



**Notice
Draft Environmental Impact Statement Available for Public Review and Public Hearing**

**North Houston Highway Improvement Project
From US 59/I-69 at Spur 527 to I-45 at Beltway 8 North
CSJ: 0912-00-146
Harris County, Texas**

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), as the lead agency, is proposing improvements to create additional roadway capacity to manage congestion, enhance safety, and improve mobility and operational efficiency on Interstate Highway 45 (I-45) from United States Highway 59 (US 59)/I-69 to Beltway 8 North, including improvements along US 59/I-69 between I-45 and Spur 527 in Harris County, Texas. This notice advises the public that a draft environmental impact statement (EIS) is available for public review and that TxDOT will be conducting a public hearing on the proposed project.

The public hearing will be held twice as follows:

**Tuesday, May 9, 2017
St. Pius X High School
811 West Donovan Street, Houston, Texas 77091**

**Thursday, May 11, 2017
Houston Community College Central Campus, San Jacinto Building
1300 Holman Street, Houston, Texas 77004**

Schedule at all locations:

**5:30 p.m. – Open House
6:30 p.m. – Public Hearing**

Displays will be available for viewing at 5:30 p.m. with the formal hearing starting at 6:30 p.m. The purpose of the hearing is to present the planned improvements and to receive public comments on the proposed project.

The proposed project (North Houston Highway Improvement Project) would include the addition of four managed express lanes (also known as MaX lanes) on I-45 from Beltway 8 North to Downtown Houston, including reconstruction of mainlanes and frontage roads, and the rerouting of I-45 in the Downtown area to be coincident with I-10 on the north side of Downtown and coincident with US 59/I-69 on the east side of Downtown. The existing elevated I-45 roadway along the west and south sides of Downtown would be removed. Access to the west side of Downtown would be provided via "Downtown Connectors" that would allow access to and from various Downtown streets. Both I-10 and US 59/I-69 within the proposed project area would be realigned to eliminate the current roadway curvature, and four elevated I-10 express lanes would be added between I-45 and US 59/I-69.

The right-of-way (ROW) of the existing roadways in the project area varies in width from 205 to 420 feet. In portions of the project area, no new ROW is required. In some areas of the project, new ROW would be up to 225 feet wide. The proposed project is anticipated to displace approximately 168 single-family residences, 1,067 multi-family residences, 331 businesses, four places of worship, and two schools. Relocation assistance is available for displaced persons and other entities. Information concerning the TxDOT Relocation Assistance Program, services and benefits available to affected property owners, and information about the tentative schedule for ROW acquisition may be obtained from the TxDOT district office at the address listed below.

The project crosses four bayous and encroaches on the floodplains of these bayous. Based on a preliminary assessment, less than one acre of wetlands and approximately 28 acres of other waters of the U.S. are within the project ROW. It is anticipated that most waters of the U.S. would be bridged or culverted.

In accordance with Chapter 26 of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Code, the hearing is also being conducted to allow the public the opportunity to review the draft EIS and provide comments on the project's potential impacts to approximately 0.14 acre of Linear Park and to approximately 0.21 acre of Freed Art and Nature Park. TxDOT is considering Section 4(f) de minimis impact determinations (under 23 CFR 774.3(b)) for the impacts to Linear Park and Freed Art and Nature Park and is coordinating with the City of Houston, which has jurisdiction over the parks. If the project is found to have a Section 4(f) de minimis impact, the proposed project would not adversely affect the activities, features, or attributes that qualify Linear Park and Freed Art and Nature Park for protection under Section 4(f). TxDOT will consider comments received during the public hearing before making a final Section 4(f) de minimis determination. Information describing the Section 4(f) resources and the impacts to the resources is included in the draft EIS document prepared for this project.

TxDOT is also considering Section 4(f) de minimis determinations for impacts to four historic resources: Cheek-Neal Coffee Company Building, San Jacinto Warehouse, Walter's Downtown (former Bottling Works), and Houston Warehouse District. A Section 4(f) de minimis finding in the case of a historic resource means that this project would have an impact on a resource, but that TxDOT, in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), has made a preliminary determination that the impacts are so minor that they would not adversely affect the character, activities, or attributes that qualify a resource for protection under Section 4(f).

The draft EIS, maps showing the project location and design, tentative construction schedules, and other project information are on file and available for inspection Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., excluding state holidays, at the TxDOT Houston District Office located at 7600 Washington Avenue, Houston, TX 77007 and on the project website, www.IH45NorthandMore.com. This information will also be available for inspection at the hearing. Verbal and written comments from the public regarding the project are requested and may be presented at the hearing, or submitted in person or by mail to the TxDOT Houston District Office, Director of Project Development, P.O. 1386, Houston, TX 77251-1386, or emailed to HOU-piowebmail@txdot.gov. **The comment period has been extended to Thursday, July 27, 2017, and comments must be postmarked or emailed by that date to be part of the official record.**

The hearing will be conducted in English with simultaneous Spanish translation. Persons interested in attending the hearing who have special communication or accommodation needs, such as the need for an interpreter, are encouraged to contact the TxDOT Public Information Office at (713) 802-5076. Requests should be made at least five working days prior to the public hearing. Every reasonable effort will be made to accommodate these needs.

If you have any general questions regarding the proposed project or hearing, please contact Pat Henry at (713) 802-5241.

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.