



**IH 20 Ranger Hill Schematic Design and Environmental Documentation
CSJ: 0007-06-084**

**Project Limits
From approximately 3.5 miles east of Loop 254
To SH 16**

Public Meeting Summary

DATE/TIME:

August 25, 2015; 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.

LOCATION:

Ranger High School (cafeteria), 1842 TX-254 Loop, Ranger, TX 76470

PURPOSE OF MEETING:

- Present alternatives for realigning and reconstructing the IH 20 main lanes to reduce grade and curve radius at Ranger Hill to improve safety for the traveling public.
- Present proposed project Need and Purpose.
- Explain next steps in project.
- Answer questions and receive comments on all information presented.

FORMAT:

The two-hour Public Meeting consisted of an open house followed by a TxDOT presentation. During the open house portion of the meeting, attendees had an opportunity to review displays showing the project area and background, Purpose and Need, proposed alternatives, and environmental process. Project team members were available to answer questions and provide any requested information. Attendees were able to submit written comments during the meeting or the 10-day comment period following the meeting.

PUBLIC NOTICE:

A public notice of the meeting was published in the *Ranger Times/Eastland Telegram/Eastland County Today* on August 13 and August 20, 2015. TxDOT Brownwood District also distributed a press release/media advisory to the following media outlets:

- KTXS-TV, Abilene
- KTAB/KRBC, Abilene
- *Brownwood Bulletin*, Brownwood
- *Brownwoodnews.com* (online newspaper)
- KBWD-AM/KOXE-FM radio - Brownwood (country)
- KPSM - 99.3 FM radio – Brownwood
- KQBZ- 96.9 FM, Newstalk radio



- 102.3 FM, KXYL radio, Brownwood
- *Coleman Chronicle & Democratic Voice*
- KSTA-AM/FM radio, Coleman
- *Comanche Chief*, Comanche
- KCOM-AM & KYOX radio, Comanche
- *Eastland Telegram* (Cisco, Ranger, Rising Star & Gorman)
- KATX (HPRN CO.) radio, Eastland;
- *Microplex News* (online newspaper), Eastland
- *Lampasas Dispatch Record*, Lampasas
- KCYL-AM/KACC-FM radio, Lampasas
- *Brady Herald Standard*, Brady
- KNEL-AM radio, Brady
- *Goldthwaite Eagle*, Goldthwaite
- *San Saba News and Star*, San Saba
- KNUZ-FM/KNVR-AM radio, San Saba
- *Breckenridge American*, Breckenridge
- KLXX/ KROO radio, Breckenridge

Direct mail meeting notices were sent to a list of 58 property owners, federal, state, county, and local elected officials, federal, state, and local agencies, and other stakeholders. These notices contained the same information that is found in the display ad in the newspaper.

A meeting notice also was posted on the TxDOT.gov website and meeting information was posted on Facebook on August 24, 2015.

ATTENDANCE:

A total of 25 individuals (one of whom was a TxDOT employee) registered their attendance at the public meeting. Three elected officials or representatives of elected officials signed in as well.

DISPLAY AND HANDOUT MATERIALS:

The following displays were available for viewing: a project location map; project history and background; project description; Purpose and Need; maps and descriptions of proposed Alternative 1 and proposed Alternative 2, and a board comparing Alternatives 1 and 2. In addition, information was provided on the environmental process being used to evaluate the two project alternatives. Preliminary schematic drawings for the alternatives were displayed on tables so that meeting participants could study detailed engineering drawings for each alternative. In addition, a comment card was given to each meeting participant.

The meeting exhibits are available on TxDOT's website at <http://ftp.dot.state.tx.us/pub/txdot-info/bwd/projects/i20-ranger-hill/082515-boards.pdf>

PRESENTATION:

Jason Scantling, Director, Transportation Planning and Development, TxDOT Brownwood District, opened the meeting and introduced the project team. He



described the purpose of the public meeting – to introduce the project to the general public; provide information on the current preliminary design of project alternatives; obtain public input; and involve the public in the environmental process. Mr. Scantling then introduced, Krishna Peapully, AECOM Project Manager, who provided some background on the project, explaining that the project would address safety, mobility, and access issues by reconstructing the IH 20 main lanes to reduce steep vertical grade, flatten horizontal curves, and flatten superelevation (banking).

