SUMMARY OF ORAL COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

**Tom Hayes** commented on the environmental studies and impacts.

Response: Project studies are available for the cost of reproduction through a request to TxDOT. The proposed project is categorically excluded from the need for an environmental impact statement by a programmatic agreement between FHWA and TxDOT. It was determined by qualified staff that no impacts to wetlands, or endangered species would result from this project. An infiltration basin that infiltrates water to the underlying soils was not possible because soil boring data obtained in the vicinity of the project indicate that the underlying soils are clayey in nature and would therefore not provide the required infiltration capacity. A filtration system such as a sand filter or bio filter was also not possible because of site topographic limitations. The elevation difference in the drainage channel located between the water quality basin inlet and outlet are not sufficient to provide the depth that would be required for filter media and an under drain system. Stormwater from the project area would initially flow into the upgraded detention basin to be treated, then via another vegetated channel for natural filtering before its discharge into the San Marcos River. The existing detention basin currently receives stormwater runoff from a large drainage area. Improvements to the detention basin would improve the existing water quality for all stormwater runoff from this entire area, not just from the project area. This would ensure the protection of aquatic resources including listed species. It is not reasonably feasible to pump stormwater to another location.

**Patricia Alba** commented on access to and from the Spring Lake Hills neighborhood and on proposed traffic management.

Response: SL 82 access exists from West Laurel St by heading north to the traffic signal at Post Rd where a traveler may go to the eastbound SL 82 access road, which heads to IH 35. A right turn is available from West Laurel St onto the Post Rd/SL 82 access road, which leads to Charles Austin Dr. An alternate routes to Charles Austin Dr is the use the eastbound access roads and Thorpe Ln. Traffic analyses performed by the City contributed to development of the merge lanes from the access roads to SL 82. This design complies with the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) and TxDOT design criteria that includes a consideration of the design speed and traffic patterns of the roadway.

**Jeannene Herber** commented on access to Charles Austin Dr, traffic volumes, traffic management, and congestion.

Response: Traffic analyses have been performed by the City and merge lanes from the access roads to SL 82 have been developed based on the design speed, traffic volumes, and traffic patterns of the roadway. Criteria from AASHTO and TxDOT were used to design safe merging and traffic crossover. Due to the geometric constraints of the
grade separation between SL 82 and the UPRR, additional distance to allow vehicles to merge into the left-turn lanes at the signalized intersection at Charles Austin Dr is not possible. Alternative routes to Charles Austin Dr exist by which a traveler may utilize the east- or westbound access roads to reach destinations along Charles Austin Dr. The purpose of the proposed improvements is to increase mobility by reducing congestion.

Jim Carrillo commented on the proposed bike accommodations.

Response: Due to the right-of-way and environmental constraints, the bicycle facilities have been limited to bicycle friendly, 14-foot-wide outside lanes on access roads and 6-foot sidewalks, which would be provided on both sides. Traffic volumes are significantly reduced on the access roads when compared to what currently exits on SL 82 because the majority of traffic would be using the overpass bridge. The City is the sponsor of the project and they have helped design the bike accommodations per their plan.

Dianne Wassenich supports the proposed project stormwater management plan and commented on the environmental impacts.

Response: The project includes substantial water quality improvements such as the addition of the sediment basin. The improvements to the sediment basin and erosion and sediment controls would be installed prior to construction in order to control runoff during construction and to minimize impacts to the aquatic environment. The proposed project is not located within the Edwards Aquifer recharge or contributing zones so no impacts to the Edwards Aquifer would result from the project. However, the project has been designed to contain water quality measures included in the Texas commission on Environmental Quality guidance titled *Measures for the Protection of Water Quality in the Edwards Aquifer*. Silt fencing would be installed prior to the project’s initiation to minimize the potential for impacts caused by erosion and sedimentation. Additionally, mulch socks would be used to provide a double barrier to prevent any runoff into Spring Lake.

Gena Fleming commented on traffic volumes, congestion, and environmental impacts. She expressed interest in the history of the area.

Response: The proposed project would not add capacity to an existing facility. The purpose of the proposed improvements is to increase mobility by reducing congestion. The improved mobility and safety would reduce the idling of cars that are currently forced to sit in traffic at the railroad crossing. Improved mobility would reduce the accumulations of exhaust from idling cars. The historic use of the buildings and land within the project area has been included in a Historic Survey Report that is available through a request to TxDOT for the cost of reproduction.
SUMMARY OF WRITTEN COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

**Sam Beasley** commented on the aesthetics.

Response: The architecture of the proposed overpass includes a design that would complement the new football stadium and blend in with the natural feel of the surrounding area. The aesthetics were developed in cooperation with TxDOT, the City planners, and Texas State. The area under the overpass includes a river landscaping theme.

