Q & A

VIRTUAL PUBLIC MEETING

Fondren Road Paving and Drainage: From Braeswood to Creekbend and Creekbend to W. Airport

Project Number: N-100008-0001-3 & N-100021-0001-3

The questions and answers page is a summary of all the questions and comments from the Stakeholder meeting held on October 6, 2020 and that were emailed to us about the Fondren Paving and Drainage project. We have organized the Q&A into 7 categories for easy review.

Construction & Impact

Questions	**Answers**
Will traffic be completely closed off at any point?	Traffic Control during construction of Fondren Road will provide for through traffic on Fondren during construction as well as access to businesses during construction. Any access closure will be coordinated 48 hour prior with the contractor during construction.
One of the issues of concern is emergency vehicle access into and out of the neighborhood. The Fondren bridge being temporarily closed will be dangerous enough when it comes to major emergency room access. If it is closed concurrently with sections of Fondren RD south of it, emergency response time/access to Memorial Hermann ER will be dramatically increased. Harris County Flood Control District did not consider this issue initially along the Bayou involving the bridges to be rebuilt and had to revise construction plans to comply with public safety requirements.	As part of this project the Fondren bridge just north of Braeswood will not be closed to vehicular traffic. Two way traffic will be maintained throughout construction of this project. The traffic control plan will be reviewed and approved by City's Traffic Operations. At this time we do not have a schedule for HCFCD and when we do we will coordinate with them.
Our property has several ingress and egress with access our parking lots. How will this effect access to our property and for how long?	A detailed access management analysis was performed within the project limits. We reviewed each median opening, driveway locations to see whether they meet the current city of Houston standards. Also we looked into current crash patterns along the corridor to identify potential crash hotspots. We also made sure that they have alternate routes to exit properties.
What consideration was given to ingress and egress of commercial properties?	A detailed access management analysis was performed within the project limits. We reviewed each median opening, driveway locations to see whether they meet the current city of Houston standards. Also we looked into current crash patterns along the corridor to identify potential crash hotspots. We also made sure that they have alternate routes to exit properties.
As business owners, are there any considerations to accommodate the financial impacts of this two year disruption to businesses along the Fondren corridor? In short, what other life-line options will be available to business owners during this construction period? example COH compensation- grant/tax breaks etc. Please elaborate.	A detailed access management analysis was performed within the project limits. We reviewed each median opening, driveway locations to see whether they meet the current city of Houston standards. Also we looked into current crash patterns along the corridor to identify potential crash hotspots. We also made sure that they have alternate routes to exit properties.
Drivers will use Sandpiper to avoid the construction. HPD is not responsive to calls about Sandpiper and told me to move.	If the resident has an issue with the speeding on Sandpiper please call HPD and put in an alert slip. We can also get the speed trailer out there for that project. Once Fondren Rd. is completed we can have HPD patrol out on the road.
I am concerned about increased cut through traffic on Sandpiper Drive. This is a residential area with little or no enforcement of speed limit. What can I do to make sure the neighborhood stays safe? Will there be any enforcement of the speed limit or am I on my own here?	If the resident has an issue with the speeding on Sandpiper please call HPD and put in an alert slip. We can also get the speed trailer out there for that project. Once Fondren Rd. is completed we can have HPD patrol out on the road.
Any idea in what month this project may start?	Once the project is awarded we will have that contractor on board and we will come back and give the community preconstruction engagement meeting and we will have a phasing plan that will entail the start and stop timeline.
Will this project coincide with Harris County Flood Control replacement of the Brays Bayou bridge replacement on the north end of the project? I asked the question because the bridge replacement, if combined with road construction, will cause potential transportation blockages including access to the area by emergency vehicles to and from Memorial Hermann SW. It is important to take all this into consideration when planning construction.	As part of this project the Fondren bridge just north of Braeswood will not be closed to vehicular traffic. Two way traffic will be maintained throughout construction of this project. The traffic control plan will be reviewed and approved by City's Traffic Operations. At this time we do not have a schedule for HCFCD and when we do we will coordinate with them.
How will this affect the building where I work?	All businesses will still be able to conduct business as usual.