He then introduced Reggie Herman, AECOM Environmental Task Manager, who explained the environmental process being used to evaluate proposed project alternatives. He described the project Purpose and Need (safety, mobility, and access improvements), as well as the steps involved in completing an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the project. Mr. Herman then handed the presentation back to Krishna Peapully, who discussed the nine alternatives previously evaluated by TxDOT and constraints with each of those alternatives. He also presented two alternatives that optimize the right-of-way requirements while upgrading the roadway to current design standards. He also explained the design considerations including the proposed design speed, reductions in grade and horizontal curve and approximate right-of-way needed for each alternative. MR. Peapully handed the presentation back to Mr. Scantling.

Mr. Scantling concluded the meeting by explaining the next steps, which included the selection of an alternative for further evaluation; a value engineering study; ongoing meetings with affected property owners; a second public meeting later in the fall (2015); a draft EA and public hearing in the spring of 2016; and a final EA in the summer of 2016.

The public meeting presentation for this meeting is available at <http://ftp.dot.state.tx.us/pub/txdot-info/bwd/projects/i20-ranger-hill/082515-presentation.pdf>

DEADLINE:

Comments received and/or postmarked on or before September 4, 2015 were included in this public meeting report.

WRITTEN COMMENTS DELIVERED AT THE MEETING:

Five individuals submitted written comments at the public meeting. Their comments are listed below, along with a response from TxDOT.

Comment #1: Individual requested the following: 1) Take Alternative #1 and 2) Increase center barrier so headlights from oncoming traffic (from tall trucks and pickup trucks) is not visible.



TxDOT response: Thank you for your comment. For both alternatives, TxDOT is considering a concrete median barrier with a minimum height of 54 inches. In most motorized vehicles, headlights are located 22 to 54 inches above the pavement surface. Further consideration of the height of the concrete median barrier will occur during the design phase of the project development process (once an alternative is selected following the completion of the EA).

Comment #2: Individual stated that the latest upgrades to Ranger Hill have helped considerably but access to the hill by emergency vehicles is still a problem when responding to accidents. Traffic is steadily increasing and the westbound lanes of Ranger Hill become bogged down from slow moving semis trying to get up the hill. The curve causes a problem with seeing what is happening ahead. Individual strongly encourages the approval of the project with the least amount of grade – Alternative #1.

TxDOT response: Thank you for your comment. At this time, TxDOT is considering two possible alternatives for addressing safety, mobility, and access issues on IH 20 at Ranger Hill. These alternatives (plus the no-build—leaving the interstate as it is now) will be evaluated and documented in the EA.

Comment #3: Individual prefers Alternative 2, less right-of-way acreage and impact on private property owners.

TxDOT response: Thank you for your comment. At this time, TxDOT is considering two possible alternatives for addressing safety, mobility, and access issues on IH 20 at Ranger Hill. These alternatives (plus the no-build—leaving the interstate as it is now) will be evaluated and documented in the EA.

Comment #4: Individual requests moving overpass back from property, etc., on the north side.

TxDOT response: TxDOT is still at a very preliminary stage in the project development process for the IH 20 at Ranger Hill project and therefore has not made any decisions about the specific footprint of the changes to be made. At this time, two alternatives along with the no-build are being considered and will be evaluated in the EA.

Comment #5: Individual says she likes Alternative 1 due to the grade difference and drainage. One concern: Strawn's billboard on top of Ranger Hill. We need to keep our billboard. Our State Park – keeping the entrance inside the Strawn city limits.

TxDOT response: Thank you for your comment. During the preparation of the EA, TxDOT will evaluate impacts to all surrounding properties. As part of this evaluation consideration is given to avoid, minimize, and mitigate any impacts of the build alternative(s) to adjacent properties. If an alternative is selected that



results in an impact to the billboard, TxDOT would work with the property owner during the right-of-way acquisition phase of the project.

The proposed entrance to Palo Pinto Mountain State Park is on Farm to Market (FM) Road 2372, which is approximately three miles to the north of the proposed IH 20 Ranger Hill project area. All alternatives currently under consideration would not be in the vicinity of FM 2372, and thus there are no entrances to the State Park associated with the proposed roadway project.

WRITTEN COMMENTS RECEIVED AFTER THE PUBLIC MEETING:

Four individuals submitted written comments to TxDOT on or before the September 4, 2015 comment period deadline.

