



Draft EA Notice of Availability and a Virtual Public Hearing with In-Person Option

Notice

Draft Environmental Assessment and Virtual Public Hearing with In-Person Option

US 271 AND LOOP 485

From FM 16 north to Upshur County line

CSJs: 0165-02-061, 0165-03-036, 0248-06-017, 3290-02-008 and 3290-02-009

SMITH AND GREGG Counties, Texas

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) is proposing to widen US 271 from FM 16 in Smith County, Texas, north to the Upshur County line, for a total distance of approximately 10 miles. The widening will follow Loop 485 around the city of Gladewater rather than continuing through the downtown district. This notice advises the public that a draft environmental assessment (EA) is available for public review and that TxDOT will be conducting a virtual public hearing on the proposed project with an in-person option. **The virtual hearing will be held on May 20, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.** To log into the virtual public hearing, go to the following web address at the date and time indicated above: www.txdot.gov, and in the upper right-hand search box, enter the keywords "US 271 Public Hearing". The virtual hearing will consist of a pre-recorded video presentation and will include both audio and visual components. Please note that the presentation will not be available on the website until the time and date listed above. The presentation will remain available for viewing at the web address indicated above until June 4, 2021 at 11:59 p.m.

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 hearing, which will be playing on a screen, review hard copies of project materials, ask questions of TxDOT staff from a socially distanced approach, and leave written comments. **The in-person option will be held on May 20, 2021 from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. at TxDOT Tyler District Office, 2709 W. Front St., Tyler, TX 75702. Attendance at the in-person option will be by appointment only.** Individuals wishing to attend the in-person option must call (903) 510-9100 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 hearing room.

For both the virtual public hearing and in-person option, members of the public may call (903) 200-1700 to provide verbal testimony from May 20, 2021 through June 4, 2021. Written comments may also be provided by mail or email, as explained below. All verbally provided testimony and timely written comments will be considered by TxDOT and included as part of the official record. Responses to verbal testimony and written comments will be prepared by TxDOT, included as part of the hearing and project record, and made available online at www.txdot.gov, keywords "US 271 Public Hearing" once they are prepared.

The proposed project would reconstruct and widen approximately 10 miles of US 271 and Loop 485 from two-lanes to four-lanes, with opposing traffic separated by either a 76-foot depressed median, or a 16-foot flush median. The depressed-median section would begin at FM 16 in Smith County, continuing north to SH 135. The flush median would serve as a continuous two-way left-turn lane along Loop 485, continuing north along US 271 to the Upshur County line. The proposed project would incorporate 6-foot sidewalks and curb-and-gutter along the US 271 section north of Loop 485, and include space for a 12-foot shared-use path inside Loop 485 to be developed in the future. The proposed project redesigns US 271 and Loop 485 alignment to meet current design criteria.



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The proposed project would, subject to final design considerations, require approximately 123 acres of additional right of way, and potentially displace 37 residences and 15 non-residential structures. Relocation assistance is available for displaced 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 project webpage, or by calling the TxDOT Tyler District Office at (903) 510-9100.

The proposed project would involve construction in wetlands and action in a floodplain. The draft EA, maps and drawings showing the project location and design are available for review online at the project webpage, and on file at the TxDOT Tyler District Office between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. These project materials will also be available in hard copy form for review at the in-person option.

The virtual public hearing and in-person option will be conducted in English. If you need an interpreter or document translator because English is not your primary language or you have difficulty communicating effectively in English, 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 hearing or in-person option, please contact TxDOT Tyler District Office, at (903) 510-9100 no later than 4 p.m., May 17, 2021.

Written comments from the public regarding the proposed project are requested and may be submitted by mail to the TxDOT Tyler District Office, Attention: APD, 2709 W. Front St., Tyler, TX 75702. Written comments may also be submitted by email to dylan.mccord@txdot.gov. **All written comments must be received on or before June 4, 2021.** Additionally, as stated above, members of the public may call (903) 200-1700 and verbally provide testimony from 12:01 a.m. on May 20, 2021 until 11:59 p.m. on June 4, 2021.

If you have any general questions or concerns regarding the proposed project or virtual hearing or in-person option, please contact Dylan McCord, Environmental Project Manager, by email at dylan.mccord@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 December 9, 2019, and executed by FHWA and TxDOT.