Public Hearing Summary Report

FM 457 Swingbridge Replacement

At Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (GIWW) near Sargent

FM 457

Matagorda Co

CSJ: 0605-01-060

Alan Migl, Yoakum District
<table>
<thead>
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<th>APPENDICES</th>
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<td>Appendix B     Public Hearing Media News Release</td>
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The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), Yoakum District, conducted a public hearing on September 1, 2015, at the Sargent V.F.W. Post 2412 Hall, located at 20305 FM 457, Sargent, Texas. The purpose of the hearing was to present the public with TxDOT’s preferred alternative and allow the public to comment on the proposed swingbridge replacement project.

The proposed project would replace the existing swingbridge with a concrete bridge that would span the GIWW. The project limits are from Anchor Way Street north of the GIWW south to the southern terminus of FM 457 at Sargent Beach. The length of the proposed project is approximately 0.54 mile. Acquisition of additional right-of-way would be required for the proposed project. The project CSJ is 0605-01-060.

A notice for the public hearing was posted in the Bay City Tribune on August 2 and August 19, 2015 (see Appendix A). An advertisement was also sent to two local newsletters that are published on a weekly basis; The Coastal Clipper and The Sargent News (see Appendix B). A news release was also sent out to various Matagorda County media outlets (see Appendix B). A virtual public hearing was set up and made available to the public on September 1, 2015 on the TxDOT website at the following link: https://www.txdot.gov/inside-txdot/projects/studies/yoakum/fm457-bridge-replacement.html. All meeting materials from the previous open house and public meeting were posted to this web site.

The public hearing started with an open house session from 5:30pm to 6:30pm. The formal public hearing was called to order by the public hearing officer, Paul Retiz P.E., at 6:30pm. Following the formal presentation from TxDOT (see Appendix D), the public was allowed to comment on the proposed project. Attendees were invited to sign in when they entered (see Appendix C). Comment forms were provided to attendees to either present verbal comments during the hearing, submit written comments, or to mail comments to TxDOT to share their thoughts regarding the proposed project. A total of 151 people attended the public meeting; of which, 129 were members of the public, 1 State Representative, 1 County Judge, 1 Texas Parks and Wildlife representative, 1 environmental consultant from Hicks Environmental, and 18 TxDOT employees.

**Public Comments**

The public was encouraged to submit comments on the proposed project either verbally or in writing. Four citizens verbally commented on the proposed project during the public comment portion of the hearing. Eleven written comments were either submitted at the public hearing or received through mail and/or email during the 10 day public comment period following the hearing. Three of the citizens who spoke at the public hearing also submitted written comments. TxDOT responded to all received comments,
12 total, with a written mailed letter. Copies of the comments received and the TxDOT response letters are located in Appendix E, and the verbatim transcript of the public hearing can be found in Appendix F. Of the comments received, seven were in favor of the project and 5 were opposed.
Appendix A

Notice of Public Hearing
Notice of Public Hearing

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) will conduct a public hearing Tuesday, September 1, 2015 at the V.F.W. Post 2452 Hall, 20005 FM 457 in Sargent, TX. The purpose of the hearing is to present the planned improvements for the FM 457 Swing Bridge over the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (GIWW) and to receive public comments. Displays will be available for viewing at 5:30 p.m. with the formal hearing commencing at 6:30 p.m.

The existing facility is a divided roadway with one 12-foot lane in each direction with no shoulders. The existing roadway crosses a 120-foot metal pontoon bridge at grade. The pontoon bridge is operated by a control tower regulating both vehicular and water traffic. The width of the existing facility ranges from appraisal/raney 24 to 30 feet.

The proposed project would replace the existing, age-grace, pontoon barges swing span and approach spans with a new fixed-span, high-clearance structure with spiral approach. The purpose of the proposed project is to provide a replacement structure that offers a more structurally sound bridge, reduced maintenance costs, and timely, reliable access across the GIWW along FM 457. The proposed improvements would require approximately 4.2 acres of additional right of way (ROW). The proposed project would displace one single-family residence, several TxDOT owned buildings, and potentially impact one water supply well. Information about the TxDOT Relocation Assistance Program, benefits and services for displacements, as well as information about the tentative schedule for ROW acquisition and construction may be obtained from the TxDOT Yoakum District Office. Relocation assistance is available for displaced persons and businesses. The project would traverse the 100-year floodplain and cross wetlands.

Maps and other drawings showing the proposed project’s location and design will be displayed at the hearing. Environmental documentation for the project will also be available for inspection at the hearing. Other information about the proposed project is on file and available for inspection Monday through Friday, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. at the TxDOT Yoakum District Office located at 403 Hack St., Yoakum, TX 77995 as well as the TxDOT Matagorda County Maintenance Office located at 500 Ave. F- Bay City, TX 77414 between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday.

All interested citizens are invited to attend this public hearing. Verbal and written comments from the public regarding this project are requested and may be presented for a period of 10 calendar days following the hearing. Written comments may be submitted either in person or by mail to the TxDOT District Office, Mr. Paul Retz, P.E., Director of Transportation, Planning, and Development, 403 Hack St., Yoakum, TX 77995. Comments must be received on or before September 14, 2015 in order to become part of the official hearing record.

The Public Hearing will be conducted in English. Persons interested in attending the hearing who have special communication or accommodation needs, or need an interpreter, are encouraged to contact Mr. Andrew Carlson, TxDOT Public Information Officer, at (361) 293-4456. 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 questions, or concerns regarding this project, you may contact Mr. Paul Retz, P.E., at (361) 293-4457.

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 18, 2014, and executed by FHWA and TxDOT.
# TXDOT AD PLACEMENT ESTIMATE APPROVAL

**Date:** 7/24/2015  
**Publication Name:** Bay City Tribune  
**TXDOT District:** Yoakum  
**Ad dates:** Aug. 2, 2015 and Aug. 19, 2015  
**Type of ad:** Public Notice  
**Publication Contact:** Dena Matthews  
**Market:** Bay City and Sargent, TX  
**Publication Phone #:** 979-245-5555  
**Publication email:** classified@baycitytribune.com  

**Requested By:** Brian P. Kutach

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**Agency Fees Sub-Total** $ 141.18

**GRAND TOTAL** $ 941.18

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In order for ad to run, publication must receive approval by 3 pm Monday, July 27.

Approved by: ____________________________

Signature: ____________________________  
Date: ____________________________
Appendix B

Public Hearing
Media News Release
TxDOT TO CONDUCT PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED FM 457 BRIDGE IN SARGENT

Proposed “corkscrew” bridge would replace aging and costly swing bridge at Gulf Intracoastal Waterway

August 3, 2015

SARGENT – The Texas Department of Transportation will conduct a public hearing Tuesday, September 1, 2015 at the V.F.W. Post 2412 Hall, 20305 FM 457 in Sargent. The purpose of the hearing is to present the planned replacement of the FM 457 Swing Bridge at the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (GIWW) and to receive public comments. Displays will be available for viewing at 5:30 p.m. with the formal hearing commencing at 6:30 p.m.

The existing facility is a divided roadway with one 12-foot lane in each direction with no shoulders. The existing roadway crosses a 120-foot metal pontoon bridge at grade. The pontoon bridge is operated by a control tower regulating both vehicular and water traffic. The width of the existing facility ranges from approximately 24 to 30 feet.

The proposed $28.7 million project would replace the existing, at-grade pontoon barge swing span and approach spans with a new fixed-span, high-clearance structure with spiral approaches. The purpose of the proposed project is to provide a replacement structure that offers a more structurally sound bridge, reduced maintenance costs, and timely, reliable access across the GIWW along FM 457. The decades-old swing bridge requires significant ongoing maintenance costs, requires 24/7 staffing, and can slow emergency vehicle response time if the bridge is open to marine traffic.

