to its intersection with RM 1431. This will typically require excavation of a trench with a width of approximately 10 feet and a depth of 11 to 14 feet. Because of the cost of tunneling, open-cut construction methods are the preferred methods of construction for most pipelines except when there are major obstructions that must be avoided. The most critical area for open-cut construction for the Trails End Road pipeline is between the Trails End HOA Park and First Street on the southern end of Trails End Road. Tunneling was considered for this portion of the alignment to avoid surface disturbance of this narrow working area. However, it was determined tunneling would cost an additional \$2 million to \$3 million and would only eliminate about six to ten weeks of open-cut construction in this area.

#### **ISSUE: Environmental Impacts**

Some of you have asked whether we've considered possible environmental impacts. The answer is yes. We are preparing an environmental assessment report that will address endangered species, cultural resources, vegetation, wetlands and waters of the United States and jurisdictional waters. Any concerns that are identified in this report will be addressed in design prior to construction

#### **ISSUE: Possibility of a Pipeline Break/Flooding**

This issue involves several questions. Among them—what if the pipeline breaks? How much water are we talking about, and where would the water go? First, the chances are extremely remote for a pipe break creating major surface damage. Typically, when there is a failure in a pipeline, it is a very small leak to begin with. You would experience a muddy spot or see moisture at the location of the leak. But, let's say there is a significant break. The total volume of water in the pipeline if the pipe were full for the entire length would be about seven million gallons. As a safeguard, the pumps would shut off when they sensed a pressure loss in the pipe, or if a leak or break were observed and reported. Finally, the direction of flow and the exact impacts would depend greatly on the specific location of a pipe break. The project team will be examining these issues further as design progresses.

#### **ISSUE: Impacts on the Neighborhood and Way of Life**

This issue is made up of several components (e.g., construction impacts, being "whole" at the end of the project, and treating residents and the neighborhood in a considerate and respectful manner during construction). Each of these issues is discussed below.

##### ***Construction Impacts***

Construction in the Trails End Road right of way is expected to last for about two years, including pre-construction work, repaving, inspection, and clean-up. We acknowledge it will be dusty and noisy at times and traffic will be somewhat impacted. However, we have a number of mechanisms under consideration to lessen the inconvenience.

##### ***Dust Control***

BCRUA is evaluating several measures to minimize the dust that is transported from the construction site to neighboring homes and properties. Methods of dust control that have been used with success include watering, mulching and seeding, soil stabilizers, and, in some rare cases, mechanical dust removal equipment. It is not anticipated at this time that air

quality monitoring stations will be set up for this project, but rather visual inspections will occur to ensure that proper dust control measures are in place and are working.

### ***Access for Emergency Vehicles/Safety***

Some residents who have relatives with health conditions are worried that emergency vehicles may not be able to reach homes quickly enough. We are planning to keep two lanes of traffic open for the majority of the Trails End alignment by constructing a temporary lane of traffic. We will have a barrier, likely a concrete bulkhead, separating the construction from the lane of traffic so that school buses and emergency vehicles will not be impeded. Where we have one lane of traffic in the lower portion of Trails End Road south of First Street, we will have flagging personnel to direct traffic. It's important to note that the contractor will be required to maintain access to driveways at all times. The only exception is when pipe needs to be installed directly in front of a driveway. In such a case, a resident's driveway will be shut down for a short period of time (estimated at two to four hours). You will be contacted well in advance to coordinate a convenient time that does not create an undue hardship.

### ***Trees***

We are going to do everything we possibly can to avoid mature oaks and hard woods. We believe there are some areas where we have the opportunity to narrow down the working area to avoid the larger trees. At this point, we do not see conflict with many mature oaks along the alignment. We have identified all oaks and other hardwood trees with a diameter greater than eight inches in our survey.

### ***Erosion***

Erosion control measures will be put in place to ensure that sediment is not transported outside of the construction area. Within the construction area, the surface will be restored to as good or better conditions prior to completion of construction. This will include replacing topsoil and restoration of vegetation in the disturbed area.

