The banner features a collage of images at the top showing people at a public meeting. The main text is on a white background with a blue border. The title 'Virtual Public Meeting' is in large blue font. Below it, the project name and location are listed in black. The dates of the meeting are also in black. At the bottom, there is a small line of italicized text regarding environmental review.

Virtual Public Meeting

US 281 South Comal Project
From East Borgfeld Drive to SH 46
Comal and Bexar counties, Texas
CSJ: 0253-03-071

Virtual Public Meeting
May 18, 2021 to June 2, 2021

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. and a Memorandum of Understanding dated December 9, 2019, and executed by FHWA and TxDOT.

Welcome to the Texas Department of Transportation San Antonio District’s Virtual Public Meeting for the US 281 South Comal Project.

The Virtual Public Meeting Room will be available from Tuesday, May 18, 2021 through Wednesday, June 2, 2021. Virtual Public Meeting materials will continue to be available at www.txdot.gov, keywords “US 281 South Comal” under the “Downloads” section of the meeting notice page. Throughout this presentation, we will give you various ways you can submit your comments and ask questions.

Let’s get started!

Virtual Public Meeting in Response to Public Health Concerns

- TxDOT changed the in-person public meeting to a virtual format in response to the COVID-19 outbreak.
- The Virtual Public Meeting and TxDOT website will provide the same information as an in-person meeting would have.

US 281 South Comal

Given the unique circumstance of the COVID-19 outbreak, along with TxDOT’s commitment to protecting public health, TxDOT is conducting this Virtual Public Meeting to limit in-person contact and large gatherings. At this time, the virtual format will be used in lieu of an in-person public meeting.

The Virtual Public Meeting covers the same information that TxDOT would have presented at an in-person public meeting. All meeting materials can be found on www.txdot.gov, keywords “US 281 South Comal”.

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US 281 South Corral 3

This slide provides an overview of the agenda for the meeting. We will go into more details on each of these topics throughout the meeting.

Purpose of Virtual Public Meeting

- The purpose of the meeting is to present the proposed improvements to the public and **gather feedback** on the proposed project.
- Questions or comments may be submitted to the US 281 South Comal Project Team at any time during project development.
- To be included in the official public meeting record, comments from the public are requested and may be presented for a 15-day comment period. **Comments must be postmarked and/or submitted on or before Wednesday, June 2, 2021, to be included in the official public meeting record.**
- Written comments may be submitted online as part of this Virtual Public Meeting, by mail, or by email to:

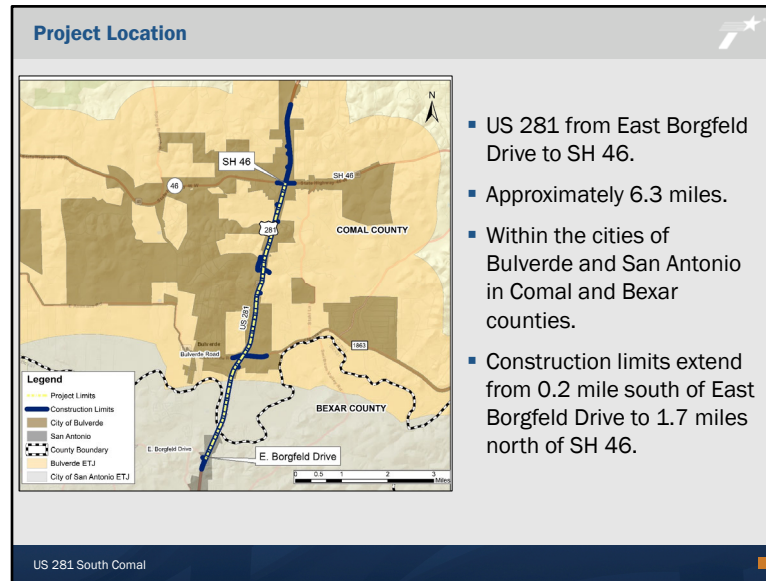
US 281 South Comal Project Team
c/o Jackie Lopez
5835 Callaghan Road, Suite 200
San Antonio, Texas 78228
US281Comal@pozcam.com
- Responses to comments received during the public comment period will be provided in a Documentation of Virtual Public Meeting report and available for public review on the project's website at www.txdot.gov, keywords "US 281 South Comal."

