



January 21 & 23, 2025

WELCOME

Interstate 69 (I-69) Connector Public Scoping Meeting

From I-69C/US 281 to I-69E/US 77
Hidalgo, Cameron, and Willacy Counties, Texas
CSJ: 0921-02-353

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.

Welcome to the Texas Department of Transportation’s Virtual Public Scoping Meeting with In-Person option for the proposed I-69 Connector project. My name is Catherine Ramirez, and I am a part of the consultant team working on this project. On behalf of the Texas Department of Transportation’s Pharr District (TxDOT), I would like to welcome and thank you for participating in this virtual public scoping meeting.

This is a pre-recorded presentation. Please note that you may pause this presentation at any point to allow more time to view the slides, you may also pause the presentation and navigate forward or backward as needed.

The TxDOT Pharr District is initiating an Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed I-69 Connector project from I-69C/US 281 to I-69E/US 77 in Hidalgo, Cameron, and Willacy Counties, Texas.

In this presentation, we will cover draft planning materials used to conduct the study and provide an opportunity for public input and comments. This presentation is followed by an explanation of how to provide comments for the proposed project. The meeting materials and other project information can be found at www.txdot.gov by searching “I-69 Connector.”

Public Scoping Meeting Format

This public scoping meeting is being offered both Virtually and In-Person

The Virtual and In-Person Public Scoping Meetings will provide the same information and the opportunities to comment do not differ

The in-person public scoping meetings will be held:

Tuesday, January 21, 2025

5 p.m. to 7 p.m. CST

J. Economedes High School Cafeteria
1414 N Alamo Rd, Edinburg, Texas 78541

Thursday, January 23, 2025

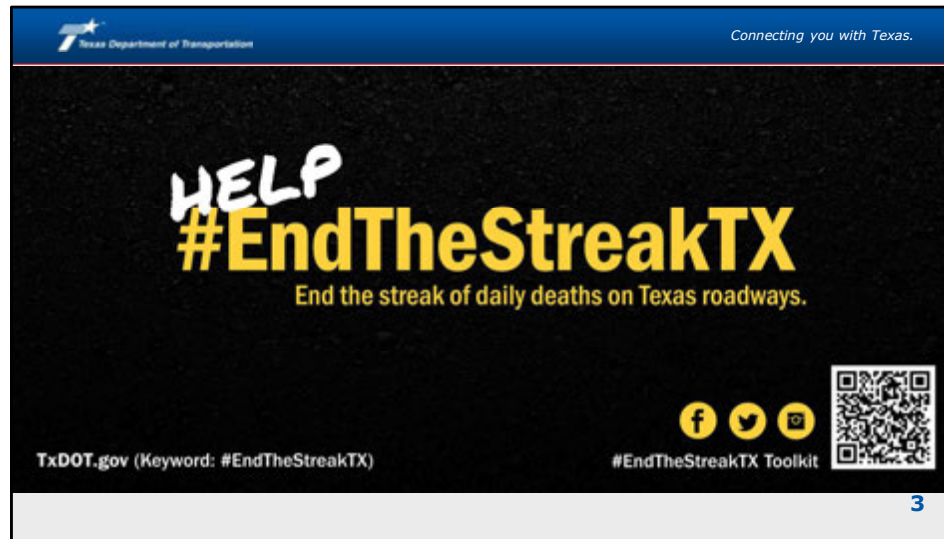
5 p.m. to 7 p.m. CST

Santa Rosa High School Cafeteria
102 Jesus R Cruz, Santa Rosa, Texas 78593


2

This public scoping meeting is being offered both virtually and in-person and will provide the same information. The opportunities to comment do not differ.

The in-person public scoping meetings will be held on Tuesday, January 21, 2025 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. CST at J. Economedes High School Cafeteria located at 1414 N Alamo Rd, Edinburg, Texas 78541 and on Thursday, January 23, 2025 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. CST at Santa Rosa High School Cafeteria, located at 102 Jesus R. Cruz, Santa Rosa, Texas 78593.



November 7, 2000, was the last deathless day on roadways in Texas. That means for over 24 years, at least one person has died every single day. 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.



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Agenda

1 Purpose of Public Scoping Meeting	7 Timeline
2 Project Overview	8 Public Comment Process
3 Project History	
4 Purpose and Need	
5 Range of Alternatives and Analysis	
6 Environmental Overview	

4

This presentation includes the purpose of the public scoping meeting, the project overview, project history, purpose and need, range of alternatives and analysis, environmental overview, the project timeline, and the public comment process.

