



VIRTUAL/IN-PERSON PUBLIC MEETING SCRIPT
FM 917 (I-35W to Mansfield) Safety and Mobility Improvements
From I-35W to South of BU 287P
CSJ: 1181-04-047
Johnson County, Texas
AUGUST 10, 2023

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

SLIDE 1 – Title

Welcome to the Texas Department of Transportation’s prerecorded virtual public involvement presentation. We appreciate your interest in the project and welcome each of you. Please note that you may pause this presentation at any point to allow more time to view the slides, and you may also pause the presentation and navigate forward or backward as needed.

In this presentation, we will cover the public involvement purpose, project overview, environmental, and right of way considerations. This is followed by an explanation of how to provide comments for the proposed project and the adjournment.

SLIDE 2 – Welcome

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. Your input on the proposed improvements is valuable and will help benefit the community and shape the final project recommendations. The virtual public materials and project information can be found at www.txdot.gov by typing the project keyword in the search box in the upper right-hand corner. After the project information is presented, we would appreciate your feedback.

SLIDE 3 – End the Streak TX

November 7, 2000 was the last deathless day on roadways in Texas. That means for nearly 22 years, at least one person has died every single day. We all have a part to play to change that. This message is that reminder – to End the Streak of deaths on Texas highways. We need drivers and passengers to act more responsibly and help us reach our goal of zero deaths by 2050. Texans can play a major role in ending fatal crashes with a few simple driving habits: wear seatbelts, drive the speed limit, put away the phone and other distractions, and never drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs. So please do your part and share this message with your friends and family. Thank you and please enjoy the rest of this presentation.

MR. RANDALL DILLARD, CONSULTANT TO TxDOT

SLIDE 4 – Virtual Public Meeting Displays

Hello, my name is Randall Dillard, and I am consultant supporting the TxDOT Fort Worth district with public involvement services.

Information about the FM 917 Safety and Mobility Improvement project is available on the TxDOT website: www.txdot.gov using the keyword, “**FM 917 from I-35W to BU 287P**” in the search box in the upper right-hand corner.

SLIDE 5 – Safety Moment

Before we go further, please note that there are Emergency Exits along the right side and back of the cafeteria. In the event of an emergency please calmly exit the building using one of these exits.

Restrooms are located in the hallways outside the back entrance of the cafeteria.

SLIDE 6 – Table of Contents

We will cover several topics regarding the FM 917 project throughout this presentation, including:

- Public meeting purpose
- Opportunities for public involvement
- Project background
- Proposed design alternatives
- Environmental issues being studied
- Potential right-of-way acquisition
- Near the end of the presentation, we will provide the various options on how to provide comments.

SLIDE 7 – Public Meeting Purpose

The purpose of this public meeting is to:

- Present the proposed project,
- Engage with the community, and
- Gather feedback

SLIDE 8 – Public Involvement

Public input is welcome throughout the project process. To encourage public input, we have had and will continue to have several public involvement opportunities:

- October 21, 2022, a Technical Working Group was held
- July 20, 2023, we hosted stakeholder meetings with elected, non-elected and other city officials
- August 10, 2023 will be the first public meeting, and
- A public hearing is anticipated for summer 2024

SLIDE 9 – Project Background

The purpose of the FM 917 project is to improve safety, increase mobility and meet current design standards. This project is needed to meet future travel demands stemming from projected population growth and traffic volumes. This map shows the project's location along FM 917 in Johnson County from I-35 West to south of Business 287. The project is approximately 10 miles in length.

SLIDE 10 – Project Background – Existing Roadway

The existing roadway consists of two 12-foot-wide travel lanes in each direction and outside safety shoulders that vary in width. There are no existing sidewalk, bicycle or pedestrian facilities. The existing roadway also has a low design speed on various curves and a rolling terrain.

SLIDE 11 – Project Background – Proposed Roadway

The proposed project includes a right of way of 150 feet. This would allow for two 12-foot travel lanes in each direction separated by a 40-foot center grassy median, which would allow one additional lane in each direction, if needed in the future.

Expanding the current two-lane undivided highway to a four-lane **divided** highway will improve both safety and mobility by:

- Separating traffic moving in opposite directions with a center median to help prevent head-on crashes
- The additional lane in each direction will allow improved mobility

- Vehicles making a left turn will no longer be in the travel lane, there will be left-turn bay storage at appropriate crossovers providing a refuge area, separate from high-speed traffic lanes, for vehicles waiting to make left turns
- The median will also provide a better turning radius for vehicles (including vehicles with trailers) making U-turns

The proposed project will also include a 10-foot wide shared-use path on each side of the highway for bicyclists and pedestrians. To improve safety, the shared-use paths will be separated from the highway by a 5-foot grass buffer.

