

Project Team







Joint Lead Agency



Environmental

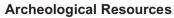


Design Engineering



Public Involvement







Traffic Engineeering









Biological Resources

EIS Support

Purpose of Public Scoping Meeting

- 1. Initiate your early involvement
- 2. Provide project history and background
- 3. Explain the environmental review process
- Invite review and comment of these two draft documents:
 - a. Need and Purpose Statement
 - b. Agency Coordination and Public Involvement Plan
- 5. Discuss project with you and answer questions
- Gather information about the project area
- 7. Receive comments on the project
- 8. Present the project timeline
- 9. Encourage your continued involvement

What is an EIS?

What is an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)?

- A full disclosure document detailing the environmental review process through which the transportation project was developed
- Includes the consideration of a range of reasonable alternatives
- Analyzes the potential impacts resulting from the alternatives
- Demonstrates compliance with other applicable environmental laws and executive orders
- The EIS process is completed in the following ordered steps
 - o Notice of Intent (NOI)
 - o Draft EIS document (DEIS)
 - o Final EIS document (FEIS)
 - o Record of Decision (ROD)
- The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, requires Federal agencies to prepare Environmental Impact Statements (EISs) for major Federal actions that will significantly affect the quality of the human environment

What is the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)?

- An environmental review process that considers multiple alternatives as possible ways to complete a project
- Includes alternative alignments and variations of multi-modal configurations, such as railway and roadway combinations
- Considers the no-build or no-action alternative, which would be to do nothing
 - o Provides a baseline to which we can compare the build alternatives
 - Analyzes what would occur if nothing was done to address the needs of the project area
- Alternatives are identified, analyzed, evaluated, and documented, with regard to the impact each would have on the natural, built and social environment.
- Potential impact information, along with engineering schematic design, is used to determine the best possible alternative for the community and those who use the facility

Agencies and Their Roles

LEAD, COOPERATING, AND PARTICIPATING AGENCIES

- Role depends on the agency's expertise and relationship to the project
- Agency carrying out the project is responsible for complying with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

LEAD AGENCIES

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is the Lead Federal Agency for this project and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) is the Joint Lead Agency Primary Responsibility:

- Federal or state agency that supervises the preparation of the environmental analysis and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) document in accordance with federal regulations.
- Additional Responsibilities:
 - o Identify and involve cooperating and participating agencies
 - Develop Agency Coordination and Public Involvement Plan
 - Provide opportunities for public and participating agency involvement
 - Collaborate with participating agencies
 - o Provide increased oversight in managing the process and resolving issues

COOPERATING AGENCY

Federal or state agency, other than a lead agency, that has jurisdiction by law, or special
expertise with respect to any environmental impact involved in a proposed project or
project alternative. For example: United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE),
United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

PARTICIPATING AGENCY

 Federal and state agencies, other than the lead agencies, tribal, regional, and local government agency that may have an interest in the project. For example: Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD), Harris County Toll Road Authority (HCTRA)

Cooperating Agencies have a higher degree of authority, responsibility, and involvement in the environmental review process than Participating Agencies.

For more information refer to the Draft Agency Coordination and Public Involvement Plan.

Environmental Considerations During Transportation Planning

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires the lead agency to conduct an early and open process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed and for identifying the significant issues related to a proposed project.

Input during this scoping meeting and other outreach opportunities provided to agencies and the public will assist the team in identifying additional areas of concern and determining what is important to consider for the proposed project.

The topics listed here are some that will be considered during the environmental review process and documented in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

We invite you to voice your opinion about the topics that are important to you.

- * Topography/Geology/Soils
- * Visual/Aesthetic Resources
- * Hazardous Materials
- * Threatened and Endangered Species and their Habitat
- * Waters of the United States/Wetlands
- * Land Use, including Public Uses
- * Public Health and Safety
- * Historic Properties
- * Archeological Resources

- * Hydrology/Drainage
- * Water Quality
- * Air Quality
- * Traffic Noise
- * Biological Resources
- * Community Resources
- * Environmental Justice
- * Socioeconomics
- * Floodplains

