

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
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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	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. 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.2. Table 5.0-1 Scoping Agencies list was updated.
Draft Coordination Plan October 2011	October 27 , 2011	Revisions: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Section 4.0 Need & Purpose2. Schedules in Sections 8.0 and 9.0

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 by adding 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.

Additional Alternatives Identified During Scoping

As discussed in **Section 7.0, Public Involvement**, a scoping meeting was held for the project on August 9, 2011 and second scoping meeting is planned for October 27, 2011. Comments received at and following the first scoping meeting from agencies and the public identified two additional build alternatives that are now being considered as project alternatives. The two

additional alternatives are shown on the location map in the Appendix and, as described below, are named the Western Alternative and the Tunnel Alternative.

The Western Alternative was suggested by a member of the public at the Scoping Meeting held on August 9, 2011. The alternative would begin to the north on US 181 at Beach Avenue, near Sunset Lake, and veer west of the existing US 181 across Nueces Bay, continuing south across the Port of Corpus Christi dredge spoil storage area. The alternative would then route to the south across the Corpus Christi Ship Channel and continue south generally following Nueces Bay Boulevard to I-37.

The Tunnel Alternative was suggested by the US Environmental Protection Agency and two citizens following the public Scoping meeting on August 9, 2011. The tunnel generally follows the existing alignment of US 181 with a slight offset to the west.

3.2 Methodology for Analyzing Alternatives

Agency Analysis

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.

NEPA Analysis

TxDOT proposes a methodology involving two screening criteria to establish the range of reasonable alternatives. An alternative will be carried forward for detailed evaluation in the DEIS if: 1) the alternative meets the Need & Purpose for the project; and 2) the alternative does not involve clearly identifiable and unavoidable significant impacts that cannot reasonably be mitigated.

To determine whether an alternative meets the Need & Purpose of the project, TxDOT will apply the (FHWA approved) Measures of Effectiveness (**See Section 4.3 Measures of Effectiveness**), established through collaboration with participating agencies and the public and documented in the Coordination Plan. Alternatives that are found to not meet the Need & Purpose would be eliminated from further consideration, and the rationale for elimination would be documented.

To determine whether an alternative involves clearly identifiable and unavoidable significant impacts that cannot be mitigated, TxDOT will conduct an environmental constraints analysis and preliminary review of the environmental effects with an emphasis on avoidance, minimization, and mitigation. If through this evaluation, TxDOT determines that, if implemented, an alternative would clearly have significant environmental impacts that it could not reasonably mitigate, it would propose elimination of that alternative from further consideration (and therefore not include it in the range of reasonable alternatives) by FHWA. If approved by FHWA, a brief explanation for the elimination of alternatives will be presented in the DEIS. Alternatives having only potentially significant impacts, or clearly identifiable significant impacts with a reasonable expectation of being mitigated, would be carried forward for full consideration in the DEIS.

4.0 Draft Need and Purpose

I-37, US 181 and State Highway (SH) 286 (Crosstown Expressway) are the major highways that serve the project area. The proposed project limits extend both north-south and east-west and include: a 2.1-mile section of I-37 between Nueces Bay Boulevard and Shoreline Drive, where I-37 ends in the Corpus Christi central business district (CBD); US 181 from its southern terminus beginning in the CBD where I-37 intersects with Broadway Street and extending north across the Harbor Bridge approximately 2.3 miles to Beach Avenue; and SH 286 extending approximately 2.2 miles from I-37 south to Morgan Avenue. The logical termini and limits of independent utility for the proposed project are US 181 at Beach Avenue and SH 286 at Morgan Avenue. The proposed project is approximately 4.8 miles long. See the project location map in the Appendix.

US 181 provides a direct connection between the Corpus Christi CBD and the communities of Portland, Gregory, Ingleside, and Aransas Pass to the north. US 181 is the only continuous state/federal facility that provides a direct connection between the Corpus Christi CBD and its northern suburbs.

The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA21) specifically designated funds to study the replacement of the Harbor Bridge. TxDOT completed the Feasibility Study in 2003. In 2011, the Texas Transportation Commission passed a Minute Order authorizing the preparation of the Environmental Impact Statement and schematic development for the proposed project. The US 181 Harbor Bridge project is listed in the Corpus Christi Metropolitan Planning Organization's Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) 2010-2035 (the long range transportation plan) as construction of a new bridge over the Corpus Christi Ship Channel. The proposed project is expected to be completed within the planning timeframe of the MTP, but is beyond the 2011-2014 STIP-TIP planning period. An estimated date of completion is not available at this time. The proposed project is included in Appendix D to the 2011-2014 STIP-TIP which identifies projects undergoing preliminary engineering and environmental analysis.

4.1 NEED FOR THE PROPOSED PROJECT

The following underlying problems have been identified with the existing US 181, including the Harbor Bridge, and the project area: 1) safety risks (including hurricane evacuation) caused by geometric deficiencies; 2) structural restrictions to navigational access at the Port of Corpus

Christi limiting Port expansion and economic opportunity; 3) increased difficulty in maintaining the structure's operability over the long-term; 4) limited connectivity to local roadways; and 5) decreased capacity caused by outdated design elements and increasing traffic demand.

Safety Risks (including hurricane evacuation)

Numerous geometric deficiencies exist on the current US 181 facility, including the Harbor Bridge, and these deficiencies lead to deteriorating traffic conditions and unacceptable accident levels. In general, crash rates on US 181 exceed the statewide average for similar facilities (urban 4-lanes or more divided roadway classification). The 2009 crash rate per 100 million vehicle miles traveled for US 181 was 130.97, whereas the statewide average crash rate in 2009 for similar facilities was 114.65, a difference of fourteen percent. More specifically, the following are safety problems presented by the geometry of the existing roadway.

- 1) The existing Harbor Bridge and approaches do not have shoulders, contributing to high levels of congestion when even minor traffic crashes and breakdowns occur. The lack of shoulders also means the clearance between the travel lanes and the railing on the existing bridge does not meet current standards, which leads to decreased driver comfort.
- 2) The existing US 181 approaches to Harbor Bridge are on a steep (5%) vertical slope that when combined with the horizontal curvature on both the north and south ends of the existing bridge creates a situation where vehicles are travelling at downhill speeds (faster than posted speeds) entering into sharp "S" curves.
- 3) Certain ramp lengths do not provide sufficient acceleration or deceleration distances to meet current design standards.
 - a. For example, the northbound SH 286 to eastbound I-37 exit is designed for a lower speed than the main lanes, requiring vehicles to slow down as they exit SH 286. In addition, there is inadequate distance on the I-37 on-ramp to accelerate before merging with traffic traveling at highway speeds. In order to then exit I-37 and enter US 181, vehicles must again slow down to navigate the I-37 exit-ramp/US 181 entrance ramp.
 - b. Another example of a ramp with insufficient length is the US 181 northbound entrance ramp from Spur 544/Mesquite Street. This low-speed entrance ramp is not long enough for traffic to accelerate before merging with traffic from an adjacent on-ramp (Antelope Street) and the US 181 northbound main lanes.
 - c. A third example of a ramp that does not meet current design-criteria is the US 181 southbound exit ramp to Port Avenue. The length of this ramp combined with the sharp curvature and the steep vertical grade coming down off of the bridge makes it difficult for vehicles, particularly large trucks, to decelerate quickly enough before merging with local traffic on the service road.
- 4) The current configuration of US 181 southbound just south of the Harbor Bridge does not meet current design standards or conform to driver expectancy. Approaching Downtown Corpus Christi from the north, motorists are presented with a three-decision breakpoint, meaning the three-lane highway offers three separate destinations via US 181 (Downtown Corpus Christi, IH 37/SH 286, and Staples Street) from the same point on the highway. The spacing between the three exit ramps does not conform to current design criteria, and, in particular, the ramp to Downtown Corpus Christi (an undesirable left-

hand exit) does not allow motorists sufficient time to decelerate before reaching the traffic-lighted intersection at Spur 544. These conditions increase the likelihood of erratic movements and accidents, especially for drivers unfamiliar with the Corpus Christi area.

