



# TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



# WELCOME

**SEPT. 14, 2020**

**VIRTUAL PUBLIC HEARING**

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**State Loop 195 (SL 195)**

**From FM 755 to US 83 (1-mile northwest of the Loma Blanca Road)**

**Starr County, Texas**

**CSJs: 3632-01-001, etc.**

# Virtual Public Hearing in Response to Public Health

The virtual public hearing with an in-person option and TxDOT website provide the same information as the in-person hearing:

- Project information
- Estimated timeline
- Process for submitting comments
- Key contacts

In-Person Options (by appointment only):

Sept. 15 – TxDOT Pharr District Office

Sept. 16 – TxDOT Roma Area Office

Following the virtual public hearing, the presentation will remain available for viewing online until Thursday, Oct. 1, 2020 at 11:59 p.m.

## Share Facts About COVID-19

Know the facts about coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and help stop the spread of rumors.

FACT  
1

Diseases can make anyone sick regardless of their race or ethnicity.

People of Asian descent, including Chinese Americans, are not more likely to get COVID-19 than any other American. Help stop fear by letting people know that being of Asian descent does not increase the chance of getting or spreading COVID-19.

FACT  
2

Some people are at increased risk of getting COVID-19.

People who have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 or people who live in or have recently been in an area with ongoing spread are at an increased risk of exposure.

FACT  
3

Someone who has completed quarantine or has been released from isolation does not pose a risk of infection to other people.

For up-to-date information, visit CDC's coronavirus disease 2019 web page.



FACT  
4

You can help stop COVID-19 by knowing the signs and symptoms:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

Seek medical advice if you

- Develop symptoms

AND

- Have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 or if you live in or have recently been in an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19.

FACT  
5

There are simple things you can do to help keep yourself and others healthy.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating or preparing food.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.

For more information: [www.cdc.gov/COVID19](http://www.cdc.gov/COVID19)

# Public Hearing Agenda

- Public Hearing Purpose
- Project Limits
- Project Need and Purpose
- Proposed Project
- Project History
- Preferred Alternative
- Environmental Assessment
- Right of Way Acquisition Process
- Next Steps in Project Development
- How to Provide Comments

