

# Austin Avenue Bridges Project

# Public Meeting Summary

June 29, 2016







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### **Austin Avenue Bridges Project**

#### **Public Meeting Summary**

The City of Georgetown is studying Austin Avenue from Morrow Street to 3<sup>rd</sup> Street including the two historically significant bridges crossing the San Gabriel River. This study is evaluating a range of both short and long term solutions for Austin Avenue while balancing considerations such as safety, mobility, public input, impacts to property owners, and cost.

#### MEETING DETAILS

The City of Georgetown hosted the second public meeting for the Austin Avenue Bridges Project in a workshop format. The purpose of this meeting was to develop a vision for the future of the bridges that balances its needs and the wants of the community. A walking tour of the project was conducted prior to the meeting for interested attendees. At the workshop, the project team provided a brief presentation and then community members participated in a workshop to share input on the project. The team did collect RSVPs for the workshop and walking tour to help prepare for activities.



Austin Ave. Public Workshop

Wednesday, June 29, 2016 6 – 8:30 p.m. San Gabriel Community Center 445 E. Morrow Street, Georgetown, TX 78626

#### NOTICES AND ADVERTISEMENTS OF THE PUBLIC MEETING

The following methods were used to inform the community of the meeting:

#### Direct Mail

A letter was mailed to 49 property owners abutting project limits on June 13, 2016, notifying them of the upcoming public meeting.

#### **Email Notifications**

Email notifications were sent to the stakeholder database including public officials, landowners, businesses, community organizations, and other interested parties who signed up for updates. Email notifications were sent on the following dates:

- June 2, 2016, to 592 individual email addresses
- June 23, 2016 to 594 individual email addresses
- June 28, 2016 to 594 individual email addresses.

The meeting was also promoted by Georgetown Online through emails sent to contacts in their database.



Austin Ave. Public Workshop Flyer

#### Media Advertisements

A media release was sent to local media outlets on June 24, 2016. Meeting announcements and reminders were posted to Facebook on June 22, June 27, and June 29, 2016.

#### Signage

Large signs were placed on the north and south end of the San Gabriel Trail on June 3, 2016. The signs displayed public meeting details and project contact information.

Notification signs were also placed at the Georgetown Public Library, the Georgetown Recreation Center, the Georgetown Municipal Complex, City Hall and the Williamson Museum. The meeting information was also shared on the digital display monitors at both the Recreation Center and Georgetown Public Library.

The City also utilized digital message boards the week of June 25<sup>th</sup> along Austin Ave., alerting north and southbound traffic to the public meeting.



Austin Ave. Meeting Notification - San Gabriel Trail

#### Additional Outreach

Public meeting flyers and project information contact cards were distributed to local business and City offices on June 23, 2016.

#### **PUBLIC WORKSHOP**

A walking tour was conducted prior to the public workshop to explain existing conditions, maintenance considerations, and trail/pedestrian considerations through a hands on approach. A bus picked up approximately 15 citizens from the Community Center and dropped them off near the Blue Hole (close to the bridges). The City Project Manager, Nat Waggoner, and the team Project Manager, John Mutchler, led the tour and discussions including:

- A tour under the south bridge and discussion of the history of the bridges, components of the structures, recent inspection reports, City maintenance and structurally deficient components
- A tour of sidewalks on top of the south bridge and discussed functionally obsolete components, trail and pedestrian elements, and safety
- A quick Q&A session

The bus then brought attendees back in time for the public meeting. Reference Appendix E for the Guide that was used for planning purposes.

There were 69 RSVPs for the meeting and 58 attendees that signed in. Attendees were randomly assigned a color that corresponded with a workshop table and were provided with a handout that summarized public involvement collected to date. At each table there were graphic examples of different types of enhancements, improvements, and bridge design photos to be considered as the groups talked through possible improvements (reference Appendix B). Below is brief description of activities at the meeting.

#### Presentation

The presentation included the purpose and need, timeline, and process for the project. A review of the public input collected to date was shared followed by an overview of the ground rules and explanation of the workshop.

