SAFETEA-LU SECTION 6002 COORDINATION PLAN

for

United States Highway (US) 181 at
Harbor Bridge
From Beach Avenue to Morgan Avenue
Nueces County, Texas
CSJ: 0101-06-095

Prepared by
Texas Department of Transportation
Corpus Christi District

and

U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration

DRAFT July 2011

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Table 1.0-1: Draft Coordination Plan Revision History

Version	Date	Description of Action
Draft Coordination Plan, Dec. 2010	January 5, 2010	Reviewed by ENV Technical Experts
Draft Coordination Plan, March 2011	March 7, 2011	Revised and resubmitted
Draft Coordination Plan April 2011	April 22, 2011	Revised and resubmitted
Draft Coordination Plan June 2011	June 22, 2011	 Sections 8.0 and 9.0 were revised to be consistent with the revised project schedule that was submitted to FHWA with the Letter of Initiation. Table 5.0-1 Scoping Agencies list was updated.

1.0 Purpose of the Coordination Plan

To provide for more efficient environmental reviews for project decision making, Section 6002 of Public Law 109-59, "Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users," (SAFETEA-LU), enacted on August 10, 2005, implemented the development of a Coordination Plan for all projects for which an environmental impact statement (EIS) is prepared under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), as lead Federal agency, and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), as joint lead agency, have prepared this Coordination Plan to accompany the EIS that will be developed for the proposed improvements to United States (US) 181 at the Harbor Bridge over the Corpus Christi Ship Channel from Beach Avenue to Morgan Avenue on State Highway (SH) 286 in the City of Corpus Christi, Nueces County (referred to in this document as the Harbor Bridge Project).

The purpose of the SAFETEA-LU 6002 Coordination Plan is to facilitate and document the lead agencies' structured interaction with the public and agencies, and to inform the public and agencies of how the Coordination Plan will be coordinated and revised. The Coordination Plan is meant to promote an efficient and streamlined process, and good project management through coordination, scheduling, and early resolution of issues as well as to encourage public and agency participation in and comment on the environmental review process for the Harbor Bridge Project. This Coordination Plan will be updated following each step of the NEPA process to describe the development of the EIS and public involvement processes. The steps are the following:

- Scoping meetings;
- Public meetings;
- Approval of the draft EIS;
- Public hearing;
- Approval of the final EIS; and
- Record of Decision (ROD).

With this Coordination Plan, FHWA and TxDOT will:

- Identify planned early coordination efforts;
- Identify cooperating and participating agencies to be involved in agency coordination;
- Establish the timing and approach for agency involvement in defining the project's need and purpose, study area, the range of alternatives to be investigated, and methodologies, as well as in reviewing the EIS drafts, and the selection of the preferred alternative and mitigation strategies;
- Establish the timing and approach to public opportunities to help define the project's need and purpose, study area, and the range of alternatives to be investigated; to provide input on issues of concern and environmental features; and to comment on the findings presented in the Draft EIS:
- Describe the communication methods that will be implemented to inform the community about the project; and

• Solicit comments from the public and from participating or cooperating agencies regarding the need and purpose for the proposed project, project alternatives, methods to be used in evaluating the alternatives, and the level of detail required in the analysis of each alternative.

2.0 Project History

The following is a brief chronology of events in the life of the Harbor Bridge Project.

2001: The Harbor Bridge Project was initiated when TxDOT began developing a Feasibility Study to look at the possibility of improving US 181 at the existing Harbor Bridge. The study was conducted in accordance with the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA21). TEA21 specifically designated funds for the study. A more detailed discussion of the project history is provided in **Section 8.0 – Detailed Project History and Future Actions**.

2003: The TxDOT Corpus Christi District Office completed the Feasibility Study for this project, in which it analyzed four corridors (i.e., the Red, Orange, Green, and Blue Corridor alternatives). A map showing the four corridors analyzed during the Feasibility Study is in the Appendix to this plan.

2004: TxDOT initiated an engineering and environmental study that would result in the completion of an EIS and public involvement process.

2005: The first Notice of Intent (NOI) was published in the *Federal Register* in May 2005, for the proposed improvements to US 181 at Harbor Bridge. In that NOI, the Harbor Bridge project was described as involving the replacement of the existing Harbor Bridge and approaches where US 181 crosses the Corpus Christi Ship Channel.

2006: TxDOT District determined that managed lanes should be considered as part of the Harbor Bridge project as a funding option. This decision was based on directions from the Texas Transportation Commission and Administration that directed districts to include a toll component on "new location" projects as a form of financing the construction and operation of the facility. In this case, managed lanes were envisioned as one tolled lane in each direction where access would be controlled by tolls established based on traffic volumes. As part of this change, FHWA determined that the project and study limits should be extended in order to accommodate the additional capacity required if the project were to include managed lanes or various tolling strategies.

2007: A second NOI was published in the *Federal Register* in March 2007. That NOI showed the project and study limits as follows:

"The new project limits are as follows: the northern limit is the US 181 and Beach Avenue interchange located north of the Corpus Christi Ship Channel but south of the Nueces Bay Causeway; the southern limit is the SH 286 and SH 358 (South Padre Island Drive) interchange; the eastern limit is the Interstate Highway (IH) 37/US 181 intersection with Shoreline Boulevard; and the western limit is the IH 37 and Nueces Bay Boulevard interchange...The new study limits are as follows: the northern limit is the US

181 and SH 35 interchange just south of Gregory; the southern limit is the SH 286 and SH 358 (South Padre Island Drive) interchange; the eastern limit is Shoreline Boulevard; and the western limit is the IH 37 and SH 358 (North Padre Island Drive) interchange."

According to the 2007 NOI, the project limits are defined as the limits of the schematic design effort, and the study limits are defined as the limits of potential impacts from the proposed project alternatives.

Work continued on the US 181 Harbor Bridge Project through 2007 but was temporarily put on hold until September of 2009 due to funding constraints at TxDOT.

2009: TxDOT Administration determined that the improvements discussed in the 2007 NOI would no longer include the added capacity or managed lanes on US 181 and SH 286 as part of the proposed action. The revised project and study limits were therefore reduced to closely correspond to the original project limits as described in the NOI published in 2005:

- Northern limit US 181 and Beach Avenue, north of the Corpus Christi Ship Channel but south of the Nueces Bay Causeway
- Southern limit SH 286 between Morgan Avenue and Baldwin Boulevard
- Eastern limit I-37 and Shoreline Boulevard in the Corpus Christi central business district (CBD)
- Western limit I-37 and Nueces Bay Boulevard.

This Coordination Plan addresses agency coordination required during preparation of the EIS that will be developed for proposed improvements to US 181 at Harbor Bridge and the roadway approaches to the bridge from Beach Avenue north of the ship channel to SH 286 at Morgan Avenue.

3.0 Project Description and Scope

FHWA and TxDOT propose to improve US 181 at the existing Harbor Bridge in the City of Corpus Christi, Nueces County, by improving the current 6-lane structure that has no shoulders with a 6-lane divided structure with 4-foot to 10-foot inside and 6-foot to 10-foot outside shoulders. As this project is the replacement of the existing Harbor Bridge, the project logical termini and limits of independent utility are from US 181 at Beach Avenue to SH 286 at Morgan Avenue. The proposed project length is approximately 3.0 to 4.8 miles depending on the proposed alternative. In order to meet the draft Need and Purpose for the project, as discussed below in **Section 4.0 – Draft Need and Purpose**, the current build alternatives for the project include replacing the existing Harbor Bridge. In 2011, the Texas Transportation Commission passed a Minute Order that authorized the preparation of the Environmental Impact Statement and schematic development for the project.

