



**VIRTUAL PUBLIC HEARING WITH IN-PERSON OPTION
US 81/US 287 RHOME TO AVONDALE PROJECT
FROM NORTH OF PIONEER ROAD TO SOUTH OF AVONDALE HASLET ROAD
CSJs: 0013-08-111 & 0014-15-076
TUESDAY, MAY 16, 2023**

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SLIDE 1 – Introduction/Title Slide

Welcome to the Texas Department of Transportation’s pre-recorded 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

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.

[CHERISH ANDERSON]

SLIDE 4 – Virtual Public Hearing with In-Person Option

Hello, I am Cherish, a consultant on this project 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 hearing with in-person option for the US 81/US 287 Rhome to Avondale Project.

The virtual public hearing is being held in conjunction with an in-person option. This virtual public hearing with in-person option will present audio and visual information on the proposed US 81/US 287 Rhome to Avondale Project from north of Pioneer Road to south of Avondale Haslet Road in Wise and Tarrant Counties, Texas. The virtual public hearing with in-person option materials are available online at the website <https://www.txdot.gov>. In the “Search TxDOT” box in the upper-right hand corner, enter “US 81/US 287 Rhome”. After the project information is presented, please provide us with comments on the

proposed improvements from Tuesday, May 16 through Friday, June 2, 2023. Your valuable input into these proposed improvements will benefit the community and help shape the final project recommendation.

The in-person option will be held on Tuesday, May 16, 2023, from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Chisholm Trail Church Family Life Center located at 300 Chisholm Creek Parkway, Rhome, Texas. The information presented in the virtual public hearing and the in-person option is identical, and the opportunities to comment do not differ.

SLIDE 5 – Virtual Public Hearing with In-Person Option Purpose

As part of the National Environmental Policy Act, or NEPA process, TxDOT is hosting a virtual public hearing with an in-person option to provide the public with an update on the project and present audio and visual information on the proposed improvements along US 81/US 287 from north of Pioneer Road to south of Avondale Haslet Road. This virtual hearing provides a status of the project design, environmental overview and seeks public comments so that we can develop a record of public engagement.

SLIDE 6 – Virtual Public Hearing with In-Person Option Agenda

In this presentation, the following topics will be covered: Project Location, Need, and Purpose; the Existing and Proposed Roadway Design; Environmental Process; Estimated Project Schedule and Cost; and TxDOT Project Contact Information.

SLIDE 7 – Project Location

The project limits along US 81/US 287 are from north of Pioneer Road to south of Avondale Haslet Road, in Wise and Tarrant Counties, Texas. The proposed 10-mile

project would reconstruct the US 81/US 287 main lanes from north of Pioneer Road to Avondale Haslet Road and reconstruct and add an additional main lane (three main lanes in each direction) south of Avondale-Haslet Road to the southern project limit. The proposed project also includes the construction, or reconstruction, and conversion of frontage roads to create a continuous one-way system within the project limits. The frontage roads would include two travel lanes on either side of US 81/US 287, left turn lanes at cross streets, and adjacent shared use paths for bicycle and pedestrian accommodations within the project limits. The proposed project also includes new overpasses at County Road 4840 and Future Northstar Parkway, a new underpass at Ramhorn Hill Road, and new direct connectors at State Highway 114 East. Additionally, the proposed project would include operational improvements to existing cross streets, ramps, and auxiliary lanes.

SLIDE 8 – Project Need and Purpose

The proposed project is needed to address operational efficiency, enhance safety, and because the roadway does not meet current design standards. The purpose of the proposed project is to improve mobility, reduce congestion, improve access and enhance safety.

SLIDE 9 – Existing US 81/US 287 Roadway – Typical Section

Within the project limits, the existing US 81/US 287 roadway is a four-lane highway with 12-foot-wide travel lanes (two in each direction) and two 12-foot-wide discontinuous two-way frontage road lanes on either side of the main lanes. One-way frontage roads exist within the project limits south of Avondale Haslet Road. No pedestrian accommodations exist along US 81/US 287 within project limits.

SLIDE 10 – Existing US 81/US 287 Roadway – Interchanges

There are existing US 81/US 287 interchanges at Pioneer Road, SH 114 West, FM 3433 (South Main Street), SH 114 East, North Saginaw Boulevard and Avondale Haslet Road. There are existing unsignalized intersection crossings of US 81/US 287 at CR 4838, CR 4840 and Ramhorn Hill Road.