TxDOT as the lead agency is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for this project. An EIS is a government document that analyzes impacts to the human and natural environment. It is the highest level and most rigorous study conducted for transportation projects and prepared when Administration determines the action is likely to cause significant impacts to the environment. The EIS process is conducted in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act, resource agency involvement, and public involvement.

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The Purpose of Public Scoping Meeting is to Review and Comment on:


-  Draft Purpose and Need Statement
-  Draft Coordination Plan and Schedule
-  Draft Range of Alternatives Technical Report
-  Proposed Alternatives Analysis Methodology
-  Environmental Constraints

5

The purpose of this Public Scoping Meeting is to provide an opportunity for the public to review, and provide input on the projects’:

- Draft purpose and need statement
- Draft coordination plan and schedule
- Draft range of alternatives technical report
- Proposed alternatives analysis methodology
- Environmental constraints; and to
- Identify any significant issues that will be analyzed in depth in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

You can review these draft documents by navigating to the TxDOT website by typing www.txdot.gov, and search “I-69 Connector.”


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Project Overview

Project Study Area:
Approximately 400 square miles, Hidalgo, Cameron, and Willacy Counties

Project Limits: From I-69C/US 281 to I-69E/US 77

Project Length: Varies from approximately 23 to 26 miles.

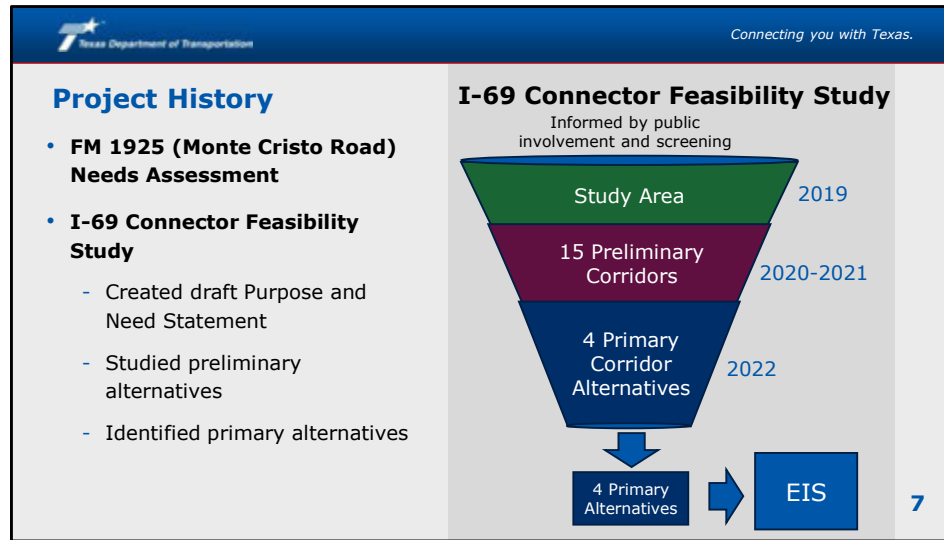


6

The proposed I-69 Connector project will explore a new, non-toll freeway extending from I-69C/United States (US) 281 to I-69E/US 77. The project study area covers approximately 400 square miles and is located in portions of Hidalgo, Cameron, and Willacy Counties.

The proposed project evolved from an early study conducted on FM 1925, also known as Monte Cristo Road, and a subsequent TxDOT feasibility study. The feasibility study assessed several conceptual corridor alternatives to address transportation needs. Based on the feasibility study, conceptual alternatives varied in length from approximately 23 to 26 miles.

On the map here, red outlines the study area, and the beige areas highlights city limits.



In 2015, prior to the I-69 Connector Feasibility Study, TxDOT conducted a Needs Assessment Study for FM 1925/Monte Cristo Road. This study evaluated improving and expanding FM 1925 from the proposed SH 68 project to I-69E/US 77. Given the anticipated development and population growth in the region, TxDOT determined the scope should broaden to include alternatives beyond FM 1925 as part of the advanced planning process, leading to the rebranding of the study as the I-69 Connector. As a result, the I-69 Connector feasibility study then began in 2019 to evaluate the need for a new potential connection from I-69C/US 281 to I-69E/US 77.

A study area was developed for the project, a draft purpose and need statement was prepared, a traffic origin-destination study was completed, and fifteen preliminary alternatives were developed and screened. These fifteen alternatives were narrowed to four primary corridors.

Public engagement was an integral component of the study, including technical workgroup meetings and public meetings. A technical workgroup meeting was held at Weslaco City Hall Legislative Chambers on October 2, 2019, followed by a virtual meeting on October 27, 2020.

