



WELCOME

VIRTUAL PUBLIC HEARING: BURNET ROAD CORRIDOR
MOBILITY & SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS

CSJ: 1376-02-042

MAY 20, 2020

ALTHOUGH NO FEDERAL FUNDING HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED FOR THIS PROJECT AT THIS TIME, THE ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW, CONSULTATION, AND OTHER ACTIONS REQUIRED BY APPLICABLE FEDERAL ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS FOR THIS PROJECT ARE BEING, OR HAVE BEEN, CARRIED-OUT BY TXDOT PURSUANT TO 23 U.S.C. 327 AND A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING DATED DECEMBER 9, 2019, AND EXECUTED BY FHWA AND TXDOT.

Hello. My name is Lars Anderson and I am a Project Manager with the City of Austin. On behalf of the City of Austin, in coordination with The Texas Department of Transportation, or TxDOT, I would like to welcome you to the virtual public hearing for the Burnet Road project. Thank you all for attending. We look forward to receiving your comments.

The virtual public hearing for the proposed Burnet Road project launched on Wednesday, May 20, 2020 at 9 a.m. and will extend through 5 p.m. on Friday, June 5, 2020. The purpose of this public hearing is to provide an update on the project, and to receive public input on the proposed improvements.

AGENDA



- Project overview
- Environmental overview
- Public comments
- Adjourn

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Today's presentation will include a project overview, an overview of the environmental studies that were completed and their results, and information on how you may provide public comments about the project. In addition to watching this presentation, you may also download a copy of the presentation from the public hearing website at AustinTexas.gov/BurnetENV.

HOW CAN I MAKE COMMENTS?



- Provide verbal comments by calling 512-974-8833 and leaving a voicemail
- Submit an online comment on: AustinTexas.gov/BurnetENV
- Email comments to: Burnet@AustinTexas.gov
- Mail written comments to: City of Austin, Corridor Program Office

PO Box 1088, Austin, TX 78767

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Following the launch of the virtual public hearing, members of the public may call 512-974-8833 at any time to provide verbal comments, up to three minutes in length, through a voicemail system.

Members of the public can also submit comments online at AustinTexas.gov/BurnetENV, by email to Burnet@AustinTexas.gov, or by mail to the City of Austin Corridor Program Office at PO Box 1088, Austin, TX 78767.

We want to hear from you, so please take the time to provide your input during the public comment period. Please note that per TxDOT requirements, the City of Austin is not permitted to respond to verbal comments or questions that are received during the official comment period at the previously stated number.

HOW CAN I MAKE COMMENTS?



All verbal and written comments must be received or postmarked **by 5 p.m. on Friday, June 5, 2020.**

Responses to verbal and written comments received will be available online at AustinTexas.gov/BurnetENV once they have been prepared.

To speak with project staff and ask questions, please call 512-974-7751 during regular office hours at any time in the project development process.

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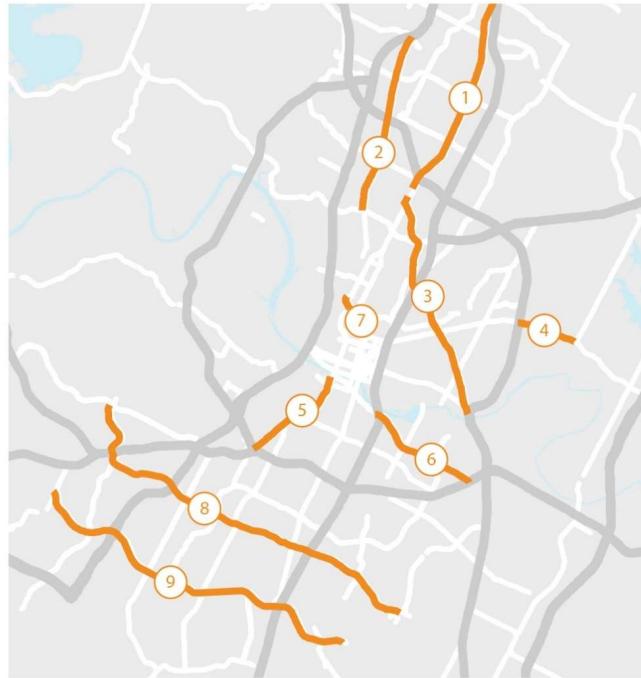
All verbal and written comments must be received or postmarked by 5 p.m. on Friday, June 5, 2020.

