



Virtual Public Meeting Pre-Recorded Presentation

US 79 Alternatives
West of I-45 to West of FM 1512
Leon County
CSJ: 0205-04-047

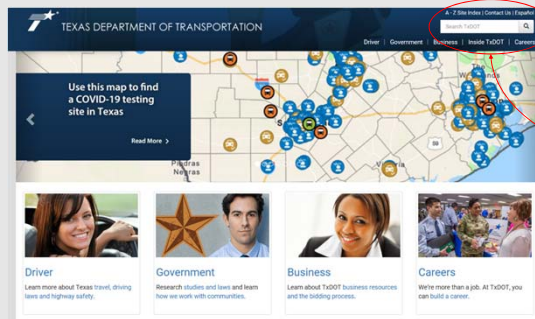
Nov. 10, 2020

I would like to welcome you to the US 79 virtual public meeting, which has been pre-recorded, for the proposed project in Leon County, Texas. The proposed project extends along US 79 from West of I-45 near Buffalo, to West of FM 1512 near Jewett.



Welcome by Juan Quiroz, P.E.

District Planning Engineer for the Bryan District,
Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT)



Virtual Public Meeting documents available online at the website www.txdot.gov.

Type “US 79 Leon County” in the keyword search box.

Thank you for joining us. My name is Juan Quiroz and I serve as the District Planning Engineer for the Bryan District of the Texas Department of Transportation, better known as TxDOT.

This virtual public meeting, presented by TxDOT, is being provided to share information and to encourage comments from the public regarding the proposed US 79 Project in Leon County. The following Virtual Public Meeting documents are made available online at our TxDOT website www.txdot.gov. Just type “US 79 Leon County” in the keyword search box.



TxDOT changed the in-person public meeting to a virtual format in response to the COVID-19 outbreak:

The pre-recorded virtual public meeting and TxDOT website provide the same information as an in-person meeting would:

- Project information
- Estimated timeline
- Process for submitting comments
- Key contacts

Share Facts About COVID-19

Know the facts about coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and help stop the spread of rumors.

FACT 1 Diseases can make anyone sick regardless of their race or ethnicity.

People of Asian descent, including Chinese Americans, are not more likely to get COVID-19 than any other American. Help stop fear by letting people know that being of Asian descent does not increase the chance of getting or spreading COVID-19.

FACT 2 Some people are at increased risk of getting COVID-19.

People who have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 or people who live in or have recently been in an area with ongoing spread are at an increased risk of exposure.

FACT 3 Someone who has completed quarantine or has been released from isolation does not pose a risk of infection to other people.

For up-to-date information, visit CDC's coronavirus disease 2019 web page.



FACT 4 You can help stop COVID-19 by knowing the signs and symptoms:

- Fever
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath
- Seek medical advice if you
- Develop symptoms

AND

- Have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 or if you live in or have recently been in an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19.

FACT 5 There are simple things you can do to help keep yourself and others healthy.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom, and before eating or preparing food.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.

For more information: www.cdc.gov/COVID19

Given the unique circumstance of the COVID-19 outbreak, along with our commitment to protecting public health during this national emergency, TxDOT is conducting this virtual public meeting to avoid in-person contact. At this time, the virtual format will be in lieu of an in-person public meeting.

The presentation will cover the same information the Bryan District would have shared at the in-person public meeting. However, the comment process for this virtual public meeting will be different from what we normally conduct at an in-person meeting and will be explained shortly. Project information can be found on the TxDOT webpage.

Virtual Public Meeting Contents



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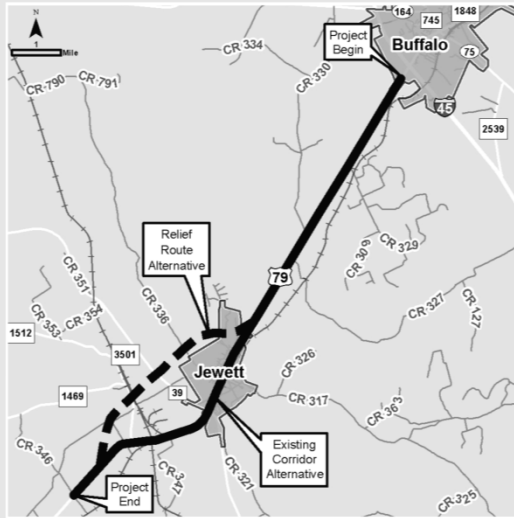
This virtual public meeting presentation will include the following topics:

- Project Description
- Public Involvement Purpose and Timeline
- Alternatives Analysis
- Environmental Process
- Anticipated Project Schedule and Funding
- TxDOT Right of Way Process
- Share Your Input



Project Description

Project Description



US 79

From: West of IH 45 (near Buffalo)

To: West of FM 1512 (near Jewett)

Leon County

Approximately 10-11 miles in length

The proposed project extends along US 79 for approximately 10 to 11 miles from west of IH 45 near Buffalo to west of FM 1512 near Jewett in Leon County.

Project Need and Purpose



What are The Issues? Project Needs

- Anticipated population growth
- High percentage of heavy truck traffic through Jewett
- Increasing crash rates over the last five years
- High pedestrian traffic through Jewett during Flea Market weekends
- At-grade (ground level) railroad crossing at Nucor
- Lack of bicycle/pedestrian accommodations

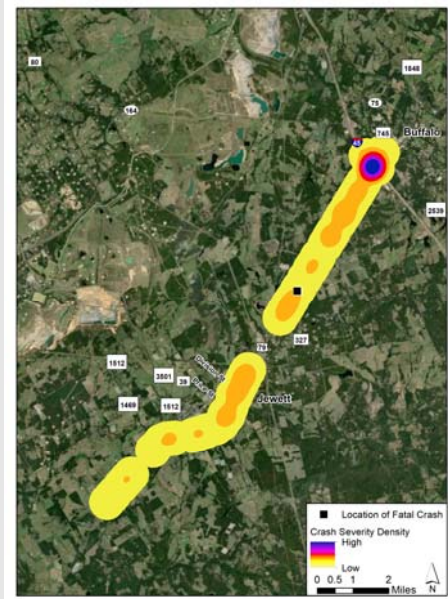
What Are We Trying To Do? Project Purpose

- Enhance safety
- Improve mobility
- Provide added capacity for projected traffic

The project addresses the following needs: anticipated population growth, a high percentage of heavy truck traffic through Jewett, increasing crash rates over the last five years, high pedestrian traffic through Jewett during Flea Market weekends, an at-grade, ground level railroad crossing at Nucor, and a lack of bicycle/pedestrian accommodations within the City of Jewett.

The purpose of the proposed project is to enhance safety, improve mobility, and provide added capacity for projected traffic to 2045.