Feasibility study public meetings were conducted at:

- J. Economedes High School on December 10, 2019
- Santa Rosa High School on December 12, 2019
- The Endowment Center on November 3, 2021
- The Combes Community Center on November 4, 2021

In addition, a virtual public meeting was held between November 3 to November 19, 2021.

The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the I-69 Connector is currently being developed based on the results of the feasibility study. The total project length will depend on the selected alternative.

Draft Agency Coordination Plan

TxDOT will serve as the lead agency for the proposed project

For a more detailed review, visit www.TxDOT.gov and search keyword "I-69 Connector"



In accordance with 23 U.S. Code § 139(g), TxDOT, as lead agency, has prepared a draft agency coordination plan for the proposed I-69 Connector project. This plan is intended to establish a schedule and process for coordinating public and agency participation and comment during the environmental review process. The coordination plan is developed early in the environmental and planning process. It will be adjusted and updated as input is received from cooperating and participating agencies and the public, and as the complexity of potential environmental issues are revealed. For a more detailed review of the Agency Coordination Plan, please visit www.txdot.gov, keyword search "I-69 Connector."

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Cooperating and Participating Agencies Roles

Cooperating Agencies	<p>Federal agencies that have either jurisdiction by law regarding aspect(s) of the proposed project or special expertise pertaining to the proposed project.</p> <hr/> <p>Assist in the preparation, coordination, and review of the EIS, participate in the scoping process, and participate in the development of the purpose and need statement, range of alternatives methods, and level of detail for analyzing alternatives.</p>
Participating Agencies	<p>Participate in the scoping process, participate in the development of the purpose and need statement, range of alternatives methods, and level of detail for analyzing alternatives and identifying and providing input on issues of concern regarding potential impacts.</p>

9

An agency scoping meeting was held on July 29, 2024. As the lead agency, TxDOT invited federal, state, tribal nations, and local governments to become involved with this project as a cooperating or participating agency. Both cooperating and participating agencies participate in the scoping process but have different roles.

Cooperating agencies are federal agencies that have legal authority or specific expertise related to the project. They assist in preparing and reviewing project documentation, and in developing the project’s purpose, needs, alternatives, and analysis methods.

Participating agencies are often non-federal, also help shape the project's purpose, consider different approaches, and provide input on areas of concern regarding potential impacts.

A list of Cooperating and Participating Agencies are included in the draft Agency Coordination Plan.

TxDOT is now presenting the same information in this Public Scoping Meeting to receive input from the public.

Draft Purpose and Need

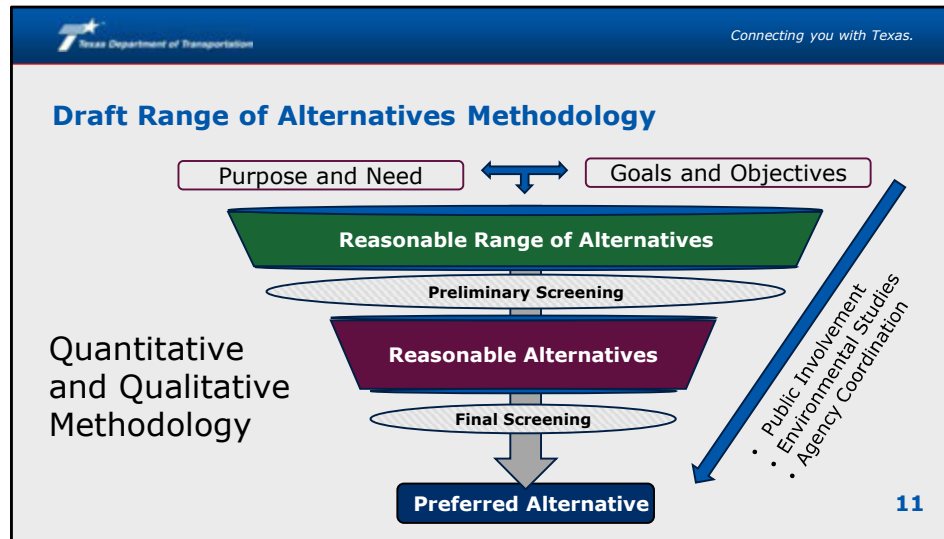
To alleviate/reduce traffic congestion and improve regional mobility, to improve and increase transportation network connectivity, to address future population growth and travel demands, and to provide an east-west hurricane evacuation route



10

The purpose and need of the proposed I-69 Connector is to alleviate/reduce traffic congestion and improve regional mobility, to improve and increase transportation network connectivity, to address future population growth and travel demands, and to provide an east-west hurricane evacuation route.

Supporting documentation for this Draft Purpose and Need is included in the report found at the TxDOT website.



