

Washington, DC 20590-0001. All comments received will be available for examination at the above address between 10:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., E.T., Monday through Friday except Federal holidays. Those desiring notification of receipt of comments must include a self-addressed, stamped postcard/envelope.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Silvio Cutuli, Office of Real Estate Services, Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation, HRE-20, Room 3221, 400 7th St., S.W. Washington, DC 20590-0001, telephone (202) 366-2025. Office hours are from 7:45 a.m. to 4:15 p.m., E.T., Monday thru Friday, except Federal holidays.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

Electronic Availability

Internet users may access all comments received by the U.S. DOT Dockets, Room PL-401, by using the universal resource locator (URL): <http://dms.dot.gov>. It is available 24 hours each day, 365 days each year. An electronic copy of this document can be downloaded using a modem and suitable communications software from the **Federal Register** electronic bulletin board service (telephone number: 202-512-1661). Internet users may reach the Federal Register home page at: <http://www.nara.gov/nara/fedreg> and the Government Printing Office's database at: http://www.gpo.gov/su_docs.

Title: Outdoor Advertising and Junkyard Report.

OMB Number: 2125-0030.

Background

The report on the status of control of outdoor advertising and junkyards is provided by highway agencies of each State, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico on Form FHWA-1424, Outdoor Advertising and Junkyard Report. The information on this form, which consists of the numbers of signs in specified categories is voluntarily submitted. These statistics are used to determine how the provisions of 23 U.S.C. 131 and 136 are being complied with and reflect actions taken by the States in this regard. Since the current form has been in use over 20 years, and was last revised in 1989, the FHWA is interested in comments regarding the validity and usefulness of the information requested as it relates to current state activities implementing provisions of 23 U.S.C. 131 and 136. Interested parties are invited to send comments regarding any aspect of this information collection, including, but not limited to: (1) the continued necessity and utility of the requested

statistics used to reflect the control of the outdoor advertising signs and junkyards; (2) ways to enhance or improve the relevance of requested information; (3) ways to minimize the collection burden without reducing the quality of the information submitted; and (4) the accuracy of the estimated burden. Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized and/or included in the request for OMB renewal of this information collection.

Respondents: State Departments of Transportation/State Highway Agencies.

Average Burden per Response: The average burden is 26 hours per response.

Estimated Total Annual Burden: The estimated total annual burden is 1,352 hours.

Frequency: Annually.

Authority: 23 U.S.C. 117 and 121.

Issued on: April 1, 1998.

George S. Moore, Jr.,

Associate Administrator for Administration.

[FR Doc. 98-9361 Filed 4-8-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Highway Administration

Environmental Impact Statement: Macon County, Missouri

AGENCY: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of intent.

SUMMARY: The FHWA is issuing this notice to advise the public that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be prepared for a proposed project in central Missouri.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Donald Neumann, Programs Engineer, FHWA Division Office, 209 Adams Street, Jefferson City, MO 65101, Telephone Number (573) 636-7104; or Fred A. Martin, Preliminary Studies, Division Engineer, Missouri Department of Transportation, P.O. Box 270, Jefferson City, MO 65102, Telephone Number (573) 526-0991.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The FHWA, in cooperation with the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT), will prepare an EIS for a proposed project to upgrade U.S. Route 63 to a four-lane relocation facility around the city of Macon in Macon County, Missouri.

The proposed action is considered necessary to improve safety and capacity for through traffic on U.S. Route 63 and to promote economic development for Macon County, the city

of Macon, and communities north and south along the U.S. Route 63 Corridor. Alternatives under consideration include (1) taking no action, (2) implementing Transportation System Management (TSM) options, (3) upgrading and improving the existing roadway; and (4) constructing a four-lane roadway on new or partially-new location. The location study conducted during preparation of the EIS will provide definitive alternatives for evaluation by the EIS. The proposed action will likely include transportation improvements from approximately one mile south of Macon at the Route YY intersection and extend to the Route DD intersection approximately 3.0 miles north of Macon. The project is approximately 7.0 miles in length.

The scoping process will involve all appropriate federal, state, and local agencies, and private organizations and citizens who have previously expressed or are known to have interest in this proposal. To date, preliminary information has been issued to local officials and other interested parties. Public meetings will be conducted as the location study process progresses. A public hearing will be held to present the findings of the Draft EIS (DEIS). The DEIS will be available for public and agency review and comment prior to the public hearing.

