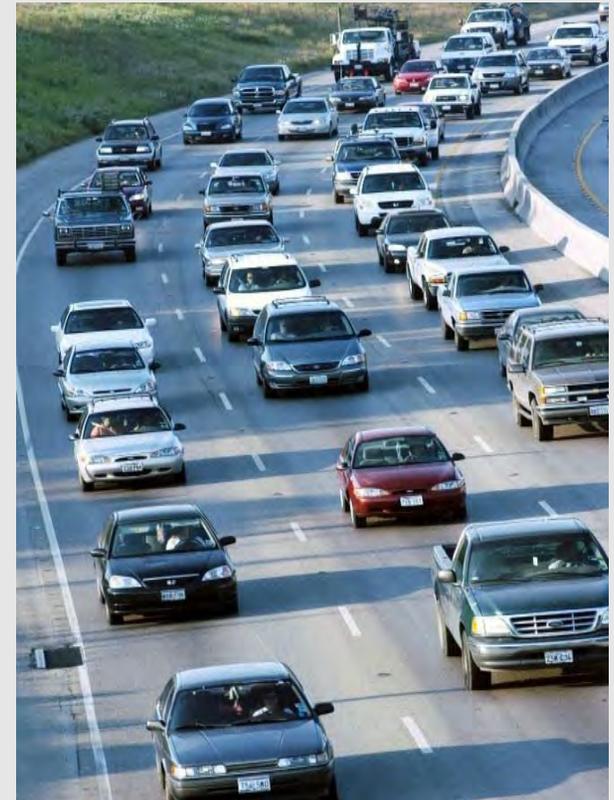




IH 20 STAKEHOLDER UPDATE

IH 20, Eastland County, TX – CSJ 0007-06-084

IH 20 from 3.5 mi. East of LP 254 to 0.5 mi. East of SH 16 (Ranger Hill)



Agenda

- Introductions
- Project Background
- Project Description
- Purpose and Need
- Design Goals and Objectives
- Previous Design Considerations
- Current Design Considerations
- Next Steps



Project Background

- IH 20 Ranger Hill segment is on a sharp horizontal curve and steep vertical grade
 - One of the more hazardous stretches of IH 20 between Fort Worth and El Paso
 - 127 traffic incidents since 2008
 - Petitions for safety improvements submitted to TxDOT
- Recent safety improvements implemented 2013 and 2014
 - Resurfacing of main lane pavement
 - Speed limit reduction from 75 to 65
 - Construction 54-inch concrete barrier
 - Installation of high mast safety lighting
- TxDOT has further evaluated public input and is proposing long-term modifications to improve safety and mobility



Project Description

- Project limits:
 - Located in Eastland County, Texas
 - From approximately 3.5 miles east of Loop 254 to State Highway (SH) 16 in Eastland County
 - Length: approximately 3 miles
- Project would realign and reconstruct IH 20 main lanes to reduce vertical grade and flatten horizontal curvature
- Project details include:
 - Reduce grade from approximately 6% to 3.5%
 - Reconstruct east and westbound lanes
 - Westbound climbing lane
 - Continuous two-way frontage in both directions
 - Maintain access to the rest area

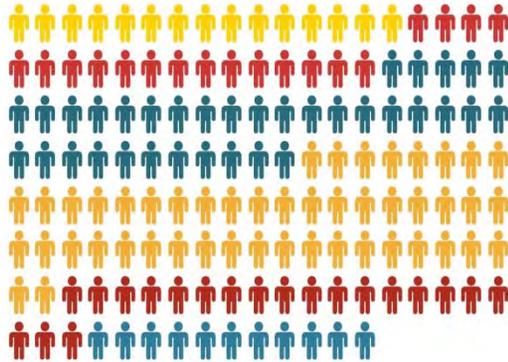
Purpose and Need

- Safety
- Access
- Mobility



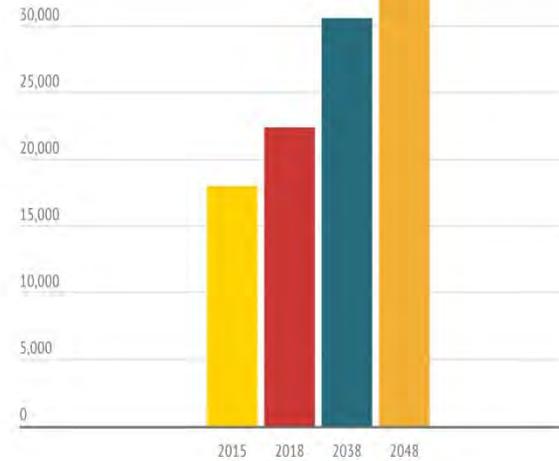
Purpose and Need: Safety

Accidents



● 2010 ● 2011 ● 2012 ● 2013 ● 2014 ● 2015

Traffic



⚠️ 6% Grade is one of the Highest in TX on Interstate System

🚛 50% of traffic consists of trucks

Approximately 9,000 a day!



Purpose and Need: Access

- Lack of frontage roads
 - Traffic currently diverted to limited number of roadways in the area
- Access to IH 20 accidents by emergency responders
 - First responders park as close as possible, walk/wheel equipment to crash site
 - Existing access roadway (south of roadway facility) not easily accessible



Purpose and Need: Mobility

- Over 18,000 vehicles cross through Eastland County each day; approximately 9,000 (50%) are trucks
- Accident Delay
 - 30 minutes to 8 hours
 - Traffic backed up to Eastland (west) and Weatherford (east)
 - Back-ups worse on Holidays
- Lack of Emergency Agency staff /resources to direct that much traffic



Purpose and Need

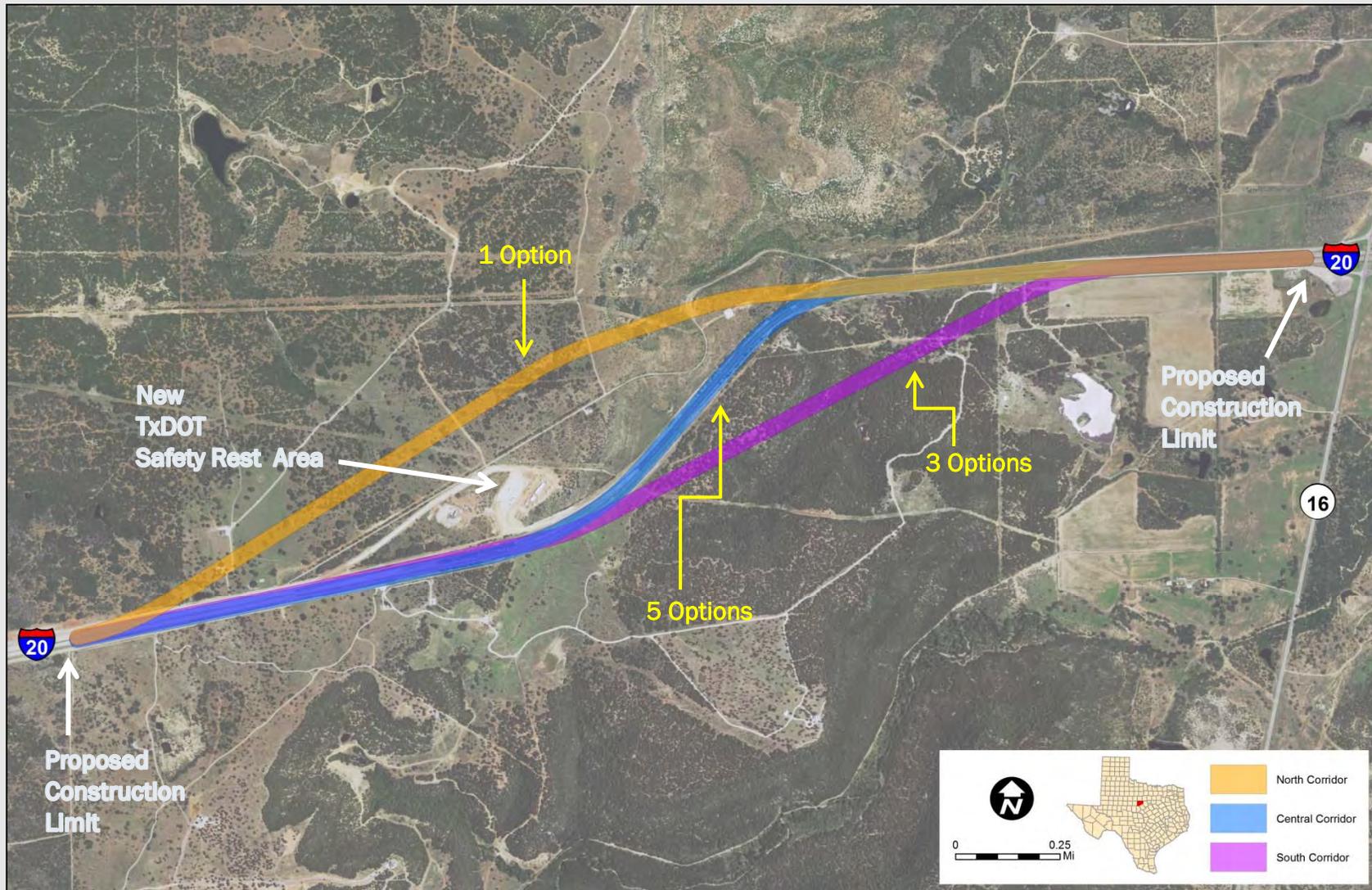
- MAP 21
 - Key areas of focus for the transportation reauthorization bill
 - **Safety – significant reduction in traffic fatalities and serious injuries on public roads**
 - Infrastructure condition – maintain highway infrastructure asset system in a good state of repair
 - Congestion reduction
 - **System Reliability – improve efficiency of surface transportation system**
 - **Mobility – freight movement, access to rural communities, and economic viability**
- Purpose and Need aligns with key focus areas of MAP 21

Design Goals and Objectives

- Enhance Mobility and Safety
 - Reduce roadway grade
 - Straighten curves
 - Improve freight movement
- Accommodate future expansion
- Addition of frontage roads for better incident management
- Optimize ROW



Previous Design Considerations



Previous Design Considerations – Preliminary Screening

North Corridor

- **Design Detail**
 - Alignment north of existing IH 20 with 2-way frontage roads, north frontage road overpass at ramp
- **Constraints**
 - Newly constructed rest area to north of IH 20
 - Various utility crossings

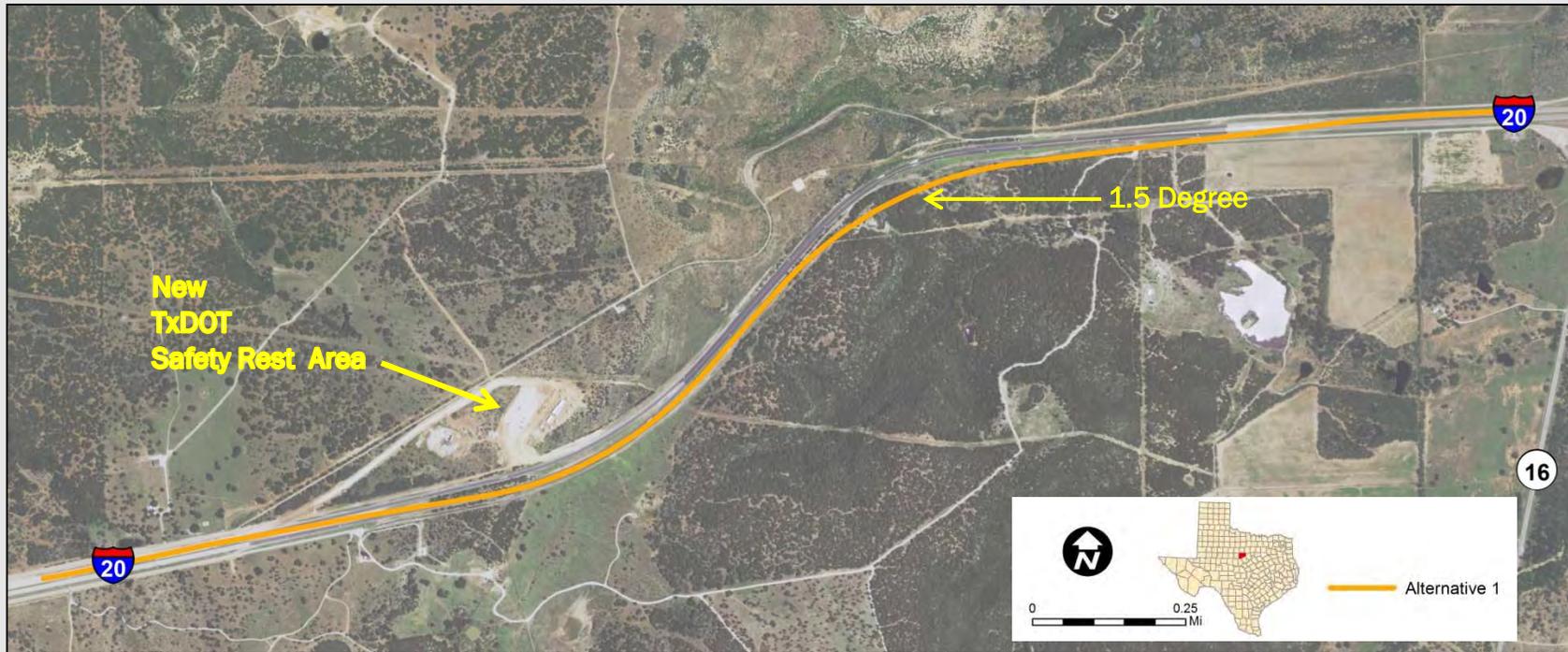
Central Corridor (along existing IH 20 alignment)

- **Design Detail**
 - 4 of 5 alternatives have 2-way frontage roads
 - North frontage roads extend around westbound rest area
 - 2 alternatives have truck rail barrier along frontage roads
 - 2 alternatives have grass medians separating main lanes
- **Constraints**
 - Difficult to maintain existing lanes during construction
 - Proposed North frontage roads cross existing utilities and require heavy rock excavation
 - Alternatives do not improve horizontal curvature

South Corridor

- **Design Detail**
 - Two-way frontage roads
 - North frontage extend around west bound rest area
 - 2 alternatives with grass medians
 - 1 alternative has truck rail barrier along frontage roads
- **Constraints**
 - Substantial ROW acquisition on north and south side of IH 20
 - North frontage roads cross with existing utilities and require heavy rock excavation

Current Design Considerations – Alternative 1



Alternative Details

- Passing lanes for westbound traffic
- Continuous frontage roads
- Access to rest area/braided ramps
- Median barrier (54")

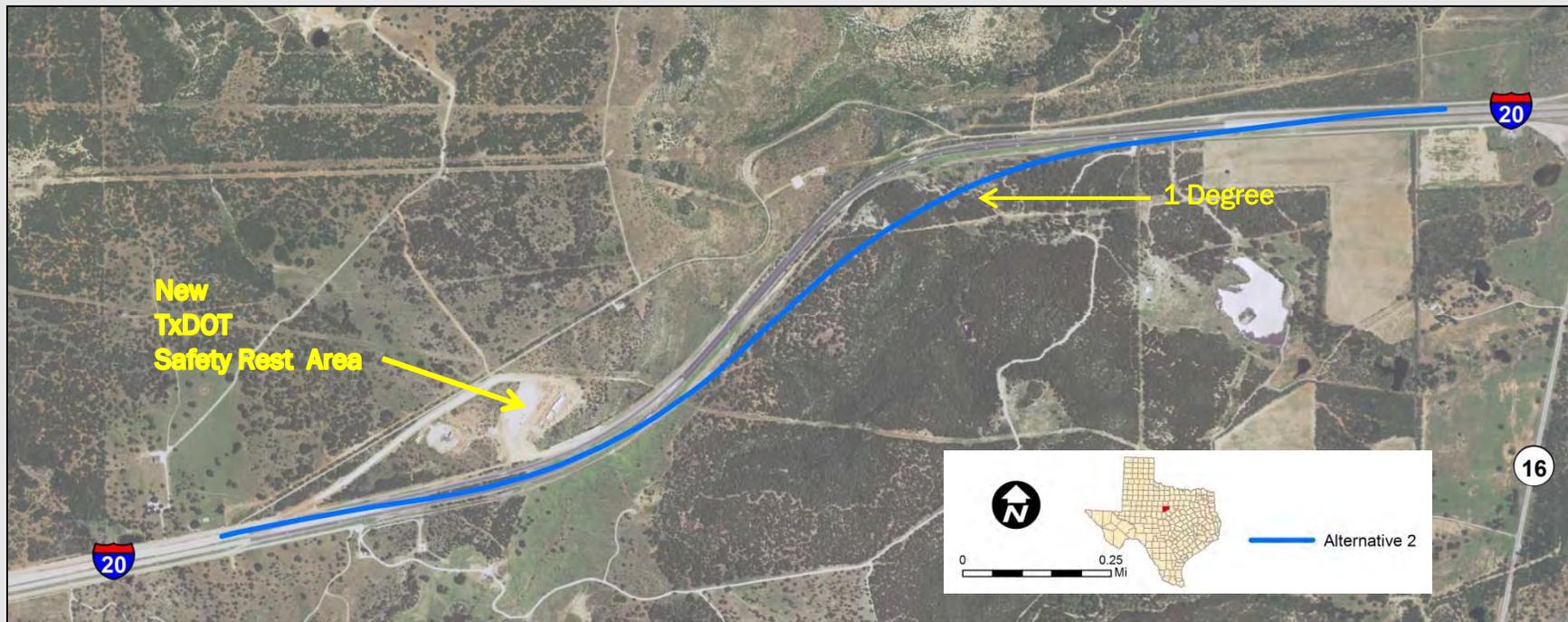
Pros

- Less ROW
- Maintains existing travel lanes open during construction

Cons

- Steeper superelevation
- Sharper horizontal curve
- Drainage/runoff handling
- Steeper construction slopes

Current Design Considerations – Alternative 2



Alternative Details

- Passing lanes for westbound traffic
- Continuous frontage roads
- Access to rest area/braided ramps
- Median barrier (54")

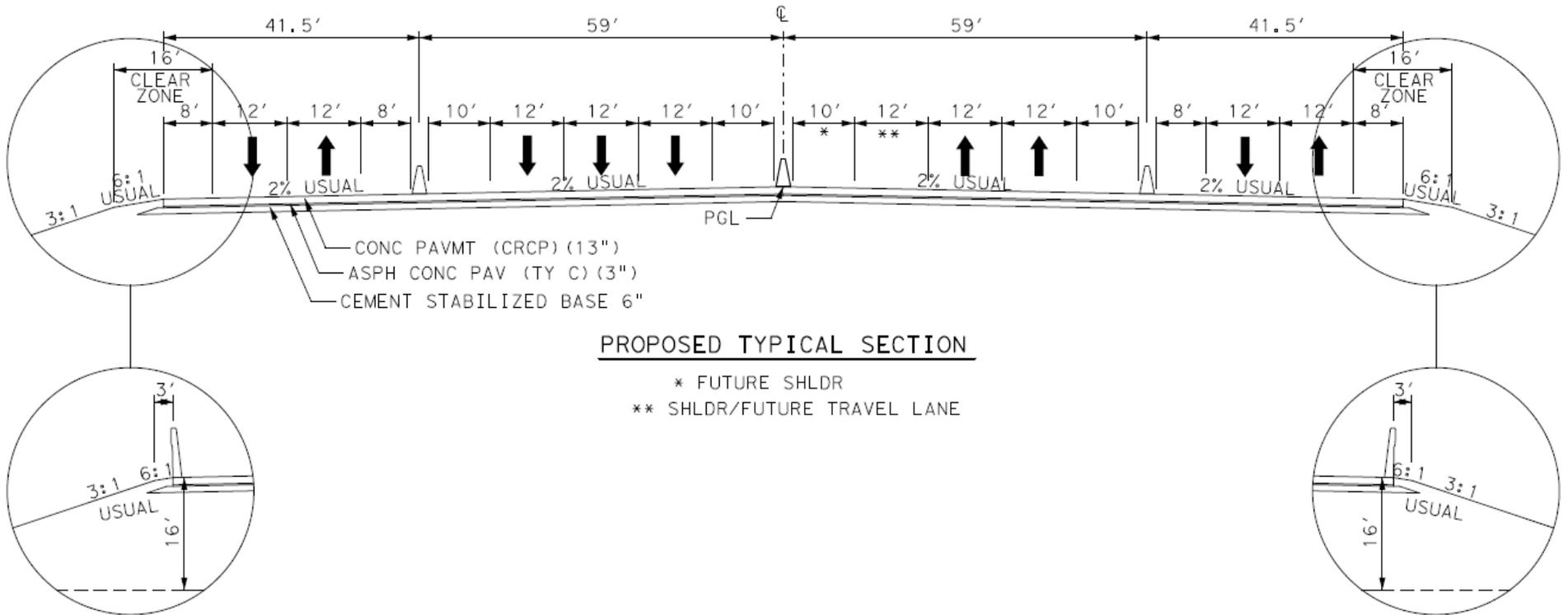
Pros

- Flatter horizontal curve
- Flatter superelevation/cross slope
- Maintains existing travel lanes open during construction
- Better drainage handling
- Flatter construction slopes

Cons

- More ROW

Proposed IH 20 Ranger Hill Typical Section



Summary: Alternatives 1 and 2

	Alternative 1	Alternative 2
No. of Parcels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5
Design Speed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 75 MPH 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 75 MPH
Constructability Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large amounts of cut/fill Access to existing driveways Construction staging/steeper slopes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large amounts of cut/fill Access to existing driveways
Pros	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less ROW Maintains existing travel lanes open during construction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flatter horizontal curve (1 degree) Flatter superelevation (3.7%) Maintains existing travel lanes open during construction Better drainage handling Flatter construction slopes
Cons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Steeper superelevation (5.1%) Sharper horizontal curve (1.5 degree) Drainage/runoff handling Steeper construction slopes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More ROW
Profile Grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.5% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.5%

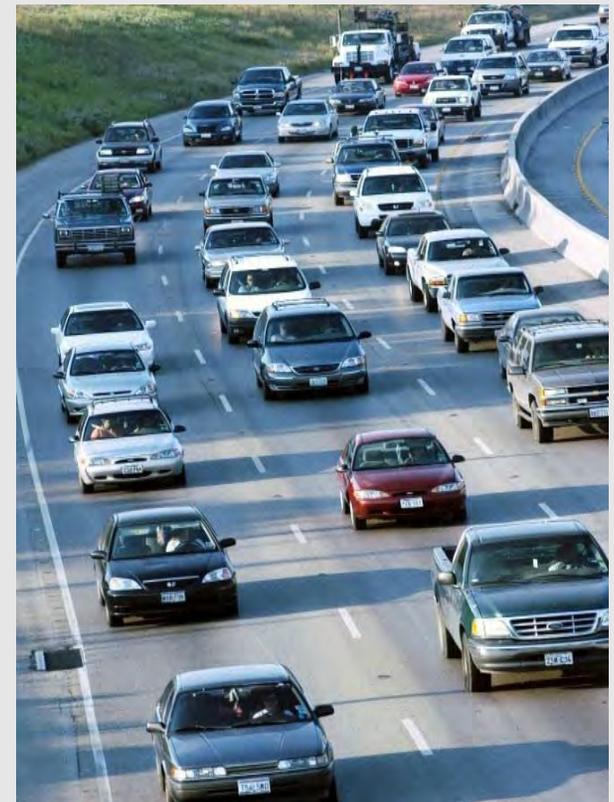
Next Steps

- Select Alternative for further evaluation
- Value Engineering Study
- Public Involvement
 - Meetings with Affected Property Owners – On-going
 - Stakeholder Meeting – July 31, 2015
 - First Responders Meeting – TBD
 - First Public Meeting – August 25, 2015
 - Second Public Meeting – October 20, 2015
 - Public Hearing – April 2016
- Draft EA – Spring 2016
- Final EA/FONSI – Summer 2016





QUESTIONS & COMMENTS



MEETING MINUTES

Project: 32-332P5048 WA 6
CSJ: 0007-06-084
IH 20 – From 3.5 Mi. East of LP254 to 0.5Mi. E. of SH 16

Subject: Stakeholder Meeting

Place: TxDOT Brownwood District Office

Date & Time: July 31, 2015 at 1:00 PM

Attendees: TxDOT BWD – Jason Scantling, Chris Graf, Andrew Chisholm, Chelsea Humphrey, Susan Howard, Elias Rmeili, Eric Lykins
TxDOT Eastland – Larry Smith, Sarah Horner
TxDOT DES – Maria Burke, Jim Heacock
STAKEHOLDERS – Pam Dutton (Sen. Charles Perry’s Office), Tori Regas (Rep. Jim Keffer), Judge Rex Fields (Eastland County Judge)
URS/AECOM – Krishna Peapully, Maribel Chavez, Mark Thomas, Reggie Herman, Irene Alanis

Date Prepared: August 09, 2015

Prepared By: Irene Alanis/Reggie Herman/Krishna Peapully

1. Introduction:

- a. Jason welcomed everyone and introduced URS. Everyone introduced themselves.

2. Power point presentation:

- a. Krishna introduced the project, presented the agenda and described the project. There have been recent improvement projects such as reducing speed limit and placing concrete barrier which have helped, but URS is tasked with developing a more permanent long term solution. To improve the safety at this location, the corridor needs to be realigned and reconstructed with lower vertical grades and flatter horizontal curves. Two way frontage roads will be added in both directions along the project.
- b. Reggie explained the purpose and need. The number of accidents has decreased with the recent improvements but existing roadway conditions are the same. Safety will be improved by the flatter horizontal curves and flatter vertical grades. Emergency responders will have better access especially with the addition of frontage roads. Not only mobility of goods through the corridor will improve, but also delay time and traffic back up will decrease. URS understands the severity and importance of this project is not only locally but also nationally. The transportation reauthorization bill MAP 21

which was passed in 2012 focuses on safety, congestion reduction, system reliability, and mobility. Therefore, purpose and need aligns with the key focus areas of MAP 21.

- c. Krishna outlined the design goals and objectives: enhance mobility and safety, optimize ROW, accommodate future expansion, and add frontage roads. The need for the designed alternative to consider constructability was discussed since existing number of traffic lanes through the corridor can't be reduced.
- d. Krishna explained that while analyzing many options along the north, central and south corridor, many challenges were encountered. On the north corridor, the large number of utilities and safety rest area were the main constraints. On the south side, a large amount of ROW would have been needed. Along the central corridor, constructability and maintenance of traffic would have required large amounts of temporary shoring/walls.
- e. Krishna presented both alternatives 1 and 2. The main difference between URS's alternatives 1 and 2 is the horizontal curvature. Alternative 1 has 1.5 degrees of curvature and steeper super elevation. These might cause issues with drainage and constructability. Alternative 2 presents a 1 degree horizontal curve with flatter super elevation. This alternative offers better drainage handling and flatter slopes during construction. As the typical section shows, both alternatives would include median concrete barrier. One key point is that both alternatives being presented are safer than existing condition. However, option 2 not only is safer and offers higher design standard, but also will allow for flatter slopes during construction.
- f. Elias talked about the ultimate typical section. It includes 3 travel lanes along the west bound and 2 lanes in the east bound direction with enough pavement area to stripe an additional lane in the future. It has 2 way frontage roads in each direction.
- g. Pam asked what the limits are where frontage roads will be added. Krishna responded about a mile.
- h. Judge Rex asked what speed limit was used for the design. Was there a study for the optimal speed? Will there be any grubbing on the concrete to keep trucks from sliding? Since the concrete barrier was installed, the truck accidents have been reduced. The latest accident happened during a 2" quick rain event a truck slid across the lanes and the barrier kept it from going over to the opposite side to oncoming traffic. He agreed that with less banking, the corridor will be safer. Krishna mentioned that the corridor was designed for 75 mph. Jason responded that there can be an optimal speed study, but from design criteria the curve at the bottom of the hill is designed for 80 mph.
- i. Judge Rex asked if TxDOT had a preferred alternative. Jason, Larry and Elias said that alternative 2 was the preferred alternative at this time. Not only will it be safer, but also will allow for better maintenance.
- j. Maribel mentioned that because it is a federal highway and there will be federal funds available, the project has to follow the required federal NEPA procedure.

- k. Judge Rex asked if it would only be federal funds or also state funds going into the project. Maribel responded that it will be both federal and state funds.
- l. Judge Rex asked if there are already funds available. Elias responded that there is currently no funding, but they are working on getting the funds for it. The letting date is December 2016, assuming that the funds will be available by then.
- m. Judge Rex expressed concern that Rep. Keffer will be out of office by then and wasn't sure if there will be a champion for this project in the state Legislature. Pam Dutton from Sen. Charles Perry's Office mentioned that Sen. Perry has assured that he will convey local concerns and will continue the good work done by Rep. Keffer. She asked if there was any trouble acquiring ROW. Maribel mentioned that every project has challenges in obtaining required ROW but TxDOT always uses all the available tools before considering use of eminent domain.
- n. Tori Regas from Rep. Jim Keffer office asked Judge Rex what type of land was along the project area. Judge Rex responded that there are ranches. He also asked if the land owners are responding and what happens if there is refusal to sell. Jason mentioned that the Johnsons have not responded to TxDOT. According to Mr. Bradley, the Johnsons were hesitant in selling ROW. On the other hand Mr. Fambro is willing to sell. He is a real estate agent. To answer Judge Rex, yes the eminent domain will be the next step in the process, if negotiations with the landowners are unsuccessful.
- o. Judge Rex asked if the existing material could be used for project fill. Jason responded that TxDOT will be doing geotechnical investigations along the project to determine if any existing material would be usable for fill.
- p. Judge Rex asked if the rocks out by IH 20 came out from the ongoing construction at the rest area ramp. Larry responded that it was correct.
- q. Jason added on that there is about 40' deep of hard rock and only about 5' soft soil.
- r. Judge Rex asked how will the public be informed about the project. He suggested using the local radio station in Eastland. Chelsea said that the information will be posted on social media, the TxDOT website, Abilene TV station and the local newspaper. Reggie added that URS will help in developing a mailing list for the public and send out notices.
- s. Judge Rex volunteered to send out a mass email about the project to his local contacts. He also mentioned to take in consideration the upcoming Palo Pinto State Park which will increase traffic and add more RVs to the traffic.
- t. Susan asked Jason if Mr. Bradley had Johnson's phone number. Jason responded that he will continue to investigate.
- u. Judge Rex said he is all in favor for this project so do what it takes.
- v. Judge Rex wants to know when TxDOT will know about the funding. Elias said that they are trying to find proposition 1 money, which is based on oil and gas revenue, and that Mr. Keffer and Mr. Perry are also looking for funding.

- w. Maribel stated it is imperative that design plans be completed and then look to secure funding. TxDOT may be able to reallocate money from other projects that are on hold or are not able to make letting.
- x. Judge Rex wondered if the design has to be accepted by the stakeholders in order for it to be finalized.
- y. Maribel explained that the federal NEPA process is utilized to inform the public and stakeholders about the options going through the environmental process. The stakeholders don't have to vote on it; however, their input is considered during project development.
- z. Jason concluded the meeting and asked the stakeholders to email Chelsea with any additional questions. If Mr. Keffer and Mr. Perry want to meet one on one, TxDOT will be more than willing to meet with them.



**IH 20 Ranger Hill Schematic Design and Environmental Documentation
CSJ: 0007-06-084**

**Project Limits
From approximately 3.5 miles east of Loop 254
To SH 16**

Public Meeting Summary

DATE/TIME:

August 25, 2015; 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.

LOCATION:

Ranger High School (cafeteria), 1842 TX-254 Loop, Ranger, TX 76470

PURPOSE OF MEETING:

- Present alternatives for realigning and reconstructing the IH 20 main lanes to reduce grade and curve radius at Ranger Hill to improve safety for the traveling public.
- Present proposed project Need and Purpose.
- Explain next steps in project.
- Answer questions and receive comments on all information presented.

FORMAT:

The two-hour Public Meeting consisted of an open house followed by a TxDOT presentation. During the open house portion of the meeting, meeting participants had an opportunity to review displays showing the project area and background, Purpose and Need, proposed alternatives, and environmental process. Project team members were available to answer questions and provide any requested information. Members of the public were able to submit a written comment at the time of the meeting or during the 10-day comment period following the meeting.

PUBLIC NOTICE:

A public notice of the meeting was published in the *Ranger Times/Eastland Telegram/Eastland County Today* on August 13 and August 20, 2015. TxDOT Brownwood District also distributed a press release/media advisory to the following media outlets: KTXS-TV, Abilene; KTAB/KRBC, Abilene; Brownwood Bulletin; Brownwood; Brownwoodnews.com (online newspaper); KBWD-AM/KOXS-FM Radio - Brownwood (country); KPSM - 99.3 FM radio – Brownwood; KQBZ- 96.9 FM, Newstalk radio; 102.3 FM, KXYL radio, Brownwood; *Coleman Chronicle & Democratic Voice*; KSTA-AM/FM radio,



Coleman; *Comanche Chief*, Comanche; KCOM-AM & KYOX radio, Comanche; *Eastland Telegram* (Cisco, Ranger, Rising Star & Gorman); KATX (HPRN CO.)

radio, Eastland; *Microplex News* (online newspaper), Eastland; *Lampasas Dispatch Record*, Lampasas; KCYL-AM/KACC-FM radio, Lampasas; *Brady Herald Standard*, Brady; KNEL-AM radio, Brady; *Goldthwaite Eagle*, Goldthwaite; *San Saba News and Star*, San Saba; KNUZ-FM/KNVR-AM radio, San Saba; *Breckenridge American*, Breckenridge; and KLXK/ KROO radio, Breckenridge.

Direct mail meeting notices were sent to a list of eight property owners identified by TxDOT as well as to four elected officials. These notices contained the same information that is found in the display ad in the newspaper.

A meeting notice also was posted on the TxDOT.gov website and meeting information was disseminated on social media.

ATTENDANCE:

A total of 25 individuals (one of whom was a TxDOT employee) registered their attendance at the public scoping meeting. Three elected officials or representatives of elected officials signed in as well.

DISPLAY AND HANDOUT MATERIALS:

The following displays were available for viewing: a project location map; project history and background; project description; Purpose and Need; maps and descriptions of proposed Alternative 1 and proposed Alternative 2, and a board comparing Alternatives 1 and 2. In addition, information was provided on the environmental process being used to evaluate the two project alternatives. Preliminary schematic drawings for the alternatives were displayed on tables so that meeting participants could study detailed engineering drawings for each alternative. In addition, a comment card was given to each meeting participant.

The meeting exhibits are available on TxDOT's website at [LINK](#)

PRESENTATION:

Jason Scantling, Director, Transportation Planning and Development, TxDOT Brownwood District, opened the meeting and introduced the project team. He described the purpose of the public meeting – to introduce the project to the general public; provide information on the current preliminary design of project alternatives; obtain public input; and involve the public in the environmental process. Mr. Scantling provided some background on the project, explaining that the project would address safety, mobility, realign and access issues by reconstructing the IH 20 main lanes to reduce steep vertical grade, flatten horizontal curves, and flatten superelevation (banking).



He then introduced Reggie Herman, AECOM Deputy Program Manager, who explained the environmental process being used to evaluate proposed project alternatives. He described the project Purpose and Need (safety, mobility, and access improvements), as well as the steps involved in completing an Environmental Assessment for the project. Mr. Herman introduced Krishna Peapully, AECOM project manager, who explained that nine original alternatives were considered for meeting the Purpose and Need for the project. After a screening evaluation, this number was reduced to two alternatives.

Mr. Scantling concluded the meeting by explaining the next steps—selection of an alternative for further evaluation; a value engineering study; ongoing meetings with affected property owners; a second public meeting later in the fall (2015); a draft EA and public hearing in the spring of 2016; and a final EA in the summer of 2016.

The public meeting presentation for this meeting is available at ([LINK to TXDOT website](#))

DEADLINE:

Comments received and/or postmarked on or before September 4, 2015 were included in this public meeting report.

WRITTEN COMMENTS DELIVERED AT THE MEETING

Five individuals submitted written comments at the public meeting. Their comments are listed below, along with a response from TxDOT.

Comment #1: Individual requested the following: 1) Take Alternative #1 and 2) Increase center barrier so headlights from oncoming traffic (from tall trucks and pickup trucks) is not visible.

TxDOT response:

Comment #2: Individual stated that the latest upgrades to Ranger Hill have helped considerably but access to the hill by emergency vehicles is still a problem when responding to accidents. Traffic is steadily increasing and the westbound lanes of Ranger Hill become bogged down from slow moving semis trying to get up the hill. The curve causes a problem with seeing what is happening ahead. Individual strongly encourages the approval of the project with the least amount of grade – Alternative #1.

TxDOT response: Thank you for your comment. At this time, TxDOT is considering two possible alternatives for addressing safety, mobility, and access issues on I-20 at Ranger Hill. These alternatives (plus the no-build—leaving the highway as it is now) will be evaluated during the Environmental Assessment.



Comment #3: Individual prefers Alternative 2, less ROW acreage and impact on private property owners.

TxDOT response: Thank you for your comment. At this time, TxDOT is considering two possible alternatives for addressing safety, mobility, and access issues on I-20 at Ranger Hill. These alternatives (plus the no-build—leaving the highway as it is now) will be evaluated during the Environmental Assessment.

TxDOT response: Accessibility to the downtown area and communities (including North Beach) is extremely important to this project, and is something that is being considered as we develop the project schematics.

Comment #4: Individual requests moving overpass back from property, etc., on the north side.

TxDOT response: TxDOT is still at a very preliminary stage in planning the I-20 at Ranger Hill project and therefore has not made any decisions about the specific footprint of the changes to be made. At this time, two alternatives are being considered and will be evaluated during the Environmental Assessment.

Comment #5: Individual says she likes Alternative 1 due to the grade difference and drainage. One concern: Strawn's billboard on top of Ranger Hill. We need to keep our billboard. Our State Park – keeping the entrance inside the Strawn city limits.