Responses to verbal and written comments received will be available online at AustinTexas.gov/BurnetENV once they have been prepared.

The public may call project staff during regular office hours, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., to ask questions during the project development process at 512-974-7751. Please note, discussion with project staff will not be included in the official record of this public hearing. If members of the public wish to submit a comment to be a part of the official record of this public hearing following their discussion with the project staff, they will need to call 512-974-8833 or provide written comments via one of the methods previously identified.



PROJECT OVERVIEW
BURNET ROAD CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS



2016 Mobility Bond
provides \$482 million
for improvements to
Austin corridors

- ① North Lamar Boulevard
(US HWY. 183 TO HOWARD LN.)
- ② Burnet Road
(KOENIG LN. TO MOPAC EXPY.)
- ③ Airport Boulevard
(N. LAMAR BLVD. TO US HWY. 183)
- ④ East MLK Jr. Boulevard
(US HWY. 183 TO DECKER LN.)
- ⑤ South Lamar Boulevard
(RIVERSIDE DR. TO BEN WHITE BLVD./US HWY. 290 WEST)
- ⑥ East Riverside Drive
(I-35 TO SH 71)
- ⑦ Guadalupe Street
(MLK JR. BLVD. TO W. 29TH ST.)
- ⑧ William Cannon Drive
(SOUTHWEST PKWY. TO MCKINNEY FALLS PKWY.)
- ⑨ Slaughter Lane
(FM 1826 TO VERTEX BLVD.)

In 2016, Austin voters passed the 2016 Mobility Bond, which provides \$720 million for transportation improvements throughout the City of Austin. As part of the Corridor Mobility Program, some of the bond funds are being used to design and construct multi-modal improvements on nine major roadways.

Burnet Road, between Koenig Lane and MoPac Expressway, is one of the nine major roadways in the Corridor Mobility Program.

The City of Austin completed a Corridor Mobility Plan for Burnet Road in December 2013.

BURNET ROAD



Project Area Limits: US 183 to the MoPac frontage road

Total Length: 2.5 miles

Environmental Study evaluating

- Improvements funded for construction
- Improvements outside the existing right of way, not yet funded for construction

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This virtual public hearing will focus specifically on the segment of Burnet Road beginning at US 183 and extending north for 2.5 miles to the MoPac frontage road.

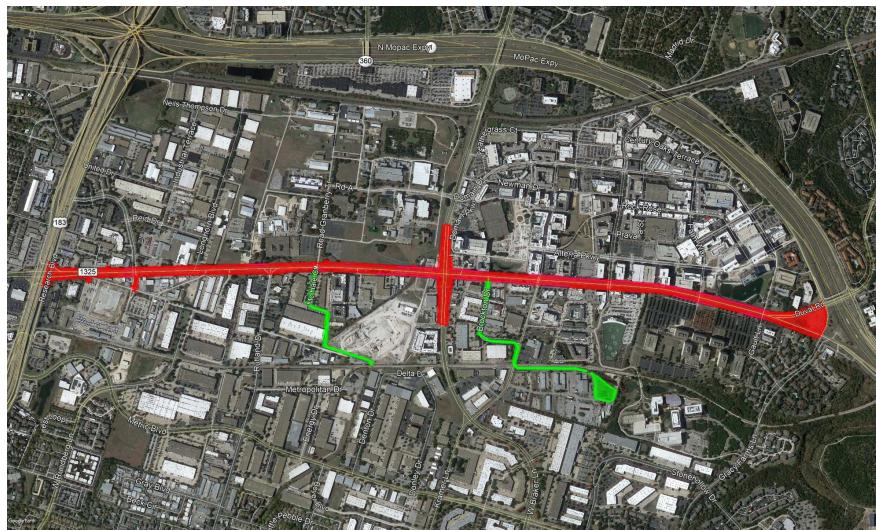
The City of Austin conducted an environmental analysis to understand the potential impacts of the proposed mobility, safety and connectivity improvements for the entire Burnet Road corridor. For Burnet Road between US 183 and the MoPac frontage road, the analysis was conducted in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act, or NEPA, because this portion of Burnet Road is owned and maintained by TxDOT.