The proposed improvements would require approximately 4.2 acres of additional right of way (ROW). The proposed project would displace one single-family residence, several TxDOT-owned buildings, and potentially impact one water supply well. Information about the TxDOT Relocation Assistance Program, benefits and services for displacements, as well as information about the tentative schedule for ROW acquisition and construction may be obtained from the TxDOT Yoakum District Office. Relocation assistance is available for displaced persons and businesses. The project would traverse the 100-year floodplain and cross wetlands.

Maps and other drawings showing the proposed project’s location and design will be displayed at the hearing. Environmental documentation for the project will also be available for inspection at the hearing. Other information about the proposed project is on file and available for inspection Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. at the TxDOT Yoakum District Office located at 403 Huck St., Yoakum, TX 77995 as well as the TxDOT Matagorda County Maintenance Office located at 500 Ave. F, Bay City, TX 77414 between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday.

All interested citizens are invited to attend this public hearing. Verbal and written comments from the public regarding this project are requested and may be presented for a period of 10 calendar days following the hearing. Written comments may be submitted either in person or by mail to the TxDOT District Office, Mr.
Paul Reitz, P.E., Director of Transportation, Planning, and Development, 403 Huck St., Yoakum, TX 77995. Comments must be received on or before September 14, 2015 in order to become part of the official hearing record.

The Public Hearing will be conducted in English. Persons interested in attending the hearing who have special communication or accommodation needs, or need an interpreter, are encouraged to contact Mr. Andrew Carlson, TxDOT Public Information Officer, at (361) 293-4436. 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 general questions or concerns regarding the proposed project, you may contact Mr. Paul Reitz, P.E. at (361) 293-4347.

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.

TxDOT’s Yoakum District encompasses 11 counties in South Texas, serving over 333,000 residents. The district employs approximately 300 people, and has offices in each of the counties we serve.

For news media inquiries, contact Andrew.Carlson@txdot.gov or (361) 293-4436.

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Appendix C

Sign-in Sheets
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| Joe Bono III |         |              |               | Newspaper  
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<td>Alan Misl</td>
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<td>Michael Brzozowski</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:Jason.Buntz@txdot.gov">Jason.Buntz@txdot.gov</a></td>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Address</td>
<td>Phone Number</td>
<td>Email Address</td>
<td>How did you hear about the meeting?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Steve Garman</td>
<td>P.O. Box 9123, TX 77404</td>
<td>281-599-7</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Steve.Garman@Gmail.com">Steve.Garman@Gmail.com</a></td>
<td>Newspaper___ Road-side sign ___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panny Perez</td>
<td></td>
<td>281-522-0</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Danny.Perez@_xbox.com">Danny.Perez@_xbox.com</a></td>
<td>TV___ Friend___ Community Flyer___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bryan Ellis</td>
<td>Victoria, TX</td>
<td>940</td>
<td><a href="mailto:bryan.ellise@_xbox.com">bryan.ellise@_xbox.com</a></td>
<td>Radio___ Community Flyer___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clay Churchill</td>
<td>Childress, TX</td>
<td>937-7157</td>
<td><a href="mailto:clay.churchill@_xbox.com">clay.churchill@_xbox.com</a></td>
<td>Newspaper___ Road-side sign ___</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jessica Fields</td>
<td></td>
<td>979</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Jessica.Fields@_xbox.com">Jessica.Fields@_xbox.com</a></td>
<td>TV___ Friend___ Community Flyer___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Downer</td>
<td>Bay City</td>
<td>245-8888</td>
<td><a href="mailto:David.Downer@_xbox.com">David.Downer@_xbox.com</a></td>
<td>Radio___ Community Flyer___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dwayne Ryan</td>
<td>Bay</td>
<td>281-8333</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Dwayne.Ryan@_xbox.com">Dwayne.Ryan@_xbox.com</a></td>
<td>Newspaper___ Road-side sign ___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meghan Paulowski</td>
<td>ENV-Austin</td>
<td>512-209-433</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Meghan.Paulowski@_xbox.com">Meghan.Paulowski@_xbox.com</a></td>
<td>TV___ Friend___ Community Flyer___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mario Mata</td>
<td>ENV-Austin</td>
<td>512-441-2200</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Mario.Mata@_xbox.com">Mario.Mata@_xbox.com</a></td>
<td>Radio___ Community Flyer___</td>
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</table>
Appendix D

Presentation
FM 457 SWING BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT

Public Hearing
September 1, 2015
Agenda

• Meeting Format
• Project Overview
• Environmental Overview
• Project Schedule
• Public Comments
Public Hearing Purpose

Why Am I Here?

• Learn and ask questions about the proposed project
• Review purpose and need for project
• Review the proposed project alternatives, including the preferred alternative
• Provide comments and feedback on the proposed project and alternatives
How To Submit Comments

• Verbal comments will commence after presentation
• Written comments can be placed in the comment box
• E-Mail comments to: Paul.Reitz@txdot.gov
• Fax comments to: 361-293-4372
• Mail comments to: TxDOT Yoakum Office
  403 Huck Street
  Yoakum, Texas 77995

Deadline for comments is Monday, September 14, 2015
Project Overview

- Replace current swing bridge with concrete “corkscrew” bridge over the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (GIWW)
- Corkscrew bridge will have two lanes – one lane in each direction
- Anticipated displacements are one residence and TxDOT bridge control tower
- Estimated project cost $28.7 million
What are we trying to do?
• Provide reliable access across the GIWW
• Provide a bridge that requires less upkeep and
does not need 24/7 staffing

What problems are we trying to address?
• Current bridge has to be open for barge traffic
• Motorists have to wait to cross current bridge
• Emergency response times can be delayed
• Current bridge is in need of major, costly repairs
Corkscrew Bridge Details

Why a Corkscrew Bridge?
A corkscrew bridge best accommodates the limited space along FM 457 and height requirements for a new bridge.

Benefits of a Corkscrew Bridge

• Unrestricted vehicular flow across the GIWW
• Unrestricted boat and barge traffic
• Unrestricted emergency access across the GIWW
• Eliminate swing bridge maintenance costs
Road Design Considerations

- Designed for 30 mph speed
- Road width minimum of 32' with 48' width preferred
- Lane width of 12'
- Shoulder width 4' with 12' width preferred
- Flush 4' median for large trucks
- Maximum grade of 7%
- Pedestrian and bicycle access
Bridge Design and Construction Considerations

- Need 73' of vertical clearance over 225' of GIWW
- Main span and support span length
- Limited footprint on island
- Potential storm surge and other environmental forces
- Corrosion protection for 75 to 100 year service life
- Few or no retaining walls
- Location for new bridge substructure
- Aesthetics
- Access to residences and businesses
- Minimizing work in channel clearance zone
## Project Alternatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Alternatives</th>
<th>Alternative A</th>
<th>Alternative B</th>
<th>Alternative C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>No build alternative – the current bridge would remain</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Consistent with Purpose and Need?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Potential for residential relocations?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes (4)</td>
<td>Yes (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential for commercial displacements?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes (1)</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>Impacts to Waters of the U.S.?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impacts to potential wetlands?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional right-of-way (ROW) required?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preliminary Decision</td>
<td>Required to be further considered</td>
<td>Not Recommended</td>
<td>Preferred alternative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Preferred Alternative – Alternative C

Alternative C is the preferred alternative because it:

- Meets the project purpose and need.
- Requires fewer residential displacements.
- Does not require any commercial displacements.
- Has fewer permanent impacts to wetlands.
- Uses natural vegetation as a buffer between the construction area and the beach. This natural buffer provides protection for federally listed sea turtles and shore birds.
ENVIROMENTAL OVERVIEW

FM 457 Swing Bridge Replacement 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.
Environmental Assessment (EA)

