



Notice of a Virtual Public Meeting with In-Person Option

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**US 281 (MILITARY HIGHWAY)
From FM 732 to FM 1421
CSJs: 0220-04-049 & 0220-04-050
Cameron County, Texas**

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) is proposing to reconstruct and widen US Highway (US) 281 (Military Highway) from approximately 0.3 miles west of Farm-to-Market (FM) 732 to 0.18 miles west of FM 1421 in Cameron County, Texas. This notice advises the public that TxDOT will be conducting an online virtual public meeting on the proposed project with an in-person option. **The virtual meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 7, 2021, at 5 p.m.** To log onto the virtual public meeting, go to the following web address (www.txdot.gov) at the date and time indicated above and type "US 281 Military Highway" into the search box at the top right corner of the webpage. Project staff will give a presentation, which will be a pre-recorded video that includes both audio and visual components. Please note that the presentation will not be available on the website until the time and date listed above. Following the virtual public meeting, the presentation will remain available for viewing at the web address indicated above until Friday, April 23, 2021, at 5 p.m. If you do not have internet access, you may call Atidio "Rudy" Garza, P.E. at (956) 702-6339 between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, to ask questions and access project materials during the project development process.

Additionally, TxDOT is providing an in-person option for individuals who would like to participate in person instead of online. In-person attendees will be able to view the same presentation delivered in the online public meeting, which will be playing on a screen, review hard copies of project materials, ask questions of TxDOT staff and/or consultants from a socially distanced approach, and leave written comments. **The in-person option will be held on Thursday, April 8, 2021, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the TxDOT San Benito Area Office, 1350 E. Bus. Hwy 77, San Benito, Texas 78586.** Attendance at the in-person option will be by appointment only. Individuals wishing to attend the in-person option must call Atidio "Rudy" Garza, P.E. at (956) 702-6339 between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, to make an appointment. In recognition of COVID-19, enhanced safety measures will be applied at the in-person option, including a requirement to have an appointment, and follow social distancing practices. If anyone arrives without an appointment, they may be asked to wait outside to ensure we maintain appropriate occupancy within the meeting room.

The proposed project activities would consist of reconstructing and widening the existing two-lane rural US 281 (Military Highway) to a 4-lane rural highway with a left-turn lane and shoulders. The proposed project roadway width varies from 78 feet to 86 feet. The proposed right of way varies between 121 feet and 146 feet and would require approximately 3.1 acres of new right of way. The proposed roadway facility would include four 12-foot travel lanes with two travel lanes in each direction and 8-foot shoulders on each side of the roadway. The proposed roadway facility would also include a 14-foot turning lane. The proposed drainage within the project area would be a roadside open ditch with equalizer culverts beneath the roadway.

The proposed project would, subject to final design considerations, require additional right of way, and potentially displace two residential outbuildings (car ports) and two commercial structures. No residences are anticipated to be displaced by the proposed project. Relocation assistance is available for displaced



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persons and businesses. Information about the TxDOT Relocation Assistance Program and services and benefits for those displaced and other affected property owners, as well as information about the tentative schedule for right-of-way acquisition and construction, can be obtained from the TxDOT District office by calling (956) 702-6287.

The proposed project would acquire right of way from Esparza-Domanski Community Park at the intersection of FM 1577 and US 281 (Military Highway). Approximately 0.07 acres of the park property adjacent to the US 281 (Military Highway) right of way would be required to construct the proposed improvements. No recreational structures associated with the park would be impacted. TxDOT anticipates making a *de minimis* determination for this use under Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966. Public comments on the effects of the proposed project on the activities, features, or attributes of Esparza-Domanski Community Park may be submitted as described below.

Three wildlife crossing structures are proposed to be constructed beneath the roadway and adjacent to the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Lower Rio Grande Valley National Wildlife Refuge (LRGVNWR). The proposed project would involve construction in wetlands. The proposed project would involve action in a floodplain.

Any environmental documentation or studies, any maps and drawings showing the project location and design, tentative construction schedules, and other information regarding the proposed project are available online at www.txdot.gov, keyword search: "US 281 Military Highway". These materials will also be available in hard copy form for review at the in-person option.

The virtual public meeting and in-person option will be conducted in English and Spanish. If you need an interpreter or document translator because neither English nor Spanish are your primary languages or you have difficulty communicating effectively in one of these languages, one will be provided to you. If you have a disability and need assistance, special arrangements can be made to accommodate most needs. If you need interpretation or translation services or you are a person with a disability who requires an accommodation to attend and participate in the virtual public meeting or in-person option, please contact Norma Robledo at the TxDOT Pharr District, at (956) 702-6161 no later than 4 p.m., Friday, April 2, 2021. Please be aware that advance notice is required as some services and accommodations may require time for TxDOT to arrange.

Written comments from the public regarding the proposed project are requested and may be submitted by mail to the TxDOT Pharr District Office, 600 W. I-2, Pharr, Texas 78577. Written comments may also be submitted by email to Atidio.Garza@txdot.gov. All comments must be received on or before Friday, April 23, 2021. Responses to comments received will be available online at www.txdot.gov, keyword search: "US 281 Military Highway" once they have been prepared.

If you have any general questions or concerns regarding the proposed project or virtual meeting or in-person option, please contact Atidio "Rudy" Garza, P.E., Project Manager, at (956) 702-6339 or Atidio.Garza@txdot.gov.

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 Dec. 9, 2019, and executed by FHWA and TxDOT.