



U.S. Department
of Transportation
Federal Highway
Administration



I-45 North Houston Highway Improvement Project (NHHIP)

Voluntary Resolution Agreement (VRA) Progress Report #3

August 27, 2024

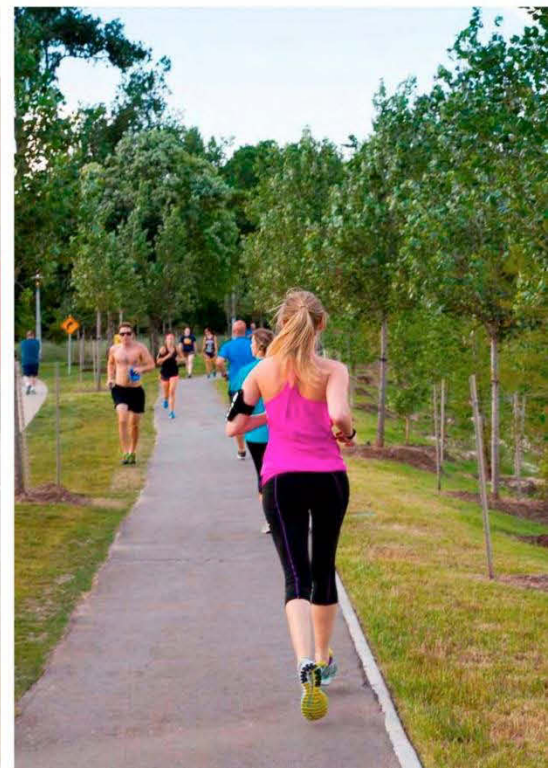
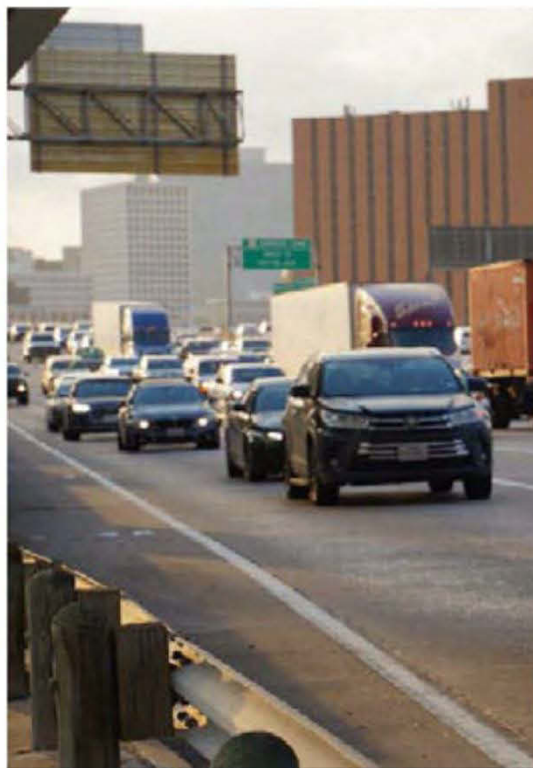
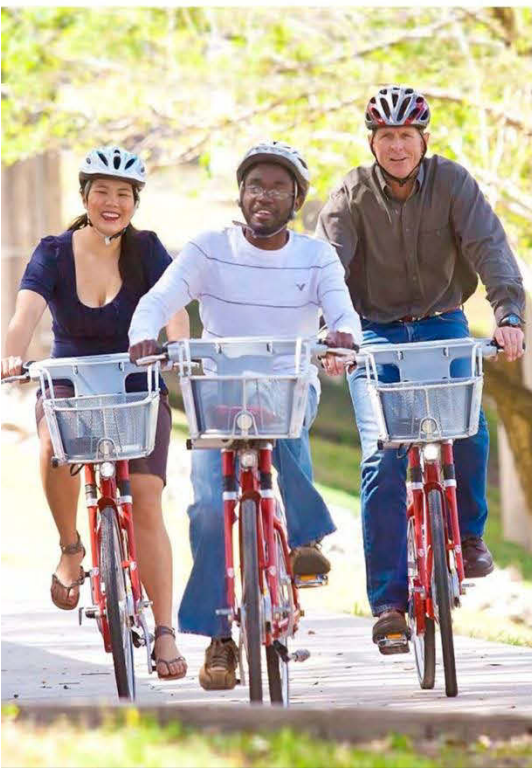


TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations.....	iv
Definitions	v
Executive Summary	1
Progress on Action Items.....	2
1. Reducing the NHHIP Footprint During Detailed Design (IV.1).....	2
2. Displacements, Relocations, Housing, and Other Community Impacts (IV.2)	3
2.1. Displacements.....	3
2.1.1. Table of Residential and Non-Residential Displacements (IV.2.a).....	3
2.1.2. Non-Residential Business, Services, or Other Organizations (IV.2.b).....	4
2.1.3. Access to Essential Services (IV.2.c)	4
2.1.4. Table of Acquisitions or Demolitions Not Included in FEIS or ROD (IV.2.d)	5
2.1.5. Reduction to ROW Needed or Displacement Impacts (IV.2.e).....	5
2.1.6. Funding Affordable Housing Initiatives (IV.2.f)	5
2.1.7. Coordination with the City of Houston Concerning Surplus Property (IV.2.g)	6
2.2. Relocations	6
2.2.1. Summary of Denied Relocation Benefits (IV.2.h)	6
2.2.2. Enhanced Relocation Services (IV.2.i).....	6
2.2.3. Eligibility of Owners or Renters Outside Footprint for Relocation Services (IV.2.j) ...	9
2.3. Housing.....	9
2.3.1. Status of Occupancy Agreement Options (IV.2.k).....	9
2.3.2. Project Website and Language Translation (IV.2.l).....	9
2.4. Community Impacts	10
2.4.1. Housing Relocation Supplements (IV.2.m.ii and IV.2.n.i).....	10
2.4.2. Services Needed by Persons Experiencing Homelessness (IV.2.o).....	10
2.4.3. Strategies on Meaningful Public Involvement in Transportation Decision-Making (IV.2.p)	10
2.4.4. Public Engagement Meetings (IV.2.q)	11
3. Flooding	14
3.1. Segment 1 Detailed Drainage Study (IV.3.b).....	14
3.2. Regional Drainage Improvements (IV.3.e-j).....	14
3.3. Trail Initiatives (IV.3.k).....	15
4. Air Quality Mitigation (IV.4)	15
5. Structural Caps (IV.5).....	17

6. Parks, Open Spaces, Trails, and Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities (IV.6)	18
6.1. Kelly Village Open Space Mitigation (IV.6.h).....	18
6.2. City Parks Development and Rehabilitation (IV.6.i)	19
6.3. Evaluation of North Street Bridge Alternative Pedestrian/Bicycle Routes (IV.6.j)	19
6.4. Emancipation National Historic Trail Connectivity (IV.6.k).....	19
6.5. Support for Olivewood Cemetery Listing in National Register of Historic Places (IV.6.k.vii) 21	
7. Access During Construction (IV.7).....	21
7.1. School Access (IV.7.a).....	21
7.2. Transit Access (IV.7.b).....	22
7.3. Traffic Management (IV.7.c)	23
8. Meaningful Access for Persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) (IV.8)	23
8.1. Language Access Program (IV.8.a).....	24
8.2. Translation Services (IV.8.b).....	24
8.3. LEP Needs of Pending Displacements (IV.8.c)	24
8.4. Timely Language Assistance Services (IV.8.e).....	24
8.5. Documentation of Future Interactions (IV.8.f).....	24
8.6. Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) Development (IV.8.g)	24
8.7. TxDOT Provided Interpreter (IV.8.h).....	25
8.8. Translation of Documents and Materials (IV.8.i).....	25
8.9. LEP Training (IV.8.j)	25
8.10. Survey of Displaced Individuals (IV.8.k).....	25
8.11. Language Assistance Services During Public Engagement (IV.8.l).....	25

