

**Q & A**

**VIRTUAL PUBLIC MEETING**

**GARDEN OAKS AND SHEPHERD PARK (EAST) DRAINAGE AND PAVING**

**PROJECT NO. M-410022-0001**

Q: Did the consultant consider adding on-street parking in place of landscaping between the sidewalk and back of curb? There are several town homes along Wakefield and the street parking is utilized frequently.

**A: Parking is allowed by default on residential streets meeting the 26-ft standard. The new cross sections should substantially increase the amount of parking available to the neighborhood. Thank you for the question!**

Q: What will the buffer protecting the bike lane look like?

**A: We are determining some of the bike lane features in the design. Right now, what we are mainly using are the rubber armadillos like the ones seen in downtown on Lamar St. We are looking at a physical buffer so that you have some kind of physical protection from vehicles.**

Q: Why are no splitter islands proposed along 41st? Splitter islands are important to force traffic entering the roundabout to reduce speed.

**A: This is a preliminary schematic to help describe the concept to the public. We will refine the design throughout the design process. Traffic volumes and speeds may be low enough that we may not need a fully standard roundabout to achieve safety and mobility goals. That said we would not compromise on safety. Thank you for the comment!**

Q: What do “buffers” mean along the new bike lanes on 43rd street? Concrete bumps?

**A: The specifics of the bike lanes will be worked out in the design. The current standard bike lane separation consists of the rubber "armadillos" separators that are used on Lamar in downtown (and several other existing bike lanes). But we will look for the safest option available that we can maintain.**

Q: Will this proposed project include sidewalks? As a resident for almost 15 years through numerous storms I have been very happy without ditches. It is my understanding that sidewalks would possibly take the place of ditches.

**A: Yes, there will be sidewalks or walkable places in transit-oriented development ordinance is now in place the project will be designed with sidewalks on both sides. There was a request from the civic club president about not having a sidewalk on the other side of the school. Our project team did reach out to transportation and drainage at that time, but we were asked to put on hold because we were not going to construction right away. The ordinance was not working at the time. Now since that has been approved and planning and development is working on drafting the standard operating procedure so once that procedure is developed we will go back to input the memo that was requested before and will evaluate on that.**

Q: When will full plans be available?

**A: We expect to have the full design plans by summer of 2023.**

Q: Will additional easements/land be needed to create the roundabout? Or can roundabout be created on the existing roadway area?

**A: The roundabout is completely within the existing street right-of-way.**

Q: Approximately how much lower elevation is expected on Sue Barnett?

**A: Most of the area on the north side of Sue Barnett is roadside ditch and we do expect to get it lower. I do not think we will be able to say how much we will be able to lower at this time. I do not expect it to be significantly lower than the road.**

Q: Some resident's use parking on 43rd (as well as lawn crews). Will there be room for that?

**A: Typically, we do not like to encourage parking on the street. In any case we may not restrict it. We do not consider that to the safest place to park. In the cross section with the bike lanes there will be no parking.**

Q: Would all 43rd between Ella and Shepherd be changed to 3 lanes?

**A: We have not determined that yet. I think in future conversation we will determine what the cross sections need to be west of this project.**

Q: Is a pedestrian crossing light / signal anticipated at intersection of Sue Barnett and W 43rd?

**A: To satisfy the need for any kind of signal we have to meet certain state warrants, but we have not been able to meet that. These cross sections of three lanes we will be making it so much safer slowing down traffic and make it more of a neighborhood street.**

Q: If design is not going to be completed until 2023, what is the ability to clear the existing drainage lines? There must be a lot of junk in those lines over the last 40 years.

**A: There has been a central project done and we are going to do the west project so doing this project a lot of pressures from the east project will be relieved.**

Q: Can you please clarify if the city will be planning to take additional easement from property owners along these streets?

**A: We are planning to have a total of six sidewalk easements on the west side of the intersection of Sue Barnett and 43rd. It is a narrow easement to accommodate the sidewalk.**

Q: Will the work within the Shepherd Park Plaza neighborhood impact streets only or backyards too?

**A: We anticipate having only on the streets within the right of way.**

Q: Can you explain more about the no left turn on Sue Barnett and 43rd?

