



US 77 PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

FROM SOUTH OF WOODSBORO TO NORTH OF REFUGIO

CORPUS CHRISTI DISTRICT

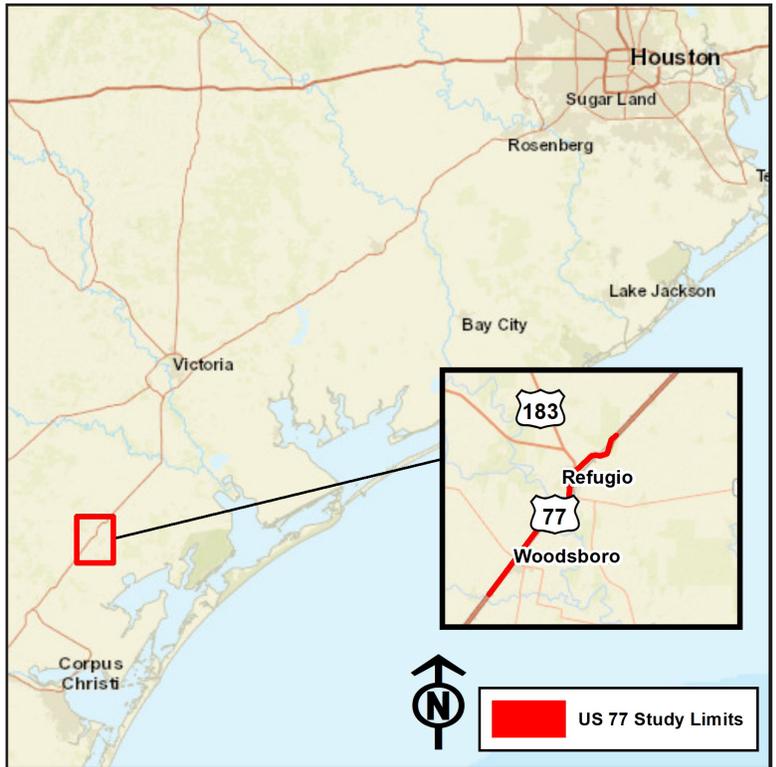
SUMMER 2020

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) Corpus Christi District, in coordination with Refugio County, is moving forward with the project development process for the US Highway (US) 77 improvements in the Woodsboro and Refugio area. Please refer to the Project Development Process detailed below. The US 77 proposed improvement project will follow the recommendations of the 2018 Route Study, which included:

1. Upgrading existing US 77 to interstate standards along the existing route near the City of Woodsboro, and;
2. Developing a new US 77 roadway to interstate standards located within a new corridor east of the City of Refugio.

Preliminary design and environmental studies are the next step in the process. The purpose of these activities is to develop and evaluate roadway alignment options within this corridor, take into consideration public input, and determine the potential impacts the proposed project will have on the environment and community. The goal of the project is to improve safety for local and through traffic; improve mobility, access, and connectivity; and support economic opportunity. Additionally, the development of the corridor meets the future goal of designating this section of US 77 as part of the Interstate 69 (I-69) highway system.



Project Vicinity Map

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT PROCESS*

WE ARE
HERE

*The Project Development Process timeline shown is preliminary and based on availability of funding



US 77 ROUTE STUDY (2018) RECAP

A Route Study was conducted to evaluate options for upgrading US 77 to interstate standards from south of Woodsboro to north of Refugio. The study approach included the following:

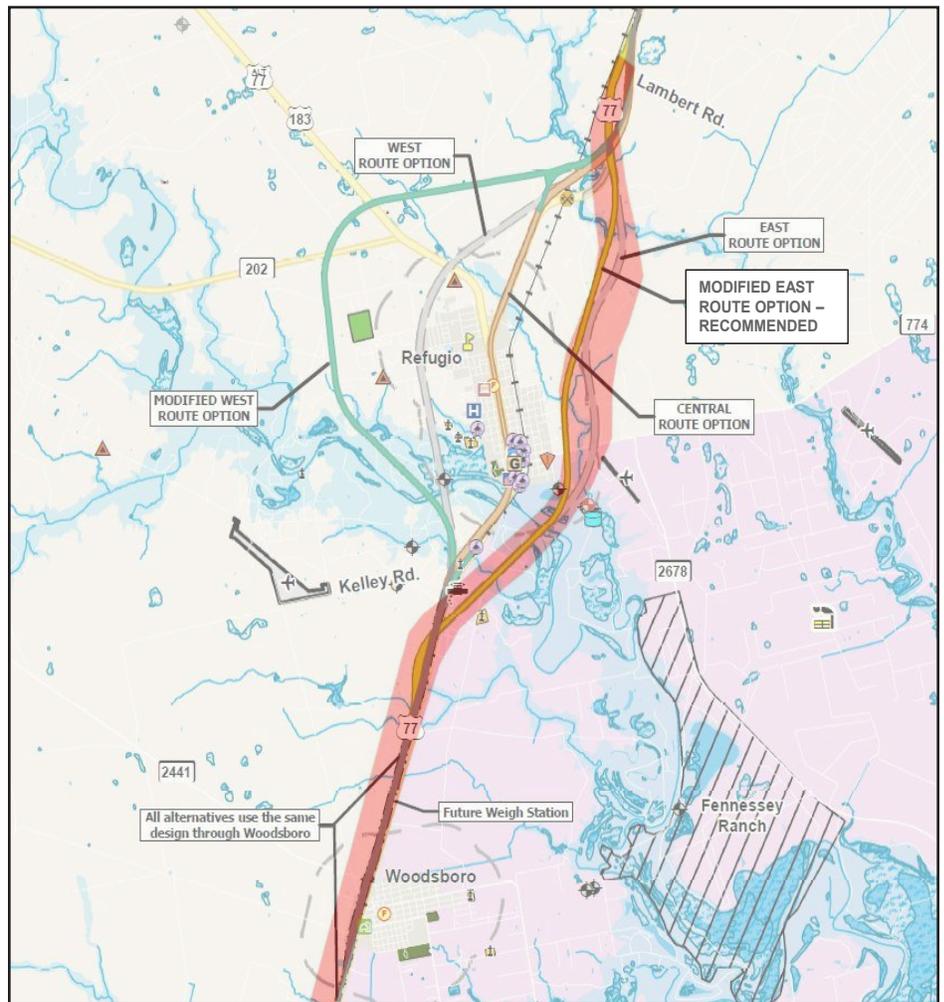
- Identification of the need and purpose of the project
- Development of route options
- Evaluation of high-level environmental and community impacts
- Recommendation of a preferred route to move forward to the schematic design and environmental study phase of project development.

Stakeholder and public input is important at each stage of the process. A stakeholder working group was formed to allow local officials, business owners, and community leaders the opportunity to provide input on the development of the route options. Presentations were given to local officials and community groups, and a public open house was held on June 21, 2018. Feedback from stakeholder and public engagement helped identify key environmental and community features within the project area, develop and refine route options, and recommended a route to be carried forward to the next stage of project development.

Originally, three route options were developed based on safety and design standards along with input received from the stakeholder working group: (1) A route that upgrades existing US 77 near Woodsboro and continues on new location to the west of Refugio, (2) A route that upgrades existing US 77 near Woodsboro and continues on new location to the east of Refugio, and (3) A route that would upgrade and expand existing US 77 through both Woodsboro and Refugio.

TxDOT developed two additional route options in response to concerns expressed at the public open house: (1) A modified west route option which passed farther west of Refugio to minimize the number of displaced residences and businesses, and (2) A modified east route option which passed closer to Refugio to provide better access to the town's businesses and services.

The modified east route was ultimately selected to carry forward to the schematic design and environmental study phase. This route represents a broad corridor in which several different alignment options for the actual roadway will be defined and evaluated as a part of the Environmental Assessment. Moving forward, the central, west, and modified west routes have been removed from further consideration.