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1-1: Summary of ROW Footprint Reduction Assessments	3
Table 2-1: Residential and Non-Residential Displacements (this reporting period)	4
Table 2-2: Acquisition or Demolition Parcels Not Included in FEIS and ROD	5
Table 2-3: Enhanced Relocation Services Provided Since 2020	7
Table 5-1: Structural Caps.....	17
Table 6-1: Connectivity to Emancipation Trail.....	20
Table 7-1: METRO Meetings and Submittals	22

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2-1:Public Meeting Attendance Breakdown	12
--	----

APPENDICES

- A. NHHIP Voluntary Resolution Agreement
- B. Documentation of Benefits Provided in Accordance with Uniform Act
- C. Enhanced Relocation Benefits
- D. Third-Party Coordination Meetings
- E. July 18, 2024 Public Meeting Pre-Meeting Outreach Efforts

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
BRT	Bus Rapid Transit
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CSJ	Control-Section-Job Number
DBE	Disadvantaged Business Enterprise
DGA	Displaced by Government Action
DOT	United States Department of Transportation
DS&S	Decent, Safe, & Sanitary
EJ	Environmental Justice
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FEIS	Final Environmental Impact Statement
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
GIS	Geographic Information System
HHA	Houston Housing Authority
HCFCD	Harris County Flood Control District
HISD	Houston Independent School District
HUD	United States Department of Housing and Urban Development
IH	Interstate Highway
LEP	Limited English Proficiency
LRT	Light Rail Transit
METRO	Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County, Texas
NHHIP	North Houston Highway Improvement Project
NTP	Notice to Proceed
NPS	National Park Service
RFP	Request for Proposal
ROD	Record of Decision
ROW	Right of way
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
TCEQ	Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
TIRZ	Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (City of Houston)
TSAHC	Texas State Affordable Housing Corporation
TxDOT	Texas Department of Transportation
TxDOT ROW	TxDOT Right of Way Division
TxDOT HOU	TxDOT Houston District
VRA	Voluntary Resolution Agreement
UHD	University of Houston Downtown
WTC	METRO's Wheeler Transit Center

Definitions

For the purpose of this report, the terms listed below shall have the following meanings:

Appraisal means a written statement independently and impartially prepared by a qualified appraiser setting forth an opinion of defined value of an adequately described property as of a specific date, supported by the presentation and analysis of relevant market information.

Owner means a person who purchases or holds any of the following interests in real property:

- (i) Fee title, a life estate, a land contract, a 99-year lease, or a lease including any options for extension with at least 50 years to run from the date of acquisition; or
- (ii) An interest in a cooperative housing project which includes the right to occupy a dwelling; or
- (iii) A contract to purchase any of the interests or estates described in subparagraphs (i) or (ii) of this section; or
- (iv) Any other interest, including a partial interest, which in the judgment of TxDOT warrants consideration as ownership.

Tenant means a person or entity who on February 1, 2021, and continuously thereafter, has the temporary use and occupancy of Residential Property or Business Property owned by another.

Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones (TIRZs) are special zones created by City Council to attract new investment in an area. These zones help finance costs of redevelopment and promote growth in areas that would otherwise not attract sufficient market development in a timely manner. Taxes attributable to new improvements (tax increments) are set-aside in a fund to finance public improvements within the boundaries of the zone.

Executive Summary

On March 6, 2023, the FHWA and TxDOT entered into a VRA to resolve the FHWA investigation of TxDOT regarding the North Houston Highway Improvement Project (Project) under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000d to 2000d-7 (Title VI). The VRA sets forth specific mitigation actions for the Project to ensure TxDOT carries out the Project consistent with the requirements of Title VI.

This report is the third report (Report No. 3), and it has been prepared in accordance with Article VI of the VRA to report on all actions set forth in the VRA and as referenced by Article throughout this Progress Report.

Reporting Period: February 1, 2024, through July 27, 2024

Data tables in this third VRA progress report contain information for the period of February 1, 2024, to July 27, 2024. Data is provided through July 27, 2024, in order to give time to assemble the report. Meetings and submittals are listed for the period of February 1, 2024, through August 15, 2024.

During this reporting period, design, ROW acquisition, utility adjustment coordination and coordination with the Union Pacific Railroad continued in Segment 3. Design and utility tasks were primarily related to the first three projects in the south half of Segment 3, Projects 3A, 3B-1, and 3B-2. TxDOT is in process of contracting a general engineering consultant for all 3C projects and design consultants for Projects 3C-1, 3C-3, 3C-4, and 2A. TxDOT is performing limited ROW acquisition in Segments 1 and 2 pending assessment of right of way footprint reductions in these segments.

TxDOT has entered a partnership with the Texas State Affordable Housing Corporation (TSAHC) as part of its \$30 million commitment aimed at creating and supplementing the affordable housing inventory within Environmental Justice (EJ) communities directly impacted by the project. These funds are separate from the enhanced relocation benefits extended to individual property owners and tenants affected by the project. The first step is issuing a Request for Proposal (RFP) to seek local experts to develop an affordable housing redevelopment plan for Independence Heights, Near Northside, Fifth Ward, and Third Ward.

Another major milestone achieved in the period was letting of the first construction project 3B-1 in June 2024. The project will construct the drainage outfall to Buffalo Bayou that serves the SH 288 and I-69 interchange and will also ultimately serve portions of I-69 between SH 288 and Buffalo Bayou. The drainage outfall is under St. Emanuel and as such, includes reconstruction of portion of St. Emanuel Street between McIlhenny Street and Commerce Street. Construction is anticipated to start in October 2024, with anticipated completion of construction is 2027.

A public meeting was held during this reporting period in Segment 3, to share information with impacted property owners, tenants, and communities in accordance with VRA requirements. The meeting included information on the recently awarded Project 3B-1 construction project and the upcoming Project 3B-2 design with letting scheduled for September 2024. Information on all three segments was shared at the meeting, which was held on Thursday July 18, 2024: the in-person meeting for Segment 3 was held at Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church from 5-7 pm. Additional public meetings are planned for Fall 2024 including another meeting focused on Segment 3 on September 19, 2024, and meetings focused on Segments 1 and 2 in October 2024.

TxDOT also performed LEP training for 46 additional personnel prior to the July public meeting.

Progress on Action Items

1. Reducing the NHHIP Footprint During Detailed Design (IV.1)

As previously reported, detailed design is ongoing in Segment 3 with the first construction project being awarded during the past period for Project 3B-1. Project 3B-2 will receive construction bids the week after this reporting date. Final design continues on Project 3A and designers have been selected to initiate final design for Projects 3C-1, 3C-3, 3C-4, and 2A. As final design continues in Segment 3, the ROW area will be reviewed to assess if there are any opportunities for potential ROW reduction that would still meet the Need and Purpose identified in the FEIS and in accordance with the conditions identified in the VRA Article IV.1a. As noted in VRA Article IV.1a, TxDOT is evaluating ROW reduction opportunities with a focus on the following:

- i. Strengthening Houston's economy;
- ii. Reducing flooding on and off the freeway;
- iii. Making travel safer for all road users;
- iv. Providing long-term capacity for all users of the roadway, including automobile, freight, and transit;
- v. Serving and preserving the neighborhoods along the corridor while enhancing connectivity between neighborhoods;
- vi. Mitigating impacts to existing parks and open space while creating additional opportunity for open space; and
- vii. Ensuring accessible evacuation routes.

