

Briefing Notes

Project:	US 77 Odem Area Planning Study From I-37 to FM 1945 near Sinton
Subject:	Stakeholder Working Group Route Options Briefing
Date and time:	March 28, 2023 – 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Meeting place:	First United Methodist Church, Odem TX
Attendees:	Listed on the attached sign-in sheets (Attachment 1)

Meeting purpose:

The purpose of the Stakeholder Working Group Route Options Briefing was to:

- Provide a summary of the Spring Stakeholder Working Group Informational Briefing and Public Open House results and input.
- Review the proposed route options to bring US 77 up to interstate standards and conduct a stakeholder breakout session to obtain stakeholder input and recommendations.
- Review the next steps of the study.

Welcome and Opening Remarks (Judge David Krebs)

San Patricio County Judge, David Krebs, welcomed the members of the US 77 Odem Area Planning Study Stakeholder Working Group to the briefing. He explained that this would be the last planning study stakeholder briefing and expressed his appreciation for the valuable input that the stakeholders provided in supporting the study, which has led to the development and screening of route options to bring US 77 up to Interstate standards.

Stakeholder Working Group Briefing Presentation and Discussion

Gabriel Longoria, P.E., Advanced Project Development Engineer TxDOT Corpus Christi District, began the PowerPoint presentation by reviewing the key benefits of I-69 system development and designation in Texas, the stakeholder working group charge and areas of responsibility, the project development process, the US 77 Planning Study milestone schedule, and the objectives for today's briefing. (**Attachment 2, slides 4-8**)

Mitzi Ellison, Public Involvement Lead with Nancy Ledbetter and Associates, summarized the Fall Stakeholder Working Group Route Options Briefing and Public Open House results and input, including an overview of the public open house comments that were received. (**Attachment 2, slides 9-12**)

Tara McDonald, P.E., Lead Engineer with Atkins, reviewed the eight proposed route options that were presented at the fall Stakeholder Briefing and Public Open. (**Attachment 2, slides 14-16**). She explained that the three A Route Options connected at the existing US77/I-37 interchange; the three B Route Options connected to I-37 at a proposed new "central" interchange located north of the existing interchange; and the only C1 Route Option connected at a new proposed northern interchange near Edroy.

Tara then explained that the Route Option screening process took into consideration the following: 1) the stakeholder and public input that was received to date including the identified most beneficial Route Options and least preferred Route Options and associated rationale; and 2) the potential to impact environmental and community resources. She reviewed the screening results and explained the rationale that has led to the advancement of Route Options A3, B4, and C1 into the environmental study phase of the project development process. (**Attachment 2, slide 15**). She further reviewed the rationale that has led to eliminating from further consideration Route Options A1, A2, B1, B2, and B3. Tara reported, for the sake of simplification moving forward, that A3, B4, and C1 would be referred to as Route Options A, B, and C, respectively. (**Attachment 2, slide 15**).

Tara and Alex Amponsah, AICP, Atkins Environmental Lead, presented a comparison of the estimated construction costs and environmental evaluation results, respectively, for advanced Route Options A, B, and C. (**Attachment 2, slide 17-21**). Tara explained that the total Route Options cost estimates included the costs for construction, right-of-way (ROW) acquisition, and utility relocations. She also explained that the cost differential of Route Option A compared to Route Options B and C was based on the following: 1) Route Option A utilizes

Briefing Notes

the existing interchange and would include improvements to the US 77 direct connectors (future I-69E mainlanes) to meet a 70 mph minimum design speed; 2) Route Option B includes construction of a new interchange plus complete reconfiguration and reconstruction of the existing US 77/I-37 interchange that would replace the direct connectors with ramps connecting to frontage roads in compliance with the interstate interchange spacing standards; and 3) Route Option C includes construction of a new interchange plus construction of a new northbound I-37 mainlane from the existing US 77/I-37 interchange to the new interchange near Edroy to provide sufficient I-37 capacity. Alex reported that Route Option A, having the shortest travel distance between the existing US 77/I-37 interchange and FM 1945 near Sinton, is projected by 2050 to attract the most US 77 traffic travelling through Odem, with a traffic diversion rate of 90 percent. (**Attachment 2, slide 19**). He also explained that Route Option A requires the least amount of new ROW. Alternatively, while Route Option C would result in a total three potential residential replacements compared to six for Route Options A and B, Route Option C would result in 33 potential commercial displacements compared to four for Route Options A and B as well as one displaced church. Finally, Alex reviewed the potential environmental resources, land uses, and utilities present within the ROW of Route Options A, B, and C. (**Attachment 2, slides 20-21**).

In conclusion Gabriel reviewed the next steps in completing the US 77 Odem area Planning Study, that includes conducting the third and final public open house on April 13, 2023, reviewing public input received during the open house comment period, and preparing the planning study report during the summer of 2023. (**Attachment 2, slide 23**).

