

PUBLIC HEARING SCRIPT (PRE-RECORDED)

FM 551 WIDENING PROJECT

FROM SH 276 TO SH 66

ROCKWALL COUNTY

CSJ: 1016-01-032

THURSDAY, MAY 22, 2025, FROM 5-7 P.M.

FATE CITY HALL

1900 CD BOREN PARKWAY, FATE, TEXAS 75087

<https://www.keepitmovingdallas.com/projects/fm-roads/FM551>

SLIDE 1 – Title Slide

Hello and welcome to the Public Hearing for FM 551 Widening Project from State Highway 276 to State Highway 66. This hearing has been convened by the Texas Department of Transportation in partnership with Rockwall County and is being held to receive and consider comments from the public.

Please note, you may pause this presentation at any point to allow more time to review the information.

SLIDE 2 – End the Streak

November 7, 2000, was the last deathless day on Texas roadways and over 80,000 people have lost their lives since then. 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.

SLIDE 3—Travis Campbell, P.E. Welcome Video

I'm Travis Campbell, Director of Transportation Planning and Development for the TxDOT Dallas district. Thank you for joining us as we conduct this virtual public event. Understanding how our projects impact communities is important to TxDOT. The following presentation will provide instruction on how you can connect with us and provide vital input about this project. We will continue to work closely with stakeholders, communities and the public as we move forward. Thank you for your time and interest in improving our transportation system and we look forward to receiving your comments.

SLIDE 4 – Public Hearing Purpose and Changes to Public Hearing Protocol

You may have attended previous public hearings conducted by TxDOT. For the benefit of those who have never participated before, we will explain why the Department conducts a public hearing.

A public hearing has four essential purposes:

1. Inform the public of the status of planning on the project and present the recommendations based on studies performed to date.
2. Describe the project so those attending can determine the project's potential to affect their lives and property.
3. Provide the public an opportunity to see information and provide feedback.
4. And finally, to develop a record of public views and participation to accompany recommendations for subsequent decisions.

This public hearing is being held in compliance with both federal and state laws. Following this hearing, the Department will proceed with the preparation of the final environmental documentation. Your statements and comments will be addressed in this document and will be given full consideration in the preparation of the final recommendation and design for the FM 551 Project.

SLIDE 5 – Viewing the Project Information

The design schematic and environmental documentation for the FM 551 Widening Project are available for inspection and reproduction at the Texas Department of Transportation Dallas District Office, located at 4777 East US Highway 80 in Mesquite, Texas, and at City of Fate City Hall, located at 1900 CD Boren Parkway, Fate, Texas 75087. In addition, the design schematic may be viewed at www.keepitmovingdallas.com under “Public Hearings / Meetings.” The information on this website is the same information being shown in this presentation.

SLIDE 6 – Project Description

The project includes 3.13 miles of reconstruction and widening along FM 551 from SH 276 to SH 66 in Rockwall County, Texas.

SLIDE 7 – Project Purpose and Need

The purpose of the FM 551 Widening Project is to improve safety, meet local and regional future travel demand by increasing capacity of FM 551, and to upgrade the transportation infrastructure to meet current design standards.

The proposed FM 551 Widening Project is needed because the existing two-lane FM 551 roadway is inadequate to meet current and future traffic volumes, resulting in congestion and reduced mobility, and fails to meet current design standards.

SLIDE 8 – Existing Facility

The existing FM 551 facility within the project limits is currently two 12-foot-wide lanes that include 3-foot-wide shoulders with ditches on both sides. The existing right of way is approximately 80 feet wide. There is no bicycle or pedestrian accommodation.

SLIDE 9 – Proposed Facility (SH 276 to I-30)

The proposed project improvements would reconstruct FM 551 from SH 276 to I-30 to a four-lane divided roadway, separated by an 18- to 19-foot-wide raised median. Bicycle and pedestrian accommodation would include a 10-foot-wide shared-use path on each side of the road. The proposed right of way would be approximately 112 to 223 feet wide.

SLIDE 10 – Proposed Facility (I-30 to SH 66)

The proposed project improvements would reconstruct FM 551 from I-30 to SH 66 to a three-lane roadway with one travel lane in each direction and center turn lane. Bicycle and pedestrian accommodation in this section would also include a 10-foot-wide shared-use path on each side of the road. The proposed right of way would be approximately 92 to 199 feet wide.

SLIDE 11 – Projected Construction Cost & Schedule

The FM 551 Widening Project's Ready to Let is to be determined. "Letting" is when TxDOT notifies the construction community that a project is ready to be bid on. Construction on a project begins after the letting process is complete.

