

PUBLIC HEARING SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

IH 35: from FM 1626 to Yarrington Road

CSJ: 0016-02-114

Project Number: PTF

Hays County

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS: The proposed improvement to the IH 35 Frontage Road includes widening the northbound and southbound frontage roads from two lanes to three, and to include a short section of new southbound frontage road. The frontage roads would be converted to one-way traffic operation. Existing entrance and exit ramps would be replaced or relocated with associated acceleration and deceleration lanes. The project would realign the frontage roads and provide the addition of turn and auxiliary lanes and turn-around bridges in order to improve mobility and safety in the area.

PURPOSE AND NEED: The purpose of this project is to maintain mobility and improve safety. The need for the improvements is to provide additional capacity to meet future traffic demands and to bring the roadway into conformity with current design standards.

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT APPROVAL: FHWA approved this document as Satisfactory for Further Processing on July 21, 2011.

NOTICES AND ARTICLES: Legal notices were published in the Austin American Statesmen on August 7, 2011 and August 29, 2011; in Ahora Si on August 4, 2011 and August 25, 2011; in the Wimberley View on August 3, 2011 and August 24, 2011; in the Kyle Eagle on August 3, 2011 and August 24, 2011; and in the Hays Free Press on August 3, 2011 and August 24, 2011. Letters were mailed to adjacent property owners, public officials, and those individuals who requested to be included in the mail out for the public hearing.

PUBLIC HEARING DATE AND PLACE: Thursday, September 8, 2011 at Jack C. Hays High School.

ATTENDANCE: Approximately 57 people (private citizens and elected officials) signed the registration sheets. In addition, there were approximately eight (8) representatives from TxDOT and two (2) project consultants from HNTB, three (3) from CP&Y, Inc. and one (1) from Nancy Ledbetter and Associates.

EXHIBITS: The project design schematic was displayed for public review and comment. A packet of information regarding the proposed project was prepared and available to the hearing attendees. The packet included a welcome letter with contact information, the hearing agenda, project location maps, descriptions of the proposed projects, typical sections, and a comment sheet. Also available were the Categorical Exclusion document and TxDOT's *The Purchase of Right-of-Way* booklet.

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CONDUCTED BY:

John Hurt, TxDOT Public Information Officer

Officiate and present Introduction

Mike Knapik, P.E., CPY, Inc.

Technical presentation on IH 35 Frontage Roads

Jessica Rodriguez-Gomez, P.E., URS, Corp

Technical presentation on RM 150 East

Andy Atlas, CPY, Inc.

Environmental presentation on IH 35 FR and RM 150 East

Bob Harwood, TxDOT ROW Agent

Right-of-way acquisition procedures

John Hurt, TxDOT Public Information Officer

Public Comment Period

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Two people presented oral comments, one presented oral and written comments, and twenty two submitted written comments. All comments were received by the close of the public comment period on Monday, September 19, 2011.

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS:

Issue	Number of Comments	Summary of Comments
Project Support	17	Expressions of support for the project as a whole or elements of the project plan
Safety	14	Project would improve safety
	1	Project would decrease safety
Mobility	1	Project would maintain mobility
	2	Project would improve mobility
Economic Development	5	Project supports economic development
	3	Existing directions of travel on S Old Hwy 81 support economic development
Quality of Life	3	Project would improve quality of life
Context Sensitive Design	1	Add design elements to the Yarrington Road bridge that would represent the City of San Marcos
Intersections	2	Improvements are needed
Travel Time	4	Project would shorten travel time
	1	Project would increase travel time
Access	4	Maintain existing access
	1	Prohibit truck access to/from local roads at intersections
Vehicle Speeds	1	Too high on frontage roads and intersecting local roads.
Traffic Volumes	1	Too high on local roads due to travelers using these as alternate routes.
Congestion	1	Trucks use local roads as alternate routes and this causes congestion on those roads.

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RECOMMENDATION:

The responses to the comments indicate that existing proposed plans have addressed all but two of the above issues. The first issue has to do with the request to reduce vehicle speeds on the frontage roads and intersecting local roads. Speed limits would be set following project completion. The second issue is related to details in the context sensitive design of the Yarrington Road bridge. These details in the aesthetic design will be worked out by Hays County and the City of San Marcos and would not affect the configuration of the roadway. Therefore, they would not change the environmental impacts as currently assessed. The project is recommended for approval as a Categorical Exclusion because the assessment of the environmental impacts with input from the public indicates these would not be significant.