Balch Springs
Hickory Tree Road Corridor Planning Study
Online Public Engagement

9/10/2021

Public Engagement Webpage: https://www.nctcog.org/trans/plan/land-use/land-use-projects

About NCTCOG

North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG)

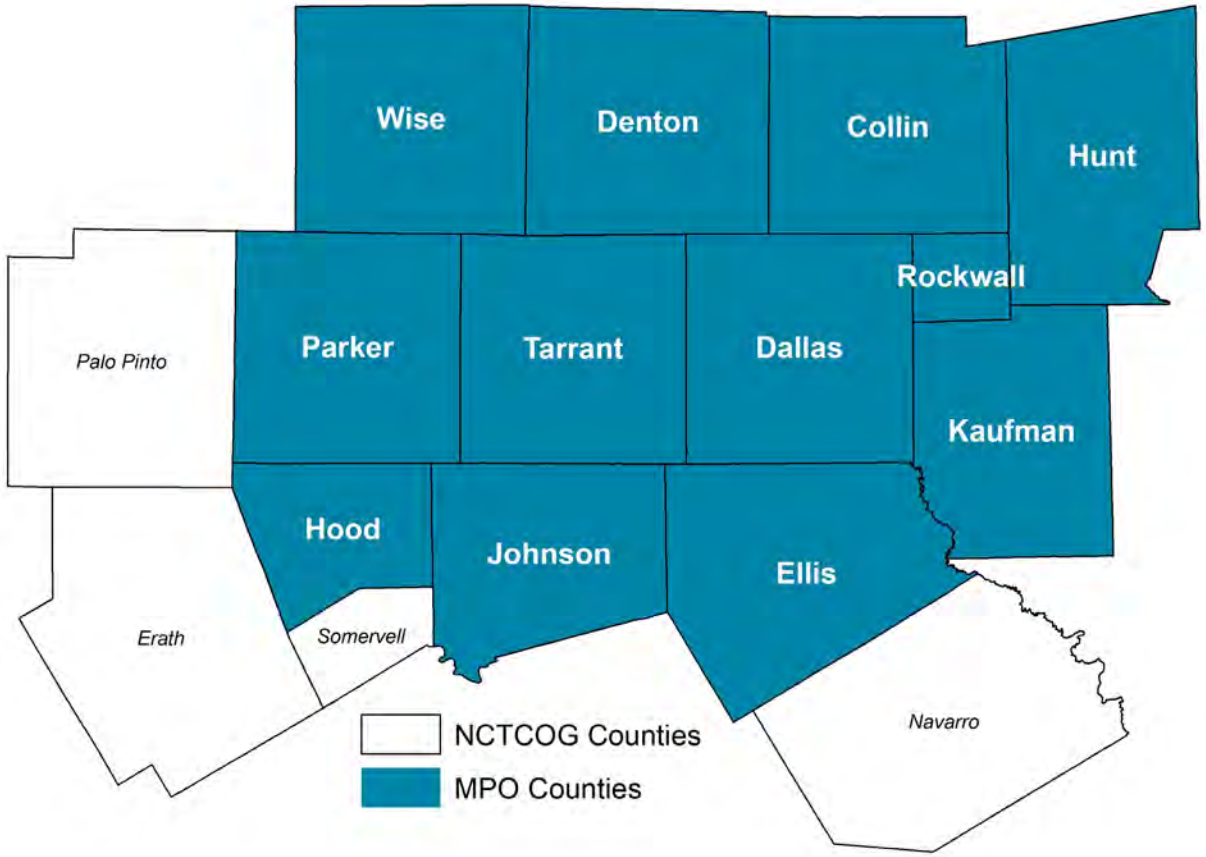
Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Dallas-Fort Worth region

Regional Transportation Council (RTC)

Transportation Actions

Funding of "Projects and Programs"

Effectiveness and Equity



www.nctcog.org

Project Background

Planning Project Purpose

- The City of Balch Springs is pursuing reconstruction of Hickory Tree Road from Elam Road to Bruton Road to better accommodate bicycle/pedestrian access, traffic, and economic development.
- NCTCOG is conducting a planning study of the corridor to **identify high-level concepts and recommendations** for the development of the roadway design.

Public Engagement Goals

- This public engagement opportunity is part of the public process for obtaining feedback on the proposed concepts and recommendations to ensure the project will achieve community goals.
- The purpose of this public engagement is to obtain feedback from community members with an interest in the Hickory Tree Road corridor.

Planning Project Goals

- Develop Context-Sensitive Design recommendations for the corridor
  - Design that fits the roadway's human and natural environment and meet the needs of the community
- Intent of Recommendations:
  - Enhance bicycle/pedestrian experience
    - Increase safety
    - Increase comfort
  - Connect key amenities and services
    - Schools, parks, municipal buildings, commercial areas
  - Facilitate economic opportunity

Project Timeline

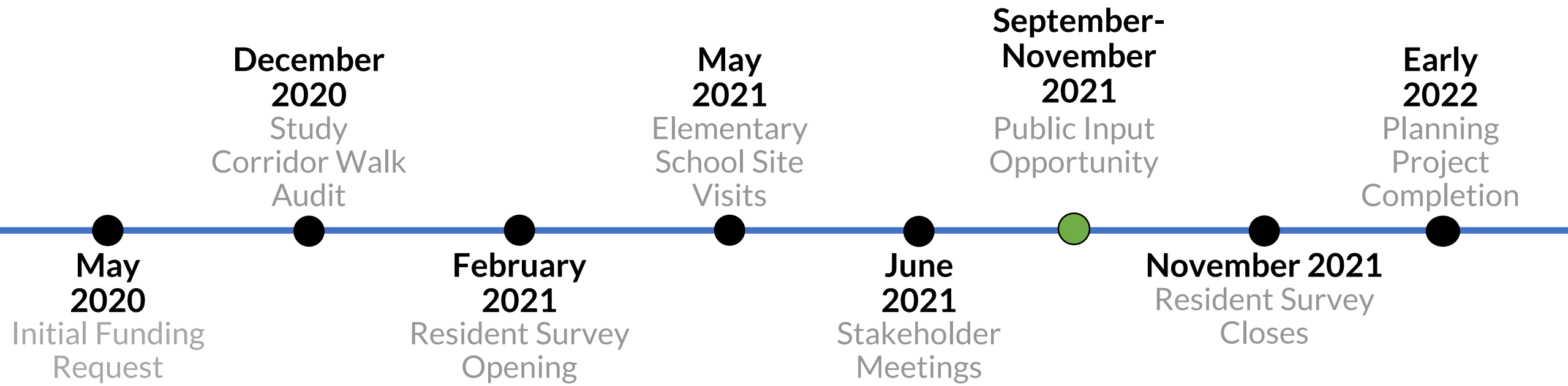
- May 2020: City submitted funding proposal to NCTCOG
- June 2020: RTC funded corridor planning study by NCTCOG staff to develop context-sensitive corridor plan from Elam Road to Bruton Road
- April 2021: RTC approved COVID Round 4 funding award for Phase 1 Hickory Tree Road construction: Elam Road to Lake June
  - $13.5M Total: $8.2M Federal / $5.3M Local (County) / 260K Regional Transportation Development Credits
- Anticipated FY 22-25: Design/Engineering, Right of Way, Utilities, & Construction
- Funding partners include NCTCOG, County, TxDOT, and City of Balch Springs

Planning Project Limits

Project Limits: Hickory Tree Road, from Bruton Rd to Elam Road

Corridor length: 2.03 miles

Timeline

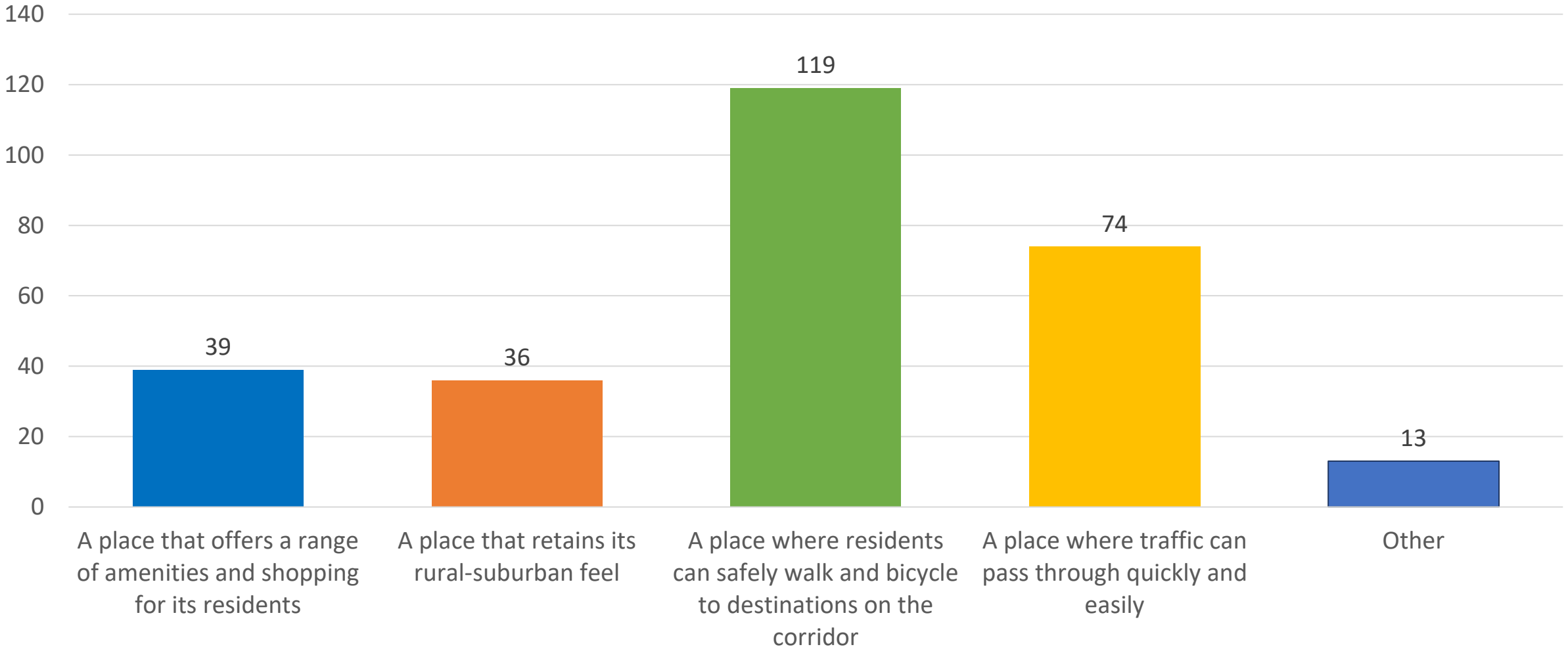

May 2020
Initial Funding Request
December 2020
Study Corridor Walk Audit
February 2021
Resident Survey Opening
May 2021
Elementary School Site Visits
June 2021
Stakeholder Meetings
September-November 2021
Public Input Opportunity
November 2021
Resident Survey Closes
Early 2022
Planning Project Completion