3.1 Alternatives

The EIS prepared for this project will consider several alternatives, described below, intended to satisfy the identified need and purpose. The alternatives will include the No-build alternative, Transportation System Management/Transportation Demand Management, mass transit, and roadway build alternatives. The build alternatives include a six-lane arterial that replaces the

existing Harbor Bridge with a new non-steel structure that has a vertical clearance over the Corpus Christi Ship Channel that is substantially higher than the existing structure, which is 138 feet above the ship channel. The current build alternatives to be considered between approximately Beach Avenue north of the ship channel and Morgan Avenue on SH 286 are shown on the Location Map in the Appendix. The current build alternatives will be considered along with any other alternatives that the public as well as the cooperating and participating agencies may identify during the formal scoping process.

The following descriptions of the build alternatives were developed during the previous work as explained above in **Section 2.0** – **Project History**.

- 1) The **Red** alignment begins at the interchange between US 181 and Beach Avenue north of the ship channel, then veers west of US 181 just north of Burleson Street and crosses the ship channel about 1500 feet west of existing US 181, then extends through TC Ayers Park, where it crosses I-37, and follows SH 286 to Morgan Avenue.
- 2) The **Orange** alignment begins at the interchange between US 181 and Beach Avenue north of the ship channel, then veers west of US 181 at Burleson Street and crosses the ship channel immediately west of existing US 181, veers west, and then extends through TC Ayers Park where it crosses I-37 and follows SH 286 to Morgan Avenue.
- 3) The **Green** alignment generally begins at Beach Avenue on US 181 and follows the existing alignment of US 181 south to Burleson Street, then veers immediately to the west of the existing Harbor Bridge, and then crosses the ship channel, continuing on the west side of existing US 181 to I-37 and following the existing alignment of I-37 to North Staples Street.
- 4) The **Blue** alignment begins at Beach Avenue on the north and generally follows the existing alignment of US 181 to Burleson Street and veers east to Corpus Christi Bay just north of the USS Lexington and continues across the bay and the ship channel, turning west and crossing Shoreline Drive at Spur 544, and then following the existing alignment to I-37 at US 181 and following I-37 west to approximately North Staples Street.

The Red and Orange alternatives would include improvements to I-37 between Shoreline Drive and Nueces Bay Boulevard as well as a new interchange with US 181 at the existing interchange of I-37 and SH 286. The Green and Blue alignments would include improvements to Spur 544 and I-37 between Shoreline Drive and North Staples Street.

3.2 Methodology for Analyzing Alternatives

Section 5.0 - Agency Roles and Responsibilities of this document lists the Federal and State agencies that were asked to be cooperating or participating agencies in the project and agreed to do so unless they requested in writing that they did not want to participate because their agency:

- Has no jurisdiction or authority over the project;
- Has no information or expertise relevant to the project; and
- Does not intend to submit comment on the project.

During the environmental process, under NEPA, it is assumed that each agency will analyze the project alternatives' potential impacts under the regulatory requirements and guidelines established by the laws, rules or regulations shown in **Section 5.0 – Agency Roles and Responsibilities** for each respective agency unless they request otherwise during the scoping process. TxDOT will also follow these laws, rules and regulations for each participating agency so that coordination or consultation occurs at the appropriate time to allow for consideration of each agency's concerns before a final decision has been made on an alternative.

4.0 Draft Need and Purpose

A draft Need and Purpose was developed for the project in 2007. Using the 2007 draft Need and Purpose as a starting point, a new draft has been developed based on the current project limits and the elimination of tolling. During the new scoping process, explained in **Section 7.0** – **Proposed Public Involvement Plan** below, the public as well as the cooperating and participating agencies will be provided an opportunity to provide input on the draft Need and Purpose.

As stated above in Section 3.0, as this project is the replacement of the existing Harbor Bridge, the project logical termini and limits of independent utility are from US 181 at Beach Avenue to SH 286 at Morgan Avenue. TxDOT undertook the feasibility study of Harbor Bridge in response to federal legislation in the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA21). TEA21 specifically designated funds for the study. In 2011, the Texas Transportation Commission passed a minute order authorizing the preparation of the Environmental Impact Statement and schematic development for the project.

4.1 Draft Need

The proposed improvements to US 181 at Harbor Bridge are required to maintain a safe and efficient transportation system within the City of Corpus Christi. This project would include improving the connections to the existing highway system as well as to the local/surface street system. The Harbor Bridge Project is listed in the Corpus Christi Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO's) Metropolitan Transportation Plan 2010-2035 (the long-range transportation plan) as construction of a new bridge over the Corpus Christi Ship Channel.

TxDOT has identified the following underlying needs that the Harbor Bridge project would address: safety, roadway deficiencies (including design standards and capacity issues), connectivity to local roadways, enhanced navigation including economic development of the Port of Corpus Christi, and hurricane evacuation.

Below is a more detailed explanation of each of the project needs:

• <u>Safety</u> – The existing US 181 roadway approaches to Harbor Bridge are on a steep vertical slope (5% vertical grade) that exceeds the current design criteria established in the *TxDOT Roadway Design Manual* (a maximum grade of 4% for urban freeways with a design speed greater than 60 mph). A vertical grade of 4% means that for each 100 feet of distance the slope goes up or down 4 feet. The roadway approach on the north side of the bridge touches down and enters into an "S" curve. The roadway approach on the

south side of the bridge touches down and presents the driver with three exits in close proximity. This complicates the driver's decision during lane changes and when selecting the correct exit. In addition, the existing Harbor Bridge and approaches do not have shoulders, which places the travel lane next to the concrete barrier and does not allow for a safety area for breakdowns. These conditions are amplified during less desirable driving conditions such as nighttime and inclement weather. In addition, because of the large number of visitors that come to Corpus Christi for business conferences and vacations, these approaches create an undesirable mix of local drivers who are familiar with the bridge configuration as well as those who are not familiar. This mix of drivers decreases safety and efficiency in the project area.

O Vehicle Crash Rate – In the discussion below, the 2009 crash rate per 100 million vehicle miles traveled for US 181, I-37, and SH 286 are compared to the statewide rate for similar facilities. (A crash is an automobile or truck accident.) All three of the facilities in the project are six-lane divided facilities. Therefore, they will be compared to the 2009 statewide crash rate for urban roadways with four lanes or more which is 114.65 crashes per 100 million vehicle miles traveled. As noted below, all three facilities exceeded the 2009 statewide average for crashes per 100 million vehicle miles traveled.

	Crash Rate	% of State Average
US 181	130.97	114.2
I-37	234.08	204.2
SH 286	138.85	121.1

- Roadway and Structure Deficiencies The lack of shoulders and the horizontal and vertical grades that do not meet current standards were described in the discussion of safety above. Other deficiencies include the following:
 - O High maintenance costs The Harbor Bridge is currently a combination of prestressed concrete beam spans, steel plate girder spans, simple deck truss spans, and continuous deck truss and suspended tied arch spans over a highly corrosive saltwater environment. These conditions represent high, recurring maintenance costs to TxDOT and affect both vehicular and ship traffic during maintenance activities.
 - o *Insufficient ramp length* Throughout the project area, exit and entrance ramps are shorter than recommended by current design standards. This provides drivers with an inadequate distance to make and carry out decisions as they are merging with other traffic either on the main lanes or frontage roads.
 - O Roadway capacity constraints Lack of shoulders and short weaving distances between entrance and exit ramps limit the capacity (the maximum traffic volume the roadway can carry) and operation speed of the roadways. The north/south movement through this area must negotiate a low-speed entrance ramp to the high-speed main lanes and then return to a low-speed exit ramp in a relatively short distance.

