VIRTUAL PUBLIC MEETING SCRIPT

I-35W SEGMENT 1

I-35W FROM SEMINARY DRIVE TO FM 3391/EAST RENFRO STREET,

I-20 FROM HEMPHILL STREET TO CAMPUS DRIVE, AND

SH 174 FROM I-35W TO NORTHWEST NEWTON DRIVE

TARRANT AND JOHNSON COUNTIES, TEXAS

CSJS: 0014-02-050, 0014-02-055

APRIL 27, 2021

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

SLIDE 1 – Title Slide

Welcome to the Texas Department of Transportation's pre-recorded, virtual public meeting for the proposed improvements to Interstate Highway 35W, or I-35W, from I-20 to State Highway 174, or SH 174, in Tarrant and Johnson counties, Texas. During the virtual public meeting, you may pause the presentation and navigate forward or backward using your video player at any time.

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 proposed improvements to I-35W from I-20 to SH 174. After the project information is presented, please provide us comments on the proposed improvements from April 27th through May 12th, 2021. Your valuable input into these proposed improvements will benefit the community and help shape the final project recommendation.

SLIDE 3 – Virtual Public Meeting in Response to Public Health

Given the unique circumstance of the COVID-19 outbreak, along with our commitment to protecting public health during this national emergency, TxDOT is conducting this virtual public meeting to avoid in-person contact. At this time, the virtual format will be in lieu of an in-person public meeting. The presentation will cover the same information the Fort Worth District would have shared at the in-person public meeting. However, the comment process for this virtual public meeting will be different from what we normally conduct at an in-person meeting and will be explained shortly. All project information can be found on TxDOT's website at www.txdot.gov with the keyword search of "I-35W Segment 1."

SLIDE 4 – Agenda

At this time, I will hand the presentation over to our consultant with Halff Associates, Inc. to present the following topics: Project Overview, Environmental Overview, Project Schedule and the Public Comment Process.

MARIA GUERRA, P.E., ENGINEERING CONSULTANT

SLIDE 5 – Project Partners

Hello, I am Maria Guerra, an engineering consultant with Halff Associates, Inc. for which we are under contract with the TxDOT Fort Worth District. On behalf of TxDOT, I would like to welcome you to the virtual public meeting for the I-35W Segment 1 Project.

Before discussing the project details, I would like to acknowledge our local project partners who have participated in the development of this project including: the Federal Highway Administration, the North Central Texas Council of Governments, Tarrant and Johnson counties, and the cities of Burleson and Fort Worth.

SLIDE 6 – Virtual Public Meeting Purpose

As part of the National Environmental Policy Act, or NEPA process, TxDOT is hosting a virtual public meeting to provide the public with an update on the project and present audio and visual information on the proposed improvements to I-35W from I-20 to SH 174. The goal of this virtual meeting is to provide a status of the project design, an environmental overview and receive public comments that can assist in influencing project design elements.

SLIDE 7 – Prior Public Involvement

During project development, TxDOT held several technical work group meetings which are held during the alternatives analysis phase of the project and consist of agency personnel and local government officials who have a role in funding, permitting and implementing the proposed project. These meetings offer participants the opportunity to voice their input, scrutiny, and opinion on all aspects of the project. In addition to these technical work group meetings, TxDOT held one on one meetings with cities, right of way workshops, and city council meetings to receive input from project partners.

SLIDE 8 – Corridor Study Purpose

The purpose of the I-35W Segment 1 Project is to improve mobility and access and enhance safety on the I-35W highway by upgrading the facility to meet current design criteria. The project would reconstruct and widen the I-35W mainlanes with new ramps and frontage roads in each direction to relieve the existing congestion.

SLIDE 9 – Public Meeting Notices

- The public meeting notice for this project was posted on the www.TxDOT.gov website on the “Public Meetings, Meetings and Notices” schedule page on Tuesday, April 6, 2021.
- Elected and public officials were mailed a notice and fact sheet on Wednesday, April 7, 2021.
- Adjoining property owners were mailed a notice and fact sheet on Friday, April 9, 2021. Adjoining property owners were identified by using county tax rolls.

- Residents of nearby adjacent neighborhoods were mailed a postcard on Friday, April 9, 2021.
- English and Spanish notices of this public meeting were published in the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* newspaper on Saturday, April 10, 2021.

SLIDE 10 – Project Overview

Now, I will highlight the project limits. The I-35W Segment 1 study limits are from Seminary Drive to FM 3391, or East Renfro Street. The I-20 study limits are from Hemphill Street to Campus Drive. And the SH 174 study limits are from I-35W to Northwest Newton Drive. The project extends through portions of the cities of Fort Worth and Burleson in Tarrant and Johnson counties, Texas. The project is approximately 10 miles in length and the estimated construction cost is $568 million. A separate I-35W Segment 2 project from Renfro Street to US 67 is being studied to the south of this project.