Crash Data



- Increasing crash rates over the last 5 years
- High crash rates at I-45 and Division Street
- One fatal crash at CR 327

This graphic shows the crash severity density along US 79 within the project limits. The data indicated increasing crash rates over the last 5 years and a high crash rate at the intersections of US 79 at I-45 near Buffalo and US 79 and Division Street in downtown Jewett. One fatal crash occurred at the intersection of US 79 and CR 327.

Pedestrian Traffic - Jewett Monthly Flea Market



Parking within TxDOT ROW

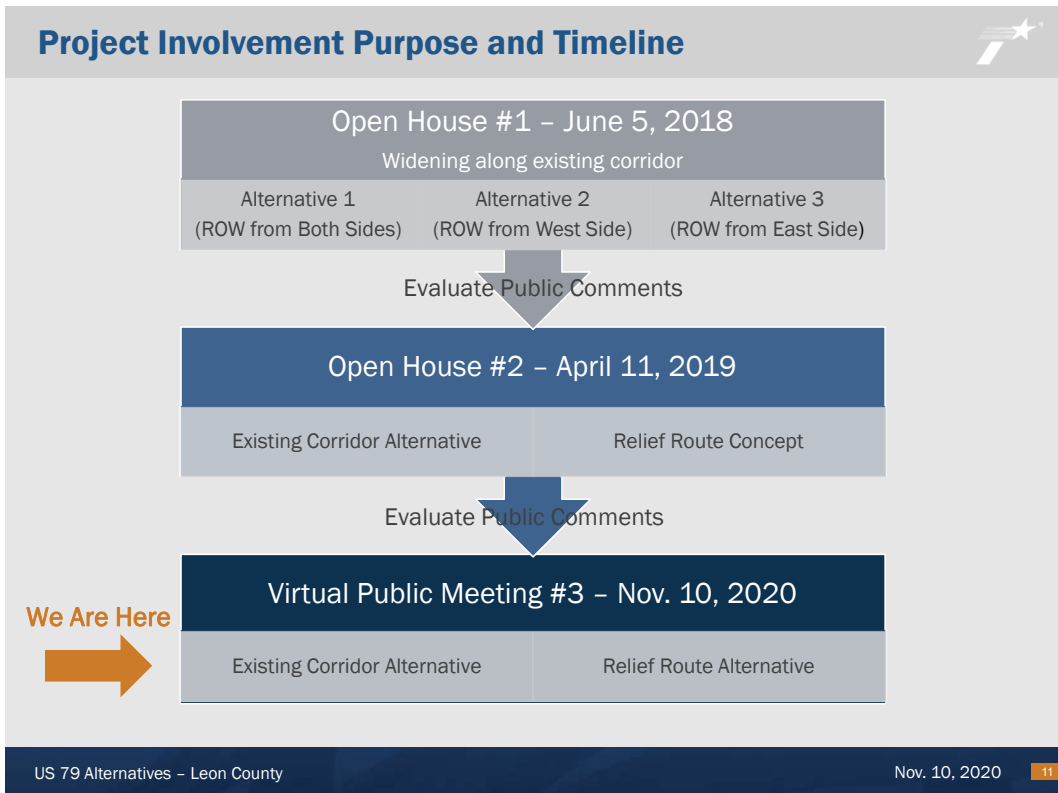


Heavy Pedestrian Traffic

Due to the high levels of pedestrian traffic generated by the monthly Flea Market weekend, pedestrian counts were conducted to determine the need for signalization in downtown Jewett. Counts measured up to 450 pedestrians crossing US 79 in one hour during flea market weekends. The study recommends a traffic signal at Division Street and a pedestrian signalized beacon between Pettigrew Street and Waltman Street. An unsignalized crosswalk would also be added at the intersection with Spruiell Street and Price Street. In addition, cars are currently parking in the existing TxDOT right of way creating an unsafe condition as cars are backing up onto US 79.



Public Involvement Purpose and Timeline



The public involvement purpose for the proposed project includes providing opportunities for stakeholders, roadway users, and the public to engage with the project team to share feedback as well as to update those interested in the project process and timeline.

Open House #1 was held on June 5, 2018 at the Jewett Civic Center and focused on widening the existing US 79 corridor. That meeting showed three different alternatives for widening US 79. Open House #2 was held on April 11, 2019 at the Jewett Civic Center. The project team presented a refined Existing Corridor Alternative and a Relief Route Concept. Based on public comments received, the project team further evaluated the Relief Route Concept by performing a Feasibility Study and developed a Relief Route Alternative to be presented at this virtual public meeting. The Existing Corridor Alternative was further refined and is presented in this virtual public meeting also. An in-person public meeting was scheduled in March of 2020 but was cancelled due to COVID-19.



Alternatives Analysis

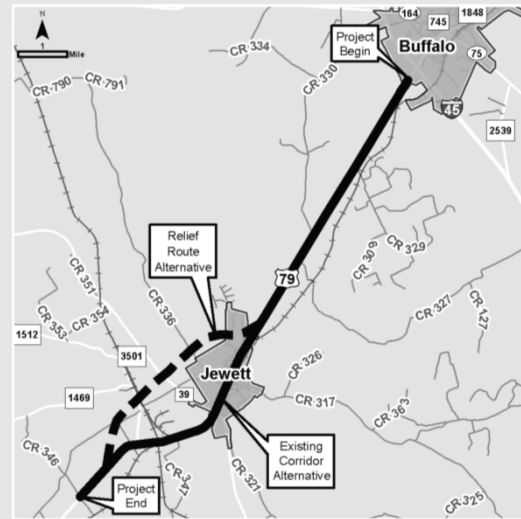
Alternatives Analysis



Alternatives

Existing Corridor Alternative
10.1 miles

Relief Route Alternative
11.1 miles



Alternatives Location Map

The proposed project is currently evaluating two alternatives: the Existing Corridor Alternative and the Relief Route Alternative. The Existing Corridor Alternative follows US 79 for the entire length and extends approximately 10 miles from West of IH 45 near Buffalo to West of FM 1512. The Relief Route Alternative would extend approximately 11 miles along US 79 from West of IH 45 near Buffalo towards Jewett then transitions to a new location route around the west side of Jewett tying back to US 79 west of FM 1512.

The two alternative schematics are available for viewing and download at the TxDOT website www.txdot.gov. Just type “US 79 Leon County” in the keyword search box.

Alternatives Analysis



Alternative	Advantages	Disadvantages
Existing Corridor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lowest cost ▪ Fewer displacements ▪ Least environmental impacts ▪ Includes urban improvements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Heavy truck traffic through town ▪ Slowest travel time ▪ Limited right of way within Jewett may not accommodate long-term traffic growth ▪ More potential traffic conflicts in Jewett
Relief Route	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Routes most truck traffic away from downtown Jewett ▪ Faster travel time ▪ Provides adequate right of way to accommodate long-term traffic growth ▪ Includes urban improvements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More displacements ▪ Highest cost ▪ More environmental impacts

This table lists the various advantages and disadvantages of each alternative.