- Multiple decision points Improperly spaced decision points (less distance between entrance and exit ramps than recommended by current design standards) at both ends of the bridge do not allow for clear advance signage and can affect capacity. These conditions increase the likelihood of erratic movements and accidents, and are compounded for drivers unfamiliar with the Corpus Christi area.
- O Limited Bicycle and Pedestrian Access The existing Harbor Bridge does not provide any bicycle lanes to the public; however, the City of Corpus Christi and Nueces County have identified Harbor Bridge as a desired intermodal link in their adopted Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plans. Pedestrian and bicycle access on Harbor Bridge would improve the options for bicyclists and pedestrians as well as improve linkages to and from the City of Corpus Christi and neighboring communities located to the north and south.
- Capacity and Traffic Volumes Traffic volumes in the project area are shown below in Table 4.0-1 for US 181, I-37, and SH 286 for 2010 and the design year 2035. There is projected to be a substantial increase in traffic volumes in the project area between 2010 and 2035. The discussion of Level of Service below explains how this will affect drivers.

Table 4.0-1: Daily Traffic Volumes at Study Locations

Location	Limits	Functional Class	Total Number of Lanes	2010 Daily Volume	2035 Daily Volume
US 181	Beach Avenue to SH 286 (Crosstown Expressway)	Freeway	6	48,700	78,000
IH 37	US 181 to Crosstown	Freeway	6 ML + 4 FR	60,000	86,200
SH 286	IH 37 to Morgan Avenue	Freeway	6 ML + 4 FR	65,800	94,100

Note: ML – Main Lane, FR – Frontage Road

Level of Service (LOS)

LOS has been developed by traffic engineers to provide a better measure of how traffic volumes impact a driver's ability to maneuver as traffic volume changes. The 2000 Highway Capacity Manual (HCM), published by the Transportation Research Board, generally defined the various LOS for each type of facility. LOS ranges from A to F; with LOS A representing free flow conditions and LOS F representing stop and go conditions. Gradations from LOS A to LOS F are defined by the ability to maintain posted speeds, freedom of maneuverability, traffic volume-to-capacity ratio, and the formation of queues. Each of the levels is defined in **Table 4.0-2** below.

Table 4.0-2: Explanation of Level of Service

Level of Service	Technical Descriptions				
A	No Delays. Highest quality of service. Traffic flows freely with little or no restrictions on speed or maneuverability.				
В	No Delays. Traffic is stable and flows freely. The ability to maneuver in traffic is only slightly restricted.				
С	Minimal Delays. Few restrictions on speed. Freedom to maneuver is restricted. Drivers must be more careful making lane changes.				
D	Minimal Delays. Speeds decline slightly and density of traffic increases. Freedom to maneuver is noticeably limited.				
Е	Significant Delays. Vehicles are closely spaced, with little room to maneuver. Driver comfort is poor as the drivers enter and exit the roadway.				
F	Considerable Delays. Very congested traffic with traffic jams, especially in areas where vehicles have to enter and exit the highway.				

The existing six-lane section of US 181 at the Harbor Bridge currently operates at LOS C and is anticipated to operate at LOS E in the design year 2035 (78,000 Annual average daily traffic [AADT]). The existing six-lane section of SH 286 within the project area currently operates at LOS C and is projected to operate at LOS D in 2035 (94,100 AADT). The existing six-lane section of I-37 is currently operating at LOS C but is projected to operate at LOS D in 2035 (86,200 AADT). This is shown below in **Table 4.0-3**.

Table 4.0-3: Peak Hour Directional Traffic Volumes and Level of Service at Study Locations (Year 2010)

Location	Limit	Functional Class	Number of Lanes in Each Direction	LOS (2010)	LOS (2035)
US 181	Beach Avenue to SH 286 (Crosstown Expressway)	Freeway	3	С	E
I-37	US 181 to Crosstown	Freeway	3 ML + 2 FR	С	D
SH 286	IH 37 to Morgan Avenue	Freeway	3 ML + 2 FR	С	D

Note:

- Assumed a Free Flow Speed (Locations are in Urban Area) of 55 mph for these locations. LOS from Exhibit 23-2 of HCM 2000.
- Assumed Class III Urban Street with typical FFS of 35 MPH at this location. LOS from Exhibit 15-2 and 10-7 of HCM 2000.
- 3. Frontage roads were assumed equivalent to HCM 2000 Urban Street Class I.
- 4. Truck percentage for freeways was assumed 6%.

- Connectivity to Local Roadways The US 181 southern approach to Harbor Bridge currently sits on a large fill embankment (with no underpasses) that prevents five city streets from crossing from the east side of US 181 to the west side. The existing US 181 approach also makes access to various tourist attractions on the south side of the Corpus Christi Ship Channel much more difficult for tourists who are unfamiliar with the city. For example, the Bayfront Science Park on the east side of US 181 is separated from an amphitheater, a professional baseball stadium, and the Solomon Ortiz International Center on the west side of US 181.
- Enhance Navigation including Economic Development Two factors impact the ability of the Port of Corpus Christi (the Port) to attract larger shipping vessels to call (enter) at the Port. The first is the vertical clearance underneath the Harbor Bridge that is currently 138 feet above the water in the Ship Channel. The second is the depth and width of the Corpus Christi Ship Channel across Corpus Christi Bay.

As stated above, the existing Harbor Bridge provides 138 feet of vertical clearance for moving vessels in and out of the Port. This clearance requirement was set in the 1950s when the existing Harbor Bridge was constructed to post-World War II standards at a time when vertical clearance requirements were substantially less than they are today. As the maritime industry has evolved in the container, cruise, and military sectors, vertical clearance requirements and needs have increased dramatically to accommodate modern ships and cargo sizes. Harbor Bridge's vertical restriction has made it difficult for the Port to compete in these industry sectors with other Gulf Coast deep water ports.

The Port conducted a new *Harbor Bridge Clearance Study* in 2010. The report indicates that a vertical clearance of approximately 205 feet would allow the Port to attract larger vessels that would enhance the economic development of the Port and Corpus Christi. This is based on an analysis of the various types of vessels that are currently are and will be available in the future, including cargo ships, tankers, cruise ships, and military ships. The study also included a review of other ports around the world and specifically those in the U.S. and along the Gulf Coast to identify current restrictions to navigation such as bridge heights and channel widths. Polled customers of the Port mentioned that currently some of their vessels are required to take on ballast water after offloading cargo to clear the existing Harbor Bridge and to leave the Port while timing these maneuvers with low tides. This is costly for the ship owners both in terms of time and money. The Port customers generally recommended that a vertical clearance from 175 feet to 200 feet be considered for any new Harbor Bridge. All these factors were considered in the study's recommendation that 205 feet of vertical clearance be provided under a new bridge. This clearance study is available from the Port or the TxDOT District office in Corpus Christi.

In 2007, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers approved a Record of Decision for the Final Environmental Impact Study (EIS) for improvements to the Corpus Christi Ship Channel and adjoining channels by deepening and widening the existing channel from the existing conditions of a 45-foot depth and 400-foot width. These planned improvements would enable access to the Port by larger vessels such as cruise ships and large container ships. Deepening and widening these channels will enhance economic opportunities for the

region including developing areas north of the Ship Channel for increased industrial growth. The recommended plan consists of widening, deepening, and constructing barge shelves in the Ship Channel. The Corpus Christi Ship Channel would be deepened to 52 feet mean low tide (MLT) from the Viola Turning Basin to the end of the jetties in the Gulf of Mexico (approximately 34 miles), and deepened to 54 feet MLT for the remainder of the channel into the Gulf of Mexico (approximately 2 miles). The Ship Channel would also be widened in the upper and lower bay reaches (approximately 20 miles) to 530 feet. Barge shelves would consist of 200-foot wide, 12-foot deep areas on both sides of the upper bay reach (approximately 10 miles). See the Appendix for a map of the location of the proposed channel improvements.

