

Welcome
Virtual Public Meeting
Pre-Recorded Presentation

SH 16 (Smith St.)
at Kansas City Southern (KCS) Railroad Grade Crossing
Hebbronville, Texas
Tilley St. to Draper St.
Jim Hogg County

CSJ: 0482-01-037

Nov. 9, 2021

1. Welcome

Welcome to the virtual pre-recorded public meeting with in-person option for the State Highway 16 at Kansas City Southern Railroad grade crossing safety project in Hebbronville. The Texas Department of Transportation (or TxDOT) is proposing to improve safety and mobility by improving:

- The grade differential at the intersection of State Highway 16 and the Kansas City Southern (KCS) railroad crossing
- And enhancing pedestrian and bicyclist safety

We would like to thank you for taking the time to view this virtual presentation available online from November 9, 2021 through November 29, 2021. The purpose of this virtual public meeting is to encourage and maintain effective communication with the public and to describe the project and the preferred alternative. Public involvement is an ongoing aspect of the project development process to encourage and solicit public input and provide an opportunity for the public to become fully informed and engaged about the project. Contact information for questions or comments is noted at the end of this presentation.

Virtual Public Meeting in Response to Public Health Concerns

Given the COVID-19 outbreak, TxDOT is providing the public meeting presentation in a virtual format; however, an in-person option is available:

Wednesday, Nov. 10, 2021, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Jim Hogg County Courthouse, 102 E. Tilley Street, Hebbronville, TX 78361

The virtual public meeting on the TxDOT website provides the same information as the in-person meeting:

- Project information
- Estimated timeline
- Process for submitting comments
- Key contacts

SHARE FACTS ABOUT COVID-19

Know the facts about coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and help stop the spread of rumors.

FACT 1 Diseases can make anyone sick regardless of their race or ethnicity. Fear and anxiety about COVID-19 can cause people to avoid or reject others even though they are not at risk for spreading the virus.

FACT 2 For most people, the immediate risk of becoming seriously ill from the virus that causes COVID-19 is thought to be low. Older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions may be at higher risk for more serious complications from COVID-19.

FACT 3 Someone who has completed quarantine or has been released from isolation does not pose a risk of infection to other people. For up-to-date information, visit CDC's coronavirus disease 2019 web page.

FACT 4 There are simple things you can do to help keep yourself and others healthy:
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing, going to the bathroom, and before eating or preparing food.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unclean hands.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.

FACT 5 You can help stop COVID-19 by knowing the signs and symptoms:
- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
Seek medical advice if you develop symptoms.
AND
- Have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 or if you live in or have recently been in an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19.

[cdc.gov/COVID-19](https://www.cdc.gov/COVID-19)

SH 16 KCS Railroad Grade Crossing

Nov. 9, 2021

2

2. COVID-19

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, if desired. TxDOT is also providing an in-person option for individuals who would like to participate in-person instead of online. This presentation will cover the same information that will be shared at the in-person public meeting.

This virtual public meeting is being held to receive and consider comments from the public regarding the State Highway 16 at Kansas City Southern Railroad grade crossing project from Tilley Street to Draper Street.

The meeting will provide:

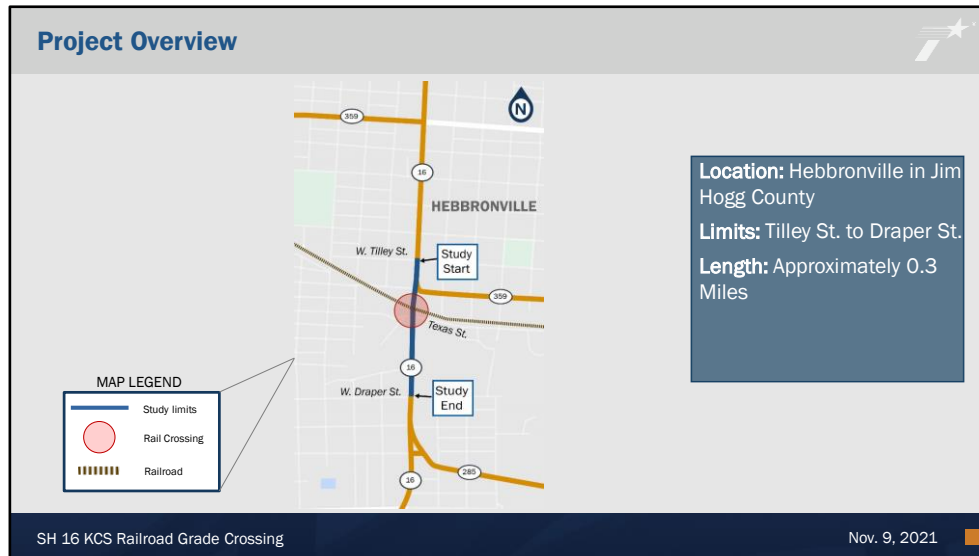
- Project information
- Estimated timeline
- Process for submitting comments
- Key contacts

