



JOHNNY MORRIS ROAD  
Public Engagement Summary

JUNE 2018

# OVERVIEW

## ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

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A Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) is being developed for Johnny Morris Rd. between Loyola Lane and FM 969 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. The project is part of the City of Austin's 2016 Mobility Bond for Substandard Streets and Capital Renewal. The purpose of PERs is to identify improvements that would address the existing substandard street conditions, as well as increase connectivity and access for all roadway users.

Public engagement during this project serves to gain an understanding for people's experiences utilizing the street, contextualizing problem areas and issues for project engineers and planners.

As part of the initial phase of outreach for this project, a public meeting and a pop-up informational session were held with community members to raise awareness of the project and to solicit feedback from the community. Details for each meeting are summarized below. In addition, an online survey was shared with community leaders, businesses, neighbors, and neighborhood schools.

## PUBLIC MEETING 1

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*Barbara Jordan Elementary School*

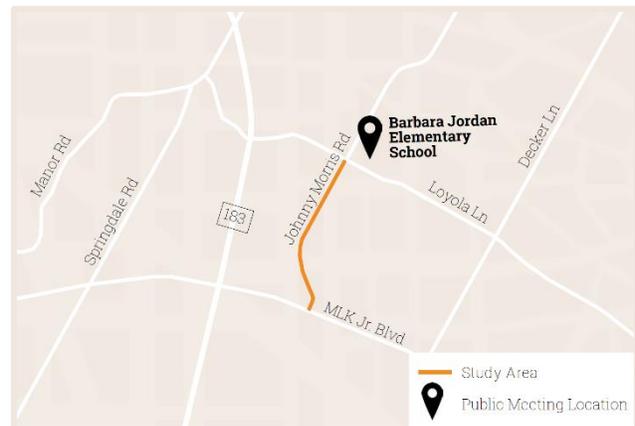
*Tuesday, February 6, 2018*

*5:30 PM – 7:30 PM*

### EVENT INFORMATION

The project's first public meeting was held Tuesday, February 6, 2018 at Barbara Jordan Elementary School, on the northern end of the project area and a major destination on Johnny Morris. City of Austin and consultant staff

members worked with school leaders to secure a meeting space and inform community members of the meeting to share their experiences on Johnny Morris Rd.



### WHAT WE HEARD

The issue voiced most commonly by participants related to a tradeoff of potentially losing school bus service in adjacent communities if sidewalks are added to Johnny Morris. Several participants expressed visibility and flooding concerns, particularly on the southern stretch of the project area and suggested improving landscape maintenance along the entire street.

## EVENT PROMOTION

### Figure 1-1: Mailer

Nearly 1,000 postcards were mailed advertising the meeting to property owners, residents, businesses, and schools on Johnny Morris Rd. and in surrounding communities. The project team relied on Travis County Appraisal District data to mail property owners at registered addresses and worked with Pecan Park Mobile Homes property management to directly mail over 500 residences.



Figure 1-2: English / Spanish Flyer



Figure 1-3: English / Spanish Event Postcard



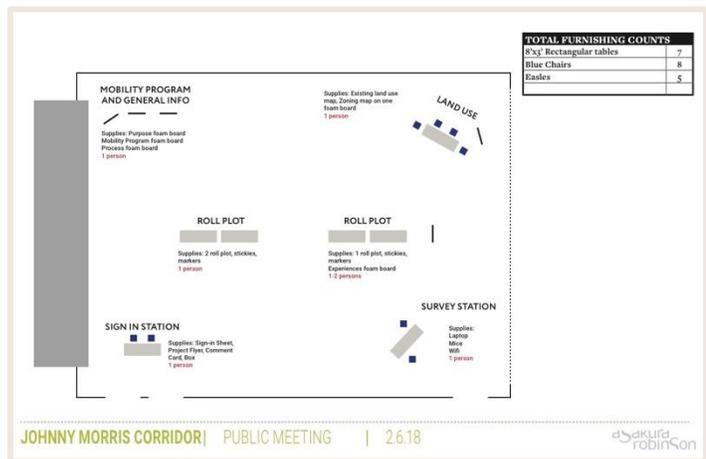
### Thursday Folders

The project team collaborated with Barbara Jordan Elementary School officials to distribute over six-hundred project flyers and public meeting postcards through the school’s weekly “Thursday Folders” students take home to their parents.

### MEETING MATERIALS

#### Figure 1-4: Room Layout

This graphic illustrates the proposed layout of the meeting space for the first public meeting.



#### Figure 1-5: Exhibits

### PURPOSE

The City of Austin is analyzing Johnny Morris Road between MLK Jr. Blvd. and Loyola Ln. in order to identify mobility and safety improvement recommendations to be included in a Preliminary Engineering Report. This is part of the 2016 Mobility Bond for substandard streets.

