



WELCOME

Virtual Public Meeting

I-20 Six-Lane Widening Project
From the Abilene West City Limits to Buck Creek Road
CSJs: 0006-05-090, 0006-06-105, 0006-06-081, 0006-07-082

I-20 Six-Lane Widening Project Sept. 22 – Oct. 7, 2020

Hello and welcome to the I-20 Six-Lane Widening Project Virtual Public Meeting hosted by the Texas Department of Transportation Abilene District. TxDOT appreciates your interest and involvement in this proposed project.

This is a pre-recorded presentation.

We are early in a multi-year process to bring improvements to the I-20 corridor in Abilene. I would like to thank you for your time and attention today. Your input is critical to the project development process and to help shape TxDOT's decision-making.

This presentation and accompanying materials are available online at TxDOT.gov as of Sept. 22, 2020, and they are available for comment through Oct. 7, 2020.

Comments received during this period will be included – along with TxDOT's responses – in the comment/response matrix for the meeting summary. The meeting summary is typically posted to TxDOT.gov several months after a public meeting is held.

You will be provided information at the close of this presentation on how to provide comments.



The slide is titled "I-20 Virtual Public Meeting Outline" and features a list of five items, each preceded by a numbered arrow icon. The items are: 1 Welcome, 2 Project Introduction, 3 I-20 Corridor Concerns and Characteristics, 4 Opportunity for Public Input, and 5 Next Steps. The slide also includes a logo in the top right corner and a footer with the text "I-20 Six-Lane Widening Project", "Sept. 22 – Oct. 7, 2020", and a page number "2".

I-20 Virtual Public Meeting Outline

- 1 Welcome
- 2 Project Introduction
- 3 I-20 Corridor Concerns and Characteristics
- 4 Opportunity for Public Input
- 5 Next Steps

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Today's presentation includes an introduction of the project, our identified concerns and characteristics of the I-20 corridor, information on how you can submit your comments, and our planned next steps.

Virtual Public Meeting in Response to Public Health

TxDOT changed the traditional in-person public meeting to an online format in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The virtual public meeting includes the same information that would have been available at an in-person public meeting.

Thank you for helping us slow the spread of COVID-19 by engaging with us online.



Source: U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

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Given the unique circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, along with TxDOT’s commitment to protecting public health, TxDOT is conducting this virtual public meeting online to slow the spread of COVID-19. This online format is being conducted in-lieu of an in-person public meeting.

The presentation will cover the same information we would have shared at an in-person public meeting. However, the comment process for this virtual public meeting will be somewhat different from what we normally conduct at an in-person meeting and will be explained at the end of the presentation.

Thank you for helping us slow the spread of COVID-19 by engaging with us online.

I-20 Virtual Public Meeting Webpage Information

Visit TxDOT.gov
Keyword search, “I-20 Six-Lane Widening Project”
Or: www.txdot.gov/inside-txdot/get-involved/about/hearings-meetings/abilene/092220.html



The webpage includes:

- Virtual meeting instructions
- Pre-recorded presentation
- Project information
- Environmental constraints maps
- Process for submitting comments
- Project team contact information

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All project information, including this presentation, can be found on the TxDOT website.

Visit TxDOT.gov and keyword search “I-20 Six-Lane Widening Project” or type in the link as noted on the screen.

The webpage includes

- Virtual meeting instructions
- This pre-recorded presentation
- Project information
- Environmental constraints maps
- The process for submitting comments, and
- Project team contact information

Virtual Public Meeting – I-20 Six-Lane Widening Project

I-20 Virtual Public Meeting Outreach Methods

UPCOMING VIRTUAL PUBLIC MEETING
I-20 Six-Lane Widening Project

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

WHEN
Sept. 22, 2020
to Oct. 7, 2020

WHERE
www.TxDOT.gov
Keyword search:
"I-20 Six-Lane Widening Project"

What are your safety and mobility needs in the I-20 corridor in Abilene?

INTERESTED IN RECEIVING FUTURE PROJECT NOTICES? Let us know!