Drainage	
Question	**Answer**
With the proposed enlarged drainage where will the water go ? I understand that the culverts underneath are for water conveyance and storage but the smaller ones are not good enough, in my opinion. If I understood they are discussing 2 lines of culverts which is not a sure thing. They should be discussing putting 4 lines the entire length. We already know that Brays Bayou will not be allowed to take more water by HCFCD.	Fondren Road's drainage design study is being reviewed by TxDOT's Drainage Engineers and after their review completion will be forwarded to HCFCD for their review and concurrence. The underground conveyance system will provide inline detention that will mitigate the added impervious area plus help relieve some of the flooding on Fondren. There will be no adverse impact to Brays Bayou.
Can you give us the actual number of the drainage conveyances? D-140?	A copy of the draft drainage report will be uploaded to the website when available for your reference.
How much additional capacity is being added?	The current design will make the system better than the existing. The existing drainage system has been enlarged to take care of the additional imperviousness and that there are no impact to the HCFCD channels. The proposed drainage will not negatively impact the existing drainage condition in that area.
What is current size and proposed size of drainage under the street?	The current size ranges from 24 inches in diameter storm sewer piper to as large as 60 inches. We are going to be removing and replacing a majority of that existing system and replacing it in many cases, upsizing and increasing, 24 inches diameter to a 6x6 ft. in diameter.
Where is the new detention associated for the project, since adding more inflow to channel?	A detailed drainage analysis was performed to ensure the new pavement will not have any adverse flood impact. Increase in the flow is mitigated by providing oversized underground pipes (inline detention).
If I am not mistaking, this area is lower than the Brays Bayou in term of ground level. If Brays Bayou is full, the water in the area has no place to go, but flood homes. Right?	In some areas the Fondren street level are close to the Brays Bayou top of bank elevation. Nevertheless, Brays Bayou improvements by the Harris County Flood Control District (HCFCD) are ongoing and will address regional drainage capacities.
Is the rain water drained to Brays Bayou? If the conveyance capacity of Brays Bayou is not increased dramatically, the rain water will not be drained away effectively. It could be even worse, water will flow to the neighborhood through the drainage box culvert from Brays Bayou. Am I right?	The existing drainage system has been enlarged to take care of the additional imperviousness and that there are no impact to the HCFCD channels. The proposed drainage will not negatively impact the existing drainage condition in that area.
What studies were done to confirm that the loss of green space in the esplanades and replacement by concrete will not create more flooding in the community, especially because the new pipes will get the increased storm water runoff from the added concrete will get to Brays Bayou even faster?	The existing drainage system has been enlarged to take care of the additional imperviousness and that there are no impact to the HCFCD channels. The proposed drainage will not negatively impact the existing drainage condition in that area.

