

Balch Springs
Hickory Tree Road Corridor Planning Study
Business & Property Owner
Stakeholder Meeting

6/30/21

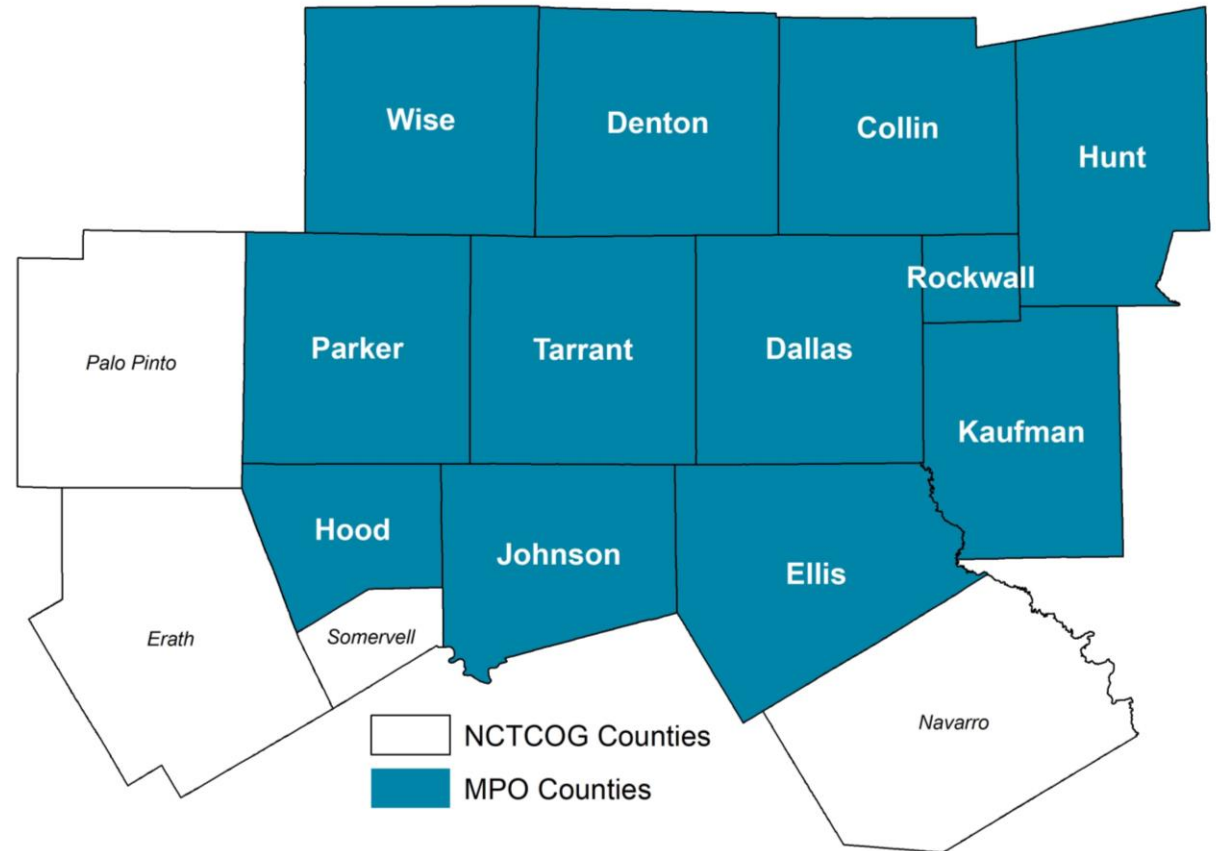
About NCTCOG

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

Meeting 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.
- This meeting 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 tonight's meeting is to obtain focused feedback from business owners/tenants and property owners along the study corridor.



Project Background

Project Background

- May 2020: City submitted funding proposal to NCTCOG
- June 2020: RTC approved corridor planning study by NCTCOG staff to develop context-sensitive corridor plan facilitating economic growth
 - 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: Engineering, Right of Way, Utilities, & Construction
- Funding partners include NCTCOG, County, TxDOT, and City of Balch Springs

Planning Project Goals

- Develop Context-Sensitive Design recommendations for the corridor
 - Design that is meant to fit the environments of the area surrounding it and meet the needs of the community
- Enhance bicycle/pedestrian experience along the study corridor
 - Increase safety for bicyclists and pedestrians
 - Increase comfort
- Connect key amenities and services along the study corridor
 - Schools, Parks, Municipal Buildings, Commercial Areas
- Facilitate economic opportunity along the study corridor

