

HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION

June 03, 2020

HDRC CASE NO: 2020-213
ADDRESS: 114 W COMMERCE ST
LEGAL DESCRIPTION: NCB 123 BLK LOT E 119.34 & W 84.58 OF TR-1
ZONING: D
CITY COUNCIL DIST.: 1
DISTRICT: Main/Military Plaza Historic District
APPLICANT: Sean Reich/City of San Antonio Public Works
OWNER: San Antonio San Antonio/City of San Antonio Public Works
TYPE OF WORK: Right-of-way improvements
APPLICATION RECEIVED: May 15, 2020
60-DAY REVIEW: Not applicable due to City Council Emergency Orders
CASE MANAGER: Rachel Rettaliata

REQUEST:

The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for approval to perform road, sidewalk, pedestrian, bicycling, lighting, and landscaping improvements in the right-of-way of W Commerce corridor between Frio Street and Alazan Creek.

APPLICABLE CITATIONS:

Historic Design Guidelines, Chapter 5, Guidelines for Site Elements

1. Topography

A. TOPOGRAPHIC FEATURES

- i. *Historic topography*—Avoid significantly altering the topography of a property (i.e., extensive grading). Do not alter character-defining features such as berms or sloped front lawns that help define the character of the public right-of-way. Maintain the established lawn to help prevent erosion. If turf is replaced over time, new plant materials in these areas should be low-growing and suitable for the prevention of erosion.
- ii. *New construction*—Match the historic topography of adjacent lots prevalent along the block face for new construction. Do not excavate raised lots to accommodate additional building height or an additional story for new construction.
- iii. *New elements*—Minimize changes in topography resulting from new elements, like driveways and walkways, through appropriate siting and design. New site elements should work with, rather than change, character-defining topography when possible.

2. Fences and Walls

A. HISTORIC FENCES AND WALLS

- i. *Preserve*—Retain historic fences and walls.
- ii. *Repair and replacement*—Replace only deteriorated sections that are beyond repair. Match replacement materials (including mortar) to the color, texture, size, profile, and finish of the original.
- iii. *Application of paint and cementitious coatings*—Do not paint historic masonry walls or cover them with stone facing or stucco or other cementitious coatings.

B. NEW FENCES AND WALLS

- i. *Design*—New fences and walls should appear similar to those used historically within the district in terms of their scale, transparency, and character. Design of fence should respond to the design and materials of the house or main structure.
- ii. *Location*—Avoid installing a fence or wall in a location where one did not historically exist, particularly within the front yard. The appropriateness of a front yard fence or wall is dependent on conditions within a specific historic district. New front yard fences or wall should not be introduced within historic districts that have not historically had them.
- iii. *Height*—Limit the height of new fences and walls within the front yard to a maximum of four feet. The appropriateness of a front yard fence is dependent on conditions within a specific historic district. New front yard fences should not be introduced within historic districts that have not historically had them. If a taller fence or wall existed

historically, additional height may be considered. The height of a new retaining wall should not exceed the height of the slope it retains.

iv. *Prohibited materials*—Do not use exposed concrete masonry units (CMU), Keystone or similar interlocking retaining wall systems, concrete block, vinyl fencing, or chain link fencing.

v. *Appropriate materials*—Construct new fences or walls of materials similar to fence materials historically used in the district. Select materials that are similar in scale, texture, color, and form as those historically used in the district, and that are compatible with the main structure. Screening incompatible uses—Review alternative fence heights and materials for appropriateness where residential properties are adjacent to commercial or other potentially incompatible uses.

C. PRIVACY FENCES AND WALLS

i. *Relationship to front facade*—Set privacy fences back from the front façade of the building, rather than aligning them with the front façade of the structure to reduce their visual prominence.

ii. *Location* – Do not use privacy fences in front yards.