• Hurricane Evacuation – US 181 across the Harbor Bridge as well as I-37 within the project area are designated hurricane evacuation routes. During a storm event, I-37 would be used for evacuation until the traffic volumes reached the maximum highway capacity, which includes the use of the extra evacuation lane and contraflow lanes (reversing the south bound lanes). Once the traffic volume on I-37 has reached capacity, the plan is to direct traffic to US 181. Therefore, a major evacuation would use both the Harbor Bridge and the Joe Fulton Trade Corridor (Navigation Boulevard, Market Street, and Causeway Boulevard) running from US 181 along the north side of the Inner Harbor to Carbon Plant Road, where it connects to I-37. US 181 is the primary evacuation route for San Patricio County and an alternate route to I-37 for the City of Corpus Christi. Therefore, an improved route including a new Harbor Bridge with increased capacity and safer geometry is critical to the area during an evacuation.

4.2 Draft Purpose

Based on the project needs as described above, the following bullets provide a list of improvements that are the purpose for undertaking the Harbor Bridge Project.

- Improving safety, thereby reducing accident rates.
- Improving roadway and bridge deficiencies, meeting current design standards, and reducing the amount of needed maintenance.
- Providing greater economic development opportunities for the Port by increasing the vertical clearance up to 205 feet for larger vessels.
- Improving the connectivity to the local roadway system by improving the entrance and exit ramp connections to existing streets that will allow traffic to move more easily from the Bayfront to the existing neighborhoods west of existing US 181.
- Providing for improvement of intermodal transportation by enhancing highways, Port access, and pedestrian and bicycle modes that would facilitate the movement of people and goods, including military equipment and Port assets, throughout the region.
- Providing adequate capacity to meet future traffic demands and volumes. Improving capacity is consistent with the policies and goals of the Corpus Christi MPO's 2010 2035 (the long-range transportation plan) adopted on December 3, 2009.
- Maintain and improve access to US 181 north as an alternative hurricane evacuation route for the Corpus Christi area.

5.0 Agency Roles and Responsibilities

SAFETEA-LU requires identification of lead, cooperating, and participating agencies in the development of an EIS. The lead Federal agency (FHWA) and the joint lead agency (TxDOT) must identify and involve participating agencies; develop the Coordination Plan; provide opportunities for public and participating agency involvement in defining the purpose and need and determining the range of alternatives; and collaborate with participating agencies in determining methodologies and the level of detail for the analysis of alternatives. In addition, lead agencies must provide oversight in managing the environmental documentation process and resolving issues.

Federal Lead Agency: FHWA is the U.S. Department of Transportation agency responsible for NEPA analysis, management of the SAFETEA-LU Section 6002 process, and independent review of the EIS. FHWA will ensure that the project sponsor (TxDOT) complies with all design and mitigation commitments in the ROD and that the EIS is appropriately supplemented if changes in the project become necessary.

Joint Lead Agency: TxDOT, as project sponsor and direct recipient of SAFETEA-LU funds, is the joint lead agency. The "project sponsor" is defined as the agency or other entity, including any private or public-private entity, which seeks approval of the U.S. Department of Transportation for a highway project. The responsibilities of the joint lead agency mirror those of the Federal lead agency.

Cooperating Agencies: Certain Federal agencies having jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to any environmental impact involved in a proposed project or project alternative are designated as cooperating agencies. Cooperating agencies are also "participating agencies" (agencies with an interest in the project), but have a higher degree of authority, responsibility, and involvement in the environmental review process than do participating agencies that are not also cooperating agencies. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, for example, is specifically responsible for the issuance of permits under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.

Participating Agencies: All Federal, state, tribal, regional, or local governmental agencies that may have an interest in the project should be invited to serve as participating agencies. The roles and responsibilities of these agencies include, but are not limited to:

- Participating in the NEPA process starting at the earliest possible time, especially with regard to the development of the need and purpose statement, range of alternatives, methodologies, and the level of detail for the analysis of alternatives.
- Identifying, as early as practicable, any issues of concern regarding the project's potential environmental or socioeconomic impacts. Participating agencies also may participate in the issue resolution process.
- Providing meaningful and timely input on unresolved issues.
- Participating in the scoping process. The scoping process should be designed so that agencies whose interest in the project comes to light as a result of initial scoping activities are invited to participate and still have an opportunity for involvement.

The list of lead, joint-lead, cooperating, and participating agencies is provided in **Table 5.0-1**.

Table 5.0-1: Scoping Agencies List

Agency Name	Contact Person/ Title	Address	Role	Responsibilities		
Federal Agencies						
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)	Col. Christopher W. Sallese, District Engineer and Commanding Officer,	Galveston District, P.O. Box 1229 Galveston, TX 77553-1229	Cooperating Agency; Participating Agency	Section 404 Clean Water Act permit jurisdiction Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act – Bridge permit jurisdiction		



Table 5.0-1: Scoping Agencies List, Continued

Agency Name	Contact Person/ Title	Address	Role	Responsibilities			
Federal Agencies, continued							
U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)	David Frank, Commander DPB, Eighth CG District	Bridge Section, 500 Poydras, Street New Orleans, La 70130-3310	Cooperating Agency; Participating Agency	Section 9 of the Rivers and Harbor Act – bridge permit jurisdiction			
U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)	Donald W. Gohmert, State Conservationist	101 South Main Temple, TX 76501	Cooperating Agency; Participating Agency	Analysis of project effects on prime farmland, under Farmland Protection Policy Act			
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	Dr. Alfredo Armendariz, Regional Administrator, Region 6	1445 Ross Avenue Suite 1200 Dallas, TX 75202- 2733	Cooperating Agency; Participating Agency	Review and comment on possible effects to air quality, under Section 309 of Clean Air Act			
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)	Allan Strand, Supervisor, Corpus Christi Ecological Services Office	C/O TAMU-Corpus Christi 6300 Ocean Drive, # 5837 Corpus Christi, TX 78412-5837	Cooperating Agency; Participating Agency	Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act permit jurisdiction			
National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)	Dr. Roger Zimmerman, NMFS, Southeast Regional Office	Habitat Conservation 4700 Avenue U Galveston, TX 77551	Cooperating Agency; Participating Agency	Review and comment on possible effect to marine fisheries in compliance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Reauthorization Act of 2006			
		State Agencie	s				
State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO)	Mark Wolfe, Executive Director, Texas Historical Commission	P.O. Box 12276 Austin, TX 78711- 2276	Participating Agency	Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act; Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 (49 USC 303)			
Texas Coastal Coordination Council	Ms. Helen Young, Deputy Commissioner, Coastal Resources	Texas General Land Office P.O. Box 12873 Austin, TX 78711- 2873	Participating Agency	Review and comment related to coastal resource impacts related to the proposed project and compliance with the Coastal Management Plan.			

Table 5.0-1: Scoping Agencies List, Continued

A man ar NT	Contact Person/	A 44	D.I.	Dom on -11-11-11-			
Agency Name	Title	Address	Role	Responsibilities			
State Agencies, continued							
Texas General Land Office	Hal Croft, Asset Management Deputy Commissioner	P.O. Box 12873 Austin, TX 78711-2873	Participating Agency	Review project effects under Memorandum of Understanding and Memorandum of Agreement between TxDOT and GLO			
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ)	Mark R. Vickery, Executive Director	P.O. Box 13087 Austin, TX 78711- 3087	Participating Agency	Review project impacts to hazardous material sites, and compliance with the Texas Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (TPDES). Designated state representative for EPA.			
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD)	Carter Smith, Executive Director	4200 Smith School Road Austin, TX 78744	Participating Agency	Review project effects under Memorandum of Understanding and Memorandum of Agreement between TxDOT and TPWD			
		Local Agencie	es				
City of Corpus Christi	Ángel Escobar, City Manager	1201 Leopard Street Corpus Christi, TX 78401	Participating Agency	Identification and resolution of project effects to areas within the city limits and area of extraterritorial jurisdiction			
Nueces County	Samuel L. Neal, Jr, County Judge	901 Leopard Street, Rm. 303 Corpus Christi, TX 78401	Participating Agency	Identification and resolution of any issues of concern regarding the project's potential environmental effects within the county's jurisdiction			
City of Portland	Mike Tanner, City Manager	1900 Billy G. Webb Dr. Portland, TX 78374	Participating Agency	Identification and resolution of any issues of concern regarding the project's potential environment effects within the city's jurisdiction.			
San Patricio County	Terry A. Simpson, County Judge	400 West Sinton Street #109 Sinton, TX 78387	Participating Agency	Identification and resolution of any issues of concern regarding the project's potential environmental effects within the county's jurisdiction			

