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[Notices]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Highway Administration

Environmental Impact Statement- Fort Bend and Brazoria Counties, TX

AGENCY: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of Intent.

SUMMARY: The FHWA is issuing this notice to advise the public that an **environmental impact statement** will be prepared for a proposed transportation project in Fort Bend and Brazoria Counties, Texas.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. John Mack, P.E., Federal Highway Administration, Texas Division, 300 East 8th Street, Room 826, Austin, Texas 78701, Telephone (512) 916-5516.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The FHWA, in cooperation with the Texas Department of Transportation (TXDDT) and the **Grand Parkway** Association, will prepare an environmental **impact statement** (EIS) on a proposal to upgrade the existing road network in Fort Bend and Brazoria Counties. A major investment study is underway to evaluate various modal options between U.S. 59 (S) and SH 288. The proposed action will occur within a corridor in Fort Bend and Brazoria Counties. The majority of this corridor crosses relatively undeveloped properties in Fort Bend and Brazoria Counties. Cities and towns in the region include Sugar Land, Richmond, Rosenberg, Missouri City, Thompsons and Iowa Colony.

The **Grand Parkway** Association proposes to build a facility to provide improved transportation characteristics in the region, including improvement to the evacuation routes from coastal areas in Harris, Galveston, and Brazoria Counties.

Several alignment alternatives will be discussed in the Draft **Environmental Impact Statement** (DEIS). The DEIS will also include evaluation of the no action alternative. Alignment alternatives through and near urban areas as well as alignments through farmland will be evaluated in the DEIS.

Impacts caused by the construction and operation of the facility will vary according to the alternative alignment utilized. Generally, impacts would include the following: transportation impacts (construction detours, construction traffic, mobility improvement and evacuation routes improvement), air and noise impacts from construction equipment and operation of the facility, water quality impacts from construction area and roadway storm water runoff, impacts to waters of the United States including wetlands from right of way encroachment, and impacts to residents and businesses based on potential displacements.

Letters describing the proposed action soliciting comments will be sent to appropriate Federal, State, and local agencies, and to private organizations and citizens who have previously expressed or are known to have interest in this proposal. A public scoping meeting will be held at August 20, 1998 at the George Ranch Historical Park, 5 miles south of US 59 on FM 762 in Guy Hall at 7:00 P.M. Public comments on the proposed action and alternatives will be requested. This will be **the first of a series of meetings to evaluate alternatives, corridor alternatives and design alternative alignments. a public hearing will be held at a later time, with**

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copies of DEIS available for public and agency review and comment prior to the public hearing. To ensure that the full range of issues related to this proposed action are addressed and all significant issues identified, comments and suggestions are invited from all interested parties. Comments or questions concerning this proposed action and the **Environmental Impact Statement** should be directed to the FHWA at the address provided above.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program Number 20.205, Highway and Planning and Construction. The regulations implementing Executive Order 12372 regarding governmental consultation on Federal programs and activities apply to this program.)

John R. Mack,
District Engineer, Austin, Texas.
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