US 281 South Comal

The purpose of this meeting is to present the proposed improvements to US 281 and to gather public feedback on the proposed project. Your input is valuable and will be considered by the project team for design refinements, where appropriate.

Questions or comments may be submitted to the US 281 South Comal Project Team at any time during project development. However, to be included in the official public meeting record, all comments must be postmarked or received by Wednesday, June 2, 2021. Written comments may be submitted online as part of this Virtual Public Meeting under the "Participate" tab, or may be submitted by mail or by email to the US 281 South Comal Project Team, attention to Jackie Lopez, at 5835 Callaghan Road, Suite 200 in San Antonio, Texas 78228 or to US281Comal@pozcam.com.


Responses to comments received during the public comment period will be provided in a Documentation of Virtual Public Meeting Report and will be available for public review on the project's website at www.txdot.gov, keywords "US 281 South Comal" once it has been completed.



The limits of the proposed project are on US 281 from East Borgfeld Drive to SH 46, for a distance of approximately 6.3 miles. The project limits are located within the cities of Bulverde and San Antonio in Comal and Bexar counties.

In order to construct the project and tie-in to the existing US 281 outside of the project limits, construction would extend approximately 0.2 mile south of East Borgfeld Drive and would extend approximately 1.7 miles north of SH 46.

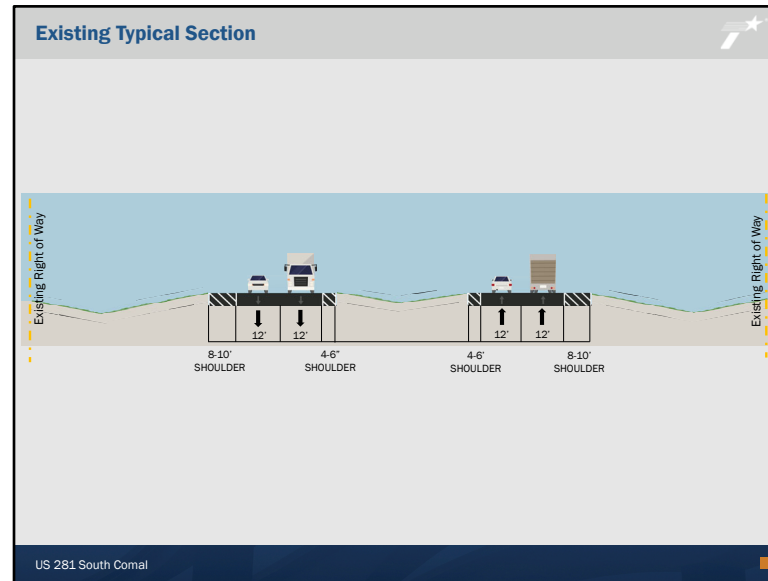
Existing Conditions



- Existing right-of-way width of 225 to 315 feet
- Four lanes (two in each direction)
- Large grassy median
- No frontage roads (non-controlled access)
- Open ditch drainage system
- Overpasses at East Borgfeld Drive, FM 1863, and SH 46

US 281 South Corral

Currently, US 281 is a four-lane highway, with two lanes in each direction and a large grassy median. The existing right-of-way width is approximately 225 to 315 feet. Within the project limits, there are currently no frontage roads along US 281 and the roadway operates as a non-controlled access highway. Drainage is accommodated by an open ditch drainage system. There are existing overpasses on US 281 at East Borgfeld Drive, FM 1863, and SH 46.



Here is an existing typical cross-section of what US 281 typically looks like today. As you can see, US 281 consists of two 12-foot travel lanes in each direction with inside and outside shoulders, separated by a large median. No bicycle or pedestrian accommodations are currently provided along the corridor.

Purpose and Need of the Proposed Project

- **Need** – The proposed project is needed because US 281 between East Borgfeld Drive and SH 46 is experiencing growth and an associated increase in traffic congestion, resulting in reduced mobility and safety.
- **Purpose** – The purpose of the proposed project is to relieve traffic congestion, improve mobility, and improve safety on US 281 within the project limits.

Increased population in the project area has led to an increase in the number of businesses, driveways, and cross-street connections along US 281, which increases the possibility of crashes within the project limits.

