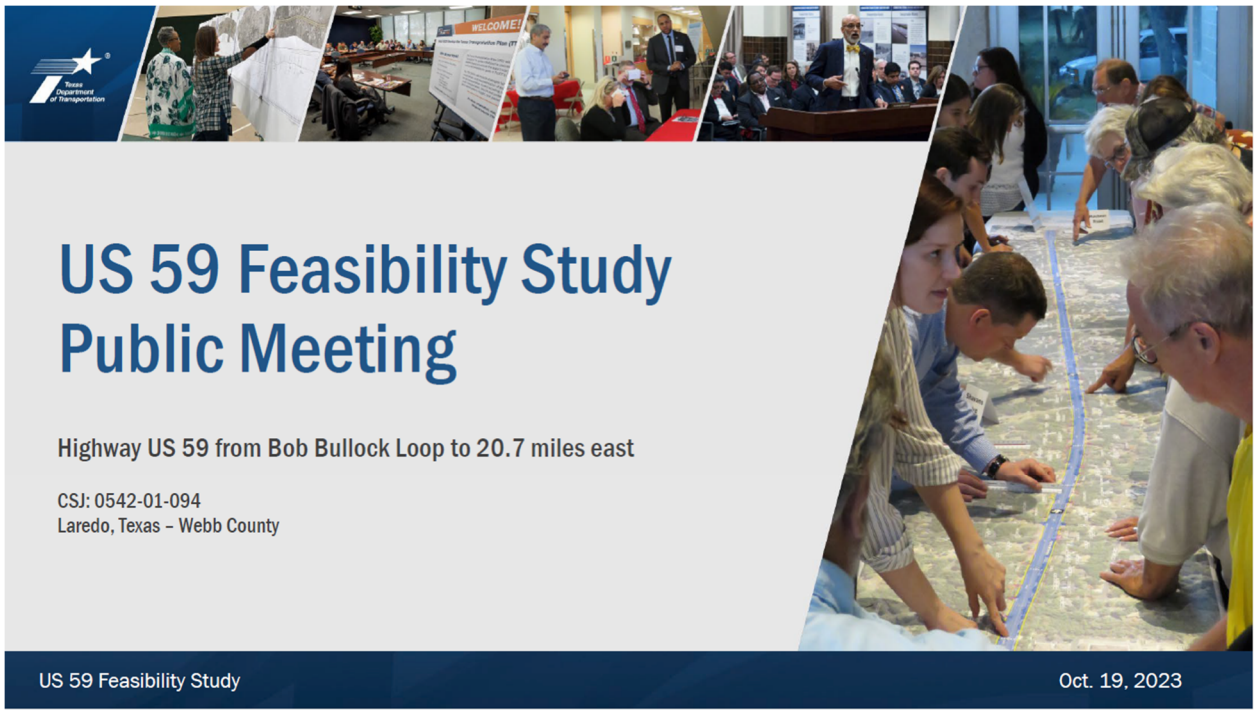
US 59 Feasibility Study
Highway US 59 from Bob Bullock Loop to 20.7 miles east
Public Meeting Presentation and Script (English)



Slide 1:

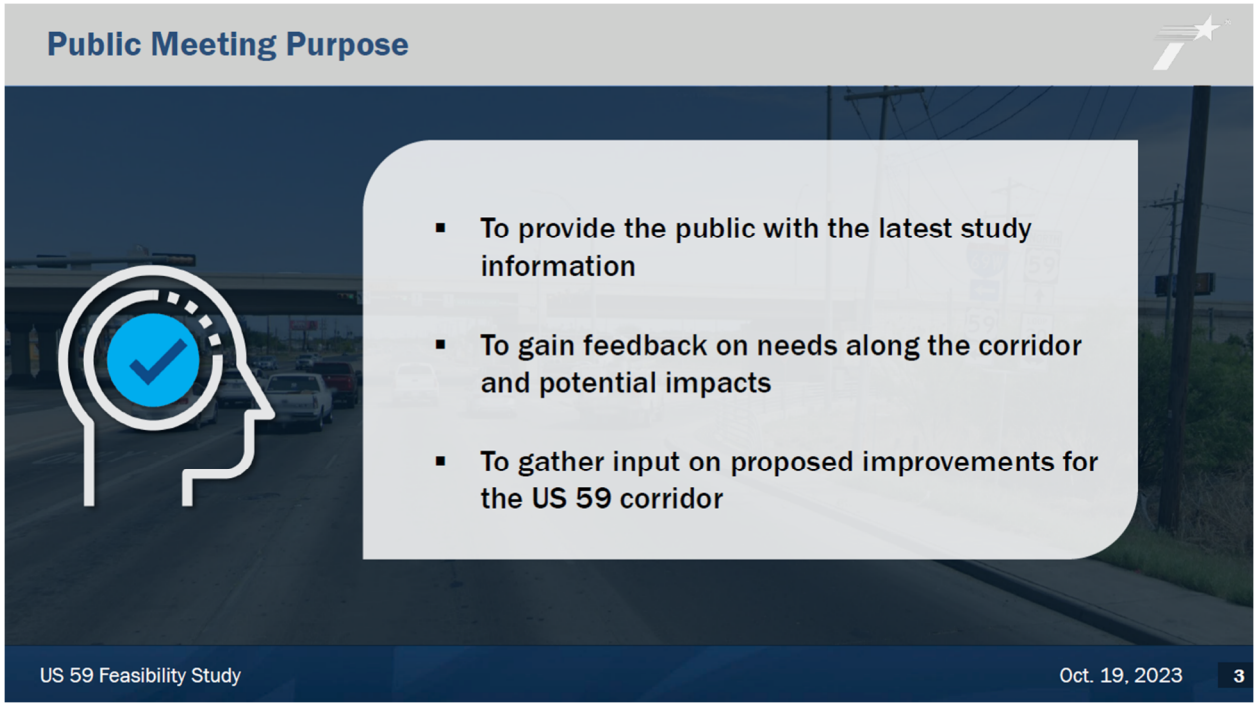
Hello and welcome to the public meeting for the US 59 Feasibility Study. This study is analyzing potential improvements to US 59 from Bob Bullock Loop to 20.7 miles east of Bob Bullock Loop. The eastern project study limit on US 59 is located approximately 7.5 miles west of FM 2895.