Agenda		
1	Project Overview	4
2	Accident/Incident History and Safety Risk Analysis	5
3	Need and Purpose	8
4	Existing and Proposed Typical Sections	9
5	Traffic Data	12
6	Proposed Alternatives	13
7	Environmental Studies	18
8	Alternative Evaluation	21
9	Right of Way	23
10	Schedule	24
11	Contacts and Comments	25

SH 16 KCS Railroad Grade Crossing Nov. 9, 2021 3

3. Agenda

This virtual public meeting covers several topics relating to the safety improvements at the State Highway 16/KCS Railroad grade crossing in Hebbronville. These topics include a project overview, the need and purpose of improvements, alternatives, what preferred improvements would be made, and a schedule of the possible improvements We encourage your input and will provide information on how to submit comments later in this presentation.



4. Project Overview

The Texas Department of Transportation is considering the best way to remove the “hump” at the State Highway 16 and KCS Railroad grade crossing. The project limits are from Tilley Street to Draper Street, but the bulk of the work would be at the State Highway 16 and the KCS Railroad grade crossing.

Safety is the Priority



- Safety Initiative to reduce Train/Truck Crashes in Hebbroville



Improve this



to prevent this

SH 16 KCS Railroad Grade Crossing

Nov. 9, 2021

5

5. Safety is a Priority

This slide shows the concern at this railroad grade crossing. The picture on the left illustrates the low ground clearance at the crossing, and the picture on the right shows what is far too often the result – a “bottomed out” truck that gets stuck on the railroad tracks.

Safety is the Priority



SH 16 (Smith Street) is the major North-South roadway in Hebbbronville and the only roadway on the State Highway System that crosses the KCS rail line in Jim Hogg County

Two trucks were struck by trains at the SH 16-KCS rail crossing since 2019, according to TxDOT Crash Records Information System and Federal Railroad Administration Incident reports

Since 2019 until today, there have been:

- 11 reported vehicles stuck on tracks = 4 incidents per year, a significant safety risk
- 6 near misses with vehicles at this crossing
- 1 person injured in a 1-14-20 crash at the crossing site

Semi-trucks and trains at this crossing may carry hazardous materials, presenting a potential safety risk to human life and property

SH 16 KCS Railroad Grade Crossing

Nov. 9, 2021

6

6. Safety is a Priority

Safety improvements are a priority. State Highway 16 is the major north-south roadway in Hebbbronville.

Since 2019:

- 11 vehicles have been reported stuck on the tracks at the grade crossing
- Two semi-trucks were struck by trains at the State Highway 16 crossing
- There have been six near misses between trains and vehicles at this crossing
- One person was injured in a crash last year

Also, semi-trucks and trains at this crossing may carry hazardous materials, presenting a potential safety risk to human life and property.

Rail Crossing Safety Evaluation

- May 4, 2020, Texas A&M Transportation Institute (TTI) conducted a study at SH 16/KCS railroad crossing on the severity of “bottom outs.” Seven designs were looked at, including:
 - Garbage truck
 - Two types of fire trucks
 - School bus
 - Lowboy trailers (pictured)
 - Car carrier trailer
 - Limousine
- The results found all seven designs had potential for bottom outs.
- The report recommended improving the grade crossing to ‘flatten’ the roadway.



SH 16 KCS Railroad Grade Crossing

Nov. 9, 2021

7

7. Railroad Grade Crossing Safety Evaluation

As part of the preliminary analysis, the Texas A&M Transportation Institute completed a safety evaluation of the railroad crossing last year. The assessment looked at how seven common low-clearance vehicles, listed on this slide, contacted the ground or “bottomed out” at the State Highway 16/KCS Railroad grade crossing.

The results found all seven types of vehicles had the potential for at least some contact with the road or grade crossing surface.

The report went on to say that physical improvements were necessary at the crossing to minimize potential safety issues with low-clearance vehicles and approaching trains.