As previously reported, for Project 3B-2 at the interchange of I-69 and SH 288, the benefit of restoring the street grid network between Jackson Street and Chenevert Street and between Holman Street and Stuart Street creates an opportunity for anticipated surplus ROW to be returned to the City and the community. The design changes were presented to the public as part of a reevaluation of the Environmental Impact Statement as part of the NHHIP December 2023 Public Meetings. The result is making travel safer for all users with conventional intersections and geometrics; preserving the neighborhood while enhancing connectivity and mobility; and identification of potential surplus property north of Chenevert Street to Jackson Street. This surplus property provides opportunities to strengthen Houston's economy and/or creates additional opportunity for open space depending on how the City of Houston and the community utilize the surplus once it is transferred from the State following construction.

Evaluation of the footprint for Segments 1 and 2 is continuing as discussed in materials shared at in the NHHIP December 2023 Public Meetings and in the most recent July 18, 2024, NHHIP Segment 3 Public Meeting. These evaluations continue and TxDOT will collaborate on results of initial analysis with Harris County and the City in accordance with applicable Memorandums of Understandings executed with each agency. Final results of these evaluations in Segments 1 and 2 will be reported in future VRA reports as such efforts are completed.

Assessment in Segment 2 will be evaluated with efforts to include a southbound exit ramp to North Main Street and northbound entrance ramp from North Main Street per stakeholder requests. Considerations will also include the proposed replacement of culverts along Little White Oak Bayou at I-610 and at I45 with bridges and associated channel improvements.

For Segment 1, as presented in the NHHIP December 2023 Public Meetings, concepts to reduce ROW that are being evaluated include the use of braided ramps between the frontage roads and main lanes, opportunities to minimize the ramp envelope distance between the frontage roads and mainlanes, and a review of the number of frontage road lanes combined with off-street pedestrian and bicycle accommodations.

TxDOT conducted a workshop with the FHWA and DOT on April 4, 2024, to review the ROW reduction methodology. TxDOT is currently evaluating initial assessments of review of Segment 1 and 2, and will coordinate with Harris County on results of these evaluations during the next couple of months before making recommendations.

Table 1-1: Summary of ROW Footprint Reduction Assessments

Segment (Project)	Parcel	Location	Original Taking (SF)	Revised Taking (SF)
Not Applicable This Reporting Period				

2. Displacements, Relocations, Housing, and Other Community Impacts (IV.2)

2.1. Displacements

TxDOT is committed to minimizing residential, business, and community resource displacements due to the Project to the extent practicable, consistent with meeting the purpose and need of the Project and consistent with Title VI requirements. In addition, TxDOT recognizes the impacts of the Project on the already limited availability of affordable housing in the Project area and is committed to mitigating such impacts as set forth in the Project ROD and the VRA. TxDOT will continue to engage and inform the public about project developments and construction impacts as the Project moves forward and provide competent language assistance services, interpretation, and translation for persons with LEP.

2.1.1. Table of Residential and Non-Residential Displacements (IV.2.a)

TxDOT will continue to comply with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4601 et seq.) (Uniform Act) and associated regulations at 49 CFR Part 24 throughout the course of the Project. See Table 2-1, for data elements in Parts B and C of Appendix B, 49 CFR part 24, for all residential and non-residential displacements associated with the Project during this reporting period required by Article VI of this VRA.

Table 2-1: Residential and Non-Residential Displacements (this reporting period)

Part B. Residential Relocation Under the Uniform Act	
5) Total Number of Residential Displacements (Households)	50
6) Residential Moving Payments	\$242,883.42
7) Replacement Housing Payments	\$1,512,257.30
8) Number of Last Resort Housing Displacements in Line 5 (Households)	48
9) Number of Tenants converted to Homeowners in Line 5 (Households using 24.402(c))	4
10) Total Costs for Residential Relocation Expenses and Payments (Sum of lines 6 and 7; excluding Agency Administrative Costs)	\$1,755,140.52
Part C. Non Residential Relocation Under the Uniform Act	
11) Total Number of Non-Residential Displacements	12
12) Non-Residential Moving Payments – total Costs (Including 24.305)	\$4,014,485.45
13) Non-Residential Reestablishment Payments – Total Costs	\$47,719.76
14) Total Costs for Non-Residential Relocation Expenses and Payments (Sum of lines 12 and 13; excluding Agency Administrative Costs)	\$4,062,205.21

See Appendix B, *Documentation of Benefits Provided in Accordance with Uniform Act*, which provides documentation of benefits provided in accordance with the Uniform Act for each displacement listed in Table 2-1 above. Note that personally identifiable information has been redacted from Appendix C documents as required.

2.1.2. Non-Residential Business, Services, or Other Organizations (IV.2.b)

In accordance with the Uniform Relocation Act, during the current reporting period, a total of 12 business relocations, providing various relocation benefits to displacees, have been facilitated to date including those completed, waived and in process. The total moving costs incurred during this reporting period amounted to \$4,014,485.45, covering expenses related to transportation, packing, and unpacking of personal property, land planner services and fixed payments in lieu of actual moving expenses. Additionally, a sum of \$47,719.76 was incurred during this reporting period for reestablishment costs, encompassing expenditures related to repairs or modifications to the replacement site. Overall, the relocation benefits resulted in a total business relocation cost of \$4,062,205.21 during this reporting period.

2.1.3. Access to Essential Services (IV.2.c)

In accordance with requirements of Article IV.2.c of the VRA, TxDOT has prepared a plan to ensure that roadway, transit, and pedestrian/bicycle access to essential services, including but not limited to health care facilities, grocery stores, pharmacies, schools, places of worship, and voting locations, will be maintained during and after construction in neighborhoods where such essential services will be impacted by the Project.

An assessment has been completed for Segments 3B-1 and 3B-2 and it has been determined the 3B-1 and 3B-2 construction has no adverse impact on the essential services. Traffic control plans were developed for each project considering the identified essential services for each of these projects.

TxDOT met with first responders on January 26, 2024, to discuss the traffic control plans for 3B-1 and 3B-2 that may affect Fire Station No. 7 located at Elgin Street and Austin Street.

2.1.4. Table of Acquisitions or Demolitions Not Included in FEIS or ROD (IV.2.d)

There were no acquisitions or demolitions of a parcel during this reporting period that was not included in the FEIS or ROD.

Table 2-2: Acquisition or Demolition Parcels Not Included in FEIS and ROD

Segment	Parcel	Action Required	Re evaluation Result
Not Applicable This Reporting Period			

2.1.5. Reduction to ROW Needed or Displacement Impacts (IV.2.e)

There were no new reductions to ROW identified during the past reporting period. Potential ROW reductions to date in Segment 3 are identified in the previous VRA Report No. 1 issued September 2, 2023. Future reports will note potential ROW reductions as applicable evaluations are completed.

2.1.6. Funding Affordable Housing Initiatives (IV.2.f)

Pursuant to the ROD and VRA, TxDOT committed \$30 million to support affordable housing initiatives in the project area. TxDOT has entered a partnership with the Texas State Affordable Housing Corporation (TSAHC) as part of its \$30 million commitment to stimulate affordable housing in the I-45 North Houston Highway Improvement Project (NHHIP) area. Through this partnership, TSAHC will administer a comprehensive program aimed at creating and supplementing the affordable housing inventory within Environmental Justice (EJ) communities directly impacted by the project. These funds are separate from the enhanced relocation benefits extended to individual property owners and tenants affected by the project.

