



Environmental Workshop Meeting Documentation Form

Thursday, June 23, 2016 from 6-8 pm
Oak Hill United Methodist Church
7815 Hwy. 290 West, 78736

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority (Mobility Authority) held an Environmental Workshop at the Oak Hill United Methodist Church Fellowship Hall on June 23, 2016 from 6 to 8 p.m. regarding the Oak Hill Parkway Study, at U.S. Highway 290 and State Highway 71 West in Oak Hill. The goal of the workshop was to update the community on the science and studies that have informed the project over the last eight months.

Color display advertisements were published in the Oak Hill Gazette on June 9 and June 23, 2016, and in the News-Dispatch on June 16, 2016. An email invitation was sent on June 9, 2016 to all stakeholders that have been invited to or have attended previous workgroup meetings, as well as stakeholders who have submitted comments or have provided us with an email address over the course of this project. Additionally, two reminder emails were sent on June 20, 2016 and June 23, 2016. The Environmental Workshop was also verbally advertised to members of the Oak Hill Association of Neighborhoods (OHAN) at their OHAN Membership monthly meeting held on June 8, 2016 (Oak Hill Parkway project team members were invited guests of OHAN and were in attendance). Meeting invitations and details were also shared extensively on Facebook and Twitter, including on the @OakHillParkway, @TxDOTAustin, and @CTXMobility feeds.

Over 50 members of the public attended. Attendees and project staff were seated at five stations around the meeting room and at rowed seating in the back of the meeting room. Three handouts were provided to attendees at sign-in: a workshop agenda, a project fact sheet, and a list of improvements made to the proposed alternatives due to community input received to date. A fourth handout was provided later during the roundtable discussion, an Aesthetics Priority Exercise handout.

Exhibits

Prior to the start of the presentations and interactive portion of the workshop, the public was able to review informational project exhibit boards' setup in the foyer of the meeting space and discuss the environmental study process with project staff. There were 11 exhibit boards total displayed for public viewing. The community was asked to provide input via post-it-notes to one of the transit related boards in order to help the project team understand the community's transit priorities. Representatives from TxDOT, the Mobility Authority and the study team were positioned around the exhibits to answer questions, facilitate discussion and gather input from attendees. The exhibit boards displayed were:

- Welcome
- Project Location – Or, Where are we studying?
- Project Purpose – Or, What are we trying to do?
- Project Need – Or, What are we trying to solve?
- Artistic Renderings – Alternative A and Alternative C
- Project Footprint – Non-Tolled versus Tolled
- Creative Routes To Avoid Congestion at the Y – Bee Cave Area Stakeholders
- Creative Routes to Avoid Congestion at the Y – Dripping Springs Area Stakeholders
- Community Priority – Potential Transit Enhancements (What We Heard from the Community/Give Us Your Input!)
- Project Team Response to Community Priority Transit Enhancements – Bus Pull Out Enhancements & Transit Corridor Preservation

OAK HILL PARKWAY
Environmental Workshop Event Summary
June 23, 2016

- Project Team Response to Community Priority Transit Enhancements – Potential Park & Ride Areas & Agency Coordination
- Process to Decide if a Road Gets Constructed

Presentations

The meeting facilitator, Lynda Rife, introduced the Oak Hill Parkway project team members and a special guest speaker from the City of Austin, who then provided short presentations to the group – Michelle Dippel (HDR, Inc.), Meghan Pawlowski (CMEC) and Michael Embesi (City of Austin). Presentation topics included:

- Science and Studies
- Focus on Trees

The Science and Studies presentation by Michelle Dippel touched on the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), which establishes the process that agencies must follow in making decisions. Also, she discussed some of the social, economic, and environmental issues being considered in the study: biological resources (vegetation and wildlife), water resources (floodplains, water quality, wetlands, and waters of the U.S.), archeology, historic resources, socioeconomic resources, noise impacts, air quality, geology, and hazardous materials. Michelle also presented a flow-chart outlining, “How do we get to a Record of Decision?”