Some of the proposed improvements evaluated by the City of Austin would be funded by the voter-approved 2016 Mobility Bond. The City has also evaluated the environmental impacts of additional improvements outside the existing right of way which are not yet funded for construction.

PROJECT AREA

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- Corridor limits
- Off-corridor drainage improvements

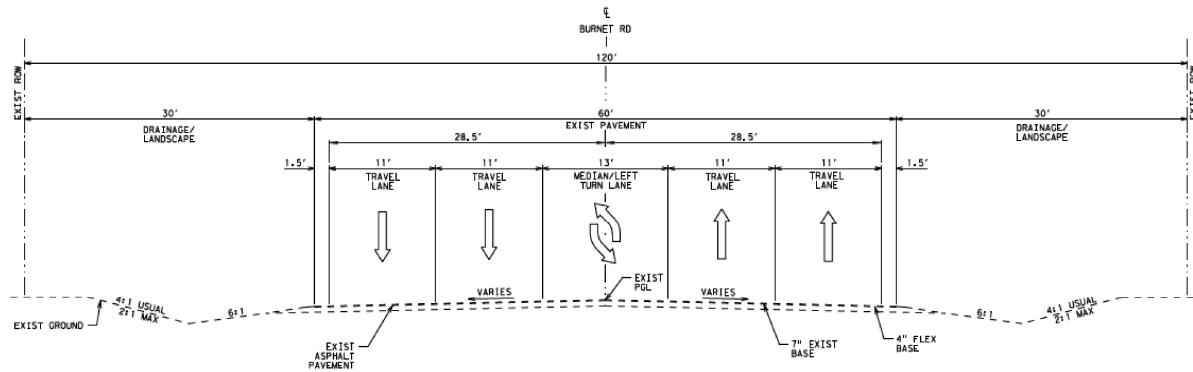


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This is an aerial of the project area. In this image, north is to the right on the screen. The red line indicates the corridor project limits and the green shading indicates where off-corridor drainage will be addressed as part of the improvements, to be described later in this presentation.

EXISTING ROAD CONFIGURATION

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This is a typical section of the existing road configuration. The segment of Burnet Road from US 183 to the MoPac frontage road currently consists of 4 travel lanes, two in the northbound and two in the southbound directions, separated by a two-way center running left turn lane. There are no existing bicycle lanes and existing sidewalks lack connectivity. The existing drainage is generally an open ditch system; and therefore, further hinders pedestrian mobility.

THE NEED FOR IMPROVEMENTS



918 TRAFFIC CRASHES

on Burnet Road (US 183 to the Mopac frontage road) in the last five years:

March 1, 2015 - February 29, 2020

- Traffic volume exceeds 35,000 vehicles/day
 - Approximately 60 access driveways in 2.5 miles



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The purpose of the project is to address safety concerns and congestion on Burnet Road. Over 35,000 vehicles travel this major Austin roadway per day and approximately 60 access driveways in 2.5 miles create additional safety concerns.

According to crash data collected by the Austin Transportation Department, there were more than 900 crashes on this section of Burnet Road between 2015 and 2020. Those crashes resulted in 23 fatalities or serious injuries. 19 bicyclists or pedestrians were involved in crashes throughout the time observed.

