



Notice

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

I-35

From FM 3002 to Merle Wolfe Road/Mile Marker 1

CSJs: 0194-01-010, 0194-02-081, 0194-02-092, 0195-01-087, 0195-01-111, 0195-01-119,
and 0903-15-100

Cooke County, Texas and Love County, Oklahoma

The Texas Department of Transportation (“TxDOT”) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) are proposing to widen Interstate Highway 35 (I-35) from near Farm-to-Market (FM) 3002 to Merle Wolfe Road in Cooke County, Texas (TX) and Love County, Oklahoma (OK), respectively. This notice advises the public a draft environmental assessment (EA) is available for public review and that TxDOT will be conducting an online virtual public hearing on the proposed project with an in-person option. **The virtual hearing will be held on Tuesday, Sept. 15, 2020 at 5 p.m.** To log onto the virtual public hearing, go to the following web address at the date and time indicated above and visit www.txdot.gov and keyword search “I-35 Cooke County.” Project staff will give a presentation which will be a pre-recorded video 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. Following the virtual public hearing, the presentation will remain available for viewing at the web address indicated above until Wednesday, Sept. 30, 2020 at 11:59 p.m. If you do not have internet access, you may call 940-665-5071 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 hearing 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 Tuesday, Sept. 15, 2020 from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. and again from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. at the TxDOT Area Office at 2615 W. Highway 82, Gainesville, TX, 76240.** Attendance at the in-person option will be by appointment only. Individuals wishing to attend the in-person option must call 940-665-5071 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 wear a face mask, submit to a temperature check prior to entry, 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 833-933-0430 to provide verbal testimony immediately following the conclusion of the virtual public hearing presentation at 5 p.m. on Sept. 15, 2020 through 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 30, 2020. Formal written comments may also be provided by mail or email as explained below. All verbally provided testimony and timely written comments would be considered by TxDOT and included as part of the official record. Responses to verbally provided testimony and comments will be prepared by TxDOT, included as part of the hearing and project record, and made available online at www.txdot.gov.

The proposed project would construct two additional travel lanes in each direction on I-35 in Cooke County, Texas, and Love County, Oklahoma and convert the I-35 frontage roads to one-way traffic. The addition of two travel lanes on I-35 would also require a new bridge at the Red River. The project length is approximately 22 miles. Right-of-way width would change from the existing range of 248 feet to 630 feet to the proposed range of 266 feet to 532 feet (unused existing ROW may be sold later as surplus property for private use; not TxDOT property). The cities affected by the proposed project include Gainesville and Valley View. Final NEPA action cannot be completed unless funding for the project described in the environmental document is reasonably available. TxDOT is currently working on identifying reasonably available funding for the proposed project. FHWA will not take final action on the environmental document until reasonably available funding for the project is demonstrated.

The proposed project would, subject to final design considerations, require additional right of way and potentially displace six commercial 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 TxDOT district office by calling 940-720-7700.

The proposed project would involve construction in wetlands.

The proposed project would involve an action in a floodplain.

Updated biological data is currently being reviewed. Once approved, the updated information will be included in the Final EA.

The draft EA, 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 and keyword search I-35 Cooke County. These materials can also be made 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 the TxDOT Gainesville Area Office at 940-665-5071 no later than 4 p.m. CT, Sept. 10, 2020. Please be aware that advance notice is required as some services and accommodations may require time for the Texas Department of Transportation to arrange.

Written comments from the public regarding the proposed project are requested and may be submitted by mail to the TxDOT Wichita Falls District Office, 1601 Southwest Parkway, Wichita Falls, TX 76302. Written comments may also be submitted by email to MyProjectsWichitaFalls@txdot.gov. **All written comments must be received on or before Sept. 30, 2020.** Additionally, as stated above, members of the public may call 833-933-0430 and verbally provide testimony from 5 p.m. on Sept. 15, 2020 until 11:59 p.m. on Sept. 30, 2020. Responses to written comments received and public testimony provided will be available online at www.txdot.gov once they have been prepared.

If you have any general questions or concerns regarding the proposed project or virtual hearing or in-person option, please contact Mike Hallum, Gainesville Area Engineer at 940-665-5071 or mike.hallum@txdot.gov.

The lead agency under the National Environmental Policy Act for the proposed project is the Federal Highway Administration.