

Loop 360 at Courtyard Drive/RM 2222 Virtual Public Hearing Presentation Transcript

Slide 1 – Welcome



Welcome to the virtual public hearing for the Loop 360 at Courtyard Drive/RM 2222 project presented by the Texas Department of Transportation, Austin District. We appreciate your interest in this project and welcome each of you.

Please note that this presentation can be paused at any point to allow you more time to review the slides.

Slide 2 – Virtual Public Hearing in Response to Public Health

Virtual public hearing in response to public health

TxDOT changed the in-person public hearing to a virtual format in response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

The virtual public hearing and TxDOT website will provide the same information as an in-person hearing.

SHARE FACTS ABOUT COVID-19

Know the facts about coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and help stop the spread of rumors.

FACT 1 Diseases can make anyone sick regardless of their race or ethnicity.

Fear and anxiety about COVID-19 can cause people to avoid or reject others even though they are not at risk for spreading the virus.

FACT 2 For most people, the immediate risk of becoming seriously ill from the virus that causes COVID-19 is thought to be low.

Older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions may be at higher risk for more serious complications from COVID-19.

FACT 3 Someone who has completed quarantine or has been released from isolation does not pose a risk of infection to other people.

For up-to-date information, visit CDC's coronavirus disease 2019 web page.

FACT 4 There are simple things you can do to help keep yourself and others healthy.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing, going to the bathroom, and before eating or preparing food.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.

FACT 5 You can help stop COVID-19 by knowing the signs and symptoms:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

Seek medical advice if you:

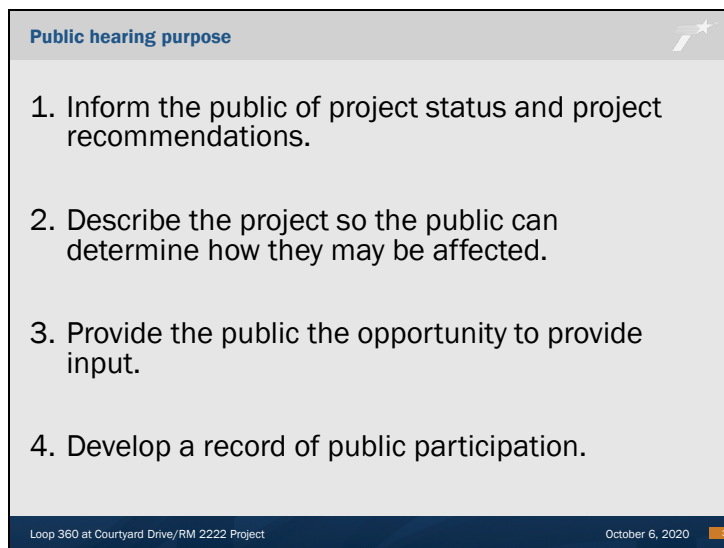
- Develop symptoms AND
- Have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 or if you live in or have recently been in an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19.

[cdc.gov/COVID-19](https://www.cdc.gov/COVID-19)

Given the unique circumstance of the COVID-19 outbreak, along with our commitment to protecting public health during this national emergency, TxDOT is conducting this virtual public hearing to minimize in-person contact.

The presentation will cover the same information the Austin District would have shared at an in-person public hearing. However, the comment process will be different. Details on how to submit a comment and have your questions addressed will be covered later on in this presentation. All project information can be found on the TxDOT website.

Slide 3 – Public Hearing Purpose

A presentation slide titled "Public hearing purpose" with a list of four numbered points. The slide has a light gray background and a dark blue footer. The footer contains the text "Loop 360 at Courtyard Drive/RM 2222 Project" on the left, "October 6, 2020" in the center, and a small orange square with the number "3" on the right.

Public hearing purpose

1. Inform the public of project status and project recommendations.
2. Describe the project so the public can determine how they may be affected.
3. Provide the public the opportunity to provide input.
4. Develop a record of public participation.

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This virtual hearing has been convened by TxDOT and is being held to receive and consider comments from the public regarding the Loop 360 at Courtyard Drive/RM 2222 project.

Many of you may have attended previous public hearings conducted by TxDOT. However, for the benefit of those of you who have never attended one, I would like to explain how and why the department conducts a public hearing.