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS



Funded for construction:

- Up to 8 traffic signal improvements with enhanced technology
 - Waterford Centre Blvd.
 - Kramer Ln.
 - Longhorn Blvd.
 - Esperanza Crossing
 - Rutland Dr.
 - Palm Way
 - Braker Ln.
 - Gault Ln.
- Intersection improvements with turn lane modifications
 - Braker Ln.
 - Esperanza Crossing
 - Palm Way

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Proposed improvements are expected to improve mobility, safety, and connectivity along this 2.5-mile section of the Burnet Road corridor for all users, whether they walk, bike, drive or take transit.

The funded project would include up to eight traffic signal improvements with enhanced technology as well as intersection improvements with turn lane modifications in three identified locations.

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS



Funded for construction:

- Up to 2.5-miles of new, shared-use paths
- Up to 2.5-miles of pavement rehabilitation
- Raised median islands at the intersection of Braker Ln. and Burnet Rd.
- Drainage improvements to upgraded, closed storm system to support mobility objectives
- Bus stop enhancements in partnership with Capital Metro
- Reconstruction and modification of some driveways

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The project would also include shared-use paths, pavement rehabilitation, raised median islands, drainage improvements, bus stop enhancements, and the reconstruction and modification of some driveways.

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS



Not yet funded for construction:

- 2.5-miles of full street reconstruction to widen Burnet Road from 4 lanes to 6 lanes with
 - An additional through lane for both travel directions
 - Enhanced and separate pedestrian and bicycle facilities
 - Streetscape
 - Trees
 - Raised medians
 - Street lighting

Right of Way:

- The proposed unfunded improvements would require an additional 6.14-acres of right of way

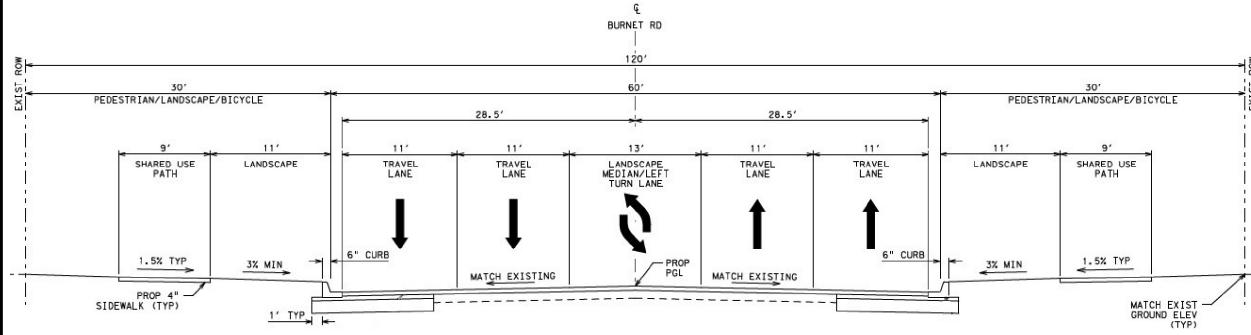
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The City has also evaluated the environmental impacts of additional improvements outside the existing right of way which are not yet funded for construction. These would include 2.5-miles of full street reconstruction to widen Burnet Road from 4 lanes to 6 lanes with an additional through lane in both travel directions, enhanced and separate pedestrian and bicycle facilities, streetscape, trees, median islands, and street lighting.

The unfunded improvements would require an additional 6.14-acres of right of way.

