



Blanco US 281 Information

Blanco Chamber of Commerce
The heart and hub of the hill country

Thank you for coming

- ❖ Why we asked you to come:
 - ❖ There is a lot of information coming out quickly.
 - ❖ We wanted to compile that information and get it out to the community in an organized manner.
 - ❖ We want to promote working together as a community to achieve the best possible outcome.
 - ❖ We are trying to reduce incorrect information and help avoid rumors.
 - ❖ Disclaimer - All information is correct and factual to the best of our knowledge. We have done our best to present it in a clear and concise manner.

Speakers

- ❖ Huge thank you to our speaker
 - ❖ Mayor Rachel Lumpee - Thank you for so much for coming tonight and for working so hard to help our town.
 - ❖ The floor is yours.

Why the Chamber?

❖ In our Articles of incorporation

The original purpose for which this organization is formed is:

A. *To promote the interest of trade and increase the facilities of commercial transaction in the city of Blanco, Texas, and the immediate surrounding territory;*

B. *To promote civic interests, economic prosperity and the general welfare of the people of this area;*

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C. *To be actively involved in local community growth and development.*

We believe working with the community on this issue is fulfilling that purpose in the best way possible.

Historically Chambers have opposed relief routes?

- ❖ There is typically a negative impact on businesses when traffic is routed around a town.
- ❖ Less traffic, less business.
- ❖ Not necessarily the case here.

Why Blanco Chamber of Commerce is in favor of a Relief Route Option

- ❖ We believe, this large increase in congestion through town would be more negative than positive.
- ❖ We want to preserve the existing charm and small town feel to help promote tourism opportunities.
- ❖ Our existing businesses have seen significant positive changes over the past few years which will allow them to continue to grow and thrive.
- ❖ This positive change will continue to bring tourist to our town, who want to enjoy our hill country way of life.

What we want to accomplish here today?

- ❖ We want you to leave informed of all the information currently known.
- ❖ To help promote a One Community, One Team approach.
- ❖ Encourage clear lines of communication moving forward.
- ❖ And we need to Start working on a plan.



What are we talking about

- ❖ US 281 is currently being expanded south of the county line.
- ❖ The next phase is going to expand US 281, just outside of our city limits (north and south of us).
- ❖ US 281 is being developed to alleviate congestion on I-35.
- ❖ Expected expansion is 250-400 feet wide.
- ❖ No route is finalized around Blanco.
- ❖ But we will see increased traffic soon!