3. Landscape Design

A. PLANTINGS

i. *Historic Gardens*—Maintain front yard gardens when appropriate within a specific historic district.

ii. *Historic Lawns*—Do not fully remove and replace traditional lawn areas with impervious hardscape. Limit the removal of lawn areas to mulched planting beds or pervious hardscapes in locations where they would historically be found, such as along fences, walkways, or drives. Low-growing plantings should be used in historic lawn areas; invasive or large-scale species should be avoided. Historic lawn areas should never be reduced by more than 50%.

iii. *Native xeric plant materials*—Select native and/or xeric plants that thrive in local conditions and reduce watering usage. See UDC Appendix E: San Antonio Recommended Plant List—All Suited to Xeriscape Planting Methods, for a list of appropriate materials and planting methods. Select plant materials with a similar character, growth habit, and light requirements as those being replaced.

iv. *Plant palettes*—If a varied plant palette is used, incorporate species of taller heights, such informal elements should be restrained to small areas of the front yard or to the rear or side yard so as not to obstruct views of or otherwise distract from the historic structure.

v. *Maintenance*—Maintain existing landscape features. Do not introduce landscape elements that will obscure the historic structure or are located as to retain moisture on walls or foundations (e.g., dense foundation plantings or vines) or as to cause damage.

B. ROCKS OR HARDSCAPE

i. *Impervious surfaces* —Do not introduce large pavers, asphalt, or other impervious surfaces where they were not historically located.

ii. *Pervious and semi-pervious surfaces*—New pervious hardscapes should be limited to areas that are not highly visible, and should not be used as wholesale replacement for plantings. If used, small plantings should be incorporated into the design.

iii. *Rock mulch and gravel* - Do not use rock mulch or gravel as a wholesale replacement for lawn area. If used, plantings should be incorporated into the design.

C. MULCH

Organic mulch – Organic mulch should not be used as a wholesale replacement for plant material. Organic mulch with appropriate plantings should be incorporated in areas where appropriate such as beneath a tree canopy.

i. *Inorganic mulch* – Inorganic mulch should not be used in highly-visible areas and should never be used as a wholesale replacement for plant material. Inorganic mulch with appropriate plantings should be incorporated in areas where appropriate such as along a foundation wall where moisture retention is discouraged.

D. TREES

i. *Preservation*—Preserve and protect from damage existing mature trees and heritage trees. See UDC Section 35-523 (Tree Preservation) for specific requirements.

ii. *New Trees* – Select new trees based on site conditions. Avoid planting new trees in locations that could potentially cause damage to a historic structure or other historic elements. Species selection and planting procedure should be done in accordance with guidance from the City Arborist.

iii. *Maintenance* – Proper pruning encourages healthy growth and can extend the lifespan of trees. Avoid unnecessary or harmful pruning. A certified, licensed arborist is recommended for the pruning of mature trees and heritage trees.

4. Residential Streetscapes

A. PLANTING STRIPS

- i. *Street trees*—Protect and encourage healthy street trees in planting strips. Replace damaged or dead trees with trees of a similar species, size, and growth habit as recommended by the City Arborist.
- ii. *Lawns*—Maintain the use of traditional lawn in planting strips or low plantings where a consistent pattern has been retained along the block frontage. If mulch or gravel beds are used, low-growing plantings should be incorporated into the design.
- iii. *Alternative materials*—Do not introduce impervious hardscape, raised planting beds, or other materials into planting strips where they were not historically found.

B. PARKWAYS AND PLANTED MEDIANS

- i. *Historic plantings*—Maintain the park-like character of historic parkways and planted medians by preserving mature vegetation and retaining historic design elements. Replace damaged or dead plant materials with species of a like size, growth habit, and ornamental characteristics.
- ii. *Hardscape*—Do not introduce new pavers, concrete, or other hardscape materials into parkways and planted medians where they were not historically found.

C. STREET ELEMENTS

- i. *Site elements*—Preserve historic street lights, street markers, roundabouts, and other unique site elements found within the public right-of-way as street improvements and other public works projects are completed over time.
- ii. *Historic paving materials*—Retain historic paving materials, such as brick pavers or colored paving, within the public right-of-way and repair in place with like materials.

