

FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

FHWA-TX-EIS-99-05-F

State Highway 121

From IH 30 to FM 1187

Tarrant County, Texas

Volume One

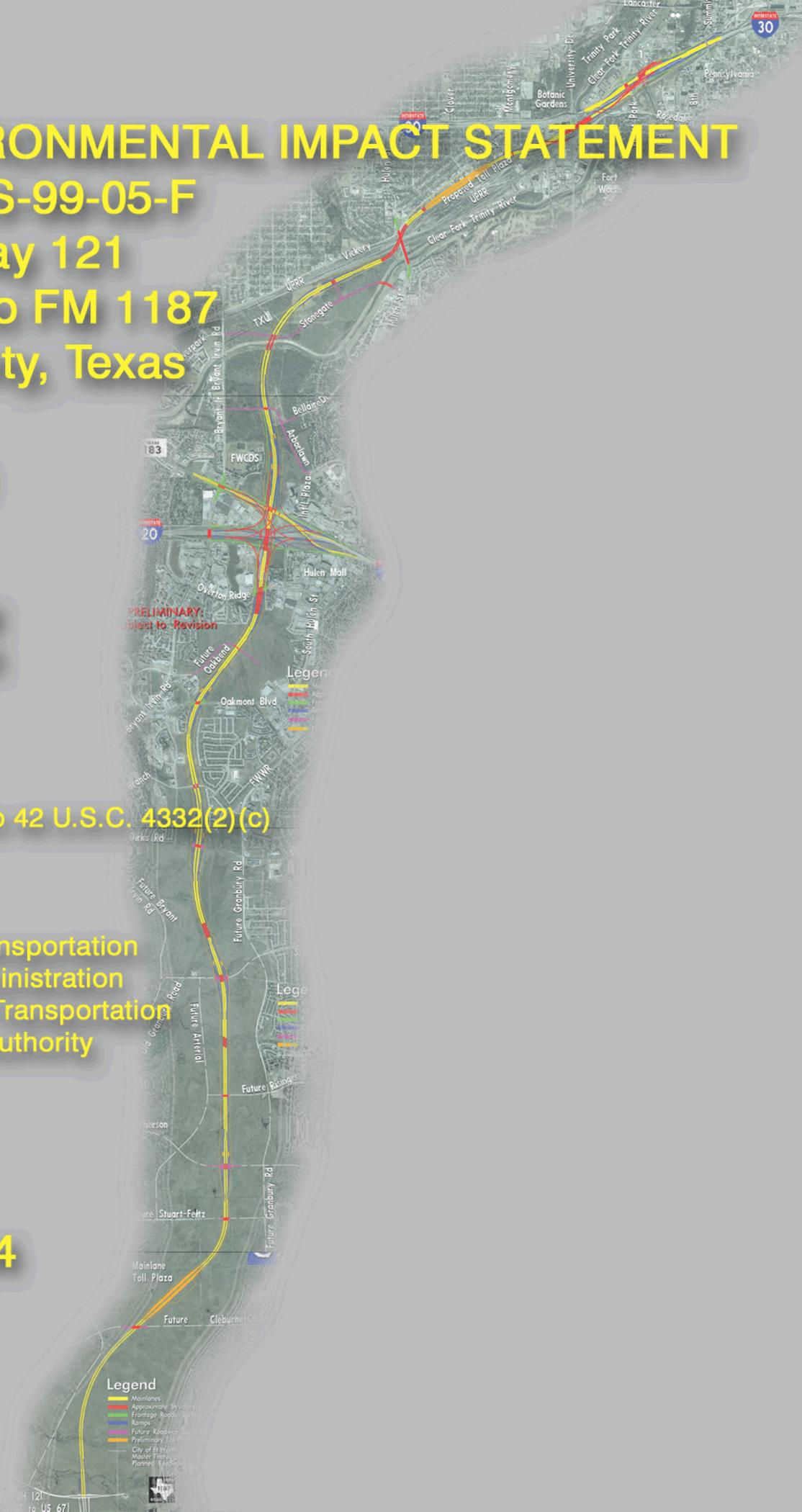
CSJ 0504 02 008
CSJ 0504 02 013

Submitted Pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(c)

Prepared by:

US Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration
Texas Department of Transportation
North Texas Tollway Authority

October 2004



FHWA-TX-EIS-99-05-F

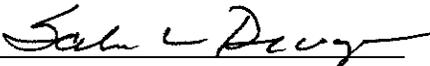
STATE HIGHWAY 121
FROM INTERSTATE HIGHWAY 30
To FARM-TO-MARKET 1187 In TARRANT COUNTY, TEXAS
CSJ: 0504-02-008
CSJ: 0504-02-013

FINAL
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

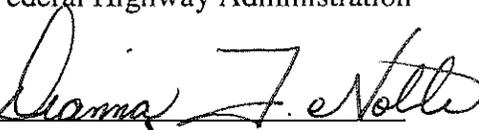
Submitted Pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(c)

U.S. Department of Transportation - Federal Highway Administration
Texas Department of Transportation
and
North Texas Tollway Authority

10/27/04
Date


Federal Highway Administration

10-27-04
Date


Texas Department of Transportation

10-20-04
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North Texas Tollway Authority

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The action proposed is the construction of State Highway 121, a multi-lane controlled access roadway on new alignment, from Interstate Highway 30 to Farm-to-Market 1187 in Tarrant County. The total project length would be approximately 15 miles. A portion of the roadway is proposed as a tollroad.

Comments on this Final Environmental Impact Statement are due 45 days from the date the notice of availability is published in the Federal Register.

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PREFACE

PREFACE

Throughout the history of this project, the roadway has been referred to by several different names. For the purposes of this document, the recommended project/tollroad is identified as State Highway 121. This Final Environmental Impact Statement for SH 121 from Interstate Highway 30 to Farm-to-Market Road 1187 has been prepared in accordance with regulations developed by the Council on Environmental Quality for the National Environmental Policy Act, U.S. Department of Transportation and Federal Highway Administration. The structure of this document is as follows:

Summary: Provides a summary of the document.

Chapter 1 – Project History: Presents the SH 121 project development history.

Chapter 2 – Purpose and Need: Presents the purpose and need for the project along with an overview of local and regional transportation goals. Specific transportation problems are presented along with a discussion of the purpose and need for transportation improvements in the southwest quadrant of the City of Fort Worth.

Chapter 3 – Alternatives: Provides a comparison and analysis of options considered including roadway options, various Build alternatives, the No-Build alternative, the recommended alternative and congestion management strategies in conjunction with the proposed alternatives.

Chapter 4 – Affected Environment: Describes the existing social, economic and natural environmental conditions in the study area without the influence of the recommended project. The discussion provides a description of the environment in which the project would take place and describes the relevant resources in the study area.

Chapter 5 – Environmental Consequences: Discusses potential impacts of the recommended project alternatives on the man-made and natural environments.

Chapter 6 – Public and Agency Involvement: This chapter summarizes the public and agency involvement efforts.

Chapter 7 – Recommended Alternative: Identifies the recommended Build alternative.

Chapter 8 – Summary of Mitigation Measures: Potential mitigation measures are described for regulated impacts due to the recommended alternative.

Chapter 9 – Agency Coordination and Comments

This document also contains eight appendices:

Appendix A provides a list of preparers.

Appendix B provides a list of recipients.

Appendix C provides the City of Fort Worth authorizations.

Appendix D contains the Notice of Intent letters.

Appendix E contains the Southwest Fort Worth Subarea Study.

Appendix F contains agency coordination and communications.

Appendix G provides the City of Fort Worth Project Development Team Recommendations

Appendix H provides a list of acronyms, abbreviations and definitions used in the document and their definitions.

Volume Two of the document contains the April 22, 2003 Public Hearing documentation consisting of:

- Public Hearing summary and analysis
- Public Hearing comment and response report
- Public Hearing transcript
- Written comments from the Public Hearing process