- A detailed study called an Environmental Assessment (EA) was done for the proposed project.
- The study resulted in a draft EA report.
- The study and report document impacts to the natural and human environment including potential impacts to:
  - Floodplains
  - Potential wetlands
  - Vegetation
  - Wildlife
  - Land use
  - Threatened and endangered species
  - Aesthetic and visual resources
  - Surface water
  - Historic and archaeological resources
  - Potential displacements to residents and businesses
  - Social and community impacts
Project plans and the draft environmental assessment report document are available for viewing:

- Tonight at the Public Hearing
- Project website at [www.txdot.gov](http://www.txdot.gov) and search keywords “FM 457”
- TxDOT Matagorda County Maintenance Office
  Monday – Thursday 7:30 am - 5:30 pm
  500 Ave. F
  Bay City, TX 77414
- TxDOT Yoakum District office
  Monday – Friday 8 am - 5 pm
  403 Huck St.
  Yoakum, TX 77995
Right of Way Acquisition and Relocation Assistance

Greg Polasek
TxDOT Right of Way Supervisor
361-293-4312
Greg.Polasek@txdot.gov
Ongoing Public Involvement

Preliminary Study Launched
March 2013

Initial Community Outreach
Aug – Sept 2013

Environmental Study Launched
January 2014

Public Meeting on Project
March 2014

Development of Environmental Document
2014 – 2015

Public Hearing on Project
Fall 2015

Environmental Decision Anticipated
Late 2015

* This project schedule and dates are preliminary and subject to change.
Next Steps

• Compile and consider community input from tonight’s public hearing

• Submit Environmental Assessment document for a decision on if the project will be built
How To Submit Comments

• Verbal comments period

• Written comments can be placed in the comment box

• Email comments to: Paul.Reitz@txdot.gov

• Fax comments to: 361-293-4372

• Mail comments to: TxDOT Yoakum Office
  403 Huck Street
  Yoakum, Texas 77995

Deadline for comments is Monday, September 14, 2015
10 Minute Break
Public Comment Period

- Use the microphone
- State your name
- State your interest in the project
- Give your comments on the project
- Please observe 3 minute rule
Thank You for Your Participation!

Please remember to submit comments on or before Monday, September 14, 2015

• Written comments can be placed in the comment box
• E-Mail comments to: Paul.Reitz@txdot.gov
• Fax comments to: 361-293-4372
• Mail comments to: TxDOT Yoakum Office
  403 Huck Street
  Yoakum, Texas 77995
Appendix E

Written Public Comments,
TxDOT Responses,
Verbatim Transcript
FM 457 SWING BRIDGE PROJECT
COMMENT CARD

(PLEASE PRINT)

NAME: DONNA ANDERSON YOUNGER

ADDRESS:

REPRESENTING: Self

(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

COMMENTS:

With the swing bridge at Sargent being the only one remaining along the Intracoastal Canal, it now has an exalted position of historical significance. Therefore, it should remain in operation as a tourist attraction, assertively promoted by TxDOT and other advocates of visitor/hospitality-industry growth.

(2) The roads and bridges of Texas are vital to the economic, social and environmental well-being of the residents of our state and nation. Yet, many of these transportation necessities are in a deteriorated state. It would appear reasonable to assume that 28 or 29 million dollars would be better spent on repairing and/or upgrading our existing infrastructure.

It is apparent that this 'new' bridge would represent a sizeable investment of tax dollars that would provide a convenience to only a miniscule portion of the state's population (i.e., 3 dozen home owners & a "very" small number of beach visitors). Please spend our money as wisely as humanly possible! Thank You!

Please submit all comments by Monday, September 14, 2015

E-Mail to Paul.Reitz@txdot.gov
Fax to 361-293-4372
Mail to TxDOT Yoakum Office, 403 Huck Street, Yoakum, Texas 77995
September 29, 2015

Donna Anderson Younger

Dear Donna,

Thank you for your interest and recent participation in the FM 457 public hearing. Public input is a vital part of TxDOT's project planning and development process. Following the hearing, the project team reviewed and considered all public comments.

The Sargent Swingbridge is not the only remaining swingbridge located along the Intracoastal Canal. There are several in the eastern part of Texas and one located in South Texas. The bridge was not determined to be an historic structure. The project is being proposed to eliminate the costly operation and maintenance of the swingbridge. The amount of money saved by eliminating the maintenance and operation of the swingbridge will be greater than the cost to construct the new bridge over the life span of this structure.

If you have questions or would like to further discuss the response to your comment, please contact Paul Reitz at 361-293-4347. Thank you again for your participation and input.

Sincerely,

Paul E. Reitz, P.E.
FM 457 SWING BRIDGE PROJECT
COMMENT CARD

(PLEASE PRINT)

NAME: Janalee Russell

ADDRESS: ____________________________________________________________

REPRESENTING: ______________________________________________________

(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

COMMENTS: I am 100% in favor of the construction of the new bridge on 457 off Sargent Beach. This will bring much needed economic growth to the area as well as faster response time for emergency services to residents and tourists.

Please submit all comments by Monday, September 14, 2015
E-Mail to Paul.Reitz@txdot.gov
Fax to 361-293-4372
Mail to TxDOT Yoakum Office, 403 Huck Street, Yoakum, Texas 77995
September 30, 2015

Diane Russell  
[Redacted]

Dear Ms. Russell,

Thank you for your interest and recent participation in the FM 457 public hearing. Public input is a vital part of TxDOT’s project planning and development process. Following the hearing, the project team reviewed and considered all public comments.

Your comment to support the bridge replacement project is appreciated and will be entered into the official public hearing submittal.

If you have questions or would like to further discuss the response to your comment, please contact Paul Reitz at 361-293-4347. Thank you again for your participation and input.

Sincerely,

Paul E. Reitz, P.E.
NAME: James A. Farrar, AIA Emeritus NCARB

ADDRESS: ________________________________________________________________

REPRESENTING: Myself jafarrar@gmail.com

(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

COMMENTS: Looks good as good goes. What could be improved is how the ramp lands on the Gulf side. I believe this arrangement will require more apron a retention of the Gulf from undermining the termination.
Hello Paul,

I appreciate you and your team coming and presenting the bridge project. We have talked and corresponded about the bridge in the past. I have attended all your meetings. It was a good presentation that you and your team made. I believe this is the third time you have done this. I was sorry to see it appearing to not be as well received as it should.

There were three speaker against the and one for it. If you haven’t already found out you will find Sargent is very dysfunctional with various groups and people wanting control yet not knowing what to do with it even if they attain some.

I know the state is going to build the bridge irrespective of the opinions. I think the bridge is a good thing. And any objections to it is based upon catastrophes that will be met by the state being responsible for it use and maintenance. Irrespective of the future of the bridge TxDOT will be married to it as they are managers for everything else in the states road inventory. And that is reason enough to support it. The preferred alternative appears to be the best scheme.

There are a couple to things you might consider in the design. The first is that instead of the helical super-elevated ramp on the land side it might be a straight run with the rise starting further down FM 457. That might standardize the precast concrete beams sections and the ledgers. There could be a bend in the road occurring at the land side of the ICH if you want the roadbed in that position in order to build it and not interfere with the operation of the existing swing bridge while building the new bridge. With this you would need a frontage road which you probably would anyway.

You might also consider some sort of radar monitor for if you don’t they will by some accidents with some of the folks who live at Sargent out having their fun.

The helical super-elevated ramp on the beach side is mandatory. The landing of it in a tee to the road is done a lot but is always awkward coming off a ramp. Better the road continue as a curve and continue as a part of Canal Drive. Other roads can connect to Canal Drive at a right angle. The will be no further development down the beach other than the fishing park since the state owns the land all the way to Mitchell’s Cut is my understanding. I think Roy Cullen donated it to the State of Texas maybe 25 years ago. The frontage road on the land-side should be held tight to the roadway to keep from taking more road frontage from property owners.