- Invitation to elected officials
- TxDOT website notice
- Postcards sent to adjacent property owners and stakeholders
- E-mail invitations sent to stakeholders
- Display advertisement published in the *Abilene Reporter-News*
- News release

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This virtual public meeting was developed to provide project information for the public, stakeholders, and elected officials, and to request input.

Outreach methods to inform the community about this meeting included:

- A letter of invitation to elected officials
- A notice on TxDOT.gov
- Postcards sent to adjacent property owners and stakeholders
- E-mail invitations sent to stakeholders on our mailing list
- Display advertisements published in the *Abilene Reporter-News*
- And a news release to local media

If you are interested in receiving future project notices, please let us know! We encourage you to join our mailing list. Methods to contact us and sign up for updates will be shown at the end of this presentation.

Memorandum of Understanding



National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Assignment to the Texas Department of Transportation

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. 9, 2019, and executed by the Federal Highway Administration and TxDOT.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

TxDOT is following all applicable state and federal laws to identify and review potential solutions for long-term safety and mobility problems on the I-20 corridor in Abilene.

Currently, TxDOT has local, state, and federal dollars allocated for a portion of the proposed project. We anticipate identifying further funding as we continue through the project development process.

With any project receiving federal funds, TxDOT is required to evaluate the potential environmental consequences of the proposed project. The environmental review process we follow is in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, otherwise known as NEPA.

The NEPA process results in documentation that is provided to decision makers so they have all the data needed to make an informed decision if the project should proceed.

In December 2014, TxDOT received a signed Memorandum of Understanding from the Federal Highway Administration that allows TxDOT to assume responsibility from the Federal Highway Administration to review and approve certain assigned NEPA projects. In December 2019, this memorandum was renewed. The review and approval process applies to this project.

In short: TxDOT will follow all state and federal laws to identify and review potential solutions for long-term safety and mobility problems on the I-20 corridor in Abilene.

Extension of I-20 Six-Lane Widening Project Limits

- **TxDOT held an Open House in November 2019**
- **2019 Project Limits:** I-20 from SH 351 to near Buck Creek Road/CR 108



