FINAL 5-28-2020

VIRTUAL PUBLIC HEARING

Southeast Connector

Reconstruction and Widening of I-20, I-820, & US 287

I-20 from Forest Hill Drive to Park Springs Boulevard

I-820 from I-20 to Brentwood Stair Road

US 287 from Bishop Street to Sublett Road

CSJs: 0008-13-125, etc.

Tarrant County, Texas

Thursday, June 4; 6:00 PM

RICARDO GONZALEZ, P.E.

SLIDE 1 – Title Slide

Welcome to the Southeast Connector virtual public hearing. The Texas Department of Transportation, better known as TxDOT is proposing to reconstruct and widen I-20, I-820, and US 287 through the Cities of Arlington, Forest Hill, Fort Worth, and Kennedale in southeast Tarrant County, Texas.

Thank you for joining us. My name is Ricardo Gonzalez and I serve as the Director of Transportation Planning and Development for the Fort Worth District of TxDOT.

Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, TxDOT is hosting this virtual public hearing in lieu of a traditional in person public hearing. This pre-recorded presentation will show the same information that would have been presented during the in-person hearing.

We appreciate your interest in the Southeast Connector Project and welcome each of you to provide comments, questions, and concerns about the project, following this presentation.

SLIDE 2 – Safety & End the Streak

Before we start the hearing, I would like to take a minute to mention TxDOT's End the Streak campaign. November 7, 2000 was the last deathless day on roadways in Texas. That means for 19 years straight, at least one person has died every single day on Texas Highways. That's a streak we want to break. Texans can play a major role in ending fatal crashes with a few simple driving habits including wearing seatbelts, driving the speed limit, putting away the phone and other distractions, and never driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Let's "End the Streak" together!

SLIDE 3 – Public Hearing Agenda

This presentation will start by discussing how to make a comment on the proposed project since this will be a little different than a typical in person public hearing. We will then go into a detailed presentation concerning the location and design features for the proposed project. Next, we will discuss the anticipated environmental effects related to the project, followed by a discussion of right-of-way acquisition and the State's Right-of-Way Acquisition and Relocation Assistance Program as it relates to the project.

If you have not had a chance yet, please review the project information including the Draft Environmental Assessment, Environmental Technical Reports, public hearing presentation slides, and maps and drawings showing the proposed project design currently available on TxDOT's website, www.txdot.gov, by searching the keywords "Southeast Connector".

We would also like to thank all of the project staff and local and public officials that made this project and presentation possible. And thanks to all who are participating by viewing this presentation, your participation and input are greatly appreciated.

SLIDE 4 – Public Hearing Purpose

This hearing has been convened by the TxDOT Fort Worth District and is being held to receive comments from the public regarding the Southeast Connector Project**.** All comments received as a result of this hearing will be considered during future project development.

Many of you may have attended previous public hearings conducted by TxDOT. However, I would like to explain how we will conduct this virtual public hearing.

Similar to an in person public hearing, this public hearing has four essential purposes:

- To inform the public of the status of planning on the project and present the recommendations based on studies performed to date.
- To describe the project so those participating can determine the project's potential to affect their lives and property.
- To give the public an opportunity to provide their comments and input on the project before location and design decisions are finalized. However, due the virtual format, the comment process may be a little different than what you are used too. We will give a detail explanation of the ways to provide input on the project shortly.
- And finally, to develop a record of public views and participation to accompany recommendations for any decisions.

This public hearing is being held in compliance with both federal and state laws. For the official record, a transcript of this hearing will be made.

SLIDE 5 –Public Comments

TxDOT is committed to continuing its efforts to gain public feedback about this project. We understand this virtual public hearing format is a bit different, so let's take a few minutes and explain the comment process – which is the most important part of this presentation.

The TxDOT Fort Worth District is asking the public to provide their comments in the following ways:

1. To make a verbal comment: Call (817) 887-6150 and leave a voice message when prompted. Please limit your voicemail to a maximum of three minutes. This option will be available starting on June 4th, 2020 at 6 p.m. and will continue until June 22, 2020 at 5 p.m. Your verbal comments will be recorded and included in the public hearing documentation.
2. You may email your comments to: SoutheastConnector@txdot.gov.

3. Mail your comments to Loyl C. Bussell. P.E., District Engineer, TxDOT Fort Worth District, 2501 SW Loop 820, Fort Worth, TX 76133.
4. Additionally, you may submit your comments online:
    a. Visit www.txdot.gov.
    b. In the “Search TxDOT” box in the upper-right hand corner of the webpage, enter the search term: Southeast Connector.
    c. Select the Virtual Public Hearing webpage, then click on the “Submit Your Comment” button at the top right of the page or click on the email link at the bottom of the page.

In the event that the TxDOT.gov website is unavailable, please use the link shown here as an alternative to the TxDOT project website to access the project information and to submit your comments online.