Comment #6: Individual asked if there was a way to bypass Ranger Hill altogether.

TxDOT response: Due to the current location of IH 20 and the existing topography in the area, there is no reasonable alternative that could bypass Ranger Hill without substantial relocation and alteration of IH 20, which would result in significant amounts of right-of-way acquisition to the east and west of the current proposed project. These factors would make bypassing Ranger Hill cost prohibitive and would thus not be feasible.

Comment #7: Individual stated the following: I have lived in Abilene for 33 years and have passed through Ranger Hill many times. I have appreciated the efforts to make it safer, but cannot understand why one simple remedy is not implemented. The simplest (yet apparently most radical) remedy is to drastically lower the speed limit for all vehicles. Lowering it to 65 mph was meaningless, but lowering it to 30-35 mph would be effective. Would that frustrate some drivers? Yes, of course. But it is also free---no construction necessary. That is a quite short stretch of road and drastically reducing the speed limit would make virtually no change in the travel time for any driver. People in Texas seem to believe it is their right to drive fast; this is a place to make an exception for 3-4 miles and save both lives and money.

TxDOT response: TxDOT is undertaking this project to address safety issues on IH 20 at Ranger Hill, which is consistent with the project's purpose and need presented at the public meeting. The three main safety concerns attributed to this location are the steep vertical grade (6%), sharp horizontal curve, and steep superelevation (8% banking). Proposed alternatives would reduce the steep vertical grade, flatten the sharp horizontal curve, and reduce roadway banking. These modifications, which meet TxDOT's current design standards, would accommodate a 75 mph travel speed. The speed required according to the design standard is 70 mph. This freeway is on the interstate system and reducing the speed to 30 mph could produce negative effects such as additional accidents caused by faster driving motorists, additional traffic congestion, delayed mobility,



and the need for additional law enforcement 24/7 to enforce the 30 mph speed limit.

Comment #8: Individual stated that regarding Ranger Hill, years ago the highway wound around hills north of the current road. Maybe a new route could be built leaving 20 in operation during the construction.

TxDOT response: If the proposed project were to be environmentally cleared and then constructed, TxDOT would phase construction in a manner that would keep all lanes of traffic of IH 20 open to the traveling public.

Comment #9: Individual's concern is the potential impact to traffic flow and safety from the south frontage road as it merges across oncoming traffic onto the Loop 254 overpass. Although the existing south frontage road is two-way travel, it is a dead-end at the top of Ranger Hill, thus alleviating thru traffic concerns. Once that south frontage road is continuous thru travel and not a dead-end, there will be an increase in thru traffic, particularly during times of incidents in the area. That thru traffic then will be required to cross oncoming traffic coming out of Ranger on that Loop 254 overpass. It is no secret the overpass is downhill, curving, and the view is obscured. South frontage road traffic will be crossing from a complete stop, turning, and attempting to gain speed to go up the incline. And we hope that the drivers of those vehicles do not attempt to enter the "exit" onto eastbound I-20.

TxDOT response: Thank you for your comment. The Loop 254 bridge is currently outside the proposed project limits. The safety of the traveling public is a major point of emphasis for TxDOT; thus, during the design phase of the project, TxDOT would evaluate potential changes to traffic movements at both the west and eastern limits of this project.

ATTACHMENTS

Public Meeting Notice
Public Meeting Notice to Property Owners
Public Meeting Comment Form
Public Meeting Photo Log



TxDOT Public Meeting on IH 20 Ranger Hill to be held August 25

On August 25, 2015, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) will hold a public meeting to share proposed changes to Interstate Highway (IH) 20 that would improve safety for the traveling public. The stretch of IH 20 to be improved is in Eastland County (from about 3.5 miles east of Loop 254 to State Highway 16).

Time: 5:30 – 6:30 pm - open house

6:30 pm - TxDOT presentation, followed by question/answer session

Location: Ranger High School cafeteria, 1842 TX-254 in Ranger, Texas

The public meeting will be conducted in English. Anyone interested in attending the meeting who has special communication or accommodation needs, or needs an interpreter, is encouraged to call (325) 643-0415. Requests should be made at least two days before the public meeting. Every reasonable effort will be made to accommodate special needs.

The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried-out by TxDOT pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated December 16, 2014, and executed by FHWA and TxDOT.

