



CLEAR FORK EMERGENCY ACCESS BRIDGE

PURPOSE, PROPOSAL, PROCESS

Benbrook City Council is evaluating the feasibility of constructing an emergency access-only bridge across the Clear Fork Trinity River to improve and protect Police and Fire/Emergency Medical Service (EMS) response times to northeast Benbrook.

The proposed one-lane, gated, emergency access bridge will improve Police and Fire/EMS response times to a similar level of service currently enjoyed by other Benbrook residents.

In addition, the bridge will meet the future emergency response needs of our growing community.

Benbrook City Council has reviewed alternative options to provide enhanced service levels, has engaged an engineering firm to provide a conceptual design and proposed costs, and is currently receiving public input on the proposed Clear Fork Emergency Access Bridge project.

Rapid response times save lives; the health and safety of all Benbrook citizens is of utmost importance to the City of Benbrook.



Why: Improve emergency response times now and protect response times in the future.

What: A one-lane, low profile, 15-foot wide emergency access-only gated bridge. The proposed Clear Fork Emergency Access Bridge is not expandable, is too narrow for public use, and will not accommodate bicycle or pedestrian traffic. The gate will only be accessible to emergency responders. The bridge will not connect to I-20 nor have any signage on I-20 as it will not be for public use.

Where: The proposed bridge would be located just north of I-20 in Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) right-of-way (see page 4).

When: No construction timeline has been established as the bridge has not been formally approved by Benbrook City Council. If approved, the project will take up to 30 months to complete.

How: The cost of the proposed Clear Fork Emergency Access Bridge is estimated at \$1.6 million.

If approved, the project will be funded with cash reserves and no debt will be issued to pay for the project. The bridge will have a minimum service life of 50-years.

GETTING TO OUR CITIZENS IN AN EMERGENCY

Currently, there are two routes to northeast Benbrook utilized by public safety personnel; both routes create challenges getting to our citizens:

West Vickery Boulevard, and I-20 to Bryant Irvin Road.

Both routes have significant traffic and access issues that create increased emergency response times, compared to the rest of Benbrook.

The **West Vickery** route is indirect and circles to the west and north before entering northeast Benbrook. This route also includes a very active train track crossing, which has delayed emergency responders 180 times between 2014 and 2016. Additionally, this route crosses three traffic signals.

The **I-20 to Bryant Irvin** route has periods of heavy traffic, including bumper-to-bumper traffic during morning and afternoon commutes. This route requires exiting at Bryant Irvin Road, which is often heavily congested both at the exit ramp and at the traffic signal. Further, this route crosses five traffic signals.

Both emergency response routes require first responders to travel outside of Benbrook city limits when responding to calls for service. Because responding units are not typically in communication with Fort Worth, units have no way of knowing what traffic, roadside or other problems they may encounter in Fort Worth, potentially creating more delay in responding to Benbrook citizens.

The proposed **Clear Fork Emergency Access Bridge** response route utilizes the eastbound I-20 access road to connect directly to Bellaire Drive (see page 4). The route eliminates train track crossings, circumvents traffic congestion, and only crosses one traffic signal.

Benbrook Police Department conducted a drive time analysis, without the use of emergency lights/sirens, to determine an average drive time using each route to multiple locations in northeast Benbrook (see adjacent chart).

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Typical Drive Time to Northeast Benbrook (in minutes)

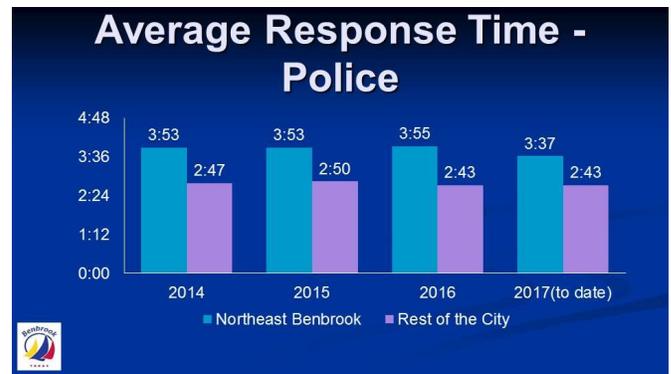
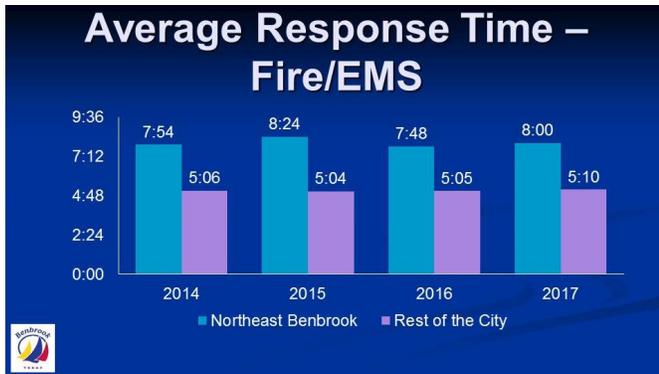
Driving Route