### 2016 MOBILITY BOND

- \$720 million for transportation and mobility improvements citywide
- Corridor Mobility Program - \$482 million
- Regional Mobility Program - \$101 million
- Local Mobility Program - \$137 million
  - Sidewalks - \$37.5 million
  - Safe Routes to School - \$27.5 million
  - Urban Trails - \$20 million
  - Bikeways - \$20 million
  - Intersection Safety/Vision Zero - \$15 million
  - Substandard Streets/Capital Renewal - \$11 million

Substandard streets are publicly owned roadways within the City of Austin's jurisdiction that do not meet current City of Austin requirements because they may have pavement widths that are less than 24 feet and typically lack curb and gutter, drainage, bicycle accommodations, and sidewalk infrastructure.

### PROCESS

- This project includes a review of existing conditions and constraints
- A preliminary Engineering Report will be developed to address substandard elements of the street
- There are no design or construction funds allocated for improvements, but having a plan ready allows the City to move forward quickly, as funding is identified
- Community engagement will be coordinated throughout the project to share information and collect feedback

### EXISTING LAND USE AND ZONING

### EXPERIENCES

- What mode of travel do you use on this road?
- Are there any improvements that you believe are important?
- Are there any specific issues you have experienced on Johnny Morris Road?
- ¿Cuál modo de transporte utiliza para viajar o pasar por la avenida?
- ¿Cuáles mejoramientos serán importante para la avenida Johnny Morris?
- ¿Existen otros inconvenientes que usted haya encarado en la avenida?

### EXPERIENCES

## Surveys

The project survey was made available in both digital version and hard copy for meeting attendees.

Figure 1-6: Event Photos



## POP-UP INFORMATIONAL EVENT

*Pecan Park Mobile Homes — Community Park*

*Saturday, March 3, 2018*

*8:00 AM – 11:00 AM*

### EVENT INFORMATION

The project team held an informational session Saturday, March 3, 2018 from 8:00 AM -11:00 AM at the neighborhood park located within the Pecan Park mobile home community. City of Austin and consultant staff invited neighbors to stop by for breakfast tacos and speak directly with the project team about their experiences on Johnny Morris Rd. and to help promote awareness of the project with their neighbors.



### PARTICIPATION

The project team contacted 74 neighborhood residents at the event, distributed over 200 postcards and secured 15 completed surveys. This number included people that stopped by to learn more about the project; neighbors who were outdoors and approached by project team staff; people driving by the community park or mailboxes; and people at the Johnny Morris soccer fields across the street from Pecan Park who were approached during the event.

### WHAT WE HEARD

Below are comments listed in quotations marks that were captured during the event. These comments were shared in Spanish and notated by our project team into English during the event. People expressed their observations and offered ideas that would help promote a safer experience on the roadway. In general, the lack of sidewalks, excessive vehicle speeds and poor visibility on Johnny Morris were the overarching concerns. One family that has been active in bringing neighbors together to advocate for more sidewalks in the area expressed concern about the racial inequities in the allocation of amenities like sidewalks, bike lanes, lighting, etc. In their own words, these safety issues, “would not be permitted in a white middle class neighborhood.”

**COMMENTS IN BRIEF**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <i>“Need sidewalks”</i>   | <i>“We are aware of the racial inequities of bike lanes and sidewalks -- the nicer parts of town where white people live have very nice amenities while our neighborhood cannot even get sidewalks”</i> |
| <i>“Crosswalk to bus stop”</i>  |   |
| <i>“Flooding - March 2015 rains flooded the park, more retention ponds”</i>   |   |
| <i>“Better street lighting”</i>   | <i>“White cyclists are also more informed on safety precautions than our people. We have to educate our people on the value of using lighting and safety features while they bike”</i>                  |
| <i>“I would like to ride my bike”</i>   |   |
| <i>“Many residents ride the bus who live here and there is no bus shelter”</i>  | <i>“Too many accidents! Need sidewalks! Cyclists also do not have facilities!”</i>  |
| <i>“Everyone is speeding”</i>   |   |
| <i>“Too much speeding”</i>  | <i>“The roads are windy and covered with brush which makes driving difficult and unsafe”</i>  |
| <i>“Dangerous for runners, too much speeding”</i>   |   |
| <i>“Motorbike and car racing”</i>   | <i>“We see many kids walking from school in the grass by the street”</i>  |
| <i>“This mobile home park is secure”</i>  |   |
| <i>“No sidewalks”</i>   | <i>“School bus drivers who enter the mobile home park drive aggressively and unsafe. The weight of the buses has ruined the pavement and altered elevations of our mobile homes”</i>                    |
| <i>“Kids ride their bikes on the road”</i>  |   |
| <i>“No sidewalks - very dangerous for children. My child’s friend was killed while riding his bike on the street and we are really concerned”</i> | <i>“Soccer field visitors park alongside the street”</i>  |
| <i>“Lack of sidewalks for children is very unsafe”</i>  |   |
| <i>“Concerned about being displaced”</i>  |   |

**EVENT PROMOTION**

**Property Management** | Neighbors were informed of the event a week prior through postcard distribution attached to each of the 500 households’ rent bill. This was coordinated with property management staff at Pecan Park Mobile Homes in the preceding weeks and helped raise awareness of the event with neighbors.