The estimated construction cost for the project is approximately \$77 million. The project is unfunded. A project cannot Let until funding is identified; however, right of way acquisition can proceed even if a project does not have construction funding.

SLIDE 12 – 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. This agreement was updated on December 9, 2019.

Environmental studies were conducted for the proposed FM 551 Widening 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.

Technical environmental documentation was approved for further processing by TxDOT and was coordinated with other public agencies. Notices for this public hearing were advertised in the Royse City Herald Banner and the Rockwall County Herald Banner, on the [TxDOT.gov](https://www.txdot.gov) website under "Hearings and Meetings Schedule" and on

Keepitmovingdallas.com under “Public Hearings and Meetings.” The TxDOT Public Information Office also prepared a news media release to advertise the public hearing. The TxDOT technical reports are available for your review on the project website and at the TxDOT Dallas District office.

SLIDE 13 – Environmental Review / Impacts Addressed

The technical documentation for this project addresses the potential environmental impacts identified during the preliminary engineering of the proposed project. These areas of potential impacts 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 those findings.

SLIDE 14 – Environmental Review / Right-of-Way

A total of approximately 18 acres of additional right-of-way would be required to complete the proposed improvements. Four residential and two commercial business displacements are anticipated.

No public facilities such as recreational facilities, churches, schools, or cemeteries, would be displaced as a result of the construction of the proposed project.

All right-of-way acquisition would be completed in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended. Brochures, including two booklets titled “The Purchase of Right of Way,” and “Relocation Assistance,” are also available on the project website. These booklets

contain detailed information to inform you of your rights and provide information about TxDOT right-of-way acquisition process.

SLIDE 15 – Environmental Review / Resources

Traffic Noise

A Traffic Noise Analysis was accomplished in accordance with TxDOT's (and FHWA approved) Guidelines for Analysis and Abatement of Roadway Traffic Noise. Based on the analysis, noise barriers were determined to be not reasonable and feasible; therefore, none are proposed for incorporation into the proposed project.

Floodplains and Waters of the U.S./Wetlands

Portions of the project corridor are situated within FEMA designated 100-year flood hazard areas. These flood hazard areas are associated with an unnamed tributary to Hackberry Creek. The hydraulic design for this project would be in accordance with current TxDOT policies.

Two streams and one wetland were identified as potential impacted waters of the U.S. within the project area. Impacts would be authorized by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers under a Section 404 Nationwide Permit 14. A Preconstruction Notification to the Army Corps of Engineers would be required for impacts to wetlands.

SLIDE 16 – Environmental Review / Section 4(f) & Chapter 26 Process

Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966 and Chapter 26 of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Code are federal and state regulations, respectively, set up to

protect the use of public lands. These regulations require TxDOT to inform and gather input from the public.

The proposed project would potentially impact a property owned by the City of Fate that is zoned as a park, located within the project limits between Charleston Lane and Gettysburg Boulevard along FM 551 in Fate, Texas. This property is protected by Section 4(f) and Chapter 26. The proposed project would require minimal right of way and would not result in adverse effects to the property.

SLIDE 17 – Environmental Review / Section 4(f) and Section 106 Coordination

The proposed project would result in a potential impact to a National Register of Historic Places property protected under Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966 and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. That property is the Fate Presbyterian Church, located within the project limits at 202 William E Crawford Avenue in Fate. The proposed project would require minimal right of way and would not result in adverse effects to the property.

Conclusion

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

SLIDE 18 – Project Timeline

The public comment period for the proposed project ends June 6, 2025. Following this hearing, documentation of this public hearing will be reviewed by TxDOT for final environmental clearance and design approval. If there are no major issues arising from

this hearing that cannot be addressed in a reasonable time frame, final environmental clearance is expected by Spring 2026. Advancement from phase to phase is contingent upon the outcome of the previous phase and funding availability.

As mentioned earlier, the project's Ready to Let Date is to be determined. This concludes the environmental evaluation portion of the presentation.

SLIDE 19 – Public Comments

Comments will be accepted in a number of ways as shown on the screen. If you would like to leave a verbal comment, please call the number listed.

Comments must be received or postmarked by Friday, June 6, 2025, to be part of the official public hearing record. All substantive comments and questions will be fully considered and responded to in the project record and made part of the final environmental document for this proposed project. This document will then be made available for public review online at the project website.

SLIDE 20 – “Thank You for your Interest” / Hearing is now Adjourned

We sincerely appreciate your participation and interest concerning the proposed design of the FM 551 Widening Project. Your questions, comments and concerns will receive careful consideration. This concludes the presentation.

Thank you very much.