- 5) Existing lane widths are 11.7 feet, less than the current standard 12 feet, making it difficult for large trucks and faster moving automobiles to maneuver, particularly around curves and at night or during inclement weather.

Both US 181, including the Harbor Bridge, and I-37 within the project area are designated major hurricane evacuation routes (TxDOT 2011). US 181 is the primary evacuation route for San Patricio County and an alternate route to I-37 for the City of Corpus Christi. During a storm event I-37 is used for evacuation until the traffic volumes reach the maximum highway capacity, which includes the use of the shoulder evacuation lane and contraflow lanes (reversing the south bound lanes). Once the traffic volume on I-37 reaches capacity, traffic is directed 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, which connects to I-37. Given the geometric deficiencies outlined above, US 181 carries with it the increased risk of becoming unnecessarily clogged in the event of an accident or vehicle breakdown during an emergency hurricane evacuation.

Structural Restrictions to Navigational Access to the Port of Corpus Christi

The Port of Corpus Christi is the 5th largest port in the United States in total tonnage and the primary economic engine for the Coastal Bend (Port of Corpus Christi 2011). The Port's mission statement is "to serve as a regional economic development catalyst while enhancing and protecting its existing industrial base and simultaneously working to diversify its international maritime cargo business." In a 2003 Economic Impact Study conducted on the Port's behalf, data were presented showing that the activities at the Port were responsible for 39,905 jobs in Texas and about \$2.2 billion of personal income (Martin Associates 2004).

The existing Harbor Bridge provides 138 feet of vertical clearance for moving vessels in and out of the Port's inner harbor. As the bridge was designed and built in the 1950s, it accommodated vessel sizes of the post-World War II era. As the maritime industry has evolved in the container, cruise, and military sectors, the growth in size of modern ships and cargo has outgrown the Harbor Bridge's 138-foot vertical restriction.

In 2010, the Port commissioned a *Harbor Bridge Clearance Study* based on an analysis of the various types of vessels that currently are and will be available in the future, including cargo ships, tankers, cruise ships, and military ships. The study included a survey of current Port customers seeking data pertaining to vessel size and type, both for current conditions and future projections (Harrington & Cortelyou, Inc. 2010). The study of the effects of the restriction caused by the vertical clearance of the existing Harbor Bridge suggests that current Port customers using the inner harbor see the potential to bring even more business to the area if that vertical clearance were raised, permitting the un-obstructed and safe operation for larger vessels, in particular crude oil tankers. Customers routinely forego chartering these larger, more profitable vessels, because, while they can enter the Port when weighed down with cargo, they need to take on ballast water to fit under the bridge to exit. This operation requires the vessel to

unload the dirty ballast water at the next port and wash out its tanks prior to loading again. The cost and time lost makes this operation extremely expensive; due to the unprofitability, ships of this size do not call on the Port (Harrington & Cortelyou, Inc. 2010). In the 2010 study, Port customers generally recommended that a vertical clearance from 175 feet to 200 feet be considered for any new Harbor Bridge.

The vertical restriction of the existing Harbor Bridge is considered an impediment to potential economic benefits and economic opportunities for residents of Corpus Christi and the surrounding Nueces County and San Patricio County areas. Therefore, to better serve its customers and to take advantage of the opportunities presented by the current expansion of the Panama Canal, including the construction of a new set of locks that will allow the transit of longer and wider ships, the Port of Corpus Christi is planning expansion projects in areas outside the inner harbor (Port of Corpus Christi 2011), leaving the inner harbor as a limiting factor in the Port's long-term economic development potential.

Increased Difficulty in Maintaining the Structure's Operability over the Long-Term

The existing Harbor Bridge is a combination of pre-stressed concrete beam spans, steel plate girder spans, simple deck truss spans, and continuous deck truss and suspended tied arch spans over corrosive saltwater, factors that when combined require frequent and costly maintenance that disrupts both vehicular and maritime traffic. In addition, due to the structure's age (construction was completed in 1959), major reconstruction will be required to maintain operability over the long-term.

Limited Connectivity to Local Roadways

The combination of US 181 and I-37, constructed in the late 1950s to early 1960s modified the local roadway network such that access to uptown and downtown Corpus Christi, particularly from the residential areas north of I-37, was made more circuitous. Locally, this has had the effect of creating a perceived barrier between those neighborhoods and the Corpus Christi CBD. In addition, access to the City's museum district (including Bayfront Science Park) on the east side of US 181 as well as major traffic generators on the west side (Whataburger Field professional baseball stadium, the Concrete Street Amphitheater, and the Congressman Solomon P. Ortiz International Center) is indirect and results in congestion on the facility as well as a breakdown in circulation on the local roadway network during major events.

Decreased Capacity to Meet Future Traffic Demand







Corridor-level traffic analysis prepared for the proposed project indicates an estimated average annual daily traffic for the section of US 181 between Beach Avenue and SH 286 (Crosstown Expressway) of 48,700 vehicles per day (vpd) in 2009 (TxDOT 2009). According to traffic model projections prepared for the proposed project, traffic is expected to reach 78,000 vpd by 2035, an increase of sixty percent (URS 2011), meaning drivers would go from currently experiencing minimal delays with few restrictions on speed, to significant delays and poor driver comfort.

Table 4.0-1: Annual Average Daily Traffic on US 181

Location	Limits	Functional Class	Total Number of Lanes	2010 Daily Volume	Projected 2035 Daily Volume
US 181	Beach Avenue to SH 286 (Crosstown Expressway)	Freeway	6	48,700	78,000

Source: TxDOT 2009; URS 2010.

The measure of the operational condition of a highway as perceived by the driver is characterized as that highway's Level of Service (LOS). LOS is broken into categories ranging from A to F, with A representing free-flow operations and F representing very congested traffic conditions. In the publication *A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets*, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) recommends that freeways and their auxiliary facilities should generally be designed for LOS C in urban areas and LOS B in rural areas. LOS D may be acceptable in heavily developed sections of metropolitan areas and LOS C in rural areas with unusually high traffic volumes. The corridor-level traffic analysis prepared for the proposed project indicates that if no improvements are made in this section, US 181 is anticipated to be operating at LOS E in 2035.

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

Source: California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), 2003

4.2 PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT

The purpose of the proposed project is to:

- 1) Mitigate geometric deficiencies and bring the highway, including the Harbor Bridge, into conformance with current design standards and criteria to improve safety for the travelling public, including during hurricane evacuations;
- 2) Reduce the structural restriction to navigational access to the inner harbor at the Port of Corpus Christi, thereby promoting the expansion of the Port and spurring economic opportunity in the area;
- 3) Maximize the long-term operability of the Harbor Bridge structure;
- 4) Improve the connectivity to the local roadway system; and
- 5) Meet current standards for capacity on US 181, including the Harbor Bridge, considering projected future traffic demand.

4.3 MEASURES OF EFFECTIVENESS

To evaluate whether a particular alternative serves the purposes of the proposed project and thereby addresses the identified needs, project planners developed the following *measures of effectiveness* to apply to each alternative. **Table 2** provides detailed measures for evaluating the alternatives against these effectiveness criteria.

To improve safety for the public travelling on US 181 and to establish a reliable hurricane evacuation route, an alternative would need to correct the existing geometric deficiencies and upgrade the facility to current design standards where appropriate, allowing for warranted design exceptions. This includes adding shoulders to the bridge and approaches, reducing the vertical slope, providing longer ramps where needed and adequate spacing between ramp exits; and widening the travel lanes on US 181. To establish a reliable hurricane evacuation route, the proposed improvements would be designed to meet the State's criteria for identifying US 181 as a Major Evacuation Route.