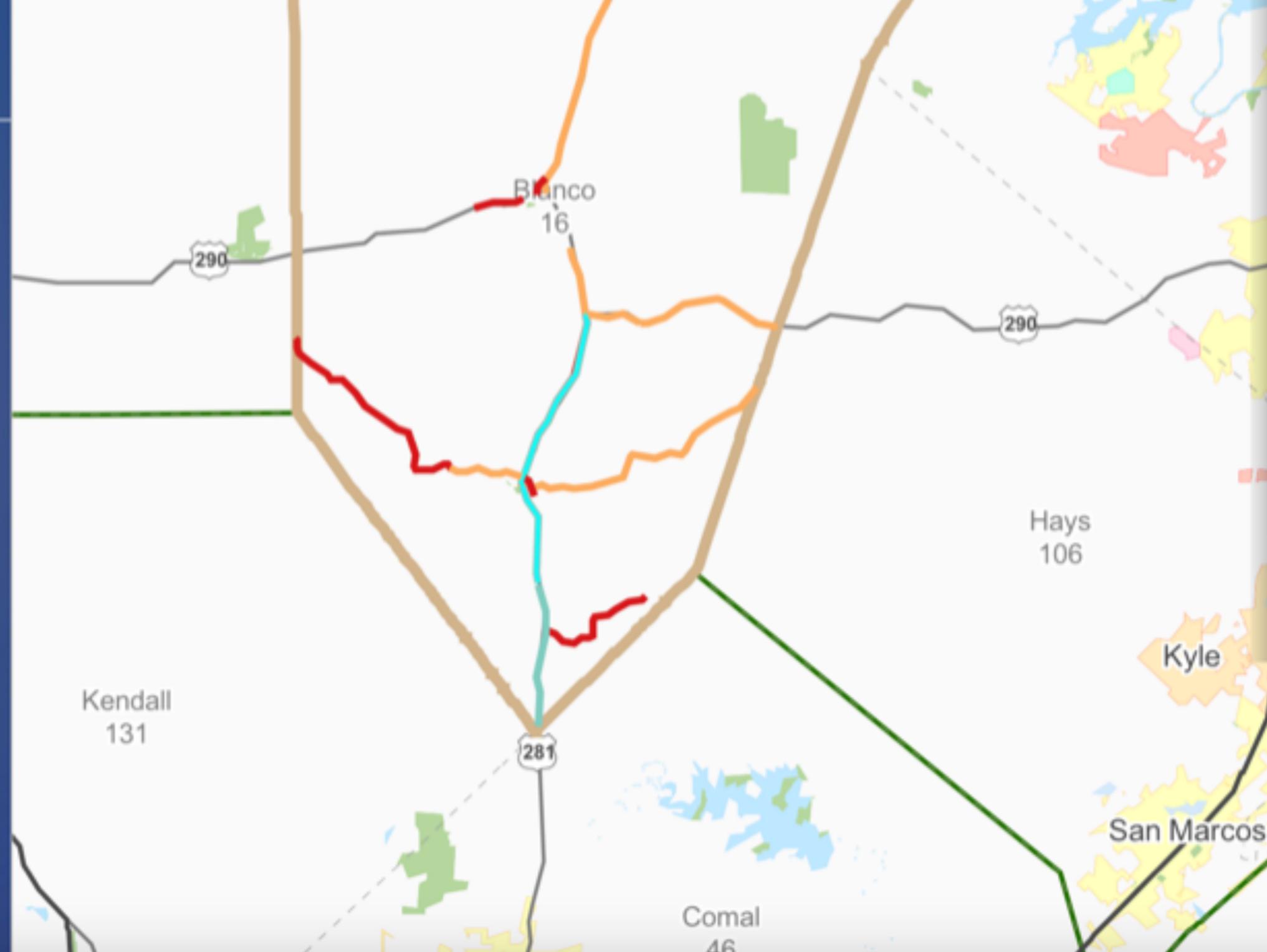
Expected outcome

- ❖ We expect to help direct the route around the City of Blanco with the lowest negative impact on the community and property owners while maintaining our charm and economic development.



Search

Est. Cost
\$10,216,618
\$27,303,177
\$77,875,002
\$0
\$115,394,797



To Limit	SOUTH OF CR 413
District	Austin
County	Blanco
Est. Construction Cost	\$50,645,090
Project Length	12.605 (Miles)
Last Updated	8/16/2022
Est. Complete Date	TBD

Contact Information >

Contact Information is from the TxDOT SiteManager System

TxDOT Contact Name	Heather Ashley-Nguyen, P.E.
Construction Company	TBD
Phone	512-832-7216

7183

- Construction underway or begins soon
- Construction begins within 4 years
- Construction begins in 5 to 10 years
- Corridor Studies, construction in 10 years

- ❖ Blue line shows the next approved route to be started in the near future (expected 2027).
- ❖ The blue portion through our town is the one part that does not have an exact route set.

North San Antonio US 281 Timeline

- ❖ For reference - 1604 - Borgfeld Drive
- ❖ 2015 - Environmental impact study was done on the proposed 6-lane expressway north of San Antonio.
- ❖ 2016 - TxDOT broke ground north of San Antonio.
- ❖ 2017 - Construction begins segment 1.
- ❖ 2019 - Construction begins segment 2.
- ❖ 2021 - Segment 1 opens to traffic.
- ❖ 2022 - Segment 2 planned to open to traffic but has not yet happened.
- ❖ This took 7 years to start and almost complete (we should expect something similar)