SLIDE 12 – Project Background – Safety Overview

There were 413 crashes on this 10-mile section of FM 917 between 2015 and 2019. Due to COVID-19 impact on travel, crash data from 2020 and 2021 were not considered in the traffic analysis, although the 2021 crashes were higher.

SLIDE 13 – Project Background – Safety Overview

The severity of crashes increased in 2019 after a slight decrease in 2018.

SLIDE 14 – Project Background – Important Features

This slide shows several important features to consider along this 10-mile section of FM 917, including:

- 28 drainage structures
- 4 major utility conflicts
- 3 churches and a cemetery
- 7 regulatory floodways

SLIDE 15 – Alternatives Limits

This image highlights two locations of the current highway that have sharp, low-speed curves. Three options are being considered to improve these sharp curves.

SLIDE 16 – Alternatives 1, 2 and 3

In addition to the No-Build Option, which would maintain the road in its current condition and make no improvements, three alternatives are being considered for improvements:

- Alternative 1 – in red - would follow the existing alignment but would not make many improvements
- Alternative 2 – in green - would replace the existing curves by building a new-location alignment to the north of existing FM 917
- Alternative 3 – in yellow - would replace the existing curves with a new-location section south of the current roadway and would then follow the existing FM 917 alignment
- All three alternatives, and the No-Build Option, are being considered. At this time no alternative has been selected.

SLIDE 17 – Alternative Analysis

In addition to receiving public comment, a detailed analysis is being conducted. Several potential environmental impacts are also being analyzed. Those issues include:

- Right of way needed
- The number of properties impacted and how they are impacted
- Water crossings and the 100-year floodplain
- Petroleum storage tanks and electric transmission lines
- Churches
- Farmland

SLIDE 18 – Environmental Process

Prior to December 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 to review and approve certain assigned NEPA environmental documents. This agreement was updated on December 9, 2019.

SLIDE 19 – Environmental Process

An environmental assessment of the FM 917 project is ongoing. The final report will be developed according to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act.

Once completed, the report will be available on the TxDOT project website: www.txdot.gov using the keyword “**FM 917 from I-35W to BU 287P**” in the search box.

This slide shows the numerous environmental issues that are being evaluated.

SLIDE 20 – Right of Way

Unless the No-Build Option is selected, the other three alternatives would require from 82 to 108 acres of anticipated additional right of way to construct the proposed project. Easements for drainage would require approximately five acres.

SLIDE 21 – Right of Way

TxDOT offers relocation counseling and financial assistance to businesses and residents that are impacted by the acquisition of highway right of way in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970. TxDOT will provide assistance to potentially displaced businesses and property owners.

SLIDE 22 – Anticipated Schedule

This slide shows the anticipated schedule for the FM 917 project. After this public meeting an environmental study will be completed. After approval, any right of way will be acquired, and existing utilities will be adjusted as needed. Construction, which is dependent on available funding, could begin in fall 2029. Please note, this schedule is subject to change.

SLIDE 23 – Future FM 917 Developments *separate projects*

This project will connect FM 917 to a separately designed and partially funded adjacent project.

The I-35W interchange reconstruction at FM 917 will reconstruct and widen FM 917 at the I-35W interchange, provide U-turns, and improve vertical clearance along I-35W mainlanes. Construction bidding is tentatively scheduled for Summer 2026.

SLIDE 24 – Share your Input

Comments will be accepted in a variety of ways including email, voicemail for verbal comments, a comment card or online as shown on the screen. Written comments are appreciated, but if you would like to leave a verbal comment, please call the number shown here.

Comments must be received or postmarked by **Friday, August 25, 2023** to be included in the official public meeting record.

All comments and questions will be fully considered and responded to in the Public Meeting Summary Report and made part of the final environmental document for this proposed project. This document will be made available for review on the TxDOT website, once available.

If you would like to discuss the project development process, please call 817-370-6673 during regular office hours. You may also email staff at any time during the project development process.

SLIDE 25 – Thank you

We sincerely appreciate your participation and interest in the proposed design of the FM 917 safety and mobility improvements. Your questions, comments and concerns will receive careful consideration. Thank you very much.