

VIRTUAL PUBLIC HEARING with In-Person Option
US 77 Sinton Improvement Project

US 77 from BU 77 South to BU 77 North
CSJ: 0371-04-062 and 0372-01-101

San Patricio County, Texas
Thursday, January 13, 2022

Slide 1

Welcome

Pre-Recorded Virtual Public Hearing with an In-Person Option

US 77 Sinton Improvement Project

January 13, 2022

San **Patricio** County, Texas

Slide 1 Notes/Script

Welcome to the Texas Department of Transportation Corpus Christi District's pre-recorded virtual public hearing for the US 77 Sinton Improvement Project. We appreciate your interest in this project and thank you for your participation. This presentation will discuss the proposed improvements to US 77, from Business 77 South to Business 77 North in San Patricio County, Texas.

At the end of the presentation, we will provide you with commenting options for any questions or input you may have. To be included in the official virtual public hearing record, comments must be received on or before Friday, January 28, 2022, at 11:59 p.m.

Let's get started!

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Virtual Public Hearing in Response to Public Health

TxDOT is offering this public hearing in an online format in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

This virtual public hearing and the project webpage include the same information available at the in-person meeting.

All project information is available online at www.txdot.gov, keyword search “US 77 Sinton Improvement.”

Slide 2 Notes/Script

Given the unique circumstances of the COVID-19 outbreak, along with our commitment to protecting public health during this pandemic, TxDOT is offering this public hearing in an online format and providing an in-person option for individuals who would like to participate in person instead of online.

In-person attendees will be able to view the same presentation delivered in the online public hearing, which will be playing on a screen, review hard copies of project materials, ask questions of TxDOT staff and/or consultants from a socially distanced approach, and leave written comments.

All project information can be found on the project website at www.txdot.gov keyword search “[US 77 Sinton Improvement](#)”

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Purpose of this Virtual Public Hearing

- Describe the project to determine how the public may be affected
- Inform the public of project status and recommendations
- Offer the public an opportunity for public input
- Develop a record of public participation

Slide 3 Notes/Script

This virtual public hearing is being held to present information on the project development process and receive input from the public on the proposed US 77 Sinton Improvement project.

You may have attended previous public hearings conducted by TxDOT. However, for the benefit of those who have never attended one, I will explain why and how the Department conducts a public hearing.

A public hearing has four essential purposes:

- To describe the project to the public including known potential project impacts to the human and natural environment.
- To inform the public of the status of planning efforts on the project and recommendations based on technical analysis performed to date.
- To provide the public an opportunity to view information and express their ideas and concerns at this stage in the planning process when there is still flexibility to respond to comments and location and design decisions that have not been finalized.
- And finally, to develop a record of public views and participation to accompany recommendations for subsequent decisions.

This virtual public hearing is being held in compliance with both federal and state laws. Documentation of this meeting will be included in the project record and be posted to the project webpage on txdot.gov keyword search "US 77 Sinton Improvement".

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Project Location:

Project Limits:

US 77 between BU 77 South & BU 77 North

Project Length:

Approximately 6 miles

Slide 4 Notes/Script

The US 77 Sinton Improvement project is located on U.S. Highway 77 west of the City of Sinton in San Patricio County.

The project limits begin where US 77 & Business 77 separate on the south side of Sinton and end where US 77 & Business 77 converge on the north side of Sinton.

The project is approximately 6 miles long.

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Project Purpose

PURPOSE

The primary purpose of the proposed project is to improve safety and mobility by upgrading the roadway to interstate standards (as part of future Interstate Highway 69 corridor).

Slide 5 notes/script

The primary purpose of the proposed project is to improve safety and mobility by upgrading the roadway to interstate standards (as part of the future Interstate Highway 69 corridor).

Early in project development, information was gathered to help design the proposed project. This information included traffic and crash data, flooding and drainage patterns, and planned developments within the project area.

Later in this presentation we will discuss specific environmental and engineering constraints that impacted project design.

Slide 6

Crash Data (2011 – 2020)

Legend

Fatal Crash Location

Crash Density

High

Low

Slide 6 notes/scripts

As part of project development, one of the first things our team did was analyze available crash data. This image shows that in the past 9 years, the majority of crashes within the project area occurred at intersections. Sadly, a number of these crashes resulted in fatalities.

The proposed project would construct a new overpass at CR 1196 and help reduce the potential for accidents at this intersection.