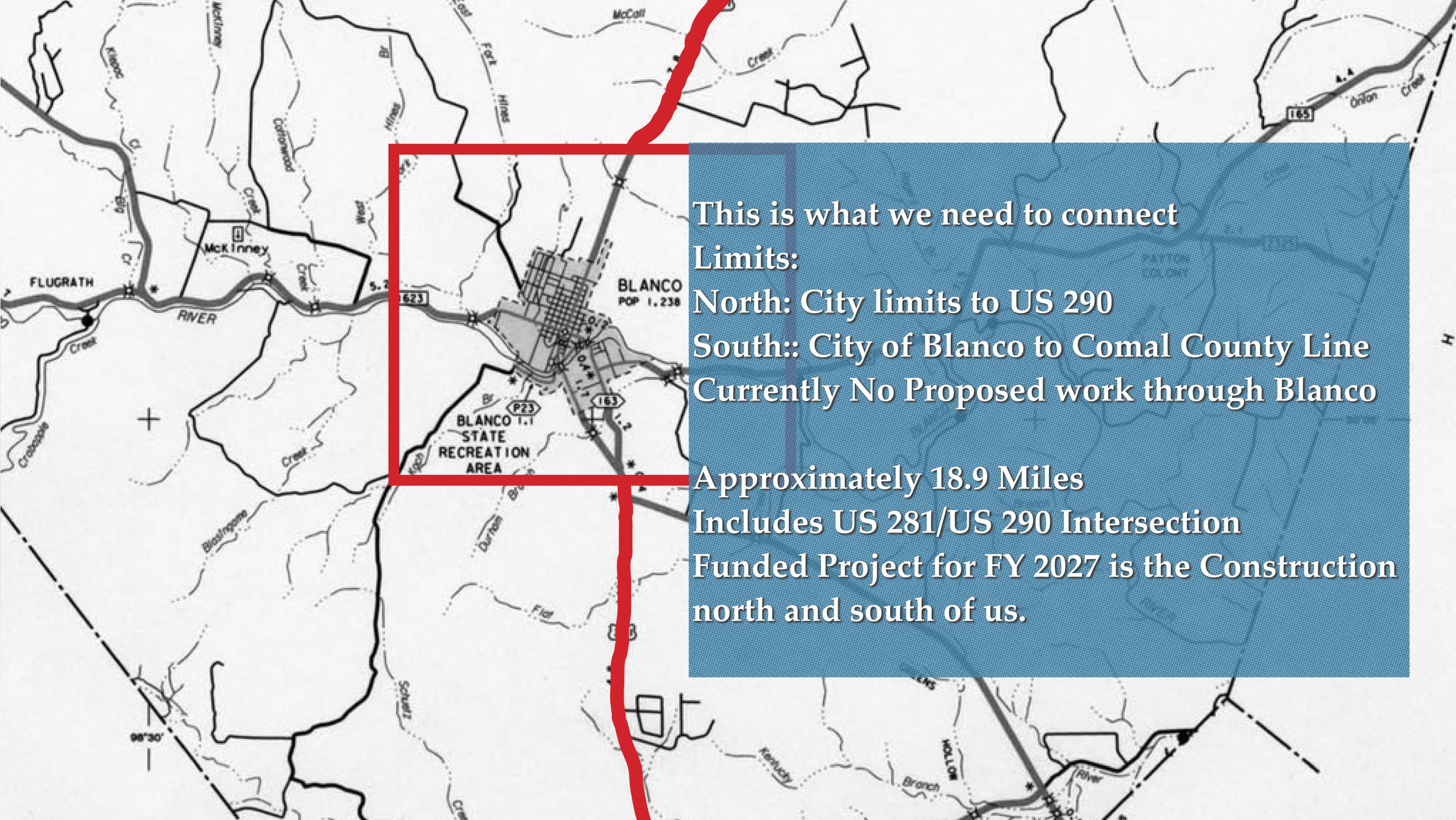
What has/is being done

- ❖ Around 2018, TxDOT stated US 281 will be growing in the hill country.
- ❖ Around 2021, TxDOT stated US 281 would be the new relief route for I-35.
- ❖ In early 2022 City administration requested a relief route study to start working on a plan.
- ❖ On May 23rd, TxDOT held a stakeholders meeting about US 281 corridor project from south Blanco county line to US 290 north of town.
- ❖ Currently we are working on creating a solution.

