

7. PUBLIC AND AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

Agency coordination and public involvement are crucial to the successful delivery of transportation projects. In recognition of the size, scope, and complexity of the proposed OHP Project, the project team led a strategically designed proactive outreach effort in order to engage many stakeholders and resource agencies, and to provide an open and continuous public involvement process.

TxDOT and the Mobility Authority's approach involved developing an understanding and appreciation of agency viewpoints and community values and strived to incorporate or address these in the evolution of the project. The team worked to inform, engage, and respond to stakeholders in a transparent, meaningful, and constructive process.

The proposed project has been open to comment regarding the scope, the need and purpose, proposed concepts, proposed alternatives, environmental impacts, and other project-related information. TxDOT and the Mobility Authority have recorded and considered all comments received as of the date this DEIS has been issued, and will continue to consider all comments received during the public hearing and in preparing the FEIS and ROD for this project.

This section serves to document all public and agency involvement efforts to date, including: public and agency scoping meetings, agency coordination, open house public meetings, community workshops, stakeholder meetings, as well as other outreach methods. Each of these activities is discussed below.

7.1 Notice of Intent

In 2008, TxDOT and FHWA declared their intent to prepare a limited scope Supplemental EIS for US 290/SH71 through the project corridor. However, it was determined that the project and area had changed enough that a new EIS would be required for the project. On July 9, 2012, and July 20, 2012, *Rescissions of the Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare a Supplemental EIS for SH 71/US 290* were published in the *Federal Register* and *Texas Register*, respectively.

FHWA, TxDOT, and the Mobility Authority then published a NOI to prepare an EIS for the proposed project in October 2012. The NOI, as required by NEPA, initiated the EIS scoping process. The NOI was published in the *Federal Register* on October 9, 2012, and in the *Texas Register* on October 19, 2012.

The NOI established the preliminary contents of the EIS, the required approvals by the federal government, details for scoping, and procedures expected for coordination and public involvement based on NEPA requirements. Copies of the published 2012 OHP Project NOIs are available for review at the TxDOT Austin District Office.

7.2 Public and Agency Coordination Plan

TxDOT and the Mobility Authority, in coordination with FHWA, prepared a project coordination plan to facilitate and document the Joint Lead Agencies' structured interaction with the public and other agencies during the project development process. This plan also documents how this interaction and coordination would be accomplished.

In the OHP Project's *Public and Agency Coordination Plan* (Coordination Plan), the cooperating and participating agencies for the proposed project are identified, along with their respective roles and responsibilities. Cooperating agencies are defined in 40 CFR §1508.5 as federal or state agencies with jurisdiction by law or special expertise pertaining to the proposed project. Participating agencies include local, state, and federal resource agencies with a special interest in the proposed project. The list of cooperating and participating agencies is found in **Table 7-1**.

Table 7-1. Cooperating and Participating Agencies

Role	Agency
Cooperating Agency	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Cooperating Agency	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Participating Agency	Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
Participating Agency	Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
Participating Agency	Travis County
Participating Agency	City of Austin
Participating Agency	Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Source: Project Team, 2017

In addition to the agencies listed in **Table 7-1**, several other agencies did not respond or declined the invitation to be cooperating or participating agencies on the OHP Project. These agencies include: the Mescalero Apache Tribe, Wichita and Affiliated Tribes, Kiowa Indian Tribe of Oklahoma, Comanche Nation of Oklahoma, Caddo Nation of Oklahoma, Apache Tribe of Oklahoma, Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas, Tonkawa Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma, FEMA, CAMPO, LCRA, BSEACD, THC, and Hays County.

7.3 Scoping Meetings

Project team members utilized public and agency scoping meetings to reach out to stakeholders including neighborhood organizations, business groups, environmental organizations, local jurisdictions, and the general public. The meetings served as a forum for disseminating information about the project and for obtaining public input on the scope of issues to be addressed during the preparation of the DEIS.

7.3.1 Public Scoping Meetings

7.3.1.1 Open House No. 1

A public and agency scoping meeting, also known as Open House No. 1, was held by TxDOT and the Mobility Authority in November 2012 to gather public and agency input regarding the OHP Project. The meeting was held specifically to collect input on the scope of the EIS and the draft Coordination Plan, discuss the purpose and need for long-term improvements to US 290/SH 71 through Oak Hill, present information on previous studies, present the tentative project schedule, and discuss the EIS process. Public input was requested on all materials and information. Cooperating and participating agencies were also invited to attend.

The meeting was held from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. on November 15, 2012, in the Clint Small, Jr. Middle School Cafeteria, 4801 Monterey Oaks Boulevard, Austin, Texas. The meeting utilized an open house, come-and-go format where the public was able to review project exhibits and discuss the environmental study process with project staff on a one-on-one basis. The meeting summary as well as the comment and response report for this event is available for review at the TxDOT Austin District Office.

7.3.1.2 Invitations

Legal notices for the public and agency scoping meeting were published in the *Austin American-Statesman* on Tuesday, October 16, 2012, and Thursday, November 1, 2012. Color display advertisements were published in the *Oak Hill Gazette* and the *Dripping Springs News Dispatch* on Thursday, November 1, 2012.

Postcard advertisements were sent to individuals along the corridor via the Every Door Direct mailing system. In all, 68,965 postcards were distributed. Elected officials were notified by email in advance of the event.

TxDOT and the Mobility Authority issued a news release about the upcoming event on October 17, 2012, prior to the event date. The news release mentioned the opportunity for media outlets to interview project officials and community residents.

A news conference for Austin area media was held along US 290 in Oak Hill on October 17, 2012, by the Mobility Authority. Speakers included State Representative Paul Workman, Travis County Commissioner Karen Huber, and representatives from Capital Metro and TxDOT. The purpose of the news conference was to announce the start of the EIS process. The date, location, and purpose of the November 15, 2012, public and agency scoping meeting was also announced.

Information on the date, time, location, and purpose of the public and agency scoping meeting was posted on the project website, www.OakHillParkway.com. The meeting was also posted on the TxDOT Hearings and Meetings Schedule website (<http://txdot.gov/inside-txdot/get-involved/about/hearings-meetings.html>).

7.3.1.3 Meeting Information

In all, 83 people attended the public and agency scoping meeting. One elected official signed in, Travis County Commissioner elect for Precinct 3—Gerald Daugherty. Upon arrival at the event, attendees were asked to sign in and were offered a set of handouts which included the following items:

- Welcome Letter
- Comment Sheet
- Fact Sheet
- OHP Survey
- Meeting Satisfaction Survey

Twenty-two informational boards regarding the project and the EIS process were displayed around the room for public viewing. A station was set up to provide attendees with information regarding other transportation improvement projects in the area and tables were available for representatives of the COA and Capital Metro to visit with attendees regarding local issues. A seating area was made available so attendees could watch a slide show that ran on a continuous loop showing the display boards and pictures of the study area.