This initiative involves a two-part process focused on revitalizing affordable housing in Houston neighborhoods directly impacted by the project. The first step is issuing a Request for Proposal (RFP) to seek local experts to develop an affordable housing redevelopment plan for Independence Heights, Near Northside, Fifth Ward, and Third Ward. The RFP can be accessed here: <https://www.tsahc.org/news/article/tsahc-issues-rfp-for-a-consultant-for-the-development-of-a-revitalization-plan-as-part-of-the-north-houston-highway-improvement-project>

The second step involves developing and administering \$28.5 million in funding based on the housing impact and needs identified in the redevelopment plan. This grant program aims to leverage the construction of affordable housing in communities that have historically experienced a decline in such housing stock.

TSAHC, a statewide affordable housing provider, will partner with local experts to develop the funding priorities and determine the recipient eligibility requirements.

2.1.7. Coordination with the City of Houston Concerning Surplus Property (IV.2.g)

TxDOT is prepared to discuss with the City of Houston the use of the Project's future surplus right-of-way for affordable and workforce housing as developed by third parties in potential partnership with the City. TxDOT has identified, and appraised, 34 tracts of potential surplus ROW in Segment 3. Some of the potential surplus ROW locations are subject to confirmation during final design development. Therefore, many of the surplus property opportunities will not be fully clarified until final design is complete on the various segments and projects. Potential surplus property identified between Chenevert and Jackson Streets was presented at the December 2023 Public Meetings as noted in VRA Report No. 2 published February 29, 2024.

2.2. Relocations

2.2.1. Summary of Denied Relocation Benefits (IV.2.h)

TxDOT will make relocation benefits available to all eligible displacees and not deny benefits in cases that would result in exceptional and extremely unusual hardship to such a displacee. There were no displacees denied any relocation benefits during this reporting period.

2.2.2. Enhanced Relocation Services (IV.2.i)

TxDOT provides enhanced relocation services to residential property owners and renters affected by the project. These services are delivered by qualified consultants contracted with TxDOT who offer personalized assistance throughout the entire relocation process. This includes individualized advisory services and workshops to help residents understand the available relocation benefits and assistance programs.

The services provided to date range from clarifying available relocation benefits to arranging transportation and securing comparable housing prior to displacement. Consultants also share up-to-date listings of similar properties and explain various processes such as acquisition, relocation, appraisal, and property tax impact. Additionally, displacees have been informed about federal and state programs that offer additional assistance, and counseling services have been provided to mitigate any challenges they may face during the relocation process. Language accommodations have also been made to overcome linguistic and cultural barriers.

In addition to individualized services, workshops have been conducted to cover various topics. These include understanding household members, identifying future goals and abilities, promoting culturally sensitive communication, determining specific needs and preferences, and explaining relocation benefits. Workshops also provide resources for moving, offer first-time homebuyer seminars, guide residents through the escrow process, assist with updating voter registration information, access social services and benefits, select a real estate agent, improve credit scores, manage household budgets, and enhance understanding of the transition process.

Table 2-3, Enhanced Relocation Services Provided shows the total number of displacees per location and services provided since 2020 along with the associated total costs of these services.

Table 2-3: Enhanced Relocation Services Provided Since 2020

Total Number of Displacees	Location	Services Provided	Total Costs
75	Midtown Terrace Suites/Veterans facility, and residential relocations on Projects 3A and 3B-2	Individual Advisory Services, Community Workshops, and Individual Workshops	\$4,522,587
Ball Park 366 Temenos 76 Beatriz 49	Lofts at the Ballpark Apartments, Beatriz Apartments, and Temenos	Individual Advisory Services, Community Workshops, and Individual Workshops	\$7,782,255
182	Clayton Homes Apartments	Individual Advisory Services, Community Workshops, and Individual Workshops	\$10,037,041

Reference Appendix C *List of Enhanced Relocation Services* for a list of services requested and services provided to each request.

TxDOT is developing a draft of the plan for enhanced relocation services for use on all NHHIP segments and projects and will submit to FHWA in accordance with the VRA Article IV.2.j. TxDOT will also document all discussions concerning the enhanced relocation services plan with relevant departments. TxDOT will track and report on the progress of providing these services to residents, including the number of property owners and tenants who have benefited.

Services Provided to Temenos Displacees:

Temenos II Apartments was an 80-unit single occupancy efficiency apartment facility managed by a nonprofit organization, Temenos Community Development Corporation, which offers affordable housing for low-income disabled individuals experiencing homelessness. At this facility, 79 of the 80 units were occupied when TxDOT relocation and EJ services were initiated. All the residents were utilizing HHA Project Based Housing Vouchers which means HHA was paying most if not all of the displacee’s rent at Temenos.

During the relocation process, the residents were able to remain in the existing facility so that housing services could continue uninterrupted. A replacement facility, Rasmus Temenos, was being constructed less than one mile from Temenos II. The EJ team co-located at Temenos II in an office off the main lobby beginning in August 2023. When all of the displacees moved in February 2024 to Rasmus Temenos so did the EJ team. At both locations the EJ team provided workshops, community events and conducted one on one displacee outreach centered around preparing the displacees for the move and making certain that they understood and received the relocation benefits to which they were eligible. The residents at Temenos II ranged in age and cultures and all had some type of mental and/or physical disability, so the programs and services the EJ team provided were designed to meet the specific needs of the displacees and to provide information that was relevant to each displacee.

During the months leading up to the move from Temenos II to Rasmus Temenos, the EJ team provided Individual Advisory Services. In coordination with the relocation agent, an assigned

EJ navigator worked directly with displacees to provide a second tier of relocation advisory services. They accompanied the relocation agent on each of their appointments with the displacees. Due to some of the displacees mental disability, a case worker from SEARCH Homeless Services would sometimes attend to help facilitate the meeting. The EJ Navigator followed up with the displacees throughout the relocation process to ensure they understood their relocation benefits, answered questions, and if needed provided transportation in their search for a new home. The majority of the displacees at Temenos were not physically able to move themselves and did not have the money to pay for a mover, so the EJ navigators helped coordinate two moving companies, TxDOT and displacees in utilizing the Direct Payment to Vendor option. About one-third of the displacees opted to do self-moves. Ninety percent of the displacees moved over a two-week period in February 2024, to the new Rasmus Temenos. To minimize chaos and congestion in the hallways, stairwells and elevator, the first week of the move was designated for commercial moves and the second week of the move was for everyone doing a self-move. On the scheduled day of the displacee's move, the EJ navigators helped the displacee, as well as provided transportation to the new location. Because the movers would not move perishable items, the EJ navigators helped many of the displacees pack their perishables and refrigerated goods into bags and coolers and transported those items to the new location as the majority of the displacees had no means of transporting those items to the new facility. The EJ team also provided ADA transportation for wheelchair bound displacees as well as translation services for two Vietnamese displacees living at Temenos.

At least twice a month the EJ team would host a Community Outreach Event. The purpose of these events were to provide an opportunity for the displacees and EJ navigators and relocation agents to interact in a fun and relaxing way conducive to build trusting relationships. To entice people to attend, food and games were offered which usually drew in two-thirds or more of the residents. These events would provide opportunities to connect with displacees, answer questions, ease concerns and to sometimes contact displacees who are difficult to schedule appointments with.

