



**VIRTUAL PUBLIC MEETING
US 377 IN HOOD COUNTY PROJECT
FROM HOLMES DRIVE TO 3,000 FEET NORTH OF FM 167 (FALL CREEK
HIGHWAY),
INCLUDING SH 144 FROM AUTUMN RIDGE ROAD TO FM 51 (PALUXY ROAD)
HOOD COUNTY, TEXAS
CSJS: 0080-04-081, 0080-03-049, 0080-04-094 AND 0080-03-060
TUESDAY, MAY 4, 2021**

RICARDO GONZALEZ, P.E.

SLIDE 1 – Introduction/Title Slide

Good evening ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to the Texas Department of Transportation's pre-recorded, virtual public meeting for the proposed improvements along US 377 from Holmes Drive to 3,000 feet north of FM 167, or Fall Creek Highway, in the City of Granbury in Hood County, Texas. Improvements are also proposed along SH 144 from Autumn Ridge Road to FM 51, or Paluxy Road. 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 the proposed US 377 in Hood County Project. The virtual public meeting materials are available online at the website <https://www.txdot.gov>. In the “Search TxDOT” box in the upper-right hand corner, enter “US 377 in Hood County.” After the project information is presented, please provide us with comments on the proposed improvements from Tuesday, May 4 through Wednesday, May 19, 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, including this presentation, can be found on the TxDOT website with the keyword search of “US 377 in Hood County.”

At this time, I will hand it over to our consultant with Halff Associates, Inc.

MARIA GUERRA, P.E.

SLIDE 4 – Virtual Public Meeting Agenda

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 US 377 in Hood County Project. In this presentation, the following topics will be covered: Project Overview, Environmental Overview, Project Schedule and Next Steps and the Public Comment Process.

SLIDE 5 – Project Overview – Project Partners

Before discussing the project details, I would like to acknowledge our local project partner, the City of Granbury, who has participated in the development of this project.

SLIDE 6 – Project Overview – 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 along US 377 from Holmes Drive to 3,000 feet north of FM 167, or Fall Creek Highway, including SH 144 from Autumn Ridge Road to FM 51, or Paluxy Road. This virtual meeting provides a status of the project design, environmental overview and seeks public comments so that we can develop a record of public engagement and collect comments.

SLIDE 7 – Project Overview – Prior Public Involvement

During project development, TxDOT held technical work group and stakeholder meetings on the dates shown to receive input about the project. Previous invitees and participants of these meetings are included here on the slide.

SLIDE 8 – Project Overview – Public Meeting Notices

- The virtual public meeting notices for this project were posted on the www.TxDOT.gov website on the “Public Hearings, Meetings and Notices” page on Wednesday, April 14, 2021.
- Elected and public officials were mailed a notice and fact sheet on Wednesday, April 14, 2021.
- Adjacent property owners were mailed a notice and comment form on Friday, April 16, 2021.
- Residents of properties within a quarter mile of the project area were mailed a postcard on Friday, April 16, 2021.
- Notices of this virtual public meeting were published in the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* on Monday, April 19, 2021; *La Prensa Comunidad* on Tuesday, April 20, 2021; and the *Hood County News* on Wednesday, April 21, 2021.

SLIDE 9 – Project Overview – Project Limits

The project limits along US 377 are from Holmes Drive to 3,000 feet north of FM 167, or Fall Creek Highway, including SH 144 from Autumn Ridge Road to FM 51, or Paluxy Road, in the City of Granbury, Hood County, Texas. The project is approximately 9 miles long. Proposed improvements include adding capacity to the existing US 377 roadway, reconstructing the existing roadway to an urban typical section, and improving and reconfiguring cross street interchanges, ramps and driveway connections. The project also includes the addition of bicycle and pedestrian accommodations and drainage improvements along the corridor.

SLIDE 10 – Project Overview – Project Limits for the Breakout Project

The Breakout Project for early implementation would involve interchange and added capacity improvements along US 377 from FM 51, or Paluxy Road, to the east end of the Brazos River Bridge, and includes SH 144 from Autumn Ridge Road to FM 51, or Paluxy Road.

SLIDE 11 – Project Overview – Project Need and Purpose

The proposed project is needed because the capacity of the roadway is inadequate to meet current and projected traffic volumes, and because the roadway does not meet current design standards.

The purpose of the proposed project is to improve mobility and enhance safety. To accomplish this, we are proposing improvements that add capacity, manage congestion, and improve operational efficiency of the roadway.

SLIDE 12 – Project Overview – Need and Purpose: Mobility

There is a specific need for this project to manage congestion and improve mobility. The map shown on this slide shows 2019 traffic counts conducted by TxDOT in the city of Granbury and shows US 377 with an annual average daily traffic of nearly 50,000 vehicles in the most heavily traveled segment near Business 377 North.

