



Documentation Standard Historical Studies Research Design

Use this documentation standard (DS) and the template pinned to Appendix A to prepare a historical studies research design (HSRD). The DS and template can be used for state projects and for federal projects assigned to the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

The HSRD also must meet the TxDOT publication standards as outlined by the [TxDOT Brand Guidelines](#).

To prepare an HSRD, use the standards and instructions in the DS to enter project-specific information in the prompts and required sections of the template. The required sections are included in the template. Prompts are highlighted in grey, *<as shown here>*. When complete, review the HSRD addressing any remaining prompts. Ensure no prompts remain in the final HSRD.

I. HSRD Scope Parameters

The HSRD must include the following components:

- A. Study Area is defined as 1300 feet from the edge or proposed new ROW
- B. Area of Potential Effect (APE) definition as codified in the Section 106 PA or the MOU with the Texas Historical Commission ([TAC Title 13, Part 2, Chapter 26, Subchapter E](#))
- C. Survey cut-off date (construction letting date minus 45 years)
- D. The Period(s) of Significance (POS) and the Areas of Significance must be clearly identified in the context statement of the report. Period of Significance refers to the span of time during which significant events and activities occurred in the project area. Period of Significance should not be automatically calculated to the 45 or 50 year mark. Events and associations with historic properties are finite; most properties have a clearly definable period of significance. Each project may have multiple POS. Each historic context and location may have a different POS. A historic property may have a different POS from the context POS. For example, the local context about irrigation in the 1910s would not be relevant to an architect-designed landmark from the 1960s. Each theme in the context and each historic property must have a POS. See National Parks Service (NPS) Bulletin 39 for further discussion. A POS is not required for surveys of historic-age resources where no historic properties are present.
- E. Documentation of previously identified resources in APE
 - Texas Historical Commission (THC) atlas [found at <http://atlas.thc.state.tx.us>]
 - TxDOT files/online maps [found [on TxDOT's Historical Resources Toolkit](#)]
 - Locally designated properties as determined by Certified Local Governments (CLGs)
 - Texas Freedom Colonies Atlas
 - Family Land Heritage Farms
- F. Documentation of previously identified historic districts. Indicate:



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- whether a property was determined to be contributing or non-contributing to the district
- Is the property still extant?
- Is the property now recommended non-contributing

G. Minimum research requirements for the various types of surveys:

A desktop survey or windshield/ADA¹ survey report must contain a minimal literature review. Discuss the scope with TxDOT historians.

A Reconnaissance survey report must contain appropriate archival and bibliographical references that facilitate analysis of historic properties, which may include but are not limited to:

- A. Historical Maps (such as those in the Texas Historic Overlay (THO) or Sanborns) and/or aerial photography
- B. Local history sources, such as published county histories and county records
- C. Desktop research based on state/local history websites
- D. TxDOT historic roadway/bridge plans of the project area, if available and relevant
- E. Documents available in the Historical Resources Toolkit found on TxDOT.gov at: <https://www.txdot.gov/business/resources/environmental/compliance-toolkits/historic-resources.html>
- F. Studies for similar properties done by other state SHPOs and other state departments of transportation (DOTs)

An Intensive survey report must contain the archival and bibliographical references included in a Reconnaissance report, as well as

- A. Oral Histories
- B. Deed and/or title research
- C. Tax Assessor records research
- D. Contemporaneous newspapers or periodicals
- E. Additional archival research directly related to the property

II. Cover Page

The HSRD must have a cover page including the following components. Enter the information as prompted by the template.

- A. The following information, as included in the template
 1. The TxDOT logo
 2. The main title, Historical Resources Survey Report

¹ Americans with Disability Act 2



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3. The type of survey that is proposed.

Desktop Survey, Windshield Survey, Reconnaissance Survey, or Intensive Survey.

4. For FHWA Assigned Projects the following statement must be included at the bottom of the cover page of the final report.

The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried-out by TxDOT pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated July 17, 2025, and executed by FHWA and TxDOT.

For state projects, delete this statement.

- B. The name of the highway/facility or project name

For example: County Road, State Highway, Bridge Crossing, etc.

- C. The project limits

Enter the proposed project limits. Ensure the limits match the limits defined in the CE determination or the environmental review document (i.e. EA or EIS).

- D. The name of the TxDOT district(s) where the project is located

- E. The name of the county(s) where the project is located

- F. The control section job (CSJ) number(s)

- G. The name of principal investigator

- H. The date the HSRD was prepared

III. Template Page Two

The second page of the HSRD must have the following components, which are included in the template. Do not change or remove these components.

- A. The statement about complying with the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), the Antiquities Code of Texas (ACT), and other cultural resource legislation
- B. The footer, which is applied to the remainder of the HSRD

IV. Template Page Three

The third page of the HSRD is the table of contents, which is included in the template. When complete, update the table of contents as needed to reflect the actual content of the HSRD.

