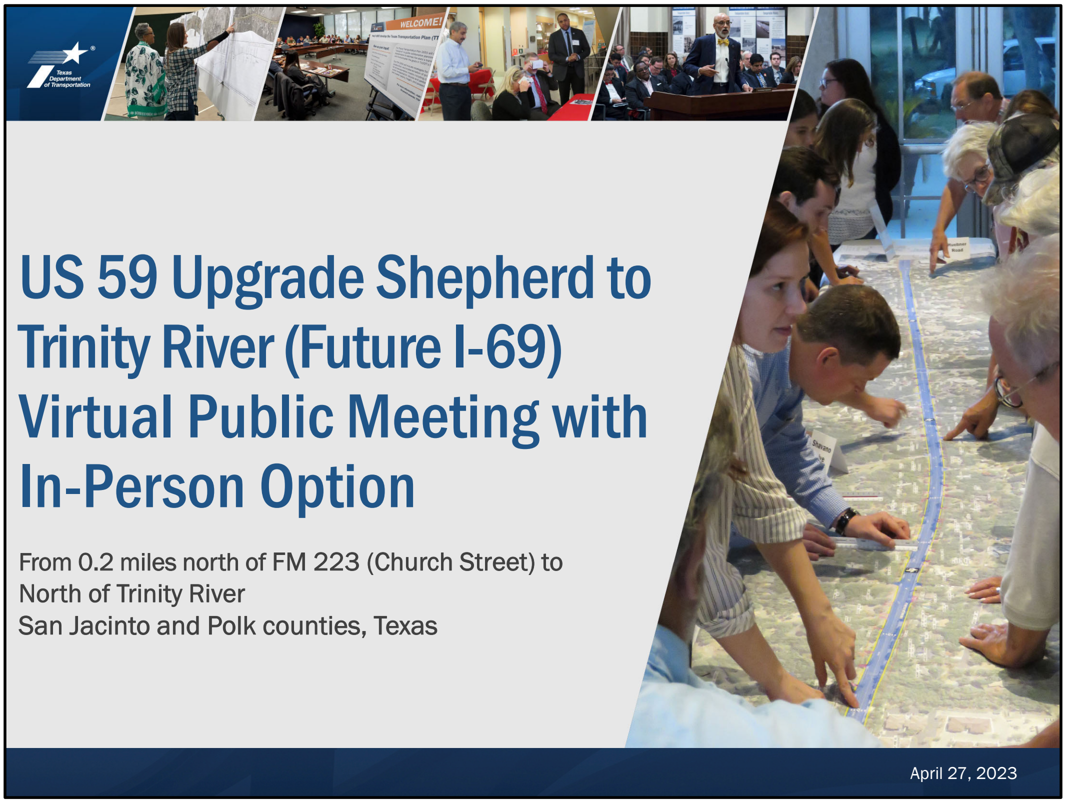
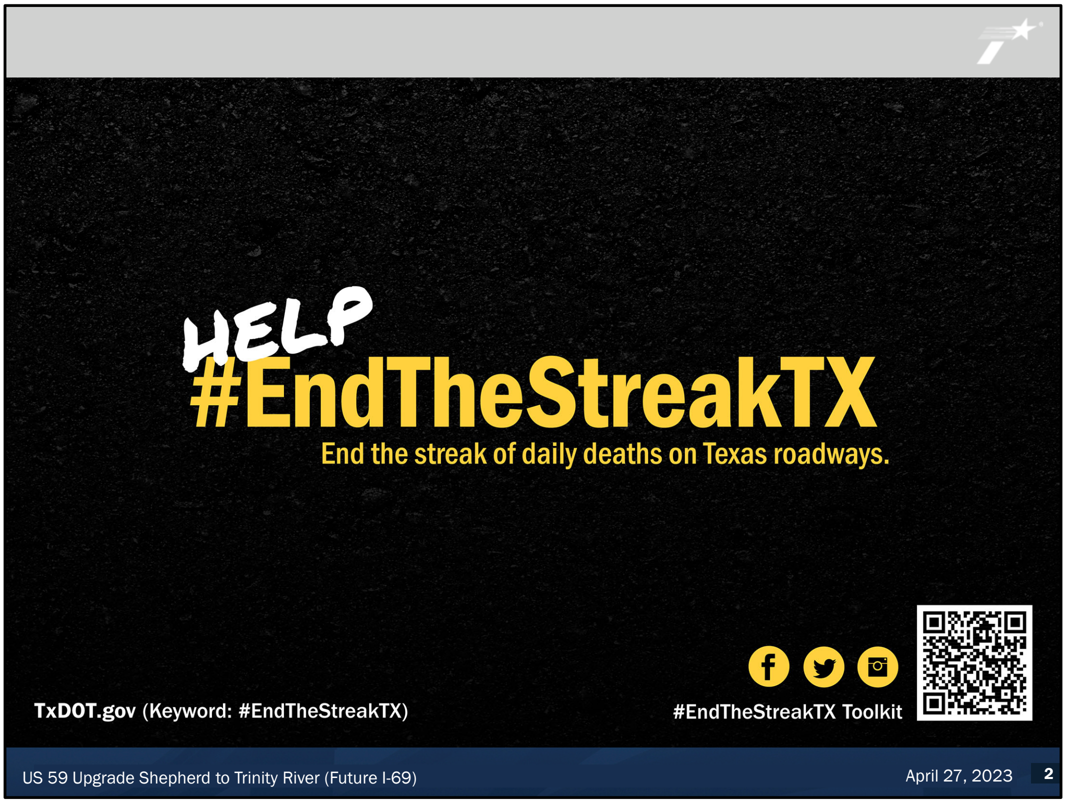


Welcome to the Texas Department of Transportation Lufkin District's virtual Public meeting with in-person option for US 59 Upgrade Shepherd to Trinity River (Future I-69) in San Jacinto and Polk counties, Texas. We appreciate your interest in this project.

This is a prerecorded presentation. My name is Catherine Ramirez, and I am part of the project team working on the US 59 project. I would like to welcome and thank you for participating in this virtual public meeting with in-person option.

This meeting presentation is available for online viewing starting Thursday, April 27, 2023, by noon. The in-person meeting will be held on Thursday, April 27, 2023, from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. at Shepherd High School Cafeteria located at 1 Pirate Lane, Shepherd, TX 77371.

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 overview, and anticipated project timeline. This is followed by an explanation of how to provide comments for the proposed project and adjournment. The meeting materials, project information and details on the in-person option can also be found at www.txdot.gov by searching "US 59 Upgrade Shepherd to Trinity River."



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.

Memorandum of Understanding

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Assignment to the
Texas Department of Transportation

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 the Federal Highway Administration and TxDOT.