#### Workshop Activities

After the presentation, attendees divided into five groups (two blue groups, two green groups, and one red group) to participate in a charrette activity. For 20 minutes, groups brainstormed possible improvements to Austin Avenue related to safety and connectivity. Groups marked their suggestions on aerial maps with numbered stickers, and a table scribe noted detailed comments on easel paper. For another 20 minutes, groups repeated this process, focusing on aesthetic and character elements. Groups used colored dots (red for safety and green for connectivity) to represent considerations and cut out specific photo examples to share preferences. Reference Appendix D for the Guide developed for facilitators to generate discussions and collect feedback.

#### Charrette Results

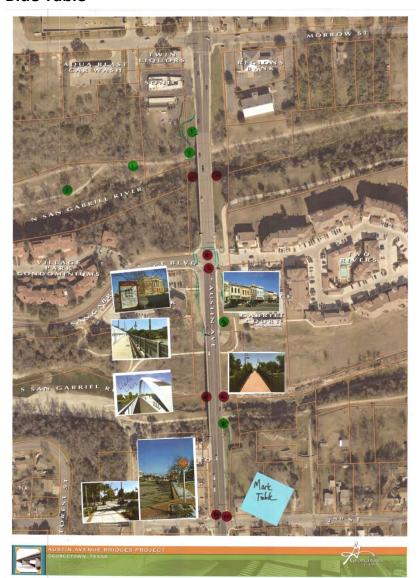
Notes were taken by a volunteer at each table that corresponded with the maps. A volunteer from each group gave a short presentation highlighting the discussion from their table.

The notes below do not follow consistent numbering and bulleting. These were the notes submitted from each group and they represent comments and observations made by participants. The project team added some clarification where needed to explain the intent.



Austin Ave Public Workshop

#### **Blue Table**



#### **Safety Considerations**

- Turn lanes 3 locations
  - o 2<sup>nd</sup> St.
  - o San Gabriel Village Blvd.
  - o Morrow St.
- Enhanced Pedestrian Crosswalks
- Economic impact to downtown was big concern

#### **Connectivity Considerations**

- Path to Sheraton Hotel and Conference Center
- Blue Hole Park and Trail
- Two Rivers apartments to San Gabriel River Trail

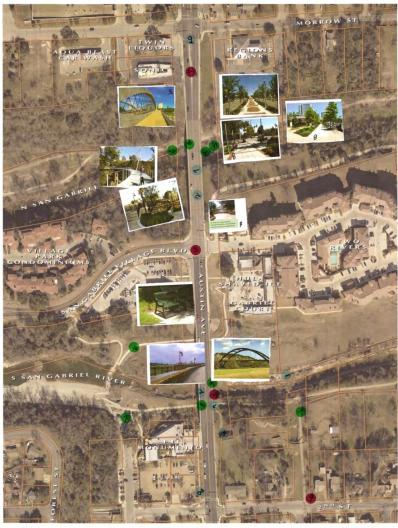
#### **Aesthetic Considerations**

- Several in the group wanted to see a separate pedestrian bridge or one that appears to be separate
- Can make statement architecturally while still being sensitive to complementing the existing character of Georgetown

#### **Character Considerations**

- Possible event venue (e.g. weddings)
- Group was divided (some felt the bridges need replacement; others felt no replacement was necessary)
- Update and think about safety

#### **Green Table**





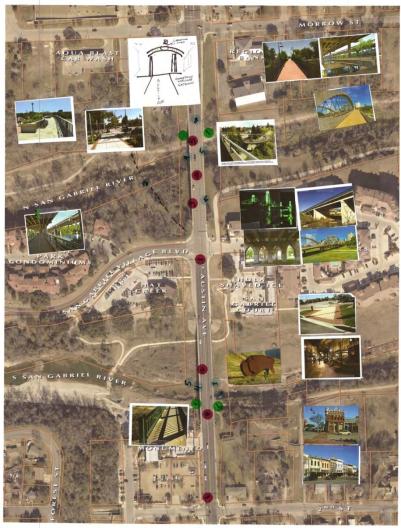
#### **Safety and Connectivity Notes:**

- R1: Better pedestrian access/walkways
- R2: Center turn lane to businesses
- R3: No left turn lanes to San Gabriel Village Blvd., due to cut through traffic and speed concerns
- R4: Pedestrian crossing at 2nd and Main with a traffic light
- G1: Drop pedestrian & bike bridge below traffic
- G2: Connections from south to north rivers with trail access
- G3: Replace low water crossings on North & South rivers (Picture 1)
- G4: Sidewalks on both sides of Austin Ave from downtown to rivers
- G5: Existing trails on both rivers to connect to pedestrian and bike bridge