To ensure that the full range of issues related to this proposed action is addressed and all significant issues are identified, comments and suggestions are invited from all interested parties. Comments or questions concerning this proposed action and the EIS should be directed to the FHWA or MoDOT at the addresses provided above.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program Number 20.205, Highway Planning and Construction. The regulations implementing Executive Order 12373 regarding intergovernmental consultation on Federal programs and activities apply to this program.)

Issued on: March 31, 1998.

Donald L. Neumann,

Programs Engineer, Jefferson City.

[FR Doc. 98-9367 Filed 4-8-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-22-M

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Highway Administration

Environmental Impact Statement: Harris, Fort Bend, and Waller Counties, Texas

AGENCY: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of intent.

SUMMARY: The FHWA is issuing this notice to advise the public that an environmental impact statement (EIS) will be prepared for a proposed highway expansion project in Harris, Fort Bend, and Waller Counties, Texas.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: John Mack, P.E., District Engineer, Federal Highway Administration, Room 826, Federal Office Building, 300 East 8th Street, Austin, Texas 78701, Telephone (512) 916-5516, or James G. Darden, P.E., Project Development, Houston District, Texas Department of Transportation, P.O. Box 1386, Houston, Texas 77251-1386, Telephone (713) 802-5241.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The FHWA, in cooperation with the Texas Department of Transportation, (TxDOT), will prepare an EIS for a proposed expansion of the Interstate 10 West Katy Freeway (IH-10 Katy Freeway), from the Houston's central business district, extending along the IH-10 Katy Freeway to the Brazos River approximately 65.98 kilometers (41 miles). The study area includes major parallel arterials and the TxDOT right-of-way through Harris, Fort Bend, and Waller Counties (recently purchased from Union Pacific Railroad formerly known as the Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad). Cities and towns affected in this region include Houston, Brookshire, Hedwig Village, Bunker Hill Village, Hilshire Village, Hunters Creek Village, Katy, Piney Point Village, and Spring Valley.

A comprehensive transportation study of the 40 mile corridor along the IH-10 Katy Freeway between downtown Houston and the Brazos River, referred to as a Katy Freeway Corridor Major Investment Study (MIS) identified several strategies to meet the existing and future travel needs within the corridor. These strategies range from a No-Build and Transportation System Management (TSM) approach to a major emphasis on high occupancy vehicles (HOV) and transit, as well as the single occupancy vehicle (SOV). Combinations of these approaches were also evaluated. As a result of these evaluations, a preferred alternative for meeting the corridor's transportation needs was then selected. Strategies, approaches, and alternatives will be discussed in the Draft EIS. Other topics to be discussed (in detail) in the Draft EIS include land use; traffic and transportation; economic development; displacement and relocation; neighborhood quality and cohesion; access to community facilities; safety and security; geology and soils; hazardous materials; noise; visual and aesthetics; water resources; biological resources and endangered

and threatened species; wetlands; air quality; and cultural resources.

Impacts caused by the construction and operation of the IH-10 Katy Freeway corridor will vary in accordance with the preferred alternative alignment. Generally, impacts would include construction detours, construction traffic, mobility improvement and evacuation route improvements, air and noise impacts from construction equipment and roadway operations, water impacts from construction areas and roadway storm water runoff, impacts to waters of the United States, and impacts to residents and businesses based on potential relocations.

In March 1995, the TxDOT Houston District initiated the Katy Freeway Corridor MIS study. This study followed guidelines designed by the Federal government for major investments in transportation, as outlined in the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991. This study involved the development of key elements of a MIS encompassing the IH-10 Katy Freeway, major arterials, and the adjacent parallel Union Pacific ROW which has been purchased by the State. The Katy Freeway Corridor MIS was a cooperative effort between TxDOT and an interagency committee with representatives from the Houston-Galveston Area Council, the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the Metropolitan Transit Authority (METRO), the FHWA, the Federal Transit Administration, and the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission. The purpose of this MIS was to evaluate the transportation needs of the corridor and provide an opportunity for TxDOT and participating agencies to identify the most reasonable, effective, and efficient transportation option for addressing these needs. Goals and objectives were developed with the assistance of over 150 community and business representatives who participated in a round of public meetings held in July of 1995.