Data Collection / Existing Conditions

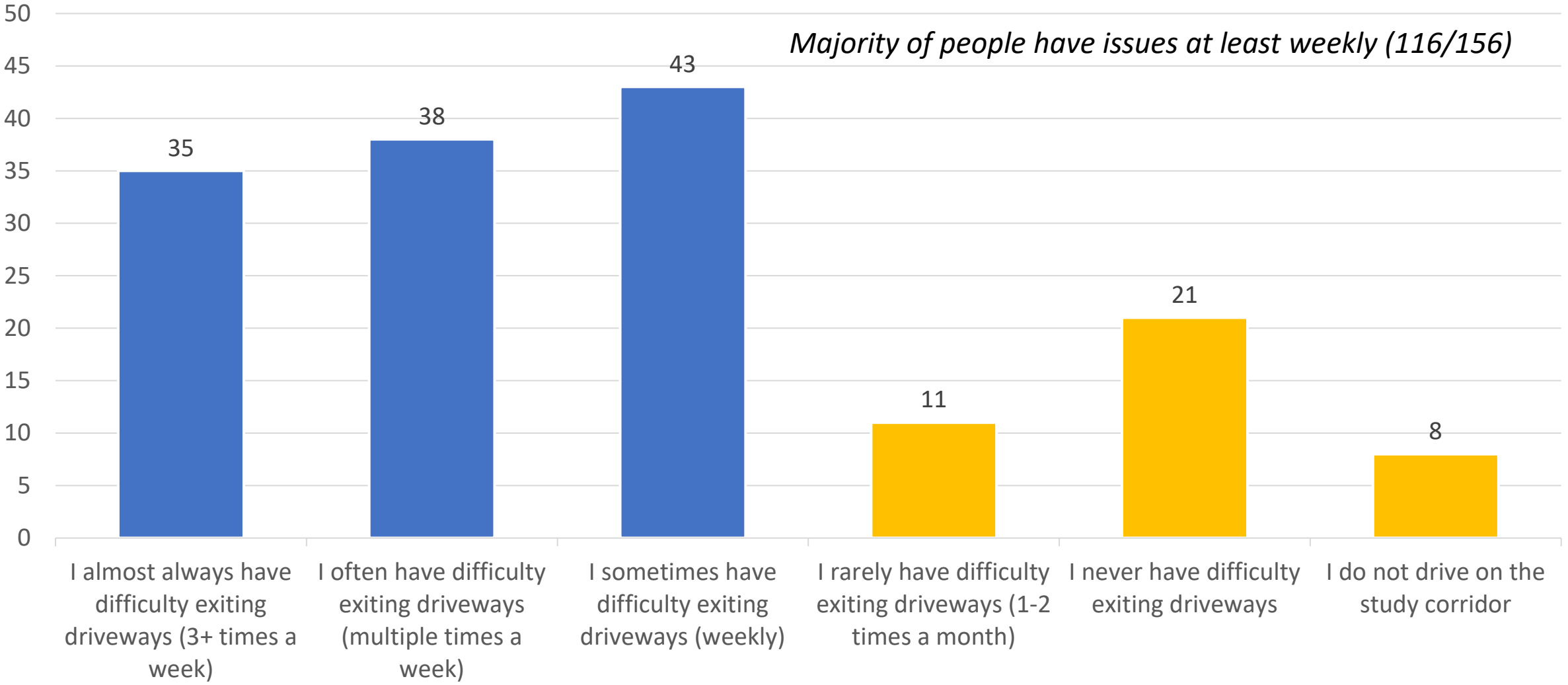
Online Survey

- Live from February 2021-Present
  - Expected close in November 2021
- Hosted on Balch Springs' website
  - http://www.cityofbalchsprings.com/443/Hickory-Tree-Rd-Survey
  - ***Please take the survey!***
- Questions about travel modes on study corridor, safety concerns, and future visions for the corridor
- Preliminary survey results as of 9/10 on public engagement web page

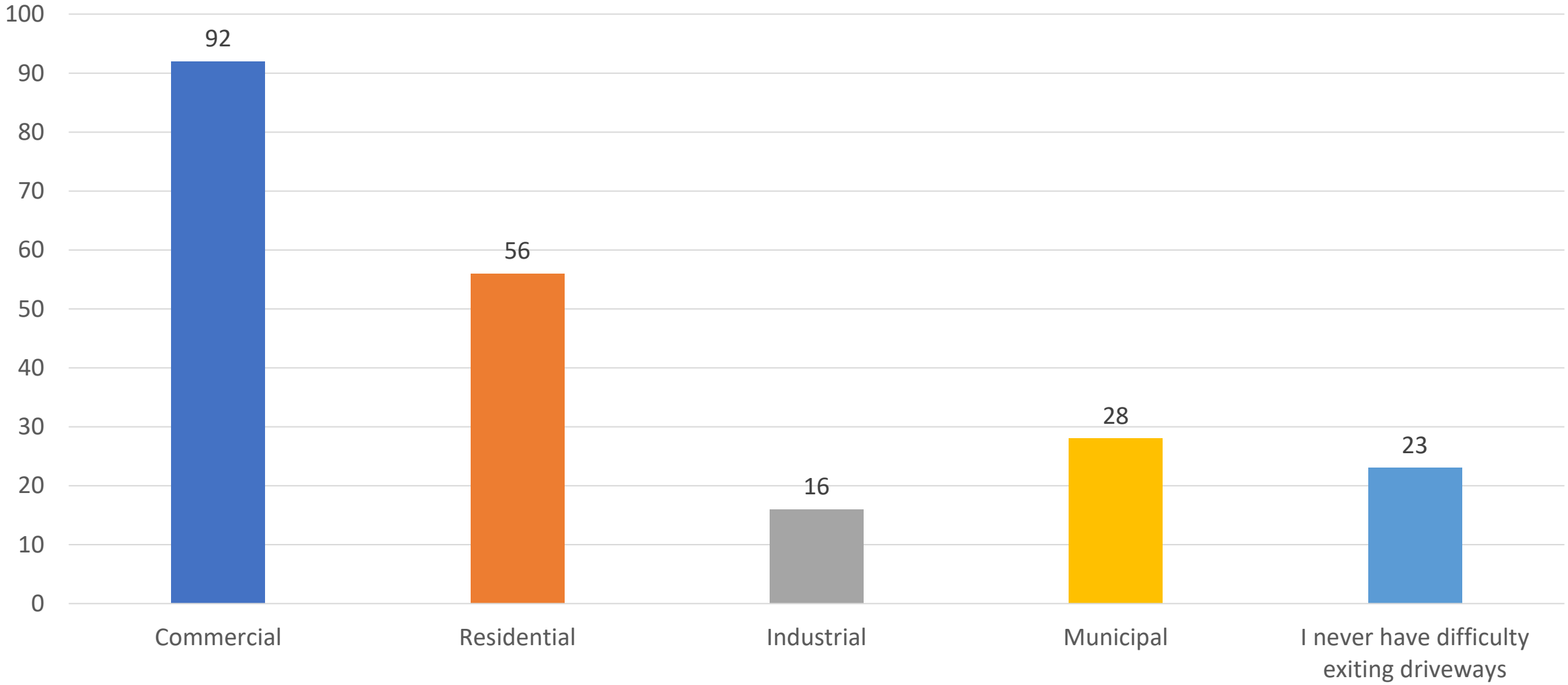
Select Preliminary Survey Results: “What is your vision for the corridor study area in the future? Select all that apply.” (159 Responses)



Select Preliminary Survey Results: “Rate the difficulty of exiting driveways on the study corridor.” (156 Responses)



Select Preliminary Survey Results: “If you have difficulty exiting driveways on the study corridor, what type of driveways do you most often have difficulty exiting? Select all that apply.” (154 Responses)

