Final Environmental Assessment

US 281 from FM 3248 to FM 1421

CSJ# 0220-04-035

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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 16, 2014, and executed by FHWA and TxDOT.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AADT – Average Annual Daily Traffic

AASHTO – American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials

ACS – American Community Survey

AOI – Area of Influence

APE – Area of Potential Effect

BMP – Best Management Practice

CCAD – Cameron Central Appraisal District

CCID – Cameron County Irrigation District

CEQ – Council on Environmental Quality

CFR – Code of Federal Regulations

CMP – Congestion Management Process

CO – Carbon Monoxide

DHHS – Department of Health and Human Services

DOT – Department of Transportation

EA – Environmental Assessment

ECOS – Environmental Compliance Oversight System

EMST – Ecological Mapping Systems of Texas

EO – Executive Order

EPA – Environmental Protection Agency

EPIC – Environmental Permits, Issues and Commitments

EJ – Environmental Justice

FM – Farm-to-Market

FEMA – Federal Emergency Management Agency

FHWA – Federal Highway Administration

FWCA – Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act

GIS – Geographic Information System

IBWC – International Boundary and Water Commission

IHWCA – Industrial Hazardous Waste Corrective Action

IIR – Issue Identification and Resolution

ISA – Initial Site Assessment

LEP – Limited English Proficiency

LPST – Leaking Petroleum Storage Tank

LRGVNWR – Lower Rio Grande Valley National Wildlife Refuge

MBTA – Migratory Bird Treaty Act

MOU – Memorandum of Understanding

MPO – Metropolitan Planning Organization

MPH – Miles per Hour

MS4 – Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System

MSAT – Mobile Source Air Toxics

MTP – Metropolitan Transportation Plan

NEPA – National Environmental Policy Act

NCHRP – National Cooperative Highway Research Program

NHD – National Hydrography Dataset

NOI – Notice of Intent

NRCS – Natural Resources Conservation Service

NRHP – National Register of Historic Places

NWI – National Wetlands Inventory

NWP – Nationwide Permit

PA-TU – First Amended Programmatic Agreement among FHWA, TxDOT, the TSHPO, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation Regarding the Implementation of Transportation Undertakings

PCB – Polychlorinated Biphenyls

PCN – Pre-Construction Notification

PS&E – Plans, Specifications & Estimates

PST – Petroleum Storage Tank

RCRA – Resource Conservation and Recovery Act

SAL – State Antiquities Landmark

SGCN – Species of Greatest Conservation Need

SH – State Highway

STIP – State Transportation Improvement Program

SW3P – Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan

TAC – Texas Administrative Code

TCEQ – Texas Commission on Environmental Quality

TDHCA – Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs

THC – Texas Historical Commission

TIP – Transportation Improvement Program

TMA – Transportation Management Area

TMUTCD – Texas Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices

TPDES – Texas Pollutant Discharge Elimination System

TPWD – Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

TSS – Total Suspended Solids

TWDB – Texas Water Development Board

TxDOT – Texas Department of Transportation

TXNDD – Texas Natural Diversity Database

TSHPO – Texas State Historic Preservation Office

USACE – United States Army Corps of Engineers

USFWS – United States Fish and Wildlife Service

USGS – United States Geological Survey

VPD – Vehicles per Day

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) proposes improvements to U.S. Highway (US) 281 in Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas. The proposed roadway widening would extend along US 281 from Farm-to-Market (FM) 3248 northwest to FM 1421, a distance of approximately 5.2 miles (**Figure 1** in **Appendix A**).

2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 EXISTING FACILITY

The existing facility is a two-lane undivided major rural arterial that serves as a designated Hurricane Evacuation Route through rural communities in western Cameron County. The current roadway is located within a 100-foot existing right of way and measures between 38 and 62 feet wide with 12-foot travel lanes (one in each direction), discontinuous 2- to 12-foot shoulders, and intermittent center left-turn lanes (see **Figure 2** in **Appendix A**). Currently, the speed limit on US 281 ranges from 45 to 60 miles per hour (mph). Open, graded ditches provide roadway drainage and are located within a vegetated buffer adjacent to the roadway. The existing facility does not include designated bicycle lanes or sidewalks.

2.2 ALTERNATIVES

An integral component of the environmental process is the consideration of reasonable alternatives, as required under Section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (Public Law 90-190; 42 U.S.C. § 4371 et seq.). For the purposes of this analysis, a Build and No Build Alternative were considered.

2.2.1 BUILD ALTERNATIVE

The Build Alternative would widen this stretch of US 281 from two to four lanes, add intermittent right-turn lanes, add dedicated center left-turn lanes at major intersections, and improve drainage infrastructure along the roadway from FM 3248 to FM 1421. Continuous shoulders would also be constructed and would measure between five and eight feet wide, depending on location (see **Figure 3** in **Appendix A**). The majority of improvements would be constructed within the existing 100-foot right of way. Additional right of way totaling approximately 2.3 acres would be required to provide for the enhanced safety and operational improvements; no temporary or permanent easements are anticipated to be required for construction. No changes to the existing speed limit have been proposed as part of this project. The proposed project would not include dedicated travel lanes for bicyclists or pedestrians; however, the proposed five- to eight-foot shoulders on each side of the roadway would accommodate use by bicyclists and pedestrians travelling along this stretch of US 281.

The limits of the proposed improvements from FM 3248 to FM 1421 represent logical termini, as both intersections serve to connect the more rural portion of western Brownsville to central Brownsville and connect US 281 to Interstate 69 East (I-69E), a major freeway for the South Texas region. The proposed project would have independent utility, serving to correct design deficiencies and allow for a more

continual flow of traffic (including during hurricane evacuation events), regardless of other improvements. As of October 2015, the estimated total cost of the proposed project is $15,862,261.

Based on the findings of this Environmental Assessment (EA), the Build Alternative is recommended as the Preferred Alternative.

2.2.2 NO BUILD ALTERNATIVE

Under the No Build Alternative, the proposed improvements to US 281 would not be constructed. The No Build Alternative would not require the conversion of approximately 2.3 acres of undeveloped land to transportation use. However, under the No Build Alternative, the existing facility would remain out of date and mobility and operational efficiency would not be improved. This alternative does not meet the need for and purpose of the proposed project; however, the No Build Alternative is considered for comparison purposes.

3.0 PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of the proposed project is to improve mobility and increase operational efficiency along this stretch of US 281. The need for the proposed project is because of increased traffic counts causing higher levels of congestion and decreased mobility and efficiency along this stretch of US 281. Population in the surrounding census tracts between 2000 and 2010 have had increased growth rates ranging from 44 to 186 percent, which are higher than the overall population growth rate of Brownsville during the same time period (approximately 25 percent). Additionally, the roadway is projected to undergo an increase in traffic of approximately 46 percent over the next 20 years. The average annual daily traffic (AADT) for this stretch of US 281 is 10,500 vehicles per day (vpd) in 2015, compared to an estimated AADT of 15,300 vpd in 2035. An objective of the proposed project is to ensure that the capacity of the roadway, which serves as a designated Hurricane Evacuation Route, is sufficient to support fleeing residents and associated emergency services during extreme weather events.

4.0 PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING STATUS

The proposed project is currently listed as a candidate project (ID# BMPO-D2) in the Brownsville Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO's) 2015–2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and was included in the most recent Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)/Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) during a September 2015 out-of-cycle revision (see **Appendix B**). The proposed project is funded under Category 10, Supplemental Transportation Projects and Category 2M, Urban Area (Non-Transportation Management Area [TMA]) Corridor Projects. The total cost of the proposed project is estimated at $15,862,261 as of October 2015 (see **Appendix B**).

5.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

NEPA requirements apply to any project or action receiving federal funding that may have a significant impact on the quality of the human environment. Because the proposed project is receiving federal funding, it has been developed in accordance with the procedural provisions of NEPA; the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA (40 Code

of Federal Regulations [CFR] Parts 1500-1508); Environmental Impact and Related Procedures (23 CFR Part 771); Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Technical Advisory T6640.8A; Environmental Review and Public Involvement for Transportation Projects (Texas Administrative Code [TAC] Title 43 Part I Chapter 2 Subchapter A); and the 2015 TxDOT Environmental Compliance Toolkits.

In support of this EA, the following technical reports were prepared and are currently available for review at the TxDOT Pharr District:

- TxDOT 2015a. Community Impact Assessment
- TxDOT 2015b. Report for Historical Studies Survey
- TxDOT 2015c. Indirect and Cumulative Impacts Technical Report
- TxDOT 2015d. Archeological Survey Report
- TxDOT 2015e. Hazardous Materials Initial Site Assessment (ISA)
- TxDOT 2015f. Air Quality Technical Report
- TxDOT 2015g. Traffic Noise Technical Report
- TxDOT 2015h. Biological Resources Technical Report
- TxDOT 2015i. Water Resources Technical Report
- TxDOT 2015j. Public Meeting Summary
- TxDOT 2015k. Traffic Noise Workshop Summary

Based on the above technical studies, scoping, and thorough analysis, it was determined that the proposed project would have no impact on the following resource categories: Farmland; Groundwater; Navigable Waters; Wild and Scenic Rivers; Coastal Coordination; Section 6(f) Properties; and Section 4(f) Properties. Resource categories with the potential to be affected by the implementation of the proposed project are summarized in the following sections.

5.1 RIGHT OF WAY/DISPLACEMENTS SUMMARY

The majority of the proposed project would be built within the existing 100-foot right of way. An additional 2.3 acres of new right of way would be required for construction, none of which was previously acquired through early acquisition. According to the Cameron Central Appraisal District (CCAD), approximately 34 parcels intersect or are adjacent to the proposed right of way, which includes both private and publically owned land (TxDOT 2015a).

The proposed project would not require the relocation or displacement of any residences or businesses. All right of way acquisition would be completed in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended.

Under the No Build Alternative, no additional right of way would be required.

5.2 LAND USE SUMMARY

The project is located primarily in the western portion of the city of Brownsville in the Rio Grande Valley in Cameron County, Texas. The city of Brownsville is located at the southernmost tip of Texas, just

opposite of the Mexican city of Matamoros. The proposed project parallels the international border between Mexico and the United States, connecting Brownsville to the cities of Edinburg, Pharr, and McAllen to the west (see **Figure 1** in **Appendix A**). Current land use in the area consists of agricultural land mixed intermittently with small, family-owned business, residential developments, and parkland and wildlife preserve land (TxDOT 2015a). A total of five cemeteries are located within the general vicinity of the proposed project area. Also, the small communities of Villa Nueva and San Pedro are adjacent to the proposed project area, along with two schools: Veterans Memorial Early College High School (located on the north side of US 281 between Carmen Avenue and New Carmen Avenue) and Villa Nueva Elementary School (located on the north side of US 281 in the community of San Pedro). No other public facilities are adjacent to the proposed project area (see **Figure 1** in **Appendix A**).

The proposed project is adjacent to portions of the Lower Rio Grande Valley National Wildlife Refuge (LRGVNWR) and is located south of Resaca de la Palma State Park. However, the proposed project would not result in any impacts to these publicly owned resources. As detailed in the Report for Historical Studies Survey (TxDOT 2015b) and in **Section 5.7.1**, two resources within the proposed project area have been determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP): the Donna-to-Brownsville levee and the Los Fresnos Irrigation District. However, no new right of way would be required in either of these areas, and the proposed project would have no direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to either of these resources. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in the use of any Section 4(f) properties as defined in 23 CFR 774 and Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act.

The proposed project was evaluated for consistency with local plans, including the Brownsville MPO's 2015–2040 MTP; the *Imagine Brownsville* Comprehensive Plan (City of Brownsville 2009); the City of Brownsville Zoning Map (City of Brownsville 2015); and *Connecting Brownsville: the 2013 Bicycle and Trail Master Plan* (City of Brownsville 2013). As determined in the Indirect and Cumulative Impacts Technical Report (TxDOT 2015c), the proposed project would not alter current trends in development in the project area. Overall, conversion of the existing facility to a four-lane roadway with intermittent turn lanes and shoulders is considered to be consistent with future land use plans for the area (TxDOT 2015c).

The No Build Alternative would not directly affect land uses within the project area; however, this alternative would not be consistent with the 2015–2040 MTP.

5.3 UTILITIES/EMERGENCY SERVICES SUMMARY

The proposed project would require the relocation of underground or overhead utilities in some areas. At this stage of the project, specific plans regarding utility adjustments or relocations have not been completed; however, plans will be finalized prior to the construction phase. Subsurface and overhead utility locating would be an element of the detailed design, and coordination with the utility owners on possible relocation options would take place prior to construction. Utility relocations and adjustments would be accomplished with the minimum practicable disruption in service to customers.

Access throughout the project area would be maintained and emergency services would not be affected during the construction phase of the proposed project. Additional travel lanes included as a part of the proposed project would ensure that the capacity of the roadway, which serves as a designated Hurricane Evacuation Route, is sufficient to support fleeing residents and associated emergency services during extreme weather events.

The No Build Alternative would not require utility relocations or adjustments or affect emergency services.

5.4 TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION/BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES SUMMARY

The proposed project would not result in substantial changes to traffic patterns, and no substantial changes in access to adjacent properties would occur. The addition of travel lanes, intermittent turn lanes, and dedicated left- and right-turn lanes at major intersections would help to improve mobility and increase operational efficiency along this stretch of US 281 (TxDOT 2015a). As of the September 2015 date of this EA, no public transportation system serves the project area.

US 281 would remain open during construction, although traffic control measures would be required during the construction phase. Lane closures could result in increased travel times, although this condition would be temporary. Access to adjacent properties would be maintained during construction.

The proposed project would not include dedicated travel lanes for bicyclists or pedestrians; however, the proposed five- to eight-foot shoulders on each side of the roadway would accommodate use by bicyclists and pedestrians travelling along this stretch of US 281.

The No Build Alternative would not result in changes in access or temporary increases in travel times and would not provide bicycle and pedestrian accommodations within the project area.

5.5 COMMUNITY IMPACTS SUMMARY

5.5.1 Population

The proposed project area encompasses a total of 38 census blocks, including 26 populated census blocks and the Census Designated Place (CDP) of San Pedro. In 2013, there were approximately 19,064 residents living in the area surrounding the proposed project (TxDOT 2015a), the majority of which resided in the areas closest to central Brownsville. Between 2000 and 2010, the population of the city of Brownsville increased by approximately 25 percent, a rate slightly higher than the state and county levels (TxDOT 2015a). Census tracts within the proposed project area experienced even greater overall population growth than Brownsville during the same time period, with growth rates ranging from 44 to 186 percent (TxDOT 2015a). The southeastern portion of the proposed project area (closest to central Brownsville) experienced the greatest population change during this ten-year span. However, the San Pedro CDP, located in the northwest portion of the project area, underwent a population decline of nearly 21 percent between 2000 and 2010.

According to the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB), the population of the city of Brownsville is anticipated to steadily increase through 2040, although growth rates are expected to decrease gradually in each successive 10-year span (TxDOT 2015a).

5.5.2 Community Cohesion

The existing US 281 facility predates the majority of development in the area; therefore, the proposed project would not separate or divide any neighborhoods. The proposed project alignment would be the same as the current condition relative to the location of existing neighborhoods and would not introduce a new barrier or affect neighborhood connectivity or cohesion (TxDOT 2015a). Crossings at intersections would be maintained or enhanced, and no substantial changes in traffic patterns or access to adjacent properties would occur. The proposed five- to eight-foot shoulders on each side of the roadway would accommodate use by bicyclists and pedestrians travelling along this stretch of US 281.

The No Build Alternative would not result in changes to community cohesion, affect access and travel patterns, or improve bicycle or pedestrian accommodations along this stretch of US 281.

5.5.3 Environmental Justice

An environmental justice (EJ) analysis was completed in accordance with Executive Order (EO) 12898 "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations."