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Project Details

The proposed project would include the following improvements:

- Continuous frontage roads would be constructed with entrance and exit ramps; and
- An overpass would be constructed at CR 1196 along with intersection improvements

Slide 7 Notes/Script

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- Continuous frontage roads would be constructed with entrance and exit ramps; and
- An overpass would be constructed at CR 1196 along with intersection improvements

By constructing frontage roads, and exit and entrance ramps, we are controlling access to the freeway and separating high-speed freeway traffic from lower speed local traffic. This separation reduces the potential for accidents. In addition, in the event accidents or other incidents require closing the main lanes, traffic may be detoured onto the frontage roads.

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Project Design

Existing Typical Section

Proposed Typical Section

Slide 8 notes/script

Typical sections are used to explain how the roadway looks today compared to how the roadway would look after construction of the proposed project.

Looking at the top figure, the existing typical section for US 77 includes two 12-foot-wide lanes in each direction, 10-foot-wide outside shoulders and 4-foot-wide inside shoulders.

The bottom figure shows the proposed typical section. The proposed project would use existing roadway pavement in some areas, with the existing northbound lanes becoming the northbound frontage road and the existing southbound lanes being upgraded and converted into the new northbound main lanes. New southbound main lanes and frontage roads would be constructed. The proposed project would consist of two 12-foot-wide freeway lanes with 10-foot-wide outside shoulders and 4-foot wide inside shoulders, in each direction. The frontage roads would consist of two 12-foot-wide lanes with 8-foot-wide outside shoulders and 4-foot wide inside shoulders, in each direction.

The northbound and southbound mainlanes would be separated by a 60-foot to 64-foot grassy median.

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Anticipated Right-of-Way Impacts

- Approximately 97 acres of additional Right-of-Way needed for proposed improvements.
- Impacts to residences and businesses were avoided whenever possible
- Project design based on current TxDOT Design Standards and known environmental and engineering constraints

Acquisition and relocation assistance would be in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Properties Acquisitions Policies Act of 1970, as amended.

Slide 9 Notes/Script

Based on the preliminary design, this project would require approximately 97 acres of additional Right-of-Way. No additional easements would be needed. The existing Right-of-Way width varies from 230 to 660 feet, and the proposed Right-of-Way width would vary between 230 and 930 feet.

Impacts to residences and businesses were avoided whenever possible.

The project was designed based on current TxDOT design standards and known environmental and engineering constraints.

Based on preliminary design, the project would result in two residential displacements and two commercial displacements.

Right-of-way acquisition would be completed in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended.

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Anticipated Right-of-Way Impacts

- Information on the Right-of-Way acquisition process is available at txdot.gov and on the Virtual Hearing webpage:
 - Landowner’s Bill of Rights
 - Relocation Assistance
 - State Purchase of Right-of-Way Booklet

Information concerning services and benefits to affected property owners and information about the tentative schedule for right of way can be obtained from the TxDOT Corpus Christi District Office. Please call Jason Alvarez, P.E. at (361) 808-2495 or Kimberly Amy at (361) 808-2509 if you would like to speak with a TxDOT Right-of-way professional.

Slide 10 Notes/Script

Brochures titled “Landowner’s Bill of Rights”, “Relocation Assistance,” and “State Purchase of Right-of-Way” are available at txdot.gov and by clicking on the TxDOT Right-of-Way Information link located on the Virtual Public Hearing webpage. These materials contain detailed information to inform you of your rights and to provide information about the TxDOT Right-of-Way acquisition process.

Slide 11

Environmental Assessment

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other federal and state environmental regulations, the environmental process has included an evaluation of potential environmental impacts to the natural and human environment, including, but not limited to:

- Residential and commercial properties
- Vegetation
- Threatened and endangered species (Including a Presence/Absence Survey for federally listed plant species)
- Water resources
- Air quality
- Historic resources
- Archaeological resources
- Hazardous resources
- Noise
- Communities
- Farmland soils
- Environmental Justice and Limited English Proficiency
- Access and travel patterns
- Utilities

Once public hearing comments have been addressed and the above studies are complete, a final Environmental Assessment will be prepared.

