



NEWS RELEASE

HOUSTON DISTRICT

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Texas Transportation Commission Seeks Public Comment on Funding for the I-45 Improvement Project in Update to 10-Year Plan

July 6, 2021

HOUSTON – The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) is inviting public comment on the draft annual update to its 10-year plan, the Unified Transportation Program (UTP), to include the potential removal of funding assigned to the I-45 North Houston Highway Improvement Project (known as the NHHIP). The UTP guides the development of transportation work across the state and authorizes the distribution of construction dollars expected to be available. A virtual public meeting to provide an overview of the Draft 2022 UTP will be held on Wednesday, July 7, with the 30-day comment period opening on Friday, July 9.

At the June 2021 meeting of the Texas Transportation Commission (Commission), Chairman J. Bruce Bugg, Jr. requested that TxDOT staff include specific reference in the Draft 2022 UTP to the funding allocated to the \$7.9 billion NHHIP due to the project pause requested by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and uncertainty about how or when the project may advance. **The UTP update process will allow the public to comment on current funding approved for the NHHIP.** The Commission is expected to consider formal action on this funding in August 2021 as it takes action on the 2022 UTP.

This week marks the opening of the 30-day public comment period on the 2022 UTP following the public meeting:

- July 7, 2021: Virtual public meeting with an overview of the Draft 2022 UTP
- July 9, 2021: Draft 2022 UTP document posted online and 30-day UTP public comment period opens
- August 2, 2021: Virtual public hearing for comments
- August 9, 2021: UTP public comment period closes at 4 p.m. CT

The public meeting and hearing will be conducted in English. Persons who have special communication or accommodation needs are encouraged to contact the Transportation Planning and Programming Division at (800) 687-8108.

More information on the UTP public meeting, hearing and comment period can be found at <https://www.txdot.gov/inside-txdot/get-involved/unified-transportation-program.html>. In addition to attending the virtual meetings, public comments may also be submitted in the following ways:

- Electronically: Visit www.TxDOT.gov and search the keyword “UTP public involvement” to access the online public comment form to provide feedback on the UTP as well as the funding assigned to the NHHIP. Comments also can be emailed to UTP-PublicComments@txdot.gov.
- Phone: (800) 687-8108
- US Mail:
Texas Department of Transportation
Attn: TPP-UTP
P.O. Box 149217
Austin, TX 78714-9217

The Draft 2022 UTP will be available for public comment from July 9, 2021 through August 9, 2021 at 4 p.m. CT.

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ADDITIONAL NHHIP INFORMATION

The NHHIP will address critical safety and mobility needs including updating the highways to current design and safety standards, relieving traffic congestion, improving storm water drainage, and improving evacuation routes.

Consistent with plans previously approved by the Houston-Galveston Area Council Metropolitan Planning Organization (H-GAC MPO), the NHHIP includes roadway improvements to add four managed express (MaX) lanes on I-45 from Downtown Houston to Beltway 8 North, reroute I-45 to be parallel with I-10 on the north side of Downtown Houston and parallel to US 59/I-69 on the east side of Downtown Houston, and realign sections of I-10 and I-69 in the Downtown area to accommodate greater mobility. The project will also depress I-69 between I-10 and Spur 527 south of Downtown to improve safety by eliminating unsafe weaving.

The Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the NHHIP became available in September 2020. TxDOT prepared a series of white papers titled “NHHIP Project Facts and Highlights” to help condense the contents of the Final EIS and simplify key information regarding matters of high priority to the public. The Final EIS and the NHHIP Project Facts and Highlights can be accessed on the project website: www.ih45northandmore.com.

The purpose of the NHHIP is to implement an integrated system of transportation improvements that would:

- Bring I-45, I-10, and US 59/I-69 up to current design standards to improve safety and operations.
- Manage I-45 traffic congestion in the NHHIP area through added capacity, MaX lanes, options for single-occupancy vehicle (SOV) lanes, and improved operations.
- Improve mobility on I-45 between US 59/I-69 and Beltway 8 North by accommodating projected population growth and latent demand in the project area.
- Provide expanded transit and carpool opportunities.
- Improve the capabilities of I-45 as an emergency evacuation route.
- Improve storm water drainage on I-45.
- Support the projected significant increase in travel on the regional highways in the Houston-Galveston area.

A video presentation on the NHHIP can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y4IHFYOjFzs&t=9s>.

For more information, contact Danny Perez at (713) 802-5077. Also Follow us on Twitter and Instagram at [@TxDOTHouston](https://twitter.com/TxDOTHouston) and on Facebook at www.facebook.com/TxDOTHouston.

The Texas Department of Transportation is responsible for maintaining 80,000 miles of road and for supporting aviation, maritime, rail and public transportation across the state.

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