The EJ team also conducted two or more Workshops per month for the displacees of Temenos before and after the move. Some of the workshops offered were led by EJ Navigators and Relocation Agents such as:

- Overview of the NHHIP Project
- Overview of the Relocation Process
- Move Planning
- Filing Relocation Claims for Reimbursement
- Q & A with Allied Orien (Rasmus Temenos management)

For some workshops, the EJ team would collaborate with outside organizations and bring in guest speakers, for example:

- Diabetes Prevention and Hypertension Awareness (Harris County Health as well as St Joseph Hospital)

- Updating your Voter Registration Information and State Identifications (Texas Department of Public Safety employee)
- HHA Voucher Program – Transitioning from Project Based to Housing Choice Vouchers (Houston Housing Authority)
- Healthy eating workshops – Bread of Life
- Drug and Alcohol Recovery workshops – SEARCH Homeless Services

All of the EJ services will continue to be provided to the Temenos displacees until the each of their 18-month claim period expires.

2.2.3. Eligibility of Owners or Renters Outside Footprint for Relocation Services (IV.2.j)

TxDOT continues to focus on ROW acquisitions on the first projects in Segment 3, Projects 3A, 3B-1 and 3B-2, located along I-69 from Spur 527 to I-45, and storm sewer outfall improvements along St. Emanuel from I-45 to Buffalo Bayou. Activities are also in process for other Segment 3 properties and as ROW acquisitions progress, TxDOT will review whether its planned acquisition for the NHHIP will leave any residential or non-residential owners or renters outside of the Project footprint isolated or cut off from the rest of the community and assess whether it must provide relocation assistance acquisition or assistance or advisory services pursuant to the Uniform Act and associated regulations of 49 CFR Part 24, as well as the VRA, to such owners or renters to mitigate such impacts.

Based on detailed design for Segments 3B-1 and 3B-2, TxDOT has not identified any planned acquisition for the NHHIP that would leave any residential or non-residential owners or renters outside of the Project footprint isolated or cut off from the rest of the community.

TxDOT shall report in future Progress Reports required by the VRA on this issue after the conclusion of each acquisition phase of the Project.

2.3. Housing

2.3.1. Status of Occupancy Agreement Options (IV.2.k)

TxDOT will continue to inform both residential and non-residential property owners of the opportunity to enter into an Occupancy Agreement for parcels that TxDOT acquires. The Occupancy Agreement has allowed property owners and tenants to remain on the property with the necessary time and resources to find replacement locations for their businesses or residences.

To date, TxDOT has entered into Occupancy Agreements with twenty-two property owners involving multi-family residences, businesses, and places of worship. Thirteen of these agreements currently remain active.

2.3.2. Project Website and Language Translation (IV.2.l)

TxDOT maintains a publicly available project-specific website, <https://www.txdot.gov/nhhip.html>, in accordance with the requirements of VRA Article IV.2.l. During this reporting period, the website was updated with information for the July 2024 public meeting, including provisions for translation options.

2.4. Community Impacts

2.4.1. Housing Relocation Supplements (IV.2.m.ii and IV.2.n.i)

For Clayton Homes and Kelly Village residents, TxDOT will offer housing relocation supplements (up to market-valued rent), in addition to the Tenant Protection Vouchers that would be offered by FHWA, as an alternate relocation path under the Uniform Act.

2.4.2. Services Needed by Persons Experiencing Homelessness (IV.2.o)

TxDOT will coordinate with the City of Houston and homeless service providers to develop a plan to assist in addressing services needed by persons experiencing homelessness within the project limits. TxDOT will submit this plan to FHWA within 30 days of finalization of the plan. TxDOT will build off their current coordination efforts with the Houston Police Department on the clean up of homeless encampments within the city which includes coordination with a homeless outreach team to provide individuals experiencing homelessness with available resources prior to any clean up efforts.

Reference Article 2.2.2, *Enhanced Relocation Services*, for discussion of activities at Temenos Apartments which offers affordable housing for low-income disabled individuals experiencing homelessness. Services provided at Temenos included partnership with SEARCH Homeless Services.

2.4.3. Strategies on Meaningful Public Involvement in Transportation Decision-Making (IV.2.p)

Reference NHHIP VRA Report Number 1, dated September 2, 2023, for NHHIP strategies on meaningful public involvement in transportation decision-making, which was prepared in alignment with the October 2022 DOT report on “Promising Practices for Meaningful Public Involvement in Transportation Decision-Making” as well as best practices across the state in engaging stakeholders and leveraging public input throughout all phases of project development.

Some specific examples of our public engagement during the reporting period are included below:

- In advance of the July 2024 Segment 3 Changes for the Better public meeting, TxDOT hosted an in-person briefing for elected officials at its Houston District office on June 27, 2024. Invitations were extended to elected officials representing areas within the project’s footprint. As the primary objective of this briefing was to provide elected officials with a comprehensive update on NHHIP, the presentation included an interactive question and answer session. Additionally, the briefing served as a platform to inform elected officials of the July public meeting and request their support in disseminating information about the public meetings to their constituents. To facilitate communication with their constituents, participants received presentation packets and bilingual meeting notice postcards.
- TxDOT hosted July 18, 2024, NHHIP Segment 3 Changes for the Better Public Meeting. Reference Section 2.4.4 Public Engagement meetings, for summary of the I-45 NHHIP July 2024 public meeting series, which was held for Segment 3 in accordance with requirements of VRA Article IV.2.q.

- The I-45 NHHIP Housing and Community Focus Group met on June 4, 2024, and update was provided on the partnership between TxDOT and TSAHC to advance the affordable housing grant commitment of \$30 million as noted in the VRA.
- Summary report for the December 2023 Changes for the Better public meeting series was published including results of surveys conducted and responses to comments received.
- TxDOT attended 12 community group meetings and events to provide updates on NHHIP Segment 3 and provide attendees an opportunity to view the banners presented at the December 2023 public meeting series.
- TxDOT held over 100 meetings with various stakeholders, elected officials, other agencies and community groups between January 1, 2024, through August 15, 2024. A complete listing of all third-party meetings is in Appendix D, *Third Party Meetings*.

2.4.4. Public Engagement Meetings (IV.2.q)

In accordance with VRA Article IV.2.q, TxDOT reaffirms its unwavering commitment to holding biannual public engagement meetings for each segment currently under design or construction. For the 2024 reporting period, Segment 3 is the sole area actively advancing through design and construction, necessitating two public meetings by December 31, 2024, to ensure full VRA compliance. However, TxDOT is going beyond the VRA meeting requirements by scheduling five I-45 NHHIP Public Meetings between January 1 and December 31, 2024.

Below is the schedule for the 2024 Public Meetings: (Future meeting dates are subject to change with applicable notice)


1. **Thursday, July 18, 2024:** Segment 3 - In-Person Public Meeting (Open House Format)
Location: Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, 2405 Navigation Blvd., Houston, TX 77003
2. **Thursday, September 19, 2024:** Segment 3A Design & Revaluation - In-Person Public Meeting (Open House Format)
Location: The Young Women's College Preparatory Academy, 1906 Cleburne Street, Houston, TX 77004
3. **Tuesday, October 15, 2024:** Segments 1 and 2 - In-Person Public Meeting (Open House Format)
Location: Moody Community Center, 3725 Fulton Street, Houston, TX 77009
4. **Wednesday, October 17, 2024:** Segments 1 and 2 - Virtual Public Meeting via Zoom
5. **Thursday, December 5, 2024:** Segment 3 - Virtual Public Meeting via Zoom

Segment 3 Public Meeting Recap:

TxDOT conducted the first VRA-compliant public meeting of 2024 for Segment 3, titled "Changes for The Better," on Thursday, July 18, 2024. This meeting not only focused on the current segment but also provided information on the other two segments. In addition to these updates, the meeting featured Right of Way (ROW), VRA, and Public Engagement exhibit stations, staffed by bilingual subject matter experts available to address public inquiries. The meeting was held from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. and was fully compliant with the Federal Highways Administration's Environmental Handbook for Public Involvement. This compliance included adherence to all meeting provisions and language access requirements.