A map of potential environmental constraints within the project area was displayed. Two large plots with the study limits on an aerial photograph were displayed on long tables; attendees were encouraged to use pens to locate/mark on the plots to indicate traffic problem spots they were aware of, environmental features they felt should be considered in the study, and their ideas on how to improve mobility in the area.

Representatives from TxDOT, the Mobility Authority, and the project team were positioned around the room to answer questions, facilitate discussion, and gather input from attendees. Tables were arranged so attendees could have a place to fill out comment sheets and surveys. Boxes were available for attendees to leave their completed comment and survey forms. A court reporter was also available to transcribe comments from attendees who desired to give their input verbally.

7.3.1.4 Comments

In all, 44 comments were received during the official comment period, which ran from Tuesday, October 16, 2012, to Monday, November 26, 2012. Major themes were prevalent among the comments, including: access concerns, support for bicycles and pedestrian accommodations, frustration with the process taking so long, opposition to elevated structures, traffic congestion concerns, and Williamson Creek/water quality concerns. Other comments included: opposition to tolling, support for the project to be built, concerns about the size of the project's footprint, support for the project to be environmentally friendly, concerns about emergency access, noise pollution concerns, and support for transit options.

7.3.2 Agency Scoping Meetings

TxDOT and the Mobility Authority hosted an Agency Scoping Meeting on January 22, 2013. At this meeting, the project team provided an overview of the project and corridor challenges; discussed the project history, draft Coordination Plan, draft purpose and need, known environmental constraints, and anticipated schedule; and allowed the resource agencies to discuss their interest in the project. In addition to the project team, in attendance were representatives from USFWS, TCEQ, Travis County, COA, and Capital Metro.

A Workshop session was held between COA staff and the OHP project team on March 1, 2013. Participants broke into three small group discussions focusing on mobility and connectivity, floodplain management, and environmental issues.

The project team met with the COA on December 12, 2014. The COA was provided with an overview of the project. Following the overview, several subjects were discussed in more detail including: bike and pedestrian facilities, transportation issues, Williamson Creek, and water quality.

The project team held an Agency Coordination Meeting on September 21, 2017. Staff from COA, TPWD, TCEQ, USFWS, Capital Metro, and Travis County were invited. The presentation included a project overview and an update of work done to date. A more detailed question-and-answer discussion followed on topics including: proposed excavation and the geologic assessment, proposed plantings and moving large trees, threatened and endangered species that would require consultation with USFWS, karst features in the project area, acres of streams and water bodies in the right-of-way, and proposed construction staging areas.

7.4 Agency Coordination

During the completion of the DEIS, agency coordination took place to gather input and information from agencies with jurisdictions relevant to the proposed project. This input was valuable to TxDOT and the Mobility Authority during analysis of proposed alternatives.

23 U.S.C. §139 requires the identification of lead, cooperating, and participating agencies in the development of this DEIS. This up-front identification is intended to facilitate an expedited review of environmental documents for the proposed project and allow all members of the team to know the expected project schedule and expectations. Allowing agencies to be involved early allows for early identification of any issues or concerns regarding the project's impacts, allows for early identification of necessary permits and approvals, and allows support staff to be available for review of project documents when necessary.

7.4.1 Lead Agencies

At project initiation in 2012, the Texas Division of the FHWA was the federal lead agency and TxDOT and the Mobility Authority shared responsibility as joint lead agencies. In 2015, FHWA assigned the NEPA responsibilities to TxDOT. Currently, TxDOT and the Mobility Authority are the joint lead agencies for the proposed project.

TxDOT is the USDOT agency responsible for the NEPA analysis and independent review of the EIS. TxDOT would ensure that any design and mitigation commitments are included in the ROD and followed. TxDOT is also the project sponsor and responsible for producing the required environmental and engineering studies, producing the environmental document, and involving the public in the NEPA process.

As the Joint Lead Agency, the Mobility Authority's role is to assist TxDOT with decision-making and approvals at various points in the project development process, review technical studies, provide technical guidance, and assist with procedural requirements conducted as part of the EIS process.

7.4.2 Cooperating and Participating Agencies

In 2012, TxDOT and the Mobility Authority invited 22 federal, state, local, and tribal agencies to become cooperating or participating agencies for the proposed project. The two levels of involvement had different roles.

Cooperating agencies are certain federal agencies (or occasionally state or local agencies with similar qualifications) that have an interest in the project and also have jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to any environmental impact involved in a proposed project or project alternative. Cooperating agencies have a higher degree of authority, responsibility, and involvement in the environmental review process than do participating agencies.

Participating agencies are federal, state, tribal, regional, or local governmental agencies that have an interest in the project.

The agencies that accepted the invitation to be a cooperative or participating agency are listed in **Table 7-1** above.

7.5 Open Houses

Following the initial scoping meeting (Open House No. 1), several open house-style public meetings were held throughout EIS and schematic development in order to build informed consent with the community and to ensure the design met both the mobility need and community values.

7.5.1 Open House No. 2

The second open house was held by TxDOT and the Mobility Authority in May 2013 to gather public input regarding the OHP Project. The meeting was held specifically to review information provided by the public at the OHP Project public and agency scoping meeting and subsequent workshops and to discuss eight alternative concepts being developed based on public input. Public input was requested on all materials and information.

The meeting was held from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. on May 23, 2013, in the Clint Small, Jr. Middle School Cafeteria, 4801 Monterey Oaks Boulevard, Austin, Texas. The meeting utilized an open

house, come-and-go format where the public was able to review project exhibits and discuss the environmental study process with project staff on a one-on-one basis. The meeting summary as well as the comment and response report for this event is available for review at the TxDOT Austin District Office.

7.5.1.1 Invitations

Legal notices for the open house were published in the *Austin American-Statesman* on Tuesday, April 23, 2013, and Monday, May 13, 2013. Color display advertisements for the open house and Virtual Open House were published in the *Oak Hill Gazette* on May 2 and May 16, 2013; the *Lake Travis View* on May 9, 2013; the *Driftwood News Dispatch* on May 16, 2013; and the May 2013 issue of *Community Impact Newspaper* (Southwest Austin Edition).

TxDOT and the Mobility Authority distributed a news release on May 21, 2013, regarding the upcoming event. The alert mentioned the opportunity for media outlets to interview project officials and community residents. A news release promoting continued opportunity for public engagement through a Virtual Open House was distributed on May 24, 2013.