Comments must be received on or before June 22, 2020 to be included in the virtual Public Hearing Summary Report. You may also submit a combination of both verbal and written comments.

As previously mentioned, project information including the Draft Environmental Assessment, Environmental Technical Reports, public hearing presentation slides, and maps or drawings showing the proposed project design are currently on available on TxDOT.gov.

Following this hearing, the District will proceed with the preparation of the final environmental documentation. Your statements and comments will be included in the virtual public hearing summary report. Each comment will be given full consideration in the preparation of the final environmental assessment and design recommendations for the Southeast Connector Project.

SLIDE 6 – Project Partners/Relationships

Before we start discussing the project details, the District would also like to acknowledge and thank our project partners that have or will participate in the development of this project, including:

- Federal Highway Administration, also known as FHWA

- North Central Texas Council of Governments, also known as NCTCOG
- City of Fort Worth
- City of Forest Hill
- City of Arlington
- City of Kennedale
- Tarrant County
- Trinity Metro

I will now introduce Katelyn Kowalczyk, the Consultant Public Involvement Specialist, who has been assisting TxDOT with developing this virtual public hearing.

KATELYN KOWALCZYK, BGE INC.

SLIDE 7 – Project Location

Thank you, Ricardo.

The TxDOT Fort Worth District proposes the reconstruction and widening of the I-20, I-820 and US 287 corridors and interchanges within the cities of Arlington, Forest Hill, Fort Worth, and Kennedale in southeast Tarrant County. The limits of proposed improvements include I-20 from Forest Hill Drive to Park Springs Boulevard, I-820 from I-20 to Brentwood Stair Road and US 287 from Bishop Street to Sublett Road. The total project length is approximately 16 miles.

The proposed improvements would reconstruct and widen the main lanes along I-20, I-820 and US 287 within the project area. Additionally, frontage road systems would be constructed at various locations, and bicycle and pedestrian accommodations would be provided throughout.

SLIDE 8–Purpose and Need

This project is needed because the capacity of I-20, I-820, and US 287 within the project limits is inadequate to meet current and future traffic volumes, resulting in congestion, reduced mobility, and an unacceptable Level of Service within these project limits; the connectivity of I-20, I-820, and US 287 with the existing local transportation systems is inefficient resulting in reduced mobility; and there are currently no continuous pedestrian

or bike facilities within or along frontage roads and no connection to municipal bike trails or facilities resulting in lack of connectivity.

The purpose of the proposed project is to reduce traffic congestion and improve mobility on the I-20, I-820, and US 287 roadways within the project limits; improve mobility and connectivity of I-20, I-820, and US 287 with the existing local transportation systems; and provide continuous pedestrian/bike facilities within or along frontage roads and connection to existing municipal bike trails or facilities .

The next few slides will discuss the existing roadway as well as the proposed project improvements, starting with I-20.

SLIDE 9– Existing Facility I-20

The existing I-20 roadway from Forest Hill Drive to Park Springs Boulevard is composed of four to five 12-foot wide main travel lanes in each direction separated by a concrete safety barrier or metal beam guard fence, located along the I-20 centerline, with 10-foot inside and outside adjacent shoulders. At limited locations along I-20, a grass median is located on either side of the barrier, between the barrier and the shoulder. In addition, 12-foot wide auxiliary lanes exist between the entrance and exit ramps at various I-20 locations. An auxiliary lane is the extra lane constructed between on and off ramps that allows drivers a safe way to merge into traffic while also preventing bottlenecks caused by drivers attempting to enter or exit the freeway.

Two major interchanges exist within the roadway network: the I-20/I-820 Interchange and the I-20/US 287 Interchange.

Along I-20, two to three-lane discontinuous frontage roads exist in each direction and are each composed of 12-foot wide lanes.

SLIDE 10 – Proposed Facility- I-20

Along I-20, from Forest Hill Drive eastward to the I-20/I-820 Interchange, the existing I-20 main travel lanes would be reconstructed and widened to six 12-foot wide main travel lanes in each direction with adjacent 10-foot wide inside and 12-foot wide outside

shoulders, auxiliary lanes would be added between the entrance and exit ramps to allow for efficient vehicular weaving.

The I-20 frontage roads would be reconstructed and widened from two lanes to four lanes in each direction. New location frontage roads would be constructed over the Union Pacific Railroad, and a new eastbound frontage road would be constructed from Forest Hill Drive eastward to Anglin Drive. The proposed design would provide continuous frontage roads from Forest Hill Drive eastward to the I-20/I-820 interchange.