Stakeholder Question and Answer Session

The following summarizes the highlights of the questions asked and the responses given:

- Will consideration be given to providing sufficient overpass clearance to accommodate heavy freight and oversized vehicles when developing the designs during the environmental phase? In response, Gabriel explained that the interstate design standards will be applied, and design accommodations will be evaluated to provide sufficient clearance, turning radii, and other safety countermeasures for heavy freight and large vehicle traffic.
- Is the goal of the next phase of study to choose an alternative to complete final design and purchase ROW? In Response, Gabriel explained that the next phase of project development is the environmental study phase, which is intended to further evaluate and possibly refine the Route Options being advanced to identify the preferred alternative for developing a schematic design and completing the detailed environmental studies in comparison with the no-build alternative. Completion of the environmental studies and continued public involvement is required to obtain environmental clearance before final design and ROW acquisition may proceed. The timeframe to complete the environmental study phase may take up to two years.
- Are the plans for the current US77/I-37 interchange improvements available for review? In response, Gabriel explained that he will coordinate with Robert Isassi, P.E., to respond to any requests to review the plans.
- Rather than bringing US 77 up to interstate standards where the current Route Options are located, why not extend I-69E at its current connection with I-37 in the Calallen area of Corpus Christi straight to FM 1945 near Sinton? In response, Gabriel explained that such a route option was not developed because of the presence of the habitat associated with the Nueces River and limits of the Nueces River Delta Preserve. However, the merits of such an alignment will be investigated, based on consideration of the project purpose and need and potential costs and impacts.

Gabriel Longoria then thanked the stakeholders for their participation throughout the planning study, and the meeting was adjourned.

Attachment 1
Sign In Sheets



US 77 Odem Area Planning Study Stakeholder Working Group Briefing Stakeholder Sign-In Sheet

Interstate 37 to Farm-to-Market Road 1945 (near Sinton)
Tuesday, March 28, 2023 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.
First United Methodist Church (Odem, TX)

Name	Title / Affiliation	Initials
Brian Fishbeck	Sergeant, Department of Public Safety – San Patricio County	<i>BF</i>
Daniel Jennings	Owner, Elco Auctions	
Daniel Luehrs	Manager, EdCot Cooperative Gin Company	
Danny Beyer	Farmer, Resident	
Danny Lorberau	Captain of Patrol, Nueces County Sheriff's Office	
Danny Salinas	Owner, Xtreme Auto Repair	
David Krebs (Group Chair)	Judge, San Patricio County	<i>DK</i>
David Maldonado	Community Coordinator, Resident	
Ernie Lane	Farmer, Resident	
Gerald Ochoa	Chief of Police, City of Odem	<i>GO</i>
Isaac Camacho	Owner, Camacho Recycling	
Jake Herring	Director, Nueces Delta Preserve	
Jan Whiteley	Farmer, Resident	<i>JW</i>
Janice Sykora	Homeowner, Resident	
John Hernandez	County Engineer, San Patricio County	<i>JH</i>
Jon Whatley	Farmer, Resident	<i>JW</i>
Lilly Wilkinson	Commissioner Pct. 3, San Patricio County	<i>LW</i>
Matt Setliff	Farmer, Resident	<i>MS</i>
Michael R. Vanecek	Operations Manager, San Patricio County Drainage	<i>MRV</i>
Natalie Hinojosa	Owner, Railroad Seafood Inn	
Nathan Lindeman	Councilmember Pl. 2, City of Sinton	
Oscar M. Israel, III	Contractor, Down South Construction Pipeline Co.	
Oscar Rivera	Sheriff, San Patricio County	
Porfirio Huerta	Fire Chief, City of Odem	
Rollie Braddock	Business Owner	<i>RB</i>
Ruben Gonzales	Homebuilder/Restaurant Owner, Hacienda Homes	
Sam Aly	Owner, Valero Snappy	



**US 77 Odem Area Planning Study
Stakeholder Working Group Briefing
Stakeholder Sign-In Sheet**

Interstate 37 to Farm-to-Market Road 1945 (near Sinton)
Tuesday, March 28, 2023 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.
First United Methodist Church (Odem, TX)

Name	Title / Affiliation	Initials
Sid Brough	Owner, EdCot Cooperative Gin Company	
Silvia Loden	Homeowner, Resident	SL
Susan Boutwell	Homeowner, Resident	SB
Todd Skinner	Owner, San Patricio Collision	
Tony Delgado	Senior Vice President, Odem State Bank	
Trey Williams	Construction Contractor, Coastal LLC	TW
Tyler Cross	General Manager, Smith Gin Co-Op	TC
Virginia Garza	Mayor, City of Odem	VG
Yolanda Carr	Superintendent, Odem-Edroy ISD	YLC



**US 77 Odem Area Planning Study
Stakeholder Working Group Briefing
Public Sign-In Sheet**

Interstate 37 to Farm-to-Market Road 1945 (near Sinton)
Tuesday, March 28, 2023 4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.
First United Methodist Church (Odem, TX)

Name	Title / Affiliation
John McGrath	Angelita Ranch
Anthony Smith	Prop Owner
James Patterson	

Attachment 2
PowerPoint Presentation



US 77 Odem Area Planning Study

From Interstate 37 (I-37) to
Farm-to-Market Road 1945 (FM 1945)
near Sinton, TX in San Patricio County

Stakeholder Working Group Briefing
March 28, 2023

March 28, 2023



Welcome and Opening Remarks

Judge David Krebs, San Patricio County

Gabriel Longoria, P.E., Advanced Project Development Engineer

TxDOT Corpus Christi District



HELP
#EndTheStreakTX

End the streak of daily deaths on Texas roadways.