As TxDOT develops a range of reasonable alternatives for the I-69 Connector project, the study will build on early planning efforts completed during the feasibility study. The process of evaluating alternatives will follow a phased approach. In the first phase, TxDOT will conduct a preliminary screening using both qualitative and quantitative criteria. Each alternative will be assessed based on how well it meets the project’s purpose and need statement, engineering feasibility, environmental considerations, community impacts, and public feedback. Alternatives that are not technically or economically feasible, or that fail to meet the project's goals, will not be carried forward. The methodology for analyzing alternatives may be refined based on feedback from cooperating and participating agencies as well as public input. In the second phase, TxDOT will conduct a more detailed analysis, incorporating environmental studies, engineering constraints, and public and agency feedback to evaluate each alternative’s transportation performance, feasibility, and potential impacts. The alternatives analysis will begin with the draft Purpose and Need statement and the goals identified in the feasibility study. Public involvement, environmental studies, and coordination with relevant agencies will continue throughout this process. Once a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is prepared and approved for further review, TxDOT will publish a Notice of Availability and hold a public hearing to gather comments on the findings. Following the public hearing, TxDOT will move forward with preparing the Final EIS and issuance of a Record of Decision.



- Alternative A- Yellow
- Alternative B- Blue
- Alternative C- Green
- Alternative D- Orange
- No-Build Alternative

The feasibility study identified four primary alternatives. TxDOT considers these to be the range of alternatives that will be carried forward into the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

Alternative A, the yellow alignment, was developed based on technical workgroup input that encouraged usage and development of State Highway (SH) 107 while minimizing impacts to properties.

Alternative B, the blue alignment, was developed on new location, following parcel lines where possible and minimizing impacts to residential properties.

Alternative C, the green alignment, was developed based on the technical workgroup's input recommendation to intersect I-69E/US 77 as near to the existing Orphanage Road as possible.

Alternative D, the orange alignment, was developed on new location, following parcel lines where possible and minimizing impact to residential properties. The No-Build Alternative will be carried through the evaluation process and used for the baseline comparison when analyzing alternatives.

Proposed Alternatives Analysis-Purpose and Need

Subject/Resource	Method of Analysis
Alleviate Congestion	Traffic analysis (Low, Medium, High)
Provide Additional Hurricane Evacuation Route	Yes/No
Improve Mobility	Traffic analysis (Low, Medium, High)
Enhance Connectivity of the Transportation Network	Traffic analysis (Low, Medium, High)

13

As mentioned, a key component of the alternatives analysis is to determine if an alternative meets the Purpose and Need Statement. In this slide, you will see the subject and/or resource on the left side of the table that will be analyzed and the method of analysis used to determine if an alternative meets the Purpose and Need Statement.

TxDOT plans to analyze alternatives using qualitative and quantitative methods. A qualitative method would mean analyzing a subject or resource using criteria such as low, medium, or high impacts. Low, medium, and high impacts will be determined by the range of impacts. For example, if alternative ranges in impacts from 10 displacements to 50 displacements (the lower and upper ends of impacts), then an alternative that may fall between these ranges could be ranked as a median impact. If the difference between a low alternative and another alternative are close in comparison, then both alternatives may be identified as low impacts. The alternatives analysis takes into consideration many different resources. TxDOT is looking for the lowest impacts but it's important to understand that when looking at the numerous range of subjects and resources evaluated, some resources may have higher impacts than others, but still qualify as a recommended alternative.

A quantitative method would mean using a specific quantity such as acres or miles, as an example, to assess potential impacts.

TxDOT plans to analyze congestion relief, providing for hurricane evacuation, improving mobility, and enhancing connectivity of the transportation network. Supporting studies such as traffic analysis reports would be used to support results related to congestion, mobility and transportation network connectivity.

Proposed Alternatives Analysis Methodology-Engineering

Subject/Resource	Method of Analysis
Parcels Impacted	Number (Low, Medium, High)
Utility Conflicts	Number and type (Low, Medium, High)
Proposed ROW	Amount (Acres)
Alternative Length	Miles
Hydraulic Structures	Length (Low, Medium, High)
Construction Complexity	Low, Medium, High
Estimated Construction Cost	U.S. currency

14

For engineering components, TxDOT will be evaluating 11 sources. TxDOT plans to study the number of parcels impacted by each alternative, utility conflicts, proposed right of way needs (or needed property to build the roadway), alternative lengths, hydraulic structures, construction complexity and the estimated cost of construction. As shown on this slide the method of analysis follows a qualitative or quantitative approach depending on the subject or resource analyzed.