TxDOT response:

WRITTEN COMMENTS RECEIVED AFTER THE PUBLIC MEETING

Four individuals submitted written comments to TxDOT on or before the September 4, 2015 comment period deadline.

Comment #5: Individual asked if there was a way to bypass Ranger Hill altogether.

TxDOT response:

Comment #6: Individual stated the following: I have lived in Abilene for 33 years and have passed through Ranger Hill many times. I have appreciated the efforts to make it safer, but cannot understand why one simple remedy is not implemented. The simplest (yet apparently most radical) remedy is to drastically lower the speed limit for all vehicles. Lowering it to 65 mph was meaningless, but lowering it to 30-35 mph would be effective. Would that frustrate some drivers? Yes, of course. But it is also free---no construction necessary. That is a quite short stretch of road and drastically reducing the speed limit would make



virtually no change in the travel time for any driver. People in Texas seem to believe it is their right to drive fast; this is a place to make an exception for 3-4 miles and save both lives and money.

TxDOT response: One of the main reasons why TxDOT is undertaking this project is to address safety issues on I-20 at Ranger Hill. Three main safety concerns have to do with the steep grade, sharp curve, and steep superelevation (8% banking) at this location. I-20 also needs to be updated to TxDOT's current design standards. (need to address speed limit).

Comment #7: Individual stated that regarding Ranger Hill, years ago the highway wound around hills north of the current road. Maybe a new route could be built leaving 20 in operation during the construction.

TxDOT response:

Comment #8: Individual's concern is the potential impact to traffic flow and safety from the south frontage road as it merges across oncoming traffic onto the Loop 254 overpass. Although the existing south frontage road is two-way travel, it is a dead-end at the top of Ranger Hill, thus alleviating thru traffic concerns. Once that south frontage road is continuous thru travel and not a dead-end, there will be an increase in thru traffic, particularly during times of incidents in the area. That thru traffic then will be required to cross oncoming traffic coming out of Ranger on that Loop 254 overpass. It is no secret the overpass is downhill, curving, and the view is obscured. South frontage road traffic will be crossing from a complete stop, turning, and attempting to gain speed to go up the incline. And we hope that the drivers of those vehicles do not attempt to enter the "exit" onto eastbound I-20.

TxDOT response:

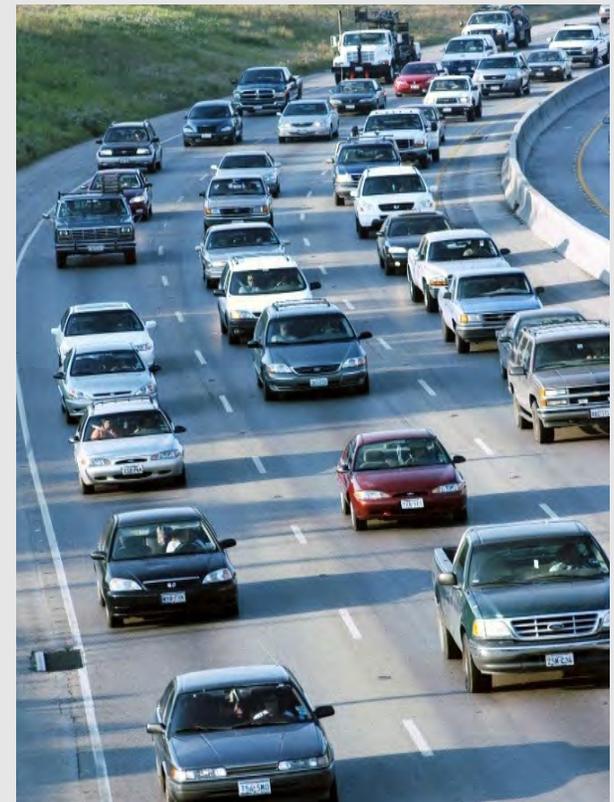
ATTACHMENTS

Public Meeting Notice
Public Meeting Notice to Property Owners
Public Meeting Comment Form



IH 20 RANGER HILL PUBLIC MEETING AUGUST 25, 2015

IH 20, Eastland County, TX – CSJ 0007-06-084
IH 20 from 3.5 mi. East of LP 254 to SH 16
(Ranger Hill)



Agenda

- Introductions
- Purpose of the Public Meeting
- Project Background
- Project Description
- Environmental Process
 - Defined Process for Proposed Project
 - Purpose and Need
- Preliminary Design
 - Design Goals and Objectives
 - Alternatives Considered
 - Proposed Alternatives for Further Analysis
- Next Steps
- Comment Period

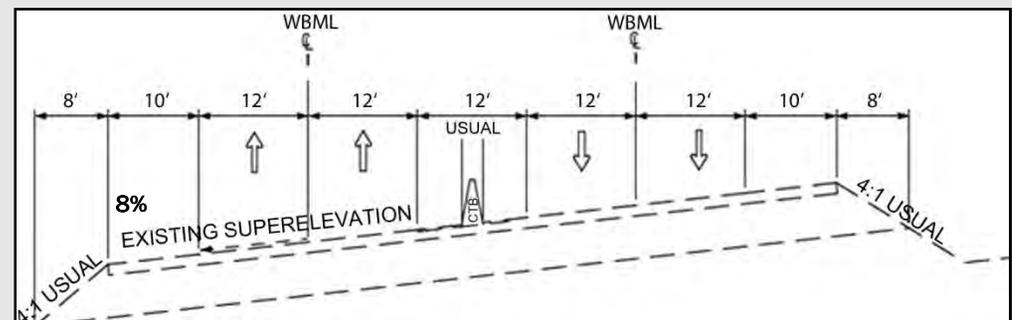
Purpose of the Public Meeting

- Introduce the project to the general public
- Provide information on the current preliminary design
- Obtain public input
- Involve the public in the environmental process



Project Background

- Why the concern for this portion of IH 20
- Three main safety concerns
 - Steep grade
 - Sharp curve
 - Steep superelevation (8% banking)
- Need to update to current design standards



Project Background

- IH 20 at Ranger Hill has one of the steepest grades in Texas on interstate system
 - 127 traffic incidents since 2008
 - Petitions for safety improvements submitted to TxDOT
- TxDOT's safety improvements in 2013 and 2014
 - Resurfaced main lane pavement
 - Reduced speed limit from 75 to 65 MPH
 - Constructed 54-inch concrete barrier
 - Installed "high mast" safety lighting
- TxDOT has further evaluated public input and is proposing long-term modifications to improve safety and mobility



Roadway Prior to Safety Improvements



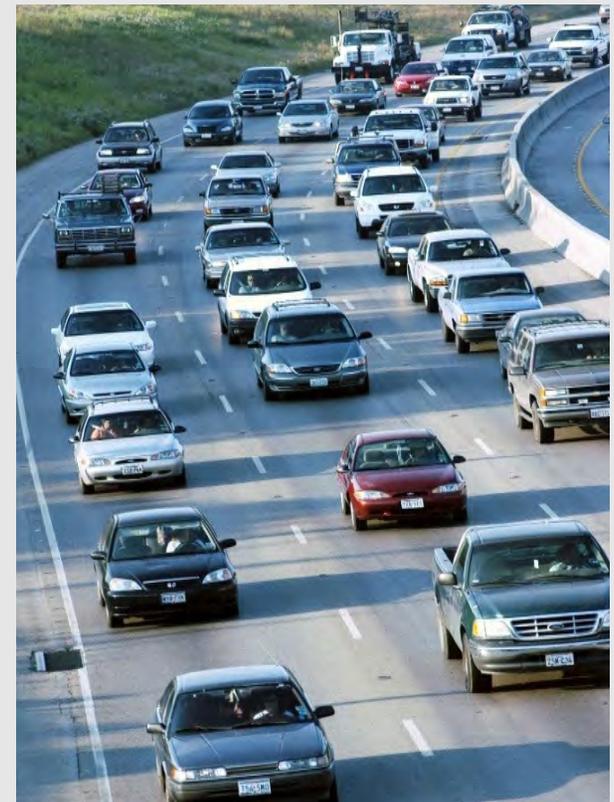
Roadway with Safety Improvements

Project Description

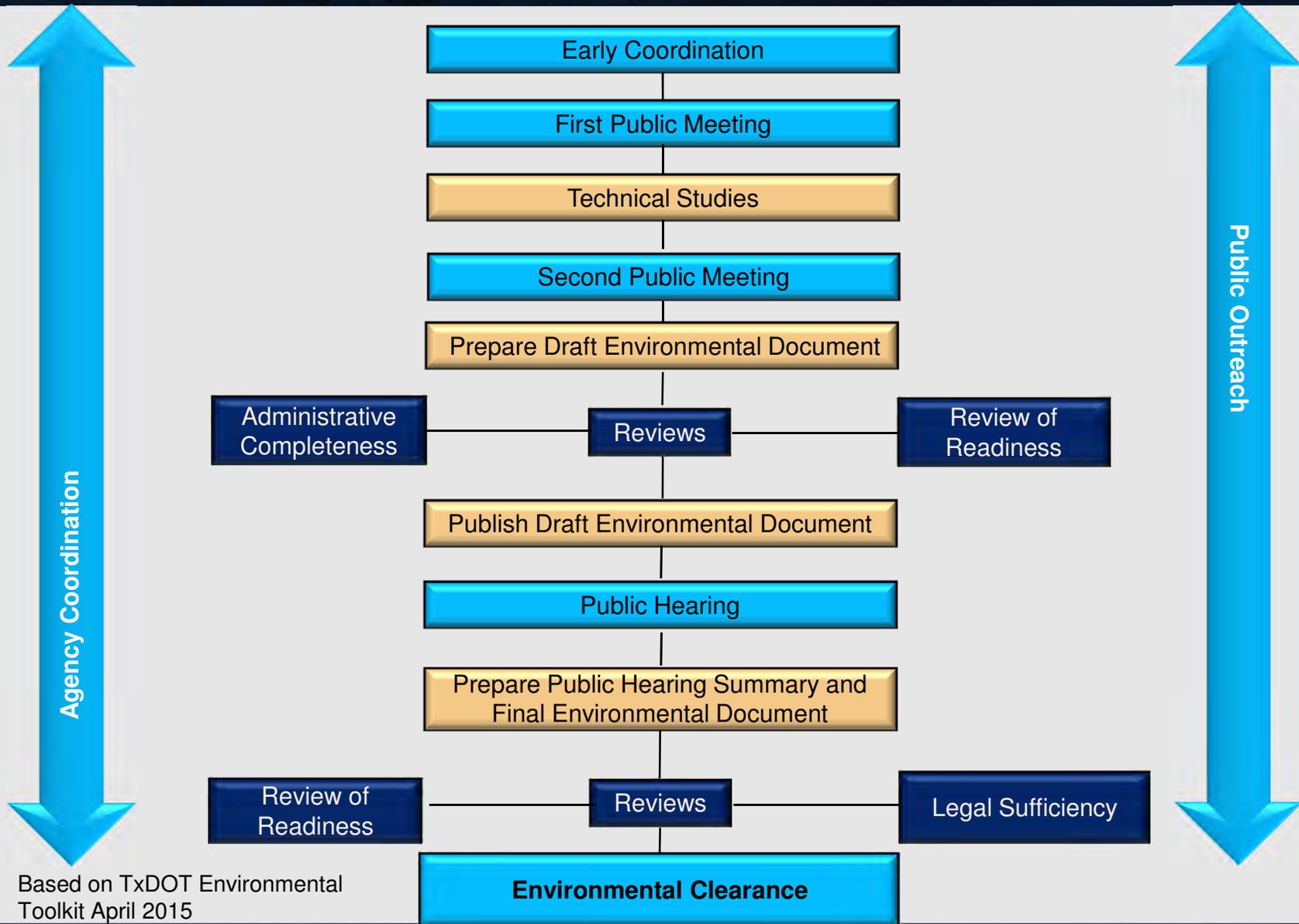
- Project limits:
 - Located in Eastland County, Texas
 - From approximately 3.5 miles east of Loop 254 to State Highway (SH) 16 in Eastland County
 - Length: approximately 3 miles
- Project would realign and reconstruct IH 20 main lanes to reduce steep vertical grade, flatten horizontal curves, and flatten superelevation (banking)
- Project details:
 - Reduce grade from approximately 6% to 3.5%
 - Reconstruct east and westbound lanes
 - Add westbound climbing lane
 - Add continuous two-way frontage road in both directions
 - Maintain access to the safety rest area



ENVIRONMENTAL PROCESS



Defined Process for Proposed Project



Based on TxDOT Environmental Toolkit April 2015

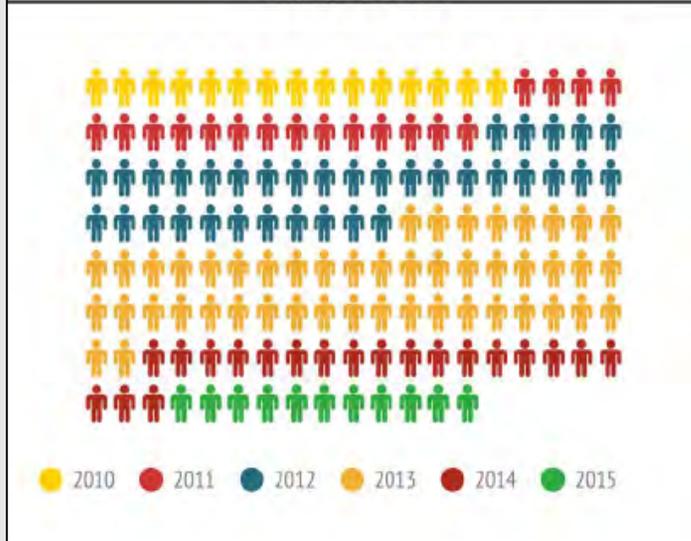
Purpose and Need

- Safety
- Mobility
- Access

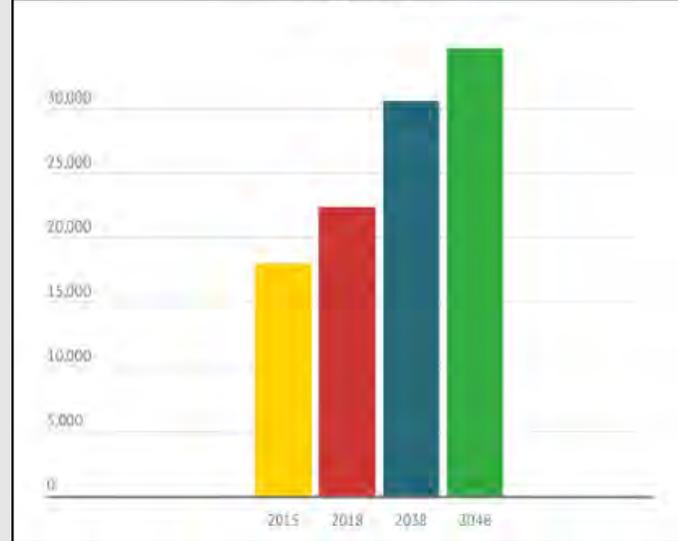


Purpose and Need: Safety

Accidents



Traffic



6% Grade is one of the Highest in TX on Interstate System



50% of traffic consists of trucks

Approximately 9,000 a day!

Purpose and Need: Mobility

- Over 18,000 vehicles travel this portion of IH 20 each day; approximately 9,000 (50%) are trucks
- Accident Delay
 - 30 minutes to 8 hours
 - Traffic backed up to Eastland (west) and Weatherford (east)
 - Back-ups worse on holidays
- Lack of emergency staff/resources to manage traffic for major incidents



Purpose and Need: Access

- Lack of frontage roads
 - When incident occurs traffic diverted to limited number of roadways in the area
- Access to IH 20 incidents by emergency responders
 - First responders park as close as possible
 - Then walk/wheel equipment to crash site
 - In some instances crash site may be a long distance from roadway access points





PRELIMINARY DESIGN

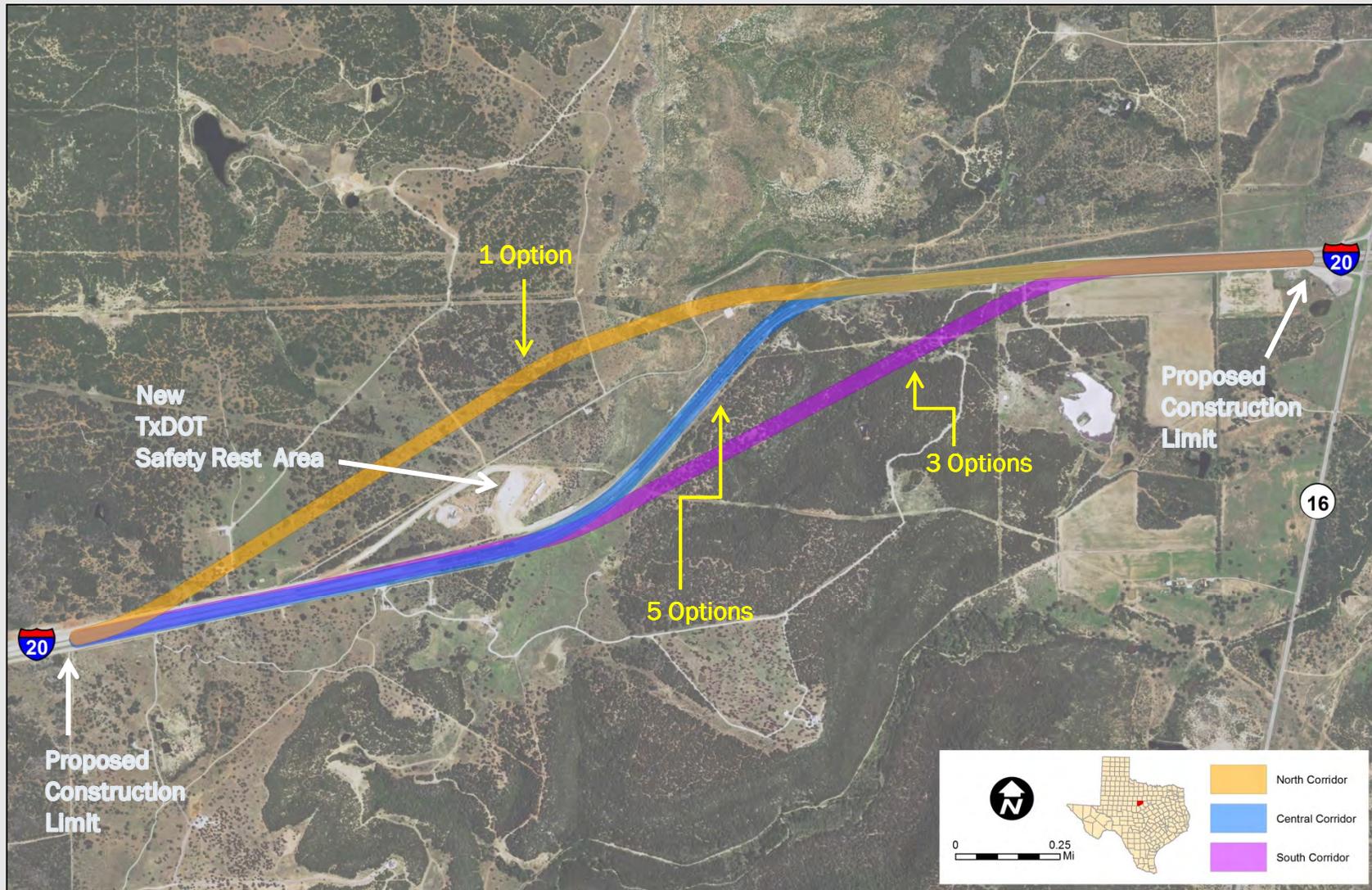


Design Goals and Objectives

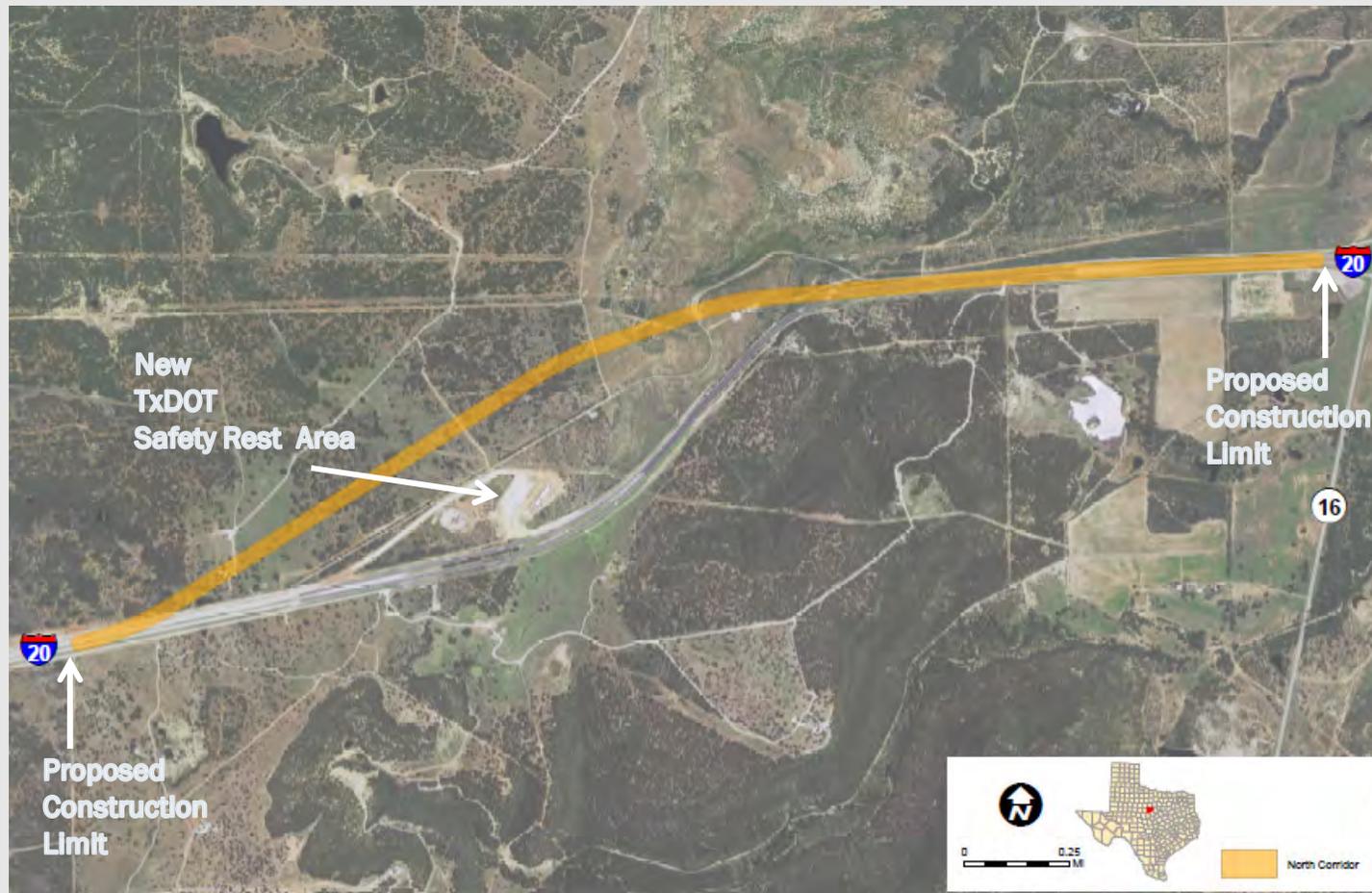
- Enhance Safety
 - Reduce roadway grade
 - Straighten curves
 - Reduce roadway superelevation (banking)
- Optimize ROW
- Addition of frontage roads for better incident management
- Improve freight movement
- Accommodate future expansion
- Minimize constructability challenges



Alternatives Considered



North Corridor



North Corridor Constraints

- Substantial ROW needed to the north of the existing highway and safety rest area
- Requires significant utility relocation
- Substantial earth work and heavy rock excavation
- New interchange to access the safety rest area from the interstate

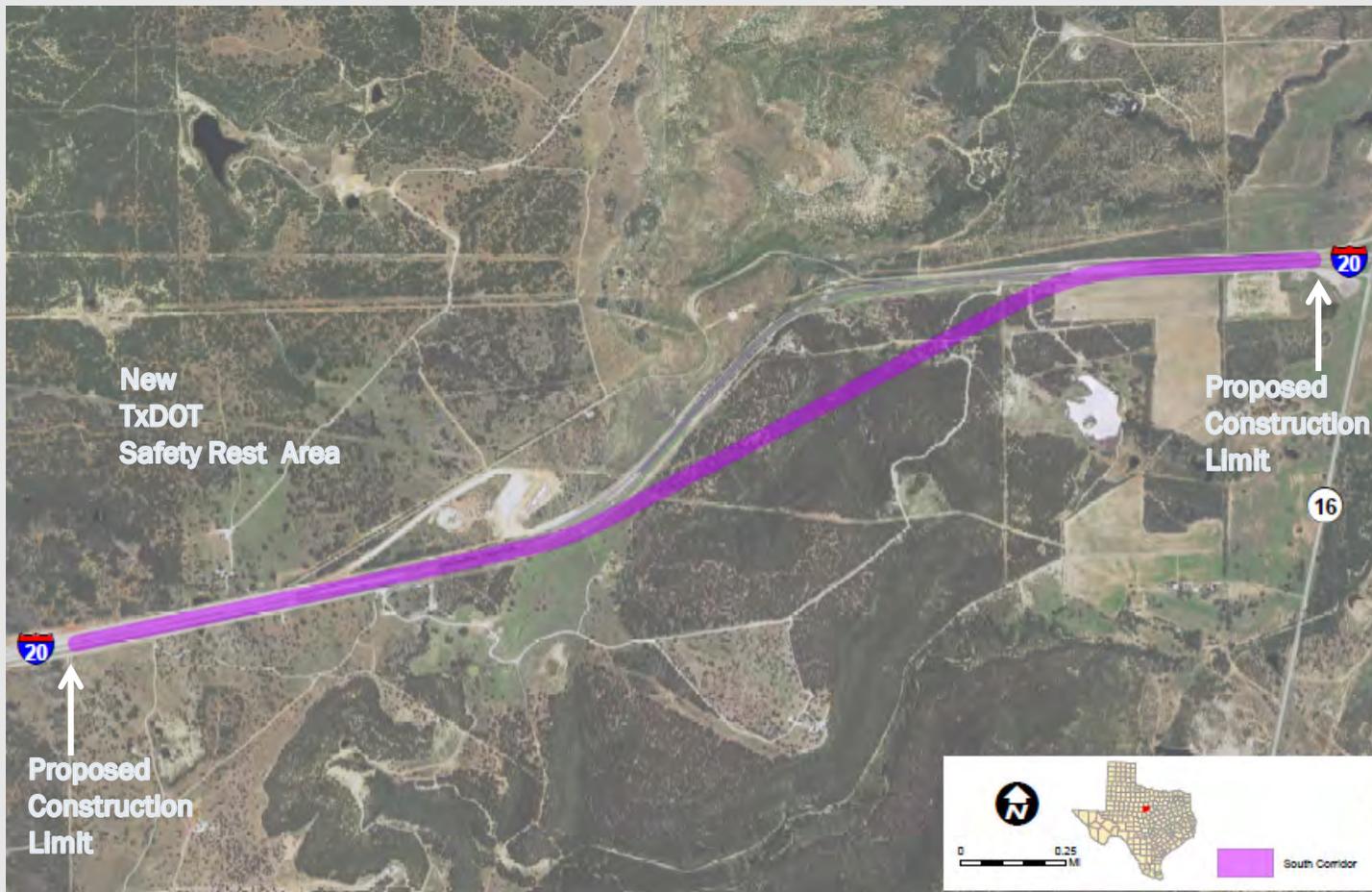
Central Corridor



Central Corridor Constraints

- ROW impacts due to frontage roads north of the safety rest area
- Does not provide the optimal safety improvements to grade, curve and superelevation (banking)
- Difficulty in maintaining existing four lanes of traffic during construction
- Constructability challenges

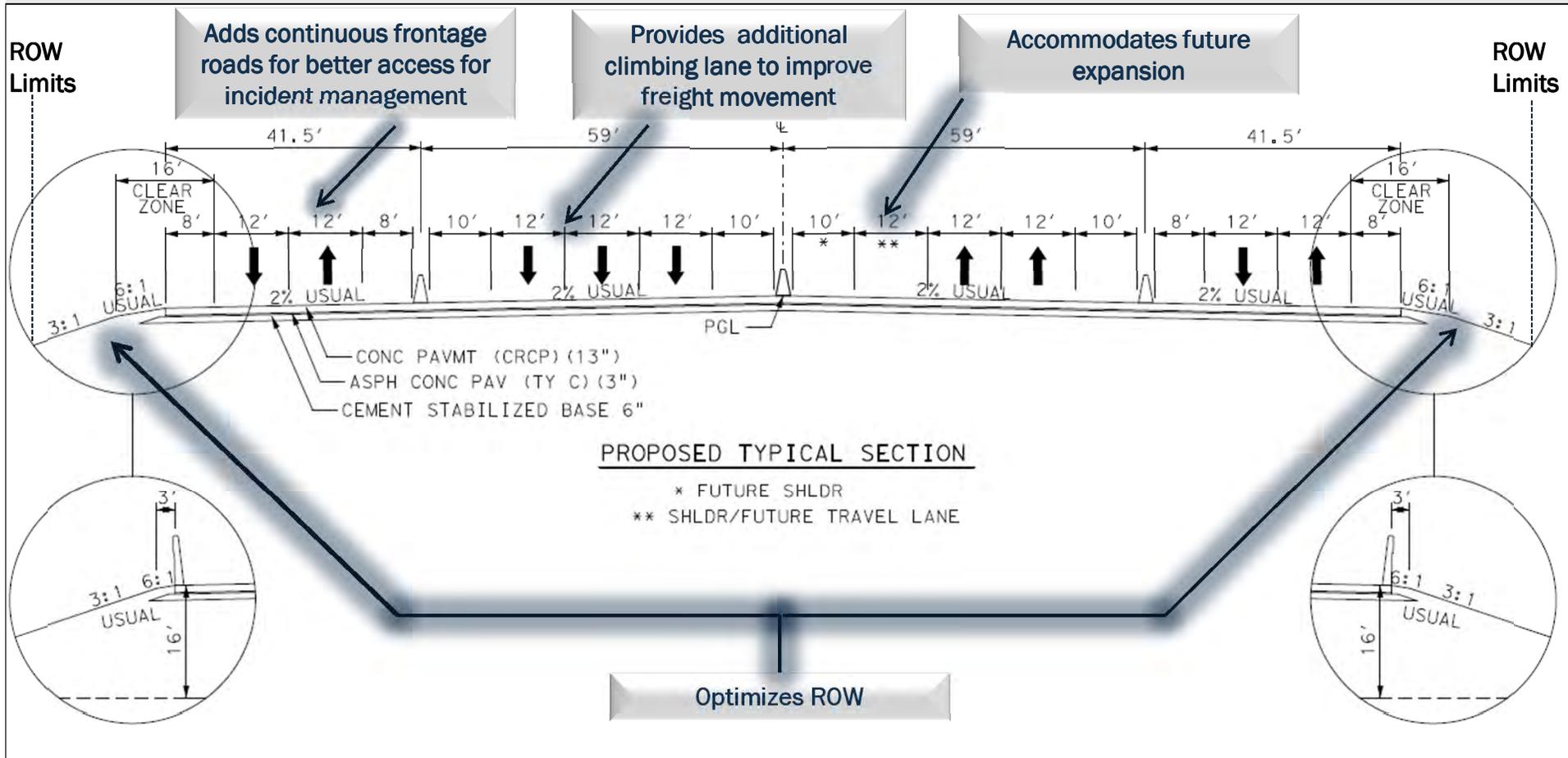
South Corridor



South Corridor Constraints

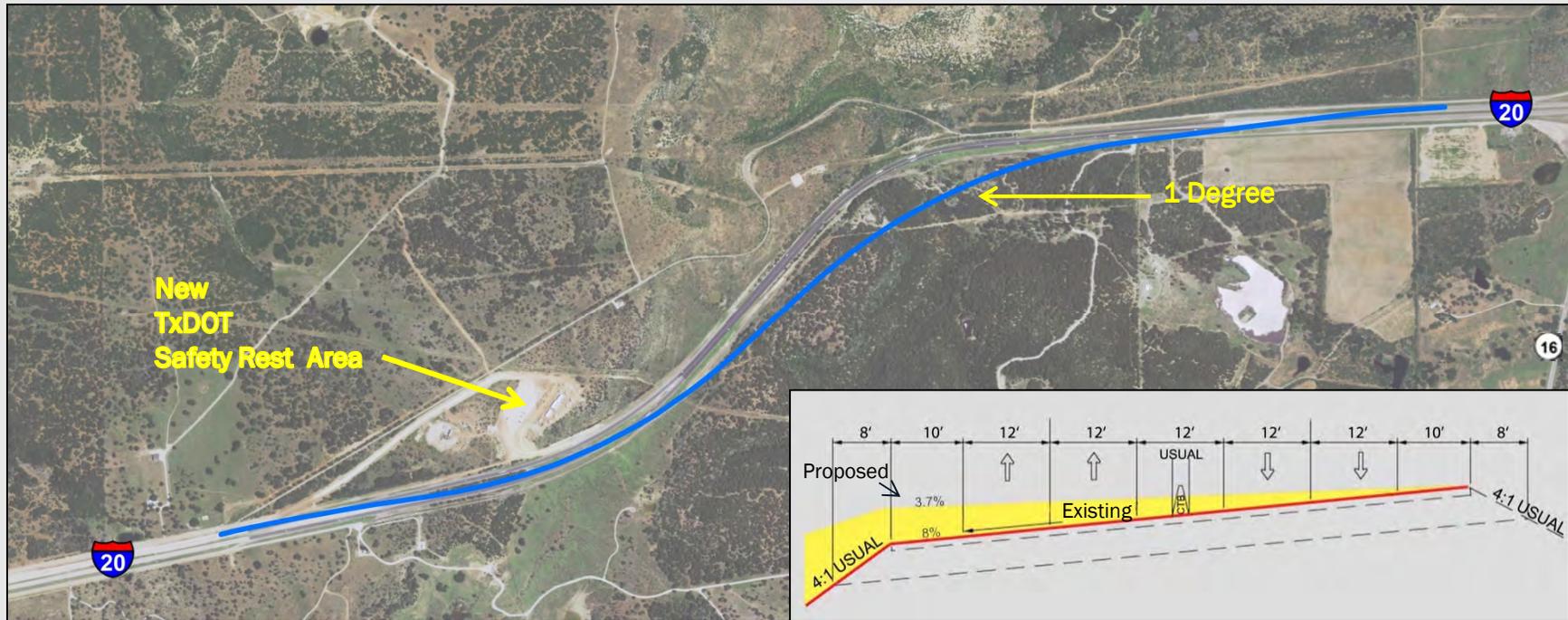
- Substantial ROW impacts to the south and to the north due to frontage road extending around safety rest area
- Significant earth work to the north and south of existing alignment

Proposed IH 20 at Ranger Hill



- Proposed frontage road and main lane configuration for current alternatives
- Consistent with identified design goals and objectives

Proposed Alternative 1



Alternative Details

- Passing lanes for westbound traffic
- Continuous frontage roads
- Access to rest area/braided ramps
- Median barrier (54-inch)

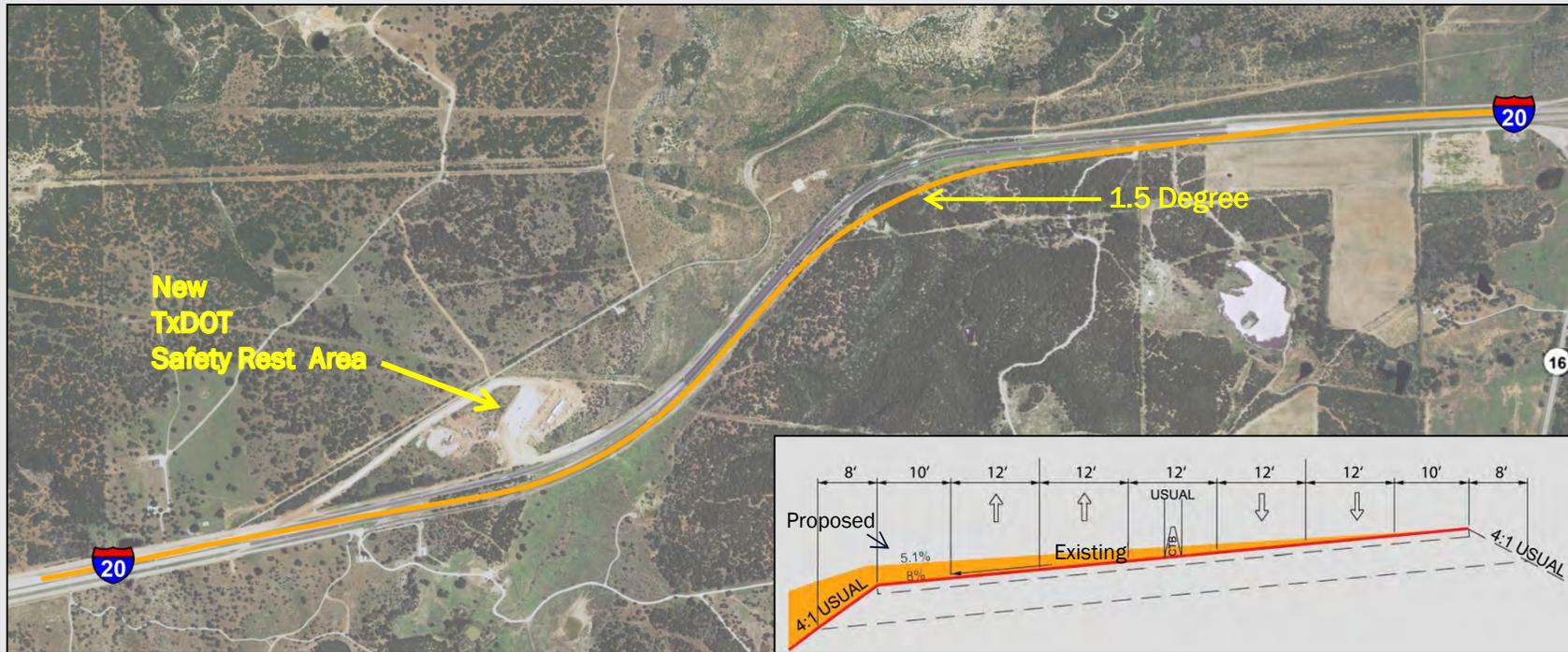
Pros

- Flatter horizontal curve
- Flatter superelevation (banking)
- Keeps existing travel lanes open during construction
- Drainage and stormwater runoff
- Minimize constructability challenges