Table 5.0-1: Scoping Agencies List, Continued

	Contact Person/						
Agency Name	Title	Address	Role	Responsibilities			
Local Agencies, continued							
Corpus Christi Metropolitan Planning Organization	Tom Niskala, Transportation Planning Director	5151 Flynn Parkway Corpus Christi, TX 78411	Participating Agency	Identification of issues relating to safety and mobility, system interconnectivity, and project effects to minority and low income populations			
Port of Corpus Christi	Frank C. Brogan PE, Deputy Port Director Engineering, Finance and Administration	222 Power Street Corpus Christi, TX 78401	Participating Agency	Identification of issues related to the Corpus Christi Ship Channel and Port properties including shipping, safety and commerce.			
Coastal Bend Council of Governments	John P. Buckner Executive Director	P.O. Box 9909 Corpus Christi, Texas 78469-9909	Participating Agency	Identifies planning and coordinates issues relative to the local governments.			
Corpus Christi Regional Transit Authority	Mike Setzer, Interim Chief Executive	5658 Bear Lane, Corpus Christi, Texas 78405	Participating Agency	Identifies issues related to public transportation relative to the cities and counties in the RTA.			
Corpus Christi Regional Economic Development Corporation	Tony LaMantia Chairman	One Shoreline Plaza 800 N. Shoreline Blvd. Ste. 1300 South Corpus Christi, Texas 78401	Participating Agency	Involved with programs and activities that promote, assist, and enhance economic development within the city of Corpus Christi.			
	Native A	merican Tribes – Nue	ces County, Texas				
Apache Tribe of Oklahoma	Louis Mynahonah, Chairman	P.O. Box 1220 Anadarko, OK 73005	Participating Agency	Identification of potential impacts to environmental justice populations			
Comanche Nation of Oklahoma	Jimmy Arterberry, THPO	Comanche Nation Office of Historic Preservation P.O. Box 908 Lawton, OK 73502	Participating Agency	Identification of potential impacts to environmental justice populations			
Kiowa Indian Tribe of Oklahoma	Jame Eskew	c/o Kiowa Culture Preservation Authority P.O. Box 885 Carnegie, OK 73015	Participating Agency	Identification of potential impacts to environmental justice populations			
Mescalero Apache Tribe	Carleton Naiche- Palmer, President	c/o Holly Houghten, THPO P.O. Box 227 Mescalero, NM 88340	Participating Agency	Identification of potential impacts to environmental justice populations			
Tonkawa Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma	Don Patterson, President	1 Rush Buffalo Rd Tonkawa, OK 74653	Participating Agency	Identification of potential impacts to environmental justice populations			

Table 5.0-1: Scoping Agencies List, Continued

Agency Name	Contact Person/ Title	Address	Role	Responsibilities	
Other Interested Parties					
Historic Bridge	Kitty Henderson,	P.O. Box 66245	Interested Party	Comment on impacts to	
Foundation	Executive Director	Austin, TX 78766	interested Farty	historic bridges	



6.0 Project Coordination Points

SAFETEA-LU incorporates changes aimed at improving and streamlining the environmental process for transportation projects. Lead and participating agencies have legal and general governmental obligations to work cooperatively to improve the environmental review process. The roles and responsibilities specified in Section 6002 for lead and participating agencies form a part of those obligations.

The intent of coordination points is to set a deadline for agency input in order to move the project forward. These coordination points do not require concurrence or total agreement among agencies. If there is not concurrence, the lead agencies will take this information into account when project decisions are being made.

The agencies listed above will at a minimum be participating at the following three coordination points in the environmental review process for the Harbor Bridge Project:

- Need and Purpose;
- Reasonable Alternatives to be Evaluated in the DEIS; and
- Methodologies for Alternatives Analysis.

Based upon comments received during the new scoping process from agencies and the public, the draft need and purpose, project alternatives, methods to be used in evaluating the alternatives, and the level of detail required in the analysis of each alternative for the project will be revised and submitted by TxDOT to FHWA for internal review. Upon incorporation of comments from FHWA, TxDOT will prepare and forward to the participating agencies the revised Coordination Plan showing the changes to the three parts listed above.

7.0 Proposed Public Involvement Plan

Public involvement is an important part of the Harbor Bridge Project because it provides an opportunity for various stakeholders (including the public) to participate in the EIS process. The objectives of the public involvement program for the project are as follows:

- To engage all stakeholders including those of limited English proficiency and Environmental Justice (EJ) populations to ensure that all are given an opportunity to provide input regarding possible alternatives for Harbor Bridge;
- To provide stakeholders with clear, concise information about the progress of the environmental documentation/schematic development process;
- To enable TxDOT to be responsive to comments and concerns raised by stakeholders; and
- To document all communications between stakeholders and TxDOT for inclusion in the project's Administrative Record.

To meet these public involvement objectives, TxDOT (District) is planning the following activities:

- A project mailing list will be created/maintained that includes all local stakeholders and residents who wish to receive project mailings.
- A project website will allow the agency to both disseminate and gather public input. The website will include project status updates, project newsletters, information on the EIS process, public meeting/hearing announcements, public meeting/hearing information (meeting summary, meeting presentation and handouts, meeting exhibits), project schedule, engineering schematics, project photos, etc. Individuals who visit the website will have an opportunity to provide comments or request that they be added to the project mailing list. Website information will be prepared in Spanish and English.
- Two public scoping meetings will be held early in the project. During the first scoping meeting, resource agencies, stakeholders, and members of the public would have an opportunity to review and provide comments on the draft Coordination Plan, Coordination Plan including the Need and Purpose, and an explanation of the methodology of analysis and level of detail for the alternative analysis. The second scoping meeting will cover the approved Coordination Plan, including the final need and purpose statement, the range of alternatives, and the methods and level of detail. Again the meeting participants will have an opportunity to review the information presented and provide comments.
- Two public meetings will be held to provide additional information to the stakeholders and the public and to gather additional public input. The first of these meetings will be held during preparation of the draft EIS and will allow the meeting participants to review and comment on the reasonable alternatives. The second meeting will be held after completion of the draft EIS and will also consist of a Design Guideline Workshop to enable the meeting participants to review and comment on draft EIS findings and to help TxDOT understand community desires for the design of a potential new bridge.
- A Citizens Advisory Committee and a Technical Advisory Committee will be created to provide community/stakeholder input throughout the project. The Citizens Advisory Committee will be comprised of local residents, property owners, non-profit agencies working in the project area, and representatives of neighborhood associations, educational and religious organizations. The Technical Advisory Committee will consist of elected officials, civic organizations, and representatives of the MPO and other local agencies. These committees will each meet two three times a year (depending on project milestones) and meetings will be open to the public. Meeting membership will be determined through a nomination process to ensure representative committee compositions.
- One-on-one or small group stakeholder meetings will be held throughout the EIS process
 to ensure that all community concerns/inputs are considered during evaluation of
 alternatives. Special efforts will be make to reach out to EJ populations and to those who
 reside in the project area. These will include attending and participating in existing
 community meetings as well as setting up meetings with individuals or groups of
 individuals representing neighborhood and local business interests. Meetings will be held

at times and locations of most convenience for these individuals. TxDOT will publicize its desire to conduct these meetings during public scoping meetings, public meetings, and on the website. In addition, the Citizens Advisory Committee will be asked to identify community individuals/organizations for TxDOT to contact.