What is planned/what is not

- ❖ The planning process for the road north and south of town has begun.
- ❖ We need a way to connect US 281 North and South of us that does not push this traffic through downtown.
- ❖ TxDOT is NOT planning to bulldoze in our city.





This is what we need to connect
Limits:

North: City limits to US 290

South:: City of Blanco to Comal County Line

Currently No Proposed work through Blanco

Approximately 18.9 Miles

Includes US 281/US 290 Intersection

Funded Project for FY 2027 is the Construction north and south of us.

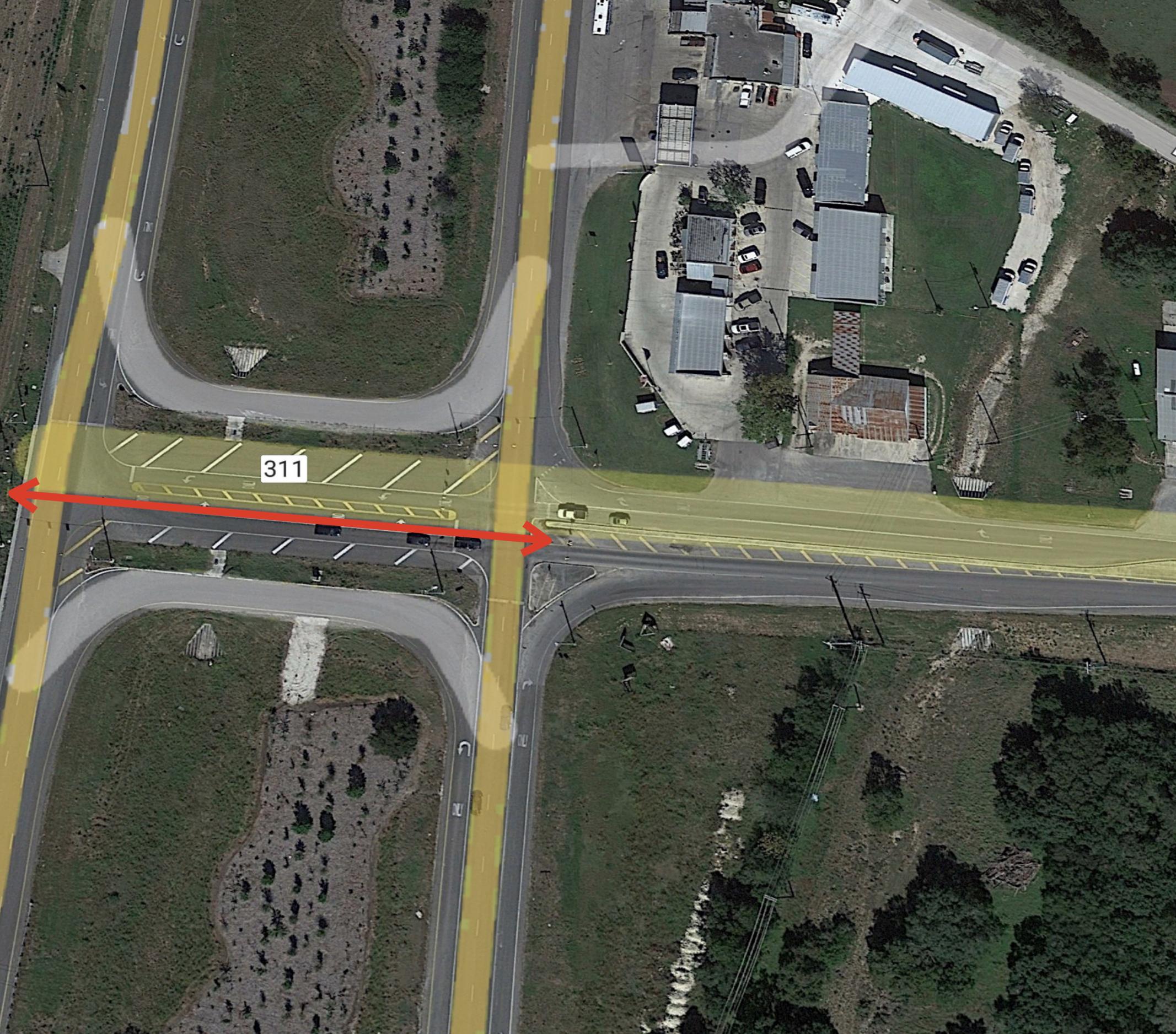
How large do we expect any relief route to be?