TxDOT appreciates your interest in this study and thanks you for your participation. Please note, you may pause this presentation at any point to allow more time to review the information.

Slide 2:

November 7, 2000, was the last deathless day on roadways in Texas. That means for nearly 22 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.

More information about TxDOT's End the Streak Campaign can be found using the information on the screen.

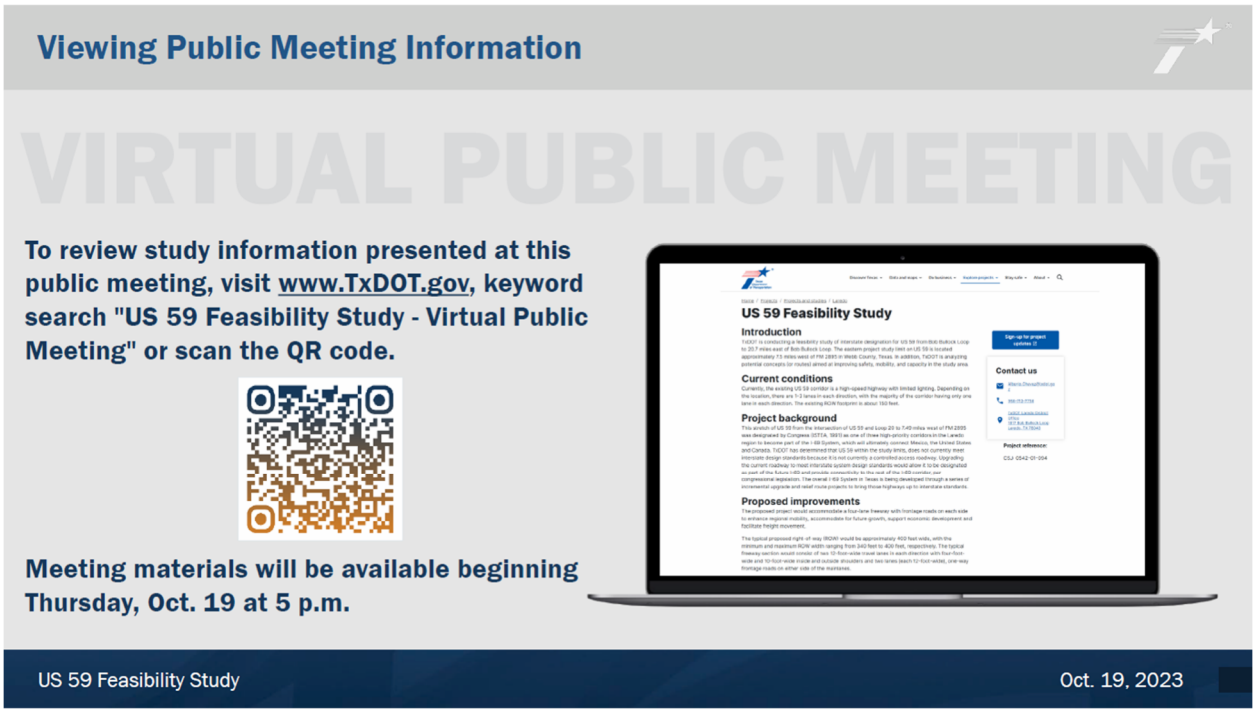


Slide 3:

This Public Meeting has three essential purposes:

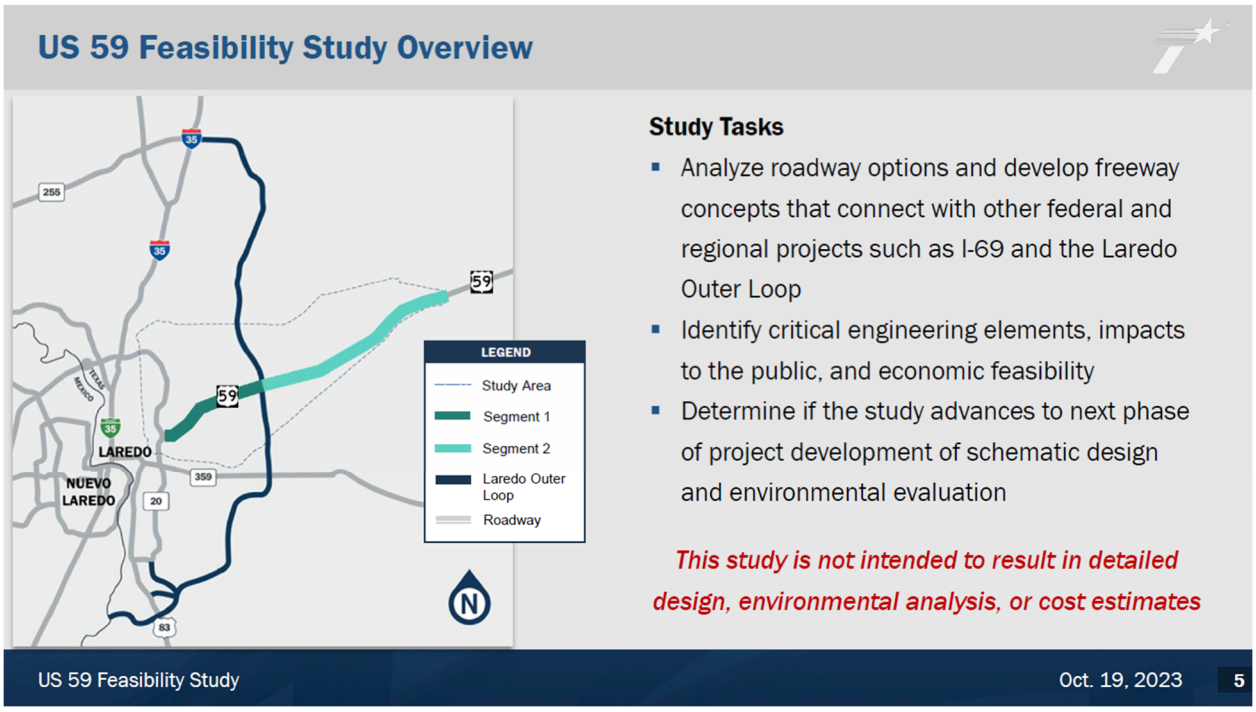
1. First, to provide the public with the latest study information.
2. Second, to gain feedback on needs along the corridor and potential impacts.
3. And finally, to gather input on proposed improvements for the US 59 corridor.