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SUMMARY

SUMMARY

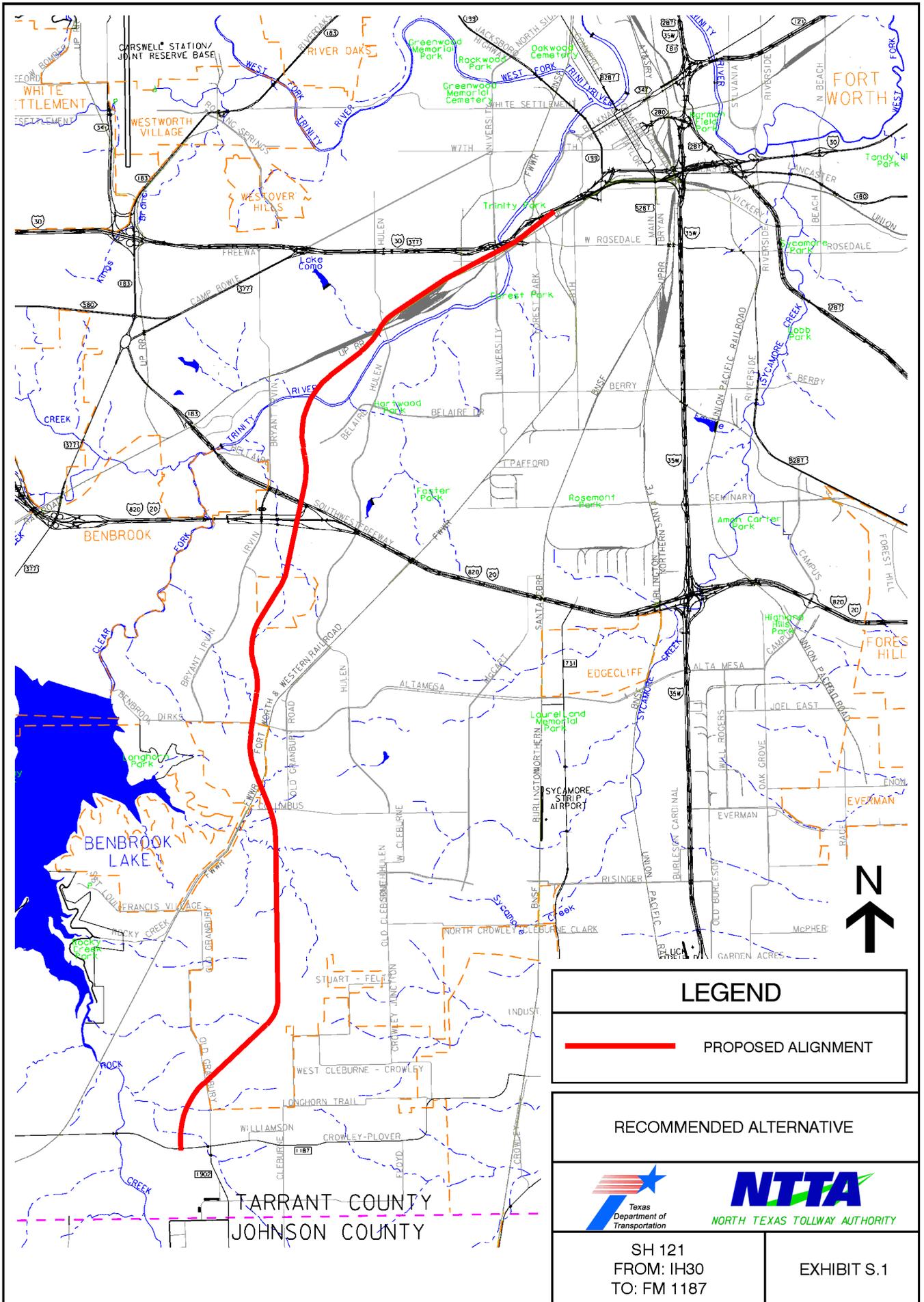
S 1.0 Description of Proposed Action

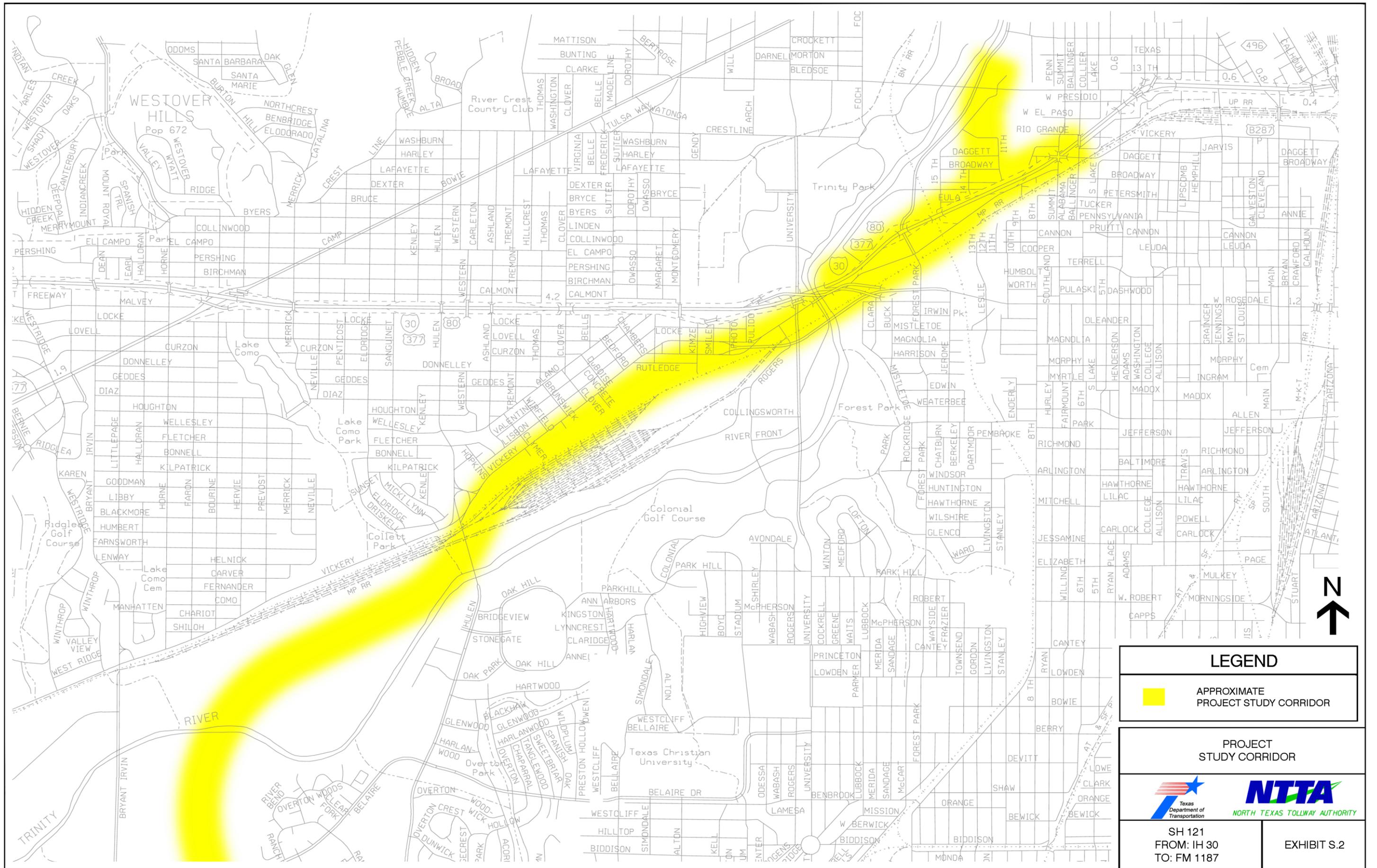
The proposed State Highway (SH) 121 project is a multi-lane controlled access tollroad from Interstate Highway (IH) 30 near downtown Fort Worth in Tarrant County to Farm-to-Market Road (FM) 1187, for a total project length of approximately 15 miles (mi). Exhibit S.1 represents the recommended alternative. Exhibit S.2 through Exhibit S.5 provides a geographical representation of the project study corridor (PSC). The entire facility is proposed on a new alignment. It would traverse a large portion of the City of Fort Worth (City) with major interchanges at IH 30 and IH 20/SH 183.

IH 30 (the northern terminus) is a major IH that facilitates traffic moving east-west through the Dallas/Fort Worth (DFW) area. FM 1187 (the southern terminus) is a major arterial, included on the National Highway System that serves traffic moving through southern Tarrant County. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) approved the limits of the project as logical termini.

The proposed action would provide a major link in the regional transportation network. Construction of the proposed SH 121 is part of the North Central Texas Council of Governments' (NCTCOG) regional transportation plan and the City of Fort Worth's *Master Thoroughfare and Comprehensive Plans*. The proposed SH 121 would provide a needed alternate route to the already congested urban arterials serving southwest Tarrant County.

The proposed action would be a divided tollroad. From the northern terminus at IH 30 to Altamesa Boulevard the proposed facility would ultimately be six lanes. From Altamesa Boulevard to the southern limit at FM 1187, the ultimate facility would be four lanes. However, until warranted due to future increases in traffic volume, only a part of the ultimate six/four-lane facility is being proposed at this time. As currently proposed, the facility would vary from six lanes between IH 30 and Altamesa Boulevard to four lanes from Altamesa Boulevard to FM 1187. Limited frontage road access would be provided where needed for local traffic circulation. The typical right-of-way (ROW) width for the project varies from 220 feet (ft) to 400 ft, with additional ROW width required





