

FM 150 West Character Plan Public Meeting Summary

July 11, 2017



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Introduction

Over the past two and a half years, Hays County has worked closely with the community to develop the FM 150 Character Plan. On Tuesday, July 11, 2017 the County hosted a public meeting to share background information about The Character Plan and the public involvement process, concepts for the roadway, and the next steps in the preparation of the final Nature & Character Master Plan. The meeting provided the opportunity for community members to visit with the project team and provide feedback on concepts for the corridor.

Public Meeting Details

Date: Tuesday, July 11, 2017

Time: 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Location: Dripping Springs High School
940 US 290
Dripping Springs, TX 78620

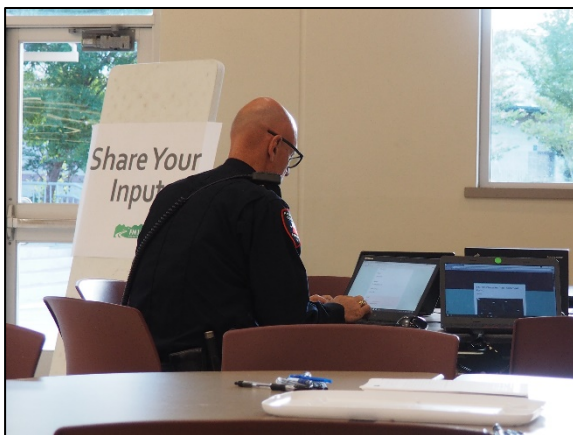


Public Meeting – July 11, 2017

Format: The meeting was an open house format, during which attendees were able to view large format concept maps of the corridor, visit with project team members, and share their input and questions. Corridor maps included concepts for the South Section (Arroyo Ranch Road to FM 3237), the North Section (FM 1826 to RM 12), and Upgrade Sections (FM 967 and FM 1826), as well as concepts and a potential location for a Bypass. A short welcome and introduction was shared at 6:15 p.m.

Attendance: 71 members of the public signed in at this meeting.

Gathering Input: Attendees were able to share input by writing comments directly on the maps or submitting written comments through comment cards or an online comment form. Comments would also be accepted by mail or email after the meeting until July 26, 2017.



Written and online comment station



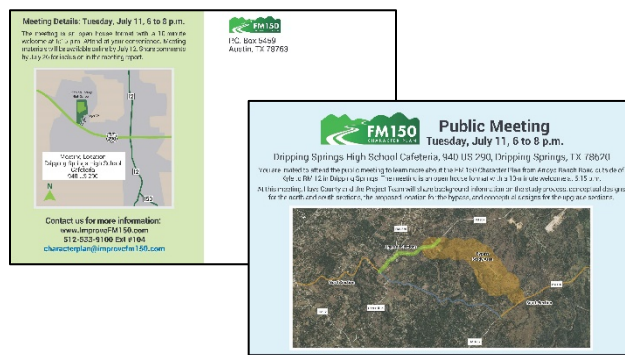
Mapped comments on corridor maps

Notices and Advertisement of the Public Meeting

The following methods were used to contact and inform stakeholders of the FM 150 Character Plan Public Meeting:

Direct Mail

A postcard notification with meeting details was mailed to 554 property owners along FM 150 from Arroyo Ranch Road to RM 12, and along the potential bypass route on June 16, 2017.



Postcard Notification

Published Notifications

Advertisements were published in the following newspapers:

- *Hays Free Press* on June 21, 2017 and July 5, 2017
- *Hays News Dispatch* on June 22, 2017, and June 29, 2017

Email Notifications

Email notifications with meeting details were distributed to individuals who requested to be included on the mailing list on the following dates:

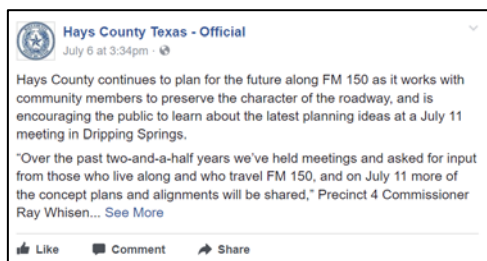
- June 20, 2017 – sent to 478 stakeholders
- July 7, 2017 – sent to 478 stakeholders