La revisión ambiental, consultas y otras acciones requeridas por las leyes ambientales federales aplicables para este proyecto, están siendo o han sido realizadas por TxDOT de conformidad con la Reglamentación 23, Sección 327 del Código de Estados Unidos y un Memorando de Entendimiento con fecha del 9 de diciembre de 2019, ejecutado por la FHWA (Administración Federal de Carreteras) y TxDOT.

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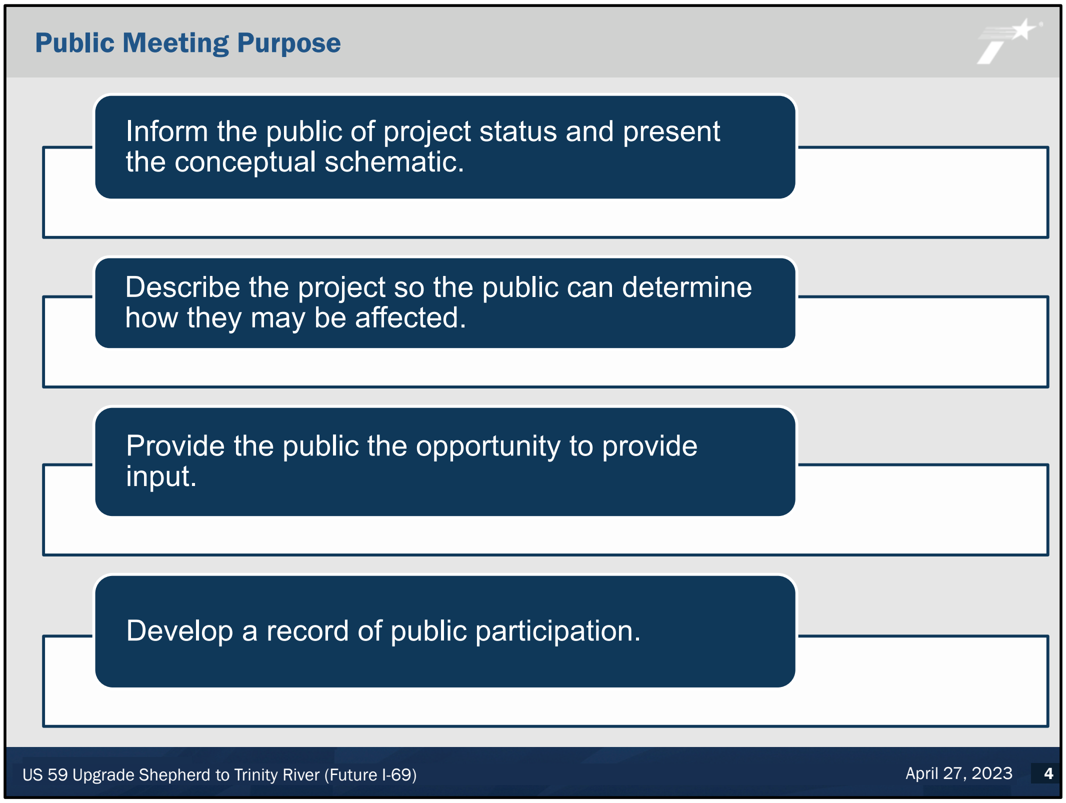
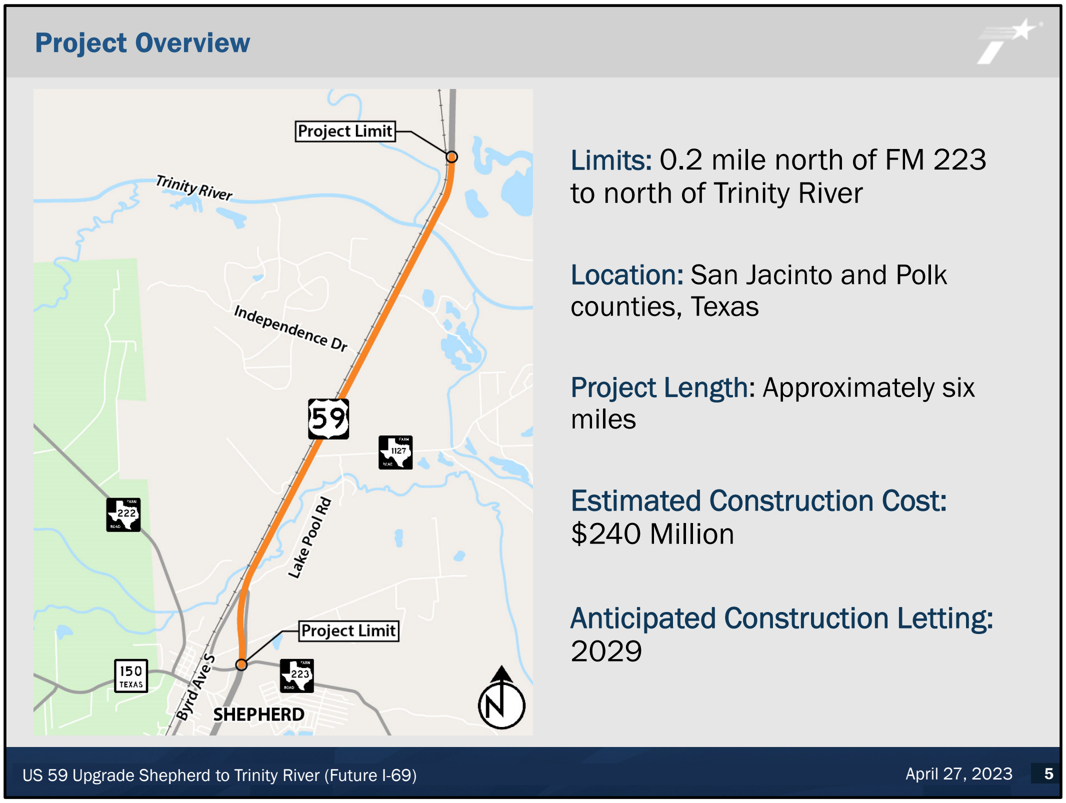
Prior to Dec.16, 2014, the Federal Highway Administration, otherwise known as FHWA, reviewed and approved documents prepared under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). However, on Dec. 16, 2014, the Texas Department of Transportation assumed responsibility from FHWA for reviewing and approving certain assigned NEPA environmental documents. This memorandum of understanding was renewed on Dec. 9, 2019. This review and approval process applies to this proposed project as it is receiving federal funds; therefore, TxDOT is required to assess the potential environmental effects of the proposed project in accordance with Federal standards.



The purpose of this virtual public meeting is to inform you about the proposed project and to gather your feedback.

