

Public Hearing Summary and Analysis / Recommendation

June 12, 2012

IH 35W: From IH 820 to IH 30

District / County: Fort Worth / Tarrant County

CSJ / Project Numbers: 0014-16-179 and 0014-16-268

Proposed Improvements: The proposed study limits are within Tarrant County, Texas. The project area is IH 35W from IH 820 to IH 30, SH 121, and US 287. The length of the proposed project is approximately 5.4 miles along IH 35W, approximately one mile along SH 121, and approximately one mile along US 287. The proposed improvements include the expansion of the IH 35W corridor from a four/eight lane divided freeway to an eight-lane (non-toll) freeway with two/four concurrent managed (toll) lanes centered between the general purpose lanes. The following describes the improvements:

- From IH 820 to SH 183 - Eight general purpose (non-toll) lanes (four in each direction) with four managed (toll) lanes (two in each direction) with four/six discontinuous frontage road lanes including auxiliary lanes near ramps and cross streets.
- From SH 183 to SH 121 – Eight general purpose (non-toll) lanes (four in each direction) with four managed (toll) lanes (two in each direction) with four /eight continuous frontage road lanes including auxiliary lanes near ramps and cross streets. Direct connectors would be provided between the IH 35W managed lanes and Belknap-Weatherford for access to downtown Fort Worth.
- SH 121 to IH 30 - Eight general purpose (non-toll) lanes (four in each direction) with two managed (toll) lanes (one in each direction) with four /six discontinuous frontage road lanes including auxiliary lanes near ramps and cross streets. The managed lanes would tie into the IH 35W general purpose (non-toll) lanes just north of IH 30 and have direct connections to US 287.
- SH 121 From IH 35W to Riverside Drive – Eight general purpose (non-toll) lanes with direct connections provided to north and south IH 35W. Frontage roads would be continuous for the length of the improvement on SH 121. Direct connectors would be provided to IH 35W north and south with local access to Belknap-Weatherford (SH 121).
- US 287 From IH 35W to IH 30 – Six general purpose (non-toll) lanes with managed (toll) lane direct connectors provided between IH 35W and US 287 with two discontinuous frontage road lanes (includes two – way northbound frontage road from Cypress Street to 4th Street).

The proposed roadway would consist of 12-foot wide lanes with 10-foot wide inside and outside shoulders for the general purpose lanes, and 12-foot wide lanes with four-foot wide inside and 10-foot wide outside shoulders for the managed (toll) lanes. Auxiliary lanes would be constructed between entrance and exit ramps along the roadway. Bicycle and pedestrian accommodations would be provided on the frontage roads and cross-streets. Frontage roads would include a 14-foot wide outside shared lane for cyclists and six-foot wide sidewalks for pedestrians.

Need and Purpose: The proposed project is needed to meet future travel demands stemming from projected population growth and traffic volumes, address operational and capacity deficiencies on IH 35W, SH 121, US 287, and update the facility to current design standards.

The purpose of the proposed project is to improve mobility within the IH 35W corridor. The addition of general purpose (non-toll) lanes and managed (toll) lanes would add capacity and improve mobility. The improved design of the proposed project and addition of direct connectors would help to eliminate the operational deficiencies on IH 35W, SH 121, and US 287. The installation of new frontage roads

along IH 35W would provide access to adjacent land uses and encourage development in these areas along the roadway.

The purpose of implementing concurrent managed lanes as part of the IH 35W project would be to provide congestion relief primarily within the peak hour travel times, and provide a revenue source to pay for the operational and maintenance costs of the facility and future rehabilitation or reconstruction of the facility.

The capacity constraints of existing streets and alternate north/south highways near the project study area, and the limitations on the availability of right-of-way for new roadways have created and would intensify congestion. The proposed project would reduce congestion by increasing the capacity along this portion of IH 35W.

The proposed improvements would require additional right-of-way of approximately 85.4 acres, including the displacement of approximately 13 residences, and *50 businesses associated with the proposed project (*in addition to five vacant properties and one utility lift station). The State's Relocation Assistance Program, its benefits and services for displacements, were presented at the hearing. The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) committed to utilizing the Texas Workforce Commission and Workforce Solutions for Tarrant County to help minimize or mitigate for adverse impacts to individual employees as a result of the proposed project's implementation. Representatives from these organizations attended the Open House/Public Hearing to answer questions or present services information.

Approximately 0.04 acre of temporary construction easements are required in order to reconstruct existing driveways. In addition, the proposed project would require right-of-way easements from the following Section 4(f) properties: Fort Worth Floodway, Fort Worth Trinity Trails, and Harmon Field Park.

In accordance with 33 United States Code (USC) 408 (Section 408) Review and Approval for modifications to existing U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) flood control projects (West Fork Trinity River and Ham Branch) the USACE is a cooperating agency.

The proposed project crosses five jurisdictional waters of the U.S. The proposed project would result in the placement of temporary and permanent dredge or fill material into five locations, including wetlands, and would require a Section 404 USACE Nationwide Permit (NWP) 14 Preconstruction Notification (PCN) for two of the crossings. Permanent impacts to all jurisdictional locations would total approximately 0.46 acre (0.17 acre of streams and 0.29 acre of wetlands). The proposed project would cross and encroach on the 100-year floodplain.

On December 16, 2011, the Texas Historic Commission (THC) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) were advised that the Oakhurst Neighborhood Association (ONA) was granted consulting party status by TxDOT. In general, per Federal regulations (36 CFR 800), a consulting party has opportunities to comment on preservation issues involving a transportation undertaking.

Environmental Document Approval: The FHWA approved the Environmental Assessment (EA) for satisfactory for further processing on May 1, 2012.

TxDOT conducted four public meetings: the first held on June 3, 1993, the second held on October 5, 2006, the third held on April 3, 2007 and the fourth held on November 16, 2010.

Notices and Articles: A notice of public hearing was published in the legal section of The *Fort Worth Star Telegram* on May 12, 2012, May 13, 2012, May 20, 2012, May 27, 2012 and June 3, 2012. A

Spanish version of the notice was published in the legal section of *La Semana* on May 11, 2012, May 18, 2012, May 25, 2012 and June 1, 2012 and in the legal section of *La Estrella* on May 19, 2012, May 26, 2012 and June 2, 2012. Notices were mailed to adjacent property owners and public officials.

Public Hearing Date and Place: A Public Hearing was held on Tuesday, June 12, 2012 at Calvary Christian Academy, 1401 Oakhurst Scenic Drive, Fort Worth, Texas 76111. The layouts were available for public viewing from 6:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. and the Public Hearing began at 7:00 p.m.

