

Makayla Rodriguez

From: Wendi Hundley [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, June 1, 2025 11:14 AM
To: Makayla Rodriguez; Alun Thomas
Cc: Jon Hundley
Subject: P&Z Public Comment Agenda Item #5 – Proposed Drainage Infrastructure at Vale Street and Bettis Boulevard

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Hello,

We would appreciate it if you would please forward this email to the P&Z members I, and also include this email as our public comment for agenda item #5 for the upcoming P&Z meeting.

Thank you. :)

Dear Planning & Zoning Commission Members,

I hope you're all doing well. I'm writing as the homeowner at 401 Vale Street—our home sits directly next to the intersection of Vale and Bettis where drainage changes are being considered.

First, I just want to say how sorry I was to hear that 305 Vale has been dealing with drainage issues. I genuinely hope the City can help find a good solution for them. At the same time, I hope any fix doesn't unintentionally push the problem downhill to our home or others nearby. I know that's not anyone's goal, but it's something we're really worried about.

At the May 21 City Council meeting, Council Member Glasheen made a motion to move forward with an engineering study and then install infrastructure at this intersection. That motion passed, and my understanding is that a thorough engineering analysis would come first, before anything is built.

So I was surprised to see this now listed on your June 4 agenda as:
"Discussion and possible action on installation of a valley gutter at the intersection of Vale Street and Bettis Boulevard or other water diversion structures."

That wording raised a few concerns for us, and I hope you'll take these in the spirit they're intended—with respect, and with a shared interest in doing this right:

1. P&Z's Role: From what I understand, Planning & Zoning usually focuses on zoning, platting, and land use—not water infrastructure projects. So I'm not totally clear why this item is coming to your commission, especially before an engineering report has been completed.

2. Council voted to start with a professional study. It feels premature to talk about specific infrastructure like a valley gutter when no one's seen the engineering analysis yet. I'd love to see that information guide the conversation before anything is finalized.

3. We live right next to the area being discussed and haven't received any details about what's being proposed. We only learned about this agenda item a few days ago. It would mean a lot to have a more open process with input from the homeowners who will be directly affected.

4. Our home sits downhill from this intersection, and we already receive runoff from multiple directions. After the drainage "test" the City ran on April 22, we saw water build up in a way we've never seen before—nearly cresting over the original raised driveway apron that's been there since the 1950s. We have photos and video of it. If that water had gone just a bit higher, it could have flooded our basement and backyard. We have a drainage map and elevation info showing how water flows through our lot—everything heads to the southeast corner near 403 Vale, right where our vulnerable areas are.

We're not trying to stand in the way of a solution—in fact, we'd love to see one that works. But we're really concerned about being put in a position where water that used to flow elsewhere now ends up in our basement or yard. It's never been a problem in all the years our house and the former 1950s house (with same footprint) has been here, and we want to keep it that way.

If possible, I'd kindly ask the Commission to hold off on any decisions about installing drainage infrastructure until the engineering study is done and made public. I really think that's the best way to make a smart, fair decision that protects everyone involved.

Thanks so much for taking the time to read this and for all the ways you serve our community. I know none of this is easy, and I truly appreciate your time and thoughtfulness.

Warmly,
Wendi Hundley
401 Vale Street
Rollingwood, TX 78746

P.S. Please read my husband's email to Mr. Thomas (below) for more detailed information about our concerns.

From: Jon Hundley [REDACTED]
Date: May 28, 2025 at 7:16:50 PM GMT+2
To: Wendi Hundley [REDACTED]
Subject: Fwd: Drainage Concerns Related to 401 Vale and Bettis/305 Vale

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Makayla Rodriguez <mrodriguez@rollingwoodtx.gov>
Date: Wed, May 28, 2025 at 12:14 PM
Subject: Drainage Concerns Related to 401 Vale and Bettis/305 Vale
To: [REDACTED]

Good afternoon,

Thank you for your communication to the City of Rollingwood. Your request has been received and is being processed. All written requests for documents or information from the public fall under the Texas Public Information Act.

Consistent with the Texas Public Information Act, you can expect communication from the City of Rollingwood within 10 business days after the date of the request for information.