# Public Hearing Purpose

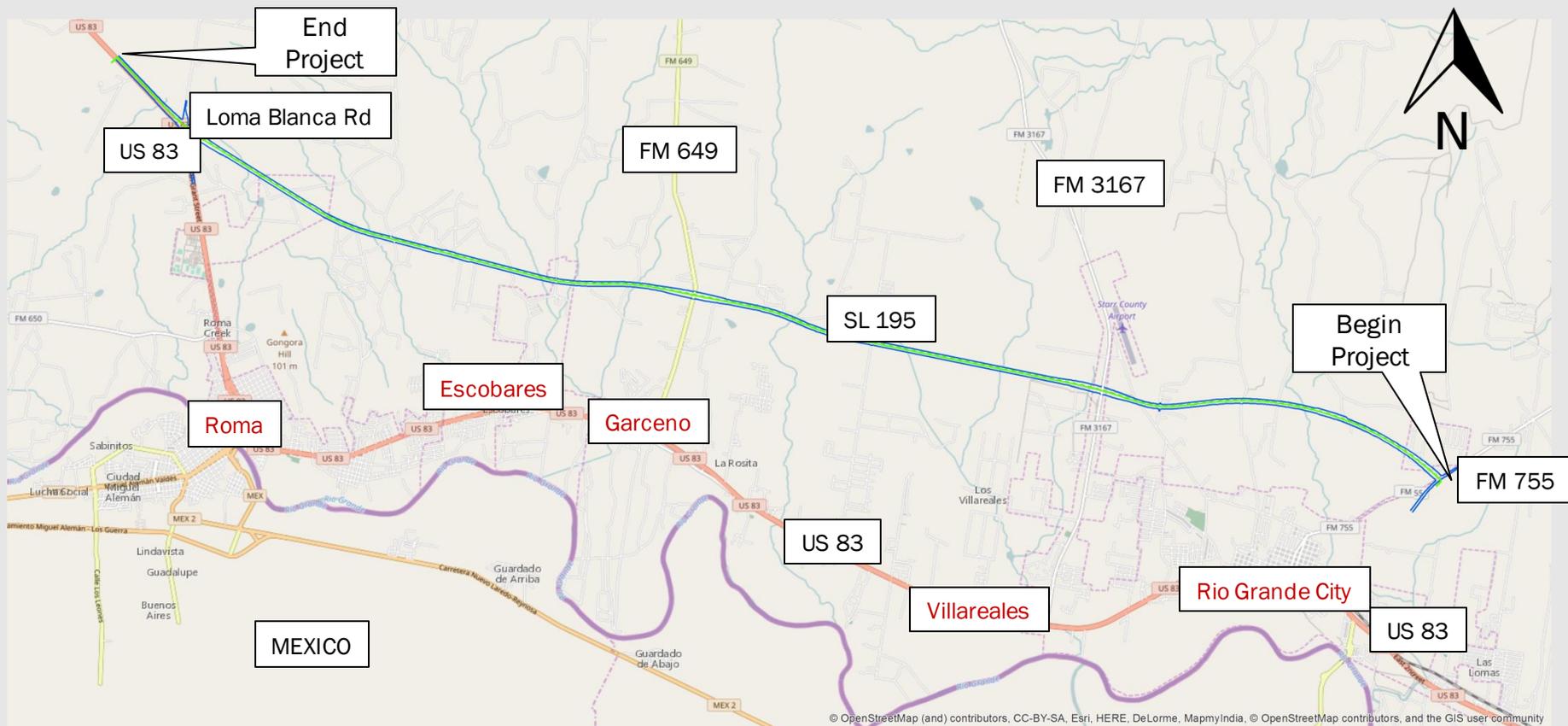
- **Encourage and maintain effective communication with the public**
- **Provide project information on SL 195**
- **Follow an important step in the environmental process**
- **Receive public input and comments**



Animation of SL 195 at Loma Blanca Road

# Project Limits

- From FM 755 to US 83 – 1 mile northwest of the Loma Blanca Road
- Total Length: 17.24 miles
- Estimated Construction Cost of \$209 million



## Project Need:

- Lack of mobility
- Poor corridor connectivity

## Project Purpose:

- Improve safety
- Improve mobility and connectivity by providing a new 4-lane divided highway between Rio Grande City and Roma.

# Project Need and Purpose

## Traffic Projections for US 83, With and Without Proposed Project

US 83 Segment Location	Average Daily Traffic (ADT in Vehicles Per Day (vpd) in 2022		
	Without SL 195	With SL 195	Percent Reduction with Construction of SL 195
FM 755 to FM 3167	37,220	30,200	-19%
FM 3167 to FM 649	23,770	18,000	-24%
FM 649 to SP 200	24,000	21,500	-10%
SP 200 to Athens St	15,990	12,000	-25%
Athens St to Loma Blanca	11,354	3,400	-70%