One of the commentators mentioned FM 457 taking a beating from the construction and that is real. The road is not designed for carrying the weights of the precast concrete sections. So there should be something in the planning to rehab it and make it into an even better more durable roadway than it already is. It could also stand some shoulders and better ditching for maintenance and drainage.

If you would like me to provide you with some freehand scanned sketches of what I am suggesting for the land side elevated roadway and the landing of the beach helical let me know and I will prepare and send them.
September 29, 2015

James Farrar

Dear Mr. Farrar,

Thank you for your interest and recent participation in the FM 457 public hearing. Public input is a vital part of TxDOT's project planning and development process. Following the hearing, the project team reviewed and considered all public comments.

In considering your comment concerning the helical ramp on the land side, the project team determined to minimize the impacts to a Federal Reserve Park and landowners along FM 457 the helical would be built on existing state property. The landing on the island side was designed with a T intersection due to the fact that it would minimize impacts to wetlands and sea turtle habitat. There is a road widening project going out for bids Spring 2016 to add shoulders to FM 457 from Sargent to the intercoastal waterway.

If you have questions or would like to further discuss the response to your comment, please contact Paul Reitz at 361-293-4347. Thank you again for your participation and input.

Sincerely,

Paul E. Reitz, P.E.
FM 457 SWING BRIDGE PROJECT
COMMENT CARD

(PLEASE PRINT)

NAME: (Wanda) Ruth Staley
ADDRESS: ____________________________
REPRESENTING: Self

(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

COMMENTS: Att. "C" to support

However, we are concerned about guard rails for the bridge as you come off the bridge - we do not want anyone running into our Staley home.

Please submit all comments by Monday, September 14, 2015
E-Mail to Paul.Reitz@txdot.gov
Fax to 361-293-4372
Mail to TxDOT Yoakum Office, 403 Huck Street, Yoakum, Texas 77995
September 22, 2015

Ruth Staley

Dear Ms. Staley,

Thank you for your interest and recent participation in the FM 457 public hearing. Public input is a vital part of TxDOT's project planning and development process. Following the hearing, the project team reviewed and considered all public comments.

In considering your comment concerning having enough guardrail coming off the bridge, the project team will ensure that the required length of rail is needed to create a safe departure off the bridge.

If you have questions or would like to further discuss the response to your comment, please contact Paul Reitz at 361-293-4347. Thank you again for your participation and input.

Sincerely,

Paul E. Reitz, P.E.
FM 457 SWING BRIDGE PROJECT
COMMENT CARD

(PLEASE PRINT)
NAME: Nelson Davies
ADDRESS: ____________________________

REPRESENTING: ____________________________

(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

COMMENTS: I Am 100% FOR THIS BRIDGE. I think it would bring much needed economic growth to the Sargent Beach Area and create jobs. Not to mention emergency vehicles accessing the island.

Please submit all comments by Monday, September 14, 2015
E-Mail to Paul.Reitz@txdot.gov
Fax to 361-293-4372
Mail to TxDOT Yoakum Office, 403 Huck Street, Yoakum, Texas 77995
Hi Paul,

I am 100% for this bridge and the proposed location. I think it is great. Will create jobs and enhance the local economy as well. Finally, taxpayers are getting a reliable bridge for the people on the island not to mention the safety factors involved. Fire, medical emergencies that would be greatly improved. It's about time for this bridge to happen. Old bridge not safe and unreliable.

I could benefit monetarily from the project or other item about which I am commenting.

Best regards,

Nelson Davies
September 30, 2015

Nelson Davies

Dear Mr. Davies,

Thank you for your interest and recent participation in the FM 457 public hearing. Public input is a vital part of TxDOT’s project planning and development process. Following the hearing, the project team reviewed and considered all public comments.

Your comment to support the bridge replacement project is appreciated and will be entered into the official public hearing submittal.

If you have questions or would like to further discuss the response to your comment, please contact Paul Reitz at 361-293-4347. Thank you again for your participation and input.

Sincerely,

Paul E. Reitz, P.E.
FM 457 SWING BRIDGE PROJECT
COMMENT CARD

(PLEASE PRINT)

NAME: Tracylee Wallney

ADDRESS: 

REPRESENTING: 

(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

COMMENTS: I am 100% in favor of the new bridge at 457 to Sargent Beach. It will have a positive economic impact as well as provide growth to the community. Emergency services will also be improved to residents as well as tourists.

Please submit all comments by Monday, September 14, 2015
E-Mail to Paul.Reitz@txdot.gov
Fax to 361-293-4372
Mail to TxDOT Yoakum Office, 403 Huck Street, Yoakum, Texas 77995
September 30, 2015

Tracye Wollney

Dear Tracye,

Thank you for your interest and recent participation in the FM 457 public hearing. Public input is a vital part of TxDOT’s project planning and development process. Following the hearing, the project team reviewed and considered all public comments.

Your comment to support the bridge replacement project is appreciated and will be entered into the official public hearing submittal.

If you have questions or would like to further discuss the response to your comment, please contact Paul Reitz at 361-293-4347. Thank you again for your participation and input.

Sincerely,

Paul E. Reitz, P.E.
NAME: Jan S. Brock - Caney Creek Marina
ADDRESS: ____________________________
REPRESENTING: Caney Creek Marina

(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

COMMENTS: I am a seasonal business (bait-camp) May - Oct., during that time the money I make has to pay for the winter month's bills and the $10,000. property taxes due each year. The fear I have is the increase in property taxes to pay for the bridge cost of $8 million. It seems a waste of money for the Loop before going over the I-37. The Loop across the I-37 is where the Loop is needed. What will happen when the beach ends at the retaining wall? A big 5 hurricane comes? Why not have the barges go through the Swing Bridge, paying for the expenses so we when they use it daily? Why not have an Emergency Boat for the Island to bring across critically ill patients to meet an ambulance? My business does not make enough money to support my expenses in the winter months so the bridge is expensive and may not work out in the long run. Thanks.

P.S. Why not put in jetty's?
September 29, 2015

Jan S. Brooks

Dear Jan Brooks,

Thank you for your interest and recent participation in the FM 457 public hearing. Public input is a vital part of TxDOT’s project planning and development process. Following the hearing, the project team reviewed and considered all public comments.

The bridge costs will not be paid by property taxes. Texas Department of Transportation will utilize a funding program through our bridge division that is paid from gasoline taxes and various other avenues but not property tax. The loop is need on the mainland side to reduce impacts to property. The property the loop on the mainland side is being built on is owned by the state so this reduces the amount of property we will need to purchase for this project.

If you have questions or would like to further discuss the response to your comment, please contact Paul Reitz at 361-293-4347. Thank you again for your participation and input.

Sincerely,

Paul E. Reitz, P.E.
Mr. Reitz,

The opportunity to comment, in person and in writing, on the proposed bridge at Sargent is greatly appreciated! Attached is my written response to the prospective construction of a fixed bridge over the GIWW. I am sharing these with local, state and federal elected officials; potentially involved agencies; and, civic leaders concerned with the affairs of the Sargent Area in hopes the erosion issue on Sargent Beach will be duly considered before this feature is built.

Thank you!

Willie Younger
Former Extension Marine & Coastal for Matagorda County (FYI - intimately involved in the installation of Sargent Beach Revetment Wall), Taxpayer and 36-yr. resident of Matagorda County
COMMENTS on the PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION of a FIXED BRIDGE
OVER the GIWW at SARGENT, TEXAS

➢ In the mid-80’s, Sargent residents sensed a mounting urgency to curtail the astounding rate of beach loss at Sargent Beach (i.e., UT Bureau of Economic Geology and the Corps of Engineers verified an average erosion loss of 30-plus feet per year along a 8-mile stretch of the coastline there; with a few trouble spots approaching 60 ft./yr.).

