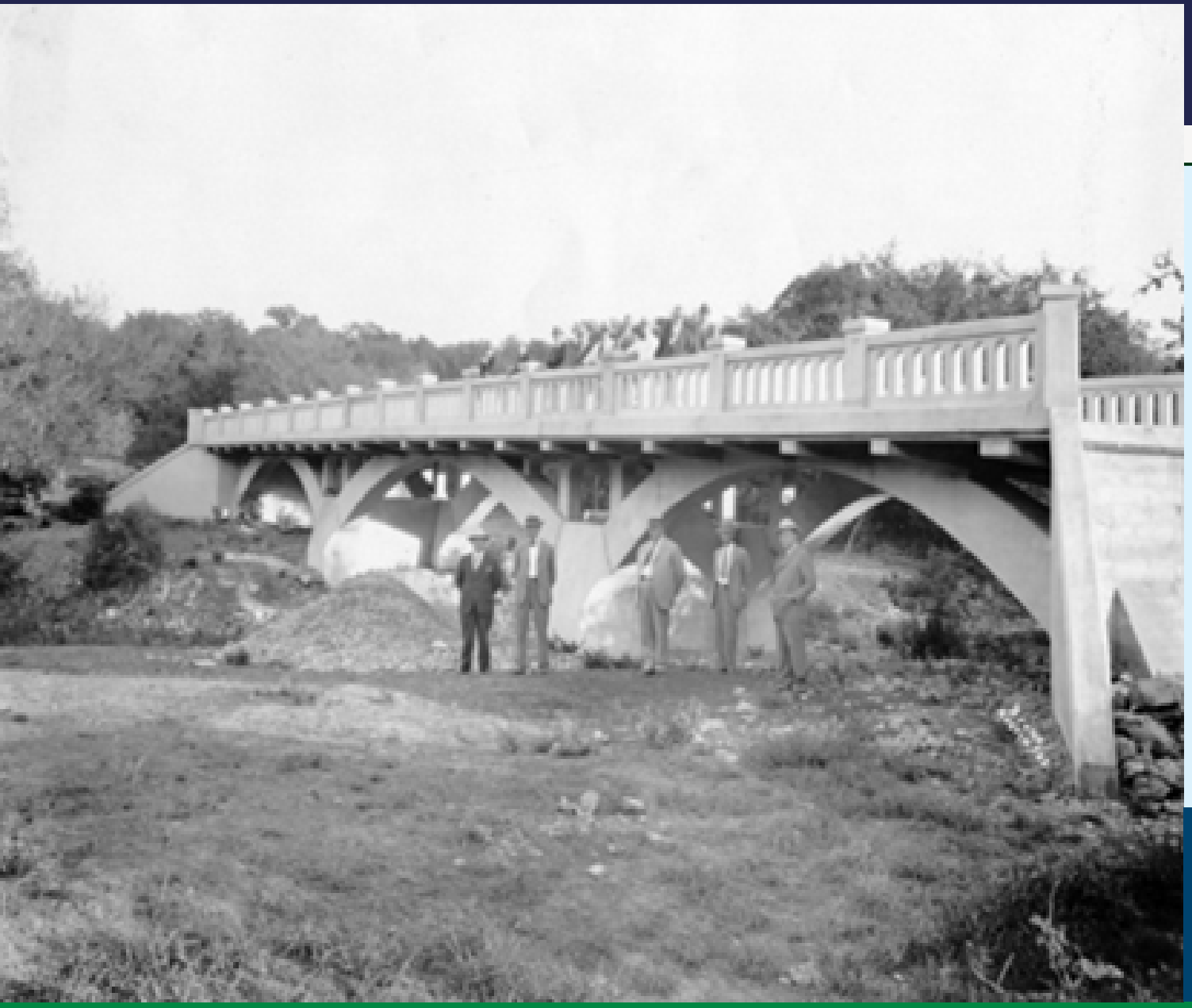
Parks Board – Barton Springs Rd. Bridge Update

May 6, 2026

Eric Bailey, P.E. – Deputy Director Capital Delivery Services

Barton Springs Road Bridge



100
years old
built in 1926

20,000
Vehicles per day

1946
Bridge Expansion

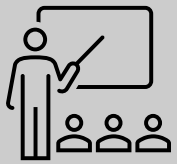
Key Entrance
to Zilker Park and for Major City Events

