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## **MAIN STREET EXPANSION PROPOSAL RAISES CONCERNS OVER TREE REMOVAL**

*The City of Buda is focused on protecting its historic trees*

**BUDA, TX – March 3, 2016** -There is no question that the City of Buda is in the midst of a major growth spurt. With new homes being built and businesses setting up shop here, the number of people moving to our beautiful town is on the rise.

Like many other cities in Central Texas, Buda is working to maintain its small town charm, while adapting to the quickly changing landscape. In 2014, Buda voters approved a \$55 million bond aimed at improving streets, drainage, and parks and trails.

One of the street improvement proposals includes expanding the North Side of Main Street to 5 lanes, near the Historic Stagecoach Park and Willie’s Joint. On November 12, 2015 roadway improvement options were presented to the public at an open house. Citizens placed high priority on minimizing the impact to large oak trees.

At the February 29, 2016 City Council meeting, HDR Engineering, the city’s design consultant, presented several road improvement options based on the public’s comments. However, it was determined that widening Main Street to 5 lanes would still lead to the removal of some trees. Council members voiced their opposition to any plan that would have an impact on the trees.

“This 5 lane expansion and taking out the trees I think is going against the wishes of the citizens and is certainly not something that I want to see. I think we should probably take a look at some of our other options,” Councilmember Angela Kennedy said.

The rest of the council echoed Kennedy’s sentiment. City engineers will explore other alternatives that do not include taking out trees. The Buda Bond Advisory Committee will also weigh in on the issue. Members of the committee have always been clear in their goal to preserve trees.

Buda City Manager Kenneth Williams points out that the city has a history of saving trees during road construction.

“During the reconstruction of FM 967, the City of Buda City Council and Staff worked diligently with Hays County and the Texas Department of Transportation to preserve the trees along the route when initial plans called for the removal of historic trees. Due to those efforts we will have a wonderful tree lined parkway when finished,” Williams said.

The city will continue its purpose of being a friendly community with small town charm while planning for the future.

“That includes a commitment to nature,” Williams said. “In 2011 Buda was designated as a ‘*Scenic City*’ for encouraging innovative landscaping design, having special districts and meeting recommended standards of 10 acres of park land per 1,000 people.”

The City of Buda will continue seeking transportation improvements that follow the wishes of its citizens, the City Council and staff. This includes the goal of preservation of trees.

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