To reduce the structural restriction to navigational access to the inner harbor at the Port of Corpus Christi, thereby promoting the expansion of the Port and spurring economic opportunity in the area, an alternative would need to raise the low-chord elevation of the existing Harbor Bridge to allow larger vessels to use the harbor. The height of the proposed bridge would need to be sufficient to accommodate the sizes and types of vessels the Port envisions as providing the necessary catalyst for expansion.

To maximize the long-term operability of the Harbor Bridge structure, an alternative would reduce the cost and frequency of bridge maintenance relative to the existing conditions and extend the operational life of the bridge well beyond the life of the existing bridge. To accomplish this, the proposed rehabilitated or replaced bridge would be designed with non-corrosive building or maintenance materials, such as concrete, and other elements requiring less maintenance over the life of the bridge, and the design-life of the proposed rehabilitated or replaced bridge would be 100 years.

To improve the connectivity to the local roadway system, an alternative would be designed to meet current design criteria where appropriate, allowing for warranted design exceptions, and

would maintain local roadway accessibility relative to the existing condition of the local roadway network. To accomplish this, project engineers would follow TxDOT's Roadway Design Manual, including associated references, in designing the proposed improvements and would provide at a minimum the same number of on- and off-ramps as currently exist without eliminating access to areas relative to the existing local roadway network.

To meet current standards for capacity on US 181, including the Harbor Bridge, an alternative would be designed to increase the capacity of the facility (main lanes and ramps) and the bridge structure, consistent with the traffic analysis to be conducted for the proposed project, to accommodate projected future traffic demand.

Table 4.0-2: Measures of Effectiveness

Project Purpose	Criteria	Measure
Mitigate geometric deficiencies to improve safety for travelling public	Corrects geometric deficiencies	Adds shoulders to the bridge and approach sections; reduces the vertical slope; provides ramp lengths commensurate with design speed; provides sufficient spacing for exit ramps to meet driver expectancy; widens travel lanes
	Upgrades facility to current design standards where appropriate, allowing for warranted exceptions	Utilizes TxDOT's Roadway Design Manual and Bridge Design Manual, including associated references, in designing the proposed improvements
	Establishes a reliable hurricane evacuation route	Meets State criteria used to determine Hurricane Evacuation routes for the Corpus Christi area
Reduce structural restriction to navigational access to the inner harbor at the Port of Corpus Christi, thereby promoting the expansion of the Port and spurring economic opportunity in the area	Rehabilitate or replace the existing Harbor Bridge to allow for a structure with greater vertical clearance above the channel	Provides a vertical clearance sufficient to accommodate the sizes and types of vessels that will facilitate the expansion of the Port of Corpus Christi inner harbor and the spurring of economic opportunity in the area
Maximize long-term operability of the Harbor Bridge structure	Reduces the cost and frequency of bridge maintenance	Uses non-corrosive building or maintenance materials, such as concrete, and other elements to limit the extent of routine and structural maintenance over the life of the bridge
	Extends the operational life of the bridge well beyond the expected life of the existing bridge	Uses a 100-year design-life for the rehabilitated or replaced bridge
Improve connectivity to the local roadway system	Upgrades the facility to current design standards where appropriate, allowing for warranted exceptions	Utilizes TxDOT's Roadway Design Manual, including associated references, in designing the proposed improvements
	Maintains local roadway accessibility relative to the existing condition	Provides at a minimum the same number of on- and off-ramps as currently exist; does not eliminate access to areas relative to the existing local roadway network
Meet current standards for capacity to accommodate future traffic demand	Increases capacity of the facility (mainlanes and ramps), including the bridge structure	Adds mainlanes if warranted following the project-level traffic analysis; adds shoulders; alters ramp design to increase capacity
	Upgrades the facility to current design standards where appropriate, allowing for warranted exceptions	Utilizes TxDOT's Roadway Design Manual, including associated references, in designing the proposed improvements

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	Document Review Periods	Responsibilities
Federal Agencies					
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)	Col. Christopher W. Sallese, District Engineer and Commanding Officer Attention: Dwayne Johnson	Galveston District, P.O. Box 1229 Galveston, TX 77553-1229	Cooperating Agency; Participating Agency	Agreed to provide comments within the requested times set by SAFETEA-LU. Stated that their permit process has its own time periods.	Section 404 Clean Water Act permit jurisdiction Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act – Bridge permit jurisdiction
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	Agreed to provide comments within 30 days when possible but both District and HQ must review permits.	Section 9 of the Rivers and Harbor Act – bridge permit jurisdiction
U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)	Salvador Salinas, State Conservationist	101 South Main Temple, TX 76501	Cooperating Agency; Participating Agency	NRCS will not require further coordination for this project according to their letter dated August 2, 2011.	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 Attention: John MacFarlane	1445 Ross Avenue Suite 1200 Dallas, TX 75202-2733	Cooperating Agency; Participating Agency	Agreed to be a cooperating agency by letter dated Aug.9,2011 but did not comment on review periods.	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 Attention: Pat Clements	C/O TAMU-Corpus Christi 6300 Ocean Drive, # 5837 Corpus Christi, TX 78412-5837	Cooperating Agency; Participating Agency	Agreed to 30 day and 60 day review periods but may request and extension of 30 day review period.	Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act permit jurisdiction

Table 5.0-1: Scoping Agencies List, continued

Agency Name	Contact Person/ Title	Address	Role	Document Review Periods	Responsibilities
Federal Agencies, continued					
National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)	Dr. Roger Zimmerman, NMFS, Southeast Regional Office Attention: Erin Piper	Habitat Conservation 4700 Avenue U Galveston, TX 77551	Cooperating Agency; Participating Agency	Agreed to 30 day and 60 day review periods.	Review and comment on possible effect to marine fisheries in compliance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Reauthorization Act of 2006
US Department of the Interior, National Parks Service (NPS)	Roger Knowlton, Outdoor Recreation Planner	Midwest Region Partnerships/Grants 601 Riverfront Drive Omaha, NE 68102	Cooperating Agency Participating Agency		Waiting for response to invitation letter.
State Agencies					
State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO)	Mark Wolfe, Executive Director, Texas Historical Commission	P.O. Box 12276 Austin, TX 78711-2276	Participating Agency	Agreed to be a 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	No response received.	Review and comment related to coastal resource impacts related to the proposed project and compliance with the Coastal Management Plan.
Texas General Land Office	Hal Croft, Asset Management Deputy Commissioner	P.O. Box 12873 Austin, TX 78711-2873	Participating Agency	No response received.	Review project effects under Memorandum of Understanding and Memorandum of Agreement between TxDOT and GLO

Table 5.0-1: Scoping Agencies List, continued

Agency Name	Contact Person/ Title	Address	Role	Document Review Periods	Responsibilities
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ)	Mark R. Vickery, Executive Director	P.O. Box 13087 Austin, TX 78711-3087	Participating Agency	TCEQ stated that they will be a Participating Agency and provide timely review comments.	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	No response received.	Review project effects under Memorandum of Understanding and Memorandum of Agreement between TxDOT and TPWD
Local Agencies					
City of Corpus Christi	Ángel Escobar, City Manager	1201 Leopard Street Corpus Christi, TX 78401	Participating Agency	Agreed to be a Participating Agency and to 30 day and 60 day review periods.	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	No response received.	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	Agreed to attend the scoping meeting but did not comment on review periods.	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	Agreed to attend scoping meetings but did not address the review periods.	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

Agency Name	Contact Person/ Title	Address	Role	Document Review Periods	Responsibilities
Corpus Christi Metropolitan Planning Organization	Tom Niskala, Transportation Planning Director	5151 Flynn Parkway Corpus Christi, TX 78411	Participating Agency	Agreed to be a Participating Agency and attend the scoping meetings but did not comment on review periods.	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	Agreed to 30 day and 60 day review periods.	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	Agreed to participate in the project but did not address the review period in their letter dated Aug. 1, 2011.	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	No response received.	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	No response received.	Involved with programs and activities that promote, assist, and enhance economic development within the city of Corpus Christi.
Native American Tribes – Nueces County, Texas					
Apache Tribe of Oklahoma	Louis Mynahonah, Chairman	P.O. Box 1220 Anadarko, OK 73005	Participating Agency	No response received.	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	No response received.	Identification of potential impacts to environmental justice populations

