



**Virtual Public Hearing**

**US 190 at Neches River - Bridge Replacements  
Jasper and Tyler Counties, Texas  
CSJs: 0213-07-047, 0213-08-074  
(Project Numbers)**

March 21, 2023

Welcome to the Virtual Public Hearing for the TxDOT Beaumont District’s US 190 Project at the Neches River. This is a pre-recorded video presentation.

TxDOT is proposing to replace the US 190 bridges over the Neches River in Jasper and Tyler Counties. My name is Catherine Ramirez, and I am part of the project team. I would like to thank you for your interest in the project.

This hearing presentation is available for viewing starting March 21, 2023. During the virtual public hearing you may pause the presentation and navigate forward or backward using your video player to allow more time to review the information.

The graphic features a dark background with a grey header at the top left containing the text "End The Streak" and a white star icon with a swoosh. The main text is "HELP #EndTheStreakTX" in white and yellow, with "HELP" in a handwritten style. Below it is the tagline "End the streak of daily deaths on Texas roadways." in yellow. At the bottom left, it says "TxDOT.gov (Keyword: #EndTheStreakTX)". At the bottom right, there are icons for Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, followed by a QR code and the text "#EndTheStreakTX Toolkit". A dark blue footer at the very bottom contains the text "US 190 Neches River Bridge Replacements" on the left, "March 21, 2023" in the center, and a small white box with the number "2" on the right.


November 7, 2000 was the last deathless day on roadways in Texas. That means for nearly 22 years, at least one person has died every single day. We all have a part to play to change that. This message is that reminder – to End the Streak of deaths on Texas highways. We need drivers and passengers to act more responsibly and help us reach our goal of zero deaths by 2050. Texans can play a major role in ending fatal crashes with a few simple driving habits: wear seatbelts, drive the speed limit, put away the phone and other distractions, and never drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs. So please do your part and share this message with your friends and family. Thank you and please enjoy the rest of this presentation.

### Purpose of this Public Hearing



- Provide project information and status
- Describe the project so the public can determine how they may be affected
- Provide an opportunity to receive public input
- Maintain effective communication with the public regarding the project
- Comply with the requirements of Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act and Chapter 26 of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Code

The purpose of the public hearing is to provide project information, describe the project so the public can determine if and how they may be affected, provide an opportunity to receive public input, maintain effective communication with the public regarding the project and to comply with the requirements of Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act and Chapter 26 of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Code.

**Agenda** 





- 1** How to Submit Verbal Testimony and Written Comments
- 2** Project Overview
- 3** Project Purpose and Objectives
- 4** Existing Roadway and Proposed Design
- 5** Environmental Studies
- 6** Anticipated Schedule
- 7** How to Submit Comments

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During this presentation, we will provide how to submit verbal testimony and written comments, a project overview, project purpose and objectives, existing roadway and proposed design information, and a description of the environmental studies conducted for the project. In addition, we will provide an anticipated schedule, and then recap how you can submit comments.

### How to Submit Your Verbal Testimony

- Verbal testimony available, starting at noon on Tuesday, March 21, 2023, until 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, April 5, 2023
- Leave your voicemail at:
  - (409) 203-2579
  - Please limit your comments to 3 minutes





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TxDOT is committed to continuing our efforts to gain public feedback about this project. Let's take a few minutes and explain the comment process, which is the most important part of this video. The Beaumont District is asking the public to provide their input through verbal and written comments. The first way you can share your input is to provide your verbal testimony - similar to an in-person public hearing. The verbal testimony option is available starting at noon on Tuesday, March 21, 2023, and will be available until 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, April 5, 2023. Please call (409) 203-2579 and leave a voicemail with your comment during that time to provide verbal testimony. Your comments will be recorded, and a response will be included in the virtual public hearing summary report. Please keep your comments to three minutes, which is similar to the time provided during our standard in-person public hearing event.