Attendance: The registration sheets indicated 289 people attended the public hearing. Of these, 241 were private citizens. The remaining attendees were from TxDOT, FHWA, elected officials, city and county government representatives, and the design consultant.

Conducted By: Ms. Maribel P. Chavez, P.E., District Engineer for the Fort Worth District of TxDOT, moderated and provided the introduction for the hearing. The elected or local officials in attendance were Lon Burnam, Texas State Representative, District 90; Sal Espino, Fort Worth City Council, District 2; Oscar Trevino, Mayor of North Richland Hills; Tom Lombard, Mayor Pro Tem North Richland Hills City Council, Place 3 and Richard Hutchison, Mayor of Haltom City. Mr. Curtis Hanan, P.E., Advance Project Development Director for the Fort Worth District of TxDOT, explained the public hearing process, project information and the environmental assessment. Mr. Nassar Abusaad, P.E. with Civil Associates, Inc. Project Manager, discussed the recommended corridor improvements. Mr. Keith Sliger, TxDOT-Texas Turnpike Authority Division, explained the right of way acquisition and relocation assistance process.

Exhibits: Layouts illustrating the proposed project were displayed for public view and comment. These layouts included design schematics and renderings on aerial photography, a video rendering of the project, and the Environmental Assessment document. TxDOT's *Right-of-Way* booklet and *Relocation Assistance* booklets (both in English and Spanish) were made available to the public. Handouts including the public hearing agenda and hard copies of the PowerPoint presentation slides were given to attendees.

Comments from Elected / Local Officials:

There were 8 verbal comments and 14 written comments provided by elected/local officials.

Verbal:

Seven elected/local officials spoke in support of the proposed project.

A representative of the Fort Worth Housing Authority (FWHA) indicated FWHA does not approve of the replacement of the US 287 pedestrian bridge. Stated FWHA sees this as an environmental crime-prevention issue because it allows access to and from the area which is not controlled or patrolled by the police department. Further states there is sufficient access to the Bertha Collins Center using the vehicular/pedestrian bridge at Cypress Street.

Comments from a State Representative indicated his support for the project. Emphasized hatred for toll roads but described the reality is they are needed for funding since there is no money. Further expressed concerns over the removal of a pedestrian bridge near Butler Place and questioned the need for an access road between the river or Northside Drive and 28th Street.

A representative of a State Senator read a letter of support signed by the Senator. The representative expressed the Senators concerns related to noise levels and safety issues raised by the Oakhurst Neighborhood Association and encouraged TxDOT to listen and give serious consideration to various

measures to reduce noise and provide safety. The measures listed were use of noise reducing pavements and the development of safety and noise barriers.

One elected official from the City of Fort Worth stated the City Council unanimously approved a resolution supporting the IH 35W project and entered the resolution into the public hearing record. He encouraged TxDOT to ensure all appropriate mitigation measures are included not only in the ultimate schematic, but also in the mandatory scope of work to hopefully be underway in the spring.

A representative from the North Central Council of Governments (NCTCOG) indicated the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) and the NCTCOG fully support expansion of IH 35W. Requested use of appropriate staging of frontage roads, lighting, plantings, pavement and lateral joints to reduce noise of cars and trucks, innovative financing to deliver the project sooner and consideration of a safety wall for the protection of the Oakhurst neighborhood and Calvary Christian Academy.

Written:

Fourteen written comments from elected/local officials were provided during the official comment period. Thirteen letters stated support for the proposed project. Five of the letters expressed speedy implementation of the proposed project.

A representative from the FWHA requested pedestrian bridges over IH 35W and US 287 adjacent to Butler Place housing community be eliminated and not reconstructed. Commenter states reconstruction of the bridges would not meet Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) guidelines because access to and from the area is not patrolled by the police department and predators prefer the more remote locations of the bridges. The commenter requests consolidation of pedestrian bridges with the Luella Street Bridge over IH 35W and the Cypress Street Bridge over US 287 for vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian traffic. States proper safety lighting, pathways and police patrols on Luella Street and Cypress Street would reduce risk, injury, and criminal activity by providing a well-traveled, well lit, more accessible and easily patrolled route.

A State Representative questioned the need for four lanes along the new frontage road adjacent to Calvary Christian Academy and Calvary Cathedral International. The Representative expressed appreciation in identifying effective ways to reduce additional noise from the increased traffic on homes in Oakhurst. Requests measures to mitigate safety concerns for the nearby school and church and a sound barrier be installed within TxDOT right of way.

A State Senator encouraged TxDOT to listen to ONA concerns related to noise and safety and give consideration to mitigation measures such as selection of certain pavement types and use of safety or noise barriers.

A Fort Worth City Councilman presented a resolution supporting the environmental clearance and commencement of improvements to the IH 35W corridor, with the following provisions. TxDOT continues to plan appropriate and prudent mitigations to the historical and noise issues raised by ONA and the IH 35W and SH 121 crossings of the Trinity Trail and the Trinity River including limited trail closures, installation of under bridge lighting, and clear spans of the Trinity River as practical. TxDOT continues engagement with City of Fort Worth regarding development of local access elements including aesthetic treatments for the corridor and ensure the least disruption to the community, the City's arterial network system and utilities including water, sewer and storm water.

Comments from Public:

There were 36 verbal comments and 285 written comments provided by members of the public.

Verbal:

Twenty people expressed approval for the project. Thirteen of these people expressed the need for advancement of the project without further delays.

One person requested to learn more about the loss of the pedestrian bridge over IH 35W at Butler Housing. Stated Butler Housing is in the National Register of Historic Districts and the quality of life for residents would be enhanced if a pedestrian bridge is included in the expansion of IH 35W.

One person expressed concern about noise and the loss of three or four houses in the Greenway neighborhood and requested TxDOT look at what could be done to lessen the impacts on their neighborhood.

One person stated to continue the expansion of IH 35W would result in the destruction of their neighborhood, United Riverside.

Three people requests the proposed roadways be moved away from the Oakhurst neighborhood, Calvary Christian Academy and Calvary Cathedral International. One of these people representing ONA expressed concern over shifting the roadway closer to Oakhurst in order to decrease impacts to Chesapeake's natural gas drill site and another of these people expressed the long-term quality of life is more important than taking care to not impact gas wells that could be functionally obsolete in 20 years.

One person expressed concern about gas, oil, and tire debris from cars being washed off the freeway during rain events. Commenter stated when it rains, that stuff goes somewhere off the freeway and is concerned it will go into the Trinity River.

The ONA representative and another person questioned the need for a new four lane frontage road adjacent to Calvary Christian Academy and Calvary Cathedral International extending northbound from Northside Drive to 28th Street and asked TxDOT to consider reducing the width of the frontage road.