Proposed Alternatives Analysis Methodology-Engineering

Subject/Resource	Method of Analysis
Grade Separations (Bridges)	Number
Conflicts with Irrigation and Drainage Districts	Low, Medium, High
Congestion Relief	Measured by level of service, a qualitative measure of motor vehicle traffic service
Conflicts with Platted Developments	Low, Medium, High

15

The number of grade separations (bridges), conflicts with irrigation and drainage districts, congestion relief and conflicts with platted developments will also be studied.

Congestion relief would be assessed by measuring the level of service. Level of service is a measurement of traffic flow and ranked by letters A through F. A level of service A is free flow traffic, and a level of service F is traffic gridlock.

Proposed Alternatives Analysis Methodology-Environmental

Subject/Resource	Method of Analysis
Land Use Impacts	Acres of developed, undeveloped properties
Displacements	Type and number
Proposed ROW	Amount (Acres)
Community Facilities	Number of schools, churches, grocery stores, institutional properties
Environmental Justice Populations	Impacts to minority and low-income populations (Low, Medium, High)
Traffic Noise Impacts	Probability of traffic noise impacts based on land use activity Areas (Low, Medium, High)

16

TxDOT will be evaluating 29 environmental resources. TxDOT will analyze impacts to land use, the number of anticipated displacements, proposed ROW (or needed property to build the roadway), community facilities, environmental justice populations and traffic noise impacts.

Proposed Alternatives Analysis Methodology-Environmental

Air Quality Impacts	Based on projected traffic make-up and projected traffic volumes (Low, Medium, High)
Hazardous Materials	Type of site within and/or adjacent to Alternative (Low, Medium, High)
Visual/Aesthetic Impacts	Changes in visual character (Low, Medium, High)
Potential to Impact Threatened and Endangered Species	Low, Medium, High (assessed by qualified biologist)
Prime Farmland Soils	Amount (Acres of within alternative footprint)

17

Air quality, hazardous materials, visual/aesthetic impacts, potential impacts to threatened and endangered species, and prime farmland soils will also be evaluated.

Proposed Alternatives Analysis Methodology-Environmental

Critical Habitat	Yes/No
Impacts to Land Cover/Habitats	Amount (acres within alternative footprint)
Waters of the U.S.	Amount (acres within alternative footprint)
Floodplain Impacts	Amount within 100-year floodplain
303(d) Listed Waters	Proximity to impaired stream segment
International Boundary and Water Commission Coordination	Yes/No
Impacts to Water Wells	Yes/No, number

18

Impacts to critical habitat, land cover/habitat types, impacts to waters of the U.S., floodplain impacts, 303(d) listed waters, International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) coordination, and impacts to water wells.

Proposed Alternatives Analysis Methodology-Environmental

Subject/Resource	Method of Analysis
National Register of Historic Places-Listed	Number
National Register of Historic Places-Eligible	Number
Section 4(f) Properties (Historic Sites, Parks, Recreational Areas, Wildlife and Waterfowl Refuges)	Yes/No, number
Section 6(f) Properties	Yes/No, number
Chapter 26 of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Code	Yes/No

19

For historical studies, TxDOT will evaluate how each alternative may impact listed and eligible national register of historic places. TxDOT will also evaluate protected lands including Section 4(f) properties, Section 6(f) properties and if the alternative is subject to Chapter 26 of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Code.

Proposed Alternatives Analysis Methodology-Environmental

Subject/Resource	Method of Analysis
Archeological Resources	Low, Medium, High probability
Historical Resources	Number of historic-age resources
Cemeteries	Number
Induced Growth	Induced development that may result from the project
Cumulative Impacts	Direct, Indirect and Cumulative impacts that are reasonably foreseeable within a defined area of influence
Public Involvement	Input from public (dialogue, responses to concerns, solutions, public support)

20

Archeological resources will be analyzed based on low, medium, and high probability of encountering intact sites. TxDOT will also look at the number of historic-age resources, cemeteries, induced growth, cumulative impacts and any input received from the public.

Memorandum of Understanding

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

The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried-out by TxDOT pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated December 9, 2019, and executed by the Federal Highway Administration and TxDOT.

The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this proposed project are being, or have been, carried-out by TxDOT pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327 and a memorandum of understanding (MOU) dated December 9, 2019, and executed by Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and TxDOT. The MOU assigns to TxDOT FHWA responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other environmental laws. This review and approval process applies to this proposed project as the I-69 Connector project is receiving federal funds; therefore, TxDOT is required to assess the potential environmental effects of the proposed project in accordance with Federal standards.

