

SUMMARY: The FHWA is issuing this notice to advise the public that an Environmental Impact Statement will be prepared for a proposed new location highway/tollway project in Travis and Caldwell Counties, Texas.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Walter C. Waidelich, District Engineer, Federal Highway Administration, Room 850, Federal Building, 300 East 8th Street, Austin Texas 78701. David Kopp, P.E., Texas Turnpike Authority Division, Texas Department of Transportation, 125 E. 11th Street, Austin, Texas 78701-2483.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: State Highway 130, as currently envisioned, is a proposed controlled access highway which will extend from IH 35 at State Highway 195 north of Georgetown in Williamson County, Texas, to IH 10 near Seguin in Guadalupe County, Texas. State Highway 130 will be located generally parallel to and east of Interstate Highway 35 and the urban areas of Austin, San Marcos, and New Braunfels. The total length of the proposed facility is 143.5 kilometers (89 miles). The proposed State Highway 130 facility is being developed by the FHWA in cooperation with the Texas Turnpike Authority Division (TTA) of the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT). It is being developed in three segments with each segment having logical termini and independent utility. FHWA and TTA will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for each of the three independent segments.

This Notice of Intent (NOI) focuses on the central segment, Segment B, of State Highway 130. As announced herein, the FHWA in cooperation with TTA will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement on a proposal to construct Segment B of State Highway 130. Segment B of proposed State Highway 130 extends from US Highway 290 east of Austin in Travis County, Texas, to the junction of US Highway 183 and Farm-to-Market Road 1185 north of Lockhart in Caldwell County, Texas. The length of Segment B is approximately 46.67 kilometers (29 miles) but will vary depending on the selected alternative. The proposed action is intended to relieve congestion on Interstate 35 by providing an alternative route for those who commute between Austin and surrounding areas as well as drivers desiring to bypass the central business area of Austin and other cities along the heavily traveled Interstate 35 corridor. The proposed action will also provide improved access and increased mobility to urbanized areas in the proposed corridor; help support planned business and residential growth in various areas

throughout the project corridor; and provide needed freeway access from surrounding areas to the proposed Austin Bergstrom International Airport.

A Major Investment Study, addressing the entire length of the proposed State Highway 130, was adopted in July 1997 by the Austin Transportation Study Policy Advisory Committee, the metropolitan planning organization for the Austin, Texas area.

As currently envisioned the proposed Segment B facility will be a controlled access toll road; thus, in conjunction with the EIS and selection of a preferred alternative, the TTA will conduct a toll feasibility study to evaluate the viability of developing the selected alternative as a toll road and financing it, in whole or part, through the issuance of revenue bonds. The toll road designation will not influence the selection of a preferred alternative. Proposed alternatives, including alternative alignments, will be evaluated for how well they meet the stated purpose and need for the proposed project. Any impacts owing to the toll road designation will be discussed in the environmental impact statement.

The draft EIS for Segment B will address a build alternative including multiple alternative alignments. Alternatives to the proposed action, which will also be discussed in the EIS, will include (1) taking no action, or the "no build" alternative, and (2) improving existing roadways in the project area. The build alternatives include multiple alternative alignments along new location and existing highway rights-of-way within the Segment B project limits.

Impacts caused by the construction and operation of Segment B of State Highway 130 will vary according to the alternative alignment utilized. Generally, impacts would include the following: transportation impacts (construction detours, construction traffic, and mobility improvement); air and noise impacts from construction and operation of the roadway; water quality impacts from construction activities and roadway stormwater runoff; impacts to waters of the United States, including wetlands, from right-of-way encroachment; conversion of dedicated parkland; and impacts to residences and businesses.

Letters describing the proposed action and soliciting comments have been sent to appropriate Federal, State, and local agencies, and to private organizations and citizens who have previously expressed interest in the proposal. Public meetings for the Segment B project were held on April 15, 1996, at Del Valle High School in Del Valle,

Texas; on April 16, 1996, at Barbara Jordan Elementary School in Austin, Texas; on June 11, 1996, at Plum Creek Elementary School in Lockhart, Texas; and on June 26, 1997, at Barbara Jordan Elementary School in Austin, Texas. At these meetings, public comments on the proposed action and alternatives were requested.

In continuation of the scoping process for Segment B of State Highway 130, an additional public meeting will be held on November 5, 1998. The location of the public meeting will be at Barbara Jordan Elementary School, 6711 Johnny Morris Road, Austin, Texas. From 6:00 to 7:00 pm, displays showing the preliminary alternative corridors will be available for review. During this period, staff of the TTA will be available to answer questions. Beginning at 7:00 pm a formal presentation of the project will be made and will be followed by a public comment period. All interested persons are encouraged to attend the public meeting.

A public hearing will be held for the Segment B project subsequent to publication of the Draft EIS. Public notice will be given of the time and place of the hearing. The Draft EIS will be available for public and agency review and comment prior to the public hearing.

To ensure that the full range of issues related to proposed Segment B of State Highway 130 are addressed and all significant issues identified, comments and suggestions are invited from all parties. Comments or questions concerning this proposed action and the EIS should be directed to the FHWA or TTA at the addresses provided above.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program Number 20.205, Highway Research, Planning and Construction. The regulations implementing Executive Order 12372 regarding intergovernmental consultation on Federal programs and activities apply to this program.)

Walter C. Waidelich,

District Engineer, Austin, Texas.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Highway Administration

Environmental Impact Statement: Travis and Williamson Counties, Texas

AGENCY: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of intent.