The ONA representative and another person described appropriate or reduced lighting should be utilized. Thanked TxDOT for the commitment to comply with "Dark Sky" lighting regulations to reduce light spill beyond the roadway. Three additional people encouraged consideration to quality of life issues and minimization of these concerns and impacts for the Oakhurst neighborhood.

One person stated the THC did find that this road and this expansion would have an adverse effect on our National Registered Historic District (Oakhurst neighborhood). The ONA representative expressed appreciation to TxDOT for consideration of previous requests to limit impacts to the Oakhurst Historic District and noted an Environmental Permits, Impacts and Commitment (EPIC) sheet has been created by TxDOT.

The ONA representative and ten people expressed concern over noise levels in the Oakhurst neighborhood. Five of these described housing values or the ability to sell homes would be reduced due to noise levels. The ONA representative thanked TxDOT for the commitment to support "No Jake-Braking" near the neighborhood. One of these stated noise levels affect potential to obtain Federal Housing Administration (FHA) loans and another requested selection of certain pavement types to reduce noise be used on the proposed project.

The ONA representative and twelve people requested a noise wall be constructed along the Oakhurst neighborhood and Calvary Cathedral International property.

The ONA representative and eleven people expressed concern for the safety of children and congregants at Calvary Christian Academy and Calvary Cathedral International due to the close proximity of the proposed roadways adjacent the church parking lot and school facilities. One of these indicated the church and school host hundreds of attendees each day and safety is a high priority for educators and congregants. Suggests options be explored, including construction of safety or noise walls, to ensure the safety of people attending school and church activities.

One person expressed concern about accessibility at Calvary Cathedral International and Calvary Christian Academy. Additionally, because numerous people access the church and school from IH 35W, it is important that access during construction remains comparable to the current condition. Another person urged the City of Fort Worth to listen to residents along the corridor related to accessibility to the freeway.

One person expressed concern about visibility at Calvary Cathedral International and Calvary Christian Academy. The church and school host hundreds of attendees each day and visibility of the church and school facilities and signs is important.

Two people requested landscaping and plantings, including evergreens with vegetation.

One person requested the general public consider the quality of life improvements toll roads bring. While living in Austin, commute time to work was improved both on days when she elected to use a new toll road to get to work and on days when she elected to use the existing road.

One person expressed concerns about impacts to the community with regards to safety or congestion issues related to traffic being forced through neighborhoods.

One person expressed concern of what will happen to trees along the backside of the property near Oakhurst Scenic Drive and Yucca.

One person expressed concern about the impact to wildlife in the Oakhurst neighborhood from the proposed project.

Two people suggested the road not undulate as shown in the plans but be on an even continuous smooth grade. One additional person asked why it would be necessary to raise the road seventeen feet above current elevations near Oakhurst neighborhood.

Written:

One hundred and ninety six people expressed support for the expansion of IH 35W which includes a noise/safety wall for the Oakhurst neighborhood. An additional forty four people expressed approval for the project and a speedy implementation along with acknowledging TxDOT's hard work, diligence, and being a good partner with the IH 35W community in developing solutions for IH 35W. The ONA representative expressed support for the project.

One person does not believe High Occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes are an effective way of supporting carpooling because many times HOV lanes are empty. The commenter states that highway funds would be better used if all the lanes could be fully used.

One person expressed concern that Yucca Avenue is ruined because of the freeway and asks what the city is going to do.

One person requested TxDOT and their contractors consider heavy truck access to businesses, especially those between NE 28th Street and Meacham Boulevard. Turning movements for large tractor trailers need to be considered when placing temporary and permanent barricades.

One person questions if any Federal Communication Commission (FCC) surveys of impacts on commercial radio links have been conducted. Also, asks whether studies on railroad microwave links or traffic light/river monitor links have been conducted.

One person requested the closure of Blandin Street between the proposed northbound SH 121 (Airport Freeway) frontage road to Rouse Street when the expansion of SH 121 occurs. The non-profit agency that owns property surrounding this street provides prevention and intervention services for substance and alcohol abuse. Removal of the street would allow maximization of property access for possible rebuilding.

One person requested a map of IH 35W from IH 30 to Northside Drive. Asked if there is an option to keep the northbound Pharr Street exit as the loss of the exit would affect how customers access his business. Described he would like to share with customers the new route to access his business.

Nine people requested copies of the maps and presentation provided at the public hearing.

Two people requested relocation of billboards impacted by the IH 35W expansion in appropriate and compatible areas within the City of Fort Worth. Current city ordinance does not allow the relocation of off-premise signs within the corporate city limits or Extra Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) of Fort Worth.

Two people expressed concern related to removal and re-location of billboards along the IH 35W corridor. One of these reminded TxDOT IH 35W is designated a "scenic corridor" and current City of Fort Worth ordinances prohibit removed billboards from being replaced along the corridor. Requests specific documentation for the duration of the project on billboards removed. The other person asked which entity, being TxDOT, City of Fort Worth, North Texas Tollway Authority (NTTA) or Tarrant County would be responsible for the payment for billboard removal. Also asked would the responsible entity be eligible for reimbursement from one of the other above listed entities or from the federal government.

One person stated sound barriers should cost \$175-200 a square meter based on information from FHWA. Suggests removal of the proposed entrance ramp at Northside/Yucca would more than cover the cost of a noise barrier.

One person requested dedicated truck lanes on IH 35W with tolls if necessary.

One person suggested TxDOT should obtain a waiver for the widened bike lanes proposed on the frontage roads because the City of Fort Worth has a comprehensive bike plan using city streets.

One person requested access be provided to the Greenway neighborhood from both northbound and southbound IH 35W. Currently the neighborhood can access southbound IH 35W from Carver Avenue.

One person questioned why no proposed exit ramp from northbound SH 121 to Sylvania Street to access their neighborhood was included in the proposed project. Additionally, questioned why no further attempts were made to determine other entrances into the neighborhood with the widening of

SH 121. The commenter believes the proposed project would destroy the United Riverside neighborhood with the omission of access to homes and businesses who have helped grow this city.

Two people who manage or own property along the northbound IH 35W frontage road expressed concern the placement of the proposed entrance ramp would not allow access from Berner Street. Requested the entrance ramp be re-located north to allow access as it exists today. Stated a major part of the intrinsic value of the properties is the ease of access both on and off the freeway and describe if the ramp is not re-located, local business traffic would need to travel through an adjacent residential neighborhood or drive an additional two miles to access northbound IH 35W.