- ❖ Typical projections of a highway with this much traffic would need to be 250-400 feet wide.
- ❖ What does that look like?

This is at US 281 and
FM 311 in Spring
Branch.

This is what 400 feet
looks like

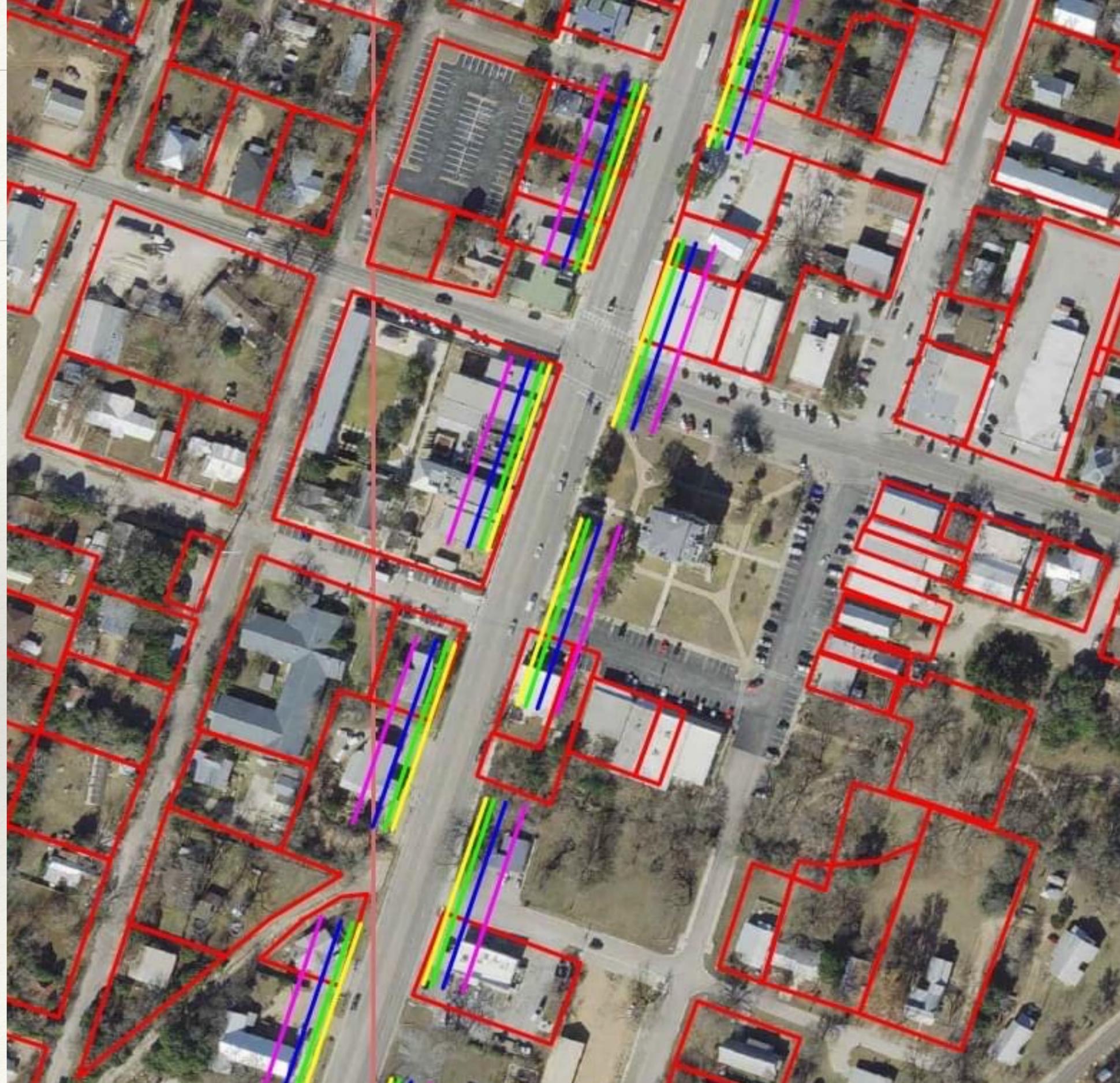
If you have sat at this
light, you know how
far apart these roads
are