• A public hearing will be held when the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) is made available for public comment. This meeting will represent an opportunity for the public to make verbal comments on the DEIS and/or submit written comments.

8.0 Detailed Project History and Future Actions

History of Harbor Bridge Project

- 1. **2001**. TxDOT initiated the Feasibility Study to analyze the possibility of replacing the existing Harbor Bridge
- 2. **2003**. The Feasibility Study was completed with a recommendation to move forward with an environmental impact statement (EIS).
- 3. **November 2004.** TxDOT initiated an engineering and environmental study that would result in the completion of an EIS and public involvement process.
- 4. **Winter 2004-2005.** TxDOT initiated the scoping and coordination process with stakeholders to explain the project and obtain their comments.
- 5. **May 2005**. FHWA and TxDOT published a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an EIS in the *Federal Register*, *Texas Register*, *and Corpus Christi Caller-Times*. The NOI, which included a draft Need and Purpose statement, formally announced the project.
- 6. **June 2005**. TxDOT held scoping meetings with resource agencies and the public to present the alternatives for the project and obtain input before proceeding with the project.
- 7. **Summer 2005**. TxDOT developed the initial Need and Purpose for the project for project limits described as involving the replacement of the existing Harbor Bridge and approaches where US 181 crosses the Corpus Christi Ship Channel.
- 8. **September 2005**. Initial Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC) meetings were held in Corpus Christi and Portland to introduce the project to the CAC and obtain their comments.
- 9. **August 2005 April 2006**. TxDOT initiated the analysis of build and no-build alternatives and evaluated the affected environment.
- 10. **February 2006**. TxDOT prepared a draft Need and Purpose and submitted it to FHWA.
- 11. **March 2006**. The second set of CAC meetings was held.
- 12. **June 2006**. FHWA and TxDOT approved the Need and Purpose for the project.
- 13. **Fall 2006**. FHWA and TxDOT determined that managed lanes should be considered as part of the Harbor Bridge project as a funding option. As part of this change, FHWA determined that the project and study limits should be extended south along SH 286 to the interchange with SH 358 to accommodate the additional capacity required if the project were to include managed lanes or various tolling strategies.
- 14. **February 2007.** FHWA and TxDOT republished the NOI to prepare an EIS for the extended project limits in the *Federal Register*, *Texas Register*, *and Corpus Christi Caller-Times*. The revised NOI addressed the change in need and purpose for the project.

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- 15. **April 2007.** Additional neighborhood meetings were held at locations along SH 286 between Morgan Avenue and SH 358 to inform the public that the project could potentially impact their neighborhoods.
- 16. **May 2007.** TxDOT held new agency and public scoping meetings to explain that tolling had been added as a funding option and that the project had new longer limits extending along SH 286 south to SH 358.
- 17. **Summer and Fall 2007.** TxDOT developed a new Need and Purpose for the project that addressed the design changes and the changes to the project limits.
- 18. **October 2007.** A third set of CAC meetings was held to present the schematics for the two build alternatives and discuss the next steps in the process.
- 19. **December 2007**. Project was placed on hold.

Recent and Future Steps in the Harbor Bridge Project (to be revised when pre-scoping is complete)

- 20. **September 2009**. Project was reinitiated with new project limits from Beach Avenue to Morgan Avenue, in Nueces County.
- 21. **November 2010**. TxDOT and FHWA published the rescission of the 2007 NOI in the *Texas Register* and the *Federal Register*.
- 22. **December 2010 to May 2011**. FHWA directed TxDOT to develop a pre-scoping process prior to the publication of a new Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS.
- 23. **February 2011**. Pre-scoping letters were sent to potential cooperating and participating agencies.
- 24. **March 2011**. Pre-scoping conference calls were held with cooperating and participating agencies.
- 25. **March to April 2011**. Responses were received from potential cooperating/participating agencies.
- June 2011. TxDOT submitted the Letter of Intent to prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to FHWA advising that the pre-scoping process was complete.
- 27. **June 2011**. FHWA approved the Letter of Intent to in order to allow for the Notice of Intent to be prepared and published in the *Federal Register*.
- 28. **June 2011**. Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS to be published in the *Texas Register* and *Federal Register* to address the change in project limits from Beach Avenue to Morgan Avenue, in Nueces County.
- 29. **Anticipated July 2011**. Letters to be sent to cooperating and participating agencies announcing the new scoping process and requesting agency input on the Need and Purpose and the Draft Coordination Plan.
- 30. **Anticipated July 2011**. TxDOT to publicize Agency and Public Scoping Meeting (Scoping Meeting #1) to be held in Corpus Christi to explain to the public, and cooperating and participating agencies that the project is being reinitiated and the limits have been revised to extend from Beach Avenue to Morgan Avenue, in Nueces County.
- 31. **Anticipated August 9, 2011**. TxDOT to conduct Scoping Meeting #1. Meeting to present draft Coordination Plan including the Need and Purpose, and an explanation of the methodology of analysis and level of detail for the alternative analysis.