Environmental Overview

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other federal and state environmental regulations, the environmental process would include an evaluation of potential environmental impacts to the natural and human environment, including, but not limited to:



Water Resources



Air Quality



Traffic Noise



Community Impacts



Vegetation & Wildlife



Threatened & Endangered Species



Indirect & Cumulative Impacts



Historical & Archeological Resources



Hazardous Material Sites

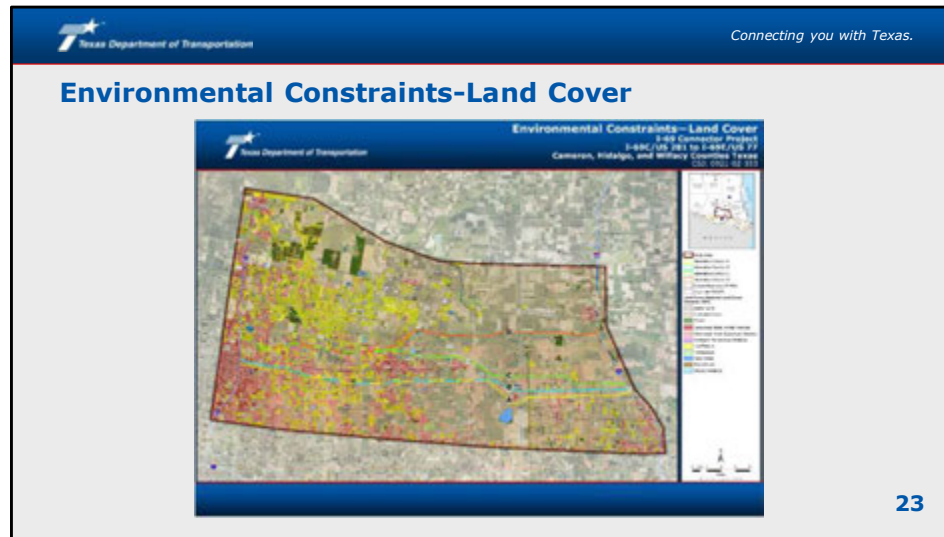


Land Use & Parkland

22

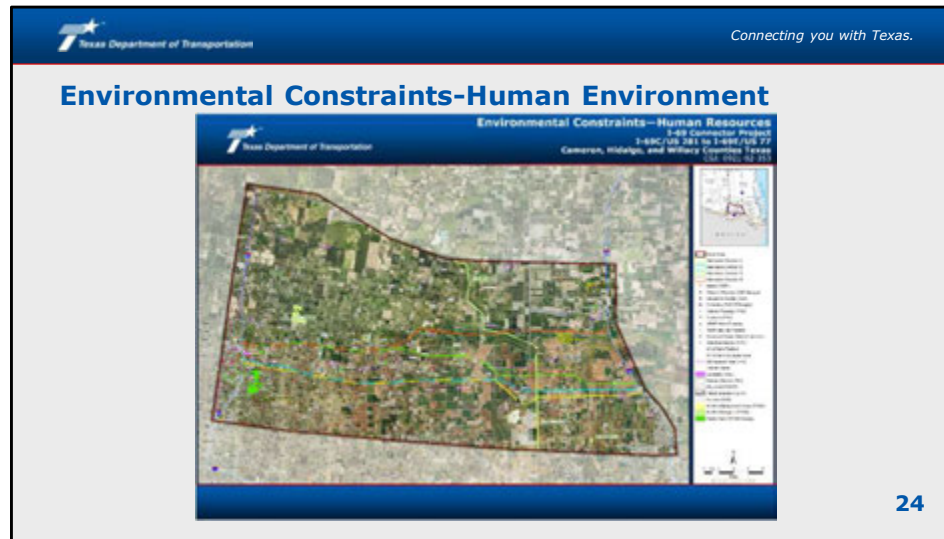
NEPA requires federal agencies to evaluate the environmental effects of their proposed actions prior to making decisions, and to provide opportunities for the public to review and comment on those evaluations.

On this slide, we've noted a variety of environmental resources that we are analyzing as part of the NEPA process. As we continue with our environmental analysis, please notify the project team by providing public comment if you see any resources we may have missed as we work to evaluate alternatives. Your help in this process will ensure our environmental analysis is thorough and accurate throughout the study.