➢ With the support of local leaders; elected county, state and federal officials; TxDOT; and, petro-chemical and shipping industry representatives; the US Congress appropriated and allocated funds (+$60 M) which allowed the Army Corps of Engineers to oversee the construction of a 7 ½-mile granite-block revetment wall along Sargent Beach (i.e., seaward of the GIWW).

➢ The primary goal of this major US Public Works project was to protect the GIWW, the billions of dollars in commerce and large number of jobs which this essential maritime transportation artery provides.

➢ Secondarily, Sargent Beach (as locals hoped for) has been relatively stable since this horizontal defense system was installed. Yet, the glaring, and most troubling, fact surrounding the potential effectiveness of this protective structure is that...it has not yet been tested by a major hurricane (e.g., Category 3, 4 or 5) striking at or near this artificially-defended beach.

➢ From the TxDOT graphics supplied at the hearing, it appears that the toe of the corkscrew ramp at beachside will be solidly pressed against the ‘inside’ wall of this granite shield.

➢ Thus, it would seem apparent that, even the remotest prospect of, an irreparable breach in this revetment wall, anywhere in the vicinity of this spiraling bridge ramp, should be of upmost importance when designing this major transportation feature!!

➢ However, it was baffling to note that there was no specific reference to this chronic (and well-documented) erosion issue in the PowerPoint presentation, or comments, given by the TxDOT Hearing Officer at the 09-01-15 public hearing in Sargent???

➢ Hopefully, the historically-validated possibility of the insatiable erosion suddenly, and viscously, reappearing at Sargent Beach, will be thoughtfully factored into both the design, and GO or NO GO decision-making, equations.

➢ Otherwise, Sargent might soon gain a spot in the BOOK of RECORDS for being home to the tallest, most expensive and least-functional fishing pier in the world.

THANK YOU for EXERCISING CAUTION WHILE PONDERING the INVESTMENT of LARGE AMOUNTS of the U.S. TAX-PAYERS HARD-EARNED DOLLARS in SARGENT’S, MATAGORDA COUNTY’S and TEXAS’ FUTURE!
Willie Younger, 150 Lower Colorado, Bay City, TX 77414; 979-240-4872; w-younger@att.net
September 29, 2015

William Younger

Dear Mr. Younger,

Thank you for your interest and recent participation in the FM 457 public hearing. Public input is a vital part of TxDOT’s project planning and development process. Following the hearing, the project team reviewed and considered all public comments.

We understand the erosion issue at Sargent Beach. Our design team will look at the landing to ensure we have some distance between our landing and the granite wall. We have followed the AASHTO (American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials) load requirements for natural forces including extreme wind, scour, wave action, tidal effects and storm surge.

If you have questions or would like to further discuss the response to your comment, please contact Paul Reitz at 361-293-4347. Thank you again for your participation and input.

Sincerely,

Paul E. Reitz, P.E.
September 2, 2015

TxDOT District Office
Mr. Paul Reitz, P.E.
Director of Transportation, Planning and Development
403 Huck Street,
Yoakum, TX, 77995

Dear Mr. Reitz,

RE: FOR the proposed plan to replace the current swing bridge.

We own [redacted] Sargent Beach and are very excited to hear that we may soon have better access to our property.

We are for this proposal for the following personal reasons:

1. Easier access / no waiting either direction.
2. Easier boating when trying to access the Matagorda Bay area. Not having to wait for the bridge to open or for the boat bridge to be raised will greatly enhance our fishing & boating pleasure.
3. Economic increase. Hopefully, this will convince persons interested in the Sargent area that we are not forgotten and progress is steadily moving our direction.
4. Emergency Response Time will be much faster, which is a concern for my wife & I as we are in our 60’s and the bridge has always been a concern when considering possible medical issues.

We realize the reasons above are all very selfish and personal and that those reasons alone would not be sufficient to replace the swing bridge.

As property owners we can only assume that the State of Texas has determined it will be in the best interest of all taxpayers to replace a high maintenance, outdated and inconvenient method of crossing the GFWW with a modern, convenient and much safer alternative.

We certainly hope the project moves forward and we look forward to seeing concrete in the ground soon.

Best Regards,

J.R. & Karen McDonald
September 30, 2015

J.R. & Karen McDonald

Dear McDonalds,

Thank you for your interest and recent participation in the FM 457 public hearing. Public input is a vital part of TxDOT’s project planning and development process. Following the hearing, the project team reviewed and considered all public comments.

Your comment to support the bridge replacement project is appreciated and will be entered into the official public hearing submittal.

If you have questions or would like to further discuss the response to your comment, please contact Paul Reitz at 361-293-4347. Thank you again for your participation and input.

Sincerely,

Paul E. Reitz, P.E.
Case: 00068097

Case Number 00068097 [View Hierarchy]

Case Origin Web
Priority Medium
Status New
Issue Type Environmental
Case Owner Rhonda Moorman
Private

Additional Information

Received Date 9/16/2015
Due Date 9/16/2015
Date/Time Opened 9/2/2015 11:12 AM
Service Level 10

Description Information

Subject environmental concern (plz provide agency referral info if not TxDOT related) YKM

Description Sargent property owner for 43 yrs and I've seen lots of changes in the Sargent area. The erosion of our beaches started over 55 yrs ago when Dow change the flow of the Brazos River for their use. About 23 yrs ago the Corp of Engineers suggested the area needed a barrier wall to stop the Gulf from reaching the ICW. Well, that didn't work.

Location Details

DDOR (Mobile)

DDOR YOAKUM
County
Route
Mile Marker
CSJ

Reported By Yoakum

Email

Business

Name of person reporting on behalf of contact or government official (State or Federal) Yoakum
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September 29, 2015

JD Stayton

Dear Mr. Stayton,

Thank you for your interest and recent participation in the FM 457 public hearing. Public input is a vital part of TxDOT’s project planning and development process. Following the hearing, the project team reviewed and considered all public comments.

Your comment can be better addressed by United States Corp of Engineers and United State Coast Guard relating to the erosion on the beach. The bridge replacement project will not address any of the erosion issues.

If you have questions or would like to further discuss the response to your comment, please contact Paul Reitz at 361-293-4347. Thank you again for your participation and input.

Sincerely,

Paul E. Reitz, P.E.
Dear Mr. Reitz,

I am writing in regard to the proposed bridge replacement for the existing Sargent Swing Bridge.

I am a long time resident of Sargent Beach, over 30 years, longer than anyone else. I have probably sat and waited on barges longer than anyone at this point. And you know what? I moan and groan sometimes when I have to wait and other times I get out of the car, (if I am on the beach side), and run down the beach for some added exercise, or pull out a book and read, or if I am on the land side I get out and see if the fishermen are catching any fish. Do you really want to take this treasured land mark away?

It appears to me, after listening to your very short and unimpressive presentations at the VFW that no one at the TxDOT really is too concerned as to what the residents want; that your presentations were done solely for the purpose of political necessity.

First off, there is no way that you are going to be able to construct a "cork screw" bridge at that site and have it be safe. The concept is ludicrous. Cork Screw bridges are very few and the ones that have been built are known to be some of the most dangerous bridges in the world. Add that on top of young drunks down on the beach partying on vacation and you have a major setting for some very bad accidents. Does the TxDOT want to be held liable for this secondary to building a most dangerous bridge? And this will happen sooner or later.

Secondly, there is no way that this bridge is going to withstand the powers of nature. This is a very controversial bridge design on a beach that has been eroding at a mammoth rate for years. The rock revetment is not going to stop any real erosion from a major hurricane. It may slow down the day to day erosion for a few years but not for any great length of time. So please do not look at it for protection of this multi-million dollar bridge you are planning or building. I would imagine the beams, (or whatever you call the supporting structures of this bridge), will be almost on the beach. How far from the mean tide will they be? How can you think that this bridge is not going to be affected by erosion in the next 10 years? Our weather patterns are changing and sea levels are rising. Storms are getting much more severe. We are due for a good hurricane.