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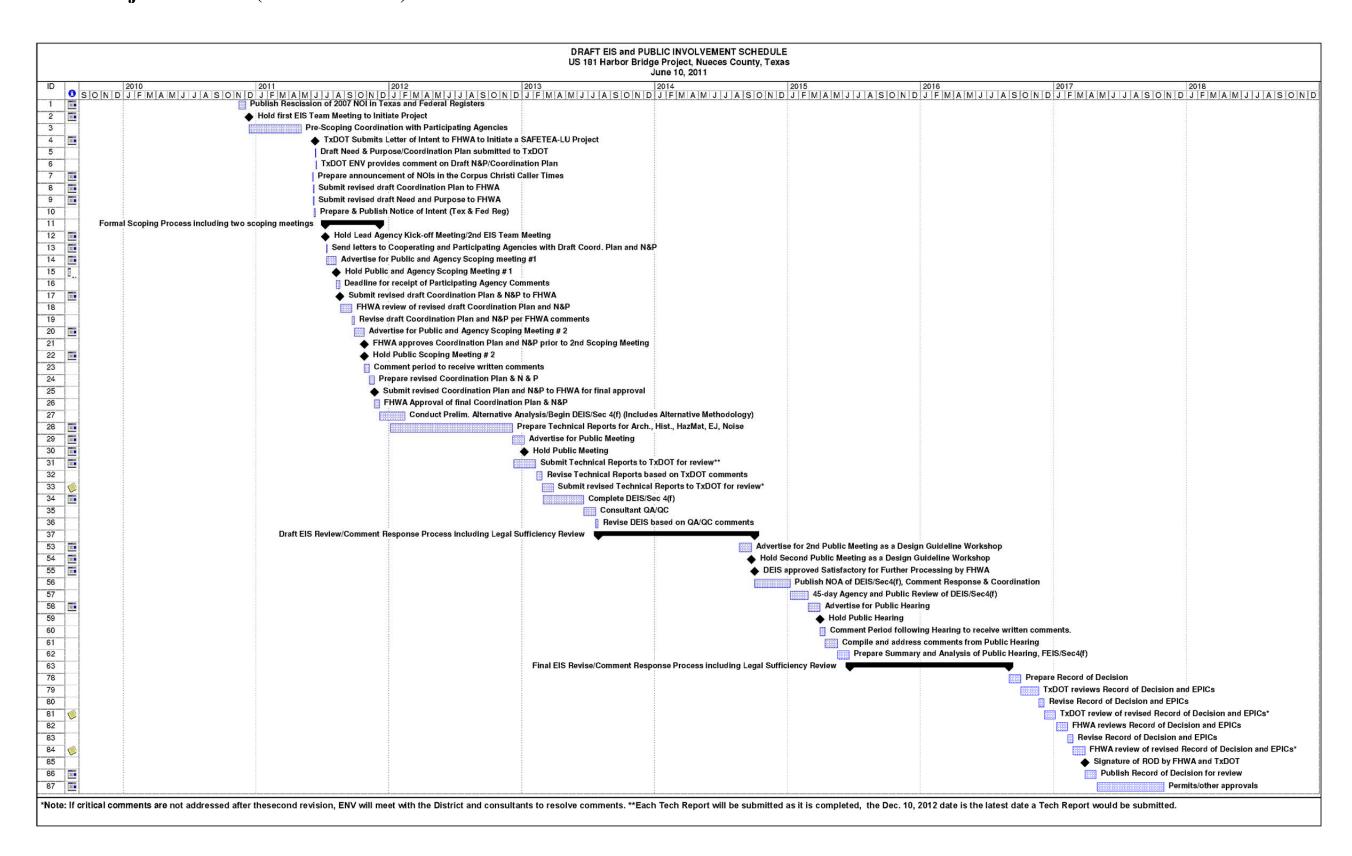
- Comments from the public and cooperating and participating agencies are due 10 days after the meeting.
- 32. **Anticipated August September 2011**. FHWA and TxDOT to evaluate input received at Scoping Meeting #1 and revise the Need and Purpose, the range of alternatives, and the Draft Coordination Plan as necessary.
- 33. **Anticipated September 2011**. TxDOT to publicize Scoping Meeting #2 in Corpus Christi.
- 34. Anticipated October 2011. TxDOT to conduct Scoping Meeting #2 in Corpus Christi. Presentation to cover the approved Coordination Plan, including the final Need and Purpose statement, the range of alternatives, and the methods and level of detail. Comments from the public and cooperating and participating agencies are due 10 days after the meeting.
- 35. **Anticipated November 2011.** FHWA and TxDOT to evaluate input received at Scoping Meeting #2 and finalize the Coordination Plan as necessary.
- 36. **Anticipated December 2011 to February 2012**. TxDOT to initiate preliminary alternatives analysis, data collection and base line research and write-up for the Draft EIS (DEIS).
- 37. **Anticipated throughout 2012.** TxDOT **to prepare** technical reports for Archeology, Historic structures, Hazardous Materials, Environmental Justice and Traffic Noise. As each tech report is prepared, it will be submitted to for review by FHWA and, as appropriate, coordinated with resource agencies.
- 38. **Anticipated Winter 2012 2013.** TxDOT to advertise the public meeting.
- 39. **Anticipated Winter 2012 2013.** TxDOT to conduct the Public Meeting. Exhibits of the reasonable alternatives to be presented. Comments from the public and cooperating and participating Agencies are due 10 days after the meeting.
- 40. **Anticipated Winter to Summer 2013**. DEIS/Section 4(f) to be completed and submitted to federal, state, and local agencies as well as interested citizens for review and comments. DEIS to be revised and resubmitted to TxDOT and FHWA as part of the process.
- 41. **Anticipated Summer 2013 to Summer 2014.** TxDOT and FHWA to review the Draft EIS, including legal sufficiency reviews and provide comments on the DEIS. This process includes multiple reviews, revisions, and meetings to address the changes to the DEIS prior to it being sent to the participating and cooperating agencies.
- 42. **Anticipated Summer to Fall 2014.** DEIS to be sent to participating and cooperating agencies, as well as the public, for review and comment. The DEIS is then revised as appropriate to address the agency and public comments.
- 43. **Anticipated Fall 2014**. Second Public Meeting to be conducted as a Design Guideline Workshop.
- 44. **Anticipated Fall 2014.** DEIS/Section 4(f) to be completed and approved Satisfactory for Further Processing by TxDOT and FHWA, allowing the project to proceed to the public hearing phase.
- 45. **Anticipated Winter 2014 -2015.** DEIS/Section 4(f) to be submitted to the public and agencies for 45-day review period prior to the Public Hearing.
- 46. **Anticipated Winter 2015.** FHWA and TxDOT to publish the Notice of Availability of DEIS in the *Federal Register*, the *Texas Register*, the *Corpus Christi Caller*

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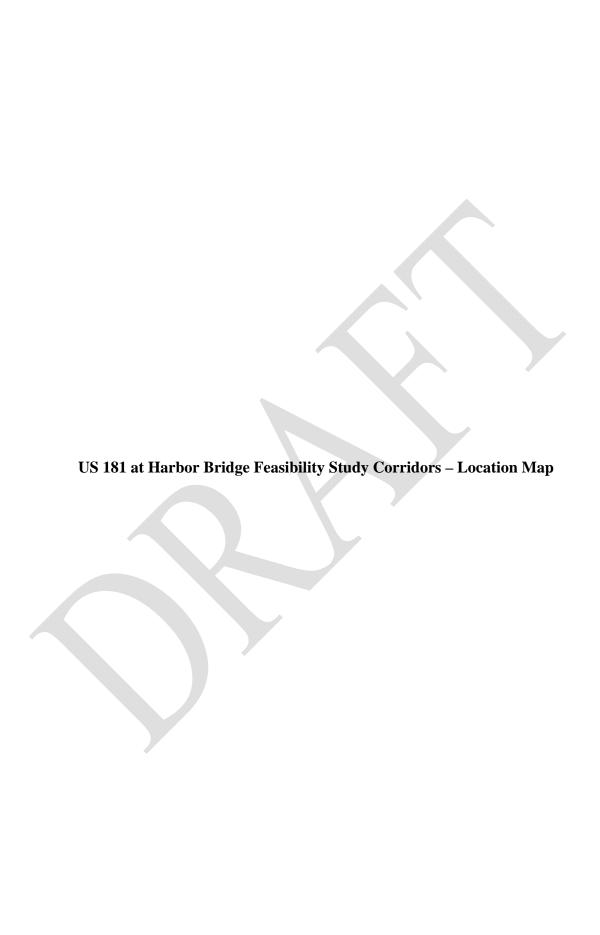
- *Times*, and a Spanish-language newspaper of local distribution. Comment Response and Coordination with participating and cooperating agencies to be completed.
- 47. **Anticipated Winter Spring 2015.** TxDOT to advertise the public hearing.
- 48. **Anticipated Spring 2015.** TxDOT to conduct a Public Hearing. Results of the DEIS and the Preferred Alternative to be presented. Comments from the public and cooperating and participating agencies are due 10 days after the meeting.
- 49. **Anticipated Spring Summer 2015.** The Final EIS will be developed using the DEIS and the Summary and Analysis of the Public Hearing
- 50. **Anticipated Summer 2015 to Summer 2016.** Final EIS and Summary and Analysis to be reviewed by TxDOT and FHWA. This review and comment process includes the legal sufficiency review by both agencies. This process also includes multiple reviews, revisions, and meetings to address the changes to the Final EIS prior to it being distributed to the participating and cooperating agencies.
- 51. **Anticipated Summer 2016.** FHWA and TxDOT to publish Notice of Availability of final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) in the *Federal Register*, the *Texas Register*, the *Corpus Christi Caller-Times*, and a Spanish-language newspaper of local distribution.
- 52. **Anticipate Summer 2016 Spring 2017.** TxDOT and FHWA to prepare, review, and revise the Record of Decision. This process includes multiple reviews, revisions, and meetings to address the changes to the Record of Decision prior to it being approved by FHWA.
- 53. **Anticipated Spring 2017.** FHWA and TxDOT to publish the Record of Decision in the *Federal Register* and the *Texas Register*.
- 54. **Anticipated 2017.** TxDOT to obtain necessary permits, licenses, or approvals after the Record of Decision.