Median Closure(s)	
Question	**Answer**
Currently there are 3 east/west median openings in this portion of the road. The City has reduced it to only 1 east/west median. Why? There should be no less than 2 median openings from Dumfries to Willowbend at locations that do not create unnecessary dangerous U-turns. Why can this not be done?	An Access Management Study report has been completed and reviewed by Traffic Drainage Operations (TDO). The design meets the minimum geometric requirements of the Infrastructure Design Manual and provides the best design for mobility and safety.
How will left-turns be handled? This area has multiple apartments, strip centers, private schools with lots of in/out that is already difficult to navigate today.	In addition to the Access Management Study report, the design team also did some traffic analysis review ,along this corridor within the project limits where we reviewed each median opening, driveway locations to confirm whether they meet the current City of Houston standards. We also compared it to the current accident patterns along the corridor. Please see the proposed median exhibit for details.
Where are the cut throughs and is anyone looking at the impact to Westbury Christian school and sports fields?	Westbury Christian Athletic Complex has three existing driveway approaches from Fondren Road. All three would still be accessible for south bound traffic. Two would be accessible for north bound traffic, the approach at the south end of the property and the approach to the north across from Dumfries. Both northbound approaches will have a dedicated Left-Turn Lane. See the proposed median exhibit.
Taking away one left turn lane as proposed in your plan to enter Southwest Village Shopping Center from both sides will impede access to the Shopping Center. How do intend to address this major concern? •New left turn will not align with our current driveways and as a result patrons will not have better access right to the businesses.	In addition to the Access Management Study report, the design team also did some traffic analysis review ,along this corridor within the project limits where we reviewed each median opening, driveway locations to confirm whether they meet the current City of Houston standards. We also compared it to the current accident patterns along the corridor. Please see the proposed median exhibit for details.
How were median cuts (passthroughs) determined? Is there an opportunity to revise some of the median cuts to accommodate the property owners along Fondren?	A detailed Access Management Study report, the design team also did some traffic analysis review ,along this corridor within the project limits where we reviewed each median opening, driveway locations to confirm whether they meet the current City of Houston standards. We also compared it to the current accident patterns along the corridor. Please see the proposed median exhibit for details.
Pertaining from Willowbend and Sandford the modification does not consider the existing businesses and what it will cause regarding hundreds to over 1,000 added U-turns a day. Are 2 turns instead of 1 an option? If not why?	An Access Management Study report has been completed and reviewed by Traffic Drainage Operations (TDO). The design meets the minimum geometric requirements of the Infrastructure Design Manual and provides the best design for mobility and safety.
The current plan adds an incredible U-turn volume southbound at Willowbend for residents at Braeswood Oaks Apartments. The 2 street lights within 100 feet of each other reflects the challenge this intersection presents. Adding hundreds of cars U-turning during peak times to the most congested intersection on Fondren cannot be a good idea. Can this be addressed and revised?	An Access Management Study report has been completed and reviewed by Traffic Drainage Operations (TDO). The design meets the minimum geometric requirements of the Infrastructure Design Manual and provides the best design for mobility and safety.

Explanades/Landscapes	
Question	**Answer**
The big issue at hand is the trees in the esplanades. If there was a plan to save some of the trees, the biggest ones, oldest ones, it would be best. But if there was a plan to replace them, that would be better.	The City has retained consultants to propose the best tree mitigation plan considering the limited right of way that is available. The Design Team's tree mitigation plan has been reviewed by the City of Houston's Parks Department for compliance with the tree ordinance.
Will the expansion to six lanes come out of the current esplanade? Or will it change the approach to each drive off of Fondren Rd?	It will come from the esplanade.
Can 6" trees be put in as replacements for the very mature trees that are proposed to be removed, 50 of which are over 12" caliper trees?	The Design Team's landscape arborist is analyzing planting 6-inch trees in lieu of smaller sized trees. It should be noted that survivability of planting larger caliper trees is lower than say for example 4-inch trees.
For the removal of existing trees in the esplanades of the southern segment, where will the shortage and mitigation of 263 caliper inches required by City standards be accommodated in the design?	The Design team's arborist is analyzing ways to make up some of the shortage of removed tree caliper inches. Future design will be shared with BOMD.
If the esplanade irrigation systems are to be removed, can the backflow meters be preserved or replaced, and can sleeves be placed under the street connecting the new esplanades so future planting beds and corresponding irrigation systems can be installed and connected to the water meters?	The City's Design Team is open to coordination efforts with BOMD, to providing sleeves and connection leave-outs from the new waterline, for future irrigation systems.
The Brays Oaks Management District is preparing a Streetscape Master Plan for the District. Can improvements that will be proposed in the Master Plan for major intersections (S. Braeswood, W. Bellfort and W. Airport) be able to be accommodated in the current design?	It can but it should be noted that a Cooperative Developer Agreement (CDA) should be executed to define the duties of the City and those of the management district. The CDA would protect both parties, and also define funding sources.
Will the Brays Oaks Management District be reimbursed for the elimination of =/- 10,000 sf of planting beds and corresponding irrigation systems in adopted esplanades that the District has been maintaining since 2005?	No, the City cannot reimburse for private improvements done within the City's Right of Way.
On adopted esplanades will the adopter still be responsible for them?	Yes, but please get clarification through the Parks Department.
How much of the esplanade will remain. what is the remaining width of the esplanade in other words	A 15-ft wide esplanade will typically remain.
•100 very mature trees (half are 12” caliper or greater in size) are being removed in both the northern and southern segments to accommodate the location of new underground drainage culverts under the new esplanades. The southern segment from Creekbend to W. Airport has a mitigation deficiency of 263 caliper inches that are not being replaced when 614 caliper inches should be required by COH standards. •21 esplanades that the BOMD has adopted and been maintaining in various adoption phases since the inception of the District are being removed or seriously reduced in width.	The Design team's arborist is analyzing ways to make up some of the shortage of removed tree caliper inches. Future design will be shared with BOMD.
•12 planting beds (+/- 10,000 sf) and corresponding irrigation systems (both maintained by the BOMD) are being removed and not being replaced. Our landscape maintenance contractor estimates that these would cost over $250,000 to replace. •The BOMD is working on a Streetscape Master Plan for the District, and would like to opportunity to provide input on the key intersections on Fondren (@Braeswood, W. Bellfort and W. Airport) for future improvements, or at least have accommodations made in the design for future improvements.	The City's Design Team is open for coordination efforts with BOMD, providing sleeves for future irrigation system and connections to the new waterline.