Two people representing property owners expressed their clients concern with access denial to adjacent the southbound frontage road between Meacham Boulevard and the Fort Worth Western railroad. They request access openings for commercial development.

One person requested no toll lanes, but only HOV lanes and the discount for HOV users would not expire once air quality improves.

One person would like a train system constructed along IH 35W for public transportation between high density population and work/shopping areas.

One person requested the proposed roadways be moved away from the Oakhurst neighborhood and Calvary Cathedral International. Another person representing ONA expressed concern over shifting the roadway closer to Oakhurst in order to decrease impacts to Chesapeake's natural gas drill site and requests that TxDOT consider using a consultant to independently assess the cost of any impact on the tanks at Chesapeake's site.

One person representing ONA asks whether coordination with the City of Fort Worth Stormwater Management staff has occurred to ensure that runoff from the proposed project would be adequately handled by the floodplain areas between Belknap Street and Watauga Road.

One person representing ONA questioned the need for four lanes along a new frontage road adjacent to Calvary Christian Academy and Calvary Cathedral International extending northbound from Northside Drive to 28th Street. Requested consideration for the possibility of reducing the width.

One person described reduced lighting should be utilized. One person representing ONA thanked and reiterated TxDOT's commitment to prohibit high mast lighting in the vicinity of Oakhurst neighborhood and comply with "Dark Sky" lighting regulations to reduce light spill beyond the roadway. Another person encouraged consideration to quality of life issues and minimization of these concerns and impacts for the Oakhurst neighborhood.

One person representing ONA expressed appreciation to TxDOT for consideration of previous requests to limit impacts to the Oakhurst Historic District. Noted an EPIC has been created to minimize visual-related impacts. In addition, noted previous statements and current beliefs the IH 35W expansion would have visual impacts to the Oakhurst Historic District under the Section 106 National Historic Preservation Act. Explains the visual impacts of the proposed road may alter the design and materials within Oakhurst Historic District if homeowners try to mitigate the views on their own and build tall fences or board windows.

The ONA representative provided questions and statements relative to the April 3, 2012 letter TxDOT coordinated with the THC including asking why TxDOT included language stating that views out of the neighborhood were not in the National Register Nomination and if it is the job of the MOA/PA to look for

adverse effects. They described that the view and impact of the expansion from 6 to 12 lanes would be much different and that TxDOT should consider indirect and cumulative impacts to the view shed outside of the Oakhurst Historic District.

The ONA representative describes TxDOT stated the Area of Potential Effects has drastically changed and unfortunately Oakhurst Historic District has no control over zoning of its neighborhood. Explained as for internal vistas, TxDOT is required to study the impacts and effects not just in the district but to the district. References that TxDOT states the Oakhurst National Register nomination references isolation of the district and explains this should be taken into account. They state it is not the purpose of the National Register nomination to anticipate the impacts of a multi-lane, international highway.

The ONA representative states TxDOT seems to vacillate on whether the vegetation is heavy or not and whether it is important to shielding sound and impact. They described TxDOT discusses the feeling and setting outside the boundaries of the District do not count towards eligibility; however, they ask would the activities proposed have an adverse effect on the historic district. Describes TxDOT states the Oakhurst Neighborhood would retain overall integrity with the proposed project design; however, the question is not about integrity but about impact on the District.

The ONA representative noted Fort Worth is in non-attainment for air quality and asks what is the speed limit for non-attainment areas and why is the design speed 70 mph?

Seven people and one person representing ONA expressed concern over noise levels in the Oakhurst neighborhood and Calvary Christian Academy.

The ONA representative noted TxDOT stated most contributing resources along the western edge of the Oakhurst Historic District would see an increase in noise beyond the current impacts. Stated the freeway noise issue could clearly have a negative impact on the economic value of houses near this location and of the entire neighborhood. Requested TxDOT address how the FHWA noise abatement regulations (23 CFR772) are relevant to mitigating noise increases in Oakhurst. Indicated the EA states TxDOT proposes to add noise barriers to mitigate project freeway noise impacts at Butler Place, Greenway Neighborhood, Scenic Bluff Neighborhood and the United Riverside Neighborhood, but it does not propose noise barriers for Oakhurst Historic District. Requested consideration of mitigation measures, including selection of certain pavement types, to reduce noise. Provided noise ordinances adopted by the City of Fort Worth in April 2012, information showing several clients are uninterested in housing for sale due to backyard noise levels and a news article on a Swedish study related to noise and high blood pressure. Described predicted traffic noise levels reported in the EA show that highway traffic noise in the Oakhurst neighborhood could be above levels considered a nuisance in residential areas. Requested TxDOT work with the City of Fort Worth to install "No Jake-Braking" signs along IH 35W.

One hundred and ninety seven people and one person representing ONA asked for a noise wall to be constructed along the Oakhurst neighborhood and Calvary Cathedral International property. The ONA representative noted a TxDOT project proposed in Austin along MOPAC would include 20-foot tall noise barriers which would also be around the height needed to be effective for the Oakhurst neighborhood.

Six people and one person representing ONA expressed concern for the safety of children and congregants at Calvary Christian Academy and Calvary Cathedral International due to the close proximity of the proposed roadways adjacent to the church parking lot and school facilities.

One person expressed concern about accessibility at Calvary Cathedral International and Calvary Christian Academy. The church and school host hundreds of attendees each day and accessibility to IH 35W is a high priority of educators and congregants.

One person expressed concern about visibility at Calvary Cathedral International and Calvary Christian Academy. States the church and academy have invested millions of dollars in improvements and hundreds of thousands dollars in signage that are visible from IH 35W. Describes the church and academy depend on visibility for recognition.

One person requested construction timelines and distances from the furthest western proposed roadways to the nearest producing gas wells at the Mercado natural gas well and compressor site (Mercado site). Describes the most current design does not leave adequate room as 75 feet minimum is required for safety, servicing, and maintaining existing wells and 150 feet minimum is required for drilling operations for new wells. Provided alternative layouts prepared during project development that included reduced right of way impacts and also an overlay with the current design. Describes the revised plans would negatively affect the existing and future required safety maintenance, operations and mineral development of the Mercado site.

One person requested landscaping and plantings, including types utilized along North Dallas Tollway such as cedars, ponytail grass, yucca and sage. Another person representing ONA thanked TxDOT for the commitment to require the use of a Registered Landscape Architect in the development of a landscaping plan for the proposed project.