**How to Submit Your Written Comments**

Visit [www.txdot.gov](http://www.txdot.gov)  
 In the "Search TxDOT" box in upper right-hand corner, enter:  
 "US 190 at Neches River"

<p>1) Mail Comment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Download comment form</li> <li>• Add comments</li> <li>• Mail comments to:            TxDOT Beaumont District            Re: US 190 at Neches River            8350 Eastex Freeway            Beaumont, TX 77708</li> </ul>	<p>2) Submit Online Comment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Click on "Email the Beaumont District"</li> <li>• Add comments</li> </ul> 	<p>In addition:</p> <p>3) Email Comment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Send to <a href="mailto:bmtprojects@txdot.gov">bmtprojects@txdot.gov</a></li> </ul> 
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**Comments must be received on or before Wednesday, April 5, 2023**

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In addition to providing the verbal testimony voicemail option, TxDOT is also encouraging written comments. Comments must be received or postmarked by Wednesday, April 5, 2023, to be included in the virtual public hearing summary report. You can submit written comments in the following ways:

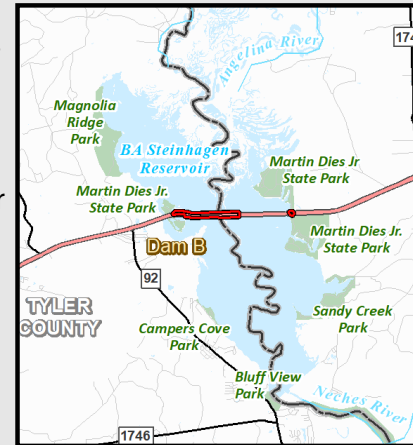
To mail or submit your comments online:

- Mail comments to: TxDOT Beaumont District, Re: US 190 at Neches River, 8350 Eastex Freeway, Beaumont, TX 77708
- Or -
- Visit [www.txdot.gov](http://www.txdot.gov)
- In the "Search TxDOT" box in the upper-right hand corner, enter: "US 190 at Neches River"
- Once on the TxDOT site you can download a comment form, add your comments, and mail the form to the address shown on the screen. If you want to submit your comments electronically, you can click the "Email the Beaumont District" button on the TxDOT site. If you would like to email your comments, you can send them to [bmtprojects@txdot.gov](mailto:bmtprojects@txdot.gov).

Please be sure to submit your written and verbal comments no later than Wednesday, April 5, 2023, by 11:59 p.m. The responses to your comments submitted during the comment period will be included in the virtual public hearing summary report. This report will be posted to the TxDOT website once approved.

## Project Overview

- Project length - Approximately 1.11 miles long over Neches River at B.A. Steinhagen Reservoir, between Woodville and Jasper, Texas (in red in map to right)
- Project would replace US 190 at Neches River Relief Bridge and US 190 at Neches River Bridge by constructing a single new bridge directly north of the two existing bridges
- Estimated project cost is approximately \$30,000,000



This slide provides a brief project overview. The project is approximately 1.11 miles long over the Neches River at B.A. Steinhagen Reservoir, between Woodville and Jasper, Texas. The project area is shown in red in the map to right.

The project would replace two existing bridges (the US 190 at the Neches River Relief Bridge and Neches River Bridge) by constructing a new bridge directly north of the existing bridges and then removing the existing bridges and approaches. The estimated project cost is approximately \$30,000,000, but is subject to change.

## Project Purpose and Objectives



- The proposed project is needed to provide a bridge with adequate width and height to safely accommodate existing and foreseeable future transportation needs
- The two existing bridges are being combined into one bridge to meet United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) requirements
- Replacing the bridges with one bridge would maintain the existing connection across the Neches River

The purpose of the proposed project is to replace the two existing US 190 bridges. The existing US 190 bridges do not meet current design criteria. The proposed project is needed to provide one bridge with adequate width and height to safely accommodate existing and foreseeable future transportation needs. Replacing the bridges would maintain the existing connection across the Neches River. Additionally, the two bridges are being combined to one bridge to meet United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) requirements.