SLIDE 13 – Project Overview – Need and Purpose: Safety

Managing congestion and improving mobility results in improved safety. Shown here are maps of the US 377 corridor's reported crash history from 2015 to 2019. As you can see in red, there are several areas of high crash reports that we are looking to address.

SLIDE 14 – Project Overview – Project Objectives

Some specific objectives of the project include:

- Improving the interchange of US 377 and SH 144, which would be included in the Breakout Project,
- Adding capacity with an additional through-lane in each direction,
- Improving the interchanges at Business US 377 (both North and South),
- Addressing drainage issues,
- Providing pedestrian and bicycle accommodations,
- Evaluating access management for improvements to operational efficiency and safety, and
- Accommodating the North Central Texas Council of Governments or NCTCOG's Mobility 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan and the City of Granbury Thoroughfare Plan.

SLIDE 15 – Project Overview – Existing US 377 Roadway with Depressed Median

Within our project limits, the existing US 377 roadway is a four-lane highway with 12-foot-wide travel lanes (two in each direction). The existing right of way throughout the corridor varies from 120 feet to 371 feet.

There are sections of the roadway with either a depressed median, raised median or a center two-way left turn lane within the corridor. Depicted here is a cross section layout of the existing four-lane roadway with a depressed median. The section of US 377 from Holmes Drive to the east end of the US 377 bridge over the Brazos River, and from FM 167, or Fall Creek Highway, to 3,000 feet north of FM 167, has a depressed median.

SLIDE 16 – Project Overview – Existing US 377 Roadway with Raised Median

Depicted here is a cross section layout of the existing four-lane roadway with a raised median, typifying the section of US 377 from the east end of the US 377 bridge over the Brazos River to east of Whitehead Drive.

SLIDE 17 – Project Overview – Existing US 377 Roadway with Two-Way Left Turn

Lane

Depicted here is a cross section layout of the existing four-lane roadway with a center two-way left turn lane, typifying the section of US 377 from east of Whitehead Drive to FM 167, or Fall Creek Highway.

SLIDE 18 – Project Overview – Proposed US 377 Roadway

The Breakout Project would include interchange improvements from FM 51, or Paluxy Road, to the east end of the Brazos River Bridge, including SH 144 from Autumn Ridge Road to FM 51.

The Ultimate Project would increase the existing four-lane roadway to a six-lane divided urban highway with three lanes in each direction. Shown here is an example of a typical cross section of the proposed improvements. However, US 377 between FM 51 (Paluxy Road) and Holmes Drive would remain a four-lane highway and would be converted from a rural highway to an urban highway by adding enclosed drainage, curbs as appropriate, and bicycle and pedestrian accommodations. The project also includes improvements to cross street intersections, ramps and driveway connections, as well as accommodations for bicycles and pedestrians.

SLIDE 19 – Project Overview – Alternative Analysis Study Areas

Our alternatives analysis included five focused study areas. These are areas that were shown, through traffic studies and collaboration with the City of Granbury and various stakeholders, to be crucial in improving this corridor. They include:

- The interchange of US 377 and Business 377 South, or West Pearl Street,
- US 377 and Pirate Drive,
- The intersection of FM 51 and SH 144
- US 377 and Business 377 North, or East Pearl Steet, and
- The intersection of US 377 and FM 167, or Fall Creek Highway/M&M Ranch Road,

All of which are shown here.

SLIDE 20 – Project Overview – Proposed BUS 377 South (West Pearl Street) and Pirate Drive

At the western project terminus, the proposed configuration includes two lanes in each direction separated by a raised median. At Holmes Drive, an at-grade intersection would be constructed that includes a connection with Archer Drive. The proposed connections of US 377 with Business 377, or West Pearl Street, and US 377 with Pirate Drive, are at-grade intersections. The US 377 intersection with Business 377 would be realigned to form a “T” intersection that can be signalized as warranted by future traffic and safety demands.

SLIDE 21 – Project Overview – Alternative Analysis: FM 51 (Paluxy Road)/SH 144

At FM 51, or Paluxy Road, and SH 144, or South Morgan Street, the proposed alternatives, or configurations, are a series of grade-separated interchanges with one-way frontage roads along US 377 connecting the two streets. The interchange at SH 144 interchange has two alternative designs being considered, the first being a diverging diamond interchange, or DDI, and the second being a traditional diamond interchange. In order to meet current and future traffic demands at SH 144, a DDI is proposed, and on the US 377 mainlanes, an additional lane in each direction is proposed immediately east of SH 144, for a total of three though lanes each direction. A DDI is an interchange configuration that is designed to handle both heavy through movements and a large volume of left-turning traffic on the cross street. While DDIs are a relatively new design, several DDIs have been constructed and operate successfully in Texas, with the closest examples being in The Colony on SH 121, or Sam Rayburn Tollway, at South Colony Boulevard and on I-35 at FM 1431 and University Boulevard in Round Rock.