Table 5.0-1: Scoping Agencies List, continued

Agency Name	Contact Person/ Title	Address	Role	Document Review Periods	Responsibilities
Kiowa Indian Tribe of Oklahoma	Jame Eskew	c/o Kiowa Culture Preservation Authority P.O. Box 885 Carnegie, OK 73015	Participating Agency	No response received.	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	No response received.	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	No response received.	Identification of potential impacts to environmental justice populations
Other Interested Parties					
Historic Bridge Foundation	Kitty Henderson, Executive Director	P.O. Box 66245 Austin, TX 78766	Interested Party	No response received.	Comment on impacts to 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 in **Table 5.0-1** 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 are part of the early in the project development. The first scoping meeting was held at the TxDOT District Office on August 9, 2011. This scoping meeting provided resource agencies, stakeholders, and members of the public an opportunity to review and provide comments on the draft Coordination Plan that includes the Need and Purpose, and an explanation of the methodology of analysis and level of detail for the alternative analysis. The second scoping meeting is planned for October 27, 2011, and will cover the revised draft Coordination Plan, including the revised Need and Purpose statement, the range of alternatives including new alternatives suggested by the agencies and the public, 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 made 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.
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.
26. **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. **July 2011.** Letters were 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. **July 2011.** TxDOT to publicized for Agency and Public Scoping Meeting (Scoping Meeting #1) 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. **August 9, 2011.** TxDOT to conducted 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. Comments from the public and cooperating and participating agencies are due 10 days after the meeting.
32. **August - September 2011.** FHWA and TxDOT to evaluated input received at Scoping Meeting #1 and revised the Need and Purpose, the range of alternatives, and the Draft Coordination Plan .
33. **October 2011.** TxDOT to publicized Scoping Meeting #2 in Corpus Christi.
34. **Anticipated October 27, 2011.** TxDOT will 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.** 30-day review and comment period following the 2nd Scoping Meeting.
36. **Anticipated November 2011.** FHWA and TxDOT to evaluate input received at Scoping Meeting #2 and finalize the Coordination Plan as necessary.
37. **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). The first step will be to determine which build alternatives meet the Need & Purpose of the project. The second step will be to evaluate the build alternatives that meet the Need & Purpose by doing an initial review of the potential project impacts.
38. **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.
39. **Anticipated Summer 2012.** The draft technical reports would be completed for Hazardous Material, Environmental Justice, Air Quality and provided to the Environmental Protection Agency for their review and comment. The information provided in these technical reports would be what is available at that time but will not be complete until the impact analysis of all alternatives is complete.
40. **Anticipated Winter 2012 - 2013.** TxDOT to advertise the public meeting.
41. **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.
42. **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.
43. **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.

44. **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.
45. **Anticipated Fall 2014.** Second Public Meeting to be conducted as a Design Guideline Workshop.
46. **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.
47. **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.
48. **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 Times*, and a Spanish-language newspaper of local distribution. Comment Response and Coordination with participating and cooperating agencies to be completed.
49. **Anticipated Winter – Spring 2015.** TxDOT to advertise the public hearing.
50. **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.
51. **Anticipated Spring – Summer 2015.** The Final EIS will be developed using the DEIS and the Summary and Analysis of the Public Hearing
52. **Anticipated Summer 2015 to Spring 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.
53. **Anticipated Winter 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.
54. **Anticipate Summer- Fall.** 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.
55. **Anticipated Fall 2016.** FHWA and TxDOT to publish the Record of Decision in the *Federal Register* and the *Texas Register*.
56. **Anticipated Fall 2016.** TxDOT to obtain necessary permits, licenses, or approvals after the Record of Decision.

				DRAFT EIS and PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT SCHEDULE US 901 Harbor Bridge Project, Nueces County, Texas June 10, 2011																									
ID	Task Name	Duration	Start	Finish	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034
1	Public Notification of 2007 NEPA Title and Federal Register	10 days	Mon 1/17/10	Mon 1/26/10																									
2	Hold 1st EIS Team Meeting to Initiate Process	0 days	Mon 1/17/10	Mon 1/17/10																									
3	Pre-Scoping Coordination with Participating Agencies	10 days	Mon 1/17/10	Mon 1/26/10																									
4	TSOAT Submits Letter of Intent to FHWA to Initiate a SAFETEA-LU Project	0 days	Mon 1/17/10	Mon 1/17/10																									
5	Draft Need & Purpose/Coordination Plans submitted to TSDOT	0 days	Mon 1/17/10	Mon 1/17/10																									
6	TSOAT EIS provides comments on Draft NEPA Coordination Plan	2 days	Wed 1/21/10	Thu 1/21/10																									
7	Prepare amendment of NCE in the Corps Civil Works Plan	2 days	Mon 1/17/10	Tue 1/19/10																									
8	Submit revised Coordination Plan to FHWA	0 days	Wed 1/21/10	Thu 1/21/10																									
9	Submit revised Draft Need and Purpose to FHWA	2 days	Wed 1/21/10	Thu 1/21/10																									
10	Prepare a Draft Need & Purpose (Draft NEPA)	0 days	Mon 1/17/10	Mon 1/17/10																									
11	Formal Scoping Process including pre-scoping meetings	160 days	Mon 2/15/10	Mon 2/22/12																									
12	Hold 1st Agency Kick-off Meeting/2nd EIS Team Meeting	0 days	Mon 2/15/10	Mon 2/15/10																									
13	Hold 1st Agency Kick-off Meeting/2nd EIS Team Meeting	0 days	Mon 2/15/10	Mon 2/15/10																									
14	Advertise for Public and Agency Scoping Meeting #1	10 days	Thu 2/18/10	Tue 2/23/10																									
15	Hold Public and Agency Scoping Meeting #1	0 days	Tue 2/23/10	Tue 2/23/10																									
16	Deadline for receipt of Participating Agency Comments	24 days	Tue 2/23/10	Thu 3/5/10																									
17	TIS Team Meeting	0 days	Wed 2/24/10	Wed 2/24/10																									
18	Submit revised Draft Coordination Plan to FHWA	0 days	Thu 2/25/10	Thu 2/25/10																									
19	FHWA review of revised Draft Coordination Plan and NEPA (including MCE)	10 days	Fri 2/26/10	Tue 3/2/10																									
20	Review Draft Coordination Plan and NEPA per FHWA comments	0 days	Fri 3/2/10	Fri 3/2/10																									
21	Advertise for Public and Agency Scoping Meeting #2	10 days	Fri 3/2/10	Tue 3/23/10																									
22	FHWA approves Coordination Plan and NEPA prior to 2nd Scoping Meeting	0 days	Mon 3/15/10																										