A public hearing has four essential purposes:

- Inform the public of the status of planning on the project and present the recommendations based on studies performed to date.
- Describe the project so those attending can determine the project's potential to affect their lives and property.
- Provide the public an opportunity to see information and express their views at a stage in the planning process when flexibility to respond to comments still exists and before location and design decisions are finalized.
- And finally, develop a record of public views and participation to accompany recommendations for subsequent decisions.





This virtual 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 4 – How to Submit Public Comments

How to submit public comments

We Request Your Feedback

Please submit your comments regarding the information presented in this Virtual Public Hearing by using any of the methods below between **Tuesday, Oct. 6, 2020, and Wednesday, Oct. 21, 2020.**

			
Leave a Voicemail	Email Us	Mail in Comments	Comment Online
(512) 647-1064	info@Loop360Project.com	Loop 360 Project Team 1608 W 6 th St. Austin, TX 78703	Click on the comment form link on Loop360Project.com

For general questions about the presentation or the project, please contact Crystal Wotipka at cwotip-c@TxDOT.gov or 512-832-7192. The public may email at any time in the project development process to ask questions about the project.

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Following this hearing, TxDOT will proceed with preparation of the final design and complete the environmental process. Your statements and comments will be given full consideration in the preparation of the final recommendation and design for the Loop 360 at Courtyard Drive/RM 2222 project.

Comments will be accepted in a number of ways. Verbal comments can be provided by leaving a message via voicemail at (512) 647-1064. Written comments can be emailed to the project team at info@Loop360Project.com or mailed to the Loop 360 Project Team at 1608 W 6th. St., Austin, TX 78703. Comments will also be accepted using an online comment form available on the program website, www.Loop360Project.com.

Comments must be received or postmarked by Wednesday, October 21, 2020, to be part of the official public hearing record. However, the public may email project staff at any time in the project development process to ask questions about the project.

Slide 5– Viewing Design Schematic and Environmental Documentation

Viewing design, schematic and environmental documentation

- Websites:
 - Loop360Project.com
 - Program website with direct link to the posted materials.
 - TxDOT.gov
 - Search keywords “Loop 360 at Courtyard Drive”
- The information presented on these websites is the same information being presented in this video.

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The next slides will cover the design aspects of the Loop 360 at Courtyard Drive/RM 2222 Project. The design schematic and environmental documentation for the project may be viewed online at www.Loop360Project.com or at www.txdot.gov by searching keywords “Loop 360 at Courtyard Drive.” The information on these websites is the same information being presented in this video.

Slide 6 – Project Location, Need and Purpose

Project location, need and purpose

- Project Limits:
 - Lake Austin to north of RM 2222.
 - Project length – 1 mile.
- Project Need:
 - Congestion, reduced mobility and safety issues.
- Project Purpose:
 - Improve safety.
 - Improve mobility.



Loop 360 at Courtyard Drive/RM 2222 Project

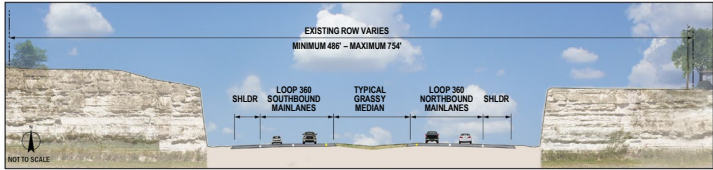
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The proposed Loop 360 at Courtyard Drive/RM 2222 project extends approximately 1 mile from Lake Austin to north of RM 2222 within the City of Austin in Travis County, Texas. The project is needed because increased traffic congestion at Courtyard Drive, RM 2222 and elsewhere along Loop 360 has resulted in a lack of mobility and increased safety concerns.

The purpose of the project is to improve mobility and safety at the Loop 360 intersections of Courtyard Drive and RM 2222.

Slide 7 – Existing Roadway

Existing roadway



- Existing Roadway
 - Two, 12-foot wide mainlanes with 10-foot wide outside shoulders in each direction, separated by a 48-foot wide grassy median.
 - At-grade intersection at Courtyard Drive with left-turn and right-turn lanes.
 - Traditional grade-separated intersection with entrance and exit ramps at RM 2222.
 - No bike lanes, shared-use paths or sidewalks.