Project Need and Purpose

Project Need:

- The project is needed because low-profile trucks, trailers and long vehicles bottom out causing them to be stuck on the tracks due to the difference in elevation between the railroad and roadway

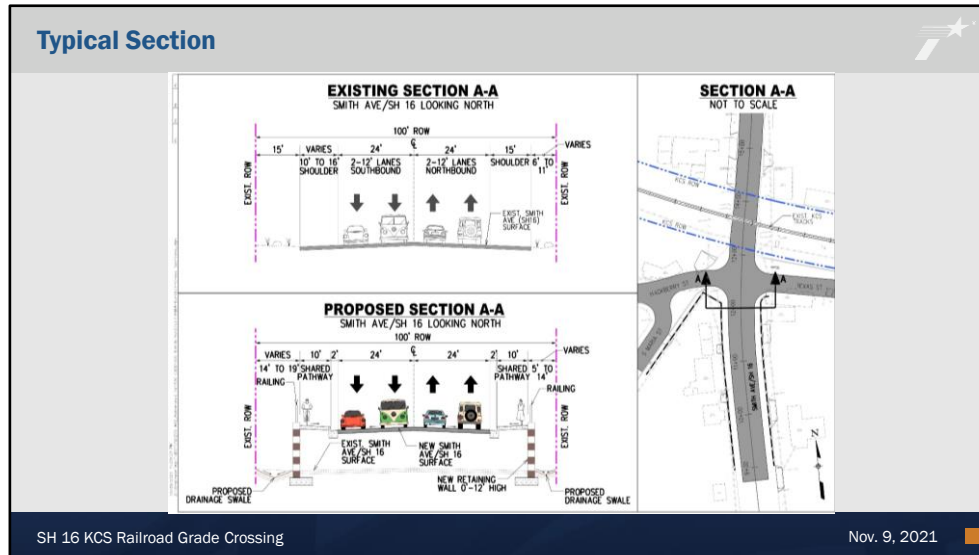
Project Purpose:

- The purpose of this project is to minimize bottom outs incidents and improve safety at the railroad crossing
- To improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety
- To improve driveway access safety

SH 16 KCS Railroad Grade Crossing Nov. 9, 2021 8

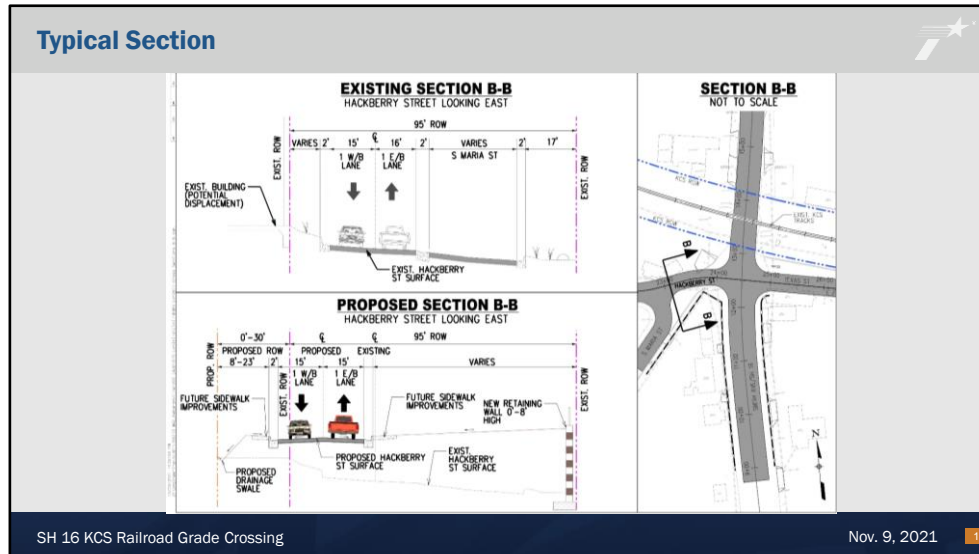
8. Project Need and Purpose

There is a need to improve traffic safety at the State Highway 16 and KCS Railroad grade crossing. The purpose of the project is to improve the grade differential – or in more simple terms, reduce the hump at the crossing. In addition, the project would also improve driveway access safety. Pedestrian and bicyclist safety will also be addressed with the addition of a shared-use path alongside State Highway 16 in the crossing area.



