

## **STATION 1: WELCOME**

Welcome to the second Virtual Public Meeting for the State Highway 349 project. My name is Doug Hagemeyer and I will guide you through this interactive public meeting.

If you have questions about using this format, please contact Gilysa Garcia at (512) 829-7133 for assistance.

This virtual public meeting has been designed to mirror a traditional public meeting, while giving you a chance to experience this meeting 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. Opportunities to provide comments will be available throughout 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 map 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 numbers highlighted on the map indicate which station you are currently viewing. At any time, you can use this map 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 more information about how to navigate around the room and what the different buttons do. The next icon to the right, shown as a "www" will take you to the TxDOT project website which includes all the materials you will see here today in the meeting. The middle icon shows you a map of the project area and where it is in the region. Next you see plus and minus icons that can be used to zoom in and out, respectively, at anytime. There is a comment icon in the right bottom corner of the screen. You can leave a comment in any station by clicking this button. Also, there is a pause and 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 backward, click the arrow on the left-hand side of the screen. You can view all stations as many times as you'd like and replay any narration as many times as you'd 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 you are finished viewing an item, just press the "X" in the top right-hand corner to exit. You can also click the icon on the right to download the board and view it as a PDF and then print or save it to your device. 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 "Sign-In". The second paper to the right is the project fact sheet, this handout provides the most up to date project information. Click on the down arrow icon to download the project fact sheet.

When you are finished viewing the materials at this 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'll be able to view boards providing a project overview.

## **STATION 2: PROJECT OVERVIEW**

As we start this next station remember to click on the eye icon beneath each board as I talk about it to see the additional information presented on each topic.

Station 2 provides a project overview board, the purpose and need, a brief summary of public outreach conducted, and the project timeline.

The first board on the left provides the project overview. The SH 349 corridor, from County Road (CR) 140 in Midland to Spur 576 in Rankin, is about 50 miles in length. TxDOT is proposing to widen SH 349 to a four-lane divided highway, with two lanes in each direction, a center median or barrier, and turn lanes throughout the entire length of the project. Project studies are evaluating and analyzing improvements for safety while seeking to avoid and minimize impacts to landowners, the community, and the environment.

The second board provides the purpose and need of the project. The project is needed to accommodate increased freight and energy truck traffic volumes due to growing oil and gas production, to address safety concerns, and to address the aging roadway infrastructure. The purpose of the project is to improve mobility and safety, and upgrade the roadway to meet current design standards.

The third board provides a summary of public outreach conducted to date. TxDOT held the first public meeting on November 10 through Nov. 25, 2020. A total of 73 people attended the virtual public meeting and 29 comments were received. The comments and responses for the public meeting are available online on the TxDOT website. In addition to the public meeting, TxDOT has been coordinating with key stakeholders along the corridor. On April 12, 2021, TxDOT reached out to 69 stakeholders requesting their input. Coordination with stakeholders is ongoing.

The fourth and last board shows the anticipated timeline for the SH 349 project. Note this schedule is subject to change. We are currently at the second public meeting for the project. Public input received will help shape the project design. The project design and environmental documents are anticipated to wrap up in Winter 2021, followed by the opportunity for a public hearing in Spring 2022 to present the final project design and environmental findings. The approval date for the final schematic and environmental document is dependent on project funding. Funding for the proposed project has not yet been identified.

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

### **STATION 3: TRAFFIC & SAFETY**

As we start this next station remember to click on the eye icon beneath each board as I talk about it to see the additional information presented on each topic.

Station 3 summarizes traffic volume trends and current safety conditions for the project corridor on five boards.

The first board provides traffic volume data for the years 2015 through 2019 and the future year 2038. Traffic volumes increased by 30 percent between 2015 and 2019, and traffic volumes are anticipated to increase by another 45 percent by 2038. In 2021 truck traffic along the corridor varies between 13 and 51 percent of the total traffic volume, for an average of 33 percent compared to the statewide average of 16 percent.

Boards two through five provide information on crash data along the project corridor. The second board compares the crash rate average for the SH 349 corridor, statewide rural highways, and statewide urban highways between 2015 and 2019. The SH 349 corridor was shown to have a higher average crash rate than the average statewide rural state highway crash rate.

The third board provides crash statistics along the project corridor, including the total number of crashes between 2015 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 red dots indicate locations of crash fatalities. According to the map, a higher concentration of crashes occurred near the northern project limit within Midland. Crash numbers have increased from 2015 to 2019 by about 102 percent. The number of fatalities along the corridor are about 20 times above the statewide average, and the suspected serious injury crashes are 4.5 times more than the statewide average.

The fourth board provides the causes of crashes that result in fatalities and severe injuries. Fifteen percent of the crashes along the corridor are caused by distracted driving, 23 percent are caused by slowing or stopping along the corridor, and 20 percent are caused by other factors.