FUNDING SOURCE:

- Preliminary Design: 2012, 2018 and 2020 Bonds
- Design: 2020 Bond
- Construction: FHWA/City

Project Development Process

PRELIMINARY PHASE
2015 - 2023



PUBLIC MEETING
April 2023

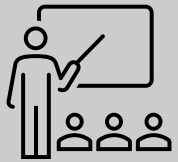
RESPOND TO COMMENTS
Summer 2023

REFINE REPORT
Fall 2023

COUNCIL ACTION
December 2023

DESIGN PHASE
2024 - 2027

60% DESIGN + NEPA



PUBLIC MEETINGS + BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

FINAL DESIGN AND PERMITTING

WE ARE HERE

CONSTRUCTION PHASE
2027 - 2029

BID AND AWARD + COUNCIL ACTION

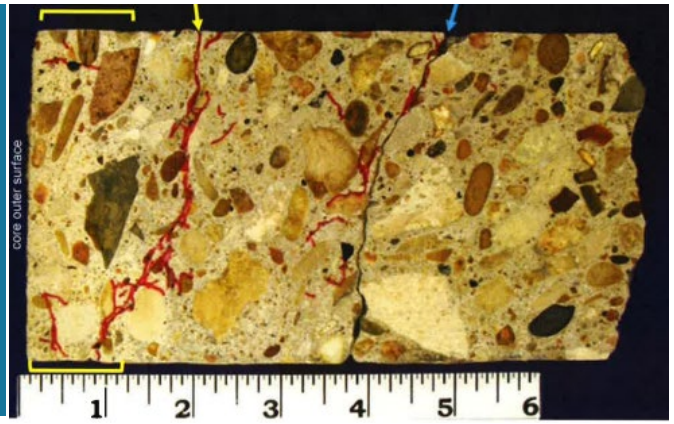
CONSTRUCTION

Current Condition

Spalling Concrete in Bridge Structure

Delamination of Beams

Concrete Cores



Curb And Railing Do Not Meet Current ADA Standards

Load Restricted As Of November 2023 – Heavy Vehicles Moving Eastbound Must Use Outer Lanes

Analysis

Structural and Mobility Analysis:

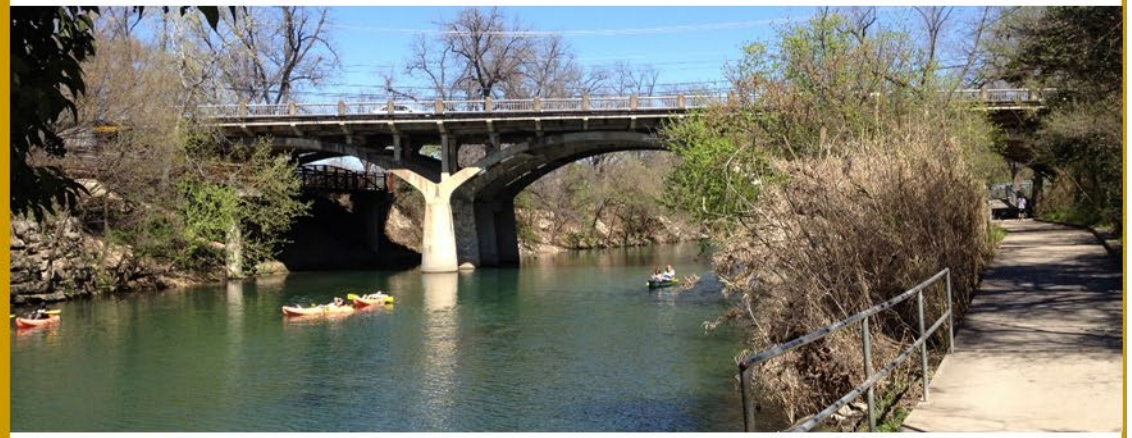
- External Structure - Spalling Concrete
- Internal Structure – Deteriorating Steel
- Geotechnical Data –Replacement Design
- Cost/Benefit Analysis – extended life vs. cost
- ADA compliance – Pedestrian Circulation
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Mobility – no improvement to existing condition

Historic Analysis:

- Coordinated with US Army Corps (USACE) and Texas Historic Commission (THC)
- The bridge is a contributing feature to the Zilker Park Historic Landmark designation
- The Texas Historic Commission has approved potentially fully replacing the bridge. As the process continues, the final design will be reviewed and approved by USACE and THC.

