

SH 18 Virtual Public Meeting Transcript

Station 1

Welcome to the State Highway 18 South Project virtual public meeting. I will be guiding you through this interactive public meeting. If you have questions about using this format, please contact Mike Garrison at (972) 464-4800 for assistance. This virtual public meeting has been designed to mirror a traditional public meeting while giving you a chance to review the material and provide input from the comfort and safety of your own home. You will have the opportunity to learn about the proposed project by reviewing several exhibit boards of the project objectives. Your comments and suggestions are extremely important to the success of this project, and several options to provide comments will be available within this virtual meeting room.

Let's begin with an orientation of this virtual room format. At the top left of the screen is a dropdown menu which provides an outline of the stations in the room. At the top right there is a floorplan of the room. If you do not see a rectangular layout, press the map icon. The numbered stations on this map align with the numbers on the dropdown menu. The blue station number highlighted on this floorplan indicates which station you're currently viewing. At any time, you can use this floorplan to move from station to station or orient yourself in the room.

At the bottom of the screen you will see several icons. The first icon to the left labeled as the Letter I will give you more information about how to navigate around the room and what the different buttons do. The second icon shown as WWW will take you to the TxDOT project website, which includes all of the materials you will see here today in the meeting. The third icon links you to an online map of the project area and where it is in the region. The fourth icon is an autorotate button which will assist you in rotating within the virtual room. Next you see plus and minus icons that can be used to zoom in and out respectively at any time. Also, there is a pause or play button near the bottom of the screen which allows you to play and pause the narration.

Finally, to move forward one station, click the arrow on the right-hand side of the screen. To move back to the previous station, click the arrow on the left-hand side of the screen. You can view all the stations as many times as you'd like and replay any narration as many times as you like. Now let's look at Station 1, beginning with the boards, we have the Welcome Board. To zoom in on each board simply click the icon that looks like an eye. Once there, you can also click on the down arrow icon in the top right-hand corner to download the board to save it to your device. Once you are finished viewing an item, just press the X in the top right-hand

corner to close the board. You will see the same icons for all exhibits and handouts in the room.

Moving down to the table, this is where you sign in for the meeting. Please provide your contact information so that we can keep you informed as the project progresses. We encourage all visitors to sign in. To do so, just click the pen icon under the box labeled “Please Sign-In”. After you have completed signing in, there are some additional items on the table that you can view or download. Next to the sign-in sheet is the Project Fact Sheet handout. In the back right corner of the table, you will find a transcript for all the stations in this virtual meeting room.

When you are finished viewing the materials at the station, either click the arrows on the right-hand side of the screen or select Station 2 from the map at the top right corner of the screen to advance. At Station 2, you will be able to view boards providing a project overview.

Station 2

Station 2 provides a location map, a project overview board and a brief summary of the key roles the project corridor serves within the Permian Basin. The first board on the left shows the State Highway 18 corridor location from Loop 464 in Monahans to Business Interstate 10 in Fort Stockton. The second board provides the project overview. The SH 18 corridor from Loop 464 in Monahans to Business Interstate 10 in Fort Stockton is about 46 miles in length.

TxDOT is proposing to widen SH 18 to a four-lane divided highway with two lanes in each direction and a wide center median consisting of an open ditch or turn lane. Initial project assessments would evaluate and analyze improvements for safety while avoiding and minimizing impacts to landowners, the community, and the environment.

The third board provides information about the corridor and other transportation infrastructure within the Permian Basin. The SH 18 corridor has been identified as a key energy and freight corridor within the Permian Basin. Increased population growth and growing oil and gas production have resulted in increased traffic numbers and oil and gas infrastructure development. As a result, traffic volumes, including truck traffic volumes, have increased. This increase in traffic volumes along with the aging transportation infrastructure has contributed to safety concerns along several roadways within the Permian Basin.

When you are finished viewing the boards, please advance to Station 3.

Station 3

Station 3 summarizes the truck and traffic volume trends, as well as the current safety conditions for the project corridor on four boards.

The first board provides historical traffic volume data for the years 2015 through 2019 and projected future year 2039. Truck traffic makes up approximately 21% of the traffic volumes along the project corridor. Between 2015 and 2019, traffic volumes increased anywhere from zero to 88 percent along the corridor with an approximate 43 percent increase in the middle of the corridor south of Grandfalls. Traffic volumes are anticipated to increase by another 20 percent between 2019 and 2039.

The next two boards provide information on historical crash data along the project corridor. The first board compares the crash rate for the corridor to the statewide average for urban and rural state highways for a three-year period between 2017 and 2019. In 2019, the SH 18 corridor crash rate was greater than that of the statewide average for a rural state highway. High crash locations within the corridor were noted to be at intersections with FM 1450 and Loop 464.

The next board provides crash statistics along the project corridor, including the total number of crashes between 2017 and 2019. The map on this board indicates crash densities or areas with higher numbers of crashes. Green indicates a lower density of crashes, and red indicates a higher density of crashes. The blue dots indicate locations of crash fatalities. According to the map, a higher concentration of crash locations is located near major highway intersections, in Fort Stockton, and around the small towns of Royalty and Grandfalls. About 38% of the crashes reported occurred during peak commuting hours, both morning and evening, while about 41% of the crashes occurred at intersections or driveways.