Cons

- Preliminary estimate of approximately 100 acres of ROW

Proposed Alternative 2



Alternative Details

- Passing lanes for westbound traffic
- Continuous frontage roads
- Access to rest area/braided ramps
- Median barrier (54-inch)

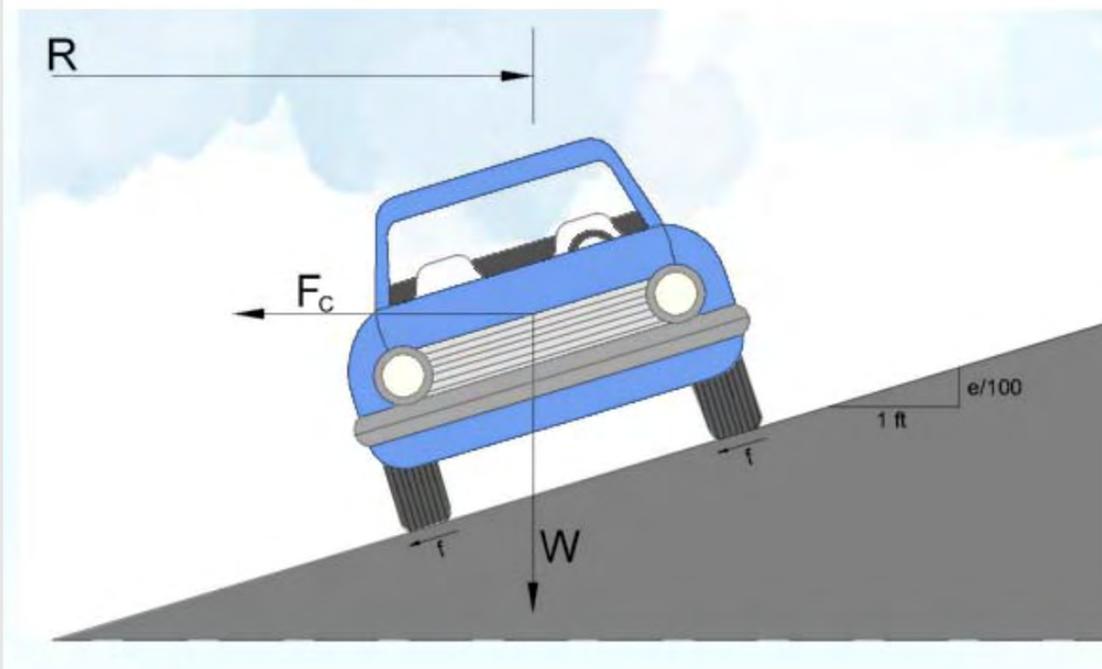
Pros

- Preliminary estimate of approximately 80 acres of ROW
- Keeps existing travel lanes open during construction

Cons

- Steeper superelevation (banking)
- Sharper horizontal curve
- Drainage and stormwater runoff
- Greater constructability challenges

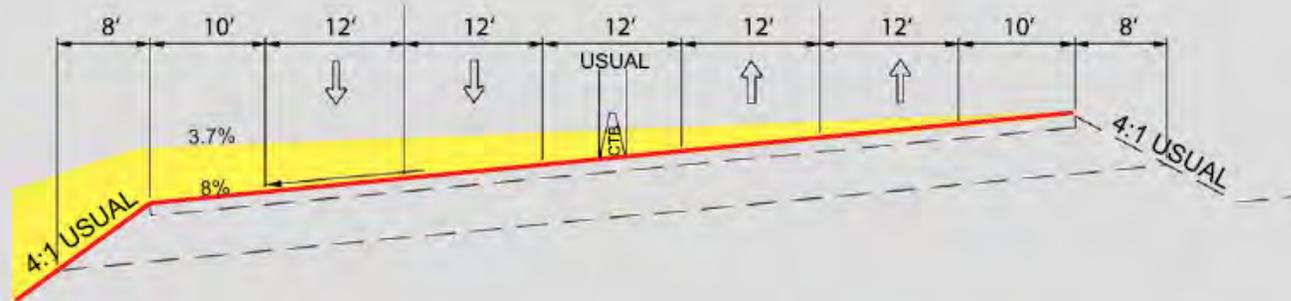
Superelevation (Banking)



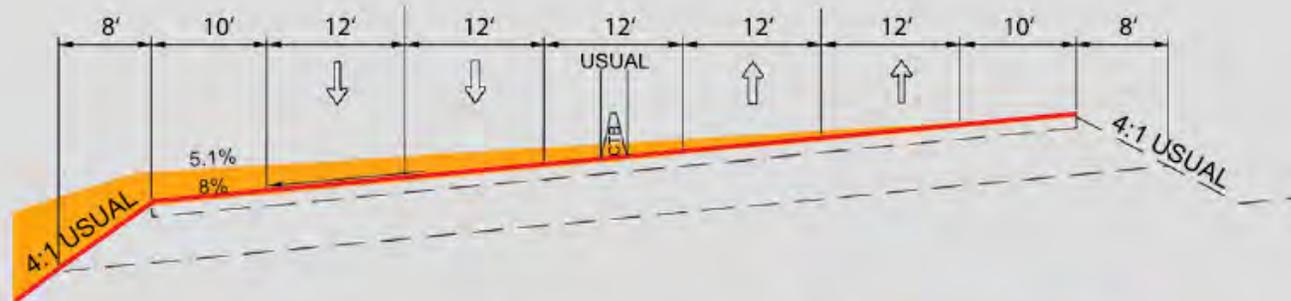
- Superelevation (banking) is a function of the horizontal curve design
 - Roadway banking/pavement rotation
 - Balances vehicles along with friction
- Steeper superelevation (banking)
 - Ideal for dry pavement conditions
 - Potentially hazardous during rain and winter events
- Minimal roadway superelevation (banking) and flatter horizontal curves improve safety

Superelevation (Banking) Comparison

Alternative 1



Alternative 2



Alternative 1
Superelevation: 3.7%

Alternative 2
Superelevation: 5.1%

Existing
Superelevation: 8%



Summary: Alternatives 1 and 2

	Alternative 1	Alternative 2
No. of Parcels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5
Design Speed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 75 MPH 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 75 MPH
Profile Grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.5% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.5%
Constructability Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large amounts of cut/fill Access to existing driveways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large amounts of cut/fill Access to existing driveways Construction Staging/steeper slopes
Pros	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flatter horizontal curve (1 degree) Keeps existing travel lanes open during construction Flatter superelevation (3.7%) Better drainage and runoff Flatter construction slopes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preliminary estimate is approximately 80 acres of ROW Keeps travel lanes open during construction
Cons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preliminary estimate is approximately 100 acres of ROW 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Steeper superelevation (5.1%) Sharper horizontal curve (1.5 degrees) Drainage and runoff Steeper construction slopes

Next Steps

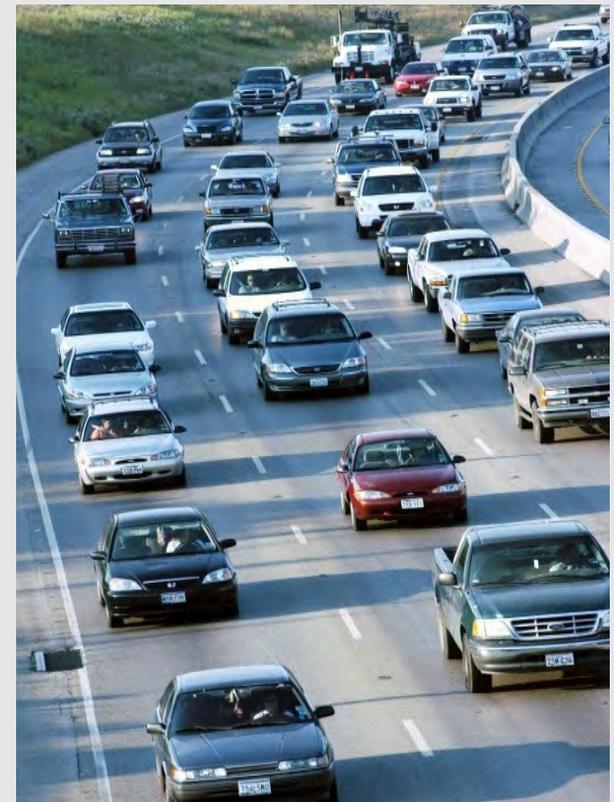
- Select Alternative for further evaluation
- Value Engineering Study September 2015
- Public Involvement
 - Ongoing meetings with Affected Property Owners
 - First Public Meeting – August 25, 2015
 - Second Public Meeting – Fall 2015
 - Public Hearing – Spring 2016
- Draft EA – Spring 2016
- Final EA/FONSI – Summer 2016





THANK YOU

Comment period ends September 4, 2015





**IH 20 Ranger Hill Schematic Design and Environmental Documentation
CSJ: 0007-06-084**

**Project Limits
From approximately 3.5 miles east of Loop 254
To SH 16**

Public Meeting Summary

DATE/TIME:

November 19, 2015; 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

LOCATION:

Ranger High School (cafeteria), 1842 TX-254 Loop, Ranger, TX 76470

PURPOSE OF MEETING:

- Present latest alternative development for realigning and reconstructing the IH 20 main lanes to reduce grade and curve radius at Ranger Hill to improve safety for the traveling public.
- Present completed project development phases.
- Explain next steps in project.
- Answer questions and receive comments on all information presented.

FORMAT:

The two-hour Public Meeting consisted of an open house during which attendees had an opportunity to review displays showing the project area and background, Purpose and Need, proposed alternatives, environmental process, project timeline, and summary of the alternatives comparison. Other materials, including roll plots of the alternative and corridors, and an animated visualization were also available for consideration. Project team members answered questions and provided any requested information. Attendees were able to submit written comments during the meeting or the comment period following the meeting.

PUBLIC NOTICE:

A public notice of the meeting was published in the *Ranger Times/Eastland Telegram/Eastland County Today* on November 12 and November 19, 2015. In addition, the *Ranger Times/Eastland Telegram/Eastland County Today* ran a front page news article on the public meeting. TxDOT Brownwood District also distributed a press release/media advisory to the following media outlets:



- KTXS-TV, Abilene
- KTAB/KRBC, Abilene
- *Brownwood Bulletin*, Brownwood
- *Brownwoodnews.com* (online newspaper)
- KBWD-AM/KOXE-FM radio - Brownwood (country)
- KPSM - 99.3 FM radio – Brownwood
- KQBZ- 96.9 FM, Newstalk radio
- 102.3 FM, KXYL radio, Brownwood
- *Coleman Chronicle & Democratic Voice*
- KSTA-AM/FM radio, Coleman
- *Comanche Chief*, Comanche
- KCOM-AM & KYOX radio, Comanche
- *Eastland Telegram* (Cisco, Ranger, Rising Star & Gorman)
- KATX (HPRN CO.) radio, Eastland;
- *Microplex News* (online newspaper), Eastland
- *Lampasas Dispatch Record*, Lampasas
- KCYL-AM/KACC-FM radio, Lampasas
- *Brady Herald Standard*, Brady
- KNEL-AM radio, Brady
- *Goldthwaite Eagle*, Goldthwaite
- *San Saba News and Star*, San Saba
- KNUZ-FM/KNVR-AM radio, San Saba
- *Breckenridge American*, Breckenridge
- KLXK/ KROO radio, Breckenridge

Direct mail meeting notices and emails were sent to a list of 77 property owners, federal, state, county, and local elected officials, federal, state, and local agencies, and other stakeholders. These notices contained the same information that is found in the display ad in the newspaper and are attached to this document.

A meeting notice also was posted on the TxDOT.gov website.

ATTENDANCE:

A total of 17 individuals (three of whom were TxDOT employees) registered their attendance at the public meeting. Four elected officials or representatives of elected officials signed in as well. The sign-in sheet is attached to this document.

DISPLAY AND HANDOUT MATERIALS:

The following displays were available for viewing: a project location map; project history and background; project description; Purpose and Need; the environmental and design considerations used to evaluate the two project alternatives; the environmental resources to be evaluated as part of the Environmental Assessment (EA); and the project development phases and anticipated timeline. Preliminary schematic drawings for Alternative 1 and a preliminary corridors roll map were displayed on tables for detailed review by meeting participants. An animated visualization of proposed changes to IH 20 at Ranger Hill was available for viewing. In addition, a project fact sheet and comment card was given to each meeting participant.



The meeting exhibits are available on TxDOT's website at <http://www.txdot.gov/inside-txdot/get-involved/about/hearings-meetings/brownwood/111915.html>. The meeting handout and comment card are attached to this document.

DEADLINE:

Comments received and/or postmarked on or before December 4, 2015 were included in this public meeting report.

WRITTEN COMMENTS DELIVERED AT THE MEETING:

No written comments were received at the meeting.

WRITTEN COMMENTS RECEIVED AFTER THE PUBLIC MEETING:

One individual submitted a written comment to TxDOT on or before the December 4, 2015.

Comment #1: Individual noted that the open house was a very well organized presentation by TxDOT.

TxDOT response: Comment noted.

ATTACHMENTS

- Public Meeting Notice (newspaper)
- Newspaper Article
- Public Meeting Notice to Property Owners
- Public Meeting Comment Form
- Public Meeting Handout
- Public Meeting Sign-in Sheet
- Public Meeting Photo Log

PUBLISHER'S AFFIDAVIT

STATE OF TEXAS

COUNTY OF EASTLAND

Before me, the undersigned authority, on this day personally appeared Amy O'Brien Glenn, Publisher of the Ranger Times/Eastland County Today, a newspaper having general circulation in Eastland, County, Texas, who being by me duly sworn, deposes and says that the foregoing attached notice was published in said newspaper on the following date(s), to wit: November 12 & 19, 2015.

Amy O'Brien Glenn

Amy O'Brien Glenn
Publisher

Subscribed and sworn to before me this the 20 day of November
 , 2015, to certify which witness my hand and seal of office.



Ladonna Latham
Notary Public

@ the Ranger Library...& More!

One morning last week, two young men visited our library. They had used our public access computers before and I already knew that the young man wearing a red-striped toboggan on his head had language issues. He seems to use the f-word without knowing it. It wasn't too long before I said, "It's a good thing we do not have children in here." Before long, we did. A mother came in with her two teenaged daughters. When the mom turned and looked at me with raised eyebrows, I knew she was offended, and it was due to a "White girl" comment, NOT profanity, at least as far as I heard. Before long, the mom and her daughters left, and I walked out to the porch with them. "There's no way I'd leave my daughters in here with those two."

After rechecking a book for Scott B, the "rapping" had started in the Computer Room. It was just me and them. "It's Rap, Miss," the young man wearing the toboggan smiled real big. Oh I heard, complete with F-words and S-words. I told them, "I like rap as much as the next girl, but the obscenities aren't acceptable. Wrap it up. Two minutes."

The twenty-ish year old wearing a toboggan threw his hands in the air and exclaimed, "I'm sorry, I'm sorry." I replied sincerely, "I'm sorry, too. I'm sorry that you haven't learned how to act in a public place. This is a public library, and it's time for you to leave." And they left.

My mom whispered later, "Were they college students?" I said, "No way."

Today, these two returned, and apologized. My mother's daughter asked, "Are y'all Ranger College students?" "No." The more mature of the two said, "But I want to be. And this guy," indicating his toboggan-wearing pal, "is hard to take out in public." All was forgiven. The library is a good place to learn things...but I'd prefer Science!

"Kathi" called last Friday from the Weatherford Public Library. She was interested in a "Triumph" (a car) for sale on Pine Street by a seller who calls himself the "Yard Sale King".

I told Kathi that our library was located on Pine Street and when I had a chance, I'd cruise down Pine and try to notice a "Triumph" or

a Yard Sale King. No luck. Kathi didn't wish to drive to Ranger unless she had a chance at a "Triumph". Do YOU know anything helpful for Kathi? I have her number!

Today our library received invoices so maybe tomorrow we'll receive boxes. Expected soon: The Guilty by David Baldacci; Tricky Twenty-Two (a Stephanie Plum novel) by Janet Evanovich; Who Do You Love by Jennifer Weiner; What You See by Hank Phillippi Ryan; and Twilight, Life and Death, by Stephanie Meyer.

I'm ready to start Chapter 5 of "Corrupted", the newest by Lisa Scottoline. One favorite library patron wrote, "A stay-up-til 3:24 AM kind of read!" and gave the book five stars. So far...so good! But I doubt that it can keep me awake until 3 AM.

This past weekend, Jim and I "babysat" our two youngest grandsons, ages 2 and 4. I think it'd be fair to say that we're still a little exhausted! (In a good way!) I took two library books to read to them: "Armadilly Chili" by Helen Ketteman, an author that I've "worked" for before at the Texas Library Association Conference, AND "Oh Where, Oh Where Has My Little Dog Gone?"—a book that I sing and the little lads sing along with me. In our second reading of "Armadilly Chili", when "Miss Billie" is irritated with her friends for not helping make the chili when the Blue Northern is blowing in, Dean assured me that the story WOULD have a happy ending—and Dean was right!

And better than a story with a happy ending, we got the little boys to Bible Class early, and we were ALL happy. And thanks to Animal Crackers and multi-colored pens, we NEARLY made it through a whole sermon, contentedly. Veterans, past and present, were asked to stand. The applause of nearly 500 Christians was impressive.

Last thoughts from the guest preacher: Our biggest problem in the United States is not our deficit, it's not health-care, and it's not immigration. Our biggest problem is that we do not honor God.

Let's do better. "Courage is fear that's said its prayers." Thank you, Veterans. Please take care, and as always...ENJOY READING!!!



The McCulloughs' four year old grandson insists on having the right song in the hymnal. Sunday's first song was on page 3, "Hallelujah, Praise Jehovah".



Hunting Season Opened
John Rutledge shot A 11 pt Buck on opening hunting season Saturday in Ranger. It scored 150.

Ranger Elementary News

Wow have two six weeks already passed??? It has really flown by. First grade will complete our second reader and will soon start on the third one. First graders need to continue to read everyday to an adult at home. Math is more rigorous and we are learning how to use strategies to solve addition and subtraction problems. In Science we have learned about energy and force and have conducted some experiments. This time of the year the expectations are increasing. Please discuss with your student the importance of working hard daily.

Lions Club
From Page B1

a blended family, and/or owns property or real-estate. Making a will can also assure a person's assets are left to whomever they choose; clarify how they wish to be buried; set up a trust; and forgive debts, among other purposes.

Ms. Hansen suggested that a husband and wife should have two separate wills. She also mentioned that a homestead is no longer automatically a homestead when the owner's name is changed. It must be homesteaded again and refiled.

(Lion) Dr. Bill Campion told Ranger Lions of the help Ms. Hansen gave the Ranger College in writing the institution's self study some years ago. She was the college librarian at that time. She then received her law degree and is an attorney with the law office Turner, Seaberry, and Warford and an important attorney for the college, he said.



Ranger ... Home of the Bulldogs!

Meeting Notice
From Page B1

SCRIBED BY LAW, FOR THE PAYMENT OF THE NOTES; PRESCRIBING THE FORM, TERMS, CONDITIONS, AND RESOLVING OTHER MATTERS INCIDENT AND RELATED TO THE ISSUANCE, SALE, AND DELIVERY OF THE NOTES; AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF A PAYING AGENT/REGISTRAR AGREEMENT AND A PURCHASE AND INVESTMENT LETTER; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE. – Mayor Pilgrim
Agenda Item 06: Ad-journment

Coat Drive
From Page B 1

will bless you for your generosity. All canned goods, monetary and remaining coats and blankets were given to Hopes Kitchen. God Bless Ranger!

Luke 6:38

"For if you give, you will get! Your gift will return to you in full and overflowing measure, pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, and running over. Whatever measure you use to give—



TxDOT Public Open House on IH 20
Ranger Hill to be held November 19

On November 19, 2015, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) will hold a public open house to share proposed changes to Interstate Highway (IH) 20 that would improve safety for the traveling public. The stretch of IH 20 to be improved is in Eastland County (from about 3.5 miles east of Loop 254 to State Highway 16).

TIME: 5 – 7 p.m.

FORMAT: A come and go open house to meet the project team, learn about the current alternative development and ask questions about the project. There will be no presentation.

LOCATION: Ranger High School cafeteria, 1842 TX-254 in Ranger, Texas

The public meeting will be conducted in English. Anyone interested in attending the meeting who has special communication or accommodation needs, or needs an interpreter, is encouraged to call (325) 643-0415. Requests should be made at least two days before the public meeting. Every reasonable effort will be made to accommodate special needs.

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 16, 2014, and executed by FHWA and TxDOT.

Additional information on this meeting may be found at <http://www.txdot.gov/inside-txdot/get-involved/about/hearings-meetings>.

Public Notice

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF REFERRAL PERIOD
Public Notice

Ranger ISD is now accepting referrals for students who may need Gifted and Talented Services for the school year. This program is designed for students who exhibit intellectual and creative thinking abilities at an extraordinary level not normally served in the regular classroom. Services are provided only upon identification of education needs of the student. Anyone wishing to refer a student attending Ranger ISD in kindergarten through twelfth grade this year is asked to go by the student's campus office and request a copy of the referral form. This form must be returned to the school by November 24. Those unable to go by the school should call 254-647-1138 to request a form be mailed to them.

ANUNCIO DEL PERÍODO DE REFERENCIA

Aviso public
Ranger ISD está aceptando las referencias para los estudiantes que necesitan servicios dotados y talentosos para el año escolar. Este programa está diseñado para estudiantes que exhiben las habilidades de pensamiento intelectu-

large or small—will be used to measure what is given back to you."

REMEMBER OUT VETERANS! THOSE WHO HAVE SERVED AND THOSE WHO SERVE TODAY



Legal Notice

ORDINANCE NO. 2015-11-23-J

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF RANGER, TEXAS VACATING AND ABANDONING A PORTION OF 7TH STREET AND AUTHORIZING THE QUITCLAIMING OF A PORTION OF SUCH VACATED AND ABANDONED STREET TO THE ABUTTING SUBDIVISION LAND OWNER, AND CONTAINING A SEVERABILITY CLAUSE

(11-12-2015)

al y creativo en un extraordinario nivel normalmente no sirve en el salón de clases regular. Servicios son proporcionados solamente sobre la identificación de las necesidades de la educación del estudiante. Cualquier persona que desee hacer referencia a un estudiante que asiste a Ranger ISD de kindergarten a clase de doce grado este año se le pide que vaya por la oficina del alumno de la escuela y solicitar una copia de la forma de referencia. Este formulario debe devolverse a la escuela el 24 de noviembre. Aquellos que no pueden ir a la escuela deben llamar a 254-647-1138 para solicitar una forma enviada a ellos.

Renew Your Subscription @ 254-629-1707 Don't Miss Any Local News!



@ the Ranger Library...& More!

The wind is howling outside my dark windows. Our crescent-shaped moon disappeared and reappeared behind black, ominous clouds on my short drive home from the Ranger City Library tonight, our late night when we close at 7:30 PM. A line of thunderstorms are predicted to cross us, sometime in the night. I love rain, but nobody wants dangerous, destructive weather. Jim predicts we'll have more pecans fall, and I'm the one who is supposed to be the optimist...

One day last week, our library fielded a phone call from one of our neighbors, on the long stretch of road to Amarillo. She and her traveling companion became interested in Amelia Earhart's flight to Ranger back on June 16, 1931. "We want to know, where was Amelia Earhart going after her stop in Ranger?" I asked, "Did you google it?" "No, we called YOU." "Okay, give me your call back number and I'll see what I can find out."

THAT'S when Amelia Earhart's story got REAL interesting. I googled the Internet for Amelia's famous visit to the Ranger Airport and I found Ranger Middle School teacher, Lindsey Hawvermale, and her 7th and 8th grade class project and a salute to them from the Lincoln Highway National Museum and Archives for "A Job Well Done!!" (And furthermore) "Thanks to You" Ranger, Texas is now "On The Map" as one of Amelia Earhart's "Documented Stops" during her "1931 Beach-Nut Transcontinental Autogiro Tour!!"

Yes, those are quotes that I found fast and easy on the Internet on the Lincoln-Highway-Museum.org website, and I was delighted.

I immediately called my caller back and shared what I learned. Not so quickly, I composed a "Thank You" email to Lindsey Hawvermale, still a beloved Middle School teacher in Ranger. The next morning, I read her gracious reply. And this is NOT an exact quote,

but something to the effect of: "It was a great project and we enjoyed it! Can you believe some of those students are now Seniors in High School?"

A teacher and her students, making a nice difference to our town and to the world--putting Ranger on the map!

One interesting visitor last week was "Spider Clark" from the RHS Class of 1953. He is interested in perusing a 1953 yearbook. I called the school, and RHS Librarian Bobbie Thompson has a 1951 yearbook but not one from 1953. Might YOU have access to one? We could set up a rendezvous at the library—it'd probably be great fun!

"Late-breaking news" started dinging on my devices Friday afternoon. Cowardly terrorists had inflicted senseless, spineless harm on innocent people in Paris, France. If our library owned a flag, I hope that it'd be flying at half-staff, in sorrow with those who mourn. Today I remember, "If we do not hang together, we shall surely hang separately." Who said that? Benjamin Franklin. Ben said all kinds of great things and I will share some with you in closing...

"There was never a good war, or a bad peace." "Hear reason, or she'll make you feel her." "He that composes himself is wiser than he that composes a book." "One today is worth two tomorrows." "Who is rich? He that rejoices in his portion." "Fatigue is the best pillow." "To succeed, jump as quickly at opportunities as you do at conclusions." And more humorously, "The worst wheel of the cart makes the most noise."

Only nine pages remain in my current novel, "Corrupted" by Lisa Scottoline. It's one of the best stories that I've read in a while. Bullies? Watch out. From page 412: "What people wanted was everything back the way it was. Justice was only a consolation prize."

Please take care, and let's "hang together"! Like Children of God. And as always...Enjoy Reading!!!

RISD Meeting
From Page B 1

nance/Repairs, Personnel, Projects, Report Cards, Special Populations, Student Groups, and Activities, Testing

c. Extracurricular/Athletic Reports - District Standings, Eligibility, Games/Meets, Opponents, Participation, Playoffs, Projects, Schedules, Personnel

d. Financial Report - Audits, Budget Amendments, Budget Development, Expenditures, Fund Balances, Funding, Revenue, Tax Appeal, Tax Assessed Values, Tax Collections

e. 6.2 Superintendent's Report - Academics, Accountability, Audits, Board Training, Budgeting, Business, Cafeteria, Capital Outlay, Community Service, Committees, Facilities, Funding, Legislation, Maintenance, Personnel, Policy, Professional Development, Projects, Taxes, Testing, Enrollment, Campus Safety, Highly Qualified Teacher Report 2015-2016 Budget.

7. Consent Agenda
7.1 Consent Agenda
8. Action Items

8.1 Appoint Member to Eastland County Appraisal District

8.2 Appoint Member to Stephens County Appraisal District

8.3 Signature card changes

8.4 Ranger ISD Wellness Policy

9. Closed Session
Tex. Gov't Code Section 551.074- Discuss administrative personnel

Tex. Gov't Code Section 551.074- Discuss certified personnel

Tex. Gov't Code Section 551.074- Discuss non-certified personnel

9.4 Open Session Action, if any, related to closed session personnel deliberations above.

10. Adjournment

10.1 Adjournment

If during the course of the meeting, any discussion of any item on the agenda should be held in executive or closed session, the Board will convene in such executive or closed session in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act. Texas Government Code Chapter 551, Subchapter D, Section .071 Attorneys; .072 Real Property; .073 Prospective Gift; .074 Personnel. Any final action, decision, or vote on a subject deliberated in closed meeting will be taken in an open meeting.

Ranger and Eastland's delinquent water billing

3. Discuss and approve pass through billing to the cities of Eastland and Ranger for the repair of water leaks along and on our main lines to the cities that are a result of leaks on the respective cities taps or

Ranger Elementary
2nd Six Weeks
Honor Rolls

A Honor Roll
Kindergarten

Emma Beasley, Tansleigh Bell, Marley Borrego, Cade Coleman, Natalie Mcrouch, Hayden Dobbs, Barron Ramsey, Zayden Robertson, Carley Stewart, Landon Uhlhorn

1st Grade
Harper Barron, Kitteria Bell, Caleb Carroll, Ayden Diaz-Harr, Brenne Dove, Ana Squivel,

Brailey Gohlke, Michael Gomez, Cody Neely, Brystal Pittman, Hayes Pittman, Maya Richardson

2nd Grade
Kevin Beasley, Alijah Crouch, Caden Fischer, Landon Riffle, Victoria Squyers

3rd Grade
Hallie Ellerbe, Jayton Wesley

4th Grade
Mishael Coyote, Kaleb Romanstine

5th Grade
Eric Beltran, Allison Griffin, Hailey Lauth

A/B Honor Roll
Kindergarten

Sabree Campbell, Wyatt Carroll, Aubri Casey, Jalunda Cole, Angelo Elizondo, Keegan Gunstanson, Preslee Hoodie, Isaiah Lewis, Zoey Lewis, Gabby Lopez, Rylie Nichols, Caydence Plascencia, Mason Reiser, Jordan Rodriguez, Gunner Watson

1st Grade

Lizbeth Alanis, Anthony Ballard, Alexis Granillo, Jaide Hernandez, Kylie Isbell, Ashlynn James, Jalie Jenkins, Brayden Martinez, Leah Mckee, Conner Neel, Tyler Roberts, Ethan Saucedo, Brycen Turnbow, Madison Vela

2nd Grade
Zerek Bell, Maycie Berel, Mayci Dobbs, Emmaes Ensey, Luis Quivel, Xzavier French, Emery Lee, Samuel Madore,

Shyanne Mcgough, Caleb Mckee, Ivanetta Revis, Victoria Valdez, Brayden Walters, Ashleigh Wilcoxon, Bayleigh Zarate

3rd Grade

Rhett Allgood, Ryan Ball, Doklan Creech, Jayton Dickey, Wyatt Franks, Martin Carcia, Nayomi Haynes, Lilly Hernandez, June Irvine, Summer Maddox, Edgar Medina, Kyler Perez, Belen Perkins,

ing held in compliance with the Texas Open Meetings Act.

This notice was posted at 3:00 PM on

customer lines coming off of our main lines.

4. Action necessary from Engineer Update

5. Discussion by Rodney Shelton regarding Flooding

6. Discuss/Approve replacing old water line from CMR Co to Ranger Meat



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Ranger Hill to be held November 19

On November 19, 2015, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) will hold a public open house to share proposed changes to Interstate Highway (IH) 20 that would improve safety for the traveling public. The stretch of IH 20 to be improved is in Eastland County (from about 3.5 miles east of Loop 254 to State Highway 16).

TIME: 5 – 7 p.m.
FORMAT: A come and go open house to meet the project team, learn about the current alternative development and ask questions about the project. There will be no presentation.

LOCATION: Ranger High School cafeteria, 1842 TX-254 in Ranger, Texas

The public meeting will be conducted in English. Anyone interested in attending the meeting who has special communication or accommodation needs, or needs an interpreter, is encouraged to call (325) 643-0415. Requests should be made at least two days before the public meeting. Every reasonable effort will be made to accommodate special needs.

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 16, 2014, and executed by FHWA and TxDOT.

Additional information on this meeting may be found at <http://www.txdot.gov/inside-txdot/get-involved/about/hearings-meetings>.

Devin Price, Sayvien Reed, Shelby Richardson Mayela Torres

4th Grade
Kutter Ancell, Landon Farmer, Garrett Franks, Ferardo Giron, Caden Hernandez, Cassidy Hoodie, Ciara Irwin, Taylor Lane, Isaak Medina, Tiffany Ponce, Amanda Riffle, Dagan Smith, Callie Thompson, James Uhlhorn, Celeste Valdez, Kaylea Walston

5th Grade
Oliver Barron, Tucker Boring, Trinity Coleman, Meradie Danner, Alyssa Davlin, Justice Dove, Destiny Hall, Kaleigh Hernandez, Jesse Honeycutt, Makenna Koerner, James Mckee Isaiah Medina, Elizabeth Roberts, Alicia Rodriguez, Taylor Scott, Cadence Smith, Conner Taylor

Perfect Attendance
2nd Six Weeks

Lizbeth Alanis, Ryan Ball, Emma Beasley, Kevin Beasley, Tyler Beasley, Izayik Bell, Zerek Bell, Madilyn Boyd, Caleb Carroll, Wyatt Carroll, Rylan Curry, Meradie Danner, Alyssa Davlin, Jayton Dickey, Addison Dunson, Landon Farmer,

Kirsten Fox, Martin Garcia, Michael Gomez, Riley Griffin, Nolan Harris, Caden Hernandez, Cassidy Hoodie, Preslee Hoodie, Braylin Ibarra, June Irvine, Ashlynn James, Makenna Koerner, Hai

November 16, 2015

Mike Thompson
Superintendent of Schools

7. Review Monthly Financial Report for October 2015

7. Approve Minutes of the October 15, 2015 Meeting

8. Approve Accounts Payables

9. Approve Secretary's Reimbursement of Monthly Expenses

Legal Notice

ORDINANCE NO.
2015-11-23-J

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF RANGER, TEXAS VACATING AND ABANDONING A PORTION OF 7TH STREET AND AUTHORIZING THE QUITCLAIMING OF A PORTION OF SUCH VACATED AND ABANDONED STREET TO THE ABUTTING SUBDIVISION LAND OWNER, AND CONTAINING A SEVERABILITY CLAUSE

(11-12, 11-19-2015)

Iley Lauth, Lee Emery, Melissa Lewis, Zoey Lewis, Summer Maddox, Hayley Mankin, Brayden Martinez, Caleb Mckee, James Mckee, Leah Mckee, Alaina Mandoza, Ethan Nolan, Kyler Perez, Belen Perkins, Shaun Perry, Tiffany Ponce, Kelin Poncin, David Ramsey, Mason Reiser, Shelby Richardson, Landon Riffle, Elizabeth Roberts, Ryan Roberts, Alicia Rodriguez, Kaleb Romanstine, Santiago Romero, Kendra Rucker, Cadence Smith, Carley Stewart, Lilly Stewart, Prycen Turnbow, Brynlee Turnbow, James Uhlhorn, Landon Uhlhorn, Celeste Valdez, Benjamin Vasquez, Kaylea Walston, Jayton Wesley, Zackary Wilson-Ballesteros, Logan Zarate

10. Superintendent's Update

12. Executive Session in Accordance with Government Code Section 551.074 (Personnel Matters), Code Section 551.072 (Deliberations about Real Property) and 551.0726 (Deliberation Regarding Contract Being Negotiated)

13. Reconvene in Open Session for Action from Executive Session Adjourn

Notice of Meeting

Eastland County Water Supply District will hold an agenda meeting on Nov. 19 at 6:00 P.M. at the Filtration Plant, 802 FM 2461 S., Ranger, Texas.

- Agenda
A. Meeting Called to Order
B. Pledge of Allegiance and Prayer
C. Gibbs & Todd

Update

D. Update from City Representatives

E. Comments from Board Members

F. The Board of Directors may Discuss or Take Action on any of the Following Agenda Items:
1. FEMA update on chosen engineer and grant writer
2. Discussion of

EASTLAND COUNTY TODAY

The Local News Source

TODAY
IS DEDICATED TO
EASTLAND COUNTY
ECONOMIC GROWTH

Material edited and
pages designed in
this county

\$1.00

Volume 2 Number 47

eastlandcountytoday.com

Weekly Edition

© 2015 Eastland County Newspapers, Inc. Thursday, November 19, 2015
FEAR GOD AND KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS, FOR THIS IS THE WHOLE DUTY OF MAN. -- Ecclesiastes 12:13, NKJV



photo by Jason Walston/ECT staff

Paying Respect To Those Who Have Served Our Country

The Cub Scouts of Gorman, Pac 8, learn about a World War II veteran buried at Oaklawn Cemetery. On Veterans Day, the Cub Scouts brought flags to be placed at the gravesites of servicemen and women. They also placed a penny on the graves they visited which, according to tradition, sends a message to the deceased soldier's family that someone else has visited the grave to pay respect. In particular, this gesture is to give special honor to servicemen and women who gave their lives to serve our country and became common during the Vietnam war, reports say.

All Invited To VFW Thanksgiving Dinner

VFW Post 4136 located at 918 Hwy 570 will be hosting a Thanksgiving Dinner for Eastland County Veterans and their families. The general public is also invited to attend. Dinner will be served at 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 21.

Thank you, Commander Rick Cox

T-Shirt Sale Started To Help With Medical Expenses For Matthew

One of the most cherished qualities of our community is that we pull together in a time of need and support one another. Matthew Moreno is a 13 year old 8th grader at Eastland Middle School. He became ill with decreased kidney function in October and has been hospitalized since November 6.

A T-Shirt sale has been started to help family with medical



photo by Jason Walston/ECT staff

West Texas Rehab Benefit Concert Big Success

Texas Legend Gary P. Nunn (pictured above right) performed along with the Sons of the Bunkhouse Band at the Majestic Theatre in Eastland Thursday, Nov. 12 to a large and enthusiastic crowd. The concert benefited the West Texas Rehabilitation Center, a non-profit, outpatient facility. The Rehabilitation Center announced Tuesday that the benefit concert raised \$21,000!