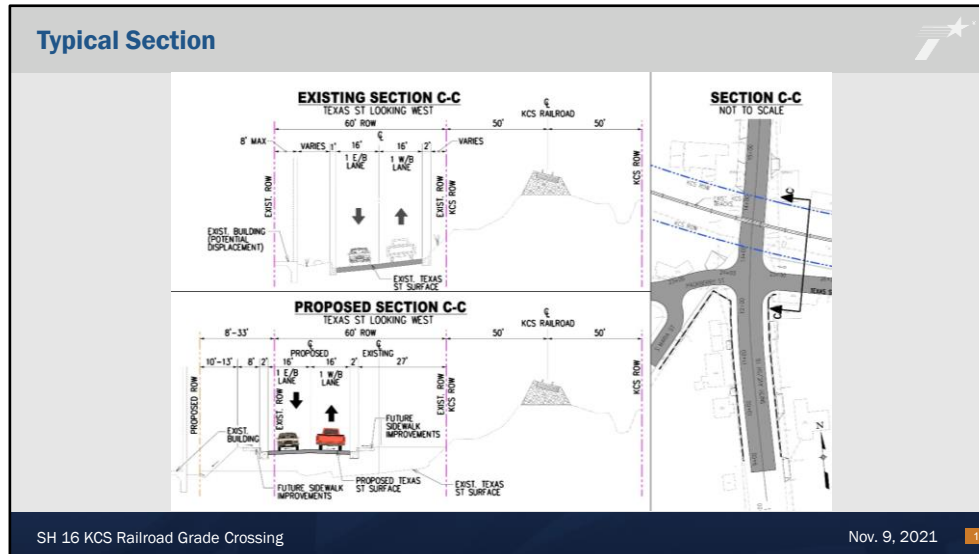
9. Typical Section – State Highway 16

Many improvements will be included in the new roadway, including raising the roadway to remove the “hump” at the railroad grade crossing. The proposed project would also include two 12-foot lanes in each direction just like the current roadway. Curb and gutter will be added, as will 10-foot shared-use paths on each side of the roadway for pedestrians and bicyclists. Retaining walls are needed to minimize the need for additional right of way. The retaining walls will range in height from zero to twelve feet.



10. Typical Section – Hackberry Street

In general, potential additional right of way may be needed along Hackberry Street to allow room for improvements. The uneven slope of the roadway will be leveled and include one 15-foot lane in each direction. The proposed project would include curb and gutter along with room for future sidewalks on each side of the roadway.



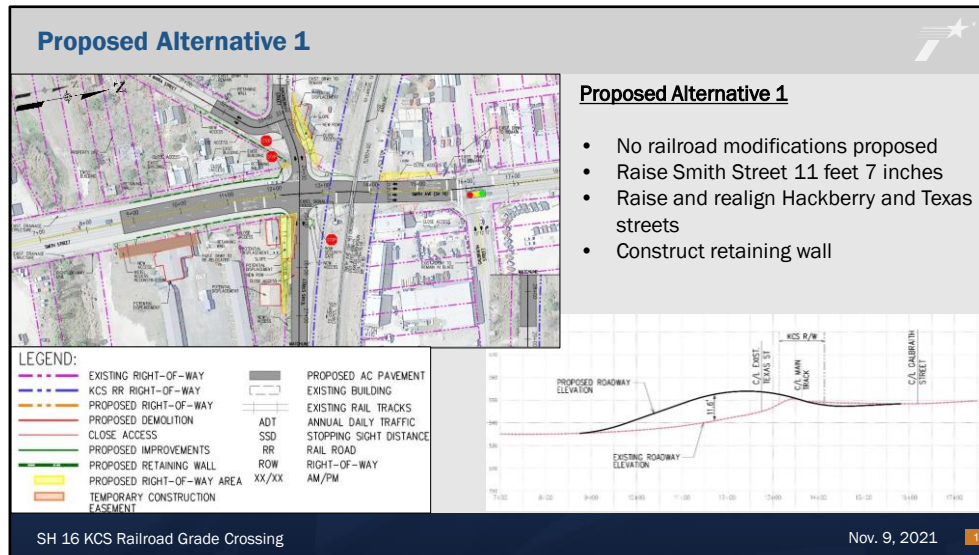
11. Typical Section – Texas Street

In general, additional right of way may be needed along Texas Street to allow room for improvements. The uneven slope of the roadway will be leveled and include one 16-foot lane in each direction. The proposed project would include curb and gutter along with room for future sidewalks on each side of the roadway.

Traffic Volumes			
Traffic Data SH 16 at KCS Railroad Grade Crossing			
	2019	2021	2045
Annual Average Daily Traffic (estimated)	11,206	11,542	15,576
Trucks per Day (estimated)	482	496	670
Source is Hebronville/Smith Street KCS Grade Crossing Draft Traffic Analysis.			
SH 16 KCS Railroad Grade Crossing		Nov. 9, 2021	

12. Traffic Volumes

The volume of traffic on State Highway 16 will continue to increase at the KCS Railroad grade crossing. By the year 2045, it is anticipated that traffic volume will increase by nearly 35 percent from what it is today. Truck traffic will increase by about the same rate. If nothing is done to improve the railroad grade crossing, safety will continue to be impacted by increased traffic.