SLIDE 11 – Project Development Process

TxDOT's efforts for the corridor study will include: conceptual layouts; alternatives analysis; geometric design schematics and environmental studies supported with public involvement; a value engineering study; drainage studies; traffic counts and analysis including an Interstate Access Justification Report; 3-D design visualization; surveying and mapping of existing right of way; and subsurface utility engineering, or SUE.

SLIDE 12 – I-35W: Existing Conditions

Within the project limits, I-35W consists of three 12-foot-wide mainlanes in each direction and two 12-foot-wide frontage road lanes in each direction. Depicted here is a cross section of the existing I-35W mainlanes and frontage roads. The existing right of way varies between 300 feet to 450 feet.

SLIDE 13 – Alternatives Analysis Study Areas

TxDOT has developed an alternatives analysis to evaluate proposed improvements along I-35W, with additional efforts on four study areas. These are areas that were shown, through traffic studies and collaboration with various stakeholders, to be crucial in improving on the corridor. They include:

- Improvements on I-20 including the interchange of I-35W and I-20,
- The interchange of I-35W and FM 1187,
- The interchange of I-35W and SH 174, and
- Improvements on SH 174, all of which are shown here.

SLIDE 14 – I-35W/I-20 Interchange – Existing Conditions

TxDOT is evaluating improvements along I-20 from Hemphill Street to Campus Drive, including the I-35W and I-20 interchange that was constructed in 1991. TxDOT is currently evaluating the existing interchange and will be developing alternatives to improve the interchange, as needed.

SLIDE 15 – I-35W/FM 1187 Interchange – Existing Conditions

FM 1187 is a major highway crossing I-35W within the project limits. FM 1187 is in close proximity to McAllister Road, presenting access and operational challenges. TxDOT has developed three alternatives at the I-35W and FM 1187 interchange to address safety, operations and access in this area. These alternatives include a traditional diamond interchange, a partial cloverleaf interchange, and a diverging diamond interchange. These three alternatives are available for viewing at this public meeting.

SLIDE 16 – I-35W/SH 174 Interchange – Existing Conditions

TxDOT has also developed three alternatives at the I-35W and SH 174 interchange. The existing interchange has limited local access and does not provide access from northbound I-35W to southbound SH 174. These alternatives include a traditional three-level directional interchange, a directional interchange with a frontage road box, and a directional interchange with a Centre Drive and SH 174 frontage road couplet. These three alternatives are available for viewing at this public meeting.

SLIDE 17 – SH 174 – Existing Conditions

SH 174 connects to I-35W through a system interchange, resulting in high-speed traffic from I-35W transitioning to a low-speed urban arterial on SH 174. TxDOT has developed three alternatives to improve operations and safety along SH 174. These alternatives include the railroad overpass alternative, the Hillery Street overpass alternative, and the Renfro Street overpass alternative. These three alternatives are available for viewing at this public meeting.

SLIDE 18 – Alternatives Analysis Typical Sections

An alternatives analysis was conducted for the project to determine recommended improvements. This process started by evaluating various typical sections. The following typical sections were considered:

- Alternative A, a no-build typical section maintaining three existing mainlanes in each direction.
- Alternative B, a proposed typical section with five mainlanes in each direction.
- Alternative C, a proposed typical section with six mainlanes in each direction.
- Alternative D, a proposed typical section with five northbound mainlanes and six southbound mainlanes North of Risinger Road, and five mainlanes in each direction South of Risinger Road.
- Alternative E, a proposed typical section with six mainlanes in each direction North of Risinger Road, and five mainlanes in each direction South of Risinger Road.
- Alternative F, a proposed typical section with five mainlanes in each direction and one reversible express lane.
- Alternative G, a proposed typical section with four mainlanes and one express lane in each direction.

SLIDE 19 – Alternatives Analysis Overview

A select link analysis was used to measure the effectiveness of the express lane alternatives along I-35W. This analysis showed a low percentage of through trips traversing the limits of the study area. For instance, in the southbound direction, only 28 percent of vehicles entering the I-35W corridor from the north are expected to remain on I-35W to the south of SH 174.

In addition, a peak hour demand to capacity analysis was used to evaluate operations and make a final determination on the number of proposed mainlanes. An evaluation matrix was used in the alternatives analysis to identify which alternatives should be studied further. The alternatives analysis matrix is available for viewing at this public meeting.

SLIDE 20 – I-35W: Alternative Being Further Developed

The I-35W Segment 1 Project would increase the existing northbound mainlanes to five 12-foot-wide mainlanes. For southbound mainlanes between I-20 and Risinger Road, six 12-foot-wide mainlanes are proposed, and between Risinger Road to SH 174, five 12-foot-wide mainlanes are proposed. Depicted here are typical sections of the proposed I-35W southbound and northbound mainlanes.