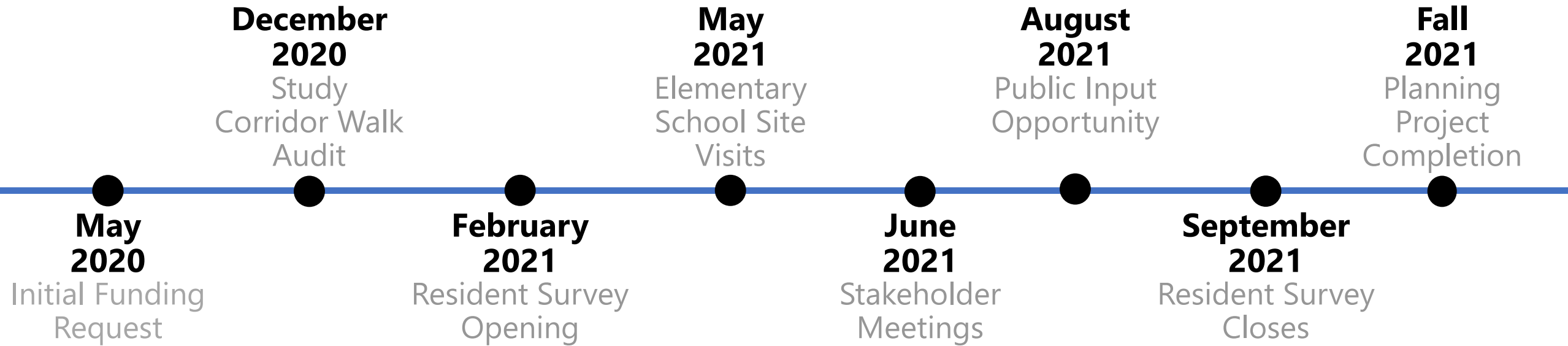
Planning Project Limits

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

Corridor length: 2.03 miles



Timeline



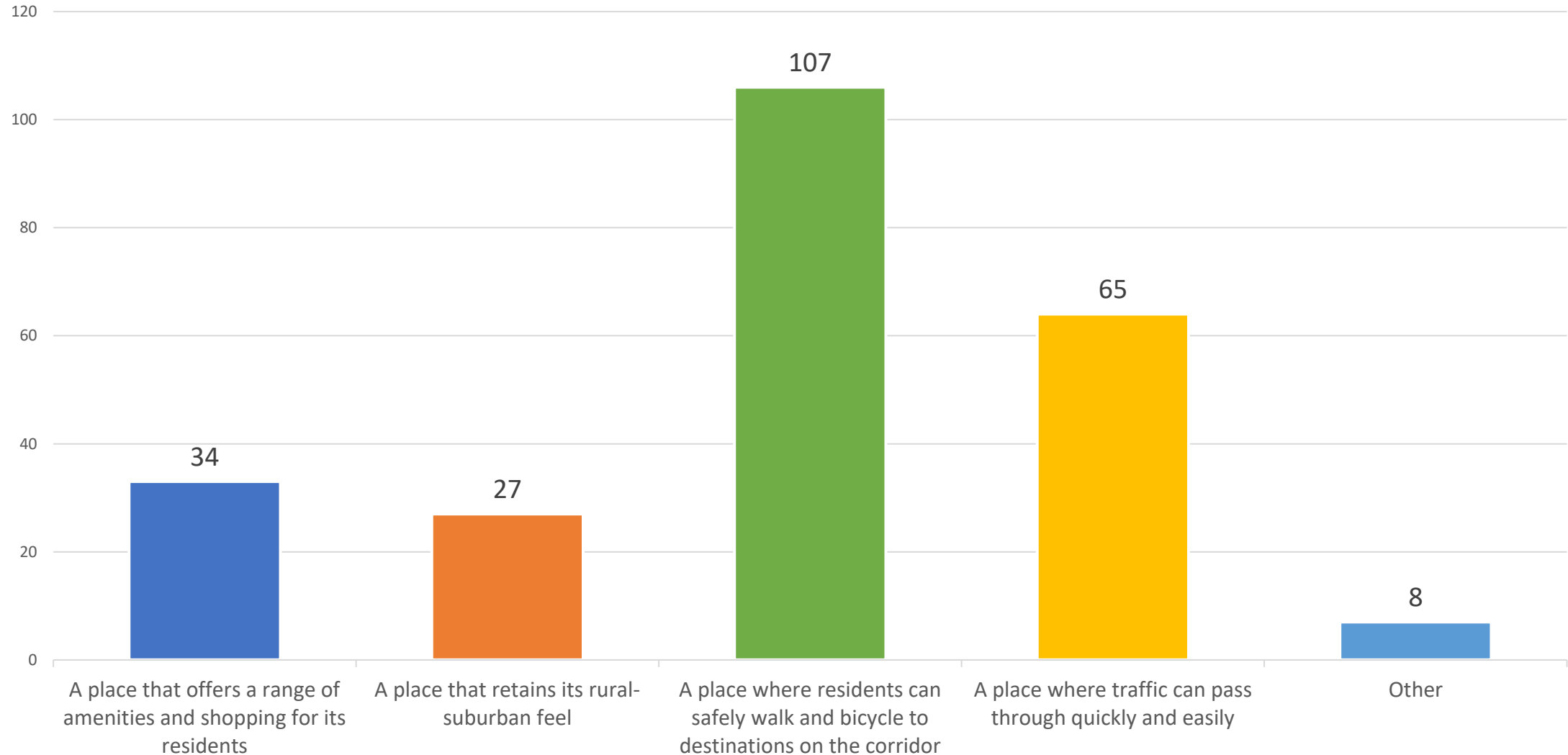
Data Collection / Existing Conditions

Online Survey

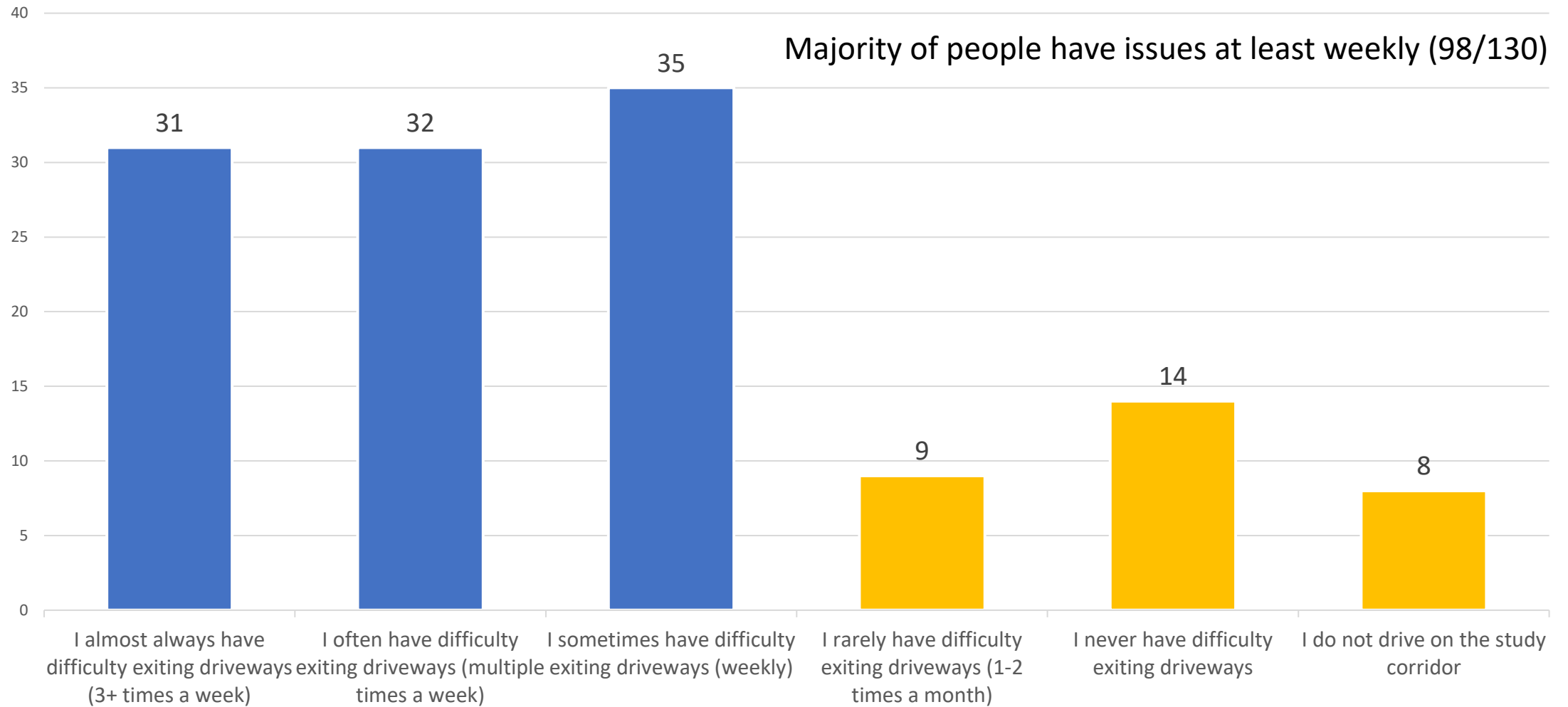
- Live from February 2021 onward (expected close date is September 2021)
- Hosted on Balch Springs' website
 - <http://www.cityofbalchsprings.com/443/Hickory-Tree-Rd-Survey>
- Questions about travel modes on study corridor, safety concerns, and future visions for the corridor



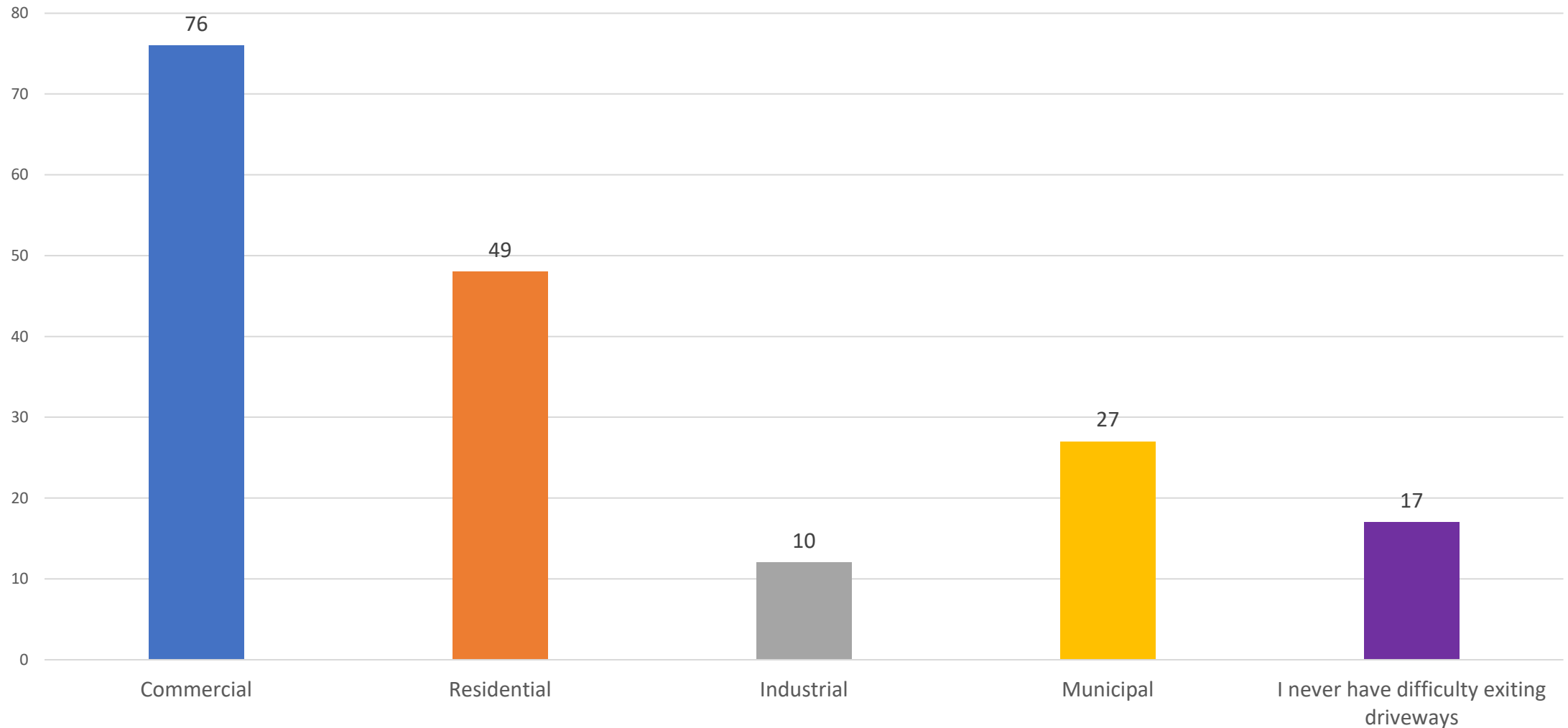
Preliminary Survey Results: “What is your vision for the corridor study area in the future? Select all that apply.” (132 Responses)