US 281 South Comal 8

The US 281 South Comal Project is needed because US 281 between East Borgfeld Drive and SH 46 is experiencing population growth and an associated increase in traffic congestion, resulting in reduced mobility and safety. The increased population in the project area has led to an increase in the number of businesses, driveways, and cross-streets along US 281, which increases the possibility for crashes along the corridor.

The purpose of the proposed project is to relieve traffic congestion, improve mobility, and improve safety on US 281 within the project limits.

Description of the Proposed Project

US 281 would be expanded to a four-lane freeway with two-lane frontage roads in each direction, with space in the median that could accommodate future transportation improvements.

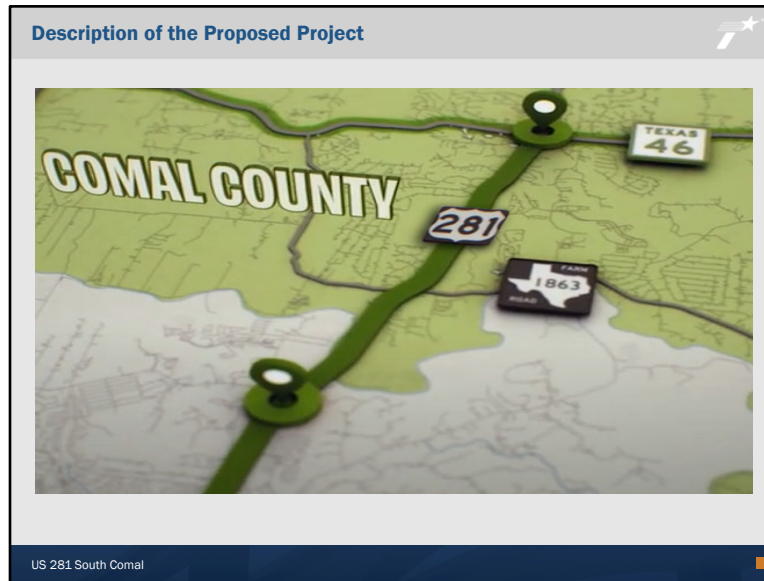


US 281 South Corral

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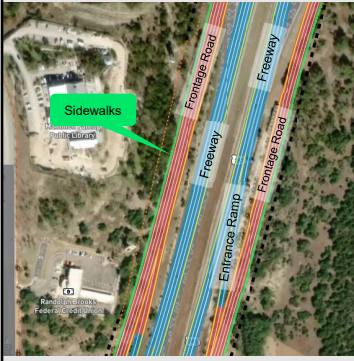
Under implementation of the proposed project, US 281 would be expanded to a four-lane freeway with two-lane frontage roads in each direction, with space in the median that could accommodate future transportation improvements.

Now, let's watch a short video that describes the major components of the proposed project.



[At this point of the presentation, the 3D visualization video was played. This video is available for review under the “Watch” tab of the Virtual Public Meeting.]

Description of the Proposed Project



Project Elements:

- Four-lane divided freeway (two lanes in each direction).
- One-way frontage roads (two to four lanes in each direction).
- Auxiliary lanes along main lanes and frontage roads as needed.
- Turn lanes to cross streets and major driveways.
- Exit and entrance ramps for each proposed grade separation.
- Sidewalks along frontage roads.

US 281 South Corral

As you just saw in the video, the proposed US 281 would consist of a four-lane divided freeway, with two lanes in each direction, as well as one-way frontage roads, with two to four lanes in each direction. Auxiliary lanes would also be provided throughout the project limits on the main lanes and frontage roads, where needed. At cross-streets, intersections, and major driveways, turn lanes would be provided. Exit and entrance ramps would be constructed at strategic locations along the corridor to allow vehicles to enter and exit the freeway. These ramps would be placed in locations that allow for access to the major intersections at the proposed grade separations. Lastly, sidewalks would be provided along the frontage roads.

Description of the Proposed Project

The map shows the proposed project area for US 281 South Comal. It highlights the project limits (dashed line), construction limits (solid line), and existing overpasses (stars). The map also shows the city boundaries of Bulverde and San Antonio, and the county boundaries of Comal and Bexar. A legend in the bottom left corner identifies the symbols used on the map.