## Description of Existing Bridges to be Removed



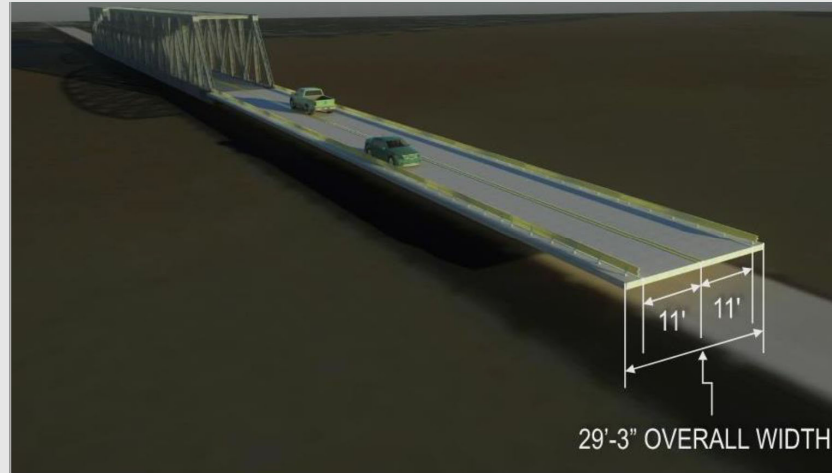
- **Neches River bridge:**
  - Listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)
  - Bridge length – approximately 1,595 feet
  - Built between 1941 and 1943 as custom-designed truss bridge
  - Consists of two through truss spans with 24-foot-wide roadway and 27 simple approach spans
  - Includes an 11-foot-wide travel lane and 1-foot-wide shoulder in each direction
- **Neches River relief bridge (west relief bridge):**
  - Not listed in the NRHP
  - Bridge length – approximately 455 feet
  - Built in 1940 as concrete tee-beam structure (located west of historic bridge)
  - Includes an 11-foot-wide travel lane and 1-foot-wide shoulder in each direction

This slide provides a description of the existing bridges to be removed.

The Neches River bridge is listed in the National Register of Historic Places or NRHP. The bridge is approximately 1,595 feet in length and was built between 1941 and 1943 as a custom-designed truss bridge. It consists of two, through truss spans with a 24-foot-wide roadway and 27 simple approach spans. Currently, there is one 11-foot-wide travel lane and a 1-foot-wide shoulder in each direction.

The Neches River Relief bridge (or west relief bridge) is not listed in the NRHP and is approximately 455 feet in length. The bridge was built in 1940 as a concrete tee-beam structure and is located west of the historic bridge. This bridge also includes one 11-foot-wide travel lane and a 1-foot-wide shoulder in each direction.

## Existing Bridges Typical Section



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This is a typical section of the existing US 190 bridges. As shown, it consists of two, approximately 11-foot-wide travel lanes, one in each direction, with 1-foot-wide shoulders. The bridges include two through truss spans and a concrete tee-beam structure.

## Existing Road Typical Section



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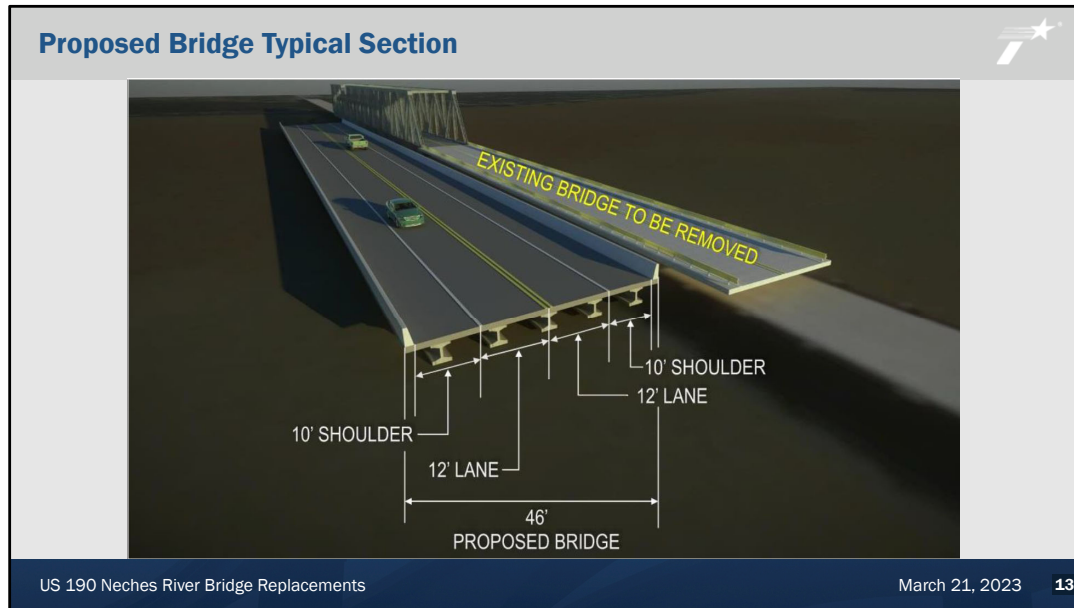
This is a typical section of the existing US 190 roadway, which consists of two approximately 11-foot-wide travel lanes, one in each direction, with 6-foot-wide shoulders and guardrails on both sides.