The City will make an effort to ensure the information requested is made available to you in a timely manner. Depending on the scope of the request and the time required to research and compile the information, the City may not be able to produce the information you have requested in the required 10 days, if this happens you will be notified of the following:

- The date the information will be available.
- A cost estimate of charges for the request.
- A letter advising that some of the responsive information may or must be withheld by the City, and whether or not an Attorney General opinion is being sought.
- The need for clarification from you.

Thanks,

Makayla Rodríguez

City Secretary

City of Rollingwood

(512) 327-1838

www.rollingwoodtx.gov

From: Jon Hundley [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, May 25, 2025 3:33 PM
To: Alun Thomas <athomas@rollingwoodtx.gov>
Subject: Drainage Concerns Related to 401 Vale and Bettis/305 Vale

Mr. Thomas,

Thank you for your help with this issue and for including my public comment in the City Council agenda packet. I am sorry to hear that 305 Vale is experiencing drainage issues, and I hope a thoughtful and equitable solution can be found to protect all affected properties.

After watching the City Council meeting, I had some follow-up questions that I hope you can help me with:

1. There was a drainage test conducted near my property, where limestone rocks were placed to redirect water flow toward 401 Vale. Could you please confirm who authorized or directed this test, and what its purpose and findings were? Were any City officers or elected officials—including Council Member Sara Hutson—involved in initiating, approving, or supervising this test? Around the time of the test, we observed Council Member Hutson meeting with the property owners at 305 Vale. In hindsight, it appears this meeting may have been related to the drainage concerns later discussed at the Council meeting. However, we were not contacted or informed about the issue, even though our home at 401 Vale is directly adjacent and may be equally or more affected by any redirection of water. If this was a coordinated City effort, I would appreciate clarification on why nearby property owners like us were not included. While the meeting may not have been formal, the fact that one property owner received direct engagement while others—whose homes are also vulnerable—were excluded raises concerns about transparency and fairness. All potentially affected residents should be equally informed and included in any process that could impact their property.

2. During the meeting, Council Member Hutson mentioned that the property owners at 305 Vale have recently made some landscape changes, including grading and the addition of large berms along the front of the property, with an opening for a sidewalk that leads to their front door. I'd appreciate if the

engineers could take a look at whether this newer landscaping might be unintentionally concentrating water in one area of the yard and directing it toward their entry. There may be opportunities to adjust the layout to help distribute the water more evenly and improve the situation for them—without creating new issues downstream. We're not entirely sure how or where the water is pooling or jumping the curb into their yard, as was discussed at the meeting, but we do wonder whether private property improvements may have unintentionally contributed to the current challenge.

3. During the meeting, it was implied that the intent is to direct water straight down Bettis into Eanes Creek, avoiding the turn onto Vale. Is that an accurate understanding of the Council's directive? It was also suggested that this might involve installing a valley gutter, speed bump, or other surface-level diversionary structure. If that is the direction being pursued, I would like to understand whether the proposed infrastructure will be engineered to manage the full volume and velocity of stormwater during significant rain events—such as a 25- or 100-year flood—or whether it would merely deflect water toward a new location without effectively containing or conveying it. Redirection without adequate capacity or planning could significantly increase the risk of flooding at downstream properties, including ours at 401 Vale. Will this risk be modeled and fully accounted for as part of the engineering analysis?

4. Given the natural slope of the area, even small amounts of overflow can cross the street and flow downhill toward 401 Vale. This is not a theoretical concern—we have both video and photo evidence of water backing up near our property after the April 22 drainage test. During that test, we observed that the diversion altered the typical path of water. Instead of turning onto Vale as it normally does, the water continued down Bettis but crossed to the other side of the road at the intersection as sheet flow, flowing downhill and joining the existing runoff in the curb and gutter along the south side of the street—directly along the side of our home—rather than remaining on the north side, where it has historically flowed. This caused a noticeable buildup of water at the Bettis/Vale intersection and along our curb. Our property already receives stormwater from the curb and gutter system that carries water north along the east side of Vale. The diverted water from Bettis compounded this existing flow, creating a much larger volume and velocity of runoff concentrated along the south side. The water came dangerously close to overtopping the original raised section of our driveway apron, which was constructed in the 1950s and intentionally preserved during our construction because our property has never previously experienced water crossing over it. Had the rain lasted even slightly longer or been more intense, it likely would have resulted in water entering our basement, pool

equipment area, and backyard. This experience underscores the very real and immediate risk that a redirection of flow—without properly engineered conveyance—could create for our property. I would like confirmation that the engineering review will include a comprehensive hydrologic and hydraulic (H&H) analysis and that the City will take all necessary steps to ensure flood risk is not shifted to our home.