Previous Studies	
Question	**Answer**
6 lanes needs 33,000 vehicles the numbers in 2035 are projected at 34,402. less than a 4% delta. Were more updated numbers counted?	Traffic studies completed in the Pre Engineering (Year 2013) indicate that the volume of traffic projections on Fondren will increase to where 4 lanes will no longer be able to support future growth. While the anticipated Average Daily Traffic (ADT) would be only marginal for six lanes in 15 years, it must be noted that our concrete roadway section is designed for 50-years. Anticipated use of the Fondren Roadway will certainly outgrow 4-lanes.
What is the 33,000 vehicle needing 6 lanes timeframe based on?	Traffic studies completed in the Pre Engineering (Year 2013) indicate that the volume of traffic projections on Fondren will increase to where 4 lanes will no longer be able to support future growth. While the anticipated Average Daily Traffic (ADT) would be only marginal for six lanes in 15 years, it must be noted that our concrete roadway section is designed for 50-years. Anticipated use of the Fondren Roadway will certainly outgrow 4-lanes.
Who initiated the process of deciding that Fondren Road needed to be expanded to 6 lanes? And when was this process initiated?	Fondren Road is classified as a 6 lane, major thoroughfare within a 100 foot right of way on the City's Major Thoroughfare and Freeway Plan (MTFP). Fondren was studied by the City's Planning Group, along with other projects, for infrastructure improvements based on its low scoring of pavement, traffic projections, drainage and utilities. Recommendations through the Planning Group was compiled in a Pre Engineering Report.
Your data is 9 years old and a school sports complex has been added since then.	With the Major Thoroughfare and Freeway Plan (MTFP), Fondren was studied by the City's Planning Group, along with other projects, for infrastructure improvements based on its low scoring of pavement, future traffic projections, drainage and utilities. Recommendations through the Planning Group was compiled in a Pre Engineering Report.
This area is more than 90% developed. I dispute that traffic will increase so much. The data presented indicates that 4 lanes is sufficient for the existing and future anticipated traffic - for the section that is currently 4 lanes.	With the Major Thoroughfare and Freeway Plan (MTFP), Fondren was studied by the City's Planning Group, along with other projects, for infrastructure improvements based on its low scoring of pavement, future traffic projections, drainage and utilities. Recommendations through the Planning Group was compiled in a Pre Engineering Report.