The community of San Pedro in the northwestern portion of the project area is considered an EJ population, based on comparison of the median household income of project area block groups as reported in the 2009–2013 American Community Survey (ACS) to the 2015 Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) poverty guideline for a family of four ($24,250) (TxDOT 2015a). At $16,188, the median household income of San Pedro is substantially lower than the DHHS standard as well as the median household income rates of the surrounding area. San Pedro is registered by the Texas Secretary of State as being a *colonia*. The Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) defines *colonias* as "geographic area[s] located within 150 miles of the Texas-Mexico border that [have] a majority population composed of individuals and families of low and very low income [and which] tend to be predominately Hispanic and employed in low paying sectors" (TDHCA 2014). Although no demographic information is available from the US Census Bureau for the community of Villa Nueva (located in the southeastern portion of the project area; see **Figure 1** in **Appendix A**), it is also registered as a *colonia* with the Texas Secretary of State; therefore, it is possible that economic conditions in the community could be similar to those of San Pedro, qualifying it as an EJ population.

Minority populations in project area block groups range from approximately 86 percent to 98 percent—proportions that indicate that the project area constitutes a majority-minority population. A total of approximately 95 percent of the city of Brownsville is comprised of minority residents, and approximately 89 percent of Cameron County is minority. Because of the proximity of the project area to Mexico, and the fact that many new residents from Mexico and Central America reside in Cameron County, the Texas State Historical Association (TSHA) has indicated that the Hispanic or Latino

population in Cameron County is likely even higher, as US Census numbers often do not account for migrant farmworkers, undocumented workers, and refugees (TSHA 2010).

Although EJ populations exist within the proposed project area, the proposed project would not have any substantial adverse community impacts—no displacements, no major changes in access, and no effects to community cohesion would occur (TxDOT 2015a). Therefore, the Build Alternative would not result in disproportionately high and adverse effects to low-income populations or minority populations and is consistent with EO 12898.

The No Build Alternative would not result in disproportionately high and adverse effects to low-income populations or minority populations.

5.5.4 Limited English Proficiency

Based on data from the 2009–2013 ACS for project area block groups, the percentage of persons with limited English proficiency (LEP) in the project area ranges from approximately 31 percent to 36percent. Within the community of San Pedro, the proportion of LEP residents is even higher (approximately 47 percent). Overall, 5,851 persons in the project area block groups are identified as LEP, representing approximately 33 percent of the area's total block group population over five years old. The language most often spoken by LEP persons in the project area is Spanish (TxDOT 2015a).

To ensure full and fair public participation, meeting notifications and display advertisements for the public meeting held on April 1, 2015, were published in both English and Spanish in *The Brownsville Herald* and *El Nuevo Heraldo* on March 15 and 29, 2015, and Spanish-speaking representatives from TxDOT were available at the meeting. Notifications and advertisements for the Traffic Noise Workshop held on September 3, 2015, were published in both English and Spanish. Additionally, the Notice Affording an Opportunity for a Public Hearing was published in English in *The Brownsville Herald* on September 27, 2015, and in Spanish in *El Periódico USA* on September 30, 2015, and in both English and Spanish on the TxDOT Pharr District website (see **Appendix D** and **Section 6.1** for more detail).

5.6 VISUAL/AESTHETICS SUMMARY

The proposed project would follow the existing alignment of US 281 and would be constructed primarily within the existing right of way. No changes to existing visual and aesthetic qualities are anticipated.

The No Build Alternative would not change the existing visual and aesthetic qualities of the project area.

5.7 CULTURAL RESOURCES SUMMARY

Cultural resources were evaluated in compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, the Antiquities Code of Texas, and the Texas Health and Safety Code. Potential effects to cultural resources were coordinated in accordance with the First Amended Programmatic Agreement among FHWA, TxDOT, the Texas State Historic Preservation Officer (TSHPO), and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation Regarding the Implementation of Transportation Undertakings (PA-TU) and the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between TxDOT and the Texas Historical Commission (THC).

5.7.1 Historic Resources

A historic resources survey was conducted in June 2013 in order to assess the potential effects of the proposed project to historic resources. A portion of the proposed project is located within the Los Fresnos Irrigation District (now Cameron County Irrigation District #6). The district was determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in December 2009. One resource associated with this district—an unlined canal—passes under US 281 near Torres Road. This canal is recommended in the Report for Historical Studies Survey (TxDOT 2015b) as a contributing resource to the eligible Los Fresnos Irrigation District. Also, the Donna-to-Brownsville levee (part of the Rio Grande Levee System) parallels the US-Mexico border south of US 281 near its intersection with New Carmen Avenue. The levee was determined eligible for listing in the NRHP in February 2009.

No new right of way would be required from these areas. Work within the Los Fresnos Irrigation Canal would be limited to the replacement of existing riprap on either side of the culvert at US 281; no work would be done within the area immediately surrounding the levee. The proposed project would not result in direct effects to either resource and would not impede the function of the system or pose any effects to the character-defining features of the canal, district, or levee system; therefore, the project would have no indirect or cumulative effects to these eligible resources. Based on an evaluation of project impacts, TxDOT historians determined that the proposed project would have no adverse effect to historic resources (TxDOT 2015b). Therefore, the proposed project would not result in the use of any Section 4(f) properties as defined in 23 CFR 774 and Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act. Approval of the Report for Historical Studies Survey was received from TxDOT on June 24, 2015 (see **Appendix C**).

The No Build Alternative would not affect historic properties listed in or eligible for listing in the NRHP.

5.7.2 Archeological Resources

An intensive pedestrian survey supplemented with shovel testing was conducted in April 2015 to assess the potential effects of the proposed project on archeological resources (TxDOT 2015d). The investigations did not reveal the presence of any archeological sites or features greater than 50 years in age. A total of 0.12 acres of land was inaccessible during the time the survey was conducted; however, these areas bore clear indication of extensive disturbance and are unlikely to contain intact archeological deposits. Therefore, no further work is recommended for these areas (TxDOT 2015d).

Three cemeteries are located adjacent to the area of potential effect (APE) for archeological resources, two of which are historic age: El Carmen Cemetery and San Pedro/Montemayor Cemetery. No further work was recommended for the APE near El Carmen Cemetery. While no proposed right of way is planned in the area adjacent to San Pedro/Montemayor Cemetery, given the proximity of the cemetery to US 281 and the lack of a defined cemetery boundary, the possibility of unmarked burials within the APE exists (TxDOT 2015d). In consultation with TxDOT, it was determined that this area would be mechanically scraped prior to construction utilizing gradall machinery with scraping excavations directed and monitored by an archeologist; no interments or cultural materials greater than 50 years in age were encountered during these additional investigations conducted in August 2015. With demonstrated limited potential for the proposed undertaking to impact unmarked burials, it was recommended that

work at this location be allowed to proceed without further coordination for archeological resources. TxDOT determined that the proposed project would have no effect on archeological historic properties or State Antiquities Landmarks and that the project should be allowed to proceed to construction with no further work recommended in a letter dated August 11, 2015. The THC concurred with the recommendations made by TxDOT on August 14, 2015 (see **Appendix C**).

No archeological historic properties (36 CFR 800.16(1)) or State Antiquities Landmarks (SALS) (13 TAC 26.12) would be affected by the proposed project. No additional archeological investigations are recommended prior to construction. In the event that unanticipated archeological deposits are encountered during construction, work in the immediate area will cease, and TxDOT archeological staff will be contacted to initiate post-review discovery procedures under the provisions of the PA-TU and MOU.

The No Build Alternative would have no impact on archeological resources within the proposed project area.

5.8 PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT SUMMARY

5.8.1 Hazardous Materials

A review of environmental regulatory databases and an Initial Site Assessment (ISA) were conducted to identify sites or facilities that could potentially result in hazardous materials impacts to the proposed project (TxDOT 2015e). A total of five records at four individual locations were reported, none of which are located within or adjacent to the proposed project area. Additionally, two underground natural gas lines were reported as being located within the proposed project area.

During the March 2015 field visit, signs for an anode bed were documented adjacent to an underground natural gas pipeline near New Carmen Avenue. Although the location of the anode bed is unknown, the signage is located within the proposed right of way (TxDOT 2015e). Coordination with the appropriate utility owners to identify the location of the anode bed would be required prior to construction of the proposed project.

Other observations noted during the field visit included auto repair shops (for which no issues were reported); several pole-mounted transformers (none of which are known to be suspected of leaking or containing polychlorinated biphenyls); and an unlabelled 55-gallon drum offset from the right of way (TxDOT 2015e). The location and condition of these sites are documented in the ISA and supporting documentation (TxDOT 2015e). The regulatory database search and field survey identified hazardous materials concerns that would potentially require additional investigation prior to construction; therefore, an Issues Identification and Resolution (IIR) form was completed in TxDOT's Environmental Compliance Oversight System (ECOS) for the proposed project. Additional investigation or coordination with utility owners may be required to determine potential conflicts during final design. All concerns which would require additional investigation prior to construction are summarized below in **Table 5.8-1**.

Table 5.8-1 Hazardous Materials Concerns Requiring Additional Investigation	
Concern	**Summary**
Anode Bed	Signage for an underground anode bed is located within the proposed right of way; exact location is unknown.
Natural Gas Lines	Two underground natural gas lines cross the roadway within the project area.
Industrial Hazardous Waste Corrective Action (IHWCA) Site	Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) IHWCA site is located within one mile of the project area.

No impacts related to potential hazardous materials sites would occur under the No Build Alternative.

5.8.2 Air Quality

The proposed project is located in Cameron County, which is in attainment or unclassifiable for all National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS); therefore, transportation conformity rules do not apply. Because the project is located in an area that is in attainment or unclassifiable for all NAAQS, a Congestion Management Process (CMP) analysis is not required.

Design year (2035) traffic for the proposed project is estimated at 15,300 vehicles per day (vpd) (TxDOT 2015f). A prior TxDOT modeling study and previous analyses of similar projects demonstrated that it is unlikely that a carbon monoxide (CO) standard would ever be exceeded as a result of any project with an AADT count below 140,000. The AADT projections for the project do not exceed 140,000 vehicles per day; therefore, a traffic air quality analysis is not required.

A qualitative assessment for Mobile Source Air Toxics (MSAT) was completed and found that while the Build Alternative may result in increased exposure to MSAT emissions in certain locations, the concentrations and duration of exposures are uncertain (TxDOT 2014f). Because of this uncertainty, the health effects from these emissions cannot be estimated. The No Build Alternative would result in gradually increasing vehicle miles travelled as traffic volumes increase and traffic congestion worsens within the existing roadway system over time. However, MSAT emissions will likely be lower than present levels in future years as a result of the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) national control programs that are projected to reduce annual MSAT emissions by over 80 percent from 2010 to 2050 (TxDOT 2015f).

5.8.3 Traffic Noise

A traffic noise analysis was conducted for the proposed project in accordance with TxDOT's (FHWA-approved) 2011 *Guidelines for Analysis and Abatement of Highway Traffic Noise*. The traffic noise analysis determined that the proposed project would result in traffic noise impacts at 13 modeled receivers, representing a total of 32 impacted receivers (TxDOT 2014g). Noise abatement measures considered include traffic management, alteration of horizontal and/or vertical alignments, acquisition of undeveloped property to act as a buffer zone, and the construction of noise walls.

The Traffic Noise Technical Report (TxDOT 2015g) determined that the noise wall listed below in **Table 5.8-2** would be feasible and reasonable and, therefore, is proposed for incorporation into the project. A Traffic Noise Workshop was held on September 3, 2015, to provide information to property owners

adjacent to the proposed noise wall and to give residents an opportunity to vote for or against the construction of the proposed noise wall at the Valle Estrella subdivision. A total of 14 individuals voted during the polling period (September 3–September 21, 2015), 13 of which voted for construction of the proposed noise wall. This represents the majority (approximately 59 percent) of the 22 benefitted receivers; therefore, TxDOT will incorporate the wall into the final design of the proposed project. The details of the workshop are summarized in the Traffic Noise Workshop Summary (TxDOT 2015k) on file at the TxDOT Pharr District office.

Table 5.8-2 Noise Wall Proposal

Proposed Noise Wall	Representative Receiver(s)	Total # Benefitted Receivers	Height (feet)	Total Length (feet)	Total Cost*	Cost per Benefitted Receiver
Valle Estrella	RA-30, RA-31, RA-32	22	8	1,199	$172,540	$7,843
*Minor inconsistencies in total barrier costs are due to rounding of total wall lengths.						

Source: US 281 Noise Study Team 2015.

To avoid noise impacts that may result from future development of properties adjacent to the project, local officials responsible for land use control programs must ensure, to the maximum extent possible, no new activities are planned or constructed along or within the following predicted (2035) noise impact contours (TxDOT 2014g).

Under the No Build Alternative, the proposed project would not be constructed. Traffic noise levels at modeled receiver locations would be expected to increase due to the anticipated increase in traffic volumes, although traffic noise impacts would not be expected.

5.9 BIOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT SUMMARY

5.9.1 Vegetation

The Ecological Mapping Systems of Texas (EMST) Geographic Information Systems (GIS) database was searched in order to assess vegetation that would potentially be impacted by the proposed project (TxDOT 2015h). The EMST categorizes the project area vegetation into nine different communities, including: South Texas: Clayey Blackbrush Mixed Shrubland; South Texas: Floodplain Evergreen Forest and Woodland; South Texas: Floodplain Hardwood Forest and Woodland; Marsh; Barren; South Texas: Disturbed Grassland; Row Crops; Urban High Intensity; and Urban Low Intensity (Texas Parks and Wildlife Department [TPWD] 2010).

A discrepancy was noted between the vegetation communities mapped by the EMST and vegetation communities mapped during the field investigations conducted in March 2013 and March 2015. Vegetation communities mapped by EMST that were not identified during field verification include South Texas: Floodplain Evergreen Forest and Woodland; South Texas: Floodplain Hardwood Forest and Woodland; Urban High Intensity; and Barren, all of which were classified in the field as Urban Low Intensity. Following field investigations, five different vegetative communities were verified as being within or adjacent to the proposed project area (TxDOT 2015h). These are shown below in **Table 5.9-1**.

Table 5.9-1 Vegetation Impacted by the Proposed Project						
EMST Vegetative Community	**Field Identified Vegetation Community**	**MOU Vegetation Type[1]**	**Area Impacted Within the Existing Right of Way (acres)**	**Area Impacted Within the Proposed Right of Way (acres)**	**Total Area Impacted (acres)**	**MOU Threshold (acres)**
Row Crops	Row Crops	Agriculture	0.00	0.25	0.25	10.0
South Texas: Disturbance Grassland	Disturbance Grassland	Disturbed Prairie	0.04	0.93	0.97	3.0
Urban Low Intensity	Urban Low Intensity	Urban	32.94	0.96	33.90	n/a
Urban High Intensity						
South Texas: Floodplain Evergreen Forest and Woodland						
South Texas: Floodplain Hardwood Forest and Woodland						
Barren						
South Texas: Clayey Blackbrush Mixed Shrubland	Mixed Brush	Scrub, Thornscrub, Shrubland	0.54	0.17	0.67	2.0
Marsh	Marsh	Riparian	0.27	0.12	0.39	0.1

Source: TPWD 2010; US 281 Environmental Assessment Study Team 2013, 2015.
[1]MOU vegetation types are identified for each vegetation community in accordance with the Threshold Table Programmatic Agreement.

As detailed in §2.206 of the 2013 TxDOT-TPWD Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), coordination with TPWD is required for projects based on certain triggers, including the disturbance of habitat in an area equal to or greater than the area of disturbance indicated in the Threshold Table Programmatic Agreement. Quantified vegetation impacts show that the proposed project would exceed the threshold for MOU type Riparian (TxDOT 2015h). Because of this, and since the proposed project would be authorized under a US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Section 404 Nationwide Permit (NWP) with a pre-construction notification (PCN) (see **Section 5.9.4**), coordination with TPWD was required. TPWD had no comment on the proposed project, and coordination was determined to be complete on September 1, 2015 (see **Appendix C**).