An e-newsletter announcing the open house and summarizing previous outreach meetings and public input was distributed to 159 individuals and groups that requested to be added to the study database. Elected officials were notified by email in advance of the event.

Information on the date, time, location, and purpose of the open house was posted on the project website, www.OakHillParkway.com. The meeting was also posted on the TxDOT Hearings and Meetings Schedule website, <http://txdot.gov/inside-txdot/get-involved/about/hearings-meetings.html>.

Announcements about the open house and subsequent Virtual Open House were sent from the project's Twitter account @OakHillParkway in May using both organic and promoted advertising options. Promoted Facebook and Google advertisements were also utilized to advertise the Virtual Open House.

The open house was also promoted at a May 16, 2013, OHP Project Design Concept Preview Meeting held by TxDOT and the Mobility Authority.

7.5.1.2 Meeting Information

In all, 78 people attended the open house. Upon arrival at the event, attendees were asked to sign in and were offered a set of handouts which included the following items:

- Welcome Letter
- Comment Sheet
- Concept List
- Design Concepts Survey
- Information about the Virtual Open House

Twenty-one informational boards regarding the project and the EIS process were displayed around the room for public viewing. The boards included information on the project's purpose and need statement, the environmental process, project schedule, the Green Mobility Challenge, eight preliminary design concepts, one option to extend the west transition past Circle Drive, a summary of public involvement opportunities to date, the OHP Project Virtual Open House, and survey results from the November 2012 public and agency scoping meeting. In addition, a map provided by the Oak Hill Trails Association showing planned and potential bicycle and pedestrian trails for the area was displayed. A map of potential environmental constraints within the study area was also provided for public viewing.

A station was set up to provide information regarding TxDOT's Interim Intersection Improvements Project that was being constructed at intersection locations along US 290 within the OHP Project corridor.

Representatives from TxDOT, the Mobility Authority, and the project team were positioned around the room to answer questions, facilitate discussion, and gather input from attendees. Tables were arranged so attendees could have a place to fill out comment forms and surveys. Boxes were available for attendees to leave their completed comment cards and survey forms. A court reporter was also available to transcribe comments from attendees who desired to give their input verbally.

7.5.1.3 Virtual Open House

The Virtual Open House on the project website (www.OakHillParkway.com) was available for public view from May 23, 2013, to June 3, 2013. This Virtual Open House was a pilot event with sponsorship from the Texas A&M Transportation Institute. Each exhibit displayed at the open house meeting was available for view as a PDF file, and links were provided for participants to submit official comments. Also, this digital experience included videos that explained each of the eight concepts under consideration for the OHP Project, as well as the *No Build Alternative*. The open house attendees were notified of the Virtual Open House through a handout and through an exhibit board display. As mentioned earlier, the Virtual Open House was advertised in print and digital media. The Virtual Open House recorded 659 unique page views during the 11 days it was available for view.

In addition, in order to provide an interactive experience that more closely resembled the traditional open house, the Virtual Open House featured two separate real-time chat sessions where the materials presented were accompanied by the presence of an OHP Project representative via a real-time chat feature. The real-time chat feature enabled users of the Virtual Open House to ask questions directly of OHP Project representatives and to provide comments regarding the material presented to them. These real-time chat sessions occurred on May 24, 2013, from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and May 28, 2013, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Additional information about this Virtual Open House is available for review at the TxDOT Austin District Office.

7.5.1.4 Comments

In all, 59 comments were received during the official comment period, which ran from Tuesday, April 23, 2013, to Monday, June 3, 2013. Major themes were prevalent among the comments, including: opposition to tolling, support and opposition for “Concept A,” suggestions for alternate proposals for various mobility improvements elsewhere, access concerns, opposition to “Concept F,” concerns for oak trees in the area, and Williamson Creek/water quality concerns. Other comments included: support for bicycles and pedestrian accommodations, support and opposition for “Concept C,” support and opposition for direct connector bridges at US 290 and SH 71, support and opposition for “Concept B,” and support for the project to be environmentally friendly.

7.5.2 Open House No. 3

A third open house was held by TxDOT and the Mobility Authority in October 2013 to gather public input regarding the OHP Project. The meeting was held specifically to review information provided by the public at previous public engagement events, discuss alternative concepts being developed based on public input, and review the criteria that would be used to evaluate the concepts. Public input was requested on all materials and information.

The meeting was held from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. on October 22, 2013, in the Covington Middle School Cafeteria, 3700 Convict Hill Road, Austin, Texas. The meeting utilized an open house, come-and-go format where the public was able to review project exhibits and discuss the environmental study process with project staff on a one-on-one basis. The meeting summary as well as the comment and response report for this event is available for review at the TxDOT Austin District Office.

7.5.2.1 Invitations

Legal notices for the open house were published in the *Austin American-Statesman* on Sunday, September 22, 2013, and Saturday, October 12, 2013. Color display advertisements for the open house and Virtual Open House were published in the *Oak Hill Gazette* on October 17, 2013; the *Lake Travis View* on October 17, 2013; the *Community Impact Newspaper* (Southwest Austin Edition) September 2013 issue; and the *Driftwood News Dispatch* on October 17, 2013.

TxDOT and the Mobility Authority distributed a news release on October 22, 2013, regarding the upcoming event which mentioned the opportunity for media outlets to interview project officials and community residents.

An e-newsletter announcing the open house was distributed to 319 individuals and groups who had asked to be added to the study database. Elected officials were notified by email in advance of the event.

Information on the date, time, location, and purpose of the open house was posted on the project website, www.OakHillParkway.com. The meeting was also posted on the TxDOT

Hearings and Meetings Schedule website, <http://txdot.gov/inside-txdot/get-involved/about/hearings-meetings.html>.

Announcements about the open house and subsequent Virtual Open House were sent from the project's Twitter account @OakHillParkway on October 10, 2013, and continued into November 2013.

The open house was also promoted at a September 30, 2013, OHP Project Evaluation Workgroup Meeting held by TxDOT and the Mobility Authority.

7.5.2.2 Meeting Information

In all, 150 people attended the open house. Upon arrival at the event, attendees were asked to sign in and were offered a set of handouts which included the following items:

- Welcome Letter
- Comment Sheet
- Community Survey Form
- Concept List
- Information about the Virtual Open House

Fourteen informational boards regarding the project and the EIS process were displayed around the room for public viewing. Eleven maps, showing nine concepts (including the *No Build Alternative*) and two options that could be used with multiple concepts, were on tables in the middle of the room. In addition, stations were set up by representatives from Capital Metro and the MoPac South Environmental Study to provide information.

