



DOWNTOWN 10

From Executive Center Boulevard to State Loop 478 (Copia Street)

CSJ: 2121-02-166

El Paso County, Texas

Virtual Public Meeting (VPM) #2 Frequently Asked Questions

Question #1: Why are traffic growth rates higher than historic population growth in El Paso County and City of El Paso?

Answer: Since 1999, there has been steadily rising traffic growth throughout the Downtown 10 project limits. The Reimagine I-10 Corridor Study identified a correlation between trade and traffic volumes even though during times of economic recession, trade uncertainty and, most recently, COVID 19, traffic volumes decrease for short periods of time. The difference between traffic and population indicates that other factors such as, but not limited to, interstate and international activities, are contributing to an overall increase in traffic. Long term traffic growth rates take several growth factors into account. From 2010 to 2019 census data indicates that the county and city's population has experienced annual growth of 0.6% and 0.5%, respectively. In contrast, traffic growth between 2010 to 2019 has experienced annual growth of around 1.5%. Within the same period of 2010 to 2019, northbound truck crossings from the nearby Port of Entry have increased 30.9%, or 3.4% annually.

Initial preliminary traffic analyses based on the El Paso Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO) Travel Demand Model indicate the existing I-10 facility will not meet current nor projected demand. As the Downtown 10 project transitions to the Viable Alternative phase of development, a detailed traffic evaluation will be developed to forecast future traffic volumes consistent with the El Paso MPO Travel Demand Model. This process is in accordance with the FHWA design manual, AASHTO guidance, and TxDOT standards. TxDOT is looking for solutions to I-10 to address this need, including additional roadway capacity. TxDOT's goal is to identify an alternative that addresses regional, local, and multi-modal mobility, and that allows increased traffic volumes to utilize the I-10 corridor in the most effective and efficient manner possible.

Question #2: Why can't additional traffic be re-routed to a bypass?

Answer: TxDOT has existing and planned future connections to Loop 375 to relieve I-10. Additionally, the El Paso MPO's Travel Demand Model (Destino 2045) includes all regionally significant projects such as an alternative route known as Northeast Parkway or Borderland Expressway (exits at NM 404, Anthony Gap). However, the majority of truck trips on I-10 in El Paso originate and/or are destined to locations adjacent to I-10 within the city limits and therefore would not be served effectively by a bypass route.

Question #3: What is the Purpose and Need for this project? What are the Goals and Objectives?

Answer: The Purpose and Need statement explains why TxDOT is proposing the project and provides a basis for the development and evaluation of project alternatives. Each alternative must be analyzed in terms of the extent to which it will or will not satisfy the Purpose and Need of the project. The Need for the project must also include specific facts and/or data supporting each problem or unsatisfactory condition identified in the Need Statement. The Need Statement for the Downtown 10 project was identified and refined through background research, input from the public, and analyses conducted for the Reimagine I-10 Corridor Study.

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 FHWA and TxDOT.

The project is needed due to traffic congestion and mobility issues, concerns surrounding incident management and aging infrastructure, substandard pavement conditions, and failure to meet current design standards.

Goals and Objectives define the conceptual direction of a project and help develop potential solutions. After the first round of public involvement conducted in 2020, TxDOT received feedback requesting that “local connectivity” be added to the Purpose and Need or Goals and Objectives for the project. Therefore, “local connectivity” was added to the Downtown 10 Goals and Objectives, which include the following: local, regional, and national connectivity; the minimization of potential environmental impacts; improvements to multimodal connections and pedestrian and bicycle access; and addressing design improvements. As the team moves forward with the project, the Goals and Objectives may change to address similar comments. **See Station #2 of the Downtown 10 VPM #2.**

Question #4: Will the project provide a connection between Uptown and Downtown El Paso? Can the project improve both east to west and north to south connections at the same time?

Answer: While the purpose of the project is to improve corridor mobility along I-10, the project Goals and Objectives also include improving north to south mobility across I-10. Therefore, as part of the Downtown 10 project, TxDOT is evaluating and incorporating opportunities to maintain and improve connections from Uptown and Downtown El Paso, including vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian travel. These are reflected in the currently proposed viable alternatives, detailed in **Station #4 of the Downtown 10 VPM #2.**

Question #5: How will the project address bicycle and pedestrian mobility?

Answer: As one of the project goals, bicycle and pedestrian facilities such as sidewalks and bicycle lanes are being evaluated and incorporated into the Downtown 10 alternatives, where applicable. Potential bicycle routes would be evaluated in coordination with the City of El Paso Bicycle Master Plan, available MPO Bicycle/Multimodal Plan, and TxDOT’s Bicycle/Multimodal plan(s). **See Station #4 of the Downtown 10 VPM #2** for more details about potential bicycle and pedestrian elements included as part of the proposed viable alternatives.

Question #6: Will a proposed deck plaza be included as part of this project?

Answer: Any proposed deck plaza concepts will be developed separately from this project and by private or public entities other than TxDOT. However, the Downtown 10 project will be developed in such a way as not to predetermine or preclude the future addition of a deck plaza if a separate project is initiated.