5. Sidewalks, Walkways, Driveways, and Curbing

A. SIDEWALKS AND WALKWAYS

- i. *Maintenance*—Repair minor cracking, settling, or jamming along sidewalks to prevent uneven surfaces. Retain and repair historic sidewalk and walkway paving materials—often brick or concrete—in place.
- ii. *Replacement materials*—Replace those portions of sidewalks or walkways that are deteriorated beyond repair. Every effort should be made to match existing sidewalk color and material.
- iii. *Width and alignment*—Follow the historic alignment, configuration, and width of sidewalks and walkways. Alter the historic width or alignment only where absolutely necessary to accommodate the preservation of a significant tree.
- iv. *Stamped concrete*—Preserve stamped street names, business insignias, or other historic elements of sidewalks and walkways when replacement is necessary.
- v. *ADA compliance*—Limit removal of historic sidewalk materials to the immediate intersection when ramps are added to address ADA requirements.

B. DRIVEWAYS

- i. *Driveway configuration*—Retain and repair in place historic driveway configurations, such as ribbon drives. Incorporate a similar driveway configuration—materials, width, and design—to that historically found on the site. Historic driveways are typically no wider than 10 feet. Pervious paving surfaces may be considered where replacement is necessary to increase stormwater infiltration.
- ii. *Curb cuts and ramps*—Maintain the width and configuration of original curb cuts when replacing historic driveways. Avoid introducing new curb cuts where not historically found.

C. CURBING

- i. *Historic curbing*—Retain historic curbing wherever possible. Historic curbing in San Antonio is typically constructed of concrete with a curved or angular profile.
- ii. *Replacement curbing*—Replace curbing in-kind when deteriorated beyond repair. Where in-kind replacement is not be feasible, use a comparable substitute that duplicates the color, texture, durability, and profile of the original. Retaining walls and curbing should not be added to the sidewalk design unless absolutely necessary.

6. Non-Residential and Mixed-Use Streetscapes

A. STREET FURNITURE

- i. *Historic street furniture*—Preserve historic site furnishings, including benches, lighting, tree grates, and other features.
- ii. *New furniture*—Use street furniture such as benches, trash receptors, tree grates, and tables that are simple in design and are compatible with the style and scale of adjacent buildings and outdoor spaces when historic furnishings do not exist.

B. STREET TREES

- i. *Street trees*—Protect and maintain existing street trees. Replace damaged or dead trees with trees of a similar species, size, and growth habit.

C. PAVING

i. *Maintenance and alterations*—Repair stone, masonry, or glass block pavers using in-kind materials whenever possible. Utilize similar materials that are compatible with the original in terms of composition, texture, color, and detail, when in-kind replacement is not possible.

D. LIGHTING

i. *General*—See UDC Section 35-392 for detailed lighting standards (height, shielding, illumination of uses, etc.).

ii. *Maintenance and alterations*—Preserve historic street lights in place and maintain through regular cleaning and repair as needed.

iii. *Pedestrian lighting*—Use appropriately scaled lighting for pedestrian walkways, such as short poles or light posts (bollards).

iv. *Shielding*—Direct light downward and shield light fixtures using cut-off shields to limit light spill onto adjacent properties.

v. *Safety lighting*—Install motion sensors that turn lights on and off automatically when safety or security is a concern. Locate these lighting fixtures as discreetly as possible on historic structures and avoid adding more fixtures than necessary.

7. Off-Street Parking

A. LOCATION

i. *Preferred location*—Place parking areas for non-residential and mixed-use structures at the rear of the site, behind primary structures to hide them from the public right-of-way. On corner lots, place parking areas behind the primary structure and set them back as far as possible from the side streets. Parking areas to the side of the primary structure are acceptable when location behind the structure is not feasible. See UDC Section 35-310 for district-specific standards.

ii. *Front*—Do not add off-street parking areas within the front yard setback as to not disrupt the continuity of the streetscape.

iii. *Access*—Design off-street parking areas to be accessed from alleys or secondary streets rather than from principal streets whenever possible.

B. DESIGN

i. *Screening*—Screen off-street parking areas with a landscape buffer, wall, or ornamental fence two to four feet high—or a combination of these methods. Landscape buffers are preferred due to their ability to absorb carbon dioxide. See UDC Section 35-510 for buffer requirements.

ii. *Materials*—Use permeable parking surfaces when possible to reduce run-off and flooding. See UDC Section 35-526(j) for specific standards.

iii. *Parking structures*—Design new parking structures to be similar in scale, materials, and rhythm of the surrounding historic district when new parking structures are necessary.

8. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance

A. HISTORIC FEATURES

i. *Avoid damage*—Minimize the damage to the historic character and materials of the building and sidewalk while complying with all aspects of accessibility requirements.

ii. *Doors and door openings*—Avoid modifying historic doors or door openings that do not conform to the building and/or accessibility codes, particularly on the front façade. Consider using a discreetly located addition as a means of providing accessibility.

B. ENTRANCES

i. *Grade changes*—Incorporate minor changes in grade to modify sidewalk or walkway elevation to provide an accessible entry when possible.

ii. *Residential entrances*—The preferred location of new ramps is at the side or rear of the building when convenient for the user.

iii. *Non-residential and mixed use entrances*—Provide an accessible entrance located as close to the primary entrance as possible when access to the front door is not feasible.

C. DESIGN

i. *Materials*—Design ramps and lifts to compliment the historic character of the building and be visually unobtrusive as to minimize the visual impact, especially when visible from the public right-of-way.

ii. *Screening*—Screen ramps, lifts, or other elements related to ADA compliance using appropriate landscape materials. Refer to Guidelines for Site Elements for additional guidance.

iii. *Curb cuts*—Install new ADA curb cuts on historic sidewalks to be consistent with the existing sidewalk color and texture while minimizing damage to the historical sidewalk.

FINDINGS:

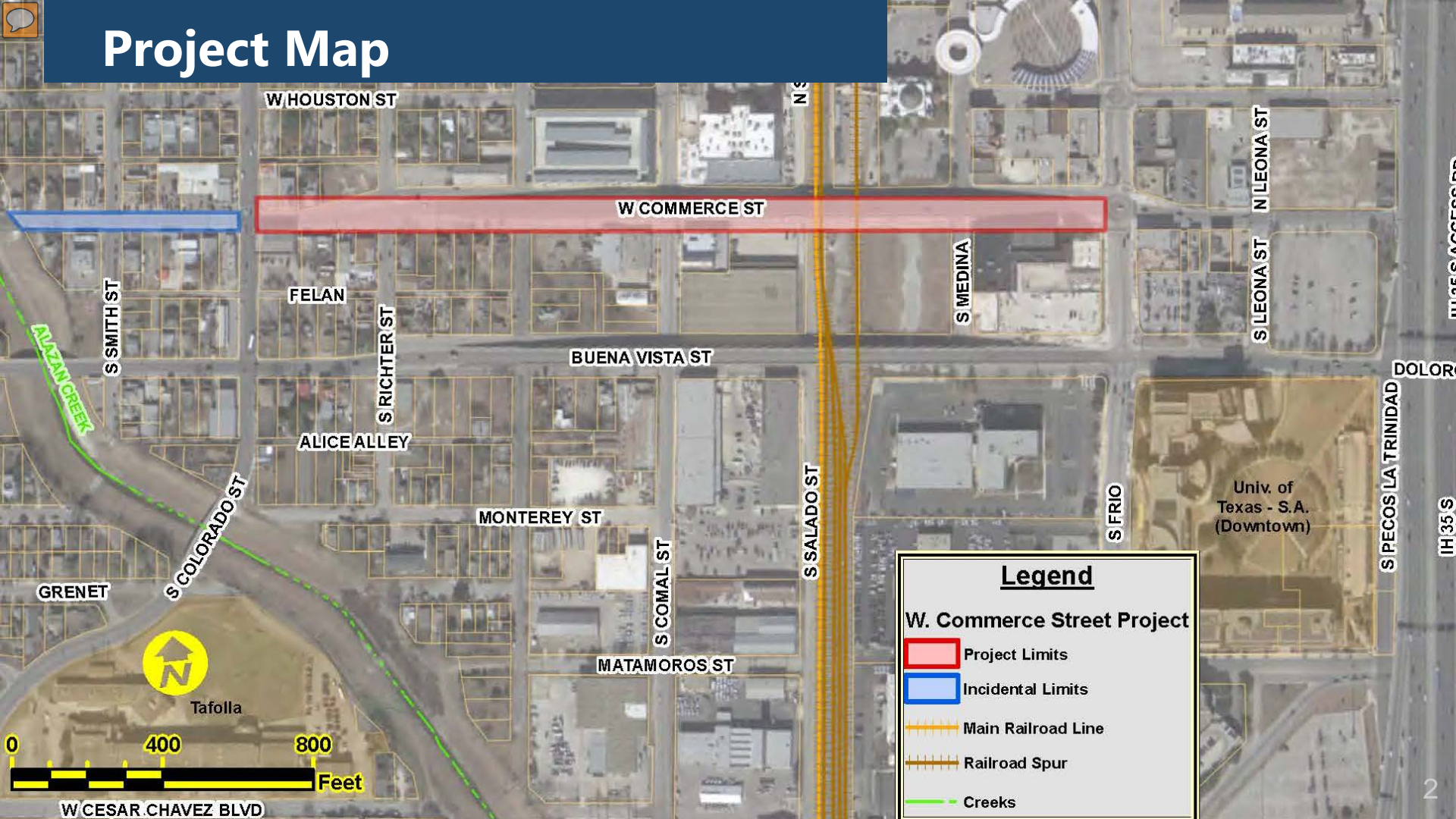
- a. The applicant has proposed to perform various street improvements on W Commerce from Frio Street to Alazan Creek. Proposed improvements include structural repairs, reconfiguring travel lanes on the bridge, installing wider sidewalks, installing streetscape landscaping, installing ADA improvements, and installing bike facilities. A portion of this corridor resides in the Zona Cultural. The construction project is part of the 2017 Bond Program.
- b. WEST COMMERCE BRIDGE: ALTERATIONS – The applicant has proposed to completing structural repairs, resurfacing the pavement and adding new pavement markings, creating two 12-foot travel lanes, adding a 4-foot shoulder adjacent to sidewalks, and adding a 6-foot bicycle lane with a 6-foot buffer on the West Commerce Street Bridge. Staff finds the proposal consistent with the UDC.
- c. WEST COMMERCE STREET: ALTERATIONS – The applicant has proposed to complete structural repairs, resurface road reconstruction with bike lanes, install new curbs and sidewalks, create street parking, install pedestrian bridge lighting, install signal upgrades, improve drainage facilities, relocate and improve utilities, and install streetscape landscaping on West Commerce Street.
- d. SIDEWALKS AND RAMPS – According to the Guidelines for Site elements, replacement materials for sidewalks should match existing sidewalk and material or should be consistent with materials and configurations in the district. The proposal includes widening sidewalks and repairing or replacing ADA ramps where required. The work in this area as proposed is appropriate.
- e. NEW CURBING AND PAVING – The applicant has proposed to install new decorative and textured paving in specific locations within the improvement boundary. New paving materials include concrete unit pavers, Holland stone, and brick pavers in Herringbone pattern, basket weave pattern and an antique red color mix. Staff finds the proposal appropriate.
- f. BENCHES – The applicant has proposed to install a variety of benches, including curved bench seating, four seat, and three seat benches. The benches comply with the UDC requirements for pedestrian spaces. Staff finds the designs appropriate.
- g. PEDESTRIAN LIGHTING – The applicant has proposed to install custom street and pedestrian lighting as indicated in the submitted plans, including light poles, bridge column lighting, bridge façade lighting, and under bridge lighting. Staff finds the proposal appropriate.
- h. AMENITIES – The applicant has proposed to install a variety of amenities along the public right-of-way including bike racks, trash receptacles, and a curbed and paved Under-Bridge Activity Area. Staff finds the proposal appropriate.
- i. LANDSCAPING – The proposal includes ample new landscaping, including several trees and shrubs. Species include crape myrtle, cedar elm, live oak, Texas redbud, Texas persimmon, Mexican bush sage, Mexican oregano, red yucca, salvia mystic spires, salvia gregii, pink rose, giant liriopoe, and Lindheimer’s muhly grass. Staff finds the proposal appropriate.
- j. ARCHAEOLOGY- The project shall comply with all federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations regarding archaeology, as applicable.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the requested park improvements based on findings a through j with the following stipulation:

- a. ARCHAEOLOGY – The project shall comply with all federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations regarding archaeology, as applicable.