SLIDE 22 – Project Overview – Alternative Analysis: FM 51 (Paluxy Road)/SH 144 with DDI

The video you see here is a simulation of the proposed DDI at US 377 and SH 144. You'll notice a label in the upper-left corner that says, "A.M. Peak" or "P.M. Peak." That means this video is simulating the conditions you'd expect to see in either the morning or evening peak hour, or rush hour, traffic conditions. The key feature of this type of interchange, which you'll notice in this simulation, is that the traffic moving north and south along SH 144 through the interchange crosses over to the opposite side of the highway as it approaches the interchange. After crossing over US 377, the traffic moves back over to the right side of the road. This is accomplished with signalized intersections at either end and by use of raised medians, pavement markings, and signage that clearly directs traffic.

SLIDE 23 – Project Overview – Alternative Analysis: FM 51 (Paluxy Road)/SH 144 with DDI

The benefit to this configuration is that left-turning traffic to and from SH 144 only merges and diverges with the through movements, which reduces the need for left-turning traffic to cross through traffic. This has several operational and safety benefits. A link to an in-depth video discussing the benefits of this type of interchange, developed by the Federal Highway Administration, or FHWA, is provided on this slide and is included on the TxDOT project website. A link to the DDI simulations you see here are also included on the TxDOT project website.

SLIDE 24 – Project Overview – Alternative Analysis: FM 51 (Paluxy Road)/SH 144

An alternative configuration of FM 51 and SH 144 would be grade-separated interchanges with frontage roads connecting the two streets. The interchange at SH 144 would be a traditional diamond interchange with signalized intersections and left turn lanes. FM 51 would be connected to SH 144 via frontage roads, but there would be no direct access ramps to or from FM 51 to US 377.

SLIDE 25 – Project Overview – Proposed BUS 377 North (East Pearl Street)

At Business 377 North, or East Pearl Street, a full grade-separated diamond interchange is proposed. Business 377 would carry two lanes each direction to a “T” intersection with North Plaza Drive, while the US 377 mainlanes would go over Business 377. Entrance and exit ramps would also be constructed each direction.

SLIDE 26 – Project Overview – Proposed FM 167 (Fall Creek Highway)/M&M Ranch Road

At the eastern project terminus, proposed improvements include replacing the existing at-grade signalized intersection with a grade-separated diamond interchange with FM 167, or Fall Creek Highway, and M&M Ranch Road. The US 377 mainlanes would go under FM 167 and M&M Ranch Road, and entrance and exit ramps would be provided in each direction. Short segments of one-way frontage roads would also be constructed on each side of US 377 in both directions to maintain limited access to properties.

East of this interchange, US 377 transitions from a six-lane urban highway to the existing four-lane rural highway.

SLIDE 27 – Project Overview – Drainage Study Areas

One of the objectives of this project is to improve drainage on US 377 throughout the project limits. The drainage system would be converted from open drainage ditches to an enclosed urban storm drain system through most of the corridor, and that system would be designed to current TxDOT design criteria. Our study areas consist of the culverts near the intersection with Business 377 South; the culvert crossing US 377 near Heather Drive; the railroad trestle bridge near Portal Drive and Eastridge Road, which is being studied for potential offsite detention among other alternatives to alleviate flooding of the roadway; and the culverts near Cleveland Road.

These study areas are being evaluated for improvements that would minimize roadway flooding for storm events while not adversely affecting areas upstream or downstream of the improvements.

SLIDE 28 – Project Overview – Proposed Right of Way and Easements

The Ultimate Project would require approximately 13.67 acres of right of way and would potentially displace four commercial structures. Please note that right of way needs are subject to change pending further design refinements and that all right of way acquisition would be completed in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act.

SLIDE 29 – Project Overview – 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 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 Overview – Right of Way

Each impacted property owner is offered “just compensation” for the property needed for the project. To arrive at this value, independent appraisers are hired to prepare detailed appraisals and establish value. After that, a written offer to the property owners is made based on the value determined in the appraisals. Property owners are then given a minimum of 30 days to consider the offer. For further information, TxDOT right of way brochures can be found at the link provided on the screen. The brochures, including two booklets titled "The Purchase of Right of Way," and "Relocation Assistance," are also available upon request. These booklets contain detailed information to inform you of your rights and provide information about TxDOT’s right of way acquisition procedures.

