



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

**Texas Division**

September 13, 2013

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Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and Section 4(f) *de minimis* Determination  
S.M. Wright Project  
US 175/S.M. Wright Freeway from IH 45 to North of Budd Street  
US 175/C.F. Hawn Freeway from East of Bexar St. to IH 45 and  
IH 45 from South of Lamar St. to US 175/S.M. Wright Freeway  
Dallas County  
CSJs: 0092-01-052, 0197-02-108, & 0092-14-081

Mr. Carlos Swonke  
Director, Environmental Affairs  
Division  
Texas Department of Transportation  
125 E. 11th Street  
Austin, TX 78701

Dear Mr. Swonke:

We have thoroughly reviewed our records on the S.M. Wright Project which include, but are not limited to, the Environmental Assessment (EA) which included Section 4(f) *de minimis* documentation dated June 2013 (the EA), the revised Public Hearing Summary and Analysis (which includes responses to public comments) prepared by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and provided by letter dated August 16, 2013, and all previous environmental studies and findings. Subsequent revisions to the aforementioned documents were later provided electronically.

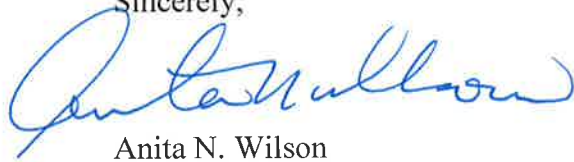
Based upon our own agency review and consideration of the analysis and evaluation contained in the June 2013 EA as documented in the enclosed Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) document and after further consideration of all social, economic and environmental factors, including input from the public involvement process, we hereby issue a FONSI and Section 4(f) *de minimis* determination for the S.M. Wright Project.

We concur in the findings made in the June 2013 EA in that: (1) the Build Alternative is the selected alternative for the S.M. Wright Project, (2) the Build Alternative best meets the purpose and need of the project with the least amount of impacts to the resource areas, and (3) the proposed project with all the required mitigation and coordination as detailed above will have no significant impacts on the quality of the human or natural environment under NEPA. In addition, based on this review, we find that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required for this project.

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Should you have any questions please contact me at (512) 536-5951.

Sincerely,



Anita N. Wilson  
Urban Programs Engineer

Enclosures

FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION  
**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)  
AND  
SECTION 4(f) *DE MINIMIS* DETERMINATION**

FOR THE SM WRIGHT PROJECT  
WITH IMPROVEMENTS TO:  
US 175/SM WRIGHT FREEWAY FROM IH 45 TO NORTH OF BUDD STREET;  
US 175/CF HAWN FREEWAY FROM EAST OF BEXAR ST. TO IH 45;  
AND  
IH 45 FROM SOUTH OF LAMAR ST. TO US 175/SM WRIGHT FREEWAY  
CITY OF DALLAS, DALLAS COUNTY, TEXAS  
CSJs: 0092-01-052, 0197-02-108, & 0092-14-081

**INTRODUCTION**

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has determined, in accordance with 23 CFR §771.119, §771.121 and §774.3(d), that the project's proposed improvements to the existing S.M. Wright Freeway/United States Highway (US) 175, the C.F. Hawn Freeway (US 175), and Interstate Highway (IH) 45, will not have a significant impact on the human or natural environment. The EA was approved by FHWA for public involvement on December 18, 2012 and a Public Hearing was held on January 31, 2013. Because of design concerns raised during the Public Hearing, revisions were made to the proposed project design. The environmental document was revised accordingly and approved as satisfactory for further processing on June 27, 2013. The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) held a second Public Hearing on June 27, 2013. The Public Hearing Summary Reports were prepared by TxDOT in August of 2013 and are on file at the TxDOT – Dallas District office. This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the preferred alternative is based on the June 2013 Environmental Assessment (EA).

The June 2013 EA and the August 2013 Public Hearing Summary Reports (for the January 31, 2013 and June 27, 2013 Public Hearings) have been independently evaluated by FHWA, and determined to adequately and accurately discuss the need for, the purpose of, alternatives, environmental issues, and impacts of the proposed S.M. Wright improvements project, and appropriate mitigation measures. These documents provide sufficient evidence and analysis for determining that an Environmental Impact Statement is not required. Finally, these documents are incorporated by reference into this decisional document.

**PROJECT BACKGROUND**

TxDOT proposes improvements to the existing S.M. Wright Freeway/ US 175, the C.F. Hawn Freeway (US 175), and Interstate Highway 45 (IH 45) in the City of Dallas, Dallas County, Texas. For clarification purposes, the existing US 175 is known as the S.M. Wright Freeway from the existing IH 45 interchange to SH 310; however, upon completion of the proposed project, this area will be known as the S.M. Wright Parkway. In addition, the existing US 175 is also known as the C.F. Hawn Freeway south and east of SH 310. The portion of the existing IH 45 within the proposed project area is also known as the Julius Schepps Freeway.

The proposed project is triangular in nature and will include improvements to the existing S.M. Wright Freeway/US 175, from IH 45 to north of Budd Street (2.2 miles) and to the C.F. Hawn Freeway (US 175) from east of Bexar Street to IH 45 (1.5 miles). The proposed improvements to the C.F. Hawn Freeway (US 175) and the proposed direct connecting (DC) ramps to IH 45 will necessitate the

construction of a new interchange with IH 45 and the widening/restriping of IH 45 from south of Lamar Street to the S.M. Wright Freeway/US 175 (2.3 miles). The proposed project is located entirely within the City of Dallas, Dallas County, Texas.

As a result of this FONSI, the approved improvements will be constructed in two major phases, S.M. Wright Phases I and II. S.M. Wright Phase I involves constructing new DC ramps from C.F. Hawn Freeway to IH 45, and widening IH 45 to the inside from Lamar Street to the S.M. Wright Freeway ramps. After S.M. Wright Phase I is completed, traffic travelling between C.F. Hawn Freeway and IH 45 will be allowed to utilize the newly constructed DC ramps. This redirecting of traffic to the DCs will allow S.M. Wright Phase II construction to begin, which involves reconstructing the existing S.M. Wright Freeway, north of the SH 310 interchange, to a low speed, signalized six-lane urban arterial, known as the proposed S.M. Wright Parkway.

The proposed right-of-way (ROW) acquisition for the project is limited to the C.F. Hawn Freeway segment of US 175, the proposed DC ramps between US 175 and IH 45, and IH 45 south of Lamar Street. All of the proposed construction will occur within the existing and proposed US 175 (C.F. Hawn Freeway) ROW width of 293 to 500 feet and IH 45 ROW width of 181 to 658 feet. No proposed ROW is anticipated along the proposed S.M. Wright Parkway/SH 310 and all construction will occur within the existing ROW width of 165 to 467 feet.