Project Options

Rehabilitation Options



1. **PRESERVE** existing structure, consider separate bike/ped structure (minimal rework - light touch)

2. **REHABILITATE** and widen deck to include bike/ped

Replacement Options

RECONSTRUCT BRIDGE completely and widen deck to include bike/ped

1. **One-Span** option

2. **Two-Span** option

3. **Three-Span** option

Bridge Rehabilitation

Bridge Structure Rehabilitation

1 Remove Existing Bridge Deck and Spandrel Columns

2 Remaining Portion of Existing Structure

3 New Components: Exterior Pairs of Arch Ribs, Spandrel Columns, Deck, and Abutment Extensions

Less than half of the original structure will remain

- ✓ Remaining structure will require refacing with new material surfaces
- ✓ View of old arches will be mostly blocked by new structure

City Council Actions

1 Direction from Council in 2020 Bond Resolution (20200812-011):

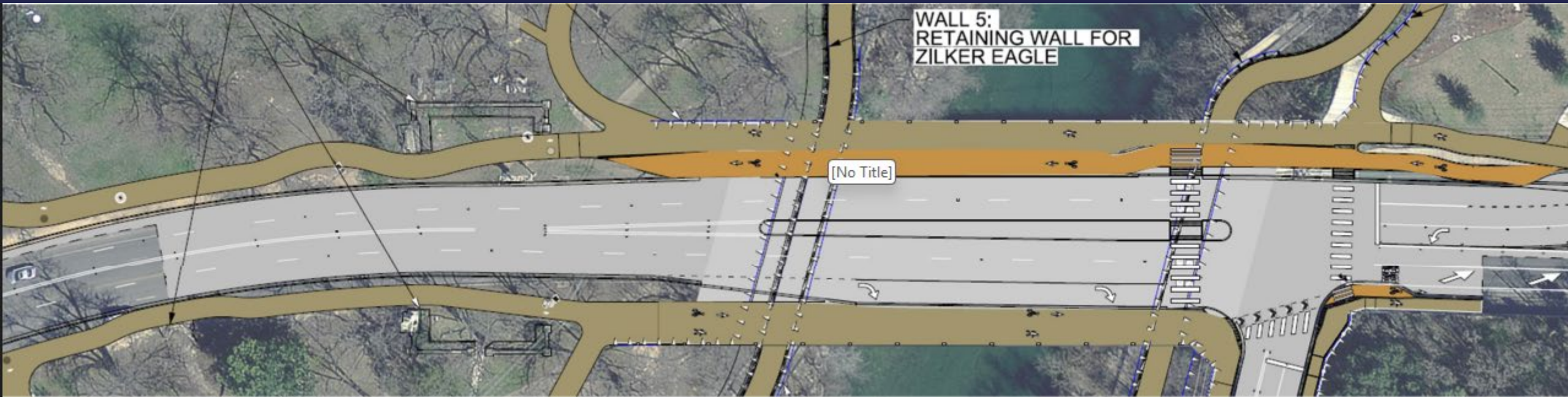
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

Funding for Barton Springs Road Improvements shall only be used for improvements between Barton Boulevard and Lou Neff Road after completion of the preliminary engineering study for a Barton Springs Bridge, which shall include a community engagement process, and after presentation of improvement options, a public hearing, and approval of options by City Council. Any improvements shall be aligned with the Zilker Park Vision Plan once approved by Council.