TxDOT.gov (Keyword: #EndTheStreakTX)

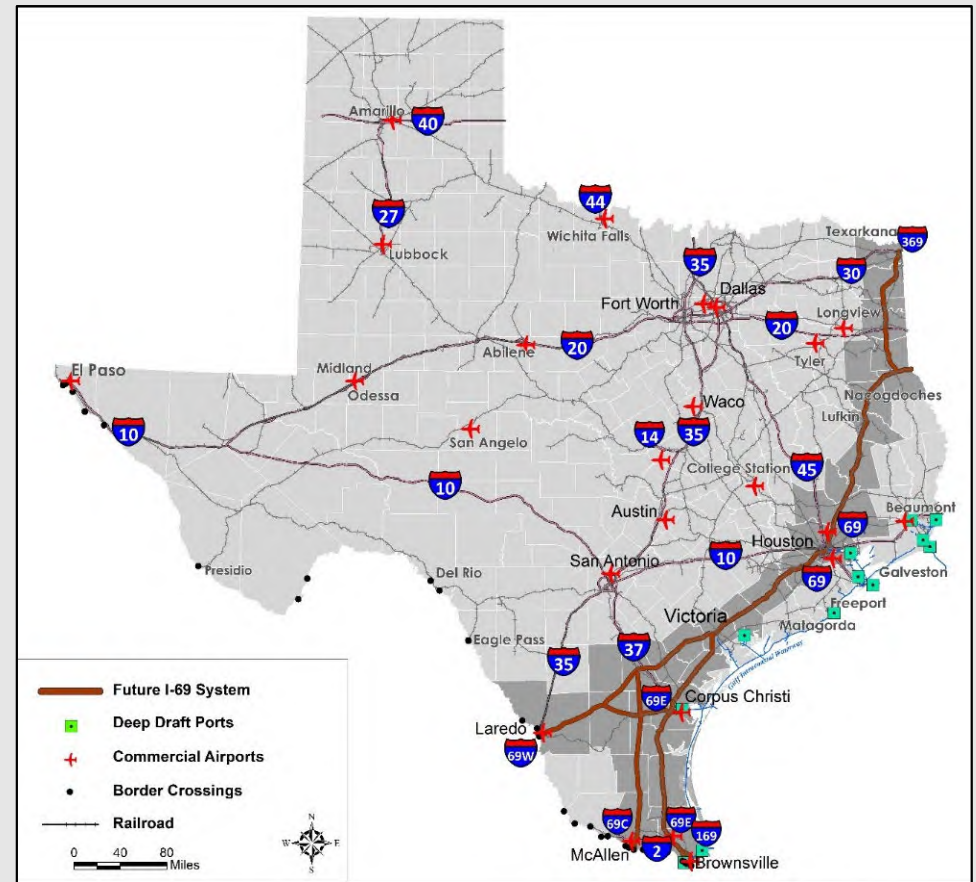


#EndTheStreakTX Toolkit



Benefits of I-69 System Development in Texas

- Enhance safety and traffic operations.
- Facilitate the efficient movement of freight.
- Address emergency evacuation needs.
- Serve both rural and urban communities.
- Accommodate growth and economic development.



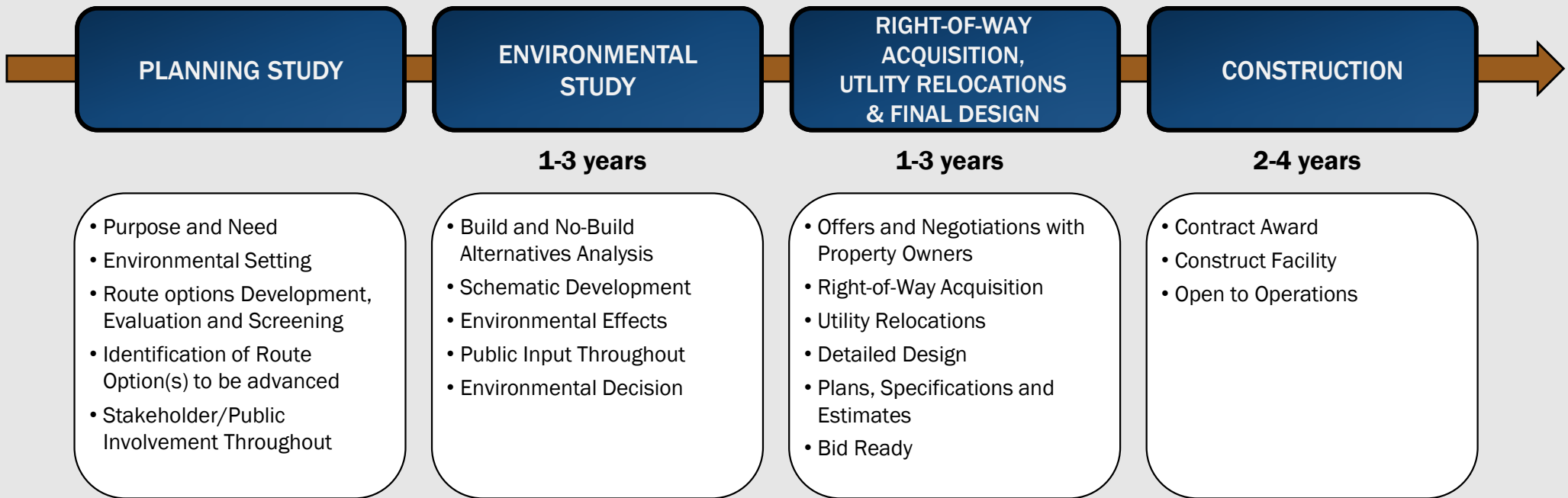
Stakeholder Working Group Charge



- **PARTICIPANTS** in a grassroots driven Public Involvement approach.
- **ADVOCATES** for sharing information and encouraging feedback.
- **PARTNERS** with TxDOT in conducting the study.
- **CONTRIBUTORS** to recommending and championing route option(s) to be advanced.