SLIDE 11 – Proposed Facility- I-20

Along I-20, from I-820 eastward to US 287, the existing I-20 main travel lanes and the I-20/I-820 and I-20/US 287 interchanges would be reconstructed to provide five 12-foot wide I-20 main travel lanes in each direction with an adjacent four-lane collector-distributor road system installed in each direction. Collector-distributor lanes consist of parallel lanes running between the main travel lanes and the frontage roads that collect the traffic from closely spaced entrance ramps and then distribute it to a facility beyond the congested areas. These collector-distributor lanes would separate vehicular movements and reduce main lane weaving between vehicles traveling to and from US 287 with vehicles traveling along I-20.

The existing I-20 frontage roads would be reconstructed and widened to two to four 12-foot wide continuous lanes in each direction.

SLIDE 12 – Proposed Facility- I-20

Along I-20, from the I-20/US 287 interchange eastward to Park Springs Boulevard, the existing I-20 main travel lanes would be reconstructed and widened to five 12-foot lanes in each direction with auxiliary lanes added between the entrance and exit ramps.

The existing I-20 frontage roads would be reconstructed and widened to two to four 12-foot lanes in each direction. New location frontage roads would be constructed between Green Oaks Boulevard to Kelly Elliott Road.

SLIDE 13– Existing Facility - I-820

The existing I-820 roadway from I-20 northward to the I-820/US 287 Interchange is a four-lane roadway in each direction separated by a concrete safety barrier or metal beam

guard fence, located along the I-820 centerline, and composed of 12-foot wide main travel lanes and 10-foot wide inside and outside shoulders. Two 12-foot wide continuous I-820 frontage road lanes exist in each direction from I-20 to the I-820/US 287 Interchange.

Two major interchanges exist within the I-820 roadway network: the I-20/I-820 Interchange and the I-820/US 287 Interchange. Direct connections within the interchanges typically contain one 14-foot lane or two 12-foot lanes, dependent on the location.

SLIDE 14 – Proposed Facility- I-820

Along I-820, from I-20 northward to US 287, the existing I-820 main travel lanes would be reconstructed to seven 12-foot lanes in each direction. This reconstruction would allow merging and diverging US 287 vehicles to enter and exit, respectively, I-820 on the right-hand side of the I-820 corridor in both directions. This would help to eliminate the major main lane weaving that currently exists between vehicles traveling along I-820 and US 287 with the left-hand ramp access system.

The existing frontage roads would be reconstructed and widened to two to four 12-foot wide continuous lanes in each direction.

SLIDE 15– Existing Facility - I-820

Generally, I-820 from the I-820/US 287 Interchange northward to Craig Street is a two-lane roadway in each direction composed of 12-foot wide main travel lanes separated by a 40 to 44-foot wide grass median with a cable barrier system located adjacent to southbound lanes. The I-820 shoulders within this corridor are composed of four to 6-foot wide inside shoulders and four to 10-foot outside shoulders. I-820 from Craig Street northward to Brentwood Stair Road transitions to a three-lane roadway in each direction separated by a 28-foot concrete median with a concrete safety barrier or metal beam guard fence located along the I-820 centerline. In addition, 12-foot wide auxiliary lanes exist at various I-820 locations between the entrance and exit ramps.

The frontage roads between the I-820/US 287 interchange northward to Brentwood Stair Road are discontinuous. Typically, these frontage road locations are curbed and

composed of two 12-foot lanes in each direction with 2-foot wide inside shoulders and 6-foot wide outside shoulders.

SLIDE 16 – Proposed Facility- I-820

Along I-820, from US 287 northward to Meadowbrook Drive, the existing I-820 main travel lanes would be reconstructed to four 12-foot lanes in each direction with auxiliary lanes between the entrance and exit ramps.

The frontage roads would be reconstructed and widened to two to three 12-foot wide continuous lanes in each direction. New frontage roads would be constructed from Rosedale Street northward to Craig Street, and from Carey Street at US 287, and northward to Wilbarger Street at I-820 to provide for a continuous frontage road system.

Along I-820, north of Meadowbrook Drive, operational improvements consisting of ramp modifications to and from Meadowbrook Drive and Brentwood Stair Road would improve the current weaving between closely spaced ramps.

SLIDE 17– Existing Facility - US 287

The existing US 287 roadway from Bishop Street southward to the I-820/US 287 Interchange is a three-lane roadway in each direction separated by a concrete safety barrier or metal beam guard fence and composed of 12-foot wide main travel lanes and 10-foot wide inside and outside shoulders.

The frontage roads are discontinuous at the Miller Avenue/Wilbarger Street interchange and between Wilbarger Street at I-820, and Carey Street at US 287. The frontage roads are curbed and composed of two 12-foot wide lanes in each direction with 2-foot wide inside shoulders and 6-foot wide outside shoulders.

The existing US 287 roadway from the I-20/US 287 Interchange southward to Sublett Road is a two-lane roadway in each direction, composed of 12-foot wide main travel lanes with 6-foot wide inside shoulders and 10-foot wide outside shoulders. The northbound and southbound main travel lanes are separated by an approximately 60-foot wide grass median which contains a concrete safety barrier located directly adjacent to the southbound US 287 main travel lane shoulder.