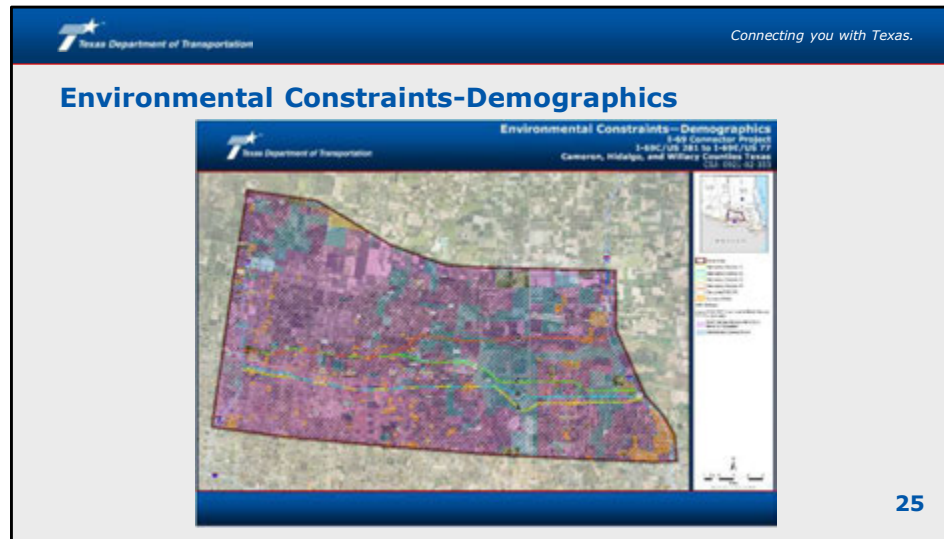
This slide shows environmental constraints-land cover mapped in the I-69 project area. The study area is approximately 400 square miles. The land cover map includes areas that are developed or undeveloped. The red areas on the map show developed areas with the darker red being high intensity development and the lighter red as low intensity development. You can see that most of the developed areas are concentrated in the west/southwest portion of the study area. The study area also has agricultural areas including croplands and pasture lands. Yellow areas are denoted as hay or pastureland areas. Cultivated crops are shown as light tan areas. Each of the four primary alternatives are shown on the maps any how they relate to land cover within the study area. All maps shown are preliminary and subject to revision.

To view and download this map visit www.TxDOT.gov and enter "I-69 Connector."



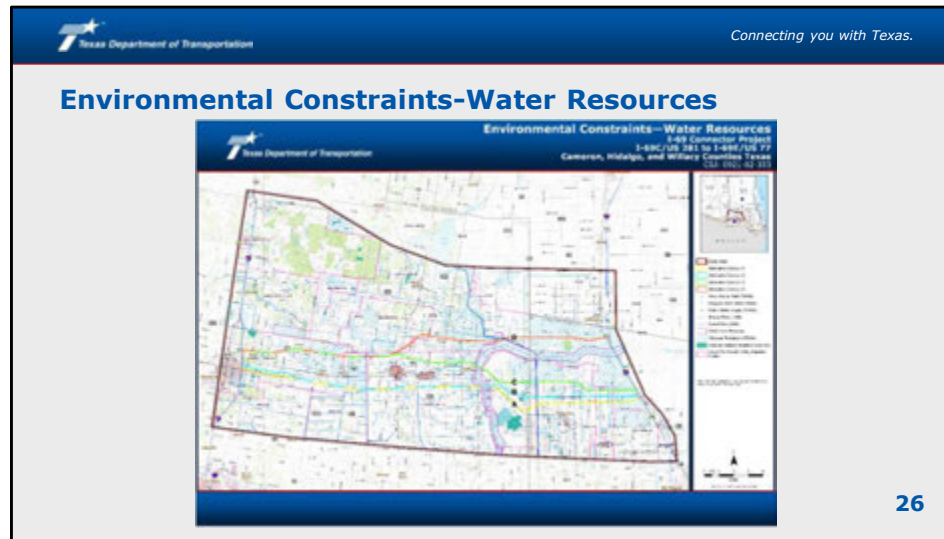
This next map shows the four primary alternatives in relation to the human environment constraints. These include places of worship, educational facilities, airports, wind farms and known collection lines, cemeteries, known historic places, museums, historical markers, and recorded Texas historical landmarks. In addition, wildlife management areas, wildlife refuges, prison boundaries, historic districts, and parks are included.

To view and download this map visit www.TxDOT.gov and enter "I-69 Connector."



