



# US 281 Lamparas to Evant

## Virtual Open House with In-Person Option

Monday, April 22, 2024 (Evant) & Tuesday, April 30, 2024 (Lamparas)

### Project CSJs:

0251-05-054, 0251-04-023, 0251-03-022

## Why am I here?

- Review the preferred route option that has been refined since the November 2023 open house
- Provide feedback on the project

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On behalf of the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), welcome to the third Open House for the US 281 Lamparas to Evant Project. This project is located in Lamparas and Coryell counties. As mentioned, this is the third Open House for this project. Previous Open Houses were held in February and November 2023 and presented preliminary alternatives for public review and comment. Since then, TxDOT has considered the public's input, refined the alternatives, and will now present a preferred route option. Input received in response to this Open House will be considered as the project is further developed. We appreciate your interest in the US 281 Lamparas to Evant project and look forward to your continued feedback.



HELP

# #EndTheStreakTX

End the streak of daily deaths on Texas roadways.

[TxDOT.gov](https://www.txdot.gov) (Keyword: #EndTheStreakTX)



#EndTheStreakTX Toolkit



November 7, 2000, was the last deathless day on roadways in Texas. That means for over two decades, at least one person has died every single day on Texas roadways. We all have a part to play to change that. This message is that reminder – to End the Streak of deaths on Texas highways. We need drivers and passengers to act more responsibly and help us reach our goal of zero deaths by 2050. Texans can play a major role in ending fatal crashes with a few simple driving habits: wear seatbelts, drive the speed limit, put away the phone and other distractions, and never drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs. So please do your part and share this message with your friends and family.

## Agenda



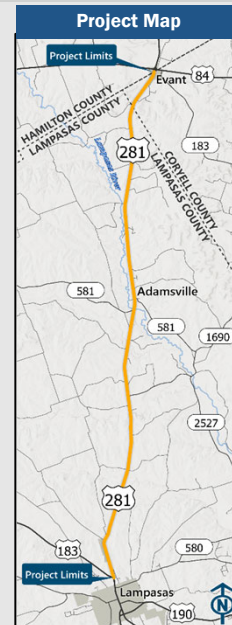
- 1 Project Location and Overview
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- 4 NEPA and Project Process
- 5 Typical Sections, Design Standards, Preferred Route Option
- 6 Environmental Constraints and Considerations
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This Open House has been convened by TxDOT's Brownwood District Office and is being held to receive and consider comments from the public regarding the US 281 Lampasas to Evant Project's preferred route. Today's presentation will review the project location, the purpose and need, general project information regarding the preferred route option, and how to submit comments. A key part of this Open House is to receive your feedback on the preferred route which has been determined since the last Open House in November 2023.



## Project Location

- This project is located along US 281 between US 183 in the city of Lamparas and the Hamilton County Line in the city of Evant.
- The project spans approximately 28 miles.

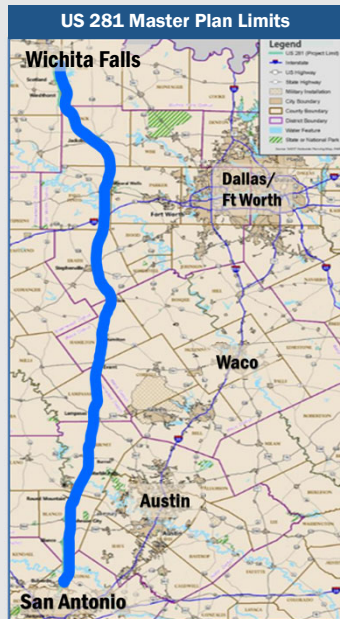


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The approximately 28-mile-long US 281 corridor is located in Lamparas and Coryell Counties as noted on this Project Location Map. It spans from US 183 in the City of Lamparas northward to the Hamilton County Line in the City of Evant. The widening would conclude at the south end of the town of Evant. The gold line on this map denotes the proposed project area.