Sidewalks and Pedestrians	
Question	**Answer**
How is the project an increased pedestrian safety when their seems to be no buffer between the outer most lane and the 6' sidewalk.	In areas that there is no buffer is due to the lack of right of way. In order to increase the safety we have increased the width of the sidewalk from 5 ft to 6 ft. The existing sidewalk is currently 4 feet wide. As a whole, the wider sidewalk and a 12 feet outside lane will provide a safer environment for Fondren Road.
There are fences along much of this area from apartments, houses of worship, etc. Will the sidewalk expansion affect them?	No, we designed around the existing structure to prevent relocations.
The W Bellfort/Fondren intersection is one of the most dangerous in Houston for pedestrian deaths. How is this being improved for pedestrians per Vision Zero?	All the new traffic signals will be upgraded and will be timed accordingly to provide additional safety for the pedestrians. Per the City's requirements, all the signalized intersections will pedestrian push buttons, timers, audibles, ramps, landing area and wider crosswalks.
It is already difficult to cross Fondren on foot, bike or car. What is going to be done to facilitate crossing Fondren?	For safety, crossing a busy major thoroughfare should always be done at signalized intersections. All the new traffic signals will be upgraded and will be timed accordingly to provide additional safety for the pedestrians. Per the City's requirements, all the signalized intersections will pedestrian push buttons, timers, audibles, ramps, landing area and wider crosswalks.
What is the process to add a bike lane to the design in addition to the 6' sidewalk? I Cycle this route daily.	Fondren was not identified as part of the Houston bikeway plan and connectivity.
Can the median width be reduced to get better sidewalk widths and buffers as needed	The infrastructure design manual calls for a 15 ft. minimum face-to-face median width.

Streets	
Question	**Answer**
Are the traffic lights going to be timed? More concrete is not the only solution. What is the 33,000 vehicle needing 6 lanes timeframe based on? Your slide shows numbers of autos but, not how long…	Traffic studies completed in the Pre Engineering (Year 2013) indicate that the volume of traffic projections on Fondren will increase to where 4 lanes will no longer be able to support future growth. While the anticipated Average Daily Traffic (ADT) would be only marginal for six lanes in 15 years, it must be noted that our concrete roadway section is designed for 50-years. Anticipated use of the Fondren Roadway will certainly outgrow 4-lanes. The traffic lights will be timed according to the City's infrastructure guidelines.
What consideration was given to the added U turns that will now be required and volume being forced southbound at Willowbend for residents at Braeswood Oaks which is already congested?	An Access Management Study report has been completed and reviewed by Traffic Drainage Operations (TDO). Consideration was given to providing a safer traffic pattern for southbound traffic accessing the Braeswood Oaks Apartment. Safety is our top priority. This design meets the minimum geometric requirements of the Infrastrucrure Design Manual and provides an optimal balance bewteen mobility and safety. For the Braeswood Oaks Apartment, both driveways accessed by the residents from the South Bound lanes must do so via U-Turns in the existing condition. This will remain the case in the proposed condition. The exisintg median opening in front of the leasing office will be closed in proposed condition, however the signalized intersection at Willowbend will provide a safer access.
What will be the speed limit? Currently, speeding is an issue. The narrow 11-foot lanes are narrow. Have you looked at the accident-statistics for the current configuration?	The design considered accident statistics of the current conditions. The posted speed limit out there today will remain, which is 35 mph. To request a evaluation of the speed please contact the City of Houston's Transportation and Drainage Operations.
Why is there no proposed light at Dumfries	The Dumfries intersection does not warrant a traffic signal, based on the findings from the 2016 Traffic Signal Warrant Study.
Will there be an improvement at Braeswood when the lanes shrink back to 4? currently, traffic backs up there pretty bad	The proposed configuration includes the ability to carry 3 lanes through the Braeswood intersection Northbound. In the interm it will be striped to accomodate 2-lanes traveling Northbound. The proposed configuartion will include dual Left-Turn Lanes on to Westbound Braeswood Blvd which will help reduce delays. In the ultimate configuration the segment north of this project will be upgraded to 3-lanes Northbound per the City's Major Thoroughfare Plan.
Is the bus lane exclusively for buses or will cars be allowed to these lanes?	Yes, cars will be allowed to use them. The lanes are not dedicated bus lanes.