This public meeting is being held in compliance with both federal and state laws. Following this meeting, your comments will be considered in the preparation of the final feasibility study report for the US 59 feasibility study.



Slide 4:

The roll plots, exhibit boards and other study materials may be viewed online at www.txdot.gov, keyword search “US 59 Feasibility Study – Virtual Public Meeting” or scanning the QR code shown on the screen beginning on Thursday, Oct. 19 at 5 p.m. The information on this website is the same information being shown in this presentation.



Slide 5:

The US 59 Feasibility Study is evaluating the study area shown on the screen. The US 59 corridor is also one of three corridors designated by Congress as a high-priority corridor in the Laredo region to become part of the Interstate 69 (I-69) System, which will ultimately connect Mexico, the United States and Canada.

TxDOT has determined that US 59, within the study limits, does not meet interstate design standards, because it is currently not a controlled access roadway. Upgrading the current roadway to meet interstate system design standards would allow it to be designated as part of future I-69 and provide connectivity to the rest of the I-69 corridor.

It is important to note that this feasibility study is not intended to result in detailed design, environmental analysis or final cost estimates.

What We Heard – Engaging Study Area Stakeholders

- Impacts to future development
- Avoiding potential impacts to areas such as the colonias
- Alleviating congestion specifically near the US 59/Bob Bullock Loop intersection
- Improving access to existing properties within the study area (i.e. Texas A&M International University)
- Providing alternative freight routes

Slide 6:

As this study has progressed, TxDOT has hosted two stakeholder workshops to gather input from stakeholders within the study area regarding study data and proposed improvements.

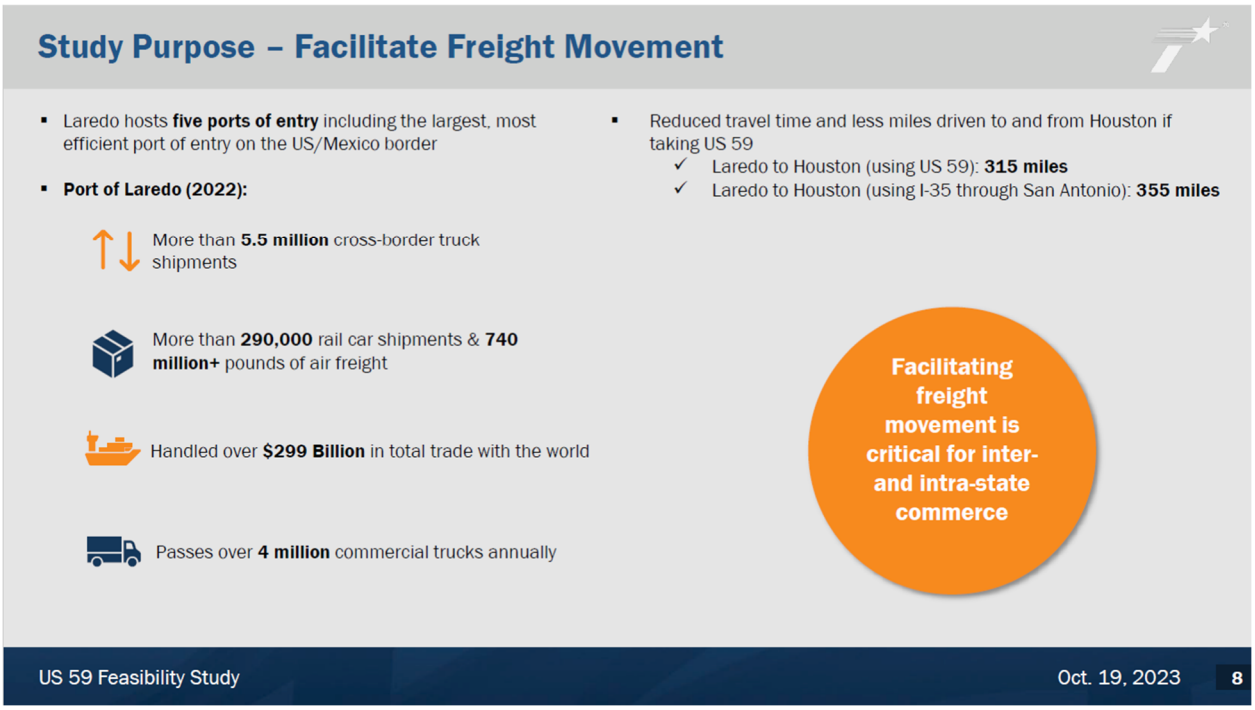
Comments from stakeholders during these workshops referenced impacts to future developments; avoiding potential impacts to areas such as the colonias; alleviating congestion, specifically near the US 59/Bob Bullock Loop intersection; improving access to existing properties within the study area (such as Texas A&M International University); and providing alternative routes for freight movement.

Slide 7:

The purpose and need of this study is to enhance safety and mobility for drivers, accommodate population and employment growth, support economic development, and facilitate freight movement.

Improvements to US 59 would help support the study purpose by:

- Providing a safe and reliable transportation option for drivers to stay connected within the region;
- Keeping pace with the growing regional employment, which generates a significant number of trips by employees to and from work; and
- Finally, offering a reliable freight route to support the significant volume of goods that pass-through Laredo every year.