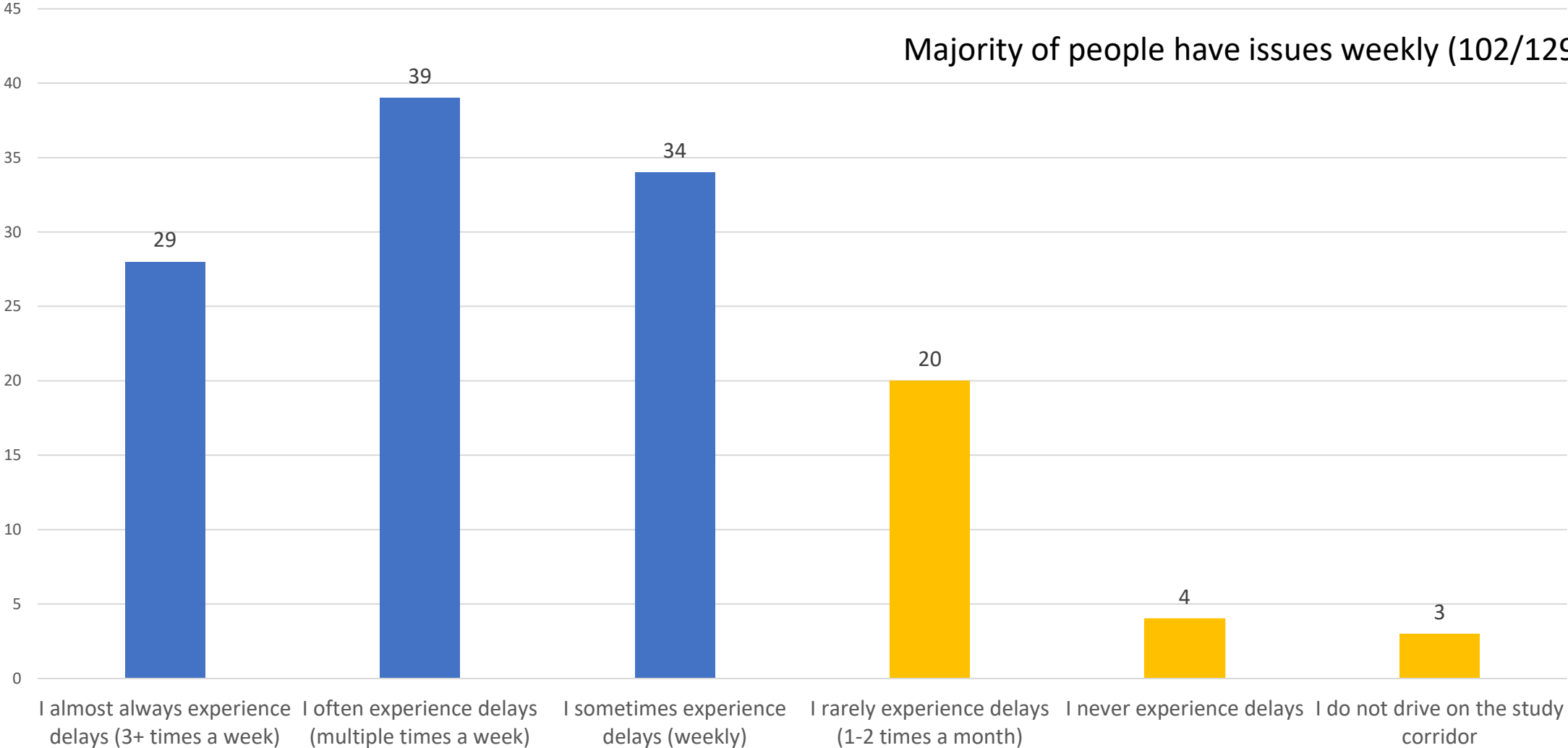
Preliminary Survey Results: “Rate the difficulty of exiting driveways on the study corridor.” (130 Responses)



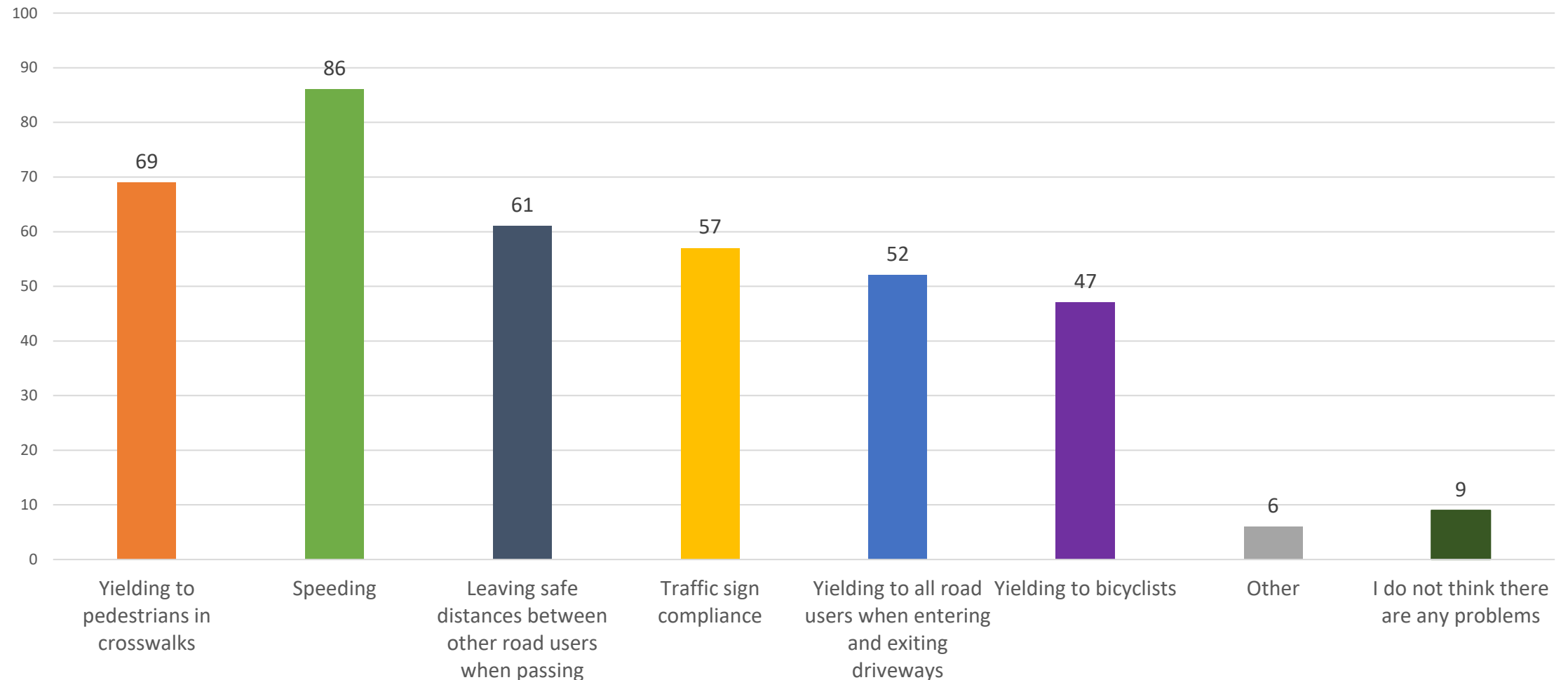
Preliminary Survey Results: “If you have difficulty exiting driveways on the study corridor, what type of driveways do you most often have difficulty exiting? Select all that apply.” (127 Responses)



Preliminary Survey Results: “How often do you experience delays due to traffic congestion while driving on the study corridor?” (129 Responses)