Two-lane US 287 frontage roads exist in each direction from I-20 southward to Sublett Road. The northbound US 287 frontage road is discontinuous at Little Road. The frontage roads are composed of two 12-foot wide lanes with 2-foot wide inside shoulders and 6-foot wide outside shoulders.

SLIDE 18 – Proposed Facility- US 287

Along US 287 from Bishop Street to I-820, the project would reconstruct US 287 with three 12-foot main travel lanes in each direction with 12-foot wide auxiliary lanes between the entrance and exit ramps. The existing frontage roads would be reconstructed to two to three 12-foot lanes in each direction.

Along US 287 from I-20 to Sublett Road, the project would widen the existing main lanes to three 12-foot lanes in each direction with 12-foot auxiliary lanes between ramps with the I-20/US 287 Interchange. The frontage roads would be reconstructed to two to three 12-foot wide lanes in each direction.

SLIDE 19 –Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations

Currently, limited sidewalks exist adjacent to the frontage roads along the project corridor and are primary confined to only the major, high volume traffic frontage road and cross street intersections, as well as, a pedestrian and cyclist bridge located over the I-820 main travel lanes north of Craig Street. Bike lanes also do not exist within the corridor.

The proposed project would provide a 10-foot wide, shared-use path, for bicycles and pedestrians, on one side of the project corridor and a 6-foot wide sidewalk for pedestrians on the other side of the corridor. These facilities would be located adjacent to frontage roads and would be Americans with Disabilities Act or ADA compliant. For non-vehicle users wanting to travel along the project corridors, pedestrians would be accommodated on both sides, while bicyclists would be accommodated on one side. ADA compliant wheelchair-accessible ramps would be constructed throughout the project. The reconstructed cross street interchanges would also include ADA compliant sidewalks, wheelchair-accessible ramps, and marked crosswalks. The proposed project would comply with the TxDOT Guidelines Emphasizing Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations and the March 11, 2010, US Department of Transportation Policy

Statement on Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations, Regulations and Recommendations.

SLIDE 20 –Pedestrian Bridge Closure

A bike and pedestrian bridge is currently located north of Craig Street and provides access across I-820 for users traveling from the area of West Handley Elementary School on the west side of I-820 to the area of Handley Park and Handley Meadowbrook Community Center on the east side of I-820. Bridge users must walk across existing frontage roads on both sides of I-820, and even though those frontage roads carry low volumes of traffic traveling at relatively low speeds, there is no signage or protected pedestrian crossing across at frontage roads.

TxDOT conducted pedestrian and bike counts on the existing pedestrian bridge, the Craig Street bridge, and the Meadowbrook Drive bridge. Counts were conducted on four days during peak travel times both before and after Fort Worth ISD resumed the school year. Based on those counts, the Meadowbrook Drive bridge was crossed by 373 users, the Craig Street bridge was crossed by 65 users, and the existing pedestrian bridge was crossed by 27 users during the four-day period. TxDOT assumes these travel counts reflect the preferences of bike and pedestrian users that currently cross I-820.

Based on the pedestrian and bike counts study, the existing pedestrian bridge would be removed as part of the proposed project, and those bike and pedestrian users would be accommodated by using the proposed sidewalk or shared-use paths that would be installed on the Craig Street and Meadowbrook Drive bridges to cross I 820.

SLIDE 21 –Access Changes: Exit & Entrance Ramps

In addition to the removal of the pedestrian bridge at Craig Street, there are several other local access changes for motorists proposed as part of the project. The proposed access changes being considered are discussed in the draft environmental assessment and on the design schematics, both available on the project website for your review.

The following slides summarize the proposed access changes.

Several existing exit or entrance ramps would be reconfigured, including the removal of ramps in some areas to comply with current TxDOT design criteria. The reconfiguration

of existing exit or entrance ramps would alter vehicular access for some adjacent businesses and residents along the frontage roads. The proposed project would change ramp locations along the corridors resulting in several cross streets losing direct access with the project main lanes. These cross streets would have the direct entrance and or exit ramps removed, requiring motorists to travel through additional intersections and traffic signals to get access to and from the project main lanes. This is anticipated to impact the direct main lane access for 8 cross streets. Ramp updates would also require denial of access from private properties to the frontage roads and removal or relocation of driveways near locations where the new ramps would connect with the frontage roads.

SLIDE 22 –Access Changes: Ramps Configuration

Several ramps would be redesigned from a diamond configuration to an "X" pattern to improve access and mobility between the main lanes and frontage roads and to increase the vehicle storage at traffic signals on the frontage roads. More vehicle storage would decrease the chance of vehicle queues onto the exit ramps and main lanes, a safety and traffic operations issue. This would reduce delays and improve emergency response times for community services.

