

FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION  
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)

For

IH 820: From IH 35W to SH 121/SH 183/SH 26  
In the  
Cities of Fort Worth, Haltom City, and North Richland Hills  
In  
Tarrant County, Texas

TxDOT CSJs: 0008-14-058, 0008-14-059 and 0014-16-194

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) proposes to reconstruct and widen IH 820 from IH 35W to SH 121/SH 183/SH 26 (Northeast Mall interchange); it also includes the interchange with IH 35W and the ramps and direct connections from IH 35W and the north-south managed (toll) lanes connection from SH 121/SH 183 to IH 820 through the Northeast Mall interchange. The approximate 6 mile project is located in Tarrant County within the cities of Fort Worth, Haltom City, and North Richland Hills. The proposed facility will include three general purpose lanes in each direction (12 feet in width with auxiliary lanes and 10 foot inside and outside shoulders), two managed (toll) lanes in each direction (12 feet in width with 4 foot wide inside and 10 foot wide outside shoulders), and two frontage roads in each direction discontinuous at the Southwestern/Dallas Area Rapid Transit railroad including auxiliary lanes and turn lanes at intersections.

Project History

IH 820 in this area was constructed between 1963 and 1967 as a four lane divided controlled access freeway. It includes two main lanes in each direction, and two discontinuous frontage roads in each direction. The interchange with IH 35W has left hand exits. No major modifications have been done to the facility in these areas since it was constructed; however, the Northeast Mall interchange was reconstructed in the 1990's and will not be reconstructed as part of this project.

In 1960, the population of Tarrant County was 538,495; the 1970 population was 716,317, an increase of approximately 33%. In 2000, that population had risen to 1,446,219. It is estimated that the population in 2008 is 1,780,150; this is approximately 2 ½ times the population from 1970 and more than three times that of 1960. With the growth in population experienced in Tarrant County, the IH 820 corridor and others have become increasingly congested due to travel demand. The proposed project will improve mobility and safety along IH 820 for local and through traffic.

TxDOT began preliminary engineering for the IH 820 corridor in the early 1990's; however, due to air quality conformity issues, the proposed plan was modified to include high

occupancy vehicle lanes (HOV). Then, before the HOV alternative could move forward toward implementation, funding shortfalls necessitated looking into other means of funding of IH 820 and other major corridors in the area. The managed (toll) lane concept was developed and has been carried forward into the IH 820 project.

Several alternatives were considered during the planning process, including the No Build Alternative. As a result of the public involvement and project development process, the alternative presented in a public meeting 2006 as a managed (toll) lane concept with the addition of one free lane in each direction has been selected as the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will best achieve the purpose and need of the project within a reasonable time frame and minimize impacts to the developed areas along the corridor. Approximately 41.93 acres of additional right of way will be required for the proposed project and six properties will be displaced; three businesses and three residences.

In accordance with the regulatory requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and the terms of the First Amended Programmatic Agreement, coordination with the Texas Historical Commission for Historic Structures and Archeology has been completed and concurrences of "no adverse effect" were received.

Coordination with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) was completed on March 11, 2008. The results of the air quality assessment indicate that no mitigation is necessary and that the proposed project would not contribute to significant cumulative impacts. It is anticipated that this project will require a Nationwide Permit No. 14 without the need for a pre-construction notice to the United States Army Corps of Engineers.

No disproportionately high and adverse impacts to minority or low income populations compared to the general population will occur due to the proposed project right of way acquisitions. An origin-destination analysis was conducted due to the proposed implementation of a portion of the facility to be tolled. This analysis indicates that the environmental justice traffic study zones with higher percentages of lower income populations will pay a higher percentage of their income due to the tolls; however, it also shows that those same zones with lower income population will utilize the build alternative more the no build.

The hydraulic design for the project will be in accordance with current TxDOT and FHWA design policies and procedures. The alternatives considered would permit the conveyance of a 100-year flood, inundation of the roadway being acceptable, without causing significant damage to the roadway, floodplain or other property along the route.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) approved the EA as 'Satisfactory for Further Processing' on May 23, 2008. The Fort Worth District conducted a public hearing on July 1, 2008; with approximately 300 in attendance. There were no additional commitments or mitigation required as a result of the comments received during the comment period.

## MITIGATION COMMITMENTS

### Section 4(f)

There are two Programmatic Section 4(f) properties, the North Richland Hills Tennis Center and the North Richland Hills Community Center, along the corridor that require acquisition of right of way. Because the two properties are on opposing sides of the corridor and close to directly across from each other, efforts to avoid impacts to one or both of these facilities failed; therefore, minimization of harm has been addressed. Approximately, 0.58 acre from the North Richland Hills Tennis Center will be acquired and 0.521 acre from the North Richland Hills Community Center. Mitigations required for the North Richland Hill Tennis Center include construction of a wall, replacement and installation of a Light Emitting Diode (LED) sign, irrigation modifications, replacement of vegetation and 1:1 of substitution of land for all property converted from recreation use. Owners with jurisdiction have concurred with the findings and mitigation in the Programmatic Section 4(f) documents.

### Relocations

Relocation impacts as a result of this project will not be significant. Both the US and Texas Constitutions provide that no private land may be taken for a public purpose without adequate compensation. Therefore, all land necessary for highway improvements must be purchased from existing property owners in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, hereafter referred to as the Uniform Act.

Approximately 41.93 acres of additional right of way will be required for the proposed project. There are a total of 136 properties that additional right of way will be acquired, including six that require displacement; three businesses and three residences. TxDOT has acquired Right of way (ROW) for 18 properties thru the early ROW acquisition process. The advance purchase of these parcels did not preclude further evaluation of the No Build or Preferred Alternatives. For the remaining purchases, there are adequate replacement housing and commercial property replacements within the area to accommodate the relocations. All relocations that are a result of this project will be and have been in accordance with the Uniform Act.

### Noise

The noise analysis indicates there are noise impacts associated with the proposed project. Noise abatement in the form of noise barriers is proposed for two locations along the corridor. Pending further public involvement via noise workshops during the detailed design phase, they will be implemented if the majority of the adjacent property owners want them.

### Land Use

The impacts to land use as a result of this project are not significant. Based on historic patterns it is anticipated that land use along IH 820 will slowly trend to redevelopment and more commercial and residential uses. However, all future development plans are subject to cities and/or county subdivision plat approval processes and/or land-use development

codes. Any land-use development taking place within the municipalities would be subject to the city's land-use development regulations and policies.

DETERMINATION

The FHWA has determined that the Preferred Alternative will have no significant impact on the human environment. This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is based on the attached Environmental Assessment which has been independently evaluated by the FHWA and determined to adequately and accurately discuss the need, environmental issues, and impact of the proposed project and appropriate mitigation measures. It provides sufficient evidence and analysis for determining that an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

  
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Paula Wilson  
Federal Highway Administration

Dec 5, 2008  
Date