Display Advertisement

Additional Outreach

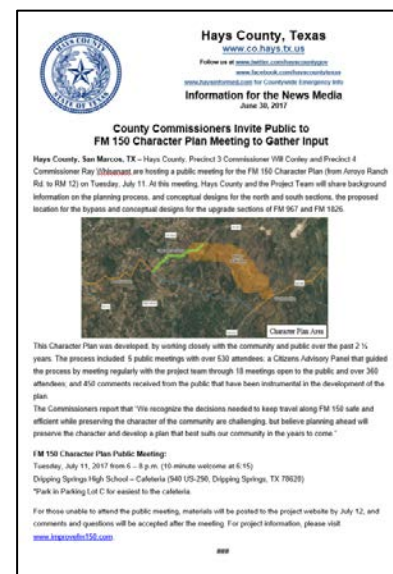
- A media release was distributed by the County to local media outlets on June 30, 2017
- Meeting details were also published on Hays County Facebook and Twitter accounts on July 6, 2017
- The meeting announcement was published on the www.improvefm150.com webpage on May 15, 2017



July 6, 2017 Facebook Post



July 6, 2017 Twitter Post



June 30, 2017 Media Release

Public Comments

The public was asked to submit their comments through written or online comment forms, using the mapping exercise at the meeting, or by mail or email before July 26, 2017 to be included with this meeting summary report.

Email notifications were sent to share information about meeting materials and to remind stakeholders to submit input during the official comment period on the dates listed below. Due to subscriber preferences and bounce-backs, two stakeholders were removed from the updates list.

- July 12, 2017 – sent to 501 stakeholders
- July 24, 2017 – sent to 499 stakeholders

A total of 79 comments were received during the open comment period. Of these comments, 59 were provided on the map at the public meeting and 20 written comments were received through comment cards, the online comment form, or through email. Below is a summary of the common themes identified from the input received. (Table 1)

Table 1: Common Themes from Input	
Additional and corrected labels	Desire for landscaping
Belief sections of project are unnecessary	Desire to utilize City of Austin property
Comment on size, ownership, and conditions of existing parcels	Desire to protect the environment and natural resources
Concern about development and water usage	Desire to keep rural character
Concern for cost	Desire to save trees
Concern for impacts to utilities	Flooding concerns
Concern for increased crime due to pedestrian facilities	Opposition to project
Concern for insufficient environmental studies	Opposition to roundabouts
Concern for personal property	Outside project limits
Concern for protecting the environment and wildlife	Request for more information on specific areas
Support for improved turning options	Safety concerns
Concern pedestrian facilities will not be used	Slower speed
Concern roundabouts will cause confusion	Suggestion for alternate traffic routes
Concern proposed right of way is too big	Support for concepts presented
Concern with maintaining natural landscape/historical improvements	Concern for safe access to driveways and side streets with appropriate road markings
Desire for animal crossings	Support for public Involvement process
Desire for bike lanes/pedestrian facilities	Support for project
Desire for improved safety	Support for roundabouts
Desire for left turn at FM 150 and Darden Hill	Support for signalized intersections

The mapped comments are included on the following pages in Exhibit 1 - North Section, Exhibit 2 - South Section, and Exhibit 3 - Upgrade Sections and Bypass Study Area. Following the mapped comments exhibits are the detailed comments received on the comment form by section, as well as the complete emailed comments.

