

## INTRODUCTION

This Environmental Assessment evaluates the social, economic, and environmental effects resulting from the proposed extension of Spur 366 (Woodall Rodgers Freeway) and associated improvements along Industrial Boulevard and Beckley Avenue in Dallas County, Texas. This project is being proposed by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) to address the long-term transportation needs in western Dallas County.

Spur 366, commonly known as the Woodall Rodgers Freeway, forms the northern boundary of the City of Dallas central business district (CBD). Spur 366 extends from U.S. 75 on the east to Industrial Boulevard on the west. Direct-connections exist at these same termini allowing access to and from U.S. 75 and IH 35E (east of Industrial Boulevard).

A Major Transportation Investment Study (MTIS) was conducted by the Dallas District of TxDOT from 1996 through 1997. This MTIS developed a locally-preferred alternative to address the current and forecasted transportation problems within the Dallas Trinity River Corridor. As a result, various roadway projects are now under design to alleviate congestion including Project Pegasus (IH 35E/IH 30), The East Corridor (IH 30/U.S. 80) and Trinity Parkway.

The current and projected population growth in Dallas and the surrounding area has greatly increased transportation demand. The Spur 366 extension project proposes to improve mobility while minimizing effects to the communities in the western portion of the City of Dallas.

## I. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION

### A. Description of Proposal

The proposed action is the extension of Spur 366 with improvements along Industrial Boulevard and Beckley Avenue in Dallas County. The project limits of Spur 366 are from IH 35E to the Beckley Avenue/Singleton Boulevard intersection, a distance of approximately 1.03 miles. A major portion of Spur 366 extension crosses the Trinity River floodplain. The limits of the Industrial Boulevard improvement extend approximately 500 ft south and approximately 500 ft north of the Spur 366 centerline. The limits for the Beckley Avenue improvements extend south to the Union Pacific Railroad crossing and north to Gulden Lane. See **Figure 1: Project Location Map** in **Appendix A**.

The proposed project is the extension of the existing Spur 366 Freeway. The proposed project can be found in the current conforming North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) Mobility 2025 Plan – 2004 Update. Aerial photographs for this new-location project are shown in **Figure 2: Project Centerline Map with ROW** in **Appendix A**.

Both TxDOT and the City of Dallas have approached the project's design with the goal of creating a strong physical and symbolic link between the West Dallas and Oak Cliff communities and the City of Dallas CBD. The incorporation of a landmark or "signature" bridge structure into the project is currently proposed. This structure would be centered over the Dallas

Floodway and would be based on an arch design theme with a suspension (cable) system of support.

The Spur 366 alignment varies in width, but the mainlane bridge structure is composed of three, 12 ft wide through travel lanes per direction with inside and outside shoulders each 10 ft wide. The overall width of the single arch bridge would be approximately 121 ft.

The proposed signature structure's main span length is approximately 1,205 ft with a single arch for support at the midpoint and would include an approach and transition spans of at least 300 ft on each side of main span. The proposed support arch would rise 400 ft above the bridge deck from which support cables would be attached to support the bridge deck below. The proposed bridge deck elevation would be approximately 5 ft above the existing Continental Avenue Viaduct bridge deck elevation.

The project is designed to accommodate projected traffic volumes for the nearby Continental Avenue Viaduct located north of the project site which would be closed to vehicle traffic after completion of the Spur 366 extension. The Continental Avenue Viaduct was originally constructed circa 1930 and is eligible for the National Register for its design and engineering significance. The closure of the Continental Avenue Viaduct would be in concert with the City of Dallas' objective to utilize and preserve it as a permanent bicycle/pedestrian facility and/or promenade integrated within the City's current and future bicycle/pedestrian plan.

Industrial Boulevard would remain a six lane facility with the addition of turn lanes at Industrial Boulevard and the ramps to/from the overhead Spur 366 extension. Through travel lanes would consist of three 11 ft lanes in each direction. The proposed ROW width is approximately 120 ft to 192 ft. Additional ROW, corner clips, would be acquired to facilitate the Industrial Boulevard intersection improvements beneath the elevated Spur 366 extension. The proposed facility would remain at-grade.

Beckley Avenue would be expanded from a two lane to a four lane facility. Through travel lanes would consist of two 12 ft lanes in each direction divided by a median. The proposed ROW width is approximately 196 ft to 284 ft. Approximately 0.59 acre of additional ROW would be acquired on Beckley. This would come from the acquisition of a Texas Utilities parcel and a privately owned parcel containing G&H Marketing and Fina. The Texas Utilities parcel is located north and east of the Continental Avenue and Beckley Avenue intersection. The privately owned parcel is located south of Continental Avenue between the current main lanes of Beckley Avenue and associated direct connection to Continental Avenue. Please refer to **Sheet 1 of 3 in Appendix C: Proposed Schematic**. The proposed facility would connect at-grade to the Spur 366 extension.