LEGEND

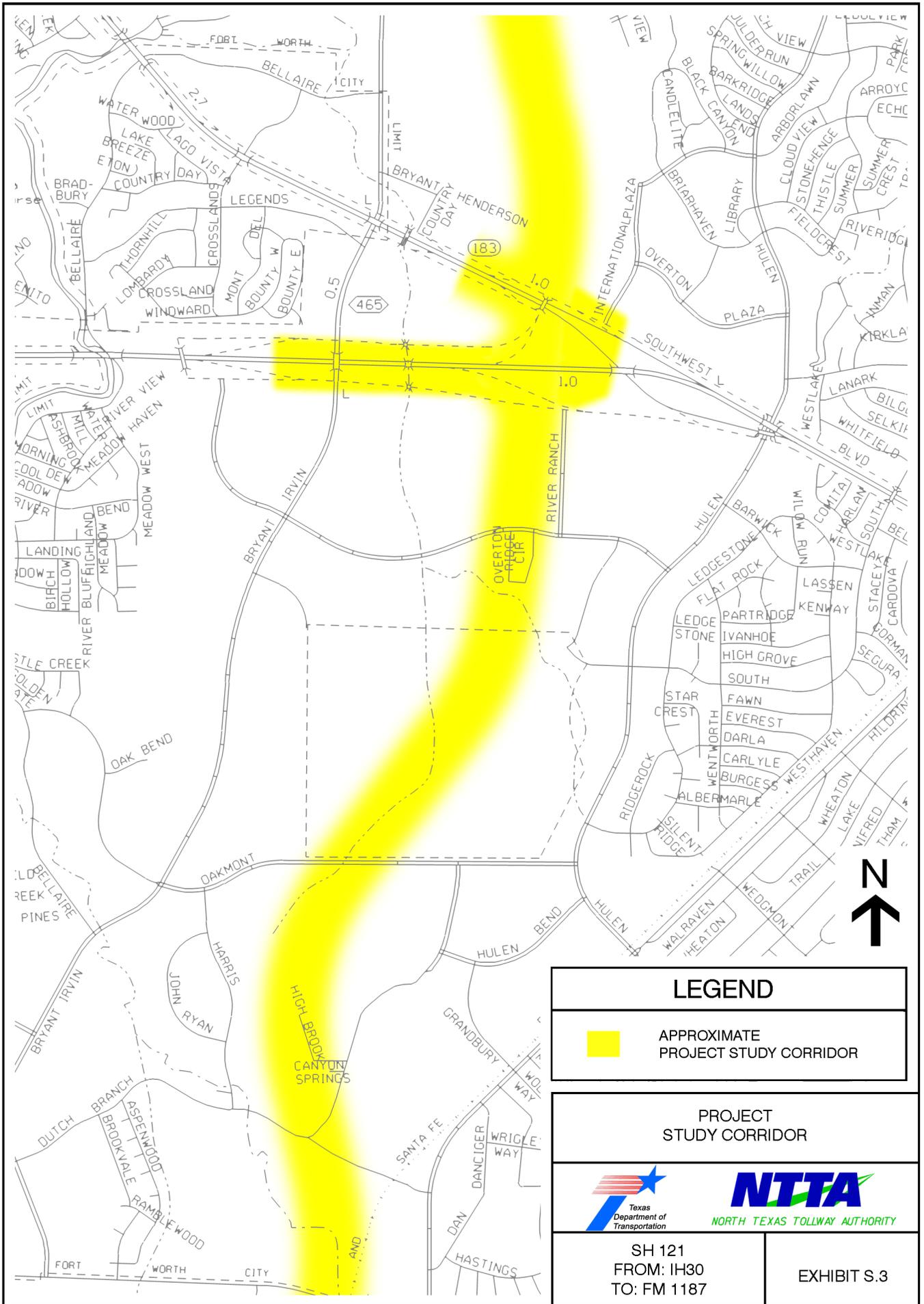
 APPROXIMATE PROJECT STUDY CORRIDOR

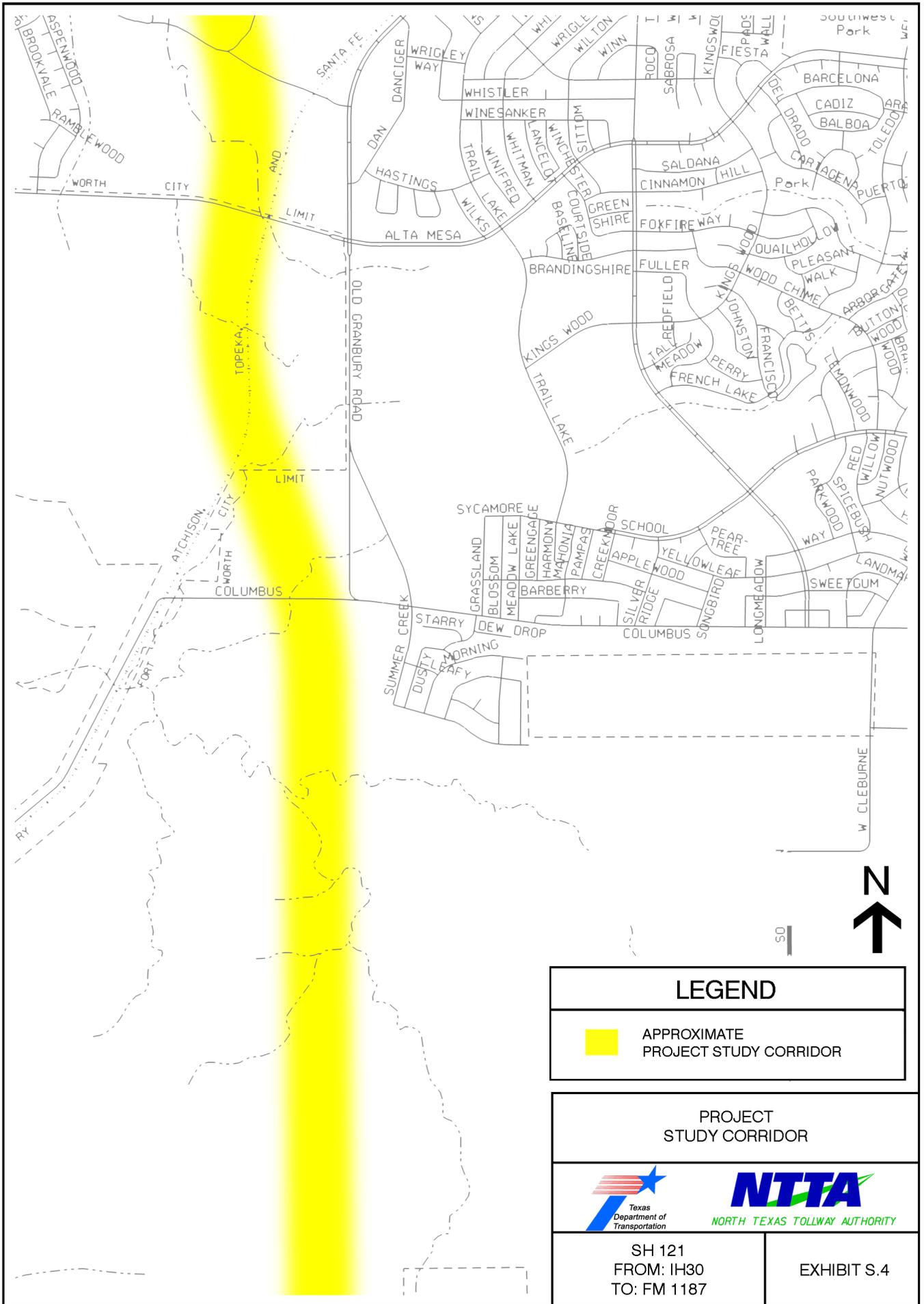
PROJECT STUDY CORRIDOR

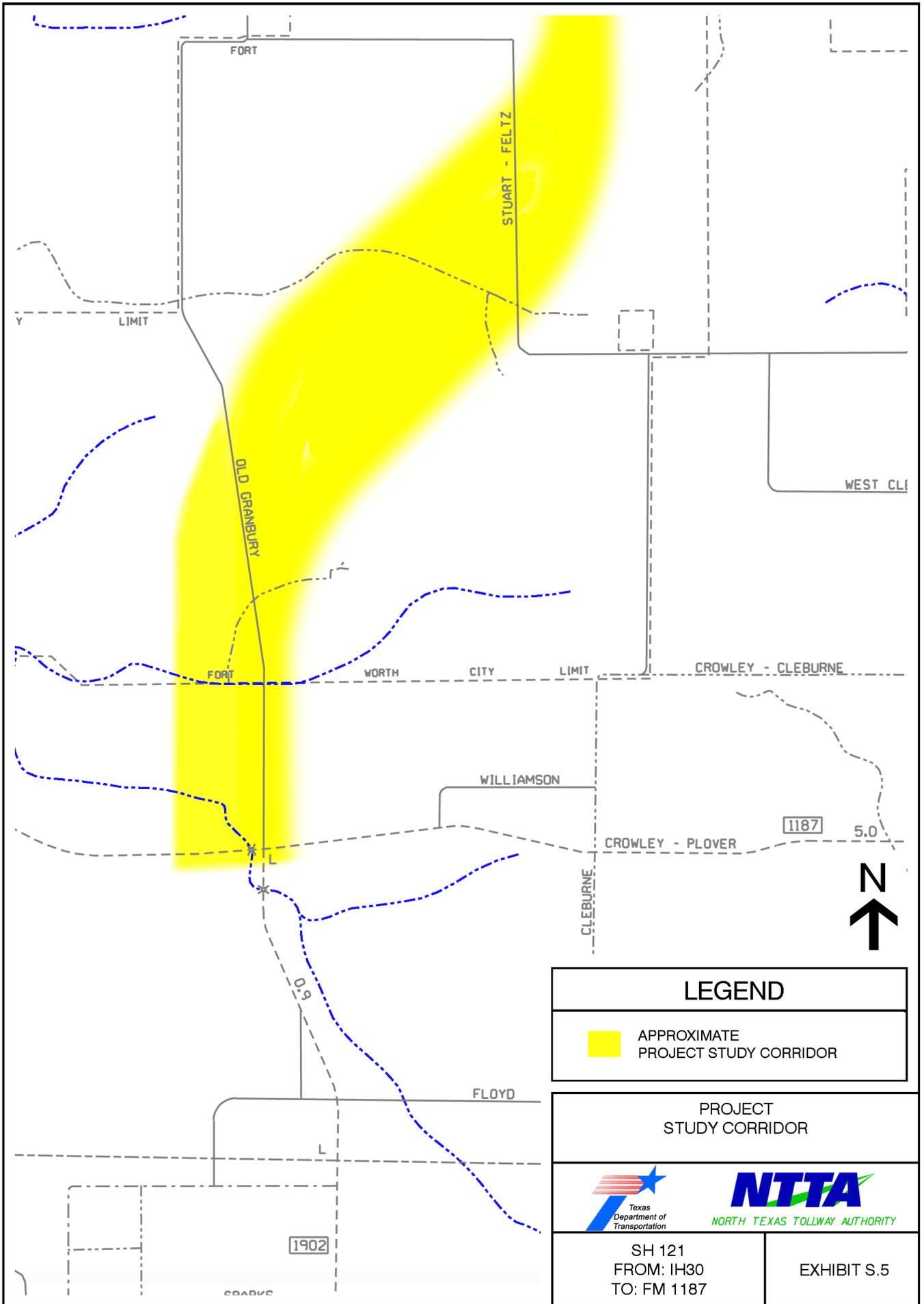


SH 121
FROM: IH 30
TO: FM 1187

EXHIBIT S.2







at interchanges. The recommended alternative would require acquisition of approximately 635 acres (ac).

Though proposed as a multi-phase constructed facility, the action described in this document is consistent with the *2004 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)*, *Mobility 2025 – 2004 Update*, the *2004 - 2006 Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP)* and conforms to the *Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 (CAAA)* per the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) on April 8, 2004. The Motor Vehicle Emissions Budget in the State Implementation Plan was found to be adequate for transportation conformity purposes effective November 6, 2000 by the US Environmental Protection Agency (see 65 Federal Register 63074). Since that time, modifications to the concept and scope of identified projects submitted by local governments and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) have required revisions to the air quality conformity determination. The most current conformity determination continues to meet the requirements of the SIP, the *Clean Air Act (CAA)* found in 42 *United States Code (USC)* 7504, 7506 (c) and (d) as amended on November 15, 1990 and the transportation conformity rule found in 40 *Code of Federal Regulations (CFR)* Parts 51 and 93. Additionally, the project comes from an operational Congestion Management System (CMS) that meets all requirements of 23 CFR-Highways, Parts 450 and 500.

A previously proposed route was designated as a Texas SH in October 1973, following a Public Hearing and approval of a recommended alignment by the Texas Highway Commission. Following refinement of route location and study limits, a toll facility became the only viable option for funding. The project is now proposed to be a part of the North Texas Tollway Authority (NTTA) system (Please see discussion in Chapter 1.0, Project History and in Chapter 3.2, Freeway and Tollroad Options).

S 2.0 Major Actions Proposed by Other Government Agencies

The City is currently planning the extension of Bellaire Drive/Arborlawn Drive from its current terminus to Bryant Irvin Road. The proposed extension would be extremely effective in improving local traffic circulation. Future development of the proposed outer loop (Loop 9), which is planned

to follow the current alignment of FM 1187 in the southern part of Tarrant County, is under consideration pending further study.

No other major actions are currently proposed by other government agencies that would influence the proposed action.

S 3.0 Reasonable Alternatives Considered

This document includes a detailed account of the history of the project, including the consideration of various modal and alignment alternatives. Four Build alternatives and the No-Build were identified in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). During the Public Hearing, the City presented a resolution identifying an additional Build alternative. Therefore five Build alternatives identified as A, B, C, C/A and D, in addition to the No-Build, are presented in this document. The Build alternatives vary with respect to their interchanges and footprint.

Due to the 40-year history of the project and subsequent land use patterns that have evolved, the proposed Build alternatives are essentially confined to the same horizontal alignment with the vertical profile varying among the alternatives. In addition to vertical profile modification, there are various locations where different plan concepts have been proposed depending on the alternative. The Build alternatives were proposed by different agencies, studies and continuing public involvement. The City's recommended alternative is primarily Alternative A with modifications.

The following alignment description is applicable to all five build alternatives. The recommended project would begin west of Summit Avenue at IH 30 with a tie-in to Forest Park Boulevard. It would proceed west between Vickery Boulevard and the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR), crossing over the UPRR before proceeding south and over the Clear Fork of the Trinity River to the SH 183/IH 20 interchange. From this point the alignment would proceed south to its terminus at the intersection of FM 1187.