The Existing Corridor Alternative has the lowest cost, fewer displacements, and least environmental impacts. This alternative would still allow heavy truck traffic through Jewett, would have the slowest travel time, with limited right of way within Jewett may not accommodate long-term traffic growth, and would have more potential traffic conflicts in Jewett.

The Relief Route Alternative could route most truck traffic away from downtown Jewett, would have a faster travel time, with adequate right of way would accommodate long-term traffic growth and would also include urban improvements. This alternative would have more displacements, the highest cost, and more environmental impacts.

Existing Corridor Alternative

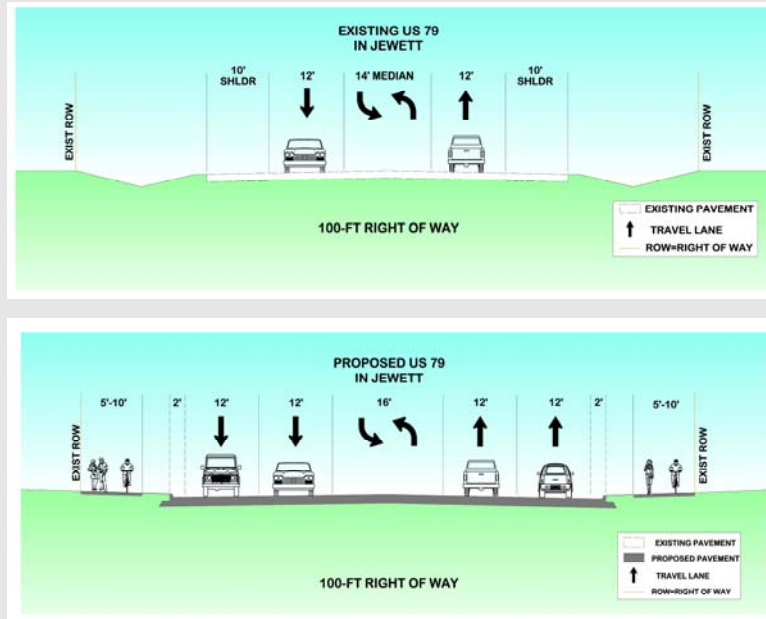


- **Widen pavement through Jewett from three lanes to five lanes**
- **Add pedestrian and bicycle improvements through Jewett**
- **In rural areas, widen US 79 from a two-lane highway to a four-lane divided highway, two lanes in each direction, separated by a grassy median**
- **New overpasses at Nucor and FM 39**
- **Additional right of way would be approximately 220 acres**
- **Potential Displacements: eight residential, 10 commercial, one church, and one potentially historic structure**

The Existing Corridor Alternative would widen the pavement through Jewett from three lanes to five lanes, add pedestrian and bicycle improvements through Jewett, widen US 79 from two lanes to four lanes in rural areas, and add a grass median between oncoming lanes in rural areas. New overpasses would be constructed at Nucor and FM 39. Additional right of way would be approximately 220 acres.

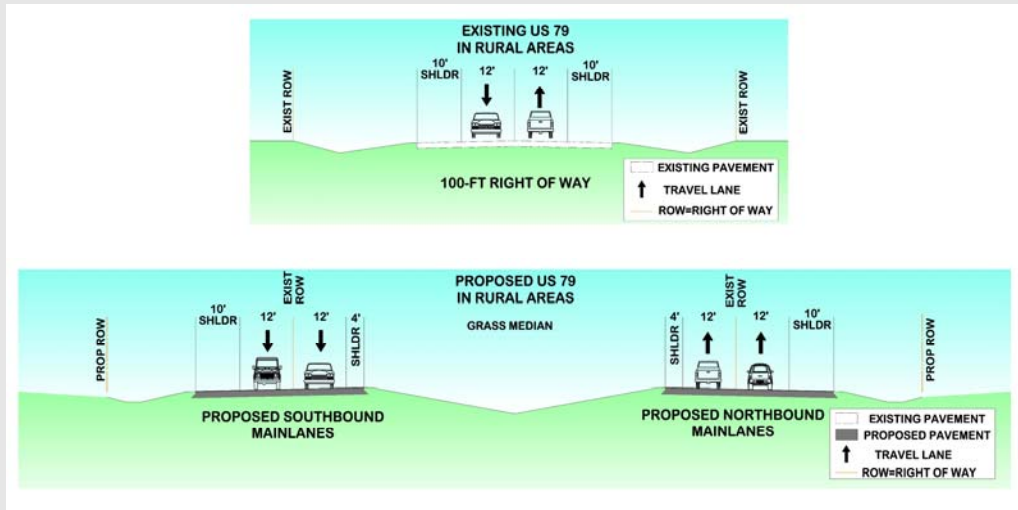
The Existing Corridor Alternative is anticipated to impact eight residential, 10 commercial, one church, and one potentially historic structure for a total of 20 potential displacements.

Existing and Proposed Typical Sections – Existing Corridor Alternative (Within Jewett)



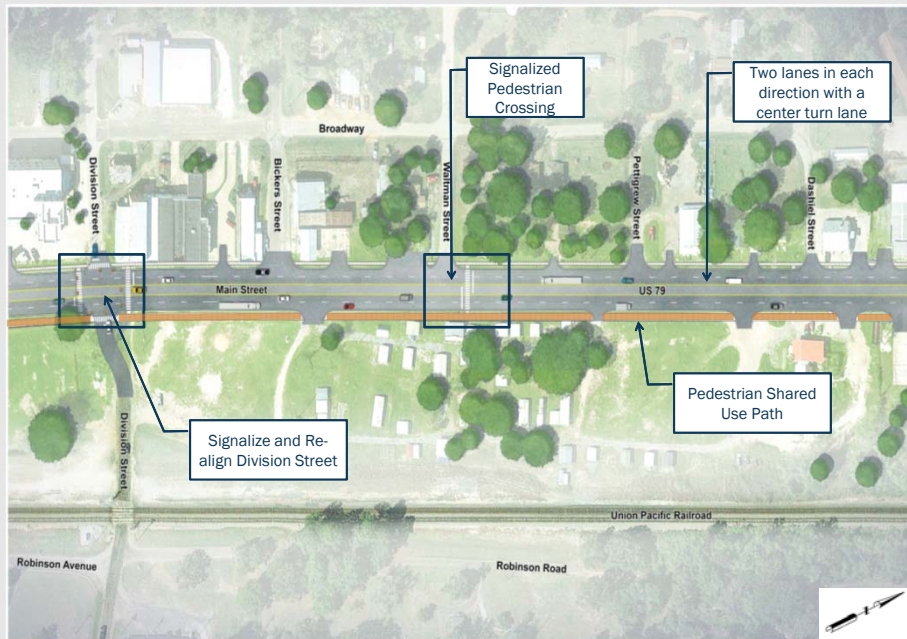
The Existing Corridor Alternative would include two different typical sections – the portion within Jewett and the portions within the rural areas. The existing typical section within Jewett includes two 12-foot travel lanes in each direction with a 14-foot two-way center turn lane and 10-foot outside shoulders. In Jewett, the proposed project would provide two 12-foot travel lanes in each direction separated by a 16-foot two-way center turn lane. It would include curb and gutter with a 5- to 10-foot-wide shared use path. The proposed section would fit within the existing 100-foot right of way.