TXDOT TO CONDUCT OPEN HOUSE ON PROPOSED RANGER HILL RECONSTRUCTION

TXDOT is hosting a public open house on Thursday, Nov. 19 to share proposed changes to Interstate 20 that would improve safety for the traveling public. The two-mile stretch proposed to be improved is in Eastland County, from about 3.5 miles east of Loop 254 to SH 16. This area is commonly known as Ranger Hill.

The open house will take place from 5-7 p.m. in the Ranger High School cafeteria located at 1842 E. Loop 254, Ranger, TX 76470. The public will be able to view the proposed changes and ask questions of TXDOT personnel. There will be no presentation.

Although TXDOT has already made some safety improvements to this section of I-20 (such as reducing the speed limit, resurfacing the mainlane pavement and installing a concrete barrier), additional measures are needed to respond to local concerns. TXDOT has now identified alternatives for additional safety, access and mobility improvements. These alternatives include:

- Reducing the grade
- Straightening the curve of the interstate at Ranger Hill
- Providing a westbound climbing lane
- Continuous

(Continued Page A 2 ...)

THANK YOU FROM JAYDEN'S FAMILY

I've set down numerous times to start this thank you, but finding it difficult to locate the starting point. So many wonderful people have given to this family so unselfishly and so generously.

We knew we lived in a great community, Gorman, and Eastland, but we've learned our community is county wide, and then some. Many people have touched our lives and gave us strength by prayers and hugs.

A huge thank you goes out to the awesome students and athletes of the entire EISD for your one-of-a-kind (Continued Page A 2 ...)

TO HELP MAKE

HOLIDAY CHEER

FOR LUCKY ONES

Leon River Cowboy Church

Time For 2015 Eastland County Pecan Show

With fall closing in...

...to the Extension Office...

from Page 1
Ranger Hill

frontage roads along both east and west-bound lanes

The open house will be conducted in English. Anyone interested in attending who has special communication or accommodation needs, or needs an interpreter, is encouraged to call (325) 643-0415. Requests should be made at least two days before the public meeting. Every reasonable effort will be made to accommodate special needs.

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 Dec. 16, 2014, and executed by FHWA and TxDOT.

TxDOT's Brownwood District includes Brown, Coleman, Comanche, Eastland, Lampasas, McCulloch, Mills, San Saba and Stephens counties.

from Page 1

Thank You

get well cards and for showing your support during sporting events. That gave Jayd's heart a positive beat!

Thank you to Siebert Elementary Staff for such professional and compassionate response, and All Emergency Personnel and Volunteers and All law enforcement. Your quick action literally saved the life of Jayden Justice, and there is not enough words to express our appreciation, gratitude, and love we feel for all of you. To the many people who worked countless hours collecting and organizing Jayd's benefit dinner, the many who donated toward the meal or silent auction, for those who provided the labor behind the scenes, and for everything that was contributed to the benefit, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

Everyone who has

Fellowshipping
By H. V. O.

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
West 8th St., Cisco TX
Sunday at 11 a.m.
Mike Hannah, Minister

Members take pride and visitors will marvel at this majestic, historic building, inside and out. Regal columns and staired glass galore throughout; red carpet and good maintenance is obvious.

Pastor Hannah was away on the day we visited but we heard an outstanding delivery by Layman Bill Smith, a Pecos native who with his wife chose the Cisco area for retirement.

His theme was perseverance and his scripture was Ecclesiastes 9:10-11. He told of his own experiences in which perseverance through the grace of God took him through many typically tough times, which most of us also face.

"A person's attitude braced with God's armor is the key to survival," he emphasized. Lay Leader Harryette Purvis presided with Betty Cooper at the organ and Davene Jeffcoat, music director, at the piano. (Mrs. Jeffcoat's name is familiar to many; she is the launcher of the Siebert (Elementary) Singers in Eastland.

Attendance was below average Sunday due to the fact that the membership had conducted a highly successful Lord's Adoration in any way we want you to know how deeply grateful we truly are. Knowing you have Jayd's back by continually lifting him in prayer is the best source of comfort and encouragement.

May God bless each and every one of you for caring and helping Jayden and this family. We do believe there are many angels among us, and some wear Eastland Maverick uniforms.

Thank you again to everyone who has given in any way. Jayden Justice Family

event the previous long and tiring day.

After service visiting with Jerry Jeffcoat when I asked about the age of the church, he furnished a church history book done by the late Lela Latch Lloyd, member and historian.

The book answered many questions: the church was originally at Red Gap, destroyed by the tornado, and moved to what is now Cisco, by the way, by John Jay Cisco who brought the first railroad through this area and gave the lot where the church stands to the congregation.

(All of which may also solve which is the oldest church in the county: there was a Methodist Church at Red Gap until the 1893 tornado that killed 22 people and moved the town north to the new railroad area. We attended Merryman's 123rd anniversary service last week so we're guessing 132 years might be the record. We may hear otherwise.

The Lloyd Cisco FUMC history is an absolute treasure and would that every congregation had such thorough records.

(If you do not have a church home, you might want to think about it.)

ECWSD MEETING

Eastland County Water Supply District will hold an agenda meeting on Nov. 19 at 6:00 P.M. at the Filtration Plant, 802 FM 2461 S., Ranger, Texas.

- Agenda Includes: A. Meeting Called to Order B. Pledge of Allegiance and Prayer C. Gibbs & Todd Update D. Update from City Representatives E. Comments from Board Members F. The Board of Directors may Discuss or Take Action on various additional agenda items.

LEGAL NOTICES

NOTICE OF RECEIPT OF APPLICATION AND INTENT TO OBTAIN AIR PERMIT

AIR QUALITY PERMIT NUMBER 925651003

APPLICATION Vulcan Construction Materials, LLC has applied to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) for issuance of Air Quality Permit Number 925651003, which would authorize a change of location of a rock crushing plant to be located at 702 County Road 442, Eastland, Eastland County, Texas 76448. This application is being processed in an expedited manner, as allowed by the commission's rules in 30 Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 101, Subchapter J. This link to an electronic map of the site or facility's general location is provided as a public courtesy and not part of the application or notice. For exact location, refer to application. <http://www.tceq.texas.gov/assets/public/hb610/index.html?at=32.3823&lang=98.764&zoom=13&type=E>. The facility will emit the following contaminants: organic compounds, carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, and particulate matter including particulate matter with diameters of 10 microns or less and 2.5 microns or less.

This application was submitted to the TCEQ on November 10, 2015. The application will be available for viewing and copying at the TCEQ central office, the TCEQ Abilene regional office, and the Eastland Centennial Memorial Library, 210 South Lamar Street, Eastland, Eastland County, Texas, beginning the first day of publication of this notice. The facility's compliance file, if any exists, is available for public review in the Abilene regional office of the TCEQ.

The executive director has determined the application is administratively complete and will conduct a technical review of the application.

CHANGE IN LAW The Texas Legislature enacted Senate Bill 709, effective September 1, 2015, amending requirements for comments and contested case hearings. This application is subject to those changes in law.

PUBLIC COMMENT/ You may submit public comments, a request for a public meeting, or request a contested case hearing to the Office of the Chief Clerk at the address below. The TCEQ will consider all public comments in developing a final decision on the application. The deadline to submit public comments is 30 days after newspaper notice is published.

The purpose of a public meeting is to provide the opportunity to submit comments or ask questions about the application. A public meeting will be held if the executive director determines that there is a significant interest in the application. After the final deadline for public comments following the Notice of Application and Preliminary Decision, the executive director will consider the comments and prepare a response to all relevant and material, or significant public comments. If comments are received, the response to comments, along with the executive director's decision on the application, will then be mailed to everyone who submitted public comments or is on a mailing list for this application.

OPPORTUNITY FOR A CONTESTED CASE HEARING You may request a contested case hearing is a legal proceeding similar to a civil trial in state district court. Unless a written request for a contested case hearing is filed within 30 days from this notice, the executive director may approve the application. A contested case hearing will only be granted based on disputed issues of fact that are relevant and material to the Commission's decisions on the application. Further, the Commission will only grant a hearing on issues submitted by you or others during the public comment period and not withdrawn.

A person who may be affected by emissions of air contaminants from the facility is entitled to request a hearing. If requesting a contested case hearing, you must submit the following: (1) your name (or for a group or association, an official representative), mailing address, daytime phone number; (2) applicant's name and permit number; (3) the statement "[I/we] request a contested case hearing"; (4) a specific description of how you would be adversely affected by the application and air emissions from the facility in a way not common to the general public; (5) the location and distance of your property relative to the facility; (6) a description of how you use the property which may be impacted by the facility; and (7) a list of all disputed issues of fact that you submit during the comment period. If the request is made by a group or an association, one or more members who have standing to request a hearing must be identified by name and physical address. The interests which the group or association seeks to protect must also be identified. You may also submit your proposed adjustments to the application/permit which would satisfy your concerns.

Following the close of all applicable comment and request periods, the Executive Director will forward the application and any requests for contested case hearing to the Commissioners for their consideration at a scheduled Commission meeting. The Commission may only grant a request for a contested case hearing on issues

executive director's response to comments.

After the final deadline for public comments following the Notice of Application and Preliminary Decision, the executive director will consider the comments and prepare a response to all relevant and material, or significant public comments. If comments are received, the response to comments, along with the executive director's decision on the application, will then be mailed to everyone who submitted public comments or is on a mailing list for this application.

OPPORTUNITY FOR A CONTESTED CASE HEARING You may request a contested case hearing is a legal proceeding similar to a civil trial in state district court. Unless a written request for a contested case hearing is filed within 30 days from this notice, the executive director may approve the application. A contested case hearing will only be granted based on disputed issues of fact that are relevant and material to the Commission's decisions on the application. Further, the Commission will only grant a hearing on issues submitted by you or others during the public comment period and not withdrawn.

A person who may be affected by emissions of air contaminants from the facility is entitled to request a hearing. If requesting a contested case hearing, you must submit the following: (1) your name (or for a group or association, an official representative), mailing address, daytime phone number; (2) applicant's name and permit number; (3) the statement "[I/we] request a contested case hearing"; (4) a specific description of how you would be adversely affected by the application and air emissions from the facility in a way not common to the general public; (5) the location and distance of your property relative to the facility; (6) a description of how you use the property which may be impacted by the facility; and (7) a list of all disputed issues of fact that you submit during the comment period. If the request is made by a group or an association, one or more members who have standing to request a hearing must be identified by name and physical address. The interests which the group or association seeks to protect must also be identified. You may also submit your proposed adjustments to the application/permit which would satisfy your concerns.

writing to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Office of the Chief Clerk, MC-105, P.O. Box 13087, Austin, Texas 78711-3087. If you communicate with the TCEQ electronically, please be aware that your email address, like your physical mailing address, will become part of the agency's public record. For more information about this permit application or the permitting process, please call the Public Education Program toll free at 18006874040. Si desea información en Español, puede llamar al 1-800-687-4040. Further information may also be obtained from Vulcan Construction Materials, LLC, P.O. Box 791550, San Antonio, Texas 78279-1550 or by calling Mrs. Kathryn Sipe, Westward Environmental, Inc. at (830) 249-8284. Notice Issuance Date: November 13, 2015 (11-19-2015)

from Page 1

Pecan Show

courthouse in 1959. If you have any questions about the Eastland County Pecan Show, please call Wade Howard at 254-629-2222. *****

2015 Eastland County Pecan Show Pecan Pie Contest

The Eastland Extension Education Club is excited to announce that they will be hosting the 2015 Eastland County Pecan Show Pie Contest, to be held in conjunction with the Pecan Show. The contest will be held on December 2nd at the Eastland County Courthouse. Entries will be taken from 8 am - 10 am (December 2nd). There will be three divisions: 1) EE Members Youth 3) Open. Participants may enter one pie in each of the divisions they qualify for. There will be a \$5 entry fee for each pie entered. All pies and their containers will become property of the Eastland EE Club.

Recipes must be turned in with the information and a complete set of rules, please contact Wade Howard at 629-2222.

Breaking VIDEO NEWS at eastland county today.com

EASTLAND COUNTY TODAY Publication No. USPS 16 ©2015 Eastland County Newspapers, Inc.



2495 HIGHWAY 183 N. | BROWNWOOD, TEXAS 76802 | (325) 646-2591 | WWW.TXDOT.GOV

Notice of Public Meeting

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) invites you to attend a public meeting to provide an update on our proposed changes to Interstate Highway (IH) 20 that would improve safety for the traveling public. The stretch to be improved is in Eastland County, from about 3.5 miles east of Loop 254 to State Highway (SH) 16.

The meeting will be held from 5 – 7 p.m. on Thursday, November 19, 2015, at the Ranger High School Cafeteria, 1842 E. Loop 254, Ranger, TX 76470. The format will be a come-and-go open house to meet the project team, learn about the current alternative development and ask questions about the project. There will be no presentation. The purpose of the public meeting is to present the proposed project alternatives and associated improvements to the public and to receive comments. Although TxDOT has already made some safety improvements to this section of IH 20 (e.g., reducing the speed limit, resurfacing the main lane pavement, and installing a concrete barrier), additional measures are needed to respond to local concerns. TxDOT now has identified additional safety, access and mobility improvements. These include reducing the grade; straightening the curve of the interstate at Ranger Hill; providing a westbound climbing lane; and adding continuous frontage roads along both east and westbound lanes.

The proposed improvements would keep traffic from diverting to limited surrounding roadways when accidents occur and would allow emergency responders easier access to IH 20 at Ranger Hill. Currently, accident delays can cause backups from 30 minutes to eight hours.

The public meeting will be conducted in English. Anyone interested in attending the meeting who has special communication or accommodation needs, or needs an interpreter, is encouraged to call (325) 643-0415. Requests should be made at least two days before the public meeting. Every reasonable effort will be made to accommodate special needs.

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 Dec. 16, 2014, and executed by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and TxDOT.

All interested citizens are invited to attend this public meeting. Written comments from the public regarding this project are requested and may be presented for a period of 10 calendar days following the meeting. Written comments may be submitted either in person or by mail to Jason Scantling at the TxDOT Brownwood District, 2495 Highway 183 North, Brownwood, TX 76802. Written comments must be received by December 1, 2015 to be included in the Public Meeting Summary.

Additional information about this public meeting may be found at <http://www.txdot.gov/inside-txdot/get-involved/about/hearings-meetings>.

OUR GOALS

MAINTAIN A SAFE SYSTEM ▪ ADDRESS CONGESTION ▪ CONNECT TEXAS COMMUNITIES ▪ BEST IN CLASS STATE AGENCY

An Equal Opportunity Employer



Public Meeting

IH 20, Eastland County, TX – CSJ 0007-06-084
IH 20 from 3.5 mi. east of LP 254 to SH 16 (Ranger Hill)

November 19, 2015 – 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Ranger High School Cafeteria
1842 E. Loop 254, Ranger, TX 76470

COMMENTS

Name: _____
Address: _____
City, State, Zip Code: _____
Email: _____

(Per Texas Transportation Code, §201.811(a)(5)): check each of the following boxes that apply to you:

- I am employed by TxDOT.
- I do business with TxDOT.
- I could benefit monetarily from the project or other item about which I am commenting.

Please add me to the project mailing list

Written comments may be turned in today, or mailed or emailed by **December 4, 2015 to:**

Jason Scantling, Project Manager
TxDOT Brownwood District
2495 Highway 183 N.
Brownwood, TX 76802
jason.scantling@txdot.gov



Brownwood District

What is an Environmental Assessment?

- Document required by National Environmental Policy Act for construction of projects that use federal highway funds.
- Discloses project information, describes the project and study areas, and analyzes possible environmental consequences associated with construction.
- Includes public involvement at the beginning and throughout the project development process.
- Must be approved by TxDOT Environmental Affairs Division before right-of-way acquisition and construction can begin.

F A C T S H E E T

Improvements to IH 20 at Ranger Hill
November 2015

What is the Interstate Highway (IH) 20 Ranger Hill Project?

- Project is approximately a 3-mile stretch of IH 20 in Eastland County.
- Project would extend from approximately 3.5 miles east of Loop 254 to State Highway 16.
- TxDOT has recently made some safety improvements to this section of IH 20 by reducing the speed limit, resurfacing the main lane pavement, and installing a 54-inch concrete barrier.
- TxDOT has identified additional safety, access, and mobility improvements that include reducing the grade, straightening the curve at Ranger Hill, and providing a westbound climbing lane and continuous frontage roads along eastbound and westbound main lanes.

Project Development Phases and Anticipated Timeline

- Public involvement throughout project
- Initial development of nine alternatives: 2013-2014
- Alternative refinement: Summer 2015
- Development of project purpose and need: Summer - Fall 2015
- Comparison of all alternatives to purpose and need: Summer - Fall 2015
- First public meeting: August 2015
- Value engineering and design refinement: Fall 2015
- Identification and evaluation of proposed project effects on environmental resources: Fall 2015

You are Here: Second Public Meeting: November 2015

- Schematic design finalized: Fall 2015
- Preparation and review of draft Environmental Assessment (EA): Spring 2016
- Draft EA released for agency and public review: Spring 2016
- Public Hearing: Spring 2016
- Preparation and review of final EA: Summer 2016
- Environmental clearance (Finding of No Significant Impact): Summer 2016

Stay involved in the IH 20 Ranger Hill Project by participating in the following:

- Follow the project online: www.txdot.gov/inside-txdot/get-involved/about/hearings-meetings.html
- Sign up to be on our mailing list.
- Attend public meetings and public hearing.
- Submit a comment.

For more information, contact:

TxDOT Project Manager, Jason Scantling, (325) 643-0415
TxDOT Public Information Officer, Andrew Carlson, (325) 643-0413



IH 20, Eastland County, TX – CSJ 0007-06-084
IH 20 from 3.5 mi. east of LP 254 to SH 16 (Ranger Hill)
 Public Meeting

SIGN-IN

Thursday November 19, 2015 – Ranger High School Cafeteria, 1842 E. Loop 254,
 Ranger, TX 76470

PLEASE PRINT

No.	Name	Affiliation	How did you hear about this meeting?	Address	Home or Business Phone Number	e-mail Address
1	ELIAS RMEILI	TX DOT				
2	Andrew Chisholm	TX DOT				
3	Susan Howard	TX DOT				
4	Darrell Fox	RANGER FD				
E 5	Jean B. Ruett	City Commissioner Historical Society	TxDOT			
6	Kevin Spahrer	FHWA	TxDOT			
7	Mary Wells	City of Ranger	LETTER			
E 8	Jana Lemoine Knox	District Coordinator for Rep. Jim Kuffer HD60	TX DOT - ATX office			
E 9	Buzzy Rull Dage	EASTLAND CO Hambro Ranch	LETTER			
10	Richard Burger		LETTER			
11	VANCE CHESTNUT	PROPERTY OWNER	TX DOT			
E 12	REX FIELDS	EASTLAND CO, JUDGE	TX DOT			



IH 20, Eastland County, TX – CSJ 0007-06-084
IH 20 from 3.5 mi. east of LP 254 to SH 16 (Ranger Hill)
 Public Meeting

SIGN-IN

Thursday November 19, 2015 – Ranger High School Cafeteria, 1842 E. Loop 254,
 Ranger, TX 76470

PLEASE PRINT

No.	Name	Affiliation	How did you hear about this meeting?	Address	Home or Business Phone Number	e-mail Address
13	Mary Bartley					
14	Gerald L. Gunstanson					
15	Richard Skopick					
16	Tom Parks	Wild Canyon Property owner				
17	RICK FAMBRO	Prop. Owner				
18						
19						
20						
21						
22						
23						
24						



**IH 20 Ranger Hill Schematic Design and Environmental Documentation
CSJ: 0007-06-084**

**Public Meeting Photo Log
November 19, 2015**





**IH 20 Ranger Hill Schematic Design and Environmental Documentation
CSJ: 0007-06-084**

**Public Meeting Photo Log
November 19, 2015**





**IH 20 Ranger Hill Schematic Design and Environmental Documentation
CSJ: 0007-06-084**

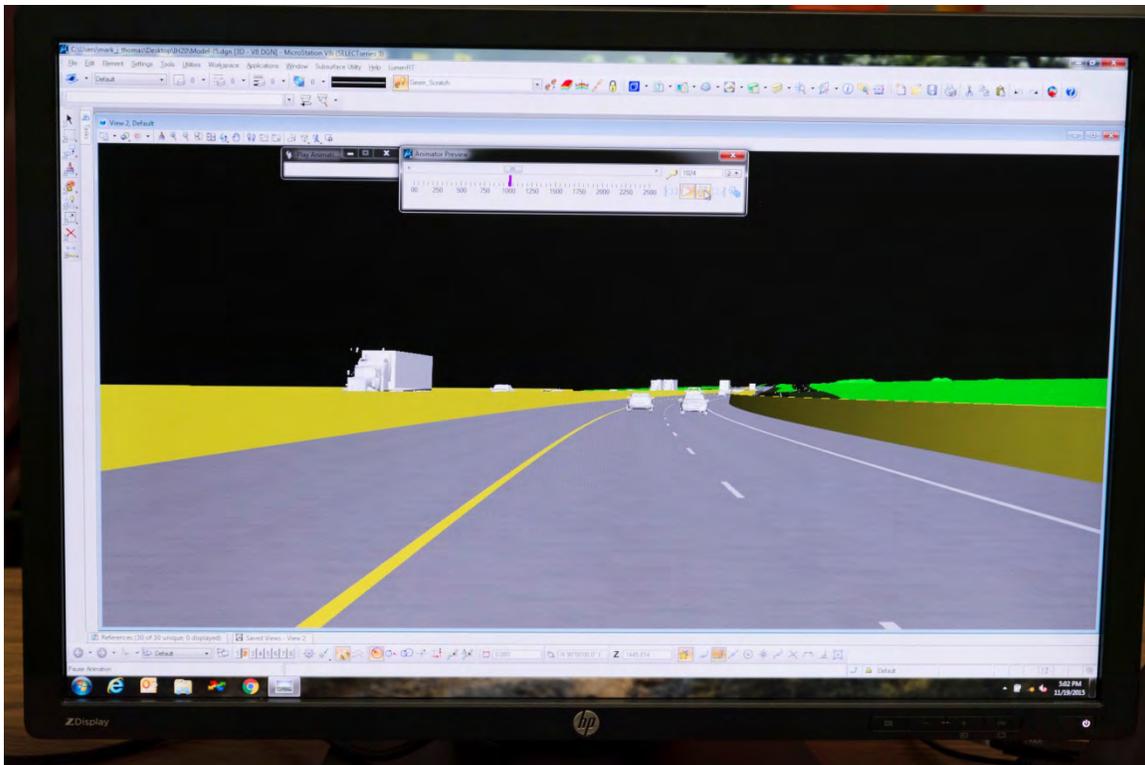
**Public Meeting Photo Log
November 19, 2015**





IH 20 Ranger Hill Schematic Design and Environmental Documentation CSJ: 0007-06-084

Public Meeting Photo Log November 19, 2015





IH 20 Ranger Hill Schematic Design and Environmental Documentation CSJ: 0007-06-084

Public Meeting Photo Log November 19, 2015





**IH 20 Ranger Hill Schematic Design and Environmental Documentation
CSJ: 0007-06-084**

**Public Meeting Photo Log
November 19, 2015**





**IH 20 Ranger Hill Schematic Design and Environmental Documentation
CSJ: 0007-06-084**

**Public Meeting Photo Log
November 19, 2015**





**IH 20 Ranger Hill Schematic Design and Environmental Documentation
CSJ: 0007-06-084**

**Public Meeting Photo Log
November 19, 2015**





IH 20 Ranger Hill Schematic Design and Environmental Documentation CSJ: 0007-06-084

Public Meeting Photo Log November 19, 2015





**IH 20 Ranger Hill Schematic Design and Environmental Documentation
CSJ: 0007-06-084**

**Public Meeting Photo Log
November 19, 2015**





**IH 20 Ranger Hill Schematic Design and Environmental Documentation
CSJ: 0007-06-084**

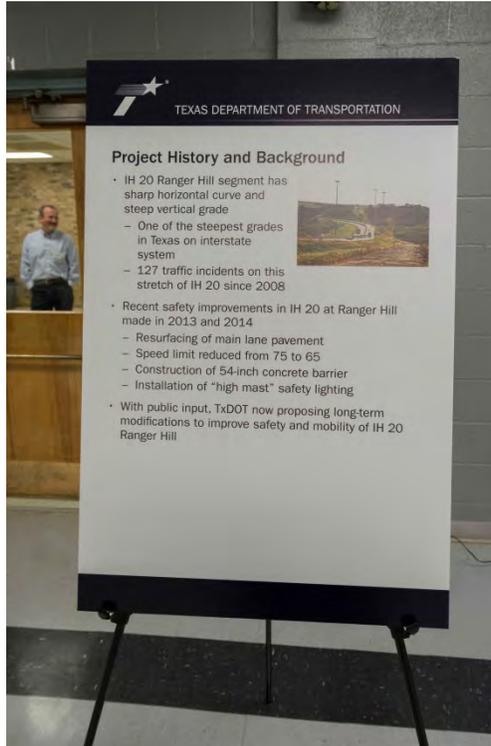
**Public Meeting Photo Log
November 19, 2015**





IH 20 Ranger Hill Schematic Design and Environmental Documentation CSJ: 0007-06-084

Public Meeting Photo Log November 19, 2015





November 9, 2015

RE: CSJ: 0007-06-084; IH 20 from 3.5 Miles East of Loop 254 to SH 16, Realign and Widen Existing Roadway, Section 106 Consultation; Eastland County, Brownwood District

To: Representatives of Federally-recognized Tribes with Interest in this Project Area

The above referenced transportation project is being considered for construction by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT). Environmental studies are in the process of being conducted for this project. 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 16, 2014, and executed by FHWA and TxDOT.

The purpose of this letter is to contact you in order to consult with your Tribe pursuant to stipulations of the First Amended Programmatic Agreement among the Federal Highway Administration, the Texas Department of Transportation, the Texas State Historic Preservation Officer, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation Regarding the Implementation of Transportation Undertakings (PA-TU). The project is located in an area that is of interest to your Tribe.

Undertaking Description

TxDOT's Brownwood District is proposing to realign a portion of IH 20 located northeast of the community of Ranger in Eastland County, Texas. The existing roadway consists of four travel lanes configured in an "S" shaped curve. The proposed roadway would consist of five 12 foot wide travel lanes (three westbound and two eastbound) with 10 foot wide shoulders. Four 10 foot wide frontage roads with 8 foot wide shoulders and 8 foot wide buffer zones would also be constructed. In addition, the existing "S" curve would be straightened. Fourteen foot wide ramps with 6 foot shoulders would also be constructed for access to and from a rest area located north of IH 20. New cross drainage structures would be installed and existing structures lengthened. Approximately 100 acres of proposed new right of way (ROW) would be required.

Area of Potential Effects

The undertaking's area of potential effects (APE) is defined as the proposed 180 to 220 foot wide IH 20 ROW beginning 3.5 miles east of Loop 254 and extending 3.1 miles northeast to SH 16. According to typical roadway design the depth of impacts is estimated to be up to fifty feet below the current ground surface for bridge/overpass supports and up to three feet for the remainder of the project. The APE is comprised of approximately 130 acres of existing ROW and 100 acres of proposed ROW for a total of 230 acres. For the purposes of this cultural resources review, the APE also includes an additional 50-foot area around the previously-described horizontal dimensions to account for potential alterations to the proposed APE included in the final project design. Consultation would be continued if potential impacts extend

Re: Section 106 Consultation, National Historic Preservation Act;
Proposed Texas Department of Transportation Project
CSJ: 0007-06-084; IH 20 9 From 3.5 miles east of Loop 254 to SH 16, Realign and Widen
Roadway, Eastland County

beyond this additional area, based on the final design. Please refer to Exhibits A and B for location details of the proposed project.

Identification Efforts

For this project, TxDOT has conducted a desktop-based study of available background information. According to the 1979 Dallas Sheet of the Geologic Atlas of Texas, the underlying geology of the APE is comprised of Pennsylvanian aged geologic deposits with formation period predating the generally accepted arrival time of human beings into Eastland County (12,000 years ago). Therefore, these geologic formations possess minimal potential for the presence of buried intact archeological deposits. Any archeological sites within the area should lie relatively close to the modern ground surface. According to the Bear Mountain (3298-244) and the Ranger (3298-243) USGS topographic quadrangles of the Texas Archeological Sites Atlas, there have been no archeological sites previously recorded within 1 kilometer (0.625 miles) of the APE (Exhibit B). The APE, however, has not been previously surveyed.

Further field investigation is warranted. This recommendation is based upon the large size of the APE and the lack of previous archeological investigation within it.

Findings and Recommendations

Based on the above, TxDOT proposes that an intensive archeological survey be conducted within the APE. A zone of 50 feet beyond the horizontal project limits should be considered as part of the cultural resources evaluation; and if any future changes to the project APE extend beyond the additional 50-foot zone or if prehistoric or protohistoric archeological deposits are discovered, your Tribe would then be contacted for further consultation.

According to our procedures and agreements currently in place regarding consultation under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, we are writing to request your comments on historic properties of cultural or religious significance to your Tribe that may be affected by the proposed project APE and the area within the above defined buffer. Any comments you may have on the TxDOT findings and recommendations should also be provided. Please provide your comments within 30 days of receipt of this letter. Any comments provided after that time will be addressed to the fullest extent possible. If you do not object that the proposed findings and recommendations are appropriate, please sign below to indicate your concurrence. In the event that further work discloses the presence of archeological deposits, we will contact your Tribe to continue consultation.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you have questions, please contact Jon Budd (TxDOT Archeologist) at 512/416-2640 (email: jon.budd@txdot.gov) or me at 512/416-2631 (email: Scott.Pletka@txdot.gov). When replying to this correspondence by US Mail, please ensure that the envelope address includes reference to the Archeological Studies Branch, Environmental Affairs Division.

Sincerely,



Re: Section 106 Consultation, National Historic Preservation Act;
Proposed Texas Department of Transportation Project
CSJ: 0007-06-084; IH 20 9 From 3.5 miles east of Loop 254 to SH 16, Realign and Widen
Roadway, Eastland County

Scott Pletka, Supervisor
Archeological Studies Branch
Environmental Affairs Division

Concurrence by:

Date:

Attachments

cc w/attachments: ENV-ARCH ECOS

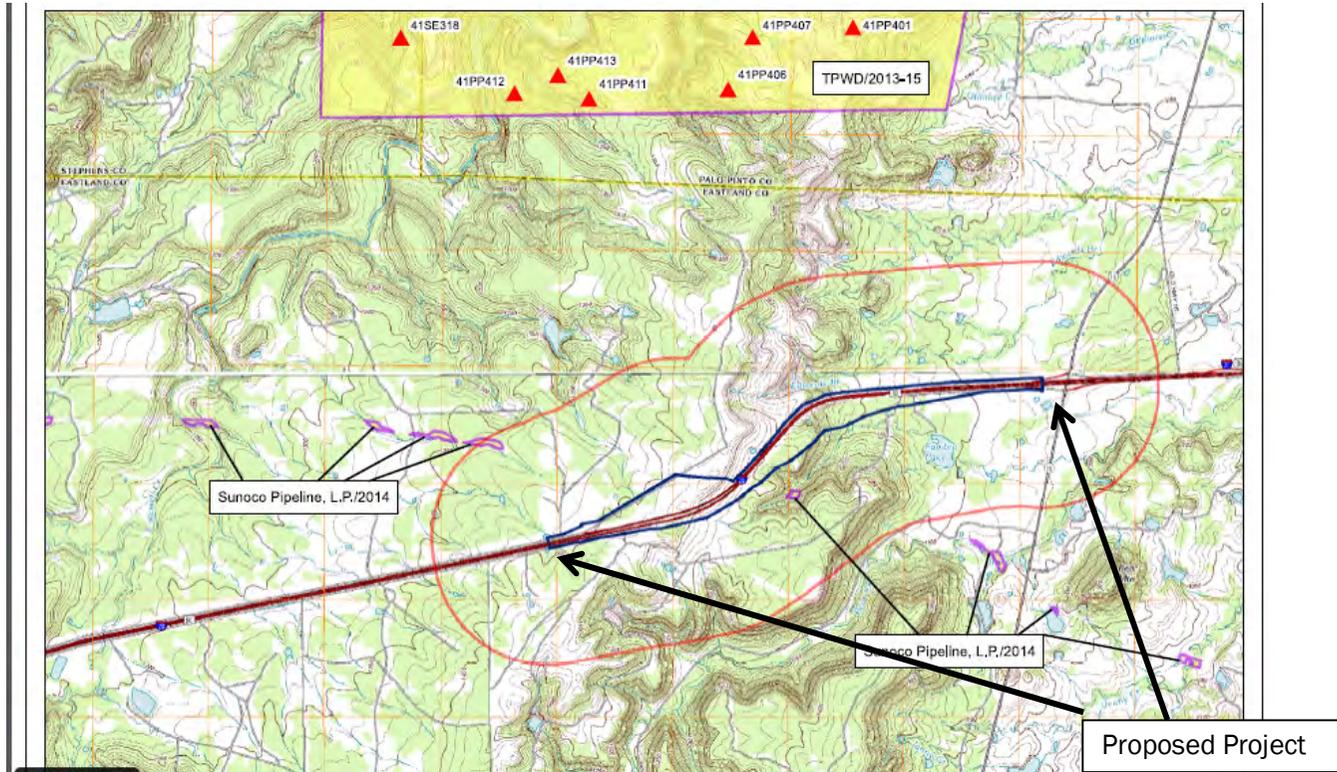
Re: Section 106 Consultation, National Historic Preservation Act;
Proposed Texas Department of Transportation Project
CSJ: 0007-06-084; IH 20 9 From 3.5 miles east of Loop 254 to SH 16, Realign and Widen
Roadway, Eastland County

Exhibit A: Project Location Illustrated on an Eastland County Map



Re: Section 106 Consultation, National Historic Preservation Act;
Proposed Texas Department of Transportation Project
CSJ: 0007-06-084; IH 20 9 From 3.5 miles east of Loop 254 to SH 16, Realign and Widen Roadway, Eastland County

Exhibit B: Map Exhibit B: Project Location Illustrated on the Bear Mountain 7.5" USGS Topographic Quadrangle Map



Scott Pletka

From: Kim Penrod <kpenrod@caddonation.org>
Sent: Thursday, November 12, 2015 8:40 AM
To: Scott Pletka
Subject: Re: Fw: Section 106 Consultation, Texas Department of Transportation; CSJ 000706084
Attachments: Card for "Kim Penrod" <kpenrod@caddonation.org>.vcf

Hi Scott,

This should have come to me not Christine Noah :)

Again this is an area of Caddo interest and most likely will expose things since this area has not been previously surveyed.

I have found a few references to this general area that you should keep in mind please.

<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~txeastla/docs/ranger1.htm>

Talking about Caddo Indian Ball Ground and One Hundred Mile Mountain.

Just fyi

Please keep us updated

thanks for all your hard work,

Kim

On Monday, November 9, 2015 4:53 PM, Scott Pletka <Scott.Pletka@txdot.gov> wrote:

Good afternoon,

We kindly request your comments regarding a proposed undertaking. Please see the attached letter for project details and information.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Regards,

Scott Pletka
Supervisor, Archeological Studies Branch
Texas Department of Transportation

Talk. Text. Crash.



--

Respectfully,
Kim Penrod
Director
Caddo Nation Heritage Museum, Library and Archives
Acting NAGPRA Coordinator

Caddo Nation of Oklahoma
P.O. Box 487
Binger, OK 73047
405-656-2344 wk
405-924-9485 cell
kpenrod@caddonation.org
kimpenrod@yahoo.com

*Be who you are and say what you feel, because those who mind don't matter and those who matter don't mind. ~**Dr. Seuss***



November 9, 2015

RE: CSJ: 0007-06-084; IH 20 from 3.5 Miles East of Loop 254 to SH 16, Realign and Widen Existing Roadway, Section 106 Consultation; Eastland County, Brownwood District

To: Representatives of Federally-recognized Tribes with Interest in this Project Area

The above referenced transportation project is being considered for construction by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT). Environmental studies are in the process of being conducted for this project. 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 16, 2014, and executed by FHWA and TxDOT.

The purpose of this letter is to contact you in order to consult with your Tribe pursuant to stipulations of the First Amended Programmatic Agreement among the Federal Highway Administration, the Texas Department of Transportation, the Texas State Historic Preservation Officer, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation Regarding the Implementation of Transportation Undertakings (PA-TU). The project is located in an area that is of interest to your Tribe.

Undertaking Description

TxDOT's Brownwood District is proposing to realign a portion of IH 20 located northeast of the community of Ranger in Eastland County, Texas. The existing roadway consists of four travel lanes configured in an "S" shaped curve. The proposed roadway would consist of five 12 foot wide travel lanes (three westbound and two eastbound) with 10 foot wide shoulders. Four 10 foot wide frontage roads with 8 foot wide shoulders and 8 foot wide buffer zones would also be constructed. In addition, the existing "S" curve would be straightened. Fourteen foot wide ramps with 6 foot shoulders would also be constructed for access to and from a rest area located north of IH 20. New cross drainage structures would be installed and existing structures lengthened. Approximately 100 acres of proposed new right of way (ROW) would be required.

Area of Potential Effects

The undertaking's area of potential effects (APE) is defined as the proposed 180 to 220 foot wide IH 20 ROW beginning 3.5 miles east of Loop 254 and extending 3.1 miles northeast to SH 16. According to typical roadway design the depth of impacts is estimated to be up to fifty feet below the current ground surface for bridge/overpass supports and up to three feet for the remainder of the project. The APE is comprised of approximately 130 acres of existing ROW and 100 acres of proposed ROW for a total of 230 acres. For the purposes of this cultural resources review, the APE also includes an additional 50-foot area around the previously-described horizontal dimensions to account for potential alterations to the proposed APE included in the final project design. Consultation would be continued if potential impacts extend

Re: Section 106 Consultation, National Historic Preservation Act;
Proposed Texas Department of Transportation Project
CSJ: 0007-06-084; IH 20 9 From 3.5 miles east of Loop 254 to SH 16, Realign and Widen
Roadway, Eastland County

beyond this additional area, based on the final design. Please refer to Exhibits A and B for location details of the proposed project.