The fifth and last board at this station provides statistics on the crash severity and crash type. As you can see in the chart on the left, most crashes did not result in injury. The chart on the right indicates most crashes were a result of rear ending or left turn movements.

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

**STATION 4: TYPICAL SECTIONS**

As we start this next station remember to click on the eye icon beneath each board as I talk about it to see the additional information presented on each topic.

Welcome to Station 4. This station shows the existing and conceptual typical sections along the project corridor.

The board on the left shows the existing typical section, which consists of one travel lane in each direction, with an alternating passing lane, and shoulders along both sides of the roadway.

The board on the right shows the conceptual typical section, which consists of two lanes in each direction separated by a depressed median, with left hand turn lanes and inside and outside shoulders on both sides of the roadway.

Please advance to Station 5 when you are finished looking at the typical sections.

### **STATION 5: ALTERNATIVES CONSTRAINTS MATRIX**

As we start this next station remember to click on the eye icon beneath each board as I talk about it to see the additional information presented on each topic.

Station 5 includes a board summarizing the alternatives analysis. The alternatives constraints matrix or table is based on engineering and environmental constraints, such as design requirements, mobility and truck capacity, safety, the human environment, and the natural environment. Also, utilizing existing pavement was a sustainability goal for all three alternatives in order to reduce impacts to adjacent properties and resources. These constraints were ranked according to the level of impact (negative rankings) or improvement (positive rankings) anticipated with the development of each alternative. Three alternatives were considered, which included an alternative taking right of way only from the west, an alternative taking right of way only from the east, a mixed alternative that took right of way from both sides of the roadway, and the no-build scenario. The mixed alternative is the current proposed alternative and what is shown on the proposed conceptual schematic. The goal of the mixed alternative was to avoid the most impacts to residential, commercial, and industrial properties as well as impacts to the natural environment, while meeting engineering constraints. As you can see, the mixed alternative has the least amount of negative impacts, and the most positive impacts, compared to the west and east alternatives and the no-build scenario.

When you've finished viewing the alternatives constraints matrix, please move to Station 6 to view the Mixed alternative, or the proposed conceptual schematic.

**STATION 6: SCHEMATICS**

Station 6 includes a board showing the Mixed alternative, or the proposed conceptual schematic. Click on the eye at the bottom of the board to view in more detail. Once you click on the eye, you will see a map of the project corridor divided into 10 map sections. You can click on any of the map sections to view that portion of the corridor in more detail, and zoom in and out for a closer view of the area. Please note, the index map shown here can be download at this station, however the ten schematic maps are only available for download with the meeting materials at station 9.

When you are done reviewing the maps please proceed to station 7.

## **STATION 7: ENVIRONMENTAL**

As we start this next station remember to click on the eye icon beneath each board as I talk about it to see the additional information presented on each topic.

Station 7 includes a board summarizing the environmental process. During the environmental process, documentation of 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 archeological and historic resources.

In the next station, you will be able to review the interactive comment map where you can provide comments on the Mixed alternative, or the proposed conceptual schematic. The objective of the Public Meeting is to seek public and stakeholder input on the proposed Mixed alternative, identify additional constraints or issues, or concerns where avoidance was not possible.

The next stage in the project process will be to review and evaluate public input for further refinement of the schematic design and to optimize avoidance of impacts to the human and natural environment.

Please proceed to Station 8 to leave comments on the Interactive Comment Map.

**STATION 8: INTERACTIVE COMMENT MAP**

Welcome to Station 8, which includes our interactive comment map. We are interested in your comments and input throughout this process. Please take a moment to leave your comments within the interactive comment map. On the table to the right is an instruction handout on how to navigate the interactive comment map. To access the map, click on the link to open a separate browser. You will see an interactive map on the left and comments on the right. You can zoom in and click through the map to see locations, streets, and other participants' comments. 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 "Click Here to Submit Comment" on the right side. Drop a point on the map, fill out the form, and once you are 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 have had a chance to view and/or comment on the interactive map, please move to the final station.



### **STATION 9: COMMENT AND CONTACT INFORMATION**

This is the final station of the virtual public meeting. The board provides directions for submitting comments and contact information for the project consultant engineer. If you have specific questions, please contact Robert Sutton, the project consultant engineer, using the phone number and email address provided on the right side of 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](http://www.txdot.gov) and use the keyword search function at the top right of the webpage. In this box enter the keywords "SH 349 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 Friday, July 16, 2021.

Looking at the table, there is a comment card. Click on the pen button to leave an electronic comment or click on the down arrow to download the comment card. You can send this card in via mail to the address shown on the board behind the table or scan and send via email.

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

We thank you for taking the time to participate in this virtual public meeting. Please stay safe and take care. This concludes the virtual public meeting.