- Overpasses would be located on US 281 at:
 - East Borgfeld Drive** – the overpass currently under construction would remain in place.
 - FM 1863/Bulverde Road** – the existing overpass would be improved by adding frontage roads and approach/departing lanes.
 - Mustang Vista** – a new overpass would be constructed.
 - SH 46** – the existing overpass would be replaced with a wider bridge.

US 281 South Comal

As we've touched on, there are existing overpasses on US 281 at East Borgfeld Drive, FM 1863, and SH 46. At East Borgfeld Drive, an overpass is currently under construction. This overpass would remain in place under the proposed project. At FM 1863/Bulverde Road, the existing overpass would be improved by adding frontage roads and approach/departing lanes. At SH 46, the existing overpass would be replaced with a wider bridge to accommodate auxiliary lanes and future expansion. A new overpass would be constructed at Mustang Vista, as was described in the video that was previously shown.

Description of the Proposed Project

Project Elements:

- Proposed widening of FM 1863 from US 281 to east of Wiley Road.
- Proposed connection from Casey Road to Mustang Vista.

US 281 South Corral by Unknown Author is licensed under CC BY 4.0

The project would also include the widening of FM 1863 from US 281 to east of Wiley Road.

In addition, a new extension of Mustang Vista on the west side of US 281 would be constructed, which would provide a connection from Casey Road to Mustang Vista.

Description of the Proposed Project

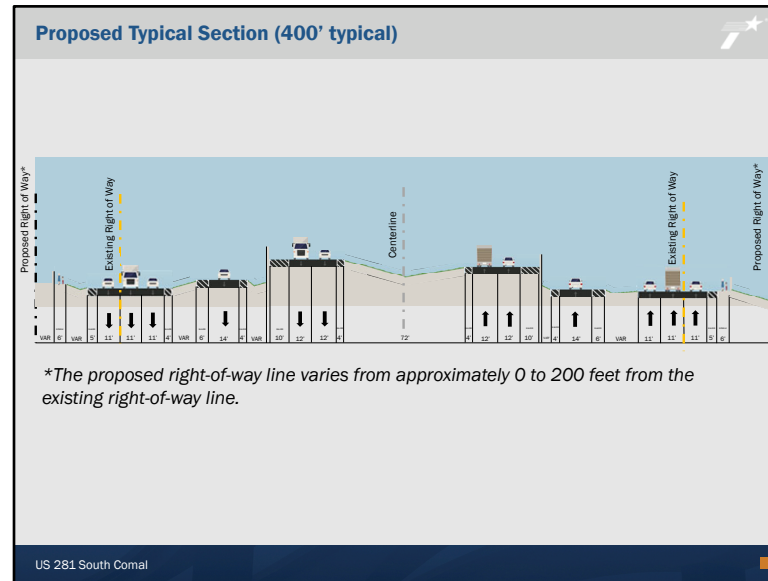
Project Elements:

- Southbound entrance ramp for SH 46 traffic braided over the US 281 southbound exit ramp for Mustang Vista.
- North of SH 46, a southbound frontage road constructed.

US 281 South Corral

A southbound entrance ramp for traffic traveling from SH 46 would be braided over the southbound exit ramp for Mustang Vista.

North of SH 46, a southbound frontage road would be constructed.



Here is the cross-section of what US 281 would like if the proposed project were constructed. As we've discussed, US 281 would be upgraded to a freeway with main lanes and frontage roads on both sides of the roadway, with entrance and exit ramps, auxiliary and turn lanes, and sidewalks along the frontage roads. The proposed ROW width is approximately 400 feet but varies down to 315 feet and up to 450 feet in certain locations. The proposed ROW line varies from approximately 0 to 200 feet from the existing ROW line, depending on location.