The proposed project would not impact important remnant vegetation or result in channel realignment or stream bed or stream bank excavation, scraping, or clearing. Additionally, the proposed project would not impact isolated wetlands outside of the TxDOT right of way. Unusual vegetation features or special habitat features occurring within the proposed project area were identified and described during field investigations in accordance with the 2013 TxDOT-TPWD MOU and included unmaintained

vegetation, fencerow vegetation, and islands of vegetation. Special habitat features observed during field investigations included water bodies consisting of man-made canals and resacas (TxDOT 2015h).

Under the No Build Alternative, no effects to vegetation or wildlife habitat related to the construction of the proposed project would occur. Existing land use and activities would continue to periodically affect vegetation communities.

5.9.2 Wildlife

The proposed project would be constructed on existing location and would require minimal amounts of additional right of way; therefore, potential impacts to general wildlife that could occur in the vicinity of the proposed project would be minor (TxDOT 2015h). Disturbance would be limited to only that which is necessary to construct the proposed project.

Migratory Bird Treaty Act

Evidence of migratory bird activity was noted in the proposed project area during field assessments conducted in late March 2013 and early March 2015. In the event that migratory birds arrive in the project area to breed during construction of the proposed project, appropriate measures would be taken to avoid adverse impacts (TxDOT 2015h). Migratory birds protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act would not be impacted by the No Build Alternative.

Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (FWCA)

The proposed project would be authorized under a USACE Section 404 NWP; therefore, no coordination under the FWCA would be required.

5.9.3 Threatened and Endangered Species

Federally Listed Species

As detailed in the Biological Resources Technical Report (TxDOT 2014h), desktop analysis and field investigations conducted in March 2013 and March 2015 indicated that potential habitat for one federally listed endangered plant species, the South Texas Ambrosia (*Ambrosia cheiranthifolia*), and one candidate species for federal listing, the Red-crowned Parrot (*Amazona viridigenalis*), would be impacted by the proposed project. These investigations also indicated that habitat was not present for the Texas ayenia (*Ayenia limitaris*), which was reported to occur within the vicinity of the proposed project area in 1963 according to the Texas Natural Diversity Database (TxNDD) database search conducted for the proposed project (see the Biological Resources Technical Report [TxDOT 2014h] for additional information regarding this species). As stated in the Biological Resources Technical Report, the proposed project would have no effect on the South Texas ambrosia and no impact on the Red-crowned Parrot. Therefore, consultation with USFWS was not required for the proposed project. Additional information regarding the South Texas ambrosia and Red-crowned Parrot and their potential impact scenarios is included below and in the Biological Resources Technical Report (TxDOT 2014h).

South Texas Ambrosia

South Texas ambrosia is an herbaceous, rhizomatous, perennial plant that is federally listed as endangered. This species grows at low elevations in open clay loam to sandy loam prairies and savannahs. The blooming period for this plant is between July and November, and flowers consist of clusters of yellowish florets (TxDOT 2015h). The major threats to this species include conversion of native prairie habitat to agricultural fields, improved pastures and urban areas as well as the invasion of non-native grass species, which successfully outcompete and displace this species (Poole et al. 2007, 76–77). Suitable soil and habitat for this species would be impacted by the proposed project; however, the majority of the proposed project footprint is within the existing right of way, and very little potential habitat for this species would be impacted (TxDOT 2015h). This species was not detected during the plant survey conducting during March 2015; therefore, the proposed project would have no effect on this species.

Red-crowned Parrot

The Red-crowned Parrot, a candidate for federal listing, is a non-migratory bird that is generally associated with tropical lowlands and foothills where it inhabits tropical deciduous forest, gallery forest, evergreen floodplain forest, Tamaulipan thornscrub, and semi-open areas. This species typically forages for seeds, nuts, buds, and flowers in the crown of trees but has also been known to forage in low-lying bushes. Nesting occurs March through August in pre-existing tree cavities made by other bird species. The major threats to this species include destruction and modification of habitat for urbanization and agricultural purposes and illegal collection for the pet trade (United States Fish and Wildlife Service [USFWS] 2012). This species has been known to utilize tall trees within and near urban areas for foraging and roosting. This urban habitat type is actually becoming increasingly common. BMPs to avoid adverse impacts to birds are discussed in the Biological Resources Technical Report (TxDOT 2015h). Additionally, vegetation clearing during construction or construction-staging activities would be avoided or minimized by limiting disturbance to only that which is necessary to construct the proposed project. The proposed project would have no impact on this species.

Potential Habitat within the Lower Rio Grande Valley National Wildlife Refuge (LRGVNWR)

Though no potential habitat for other federally listed threatened, endangered, or candidate species would be impacted by the proposed project, potentially suitable habitat exists adjacent to the proposed project area in tracts of land owned by the USFWS as part of the LRGVNWR. Because of the close proximity of suitable habitat to the proposed project area, federally listed endangered avian and terrestrial species including the Northern Aplomado Falcon (*Falco femoralis septentrionalis*), jaguarondi (*Herpailurus yaguarondi*), and ocelot (*Leopardus pardalis*) may have the potential to occur within the proposed project limits; however, any use would be temporary in nature, and the project would have no effect on these species (TxDOT 2015h).

State-listed Species

Potential habitat for eighteen state-listed threatened species was identified within the proposed project area (TxDOT 2015h). State-listed species are protected from direct harm, but there is no current

regulatory protection for their habitat. The black-spotted newt (*Notophthalmus meridionalis*), Mexican treefrog (*Smilisca baudinii*) and south Texas siren (*Siren sp 1*) could occur within the proposed project area water features including ditches, canals and resacas. Also, the White-faced Ibis (*Plegadis chihi*) and Wood Stork (*Mycteria americana*) could utilize these water features for foraging. The sheep frog (*Hypopachus variolosus*), white-lipped frog (*Leptodactylus fragilis*), black-striped snake (*Coniophanes imperialis*) and Texas indigo snake (*Drymarchon melanurus erebennus*) could occupy a variety of habitats including the proposed project area's water features, cultivated fields and areas dominated by the grassland and mixed brush vegetation communities. The northern cat-eyed snake (*Leptodeira septentrionalis septentrionalis*) and speckled racer (*Drymobius margaritiferus*) could inhabit dense thickets of the mixed brush vegetation community near proposed project area water features, and the Texas tortoise (*Gopherus berlandieri*) could potentially occupy the proposed project area's disturbance grassland and mixed brush communities. The Cactus Ferruginous Pygmy Owl (*Glaucidium brasilianum cactorum*), Gray Hawk (*Asturina nitida*) and the Northern Beardless Tyrannulet (*Camptostoma imberbe*) could inhabit the proposed project area's mixed brush vegetation community, while the Texas Botteri's Sparrow (*Aimophila botterii texana*) could occupy the open grasslands and grassland areas interspersed with mixed brush. Coues' rice rat (*Oryzomys couesi*) could inhabit wetland vegetation within and around grassland areas near proposed project area water features. The southern yellow bat (*Lasiurus ega*) could utilize proposed project area palm trees including the Texas sabal palm and the Washington fan palm for roosting (TxDOT 2015h).

In accordance with the Best Management Practices Programmatic Agreement between TxDOT and TPWD, contractors would be advised of the potential occurrence of the Texas indigo snake and Texas tortoise in the proposed project area, and care would be taken to avoid direct harm to these species. Additionally, any utility trenches would be covered overnight and visually inspected before filling to prevent tortoises from becoming trapped and buried. BMPs for birds discussed in the Biological Resources Technical Report (TxDOT 2015h) would be implemented to avoid adverse impacts to the White-faced Ibis, Wood Stork, Cactus Ferruginous Pygmy Owl, Gray Hawk, Northern Beardless Tyrannulet and Texas Botteri's Sparrow. BMPs would also be implemented to avoid or minimize impacts to the southern yellow bat (TxDOT 2015h).

BMPs have not been identified for the black spotted newt, Mexican treefrog, south Texas siren, sheep frog, white-lipped frog, black-striped snake, northern cat-eyed snake, speckled racer or Coues' rice rat; therefore, coordination with TPWD was be required for these species and was completed on September 1, 2015 (see **Appendix C**).

Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN)

SGCN are species that lack legal protection; however, due to limited distributions and/or declining populations, these species face the threat of extirpation or extinction. Potentially suitable habitat for ten SGCN exists within the proposed project area (TxDOT 2015h). These include: three plant species (Bailey's ballmoss [*Tillandsia baileyi*], Mexican mud-plantain [*Heteranthera mexicana*] and Runyon's water-willow [*Justicia runyoniii*]); three insect species (a royal moth [*Sphingicampa raspa*], subtropical blue-black tiger beetle [*Cicindela nigrocoerulea subtropica*], and the Tamaulipan agapema [*Agapema*

galbina]); three bird species (Audubon's Oriole [*Icterus graduacauda audubonii*], Brownsville Common Yellowthroat [*Geothlypis trichas insperata*], and the Western Burrowing Owl [*Athene cunicularia hypugaea*]); and one mammal species (the plains spotted skunk [*Spilogale putorius interrupta*]). Bailey's ballmoss could occur within evergreen trees such as Texas ebony that occur throughout the proposed project area's maintained landscape and mixed brush vegetation communities. Mexican mud-plantain and Runyon's water-willow could occur within the proposed project area resaca features. The subtropical blue-black tiger beetle could potentially inhabit open areas within the proposed project limits. The Tamaulipan agapema, a rare moth, could occur within mixed brush vegetation where this species' caterpillar foodplant, Brasil, was noted during field investigations. Likewise, legume species within mixed brush vegetation serve as the foodplants for royal moth caterpillars. Audubon's Oriole could occur within the mixed brush vegetation community, especially near the proposed project area's drainage features. The Brownsville Common Yellowthroat was heard calling in a resaca area adjacent to the proposed project during March 2013 field investigations. This species could occur within brush and tall grasses lining wetland areas associated with the proposed project area's resaca wetlands and other water features. The Western Burrowing Owl could occur within the proposed project's cultivated and open areas, and the plains spotted skunk could inhabit the proposed project area's cultivated or brushy areas (TxDOT 2015h).

In accordance with the Best Management Practices Programmatic Agreement between TxDOT and TPWD, BMPs for birds discussed above would be implemented to avoid adverse impacts to the Audubon's Oriole, Brownsville Common Yellowthroat, and the Western Burrowing Owl (TxDOT 2015h). Contractors would be advised of the potential occurrence of the plains spotted skunk in the proposed project area, and care would be taken to avoid direct harm to this species as well as unnecessary impacts to skunk dens, if encountered. BMPs have not been identified for the royal moth, subtropical blue-black tiger beetle, and Tamaulipan agapema; therefore, coordination with TPWD was be required for these species and was completed on September 1, 2015 (see **Appendix C**).

5.9.4 Water Resources

The proposed project is located in the Nueces–Rio Grande River Basin, which drains approximately 10,442 square miles of south Texas and outfalls into the Laguna Madre, Baffin Bay, and Oso Bay (TxDOT 2015i). Riverine wetlands within this basin are typically limited to depressions in the floodplains of rivers and major creeks. Generally, these depressions are scour features left by the rivers and, within the Rio Grande floodplain, include oxbows (sometimes referred to as "bancos") and cut-off channels locally known as resacas (Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service 2013). Resacas are former channels of the Rio Grande that have been naturally cut-off from the river and no longer have an inlet or outlet. In the Harlingen–Brownsville area, resacas and oxbows/bancos are prominent surface water and geographic features. These project area water features provide important habitat for a number of fish and wildlife species, and also function as a means of diversion and dissipation of floodwaters from the Rio Grande (TxDOT 2015i).

An analysis of National Wetland Inventory (NWI), National Hydrography Dataset (NHD), United States Geological Survey (USGS) topographic maps and recent aerial photography revealed potential jurisdictional waters of the U.S. that would be impacted by the proposed project. Field reconnaissance

conducted on June 3–5, 2013, and March 5–6, 2015, confirmed these findings. Seven sites were evaluated to determine the extent of waters of the U.S., including wetlands, within the proposed project. The routine method of wetland delineation outlined in the *Field Guide for Wetland Delineation–1987 Corps of Engineers Manual* (Environmental Laboratory 1987) and the *Regional Supplement to the Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual: Great Plains Region* (Environmental Laboratory 2010) was utilized for wetland determinations within the proposed project. The seven sites evaluated and their associated permitting scenarios are shown in **Table 5.9-2** below. The placement of temporary or permanent dredge or fill material into potentially jurisdictional waters of the U.S. would be authorized under NWP 14 for Linear Transportation Crossings with a PCN (TxDOT 2015i).

Table 5.9-2 Waters of the U.S., Including Wetlands, Within the Proposed Project Area

Name of Water Body	Existing Structure	Proposed Work or Structure	Permanent Fill		Temporary Fill		NWP	PCN (Y/N)
			Open Waters (acres [ac] and linear feet [lf])	Wetlands or other Special Aquatic Sites (acres)	Open Waters (acres [ac] and linear feet [lf])	Wetlands or other Special Aquatic Sites (acres)		
Site 1	5-foot Arched Concrete Culvert	Road Widening and Improvements	.02 ac 32.36 lf	0	0	0	14	N
Site 2	Concrete Box Culvert	Road Widening and Improvements	0.08 ac 85.00 lf	0	0.04 ac 24.00 lf	0	14	N
Site 3	None	Road Widening and Improvements	0	0.03	0	0.01	14	Y
Site 4	None	None	0	0	0	0	N/A	N
Site 5	Concrete Box Culvert	Road Widening and Improvements	0.01 ac 11.40 lf	0	0.01 ac 21.80 lf	0	14	N
Site 6	None	Road Widening and Improvements	0	0.23	0	0.14	14	Y
Site 7	None	Road Widening and Improvements	0	0.07	0	0.12	14	Y

Source: US 281 Environmental Assessment Study Team 2015.

Project construction would involve the placement of temporary or permanent dredge or fill material into jurisdictional waters of the U.S., which would be authorized under a USACE Section 404 NWP (TxDOT 2015i). Pre-construction Notification would also be required by the USACE for all three sites (TxDOT 2015i). In addition, TxDOT would comply with the requirements of the TCEQ's Texas Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (TPDES) Construction General Permit to regulate point and non-point sources of water pollution. A Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SW3P) would be implemented, and a notice would be posted at the construction site. A Notice of Intent (NOI) would also be prepared and submitted to the TCEQ. Coordination with the TCEQ was conducted because the proposed project is an Environmental Assessment and is within five miles and within the same watershed of a 303(d)-listed threatened/impaired water body. Coordination was completed on July 23, 2015 (see **Appendix C**).

Portions of the project are located within the boundaries of the City of Brownsville and the Cameron County Phase II Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4); therefore, TxDOT would need to comply with the applicable MS4 requirements.

The proposed project includes work within a 100-year floodplain as designated by the Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA). The hydraulic design for the proposed project would be in accordance with current FHWA and TxDOT design policies (TxDOT 2015i). The facility would permit the conveyance of the 100-year flood, inundation of the roadway being acceptable, without causing significant damage to the facility, stream or other property. The proposed project would not increase the base flood elevation to a level that would violate applicable floodplain regulations and ordinances. Coordination with the local Floodplain Administrator would be required (TxDOT 2015i).

5.10 INDIRECT AND CUMULATIVE IMPACTS SUMMARY

The indirect and cumulative impacts analysis for the proposed project was developed using TxDOT's 2014 *Environmental Handbook on Indirect and Cumulative Impacts*, the 2002 National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) Report 466 entitled *Desk Reference for Estimating the Indirect Effects of Proposed Transportation Projects*, and the 2011 American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) *Practitioner's Handbook for Assessing Indirect Effects and Cumulative Impacts Under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).* A separate technical report has been developed to document the analysis of the potential indirect and cumulative effects of the proposed project (TxDOT 2015c).