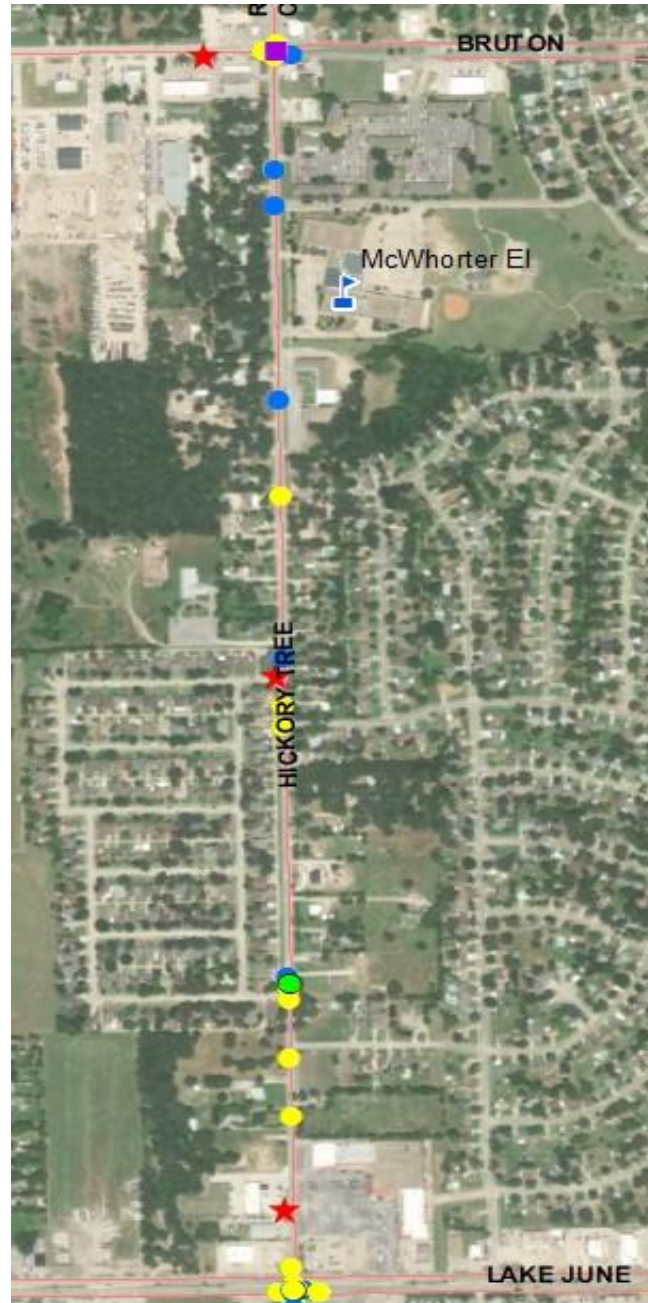


Preliminary Survey Results: “Are there driver behaviors that you think are a problem along the study corridor? Select all that apply.” (120 Responses)

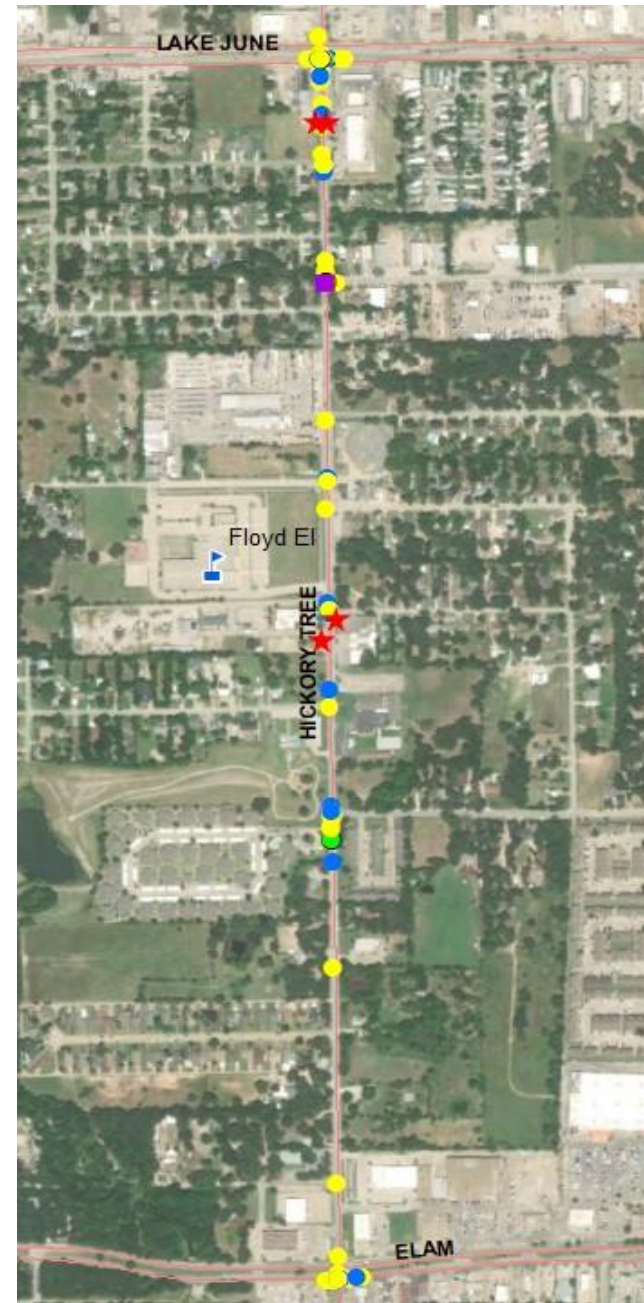


Current Conditions - Crash Maps




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

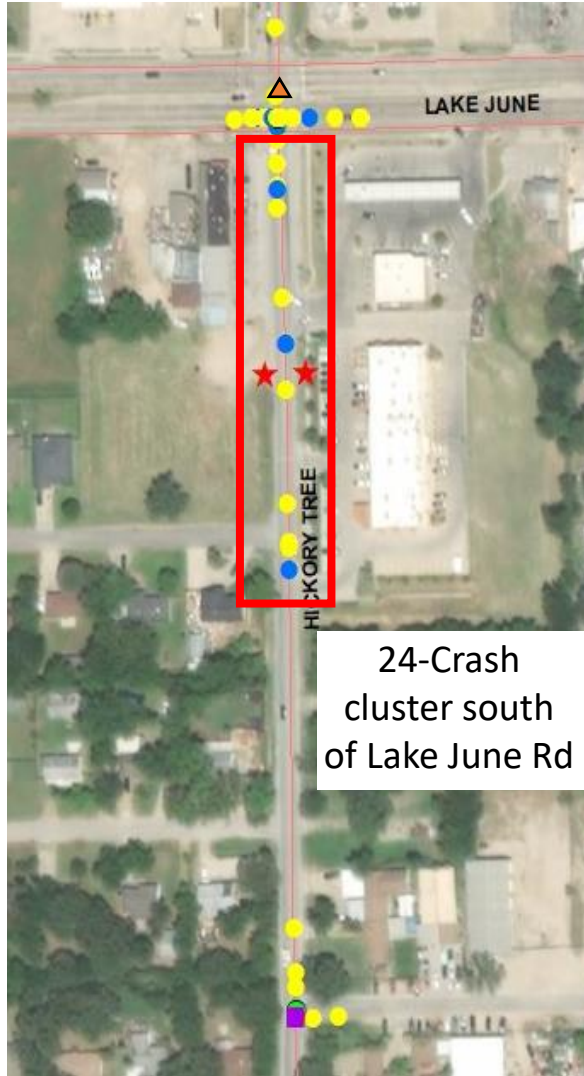
Crash data from 2015-2019
Source: NCTCOG Safety Team

