

County to debate \$6M for Formula One Austin road upgrades

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Travis County officials and traffic engineers at **Kimley-Horn And Associates Inc.** disagree over whether \$6 million in road improvements are necessary for the Formula One race track being built near Austin.

On Dec. 14, county commissioners are expected to discuss traffic issues and vote on granting a floodplain variance to the \$250 million race development, planned on 960 acres near Del Valle. The development is expected to create thousands of jobs, while spurring spin-off investment and economic impact.

The hearing could mark the last public discussion needed for the site to begin construction. The F1 developers still need administrative permits to begin work, however county commissioner's approval will be another step forward. The project must break ground this month to meet a mid-2012 deadline, race representatives have said.

At a city level, there are only minor outstanding issues and staff does not anticipate any of them holding up the project, staff has said.

In a Dec. 1 memorandum, Kimley-Horn engineer **Aaron Nathan** told the county the "our study indicates no improvements are required to provide for an acceptable flow of traffic to and from the event."

Nathan declined to comment on the report and county officials could not be reached.

The county, meanwhile, thinks the two-lane Elroy Road — from McAngus Road to the northern access of the site — needs to be widened to a minimum of four lanes.

The approximate cost for widening Elroy Road to a four-lane road is \$6 million and the county wants the developer to foot the bill.

The county also wants the developer to pay an unspecified amount for a special event management plan, a detailed traffic control set-up plan, contracts for set-ups of all traffic control devices on race weekend and plans to fund the necessary traffic control officers for race weekend.

A separate request from developers for a flood plain variance will also be discussed on Dec. 14. County staff have recommended approval of the request.

The developers are awaiting federal approval to move dirt in the 100-year floodplain, which takes about six months, according to county staff.

A floodplain is the land next to a river or creek that has a 1 percent chance of flooding in any given year.

The floodplain approval won't happen in time, but the developers have agreed to post \$920,000 in insurance to restore the area if they do not, according to county documents.

The entire Kimley-Horn And Associates Inc. report, plus memos related to the floodplain request, is available for download [here](#).

The city and/or county still have to discuss [providing incentives worth \\$4 million annually, to match \\$25 million annually](#) the state is offering.

Earlier this year, the city approved \$13.5 million to fund water improvements for the site, which staff said will benefit more than just the race site.