Since the proposed project is a new location facility, no existing typical sections exist for the Spur 366 extension. The existing and proposed typical sections for the Spur 366 mainlanes, Industrial Boulevard, and Beckley Avenue are shown in **Appendix B**. The project's preliminary design schematic is shown in **Appendix C**.

The preliminary design schematic encompassing the proposed improvements is available for inspection at the TxDOT Dallas District Office, 4777 E. Hwy 80, Mesquite, Texas 75150-6643.

### **B. Purpose and Need**

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) requires that the social, economic, and natural environmental impacts of any proposed action of the Federal government be analyzed for decision-making and public information purposes. This EA focuses on the choice of the best solution for relieving traffic congestion and improving design deficiencies given the current state of infrastructure, limited financial resources, environmental restraints, and the needs of the local and regional communities. This document presents the alternatives that have been developed through a process involving the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), TxDOT, local cities, Dallas County, project consultants, local officials, and the public.

The purpose of the proposed Spur 366 extension is to address long-term transportation solutions for this corridor and for the western portions of the City of Dallas and Dallas County. The proposed project is designed to enhance the regional and national transportation system by reducing traffic congestion, improving mobility, improving design deficiencies, and improving system linkages. The current transportation network in the project area is insufficient to accommodate the increased demand projected by Transportation Planning and Programming (TPP) and the NCTCOG.

The alternatives evaluated in this document would be considered in terms of how well they serve the following purposes while meeting the underlying needs.

#### *Reduce traffic congestion*

The traffic constraints of existing streets and alternate east-west routes near the IH 35E/IH 30 interchange and limited opportunities to cross the Trinity River and its floodplain have created and would intensify congestion. Extending Spur 366 would reduce the number of vehicle miles per lane per mile of roadway, thus reducing congestion within the study area by providing an alternative route.

#### *Improve mobility*

The project would relieve travel demand within the IH 35E/IH 30 interchange and improve the linkage between western portions of the City of Dallas and Dallas County. Currently, West Dallas County travelers entering the Dallas CBD commonly utilize the Continental Avenue/Commerce Street viaducts. Unlike these non-circuitous viaduct routes, the project would allow for travelers from Oak Cliff and West Dallas another means of accessing the Dallas CBD, or downtown area, while simultaneously providing access to the Dallas North Tollway, IH 35E, U.S. 75, IH 45 and the future Trinity Parkway. The project is also designed to join the future IH 35E collector-distributor road system located adjacent to IH 35E, which would also contribute to relieving travel demand in and around the CBD.

#### *Improve design deficiencies*

Although the Continental Avenue Viaduct met design standards when constructed, circa 1930, there are elements that do not meet current design standards. The proposed structure would meet both current loading requirements and roadway design criteria while accommodating future

traffic projections. At the project’s west terminus, the City of Dallas is proposing to widen Beckley Avenue to a continuous six-lane facility from IH 30 to the project limits. Dallas County would also widen Singleton Boulevard to a four-lane facility with a continuous left-turn lane from Hampton Road to west of Beckley Avenue. These improvements would integrate and function in tandem with the project in accommodating current and future traffic volumes and movements.

*Improve system linkage*

The only local roadway facilities which allow east-west travelers from West Dallas, Oak Cliff, and western Dallas County to access the CBD or areas beyond the CBD are IH 30 and the Continental Avenue/Commerce Street viaducts. Only the IH 30 facility provides direct access to IH 35E and destinations beyond the CBD. However, IH 30 is not accessible by the Beckley Avenue arterial and thus does not serve the West Dallas and Oak Cliff area. Beckley Avenue is a major arterial and the final facility providing a north-south movement for local drivers to access the Continental Avenue/Commerce Street viaducts before the physical boundary of the Trinity River west levee is encountered. Since IH 30 is not accessible by Beckley Avenue, the project would provide access between Beckley Avenue and IH 30 and allow for navigation to/from the CBD area and beyond.