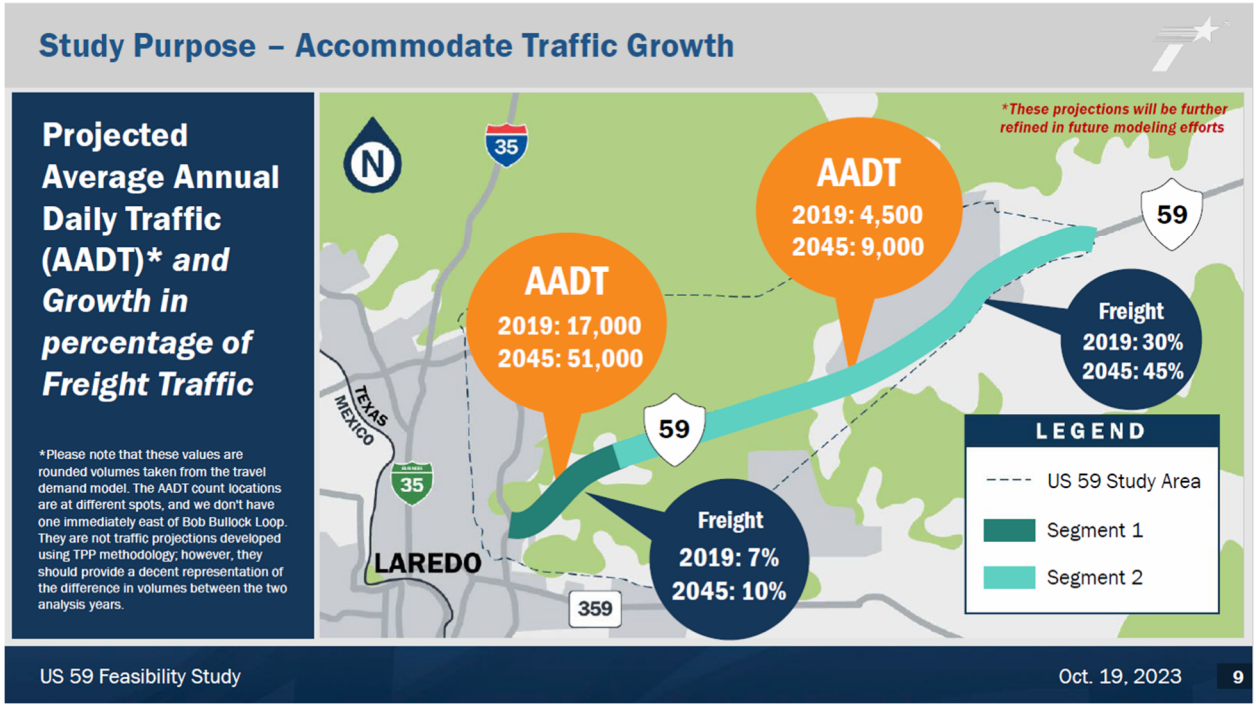


Slide 8:

Facilitating freight movement through Laredo is an important part of this study as it is home to five ports of entry including the largest, most efficient port of entry on the U.S./Mexico border – The Port of Laredo.

In 2022, the Port of Laredo handled more than 5.5 million cross-border truck shipments, 290,000 rail car shipments, and 740 million pounds of air freight, and over $299 billion in total trade with the world.

Improvements to US 59 could provide an alternative route for trucks trying to get to Houston and therefore would alleviate overall freight traffic on I-35 as well as reduce freight travel times from Laredo to Houston.



Slide 9:

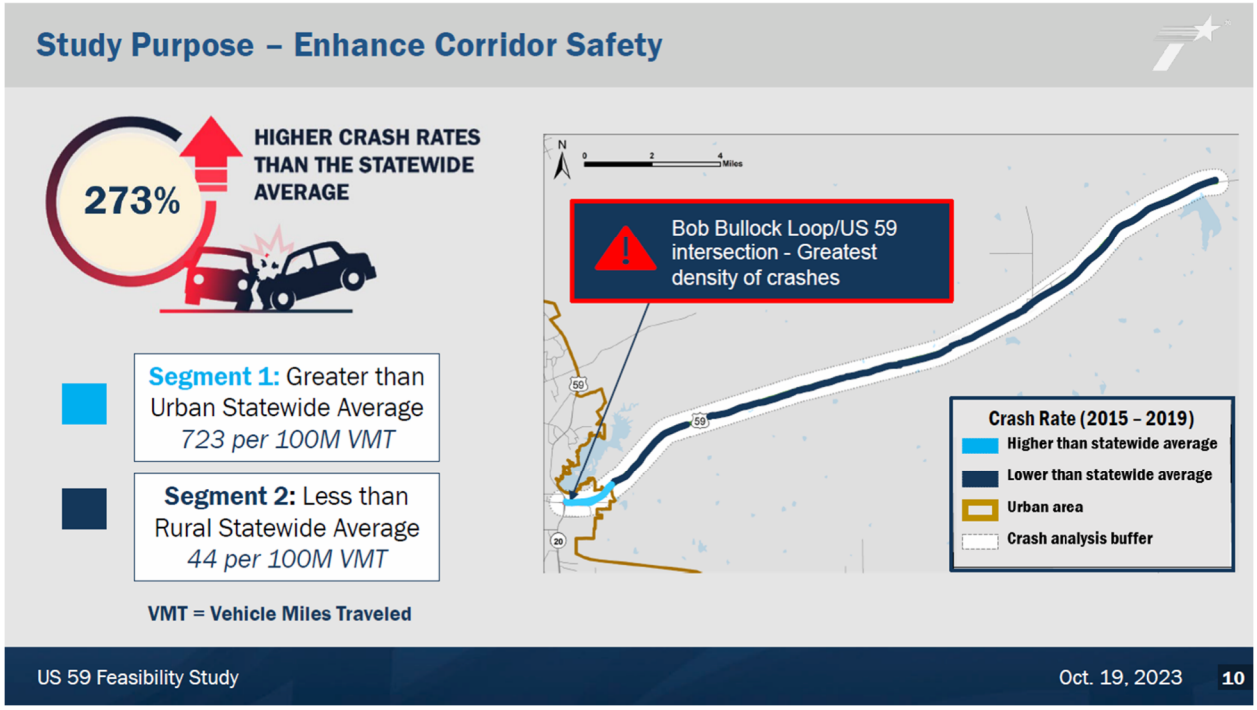
Another key consideration of this study is to accommodate the growth in average annual daily and freight traffic that is expected.

Pictured above in orange is the average traffic growth we've seen along the corridor between 2015 and 2019. Average annual daily traffic (AADT) is the total volume of vehicle traffic on a highway or road for a year divided by 365 days.