#### **Aesthetics and Character Notes:**

- Park area east of Austin on S. San Gabriel with access
- 2. Lighting (light features)
- 3. Scenic overlooks on bridges
- 4. Benches along new pathways & sitting areas
- 5. Separation between pedestrians and traffic
- 6. Remove billboards
- 7. Keep natural beauty of rivers
- 8. Landscaped areas entering river
- 9. Extend downtown aesthetics & streetscapes to rivers

#### **Green Table**





#### **Safety Considerations:**

- 1. Left turn stops flow of traffic; need turn lane
- 2. Sidewalks too narrow, no protection
- 3. Speed concerns
- 4. Traffic congestion -stopped traffic
- 5. Trail safety falling debris
- 6. Overall safety for citizens of Georgetown

#### **Connectivity Considerations:**

- 1. Trail Both bridges, both sides to Austin Avenue
- 2. Pedestrian bridge connection to Regional Trail and to Austin Ave

## Character & Aesthetics Considerations:

- Architecture of downtown incorporate into bridge
- 2. Current bridge railings
- 3. Lighting- preferably LED
- Cathedral arches like College Street Bridge
- 5. Need more uplighting
- 6. Use existing railings some way

#### **Artistic Considerations:**

- 7. Steers crossing the river (highlighting the Chisolm Trail)
- 8. Gateway signage

#### **Blue Table**



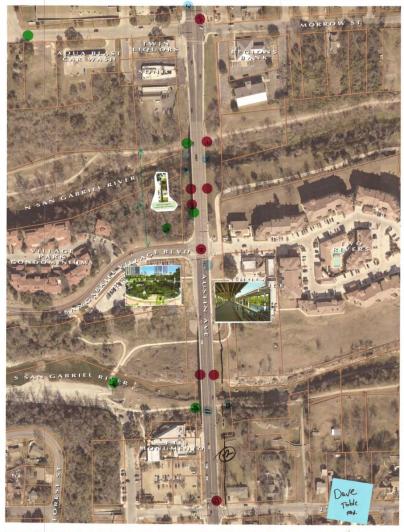
## Safety and Connectivity Considerations:

- Intersections San Gabriel Village Blvd, 2nd St, & Austin Ave
  - o Vehicular and pedestrian lanes
  - o Turn lanes too short
  - Reduce the number of lanes but have one continuous turn lane
- Pedestrian Crossings
  - Separate bicycle & pedestrian corridors
- Consider lifetime of bridge

## Character and Aesthetics Considerations:

- Should some kind of Historic and Architectural Review Commission guidelines be applied?
- Lighting considerations (LED)
- Consider gateway to city
  - Reflect "old town" issues while considering flooding, wider traffic lanes, fly overs

#### **Red Table**



#### **Safety and Connectivity Notes:**

- 1. Would like to see forensic report evaluations
- 2. What is the lifespan?
- 3. Extend safety considerations all the way to Williams Drive
- 4. Turning traffic causes wrecks at San Gabriel Boulevard
- 5. Pedestrian traffic visibility problems
- 6. Increase connectivity routes for pedestrians
- 7. North side parking area needed
- 8. Cantilever or widen bridge for pedestrians/cyclists
- 9. Add pedestrian ramp access
- 10. Safety of downtown businesses
- 11. Slow traffic
- 12. Separate pedestrian bridges

#### **Aesthetics and Character Notes:**

- 13. Transition to more historic character
- 14. Preference shared for no significant aesthetic changes to existing bridges
- 15. Add lighting on & below consistent with downtown lights

