



VIRTUAL PUBLIC MEETING SCRIPT
FM 917
From West of Avenue F to East of SH 174
CSJ: 1181-02-033 & 1181-03-036
Johnson County, Texas
AUGUST 9, 2022

MR. RICARDO GONZALEZ, P.E., TxDOT DIRECTOR OF TRANSPORTATION, PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

SLIDE 1 – Title Slide

Welcome to the Texas Department of Transportation Fort Worth District’s Pre-Recorded Virtual Public Meeting for the proposed improvements to Farm-to-Market 917, or FM 917, from West of Avenue F to East of State Highway (SH) 174 in Johnson County, Texas.

During the virtual meeting, you may pause the presentation and navigate forward or backward using your video player.

SLIDE 2 – Welcome

Thank you for joining us. My name is Ricardo Gonzalez and I serve as the Director of Transportation Planning and Development for the Fort Worth District of the Texas Department of Transportation, better known as TxDOT.

This virtual public meeting will present audio and visual information on the proposed FM 917 project in Johnson County. The virtual public meeting materials and project information can be found at www.txdot.gov. In the “Search TxDOT” box in the upper right-hand corner, enter “FM 917 From West”. After the project information is presented, we would appreciate your feedback. Please submit comments between August 9, 2022 and August 24, 2022. Your input on the proposed improvements is valuable, will help benefit the community, and shape the final project recommendation.

MISS DAISY ORONA, CONSULTANT TO TxDOT

SLIDE 3 – Agenda

Hello, my name is Daisy Orona, and I am part of the consultant team working on this project on behalf of TxDOT. On behalf of TxDOT, I would like to welcome you and thank you for participating in this public meeting.

This public meeting is being held to introduce the proposed project and gather public input. You are encouraged to submit comments on the proposed project after reviewing the meeting materials and listening to this presentation.

In this presentation, I will describe the proposed project and explain the purpose of the public meeting, provide a project and environmental overview, explain the TxDOT Right-of-Way Process, the proposed project's next steps and outline the methods for submitting comments.

SLIDE 4 – Public Involvement Goals

The public involvement goals for the proposed project include providing public involvement opportunities for stakeholders, roadway users, and the general community to engage with the project team and share feedback and to update those interested on the project process and timeline.

SLIDE 5 – Previous Public Involvement

Two previous public meetings have been held for this project.

During the first public meeting, held on September 29, 2015, four alternatives were presented to approximately 71 attendees.

During the second public meeting, held on November 15, 2016, one alternative was presented to approximately 78 attendees.

Notices for these public meetings were in English and no translation services were requested for either meeting.

SLIDE 6 – Public Outreach and Notifications

Notices for this public meeting were published in English and Spanish in the Cleburne Times Review on July 21, 2022. Letters to elected officials were mailed on July 20, 2022. The English and Spanish notices were posted on the TxDOT website on July 20, 2022. English and Spanish Notices were mailed to adjacent property owners on July 22, 2022. English and Spanish postcards were mailed to all property owners within one-half mile of the alternatives and those who attended previous public meetings.

SLIDE 7 – Public Meeting Questions and Concerns

If you experience technical difficulties with the public meeting, please call 817-370-6772.

You may also request special accommodations, assistance accessing public meeting information and materials, and language interpretation needs other than English.

SLIDE 8 – Purpose and Need

The proposed project is needed because the existing at-grade Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railroad crossing causes traffic congestion when trains pass through Joshua. This does not allow for reliable travel times and delays emergency response vehicles. Additionally, the 90-degree turns as the FM 917 alignment changes path from 14th Street to 12th Street (via Main Street) causes additional traffic congestion and unreliable operations. Large trucks cannot make the 90 degree turns without traffic clearing the intersection. The purpose of the project is to improve safety, improve mobility and connectivity, and provide reliable travel times in the project area.

SLIDE 9 – Project Overview

The project limits are along FM 917 from west of Avenue F to east of SH 174 within the City of Joshua, Johnson County, Texas. The project is approximately 0.623 miles long.

SLIDE 10 – Proposed Improvements

The proposed roadway improvements include:

- Realignment and widening FM 917 from a two-lane to a three-lane roadway section with a 14-foot-wide striped median/turn lane. The realignment would form a continuous alignment of FM 917 through the City of Joshua.
- New grade separations with FM 917 constructed under BNSF Railroad and Main Street
- Addition of continuous bicycle and pedestrian accommodations.

The project would require approximately 6.71 acres of additional right-of-way and 16 displacements.

SLIDE 11 – Existing Conditions

FM 917 is currently two travel lanes (one in each direction) with varying shoulder widths.

There are limited sidewalks within the alignment only along portions of Main Street.