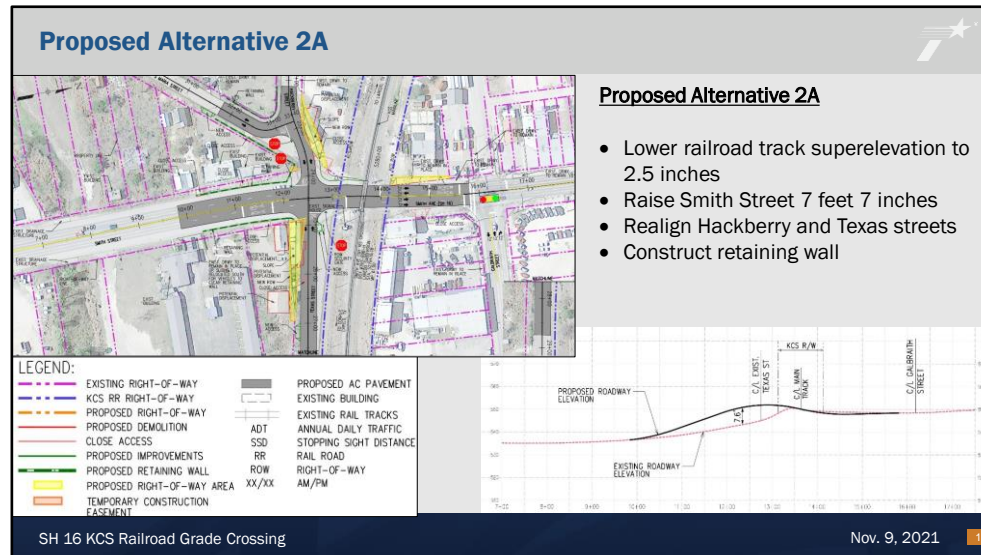


13. Proposed Alternative 1

Four proposed alternatives were considered for the railroad grade crossing safety improvements – three build alternatives and a no-build alternative. Each of the proposed build alternatives would require approximately a quarter acre of additional right of way and Alternatives 1 and 2B would require approximately a tenth of an acre of temporary construction easements.

Proposed Alternative 1 would:

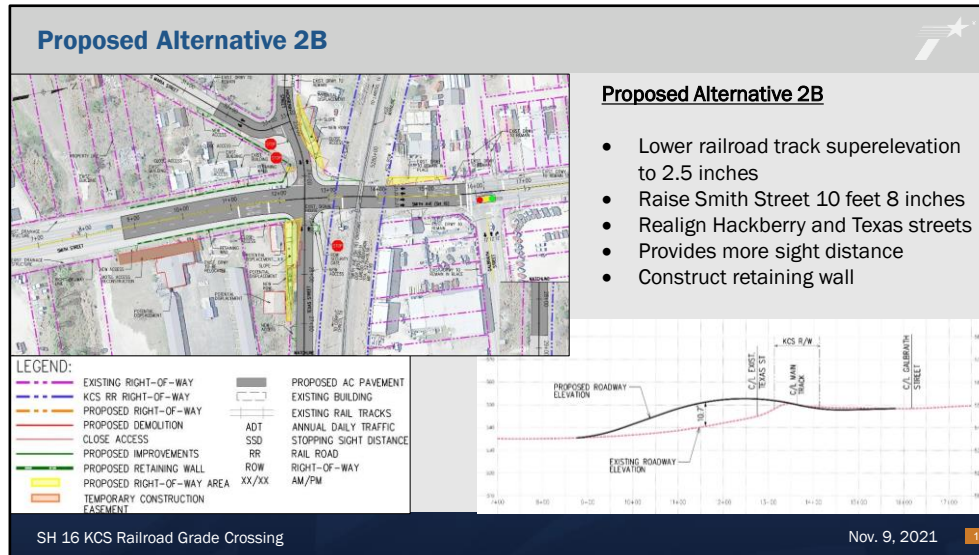
- Not include railroad modifications
- Raise Smith Street 11 feet 7 inches
- Raise and realign Hackberry and Texas streets
- Construct retaining wall



14. Proposed Alternative 2A

Proposed Alternative 2A would:

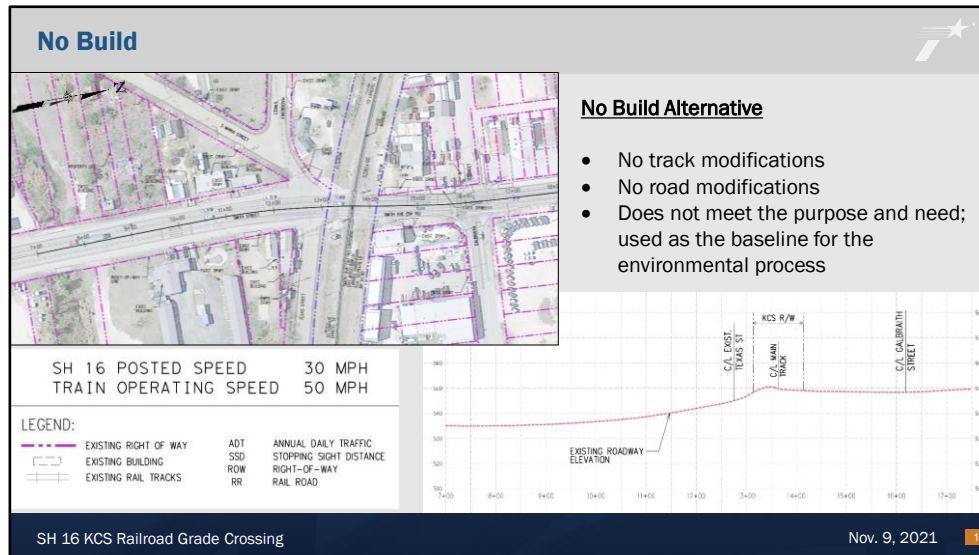
- Lower railroad track superelevation to 2.5 inches
- Raise Smith Street 7 feet 7 inches
- Realign Hackberry and Texas streets
- Construct retaining wall



15. Proposed Alternative 2B

Proposed Alternative 2B would:

- Lower railroad track superelevation to 2.5 inches
- Raise Smith Street 10 feet 8 inches
- Realign Hackberry and Texas streets
- Provides more sight distance
- Construct retaining wall



16. No Build

The no build alternative will leave the crossing as it currently is. There would be no track or road modifications. This option does not meet the need or the purpose of this project.

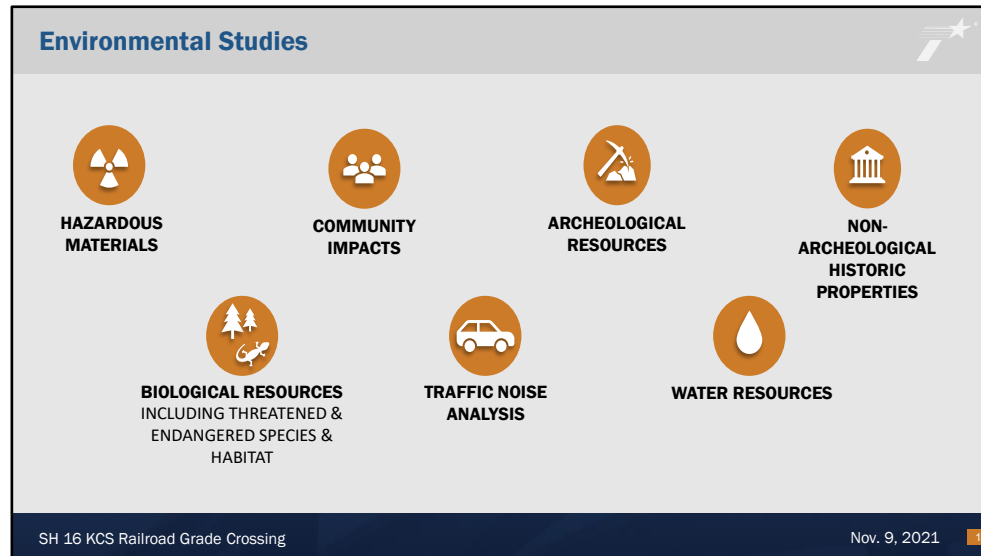


**National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Assignment to the
Texas Department of Transportation**

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 (FHWA) and TxDOT.

17. MOU

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 23U.S.C.327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated December 9, 2019, and executed by the Federal Highway Administration and TxDOT.



18. Environmental Studies

The State Highway 16 railroad grade crossing project requires the preparation of an Environmental document in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act or NEPA.

The process evaluates alternatives and requires environmental studies before a recommended alternative is identified and an environmental decision is rendered.

Supporting studies include an initial site assessment for hazardous materials, community impact analysis, historical and archeological studies, evaluation of biological resources, a traffic noise analysis and evaluation of water resources.

Environmental Studies



Preliminary results

- Approximately 0.25-acre of new right of way would be required to construct the proposed improvements
- Approximately 0.1-acre of temporary construction easement would be required for a business access driveway
- Potential impacts to colonias will be further investigated and verified.
- No residential displacements are anticipated.
- Approximately 5 commercial and 1 other (a sign/marquee) displacements are anticipated.
- There are up to 9 potential business access changes proposed.
- One potential hazardous materials site may be impacted by the project

SH 16 KCS Railroad Grade Crossing

Nov. 9, 2021

19

19. Environmental Studies

This slide lists preliminary results of the environmental studies so far. Additional studies continue.