One person described concerns regarding the Trinity River corridor and Trinity Trails below the IH 35W and SH 121 crossings. Reiterated mitigation items presented to TxDOT including trail connection from Delga Park compliancy with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements, trail/trailhead amenities displaced or removed to be replaced with like or better improvements, detours to include hard surfaces and trail to remain open from 5:00 am to 10:00 pm. Other mitigation measures listed included beam placement to occur during hours trail is closed, underside of bridges to be lighted and provision for a future trail 12 feet in width along the north bank of the crossing at IH 35W. Requested favorable consideration of design features including open bridge railings, roadway signs alerting motorist they are crossing the river and riverbank stabilization allowing for continuity of typical landscaping be provided. Also described bridge piers should not interfere with trail use and that design of roadways and bridges should allow natural light to penetrate to trails and clear span the river as practical. Noted design enhancements under bridges are needed to not compromise the trail user's experience.

One resident of the Oakhurst neighborhood requested the grade or elevation be reduced. The person representing ONA questioned why it is necessary to raise the road to clear the railroad track which the road in its current configuration already clears.

Two people requested further explanation as to how the proposed expansion would affect their property as their property was numbered on the exhibits displayed at the Public Hearing.

One person provided suggestions on how to keep the sign-in table easily accessible for the public.

Summary of Major Comments/Issues that were Addressed:

Detailed TxDOT response to issues and concerns can be found in the Comment and Response Report. The verbal and written comments express an overall support for the project and a desire for the project to move forward quickly. Major comments/issues include the following:

- 1) Requests incorporation of various types of modes of transportation including a train system for public transportation, dedicated truck lanes with tolls and HOV lanes.
- 2) Requests TxDOT and their contractors consider heavy truck access to businesses.
- 3) Concern related to removal and re-location of billboards along the IH 35W corridor.
- 4) Loss of the IH 35W pedestrian bridge and proposed reconstruction of the US 287 pedestrian bridge serving Butler Place housing community.
- 5) Suggests TxDOT obtain a waiver for the widened bike lanes proposed on the frontage roads.
- 6) Requests access be provided to the Greenway neighborhood from both northbound and southbound IH 35W. Concerned about noise and the loss of 3 or 4 houses in the neighborhood.
- 7) Questioned why no proposed exit ramp from northbound SH 121 to Sylvania Street to access the United Riverside neighborhood was included. Additionally, questioned why no further attempts were made to determine other entrances into the neighborhood with the widening of SH 121.
- 8) Concern over shifting the roadway closer to Oakhurst in order to decrease impacts to Chesapeake's natural gas drill site.
- 9) The width and requirement for a new frontage road adjacent to Calvary Christian Academy and Calvary Cathedral International extending northbound from Northside Drive to 28th Street.
- 10) Appropriate or reduced lighting adjacent to the Oakhurst neighborhood.
- 11) Visual impacts to Oakhurst Historic District due to the proposed expansion of IH 35W.
- 12) Noise impacts to the Oakhurst neighborhood, Calvary Cathedral International, and Calvary Christian Academy.
- 13) Requests noise/safety barrier be constructed along the Oakhurst neighborhood and Calvary Cathedral International property.
- 14) Accessibility to Calvary Cathedral International and Calvary Christian Academy.
- 15) Visibility of Calvary Cathedral International and Calvary Christian Academy.
- 16) Design revisions that affect Mercado natural gas well and compressor site (Mercado site). Describes the most current design does not leave adequate room as 75 feet minimum is required for safety, servicing, and maintaining existing wells and 150 feet minimum is required for drilling operations for new wells.
- 17) Requests landscaping, plantings, aesthetic treatments and engagement with the City of Fort Worth regarding development of the IH 35W aesthetic plan.
- 18) Concern regarding the Trinity River corridor and Trinity Trails below the IH 35W and SH 121 crossings. Reiterated mitigation items presented to TxDOT.
- 19) Concern about raising the grade or elevation of the roadway near Oakhurst neighborhood, Calvary Cathedral International and Calvary Christian Academy.

TxDOT Response to Public Hearing Comments

- (1) *The proposed reconstruction and additional lanes, consisting of general purpose (non-toll) and managed (toll) lanes, proposed for the corridor along with mass transit are required to meet mobility needs of the region. Commuter rail for the region is included in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) Mobility 2035. The Speedway Line, which would run from the Fort Worth Intermodal Transportation Center to the Texas Motor Speedway and be parallel to IH 35W is proposed in Mobility 2035. Dedicated truck lanes for the corridor are not included in Mobility 2035.*

The NCTCOG RTC is responsible for developing the regional managed lane policies. The proposed managed lanes would not be restricted to only HOV. HOVs of two or more occupants would receive a 50 percent discount to use the managed lanes during the peak period. This discount would phase out after the air quality attainment maintenance period. The managed lanes would be available to single-occupancy vehicles (SOVs) if they elect to pay the toll. No discount would be available for SOV users. The managed lane policies may be adjusted by the RTC to meet regional goals. Any request for a change in the managed lane policy would need to be sent to NCTCOG.

A managed lane facility increases freeway efficiency by packaging various operation and design actions to promote reliability of the system and provide for long-distance travel with few access points to disrupt traffic flows. In addition to maximizing the vehicle carrying capacity of the roadway, managed lane systems also maximize person moving capacity, provide travel options and increase flexibility, and achieve community and corridor goals. With the addition of managed lanes, fewer vehicles per lane would be expected to use the general purpose lanes for long-distance trips which provide better balancing of traffic movements, improved level of service and reduced congestion. Tolling helps much-needed facilities be implemented faster than if relying on traditional funding sources. Without tolling, this roadway expansion would be substantially delayed or not constructed.

- (2) The detailed traffic control plan/sequence of work for the reconstruction of IH 35W has not been developed at this time. Access to and from city streets, businesses and residential neighborhoods would be maintained during construction. For areas along the IH 35W corridor where heavy trucks serve local businesses, TxDOT would incorporate designs accommodating larger turning radius used by heavy trucks in the detailed traffic control plan/sequence of work. Temporary closures during the day for construction activities may be required and most likely would occur during the evening hours and other non-peak periods to minimize the impact to the local residents and businesses, provide a safe and efficient facility during construction for the traveling public, and expedite the reconstruction of IH 35W. TxDOT would work with local city staffs and business owners to develop traffic control plans/sequences of work to minimize construction impacts to the local communities, businesses and traveling public.*
- (3) Development of ordinances related to relocation of off-premise signs is the responsibility of the city government. TxDOT has no authority to assist local governments in development of ordinances or to encourage local governments to change ordinances related to the re-location of off-premise signs within the ETJ or city limits. TxDOT encourages all parties located along the IH 35W corridor to cooperatively work together to find solutions minimizing project delays and cost.*

Outdoor advertising signs are considered personal property (versus real estate). During the acquisition of right of way, the owners of outdoor advertising signs would be eligible for relocation expenses to relocate the sign to a conforming location. The relocation agent would explain those benefits to the interested parties during the acquisition process.

