

State Highway 16 Project

Project Overview

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) has begun a study of the State Highway 16 and Farm-to-Market Road 649 corridors in South Texas. The purpose of this study is to determine the feasibility of upgrading SH 16 from Potteet to Zapata and FM 649 from Randado to Roma.

To determine the project's feasibility the study will analyze three factors. First, both roadways will be examined for the possibility of expansion to a four-lane divided facility.

Second, the study will consider the current and future effects of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) upon travel demands on SH 16, FM 649, and IH 35.

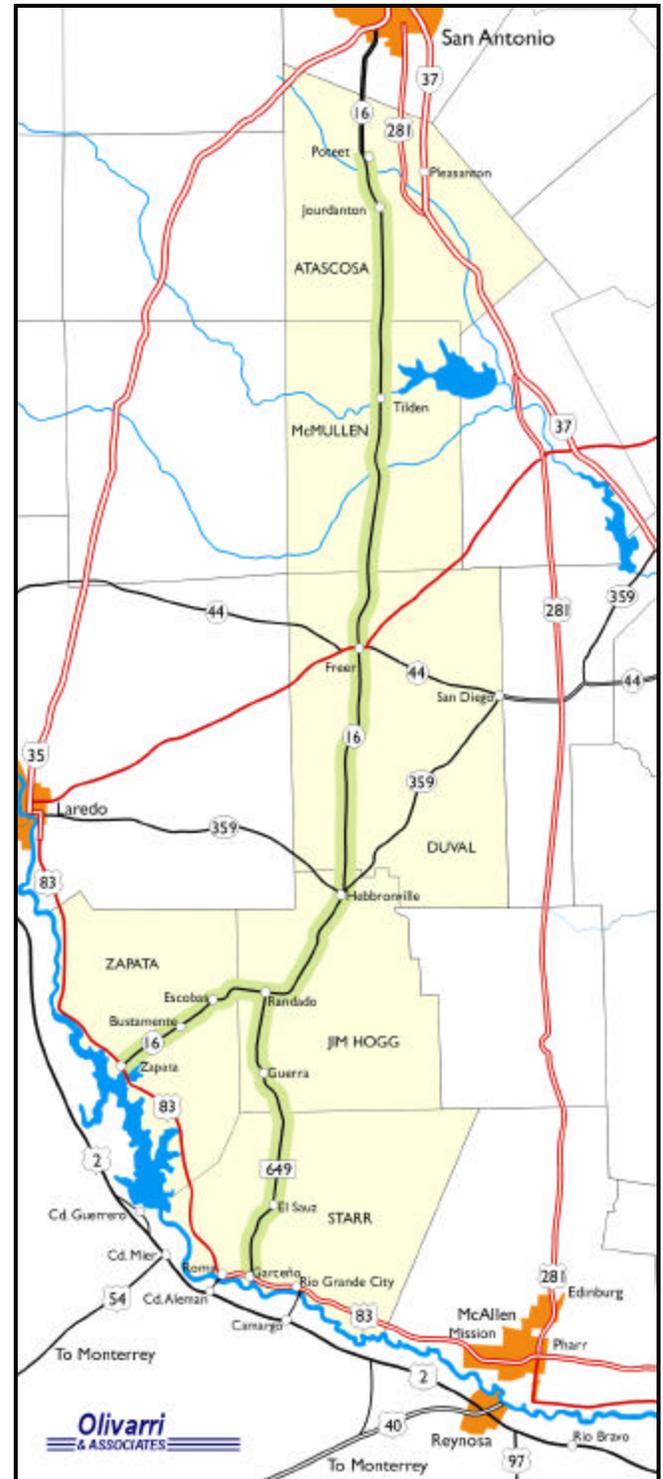
A third consideration will include identifying some specific locations along both corridors where targeted enhancements could be implemented to improve driving conditions.

The goals of the study are to:

- Identify conceptual roadway improvement alternatives;
- Provide public involvement through an outreach program and public meetings; and
- Determine the feasibility of the conceptual alternatives.

This is the first of four newsletters to be distributed during the feasibility study. Newsletters may also be accessed on the TxDOT website, www.dot.state.tx.us (in the section on Major Investment Studies.)

For more information about this project, or to be added to the mailing list contact: SH 16 Project, c/o Olivarri & Associates, Inc., 719 South Shoreline Drive, Suite 200, Corpus Christi, Texas 78401, or call toll-free 800-945-2156 (x20).



Public Meetings

Open Houses 5:00 P.M. and Public Meetings 6:00 P.M.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 17
Roma

Roma Community Center
502 6th Street

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 18
Freer

Freer Community Center
608 Carolyn Street

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 19
Jourdanton

Atascosa County Courthouse
Circle Drive 41
One Block East of SH 16 on SH 97

Personas que quieren informacion en espanol llame 361-884-5000 (x 50) y deje un mensaje. Alguien regresara su llamada para discutir sus preguntas o comentarios en espanol.

Scope of Work

The scope of work for this study includes the following:

- Identify the existing conditions of the roadway and any presently planned improvements within the project area.
- Inform and solicit input from stakeholders in the project as well as other interested individuals or groups.
- Conduct two rounds of public meetings in the project area to inform the public about the project and to solicit input.
- Develop conceptual alternatives and traffic forecasts for each of the alternatives, including the no-build alternative.
- Perform a benefit/cost analysis. This is calculated by comparing the benefits of a project to its costs. The benefits of a freeway, including accident savings, delay savings, and reduced vehicle operating costs, are compared to costs associated with the proposed improvements, such as construction and maintenance. If the benefit/cost ratio shows that there is greater savings to users for every dollar spent on building the freeway, it is considered "feasible."
- Prepare a final report that will outline the study process, the alternatives considered, an explanation of the methodology used to determine feasibility, and the results of the study.