Representatives from TxDOT, the Mobility Authority, and the project team were positioned around the room to answer questions, facilitate discussion, and gather input from attendees. Tables were arranged so attendees could have a place to fill out comment and survey forms. Boxes were available for attendees to leave their completed comment and survey forms. A court reporter was also available to transcribe comments from attendees who desired to give their input verbally.

7.5.2.3 Virtual Open House

The Virtual Open House on the project website (www.OakHillParkway.com) was available for public view from October 23, 2013, to November 5, 2013. Each exhibit displayed at the open house meeting was available for view as a PDF file, and links were provided for participants to submit official comments. The open house attendees were notified of the Virtual Open House through a handout. The Virtual Open House recorded 520 unique page views during the 14 days it was available for view.

7.5.2.4 Comments

In all, 189 comments were received during the official comment period, which ran from September 22, 2013, to November 5, 2013. Major themes were prevalent among the comments, including: concerns about access at Old Bee Cave Road and Blue Frog Music School, support for “Concept C,” support and opposition to “Concept F,” access concerns, and support for bicycles and pedestrian accommodations. Other comments included: support for “Concept D” and “Concept A,” and opposition to tolling.

7.5.3 Open House No. 4

A fourth open house was held by TxDOT and the Mobility Authority in June 2014 to gather public input regarding the OHP Project. The meeting was held specifically to discuss the remaining and revised concepts, provide input on the evaluation criteria, and discuss the CSS process. Public input was requested on all materials and information.

The meeting was held from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. on June 17, 2014, in the Covington Middle School Cafeteria, 3700 Convict Hill Road, Austin, Texas. The meeting utilized an open house, come-and-go format where the public was able to review project exhibits and discuss the environmental study process with project staff on a one-on-one basis. The meeting summary as well as the comment and response report for this event is available for review at the TxDOT Austin District Office.

7.5.3.1 Invitations

Legal notices for the open house were published in the *Austin American-Statesman* on Saturday, June 7, 2014. Color display advertisements for the open house and Virtual Open House were published in the *Oak Hill Gazette* on May 29, 2014; the *Lake Travis View* on June 5, 2014; the *Community Impact Newspaper* (Southwest Austin Edition) May 2014 issue; and the *Driftwood News Dispatch* on June 5, 2014.

TxDOT and the Mobility Authority distributed a news release on June 10, 2014, regarding the upcoming event which mentioned the opportunity for media outlets to interview project officials and community residents.

Multiple e-newsletters announcing the open house were distributed to 826 individuals and groups who had asked to be added to the study database.

Information on the date, time, location, and purpose of the open house was posted on the project website, www.OakHillParkway.com. The meeting was also posted on the TxDOT Hearings and Meetings Schedule website, <http://txdot.gov/inside-txdot/get-involved/about/hearings-meetings.html>.

Announcements about the open house and subsequent Virtual Open House were sent from the project’s Twitter account @OakHillParkway from June 9, 2014, to June 17, 2014.

TxDOT and the Mobility Authority met with the Fix 290 Coalition and neighborhood representatives on June 9, 2014, at the Oak Hill United Methodist Church to share information regarding concepts to be presented at the June 17, 2014, open house meeting.

7.5.3.2 Meeting Information

In all, 137 people attended the open house, as well as one elected official. Upon arrival at the event, attendees were asked to sign in and were offered a set of handouts which included the following items:

- Welcome Letter
- Comment Sheet
- Community Survey Form
- Mobility Concept List

Nineteen informational boards regarding the project and the EIS process were displayed around the room for public viewing. Information included screening criteria, the two build concepts selected to move forward, CSS, and other general information about the study. Schematic drawings of all eight concepts considered during the study (A, B, C, D, E-1, E-2, F, and the 2007 Alternative) were also on display. In addition, stations were set up by representatives from TxDOT Intersection Improvements, Mobility Authority, CAMPO, and Project Connect to provide information.

Representatives from TxDOT, the Mobility Authority, and the project team were positioned around the room to answer questions, facilitate discussion, and gather input from attendees. Tables were arranged so attendees could have a place to fill out comment and survey forms. Boxes were available for attendees to leave their completed comment and survey forms. A court reporter was also available to transcribe comments from attendees who desired to give their input verbally.

7.5.3.3 Virtual Open House

The Virtual Open House on the project website (www.OakHillParkway.com) was available for public view from June 18 to June 27, 2014. Each exhibit displayed at the open house meeting was available for view as a PDF file online, and links were provided for participants to submit official comments and fill out the Community Survey (through survey website SurveyMonkey). The open house attendees were notified of the Virtual Open House through the Welcome Letter handout. The Virtual Open House recorded 346 unique page views during the 10 days it was available for view.

7.5.3.4 Comments

In all, 164 comments were received during the official comment period, which ran from May 22, 2014, to June 27, 2014. Major themes were prevalent among the comments, including: access concerns, support for “Concept F,” safety concerns, support for “Concept A,” concerns regarding toll diversion and financing, frustration with the environmental process, and

concerns about access at Old Bee Cave Road. Other comments included: concerns about the evaluation criteria matrix being biased against “Concept F,” support for “Concept C,” as well as concerns about flooding, Williamson Creek/water quality concerns, and light pollution.

7.5.4 Open House No. 5

A fifth open house was held by TxDOT and the Mobility Authority in January 2015 to gather public input regarding the OHP Project. The meeting was held specifically to review and comment on the revised alternatives and discuss CSS. Public input was requested on all materials and information.

The meeting was held from 4:30 to 7:00 p.m. on January 20, 2015, in the Covington Middle School Cafeteria, 3700 Convict Hill Road, Austin, Texas. The meeting utilized an open house, come-and-go format where the public was able to review project exhibits and discuss the environmental study process with project staff on a one-on-one basis. The meeting summary as well as the comment and response report for this event is available for review at the TxDOT Austin District Office.

7.5.4.1 Invitations

Color display advertisements for the open house and Virtual Open House were published in the December 2014 issue of the *Community Impact Newspaper* (Southwest Austin Edition); the *Oak Hill Gazette* on January 8, 2015; the *Lake Travis View* on January 15, 2015; and the *Driftwood News Dispatch* on January 15, 2015.

TxDOT and the Mobility Authority distributed a news release on January 13, 2015, regarding the upcoming event which mentioned the opportunity for media outlets to interview project officials and community residents.

Multiple e-newsletters announcing the open house were distributed to 894 individuals and groups who had asked to be added to the study database.

Information on the date, time, location, and purpose of the open house was posted on the project website, www.OakHillParkway.com. The meeting was also posted on the TxDOT Hearings and Meetings Schedule website, <http://txdot.gov/inside-txdot/get-involved/about/hearings-meetings.html>.