Question #7: What are managed and adaptive lanes, and why are they being proposed?

Answer: Managed lanes are highway lanes where operational strategies are proactively implemented and managed in response to changing conditions. An adaptive lane is a lane that is intended to accommodate multimodal traffic demands and can be adjusted based on use, including rapid transit and autonomous vehicles. Managed lanes, including adaptive lane strategies, are an alternative solution being considered to manage congestion in the future. **See Station #4 of the Downtown 10 VPM #2**

Question #8: Is TxDOT taking community or important cultural sites into consideration? How will the project affect these sites?

Answer: Yes. As part of the Downtown 10 alternatives analysis, the environmental process, and the Section 106 process, potential impacts to cultural resources (including historic and archeological sites) and community resources (e.g. museums) have been assessed. The potential for the project to impact these resources through the Section 106 process (and other regulations) will be evaluated as alternatives are further developed and refined. **See Station #5 of the Downtown 10 VPM #2.**

Question #9: How can I participate in the preservation of historic resources?

Answer: TxDOT will be complying with the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), specifically a part of the act called Section 106. To balance transportation needs and historic preservation, TxDOT will identify Consulting Parties, which are typically individuals or organizations that have a vested interest in historic resources. *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 FHWA and TxDOT.*

properties and have specialized input they can share during project development. Several Consulting Parties have already been identified, and detailed coordination with these entities will begin once a recommended preferred alternative is identified **See Station #5 of the Downtown 10 VPM #2**. If you would like to become a Consulting Party on the Downtown 10 project, please go to **Station #7** and leave a comment or contact TxDOT through the email or telephone provided. You can also contact TxDOT anytime by going to the project website.

Question #10: How will the Downtown 10 project address potential impacts to low-income and minority populations?

Answer: In accordance with the Executive Order (EO) 12898 “Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations” TxDOT will “make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations.” As part of the Downtown 10 alternatives analysis and the environmental process, potential impacts to low-income, minority, and limited English proficiency (LEP) populations will be assessed. In addition, the potential for the project to impact community features, neighborhoods, and community cohesion will also be evaluated. Impacts to these resources will be avoided and minimized to the extent possible.

Question #11: Will the project require right-of-way from my property?

Answer: As outlined in Public Meeting #2, alternatives are still under development for the Downtown 10 project and these alternatives reflect varying potential right-of-way needs. As these alternatives are further evaluated and refined, the potential right-of-way footprints will be adjusted accordingly. The recommended preferred alternative(s) design will need to undergo preliminary engineering evaluations, environmental analysis, and additional public involvement before right-of-way negotiations with landowners are initiated.

Question #12: What is the estimated project cost and what is the funding source?

Answer: Currently, TxDOT is estimating the construction cost ONLY (right-of-way or engineering design have not been determined and are not included), for the Downtown 10 project to be approximately \$750.5 million. However, as the Downtown 10 project develops and alternatives are refined, this estimate will likely change. Funding sources are unknown, however, Federal, State, and/or Local sources will be considered. TxDOT will also work with the El Paso MPO to move forward on this project and others in order to prioritize funding.

Question #13: What is the timeline for this project and when is the final alternative expected?

Answer: The schematic design and environmental project development is anticipated to be completed in late 2023. Once a NEPA decision is received, detailed design and right-of-way phases are anticipated through mid-2025. Finally, target construction letting is anticipated by mid- to late-2025 (subject to change). The timeline for this project includes several opportunities for the public to comment on proposed alternatives, including this public meeting and through the project website. Please note that the No-Build alternative will also be analyzed throughout the entire process, in compliance with NEPA. **See Station #6 of the Downtown 10 VPM #2**.

Question #14: What is the difference between the Work Group, the Steering Committee, and the other meeting types for the project?

Answer: Public engagement strategies for this project include One-on-One meetings, Workshops, Steering Committee meetings, Work Group meetings, Public Meetings, and a formal Public Hearing. We are also initiating the Section 106 Process by identifying Consulting Parties as outlined here in **Question #9**.

Definitions of individual groups are as follows:

- One-on-one meetings will be held, as needed, throughout the course of the project and will include individual stakeholders, members of the public, neighborhood associations, groups of individuals with common concerns, or elected officials.

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- The Steering Committee is comprised of elected officials and representatives from agencies and entities who have localized jurisdiction within the project limits and provide direction in identification of specific project area transportation needs.
- The Work Group includes agency representatives, public officials, and members of the public who can provide insight into the project area.

Question #15: How can I comment on the proposed project?

Answer: Written comments from the public regarding the proposed project are being requested and may be submitted by mail to the TxDOT El Paso District Office, Attn: Downtown 10, 13301 Gateway West, El Paso, Texas 79928-5410. Electronic comments may also be submitted by email to Downtown10@txdot.gov or through the Virtual Public Meeting #2 site. Additionally, a verbal comment may be provided by calling (915) 209-0027. In order to be included as part of the official record for this public meeting, comments must be received by Tuesday March 16, 2021 at 11:59 p.m. (MST). **See Station #7 of the Downtown 10 VPM #2.**