Existing and Proposed Typical Sections – Existing Corridor Alternative (Rural Areas)



The existing typical section outside Jewett includes two 12-foot travel lanes in each direction with 10-foot outside shoulders. The Existing Corridor Alternative outside Jewett would include two 12-foot travel lanes in each direction separated by a 48-foot to 76-foot grass median. The travel lanes would be bounded by 4-foot inside and 10-foot outside shoulders. The proposed right of way on rural US 79 would be between 200 and 315 feet wide.

Existing Corridor Alternative – Urban Improvements



This slide illustrates what the Existing Corridor Alternative in Jewett would look like. There would be two 12-ft lanes in each direction with a 16-ft two-way center turn lane, curbs, and pedestrian shared use paths. Division St. would be signalized and realigned with the road on the opposite side of US 79. On-street parking would be removed to improve safety. Between Waltman St. and Pettigrew St. a signalized pedestrian crossing would be installed.

Existing Corridor Alternative Rendering



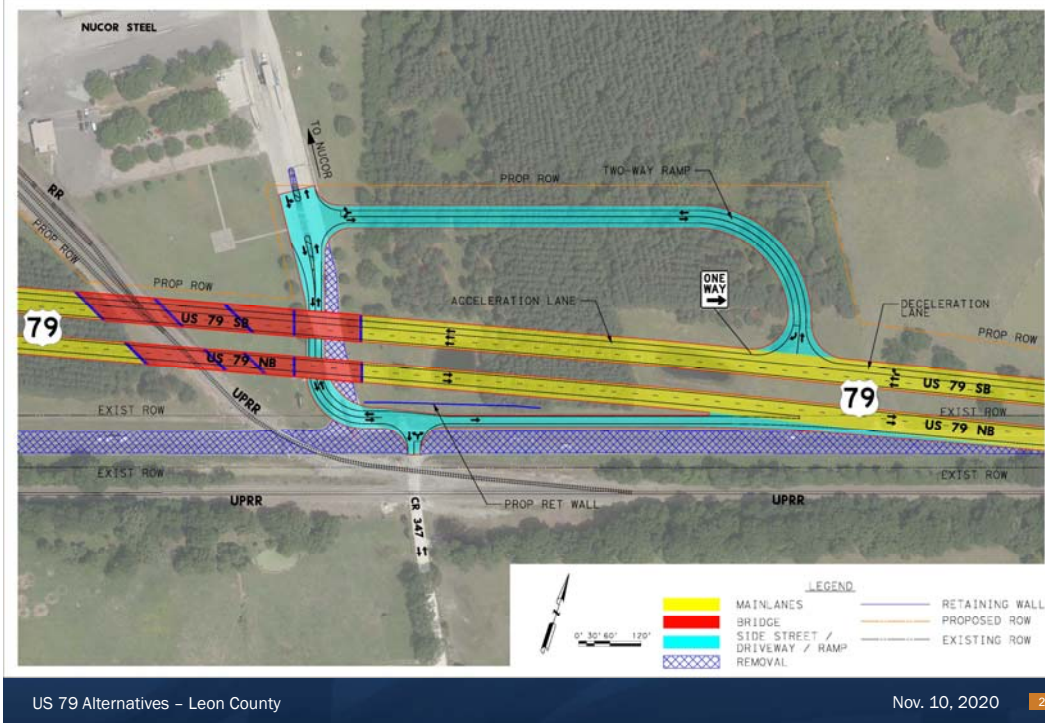
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This rendering illustrates what the Existing Corridor Alternative in Jewett would look like south of Division St. There are two 12-ft lanes in each direction with a 16-ft two-way center turn lane, curbs, and sidewalks.

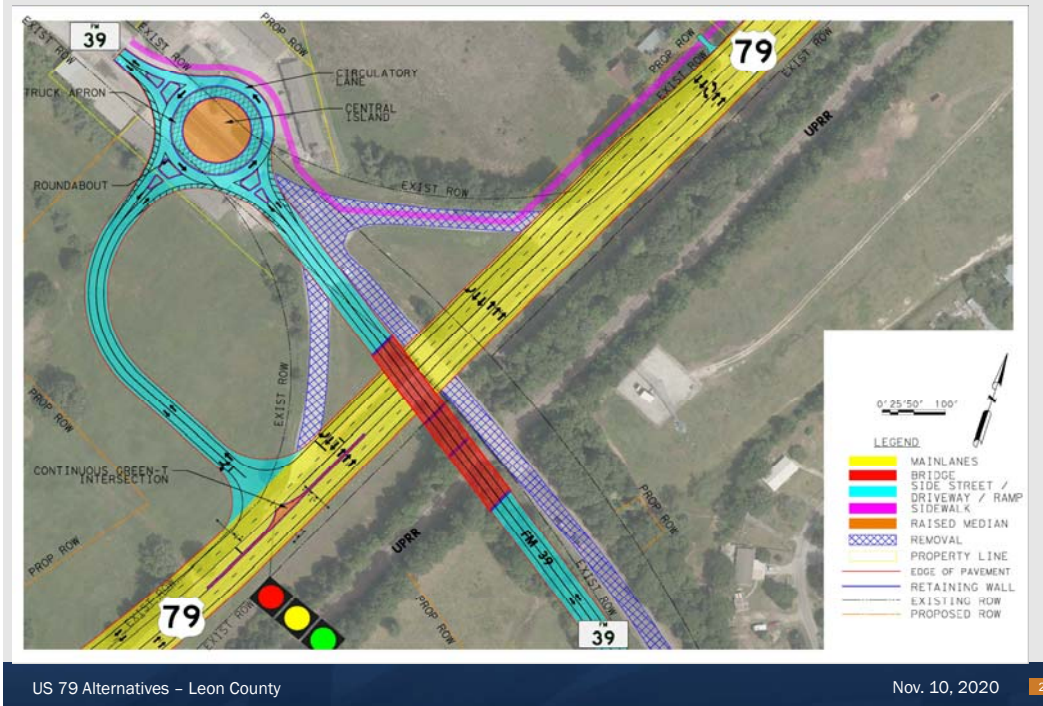
Existing Corridor Alternative – Nucor Entrance



The Nucor Steel foundry's primary entrance is along US 79. The existing US 79 alignment, shown in cross hatched blue, has a ground-level railroad crossing.