Project Development Process



Timeframes are estimates. Also, the timeframe to complete all phases of work are estimates and spans approximately 8-12 years, depending on funding availability.

US 77 Odem Area Planning Study Milestone Schedule



Stakeholder Working Group Briefing Objectives

- Provide a Summary of the Route Options Stakeholder Briefing (Sept. 22, 2022)
- Summarize the Public Open House (Nov. 9, 2022) Results and Input Received
- Review Route Options Screening Evaluation
 - Proposed Route Options
 - Route Option Screening Results and Rationale
 - Advanced Route Options
 - Comparison of estimated construction costs and environmental evaluation results
- Review Next Steps of the Study





Summary of the Route Options Stakeholder Briefing and Public Open House (September/November 2022)

Mitzi Ellison, NLA

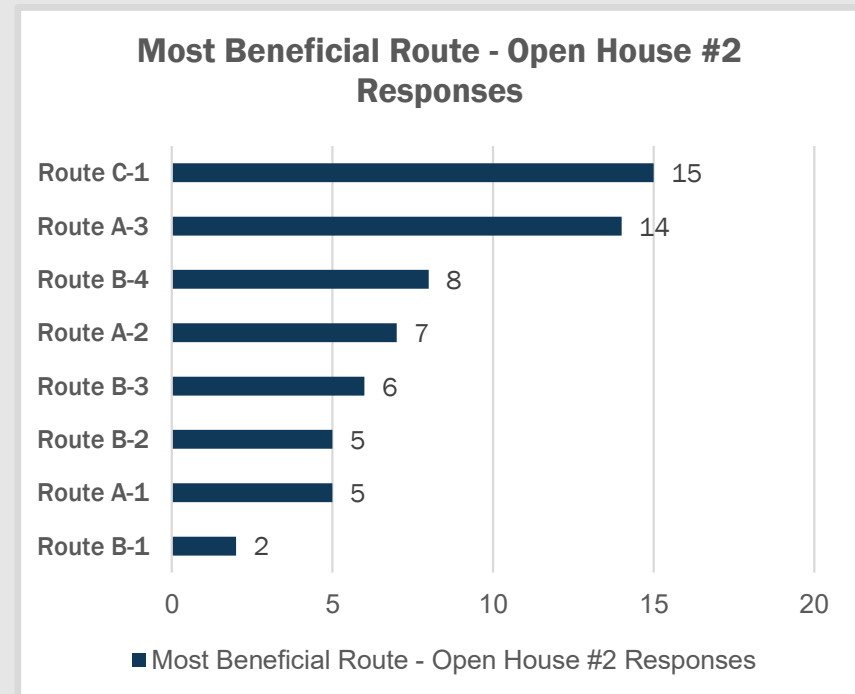
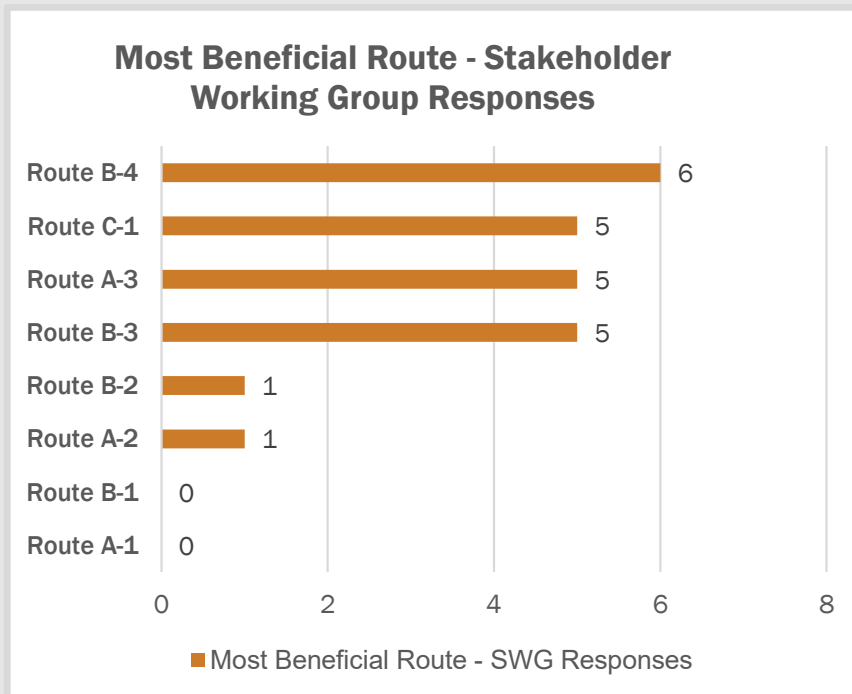
Overview of the Public Open House (Nov. 9, 2022) and Input Received