Thirdly, do you really expect anyone to believe that you can angle the curve in this "cork screw" bridge such that you can go 30 miles an hour on it? And that is what was said at your short, little presentation. That is not even feasible.

This bridge is most obviously being built for the tug companies and all the chemical and oil companies that utilize their services. How much money are they donating to the TxDOT such that you will build their bridge for them and cut their transportation cost?

We, in Sargent, predominantly do not want this bridge. It is going to totally destroy the aesthetic beauty of the Sargent Beach environment. Our swing bridge is historic. It is a vital part of Sargent. It is the last one left in the state. I do not believe it is quite as costly to maintain as you indicate. I do believe that the cost of this proposed bridge is going to be much greater than you are estimating. Are you looking in to law suits that will
arise secondary to accidents secondary to the design of this most dangerous bridge? Are you looking into the cost of erosion and damage caused by storms?

I beg of you to re-consider this design and plan. It is not a good one. And if you do go through with this, why can you not have a straight incline on the land side? I do understand that there is a wild life preserve on some of that land that would have to be accessed. But I do feel that that is an option that could be looked into. Would the environmental impact of accessing a small piece of that reserve to make the incline of this bridge straight and much safer and aesthetically pleasing be greater or lesser than using the land that the bridge house currently stands on and thus having the "cork screw" incline?

I very much hope you read through this carefully and reconsider your current plans.

Thank-you,

Mary S. Quinlan
September 30, 2015

Mary Quinlan

Dear Ms. Quinlan,

Thank you for your interest and recent participation in the FM 457 public hearing. Public input is a vital part of TxDOT’s project planning and development process. Following the hearing, the project team reviewed and considered all public comments.

The “cork screw” bridge will be designed using current AASHTO (American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials) approved roadway design standards. These design standards are utilized on all state highways and bridges to create a safe travel way for the public. The bridge is also being designed to resist current AASHTO (American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials) load requirements for natural forces including extreme event wind, scour, wave action, tidal effects, and storm surge. The entire bridge including the columns, footings, and foundations will be designed to resist bending and shear forces from hurricanes and storm surge events. The concrete pile foundations are projected to penetrate nearly 100’ below the surface. Their length will enable the bridge to stand even with several feet of erosion. TxDOT has enlisted the services of coastal engineers who are well versed in the design of coastal structures such as offshore platforms that withstand hurricanes and wave action on a regular basis. These engineers will determine the extent of wave and storm surge loads on the structure, and will develop plans for measures to protect the bridge from extreme coastal natural events. The design standards used will allow 30 mph speed to traverse the bridge. At this early design stage of the bridge we will estimate the posted speed limit to be 20mph.

If you have questions or would like to further discuss the response to your comment, please contact Paul Reitz at 361-293-4347. Thank you again for your participation and input.

Sincerely,

Paul E. Reitz, P.E.
Appendix F

Verbatim Transcript
Transcript of the Testimony of

TXDOT Public Hearing

Date:

September 01, 2015

Case:

TXDOT PUBLIC HEARING
TXDOT PUBLIC HEARING AND OPEN HOUSE

SARGENT SWING BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT

SEPTEMBER 1ST, 2015

HEARING COMMENCED AT THE VFW HALL
20305 FM 457
SARGENT, TX

SUZI GLADNEY-O'NEILL, CSR, RPR, ON BEHALF OF

KIM TINDALL & ASSOCIATES, LLC
SPEAKERS

Mr. Paul Reitz
Mr. Willie Younger
Mr. J.D. Stayton
Mr. Brian Theros
Ms. Mary Quinlan
<table>
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MR. REITZ: Well, as he said, thank y'all for spending time and coming here tonight. As he said, I'm Paul Reitz; and I am the Director of Transportation Planning and Development for the Yoakum District of the Texas Department of Transportation and also your Public Hearing Officer for tonight's proceeding.

TxDOT welcomes you to this public hearing for the proposed replacement for the FM457 swing bridge. Citizen participation and input is important in this transportation planning process, and I appreciate you taking time from your busy schedule to be here.

Tonight's public hearing is a more formal meeting than the open houses that we've had on this project. There will be a formal public comment period after the presentation. Because of the format of a public hearing, we will not be responding to questions or comments during the formal comment period this evening. Before the comment period begins, we'll take a 10-minute break so you can talk with our TxDOT staff and get any questions you may need answered. We'll also be available to talk with you after the presentation and the comment period. Any comments that are brought up or asked us tonight, we'll respond in writing to those comments. We won't be able to respond tonight.

This presentation will describe the proposed
replacement for the Sargent swing bridge, let you know
the environmental factors that are considered for this
proposed project, give an overview for the timeline for
this project, and then we'll wrap up with the hearing
portion of the evening for the public comment period.

Why am I here? Tonight's public hearing
is an important step in studying and potentially
constructing this project. Tonight's open house and
public hearing is an opportunity for you to learn more
about the proposed project, the details about the
proposed project, talk with our project staff and ask
questions, and leave any comments you have about this
proposed project or our preferred alternatives.

How you can submit comments: There are several
ways to get your comments submitted. As I mentioned,
we'll take your verbal comments which we'll call you --
whoever filled out the verbal comment sheet, we'll call
your name and you can step up to the microphone and you
can make comments to the public. Just make sure -- we
have a sign-in table in the back that you can get your
name written down. We'll give a break later on if
somebody wants to go do that.

If you would like to submit comments and not
wish to make them verbally, you may submit them in a
written form. There are comment forms available at our
sign-in table; and that may be placed in our comment box, e-mailed, faxed, or mailed to the addresses on the form which is myself. And these will all get answered in writing, replied back. All written comments, though, must be postmarked or e-mailed no later than September the 14th in order to be included in the public record for our hearing tonight.

I'll try and get started in the project overview. The project details, this project will replace the current swing bridge with a concrete -- what we call a corkscrew bridge. The proposed bridge will have two lanes, one lane in each direction. The preferred option or alternative for the proposed project is anticipated to displace one residence and the control tower for the current Sargent swing bridge. The proposed bridge is anticipated to cost approximately 28 million.

The purpose and need for this project, replacing the current swing bridge, is being considered to allow more reliable access across the Intracoastal waterway and eliminate waiting when the bridge is open for barge traffic. This is especially important for reliable emergency response times.

Also the current bridge requires round-the-clock staffing, is expensive to maintain, and is in need of major costly repairs. Just our approximate
numbers on that, our maintenance costs are about 500,000 a year; and as far as the costly repairs that the bridge needs now, it's probably 10 to $12 million rehab project on the bridge.

So, under the corkscrew bridge detail that we're proposing, the proposed corkscrew bridge is a unique design that has been used for other bridges and will work well for this project. A corkscrew bridge will allow the bridge to be at the necessary height so that barges can pass underneath while also accommodating limited space on the island for the side where the bridge ramp comes down to grade.

The corkscrew bridge won't have to be opened and closed like the current bridge. So, there would be no unrestricted vehicle, boat, and barge traffic. This will also eliminate potential emergency response delays associated with the swing bridge. The proposed bridge will also cost less to maintain than the swing bridge.

Some of the road design considerations: The design has not been finalized, but the corkscrew bridge will be designed for 30-mile-per-hour driving. The design will be at least 32 feet wide with a 12-foot wide lane and shoulders at least 4 foot. The middle median will be flush with the pavement and won't be raised like some with a concrete raised island. It will be -- the
middle median will be about 4 feet wide so trucks can
easily make the turn up and down the corkscrew. The
maximum grade of the bridge will be 7 percent to
accommodate not only vehicles but bikes and pedestrians
also.