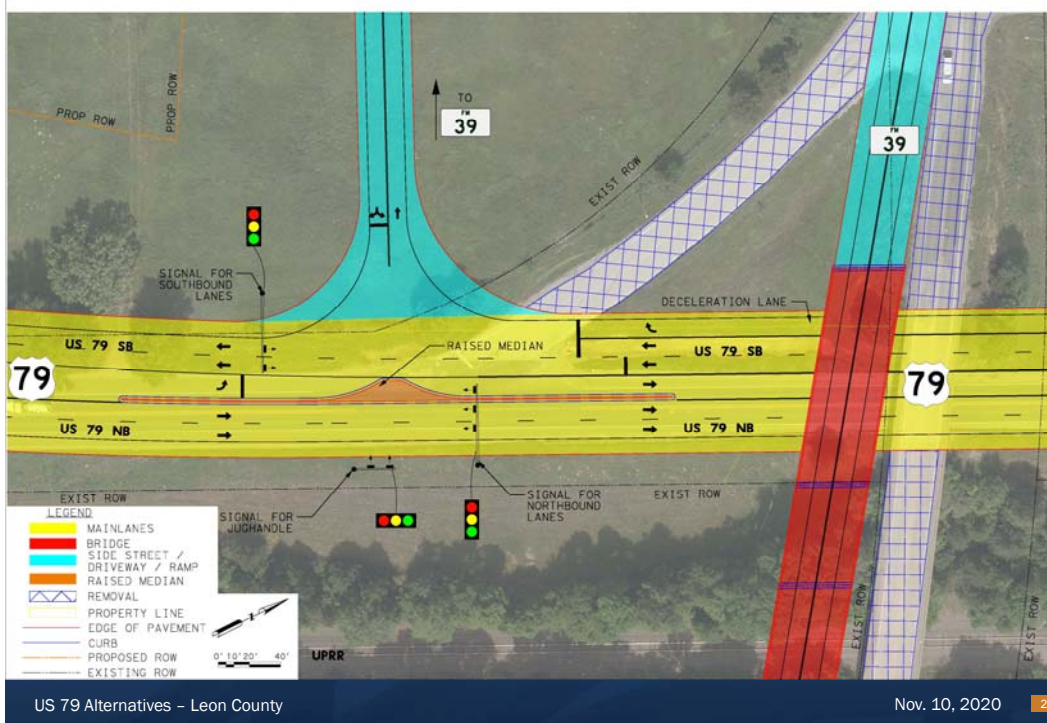
The proposed re-alignment of US 79, shown in yellow, will bridge over the Nucor entrance and the Union Pacific Railroad. A reconfigured Nucor entrance, shown in light blue, and CR 347 will remain at existing ground level with access to US 79. For northbound traffic, there is a turnaround between Nucor and FM 39 that allows drivers to u-turn and enter Nucor from US 79 at the new two-way ramp entrance. Southbound traffic will be able to enter Nucor at the new two-way ramp entrance directly.

Existing Corridor Alternative – FM 39 and US 79 Interchange



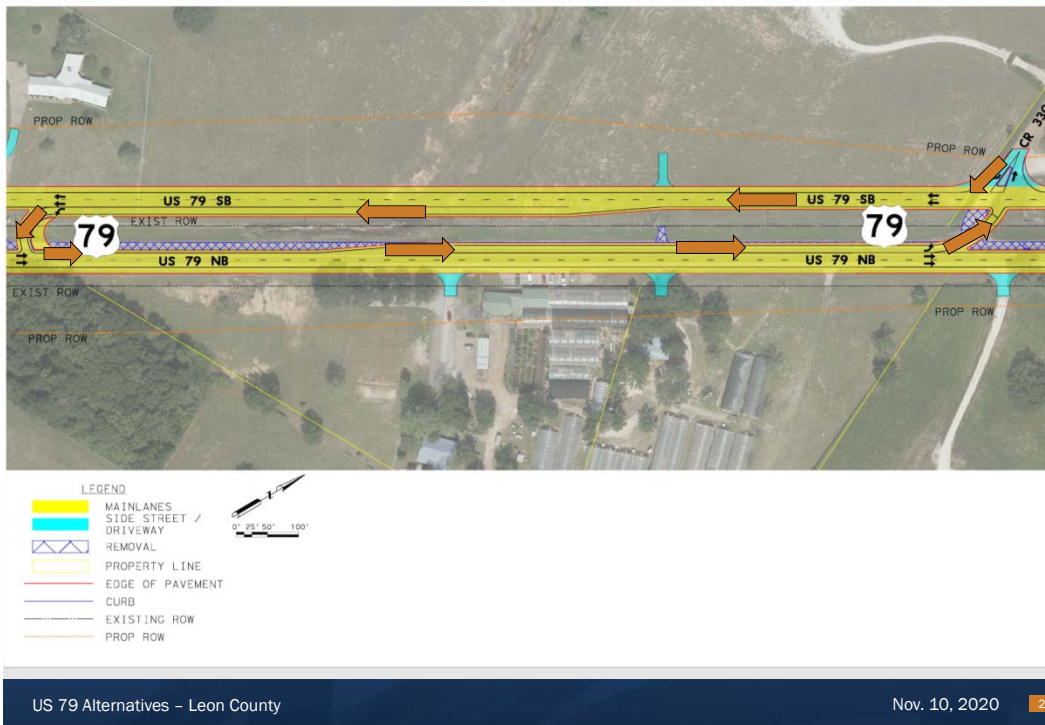
This slide shows the newly configured FM 39 Intersection shown in light blue. FM 39 would be re-aligned as shown to bridge over proposed US 79 and Union Pacific Railroad. West of the bridge, a roundabout would be constructed with a ramp connection to US 79 that will allow access from both northbound and southbound traffic on US 79 via a signalized Continuous Green-T Intersection. Northbound US 79 through traffic would not have to stop at the Continuous Green-T Intersection. Pedestrian features include a shared use path, shown in purple, providing bicycle-pedestrian connectivity to Jewett.

Existing Corridor Alternative – Continuous Green-T Intersection



This slide provides a close-up view of the US 79 signalized Continuous Green-T Intersection. A two-way ramp to and from FM 39 intersects US 79. Northbound US 79 traffic has a continuous green light on US 79. A signalized Continuous Green T Intersection operates the same as a traditional signalized intersection with the added feature of allowing one direction of through traffic, in this case northbound traffic, to flow through the intersection without stopping. A raised median would be constructed to channelize traffic movements through this intersection.

Existing Corridor Alternative – R- CUT Intersections



The intersections at county roads along the Existing Corridor Alternative were re-configured from what was previously shown at the public meeting to Restricted Crossing U-Turn Intersections, also known as R-CUT Intersections. This type of intersection improves safety by removing the left turns from the county road to US 79, thereby minimizing the number of conflict points at the intersection. A northbound driver on US 79 can turn left onto CR 330. A driver on CR 330 can turn right on to US 79, but to turn left, the driver must turn right at US 79 and then u-turn at a location off-set from the intersection.