Outreach Results

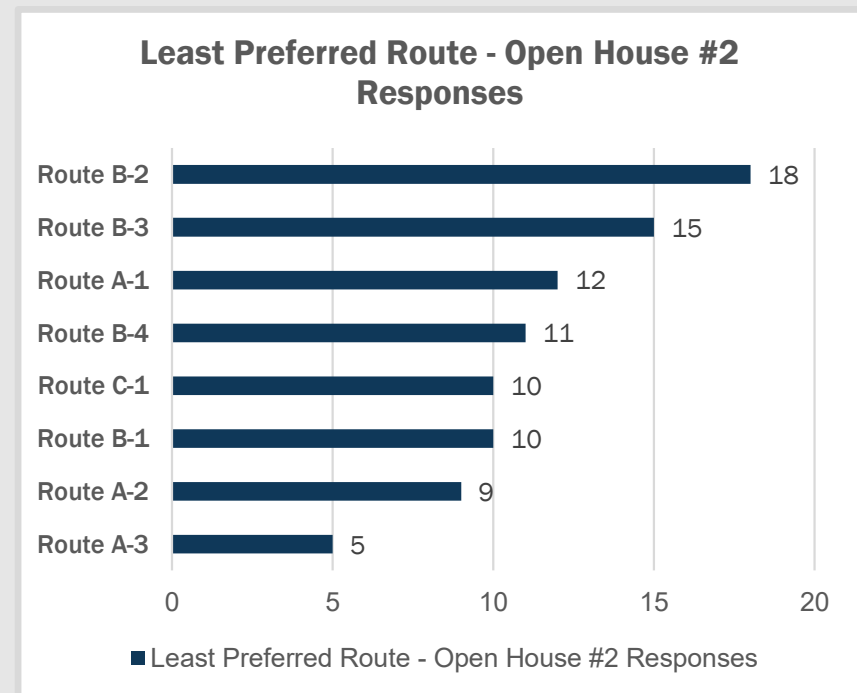
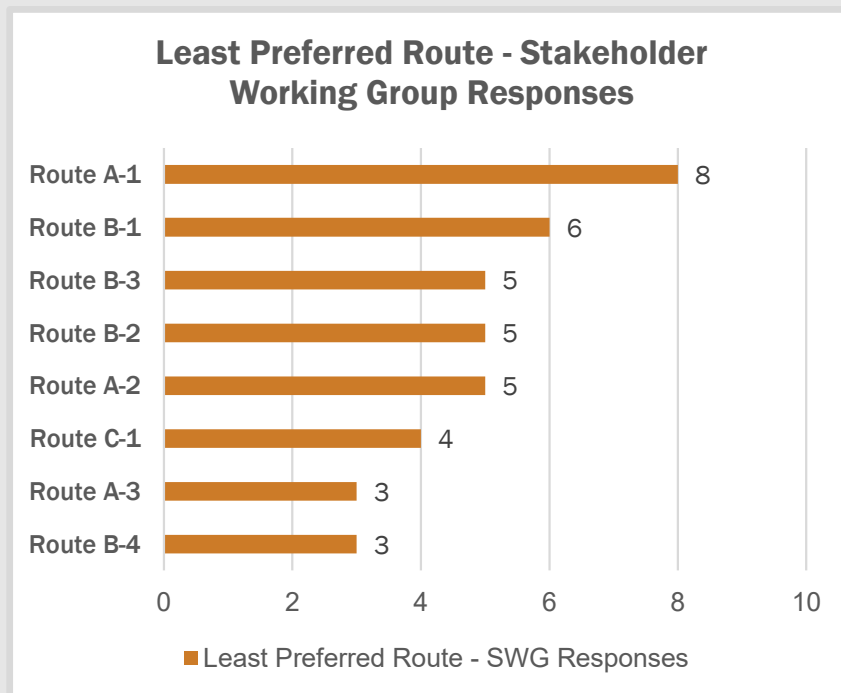


- Most beneficial options:





- Least preferred options:

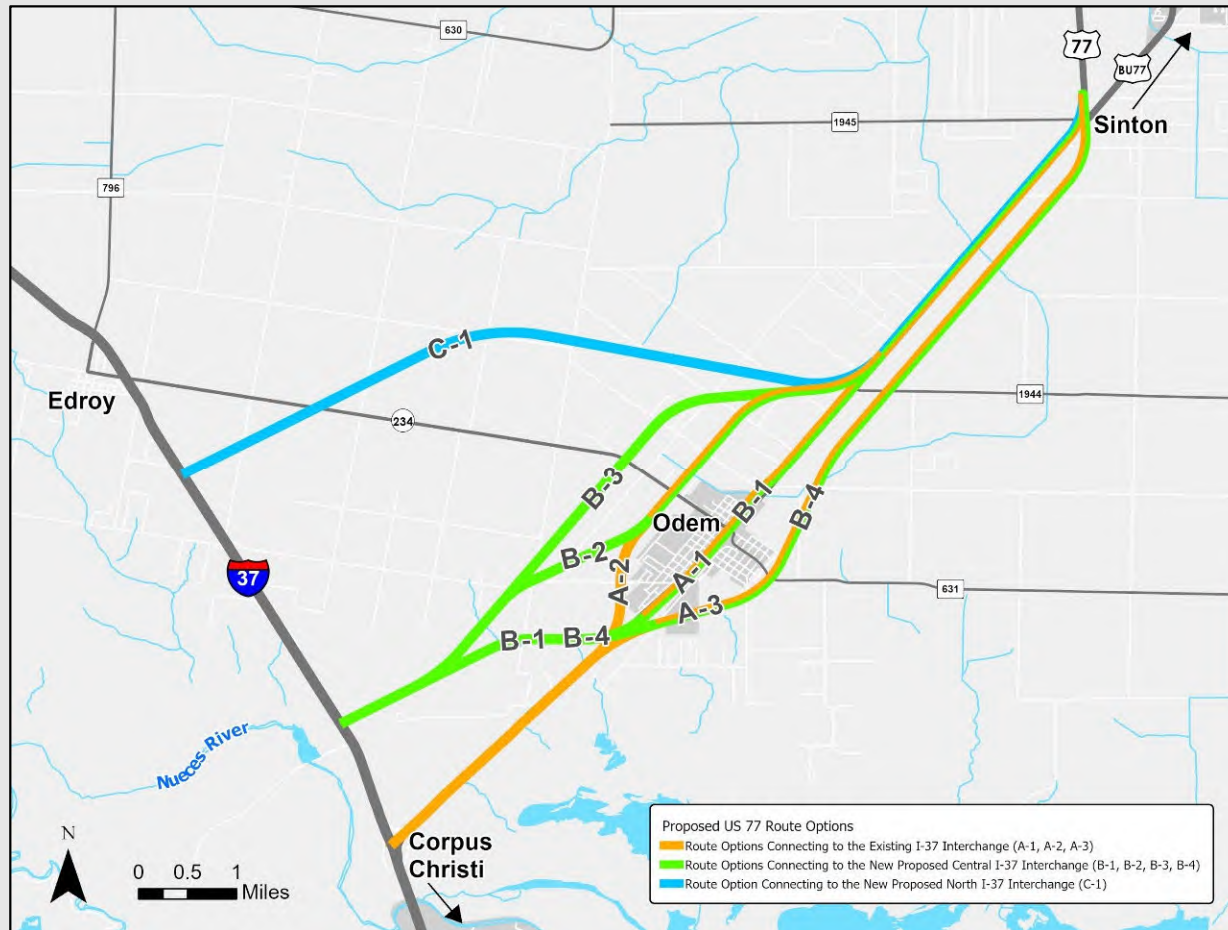




US 77 Odem Area Route Options

Tara McDonald, P.E., Atkins

Screened Route Options





Route Options Screening Rationale

Based on the route options screening performed to date and the stakeholder and public input on the route options, the following rationale was formulated to support the advancement or elimination of the route options for further study:

A3 advanced as the A ROUTE OPTION

- Compared to A-1 and A-2, A-3 provides a better opportunity to avoid planned and existing development, while providing access to Odem east of US 77.
- A-3 is not close to school facilities, which was a benefit expressed by the public.
- A-3 was identified as one of the most beneficial routes with the greatest support and least opposition.

B4 advanced as the B ROUTE OPTION

- Compared to B-1, B-2, and B-3, B-4 provides a better opportunity to avoid existing development, while providing access to Odem east of US 77.
- B-4 is not close to school facilities, which was a benefit expressed by the public.
- B-4 was identified as more beneficial than B-1, B-2, and B-3.