5. Council Member Hutson mentioned diversionary structures and road crowns. However, from what we can see, Bettis lacks a sufficient crown to reliably keep water within the gutter during heavy rainfall. If water is redirected down Bettis and overflows to the south side, it could directly impact our basement, pool equipment, and yard. Will this risk be fully evaluated as part of the proposed engineering solution?

6. Redirecting water using a valley gutter or other surface-level structure as part of a repaving project does not appear to meet the engineering standards typically required for altering stormwater flow. Without a formal H&H analysis, changes like this can inadvertently increase flood risk for downstream properties. In our case, runoff redirected to the south side could overwhelm our lot, which sits below street level. Any permanent drainage changes should follow generally accepted engineering practices and be based on a hydrologic and hydraulic (H&H) study. Proceeding without that level of review would not meet the professional standard of care expected in municipal stormwater design and could expose the City to liability if those changes cause damage to private property.

7. We have a complete drainage assessment of our property, which shows that all water flows toward the southeast corner of our lot—adjoining 403 Vale. Our garage, basement, pool equipment, and backyard are directly in the path of this natural drainage. I would like to formally submit this drainage map, elevation information, and other relevant documentation to the engineers. Could you please let me know the best way to do that?

8. Will the engineers be reviewing topographic maps and conducting elevation surveys of Bettis, Vale, and surrounding properties to model water movement accurately? These tools are essential for identifying risk and designing appropriate infrastructure.

9. I would also like confirmation that the engineers engaged by the City will be permitted to make fully independent, expert determinations regarding any drainage changes—free from direction or influence by individual Council Members. I am especially concerned about the potential conflict posed by Council Member Sara Hutson, who is both a licensed drainage engineer and an elected official. Unless she is formally acting as the engineer of record for this project (with legal responsibility and regulatory oversight), she should not be informally guiding drainage design. These decisions must be made by professionals retained by the City and documented through a transparent, unbiased process. I also ask that the engineers receive my public comments and all supporting materials.

10. During the meeting, Council Member Hutson referred to a 2006 memo regarding 305 Vale. Could you please share a copy that memo with me? The memo was not included with the meeting documents.

11. The drainage flow patterns in this area have remained largely unchanged for over 20 years. Our property at 401 Vale has never flooded in nearly 70 years, despite sitting at a lower elevation than 305 Vale. It's possible that the existing drainage arrangement—though imperfect—has remained in place because it effectively balances water flow between multiple properties and prevents a cascading or domino effect. Any proposed change should be reviewed carefully to avoid disrupting this balance and shifting unintended risk to downstream homeowners.

12. Now that these concerns have been raised, I respectfully ask that the City commit to notifying affected property owners before any drainage modifications are approved or implemented. How will notice be provided, and can you confirm that I will be included on any relevant communication list?

13. Under Texas Water Code § 11.086(a), no person—including a municipality—may divert or impound the natural flow of surface water in a manner that causes overflow and damages another property. If drainage changes lead to flooding at 401 Vale, the City could be in violation of this statute and subject to liability.

14. Article I, Section 17 of the Texas Constitution prohibits the taking, damaging, or destruction of private property for public use without compensation. If changes to City infrastructure redirect stormwater toward our property and result in flooding, this could constitute a taking. We do not consent to our land being used to receive public water flow and reserve all rights under the law.

15. If the City makes a change that shifts the flooding problem to our property, it would constitute negligence and the City would be responsible for any resulting damage to our home and land. As has been the case in prior instances, when the City acts negligently, TML insurance does not provide coverage. As a resident, I do not want to be placed in the position of having no other option but to pursue legal action against the City to protect our property if preventable flooding is redirected to 401 Vale.

I am raising these concerns in good faith and before any construction begins so that the City has a full and fair opportunity to evaluate the risks and consider alternative solutions. If drainage changes are implemented in a way that causes flooding or damage to our home, we will be able to show that this outcome was both foreseeable and avoidable. My goal in writing this letter is to help prevent that scenario and to ensure that any solution protects not just one property, but the entire affected area.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Thanks, Jon

401 Vale