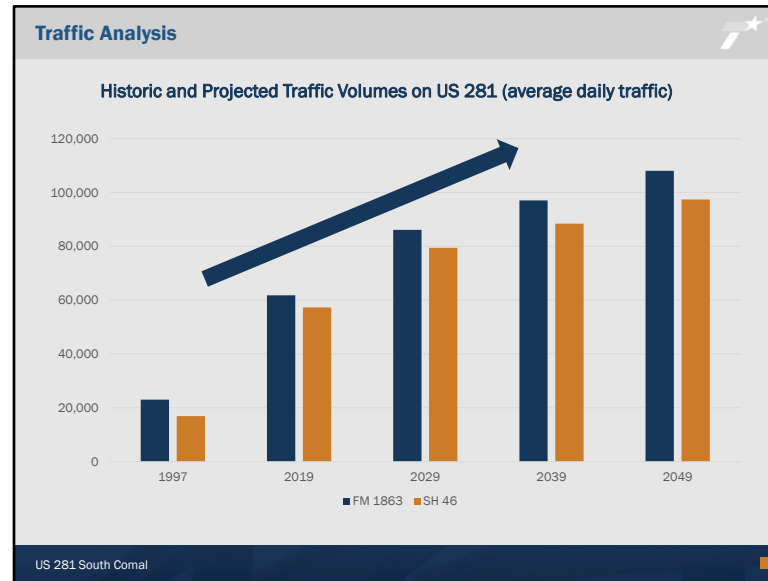
Crash Reduction Strategies

- ☑ Construct overpass at Mustang Vista.
- ☑ Construct frontage roads that provide access to all driveways and cross streets, which separates local traffic from thru traffic.
 - Vehicles enter driveways from frontage roads, which have significantly lower traffic volumes.
 - Vehicles exit driveways onto 45 mph frontage roads versus the current 65 mph US 281 (4 lane divided highway).
- ☑ Upgrade US 281 to meet all current freeway design standards.
- ☑ Provide sidewalks and crosswalks for pedestrian mobility and safety.

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One of the purposes of the proposed project is to improve safety on US 281 within the project limits. Many project elements are proposed that are anticipated to improve safety along the corridor. These include constructing an overpass at Mustang Vista, constructing frontage roads that provide access to driveways and cross streets, upgrading US 281 to meet freeway design standards, and providing sidewalks and crosswalks for pedestrians.

By upgrading US 281 to a freeway with frontage roads, local traffic would be separated from thru traffic. Under the proposed project, vehicles would enter and exit driveways from the proposed frontage roads, which would have lower traffic volumes and speeds than what exists on US 281 today.

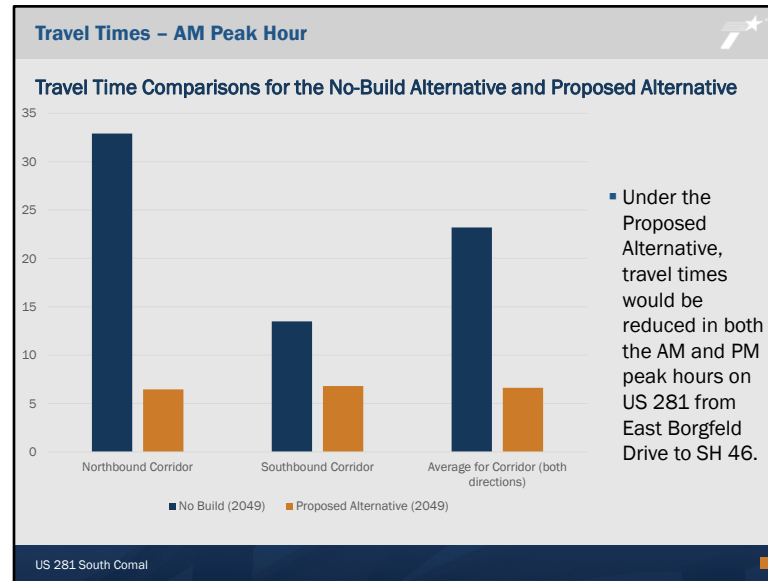


Now, let's dive a bit deeper into the traffic analysis that was conducted as part of the project.

Population and traffic growth have been occurring in Comal County and along US 281. Traffic projections done for the project anticipate that this trend is likely to continue into year 2049.

In 2019, traffic volumes at US 281 and FM 1863 were approximately 62,000 vehicles per day, and at US 281 and SH 46 were approximately 57,000 vehicles per day.

Using predicted population growth rates for the area, future traffic volumes were projected for the corridor. This analysis indicates that by 2049, traffic volumes at US 281 and FM 1863 would increase to approximately 108,000 vehicles per day, which relates to a **74** percent increase from existing conditions! Similarly, at US 281 and SH 46, traffic volumes are anticipated to reach approximately 97,000 vehicles per day in 2049, which is a 70 percent increase from existing conditions.



