

PUBLIC MEETING 2 SCRIPT

US 281 Hamilton Truck / Relief Route Project

From 1.25 miles north of CR 203 (Leon River) to State Highway (SH) 36,

From SH 36 to CR 506 and SH 36 From US 281 to SH 36

CSJ(s): 0251-01-064, 0251-02-050, and 0183-03-054

Hamilton County, Texas

SLIDE 1 – Welcome

Welcome to the second public meeting for the US 281 Hamilton Truck / Relief Route Project presented by the Texas Department of Transportation, or TxDOT. We appreciate your interest in the project.

Please note you may pause this presentation at any point to allow more time to view each slide.

SLIDE 2 – Table of Contents

This meeting has been convened by TxDOT's Waco District Office and is being held to receive and consider comments from the public regarding the US 281 Hamilton Truck / Relief Route Project. Today's presentation will cover the project history and location, typical sections, environmental review, project costs and schedule, timeline, and how to submit comments.

SLIDE 3 – US 281 Hamilton Truck / Relief Route Project History

Prior to the US 281 Hamilton Truck / Relief Route project, TxDOT conducted a Hamilton Truck/Relief Route Feasibility Study. Multiple Route Alignments were explored, evaluated, and presented at three advertised public meetings shown on the screen. TxDOT also met with interested agencies, stakeholders, and landowners.

SLIDE 4 – Adjacent Projects

The US 281 Hamilton Truck / Relief Route Project is adjacent to numerous other projects along US 281 such as the US 281 Widening Project. The previous Feasibility Study, which was completed in 2025, included both the Widening and the Truck/Relief Route. However, the project limits of the Hamilton Truck/Relief Route project are from 1.25 miles north of County Road (CR) 203 (or Leon River) to State Highway (SH) 36, and from SH 36 to CR 506, and from US 281 to SH 36 east of Hamilton and is shown in Orange on this slide.

SLIDE 5 – Project Location Map

The total project length is approximately 16.7 miles and is located in Hamilton County, Texas. The project limits are shown on the map for all sections of the US 281 Hamilton/Truck Relief Route Project.

SLIDE 6 – Project Goals

All US 281 Hamilton/Truck Relief Route Project options are being explored and evaluated alongside the public with the goal of producing an optimum US 281 transportation solution which takes into account:

- Mobility and Congestion Relief
- Safety
- Population and Growth
- And the Human and Natural Environment

SLIDE 7 – Project Goals: Safety

The US 281 vehicle crash data documented between 2017 and 2022 was evaluated and utilized to identify potential design or operational issues that may be associated with the need to improve the US 281 highway.

Safety awareness locations along US 281 are shown on the map.

The proposed US 281 Hamilton Truck/Relief Route Project would be designed to reduce incidents and enhance safety along the project limits. Traffic congestion within the City of Hamilton continues to increase, but space to add US 281 travel lanes is limited within the City/downtown area due to existing business and/or residential structures.

SLIDE 8 – Project Goals: Population Growth

While Hamilton County has not individually increased in population, the surrounding areas of Burnet, Coryell, Erath, Lampasas, and Bosque counties have grown significantly.

Growth in the Central Texas area has resulted in an ongoing increase in traffic volumes and drivers navigating central Texas via various interconnecting statewide transportation facilities such as US 281 and SH 36 which span Hamilton County.

The proposed US 281 would be designed to accommodate the growth in the area.

SLIDE 9 – Project Goals: Traffic Congestion Relief and Mobility

TxDOT is evaluating the future impacts to the study area if no truck/relief route is built and projected population and traffic continue to grow. The “no build” alternative is used as the baseline for comparison of the build alternatives. Year 2055 Build and No-Build comparison scenarios studied for the US 281 Truck / Relief Route indicate that without the project, heavy traffic and congestion in downtown Hamilton will increase.

The No Build and Build Scenarios are shown on the maps.

The proposed US 281 highway would alleviate congestion and mobility concerns along the project limits.

SLIDE 10 – Existing US 281 Typical Section

The existing US 281 typical roadway section within the study limits consists of one 12-foot-wide travel lane in each direction with adjacent 2- to 3-foot-wide shoulders, no center median, and side ditch drainage.

The existing US 281 right-of-way width varies along the corridor, but overall is approximately 120-feet-wide.

SLIDE 11 – Existing SH 36 Typical Section

The existing SH 36 typical roadway section within the study limits consists of one 11- to 12-foot-wide travel lanes in each direction with adjacent 2- to 3-foot-wide shoulders, no center median, and side ditch drainage.

The existing SH 36 right-of-way width varies along the corridor, but overall is approximately 120-200 feet wide.

SLIDE 12 – Proposed US 281 Typical Sections

The proposed US 281 Hamilton Truck / Relief Route Project would be a four-lane divided roadway with non-continuous two-lane frontage roads and access ramps to major cross-streets, and an approximate 300- to 440-foot-wide right-of-way width.

The proposed project would require additional right of way to accommodate the construction of the project.

SLIDE 13 – Proposed SH 36 Typical Section

Proposed SH 36 improvements include:

- Four-lane divided roadway with 12-foot-wide lanes and 10-foot-wide shoulders

- Non-continuous two-lane northbound and southbound frontage roads
- Access ramps to major interconnecting roadways/cross-streets

SLIDE 14 – Environmental Review (NEPA)

Prior to Dec. 16, 2014, the Federal Highway Administration, or FHWA, reviewed and approved documents prepared under the National Environmental Policy Act, known as NEPA; however, on Dec. 16, 2014 TxDOT assumed responsibility from FHWA through a Memorandum of Understanding to review and approve certain assigned NEPA environmental documents. This Memorandum of Understanding between TxDOT and FHWA was updated on July 17, 2025. The review and approval process applies to this project.

Environmental studies will begin this year to support an environmental clearance in accordance with NEPA. These environmental analyses are necessary to identify, avoid, and minimize effects to the human and natural environment.

SLIDE 15 – Environmental Constraints Map

The environmental constraints map shown on this slide is focused on the US 281 Hamilton Truck / Relief Route Project location. Part of the alternative alignment exploration involves identifying environmental features that could potentially be impacted by an alignment. Therefore, an environmental constraints map has been prepared to aid the designers in avoiding environmental features and / or minimize impacts. These features include businesses and residences, cemeteries, floodplains and streams, hazardous materials facilities, historic structures, houses of worship, public facilities, and species-specific vegetation.

SLIDE 16 – Project Cost and Schedule

The US 281 Truck/ Relief Route Project's anticipated Let Date is 2030. "Letting" is when TxDOT notifies the construction community that a project is ready to be bid on. Construction on a project begins after the letting process is complete. The total estimated project cost for the project is to be determined.

SLIDE 17 – Timeline and Next Steps

The project timeline is shown on the screen. Please note the listed dates are subject to change.

SLIDE 18 – Comments

All public comments received during this meeting will be fully considered and responded to in the US 281 public meeting record and made part of the final documentation for the US 281 Truck/ Relief Route Project. This documentation will then be made available for public review on the public meeting website.

Your comments may be provided online, by email, mail, or phone as shown on this screen. Comments must be received or postmarked on or before Friday, February 27, 2026, to be included in the documentation for this public meeting.

SLIDE 19 – Thank You for your Interest

We sincerely appreciate your interest in the US 281 Hamilton Truck / Relief Route Project. Your questions, comments and concerns will receive careful consideration.