



Finding of No Significant Impact for a State Project

Proposed Action: U.S. 69: Gateway to the Big Thicket

Project Limits: From 0.1 miles south of Black Creek to Hardin County Line and
From Tyler County Line to 0.75 miles south of FM 1003

City: Kountze, Warren **County:** Hardin and Tyler Counties **State:** Texas

TxDOT CSJ(s): 0200-08-049 and 0200-09-069

In accordance with 43 T.A.C. Part 1, Chapter 2, Subchapter D, Section 2.83, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) has determined that the U.S. 69: Gateway to the Big Thicket 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 (EA) dated September 2021 and the entire project record. This decision documents the selection of Alternative C presented in the final EA as the Preferred Alternative, which is described as:

The TxDOT Beaumont District proposes improvements along U.S. 69 within the CSJ limits. The logical termini include FM 1003 (southern) and FM 1943 (northern), which provides rational end points for the proposed improvements and review of environmental impacts. The project has independent utility without the benefit of other transportation improvements. Although the southern project limit extends to 0.75 miles south of FM 1003, no work occurs from the southern project limit north to FM 420.

The project would improve the roadway to include two 12-foot travel lanes in each direction, 4-foot inside shoulders and a 10-foot outside shoulder on the southbound lanes, and a 12-foot outside shoulder on the northbound lanes that would also serve as an "evaculane." Evaculanes are roadway shoulders that may be used as travel lanes during times of significant congestion (e.g., mandatory evacuations). The proposed speed limit would be 75 mph.

The project right-of-way is typically 300 feet wide and includes existing TxDOT-owned right-of-way and additional new right-of-way. It would also include an approximately 100-foot-wide vegetated median. This design would create separation from the two travel directions, reduce conflict points per mile, and increase capacity and safety for the traveling public.

The project would also extend the existing 10-foot hike-and-bike trail from FM 420 to Magnolia Street just south of FM 1943. This provides increased connectivity to the existing hike and bike trails within the Big Thicket National Preserve. Three new trailheads and one new parking area would also be constructed.

Additionally, the project would incorporate Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS). The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) defines context sensitive solutions (CSS) as: "a collaborative, interdisciplinary approach that involves all stakeholders in providing a transportation facility that fits its setting. It is an approach that leads to preserving and enhancing scenic, aesthetic, historic, community, and environmental resources, while improving or maintaining safety, mobility, and infrastructure conditions." The proposed CSS for this project would include improving awareness



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of the surrounding resources by use of monument signage to identify local amenities such as the Big Thicket National Preserve and the John Henry Kirby State Forest.

Proposed drainage along this segment of US 69 is comprised of open ditch drainage flow with cross culverts. Since the grass median separates the two roadbeds – northbound and southbound – the proposed number of cross culverts and bridges are doubled due to the median break. There would be a total of five bridge-class culverts and seventeen span bridges, which would also serve as wildlife crossings and bat habitat. There would be a signature arch bridge over Village Creek that is for aesthetics and is located between the northbound and southbound bridges.

In addition to the roadway structures, there are additional structures proposed along the hike-and-bike trail including one bridge-class culvert and seven span bridges – one of which includes an arch feature over Village Creek.

A Notice of Availability of the draft EA was issued on November 1, 2020.

A virtual public hearing for this project was held on November 19, 2020 with an in-person option held on December 1 and 3, 2020.

No changes to the draft EA were made as a result of comments received on the draft EA during the posted comment period or from comments made at the public hearing.

Public Hearing Documentation 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 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 U.S. 69: Gateway to the Big Thicket project from 0.1 miles south of Black Creek to Hardin County Line and the Tyler County Line to 0.75 miles south of FM 1003.

TxDOT will ensure adherence and completion of all project commitments described in the final EA September 2021, Section 8.0 Post Environmental Clearance Activities and Design/Construction Commitments. TxDOT will ensure that any and all local, state, or federal permit requirements and conditions are met and otherwise complied with.

DocuSigned by:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Benjamin D. Barth".

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TxDOT Environmental Affairs Division Director