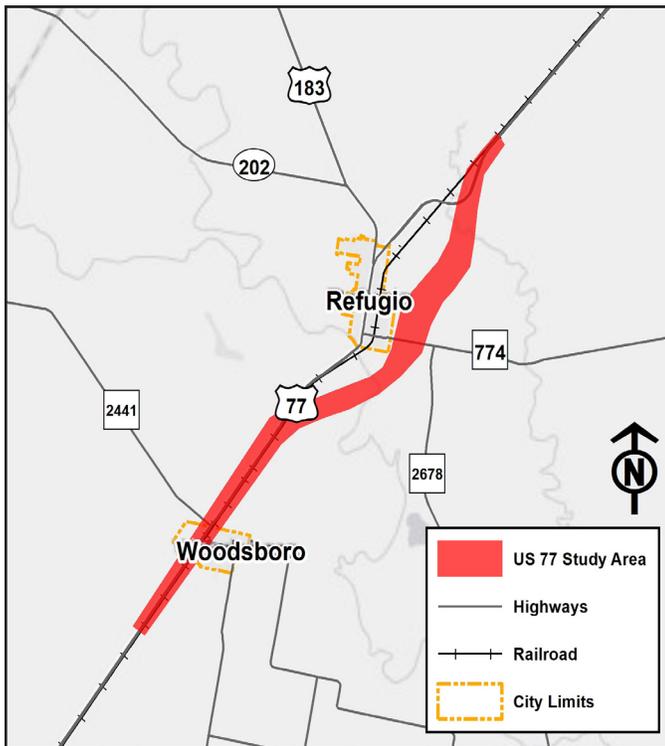
The 2018 Route Study identified five potential route options for the new US 77. Only the Modified East Route Option is being carried forward into the schematic and environmental study phase of the project.

SCHEMATIC DESIGN AND ENVIRONMENTAL STUDY

An Environmental Assessment (EA) is being performed to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act or “NEPA”. The NEPA process is a decision-making process that requires evaluation and consideration of the impact of a project on the natural and human environment. The goal of an EA is to determine whether the impact of a project is “significant”. Based on the conclusions of this EA, either a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) will be issued and the project can progress to the next phase of project development, or it will be determined that a significant impact could occur, and further study in the form of a more intensive Environmental Impact Statement would be required.

This Environmental Assessment phase of the US 77 project will use the 2018 Route Study recommendations and further refine the purpose and need, conduct detailed environmental studies, and provide additional opportunities for stakeholder and public input.

During this phase, alignment alternatives will be developed within the recommended modified east corridor and they, along with a no-build option, will be evaluated for their potential environmental impacts.



Roadway alignments will be designed within the corridor to the east of Refugio in this phase of project development.

The public plays an important role during the environmental and schematic process and TxDOT is committed to continuing public involvement throughout this project. There will be multiple opportunities for the public to provide information to TxDOT, to review documents and alternatives, and to comment on environmental documentation and proposed design. At the conclusion of the environmental and schematic process, a final project layout will be approved that details the project alignment and includes major project elements such as bridge locations, access points and signage as well as the existing and proposed property (right-of-way) needed for the proposed improvements.

MOVING FORWARD

TxDOT has hired Michael Baker International (MBI) to assist in the schematic design and environmental studies required for this project. In the coming months, field staff from MBI and its subconsultants will begin survey and field work. An aerial survey will be performed to create mapping needed to develop the schematic. TxDOT will be requesting permission from landowners along the corridor so that the survey activities may take place on their property. Sometime in August/September 2020, property owners along the corridor will receive letters from TxDOT requesting Right of Entry to their property for these surveys. Once alternative alignments have been identified, additional environmental surveys will be performed to verify the presence of any environmental resources.

There will be several opportunities throughout the duration of this project to provide input on the proposed improvements and have your comments included in the project record.

Public meetings will be held to solicit feedback first on the identified alignment alternatives, and later on

the recommended alignment and draft Environmental Assessment. A Notice of Availability will be published to inform the public and other interested parties that documents are available and where to obtain them. The type and nature of these public outreach efforts are still being developed with public health and safety in mind and in accordance with federal, state, and local guidelines. Project information will be posted online to the project website as it becomes available.

Improvements Under Consideration

Woodsboro:

Upgrade existing US 77 from approximately one mile south of Woodsboro to south of Refugio near Toup Road to interstate standards (controlled access).

Refugio:

Design US 77 on new location to the east of Refugio from near Toup Road to north of Refugio as a controlled access highway meeting interstate standards.



Contact us if you have questions or need further information:

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Visit www.TxDOT.gov and search "US 77 Woodsboro/Refugio" for project updates.

Favor de contacte Victor Vourcos si desea esta información en español.