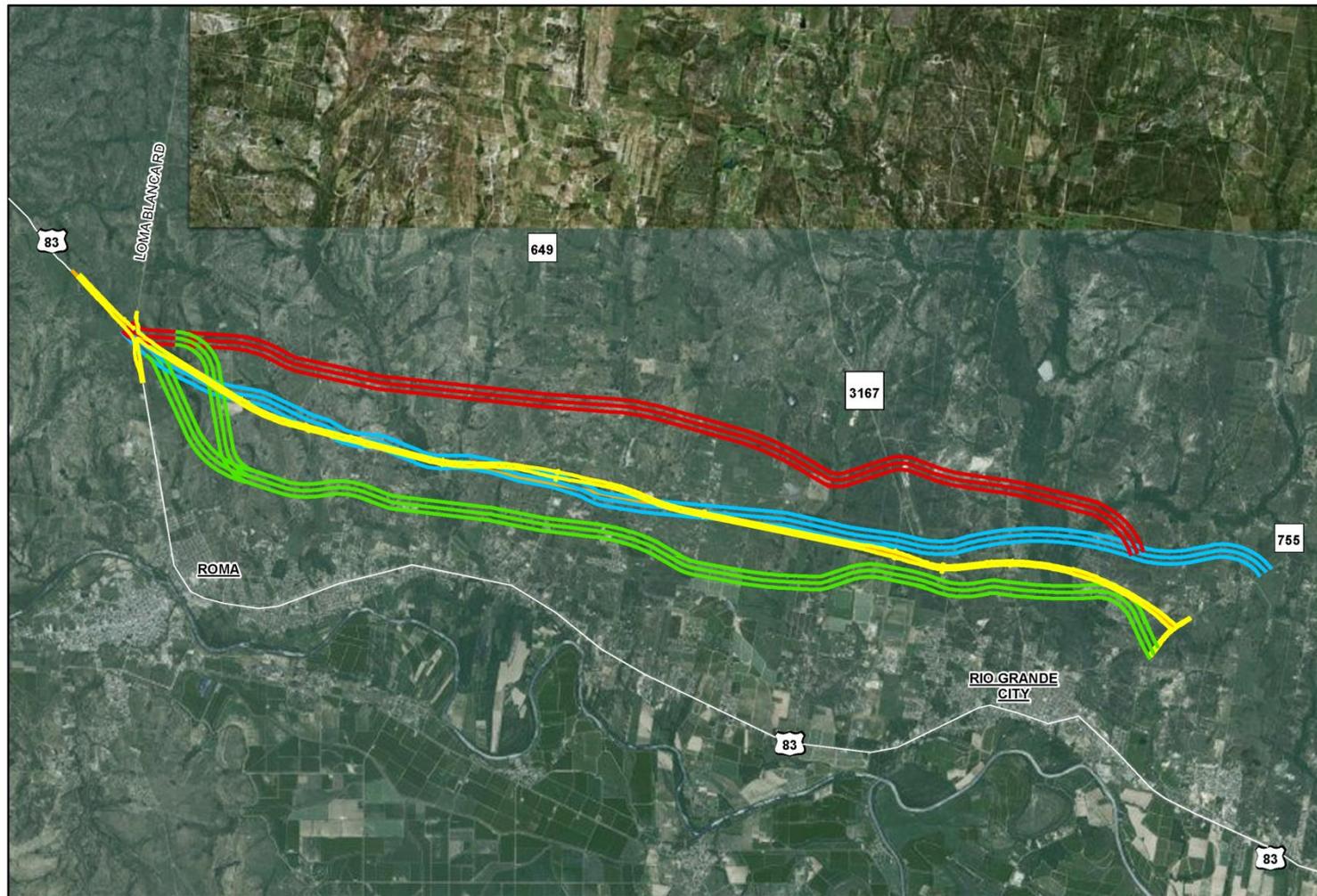
## 2018 TxDOT Statewide Crash Rates

Road Type	Traffic Crashes per 100 million vehicles miles	
	Rural	Urban
Two-lane, two way	102.13	213.77
Four or more lanes, divided	62.95	158.28

## Proposed Project

The proposed project is a new-location reliever route. FM 755 (the eastern terminus) is a two-lane undivided facility, and US 83 (the western terminus) has two lanes in each direction with a center left-turn lane. The proposed SL 195 project would connect these two existing roadways.