TYPICAL SECTIONS

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PROPOSED FUNDED IMPROVEMENT

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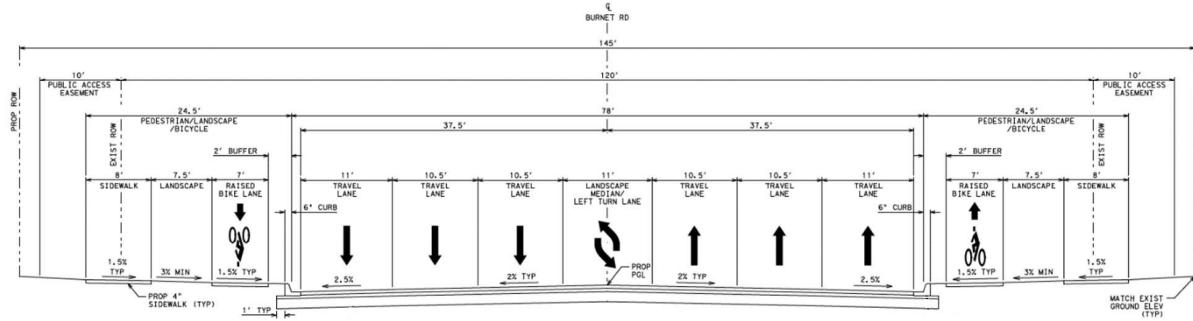
This typical section provides a view of what the proposed funded improvements would look like.

The project would largely be constructed within the existing right of way. Starting from the outside moving in, 9-foot shared-use paths would be on either side of the road with up to 11-foot landscape sections separating cyclists and pedestrians from the travel lanes. It should be noted that the near-term funded improvements would require limited ROW, with needs generally restricted to areas at major intersections with turn lanes.

The northbound and southbound travel lanes would remain, and landscaping would be added to the median islands.

TYPICAL SECTIONS

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PROPOSED UNFUNDED IMPROVEMENTS

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This typical section provides a preview of what the proposed unfunded improvements would look like.

The right of way would be widened from 120 feet to 145 feet. Starting again from the outside moving in, the bicycle and pedestrian facilities would be separated and enhanced. There would be an 8-foot sidewalk, a 7-and-a-half-foot landscaped section, and a 7-foot bicycle lane. A 2-foot buffer would separate cyclists from the travel lanes.

An additional through travel lane would also be added in both the northbound and southbound directions.

ENVIRONMENTAL OVERVIEW

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I will now discuss the environmental studies completed for the proposed project. These studies considered the potential impacts of the unfunded improvements as discussed in the previous slide.

ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES



Traffic Noise



Water Resources



Cultural Resources



Biological Resources



Hazardous Materials



Social & Community Impacts

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As part of the project's compliance with NEPA, the City of Austin assessed traffic noise, cultural resources, hazardous materials, water resources, biological resources, and social and community impacts within the corridor. Overall, impacts to environmental resources would be minimal.

Throughout the development of these improvements, the City worked to reduce and minimize potential impacts.

Following is a summary of the identified impacts.

ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

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Biological Resources

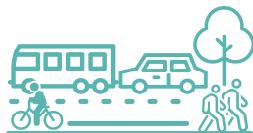
- Suitable habitat for 16 species of greatest conservation need
- Disturbance of 0.58 acres of riparian habitat
- Coordination with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department has been completed
- Best management practices (BMPs) implemented:
 - Vegetation BMPs
 - Amphibian and aquatic reptile BMPs for Woodhouse's toad
 - Terrestrial reptile BMPs for the eastern box turtle
 - Bird BMPs for the Western Burrowing Owl
 - Bat BMPs for the cave myotis, big brown bat, eastern red bat, hoary bat, and Mexican free-tailed bat

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The project contains suitable habitats for 16 species of greatest conservation need. The project would potentially impact 0.58 acres of riparian habitat. Coordination with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department has been completed.

The following best management practices, or BMPs, would be implemented to minimize biological impacts: vegetation BMPs, amphibian and aquatic reptile BMPs for Woodhouse's toad; terrestrial reptile BMPs for the eastern box turtle; bird BMPs for the Western Burrowing Owl; and bat BMPs for the cave myotis, big brown bat, eastern red bat, hoary bat, and Mexican free-tailed bat.

ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES



Traffic Noise

- Noise abatement measures in the form of a barrier wall were considered at three apartment locations
 - Noise barrier walls are not recommended due to their ineffectiveness to reduce impacts and constructability factors such as right of way, utilities, business access, and cost constraints that are considered reasonable

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A Traffic Noise Analysis was conducted in accordance with TxDOT Guidelines for Analysis and Abatement of Roadway Traffic Noise. Noise abatement measures, in the form of a barrier wall, were considered at three apartment locations. Upon further analyses, it was determined that the noise barriers would not be feasible due to ineffectiveness in reducing impacts and constructability factors such as right of way, utilities, blocking business access, and cost constraints that exceeded approved reasonable noise wall barrier cost as set by the Federal Highway Administration.

ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

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Social & Community Impacts

- No displacements
- Minor access changes
 - 8 proposed driveway closures; accessibility would be retained
 - Intermittent raised median islands
- Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and minority populations
 - No adverse effects
- Increased bicyclist and pedestrian safety
 - Consistent with Capital Area Metropolitan 2040 Regional Transportation Plan

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No displacements are anticipated as a result of the proposed project. Access management measures including median islands and driveway consolidations are proposed to improve safety and mobility for all users. The project would include the closure of eight driveways; however, properties impacted by driveway closures would remain accessible by other access points to the property.

The proposed project includes intermittent raised median islands throughout the project area to control left turn movements and to reduce the risk of potential crashes as well as improve comfort levels for motorists and pedestrians.

Limited English Proficiency, or LEP, populations were identified within the project area. LEP persons were given and will continue to be given the opportunity for meaningful involvement in the NEPA process. The project would not have any adverse effects on low-income or minority populations.

The bike lanes, sidewalks, and intersection improvements were included in the design to provide a safe environment for bicyclists and pedestrians. The Burnet Road project is consistent with the Capital Area Metropolitan 2040 Regional Transportation Plan, adopted in 2015.

Overall, the project would provide increased safety and connectivity for all modes of transportation, which is consistent with the City of Austin's Strategic Mobility Plan.

ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

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Water Resources

- Two potential waters of the U.S.
 - Anticipated that impacts to waters of the U.S. would be authorized through Nationwide Permit #14
 - No wetlands were identified within the corridor
- Project would meet Section 401 Water Quality Certification and would require compliance with Section 402 requirements
- Coordination with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality would be required under their Memorandum of Understanding with TxDOT

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Two potential waters of the U.S. were located within the project limits. It is anticipated that any impacts to waters of the U.S. would be authorized through Nationwide Permit #14 for Linear Transportation Projects. No wetlands were identified within this corridor.

The project would meet Section 401 Water Quality Certification and would warrant compliance with Section 402 requirements under a blanket certification from Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, or TCEQ, for projects permitted by Nationwide Permit #14.

Coordination with TCEQ would be required under their pre-existing agreement with TxDOT.

PROJECT SCHEDULE



Environmental clearance: June/July 2020

First Construction Project: Burnet Road/Braker Lane intersection (funded):

- Final design plans: Summer 2020
- Construction start: Late 2020

US 183 to the MoPac frontage road:

- Funded improvements
 - Final design plans: Fall 2021
 - Construction start: Late 2022
- Unfunded improvements
 - Final design plans and construction start: Dependent on funding availability

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We anticipate that the project will receive environmental clearance this summer.

Plans for our first construction project, at the Burnet Road and Braker Lane intersection, are currently in development and should be completed in Summer 2020. Some utility relocations are expected as part of this project. The anticipated construction start date is late 2020.

Plans for the improvements for the remainder of the project area from US 183 to the MoPac frontage road are in concurrent development and should be completed in Fall 2021. As a reminder, these project limits of Burnet Road, owned and maintained by TxDOT, are the focus of this presentation. Some utility relocations are anticipated as part of this larger project. The anticipated construction start date is late 2022.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

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As stated at the beginning of the presentation, all comments received, whether written or verbal, will be included in the official record of this public hearing.

HOW CAN I MAKE COMMENTS?



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HOW CAN I MAKE COMMENTS?



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To speak with project staff and ask questions, please call 512-974-7751 during regular office hours at any time in the project development process.

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All comments we receive by Friday, June 5, 2020, will be recorded, analyzed, and responded to in a summary report. The comments and responses will be made available to the public on the City's website.

This concludes the virtual public hearing presentation. Thank you for your interest and participation. Please be well and be safe in this season.