### Description of Proposed Project

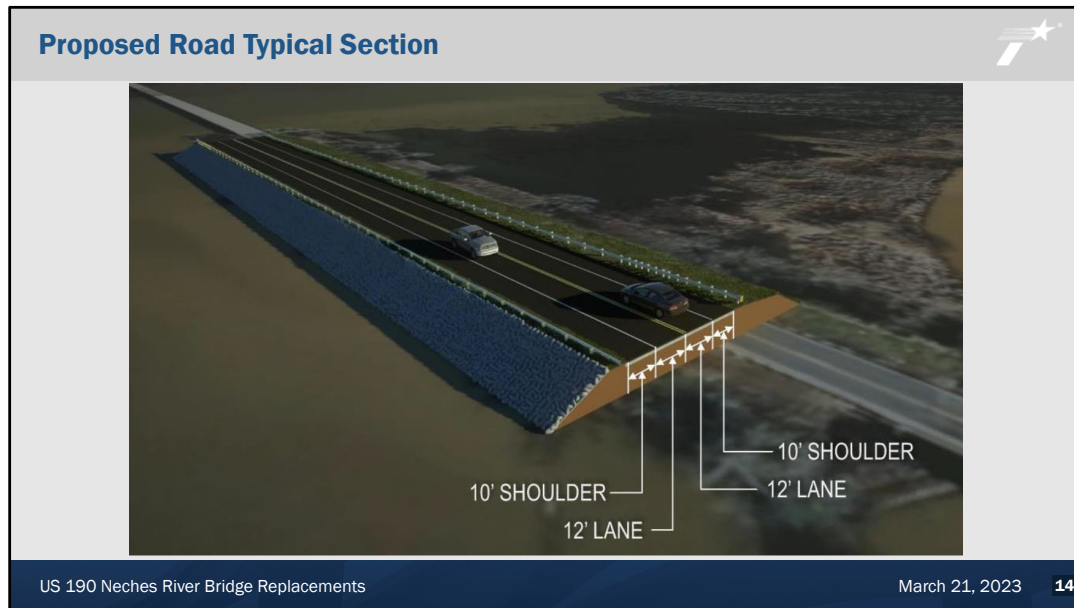


- Proposed project would be constructed within the existing 200- to 300-foot-wide permanent transportation easement (a.k.a. right-of-way or ROW)
- Proposed approach roadways and new bridge would consist of two 12-foot-wide travel lanes (one in each direction) with 10-foot-wide outside shoulders, new guardrail, and stone rip rap along the embankments
- Proposed project includes three proposed temporary construction easements:
  - One within existing permanent easement/ROW (0.25 acre)
  - Two within Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD)/USACE property (8.9 acres)
- Construction detours are not anticipated and roadway access would be maintained.

This is a description of the proposed project, which would be constructed within the existing 200 to 300-foot-wide permanent transportation easement (also referred to for our purposes as existing right-of-way). The proposed approach roadways and the new bridge would consist of two, 12-foot-wide travel lanes, one in each direction, with 10-foot-wide outside shoulders, a new guardrail, and stone rip rap along the embankments. The proposed project includes three proposed temporary construction easements. One within existing ROW, which is 0.25 acres in size and two that are within 8.9 acres leased by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers property. No construction detours are anticipated and roadway access would be maintained.



This a typical section of the proposed bridge, which would be constructed just to the north of the existing bridge during the first phase of construction. The new bridge would consist of two, 12-foot-wide travel lanes, one in each direction, with 10-foot shoulders and concrete railing. During construction, two lanes of traffic will be maintained, with no closures during bridge construction. The existing bridge will be removed during the final phase of construction.



This is a typical section of the proposed roadway, which would be constructed just to the north of the existing roadway. The first phase of construction would include construction of the northern half of the roadway. During this first phase, traffic would be reduced to one lane only at the beginning and end of the project. Once the first phase is complete, the second phase of construction would begin. During the second phase, vehicles would travel on the newly constructed bridge while the southern half of the roadway is constructed. Traffic would be reduced to one lane, during this phase only, at the beginning and end of the project. The new roadway would consist of two, 12-foot-lanes, one in each direction, with 10-foot-wide shoulders, new guardrail, and stone rip rap along the embankments.