*Current and Future Traffic Levels*

The existing (2006) data was derived from the NCTCOG and the projected unconstrained data (2026) was derived from the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI). Traffic volumes in vehicles per day (VPD) for the project corridor are shown in **Table 1-1**. The 2026 volumes represent the unconstrained demand, as if there was unlimited capacity on Spur 366, Industrial Boulevard or Beckley Avenue. All 2026 traffic volumes take into account the closure of the nearby Continental Avenue Viaduct to vehicular traffic with the anticipation that the Trinity Parkway would operate as a toll facility. However, in reality, the capacity of the extension limits the vehicular volume. Nonetheless, these unrestricted projections show major increases in demand throughout the corridor. The daily traffic volumes represent the total extension volumes in a 24-hour period.

**Table 1-1  
Existing and Projected Traffic Volumes (vehicles per day)**

	2006 VPD	2026 VPD	Percent Increase
Spur 366 from IH 35E to Beckley Avenue/Singleton Boulevard	N/A	64,199	N/A
Industrial Boulevard from 498 ft South of Spur 366 to 500 ft North of Spur 366	39,710	42,200	6.2
Beckley Avenue from UPRR to Gulden Lane.	20,520	44,200	115.3
Continental Avenue from Singleton Boulevard to Industrial Boulevard	24,790	4,800*	

\* Traffic volume from future Trinity Parkway (at Continental) to Industrial Boulevard only, since the Continental Avenue over the Trinity River floodplain will be closed to vehicular traffic as a result of the Spur 366 extension.  
Traffic Volume Source: NCTCOG and TTI.

### **C. Related Studies and Relevant Documents**

#### *Mobility 2025 Plan – 2004 Update: The Metropolitan Transportation Plan:*

This plan is prepared by the NCTCOG and defines transportation systems and services in the DFW metroplex. It serves as a guide for the expenditure of state and federal funds through the year 2025. The plan addresses regional transportation needs that are identified through forecasting current and future travel demand, developing and evaluating system alternatives, and selecting those options which best meet the mobility needs of the region.

#### *Project Pegasus:*

The focus of this study is to relieve traffic congestion along two major Interstate Highways directly serving downtown Dallas. The limits are the IH 30/IH 35E interchange on the western edge of downtown Dallas, the depressed portion of IH 30 south of downtown, and the portion of IH 35E from Eighth Street to SH 183.

#### *Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP):*

The TIP is a staged, multiyear listing of surface transportation projects for funding by federal, state, and local sources within the DFW metroplex. It is developed through a cooperative effort of the NCTCOG Regional Transportation Council, TxDOT, local governments, and transportation authorities. The TIP contains projects with committed funds over a multi-year period.

#### *Trinity Parkway:*

This project proposed by the North Texas Tollway Authority (NTTA) would provide a parkway/reliever route to accommodate traffic demand through downtown Dallas. The current plan addresses direct connection ramps between the Trinity Parkway and IH 35E, south of downtown Dallas. A Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) is being processed for the project.

### **D. Logical Termini**

The proposed project begins at the IH 35E/Spur 366 interchange. IH 35E is a north-south interstate which extends from Texas to Minnesota and is an essential NAFTA corridor. Spur 366 provides a link from IH 35E on the west side of downtown Dallas to U.S. 75 and IH 45 on the east side of downtown Dallas. The proposed Spur 366 ends at the Beckley/Singleton intersection. This intersection currently provides access to the Continental Avenue Viaduct. Beckley Avenue is a north-south arterial through western Dallas, paralleling the Trinity River, and south through Oak Cliff. Singleton Boulevard is an east-west arterial in west Dallas.

### **E. Right of Way (ROW) Requirements and Utility Adjustments**

The Spur 366 extension would be constructed predominantly as a new location facility. The proposed ROW along Spur 366 varies from approximately 250 ft across the Dallas floodway to 665 ft. just west of the IH 35E/Spurr 366 interchange. The proposed ROW along Industrial Boulevard varies from approximately 120 ft to 192 ft. The proposed ROW along Beckley Avenue varies from approximately 196 ft to 284 ft. Approximately 30 additional acres would be necessary for the proposed ROW. TxDOT would be responsible for the ROW acquisitions. Land use types the additional ROW would be needed from are commercial, floodplain and vacant land. It is estimated that two businesses and one public facility would be displaced or

relocated. The number of displacements is approximated based on the most current schematic design included as **Appendix C** of this EA. See the Relocations and ROW Acquisitions section under Community Cohesion/Environmental Justice for more information on displacements.

Joint-use railroad agreements would be required for the construction of the project's elevated mainlanes which would overpass the railroad spurs at the Dallas, Garland & Northeastern Railroad located just west of the Suzanne L. Kays Detention Facility between the east levee and Industrial Boulevard.