Exhibit 1 - Mapped Comments

North Section - FM 1826 to RM 12

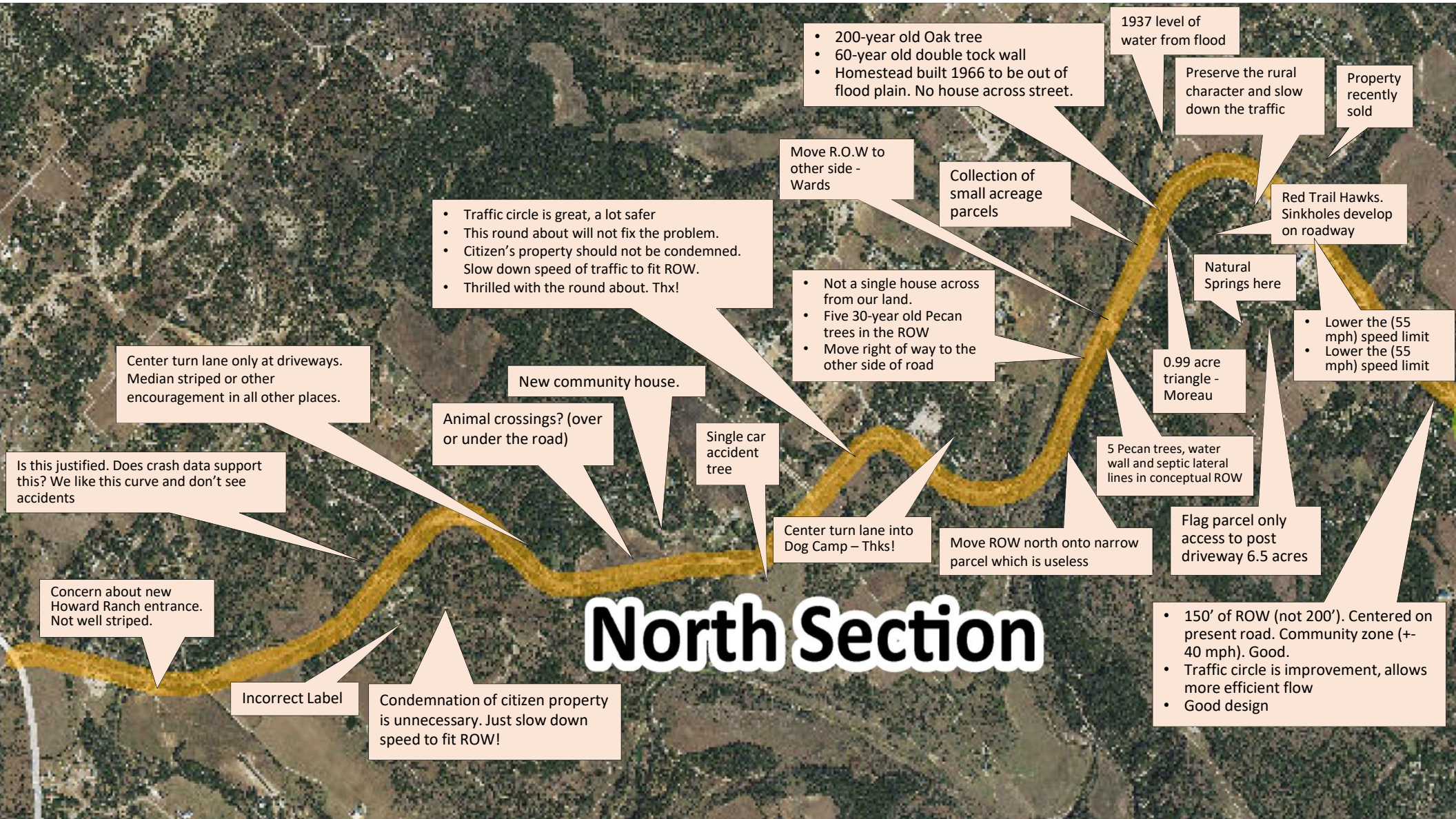


Exhibit 2 - Mapped Comments

