

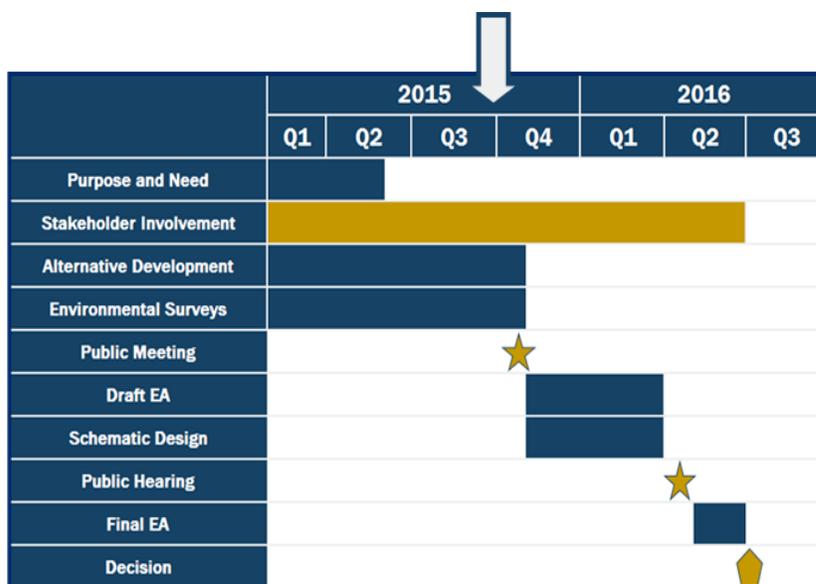
NECHES RIVER BRIDGE STUDY



PROJECT BACKGROUND

The primary east-west rail corridor through the City of Beaumont includes the only river crossing in the region, the Neches River rail bridge, a single track vertical lift span bridge owned and operated by the Kansas City Southern (KCS) Railway. The bridge averages 7-8 lifts per week which result in train delays while ships navigate the river below. The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) conducted a feasibility study for this crossing of the Neches River in 2013. The current study will complete the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements. A purpose and need statement is fundamental to developing a proposal that will require NEPA evaluation such as an Environmental Assessment (EA).

PROJECT TIMELINE



WHAT IS THE PROCESS FOR COMPLETING THIS STUDY?

The Project Timeline shows the primary steps of the NEPA process. Key stakeholders are engaged early as the study team develops the purpose and need and alternatives to consider. This coordination continues as preliminary engineering studies and environmental surveys are conducted to determine the recommended Preferred Alternative that will be evaluated in detail in the Draft EA along with the No Build Alternative. TxDOT will hold a Public Meeting to seek additional input before the study team develops the Draft EA. When the Draft EA is available for review, TxDOT will offer a Public Hearing to solicit comments on its findings. The study team will then respond to comments within the Final EA prior to the lead agency making a decision.

PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT

Improve rail operations by maintaining existing rail mobility and continuity while providing rail capacity to accommodate growth. The project would support and enhance industrial facilities that use rail, marine, and highway services.

PROJECT NEED

Existing rail operations are affected by track capacity, track switching, industrial service access, and bridge openings for marine vessel traffic. Future rail traffic across the Neches River is expected to increase with both through and local rail traffic serving existing and expanding industrial facilities. Without improvements, operations will deteriorate in the future with increased rail traffic.





NO BUILD ALTERNATIVE

The No Build alternative includes continued operational and maintenance activities of the existing rail network and lift bridge. It serves as the baseline to which the Build Alternative is compared in the EA process.

BUILD ALTERNATIVES

Existing Alignment Alternative E-1: Builds an additional track over the Neches River supported by a new lift-span or fixed rail bridge that is parallel to and north of the existing KCS Railway lift-span rail bridge. The base elevation would be the same as the existing Neches River Bridge.

Existing Alignment Alternative E-2: Builds an additional track over the Neches River supported by a new lift-span or fixed rail bridge parallel to and north of the existing KCS Railway lift-span bridge. The base elevation would be the same as the I-10 vertical clearance. The west approach would use a viaduct, the east approach a trestle structure. Horizontal curves in the track would allow the UPRR to tie into the KCS main-line. Two additional UPRR bridges and two grade crossings would be constructed at the east end of the project limits.

Northern Alignment Alternative N-1: Builds a new alignment that crosses the Neches River with a single-track, fixed-span bridge just south of the I-10 Bridge over the Neches River. This alignment would also include a rail grade separation to alleviate the need for a diamond connection between the KCS and UPRR rail traffic east of the Neches River. On the west side of the Neches River, the alignment upgrades the existing BNSF single track along Long Avenue and adds an additional track along the First Avenue/Gulf Street corridor.

Northern Alignment Alternative N-2: Builds a new alignment that crosses the Neches River with a single-track, fixed-span bridge just south of the I-10 Bridge over the Neches River similar to Alternative N-1. On the west side of the Neches River, the alignment would upgrade the existing BNSF track along and through the former Port of Beaumont yard that roughly follows Pine Street.

UPCOMING PUBLIC MEETING

Join TxDOT in discussing proposed rail improvements for the Neches River Bridge

Wednesday, October 21, 2015

Attend anytime from 4:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

**Central Park Community Center
2925 Fannin Street, Beaumont, Texas 77701**

The public meeting will be conducted in English, with meeting materials also available in Spanish. Persons interested in attending the meeting who have special communication or accommodation needs, or need an interpreter, are encouraged to contact TxDOT's Public Information Officer, Sarah Dupre, at (409) 898-5745 at least two days prior to the meeting. TxDOT will make every reasonable effort to accommodate these needs.

SECTION 106 PROCESS

(www.achp.gov)

TxDOT will use public involvement procedures under NEPA to fulfill the Section 106 public involvement requirements.

The National Historic Preservation Act (1966) takes into account the effects of the undertaking on eligible or listed National Register properties. Consulting parties may provide input on key decision points in the Section 106 process.

Individuals or organizations may request to become a consulting party for this project by contacting:

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