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The existing Loop 360 corridor is a four-lane roadway, consisting of two 12-foot mainlanes and a 10-foot wide outside shoulder in each direction, separated by a 48-foot wide grassy median.

There is a signalized, at-grade intersection at Courtyard Drive with left and right-turn lanes, and a traditional grade-separated intersection with entrance and exit ramps at RM 2222.

There are no bicycle lanes, shared-use paths or sidewalks along the project corridor.

Slide 8 – Proposed Roadway

Proposed roadway

- Proposed improvements
 - Replace the existing traffic signals on Loop 360 at Courtyard Drive with an underpass (where the Loop 360 mainlanes go under the cross street).
 - Construct a diverging diamond intersection (DDI) at RM 2222.
 - Add 10-foot wide shared-use path along both sides of Loop 360, a 10-foot wide shared-use path on the north side of the Courtyard Drive bridge over Loop 360, and 6-foot wide sidewalks along both sides of Courtyard Drive east and west of the bridge, within the project limits.
- Construction details, including construction phasing and cliff removal methodology, will be determined as the project progresses into detailed design.

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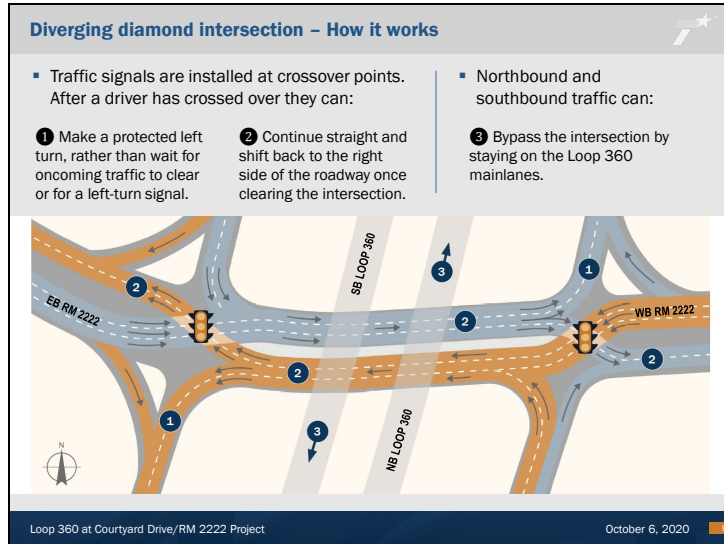
The project would remove the traffic signal from the Loop 360 mainlanes at Courtyard Drive and construct an underpass, where the Loop 360 mainlanes go under the cross street.

The project would also construct a Diverging Diamond Intersection, or DDI, at RM 2222.

Bicycle and pedestrian accommodations would be provided by a 10-foot wide shared-use path along both sides of Loop 360, a 10-foot wide shared-use path on the north side of the Courtyard Drive bridge over Loop 360, and a 6-foot wide sidewalk along both sides of Courtyard Drive east and west of the bridge, within the project limits.

Construction details, including construction phasing and cliff removal methodology, are not known at this time and will be determined as the project progresses into detailed design.

Slide 9 – Diverging Diamond Intersection-How It Works



Diverging diamond intersections (DDIs) are proposed for intersections with a high volume of left-turning traffic.

DDIs allow vehicles to travel more efficiently through an intersection by temporarily shifting traffic to the left side of the road. This allows through-traffic and left-turning traffic to proceed through the intersection simultaneously, eliminating the need for a left-turn arrow.

To help drivers navigate, DDIs are designed with overhead signs, pavement marking and traffic signals.

The graphic on your screen explains how a DDI works:

Traffic signals are installed at crossover points. After a driver has crossed over they can:

1. Make a protected left turn, rather than wait for oncoming traffic to clear or for a left-turn signal.
2. Continue straight and shift back to the right side of the roadway once clearing the intersection.

North and south-bound traffic can:

3. Bypass the intersection by staying on the Loop 360 mainlanes.

Slide 10 – Diverging Diamond Intersection-Benefits

Diverging diamond intersection – Benefits

- Enhances safety by reducing potential crash points at intersections.
- Increases mobility by allowing more cars to move through an intersection.
- Accommodates more vehicles turning left without adding more lanes.
- Better sight distance at turns.