SLIDE 21 – I-35W: Alternative Being Further Developed (Continued)

The I-35W Segment 1 Project would reconstruct ramps on the corridor to improve traffic operations. The project would provide two to three 12-foot-wide frontage road lanes in each direction. Additionally, improvements to cross streets and accommodations for bicycles and pedestrians would be made, including 10-foot-wide shared use paths adjacent to the I-35W frontage roads in each direction.

SLIDE 22 – Environmental Process

The I-35W Segment 1 Project is anticipated to be federally funded. Due to the project receiving federal funds, TxDOT is required to assess the potential environmental effects of the proposed project. The National Environmental Policy Act, or NEPA process, provides analyses of the potential impacts to the natural and manmade environment, and helps the decision maker to make an informed decision on whether to proceed with the project.

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, TxDOT assumed responsibility from FHWA to review and approve certain assigned NEPA environmental documents. This memorandum of understanding was renewed on December 9, 2019. This review and approval process apply to this proposed project.

This virtual public meeting, presented by TxDOT, is provided to share information and to encourage comments from the public regarding the proposed I-35W Segment 1 Project.

SLIDE 23 – Environmental Overview

As part of the project scope, TxDOT tasked the engineering consultant to determine the environmental resources to be analyzed, conduct field work to determine potential impacts to environmental resources and document those findings in the preparation of the NEPA document. The technical documentation for this project would address the potential impacts identified during the engineering and design phase of the proposed project. These areas of potential impacts include natural, social, and cultural resources as well as potential impacts to adjacent and surrounding land use. This slide shows a list of all resources and issues that would be evaluated during the environmental analyses. Please note that these environmental studies are ongoing, any findings as a result of these studies will be shared at future public involvement events.

SLIDE 24 – Project Schedule

The NEPA process includes public involvement and proactively engaging stakeholders and seeking public input. This slide highlights the steps of the NEPA process and project timeline.

Currently, design schematic refinements are underway with a draft preliminary design anticipated in Spring 2022. A draft environmental document is anticipated to be complete in Summer 2022 with a public hearing planned for Fall 2022. Upon approval of the environmental document, environmental clearance is anticipated in Spring 2023. Right of way acquisition and utility relocation dates are yet to be determined. The project will be constructed in phases, with Phase 1 expected to start in 2027. All components of the project are expected to be constructed and operational by 2036.

SLIDE 25 – Cost and Subsequent Project Timeline

Current project cost estimates have been developed. Construction costs are estimated at $568 million, with an additional $24 million for right of way acquisition, $32 million for utility relocations, and $34 million for engineering. Future phases of the project, including final design plans, right of way acquisition and utility relocations, have not been scheduled and would be determined at a later date. Funding for the full, I-35W Segment 1 Project is still being identified. ~~However, I~~Limited funding is expected to be available for breakout projects to address high priority needs on the corridor. These breakout projects have not yet been identified.

SLIDE 26 – Public Meeting Materials and Questions

For your convenience, we invite you to view all information developed for this project online at www.txdot.gov Keyword Search: “I-35W Segment 1.” Public meeting materials such as the draft schematic and alternatives layouts are available for viewing at this virtual public meeting.

Project questions are welcomed throughout the project development process. If you have questions or comments throughout project development, please contact the TxDOT Design Project Manager Tejas Soni, P.E., by calling him at (817) 370-6852 during regular office hours or e-mail him at I35WSeg1@txdot.gov.

SLIDE 27 – Public Comment Process

Your comments about this project are very important to TxDOT. Your feedback on the I-35W Segment 1 Project will contribute greatly to the success of this project. This slide highlights the process for public comments.

In order for your comments to be included in the public meeting summary, all written comments must be received by Wednesday, May 12, 2021. Mail written comments to: TxDOT Design Project Manager Tejas Soni, P.E. at TxDOT's Fort Worth District, 2501 Southwest Loop 820, Fort Worth, Texas 76133. Email comments to TxDOT Design Project Manager at I35WSeg1@txdot.gov. Online comments may be submitted at www.txdot.gov Keyword Search: "I-35W Segment 1." Select this project, then click on the "Submit Your Comments" box in the upper right-hand corner of the project webpage. We appreciate your understanding with this comment process. The responses to your comments submitted during the comment period will be included in the virtual public meeting summary. This report will be posted on TxDOT's website when it is finalized prior to the public hearing.

SLIDE 28 – Conclusion

Ladies and gentlemen, we sincerely thank you for joining TxDOT's online virtual public meeting for the proposed I-35W Segment 1 Project in Tarrant and Johnson counties. Your questions, comments and concerns will receive careful consideration. Please take a moment to review the project materials online. And, remember to submit your comments by Wednesday, May 12, 2021. This virtual public meeting is officially adjourned. Thank you.