### US 281 Master Plan (August 2016)

- TxDOT conducted a statewide study of the US 281 corridor from San Antonio to Wichita Falls.
- Goals:
  - Understand corridor travel characteristics.
  - Understand existing conditions and constraints involving adjacent communities.
  - Address corridor-level needs related to safety, congestion, economic development, and access to adjacent land uses.
  - **Identify potential long-range and localized improvements.**

Improvements to US 281 are being considered in a much longer corridor than just here in Lampasas and Coryell counties. In 2016, TxDOT prepared a US 281 Master Plan looking at the corridor all the way from San Antonio to Wichita Falls.

The four goals of the statewide study were to:

- Understand corridor travel characteristics.
- Understand existing conditions and constraints involving adjacent communities.
- Address corridor-level needs related to safety, congestion, economic development, and local access.
- And to identify potential long-range and localized improvements.



- Findings of the 2016 US 281 Master Plan included:
  - Improvements are needed in the next five to ten years to address safety and mobility needs.
  - Lowering the crash rate was needed on US 281, specifically from Lampasas to north of Adamsville.
  - Additional capacity was needed to meet future traffic demands resulting from population growth and significant truck traffic.

For Lampasas County, the 2016 Master Plan findings included the following:

- Improvements are needed in the next five to ten years to address safety and mobility needs.
- Lowering the crash rate was needed on US 281, specifically from Lampasas to north of Adamsville.
- Additional capacity was needed to meet future traffic demands resulting from population growth and significant truck traffic.



### **Purpose:**

- To enhance safety and improve mobility while addressing the long-term needs of the corridor and the demands of a growing population.

The purpose of the proposed project is to enhance safety and improve mobility while addressing the long-term needs of the corridor and the demands of a growing population.



### Need:

- Originally constructed in the 1930s, improvements on US 281 are needed to:
  - Continue supporting the growing population in the area\*
  - Improve passenger and freight mobility
- As part of the Texas Trunk System, US 281 must be improved to enhance mobility, safety and connectivity between cities with population over 20,000 people and major ports and ports of entry.

\* In 2020, the population of Texas was estimated to be 29.1 million. By 2050, the population is expected to surpass 42 million residents if migration continues at the same rate seen from 2010 to 2020 – an increase of over 44 percent. Sources: U.S. Decennial Census, Table P1 "Race"; American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate Table B01300 "Total Population"; Texas Water Development Board 2021 Regional Water Plan – Population Projections for 2020 – 2070.

There is a need to address an aging transportation infrastructure in a state with a rapidly growing population. Originally constructed in the 1930s, improvements on US 281 are needed to continue supporting the growing population in the area and to improve passenger and freight mobility.

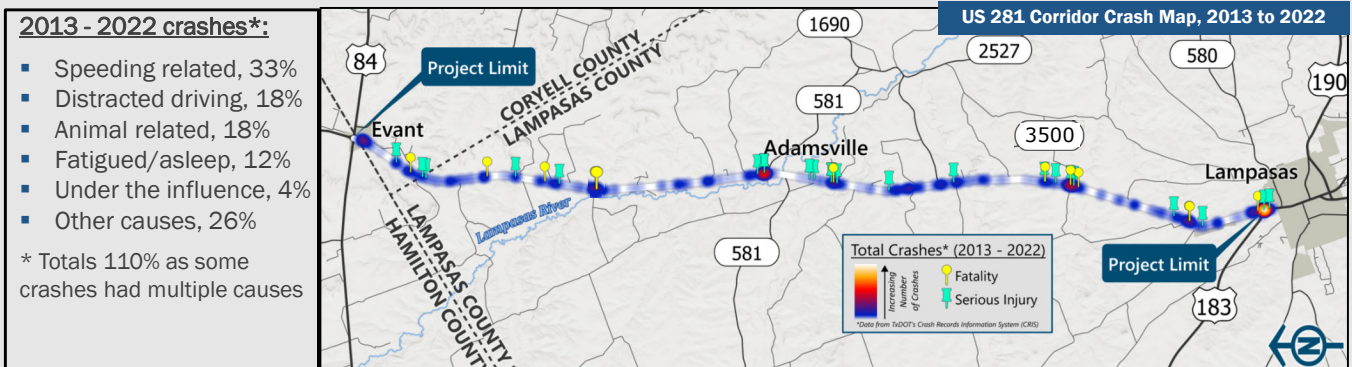
In addition, the project is needed to manage statewide transportation priorities.