Visit Loop360Project.com/divergingdiamond.htm to learn more about a DDI and view an informational video.

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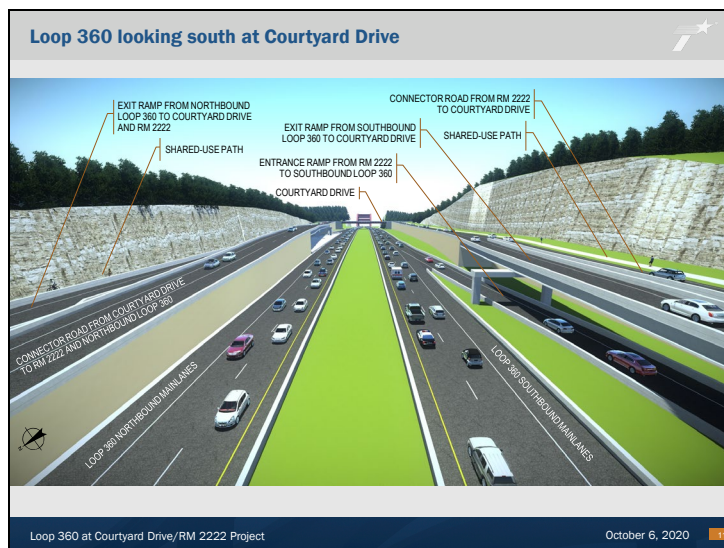
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A diverging diamond intersection has several benefits. A DDI enhances safety by reducing potential crash points at intersections, increases mobility by allowing more cars to move through an intersection, accommodates more vehicles turning left without adding more lanes and allows for better sight distance at turns.

Visit www.Loop360Project.com/divergingdiamond.htm to learn more about a DDI and view an informational video.

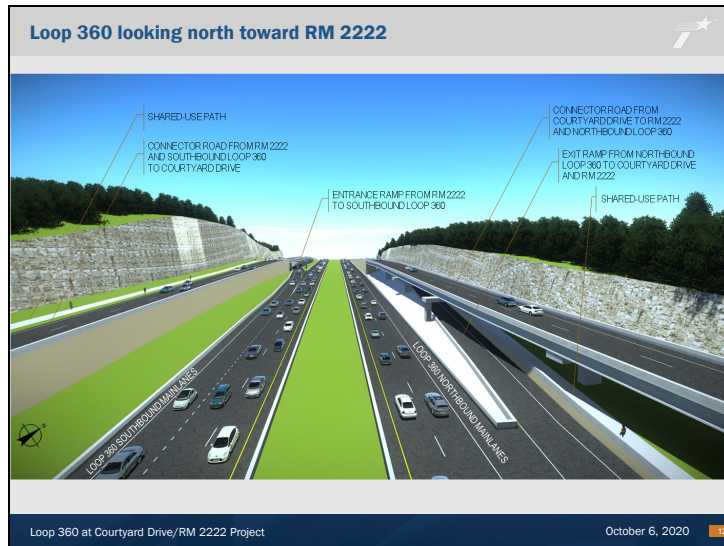
Slide 11 – Loop 360 Looking South at Courtyard Drive



This is an artistic rendering of how the area will look when the project is complete. This viewpoint faces toward the south, looking at Courtyard Drive. You can see the Pennybacker

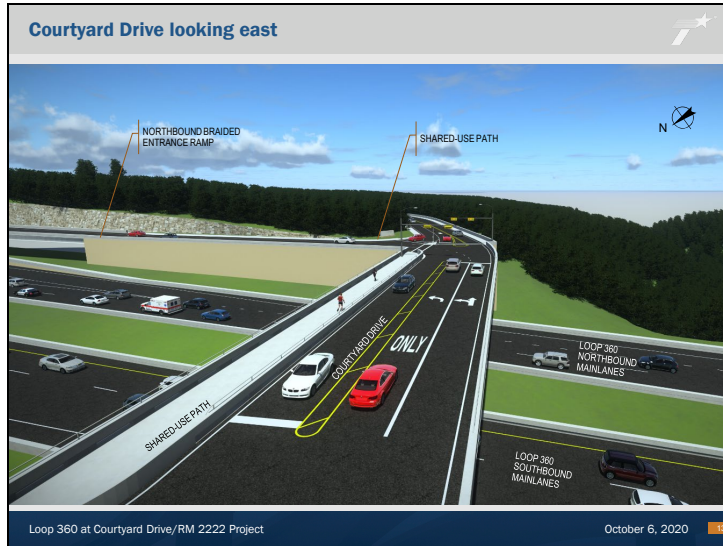
Bridge in the background. The Loop 360 mainlanes will be free-flowing, and the braided entrance and exit ramps and connector roads on either side of the roadway will provide local connectivity. You can see bicyclists and pedestrians using the 10-foot shared-use path planned for both sides of Loop 360.