- Approximately 0.25-acre of new right of way would be required to construct the proposed improvements
- Approximately 0.1-acre of temporary construction easement would be required for a business access driveway
- Potential impacts to colonias will be further investigated and verified.
- No residential displacements are anticipated.
- Approximately 5 commercial and 1 other (a sign/marquee) displacements are anticipated.
- There are up to 9 potential business access changes proposed.
- One potential hazardous materials site may be impacted by the project

Environmental Studies (continued)



Preliminary results (cont.)

- Impacts to the 100-year floodplain are anticipated to occur within the project area
- Impacts to creeks, streams and/or wetlands are not anticipated
- Impacts to threatened and endangered species are not anticipated
- No archeological sites are anticipated to be affected
- Up to 6 potentially historic-aged structures are anticipated to be impacted.
- No parks and recreation areas occur in the project area
- Traffic noise analysis is awaiting approved traffic data

20. Environmental Studies

And here are more preliminary results from the numerous environmental studies needed to evaluate the project.

- Impacts to the 100-year floodplain are anticipated to occur within the project area
- Impacts to creeks, streams and/or wetlands are not anticipated
- Impacts to threatened and endangered species are not anticipated
- No archeological sites are anticipated to be affected
- Up to 6 potentially historic-aged structures are anticipated to be impacted.
- No parks and recreation areas occur in the project area
- Traffic noise analysis is awaiting approved traffic data

Alternative Evaluation Matrix					
CRITERIA					
ENGINEERING	Units	Alternative 1 - No Track Changes, Highway Improvements Only	Alternative 2A - Minor Track Changes (Reduce existing superelevation of 3.5" to 2.5") and Lesser Highway Improvements	Alternative 2B - Minor Track Changes (Reduce existing superelevation of 3.5" to 2.5") and Further Highway Improvements	No Build - No Track Changes and No Highway Improvements
Meets Highway & Railroad Safety	Each	YES	YES	YES	NO
Potential Proposed ROW (AC)	Acres	0.25	0.25	0.25	0
Potential Temporary Construction Easement (TCE) (AC)	Acres	0.1	0	0.1	0
ENVIRONMENTAL					
Potential Hazardous Materials Sites	Each	1	1	1	0
100-year Floodplains	Acres	1.94	1.6	1.94	0
Potential Historic Aged Structures	Each	6	5	6	0
Potential Commercial Displacements	Each	5	4	4	0
Potential Other Displacements	Each	1	0	1	0
Potential Changes In Access					
Potential Driveways Closed	Each	6	5	5	0
Potential Driveways Relocated	Each	3	2	3	0
Total Driveways Affected	Each	9	7	8	0
Sensitive Noise Receptors	Each	5	4	5	0
Cost (MM)	\$	6.5	4.2	6.3	0
NOTES		Meets safety requirements, but impacts the most number of properties	Meets safety requirements, and impacts the least number of properties	Best meets safety requirements, but impacts the second to most number of properties	Does not meet safety requirements

SH 16 KCS Railroad Grade Crossing

Nov. 9, 2021

21

21. Alternative Evaluation Matrix

An evaluation matrix was developed to compare the four alternatives which includes three build alternatives and one no-build, or do nothing, alternative.

The matrix included several engineering and environmental criteria. As you can see, each of the proposed build alternatives would require a quarter acre of additional right of way and Alternative 1 and 2B would require a tenth of an acre of temporary construction easement. Alternative 1 includes the highest potential property acquisitions.

Preferred Alternative



A total of four alternatives were evaluated:

- 3 build alternatives
- A “No Build” alternative that makes no changes to the rail crossing

Of the four alternatives evaluated, Alternative 2A, is the preferred alternative since it meets safety requirements and impacts the least number of properties.

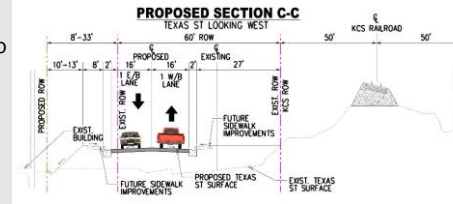
Alternative 2A involves lowering the railroad superelevation and realigning Smith Street to match new railroad superelevation.

22. Preferred Alternative

Alternative 2A was determined as the Preferred Alternative because it meets safety requirements and impacts the least number of properties.

