



PUBLIC MEETING – POWERPOINT NARRATION

US 281 HAMILTON TRUCK / RELIEF ROUTE FEASIBILITY STUDY & WIDENING PROJECT FROM US 84 (EVANT, TX) TO SH 6 (HICO, TX) HAMILTON COUNTY

CSJ:0251-01-067

SLIDE 1 – Title Slide

Welcome to the May 3, 2023, Second Public Meeting for the US 281 Hamilton Truck / Relief Route Feasibility Study and Widening Project presented by the Texas Department of Transportation. We appreciate your interest in the US 281 Hamilton Truck / Relief Route Feasibility Study and Widening 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 the Department's Waco District Office and is being held to receive and consider comments from the public regarding the US 281 Hamilton Truck / Relief Route Feasibility Study and Widening Project. Today's presentation will cover the Feasibility Study location, Feasibility Study information, Widening Project location, Widening Project information, and how to submit comments.

SLIDE 3 – Hamilton Truck / Relief Route Feasibility Study Area

The feasibility study area extends from south of Hamilton to north of Hamilton. The length of the study corridor varies according to each of the various relief route alignments being considered, each of which is generally located around the City of Hamilton.

SLIDE 4 – Feasibility Study Goals

This study is needed because the existing US 281 within the study limits of the City of Hamilton does not meet current design standards and does not adequately accommodate current or forecasted traffic volumes, which results in traffic congestion and reduced mobility.

The goals of this Feasibility Study are to identify, evaluate and recommend solutions to improve travel conditions along US 281 within the City of Hamilton and evaluate the options based on criteria which includes mobility, safety including truck / relief route accommodation of hazardous truck cargo, traffic operations, and natural and human environments.

SLIDE 5 – Feasibility Study Process

There are several steps in the Feasibility Study process. Today we are conducting **Step 2** of the process presenting the Truck / Relief Route Concepts and exploring US 281 improvements alongside the public during this Public Meeting.

Step 3 prepares a Recommended Relief Route Build Alternative and associated US 281 Build Improvements within the city of Hamilton, both of which factor in comments received at this Public Meeting.

Step 4 presents the Build Alternative and Improvement for public review and comment during a final Public Meeting.

Step 5 concludes the study with the production of a US 281 Feasibility Study Report.

After the study is completed, the Department's next step will be producing a US 281 Relief Route Schematic Design, Environmental Analyses, and conduct further Public Involvement to determine the specific Relief Route and US 281 improvement designs, as well as proposed right-of-way dimensions.

SLIDE 6 – Truck / Relief Route Alternative Solutions

When conducting an alternatives analysis, the No Build Alternative is compared to various Build Alternatives. Under the No Build Alternative, no improvements to US 281 would occur; however, improvements to other corridor roadways would continue as planned.

All of the Build Alternatives have the same goals, including adequate mobility for motorists, bicyclists, pedestrians, addressing safety issues, and minimizing environmental impacts while also considering local Municipal Objectives.

The Build and No-Build Alternative evaluation and comparison process involves travel demand evaluations along US 281 factoring in forecasted design year 2055 traffic volumes, traffic safety evaluations including crash history locations, minimization of impacts, and municipality and stakeholder agency coordination. One of the design exploration objectives is to achieve an acceptable year 2055 Level of Service or LOS. Level of Service is a term used to qualitatively describe the operating conditions of a roadway based on factors such as speed, travel time, maneuverability, delay, and safety. Level of Service is categorized from A to F where Level of Service A is free flowing traffic and Level of Service F is extremely congested.

SLIDE 7 – Truck / Relief Route: Current Alignment Concepts

The current Truck / Relief Route alternative alignment concepts are presented at this public meeting for public review and comment. These Diagrammatics will also be available for inspection on the Public Meeting website. The public is also invited to present other concepts to the Department.

SLIDE 8 – Existing US 281 within the City of Hamilton

The existing US 281 typical roadway section within the study limits consists of one 11- to 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 100 feet wide.

SLIDE 9 – Truck / Relief Route: New Location Roadway Option

The proposed US 281 Truck / Relief Route Option would construct two 12-foot-wide lanes in each direction around the city of Hamilton. Portions of the Truck / Relief Route alignment option are located where no roadway currently exists. The overall Truck / Relief Route Options right-of-way width is approximately 300-440-feet wide.

SLIDE 10 – Truck / Relief Route: Environmental Constraints Map

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. The Environmental Constraints Map shown on this slide is focused on the Truck / Relief Route Feasibility Study location.