The improvements also include provisions for sidewalks along the US 175 (C.F. Hawn Freeway) frontage roads and along the proposed S.M. Wright Parkway. In addition, there is a 14-foot wide outer lane (excluding gutter) in each direction along the proposed S.M. Wright Parkway to accommodate shared use by bicycles and vehicles. No roadway or pedestrian improvements are proposed to the IH 45 frontage roads. The proposed project will maintain the existing pedestrian bridge across IH 45 (located south of Pennsylvania Avenue). During the final design phase of the project, TxDOT will make every effort to separate sidewalks from cross streets and frontage roads as much as possible and all proposed sidewalks will meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) design criteria.

In addition to these improvements, the S.M. Wright Parkway – Landscape and Aesthetic Concept Plan will include enhanced landscape plantings along the streetscape and at key intersections that will provide an inviting environment for pedestrian and motorists. Aesthetically pleasing, native and adaptive plants have been selected to promote low water requirements and minimal maintenance needs. Visibility clearances will be maintained to meet TxDOT and City of Dallas standards. Various sizes of gateway monuments will also be included throughout the corridor. The design of each gateway monument is representative of the historic character of the adjacent neighborhoods and will promote a sense of pride and ownership in the community.

### ***Existing Facility***

The existing ROW is a heavily urbanized area within the City of Dallas. The studied portion of US 175 has divided the local neighborhood along S.M. Wright Freeway due to the congested freeway and commuter traffic. The existing US 175 is a six-lane urban freeway, with discontinuous frontage roads utilizing both one-way and two-way operations, from the southern project limits east of Bexar Street to Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. North of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, the roadway terminates at DC ramps with IH 45, Cesar Chavez Boulevard, and Good Latimer Expressway.

US 175 within the project limits is named both S.M. Wright Freeway and C.F. Hawn Freeway. The existing S.M. Wright Freeway facility connects directly to the C.F. Hawn Freeway through a sharp, accident-prone curve which has a posted speed of 25 miles per hour (mph). The S.M. Wright Freeway then continues south along SH 310. The frontage roads along SH 310 terminate at the southern limits of the proposed project where S.M. Wright Freeway transitions from an urban freeway facility to an urban highway facility. The existing ROW width along S.M. Wright Freeway generally varies from 165 to 467 feet. Depending on location, either concrete traffic barriers or double-sided

metal beam guard fences separate the existing mainlanes. The posted speed along the existing S.M. Wright Freeway is 60 mph, except for the US 175/SH 310 interchange area. Roadway design standards have improved greatly since the initial design and construction of US 175 and consequently the current roadway exhibits several design deficiencies.

As previously discussed, US 175 is referred to as the C.F. Hawn Freeway southeast of the interchange with SH 310. The existing C.F. Hawn Freeway is a six-lane urban freeway with partial two-way frontage roads along the corridor. The existing ROW width along C.F. Hawn generally varies from approximately 293 to 473 feet. Concrete traffic barriers separate the existing mainlanes. The posted speed along the existing freeway is 60 mph.

Existing IH 45 is a six-lane urban freeway from the southern project limits south of Lamar Street to the interchange with existing S.M. Wright Freeway/US 175. The existing interchange between IH 45 and US 175 consists of a northbound two-lane DC entrance ramp from US 175 and a southbound two-lane DC exit ramp to US 175. North of the existing US 175 interchange, IH 45 is a 10-lane section (six mainlanes, four auxiliary lanes) up to the southern half of the IH 30 interchange. North of the northbound exit to IH 30 and southbound entrance from IH 30, IH 45 returns to a six-lane section. The IH 45 mainlanes are on structure from the southern project limits to Lamar Street and from Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard to the northern project limits. The mainlanes consist of 12-foot wide travel lanes with 10-foot wide inside and outside shoulders. Existing frontage roads are present between Lamar Street and Pennsylvania Avenue. The existing ROW width along IH 45 generally varies from approximately 181 to 630 feet. Identified deficiencies in the current roadway configuration include insufficient weaving distance between the US 175 and IH 30 DC ramps. The existing configuration provides approximately 2400 feet (northbound) and 1500 feet (southbound) of weaving distance between these DC ramps. These distances are insufficient to facilitate weaving volumes between the mainlanes and DC ramps.

Within the project limits the existing facility has multiple bridge crossings, all associated with either arterials, railroad lines, or roadway connectors.

### ***Traffic Projections***

Average daily traffic (ADT) volumes along US 175 and IH 45 were provided by TxDOT's Transportation Planning and Programming (TPP) Division. TxDOT ADT volumes for 2010 traffic counts show the existing US 175 at 82,000 vehicles per day (vpd) and IH 45 at 69,000 vpd. By 2035, these vpd numbers are anticipated to increase to 186,200 vpd (127% increase) for US 175 and 171,800 vpd (149% increase) for IH 45. The proposed realignment of US 175 allows for the existing S.M. Wright Freeway/US 175 to be downsized to a low speed arterial. The proposed S.M. Wright Parkway is projected to carry 57,500 vpd, which is an approximate 30% decrease when compared to the 2010 vpd traffic counts for US 175.

### ***Need and Purpose***

Transportation improvements are needed along the existing US 175 (S.M. Wright Freeway and C.F. Hawn Freeway) and IH 45 due to design and operational deficiencies, safety concerns, projected population and employment growth in Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW), projected traffic volumes and level of service (LOS), and transportation demand.

The existing designs do not meet current urban freeway design standards, nor do they adequately accommodate current traffic demand. The proposed improvements will enhance safety by correcting the current inadequate geometry at the US 175/SH310 Interchange as well as by improving accessibility of emergency vehicles to emergency sites and reducing bottleneck conditions. In addition, the Dallas area is in a state of growth. Dallas County and the City of Dallas are projected to increase in population by approximately 38 percent and 26 percent from 2005 - 2035. This growth pattern necessitates transportation improvements to accommodate the projected increases in traffic demand to the already insufficient regional transportation system.

The purpose of the proposed project is to improve safety, operability, connections, and mobility; be compatible with local, county, and regional needs and plans; and to minimize social, economic, and environmental effects on the human environment. The roadway expansion is consistent with local planning efforts.

## **REVIEW OF THE EA**

### ***Preferred Alternative***

The Build Alternative will involve the reconstruction of the existing S.M. Wright Freeway (US 175/SH 310) from IH 45 to north of Budd Street (2.2 miles); realigning the C.F. Hawn Freeway segment of US 175 and constructing a new DC interchange with IH 45 (1.5 miles); and constructing improvements to IH 45 from existing US 175 (S.M. Wright Freeway) to south of Lamar Street (2.3 miles). The existing S.M. Wright Freeway segment of US 175 will be downgraded to a low speed urban arterial with at-grade intersections. This downgraded facility will be referred to as the S.M. Wright Parkway. The C.F. Hawn Freeway segment of US 175 will be reconstructed and realigned to remove the sharp, accident prone curve at the SH 310 interchange. This realignment will necessitate inside and outside widening along IH 45 to facilitate proposed DC ramps and lane balance north of the proposed US 175 interchange.