Meeting materials and outreach were provided in both English and Spanish, with additional languages available upon request to accommodate individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) as outlined in TxDOT’s LEP Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). The meeting was well attended, with about 155 members of the public and about seventy staff, and the last guest departed at 7:26 p.m. Twenty-seven public commenters responded by the August 2, 2024, deadline. (See Figure 2-1 for public meeting attendance breakdown).

FIGURE 2-1 FOR PUBLIC MEETING ATTENDANCE BREAKDOWN

I-45 NHHIP Public Meeting	
 In-person JULY 18, 2024	
Public	146
Elected Officials	4
Media	5
Total Attendees	155

Pre-Meeting Outreach Efforts:

In preparation for the meeting, TxDOT engaged with affected communities and issued meeting notices in English and the most widely spoken languages among LEP individuals within the community. The outreach efforts included:

- **Legal Notices**
- **Media Outreach**
- **Community Ads**
- **Direct Mail Post Cards**
- **Social media and Digital Outreach**
- **Yard Signs**
- **Door Hangers**
- **Electronic Signage:**
- **Public Contact Number:** The meeting notice included a dedicated phone number for the public to call with questions and to access project materials by appointment with TxDOT staff.

For additional information on pre-meeting efforts, reference Appendix E, *July 18, 2024 Public Meeting Pre-Meeting Outreach Efforts*.

Public Meeting Overview

During the public meeting, TxDOT delivered comprehensive updates on Segment 3, covering the project’s status, upcoming construction timelines, Right of Way (ROW) acquisition details, and insights into the decision-making process, as well as the implementation of the Voluntary Resolution Agreement (VRA). The meeting was intentionally designed to foster community feedback, address concerns, and provide clear answers to questions regarding the NHHIP and TxDOT’s adherence to VRA requirements.

TxDOT meticulously planned, promoted, and executed the meeting to ensure that all attendees, including those requiring Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and other accommodations, had full access to information and meaningful interactions with the project team. Key measures taken to ensure inclusive and effective communication included:

- **Advance Accommodation Notifications:** Prior to the meeting, notifications were sent out, allowing attendees to request language and other accommodations with a three-day advance deadline. No one requested any form of accommodation prior to the meeting.
- **LEP Resource Station:** At check-in, a dedicated station was established where all materials were available in both English and Spanish. Attendees could also request translation services through LEP accommodation forms.
- **Interactive Exhibit Banners:** Eight interactive banners were strategically placed around the venue that included three Segment 3 Banners, a Segment 1 and a Segment 2 Banners, Right of Way, VRA, and Public Engagement Banners.
- **Bilingual Handouts:** Meeting handouts were prepared and distributed in both English and Spanish at designated stations, ensuring that language barriers did not hinder access to critical information.
- **Bilingual Staffing:** The meeting was staffed by professionals fluent in both English and Spanish, who wore badges indicating their language proficiency to facilitate easy identification by attendees.
- **American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreters:** ASL interpreters were made available for hearing-impaired participants, ensuring that the meeting was accessible to all community members. No one requested interpretation during the meeting.
- **Spanish-Speaking Subject Matter Experts:** TxDOT ensured that Spanish-speaking experts were on hand to answer questions and provide translations as needed. Two attendees engaged in Spanish-language discussions at various stations during the meeting.
- **ADA-Compliant Venue:** The venue was carefully selected to meet ADA requirements, ensuring that it was fully accessible to individuals with disabilities. One person in a wheelchair was provided accommodation during the meeting.
- **Bilingual Wayfinding and Assistance:** Bilingual wayfinding signs and parking attendants were provided to assist attendees in navigating from the parking areas to the meeting site.
- **Personalized Property Consultations:** Resource tables were set up where property owners could determine if their properties were affected by the project. TxDOT Right of Way, NHHIP Low-Income Construction Noise & Dust Mitigation Program, bilingual specialists were available for personalized consultations.
- **Multilingual Video Presentations:** Two videos—a 13-minute Segment 3 General Overview and Update and a 6.5-minute Drainage Mitigation overview—were played in both English and Spanish.
- **Interactive Exhibit Banners:** Seven exhibit banners provided detailed information on Segments 1, 2, and 3, ROW, VRA, and Public Engagement. Each banner featured QR codes linking to Spanish translations of the English content and online public

comment forms. QR code links directed attendees to relevant content on TxDOT's website.

- **Digital Access and Feedback Options:** Attendees were encouraged to use the laptops provided or their personal mobile devices to access segment exhibits, resources, and submit feedback either at the meeting or online.
- **Pre-Meeting Online Access:** All meeting materials were posted on the project website by 3 p.m. on the day of the meeting, ensuring that those unable to attend in person could still access the information.

Commitment to Enhanced Public Engagement:

TxDOT remains dedicated to fostering public engagement beyond the mandatory public meetings by offering impacted property owners, tenants, and stakeholders many opportunities to receive updates and provide feedback through ongoing Public Engagement Stakeholder Meetings. In addition to the formal public meeting schedule, TxDOT has been holding stakeholder meetings that included, property owner and tenant meetings, neighborhood associations, Multi-Agency Group and Housing and Community Focus Group meetings, Super Neighborhood meetings, and Elected Official meetings leading us to the public meeting. During the past period, TxDOT has hosted or participated in fifty-two public engagement meetings in addition to agency meetings. The primary goal of these efforts is to ensure that the right stakeholders are engaged at the right time, which often involves multiple meetings with diverse groups to reach informed decisions and gather valuable input.

Diverse Meeting Formats:

As illustrated by the meetings held between July 1 and August 2024, TxDOT has employed various public outreach formats, including in-person, virtual, and hybrid meetings. This approach maximizes accessibility, allowing diverse groups to receive information and provide feedback that is carefully evaluated and considered for incorporation into the project. TxDOT also publishes, on the project website in applicable public meeting reports, the responses to written comments received on the project. These meeting formats have included engagements with neighborhood associations, multi-agency groups, housing and community focus groups, super neighborhoods, industry groups, and elected officials.

TxDOT remains deeply committed to maintaining open communication and fostering meaningful engagement with the communities impacted by the I-45 NHHIP. Through its robust public engagement efforts, TxDOT endeavors to ensure that all stakeholders are well-informed and have numerous opportunities to actively participate in the project's development.

3. Flooding

3.1. Segment 1 Detailed Drainage Study (IV.3.b)

As previously reported, four drainage reports for Segment 1 are posted on the NHHIP project website along with Segment 2 and 3 reports. These reports will be updated as design progresses and to reflect any design changes and the applicable updates will be posted and reported on in future VRA progress reports as they are completed and approved.

3.2. Regional Drainage Improvements (IV.3.e-j)

TxDOT and the City of Houston executed an Advance Funding Agreement on April 11, 2023, for the planning, design, and construction of the City's proposed North Canal Project which involves regional flood control benefits with implementation of the North and South Canals.

The North and South Canals, inclusive of proposed channel improvements on White Oak Bayou at Yale Street and Studemont Street, involves the HCFCD and FEMA in addition to the City of Houston and TxDOT.

