

Public Notice of FEIS (Grand Parkway Segment F-2)

Public Notice of FEIS: Pursuant to Title 43, Texas Administrative Code, §2.5(e)(8)(B), the Texas Department of Transportation is advising the public of the availability of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the proposed construction of State Highway 99, SH 249 to IH 45 (the Grand Parkway Segment F-2) northwest of Houston in Harris County, Texas. Comments regarding the FEIS may be submitted via email to: segmentf2comments@grandpky.com or to The Grand Parkway Association, Attention: Segment F-2 Comments, located at 4544 Post Oak Place, Suite 222, Houston, Texas 77027 or the Director of Project Development at the Texas Department of Transportation's Houston District Office located at 7600 Washington Avenue, Houston, Texas. Comments due by 5:00 p.m. on September 17, 2008. The Texas Department of Transportation's (TxDOT's) mailing address is P.O. Box 1386, Houston, Texas, 77251-1386.

The purpose of the proposed action is to provide improved access to the existing and future thoroughfare system, reduce area traffic congestion, improve safety, and improve area-wide mobility. A full range of alternatives were identified and evaluated for Segment F-2 at the corridor level (five corridors), transportation mode level (No Build, Transportation System Management Alternatives, Travel Demand Alternatives, and Modal Alternatives), and at the alignment level. The proposed action consists of the construction of a controlled access tollway from SH 249 to IH 45 in Harris County, a distance ranging from 12.0 to 13.0 miles, depending on the alternative alignment considered. The proposed facility will consist of a four-mainlane controlled access tollway within a 400-foot (ROW) width. A total of seven build alternative alignments, in addition to the No-Build alternative, have been presented in the FEIS. All seven alternative alignments lie between SH 249 and IH 45 in a west-east direction and begin approximately 0.2 miles south of Boudreaux Road. Alternative Alignment A traverses mainly through the center of the study area. This alignment alternative terminates at IH 45, approximately 0.6 miles north of Spring Stuebner Road and is 12.5 miles in length. Alternative Alignment B traverses mainly through the southern portion of the study area. Alternative Alignment B terminates approximately 0.1 miles south of the Hardy Toll Road and IH 45 intersection and is 13.0 miles in length. Alternative Alignment C passes through the north and middle portion of the study area. Alternative Alignment C terminates at the same location as Alternative Alignment A and is 12.2 miles in length. Alternative Alignment D passes through the middle of the study area from Boudreaux Road approximately 0.3 mile northeast of FM 2920 for approximately 7.0 miles before ending at the same location as Alternative Alignment C and is 12.0 miles in length. Alternative Alignment E passes through the northern portion of the study area where it ends at the same location as Alternative Alignment B and is 12.5 miles in length. Alternative Alignment F passes through the northern portion of the study area before ending at the same location as Alternative Alignment C and is 12.1 miles in length.

The preferred corridor and transportation mode and the recommended alternative alignment as presented in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), were selected after careful consideration and assessment of the potential environmental impacts and evaluation of agency and public comments. After consideration of all agency and public comments received on the RDEIS of 2006 and the original DEIS of 2004, coordination with landowners, as well as updated environmental data, the GPA, in coordination with TxDOT and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), selected a Preferred Alternative Alignment. It was determined after careful review of the RDEIS and DEIS comments that a shift of the Recommended Alternative Alignment shown in the RDEIS in two locations was necessary to create a Preferred Alternative Alignment. These shifts are as follows:

- In Reach 7, near Boudreaux Road, where the Recommended Alternative Alignment passed through a portion of the Spring Terrace subdivision, the alignment was shifted approximately 120 feet to the northeast, thereby avoiding four platted home sites.
- In the far eastern end of Reach 7, the Recommended Alignment was modified to a route more closely in line with Alternative Alignment A, with an added dip to the south near the border of Reach 8. This adjustment allowed engineers of the roadway to avoid a relocation of the railroad which had been included in the Recommended Alternative Alignment. Relocating the railroad necessitated additional Right-of-Way impacts and would have added a large expense in time, energy, and money. This modification does not increase impacts to any other resource.

The preferred build alternative that has emerged from the study was proposed on the basis of its ability to best facilitate the projects Need and Purpose while minimizing impacts to the natural, physical, and social environments. The Preferred Build Alternative Alignment is approximately 12.01 miles long. It begins at SH 249 approximately 0.2 miles south of Boudreaux Road, the alignment travels east approximately 1.8 miles, then heads northeast approximately 2.5 miles, running parallel and adjacent to Boudreaux Road. After crossing FM 2920, the Preferred Alternative Alignment travels east 1.2 miles before veering northeast for 0.8 miles and crossing Boudreaux Road and Kuykendahl Road just north of the Spring Terrace subdivision. Continuing northeast, crossing Northcrest drive, and then turns eastward to a crossing of Gosling Road and on to a joint crossing of Rothwood Drive and the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR). Thence the alignment turns east-southeast parallel to and north of the UPRR tracks until it turns northeast to connect to IH 45, approximately one mile south of the IH 45/Hardy Toll Road interchange. The preferred alternative alignment for Segment F-2 would require the acquisition of new ROW (630 acres), the adjustment of utility lines, and the filling of aquatic resources including jurisdictional wetlands (58.89 acres). The Preferred Alignment as presented in the FEIS would displace 120 residential properties and nine commercial properties. No archeological sites, historic properties, or endangered species are expected to be affected.

Copies of the FEIS may be viewed at the Grand Parkway Association website, www.grandpky.com; at the offices of the Grand Parkway Association or the TxDOT Houston District (addresses previously mentioned); at the Houston Public Library, Central Branch, 500 McKinney, Houston, Texas; at the Harris County Public Library, Tomball Branch, 30555 Tomball Parkway, Tomball, Texas; at the Harris County Public Library, Northwest Branch, 11355 Regency Green Drive, Cypress, Texas; and at the Harris County Public Library, Barbara Bush Branch, 6817 Cypresswood Drive, Spring, Texas. Copies of the FEIS and other information about the project may be obtained at the Grand Parkway Association office or TxDOT's Houston District Office. For further information, please contact David Gornet, P.E. at (713) 965-0871 or Pat Henry, P.E. at (713) 802-5241.

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