**Proposed Design Schematics**

To view and/or download schematics:

- Go to [www.txdot.gov](http://www.txdot.gov) and enter keywords “US 190 at Neches River”

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If you would like to view and/or download the project design, which is also referred to as “schematics,” you can go to [www.txdot.gov](http://www.txdot.gov) and look at the top right corner. In the search field, add the keywords “US 190 at Neches River” to access the project page, where all project materials are located, including the schematics. Once you open the schematics, you can zoom in and out to show your location of interest. Also, shown on the slide is a screen capture of the schematic and legend. The legend shows the colors that fill the proposed design. These colors identify the limits and major aspects of the project. For example, the new proposed bridge is shown in pink.




## NEPA Assignment to the Texas Department of Transportation

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 9, 2019, and executed by the Federal Highway Administration and TxDOT.

Prior to December 16, 2014, the Federal Highway Administration, otherwise known as FHWA, reviewed and approved documents prepared under the National Environmental Policy Act or “NEPA”. However, on December 16, 2014, the Texas Department of Transportation assumed responsibility from FHWA for reviewing and approving certain assigned NEPA environmental documents. This memorandum of understanding was renewed on December 9, 2019. This review and approval process applies to this proposed project as it is receiving federal funds; therefore, TxDOT is required to assess the potential environmental effects of the proposed project in accordance with Federal standards.

**Environmental Studies**

Environmental documentation is categorized as Categorical Exclusion (CE) and has been prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)



Biological Resources

Community Impacts

Cultural Resources

Park Resources

Water Resources

Hazardous Materials

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The project team has evaluated the potential environmental impacts that could occur as a result of constructing the proposed project. The project has been categorized as a Categorical Exclusion or “CE” under the National Environmental Policy Act or “NEPA.”

In support of the CE, TxDOT has prepared technical reports for the following resources: biological resources, community impacts, cultural resources including the historic bridge and archeology, water resources, and hazardous materials. The project was designed to avoid and/or minimize environmental impacts to the greatest extent practicable. The proposed project would not impact any federally-listed species. Suitable habitat was present within the project area for sixteen state-listed threatened species, and 38 species that are considered of greatest conservation need by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. TxDOT is currently coordinating with the USACE regarding potential impacts to waters of the U.S., which are considered Section 404 impacts under the Clean Water Act and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act. In addition, because the project would involve an action in a floodplain, coordination with the local floodplain coordinator is required. In addition, potential impacts to one of the bridges and the Martin Dies Jr. State Park will be addressed through the Section 106, Section 4(f), and Chapter 26 processes, which are explained in the following slides.

The materials are available at the TxDOT Beaumont District Office by appointment Monday through Friday between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Please call ahead to schedule an appointment to see these materials. Contact information is shown at the end of this presentation.

## Section 106, Section 4(f), and Chapter 26



- Section 106:
  - Under Section 106, federal agencies must consider the effects of their actions on historic properties, which are defined as resources that are included in or eligible for inclusion in the NRHP.
- Section 4(f) of the US DOT Act protects:
  - Publicly owned parks
  - Recreation areas
  - Wildlife and water fowl refuges, and
  - Historic sites (regardless of ownership)
- Chapter 26 of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Code protects:
  - Public parks
  - Recreation areas
  - Scientific areas
  - Wildlife refuges, and
  - Historic sites

This slide lists the types of properties that are protected under Section 106, Section 4(f), and Chapter 26. As shown in blue, the project is subject to Section 106 because it potentially affects an NRHP-listed historic site (the US 190 at Neches River Bridge). The project is subject to Section 4(f) and Chapter 26 because it potentially affects an NRHP-listed historic site (the US 190 at Neches River Bridge) and a publicly owned park (Martin Dies Jr. State Park).

## Section 106, Section 4(f), and Chapter 26 – Historic Bridge



- US 190 Neches River bridge is listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRPH) under Criterion C (Engineering) at the state level of significance for employing technically complex, advanced, or innovative design
- Proposed project would replace the US 190 Neches River bridge. Because the bridge is listed on the NRHP, it is protected under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act, and Chapter 26 of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Code
- The existing US 190 Neches River bridge has structural and functional deficiencies and does not meet current design standards.