Appendix

US 181 at Harbor Bridge Feasibility Study Corridors – Location Map

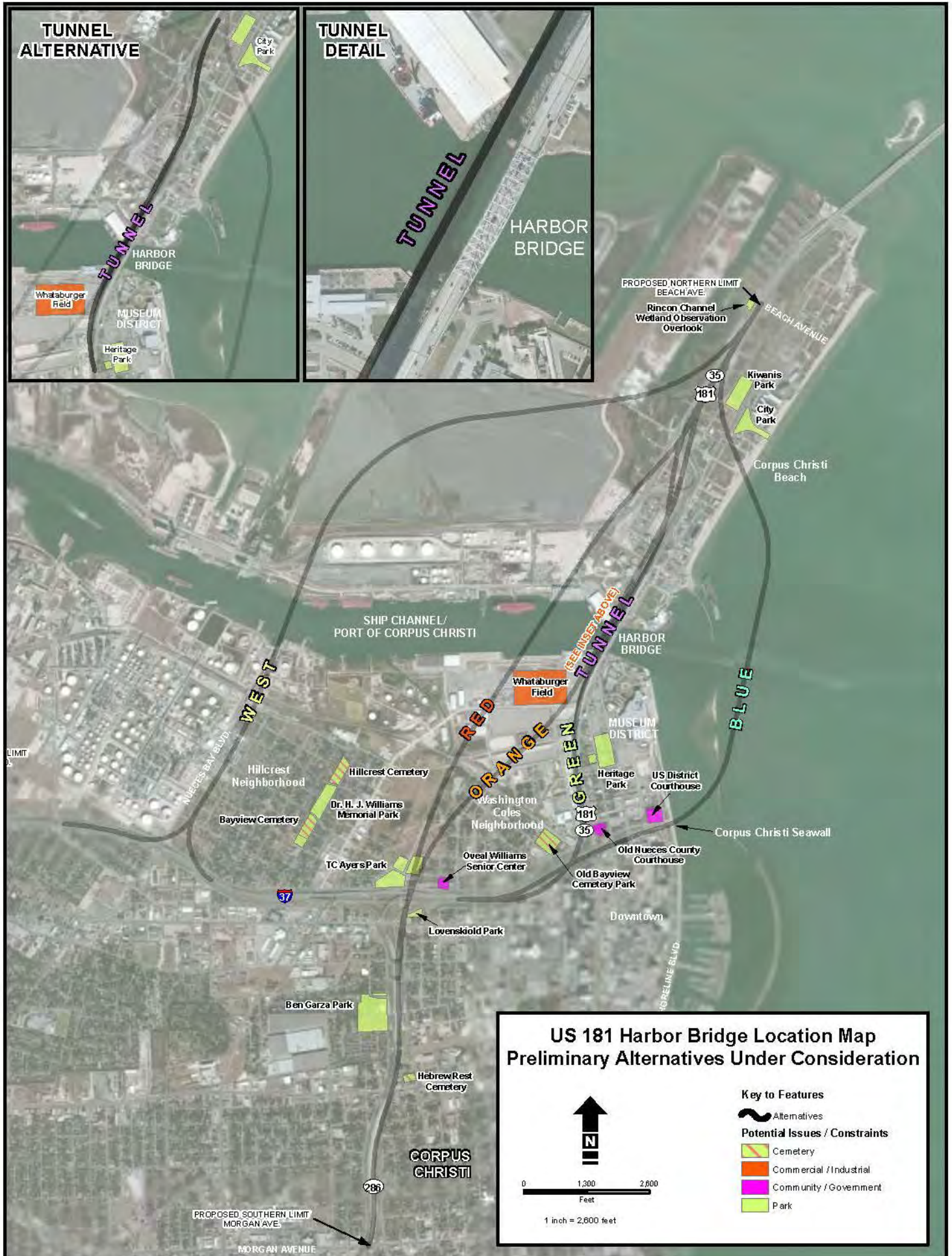
Potential Environmental Constraints - Harbor Bridge

Key to Features

- Green Alignment
- Yellow Alignment
- Blue Alignment
- Red Alignment
- Historical Materials Site
- Cultural Resources
- Habitat
- Ordinary Habitat
- Placement Areas
- Land Use Type
- Canalway
- Church
- Commercial/Industrial
- Community/Government
- Educational
- Park
- Residential
- Utility



US 181 Harbor Bridge Location Map – Current Build Alternatives Under Consideration



Proposed Corpus Christi Ship Channel Improvements

Attachment 2: Corpus Christi Ship Proposed Channel Improvements



Letters of Invitation to the Cooperating and Participating Agencies



Texas Department of Transportation

DEWITT C. GREER STATE HIGHWAY BLDG. • 125 E. 11TH STREET • AUSTIN, TEXAS 78701-2483 • (512) 463-8585

October 13, 2011

Mr. David Bernhart
Assistant Regional Administrator
Protected Resources Division
National Marine Fisheries Service
263 13th Avenue South
St. Petersburg, FL 33701

Dear Mr. Bernhart:

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is preparing for a Second Agency Scoping Meeting regarding the Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed United States Highway 181 Harbor Bridge replacement project in Corpus Christi, Nueces County, Texas (CSJ 0101-06-095). Your agency's participation in the scoping process thus far and agreement to serve as a Participating Agency are appreciated. Summary materials from the first Scoping Meeting, held on August 9, 2011, are enclosed.

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Ms. Sonya Hernandez
Project Delivery Management Branch
Environmental Affairs Division
Texas Department of Transportation
125 E. 11th Street
Austin, TX 78701-2483
(512) 416-2579 | Sonya.Hernandez@txdot.gov

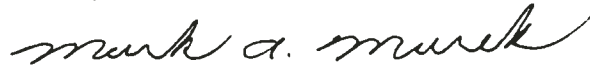
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Thank you for your cooperation and interest in this proposed project.

Sincerely,

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Mark A. Marek, P.E.
Environmental Affairs Division Interim Director

Enclosures: Summary materials from first Scoping Meeting

Cc: Mr. Gregory S. Punske, P.E., Federal Highway Administration-Texas Division
Mr. Victor Vourcos, P.E. and Ms. Paula Sales, P.E., TxDOT Corpus Christi District
Ms. Melissa Neely, TxDOT Environmental Affairs Division



Texas Department of Transportation

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October 13, 2011

Salvador Salinas
State Conservationist
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service
101 South Main Street
Temple, TX 76501

Dear Mr. Salinas:

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is preparing for a Second Agency Scoping Meeting regarding the Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed United States Highway 181 Harbor Bridge replacement project in Corpus Christi, Nueces County, Texas (CSJ 0101-06-095). Your agency's participation in the scoping process thus far and agreement to serve as a Participating Agency are appreciated. Summary materials from the first Scoping Meeting, held on August 9, 2011, are enclosed.

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Environmental Affairs Division Interim Director

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October 13, 2011

Col. Christopher W. Sallase
District Engineer and Commanding Officer
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Galveston District, P.O. Box 1229
Galveston, TX 77553-1229

Dear Col. Sallase:

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is preparing for a Second Agency Scoping Meeting regarding the Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed United States Highway 181 Harbor Bridge replacement project in Corpus Christi, Nueces County, Texas (CSJ 0101-06-095). Your agency's participation in the scoping process thus far and agreement to serve as a Participating Agency are appreciated. Summary materials from the first Scoping Meeting, held on August 9, 2011, are enclosed.

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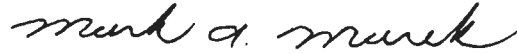
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Mark A. Marek, P.E.
Environmental Affairs Division Interim Director

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Texas Department of Transportation

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October 13, 2011

Mr. David Frank,
Commander DPB, Eighth CG District
U.S. Coast Guard
Bridge Section,
500 Poydras Street
New Orleans, LA 70130-3310

Dear Mr. Frank:

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is preparing for a Second Agency Scoping Meeting regarding the Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed United States Highway 181 Harbor Bridge replacement project in Corpus Christi, Nueces County, Texas (CSJ 0101-06-095). Your agency's participation in the scoping process thus far and agreement to serve as a Cooperating Agency are appreciated. Summary materials from the first Scoping Meeting, held on August 9, 2011, are enclosed.

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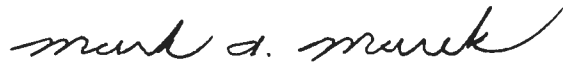
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October 13, 2011

Mr. Allan Strand
Supervisor, Corpus Christi Ecological Services Office
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
C/O TAMU-Corpus Christi
6300 Ocean Drive, # 5837
Corpus Christi, TX 78412-5837

Dear Mr. Strand:

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is preparing for a Second Agency Scoping Meeting regarding the Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed United States Highway 181 Harbor Bridge replacement project in Corpus Christi, Nueces County, Texas (CSJ 0101-06-095). Your agency's participation in the scoping process thus far and agreement to serve as a Participating Agency are appreciated. Summary materials from the first Scoping Meeting, held on August 9, 2011, are enclosed.