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

- 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

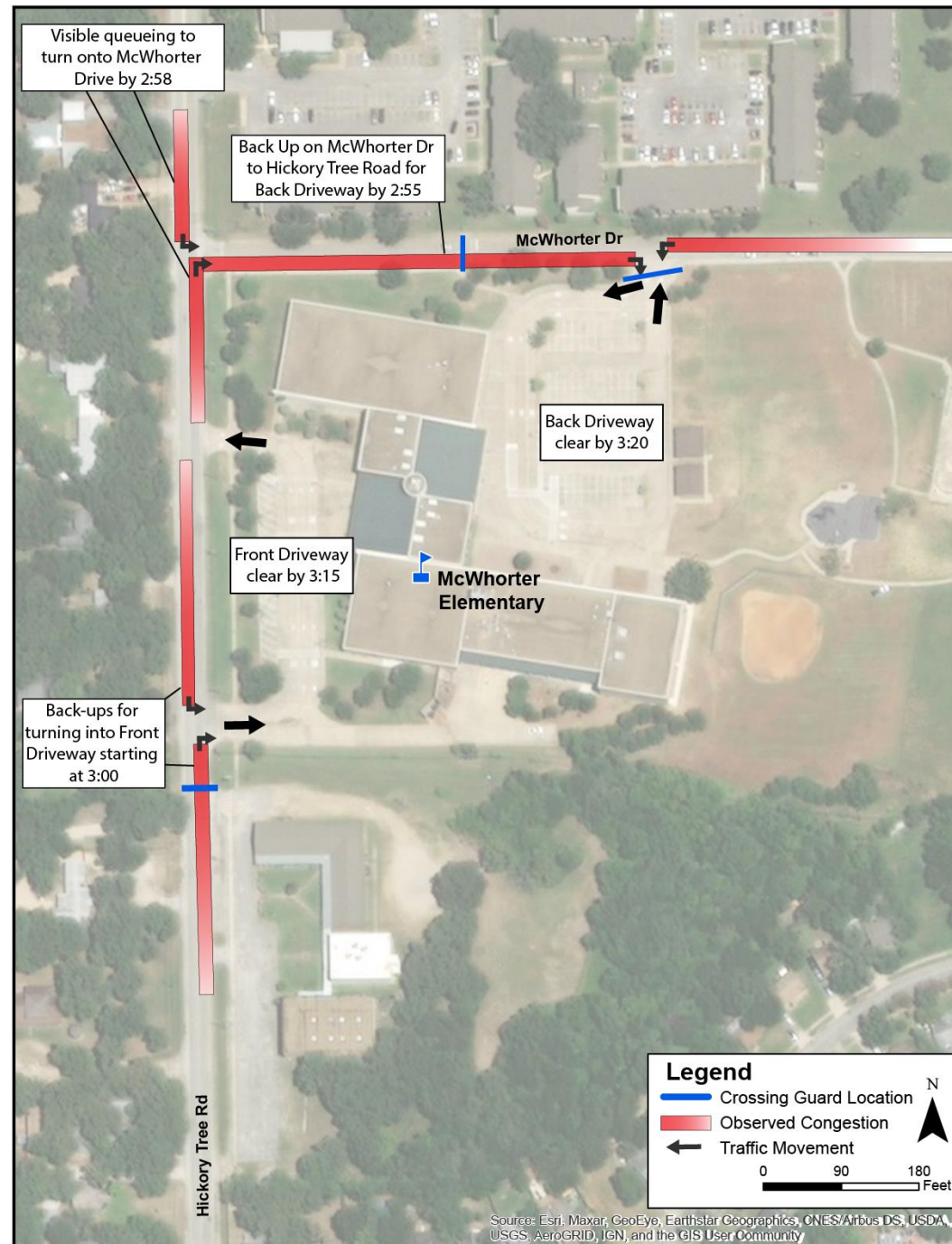
5/4/21

Observations:

- Students in grades K-2 with no older siblings are picked up in front driveway along Hickory Tree Road
- Back-up from driveway queueing overflow on Hickory Tree Road peaked 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

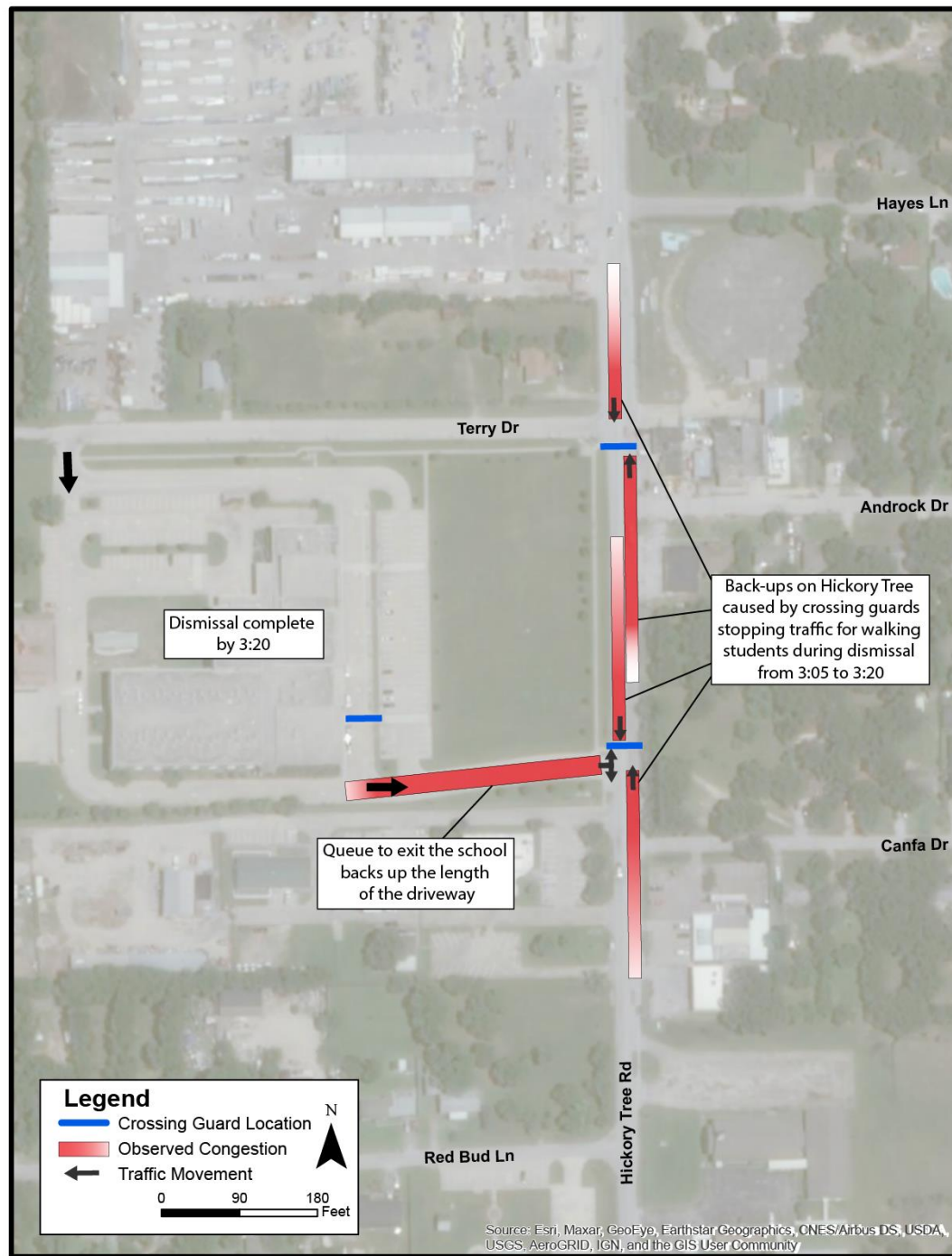


School Site Visit: Floyd Elementary 5/6/21

- 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.
- Walkers 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