- Public requested extension of project study limits

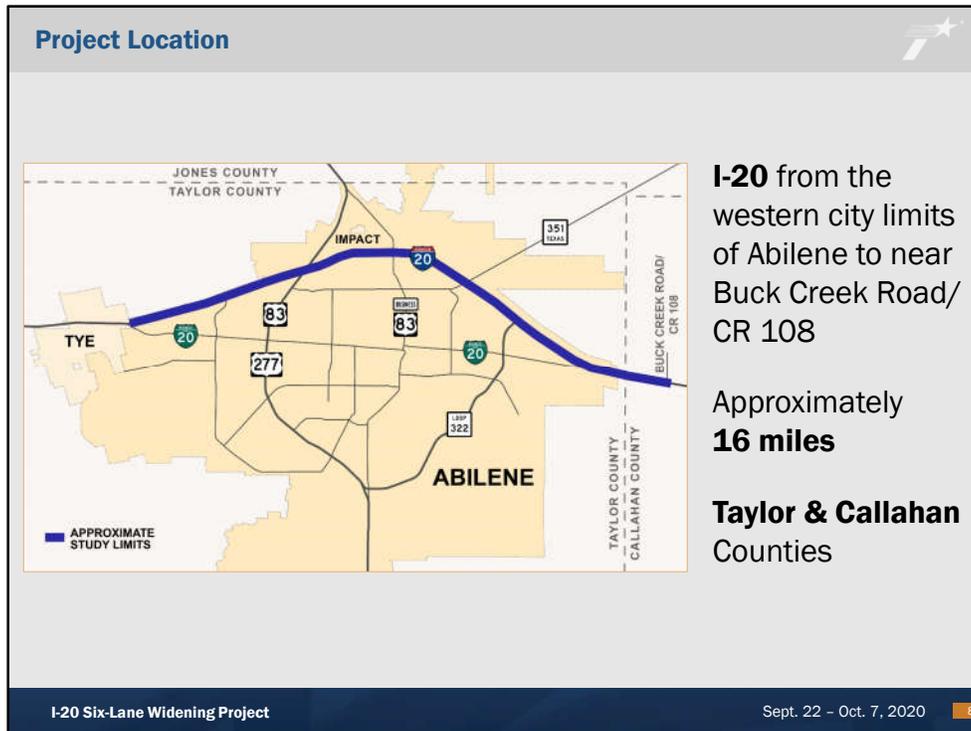


On Nov. 12, 2019, TxDOT held an open house regarding the I-20 corridor. This meeting was to introduce a proposed project on I-20 between SH 351 in Abilene to near Buck Creek Road, just outside of the city limits in Callahan County.

We would like to thank the eighty-one members of the public who attended.

One of the major comments received was a request to extend the study limits further west.

Virtual Public Meeting – I-20 Six-Lane Widening Project



Thank you for your input. TxDOT has decided to advance additional segments of the I-20 corridor into our current study.

We are now studying I-20 from the western city limits of Abilene, approximately where I-20 meets Business 20, to near Buck Creek Road. This spans approximately 16 miles of interstate and is located in both Taylor and Callahan counties.

Study Overview

- TxDOT aims to **identify long-term safety and mobility solutions** for the I-20 corridor
- TxDOT plans to **widen I-20 to three lanes in each direction** and implement **potential improvements** to ramps and frontage roads
- **Study elements** for this project include:
 - Traffic data and travel times
 - Safety
 - Environmental
 - Engineering
 - Right of Way
 - Public involvement

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We will be identifying long-term safety and mobility solutions for the I-20 corridor.

We plan to widen I-20 to three lanes in each direction and implement potential improvements to ramps and frontage roads.

Elements that we must study include:

- Traffic data and travel times
- Safety information such as crash data
- Environmental constraints and issues
- Engineering considerations
- Right of Way, or the width of land TxDOT may need for improvements
- And public involvement



The process to identify, review, approve, and implement long-term safety and mobility solutions for the I-20 corridor takes several steps and will last several years.

First, we PLAN. TxDOT will prepare an environmental study and a preliminary roadway design known as a schematic. We are at the beginning of this study and we anticipate approval to potentially move to the next step in 2022. I say potentially because funding will need to be identified for the next two steps. The current approved funding for this project is 40 million dollars, which will only fund a portion of the proposed project. As such, if the project is approved, it is likely to be split into several phased projects that will then individually move into the next steps of design and construction.

In DESIGN, TxDOT will advance the schematic design into a final design ready for construction. Additional activity occurs such as right-of-way acquisition and utility adjustments. This effort can take approximately two years.

Finally, CONSTRUCTION. Construction can take up to three years for completion.

So, this will not be the last time you hear from us. As the project progresses through development and implementation, TxDOT will continue to engage the public and request input as the project is further defined.

Project Goals and Objectives 

Improve **safety** in the corridor

Improve **mobility** in the corridor

Enhance **accessibility** for residents and businesses

Improve **emergency response times**

Support **economic development**

Minimize impacts to the community and natural environment

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We have currently identified the following project goals and objectives:

Improving safety, improving mobility, enhancing accessibility, improving emergency response times, supporting economic development, and minimizing impacts to the community and the natural environment.

These are important elements to keep in mind when providing comments and recommendations for improvements to the corridor.

What is the Problem We are Trying to Solve?



