

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION****Federal Highway Administration****Environmental Impact Statement:  
Caldwell and Guadalupe 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 will be prepared for a proposed new location highway/tollway project in Caldwell and Guadalupe 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 or 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 projects with each project having logical termini and independent utility. FHWA and TTA will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for each of the three independent projects.

This Notice of Intent (NOI) focuses on the southern project, Segment C, 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 C of State Highway 130. Segment C of proposed State Highway 130 extends from the junctions of US Highway 183 and Farm-to-Market Road 1185 north of Lockhart in Caldwell County, Texas, to Interstate Highway 10 near Seguin in Guadalupe County, Texas. The length of Segment C varies depending on the alternative selected. The proposed action is intended to relieve congestion on Interstate 35 by providing an alternative route for those

who commute between the metropolitan areas of Austin or San Antonio and surrounding areas as well as drivers desiring to bypass Austin and other central Texas cities located 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 endorsed in July 1997 by the Austin Transportation Study Policy Advisory Committee, the metropolitan planning organization for the Austin, Texas area.

The proposed Segment C facility is being developed as a candidate 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 ability 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 C 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 C project limits.

Impacts caused by the construction and operation of Segment C 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 storm water 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. Public meetings for the Segment C project were held in June and September 1997 in Seguin, Texas and in June and September 1997 in Lockhart, Texas. At these meetings, public comments on the proposed action and alternatives were requested.

In continuation of the scoping process for Segment C of State Highway 130, an additional set of public meetings has been scheduled. These meetings will be held on Wednesday, December 2, 1998, at the Sequin Coliseum, 810 South Guadalupe Street, Seguin, Texas, and on Tuesday, December 8, 1998, in the cafeteria of Plum Creek Elementary School, 710 Flores Street, Lockhart, Texas. Two meetings are planned for the convenience of those wishing to attend. TTA, and its consultants, will present the same information at each meeting. From 6:00 to 7:00 pm, displays showing the preliminary alternative corridors will be available for review. During this period, TTA staff 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 one or both of these public meetings.

A public hearing will be held for the Segment C 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 C 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.)

Issued on: November 18, 1998.

**Walter C. Waidelich,**

*District Engineer, Austin, Texas.*

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