# Project History



**STATE LOOP 195  
PRELIMINARY CORRIDORS EVALUATED**

- Legend**
- PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE 2004
  - PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE
  - BLUE ALTERNATIVE
  - GREEN ALTERNATIVE
  - RED ALTERNATIVE

## 2000

- Original project scope include a controlled access freeway with no frontage roads with 300-foot proposed right-of-way
- Feb. 2, 2000 - Public Meeting held in Roma

## 2004

- Open House and Public Workshops held in Rio Grande City and Roma

## 2008

- Project put on hold due to lack of funding

## 2012

- Stakeholder Meetings with Starr County, Rio Grande City, City of Escobares, and the City of Roma

## 2017

- Public Meetings held in Roma and Rio Grande City

Full versions of the following Public Hearing Display Maps are available for download at [www.txdot.com](http://www.txdot.com).

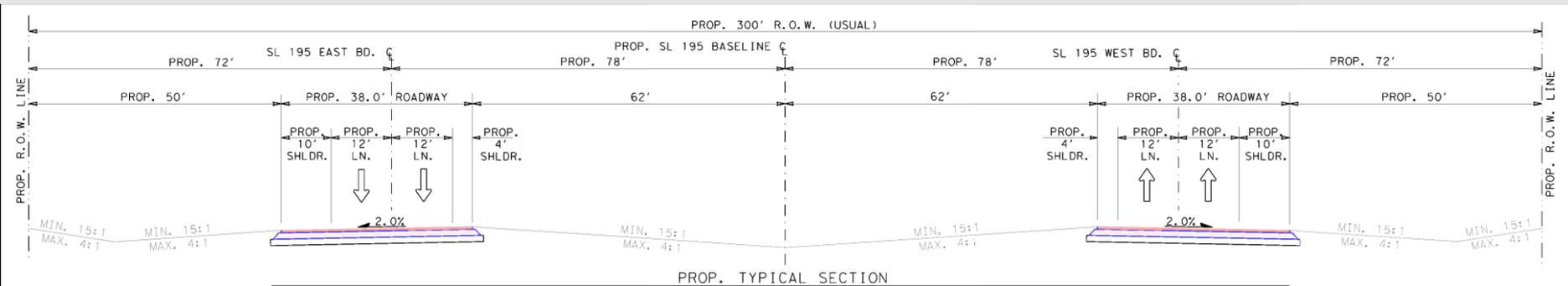
Keyword Search “SL 195”

# Preferred Alternative

- New location relief route
- 4-lane divided highway within 300-foot right of way
- Overpasses at Loma Blanca Road, FM 3167, and FM 649 within 450-foot right of way
- Major intersections with turnarounds within 450-foot right of way
  - FM 3167, FM 649 and Loma Blanca
- Crossovers at the following intersections:
  - Charco Blanco Rd, Jesse Warren Rd, Alvarez Rd, San Julian Rd and Ebony Ave
- Construct bridges at flood zones and 13 other waterways
- Construction is proposed in three phases as funding becomes available.

# Preferred Alternative

## SL 195 Proposed Typical Section (300-foot ROW)



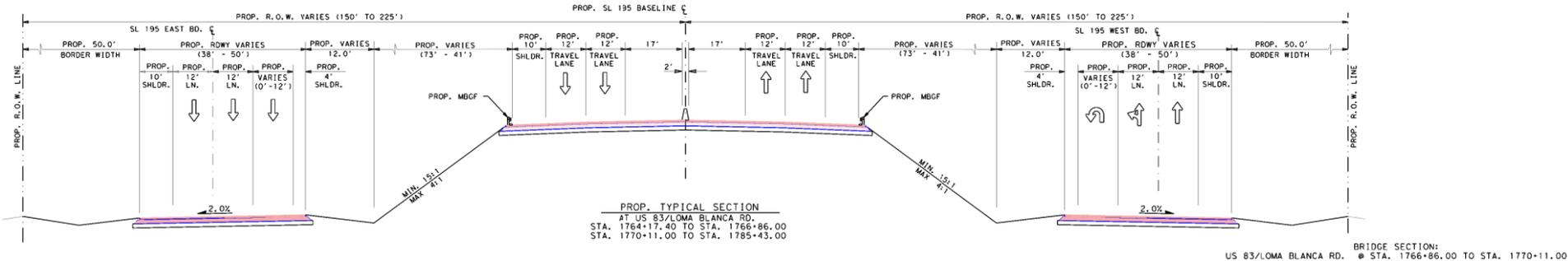
- 38 feet overall width of new roadway
- Two 12-foot-wide travel lanes in each direction
- 4-foot inside shoulders
- 10-foot outside shoulders
- Divided roadway with 124-foot center median