To meet the requirements of the Texas Trunk System, US 281 is to be improved to enhance mobility, safety and connectivity between cities with a population of over 20,000 people and major ports and ports of entry.

## Crash History



- US 281 from Lampapas to Evant had a rate of about 107 total crashes per 100 million vehicle miles from 2013 to 2022, which is about **1.5 times higher** than the 2022 statewide average of 68 total crashes per 100 million vehicle miles for rural US highways.
- Statewide crash data from 2017 to 2021 indicates crashes on rural undivided highways occur **1.6 times more frequently** and are **1.5 times as likely to be fatal** than on divided highways with grassy medians.
- The table below shows the contributing factors of crashes on this section of US 281.
  - Excessive speed is the most frequent contributing factor followed by distracted driving, animal collisions and fatigue.
  - No fatalities were associated with crashes involving animal collisions from 2013 to 2022.



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We have continued to research crash information since the last Open House.

US 281 from Lampapas to Evant had a rate of about 107 total crashes per 100 million vehicle miles from 2013 to 2022, which is about 1.5 times higher than the 2022 statewide average of 68 total crashes per 100 million vehicle miles for rural US highways. Statewide data indicates crashes on undivided highways are 1.6 times more frequent and 1.5 times more likely to be fatal compared to divided highways with grassy medians as proposed in this project.

The table shown here indicates a percentage breakdown of the various contributing factors for crashes on this section of US 281. Excessive speed is by far the most frequent contributing factor to crashes at 33%, with distracted driving, animal collisions and fatigue other factors. Also, no fatalities were associated with crashes involving animal collisions from 2013 to 2022.

## Safety Focus



- Safety is a priority for TxDOT.
- Divided roadways reduce crashes by 43% compared to undivided regardless of the cause of the crash.
- In terms of safety, wide grassy medians:
  - Reduce the chance of head-on collisions (which result in more fatalities and/or severe injuries)
  - Reduce headlight glare
  - Provide a sheltered storage area for crossing vehicles
  - Provide sufficient storage length for large vehicles making left turns

TxDOT is focused on safety as a high priority in all the work it does.

Divided roadways reduce crashes by 43 percent compared to undivided highways, regardless of what factors contributed to the crash.

In terms of safety, there are many benefits of wide medians. The main benefit is a reduction in head-on collisions, which most often result in fatalities or severe injuries. Other benefits include a reduction in headlight glare, a safety area for crossing vehicles, and added space for large vehicles making left turns.



# 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 December 9, 2019, and executed by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and TxDOT.

Prior to December 16, 2014, the Federal Highway Administration, or FHWA, reviewed and approved documents prepared under the National Environmental Policy Act, known as NEPA; however, on December 16, 2014, the Texas Department of Transportation assumed responsibility from FHWA through a Memorandum of Understanding to review and approve certain assigned NEPA environmental documents. This Memorandum of Understanding between TxDOT and FHWA was updated on December 9, 2019. The review and approval process applies to this project.

Environmental studies are being conducted for the Project to support an environmental clearance in accordance with NEPA. These environmental analyses are necessary to identify, avoid, and minimize effects to the human and natural environments.

Notices for this Open House were advertised in the Lampasas Dispatch Record, The Four-County Evant Star, and on the TxDOT.gov website under "Hearings and Meetings Schedule." The Brownwood District Public Information Officer also prepared a news media release to advertise the Open House in the newspapers previously mentioned and in the Lampasas Radiogram. Additionally, notifications were mailed to local elected officials, adjacent property owners, and additional stakeholders or interested parties. A postcard was sent to zip codes within the proposed project area. Project information is also available on the TxDOT.gov website.