- (4) TxDOT in coordination with the City of Fort Worth, the FWHA, and Tarrant Regional Water District (TRWD) conducted two meetings with Butler Place community residents to discuss the removal and potential replacement of the existing pedestrian bridges. Also, to verify use of the existing pedestrian bridges, TxDOT contracted Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) to perform a pedestrian count study. The TTI count study, conducted during two days, and indicated a total of 7 pedestrians used the IH 35W pedestrian bridge while a total of 661 pedestrians used the Luella Street Bridge. For the US 287 pedestrian bridge, 37 pedestrians used the US 287 pedestrian bridge while 30 pedestrians used the Cypress Street bridge.*

Based on resident comments, FWHA recommendations, police/fire official input, and current counts across the pedestrian bridges, it was determined the pedestrian bridge crossing IH 35W would be removed and not replaced. To provide pedestrian access over IH 35W, TxDOT would provide improved bicycle and pedestrian facilities on the Luella Street.

For US 287, the existing pedestrian bridge would be removed and replaced with an ADA-compliant bridge. The proposed pedestrian bridge would drop off pedestrians in approximately the same location for Butler Housing and the Bertha Collins Community Center as existing. Improved bicycle

and pedestrian facilities on the proposed Cypress Street Bridge would also be provided. Both vehicular bridges would include a 14-foot wide trail that is barrier-separated from vehicular traffic and a six-foot wide sidewalk. The 14-foot wide trail on these bridges would extend into Butler Place the length of the TxDOT ROW. The trail on these bridges would allow pedestrians and cyclists to access downtown Fort Worth and the Trinity Trail.

- (5) For the IH 35W corridor, the 2010 City of Fort Worth Comprehensive Bicycle Transportation Plan, adopted February 9, 2010, was used to develop bicycle and pedestrian accommodations on cross streets. Design and construction of these facilities would be in compliance with the Texas Accessibility Standards, Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (TAS/ADAAG), the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities (AASHTO Bike Guide) and TxDOT's Roadway Design Manual (RDM).

Current TxDOT policy, based on the federal policy statement by the US Department of Transportation on Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations, Regulations and Recommendations requires full reconstruction projects where new right of way is acquired to provide the desired roadway, bicycle and sidewalk geometric values shown in the RDM, AASHTO Bike Guide and TAS/ADAAG. Desired values were used for bicycle and pedestrian elements in the development of the proposed IH 35W facility.

- (6) Proposed access to the Greenway neighborhood from southbound IH 35W would be provided along an exit ramp to Belknap Street. The proposed exit ramp ties to the southbound frontage road at Carver Avenue with access permitted to Glenmore Avenue. For northbound IH 35W, it was not feasible to maintain the existing northbound exit ramp to the Greenway neighborhood due to the close spacing of the southbound SH 121 direct connection to northbound IH 35W, the Belknap Street entrance ramp and the exit ramp to Northside Drive tying to IH 35W just south of the West Fork Trinity River. Access to the Greenway neighborhood from northbound IH 35W would be provided by taking the exit ramp to Northside Drive/Yucca Avenue; use the Texas Turnaround to travel under the IH 35W bridge to the southbound frontage road. Access to Carver Avenue from the southbound frontage road is provided. Access from Carver Avenue to southbound IH 35W would be provided by an entrance ramp located south of the Belknap Street/Weatherford Street southbound frontage road intersection.

The traffic noise analysis performed for the proposed project recommended noise abatement measures to reduce the noise levels for adjacent residential properties. A proposed noise wall, approximately 14 feet in height along the right of way line from Delga Street to south of Greenfield Avenue would provide at least a 5 dBA reduction for adjacent residences. The noise barrier would have openings to provide access to local cross streets from the southbound frontage road.

With right of way acquisition for the expansion of IH 35W, five single-family homes would be displaced. Residential vacant lots are available in the neighborhood for homeowners that would like to re-locate within the neighborhood. Property owners are compensated for right of way acquired based on the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Act of 1970. In addition to fair market value, the owner would be eligible for relocation assistance for moving of personal property and the contents of the residence. In addition to moving of personal property, the owner may be entitled to a housing supplement if occupied by the owner. If the residence is occupied by a tenant, they could be entitled to a rent supplement as well as moving of personal property.

- (7) Early in project development, proposed direct exit ramps to Sylvania Avenue from IH 35W northbound, US 287 northbound and Spur 280 were shown on the October 2006 public meeting display. Evaluation for inclusion of these ramps into the IH 35W preliminary design determined

additional right of way impacts to adjacent property and additional bridge structures over the West Fork Trinity River would be required. The preliminary design of these ramps also resulted in three lanes converging together approximately 300 feet west of Sylvania Avenue.

The proximity of the ramp lanes converging at Sylvania Avenue would create traffic operation and safety concerns with the function of the Sylvania Avenue/frontage road intersection. Based on traffic operations and safety concerns, costs to construct additional bridge structures over the West Fork Trinity River, and acquisition of additional right of way, inclusion of these ramps in the IH 35W schematic was not considered reasonable or practical.

Alternatives to provide viable direct access to 4th Street from IH 35W northbound were found to not be feasible to incorporate into the IH 35W schematic due to the proximity of 4th Street to the Trinity Railway Express (TRE) railroad and the Spur 280 interchange. Currently, no direct access movement to 4th Street from IH 35W is available through the existing roadway system.

Proposed layouts from 2007 and 2010 public meetings and the June 2012 public hearing display did not show direct access to and from Sylvania Avenue with SH 121 in the eastbound direction since no viable method was determined without creating additional proposed right of way impacts or without costly bridge structures crossing the West Fork Trinity River. Access ramps from Weatherford Street to Belknap Street and SH 121 are provided in this location in the eastbound direction. Indirect access for Sylvania Avenue from SH 121 in the eastbound direction would be available through the next interchange with Riverside Drive approximately ½ mile east of Sylvania Avenue.

