

### **Public Hearing Summary and Analysis**

(Summary and Analysis and Response to Comments Received at and Subsequent to the December 13, 2004 Public Hearing)

**District/County** Fort Worth District/ Tarrant County

**Highway/Limits** SH 121: From IH 30 to FM 1187

**CSJ** 0504-02-008  
0504-02-013

### **Proposed Improvements**

The State Highway (SH) 121 project is a multi-lane controlled access tollroad that is proposed on new alignment from Interstate Highway (IH) 30 near downtown Fort Worth in Tarrant County to Farm-to-Market Road (FM) 1187, for a total project length of approximately 15 miles (mi). SH 121 would traverse a large portion of the City of Fort Worth with major interchanges at IH 30 and IH 20/SH 183.

IH 30 (the northern terminus) is a major IH that facilitates traffic moving east-west through the Dallas/Fort Worth (DFW) area. FM 1187 (the southern terminus) is a major arterial, included on the National Highway System, which serves traffic moving through southern Tarrant County.

The proposed action would be a divided tollroad. From the northern terminus at IH 30 to Altamesa Boulevard the proposed facility would ultimately be six lanes. From Altamesa Boulevard to the southern limit at FM 1187, the ultimate facility would be four lanes. However, until warranted due to future increases in traffic volume, only a part of the ultimate 6/4-lane facility is being proposed at this time. As currently proposed, the facility would vary from six lanes between IH 30 and Altamesa Boulevard to four lanes from Altamesa Boulevard to FM 1187. Limited frontage road access would be provided where needed for local traffic circulation.

### **Purpose and Need**

The purpose of the proposed project is to improve regional mobility, increase people and goods carrying capacity and alleviate further overburdening of the local transportation system between the Central Business District (CBD) of Fort Worth, including the existing regional transportation network and newly developed and developing areas in southwest Tarrant County.

### **Document Approval for Distribution**

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) approved the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for distribution on October 27, 2004.

### **Notices and Articles**

Notices announcing the Public Hearing for the FEIS were published in the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* November 7, 2004 and November 28, 2004, *Alliance Regional Newspaper* November 12, 2004 and December 3, 2004, *Burleson Star* November 7, 2004 and November 28, 2004,

*Crowley Star Review* November 11, 2004 and December 2, 2004, *Cleburne Times-Review* November 7, 2004 and November 28, 2004, *Joshua Star Tribune* November 11, 2004 and December 2, 2004 and *Fort Worth Business Press* November 10, 2004 and December 1, 2004. In addition, a Spanish version of the notice was published in *La Estrella* November 13, 2004 and December 4, 2004 and *La Semana* November 12, 2004 & Friday – December 3, 2004. Copies of the Public Hearing notice were mailed to property owners adjoining the project. Addresses for mailing of the notices to adjoining property owners were obtained from the County Appraisal District (the local taxing entity). A press release for immediate release announcing the Public Hearing was faxed to the local media on December 10, 2004.

### **Public Hearing Date and Place**

A Public Hearing was held for the FEIS on Monday December 13 at 7:00 p.m. in Ballroom C of the Fort Worth Civic Center to present project information and receive comments concerning the proposed construction of SH 121.

### **Attendance**

Attendance at the Public Hearing was composed of 17 representatives of the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), three representatives of the FHWA, nine representatives of the City of Fort Worth, one representative of the North Central Texas Council of Governments, one representative of the Tarrant Regional Water District, four representatives of the City of Cleburne, four representatives of the City of Burleson, seven representatives from the North Texas Tollway Authority (NTTA), two representatives of elected officials, 37 consultants, one shorthand reporter and 112 interested citizens. A total of 198 individuals attended the Public Hearing.

### **Conducted by**

Maribel Chavez, P.E., Fort Worth District Engineer opened the Public Hearing. Charles Conrad, P.E. of the Fort Worth District gave the process and procedures for the hearing and provided an environmental update; Darrell Thompson P.E., with Carter & Burgess, presented the design overview; and William Riley, P.E., District Director of Transportation Planning and Development, discussed right of way (ROW) procedures.