SLIDE 23 –Access Changes: Cul-de-Sacs

Cul-de-sacs and street closings are needed at various locations because the existing streets would not match elevations of the proposed frontage roads or would conflict with control of access requirements per TxDOT's Roadway Design Manual and Access Management Manual at ramp junctions or intersections. These cul-de-sacs would close access at one end of the street requiring travelers to access frontage roads from adjacent driveways and streets in a more circuitous manner. The design of cul-de-sacs would accommodate fire trucks and other emergency vehicles. Cul-de-sacs and dead-end streets anticipated to be impacted are shown on this slide. These locations are also illustrated on the design schematics located on the project website.

Several intersections at cross streets would also be improved as part of the proposed project. This is anticipated to increase mobility across the project corridors.

The following slides discuss key areas along the proposed project where changes in access and mobility would be expected.

SLIDE 24 –Access Changes: Jughandles at Craig Street

Craig Street is proposed to bridge over the I-820 frontage roads and main lanes to continue to provide local access across I-820. The construction of jughandle connections are proposed to maintain access between Craig Street and the I-820 frontage roads. The jughandle configuration consists of providing at-grade two-way connections on each side of the I-820 frontage roads to intersect with the north side of Craig Street. The jughandles could slightly increase travel time and distance for some motorists; however, mobility is expected to improve for through traffic on Craig Street as the current all-way stop-controlled intersections would change to only stop-controlled for the jughandles. Elevation changes at Craig Street would require removal of direct access from Craig Street to Mel Street; however, this access would still be available from Putnam Street, a one-block detour. The elevation changes would also require removal of access from Rich Street with the southbound frontage road.

SLIDE 25 –Access Changes: Anglin Drive

Anglin Drive, north of I-820, would be realigned and shifted approximately 300 feet to eliminate the existing segment of two-way frontage road and align Anglin Drive with the existing bridge over I-20. The current two-way frontage road causes a potential safety concern since two-way frontage roads are uncommon for drivers in urban areas. Even though this realignment of Anglin Drive results in several displacements, the accessibility and mobility in this area is anticipated to improve because of the re-alignment for motorists and bike and pedestrian users using Anglin Drive to travel across I-20. There is also currently no eastbound frontage road between Forest Hill Drive and Anglin Drive. The proposed improvements would include the construction of the eastbound I-20 frontage road between these two intersections.

SLIDE 26 –Access Changes: Frontage Roads

A proposed eastbound I-20 frontage road would connect Forest Hill Drive to Hartman Road and Hartman Road to Anglin Drive where no frontage road exists today.

The proposed project includes construction of I-20 frontage roads over Union Pacific Railroad. Currently, the Union Pacific Railroad acts as a barrier between communities on either side of the railroad. The construction of continuous frontage roads over the railroad would enhance local access by providing grade-separated crossings over the railroad where there currently are none. This would allow for new modes of transportation including pedestrians and bicycles to safely cross the railroad, thereby increasing cohesion and access.

New location frontage roads would be constructed along I-20 between Green Oaks Boulevard and Kelly Elliott Road. This would also benefit local traffic along with bike and pedestrian users crossing Kee Branch.

New frontage roads would be constructed along I-820 from Rosedale Street northward to Craig Street. These frontage roads would replace the existing collector-distributor system and would provide better access to adjacent properties and minimize the existing weaving conditions between ramps.

New frontage roads would be provided between Carey Street at US 287 and Wilbarger Street at I-820. This would provide better circulation of travel between the I-820 and US 287 frontage roads and possible access for adjacent properties.

SLIDE 27 –3D Visualization

A 3D visualization model was also prepared to help the public understand the proposed project features. The visualization plan view of the project layout, exhibits of proposed interchanges and neighborhoods, and fly through animation are currently available on TxDOT's website by searching the keyword "Southeast Connector".

The 3D video is also available on the virtual public hearing website shown here.

SLIDE 28 –Proposed Project Aesthetics

A Project Aesthetics Plan will be developed during the detailed construction design phase of this project. Development of the Aesthetics Plan will include coordinating with local cities for their input on the plan. This slide illustrates examples of aesthetic elements included on previous projects in the Fort Worth District that may be incorporated into the Southeast Connector Project.

SLIDE 29 –Project Alternatives

During project design and environmental review, several project alternatives were considered and eliminated from further consideration. Those alternatives included adding managed lanes, adding express lanes, or adding collector-distributor lanes throughout the project corridor.

TxDOT also considered adding general purpose lanes to provide for needed additional capacity just like the proposed project, except this alternative would not reconstruct the frontage roads or add bike and pedestrian facilities.

Additional information about these alternatives can be found in the draft environmental assessment available on the project website for your review.

