

Paisano-Montana PowerPoint Script

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Hello, I'm Jennifer Wright, a public information officer with the El Paso District of the Texas Department of Transportation. Welcome to the second and final Public Meeting Series for the Paisano Drive and Montana Avenue Corridor Study. We would appreciate your feedback. Please note that you may pause this presentation at any point to allow more time to view the slides, and you may also pause the presentation and navigate forward or backward as needed. In this presentation, we will cover our data analysis, proposed recommendations, and study schedule. This is followed by an explanation of how to provide comments for our study.

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November 7, 2000 was the last deathless day on Texas roadways and 4,313 people lost their lives in 2023. That's a streak we want to break. Help TxDOT End the Streak of roadway fatalities by buckling up, driving the speed limit, putting down your phone and never driving under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.

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The Paisano Drive Study Corridor extends approximately 11.5 miles from Sunland Park Drive to Montana Avenue, passing through Downtown El Paso and the Bridge of the Americas. The purpose of this study is to develop short, mid, and long-term improvements for multimodal, safety, connectivity, transportation operations, and drainage. Short-term refers to recommendations that could take up to 5 years for implementation, while mid-term refers to recommendations that could take 5 – 10 years, and long-term refers to recommendations that could take more than 10 years.

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The Montana Avenue Study Corridor extends approximately 9 miles from Paisano Drive to Loop 375. The purpose of this study is to develop short, mid, and long-term improvements for multimodal, safety, connectivity, and transportation operations. Short-term refers to recommendations that could take up to 5 years for implementation, while mid-term refers to recommendations that could take 5 – 10 years, and long-term refers to recommendations that could take more than 10 years.

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We are currently in the corridor study stage of the process, where we've focused on data gathering and analysis to assess the practicality of short-, mid-, and long-term recommendations. Should TxDOT decide to proceed with the study recommendations, the projects must go through TxDOT's project development process. Several major tasks and more opportunities for public input would follow before construction can begin, including identifying funding for the projects.

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Existing Conditions and Data Collection for the Paisano Drive and Montana Avenue Corridor Study including population growth, crash statistics, and bike and transit information, can be found at the public meeting boards.

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An overview of the recommendations, including drainage, for the Paisano Drive and Montana Avenue Corridor Study can also be found at the public meeting boards.

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The first public meeting series was held in-person on October 17th and 18th, 2023 at the Texas Tech Health Sciences Center and Sun Metro Facility with 54 total attendees. The virtual public meeting was open from October 17th to November 1st, 2023. The video presentation received 142 views. A total of 126 total comments were received through the comment form, roll plots, online survey, and interactive map.

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We used input from the public meetings and stakeholder meetings to refine our recommendations. The proposed recommendations are presented in the next few slides. Paisano Drive from Coldwell Street to Durango Street was identified as a major fatal crash location due to its sharp curve geometry. Some of the short-term recommendations for this area include installing curb and pavement markings as well as transverse rumble strips and speed pavement markings to slow down traffic taking the sharp curve too quickly. Mid-term recommendations for this area include installing pedestrian hybrid beacons at San Antonio Street, Overland Avenue, and Durango Street and a shared use path from Coldwell Street to El Paso Street. A potential bike and scooter share station is also proposed at Durango Street to encourage safe pedestrian and bike activity.

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Two long-term recommendations for Paisano Drive between Coldwell Street and Durango Street are to realign the curve within the Right of Way to reduce curve radii and to add a signal at Durango Street if warranted by future traffic volumes. Another long-term recommendation for this area is a roundabout at Coldwell Street to slow down speeding vehicles heading west towards Coldwell Street.

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The Paisano Drive and Deltahi Drive / Virginia Street intersection was identified as a location with unusual intersection geometry and a high number of crashes. The mid-term recommendation for this location is to add a hooded left-turn from westbound Paisano Drive to Virginia Street and only allow right turns to and from Virginia Street and Delta Drive. Vehicles wanting to travel west from Virginia Street and Delta Drive will be directed to the traffic signal at St Vrain St which is one block east.

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On Paisano Drive at the Bridge of the Americas, potential pedestrian drop-off and pick-up areas are recommended in the northwest, northeast, and southwest quadrants. Due to recent lane geometry changes, San Antonio Avenue has vehicles traveling north to merge onto I-110. Since San Antonio Avenue only connects to the neighborhood community, the mid-term recommendation is to close access to San Antonio Avenue.