Appendix A

Sign-in Sheets

Date: June 29, 2016

Name	Address and/or Affiliation	Email (if you would like to receive updates)	How did you hear about the meeting?
Parial Cople			Email Newspaper Sign Friend
Les Sonto			Email Newspaper Sign Friend Letter Other
Lyun William			Email Newspaper Sign Friend Letter Other
JOM Craw Ford			Email Newspaper Sign Friend Letter Other
Mike Messiosky			Email Newspaper Sign Friend Letter Other
J.P. JUHNSON			Email Newspaper Sign Friend Letter Other
Bobby Weisbrod			Email Newspaper Sign_ Friend Letter Other_
Clara Dugan			Email Newspaper Sign Friend Letter Other
PATRICIA A. TAYLOR			Email Newspaper Sign Friend Letter Other
RONGARLOND			Email Newspaper Sign Friend Letter Other
Stephen Wyman			Email Newspaper_/_ Sign Friend Letter Other
Shanna Kenerson	Two Rivers		Email Newspaper Sign Friend Letter Other
Linda Scarbrough	Williamson County Sun		Email Newspaper Sign Friend Letter Other
Clark Thurmond	11		Email Newspaper Sign Friend Letter Other
			Email Newspaper Sign Friend Letter Other

Date: June 29, 2016

Name	Address and/or Affiliation	Email (if you would like to receive updates)	How did you hear about the meeting?
CHARLIE BRIGGS			Email Newspaper Sign Friend Letter Other
Don Padfield			Email Newspaper_ Sign Friend Letter Other
Vince DeLaCriz			Email Newspaper Sign Friend Letter Other
Fred Sellers			Email Newspaper Sign Friend Letter Other
SuzanToth			Email Newspaper Sign Friend Letter Other
Jeff Paska			Email Newspaper Sign Friend Letter Other
Ling Harrington			Email NewspaperSign Friend Letter Other
Mindy Harring In			Email Newspaper Sign Friend Letter Other
Linde Nu			Email Newspaper Sign Friend Letter Other
Marcin Voban			Email Newspaper Sign Friend Letter Other
LEN DENTON			Email Newspaper Sign Sign Other
John Peters	TXDOT		Email Newspaper Sign Friend Letter Other
Larry Brundiage			Email Newspaper Sign Friend Letter Other
Bob Smith			Email Newspaper Sign Friend Letter Other
Bucke Grandpan			Email Newspaper Sign Friend Letter Other

Date: 6 2 10

Name	Address and/or Affiliation	Email (if you would like to receive updates)	How did you hear about the meeting?
I Parker	MSB		Email Newspaper Sign Friend Cetter Other
Durght Krichter			Email Newspaper Sign Friend Letter Other
R. Michael Friends			Email Newspaper Sign Friend Letter Other
Glenda Overber			Email Newspaper Sign Friend Letter Other
Bill Olussecc			Email Newspaper Sign Friend Letter Other
Bobby Ramthun	TxDOT		Email Newspaper Sign Friend Letter Other
Kay Briggs	Pirk Poppy Atisma BAB		Email Newspaper Sign Friend Letter Other
Lee Bain			Email Newspaper Sign Sign Other
John Malone			Email Newspaper Sign Friend Letter Other
Nat Xiono			Email Newspaper Sign Friend Letter Other
Michael Cox		_%	Email Newspaper Sign Friend Letter Other
ValCover			Email Newspaper Sign Friend Letter Other
V			Email Newspaper Sign Friend Letter Other
			Email Newspaper Sign Friend Letter Other
			Email Newspaper Sign Friend Letter Other

Date: June 29, 2016

Name	Address and/or Affiliation	Email (if you would like to receive updates)	How did you hear about the meeting?
PAH: COCBERT			Email Newspaper Sign Sign Other
Kathy Sellers			Email Newspaper Sign Friend Letter Other
Porter Cachran			Email Newspaper Sign Friend Letter_ Other
Shirley Nichols	TYDOT-AUS DISTRICT		Email Newspaper Sign Friend Letter Other
Rady X imener	RSX STUDIUS - RUDY KINEWEL PROFUGATO		Email Newspaper Sign Friend Letter Other
Sophia Buchanan			Email Newspaper Sign Friend Letter Other_\(  \)
1300 Weima			Email Newspaper Sign Friend Letter Other
Larry Olson			Email Newspaper Sign Friend Letter Other
Lotherne Dalton			Email Newspaper Sign Friend Letter Other
Meal Geiger			EmailNewspaper Sign Friend Letter Other
Mickie Ross			Email Newspaper Sign Friend Letter Other
Tanya Bumbar	Two Rivors		Email Newspaper Sign Friend Letter Other
	W		Email Newspaper Sign Friend Letter Other
Jan			Email Newspaper Sign Friend Letter Other
			Email Newspaper Sign Friend Letter Other