SLIDE 30 –Project Cost

The estimated total cost for the proposed project would be approximately $2 billion dollars. It is anticipated that the project would be funded with federal and state funds.

TxDOT plans to procure a design-build contractor to reconstruct the corridors with construction expected to begin in 2021 and is anticipated to be completed in 2026.

We will now discuss an overview of the environmental evaluation for the proposed Southeast Connector Project.

SLIDE 31 – Review and Approval of Environmental Document

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 to review and approve certain assigned NEPA environmental documents. The Memorandum of Understanding between TxDOT and FHWA was updated on December 9, 2019.

Environmental technical reports have been performed for the proposed Southeast Connector Project to support the Environmental Assessment in accordance with NEPA.

The environmental analyses are necessary to identify, avoid, and minimize effects to the human and natural environments.

The draft environmental assessment was approved for further processing by TxDOT and has been coordinated with other public agencies. The environmental technical reports and draft environmental assessment are available at the TxDOT Fort Worth District office, and on the TxDOT website. If you need assistance accessing or receiving this information, please contact the TxDOT Project Manager, Curtis Loftis, P.E., by calling (817) 370-6807.

SLIDE 32 – Environmental Review / Impacts Addressed

The technical reports for this project addressed the potential environmental impacts identified in coordination with the engineering and design phase of the proposed project. These areas of evaluation included natural, social, and cultural resources.

This slide shows a list of all resources that were evaluated during the environmental analyses. The following slides include a summary of the more notable findings.

SLIDE 33– Environmental Review – Traffic Noise

A Traffic Noise Analysis was performed in accordance with TxDOT's (and FHWA approved) *Guidelines for Analysis and Abatement of Roadway Traffic Noise* and TxDOT's *Reasonable Cost Proposal for 2018 Noise Policy* memo. The FHWA traffic noise modeling software was used to calculate existing and predicted year 2045 traffic noise levels at 129 representative receivers. Representative receivers are locations where frequent human activity occurs throughout the project area. The model primarily considers the number, type and speed of vehicles; highway alignment and grade; cuts, fills and natural berms; sounding terrain features; and the locations of activity areas likely to be impacted by the associated traffic noise. Noise impacts were identified at 95 representative receivers; and, noise abatement measures were evaluated. These noise abatement measures consisted of traffic management; alteration of horizontal and or vertical alignments; acquisition of undeveloped property to act as a buffer zone; and the construction of noise barriers. Before any noise-abatement measure can be proposed

for incorporation into the project, it must be determined to be both feasible and reasonable.

SLIDE 34– Environmental Review – Traffic Noise

Based on the analysis, a total of 22 noise barriers are being proposed for incorporation into the project. The approximate locations of these noise barriers are shown on this slide and on the Noise Barrier Exhibit available on the project website for your review.

Final decisions on noise barriers will be determined at noise workshops conducted with adjacent property owners during the detailed design phase of the project. The adjacent affected property owners will be given the opportunity to participate in these workshops and would be allowed to vote on whether they desire a wall adjacent to their property. Noise barriers would be included with the overall construction of the project.

Final decision on the location and size of the proposed noise barriers will not be made until completion of the project design, utility evaluation, and polling of adjacent property owners.

To avoid noise impacts that may result from the future development of properties adjacent to the project, local officials responsible for land use control programs must ensure, to the maximum extent possible, no new activities are planned or constructed along or within predicted 2045 noise impact contours.

More information about the traffic noise analysis, noise abatement measures, and noise impact contours can be found in the Traffic Noise Technical Report or Draft EA.

SLIDE 35– Environmental Review – Environmental Justice

In compliance with the FHWA Title VI program and Executive Order 12898 Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, an assessment was performed to identify, minimize, and mitigate potential project impacts on minority and low-income communities. A large portion of the study area is comprised of these environmental justice communities, with concentrations along I-820 and US 287 north and east of the I-820/US 287 Interchange, as well as along I-20 west of the I-20/I-820 interchange.

There are 42 potential displacements (23 single-family residential and 19 commercial properties) associated with the proposed project. The displaced commercial properties' services do not target or serve specific minority groups. The proposed project would not restrict access to any existing public or community services, businesses, commercial areas, or employment centers. However, notable access changes at Anglin Drive, the frontage roads across the Union Pacific Railroad at I-20, and Craig Street would impact minority populations. Predominant minority populations in these impacted areas are Black or African American and Hispanic or Latino.

The proposed changes to Anglin Drive would provide direct access across I-20 north and south through road realignment with the removal of the existing offset roadway. This access change would cause displacements but substantially improve traffic flow through improved access.

Adding jug handle-style ramps at Craig Street and I-820 would provide direct access from frontage roads to Craig Street due to ramp reconfiguration in the area. This access change would result in the displacement of one commercial and 10 single-family residential properties, but substantially improve traffic flow through improved access. Braided entrance and exit ramps that cross over each other vertically along I-820 would require Craig Street to be raised, making frontage road connection without jug handle ramps between Craig Street and the frontage roads impossible without greater displacements or lost connectivity between parcels and the frontage roads.