**Jane Hansen** commented in support of the project and on the need to reduce congestion.

Response: Comment noted and the City and TxDOT concur that the project is needed to reduce congestion.

**Chris Hehr** commented on access, safety, travel capacity, project cost, and congestion.

Response: A large percentage of the vehicles travelling to Charles Austin Dr would be on the overpass and have access to the left-turn lane to Charles Austin Dr. Travelers on Post Rd desiring access to Charles Austin Dr may have to seek an alternate route by using Thorpe Ln. Due to the geometric constraints of the grade separation between SL 82 and the UPRR, additional distance to allow vehicles to merge into the left-turn lanes at the signalized intersection at Charles Austin Dr is not possible. The eastbound SL 82 traffic would go through the same signal and lane configuration at Thorpe Ln that is in place today. The additional lane on westbound Post Rd accommodates turn lanes at the proposed signalized intersection of Post Rd and the east access roads over the at-grade crossing with the UPRR. The turn lanes are necessary to maintain the existing level of service and accommodate the various vehicular movements entering and exiting the access roads from various points (Texas State parking lots, turnaround, West Laurel St) and for Texas State game-day traffic control. The access roads geometry and clearances meet the sight distance requirements for the low speed facilities of 20mph. Vehicles exiting the stadium parking lots are given two access points to head west on SL 82. At the first access point, vehicles can head directly to the westbound access roads at intersections located beneath the SL 82 overpass bridge. The second access point includes vehicles heading west from other driveway locations, which have access to turnarounds located beneath the SL 82 overpass bridge. Aesthetic treatments would add cost to the project; however, “cost-effective” aesthetic treatments were selected to minimize the initial cost as well as long-term maintenance costs. The aesthetics treatments were chosen in conjunction with TxDOT staff, the City planners, and Texas State. The purpose of the proposed improvements is to increase mobility by reducing congestion.
Genevieve Scalan commented on environmental impacts.

Response: Qualified biologists participated in the project development and determined that no impacts or effects to threatened or endangered species or their critical habitat would occur because of this project. A FHWA and TxDOT approved traffic noise analysis was performed for the project area, and traffic noise impacts were only determined to occur near the sports area at the intersection at Charles Austin Dr. However, no traffic noise abatement measures would be feasible or reasonable for this site; therefore, no abatement measures were proposed for this project.

Trish and Joe Sumbera commented on traffic management, traffic volumes, congestion, and safety.

Response: A single stop sign for traffic exiting from West Laurel St is proposed. Post Rd traffic would flow freely at the West Laurel St intersection. There is a proposed signal located at the Post Rd/SL 82 east access road intersection to relieve congestion. The merge condition and length has been established following TxDOT design procedures for the design speed and traffic conditions of the proposed roadway to improve safety. The purpose of the proposed improvements is to increase mobility by reducing congestion.

Joe Tomasso commented on access, traffic management, and construction timing.

Response: Access to the Spring Lake Hills Neighborhood through West Laurel St would be maintained at all times during construction. Construction of the intersection would be performed using an accelerated method in which it would be phased in segments with a faster pavement technique resulting in only short-term interruptions. Traffic volumes at the West Laurel St intersection with Post Rd are not predicted to meet the conditions, which warrant a traffic signal at this location at this time.

Ashley Wright commented on local planning and specifically asked that the UPRR be moved from within the City.

Response: Relocation of the UPRR through the City and other cities along the IH 35 corridor is an important and on-going regional issue with the many partners engaged in this process. As these studies are ongoing and affect the region as a whole, they are outside of the scope of this project. However, these studies have focused on the relocation of the freight rail traffic to facilitate re-use of the existing UPRR as a passenger rail system. Use of the UPRR as a passenger rail system would still result in a need for a grade-separation between the passenger rail and the vehicular traffic. Therefore, the proposed project would meet this need.
Michael Huston commented on project cost, environmental impacts and planning.

Response: Careful consideration has been given to the cost of the aesthetics of the proposed structure as well as the impacts to the remaining surface streets. The project includes improvements to maintain vehicular connectivity as well as the introduction of pedestrian and bicycle facilities that would increase access not only to the Texas State facilities such as the stadium, but also to the natural features such as Spring Lake and Aquarena Park. In addition, the water quality improvement proposed with the project would improve the existing water quality of runoff to the San Marcos River. The proposed facility would not only treat run-off from the proposed project site but also includes treatment of water from the entire drainage area. The proposed addition of hazardous material traps would also minimize the potential of hazardous waste being introduced into the San Marcos River.

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