As a result of the July 1995 public meetings, a set of twenty-two alternative transportation improvement concepts were developed to address the problems and needs of the corridor. These twenty-two concepts included transportation modes such as highway, bus, and rail. The twenty-two initial concepts were then screened based on the goals and objectives for the MIS study, resulting in eleven corridor-wide conceptual alternatives. These eleven alternatives were presented for review and comment at a second round of public meetings in November of 1995.

Using the input from the second round of public meetings, the corridor-wide conceptual alternatives were again screened to a short list of seven alternatives to be carried forward for further analysis. Each alternative was evaluated based on travel forecasts, environmental impacts, capital costs, and financial feasibility. These alternatives are described as follows:

Alternative I: No-Build—This alternative includes improvements that are already committed to and expected to be in place by the year 2020, including additional arterial enhancement, reversible HOV connection from IH-10 east of Studemont into downtown, HOV direct connection between the Northwest Transit Center and the IH-10 Katy Freeway at the Interstate 610 West Loop (IH-610 West Loop), and localized intersection improvements. Transit service would be increased according to METRO 2020 plans, including a new transit center between Shepherd and Durham near the IH-10 Katy Freeway. The capacity of the No-Build alternative is the same as the current IH-10 Katy Freeway.

Alternative II: TSM/Transportation Demand Management (TDM)—The TSM/TDM alternative is designed to improve mobility in the corridor without major capital investment. The alternative is designed to improve the operating flow in the corridor rather than increase capacity. The TSM/TDM alternative includes the No-Build improvements plus synchronized traffic signals, ramp meterings, park and pool facilities, geometric improvements, motorist information systems, and other low-cost enhancements. Transit service would be further increased, including an expanded and relocated Kingsland Park & Ride lot and a new transit center at Memorial City Mall.

Alternative III-1: Moderate SOV, Moderate HOV—This alternative includes all No-Build and TSM/TDM improvements. From downtown to IH-610 West Loop, no SOV lanes are added; however, a two-lane, two-way HOV facility is added. From IH-610 West Loop to Katy, one SOV lane in each direction is added to provide a total of eight SOV lanes. The existing reversible HOV lane is upgraded and extended to provide a two-lane, two-way HOV facility to Katy. From Katy to Brookshire no additional SOV or HOV lanes are provided. From Brookshire to the Brazos River, one SOV lane in each direction is added, for a total of six SOV lanes. Transit service would benefit from increased speeds in both directions with the HOV lane improvements. The West

Belt Park & Ride lot would be expanded and relocated.

Alternative IV-2: Major SOV, Moderate HOV—This alternative includes all No-build and TSM/TDM improvements. From downtown to IH-610 West Loop, no SOV lanes are added but a two-lane, two-way HOV facility is added. From IH-610 West Loop to Katy, two SOV lanes in each direction are added to provide a total of ten SOV lanes. The existing reversible HOV lane is upgraded and extended to provide a two-lane, two-way HOV facility all the way to Katy. From Katy to Brookshire no additional SOV or HOV lanes are provided. From Brookshire to the Brazos River, one SOV lane in each direction is added, for a total of six SOV lanes. Transit service would benefit from increased speeds in both directions with the HOV lane improvements. The West Belt Park & Ride lot would be expanded and relocated.

Alternative V-2: Moderate SOV, Special Use Lane—This alternative includes all No-Build and TSM/TDM improvements. From downtown to IH-610 West Loop, no SOV lanes are added but a two-lane, two-way HOV facility is added. From IH-610 West Loop to Katy, one SOV lane in each direction is added to provide a total of eight SOV lanes. The existing reversible HOV lane is upgraded to provide a four-lane, two-way HOV/Special Use facility between IH-610 West Loop and State Highway 6 (SH 6). The special use lanes could be express lanes with an option of a toll charged for use. A two-lane, two-way HOV facility would be added between SH 6 and Katy. From Brookshire to the Brazos River, one SOV lane in each direction is added, for a total of six SOV lanes. Transit service would benefit from increased speeds in both directions with the HOV lane improvements. The West Belt Park & Ride lot would be expanded and relocated.