The proposed ROW acquisition for the project is limited to the C.F. Hawn Freeway segment of US 175, the proposed DC ramps between US 175 and IH 45, and IH 45 south of Lamar Street. All of the proposed construction will occur within the existing and proposed US 175 (C.F. Hawn Freeway) ROW width of 293 to 500 feet and IH 45 ROW width of 181 to 658 feet. No proposed ROW is anticipated along the proposed S.M. Wright Parkway/SH 310 and all construction will occur within the existing ROW width of 165 to 467 feet. Approximately 32.4 acres of new ROW will be required for the project. Details regarding the proposed project improvements are provided below.

### ***US 175 (C.F. Hawn Freeway)***

The Build Alternative's typical mainlane width for US 175 will be 12 feet throughout the project limits along with 10-foot inside and outside shoulders. Beginning at the southeastern project limits, the proposed number of mainlanes along US 175 varies from three lanes in each direction (east of the proposed S.M. Wright Parkway/SH 310) to two lanes in each direction (west of the proposed S.M. Wright Parkway/SH 310). Two-lane DC ramps in each direction will be provided west of Lamar Street to facilitate the US 175 connection to IH 45. The design speed for US 175 will be 60 mph on the mainlanes. The DC ramps design speed will be 50 mph. The existing entrance and exit ramps along the C.F. Hawn Freeway segment of US 175 will also be reconstructed at a design speed of 40 mph.

*Mobility 2035* includes improvements for the proposed Trinity Parkway Project and a separate project for US 175 from SH 310 to IH 20. Both projects are projected to be operational by the year 2035. The proposed project has been coordinated with these two separate projects to maintain lane balance. After the construction of these two projects, US 175 within the project limits will be restriped to four lanes each direction (east of the proposed S.M. Wright Parkway/SH 310) and to three lanes in each direction (west of the proposed S.M. Wright Parkway/SH 310). These three lanes in each direction west of the proposed S.M. Wright Parkway/SH 310 could tie directly to the proposed Trinity Parkway. Mainlane widths of 12 feet will be maintained along US 175.

As part of the Build Alternative, US 175 frontage roads will be reconstructed from Bexar Street to the proposed S.M. Wright Parkway/SH 310 and converted to one-way operation. The proposed one-way frontage roads will be extended to a new location on Lamar Street along the proposed US 175 realignment. The extension of the frontage roads is necessary to facilitate local access to city streets located between Lamar Street and the proposed S.M. Wright Parkway/SH 310. The typical configuration will consist of one to two inside 11-foot wide lanes and an outside 14-foot wide lane (excluding gutter) for shared use by bicycles and vehicles. Additionally, the typical sections for the

frontage roads will include 6-foot sidewalks of 1.5 percent slope adjacent to the roadway as to accommodate for pedestrian travel. During the final design phase of the project, TxDOT will make every effort to separate the sidewalks from the frontage road as much as possible and all proposed sidewalks will meet ADA design criteria. The design speed for the frontage roads will be 40 mph.

The Build Alternative will improve Lamar Street at the proposed intersection with the US 175 frontage roads. The Lamar Street configuration at the frontage road intersections will consist of three through lanes in each direction, with a dedicated left turn lane to access the southeast bound frontage road. The improvements to Lamar Street have been coordinated with the City of Dallas and will include six-foot sidewalks of 1.5 percent slope adjacent to the roadway as to accommodate for pedestrian travel.

#### ***IH 45***

From the southern IH 45 project limit to the proposed US 175 interchange, the IH 45 mainlane widths will vary from 11 to 12 feet, inside shoulder widths will vary from two to 10 feet, and outside shoulder widths will be 10 feet. Three mainlanes will be provided in each direction.

From the proposed US 175 interchange to the existing S.M. Wright Freeway interchange, the mainlane widths will be 11 feet with two-foot inside shoulders and 10-foot outside shoulders. Three mainlanes and one transition lane in each direction will be provided in this segment. The transitional lanes will assist in facilitating the movement of traffic along the existing IH 45 six-lane section up to the existing IH 45 six mainlanes/four auxiliary lane section north of the existing S.M. Wright Freeway interchange. These lanes will be created through inside widening of the existing mainlanes and/or restriping. The mainlane widths will transition back to 12 feet and the inside shoulder widths will transition back to 10 feet at the existing S.M. Wright Freeway interchange. The design speed for IH 45 will be 60 mph on the mainlanes. The half diamond set of ramps providing access to Pennsylvania Avenue will be removed to facilitate the proposed US 175 interchange. Access to Pennsylvania Avenue and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard will be maintained through the proposed ramps south of Lamar Street, which will be reconstructed at a design speed of 40 mph. The proposed northbound two-lane exit ramp located south of Lamar Street will split into two one-lane ramps approximately 1000 feet north of the diverge from the mainlanes. One ramp will drop down to provide access to Lamar Street and the other ramp will overpass Lamar Street and merge with the northbound frontage road north of Lamar Street. A third lane will be added to the frontage road downstream of the ramp gore. A southbound entrance ramp north of Lamar Street will be added. This entrance ramp will diverge from the southbound frontage road north of Lamar Street and overpass Lamar Street. The one-lane entrance ramp will merge with the proposed one-lane entrance located south of Lamar Street. Downstream of the ramp merge, the one-lane entrance ramp will merge with the southbound main lanes. The existing northbound entrance from Lamar Street and existing southbound exit to Lamar Street will be maintained. The existing S.M. Wright Freeway ramps will be maintained as well. Due to the proposed IH 45 lane balance and reduced traffic volumes on S.M. Wright, the existing northbound entrance from S.M. Wright will be restriped from a two-lane ramp to a one-lane ramp.

As part of the Build Alternative, existing IH 45 frontage roads will be maintained. The existing IH 45 frontage roads have lane widths varying from 11 to 12 feet. An approximate 300 feet of northbound and southbound frontage road south of Lamar Street will be reconstructed. South of Lamar Street, the frontage roads do not provide access to adjacent properties and the roadways terminate into ramps accessing IH 45. An approximate 400 feet of southbound frontage north of Lamar Street will be reconstructed to allow for the proposed southbound split entrance ramp. Limited areas of the existing frontage roads between Lamar Street and Pennsylvania Avenue will be restriped or widened to allow for the proposed noise walls or the proposed split ramps that bypass Lamar Street. The design speed for the proposed frontage roads will be 40 mph. All existing cross streets will be maintained. The McDonald Avenue intersection with Lamar Street west of IH 45 will be relocated northwest to facilitate the proposed IH 45 split ramps and frontage roads. Lamar Street west of IH 45 will be widened to include a right-turn lane to the southbound frontage road and a left-turn lane to McDonald Avenue.

### ***S.M. Wright Parkway***

The realignment of US 175 and the proposed US 175/IH 45 interchange will allow for the existing S.M. Wright Freeway to be downsized to a low speed arterial with at-grade intersections. Two lanes will be provided in each direction between the southern project limit and the US 175 overpass. Between US 175 and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, three mainlanes will be provided in each direction. The typical configuration will consist of one to two inside 11-foot wide lanes and an outside 14-foot wide lane (excluding gutter) for shared use by bicycles and vehicles. Additionally, the typical sections for the proposed S.M. Wright Parkway will include 12-foot shared-use path of 1.5 percent slope on each side of the roadway to accommodate for pedestrian and bicycle travel. The shared-use path will be striped and signed in accordance with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) guidance, and the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG). The design speed for the proposed S.M. Wright Parkway/SH 310 will be 35 mph.