Identification Efforts

For this project, TxDOT has conducted a desktop-based study of available background information. According to the 1979 Dallas Sheet of the Geologic Atlas of Texas, the underlying geology of the APE is comprised of Pennsylvanian aged geologic deposits with formation period predating the generally accepted arrival time of human beings into Eastland County (12,000 years ago). Therefore, these geologic formations possess minimal potential for the presence of buried intact archeological deposits. Any archeological sites within the area should lie relatively close to the modern ground surface. According to the Bear Mountain (3298-244) and the Ranger (3298-243) USGS topographic quadrangles of the Texas Archeological Sites Atlas, there have been no archeological sites previously recorded within 1 kilometer (0.625 miles) of the APE (Exhibit B). The APE, however, has not been previously surveyed.

Further field investigation is warranted. This recommendation is based upon the large size of the APE and the lack of previous archeological investigation within it.

Findings and Recommendations

Based on the above, TxDOT proposes that an intensive archeological survey be conducted within the APE. A zone of 50 feet beyond the horizontal project limits should be considered as part of the cultural resources evaluation; and if any future changes to the project APE extend beyond the additional 50-foot zone or if prehistoric or protohistoric archeological deposits are discovered, your Tribe would then be contacted for further consultation.

According to our procedures and agreements currently in place regarding consultation under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, we are writing to request your comments on historic properties of cultural or religious significance to your Tribe that may be affected by the proposed project APE and the area within the above defined buffer. Any comments you may have on the TxDOT findings and recommendations should also be provided. Please provide your comments within 30 days of receipt of this letter. Any comments provided after that time will be addressed to the fullest extent possible. If you do not object that the proposed findings and recommendations are appropriate, please sign below to indicate your concurrence. In the event that further work discloses the presence of archeological deposits, we will contact your Tribe to continue consultation.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you have questions, please contact Jon Budd (TxDOT Archeologist) at 512/416-2640 (email: jon.budd@txdot.gov) or me at 512/416-2631 (email: Scott.Pletka@txdot.gov). When replying to this correspondence by US Mail, please ensure that the envelope address includes reference to the Archeological Studies Branch, Environmental Affairs Division.

Sincerely,



Re: Section 106 Consultation, National Historic Preservation Act;
Proposed Texas Department of Transportation Project
CSJ: 0007-06-084; IH 20 9 From 3.5 miles east of Loop 254 to SH 16, Realign and Widen
Roadway, Eastland County

Scott Pletka, Supervisor
Archeological Studies Branch
Environmental Affairs Division

Concurrence by: 

Date: 11/10/15

Attachments
cc w/attachments: ENV-ARCH ECOS

Scott Pletka

From: Theodore Villacana <theodorev@comanchenation.com>
Sent: Monday, November 16, 2015 2:33 PM
To: Scott Pletka
Subject: RE: Section 106 Consultation, Texas Department of Transportation; CSJ 000706084

In response to your request, the above project has been reviewed by staff of this office. Based on the information provided and a search within the Comanche Nation Site Files, we have determined that there are **no Properties** affected by the proposed undertaking.

If you require additional information or in need of further assistance, please contact this office at (580)595-9960 or 9618. This review is performed in order to identify and preserve the Comanche Nation and States cultural heritage, in conjunction with the State Historic Preservation Office.

From: Jimmy Arterberry
Sent: Friday, November 13, 2015 6:38 PM
To: Theodore Villacana
Subject: FW: Section 106 Consultation, Texas Department of Transportation; CSJ 000706084

From: Scott Pletka [Scott.Pletka@txdot.gov]
Sent: Monday, November 09, 2015 4:53 PM
To: Arturo Garza; Don Spaulding (don.spaulding@kttribe.org); Gilbert Salazar (gsalazar@kickapootribeofoklahoma.com); Megan Young (myoung@pci-nsn.gov); Pam Wesley (pamwesley@kickapootribeofoklahoma.com); Amie R. Tah-Bone (atahbone@kiowatribe.org); Gary McAdams (Gary.McAdams@wichitatribe.com); Holly Houghten (holly@mathpo.org); Jimmy Arterberry; Leonard M. Harjo (pinion.e@sno-nsn.gov); Lyman Guy (chairman@apachetribe.org); Miranda Myer (mallen@tonkawatribe.com); Tamara Francis-Fourkiller (bcnoah@yahoo.com); Terri Parton (Terri.Parton@wichitatribe.com); Tiger Hobia (kialegeetribal@yahoo.com)
Subject: Section 106 Consultation, Texas Department of Transportation; CSJ 000706084

Good afternoon,

We kindly request your comments regarding a proposed undertaking. Please see the attached letter for project details and information.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Regards,

Scott Pletka
Supervisor, Archeological Studies Branch
Texas Department of Transportation

Talk. Text. Crash.





125 EAST 11TH STREET, AUSTIN, TEXAS 78701-2483 | 512.463.8588 | WWW.TXDOT.GOV

April 14, 2016

RE: Section 106/Antiquities Code of Texas Consultation: Brownwood District, Eastland County
IH 20 at Ranger Hill: From 3.5 Miles East of Loop 254 to SH 16, Realign and Widen Existing Roadway, URS Intensive Archeological Survey Report: CSJ: 0007-06-084
Texas Antiquities Permit No. 7546

Patricia A. Mercado-Allinger
Division Director/State Archeologist
Texas Historical Commission/ Archeology Division
PO Box 12276
Austin, TX 78711-2276

Dear Ms. Mercado-Allinger,

In accord with the First Amended Programmatic Agreement among the Federal Highway Administration, the Texas Department of Transportation, the Texas State Historic Preservation Officer (TSHPO), and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation Regarding the Implementation of Transportation Undertakings (PA-TU), as well as the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the TSHPO and TxDOT, we are initiating Section 106 and Antiquities Code of Texas consultation for the proposed IH 20 undertaking.

TxDOT's Brownwood District is proposing to realign a portion of IH 20 located northeast of the community of Ranger in Eastland County, Texas. The existing roadway consists of four travel lanes configured in an "S" shaped curve. The proposed roadway would consist of five 12 foot wide travel lanes (three westbound and two eastbound) with 10 foot wide shoulders. Four 10 foot wide frontage roads with 8 foot wide shoulders and 8 foot wide buffer zones would also be constructed. In addition, the existing "S" curve would be straightened. Fourteen foot wide ramps with 6 foot shoulders would also be constructed for access to and from a rest area located north of IH 20. New cross drainage structures would be installed and existing structures lengthened. Approximately 89.42 acres of proposed new right of way (ROW) would be required.

The undertaking's area of potential effect (APE) is defined as the existing 300 to 1,300-ft wide IH-20 ROW, beginning 3.5 miles east of Loop 254 and extending 3.39 miles east to State Highway 16. The 1,300-ft wide section of the APE is located at the Eastland County Safety Rest Area. The APE totals 169.54 acres of existing ROW and 89.42 acres of proposed new ROW. According to the planned roadway design, the depth of impacts is estimated to be up to 70 feet below the current ground surface for bridge and overpass

OUR VALUES: *People • Accountability • Trust • Honesty*

OUR MISSION: *Through collaboration and leadership, we deliver a safe, reliable, and integrated transportation system that enables the movement of people and goods.*

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supports and up to 10 feet for the remainder of the project. The APE is comprised of an estimated 258.96 acres.

Your office assigned Texas Antiquities Permit Number 7546 to URS Environmental Consultants Inc. (URS) to conduct an intensive archeological survey of the APE. They have recently completed the field work. The investigation consisted of 100% pedestrian survey of the APE and the installation of 38 shovel tests. No archeological sites were identified. One projectile point was observed and recorded as an isolated find. The investigators have recommended no further work for the undertaking. A copy of the URS survey report is attached for your review.

TxDOT has reviewed this report and agrees with its findings. Based upon the results of the investigations, TxDOT seeks your concurrence for the following recommendations:

1. The inventory of the APE is complete.
2. For a finding of "no historic properties affected" and no State Antiquities Landmarks affected.
3. No further work or consultation is required.
4. The attached report is adequate and that the stipulations set forth in the Antiquities Code have been partially fulfilled.

Please signify your concurrence by signing on the line provided below. Thank you for your consideration in this matter. If you have any questions, please contact me at (512) 416-2640.

Sincerely,



Jon Budd, TxDOT Staff Archeologist

Concurrence by;



Date:

4-14-16

For Mark Wolfe, State Historic Preservation Officer and Executive Director

Attachments

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 12-16-14, and executed by FHWA and TxDOT.

OUR GOALS

MAINTAIN A SAFE SYSTEM • ADDRESS CONGESTION • CONNECT TEXAS COMMUNITIES • BEST IN CLASS STATE AGENCY

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**Intensive Archaeological Survey of IH-20 at Ranger Hill
Eastland County, Texas
(CSJ: 0007-06-084)**

by
Shelley Hartsfield, MA
Christopher R. von Wedell, MA
Steven Ahr, PhD

Principal Investigator
Shelley Hartsfield, MA

Texas Antiquities Permit Number 7546

Prepared by
URS, An AECOM Company
1950 N. Stemmons Freeway, Suite 6000
Dallas, Texas 75207

Prepared for
TxDOT, Brownwood District
2495 Highway 183 North
Brownwood, TX 76802

DRAFT REPORT ACCEPTABLE	
by _____	
for Mark Wolfe	
Executive Director, THC	
Date _____	4-14-14
Track# _____	

Project Number 60420338

Johnson, Erin

Subject: FW: I-20 at Ranger Hill 0007-06-084 Coordination

Begin forwarded message:

From: Andrew Chisholm <Andrew.Chisholm@txdot.gov>
Date: March 24, 2016 at 2:36:26 PM CDT
To: Sue Reilly <Sue.Reilly@tpwd.texas.gov>
Cc: "Andrew Blair (Andrew.Blair@txdot.gov)" <Andrew.Blair@txdot.gov>
Subject: RE: I-20 at Ranger Hill 0007-06-084 Coordination

Sue,

There have been alternatives looked at in some form or fashion. We looked at probably 10 different alternatives from an engineering standpoint and narrowed it down to essentially the no build and two build alternatives essentially on this same general southern alignment. The one that seems to be preferred takes a bit more ROW than the other (~20 acres), but it has a much better vertical and horizontal alignment (less curves and banking). There is currently not a draft EA. We are in the technical report portion of the analysis and therefore the consultant has not produced an EA yet. We have already been in contact with USFWS (Darren LeBlanc and Omar Bocanegra). They met us on site and have seen the schematics that you have seen. We are currently doing presence absence surveys and should finish those in the next 3 weeks determining whether it is a formal or informal consultation. Let me know if you have any other questions.

From: Sue Reilly [<mailto:Sue.Reilly@tpwd.texas.gov>]
Sent: Wednesday, March 23, 2016 4:44 PM
To: Andrew Chisholm
Subject: FW: I-20 at Ranger Hill 0007-06-084 Coordination

Hi Andrew,

Just a couple of questions—

Was there an alternatives analysis for this project? Or is there a draft EA I could see?

Also, just to confirm, you are consulting with USFWS for golden-cheeked warbler, correct?

Thank you,

Sue Reilly
Transportation Assessment Liaison
TPWD Wildlife Division
512-389-8021

From: WHAB_TxDOT
Sent: Thursday, March 10, 2016 11:24 AM
To: Andrew Chisholm; WHAB_TxDOT
Cc: Andrew Blair; Sue Reilly
Subject: RE: I-20 at Ranger Hill 0007-06-084 Coordination

Good morning,

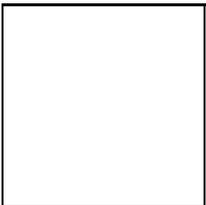
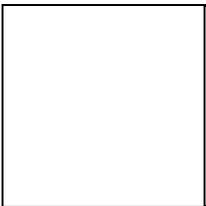
The TPWD Wildlife Habitat Assessment Program has received your request for Early Coordination and has assigned it project ID #36361. The Habitat Assessment Biologist who will complete your project review is copied on this email.

Thanks,
Kim Milburn
Administrative Assistant
Wildlife Diversity Program
Email: Kim.milburn@tpwd.texas.gov
Office: (512) 389-8111
Fax: (512) 389-8758

From: Andrew Chisholm [<mailto:Andrew.Chisholm@txdot.gov>]
Sent: Wednesday, March 09, 2016 4:32 PM
To: WHAB_TxDOT <WHAB_TxDOT@tpwd.texas.gov>
Cc: Andrew Blair <Andrew.Blair@txdot.gov>
Subject: I-20 at Ranger Hill 0007-06-084 Coordination

In a Dropbox you should receive shortly there will be documents pertaining to the above mentioned project. The proposed project will realign an approximate 3 mile section of I-20 on one of the steepest grades of the interstate in Texas. Please review the Bio impact Assessment and associated information and provide any comments. If you need additional information; please call 325-643-0442 or email me.

[<~WRD000.jpg>](#)



Johnson, Erin

From: Andrew Chisholm <Andrew.Chisholm@txdot.gov>
Sent: Monday, May 23, 2016 8:14 AM
To: Johnson, Erin; Herman, Reggie
Subject: FW: I-20 at Ranger Hill 0007-06-084 Coordination

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

This is the closeout from TPWD (May 20,2016).

From: Sue Reilly [mailto:Sue.Reilly@tpwd.texas.gov]
Sent: Friday, May 20, 2016 4:41 PM
To: Andrew Chisholm
Cc: Andrew Blair
Subject: RE: I-20 at Ranger Hill 0007-06-084 Coordination

Andrew,

I am going to go ahead and close this project with the understanding that commitments made to the USFWS during the Section 7 consultation process are also considered commitments to TPWD.

Thank you for submitting the following project for early coordination: IH-20 at Ranger Hill (CSJ 0007-06-084). TPWD appreciates TxDOT's commitment to implement the practices listed below as well as in the Biological Evaluation Form submitted on March 9, 2016. Based on a review of the documentation, the avoidance and mitigation efforts described, and provided that project plans do not change, TPWD considers coordination to be complete. However, please note it is the responsibility of the project proponent to comply with all federal, state, and local laws that protect plants, fish, and wildlife.

Thank you,

Sue Reilly
Transportation Assessment Liaison
TPWD Wildlife Division
512-389-8021

From: Andrew Chisholm [mailto:Andrew.Chisholm@txdot.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, May 04, 2016 8:00 AM
To: Sue Reilly
Cc: Andrew Blair
Subject: RE: I-20 at Ranger Hill 0007-06-084 Coordination

Sue,
I will send a copy of our consultation biological assessment and then a copy of the biological opinion once USFWS respond. It will likely be several weeks before the official consultation goes out as we have another 2 survey days to complete. Let me know if there is anything else you need.

From: Sue Reilly [<mailto:Sue.Reilly@tpwd.texas.gov>]
Sent: Tuesday, May 03, 2016 5:03 PM
To: Andrew Chisholm
Cc: Andrew Blair
Subject: RE: I-20 at Ranger Hill 0007-06-084 Coordination

Andrew,

Yesterday on the phone you said that you would be sending in consultation to USFWS regarding the black-capped vireo. Can you please send that same commitments to me?

Thank you,

Sue Reilly
Transportation Assessment Liaison
TPWD Wildlife Division
512-389-8021

From: Andrew Chisholm [<mailto:Andrew.Chisholm@txdot.gov>]
Sent: Thursday, April 07, 2016 8:33 AM
To: Sue Reilly
Cc: Andrew Blair
Subject: RE: I-20 at Ranger Hill 0007-06-084 Coordination

There have been no warblers. We have one more week of survey and we will be done. I believe Andy and John M. went out last Friday and heard a bunch of birds, but still no GCW.

From: Sue Reilly [<mailto:Sue.Reilly@tpwd.texas.gov>]
Sent: Wednesday, April 06, 2016 5:35 PM
To: Andrew Chisholm
Cc: Andrew Blair
Subject: RE: I-20 at Ranger Hill 0007-06-084 Coordination

Hi Andrew,

I got your voicemail today and I apologize for not getting back with you. I have some things I am looking at with this project and will get back with you soon.

I heard you were out surveying recently, did you see any birds?

Thank you,

Sue

From: Andrew Chisholm [<mailto:Andrew.Chisholm@txdot.gov>]
Sent: Thursday, March 24, 2016 2:36 PM
To: Sue Reilly
Cc: Andrew Blair
Subject: RE: I-20 at Ranger Hill 0007-06-084 Coordination

Sue,
There have been alternatives looked at in some form or fashion. We looked at probably 10 different alternatives from an engineering standpoint and narrowed it down to essentially the no build and two build alternatives essentially on this same general southern alignment. The one that seems to be preferred takes a bit more ROW than the other (~20 acres), but it has a much better vertical and horizontal alignment (less curves and banking). There is currently not a draft EA. We are in the technical report portion of the analysis and therefore the consultant has not produced an EA yet. We have already been in contact with USFWS (Darren LeBlanc and Omar Bocanegra). They met us on site and have seen the schematics that you have seen. We are currently doing presence absence surveys and should finish those in the next 3 weeks determining whether it is a formal or informal consultation. Let me know if you have any other questions.

From: Sue Reilly [<mailto:Sue.Reilly@tpwd.texas.gov>]
Sent: Wednesday, March 23, 2016 4:44 PM
To: Andrew Chisholm
Subject: FW: I-20 at Ranger Hill 0007-06-084 Coordination

Hi Andrew,

Just a couple of questions—
Was there an alternatives analysis for this project? Or is there a draft EA I could see?

Also, just to confirm, you are consulting with USFWS for golden-cheeked warbler, correct?

Thank you,

Sue Reilly
Transportation Assessment Liaison
TPWD Wildlife Division
512-389-8021

From: WHAB_TxDOT
Sent: Thursday, March 10, 2016 11:24 AM
To: Andrew Chisholm; WHAB_TxDOT
Cc: Andrew Blair; Sue Reilly
Subject: RE: I-20 at Ranger Hill 0007-06-084 Coordination

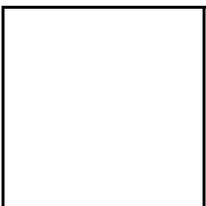
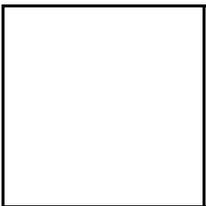
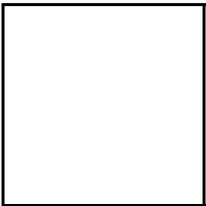
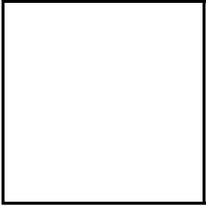
Good morning,

The TPWD Wildlife Habitat Assessment Program has received your request for Early Coordination and has assigned it project ID #36361. The Habitat Assessment Biologist who will complete your project review is copied on this email.

Thanks,
Kim Milburn
Administrative Assistant
Wildlife Diversity Program
Email: Kim.milburn@tpwd.texas.gov
Office: (512) 389-8111
Fax: (512) 389-8758

From: Andrew Chisholm [<mailto:Andrew.Chisholm@txdot.gov>]
Sent: Wednesday, March 09, 2016 4:32 PM
To: WHAB_TxDOT <WHAB_TxDOT@tpwd.texas.gov>
Cc: Andrew Blair <Andrew.Blair@txdot.gov>
Subject: I-20 at Ranger Hill 0007-06-084 Coordination

In a Dropbox you should receive shortly there will be documents pertaining to the above mentioned project. The proposed project will realign an approximate 3 mile section of I-20 on one of the steepest grades of the interstate in Texas. Please review the Bio impact Assessment and associated information and provide any comments. If you need additional information; please call 325-643-0442 or email me.





125 EAST 11TH STREET | AUSTIN, TEXAS 78701-2483 | (512) 463-8588 | WWW.TXDOT.GOV

June 30, 2016

Mr. Darren LeBlanc
United States Fish and Wildlife Service
10711 Burnet Road, Suite 200
Austin, Texas 78758

RE: Formal Consultation
IH 20 at Ranger Hill - 3.5 miles east of LP 254 to SH 16
CSJ: 0007-06-084
Eastland County, Texas

Dear Mr. LeBlanc:

With this letter and enclosed Biological Assessment (BA), the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) requests to initiate formal consultation under Section 7(a)(4) of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) pursuant to the 2014 FHWA-TxDOT MOU¹.

After evaluation of the potential effects, TxDOT - Environmental Affairs Division (ENV) has concluded that the proposed IH 20 Improvements at Ranger Hill may result in more than a negligible probability of adverse effects to the Black-capped Vireo (*Vireo atricapilla*; BCVI) and the Golden-cheeked Warbler (GCWA; *Setophaga chrysoparia*). Therefore, TxDOT has made a determination of **may affect, likely to adversely affect** for these species. In accordance with the requirements under the ESA, TxDOT requests incidental take coverage for all BCVI and GCWA encountered throughout the proposed project area for the duration of construction activities.

The enclosed BA addresses the life histories, project effects, and conservation measures proposed for the aforementioned species in relation to the IH 20 Ranger Hill Project. If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Andrew Chisholm of the TxDOT Brownwood District at (325) 643-0442 or Andrew.Chisholm@txdot.gov.

Sincerely,

Jodi Bechtel
Director of Natural Resources Management Section
Environmental Affairs Division

¹ Memorandum of Understanding between the Federal Highway Administration and the Texas Department of Transportation concerning state of Texas' participation in the project delivery program pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327, December 2014



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Ecological Services
2005 NE Green Oaks Blvd., Suite 140
Arlington, Texas 76006

In Reply Refer To:
02ETAR00-2016-F-0935

August 11, 2016

Mr. Carlos Swonke
Texas Department of Transportation
Environmental Affairs Division
P.O. Drawer 15426
Austin, Texas 78761-5426

RE: CSJ# 0007-06-084

Dear Mr. Swonke:

This letter acknowledges the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) receipt of your letter, dated June 30, 2016, requesting initiation of formal consultation under section 7 the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act)(16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) on the proposed IH-20 at Ranger Hill project. The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) has determined the proposed project "may affect, and is likely to adversely affect" the golden-cheeked warbler (GCWA) (*Setophaga chrysoparia*) and black-capped vireo (BCVI) (*Vireo atricapilla*), species listed as endangered pursuant to the Act. The proposed project is a safety relocation of a 1.5-mile section of IH-20, near Ranger Hill, in Eastland County, Texas.

Section 7 of the Act requires that all Federal agencies consult with the Service to ensure that the actions authorized, funded, or carried out by such agencies do not jeopardize the continued existence of any threatened or endangered species or adversely modify or destroy designated critical habitat of such species. The proposed action would utilize funding under the authority of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The FHWA assigned responsibility for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act and all Federal resource agency consultations, including section 7 formal consultations, to TxDOT in an Memorandum of Understanding dated December 16, 2014 (23 U.S.C. 327).

We have received the biological assessment included with your letter and have determined it provides sufficient information for us to proceed. The Service emailed several relatively minor information requests on August 11, 2016, and recommended that TxDOT develop additional mitigation for the proposed GCWA habitat loss. Otherwise, the Service has determined that your initiation package is complete and the initiation date for formal consultation is August 11, 2016. The Service has up to 90 days to consult and then 45 days to finalize our biological opinion. Therefore, we expect to provide you with our biological opinion no later than December 24, 2016. However, it is likely that we will be able to conclude the consultation in a much shorter time frame.



As a reminder, the Act requires that after initiation of formal consultation, the Federal action agency may not make any irreversible or irretrievable commitment of resources that limits future options. This practice insures agency actions do not preclude the formulation or implementation of reasonable and prudent alternatives that avoid jeopardizing the continued existence of endangered or threatened species or destroying or modifying their designated critical habitat.

We look forward to working with your agency in an expeditious manner. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Mr. Darren LeBlanc at (512) 490-0057, ext. 247 or Omar Bocanegra (817) 277-1100 ext. 2126.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Debra T. Bills". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Debra Bills
Project Leader

cc: Andrew Chisholm, TxDOT Brownwood District, Brownwood, TX (electronic)
Andy Blair, TxDOT ENV, Austin, TX (electronic)

S:\Correspondence\FY 2016\2016-F-0935 TxDOT -Ranger Hill\2016-F-0935 TxDOT IH20 at Ranger Hill_Initiation response.docx



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Ecological Services
2005 NE Green Oaks Blvd., Suite 140
Arlington, Texas 76006

In Reply Refer To:
02ETAR00-2016-F-0935

October 21, 2016

Mr. Carlos Swonke
Texas Department of Transportation
Environmental Affairs Division
125 East 11th Street
Austin, Texas 78701-2483

CSJ# 0007-06-084

Dear Mr. Swonke:

This document transmits the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) Biological Opinion (BO) based on the Texas Department of Transportation's (TxDOT) proposed relocation of a three-mile section of I-20 near Ranger Hill, in Eastland County, Texas. Your request to initiate formal section 7 consultation under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) (Act), was received on July 5, 2016. TxDOT has determined the project "may affect, and is likely to adversely affect" the endangered golden-cheeked warbler (GCWA) (*Setophaga chrysoparia*) and black-capped vireo (BCVI) (*Vireo atricapilla*).

Section 7 of the Act requires that all Federal agencies consult with the Service to ensure that the actions authorized, funded, or carried out by such agencies do not jeopardize the continued existence of any threatened or endangered species or adversely modify or destroy designated critical habitat of such species. The Federal Highway Administration assigned responsibility for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act and all federal resource agency consultations, including section 7 formal consultations, to TxDOT in a Memorandum of Understanding, dated December 16, 2014 (23 U.S.C. 327).

This BO has been prepared in accordance with section 7 of the Act. It is based on information in TxDOT's Biological Assessment (BA), which was included with the formal consultation request, information provided by TxDOT staff, Service files and other sources of information. A complete administrative record of this consultation is on file at the Service's Austin Ecological Services Field Office.

The current list of federally threatened and endangered species that are known to occur in Eastland County and relevant to the proposed project is presented in **Table 1**.

Table 1. Federally listed species that may occur in the project area.		
Common Name	Scientific Name	Status
black-capped vireo	<i>Vireo atricapilla</i>	Endangered
golden-cheeked warbler	<i>Setophaga chrysoparia</i>	Endangered
whooping crane	<i>Grus americana</i>	Endangered

Two federally listed endangered species are known to occur in the vicinity of the I-20 relocation project, the BCVI and GCWA. Whooping cranes may pass through Eastland County during their migration. However, there is no foraging or roosting habitat within the proposed I-20 right-of-way (ROW), therefore, TxDOT has determined that the whooping crane would not be affected by the proposed action and they are not considered further in this BO.

Consultation History

- March 2, 2016: Initial meeting and site visit between TxDOT, the Service and the project consultant, AECOM, to discuss the proposed action and evaluate the project area for potential GCWA or BCVI habitat.
- May 2, 2016: Conference call between TxDOT, AECOM, and the Service to discuss the presence/absence survey results for the GCWA and BCVI, and TxDOT's determination to move forward with formal consultation.
- July 1, 2016: TxDOT emailed the project BA to the Service, along with project schematics and site plans.
- July 5, 2016: TxDOT submitted the final BA and formal consultation initiation request to the Service.
- August 11, 2016: The Service emailed TxDOT with a minor request for additional information on the project. The Service also submitted a letter to TxDOT acknowledging the initiation of formal section 7 consultation.
- August 16, 2016: TxDOT emailed the Service with the additional requested information.
- August 17, 2016: Conference call between TxDOT and the Service to discuss habitat mitigation for the GCWA.
- September 23, 2016: The Service provided TxDOT with a draft BO.
- October 3, 2016: TxDOT provided minor comments on the draft BO to the Service.

BIOLOGICAL OPINION

Description of Proposed Action

The existing I-20 roadway is a four-lane highway with two 12-foot lanes in each direction, 10-foot outside shoulders and 6-foot inside shoulders, and a 54-inch wide concrete median between travel directions. The highway section within the project area contains a horizontal S-curve about 1.5 miles west of State Highway (SH) 16. This curve has a six percent vertical grade and increases in elevation from east to west by about 300 feet. During icy winter weather, this section of the highway becomes hazardous and occasionally temporarily impassable, creating operational and safety issues that need to be addressed.

The proposed project includes the realignment and construction of about three miles of I-20 main lanes to reduce the steep vertical grade and flatten horizontal curves. Frontage roads would also be added. The new main lane configuration would consist of two 12-foot travel lanes in each direction, with 10-foot shoulders. A new 12-foot passing lane would be added for westbound (uphill) traffic. East- and westbound travel lanes would be separated by a 54-inch concrete median barrier. The horizontal curvature of the road would be flattened to about one degree and the vertical grade would be reduced to 3.5 percent, with a maximum super elevation of four percent. Continuous two-way frontage roads would be constructed on each side of the new main lane alignment. The two frontage roads would consist of two, 12-foot lanes, with 4-foot inside and 8-foot outside shoulders. The frontage roads would be separated from the main lanes by a 54-inch concrete traffic barrier.

The proposed action also includes braided, grade separated, entrance/exit ramps to access the westbound safety rest area. The proposed construction would require the addition of about 89 acres of new ROW. Project specific locations (PSLs), including material laydown areas, storage, equipment parking, etc., have not been determined at this time, but would be located within the project ROW footprint. The existing I-20 main lanes will continue to be used until construction of the new lanes is completed. Once traffic is shifted to the new alignment, the existing road will be removed and the area restored with TxDOT's standard ROW seed mix.

Vegetation clearing for the new ROW and road realignment is anticipated to start after environmental clearances have been obtained and before the start of the 2017 GCWA breeding season. Following the removal of all woody vegetation from the new ROW, limited geotechnical boring would be conducted to determine the depth and composition of rock and sediment within the proposed new alignment. Areas of significant (up to 60 feet) excavation or embankment fill would be needed to complete construction along the new alignment. Excavation would be completed using a combination of mechanical equipment and explosives, particularly in areas of deep, hard rock. In areas where the use of explosives is required, the contractor would use standard methods (i.e., use of blasting mats and careful placement and sequencing of charges) to ensure the blasting is carried out in a safe and controlled manner, given the proximity to the existing I-20 lanes.

Concurrent with the first phase of excavation and embankment, paving and drainage activities would be conducted. The remaining construction phase would include the installation of

permanent lighting, signage, and final paving and pavement marking. Once the construction on the new lanes is completed, traffic would be routed onto the new lanes and the existing I-20 lanes would be decommissioned and demolished. Construction is scheduled to start in late 2016 or early 2017 and is expected to take about three years to complete.

TxDOT is proposing to implement several voluntary conservation measures related to project impacts and timing to avoid or minimize the effects to the GCWA and BCVI. These measures include:

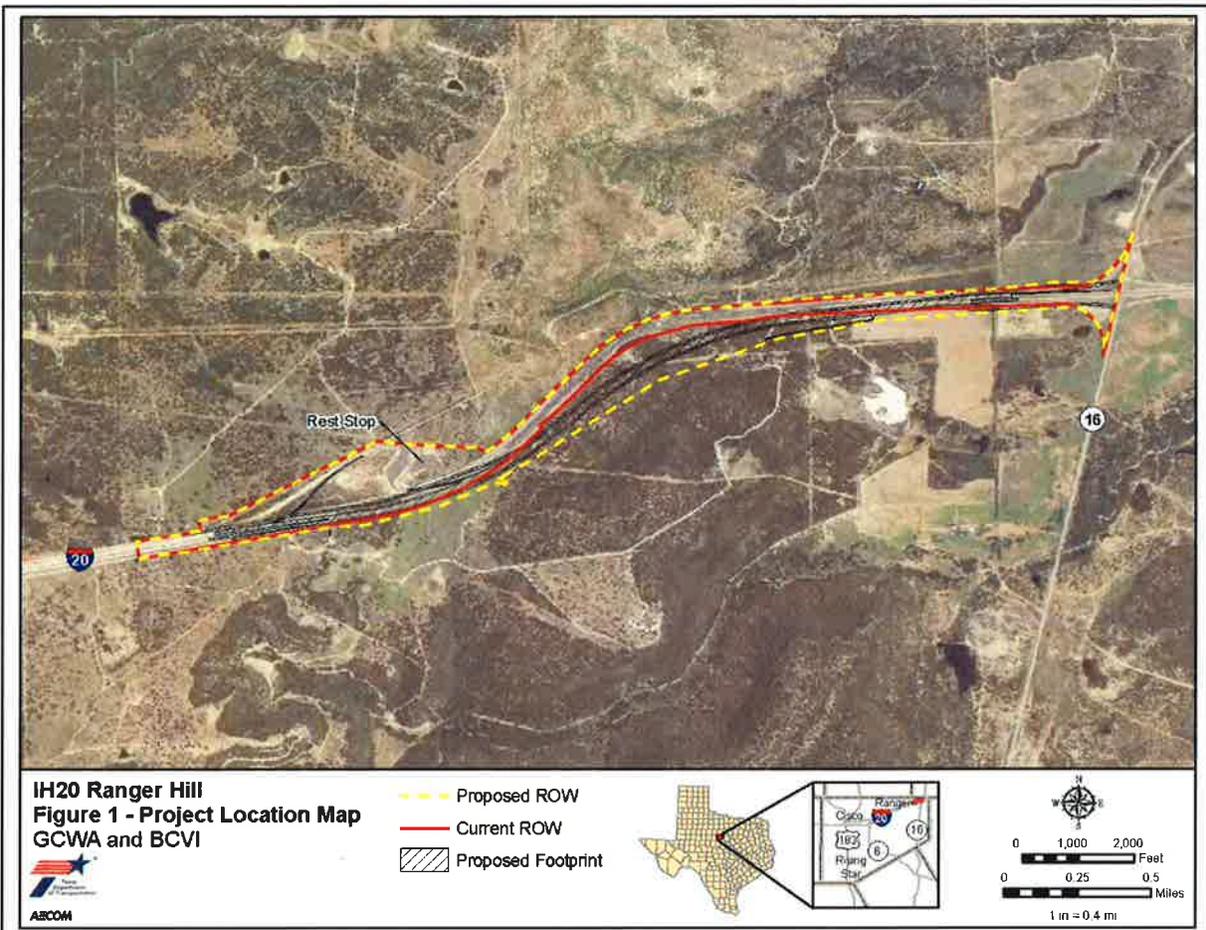
- The clearing of woody vegetation would be limited to the existing and new ROWs.
- To the maximum extent practicable, all woody vegetation clearing would be conducted prior to the start of the 2017 breeding season for the GCWA and BCVI. However, small, linear strips of woody vegetation, located adjacent to the current road alignment and ROW, may not be cleared during this timeframe due to traffic control issues. Any woody vegetation remaining in the project area after initial clearing would either be: removed outside of subsequent breeding seasons; removed after nest surveys have concluded no active nests are present; or, after further consultation with the Service if active nests are discovered.
- In areas where excavation activities require the use of explosives, blasting would be accomplished in a controlled manner, and only after TxDOT has approved a site specific blast plan.
- Construction activities would be minimized in areas adjacent to occupied GCWA or BCVI habitats. Habitat areas adjacent to the project would be shown on the construction plans and the contractor would be notified, via the Environmental Permits, Issues, and Commitments sheet in the project plans and during the pre-construction meeting, to not use the habitat adjacent to the project ROW for the placement of PSLs. Staging areas and other PSLs placed within the ROW would be located away from the GCWA and BCVI habitat on the south side of the proposed new alignment ROW.
- TxDOT would provide information to the project contractors on how to recognize habitat for the GCWA and BCVI and would advise the contractors to avoid impacting habitat areas outside of the project footprint. TxDOT would remind contractors of their responsibility to comply with all State and Federal regulations, including the Act, and would inform them of the legal and financial ramifications of non-compliance.
- Construction would be restricted to daylight hours to prevent continuous disturbance of adjacent habitat areas.
- After construction is completed, disturbed areas would be seeded with native vegetation, per TxDOT's standard seeding specifications.

Action Area

The proposed action area is equivalent to the proposed project limits (**Figure 1**), which extend about three miles on I-20 east of Loop 254, eastward to SH 16, and a 300 foot buffer beyond the ROW in areas where GCWA or BCVI habitat occurs. Direct effects would be confined to the existing I-20 alignment and ROW, as well as the 89 acres of new alignment and ROW within the project limits, for a total area of 260 acres. Indirect project effects would occur up to 300 feet beyond the edge of the ROW. GCWA and BCVI habitat, of varying quality, occurs along the

southern ROW, totaling 27.3 acres (**Figure 2**). The total action area is considered all areas where direct or indirect effects could occur, totaling about 287.3 acres.

Figure 1. Proposed I-20 project new alignment and ROW.