Slide 12 – Loop 360 Looking North toward RM 2222



This is a rendering facing in the opposite direction. This viewpoint faces north, looking toward the RM 2222 intersection. You can see the connector roads on either side of the roadway, and this rendering also shows some of the braided entrance and exit ramps planned for the project as well as the shared-use path on both sides of Loop 360. The remaining ramps, and the RM 2222 intersection itself, are outside of the view in this drawing.

Slide 13 – Courtyard Drive Looking East



This rendering shows Courtyard Drive looking east. You can see the Loop 360 mainlanes running in either direction underneath the cross street. You will also notice the shared-use path that goes across the north side of the Courtyard Drive bridge, as well as the beginning of the new northbound braided entrance ramp.

Slide 14 – Utility Adjustments

Utility adjustments

- Underground and overhead utilities:
 - Known existing utilities have been identified and mapped.
 - Conflicting utilities will need to be adjusted or relocated prior to roadway construction.

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The known utilities have been identified and mapped. Conflicting utilities within the corridor that require relocating would be adjusted prior to roadway construction to accommodate the proposed improvements.

Slide 15 – Projected Cost and Schedule

Projected schedule and cost

Construction Start Date
Summer 2023*
*Contingent on construction funding.

Construction Duration
Approximately 2 to 3 years.

Estimated Total Project Cost
Approximately \$42 million.
\$11 million from the City of Austin 2016 Mobility Bond.
Remaining funds from TxDOT.

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The proposed project is anticipated to begin construction in the Summer of 2023, contingent on construction funding, and would take approximately 2 to 3 years to construct. The estimated total cost for the project is approximately \$42 million.

This concludes the project information and design portion of the presentation. The next few slides will provide an overview of the environmental evaluation for the proposed Loop 360 at Courtyard Drive/RM 2222 project.

Slide 16 – Review and Approval of Environmental Document

Review and approval of environmental document

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.

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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 Memorandum of Understanding was renewed on December 9, 2019. The review and approval process applies to this project.

Environmental studies have been performed for the proposed Loop 360 at Courtyard Drive/RM 2222 project to support environmental clearance in accordance with NEPA. The environmental analyses are necessary to identify, avoid, and minimize effects to the human and natural environments.

Notices for this public hearing were advertised in the Austin-American Statesman and on the TxDOT.gov website under “Public Meetings and Hearings.” The TxDOT Public Information Office also prepared a news media release to advertise the public hearing. The environmental technical reports are available on the project website.

Slide 17 – Environmental Review - Impacts Addressed

Environmental review – Impacts addressed

- Right of Way/Displacements
- Traffic Noise
- Community/Socioeconomic
- Air Quality
- Visual/Aesthetics
- Archeological Resources
- Historic Resources
- Water Resources
- Wetlands/Waters of the U.S.
- Biological Resources
- Hazardous Materials
- Indirect and Cumulative Effects
- Section 4(f) Resources
 - Publicly owned parks, recreation areas, wildlife/waterfowl refuges, and historic properties

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The technical documentation for this project addressed the potential environmental impacts identified during the design phase of the proposed project. These areas of potential impacts included natural, social, and cultural resources as well as potential impacts to adjacent and surrounding land use. The environmental reports were approved by TxDOT and have been coordinated with other public agencies.

This slide shows a list of all topics that were considered during the environmental phase of the project. The following slides include a summary of the more notable findings.

Slide 18 – Environmental Review - Traffic Noise

Environmental review – Traffic noise

- Traffic noise analysis completed according to TxDOT and FHWA guidelines.
- Analysis showed traffic noise impacts to multiple receivers.
- Mitigation was analyzed for the impacted receivers.
- Noise barriers determined to not be feasible and reasonable for the impacted receivers.