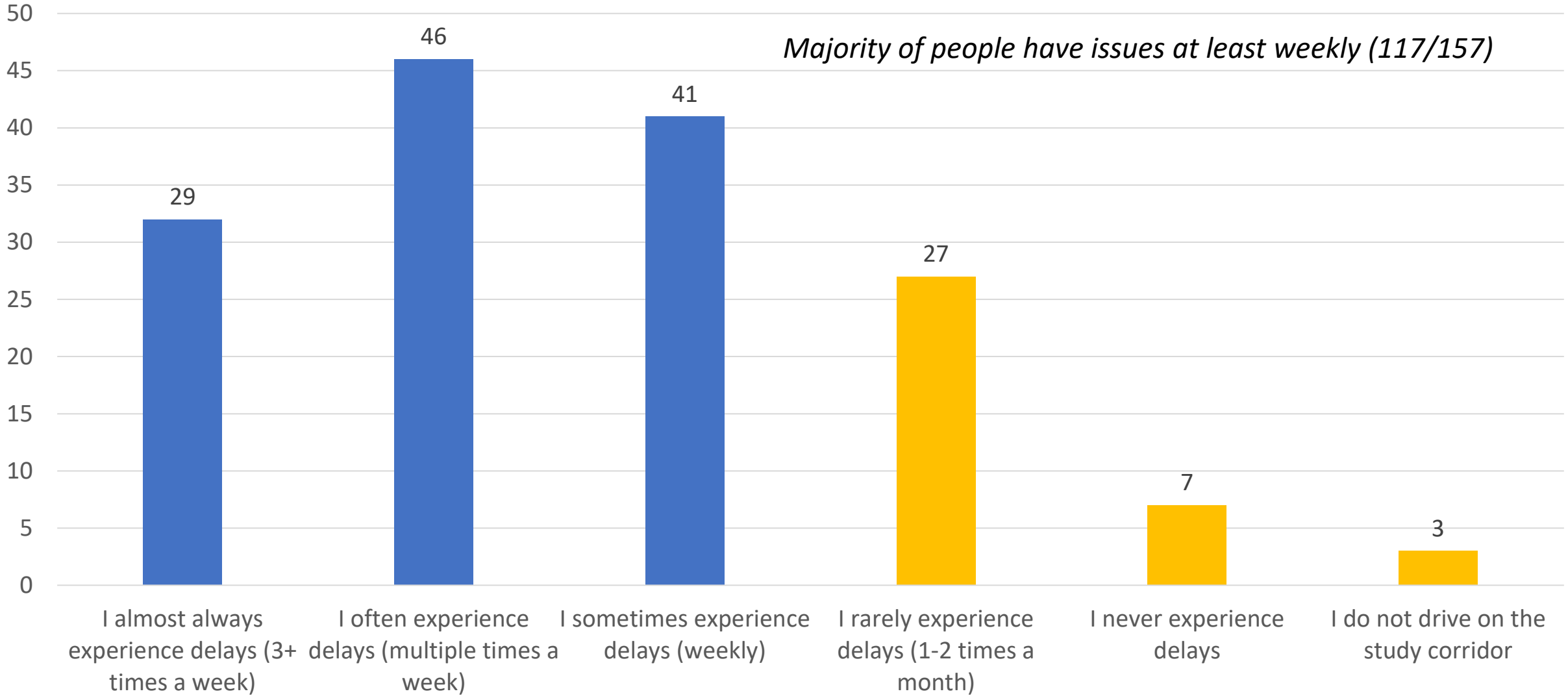


Select Preliminary Survey Results: Are there any specific problem locations where you have difficulty exiting driveways that you would like to share?

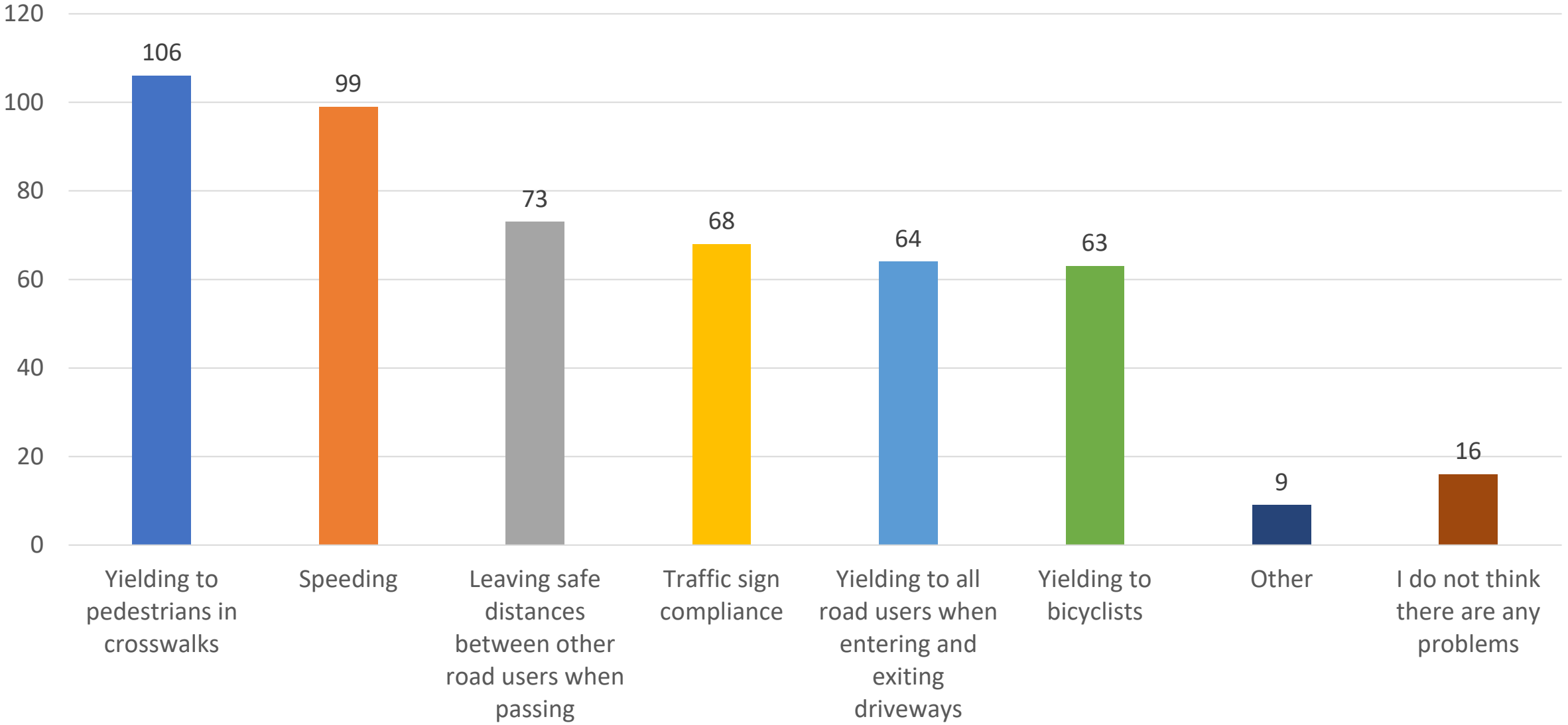
Most Popular Responses:

- Floyd Elementary: 18
- Post Office: 16
- Elam Rd at Hickory Tree Road: 14
- Quail Dr: 8
- Binford Supply: 6
- El Molinito Tortillería: 4
- McWhorter Elementary: 4
- Lake June Rd at Hickory Tree Road: 4

Select Preliminary Survey Results: “How often do you experience delays due to traffic congestion while driving on the study corridor?” (157 Responses)



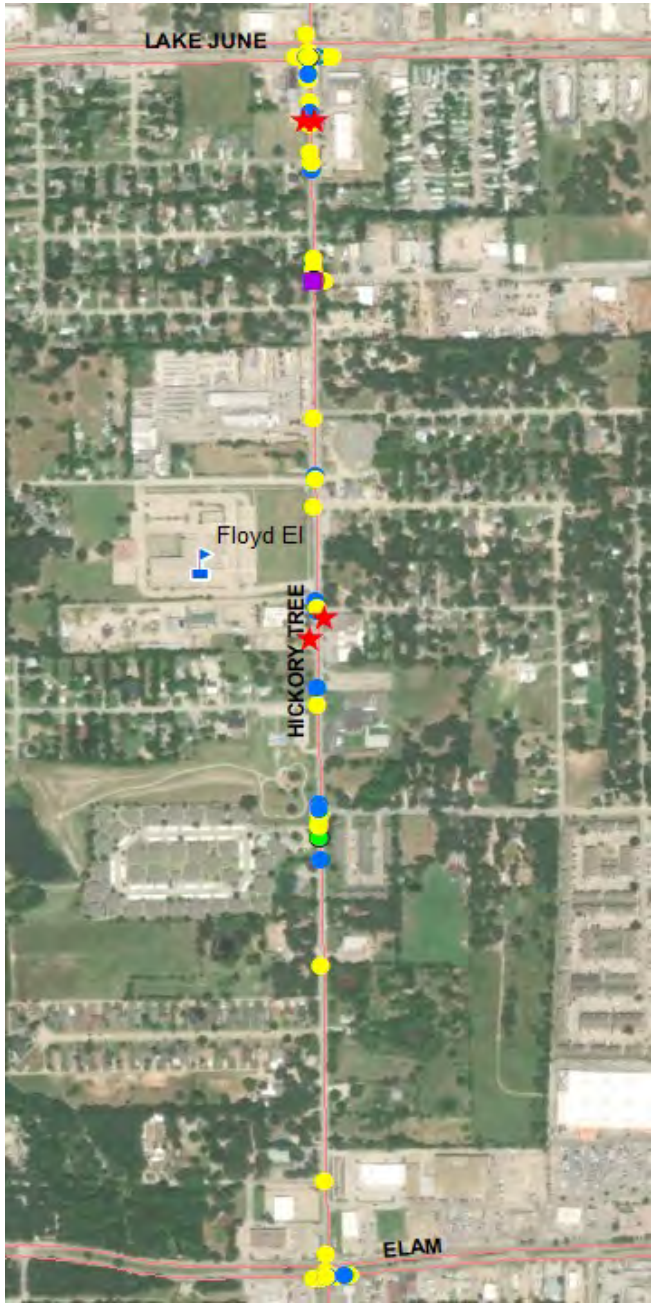
Select Preliminary Survey Results: “Are there driver behaviors that you think are a problem along the study corridor? Select all that apply. (144 Responses)