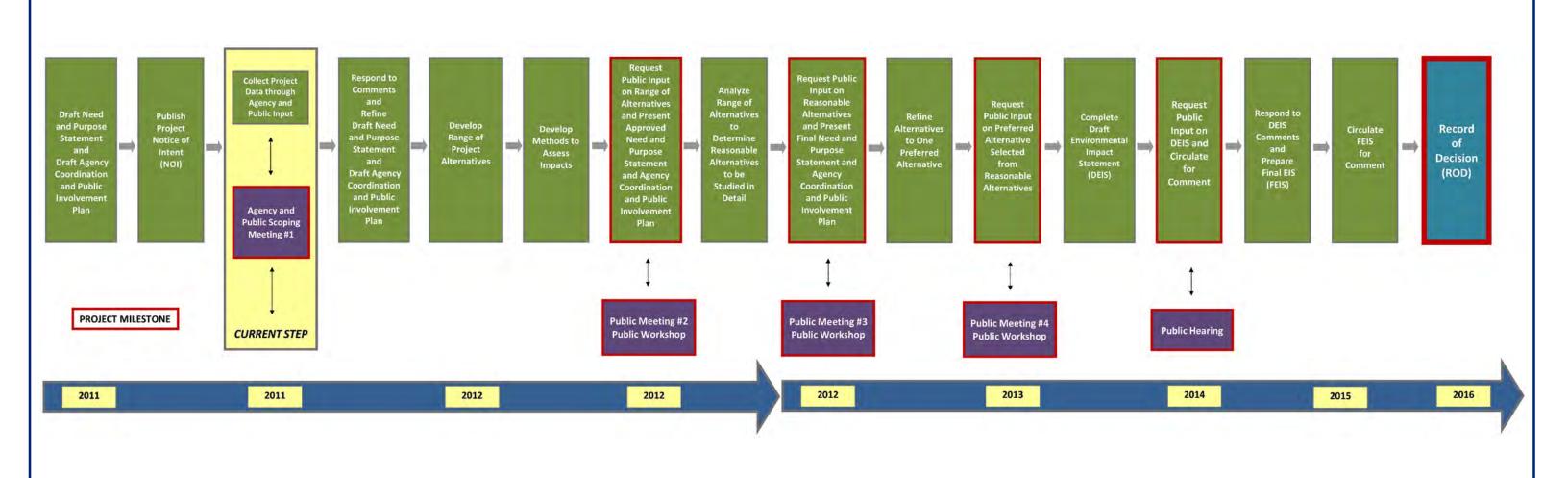
North - Hardy Corridor Studies History

North-Hardy Planning Studies - METRO, TxDOT, H-GAC

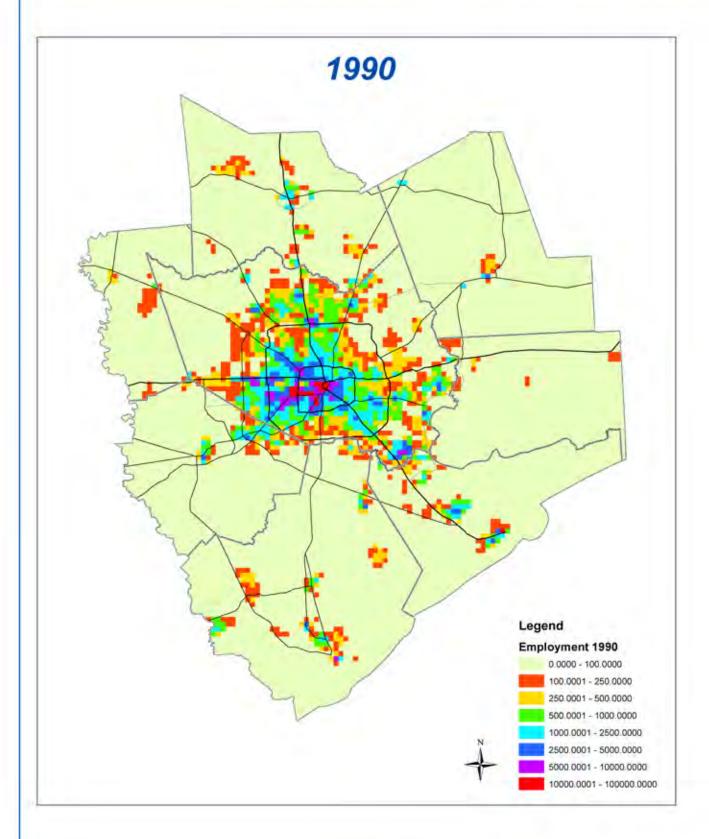
- 2003 North-Hardy Corridor Alternatives Analysis Report
 - * Examined transit and highway alternatives
 - * Recommended that transit alternatives be examined prior to detailed evaluation of highway alternatives
- 2004 North-Hardy Corridor Planning Studies Alternatives Analysis Report (Transit Component)
 - * Findings used to develop a regional transit system plan that combines an aggressive bus service program with advanced high capacity transit (light rail)
- 2005 North-Hardy Planning Studies Alternatives Analysis Report (Highway Component)
 - Recommended highway alternative from downtown Houston to Beltway 8 North is a 12-lane section, with 8 general purpose lanes and 4 managed lanes
- 2011 TxDOT / FHWA Begin Environmental Document Preparation (Environmental Impact Statement) for North-Hardy Corridor Highway Component
 - * IH 45 (N) from US 59 to BW 8 North
 - * Hardy Toll Road Corridor from downtown to BW 8 North
 - * Portions of IH 10, IH 610 & US 59 near the downtown Houston area