The Focus on Trees (Part 1) presentation by Meghan Pawlowski gave an overview on the tree surveys conducted, the techniques used in conducting the surveys, and the preliminary results of the tree surveys including: species of trees surveyed, tree impacts by each build alternative, iconic trees within the project area that will remain in place and the tree impacts expected. Meghan also provided physical examples of round household items (hula hoop/exercise ball) to convey various tree diameters at breast height (DBH) sizes to the community as a point of reference in relation to the preliminary tree survey results.

A special Thank You to guest speaker Michael Embesi, an arborist with the City of Austin (COA), for presenting at the workshop. The Focus on Trees (Part 2) presentation by Michael began with information about Austin’s tree history and COA’s jurisdiction with regard to tree ordinances and policies that have helped to preserve and protect Austin’s urban forest. He also offered information to consider when incorporating trees as part of the project design: the importance of species diversity, cost and risk associated with large tree relocation, planting new and smaller trees, as well as, tree care and protection during construction.

Interactive Survey Exercises/Roundtable Discussions

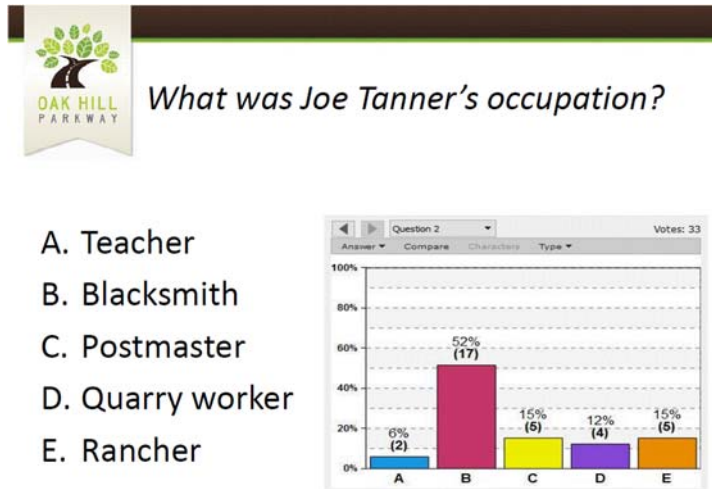
Between presentations, attendees were asked to participate in interactive survey exercises and roundtable discussion sessions on the following:

- Fun Facts about Oak Hill (multiple choice iClicker poll)
- Tree Planting Style Preference (multiple choice iClicker poll)
- Environmental Study Related Questions (roundtable discussion)
- Aesthetics Priority Exercise (roundtable discussion/handout)

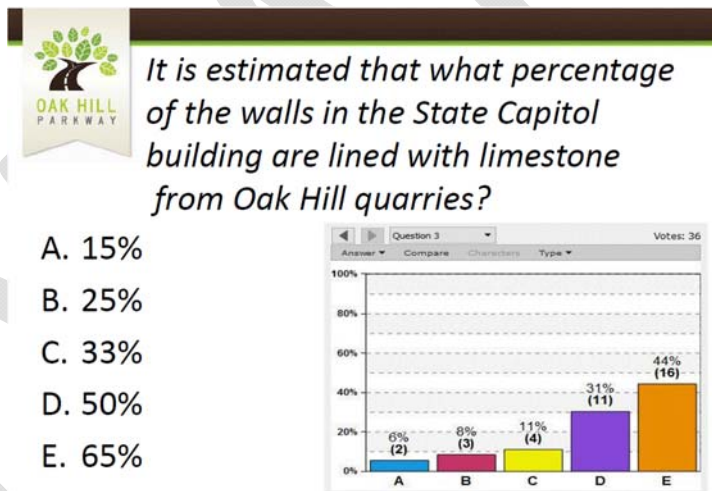
Fun Facts about Oak Hill/Tree Planting Style Preference (multiple choice iClicker poll) Results

The iClicker poll results were tallied onsite and presented at the end of the workshop.

