

STAFF RECOMMENDATION REPORT

C: Dunham Tract

APPLICANT: BGE | Kerry R. Gilbert & Associates

KEY MAP: 256, 257, 296, 297
JURISDICTION: Harris County

LAMBERT: 4466, 4565, 4566
DISTRICT/PRECINCT:
Harris County Pct. 3

PROPOSAL:

BGE | Kerry R. Gilbert & Associates (BGE|KGA) on behalf of Mason Westgreen LP, is requesting the following amendment to the 2015 Major Thoroughfare and Freeway Plan (MTFP).

- 1) Realign Major Thoroughfare Mound Road between Fairfield Place and Fry Road
- 2) Realign Major Thoroughfare Mason Road between US 290 and North Bridgeland Lake Parkway
- 3) Realign Major Thoroughfare Louetta Road between Fairfield Place and US 290
- 4) Delete Major Thoroughfare House Hahl Road between US 290 and Mound Road
- 5) Realign Major Thoroughfare House Hahl Road between Mound Road and North Bridgeland Lake Parkway and Reclassify as a Major Collector

APPLICANT'S JUSTIFICATION and HISTORY:

The Dunham family, represented by Mason Westgreen LP, owns a ±1,300-acre tract of land located immediately south of US 290 and the Union Pacific Railroad, primarily between the interchanges with two major thoroughfares, Mueschke Rd and Mason Rd. This tract is undeveloped acreage, located in an area that is growing and developing at a rapid pace in response to the completion of the Grand Parkway a few miles to the west. The property is crossed by four designated thoroughfares: Mason Road, Mound Road, Louetta Road and House Hahl Road.

The region surrounding the Dunham Tract appeared on the City of Houston MTFP map in 1966, when the scope of the MTFP map was expanded to encompass a much larger area than the 1964 MTFP map as part of the acquisition of Houston's ETJ. At the time, a two-mile grid was established in the outer reaches of the ETJ. In 1972, the two-mile thoroughfare grid in this area was upgraded to a one-mile grid. During this time period, east-west thoroughfares on the grid, such as Louetta Road, were shown to make a short jog in order to cross US 290 at a right angle before continuing straight east-west again. Mueschke Road and Mason Road both travelled generally north-to-south through the region, including across US 290, as they still do today. Mound Road first appeared on the 1982 map, moving roughly parallel to and south of US 290, and is in roughly the same configuration to this day. With the 2009 map amendment, the alignment of Mound Rd shifted slightly away from US 290 and gained several reverse curves in response to a development plan during that time period; the curvature is maintained in the current 2015 MTFP alignment.

Development of the subject property was previously stalled due to the fact that the property has limited access: the at-grade crossings of the Union Pacific Railroad on the north do not exist,

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and no other proposed thoroughfares were built in connection to the property from the adjacent undeveloped acreage tracts to the east, south, and west. Approval for construction of the at-grade railroad crossings has just recently been granted, and development of the property is now feasible. In response to new development markets as well as changes recommended in the recently completed US 290 Area Major Thoroughfare Study (Us 290 Study), there is a need to amend the currently approved thoroughfare alignments in order for the Dunham Tract to begin development in earnest. Amendments are proposed for: Mason Road; House Hahl Rd; Mound Road; and Louetta Rd. See attached an exhibit showing the proposed revisions. The amendments are detailed below:

Louetta Road is currently proposed as a primary east-west thoroughfare with an interchange at the Grand Parkway just a couple miles west of the subject site. Historically, this thoroughfare was an extension of the thoroughfare Huffmeister Road, which was projected to cross US 290 and the Union Pacific Railroad before continuing east-west. However, when TxDOT prepared plans for the expansion of US 290, an interchange or underpass for Louetta was not provided, and thus the currently-approved alignment of Louetta must terminate into a T-intersection at the south side of the Union Pacific Railroad, with no access to US 290/Hempstead Hwy. A bridge would be required over US 290 and the Union Pacific Railroad in order for Louetta to continue north in its current alignment. Therefore, the proposed amendment is to realign Louetta Rd so that it connects to the existing US 290/Mueschke Rd interchange further east. This adds significant importance to Louetta as a direct connection between interchanges on US 290 and the Grand Parkway.