- **Increasing traffic volumes** on I-20, including both local traffic and heavy truck traffic, impacting safety and mobility
- An **aging roadway in need of upgrades** (e.g. ramp configurations)
- Need for **improved emergency response times**

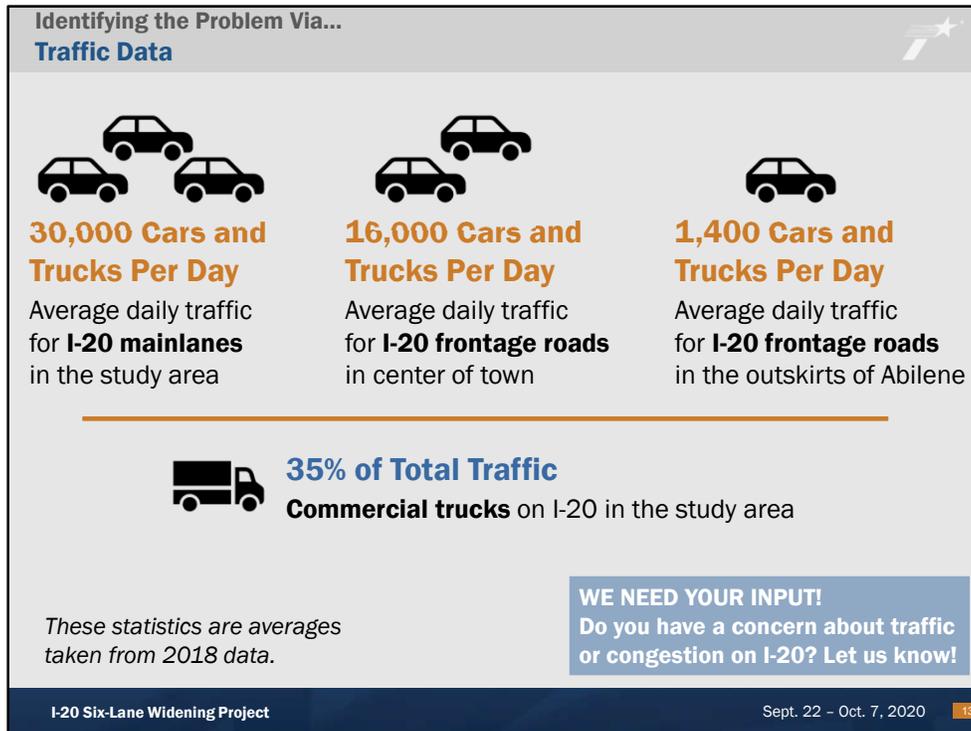
We'd like to now talk about the problem we are trying to solve. The items here were identified by data collected by our project team and from public input.

Data shows that traffic volumes have increased on I-20. This increased traffic of both local traffic and heavy truck traffic on a major interstate has impacted the safety and mobility of the traveling public.

As an aging roadway, I-20 is in need of upgrades like ramp configurations which will improve the speed discrepancies between the ramps and mainlanes.

It's also critical to improve emergency response times as well.

If no changes are made to the corridor, problems are projected to worsen in the future due to continued development and increased traffic.



Let’s review some of the data that prompted the proposed project on I-20 and problems we’re trying to address.

The I-20 mainlanes have an average of 30,000 cars and trucks per day.

In comparison, on the I-20 frontage roads within the center of town, we see an average of 16,000 cars and trucks per day.

In the outskirts of town, both to the west and east, we see significantly less traffic on the I-20 frontage roads. The average number of cars and trucks per day is 1,400.

35% of the total traffic on I-20 is commercial trucks such as an 18-wheeler truck.

This information is from 2018, and we will continue to update the data as we study the corridor.

There’s several topics where we would appreciate your input to help shape improvements on I-20. This is the first one: Do you have a concern about traffic or congestion on I-20? Please let us know in your comments.

Identifying the Problem Via...
Crash Data



- On the I-20 corridor through Abilene, we see approximately **30% more crashes than statewide averages**



- Without improvements, numbers are expected to increase

This statistic is an average taken from 2018 data.

WE NEED YOUR INPUT!
Do you have a concern about safety on I-20? Let us know!

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Next is to consider the crash data identified by our team to date.

On the I-20 corridor through Abilene, we see approximately 30% more crashes than statewide averages. In the center of our study area, between US 83 and SH 351, the data shows that the number of crashes is more than double the statewide averages.

Without improvements, numbers are expected to increase.