No indirect or cumulative impacts would occur as a result of the No Build Alternative.

5.10.1 Indirect Impacts

The potential of the proposed project to result in induced growth and related effects was determined using TxDOT's *Induced Growth Indirect Impacts Decision Tree* (TxDOT 2015c). The type and rate of growth that has occurred in the project area over the last several decades indicate that the potential for future economic growth along this stretch of US 281 is relatively limited. However, due to the uncertainty of the potential for current economic and development trends in Brownsville to affect the project area, and in accordance with criteria established in the *Induced Growth Indirect Impacts Decision Tree*, further analysis of induced growth related to the proposed project was required (TxDOT 2015c).

The results of the Induced Growth Analysis indicate that proposed improvements would not likely result in induced growth within the Area of Influence (AOI) identified for the proposed project (TxDOT 2015c). While the proposed project would improve mobility and increase operational efficiency along this five-mile stretch of US 281, these transportation improvements would not result in changes considered substantial enough to cause shifts in current development rates and patterns within the AOI. The historic and projected population, employment, and development trends within the AOI indicate that the areas closer to the center of Brownsville are more likely to undergo development than areas farther west along US 281, due in part to the development constraints (including preserve lands, floodplains, and waterbodies) that exist within the AOI. In addition to the overall lack of developable land within the area, recent growth patterns and City of Brownsville zoning indicate that complementary development is more likely to occur along major highways north and east of Brownsville, such as US 77 and SH 550.

Considering the relatively minor nature of the proposed improvements—along with the absence of a clear impetus for change in the land use trends within the AOI— the proposed improvements would not result in induced growth or related effects. This five-mile stretch of US 281 would be expected to continue to function primarily as a commuter route from rural areas into downtown Brownsville and to serve as a designated Hurricane Evacuation Route for the area (TxDOT 2015c).

5.10.2 Cumulative Impacts

In accordance with TxDOT guidance, the potential for the proposed project to contribute to cumulative impacts was determined using TxDOT's *Cumulative Impacts Decision Tree* (TxDOT 2015c). A cumulative impacts analysis focuses on resources anticipated to be substantially impacted by the proposed project (either directly or indirectly), as well as resources that would be affected to any degree by the proposed project that are also considered at risk or in poor or declining health.

The proposed project would not result in substantial direct or indirect impacts to any resource, all of which are considered to be in good health with the exception of threatened and endangered species (which are, by definition, at risk). It is possible that construction of the proposed project could impact habitat for one candidate for federal listing (the Red-crowned Parrot); however, adverse impacts to this species are considered unlikely due to the fact that this species primarily uses fairly urban habitat environments which are becoming increasingly common in the project area (TxDOT 2015c). In addition, eighteen state-listed species have the potential to occur in the proposed project area. However, none of these species were observed during field visits, and BMPs specified in the Biological Resources Technical Report (TxDOT 2015h) would serve to avoid or minimize harm to these species. In instances where specific BMPs have not been identified for a particular species, coordination with the TPWD would be conducted, and TPWD would recommend measures to avoid or minimize harm to these species for incorporation into the proposed project (TxDOT 2015c). Therefore, impacts to state-listed species are considered unlikely to occur.

Given the unlikelihood of the proposed improvements to result in adverse direct or indirect impacts to the species listed above, cumulative effects to these resources are considered improbable and were not carried forward for further analysis (TxDOT 2015c).

5.11 CONSTRUCTION PHASE IMPACTS SUMMARY

5.11.1 Noise Impacts

Noise associated with the construction of the proposed project is difficult to predict. Heavy machinery, the major source of noise in construction, is constantly moving in unpredictable patterns. However, construction normally occurs during daylight hours when occasional loud noises are more tolerable. None of the receivers are expected to be exposed to construction noise for a long duration; therefore, extended disruption of normal activities is not expected. Provisions would be included in the plans and specifications that require the contractor to make every reasonable effort to minimize construction noise through abatement measures such as work-hour controls and proper maintenance of muffler systems (TxDOT 2015g).

5.11.2 Air Quality Impacts

During the construction phase of the proposed project, temporary increases in air pollutant emissions could occur from construction activities. The primary construction-related emissions are particulate matter (fugitive dust) from site preparation. These emissions are temporary in nature (only occurring during actual construction); it is not possible to reasonably estimate impacts from these emissions due to limitations of existing models (TxDOT 2015f). However, the potential impacts of particulate matter emissions would be minimized by using fugitive dust control measures such as covering or treating disturbed areas with dust suppression techniques, sprinkling, covering loaded trucks, and other dust abatement controls, as appropriate. The construction-phase activities of this project may generate a temporary increase in MSAT emissions from construction activities, equipment, and related vehicles. The primary MSAT construction-related emissions are particulate matter from site preparation and diesel particulate matter from diesel powered construction equipment and vehicles. However, considering the temporary and transient nature of construction-related emissions, as well as the mitigation actions to be utilized, it is not anticipated that emissions from construction of this project would have any significant impact on air quality in the area (TxDOT 2015f).

5.11.3 Vegetation and Wildlife Impacts

Potential impacts during construction-phase activities include mortality of sessile and/or slow moving species by heavy machinery and vegetation removal or alteration during right of way clearing. Impacts to terrestrial species would most likely occur through direct habitat destruction from vegetation removal and alteration, including the removal of vegetation and disturbance in and around drainage features and resacas. Additionally, mortality from vehicle collisions is well documented and likely to occur. Impacts to aquatic species could occur through changes in water quality. Precautions would be taken to minimize disturbance within the proposed project area's drainage features and resacas, and vegetation clearing during construction or construction-staging activities would be avoided or minimized by limiting disturbance to only that which is necessary to construct the proposed project. Impacts to aquatic species would be minimized, and adjacent wildlife habitat would be protected from stormwater runoff by implementing BMPs that would control erosion, post-construction total suspended solids (TSS), and sedimentation (TxDOT 2015h).

5.11.4 No Build Alternative

No construction would occur under the No Build Alternative; therefore, no construction-phase effects would occur.

6.0 COMMENTS AND COORDINATION

6.1 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

A public meeting for the proposed project was held on April 1, 2015, in the auditorium at Veterans Memorial Early College High School in Brownsville. A total of 97 people attended the meeting, including 68 members of the general public. All meeting materials were available in English and Spanish, and TxDOT employees were available to provide translation services, as necessary (TxDOT 2015j). Notices

for the public meeting were published in English and Spanish in *The Brownsville Herald* and *El Nuevo Heraldo* on March 15, 2015, and were followed by display advertisements in both English and Spanish posted in the same newspapers on March 29, 2015. The meeting was also advertised on the TxDOT Pharr District website.

Overall, the response to the proposed project at the public meeting and during the comment period (April 1 to April 13, 2015) was positive; none of the comments received expressed an objection to the proposed project as a whole. The most commonly cited concerns were safety for traffic entering and exiting the various cross-streets and neighborhoods along the corridor, as well as the potential to integrate design elements such as traffic signals, street lights, and improved drainage into the proposed improvements. All comments and associated TxDOT responses are available in the Public Meeting Summary (TxDOT 2015j) on file at the TxDOT Pharr District office.

A Traffic Noise Workshop was held for the proposed project on September 3, 2015, at Veterans Memorial Early College High School, the details of which are summarized in the Traffic Noise Workshop Summary (TxDOT 2015k) on file at the TxDOT Pharr District office. A total of five residents attended the workshop, which was intended to provide property owners with sufficient information to vote for or against the incorporation of the proposed noise wall at the Valle Estrella subdivision into the proposed project. Of the 14 ballots received during the polling period (September 3–September 21, 2015), 13 individuals voted for the construction of the proposed noise wall. This represents the majority (approximately 59 percent) of the 22 benefitted receivers; therefore, TxDOT will incorporate the wall into the final design of the proposed project.

In accordance with 43 TAC §2.106, a Notice Affording an Opportunity for a Public Hearing was offered for the proposed project. The notice was published in English in *The Brownsville Herald* on September 27, 2015, and in Spanish in *El Periódico USA* on September 30, 2015. The notice was also published on the TxDOT Pharr District's website in both English and Spanish. No requests for a public hearing were received during the comment period (September 27–October 27, 2015). Copies of the notice and an original certification of the public participation process illustrating that the requirements of 43 TAC §2.106 have been met are included in **Appendix D** and are on file at the TxDOT Pharr District office.

6.2 HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Signs for an anode bed were noted adjacent to a pipeline near New Carmen Avenue during a March 2015 field visit. Although the location of the anode bed is unknown, the signage is located within the proposed right of way. Coordination with the appropriate utility owners to identify the location of the anode bed would be required prior to construction of the proposed project. Additionally, the regulatory database search reported two underground natural gas lines as being located within the proposed project area, as well as the location of an IHWCA site within one mile of the project area. All concerns that would require additional investigation prior to construction are summarized in **Table 5.8-1** in **Section 5.8.1**.

The regulatory database search and field survey identified hazardous materials concerns that would potentially require additional investigation prior to construction; therefore, an IIR form has been

completed in the ECOS for the proposed project. The IIR form will be used to ensure adequate communication and coordination regarding hazardous materials issues during later phases of the proposed project. Additional investigation or coordination with utility owners may be required to determine potential conflicts during final design.

6.3 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

The proposed project would impact approximately 0.39 acres of riparian vegetation and would therefore exceed the disturbance threshold for this MOU type (0.1 acre). In addition, the proposed project would be authorized under a NWP with a PCN. Therefore, coordination with TPWD was conducted regarding the potential impacts of the proposed project on biological resources. TPWD had no comment regarding the proposed project, and coordination was determined to be complete on September 1, 2015 (see **Appendix B**).

BMPs have not been identified for the following state-listed species: the black spotted newt, Mexican treefrog, south Texas siren, sheep frog, white-lipped frog, black-striped snake, northern cat-eyed snake, speckled racer, Coues' rice rat, the royal moth, subtropical blue-black tiger beetle, or Tamaulipan agapema.

6.4 WATER RESOURCES

Because the proposed project is an EA and is within five miles of a threatened or impaired water body, coordination with the TCEQ was conducted and was completed on July 23, 2015 (see **Appendix C**). Additionally, the proposed project includes work within a FEMA-designated 100-year floodplain; therefore, coordination with the local Floodplain Administrator is required.

6.5 CULTURAL RESOURCES

The conclusions of the cultural resources investigations, including both historic and archeological resources, were coordinated under the provisions of the PA-TU and the TxDOT-THC MOU. Approval of the Report for Historic Studies Survey was received from TxDOT on June 24, 2015 (see **Appendix C**). Concurrence with the conclusions and recommendations made in the Archeological Resources Survey Report was received on August 14, 2015.

7.0 PERMITS, APPROVALS AND COMMITMENTS

7.1 VEGETATION AND WILDLIFE HABITAT

In order to ensure that TxDOT field inspectors and contractors are informed of federal and state-listed threatened and endangered species and SGCN which have the potential to occur in the project area, the following will be undertaken:

- At the time of the pre-construction meeting, TxDOT field inspectors and contractors will be given a list of potential listed species occurring within the project area along with photographs of each species.

- Notes will be placed in the Environmental Permits, Issues and Commitments (EPIC) Sheet, including:
    - A note alerting contractors to the potential of species to occur within the proposed project area. The note will state that there is the potential for the presence of state-listed threatened species and SGCN to occur within the project area and that state law prohibits the taking (incidental or otherwise) of state-listed species. Taking is defined as the collection, hooking, hunting, netting, shooting, or snaring, by any means or devices. If any listed species are observed, work will cease in the immediate area and the project engineer will be contacted immediately.
    - A note stating that in order to comply with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and avoid the inadvertent destruction of individuals, nests or eggs, a migratory bird nest survey will need to be conducted prior to any vegetation removal and/or any construction work commencing during the nesting season (February 15th to October 1st). If project activities must be conducted during this time and active nests are found, a buffer of vegetation of 25 feet or more should remain around the nest until the young have fledged or the nest is no longer active.

The following measures will also be undertaken to avoid, minimize and mitigate impacts to vegetation:

- Disturbance will be limited to only that which is necessary to construct the proposed project;
- The removal of native vegetation, particularly mature native trees and shrubs, will be avoided to the greatest extent practicable; and
- An approved seed mix will be used in the landscaping and revegetation of disturbed areas.

Evidence of migratory bird activity was noted in the proposed project area during field assessments conducted in late March 2013 and early March 2015. In the event that migratory birds arrive in the project area to breed during construction of the proposed project, appropriate measures would be taken to avoid adverse impacts, including the following:

- The disturbance, destruction, or removal of active nests, including ground nesting birds, during the nesting season will be prohibited;
- The removal of unoccupied, inactive nests will be avoided;
- The establishment of active nests during the nesting season on TxDOT owned and operated facilities and structures proposed for replacement or repair will be prevented; and
- The collection, capture, relocation, or transportation of birds, eggs, young, or active nests without a permit will be prohibited.

Potential habitat for eighteen state-listed threatened species was identified within the proposed project. These include the black-spotted newt, Mexican treefrog, south Texas siren, sheep frog, white-lipped frog, black-striped snake, Texas indigo snake, northern cat-eyed snake, speckled racer, Texas tortoise, White-faced Ibis, Wood Stork, Cactus Ferruginous Pygmy Owl, Gray Hawk, Northern Beardless Tyrannulet, Texas Botteri's Sparrow, Coues' rice rat, and the southern yellow bat. In accordance with

the Best Management Practices Programmatic Agreement between TxDOT and TPWD, contractors will be advised of the potential occurrence of the Texas indigo snake and Texas tortoise in the project, and care will be taken to avoid direct harm to these species. Additionally, utility trenches will be covered overnight and visually inspected before filling to prevent tortoises from becoming trapped and buried.

Bird BMPs discussed above will be implemented to avoid adverse impacts to the Red-crowned Parrot (a candidate for federal listing), White-faced Ibis, Wood Stork, Cactus Ferruginous Pygmy Owl, Gray Hawk, Northern Beardless Tyrannulet, and Texas Botteri's Sparrow. Potential impacts to the southern yellow bat will be avoided or minimized by implementing the following BMPs:

- The unnecessary removal of dead fronds on native and ornamental palm trees will be avoided; and
- Large, hollow trees will be surveyed for maternity colonies and, if found, will not be disturbed until after the pups fledge.

BMPs have not been identified for the following state-listed species: black spotted newt, Mexican treefrog, south Texas siren, sheep frog, white-lipped frog, black-striped snake, northern cat-eyed snake, speckled racer, Coues' rice rat, the royal moth, subtropical blue-black tiger beetle, and Tamaulipan agapema.

Suitable habitat for seven SGCN exists within the proposed project area. These include a royal moth, subtropical blue-black tiger beetle, Tamaulipan agapema, Audubon's Oriole, Brownsville Common Yellowthroat, Western Burrowing Owl, and the plains spotted skunk.

- In accordance with the Best Management Practices Programmatic Agreement between TxDOT and TPWD, bird BMPs discussed above will be implemented to avoid adverse impacts to the Audubon's Oriole, Brownsville Common Yellowthroat, and the Western Burrowing Owl.

- Contractors will be advised of the potential occurrence of the plains spotted skunk in the proposed project area, and care will be taken to avoid direct harm to this species as well as unnecessary impacts to skunk dens, if encountered.

- Upon completion of earthwork operations, disturbed areas will be restored and reseeded in accordance with TxDOT's *Vegetation Management Guidelines* and in compliance with the intent of Executive Order 13112 on Invasive Species and the FHWA *Executive Memorandum on Environmentally and Economically Beneficial Landscape Practices*.

7.2 WATER QUALITY

The placement of temporary or permanent dredge or fill material into potentially jurisdictional waters of the U.S. will be authorized under NWP 14 for Linear Transportation Crossings. Sites 3, 6 and 7 are wetlands and considered special aquatic sites; therefore, a PCN for NWP 14 will also be required for impacts to these features. The PCN package for the proposed project is currently under review by the USACE Corpus Christi office.