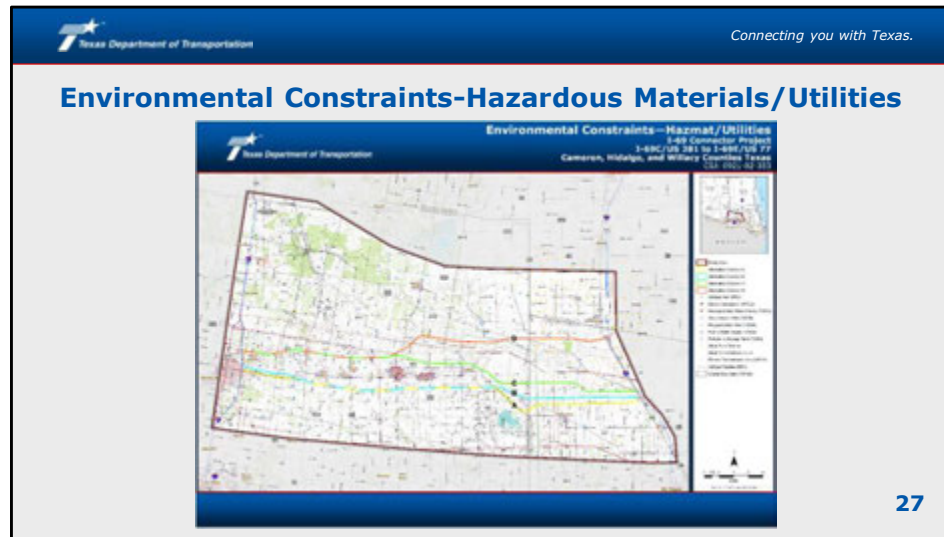
This third map provides demographic information within the study area. The purple areas show the 2020 Census Blocks with greater than 50% minority populations. The black hatched areas are low-income block groups. These are families that make less than \$31,200 per year. Colonias are shown in white hatched areas. The four primary alternatives are shown in relation to these mapped areas.

To view and download this map visit www.TxDOT.gov and enter "I-69 Connector."



This map shows water resources within the study area. Mapped resources include 100-year floodplains, National Wetland Inventory Features, Irrigation Districts, the International Boundary and Water Commission Main Floodway, streams, canals, and ditches.

To view and download this map visit www.TxDOT.gov and enter "I-69 Connector."



Finally, this last map shows known hazardous materials locations and utilities within the study area. Items including oil/gas wells, electric substations, municipal solid waste facilities, groundwater wells, plugged water wells, public water supplies, petroleum storage tanks, and electric transmission lines are shown on this map.

To view and download this map visit www.TxDOT.gov and enter "I-69 Connector."

Interactive Map

- Provide comments on resources, issues, concerns within the study area

Link: [I69Connector_ICM](#)

<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/b74b274b2f34418da12894db3b41e0f0/>



28


The constraints maps can be explored in greater detail using the I-69 Connector Interactive Comment Map. Interactive comment maps visually organizes public input more effectively, focusing on specific areas within the project. It is particularly valuable when members of the public have feedback related to specific locations within the project area. To access the interactive map, follow the link provided on this slide or visit www.txdot.gov, keyword search "I-69 Connector." Detailed instructions for navigating the map are available on the map page.








This slide shows the proposed I-69 Connector project schedule. In the next steps of the environmental process, all comments received during the comment period will be reviewed and documented. Comments are taken into consideration throughout the project development process.

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Submit Comments and Feedback



Scan me 

 In-Person	 Mail	 Email	 Interactive Comment Map
Fill out a comment card and drop it in the labeled box at the in-person public scoping meeting	Attn: Edward Paradise TxDOT Pharr District Office 600 W. Interstate 2 Pharr, TX 78577	PHR_I69_Connector@txdot.gov	Leave a comment on the interactive map by visiting www.txdot.gov and searching "I-69 Connector"

Please provide your feedback by Friday, February 7, 2025 30

Comments can be provided during the in-person meeting by filling out a comment card and dropping it in one of the comment boxes.

Comments can also be submitted by:

- Mail to the to TxDOT Pharr District Office, Attn: Edward Paradise, 600 W. Interstate 2 Pharr, TX 78577, by
- Email: PHR_I69_Connector@txdot.gov; or
- Online using the interactive comment map by visiting www.txdot.gov and searching "I-69 Connector"

While comments are always welcome, they must be received or postmarked on or before Friday, February 7, 2025, at 11:59 p.m. The Public Scoping Meeting Summary Report will be available online at www.txdot.gov once it has been prepared.

Thank you for your participation in the I-69 Connector Public Scoping meeting!

We would also like to thank J. Economedes High School and Santa Rosa High School for allowing us to use their facility for the in-person public scoping meetings on January 21, and January 23, 2025.

**Remember to please submit your comments by
Friday, February 7, 2025**

31

On behalf of the Texas Department of Transportation, I sincerely thank you for your participation in the public scoping meeting for the I-69 Connector project.

We would also like to thank J. Economedes High School and Santa Rosa High School for allowing us to use their facilities for the in-person public scoping meetings.

Please do not forget to submit comments by Friday, February 7, 2025, by 11:59 p.m. This concludes the public scoping meeting presentation.