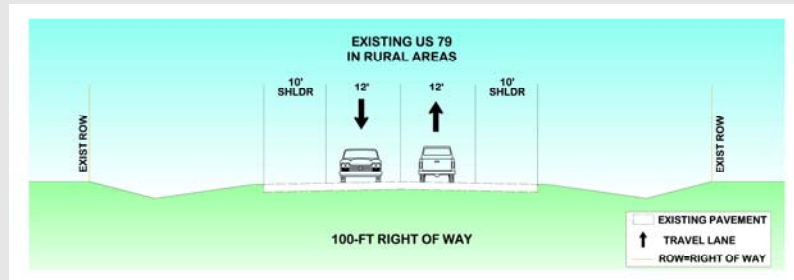
Relief Route Alternative



- Construct a four-lane divided highway Relief Route around Jewett and maintains access to downtown Jewett
- The typical section between north Jewett and Buffalo is the same as the Existing Corridor Alternative typical section
- Provide access to FM 39, as well as intersecting county roads
- An overpass would be constructed to bridge over FM 1512 and Union Pacific Railroad
- Also adds pedestrian and bicycle improvements through Jewett
- Additional right of way would be approximately 440 acres
- Potential Displacements: 13 residential, seven commercial, one church, one potentially historic structure

The Relief Route Alternative would construct a four-lane divided highway Relief Route around Jewett. The typical section between north Jewett and Buffalo is the same as the Existing Corridor Alternative typical section. Access to FM 39, as well as intersecting county roads would be maintained. An overpass would be constructed to bridge over FM 1512 and Union Pacific Railroad. Pedestrian and bicycle improvements would also be provided through Jewett. Additional right of way would be approximately 440 acres. The Relief Route Alternative is anticipated to impact 13 residential, seven commercial, one church, and one potentially historic structure for a total of 22 potential displacements.

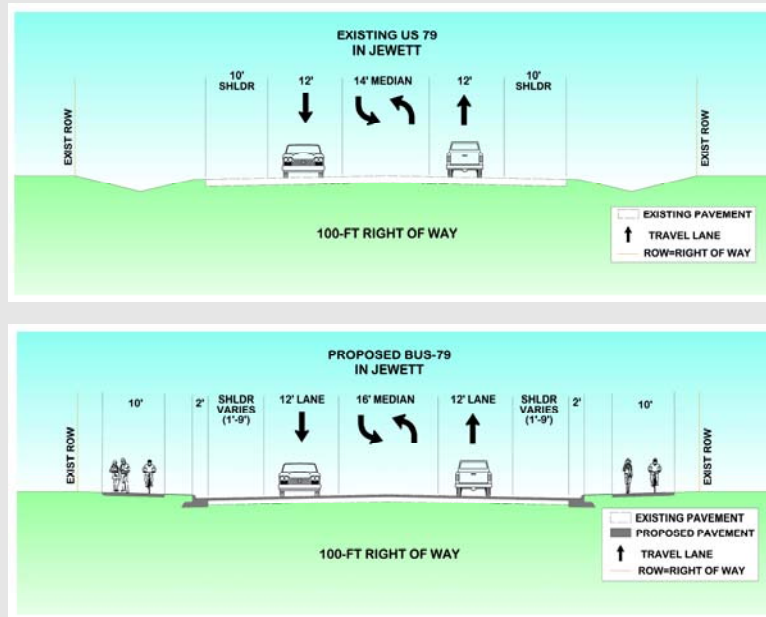
Relief Route Alternative - Existing and Proposed Typical Sections (Rural Areas)



The Relief Route Alternative would also include two different typical sections – the portion within Jewett and the portions within the rural areas.

The existing rural typical section includes two 12-foot travel lanes in each direction with 10-foot outside shoulders. The proposed Relief Route Alternative would include two 12-foot travel lanes with 10-foot outside and 4-foot inside shoulders in each direction separated by a 76-foot grass median. The proposed Right of Way on rural US 79 would be between 200 and 315 feet wide. The Relief Route Alternative would require the acquisition of approximately 440 acres of Right of Way.

Relief Route Alternative - Existing and Proposed Typical Sections – (Within Jewett)

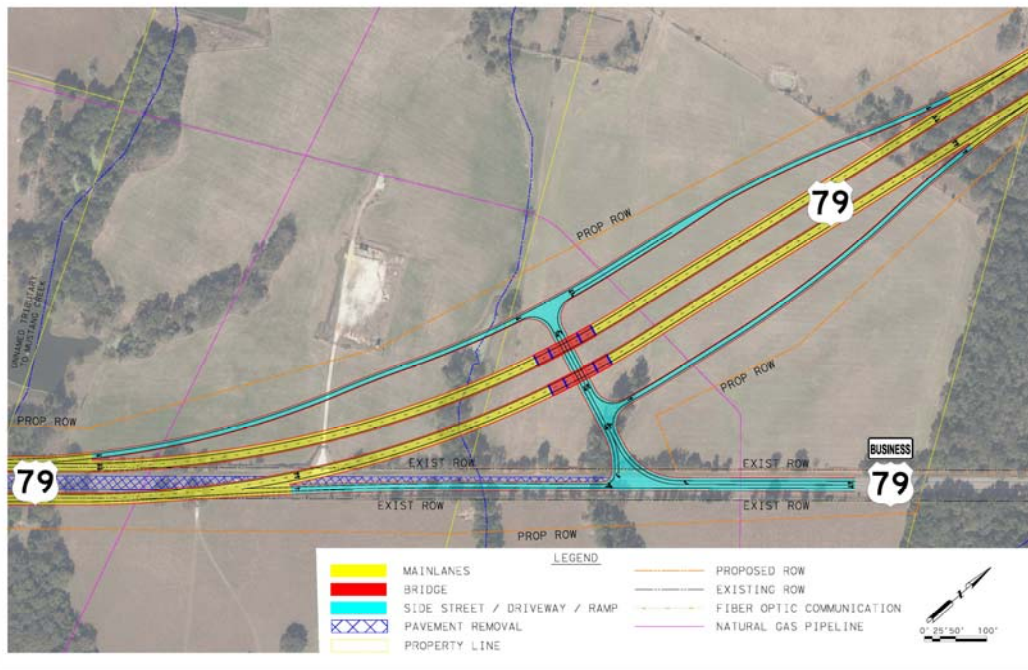


The existing typical section within Jewett includes two 12-foot travel lanes in each direction with a 14-foot two-way center turn lane and 10-foot outside shoulders. In Jewett, the Relief Route Alternative would provide one 12-foot travel lane in each direction, shoulders, a 16-foot two-way center turn lane, and curb and gutter with a 10-foot shared use path on both sides of the roadway. The proposed section would fit within the existing 100-foot Right of Way.