Mound Road on the currently approved thoroughfare plan travels northwest-southeast and roughly parallel to US 290 and Cypress Creek. The intersection of Mound Road with Fry Rd has already been established less than a mile to the east of the subject site, which limits the potential geometry for the thoroughfare. In addition, environmentally sensitive areas exist along the north side of Cypress Creek, making development on the south side of the subject site more difficult. The proposed amendment is to slightly alter the alignment of Mound Road in the Dunham Tract and the two acreage tracts to either side, in order to bring the thoroughfare closer to US 290, and to provide direct thoroughfare access to the land that backs onto the Union Pacific Railroad and that would otherwise have no access. In this way, Mound Rd will act something like a frontage road for the land backing onto the railroad and will provide significant east-west mobility parallel to US 290.

Mason Road is a primary north-south thoroughfare on the currently approved MTFP map, with a proposed alignment extending from north of US 290 all the way south into Fort Bend County and the southern extension of the Grand Parkway. The current alignment comes up from Bridgeland on the southwest of the Dunham Tract and crosses Louetta Rd, with the approved Mason/Louetta intersection sitting directly on the western property line of the Dunham Tract. Mason Rd then curves to the north to connect to the existing US 290 interchange. The proposed amendment is to realign Mason Rd to shift the Mason/Louetta intersection northeast, so that the intersection is fully contained within the subject site, which will allow for the full thoroughfare network to be completed within the Dunham Tract as the subject site develops, rather than relying on third parties to connect the thoroughfares. The proposed alignment also

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avoids environmentally sensitive areas just north of Cypress Creek within the subject site.

House Hahl Road is a north-south thoroughfare segment with an alignment that currently extends south from the Mueschke Rd/US 290 intersection. In the 1990s this was an extension of Westgreen Blvd from the south, which connected from US 290 all the way to I-10; however, the Bridgeland development supplanted this portion of Westgreen, leaving a remainder segment just a couple miles long between North Bridgeland Lake Pkwy and US 290. A small portion of the old thoroughfare alignment is currently on the ground, functioning as a local street under the name House Hahl Road. This small thoroughfare segment will be an important north-south connection when it is completed; however, the connection of Louetta to the Grand Parkway is the more critical thoroughfare for regional circulation, and the more likely to occur since no creek crossings are involved. Since the thoroughfare network on the subject site will be a stand-alone network for an extended period of time, it is more effective to disconnect House Hahl Rd from the US 290 interchange. Therefore, the proposed amendment is to delete the portion of House Hahl Rd between Mound Rd and US 290, to allow for Louetta to connect to the Mueschke Road/US 290 interchange. In conjunction with this amendment, the remainder segment between Mound Rd and North Bridgeland Lake Pkwy is proposed to be realigned into a T-intersection with Mound Rd, and to be downgraded to a Major Collector.

In summary, the proposed amendments allow for an otherwise landlocked property to develop a complete thoroughfare system, utilizing the two newly available interchanges at US 290 to maximum effect, while still allowing the surrounding thoroughfare network to be connected when adjacent acreage tracts are developed. The proposed amendments also include a significant quantity of new thoroughfare mileage that was not previously a part of the City of Houston MTFP, in order to provide the maximum benefit to circulation in the area.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

- APPROVE the realignment of Major Thoroughfare Mound Road between Fairfield Place and Fry Road on the MTFP
- APPROVE the realignment of Major Thoroughfare Mason Road between US 290 and North Bridgeland Lake Parkway on the MTFP
- APPROVE the realignment of Major Thoroughfare Louetta Road between Fairfield Place and US 290 on the MTFP, under the condition that it creates a T-intersection with to-remain House Hahl Road
- DENY the deletion of Major Thoroughfare House Hahl Road between US 290 and Mound Road on the MTFP
- DENY the realignment and reclassification of Major Thoroughfare House Hahl Road between Mound Road and North Bridgeland Lake Parkway on the MTFP

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- APPROVE the staff alternative to add Unnamed Road as a new Major Thoroughfare (T-4-100) between US 290 and Mound Road and as a Major Collector (MJ-2-80) between Mound Road and Louetta Road.