**A: We think that is one that will make the neighborhood safer. It's about accessibility and ease versus comfort and safety and I want to bring the right project to all. We do have flexibility. The current proposal is a full median.**

Q: Why do you need a drop off lane on Sue Barnett with the very large double circle drive at the school?

**A: That cross section was developed after consultation with the school. There are a lot of people that drop their kids and there is not adequate capacity. We presented different options and discussed them with the school and neighborhoods.**

Q: Will homes on 43rd street between Sue Barnett and Alba lose any property square footage with the expanded street and sidewalk footprint?

**A: No, we only have those six small sidewalk easements.**

Q: How many community members (non-city employees) are participating in this meeting?

**A: 60 attendees.**

Q: There is current traffic congestion going east between Sue Barnett & N. Shepherd where cars often back up almost to Sue Barnett and this is with the current 2 lanes going east. How can going down to one lane help this problem?

**A: We did conduct a full traffic report prior to COVID-19, this was last year, so this was peak hour and we think we can time the signal at Sheppard to accommodate the traffic volumes. We did a full traffic analysis using a high-quality traffic model and we need the full existing cross section to handle the traffic. During the peak hours there will be some queuing.**

Q: Is there any discussion about including road bumps or other ways slow traffic on Wakefield?

**A: For doing any kind of road bumps or traffic calming we have a whole dedicated neighborhood traffic management program (NT&P program). This is an opportunity to get help from the community to be able to request the application for that and submit that desire.**

Q: Is any funding in place for this project? If so, what is the source? If not, what are the expected funding sources and when are those expected to be available?

**A: [www.buildhoustonforward.org](http://www.buildhoustonforward.org) includes funding information for this project. Please search by name of project or zip code.**

Q: Will sidewalks replace the ditches, or can the ditches remain even with the sidewalks?

**A: They already have curb on the school side and on the opposite side of the school we have a ditch but putting the road in and providing safe sidewalks for the kids to walk there is no room to accommodate the street, sidewalk, and ditch.**

Q: Pre-Covid, Shepherd backed up past my house at night and in the morning. Has a traffic study been performed and how will cutting the lanes down prevent this? It seems like it will exacerbate the issue.

**A: Thank you for the question! We did conduct a traffic analysis using pre-COVID peak hour traffic volumes, and we found that this cross section will be sufficient. There may be some signal timing improvements that would further improve traffic operations. There may be some queuing during peak hour that last for a relatively short amount of time.**

Q: Are there any downstream restrictions from a drainage standpoint that will limit the benefits of the drainage? Improvements?

**A: No, all the proposed improvements that are going in with all three projects they tie into an existing system downstream but we are not enforcing any restrictions to that system so we are just providing more capacity upstream. We are not doing anything downstream of the railroad.**

Q: What is the status of the project and when will construction begin?

**A: The project is currently in design and we anticipate design completion for 2023. Construction phase is to be determined after that.**

Q: Will there be any sidewalk added along the curved/diagonal segment between W. 43rd, Azalea Street, and Sue Barnett (and will the street elevation change)?

**A: All the streets we are reconstructing we are adding sidewalks to them. Sue Barnett on the west side of the park we are reconstructing we are adding sidewalks based on consultation with the city and the parks we are keeping the existing sidewalks within the park property instead of reconstructing it.**

Q: Will individual property owners be contacted directly if there will be any additional easement required on their property?

**A: Correct, they will be contacted.**

Q: Why is the spur from WB 43rd to NB Sue Barnett being widened to the same width as all other roads?

**A: A lot of the existing roads are very narrow, and they are not safe for two-way traffic. When we put in new streets, we put in the minimum width based on the criteria.**

Q: Are the bike lanes planned for the whole 43rd all the way to Ella?

**A: Yes, that is the long-term goal.**

Q: Why are no splitter islands proposed along 41st? Splitter islands are important to force traffic entering the roundabout to reduce speed.

**A: We are only at the beginning of the design phase; we will evaluate the need for splitter islands further as the design progresses**

Q: Regarding the pedestrian crossings at 41st St. and 43rd St. along Sue Barnett, you mentioned that there would be no signals. Will there be anything other than the usual crosswalk signs? Perhaps something on the order of “vehicles must stop for pedestrians in the crosswalk”?