By 2045, projected daily traffic volumes along the US 59 corridor are anticipated to increase by 34,000 vehicles along segment 1 closest to the Loop 20 intersection and the Airport, resulting in traffic volumes comparable to present-day levels on Bob Bullock Loop.

In addition, traffic volumes along US 59 in the rural segment to the east, are anticipated to increase by 4,500 vehicles, resulting in traffic volumes comparable to present-day levels on Saunders Street west of Bob Bullock Loop.

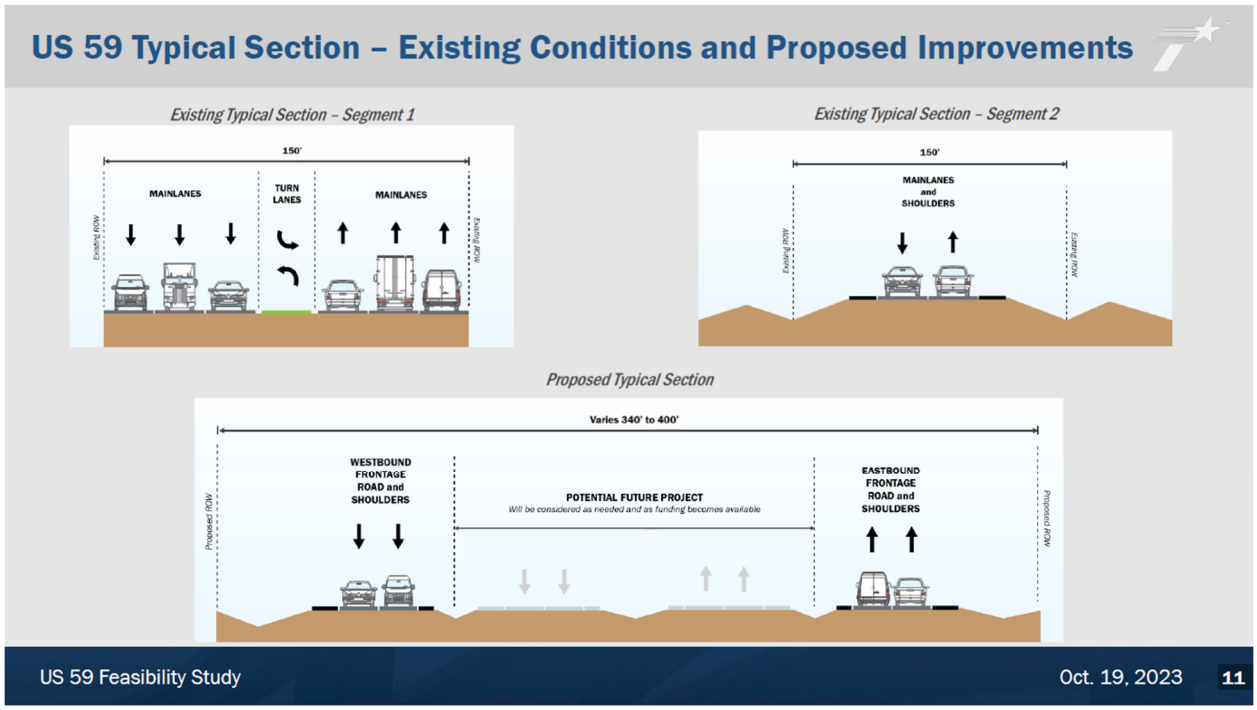
Because the US 59 corridor is an important route for the distribution of goods throughout the United States, trucks are expected to continue to make up a high percentage of traffic. The composition of truck traffic on US 59 was 7% in the urban segment (segment 1) from 2015 -2019, and approximately 30% in the rural segment (segment 2) during that same time period. By 2045, segment 1 is expected to increase from 7% to 10%, while segment 2 is expected to increase from 30% to 45%. It should be noted that these projections will be further refined with future modeling efforts.



Slide 10:

Finally, another key study consideration is to enhance corridor safety. This map on the screen shows the study corridor divided into 2 segments – light blue is the area closest to Loop 20 – the urban stretch.

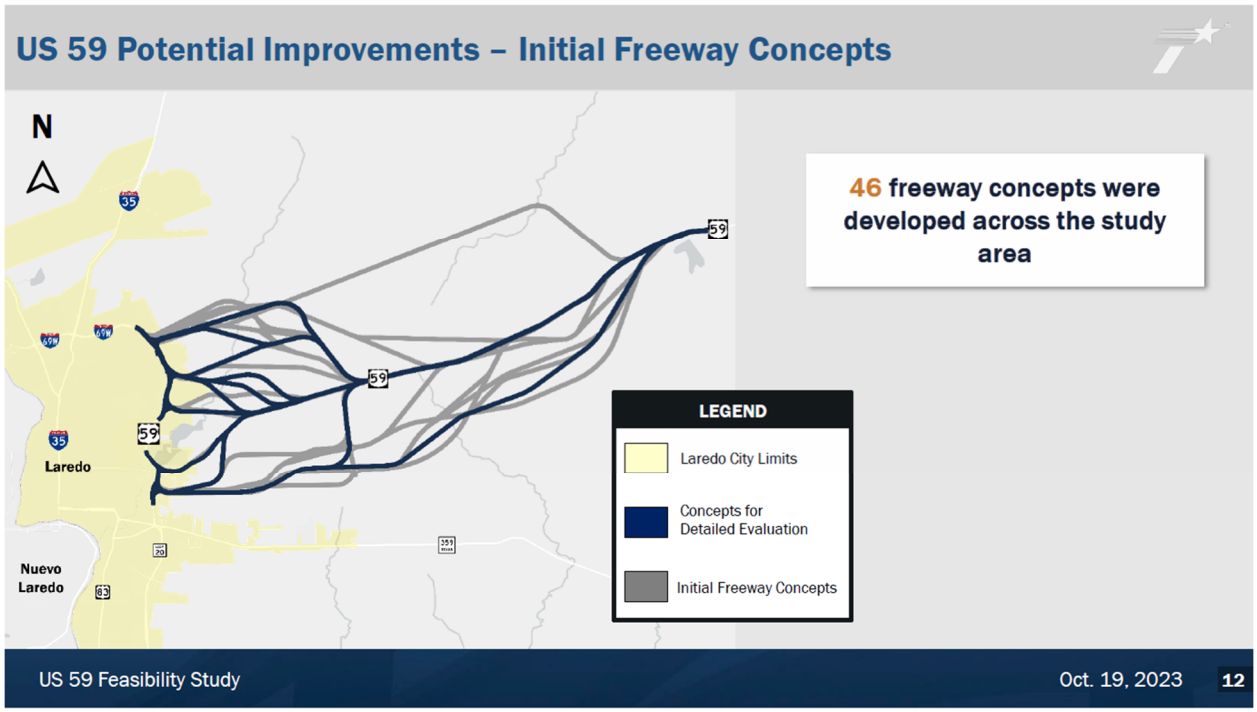
This urban segment of US 59 has a crash rate 273% higher than the statewide average for urban areas. The greatest density of crashes were logged at the Bob Bullock Loop/US 59 intersection.