2 Previous Council Action/Hearings:

11/30/23 – Council conducts a public hearing to recommend the bridge replacement alternative
12/12/23 – Council work session on the recommended option
12/14/23 – Council conducts a public hearing and directs Staff to pursue replacement option
03/07/24 – Council Directs TPW Director to apply for a federal bridge grant to replace the bridge
05/02/24 – Council approves additional engineering services for the bridge replacement
04/24/25 – Council approves accepting $32M in grant funds from the FHWA for bridge replacement

New Bridge Features



Bike Lanes

- ✓ Widened Bike Lane
- ✓ Accommodate off-road biker trail users

Sidewalk / Path

- ✓ Accommodate hiking Trails
- ✓ Wider Ped. Paths
- ✓ Accommodate Pedestrians for Special Events

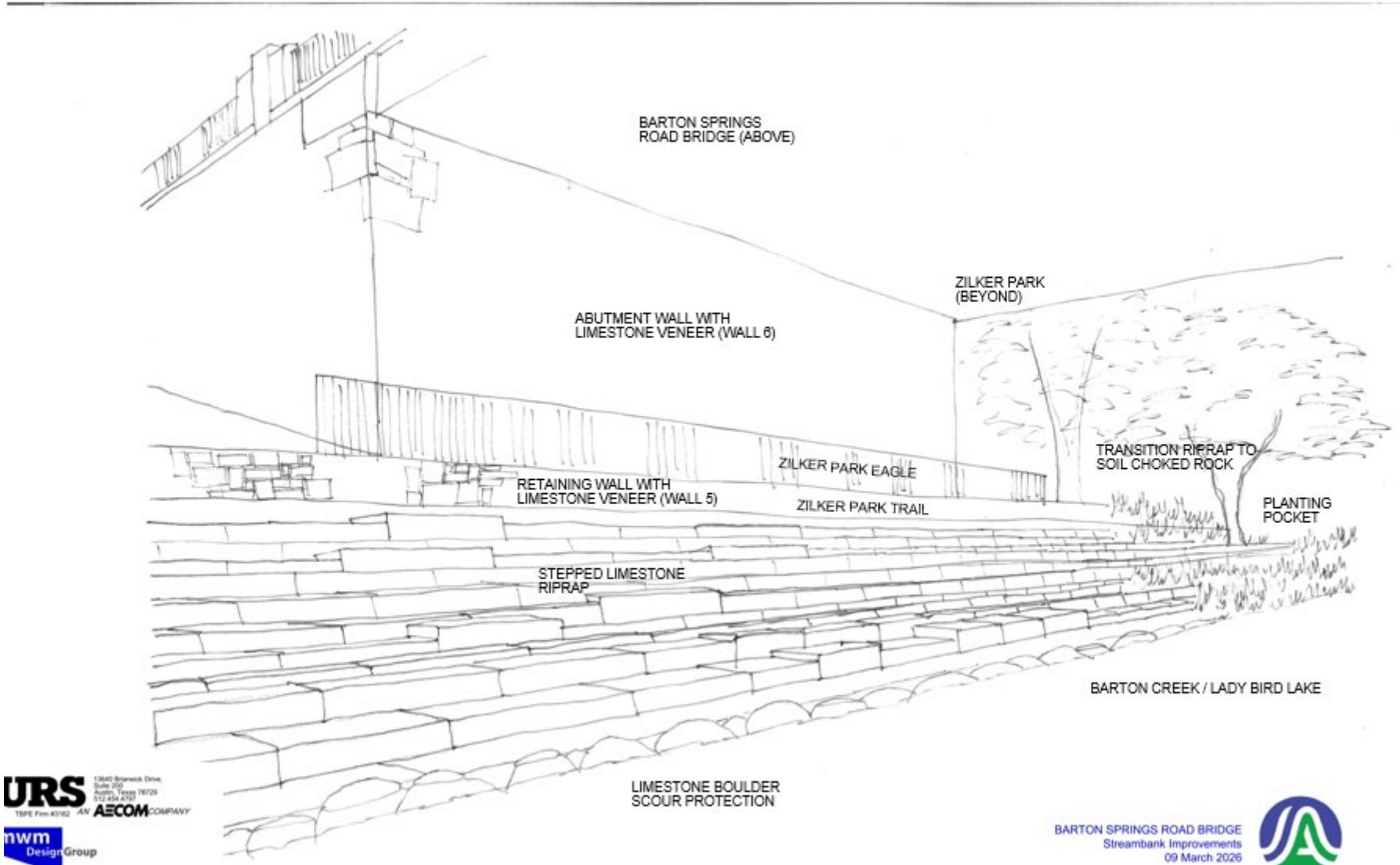
Shared Use Path

- ✓ Multimodal areas to accommodate off-road hike and bike trail users

Proposed Bridge

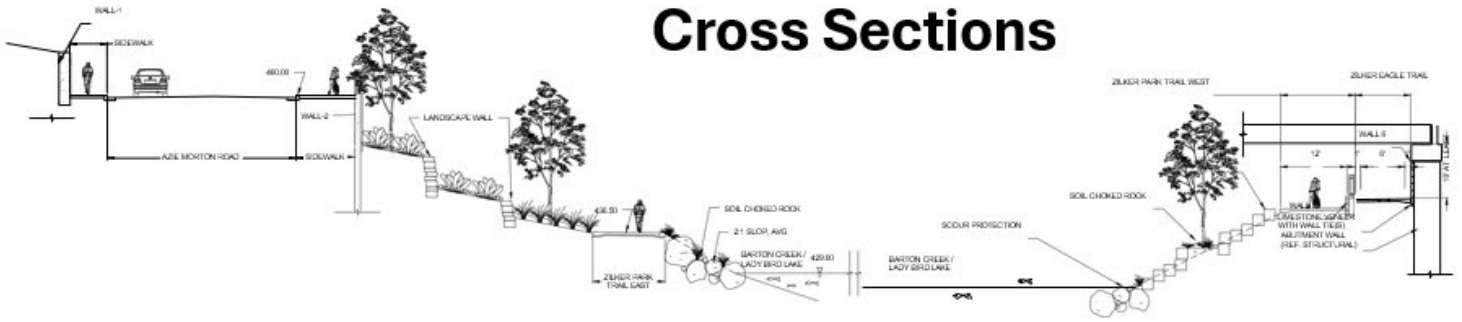
- ✓ Longer service life length
- ✓ Wider bridge
- ✓ Better alignment for safety
- ✓ Dedicated bike lanes