Below are the results of the iClicker polls:



Correct Answer: B. Blacksmith

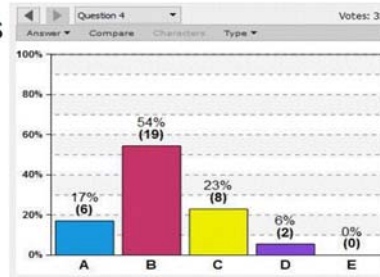


Correct Answer: C. 33%



Which of these has NOT been used as a name for the community of Oak Hill?

- A. Live Oak Springs
- B. Shiloh
- C. Oatmanville
- D. Quarry Hill

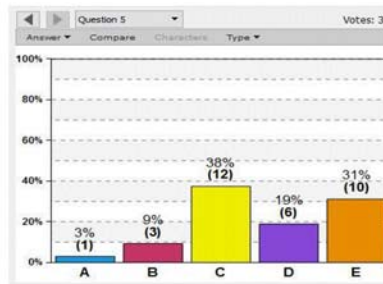


Correct Answer: D. Quarry Hill



How many miles long is Williamson Creek?

- A. 9 miles
- B. 12 miles
- C. 16 miles
- D. 19 miles
- E. 24 miles

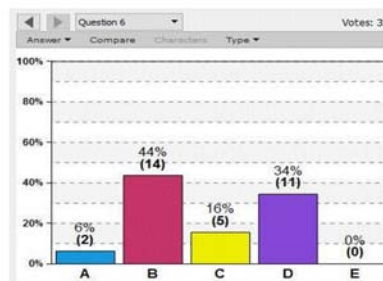


Correct Answer: D. 19 miles



If we were to plant new trees, what planting style would you prefer?

- A. On-Center
- B. Groves
- C. Depends on location
- D. Mixture of both



Community Preferences: B. Groves (44%) and D. Mixture of both (34%)

OAK HILL PARKWAY
Environmental Workshop Event Summary
June 23, 2016

Environmental Study Related Questions:

Community input on Science and Studies yielded two possible historic sites that the project team followed-up on after the workshop concluded – the old Oak Hill cemetery located at 6800 Old Bee Caves Rd. and a “hand-dug” well located in the vicinity of the Windmill Run subdivision. Project team historians looked into the information provided by the community and confirmed that both the cemetery and the well are located outside of the project’s Area of Potential Effect (APE), or where potential effects to non-archeological historic resources are studied. The cemetery is depicted in relationship to the APE boundary in the documentation prepared for the Project Coordination Request and the Historic Resources Research Design, available at TxDOT ENV.

Aesthetics Priority Exercise

The goal of the Aesthetics Priority Exercise was to assist the project team with understanding the community’s priorities to be considered as aesthetic guidelines are developed in the final design phase. Financing and other considerations will determine project enhancements. Five participant stations were set-up for attendees with project team members assigned to each station in order to facilitate discussion and participation, to take note of community input on scribe pads and to provide subject matter experts to answer questions. Participants were provided Aesthetics Priority Exercise handouts to discuss within their respective participant station groups and to fill-out. Five aesthetic elements were listed on the handout: tree relocation, new trees, landscaping, structures, and bike and pedestrian. Participants were instructed to determine and indicate on a scale of 1 to 100 what percentage of the aesthetics budget they would like to see allocated for each of the elements. Allocations could not exceed an overall total of 100% for all five elements combined. Note: elements such as lighting, signage, painting, shared use path and sidewalks were not included in the exercise as those standard elements would be constructed if the Oak Hill Parkway project is implemented. Participants were also given the opportunity to provide general comments on the handout as well. Each group then reported out the results of their respective station’s discussions to all in attendance at the close of the Aesthetic Priority Exercise session.