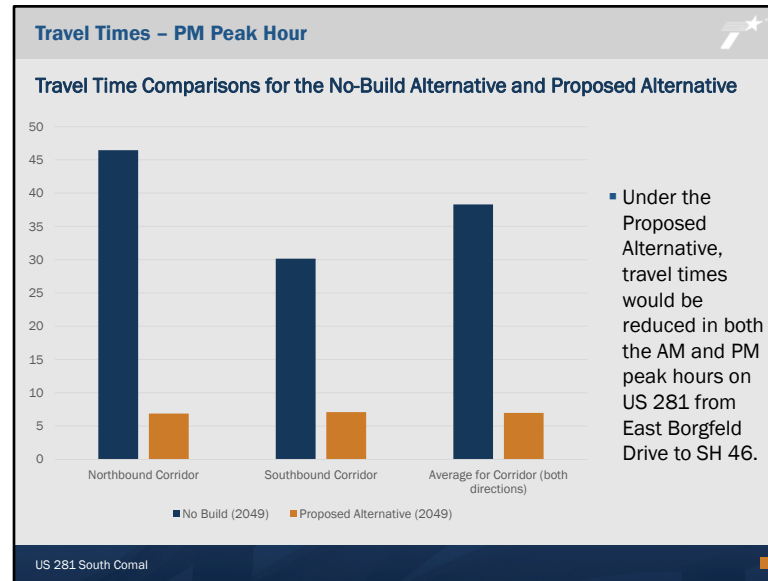
The project team also compared travel times on US 281 from East Borgfeld Drive to SH 46. The graph shown depicts the estimated travel times on US 281 in the AM – or the morning – peak hour.

Using projected traffic volumes on US 281, the project team compared the travel times expected in 2049 under the No-Build Alternative and Proposed Alternative. The No-Build Alternative is the alternative where the proposed project is not constructed and US 281 continues to operate with planned and funded improvements, mostly as a four-lane highway. The Proposed Alternative includes constructing the proposed project and upgrading US 281 to a four-lane freeway with frontage roads.

Under the No-Build Alternative, by 2049, it is estimated that it would take approximately 33 minutes to travel northbound on US 281 from Borgfeld to SH 46, and would take approximately 13 minutes to make this trip in the southbound direction. Traffic signals and turnarounds were considered under the No-Build scenario at Mustang Vista, which reduced travel times somewhat in the southbound direction. However, in the northbound direction, the capacity of FM 1863 at US 281 and Wiley Road is anticipated to result in traffic backing up onto US 281, resulting in higher travel times for northbound traffic.

If US 281 were converted to a four-lane freeway with frontage roads, which is called the Proposed Alternative, travel times on US 281 would be approximately 6 minutes in both the northbound and southbound directions in 2049.

Also, the proposed project would greatly reduce the amount of time needed to enter the freeway from driveways and cross streets by providing lower-speed frontage roads.



This chart shows the comparison of travel times for US 281 in the PM – or evening – peak hour.

In the evening, travel delays are anticipated to be even worse in the No-Build Alternative compared to morning delays, with approximate 47-minute delays for northbound US 281 traffic and 30-minute delays for southbound US 281 traffic. The Proposed Alternative would greatly reduce travel times to approximately 7 minutes for each direction.

Project Funding

- The project is not currently funded for construction.
- The estimated construction cost for the US 281 South Comal Project is approximately \$240 million.

US 281 South Comal

The proposed project is not currently funded for construction. Therefore, an estimated timeframe for construction is not available at this time. The estimated construction cost for the project is approximately \$240 million.

Anticipated ROW Impacts

- The proposed project would require the acquisition of approximately 80 to 140 feet of additional right of way along US 281.
- Information on the right-of-way acquisition process is available under the “Review” tab of the Virtual Public Meeting, including:
 - Landowner’s Bill of Rights.
 - Relocation Assistance.
 - State Purchase of ROW Booklet.
- Information concerning services and benefits available to affected property owners and information about the tentative schedule for right-of-way acquisition can be obtained from the TxDOT district office by calling 210-615-1110.

Acquisition and relocation assistance would be in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Properties Acquisitions Policies Act of 1970, as amended.

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If approved and funded, the proposed project would involve the widening of US 281 and would require the acquisition of approximately 80 to 140 feet of additional right of way.

Information on the right-of-way acquisition process is available for download and review under the “Review” tab of this Virtual Public Meeting, including a Landowner’s Bill of Rights, Relocation Assistance document, and State Purchase of Right-of-Way Booklet.