SLIDE 11 – Proposed US 81/US 287 Roadway – Typical Section

The US 81/US 287 Rhome to Avondale Project would reconstruct four 12-foot-wide main lanes (i.e., two lanes in each direction) from north of Pioneer Road to Avondale Haslet Road. From Avondale Haslet Road to the southern limit of the project, the main lanes would be reconstructed and an additional inside main lane would be added in each direction for a total of three main lanes in each direction. The project would also reconstruct frontage roads to have two continuous one-way 12-foot-wide lanes on either side of US 81/US 287 and construct 10-foot-wide shared use paths along US 81/US 287 and cross streets.

SLIDE 12 – Benefits of One-Way Frontage Road Conversion

Converting the existing two-way frontage roads to one-way frontage roads would enhance both safety and operations within the project corridor, thereby meeting the project need and purpose.

Two-way frontage roads typically have higher crash rates than one-way frontage roads, mainly due to the ramp intersections with the frontage roads. Converting frontage roads to one-way would reduce the potential of wrong-way entry onto main lanes; simplify operations at cross street intersections; enhance signal timing, phasing, and sequencing

efficiency; accommodate higher traffic volumes with minimal new right of way impacts; and increase mobility. A 2011 Texas A&M Transportation Institute, or TTI, technical report on the safety and economic impacts of converting two-way frontage roads to one-way found a nearly 60% reduction in the number of crashes and improvement in mobility by approximately 35%.

SLIDE 13 – Proposed US 81/US 287 Roadway – Interchanges

The US 81/US 287 Rhome to Avondale Project would reconstruct interchanges at Pioneer Road, SH 114 West, FM 3433 (South Main Street) and Avondale Haslet Road; construct new direct connectors and frontage roads at SH 114 East; and construct new interchanges at County Road 4840, Ramhorn Hill Road and Future Northstar Parkway.

SLIDE 14 – Proposed US 81/US 287 Roadway – Reconstructed Interchanges

(Pioneer Road)

A total of five existing interchanges would be reconstructed under the proposed improvements. Beginning at the north end, the first reconstructed interchange is Pioneer Road. The US 81/US 287 main lanes would pass under the reconstructed cross-street bridge. The cross street would be widened to support a total of four 12-foot-wide lanes, two in each direction, two 10-foot-wide shared use paths and two dedicated U-turn lanes, one for each direction, with proposed traffic signals.

SLIDE 15 – Proposed US 81/US 287 Roadway – Reconstructed Interchanges (SH

114 West)

The next reconstructed interchange is SH 114 West. This interchange is a diverging diamond interchange, or DDI, proposed at SH 114 West, with proposed traffic signals. A

DDI is an interchange configuration that is designed to handle high traffic volume through movements on the cross street as well as high traffic volume of traffic left-turning traffic from the frontage road to 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 RM 1431 and University Boulevard in Round Rock.

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.

SLIDE 16 – Proposed US 81/US 287 Roadway – Reconstructed Interchanges (FM 3433)

Continuing south, the next reconstructed interchange is FM 3433, or South Main Street. The US 81/US 287 main lanes would pass under the reconstructed cross-street bridge. FM 3433 would be widened to support a total of four 12-foot-wide lanes, two in each direction, two 10-foot-wide shared use paths and two dedicated U-turn lanes, one for each direction, with proposed traffic signals.

SLIDE 17 – Proposed US 81/US 287 Roadway – New Direct Connectors and Frontage Roads (SH 144 East)

At SH 114 East, the existing northbound US 81/US 287 to eastbound SH 114 direct connector would be reconstructed to increase the design speed with a larger and safer curve. A new westbound SH 114 to southbound US 81/US 287 direct connector would be constructed to add new access. In addition to the direct connector ramps, the existing main lanes, two lanes in each direction, would be reconstructed to the east of US 81/US

287 for approximately 3,500 feet. Furthermore, two new, 12-foot wide, one-way frontage road lanes would be constructed in each direction, as well as a 10-foot wide shared use path on both sides.