Current Conditions - Crash Maps

Lake June to Bruton Road Segment (N)

Elam to Lake June Road Segment (S)



Legend

- Elementary Schools
- Major Arterials
- STAR Transit Stops

Bike-Pedestrian Crashes

- Non-Incapacitating or Possible Injury

Auto Crashes

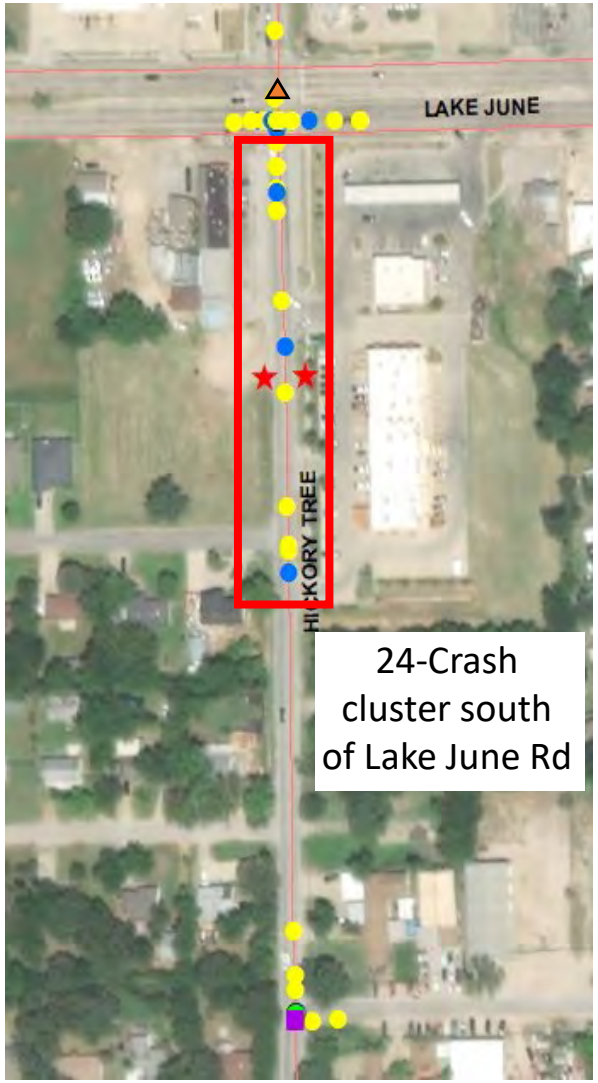
- Suspected Serious Injury
- Non-Incapacitating or Possible Injury
- No Injury

Crash data from 2015-2019
Source: NCTCOG Safety Team

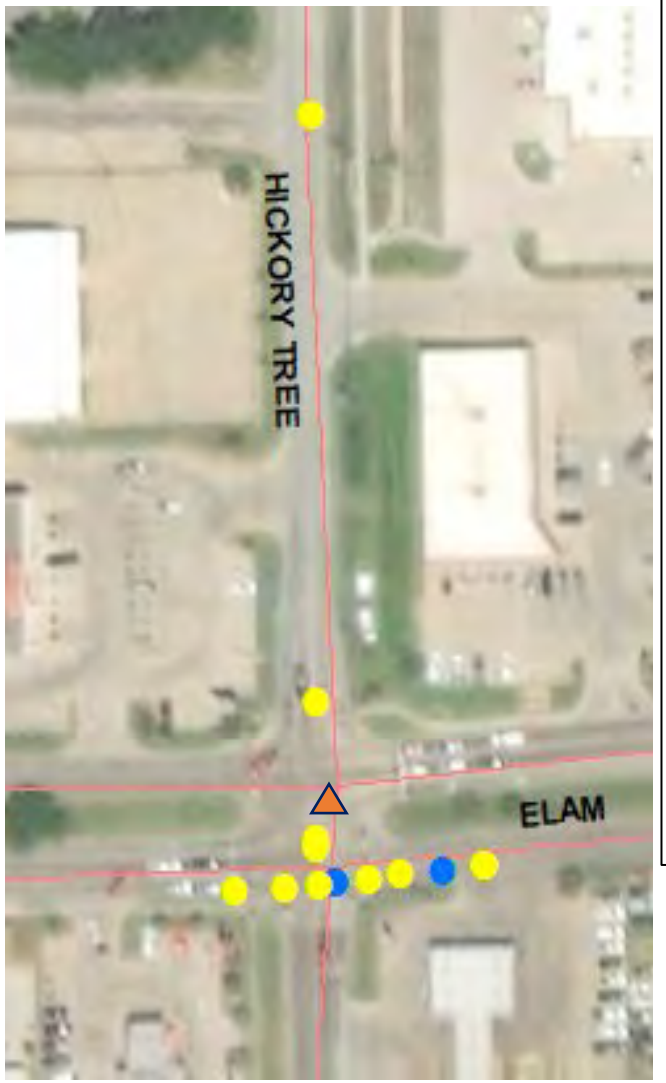
Intersection Crash Maps

Bruton and Hickory Tree Rd

Lake June and Hickory Tree Rd



Elam and Hickory Tree Rd



Legend

- Elementary Schools
- Major Arterials
- STAR Transit Stops
- Traffic Signal

Bike-Pedestrian Crashes

- Non-Incapacitating or Possible Injury

Auto Crashes

- Suspected Serious Injury
- Non-Incapacitating or Possible Injury
- No Injury

Crash data from 2015-2019
Source: NCTCOG Safety Team

Walk Audit With City of Balch Springs: 12/3/20

- Goal: Examine existing conditions of the study area, identify existing problems
- Findings:
  - Pedestrian desire is evident in areas sidewalks do not exist
  - Many challenges for less mobile pedestrians to walk safely outside of travel lanes
    - Drainage ditches, pavement cracking, water lines, trash cans, mailboxes, litter and debris along the road
  - Crosswalks and road paint very faded
  - Drivers speeding observed; few gave space to pass pedestrians safely

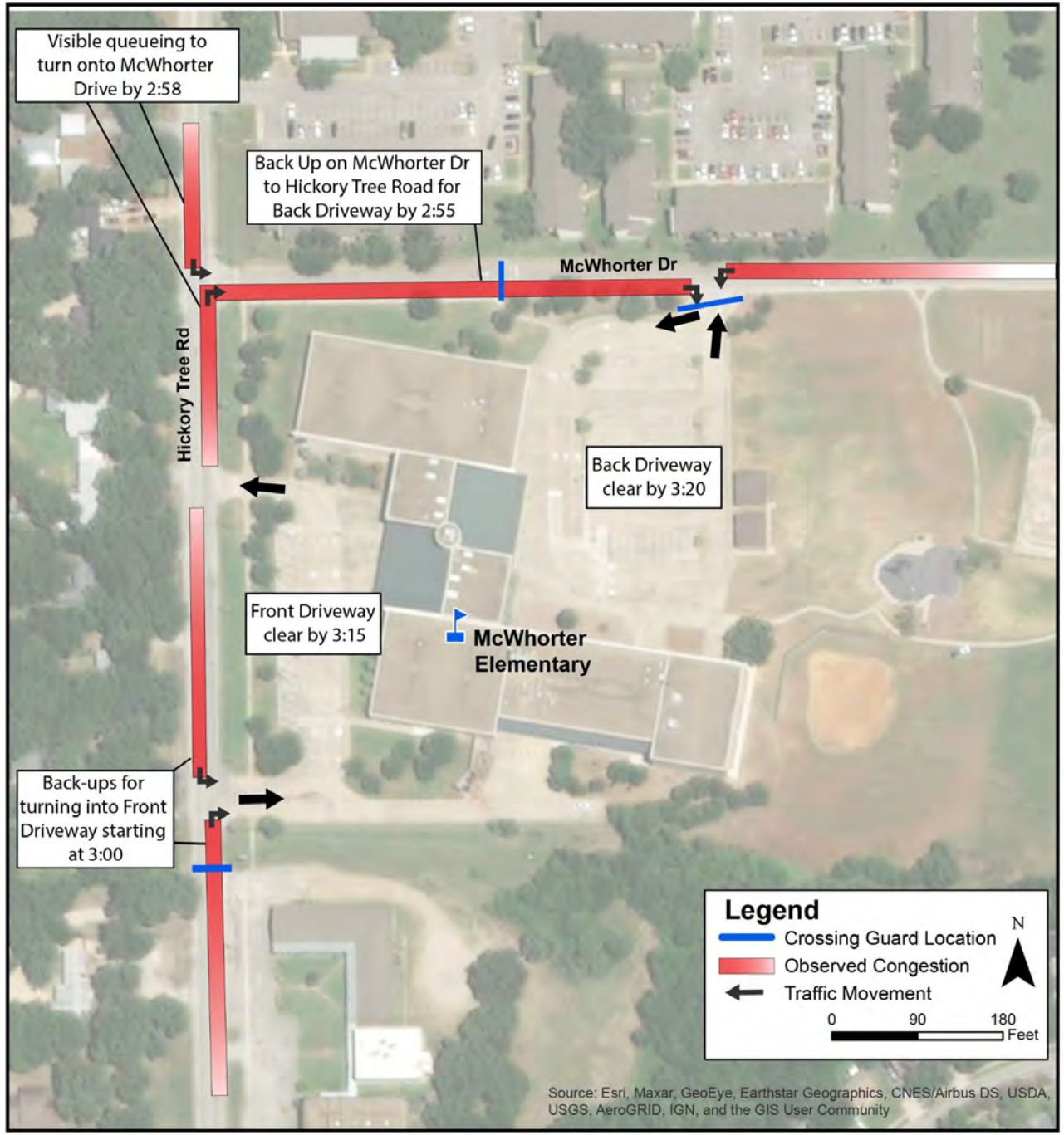
School Site Visit: McWhorter Elementary 5/4/21