Downtown Blanco

- ❖ To show size,
 - ❖ Blue is 150 feet
 - ❖ Purple is 200 feet

Typical highway projects of a road like this would need to be 250-400 feet wide to handle this much traffic.



RM 163

- ❖ Many people proposed a route down RM 163
- ❖ Once we went out and looked at it, (and realized how big the route might be) we quickly realized this didn't make sense to us.
- ❖ Not nearly enough space and too close to town.
- ❖ It would divide our community for future growth.

Why should the Traffic be rerouted around Blanco?

- ❖ With the increased volume of traffic expected to come our way, we would have too much traffic to sustain our current community pace.
- ❖ Crossing town would be dominated by I-35 style traffic.
- ❖ If the highway remains downtown, traffic congestion would have significant negative effects on our community.

What does this mean - GPS change

- ❖ It is expected that the route from San Antonio to Georgetown will be 7 minutes faster on US 281 than I-35 in the short future.
- ❖ This means anyone using GPS will choose to go the fastest route (through Blanco).
- ❖ Traffic is going to greatly increase.

Good News: We have a good head start

- ❖ We are far enough ahead of this that we have a good opportunity to have a favorable outcome, if we act now.
- ❖ Other towns were too late.
- ❖ Towns like Dripping Springs and Marble Falls do not have many options at this point.

How long would this take?

- ❖ Estimated - 6-10 years from environmental impact study to us driving on the road.
- ❖ This is after a route is decided.
- ❖ So we need to get to work.

Blanco development study by Commissioner's Court

- ❖ This study was done 2019-2020 (released in 2021) by the Blanco County Commissioners with input from TxDOT and CAPCOG.
- ❖ Created to support goals and intentions of the Rural Transportation Plan done by TxDOT.
- ❖ This plan provides a system of connectivity between counties

1.3 Study Area

Blanco County is located west of Hays and Travis Counties. The vicinity map for Blanco County is provided in **Figure 1.1**. The study area for the Blanco County Transportation and Economic Development plan included all of Blanco County and coordinated with all the adjoining counties.

Blanco County is approximately 710 square miles. The county seat is Johnson City, with the other city in the county being Blanco. The 2017 population of Blanco County was approximately 11,626 residents, with an average density of 16.3 residents per square mile. In the past ten years, growth has also occurred in the county extraterritorial jurisdiction and in the census designated place of Hye, Texas.

Two public school districts serve Blanco County residents: Blanco and Johnson City Independent School Districts. There are two state parks in Blanco County: Pedernales Falls State Park and Blanco State Park. There is one national park in Blanco County: The Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical State Park.