The project will involve five or more acres of earth disturbance; therefore, the contractor will be required to comply with the requirements of the TCEQ's TPDES Construction General Permit. An SW3P will be implemented, and a construction site notice will be posted at the construction site. An NOI will be prepared and submitted to the TCEQ.

The TPDES requirements will be met by implementing approved erosion controls, sediment controls, and post-construction total suspended solids controls. All temporary erosion controls, such as silt fences and rock berms, will be in compliance with TxDOT Standard Specifications and will be in place, according to the construction plans, prior to commencement of construction related activities and inspected on a regular basis.

A USACE Section 404 permit will be required for the proposed project; therefore, construction activities will require compliance with the State of Texas Water Quality Certification Program. Compliance with Section 401 of the Clean Water Act requires the use of BMPs to manage water quality on sites affecting jurisdictional waters. These BMPs will address each of the following categories: 1) erosion control, 2) post-construction TSS control, and 3) sedimentation control. Water quality BMPs that will be implemented may include the following:

- Approved temporary vegetation;
- Blankets/matting or mulch filter berms;
- Vegetated filter strips; and
- Silt fence, sand bag and/or compost filter berms and socks.

The project is located within the boundaries of the City of Brownsville and Cameron County Phase II MS4, and the contractor will be required to comply with the applicable MS4 requirements.

Coordination with the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) is ongoing to determine if an IBWC license would be required for the proposed project.

7.3 ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

In the unlikely event that significant cultural resources are discovered during construction of the proposed project, TxDOT will immediately initiate cultural resource discovery procedures. All work in the vicinity will cease until a specialist from TxDOT and/or the THC could arrive on site and assess the significance of the discovery and the potential need for additional investigation, if necessary.

7.4 HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Any unanticipated hazardous materials and/or petroleum contamination encountered during construction will be handled according to applicable federal and state regulations per TxDOT Standard Specifications. Section 6.10 of the "General Provisions of the Standard Specifications for Construction and Maintenance of Highways, Streets and Bridges," which applies to all highway projects, includes guidelines addressing the contractor's responsibilities regarding the discovery of hazardous materials. Furthermore, an IIR form was completed in ECOS in order to identify and address hazardous materials

concerns. Issues identified that must be remediated to appropriate regulatory standards will be completed prior to construction. Any sites which cannot be remediated ahead of time will require special specifications and provisions in the Plan, Specification and Estimates (PS&E) pertaining to the proposed project. The IIR form will be used to ensure adequate communication and coordination of hazardous materials issues in later phases of the proposed project.

7.5 TRAFFIC NOISE

A noise wall at the Valle Estrella subdivision was determined to be feasible and reasonable during the traffic noise analysis conducted for the proposed project. Based on the results of the polling process, construction of the proposed noise wall will be incorporated into the final design of the proposed project. Should project design changes be implemented, reevaluation of the noise wall proposal may be required.

To avoid noise impacts that may result from future development of properties adjacent to the project, local officials responsible for land use control programs must ensure, to the maximum extent possible, no new activities are planned or constructed along or within the following predicted (2035) noise impact contours. Provisions will be included in the plans and specifications that require the contractor to make every reasonable effort to minimize construction noise through abatement measures, such as work-hour controls and proper maintenance of muffler systems.

A copy of the Traffic Noise Technical Report has been made available to local officials. On the date of approval of this document (Date of Public Knowledge), TxDOT is no longer responsible for providing noise abatement for new development adjacent to the proposed project.

7.6 CONSTRUCTION

The contractor will observe proper maintenance and idling of construction equipment to control emissions of particulate matter and will control the generation of dust by site watering. Disruptions during the construction phase will be minimized to the extent possible by the timely notification of affected residents and business owners through posted notices, personal contact, or other notification procedures. These procedures could include rerouting the traffic, barricading, using traffic cones, or any other measures deemed necessary and prudent by TxDOT and the construction contractor to comply with all local, state, and federal traffic and safety regulations.

Signage and barrier placement will be promptly relocated as a result of the inevitable reordering of travel patterns, both during construction and in the long term, as drivers find cut-through routes to shorten travel times. During construction, procedures to minimize traffic congestion, noise, dust and risk to public safety will be specifically adapted to the circumstances of the proposed project. Provisions will be included in the plans and specifications that require the contractor to make every reasonable effort to minimize construction noise through abatement measures such as work-hour controls and proper maintenance of muffler systems.

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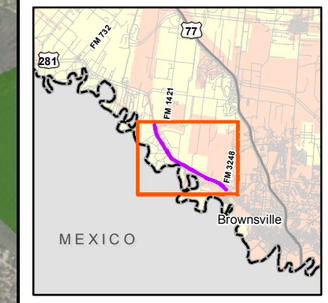
APPENDIX A
FIGURES

US 281

From FM 3248 to FM 1421

CSJ: 0220-04-035

PROJECT LOCATION



Key to Features

- Existing ROW
- Proposed ROW
- Rivers
- Resaca de la Palma State Park
- Lower Rio Grande Valley National Wildlife Refuge

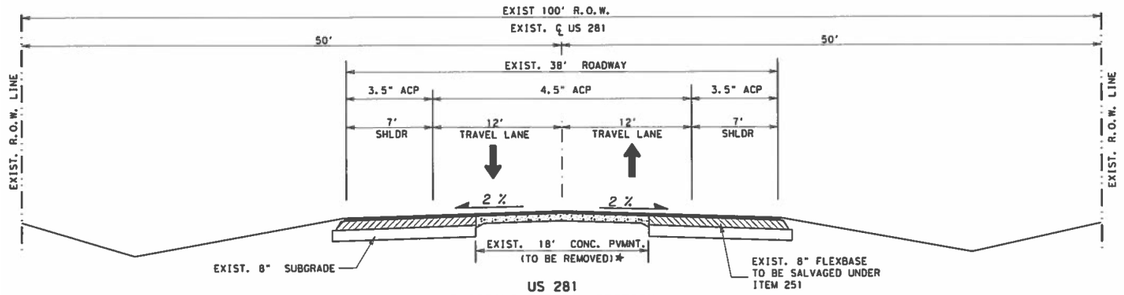
N

0 1000 2000 3000

Feet

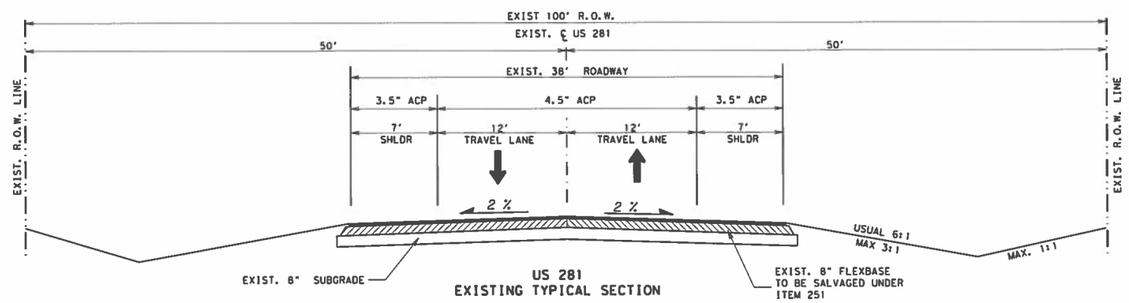
One inch equals 2000 ft

FIGURE 1



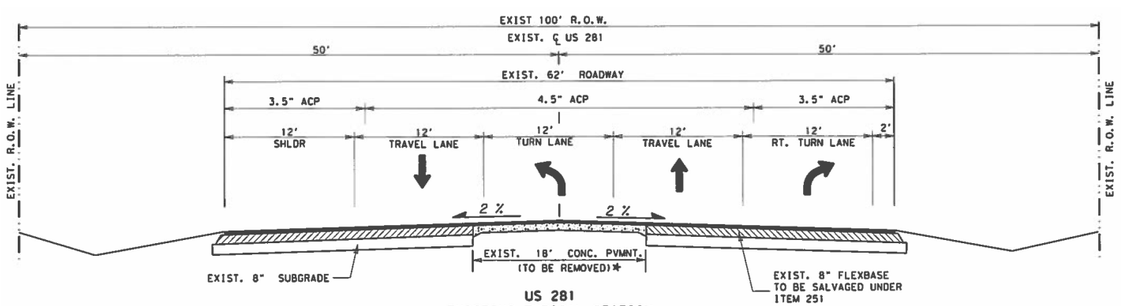
US 281
EXISTING TYPICAL SECTION

STA.1015+10.00 TO STA. 1024+00.00 (TRANS.77' TO 38')
STA. 1024+00.00 TO STA. 1058+65.00 (EXIST. 38' RDWY)
STA. 1135+10.00 TO STA. 1173+10.00 (EXIST. 38' RDWY)



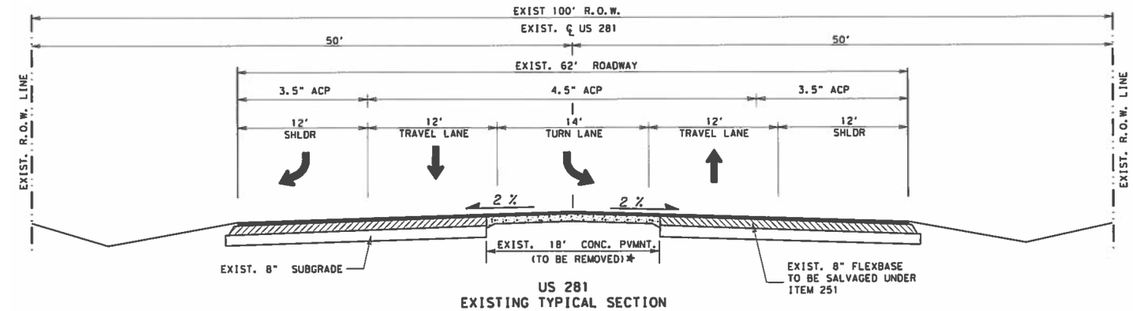
US 281
EXISTING TYPICAL SECTION

STA.1058+65.00 TO STA. 1106+77.00 (EXIST. 38' RDWY)
STA. 1106+77.00 TO STA.1110+06.00 (EXIST. 38'-62' TRANS.)
STA. 1173+10.00 TO STA. 1185+14.00 (EXIST. 38' RDWY)
STA. 1194+59.00 TO STA. 1283+60.00 (EXIST. 38' RDWY)
STA. 1283+60.00 TO STA. 1284+50.00 (EXIST. 38'-42' TRANS.)
STA. 1289+84.00 TO STA. 1295+02.00 (EXIST. 38' RDWY)



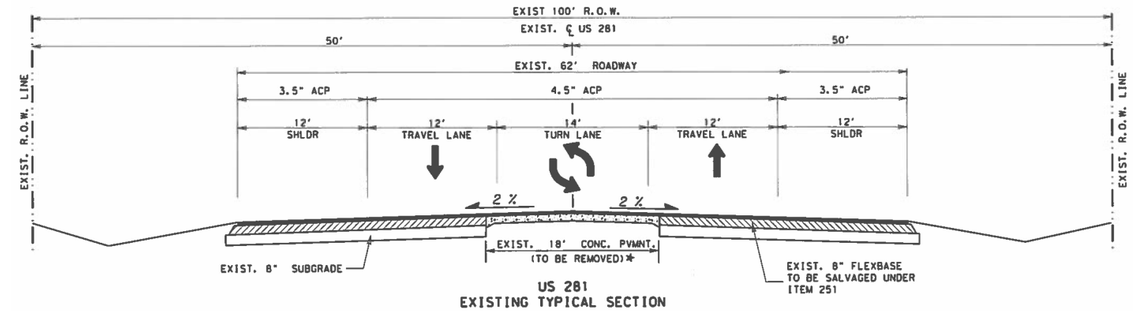
US 281
EXISTING TYPICAL SECTION

STA.1110+06.00 TO STA. 1113+29.00 (EXIST. 62' RDWY)
STA. 1128+00.00 TO STA. 1130+08.00 (EXIST. 62' RDWY)



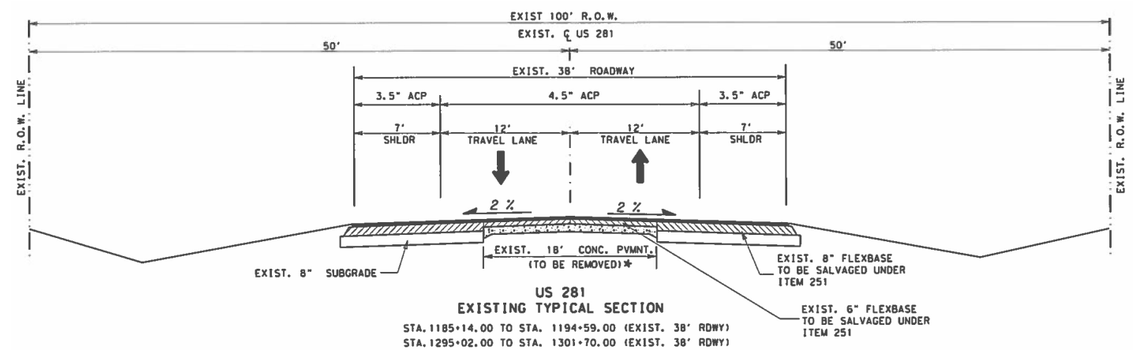
US 281
EXISTING TYPICAL SECTION

STA.1113+29.00 TO STA. 1115+28.00 (EXIST. 62' RDWY)
STA.1130+08.00 TO STA. 1132+43.00 (EXIST. 62' RDWY)
STA.1132+43.00 TO STA. 1135+10 (EXIST. 62' - 38' RDWY)



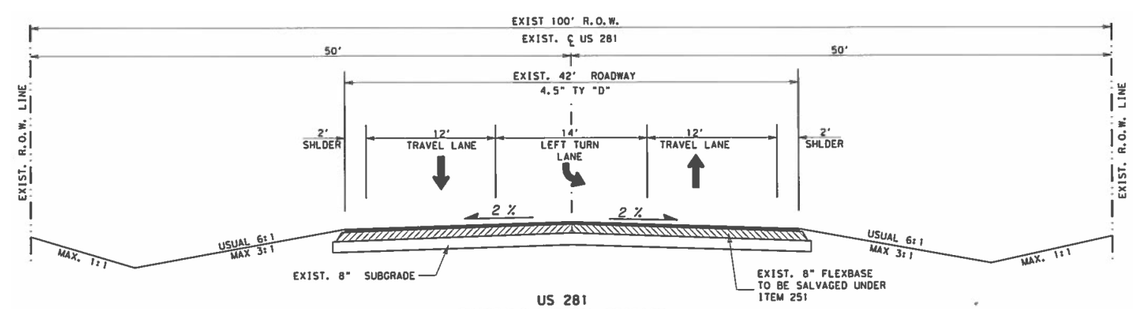
US 281
EXISTING TYPICAL SECTION

STA.1115+28.00 TO STA. 1125+00.00 (EXIST. 62' RDWY)
STA. 1125+00.00 TO STA. 1128+00 (RIGHT LANE TRANS. FROM 0' TO 12')



US 281
EXISTING TYPICAL SECTION

STA.1185+14.00 TO STA. 1194+59.00 (EXIST. 38' RDWY)
STA.1295+02.00 TO STA. 1301+70.00 (EXIST. 38' RDWY)

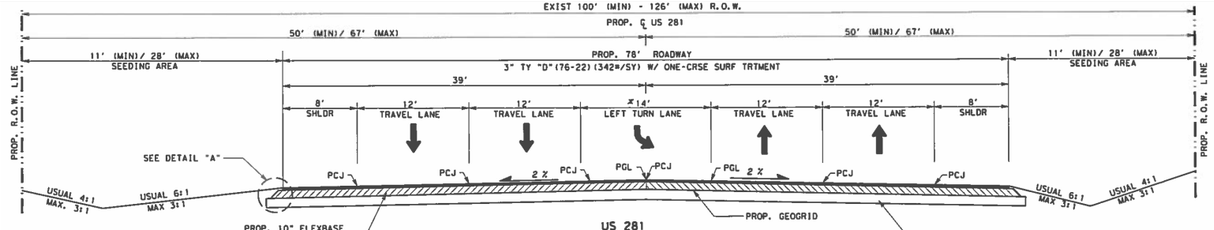


US 281
EXISTING TYPICAL SECTION

STA. 1284+50.00 TO STA. 1289+20 (EXIST. 42' RDWY)
STA. 1289+20.00 TO STA. 1289+84 (EXIST. 42'-38' TRANS.)