Date: JUNE 29, 2016

Name	Address and/or Affiliation	Email (if you would like to receive updates)	How did you hear about the meeting?
Chris Villa-			Email Newspaper Sign Friend Letter Other
Than Reed			Email Newspaper_ Sign Friend Letter Other
Min Damon			Email Newspaper Sign Friend Letter Other
			Email Newspaper Sign Friend Letter Other
			Email Newspaper Sign Friend Letter Other
			Email Newspaper Sign Friend Letter Other
			Email Newspaper Sign Friend Letter Other
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## Appendix B

# Public Workshop Handouts & Photo Examples



## **Austin Avenue Bridges Project**



#### PUBLIC WORKSHOP HANDOUT

June 29, 2016

#### Safety & Connectivity

Highlights of Public Input Considering Safety

- Safety needs to be a top concern and first priority
- Need to consider both vehicular turning traffic and pedestrian traffic

Highlights of Public Input on Bicycle and Pedestrian Trail Components

- Interest in enhancing bicycle and pedestrian facilities
- Need to widen sidewalks and provide separation or barriers between sidewalks and the roadway
- Need to provide separate bicycle and pedestrian facilities and a separate bridge

#### Highlights of Public Input on Travel Lanes

- Preference to not reduce lane widths
- Provide 5 lanes with a center turn lane
- Make Austin Ave. a 3-lane road with center turn lane and bicycle lanes
- Preference to not add a turn lane and concern for the additional traffic that it would bring to San Gabriel
   Village
- Turn signals needed at San Gabriel Village Blvd.

#### Highlights from the Georgetown Master Plan

- Directional signs and wayfinding devices tailored to the pedestrian
- Extend sidewalks along Austin Ave. north to the river
- Provide clearly defined paths between the river and downtown
- Install markers as important parts of these regional trail connectors
- Study the feasibility of providing pedestrian connections across both the rivers, that are separate from those used by automobiles
- Study the feasibility of adding a cantilevered sidewalk with a look-out area to the historic bridge over the South San Gabriel River with a grand staircase and accessible ramp to the existing trail
- Study the feasibility of installing a pedestrian bridge across the river to link downtown with development to the west
- Bike routes should be clearly defined and implemented to provide continuity of access from outlying areas to downtown
- Sidewalks leading up to bridges are Level 3. Key features include: Scored concrete in 2-foot modules, decorative lights, benches and waste receptacles, and a 6' width is preferred in Level 3.



Sidewalks leading to the bridges are currently Level 3



Type C intersections include a striped crosswalk



Type B intersections include a band of pavers with scored concrete crossings



## **Austin Avenue Bridges Project**



#### **Character & Aesthetics**

Highlights of Public Input on Character & Aesthetics

- Preference to maintain river views
- Preference to preserve historical appeal and small town charm
- Desire for the bridge to be historic landmark
- Desire to enhance gateway to Georgetown
- Questions about archeological sites
- Desire to utilize modern technology and design
- Desire to incorporate artistic elements

Highlights from the Georgetown Master Plan



Landscaped gateways should serve as "previews" of downtown and include a similar landscape palette



The terrace and/or park on the river could include a small riverside amphitheater or performance area



A pocket park and plaza along Austin Avenue could help activate this area



A "look-out" area could be incorporated into a new sidewalk over the South San Gabriel River





Lighting Strategy #1 - historic lights without banner



Art parks are sites where artists are commissioned to develop an entire site as an art installation



Contemporary sculptures have added to the downtown streetscape and should be continued

Lighting Strategy #1 historic lights with banner



































**AUSTIN AVENUE BRIDGES PROJECT** 

GEORGETOWN, TEXAS