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A traffic noise analysis was performed in accordance with TxDOT's (and FHWA approved) Guidelines for Analysis and Abatement of Roadway Traffic Noise (2011). Based on the analysis, multiple receivers are expected to be impacted by noise. Noise abatement options were considered for these receivers in accordance with TxDOT and FHWA criteria. It was determined that noise barriers would not be feasible and reasonable for the impacted noise receivers.

Slide 19 – Environmental Review - Water Resources

Environmental review – Water resources

- Floodplains
 - Portions of project within FEMA 100-year flood hazard areas associated with West Bull Creek.
 - Project would not violate applicable floodplain regulations or ordinances.
- Waters of the U.S., including Wetlands
 - West Bull Creek and a tributary to Lake Austin were evaluated.
 - No impacts to these waters of the U.S. would occur, so no USACE permit or compensatory mitigation would be required.
 - Best Management Practices (BMPs) would be used to minimize any potential impacts to water quality. BMPs could include temporary vegetation, silt fences or other appropriate methods for erosion and sedimentation control during construction.

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Floodplains:

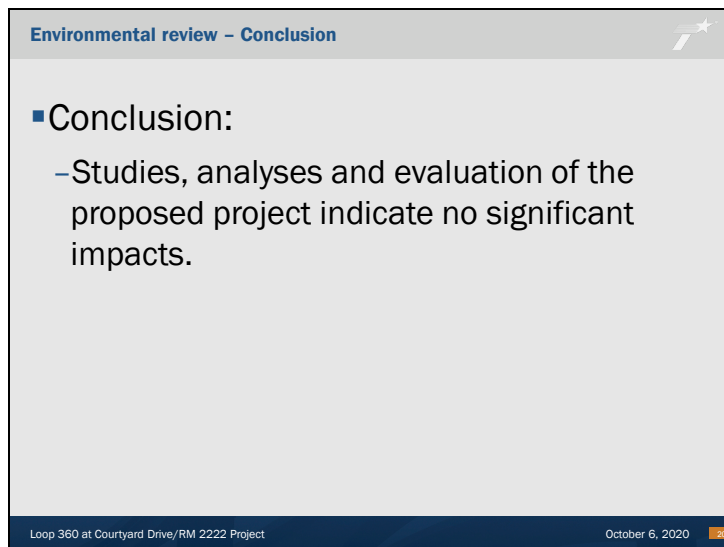
Portions of the project corridor are situated within FEMA designated 100-year flood hazard areas. These flood hazard areas are associated with West Bull Creek. The hydraulic design for this project would be in accordance with current TxDOT policies.

Waters of the U.S., including Wetlands:

Two waters of the U.S., West Bull Creek and a tributary to Lake Austin, were identified in the project area. Based on the current design, the proposed project would not result in impacts to these waters of the U.S.; therefore, a permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and compensatory mitigation would not be required.

Best Management Practices (BMPs) would be used to minimize any potential impacts to water quality. BMPs could include temporary vegetation, silt fences, or other appropriate methods for erosion and sedimentation control during construction.

Slide 20 – Environmental Review - Conclusion



The slide is titled "Environmental review – Conclusion" in the top left corner. The main content is a bulleted list under the heading "Conclusion:". The list item states: "Studies, analyses and evaluation of the proposed project indicate no significant impacts." The slide has a dark blue footer bar containing the text "Loop 360 at Courtyard Drive/RM 2222 Project" on the left, "October 6, 2020" in the center, and a small orange square with the number "20" on the right.