TxDOT continues to coordinate with the city as they proceed with design of these proposed improvements and TxDOT participated in 15 meetings with the City of Houston and HCFCD during the past reporting period that were focused on the North Canal project coordination. This is in addition to design coordination meetings with the City and HCFCD and submittals of design milestones to each agency respectively for Projects 3B-1 and 3B-2. TxDOT was also in attendance at the City's North Canal public meeting held on August 6, 2024. TxDOT's second payment of \$18,779,862.00 towards project construction is expected to be issued upon completion and approval of the North Canal Project's design and permitting.

As previously reported, on-going coordination includes:

- Use of most recent City of Houston hydraulic models from North Canal project to define base conditions on Buffalo Bayou, at the Segment 3B drainage outfall
- Demonstration of no increase in flooding to Buffalo Bayou or to City of Houston storm sewers or neighborhoods along the Segment 3B project

TxDOT, the City, and HCFCD will continue to share and utilize the same model for the various proposed improvements that include Buffalo Bayou, White Oak Bayou, and Little White Oak Bayou capturing the individual projects as well as the collective effects of the combined projects.

3.3. Trail Initiatives (IV.3.k)

Trails identified in the VRA to be designed, constructed, operated, and maintained are within the limits of upcoming projects. TxDOT will engage with HCFCD and other governmental entities when detailed project development begins for the applicable projects. TxDOT has been coordinating with HCFCD, the City of Houston, and the Houston Parks Board concerning proposed trail construction on an adjacent project along White Oak Bayou between Studemont Street and I-45 which has connectivity to the proposed NHHIP additional trails. HCFCD and the Houston Parks Board have provided draft specifications and standards that they are preparing for trails in this region and TxDOT will utilize these materials to guide applicable design and construction for trails to be constructed with the NHHIP. The entities are also discussing shared responsibilities concerning maintenance for these new trails.

Specific meetings with HCFCD, the City of Houston, and Houston Parks Board are being coordinated to review the proposed trails identified in the VRA and discuss other potential opportunities. Following meetings with these entities, TxDOT will also use the monthly multi-agency meetings forum to begin these discussions with the management districts and other stakeholders in Segment 3. Updates will be provided in future VRA reports as coordination efforts progress.

4. Air Quality Mitigation (IV.4)

As previously reported, TxDOT placed an air quality monitor in Segment 3 at 2014 Cleburne Street on June 28, 2023, and began collecting data August 1, 2023. The monitor is located within 200 feet from State Highway TX 288, adjacent east of the Young Woman's College Preparatory Academy in Houston's Third Ward, at the corner of Cleburne Street and Chartres

Street in Houston, Texas. This site was selected due to close proximity to Segments 3A and 3B, which are the initial planned construction projects within Segment 3.

The monitor was installed and operational one year in advance of the planned start of the Project 3B-1 construction, which is the initial construction project for Segment 3. Project 3B-1 was let in June 2024 and is anticipated to begin construction in October 2024. Air quality will be monitored through the duration of construction for all projects.

Measurements are collected for the following parameters, in order to compare to EPA's National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) and TCEQ's Air Monitoring Comparison Values (AMCVs):

- Carbon Monoxide (CO)
- Nitrogen oxide (NO)
- Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂)
- Oxides of nitrogen (NO_x)
- Particulate Matter (PM_{2.5})
- Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs): Benzene, 1, 3-Butadiene, Formaldehyde, Acetaldehyde
- Meteorological Data: Wind Direction and Speed, Outdoor/Indoor Temperature, Relative Humidity, and Barometric Pressure

TxDOT's NHHIP Air Monitoring website opened to the public on October 15, 2023, displaying collected data from August 1, 2023, to August 31, 2023. The website includes additional air quality resources such as links to access daily air quality conditions from the EPA and TCEQ. Air monitoring data can be accessed on TxDOT's NHHIP Air Monitoring website at <https://www.txdot.gov/nhhip/resources/about-air-monitoring.html>.

Monitored data is updated as monthly information is captured and then reviewed and quality assured. Once data has been quality assured for a subject month period, the website is updated. The time required for quality assuring the data varies and affects when data updates are posted. It depends on the number of chemical compound measurements being checked and the calibration steps that must be reviewed for each measurement. The website includes a link to sign up for being notified whenever new air monitoring data is posted.

The website contains links to the EPA *Air Now Website*, the TCEQ *Air Quality Index (AQI) website*, and the TCEQ *Air Quality Forecast and Ozone Action Day Alerts*. The TCEQ website, which is updated hourly, includes near real-time ambient air quality for continuous gaseous, particulate data and volatile organic compounds. The website includes an Air Quality Index with six classifications:

- Good
- Moderate
- Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups
- Unhealthy
- Very Unhealthy
- Hazardous

For the period of February 1, 2024, to July 27, 2024, TxDOT monitored data reported exceedances of the 24-hour PM2.5 NAAQS on May 9, May 25, May 26, and May 27, 2024. It should be noted that construction has not yet started in Segment 3. TxDOT consulted with TCEQ regarding these elevated PM concentrations, and they were likely due to residual smoke from agricultural burnings in Mexico/Central America. Elevated relative humidity levels in the Houston region on these days also potentially contributed towards the elevated fine particulate matter, but the primary suspected sources of the aerosols were the agricultural burnings. There have been no other exceedances for any of the criteria pollutants or MSAT.

5. Structural Caps (IV.5)

As reported in VRA Progress Report No. 1 dated September 2, 2023, there are five structural cap opportunities being discussed with various third-party partners as noted in Table 5-1, Structural Caps. The first four locations are as identified in the VRA with potential opportunities to increase their respective lengths pending third party funding agreements. The fifth location is an additional potential cap based on the planned extension of Cleburne across I-69. The large angle of Cleburne Street across I-69 makes it more efficient to build a small cap with beams perpendicular to I-69. The result is an opportunity to provide a small cap area either side of Cleburne. Based on coordination with the City of Houston, Midtown Redevelopment Authority, OST/Almeda Redevelopment Authority, and TIRZ No. 7, these agencies have expressed interest in partnering with TxDOT to potentially support the design and construction of a larger cap inclusive of Cleburne Street and Almeda Street.

Table 5-1: Structural Caps

Location	Segment (Project)	Design Stage	Partner Agencies
(1) I-69: METRO Red Line and Fannin St.	3 (3A)	Detailed Design	METRO; City of Houston
(2) IH-69: Caroline and Wheeler Ave.	3 (3A)	Detailed Design	Midtown Redevelopment Authority; City of Houston
(3) IH-69/IH-45: Lamar St to Commerce St.	3 (3D)	Preliminary Design	Central Houston Inc.; East Downtown Management District; TIRZ 15; City of Houston
(4) IH-45 at N. Main St.	2	Preliminary Design	To Be Determined
(5) IH-69: Cleburne Street and Almeda Street (Opportunity)	3 (3A)	Detailed Design	OST/Almeda Corridors Redevelopment Authority; TIRZ #7; Midtown Redevelopment Authority; Greater Southeast Management District; City of Houston

TxDOT, the City of Houston, and the potential partner management districts and TIRZs listed in Table 5-1 continue to coordinate specifically for cap locations 1, 2, and 5 to assess opportunities and develop associated agreements to support potential cap extensions as well as future development of amenities on the cap structures. TxDOT has provided analysis and estimated costs for extending these three caps as requested by the partner agencies. Estimates have included additional structure costs and additional fire/life/safety elements for potential extensions that would require third-party funding. Cost estimates have also been provided for maintenance to include potential cost sharing if cap structures are extended. TxDOT is still waiting for decisions and confirmation of commitments from the partner agencies to progress

detailed design at these locations. TxDOT detailed design will include all structural elements to be constructed by TxDOT's construction contractor, and applicable fire/life/safety, interior lighting, drainage, and ITS components at each cap location.