The Interstate Highway System does not go through Blanco County, but it does include two roads that are part of the National Highway System. Roadways within Blanco County are classified as principal arterial, minor arterial, major collector, minor collector or local road. **Figure 1.2** shows the functional classification of the state highways (SH) within Blanco County. The major roadways for through traffic in Blanco County are U.S. Highway (US) 281, and U.S. Highway (US) 290. **It should be noted that while US 281 is not characterized as an interstate highway through Blanco County, it does serve as the alternate route to Interstate 35 an important highway corridor that facilitates commerce between Canada and Mexico.**

6.6 Transportation Recommendations

CMTE/PUBLIC RECOMMENDED ROADWAY EXPANSIONS/OPERATIONAL IMPROVEMENTS			
	LOCATION	ISSUES	Comments
1.	City of Blanco 281 Bypass	Create an alternate route to 281 and keep the existing route as the "Business Route" through City of Blanco.	Locally initiated by local governments.
2.	City of Blanco US 281 Tractor Supply	Traffic speed and cross turning traffic are dangerous combination.	TTC is taking action to reduce the speed limit in the area.
3.	South of Blanco: US 281	Install a traffic light at FM 473 and US 281	
4.	City of Blanco SH 281 at 4 th Street	Can the intersection be re-engineered to allow for easier turning movements	
5.	US 281 (Burnet County line to Johnson City)	Expand shoulders to allow for acceleration/deceleration lane for merging traffic?	
6.	US 281- South-Central Blanco County	Improve traffic flow and left turn problems	TxDOT will restripe and create a turn lane in the next 3-5 years.

- ❖ Number 1 - Create and alternate route for US 281 around Blanco.
- ❖ Needs to be locally initiated.

6.7 Economic Development Recommendations

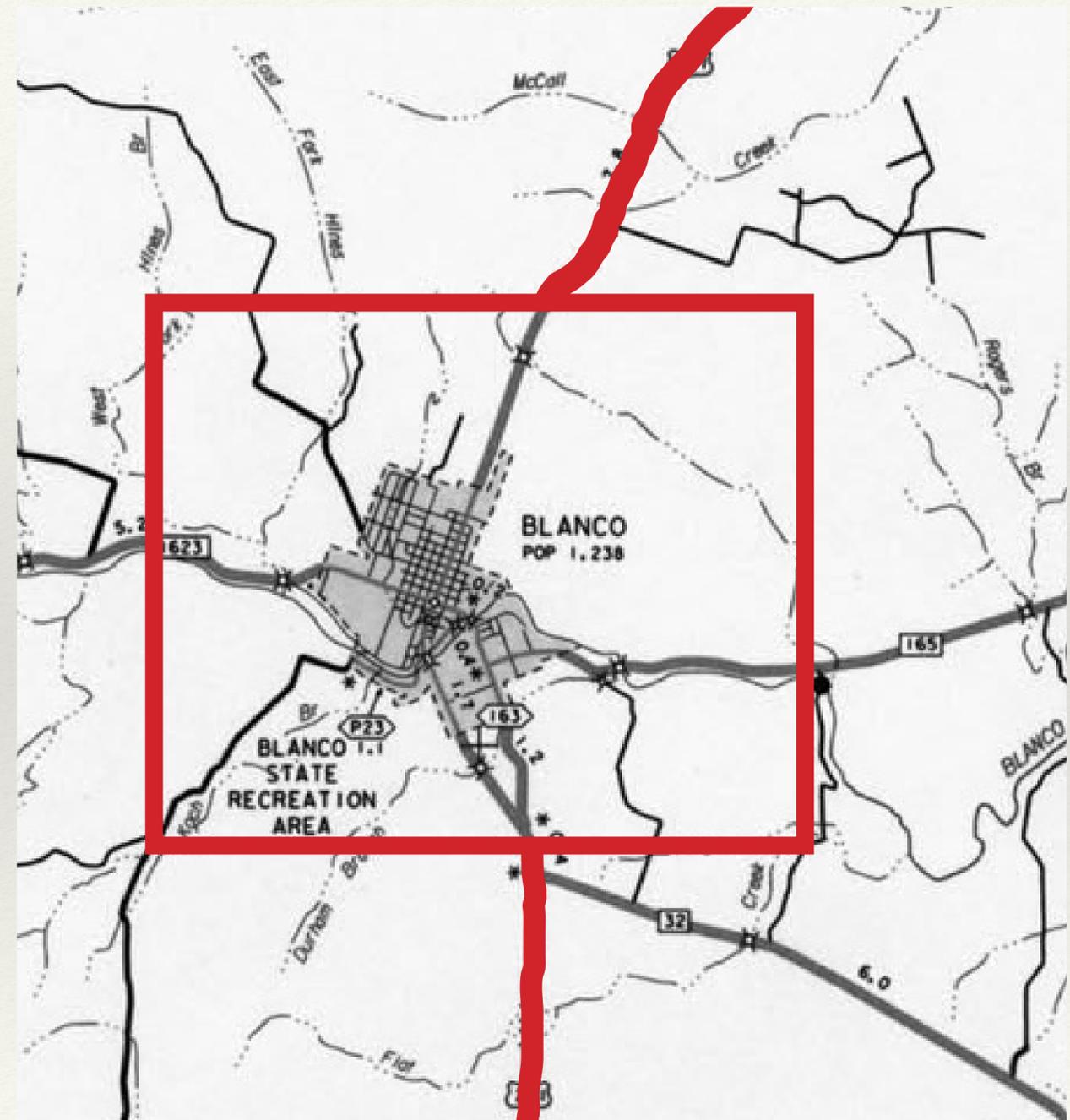
As future development occurs within the extra territorial jurisdictions of Blanco and Johnson City, this plan will provide a blueprint for the future transportation system which developers will need to consider when planning new communities. There is a direct relationship between land use, economic development, and transportation, and the impacts on the transportation system will need to be considered as each new community is built.