Slide 11:

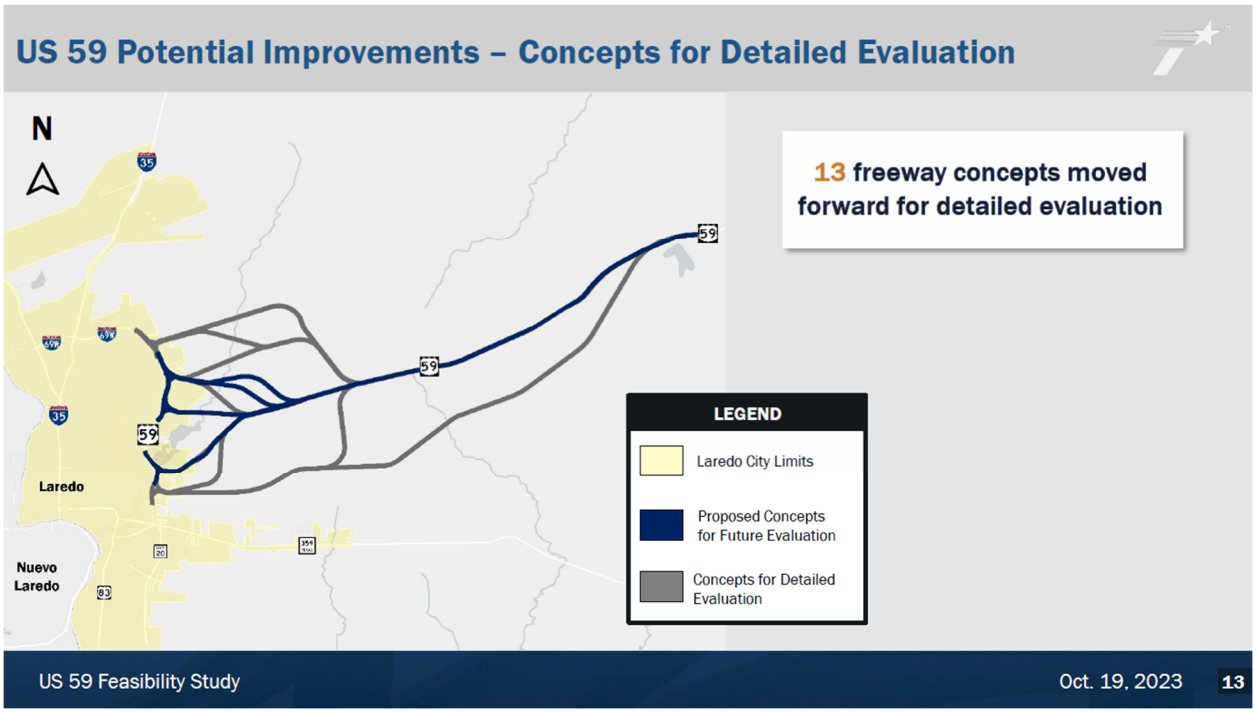
The US 59 corridor, as it exists today, is a high-speed highway with limited lighting. Depending on the location, there are 1-3 lanes in each direction, with the majority of the corridor having only one lane in each direction, as shown. The existing right-of-way footprint is about 150 feet.

The proposed roadway has a maximum 400-foot right-of-way footprint, as well as a reduced footprint of 340 feet in certain locations, where right of way is limited or where TxDOT would need to narrow its footprint to avoid a constraint. The potential future project shown on the proposed roadway is anticipated to be the mainlanes should funding become available.



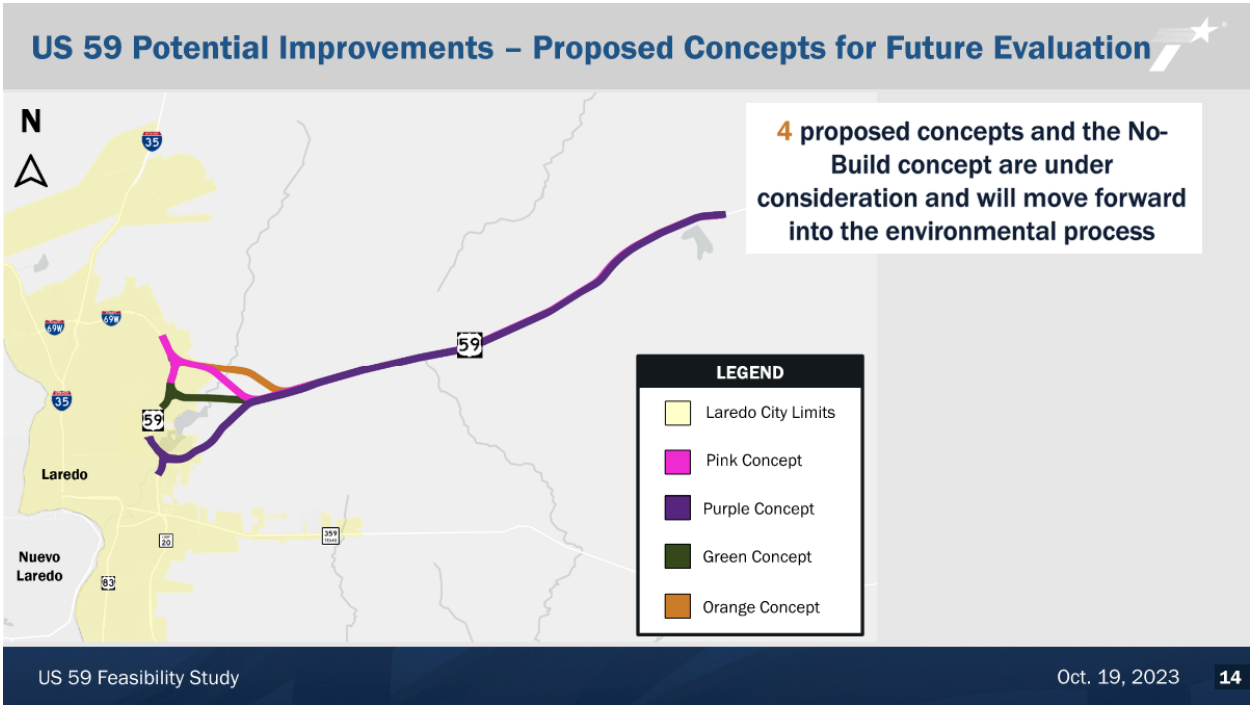
Slide 12:

Now we will move into the proposed improvements developed for the corridor. In Fall 2022, TxDOT initially developed 46 initial freeway concepts within the study area.



Slide 13:

Following a preliminary screening of the initial freeway concepts, 13 concepts were chosen to move forward for detailed evaluation in early 2023.



Slide 14:

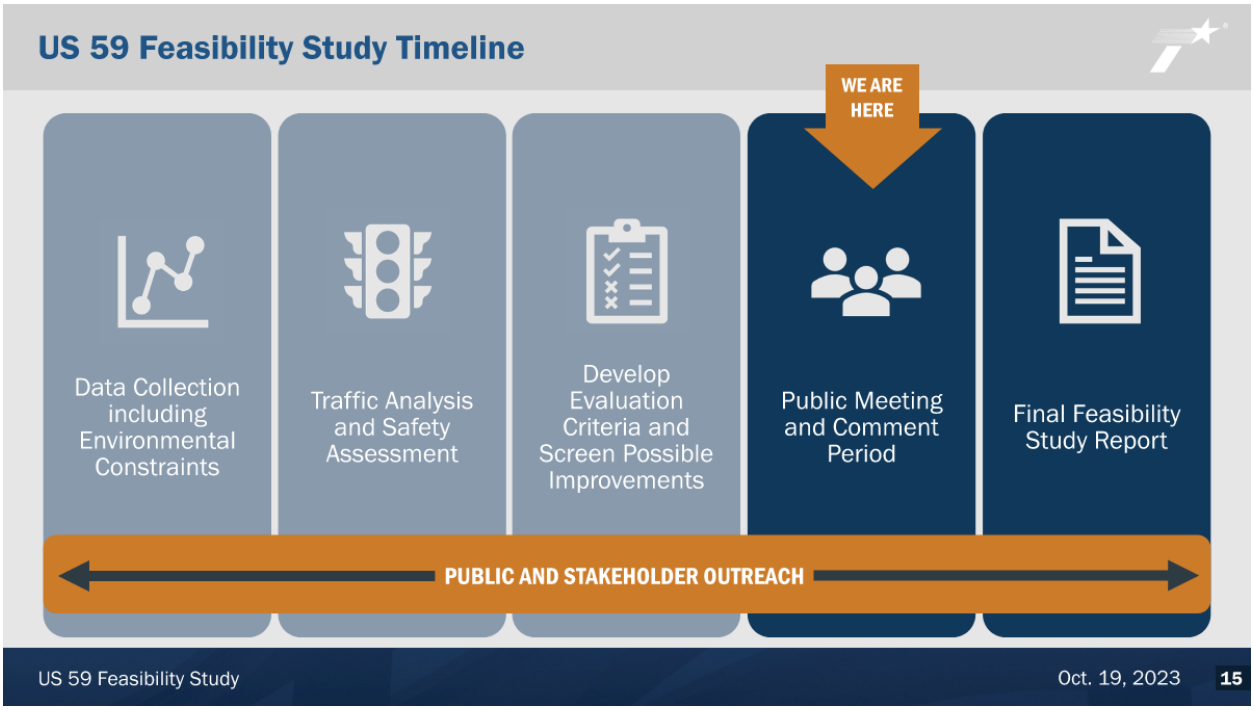
In the Spring of 2023, an evaluation matrix was developed as a tool to further analyze and review the remaining 13 concepts. Some of the evaluation factors included:

- Residential or business displacements
- Routing freight traffic too far away from the existing US 59
- And whether a concept resulted in a substantially longer route or higher cost to construct

The full evaluation matrix is available for review on the exhibit boards at the in-person meeting and on the study website.

After completing this detailed evaluation, four proposed concepts and the No-Build concept are now under consideration and will move forward into the next phase of study.