Again, this data is from 2018, which we will update as we progress through the study.

Be sure to let us know if you have a concern about safety on I-20.

Avoiding and Minimizing Potential Impacts to...
Environmental Constraints

On or adjacent to the I-20 corridor are several constraints, including:

- Oil and gas wells
- Creeks and streams
- Floodplain
- Historic sites
- Cemeteries
- Parks

On the virtual public meeting webpage, you can view the Environmental Constraints Maps



WE NEED YOUR INPUT!
Is there an environmental constraint or feature missing from our maps? Let us know!

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One of the elements that the project team must identify and study is environmental constraints on or adjacent to the I-20 corridor. Constraints are identified as areas that we need to avoid in building roadway improvements, if possible. Those constraints include: Oil and gas wells; Creeks and streams; Floodplain; Historic sites; Cemeteries; and Parks.

On the virtual public meeting webpage, you can view the Environmental Constraints Maps that we have prepared. These maps show an aerial photo of I-20 and constraints are identified by colored shading and icons. A legend is provided in the bottom left-hand corner to help you review the map. There are six different maps to look at as this is a very long corridor.

The constraints and features were obtained through use of federal, state, and local resources, including review of aerial photography, and agency databases and maps.

On the screen, you can see a snapshot of one of the maps. To orient yourself, you are seeing I-20 going from west to east, and FM 600 or West Lake Road going from north to south.

The arrow on your screen is pointing to a stream and floodplain that crosses I-20. The stream is the dark blue line, and the floodplain is the hatched teal area. The next example constraint on your screen is an example of an oil and gas well location. Those two types of icons that look like suns indicate the location of an oil and gas well as identified by the Railroad Commission of Texas, who regulates the oil and gas industry.

Environmental constraints must be identified and considered as we aim to avoid them or to minimize any potential impact, should roadway improvements be constructed.

It is critical that we identify all potential constraints. We welcome you to review our constraints maps online and let us know if something is missing, such as an unidentified cemetery.

Avoiding and Minimizing Potential Impacts to...
Economic Development

Abilene is growing!
The proposed project aims to avoid or minimize impacts to existing and future areas of economic development such as The Boardwalk at Allen Ridge



Source: RESOLUT RE

WE NEED YOUR INPUT!
Is there an economic development area we should know about? Let us know!

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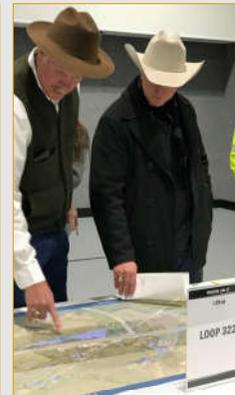
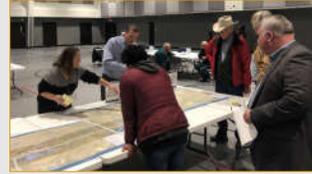
Next are considerations for existing and future areas of economic development.

It is important that we identify these areas and avoid them or minimize any potential impact. An example of such an area is the Boardwalk at Allen Ridge. This is a development under construction at I-20 and Ambler Avenue near the Abilene Christian University campus.

Please let us know if there is an economic development area we should know about.

November 2019 Public Input

**Thank you to those who attended the
Nov. 12, 2019 Open House!**



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We held an open house on Nov. 12, 2019 about the I-20 corridor; however, with a shorter project length.

Comments received helped identify the problems we're trying to address, and prompted the acceleration of the western portions of the project to be included in the current I-20 study.

We appreciate these comments and look forward to addressing them as part of this broader study where feasible.

Help us identify issues on the corridor 

WE NEED YOUR INPUT!

 **What's missing?**

What do we need to know more about?

- Mobility concerns
- Travel and delay times
- Safety concerns
- Environmental constraints
- Future development

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TxDOT is committed to continuing our efforts to gain public feedback about this project especially now that we are studying a longer corridor.

We'd like to know what's missing from our maps and initial data collection. What do we need to know more about?