## Project Process



US 281 Lampasas to Evant

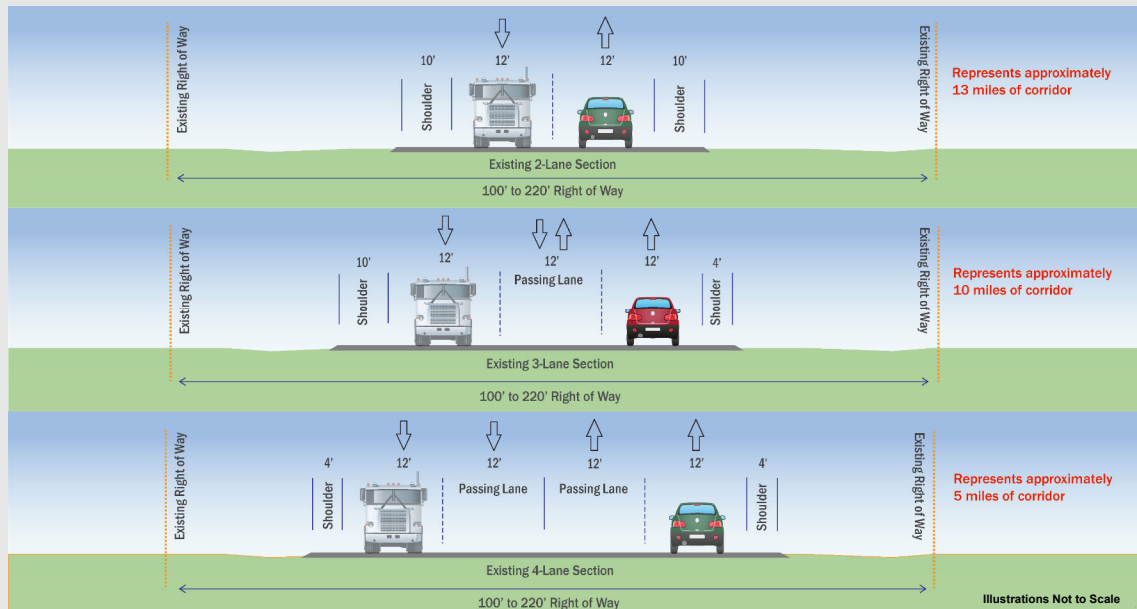
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There are several steps in the project development process. Initial steps, which have been completed, included data collection, constraints mapping, and developing of preliminary alternatives. The preliminary alternatives were presented for public review and comment at the first Open House in February 2023. A second Open House was held in November 2023, and the refined route alternatives, the relief route options, and results of the initial alternatives analysis were presented for public review and comment. The Information presented for preliminary alternatives and the corresponding evaluation are available on the TxDOT Open House #2 webpage.

At this third Open House, now underway, participants will be able to view the preferred route option and provide input. Input received in response to this Open House will be considered as the project is finalized. After this Open House, detailed project-specific environmental studies and investigations will be performed and required environmental documentation prepared.

## Existing US 281



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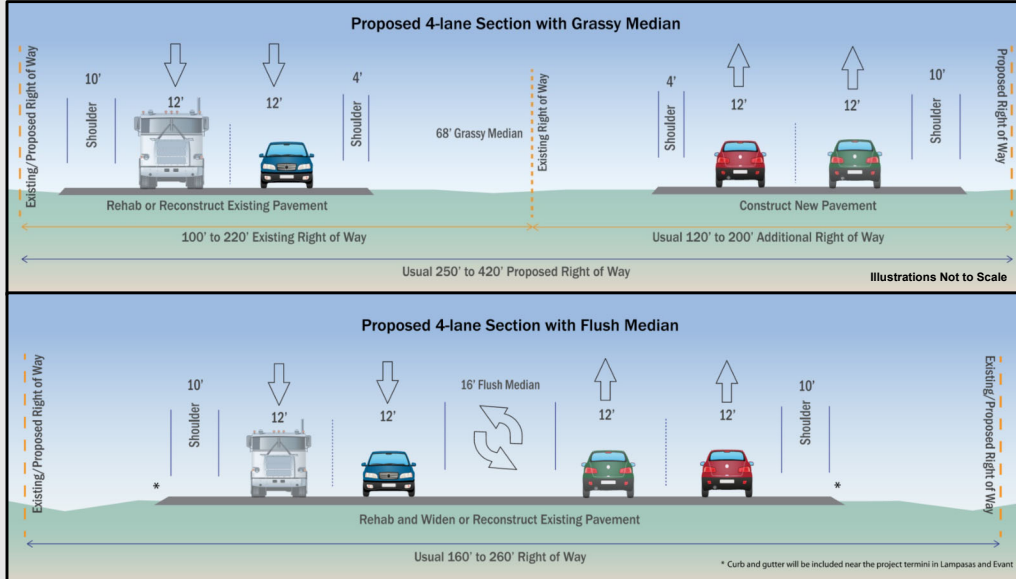
The existing US 281 typical roadway section within the overall project limits consists of one 12-foot-wide travel lane in each direction with adjacent shoulders, no center median, occasional passing lanes, and side ditch drainage. The existing right-of-way width varies along the corridor from 100 feet to 220 feet.