Project Map





Background Information

- Development of a “Gateway” to improve historic area
- \$1M approved in 2015 Budget
- Traffic analysis & bridge study completed in 2015
- Master Plan development completed in 2016
- Extensive public involvement





Project Information

Project Scope

- Reconstruct Commerce from Frio to Colorado. Mill & Overlay from Frio St. to Alazan Creek.
- Reconfigure travel lanes on bridge, wider sidewalks, bike facilities
- Other improvements within available funding





Project Information

Existing Conditions



West Commerce bridge looking north

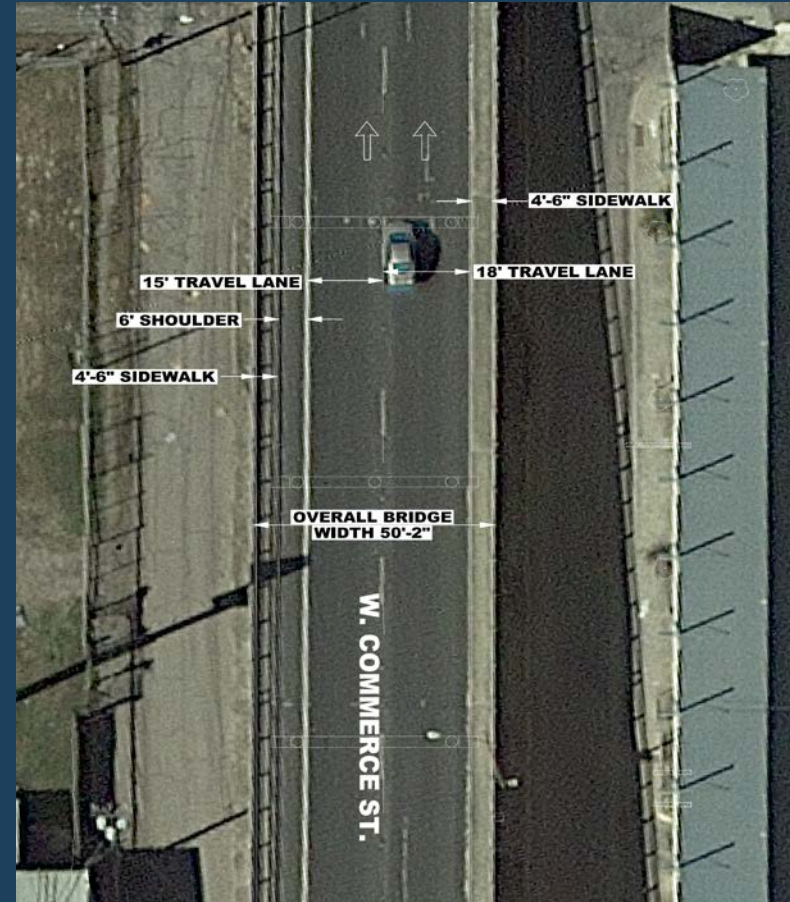


West Commerce Bridge:

- Old roadway and pavement markings
- Very wide travel lanes....one 15 ft. travel lane and one 16 ft. travel lane
- Existing 4-1/2 ft. concrete sidewalks.
- Existing 5 ft. bike lane with no buffer
- Structural repairs needed

Project Information

Existing Conditions





West Commerce Bridge:

- Joint sealing and structural concrete repairs
- Resurface pavement and add new pavement markings
- Two 12 ft. travel lanes
- Add a 4 ft. shoulder adjacent to sidewalks
- Include a 6 ft. bike lane with a 6 ft. buffer

Project Information Proposed Conditions





Project Information

Existing Conditions



West Commerce at Railroad looking east

West Commerce Street:

- Non-compliant ADA sidewalks and broken curbs
- Old roadway and pavement markings
- Utility pole conflicts
- Poor drainage
- Parking issues
- Pedestrian lighting needed





Project Information

Existing Conditions



West Commerce & N. Colorado St. looking west



West Commerce Service Road looking east

Project Information

Proposed Improvements

- Structural repairs , bike lane with buffer, resurface roadway on bridge
- Service road reconstruction with bike lanes
- New curbs and sidewalks
- On street parking
- Pedestrian and bridge lighting
- Signal upgrades at West Commerce & N Colorado