Additional information on this meeting may be found at <http://www.txdot.gov/inside-txdot/get-involved/about/hearings-meetings>.



2495 HIGHWAY 183 N. | BROWNWOOD, TEXAS 76802 | (325) 646-2591 | WWW.TXDOT.GOV

Notice of Public Meeting

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) will hold a public meeting to share proposed changes to Interstate Highway (IH) 20 that would improve safety for the traveling public. The stretch to be improved is in Eastland County, from about 3.5 miles east of Loop 254 to State Highway (SH) 16.

The meeting will be held on Tuesday, August 25, 2015, at the Ranger High School Cafeteria, 1842 E. Loop 254, Ranger, TX 76470. An open house will take place from 5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m., followed by a presentation and question and answer session from 6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

The purpose of the Public Meeting is to present the proposed project alternatives and associated improvements to the public and to receive comments. Although TxDOT has already made some safety improvements to this section of IH 20 (e.g., reducing the speed limit, resurfacing the main lane pavement, and installing a concrete barrier), additional measures are needed to respond to local concerns. TxDOT now has identified additional safety, access and mobility improvements. These include reducing the grade; straightening the curve of the interstate at Ranger Hill; providing a westbound climbing lane; and adding continuous frontage roads along both east and westbound lanes.

The proposed improvements would keep traffic from diverting to limited surrounding roadways when accidents occur and would allow emergency responders easier access to IH 20 at Ranger Hill. Currently, accident delays can cause backups from 30 minutes to eight hours.

The public meeting will be conducted in English. Anyone interested in attending the meeting who has special communication or accommodation needs, or needs an interpreter, is encouraged to call (325) 643-0415. Requests should be made at least two days before the public meeting. Every reasonable effort will be made to accommodate special needs.

The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by TxDOT pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated Dec. 16, 2014, and executed by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and TxDOT.

All interested citizens are invited to attend this public meeting. Written comments from the public regarding this project are requested and may be presented for a period of 10 calendar days following the meeting. Written comments may be submitted either in person or by mail to Jason Scantling at the TxDOT Brownwood District, 2495 Highway 183 North, Brownwood, TX 76802. Written comments must be received by September 4, 2015 to be included in the Public Meeting Summary.

Additional information about this public meeting may be found at <http://www.txdot.gov/inside-txdot/get-involved/about/hearings-meetings>.

OUR GOALS

MAINTAIN A SAFE SYSTEM ▪ ADDRESS CONGESTION ▪ CONNECT TEXAS COMMUNITIES ▪ BEST IN CLASS STATE AGENCY

An Equal Opportunity Employer



Public Meeting

IH 20, Eastland County, TX – CSJ 0007-06-084
IH 20 from 3.5 mi. east of LP 254 to SH 16 (Ranger Hill)

August 25, 2015 – 5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
Ranger High School Cafeteria
1842 E. Loop 254, Ranger, TX 76470

COMMENTS

Name: _____
Address: _____
City, State, Zip Code: _____
Email: _____

(Per Texas Transportation Code, §201.811(a)(5)): check each of the following boxes that apply to you:

- I am employed by TxDOT.
- I do business with TxDOT.
- I could benefit monetarily from the project or other item about which I am commenting.

- Please add me to the project mailing list

Written comments may be turned in today, or mailed or emailed by **September 4, 2015 to:**

Jason Scantling, Project Manager
TxDOT Brownwood District
2495 Highway 183 N.
Brownwood, TX 76802
jason.scantling@txdot.gov



**IH 20 Ranger Hill Schematic Design and Environmental Documentation
CSJ: 0007-06-084**

**Public Meeting Photo Log
August 25, 2015**





IH 20 Ranger Hill Schematic Design and Environmental Documentation CSJ: 0007-06-084

Public Meeting Photo Log August 25, 2015





**IH 20 Ranger Hill Schematic Design and Environmental Documentation
CSJ: 0007-06-084**

**Public Meeting Photo Log
August 25, 2015**





IH 20 Ranger Hill Schematic Design and Environmental Documentation CSJ: 0007-06-084

Public Meeting Photo Log August 25, 2015





**IH 20 Ranger Hill Schematic Design and Environmental Documentation
CSJ: 0007-06-084**

**Public Meeting Photo Log
August 25, 2015**