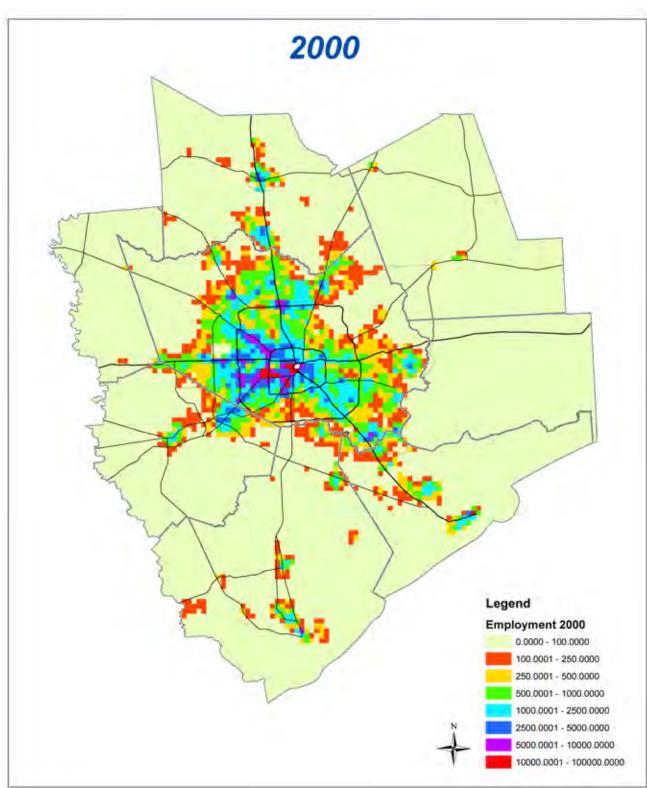
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRAINTS MAP PROJECT LIMIT PROJECT LIMIT PROJECT LIMIT PROJECT LIMIT North Houston Highway Improvement Project Legend National Wetland Inventory Project Area Library Floodway Railroad 100-Year Floodplain ***** Future Hardy Downtown Connector Park ---- Metro Light Rail Pipeline 500-Year Floodplain University / College Cemetery

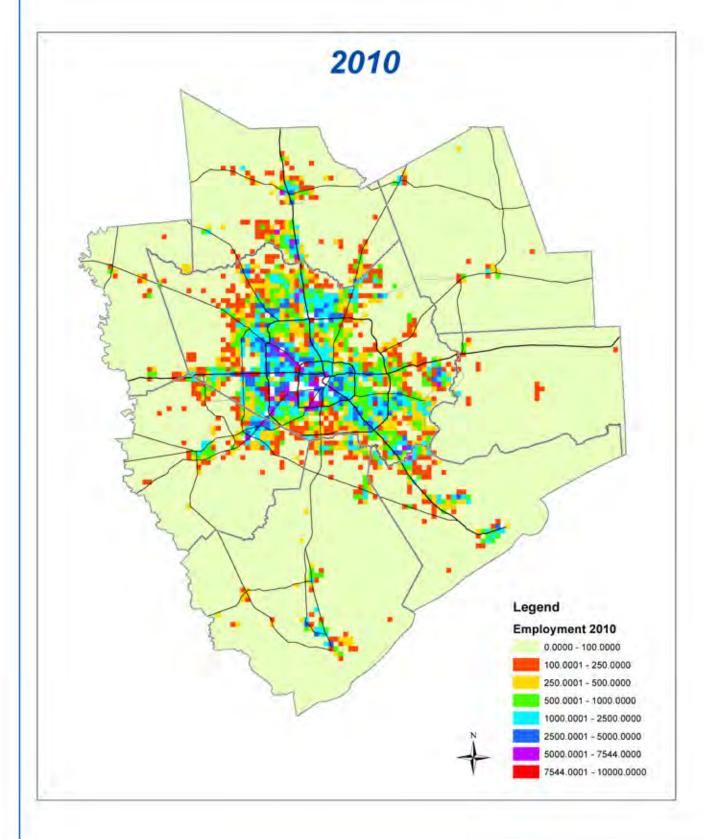
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (EIS) PROCESS AND TIMELINE