Alternative V-3: Low SOV, Fixed-Guideway—This alternative includes all No-Build and TSM improvements. From downtown to Brookshire, no SOV lanes are added. From Brookshire to the Brazos River, one SOV lane in each direction is added, for a total of six SOV lanes. A fixed-guideway system would be constructed from downtown to Katy. The fixed-guideway would allow service on three to four car trains on double tracks with grade separations at major arterials. Service would operate approximately every ten minutes in both directions during peak periods. The fixed-guideway system would provide connections to buses at each of the eleven stations, including the Northwest Transit Center for service to

the Uptown/Post Oak and the terminus station at the north end of downtown for service to downtown.

Alternative VI-1: Major SOV, Special Use Lane—This alternative includes all No-Build and TSM improvements. From downtown to IH-610 West Loop, no SOV lanes are added but a two-lane, two-way HOV facility is added. From IH-610 West Loop to Katy, two SOV lanes in each direction are added to provide a total of ten SOV lanes. The existing reversible HOV lane is upgraded to provide a four-lane, two-way HOV/Special Use facility between IH-610 West Loop and SH 6. The special use lanes could be express lanes with an option of a toll charged for use. A two-lane, two-way HOV facility would be added between SH 6 and Katy. From Brookshire to the Brazos River, one SOV lane in each direction is added, for a total of six SOV lanes. Transit service would benefit from increased speeds in both directions with the HOV lane improvements. The West Belt Park & Ride lot would be expanded and relocated.

A detailed evaluation of the seven alternatives was presented to the public during a round of open house meetings in January of 1997 for input and feedback. The meetings were held January 27, 28, 29, and 30, 1997 at the following locations: Monday, January 27 at the City of Houston West End Multi Service Center, 170 Heights Boulevard, Houston, Texas; Tuesday, January 28 at the Brookshire Convention Center, 4027 Fifth Street, Brookshire, Texas; Wednesday, January 29 at the Spring Branch Community Center, 1721 Pech, Houston, Texas; and Thursday, January 30 at the Holiday Inn Select, 14703 Park Row, Houston, Texas.

Based on the detailed analysis of the seven alternatives and public input and feedback, it was determined that Alternative V-2: Moderate SOV, Special Use Lane, was selected as the locally preferred (recommended) alternative. In order to select the recommended alternative, the seven alternatives, including the No-Build Alternative and the TSM/TDM Alternative, were evaluated for their engineering feasibility, potential environmental and community impacts, financial feasibility, and their ability to meet the goals and objectives of the community.

The preferred alternative was then presented to the public during a final round of public meetings in July of 1997. The public meetings were held July 8, 9, and 10 at the following locations: Tuesday, July 8 at West Memorial Jr. High School Cafeteria, 22311 Provincial Blvd., Houston, Texas;

Wednesday, July 9 at the Memorial Senior High School Cafetorium, Echo Lane at IH-10, Houston, Texas; and the First Baptist Church Fellowship Center, 7401 Katy Freeway at Post Oak Blvd., Houston, Texas. Each meeting format was set up as a combination open-house/public forum format. The first two hours of each meeting was an open-house where information was available regarding the locally preferred alternative and the decision-making process. Members of the study team were present during the open-house to answer questions and record comments. Immediately following the open-house, a short presentation was given. The floor was then opened for public comments. Members of the study team were also available after the public forum for additional questions or comments.

A summary of the public input and feedback regarding the final rounds of public meetings was presented to the Transportation Policy Committee of the MPO for review and concurrence in October 1997.

Letters describing the proposed action soliciting comments will be sent to appropriate Federal, State, and local agencies, and to private organizations and citizens who have previously expressed or are known to have interest in this proposal. A Public Scoping meeting will be held at a later date to request public comments on the proposed action and the preferred alternative. A public hearing will also be held at a later date, with copies of the Draft EIS available for public and agency review and comment prior to the public hearing.

To ensure that the full range of issues related to this proposed action are addressed and all significant issues identified, comments and suggestions are invited from all interested parties. Comments or questions concerning this proposed action and the EIS should be directed to the FHWA at the address provided above.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program Number 20.205, Highway Research, Planning and Construction. The regulations implementing Executive Order 12372 regarding intergovernmental consultation on Federal programs and activities apply to this program)

Issued on: March 23, 1998.

John Mack, P.E.,

District Engineer, Austin, Texas.

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