Goal: Observe school dismissal process and surrounding roadway conditions during the pick-up window

Observations:

- Students grades K-2 with no older siblings are picked up in front driveway along Hickory Tree Road, grades 3-5 and younger siblings are picked up on back driveway on McWhorter Dr
- Back-up from front driveway overflowed on Hickory Tree Road, peaking at 3:04-3:10 (3:05 dismissal)
- Additional back-up on Hickory Tree Road was caused by cars attempting to turn onto McWhorter Dr for back driveway pickup
- Students walking southbound on Hickory Tree walk in small grassy area along roadway to avoid drainage ditch

McWhorter Elementary: Congestion Mapping



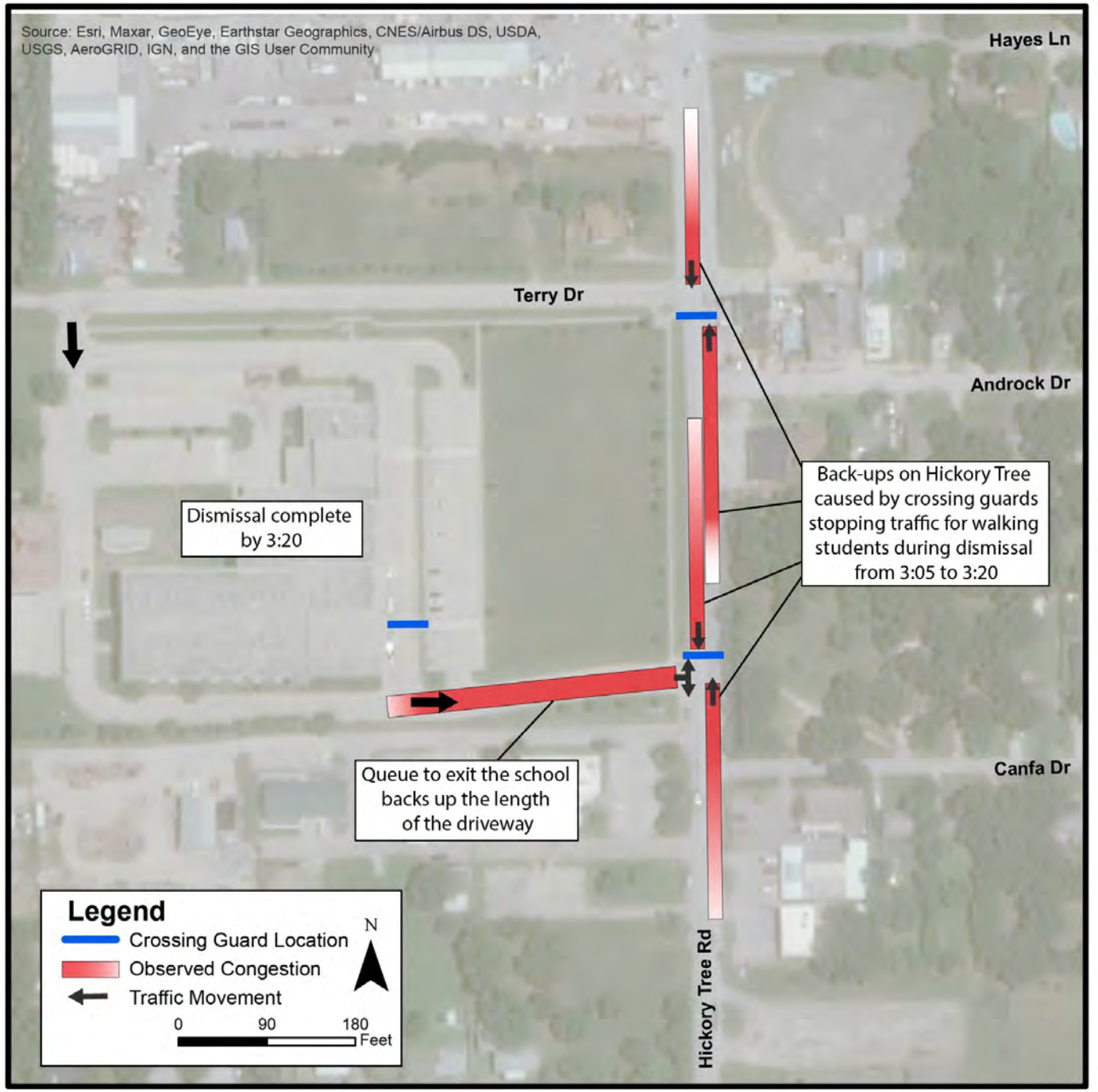
School Site Visit: Floyd Elementary 5/6/21

Goal: Observe school dismissal process and surrounding roadway conditions during the pick-up window

Observations:

- Back ups on Hickory Tree Rd caused by crossing guard stoppages to let children cross
  - Crossing Locations: Terry Dr & Southern driveway near Canfa Dr
  - Most students crossed at the southern driveway to walk down Canfa Dr to the townhomes on Quail.
- Students walked along the southern driveway and to the sidewalk to exit the school
- Cars waiting to turn from the driveway backed up to the school building

Floyd Elementary: Congestion Mapping



Major Considerations

Utilities

Many areas with above and below ground utilities may need to be moved.

Examples include:

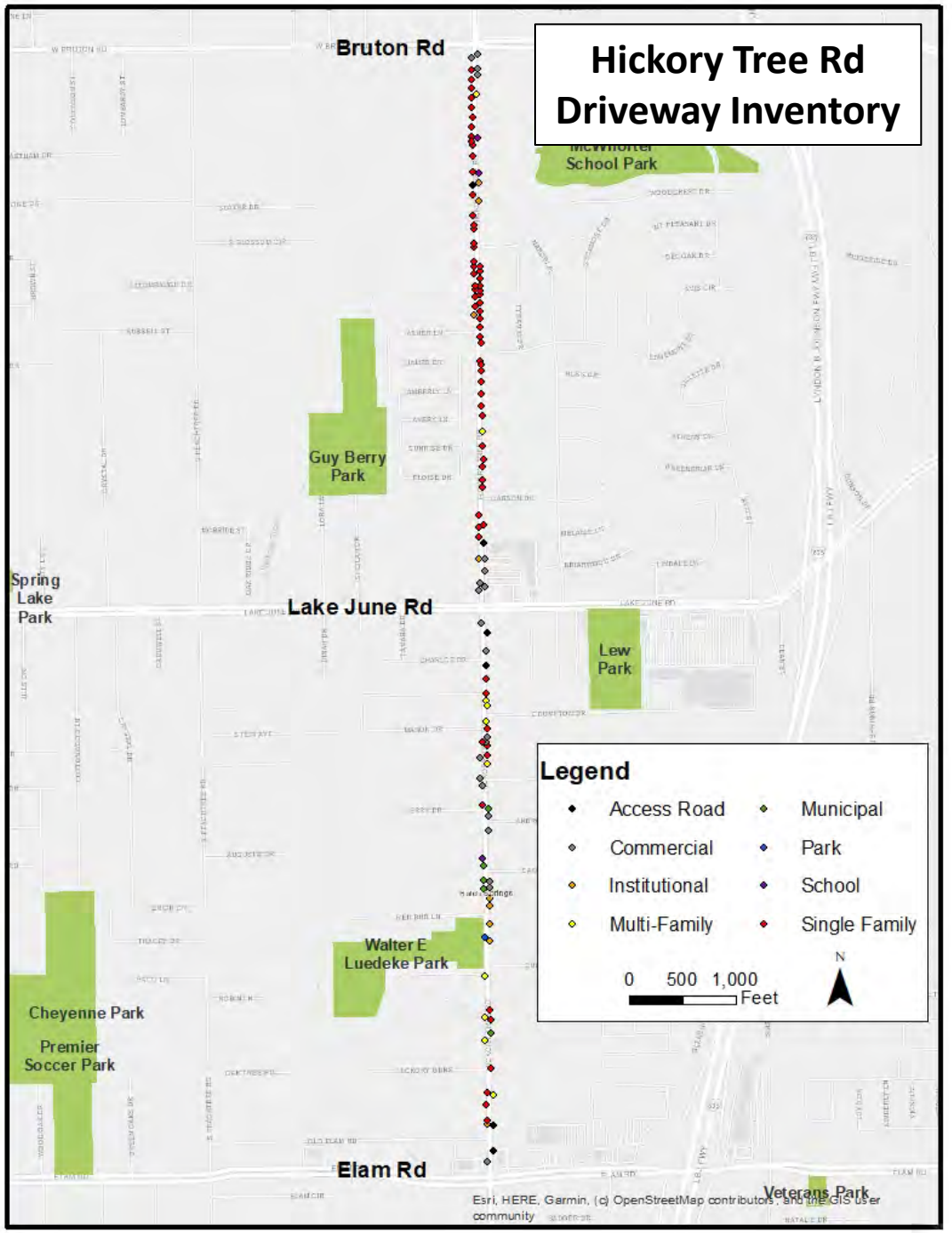
- Fiber optic
- Utility poles
- Drainage ditches
- Gas lines

Access Management

- Access Management: Techniques to increase roadway capacity, manage congestion, and reduce crashes with entrances and exits to the roadway
- Numerous residential, some commercial and municipal driveways along entire corridor