About 13 miles of the corridor has one lane in each direction without passing lanes as seen in the first image.

Another 10 miles of the corridor has a single passing lane in alternating directions as shown next.

The remaining 5 miles of the corridor has passing lanes in both directions as seen at the bottom.

## Proposed US 281 Preferred Typical Sections



### US 281 Widening Concept Considerations:

- Proposed right of way and new pavement construction is on the west or east side of existing roadway depending on constraints and engineering evaluation.
- For some locations, proposed right of way is required on both sides of the existing corridor.
- Proposed right of way width is wider in some locations where needed to accommodate more severe terrain or other existing conditions along the corridor.

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The proposed project would improve mobility by constructing additional travel lanes – transforming the highway to two lanes in each direction.

The project would increase safety by:

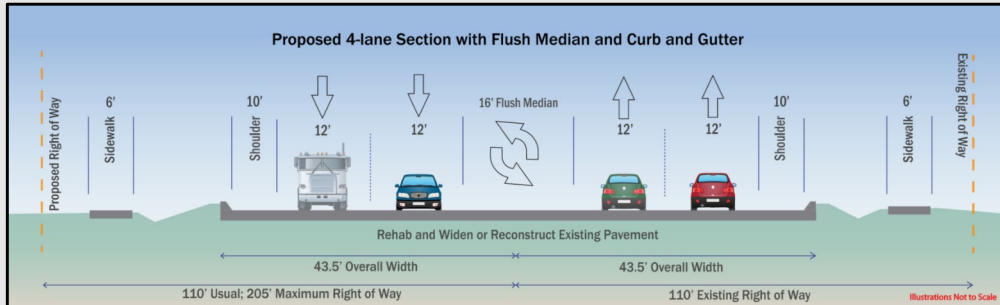
- Bringing the roadway up to current design and safety standards, which will reduce the potential for head-on crashes and provide a refuge area for those wanting to turn left.
- Separating northbound and southbound travel lanes with a grassy center median as shown in the typical section at the top of this slide.
- Note that the proposed right of way is required on the west, or east, or in some cases both sides of the existing roadway. There may also be cases where the proposed right-of-way width is wider to accommodate existing terrain.
- In the developed areas around Lampasas and Evant, the highway widening consists of a flush paved median that would also serve as a continuous two-way left-turn lane as shown by the figure at the bottom of this slide.
- The preferred route option includes upgrading other safety features such as guard rail, culvert end treatments and wide safety-shoulders.

# Proposed US 281 Preferred Typical Section - Adamsville



## US 281 Widening Concept Considerations:

- Proposed right of way and new pavement construction is on the west side of existing roadway through Adamsville.
- Proposed right of way width will vary depending on exact locations of existing parcel boundaries.