SLIDE 18 – Proposed US 81/US 287 Roadway – Reconstructed Interchanges (Avondale Haslet Road)

The southernmost reconstructed interchange is Avondale Haslet Road. The US 81/US 287 main lanes would pass under the cross-street bridge. Avondale Haslet Road would be widened to support a total of six 12-foot-wide travel lanes, three in each direction, one 10-foot-wide shared use path and turn lanes at frontage road intersections, with proposed traffic signals. The Business US 287 northbound direct connector would be reconstructed to pass over Avondale Haslet Road.

SLIDE 19 – Proposed US 81/US 287 Roadway – New Interchange (Overpass – CR 4840)

There are three new interchanges being proposed in the US 81/US 287 corridor project limits. Beginning from the north end, the first new interchange is County Road 4840. The US 81/US 287 main lanes would travel over County Road 4840. The cross street would be widened to consist of two 12-foot-wide lanes in each direction, two 10-foot-wide shared use paths, and two dedicated U-turn lanes, one for each direction, with proposed traffic signals.

SLIDE 20 – Proposed US 81/US 287 Roadway – New Interchange (Underpass – Ramhorn Hill Road)

The next new interchange being proposed is at Ramhorn Hill Road. The US 81/US 287 main lanes would travel under Ramhorn Hill Road. The cross street would be widened to consist of two 12-foot-wide lanes in each direction, two 10-foot-wide shared use paths, and two dedicated U-turn lanes, one for each direction, with proposed traffic signals.

SLIDE 21 – Proposed US 81/US 287 Roadway – New Interchange (Overpass – Northstar Parkway)

The southernmost new interchange is Northstar Parkway. The US 81/US 287 main lanes would travel over Northstar Parkway. The cross street would be widened to consist of two 12-foot-wide lanes in each direction, two 10-foot-wide shared use paths, and two dedicated U-turn lanes, one for each direction, with proposed traffic signals.

SLIDE 22 – Utility Adjustments

Utility adjustments and relocations throughout the corridor would be required prior to construction. The adjustments and relocation of any utilities would be managed so that no substantial interruptions would occur during construction.

SLIDE 23 – NEPA Assignment to TxDOT

The US 81/US 287 Rhome to Avondale Project is anticipated to receive federal funding. 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, or FHWA, that permits TxDOT to assume responsibility from the FHWA for reviewing and approving certain NEPA projects. This review and approval process applies to this project.

SLIDE 24 – Environmental Process - Overview

As part of the project scope, TxDOT tasked the environmental consultant to determine the environmental resources to be analyzed, to conduct field work to determine potential impacts to environmental resources and to document those findings in preparation of the NEPA documents. The environmental documentation for the US 81/US 287 Rhome to Avondale Project was evaluated through a Categorical Exclusion, or CE. The technical documentation for this project addressed 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 were evaluated during the environmental analyses. As part of the NEPA process, a public meeting was previously conducted on November 7, 2019.

SLIDE 25 – Environmental Process – Resource Impacts Summary (Biological Resources)

The proposed project would have direct impacts on approximately 0.93 acre of Agriculture; 7.26 acres of Disturbed Prairie; 2.98 acres of Riparian; 0.49 acre of Open Water; and 0.62 acre of Western Wetlands, or Riparian.

The project may affect the Monarch Butterfly which is a Federally listed candidate species. It is anticipated that the Monarch Butterfly may be formally listed as a Federally Threatened Species by the time the project goes to construction in 2026. The project may impact the following State Threatened species, the Sandbank Pocketbook. The project may also impact 31 species of Species of Greatest Conservation Need. BMPs and/or additional surveys are proposed to ensure the potential for impacts are minimized.

SLIDE 26 – Environmental Process – Resource Impacts Summary (Hazardous Materials)

It was determined that there are 87 hazardous material sites that are of low to moderate risk to the proposed project, with only three being considered as moderate risk. These include Automotive Facilities, Natural Gas Wells, Dry Cleaning Facilities, Manufacturing Facilities, Stockpiles, Petroleum Storage Tanks and Railroads.

SLIDE 27 – Environmental Process – Resource Impacts Summary (Water Resources)

Water Resources throughout the project area were considered. A total of approximately 0.038 acres of wetlands and 0.32 acres of streams are anticipated to be permanently impacted.