The Alternative C/A would incorporate much of the City's Resolution No. 2923 in so far as is feasible and practicable. Based on public involvement and the assessment of the affected environment, the Alternative C/A is identified as the recommended alternative, which best meets the purpose and need of the project.

S 4.0 Major Environmental Impacts

The recommended alternative would offer improved access and a less congested alternative route to local businesses, residential and commercial properties. A negative aesthetic impact would occur during construction of the proposed facility. In the long-term, the paved arteries and overpasses would affect the current rural and scenic nature in the southern end of the project within the project corridor. Short-term impacts to existing pedestrian and bicycle facilities would be limited to the construction phase of the project. Other short-term impacts such as soil erosion and sediment-laden runoff from construction areas could temporarily impact rivers and streams along the project. However, both temporary and permanent erosion control structures could be employed to reduce or eliminate sediment discharges into receiving waters. Short-term air and noise impacts would also occur during the construction phase. However, with the use of proper abatement measures these impacts would be minimized.

Acquisition of additional ROW for project construction would require the relocation of commercial, residential, City property and a place of worship. The relocation would take place along approximately 3 miles of the proposed SH 121.

S 5.0 Issues of Public Deliberation

S 5.1 Governmental Agencies

The Fort Worth City Council endorsed the proposed SH 121 project with a seven votes to two votes, on December 8, 1998. The proposal received much debate and public input, ending in the authorization of Resolution No. 2474 in support of the proposed SH 121 (Appendix C, Attachment 3). A Mayor and Council Communication (Ref. No. C-17178) was also signed on this date,

authorizing the, “ ... Southwest Parkway Interlocal Agreement Between the City, TxDOT and the NTTA.”

The Fort Worth City Council opted to consider the appointment of an independent committee to re-evaluate the “downtown” section of the proposed facility, near IH 30 and Forest Park Boulevard. From January 1999 until December 2000, the City initiated three separate review committees: the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), the Peer Review Team (PRT) and the Project Development Team (PDT). After the PDT presented the review and recommendations of the three independent committees, the recommendations were presented to the City Council. These recommendations were subsequently approved by the City Council and submitted to NTTA and TxDOT for review. The PDT’s recommended alternative, as well as an additional alternative derived from the recommendations, is included within this document (Please refer to Appendix C).

NTTA and TxDOT have diligently analyzed the public’s concerns expressed during the Public Hearing process. This resulted in revised studies based on updated data, an expanded discussion of secondary and cumulative impacts and an overall improvement in the readability of the document.

It has been determined that there are no changes to the project that would result in substantial environmental impacts not previously considered in the DEIS nor is there new information relevant to environmental concerns that would result in substantial impacts not evaluated in the DEIS. As a result of this “hard look” NTTA and TxDOT recommended proceeding to this Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). The FHWA has concurred with this approach.

Due to public interest in this project, the City has requested additional public involvement as this project advances. While not traditionally provided at the FEIS stage, NTTA, TxDOT and FHWA have agreed to provide an additional Public Hearing after the FEIS would be made available to the public. Before the execution of the Record of Decision (ROD), a summary of this additional Public Hearing and analysis of comments would also be made available to the public. Comments not previously addressed in the FEIS would be noted in the ROD.

S 5.2 Public

To date, public sentiment regarding SH 121 has been mostly positive and supportive of the project. Persons raising objections to the project have been generally opposed to specific plan elements of the facility, but continued to support the overall project. The creation of the CAC, authorized in January, 1999, by City Council Resolution No. 2482 (Appendix C, Attachment 4), has provided a means for citizens to voice many of these concerns and work together with the NTTA and TxDOT to incorporate desired aesthetic and urban design standards and in general, provide citizen input on matters of public interest. In addition to the CAC, the PDT developed alternatives during a six-month process between June 2000 and December 2000. The PDT process included monthly workshops and public meetings to solicit comments from the public.

Following the 2003 Public Hearing, the City in Resolution 2982 (Please refer to Appendix C, Attachment 6) established the Citizens' Advisory Group (CAG). The charge of the CAG is to provide input on the project's features and themes to the City Council in the succeeding phases of project development, following the ROD. Additional information on public involvement is described in Volume 2.

S 6.0 Major Unresolved Issues with Other Agencies

There are no unresolved issues with other agencies. Coordination efforts among TxDOT, NTTA, FHWA and the City are ongoing.

S 7.0 Federal Actions Required for the Proposed Action

Under Section 404 of the *Clean Water Act* (CWA) it is anticipated that construction of the project would require a United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Individual Permit (IP) for the crossings over the Clear Fork of the Trinity River. It is also anticipated that a Section 404 Nationwide Permit (NWP) No. 14 would be required at several of the other minor tributary crossings. Because the affected streams and rivers are not classified as navigable, neither a United States Coast Guard (USCG) Section 9 permit nor a USACE Section 10 permit would be required.

Coordination with the USACE concerning permits for this project would be conducted during the detailed design of the project. In addition, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) Section 401 of the CWA Best Management Practices (BMP) for erosion control would be implemented in association with any Section 404 permits.

Because this project would disturb more than one acre, the project would be required to obtain a TCEQ Phase II Texas Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (TPDES) Construction General Permit. This would be accomplished by filing a Notice of Intent (NOI) to comply with the TPDES stating that NTTA and TxDOT would have a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SW3P) in place during construction of the project. No long-term water quality impacts are expected as a result of the project.

No other permit requirements have been identified. Land transfers from Federal agencies would not be required in order to construct the project. No other Federal actions required for the proposed action have been identified.

CHAPTER 1

PROJECT HISTORY

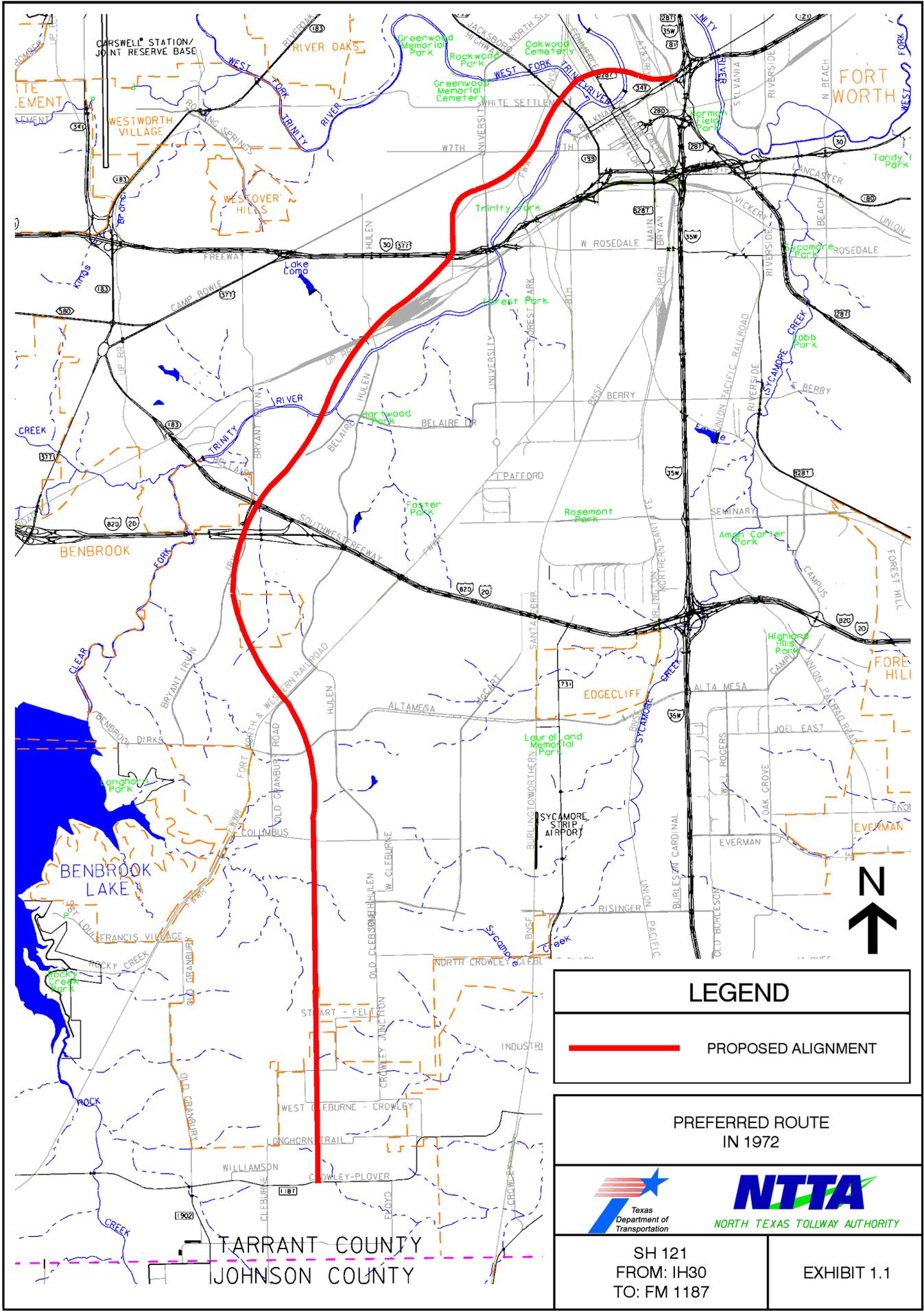
1.0 PROJECT HISTORY

In 1962, a radial freeway through the southwest quadrant of Fort Worth was placed on the *Fort Worth Metropolitan Area Thoroughfare Plan*. The Texas Highway Commission, by Minute Order (MO) 53297 dated August 1, 1963, authorized the development of a comprehensive and continuing Urban Transportation Plan, which indicated the need for the development of a freeway in the City from IH 35W to the Tarrant-Johnson County Line. In 1964, this “Northside-Southwest Freeway” was included in the *1964-85 Dallas/Fort Worth Regional Transportation Study*.

The Texas Highway Commission, through MO 64014 dated July 9, 1970 (Please refer to Appendix C), directed that preliminary design and environmental studies be completed, followed by a Public Hearing, leading to the possible designation of a southwest radial freeway as a SH. In January 1972, representatives from the NCTCOG, Tarrant County, the City and TxDOT, in conjunction with members of a consultant team, completed the Route Study Report for the Northside-Southwest Freeway. The study resulted in the 1972 recommendation of a preferred route, shown as Exhibit 1.1 for the proposed freeway.

A Draft Environmental/Section 4(f) Statement Administrative Action for the Northside-Southwest Freeway was prepared by the City Planning Department in conjunction with TxDOT in March of 1972. The report was later approved by the FHWA for circulation and comments in July of 1972. TxDOT issued an Administrative Route Approval on July 17, 1972, for the purpose of holding a route Public Hearing.

