

Meeting Minutes

Subject	Balch Springs Hickory Tree Road Planning Study	Date	6/29/2021
Facilitator	Shawn Conrad	Time	6:00 pm
Location	Zoom	Recorded by	Erin Curry
Representatives	Shawn Conrad, Erin Curry (NCTCOG); Chris Dyser, William Freeman, Suzy Cluse (Balch Springs)		

Meeting Purpose	Balch Springs Resident Stakeholder Meeting
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Discussion Items
<p>1. The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) staff are developing a roadway improvement planning study for Hickory Tree Road from Bruton Road to Elam Road, in collaboration with the City of Balch Springs. The goals of the plan are to develop context-sensitive recommendations for the corridor, enhance the bicycle/pedestrian experience along the corridor, connect key amenities and services along the corridor, and facilitate economic opportunity. NCTCOG staff discussed the project background, existing conditions and data collection, major considerations, and preliminary high-level recommendations on the corridor, including the cross-section recommendation of a three-lane roadway with a center turn lane, pedestrian refuge islands at select locations, sidewalks, and a shared-use path. This preliminary recommendation would require 70' of right-of-way (ROW), expanding from the current 60' ROW.</p> <p>2. A resident expressed concern about whether the City would need to take homes as a part of reconstruction. City staff clarified that this is very preliminary, and the project is still in the planning stage. There will be no final decisions on ROW until the engineering and design phase during fiscal year 2022 to determine the final layout of the road. City staff stated that taking homes will not be needed for this project and that most right-of-way issues will be with utilities and creek crossings. City staff also stated that the public will be engaged during the entire process, including ROW acquisition.</p> <p>3. A resident asked about funding for projects outside of the Hickory Tree Road corridor, specifically around Rodney Lane. City staff said that this meeting is specifically for the Hickory Tree Road corridor, but that they were aware of the road issues within the neighborhood and are working to resolve them.</p> <p>4. A resident asked if the recommended cross-section of three lanes would be for the extent of the study area. City staff confirmed that was the case, and that the roadway would need an additional 10' of ROW. City staff also clarified that project recommendations included a sidewalk on one side of the road and a shared-use path on the other side. The resident additionally asked about what would happen to gas lines and drainage ditches if they were located in the space that the City would need to acquire for ROW. City staff explained that the current drainage ditches would be converted into a curb and gutter drainage system. Any gas lines affected by roadway construction would be relocated, but there would be no change in gas availability to residents.</p> <p>5. A resident asked if project representatives were coordinating with the City of Mesquite. The City of Balch Springs staff responded that coordination with City of Mesquite staff regarding this project is ongoing.</p> <p>6. A resident asked about the drainage and water main on the corridor. City staff responded that the water line would be replaced prior to roadway construction and that they are aware of the issues with the current line. They</p>

additionally explained that the roadway would be converted to a curb and gutter drainage system, and the drainage ditches would be removed in favor of underground stormwater storage.

7. A resident asked if there were satellite images available with the proposed cross-section overlaid. NCTCOG staff responded that those were not yet available.

8. A resident asked about parking for businesses that use frontage space in their lots. City staff explained that while ROW space is used as parking in some areas, the businesses that use that space do not own the property. The issue will have to be addressed during design of the project.

9. A resident asked about how congestion would be reduced by adding the center turn lane to the roadway cross-section. NCTCOG staff explained that the center turn lane eliminates traffic congestion that is caused by vehicles that are stopped and waiting to make a left turn, allowing them to wait without blocking traffic. NCTCOG staff also explained that the third lane can increase capacity to almost the level of a four-lane roadway. The three-lane configuration maintains a balance between allowing cars to flow along the roadway and maintaining access to homes and businesses.

10. A resident asked about 18-wheelers on Hickory Tree Road, and enforcement of truck rules. City staff clarified that while Hickory Tree Road is not a truck route, trucks have the right to use the roadway to make direct deliveries; afterward, they must return to the City's truck routes using the most direct route possible. City staff said that the police department is monitoring the situation.

11. A resident asked about funding for the project. NCTCOG staff explained that the funding for construction from Elam Road to Lake June Road has been programmed and approved by the Regional Transportation Council and is now in the federal approval process. NCTCOG does not foresee any issues with federal and state approval and expects it to be complete within the next six months.