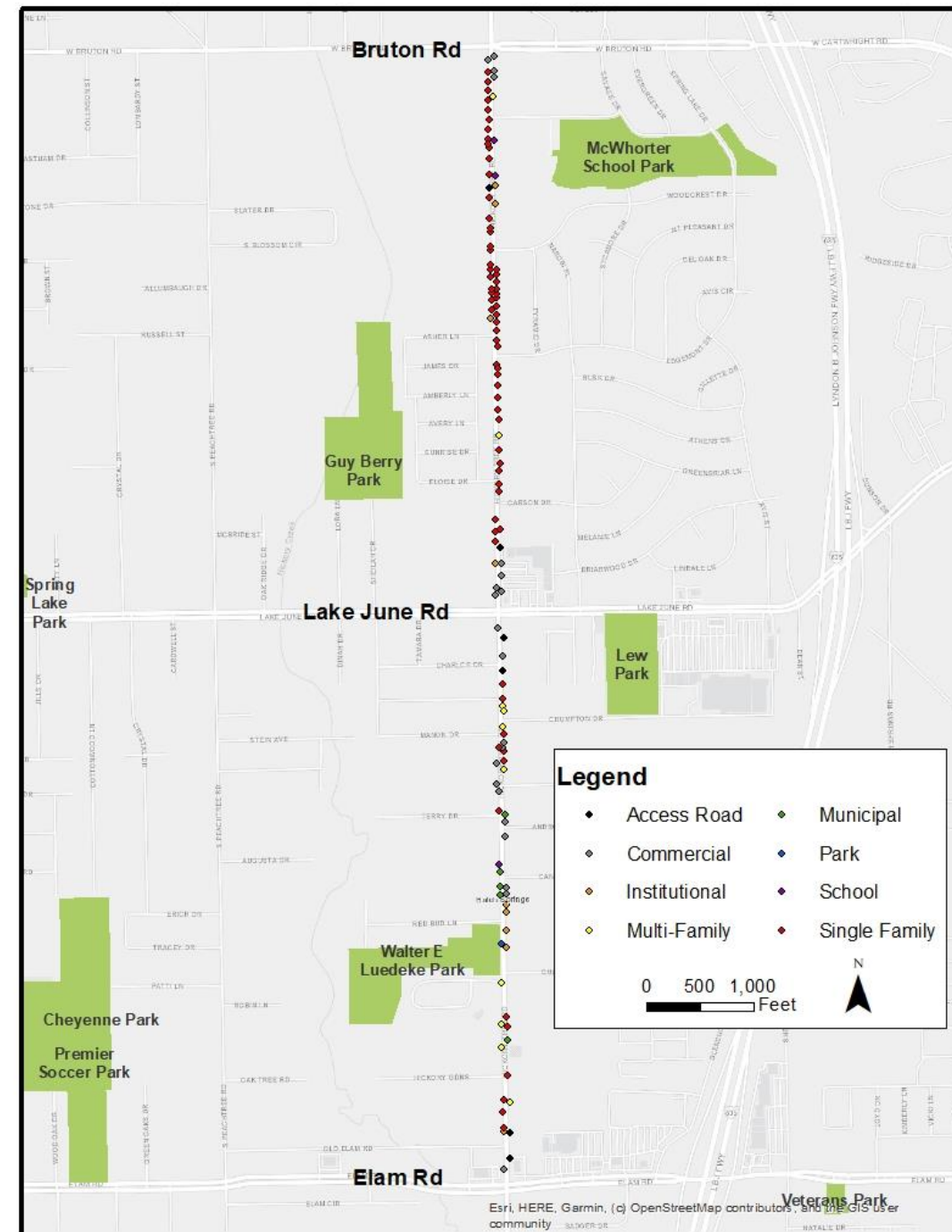
Access Management

- 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






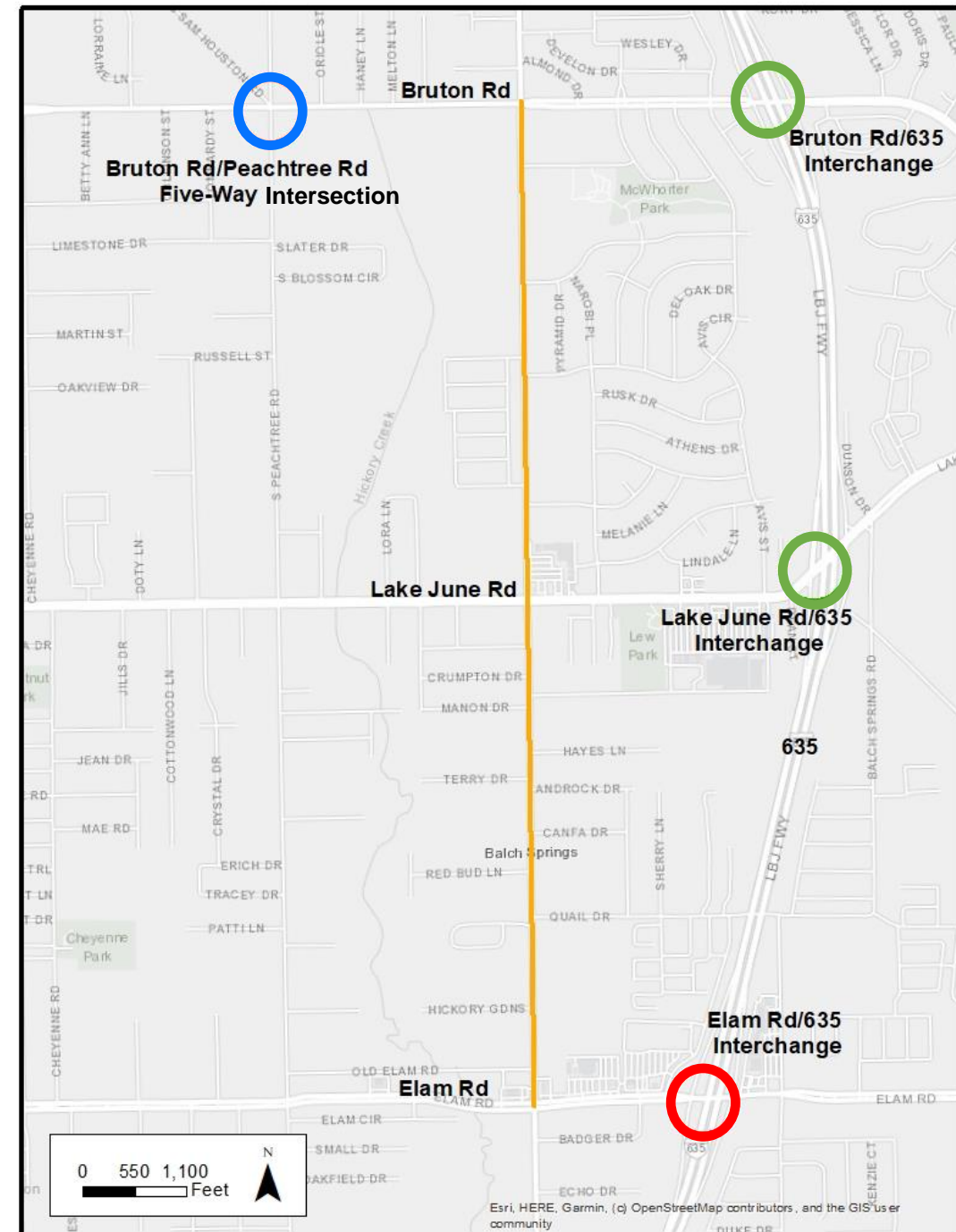
Access Management – Driveways

- 121 Driveways on corridor
 - 66 Single Family, 21 Commercial
- 98/130 survey respondents reported difficulty exiting driveways at least once a week
 - 31/130: Almost Always (3+ times/week)
 - 32/130: Often (multiple times/week)
 - 35/130: Sometimes (weekly)
- Commercial driveways were the most challenging (76/127), followed by residential (48/127)



Key Considerations – Pass-Through Traffic

-  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:

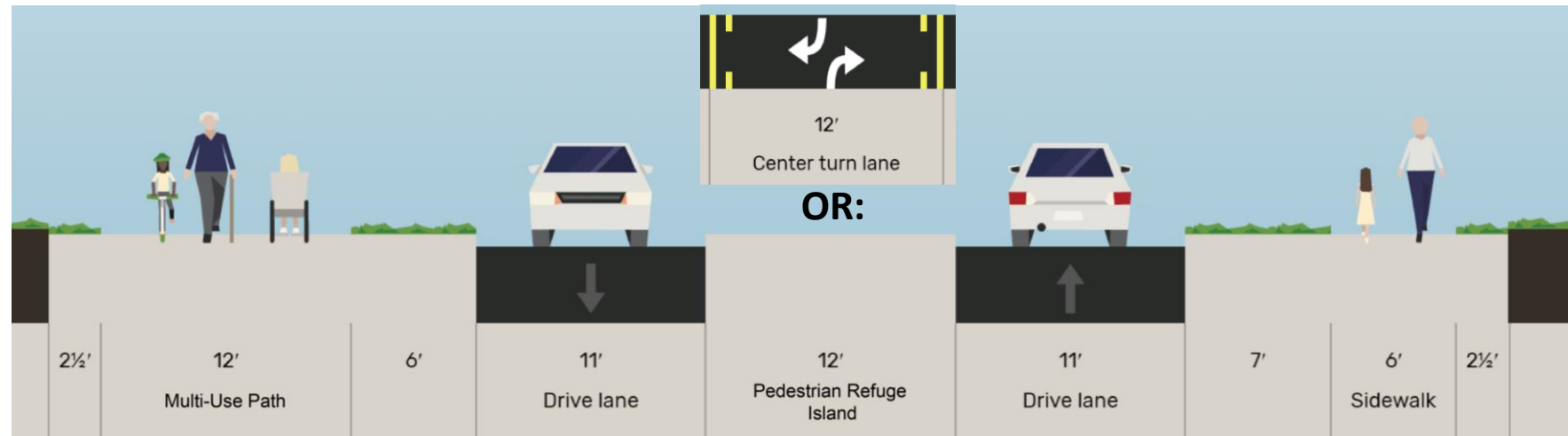
- Improve access to businesses / residences
- Improve congestion
- Room for bicyclists and pedestrians to travel safely
- Improve safety for bicycle/pedestrian
- Future traffic volumes

NCTCOG Recommendation vs Current Cross-Section:

Recommended:

3-Lane Cross-Section with
Added Ped Refuges:

70' ROW



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

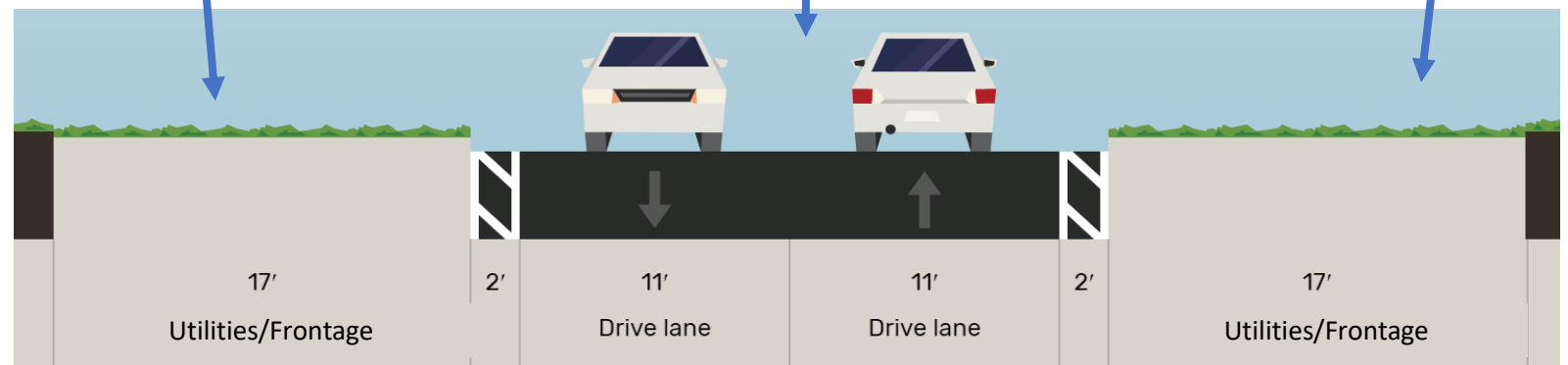
Maintain travel lane widths
and add pedestrian refuge
island/center turn lane

6' Sidewalk for
pedestrians and buffer
space from roadway

Current Cross-Section:

2-Lanes with no
Bike/Ped Amenities:

60' ROW



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 (98/130)