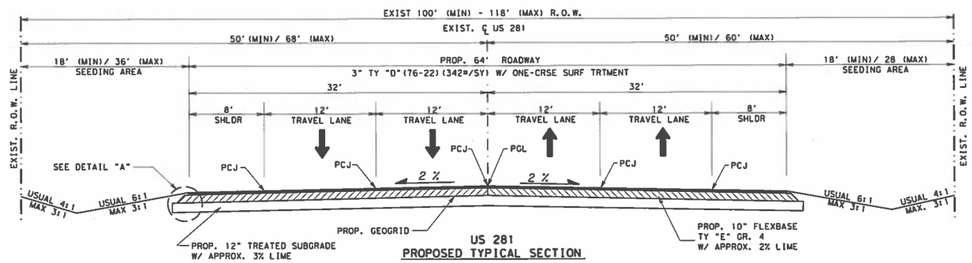
Figure 2

Existing Typical Sections
US 281 - From FM 3248 to FM 1421
CSJ# 0220-04-035



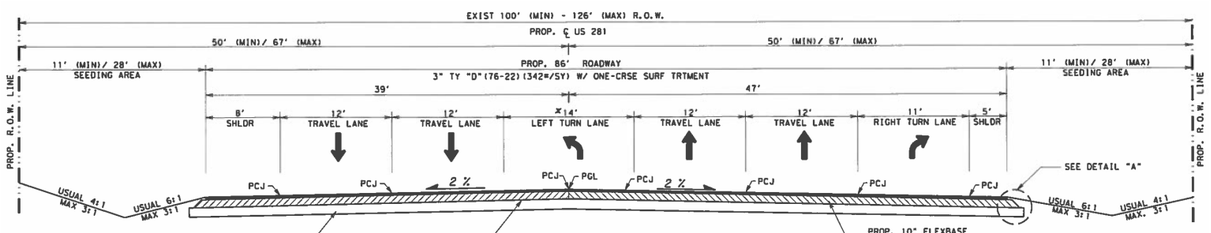
US 281
PROPOSED TYPICAL SECTION

STA. 1015+10 TO STA. 1018+55 (78' - 64' RDWY TRANSITION)
STA. 1106+34 TO STA. 1107+34 (78' - 86' RDWY TRANSITION)
STA. 1119+39 TO STA. 1123+00 (78' RDWY) (x CONTINUOUS TWO-WAY LEFT TURN LANE)
STA. 1123+00 TO STA. 1124+00 (78' - 86' RDWY TRANSITION)
STA. 1130+46 TO STA. 1135+12 (78' RDWY)
STA. 1135+12 TO STA. 1136+30 (78' RDWY W/ CENTER GORE TRANSITION)
STA. 1136+30 TO STA. 1138+40 (78' - 64' RDWY TRANSITION)
STA. 1199+91 TO STA. 1206+00 (78' RDWY)
STA. 1206+00 TO STA. 1208+11 (78' - 64' RDWY TRANSITION)



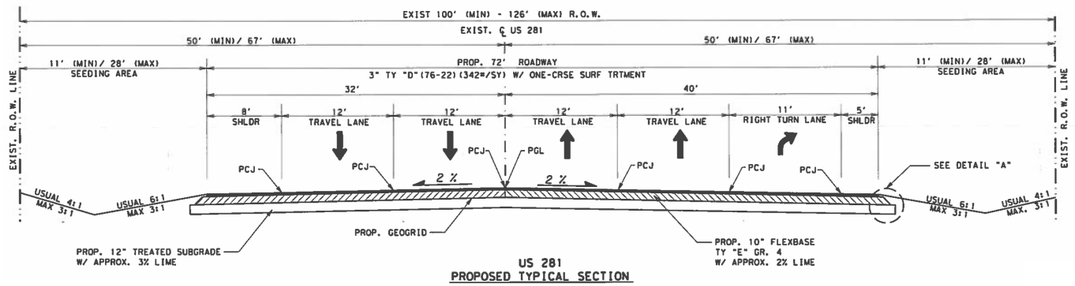
US 281
PROPOSED TYPICAL SECTION

STA. 1018+55 TO STA. 1104+24 (64' RDWY)
STA. 1104+24 TO STA. 1106+34 (64' - 78' RDWY TRANSITION)
STA. 1138+40 TO STA. 1193+11 (64' RDWY)
STA. 1193+11 TO STA. 1194+11 (64' - 72' RDWY TRANSITION)
STA. 1208+11 TO STA. 1280+00 (64' RDWY)
STA. 1280+00 TO STA. 1281+00 (64' - 76' RDWY TRANSITION)
STA. 1297+50 TO STA. 1301+70 (64' RDWY)



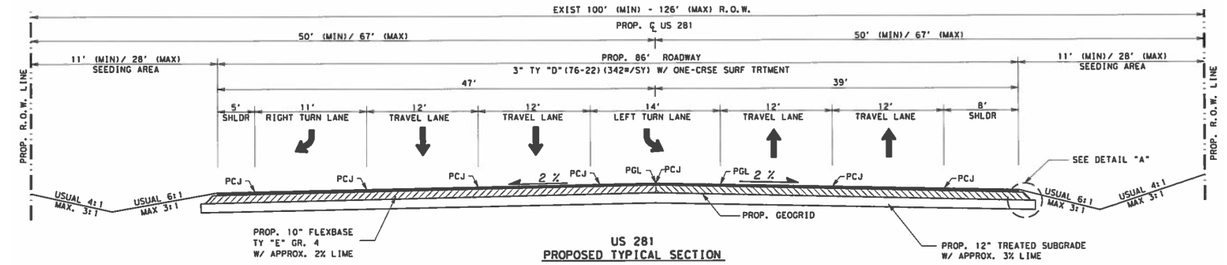
US 281
PROPOSED TYPICAL SECTION

STA. 1107+34 TO STA. 1112+40 (86' RDWY)
STA. 1112+40 TO STA. 1113+40 (86' RDWY - SHIFT)
STA. 1124+00 TO STA. 1127+09 (86' RDWY) (x CONTINUOUS TWO-WAY LEFT TURN LANE)
STA. 1127+09 TO STA. 1129+10 (86' RDWY)
STA. 1129+10 TO STA. 1130+46 (86' - 78' RDWY TRANSITION)
STA. 1198+21 TO STA. 1199+21 (86' RDWY W/CORE LANE)



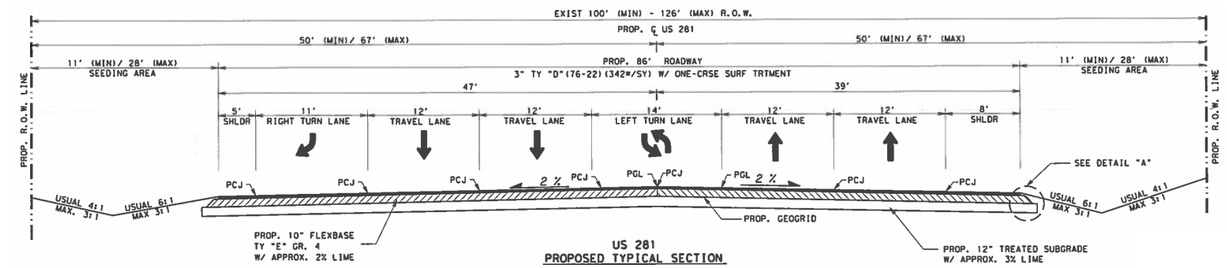
US 281
PROPOSED TYPICAL SECTION

STA. 1194+11 TO STA. 1196+11 (72' RDWY)
STA. 1196+11 TO STA. 1198+21 (72' - 86' RDWY TRANSITION/ GORE TRANS. FROM 0' TO 14')



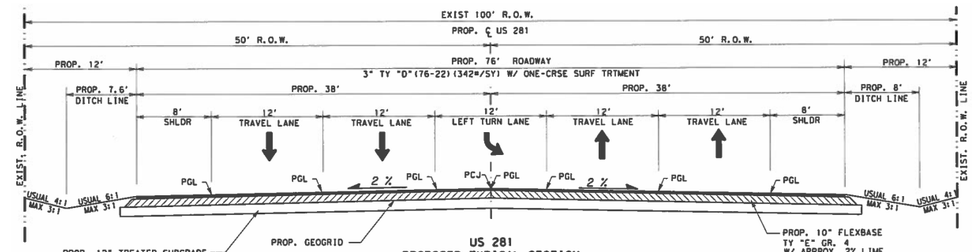
US 281
PROPOSED TYPICAL SECTION

STA. 1113+40 TO STA. 1115+35 (86' RDWY)
STA. 1199+21 TO STA. 1199+91 (86' - 78' RDWY TRANSITION)



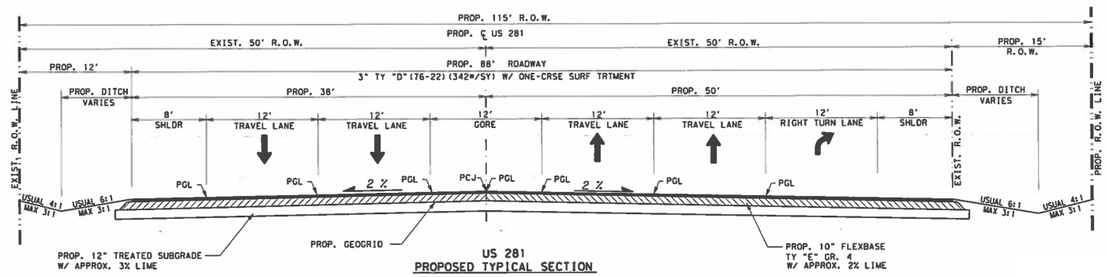
US 281
PROPOSED TYPICAL SECTION

STA. 1115+35 TO STA. 1118+39 (86' RDWY)
STA. 1118+39 TO STA. 1119+39 (86' - 78' RDWY TRANSITION)



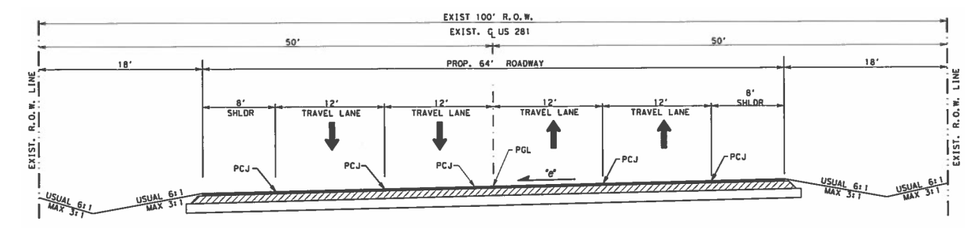
US 281
PROPOSED TYPICAL SECTION

STA. 1281+00 TO STA. 1284+60 (76'-88' RDWY TRANSITION/ GORE TRANSITION FROM 0' TO 12')
STA. 1287+20 TO STA. 1292+30 (76' RDWY)
STA. 1292+30 TO STA. 1293+30 (76' GORE TRANSITION)
STA. 1293+30 TO STA. 1297+50 (76'-64' TRANSITION)



US 281
PROPOSED TYPICAL SECTION

STA. 1284+60 TO STA. 1286+00 (88' RDWY)
STA. 1286+00 TO STA. 1287+20 (88'-76' TRANSITION)



US 281
PROPOSED TYPICAL SECTION

Figure 3

Proposed Typical Sections
US 281 - From FM 3248 to FM 1421
CSJ# 0220-04-035

APPENDIX B
TRANSPORTATION PLANNING DOCUMENTS

Corridor	Existing Roadway						Proposed Roadway				Project Information			Project Funding			
	ID #	Func Class	# of Lanes	ROW Width	Traffic Volume 2004	2004 LOS	Prop ROW Width	2035 LOS	# of Lanes	Time Frame	Description of Project	Limits: From / To	Length in Miles	Cost 1000$	YOE Cost	Funding Category	Category
Border Crossing (Safety Inspection Facility)																	
BSIF	BMPO-LS17	Facility	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Parcel for new facility	N/A	N/A	Short	Buy ROW for permanent facility and construct initial phase of permanent facility and remove temporary BSIF	Vicinity of GSA at the Veterans International Bridge	N/A	$10,474.4	N/A	Federal & State Funds	10
SH 48 (Padre Island Highway)																	
SH 48	BMPO-G1	Other Principal Arterials	4	80'	27,081	0.90	110'	1.34	4	Short/Long	Reconstruct with concrete pavement	SH 550 to SH 4	3.70	$8,000.0	$10,000.0	BND Permit	BND
SH 48	BMPO-G2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Long	Widen to 6 lanes and add median	SH 4 to FM 511	3.50	$19,250.0	$23,100.0	1, 7, 11	1, 7, 11
US 281 Connector to SH 100																	
US 281 Connector	BMPO-E1R	Other Principal Arterials	N/A	None	2,548	0.28	200'-300'	0.53	4	Long	Buy ROW (no construction)	US 281 to SH 100	20.00	$200.0	$300.0	CCRMA	ROW
US 281																	
US 281	BMPO-D2	Rural Major Arterial	2	80'	10,433	1.13	200'-250'	0.70	4	Short	Widen to 4 lanes	FM 3248 to FM 1421	5.10	$12,184.4	$12,184.4	Prop 1, CBI, 7	P 1, 10, 7
US 281	BMPO-D3	Rural Major Arterial	2	100'	7,335	0.80	200'-250'	0.93	4	Long	Widen to 4 lanes	FM 1421 to 0.4 mile west of FM 1577	4.62	$11,090.0	$27,724.7	CBI/UC	1, 7, 11
US 281	BMPO-SH14			100'	N/A	N/A	200'-250'	N/A	4	S/L	Buy ROW	FM 1421 to West of FM 1577	4.62	$200.0	$300.0	STATE/ LOCAL	1, 7, 11
FM 1732																	
FM 1732	BMPO-BB1	N/A	N/A	80'	4,631	0.50	80'	0.97	4	Long	Widen to 4 lanes	I-69E / US 77/83 Frontage to US 281	5.06	$17,119.7	$26,684.8	1, 7, 11	1, 7, 11

Adopted 12/10/14

Italics - In TIP
Gray Shading = Right of Way Projects

Logged in as Mike Chavez Log Out

Project Management Reports Support

Data

	None		
PHARR	CAMERON	Environmental	$385,855
BROWNSVILLE	US 281	Engineering	$0
0220 - 04 - 035	2016		$13,620,000
		Acquisition	$773,616
		Utilities	$1,082,790
			$0
			$0
			$0
09/2015	Kg 0.0000		
TxDOT	Kg 0.0000		$15,862,261
BMPO-D2	Kg 0.0000		
	Kg 0.0000		
BROWNSVILLE	Lbs		

FM 1421

FM 3248

CONSTRUCT RURAL 4 LANE

10	$5,378,331	$1,344,583	$0	$0	$0	$6,722,914
2M	$0	$6,897,085	$0	$0	$0	$6,897,085
	$5,378,331	$8,241,668	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$13,619,999

PHARR	BROWNSVILLE	CAMERON	0220-04-035	US 281 C	BROWNSVILLE		$ 13,619,999
	FM 1421					TxDOT	
	FM 3248						09/2015
	CONSTRUCT RURAL 4 LANE						BMPO-D2