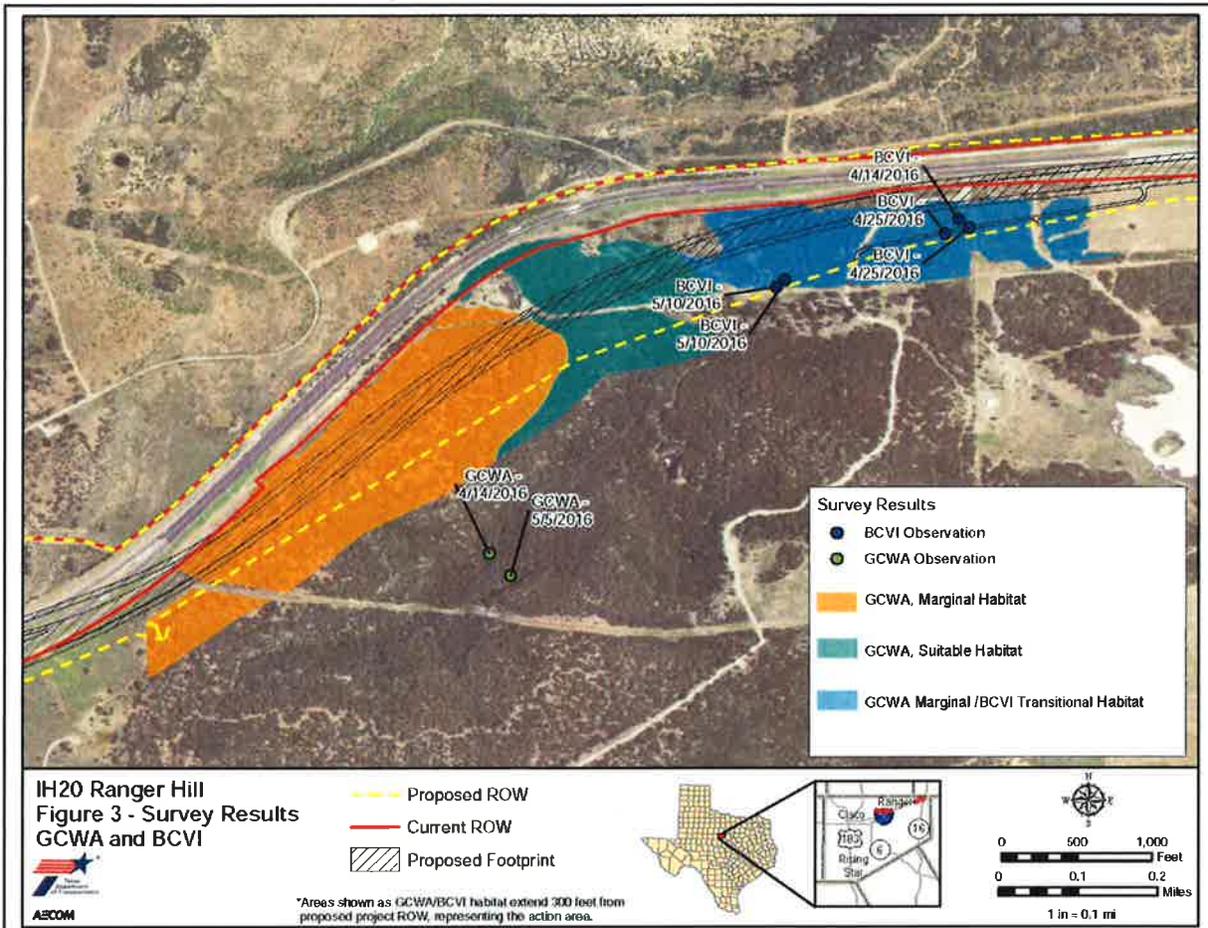
Species Description and Life History

The GCWA was emergency listed as endangered on May 4, 1990 (55 FR 18844). The final rule listing the species was published on December 27, 1990 (55 FR 53160). No critical habitat is designated for this species.

The GCWA is a small, insectivorous songbird, 4.5 to 5 inches long, with a wingspan of approximately eight inches (Pulich 1976, Oberholser 1974). The GCWA breeds exclusively in the mixed Ashe juniper/deciduous woodlands of the central Texas Hill Country west and north of the Balcones Fault (Pulich 1976). The GCWA requires the shredding bark produced by mature Ashe junipers for nest material. Typical deciduous woody species include Texas oak (*Quercus buckleyi*), Lacey oak (*Q. glaucoides*), live oak (*Q. fusiformis*), Texas ash (*Fraxinus texensis*), cedar elm (*Ulmus crassifolia*), hackberry (*Celtis* spp.), bigtooth maple (*Acer grandidentatum*), sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*), Arizona walnut (*Juglans major*), and pecan (*Carya illinoensis*) (Pulich 1976, Ladd 1985, Wahl et al. 1990). Breeding and nesting GCWA feed

primarily on insects, spiders, and other arthropods found in Ashe junipers and associated deciduous tree species (Pulich 1976).

Figure 2. 2016 GCWA and BCVI habitat and survey results within the proposed project area.



Male GCWA arrive in central Texas in early March and begin to establish breeding territories, which they defend against other males by singing from visible perches within their territories. Females arrive a few days later, but are more difficult to detect in the dense woodland habitat (Pulich 1976). Three to five eggs are generally incubated in April, and unless there are additional nesting attempts, nestlings fledge in May to early June (Pulich 1976). If there is a second nesting attempt, it is typically in mid-May with nestlings fledging in late June to early July (Pulich 1976). By late July, GCWAs begin their migration south (Chapman 1907, Simmons 1924). The GCWA winters in the highland pine-oak woodlands of southern Mexico and northern Central America (Kroll 1980).

Historical and Current Distribution

The GCWA's entire breeding range occurs on the Edwards Plateau and Lampasas Cut Plain of central Texas. The GCWA has been confirmed in 39 counties: Bandera, Bell, Bexar, Blanco, Bosque, Burnet, Comal, Coryell, Dallas, Eastland, Edwards, Erath, Gillespie, Hamilton, Hays, Hill, Hood, Jack, Johnson, Kendall, Kerr, Kimble, Kinney, Lampasas, Llano, Mason, McLennan,

Medina, Menard, Palo Pinto, Real, San Saba, Somervell, Stephens, Tom Green, Travis, Uvalde, Williamson, and Young. However, many of the counties where it is known to occur, now or in the past, have only small amounts of suitable habitat (Pulich 1976, Service 1996, Lasley et al. 1997). Diamond (2007) estimated that the amount of suitable GCWA habitat across the species' range was approximately 4.2 million acres, much of this habitat occurring on private lands. As a result, the population status for the GCWA on private lands remains undocumented throughout major portions of the breeding range.

Reasons for Decline and Threats to Survival

Before 1990, the primary reason for GCWA habitat loss was juniper clearing to improve conditions for livestock grazing. Since then, habitat loss has occurred as suburban developments spread into prime GCWA habitat. Groce et al. (2010) summarized the rates of expected human population growth within the range of the GCWA and found by 2030, the growth rate ranges from 17 percent around the Dallas-Fort Worth area to over 164 percent around San Antonio. As the human population continues to increase, so do associated roads, single and multi-family residences, and infrastructure, resulting in continued habitat destruction, fragmentation, and increased edge effects (Groce et al. 2010).

Fragmentation is the reduction of large blocks of habitat into several smaller patches. While GCWAs have been found to be reproductively successful in small patches of habitat (less than 50 acres), there is an increased likelihood of occupancy and abundance as patch size increases (Coldren 1998, Butcher et al. 2010, DeBoer and Diamond 2006). Increases in pairing and territory success are also correlated with increasing patch size (Arnold et al. 1996, Coldren 1998, Butcher et al. 2010). In addition, while some studies have suggested that small patches that occur close to larger patches are likely to be occupied by GCWAs, the long-term survival and recovery of the GCWA is dependent on maintaining the larger patches (Coldren 1998, Peterson 2001, TNC 2002).

As GCWA habitat fragmentation increases the amount of GCWA habitat edge, where two or more different vegetation types meet, also increases. For the GCWA, edge is where woodland becomes shrubland, grassland, a subdivision, etc., and depending on the type of edge, it can act as a barrier for dispersal; act as a territory boundary; favor certain predators; increase nest predation; and reduce reproductive output (Johnston 2006, Arnold et al. 1996). Canopy breaks (the distance from the top of one tree to another) as little as 36 feet have been shown to be barriers to GCWA movement (Coldren 1998). Territory boundaries have not only been shown to stop at edges, but GCWAs are more often further away from habitat edges (Beardmore 1994, DeBoer and Diamond 2006, Sperry 2007).

Other threats to GCWA include the clearing of deciduous oaks upon which they forage, oak wilt infection in trees, nest parasitism by brown-headed cowbirds (Engels and Sexton 1994), drought, fire, stress associated with migration, competition with other avian species, and particularly, loss of habitat from urbanization (Ladd and Gass 1999). Human activities have degraded or eliminated GCWA habitat throughout their range, particularly areas associated with the I-35 corridor between the Austin and San Antonio metropolitan areas.

Range-wide Survival and Recovery Needs

The recovery strategy outlined in the Golden-cheeked Warbler Recovery Plan (Service 1992), currently under revision, divides the breeding range of the GCWA into eight regions, or units, and calls for the protection of sufficient habitat to support at least one self-sustaining population in each unit. These recovery units were delineated based primarily on watershed, vegetation, and geologic boundaries (Service 1992).

Based on the Golden-cheeked Warbler Recovery Plan (Service 1992), and the GCWA 5-year Review (Service 2014), protection and management of occupied habitat and minimization of degradation, development, or environmental modification of unoccupied habitat necessary for buffering nesting habitat are necessary to provide for the survival of the species. Habitat protection must include elements of both breeding and non-breeding habitat (i.e., associated uplands and migration corridors). Current and future efforts to create new and protect existing habitat will enhance the GCWA's ability to expand in distribution and numbers. Efforts, such as land acquisition and conservation easements, to protect existing viable populations is critical to the survival and recovery of this species, particularly when rapidly expanding urbanization continues to result in the loss of prime breeding habitat.

Several state and federally owned lands occur within the breeding range of the GCWA, but the overriding majority of the species' breeding range occurs on private lands that have been either occasionally or never surveyed. Currently there are five large GCWA populations receiving some degree of protection: those at the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve and Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge (BCNWR) in Travis County; Camp Bullis Military Installation and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Government Canyon State Natural Area in Bexar County; and at Fort Hood Military Installation in Bell and Coryell Counties. There are also several conservation banks (CB) whose goal is to protect GCWA habitat: Hickory Pass CB (3,003 acres) and Hickory Ridge CB (1,255 acres) in Burnet County, Bandera Corridor CB (6,946 acres) in Bandera and Real counties, Clearwater CB (21,305 acres) in Burnet County, and Festina Lente CB (1,147 acres) in Bandera County (acres represent the total if the entire bank of credits are sold).

Black-capped Vireo

For more specific information regarding the BCVI, please refer to the Black-capped Vireo Recovery Plan (Service 1991) and Black-capped Vireo 5-year Review: Summary and Evaluation (Service 2007).

Species Description and Life History

The BCVI was federally-listed as endangered on October 6, 1987 (52 FR 37420-37423). No critical habitat is designated for this species. The BCVI is a 4.5-inch long, insectivorous songbird. Mature males are olive green above and white below with faint greenish-yellow flanks. The crown and upper half of the head are black with a conspicuous white eye-ring. The iris is brownish-red and the bill is black. Mature females are generally duller in color than males, and have a dark slate gray head (Service 1991).

Although BCVI habitat throughout Texas is quite variable with respect to plant species, soils, and rainfall, habitat types generally have a similar overall appearance. The BCVI typically inhabits shrublands and open woodlands with a distinctive patchy structure. The shrub vegetation generally extends from the ground to about 10 feet above ground and covers about 30 to 60 percent of the total area. In the Edwards Plateau, common plants in BCVI habitat include Texas oak (*Quercus texana*), shin oak (*Q. sinuata*), live oak (*Q. virginiana* & *Q. fusiformis*), mountain laurel (*Sophora secundiflora*), sumac (*Rhus*. spp.), redbud (*Cercis canadensis* var. *texana*), Texas persimmon (*Diospyros texana*), mesquite (*Prosopis glandulosa*), and agarita (*Mahonia trifoliata*). In the eastern portion of its breeding range, suitable habitat for the BCVI is early successional shrubland, often created by fire or woodland clearing. BCVI are opportunistic foragers; however, they prefer insect larvae and seeds (Grzybowski 1995).

Male BCVI arrive in central Texas in mid-March and begin to establish breeding territories, which they defend against other males by singing. Females arrive a few days later, but are more difficult to detect in the dense brushy habitat. Three to four eggs are generally incubated in April, and unless there is a second nesting attempt, nestlings fledge in May to early June. By mid-September, BCVIs have generally migrated south, beginning with females and young and followed by adult males (Graber 1957, Oberholser 1974). The BCVI breeds from Oklahoma south through central Texas to the Edwards Plateau, then south and west to central Coahuila, Nuevo Leon, and southwestern Tamaulipas, Mexico. They winter on the Pacific slope of Mexico.

Historical and Current Distribution

The historical breeding distribution of the BCVI included an area stretching from Kansas southward through central Oklahoma and through west-central Texas, with a southern limit in central Coahuila, Mexico. In 1987, the known breeding population was distributed across 21 counties in Texas, four counties in Oklahoma and in Coahuila, Mexico. Survey efforts since 2009 have confirmed that there are occupied breeding habitats in 40 counties in Texas, five counties in Oklahoma (Service, unpublished), and three states in Mexico. Based on data from 2009 to 2014, approximately 40 percent of the known population in the breeding range is found on four well-surveyed areas: Fort Hood Military Installation (Texas), Kerr Wildlife Management Area (Texas), Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge (Oklahoma), and Fort Sill Military Installation (Oklahoma) (Service, unpublished). Together, these facilities cover approximately 400,000 acres, an area representing only one percent of the total area of rangeland in the Texas/Oklahoma range of the species (Wilkins et al. 2006).

The current BCVI breeding range no longer appears to extend northward past central Oklahoma, and the species has not been documented in Kansas since the 1950s. The current range for the BCVI includes nine counties in Oklahoma and 69 counties in Texas. The discovery of breeding populations of the BCVI in southern Coahuila, Nuevo Leon, and Tamaulipas significantly extends their breeding range farther south than was known at the time of listing.

Reasons for Decline and Threats to Survival

At the time of listing, the identified major threats to the BCVI included habitat loss through land use conversion, grazing and browsing by domestic and wild herbivores, and brood parasitism by

brown-headed cowbirds. The threat of vegetative succession, originally considered minor, appears to have been underestimated at the time of listing, although the extent of the effects on the BCVI is not known, but likely important to only the eastern portion of the breeding range. Historically, naturally occurring wildfires probably maintained a mosaic of suitable habitat throughout the BCVI's eastern range.

Research conducted at Fort Hood between 1987 and 2004, found a strong negative correlation between the number of female cowbirds trapped during the BCVI breeding season and the incidence of cowbird parasitism on BCVI nests (Summers and Norman 2004, Kostecke et al. 2005). Brood parasitism of BCVI nests at Fort Hood exceeded 90 percent prior to cowbird control in 1988. Implementation of the cowbird control program at Fort Hood has coincided with reduced parasitism levels and increased nesting success for the BCVI (Eckrich et al. 1999, Kostecke et al. 2005).

On average, cattle densities throughout the BCVI's Texas range have shown moderate decreases since 1987, while several areas currently supporting large bird populations, such as Coryell, Edwards, and Mason Counties, show moderate increases in cattle densities (Wilkins et al. 2006, USDA 2007). On average, goat densities throughout the BCVI's U.S. range have decreased by 47 percent since the BCVI was listed in 1987 (Service unpublished). While the relative importance of individual threats appears to have changed since listing, these remain the primary threats to the species.

Range-wide Survival and Recovery Needs

The Black-capped Vireo Recovery Plan (Service 1991) provides preliminary criteria that would meet the interim objective of downlisting the species to threatened status. One of these criteria requires at least one viable BCVI population in each of four Texas regions and one each in Oklahoma and Mexico (Service 1991, Service 2013). The Service's 5-year status review of the BCVI found the Recovery Plan to be in need of revision and recommended the species be downlisted to threatened status (Service 2007).

Protection and management of occupied habitat and minimization of further degradation, development, or environmental modification of unoccupied habitat are necessary to provide for the survival of the species. Habitat protection must include elements of both breeding and non-breeding habitat (i.e., associated uplands and migration corridors). As habitat is created through land management practices (e.g., prescribed fire), wildfire, and existing habitat is protected, the BCVI's ability to expand its distribution and numbers will be enhanced. Efforts to increase numbers of existing viable populations are critical to the survival and recovery of this species, particularly when rapidly expanding urbanization results in the loss of prime breeding habitat. Due to the nature of early successional shrub growth preferred by the BCVI, fire should be used to manage, enhance, and create BCVI breeding habitat, as appropriate. Continued efforts to control cowbirds are necessary in areas where parasitism rates are shown to be excessive (greater than 40 percent) (Tazik and Cornelius 1993, Wilsey et al. 2014).

Environmental Baseline*Golden-cheeked warbler*

According to our consultations tracking database, there have been at least 64 formal section 7 consultations for the GCWA, with almost 118,000 acres of GCWA habitat authorized to be impacted by those projects. Several large consultations make up a majority of this acreage: 1) over 7,200 acres were associated with a consultation for Fort Hood military activities; 2) over 52,000 acres were associated with brush control projects throughout the GCWA's 35 county range; 3) 5,000 acres were for activities on Camp Bullis, less than 15 percent of which was considered occupied habitat; and, 4) about 19,000 acres in the BCNWR for activities associated with their 15-year Habitat Management Plan. The conservation resulting from these consultations is over 61,300 acres of GCWA habitat maintained on Department of Defense land and over 22,000 acres of private land preserved and/or maintained for GCWA conservation.

Additionally, the Service has issued 135 individual section 10(a)(1)(B) Incidental Take Permits (ITPs) authorizing take of the GCWA, mostly through habitat alteration. Over 57,000 acres of GCWA habitat has been authorized to be impacted. This total includes: over 21,000 acres as part of the Travis County and City of Austin Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP); 9,000 acres for the Hays County Regional HCP; 6,000 acres for the Williamson County Regional HCP; over 5,000 acres for the Southern Edwards Plateau HCP; 5,200 acres for the Comal County Regional HCP; 3,000 acres for the Oncor programmatic HCP; and, 1,100 acres for the Lower Colorado River Authority's Competitive Renewable Energy Zone HCP. The HCPs, when fully implemented, would result in the conservation of over 77,700 acres of GCWA habitat and almost \$1.3 million for the preservation and/or maintenance of land for the benefit of the GCWA.

The project action area is located in GCWA Recovery Unit 1, which includes Young, Stephens, Palo Pinto, and Eastland counties, along with the northern portion of Erath County. There is limited information on the amount of available habitat or population numbers for the GCWA in Recovery Unit 1. GCWA presence/absence surveys on Wagley Ranch, in Palo Pinto County, resulted in detection of at least one breeding male in both 2008 and 2009. In 2015, a GCWA was incidentally heard, and reported, in the same area. There have also been several GCWA observations in the southern part of Jack County, which is located immediately north of Palo Pinto County and east of Young County, outside of any designated Recovery Unit. No prior GCWA surveys have been conducted in the action area for the proposed project. However, based on the adjacent surveys and the abundance of suitable habitat, we believe the GCWA occurs in the action area.

Black-capped vireo

The Service has conducted at least 32 formal section 7 consultations for the BCVI. Over 274,000 acres of BCVI habitat has been proposed to be impacted in some way by those projects. Of the total acreage, impacts to 256,196 acres were associated with brush management and prescribed fire consultations. An additional 13,711 acres of impacts are associated with military activities on Fort Hood. These consultations also resulted in over 27,000 acres of habitat management and maintenance specifically for the benefit of the BCVI, with an expectation of an

additional net benefit in BCVI habitat creation from the brush management and prescribed fire consultations.

The Service has issued 10 individual section 10(a)(1)(B) Incidental Take Permits (ITPs) that included the BCVI. These 10 permits authorized take associated for covered activities which included over 19,300 acres of BCVI habitat alteration. If all authorized take were to occur, the ITPs would also result in over 16,800 acres of BCVI habitat management/preservation and over \$1.5 million given to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation for perpetual management of 4,500 acres of BCVI habitat on Parrie Haynes Ranch.

The proposed I-20 project is located in the North Texas Recovery Unit for the BCVI where the species has been well documented. Surveys for the BCVI in the North Texas Recovery Unit between 2009 and 2014 resulted in a total of 1,298 breeding males reported (Service, unpublished). No prior BCVI surveys have been conducted in the action area for the proposed project.

Description of the action area

The action area for the proposed project extends from about 3.5 miles east of Loop 254 to SH 16 in Eastland County, Texas. The action area is comprised of the existing I-20 and its ROW, along with the proposed addition of 89 acres of new ROW, and an additional 300 foot buffer extending out from the southern edge of the new ROW. The action area totals 287.3 acres. Traffic volume on this portion of I-20 is over 21,000 vehicles per day. Ongoing activities within the action area include:

- existing traffic on I-20;
- maintenance of the existing highway and ROW;
- maintenance of a pipeline ROW that crosses the action area in an east-west direction;
- cleared vegetation for hay production; and,
- cattle ranching and hunting on the area of proposed new ROW and adjacent property.

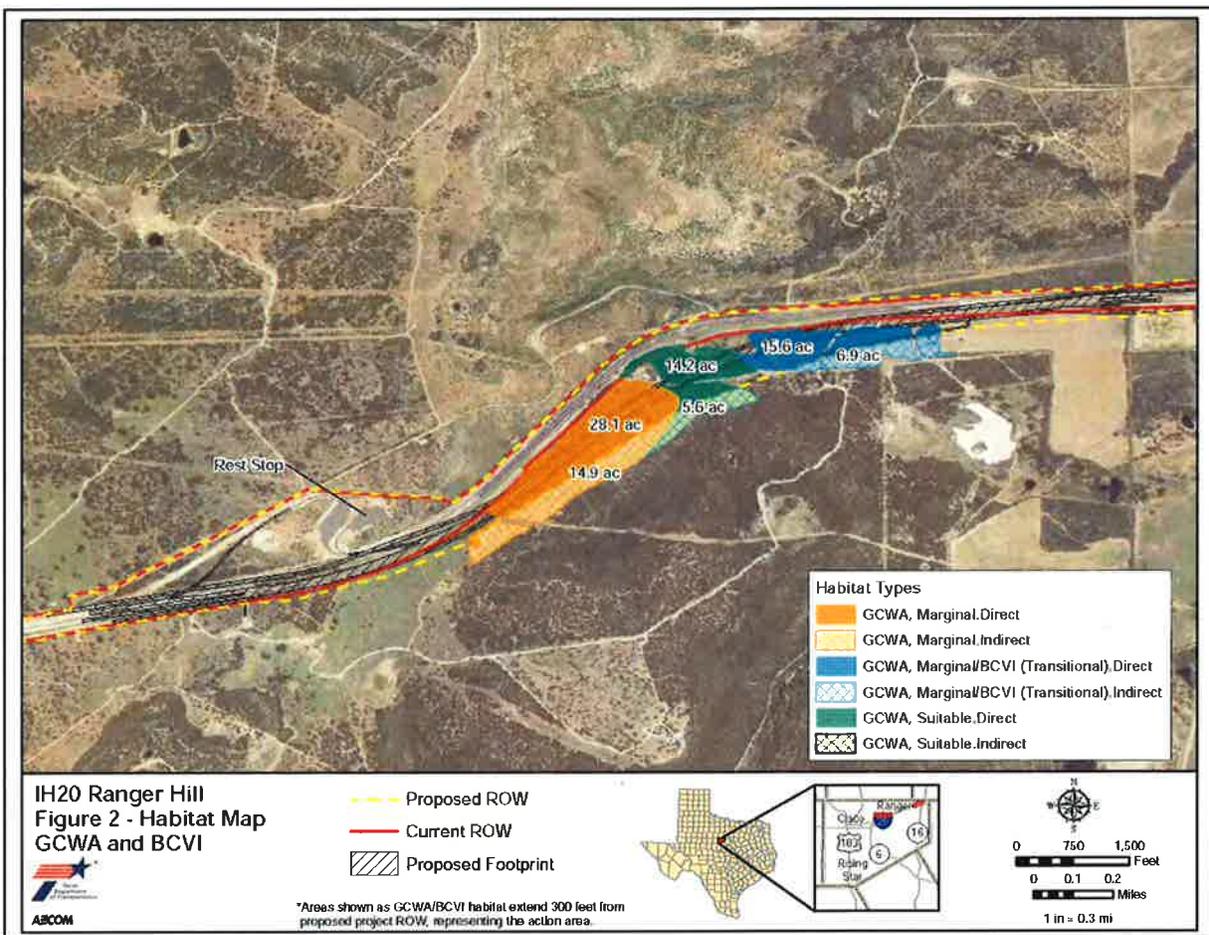
Two habitat types preferred by the GCWA were mapped within the project action area (Campbell 2003): 1) suitable habitat or habitat that may be occupied by the species, described as post oak (*Quercus stellata*)/blackjack oak (*Quercus marilandica*) and junipers (*Juniperus* spp.) with a canopy coverage between 35 and 100 percent; and, 2) marginal habitat or habitat likely to be occupied, made up of slope communities of juniper and mixed hardwoods, with 35 to 100 percent canopy cover (**Figure 3**). Marginal habitats are considered less likely to be used as breeding habitat, but may be used as foraging areas or dispersal habitat by juveniles (Pulich 1976).

Habitat for the BCVI generally consists of patchy mosaics of shrubby vegetation, with foliage extending to ground level (Campbell 2003). The eastern portion of the action area includes shrubby vegetation predominately composed of whitebush (*Aloysia gratissima*), with an overstory of post oak, mesquite (*Prosopis glandulosa*), and cedar elm (*Ulmus crassifolia*). These areas do not exhibit the typical patchy structure associated with BCVI habitat; however, the shrubby component is dense and generally extends to ground level.

Status of the species within the action area

Presence/absence surveys were conducted within areas identified as potential habitat during the spring of 2016. All surveys were conducted following protocols outlined in the Service’s 10(a)(1)(A) Scientific Permit Requirements for Conducting Presence/Absence Surveys and Habitat Assessments for GCWA. A total of nine separate surveys were conducted over 85.1 acres of habitat within the action area. GCWA and BCVI were each detected during three survey events. All GCWA that were detected were outside of the project action area. The BCVI detections occurred in the eastern portion of the action area. A map indicating the approximate location of each species detection is included in Appendix B, Figure 3, of the BA and **Figure 2** (above).

Figure 3. Habitat map showing marginal and suitable habitat for the GCWA and BCVI within the project action area.



Factors affecting the species within the action area

The undeveloped portion of the project action area is currently used for cattle ranching, hunting, and hay production. Vegetation management associated with these activities is the predominant factor that may currently be affecting the species in the action area. Disturbance due to traffic noise may occur, but would likely have a minor effect on the GCWA or BCVI.

Effects of the Proposed Action

Factors to be considered

Proximity of the action

The proposed project is located in the range of both the GCWA and BCVI. Vegetation removal within the new ROW would eliminate habitat that could be used by either the GCWA or BCVI. The proposed action would result in the permanent displacement of any birds utilizing the forested or shrub areas in the proposed 89 acres of ROW to be cleared. Habitat immediately adjacent to the newly cleared ROW would be converted to edge habitat, which may continue to be used by the GCWA or BCVI, but at a reduced rate.

Distribution

Vegetation management (i.e., removal or replacement with a ROW grass mixture) would occur on all 89 acres of new ROW, however only about 57.9 acres have the potential to be occupied by the GCWA or BCVI. An additional 27.4 acres of habitat that may be used by the birds for feeding or other activities, or may serve as a buffer to nesting habitat, would also be impacted within the new ROW. Habitat impacts within the new ROW would be permanent, displacing any birds currently using the area.

Timing

All project associated vegetation management would occur before the 2017 GCWA and BCVI breeding season (March 1–August 31). Once the vegetation is removed from the new alignment ROW, construction actions could occur during any time of the year; however, once the vegetation is cleared the birds would not be present in the action area. Project construction is expected to last for about three years.

Nature of the effect

Construction actions that occur during the breeding season could affect any stage of the GCWA and/or BCVI life cycle, if the birds occur in habitat adjacent to the project. Actions undertaken outside of the breeding season would only affect birds if habitat is permanently removed. In this case, all habitat impacts are proposed outside of the breeding season; therefore, the actions would most likely only affect adult male birds seeking to establish territories.

Duration

Effects associated with the removal of habitat within the new ROW would be permanent. Disturbance from construction activities and noise would only last as long as construction is occurring, estimated to be about three years. Post-construction effects from road noise are already occurring in the habitat that would be cleared for the new ROW. Those effects would shift to habitat adjacent to the realigned road and ROW and would be persistent as long as the road is in use, but only during the portion of the year when the birds are present for breeding.

Disturbance frequency, intensity, severity

The disturbance frequency for the GCWA and BCVI habitat would be a single occurrence, but would result in the complete and permanent removal of vegetation across the 89 acres of new ROW. Disturbance of any birds using the habitat in the 300 foot buffer surrounding the ROW, would be ongoing for the three to four years of project construction. Intensity and severity would depend on a number of factors, such as: the type of construction disturbance; how long the disturbance lasts; when it occurs during the breeding season; when it occurs during the day cycle; and/or, whether it is constant or repetitive.

Analysis for effects of the action*Direct Effects*

Direct effects are effects caused by the project at the same time and location as the effect. The construction process would remove habitat for the GCWA and BCVI outside of the breeding season; i.e., the birds would not be present at the time of the habitat removal. Thus, direct effects to nests are not anticipated and the resulting “take” from habitat lost for construction of the project would be in the form of harm (50 CFR § 17.3).

Both BCVIs and GCWAs are highly territorial and show strong fidelity to breeding sites (Grzybowski 1995, Campbell 2003), that is, birds often return to their previous breeding territory after the winter season. Thus, habitat that is used by these species during the breeding season is still considered occupied when the species is on the wintering grounds. The removal of suitable breeding habitat for these species is a direct effect if the species is seasonally occupying the habitat.

Habitat loss is a primary threat to both species and both species specialize in their respective preferred habitats. Woody vegetation within their habitats provides shelter, food, and nesting substrate and materials. The removal of woody vegetation from occupied habitats reduces the necessary components to support the species’ essential life history needs. Depending on the extent of vegetation removal, such actions would limit the available resources for the species, may result in reduced fitness, and may result in the extirpation of the species from the affected area. The ultimate result of adverse effects to individuals may be impossible to calculate, but it is very likely that the effects would result in “take” to individuals in some capacity (e.g., reduced fitness, territory abandonment, increased predation) due to modification and/or degradation of habitat previously utilized by the species. Therefore, the removal or degradation of vegetation essential to these species life history needs is expected to adversely affect the species, to the level of take, depending on the size and duration of the habitat impacts.

A total of 57.9 acres of GCWA habitat, comprised of 14.2 acres of suitable habitat, 28.1 acres of marginal habitat, and 15.6 acres of transitional habitat would be permanently removed from the ROW during project construction, but outside of breeding season when the birds are not present. The 15.6 acres of transitional habitat is also considered habitat for the BCVI. There were several observations of the BCVI using the transitional habitat during the 2016 surveys. No GCWA

were observed within the action area, but at least one individual was heard outside of the 300 foot buffer on the south side of the new road realignment and ROW.

Indirect Effects

Indirect effects are those effects caused by the project, but occur later in time. An additional 27.3 acres of habitat occurs adjacent to the project area, within a 300-foot buffer extending south of the new ROW boundary. This habitat is comprised of 5.6 acres of suitable habitat, 14.9 acres of marginal habitat, and 6.9 acres of transitional habitat. Although this habitat would not be directly impacted by the roadway construction, it would transition from interior habitat to edge habitat, resulting in harassment to any birds currently using this edge habitat for breeding or feeding purposes. Construction noise and activity could also result in harassment to any birds using the edge area adjacent to the ROW by altering a bird's normal breeding, feeding, or sheltering behavior patterns. Once the new alignment portion of the road is completed and traffic is redirected to it, operational noise and activity would have similar harassment effects as construction noise.

The removal of woody vegetation from the ROW in areas that contain habitat for these two species could result in harm to individuals of either species by reducing the overall amount of available breeding habitat, thus reducing their fitness and reproductive capability. Based on the presence of at least one male BCVI singing during the 2016 breeding season, at least one breeding territory for the BCVI would be removed requiring that individual to establish a new territory in future breeding seasons. The vegetation removal would also reduce foraging areas, which may result in harm through a reduction in individual bird's fitness if it has to expend additional energy to find available food resources.

Species' response to the proposed action

The Service believes both the GCWA and the BCVI would be negatively affected by the proposed project actions, primarily the removal of about 89 acres of vegetation, which includes about 85.1 acres of GCWA and/or BCVI habitat, for the new road alignment and ROW. These effects would be localized to the area of habitat removal and habitat immediately adjacent to the new ROW which would become edge habitat. The amount of GCWA and/or BCVI habitat that would be directly affected is 57.9 acres, with an additional 27.4 acres of indirect effects. All birds using this habitat for breeding or foraging purposes would also be directly or indirectly affected. Based on the surveys conducted by TxDOT, no active GCWA breeding territories and no more than one BCVI breeding territory would be displaced by the project. Since all vegetation removal would occur when the birds are not present, no lethal take would occur; therefore, range-wide population numbers are not expected to decrease.

Cumulative Effects

As stated in the Environmental Baseline portion of this document, the undeveloped portion of the project action area is currently used for cattle ranching, hunting, and hay production. These activities are expected to continue into the future, but given the existing road infrastructure, are not likely to increase substantially. All future Federal actions would require a separate consultation pursuant to section 7 of the Act.

Conclusion

After reviewing the current status of the GCWA and BCVI, the environmental baseline for the action area, the effects of the proposed action, and the cumulative effects, it is the Service's biological opinion that the proposed action is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the GCWA or BCVI. This conclusion is based on the following considerations:

- No GCWA or BCVI would be directly killed or injured during vegetation removal and project construction. Woody vegetation removal would occur prior to the start of the 2017 breeding season.
- Approximately 84.3 acres of GCWA habitat, which includes 22.5 acres of BCVI habitat, would be directly or indirectly affected by the project.
- One BCVI and no GCWA breeding territories would be displaced due to the project.
- The habitat quantity and quality within the project action area is low compared to locations with significant breeding populations of GCWA or BCVI.

Critical habitat has not been designated for these species; therefore, none would be affected.

INCIDENTAL TAKE STATEMENT

Section 9 of the Act and Federal regulation pursuant to section 4(d) of the Act prohibit the take of endangered and threatened species, respectively, without special exemption. Take is defined by the Service as to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct. Harass is further defined by the Service as an intentional or negligent act or omission which creates the likelihood of injury to a listed species by annoying it to such an extent as to significantly disrupt normal behavioral patterns, which include, but are not limited to, breeding, feeding and sheltering (50 CFR §17.3). Harm is also further defined by the Service to include significant habitat modification or degradation that results in death or injury to listed species by impairing behavioral patterns, including breeding, feeding, and sheltering. Incidental take is defined by the Service as take that is incidental to, and not the purpose of, the carrying out of an otherwise lawful activity. Under the terms of section 7(b)(4) and section 7(o)(2), taking that is incidental to and not intended as part of the agency action is not considered to be prohibited taking under the Act, provided that such taking is in compliance with this Incidental Take Statement.

The measures described below are nondiscretionary and must be implemented by TxDOT so that they become binding conditions of any authorization issued to implement a project covered by this biological opinion, as appropriate, in order for the exemption in section 7(o)(2) to apply. TxDOT has a continuing duty to regulate the activity covered by this incidental take statement. If TxDOT (1) fails to adhere to the terms and conditions of the incidental take statement through enforceable terms that are added to the authorizations, and/or (2) fails to retain oversight to ensure compliance with these terms and conditions, the protective coverage of section 7(o)(2) may lapse. In order to monitor the impact of incidental take, TxDOT must report the progress of the action and its impact on the species to the Service as specified in the incidental take statement. [50 CFR 402.14(i)(3)].

Amount or Extent of Take

The Service anticipates incidental take of GCWA and BCVI would occur as a result of the proposed project. Individuals of these species are difficult to detect unless they are observed undisturbed in their environment. However, because the area of habitat for both species is known for the action area, the maximum extent of incidental take may be estimated in terms of habitat area. Using habitat as a surrogate for incidental take of individuals is consistent with the implementing regulations of section 7 of the Act (50 CFR 402.14 (i)(1)(i)) for the following reasons: 1) surveys for the GCWA and BCVI provide valuable information for determining the extent of occupation of a given area; however, they do not provide a precise mechanism for predicting the number of individuals that may be “taken” by the proposed action, and 2) the effectiveness of bird surveys in quantifying the number of birds in an area is somewhat limited. For example, due to their frequent vocalizations, males of these species are more easily detected than females or fledglings during surveys.

In addition, the area of habitat affected by a particular action is a relatively stable metric of take, compared to the number, size, and location of individual birds or bird territories in the area, which may vary from year-to-year. Further, the effects of a given activity may not be fully realized in a single season, but rather spread over several seasons or even many years, during which the species’ utilization of a given area may vary quite significantly for reasons unrelated to the action itself. Variability is influenced by species preferences or environmental factors that may include natural year-to-year variations in the precise habitat utilized by individual birds, variations in individual bird behavior that influences detectability, variations in the ability of surveyors to detect and accurately map individual birds, survey methodology, and other factors.

The Service anticipates the following amount of incidental take would occur:

1. No more than one BCVI territory would be displaced as a result of the ROW clearing and construction actions authorized under this BO.
2. Harm or harassment of all GCWA or BCVI individuals that occur within the action area due to permanent displacement of individuals or territories related to woody vegetation removal. TxDOT estimates the amount of habitat to be directly impacted by vegetation removal is 57.9 acres within the cleared realignment ROW area. Harassment could also occur from temporary disturbance due to noise, activity, and the edge effect within the remaining additional 27.3 acres of habitat that occurs within a 300 foot buffer along the edge of the ROW.

Effect of the Take

In the accompanying biological opinion, the Service has determined that this level of anticipated take is not likely to result in jeopardy of the GCWA or BCVI from the effects associated with the proposed action.

Critical habitat has not been designated for these species; therefore, none would be affected.

Reasonable and Prudent Measures

The Service believes the following reasonable and prudent measures are necessary and appropriate to minimize incidental take of the GCWA and BCVI:

1. TxDOT must implement their proposed conservation measures, as described in the Description of the Proposed Action (above).
2. TxDOT must monitor and report to the Service project related information, including the amount of take that occurs from project implementation.

Terms and Conditions

In order to be exempt from the prohibitions of section 9 of the Act, TxDOT must comply with the following terms and conditions that implement the reasonable and prudent measure described above and outlined reporting/monitoring requirements. These terms and conditions are non-discretionary.