Here are some of the items we'd like to hear more about from you.

- Your mobility concerns
- Travel and delay times
- Your safety concerns
- Environmental constraints, and
- Future development

Also, please inform us of any other comment you may have about this proposed I-20 project or if you'd like to join our mailing list.

How to Comment

STEP ONE: REVIEW

 **Visit www.TxDOT.gov**, keyword search “I-20 Six-Lane Widening Project” or visit:
www.txdot.gov/inside-txdot/get-involved/about/hearings-meetings/abilene/092220.html

 **Download and review materials**

 **If you have questions or need technical assistance, contact the project team at (512) 342-3281**

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We understand that this virtual public meeting format is a bit different, so let's take a few minutes and explain the comment process.

The first step to commenting is to review the meeting materials.

Please visit the virtual public meeting webpage by going to www.TxDOT.gov, keyword search “I-20 Six-Lane Widening Project” or visit the precise web address as listed on the screen.

At the webpage, if you scroll down toward the bottom of the page, you will see a list of materials next to the bolded topic “**DOWNLOADS.**” Please download and review the materials at your convenience.

If you have any questions or if you need technical assistance, please contact the project team at (512) 342-3281.

And please know you can contact TxDOT and the project team at any time during the project development process to ask questions about the project.

How to Comment

STEP TWO: COMMENT

 **Complete Our Survey**
www.surveymonkey.com/r/I20Abilene

 **EMAIL**
IH20Project@gmail.com

 **MAIL**
Scott Darrow, P.E.
TxDOT Abilene District
4250 N. Clack Street
Abilene, TX 79601-9241

All comments must be received by Oct. 7, 2020

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The second step is to comment. Given our current COVID-19 situation, TxDOT is asking the public to provide their comments in the following ways.

- You may complete our online survey which is located at the web address listed on the screen. You can also access it from the virtual public meeting webpage.
- You can email us at IH20Project@gmail.com
- You can send us your comments via mail by addressing Mr. Scott Darrow, our TxDOT Project Manager, at the TxDOT Abilene District, 4250 N. Clack St., in the city of Abilene, Texas, 79601.

All comments must be received by Oct 7, 2020 at midnight. If you are mailing a comment, be sure that it is postmarked by Oct. 7 to be included in the record.

Please note that comments can be made throughout the comment period. You can send us more than one comment and via any of the methods mentioned.

What happens to comments?



Your input helps us better understand community concerns and values. Comments are not a vote, but what you provide helps inform the decision-making.

- Any comments received during the official comment period (Sept. 22 through Oct. 7, 2020), and their responses, are included in the comment/response matrix for the virtual public meeting summary.

You may contact TxDOT at any time during the project development process to ask questions.

Your input helps us better understand community concerns and values. Comments are not a vote, but what you provide helps inform the decision making.

The official comment period is Sept. 22 through Oct. 7, 2020. Any comments received during the official comment period, as well as TxDOT's responses, will be included in the comment/response matrix for the virtual public meeting summary. The meeting summary is typically posted to TxDOT.gov several months after a public meeting is held.

Again, you are always welcome at any time during the project development process to contact us with questions. You may reach Mr. Darrow at the TxDOT Abilene District by calling 325-676-6818.

Next Steps

- Public input will be reviewed, documented, and addressed
- Further data collection and analysis will occur
- Project team will develop potential solutions
- Additional public input will be encouraged and requested

TxDOT is committed to developing this project in collaboration with the community, in a way that meets the safety and mobility goals while minimizing community impacts.

From here, TxDOT will take the prior input received and any additional input submitted during the official comment period into account.

The project team will collect and analyze additional data, and then develop potential solutions.

We will be back to the public in 2021 to encourage and request additional input.

TxDOT is committed to developing this project in collaboration with the community, in a way that meets the mobility and safety goals while minimizing community impacts.

Thank You

Don't forget to submit comments by Oct. 7, 2020

We appreciate your time today and encourage you to participate and stay engaged. We wish you good health. Thank you and this concludes our presentation.