Slide 11 Notes/Script

- The National Environmental Policy Act, also known as NEPA, requires federal agencies to assess the environmental effects of their proposed actions prior to making decisions.
- TxDOT carries out the environmental review process for applicable transportation projects under an agreement with the federal government.
- Under NEPA, an environmental assessment (EA) is being prepared for the US 77 Sinton Improvement project. The purpose of this EA is to study the potential environmental consequences of the proposed project and determine whether an environmental impact statement (EIS) is needed.
- The EA includes an analysis of community impacts including displacements and access, vegetation, threatened and endangered species, waters resources, air quality, archeological and historical resources, hazardous materials, traffic noise, farmland soils, and environmental justice including minority and low-income groups.
- The public hearing is part of the environmental process. Once public hearing comments have been addressed and any additional coordination is conducted, a final EA will be prepared.

- If, upon completion of the environmental review process, TxDOT determines the proposed project would have no significant adverse effects, TxDOT will prepare and sign a finding of no significant impact (FONSI). The FONSI will be made available to the public.

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Environmental Resources

- Additional Right-of-Way and could result in two residential and two commercial displacements
- Exhibits a high probability for archeological deposits and will require survey following Right-of-Way acquisition
- Suitable habitat present for state-listed species

Slide 12 notes/script

Based on the results of technical studies, the project area exhibits a high probability for archeological deposits and will require an archeological survey. This survey will be completed following Right-of-Way acquisition.

Suitable habitat is present in the area for state-listed species; the project will implement Best Management Practices for amphibians, bats, terrestrial reptiles, birds, vegetation, and water quality.

Bat boxes will be installed at Chiltipin Creek bridges. These provide roosting habitat to bat species whose populations have been in decline.

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Environmental Constraints

- Requires action within areas of FEMA-designated 100-year floodplain
- Involves construction within potentially jurisdictional Waters of the U.S.
 - Stream crossings require authorization by Nationwide Permit 14
 - Impacts to wetlands would be avoided or minimized

Slide 13 notes/script

- The proposed project would include work within areas of FEMA-designated floodplain and is anticipated to impact potentially jurisdictional waters including Chiltipin Creek and three ephemeral drainages
- Work is anticipated to be authorized under a non-reporting nationwide permit
 - If impacts to jurisdictional waters exceed the thresholds included in the nationwide permit, TxDOT will coordinate with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to obtain the appropriate permit.

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Engineering Constraints

- Loves Truck Stop and Detention Pond adjacent to West Right-of-Way, just north of South BU 77 intersection
- Mary Rhodes pipeline extending the length of the project along the East Right-of-Way within a dedicated easement.
- US Army Reserve Training Center along East Right-of-Way at the CR 1196 intersection.
- UPRR line adjacent to East Right-of-Way at northern and southern project limits.

Slide 14 Script/Notes

During project development the project team evaluated several engineering and Right-of-Way constraints including the following features.

- A pond is located on the Loves Truck Stop property. This pond was constructed to help managed drainage and prevent flooding. Impacts to the pond were avoided to prevent creating drainage issues or other environmental impacts.
- A major waterline, known as the Mary Rhodes pipeline, is located on the east side of the project. If the pipeline needed to be relocated due to the proposed project, utility relocation would be very costly and require additional time to complete. In addition, relocating this utility could result in disruption of water service to customers.
- The US Army Reserve Training Center is located on the east side of the project. Additional time would be needed to acquire this type of property and relocation could be more costly than other types of property.
- A railroad is located adjacent to the project at the northern and southern project limits. When a project is located near a railroad, or has the potential to affect safe operations, TxDOT must coordinate with the railroad during the design phase. This process is typically referred to as railroad coordination and can add significant time to project development. If a project is expected to impact the railroad, agreements must be negotiated, and the railroad may have specific requirements that TxDOT must meet. For example, new at-grade railroad crossings are typically not allowed unless other crossings can be removed.
- Due to these and other project constraints, the proposed project would only acquire new Right-of-Way on the west side of US 77.

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National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Assignment to the Texas Department of Transportation

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for the project are being, or have been, carried out by TxDOT pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327 and memorandum of Understanding dated December 9, 2019 and executed by FHWA and TxDOT.

Slide 15 notes/script

Prior to Dec. 16, 2014, the Federal Highway Administration, or 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 FHWA through a Memorandum of Understanding to review and approve certain assigned NEPA environmental documents. This Memorandum of Understanding between TxDOT and FHWA was updated on Dec. 9, 2019. The review and approval process applies to this project.

