

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – WESTLAKE DRIVE/CEDAR STREET PROJECT**

### **1. Can you explain the December 2019 cross section rendering?**

From left to right, the modified cross section diagram shows the distance between the property/right of way line and the retaining wall (25'), as well as the reduced 8-foot wide shared-use path, which has been placed adjacent to the curb of the connector road. The total cliff cut saved is approximately 7 feet. The new northbound connector road will be lower than the top of the cliffs until it meets Westlake Drive. The existing roadbed will be excavated to allow the new Loop 360 mainlanes to be placed approximately 30' underneath Westlake Drive. South of Westlake Drive, the mainlanes will gradually taper up to meet the current elevation.

### **2. Does an underpass require a greater width than an overpass would?**

No – the width requirements for the roadway are approximately the same.

### **3. Why can't TxDOT use the median for the current project?**

TxDOT is preserving the median for future transportation improvements as detailed in the Loop 360 Feasibility Study completed in 2016. Preserving the median at this time helps to avoid potential reconstruction of the road in the future. The final report for the Feasibility Study can be found on our website, Loop360Project.com.

### **4. Why does TxDOT require a shared-use path?**

TxDOT is working to build a safe and reliable transportation network for all Texans. This is why TxDOT looks to include shared-use paths in new construction projects, accommodating bicyclists and pedestrians. This not only expands access to communities, but can improve quality of life.

When developing a project that is federally funded, TxDOT is required to follow guidelines mandated by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). These guidelines require transportation agencies to make bicycle and pedestrian accommodations a “routine part of their planning, design, construction, operations and maintenance activities” and to make accommodations for persons with disabilities in accordance with civil rights mandates, unless there are exceptional circumstances, which prohibit agencies from doing so.

Guidelines must be followed in order to ensure federal project funding. Review the FHWA requirements here:

[https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle\\_pedestrian/guidance/design.cfm](https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle_pedestrian/guidance/design.cfm)

### **5. Why Isn't the SUP narrowed to 8 feet the whole length of the roadway?**

The design of the shared-use path will follow the guidance in the American Association of State Highway and Transportation (AASHTO) Officials' Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities. AASHTO guidelines require a 10' minimum shared-use path where feasible but allows for narrowing the path to 8' for short distances where constraints exist.

**6. Can you indicate where the retaining walls will be necessary and where there will not be a need to retain the cliffs? Who will determine what materials are used to retain the cliffs?**

Retaining walls are typically required in locations where there is less than a 60' distance between the edge of right of way and the edge of the roadway/shared-use path. The 60' distance allows for a 20' rock catchment basin, and a 40' distance between the edge of right of way/properties and the natural rock face. Retaining walls will be needed beginning approximately 50' south of the Westlake Drive intersection. They will stretch southward approximately 850', to the beginning of the rock catchment zone.

Where retaining walls are required, the materials used will consist of structural elements to "hold up" the edge of the new rock cut and will include an aesthetic treatment along the face of the wall that will be visible to drivers. The structural elements will be designed by the project's consultant engineer to best suit the specific site conditions and will then be reviewed and approved by TxDOT's technical staff. The aesthetic treatments along the face of the walls was determined by feedback collected from the public over the past year.

**7. Can you explain the rock catchment zone - its purpose, how deep it is, and how long it is?**

The rock catchment zone exists to mitigate any potential impact of falling rocks in areas where there is no retaining wall and the cliff face is natural. South of Westlake Drive, the rock catchment zone is approximately 20' deep as required by TxDOT design standards. The length of the rock catchment zone south of Westlake Drive, and within the Westlake Drive project, is approximately 1,200' along Loop 360.

**8. Will there be sound walls? If so, where will any sound walls be placed in relation to the retaining walls?**

A noise analysis was conducted as part of the environmental study. The analysis considered the current level of noise at many locations throughout the study area, calculated existing and projected future traffic noise levels and considered noise reduction measures, such as sound walls. The results of this analysis indicated there are no projected noise impacts within the corridor; therefore, no noise abatement measures were considered for the project.

**9. How deep are the cliff cuts and does the depth vary depending on the location?**

The depth of the cliff cuts do vary depending on the location. Where retaining walls will be built, the proposed cliff cut will vary from 35' to 41' from the existing edge of the cliff. Where the cliff cut transitions to a natural rock face, the proposed cut will vary from 50' to 56'.

**10. What entity pays for loss in property values based on roadway design?**

If TxDOT were acquiring right of way, damages would be considered in the estimation from the appraisal. However, the project does not currently involve right of way acquisition.

The project team has consulted with the TxDOT right of way department for more

information. Their official response on the matter is: You are entitled to receive adequate compensation if your property is taken for a public use. The Texas Constitution and the Texas Property Code have been interpreted by the Texas Supreme Court to guarantee compensation if part of your property is taken for a public use. However, the courts have ruled that construction inconvenience due to work on the existing road right of way and problems that are common to the general public are not compensable. Abutting land owners that do not suffer any "taking" are generally not awarded any compensation for temporary construction inconvenience or injury that is of a nature as is suffered in common with other property in the community. (Referring to page 780 of State v. Schmidt 867 S.W.2d 769 (Texas Supreme Court 1994)).