**Figure 1-7: English / Spanish Project Postcard**



**MEETING MATERIALS**

**Surveys (same as Public Meeting 1)**

**Exhibits (same as Public Meeting 1)**

**Breakfast Tacos (pictured below)**

**Figure 1-7: Event Photos**



**PROJECT SURVEY**

An online survey was made available in English and Spanish. Released in January with the website launch, the survey solicited feedback on people’s experiences on Johnny Morris Road and areas that need improvement. The survey was also made available at both outreach events, and has been used to expand the project’s email distribution list. The 10-question survey solicited a variety of information: how respondents used Johnny Morris Road; where they lived, worked, and/or went to school in relation to it; the mode(s) of transportation they used on the road; the frequency of road use, measured in days travelled per week; and desired improvements to the road. What follows is a summary of responses from 48 individuals, a little over two thirds (33) of whom completed the survey in English; the remaining third (15) of respondents completed the survey in Spanish. Responses provide a glimpse into people’s everyday experiences with Johnny Morris Road. Most respondents drive the corridor frequently and suggested enhancing sidewalks, crosswalks, and general safety conditions for all road users. As people were completing surveys at both outreach events, many stated that the limited set of sidewalks and bikeways forces most people to drive and increases vehicle congestion on Johnny Morris.

#### USE (Select All That Apply)

Respondents to this question reported using Johnny Morris Road for a variety of reasons. The most-reported reason for using the road was that they ‘travel on the road’ (25, or 35.7 percent of responses), followed by commuting (20, or 28.6 percent of responses). Ten, or 14.3 percent of respondents, reported working on Johnny Morris, and the same number reported attending school, or having a child attending school along the road. Only four respondents, or 5.7 percent, reported using the road solely for recreation, shopping, or other uses, but not for living or working.

#### ZIP CODE OF RESIDENCE

Most respondents to this question — 21, or 61.8 percent — reported their home zip code as 78724, which surrounds Johnny Morris Road. (And all but one of the 13 Spanish-speaking respondents to this question reported this as their home zip code.) The remainder of respondents reported a mix of area zip codes: 78751 (1); 78759 (1); 78652 (1); 78702(1); 78703 (2); 78704 (1); 78723 (2); and an unidentified zip code from Dallas.

#### ZIP CODE OF WORK OR SCHOOL

Thirteen, or half of respondents to this question, reported their workplace or school zip code as 78724, indicating a high portion of respondents interacted with Johnny Morris Road every day. The remaining zip codes were split somewhat evenly across area zip codes: 78741 (1); 78751 (1); 78757 (1); 78746 (1); 78652 (1); 78701 (2); 78703 (1); 78704 (1); 78721 (1); and N/A or retired (2).

#### MODE(S) OF TRANSPORTATION (Select All That Apply)

Thirty, or half of responses to this question, cited driving a personal vehicle as a mode of transportation used on Johnny Morris Road. Walking garnered the next-highest number of responses (8, or 13.3 percent), followed by carpool / rideshare, and biking (7, or 11.7 percent, each), transit (6, or 10 percent), and other responses (2, or 3.3 percent), such as school bus.

### FREQUENCY OF USE (Multiple Choice)

Eighteen, or half of all respondents to this question, reported using Johnny Morris Road seven days a week. The mean number of days respondents reported using Johnny Morris was 4.9 days, whereas the median number of days was 6.5. As such, the level of familiarity of this group of respondents with Johnny Morris is moderate to high.

### DESIRED IMPROVEMENTS (Select All That Apply & Open-Ended Response)

Responses to this question did not surface one priority improvement over others — desired improvements were fairly evenly distributed. ‘Pedestrian crossings’ gained the most responses (30, or 19.2 percent), followed by ‘Improving accessibility to and from crosswalks’ (25, or 16 percent), ‘Sidewalks’ (24, or 15 percent), ‘Drainage to reduce standing water or flooding,’ and ‘Safe places for turning’ (23, or 14.7 percent, each), ‘Improvements to landscaping / street trees’ (21, or 13.5 percent), and ‘Other’ (10, or 6.4 percent). Responses in the ‘Other’ category ranged: bus stop shelters and seating; bike lanes; safe parking by the school; visibility through brush trimming; and improved street lighting.

When asked about additional issues with Johnny Morris Road in the open-ended response, respondents varied widely. Most cited were high vehicle speeds and pedestrian safety (e.g., lack of sidewalks), which were each mentioned three times in responses. Other issues surfaced included: low visibility, particularly at blind corners or where grass / brush is high; landscaping issues (e.g., tree overhang that hits tall trucks, high brush for pedestrians to walk through); vehicle congestion during Barbara Jordan Elementary dropoff and pickup times; and the need for benches at bus stops for people with disabilities.