Access Management – Driveways

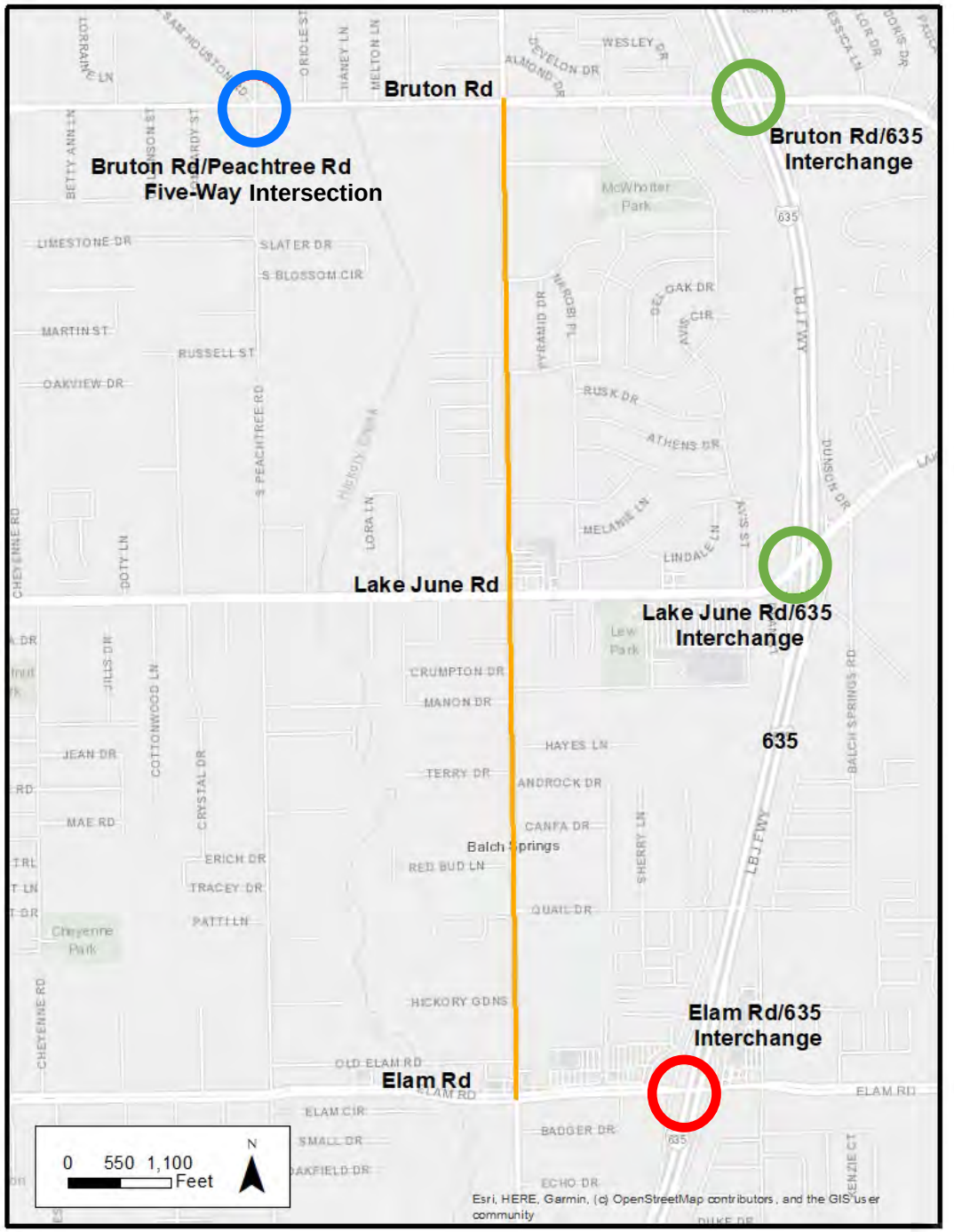
- 121 Driveways on corridor
  - 66 Single Family, 21 Commercial
- 116/156 survey respondents reported difficulty exiting driveways at least once a week
  - 35/156: Almost Always (3+ times/week)
  - 38/156: Often (multiple times/week)
  - 43/156: Sometimes (weekly)
- Commercial driveways were the most challenging (92/154), followed by residential (56/154)



Key Considerations – Pass-Through Traffic

Pass-Through Traffic: traffic that is traveling on the roadway that does not begin or end on the study corridor

- Hickory Tree is used for cut-through traffic by people avoiding the Elam Road/635 interchange.
- Drivers use Hickory Tree road to access 635 to the north or south of Elam Rd
- Drivers use Hickory Tree road to avoid a five-way intersection/signal at Bruton/Peachtree



Preliminary Recommendations

NCTCOG's Cross-Section Recommendation:

Three-lane roadway with center turn lane and pedestrian refuge islands at key crossing locations

Major Considerations:

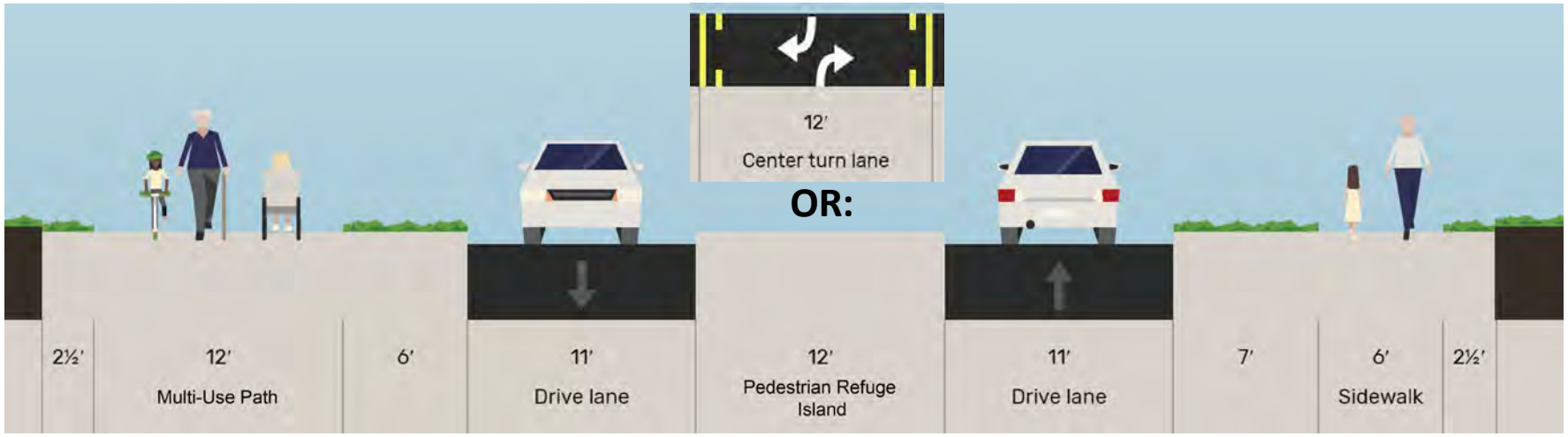
- Access to homes/businesses
- Congestion management
- Queuing for pick up/drop-off at schools
- Bicycle/pedestrian safety and improvements
- Pedestrian crossing treatments

Why:

- Improve access to businesses / residences
- Improve congestion
- Room for bicyclists and pedestrians to travel safely
- Improve safety for bicycle/pedestrian
- Accommodate future traffic volumes

NCTCOG Recommendation vs Current Cross-Section:

Recommended:
3-Lane Cross-Section with Added Ped Refuges:
<u>70’ ROW</u>

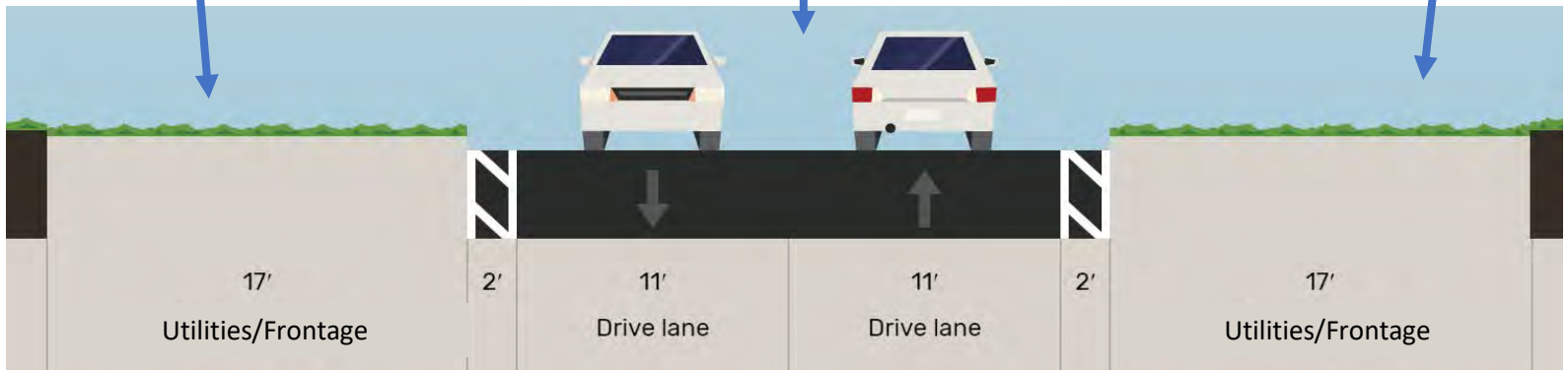


12’ Multi-Use Path for bikes and pedestrians + buffer space from roadway

Maintain travel lane widths and add pedestrian refuge island/center turn lane

6’ Sidewalk for pedestrians and buffer space from roadway

Current Cross-Section:
2-Lanes with no Bike/Ped Amenities:
<u>60’ ROW</u>



Center Turn Lane

- Allows for left and right driveway exits
- Vehicles waiting to turn left no longer cause back-ups
- Maximizes access to businesses
- Majority of people have issues at least weekly exiting driveways (116/156)