As part of the Build Alternative, the existing overpasses at Hatcher Street, Pine Street, Metropolitan Avenue, and Pennsylvania Avenue will be removed and reconfigured to at-grade, signalized intersections with the proposed S.M. Wright Parkway. In addition, the public requested that the downsized roadway will reconnect neighborhoods currently divided by the existing freeway by providing median openings at cross streets. Median openings have been provided at the intersections with Haven Street/Lowery Street, Marburg Street, Driskell Street/Hickman Street, and Warren Avenue. These intersections are stop controlled along the minor cross streets and serve as mid-block access points between the four signalized intersections. The cross street approaches for signalized intersections will have a 30 mph design speed. The cross street approaches for stop controlled intersections will have a 25 mph design speed. In multiple locations along the proposed S.M. Wright Parkway, proposed local access roads will be constructed parallel to the roadway to maintain access to adjacent properties. The design speed for these local access roads will be 30 mph.

In addition to the roadway improvements, extensive aesthetic improvements will be constructed along the proposed S.M. Wright Parkway. The aesthetic improvement alternatives have been presented during public involvement activities to develop a concept accepted by the adjacent neighborhoods. Also, a proposed rain garden will be located in the vicinity of Pine Street to facilitate local roadway drainage.

### ***PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE JUSTIFICATION***

Because the preferred alternative optimally addresses the design and operational deficiencies of the existing US 175 (S.M. Wright Freeway and C.F. Hawn Freeway) and IH 45, safety concerns, management of traffic congestion, improved mobility, and regionally adopted transportation policy objectives of the project need and purpose in conjunction with the extensive consideration of local stakeholders' needs, goals, and concerns regarding the project's interface with their respective communities and interests, the construction of the preferred alternative will best meet the need and purpose stated in this document.

Extensive stakeholder input solicitation occurred to best incorporate the needs and goals of potentially affected property owners, communities, and other local and regional agencies. Public Meetings were held in 2009 through 2012, as part of the design process, and a Public Hearing was held on January 31, 2013 which presented the EA and design schematics for S.M. Wright Project. Based on comments and concerns voiced at the January 31, 2013 Public Hearing, the proposed project underwent internal schematic design modifications by TxDOT which made revisions to the proposed entrance and exit ramps on IH 45 at Lamar Street and Pennsylvania Avenue. Design modifications were coordinated between local stakeholders and property owners to achieve an optimally balanced and feasible solution to the corridor's transportation needs and goals based upon comments of support received at public meetings and stakeholder work group meetings. All adjustments were



made to the extent practicable to optimally mitigate and incorporate the goals of all stakeholders involved in the process and to retain the objectives of the project's need and purpose to improve safety, operability, connections, and mobility; be compatible with local, county, and regional needs and plans; and to minimize social, economic, and environmental effects on the human environment.

### ***Anticipated Impacts from the Preferred Alternative***

An EA was prepared that examines the social, economic, and environmental impacts associated with the project. The following direct impacts are anticipated as a result of the proposed improvements:

#### Waters of the U.S., including Wetlands

Pursuant to Executive Order (EO) 11990 (Protection of Wetlands) and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA), an investigation was conducted to identify potential jurisdictional waters of the U.S., including wetlands, within the proposed project limits.

The proposed project is located within the Trinity River floodplain or on adjacent terrace alluvial deposits. The proposed project will not cross any naturally-occurring stream channels. Storm runoff in this urbanized area enters an underground storm system with outfalls in or near local floodplains. The only new stream crossing by the proposed project will be associated with the proposed C.F. Hawn Freeway (US 175) DC ramps, which will bridge over an ephemeral man-made drainage ditch. The existing and proposed C.F. Hawn Freeway (US 175) and IH 45 facilities will be on structure, and the proposed S.M. Wright Project will not affect the existing storm drainage system.

The project will not require a United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Section 404 Permit; therefore, a Section 401 Certification will not be required. Additionally, EO 11990 on wetlands will not apply because no wetlands will be impacted. The project does not involve work in or over a navigable water of the U.S.; therefore, Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act does not apply.

#### Floodplains

The overlap between the proposed project and the 100-year floodplain (Zone AE) is approximately 46.8 acres. However, only 2.5 acres of this overlap occurs at-grade, and the remaining project/floodplain overlap (44.3 acres) is associated with bridge or ramp structures that will be elevated above the expected water surface level for the 100-year flood. The hydraulic design for the proposed improvements will be in accordance 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 650 (Bridges, Structures, and Hydraulics) and with current TxDOT and FHWA design policies and procedures. Further, the proposed project will permit the conveyance of the design year flood, without causing substantial damage to the roadway, stream, or other property. The project will also not increase the base flood elevation to a level that would violate applicable floodplain regulations or ordinances.

#### Water Quality

The proposed project crosses within five miles upstream of the upper Trinity River (Segment 0805), which is classified as a threatened or impaired water for bacteria and Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs) and dioxins in edible tissues on the 2010 Texas 303(d) list (November 18, 2011). Because this project will disturb more than one acre, TxDOT will be required to comply with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) Texas Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (TPDES) General Permit for Construction Activity. The project will also disturb more than five acres; therefore, a Notice of Intent will be filed to comply with TCEQ stating that TxDOT will have a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SW3P) in place during the construction period. Construction will also comply with TCEQ's best management practices (BMPs) and other erosion, sedimentation, and pollution control practices.

#### Threatened/Endangered Species and Habitat

The proposed project will have no effect on the federally listed threatened or endangered species in Dallas County. The proposed project will impact the preferred habitat for one state-listed threatened

species (timber/canebrake rattlesnake) and three state-listed species of concern (cave myotis bat, plains spotted skunk, and the Texas garter snake). Due to the proposed project area containing habitat for the state threatened timber/canebrake, coordination with TPWD was required. Potential impacts to habitat will be minor, and the potential for encountering the species during construction is low. Potential habitat for three species of concern, the cave myotis bat, the plains spotted skunk and the Texas garter snake, is present within the proposed project area. Impacts to potential habitat will be minor, and the potential for encountering the species during construction is low. Overall, the proposed project will not impact state-listed threatened species or species of concern.

#### Vegetation and Wildlife Habitat

The proposed project area is set within a primarily urban landscape dominated by residential and commercial development, as such vegetation and wildlife habitat within the area is generally isolated in patches scattered throughout the vicinity. The proposed project will result in permanent impacts to approximately 7.5 acres of riparian/bottomland forest and 1.08 acres of upland forest. In accordance with TPWD, mitigation was considered for impacts to these areas. In response to the TPWD recommendation, TxDOT will coordinate with appropriate City of Dallas staff to determine if mitigation for impacts to 1.25 acres of riparian/bottomland habitat may be mitigated for within the planned Great Trinity Forest area. Implementing the proposed project is not anticipated to affect the migration patterns of birds. Areas affected by the proposed improvements will be field verified for the presence of migratory birds prior to project construction.

