

10/25/18
CC 5/18/18

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Need and Purpose

SH 68 is needed because there are limited current north-south roadways in the area and population is projected to increase substantially in the future, which will substantially increase traffic volume on the current north-south roadways in the area. SH 68 is also needed to improve the emergency evacuation capacity of the state highway system in the south Texas region.

The purpose of the SH 68 project is to accommodate population growth and higher traffic volumes, while relieving the burden on the limited number of existing north-south roadways, and provide an alternate north-south evacuation route during emergency events.

Key Dates

- Record of Decision (ROD) Spring 2019
- ROW acquisition and utility adjustment Spring 2019-2022
- Projected Letting Date Fall 2022

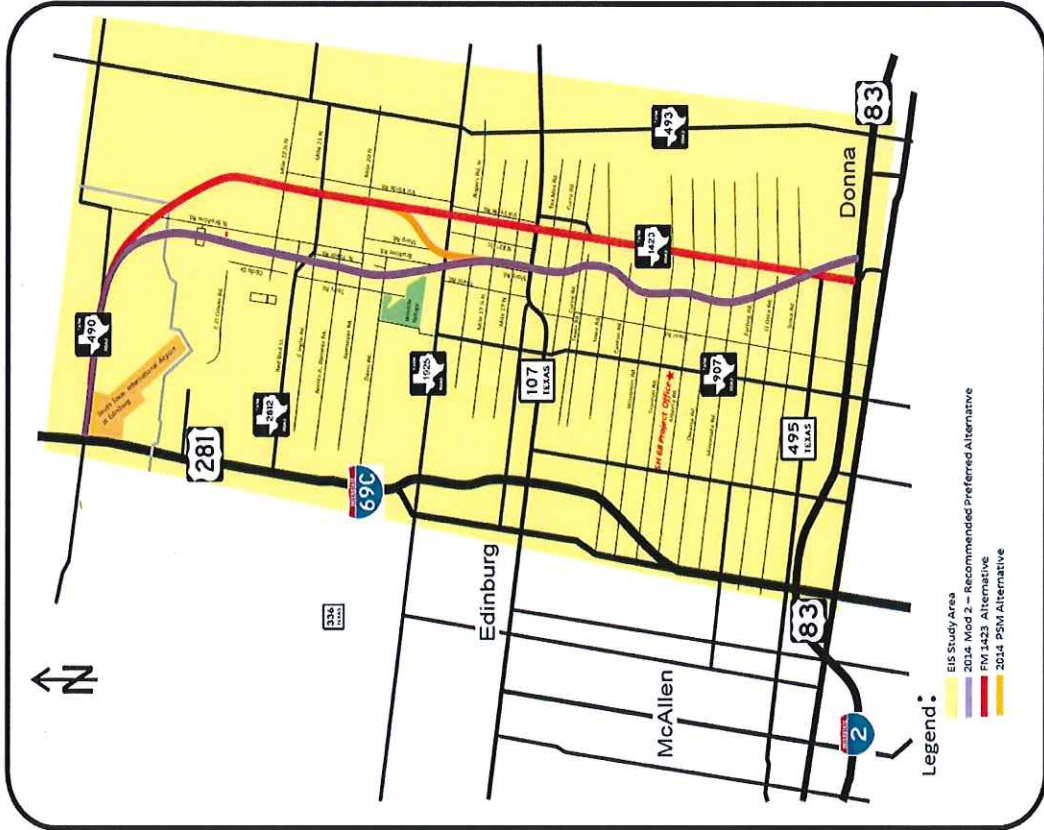
All dates are preliminary and subject to change.

Recommended Preferred Alternative 2014 Modified 2 Key points.

- 21.7 miles long
- 1057 acres of ROW
- 102 residential displacements
- 8 commercial displacements
- 140 acres of 100-yr floodplain impacts
- \$768 million project cost
- Lowest risk to impact section 4f historic structures

Summary

- Extensive public outreach
- 12 Study corridors evaluated
- Existing roadways were evaluated and eliminated due to higher overall impacts
- Recommended preferred alternative minimizes overall impacts
- Estimated 51,000 average daily traffic will benefit the local transportation network in the long run



*For additional information, please see reverse

SH 68 AT-A-GLANCE

Public Involvement

TxDOT's Public Involvement Efforts for SH 68 started in 2014 and include:

- Staffed project office with hotline
- 2 MAPOs, 1 agency scoping meeting, 1 multimodal alternatives conference 2 public meetings, and 1 public hearing
- Meeting notices, changeable message signs within the study area, newspaper advertisements, media day, post card mailouts, posted flyers, social media advisories, TxDOT webpage, email blasts to stakeholder on established database.

How did we get to this point?

- Environmental Assessment Study (EA) identified 1 preferred route
- In 2015 TxDOT determined that a significant impact would be caused by this project and started work on an Environmental Impact Study (EIS)
- Developed a full range of study corridors (12 plus the no-build at 600'), within an expanded study area that included routes suggested by the public, that were evaluated based on the need and purpose, identified critical issues, and project goal based criteria
- Critical issues screening identified 9 preliminary routes (plus the no-build) to be carried over for further evaluation at 350'-400'
- Based on the goal based analysis, 3 reasonable alternatives plus the no-build were identified.

- A recommended preferred alternative (2014 modified 2) was identified in the DEIS as the least impactful route and shown at the public hearing held April 5, 2018.

- The 3 reasonable alternatives will still be compared to the recommended preferred alternative in the FEIS to obtain a Record of Decision (ROD) by early 2019.

Why not use FM 493 or FM 1423 instead of the recommended preferred alternative?

- FM 1423 reasonable alternative was eliminated due to higher number of residential displacements (119) and commercial displacements (33), higher impacts to 100-year floodplains (161 acres), and greater potential to impact section 4f historical properties.

- The FM 1423 modified preliminary alternative was compared to the FM 1423 reasonable alternative and was eliminated due to its impact to 2 churches, higher residential displacements (204), higher impact to croplands/orchards (473 acres), higher impacts to NWI features (1.1 acres), as well as its lower constructability adjacent to major transmission line and vicinity to the N. Alamo Water Supply wastewater treatment plant.

- The FM 493 Modified 2 preliminary alternative was eliminated due to high residential structure impacts (317), impacts to 1 oil/gas well, 22 irrigation canal crossings, impacts to 11 colonias, high number of

impacts to potential historic age resources (33), and the highest number of crossing of a historical canal (19). This alternative had the 2nd highest cost at an estimated \$91.4 million and is expected to have the longest duration to initiate construction based on the significantly larger number of parcels needed and anticipated utility adjustments.

- The FM 493 modified preliminary alternative was eliminated due to its impacts to croplands/orchards (505 acres), 15 irrigation canal crossings, impacts to 3 colonias, the highest impacts to mapped floodplains (350 acres), the highest impact to prime farmland soils (1185 acres), increased construction complexity because of adjacent irrigation canals, and the highest total project cost of all preliminary alternatives.

SH 68 Preferred Alternative Impacts/Benefits

- Projected 20-year ATD to be carried by SH 68 is 51,000
- All North-South roads, with the exception of 1, within the study area are projected to see a diversion of traffic to SH 68 ranging from 0% to 58.3%
- Projected 10% reduction of traffic on I-69C between I-2 and FM 490
- I-2 WB to I-69C NB Direct connector projected to see a traffic reduction of 19.2% while the I-69C SB to I-2 EB direct connector was projected to see a traffic reduction of 14.9%

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