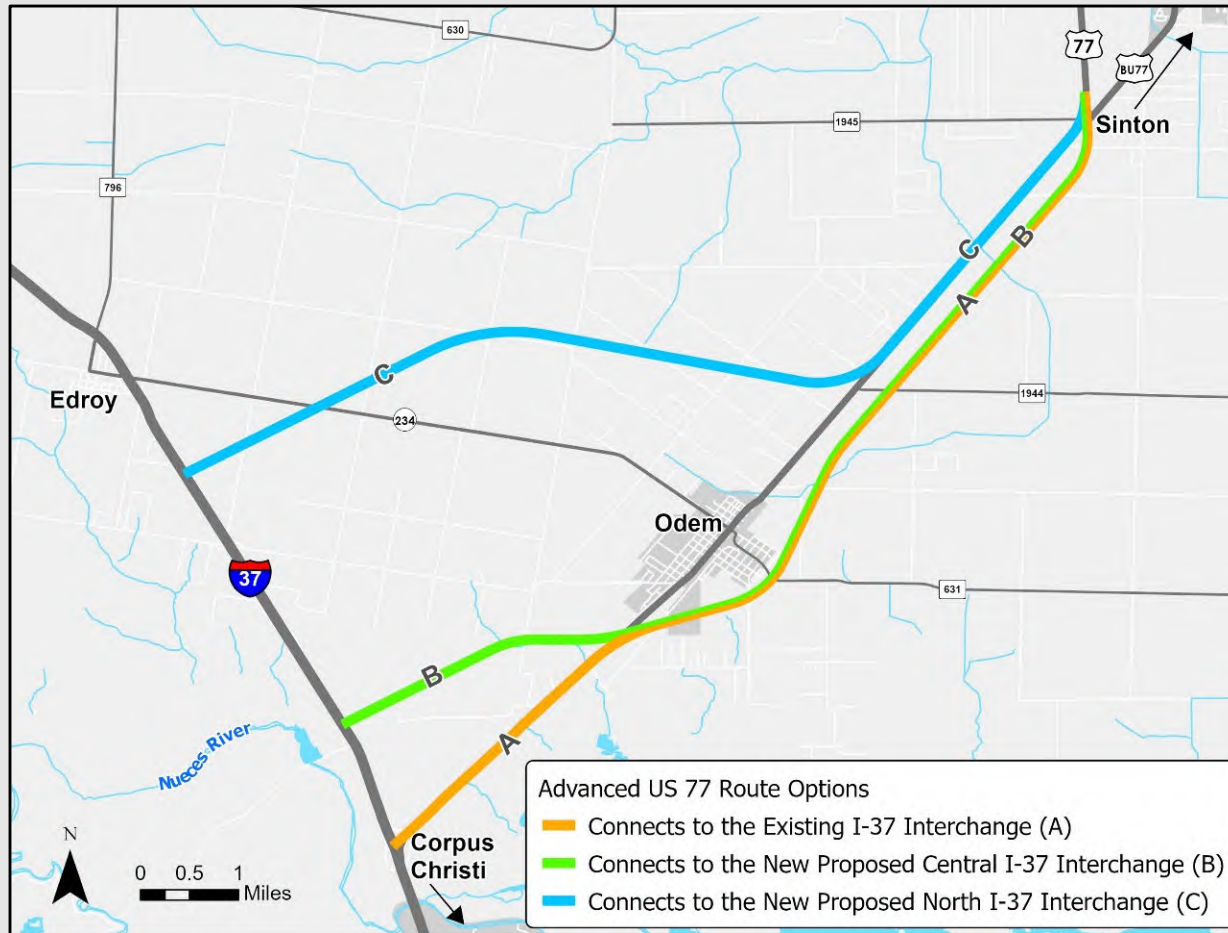
C1 advanced as the C ROUTE OPTION

- C-1 provides a better opportunity to avoid planned and existing development near Odem.
- C-1 is not near school facilities, which was a benefit expressed by the public.
- Of the stakeholder and public input received, C-1 was identified as one of the top two most beneficial routes.

Based on the following rationale Route Options A-1, A-2, B-1, B-2, and B-3 are being eliminated from further consideration:

- These routes have the highest potential to impact existing development.
- A-1 and B-1 have the highest potential to impact community cohesion in Odem.
- A-2 has a high potential to impact ongoing and planned development in proximity to Odem.
- A-2, B-2, and B-3 are close to school facilities.
- Of the stakeholder and public input received, these routes were least preferred.

Route Options Advanced for Environmental Study





Advanced Route Options – Comparison of Estimated Construction Costs and Environmental Evaluation Results

Tara McDonald, P.E., Atkins and Alex Amponsah, AICP, Atkins



Estimated Costs of the Route Options

Cost Type	Route Option A (previously identified as A3)	Route Option B (previously identified as B4)	Route Option C (previously identified as C1)
Construction	\$551.0 M	\$681.4 M	\$687.5 M
Right of Way	\$39.2 M	\$38.9 M	\$53.3 M
Utility Relocation	\$29.1 M	\$7 M	\$14.2 M
Total	\$619.3 M	\$727.3 M	\$755 M

Preliminary cost estimates, subject to change.

Environmental Evaluation Results



Factor	Route Option A (previously identified as A3)	Route Option B (previously identified as B4)	Route Option C (previously identified as C1)
Engineering Factors			
Traffic Diversion Rate*	90%	85%	75%
Travel Distance (miles)**	10.5	11.4	14.6
Approximate Travel Time (minutes)	8	9	11
Proposed New Right of Way (acres)	385	483	468
Residential Displacements (count)	6	6	3
Commercial Displacements (count)	4	4	33
Church Displacements (count)	0	0	1

*Traffic diversion rate refers to the percentage of US 77 traffic expected to use the route option. The diversion rate was forecasted with 2050 design year traffic projections.

**Travel distance between the existing US 77/I-37 interchange and FM 1945 near Sinton.

Preliminary, subject to change.

Environmental Evaluation Results



Feature	Route Option A (previously identified as A3)	Route Option B (previously identified as B4)	Route Option C (previously identified as C1)
Potential Environmental Resources Present within the Right of Way			
National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) (acres)	5.9	9.3	0.2
Predominately Hydric Soils (acres)	20.9	12.2	2.3
100-Year Floodplain (acres)	73.9	108.8	42.4
Perennial Streams per USGS NHD (National Hydrography Dataset) (feet)	474	474	0
Intermittent Streams per USGS NHD (Feet)	2,258	2,383	326
Open Water (acres)	0.6	0	0
Prime Farmlands Soils (acres)	167.6	240.6	208.0

Preliminary, subject to change.