The Aesthetics Priority Exercise was also made available to the public online from June 23 to July 9, 2016 for the broader community to also weigh in. The online component was advertised through e-blasts to the Oak Hill stakeholder list, Twitter social media, and the second advertisement with the Oak Hill Gazette on June 23, 2016. The Survey Monkey application was used to facilitate the online exercise and could be accessed via links made available to the public on the project website and on the @OakHillParkway, @TxDOTAustin and @CTXMobility Twitter feeds.

Due to the timeframe of the online exercise coinciding with the United States of America’s July 4th Independence Day holiday, the project team decided to extend the online component for an additional seven days, from July 9 to July 17, 2016, in order to allow time for additional public input. A total of 61 were completed; 27 at the workshop and 34 online. The combined results will be documented in a separate Survey Summary document which will be posted on the project website when finalized.

What to Expect Next from Oak Hill Parkway Project

Lynda Rife closed out the workshop by informing the community about what to expect next from the project and how community participation in meetings, workshops and open houses has resulted in significant improvements to the proposed build alternatives. The project team will continue to work with the community in 2016 on:

- Trees
- Proposed landscaping and the context sensitive design structures
- Enhancements to Williamson Creek
- Other environmental issues such as:
 - Air quality
 - Noise
 - Water resources

The designs for both Alternative A and C have been refined as a result of continued stakeholder outreach and are ready for the detailed analysis phase. The project team has begun the robust analysis of the Build Alternatives and the No Build Alternative; the results of this analysis will indicate the preferred alternative. The evaluation results, as well as the full Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) document, will be made available for public review and comment in late 2016/early 2017.

Information presented at the workshop is available for download on the “Public Input” page of the project website www.OakHillParkway.com.

Community Input

Below reflects input we received from the community at the workshop:

Science and Studies:

- Concern about noise in general including; large truck noise, road surface noise, and noise from traffic using elevated structures
- Interest in noise study details including: the goals of the noise study, how noise is measured, and details on how a study is conducted in general
- Interest in sound walls if noise abatement is needed and interest in Permeable Friction Course (PFC) asphalt for noise reduction
- Concern about construction, including: noise, increased congestion, impacts to businesses
- Interest in water quality and potential impacts to Williamson Creek, including downstream flooding
- Concerns about air quality impacts
- Concern about business and hazardous material locations in Oak Hill area
- Concern about project impacts to possible historic sites including the old Oak Hill cemetery located off Old Bee Caves Rd, a hand-dug well located in the Ridgeview subdivision area, the Austin Pizza Garden building and stone walls along areas of Williamson Creek
- Request for more information on archeological sites in the project area
- Concern about new development in the area, and its impact on already congested roads, especially on US 290 and SH 71

OAK HILL PARKWAY
Environmental Workshop Event Summary
June 23, 2016

Focus on Trees:

- Request for more detailed information about trees
- Interest in:
 - Saving more of the larger oaks in the corridor, especially grove at Joe Tanner area, either through design revision or relocation
 - Planting new trees (larger sized ones) and landscaping
 - Bicycle/pedestrian enhancements
- Varied interest overall across all attendees in the prioritization of tree relocation vs. tree planting vs. bicycle/pedestrian enhancements; no clear top priority

Transit:

- Build a Park & Ride at ACC campus
- Need a Park & Ride & Bus pull out

Design/Other:

- Concern regarding elevated structures and preference for smaller footprint
- Interest in financing mechanisms other than toll financing
- General support for the project

Questions and Answers

During the meeting, the project team identified four major questions that were consistently asked at the participant stations in the room. Below are our follow-up answers to those questions:

Question #1:

What all goes into a noise analysis study?

As part of the environmental study, a noise analysis study is underway to determine whether traffic noise impacts would occur from proposed safety and mobility improvements along US 290 and SH 71 in Oak Hill. If so, noise reduction strategies such as sound walls or other approved sound reduction technologies would be considered.