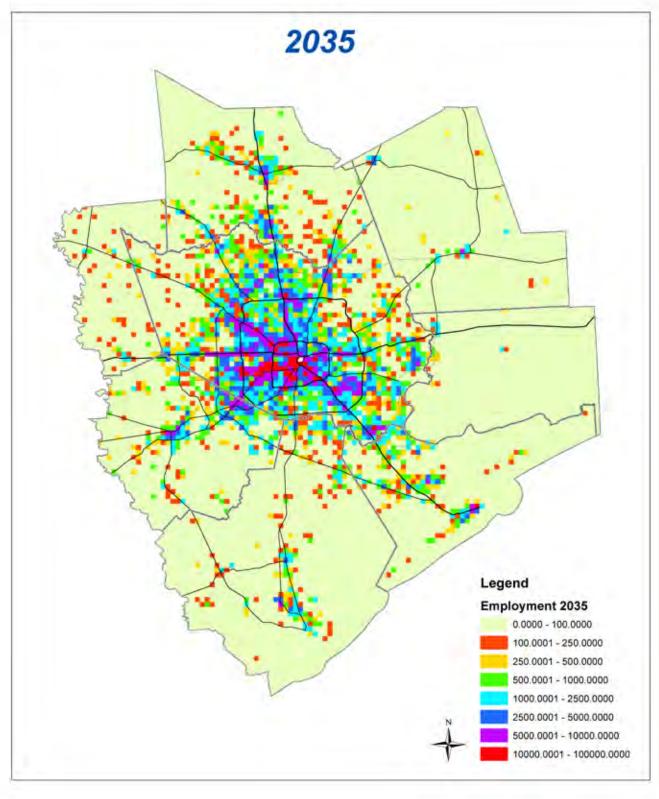


Houston Region Employment Growth

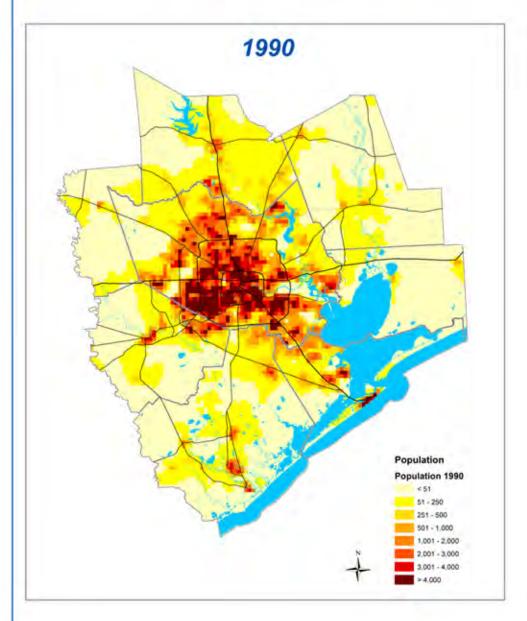


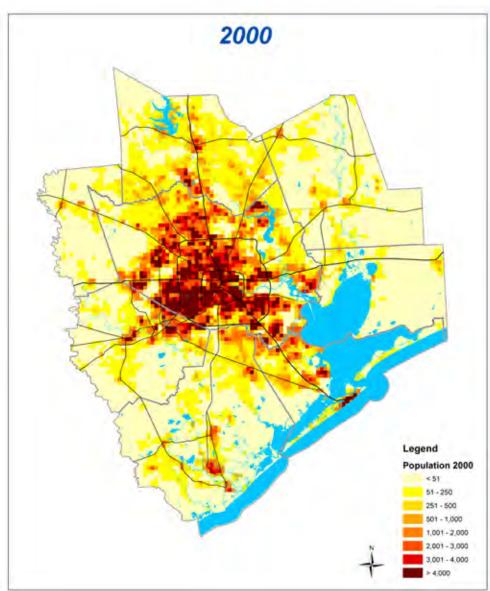


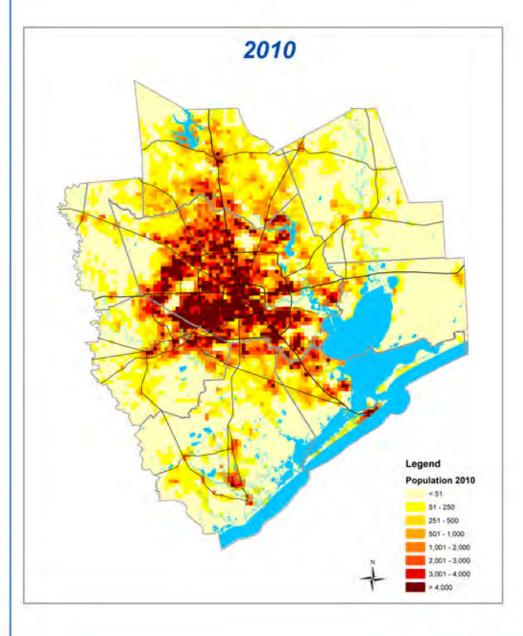


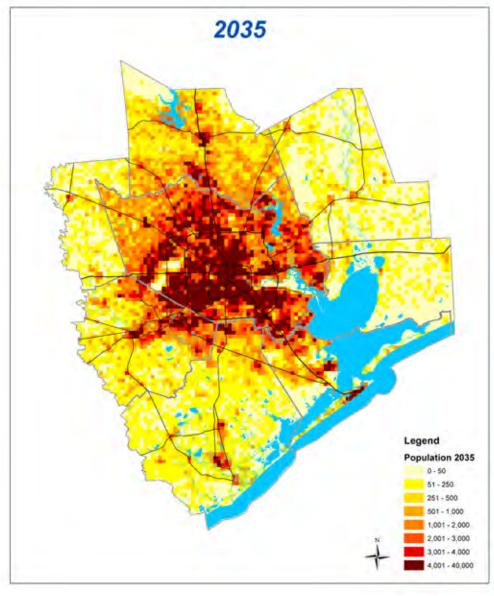


Houston Region Population Growth





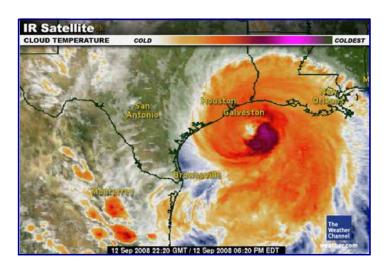




Hurricane Evacuation

A safety issue for the Houston region is emergency evacuation.





IH 45 is a designated evacuation route for the region; at its present capacity, its effectiveness would be limited in the event of a hurricane or other regional emergency.



During Hurricane Rita in 2005, approximately 2.5 million people attempted to evacuate the region, resulting in stopped traffic for miles on major arterial freeways, where it took up to nine hours to travel a distance of 10 to 20 miles.