South Section - Arroyo Ranch Rd. to FM 3237

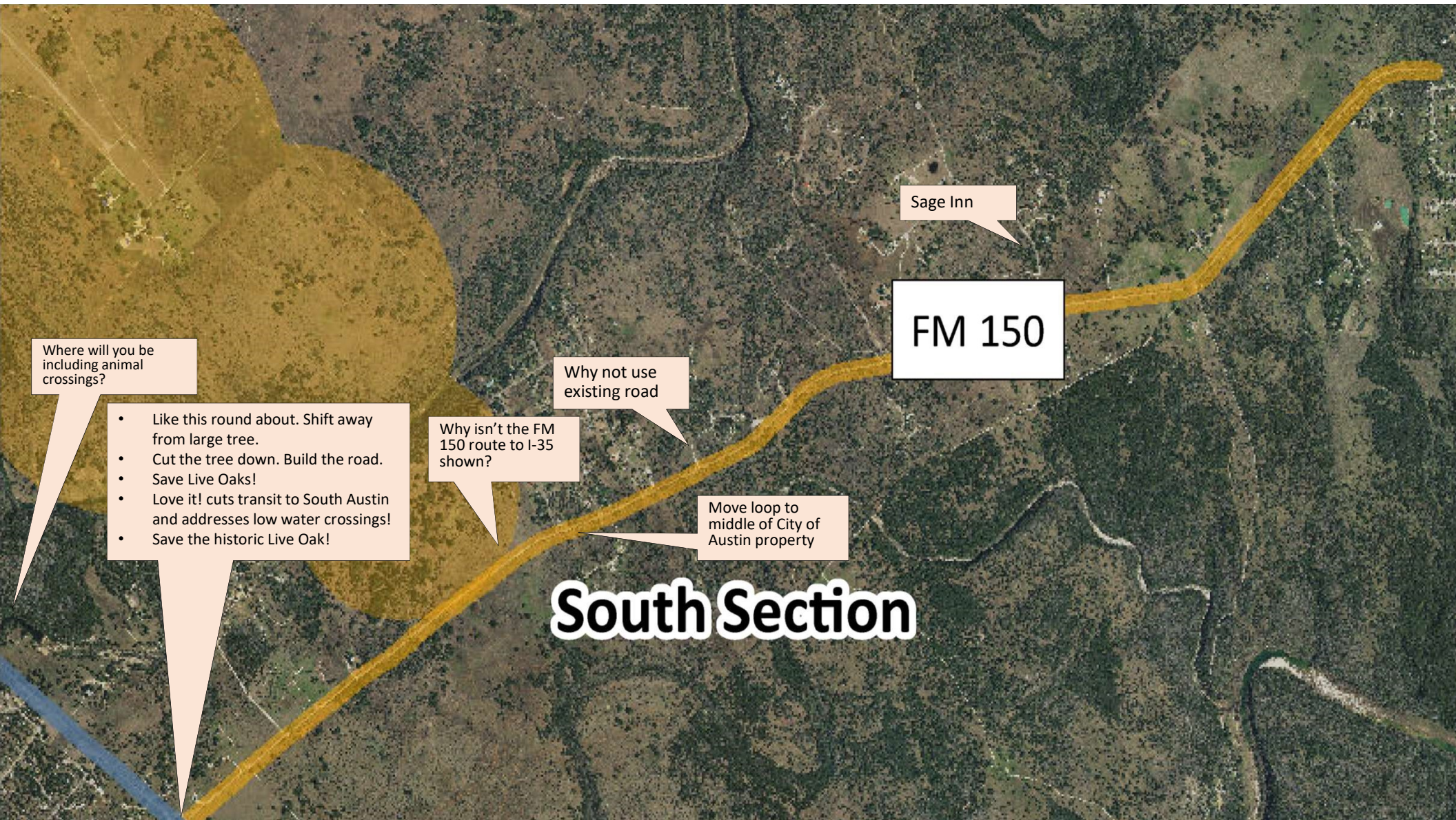
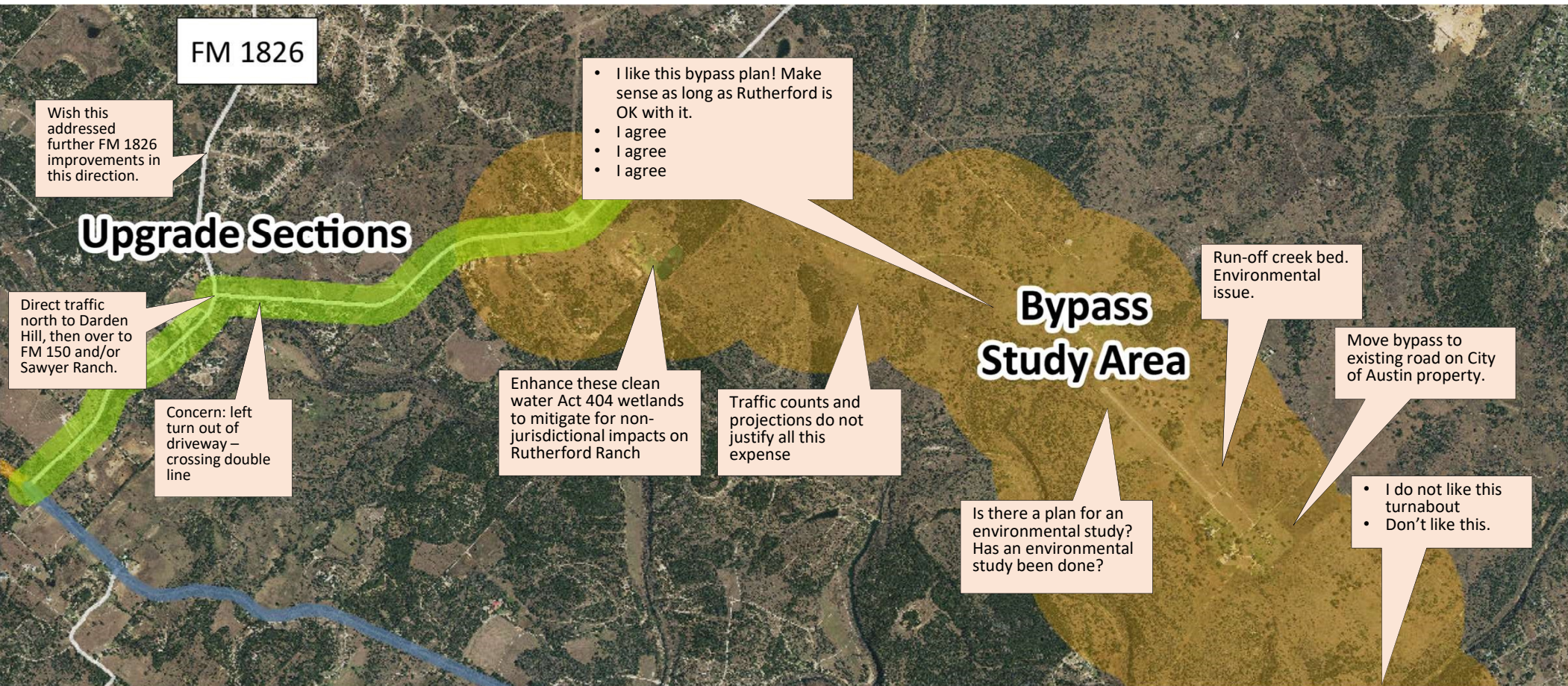