Impacts to water resources are anticipated to be permitted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Nationwide Permit 14 - Linear Transportation Projects with a Pre-Construction Notification. Mitigation for the anticipated impacts may be necessary and would be determined during the permitting process. Final impacts to streams and

wetland features will be determined during the plans, specifications, and estimates phase.

SLIDE 28 – Environmental Process – Resource Impacts Summary (Historic Resources)

A Reconnaissance Level Survey for historic-age above-ground properties was completed in accordance with TxDOT and FHWA guidelines. Six previously unevaluated historic-age properties, primarily surrounding Rhome, were identified in the project's Area of Potential Effect, or APE, and were determined not to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Segments of the Meridian Highway, the first major north/south highway to cross the United States, were observed within the APE. However, it was determined to not carry significant integrity to convey significance and did not contribute to the eligible portions of the resource. Therefore, no effects to historic resources are anticipated.

SLIDE 29 – Environmental Process – Resource Impacts Summary (Traffic Noise)

A Traffic Noise Analysis was completed in accordance with TxDOT and FHWA guidelines. 16 out of 34 modeled noise receivers are expected to be impacted in accordance with FHWA criterion. Noise abatement measures were considered for impacted receptors; however, none of the noise abatement measures were determined to meet both feasible and reasonable criteria; therefore, no abatement measures are proposed for this project.

SLIDE 30 – Environmental Process – Resource Impacts Summary (No Impacts)

No impacts are anticipated to Community Cohesion, Archeological Resources, Environmental Justice or Limited English Proficiency communities.

SLIDE 31 – Environmental Process – Right of Way

The US 81/US 287 Rhome to Avondale Project would require approximately 16 acres of new right of way and new denial of access would be required along the frontage roads from adjacent properties at new ramp junctions. No displacements are anticipated. 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 32 – Environmental Process – 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 33 – Environmental Process – 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 34 – Estimated Cost and Schedule

The US 81/US 287 Rhome to Avondale Project is estimated to cost \$454 million to construct. Provided here is an estimated schedule for the remainder of the proposed project. Our next steps include schematic design approval, which is expected in Summer 2023, followed by environmental clearance in Fall 2023. In preparation for construction, right of way acquisition would be completed by Fall 2024, and utility adjustments and the detailed PS&E (or Plans, Specifications, and Estimates) design would be completed in Summer 2026. Barring major setbacks, the project should let for construction by the Fall of 2026. However, the project may be constructed in phases through break-out projects based on the availability of funding. Please note that the schedule is tentative and subject to change.

SLIDE 35 – Public Hearing Materials

For your convenience, we invite you to view all of the information developed for this project online at www.TxDOT.gov, keyword search "US 81/US 287 Rhome" until Friday, June 2, 2023, 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:

Saba El-Hawi, P.E.

Phone: (817) 370-3562

Email Address: Saba.ElHawi@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 36 – 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 hearing format is slightly different from the in-person. 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 hearing documentation.

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

1. If you are attending the in-person option, you may leave your comment form in the designated comment boxes.
2. You may submit your comments online by visiting the website www.txdot.gov. Type in "US 81/US 287 Rhome" in the keyword search at the top right of the

TxDOT homepage, then click on the “Submit Your Comment” link on the project webpage.

3. You may email your comments to: Saba.ElHawi@txdot.gov
4. You can mail your comments to the Texas Department of Transportation, Attention: Saba El-Hawi, PE, 2501 SW Loop 820, Fort Worth, TX 76133
5. And you may leave a voicemail comment by calling (682) 235-9933.

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

The public comment period closes on Friday, June 2, 2023, which is 17 days from this virtual public hearing with in-person option. Please ensure that your comment is received or postmarked by this date. The public may also email or call the TxDOT Project Manager, Saba El-Hawi, during regular office hours to ask questions about the project at any time in the project development process.

SLIDE 37 – Conclusion – Thank You!

In conclusion, thank you for joining TxDOT’s online virtual public hearing with in-person option for the US 81/US 287 Rhome to Avondale Project. We sincerely appreciate your attendance and interest. Please take a moment to review project materials online and in-person. And remember to submit your comments on or before Friday, June 2, 2023. Your questions, comments and concerns will receive careful consideration. Thank you very much for your continued interest in the project. This concludes the virtual public hearing with in-person option presentation.