- (8) The preliminary design presented at the June 12, 2012 public hearing was determined to have the least impact on both the Oakhurst neighborhood and the Chesapeake Mercado gas wells while meeting the project's need and purpose. The November 16, 2010 public meeting displays indicated the proposed roadways directly over the active gas well heads and significantly increased the cost of the project. The increase in cost for ROW acquisition potentially made the project financially not reasonable and feasible resulting in further delays in providing safety and mobility improvements along the IH 35W corridor. Therefore, the roadways were compressed and shifted away from the well heads to minimize impacts and decrease the total project cost. ROW would still be acquired from Chesapeake's property, but the gas well heads would not be directly impacted by the proposed roadways. No ROW is required from the Oakhurst neighborhood, Calvary Christian Academy or Calvary Cathedral International. ROW would only be acquired on the west side of the highway in this area.*
- (9) The proposed northbound frontage road is two lanes wide adjacent to Calvary Christian Academy and Calvary Cathedral International. Two auxiliary lanes are introduced north of the church to accommodate a two lane exit ramp to SH 183/NE 28th Street from northbound IH 35W to access SH 183. The auxiliary lanes are necessary to maintain safe traffic operations along the proposed northbound IH 35W general purpose lanes and frontage road.*

The addition of general purpose lanes (non-toll), managed lanes (toll) and frontage roads along the corridor would add capacity; improve mobility and air quality along the IH 35W corridor. The proposed improvements to IH 35W are consistent with the areas MTP Mobility 2035 including the addition of frontage roads. The proposed northbound frontage road is needed to provide access from Northside Drive/Yucca Avenue to IH 35W or SH 183/NE 28th Street. Additionally, the frontage road would provide access for vehicles in the event IH 35W is closed for traffic incidents or other emergencies. Currently no frontage road exists between Northside Drive/Yucca Avenue and SH 183/NE 28th Street. When traffic incidents along IH 35W reduce the number of lanes available to

traffic or close the facility, vehicles are forced to exit to Northside Drive/Yucca Avenue and seek alternative routes along local city streets to bypass the incident. At this time, the proposed frontage road is expected to be constructed between the years of 2020 to 2030.

- (10) In TxDOT's September 8, 2011 Stakeholder Meeting with the ONA several members requested measures to reduce light from the roadway into the neighborhood. TxDOT made a commitment to ONA members in the audience no high mast illumination would be proposed for IH 35W near the Oakhurst Neighborhood. Only lighting along entrance and exit ramps for safety would be provided.

In recognition of ONA's ongoing concern to quality of life related to lighting along the IH 35W corridor, the following design commitments in the vicinity of the Oakhurst neighborhood would be memorialized in the facility agreement to establish formal constraints for the final detailed design to not use high mast illumination systems to comply with safety lighting standards and the lighting design to comply with Texas Health and Safety Code Title 5, Subtitle F, Chapter 425. The referenced code addresses appropriate use of cutoff luminaires i.e. "dark sky" lighting for state funded outdoor lighting.

- (11) TxDOT historians assessed the setting of the Oakhurst Historic District because Oakhurst Neighborhood Association and State Historical Preservation Officer (SHPO) of the Texas Historical Commission raised concerns about impacts the project might have to views from inside the historic district looking out. SHPO concurred with TxDOT historians' finding of no adverse visual effects on April 27, 2012. Also the National Register Bulletin, quoted on page 3 of TxDOT's letter to SHPO of April 3, 2012, stated that "setting" also includes the surroundings.

TxDOT complied with all regulations assessing direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to the Oakhurst Historic District. SHPO concurred with TxDOT historians' methodology and findings for all affects other than noise on April 27, 2012. SHPO accepted the mitigation TxDOT offered to resolve the adverse effect for increased noise levels - requiring the use of a registered landscape architect to develop the highway's landscaping. Oakhurst Neighborhood Association would be given the opportunity for involvement with the development of the landscaping plan and the overall project aesthetic plan. Probable home owner actions were considered as part of the coordination process with SHPO.

The original marketing for the neighborhood focused on the rural, country setting as one of the selling points. As demonstrated to SHPO's satisfaction in the consultation letter, the notion that bucolic, isolated setting survived to current day is not true due to historic development patterns in the general area, the existence of the active railroad line and historic highway alignments and the upgrade to interstate in the 1960s. The international multilane highway was constructed beginning in 1963. The proposed expanded facility has long been in planning. All mentioned aspects were covered in the consultation and subsequent mitigation agreement arrived at by consensus with SHPO.

- (12) TxDOT performed a noise analysis and because the Oakhurst neighborhood and Calvary Christian Academy would be impacted by traffic noise, mitigation measures consisting of traffic management, alteration of horizontal and/or vertical alignments, buffer zones and noise barriers were evaluated. None of these FHWA approved abatement measures were found to be reasonable and feasible.

Porous/permeable friction course (PFC) pavements have been shown to reduce noise levels by reducing the level of sound generated at the tire-pavement surface. FHWA regulations identify allowable noise abatement measures using federal funds. The use of porous pavement is not currently an approved noise abatement measure. TxDOT's Guidelines for Analysis and Abatement

of Roadway Traffic Noise also do not identify the use of porous pavement as a noise abatement measure. TxDOT would continue to evaluate the use of PFC effectiveness throughout the project life and implement this practice in the future if it becomes a reasonable solution.

The Oakhurst Neighborhood Association shared information concerning the impact that freeway noise could have on the economic value of houses in the western most part of the Oakhurst Historic District with TxDOT and with SHPO. In its April 27, 2012 letter, SHPO noted the neighborhood concerns on this point and concluded the predicted noise levels would have an adverse effect on the integrity of the Oakhurst Historic District. After reviewing multiple alternatives to mitigate the noise impacts, SHPO noted that none would be cost effective under the 2011 guidelines. SHPO accepted TxDOT alternative measures to resolve the adverse effect.

- (13) Based on noise analyses performed in accordance with TxDOT's Guidelines for Analysis and Abatement of Roadway Traffic Noise, a noise wall is not reasonable for the Oakhurst neighborhood. Because Oakhurst is located on top of a hill, a barrier of height necessary to achieve the required sound reductions is not cost effective to construct as not enough receivers would benefit from the wall. Standards identified in the TxDOT RDM and the AASHTO Roadway Design Manual would be followed when designing the roadways and safety appurtenances adjacent the Calvary Christian Academy and Calvary Cathedral International. The placement of safety measures including curb and gutter would be provided along the low speed frontage roads just north of near Yucca Street. Concrete traffic barriers and railings have been identified along the high speed roadway components including ramps and main lanes.*
- (14) The detailed traffic control plan/sequence of work for the reconstruction of IH 35W has not been developed at this time. Access to and from Calvary Cathedral International and Calvary Christian Academy would be maintained at all times. TxDOT would also work to develop a traffic control plan and sequence of work to minimize impacts to church and school activities to the best extent possible. Temporary closures during the day for construction activities may be required and most likely would occur during the evening hours and other non-peak periods to minimize the impact to the church and academy.*
- (15) The proposed type of concrete safety rail to be included along the outside shoulder of the IH 35W general purpose lanes adjacent to Calvary Cathedral International and Calvary Christian Academy, and to separate the managed lanes from the general purpose lanes in both directions is 3 feet tall. Based on additional design visualizations to depict views from a vehicle located along northbound IH 35W at Northside Drive/Yucca Avenue and along southbound IH 35W located at the north end of the church property using an average eye height of 3.5 feet above the ground, it appears the churches sign and marque board would still be visible to vehicles traveling in both directions along IH 35W.*
- (16) After the public meeting held on November 16, 2010, TxDOT received a letter from Chesapeake Energy Corporation expressing concerns with the severe impacts on the Mercado gas well site based on the proposed IH 35W improvements presented at the public meeting. After receipt of the November 16, 2010 letter, TxDOT began working with our procurement consultants and Chesapeake Energy Corporation to develop design alternatives for IH 35W to lessen impacts on the Mercado gas well site.*