As stated in the introduction, the Blanco County Transportation and Economic Development Plan is intended to be a tool for the county, cities, developers, chambers of commerce, and the general public as Blanco County grows. It is particularly important that residents within the county can identify transportation and economic development needs during the development of the plan. For optimal use and effectiveness, this plan should be reviewed and updated on a regular basis to see if the assumptions are still valid. Likewise, if there are jurisdiction changes, the plan should be reviewed to make sure the priorities still make sense or to take advantage of new opportunities.

- ❖ This development study helps provide a tool for the community to use as the county continues to grow.

So, Our Task

- ❖ The end goal is to draw a line on a map from point A-B. (North and south of city limits)
- ❖ Protect our community long term.
- ❖ Find a way to minimize negative affects on the people of our town.
- ❖ We must think 10-15 years into the future. Be Pro-Active!



What steps you can take moving forward

- ❖ If you have any expertise that would be helpful, please let us know!
 - ❖ Real-estate law
 - ❖ Experience with eminent domain
 - ❖ Ecological impact studies
 - ❖ Community planning
 - ❖ Civil engineering
 - ❖ State-government relations
 - ❖ Working with TxDOT
- ❖ We also need to start looking at the map and thinking about where you believe the route should go.
- ❖ Start putting lines on a map (thinking 10-20 years in the future).
- ❖ Most importantly, work positively as a community!
- ❖ This is not the time for us to be divided.

Upcoming meetings

- ❖ TxDOT - Sep 29th at high school - 5:00 - 7:00- should have stations to go ask different people about the project. (Based around corridor study)
- ❖ We would like to plan our next meeting to be practical in having the community to look at a map and work together on routes to find a solution. (TBA)

How to communicate moving forward

- ❖ Sign up for our Email list.
- ❖ We will be sending out a blank map.
- ❖ We will send out updates as they develop.

Thank you for coming

- ❖ Thank you for interest in our community!
- ❖ If you want to join this collaborative effort, please let us know.

In Closing

- ❖ We won't be doing a Q&A.
- ❖ We have provided the info we currently know.
- ❖ Please fill out the forms with any suggestions or concerns.
- ❖ We will do our best to keep up with what is happening, help facilitate conversation and work to protect our town.
- ❖ Please watch the KVUE video released recently about US 281 expansion.
- ❖ Also KXAN is producing a new story that should be coming out soon as well, keep an eye out for that.
- ❖ Thank you again for coming and have a great week.