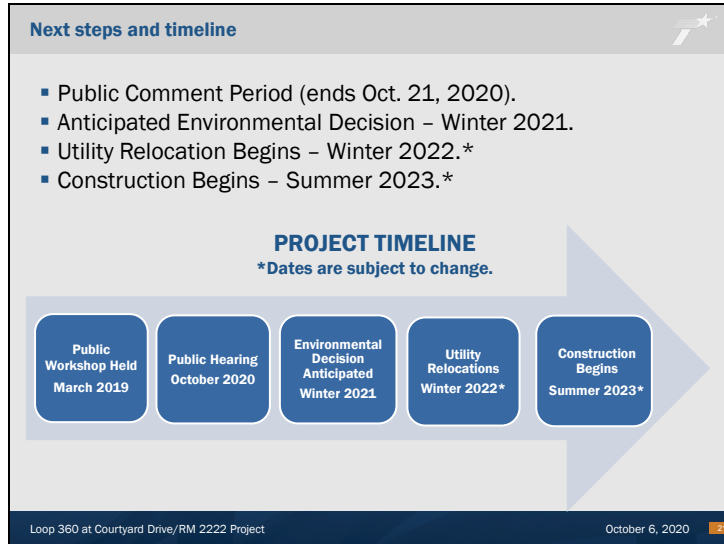
Environmental review – Conclusion

- Conclusion:
 - Studies, analyses and evaluation of the proposed project indicate no significant impacts.

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

Slide 21 – Next Steps and Timeline



Following this hearing, documentation of this public hearing will be reviewed by TxDOT for the final environmental decision and design approval. If there are no major issues arising from this hearing that cannot be addressed in a reasonable time frame, the final environmental decision is expected in the Winter of 2021.

As mentioned earlier, construction of the project is expected to begin in the Summer of 2023. The project is anticipated to take two to three years to construct.

This concludes the environmental evaluation portion of the presentation.

Slide 22 – How to Submit Public Comments

How to submit public comments

We Request Your Feedback

Please submit your comments regarding the information presented in this Virtual Public Hearing by using any of the methods below between **Tuesday, Oct. 6, 2020, and Wednesday, Oct. 21, 2020.**

Leave a Voicemail	Email Us	Mail in Comments	Comment Online
(512) 647-1064	info@Loop360Project.com	Loop 360 Project Team 1608 W 6 th St. Austin, TX 78703	Click on the comment form link on Loop360Project.com

Loop360Project.com
Click on “Projects” and select “Courtyard Drive/RM 2222”

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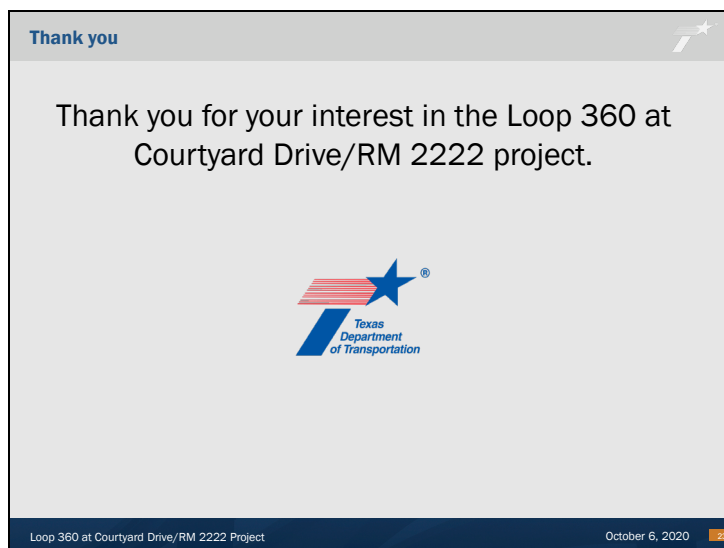
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All comments and questions will be fully considered and responded to in the project record and made part of the Public Hearing Summary Report. This document will then be made available for public review at www.loop360project.com - click on projects and select Courtyard Drive/RM 2222.

As a reminder, there are several methods available for you to leave a public comment. All forms of comments must be received or postmarked on or before Wednesday, October 21, 2020 to be included in the public hearing summary. Verbal comments can be provided by leaving a message via voicemail at (512) 647-1064. Please include your name, and if applicable, the organization with whom you are affiliated. Written comments can be emailed to the project team at info@Loop360Project.com or mailed to the Loop 360 Project Team at 1608 W 6th. St., Austin, TX, 78703. The email address and mailing address are listed on the screen. You may also leave a comment by clicking the link on the project website, Loop360Project.com.

To learn more about the project, visit the project page on the Loop 360 website. The URL is listed on the screen.

Slide 23 – “Thank You” / Hearing is now Adjourned



We sincerely appreciate your interest in the Loop 360 at Courtyard Drive/RM 2222 project. Your questions, comments and concerns will receive careful consideration.

Thank you very much. This concludes the presentation and the hearing is now adjourned.