



# **Finding of No Significant Impact for a NEPA Assigned Federal Aid Project**

---

**Proposed Action:** US 281

**Project Limits:** FM 3248 to FM 1421

**City:** Brownsville      **County:** Cameron      **State:** Texas

**TxDOT CSJ(s):** 0220-04-035

---

In accordance with 23 CFR Section 771.119 and Section 771.121, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) has determined that US 281 project from Farm-to-Market (FM) 3248 northwest to FM 1421, widening from two to four lanes, will not have a significant impact on the human or natural environment.

This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the Preferred Alternative is based on the final Environmental Assessment dated October 2015 and the entire project record. This decision documents the selection of the Build Alternative, presented in the final EA as the Preferred Alternative, which is described as:

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. 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 September 2015, the estimated cost of the proposed project is \$12,184,400.

A Notice of Availability of the draft EA was issued on September 27, 2015.

A Notice Affording Opportunity for a Public Hearing was published on September 27, 2015 and September 30, 2015.

No changes to the draft EA were made as a result of comments received on the draft EA during the posted comment period as no comments were submitted.

A *Notice Affording Opportunity for a Public Hearing* and certification that the required hearing opportunity was offered has been prepared and is available for review on request.

The final EA, and reports contained in the file of record have been independently evaluated by TxDOT and determined to adequately and accurately discuss the need, purpose, alternatives, environmental issues, impacts of the proposed project, and appropriate mitigation measures. These documents provide



**Finding of No Significant Impact for a NEPA Assigned Federal Aid Project**

sufficient evidence and analysis for determining that preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is not required. These documents are incorporated by reference into this decisional document.

Based upon TxDOT's review and consideration of the analysis and evaluation contained in the EA for this project, and after careful consideration of all social, economic, and environmental factors, including input from the public involvement process, TxDOT hereby issues this Finding of No Significant Impact for the US 281 project from FM 3248 to FM 1421.

TxDOT will ensure adherence and completion of all project commitments described in the final EA October 2015, Section 7.0. TxDOT will ensure that any and all local, state, or federal permit requirements and conditions are met and otherwise complied with.

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 the Memorandum of Understanding dated December 16, 2014, and executed by FHWA and TxDOT.

TxDOT Environmental Affairs Division Director

12/10/15

Date