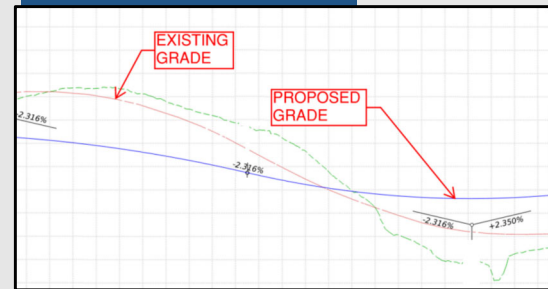
In the most constrained area in the center of Adamsville, the preferred route option will require some additional right of way on the west side of US 281 to provide the desirable width for the center two-way left-turn lane and wider shoulders, provide sufficient width for more gradual grading and better drainage accommodation through town, and provide a buffer between the sidewalk and travel lanes.

## US 281 Proposed Widening Design Standards

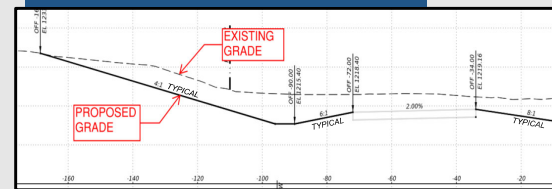


- The proposed design follows current TxDOT design standards for a 75 mph rural highway.
- The grades of the original highway built in the 1930s and widened in the 1960s were designed for 40 mph.
- Many of the existing low points must be raised and high points lowered.
- Existing side slopes are flattened to meet current safety standards.
- These changes can require significant right-of-way width for grading and realignment of county roads.

Example Proposed Profile View



Example Proposed Cross Section View



NOTE: Conceptual layout is preliminary and subject to change.

The proposed design follows current TxDOT design standards for a 75-mph rural highway.

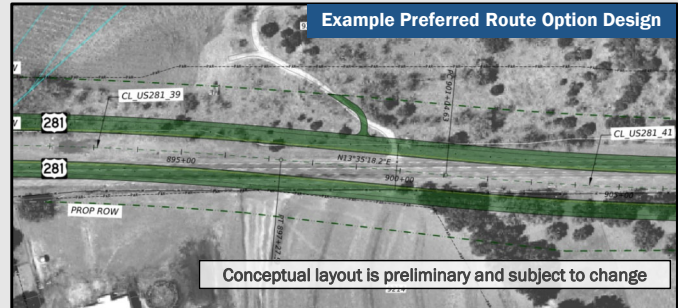
- The grades of the original highway built in the 1930s and then widened in the 1960s were designed for 40-mph.
- Many of the existing low points must be raised and high points lowered. You can see an example of the relative difference in grade between the existing and proposed ground in the top image.
- The existing side slopes must also be flattened to meet current safety standards, an example of which is depicted in the bottom image.
- These changes can require significant additional right-of-way width for grading as well as for the realignment of county roads.

## US 281 Widening – Preferred Route Option



- Widens roadway to WEST and EAST of existing corridor at different points
- Flush median in Adamsville
- Requires more than 500 acres of right of way
- Impacts more than 160 parcels
- Displaces nine residences and three businesses
- Impacts 12 other privately owned structures
- Preferred route option final design is **pending environmental study**
- Impacts 17 miles of overhead utilities and one transmission tower
- Approximate construction cost of \$249 million \*

\* Approximate construction cost is preliminary and subject to change



Widening the roadway on the west and east sides at different points along the existing corridor is reflected in the design example shown in the image here.

The preferred route option consists of:

- A flush or paved median in Adamsville that is wider than the paved median considered in the previous alternatives.
- More than 500 acres of right of way is required, impacting more than 160 parcels.
- Displacement of nine residences, three businesses and twelve other privately owned structures.
- Impact to 17 miles of overhead utilities and one electric transmission tower.
- Approximate construction cost of \$249 million in current dollars.

Please note, the preferred route option final design is **pending environmental study**.



