



Notice

Draft Environmental Assessment and Virtual Public Hearing with In-Person Hearing Opportunities

Historic SH 63/LA 8 Bridge at the Sabine River

TxDOT CSJs (Project Numbers): 0214-03-035, 0214-03-032, 0214-03-037

LADOTD Project Number/LA State Project Number: H.000986

Newton County, Texas and Vernon Parish, Louisiana

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) Beaumont District, in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LADOTD), is proposing the relocation of the State Highway (SH) 63/Louisiana Highway (LA) 8 crossing of the Sabine River at the Texas and Louisiana state line, between the community of Burkeville in Newton County, TX, and the city of Leesville in Vernon Parish, LA. The proposed project would remove the TxDOT/LADOTD jointly owned existing historic bridge and construct new approach roadways and a new bridge structure approximately 0.3 mile (i.e. 1,825 feet) downstream from the existing bridge. The project is needed based on the bridge's current condition.

This notice advises the public that a draft environmental assessment (EA) is available for public review and that TxDOT, in partnership with LADOTD, will be conducting an online virtual public hearing on the proposed project along with two in-person hearing opportunities.

The virtual hearing will consist of a pre-recorded video presentation and will include both audio and visual components. The presentation will be posted online on Tuesday, July 25, 2023, by noon. To log onto the virtual public hearing, visit www.txdot.gov and, in the keyword search box in the upper-right hand corner, enter "Historic SH 63/LA 8 Bridge."

If you do not have internet access, you may call the TxDOT Beaumont District Office at 409-898-5732 between the hours of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, to ask questions and access project materials during the project development process.

Additionally, two in-person hearing opportunities will also be provided. The public will have the opportunity to listen to the pre-recorded presentation that will be posted online, review the same materials that will be posted online, ask questions to the project team, and leave written and/or provide verbal comments through voicemail. **The first in-person opportunity will be held on Tuesday, July 25, 2023, from 5 – 7 p.m. at Leesville High School Cafeteria at 502 Berry Drive, Leesville, Louisiana 71446. The second in-person hearing opportunity will be held on Thursday, July 27, 2023, from 5 – 7 p.m. at Burkeville ISD Cafeteria at 231 CR 2099, Burkeville, Texas 75932.**

The existing historic SH 63/LA 8 Sabine River Bridge (National Bridge Inventory Number [NBI] 201760021404005), also known as Burr's Ferry Bridge, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The proposed project is nearly three miles in length: the western limit in Texas is less than one mile west of the proposed bridge; in Louisiana, the eastern project limit is less than two miles east of the proposed bridge. The current existing right of way (ROW) width ranges from 120 to 180 feet and the existing roadway approaches include two 10.5-foot-wide lanes.

The proposed ROW width for SH 63/LA 8 would range from 116 to 240 feet. The new approach roadway would contain two 12-foot-wide lanes, two 10-foot-wide shoulders, and would include a 30-foot-wide clear zone on each side of the pavement. Proposed ROW for cross streets includes a 50- to 75-foot-wide ROW with two 12-foot-wide lanes, two 1-foot-wide shoulders, and two 10-foot-wide clear zones. In Texas, the proposed ROW diverges from the existing ROW near the intersection of SH 63 and CR 2119, and in Louisiana the proposed ROW diverges from the existing ROW near the LA 8/LA 111 intersection. The proposed bridge would be 46 feet wide with two 12-foot-wide travel lanes and two 10-foot-wide outside shoulders. The project would require approximately 77 acres of new ROW, much of which is from commercial timber farms. Access would be maintained throughout project construction. Construction is anticipated to take three years.

Although additional ROW would be required, no residential or non-residential structures are anticipated to be displaced at this time. Information concerning services and benefits available to affected property owners and information about the tentative schedule for ROW acquisition and construction can be obtained from the TxDOT district office by calling 409-898-5732.

The historic SH 63/LA 8 bridge is classified as a historic site under Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966 and Chapter 26 of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Code. Since TxDOT is considering the demolition of the historic bridge, the proposed project is anticipated to impact (or “use”) under Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 and Chapter 26 of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Code. Public comment on the effects of the proposed project on the activities, features, or attributes of the historic bridge may be submitted as described below.

The proposed project would involve construction in wetlands and an action in a floodplain.

The draft EA, any maps and drawings showing the project location and design, tentative construction schedules, and other information regarding the proposed project are on file and available for inspection Monday through Friday between the hours of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the TxDOT Beaumont District Office, 8350 Eastex Freeway, Beaumont, Texas, 77708. An appointment can be made by calling 409-898-5732 to review these materials. The draft EA is also available for inspection during business hours at the main Vernon Parish Library, 1401 Nolan Trace, Leesville, LA 71446, and the LADOTD District 08 Office at 3300 S. MacArthur Drive, Alexandria, LA, 71301.

The virtual and in-person public hearings will be conducted in English. If you need an interpreter or document translator because English is not your primary language or if you have difficulty communicating effectively in English, one will be provided to you. If you have a disability and need assistance, special arrangements can be made to accommodate most needs. If you need interpretation or translation services or you are a person with a disability who requires an accommodation to attend and participate in the virtual public hearing or in-person hearings, please contact the TxDOT Beaumont District Public Information Office at 409-898-5745 no later than 4 p.m. on Friday, July 21, 2023. Please be aware that advance notice is required as some services and accommodation may require time for TxDOT to arrange.

The public may provide their comments in a variety of ways. They may call 409-203-3575 to provide verbal testimony beginning at noon on Tuesday, July 25, 2023, through 11:59 p.m. on Friday, Aug. 11, 2023. Written comments can be mailed to TxDOT Beaumont District Office, C/O Jason Hightower, Re: SH 63/LA 8 Bridge at Sabine River, 8350 Eastex Freeway, Beaumont, TX 77708 or submitted by email to bmtprojects@txdot.gov. Comments may also be submitted at www.txdot.gov and, in the keyword search box in the upper-right-hand corner, enter “Historic SH 63/LA 8 Bridge.” **All comments must be received on or before Friday, Aug. 11, 2023**, to be included in the Public Hearing Summary Report, which will be posted online once prepared.

If you have any general questions or concerns regarding the proposed project or public hearings, please call 409-898-5732 or email bmtprojects@txdot.gov.

The lead agency under the National Environmental Policy Act for the proposed project is the Federal Highway Administration.

Project Location Map

SH 63/LA 8 Bridge at the Sabine River