SLIDE 12 – Existing Conditions

The existing FM 917 roadway alignment has 90 degree turns from 14th Street and 12th Street to Main Street. Large trucks are often not able to make the turns without traffic clearing the intersection. This configuration causes congestion and unreliable operations.

The at-grade railroad crossing experiences 25 train crossings per day, which delays emergency response vehicles and also results in decreased mobility and safety.

SLIDE 13 – Alternatives Development

The project team has developed and studied a range of six conceptual alternatives to meet the need of the project. Since the last public meeting, environmental and engineering studies have been used to identify a new recommended alternative for final design and construction.

SLIDE 14 – No-Build Alternative – Existing Two-Lane Typical Section

The proposed alternatives are compared to the no-build alternative. Under the no-build alternative, the existing roadway typical section would remain as two twelve-foot lanes with minimal shoulders. This graphic shows the current configuration of the existing roadway and the 60 to 80 feet of existing right-of-way through the majority of the project. Existing drainage is carried through open ditches.

SLIDE 15 – Proposed FM 917 Typical Section

The proposed improvements to this roadway include widening to a three-lane urban section with 12-foot lanes, 14' two way left-turn-lane, and 5-foot shoulders to increase safety and operations along the corridor. A ten-foot shared use path will be provided on the north side of the roadway for use by both bicycles and pedestrians. A six-foot sidewalk will be provided on the south side of the roadway for additional pedestrian connectivity. The proposed improvements also include the improvement of drainage along the corridor to a curb and gutter system with storm sewers.

This typical section shows the proposed configuration of the roadway with the recommended improvements and the expansion of the right-of-way. Depending on the location, the usual overall right-of-way width would vary from 90 feet to 110 feet.

SLIDE 16 – Recommended Alignment Alternative – Alternative F

This graphic shows the proposed recommended alignment alternative – Alternative F.

SLIDE 17 – Alternative F

Alternative F would provide an underpass under the BNSF railroad tracks and Main Street and would develop a continuous FM 917 alignment. The proposed alignment shifts north of the existing FM 917 (14th Street), then S-curves and ties into the existing FM 917 (12th Street) prior to SH 174.

Local circulation would be maintained by local street reconfigurations.

This alignment alternative was developed as an avoidance alternative to historical impacts identified by previous detailed historic studies.

This alignment alternative is the recommended alternative as it meets the project need and purpose, provides an underpass that was preferred by the citizens and City of Joshua, and avoids impacting local historical resources.

SLIDE 18 – Previously Studied Alignment Alternatives

This graphic shows the previously studied alignment alternatives along with the proposed recommended alignment alternative.

SLIDE 19 – Alignment Alternatives Comparison Matrix

Alignment alternatives were compared considering key factors such as Mobility and Connectivity, Safety, Cost, Environmental Impacts, Economic Impacts, Efficiency, Construction, and Agency and Public Support.

The following slides will give a description of the other alternatives explored and explain why they were not carried forward for further consideration.

SLIDE 20 – Alternative A

Alternative A consisted of an overpass over the BNSF railroad tracks and Main Street and developed a continuous FM 917 alignment. The proposed alignment shifts south of the existing FM 917 (14th Street), then S-curves and ties into the existing FM 917 (12th Street) prior to SH 174.

Local circulation would be maintained by local street reconfigurations.

This alignment alternative was presented to the public during a public meeting on September 29, 2015. While the alignment was favored by the public and the City of Joshua, the overpass was not preferred due to concerns of visual impacts and division of the City. Therefore, this alternative was not carried forward for consideration.

SLIDE 21 – Alternative C

Alternative C consisted of an overpass over the BNSF railroad tracks and Main Street and developed a continuous FM 917 alignment. The proposed alignment shifts south of the existing FM 917 (14th Street) and ties back in to 14th Street prior to SH 174. The alignment is extended through the intersection with SH 174, then S-curves and ties into the existing FM 917 alignment east of SH 174 before Bentley Drive.

Local circulation would be maintained by local street reconfigurations.

This alignment alternative was presented to the public during a public meeting on September 29, 2015. This overpass alternative had the most extensive right-of-way impacts and roadway reconstruction, was not preferred by the public nor the City of Joshua, and was not carried forward for consideration.

SLIDE 22 – Alternative D

Alternative D consisted of an overpass over the BNSF railroad tracks and Main Street and developed a continuous FM 917 alignment. The proposed alignment S-curves west of BNSF Railroad and ties into the existing 12th Street alignment west of the railroad tracks

Local circulation would be maintained by local street reconfigurations.

This alignment alternative was presented to the public during a public meeting on September 29, 2015. This overpass alternative would cause negative economic impacts and displacements of businesses at the corner of Main Street and 12th Street, was not preferred by the public nor the City of Joshua, and was not carried forward for consideration.