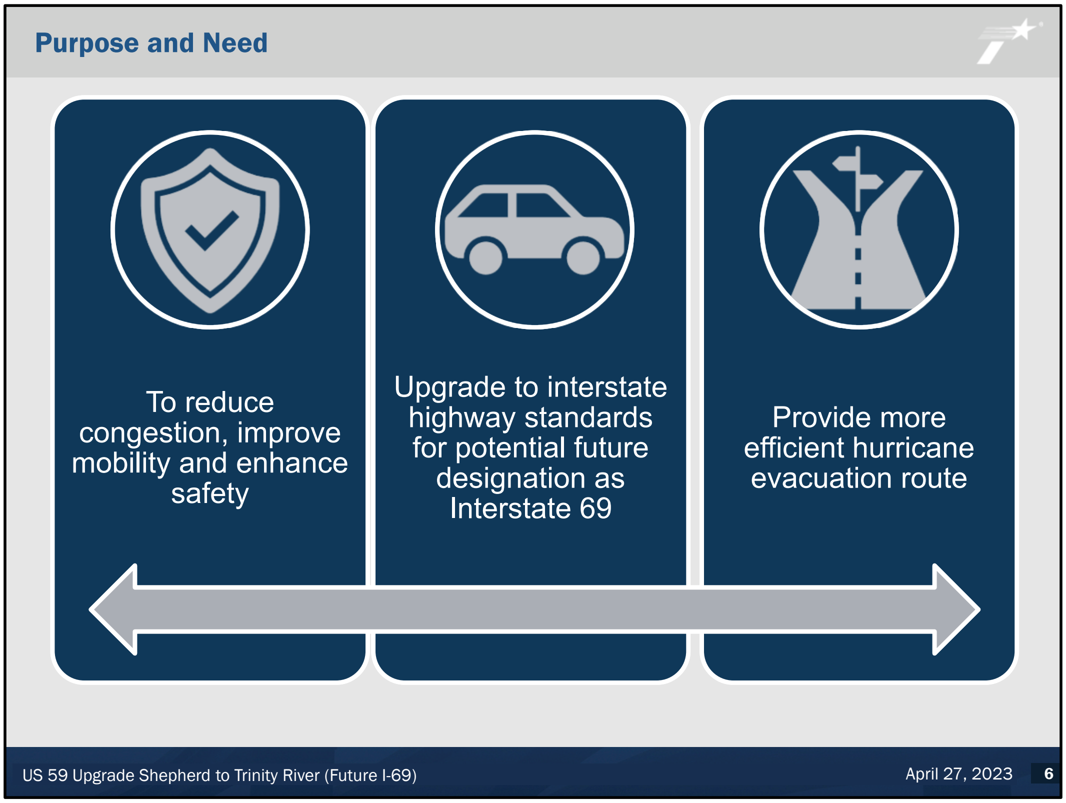
This presentation includes information about the project goals; a description of the project including the conceptual schematic, potential right-of-way requirements, project development schedule; and the potential environmental constraints in the area.

We encourage you to submit comments on the project. Please note that discussions with the project staff will not be included in the official public record of the public meeting, so if you wish to submit a comment to be a part of that record, you must do so in the ways outlined at the end of the presentation. The deadline to submit comments to be included in the official project record is May 12, 2023.



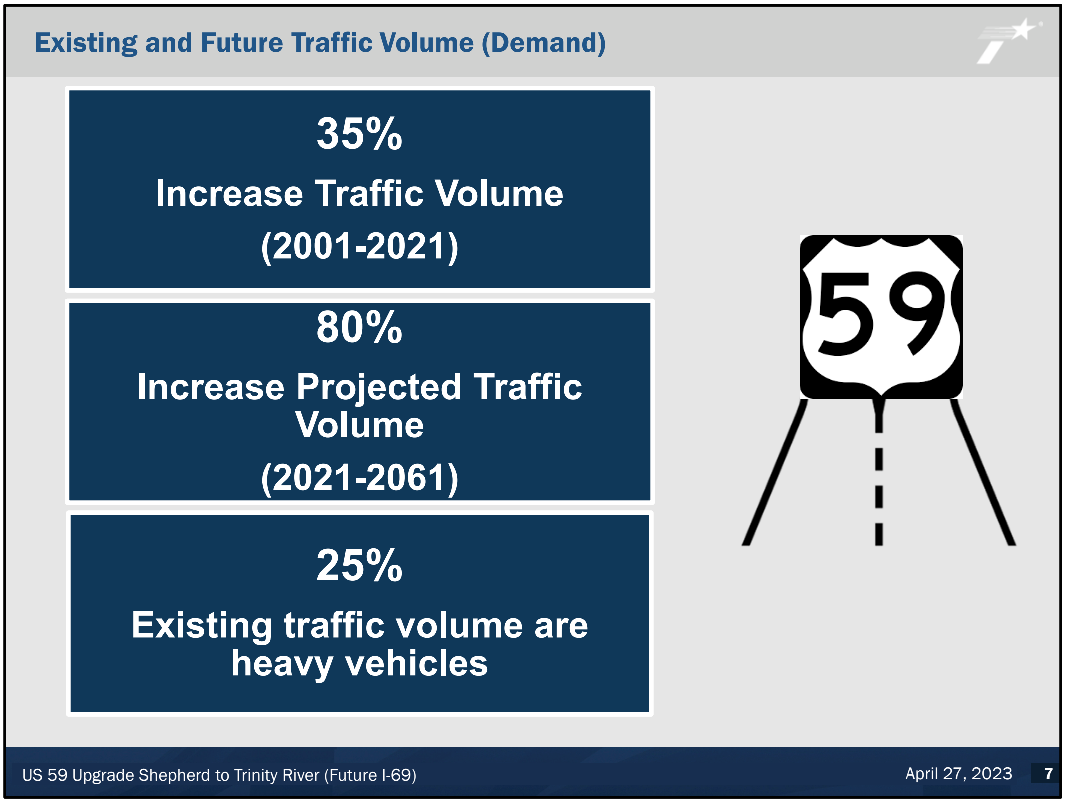
TxDOT is proposing to upgrade US 59 to interstate standards from 0.2 mile north of FM 223 (Church Street) to north of the Trinity River, in San Jacinto and Polk counties. The proposed project is approximately six miles long with an estimated construction cost of $240 million. The project is partially funded with an anticipated 2029 construction letting.

In the next slide, we will discuss the project goals.



US 59 within the project area does not meet current interstate design standards. Interstate criteria includes minimum design speed of 50 mph (urban areas) and 70 mph (rural areas); mainlane width of 12 feet or more; outside shoulder width of 10 feet or more and vertical clearances for bridges over US 59 be at least 18.5 feet. However, one of the most noticeable features of interstate criteria is full control of access. This means there is no direct access to the highway mainlanes from driveways or sideroads. Access is only allowed via ramps. The purpose of the proposed project is to bring US 59 between Shepherd and the Trinity River up to current interstate design standards, including making it a controlled access roadway. The proposed project will not only provide system connectivity for future I-69 but will also reduce congestion, improve mobility, enhance safety and provide a more efficient hurricane evacuation route.