Imagery Provided by Google

Crossing Safety Concepts: Pedestrian Refuge Island

- Increases safety for pedestrians crossing a multi-lane road
- Allows pedestrians to focus on one direction of traffic at a time
- Priority Placement Locations
  - Schools
  - Luedeke Park
  - Other high-traffic crosswalks, as needed
- Design and aesthetics for Pedestrian Refuge Islands will be part of discussion for the City-led design/engineering phase

Photo Courtesy of Dan Burden

North Texas Examples: Pedestrian Refuge Island in a Three-Lane Roadway

Spurwood Dr, Carrollton TX

NW Summercrest Blvd, Burleson TX

Imagery Provided by Google

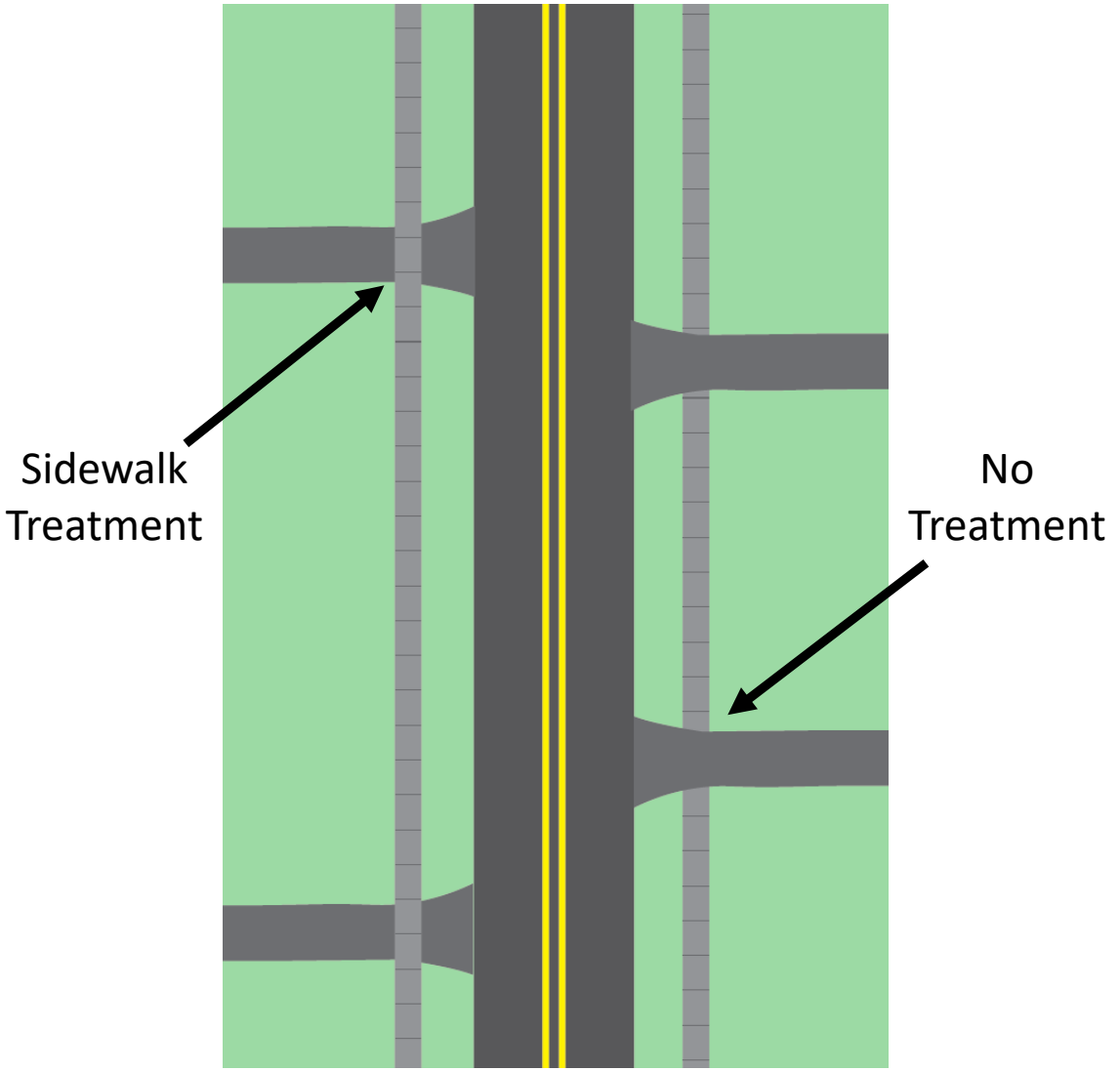
Bike/Pedestrian Infrastructure Concepts

- Sidewalks and Shared-use Paths
  - Sidewalks: 5-6’, meant for pedestrians
  - Shared-use Path: >10’, shared by bikes and pedestrians
- Existing community concern over current roadway’s unsafe walking spaces
  - Student safety walking to and from school a high concern in survey responses
- 119/159 initial respondents to the Community Survey want safe walking and biking infrastructure on Hickory Tree Road

Shared-use Path: Photo Courtesy of City of Fort Worth

Pedestrian Safety Concept: Sidewalk Driveway Treatments

- Sidewalks are continued over driveways to alert drivers to the shared space
- Continuous walking path for pedestrians reduces interruptions in flat pavement
- Benefits pedestrians with limited mobility, wheelchair users, and pedestrians with strollers



Crossing Safety Concepts

- Improve visibility of crosswalks in all weather and lighting conditions
- Concepts for all mid-block crosswalks:
  - High Visibility Crosswalk Paint
  - Crosswalk Warning Signs
  - Vehicle Stop Lines
  - Additional Lighting

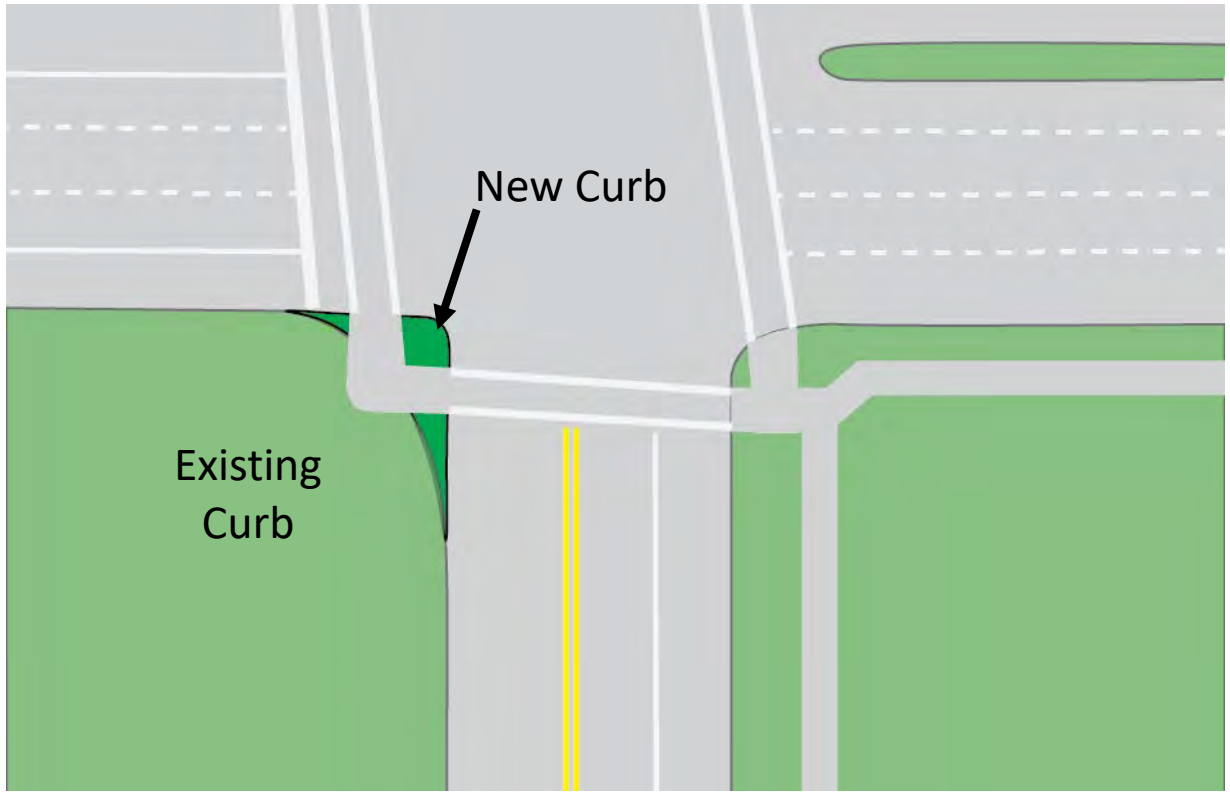
Photo Courtesy of Dan Sundstrom

Crossing Safety Concepts: Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon

- Beacon activates to temporarily halt traffic to allow pedestrians to safely cross
- Once pedestrian crosses, road returns to normal conditions
- Possible locations include:
  - Schools
  - Parks
  - Any other areas with safety concerns
- Video Explanation of Beacon available on Public Engagement Page

Crossing Safety Concepts: Curb Radius Tightening

- Shortens crosswalk distance
  - Benefits slower pedestrians
- Reduces time spent in the roadway
- Slows right turn vehicle speeds and increases visibility of crosswalk and pedestrians
- Possible Locations
  - Hickory Tree Rd & Lake June Rd
  - Hickory Tree Rd & Bruton Rd
  - Hickory Tree Rd & Elam Rd
  - Hickory Tree Rd & Quail Dr



