



City of Rockwall
The New Horizon

PRESS RELEASE

City of Rockwall Participates in TxDOT Planning Study for State Highway 205.

ROCKWALL, TEXAS – March 4, 2016 – Last year the Texas Department of Transportation began the substantial task of planning for improvements of State Highway 205, which is currently Goliad Street through Rockwall. The scope of this TxDOT planning project runs from SH 78 in Lavon to US 80 in Terrell. Rockwall and all other entities along the route are given the opportunity to participate in this planning project. The planning project provides an opportunity for the City of Rockwall to support the designation of John King Boulevard as the route through the city for SH 205—as had been envisioned when John King Blvd. was approved by Rockwall voters in 2005.

Rockwall voters approved a bond election in 2005, which financed the construction of the “205 Bypass” by an overwhelming majority, with more than 70% in favor of the proposition. The “205 Bypass” (later named John King Blvd.) was then built as a four-lane roadway with sufficient right-of-way to add two additional interior lanes in the future. John King Blvd. now serves as a bypass route for SH 205, but is not officially designated as a state roadway. Construction of additional ramps on I-30 at John King Blvd. will soon be underway to enhance the functional use of John King Blvd. as an effective bypass route.

In 2005, both the City and TxDOT were poised to exchange right-of-way on Goliad Street and the new John King Blvd.—a transaction that would have made Goliad a city street, and designated John King as the route for SH 205. Whether as a city street or as the designated route for SH 205, traffic projections have long shown the ultimate need for John King Blvd. to be six lanes. Because of changes at TxDOT, the exchange of right-of-way could not be finalized at that time. John King Blvd. opened as a city street and has functioned as the 205 bypass route since that time.

There are several reasons John King Blvd. would be better suited as SH 205. The seven mile long roadway can better accommodate the higher volume of through-traffic than the current route through downtown. With the change, commercial truck traffic through downtown Rockwall would not be eliminated, but it would be reduced. Additionally, a decrease in overall traffic volume through downtown will make it safer for pedestrians.

If TxDOT were to reconstruct the existing route of SH 205, an expansion up to six lanes would negatively impact a significant (but as yet undetermined) number of homes and businesses north of downtown, because additional right-of-way would be needed for the reconstruction. Another option under consideration would have the state constructing a one-way couplet along Goliad Street, which is the existing SH 205 route, and utilizing Alamo Street as the other part of the couplet. This would impact numerous homes and businesses along both city streets.

After discussion by the City Council in a number of public meetings, the City has advised TxDOT that the locally preferred route for the state highway through the City is John King Blvd. This would designate John King Blvd. as SH 205 and Goliad Street would remain open through the city as a local street. Even as a local street, North Goliad will need to be improved, but the control of that street, its ultimate design, and the schedule for those improvements would be at the discretion of the City.

TxDOT continues work on the planning project for SH 205. However, no improvements are currently funded, and no timeline has been established for construction.

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About The City of Rockwall:

The City of Rockwall, Texas is located 22 miles east of downtown Dallas, on the eastern shore of Lake Ray Hubbard. With a population of more than 41,000, Rockwall is a growing community that offers an extraordinary quality of life for its residents, as well as dynamic business opportunities.

As the county seat of Rockwall County, which is the wealthiest in Texas, Rockwall has received several accolades in recent years, including being named one of the top ten "Best Towns for Families" by *Family Circle* magazine, and "Number 1 for Job Creation in the United States," by *CNN Money* magazine. For more information about Rockwall, please visit www.rockwall.com.

For additional information, please contact:

Lauri Dodd

Public Information Officer / Marketing

City of Rockwall

P) 972-772-6559

ldodd@rockwall.com