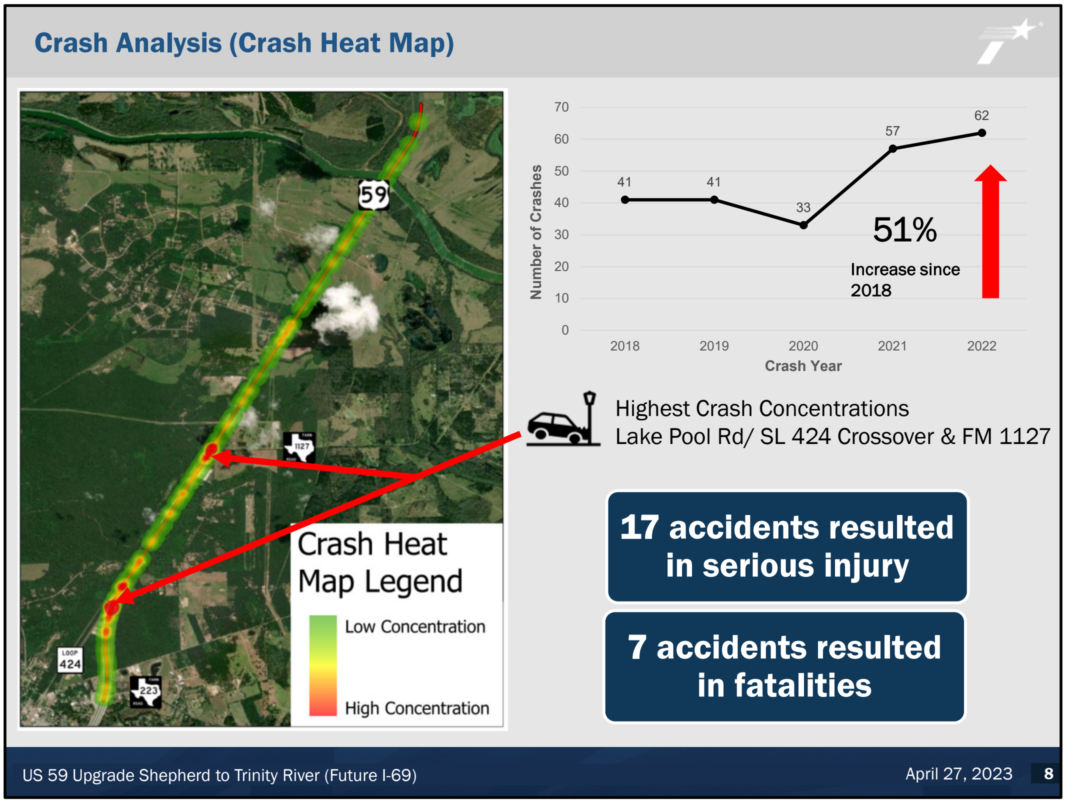
The following slides will provide additional information on the traffic growth, demand and safety in the project corridor.



The existing traffic along US 59 within the project limits has increased by approximately 35 percent between 2001 and 2021. Future traffic volumes along the corridor are expected to increase by 80 percent between 2021 and 2061.

Heavy vehicles make up approximately 25 percent of the existing traffic volume, which represents the high freight activity along the project corridor. That number is anticipated to grow as US 59 continues to be used for freight movement from Mexico into the interior of the country.

The next slides discuss crashes and crash locations within the corridor.



This slide displays a crash heatmap that highlights the top locations for crashes from FM 223 to north of the Trinity River between 2018 and 2022. As shown on the map, multiple crash locations are represented as "hot spot crash areas." Color coding is used to show the varying number of crashes with green indicating a low crash density, yellow as moderate, and red as a high-density.

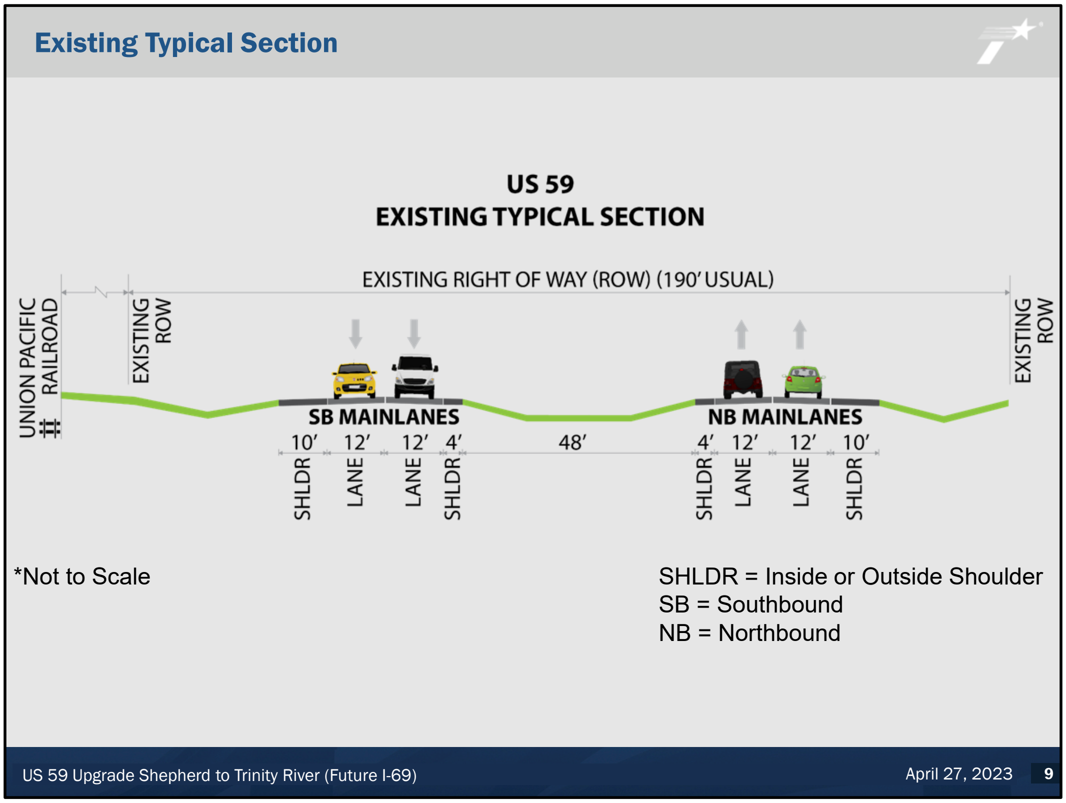
From 2018 to 2022, there have been a total of 234 crashes on US 59 from FM 223 to north of the Trinity River. With the exception of 2019 and 2020, the number of accidents has generally risen from year to year as traffic increases and the area continues to develop. Between 2018 and 2022, there has been a 51 percent increase in the number of crashes in this area of the project.