On May 2, 1973, TxDOT, the City, Tarrant County and NCTCOG conducted a Public Hearing at the Round-Up Inn. The recommended 1973 route ran from the connection of IH 35W and SH 121 crossing IH 30 alongside Montgomery Street and then proceeding south along the UPRR, crossing the railroad at Hulen Street. At this meeting the attending residents, city planners, Garden Club officials, City Park and Recreation board members, TxDOT officials and the Chamber of Commerce, endorsed a recommended route (Route A on Exhibit 1.2). Route A was then added to the Texas highway system by the Texas Highway Commission in October of 1973, giving priority to the area



LEGEND

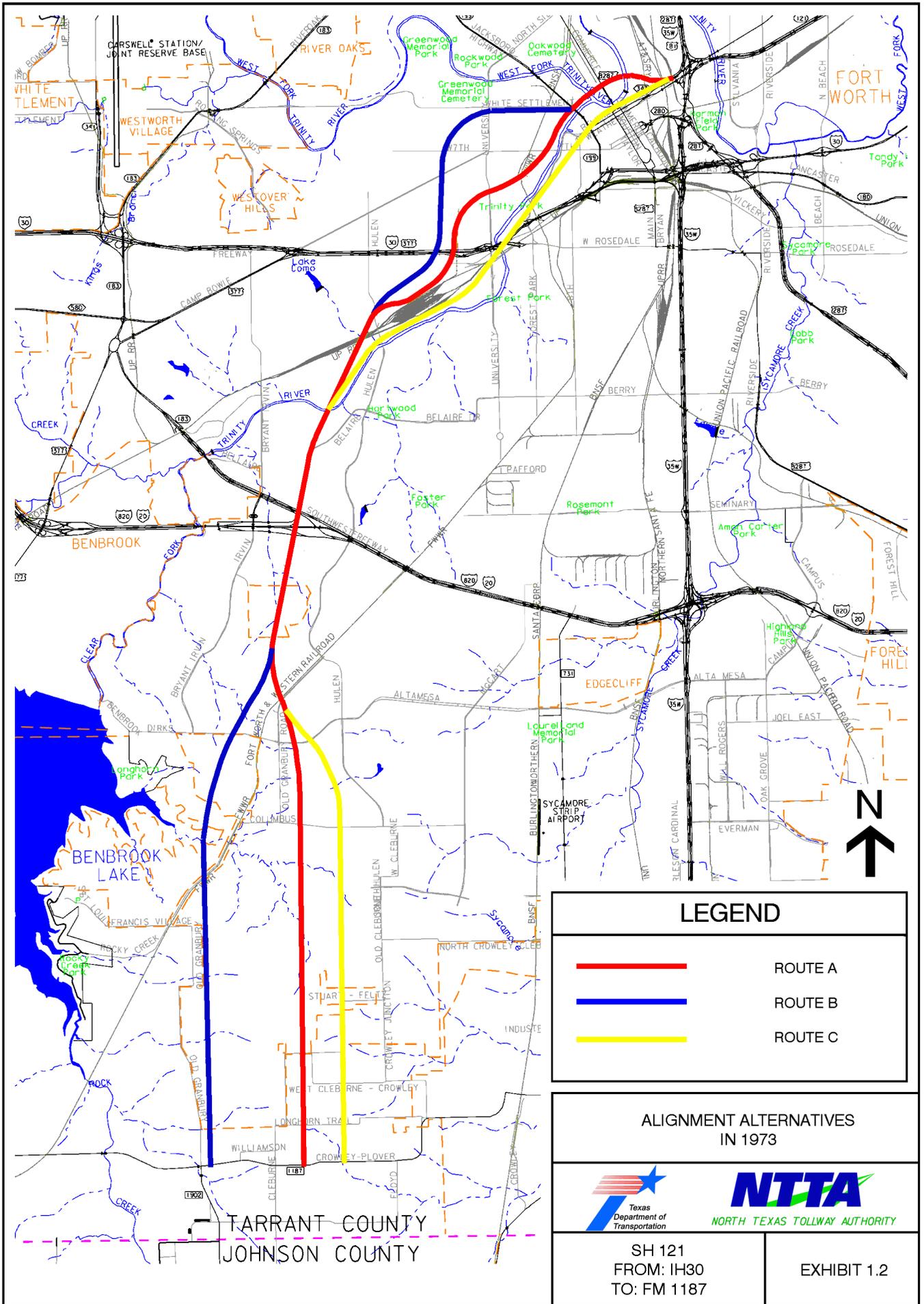
 PROPOSED ALIGNMENT

PREFERRED ROUTE
IN 1972



SH 121
FROM: IH30
TO: FM 1187

EXHIBIT 1.1



from IH 35W to IH 20. In January 1974, SH 121 from IH 35W to IH 20 was included as part of the Federal Aid Highway System. On October 4, 1974, Route A was approved by the THC under MO 68084 (Please refer to Appendix C) and it was designated as SH 121.

After advanced planning and before detailed design and ROW studies were completed for the 1974 approved route, the national economy had begun to decline with the onset of the fuel shortage crisis. Subsequent inflation of construction costs resulted in the establishment of the TxDOT statewide 20-year Project Development Plan (PDP). It was created to manage allocation of limited funding for roads and highways. Though part of the proposed SH 121 (from IH 35W to SH 199) was included in the 10 year Advance Planning Schedule, most of the route was deferred pending a later revision of the funding plan. With this indefinite deferment of construction, efforts to preserve ROW along the project corridor were abandoned and several new buildings have been constructed.

In the late 1970's and early 1980's, the concept of a "Cultural District" that encompassed museums, the Will Rogers Complex, Casa Mañana, Farrington Field, the Botanic Garden, Trinity Park and Forest Park had begun to emerge in Fort Worth. What was once a widely supported alignment for the proposed SH 121 was now strongly opposed by many of its original proponents due to the "splitting" effect it would have on this newly identified Cultural District.

The subarea planning study conducted by NCTCOG in cooperation with the City was completed in April of 1984. The study, *Southwest Fort Worth Subarea Study: Evaluation of Transportation Alternatives* examined 18 functional and location alternatives for SH 121 (Please see Appendix E). The alternatives studied included the "existing plus committed improvements," a Transportation Systems Management (TSM) strategy, three parkway alternatives, an alternative with a tollroad segment (from IH 20 to IH 30), eleven freeway alternatives and one rail alternative. Based on a comparative analysis of the alternatives, with respect to engineering, traffic performance, cost and environmental impacts, the 11.7 mi "Freeway - East Alignment" was recommended as the preferred route. The report also recommended that the section between IH 30 and Sycamore School Road be constructed in the first phase while assuring that ROW between the IH 35W and SH 121 intersection

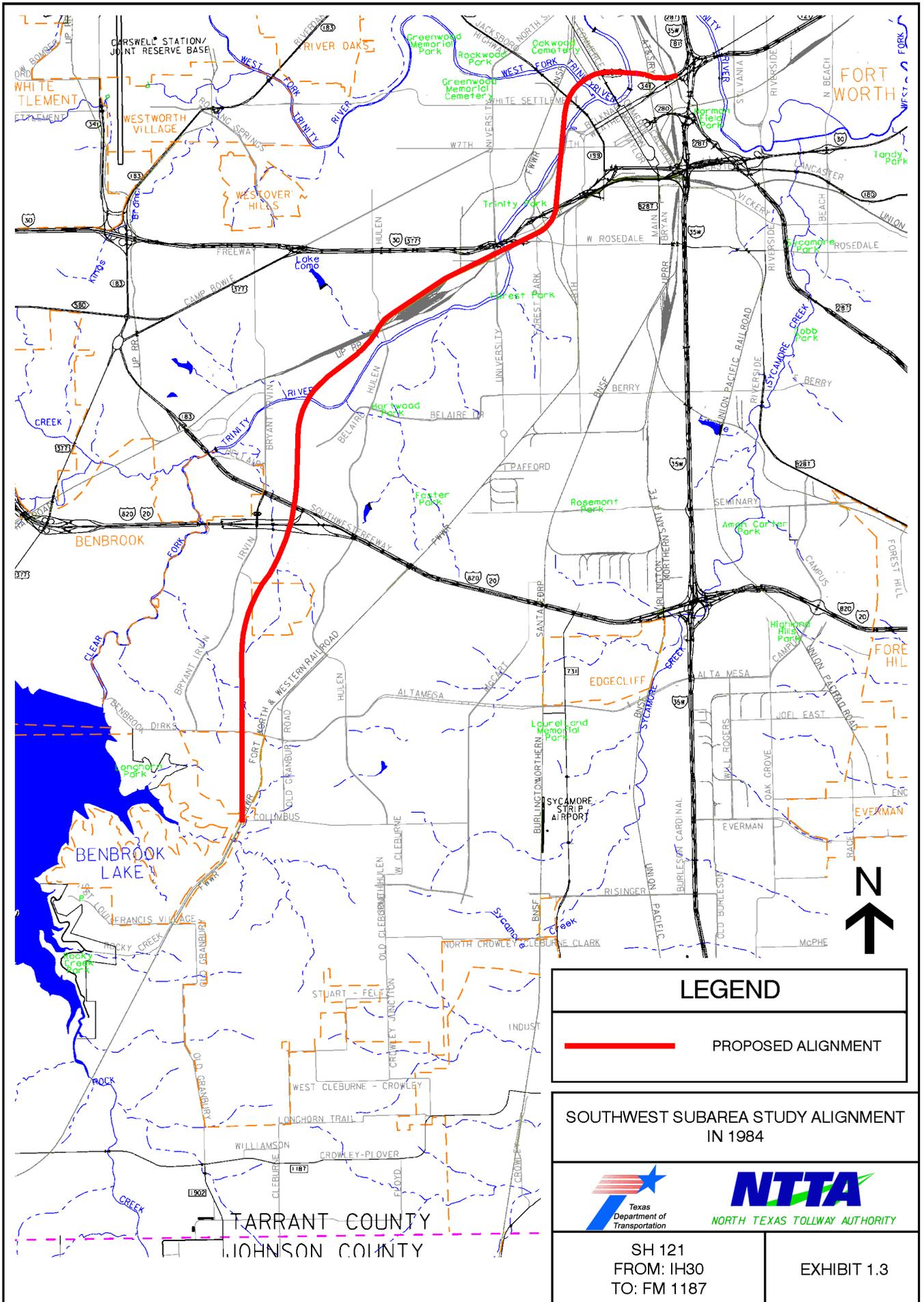
and IH 30 would be protected for phase two construction. This route was then endorsed by the Fort Worth City Council.