Right of Way (ROW) Information

- Approximately 0.25 acres of ROW for all options except No Build
- Approximately 0.1 acre of temporary construction easements for Proposed Alternatives 1 and 2B
- 4 - 5 potential displacements for all options except No Build
- The Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policy Act of 1970 (Uniform Act)
- Right-of-Way Brochures are available on the TxDOT Website: <http://txdot.gov/inside-txdot/forms-publications/publications/landowner-rights.html>
- Information about the benefits, services and Right of Way Acquisition schedule can be obtained by calling Pedro Escobar TxDOT District Office at (956) 702-6179



SH 16 KCS Railroad Grade Crossing

Nov. 9, 2021

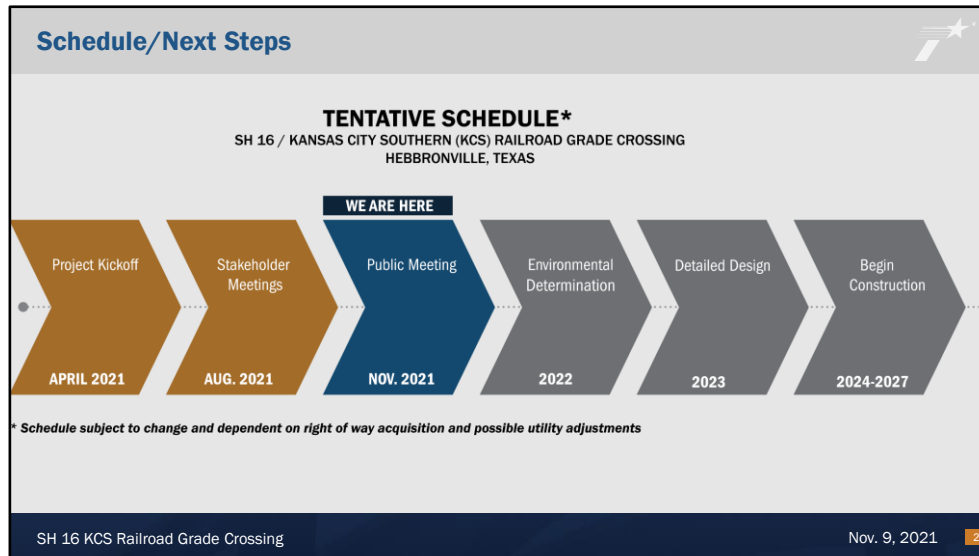
23

23. Right of Way Information

TxDOT strives to minimize impacts of roadway improvements, but the state sometimes needs the additional room to make the improvements. In this case, a quarter acre of right of way is needed for improvements, along with a potential need for a tenth of an acre for temporary construction easements for Proposed Alternatives 1 and 2B. There are four-to-five potential displacements of business buildings.

Any property purchased by the state follows the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policy Act of 1970. Right-of-way brochures are available on the TxDOT website at the address listed on this slide.

Information about the benefits, services and Right of Way Acquisition schedule can be obtained by calling Pedro Escobar, Pharr TxDOT District Office at (956) 702-6179.






24. Schedule/Next Steps

Here you can see the tentative project schedule. The project kicked off earlier this year and stakeholder meetings were held a couple of months ago with potentially impacted landowners. No final decisions have been made. Still to come is a decision on the environmental study and detailed design. At this point, we estimate it could be 2024 before construction begins. The schedule is subject to change. We welcome public input and will show you how to send us your comments on the next slide.

How To Submit Your Comments

All comments must be received or postmarked by Monday, Nov. 29, 2021, to be included in the official meeting documentation.

		
Online	Email Us	Mail-In Comments
<p>www.txdot.gov Keyword search "SH 16 at Railroad Grade Crossing".</p>	<p>Robin.Gelston@txdot.gov</p>	<p>TxDOT Pharr District Attn: Robin Gelston 600 West Interstate 2 Pharr, Texas 78577</p>

Additional Questions?
 Any questions regarding this project may be made at anytime during the project development process.

Please contact:
 Epi Gonzalez, Project Manager
 Phone: 956-702-6127
 Email: EpiGonzalez@txdot.gov

SH 16 KCS Railroad Grade Crossing Nov. 9, 2021 **25**

25. How to Submit Your Comments

Your comments are requested and will help make a better project. There are several ways to submit comments.

First, comments may be submitted online by going to the TxDOT website at: www.txdot.gov and entering the keywords "SH 16 at Railroad Grade Crossing."

Comments may also be emailed to: Robin.Gelston@txdot.gov

And finally, comments may be mailed to:

TxDOT Pharr District Office
 Attn: Robin Gelston, Environmental Supervisor
 600 W. Interstate 2
 Pharr, TX 78577

As a reminder, all comments must be received **on or before Monday, Nov. 29, 2021.**



26. Thank You

Thank you for participating in this virtual public meeting for the State Highway 16 at Kansas City Southern Railroad grade crossing safety project in Hebronville. We look forward to receiving your comments.