- West Vickery Boulevard - 7:11
- I-20 to Bryant Irvin Road - 9:43
- Emergency Access Bridge - 4:10



RESPONSE TIME INFORMATION

Seconds count when emergency responders are called to a scene. Excessive response times can critically affect outcomes. The goal of Benbrook City Council is to provide an improved level of emergency service to the residents of northeast Benbrook.



Benbrook Fire/EMS response times are significantly higher in northeast Benbrook, averaging 8 minutes compared to 5 minutes and 10 seconds for the rest of the City of Benbrook (2017). In addition, the number of extended response times, over 9 minutes, was significantly higher than the rest of the city. For 2016, 267 Fire/EMS response times exceeded 9 minutes in northeast Benbrook. Northeast Benbrook is the city's smallest geographical response area.

Benbrook Police response times are also considerably higher in northeast Benbrook than to the rest of the City. In 2017, the average response time to northeast Benbrook was 3 minutes and 37 seconds, while the response time to the rest of Benbrook was 2 minutes and 43 seconds. Similarly, the number of extended Police response times, over 8 minutes, was more than any other geographical area in Benbrook. For 2016, 204 Police response times exceeded 8 minutes in northeast Benbrook.

For Police, the Clear Fork Emergency Access Bridge also ensures rapid and predicible response times for backup. This is particularly important in life threatening situations, where the victim and the responding police officer may be in grave danger. Asking a police officer to face a life and death situation alone while waiting for an extended police backup is unacceptable. Benbrook's finest deserve better.

The goal of Benbrook City Council is to provide an improved level of emergency service to the residents of northeast Benbrook.

A GROWING COMMUNITY

Benbrook and surrounding areas are experiencing unprecedented growth. Growing populations and increased development place increased burden on transportation infrastructure.

As Benbrook continues to grow, surrounding communities are also growing and adding to the traffic congestion already impeding Benbrook first responders.

To the very near south of Benbrook, in Fort Worth, the Ventana residential development will include 600 new homes.

Most compelling, the Walsh Ranch development is just a few miles west of Benbrook. Total land area for Walsh Ranch is 11.4 square miles and is projected to far exceed Benbrook's current population of 22,000 at build out.

Anticipated population growth will undoubtedly stress our transportation systems further.

Benbrook engaged an engineering firm, Freese and Nichols, Inc. (FNI) of Fort Worth to create a conceptual design for the Clear Fork Emergency Access Bridge. FNI conducted a preliminary study of existing site conditions, bridge layout, a hydraulic analysis, and probable project costs.

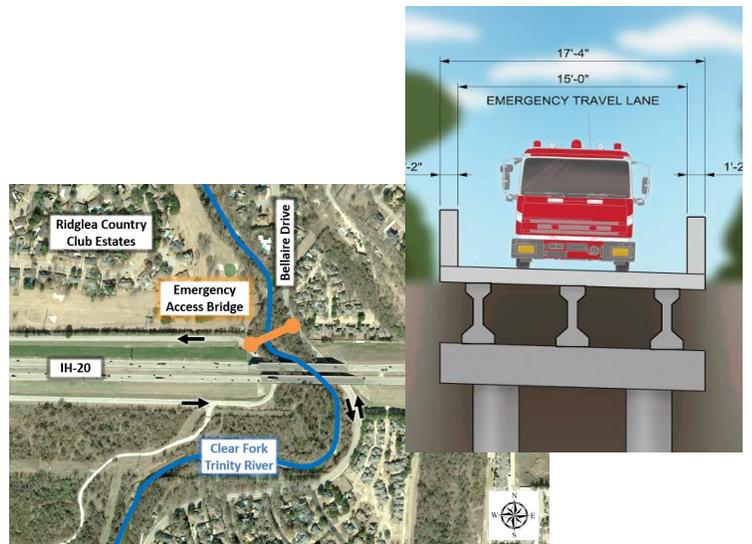
The proposed project is a single-lane, 15-foot wide, restricted-access bridge. The bridge will be gated and fenced to limit access to public safety vehicles only. The proposed bridge is wide enough to accommodate a large fire truck, but purposely narrow so that it cannot be opened to the public or converted to two lanes. The bridge has no bicycle or pedestrian lanes, and would not accommodate bicycle or pedestrian traffic. If funded, the bridge will be constructed so that it cannot be expanded or altered in the future.

