



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

YOU'RE IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT



A Quick Guide to Public Involvement

GREETINGS!

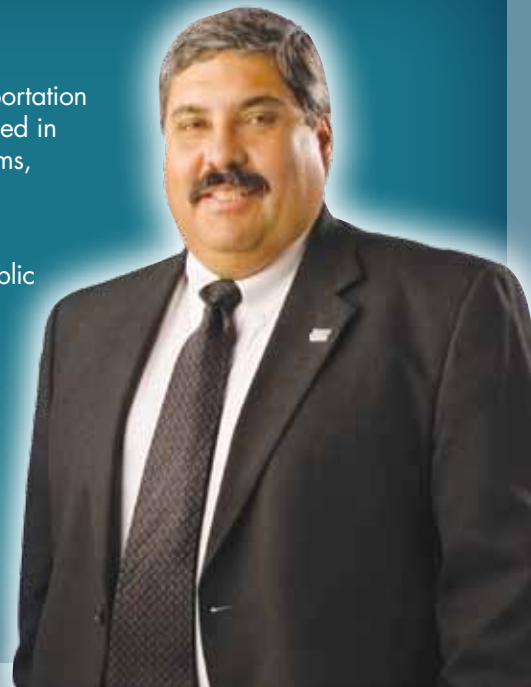
Texas' future opportunities and prosperity will most certainly be shaped by the state of our transportation system. That's why it is so important at this particular time in our history that all Texans be engaged in current transportation issues. That means you'll have to take a little time to read about the problems, proposed solutions and various opinions on the subject. Any way you look at it, the more Texans understand transportation problems, the better we'll be at working together to shape solutions.

We can't do this alone. We need your help and want to hear from you. We're stepping up our public involvement efforts, traveling throughout the state planning and conducting more public meetings. Our objectives are simple. We're here to listen to individual concerns and spark dialogue with Texans about how we should tackle our transportation challenges now and in the future.

We've updated our Web site and launched new interactive processes by increasing opportunities to access more information about transportation across the state and in your local areas.

Please take a moment to explore this guide to consider the many ways you can participate in the public involvement process. We appreciate your time and interest in improving transportation in our great state.

*Amadeo Saenz Jr., P.E.
Executive Director
Texas Department of Transportation*



FOLLOW US ONLINE

The best place to start your search for Texas transportation information is always at www.TxDOT.gov. Online we're open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. There is a good chance you will find everything you need to know on the agency's Web site.

SOCIAL MEDIA

The use of social media tools via the Internet are a great way to keep up with news and information instantly. It's easy to stay connected and communicate with others about transportation issues that affect your community.

You'll find us on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and TxDOT podcasts. We encourage you to get involved and stay connected.



What's new at TxDOT?

Find out by signing up to be our Facebook friend.



Interested in viewing news and video related to Texas transportation?

View our videos on the TxDOT YouTube channel.



Want the latest Texas transportation news as it happens? Check out our tweets on Twitter.



Want to listen in on interviews with transportation experts?

Try our podcasts.



www.TxDOT.gov



Texas Department of Transportation
Providing safe,

WHAT PROJECTS ARE SCHEDULED IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD?

Find Out Using TxDOT's Project Tracker

We've talked to citizens and asked what types of issues and concerns they have regarding transportation projects in their community. Most answered by saying they would like to know what's happening in their local area, what projects are being planned, which projects are underway and how can they find out project status.

We've listened to your concerns and have worked hard to develop a tool for centralizing resources and project information. We are pleased to introduce a new and innovative tool, **TxDOT's Project Tracker**.

Find answers on current and future construction projects, studies, reports and other applications related to transportation infrastructure. Also, find out how TxDOT is using federal stimulus and new bond dollars. It's all there.

Visit www.TxDOT.gov and click on the **Project Tracker** icon in the **Quick Link Section**.



Project Tracker

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT THROUGH MEETINGS

Overview

Public meetings, whether formal or informal, are the backbone of a public involvement process. Meetings provide a time and place for face-to-face contact and communication. Through meetings, people learn about projects and programs. Meetings provide a platform for discussing issues, listening to other's viewpoints and an opportunity to work together to find transportation solutions.

During the meetings, participants learn about projects and are given an opportunity to ask questions, or make comments. The agency may be allowed, depending on the meeting style, to respond directly to individual comments, questions, rumors or misinformation.

In the next couple of pages, we will review the many options available to citizens for participating in public meetings, public hearings and town halls. No matter the meeting style, we encourage you to attend these events in your area since getting involved helps us find the right transportation solution for your community.

For a local listing of meetings in your area, visit www.TxDOT.gov, keyword: Hearings and Meetings.



PUBLIC MEETINGS

An Open Forum for Sharing Information & Ideas

The structure of a public meeting is designed to allow the agency to present information about a project for the purpose of obtaining feedback from residents within the community. These meetings can be formal or informal and are tailored to a specific project.