SLIDE 11 – Directing US 281 Travelers to Downtown Hamilton

Based off of the feedback from the first Public Meeting, there were concerns about through traffic not stopping at Downtown Hamilton. As described on this slide, various

options exist to continue to direct travelers to Downtown Hamilton, such as Guide Signs, City Pride Signs, Logo Signs, and Gateway Signs.

SLIDE 12 – Timeline and Next Steps

Based on the comments received at today’s public meeting, the design team will prepare a Recommended Build Alternative. It is anticipated this Alternative would be completed in the Spring of 2023 and would be available for public review and comment at the final public meeting, which is anticipated for Summer of 2023. The final study is forecasted to be completed in the Fall of 2023.

Please note the listed dates are subject to change.

After the completion of this study, the Department forecasts the Next Step phases as outlined as shown on the screen.

SLIDE 13 – Transition Slide to Widening Project

This next section of the presentation will go over the Widening Project information.

SLIDE 14 – Widening Project: Location

The approximately 37-mile-long US 281 corridor is located in Hamilton County as noted in orange on this Project Study Location Map and spans from US 84 in the City of Evant northward to State Highway 6 in the City of Hico. The red line on this map denotes the study area.

SLIDE 15 – Widening Project Goals

This project is needed because existing US 281 within the study limits does not meet current design standards and does not adequately accommodate current or forecasted traffic volumes, which results in traffic congestion and reduced mobility.

The goals of this widening project are to identify, evaluate and recommend solutions to improve travel conditions along US 281 and evaluate the options based on criteria which includes mobility and safety, traffic operations, and natural and human environments.

SLIDE 16 – Widening Project Process

There are several steps in the US 281 Widening Project process. Today we are conducting **Step 2** of the Project process.

Step 2 presents the current US 281 widening concept alternatives and explores other alternatives alongside the public for public review and comment during this Public Meeting.

Step 3 initiates the US 281 draft preliminary design schematics and NEPA document and assessment.

Step 4 presents the draft preliminary design schematics at a Final US 281 Public Meeting for public review and comment.

Step 5 presents the final design schematics and National Environmental Policy Act or NEPA document at a US 281 Public Hearing.

SLIDE 17 – Current Widening Alignment Concepts

The widening alignment concepts currently under consideration within the southern sector of the corridor between the cities of Evant and Hamilton and within the northern sector of the corridor between the cities of Hamilton and Hico, are presented at this public meeting for public review and comment. These Diagrammatics will also be available for inspection on the Public Meeting Website. The public is also invited to present other concepts to the Department.

SLIDE 18 – Existing US 281 within Hamilton County

The existing US 281 typical roadway section within the study limits overall consists of one 11- to 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 19 – Widening Project: Roadway Widening Options

The US 281 widening options currently being considered would entail converting the existing two travel lanes to one-way, widening the existing outside roadway shoulder, and constructing two one-way lanes in the opposite direction. The alignment options being considered would install two new travel lanes east or west of the existing US 281 travel lanes, or a combination of east or west alignments depending on the adjacent US 281 corridor constraints.

SLIDE 20 – Widening Project: Environmental Constraints Map

As stated earlier, the Build Alternative exploration involves identifying environmental features that could potentially be impacted by various Build Alternatives. This Widening Project Environmental Constraints Map has been prepared to aid the designers in avoiding environmental features and / or minimize impacts in the US 281 widening project as well. 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 21 – Exploring US 281 Truck Parking

The Widening Project will also consider the identification and installation of truck rest stop locations as noted on this slide. Truck Parking and Rest Areas can also serve haul type vehicles, such as equestrian event horse trailers. Current data indicates approximately 16.5% of the US 281 traffic in Hamilton County are trucks. This information references a 2020 Statewide TxDOT Truck Parking Study which explored the purpose and need to install truck rest stops along various TxDOT roadway facilities. TxDOT's 2019 Roadway Inventory Database lists the US 281 Average Annual Daily Traffic volume ranges as 199 to 248 Single Unit Trucks and 393 to 550 Tractor Trailer Trucks, volumes which are forecasted to increase through design year 2055.

SLIDE 22 – Exploring US 281 Truck Parking Continued

This slide shows two examples from the 2020 Statewide TxDOT Truck Parking Study. The first is the illustrative concepts for new truck parking facilities and the second is the Fort Davis picnic area that repurposed an existing picnic area to a dedicated truck parking facility.

SLIDE 23 – 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 this US 281 Study and project. This documentation will then be made available for public review and copying on the Public Meeting website.

Your comments may be provided online, or by mail, or email as shown on this screen. Comments must be received or postmarked on or before **Thursday, May 18, 2023**, to be included in the documentation for this Virtual Public Meeting.

SLIDE 24 – Thank You for your Interest

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