Sections/Features



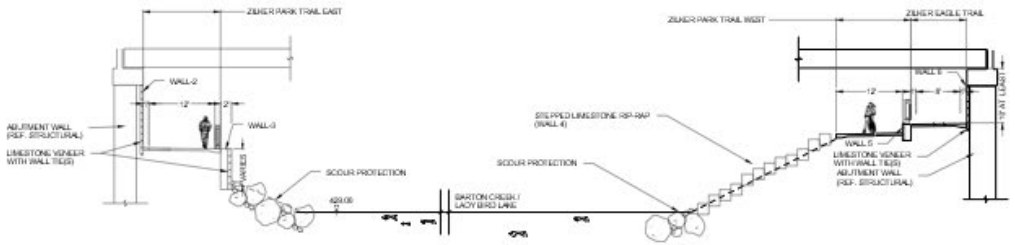
Sections/Features

Cross Sections

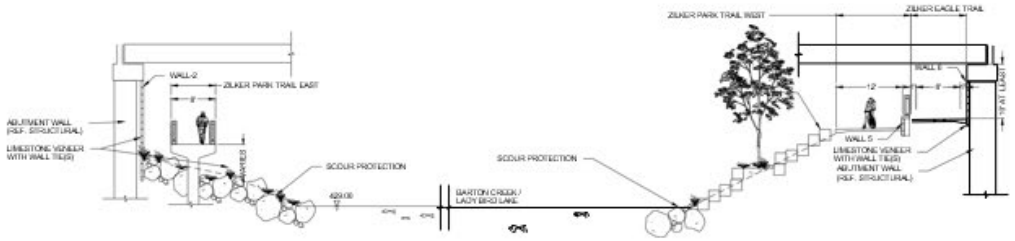


WEST

WALL SECTION - AZIE MORTON



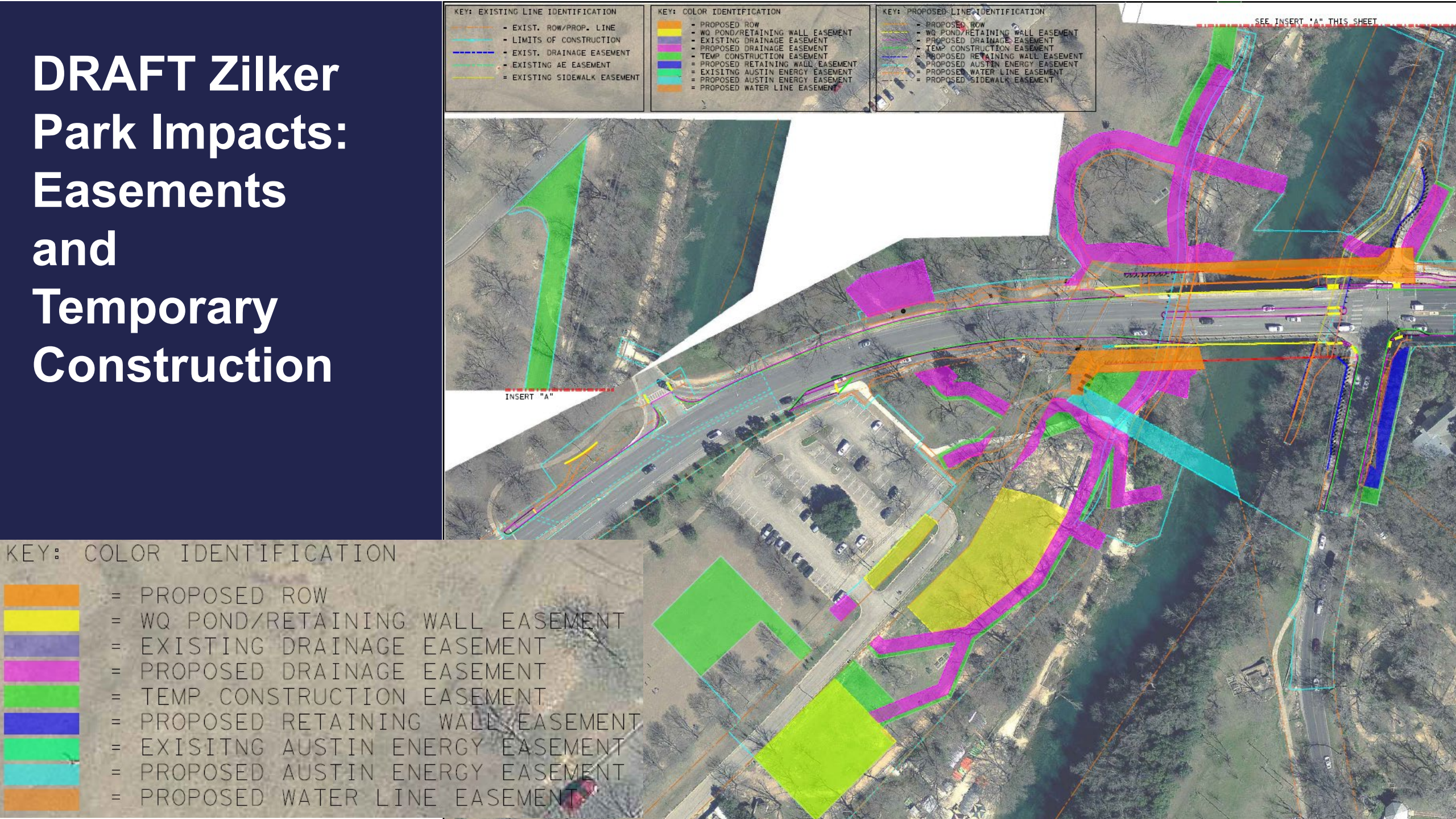
WALL SECTION - UNDER BRIDGE



WALL SECTION - PLANTING POCKET

Sections/Features

DRAFT Zilker Park Impacts: Easements and Temporary Construction



Next Steps

- **Initial reviews from THC and USACE indicate replacement as a viable alternative**
- **As the project moves through NEPA process, all jurisdictional agencies and departments will review accordingly:**
    - Texas Historic Commission
    - US Army Corps
    - COA Permitting:
        - City of Austin Development Services
        - Boards & Commissions (Environmental, Mobility, Parks, Landmarks, etc.)
        - Community Outreach
- **Project received Federal Highway Administration Bridge Improvement Program grant for $32M.**
- **Anticipated NEPA clearance at the end of 2026, bidding in 2027**

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS