



U.S. Department
of Transportation
Federal Highway
Administration



I-45 North Houston Highway Improvement Project (NHHIP)

Voluntary Resolution Agreement (VRA) Progress Report #4

February 23, 2025

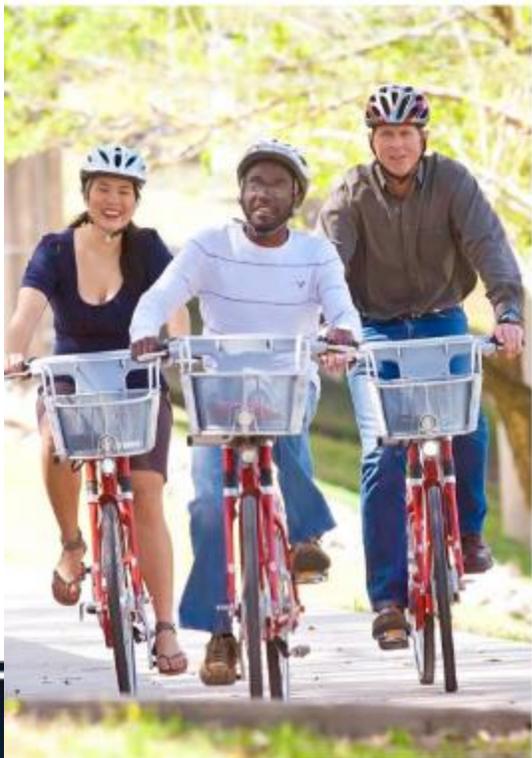


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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

| | |
|-----------|---|
| ADA | Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 |
| BRT | Bus Rapid Transit |
| CFR | Code of Federal Regulations |
| CSJ | Control-Section-Job Number |
| DBE | Disadvantaged Business Enterprise |
| DGA | Displaced by Government Action |
| DOT | United States Department of Transportation |
| DS&S | Decent, Safe, & Sanitary |
| EJ | Environmental Justice |
| EPA | Environmental Protection Agency |
| FEIS | Final Environmental Impact Statement |
| FEMA | Federal Emergency Management Agency |
| FHWA | Federal Highway Administration |
| GIS | Geographic Information System |
| HGAC | Houston-Galveston Area Council |
| HHA | Houston Housing Authority |
| HCFC | Harris County Flood Control District |
| HISD | Houston Independent School District |
| HUD | United States Department of Housing and Urban Development |
| IH | Interstate Highway |
| LEP | Limited English Proficiency |
| LRT | Light Rail Transit |
| METRO | Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County, Texas |
| NHHIP | North Houston Highway Improvement Project |
| NTP | Notice to Proceed |
| NPS | National Park Service |
| RFP | Request for Proposal |
| ROD | Record of Decision |
| ROW | Right of way |
| SOP | Standard Operating Procedure |
| TCEQ | Texas Commission on Environmental Quality |
| TIRZ | Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (City of Houston) |
| TSAHC | Texas State Affordable Housing Corporation |
| TxDOT | Texas Department of Transportation |
| TxDOT ROW | TxDOT Right of Way Division |
| TxDOT HOU | TxDOT Houston District |
| VRA | Voluntary Resolution Agreement |
| UHD | University of Houston Downtown |

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations (continued)

WTC METRO's Wheeler Transit Center

Definitions

For the purpose of this report, the terms listed below shall have the following meanings:

Appraisal means a written statement independently and impartially prepared by a qualified appraiser setting forth an opinion of defined value of an adequately described property as of a specific date, supported by the presentation and analysis of relevant market information.

Owner means a person who purchases or holds any of the following interests in real property:

- (i) Fee title, a life estate, a land contract, a 99-year lease, or a lease including any options for extension with at least 50 years to run from the date of acquisition; or
- (ii) An interest in a cooperative housing project which includes the right to occupy a dwelling; or
- (iii) A contract to purchase any of the interests or estates described in subparagraphs (i) or (ii) of this section; or
- (iv) Any other interest, including a partial interest, which in the judgment of TxDOT warrants consideration as ownership.

Tenant means a person or entity who on February 1, 2021, and continuously thereafter, has the temporary use and occupancy of Residential Property or Business Property owned by another.

Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones (TIRZs) are special zones created by City Council to attract new investment in an area. These zones help finance costs of redevelopment and promote growth in areas that would otherwise not attract sufficient market development in a timely manner. Taxes attributable to new improvements (tax increments) are set-aside in a fund to finance public improvements within the boundaries of the zone.

Background

The I-45 North Highway Improvement Project (NHHIP) is the planned reconstruction of I-45 north between the North Sam Houston Tollway (also known as Beltway 8) and Houston's downtown, including segments of connecting freeways. The project will enhance safety; create additional roadway capacity to manage congestion, incentivize transit and promote ridesharing; and improve mobility and operational efficiency on I-45 from I-69 to Beltway 8 North, including improvements along I-69 between I-45 and Spur 527 in Harris County, Texas. As shown in Figure 1, the NHHIP project is divided into three segments:

- Segment 1: Beltway 8 to north of I-610
- Segment 2: north of I-610 to just north of downtown Houston
- Segment 3: downtown loop system including I-45, I-10 and I-69

Figure 1: NHHIP Segments Overview



Additional information regarding the Project can be found on the project website:

<https://www.txdot.gov/nhhip.html>.

Voluntary Resolution Agreement

On March 6, 2023, the FHWA and TxDOT entered into a Voluntary Resolution Agreement (VRA) to resolve the FHWA investigation of TxDOT regarding the NHHIP (Project) under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000d to 2000d-7 (Title VI). The VRA sets forth specific mitigation actions for the Project to ensure TxDOT carries out the Project consistent with the requirements of Title VI. Reference Appendix A for a copy of the I-45 NHHIP VRA.

This report is the fourth report (Report No. 4), and it has been prepared in accordance with Article VI of the VRA to report on all actions set forth in the VRA and as referenced by Article throughout this Progress Report.

Executive Summary

Data tables in this fourth VRA progress report contain information for the period of July 28, 2024, to December 31, 2024. Data is provided through December 31, 2024, in order to give time to assemble the report. Meetings and submittals are listed for the period of July 18, 2024, through December 31, 2024.

During this reporting period, design, right of way (ROW) acquisition, utility adjustment coordination and coordination with the Union Pacific Railroad continued in Segment 3, and construction was initiated on Project 3B-1. **On October 16, 2024, TxDOT and community leaders held a groundbreaking event to recognize the commencement of I-45 NHHIP construction marking a major program milestone.**

Design and utility tasks were primarily focused on the first three projects in the south half of Segment 3, Projects 3A, 3B-1, and 3B-2, but TxDOT also initiated design contracts on Projects 3C-1 and 3C-3 and selected consultant firms for Projects 3C-4 and 2A. TxDOT continues to perform limited ROW acquisition in Segments 1 and 2 pending assessment of ROW footprint reductions in these segments.

In addition to starting construction on the first NHHIP Project 3B-1, TxDOT received bids in September 2024 on the second construction project (3B-2) with construction expected to being in January 2025. Project 3B-2 will re-construct the depressed mainlanes of I-69 and SH 288, including the interchange; construction of direct connectors from SH 288 to I-69 and reconstruction of cross street bridges for Elgin, Tuam and McGowen as arch bridges. .

Public meetings were held during this reporting period to share information with impacted property owners, tenants, and communities in accordance with VRA requirements. The September 19, 2024 meeting featured design changes subject to Project 3A environmental re-evaluation as well as information on all three NHHIP segments. The October 15, 2024 in-person public meeting and October 17, 2024 virtual public meeting focused on Segments 1 and 2 and also presented Segment 3 information. The December 5, 2024 meeting presented updates and highlights for Projects 3C-1, 3C-2, 3C-3, and 3C-4 along with information on all three NHHIP segments. There were approximately 634 attendees from the public for all five public meetings held in 2024.

The Texas State Affordable Housing Corporation (TSAHC), in accordance with their partnership with TxDOT, issued a Request for Proposals to hire a consultant for supporting development and management of a plan for the \$30 million commitment aimed at creating and supplementing the affordable housing inventory within Environmental Justice (EJ) communities directly impacted by the project. Proposals were received by TSAHC in October 2024. In December, TSAHC selected a

consultant team and received TxDOT concurrence on this selection in January 2025. TSAHC is working on contracting the selected consultant team and then the team will have one year to finalize the Revitalization Plan.

Progress on Action Items

1. Reducing the NHHIP Footprint During Detailed Design (IV.1)

Background

In response to requests from the City of Houston and Harris County, and as outlined in the Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs) with both entities, TxDOT acknowledges the importance of advancing ROW assessments to explore potential reductions in the project footprint compared to what was approved in the project's Record of Decision (ROD). This effort is also a key action in TxDOT's Voluntary Resolution Agreement (VRA), reinforcing TxDOT's commitment to studying ways to minimize the project's impact.

Per the VRA Article IV.1a, TxDOT's evaluation of potential ROW reduction opportunities focused on the following:

- i. Strengthening Houston's economy;
- ii. Reducing flooding on and off the freeway;
- iii. Making travel safer for all road users;
- iv. Providing long-term capacity for all users of the roadway, including automobile, freight, and transit;
- v. Serving and preserving the neighborhoods along the corridor while enhancing connectivity between neighborhoods;
- vi. Mitigating impacts to existing parks and open space while creating additional opportunity for open space; and
- vii. Ensuring accessible evacuation routes.

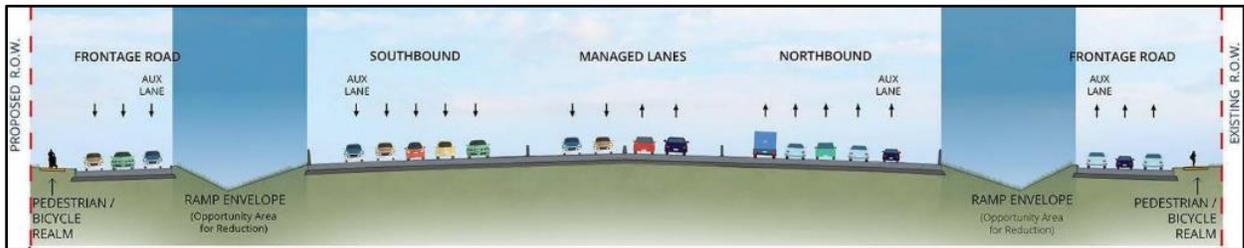
Footprint Assessment

TxDOT has previously reported on reductions identified in Segment 3 projects as design continues to develop on these respective projects. During this reporting period, TxDOT identified and assessed potential opportunities in Segment 1, between Beltway 8 and I-610, and Segment 2 between I-610 and I-10. The ROW "footprint" includes all the elements within the ROW, including the frontage roads, mainlanes and ramps; pedestrian elements; drainage (ditches and storm sewers), roadside signage and lighting; and utilities. The elements within the ROW footprint were first assessed to determine the potential for implementing reductions. As shown in Figure 1-1, the three major elements within the ROW footprint are the Pedestrian Area, Ramp Envelope and the Pavement:

- The "Pedestrian Realm" is the space between the ROW and frontage road pavement: This area accommodates pedestrian elements (sidewalks and shared use paths); roadside signage, underground and overheard utilities (including power poles); drainage elements (ditches and underground storm sewers); and potential noise barriers. It is critical to make sure this area provides adequate capacity for all users of the freeway, including pedestrians and bicyclists, and for accommodations of any noise mitigation measures.

- The “Ramp Envelope” is the space between the mainlanes and frontage road pavements: Known as the “ramp envelope,” the space between the mainlanes and frontage roads is utilized to provide entrance and exit ramp connectivity between the mainlanes and frontage roads. This space also accommodates roadway design features such as drainage, lighting, and signage.
 - It is noted that at intersections, the frontage road is generally widened to add right, left and U-turn lanes, to facilitate traffic operations by increasing throughput at the intersection. Due to the additional lanes at the intersection approaches, the space between the mainlanes and frontage roads within close proximity to an intersecting cross street is less favorable for potential footprint reduction.
 - The segments of I-45 between intersecting cross streets provide potential opportunities for footprint reduction. The ramp envelope area was assessed to determine the minimum distance needed to maintain the integrity and functionality of the purpose and need of the proposed I-45 NHHIP Project, while reducing flooding, providing safe travel that meets design criteria and ensuring accessible evacuation routes. Through this assessment, potential opportunities were identified to reduce the ROW footprint between 28 and 50 feet.
- The “Roadway Pavement” is the area that includes the frontage roads; southbound and northbound mainlanes; managed lanes, ramp lanes and shoulders. For Segment 1, the capacity increase is the addition of managed lanes which promote transit and ride sharing opportunities. In order to provide safe travel for all users, reduce flooding on the roadway travel lanes and ensure accessible evacuation routes, the roadway pavement area is not desirable for footprint reduction.

Figure 1-1: NHHIP Segment 1 Typical Section

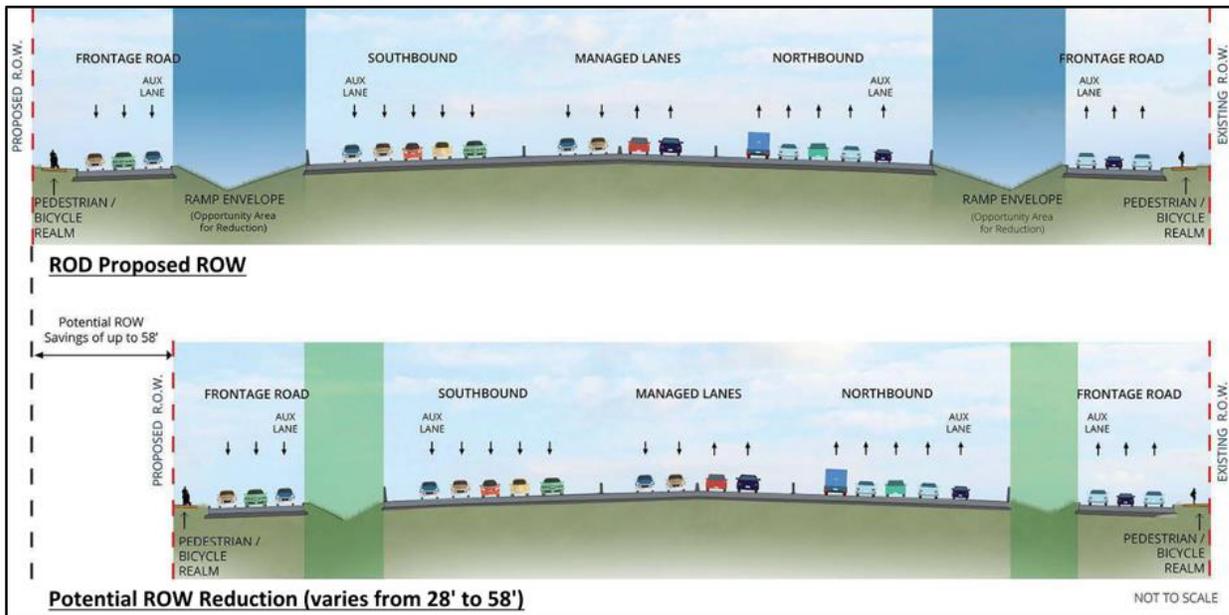


The assessment of the ROW footprint determined that ROW could potentially be reduced in several areas along Segment 1, specifically within the ramp envelope area, in sections along I-45 between the intersecting cross streets.

Conceptual Design Assessment

After the elements were identified for potential reduction, TxDOT prepared preliminary design concepts by reducing the widths of the ramp envelopes. As shown in Figure 1-2, reducing the ramp envelope width in Project 1A, while still maintaining design criteria, resulted in potential footprint reductions that vary between 28 and 50 feet.

Figure 1 -2: NHHIP Potential Segment 1 Typical Section Footprint Reduction



The NHHIP Record of Decision (ROD) design primarily maintains the existing ROW line on the east side of the corridor, along the Northbound Frontage Road, and generally only requires proposed ROW on the west side of the corridor. The footprint reduction analysis utilized a consistent approach, maintaining the same existing eastern ROW line as held and revising the western proposed ROW line as possible to achieve the potential footprint reduction.

Potential Footprint Reduction Recommendation

The footprint reduction analysis resulted in identifying potential opportunity areas within Segment 1 to reduce the ROW footprint width that not only reduces parcel impacts, but in several cases results in total elimination of previously impacted parcels. For the portion of I-45 Segment 1 south of Shepherd Drive, the proposed footprint reduction concept results in potential avoidance of impacts to nine residences and one business.

There have also been potential reductions identified in Segment 2 specifically between I-10 and North Main Street based on proposed design changes with the direct connector from I-10 eastbound to I-45 northbound which would result in eliminating three residential displacements.

TxDOT will be coordinating with the City of Houston and Harris County during the next period to discuss the potential Segment 1 and 2 ROW reductions and implementation of these proposed recommendations. A summary of all parcels identified for potential ROW reductions during this reporting period are noted in Table 1-1 below.

Table 1-1: Summary of ROW Footprint Reduction Assessments

| Segment (Project) | Parcel | Location | Original Taking (SF) | Revised Taking (SF) | Parcel Type |
|-------------------|---------|--|----------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 (1A) | 1162 | I-45 SB: Glenburnie Dr to Gammon Dr | 3,115 | 2,116 | Residential |
| 1 (1A) | 1164 | I-45 SB: Glenburnie Dr to Gammon Dr | 9,341 | 5867 | Residential |
| 1 (1A) | 1166 | I-45 SB: Glenburnie Dr to Gammon Dr | 124 | 0 | Residential |
| 1 (1A) | 1170 | I-45 SB: Gammon Dr to E. Delz Dr | 7,469 | 5417 | Residential |
| 1 (1A) | 1171 | I-45 SB: Gammon Dr to E. Delz Dr | 6,273 | 188 | Residential |
| 1 (1A) | 1174 | I-45 SB: Gammon Dr to E. Delz Dr | 6,954 | 5772 | Residential |
| 1 (1A) | 1178 | I-45 SB. Delz Dr to E. Burress St | 9,608 | 3858 | Residential |
| 1 (1A) | 1103AAQ | I-45 SB. Delz Dr to E. Burress St | 67,302 | 63928 | Multi-Family Residential |
| 1 (1A) | 1180 | I-45 SB. Delz Dr to E. Burress St | 16,052 | 14871 | Commercial |
| 1 (1A) | 1101AAQ | I-45 SB: E. Rogers St to E. Tidwell Rd | 126,077 | 116946 | Commercial |
| 1 (1A) | 1185 | I-45 SB: E. Rogers St to E. Tidwell Rd | 60,627 | 41401 | Commercial |
| 1 (1A) | 1303 | I-45 SB: E. Tidwell Rd to E. Hamilton St | 1,943 | 718 | Commercial |
| 1 (1A) | 1305 | I-45 SB: E. Hamilton St to E. Witcher Ln | 27,007 | 23281 | Commercial |
| 1 (1A) | 1308 | I-45 SB: E. Hamilton St to E. Witcher Ln | 46 | 0 | Multi-Family Residential |
| 1 (1A) | 1311 | I-45 SB: E. Witcher Ln to Ishmeal St | 247 | 0 | Residential |
| 1 (1A) | 1310 | I-45 SB: E. Witcher Ln to Ishmeal St | 48,111 | 43799 | Commercial |
| 1 (1A) | 1324 | I-45 SB: Red Ripple Rd to W. Rosamond St | 39,408 | 34799 | Commercial |
| 1 (1A) | 1325 | I-45 SB: Red Ripple Rd to W. Rosamond St | 638 | 0 | Residential |

| Segment (Project) | Parcel | Location | Original Taking (SF) | Revised Taking (SF) | Parcel Type |
|-------------------|--------|--|----------------------|---------------------|-------------|
| 1 (1A) | 1326 | I-45 SB: Red Ripple Rd to W. Rosamond St | 921 | 0 | Residential |
| 1 (1A) | 1327 | I-45 SB: Red Ripple Rd to W. Rosamond St | 947 | 0 | Residential |
| 1 (1A) | 1328 | I-45 SB: Red Ripple Rd to W. Rosamond St | 457 | 0 | Residential |
| 1 (1A) | 1331 | I-45 SB: W. Rosamond St to W. Troy Rd | 35,888 | 34937 | Commercial |
| 1 (1A) | 1332 | I-45 SB: W. Rosamond St to W. Troy Rd | 5,625 | 0 | Commercial |
| 1 (1A) | 1333 | I-45 SB: W. Rosamond St to W. Troy Rd | 30,620 | 30333 | Commercial |
| 1 (1A) | 1334 | I-45 SB: W. Rosamond St to W. Troy Rd | 4,994 | 1734 | Residential |
| 1 (1A) | 1338 | I-45 SB: W. Troy Rd to W. Obion Rd | 5,811 | 2043 | Residential |
| 1 (1A) | 1342 | I-45 SB: W. Troy Rd to W. Obion Rd | 5,606 | 1542 | Residential |
| 1 (1A) | 1344 | I-45 SB: W. Obion Rd to W. Parker Rd | 128,107 | 96582 | Commercial |
| 1 (1A) | 1346 | I-45 SB: W. Obion Rd to W. Parker Rd | 4,910 | 2390 | Residential |
| 1 (1A) | 1347 | I-45 SB: W. Obion Rd to W. Parker Rd | 904 | 0 | Residential |
| 1 (1A) | 1348 | I-45 SB: W. Obion Rd to W. Parker Rd | 7,324 | 6293 | Residential |
| 1 (1A) | 1349 | I-45 SB: W. Obion Rd to W. Parker Rd | 6,837 | 4719 | Residential |
| 1 (1A) | 1350 | I-45 SB: W. Obion Rd to W. Parker Rd | 896 | 0 | Residential |
| 1 (1A) | 1351 | I-45 SB: W. Obion Rd to W. Parker Rd | 61,110 | 42959 | Commercial |
| 1 (1A) | 1353 | I-45 SB: W. Obion Rd to W. Parker Rd | 20,280 | 18664 | Commercial |
| 1 (1A) | 1362 | I-45 SB: W. Parker Rd to Rittenhouse St | 92,540 | 78290 | Commercial |
| 1 (1A) | 1365 | I-45 SB: Rittenhouse St. to W. Little York | 45,462 | 44175 | Commercial |
| 1 (1A) | 1366 | I-45 SB: Rittenhouse St. to W. Little York | 4,321 | 970 | Commercial |

| Segment (Project) | Parcel | Location | Original Taking (SF) | Revised Taking (SF) | Parcel Type |
|-------------------|----------|---|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1 (1A) | 1367 | I-45 SB: Rittenhouse St. to W. Little York | 14,951 | 10763 | Commercial |
| 1 (1A) | 1368 | I-45 SB: Rittenhouse St. to W. Little York | 51,643 | 46515 | Commercial |
| 1 (1A) | 1369 | I-45 SB: Rittenhouse St. to W. Little York | 1,399 | 0 | Commercial |
| 1 (1A) | 1371 | I-45 SB: Rittenhouse St. to W. Little York | 70,863 | 54905 | Commercial |
| 1 (1A) | 1373 | I-45 SB: Rittenhouse St. to W. Little York | 121,427 | 105538 | Commercial |
| 1 (1A) | 1374 | I-45 SB: Rittenhouse St. to W. Little York | 73,897 | 67951 | Commercial |
| 1 (1A) | 1375 | I-45 SB: Rittenhouse St. to W. Little York | 2,683 | 239 | Commercial |
| 1 (1A) | 1380 | I-45 SB: Rittenhouse St. to W. Little York | 1,723 | 1666 | Commercial |
| 1 (1A) | 1379 | I-45 SB: Rittenhouse St. to W. Little York | 7,063 | 3746 | Commercial |
| 1 (1A) | 1376 | I-45 SB: Rittenhouse St. to W. Little York | 19,762 | 15656 | Commercial |
| 2 (2A) | 904 PT 2 | I-45 NB: South of Embry St | 4,355 | 1444 | Vacant w/Billboards |
| 2 (2A) | 905 | I-45 NB: Embry St to Little White Oak Bayou | 5,699 | 2215 | Vacant |
| 2 (2A) | 911 | I-45 NB: North St to E. Woodland St | 1,662 | 0 | Residential |
| 2 (2A) | 912 | I-45 NB: E. Woodland St to Farwood St | 2,860 | 508 | Residential |
| 2 (2A) | 913 | I-45 NB: E. Woodland St to Farwood St | 4,265 | 2475 | Commercial |
| 2 (2A) | 914 | I-45 NB: E. Woodland St to Farwood St | 2,602 | 1943 | Commercial |
| 2 (2A) | 915 | I-45 NB: E. Woodland St to Farwood St | 4,218 | 3301 | Residential |
| 2 (2A) | 916 | I-45 NB: E. Woodland St to Farwood St | 5,202 | 5053 | Residential |
| 2 (2A) | 917 | I-45 NB: E. Woodland St to Farwood St | 149 | 0 | Residential |
| 2 (2A) | 918 | I-45 NB: Farwood St to Oleander St | 85 | 0 | Residential |

| Segment (Project) | Parcel | Location | Original Taking (SF) | Revised Taking (SF) | Parcel Type |
|-------------------|----------|-------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|-------------|
| 2 (2A) | 919 | I-45 NB: Farwood St to Oleander St | 4,961 | 3951 | Residential |
| 2 (2A) | 920 | I-45 NB: Farwood St to Oleander St | 4,040 | 2918 | Residential |
| 2 (2A) | 921 | I-45 NB: Oleandar St to E. Norma St | 2,471 | 1540 | Commercial |
| 2 (2A) | 922 PT 1 | I-45 NB: Oleandar St to E. Norma St | 1,452 | 832 | Commercial |
| 2 (2A) | 922 PT 2 | I-45 NB: Oleandar St to E. Norma St | 3,120 | 1927 | Commercial |
| 2 (2A) | 923 | I-45 NB: E. Norma St to N. Main St | 956 | 408 | Commercial |
| 2 (2A) | 924 | I-45 NB: E. Norma St to N. Main St | 54 | 0 | Commercial |
| 2 (2A) | 925 | I-45 NB: E. Norma St to N. Main St | 505 | 195 | Commercial |

2. Displacements, Relocations, Housing, and Other Community Impacts (IV.2)

2.1. Displacements

TxDOT is committed to minimizing residential, business, and community resource displacements due to the Project to the extent practicable, consistent with meeting the purpose and need of the Project and consistent with Title VI requirements. To date, in all segments, TxDOT has identified the reduction of 18 single family residential displacements and three businesses. In Segment 3 there was also one multi-family residential building where ROW reduction eliminated seven residential displacements. Further evaluation is necessary where ROW reduction identified reduces the amount of acquisition to determine additional displacements that may be avoided.

In addition, TxDOT recognizes the impacts of the Project on the already limited availability of affordable housing in the Project area and is committed to mitigating such impacts as set forth in the Project ROD and the VRA. TxDOT will continue to engage and inform the public about project developments and construction impacts as the Project moves forward and provide competent language assistance services, interpretation, and translation for persons with LEP.

2.1.1. Table of Residential and Non-Residential Displacements (IV.2.a)

TxDOT will continue to comply with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4601 et seq.) (Uniform Act) and associated regulations at 49 CFR Part 24 throughout the course of the Project. See Table 2-1, for data elements in Parts B and C of Appendix B to 49 CFR part 24, for all residential and

non-residential displacements associated with the Project during this reporting period required by Article VI of this VRA.

Table 2-1: Residential and Non-Residential Displacements (this reporting period)

| Part B. Residential Relocation Under the Uniform Act | |
|--|----------------|
| 5) Total Number of Residential Displacements (Households) | 20 |
| 6) Residential Moving Payments | \$24,979.07 |
| 7) Replacement Housing Payments | \$352,875.88 |
| 8) Number of Last Resort Housing Displacements in Line 5 (Households) | 20 |
| 9) Number of Tenants converted to Homeowners in Line 5 (Households using 24.402(c)) | 0 |
| 10) Total Costs for Residential Relocation Expenses and Payments (Sum of lines 6 and 7; excluding Agency Administrative Costs) | \$377,354.95 |
| Part C. Non-Residential Relocation Under the Uniform Act | |
| 11) Total Number of Non-Residential Displacements | 15 |
| 12) Non-Residential Moving Payments – total Costs (Including 24.305) | \$3,079,339.99 |
| 13) Non-Residential Reestablishment Payments – Total Costs | \$26,377.18 |
| 14) Total Costs for Non-Residential Relocation Expenses and Payments (Sum of lines 12 and 13; excluding Agency Administrative Costs) | \$3,129,839.99 |

See Appendix B, *Documentation of Benefits Provided in Accordance with Uniform Act*, which provides documentation of benefits provided in accordance with the Uniform Act for each displacement listed in Table 2-1 above. Note that personally identifiable information has been redacted from Appendix B documents as required.

2.1.2. Non-Residential Business, Services, or Other Organizations (IV.2.b)

In accordance with the Uniform Relocation Act, during the current reporting period, a total of 12 business relocations, providing various relocation benefits to displacees, have been facilitated to date including those completed, waived and in process. The total moving costs incurred during this reporting period amounted to \$3,079,339.99, covering expenses related to transportation, packing, and unpacking of personal property, land planner services and fixed payments in lieu of actual moving expenses. Additionally, a sum of \$26,377.18 was incurred during this reporting period for reestablishment costs, encompassing expenditures related to repairs or modifications to the replacement site. Overall, the relocation benefits resulted in a total business relocation cost of \$3,129,839.99 during this reporting period.

2.1.3. Access to Essential Services (IV.2.c)

In accordance with requirements of Article IV.2.c of the VRA, TxDOT has prepared a plan to ensure that roadway, transit, and pedestrian/bicycle access to essential services, including but not limited to health care facilities, grocery stores, pharmacies, schools, places of

worship, and voting locations, will be maintained during and after construction in neighborhoods where such essential services will be impacted by the Project.

As design has now started for 3C-1 and 3C-3, the Access to Essential Services Plan has been updated to include Projects 3C-1, 3C-2, 3C-3, and 3C-4 in addition to Projects 3A, and 3B (3B-1 and 3B-2). The updated plan is included in Appendix C, *Access to Essential Services Plan*.

2.1.4. Table of Acquisitions or Demolitions Not Included in FEIS or ROD (IV.2.d)

There were no acquisitions or demolitions of a parcel during this reporting period that was not included in the FEIS or ROD.

Table 2-2: Acquisition or Demolition Parcels Not Included in FEIS and ROD

| Segment | Parcel | Action Required | Re-evaluation Result |
|---|--------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Not Applicable This Reporting Period | | | |

2.1.5. Reduction to ROW Needed or Displacement Impacts (IV.2.e)

Section 1 of this report notes potential ROW reductions identified in Segments 1 and 2 during this reporting period. Potential ROW reductions to date in Segment 3 are identified in the previous VRA Report No. 1 issued September 2, 2023. Future reports will note potential ROW reductions as applicable evaluations are completed. To date, in all segments, TxDOT has identified the reduction of 18 single family residential displacements and three businesses. In Segment 3 there was also one multi-family residential building where ROW reduction eliminated seven residential displacements.

2.1.6. Funding Affordable Housing Initiatives (IV.2.f)

Pursuant to the ROD and VRA, TxDOT committed \$30 million to support affordable housing initiatives in the project area. TxDOT has entered a partnership with the Texas State Affordable Housing Corporation (TSAHC) as part of its \$30 million commitment to stimulate affordable housing in the I-45 North Houston Highway Improvement Project (NHHIP) area. Through this partnership, TSAHC will administer a comprehensive program aimed at creating and supplementing the affordable housing inventory within Environmental Justice (EJ) communities directly impacted by the project. These funds are separate from the enhanced relocation benefits extended to individual property owners and tenants affected by the project.

This initiative involves a two-part process focused on revitalizing affordable housing in Houston neighborhoods directly impacted by the project. The first step is issuing a Request for Proposal (RFP) to seek local experts to develop an affordable housing redevelopment plan for Independence Heights, Near Northside, Fifth Ward, and Third Ward. TSAHC issued the RFP during the past period and received proposals on October 25, 2024. TSAHC subsequently selected a consultant team in December 2024 and received TxDOT concurrence on the selection in January 2025. TSAHC is currently working on the contract with the selected consultant team which will have one year to finalize a revitalization plan.

The second step involves developing and administering \$28.5 million in funding based on the housing impact and needs identified in the revitalization plan. This grant program aims to leverage the construction of affordable housing in communities that have historically experienced a decline in such housing stock.

TSAHC, a statewide affordable housing provider, will partner with local experts to develop the funding priorities and determine the recipient eligibility requirements.

2.1.7. Coordination with the City of Houston Concerning Surplus Property (IV.2.g)

TxDOT is prepared to discuss with the City of Houston the use of the Project's future surplus right-of-way for affordable and workforce housing as developed by third parties in potential partnership with the City. TxDOT has identified, and appraised, 34 tracts of potential surplus ROW in Segment 3. Some of the potential surplus ROW locations are subject to confirmation during final design development. Therefore, many of the surplus property opportunities will not be fully clarified until final design is complete on the various segments and projects. Potential surplus property identified between Chenevert and Jackson Streets was presented at the December 2023 Public Meetings as noted in VRA Report No. 2 published February 29, 2024.

2.2. Relocations

2.2.1. Summary of Denied Relocation Benefits (IV.2.h)

TxDOT will make relocation benefits available to all eligible displacees and not deny benefits in cases that would result in exceptional and extremely unusual hardship to such a displacee. There were no displacees denied any relocation benefits during this reporting period.

2.2.2. Enhanced Relocation Services (IV.2.i)

TxDOT has continued to provide enhanced relocation services to residential property owners and renters displaced by the NHHIP to ensure that they are treated fairly, consistently, and equitably, and to not suffer disproportionate hardships as a direct result of activities designed for the benefit of the community. These services are delivered by qualified consultants contracted with TxDOT who offer personalized assistance throughout the entire relocation process. This includes individualized advisory services and workshops to help residents understand the available relocation benefits and assistance programs.

Two populations who have been receiving EJ services are fifty-four low-income tenants who lived in the Beatriz Apartments and eighty low to no-income tenants who lived in Temenos II apartments, a complex for formerly unhoused disabled individuals. TxDOT began providing enhanced relocation services for the Beatriz tenants in November 2023. Those services included two full time designated navigators who occupied office space within walking distance to the complex and provided individual displacee outreach. The enhanced relocation services team also conducted monthly workshops and community events. By June 2024, all Beatriz tenants had relocated to various neighborhoods around the Houston area and as a result, attendance to the workshops and community events dramatically dropped off, so we discontinued in-person events and shifted our method of enhanced relocation services outreach to email and telephone for this location. Each month the enhanced relocation team creates and emails out a newsletter which contains information about the TxDOT NHHIP project, safety tips, resources, upcoming local events as well as free or low-

cost services available to Houstonians. The newsletter also contains contact information for the enhanced relocation team and other TxDOT relocation team resources inviting displacees to reach out if they have questions or need help with a relocation claim. In addition to the newsletter, our enhanced relocation services team creates and emails to displacees two presentations per month covering topics related to finances, social services, health, and transportation. Enhanced relocation services will continue to be provided to the Beatriz displacees until each of their eighteen-month relocation claim period ends which is in August 2025.

Temenos II was a complex that contained eighty single-occupancy apartments and housed individuals who were disabled and had previously experienced twelve consecutive months of homelessness. TxDOT acquired Temenos II and entered into an agreement with the owner and management company to allow the tenants to remain in place while a new facility was constructed. In August 2023, TxDOT began providing enhanced relocation services which included two full time enhanced relocation navigators occupying an onsite office to provide convenient and accessible individual displacee outreach. The enhanced relocation services team also created and conducted monthly workshops and community events. The workshop topics generally have to do with relocation benefits, preparing for the move, how to file relocation claims as well as a wide variety of social service and health related topics. Community events typically are designed to bring the tenants together in a fun and relaxing environment to give the enhanced relocation team navigators and tenants an opportunity to build trusting relationships and to periodically check in together to ask and answer questions related to the NHHIP and relocation benefits. In April 2024, the new building, Rasmus Temenos, was completed and the tenants relocated there over a two-week period. Approximately five tenants relocated to other locations. The enhanced relocation services team moved their project office to Rasmus Temenos and continue to offer workshops, community events and individual outreach. Attendance to the workshops and community events continues to remain high and the enhanced relocation services team consistently receives positive feedback from the tenants.

Reference Appendix D *List of Enhanced Relocation Services* for a list of services requested and services provided to each request during the past period, These services were provided to 225 displacees at a cost of \$769,284.75.

TxDOT is developing a draft of the plan for enhanced relocation services for use on all NHHIP segments and projects and will submit to FHWA in accordance with the VRA Article IV.2.i. TxDOT anticipates beginning enhanced relocation services at Kelly Village in Spring 2025 as ROW negotiations begin.

2.2.3. Eligibility of Owners or Renters Outside Footprint for Relocation Services (IV.2.j)

TxDOT continues to focus on ROW acquisitions in Segment 3. As the acquisition process progresses, TxDOT is reviewing whether its planned acquisition for the NHHIP will leave any residential or non-residential owners or renters outside of the Project footprint isolated or cut off from the rest of the community and whether it must provide relocation assistance acquisition or assistance or advisory services pursuant to the Uniform Act and associated regulations of 49 CFR Part 24, as well as the VRA, to such owners or renters to mitigate such impacts.

Based on detailed design for Segments 3B-1 and 3B-2, TxDOT has not identified any planned acquisition for the NHHIP that would leave any residential or non-residential owners or renters outside of the Project footprint isolated or cut off from the rest of the community.

TxDOT shall report in future Progress Reports required by the VRA on this issue after the conclusion of each acquisition phase of the Project.

2.3. Housing

2.3.1. Status of Occupancy Agreement Options (IV.2.k)

TxDOT will continue to inform both residential and non-residential property owners of the opportunity to enter into an Occupancy Agreement for parcels that TxDOT acquires. The Occupancy Agreement has allowed property owners and tenants to remain on the property with the necessary time and resources to find replacement locations for their businesses or residences.

To date, TxDOT has entered into Occupancy Agreements with twenty-eight property owners involving multi-family residences, businesses, and places of worship, and another five agreements are pending. Sixteen of these agreements currently remain active.

2.3.2. Project Website and Language Translation (IV.2.l)

TxDOT maintains a publicly available project-specific website, <https://www.txdot.gov/nhhip.html>, in accordance with the requirements of VRA Article IV.2.l. During this reporting period, the website was updated with information for the September, October and December 2024 public meetings, including provisions for translation options. The website was also updated to provided a page for construction updates as construction activities were initiated on Projects 3B-1 and 3B-2.

2.4. Community Impacts

2.4.1. Housing Relocation Supplements (IV.2.m.ii and IV.2.n.i)

For Clayton Homes and Kelly Village residents, TxDOT will offer housing relocation supplements (up to market-valued rent), in addition to the Tenant Protection Vouchers that would be offered by FHWA, as an alternate relocation path under the Uniform Act. TxDOT has already provided these services to Clayton Homes residents and will offer them to Kelly Village residents when relocation activities begin at that location later this calendar year.

2.4.2. Services Needed by Persons Experiencing Homelessness (IV.2.o)

TxDOT will coordinate with the City of Houston and homeless service providers to develop a plan to assist in addressing services needed by persons experiencing homelessness within the project limits. TxDOT has prepared an initial framework for the development of the Homelessness Coordination Plan. The framework addresses TxDOT's proposed approach to the following:

- Collaboration with local service providers, including homeless shelter providers, social service agencies, and local government partners to ensure housing alternatives and resources are readily available;

- Site-specific strategies to preemptively identify homeless individuals and offer support before any displacement occurs;
- Agency and service provider coordination, through regular planning meetings and stakeholder engagement, to promptly address concerns; and
- Potential long-term solutions that go beyond simple referrals to shelters, and instead incorporate considerations for workforce development, counseling, and healthcare services to facilitate potential pathways out of homelessness.

Reference Appendix E for a draft of the *Homelessness Coordination Plan Framework*. The Homelessness Coordination Plan, including the strategy for the execution of the plan, will be developed through upcoming meetings with agency partners and service providers. TxDOT will submit the Homelessness Coordination Plan to FHWA within 30 days of finalization of the plan.

2.4.3. Strategies on Meaningful Public Involvement in Transportation Decision-Making (IV.2.p)

Reference NHHIP VRA Report Number 1, dated September 2, 2023, for NHHIP strategies on meaningful public involvement in transportation decision-making, which was prepared in alignment with the October 2022 DOT report on “Promising Practices for Meaningful Public Involvement in Transportation Decision-Making” as well as best practices across the state in engaging stakeholders and leveraging public input throughout all phases of project development.

Some specific examples of public engagement during the reporting period are included below:

- In addition to the Segment 3 public meeting previously held July 2024, TxDOT hosted two more Segment 3 in-person public meetings in 2024. The public meeting held on September 19, 2024, included Project 3A environmental re-evaluation information in addition to updates on all NHHIP segments and projects, and the public meeting on December 5, 2024, included a focus on all of the 3C projects.
- Although design and construction has not yet commenced on Segments 1 and 2, TxDOT hosted an in-person Segments 1 and 2 public meeting on October 15, 2024 and a virtual public meeting on October 17, 2024. Reference Section 2.4.4 Public Engagement meetings, for summary of the I-45 NHHIP September, October and December public meetings, which were held in accordance with requirements of VRA Article IV.2.q.
- TxDOT hosted a virtual briefing for elected officials on November 13, 2024 prior to the December public meeting. This meeting provided a dedicated discussion with elected officials and their representatives. The attendees were able to highlight the scheduled December public meeting to their constituents leveraging TxDOT’s multiple outreach efforts to maximize messaging of this in-person meeting opportunity.
- Reference Appendix F for the *2024 Public Engagement Review*.
- TxDOT held over 100 meetings with various stakeholders, elected officials, other agencies and community groups between July 28, 2024, through December 31,

2024. A complete listing of all third-party meetings is in Appendix G, *Third Party Meetings*.

- TxDOT attended 8 community group meetings and events to provide updates on NHHIP.

2.4.4. Public Engagement Meetings (IV.2.q)

In accordance with VRA Article IV.2.q, TxDOT reaffirms its unwavering commitment to holding biannual public engagement meetings for each segment currently under design or construction. For the 2024 reporting period, Segment 3 is the sole area actively advancing through design and construction, necessitating two public meetings by December 31, 2024, to ensure full VRA compliance. However, TxDOT exceeded the VRA meeting requirements by hosting five I-45 NHHIP Public Meetings between January 1, 2024, and December 31, 2024:

1. **Thursday, July 18, 2024:** Segment 3 - In-Person Public Meeting (Open House Format)
Location: Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, 2405 Navigation Blvd., Houston, TX 77003
Approximate total number of attendees: 155
2. **Thursday, September 19, 2024:** Segment 3A Design & Revaluation - In-Person Public Meeting (Open House Format)
Location: The Young Women's College Preparatory Academy, 1906 Cleburne Street, Houston, TX 77004
Approximate total number of attendees: 169
3. **Tuesday, October 15, 2024:** Segments 1 and 2 - In-Person Public Meeting (Open House Format)
Location: Moody Community Center, 3725 Fulton Street, Houston, TX 77009
Approximate total number of attendees: 126
4. **Wednesday, October 17, 2024:** Segments 1 and 2 - Virtual Public Meeting via Zoom
Approximate total number of attendees: 94
5. **Thursday, December 5, 2024:** Segment 3C - In-Person Public Meeting (Open House Format)
Location: Fifth Ward Multi-Service Center, 4014 Market Street, Houston, TX 77020
Approximate total number of attendees: 91

Each public meeting provided information on all three segments and featured ROW, VRA, and Public Engagement exhibit stations, staffed by bilingual subject matter experts available to address public inquiries. The meetings were fully compliant with the Federal Highways Administration's Environmental Handbook for Public Involvement. This compliance included adherence to all meeting provisions and language access requirements.

Meeting materials and outreach were provided in both English and Spanish, with additional languages available upon request to accommodate individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) as outlined in TxDOT's LEP Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). The Segment 3 meetings were also held at locations that varied from the south side of downtown in the Third Ward community adjacent to Projects 3A and 3B where the first construction is being initiated to a central location near Buffalo Bayou in the East Downtown community to the north side in the Fifth Ward community within Project 3C-1 limits.

TABLE 2-3: 2024 Public Meeting Comments Summary

| Public Commenters | |
|--|-----|
| Public attendees | 623 |
| Virtual Question and Answer Commenters | 33 |
| Virtual Meeting Resource Chatroom participants | 94 |
| Public comment/survey | 347 |
| Ombudsman HOU-PIO webmail | 18 |
| Total comments submitted | 365 |

Pre-Meeting Outreach Efforts:

In preparation for the meeting, TxDOT engaged with affected communities and issued meeting notices in English and the most widely spoken languages among LEP individuals within the community. The outreach efforts included:

- **Legal Notices**
- **Media Outreach**
- **Community Ads**
- **Direct Mail Post Cards**
- **Social media and Digital Outreach**
- **Yard Signs**
- **Door Hangers**
- **Electronic Signage:**
- **Public Contact Number:** The meeting notice included a dedicated phone number for the public to call with questions and to access project materials by appointment with TxDOT staff.

For details concerning outreach efforts and a summary of the meetings held, reference Appendix F, *2024 Public Engagement Annual Review* summary documentation report.

Public Meetings Overview

The public meetings were intentionally designed to foster community feedback, address concerns, and provide answers to questions regarding the NHHIP and TxDOT’s adherence to VRA requirements. During each of the public meetings, TxDOT provided project status updates, upcoming construction timelines, ROW acquisition details, insights into the decision-making process, and discussion on drainage and flood mitigation efforts, as well as the implementation of the VRA.

- The July public meeting focused on Segment 3, with project updates on Segments 1 and 2.
- The September public meeting discussed the re-evaluation of Segment 3A and provided updates on all three segments.
- The October public meetings focused on Segments 1 and 2, and included a project status update on Segment 3.

- The December meeting focused on Segment 3C with elements of the 3C projects highlighted, with project updates on all three segments.

TxDOT meticulously planned, promoted, and executed the meetings to ensure that all attendees, including those requiring Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and other accommodations, had full access to information and meaningful interactions with the project team. Key measures taken to ensure inclusive and effective communication included:

- **Advance Accommodation Notifications:** Prior to the meetings, notifications were sent out, allowing attendees to request language and other accommodations with a three-day advance deadline. A request for Korean language accommodation was received for the September 2024 meeting. Accommodations were made with a professional Korean interpreter, and information was provided in Korean..
- **LEP Resource Station:** At check-in for the in-person meetings, a dedicated station was established where all materials were available in both English and Spanish. Attendees could also request translation services through LEP accommodation forms. During the virtual public meeting, a bilingual looped video played throughout the meeting, providing instructions in English and in Spanish regarding navigation between the different resource chat rooms.
- **Interactive Exhibit Banners:** Interactive banners were strategically located at the in-person venues that included Segments 1, 2 and 3 banners. ROW, VRA, and Public Engagement Banners. Attendees at the virtual public meeting could participate in multiple resource chat rooms, viewing digital versions of the exhibit banners, visiting the TxDOT NHHIP website, and locating their property in reference to the project boundaries – ensuring they had the same access to information as those attending the in-person public meetings.
- **Bilingual Handouts:** Meeting handouts were prepared and distributed at the in-person meetings in both English and Spanish at designated stations, ensuring that language barriers did not hinder access to critical information.
- **Bilingual Staffing:** The meetings were staffed by professionals fluent in both English and Spanish. Staff at the in-person meetings wore badges indicating their language proficiency to facilitate easy identification by attendees.
- **American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreters:** ASL interpreters were made available for hearing-impaired participants, ensuring that the in-person meeting was accessible to all community members.
- **Spanish-Speaking Subject Matter Experts:** TxDOT ensured that Spanish-speaking experts were on hand at both the in-person and virtual meetings to answer questions and provide translations as needed. Between four and seven attendees at each meeting engaged in Spanish-language discussions at various stations during the meetings.
- **ADA-Compliant Venue:** The venues were carefully selected to meet ADA requirements, ensuring that it was fully accessible to individuals with disabilities. One person in a wheelchair was provided accommodations during each meeting.
- **Bilingual Wayfinding and Assistance:** Bilingual wayfinding signs and parking attendants were provided for the in-person meetings to assist attendees in navigating from the parking areas to the meeting site.

- **Personalized Property Consultations:** Resource tables were set up where property owners could determine if their properties were affected by the project. TxDOT ROW, and bilingual specialists were available for personalized consultations. There were also stations concerning air quality monitoring and concerning the NHHIP low income construction noise and mitigation program.
- **Multilingual Video Presentations:** Two videos—a General Overview and Update and a Drainage Mitigation overview—were played in both English and Spanish.
- **Interactive Exhibit Banners:** Exhibit banners provided detailed information on Segments 1, 2, and 3, ROW, VRA, and Public Engagement. Each banner featured QR codes linking to Spanish translations of the English content and online public comment forms. Multiple banners were used for Segments 1, 2, and 3 to highlight key features, proposed design changes, and schedule timelines. QR code links directed attendees to relevant content on TxDOT’s website.
- **Digital Access and Feedback Options:** Attendees at the in-person meetings were encouraged to use the laptops provided or their personal mobile devices to access segment exhibits, resources, and submit feedback either at the meeting or online.
- **Pre-Meeting Online Access:** All meeting materials were posted on the project website by 3 p.m. on the day of the in-person meeting, ensuring that those unable to attend in person could still access the information.

Commitment to Enhanced Public Engagement:

TxDOT remains dedicated to fostering public engagement beyond the mandatory public meetings by offering impacted property owners, tenants, and stakeholders many opportunities to receive updates and provide feedback through ongoing Public Engagement Stakeholder Meetings. In addition to the formal public meeting schedule, TxDOT has been holding stakeholder meetings that included property owner and tenant meetings, neighborhood associations, Multi-Agency Group, Super Neighborhood meetings, and Elected Official meetings. The primary goal of these efforts is to ensure that the right stakeholders are engaged at the right time, which often involves multiple meetings with diverse groups to reach informed decisions and gather valuable input.

Diverse Meeting Formats:

As illustrated by the meetings held between 26 and December 31 2024, and the list of third-party coordination meetings listed in Appendix G, TxDOT has employed various public outreach formats, including in-person, virtual, and hybrid meetings. This approach maximizes accessibility, allowing diverse groups to receive information and provide feedback that is carefully evaluated and considered for incorporation into the project. TxDOT also continues to enhance and update the project website to provide access to the public meeting materials, project updates, air quality monitoring data, and construction updates with flexibility to view this information in multiple languages.

TxDOT remains deeply committed to maintaining open communication and fostering meaningful engagement with the communities impacted by the I-45 NHHIP. As final design begins in additional NHHIP projects, the community and stakeholder meeting engagement will continue to increase. Through its robust public engagement efforts, TxDOT endeavors to ensure that all stakeholders are well-informed and have numerous opportunities to actively participate in the project’s development.

3. Flooding

3.1. Segment 1 Detailed Drainage Study (IV.3.b)

As previously reported, four drainage reports for Segment 1 are posted on the NHHIP project website along with Segment 2 and 3 reports under the Meeting-our-Commitments tab under Flood Mitigation. These reports will be updated as design progresses and to reflect any design changes and the applicable updates will be posted and reported on in future VRA progress reports as they are completed and approved.

3.2. Regional Drainage Improvements (IV.3.e-j)

TxDOT and the City of Houston executed an Advance Funding Agreement on April 11, 2023, for the planning, design, and construction of the City's proposed North Canal Project which involves regional flood control benefits with implementation of the North and South Canals. The North and South Canals, inclusive of proposed channel improvements on White Oak Bayou at Yale Street and Studemont Street, involves the HCFCD and FEMA in addition to the City of Houston and TxDOT.

TxDOT continues to coordinate with the city as they proceed with design of these proposed improvements and TxDOT participated in 11 meetings with the City of Houston and HCFCD together during the past reporting period that were focused on the North Canal project coordination. This is in addition to project specific design coordination meetings with the City and HCFCD respectively. TxDOT's second payment of \$18,779,862.00 towards project construction is expected to be issued upon completion and approval of the North Canal Project's design and permitting.

As previously reported, on-going coordination includes:

- Use of most recent City of Houston hydraulic models from North Canal project to define base conditions on Buffalo Bayou, at the Project 3B-1 drainage outfall and for design development for Projects 3C-2, 3C-3, 3C-4, 2A, and 2B.
- Demonstration of no increase in flooding to Buffalo Bayou or to City of Houston storm sewers or neighborhoods for NHHIP projects

TxDOT, the City, and HCFCD will continue to share and utilize the same model for the various proposed improvements that include Buffalo Bayou, White Oak Bayou, and Little White Oak Bayou capturing the individual projects as well as the collective effects of the combined projects.

3.3. Trail Initiatives (IV.3.k)

Trails identified in the VRA to be designed, constructed, operated, and maintained by TxDOT are within the limits of Projects 3C-2, 3C-3, 3C-4, and Segment 2. TxDOT will engage with HCFCD and other governmental entities when detailed project development begins for the applicable projects which is expected later this calendar year. TxDOT has been coordinating with HCFCD, the City of Houston, and the Houston Parks Board concerning proposed trail construction on an adjacent project along White Oak Bayou between Studemont Street and I-45 which has connectivity to the proposed NHHIP additional trails. HCFCD and the Houston Parks Board have provided draft specifications and standards that they are preparing for trails in this region and TxDOT will utilize these materials to guide applicable design and

construction for trails to be constructed with the NHHIP. The entities are also discussing shared responsibilities concerning maintenance for these new trails.

TxDOT expects to begin meetings with HCFCD, the City of Houston, and Houston Parks Board during the upcoming reporting period to review the proposed trails identified in the VRA and discuss other potential trail opportunities. Following meetings with these entities, TxDOT will also use the monthly multi-agency meetings forum to begin these discussions with the management districts and other stakeholders in Segment 3. Updates will be provided in future VRA reports as coordination efforts progress.

4. Air Quality Mitigation (IV.4)

As previously reported, TxDOT placed an air quality monitor in Segment 3 at 2014 Cleburne Street on June 28, 2023. Data collection was started on August 1, 2023 which was one year prior to the construction beginning on Project 3B-1. The monitor is located within 200 feet from State Highway TX 288, adjacent east of the Young Woman's College Preparatory Academy in Houston's Third Ward, at the corner of Cleburne Street and Chartres Street in Houston, Texas. This site was selected due to close proximity to the first planned construction projects in Segment 3, Projects 3A, 3B-1, and 3B-2.

Project 3B-1 was let in June 2024 and began construction in October 2024. Project 3B-2 was let in September 2024 and has initiated construction in January 2025 just following the end of this reporting period. Air quality will continue to be monitored through the duration of construction for all projects.

Measurements are collected for the following parameters, in order to compare to EPA's National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) and TCEQ's Air Monitoring Comparison Values (AMCVs):

- Carbon Monoxide (CO)
- Nitrogen oxide (NO)
- Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂)
- Oxides of nitrogen (NO_x)
- Particulate Matter (PM_{2.5})
- Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs): Benzene, 1, 3-Butadiene, Formaldehyde, Acetaldehyde, Ethylbenzene¹, and Acrolein²
- Meteorological Data: Wind Direction and Speed, Outdoor/Indoor Temperature, Relative Humidity, and Barometric Pressure

TxDOT's NHHIP Air Monitoring website posted to the public on October 15, 2023, displaying collected data from August 1, 2023, to August 31, 2023. The website includes additional air quality resources such as links to access daily air quality conditions from the EPA and TCEQ. Air monitoring data can be accessed on TxDOT's NHHIP Air Monitoring website at <https://www.txdot.gov/nhhip/resources/about-air-monitoring.html>. Based on appropriate averaging periods, the website compares criteria pollutants to EPA's National Ambient Air Quality

¹ Data collection for Ethylbenzene started in April 2024.

² Data collection for Acrolein started in October 2024.

Standards (NAAQS) and mobile source air toxics (MSAT) to TCEQ's Air Monitoring Comparison Values (AMCVs).

Monitored data is updated as monthly information is captured and then reviewed and quality assured. Once data has been quality assured for a subject month period, the website is updated. The time required for quality assuring the data varies and affects when data updates are posted. It depends on the number of chemical compound measurements being checked and the calibration steps that must be reviewed for each measurement. The website includes a link to sign up for being notified whenever new air monitoring data is posted.

The website contains links to the EPA *Air Now Website*, the TCEQ *Air Quality Index (AQI) website*, and the TCEQ *Air Quality Forecast and Ozone Action Day Alerts*. The TCEQ website, which is updated hourly, includes near real-time ambient air quality for continuous gaseous, particulate data and volatile organic compounds. The website includes an Air Quality Index with six classifications:

- Good
- Moderate
- Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups
- Unhealthy
- Very Unhealthy
- Hazardous

For the period of July 28, 2024, to November 30, 2024, TxDOT's monitor reported a single exceedance of the 24-hour PM_{2.5} NAAQS on July 31, 2024. Note that the exceedance was prior to NHHIP construction which started on October 16, 2024. Elevated relative humidity levels in the Houston region on these days potentially contributed towards the elevated fine particulate matter, but the primary suspected source is Saharan dust travelling through the Gulf region⁴. There were no other exceedances for any of the criteria pollutants or MSAT during this time period.

The gaps in the data collection for all parameters from July 8, 2024, to July 9, 2024, were due to the impacts of Hurricane Beryl on the Houston area. Additionally, there were gaps in hourly CO data collection in late July, and late August to early September 2024 due to an analyzer malfunction.

³ December data is not available as of the date of the report

⁴ <https://www.click2houston.com/weather/2024/07/31/houston-get-ready-for-a-hot-humid-hazy-hump-day/>

5. Structural Caps (IV.5)

As reported in VRA Progress Report No. 1 dated September 2, 2023, there are five structural cap opportunities being discussed with various third-party partners as noted in Table 5-1, Structural Caps. The first four locations are as identified in the VRA with potential opportunities to increase their respective lengths pending third-party funding agreements. The fifth location is an additional potential cap based on the planned extension of Cleburne across I-69. The large angle of Cleburne Street across I-69 makes it more efficient to build a small cap with beams perpendicular to I-69. The result is an opportunity to provide a small cap area either side of Cleburne. Based on coordination with the City of Houston, Midtown Redevelopment Authority, OST/Almeda Redevelopment Authority, and TIRZ No. 7, these agencies have expressed interest in partnering with TxDOT to potentially support the design and construction of a larger cap inclusive of Cleburne Street and Almeda Street.

TxDOT and Midtown have developed a plan and proposed partnership to extend the cap at Caroline and Wheeler Avenue and cover the length from San Jacinto Street to Austin Street. The September 2024 Segment 3 public meeting presented this extended cap length as part of the environmental reevaluation for Project 3A as well as presenting the base option for a small cap at Cleburne Street crossing. Further design and development is pending agreements with the City of Houston who has advised TxDOT that they will be the responsible agreement partner and the City will work with the various TIRZ entities and management districts on the partnering funding responsibilities for cap park additional structural and fire/life safety requirements, development of amenities, and maintenance costs.

During the past reporting period, the HGAC dedicated \$78 million in funding to the City for Projects 3A and 3B-2 to support aesthetic and cap elements. TxDOT will be coordinating with the City to get clarification on the cap locations during the upcoming reporting period to incorporate into Project 3A final design. TxDOT detailed design will include all structural elements to be constructed by TxDOT's construction contractor, and applicable fire/life safety, interior lighting, drainage, and ITS components at each cap location.

Table 5-1: Structural Caps

| Location | Segment (Project) | Design Stage | Partner Agencies |
|--|-------------------|--------------------|--|
| (1) I-69: METRO Red Line and Fannin St. | 3 (3A) | Detailed Design | METRO; City of Houston |
| (2) IH-69: Caroline and Wheeler Ave. | 3 (3A) | Detailed Design | Midtown Redevelopment Authority; City of Houston |
| (3) IH-69/IH-45: Lamar St to Commerce St. | 3 (3D) | Preliminary Design | Central Houston Inc.; East Downtown Management District; TIRZ 15; City of Houston |
| (4) IH-45 at N. Main St. | 2 | Preliminary Design | To Be Determined |
| (5) IH-69: Cleburne Street and Almeda Street (Opportunity) | 3 (3A) | Detailed Design | OST/Almeda Corridors Redevelopment Authority; TIRZ #7; Midtown Redevelopment Authority; Greater Southeast Management District; City of Houston |

TxDOT and these entities also continue to coordinate on potential aesthetic plantings for other cross street bridges in Segment 3 and for aesthetic canopies and pedestrian appurtenances on the three proposed arch bridge locations in Project 3B-2 at Elgin, Tuam, and McGowen Streets.

Central Houston, Inc., East Downtown Management District, Houston First, and the City of Houston have formed an EaDo Cap Steering Committee related to Cap Location No. 3 that is adjacent the George R. Brown Convention Center, Minute Maid Park Major League Baseball Stadium, and Shell Energy Major League Soccer Stadium. The group has been coordinating with TxDOT on potential structural requirements for concepts on developing this cap location. The EaDo Steering Committee and TxDOT participated in a site tour of the Klyde Warren park facility in Dallas, Texas to understand the partnership that developed and now operates and maintains that facility.

6. Parks, Open Spaces, Trails, and Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities (IV.6)

The VRA identifies new trail opportunities along White Oak Bayou, Little White Oak Bayou and Buffalo Bayou which provides a baseline for development of a map of potential new trail links within existing and proposed ROW, and for connection opportunities terminating outside the State's ROW. These connection points outside of the State's ROW require coordination with the City of Houston and HCFCD. TxDOT has engaged with the new City of Houston personnel to coordinate design for all cross-street bridges in Projects 3A, 3B-1 and 3B-2 along IH-69 from Main Street to McGowen Street, including Cleburne Street across I-69.

TxDOT also coordinated with the City of Houston on the final design of Project 3B-2 to include bicycle accommodations in addition to pedestrian facilities along a portion of St. Emanuel Street and along an equivalent complimentary route along Hutchins Street where existing ROW constraints prohibited additional such features on St. Emanuel Street. Design of Project 3B-1 as well as Projects 3A and 3B-2 accommodate and provide connectivity with the City of Houston's bike plan in accordance with requirements in the VRA Article 6. This includes proposed pedestrian-bicycle realms on each side of all cross streets over and under the interstate and highway facilities. The typical realm generally features a 5 feet buffer from the curb adjacent the travel lane, a five feet bicycle lane, and a seven feet sidewalk on each side of the cross street. TxDOT has been in coordination with the Management Districts and TIRZs on either side of I-69 at Elgin, Tuam, and McGowen Streets for potential inclusion of shade canopies and amenities over these pedestrian realms on the proposed arch bridge structures at these three street crossings.

With the initiation of design on the 3C projects, TxDOT will expand this coordination with the City and will begin meetings with the City, HCFDC, and the Houston Parks Board concerning the trail network opportunities.

6.1. Kelly Village Open Space Mitigation (IV.6.h)

The acquisition is impacting a 1.85-acre portion of the Kelly Village open space. TxDOT has agreed to acquire additional property and pay for the reestablishment of impacted open space for the remaining residents of Kelly Village. The reconstruction of the park will require the demolition of an additional four buildings and relocation of the residences in these buildings. Laundry Building A is also impacted by the acquisition. The facility is located within the area designated for the reconstruction of the open space. TxDOT is finalizing an updated appraisal to begin acquisition negotiations inclusive of the green space replacement in the next couple of months.

6.2. City Parks Development and Rehabilitation (IV.6.i)

TxDOT has committed to provide \$1.5 million to the City of Houston Parks and Recreation Department for the development or rehabilitation of park facilities and amenities in City parks located in the vicinity of the project.

TxDOT has begun to draft an agreement to be executed with the City of Houston Parks and Recreation Department to provide \$1.5 million for the development or rehabilitation of park facilities and amenities in City parks located in the vicinity of the project. TxDOT continues to prepare an agreement that addresses the conditions of VRA Article IV.6.i. This agreement will require a Minute Order to be approved by the Texas Transportation Commission.

6.3. Evaluation of North Street Bridge Alternative Pedestrian/Bicycle Routes (IV.6.j)

TxDOT has developed three options for evaluation and consideration in providing pedestrians and bicyclists a crossing of I-45 at or near North Street in lieu of the existing North Street Bridge over I-45 which is planned for permanent removal in Segment 2 of the NHHIP. Options being considered include:

1. A new pedestrian bridge over I-45 adjacent to North Street with cut-back style landings that do not increase the footprint of the proposed ROW.
2. A tunnel underneath I-45 adjacent to North Street.
3. An alternative pedestrian/bicycle route utilizing an additional shared use path along the north side of Little White Oak Bayou crossing under I-45 (located approximately 400 ft south of North Street) with connections to North Street.

The evaluation of these alternatives would be part of a future re-evaluation for Segment 2. The North Street pedestrian bridge alternative for pedestrian/bicycle routes was noted in materials shown in the NHHIP December 2023 Public Meetings. TxDOT is currently negotiating a contract for final design development of Project 2A which will begin later this calendar year and which will further this evaluation..

6.4. Emancipation National Historic Trail Connectivity (IV.6.k)

TxDOT is committed to assisting and supporting efforts to develop the Emancipation Trail in accordance with the VRA. TxDOT has been in communication with the National Park Service on how the NHHIP pedestrian-bike realm can complement the potential study outcomes and any other transportation-related aspects of the Emancipation National Historic Trail. The National Park Services advised TxDOT on April 29, 2024, that the legislation that was passed was to study whether the route described meets the criteria for National Historic Trails within the National Trail System Act. The route must meet three criteria: be established by historic use, be nationally significant because of that use, and provide opportunities for the public to connect with that history on the ground. The NPS has not yet completed the feasibility study, and so this route is not a part of the National Trail System and is not considered a National Historic Trail at this time. If the study finds that the route meets eligibility criteria then additional legislation must be passed to amend the National Trail System Act to include this route. It can be a lengthy process taking many years.

TxDOT will continue to track the NPS's Emancipation National Historic Trail Feasibility Study and TxDOT is planning certain pedestrian and bicycle elements that would provide

connectivity to the potential Emancipation Trail route and will further incorporate results of the NPS’s study as applicable when they are available.

Table 6-1, Connectivity to Emancipation Trail notes the currently planned features by segment and project and the Emancipation Trail benefits. The Segment 3 items noted in Table 6-1 are being implemented in design plans; the Segment 2 items will progress once Segment 2 design begins.

Table 6-1: Connectivity to Emancipation Trail

| Segment (Project) | Feature | Emancipation Trail Benefit |
|--------------------------|--|--|
| 3 (3B-1) | Shared Use Path from Alameda Road to Cleburne St parallel to I-69 NB to SH 288 SB Direct Connector | Enhanced accessibility to Emancipation Park and at least two other Texas Historical Marker and one other National Register sites |
| 3 (3B-1) | 17-foot pedestrian realms either side of Cleburne St, Alabama St, Elgin St, Tuam St, and McGowen St | Enhanced accessibility to Emancipation Park and at least two other Texas Historical Marker and one other National Register sites |
| 3 (3B-1) | Shared Use Path from Cleburne Street to Alabama St along SH 288 NB Frontage Rd | Enhanced accessibility to Emancipation Park and at least two other Texas Historical Marker and one other National Register sites |
| 2 | Shared Use Path under I-610 at North Main St | Enhanced accessibility to Independence Heights Residential Historic District and two other National Register sites |
| 3 (3D) | Shared Use Path on Brazos St from Pierce St to Pease St and along St. Joseph Parkway adjacent detention pond | Enhanced accessibility to Antioch Missionary Baptist Church site |
| 3 (3D) | Reconnection of Andrews St with dedicated bike-pedestrian crossing over the Downtown Connector | Accommodates the Emancipation Trail within the project limits as noted in the VRA |
| 3 (3D) | 17-foot pedestrian realms either side of Dallas St over the Downtown Connector | Enhanced accessibility to Headquarter for the Ancient Order of Pilgrims Texas Historical Site and Kellum-Noble House at Sam Houston Park |
| 3 (3D) | 20-foot pedestrian realm with two-way bike path along Heiner St from Allen Parkway to Cleveland St | Strategic link between historic sites in Midtown and the Buffalo Bayou Trail with direct access to Andrews St and the Emancipation Trail |

6.5. Support for Olivewood Cemetery Listing in National Register of Historic Places (IV.6.k.vii)

TxDOT is continuing to coordinate with the Descendants of Olivewood Inc. to help in efforts of listing the Olivewood Cemetery in the National Register of Historic Places.

As previously reported, on May 10, 2024, TxDOT representatives met with the Descendants of Olivewood Cemetery at Olivewood cemetery for a tour of the cemetery and to discuss the current status of this important site. Subsequent to that visit, Olivewood Cemetery suffered

damage from a derecho that hit Houston the next week and then Hurricane Beryl on July 8, 2024. Listing the cemetery in the National Register of Historic Places would be very helpful for Olivewood to qualify for FEMA grants now and in the future.

On July 31, 2024, TxDOT executed a work authorization with SWCA, a global environmental consulting firm, and Legacy Cultural Resources to write a National Register of Historic Places nomination for the cemetery. SWCA and Legacy will also prepare an Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) StoryMap about the cemetery that will tell the stories of people buried there and the history uncovered as part of their work.

TxDOT and Legacy met with the Descendants of Olivewood, Inc. to kick off the project on September 18, 2024. Activities underway for the rest of the quarter included archival and background research on the cemetery and the people buried there, with a focus on researching the women. Research and cemetery field documentation will continue into the next reporting period.

The plan is to bring the nomination to the Texas State Board of Review meeting in January 2026.

7. Access During Construction (IV.7)

7.1. School Access (IV.7.a)

Based on meetings with the Young Women’s Preparatory Academy, the A Plus Middle School and the Houston Academy for International Studies during the design phase of Project 3B-2, TxDOT developed the detailed traffic control plans for the construction considering pedestrian and traffic detours to accommodate school access including student drop-off and pick-up routes. As construction begins on Project 3B-2 in January 2025, coordination efforts will increase significantly to keep school officials, parents, and students up to date on construction staging and any detour routes. It is imperative that timely and proactive communications take place to keep faculty, students, and parents informed.

In preparation for Project 3B-2 construction, TxDOT developed a map in English and Spanish for the detours related to Cleburne Street reconstruction that will be the first step of construction. Cleburne Street at SH 288 is in close proximity to HISD’s Young Women’s College Preparatory Academy (YWCPA). The map highlighted detour routes for both eastbound and westbound Cleburne motorists and noted maintaining access for parents, staff, and buses to the front of the school on Cleburne Street. This information was shared at a virtual meeting of the YWCPA’s Parent-Teacher’s Organization on Tuesday, January 14, 2025. Copies of the map were also provided to the YWCPA principal and staff, as well as businesses near the school, on Friday, January 17, 2025.

Similar coordination will take place with the Houston Academy for International Studies. And the A Plus Middle School when construction activities begin that impact those campuses.

TxDOT will also be coordinating with the City of Houston and schools in the other projects as design is initiated on these projects. Attention will be given to potential pedestrian detours during construction and routes will be evaluated for ADA accessibility and current standards in accordance with VRA Article IV.7.a. TxDOT will continue to identify and meet with impacted schools throughout final design and construction.

7.2. Transit Access (IV.7.b)

During detailed design of Projects 3A, 3B-1 and 3B-2, TxDOT has been coordinating closely with METRO to identify transit stop locations, bus routes, light rail routes, and upcoming work to be performed by METRO in and around the project area. Reoccurring meetings have been taking place between METRO and TxDOT to discuss how the planned construction will affect the existing bus stops and routes. An initial meeting for the 3C projects also took place with METRO on January 8, 2025, just following the end of this reporting period,

With the start of construction in Projects 3B-1 and 3B-2 TxDOT is initiating every other week construction coordination meetings with METRO to begin in January 2025.

Reference Table 7-1, METRO Meetings and Submittals for a list of coordination meetings with METRO as well as correspondence and submissions to METRO for the Segment 3 projects.

Table 7-1: METRO Meetings and Submittals

| Segment (Project) | DATE | ACTIVITY | SUBJECT |
|-------------------|-----------|-----------|--|
| 3 (3B) | 8/1/2024 | Meeting | Project 3B-1 and 3B-2 Coordination Meeting |
| 3 (3A) | 8/5/2024 | Meeting | WTC Main, Fannin tie-in at Wheeler Street |
| 3 (3A) | 8/9/2024 | Submittal | WTC Revised Layout for New Tie-Ins for Main, Fannin at Wheeler Street |
| 3 (3A) | 8/14/2024 | Submittal | Wheeler Updated Site Layout |
| 3 | 8/15/2024 | Meeting | Multi-Agencies monthly coordination meeting |
| 3 (3A) | 8/30/2024 | Submittal | Design Criteria and Specification Discrepancy |
| 3 (3B) | 9/5/2024 | Meeting | Project 3B-1 and 3B-2 Coordination Meeting |
| 3 (3A) | 9/11/2024 | Submittal | Threat and Vulnerable Assessment (TVL) and Certifiable List and Certifiable Items List (CEL/CIL) |
| 3 (3A) | 9/18/2024 | Meeting | Safety and Security Review Committee |
| 3 (3B) | 9/23/2024 | Meeting | Project 3B-1 Preconstruction Meeting |
| 3 (3A) | 9/24/2024 | Submittal | Site Layout Comments Response |
| 3 (3A) | 9/25/2024 | Submittal | NVR and Fiber Optic Splicing Questions |

| Segment (Project) | DATE | ACTIVITY | SUBJECT |
|-------------------|------------|-----------|--|
| 3 (3B) | 10/17/2024 | Meeting | Project 3B-1 Utilities Meeting |
| 3 (3A) | 10/14/2024 | Submittal | Updated CEL/CIL |
| 3 (3A) | 10/16/2024 | Submittal | Second Revision SSCP |
| 3 (3A) | 10/16/2024 | Meeting | Safety and Security Review Committee |
| 3 (3A) | 10/18/2024 | Submittal | Bridge Embedded Track Detail |
| 3 (3A) | 10/22/2024 | Submittal | SCADA Requirement for Comm |
| 3 (3B) | 10/24/2024 | Meeting | Project 3B-1 Utilities Meeting |
| 3 (3A) | 10/29/2024 | Meeting | METRO Comms Station Items |
| 3 (3B) | 10/31/2024 | Meeting | Project 3B-1 Utilities Meeting |
| 3 (3B) | 11/5/2024 | Submittal | Embedded Track As-Built Clarification |
| 3 (3A) | 11/5/2024 | Submittal | Signaling Questions-List of Deliverable Correction |
| 3 (3B) | 11/5/2024 | Submittal | Use of Precast at Intersections-Star Track |
| 3 (3B) | 11/7/2024 | Meeting | Project 3B-1 Utilities Meeting |
| 3 (3A) | 11/7/2024 | Submittal | Communication Team Questions |
| 3 (3B) | 11/7/2024 | Submittal | Electrical and Architectural Spec Request |
| 3 (3A) | 11/11/2024 | Submittal | Draft OCS plan set |
| 3 (3B) | 11/12/2024 | Meeting | Communication Team Questions |
| 3 (3B) | 11/14/2024 | Meeting | Project 3B-1 Utilities Meeting |

| Segment (Project) | DATE | ACTIVITY | SUBJECT |
|-------------------|------------|-----------|---|
| 3 (3B) | 11/20/2024 | Meeting | Constructability Review Workshop |
| 3 (3B) | 11/20/2024 | Meeting | Safety and Security Review Committee |
| 3 (3B) | 11/21/2024 | Meeting | Project 3B-1 Utilities Meeting |
| 3 | 11/21/2024 | Meeting | Multi-Agencies monthly coordination meeting |
| 3 (3A) | 11/25/2024 | Meeting | Wheeler Station and Light Rail Design |
| 3 (3B) | 11/26/2024 | Submittal | Traffic Control Devices List |
| 3 (3A) | 12/3/2024 | Meeting | Project 3A F/U Meeting |
| 3 (3B) | 12/5/2024 | Meeting | Project 3B-1 Utilities Meeting |
| 3 (3A) | 12/9/2024 | Submittal | Standard Directive Drawing |
| 3 (3B) | 12/12/2024 | Meeting | Project 3B-1 Utilities Meeting |
| 3 (3B) | 12/18/2024 | Meeting | Safety and Security Review Committee |
| 3 (3B) | 12/19/2024 | Meeting | Project 3B-1 Utilities Meeting |

7.3. Traffic Management (IV.7.c)

TxDOT has developed detailed traffic sequencing plans for Projects 3B-1 and 3B-2. Project 3B-1 uses multiple phases and steps to focus on a specific block and associated detours to limit construction activities within each area. Construction sequencing exhibits for utilities and project storm sewer and pavement construction were available for review at the 2024 public meetings and were referenced during various community group meetings.

TxDOT also continues to work with partner agencies on traffic phasing for each project as design progresses and will work to engage these partners collectively as part of the Innovative Traffic Steering Committee including representatives from the City, County, Houston-Galveston Area Council, and METRO to discuss traffic phasing and other area projects. This purpose is to help manage mobility and mitigate potential impacts to traffic on the combination of NHHIP projects and other area entity projects. TxDOT will support these partners in identifying and pursuing federal funds to support minimizing adverse impacts of construction.

TxDOT is committed to providing 14 calendar days public notice of bus and light rail service disruptions on the project webpage during the construction phase. Starting in January 2025, TxDOT will meet METRO every other week regarding coordination of Projects 3B-1 and 3B-2 construction. There were no construction-related closures during the reporting period which necessitated the 14-day public notification.

8. Meaningful Access for Persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) (IV.8)

TxDOT is utilizing the Language Assistance Plan as coordinated with FHWA, to ensure language assistance services are adequately provided and documented on all TxDOT projects including the NHHIP, The Plan is consistent with the U.S. Department of Justice's 2002 LEP guidance on updating recipient LEP plans.

8.1. Language Access Program (IV.8.a)

TxDOT is implementing its language access program in accordance with Title VI and DOT regulations and consistent with Title VI guidance issued by DOT.

8.2. Translation Services (IV.8.b)

TxDOT has been and will continue to provide translation services for vital print or digital communications without relying solely on automatic translation. TxDOT provides print and digital communication in English and Spanish as a standard practice. Seven languages, including English and Spanish, have been identified to be spoken in the Project area and TxDOT has provided print and digital communication in these languages to accommodate those who have limited English proficiency. The NHHIP website can be translated into several languages and includes information to receive translations of specific graphics, images, and PDFs on the website. Additionally, TxDOT provided a translator fluent in the Korean language at the September 2024 public meeting based on a specific request.

8.3. LEP Needs of Pending Displacements (IV.8.c)

TxDOT will continue to document, track, and monitor the LEP needs of anyone still to be displaced. TxDOT's SOPs provide guidance on how staff and consultants are to handle this effort.

8.4. Timely Language Assistance Services (IV.8.e)

TxDOT is committed to making language assistance services available in a timely way for relocation and acquisition services. TxDOT has not delayed language assistance services to individuals with LEP and times for receiving information, benefits, or other aspects of the relocation and acquisition activities have been at times consistent with the needs of individuals with non-LEP. If such a situation arises, TxDOT will document this per the commitment in the VRA.

8.5. Documentation of Future Interactions (IV.8.f)

Interactions between TxDOT's resource providers and relocation contractors and persons with LEP are documented to include the person's name, the specific language(s) and dialects needed, how spoken and written language needs are identified, date language assistance services are requested, date language assistance services are provided, and how language assistance services were provided to that person. TxDOT's LEP Right of Way SOP includes documentation requirements for LEP encounters. This documentation is reported to TxDOT's

CIV Division quarterly and then a Title VI questionnaire is reported annually at the end of each fiscal year.

8.6. Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) Development (IV.8.g)

TxDOT developed SOPs for both the Environmental Affairs Division and the Right of Way Division, as both Divisions employ personnel who potentially interact with LEP individuals. The SOPs describe the roles and responsibilities for TxDOT resource providers, relocation contractors, and TxDOT staff regarding interactions with persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP). The SOPs include procedures for documentation, communication, notice of free language assistance services available to persons with LEP, language access complaints, and issue resolution.

8.7. TxDOT Provided Interpreter (IV.8.h)

The LEP Right of Way SOP includes direction that TxDOT will have an agency-sponsored interpreter present to ensure accuracy and completeness of presented information when an individual with LEP prefers to bring an interpreter of their choosing. This direction is captured in a note for Item 6.1.3 in TxDOT's LEP Right of Way SOP.

TxDOT-sponsored interpreters were present at the September, October and December 2024 public meetings. TxDOT provided a translator fluent in the Korean language at the September 2024 public meeting based on a specific request.

8.8. Translation of Documents and Materials (IV.8.i)

TxDOT's Right of Way SOP includes direction to staff and consultants on the requirements to provide all translated relevant documents and materials to displacees in their preferred language prior to requesting signatures or other legal commitments.

8.9. LEP Training (IV.8.j)

TxDOT developed a training to educate TxDOT employees and consultants on the LEP SOP implementation. The training, which was initially performed on June 27, 2023, was recorded for future use. As new TxDOT staff or consultants begin working on the NHHIP, they will be required to watch the training to become familiar with the SOPs and their use.

A follow-up training session was held on June 27, 2024, with the pre-recorded video also provided to TxDOT staff and consultants.

A total of 11 additional personnel received training during this reporting period bringing the total staff trained in 2024 to 57.

8.10. Survey of Displaced Individuals (IV.8.k)

TxDOT sent a survey to assess the sufficiency of translation, interpretation, and other language assistance services to the previously displaced residents and businesses by mail and email on June 23, 2023. In accordance with the VRA, TxDOT submits reports every 60 days until the provision of the supplemental LEP services to all who request them and any additional services resulting therefrom are completed. Since surveys were sent out through the reporting period no requests for supplemental LEP services have been requested.

8.11. Language Assistance Services During Public Engagement (IV.8.I)

The meetings and the outreach materials for the September, October and December 2024 public meetings were all in English and Spanish. The public meetings were staffed with professionals fluent in English and Spanish with staff wearing badges in the language of their fluency. An American Sign Language translator was available.

The public meeting notification included a statement that public meeting attendees who needed language accommodations beyond English and Spanish were asked to submit those requests to TxDOT three days in advance of the meeting. The only request for language accommodation received in advance of the meetings was a request for a Korean interpreter at the September 2024 public meeting which was provided.