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
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)

- A place that offers a range of amenities and shopping for its residents: 39
- A place that retains its rural-suburban feel: 36
- A place where residents can safely walk and bicycle to destinations on the corridor: 119
- A place where traffic can pass through quickly and easily: 74
- Other: 13
Select Preliminary Survey Results: “Rate the difficulty of exiting driveways on the study corridor.” (156 Responses)

Majority of people have issues at least weekly (116/156)
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
Majority of people have issues at least weekly (117/157)
Select Preliminary Survey Results: “Are there driver behaviors that you think are a problem along the study corridor? Select all that apply. (144 Responses)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yielding to pedestrians in crosswalks</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speeding</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaving safe distances between other road users when passing</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic sign compliance</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yielding to all road users when entering and exiting driveways</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yielding to bicyclists</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not think there are any problems</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Current Conditions - Crash Maps

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

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

Bruton and Hickory Tree Rd
Lake June and Hickory Tree Rd
Elam and Hickory Tree Rd

24-Crash cluster south of Lake June Rd
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

Dismissal complete by 3:20

Queue to exit the school backs up the length of the driveway

Back-ups on Hickory Tree caused by crossing guards stopping traffic for walking students during dismissal from 3:05 to 3:20

Legend:
- Crossing Guard Location
- Observed Congestion
- Traffic Movement

Source: Esri, Maxar, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, Aerial, IGN, and the GIS User Community
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Considerations:</th>
<th>Why:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Access to homes/businesses</td>
<td>• Improve access to businesses / residences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Congestion management</td>
<td>• Improve congestion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Queuing for pick up/drop-off at schools</td>
<td>• Room for bicyclists and pedestrians to travel safely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Bicycle/pedestrian safety and improvements</td>
<td>• Improve safety for bicycle/pedestrian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pedestrian crossing treatments</td>
<td>• Accommodate future traffic volumes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NCTCOG Recommendation vs Current Cross-Section:

**Recommended:**
3-Lane Cross-Section with Added Ped Refuges:
70’ ROW

**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 (116/156)
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
  • Ludekeke 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

* 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

- **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
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

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