Announcements about the open house and subsequent Virtual Open House were sent from the project’s Twitter account @OakHillParkway from January 13, 2015, to January 30, 2015.

7.5.4.2 Meeting Information

In all, 107 people attended the open house, as well as two elected officials. Upon arrival at the event, attendees were asked to sign in and were offered a set of handouts which included the following items:

- Welcome Letter

- Comment Sheet
- Community Survey Form
- Fact Sheet

Twenty informational boards regarding the project and the EIS process were displayed around the room for public viewing. Information included the screening criteria, *Alternative A*, *Alternative C*, CSS, how public input has shaped the process, and general information about the study. Schematic drawings of the two alternatives considered during the study were also on display. In addition, stations were set up by representatives from TxDOT Intersection Improvements, Mobility Authority, CAMPO, and COA to provide information.

Representatives from TxDOT, the Mobility Authority, and the project team were positioned around the room to answer questions, facilitate discussion, and gather input from attendees. Tables were arranged so attendees could have a place to fill out comment and survey forms. Boxes were available for attendees to leave their completed comment and survey forms. A court reporter was available to transcribe comments from attendees who desired to give their input verbally.

7.5.4.3 Virtual Open House

The Virtual Open House on the project website (www.OakHillParkway.com) was available for public view from January 20 to January 30, 2015. Each exhibit displayed at the open house meeting was available for view as a PDF file online, and links were provided for participants to submit official comments and fill out the Community Survey (through survey website SurveyMonkey). The open house attendees were notified of the Virtual Open House through the Welcome Letter handout. The Virtual Open House recorded 457 unique page views during the 10 days it was available for view.

7.5.4.4 Comments

In all, 74 comments were received during the official comment period, which ran from December 18, 2014, to January 30, 2015. Major themes were prevalent among the comments, including: general support for the project to be built, frustration with the process taking so long, safety concerns, opposition to toll financing, support for *Alternatives A* and *C*, and opposition to elevated structures. Other comments included: request for the project to have a smaller footprint, concerns for oak trees in the area, and access concerns.

7.5.5 Open House No. 6

A sixth open house was held by TxDOT and the Mobility Authority in October 2015 to gather public input regarding the OHP Project. The meeting was held specifically to review and comment on the revised alternatives, discuss CSS, and review water quality and quantity issues. Public input was requested on all materials and information.

The meeting was held from 4:30 to 7:00 p.m. on October 29, 2015, in the Covington Middle School Cafeteria, 3700 Convict Hill Road, Austin, Texas. The meeting utilized an open house,

come-and-go format where the public was able to review project exhibits and discuss the environmental study process with project staff on a one-on-one basis. The meeting summary as well as the comment and response report for this event is available for review at the TxDOT Austin District Office.

7.5.5.1 Invitations

Color display advertisements for the open house and Virtual Open House were published in the October 2015 issue of the *Community Impact Newspaper* (Southwest Austin Edition); the *Oak Hill Gazette* on October 22, 2015; the *Lake Travis View* on October 22, 2015; the *Wimberley View* on Oct. 22, 2015; and the *Hays News-Dispatch* on October 22, 2015.

Postcard advertisements were sent to individuals along the corridor via the Every Door Direct mailing system, as well as to other stakeholders. In all, 19,549 postcards were distributed.

TxDOT and the Mobility Authority distributed a news release on October 26, 2015, regarding the upcoming event which mentioned the opportunity for media outlets to interview project officials and community residents.

Multiple e-newsletters announcing the open house were distributed to 1,146 individuals and groups who had asked to be added to the study database. Elected officials were notified by email in advance of the event.

Information on the date, time, location, and purpose of the open house was posted on the project website, www.OakHillParkway.com. The meeting was also posted on the TxDOT Hearings and Meetings Schedule website, <http://txdot.gov/inside-txdot/get-involved/about/hearings-meetings.html>.

Announcements about the open house and subsequent Virtual Open House were sent from the project's Twitter account @OakHillParkway from October 9, 2015, to November 9, 2015.

7.5.5.2 Meeting Information

In all, 157 people attended the open house, as well as two elected officials. Upon arrival at the event, attendees were asked to sign in and were offered a set of handouts which included the following items:

- Welcome Letter
- Comment Sheet
- Community Survey Form
- Fact Sheet

Forty-six informational boards regarding the project and the EIS process were displayed around the room for public viewing. Information included screening criteria, *Alternative A*, *Alternative C*, CSS, water quality, how public input has shaped the process, and general

information about the study. Schematic drawings of the two alternatives considered during the study were also on display.

Representatives from TxDOT, the Mobility Authority, and the project team were positioned around the room to answer questions, facilitate discussion, and gather input from attendees. Tables were arranged so attendees could have a place to fill out comment and survey forms. Boxes were available for attendees to leave their completed comment and survey forms. A court reporter was also available to transcribe comments from attendees who desired to give their input verbally.

7.5.5.3 Virtual Open House

The Virtual Open House on the project website (www.OakHillParkway.com) was available for public view from October 29 through November 9, 2015. Each exhibit displayed at the open house meeting was available for view as a PDF file, and links were provided for participants to submit official comments and fill out the Community Survey (through survey website SurveyMonkey). The open house attendees were notified of the Virtual Open House through the Welcome Letter handout. The Virtual Open House recorded 473 individual people (users) coming to the Virtual Open House site 556 times (sessions) during the 10 days it was available for view.

7.5.5.4 Comments

In all, 139 comments were received during the official comment period, which ran from October 22, 2015, to November 9, 2015. Major themes were prevalent among the comments, including: support for *Alternatives A* and *C*, concerns for oak trees in the area, Williamson Creek/water quality concerns, opposition to toll financing, access concerns, opposition to elevated structures, and noise pollution concerns. Other comments included: request for a "parkway" alternative, frustration with the process taking so long, flooding concerns, request for the project to be aesthetically pleasing and preserve the natural beauty/character of Oak Hill, support for bicycle and pedestrian accommodations including a grade-separated crossing at the US 290/SH71 intersection, request for the project to have a smaller footprint, safety concerns, light pollution concerns, opposition to *Alternatives A* and *C*, and support for the project to be built.

7.6 Community Workshops

Throughout the process, the team held facilitated, issue-specific workshops to dig deeper into community concerns like tolling, water quality, and project aesthetics. The public were invited via various methods including: email notifications, the e-newsletter; telephone calls to key stakeholders, and notifications on the website and twitter account. Stakeholder meeting summaries are available for review at the TxDOT Austin District Office.