1. The conservation measures have been proposed by TxDOT are part of the proposed action, with the following revisions: a) TxDOT must contact the Service for approval of survey results before clearing vegetation in the breeding season (March 1 – August 31); and b) if any PSLs are to be located within 300 feet of habitat along the edge of the southern ROW, TxDOT or the project contractor must contact the Service for review and approval.
2. TxDOT must provide the Service with biannual reports, in January and July of each year after the issuance date of this BO, detailing the construction activities that have occurred in the prior six months, the anticipated construction activities that would occur in the following six months, any known take that has occurred due to vegetation clearing or other activities, any listed species observed during project implementation, any unexpected delays in construction, and all ROW restoration actions. Reports must be submitted until one year after all project construction actions are completed.

In the accompanying BO, the Service determined that no more than one BCVI territory would be displaced as a result of the proposed project. In addition, construction actions may result in harm or harassment of all GCWA and BCVI utilizing habitat within the action area. If, during the course of the authorized activities, this level of incidental take is exceeded, such incidental take represents new information requiring review of the reasonable and prudent measure provided. TxDOT must immediately provide an explanation of the causes of the taking and review with the Service the need for possible modification of the reasonable and prudent measures.

Conservation Recommendations

Section 7(a)(1) of the Act directs Federal agencies to utilize their authorities to further the purposes of the Act by carrying out conservation programs for the benefit of endangered and threatened species. Conservation recommendations are discretionary agency activities to minimize or avoid adverse effects of a proposed action on listed species or critical habitat, to help implement recovery plans, or to develop information.

The Service does not have any conservation recommendations for TxDOT at this time.

Reinitiation Notice

This concludes formal consultation on TxDOT's proposed safety realignment of I-20 near Ranger Hill. As provided in 50 CFR § 402.16, reinitiation of formal consultation is required where discretionary Federal agency involvement or control over the action has been retained (or is authorized by law) and if: (1) the amount or extent of incidental take is exceeded; (2) new information reveals the project may affect listed species or critical habitat in a manner, or to an extent, not considered in this opinion; (3) the project is subsequently modified in a manner that causes an effect to the listed species or critical habitat not considered in this opinion; or (4) a new species is listed or critical habitat is designated that may be affected by the action.

If you have any questions regarding this biological opinion, please contact Omar Bocanegra at (817) 277-1100.

Sincerely,



Debra T. Bills
Project Leader

cc: Andy Blair, TxDOT ENV, Austin, TX (electronic)
Andrew Chisholm, TxDOT Brownwood District, Brownwood, TX (electronic)
Field Supervisor, Fish and Wildlife Service, Austin, TX (Attn: Tanya Sommer, electronic)

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Documentation of Public Hearing

Project Location

Eastland County, TX

IH-20 at Ranger Hill

CSJ: 0007-06-084

Project Limits

IH-20 from 3.5 miles east of LP 254 to SH 16

Hearing Location

Ranger High School Cafeteria

1842 TX-254

Ranger, TX

Hearing Date and Time

August 16, 2016 at 5:30 – 7:30 pm

Presenters

Jason Scantling, TxDOT Brownwood District

Krishna Peapully, AECOM

Erin Johnson, AECOM

Elected Officials in Attendance

Rex Fields, Eastland County Judge

Total Number of Attendees (approx.)

32

Total Number of Commenters

4



Contents

- A. Comment/response matrix
- B. Public hearing officer certification
- C. Notices
- D. Sign-in sheets
- E. Verbatim transcript
- F. Comments received
- G. Figures
- H. Hearing Presentation
- I. Public Hearing Photo Log



A. Ranger Hill Public Hearing Comment/Response Matrix



Committer Number	Committer Name	Date Received	Source	Comment Topic	Resource Category	Response
1	Wm Atkins	8/67/16	email	<p>This is nowhere near a worst/first project for the State of Texas. Waste of money at this time. Currently Ranger Hill is no more of a challenge than many roads on our Western states.</p> <p>Use this money in the highly congested big city areas instead of resorting to toll roads.</p>	Project cost	<p>The IH 20 at Ranger Hill project is needed to address safety concerns on this portion of the interstate. IH 20 at Ranger Hill has been labelled as “one of the most dangerous stretches of interstate between Fort Worth and El Paso.” (KTXS 2013) Concerns about the dangers of Ranger Hill motivated more than 4.500 residents to petition TxDOT to have the speed limit reduced to 75 mph and the interstate reconstructed to lower the grade and straighten out the curves.</p>
2	Donnice Graham	8/18/16	email	<p>I'm excited about what you all are going to do but on my way to work yesterday 8/17/16 in all the heavy rain semi trucks and SUVs were driving so fast. The sign was flashing 75 – 80. I pulled over because I couldn't see and almost got hit twice by big rigs. That hill is not the problem...the drivers are. I would love to hang out with you guys and watch the progress of this construction. What can I do to help if anything? Being a nurse is definitely far off from what you all do but I would love to help if I can. Thank you and have a blessed weekend!!!!</p>	General Support	<p>Thank you for your comment.</p>



Committer Number	Committer Name	Date Received	Source	Comment Topic	Resource Category	Response
3	Cheryl Smith	8/18/16	email	I and many others have wondered why the road side park on the west bound side was put at the top of the hill. Even if the road is rebuilt no one will be able to get up it when it is icy. The road side park should have been built at the bottom where people would have a place to go when they can't get up the hill. What are your plans at the bottom of the west bound side so that travelers will have a place to go in icy weather?	Safety	<p>Thank you for your comment. The roadside park (rest area) was constructed within the TxDOT right-of-way (ROW). To build this rest area at the bottom of the hill would have required significant additional ROW acquisition. For eastbound traffic, another rest area was built, west of Ranger Hill, for the benefit of the travelling public.</p> <p>Reconstruction of this section of IH 20 will flatten the grade and reduce the roadway curvature. This will improve safety for the travelling public.</p>



Committer Number	Committer Name	Date Received	Source	Comment Topic	Resource Category	Response
4	Cheryl Smith	8/21/16		It appears from the drawing that Ranger Hill will still have a significant curve. To prevent wrecks, it needs to be straight. If it has any curve, what's happening now will continue to happen.	Safety	Thank you for your comment. The proposed design will upgrade the roadway to current design standards including: reducing the vertical grade, flattening the horizontal curve to approximately 1 degree which will also reduce the roadway banking from 8 percent to approximately 4 percent. Significant ROW will be required to completely eliminate the horizontal curve while also requiring reconstruction of several more miles of IH 20 in this area. This is not financially feasible but also would impose potential socioeconomic impacts to the surrounding communities.



B. Public hearing officer certification



Public Hearing Certification

Project Name: IH-20 at Ranger Hill

County Name Eastland County, TX

Control Section Job Numbers (CSJ): 0007-06-084

Project Limits:

From: IH-20 from 3.5 miles east of LP 254

To: SH 16

I certify that the following statements are true and apply to the project identified above.

- A. A public hearing was held on August 16, 2016 at Ranger High School Cafeteria in Ranger, Texas
- B. The economic and social effects of the project location and design and its impacts on the environment have been considered
- C. In determining economic, social, and environmental effects, the statutory provisions of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 have been considered.
- D. The project involves a community that does not have a known plan of development.
- E. Requirements of Texas Administrative Code, Title 43, Part 1, Chapter 2, Subchapter E, Section 2.107 have been met.

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 16, 2014, and executed by FHWA and TxDOT.

Signed: 

TxDOT Public Hearing Officer/Title

Print Name: Jason Scantling, P.E.

Date: 9/19/2016



C. Notices

PUBLIC NOTICE:

The Notice of Availability of the Draft Environmental Assessment and Public Hearing was published in the *Ranger Times/Eastland Telegram/Eastland County Today* on July 28 and August 2, 2016. TxDOT Brownwood District also distributed a press release/media advisory to the following media outlets:

- KTXS-TV, Abilene
- KTAB/KRBC, Abilene
- Brownwood Bulletin, Brownwood
- Brownwoodnews.com (online newspaper)
- KBWD-AM/KOXE-FM radio - Brownwood (country)
- KPSM - 99.3 FM radio – Brownwood
- KQBZ- 96.9 FM, Newstalk radio
- 102.3 FM, KXYL radio, Brownwood
- Coleman Chronicle & Democratic Voice
- KSTA-AM/FM radio, Coleman
- Comanche Chief, Comanche
- KCOM-AM & KYOX radio, Comanche
- Eastland Telegram (Cisco, Ranger, Rising Star & Gorman)
- KATX (HPRN CO.) radio, Eastland;
- Microplex News (online newspaper), Eastland
- Lampasas Dispatch Record, Lampasas
- KCYL-AM/KACC-FM radio, Lampasas
- Brady Herald Standard, Brady
- KNEL-AM radio, Brady
- Goldthwaite Eagle, Goldthwaite
- San Saba News and Star, San Saba
- KNUZ-FM/KNVR-AM radio, San Saba

- Breckenridge American, Breckenridge
- KLXK/ KROO radio, Breckenridge

A copy of the NOA was sent via direct mail and email to a list of 75 property owners, federal, state, county, and local elected officials, federal, state, and local agencies, and other stakeholders. A meeting notice also was posted on the TxDOT.gov website.



Notice

Draft Environmental Assessment Available for Public Review and Public Hearing

IH 20 at Ranger Hill, Brownwood District

IH 20 from 3.5 miles east of LP 254 to SH 16

CSJ: 0007-06-084

Eastland County, Texas

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) is proposing to construct improvements to Interstate Highway 20 (IH 20) from 3.5 miles east of Loop 254 (LP 254) to State Highway 16 (SH 16) in Eastland County, Texas. Pursuant to Texas Administrative Code, Title 43, Part 1, Chapter 2, Subchapter E, §2.107 and §2.108 and Code of Federal Regulations, Title 23, Chapter I, Subchapter H, §771.111 and Title 40, Chapter V, §1506, this notice advises the public that a draft environmental assessment (EA) is available for public review and that TxDOT will be conducting a public hearing on the proposed project. 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 16, 2014, and executed by FHWA and TxDOT.

The hearing will be held on August 16, 2016 at Ranger High School cafeteria, 1842 TX-254 in Ranger, Texas. Displays will be available for viewing at 5:30 p.m. with the formal hearing starting at 6:15 pm. The purpose of the hearing is to present the planned improvements and to receive public comment on the proposed project.

The proposed project would consist of interstate improvements that would update the IH 20 design to meet current TxDOT design standards within the approximately three-mile project area. The design would realign IH 20 approximately 500 feet south of the existing alignment to reduce the existing horizontal curvature ("s" curve) to approximately one degree. The proposed design also would reduce the vertical grade from six to approximately three and a half percent and would update the interstate from a superelevation (banking) of eight percent to approximately four percent.

The proposed interstate would include two 12-foot main lanes in each direction with room for 10-foot shoulders. In addition there would be a new 12-foot climbing (or passing) lane for westbound traffic. The proposed interstate also would consist of construction of two new continuous two-way frontage roads on either side of the IH 20 main lanes. The frontage roads would consist of two 12-foot lanes with a four-foot inside shoulder and an eight-foot outside shoulder. It is anticipated that construction would begin in January 2017 and last approximately three years.

The proposed right-of-way (ROW) would vary from 300 to 1,380 feet for a total of approximately 260 acres, including an existing TxDOT safety rest area. TxDOT would acquire approximately 89 acres of ROW from adjacent private landowners for the expansion of the proposed project. Although additional ROW is required, no residential or non-residential structures would be displaced. Information concerning services and benefits available to affected property owners and information about the tentative schedule for ROW acquisition may be obtained from the district office at the address listed below and at the hearing.

The draft EA, maps showing the project location and design, tentative construction schedules, and other information relative to the project are on file and available for review on the TxDOT website, <http://www.txdot.gov/inside-txdot/projects/studies/brownwood/i20-ranger-hill.html> and for inspection Monday through Friday between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. at the TxDOT Brownwood District office at 2495 Highway 183 North, Brownwood, TX 76802. This information will also be available for inspection at the hearing. Verbal and written comments from the public regarding the project are requested and may be presented at the hearing, or submitted in person or by mail or email to Jason Scantling at the TxDOT Brownwood District, 2495 Highway 183 North, Brownwood, TX 76802, Jason.Scantling@txdot.gov. Comments must be received on or before August 30, 2016 to be part of the official hearing record.

The hearing will be conducted in English. Persons interested in attending the hearing who have special communication or accommodation needs, such as the need for an interpreter, are encouraged to contact (325) 643-0415. Requests should be made at least two days prior to the public hearing. Every reasonable effort will be made to accommodate these needs.

If you have any general questions or concerns regarding the proposed project or hearing, please contact Jason Scantling, P.E., Director of Transportation, Planning, and Development, Brownwood District, TxDOT, 2495 HWY 183 N., Brownwood, Texas 76802, (325) 643-0415.



NEWS RELEASE

BROWNWOOD DISTRICT

Andrew Carlson
(325) 643-0413
Andrew.Carlson@txdot.gov

TXDOT TO CONDUCT PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED I-20 RECONSTRUCTION AT RANGER HILL

\$80 million project would enhance safety by reducing the steep grade, straightening curves

 [Share This](#)

 [Tweet This](#)

August 4, 2016

WHAT: Public Hearing on Proposed I-20 Reconstruction at Ranger Hill

WHEN: Tuesday, August 16, 2016. Formal Public Hearing begins at 6:15 p.m.; project displays and draft environmental assessment available for viewing beginning at 5:30 p.m.

WHERE: Ranger High School Cafeteria, 1842 East Loop 254, Ranger, Texas 76470

RANGER – The Texas Department of Transportation will conduct a [Public Hearing](#) on August 16, 2016 to receive public comment on the proposed reconstruction of Interstate 20 at Ranger Hill in northeastern Eastland County. The Public Hearing begins at 6:15 p.m. in the Ranger High School cafeteria. Attendees will be able to review the draft environmental assessment and displays of the proposed interstate improvements beginning 45 minutes prior to the hearing.

The approximately \$80 million project would upgrade the interstate to meet current TxDOT design and safety standards within the Ranger Hill area. The limits of the approximately 3-mile project area are from near State Highway 16 on the east, to just west of the new westbound Safety Rest Area at the top of Ranger Hill.

Currently, I-20 features a steep 6% grade and a sharp “s” curve on the hill, with no frontage roads. While TxDOT has implemented various safety upgrades in recent years, such as reducing the speed limit, construction of a concrete median barrier, pavement improvements and installation of high-mast lighting for increased nighttime visibility, the roadway still does not meet current TxDOT standards.

The proposed improvements would shift the centerline of the roadway approximately 500 feet to the south of the current alignment. The grade (steepness) of the roadway would be significantly reduced from 6% to approximately 3.5%, along with more gradual curves. The project adds a third lane in the westbound (uphill) direction allowing large trucks and other slower vehicles to ascend the hill without encumbering faster traffic in the inside lanes. Continuous frontage roads would be added on both sides of the interstate throughout the project area which could be utilized as detour routes should there be an incident closing the main travel lanes.

Construction of the proposed improvements is anticipated to begin in late spring 2017.

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 16, 2014, and executed by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and TxDOT.

TxDOT's Brownwood District includes Brown, Coleman, Comanche, Eastland, Lampasas, McCulloch, Mills, San Saba and Stephens counties.

For news media inquiries, contact Andrew.Carlson@TxDOT.gov or (325) 643-0413.

###

The Texas Department of Transportation is responsible for maintaining 80,000 miles of road and for supporting aviation, rail, and public transportation across the state. Through collaboration and leadership, we deliver a safe, reliable, and integrated transportation system that enables the movement of people and goods. Find out more at txdot.gov. "Like" us on [Facebook](#) and follow us on [Twitter](#).

Our Values: People • Accountability • Trust • Honesty

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www.txdot.gov | [TxDOT on Facebook](#) | [TxDOT on Twitter](#)

PUBLISHER'S AFFIDAVIT

STATE OF TEXAS

COUNTY OF EASTLAND

Before me, the undersigned authority, on this day personally appeared Margaret Hetrick, Editor of the Eastland County Today, a newspaper having general circulation in Eastland, County, Texas, who being by me duly sworn, deposes and says that the foregoing attached notice was published in said newspaper on the following date(s), to wit: July 28, 2016.

Margaret Hetrick
Margaret Hetrick

Editor

July Subscribed and sworn to before me this the 28 day of _____, 2016, to certify which witness my hand and seal of office.

Shelia Hickox
Notary Public



PUBLISHER'S AFFIDAVIT

STATE OF TEXAS

COUNTY OF EASTLAND

Before me, the undersigned authority, on this day personally appeared H. V. O'Brien, Publisher of Eastland County News, a newspaper having general circulation in Eastland, County, Texas, who being by me duly sworn, deposes and says that the foregoing attached notice was published in said newspaper on the following date(s), to wit: August 2,, 2016.

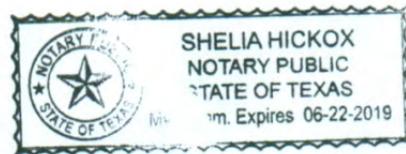
H.V.O.

H. V. O'Brien, Publisher

Subscribed and sworn to before me this the 2 day of September, 2016, to certify which witness my hand and seal of office.

Sheila Hickox

Notary Public



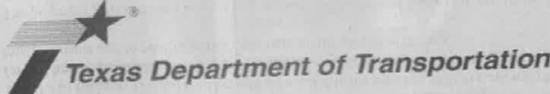


Jessica Ramirez

Gorman's Sprint Relay State Qualifying Team- Ismael Herrera, Flavio Herrera, Trent Padron, and Rylan Laminack.



Area Champs



Notice

Draft Environmental Assessment Available for Public Review and Public Hearing

IH 20 at Ranger Hill, Brownwood District

IH 20 from 3.5 miles east of LP 254 to SH 16

CSJ: 0007-06-084

Eastland County, Texas

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) is proposing to construct improvements to Interstate Highway 20 (IH-20) from 3.5 miles east of Loop 254 (LP 254) to State Highway 16 (SH 16) in Eastland County, Texas. Pursuant to Texas Administrative Code, Title 43, Part 1, Chapter 2, Subchapter E, §2.107 and §2.108 and Code of Federal Regulations, Title 23, Chapter I, Subchapter H, §771.111 and Title 40, Chapter V, §1506, this notice advises the public that a draft environmental assessment (EA) is available for public review and that TxDOT will be conducting a public hearing on the proposed project. 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 16, 2014, and executed by FHWA and TxDOT.

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The proposed project would consist of interstate improvements that would update the IH 20 design to meet current TxDOT design standards within the approximately three-mile project area. The design would realign IH 20 approximately 500 feet south of the existing alignment to reduce the existing horizontal curvature ("s" curve) to approximately one degree. The proposed design also would reduce the vertical grade from six to no more than three percent and would update the interstate from a superelevation (banking) of eight percent to four percent.

The proposed interstate would include two 12-foot main lanes in each direction with room for 10-foot shoulders. In addition there would be a new 12-foot climbing (or passing) lane for westbound traffic. The proposed interstate also would consist of construction of two new continuous two-way frontage roads on either side of the IH 20 main lanes. The frontage roads would consist of two 12-foot lanes with a four-foot inside shoulder and an eight-foot outside shoulder. It is anticipated that construction would begin in January 2017 and last approximately three years.

The proposed right-of-way (ROW) would vary from 300 to 1,380 feet for a total of approximately 260 acres, including an existing TxDOT safety rest area. TxDOT would acquire approximately 89 acres of ROW from adjacent private landowners for the expansion of the proposed project. Although additional ROW is required, no residential or non-residential structures would be displaced. Information concerning services and benefits available to affected property owners and information about the tentative schedule for ROW acquisition may be obtained from the district office at the address listed below and at the hearing.

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If you have any general questions or concerns regarding the proposed project or hearing, please contact Jason Scantling, P.E., Director of Transportation, Planning, and Development, Brownwood District, TxDOT, 2495 HWY 183 N., Brownwood, Texas 76802. (325) 643-0415.

Smith 'Excited' About Opportunity To Lead

Nicole Smith wasn't under any false illusions when she agreed to become the head volleyball coach at Ranger College. Turning the struggling Lady Rangers' program into a NCAA power could be akin to climbing a mountain.

A very tall mountain. It's a challenge she feels up to.

"I'm excited about being at Ranger College," said Smith, who was hired earlier this month to replace Brent Lewis at the helm of the RC program. "I look at this as a great opportunity. We have a good nucleus of players back and some good freshman coming in. We're going to work hard, succeed on and off the court and be a family."

Ranger College is coming off an 11-16 record last season, including a tough 4-8 mark in North Texas Junior College Athletic Conference play.

Despite stepping into the head coaching position on

July 5, Smith said she expects her team to compete this season.

"We certainly don't want to be a second-tier team," she said. "We know we have our work cut out for us, but we expect to compete. The opportunity is there for us."

A successful club level coach in the Houston area over the past four seasons, Smith is no stranger to the college ranks. Prior to coaching at the club level, she served as the head coach at Blinn College for six years and then spent two more seasons with Hill College before departing to start the volleyball program in 2005 at The University of Arkansas-Monticello, an NCAA Division II squad.

Under her tutelage, both Blinn and Hill qualified for the Region V volleyball tournament during her tenures at each school.

An alum of Francis Mary University in Florence, S.C., Smith played collegiate volleyball after graduating



Coach Smith

from Baytown. She played initially at Lee College, which was ranked 13 in the nation her more season. After at Lee College, she her career at Francis University.

The Lady Rangers begin preseason the upcoming season Aug. 12.

BRANDON'S DOZER SERVICE
254-629-1747
975 North Seaman St.
Eastland, Texas 76448
Fax 254-629-1149
Email: brandondozer@yahoo.com



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www.brandonsdozerservice.com

Fully Insured - Experienced & Dedicated Employees - Safety Oriented - DOT Compliant - Drug-Free
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References and Free Estimates Available Upon Request



Notice

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IH 20 from 3.5 miles east of LP 254 to SH 16

CSJ: 0007-06-084

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D. Sign-in sheets



IH 20, Eastland County, TX – CSJ 0007-06-084
IH 20 from 3.5 mi. east of LP 254 to SH 16 (Ranger Hill)
 Public Meeting

SIGN-IN
 Tuesday August 16, 2015 – Ranger High School Cafeteria, 1842 E. Loop 254,
 Ranger, TX 76470
PLEASE PRINT

No.	Name	Affiliation	How did you hear about this meeting?	Address	Home or Business Phone Number	e-mail Address
1	Jeanne B. Rucutt	Ranger Historical Preservation Society	Letter			
2	John David Harwin	visitor	int.			
3	Howard Holland	Robt - Kistner	e-mail			
4	Darrell Fox	Ranger FD	e-mail			
5	Les Selensky	SAM-CS, LLC	website			
6	Steve Gerdes	ECWSD	Newspaper			
7	Bryan Russell	Volkert	e-mail			
8	Chuck & Sheila Lemaster	Ranger FD	website			
9	Don Kelsey	WEBER LLC				
10	Jeff Grigsby	Sundt Constr.	email			
11	Duane Gatlin	Flatiron Constructors, Inc.	TXDOT			
12	Troy & Tricia Emery	Citizen	Internet			



IH 20, Eastland County, TX – CSJ 0007-06-084
IH 20 from 3.5 mi. east of LP 254 to SH 16 (Ranger Hill)
 Public Meeting

SIGN-IN
 Tuesday August 16, 2015 – Ranger High School Cafeteria, 1842 E. Loop 254,
 Ranger, TX 76470
PLEASE PRINT

No.	Name	Affiliation	How did you hear about this meeting?	Address	Home or Business Phone Number	e-mail Address
13	Rex Fields	EASTLAND CO. JUDGE	EMAIL			
14	CHAD ROBERTS	CITY OF RANGER	EMAIL			
15	Larry Skagg	Volkert	ll			
16	Lynn Passmore	self	email			
17	Thomas Martinez	HDR Engineering	email			
18	ELIAS RMEILI	TXDOT				
19	Shannon Valladolid	KRBE/KTAV	email			
20	David Elmore	Rabz Kistner	TXDOT			
21	Bill Nelson	CP&Y	TXDOT			
22	SEAN Macabe		TXDOT			
23	Julie Elrod	MicroplexNews.com	TXDOT			
24	Vanice Chesnut	self	TX DOT			

H. N.



IH 20, Eastland County, TX – CSJ 0007-06-084
IH 20 from 3.5 mi. east of LP 254 to SH 16 (Ranger Hill)
 Public Meeting

SIGN-IN
 Tuesday August 16, 2015 – Ranger High School Cafeteria, 1842 E. Loop 254,
 Ranger, TX 76470
PLEASE PRINT

No.	Name	Affiliation	How did you hear about this meeting?	Address	Home or Business Phone Number	e-mail Address
25	Roger Drews	City of Ranger				
26	Jason Welton	Eastland County Texas				
27	Leasa Parks					
28	Barbara Haseey					
29	Long D Munday	CITY OF RANGER				
30	Raymond Holt					
31	Lizian Hart					
32	Ron Fralich	Albino Reporter-News				
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E. Verbatim transcript

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PUBLIC HEARING

IH 20 at Ranger Hill, Brownwood District
Eastland County, Texas

CSJ: 0007-06-084

August 16, 2016; 5:30 - 7:30 pm

Ranger High School Cafeteria
1842 TX-254, Ranger, Texas

1 MR. JASON SCANTLING: Good evening, ladies
2 and gentlemen. It's now 6:15, so if you'll please be
3 seated, we'll begin tonight's Public Hearing.

4 I'm Jason Scantling, the Director of
5 Transportation, Planning and Development for the
6 Brownwood District Office of the Texas Department of
7 Transportation.

8 We appreciate your interest in the proposed
9 IH 20 at Ranger Hill project and welcome each of you
10 here this evening. Later this evening, you will be
11 invited to directly participate in the "Opportunity for
12 Public Comment" portion of this hearing.

13 A brief explanation of how we are
14 conducting this meeting, we are now in the final process
15 of the public involvement process. We began with a more
16 casual setting of public meetings. Today's Public
17 Hearing, however, is a formal and prescriptive meeting,
18 therefore I'm reading from a script. We have
19 information that will be provided and everything will be
20 captured by the court reporter.

21 The limits of the proposed project
22 improvements are as follows: IH 20 from 3.5 miles east
23 of Loop 254 to IH 20 at State Highway 16.

24 The location of these improvements is in
25 Eastland County. The total project distance is

1 approximately three miles.

2 Before proceeding further, I would like to
3 introduce the federal, state and local elected officials
4 here in attendance tonight or were able to stop by
5 during the open house.

6 With us here today, we have Eastland County
7 Judge, Rex Fields.

8 Have I overlooked anyone else? We
9 appreciate your attendance and we thank you for your
10 interest in this project.

11 Now, I would like to introduce the
12 officials of the City of Ranger, Eastland County, and
13 several members of the Texas Department of
14 Transportation who are present tonight to assist you and
15 answer questions:

16 With the City of Ranger, we have Chad
17 Roberts, Roger Drews. With the Ranger Fire Department,
18 we have Chuck Lemaster and Darrel Fox. With the Ranger
19 Historical Preservation Society, let's see, we have
20 Ms. Jeane Pruett. And TxDOT staff members, we have
21 district engineer, Elias Rmeili. Public information
22 officer, Andrew Carlson. District environmental
23 coordinator, Andrew Chisholm. Public information
24 officer out of Austin, Susan Howard. Environmental
25 specialist, Clay Churchill. And Eastland area engineer,

1 Larry Smith.

2 I would also like to acknowledge our
3 engineering provider, AECOM, who assisted the Department
4 in the production of the schematic and environmental
5 document. The TxDOT staff and our engineering provider
6 will be available during the recess to answer your
7 particular questions regarding the proposed project.

8 We thank those of you that have had an
9 opportunity to attend the open house earlier this
10 evening. As you arrived, at the front sign-in table,
11 you were given the opportunity to register your
12 attendance for this hearing and provide you the
13 opportunity to express your interest in the project. To
14 indicate you would like to make a verbal statement
15 during tonight's "Opportunity for Public Comments"
16 portion of the hearing, please fill out a speaker
17 sign-up card. In the event you did not register and
18 would like to do so, please do so during our upcoming
19 recess.

20 Many of you may have attended previous
21 Public Hearings conducted by the Texas Department of
22 Transportation. However, for the benefit of those of
23 you who have not ever attended one, I would like to
24 explain how the Department conducts a Public Hearing.
25 Following my initial comments, Krishna Peapully, AECOM

1 project manager, will give a detailed presentation
2 concerning the location and design features for the
3 proposed improvements on the project. Next, Erin
4 Johnson of AECOM will review the environmental effects
5 related to the project. Following, I will explain
6 TxDOT's right-of-way acquisition procedures and the
7 relocation assistance program for displaced persons and
8 businesses. Following this presentation, I will recess
9 the hearing for 20 minutes, and allow you the
10 opportunity to view the proposed project design
11 currently on display here tonight.

12 During the recess, you're encouraged to ask
13 any questions, which the Department representatives will
14 answer -- will address and answer. Following the
15 recess, we will reconvene the hearing and ask those
16 persons who registered to speak to come forward to the
17 podium, state your name and address for the record, and
18 provide any comments, what you like or what you do not
19 like, either positive or negative, concerning the
20 proposed project. Following the registered speakers,
21 anyone else who did not register will also be given an
22 opportunity for comment.

23 You might be asking, "What is the purpose
24 of a Public Hearing?" The four essential purposes of a
25 Public Hearing are to:

1 Inform the public of the status of planning
2 on the proposed project and present the recommendations
3 based on studies performed to date.

4 Describe the recommended location and
5 design so that those attending can determine the
6 project's potential to affect their lives and property.

7 Provide the public an opportunity to
8 present information and their views at a stage in the
9 planning process when flexibility to respond to comments
10 still exists and before a location and design decisions
11 are finalized.

12 And finally, to develop a record of public
13 views and participation to accompany recommendations for
14 subsequent decisions.

15 This Public Hearing is being held in
16 compliance with both federal and state laws. For the
17 official record, a transcript of this hearing will be
18 made. For this reason, we ask that all comments be made
19 from the podium. Following this hearing, the Department
20 will proceed with the preparation of the environmental
21 documentation. However, based on your input and input
22 from all affected stakeholders, the schematic may
23 require further significant refinements, and at that
24 time, further public involvement may or may not be
25 warranted prior to the preparation of the final

1 environmental document. Your statements and comments
2 will be addressed by TxDOT in this documentation and
3 will be given full consideration in the preparation of
4 the final recommendation and design for the proposed
5 IH 20 at Ranger Hill project.

6 The Public Hearing has been convened to
7 discuss the IH 20 at Ranger Hill project. A design
8 schematic has been developed, showing typical
9 cross-sections, roadway profiles, and proposed
10 right-of-way boundaries. Additionally, an Environmental
11 Assessment document has also been prepared, which
12 analyzed the social, economic and environmental effects
13 of the proposed project.

14 The environmental review, consultation, and
15 other actions required by applicable federal and
16 environmental laws for which the project is being, or
17 has been, carried out by TxDOT pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327
18 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated December 16th,
19 2014, and executed by FHWA and TxDOT.

20 The design schematic and Environmental
21 Assessment for the proposed IH 20 at Ranger Hill project
22 are available for inspection and reproduction at the
23 Texas Department of Transportation, Brownwood District,
24 located at 2495 Highway 183 North, Brownwood, Texas
25 76802.

1 Highway planning and construction requires
2 close cooperation among all levels of government. The
3 Department has worked closely with local governments and
4 has previously received input regarding the proposed
5 design. During the development of this project, two
6 public meetings, one in August and November of 2015,
7 were held to present the project alternatives and
8 proposed design, and to obtain public input. The design
9 of the IH 20 at Ranger Hill project is being developed
10 by the Texas Department of Transportation.

11 At this time, Mr. Krishna Peapully will
12 provide an overview of the geometric design features and
13 cost estimates of the proposed projects.

14 MR. KRISHNA PEAPULLY: Thank you, Jason.
15 Good evening, everybody.

16 My name is Krishna Peapully. I'm the
17 project manager for the engineering design team. I'm
18 going to explain the project design components.

19 The existing IH 20 facility in Eastland
20 County, Texas, is a four-lane, interstate highway with
21 two 12-foot lanes, six-foot inside shoulders, 10-foot
22 outside shoulders, and a 54-inch concrete median. IH 20
23 contains a horizontal "s" curve, that you see here, for
24 approximately 1.5 miles west of the intersection of IH
25 20 and State Highway 16. This portion of IH 20 is

1 locally referred to as the Ranger Hill and has an
2 existing six percent vertical grade increasing in
3 elevation from east to west by approximately 300 feet.
4 The existing right-of-way varies from 227 feet to
5 1,300 feet wide and totals approximately 170 acres in
6 the project area.

7 The proposed project would consist of
8 interstate improvements that would update the IH 20
9 design to meet the current TxDOT design standards within
10 the approximately three-mile project area. The design
11 would realign IH 20 approximately 500 feet to the south
12 of the existing alignment to reduce existing horizontal
13 curvature to approximately one degree. The proposed
14 design would also reduce the vertical grade from six to
15 approximately three and a half percent. The proposed
16 interstate design would update the super-elevation,
17 which is the roadway banking from eight percent to
18 approximately four percent.

19 The proposed interstate would also include
20 two 12-foot main lanes in each direction with room for
21 10-foot shoulders. In addition, there would be a new
22 12-foot climbing lane for the westbound traffic for
23 passing. The proposed interstate would consist of
24 construction of two new continuous frontage roads on
25 either side of the interstate main lanes. The frontage

1 roads would consist of two 12-foot lanes with a
2 four-foot inside shoulder and an eight-foot outside
3 shoulder. Concrete traffic barriers, 54-inch tall,
4 would be constructed between the west and eastbound main
5 lanes, and between the main lanes and frontage roads.
6 It is anticipated that the vegetation removal would
7 begin in fall of 2016 and the overall construction of
8 the project would last approximately three years.

9 The design schematics for the proposed
10 project have been prepared and are displayed here
11 tonight. The schematics depict the horizontal and
12 vertical alignments of the proposed improvements, as
13 previously mentioned, along with the existing and the
14 proposed right-of-way.

15 TxDOT would acquire approximately 89 acres
16 of right-of-way from adjacent private landowners for the
17 expansion of the proposed project. Although additional
18 right-of-way is required, no residential or
19 non-residential structures would be displaced.

20 Utilities such as waterlines, sewer lines,
21 gas lines, telephone cables, electrical lines, and other
22 underground and overhead utilities may need to be
23 adjusted.

24 The estimated total project cost, including
25 construction right-of-way acquisition utilities for this

1 proposed project is approximately \$106,785,015 million.
2 The project currently has construction authority in the
3 Unified Transportation Program and has funding via
4 Categories 4 and 8. Category 4 includes funding for
5 State-Wide Connectivity Corridor Projects and Category 8
6 includes funds for Highway Safety Improvement Projects.

7 At this time, Ms. Erin Johnson will discuss
8 an overview of the environmental evaluation of the
9 proposed project.

10 MS. ERIN JOHNSON: An Environmental
11 Assessment has been prepared for the proposed project to
12 document the environmental analyses performed in
13 accordance with The National Environmental Policy Act,
14 also known as NEPA, and in accordance with TxDOT's
15 environmental review rules.

16 The environmental analyses was conducted to
17 identify effects to human and natural environments.

18 This Environmental Assessment document
19 describes the purpose and need for the proposed project,
20 the affected environment, and the environmental
21 consequences, including approximately 20 different human
22 and environmental resources.

23 The document was approved for circulation
24 by TxDOT's Environmental Affairs Division in Austin and
25 has been or will be coordinated with other public

1 agencies as appropriate. The Environmental Assessment
2 for this proposed project is available for you this
3 evening to review. There's two copies in the back. And
4 is also available at the TxDOT's Brownwood District
5 Office located at 2495 Highway 183 North, Brownwood,
6 Texas 76802, and also on the project website, which is
7 detailed in the second-to-last slide of this
8 presentation.

9 Alternatives analysis in this Environmental
10 Assessment evaluated three corridors and approximately
11 11 alternatives to reach the buildable alternative which
12 we have presented here tonight.

13 Key environmental issues that were assessed
14 included waters of the U.S. This proposed project would
15 directly impact one potential water of the U.S. and one
16 wetland, resulting in the loss of .04 acres of
17 palustrine emergent wetland, and impact approximately
18 850 linear feet of intermediate stream. The placement
19 of temporary or permanent dredge or fill of waters of
20 the U.S., including these wetlands, that are considered
21 to be jurisdictional and authorized under the Army Corp
22 of Engineers, Section 404, Nationwide Permit 14 for
23 Linear Transportation Projects. TxDOT is currently
24 coordinating with the Fort Worth District of the Army
25 Corp of Engineers for the authorization of the

1 Nationwide Permit 14.

2 For cultural resources, there would be no
3 impact to historical or archeological resources by the
4 proposed project.

5 Threatened and endangered species and
6 associated wildlife habitat, the project contains
7 57.9 acres of habitat for the Golden-cheeked Warbler and
8 15.6 acres of marginal habitat for the Black-capped
9 Vireo. These two species are federally listed and
10 protected underneath the Endangered Species Act.
11 However, due to the project clearing the habitat outside
12 of their breeding season, the low quality of the habitat
13 within the project right-of-way, these impacts are
14 anticipated to not be substantial. And Formal Section 7
15 coordination with US Fish and Wildlife is currently
16 ongoing and will be completed before the environmental
17 clearance is complete.

18 In conclusion, these studies, analyses and
19 evaluations performed have thus indicated that the
20 proposed improvements would cause no significant
21 environmental impacts.