In December 1984, the City commissioned the development of schematic plans for a portion of the proposed alignment to resolve various preliminary design issues that had been identified. Studies concluded the route was feasible, but required a plan to relocate the Trinity River 150 to 200 ft into Trinity Park. This eastern route was embraced and endorsed by the City Council, the Tarrant County Commissioners Court, the Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce, the Cultural District Committee, the school district, the water district, the Streams and Valleys Committee, the Fort Worth Planning Commission and the Fort Worth Garden Club (Please see Exhibit 1.3). The USACE concurred with the alignment shift. This report was concluded in June 1985.

In response to the community's concerns, the Texas Highway Commission canceled its previous route approval and authorized preliminary engineering and environmental studies to establish a new route alignment. These studies were authorized by MO 83516 and MO 84030 and approved by the TxDOT Commission on August 29, 1985 and January 30, 1986, respectively. MO 83516 authorized preliminary engineering for SH 121 from IH 35W to FM 1187 and MO 84030 authorized a feasibility study for SH 121 from FM 1187 to SH 174 in Johnson County.

On February 4, 1986, the RTC adopted *Mobility 2000: The Regional Transportation Plan for North Central Texas* prepared by the NCTCOG. The proposed roadway was included as a designated freeway to FM 1187 and as a proposed freeway south of FM 1187. TxDOT included SH 121 from IH 35W north of downtown Fort Worth to SH 174 in their 20-year PDP. SH 121 was designated as a project that required local commitment in order to improve cost effectiveness.

The City and Tarrant County, having reached consensus on the freeway's route from downtown to McPherson Road, commissioned a location study for the proposed SH 121 between McPherson Road and FM 1187 in order to secure ROW donations. The location study analyzed two routes: a westerly alignment, Alternative A, which crossed FM 1187 along the existing FM 1902 alignment then used major portions of FM 1902 and an existing county road before connecting to SH 174



LEGEND

 PROPOSED ALIGNMENT

SOUTHWEST SUBAREA STUDY ALIGNMENT IN 1984




SH 121
FROM: IH30
TO: FM 1187

EXHIBIT 1.3

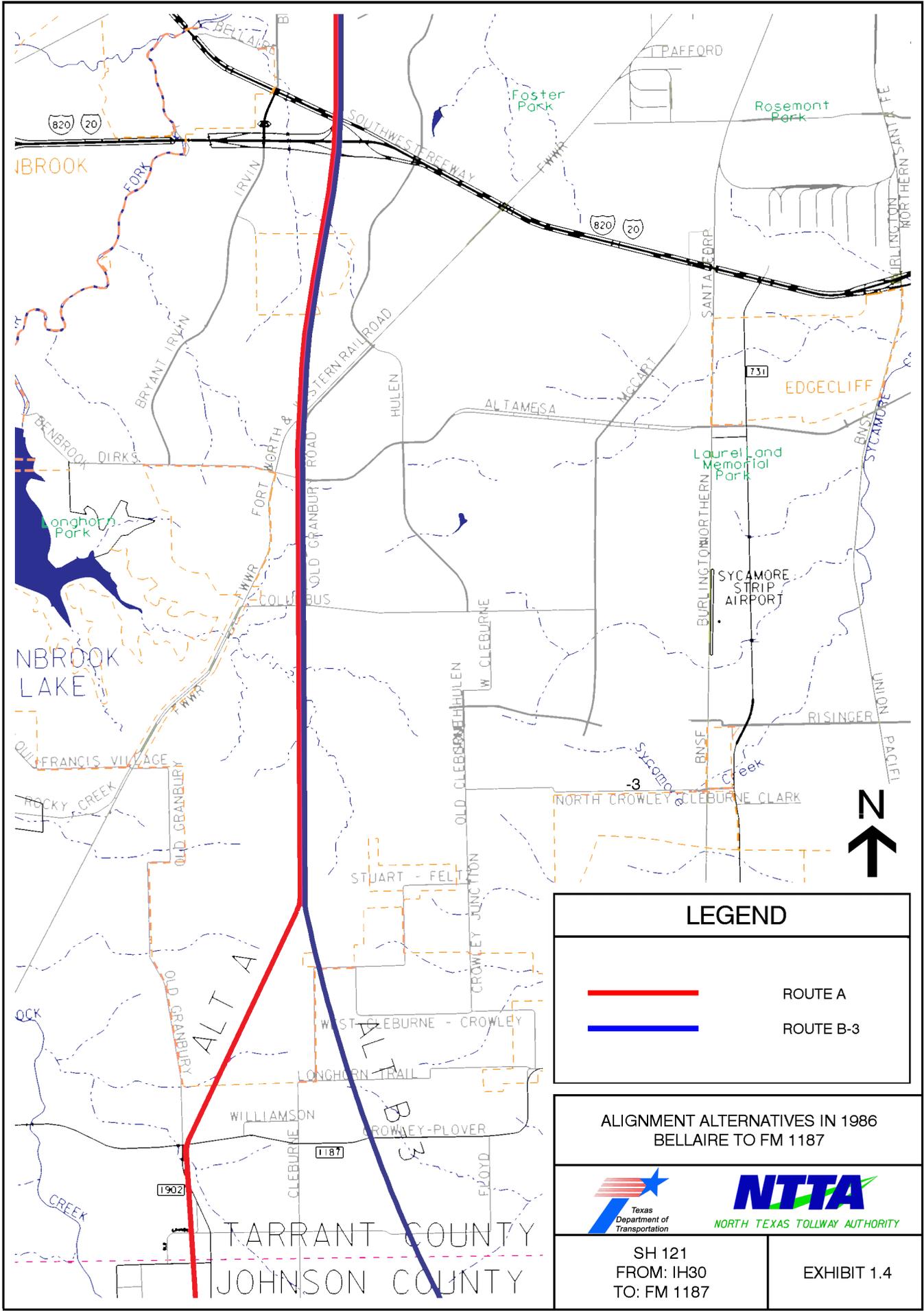
(about one mile north of Joshua); and an eastern alignment (Alternative B-3) that followed a southeastern direction from McPherson Road and connected to SH 174 about 1.5 mi north of Joshua. Exhibit 1.4 depicts the alignments studied. In February 1986, this study recommended the western alternative as being more cost effective and more conducive to phased construction.

In March 1987, TxDOT engaged the services of a consulting firm to conduct environmental studies and recommend routes for the freeway. During project development, a decision was made to separate the proposed SH 121 into two projects for public involvement and environmental study purposes. The point of division was determined to be IH 20, creating a project from the junction of IH 35W and SH 121 in the north to IH 20 and a project from IH 20 to SH 174 or United States Highway (US) 67 in Johnson County.

In May 1987, with the intent of accelerating the construction process for the proposed SH 121, the Tarrant County Commissioners proposed the creation of a county tollroad authority named the "Tarrant County Tollroad Authority." The bill proposing the creation of the agency was rejected.

In June 1987, the Fort Worth City Council and the Tarrant County Commissioners Court requested that the TxDOT, Texas Turnpike Authority Division (TTA) conduct a feasibility study for converting all or portions of the proposed SH 121 into a toll facility. The Texas Highway Commission approved the feasibility study on July 29, 1987. Subsequently, in July 1987, TTA retained a consultant team to study the costs of the project, the location of the tollbooths and the financial viability of the proposed toll facility. The proposed 9.2 mi long study included a six-lane tollroad from IH 35W north of the Central Business District (CBD) to Montgomery Street and a four-lane turnpike to IH 20 near Hulen Street. However, plans to build this segment of SH 121 as a tollroad were stopped in November 1987 when the results of these studies revealed that the proposed SH 121 would pay for only 16 percent of its estimated \$315 million dollar cost.

As part of the environmental assessment (EA) process, TxDOT sponsored a public meeting to discuss suggested routes for the proposed SH 121 from IH 20 to SH 174 or US 67. The meeting was held on November 12, 1987, at the First Baptist Church in Crowley. At this meeting, the local



LEGEND

	ROUTE A
	ROUTE B-3

**ALIGNMENT ALTERNATIVES IN 1986
BELLAIRE TO FM 1187**



SH 121
FROM: IH30
TO: FM 1187

EXHIBIT 1.4

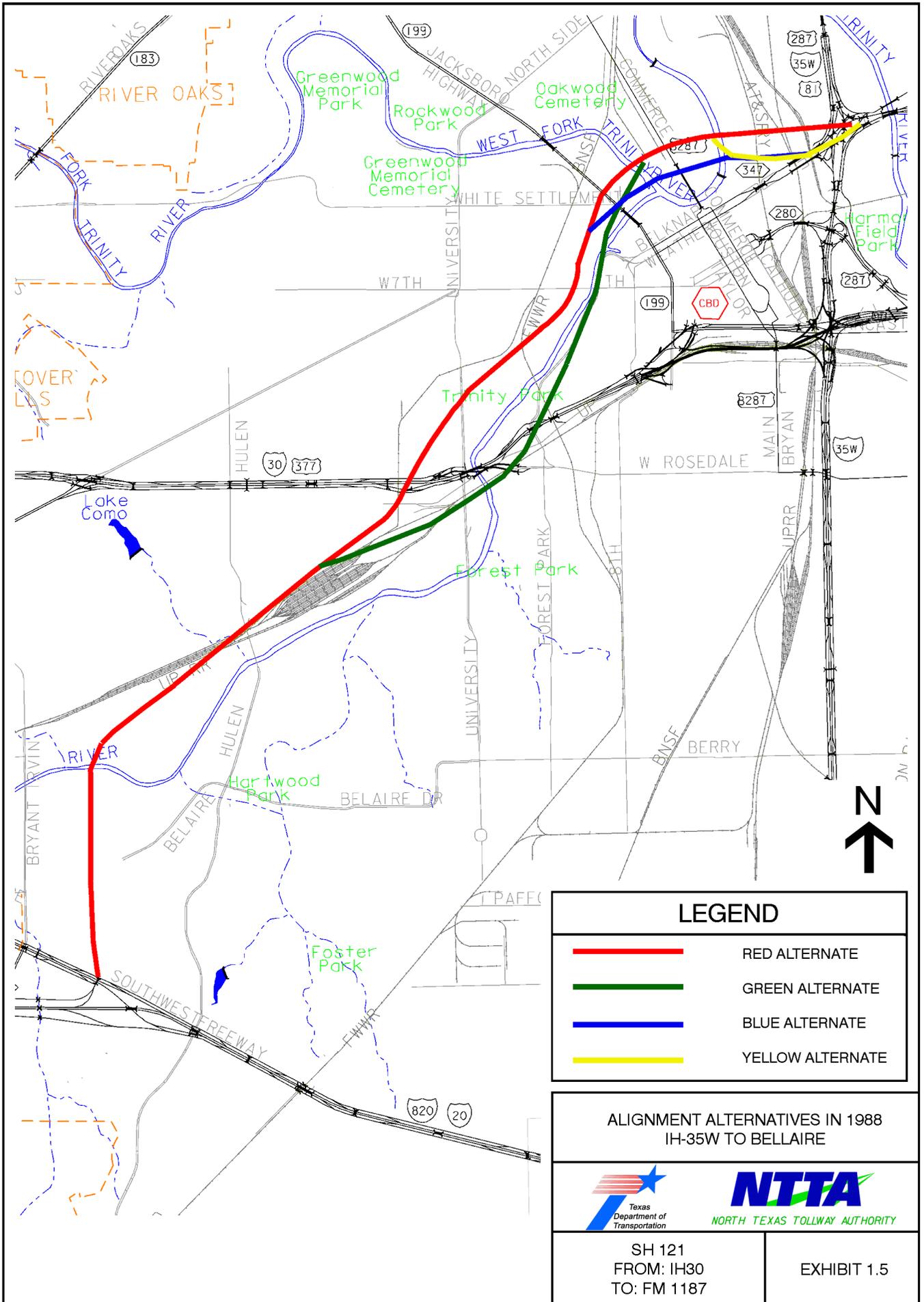
governments showed unanimous support for the extension of SH 121. However, the cities adjacent to SH 174 (Burleson, Joshua and Crowley) supported the extension of SH 121 terminating at various points along SH 174. There was no agreement on the location of the southern terminus by these cities. At the November 12, 1987 meeting, the City of Burleson presented two reports entitled: Analysis of Proposed Extension of Southwest Freeway SH 121 and Alternative Evaluation for Southern Extension of Southwest Freeway SH 121. Both of these reports supported an alternative that connects the proposed SH 121 with SH 174 just north of Burleson's city limits between Joshua and Burleson, north of FM 917.