7.6.1 Oak Hill Envisioning Mobility Workshop

On August 29, 2012, an Oak Hill Envisioning Mobility Workshop was held from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m. at the ACC—Pinnacle Campus. Members of the OHP Project team met with 37 members of the public to gain a better understanding of the Oak Hill community's values and vision for future development and mobility. An additional purpose of the meeting was to develop a community-branded name and identity for the environmental study. As a result of this meeting, the study was called “Oak Hill Parkway.”

7.6.2 Environmental Workgroup Meeting

On January 31, 2013, an Environmental Workgroup Meeting was held from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the ACC—Pinnacle Campus. Members of the OHP Project team met with members of the public to provide information about the project and receive public concerns regarding water quality, floodplains, trees and vegetation, historic, cultural, and other environmental issues.

7.6.3 Design Workgroup Meeting

On February 19, 2013, a Design Workgroup Meeting was held from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the ACC—Pinnacle Campus. Members of the OHP Project team met with members of the public to receive ideas and concepts from the community that meet the proposed purpose and need of the project and gather initial reaction to general alternative concepts.

7.6.4 Bicycle and Pedestrian Workshop No. 1

On March 19, 2013, a Bike and Pedestrian Workshop was held from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. at the ACC—Pinnacle Campus. Members of the OHP Project team met with members of the public to share information on the bike/pedestrian plans for the Oak Hill corridor and receive suggestions, issues, or concerns. The discussion included parts of the COA plan, the Oak Hill Neighborhood Plan, and the Oak Hill Trails plan.

7.6.5 Concept Preview Meeting

On May 16, 2013, a Concept Preview Meeting was held from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the Oak Hill United Methodist Church. Members of the OHP Project team met with members of the public to preview general mobility concepts for the project based on open house and workshop feedback.

7.6.6 Evaluation Workgroup Meeting

On September 30, 2013, an Evaluation Workgroup Meeting was held from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at Covington Middle School. Members of the OHP Project team met with 62 members of the public to preview new concepts that would be shared at the upcoming open house on October 22, 2013. The new concepts included TSM, TDM, and Concept F.

7.6.7 Finance Workshop

On March 22, 2014, a Finance Workshop was held from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon at Oak Hill United Methodist Church. Members of the OHP Project team met with members of the public to share information about transportation funding options, the state of transportation funding, tolling, and state and local tolling policies.

7.6.8 Stakeholder Workgroup Meeting

On August 26, 2014, a Stakeholder Workgroup Meeting was held from 5:30 to 8:00 p.m. at the Oak Hill United Methodist Church. Members of the OHP Project team met with various stakeholder representatives from the Fix290 group, area neighborhood associations, and COA District 8 Council Member candidates to share information on the status of the Interim Improvements, the NEPA process, mobility concept evaluation criteria and process, and next steps. The project team also solicited feedback from stakeholders on issues important to them related to project development.

7.6.9 Context Sensitive Solutions Workshop No. 1

On October 9, 2014, the first CSS Workshop was held from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the Oak Hill United Methodist Church. Members of the OHP Project team met with members of the public to introduce the CSS planning approach and to gain a better understanding of the Oak Hill community's priorities in relation to the CSS process.

7.6.10 Bicycle and Pedestrian Workshop No. 2

On February 17, 2015, the second Bicycle and Pedestrian Workshop was held from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. at the Mobility Authority offices. The Mobility Authority met with members of the bicycle/pedestrian community to inform and seek feedback on the agency's current and proposed investment in bicycle and pedestrian improvements. Team members from the four projects currently under study—183 North Mobility Project, MoPac South, MoPac Intersections and the OHP Project were on hand to explain the proposed improvements and record input. The event was attended by 17 individuals from 6 different organizations representing the bicycle and pedestrian community.

7.6.11 Context Sensitive Solutions Workshop No. 2

On April 7, 2015, the second CSS Workshop was held from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the Oak Hill United Methodist Church. The OHP Project team presented the results of the October 2014 CSS community survey as well as how the team would move forward with those comments and community priorities. The display boards for discussion included the draft CSS Vision Statement, maps featuring proposed multimodal connections for bicyclists and pedestrians in Oak Hill, ideas of ways to revitalize Williamson Creek, potential locations of CSS design concepts within the corridor, and artist sketches of potential retaining wall designs. Through a series of sticker dot exercises and a community survey, the public was able to indicate

whether they thought the project was on the right track and identify missing elements. Over 40 members of the public attended.

7.6.12 Water Quality Workshop

On August 25, 2015, a Water Quality Workshop was held from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the Oak Hill United Methodist Church. The OHP Project team shared what the project team knew about water issues in the corridor, including Williamson Creek, flooding concerns, and runoff. Attendees helped identify additional issues and concerns as well as their priorities for the team regarding both water quality and water quantity. Over 40 members of the public attended.

7.6.13 Environmental Workshop

On June 23, 2016, an Environmental Workshop was held from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the Oak Hill United Methodist Church. The OHP Project team welcomed the community to explore the science behind the environmental study. The goal of the workshop was to update the community on the research that had informed the project over the eight months prior to the workshop. Attendees heard about the biology, history, archeology, geology, and other work that was being conducted. Through an interactive aesthetics priority exercise, the team asked the community to help identify their priorities regarding aesthetics, landscaping, tree plantings, tree relocation, and other elements. Over 50 members of the public attended.

7.6.14 Public Update Workshop

On Tuesday, May 23, 2017, a Project Update Workshop was held from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the Oak Hill United Methodist Church. At this come-and-go event, attendees received the latest information regarding the environmental study, the proposed project designs, and what's next for the OHP Project with the upcoming release of the DEIS and public hearing. Over 90 members of the public attended.

7.7 Stakeholder Meetings

On many occasions, TxDOT and the Mobility Authority expressed their availability to meet at any time with individuals, organizations, or other interested stakeholders to discuss the project; TxDOT and the Mobility Authority continue to maintain an open-door policy for any questions or comments. Throughout the course of the project, the team continued to emphasize the importance of public input to ensure that all parties in the community were fairly represented.

7.7.1 Individuals and Organizations

At stakeholder meetings, project team members discussed aspects of the proposed project with stakeholders, received their input, and answered questions. The input received allowed the project team to better address community priorities as alternatives were refined and the environmental study progressed.

Stakeholders included local neighborhood and community groups, organizations, major employers, chambers of commerce, interested citizens, and other groups. In addition to general information about the project, discussion topics were tailored to the needs/questions of the stakeholder(s). **Table 7-2** below lists some of the stakeholder and small meetings with various organizations that have taken place. Summaries of these meetings are available for review at the TxDOT Austin District Office.

