



Legislation Text

File #: 2017-4203, **Version:** 2

Consider a presentation regarding the Stagecoach Inn Relocation Feasibility Study performed by Architexas.

Architexas was contracted to complete this study to examine the process and costs for relocating and rehabilitating the historic structure, which is in the path of the RM620 road realignment project. This presentation will review their relocation feasibility findings.

History/Significance of the Stagecoach Inn:

Built from 1848-1853 by John and Susie Harris, the Stagecoach Inn is a remaining part of Round Rock's early founding period. It was one of the first permanent buildings established where a major north-south stagecoach route crossed Brushy Creek. The settlement that grew at the Brushy Creek crossing grew in Round Rock's founding and "pre-railroad" period. Unlike the pioneer era, pre-railroad buildings were built to last, usually by skilled craftsmen, using materials available in the immediate area and following traditional folk building forms. The Inn was constructed from limestone quarried from the hill on which it stands, and the stones show the marks from hand chisels. While manufactured building materials were available, transporting them was prohibitively expensive until the arrival of the railroad in 1876.

The stagecoach route was used by cattle trails between ca. 1865-76, and was still the main route between Austin and Georgetown until the 1920s. The Stagecoach Inn was unaltered until ca. 1930 when the window openings were widened and space was added for a kitchen and bathroom. Some modifications to the roof were made later. While the State removed the building's state historic designation in 1996, Round Rock deemed its significance to be more than just architectural. The City designated this structure as a local historic landmark in 1984, recognizing that the Chisholm Trail area has significance to the history and development of Round Rock. The landmark was designated because of its importance to transportation as a stagecoach stop and to commerce in the Old Town Area.

Demolition Request and Public Involvement:

Prior to the hiring of Architexas to look at relocation of the Stagecoach, the City's Transportation Department initiated the process for demolition of the structure. Because the Stagecoach Inn has a local historic landmark designation, the City went through the same process that would be required of any other historic building owner requesting demolition. This entails applying for a Certificate of Appropriateness for Demolition from the HPC. The HPC rendered a decision to deny the Certificate of Appropriateness for Demolition and impose a 120-day waiting period on the issuance of a demolition permit, the most stringent action the HPC is authorized to take on a demolition. Once the

period passed, a demolition permit was issued. The HPC received monthly updates from staff during the 120-day waiting period, and the public was given opportunity to comment during the meetings in order to solicit ideas concerning relocation and a new use going forward. In early 2016, a non-profit, "Round Rock Preservation" was established. They have kept abreast of the status of the Stagecoach structure and have commenced fundraising with a focus on saving the Stagecoach Inn from demolition; however, they are awaiting Council's decision on the future of the Stagecoach.

Considering Relocation (Potential Sites and Costs):

The City purchased the Commons property, which includes the Stagecoach Inn, in 2013 for the purpose of right-of-way acquisition for the RM 620 road realignment project. Due to the structure's local significance, the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) recommended in a 2013 memo to the City Manager, that rather than demolishing the building, the relocation of the Stagecoach Inn should be explored. At that time, the HPC cited their preference for relocation over reconstruction or replication. The City received estimates from a historic building mover (Snow & Sons) who has significant experience moving structures, including stone buildings. However, since the relocation not only includes the physical moving of the building, but also preparing the site for a move and the ultimate restoration of the building, Architexas was hired to explore the process and associated costs. The portion of the building proposed for relocation is only the original portion of the structure, which is approximately 1300 square feet.

Two locations were examined proposed for potential relocation:

1. Another location on the Commons site, to the immediate south of the current location
2. Park site north on Chisholm trail in the proposed Bathing Beach Park

The consultant evaluated the relocation cost for the two potential locations but did not recommend one over the other. They provided the costs and processes for each, and the advantages and disadvantages of each location. The total cost for each scenario is as follows:

1. Commons site: \$614,722
2. Park site: \$758,107

The total cost is broken down into the following 4 phases. Costs are the same for both sites in Phases 1 and 3, but vary by site for Phases 2 and 4 listed below:

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| Phase 1: | Prepare and stabilize historic building for relocation. Non-historic additions and finishes would be removed. |
| Phase 2: | New site preparation and relocation of building (including foundation, landscaping, grading and structural moving costs). |
| Phase 3: | Stabilization at new site and mothballing if not intending to rehabilitate immediately. |
| Phase 4: | Basic rehabilitation of the structure, including reconstruction of historic windows, replacement of doors, mortar, masonry and chimney restoration, interior wall construction, and floor installation. Depending on the final use, MEP and ADA modifications may be necessary. |

A final use for the structure has not been determined. Restoration of the building and preparation for a new use does not have to occur immediately after relocation. The consultant describes a process for “mothballing” the building for a period of 10 years to protect it and save it for a future restoration; however, moving straight to the rehabilitation without mothballing is estimated to decrease the total cost of the project.

Architexas contacted Union Pacific about the City’s concerns to move the structure over the railroad tracks which has given preliminary approval of the move. Associated costs for safety support, including a UP Flagger and Police escort are included in the cost estimate. The consultant also specifies reinforcing the bridge to accommodate 100 tons (\$40,000).

In order to sufficiently review the costs provided by Architexas, prior to accepting the final report, Staff contacted Chuck Glace of Chasco and Temple Aday of Aday and Associates. As a result of these reviews of projected costs, Staff did not request that Architexas make any alterations to the costs listed in the final report.

Staff Recommendation Concerning Proposed Re-Location:

Concerning the two proposed locations, although the Commons Site would be closer to the Inn’s original location, it is difficult to argue that its context would be preserved since much of that context is already gone, and will be further compromised with the completion of the RM 620 project. Schematics show that the Commons Site’s visibility and accessibility will be diminished once the road realignment project is complete. Therefore, Staff recommends that greater consideration be given to the Park Site if the City Council decides to relocate the Inn. There are buildings of similar age near the Park Site, and none near the Commons Site. While the cost is slightly higher, the potential usefulness and tie-in to the cultural center of the Chisholm Trail has a higher community benefit. Staff has also been in contact with PARD to propose the integration of the Stagecoach into the Bathing Beach Park, and with the Williamson Museum so they can consider programming that would be complementary to their future museum location at 8 Chisholm Trail.