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Another mid-term recommendation for Paisano Drive is a shared use path from Copia Street to Alameda Avenue connecting three schools, the zoo, and the Bridge of the Americas for multimodal use. In this area, we are also proposing two pedestrian hybrid beacons at the locations of existing pedestrian bridges, which are proposed for removal. The beacons would allow pedestrians, including school children to cross safely without the underused pedestrian bridges. School flashers are also proposed from Washington Street to Val Verde Street to slow down vehicles traveling along Paisano Drive.

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The intersection of Paisano Drive and El Paso Drive has an atypical geometry and high delays. To improve the intersection, we are proposing installing video detection, optimizing traffic signal timing, and extending the northbound left-lane in the short-term. The mid-term recommendations include closing northbound access on Chelsea Street and closing the right turn entrance to the U-turn from Paisano Drive.

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The long-term recommendations for Paisano Drive and El Paso Drive are to change the geometry of Chelsea Street to tie into the intersection directly and to add an additional lane in the eastbound direction. Another long-term option would be a roundabout at El Paso Drive to allow for all turning movements. The charts at the bottom show how these two recommendations affect the level of service and delay.

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At the Paisano Drive and Montana Avenue intersection, the short-term recommendation is to optimize traffic signal timing and install edge line pavement markings and signage. The long-term recommendation is to add an additional signal pole and consolidate the intersection geometry to allow for pedestrian movements.

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Montana Avenue and Buffalo Soldier Road recommendations include removing overhead railroad flashers. It also includes mid-term recommendations of adding an additional northbound left-turn lane and extending the curb west of the intersection to create a hooded left-turn to improve safety.

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To consider pedestrian safety along the Montana corridor, we are proposing continuous sidewalks to fill in any gaps of missing sidewalks. From 2017 through 2022, 6 pedestrian crashes have occurred in the area from Hawkins Boulevard to Killarney Street, including 2 fatal crashes and 1 serious injury crash. We are proposing aesthetic pedestrian rail in the median at Buckner Street and Admiral Street to guide pedestrians to marked pedestrian crossings on Montana Avenue.

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A long-term recommendation to help with the capacity at major intersections along Montana Avenue is below-grade bypass lanes at Airway Boulevard and Hawkins Boulevard. The bypass lane would allow through traffic to bypass the traffic signals by going through underground lanes. The intersections themselves would remain similar with additional turn lanes.

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This typical section shows another view of the proposed below-grade bypass lanes with one 12-ft bypass lane in each direction and two 12-ft lane frontage roads on either side. The level of service charts show how delay and level of service improves with the bypass lanes.

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From McRae Boulevard to Global Reach Drive, we are proposing a shared use path on the northern and southern sides of Montana Avenue. This shared use path would connect to the existing shared use path at Global Reach Drive and proposed shared use path on McRae Boulevard. Based on projected traffic volumes, we are also proposing additional left turn lanes in the future to allow for more vehicles to travel on the cross streets of the ongoing construction from Global Reach to Loop 375.

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In addition to the ongoing construction, we are proposing a signal ahead sign, overhead flashers, and a speed feedback sign to slow down westbound traffic coming off the freeway to the Global Reach intersection west of Lee Trevino Drive. To accommodate future traffic volumes, we are proposing additional left-turn lanes on Lee Trevino Drive.

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This project was kicked off in Summer 2022. On November 3rd, 2022, May 24th, 2023, and February 29th, 2024, Agency Work Group meetings were held and attended by over 150 stakeholders. The first public meeting series was held October 17th and 18th, 2023 and had over 54 attendees. A total of 126 total comments were received through the comment form, roll plots, online survey, and interactive map. The second and final public meeting series is being held April 2nd and April 3rd, 2024, with a virtual option. The Draft Corridor Study Report is planned to be submitted in Spring 2024 with a final submittal in Summer 2024.

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Public input is critical to this project, and we appreciate your feedback! Comments may be submitted in several ways – via the project website, by email, or US Mail at the addresses shown on the screen. As part of this initial study phase, all comments must be submitted on or before Thursday, April 18th, 2024, to be included in the official record for this meeting.