Level of Service



LOS A



LOS C

Copyright ©2011 Houston TranStar



LOS E



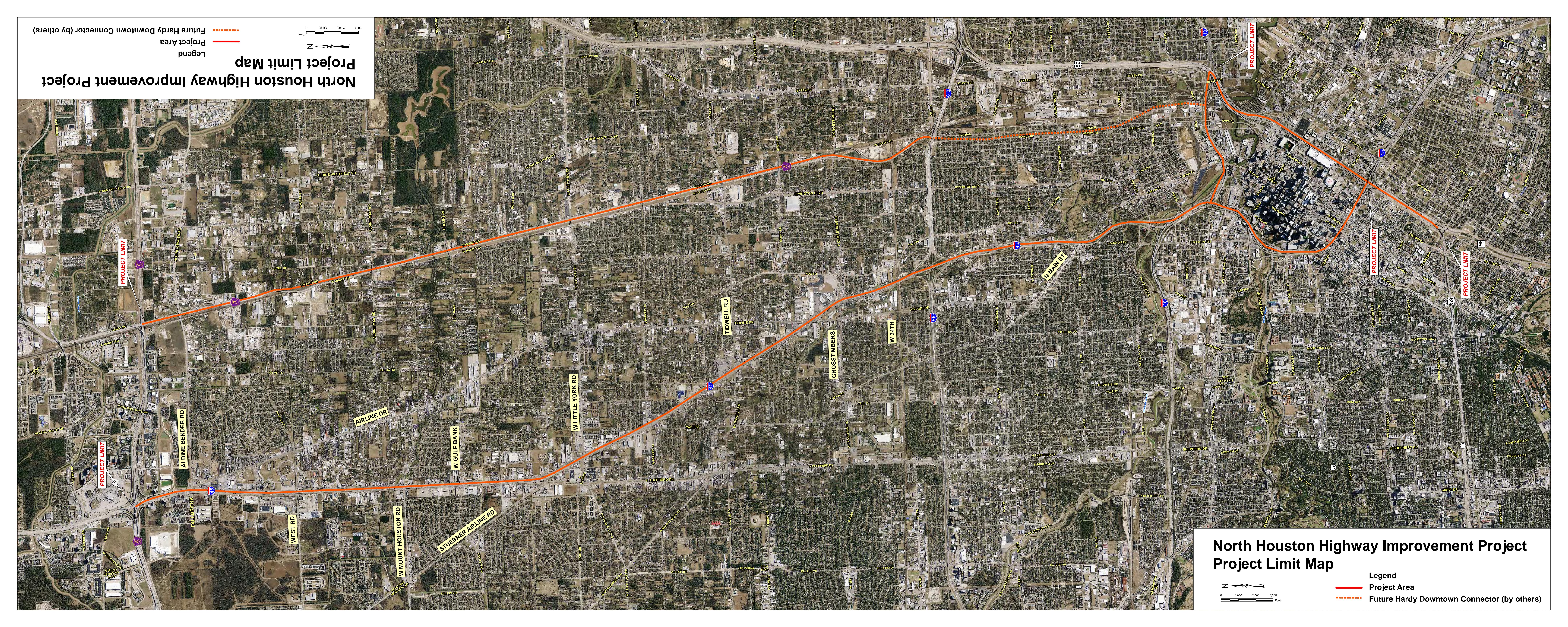
LOS B

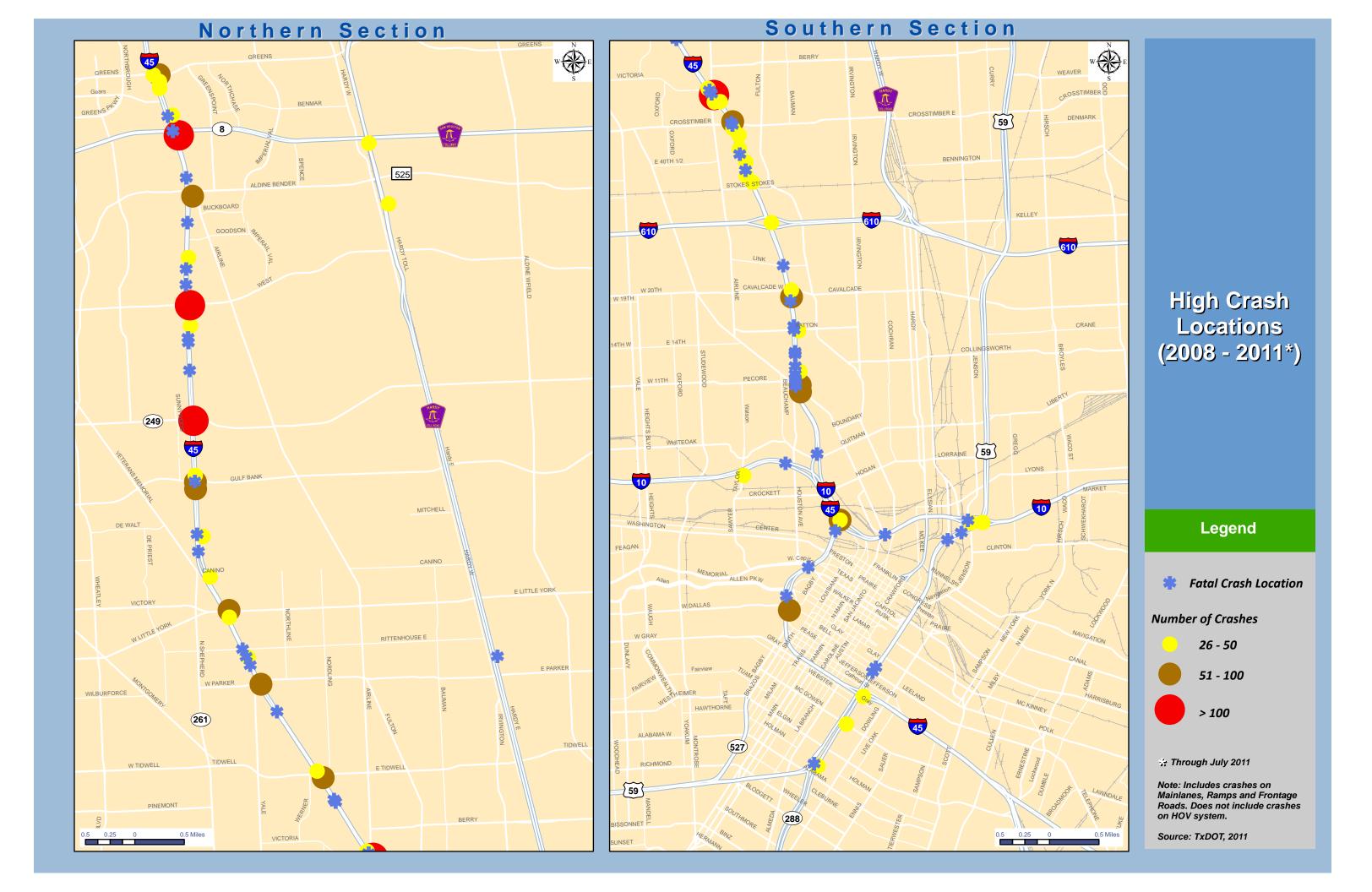


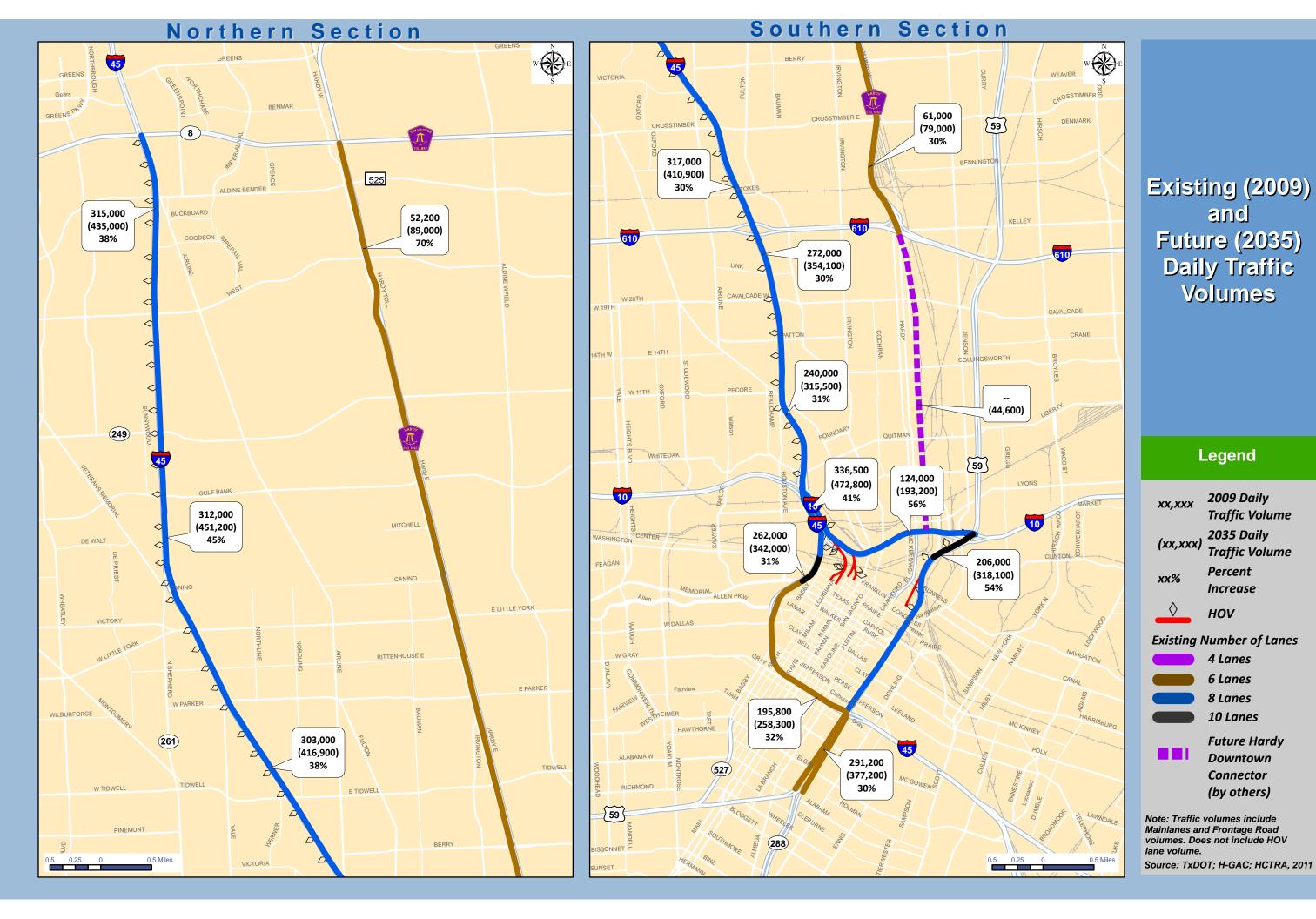
LOS D



LOS F







and

2009 Daily

Percent

Increase

4 Lanes 6 Lanes

8 Lanes

10 Lanes

Future Hardy

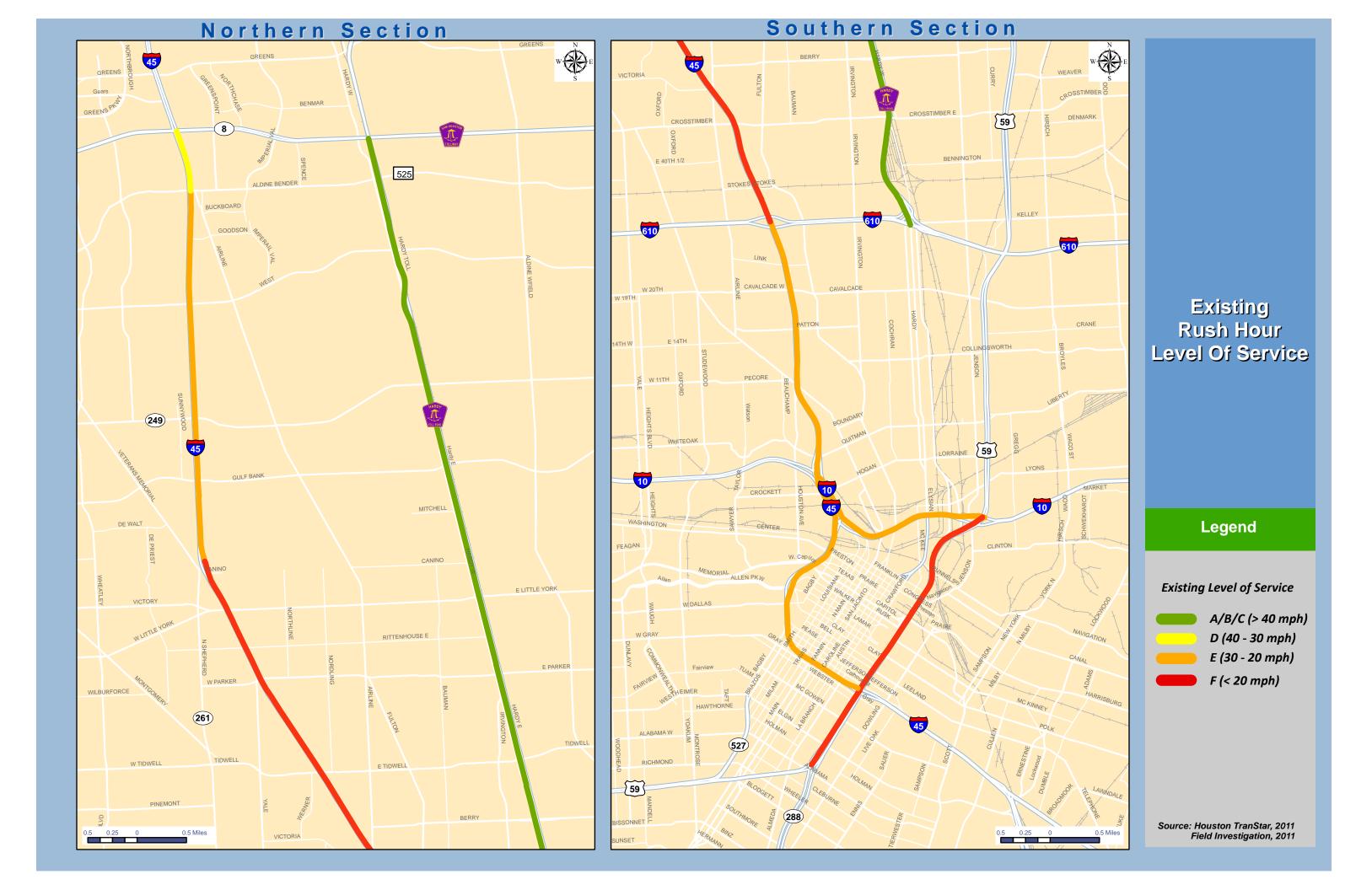
Downtown

Connector

(by others)

HOV

Traffic Volume



Southern Section Northern Section LAURA KOPPE 45 GREENS VICTORIA 59 BENMAR 261 CROSSTIMBER E CROSSTIMBER 43RD BENNINGTON E 40TH 1/2 GARDEN ALDINE BENDER Lane drop FALLBROOK 525 W 38TH 548 through interchange BUCKBOARD 610 KELLEY GOODSON 610 610 Lane drop