Justification:

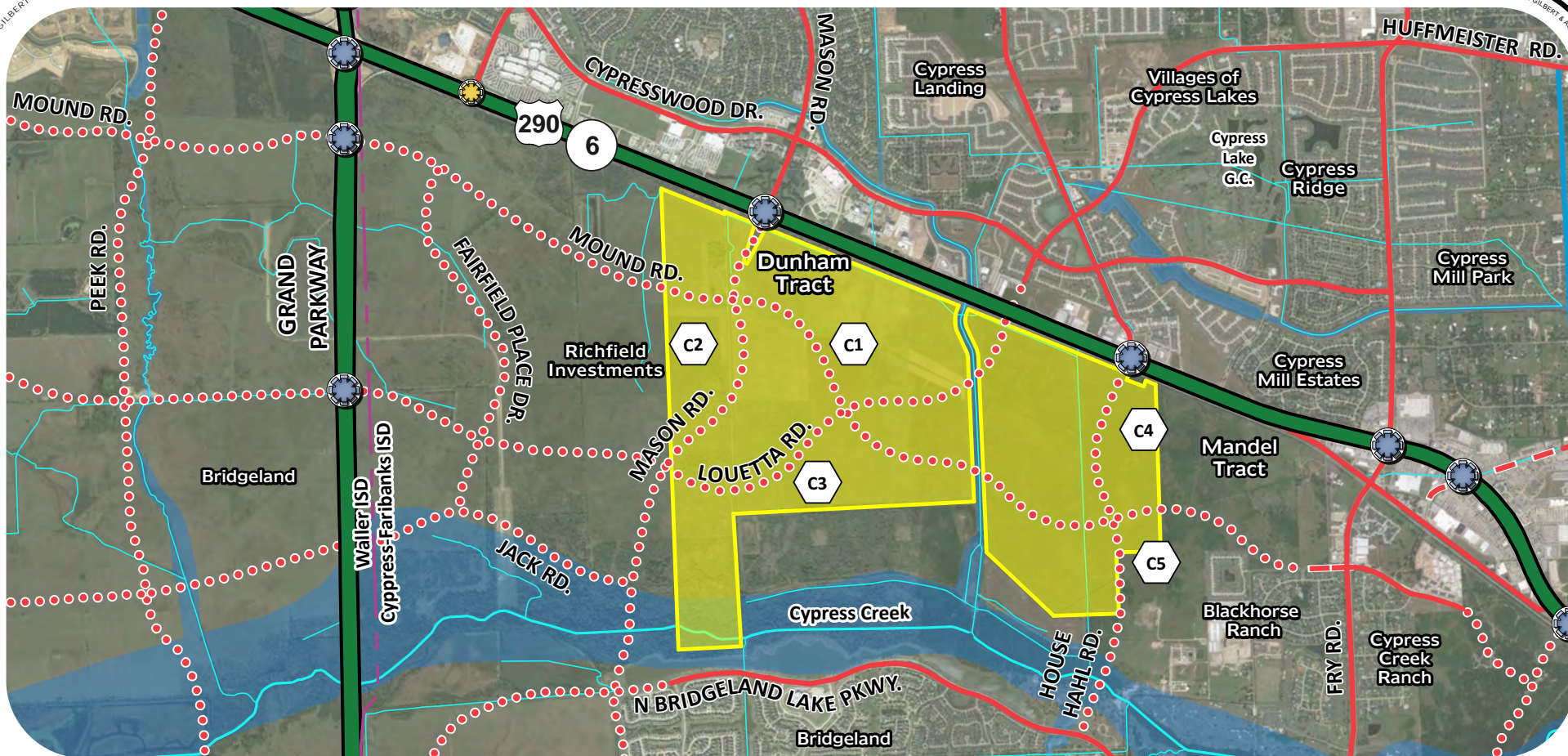
Staff supports the proposed Mound Road and Mason Road realignments, which will have no change on the overall circulation network in the amendment area or surrounding areas, as both realigned thoroughfares maintain their proposed connections with the interchanges at the Grand Parkway and/or US-290, as well as maintaining their proposed connections to Fry Road and North Bridgeland Lake Parkway. Additionally, the amendments have little to no impact on the Major Thoroughfare alignments within the properties adjacent to the Dunham Tract, including the Mandel Tract to the east and Richfield Investments property to the west.