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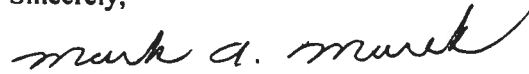
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October 13, 2011

Dr. Alfredo Armendariz
Regional Administrator, Region 6
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1445 Ross Avenue
Suite 1200
Dallas, TX 75202-2733

Dear Dr. Armendariz:

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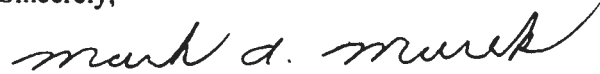
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Texas Department of Transportation

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October 13, 2011

Mr. Rusty Swafford
National Marine Fisheries Service
Southeast Regional Office
4700 Avenue U
Galveston, TX 77551

Dear Mr. Swafford:

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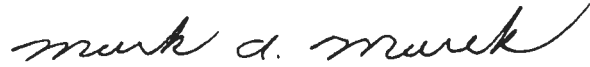
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October 13, 2011

Ms. Jame Eskew
Kiowa Indian Tribe of Oklahoma
c/o Kiowa Culture Preservation Authority
P.O. Box 369
Carnegie, OK 73015

Dear Ms. Eskew:

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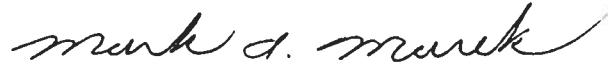
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October 13, 2011

Mr. Carleton Naiche-Palmer
President, Mescalero Apache Tribe
c/o Holly Houghten, THPO
P.O. Box 227
Mescalero, NM 88340

Dear Ms. Houghten:

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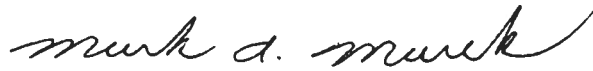
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October 13, 2011

Mr. Don Patterson
President, Tonkawa Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma
1 Rush Buffalo Road
Tonkawa, OK 74653

Dear Mr. Patterson:

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We are inviting your participation at the upcoming second Scoping Meeting, to be held on October 27, 2011 in the Nueces Room at the Congressman Solomon P. Ortiz International Center, 402 Harbor Drive, Corpus Christi, Texas, 78401, from 1:30 pm to 3:30 pm. Later that same day and at the same location, the public is invited to attend a Second Public Scoping Meeting/Open House beginning at 5:30 pm.

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If you have any questions or would like to discuss in more detail the proposed project or our agencies' respective roles and responsibilities during the preparation of this EIS, please contact:

Ms. Sonya Hernandez
Project Delivery Management Branch
Environmental Affairs Division
Texas Department of Transportation
125 E. 11th Street
Austin, TX 78701-2483
(512) 416-2579 | Sonya.Hernandez@txdot.gov

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Thank you for your cooperation and interest in this proposed project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "mark a. marek". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "mark" and last name "marek" clearly distinguishable.

Mark A. Marek, P.E.
Environmental Affairs Division Interim Director

Enclosures: Summary materials from first Scoping Meeting

Cc: Mr. Gregory S. Punske, P.E., Federal Highway Administration-Texas Division
 Mr. Victor Vourcos, P.E. and Ms. Paula Sales, P.E., TxDOT Corpus Christi District
 Ms. Melissa Neely, TxDOT Environmental Affairs Division



Texas Department of Transportation

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October 13, 2011

Mr. Louis Mynahonah
Chairman, Apache Tribe of Oklahoma
P.O. Box 1220
Anadarko, OK 73005

Dear Mr. Mynahonah:

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is preparing for a Second Agency Scoping Meeting regarding the Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed United States Highway 181 Harbor Bridge replacement project in Corpus Christi, Nueces County, Texas (CSJ 0101-06-095). Your agency's participation in the scoping process thus far and agreement to serve as a Participating Agency are appreciated. Summary materials from the first Scoping Meeting, held on August 9, 2011, are enclosed.

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Texas Department of Transportation

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October 13, 2011

Mr. Jimmy Arterberry
Tribal Historic Preservation Officer
Comanche Nation of Oklahoma
P.O. Box 908
Lawton, OK 73502

Dear Mr. Arterberry:

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is preparing for a Second Agency Scoping Meeting regarding the Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed United States Highway 181 Harbor Bridge replacement project in Corpus Christi, Nueces County, Texas (CSJ 0101-06-095). Your agency's participation in the scoping process thus far and agreement to serve as a Participating Agency are appreciated. Summary materials from the first Scoping Meeting, held on August 9, 2011, are enclosed.

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October 13, 2011

Ms. Kitty Henderson
Executive Director
Historic Bridge Foundation
P.O. Box 66245
Austin, TX 78766

Dear Ms. Henderson:

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is preparing for a Second Agency Scoping Meeting regarding the Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed United States Highway 181 Harbor Bridge replacement project in Corpus Christi, Nueces County, Texas (CSJ 0101-06-095). Your agency's participation in the scoping process as an interested party is appreciated. Summary materials from the first Scoping Meeting, held on August 9, 2011, are enclosed.

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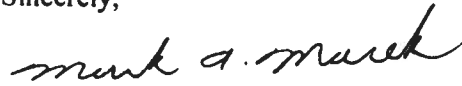
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Texas Department of Transportation

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October 14, 2011

Mr. Hal Croft
Asset Management Deputy Commissioner
Texas General Land Office
P.O. Box 12873
Austin, TX 78711-2873

Dear Mr. Croft:

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is preparing for a Second Agency Scoping Meeting regarding the Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed United States Highway 181 Harbor Bridge replacement project in Corpus Christi, Nueces County, Texas (CSJ 0101-06-095). Your agency's participation in the scoping process thus far and agreement to serve as a Participating Agency are appreciated. Summary materials from the first Scoping Meeting, held on August 9, 2011, are enclosed.

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Texas Department of Transportation

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October 14, 2011

Mr. Mark Wolfe
Executive Director
Texas Historical Commission
P.O. Box 12276
Austin, TX 78711-2276

Dear Mr. Wolfe:

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is preparing for a Second Agency Scoping Meeting regarding the Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed United States Highway 181 Harbor Bridge replacement project in Corpus Christi, Nueces County, Texas (CSJ 0101-06-095). Your agency's participation in the scoping process thus far and agreement to serve as a Participating Agency are appreciated. Summary materials from the first Scoping Meeting, held on August 9, 2011, are enclosed.

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Texas Department of Transportation

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October 14, 2011

Mr. Carter Smith
Executive Director
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
4200 Smith School Road
Austin, TX 78744

Dear Mr. Smith:

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is preparing for a Second Agency Scoping Meeting regarding the Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed United States Highway 181 Harbor Bridge replacement project in Corpus Christi, Nueces County, Texas (CSJ 0101-06-095). Your agency's participation in the scoping process thus far and agreement to serve as a Participating Agency are appreciated. Summary materials from the first Scoping Meeting, held on August 9, 2011, are enclosed.

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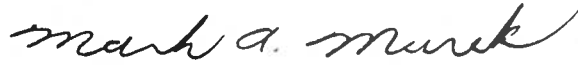
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Texas Department of Transportation

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October 14, 2011

Ms. Helen Young
Deputy Commissioner, Coastal Resources
Texas Coastal Coordination Council
Texas General Land Office
P.O. Box 12873
Austin, TX 78711-2873

Dear Ms. Young:

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is preparing for a Second Agency Scoping Meeting regarding the Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed United States Highway 181 Harbor Bridge replacement project in Corpus Christi, Nueces County, Texas (CSJ 0101-06-095). Your agency's participation in the scoping process thus far and agreement to serve as a Participating Agency are appreciated. Summary materials from the first Scoping Meeting, held on August 9, 2011, are enclosed.

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October 14, 2011

Mr. Mark R. Vickery
Executive Director
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
P.O. Box 13087
Austin, TX 78711-3087

Dear Mr. Vickery:

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is preparing for a Second Agency Scoping Meeting regarding the Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed United States Highway 181 Harbor Bridge replacement project in Corpus Christi, Nueces County, Texas (CSJ 0101-06-095). Your agency's participation in the scoping process thus far and agreement to serve as a Participating Agency are appreciated. Summary materials from the first Scoping Meeting, held on August 9, 2011, are enclosed.