#### Land Use

Approximately 32.4 acres of land will be converted to transportation ROW, which is comprised of the following types of land use: 4.93 acres undeveloped, 0.70 acres developed residential, 25.58 acres developed commercial or institutional, and 1.15 acres of a joint use easement within the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) ROW.

#### Section 4(f) and Section 6(f) Properties

The proposed project will require approximately 0.9 acre of ROW from the Dallas Independent School District (DISD) facility addressed 3701 S. Lamar Street. The facility was formerly the Procter and Gamble Manufacturing Plant, which has been determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), at the local level of significance. On June 5, 2013, TxDOT completed consultation on effects to this NRHP-eligible property with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). The coordination determined that the proposed project will have "No Adverse Effect to the Eligible Former Procter and Gamble Manufacturing Plant." Due to the minimal nature of the proposed impact, a Section 4(f) *de minimis* impact determination can be sought. TxDOT anticipates that the proposed project will result in a *de minimis* determination by the FHWA for the Section 4(f) resource. In addition, there will be no loss of park or recreation land because the proposed project does not require ROW acquisition from either land use type; therefore, consideration under Section 6(f) is not required for these resources.

#### Right-of-way/Easements/Construction License/Displacements

Existing ROW along S.M. Wright Freeway/US 175 varies from approximately 165 to 467 feet, and the proposed ROW will vary from 165 to 450 feet. With regard to C.F. Hawn Freeway/US 175, the existing ROW within the project limits varies from approximately 293 to 473 feet, and the proposed ROW width will vary from approximately 302 to 500 feet. The existing ROW along IH 45 within the project limits varies from approximately 181 to 630 feet, and the proposed ROW width will vary from approximately 181 to 658 feet.

Approximately 32.4 acres of ROW will be required to construct the proposed project, of which approximately 4.93 acres are undeveloped, 0.7 acres are developed residential, and 25.58 acres are developed commercial or institutional. Required easements include approximately 1.15 acres on existing Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) property, which will require a joint use easement.

The proposed project will involve the displacement of structures on 17 properties, including six residential, 10 commercial and one on UPRR ROW. The six residential displacements will include six single-family residences. Four of the six displaced single-family have been early acquired by the City of Dallas. The 10 commercial properties and joint easement with the UPRR have an associated nine structures and six billboards. Seven of the 10 commercial properties have businesses that will be potentially displaced by the proposed project. However, two of the potential business displacements and three of the six billboards have been early acquired by the City of Dallas. Based on the results of a replacement residential and commercial property searches, there appear to be a sufficient number of vacant and developed properties to accommodate those residences and businesses impacted by the proposed project. Relocation assistance and compensation will follow in accordance with applicable state and federal requirements.

#### Environmental Justice/Socio-Economic Impacts

For the 223 Census blocks and 18 Census block groups containing the analyzed population within 0.25 mile of the proposed project ROW:

- All 18 Census blocks contain minority populations of 50 percent or greater;
- 217 Census blocks contain minority populations of 50 percent or greater;
- According to the 2007-2011 American Community Survey Data, median household incomes for the Census block groups ranged from \$10,893 to \$43,355; and
- Thirteen block groups reported median household incomes below the Department of Human Health and Services (HHS) 2013 poverty guideline (\$23,550) for a family of four.

There will be adverse disproportionate impacts to EJ populations associated with the proposed project. However, the same EJ populations that will be adversely affected will benefit from the mitigation commitments for these impacts, as well as the proposed roadway improvements to improve safety, operations, connectivity, and mobility. Any potential adverse impacts on EJ populations will be offset in part by project related benefits and mitigation efforts. The downgrading of S.M. Wright Freeway to an at-grade, landscaped urban arterial will benefit the community cohesion in an area that is currently divided by an elevated freeway.

In addition, the projected employment growth rate from 2005 to 2035 for the City of Dallas is 48 percent. The projected employment growth rate from 2005 to 2035 for Dallas County is 51 percent. NCTCOG employment forecasts, which account for the cyclical nature of employment changes (including economic recessions), predict future employment growth for the City of Dallas as this municipality responds to increased demand spurred by forecasted population growth. The Build Alternative will provide a portion of the additional mobility necessary to support the increasing traffic associated with this projected growth.

It is anticipated that a range of 28 to 52 employees could experience job relocation or loss in association with the impacted businesses. However, there appear to be sufficient future employment opportunities of varying skill requirement intensities within the City of Dallas based on information provided by the NCTCOG's Development Monitoring database and interviews with Planning Officials from the City of Dallas. Minimization and mitigation efforts enacted by the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) and Workforce Solutions for Greater Dallas (Workforce Solutions) are available to affected employers and employees. For these reasons, substantial business and employee impacts are not anticipated.

#### Air Quality

The proposed project is included in and is consistent with the area's financially constrained long-range MTP (*Mobility 2035 – 2013 Update*) and the FY 2013-2016 TIP. The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) (FHWA/Federal Transit Administration [FTA]) found the *Mobility 2035 – 2013 Update* to conform to the SIP on July 19, 2013 and found the TIP to conform on November 1, 2012. The analyses conducted for the proposed project was based on data and methodologies associated with the long-range metropolitan transportation plan (MTP) *Mobility 2035* adopted by the Regional

Transportation Council (RTC) of the NCTCOG on March 10, 2011. The USDOT (FHWA/FTA) found the Mobility 2035 to conform to the SIP on July 14, 2011 and found the TIP to conform on November 1, 2012. On June 13, 2013, *Mobility 2035 – 2013 Update* was adopted by the RTC of the NCTCOG. This EA was prepared during the MTP transition period between *Mobility 2035* and *Mobility 2035 – 2013 Update*.

On June 22, 2011, FHWA released a guidance memorandum containing procedures to determine environmental document consistency between MTPs during an MTP transition period. The purpose of the guidance memorandum, entitled *Guidance for Metropolitan Transportation Plan Transition (between Plan years) and NEPA Document Requirements and Processing*, is to ensure that environmental documents prepared during the MTP transition period are consistent with the new MTP and are not required to be updated, thus streamlining the environmental process. In accordance with the guidance memorandum, TxDOT prepared a technical report and determined that the project and project assumptions remain consistent between *Mobility 2035* and *Mobility 2035 – 2013 Update*; therefore, the analyses based on *Mobility 2035* remains valid.

An analysis of expected carbon monoxide (CO) emissions indicates the proposed project will not cause or contribute to any new localized CO violations or increase the frequency and severity of any existing CO violations. A quantitative mobile source air toxics (MSATs) analysis was performed which indicates that 2035 MSAT emissions related to the proposed project will substantially decrease when compared to 2012 (i.e., a 33 percent decrease in total MSAT emissions from 2012 to 2035). A decrease in total MSAT emissions is expected even with the projected increase in vehicle miles traveled (VMT). This is a result of the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) national air emissions control programs that are projected to reduce MSAT emissions by 72 percent between 1999 and 2050.

