



FM 3097 (Horizon Road) Project

From Tubbs Road to FM 549

CSJ: 3148-01-013

Public Meeting Script

SLIDE 1 – Welcome Slide

Rockwall County and the Texas Department of Transportation, or TxDOT, welcome you to the FM 3097, also known as Horizon Road, Project public meeting. We appreciate your interest in the project and thank each of you for your participation.

Please note, for those viewing the virtual public meeting, you can pause this presentation at any point to allow more time to view the slides or get a more detailed view of the project design or other exhibits available online.

SLIDE 2 – Help End the Streak

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

SLIDE 3 – Public Meeting Purpose

This public meeting has been convened by Rockwall County and TxDOT to receive and consider comments from the public regarding the FM 3097 Project.

You may have attended previous public meetings conducted by TxDOT. However, for the benefit of those who have never attended one, I will explain why and how the Department conducts a public meeting.

A public meeting has four essential purposes:

1. To inform the public of the status of planning efforts on the project and to present the recommendations based on studies performed to date.
2. To describe the project to the public so the public can determine how they may be affected.



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3. To provide the public an opportunity to view information and express their ideas and concerns at this stage in the planning process while the ability to respond to comments is still flexible and before location and design decisions are finalized.
4. And finally, to develop a record of public views and participation to accompany recommendations for subsequent decisions.

This virtual public meeting is being held in compliance with both federal and state laws. Documentation of this meeting will be made available for the official record.

SLIDE 4 – Project Location

The FM 3097 Project limits are from Tubbs Road to FM 549. The total project length is approximately 1.9 miles and the project is located in the cities of Rockwall and Heath, Rockwall County, Texas. A larger version of this location map is available online and on display on the “Welcome Board” at the in-person public meeting.

SLIDE 5 – Project Purpose and Need

The purpose of the proposed project is to improve mobility and safety by widening FM 3097 (Horizon Road) to a four-lane roadway divided by a raised median.

The proposed project is needed to meet the increasing transportation demands caused by rapid suburban development in surrounding areas. In addition, the proposed project is needed to improve operational efficiency and safety for vehicles traveling on FM 3097.

SLIDE 6 – Existing Typical Section

The existing FM 3097 roadway from Tubbs Road to FM 549 is comprised of two 11-foot-wide lanes, including one southeast bound lane and one northwest bound lane separated by a discontinuous two-way center turn lane, with two-foot-wide shoulders and roadside drainage ditches. An existing shared use path runs adjacent to southwest bound FM 3097 from Little Buffalo Creek to FM 549.

The existing typical right-of-way width varies between approximately 100 to 130 feet.



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SLIDE 7 – Proposed Typical Section

Proposed improvements include widening the existing FM 3097 to four 12-foot-wide lanes, two in each direction, separated by a raised median, and curb and gutter drainage improvements. An eight to 10-foot-wide shared use path is proposed along both northwest bound and southeast bound FM 3097 within project limits.

The proposed typical right-of-way width would vary between approximately 100 to 320 feet.

SLIDE 8 – Projected Schedule and Cost

The FM 3097 Project is anticipated to receive environmental clearance in early 2025 and be ready to let in Spring 2028. The total estimated construction cost is \$43 million. The construction phase of the project is currently unfunded and cannot let until funding is identified; however right of way acquisition can proceed even if the project is not funded for construction.

SLIDE 9 – National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Assignment to the Texas Department of Transportation

Prior to December 16, 2014, the Federal Highway Administration, or FHWA, received and approved documents prepared under the National Environmental Policy Act, known as NEPA; however, on December 14, 2014, the Texas Department of Transportation assumed responsibility from FHWA through a Memorandum of Understanding to review and approve certain assigned NEPA environmental documents. This Memorandum of Understanding between TxDOT and FHWA was updated on December 9, 2019. The review and approval process apply to this project. Environmental studies are being conducted for the proposed FM 3097 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.

The technical environmental documentation will be approved for further processing by TxDOT and would be coordinated with other public agencies, as necessary. Notices for this public meeting were advertised in English in *The Dallas Morning News*, in English and Spanish in the *Rockwall County Herald-Banner*, on the TxDOT.gov website under “Hearings and Meetings Schedule” and on www.KeepItMovingDallas.com under “Public Hearings and Meetings.”



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SLIDE 10 – Environmental Constraints Map

The project Environmental Constraints Map is used to help planners and engineers at the outset of a roadway project to increase awareness of environmental constraints and to help minimize potential project impacts while meeting the project purpose. The full-size constraints map is available as a display at the in-person public meeting or it can be viewed online through the virtual public meeting page. The major known constraints include stream crossings, associated floodplain, and an existing trail adjacent to FM 3097 in the City of Heath that is protected under Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966. Environmental studies for this project are ongoing.

SLIDE 11 – Right-of-Way

Approximately 8.4 acres of new right-of-way are anticipated for the proposed project. No displacements are anticipated. 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. The brochure titled “The Purchase of Right of Way,” is available on the project website. This material contains detailed information to inform you of your rights and provide information about the TxDOT right-of-way acquisition process.

SLIDE 12 – Environmental Review – Section 4(f)

Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 is a federal regulation designed to protect the use of public land in projects. Construction of the proposed project would affect a portion of existing trail in the City of Heath that is protected under Section 4(f). The trail runs adjacent to FM 3097 (Horizon Road) from Little Buffalo Creek to FM 549. The proposed project would reconstruct a portion of the trail across the tributary of Little Buffalo Creek to accommodate a proposed culvert extension. TxDOT anticipates making a *de minimis* determination for this use.

SLIDE 13 – Project Timeline

The public comment period for the proposed project ends on Friday, December 1, 2023. Following this public meeting, the project design will be refined per public input, and environmental studies will be developed. If there are no major issues from the environmental analysis that cannot be addressed in a reasonable time frame, schematic approval is anticipated in Summer 2024 and final environmental clearance is anticipated in early 2025.



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SLIDE 14 – We Request Your Feedback

Your feedback is requested on the FM 3097 Project. Comments will be accepted in the four ways, which are outlined here. All comments will be fully considered and responded to in the project record and made part of the environmental documentation for this proposed project. The public meeting documentation, including responses to comments, will be made available at www.keepitmovingdallas.com/projects/fm-roads/fm3097. All statements, comments and questions will be given careful consideration before the final design is completed. All comments must be received or postmarked by Friday, December 1, 2023, to be included in the official public meeting documentation.

SLIDE 15 – Thank You

Thank You. We sincerely appreciate your participation and interest concerning the proposed design of the FM 3097 Project. Your questions, comments, and concerns will receive careful consideration. This concludes the presentation.