Exhibit 3 - Mapped Comments

Bypass & Upgrade Sections - FM 967 and FM 1826



North Section – FM 1826 to RM 12 – Input Received

Are there any priorities you would like the County to consider in the short and/or long-term for the proposed concepts and alignments?

Comments
When you extend Wood Loop to the "new" 150 please LANDSCAPE the extension. Right now the land immediately surrounding the proposed extension is a dump, literally. The area would make a nice place for an entrance sign to Dripping Springs, like there is on RR 12 north of 290.
A new left turn lane on FM 150 at Darden Hill Rd.
Please provide bike lanes from RM12 to at least Charro Ranch Park
In the Community areas designated, I don't feel like it needs to have walkways. In your survey it showed how there weren't any pedestrians on it. I don't think sidewalks would help. People are not going to start walking on it just because there is a sidewalk. This is a country road.
Also not quite sure why you are wanting to improve a road already in the flood plain.
By creating a bike path and sidewalk, has the county considered the increased potential for inviting crime into residential areas, the more sparse residential areas?
I really, really like the idea of a large round-a-bout at the Darden Hill and FM 150 intersection.
Shoulders and a single turn lane
Creating turn lanes in areas with residential entrances. Allow for cyclist to safely use the roadway(bike lanes). Do not make changes to Darden Hill Road, it has the same character as Elder Hill Road. Cars and trucks are already speeding down Darden Hill Road which is a residential area.
I would prefer to keep FM150 as it is.
Improving safety and protecting the environment

Do you have any additional comments on the proposed concepts and alignments for this section?