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The proposed project would replace the US 190 at Neches River bridge, which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C for Engineering at the state level of significance for employing technically complex, advanced, or innovative design. The existing US 190 Neches River bridge has structural and functional deficiencies and does not meet current design standards. Note that the photo shown on the slide shows only the main truss span – not the entire historic bridge.

## Section 106, Section 4(f), and Chapter 26 – Historic Bridge



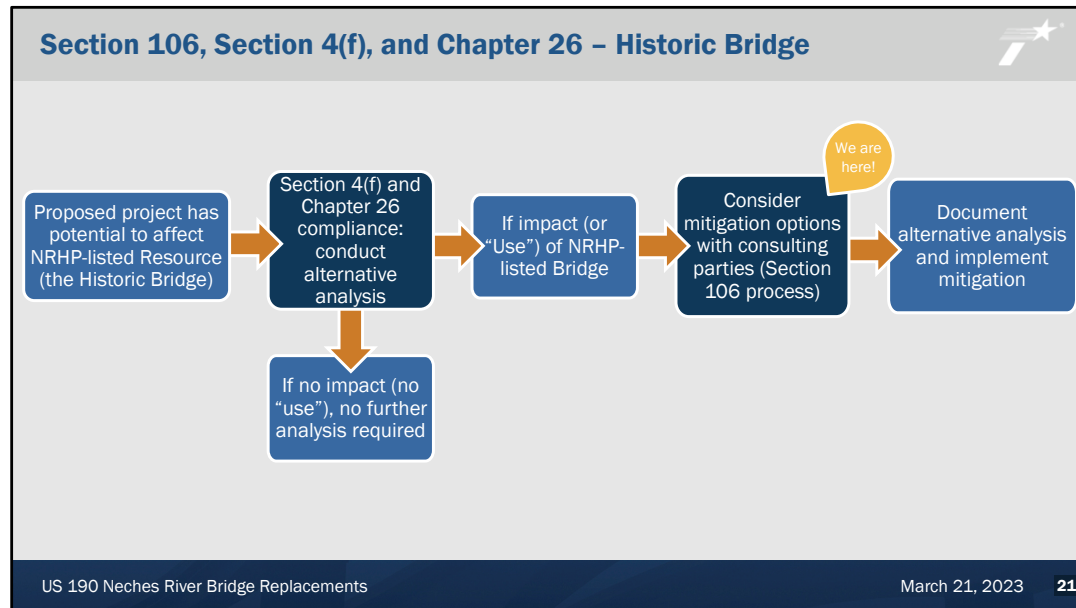
- **Alternatives Considered for the Proposed Project:**
  - No Build
  - Move Historic Bridge to New Location and Rehabilitate for Vehicular/Pedestrian Use
  - Rehabilitate Structure
    - Rehabilitate for Continued Two-Way Vehicular Use
    - Rehabilitate for One-Way Use and Construction of New Structure on New Alignment for One-Way Use (One-Way Couplet)
  - Move to New Location and Memorialize/Monument
  - Construct New Structure on New Alignment (Phased)
  - **Chosen as Preferred Alternative - Construct New Structure on New Alignment (Non-Phased)**
  - Leave Structure in Place with New Structure on New Alignment
    - Convert Historic Bridge to Scenic Turnout/Fishing Pier
    - Convert Historic Bridge to a Ped/Bicycle Facility
    - Construct Monument at Existing Location

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Since the historic bridge is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, federal law requires that TxDOT evaluate several alternatives to determine the most appropriate option for the historic bridge, the traveling public, and tax payers. Per federal requirements, TxDOT considered the following alternatives:

No Build Alternative, two alternatives that would rehabilitate the existing structure for continued vehicular use, three alternatives that would leave the structure in place with a new structure constructed on new alignment, one that would move the historic bridge and rehabilitate it for continued use, one that would move the historic bridge and create a monument of it, and one to construct a new structure on new alignment. The alternative chosen as the preferred alternative is the alternative shown in a red box on the slide - to construct a new structure on new alignment. The next step was to market the historic bridge to entities who may be interested in receiving it or maintaining it in place. Since marketing efforts did not result in any responses from interested parties, the alternative for the historic bridge is demolition.



The proposed project would construct a new structure on a new alignment adjacent to the existing structure, and then demolish the existing structures (the historic bridge and the relief bridge). Therefore, the proposed project would adversely affect the historic bridge under Section 106 and constitute a “use” under Section 4(f).