SLIDE 36– Environmental Review – Environmental Justice

The addition of shared-use paths for bicyclists and sidewalks for pedestrians would increase mobility for these modes of travel. The improved mobility from the proposed project would likely benefit Trinity Metro users and their trip times in the project area. This could benefit low-income users who may not be able to afford the costs of car ownership, in addition to other transit-dependent populations. The proposed roadway would ultimately provide all modes a more efficient route to access cross streets and adjacent properties in the project area.

The bike and pedestrian bridge located north of Craig Street provides access to Handley Park and other community facilities, and its removal would disproportionately impact

minority populations. However, the proposed enhancements to the Meadowbrook Drive and Craig Street bridges, where there is more pedestrian traffic, would minimize the adverse impact of the bike/pedestrian bridge removal.

The project team performed site visits and multiple outreach and engagement events within these communities to understand the potential impacts and gather concerns from the community. Some of the public involvement activities included a town hall meeting with the citizens of Forest Hill and two town hall meetings with State House District 95, which includes the Handley neighborhood in the Craig Street area, and the portion of Forest Hill community. At these meetings, alternative design concepts were shown, and attendees were able express concerns and have questions answered.

Community cohesion, safety, and access would increase in areas where a new mode would be provided, like bike and pedestrian facilities, to cross pre-existing barriers such as roadways and rail lines. These benefits from the proposed project to local drivers, transit users, pedestrians, and cyclists would be equally distributed in environmental justice areas, including the Anglin Drive and United Pacific Railroad area and the Craig Street area. as well as non- environmental justice areas. Following the application of minimization and mitigation measures, and considering public input on the proposed project thus far, the proposed project is not expected to result in disproportionately high and adverse impacts to environmental justice populations.

SLIDE 37– Section 4(f)

Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act, often referenced to as “Section 4(f)”, applies to publicly owned, significant and accessible parks, recreation areas, and wildlife and waterfowl refuges; as well as significant historic and archeological sites, regardless of whether they are publicly or privately owned. The proposed project would not require the use of, nor substantially impair the purposes of, any Section 4(f) Protected Properties.

SLIDE 38– Environmental Review – Cultural Resources

Impacts to cultural resources have been evaluated in accordance with TxDOT, FHWA, and the Texas Historical Commission standards and requirements.

TxDOT archaeologists determined that an archeological intensive survey is not warranted for the proposed project.

Surveys for historic-age resources were conducted in 2004 and 2020. There are two historic resources that have been previously determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places listing or NRHP near the project, the Carver Heights Historic District and Hawkins Cemetery. The project proposes no acquisitions of right-of-way or easements from either resource or any other listed or previously determined eligible NRHP properties. It is anticipated that the proposed construction would have no adverse effect to historic properties.

SLIDE 39– Environmental Review Summary

The proposed project crosses 19 waterbodies and two wetlands within the project limits. Construction within the jurisdictional limits of the waterbodies would be authorized by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers under a Section 404 of the Clean Water Act Nationwide Permit 14 for linear transportation projects. A Preconstruction Notification would not be required because impacts would be less than 0.10 acre at each crossing and the wetlands have been avoided during the design process and would not be impacted.

The proposed project crosses the 100-year floodplain associated with Village Creek and its tributary; Kee Branch and five of its tributaries, and six tributaries to Lake Arlington. The hydraulic design for this project would be in accordance with current FHWA and TxDOT design policies, laws, regulations, and standards. The proposed project would not increase the base flood elevation to a level that would violate applicable floodplain regulations and ordinances.

This project is located within an area that has been designated by the Environmental Protect Agency, or EPA as a serious and marginal nonattainment area for the 2008 and 2015 ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards, or NAAQS; therefore, transportation conformity rules apply. To comply with conformity, the transportation improvement program is being updated.

Construction of the proposed project would include drilling of bridge piers, excavation, and other earth moving activities. Such activities have the potential to encounter

hazardous materials and substances associated with past human activities. A hazardous materials initial site assessment, or ISA, was completed for the proposed project. Seven sites were determined to be either moderate or high environmental risk to the project. As the project advances and detailed design is developed, further hazardous materials impact evaluation will be performed to determine the need for additional investigations.

The proposed project would impact five different vegetation habitats types including Cross Timbers Woodland and Forest, Disturbed Prairie, Riparian, Urban, and Open Water. Impacts to vegetation would be avoided or minimized by limiting disturbance to only that which is necessary to construct the proposed project. The removal of native vegetation would be avoided to the greatest extent practicable and a native and locally adapted seed mix would be used in the re-vegetation of all disturbed areas.