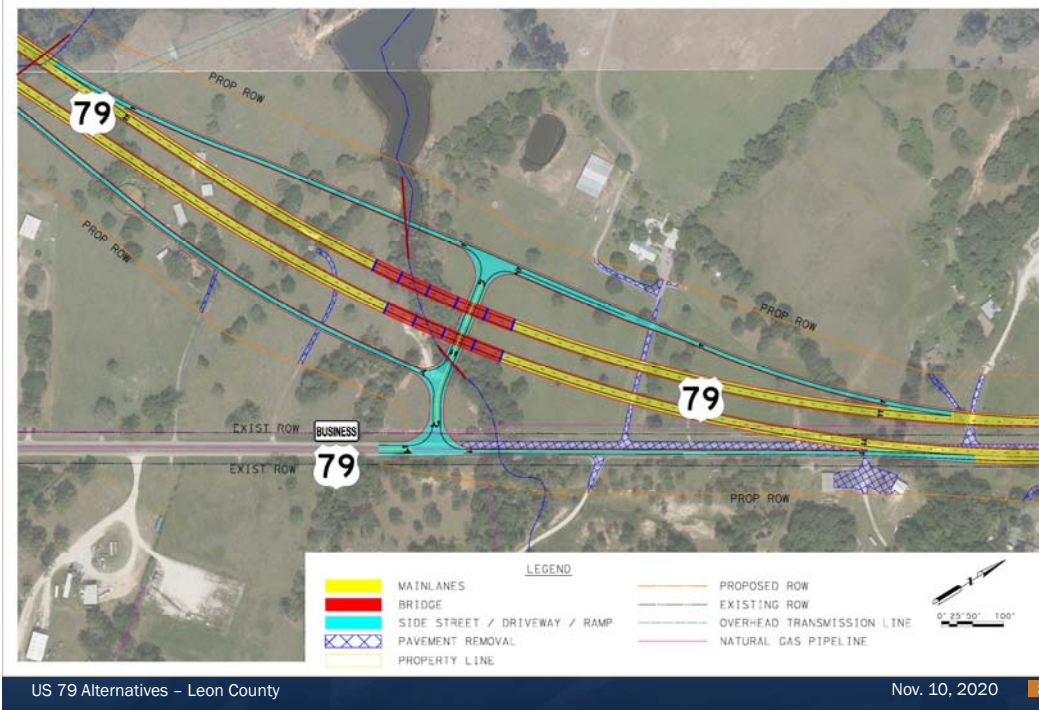
This rendering illustrates what the Relief Route Alternative improvements along BUSINESS US 79 in Jewett would look like south of Division St. There would be one 12-ft lane in each direction with a 16-ft two-way center turn lane, curbs, and 10-foot shared use path on both sides of the roadway.

Relief Route Alternative –Tie-In Interchanges with BUS US 79



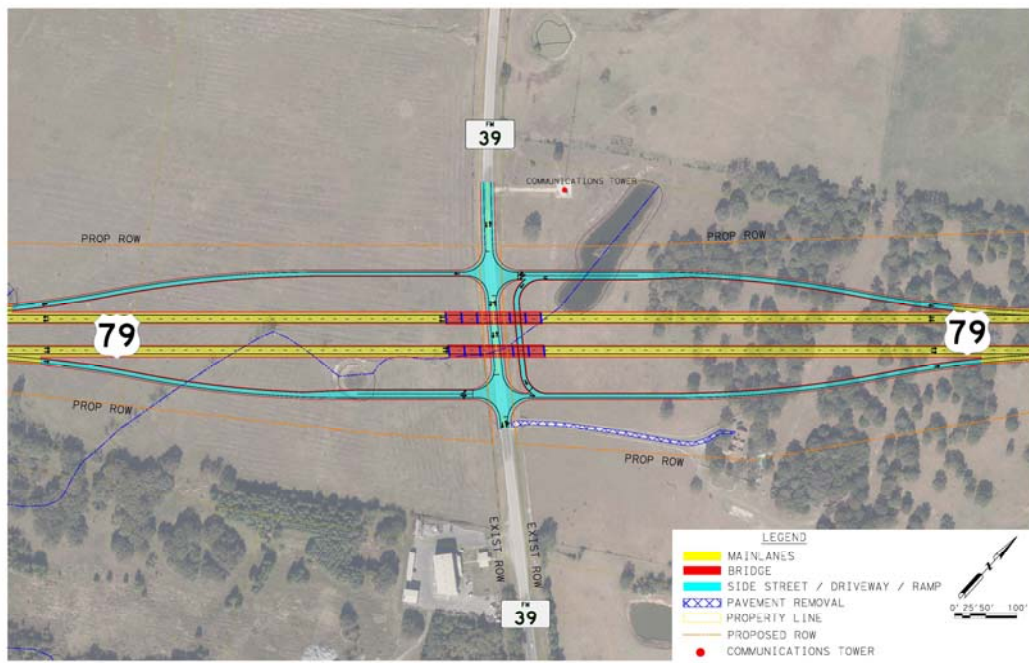
The proposed Relief Route Alternative would tie-in to US 79 with new overpass intersection entrances and exit ramps. This illustration shows the tie-in south of Jewett, where the Relief Route ties into existing US 79 north of CR 345 and south of FM 1512. Northbound travelers would now have the option to take US 79 around Jewett or alternatively take BUSINESS US 79 through Jewett.

Relief Route Alternative –Tie-In Interchanges with BUS US 79



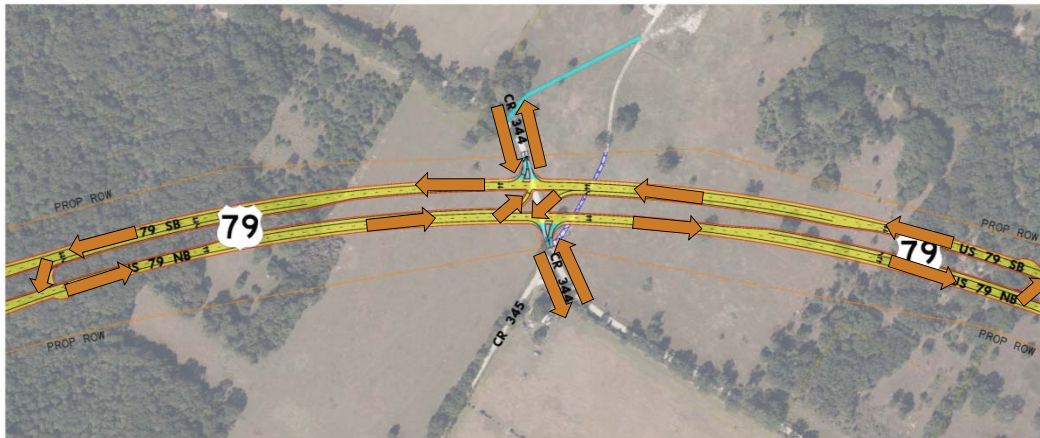
A similar tie-in configuration would be provided approximately 1.5 miles north of Jewett near CR 327.