Staff is not supportive of the amendment to delete the proposed connection of House Hahl Road to US 290, nor the amendment to reclassify House Hahl as a Major Collector. Due to growing traffic concerns along north-south Fry Road to the east, which is nearing full-capacity, staff believes the proposed north-south connection of House Hahl to US 290 as shown on the 2015 MTFP is an important connection that can be used to relieve some of the capacity issues currently seen on Fry Road. When constructed, House Hahl Road will also be an important connection to the Bridgeland development to the south of Cypress Creek, providing this area a direct connection to US 290. For these reasons, staff recommends that Planning Commission deny the amendment requests related to House Hahl Road (C-4 & C-5).

Staff supports the proposed Louetta Road realignment, under the condition that the alignment will create a T-intersection with to-remain House Hahl Road. Due to the uncertainty of the construction of a Louetta Road interchange at US 290 in the near future, a connection of the proposed Louetta Major Thoroughfare corridor to an existing interchange at US 290 would help to provide adequate short-term mobility and highway access in this rapidly developing area. With staff's recommendation to deny the amendment request to delete House Hahl Road, it is recommended that Louetta create a T- intersection with proposed House Hahl Road to the south of US 290. The applicant is supportive of this minor change to their original proposal.

While there is currently not an interchange at US-290 and existing Louetta Road/Huffmeister Road (north of US 290), staff is recommending, in coordination with Harris County Engineering Department, that Planning Commission approve the alternative to maintain a corridor for a future connection to an interchange or grade-separated crossing at the intersection of US 290 and existing Louetta Road/Huffmeister Road. Staff recommends adding a new Major Thoroughfare (T-4-100) alignment from US 290 to realigned Mound Road and a new Major Collector (MJ-2-80) alignment from realigned Mound Road to realigned Louetta Road. The proposed alignments would run parallel and to the east of the existing drainage ditch that bisects the Dunham Tract property. This recommended alignment will serve to preserve ROW for a potential extension of existing Louetta Road/Huffmeister Road to the south of US 290, if an interchange or grade separated crossing is constructed in the future.

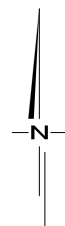
Staff has also coordinated with Texas Central Rail to overlay the Dunham Tract requested amendments with the proposed alignment of the high speed rail along the south of US 290.



CURRENT 2015 MAP

LEGEND

FREEWAYS	THOROUGHFARES
EXISTING	EXISTING
	TO BE WIDENED
MAJOR COLLECTORS	PROPOSED
EXISTING	



a thoroughfare amendment exhibit for
DUNHAM TRACT
 ± 1,327.4 ACRES OF LAND
 prepared for
MASON WESTGREEN LP