Since the impacts to the historic bridge would be permanent and adverse, mitigation for the historic bridge would be required. As shown in the flow chart, consultation is ongoing to identify and implement mitigation to fulfill Section 106, Section 4(f), and Chapter 26.

## Section 4(f) and Chapter 26 – Martin Dies Jr. State Park

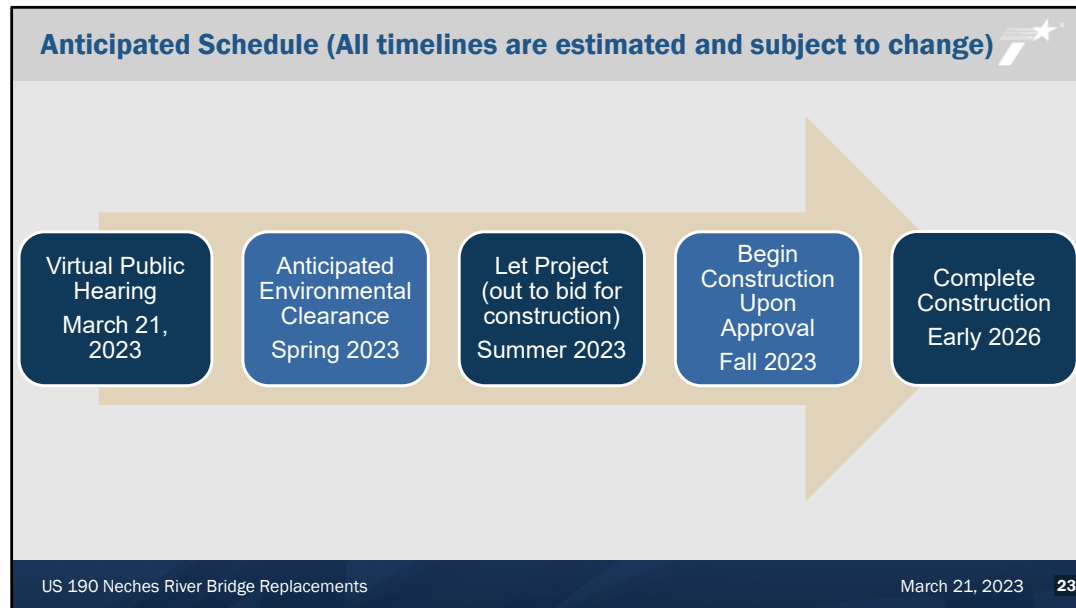
- Temporary construction easements are proposed within Martin Dies Jr. State Park. It is anticipated that the use of the park would meet the threshold for exceptions to the Section 4(f) requirements:
  - Occupancy would be temporary and no change in land ownership would occur
  - Boat ramp would be used to access the Neches River but would not be permanently closed to the public
  - No permanent adverse physical impacts would occur
  - No interference with protected activities, features, or attributes of the property would occur
  - During construction, TxDOT contractors will coordinate with the USACE and TPWD to channelize boat traffic
  - Park land would be fully restored to previous conditions or better after construction



In addition, to impacts to the historic bridge, which is a Section 4(f) and Chapter 26 property, there will be two temporary construction easements proposed within the Martin Dies Jr. State Park. It is anticipated that the use of the park would meet the threshold for exceptions to the Section 4(f) requirements, which are that occupancy would be temporary and no change in land ownership would occur. In addition, the boat ramp would be used to access the Neches River but would not be permanently closed to the public, and there would be no permanent adverse physical impacts to the park.

No interference with protected activities, features, or attributes of the property would occur during construction, and TxDOT contractors will coordinate with the USACE and TPWD to channelize boat traffic during construction. After construction the land would be fully restored to previous conditions or better. As noted above, the project's impacts to the park are temporary impacts.

Note that this park is also historic age; however, Section 106 does not apply because construction use is temporary; therefore, the park was not required to be evaluated for National Register of Historic Places eligibility.



This slide provides the anticipated project schedule. Note that all timelines are estimated and subject to change. Anticipated environmental clearance is estimated to occur this spring. The project is planned to let for construction this summer, and construction is scheduled to begin in fall upon approval. Construction is estimated to be completed in early 2026.