Relief Route Alternative – FM 39 Interchange



A new interchange would be built where the Relief Route crosses FM 39. An overpass would be constructed with connecting entrance and exit ramps and a U-Turn for southbound traffic. Vehicles traveling on FM 39 would cross under the bridge and would have access to both entrance ramps.

Relief Route Alternative – CR 344



The Relief Route Alternative also has Restricted Crossing U-Turn Intersections at the county roads as previously described. In this case, CR 344 is a cross street. A driver on US 79 can turn left onto CR 344. A driver on CR 344 can turn right on to US 79, but to turn left, the driver must turn right at US 79 and then U-turn at a location off-set from the intersection.



Environmental Process



Prior to December 16, 2014, the Federal Highway Administration, otherwise known as FHWA, reviewed and approved documents prepared under the National Environmental Policy Act, known as NEPA. However, on December 16, 2014, the Texas Department of Transportation assumed responsibility from the 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 apply to this proposed project.

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Environmental Constraints within the Study Area



- Community Facilities
- Residential/Commercial Structures
- Hazardous Materials Sites
- Historic Markers and Bridges
- Oil and Gas Wells
- Historic Structures
- Archeological Sites
- Parkland
- Streams
- Wetlands
- Floodplains
- Protected Species

Downloadable Environmental Constraints Map available at www.txdot.gov, keyword search "US 79 Leon County"

Environmental constraints were gathered from readily available data sources to evaluate potential constraints along the project corridor. Environmental constraints within the study area include some of the resources listed on this slide.

Detailed environmental studies will be completed for the proposed project and summarized in an Environmental Assessment.



Anticipated Project Schedule and Funding

Anticipated Project Schedule



The anticipated activities for the proposed project following this virtual public meeting include developing the recommended alternative and continuing the environmental studies through the end of 2020. During 2021 and 2022, TxDOT will hold either a Public Meeting #4 or a Public Hearing, depending on the alternative chosen, and then obtain environmental clearance. From 2023 to 2025, Right-of-Way acquisition and utility relocations would begin. Construction Plans would also be developed. It is anticipated that the proposed project would begin construction in 2026 upon approval and available funding. Construction could take approximately 2 to 3 years.



Preliminary Estimated Construction Cost*:

- Existing Corridor Alternative \$141 Million
- Relief Route Alternative \$162 Million

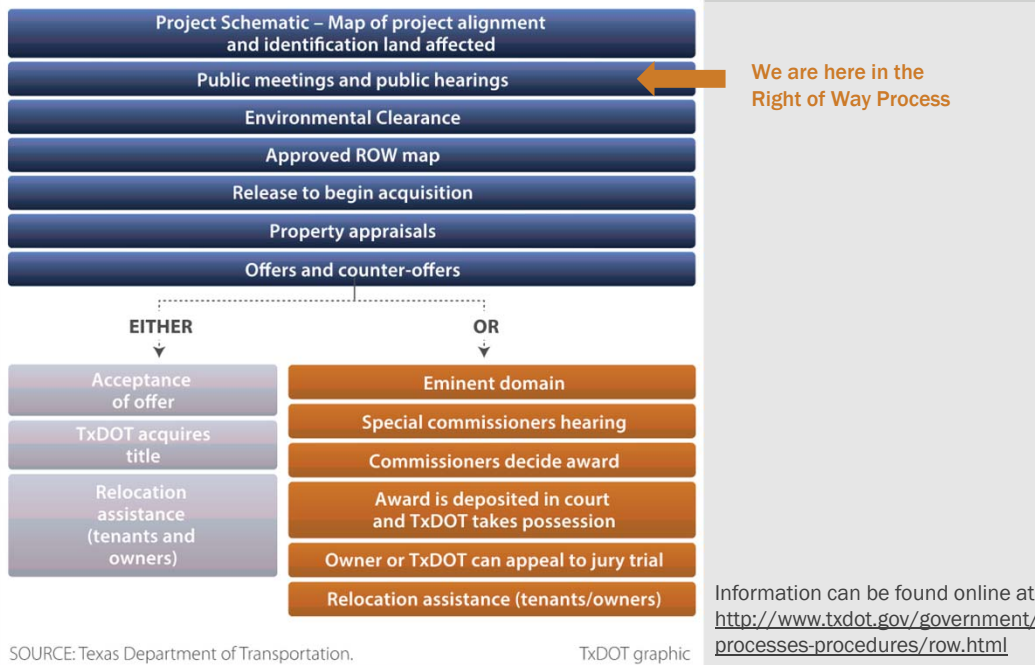
*These costs will be refined as the project is further developed.

The estimated construction cost for the Existing Corridor Alternative is approximately \$141 Million and the Relief Route Alternative is approximately \$162 Million. These costs will be refined as the project is further developed.



TxDOT Right of Way Process

TxDOT Right of Way Process



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This slide illustrates TxDOT's right of way process. We are currently in the second step of the process identified as "Public meetings and public hearings". Information is available on the TxDOT Website outlining property owners' rights, the Right of Way process, and the help provided by the department in relocating tenants and property owners.

These can be found on the project webpage or additionally at the web address noted on the lower right corner of this slide.

If you have any questions during the right of way process you can contact the TxDOT Bryan District Right of Way Specialist, Melissa Sevilla, at (979) 213-7591.



Share Your Input

Share Your Input



Submit e-mail, online, or mail-in comments by:

- Emailing: Juan.Quiroz@txdot.gov
- Using the online comment form at www.txdot.gov. Type “US 79 Leon County” in the keyword search box.
- Downloading, filling out a comment card, and mailing to:

TxDOT Bryan District

Attn: US 79 Leon County

2591 N. Earl Rudder Freeway

Bryan, Texas 77803-5190

While comments are always welcome, they must be received on or before **Wednesday, Nov. 25, 2020** to be included in the official meeting documentation.

The public may call project staff at (979) 778-2165 during regular office hours or email project staff at any time in the project development process.

TxDOT is committed to continuing our efforts to gain public feedback about this project. We understand this virtual public meeting format is a bit different, so let's take a few minutes and explain the comment process – which is the most important part of this video. Given our current COVID-19 situation, Bryan District is asking the public to provide their comments in the following ways by:

Emailing: Juan.Quiroz@txdot.gov

Using the online comment form at www.txdot.gov. Type “US 79 Leon County” in the keyword search box.

Downloading and filling out a comment card, available at www.txdot.gov on the virtual public meeting webpage, and mailing it to:

TxDOT Bryan District

Attn: US 79 Leon County

2591 N. Earl Rudder Freeway

Bryan, Texas 77803-5190

While comments are always welcome, they must be received on or before **Wednesday, Nov. 25, 2020** to be included in the official meeting documentation. The public may call project staff at (979) 778-2165 during regular office hours or email project staff at any time in the project development

process.



Thank you!

Thank you for participating in the virtual public meeting.