# Environmental Constraints and Considerations

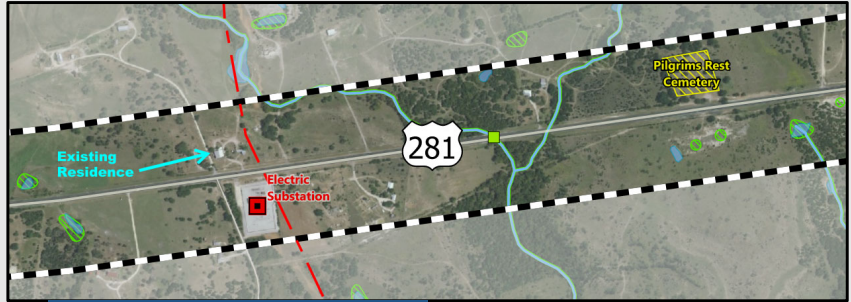


## Built Environment

- Residential displacements
- Commercial displacements
- Environmental justice community
- National Register of Historic Places listed / eligible sites
- Community facilities
- Parkland
- Cemeteries
- Oil and gas wells
- Cell towers and utilities
- Hazardous material sites

## Natural Environment

- River, stream or creek crossings
- 100-year floodplain
- National Wetlands Inventory (NWI)
- Golden-cheeked Warbler habitat



Example Environmental Constraints

NOTE: Layout is not to scale

This slide shows the built and natural environment resources and issues that are being considered.

The human environments range from residential and commercial displacements to impacts to historic sites, hazardous materials sites and much more. We have begun preliminary research into existing cultural resources along the corridor, but we also encourage anyone with knowledge of these resources to provide that information to our study team.

The natural resources include rivers, streams, creeks and wetlands as well as habitat for endangered species such as the Golden-cheeked Warbler.

## Other Considerations



- Stakeholders meeting with Adamsville community in January 2024
- Additional right of way required to meet current design and safety standards
- Parcels impacted
- Parcels divided (bisected)

Other considerations include:

- Feedback from the Adamsville community from a stakeholders meeting that was held in January 2024 where we heard from more than 50 members of that community.
- Additional right of way required to meet current design and safety standards.
- Parcels impacted.
- Parcels divided (bisected).

## Next Steps



- Review public comments
- Incorporate public comments into preferred route option design to the extent feasible
- Complete environmental study and NEPA document
- Develop final schematic design

Following this Open House and comment period, we will review public comments and incorporate them into the final preferred route option design to the extent feasible. At this point, we will move forward with preparation of the required NEPA documentation and development of the final schematics design.



## How to Provide Input

- You may submit comments through the following ways:
  - **EMAIL:** Jodie.Kelly@txdot.gov
  - **ONLINE PROJECT PAGE:** Visit [www.txdot.gov](http://www.txdot.gov) and search: “US 281 Lampasas to Evant”
  - **VOICEMAIL:** (512) 270-0284 available until 11:59 p.m. on May 17, 2024
  - **MAIL:** TxDOT Brownwood District  
ATTN: Jodie Kelly  
2495 Highway 183 North  
Brownwood, Texas 76802
- Comments related to this open house must be received or postmarked by **Friday, May 17, 2024, at 11:59 p.m.** to be included in the official open house record.
- The public is encouraged to submit or call with questions at any time during the study process.

Visit the Project webpage at [www.txdot.gov](http://www.txdot.gov) and search: “US 281 Lampasas to Evant” or use your phone or tablet to scan the QR code below.



All public comments received during this Open House will be fully considered and responded to in the US 281 Open House record and made part of the final documentation for this US 281 Lampasas to Evant Project. This documentation will then be made available for public review and download on the Open House website.

Your comments may be provided online, by mail, email or by voicemail as shown on this screen. Please visit the US 281 Lampasas to Evant Project webpage at [www.txdot.gov](http://www.txdot.gov) and search: “US 281 Lampasas to Evant” or use your phone or tablet to scan the QR code shown here.

Comments must be received or postmarked by **Friday, May 17, 2024**, to be included in the official documentation for this Open House.

The public is encouraged to submit or call with questions at any time during the study process.



# Thank you for your interest in the US 281 Lampasas to Evant Project.



**Please don't forget to submit your comments by Friday, May 17, 2024.**

We sincerely appreciate your interest in the US 281 Lampasas to Evant Project. We invite you to view the project information available online.

Your questions, comments and concerns will receive careful consideration. Please, don't forget to submit your comments by **Friday, May 17, 2024**.