#### Traffic Noise

Existing and predicted traffic noise levels were modeled at receiver locations that represent the land use activity areas adjacent to the project that might be impacted by traffic noise and potentially benefit from feasible and reasonable noise abatement. Sixteen noise barriers, benefitting 136 receivers, are considered feasible and reasonable as means to mitigate for anticipated traffic noise impacts. The total cost for the barriers along C.F. Hawn will be \$1,733,040, a total of \$21,135 per benefitted receiver and the total cost for barriers along IH 45 will be \$862,740, a total of \$15,977 per benefitted receiver. The final decision to construct the proposed noise barriers will be made upon completion of the project design and utility evaluation, as well as through public involvement efforts (i.e., noise workshops).

#### Traffic Operations

Although it is anticipated that the proposed improvements will benefit the local roadway system, a traffic study was developed to better analyze traffic operations between the Build and No-Build scenarios. The direct impacts analysis entailed the comparison of the number of lane-miles operating under different level of service (LOS) between the Build and No-Build Alternatives in 2035. The freeway segment analysis indicates that the no-build and build alternatives are very comparable (predicted to be at LOS E and F) as far as LOS performance.

#### Hazardous Materials

A review of the TxDOT-specified federal and state environmental databases (and subsequent site visit) identified six sites which were determined to pose a high risk to ROW acquisition and/or construction of the proposed project. Based on the review of the Phase I ESA Reports completed for the City of Dallas from the Fall of 2009 through the Spring of 2010 for the Trinity Parkway Project study area, which overlaps into the proposed project area, there were 25 additional sites that were deemed to have REC and/or pose a high risk to ROW acquisition and construction of the proposed project. Field reconnaissance showed no surface evidence of contamination. It is recommended that subsurface investigations (soil boring samples, ground water samples, etc.) be conducted within the

vicinity of these sites prior to ROW acquisition and construction to determine if remediation, in accordance with federal, state, and local laws, is necessary. It is further recommended that any pre-1978 displaced buildings be inspected for lead based paint (LBP) and asbestos containing materials (ACM) prior to demolition; that certain bridges be analyzed for ACM prior to demolition; and that certain steel beam(s) associated with the bridges be analyzed for LBP prior to demolition. Measures will be taken during construction to prevent, minimize, and control the spill of hazardous materials and ensure workers' safety.

#### Public Involvement

Public involvement is an integral and critical component of the NEPA project development process. The public involvement team for the S.M. Wright Project included representatives from TxDOT's Dallas District, and also included extensive consultation with and the participation and involvement of the FHWA as well as county and local officials.

#### *Stakeholder Involvement*

In order to gather valuable input from the surrounding community and to actively involve the various project stakeholders in the project development process, a Stakeholder Work Group comprised of representatives from TxDOT, stakeholder agencies, local government, and local community group leaders was formed in 2008. This stakeholder group met a total of four times between March 2008 and January 2009. During these Stakeholder Work Group meetings, items such as aesthetics, community priorities, potential alignment alternatives, schematic design, and environmental issues were discussed and evaluated. The development of potential alignment alternatives during these meetings was an iterative process involving active collaboration between stakeholders, project design engineers, and TxDOT. Stakeholders invited to the stakeholder work group meetings are defined as municipal, county, or other public agencies affiliated with the proposed S.M. Wright Parkway improvements, such as North Texas Tollway Authority (NTTA), Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART), TxDOT, NCTCOG, and the City of Dallas.

#### *Elected Official Outreach*

In addition to the public meetings and stakeholder meetings, various meetings and/or presentations have been given to public officials associated with several municipalities along the project corridor.

#### *Public Meetings and Public Hearing*

The proposed project was initially investigated as part of the *Trinity Corridor Major Investment Study* (MIS) in 1997. The proposed project was also discussed within the *Trinity Corridor Balanced Vision Plan*, dated 2003. In addition, the project was discussed and further developed as a TxDOT project during the planning of the proposed Trinity Parkway project that has been included as part of the NCTCOG's Metropolitan Transportation Plan for over a decade. Since 2006, TxDOT's focus for the proposed project has been primarily on the downsizing of the existing S.M. Wright Freeway from a six-lane freeway with frontage roads to a low speed, urban arterial.

A total of three Public Meetings were held on April 28, 2009, March 30, 2010 and August 7, 2012 at the Martin Luther King Jr., Senior Center and two Public Hearings were held on January 31, 2013 and June 27, 2013 at Park South YMCA to keep the public informed and obtain feedback regarding the establishment of a preferred alternative, schematic design, and environmental issues.

All Public Meetings and Hearings were open house format and with the same agenda: to present the public with project specific information on the proposed S.M. Wright Project improvements and to gather public comments regarding these proposed improvements. Meeting attendees were able to view project schematics, typical sections, constraints maps, and other exhibits. Project engineers and other project specialists (environmental, ROW, etc.) were available to answer questions from the meeting attendees. The public was also given the opportunity to provide written comments on the forms provided, or mail the forms with comments to the designated contact. As with all of the aforementioned Public Meetings and Hearings, public notices were sent to adjacent property owners

and local, city, and state officials and letters were sent to non-elected public officials. Notices of the Public Meetings and Hearings were also published in the following major newspapers: *The Dallas Morning News Metro Edition*, *Al Dia* (in Spanish), *The Dallas Weekly* (African American publication), and *The Dallas Examiner* (African American publication).

*Public Meeting Summary for Meeting held April 28, 2009*

A Public Meeting was held on April 28, 2009. The public meeting consisted of a total of 109 registered attendees, which included three public officials, 18 TxDOT Dallas personnel and consultants, one person from the media (*Dallas Morning News*) and 87 attendees from the general public.

Twenty-two written comment forms were received during the 10-day comment period, and no comments were received by e-mail during the comment period. No formal verbal comments were received at the public meeting. Notes were taken by staff regarding informal verbal public comments.

The context of the comments received during the 10-day comment period included support of the project, support for an alternative concept developed by the South Dallas Hope Initiative organization (4-lane S.M. Wright Parkway vs. 6-lane), support for different design elements of the proposed S.M. Wright Project (i.e. at-grade, landscaping, pedestrian facilities, lighting, and signage), comments regarding the public involvement process as well as requests for additional information, and comments regarding the mission of the proposed project (why do it?). All comments were noted and considered for the next phase of the project planning.

*Public Meeting Summary for Meeting held March 30, 2010*

A Public Meeting was held on March 30, 2010. The meeting consisted of 124 registered attendees, five public officials and accompanying staff members, and 21 TxDOT Dallas District personnel and consultants. Two print media representatives, (one from the *Dallas Morning News*, and the other from the *Dallas Observer*), were also present at the Open House Public Meeting.

Forty-four written comments were received at the March 30, 2010 meeting, four written comment forms were received during the 10-day comment period, and TxDOT received one email request for meeting handouts during the comment period. Notes were taken by staff regarding informal verbal public comments.