Comments
The new path here of 150 will be much safer. Thanks.
The only change needed for the intersection of Darden Hill Rd. and FM 150 is a left turn lane on FM 150. The existing Intersection sight distances are good, and there is no need to make the suggested very disruptive relocation of the intersection to the west, where the sight distances are not as good.
Question-will this road improve the property values or decrease them? Will we have to pass a Bond Package to pay for it? So, is it possible that the values would increase (and raising my taxes) and the bond would also increase my taxes? A double whammy for losing part of my property?
When are the residents who are losing property under this proposed concept going to be notified of their impending loss?
Just please try to save the big lovely oak trees.
Your plan for the intersection at RR 12 & FM 150 would change the character of the entire area. We have a plan of development in keeping with the character of the community. The Howard Ranch POA stands opposed to your design as it has since its inception. The intersection can be improved in the existing ROW.
Traffic from IH35 will be encouraged to bypass Austin and cut through our beautiful Hill Country. Please focus on allocating funds for land conservation to preserve the integrity of the Hill Country, protect our wildlife and keep our waterways safe from runoff, trash and pollution.

South Section - Arroyo Ranch Rd. to FM 323 – Input Received

Are there any priorities you would like the County to consider in the short and/or long-term for the proposed concepts and alignments?

Comments
At the location off of FM150 going north, why put bypass by property owners versus going through the middle of the City of Austin property? We as land owners moved to the country to get away from the traffic, not to have traffic in our backyard! There is also a natural creek bed on the east side of my property that is right where the loop is proposed? Think about the natural environment please!!! Put the loop in the middle of the property!
FM 150 W(9700-10,500) this portion of FM 150 West is a straight section of road, when the cars get to this part it is dangerous now, people pass now so much. We have had accidents at Sierra West. I even had a Lowes delivery truck hit my gatepost due to the fact no one will slow down.
Improving safety and protecting the environment

Do you have any additional comments on the proposed concepts and alignments for this section?

Comments
At the location off of FM150 going north, why put bypass by property owners versus going through the middle of the City of Austin property? We as land owners moved to the country to get away from the traffic, not to have traffic in our backyard! The roundabout on FM150 at FM3237 is a great idea but, the one east of that intersection is useless and will cause more confusion and accidents on a major road like FM150!
Please consider a shoulder improvement or middle turn lane.
The only thing the County should do is identify safety hotspots and address those with appropriate signage and additional turn lanes, as needed. Do not expand or build new roads. This area goes through the Edwards Aquifer Contributing Zone and Recharge Zone, where many of us get our drinking water. Additionally, more road capacity will just lead to more development and hence traffic and safety issues. Keep the Hill Country rural for those of us who moved here for the rural feel and natural beauty. I'd rather have to drive a little further than live in a suburb.

Bypass & Upgrade Sections - FM 967 and FM 1826 – Input Received

Are there any priorities you would like the County to consider in the short and/or long-term for the proposed concepts and alignments?

Comments
no, upgrade to FM967 is outstanding
Lessen the amount of "shared use" next to the vehicle lanes

Do you have any additional comments on the proposed concepts and alignments for this section?

Comments
Why not extend 1826 across FM 150 where they meet...all the way to County Road 193 which runs to RR12? It's a straight shot across 150 to CR 193/RR12, there's already a 50' wide easement on CR 193 for "future road expansion", and CR193 is a paved road. You would bypass the Driftwood Conservation area, and all those people trying to get to Wimberley would have a straight shot to RR12. Less right of way to purchase/acquire, and road easement in place. It makes sense.

General Comment for Entire Corridor – Input Received

Are there any priorities you would like the County to consider in the short and/or long-term for the proposed concepts and alignments?