**A: We will get details on what the intersection looks like it will depend on what kind of median refuge we will provide.**

Q: What types of full/partial closures are being utilized for TCP?

**A: We are only at the beginning of the design phase; a full traffic control plan will be developed for the project as the design progresses. The plan will prioritize keeping 1 lane open at all times. If installation of the storm sewer necessitates a full street closure, it will be in sections no longer than 800 linear feet or 1 block at one time; and it will only be closed during construction hours. Most likely low-profile barrier will be used when the 1 lane is under construction.**

Q: Did the consultant consider adding on-street parking in place of landscaping between the sidewalk and back of curb? There are several town homes along Wakefield and the street parking is utilized frequently.

**A: No, along Wakefield the city ROW is only 50-ft wide, which will not accommodate the pavement width, needed for on-street parking.**

Q: Can accommodations be made to ensure that my driveways are not blocked?

**A: We will coordinate with each homeowners during construction as we build their driveways. Also, depending on the homeowner’s need, we can provide temporary access during driveway construction.**

Q: Regarding Sue Barnett, South of W. 41st. In a series of meetings last year, community representatives and Dr. Pollock, Principal of the adjacent HISD Garden Oaks Montessori School requested only 1 sidewalk along this section of Sue Barnett. The thought is that with sidewalks already existing within the park, plus a drop-off lane, that 2 sidewalks are not needed in this section. This portion of Sue Barnett will be widened extensively and to a greater extent relative to other portions of this project, so if only 1 sidewalk is needed, it will preserve more of the easement on the homeowners side (East side of Sue Barnett). However, the current plans show 2 sidewalks and this suggestion from the neighborhood was not incorporated.

**A: Project design team did reach out to Transportation and Drainage Operation (TDO) after the meeting regarding sidewalk on the West side of Sue Barnett. Planning & Development (P&D) Department was working on Walkable Place and Transit-Oriented Development Ordinance at that time. Also, the project was not scheduled for construction during the ordinance approval process. So, the project design team was asked to wait until the Standard Operating Procedure for the ordinance is developed through P&D Department.**

**The ordinance got approved recently, and the department is working on Standard Operating Procedure. So, we will reach out to Office of City Engineer (OCE) and TDO to evaluate your request. At this time, we cannot confirm if an exception will be allowed. So, we placed sidewalk on both sides on every street per the Walkable Place and Transit-Oriented Development Ordinances.**

Q: What will be the case for the live oak tree and magnolia in the area?

**A: We do not have tree plans or tree protection plans (TPP) designed at this stage. We are on beginning of design phase, so the TPP will be available when the design is finalized.**

Q: Will I be compensated for the any property taking, adjustment, or maintenance?

**A: Property owners of properties that require an easement will be contacted individually by the City once the design is finalized. At that time, the property owner will be made aware of the obligations of The City to the property owner depending on the easement type needed.**

Q: Can there only be 1 sidewalk and not 2 along Sue Barnett South of W. 41st to preserve homeowner easement on East side of Sue Barnett?

**A: Every street that is being redone will have new sidewalks on both sides proposed per the Walkable Place and Transit-Oriented Development Ordinances. The ordinance got approved recently. We will reach out to OCE and TDO to evaluate your earlier request. At this time, we cannot confirm if an exception will be allowed. We will inform you once we get response through all concerned stakeholders.**

Q: Start and expected end date of construction for the various phases of this project. Have these start/end dates taken into account any COVID related changes such as new prioritization of other projects, funding availability, etc.? Meaning, are your proposed dates accurate relative to COVID

**A: The project has budget for design phase. So, we have started the design and expect to complete by summer of 2023. The construction schedule is subject to funding availability and due to the shifting priorities and fiscal constraints; the construction funds are not currently available in the current CIP program. The CIP program is evaluated every year and the project's construction will be programmed based on the availability of funds.**

Q: Why is the W 43rd to Sue Barnett still angled in front of 752 W 43rd, unlike the new modified intersection in front of 744 W 43rd? This results in a dangerous combination of intersection and driveway, along with destroying 2 healthy young oak trees in front of 752 W 43rd. This also results in effectively 6-way intersection (including 2 private drives) that will be dangerous, and result in a large wide expanse of pavement, not in character with the neighborhood.