## SL 195 Proposed Typical Section (300-foot ROW)



# Preferred Alternative

## SL 195 Proposed Typical Section (450-foot ROW)



- Overpass approach at US 83/Loma Blanca Road
- 104-foot width of overpass roadway
- Two 12-foot-wide travel lanes in each direction
- 17-foot inside shoulders
- 10-foot outside shoulders
- Two 38-foot-wide access roads

# Preferred Alternative

## Proposed SL 195 Overpass at Loma Blanca Road (450-foot ROW)



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 9, 2019, and executed by FHWA and TxDOT.

- **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)**
- **Environmental Technical Reports were prepared**
- **Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) document summarizes the technical reports**
- **Documents are available to review online ([www.txdot.gov](http://www.txdot.gov)) Keyword Search: SL 195**

- **ROW/Easements**
  - 667.01 acres of proposed right of way
  - No easements anticipated
- **Bicycle/Pedestrian Accommodations**
  - 10-foot outside shoulders
- **Potential Displacements**
  - 1 commercial, 5 residential relocations and 7 additional structures
- **Water Resources**
  - 36 potential waters of the U.S., including wetlands
  - 17 floodplain crossings
  - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Nationwide Permit 14

## ■ **Community Impacts**

- Relieves congestion on US 83
- Improves connectivity in the region
- Provides new access for rural parcels
- No disproportionately high and adverse impacts on minority or low-income populations are anticipated

## ■ **Vegetation & Wildlife**

- Impacts to vegetation and native wildlife would be minimized to the extent practicable
- TPWD coordination was completed in March 2019

- **Threatened & Endangered Species Impacts**
  - The project is located within the range of, and contains suitable habitat for, 21 state-listed threatened or endangered species, and 29 Species of Greatest Conservation Need
  - USFWS Consultation was completed in July 2019



## ■ Archeological Resources

- Studies were conducted in stages, including testing for NRHP eligibility and data recovery at several sites
- Under the Build Alternative, impacts to significant or potentially NRHP/SAL-eligible archeological resources may occur. Further coordination would be required with the THC.

## ■ Historic Resources

- A Texas Centennial highway marker for Mission Mier a Visita is the only NRHP eligible property identified in the project area of potential effects
- The marker is proposed to be relocated; TxDOT has coordinated with the THC and the Starr County Historical Commission
- There would be no adverse effect to the marker

- **Hazardous Materials**

- No potential hazardous materials sites were identified

- **Traffic Noise**

- Traffic Noise Analysis identified a potential effect to three residential receivers; no noise abatement measures were determined to be reasonable and feasible

- **Air Quality**

- In an area in attainment or unclassifiable for all National Ambient Air Quality Standards