Environmental Evaluation Results



Feature	Route Option A (previously identified as A3)	Route Option B (previously identified as B4)	Route Option C (previously identified as C1)
Potential Land Uses and Utilities Present within the Right of Way			
Parks (acres)	0	0	0
Schools (acres)	0	0	0
Cemetery (acres)	0	0	0
Subsidized Housing (acres)	0	0	0
Historic NRHP Listed Sites (count)	0	0	0
Pipelines (feet)	1,051	9,586	7,051
High Voltage Electrical Transmission lines (feet)	0	0	1,063
Electrical Substations (count)	0	0	0
Communication Tower (count)	0	0	0
Public Water Wells (count)	0	0	2
Major Hazmat Concerns (Landfill, Superfund) (count)	0	0	0
Oil & Gas Wells - Active, Permitted or Abandoned within 150 feet of right of way (count)	2	6	4

Preliminary, subject to change.



Review Next Steps of the Study

Gabriel Longoria, P.E., Advanced Project Development Engineer
TxDOT Corpus Christi District



The Next Steps of the Study Include:

- Prepare for and conduct third and final public open house to present the route options being advanced at the Odem Junior High School on April 13, 2023 from 4:30-6:30.
- Finalize the US 77 Odem Area Planning Study:
 - Review feedback from the open house
 - Prepare the study report documenting the planning process, community engagement and recommendations
 - Discharge the Stakeholder Working Group from its duties

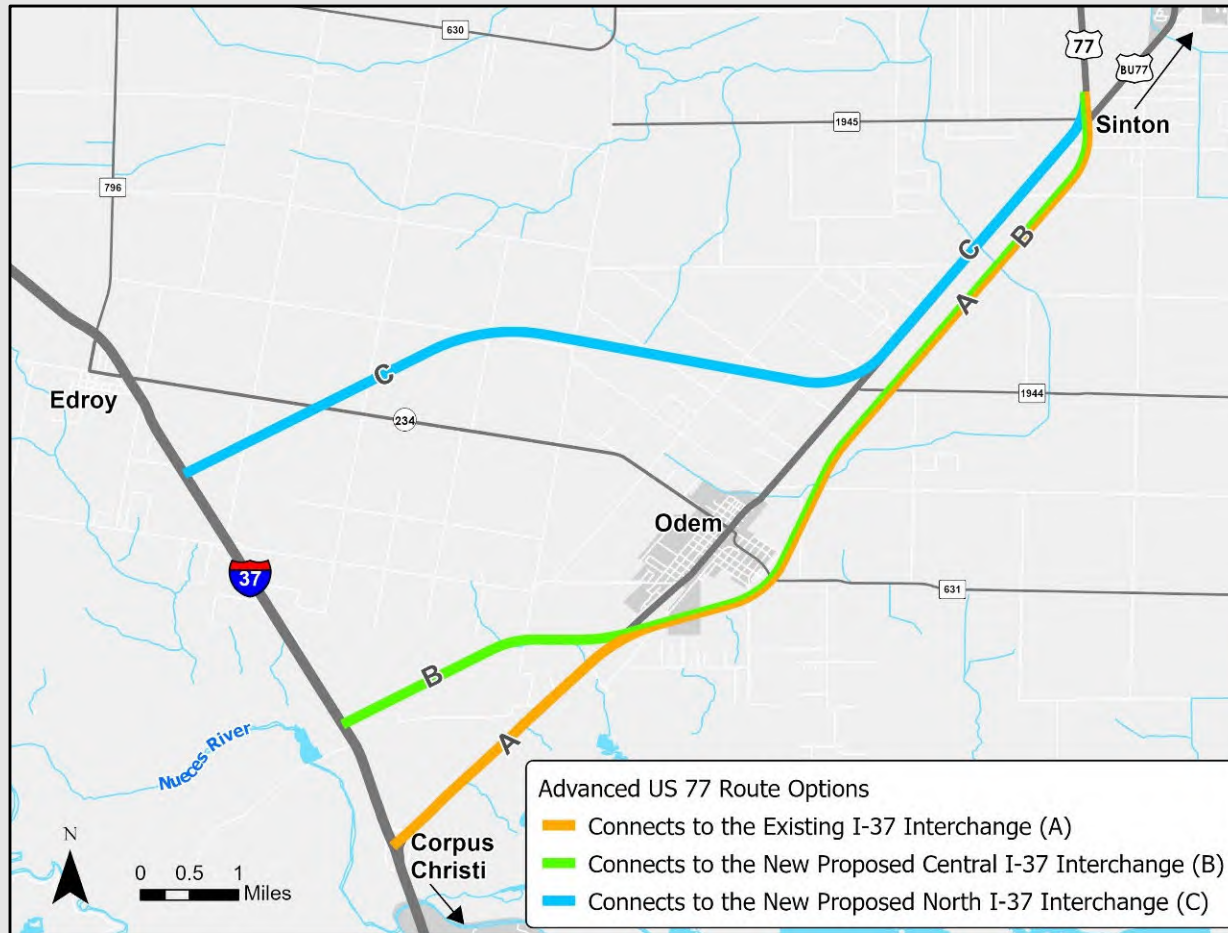


Question and Answer Session

Gabriel Longoria, P.E., Advanced Project Development Engineer

TxDOT Corpus Christi District

Advanced Route Options Map





Closing Remarks and Discharge of the Stakeholder Working Group

Judge David Krebs, San Patricio County