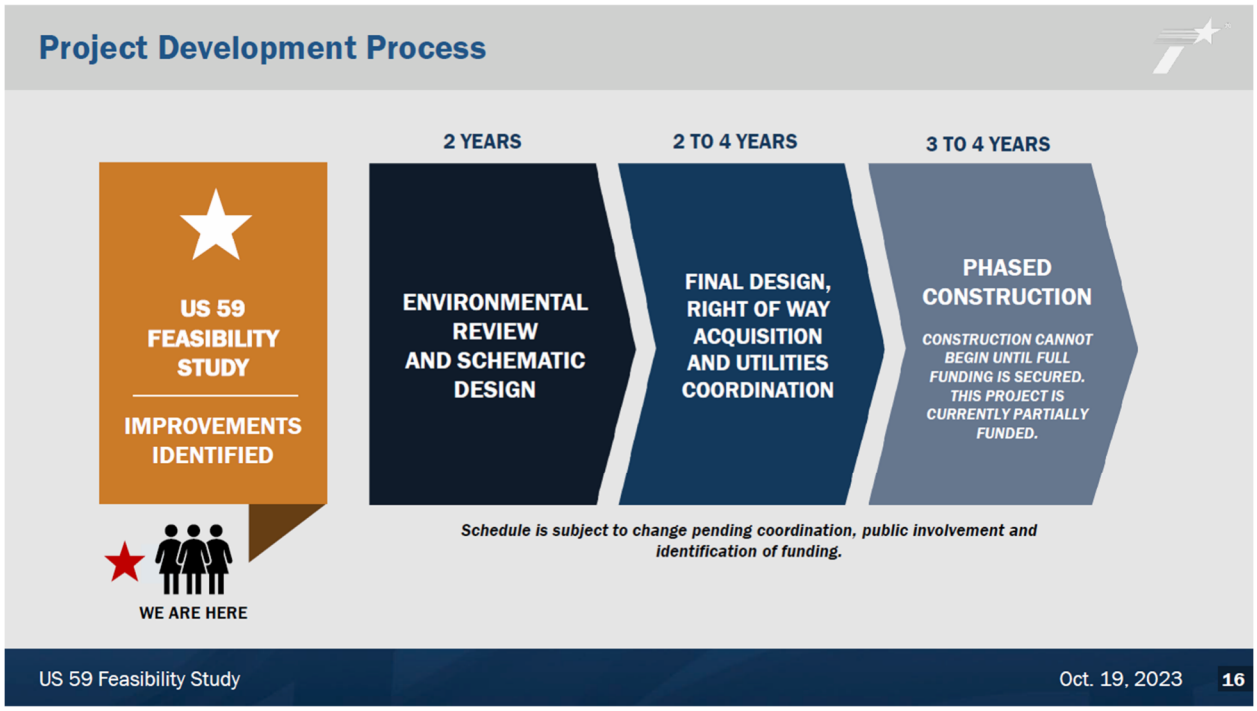
You can also view each of these concepts in more detail on the roll plots located on the study website.



Slide 15:

TxDOT is nearing the end of the Feasibility Study process and is currently in the public meeting and comment period phase. The public comment period will conclude on Friday, Nov. 3, 2023. TxDOT will provide responses to comments received which will be included in the public meeting summary.

Following this meeting, TxDOT will also develop the final feasibility study report with recommendations on how to proceed, and whether this study should advance to the next phase of development.



Slide 16:

Currently this study is in the feasibility process, where TxDOT has focused on data gathering and preliminary geometric design to assess the practicality of this project. If it is determined that the study should advance to the next phase of development, then TxDOT will begin the environmental review and schematic design process in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). This phase could take up to two years but will depend heavily on the environmental classification.

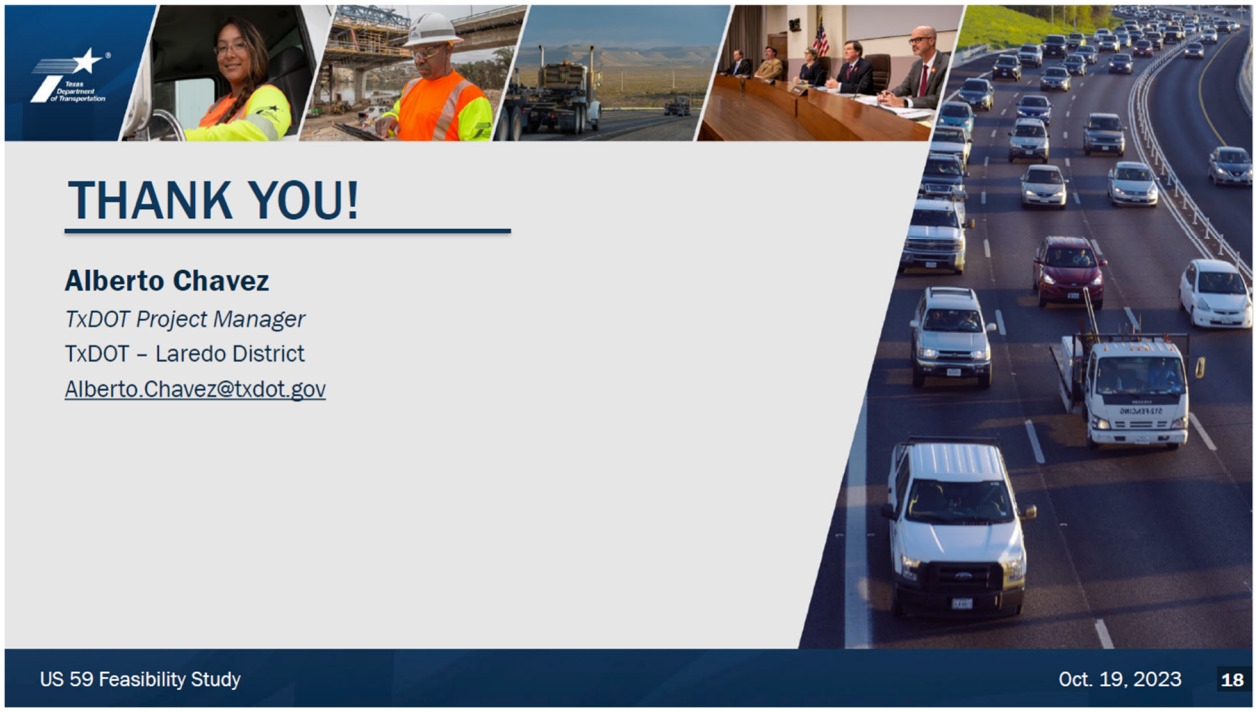
If the project receives environmental clearance through the NEPA process, TxDOT will move into final design which can take an average of two to four years.

Finally, pending identification of funding, the project will move into the phased construction phase, which takes another two to four years, or longer, to complete. It is important to note that phased construction of the project would not begin until full funding is secured.

Slide 17:

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

Comments must be received or postmarked by Nov. 3, 2023, to be included in the public meeting summary and considered in the development of the final feasibility study report.



Slide 18:

This concludes our presentation on the US 59 Feasibility Study. We sincerely appreciate your participation and interest in this study. Your questions, comments, and concerns will receive careful consideration.

Thank you.