The proposed improvements in the vicinity of the Mercado gas well site presented at the public hearing were based on these design alternatives, with revisions for access locations necessitating a larger ROW footprint. This alternative was developed to ensure all existing and future gas well heads would be outside the limits of the proposed right of way necessary for the expansion of IH

35W. This preliminary design represents the most compact horizontal alignments possible meeting the design guidelines contained in TxDOT's RDM, while not requiring additional right of way to be purchased along the east side of IH 35W adjacent to Calvary Cathedral International, Calvary Christen Academy, and the Oakhurst neighborhood.

(17) Aesthetic and landscape plans would be developed for the IH 35W corridor with input from TxDOT, the City of Fort Worth, local stakeholders and the Developer. The aesthetic and landscape plans developed would most likely be similar to the plan currently under final negotiations with the local cities along the North Tarrant Express (NTE) corridor to ensure uniformity in the region and may include items listed above. The preliminary NTE aesthetic plans include treatments for bridges and retaining walls, and landscaping within the NTE ROW. Please use the following web address to view proposed noise wall treatments to be used on the NTE: www.northtarrantexpress.com/PhotoGallery.asp?ID=14

(18) TxDOT is committed to incorporating favorable design features at the IH 35W and SH 121 Trinity River and Trinity Trail crossings. During construction, measures would be included to ensure the protection of existing trail amenities located along the Trinity Trail. Amenities located adjacent to the existing access trail connection from Delga Park or the Trinity Trail requiring relocation or replacement due to construction of the IH 35W and SH 121 bridges over the West Fork Trinity River would be the responsibility of TxDOT. In the event a detour is necessary to provide access to the Trinity Trail during construction, the detour constructed would provide a hard weatherproof surface and safe access to the Trinity Trail.

The Trinity Trail would remain open during TRWD's normal operating hours between 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. Occasionally factors beyond the control of TxDOT may occur during the placement of bridge beams requiring additional time to complete. To ensure the safety and mobility of vehicles along the corridor and construction personnel, beam placement may be required to extend into hours the Trinity Trail is open for public use. In the event the Trinity Trail would need to be temporarily closed due to construction activities, TxDOT would coordinate with TRWD to provide information on when the Trinity Trail would re-open. To minimize impacts and inconvenience to trail users and maintain trail access, TxDOT has committed to construct the realigned access trail connection to Delga Park prior to closing and removing the existing section of access trail.

Lighting the underside of the proposed IH 35W and SH 121 bridge structures over the West Fork of Trinity River along the Trinity Trail to ensure the safety of pedestrians and bicyclist would be provided. The design and construction of proposed IH 35W bridge structures over the West Fork Trinity River would not preclude future expansion of a 12 foot wide trail along the north bank of the river.

Open bridge railings would be incorporated into the design of the IH 35W and SH 121 main lane and frontage road bridge structures over the West Fork Trinity River. To help minimize the overall cost for the project, the open bridge rail would be used on the frontage road bridge structures and only along the outside of the IH 35W and SH 121 bridge structures over the river. TxDOT would ensure appropriate signage to indicate drivers are passing over the West Fork Trinity River would be placed during the construction of the facility. Continuity of typical landscaping at the bridge crossings to match the exiting condition during the time frame of detailed design and construction would be provided. TxDOT would ensure efforts are made to locate bridge piers to not limit use, safety or line of sight for bicyclist and pedestrians. Aesthetic treatments would be coordinated with local stakeholders and TRWD.

(19) *All reasonable options to limit the elevation of the roadway in the vicinity of the Oakhurst neighborhood were considered. It is not prudent to reduce the overall height of the proposed design near Oakhurst between Northside Drive/Yucca Avenue and Watauga Road because of geometric constraints, local topography, traffic mix, and safety standards.*

The basic geometric constraints near the Oakhurst neighborhood require the roadways cross over the railroad to the north and Northside Drive/West Fork Trinity River to the south. It is not feasible for the roadway to go under these features. Since the proposed design includes additional lanes and an overall wider roadway and considering that cross slopes from the centerline would need to go down at 2.5%, the elevation of the roadway at the railroad must be higher than the existing roadway at the same location to provide minimum vertical clearance over the railroad and Northside Drive/Yucca Avenue bridge structures. The change in elevation of the proposed managed/main lane roadways over the railroad just north of the neighborhood varies from 4 to 9 feet and an increase of approximately 11 feet in elevation is proposed at Northside Drive/Yucca.

Local topography creates both a difference in elevation, and a fairly steep existing grade of 4%, between these crossings. The proposed maximum grade for the managed/main lanes near Oakhurst neighborhood is 3%. This resulted in the proposed roadway being flatter than the existing roadway and prevents the proposed roadway from being lowered (or dipping down) near existing elevations in the location of the Oakhurst neighborhood. The grade bottoms out adjacent the south end of Calvary Cathedral International where there is approximately 21' difference between the elevations of the existing and proposed roadways.

This particular section of IH-35W also has a fairly high percentage of truck traffic. Since trucks respond to grades differently than passenger cars (i.e. slower up hills, faster down hills) the two types of vehicles can develop speed differences that are undesirable for safety reasons. Speed differences on the existing 4% grade are expected to approximate an undesirable 11 mph. TxDOT's RDM has grade standards among other things, tied to roadway design speed. The RDM calls for a grade of no more than 3% given the 70 mph design speed proposed for IH-35W at Oakhurst. As a result of these and other considerations, the current low point between the railroad and Northside Drive crossings has to be raised to yield the 3% grade required for a much safer truck/car speed differentials of about 5 mph.

Recommendation: After review of the comments received during the public involvement phase, TxDOT will continue to work with the local municipalities and property owners during the design and construction phases of the project. All comments have been satisfactorily addressed and the project is recommended for approval as a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).