### **Exhibits**

In addition to the FEIS document, ROW relocation brochures and a Public Hearing agenda brochure that included relevant project information as well as a list of NTTA and TxDOT contacts was made available at the Public Hearing. Schematic overview maps were also made available to the public at the Public Hearing along the walls of the auditorium. A visualization presentation on DVD format that introduced SH 121 to the public was available for viewing continuously before, during and immediately after the Public Hearing.

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### **Comments from Elected or Local Officials/other Agencies**

A total of eight public officials or their designated representatives were formally recognized at the Public Hearing and five of those officials offered comments. Kay Walls, North Texas Tollway Authority Board of Directors, discussed SH 121 as a needed alternative route to the congested urban arterials serving southwest Tarrant County. Mike Moncreif, Mayor of Fort Worth, supports the project and applauded the effort TxDOT and NTTA expended to include citizen's groups and the City of Fort Worth in the process. Ted Reynolds, Mayor of Cleburne, spoke in favor of the project stating it was necessary for the economic vitality of the area. Ken Shetter, Mayor of Burleson, also spoke in favor of the project and submitted City of Burleson Resolution 993, dated December 9, 2004, in support of the proposed SH 121 project and the Locally Preferred Alternative with the nature and character elements endorsed by the Citizen's Advisory Group (CAG).

Wendy Davis of the Fort Worth City Council representing District 9, provided a brief history of public concern and input to the SH 121 project. Councilman Davis stated that not all citizen concerns have been addressed—namely in the Mistletoe Heights, Sunset Terrace, and Alamo Heights neighborhoods.

City of Fort Worth approved Resolution 3148 in support of the project on December 7, 2004 and offered the following comments on the FEIS. The City endorses project mitigation including noise walls for Mistletoe Heights, Hulen Bend, Fort Worth Country Day School, and Park Palisades, removing high mast lighting west of Summit at IH-30 and working with the CAG to mitigate negative visual effects.

The City also provided section-by-section comments on the FEIS in a letter dated December 30, 2004. The City noted that the Project History needs more detail on the role the City and citizens' groups played in the process. These groups should be acknowledged in the Record of Decision (ROD). The City commented that the Alternative Analysis is consistent with the goals of NEPA. The City requests that TxDOT provide a complete explanation of the of Section 4(f) analysis for the project. The City noted that they support the narrowing of the median in the Park Palisades area in order to better facilitate neighborhood protections. The City also noted support of a 50 mph posted speed limits between IH 30 and Arborlawn Boulevard and supports the design of a clear span across the Trinity River. The City requested that high mast lighting east of Summit Ave be replaced.

The USACE reviewed the FEIS and provided a letter dated November 19, 2004, in which they stated the Corps had completed their review and had no comments. In addition, the Department of Interior (DOI) provided a letter dated January 28, 2005 which expressed concerns on the extent or lack of discussion on Section 4(f).

### **Comments from the Public**

#### **Verbal**

A total of 23 individual citizens spoke at the Public Hearing and presented oral statements for the record during the public comment portion of the Public Hearing. In addition, four public officials presented their comments for a total of 27 oral statements that were given at the Public Hearing.

Most of the oral comments were not definitively for or against the project, but instead had questions or expressed concerns about various aspects of the project. All oral comments are

contained in the transcript of the Public Hearing. Verbal comments from the Public Hearing have been reviewed, summarized as appropriate and responded to in the Response to Comments portion of the Public Hearing documentation.

### **Written**

A total of 38 written statements were received at the Public Hearing or before the end of the comment phase of the Public Hearing that closed on Friday, December 31, 2004. Of the comments received, most were not definitively for or against the SH 121 project but provided comments or had concerns over the project or certain aspects of the project and/or the FEIS.

A total of ten comments indicated there would be a negative impact on air quality due to the project. Ten other comments were concerned that the FEIS did not fully investigate secondary and cumulative effects of the proposed project. An additional ten comments suggested that more mitigation is needed for noise, light, and visual impacts. Eight comments state the FEIS fails to take into consideration neighborhoods eligible for historic significance Section 4(f) in terms of constructive use.