The area is very unique, so there is a variety
of factors that go in designing and potentially building
the proposed corkscrew bridge. Because of the barge
traffic, the bridge has to be at least 73 feet above the
water and must be 73 feet high for at least a 225-foot
span over the Intracoastal waterway. Because of these
requirements, the design of the main bridge span and
support span are important, as is the location of the
underground substructure for the proposed bridge.

Environmental factors such as the limited space
on the island and potential storm surge were
also considered so the proposed bridge can last 75 to 100
years. Accessing homes and businesses is also being
considered into the design. If the project is approved
for construction, you're looking at a corkscrew bridge
and keeping a clear zone of the Intracoastal waterway
open during construction will be factored in.

The table has a lot of information that would
be hard to see from the back of the room. The same
information is on our display boards in the back of the
room and is easier to see. This table details the factors TxDOT must consider in evaluating a proposed project and the various project options called our project alternatives.

For this project, three alternatives were studied and considered before coming to a preferred alternative that I will discuss in a minute -- in detail in a minute. Alternative A is also called the no-build alternative. This alternative would leave the current swing bridge in place. A no-build alternative must be studied and considered for all of our proposed projects.

Alternative B would be a corkscrew bridge with ramps on opposite sides as you can see in the pictures. Alternative C would be a corkscrew bridge with ramps on the same side as you see in the pictures. As I mentioned, many factors were studied and considered for this proposed project: Factors such as if the alternative would meet the goal of the proposed project, the number of displacements, and amount of additional right-of-way that would be necessary and also impacts to the environment.

As I said, Alternative A is required to be further considered. Alternative B is not recommended because of the impacts it would have. Alternative C is our recommended, preferred alternative to move forward.
Preferred Alternative C: Alternative C is the preferred alternative because it meets the purpose and need for this proposed project. It requires fewer displacements than Alternative B and also fewer impacts to the wetlands. This alternative also uses natural vegetation as a buffer between the construction area and the beach that can be used as a protective area for wildlife.

Going into more detail on environmental overview, I would also like to talk to you about the environmental study that has been done so far on this project. Last December TxDOT assumed federal authority for all our environmental reviews of transportation projects funded through the federal highway administration. So, TxDOT headquarters will be reviewing and evaluating the study for this project and make the determination of whether or not the bridge replacement project will move forward to construction.

The proposed project is undergoing a study called an Environmental Assessment, or EA. The study has been done so far as documented in the draft EA report which is available for review tonight. The study and report evaluated and considered impacts to the human and natural environment and included the items that are listed on this slide.
As I've mentioned, if you would like to read the draft report from the study, the report is available here tonight; and it's also available online at txdot.gov by searching the FM457 bridge. The report can also be reviewed at our TxDOT office in Bay City and Yoakum. Please note that the office in Bay City is only open Monday through Thursday. That's our maintenance office there.

The right-of-way and acquisition, Greg Polasek is here tonight. If you have any questions, you can visit with him. He's our TxDOT right-of-way supervisor and can answer any questions if you have them on the right-of-way process or what's involved in that right-of-way.

Moving on to our project schedule, many of you have attended meetings on this project since it began in 2013. We thank you for your patience and participation during this time. Now that the draft study has been developed, we are approaching the end of this stage for the proposed bridge replacement project.

After tonight's public hearing, project staff will evaluate and consider public comments and send the comments and environmental assessment report to our TxDOT headquarters. TxDOT headquarters in Austin will make the final decision on whether or not this project moves
forward and is constructed. That decision is expected later this year. If the project is approved for construction, that is anticipated to go to bid in July of 2016 and will last approximately 24 months during construction.

The next steps in the process, as I mentioned, after tonight’s public hearing, our project staff will evaluate and consider public comments and prepare the final environmental assessment report to send to our TxDOT headquarters so a decision can be made on whether or not this project moves forward and is constructed.

That concludes the formal public hearing presentation. In a few minutes, we’ll take a break so you can visit with our project staff, if you have any further questions. We’ll resume with a verbal public comment period. If you want to make verbal comments tonight, please be sure to complete a speaker registration card at our sign-in table.

If you prefer to make written comments, you can also leave these comments tonight, e-mail, mail, or fax them to the addresses listed there. I also have some cards if somebody needs a business card with those address and contact information on them. So, I think we’ll take about a five-minute break. If there’s some more questions and we need to take a little longer, that
will be okay; but our public comment cards, you can get those if you need to fill those out. And we'll call your name up to make a comment at that time. Thank you.

(Recess was taken)

MR. REITZ: I think we can get started with our comment period now. If I could ask everybody to have a seat, we can get our comment period started. Can everybody have a seat so we can get started? Does everybody have their comment card turned in if they would like to make comments? We'll go ahead and get started on that. I've got Willie Younger.

MR. YOUNGER: Use this microphone?

MR. REITZ: Yes, sir.

MR. YOUNGER: My name is Willie Younger. I've been a resident of Matagorda County for 35 years. Of that, half of it was spent as your extension marine agent in this county, coastal marine agent. For the last 17 and a half years, I spent 6 years working on the Sargent Beach erosion control with local leaders and state officials and federal authorities trying to get that issue resolved.

I'm not here as an advocate to speak for that bridge project or to speak against it, but I think there is some information and observations that might be helpful in coming to a solution that would be long
lasting and certainly represent a good investment of the taxpayers' dollars.

Just a little history lesson that in the mid '80s there were some members of this community and others throughout the state that recognized that Sargent had one of the most astounding records of erosion in the entire world, that Sargent Beach was losing an average of 30 feet per year with hot spots that approached 60 feet per year. At that rate in the small distance between the Gulf and the Intracoastal waterway, there is not much time left to save that beach if that were to be the goal.

The locals here that saw that it impacted their lives and their future really were looking for a way to save the beach at first. It became glaringly apparent that saving the beach could not be justified in terms of the dollars that it would take to do that. They looked at other communities -- Galveston, Miami, Atlantic City, New Jersey -- and felt that that was the kind of solution they needed here to re-nourish the beach.

The reality sank in eventually that that was not going to save Sargent Beach. What was going to save Sargent Beach was the hope of saving the Intracoastal waterway. I went to a meeting just yesterday where the Corps of Engineers made the statement that that canal now provides on an annual basis nearly
$42 billion of commerce annually. So, it didn’t take much to figure out that there was some people that might be interested in that.

Astoundingly, the Corps of Engineers is not allowed to identify problems. That takes the citizens to do that. They can only act on Congress’ recommendations; and, of course, the Congressmen will only react to what the citizens, their voters, tell them. But they eventually got the word that the petrochemical industry of this state was in great danger.

Without the petrochemical industry, there is no Texas. Let’s just put it that way. We produce most of the free world’s chemical product. We don’t make anything with it in Texas. It’s shipped up north via the Mississippi/Missouri Rivers and Tombigbee, those waterways.

And I’m getting to the point that what I’m trying to say is that once that recognition was accepted, the Corps of Engineers took what was normally -- in their estimation, normally a 20-year project and compressed putting in a revetment wall here at Sargent in eight years. It’s never been done before. It’s never been done since. It will probably never happen again. Katrina is about the closest that they came to rebuilding the levees around New Orleans.
What I'm trying to get at was that we're building a bridge here on a very precarious spot. Now, if that wall were to give way, there's nothing for a landing. It would come off the bridge right into the Gulf of Mexico if it does not hold. It hasn't been tested. There has not been a Category 4 or a Category 5 hurricane hit directly on Sargent Beach. We hope there never will be. But if it does, that wall could possibly be it. It may hold as they predict it will; but either way, unless you read the reports, you do not know that the plan all along is to let the beach rise right up to that revetment wall. There's no effort to save anything seaward, that revetment wall.

So, I would hope that what happens with the design of this is that they take into consideration the prospect that that could happen. We could lose the wall. The erosion rates could return at record-breaking pace. And there might not be nowhere to drive your cars once you come off that beach. And we end up with a $28 million fishing pier.