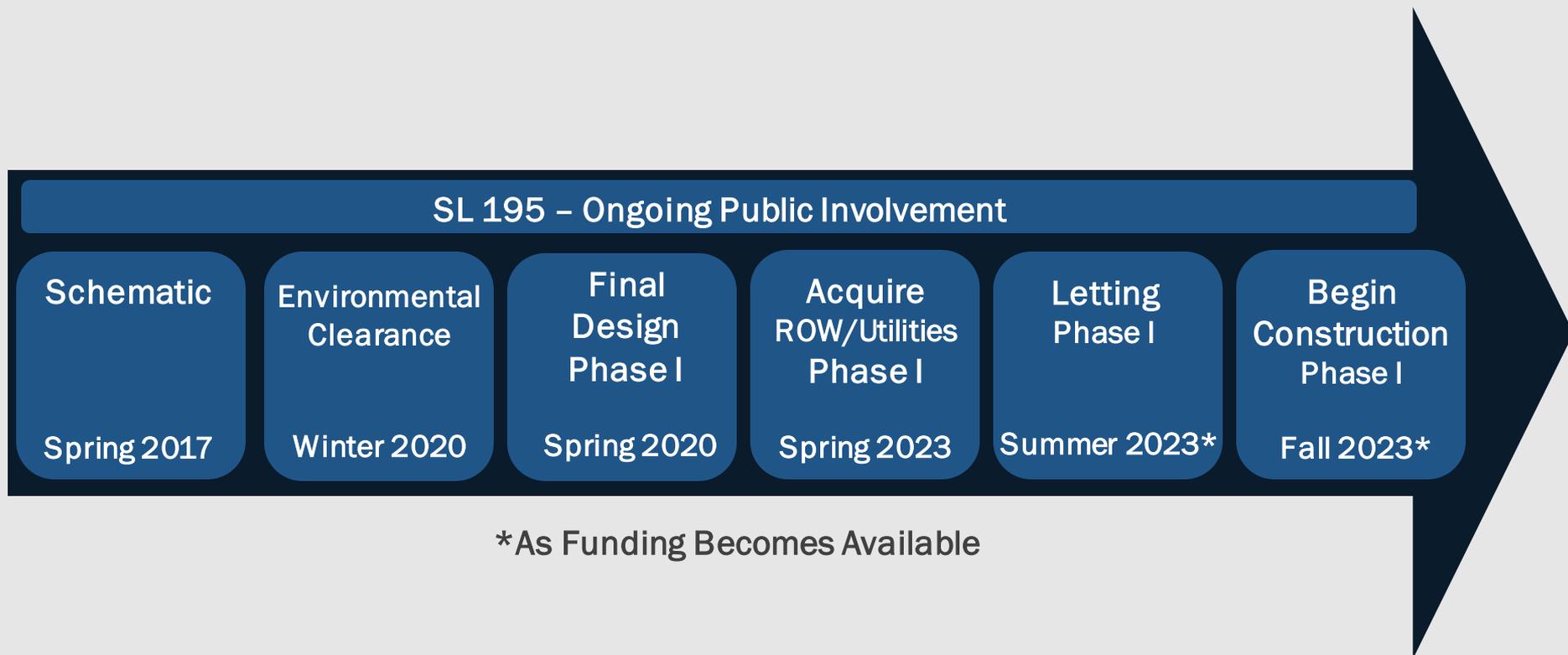
## Agency Coordination

- Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ)
- Texas Historic Commission (THC)/State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)
- Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD)
- Tribal Entities
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

# Right-of-Way Acquisition Process

- Follow federal state laws and policies
- The Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policy Act of 1970 (Uniform Act)
- Right-of-Way Brochures are available on the TxDOT Website: <http://txdot.gov/inside-txdot/forms-publications/publications/landowner-rights.html>
- Information about the benefits, services and Right of Way Acquisition schedule can be obtained by calling the TxDOT District Office at (956) 702-6110.

# Anticipated Project Schedule



# How to Provide Comments

## Submit comments by:

- **Emailing:** [Romualdo.Mena@txdot.gov](mailto:Romualdo.Mena@txdot.gov)
- **Calling:** (956) 704-9020 to leave a voicemail comment
- **Filling out a comment card to mail to:**
  - TxDOT
  - Attn: Pharr District Engineer
  - 600 W. I-2
  - Pharr, TX 78577
- **Online by visiting the website** [www.TxDOT.gov](http://www.TxDOT.gov). Search “SL 195” to find the meeting page. Download the comment form and return it to the mail or email address provided on the form.

**While comments are always welcome, they must be received on or before **Oct. 1, 2020** to be included in the official hearing documentation.**

**You may call project staff at (956) 702-6246 during regular office hours or email project staff at any time in the project development process.**

**Thank you for your  
participation in the  
SL 195 Virtual Public  
Hearing**