The last board at this station provides statistics on crash severity and crash type. As you can see in the chart on the left, the majority of crashes did not result in an injury. As noted on the previous board, four crashes between 2017 and 2019 resulted in fatalities, representing about 3 percent of all crashes during the same period. The chart on the right indicates most crashes were a result of hitting a fixed object such as a sign or a fence. Rear-end and angle collisions were also common. Angle crashes typically involve vehicles making turns at intersections.

Please advance to Station 4 when you are finished viewing this exhibit.

Station 4

There are three boards at Station 4 that show the existing and proposed typical sections for the rural parts of the project corridor.

The first existing rural typical section consists of one travel lane in each direction with shoulders along both sides of the roadway. The second existing rural typical section consists of two travel lanes in each direction, with shoulders along both sides of the roadway. The proposed rural typical section would consist of two lanes in each direction, separated by a

depressed median. Inside and outside shoulders would be added along both sides of the roadway.

Please advance to Station 5 when you are finished looking at these boards.

Station 5

Station 5 includes a board summarizing the federal environmental process and three maps showing environmental constraints along the project corridor that will be taken into consideration during the development of the schematic design. During the environmental process, documentation of the environmental analyses will be prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act, or NEPA. These analyses will evaluate impacts to air quality, traffic, noise impacts, impacts to the community, hazardous materials in the area, impacts to natural resources including biological and water resources, and cultural resources, including archaeological and historic resources.

Next are the Environmental Constraints Maps. As you can see, the limits on each map are shown above the map on each table. Please click on the map to view it in more detail. You can zoom in or out on the map by using the wheel on your mouse, by pinching out and in if you have a touch screen, or by using the plus and minus signs at the top of the screen. You can move to different areas of the map by clicking and dragging your mouse left or right.

The legend is on the bottom of the map and identifies the shading and symbols used on the map. If you have questions or comments regarding the map, you can leave a site-specific comment in the Interactive Map located at Station 7.

The Environmental Constraints Maps show the existing conditions within the environmental constraints study area. This boundary indicates a study area and is not the proposed roadway footprint or right-of-way limits. As you can see on the maps, different color coding is used to detail land use and markers to identify wells and other features. For example, parcels shown in purple are zoned commercial or parcels shown in light red are zoned residential. Other markers such as the light blue dots show the location of water wells. Within urban sections, most of the land use consists of residential use, whereas in the rural areas the land use mostly consists of rangeland and oil and gas production. These details will help shape the proposed project alignment as the schematic design develops with the goal of avoiding and minimizing impacts to the human and natural environment.

When you finish viewing the Environmental Constraints Maps, please move to Station 6.

Station 6

The board at Station 6 shows the anticipated timeline for the State Highway 18 project from Loop 464 to Business Interstate 10. Note this schedule is subject to change. We are currently

at the first public meeting for the project. The input we receive from you is important and will help to shape the project design. As the project design progresses, a more detailed environmental analysis will be conducted.

A second public meeting is anticipated in the summer of 2023 to present the project progress and obtain additional public input on the project design. The project design and environmental documents are anticipated to wrap up in the spring of 2024 followed by an opportunity for a public hearing in the summer of 2024 to present the final project design and environmental findings. The approval date for the final schematic and environmental documents is dependent upon project funding. Funding for the proposed project has not yet been identified.

Once you've had a chance to view this timeline, please move to Station 7.

Station 7

Welcome to Station 7 which includes our Interactive Comment Map. We are interested in your comments and input throughout this entire process. Please take a moment to leave your comments within the Interactive Comment Map.

On the table to the right is an instructional handout on how to navigate the interactive comment map. To access the map, click on the comment bubble on the laptop to open a separate browser, once there, click "Proceed as Guest." You will see an interactive map on the left and comment section on the right. You can zoom in and click through the map to see locations and streets. To change the map background, click on the base map Gallery button on the left side of the screen, then change the background to aerial imagery, streets, topographic or other map background options.

To leave your own comment, please click "Submit Comment" on the bottom right side, then drop a point on the map, and fill out the form. Once you're done, click "report it." You can add more than one comment if you wish. Feel free to explore the map and provide comments at your convenience. Thank you for your input.

After you've had a chance to view and comment on the interactive map, please move to the final station.

Station 8

Station 8 is the final station of the virtual public meeting. The board on the right shows several ways for you to submit comments and provides the contact information for the project consultant engineer. If you have specific questions, please contact Larry G. Redden, the Project Consultant Engineer, using the phone number and email address provided on the board.

If you didn't already do so, please add your contact information to the Sign-in Sheet at Station 1 to receive updates as they are made available.

To view any of the meeting materials you saw here today, simply go to www.txdot.gov and use the keyword search function at the top right of the web page. In this box, enter the keywords "SH 18 South Virtual Public Meeting." Your input is important to us. If you have comments regarding any of the documents, exhibits, or content you've seen today, please submit them using one of the methods listed on the board. For your comment to be included in the official record, it must be submitted on or before 11:59 p.m. Friday, Aug. 13, 2021.

Looking at the table, there is a comment card. If you would rather print out and mail in your comment, please click on the down arrow to download the comment card or go to the previous station to leave an electronic comment. You can send this card in via the US Postal Service to the address shown on the card, or scan and send via email, which is located on the board to the right of the table.

The second item on the table is a packet of all the meeting materials. Click the down arrow button to download the files to your computer.

We thank you for taking the time to participate in this virtual public meeting. Your input serves as a critical piece of the project development process. Please stay safe and take care.

This concludes the State Highway 18 South Virtual Public Meeting.