Table 7-2. Stakeholder Meetings

Date	Organization/Individual
June, 11, 2013	NXP (formerly Freescale)
June 14, 2013	H-E-B
June 24, 2013	ACC Pinnacle
July 12, 2013	Fix 290
July 24, 2013	Seton Hospital
August 12, 2013	ACC Facilities—Pinnacle
August 21, 2013	Fix 290
September 11, 2013	OHAN
September 25, 2013	Rudy Belton
November 22, 2013	Larry Peel
January 27, 2014	Jorge Garcia (Senor Buddy's)
February 4, 2014	Austin Waldorf School and Circle Drive Residents
May 13, 2014	Larry Peel
May 13, 2014	Jorge Garcia (Senor Buddy's)
May 27, 2014	Austin Waldorf School, Circle Drive, and South View Road Residents
June 3, 2014	Kathy Akin; Hawkins Family Partners and John Scott; Stubbs BBQ (Senor Buddy's)
June 9, 2014	Fix 290
June 18, 2014	Leslie Oglesby (Automotive Specialists)
June 18, 2014	Oak Hill Fire Department
July 21, 2014	COA Fire Department
August 1, 2014	H-E-B
August 14, 2014	NXP (formerly Freescale)
August 21, 2014	Lee Cooke and Dane Anderson (290 @ 71 LLC—Hilltop Park)
December 1, 2014	David Richardson (Granada Hills Neighborhood Association)
February 10, 2015	OHAN
February 12, 2015	Austin Heritage Tree Foundation and COA Arborist

Date	Organization/Individual
February 25, 2015	Life Austin Church
March 5, 2015	Bell Partners, Inc.
March 11, 2015	Fix 290
April 29, 2015	Oak Hill Fire Department
May 12, 2015	R. Schmidt (Schmidt Investments, Ltd.) and Gerold (Gerry) Powell
June 4, 2015	R&H Hospitality
June 4, 2015	Lista LLC
June 8, 2015	Highland Legacy Oak Hill Ltd C/O Southwest Tower Building
June 9, 2015	Charles N. Draper
June 12, 2015	NKMK Incorporated
June 16, 2015	KAF Development
June 23, 2015	OHAN and Save Oak Hill
June 24, 2015	Life Austin Church
June 26, 2015	Michael W. and Crystal L. Bomer
July 6, 2015	Journeyman Construction (SW Austin Assisted Living LLC)
July 7, 2015	Narcisco, Jr. and Dolores M. Saucedo
July 14, 2015	Karen Burke (Burke Center PLLC)
July 17, 2015	Tracy Schagen
July 21, 2015	OHAN and Save Oak Hill
July 21, 2015	NXP (formerly Freescale)
July 22, 2015	Ashton Woods Residential
July 23, 2015	Austin Waldorf School
August 4, 2015	John Scott (Stubbs BBQ)
August 6, 2015	Lee Cooke and Buck Baccus
August 12, 2015	George D. and Dorothy J. Bryan
August 12, 2015	Michael J. and C. Grace P. Fix (Auto Collision)
August 18, 2015	Anderson Price (On behalf of Kathy Akin)
August 27, 2015	Prosperity Bank
September 3, 2015	Austin Heritage Tree Foundation Site Visit
September 4, 2015	Jonah Mankovsky
September 9, 2015	West End Redesign Stakeholders
September 9, 2015	OHAN Board

Date	Organization/Individual
September 22, 2015	Austin Energy
October 7, 2015	Media Workshop (Local Media)
October 9, 2015	Paul Kennedy
October 16, 2015	Foundation Communities (Southwest Trails Apartments)
October 19, 2015	OHAN and Save Oak Hill
November 17, 2015	Austin Waldorf School
November 17, 2015	Oak Hill Youth Sports Association
December 2, 2015	ACC—Pinnacle
December 4, 2015	Austin Heritage Tree Foundation
January 15, 2016	Arden Properties
February 2, 2016	Dripping Springs Stakeholders
February 23, 2016	Dan Eldridge (Oak Hill Plaza—Jim's Restaurant)
February 24, 2016	Paul Westlund
April 11, 2016	Cook-Walden
April 13, 2016	OHAN Board
May 5, 2016	OHBPA
June 8, 2016	OHAN Board
June 14, 2016	Austin Heritage Tree Foundation, COA, Save Oak Hill, and Gerry Powell
October 3, 2016	OHAN and Save Oak Hill
January 26, 2017	Westcreek Neighborhood Association
February 22, 2017	H-E-B and Stantec
March 10, 2017	David Richardson (OHAN)
March 21, 2017	Life Austin Church
March 22, 2017	Cook-Walden
March 22, 2017	John Lopez (Buffalo Equities) and John Joseph (Coats Rose)
March 31, 2017	NXP (formerly Freescale)
March 31, 2017	Orville (John) Hoag
April 3, 2017	James and Debra Kretzschmar; Brian and Sandy Jones; Kelley and Santiago Calderon
May 15, 2017	Marilyne and Jim Cox (Auto Collision)
June 13, 2017	OHAN Board
June 16, 2017	David Kincade (Intended Evolution, LLC)

Date	Organization/Individual
July 25, 2017	Representatives from OHAN, Save Barton Creek Association, Aviara Neighborhood, Westcreek Neighborhood, and the <i>Oak Hill Gazette</i> .
August 31, 2017	Barton Creek Capital (Tim Jarvis and Bill Ott) and Barton Creek Capital (Keith Buchanan) (Oak Hill Plaza—Jim’s Restaurant)

Source: Project Team, 2017

7.7.2 Informational Booths

On April 23 and 24, 2016, the project team hosted an OHP Project information booth at the Founders Day Festival in downtown Dripping Springs, Texas, and on April 30, 2016, a similar informational booth was provided at the Lake Travis SpringFest in Bee Cave, Texas. At both, project team members were on hand to answer questions about the project and gather input from commuters about their experiences commuting on US 290 through Oak Hill to their respective workplaces/destinations. These events were advertised through notifications on the website as well as organic and promoted social advertising on the project Twitter account.

Festival attendees who stopped at the information booth were provided with project fact sheets and with the opportunity to sign up to receive updates. Attendees were given the option to highlight their “Creative Routes” of travel on a large area map to indicate ways they use alternate roadways to avoid driving through the congestion at the intersection of US 290/SH71 in Oak Hill.

7.8 Additional Community Outreach

To maintain public involvement efforts as the project moved forward, several steps were taken to continue communication. This included a digital application of community outreach through the project website, e-newsletter, and Twitter account.

7.8.1 Oak Hill Parkway Website

A project website (www.OakHillParkway.com) was launched October 17, 2012, to provide the public with information regarding the proposed project in its entirety. The Mobility Authority created the website and continues to update it regularly.