On May 17, 1988, a public meeting was held at the Fort Worth Tarrant County Convention Center to discuss the alternative alignments being studied for the proposed SH 121 from IH 35W to IH 20. No opposition to the proposed facility was voiced at that time. Specific comments on the alternatives tended to support both the "Red" and "Green" alternatives (Please see Exhibit 1.5). Following the meeting, however, numerous written comments were received by TxDOT, many stating that they had not been adequately informed about the meeting. The majority of the comments received heavily supported the "Green" alternative due to the impacts of the "Red" alternative on the Cultural District.

EAs were prepared by TxDOT in July 1988 and September 1988 for the two projects. A NOI to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed SH 121 from IH 20 to SH 174 or US 67 in Johnson County was published in the Federal Register on August 4, 1988.

On October 12, 1989, a DEIS for the proposed SH 121 from IH 20 to SH 174 or US 67 in Johnson County was submitted and approved by the FHWA for further processing. The proposed action for this project would result in the construction of a four/six lane controlled access highway on new location, with frontage roads on each side of the highway, from IH 20 to US 67 in Johnson County.

The proposed SH 121 from IH 35W to IH 20 was approved by the FHWA for further processing on March 28, 1990. An NOI to prepare an EIS was published in the Federal Register on April 5, 1990. The proposed action would result in the construction of an eight-lane controlled access highway on



new location from IH 20 to IH 35W with frontage roads only in those areas where they would be essential to maintain local street circulation and continuity.

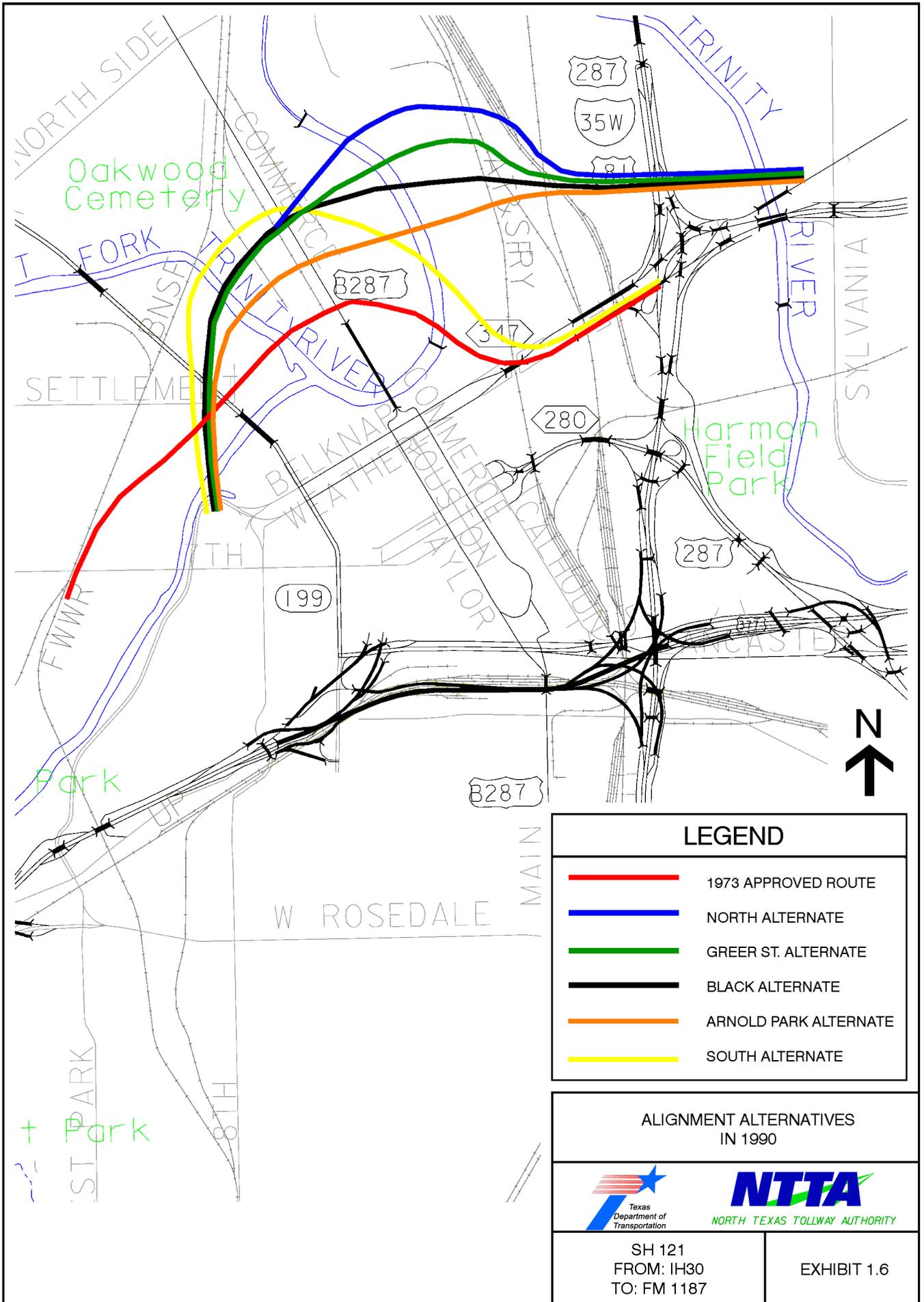
A second public meeting for the proposed SH 121 from IH 35W to IH 20 was held on October 25, 1990, at the Baptist Community Center to discuss the alternative alignments being studied. Most comments supported the "North" alternative, which would extend SH 121 from IH 35W north across Cold Springs Road near Dumpground Road, then north between Poindexter and Pavilion Streets and across North Calhoun and North Main Streets just north of North 6th Street. The alternative would then cross the Trinity River and Henderson Street. The area residents expressed opposition to the "Greer Street" alternative (Please see Exhibit 1.6).

This project was included in the NCTCOG *1990 TIP* for the DFW Metropolitan Area.

The availability of funds for transportation projects was restructured under the *Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA)*, passed into legislation in December 1991, causing a major shift in the allocation of funding. Faced with reduced opportunities for funding and a large price tag on the proposed freeway facility from IH 35W to US 67 (estimated at over \$750 million), a SH 121 Task Force was established to keep the project moving forward.

The 1991 ISTEA legislation allowed for tollroad bond funds to be augmented with Federal transportation funds to build tollroads under certain conditions. In light of this new legislation, the concept of building all or part of the proposed SH 121 as a tollroad was revived.

On September 29, 1992, a delegation from the City, Tarrant and Johnson Counties and the Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce appeared before the Texas Transportation Commission. The delegation proposed several local initiatives, including ROW donations and participation in frontage road construction, to reduce project costs. With a favorable response from the Commission, the project was authorized for further study.



On January 21, 1993, a Public Hearing was held for the proposed SH 121 from IH 20 to SH 174 or US 67 in Johnson County at the First Baptist Church in Crowley. The project was received with minimal opposition.

In July 1993, a DEIS for the proposed SH 121 from IH 35W to IH 20 was also submitted for FHWA review, however, final approval was not given and a Public Hearing was not held. TxDOT included this project in Phase I of the 1993 Transitional PDP to be financed out of Category 3A - National Highway Mobility System when funds became available.

In 1994, the SH 121 Task Force retained a consulting firm to study alternatives and proposals for the project. The primary goals of this study were to: i) reduce project costs; ii) minimize the number of interchanges; iii) minimize frontage roads; and iv) explore alternative financing options for the facility. Due in large part to the fact that the previously proposed freeway project would have difficulty obtaining full funding due to financial constraints, the study resulted in a finding that a toll facility was likely to be the best remaining viable option. A detailed feasibility study for the development of SH 121 as a tollroad was commissioned by the Fort Worth City Council in October 1994. To date, the proposal has gained both political and community consensus from all affected local entities.

The feasibility study segmented the route and identified four priority levels for the corridor: i) from SH 199 to Overton Ridge Boulevard; ii) from Overton Ridge Boulevard to FM 1187; iii) from IH 35W to SH 199, and iv) from FM 1187 to US 67 in Cleburne. The study also proposed reducing construction costs by minimizing frontage roads and grade-separated intersections while relocating portions of the facility in Johnson County and in the CBD of Fort Worth.

A detailed tollroad traffic and revenue study was completed in December 1997, for the NTTA (created in 1997). This report investigated the feasibility of constructing a tollroad that would extend from an intersection of IH 30 southwest of the Fort Worth CBD to Altamesa Boulevard (8.5 mi). A shorter alternative that would extend from IH 30 to Overton Ridge Boulevard was also investigated. This study was developed in sufficient detail to be used in support of bond financing.

Backed by a positive recommendation by the study, preliminary schematic and environmental work continued on the proposed toll facility. A NOI for the revised project limits (IH 30 to FM 1187) was filed in both the Texas and Federal Registers on May 20, 1998 and May 14, 1998, respectively (Appendix D). On June 4, 1998, a public meeting was held jointly by the NTTA and TxDOT to discuss the alignment and preliminary environmental issues with citizens. A majority of the comments received were in support of the project. The meeting was adjourned with an assurance from NTTA and TxDOT that there would be further opportunities for public input throughout the development of the project.