22 Now, Jason Scantling from TxDOT will
23 provide you an overview of TxDOT's right-of-way
24 acquisition process.

25 MR. JASON SCANTLING: Thank you, Erin.

1 At this time, I would like to take a few
2 minutes to present some information about the
3 right-of-way acquisition phase of this proposed project.
4 The proposed project, as previously described, will be
5 the object of my remarks, and will require approximately
6 89 acres of additional right-of-way impacting five
7 parcels. Although additional right-of-way is required,
8 no residential or non-residential structures will be
9 displaced. Using available state funding, we have
10 already started acquiring these five parcels through an
11 independent environmental review of the acquisition.
12 Agreements have been reached with the majority of these
13 parcels, and have been reached at risk by TxDOT until
14 the environmental clearance is completed. The
15 right-of-way procedures that were followed and will be
16 followed on the remaining parcels is detailed within the
17 two booklets, "State Purchase of Right-of-way," and
18 "Relocation Assistance." These booklets contain a
19 significant amount of information. Rather than trying
20 to cover all of this material in detail this evening, I
21 invite you to review these booklets that are available
22 at our district office.

23 At this time, I will discuss the proposed
24 project schedule.

25 Following this hearing, documentation of

1 this Public Hearing will be forwarded to our Austin
2 office for final environmental clearance and design
3 approval. Assuming there are no major issues arising
4 from this hearing that cannot be addressed in a
5 reasonable time frame, final environmental clearance is
6 expected by September 2016. It is at that stage of
7 project development that we're able to proceed with
8 detailed construction plans. Final right-of-way
9 acquisition has already been initiated using available
10 state funding and environmental clearance for the
11 acquisition. The estimated project letting date is
12 subject to the approval of the construction plans and
13 will be phased dependent on availability of funds.

14 I would like to mention that we are -- we
15 will not attempt to answer your answers while you have
16 the floor during the "Opportunity for Public Comment."
17 This procedure is necessary so that everyone is given an
18 opportunity to speak and because your comments will be
19 given due consideration. We will be happy to answer
20 your questions during the recess or even after the
21 hearing.

22 All substantive comments and questions will
23 be fully considered and responded to in the proposed
24 project record. The final environmental review document
25 will then be made available for public review and

1 copying at the TxDOT's Brownwood District Office,
2 located at 2495 Highway 183 North, Brownwood, Texas
3 76802, and online at the project website detailed in the
4 last slide of this presentation.

5 For the benefit of you that may have
6 arrived late, I would ask the members of the Department
7 and the engineering provider's staff to stand. They are
8 available to answer your questions and discuss your
9 current concerns regarding the project. At this time,
10 we will take a 20-minute recess and reconvene at 6:40.
11 And I would also like to note this clock here is an hour
12 in advance. 6:38. So we'll reconvene, I apologize, at
13 7:38 -- 7:00 o'clock.

14 (OFF THE RECORD: 6:38 P.M.)

15 (ON THE RECORD: 7:00 P.M.)

16 MR. SCANTLING: Ladies and gentlemen, we
17 are now reconvening tonight's Public Hearing. We have
18 made our presentation on the latest available
19 information on the proposed project. It is now time for
20 us to listen to your comments. Again, please be aware
21 we will not attempt to answer a question during this
22 commentary.

23 Some of you may not wish to make a
24 statement from the microphone. In that event, your
25 written statements will be equally accepted, both

1 tonight and for the next 15 calendar days following this
2 hearing. For those of you who wish to submit a written
3 comment tonight, we provide comment forms that require
4 collection of the information required by Transportation
5 Code 201.811. A comment box is located at the
6 registration table. Questions and comments may also be
7 mailed to the TxDOT Brownwood District Office at 2495
8 Highway 183 North, Brownwood, Texas 76802, Attention:
9 Jason Scantling, or to my e-mail address,
10 Jason.Scantling@txdot.gov.

11 All of your statements, comments, and
12 questions will be given careful consideration before
13 final design features are determined. Furthermore,
14 certain information developed in regard to the proposed
15 design is available for public inspection and copying.
16 The final deadline for our acceptance of statements or
17 comments is August 30th, 2016. Any comments must be
18 received by TxDOT by that date in order to be considered
19 timely.

20 We did not receive any people registered to
21 comment for this hearing. With that, I will open the
22 floor if anyone else would like to come forward and make
23 a statement.

24 Ladies and gentlemen, we sincerely
25 appreciate your attendance and interest concerning the

1 proposed project. All of your questions, comments and
2 concerns will receive careful consideration subsequent
3 to tonight's Public Hearing.

4 Thank you very much for coming out.

5 This hearing is now adjourned.

6 (Public Hearing adjourned at 7:03 p.m.)

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F. Comments received

IH 20 at Ranger Hill, Brownwood District

CSJ: 0007-06-084

Public Hearing Comments

Comment #1

Date: 8/7/2016 3:57 PM (GMT-06:00)

To: Jason Scantling <Jason.Scantling@txdot.gov>

Subject: I-20 Ranger Hill - Comment

Name: Wm Atkins

Comment:

This is nowhere near a worst/first project for the State of Texas. Waste of money at this time. Currently Ranger Hill is no more of a challenge than many roads on our Western states.

Use this money in the highly congested big city areas instead of resorting to toll roads

Comment #2

From: Donnice Graham

Sent: Thursday, August 18, 2016 6:02 PM

To: Jason Scantling

Subject: RE-CONSTRUCTION.

I'M EXCITED ABOUT WHAT YOU ALL ARE GOING TO DO BUT ON MY WAY TO WORK YESTERDAY 8/17/16 IN ALL THE HEAVY RAIN SEMI TRUCKS AND SUVS WERE DRIVING SO FAST THE SIGN WAS FLASHING 75-80. I PULLED OVER BECAUSE I COULDN'T SEE AND ALMOST GOT HIT TWICE BY BIG RIGS. THAT HILL IS NOT THE PROBLEM...THE DRIVERS ARE. I WOULD LOVE TO HANG OUT WITH YOU GUYS AND WATCH THE PROGRESS OF THIS CONSTRUCTION. WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP IF ANYTHING. BEING A NURSE IS DEFINITELY FAR OFF FROM WHAT YOU ALL DO BUT I WOULD LOVE TO HELP IF I CAN. THANK YOU AND HAVE A BLESSED WEEKEND!!!!

Comment #3

From: Cheryl Smith
Sent: Thursday, August 18, 2016 6:51 PM
To: Jason Scantling
Subject: Ranger Hill Project

I and many others have wondered why the road side park on the west bound side was put at the top of the hill. Even if the road is rebuilt no one will be able to get up it when it is icy. The road side park should have been built at the bottom where people would have a place to go when they can't get up the hill. What are your plans at the bottom of the west bound side so that travelers will have a place to go in icy weather?
Thanks, Cheryl Smith

Comment #4

From: Cheryl Smith
Sent: Sunday, August 21, 2016 2:43 PM
To: Jason Scantling
Subject: Ranger Hill

I appears from the drawing that Ranger Hill will still have a significant curve. To prevent wrecks, it needs to be straight. If it has any curve, what's happening now will continue to happen.



G. Figures

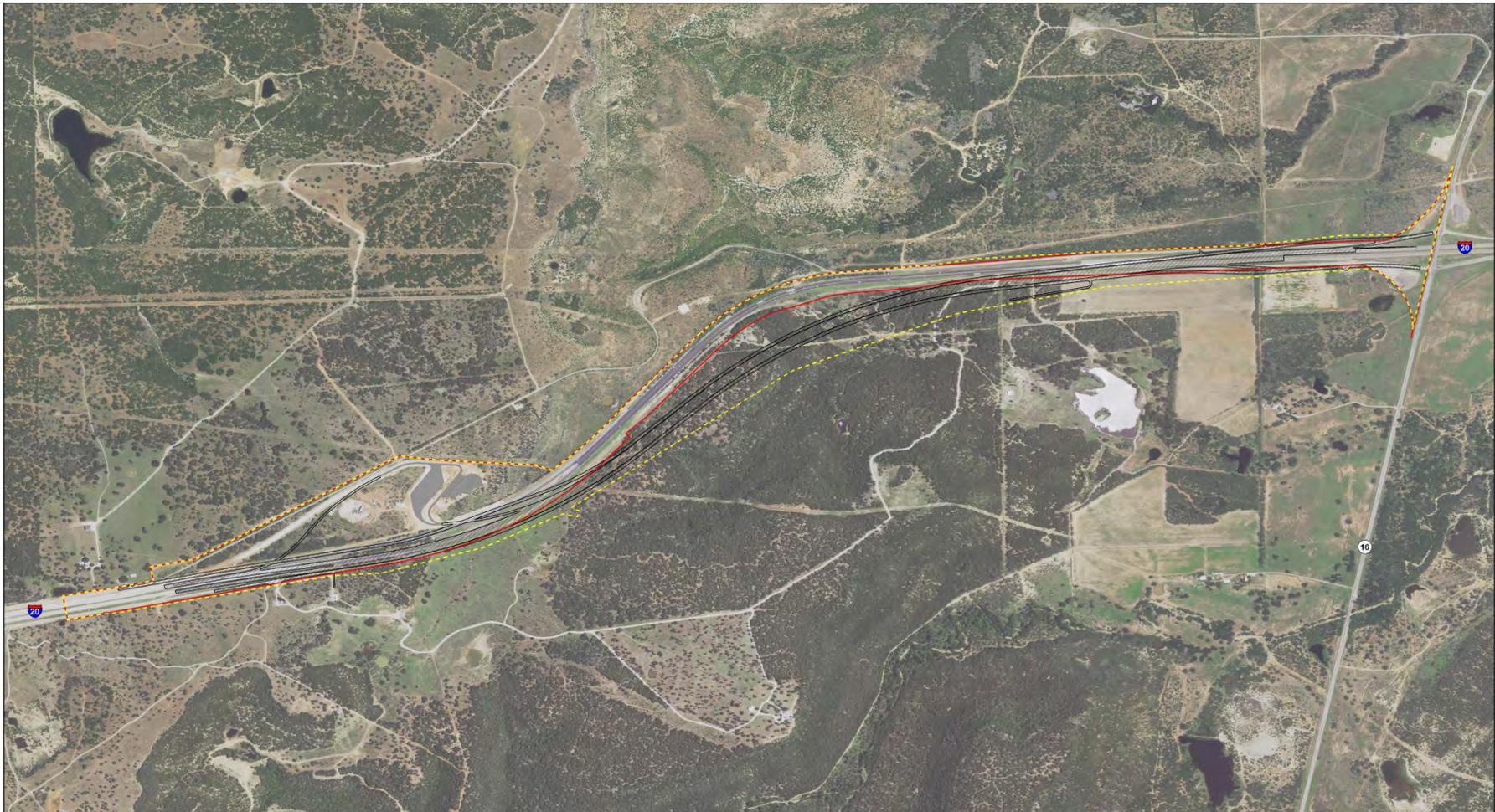


TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

WELCOME

Public Hearing

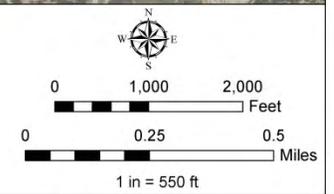
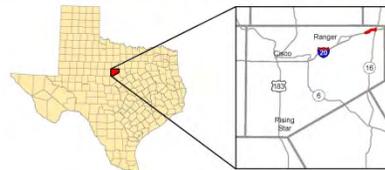
The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried-out by TxDOT pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated December 16, 2014, and executed by FHWA and TxDOT.



**IH20 Ranger Hill
Project Location Map**



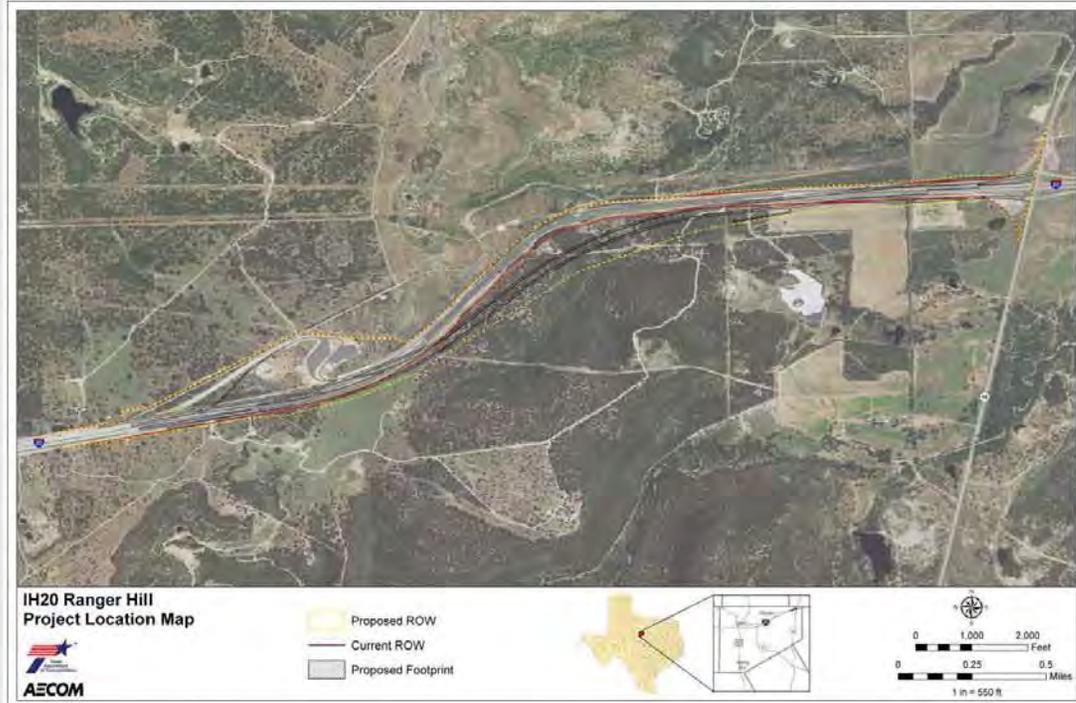
-  Proposed ROW
-  Current ROW
-  Proposed Footprint





Build Alternative

- **Project Location**
 - Northeastern portion of Eastland County, Texas
- **Project Limits and Length**
 - IH 20 from approximately 3.5 miles east of Loop 254 to SH 16
 - Approximately 3 miles



- The Build Alternative best meets the purpose and need for the project.
- The Build Alternative would have no significant effect on the human or natural environment.



Project Background

- Road design and safety
 - Steep grade
 - Sharp curve
 - Steep superelevation (8% banking)
- Reduced mobility due to accidents and increasing congestion
- Lack of access roads and incident management concerns and limited access for first responders





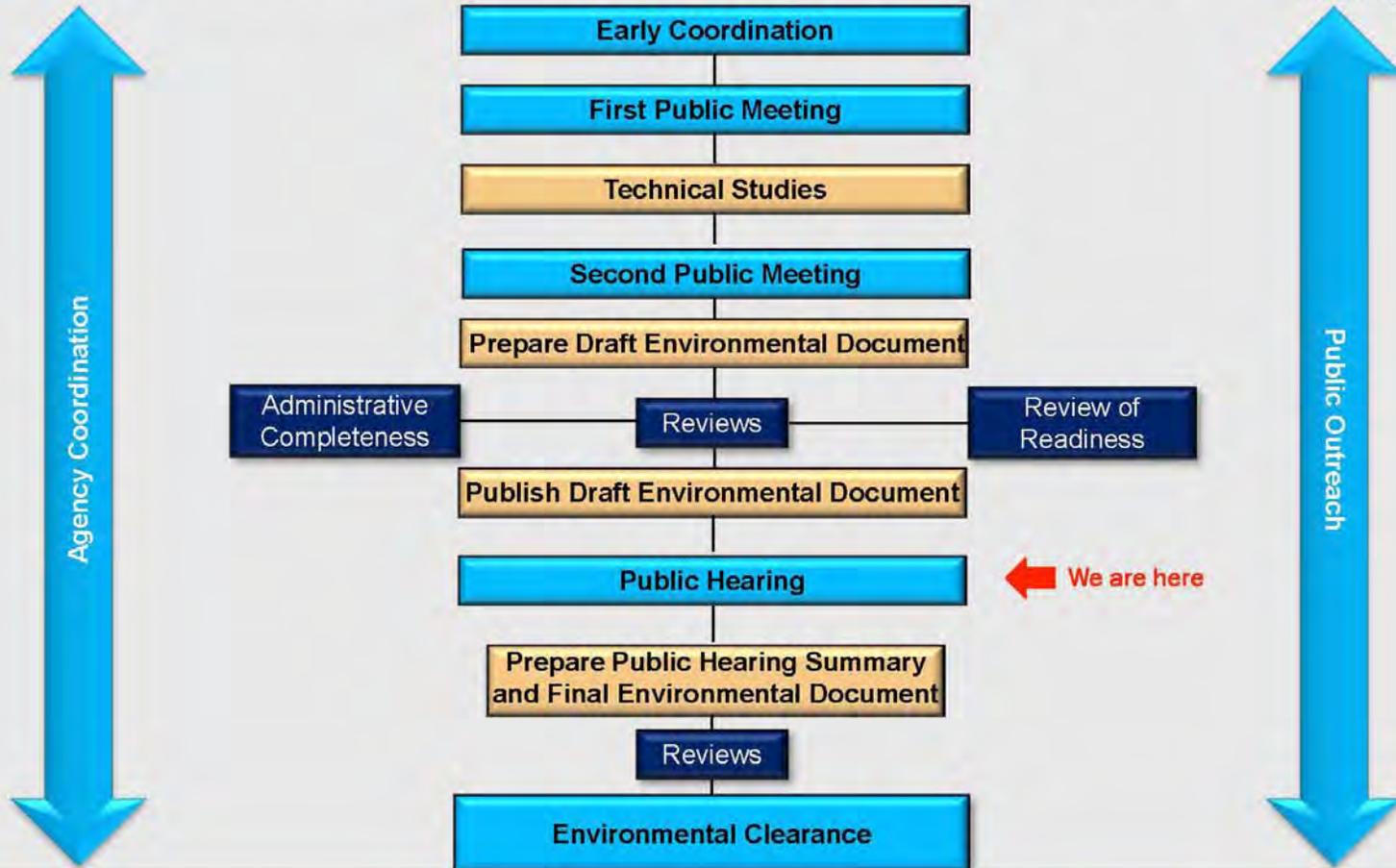
Project Description

- Realign IH 20 approximately 500 feet south to reduce the “S” curve to 1 degree
- Reduce vertical grade from 6 percent to approximately 3.5 percent
- Update superelevation (banking) from 8 percent to approximately 4 percent
- Proposed interstate would include: two, 12-foot main lanes each direction with 10-foot shoulders, and a new 12-foot passing lane for westbound traffic
- Construction of two new continuous two-way frontage roads on either side of the interstate main lanes consisting of two, 12-foot lanes, with 4-foot inside shoulder and an 8-foot outside shoulder
- 54-inch concrete traffic barriers between west and eastbound main lanes and between main lanes and frontage roads



Defined Environmental Process for Proposed Project

*Based on TxDOT Environmental Toolkit April 2015





Alternatives Analysis

- 11 alternatives evaluated
 - Three project corridors containing nine preliminary alternatives were reviewed
 - Following preliminary corridor assessment, one alternative was modified into two alternatives to address constructability constraints
 - Presented to public and stakeholders (July, August, and November 2015)
- Build Alternative selected to be carried forward for evaluation in Environmental Assessment (EA) based on:
 - Met project's purpose and need
 - Input from public and stakeholders (e.g., adjacent property owners, TxDOT, local officials)
 - Met all engineering and environmental selection criteria
- EA evaluated a Build Alternative and No Build Alternative



Project Impacts

Waters of the U.S.

- Anticipated impacts to one jurisdictional water of the U.S. and one jurisdictional wetland
- USACE Section 404 Nationwide Permit 14 (Linear Transportation Projects)
- Pre-construction Notification (PCN) required for wetland and water of the U.S. impact
- No Individual Permit required

Cultural Resources

- No cemeteries, state antiquities, landmarks, or properties eligible for National Register affected
- TxDOT historian determined project activities have no potential for effects
- Archeological surveys determined project activities would have no effect to archeological resources
- Individual project coordination with the State Historic Preservation Officer not required

Threatened/Endangered Species & Wildlife Habitat

- Project impacts to golden-cheeked warbler habitat (57.9 acres)
- Project impacts to black-capped vireo transitional habitat (15.6 acres)
- Formal Section 7 consultation with USFWS currently ongoing
- Project implementing avoidance techniques, such as scheduling vegetation removal, to avoid direct impacts to bird species.



H. Hearing Presentation

 TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



IH 20 AT RANGER HILL PUBLIC HEARING

Eastland County, TX – CSJ0007-06-084



August 16, 2016

Public Hearing Agenda

1	Introduction	Mr. Jason Scantling, P.E.
2	Project Design Presentation	Mr. Krishna Peapully, P.E.
3	Environmental Presentation	Ms. Erin Johnson
4	Right-of-way Acquisition and Relocation	Mr. Jason Scantling, P.E.
20 Minute Recess - Questions		
5	Public Comments	Mr. Jason Scantling, P.E.

IH 20, Eastland County, TX – CSJ 0007-06-084 August 16, 2016 

Purpose of the Public Hearing

- Inform the public of project status and present recommendations
- Describe the project so the public can determine how they may be affected
- Provide the public the opportunity to provide input
- Develop a record of public participation



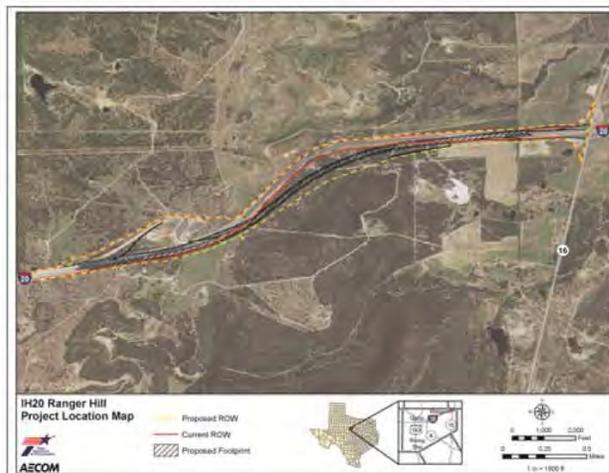
IH 20, Eastland County, TX - CSJ 0007-06-084

August 16, 2016

3

Build Alternative

- **Project Location**
 - Northeastern portion of Eastland County, Texas
- **Project Limits and Length**
 - IH 20 from approximately 3.5 miles east of Loop 254 to SH 16
 - Approximately 3 miles



IH 20, Eastland County, TX - CSJ 0007-06-084

August 16, 2016

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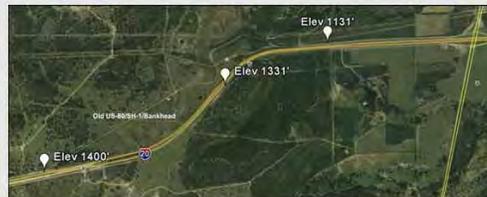
PROJECT DESIGN



August 16, 2016

Project Background

- Road design and safety
 - Steep grade
 - Sharp curve
 - Steep superelevation (8% banking)
- Reduced mobility due to accidents and increasing congestion
- Lack of access roads and incident management concerns and limited access for first responders



Project Description

- Realign IH 20 approximately 500 feet south to reduce the “S” curve to 1 degree
- Reduce vertical grade from 6 percent to approximately 3.5 percent
- Update superelevation (banking) from 8 percent to approximately 4 percent
- Proposed interstate would include: two, 12-foot main lanes each direction with 10-foot shoulders, and a new 12-foot passing lane for westbound traffic
- Construction of two new continuous two-way frontage roads on either side of the interstate mainlanes; consisting of two, 12-foot lanes, with 4-foot inside shoulder and an 8-foot outside shoulder
- 54-inch concrete traffic barriers between west and eastbound main lanes and between main lanes and frontage roads

IH 20, Eastland County, TX – CSJ 0007-06-084

August 16, 2016



Right-of-way

- Existing right-of-way varies from 227 to 1,300 feet wide and totals approximately 170 acres
- Proposed variable right-of-way width ranging from 300 to 1,380 feet totaling approximately 260 acres, including the TxDOT safety rest area
- Acquisition of 89 acres of right-of-way from adjacent private landowners
- No residential or commercial relocations or displacements

IH 20, Eastland County, TX – CSJ 0007-06-084

August 16, 2016



Utility Adjustments

- Existing telecommunication, fiber-optic communication, water and sewer, electric, petroleum, and natural gas pipeline service that will require relocation
- Ongoing coordination – anticipate collocation within the proposed IH 20 realignment
- Two petroleum pipelines will be directionally drilled from within the existing right-of-way beneath the proposed IH 20 realignment
- No substantial interruptions would occur

Estimated Cost

- Overall estimated project costs are \$106,785,015
- Estimated project costs including funds for right-of-way acquisition, utilities, contingencies, and change orders

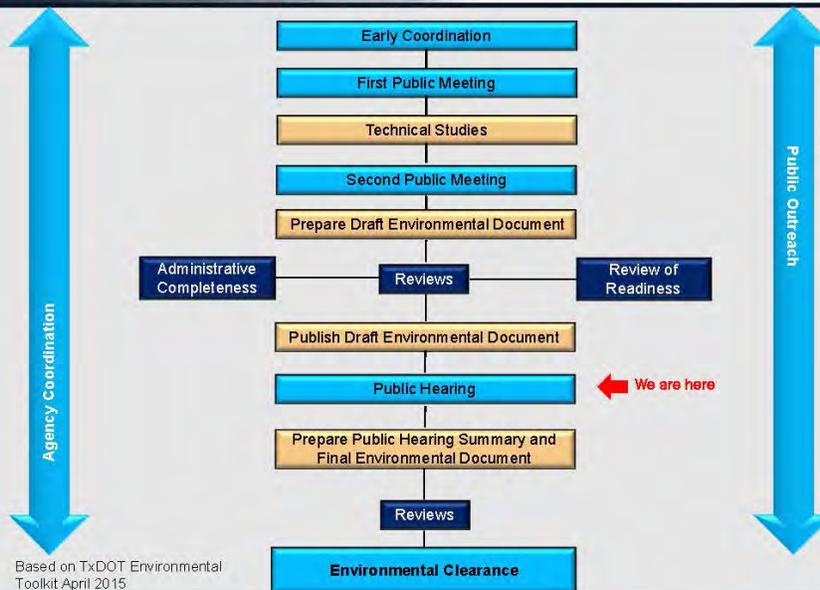


NEPA PROCESS – ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

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 16, 2014, and executed by FHWA and TxDOT

August 16, 2016

Defined Process for Proposed Project



Environmental Assessment

- Need & Purpose
- Alternatives
- Project Design
- Right-of-way
- Project Cost & Funding
- Displacements & Relocations
- Waters of the U.S. & Wetlands
- Lakes, Rivers, & Streams
- Water Quality
- Floodplains
- Regional & Community Growth
- Socio-economic Impacts
- Community Cohesion & Environmental Justice
- Public Facilities & Services
- Parkland/Section 4(f) Properties
- Threatened/Endangered Species & Wildlife Habitat
- Visual & Aesthetic Considerations
- Topography & Soils
- Prime, Unique, & Special Farmland Impacts
- Land Use
- Air Quality Assessment
- Traffic Noise Assessment
- Hazardous Materials
- Cultural Resources
- Construction Impacts
- Indirect and Cumulative Impacts

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Alternatives Analysis

- 11 alternatives evaluated
 - Three project corridors containing nine preliminary alternatives were reviewed
 - Following preliminary corridor assessment, one alternative was modified into two alternatives to address constructability constraints
 - Presented to public and stakeholders (July, August, and November 2015)
- Build Alternative selected to be carried forward for evaluation in Environmental Assessment (EA) based on:
 - Met project's purpose and need
 - Input from public and stakeholders (e.g., adjacent property owners, TxDOT, local officials)
 - Met all engineering and environmental selection criteria
- EA evaluated a Build Alternative and No Build Alternative

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Project Impacts

Waters of the U.S.

- Anticipated impacts to one jurisdictional water of the U.S. and one jurisdictional wetland
- USACE Section 404 Nationwide Permit 14 (Linear Transportation Projects)
- Pre-construction Notification (PCN) required for wetland and water of the U.S. impact
- No Individual Permit required

Cultural Resources

- No cemeteries, state antiquities, landmarks, or properties eligible for National Register affected
- TxDOT historian determined project activities have no potential for effects
- Archeological surveys determined project activities would have no effect to archeological resources
- Individual project coordination with the State Historic Preservation Officer not required

Threatened/Endangered Species & Wildlife Habitat

- Project impacts to golden-cheeked warbler habitat (57.9 acres)
- Project impacts to black-capped vireo transitional habitat (15.6 acres)
- Formal Section 7 consultation with USFWS currently ongoing
- Project implementing avoidance techniques, such as scheduling vegetation removal, to avoid direct impacts to bird species.

NEPA Process Conclusion

Results of the Environmental Assessment indicates that:

- The Build Alternative best meets the purpose and need for the project
- The Build Alternative would have no significant effect on the human or natural environment.



RIGHT-OF-WAY ACQUISITION AND RELOCATION



August 16, 2016

Right-of-way Acquisition Process

- Acquisition of 89 acres of right-of-way from adjacent private landowners
 - No residential or commercial relocations or displacements
- Acquisition on the 5 parcels is underway with a completed independent environmental review of the acquisition
- TxDOT has reached agreement on a majority of the parcels at risk, until this ongoing environmental clearance is complete.
- Right-of-way acquisition procedures on the remaining parcels are detailed in the following TxDOT publications:
 - *State Purchase of Right-of-way*
 - *Relocation Assistance*

Proposed Project Schedule

- What happens after the Public Hearing?
 - Public Comment Period (open through August 30, 2016)
 - Anticipated Environmental Clearance (September 2016)
 - Plan Preparation (Fall 2016)
 - Right-of-Way Acquisition (currently on-going)
 - Utility Clearance (Spring 2017)
 - Construction (Summer 2017)



Recess

RECESS
20 Minutes



PUBLIC COMMENT SESSION



August 16, 2016

Public Comments

Public Comment Period

Please note that we will not attempt to respond to your comments at this time. All substantive comments will be fully considered and responded to in the project record.

Public Comments

Mailing Address

Jason H. Scantling, P.E.
Director of Transportation, Planning, and Development
TxDOT
Brownwood District
2495 HWY 183 N.
Brownwood, Texas 76802
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Written comments must be postmarked by **Tuesday, August 30, 2016**

TxDOT website:

<http://www.txdot.gov/inside-txdot/projects/studies/brownwood/i20-ranger-hill.html>

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TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



THANK YOU

Comment period ends August 30, 2016



August 16, 2016

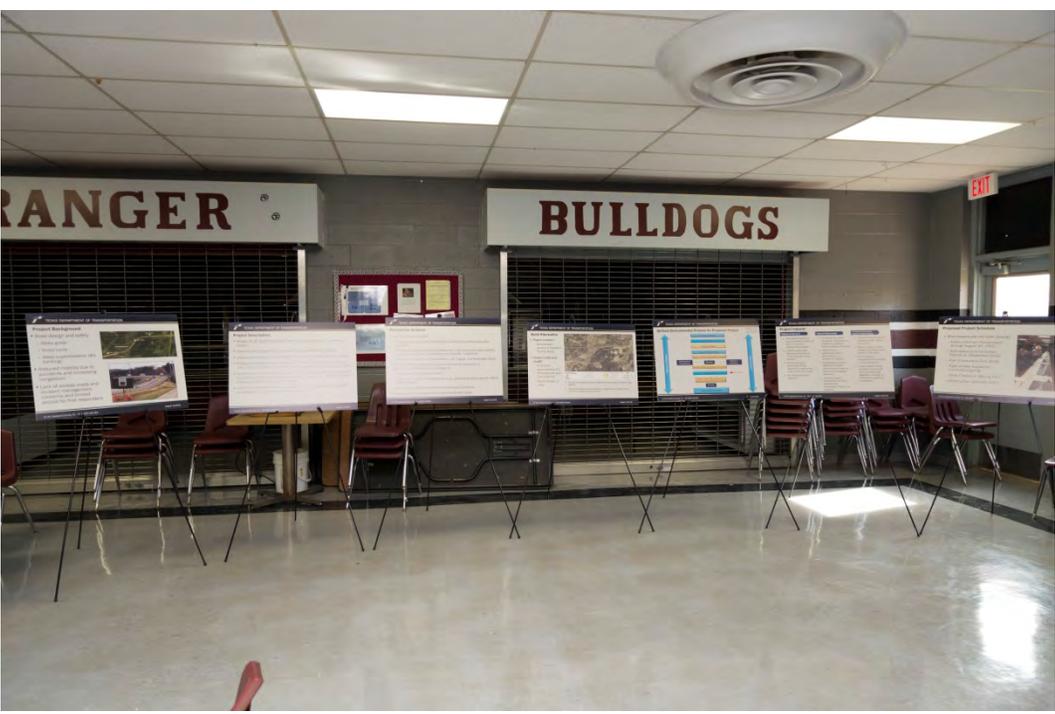
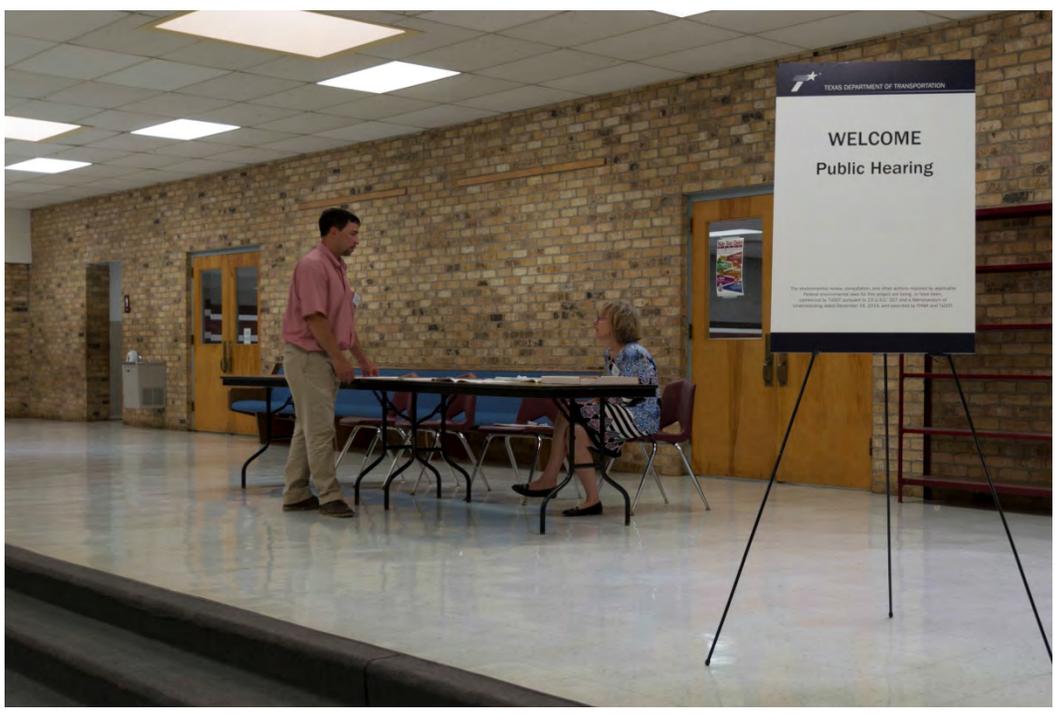


I. Public Hearing Photo Log



IH 20 Ranger Hill Schematic Design and Environmental Documentation CSJ: 0007-06-084

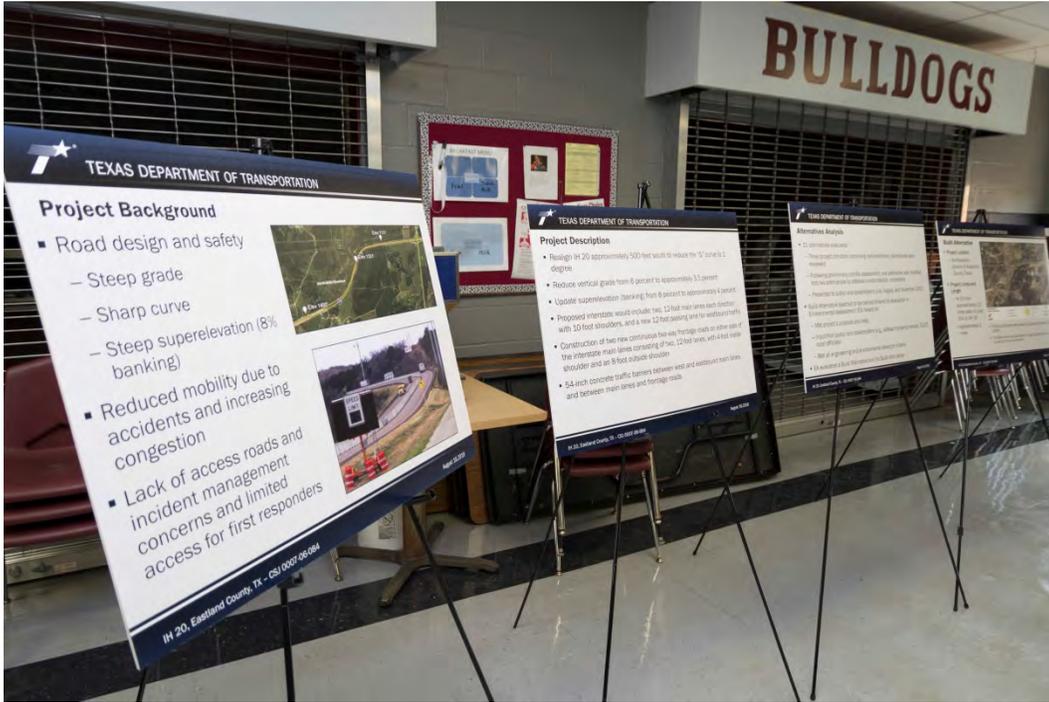
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TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Project Background

- Road design and safety
 - Steep grade
 - Sharp curve
 - Steep superelevation (SE) banking
- Reduced mobility due to accidents and increasing congestion
- Lack of access roads and incident management concerns and limited access for first responders

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