By 2035, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) estimates that the average number of daily trips through Benbrook on I-20 will be 125,970 vehicles. This is a significant increase over the 2015 average of 94,208 vehicles. Though TxDOT has proposed improvements to I-20 and is currently making improvements to the Bryant Irving bridge to ease traffic congestion and to maintain existing levels of service, those improvements are unlikely to reduce current peak hour traffic congestion. There is currently no funding in place or schedule for construction for the I-20 improvements.

The City of Benbrook is committed to planning for community growth, anticipating the needs of our citizens, and ensuring quality-of-life standards that our residents expect. Benbrook City Council believes it is important to plan for emergency services that protect Benbrook now and into the future.

CONCEPTUAL DESIGN

FNI estimates the project cost to be \$1.6 million, with project completion of 30 months. This timeframe includes design, permitting, bidding, and construction of the Clear Fork Emergency Access Bridge.



ALTERNATIVES

In keeping with Benbrook's practice of evaluating all viable options to provide quality service in the most cost efficient way, Benbrook Police Chief James Mills and Fire Chief Tommy Davis investigated several alternatives to the Clear Fork Emergency Access Bridge.

These options included adding additional staff and constructing a Fire/EMS substation to service northeast Benbrook.

This option is estimated to require an initial capital cost of \$4.5 million, with recurring costs of \$2 million per year. The proposed cost of the emergency access-only bridge, when amortized over its 50-year service life, is \$32,000 per year.

Chief Mills and Chief Davis also considered a service swap agreement with the Fort Worth Police Department (FWPD) for police backup and the Fort Worth Fire Department (FWFD) and Medstar for Fire/EMS services to residents in northeast Benbrook.

Because FWPD and Medstar currently have response times that are significantly higher than Benbrook's Police and Fire/EMS times to northeast Benbrook, this service swap option would actually represent a degradation of services.

Chief Mills and Chief Davis are also concerned that a service swap agreement would not allow Benbrook's dispatchers to have direct radio communication with Fort Worth Police, Fire, or Medstar; potentially creating poor communication and poor continuity of service that could lead to delays in first responders receiving critical, lifesaving information.

Both Chief Mills and Chief Davis concur that constructing the Clear Fork Emergency Access Bridge provides an exceptional, sustainable, cost-effective product that increases emergency access and decreases and stabilizes response times to the citizens of northeast Benbrook.

AGREEMENT WITH CITY OF FORT WORTH AND TXDOT

Benbrook City Council is also pursuing a legal mechanism to ensure that the Clear Fork Emergency Access Bridge remains closed to the public. Although the physical design of the bridge precludes any public use, Benbrook City Council has directed the Benbrook City Attorney to finalize a three way agreement with the City of Fort Worth and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) that prohibits any public access.

For the legal agreement, Benbrook and Fort Worth will jointly request that TxDOT grant an easement for an emergency access bridge to Fort Worth. Fort Worth will then grant a license for Benbrook's use of Fort Worth's easement to construct and operate a single-lane emergency access bridge.

By defining the specific legal use of the easement and the limitations prohibiting any other use, Benbrook City Council is protecting the quality of life in the neighborhood now and for future generations.

The Benbrook City Attorney/City Management and Fort Worth City Attorney/City Management have met and are jointly engaging with TxDOT. It is Benbrook's desire that the agreement be written so it is difficult to unravel, requiring legal consent from all parties.



CONCLUSION

The City of Benbrook is committed to providing the highest possible level of service to our citizens, while exploring the most cost-effective ways to do so. Our mission to protect citizens by responding to emergencies quickly and professionally is our paramount priority. We believe the Clear Fork Emergency Access Bridge is a sound investment that assures that all citizens receive the quality services they expect of their city.



CONTACT INFORMATION

Andy Wayman, City Manager
817.249.6002
awayman@benbrook-tx.gov

James Mills, Police Chief
817.249.6075
jmills@benbrook-tx.gov

Tommy Davis, Fire Chief
817.249.6080
tdavis@benbrook-tx.gov