Comments
Yes, I'd like for the decision on roundabouts vs signaling to be made. As a commuter through the area, I'd prefer a signal at these typical intersections and not the roundabouts. I understand the difference of the two concepts, but if the idea is to move the traffic (i.e. - commuters) through the area then the concept of forced reduction in speed does not make sense and rather your typical timed TxDOT intersection is better.
We have attended many meetings and given comments there, but one additional important comment occurs to us now: oak wilt is a major potential problem throughout the area. Please be sure that a trained arborist completely familiar with this problem oversees the work of those who do the clearing and pruning that will be necessary.
Continue the thorough and inclusive process. Please, please save the line Oaks at the triangle in front of Hays City Cafe and Mad Rooster. Relocate the trees at the least. Thank you
Save the Live Oak at the 3237 and FM 150 intersection-potentially shift the inner circle to encompass the live oak.
Please keep safety in mind.
Water! Water has been a problem in this area for a long time; increased development will only exacerbated that problem. And the karst geology of the area makes septic a problem as well. I have heard nothing about this in the meetings. We realize that this project is about the road itself, but where is the broader context?
Creating turn lanes in areas with residential entrances. Allow for cyclist to safely use the roadway(bike lanes). Do not make changes to Darden Hill Road, it has the same character as Elder Hill Road. Cars and trucks are already speeding down Darden Hill Road which is a residential area.
I would prefer to keep FM150 as it is.

Do you have any additional comments on the proposed concepts and alignments for this section?

Comments
I'd like to know more about the need for the C&G sections. I'd also like to know more about the future tie-in locations for spur streets into Dripping Springs such as Darden Hill and future ROW through or near the Preserve subdivision.
If safety is your main concern I beg you to please eliminate any plans for a round about. These would be very dangerous at the speed in which people drive on these roads. Also, please consider a bike lane or paved trail.
It is obviously good to take into account environmental considerations, HOWEVER in studying the map of potential golden-cheeked warbler habitat, I see a place that I know has golden cheeks (and has for at least a decade, in Rolling Oaks) is mapped as "potential low quality habitat". Even though that specific area is not part of the study area, it indicates that environmental studies done may be insufficient.
Traffic from IH35 will be encouraged to bypass Austin and cut through our beautiful Hill Country. Please focus on allocating funds for land conservation to preserve the integrity of the Hill Country, protect our wildlife and keep our waterways safe from runoff, trash and pollution.

Input Received Outside of Comment Period

Comments

Dear Citizens Advisory Panel:

I am writing to you to ask that you please reconsider the location of the proposed bypass from FM 150 W to FM 967. I own and live on the property at 7900 W FM 150. My house is directly west to the City of Austin property. I have lived on this property for 20 years and have seen the growth and increased traffic that has occurred on FM 150. There are a number of concerns that I have with regards to the proposed bypass.

1. Putting a road through the City of Austin property defeats the purpose of the intent of that land to preserve and protect a sensitive natural resource that we should all be concerned about for our future: water. I believe Kevin Thuesen's presentation spoke highly of the need for us to preserve and protect Barton Springs.

2. Over the years, growth on FM 150 has increased and traffic has become increasingly difficult to maneuver. There are certain times of the day that it is difficult to get out of my driveway. I agree that we need to make FM 150 a safer road for everyone. However, I can't imagine how this bypass if approved would increase the noise level for my home. Not only will there be the traffic noise on FM 150 but the road location next to my home would incur noise from the bypass. I would be cornered in with FM 150 to the South and the proposed bypass to the East of my home.

3. Even if the city of Austin were to agree to allowing a road to cut through their property, there is a safety concern for the placement of the bypass. There have been numerous accidents on FM 150 and even a death occurred in front of my home. There is a blind spot at where you are proposing to put a road, which would create more danger for the traffic on FM 150.

I am not against growth and am all for road maintenance and solutions to help with traffic, however I feel the need to speak up for those that would be impacted by ideas that this committee is proposing. Water and water quality should be at the top of your list.....not building more roads that would impact property owners that they have built homes on.

I would like for you to ask yourself, if you owned property and a road was being proposed to go right next to it with increased traffic and noise...would you be concerned? Would you also want to impact our valuable water resources for the sake of a road? I appreciate the thought to create a safer system for the citizens in future years. However, there must be a solution that will be agreeable to all.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Lee Rickman



I am a current property owner and soon to be resident in Howard Ranch. The plan to expand Hwy 150 and add a roundabout is not something I bargained for when considering a move from Houston. 12 is already a busy road and will get busier as Caliterra and the area get built out. A roundabout will only add to congestion and confusion, and bring unwanted expansion and traffic along 150. 290 is already a major thoroughfare and better suited to move traffic through Dripping Springs.