Information concerning services and benefits available to potentially affected property owners and information about the tentative schedule for right-of-way acquisition can be obtained from the TxDOT district office by calling 210-615-1110.


Acquisition and relocation assistance would be in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Properties Acquisitions Policies Act of 1970, as amended.

Environmental Resources within the Project Area


The Project Team identified environmental constraints early in the project development process and designed the proposed freeway to avoid or minimize impacts to these important resources.

Environmental Resources in the Area:

- **Water Resources** – Cibolo Creek, Lewis Creek, Hanz Creek and tributaries
- **Edwards Aquifer** – portions within Edwards Aquifer Recharge zone
- **Community Resources** – adjacent churches, a daycare, and RV parks
- **Vegetation and Habitat**– large tracts of undeveloped agricultural land and wooded ranchlands



Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone Sign



Adjacent RV Park

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The Project Team identified the various environmental constraints within the project area early in the project development process and designed the proposed freeway to avoid or minimize impacts to these important resources.


A summary of some of the environmental resources located along the US 281 corridor and project area include several creeks and tributaries; the Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone; adjacent churches, a daycare, and RV parks; and large tracts of undeveloped agricultural land and wooded ranchlands.

Environmental Resources within the Project Area


Environmental Resources in the Area:

- **Cultural Resources** – adjacent cemetery (existing offset to US 281 to remain), adjacent historic-age structures.
- **Traffic Noise** – several adjacent noise-sensitive receivers including residences, churches, schools, outdoor playgrounds and seating areas, and recreational areas.
- **Hazardous Materials** – adjacent gas stations, fuel tanks, auto repair shops, and former spills .
- **Air Quality** – limits within Bexar County within a non-attainment area for ozone (O₃).

Environmental constraints maps of the project area are available for review and download under the “Review” tab on the Virtual Public Meeting.



Adjacent Church

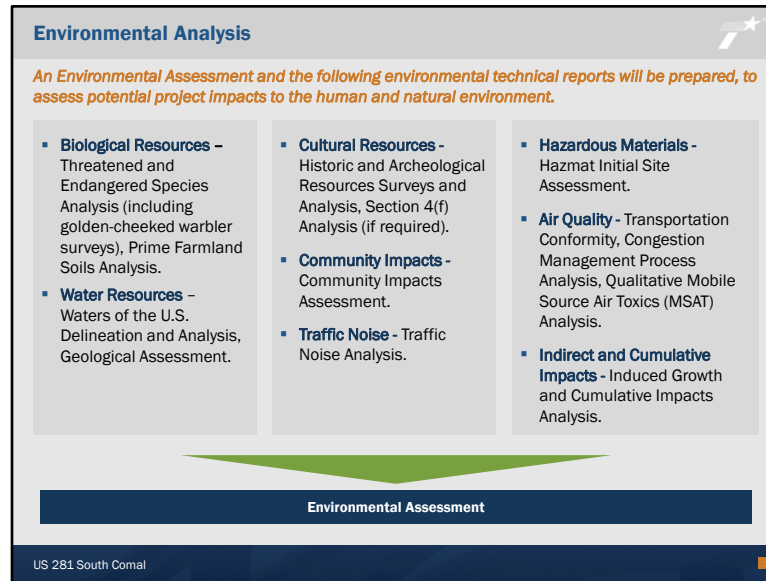


Adjacent Gas Station

US 281 South Corral 23

Other environmental resources include an adjacent private cemetery and historic-age structures; several noise-sensitive receivers, adjacent gas stations, fuel tanks, and auto repair shops; and portions of the project within a non-attainment area for ozone.

Maps showing the environmental constraints in the project area that were considered during project design are available for download and review under the “Review” tab of the Virtual Public Meeting.