**A: The design for the intersection of W43rd St crossover and Sue Barnett is not yet finalized. The City will review squaring off the intersection like we are doing at the south end of W 43rd St crossover. Regarding the existing trees: We do not have tree plans or tree protection plans (TPP) designed at this stage. We are on beginning of design phase, so the TPP will be available when the design is finalized.**

Q: Why is the section of W 43rd in front of 744, 748, and 752 W 43rd being expanded to the same width as Sue Barnett, or even included in the scope of the project? Today, this is effectively a 1-way street. This expansion will encourage the increase of speed along this route. This also adds additional capital cost to the project, which is not consistent with the goal of improving drainage.

**A: The proposed 24-ft wide roadway is narrower than the 26-ft wide roadway proposed for Sue Barnett Rd. This street is included in our project scope because we must reconstruct the south and north ends to tie in at W 43rd St and Sue Barnett changes. That is already a large portion of the street, so we will reconstruct the entire street at the same time.**

Q: Why is the centerline for the section in front of 744, 748, and 752 W 43rd being shifted east instead of west within the existing city ROW? This shift east increases the length, therefore quantities, of paving and sidewalk, directly increasing the cost of the project, and again not consistent with the project driver of improving drainage.

**A: The existing 16-ft wide roadway is off center in the 38-ft wide ROW. The proposed 24-ft wide roadway is centered in the ROW to allow for parking along W 43rd St crossover. The proposed roadway does not extent past the city ROW. A narrower roadway would require restricted parking on one or both sides of the street. Based on coordination with Transportation and Drainage Operations, we are evaluating the width of the crossover as we finalize the design.**

Q: Will this proposed project include sidewalks? As a resident for almost 15 years through numerous storms I have been very happy without ditches. It is my understanding that sidewalks would possibly take the place of ditches.

**A: Yes, all existing streets that are being replaced in this project will be replaced with concrete curb and gutter streets with sidewalks on both sides of the street. The streets that currently have roadside ditches will now have storm sewer system below the roadway to convey the drainage system.**

Q: How will drainage for the properties at 748 and 752 W 43rd be maintained? They are currently serviced by a swale; however, the project shows that filled with a sidewalk with no additional storm sewer entrances added.

**A: The proposed roadway will be designed to be lower than the ROW elevations. The water from the property will flow into the road and will be conveyed into the system by proposed inlets along the roadway.**

Q: Is the city going to be responsible to fix my lawn irrigation to the same condition as it is and existing drainage after these repairs. Who determines that things have been done to my satisfaction?

**A: We are only at the beginning of the design phase. During the construction phase, any questions or issues that may arise can be directed to the construction team. If a contractor breaks a homeowner's sprinkler system, then the contractor is supposed to fix it. City's construction team will co-ordinate with contractor and homeowner to ensure the sprinkler system has been fixed at least to the existing condition.**

Q: Why is a bike path and a larger sidewalk being installed? I don't want my neighborhood to be more accessible. Frankly, I want less bike and foot traffic in front of my house

**A: The bike facilities and sidewalk are all proposed to be constructed in the public ROW, which is reserved to provided public benefit to all Houstonians.**

**Houston Public Works is committed to honoring the Houston Bike Plan, passed by City Council in 2017, which identifies 43rd Street as a critical east-west connection for travel by bicycle.**

**Furthermore, the construction of sidewalks on all city streets is required by the recently passed Walkable Places & Transit-Oriented Development ordinance.**

**Houston Public Works is required to fully comply with all local ordinances.**

Q: I live on Thornton rd. How far in on Thornton rd. will the work occur in Shepherd Park Plaza, east of Dunsmere intersection & west of Brinkman?

**A: Yes, work will occur on Thornton Rd From Dunsmere Rd (North) and 947 Thornton Rd.**

Q: Is there a way to find out if my house will be affected or is it too soon? I saw on the last job in Shepherd Park, people were without driveways for over 4 months.

**A: We are only at the beginning of the design phase and expected to complete by summer of 2023. We will be able to find out once the Construction phase is in place, which will be only after a Contractor is procured.**