SUMMARY: The FHWA is issuing this notice to advise the public that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

and Major Investment Study (MIS) will be prepared for a proposed new location highway/tollway project in Travis and Williamson Counties, Texas.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Walter C. Waidelich, District Engineer, Federal Highway Administration, Room 850, Federal Building, 300 East 8th Street, Austin, Texas 78701. Stacey Benningfield, Texas Turnpike Authority Division, Texas Department of Transportation, 125 E. 11th Street, Austin, Texas 78701-2483.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The FHWA, in cooperation with the Turnpike Authority Division (TTA) of the Texas Department of Transportation, will prepare a joint EIS/MIS for a proposed project to relieve traffic congestion in northern Travis and southern Williamson Counties, Texas.

The proposed action is to extend Loop 1 north from its current terminus at Farm-to-Market Road 734 (Parmer Lane). The proposed Loop 1 north extension would generally follow Farm-to-Market Road 1325 or one of three corridors on undeveloped land to the west of existing Farm-to-Market Road 1325. Ultimately, all alternatives intersect with the proposed State Highway 45. The length of the proposed Loop 1 extension is approximately 6.44 kilometers (4 miles) but will vary depending on the selected alternative.

Improvements to be considered in this project include constructing a roadway on new or existing locations and/or improving alternative transportation modes in the community. Ongoing regional high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) studies as well as the combination of a fixed guideway facility (light rail) and/or commuter rail facility will be considered for integration with the proposed Loop 1 project. Ultimate facility design is anticipated to be a four to six lane roadway. Frontage roads, overpasses and direct connection ramps will be constructed at varying locations, depending on the final alignment and design.

The MIS portion of the study will analyze the various mobility alternatives in the Loop 1 corridor as described above. Information on the costs, benefits and impacts of the alternatives will lead to decisions by FHWA, TTA, the Texas Department of Transportation and the Austin Transportation Study (the metropolitan planning organization for the Austin-area) on the design concept and scope of the investment. Major considerations in the EIS will include an analysis of the costs of the right-of-way, the numbers and types of relocations necessary, engineering constraints and limitations due to

topography, and potential environmental impacts involving land use, socioeconomic conditions, water resources, air quality, noise, traffic ecological/cultural resources and hazardous material sites. At the present stage of the planning process, no preferred alternative has been selected. In-depth studies will be conducted before and after a preferred alternative is chosen to avoid and/or minimize impacts to human, cultural and ecological resources. These studies will be coordinated through appropriate local, state and federal agencies.

As currently envisioned the proposed Loop 1 extension will be a controlled access toll road; thus, in conjunction with the EIS and selection of a preferred alternative, the TTA will conduct a toll feasibility study to evaluate the viability of developing the selected alternative as a toll road and financing it, in whole or part, through the issuance of revenue bonds. The toll road designation will not influence the selection of a preferred alternative. Proposed alternatives, including alternative alignments, will be evaluated for how well they meet the stated purpose and need for the proposed project. Any impacts owing to the toll road designation will be discussed in the environmental impact statement.

The draft EIS for the Loop 1 north extension will address a build alternative including multiple alternative alignments. Alternatives to the proposed action, which will also be discussed in the EIS, will include (1) taking no action, or the "no build" alternative, and (2) improving existing roadways in the project area.

Impacts caused by the construction and operation of the proposed Loop 1 extension will vary according to the alternative alignment utilized. Generally, impacts would include the following: transportation impacts (construction detours, construction traffic, and mobility improvement); air and noise impacts from construction and operation of the roadway; water quality impacts from construction activities and roadway stormwater runoff; impacts to waters of the United States, including wetlands, from right-of-way encroachment; and impacts to residences and businesses.

Letters describing the proposed action and soliciting comments have been sent to appropriate Federal, State, and local agencies, and to private organizations and citizens who have previously expressed interest in the proposal. A public meeting for the Loop 1 extension project was held on December 2, 1997, at Summitt Elementary School in Austin, Texas. At the meeting, public

comments on the proposed action and alternatives were requested.

In continuation of the scoping process for the proposed Loop 1 extension, an additional public meeting has been scheduled. The purpose of the meeting is to receive comments on the proposed project. The meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 27, 1998, at Summitt Elementary School, 12207 Brigadoon Lane, Austin, Texas. From 6:00 to 7:00 pm, displays showing the preliminary alternative corridors will be available for review. During this period, staff of the TTA will be available to answer questions. A formal presentation of the project will be made at 7:00 pm and will be followed by a public comment period. All interested persons are encouraged to attend the public meeting.

A public hearing will be held for the Loop 1 north extension project subsequent to publication of the Draft EIS. Public notice will be given of the time and place of the hearing. The Draft EIS will be available for public and agency review and comment prior to the public hearing.

To ensure that the full range of issues related to proposed Loop 1 project are addressed and all significant issues identified, comments and suggestions are invited from all parties. Comments or questions concerning this proposed action and the EIS should be directed to the FHWA or TTA at the addresses provided above.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program Number 20.205, Highway Research, Planning and Construction. The regulations implementing Executive Order 12372 regarding intergovernmental consultation on Federal programs and activities apply to this program.)

Walter C. Waidelich,

District Engineer Austin, Texas.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Transit Administration

Transfer of Federally Assisted Land or Facility

AGENCY: Federal Transit Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of intent to transfer Federally assisted land or facility.

SUMMARY: 49 U.S.C. Section 5334(g), permits the Administrator of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to authorize a recipient of FTA funds to transfer land or a facility to a public body for any public purpose with no further obligation to the Federal