The highest concentrations of accidents were concentrated at the US 59 intersections of Lake Pool Road/SL 424 crossover and FM 1127, which is the highest within the project limits. From 2018 to 2022, there were 37 total crashes at the Lake Pool Road/SL 424 crossover and 13 total crashes at the FM 1127 intersection.

Seventeen accidents occurred which resulted in serious injury, while seven accidents resulted in fatalities, two of which involved pedestrians.

The proposed upgrades to US 59 would focus on safety enhancements such as eliminating median crossovers with the goal of decreasing future crashes.

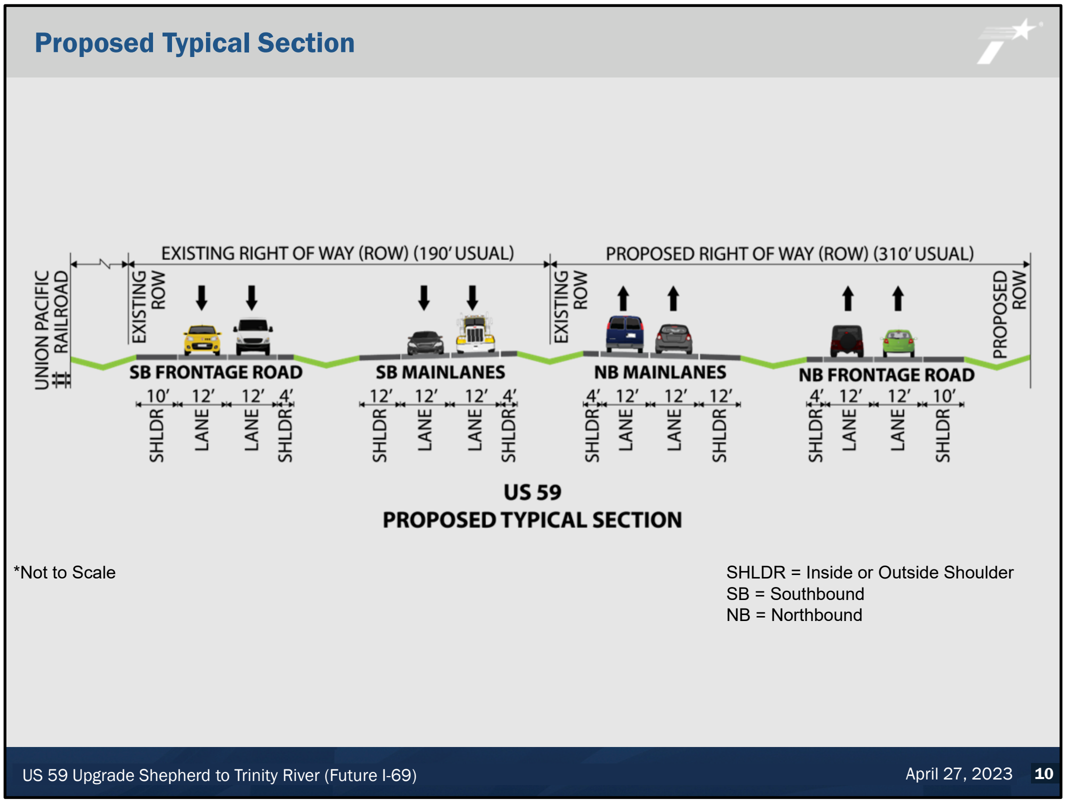
The next slides represent the cross-sections of US 59 as it is today and the proposed typical section, which we are seeking your input.



This slide shows the existing typical section of US 59. The existing corridor consists of two 12-foot-wide travel lanes in each direction with 4-foot-wide inside shoulders and 10-foot-wide outside shoulders. The highway is divided by a grassy median that is approximately 48 feet wide. The existing right-of-way is approximately 190 feet.

Drainage along the roadway is generally conveyed through open ditches along both sides of the roadway.

There are no accommodations for pedestrians and bicyclists within the project limits.



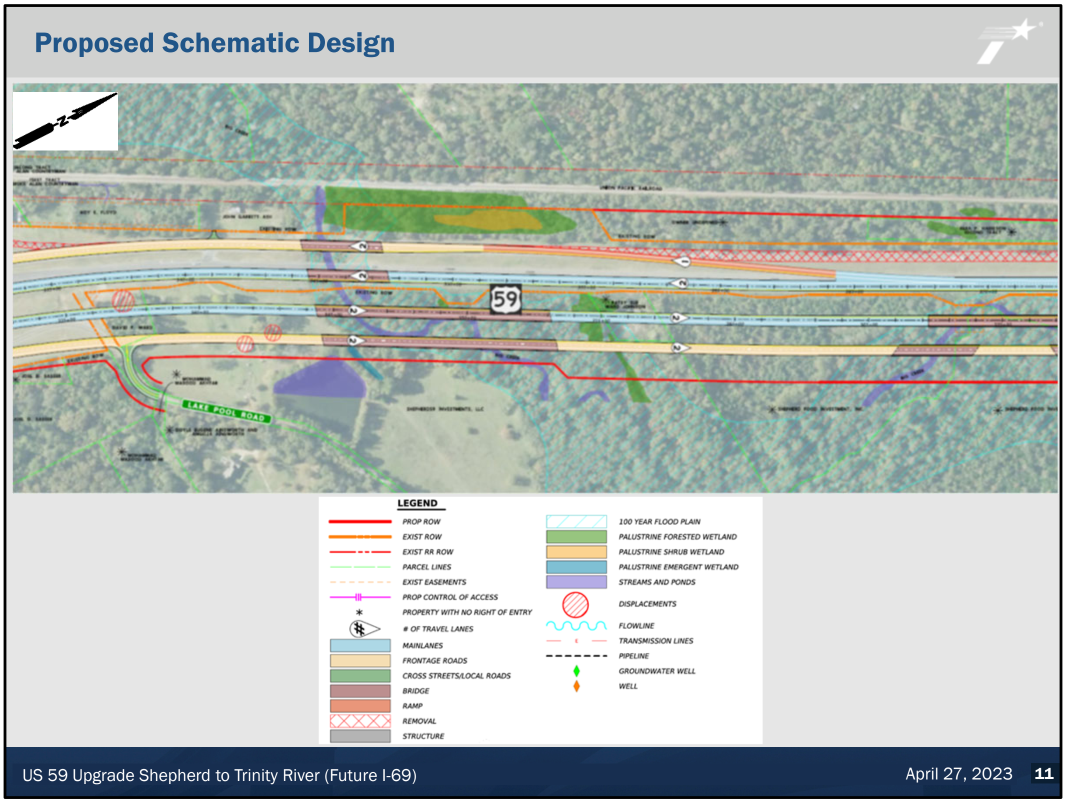
This slide shows the proposed typical section of US 59. The proposed improvements consist of two 12-foot-wide travel lanes in each direction with 4-foot-wide inside shoulders and 12-foot-wide outside shoulders. The highway would be divided by a 92 foot-wide grassy median. One-way frontage roads consisting of two 12-foot travel lanes with 10 foot outside and 4 foot inside shoulders are proposed on both sides of US 59. The proposed improvements would require approximately 310 feet of additional right of way totaling an approximate 500 foot wide corridor.