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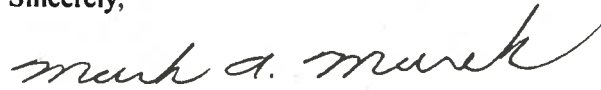
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Ms. Melissa Neely, TxDOT Environmental Affairs Division



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

Texas Division

300 E. 8th Street, Room 826
Austin, TX 78701-3255
Tel (512) 536-5900
Fax (512) 536-5990
texas@fhwa.dot.gov

October 14, 2011

In Reply Refer To:
HB-TX

Nueces County, Texas
Harbor Bridge US 181
CSJ: 0101-06-095
Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Mr. Roger Knowlton
National Park Service, Midwest Region
Partnerships/Grants
601 Riverfront Drive
Omaha, NE 68102

Dear Mr. Knowlton:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), is reinitiating the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed United States (US) Highway 181 Harbor Bridge replacement project in Corpus Christi, Nueces County, Texas (CSJ 0101-06-095). The project limits are: Beach Avenue at US 181 and Morgan Avenue at SH 286. The objectives of the proposed action, as currently defined, are to improve safety, increase roadway capacity, correct roadway and bridge design deficiencies, reduce maintenance costs, improve connectivity and intermodal transportation, enhance navigation, and to promote, enhance and spur economic development in the area. This project will be coordinated under Section 6002 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: a Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). Additional information regarding the proposed project can be found in the enclosed Notice of Intent (NOI), published in the *Federal Register* on June 22, 2011.

Your agency has been identified as an agency that might have an interest in the proposed project in relationship to the Urban Park and Recreation Recovery Program. With this letter, the National Park Service (NPS) is formally invited to become a Participating Agency with FHWA and TxDOT in the development of the EIS. This designation does not imply that your agency either supports the proposal or has any special expertise with respect to evaluation of the proposed project.

FHWA also invites the participation of the NPS as a Cooperating Agency in the preparation of the Draft EIS and Final EIS, in accordance with 40 CFR 1501.6 of the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act.

Pursuant to Section 6002 of SAFETEA-LU Cooperating Agencies are similar to Participating Agencies, but have a higher degree of authority, responsibility, and involvement in the environmental review process. As a Cooperating Agency, your special expertise permits you, as requested by the Lead Agency, to develop information and prepare environmental analyses for the EIS. Responsibilities for a Participating Agency include identifying, as early as practicable, any issues of concern regarding the project's potential environmental or socioeconomic impacts that could substantially delay or prevent an agency from granting a permit or other approval that is needed for the project. We suggest that your agency's role in the development of the above project should include the following as they relate to your area of expertise:

1. Provide meaningful and early input on defining the need and purpose, determining the range of alternatives to be considered, and the methodologies and level of detail required in the analysis of alternatives.
2. Participate in coordination meetings and joint field reviews as appropriate.
3. Provide timely review and comment on the pre-draft or pre-final environmental documents to reflect the views and concerns of your agency on the adequacy of the document, alternatives considered, and the anticipated impacts and mitigation.

Again, FHWA is inviting the NPS to serve in both a Cooperating Agency capacity as well as a Participating Agency capacity. Please respond to FHWA in writing with an acceptance or denial of the invitations within 30 days of receipt of this letter. If your agency declines, the response should state your reason for declining either invitation. If you choose to decline, you must specifically state in your response that your agency:

- Has no jurisdiction or authority with respect to the proposed project;
- Has no expertise or information relevant to the proposed project; and
- Does not intend to submit comments on the proposed project.

Finally, we are inviting your participation at the upcoming second Scoping Meeting, to be held on October 27, 2011 in the Nueces Room at the Congressman Solomon P. Ortiz International Center, 402 Harbor Drive, Corpus Christi, Texas, 78401, from 1:30 pm to 3:30 pm. Later that same day and at the same location, the public is invited to attend a Second Public Scoping Meeting/Open House beginning at 5:30 pm.

The objectives of the Second Scoping Meeting are to 1) review the results of the first scoping meeting; and 2) to collaborate in detail regarding the project's Need and Purpose, the preliminary project alternatives, and a methodology for evaluating the alternatives. FHWA and TxDOT will provide a revised Draft Coordination Plan at the second Scoping Meeting, which will include a discussion of the above. The Draft Coordination Plan will also be available on the project website in advance of the meeting on October 27. Visit <http://www.ccharborbridgeproject.com/> for more information. Please return all comments to TxDOT by December 1, 2011.


Please notify FHWA if your agency is unable to attend the meeting so that a copy of the Draft Coordination Plan can be provided for your review and comment.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss in more detail the proposed project or our agencies' respective roles and responsibilities during the preparation of this EIS, please contact:

Mr. Albert Hinojosa, Area Engineer
(512) 536-5967 | albert.hinojosa@dot.gov

Thank you for your cooperation and interest in this proposed project.

Sincerely,



Gregory S. Punske, P.E.
District Engineer

Enclosures: Summary materials from first Scoping Meeting

Cc: Mr. Mark Marek, P.E. TxDOT Environmental Affairs Division
Ms. Melissa Neely, TxDOT Environmental Affairs Division
Mr. Victor Vourcos, P.E. and Ms. Paula Sales, P.E.,
TxDOT Corpus Christi District

Letters Received from Cooperating and Participating Agencies



Coastal Bend Council of Governments

August 1, 2011

CORPUS CHRISTI

John A. Casey, P.E.
District Engineer
Corpus Christi, District
1701 South Padre Island Drive
Corpus Christi, Texas 78416-1324

AUG 03 2011

DISTRICT

RECEIVED

AUG 05 2011

CRP-TP&D

Dear Mr. Casey:

In response to your letter of July 22, the Coastal Bend Council of Governments accepts your invitation to participate in the development of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed replacement of the Harbor Bridge here in Corpus Christi. The activities you suggest that the CBCOG undertake as its role in this process are agreeable to us. We have limited involvement in activities related to transportation, but we are willing to provide what assistance we can. We have staff that are involved in environmental concerns and will be reviewing the SAFETEA-LU Section 6002 Coordination Plan. While comments on this Plan will be provided in the near future, we are responding to your invitation now, so you will know of our interest to participate.

We will send a representative to the Scoping Meeting on August 9. I assume that the information in the Coordination Plan will serve as background for the Scoping Meeting. As you know, we have a representative on the MPO Policy Committee, Bill Hennings, and although he is not CBCOG staff, we feel he can provide input into this process. If it is agreeable to you, we may ask him to participate in this EIS process as part of the CBCOG's involvement.

If any questions arise prior to the Scoping Meeting, we will contact Mr. Vourcos. We look forward to working with TxDOT on this project and if we can be of any additional assistance, please contact us.

Sincerely,

John P. Buckner
Executive Director
CBCOG



July 25, 2011

John Casey, P.E.
District Engineer
Texas Department of Transportation
Corpus Christi District
1701 South Padre Island Drive
Corpus Christi, Texas 78416-1324

CORPUS CHRISTI
JUL 26 2011
DISTRICT

Dear Mr. Casey,

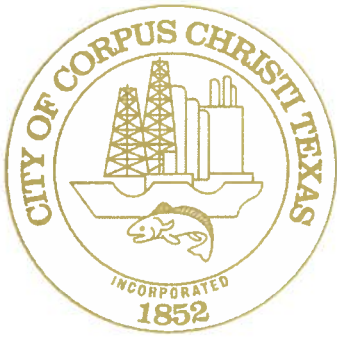
The Corpus Christi Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) enthusiastically accepts becoming a Participating Agency with FHWA and TxDOT in the development of the Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed US 181 Harbor Bridge replacement and SH 286 improvements. We will plan to attend the August 9, 2011 Agency Scoping Meeting.