SLIDE 23 – Alternative B

Alternative B consisted of an underpass under the BNSF railroad tracks and Main Street and developed a continuous FM 917 alignment. The proposed alignment shifts south of the existing FM 917 (14th Street), then S-curves and ties into the existing FM 917 (12th Street) prior to SH 174.

Local circulation would be maintained by local street reconfigurations.

This alignment alternative was presented to the public during a public meeting on September 29, 2015 and was selected as the original preferred recommended alternative.

A refined alignment and additional details were presented to the public during a public meeting on November 15, 2016. During further environmental studies, it was discovered that this alignment would displace a historic structure. Due to impacts to the historic structure, this alignment was no longer considered as a reasonable alternative, and additional alignment alternatives were required to be studied.

SLIDE 24 – Alternative E

Alternative E was explored as an avoidance alternative to the previously recommended Alternative B.

This alternative consisted of an underpass under the BNSF railroad tracks and Main Street and developed a continuous FM 917 alignment. The proposed alignment S-curves west of BNSF Railroad and ties into the existing 12th Street alignment west of the railroad tracks

Local circulation would be maintained by local street reconfigurations.

Additional environmental (historical) studies were performed on this alternative, and it was not deemed as a reasonable avoidance alternative as it would impact the Joshua Commercial Historic District. Alternative E was no longer carried forward for consideration.

SLIDE 25 – Environmental Process

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.

SLIDE 26 – Environmental Constraints Map

Potential environmental constraints have been identified along the project corridor. Detailed environmental field studies and technical reports will be completed for the proposed project in order to obtain environmental clearance prior to construction. A downloadable copy of the Environmental Constraints Map is available at www.txdot.gov, Search “FM 917 from West”.

SLIDE 27 – Environmental Process

Environmental documentation is currently be prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act. This includes an evaluation of the following resources:

- Right of Way and Easements
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations
- Community Impacts
- Vegetation and Wildlife
- Section 4(f) Resources
- Water Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Hazardous Materials

- Traffic Noise
- Air Quality, and
- Public Involvement

SLIDE 28 – Right of Way

Acquisition of approximately 6.71 acres of new right of way is anticipated for this project

Displacement of 15 residences and one non-residential structure is anticipated for this project.

SLIDE 29 – Right of Way

The Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act is a law passed in 1970 that was designed to ensure that anyone who owned property needed for a public purpose would be treated fairly. The law establishes guidelines for the acquisition of property and the relocation of displaced individuals and businesses.

Additionally, it is the policy of the TxDOT that individuals impacted by transportation systems expansion shall not be denied benefits excluded from participation or otherwise be subjected to discrimination based on the grounds of race, color, sex, age, handicaps or national origin.

SLIDE 30 – Project Next Steps – Estimated Project Milestones

The anticipated project schedule following today’s Public Meeting include an anticipated environmental decision in 2023. Right-of-Way acquisition is anticipated to be completed in 2025 with design 100% complete by 2025 and utility coordination complete by 2026. Construction is estimated to begin in the 2027 and finish in 2029.

SLIDE 31 – Public Meeting Displays

Full versions of the virtual public meeting displays are available for download at www.txdot.gov. Search “FM 917 from West”.

In addition to this pre-recorded presentation and in lieu of an in-person public meeting, public meeting displays can also be viewed in person at the TxDOT Fort Worth District offices. Materials will be available for viewing between August 9 and August 24, 2022.

In person viewing will be by appointment only. Please call Thomas Marquardt at (817) 370-6772 between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, to make an appointment.

SLIDE 32 – Share Your Input

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.

The Fort Worth District is asking the public to provide their comments in the following ways:

- Comments can be made throughout the comment period and will be included in the meeting documentation.
- You may email your comments to: Thomas.Marquardt@txdot.gov.
- You can mail your comments to:
 - Texas Department of Transportation
 - ATTN: Thomas Marquardt, P.E.
 - 2501 Southwest Loop 820
 - Fort Worth, TX 76133

Additionally, you may submit your comments online by visiting the website www.txdot.gov.

The public comment period closes on August 24, 2022 which is 15 days from this virtual public meeting. Please ensure your comment is received or postmarked by this date. The public may call project staff at (817) 370-6672 during regular office hours or email project staff at any time in the project development process.

Thank you for attending the FM 917 Virtual Public Meeting.

SLIDE 32 – Thank you

Please do not hesitate to reach out to Tom Marquardt by email at Thomas.Marquardt@txdot.gov or by phone at 817-370-6772 Monday-Friday during regular office hours with any questions or concerns you may have regarding the proposed project.

Please remember to submit comments by August 24, 2022. Thank you for participating in this virtual public meeting for the FM 917 Project. This concludes our hearing presentation.