Though not shown in this typical section, the replacement of existing bridges over the Trinity River with new bridges and turnaround (U-turns) along both banks of the river are proposed. An overpass would be constructed at the FM 1127 intersection with U-turns. A U-turn will also be provided at FM 223 (Church Street) from southbound US 59 to northbound US 59.

Access to US 59 will be limited to exit and entrance ramps from the frontage road system. The improvements would be a controlled access facility that will conform with interstate standards.

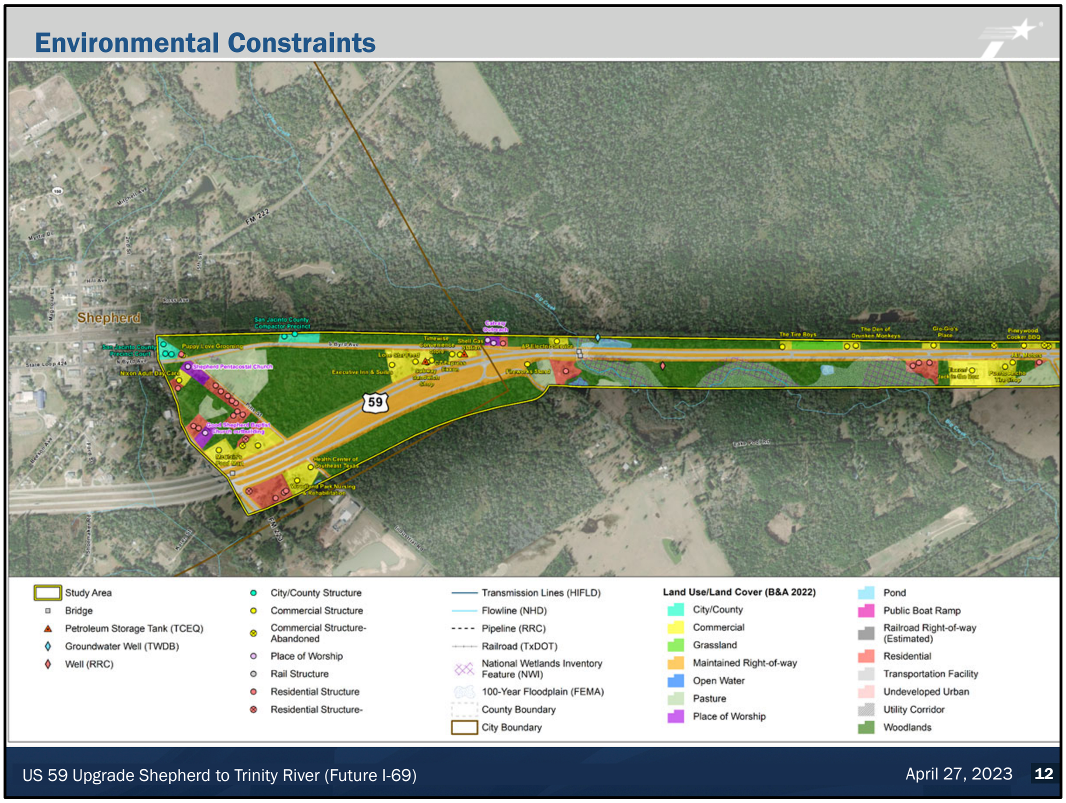
Drainage along the roadway will be designed to flow into open ditches along both sides of the roadway.

There are no improvements to accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists within the project limits.



This slide shows a screenshot of a portion of the schematic and legend. Due to the limited visibility of this slide you may not be able to see everything in detail, but we wanted to bring your attention to a couple areas that we thought would help as you view the schematic available on the website. Please take a minute to review the plan legend. This legend will illustrate what the various colored symbols on the schematic represent. For example, the orange dashed line represents TxDOT's existing right of way. The red solid line represents the proposed right of way that would be needed for this project and the green dashed lines depict property boundary lines.

To view the full schematic in more detail or to download please go to www.txdot.gov and search "US 59 Upgrade Shepherd to Trinity River." The schematic will also be available for viewing during the in-person meeting.



This slide is a screenshot of a portion of the environmental constraints mapped within the US 59 project area near the FM 223 intersection to north of Big Creek. This map, available in it its entirety on the website, shows several constraints including land use and land cover, bridges, potential hazardous material areas, residential and commercial structures, utilities (transmission and pipelines), watercourses (streams, ponds) and potential areas where wetlands may be located. This information assists the design team with the schematic design. Impacts to any of the resources identified will be determined during the environmental studies phase.