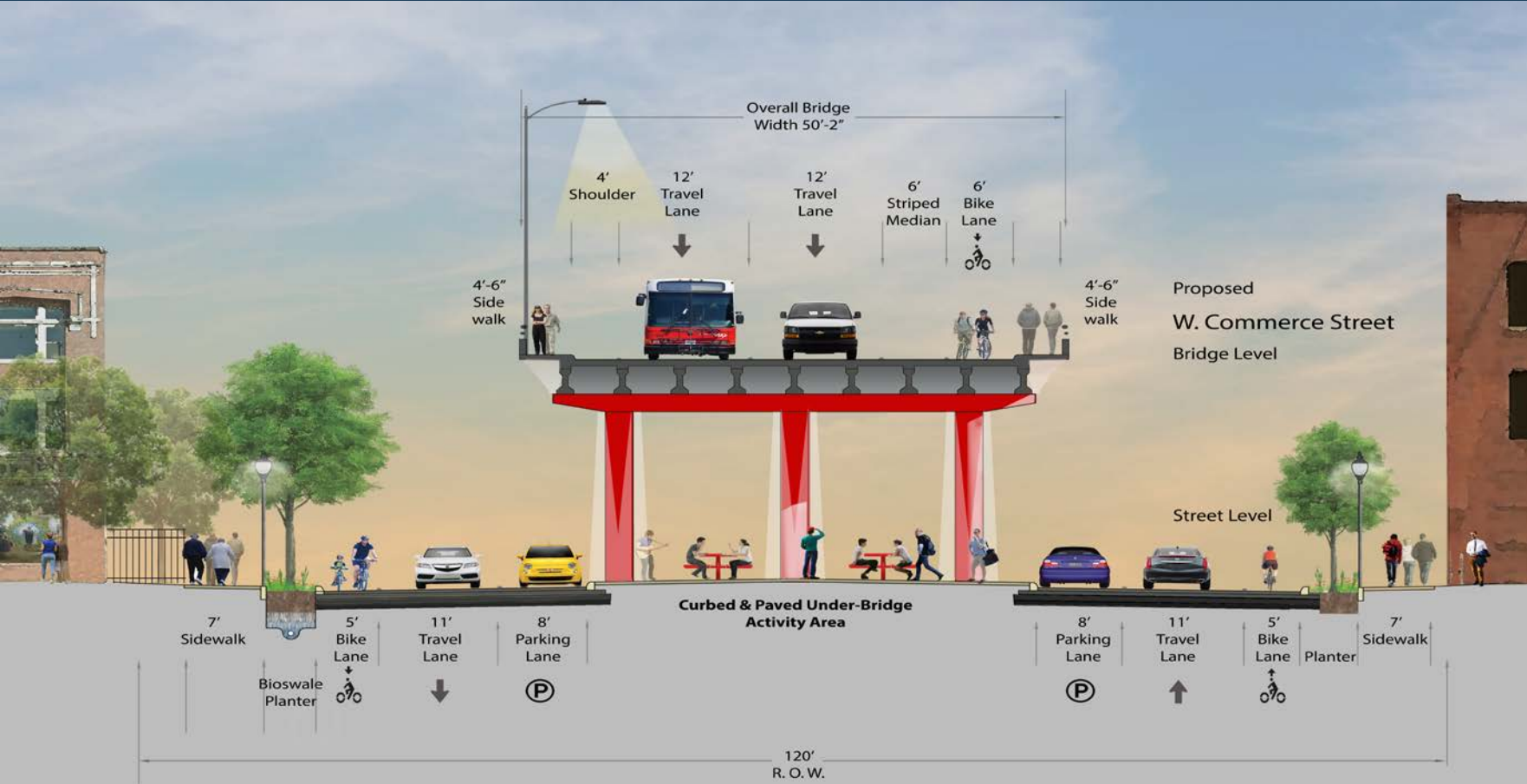


- Streetscape landscaping
- Drainage facilities
- Utility relocations and improvements