The context of the comments received during the 10-day comment period included support for the proposed project and requests for more information. Some comments expressed concern regarding the project design, aesthetics, the freeway name, potential noise impacts, potential ROW impacts, and environmental justice. All comments were noted and considered for the next phase of the project planning.

*Public Meeting Summary for Meeting held August 7, 2012*

A Public Meeting was held on August 7, 2012. The meeting consisted of 129 registered attendees, four public officials and their staff members, 22 TxDOT Dallas District personnel and consultants, as well as one print media representative from the *Dallas Morning News*.

Twenty-five written comments were received at the August 7, 2012 meeting, and TxDOT received 369 written comment forms and four emails during the 10-day comment period. Notes were taken by staff regarding informal verbal public comments.

The context of the comments received during the 10-day comment period included support for the proposed project, support for the No-Build Alternative (why do it?), ROW concerns, noise concerns, traffic concerns, pollution concerns, safety concerns, aesthetic concerns, design concerns, community impact concerns, and requests for general project information. All comments were noted and considered for the next phase of the project planning.

*Public Hearing Summary for Hearing held January 31, 2013*

An Open House/Public Hearing was held at the Park South YMCA, 2500 Romine Avenue, Dallas Texas 75215 on Thursday, January 31, 2013. There were 148 registered attendees at the Public Hearing. Seven were public and elected officials, which included the following: Carolyn Davis, Dallas City Council; Brad Adams, Mayor Pro-Tem City of Crandall; Rod Givens representing Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson; Kerry Goodwin representing State Representative Eric Johnson District 100; Tim Lott, Dallas Housing Authority; John Wiley Price, Dallas County Commissioner; and Daniel Clayton representing state Senator Royce West. A Summary and Analysis document detailing the Public Hearing and the associated comments received was submitted to TxDOT Environmental Affairs Division (ENV) in August 2013.

Sixteen citizens made verbal comments during the Public Hearing and one citizen gave a verbal comment to the court reporter during the Public Hearing recess. Nine comment forms were submitted with written comments at the Public Hearing and one additional comment form was received during the 10-day comment period, which ended on February 11, 2013.

Of the 27 comments received (17 verbal and 10 written), many included general support for the proposed project. However, several citizens expressed concerns. The issues and concerns expressed by the commenters related to the following topics:

- Economic development in the project area and hopes that the project would create economic development within the community.
- Concerns and reluctance to support the proposed ramp configuration on IH 45.
- Primary concerns about combining the existing ramp to Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd./Pennsylvania Avenue with the exit to Lamar Street, resulting in a loss of one of the existing ramps, and requiring vehicles traveling to Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard/Pennsylvania Avenue to go through the signalized interchange at Lamar Street.

Because of these concerns, TxDOT made revisions to the proposed entrance and exit ramps on IH 45 at Lamar Street and Pennsylvania Avenue. The updated design change involved a split ramp configuration with a bypass over Lamar Street in both the northbound and southbound directions. This allows traffic traveling to or from Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard/Pennsylvania Avenue to overpass Lamar Street and not pass through the signalized intersection. The design change required the southbound entrance ramp to IH 45 from Lamar to be moved further west and also required relocation of the existing McDonald Avenue intersection with Lamar Street.

The changes were presented in detail to the public at a second Public Hearing held on June 27, 2013 at the Park South YMCA, 2500 Romine Avenue, Dallas, TX 75215.

*Public Hearing Summary for Hearing held June 27, 2013*

A second Open House/Public Hearing was held at the Park South YMCA, 2500 Romine Avenue, Dallas Texas 75215 on Thursday, June 27, 2013. There were 84 registered attendees at the Public Hearing. Five of these attendees were public and elected officials and included the following: Carolyn Davis, Dallas City Council; Rod Givens representing Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson; State Senator Royce West, Pitria McKinney representing State Representative Yvonne Davis, Ocie Kazee-McCallister representing State Representative Eric Johnson, and four individuals representing the City of Dallas and Dallas County. Also attending was NCTCOG Director of Transportation Michael Morris, NCTCOG Program Manager Christopher Anderson, and FHWA Texas Urban Engineer Anita Wilson. In addition to the registered attendees, there were ten individuals representing TxDOT, eleven members of the consultant firm Halff Associates, Inc., five members of the firm Baker Consulting Associates, and one member of Gentry and Associates (court reporter). A Summary and Analysis document detailing the Public Hearing and the associated comments received was submitted to TxDOT ENV in August 2013.



Sixteen citizens made verbal comments during the Public Hearing. Ten comment forms were submitted with written comments at the Public Hearing and two additional comment forms were received during the 10-day comment period, which ended on July 29, 2013.

Of the 28 comments received (16 verbal and 12 written), many included general support for the proposed project. However, several citizens expressed concerns relating to the following topics:

- Inquiries regarding IH 45 ramp concerns previously expressed at the January 31, 2013 Public Hearing, and expressing appreciation that TxDOT had listened to public concerns about the proposed elimination of the northbound exit ramp to Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard/Pennsylvania Avenue and made appropriate revisions to the project plan.
- Hopes that the project will bring economic development to the community and that local people will be able to be trained to work on the construction of the project.
- Inquiries about the construction of noise walls near residences and one citizen's accessibility to his business.
- Inquiries about the project and how it could affect citizen's properties and changes to current access to properties.
- Concerns that the proposed plan is not favorable to the residents of the South Dallas Fair Park area, nor the northbound daily travelers on IH 45 unless an additional exit is added that allows entry into South Dallas Fair Park. Also, inquiries about the possibility to reconfigure the S.M. Wright/Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard intersection.

FHWA has completed a review of the required public involvement procedures and documentation and has determined that TxDOT has adequately responded to all comments appropriately. The Public Hearing Summary Reports for both hearings (which includes responses to all public comments) is on file at the TxDOT Dallas District office.

### **Mitigation and Monitoring Commitments**

#### ***Right-of-Way/Easements/Construction License/Displacements***

The S.M. Wright improvements will require approximately 32.4 acres of additional ROW under the Build Alternative. ROW acquisition will impact a total of 12 residences and businesses containing nine structures, of which include two single-family residences, seven commercial structures and three billboards. All relocation efforts will be consistent with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 as amended, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Urban Development Act of 1974.

Local services, such as The Bridge, are available to provide homeless/transient populations within the project corridor options for shelter both in the immediate future as well as the construction phase of this project. TxDOT is committed to contacting The Bridge and working with the City of Dallas Police Department in the event homeless/transient populations are within the immediate work area at the time of construction.

A total range of 28 to 52 employees could be affected by the proposed project, either by job relocation or job loss associated with the anticipated business displacements. Assistance to affected employees will be available through the TWC and Workforce Solutions. Efforts by Workforce Solutions' services are targeted toward assisting the individual employees and can help prepare those employees to work in other occupations if the employee is unable to find work in or chooses to leave their current field of employment.

#### ***Water Quality***

Because this project will disturb more than one acre, TxDOT will be required to comply with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) Texas Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (TPDES) General Permit for Construction Activity. The project will also disturb more than five acres;



therefore, a Notice of Intent will be filed to comply with TCEQ stating that TxDOT will have a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SW3P) in place construction of the proposed project.

### ***Threatened and Endangered Species***

Prior to any construction activities a qualified biologist shall survey the proposed project corridor for any listed species, due to the time period that will elapse between this evaluation and the start of construction activities. A brief investigation of the site immediately prior to construction by a qualified wildlife biologist will help to minimize any adverse impacts to species that have limited mobility (i.e., snakes, frogs, and lizards) during roadway construction activities. Specifically the forested habitat in the S.M. Wright Project area will be surveyed for signs of the timber/canebrake rattlesnake prior to construction activities. If evidence of the species is observed, TxDOT personnel will be contacted to determine an appropriate course of action.

### ***Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA)***

A brief field survey of riparian habitat and creeks will be conducted prior to construction clearing to verify the presence of migratory birds in the proposed project area. If species are present, work should cease at the location, and TxDOT personnel should be contacted. Between October 1 and February 15, the contractor will remove all old migratory bird nests from any structures that will be affected by the proposed project, and complete any bridge work and/or vegetation clearing. In addition, the contractor will be prepared to prevent migratory birds from building Nests between February 15 and October 1, per the Environmental Permits, Issues, and Commitments (EPIC) plans. In the event that migratory birds are encountered on-site during project construction, adverse impacts on protected birds, active nests, eggs, and/or young will be avoided. If species are present, work should cease at that location and TxDOT personnel should be contacted. If any active nests are found, the local U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) biologist should be contacted by TxDOT to determine an appropriate plan of action.

### ***Vegetation and Wildlife Habitat***

In accordance with the TxDOT-TPWD MOA, appropriate habitats were given consideration for non-regulatory mitigation during project planning. TxDOT will coordinate with appropriate City of Dallas staff to determine if mitigation for impacts to 1.25 acres of riparian/bottomland habitat may be mitigated for within the planned Great Trinity Forest area. During construction, TxDOT will minimize the amount of wildlife habitat disturbed. Existing vegetation, especially native trees, will be preserved wherever practicable.

Re-vegetation and landscaping activities will occur in compliance with EO 13112, which calls for preventing and controlling the spread of invasive plant and animal species. Further, landscaping activities will follow the Executive Memorandum on Beneficial Landscaping, thereby utilizing techniques that complement and enhance the local environment and seek to minimize the adverse effect that the landscaping will have on it (e.g., use of regionally native plants and water conservation practices). Such efforts will be limited to seeding and replanting in the project ROW (where cost effective and to the extent practicable).

### ***Archeological Resources***

If evidence of archeological deposits is encountered during construction, work in the immediate area will cease and TxDOT archeological staff will be contacted to initiate accidental discovery procedures under the provisions of the Programmatic Agreement between TxDOT, Texas Historical Commission (THC), FHWA, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the MOU between TxDOT and the THC.

### ***Air Quality***

To minimize air quality impacts due to dust and exhaust gases associated with construction activities, measures to control fugitive dust will be considered and incorporated into the final design and construction specifications.

### ***Traffic Noise Assessment***

Traffic noise impacts will occur from the construction and operation of the proposed project. Sixteen noise barriers were determined to be both feasible and reasonable as to mitigate for anticipated traffic noise impacts. There are 136 receivers that will benefit (experience a reduction in noise levels by at least five dBA) from the proposed noise barriers. The final decision to construct the proposed noise barriers will be made upon completion of the project design and utility evaluation, as well as through public involvement efforts (i.e., noise workshops). Such noise briefings will determine if the noise walls are desired and, if so, assist in their aesthetic design. Any subsequent project design changes may require a reevaluation of this proposal.

### ***Hazardous Materials***

Additional subsurface investigations will be required to confirm if contamination may be encountered during construction. During the ROW negotiation and acquisition process, further inquiry into the existing and previous ownership and uses of each property will be performed. Further assessment and investigations, if required, will be postponed until ROW can be obtained in later stages of project development. If identified and confirmed, any hazardous material issues will be addressed during the ROW negotiation, acquisition, or eminent domain process prior to construction. Appropriate soils and/or groundwater management plans for activities within these areas will be developed. Special provisions or contingency language will be included in the project's plans, specifications, and estimates to address hazardous materials and/or petroleum contamination according to applicable state, federal and local regulations per TxDOT Standard Specifications. In addition, any unanticipated hazardous materials and/or petroleum contamination encountered during construction will be addressed according to applicable state, federal and local regulations per TxDOT Standard Specifications.

### ***Aesthetic Considerations***

The proposed design will be consistent with the City of Dallas' 2005 Trails Master Plan and the 2011 Dallas Bike Plan, and include multi-use hike and bike trails located on both sides of the roadway within the landscaped parkway of the proposed S.M. Wright Project. All multi-use trails will be 12 feet wide and designed to meet current AASHTO trail design standards. This project will also include on-street bike facilities that will be accommodated by 16-foot (14-foot and 2-foot shoulder) wide outside vehicular travel lanes.

The proposed design will be compliant with the ADAAG as well as the MUTCD. Stamped concrete, brick and/or concrete pavers will delineate pedestrian access across busy streets. Intersections will be highlighted with hardscape to alert drivers of pedestrian crossings, the design will emphasize the neighborhood gateway monuments. Pedestrian crossings will include ADA accessible ramps in compliance with the Texas Accessibility Standards including detectable warning surfacing, audible alert systems, and rapid flash vehicular warning signage.

### **MONITORING AND ENFORCEMENT**

All commitments and conditions of approval stated in the EA and shown on the EPIC sheet (attached) will be monitored by TxDOT and other appropriate state, federal, and local agencies to ensure compliance.

### **FHWA DECISION**

The FHWA has reviewed all of the relevant documents and materials and all of the previous environmental studies and findings. Based upon our own independent review and analysis, we find that the June 2013 Final EA for the S.M. Wright Project analyzed and considered all of the relevant potential environmental impacts and issues. The FHWA concurs that based upon the EA: (1) the Build Alternative is the selected alternative for the S.M. Wright Project, (2) the Build Alternative best meets the purpose and need of the project with the least amount of impacts to the resource areas and (3) the proposed project, when implemented with all the required mitigation and coordination as

detailed above, will have no significant impacts on the equality of the human or natural environment under NEPA.

Based upon our own agency review and consideration of the analysis and evaluation contained in the EA and Administrative Record for this project, and after further careful consideration of all social, economic, and environmental factors, including input from the public involvement process, the FHWA further approves the Build Alternative as the selected alternative for this action. The selected alternative will best fulfill the need and purpose for the project and meets the goals identified for the S.M. Wright Project.

As to project mitigation, TxDOT is hereby required to ensure completion of all mitigation outlined above and set out specifically in the June 2013 Final EA for the S.M. Wright project and EPIC Sheet. TxDOT is also required to ensure that any and all local, state, or federal permit requirements and conditions are met and otherwise complied with.



For Federal Highway Administration

09/13/2013

Date