Public meetings allow for plenty of interaction between citizens, community organizations and transportation agency officials. Participants may ask questions, and in most cases, receive an immediate response at the meeting.

The agency usually provides an opportunity to view concepts, exhibits, displays and other project-related information. Agency staff may also be on-hand to answer individual questions before and after each meeting.

For a listing of public meetings in your area, visit www.TxDOT.gov, keyword: Hearings and Meetings.



PUBLIC HEARINGS

TxDOT Listens

The purpose of a public hearing is to gather community comments for public record and input into decisions. By their very nature, public hearings don't lend themselves to interaction between citizens and agency officials. These meetings tend to be more formal than public meetings and are usually held prior to a major project decision.

Public hearings are a requirement for many transportation projects. TxDOT officials are required to keep their comments to a minimum at these meetings. You talk and we listen.

TxDOT OPEN HOUSE

The agency may provide a question-and-answer period by holding an open house in conjunction with a public hearing. This allows the meeting participants to meet and talk one-on-one with agency officials. Meeting participants can view maps, watch videos and receive other information about the project.

Information on public hearings is available at www.TxDOT.gov, keyword: Hearings and Meetings.



TOWN HALL MEETINGS

The Big Picture

TxDOT really wants to hear your thoughts and ideas about transportation. For this reason, every year the agency plans, organizes and hosts a series of town hall meetings throughout the state. Town hall meetings are open forums for the public and local transportation officials to talk with TxDOT administration about projects and issues important within the local community.

Unlike more formal meetings, there are no time limits and no specific topics for discussion. Meeting participants are allowed to ask any type of transportation-related question. The format of the meeting allows for plenty of interaction between agency officials and the public. The purpose is to engage the audience, spark dialogue and allow the public to provide feedback for tackling transportation issues that affect their respective communities.

TOWN HALL WEBCAST

Can't make it to the meeting? You can still participate in a town hall via the Internet. A link to the live webcast is available on the days of scheduled meetings by visiting www.TxDOT.gov.

To find out about the next meeting near you, look for notices in local newspapers and other media outlets. For more information, visit www.TxDOT.gov, keyword: Town Hall Meetings.



CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Committees

TxDOT doesn't just ask for public input when we're proposing projects. We need citizens to help us develop and revise the policies that govern how we operate.

That's why TxDOT has several advisory committees. Some committees are created by the agency; others are set by state statute. No matter how the committees are formed, they are integral to advising the agency on the best policy courses.

TxDOT has several advisory committees. Here are a few:

- Texas Aviation Advisory Committee
- Bicycle Advisory Committee
- Project Advisory Committee
- Corridor Advisory Committees

For more information, visit www.TxDOT.gov, keyword: Public Involvement.



KEEP TRACK OF TRANSPORTATION

TxDOT's Top 10

1. Study the Issues.

Moving people and products in and through Texas is a tough job. Keeping nearly 80,000 miles of roadway in top condition and planning new roadways is only going to get tougher as our state grows – and finances get tighter. That's why we need every Texan to pay attention to what's happening in their community and around the state.

2. Get Involved.

Attend local public involvement hearings and town hall meetings. We advertise these opportunities with local media outlets and post them on our Web site, www.TxDOT.gov.

3. Go Online.

Visit www.TxDOT.gov frequently. We update this site with information on the latest in transportation and offer a variety of social media tools to make getting news easier than ever. View commission meetings and hearings online.

4. Explore Project Tracker.

While you're on our site, visit the Quick Link for our new Project Tracker. It's our centralized location to view the progress of most projects under development and construction.

5. Attend a Meeting.

Of course, public hearings and town hall meetings are great opportunities to hear from other Texans about their ideas for moving forward with transportation in this state. Great solutions come from good discussions.



6. Know the Players.

TxDOT is the major transportation agency for this state, but we have lots of great partners. We work with the federal government, metropolitan planning organizations, regional mobility authorities and toll authorities across the state to plan a statewide system that works for all of Texas.

7. Participate in the Public Involvement Process.

Planning transportation projects is a long, involved process. It starts with an idea – from a citizen, a community, a transportation partner or TxDOT. And all through the process, we rely on the public's input to help projects take shape.

8. Be Open to Ideas.

It's going to take a tremendous amount of work for our road system and other transportation modes to handle future increased traffic and trade. Every Texan has a part to play in making sure we're ready for it.

9. Put it in Writing.

E-mail your questions and opinions to AskTxDOT@dot.state.tx.us, or you may fax your letters to 512.463.9896. If you prefer, you may also send your letters to TxDOT, 125 E. 11th St., Austin, Texas 78701, ATTN: GPA

10. Ask a Question.

You can always give us a call. Our telephone number is 512.463.8588 or toll free 1.800.558.9368 We'll figure it out.





Visit us at www.TxDOT.gov



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