Your project proposal is complimentary with the MPO 2010 – 2035 Metropolitan Transportation Plan which recognizes that this project can have a major impact on the Corpus Christi economy. We thank you for the opportunity to support this effort.

Sincerely,

Tom Niskala, Transportation Planning Director

Cc: Victor Vourcos, P.E. and Ms. Paula Sales-Evans, P.E.



CORPUS CHRISTI

AUG 04 2011

DISTRICT
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AUG 05 2011

CRP-IF&L

August 2, 2011

Ronald L. Olson
CITY MANAGER

PO Box 9277
Corpus Christi
Texas 78469-9277
Phone 361-826-3220
Fax 361-826-3839
RonO@cctexas.com
www.cctexas.com

John A. Casey, P.E.
District Engineer, Corpus Christi District
Texas Department of Transportation
1701 South Padre Island Drive
Corpus Christi, TX 78416

Dear Mr. Casey:

This letter confirms the City of Corpus Christi's interest in and formal acceptance of TxDOT's invitation to be a Participating Agency in the EIS for the proposed US Highway 181 Harbor Bridge replacement/State Highway 286 (Crosstown Expressway) improvement project.

I will be present at the August 9th Agency Scoping Meeting, together with Johnny Perales, Rudy Garza, and Pete Anaya.

Sincerely,

Ronald L. Olson
City Manager

cc: Joe Adame, Mayor
Johnny Perales, Assistant City Manager
Rudy Garza, Assistant City Manager
Pete Anaya, Director of Engineering Services

Bryan W. Shaw, Ph.D., *Chairman*
Buddy Garcia, *Commissioner*
Carlos Rubinstein, *Commissioner*
Mark R. Vickery, P.G., *Executive Director*



TEXAS COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Protecting Texas by Reducing and Preventing Pollution

August 1, 2011

Ms. Vicki Crnich
Project Delivery Management Branch
Environmental Affairs Division
Texas Department of Transportation
125 East 11th Street
Austin, Texas 78701-2483

Re: Participate in the development of the Environmental Impact Statement informal pre-scoping process for the proposed transportation improvements on US 181 in Corpus Christi, Nueces County, Texas (CSJ 0101-06-095)

Dear Ms. Crnich:

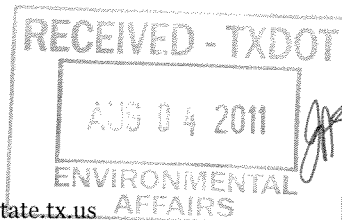
Thank you for the opportunity to become a participating agency on the proposed US 181 project informal pre-scoping process. The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality looks forward to providing timely reviews and comments on the pre-draft or pre-final environmental documents as they become available for the proposed transportation improvements. Ms. Holly Brightwell of our Air Quality Division, Mobile Source Programs Team is our new contact for the Air Quality review.

If you require further assistance on this matter, please contact Ms. Janie Roman at (512) 239-0604 or Ms. Tangela Niemann at (512) 239-3786.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Harrison".

Jim Harrison, Director
Intergovernmental Relations Division



TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

real places telling real stories

August 5, 2011

Dianna Noble, P.E.
Director, Environmental Affairs Division
125 East 11th Street
Austin, Texas 78701-2483

*Re: Environmental Impact Statement for proposed US 181 Harbor Bridge replacement project, Nueces County, Texas (TxDOT)
CSJ: 0101-06-095*

Dear Ms. Noble:

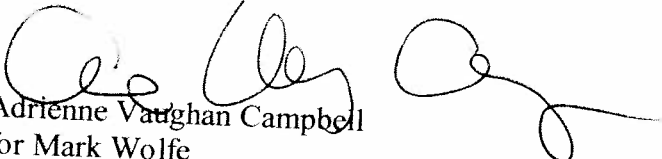
Thank you for your correspondence inviting the Texas Historical Commission (THC) to participate in the development of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the above-referenced project.

We are interested in becoming a participating agency for the development of the EIS, with the understanding that the NEPA process is not a substitute for coordination with our agency under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and the 2004 Amended Programmatic Agreement between THC, TxDOT, FHWA and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP). We look forward to being included in the process of development of the EIS. The appropriate representative from our agency for the purpose of this study will be Adrienne Campbell, who can be reached at 512/936-7403 or adrienne.campbell@thc.state.tx.us.

We will not be able to send a representative to the upcoming Agency Scoping Meeting on August 9, 2011. Please send materials from the meeting to our representative.

Thank you again for your invitation to participate.

Sincerely,


Adrienne Vaughan Campbell
for Mark Wolfe

State Historic Preservation Officer





UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

**Region 6
1445 Ross Avenue, Suite 1200
Dallas, TX 75202-2733**

RECEIVED ON

AUG 05 2011

**TEXAS DIVISION
FHWA**

August 3, 2011

Gregory S. Punske, P.E.
District Engineer
Texas Division
Federal Highway Administration
300 E. 8th Street, Room 826
Austin, TX 78701-3255

Dear Mr. Punske,

This letter is in response to the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) request for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to review and provide comments on the Draft SAFETEA-LU Section 6002 Coordination Plan for the proposed Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed United States (US) Highway 181 Harbor Bridge replacement/State Highway (SH) 286 improvement project in Corpus Christi, Nueces County, Texas. The draft coordination plan will facilitate and document the lead agencies' structured interaction with the public and agencies and is meant to promote an efficient and streamlined process for the environmental review process for the proposed project.

We have reviewed the draft coordination plan and provide these comments:

2.0 Project History

A more detailed explanation of the process and methodology by which the four preliminary corridors were developed is needed. This information can be provided in the plan or the plan should incorporate by reference the 2001 Feasibility Study.

3.1 Alternatives

This section identifies and describes the four build alternatives previously developed in the 2001 Feasibility Study. Is it in the realm of this coordination plan and scoping effort to develop additional preliminary alternatives or is the alternatives analysis limited to the previously described corridors?

4.1 Draft Need - Roadway and Structure Deficiencies

Under *High Maintenance Costs*, it would be beneficial to include the annual maintenance costs and activities to support the need.

Under *Roadway Capacity Constraints*, the term weaving should be explained in layman's terms so the average reader will understand.

5.0 Agency Roles and Responsibilities – Table 5.0-1

The EPA's responsibilities should include water quality and Section 404 CWA compliance.

8.0 Detailed Project History and Future Actions

Number 54, Anticipated 2017, states that TxDOT will obtain necessary permits, licenses, or approvals after ROD. As the Corps is likely to be a cooperating agency, a NEPA/404 merger agreement could be investigated to streamline the permitting process so the permit could be issued with the ROD.

We look forward to continued involvement and cooperation in the EIS development for the Harbor Bridge project. If you have any further questions, please contact John MacFarlane at 214-665-7491 or macfarlane.john@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rhonda Smith", followed by a smaller, less legible signature.

Rhonda Smith
Chief, Office of Planning and
Coordination

United States Department of Agriculture



Natural Resources Conservation Service
101 South Main
Temple, TX 76501-7602

RECEIVED ON
AUG 05 2011
TEXAS DIVISION
FHWA

August 2, 2011

Mr. Gregory S. Punske, P.E.
District Engineer
Federal Highway Administration
300 E. 8th Street, Room 826
Austin, TX 78701-3255

Dear Mr. Punske:

We have reviewed the project information pertaining to the proposed United States (US) Highway 181 Harbor Bridge replacement/State Highway (SH) 286 Crosstown Expressway improvement project in Corpus Christi, Nueces County, Texas (CSJ 0101-06-095).

This project should have no significant adverse impact on the environment or natural resources in the area. We do not require any permits, easements, or approvals for activities such as this.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this proposed project.

Note: Future correspondence should be addressed to Salvador Salinas, State Conservationist. Donald W. Gohmert is retired.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Salvador Salinas". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first and last names clearly legible.

SALVADOR SALINAS
State Conservationist