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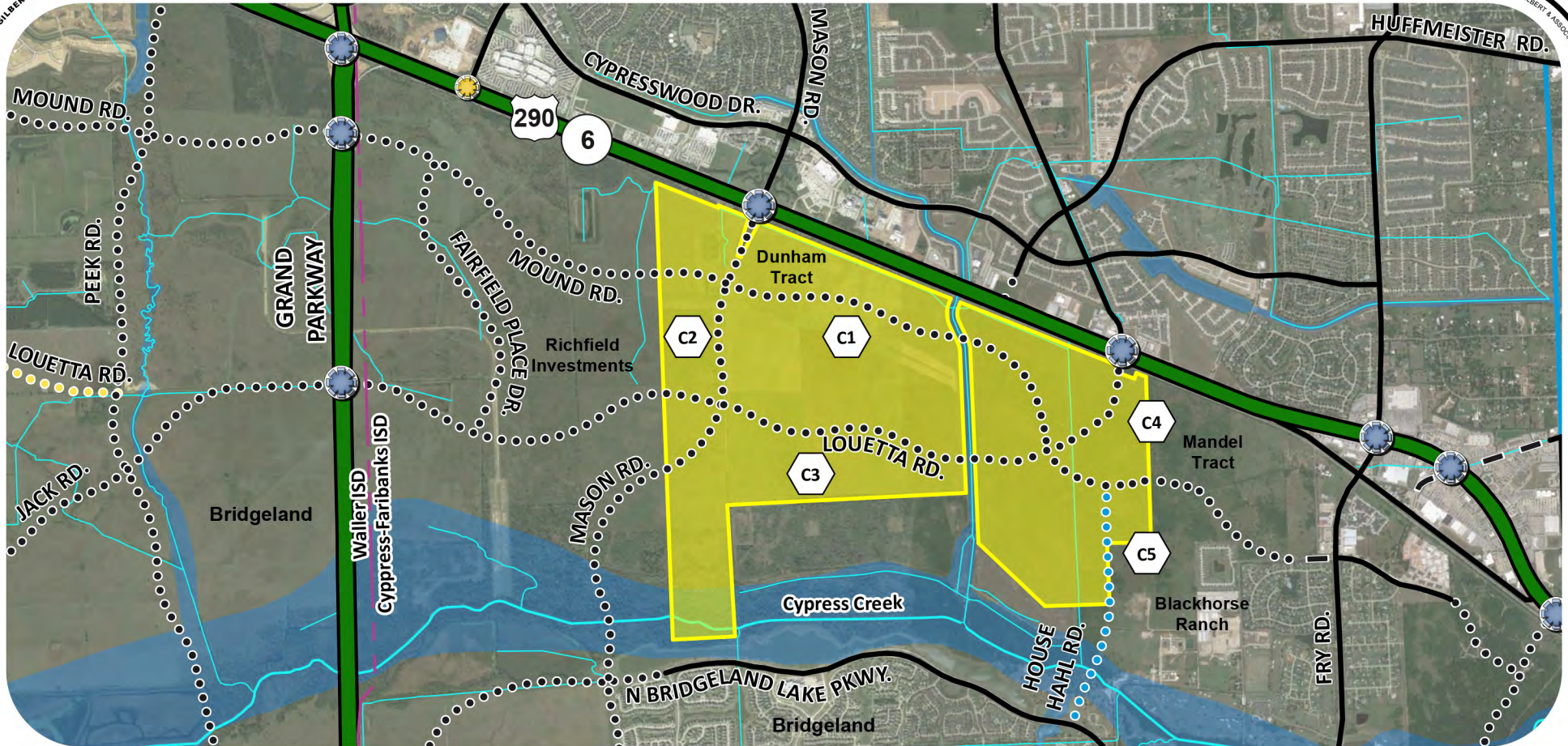
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JULY 2016
 KGA #1-213

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PROPOSED 2016 MAP LEGEND

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| FREEWAYS | THOROUGHFARES |
| EXISTING | EXISTING |
| | TO BE WIDENED |
| MAJOR COLLECTORS | PROPOSED |
| EXISTING | |
| PROPOSED | |
| MINOR COLLECTORS | |
| EXISTING | |
| PROPOSED | |