Project Information

Proposed Improvements





Project Information

Project Materials & Furnishings



Bicycle Rack



Trash Receptacle



Curved Bench Seating



Project Information

Project Materials & Furnishings



Four Seat Bench



Three Seat Bench



Pedestrian Lighting





Project Information

Project Materials & Furnishings



CONCRETE UNIT PAVER 4"X8"



'HOLLAND STONE' 80mm



'HERRINGBONE' PATTERN



'BASKETWEAVE' PATTERN



'HERRINGBONE' PATTERN



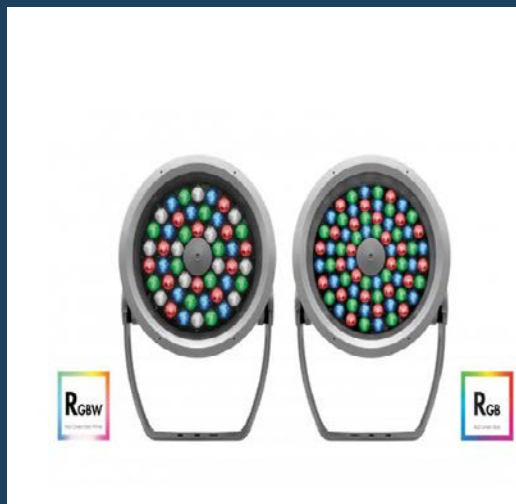
'ANTIQUE RED' COLOR MIX



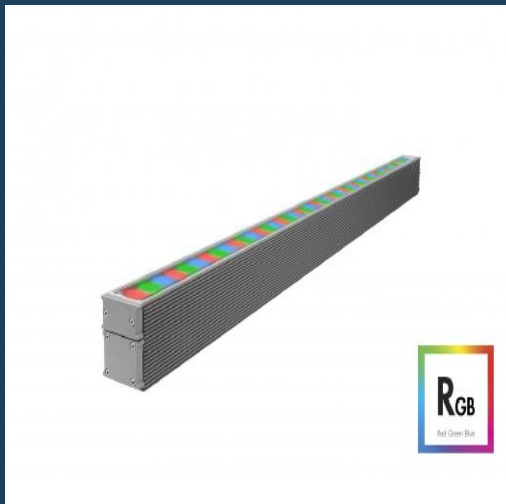


Project Information

Commerce St. - Under Bridge Lighting



Bridge Column Lighting



Bridge Façade Lighting



Under Bridge Lighting





T R E E S



LIVE OAK



CEDAR ELM



GRAPE MYRTLE



TEXAS PERSIMMON



TEXAS MT. LAUREL



TEXAS REDBUD

S H R U B S



MEX. BUSH SAGE



MEX. OREGANO



RED YUCCA



SALVIA 'MYSTIC SPIRES'



SALVIA GREGII



PINK 'KNOCKOUT' ROSE



GIANT LIRIOPE



LINDHEIMER'S MUHLY GRASS





Project Information

Project Schedule:

- Master plan & bridge study: Completed 2016
- Current design: Final Design
- Design end: May 2020
- Estimated construction start: September 2020
- Estimated construction end: November 2021



Project Budget:

- \$12,000,000



Transportation & Capital Improvements

West Commerce Economic Corridor

Project	West Commerce Economic Corridor	5
Project Scope	Improve roadway, pedestrian, bike facilities and lighting; add streetscape amenities along Commerce corridor from Frio Street to Colorado Street. Create more pedestrian and business friendly areas to boost job creation, development, generate tax revenue and improve overall quality of life in historic neighborhood. Portion of this corridor resides in the Zona Cultural. Construction project is part of the 2017 Bond Program.	
Project Status	Design Phase	
Traffic Study/Bridge Analysis	April 2015	
Master Plan Consultant Selected	September 2015	
Master Plan Complete	September 2016	
Design Firm	Bain Medina Bain	
Design Completed	May 2020	
Advertise	May 2020	
Construction Firm	TBD	
Construction Began	September 2020	
Construction Completion	November 2021	

Project Funding		
Total Project Budget	City's Portion	Funding Sources
\$13.0 Million	\$13.0 Million	(\$1M) 2015 Certificates of Obligation (\$10M) 2017 General Obligation (\$2M) FY19 Budget