So, all I'm looking for is to refuse that; and I did not see it on your list of things that y'all took into consideration about the erosion at Sargent Beach which all these studies that were done were done by the University of Texas Bureau of Economic Geology. They
have had --

MR. REITZ: Excuse me, Mr. Younger.

MR. YOUNGER: Yes, sir.

MR. REITZ: We're going to have to probably finish the rest of the comments --

MR. YOUNGER: I'm through.

MR. REITZ: Okay.

MR. YOUNGER: I just want you to put that in there.

MR. REITZ: Thank you. I appreciate your comment.

Our next speaker is J.D. Stayton.

MR. STAYTON: I'm not as well prepared as this gentleman was, but a little history about myself in the Sargent community.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: We can't hear you. Get up to the mic.

MR. STAYTON: I've been here 44 years next month; and when I came down here, you could drive across the drawbridge and you could not get into the Gulf until you drove one mile to the Gulf where you get into the water. We had canals and houses on that side, and they put this revetment wall in. They went down to the land breaking, ground breaking ceremony; and they threw me out of that meeting because I asked too many smart-ass
questions, I guess.

    Why didn't they jetty -- instead of
spending all that money on the revetment wall, they just
never retained -- it was breached in Claudette 13 years
ago. It went over that wall into the Intracoastal. I
asked them why didn't -- why wouldn't they jetty it. It
saved lighthouses on the East Coast up in Maine. They
did kelp, plastic kelp to save the erosion up there; and
they put this revetment wall in, 8 miles. And we all
know how 457 is all tore up for years. So, that didn't
work; and it's still not working.

    Dow Chemical created this mess over 55
years ago, rerouting the Brazos; and that's what started
the erosion. Why don't they pay for this instead of the
taxpayers, which our taxes will go up if somebody says
they won't, but they will. But, you know, I'm against
the bridge. It's not going to benefit anybody. We don't
have a beach now for people to come to. We used to years
ago, but they now put in a revetment wall. We don't even
have cabanas out there for the general public to use
anymore. So, that's all I have to say. I'm not -- I'm
very against this thing.

    MR. REITZ: Thank you.

    Our next speaker is Bryan Theros. I got
that wrong probably.
MR. THEROS: That's pretty darn close.

Hi, guys. I'm Brian Theros. I'm a newcomer here to this town. I moved in here in June of last year, and I understand a lot of things that people are saying of what's happened over the years to this place. However, who wants to be the person with the heart attack on the island while the bridge is up? Who wants to be that person? Is there a show of hands in here? I didn't think so.

I think what we need to do is we need to look at things from what is going to support Sargent and to help it grow, and I believe this bridge is that idea that will get people from one side to the other in a safe manner.

Some of the things that I am concerned about is during the construction process. What is going to happen to 457 with the heavy traffic? We have a lot of vehicles that are going to be required, hauling heavy equipment up and down that road. The condition of that road is -- there's no doubt it's going to be compromised. How is that going to be maintained? How is that going to be taken care of?

What is the work schedule? Is it five tens? Is it six tens? We have a lot of weekend traffic here. We have a lot of weekenders that come in through
here that want to come down and enjoy our waters and
enjoy our beach. So, I want to make sure that we keep
that in mind during the construction phase of the bridge
if, in fact, it gets approved.

The other thing I want to make sure of is
the pictures look terrific. It looks great, but
work-in-process has a different appearance to it. I'd
like to make sure that we protect our waterways, that we
utilize the inland land for the laydown areas. I had
conversations with some gentlemen here before the meeting
about that.

I want to make sure that we protect that
wildlife. I want to make sure we protect the community.
There's things that I heard that were very encouraging on
the construction style of that bridge, the types of piles
they were going to drive. I'm very encouraged about the
way they're going to do that.

All in all, like I said, I think there's a
lot for this community to reap the benefits from; and I
understand and I respect the people that have been here
for a very long time. But what we've got to do is we
need to move forward with something like this and then
why don't we address -- let's get that wall and make sure
it can sustain a Cat 3. If we're worried about this
bridge sustaining a Cat 3 -- if the bridge isn't here,
that swing bridge sure isn't going to be able to sustain a Cat 3.

So, what do we want, folks? I think it's a good idea. I think it's something that TxDOT has put a lot of time and effort into. And I think they really looked at this community from a community standpoint considering space consolidation, how they're going to do it, and from the words that I heard early on, to be able to protect the environment the best they can to keep it to a minimum, so...

MR. REITZ: Thank you.

That's the last of the comment cards I have.

MS. QUINLAN: (Indicating).

MR. REITZ: Yes, ma'am. Please state your name and --

MS. QUINLAN: Hi, my name is Mary Quinlan; and I've been down here for 30 years or so on the island. And I have to say, Mr. Younger, I agree 100 percent. That's one of my main concerns is -- aside from the fact that I think it's going to be a monstrosity of an eyesore, what is going to happen with a hurricane?

This land is eroding. It's eroding fast. We had a storm about a month ago, and I go out there to the beach. I walked out on the beach and I can see a
substantial amount of beach gone just from, you know, a
rather rough storm out there. And I don't see how
possibly there's going to be enough land for this bridge
to be built out there and not be affected by erosion -- I
mean, major erosion -- if we have any type of big
hurricane at all.

Another concern I have is we have a lot of
weekenders down here. They're partying, they're
drinking, they're young kids, they're young adults. And
they're coming down a bridge that, wow, isn't this fun,
that bridge is dangerous. I was looking at bridges that
were built like that -- very few of them, I couldn't find
very many -- and they were considered some of the most
dangerous bridges in the world, I mean, very dangerous.
And this is just -- I mean, the location here -- the
geography here at the bridge is going to be very
dangerous.

No. 3, why do we have to have a corkscrew
on the land side? We don't need a corkscrew on the land
side. I mean, I'm not an engineer. So, you know, maybe
there's a good reason that I'm not aware of. But I mean,
is that just to say that we don't have to buy or purchase
more land down the road for something because the bridge
already -- the State already owns the land that the
bridge building is on? I don't know about that.
As far as the comment, having a heart attack on the island, if somebody had a heart attack on the island, by the time they contacted EMS, the EMS -- the bridge will stay open for emergency vehicles. So, I don't think that's something anybody needs to worry about there. In fact, it might be safer than the ambulance going down the corkscrew bridge. I don't know.

As I look at this, being a staunch environmentalist, if we are furthering the profits of the oil companies by building this bridge -- and that's probably basically what it comes down to, what this is all about, and, you know, promoting American consumerism which I think as we know is blowing up our environment, which is probably a cause of the erosion and so forth and so on.

And lastly, I had one other comment about oil and chemical companies -- and I guess that's about it. I could go on and on.

MR. REITZ: As I said at the beginning of the hearing, citizen input and participation are very important in this process. I know you could be at home with your families doing something else this evening. So, I thank you again for attending and participating tonight. The Texas Department of Transportation mission is to work with others to provide safe and reliable
transportation solutions for Texas. Thank you for working with us on this proposed bridge replacement project. We look forward to receiving additional comments.

Thank you again for participation and drive safely.

(Hearing concluded)
THE STATE OF TEXAS
COUNTY OF MATAGORDA

I, Suzi Gladney-O'Neil, CSR, RPR, Certified Shorthand Reporter in and for the State of Texas, do hereby certify that the above and foregoing contains a true and correct transcription of all portions of evidence and other proceedings requested in writing by counsel for the parties to be included in the statement of facts, in the above styled and numbered cause, all of which occurred and were reported by me.

I further certify that this transcription of the record of the proceedings truly and correctly reflects the exhibits, if any, offered by the respective parties.

I further certify that the total cost for the preparation of this Reporter's Record is $__________.

Given under my hand and official seal of office this the 14th day of September, 2015.

Suzi Gladney-O'Neill

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