$ 385,855								
$ 0		10	$ 5,378,331	$ 1,344,583	$ 0	$ 0	$ 0	$ 6,722,914
$ 13,620,000		2M	$ 0	$ 6,897,085	$ 0	$ 0	$ 0	$ 6,897,085
$ 773,616	$ 13,619,999		$ 5,378,331	$ 8,241,668	$ 0	$ 0	$ 0	$ 13,619,999
$ 1,082,790								
$ 0								
$ 0								
$ 0								
$ 15,862,261								

PHARR	BROWNSVILLE	CAMERON	0220-04-035	US 281 C	BROWNSVILLE		$ 13,619,999
	FM 1421					TxDOT	
	FM 3248						09/2015
	CONSTRUCT RURAL 4 LANE						BMPO-D2

DISTRICT	MPO	COUNTY	CSJ	HWY	PHASE	CITY	YOE COST
PHARR	BROWNSVILLE	CAMERON	0220-04-035	US 281	C	BROWNSVILLE	$ 13,619,999

LIMITS FROM: FM 1421
LIMITS TO: FM 3248
PROJECT SPONSOR: TxDOT
REVISION DATE: 09/2015
PROJECT DESCR: CONSTRUCT RURAL 4 LANE
MPO PROJ NUM: BMPO-D2
FUNDING CAT(S):
REMARKS P7:
PROJECT HISTORY:

TOTAL PROJECT COST INFORMATION

PRELIM ENG:	$	385,855
ROW PURCH:	$	0
CONST COST:	$	13,620,000
CONST ENG:	$	773,616
CONTING:	$	1,082,790
INDIRECT:	$	0
BOND FIN:	$	0
POT CHG ORD:	$	0
TOTAL COST:	$	15,862,261

COST OF APPROVED PHASES $ 13,619,999

AUTHORIZED FUNDING BY CATEGORY/SHARE

CATEGORY	FEDERAL	STATE	REGIONAL	LOCAL	LC	TOTAL
10	$ 5,378,331	$ 1,344,583	$ 0	$ 0	$ 0	$ 6,722,914
2M	$ 0	$ 6,897,085	$ 0	$ 0	$ 0	$ 6,897,085
TOTAL	$ 5,378,331	$ 8,241,668	$ 0	$ 0	$ 0	$ 13,619,999

TIP History

2015-2018 STIP — **09/2015 Revision: Approved 12/03/2015**

DISTRICT	MPO	COUNTY	CSJ	HWY	PHASE	CITY	YOE COST
PHARR	BROWNSVILLE	CAMERON	0220-04-035	US 281	C	BROWNSVILLE	$ 13,619,999

LIMITS FROM: FM 1421
LIMITS TO: FM 3248
PROJECT SPONSOR: TxDOT
REVISION DATE: 09/2015
PROJECT DESCR: CONSTRUCT RURAL 4 LANE
MPO PROJ NUM: BMPO-D2
FUNDING CAT(S):
REMARKS P7:
PROJECT HISTORY:

TOTAL PROJECT COST INFORMATION

PRELIM ENG:	$	385,855
ROW PURCH:	$	0
CONST COST:	$	13,620,000
CONST ENG:	$	773,616
CONTING:	$	1,082,790
INDIRECT:	$	0
BOND FIN:	$	0
POT CHG ORD:	$	0
TOTAL COST:	$	15,862,261

COST OF APPROVED PHASES $ 13,619,999

AUTHORIZED FUNDING BY CATEGORY/SHARE

CATEGORY	FEDERAL	STATE	REGIONAL	LOCAL	LC	TOTAL
10	$ 5,378,331	$ 1,344,583	$ 0	$ 0	$ 0	$ 6,722,914
2M	$ 0	$ 6,897,085	$ 0	$ 0	$ 0	$ 6,897,085
TOTAL	$ 5,378,331	$ 8,241,668	$ 0	$ 0	$ 0	$ 13,619,999

APPENDIX C
CORRESPONDENCE AND COORDINATION

From: NEPA [mailto:NEPA@tceq.texas.gov]
Sent: Thursday, July 23, 2015 1:10 PM
To: Mike Chavez
Subject: RE: Water Technical Report review, US 281, Cameron Co, 0220-04-035 (036-037)

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) received the Texas Department of Transportation's (TxDOT) request for environmental review of the following project: **Water Technical Report review, US 281, Cameron Co, 0220-04-035 (036-037)**

In accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding between TxDOT and TCEQ regarding environmental reviews, which is codified in Chapter 43, Subchapter I of the Texas Administrative Code (TAC) and 30 TAC § 7.119, TCEQ is responding to your request for review.

Water:

TCEQ does not have any comments.

TxDOT will still need to follow all other applicable laws related to this project, including applying for applicable permits.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Elizabeth McKeefer, CAPM, NEPA Coordinator, at (512) 239-2997 or NEPA@tceq.texas.gov.

From: Mike Chavez [mailto:Mike.Chavez@txdot.gov]
Sent: Monday, July 20, 2015 2:30 PM
To: TxDot
Subject: Water Technical Report review, US 281, Cameron Co, 0220-04-035 (036-037)

Afternoon,

TxDOT requests the TCEQ evaluate the attached water quality tech report for the US 281 project in Cameron County, per 43 TAC §2.305. The proposed project would widen US 281 from Farm-to-Market (FM) 3248 northwest to FM 1421, a distance of approximately 5.2 miles. We are requesting TCEQ review since the project meets MOU triggers related to water quality and proximity to an impaired assessment unit.

Let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you,

Michael R Chavez
Project Delivery Manager
Environmental Affairs Division
Texas Department of Transportation
512-416-2514
Mike.Chavez@txdot.gov

GIS data for US281 Pharr 0220-04-035

From: Hannah Vaughan [mailto:hvaughan@hicksenv.com]
Sent: Wednesday, June 24, 2015 11:00 AM
To: Samantha Champion
Subject: Fwd: GIS data for US281 Pharr 0220-04-035

FYI

Begin forwarded message:

> **From:** Renee Benn <Renee.Benn@txdot.gov>
> **Date:** June 24, 2015 at 9:57:24 AM CDT
> **To:** Hannah Vaughan <hvaughan@hicksenv.com>
> **Cc:** Edward Paradise Jr <Edward.Paradise@txdot.gov>
> **Subject: RE: GIS data for US281 Pharr 0220-04-035**
>
> This email format is fine, I've got the survey and approve it!
>
> **From:** Hannah Vaughan [mailto:hvaughan@hicksenv.com]
> **Sent:** Tuesday, June 23, 2015 10:57 AM
> **To:** Renee Benn
> **Cc:** Samantha Champion
> **Subject:** GIS data for US281 Pharr 0220-04-035
>
> Hi Renee, we sent the final HRSR to the district last week for this project, so you should be getting it soon if you haven't already. I have the required GIS data, is it okay to just send it to you in an email like this, or do I need to send it to you in a different way?
> Thanks,

Senior Architectural Historian

Environmental, Archeological and Planning Consultants

1504 W. 5th Street | Austin, Texas 78703

512.478.0858 | fax 512.474.1849

hvaughan@hicksenv.com

www.hicksenv.com

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August 11, 2015

Section 106 Consultation/ Antiquities Code of Texas
Transmittal of Hicks and Company Survey Report; *Archeological Investigations of of the Proposed Improvements to US 281 from FM3248 to FM 1421, Cameron County, Texas*
Pharr District, CSJ: 0220-04-035
THC Antiquities Permit No. 7255

Ms. Pat Mercado-Allinger,
Division of Archeology, Texas Historical Commission
P.O. Box 12276
Austin, Texas 78711

Dear Ms. Mercado-Allinger:

The above proposed project will be undertaken with state and federal funds. As required by the First Amended Programmatic Agreement (PA, 2005) and the Memorandum of Understanding with your agency, we are continuing consultation with your office on this project and are enclosing for your review and processing a draft report of an archeological survey recently conducted by Hicks and Company Inc. for the undertaking.

Hicks and Company Inc. conducted the Intensive Archeological Survey on behalf of TxDOTand examined proposed Area of Potential Effects (APE) totaling approximately 69.3 acres including 2.3 acres of new ROW. One previously recorded archeological site is located within the project area, 41CF208, Old Military Road. During the investigations conducted for this project, no remnants of 41CF208, intact or otherwise, were encountered. Based on the results of the survey, those portions of the site that might overlap into the APE, have either been disturbed or lay beneath the existing pavement. As such, Hicks and Company Inc. concludes the proposed undertaking will NOT have an adverse affect on 41CF208.

Although the APE is located adjacent to the Montemayor San Pedro Cemetery, scraping in the project area adjacent to the cemetery revealed no grave shafts, coffin hardware, or other funerary items to indicate the presence of the cemetery in the APE. Based on the negative survey findings, Hicks and Company Inc. recommends no further archeological investigations in the 69.3 acre total project acre area acres. A report of investigation is enclosed.

A TxDOT archeologist has reviewed the report by Hicks and Company Inc. and concurs with the results. **TxDOT seeks THC concurrence that:**

1.Per our MOU, no archeological historic properties (36 CFR Part 800.16(1) or State Antiquities Landmarks (13 TAC 26.12) are present within the 69.3 acre APE examined

by the survey and none will be affected by the proposed undertaking. There is little likelihood of significant or intact prehistoric or historical archeological sites within the APE surveyed and no further archeological investigations are warranted in those areas.

2. Since the survey was conducted under an individual THC Antiquities Permit, we are forwarding the draft for your review and processing in partial fulfillment of THC Antiquities Permit No.7255. TxDOT finds the report acceptable as a draft and pending any final report review comments from your office, we request your concurrence that the report may proceed toward production and that it provides sufficient documentation that the proposed undertaking will have no affect on an archeological historic properties or State Antiquities Landmarks.

In the event that unanticipated archeological deposits are encountered during construction, work in the immediate area will cease and TxDOT archeological staff will be contacted to initiate post-review discovery procedures under the provisions of the PA (2005) and the Memorandum of Understanding between TxDOT and the THC.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter. If you have any questions regarding the survey report, please contact Josh Haefner (512) 478-0858. If you have any other questions or have need of further information, please contact me at 416-2647. Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Christopher Ringstaff, Archeological Studies Program
Environmental Affairs Division

Cc w/attachment: Robin Gelston, TxDOT Pharr District Environmental Coordinator; Mike Chavez, ENV-PD; Christopher Ringstaff ENV-Arch TxDOT; ENV Arch Project File

cc w/o attachments: ECOS Scan

Concurrence By:

for: Mark Wolfe, Executive Director and SHPO
Texas Historical Commission

8-14-15
Date

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 16, 2014, and executed by FHWA and TxDOT.

SHORT REPORT ON THE ARCHEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS OF THE PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS TO US 281 FROM FM 3248 TO FM 1421, CAMERON COUNTY, TEXAS

TxDOT PHARR DISTRICT

CSJ: 0220-04-035

Principal Investigator:
Josh Haefner

Written by:
Diamond Kapanday and Josh Haefner

Antiquities Permit #7255

Submitted to:
TxDOT Pharr District

Hicks & Company Archeology Series #268

DRAFT REPORT ACCEPTABLE
by
for Mark Wolfe
Executive Director, THC
Date 8-14-15
Track#

August 2015

Updated Wetland conflict areas

From: Sue Reilly [mailto:Sue.Reilly@tpwd.texas.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, September 01, 2015 1:46 PM
To: Edward Paradise Jr
Cc: Mike Chavez; Robin Gelston
Subject: RE: Updated Wetland conflict areas

Thank you for submitting the following project for early coordination: US 281 widening from FM 3248 to FM 1421 (CSJ 0220-04-035). TPWD appreciates TxDOT's commitment to implement the practices listed in the Biological Evaluation Form submitted in June 2015 and subsequent correspondence. Based on a review of the documentation, the avoidance and mitigation efforts described, and provided that project plans do not change, TPWD considers coordination to be complete. However, please note it is the responsibility of the project proponent to comply with all federal, state, and local laws that protect fish and wildlife.

Thank you,

Sue Reilly
Transportation Assessment Liaison
TPWD Wildlife Division
512-389-8021

From: Edward Paradise Jr [mailto:Edward.Paradise@txdot.gov]
Sent: Monday, August 31, 2015 3:52 PM
To: Sue Reilly
Cc: Mike Chavez; Robin Gelston
Subject: RE: Updated Wetland conflict areas

Sue,
The roadside ditches along US 281 would be revegetated to grass swales utilized as a BMP for post-construction stormwater treatment and reduced sediment load. Let me know if you have any further questions.
Thanks
-Edd

From: Sue Reilly [mailto:Sue.Reilly@tpwd.texas.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, August 26, 2015 3:15 PM
To: Edward Paradise Jr
Cc: Mike Chavez; Robin Gelston
Subject: RE: Updated Wetland conflict areas

If stormwater is being directed into Resaca de la Palma (Sites 3 and 4), what (if any) permanent water quality features will be implemented?

Thank you,
Sue

From: Edward Paradise Jr [mailto:Edward.Paradise@txdot.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, August 12, 2015 11:34 AM
To: Sue Reilly
Cc: Mike Chavez; Robin Gelston
Subject: FW: Updated Wetland conflict areas

Sue,
Please find attached updates to wetlands that include impact avoidance minimizations and proposed concrete rip-rap as we discussed this morning. Let me know if you have any other questions.
Thanks
-Edd

From: Eddie Espinoza
Sent: Tuesday, August 11, 2015 5:16 PM
To: Samantha Champion
Cc: Edward Paradise Jr; Ruben Agado
Subject: Updated Wetland conflict areas

Samantha, attached please find the updated locations showing the wetland shapes that you had sent with the area that is actually being impacted. The cross hatched areas show the areas that are actually being disturbed from the provided wetland shapes. The cross hatched areas are due to the work and culverts that we will be providing in that direct vicinity. The excluded areas are mainly due to us not having to construct in the areas because the side ditches that approach the low spot outfall into the natural low area of the resacas. We do not need to construct ditches on the approaches because the terrain naturally falls away from the roadway.
The sites should match up to the shapes you had sent us. Please look over the details and let me know if you have further questions. Thank you.

NOTE: The are sites that were not changed “no change” because the locations are not considered jurisdictional.

Talk. Text. Crash.

Talk. Text. Crash.

Talk. Text. Crash.

APPENDIX D
PUBLIC HEARING DOCUMENTATION

October 28, 2015

District: Pharr
County: Cameron
Control: 2094-01-038
Highway: US 281 Military Highway
Limits: From: FM 3248 (Alton Gloor Blvd.)
To: FM 1421

CERTIFICATION OF OPPORTUNITY FOR A PUBLIC HEARING

This is to certify that:

1. The opportunity has been afforded to the public to request a public hearing covering the project's location and design. No requests for a public hearing were received by the deadline of October 27, 2015 at 5:00 pm.

2. The economic and social effects of the project's location and design and its impact on the environment have been considered.

3. In determining the economic, social, and environmental effects, the statutory provisions of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 have been considered.

4. The project's consistency with the goals and objectives of urban planning as dictated by the community has been considered.

Toribio Garza, Jr., P.E.
Pharr District Engineer

10-28-15
Date

Texas Department of Transportation
600 W. Interstate 2 | Pharr, Texas 78577-1231 | (956) 702-6100 | www.txdot.gov

October 28, 2015

Mr. Toribio Garza, Jr., P.E.
Pharr District Engineer
600 W. Interstate 2
Pharr, Texas 78577

Re: US 281 Military Highway
CSJ#0220-04-035

Dear Mr. Garza:

This is to certify that the procedures outlined in TxDOT's Environmental Manual, Chapter 4 Section 2, pertaining to affording an opportunity for a public hearing has been carried out and *no requests* for a public hearing were received by this office by the deadline date of October 27, at 5:00 p.m.