The website includes four general categories (About, Multimedia, Latest News, and Environmental) where the public can view various aspects of the proposed project in more detail.

The About section provides a general project overview and history, and a Frequently Asked Questions page. In addition, an informational page was added with details about the adjacent project to complete interim intersection improvements along US 290.

The Multimedia section, which included the project’s most viewed pages throughout the life of the website, provides the public with a study area map, conceptual renderings, the draft

schematic drawings, Google Earth downloads of the proposed project's draft schematics, and information videos.

The Latest section is where the public can view upcoming events, sign up for e-newsletters, and access past and current e-newsletters.

The fourth section, Environmental, provides a robust collection of information about the environmental study and public input. The public can view: an environmental overview of the study; information about the environmental process and alternatives evaluation; documentation of past public events and public comment; and information about the Green Mobility Challenge, CSS, and the proposed elevated structures.

In addition to providing the public with project information, the website provides a Contact Us section for the public to call or email with questions or comments. During the official comment period associated with the public and agency scoping meeting, open houses, and public hearing, the project team received official comments online through the website. Official comments and responses, along with any changes as a result of the comments, were documented and incorporated into the DEIS. In addition, these comments and responses are published as part of the *Comment and Response Summary Report*, released to the public via the website in the months following the Public Hearing.

Any comments submitted outside of the official comment period were not recorded as part of the formalized *Comment and Response Summary Report* but are part of the official Administrative Record for the DEIS and were reviewed and considered by the project team.

Information regarding comments received through the project website from the public and agency scoping meeting and open house meetings are available for review at the TxDOT Austin Office.

The website also welcomes the public to subscribe to the e-newsletter or follow the project's Twitter account @OakHillParkway.

7.8.2 Electronic Newsletters

TxDOT and the Mobility Authority created an e-newsletter mechanism to communicate with the public about the proposed project; provide updates about the development of the EIS; and provide a notification of upcoming open houses, workshops, and other project-sponsored events. Those attending any meeting or activity hosted by the project as well as visitors to the project website were given the opportunity to sign up for the e-newsletter. E-Newsletter sign-ups were also promoted via Twitter, virtual open houses, and other agency communications.

During the development of the DEIS, e-newsletters were regularly distributed between February 2013 and May 2017. Copies of the e-newsletters can be found on the project website at <http://www.oakhillparkway.com/news/e-newsletters.php>. At the time of the DEIS circulation, over 13 e-newsletters and 17 event e-invitations had been sent, and 1,581 people are signed up.

7.8.3 Social Media

Social media engagement has been an integral part of the proposed project's digital program. The Twitter handle @OakHillParkway was created in order to disseminate project information and provide opportunities for engagement with users. These efforts, which supplemented traditional outreach efforts, included: "Did You Know?" informational campaigns, which featured messages related to community values and driving project education; invitations to submit input during the official comment periods as well as informal surveys and polls; an outlet to provide snapshots to the community to document how public input impacted project design and aesthetic elements; meeting and workshop invitations and recaps; and coordinated retweets and responses to show interagency coordination. On occasion, the team utilized promoted Twitter advertising to boost the message beyond the account's follower count; this included a campaign in Summer 2016 to raise project awareness and drive viewership of the project's informational videos.

In addition, the team balanced organic content with "retweets" and "shares" from other outlets to improve the overall quality and relevancy of the social media channel.

At the time of the DEIS circulation, over 824 tweets and retweets were posted, and the account has 497 followers.

Of note, comments made on social media were not included or evaluated as part of the decision-making process for the EIS. Twitter is available for and intended to encourage public dialogue about the study and was provided for outreach and informational purposes only.

7.9 Public Hearing

After TxDOT approves the DEIS for circulation, TxDOT and the Mobility Authority will schedule, advertise, and hold a public hearing per applicable regulations. The focus of the public hearing would be to present the DEIS and recommended preferred alternative and to encourage and solicit public comment. An open house session would be held prior to the formal presentation. This event, as well as all public comments received and associated responses, would be documented in the FEIS.

7.10 Notice of Availability

The Notice of Availability (NOA) for the DEIS would be published in early 2018, in the *Federal Register*. Prior to the issuance of the DEIS to the public, Cooperating and Participating agencies were provided an opportunity to view the preliminary schematics for review and comment. TxDOT and the Mobility Authority addressed these comments before publication of the DEIS. The DEIS also would be distributed to federal, state, and local agencies, and parties of interest, and would be made available to the public at the locations listed in the Distribution List provided in **Section 12**. The DEIS would be published on the OHP Project website in early 2018. Publication of the NOA would begin the public and agency comment period.

7.11 Community Impact to Design

Public participation in meetings, workshops, and open houses made substantive improvements to the proposed concepts and alternatives and resulted in a meaningful impact on project design.

To date, some of these improvements included:

- Developing alternatives that address the traffic congestion in the corridor
- Proposing a design that separates through-traffic from local traffic, providing both mobility and safety enhancements
- Limiting the proposed elevation at the US 290/SH 71 intersection to one level instead of two levels above existing ground level (from the 2007 Alternative)
- Building new facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians, including sidewalks, a trailhead at William Cannon Drive, and a shared-use path along the entire corridor
- Lowering the US 290 mainlanes underneath cross street overpasses at Circle Drive, Scenic Brook Road, RM 1826, and Convict Hill Road for *Alternatives A and C*, and at the US 290/SH 71 intersection for *Alternative A*
- Looking to avoid or limit impacts to trees, especially the Grandmother Oak, Grandfather Oak, and the Nieces Oaks in the vicinity of William Cannon Drive, and preserving the Beckett Grove Tree (formerly known as the Taco Bell Tree)
- Extending the improvements west of Circle Drive and reducing the proposed project's footprint in that area
- Minimizing impacts to Williamson Creek, including in areas where bridges would be placed over Williamson Creek
- Adding natural treatments at Williamson Creek instead of a concrete culvert to channelize the waters; in fact, the proposed action would remove a significant amount of existing concrete from the creek by building new bridges
- Realigning William Cannon Drive to avoid large trees
- Potentially reducing flooding with upstream water detention ponds
- Planning for BMPs like grassy swales, sedimentation/sand filtration basins, and bioretention ponds for water quality
- Realigning the westbound US 290 exit to RM 1826 in order to improve access for students and teachers heading to ACC
- Improving access for businesses along SH 71 just north of US 290
- Improving access to Old Bee Cave Road

- Maintaining current access of streets and neighborhoods to the frontage roads
- Adding Texas Turnaround U-turns to provide local access without sitting through a traffic light
- Adding transit bus pull-out locations
- Realigning the US 290 intersection with William Cannon Drive to save trees