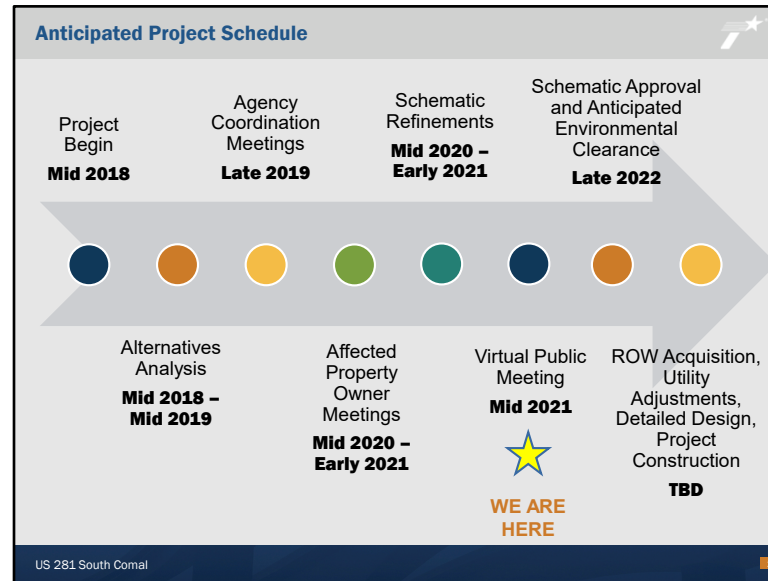
The US 281 South Comal Project involves environmental analysis of the project under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (also known as “NEPA”).

Several environmental studies will be prepared to identify, minimize or avoid, and mitigate potential project impacts to environmental resources. This includes studies on biological resources, water resources, cultural resources, community impacts, traffic noise, hazardous materials, air quality, and indirect and cumulative impacts.

After environmental studies are complete, the project team will coordinate with various resource agencies, as necessary, including potential coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Texas Historical Commission, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, and others as appropriate.

Following completion of environmental technical reports and agency coordination, an Environmental Assessment document will be prepared that summarizes any potential project impacts to environmental resources, as well as provides avoidance and minimization measures as needed.

The draft Environmental Assessment and technical studies will become available for public review and comment upon their completion at the project’s Public Hearing.



The US 281 South Comal Project began in 2018. The Project Team conducted an extensive alternatives analysis for the project and vetted several alternatives based on feedback from the City of Bulverde and Comal County, as well as the avoidance of impacts to environmental resources, adjacent properties, and the topography of the project area. A preferred alternative was selected, and the project team held meetings with potentially affected property owners in the Mid 2020 to Early 2021 to discuss the proposed improvements and garner feedback on the project. The purpose of this Virtual Public Meeting is to gather feedback from the public. The project team will consider all feedback received and will make design refinements, where appropriate.

Schematic approval and environmental clearance are anticipated in Late 2022. The next steps for the project would consist of ROW acquisition, utility adjustments, detailed design, and project construction. However, these pieces of the schedule are currently to be determined as the project is not currently funded.

Comments or Questions?

Commenting Options

1. Comment online during the Virtual Public Meeting under the "Participate" tab.
2. Email comments to US281Comal@pozcam.com.
3. Download a comment form under the "Review" tab and mail to:
US 281 South Comal Project Team
c/o Jackie Lopez
5835 Callaghan Rd., Suite 200
San Antonio, Texas 78228

Questions or comments may be submitted to the US 281 South Comal Project Team at any time during project development. However, to be included in the official public meeting record, all comments must be postmarked and/or received by Wednesday, June 2, 2021.

Responses to comments received during the public comment period will be provided in a Documentation of Virtual Public Meeting report and available for public review on the project's website at www.txdot.gov, keywords "US 281 South Comal."

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Thank you for your time and for participating in this Virtual Public Meeting. Your input is valuable, and we encourage you to submit comments on the proposed project. You may submit your comments online as part of this Virtual Public Meeting under the "Participate" tab by making comments directly onto an online schematic map of the proposed improvements or by submitting an online comment form. In addition, you may email your comments to the project team at US281Comal@pozcam.com. You also have the option of downloading a comment form under the "Review" tab and mailing your comments to the project team at the address shown on the screen.

Questions or comments may be submitted to the US 281 South Comal Project Team at any time during project development. However, to be included in the official public meeting record, all comments must be postmarked or received by Wednesday, June 2, 2021. Responses to comments received during the public comment period will be provided in a Documentation of Virtual Public Meeting Report and will be available for public review on the project's website at www.txdot.gov, keywords "US 281 South Comal" once it has been completed.

Again, thank you for your participation and input. Please navigate through the remainder of the Virtual Public Meeting, where you can download and review project handouts and exhibits and provide your feedback.