Following the public meetings of 1998, development of the preliminary schematics and environmental studies continued. As the preliminary schematics were developed they were provided to various local agencies for review. During the inter-agency review, City public officials questioned the plan of the SH 121/IH 30 interchange. Local officials felt the plan was too intrusive to the nearby residential areas and requested the overall size of the interchange be reduced. As proposed, the SH 121/IH 30 interchange provided several directional connections between SH 121, IH 30 and Forest Park Boulevard. The Forest Park Boulevard direct connections were included to accommodate traffic bound to and from the CBD. Earlier traffic analyses indicated IH 30 would be unable to carry those volumes destined for the CBD from SH 121 and as such, Forest Park Boulevard was chosen as an additional route. Although the Forest Park connections appeared to be justified, public officials requested their elimination and proposed the re-evaluation of the interchange in an effort to reduce its size.

In January 1999, the City formed the CAC to advise the City Council prior to the selection of their desired alternative. The first of a series of meetings was held in March 1999. In all, a total of seven committee meetings were held, culminating in the presentation of recommendations to the City Council in October 1999. Based on these recommendations, NTTA and TxDOT developed a new interchange plan known then as the "Modified Design" henceforth in this document referred to as Alternative B. This plan removed the direct connections between IH 30 and Forest Park Boulevard and replaced the access to Forest Park Boulevard by providing conventional ramps to frontage roads.

However, in order to provide access between the CBD and SH 121, ramps between SH 121 and Forest Park Boulevard were retained.

By February 2000, a preliminary DEIS was completed and submitted to FHWA for review. As the review process began NTTA, TxDOT and local officials continued to evaluate the SH 121/IH 30 interchange.

Unsatisfied with the recommendations of the CAC, the City formed a PRT to further review the SH 121/IH 30 interchange. The PRT was comprised of engineers and architects specializing in various fields of urban highway design. The PRT was requested to review the proposed plan developed by NTTA and TxDOT as well as to suggest alternatives or improvements. In April of 2000, the PRT evaluated the proposed alignment of SH 121 and its plan relationships with IH 30, University Drive and Forest Park Boulevard. By the end of April 2000 the PRT presented their observations and recommendations to the City Council resulting in the City's decision to pursue further detailed study of the PRT's recommendations. In May of 2000 the City formed a PDT. The PDT was comprised of local community leaders and was responsible for the oversight of the detailed study as well as selecting an independent consultant team to perform the study. This study would re-examine the SH 121/IH 30 interchange from the City's perspective and develop additional alternatives in cooperation with the public.

Over the course of the next six months the City's consultant team evaluated the previous alternatives, developed additional alternatives and presented their findings before the PDT and the public. Workshops and public meetings were held once a month beginning in August and concluding in October 2000 to solicit comment and direction from the PDT and the public.

As the study continued, the scope of the evaluation expanded to include the remainder of the project corridor to McPherson Road. In December 2000, the PDT made its recommendations to the City Council. These recommendations included the "A1R1" SH 121/IH 30 interchange alternative, to be referred to henceforth as Alternative A, with modifications to the typical section of the facility, as well as alternative interchange plan at several of the various grade separations occurring along the

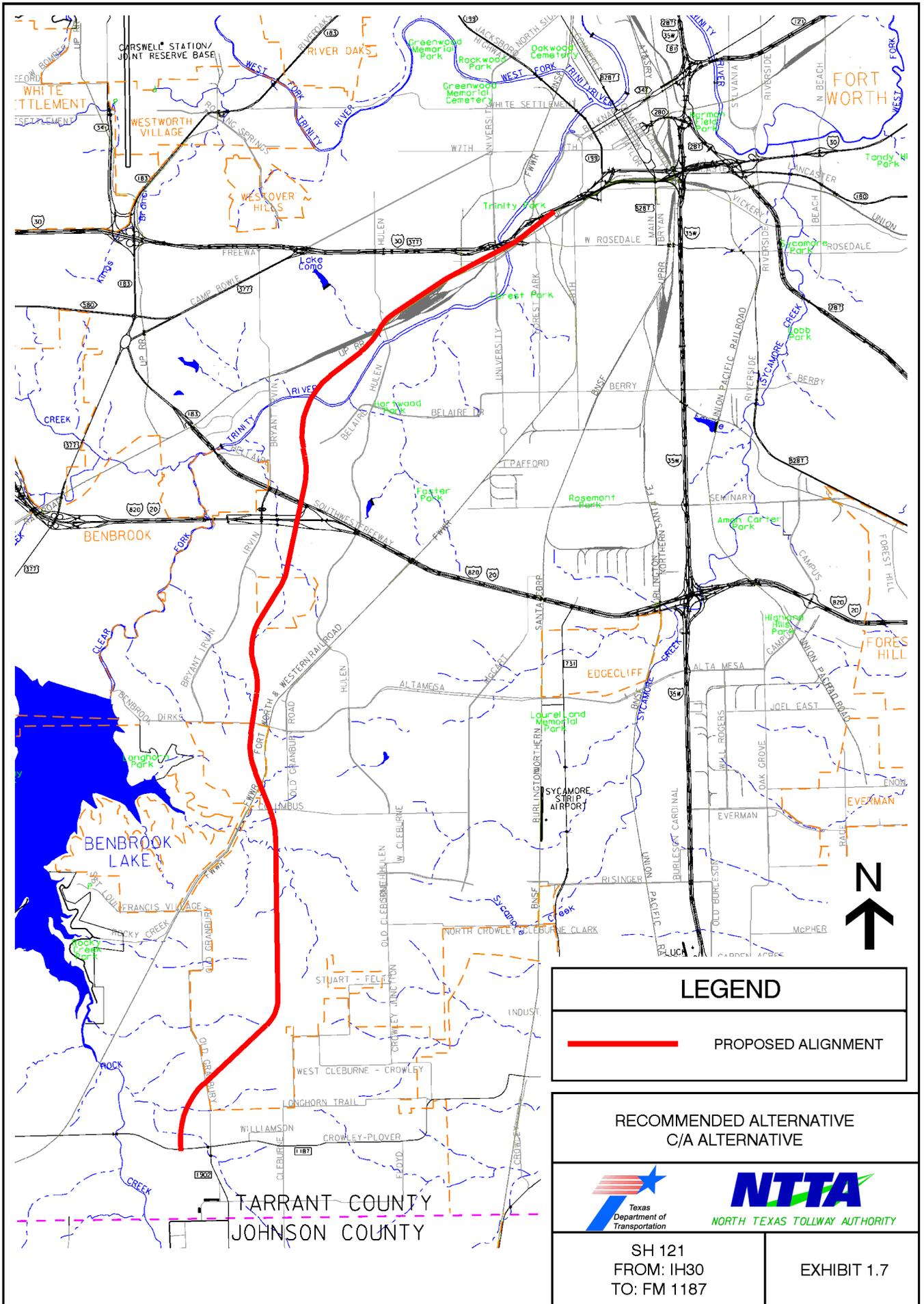
corridor. The City Council approved the recommendations and presented their findings to NTTA and TxDOT in December 2000.

Upon review of the PDT recommendations, NTTA and TxDOT determined certain integral plan elements of Alternative A violated safety and design criteria. In an effort to address the PDT's recommendations, NTTA and TxDOT developed an additional alternative comprised of the desirable plan elements from the previously developed alternatives. This "Combination Alternative", to be referred to henceforth as Alternative C, was developed during the spring of 2001.

On June 4 and June 7, 2001, public meetings were jointly conducted by the NTTA and TxDOT to discuss the current alternatives being studied. The location of the June 4 meeting was Will Rogers Memorial Center-Amon G. Carter Exhibits Hall and the location of the June 7 meeting was the Trinity Valley School. Three alternatives were presented to the public and both written and verbal comments were solicited. The alternatives differ in specific preliminary design aspects (i.e., interchange configuration), however they share similar horizontal alignment (Please see Exhibit 1.7). The three alternatives presented included Alternative A (the PDT's recommended alternative), Alternative B (the CAC's "Modified" Alternative) and Alternative C (the "Combination" Alternative). The project was met with minimal opposition. Public comment focused on the various plan alternatives throughout the project corridor.

After the June 2001 public meetings, the alternatives have been refined to incorporate and address public comment. The alignment for Alternative C has been relocated south of McPherson to offer the City flexibility with its zoning plan. The DEIS was updated to include a discussion of Alternatives A, B, C and D and was approved by FHWA in December 2002.

A Public Hearing was held for the subject project on Tuesday April 22, 2003 at 7:00 p.m. in the Round Up Inn Room of the Amon G. Carter Jr. Exhibits Hall, Will Rogers Memorial Center, 3400 Burnett-Tandy Drive in Fort Worth, Texas, to present project information and receive comments concerning the proposed construction of SH 121 from IH 30 to FM 1187. Notices announcing the Public Hearing were published in *The Fort Worth Star Telegram* January 26 and February 9, 2003



and in other local newspapers. Copies of the Public Hearing notice were mailed to property owners adjoining the project. A total of 227 individuals attended the Public Hearing.

A Public Hearing agenda with relevant project information and a list of TxDOT contacts was made available at the Public Hearing. Schematic overview maps were also made available to the public along the walls of the auditorium. A film that introduced the proposed SH 121 to the public was available adjacent to the meeting room for viewing continuously during the Public Hearing. During the Public Hearing, the City presented Resolution No. 2923 which adopted the PDT recommendations, Alternative A, as the City's locally recommended alternative with modifications (Appendix C). The Public Hearing documentation is contained in Volume 2 of this FEIS.

After the Public Hearing in August 2003, the City adopted Resolution No. 2982, which created the SH 121 CAG. The CAG was established to provide a process for stakeholder involvement related primarily to the development of corridor enhancements and amenities.

NTTA and TxDOT have diligently analyzed the project based on concerns expressed during the Public Hearing process. This resulted in revised studies based on updated data, an expanded discussion of secondary and cumulative impacts and an overall improvement in the readability of the document.

It has been determined that there are no changes to the project that would result in substantial environmental impacts not previously considered in the DEIS nor is there new information relevant to environmental concerns that would result in substantial impacts not evaluated in the DEIS. As a result of this "hard look," NTTA and TxDOT recommended proceeding to this FEIS. The FHWA concurred with this approach.

Due to public interest in this project, the City has requested additional public involvement as this project advances. While not traditionally provided at the FEIS stage, NTTA, TxDOT and FHWA have agreed to provide an additional Public Hearing after the FEIS would be made available to the public. Before the execution of the ROD, a summary of this additional Public Hearing and analysis

of comments would also be made available to the public. Relevant comments not previously addressed in the FEIS would be noted in the ROD.

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