Project Schedule

<u>Task</u>	<u>Dates</u>
Define Existing Conditions	July 2000-August 2000
Develop Conceptual Alternatives	August 2000-January 2001
Open Houses & Public Meetings	October 2000 & Spring 2001
Develop Traffic Forecasts	October 2000-December 2000
Benefit-Cost Analysis	December 2000-April 2001
Preparation of Final Report	April 2001-July 2001

Public Outreach Program

The public outreach program for this project will provide methods for contacting, informing, and soliciting input from stakeholders in the project as well as other interested individuals and groups.

Two series of open houses and public meetings will be held during the next ten months. The first series of meetings will introduce the study and outline the scope of work to be performed. The second series will present the conceptual alternatives and their feasibility.

The first round of open houses and public meetings will be held October 17-19, 2000. Please see the back of this newsletter for specific locations and times. These meetings will explain the project scope and goals and provide

the public with information on analysis and methodology. We will also solicit public comment on project goals, proposed methodology and analysis, environmental concerns, safety issues, local issues, benefits, and disadvantages.

Dates and locations for the second series of open houses and public meetings will be specified at a later date. These meetings will be preceded by newsletters updating the public on the project and outlining the conceptual alternatives and feasibility.

Interested individuals and groups are encouraged to contact Olivarri & Associates (toll-free 800-945-2156) for additional information on the public outreach program.

The Process of Developing Roadway Improvements



A typical cross section of SH 16 in a rural area

A **feasibility study** is the first step in a multi-year process. It determines the need for improvements, the types of improvements, and a general implementation plan. Feasibility studies generally take one year to complete.

Once the type of improvements necessary is determined, a **route study** must be performed. Route studies determine the actual location of the roadway and specify the type of improvements needed. A full environmental assessment and a detailed cost study may be necessary in this step.

Following the route study, **preliminary and final schematics** are completed to further define the improvements and right-of-way needs.

TxDOT, often in cooperation with local governments, then acquires the needed **right-of-way** property to construct the improvements.

Preliminary and final construction documents are prepared, bids for the work are submitted, and a contract is awarded.

Construction follows, in accordance with approved plans and specifications. In costly projects like the development of major highways, improvements are often phased over time to reduce costs.

Each step in the process can take six to 18 months to complete. Major improvement projects often require 10 years or more to complete.



A typical cross section of FM 649

TEA 21

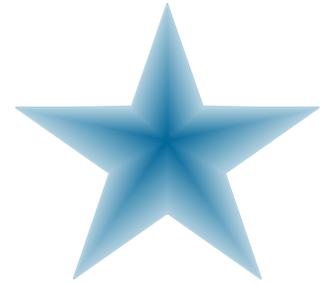
This study is being conducted as a direct result of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA 21), which was enacted in June 1998. The bill provides funding for the Federal surface transportation programs for highways, highway safety, and transit for the six year period 1998-2003.

The TEA 21 combines the continuation and improvement of programs begun under previous transportation legislation with new initiatives to improve safety, protect and enhance communities and the natural environment, and advance the

economic growth and competitiveness of the United States.

As a result of TEA 21, the Texas Department of Transportation will receive additional funds for Texas roadways. Demand for roadway funding, however, far exceeds the available funds.

Local and congressional efforts led to this feasibility study being included in TEA 21. The Texas Department of Transportation is responsible for the study and is committing additional state resources to this effort.



The Project Team

TxDOT Project Manager Peggy Thurin, P.E. (TPP-Austin) is leading this effort and is working closely with TxDOT District offices in San Antonio, Pharr, and Laredo.

Terry Watson, P.E. and Pat Owens, P.E., both of Kimley-Horn & Associates, lead the consulting team selected to complete this study.

The consulting team and their duties are outlined below:

Kimley-Horn

- Project Management
- Existing Conditions
- Alternatives
- Benefit/Cost Analysis
- Final Report

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- Mapping
- Cost Estimating

MK Centennial

- Traffic Forecasting

Olivarri & Associates

- Public Involvement and Outreach

If you have technical questions on this study, Mr. Pat Owens, P.E. can be reached at 281-920-6301.

SH 16 PROJECT
c/o Olivarri & Associates, Inc.
719 South Shoreline Blvd., Suite 200
Corpus Christi, Texas 78401

Public Meetings Scheduled

Public outreach and involvement is an important aspect of this project. In order to provide opportunities for the public to learn about the project and to make comments, a round of open houses and public meetings will be held in October.

The public is invited to attend the open houses and public meetings to discuss the project in an informal setting with the project team. A second round of meetings will be held during the spring of 2001.

Please mark your calendars and plan to attend the public meeting in your area. If you are unable to attend, you may send comments to:

SH 16 Project
c/o Olivarri & Associates, Inc.
719 South Shoreline Blvd., Suite 200
Corpus Christi, Texas 78401
Toll-free: 800-945-2156 (x20)
E-mail: leah@olivarri.com

Please submit comments by November 2, 2000.

Contact Olivarri & Associates to be added to the project mailing list.

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Freer

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One Block East of SH 16 on SH 97

Spanish translation services will be available at the meeting in Roma. Persons with disabilities who plan to attend one of meetings and need auxiliary aids or services or who will require Spanish translation at the Freer or Jourdanton meetings are requested to contact Olivarri & Associates, Inc. at 800-945-2156 (x20) prior to October 10.

Servicios de traducción serán ofrecidos en la reunión de Roma para aquellos que lo soliciten. Así mismo, aquellas personas minusválidas o con impedimentos auditivos que deseén asistir a las reuniones y necesiten asistencia especial o requieran ayuda para movilizarse, favor comunicarse con Olivarri & Associates, Inc. al número 800-945-2156 (x 50) antes del 10 de Octubre.