10/8/2021

Date



2021-2024 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program

TxDOT Beaumont District

Highway Projects

TXDOT BEAUMONT DISTRICT - HIGHWAY PROJECTS

FY 2024

2021-2024 STIP		07/2020 Revision: Approved 03/02/2021							
DISTRICT	MPO	COUNTY	CSJ	TIP FY	HWY	PHASE	CITY	YOE COST	
BEAUMONT		TYLER	0200-08-049	2024	US 69	C	OTHER	\$ 70,000,000	
LIMITS FROM 0.1 Miles South of Black Creek		PROJECT SPONSOR TXDOT							
LIMITS TO Hardin County Line		REVISION DATE 07/2020							
PROJECT Widen from 2 to 4 lanes divided		MPO PROJ NUM							
DESCR		FUNDING CAT(S) 12,4							
REMARKS				PROJECT HISTORY					
P7									
TOTAL PROJECT COST INFORMATION			AUTHORIZED FUNDING BY CATEGORY/SHARE						
PREL ENG	\$ 3,430,000	COST OF APPROVED PHASES	CATEGORY	FEDERAL	STATE	REGIONAL	LOCAL MATCH	LC	TOTAL
ROW PURCH	\$ 17,000,000		12	\$ 0	\$ 45,000,000	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 45,000,000
CONSTR	\$ 70,000,000		4	\$ 0	\$ 25,000,000	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 25,000,000
CONST ENG	\$ 3,472,000		TOTAL	\$ 0	\$ 70,000,000	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 70,000,000
CONTING	\$ 1,393,000								
INDIRECT	\$ 4,466,000								
BOND FIN	\$ 0								
PT CHG ORD	\$ 0								
TOTAL CST	\$ 169,761,000								



2021-2024 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program

Setrpc MPO

Highway Projects

SETRPC MPO - HIGHWAY PROJECTS
FY 2024

2021-2024 STIP		07/2020 Revision: Approved 03/02/2021							
DISTRICT	MPO	COUNTY	CSJ	TIP FY	HWY	PHASE	CITY	YOE COST	
BEAUMONT	SETRPC	HARDIN	0200-09-069	2024	US 69	C	OTHER	\$ 70,000,000	
LIMITS FROM TYLER COUNTY LINE						PROJECT SPONSOR TXDOT			
LIMITS TO 0.75 MILES SOUTH OF FM 1003						REVISION DATE 07/2020			
PROJECT WIDEN FROM 2 TO 4 LANES DIVIDED						MPO PROJ NUM 18002-F40E			
DESCR						FUNDING CAT(S) 4,12			
REMARKS FINALIZING FOR CONSTRUCTION				PROJECT HISTORY					
P7									
TOTAL PROJECT COST INFORMATION			AUTHORIZED FUNDING BY CATEGORY/SHARE						
PREL ENG \$	3,332,000		CATEGORY	FEDERAL	STATE	REGIONAL	LOCAL MATCH	LC	TOTAL
ROW PURCH \$	4,000,000		4	\$ 0	\$ 25,000,000	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 25,000,000
CONSTR \$	70,000,000	COST OF APPROVED PHASES	12	\$ 0	\$ 45,000,000	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 45,000,000
CONST ENG \$	3,372,800	\$ 70,000,000	TOTAL	\$ 0	\$ 70,000,000	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 70,000,000
CONTING \$	1,353,200								
INDIRECT \$	4,338,400								
BOND FIN \$	0								
PT CHG ORD \$	2,543,200								
TOTAL CST \$	158,939,600								

Jefferson-Orange-Hardin Regional Transportation

Amendment #3

Revisions to the JOHRTS Metropolitan Transportation Plan

2045

*South East Texas Regional Planning Commission
Metropolitan Planning Organization (SETRPC-MPO)
for the Jefferson-Orange-Hardin Regional
Transportation Study (JOHRTS) Area*



30-day Public Comment Period:
December 21, 2020 to January 19, 2021

Adopted on:
January 20, 2021

This document was prepared in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, and the Texas Department of Transportation.



**Revised
Federally Funded Highway Projects**

**JOHRTS METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN 2045, AMENDMENT 3
BEAUMONT DISTRICT
SETRPC METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
FEDERALLY FUNDED HIGHWAY PROJECTS
FY 2024**

DISTRICT	COUNTY	CSJ	HWY	PHASE	CITY	PROJECT SPONSOR	YOE COST
Beaumont	Hardin	0200-09-069	US 69	C		TxDOT	\$70,000,000
LIMITS FROM:	Tyler County Line					REVISION DATE:	07/2020
LIMITS TO:	0.75 miles south of FM 1003					MPO PROJECT ID:	18002-F40E
DESCRIPTION:	Widen from 2 to 4 lanes divided					FUNDING CATEGORY:	4, 12

REMARKS:

PROJECT HISTORY:

TOTAL PROJECT COST INFORMATION			Authorized Funding by Category/Share:					
				FEDERAL	STATE	LOCAL	LOCAL CONTRIBUTION	FUNDING BY CATEGORY
PRELIM ENG:	\$3,332,000							
ROW PURCHASE:	\$4,000,000							
CONST ENG:	\$3,372,800	COST OF APPROVED PHASES:	4	\$0	\$25,000,000	\$0	\$0	\$25,000,000
CONST COST:	\$70,000,000		12	\$0	\$45,000,000	\$0	\$0	\$45,000,000
CONTINGENCIES:	\$1,353,200							
INDIRECT COSTS:	\$4,338,400	\$70,000,000.00						
BND FINANCING:	\$0							
PCO:	\$2,543,200		FUNDING BY SHARE:	\$0	\$70,000,000	\$0	\$0	\$70,000,000
TOTAL PRJ COST:	\$88,939,600							

PHASE: C=CONSTRUCTION, E = ENGINEERING, R = ROW, T = TRANSFER