### ***Way of Life After the Project***

Many Trails End residents tell us they're proud of the work they've done to enhance an already beautiful neighborhood. You've told us that over the past several decades you've raised your families in a serene environment and have even laid to rest family pets on your property. You don't want the gravesites disturbed. We understand that.

### ***Restoring the Neighborhood***

We've told you we expect some trees will have to be cut down, and it will take some time for any new plantings to reach maturity. And, we know the current plants and trees will get dusty from the work. But, we're pledging to do everything we can to keep a clean jobsite and restore your neighborhood to its current state or better. When we're done, you will have a re-built road.

### ***Damages/Compensation***

Several residents have asked whether the BCRUA will pay damages or name anyone as additional insureds or carry long-term insurance for the pipeline, for example. During construction, all contractors will be required to carry liability insurance and will be responsible for any damages associated with this project. After the completion and acceptance of the facilities, warranties will be in place from both manufacturers and contractors. Other than these types of insurance, the BCRUA board has not yet considered how much and what type of insurances to carry. However, BCRUA will pay damages as required by law.

### ***Considerate Treatment***

Of paramount importance to the BCRUA is that each member of the project team treats impacted residents with the utmost respect and consideration. Our work will be limited to reasonable hours. Supervisors will be on site should any issues arise and residents will have a way to contact the project team with any concerns or questions.

### ***Trust***

You've told us a past pipeline project left your property damaged and that promises weren't kept. We are truly sorry that happened. It is understandable that residents are upset at the prospect of another pending disruption to their lives and property. In addition, with our project, some of you say you feel "blind-sided"—that we've been planning this for years, but you're just now hearing about it. It is true that the three cities have long been researching water supplies for future needs and that Lake Travis was identified as the best source several years ago. But, how to get the water from the lake to the planned treatment plant was unresolved until recent months. As mentioned earlier, we discovered in the spring of this year that Trails End Road is the only viable option for the pipeline. Letters went out to all property owners within 500 feet of the

proposed alignment in late March. We began meeting with residents, established a project website and hotline, and we are keeping the lines of communication open.

**ISSUE: Benefit to Trails End**

How can this project benefit you? That’s a hard question. Some Trails End residents don’t see any benefit because the raw water line won’t supply you directly with drinking water. But, schools that your children attend, businesses you patronize, and hospitals you may need one day will all receive water from this project. We are limited in some of what we can do, but we’re open to your ideas and suggestions. For example, we’ve heard there are some drainage problems along Trails End Road that we may be able to fix. We do want to work with you. We ask you to keep letting us know your concerns and suggestions so that we have the opportunity to give the attention they deserve. We do care how this project affects you and your neighbors and are committed to doing everything we can to minimize impacts or prevent them altogether.

**An Open Invitation to Meet**

A member of the project team will soon be contacting every person who signed up at previous meetings. We will be glad to come to your home at your convenience and speak with you about any general concerns or questions you may have pertaining to the project. If you have already been contacted by a consultant regarding easements, you will be asked to direct specific questions to that team member.

**BCRUA Hotline/Website Operational**

As mentioned, an additional way to ask questions and provide input is by calling the **BCRUA Project Hotline**. The number is **(512) 684-3200**. The hotline will be answered during normal business hours Monday through Friday. Messages may be left after-hours and on weekends. Question or concerns may also be submitted via email on the project website, [www.bcrua.org](http://www.bcrua.org)

**BCRUA Board**

**Scott Rhode, President**  
**Cobby Caputo, Vice President**  
**John D. Cowman, Secretary/Treasurer**

**Project Team**

*City of Round Rock*  
*City of Leander*  
*City of Cedar Park*  
**BCRUA General Manager, Chris Lippe**

**Consultants:**  
*Carter & Burgess, Inc.*  
*HDR Engineering, Inc.*  
*K. Friese & Associates, Inc.*  
*Lockwood, Andrews & Newnam, Inc.*  
**CDM**  
*Group Solutions RJW*  
*Staats Falkenberg & Partners, Inc.*