In conclusion, the studies, analyses, and evaluations performed thus far indicate the proposed project would cause no significant environmental impacts.

SLIDE 40 –Agency Coordination

This slide identifies completed and ongoing agency coordination conducted for the proposed project so far. Agency coordination would continue through project construction.

SLIDE 41 –Public Involvement

Throughout the duration of the project, TxDOT has conducted multiple events for local officials and the general public to disseminate information about the project and receive input and comments on the proposed improvements. This slide provides a list of the events that have taken place since the initiation of the Southeast Connector project.

Next, let's discuss the right of way acquisition process.

SLIDE 42 –Right-of-Way

Right-of-way acquisition and denial of access would be required to accommodate the proposed facility. A total of 22.6 acres of new right-of-way and 3.3 acres of permanent easements would be required to accommodate the proposed improvements, ramps, and bridge structures. There would be 23 residential displacements and 19 commercial displacements due to the project.

SLIDE 43 – Right-of-Way Acquisition and Relocation Assistance Program

Property rights needed for the expansion of the Texas highway system are acquired under the guidelines of the "Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Act of 1970" and the various subsequent addenda.

Further, it is the policy of TxDOT that individuals impacted by transportation systems expansion shall not be denied benefits, excluded from participation or otherwise be subjected to discrimination based on the grounds of race, color, sex, age, handicaps, or national origin.

SLIDE 44 – ROW Acquisition Process

The State's authority to acquire property for the transportation system is founded in the Fifth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. This authority can be used only when there is a demonstrated public need for the property and the property owners are compensated with "just compensation." "Just Compensation" is defined as the "fair market value" of the property needed plus an amount for damages that might accrue to the remaining property as a result of severing the required right of way from the whole property.

As previously stated, each impacted property owner is offered "just compensation" for the property needed for the project. To arrive at this value, independent appraisers are hired to prepare detailed appraisals and establish value.

A written offer to the property owners is made based on the value determined in the appraisals. The owners are given a minimum of 30 days to consider the offer.

SLIDE 45 – Advanced ROW Acquisition

Advanced acquisition is TxDOT's ability to legally purchase right of way, prior to environmental clearance or before a determination is made that the property is needed for the project. TxDOT has performed advanced acquisition of right of way for this project. The advanced acquisition process followed the same legal requirements mentioned

previously including the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Act of 1970 and “Just Compensation”.

SLIDE 46– ROW Acquisition Process

Brochures explaining the program in more detail can be found on the TxDOT website, under “Forms & Publications” or by contacting our office. If you have any additional questions concerning the acquisition of property, denial of access, or driveway changes, please contact the TxDOT Fort Worth District - Right of Way office.

I will now turn the program back to Mr. Ricardo Gonzalez who will explain the process for public inquiries.

RICARDO GONZALEZ, P.E.

SLIDE 47 – Public Comments

Thank you, Katelyn.

As previously stated, one of the goals of this public hearing is receive your thoughts, questions and concerns about the proposed project. We will now review the public comment process.

Comments may be submitted through email to SoutheastConnector@txdot.gov, by mail to Loyl C. Bussell at the TxDOT Fort Worth District Office, online at TxDOT.gov or by calling 817-887-6150 and leaving a voice message. Please limit your voice mail to a maximum of three minutes. You may also submit a combination of verbal and written comments.

Your verbal, email and written statements will be equally accepted following this hearing and must be received on or before June 22, 2020.

SLIDE 48 – Next Steps and Timeline

Following this hearing, documentation of this public hearing will be prepared and will be reviewed by TxDOT for a final environmental finding and design approval.

Each voicemail, email, and written statement received on or before June 22, 2020, will be carefully analyzed. Following the comment period, TxDOT will prepare a Public Hearing

Summary Report that will include responses for all comments received on or before June 22, 2020.

Where appropriate, changes would be incorporated into the project design, and revisions made to the environmental documentation. In addition, property owners near an area where the proposed project may be altered would be contacted and coordinated with concerning any proposed changes.

After the Public Hearing Summary Report has been approved and all concerns are addressed, TxDOT is anticipated to issue an environmental finding for this project in the summer of 2020. After the finding is received, right of way acquisition would continue and utilities would be relocated with construction anticipated to begin in the Winter of 2021. Construction is expected to be completed with the roadways open to the public in Winter 2026.

SLIDE 49 –Public Inquires

Please note that the public may call project staff during regular office hours or email project staff to ask questions about the project at any time in the project development process. You can contact the TxDOT Project Manager, Curtis Loftis, P.E., by calling (817) 370-6807 or by email at: SoutheastConnector@txdot.gov.

SLIDE 50 – "Thank You for your Interest" / Hearing is now Adjourned

Thank you for watching this virtual public hearing and interest concerning the proposed design of the Southeast Connector Project.

This concludes this presentation and this hearing is now adjourned.