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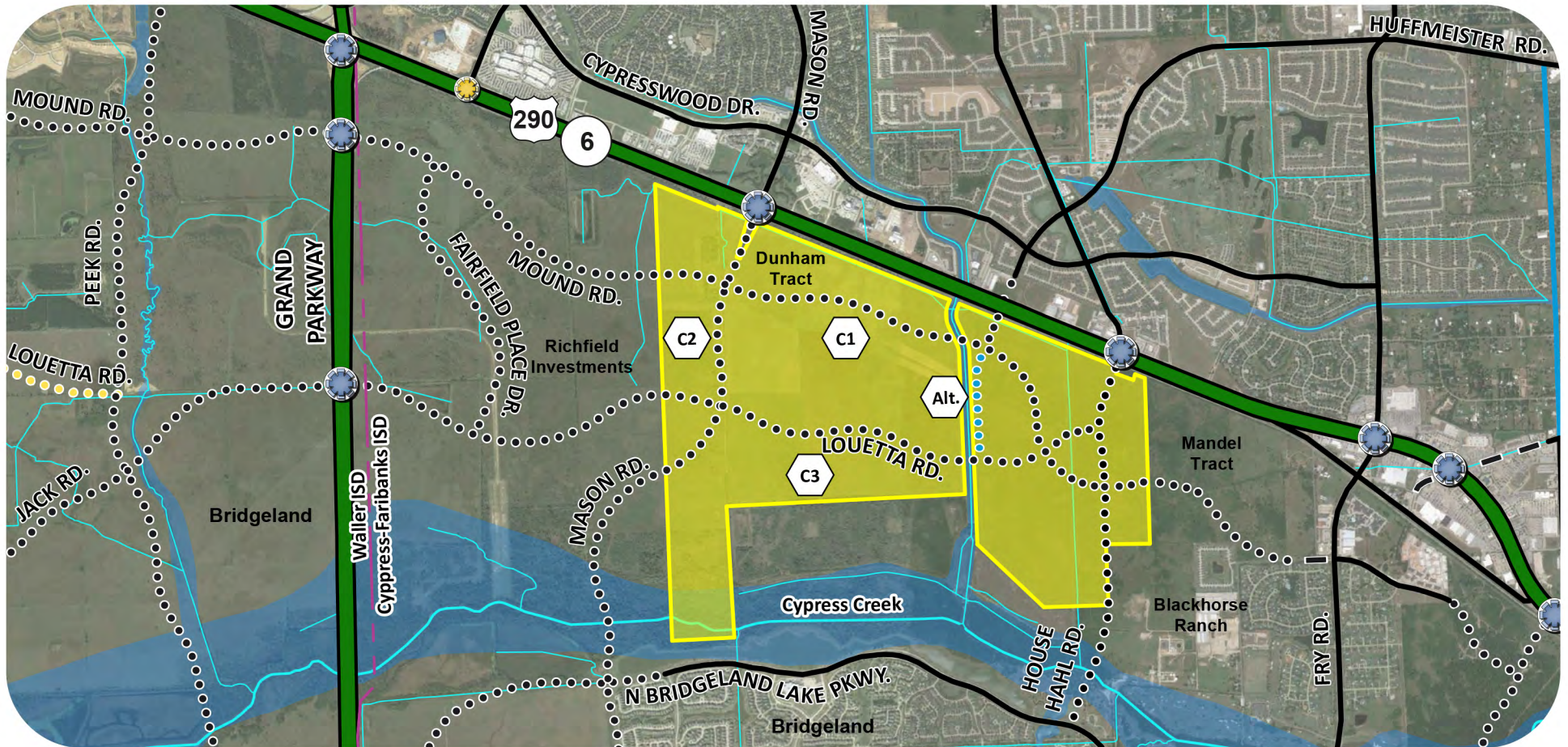
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STAFF RECOMMENDATION - C: DUNHAM TRACT

LEGEND

FREEWAYS		THOROUGHFARES	
	EXISTING		EXISTING
	PROPOSED		TO BE WIDENED
	PROPOSED		PROPOSED
MAJOR COLLECTORS			
	EXISTING		
	PROPOSED		
MINOR COLLECTORS			
	EXISTING		
	PROPOSED		