Five comments suggested that high-mast lighting be removed, lowered or directed away from residential neighborhoods. Four comments concerned wetlands issues. Four comments stated that there will be a 30 ft bridge adjacent to Park Palisades and with a ROW line zero ft from Park Palisades boundary there would be no room for a buffer.

Three comments reported there is no supporting data in the Draft EIS or the FEIS to indicate at what times of day air and noise modeling tests were done. Three comments stated FEIS does not take into consideration the history of this project in regards to the citizens groups involved.

Two comments state that the northern terminus of the facility is inconsistently described in the FEIS. Two comments stated the FEIS failed to analyze ability of storm sewer system to handle additional runoff as a result of the new road system. Two general comments were received on the Hike and Bike trail. Two comments were concerned that the FEIS statement that wetlands, wildlife and jurisdictional water issues are premature and will be dealt with at a subsequent stage of project design is out of synchronization with the planning stage of private developers.

One comment suggests the project will route more traffic through the Alamo Heights neighborhood. One comment with appendices noted that the SH 121 project would cross the largest contiguous area of virgin prairie in the entire Fort Worth Prairie area. One comment stated that noise has not been adequately addressed at the Fort Worth Country Day School. One comment stated that the FEIS does not address the total project and continues to be segmented.

Written comments from the Public Hearing have been reviewed, summarized as appropriate and responded to in the Response to Comments portion of the Public Hearing documentation.

### **Summary of how Major Comments/Issues were Addressed**

Public issues and/or concerns raised as a result of the Public Hearing are addressed with information contained within either the ROD, the response to comments or will be addressed in the Corridor Master Plan [\(CMP\)](#) as agreed to by the City of Fort Worth, NTTA and TxDOT.

All written comments, letters, comment forms and verbal comments from the Public Hearing have been reviewed and summarized as appropriate. Due to the overlap and repetition of some comments, similar comments were consolidated and paraphrased to reduce duplication. As a result, the comments that appear in this report are often not the precise words found in the commenter’s written comment, letter or verbal comment. This has been done to reduce duplication of similar comments that elicited a common response and in no way was intended to obscure the substance of a comment. All original written comments, letters and comment forms from the Public Hearing are available for public inspection at the TxDOT Fort Worth District Office located at 2501 Southwest Loop 820 in Fort Worth between 8:00am and 5:00pm weekdays.

The following pages contain an index of commenters numbered consecutively in alphabetical order. A single written comment or oral statement may have various comment components relative to different aspects of the project. After the name of each commenter is a list of corresponding comment numbers that indicates where the comment and response are located in the document. The Public Hearing Comment and Response Report contains each comment or summary thereof, the identification number of the commenter(s) the comment is attributed to and the official response from NTTA and TxDOT.

**Recommendation**

The selected alternative, C/A, best meets the purpose and need of the project by improving regional mobility, increasing people and goods carrying capacity and alleviating further overburdening of the local transportation system while complementing local future land use plans and incorporating public input as far as is feasible and practicable. Interim reports were completed in order to ensure that public concerns were investigated to the greatest extent possible. The City’s Project Development Team’s (PDT) and other public participation documents are included in the FEIS documentation.

On December 30 2004, the City of Fort Worth, the NTTA, and TxDOT entered into an agreement that identified the NTTA’s System-Wide design guidelines, and the City of Fort Worth’s Nature and Character Plan as accurate reflections of the desired nature and character elements of the project. The detailed design and development of these elements would be achieved through the CMP process scheduled to begin in 2005. The parties have agreed that NTTA will prepare the CMP prior to the preparation of the plans, specifications, and estimates for the project. The parties will conduct a CMP development process to further define the appropriate nature and character elements, and the locations of those elements, including a master landscape plan.

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The CMP process will include a workshop to consider the “Trinity River Vision Master Plan” with respect to the design of the Trinity River bridges. The City may invite the Tarrant Regional Water District to attend and participate in the workshop. The CMP process shall build upon, and add the necessary detail to the substantial progress previously achieved by the Parties toward finalizing the project design elements.

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All 178 comments have been satisfactorily addressed and the project is recommended for approval as a ROD.