The study is comparing the two proposed build alternatives with the baseline of a no-build alternative to determine whether traffic noise impacts would occur from the improvements. We plan to have preliminary results this fall and will provide full results at next year's public hearing.

Sound walls are a common noise reduction technology. The Oak Hill Parkway noise study will inform the project team if and where sound walls may be needed, as well as the appropriate heights and lengths of the walls.

To determine where sound walls are reasonable and feasible, the noise analysis considers numerous factors, including:

- Type of land use activity impacted by traffic noise (homes, schools, businesses, etc.)
- Existing noise levels
- Prediction of future noise levels under each reasonable alternative
- Consideration and evaluation of abatement measures to reduce noise impacts
- Consideration of cost and constructability of walls or other approved noise reduction technologies

OAK HILL PARKWAY
Environmental Workshop Event Summary
June 23, 2016

To determine reasonableness, a combination of social, economic and environmental factors are evaluated, including noise reduction levels, view impacts and cost effectiveness.

To determine feasibility, topography, access requirements, drainage, utilities, maintenance and noise reduction levels are evaluated.

If the study concludes sound walls are reasonable and feasible, input from adjacent property owners would be used in making final decisions about them.

We are often asked about Permeable Friction Course (PFC) pavement in relation to noise abatement. PFC is currently being considered for the Oak Hill Parkway. PFC's primary purpose is to facilitate water drainage off road surfaces to improve safety and reduce spray. This type of asphalt is currently being used on the MoPac Improvement Project and is planned for the SH 45SW project. This kind of pavement also generally results in lower traffic noise levels than standard pavement. However, PFC is not a federally-approved noise abatement measure and is not part of the noise analysis.

The noise analysis is being conducted in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and 23 CFR 772 Procedures for Abatement of Highway Traffic Noise and Construction Noise.

Question #2:

What type of construction impacts should we expect?

The environmental study will include an analysis of construction impacts, including a review of impacts to noise, air, and water quality. The study will also take into account the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of roadway construction on the area.

If the project is approved to move forward into construction and funding is identified, a preliminary timeline follows:

- Construction duration is between 3-4 years, and could start in 2019-2020 if funding is identified.
- The construction contractor will be required to maintain access to all businesses. Any temporary closures will be coordinated with the businesses and be scheduled to occur when the business is not normally open.
- Some construction related congestion is inevitable due to temporary lane and road closures. Most closures will be timed to occur outside of rush hour and holiday travels. A goal of the construction plan will to be to keep as many lanes open during construction as possible.

Question #3:

What is the environmental impact of the no build, or do nothing, alternative?

The No Build Alternative would not allow for new travel lanes. US 290 and SH 71 would continue to exist as they do today and would continue to have standard, routine maintenance over the next 30 years. Travel times will increase approximately 25-35 minutes over today, and safety and mobility would continue to decline in the Oak Hill area as population increases. Also, the No Build assumes that all other projects in the CAMPO 2040 Plan would be constructed if environmentally cleared and funding is identified.

In the environmental study, the No Build Alternative is considered and compared against the build alternatives per federal regulations.

Question #4:

Where are the lanes elevated in the two proposed build alternatives?

Both Alternatives A and C propose sections of elevated mainlanes in the US 290 corridor in order to bypass the intersections and signals at William Cannon Drive and SH 71.

For both build alternatives, the lanes are elevated:

- On US 290 from near McCarty Ln. to SH 71
- On SH 71 from west of Scenic Brook Dr. to US 290

At the interchange of US 290 and SH 71, the build alternatives differ:

- For Alternative A, US 290 mainlanes are lowered
- For Alternative C, US 290 mainlanes are elevated

Out of the eight miles of proposed roadway, US 290 will be elevated for a half-mile for Alternative A, and one mile for Alternative C. Learn more about the proposed elevated structures here: <http://www.oakhillparkway.com/environmental/structures.php>

Information and general input gathered from the public at the Environmental Workshop and online will be incorporated into the environmental study by the project team.