Sincerely,

Homero Bazan, Jr., P.E.

Homero Bazan, Jr., P.E.
Director of Transportation Planning and Development

HB:nar

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107 Auctions

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102 Bid Notices

WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS CAMERON

WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS CAMERON
REQUEST FOR QUOTES
FOR
FINANCIAL LITERACY SERVICES
RFQ# 15-RFQ-09-171

Workforce Solutions Cameron (WFSC), the Local Workforce Development Board for Cameron County, Texas, is soliciting quotes for Financial Literacy Services. The Request for Quotes (RFQ) was made available to the public on September 28, 2015, at 10 AM.

A copy of the RFQ may be obtained at the Workforce Solutions Cameron Administration Offices located at 851 Old Alice Rd., Brownsville, Texas, or on our website at www.wfscameron.org.

Workforce Solutions Cameron
Equal Employment Opportunity Employer/Program
Auxiliary aids and services are available, upon request, to individuals with disabilities.
Relay Texas: 1-800-735-2989 or 1-800-735-2988 (Voice)

107 Auctions

Auction CCPD Impound Saturday, Oct. 3rd, View Fri. 10/02, 1-5pm www.siskauction.com (361)456-7771 #7425

Port San Antonio Surplus Online Auction Ends October 7th. 324 Old Street San Antonio, TX 78226. Large inventory of equipment & vehicles Info: JonesSwenson.com Or (512)261-3838

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Valleywide CLASSIFIEDS 1-866-572-SELL

102 Bid Notices

102 Bid Notices

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR BACK OFFICE SYSTEM (BOS) RFP #BOS.01

The Cameron County Regional Mobility Authority (CCRMA) is requesting proposals from qualified Back Office System Providers.

The "Request for Proposal" may be downloaded at the following web address: www.ccrma. org/about/rfp.html or obtained at the CCRMA's office located at, 3461 Carmen Ave, Rancho Viejo, Texas 78575.

The deadline for submittal of proposals is **MONDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2015 at 5:00 P.M.**

Should you have any questions, please contact Adrian Rincones, CCRMA Chief Financial Officer at 956.621.5571. The CCRMA reserves the right to negotiate with any and all firms that submit proposals, extend the RFP deadline, or reject any or all submissions, as per the Texas Professional Services Procurement Act. CCRMA is an Affirmative Action/ Equal Opportunity Employer.

09/13, 09/20, 09/27/2015

BROWNSVILLE PUBLIC UTILITIES BOARD

INVITATION TO BID/PROPOSE

NO.	PRE- BID CONFERENCE	SUBMISSION	OPENING	NAME
B 067-15	09/29/15 10:00 AM	10/07/15 5:00 PM	10/08/15 11:00 AM	Annual Grounds Keeping Maintenance Service
B 068-15	N/A	10/07/15 5:00 PM	10/08/15 11:30 AM	90 Foot Spun Prestressed Concrete Poles

*B/P/Q (BID/PROPOSAL/QUALIFICATIONS)
Sealed bids/proposals/qualifications will be received by the Brownsville Public Utilities Board, at the office of **DIANE SOLITAIRE, PURCHASING, 1495 ROBINHOOD DR, BROWNSVILLE, TEXAS 78521, (956) 983-6364.** The bids/proposals/qualifications will be received until the date specified above. **INTERESTED BIDDERS/PROPOSERS MAY OBTAIN SPECIFICATIONS AND/OR INFORMATION AT THE BPUB PURCHASING DEPARTMENT.** Bidders/Proposers are invited to attend the bid/proposal/qualification opening at the Office of the Purchasing Department on the dates specified. Presence is not mandatory. Specifications may also be obtained at http://www.brownsville-pub.com/departments/purchasing-department/rfps-bids

09/27/2015

CAMERON COUNTY
INVITATION FOR SEALED BIDS
BID #150902

The County of Cameron will receive bids for the construction of the **CAMERON COUNTY, BID # 150902, RANCHO GRANDE DIVERSION, PHASE I DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS, GLO CONTRACT # 12-361-000-6127.** Bids must be received in the County Purchasing Department no later than October 13, 2015, **at 11:00 a.m.** (as per Purchasing Dept. time clock). Bids must be addressed and sent to the Cameron County Purchasing Department at County Courthouse (Dancy Building), 1100 East Monroe Street, Suite 345, Brownsville, Tx. 78520. Bids will be opened in the Purchasing Department - 3rd Floor, Room # 345 at 11:01 a.m. on deadline date. Bids must include one (1) original of the Bid. Bids enveloped must be titled / referenced: **ATT: Purchasing Dept. Sealed Bid #_150902. Project Name: CAMERON COUNTY, RANCHO GRANDE DIVERSION, PHASE I DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS, GLO CONTRACT # 12-361-000-6127.**

Bids are invited for several items and quantities of work as follows:

1. CONSTRUCTION OF **5,480** LF OF NEW DITCH.
2. CONSTRUCTION OF **2,040** LF OF DOUBLE 10'x10' CONCRETE BOXES
3. CONSTRUCTION OF **2** TEMPORARY BOX PLUGS.
4. CONSTRUCTION OF **1** CONCRETE CANASTA..
5. CONSTRUCTION OF **1,300** LF OF **36"** IRRIGATION LINE.
6. CONSTRUCTION OF **1 54"** IRRIGATION STANDPIPE.
7. REMOVE AND REPLACE **800** SY ROADWAY PAVEMENT.
8. REMOVE AND REPLACE PORTION OF BORDER FENCE.

Bid/Contract Documents, including Drawings and Technical Specifications are on file at Brown, Leal & Associates, 1205 W. Jackson Street., Harlingen, TX 78550. Questions regarding the proposed project or funding should be directed to Jack L. Brown, P.E. Project Engineer at Phone # 956 -428-4014.

With a non-refundable sum of One hundred fifty dollars ($150.00) each, complete sets of the Bidding Documents for the Project may be obtained from Brown, Leal & Associates. Checks or Money orders for the bid documents are to be made out to Brown, Leal & Associates.

A bid bond in the amount of 5% of the bid issued by an acceptable Surety shall be submitted with each bid. A certified check or bank draft payable to Cameron County or negotiable U.S. Government Bonds (as par value) may be submitted in lieu of the Bid Bond.

Attention is called to the fact that not less than, the federally determined prevailing (Davis-Bacon and Related Acts) wage rate, as issued by the Texas General Land Office and contained in the contract documents, must be paid on this project. In addition, the successful bidder must ensure that employees and applicants for employment are not discriminated against because of race, color, religion, sex, age, or national origin. Cameron County reserves the right to reject any or all bids or to waive any informality in the bidding. Bids may be held by Cameron County for a period not to exceed (sixty) 60 days from the date of the bid opening for the purpose of reviewing the bids and investigating the bidders qualifications prior to the contract award.

All contractors/subcontractors that are debarred, suspended or otherwise excluded from or ineligible for participation on federal assistance programs may not undertake any activity in part or in full under this project. For additional information Contact: Jack L. Brown, P.E. Project Engineer at: (956) 428-4014

CAMERON COUNTY IS AN EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER
Small and minority firms are encouraged to submit bids on this project

(Para una explicación de este aviso en español, favor de llamar al Departamento de Desarrollo del Condado de Cameron al (956) 544-0828)

09/27/2015, 10/04/2015

CAMERON COUNTY, TEXAS

PUBLIC NOTICE OF ONLINE AUCTION OF VEHICLES AND COMPUTER EQUIPMENT

Cameron County, Brownsville, Texas will have an **online** Auction. All auction-related questions should be directed to Miguel Mendo - Auction Coordinator at ph: (956) 544-0825. The County is offering vehicles and computer equipment for sale via online auction through Lone Star Auctioneers, 4629 Mark IV Parkway, Fort Worth, Texas. 76106. To bid in this auction please visit the Website at: http://www.lonestarauctioneers.com. Auction will begin the week of **Sept 21, 2015** and is scheduled for 10 days but may be extended if in the best interest of the County. Please go to the Lone Star Auctioneers website for exact details and dates. To arrange for viewing of items, contact one of the following: **1.)** Sheriff - Christopher Delagarza and Mike Leinart at ph: 956.544. **2.)** Const 2 - Cpl. Mark Trevino at ph: 956.544.0806 / 956.203.4230. **3.)** Health Dept - Jesus M. Garza at ph: 956-247-3685

09/27/2015

Texas Department of Transportation

NOTICE AFFORDING AN OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC HEARING U.S. 281 MILITARY HIGHWAY FROM FM 3248 (ALTON GLOOR BLVD.) TO FM 1421

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) proposes improvements to U.S. Highway (US) 281 in Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas. The proposed roadway widening would extend along US 281 from Farm-to-Market (FM) 3248 northwest to FM 1421, a distance of approximately 5.2 miles. In accordance with the Texas Administrative Code Title 43, Part 1, Chapter 2, Subchapter 3, Rule §2.107, a public meeting was held on April 1, 2015, to provide information regarding the proposed project and to gather input from the public.

The existing facility is a two-lane undivided major rural arterial that serves as a designated Hurricane Evacuation Route through rural communities in southern Cameron County. The current roadway is located within an existing 100-foot right of way and measures between 38 and 62 feet wide with 12-foot travel lanes (one in each direction), discontinuous 2- to 12-foot shoulders, and intermittent center left-turn lanes. Currently, the speed limit on US 281 ranges from 45 to 60 miles per hour (mph).

The proposed improvements include widening the roadway from two to four lanes, adding intermittent right-turn lanes, adding dedicated center left-turn lanes at major intersections, and improving drainage infrastructure. Continuous shoulders would also be constructed and would measure between five and eight feet wide, depending on location. The majority of improvements would be constructed within the existing 100-foot right of way. Additional right of way totaling approximately 2.3 acres would be required to provide for the enhanced safety and operational improvements; no temporary or permanent easements are anticipated to be required for construction. No changes to the existing speed limit have been proposed as part of this project. The proposed five- to eight-foot shoulders on each side of the roadway would accommodate use by bicyclists and pedestrians travelling along this stretch of US 281.

Although additional right of way is required, no residences or businesses would be displaced. Information concerning services and benefits available to affected property owners and information about the tentative schedule for right of way acquisition may be obtained from the TxDOT Pharr District office. No adverse impacts to communities, including to minority populations and low-income populations, would occur as a result of the improvements.

Maps showing the project location and design, the draft Environmental Assessment (EA), the tentative construction schedule, and other information relative to the proposed project are on file for review during regular business hours at the TxDOT Pharr District office, 600 W. I-2, Pharr, Texas 78577. The draft EA and Public Meeting Summary and Analysis will be made available online at: www.txdot.gov.

Any interested citizen may request a public hearing regarding the social, economic, and environmental effects of the proposed project. Requests for a public hearing must be submitted in writing on or before October 27, 2015 to: Robin Gelston, TxDOT Pharr District, 600 W. I-2, Pharr, Texas 78577.

For any questions regarding the proposed project, please contact Eddie Espinoza, P.E., at the address above, by telephone at (956) 702-6210, or by email at Eddie.Espinoza@txdot.gov.

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 16, 2014, and executed by FHWA and TxDOT.

Avisos Clasificados y Legales

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Texas Department of Transportation

AVISO SOBRE LA OPORTUNIDAD DE SOLICITAR UNA AUDIENCIA PÚBLICA

U.S. 281 MILITARY HIGHWAY DESDE FM 3248 (ALTON GLOOR BLVD.) a FM 1421

El Departamento de Transporte de Texas (TxDOT) propone mejoras en la carretera US Highway (US) 281 en Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas. La ampliación propuesta de la carretera se extendería a lo largo de US 281 de Farm-to-Market (FM) 3248 hacia el noroeste a FM 1421, una distancia de aproximadamente 5.2 millas. De acuerdo con el Título 43 del Código Administrativo de Texas, Parte 1, Capítulo 2, Subcapítulo 3, Regla §2.107, se llevó a cabo una reunión pública el 1 de abril de 2015, para proporcionar información sobre el proyecto propuesto y para obtener la opinión del público.

La carreteraactual es una carretera principal de dos carrilesque sirve como una Ruta de Evacuación designada para las comunidades rurales en el sur de Cameron County. La carretera actual se encuentra dentro de un derecho de vía existente de 100 pies y se mide entre 38 y 62 pies de ancho, con carriles de viaje de 12 pies (uno en cada dirección), acotamiento discontinuos de 2 a 12 pies, y carriles de giro izquierdo intermitentes. Actualmente, el límite de velocidad en la US 281 es de 45 a 60 millas por hora (mph).

Las mejoras propuestas incluyen la ampliación de la carretera de dos a cuatro carriles, incluyendocarriles de giro a la derecha intermitentes, la inclusión de carriles de giro a la izquierda en las intersecciones principales, y la mejora de la infraestructura de desagüe. Acostamientos continuos también se construirían y medirían entre 5 y 8 pies de ancho, dependiente de la ubicación. La mayoría de las mejoras se construiría en el derecho de vía existente de 100 pies.

Derecho de vía adicional de aproximadamente 2.3 acres será requerido,a fin de obtener mejor la seguridad y mejoras operativas; no se prevé que terrenos temporales o permanentes serían necesarios para la construcción. Ningún cambio en el límite de velocidad existente ha sido propuesto como parte de este proyecto. Los acostamientos de 5 a 8 pies propuestos en cada lado de la carreteraestarían disponibles por el uso de los ciclistas y peatones que viajan a lo largo de este parte de US 281.

Aunque se requiere derecho de vía adicional, ningunas residencias o negocios serían desplazadas. La información relativa a los servicios y beneficios disponibles para los propietarios afectados e información sobre el calendario provisional para la adquisición de derecho de vía se puede obtener de la oficina de TxDOT, distrito de Pharr. No habrá impactos adversos a las comunidades, incluyendo a las poblaciones minoritarias y de bajos ingresos, como consecuencias de las mejoras.

Mapas que muestran la ubicación y el diseño del proyecto, el proyecto de la Evaluación Ambiental (EA), el programa de construcción tentativa, y otras informaciones relativas al proyecto propuesto están archivados para su revisión durante el horario regular en la oficina de TxDOT, distrito de Pharr,(dirección) 600 W. I-2, Pharr, Texas 78577. El proyecto de EA y el Resumeny Análisis de la Reunión Publica estarán disponibles por el Internet aquí: www.txdot.gov

Cualquier ciudadano interesado puede solicitar una audiencia pública con respecto a los efectos sociales, económicos y ambientales del proyecto propuesto. Las solicitudes de audiencia pública deben ser presentadas por escrito a más tardar el 27 de octubre 2015 a Robin Gelston, TxDOT Distrito de Pharr, 600 W. I-2, Pharr, Texas 78577.

Para cualquier pregunta sobre el proyecto propuesto, por favor, póngase en contacto con Eddie Espinoza, P.E., a la dirección anterior, por teléfono al (956) 702-6210, o por correo electrónico a Eddie.Espinoza@txdot.gov.

La revisión ambiental, consulta, y otras acciones requeridas por las leyes ambientales federales aplicables para este proyecto están siendo o han sido, llevado a cabo por TxDOT - en virtud de 23 USC 327 y un Memorando de Entendimiento de 16 de diciembre de 2014, y ejecutado por la FHWA y TxDOT.

US 281 Military Highway

TxDOT is proposing improvements to US 281 (Military Highway) between FM 3248 (Alton Gloor Boulevard) and FM 1421 to enhance safety and mobility.

The proposed project includes:

- Expanding the existing road from a two-lane road to a four-lane road with a continuous center turn lane
- Constructing left and right turn lanes at intersections

The proposed project would require about 2.8 acres of additional right of way and is just over 5 miles long.

Get Involved

- April 1, 2015 - Public Meeting

Downloads

- Project Timeline
- Public Meeting Summary
- Draft Environmental Assessment

Contact Us

TxDOT Pharr District
Public Information Officer
600 W. I-2
Pharr, TX 78577

(956) 702-6102
Email