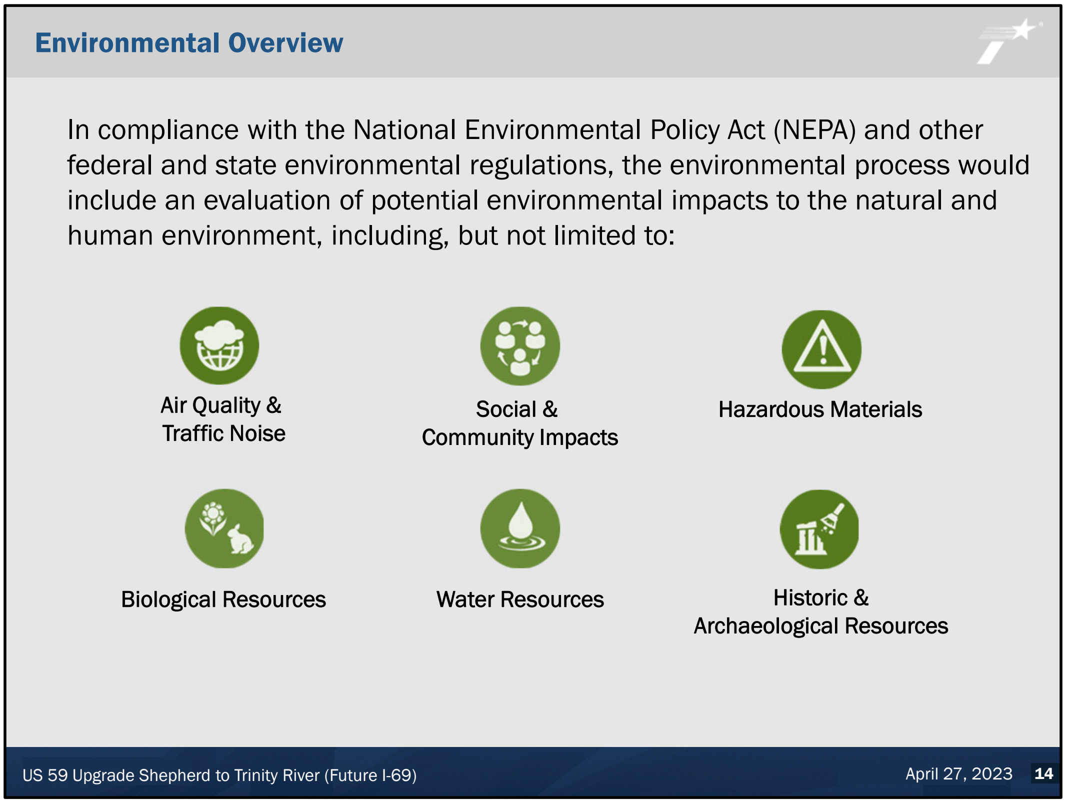
The next slide identifies the various types of environmental constraints that the project team typically evaluates for a project.

Environmental Constraints

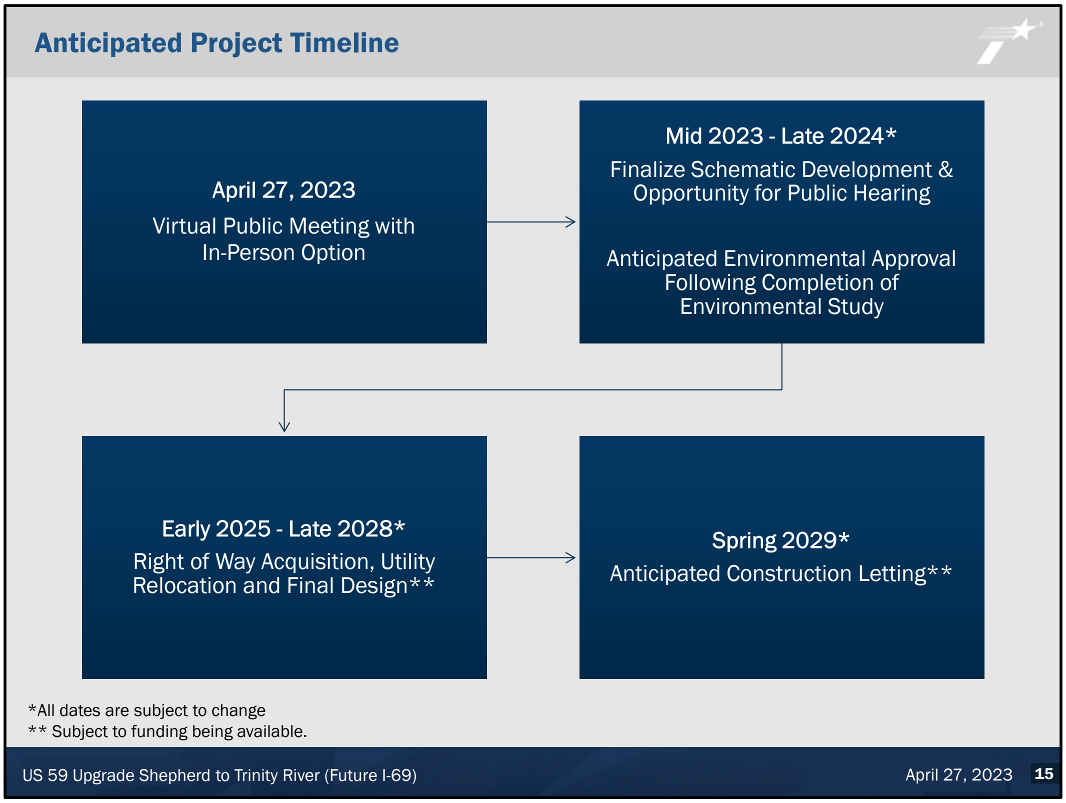
Environmental Constraint	Unit	Project Area
Waters of the United States, including Wetlands		
Acreage of streams, creeks, bayous, etc.	Acres	2.84
Acreage of wetlands (as mapped by NWI**)	Acres	25.72
Floodplains		
Acreage of 100-yr floodplain	Acres	147
Threatened & Endangered Species		
Natural Diversity Database Occurrences (1.5 mile buffer)	Number	3
Hazardous Materials*		
Count of potential hazmat sites	Number	0
Number of Structures Displacements		
Count of residential	Number	9
Count of nonresidential	Number	10
Cultural Resources		
High/Medium/Low potential survey will be recommended	Rank	Low
National Register of Historic Places		
Count of National Register of Historic Places sites	Number	0
Environmental Justice Communities		
Count of Minority Census Blocks	Number	5

* Based on preliminary data search ** National Wetland Inventory (US Fish & Wildlife Service)

Some of the potential environmental constraints/resources identified as part of our initial field and desktop analysis are identified above. Any information the public could provide would help us, as we move forward to the detailed environmental studies phase where we fully determine impacts of the proposed project.



The environmental studies conducted for this project are underway and will comply with the National Environmental Policy Act, or NEPA, process. These studies will identify and assess potential impacts to the natural and human environment, including the resources listed on this slide. This process would help TxDOT make an informed decision on whether or not to proceed with the project. Some of the resources and issues that will be assessed include air quality, traffic noise, community impacts, hazardous materials sites, biological resources such as threatened and endangered species, water resources, and historic and archaeological resources.



The anticipated project timeline is as follows. After this public meeting, the project team will review all comments received within the timeframe to be entered into the public record and determine if further refinements are needed to the schematic based on your feedback. Environmental studies will continue, and documentation will be prepared while the schematic is refined. Once the environmental studies have been completed, TxDOT will conduct additional public involvement and solicit additional feedback. Upon this feedback, TxDOT will make final decisions and submit the schematic and environmental document for approval from TxDOT's Environmental Affairs Division. If the environmental documentation and schematic are approved, TxDOT would move forward with the right-of-way process, followed by utility relocations, which will take approximately 1 year after right-of-way acquisition, and final design development. The right-of-way process is anticipated to take two years but may last longer. Construction is currently anticipated to begin in Spring 2029.