SLIDE 31 – Project Overview – Environmental Process

The US 377 in Hood County 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 or not to proceed with the project. On December 9, 2019, TxDOT received a signed Memorandum of Understanding from the Federal Highway Administration that permits TxDOT to assume responsibility from the Federal Highway Administration for reviewing and approving certain NEPA projects. This review and approval process applies to this project.

SLIDE 32 – Project Overview – Environmental Overview/Impacts Addressed

As part of the project scope, TxDOT tasked the engineering consultant to determine the environmental resources to be analysed, to conduct field work to determine potential impacts to environmental resources and to document those findings in preparation of the NEPA documents. It is anticipated that documentation for the Breakout Project at SH 144 would be evaluated in support of a Categorical Exclusion, or CE, and that the Ultimate Project over the length of the corridor would be evaluated through an Environmental Assessment, or EA. The technical documentation for these projects would address the potential impacts identified during the engineering and design phase of the projects. 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 resources and issues that would be evaluated during the environmental analyses.

SLIDE 33 – Project Overview – Historical and Section 4(f) Resources

Early environmental constraints mapping identified one National Register of Historic Places, or NRHP-listed structure, adjacent to the US 377 and SH 144 interchange. The Wright-Henderson-Duncan House, also known as the Granbury Sheriff's House, is a recorded Texas historic landmark that was listed on the NRHP in 1978. Because the house is a historic site of significance, Section 4(f) also applies. However, the proposed project would not result in right of way impacts to the structure or property.

SLIDE 34 – Project Overview – Historical Resources

Research for the project also identified an additional historical marker just south of the US 377 and FM 167 intersection. The 1936 centennial marker describes the location of the grave of Elizabeth Crockett, wife of David Crockett. Because the proposed design could impact access to the marker, it is possible that the marker would be relocated to a comparable location determined by the Texas Historical Commission.

SLIDE 35 – Project Overview – Estimated Schedule

Provided here is an estimated schedule for the remainder of the US 377 in Hood County Project. Currently, design schematic refinements are underway and set to be complete by the fall of 2021. Our next steps include initiating the environmental studies required for environmental clearance, which the Breakout Project is set to be cleared in the spring of 2022 and the Ultimate Project in the spring of 2023. Barring major setbacks, the Breakout Project should let for construction by the end of 2026 and the Ultimate Project should let by the end of 2032. However, the Breakout Project and Ultimate Project may be let for construction earlier based on the availability of funding. Please note that the schedule is tentative and is subject to change.

SLIDE 36 – Project Overview – Public Meeting Materials and Questions

For your convenience, we invite you to view all of the information developed for this project online at www.TxDOT.gov, keyword search “US 377 in Hood County” until Wednesday, May 19, 2021 at 11:59 p.m.

Project questions are welcomed throughout the project development process. If you have questions or comments throughout project development, please contact the TxDOT Project Manager with your questions or comments during regular office hours:

Dr. Francis Smith, PE

Phone: (817) 370-6708

Email Address: Francis.Smith@txdot.gov

All substantive comments and questions will be fully considered and responded to in the project record and made part of the final environmental documentation for this proposed project.

SLIDE 37 – Project Overview – Feedback: How to Submit Comments

Your comments about this project are very important to TxDOT and will contribute greatly to the success of this project. TxDOT is committed to continuing our efforts to gain public feedback about this project. We understand that this virtual public meeting format is a bit different, so let’s take a few minutes and explain the comment process. Please note that comments can be made throughout the comment period and will be included in the meeting documentation.

Given our current COVID-19 situation, the Fort Worth District is asking the public to provide their comments in the following ways:

1. You may submit your comments online by visiting the website www.txdot.gov. Type in “US 377 in Hood County” in the keyword search at the top right of the TxDOT homepage, then click on the “Submit Your Comment” button on the project webpage.
2. You can mail your comments to the Texas Department of Transportation, Attention: Dr. Francis Smith, PE, 2501 SW Loop 820, Fort Worth, TX 76133
3. And you may email your comments to: Francis.Smith@txdot.gov

All of your statements, comments and questions will be given careful consideration before final design features are determined.

The public comment period closes on Wednesday, May 19, 2021, which is 15 days from this virtual public meeting. Please ensure that your comment is received or postmarked by this date.

The public may also email or call Dr. Francis Smith during regular office hours to ask questions about the project at any time in the project development process.

SLIDE 38 – Conclusion – Thank You!

Ladies and gentlemen, in conclusion, thank you for joining TxDOT's online virtual public meeting for the US 377 in Hood County Project. We sincerely appreciate your attendance and interest. Please take a moment to review project materials online. And, remember to submit your comments on or before Wednesday, May 19, 2021. Your questions, comments and concerns will receive careful consideration. Thank you very much, and this concludes the virtual public meeting and presentation.