## Project Materials




- Project materials and technical reports are available at:
  - The TxDOT Beaumont District Office by appointment Monday through Friday between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m.


or


- [www.txdot.gov](http://www.txdot.gov), keyword search “US 190 Neches River”
  
- For questions about the project or to schedule an appointment, please call 409-898-5732 or email [bmtprojects@txdot.gov](mailto:bmtprojects@txdot.gov)

The project team has evaluated the potential environmental impacts that could occur as a result of constructing the proposed project. Project materials, including technical reports documenting the analyses and conclusions of the environmental studies are available at the TxDOT Beaumont District Office by appointment Monday through Friday between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Please call ahead to schedule an appointment to see these materials. In addition, technical reports are available for review on the project website at [www.txdot.gov](http://www.txdot.gov), keyword search “US 190 at Neches River.” Contact information is shown at the bottom of the slide. If you have any questions about the project, please call 409-898-5732 any time during the project development process.

**How to Submit Comments**

 To give verbal testimony call: **409-203-2579**

 To give E-mailed comments send to: **[bmtprojects@txdot.gov](mailto:bmtprojects@txdot.gov)**

 To give written comments:

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Re: US 190 at Neches River  
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**Comments must be received on or before Wednesday, April 5, 2023**

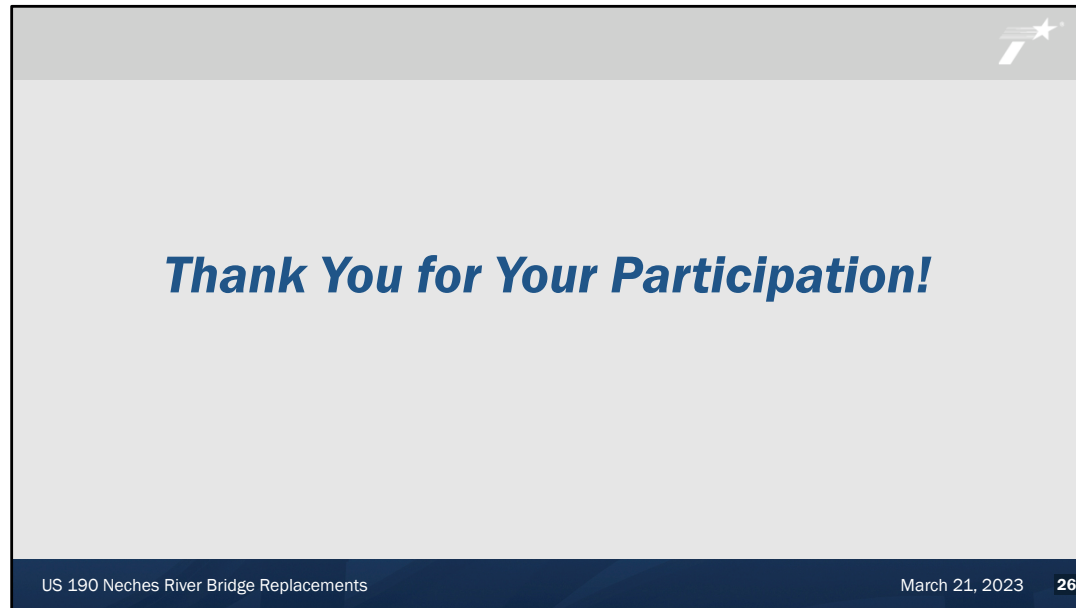
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This slide once again provides details on how to submit comments.

Leave a voicemail at 409-203-2579 to provide verbal testimony. The verbal testimony option is available starting at noon on Tuesday, March 21, 2023, and will be available until 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, April 5, 2023. Comments must be received or postmarked by Wednesday, April 5, 2023, to be included in the virtual public hearing summary report. You can submit written comments in the following ways:

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- or-
- Visit [www.txdot.gov](http://www.txdot.gov)
- In the “Search TxDOT” box in the upper-right hand corner, enter: “US 190 at Neches River”
- Once on the TxDOT site you can download a comment form, add your comments, and mail the form to the address shown on the screen. If you want to submit your comments electronically, you can click the “Email the Beaumont District” button on the TxDOT site. If you would like to email your comments, you can send them to [bmtprojects@txdot.gov](mailto:bmtprojects@txdot.gov).



Again, we would like to thank you for your participation in this public hearing for the US 190 at Neches River project.