through interchange CAVALCADE WEST W 20TH W 19TH CAVALCADE W PATTON CRANE 14TH W COLLINGSWORTH PECORE W MT HOUSTON LIBERTY (249) 59 WHITEOAK LORRAINE **GULF BANK** 10 2 lane drops Seperate project in GULF BAT in ¼ mile CROCKETT progress to address MITCHELL left hand entrance DE WALT FERGUSON WAY CLINTON CANINO ALLEN PKW E LITTLE YORK VICTORY W DALLAS RITTENHOUSE E RITTENHOUSE W W GRAY IH-45 only 2 lanes through at interchange E PARKER VERMONT AN FELIPE Lane merge on WILBURFORCE 261 IH-45 Northbound Houston direct connector Metro Rail W TIDWELL ETIDWELL 59 PINEMONT VICTORIA

Existing Geometric Deficiencies

Legend

- Forced Lane Merge
- Horizontal Curve < 60 mph
- ▲ Left Hand Entrance/Exit
- ★ Vertical Clearance < 16'
- Vertical Curve < 60 mph



Deficient Shoulder Width Frontage Road Flooding Issues

+ Houston Metro Rail

Geometric Deficiency Definitions:

Forced Lane Merge

Entrance ramp lane that merges with freeway travel lane without providing sufficient acceleration distance for entering vehicles to reach highway speeds.

Horizontal Curve < 60 mph

A horizontal curve that does not meet 60 mph design speed standards. The design of a horizontal curve entails the determination of a minimum radius (based on speed limit), curve, length, and objects obstructing the view of the driver.

Left Hand Entrance/Exit

An entrance or exit lane that enters or exits on the inside (left) portion of the roadway. A left hand entrance/exit is generally avoided in design as driver expectancy is to enter/exit a freeway to/from the right.

Vertical Clearance < 16'

Vertical clearance of less than 16' under overhead structures (from top of pavement to bottom of structure).

Vertical Curve < 60 mph

A vertical curve that does not meet 60 mph design speed standards. Properly designed vertical curves should provide adequate sight distance, safety, comfortable driving, good drainage, and pleasing appearance.

Deficient Shoulder Width

Roadway shoulder width that does not meet the minimum design standards.

Source: TxDOT, 2011