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 engineering project



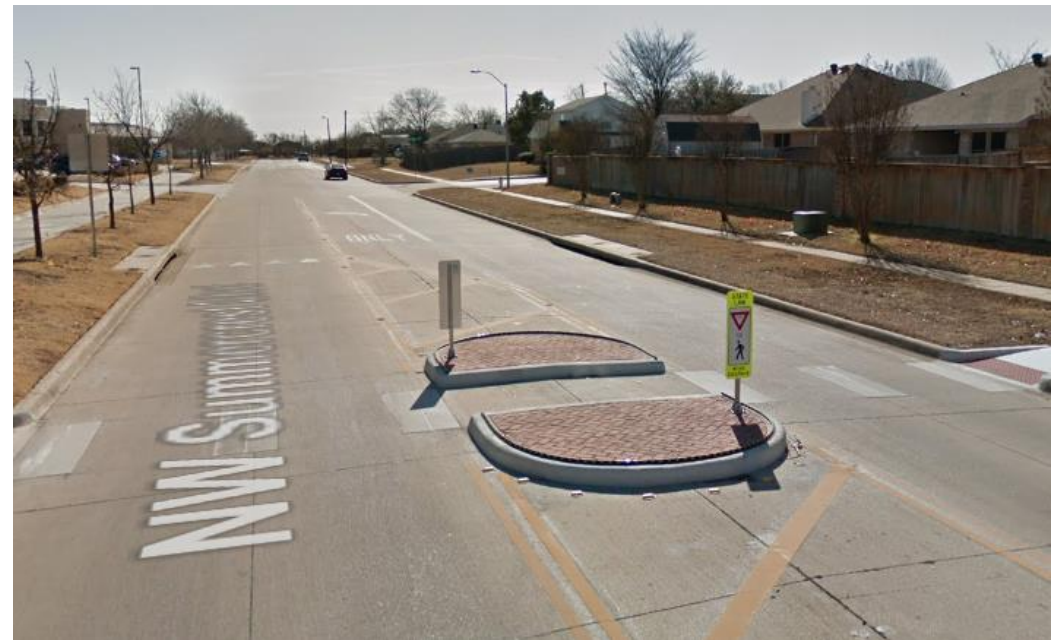
Photo Courtesy of Dan Burden

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

Spurwood Dr, Carrollton TX

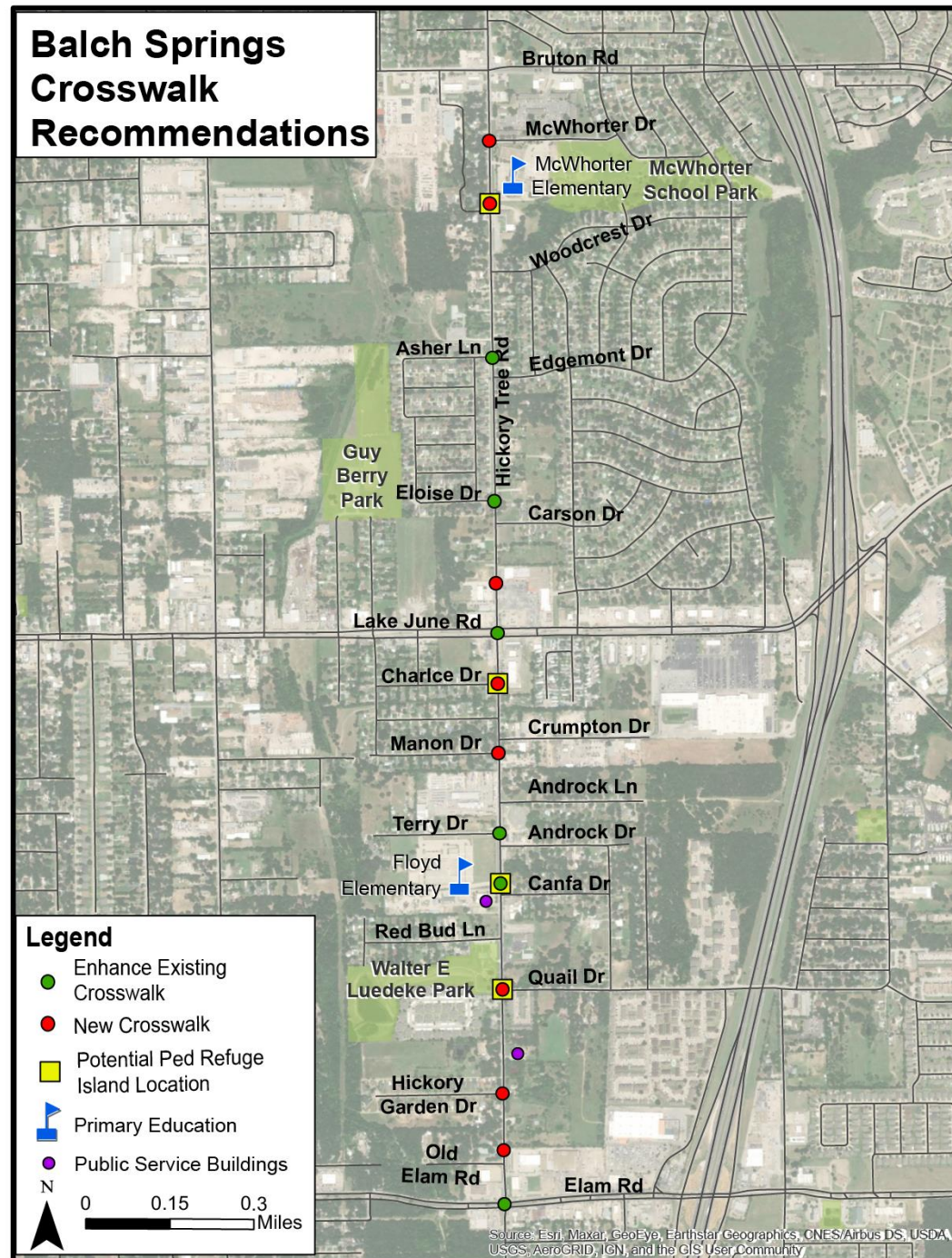


NW Summercrest Blvd, Burleson TX



Imagery Provided by Google

Pedestrian Refuge Island Preliminary Placement Recommendations



Bike/Pedestrian Infrastructure Concepts

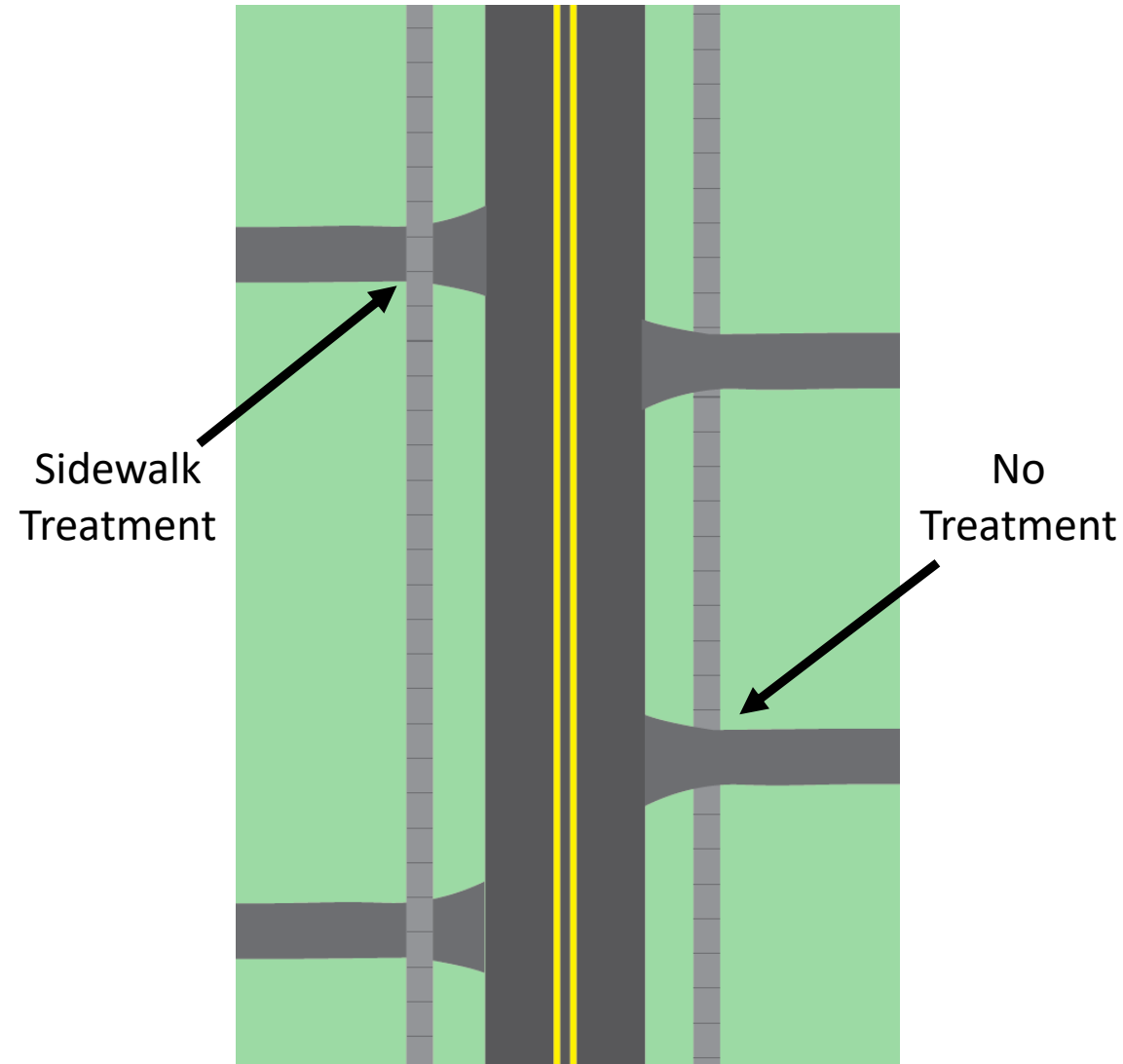
- Sidewalks and Shared-use Paths
 - Sidewalks: 5-6', meant for pedestrians
 - Shared-use Path: >10', shared by bikes and pedestrians
- Community concern over current roadway's unsafe walking spaces
 - Student safety walking to and from school a high concern in survey responses
- 107/132 initial respondents to the Community Survey want safe walking and biking infrastructure on Hickory Tree Road



Shared-use Path: Photo Courtesy 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

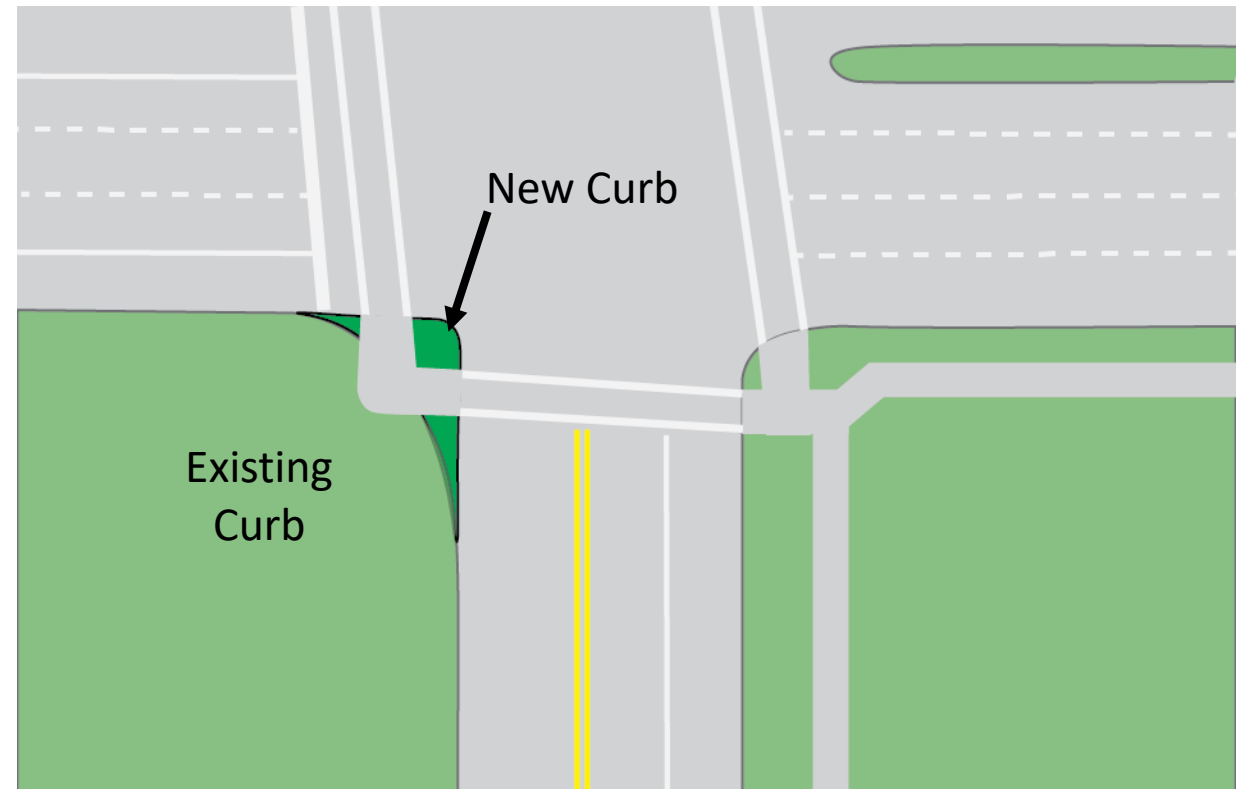
Crossing Safety Concepts: Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon

- 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



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



Next Steps:

Stakeholder
Meetings:

6/29 and 6/30

Public Feedback
(Online Public
Engagement Opportunity):

Expected: August-
September 2021

Complete Planning
Study

Reviews & Revisions:
Expected November 2021

Project Design: FY 22
ROW Acquisition: FY 23
Utilities: FY 24
Construction: FY 25

ROW Acquisition
Meetings with property
owners after final roadway
design complete

Construction &
Utilities
Construction schedule and
traffic access discussion to
come

Questions and Feedback

Discussion Questions - Businesses

- How would you describe the corridor today generally? What concerns do you have, if any?
- What problems currently exist with accessing your business from the study corridor?
- How do people usually travel to your business? Do you or any of your employees walk or bike to work on the corridor?
- What on the roadway would most benefit economic development/your business?
- How would you describe the corridor in terms of traffic and safety?
- What concerns do you have with the present-day corridor?
- What would you like to see for this corridor in the future?
- Do you have any concerns about the roadway improvement concepts presented today?

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