Notices for this Virtual Public Hearing with In-Person Option were advertised in The News of San Patricio, in English and Spanish and on the TxDOT.gov website under "Hearings and Meetings Schedule." The TxDOT Public Information Office also prepared a news media release to advertise the public meeting. The TxDOT roadway design schematics are available on the project website at www.txdot.gov keyword search "US 77 Sinton Improvement."

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Proposed Timeline

Began Project January 2019

Notice and Opportunity to Comment September 2021

WE ARE HERE

Virtual Public Hearing with In-Person Option January 13, 2022, Thru January 28, 2022

*Project schedule & dates are preliminary and based on available funding

Final Schematic Design Summer 2022

Expected Environmental Clearance Summer 2022*

Begin Construction Early 2026*

Slide 16 Notes and Script

Now let's talk about the schedule of this project.

The project team began work on the proposed project in January 2019.

A Notice and Opportunity to comment was provided to adjacent property owners and local officials in September 2021.

A Virtual Public Hearing with In-Person Option is scheduled for January 13, 2022.

The next step in the process is to finalize the schematic design, which is anticipated in Summer of 2022.

The final Environmental Assessment or (EA) and Finding of No Significant Impact or (FONSI) is anticipated to be completed Summer of 2022.

Following receipt of a Finding of No Significant Impact or FONSI, we would move into the next stage of project development and TxDOT would begin the Right-of-Way acquisition process and utility coordination. TxDOT would then develop detailed design plans, also known as plans, specifications, and estimates (PS&E).

Construction is anticipated to begin in early 2026.

Through a combination of State and Federal funding, approximately 94 million dollars have been identified for construction of the proposed project.

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How to Submit Your Comments and Questions

Comment online

Visit the project website
www.txdot.gov, keyword search
“US 77 Sinton Improvement”

Email

Jason.Alvarez@txdot.gov

Kimberly.amy@txdot.gov

Mail-in comments

TxDOT Corpus Christi District Office
Attn: Kimberly Amy
1701 S. Padre Island Drive
Corpus Christi, TX 78416

Leave a Voicemail

1-833-933-0445

For English-Press 1
For Spanish-Press 2

Comment period starts Thursday, January 13, 2022, at 4:30 p.m. and ends on Friday, January 28, 2022, at 11:59 p.m.

Slide 17 notes/scripts

Comments will be accepted in several ways. You may fill out an online comment form by visiting www.txdot.gov, keyword search “US 77 Sinton Improvement,” submit a written comment via email to Jason.Alvarez@txdot.gov or kimberly.amy@txdot.gov, submit a written comment via USPS mail to TxDOT Corpus Christi District Office, Attention Kimberly Amy, 1701 S. Padre Island, Corpus Christi, TX 78416, or members of the public may call (833) 933-0445 and verbally provide testimony from 4:30 p.m., Thursday, January 13, 2022, until 11:59 p.m. on Friday, January 28, 2022.

All verbally provided testimony and timely written comments will be considered by TxDOT, and must be received or postmarked by Friday, January 28, 2022, to be part of the official Virtual Public Hearing record.

Following this Virtual Public Hearing, TxDOT will provide responses to all comments received. These responses will be available for viewing within the Public Hearing Summary Report on the project website at www.txdot.gov keyword search “US 77 Sinton Improvement”

Slide 18:

Contact Us

Questions may be asked at any time during the project development.

Jason Alvarez, P.E.

TxDOT Project Manager

Gerente de Proyectos de TxDOT

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Kimberly Amy

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Coordinadora Ambiental de TxDOT

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For additional project information, visit www.txdot.gov and use keyword search "US 77 Sinton Improvement"

Scan QR code for more project details.

Slide 18 Notes/script

Questions may be asked at any time during the project development and directed to the TxDOT Project Manager, Jason Alvarez, P.E. at Jason.Alvarez@txdot.gov or the TxDOT Environmental Coordinator, Kimberly Amy at Kimberly.Amy@txdot.gov.

Information regarding the proposed project are on file and available for inspection Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. at the Corpus Christi District office at 1701 S. Padre Island Drive, Corpus Christi, Texas.

For additional project information, visit www.txdot.gov and use key word "US 77 Sinton Improvement" or scan the QR code for more project details.

That concludes our presentation. Thank you for taking the time to view this presentation and participate in the Virtual Public Hearing with In-Person Option.

Please remember to submit your comments by January 28, 2022.

Thank you again for participating and have a great day!