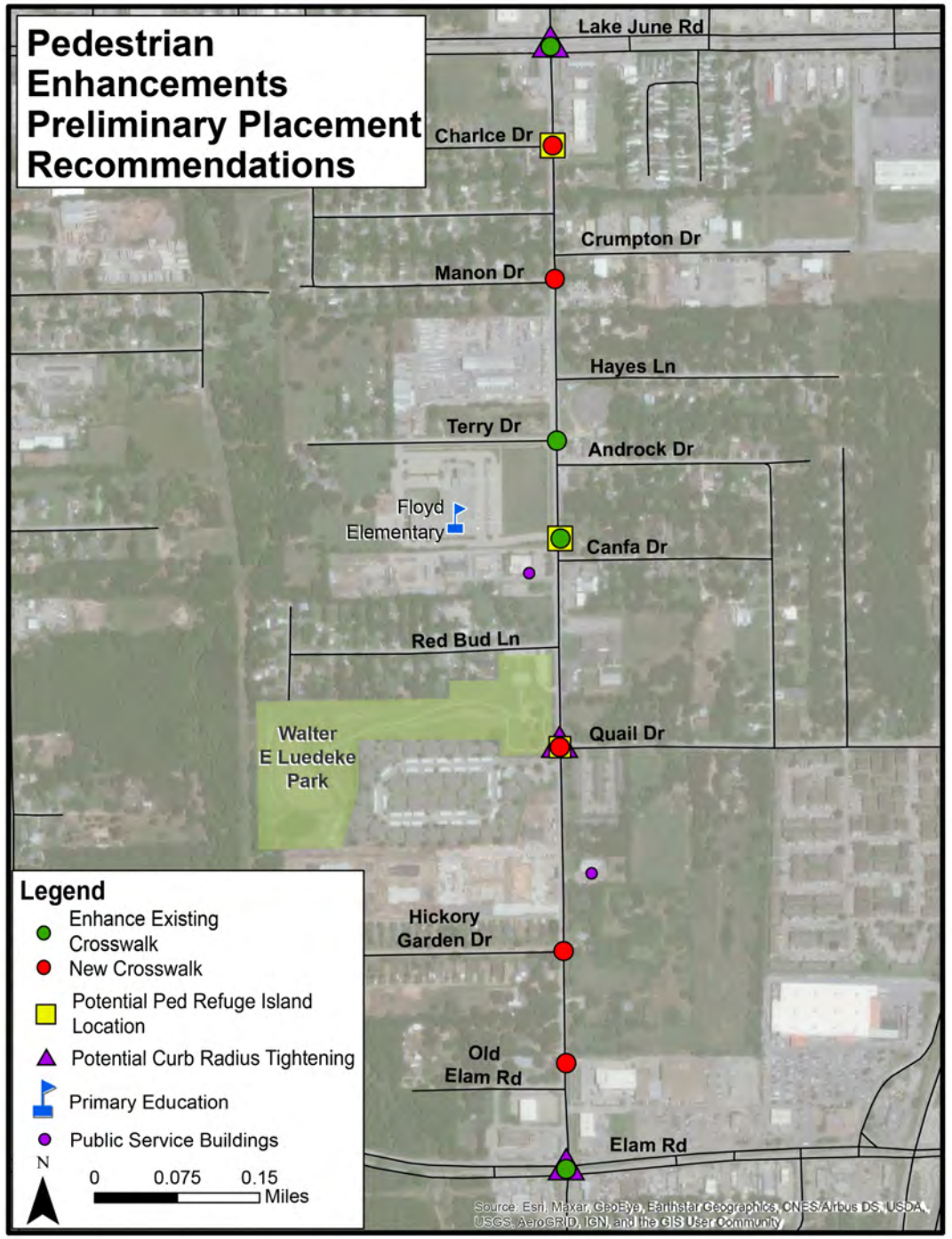
Pedestrian Enhancements Preliminary Placement Recommendations

- Lake June Road to Bruton Road

* Map is posted on public engagement page

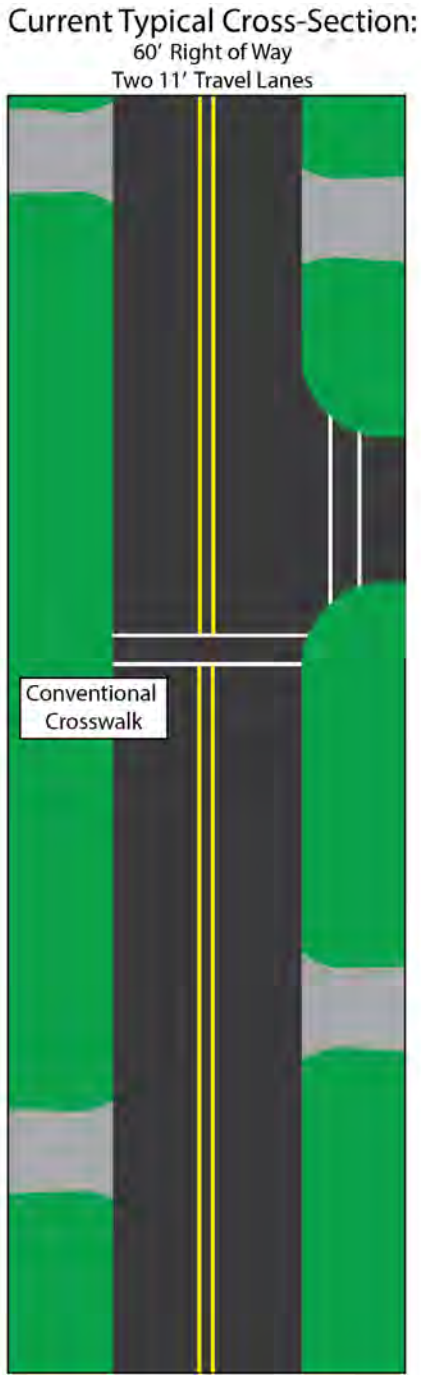
Pedestrian Enhancements Preliminary Placement Recommendations

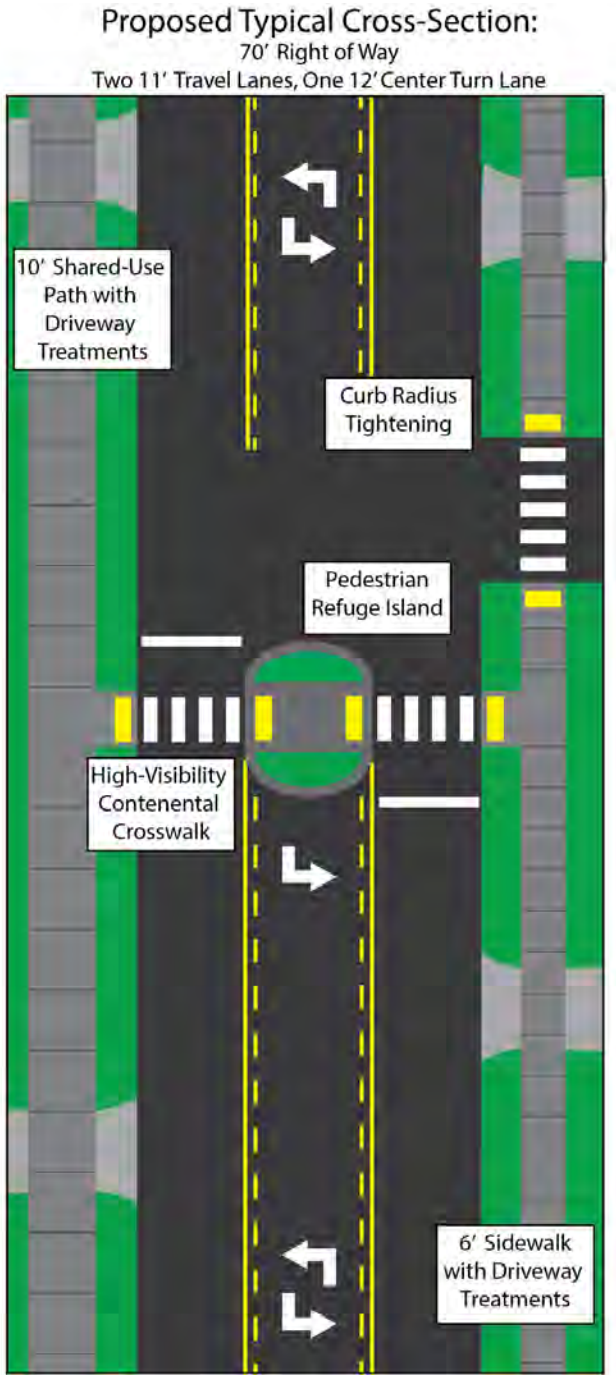
- Elam to Lake June Road



* Map is posted on public engagement page

Pedestrian Enhancement Concepts





Illustrations are not drawn to scale

* Visual is posted on public engagement page

Next Steps: Planning Study Conclusion

Public Feedback

(Online Public Engagement Opportunity):

September-October 2021

Complete Planning Study

Early 2022

Next Steps: Post-Planning Study

ROW Acquisition

Meetings with property owners after final roadway design complete

Construction & Utilities

Construction schedule and traffic access discussion to come

Get Involved!

- Provide feedback on this planning project & recommendations
  - Review maps, graphics, and external resources
  - Complete feedback form
- Take the Hickory Tree Road Corridor survey
  - Hosted on the Balch Springs Website
  - https://www.cityofbalchsprings.com/443/Hickory-Tree-Rd-Survey
- Contact Us: Emails on next slide

Contact Us

Karla Weaver

Senior Program Manager

KWeaver@nctcog.org

Shawn Conrad

Principal Transportation Planner

SConrad@nctcog.org

Erin Curry

Transportation Planner

ECurry@nctcog.org

Chris Dyser

Community Development Department Director

CDyser@cityofbalchsprings.com

William Freeman

Public Works Director

WFreeman@cityofbalchsprings.com