See instructions in the HSRD on how to use and update the table of contents

V. Project Identification

The HSRD must include the following components. Enter the information as prompted by the template, selecting only one check box per bullet.

- A. HSRD Completion Date



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Enter the date the HSRD was completed.

B. Anticipated Date(s) of Fieldwork

Enter the beginning and end dates for the field work. N/A if Desktop

C. Anticipated Historical Resources Survey Type

Select desktop, windshield, reconnaissance or intensive survey.

D. Research Design Version

Select Draft or Final.

E. Regulatory Jurisdiction

Select Federal or State

F. TxDOT Contract Number

Enter the TxDOT Assigned Contract Number

G. District or Districts

Ensure this is consistent with the cover page.

H. County or Counties

Ensure this is consistent with the cover page.

I. Highway or Facility

Enter the highway name or facility. Ensure it is consistent with the cover page.

J. Proposed Project Limits

Enter the proposed project limits. Ensure the limits match the limits shown on the cover page.

K. CSJ Number

Enter the TxDOT CSJ, and ensure it is consistent with the cover page.

L. Anticipated Report Author(s)

Enter the name of the professional historian and consulting firm who would prepare the Historic Resources Survey Report (HSRD).

M. Anticipated Principal Investigator

Enter the name of the professional historian and consulting firm who would conduct the survey.

N. Anticipated List of Preparers

Enter the names of individuals who would participate in the preparation of the report, including their roles and tasks.

VI. Project Description

The HSRD must include the following components. Enter the information as prompted by the template, selecting only one check box per bullet. If the value for any of the requested measurements is zero or the prompts do not apply to the project, delete the prompt, and enter the value as zero or enter N/A. Do not leave any prompts visible in the final report.



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Project description, length, right-of-way (ROW), and easements will be located solely in TxDOT's Environmental Compliance Oversight System (ECOS) database. Attach a screenshot from ECOS with the description, length, ROW and easements as Appendix A of the report. Screenshots may be received from TxDOT District or historian staff, as appropriate.

A. Area of Potential Effects (APE)

Select the APE definition as codified in the Section 106 PA or the MOU with the Texas Historical Commission ([TAC Title 13, Part 2, Chapter 26, Subchapter E](#)).

Use Custom Options to describe an APE that was determined as a result of Section 106 consultation with the SHPO.

B. Historic-Age Survey Cut-Off Date

Enter the anticipated construction letting date minus 45 years.

C. Study Area

The study area is defined as 1300 feet from the edge or proposed new ROW

VII. Project Setting/Study Area

The HSRD must include the following components. Enter the information as prompted by the template.

A. Current Land Use

Provide a general description of the study area which is defined as 1300-feet from the edge of the existing or proposed new right-of-way (ROW). This description should focus on the current land uses, i.e. agricultural, residential, commercial, or industrial, etc.

VIII. Anticipated Section 106 Consulting Parties/Stakeholders

The HSRD must include the following components. Enter the information as prompted by the template. If a Section 106 Public Involvement Plan (PIP) was developed for the project, include a copy in Appendix F of the report.

A. Proposed Public Involvement Outreach efforts

Briefly describe the public involvement efforts to identify and involve consulting parties in the Section 106 review process as defined by [36 CFR 800](#). The plan should include the following:

- How consulting parties will be identified, communicated with, and their comments considered.
- How consulting parties will be provided an opportunity to examine the results of TxDOT's efforts to identify historic properties, evaluate their significance and assess the undertaking's effects upon them.
- If adverse effects are found, how the agency will make information available to consulting parties concerning the scope of the undertaking, its effects on historic properties and alternatives to resolve adverse effects; and provide consulting parties an opportunity to express their views on resolving any adverse effects.

B. Potential Consulting Parties



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List potential consulting parties that may be contacted during the Section 106 review process such as the Texas Historical Commission (THC), Certified Local Governments (CLG), County Historical Commissions (CHC), Texas Freedom Colonies, and historical societies, etc. The list should include names and contact information such as address, phone number, and or email address.

The HSRD should include:

- Name of Person(s)
- Name of Organization
- Contact Information

IX. Previously Designated Historic Properties and Evaluated Resources

The HSRD must include the following components. Enter the information as prompted by the template.

A. Previously Evaluated Historic Resources

Identify previously evaluated historic resources within the APE to foster development of appropriate contextual analysis. Provide explicit reference to review of THC survey files and [Historic Sites Atlas](#), TxDOT's Historic Bridge Survey, and Historic Districts and Properties Maps available on the [Historic Resources Toolkit](#). As appropriate, provide information regarding locally designated properties determined by a CLG. As appropriate, provide information regarding presence or possible presence of Texas Freedom Colonies or Family Land Heritage farms in APE.