#### *Utilities*

Various utilities such as water lines, sewer lines, gas lines, telephone cables, electrical lines, and other subterranean and aerial utilities would require adjustment. While it may be necessary to relocate some existing utilities, the existing utility lines are not expected to pose major problems to the construction, operation, and maintenance of the proposed improvements. Detailed information on the utility lines would be evaluated during the design phase of the project in order to identify the need to integrate the proposed improvements and utility systems into the design plans. All of the utilities can be either adjusted or relocated prior to the construction of the proposed project using standard TxDOT procedures.

#### **F. Project Cost Estimate**

The project is state and federally funded from Category 12 (Commission Strategic Priority), Surface Transportation Program – Metropolitan Mobility, Bridge Replacement / Rehabilitation, Interstate Maintenance Discretionary, and City of Dallas Bonds. The September 2004 total estimated cost for construction (\$122,000,000) and right-of-way (\$5,000,000) is \$127,000,000. The project is included in the 2004-2006 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), FY 2006, page VII-49.

#### **G. Project Support**

The project was designed in conjunction with the planning efforts of Dallas County who have proposed to widen Singleton Boulevard at the Spur 366 extension western terminus.

The City of Dallas, Dallas County, and other area transportation agencies support the Trinity Parkway Corridor MTIS Plan of Action improvements:

- On September 10, 1997, the Dallas City Council approved the Trinity Parkway Corridor MTIS, which includes the project as the locally-preferred Plan of Action. Subsequently, on May 2, 1998 City of Dallas voters approved the issuance of \$28,000,000 in General Obligation Bonds for the construction of the project.
- On September 30, 1997, the Dallas County Commissioner's Court approved the Trinity Parkway Corridor MTIS, which includes the project as the locally-preferred Plan of Action.
- On October 28, 1997, the Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) board approved the Trinity Parkway Corridor MTIS, which includes the project as the locally-preferred Plan of Action.

- On March 12, 1998, the Regional Transportation Council (RTC), the policy body for the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), or NCTCOG, amended the regional transportation plan, *Mobility 2020*, to include all of the Trinity Parkway Corridor MTIS's Plan of Action improvements, including the project.

The Minute Order (No. 100002) activating and/or carrying out the orders, established policies, or work programs of this project was executed and approved under the authority of the Texas Transportation Commission (TTC) on September 3, 1991. The Minute Order and all the relative approvals/resolutions listed above are available for review at the Dallas District Office of TxDOT at 4777 East Highway 80, Mesquite, Texas 75150-6643.

On April 20, 2000 at 7:00 p.m. Central Standard Time, the Dallas District Office of TxDOT conducted a limited Public Meeting, specifically for the property owners/residents/occupants located both adjacent to, and within the vicinity of, the project. This meeting was held at the Dallas City Hall to discuss the social, economic, and environmental effects of the project's proposed design and alignments. A total of 80 Spanish and English notifications for this meeting were mailed to the individual property owners/residents/occupants located within the project's study area and included a Project Location Map and Comment Sheet. In addition, a total of seven of the same property owner notifications were sent to historic, heritage, and/or preservation/conservation commissions, societies, etc. All appropriate and involved agencies/municipalities were also notified via the same mail-out.

A total of 23 citizens signed-in with four non-TxDOT agency individuals attending. Eight of the citizen attendees signed-in as having a resident and/or business interest in the project with the remaining attendees indicating an only a business interest.

Seven commenting/inquiring (citizen) attendees spoke both initially and with follow-up questions, etc. No opposition was voiced against the project since the nature of all the questions and comments were not based on support or opposition to the project, but details surrounding the project (access, drainage, traffic, etc.). As such the project was generally accepted for its transportation merit.

Concerns were expressed not for any impacts caused by the project itself, but for the Trinity Parkway alignment which is planned to tie into the project. These concerns hinged on 1) the yet undetermined (recommended) mainlane (southbound) alignment of the Trinity Parkway, and/or 2) the southbound Trinity Parkway to eastbound Woodall Rodgers (project) direct-connection, both of which may cause residential displacements (depending on the recommended Trinity Parkway alignment). As such, one written comment was received subsequent to the meeting by a resident who would be displaced by any one of several alignment scenarios for the Trinity Parkway and/or the Trinity Parkway/Woodall Rodgers direct-connection. No other comment sheets, etc. were received by the TxDOT Dallas District.

A public hearing would be held for this project following approval of this environmental assessment as satisfactory for further processing by the Federal Highway Administration.