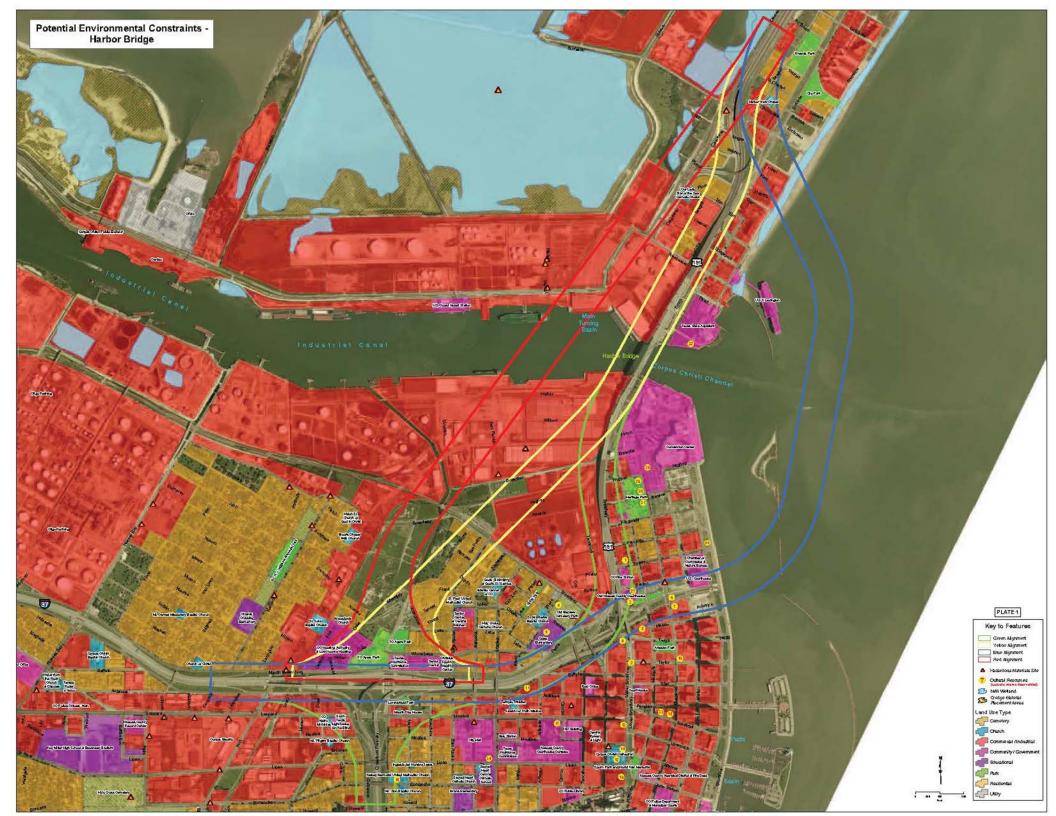


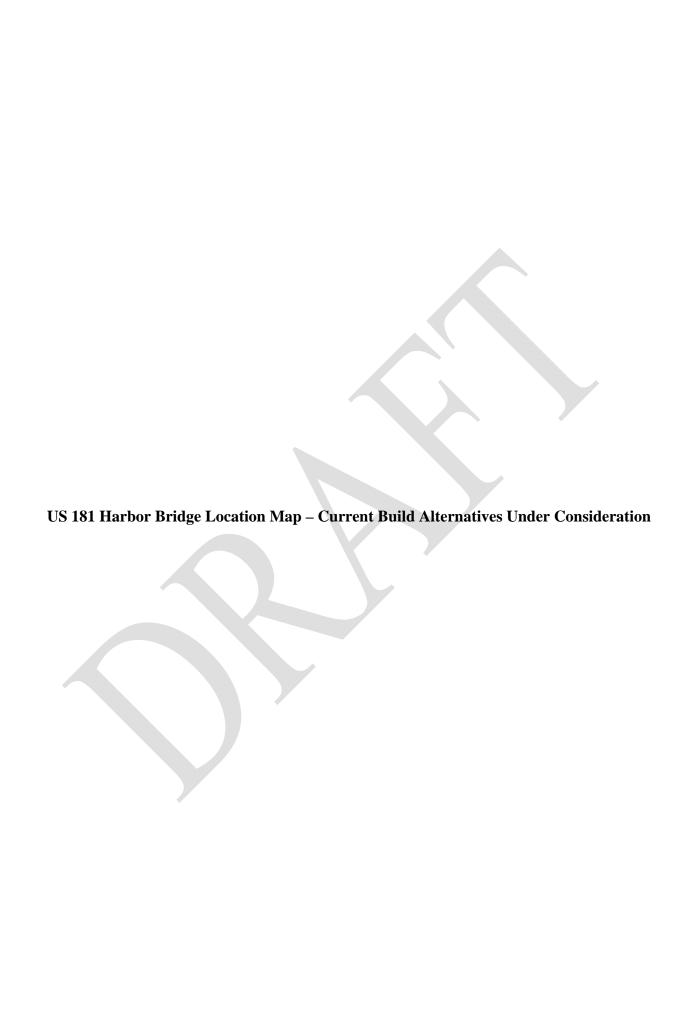
9.0 Tentative Project Schedule (as of June 2011)

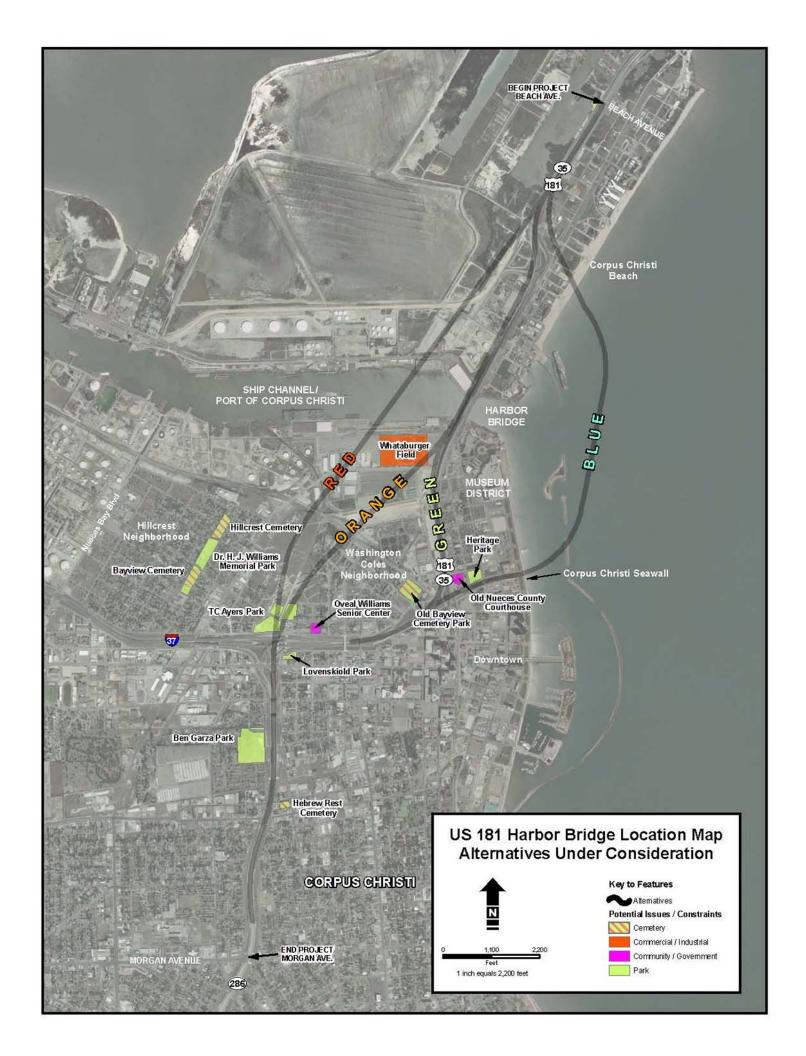














Attachment 2: Corpus Christi Ship Proposed Channel Improvements