B. Previously Designated Historic Properties

Identify previously designated historic properties within 1300' of the APE to foster development of appropriate contextual analysis. Explicit reference to review of THC survey files and Historic Sites Atlas, the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), the list of State Antiquities Landmarks (SAL), and the list of Recorded Texas Historic Landmarks (RTHL) must be included.

C. Previously Designated Historic Districts

Identify previously designated historic districts.

X. Preliminary Assessment of Impacts to Historic Properties

The HSRD must include the following components. Enter the information as prompted by the template.

A. Previously Evaluated Historic Resources

Based on the proposed project activities identify potential Section 4(f) uses of known historic properties located in the APE.

XI. Anticipated Survey Methods

The HSRD must include the following components. Enter the information as prompted by the template

A. Anticipated Surveyors:

Enter the name of individual that would participate in conducting the field investigations.

B. Anticipated Survey Methodology:

Provide a brief justification for why the type of survey conducted is appropriate for the proposed project (i.e., desktop, windshield, reconnaissance, or intensive) and how the survey would be conducted. Describe the methods that would be used to identify historic properties/districts and historic-age resources located within the APE.

For example, state, "Based on aerials, CAD and screenshot views (which must be included in this document) a desktop, a windshield, a reconnaissance, or an intensive survey or some combination thereof will be performed.

Methodology should include discussion of available documentation from past surveys and other resources, likelihood of needing field verification for any proposed desktop-based surveys, and any relevant information to help TxDOT determine appropriate type of survey.

XII. Literature Review & Methodology

The literature review must be appropriate to the type of survey, the study area, and historic-age resources present. A literature review is not necessary for a desktop or windshield survey.

A. Research To-Date

Provide a general description of the sources (including from individuals, or groups) that were consulted to prepare the research design.

B. Proposed Literature Review

Identify what additional research resources (including from individuals or groups) will be used to inform decisions about the study area and historic-age properties. The research resources should be focused on the identification of previously evaluated resources. And determining period(s) and area(s) of significance associated within the study area and extant historic-age resources.

XIII. Preliminary Historical Context Outline

Include an outline of the preliminary historic context based on the preliminary research. The outline should reflect to the age of the resources present in the APE and study area. The context may not necessarily cover the entire period of development if extant resources do not warrant it. For example, if survey efforts identified only post-WWII development properties, the context outline should address only that time period, not early settlement history, etc.

Instead of relying on the Handbook of Texas Online for contexts (particularly for historic contexts after the 1940s), look to other sources such as, NPS bulletins, historic maps, local informed citizens, such as CHC and CLG staff, and historic property reports produced by other states. Use appropriate TxDOT property type guidance available online in the [Historic Resources Toolkit](#) such as the Agricultural Theme Study for Central Texas. Let the number of resources, their historic significance, and the degree of risk for adverse effects dictate the level and complexity of the context statement. A



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discussion of evaluating properties within a historic context can be found in the NPS Bulletin 15 on page 7 At minimum the outline should address the following:

- A. Anticipated Periods of Significance
Based on preliminary research of the study area, indicate likely period(s) of significance and areas of significance for resources within the APE.
 - B. Anticipated Areas of Significance
Based on preliminary research of the study area, indicate likely areas of significance for resources within the APE.
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XIV. Reference Citations

List the resources used to prepare the research design. Be consistent in citing references.

Preferred:

- *Google Earth/Google Streetview/Microsoft citation:*
 - *GoogleEarth [version], lat/long, direction of photo, date of image.*
 - *GoogleEarth Pro, 30.270018 / -97.73125, north, June 2021.*
-

XV. Project Maps and Figures

In the appendices, provide the following:

- A. ECOS Screenshot Project Information and ROW information
 - *Insert screenshot from ECOS WPD I screen with project description and amount of new ROW.*
- B. *Figure and Tables*
- C. *Maps*



Appendix A

The template can be obtained by clicking on the link ([Historical Studies Research Design](#))



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Desktop Survey<Windshield Survey> <Reconnaissance Survey> <Intensive Survey>

Project Name: <Roadway or Facility>

Project Limits: <Project Limits>

District(s): <District(s)>

County(s): <County(s)>

CSJ Number(s): <CSJ Number(s)>

Principal Investigator: <Principal Investigator>

Report Completion Date: <Month and Year>

The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by TxDOT pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated July 17, 2025, and executed by FHWA and TxDOT.



Appendix B

The following table shows the revision history for this document.

| Revision History | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Effective Date Month, Year | Reason for and Description of Change |
| August 2025 | Version 4 was released. Updated NEPA MOU language, corrected outdated links and typographical errors. |
| May 2022 | Version 3 was released. Changes include elimination of schematics and other figures, additions to address Desktop level surveys, other small changes. |
| January 2020 | Version 2 was released. Changes include the elimination of the Project Description and project-related information that will now come from TxDOT's ECOS. Updated FHWA MOU language. |
| July 2017 | Version 1 was released. |