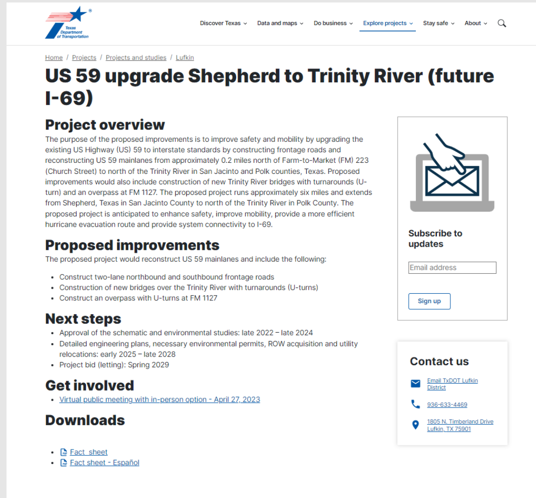
Right of way for this project would be acquired in accordance with Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Properties Acquisitions Policies Act of 1970, as amended.

In the TxDOT website you will find three documents which provide general information on the right-of-way acquisition process including topics such as appraisal, compensation, and relocation assistance. These documents may be found at the webpage shown here.

Meeting Materials

Meeting materials can be viewed by:

- Visit www.txdot.gov search “US 59 Upgrade Shepherd to Trinity River”
- Scroll to bottom of the webpage go to the Get Involved Section
- Click on the Virtual Public Meeting with In-Person Option – Tuesday, April 27, 2023, and then click on documents under the Meeting Materials Section



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All the materials for this public meeting are available for viewing and download on the US 59 Upgrade Shepherd to Trinity River (Future I-69) project webpage by navigating to www.txdot.gov and searching “US 59 Upgrade Shepherd to Trinity River ”. Once on the project webpage, scroll down to the “Get Involved” section and click on the link named Virtual Public Meeting with In-Person Option – Tuesday, April 27, 2023. To view the following public meeting materials, click on the individual documents under the Meeting Materials Section which include public meeting notice in English and Spanish, project fact sheet, schematic, newspaper display ads in English and Spanish, this pre-recorded presentation and comment cards to submit comments. The video presentation is in English and Spanish. If you need any technical or language assistance, please email us at Rhonda.Oaks@txdot.gov or call Rhonda Oaks, our public information officer, at (936) 633-4395.

Public Comment Process

Submit comments by:

- **Email:** Jennifer.Adams@txdot.gov
- **Mail:** Fill out a comment card and mail to:

  Texas Department of Transportation
  ATTN: Jennifer Adams - US 59 from Shepherd to Trinity River
  1805 N. Timberland Dr
  Lufkin, TX 75901

- **Voicemail:** Call (936) 205-1795
- **Online:** Visit www.txdot.gov and enter "US 59 Upgrade Shepherd to Trinity River"

While comments are always welcome, they must be received or postmarked by Friday, May 12, 2023 to be included in the official meeting documentation.

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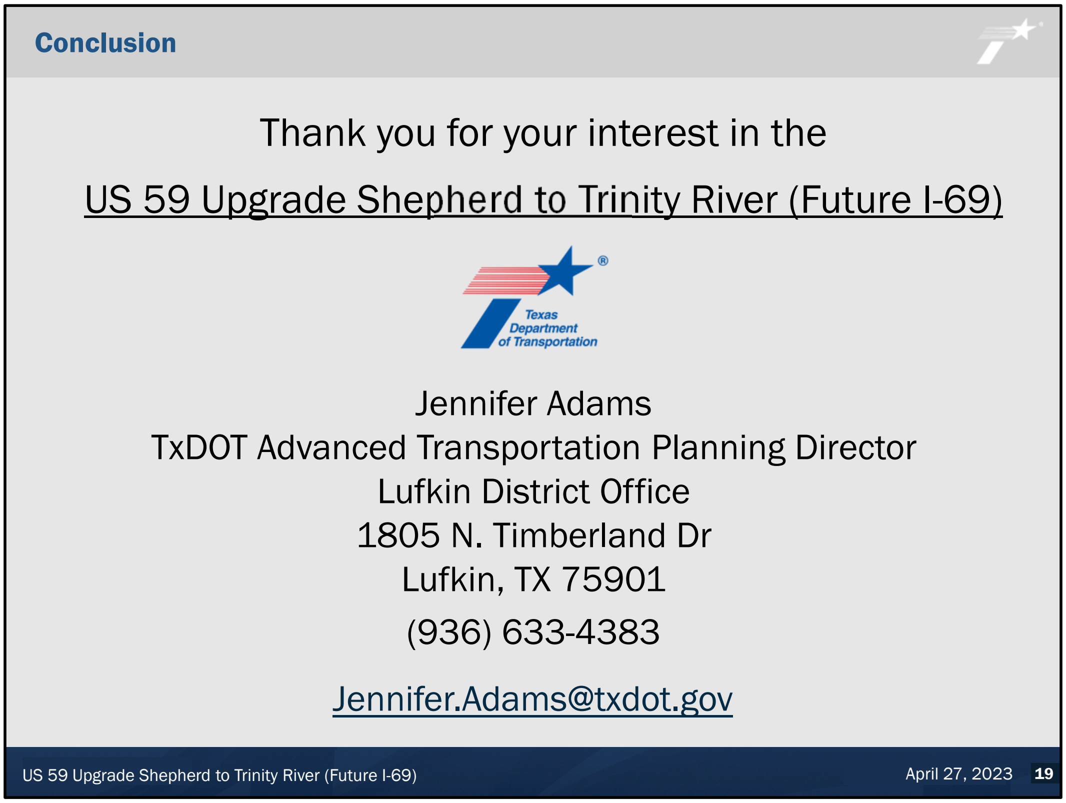
Comments can be submitted by:
Email to Jennifer.Adams@txdot.gov; by
Mail to the TxDOT Lufkin office at the address shown here;
In-person by filling out a comment card at the in-person public meeting and dropping it in a comment box;
Voicemail by calling (936) 205-1795; or
Online by visiting www.txdot.gov, search "US 59 Upgrade Shepherd to Trinity River."

While comments are always welcome, they must be received or postmarked by Friday, May 12, 2023, to be included in the official meeting documentation. Responses to verbal and written comments received during the comment period will be included in the Public Meeting Summary report that will be posted on the meeting webpage when completed.



Please don't hesitate to contact us with any questions at any time during the project development process. Jennifer Adams, the TxDOT Advance Transportation Planning Director, can be reached at (936) 633-4383 or by email to Jennifer.Adams@txdot.gov.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions or comments. Questions and comments can be submitted at any time during the project development process, but comments will only be included as part of the official Public Meeting Summary Report if received during the comment period.

Thank you for participating in this Virtual Public Meeting with In-Person Option. Please remember to submit comments by Friday, May 12, 2023. This concludes the public meeting presentation.