For these cap locations in Segment 3, the City of Houston on behalf of the various partner agencies, submitted a federal grant request in September 2023 in response to the Office of the Secretary of Transportation release of a joint Notice of Funding Opportunity for the Reconnecting Communities Pilot and Neighborhood Access and Equity programs. TxDOT was supportive of the City's efforts in seeking these funding opportunities. However, the grant request was unsuccessful. The City and partner agencies continue to assess strategies for funding these opportunities and to maximize the potential cap opportunities.

TxDOT and these entities also continue to coordinate on potential aesthetic plantings for other cross street bridges in Segment 3 and for aesthetic canopies and pedestrian appurtenances on the three proposed arch bridge locations in Project 3B-2 at Elgin, Tuam, and McGowen Streets.

Central Houston, Inc., East Downtown Management District, and the City of Houston have initiated meetings during the past period with TxDOT concerning Cap Location No. 3 that is adjacent the George R. Brown Convention Center, Minute Maid Park Major League Baseball Stadium, and Shell Energy Major League Soccer Stadium.

6. Parks, Open Spaces, Trails, and Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities (IV.6)

The VRA identifies new trail opportunities along White Oak Bayou, Little White Oak Bayou and Buffalo Bayou which provides a baseline for development of a map of potential new trail links within existing and proposed right-of-way, and for connection opportunities terminating outside the State's right-of-way. These connection points outside of the State's right of way require coordination with the City of Houston and HCFCD. With the November 2023 elections, and the associated changes to City of Houston leadership, TxDOT is engaging with the newly elected and appointed City of Houston personnel to coordinate design for all cross-street bridges in Projects 3A, 3B-1 and 3B-2 along IH-69 from Main Street to McGowen Street, including Cleburne Street.

TxDOT also coordinated with the City of Houston on the final design of Project 3B-2 to include bicycle accommodations in addition to pedestrian facilities along a portion of St. Emanuel Street and along an equivalent complimentary route along Hutchins Street where existing right of way constraints prohibited additional such features on St. Emanuel Street. Design of Project 3B-1 as well as Projects 3A and 3B-2 accommodate and provide connectivity with the City of Houston's bike plan in accordance with requirements in the VRA Article 6. This includes proposed pedestrian-bicycle realms on each side of all cross streets over and under the interstate and highway facilities. The typical realm generally features a 5 feet buffer from the curb adjacent the travel lane, a five feet bicycle lane, and a seven feet sidewalk on each side of the cross street. TxDOT has been in coordination with the Management Districts and TIRZs on either side of I-69 at Elgin, Tuam, and McGowen Streets for potential inclusion of shade canopies and amenities over these pedestrian realms on the proposed arch bridge structures at these three street crossings. Applicable third-party funding agreements are being developed and processed for these canopies and amenities which have been included in the design of Project 3B-2.

6.1. Kelly Village Open Space Mitigation (IV.6.h)

The acquisition is impacting a 1.85-acre portion of the Kelly Village open space. TxDOT has agreed to acquire additional property and pay for the reestablishment of impacted open space for the remaining residents of Kelly Village. The reconstruction of the park will require the demolition of an additional four buildings and relocation of the residences in these buildings. Laundry Building A is also impacted by the acquisition. The facility is located within the area designated for the reconstruction of the open space. TxDOT is currently updating the appraisal for the property and expects to continue negotiations during the next reporting period based on these updated appraisals.

6.2. City Parks Development and Rehabilitation (IV.6.i)

TxDOT has committed to provide \$1.5 million to the City of Houston Parks and Recreation Department for the development or rehabilitation of park facilities and amenities in City parks located in the vicinity of the project.

TxDOT has begun to draft an agreement to be executed with the City of Houston Parks and Recreation Department to provide \$1.5 million for the development or rehabilitation of park facilities and amenities in City parks located in the vicinity of the project. TxDOT does not have a template agreement for this circumstance and is drafting an agreement to address the conditions of VRA Article IV.6.i. This agreement will require a Minute Order to be approved by the Texas Transportation Commission.

6.3. Evaluation of North Street Bridge Alternative Pedestrian/Bicycle Routes (IV.6.j)

TxDOT continues evaluating different options for pedestrians and bicyclists to cross the proposed I-45 freeway at or near North Street in lieu of the existing North Street Bridge over I-45 which is planned for permanent removal in Segment 2 of the NHHIP. Options being considered include:

1. A new pedestrian bridge over I-45 adjacent to North Street with cut-back style landings that do not increase the footprint of the proposed ROW.
2. A tunnel underneath I-45 adjacent to North Street.
3. An alternative pedestrian/bicycle route utilizing an additional shared use path along the north side of Little White Oak Bayou crossing under I-45 (located approximately 400 ft south of North Street) with connections to North Street.

The evaluation of these alternatives would be part of a future re-evaluation for Segment 2. The North Street pedestrian bridge alternative for pedestrian/bicycle routes was noted in materials shown in the NHHIP December 2023 Public Meetings. Design for this area has not progressed since VRA Report 1.

6.4. Emancipation National Historic Trail Connectivity (IV.6.k)

TxDOT is committed to assisting and supporting efforts to develop the Emancipation Trail in accordance with the VRA. TxDOT has been in communication with the National Park Service on how the NHHIP pedestrian-bike realm can complement the potential study outcomes and any other transportation-related aspects of the Emancipation National Historic Trail. The National Park Services advised TxDOT on April 29, 2024, that the legislation that was passed was to study whether the route described meets the criteria for National Historic Trails within the National Trail System Act. The route must meet three criteria: be established by historic

use, be nationally significant because of that use, and provide opportunities for the public to connect with that history on the ground. The NPS has not yet completed the feasibility study, and so this route is not a part of the National Trail System and is not considered a National Historic Trail at this time. If the study finds that the route meets eligibility criteria then additional legislation must be passed to amend the National Trail System Act to include this route. It can be a lengthy process taking many years.

TxDOT will continue to track the NPS’s Emancipation National Historic Trail Feasibility Study and TxDOT is planning certain pedestrian and bicycle elements that would provide connectivity to the Emancipation Trail route and will further incorporate results of the NPS’s study as applicable when they are available.

Table 6-1, Connectivity to Emancipation Trail notes the currently planned features by segment and project and the Emancipation Trail benefits. The Segment 3 items noted Table 6-1 are being implemented in design plans; the Segment 2 items will progress once Segment 2 design begins.

Table 6-1: Connectivity to Emancipation Trail

Segment (Project)	Feature	Emancipation Trail Benefit
3 (3B-1)	Shared Use Path from Alameda Road to Cleburne St parallel to I-69 NB to SH 288 SB Direct Connector	Enhanced accessibility to Emancipation Park and at least two other Texas Historical Marker and one other National Register sites
3 (3B-1)	17-foot pedestrian realms either side of Cleburne St, Alabama St, Elgin St, Tuam St, and McGowen St	Enhanced accessibility to Emancipation Park and at least two other Texas Historical Marker and one other National Register sites
3 (3B-1)	Shared Use Path from Cleburne Street to Alabama St along SH 288 NB Frontage Rd	Enhanced accessibility to Emancipation Park and at least two other Texas Historical Marker and one other National Register sites
2	Shared Use Path under I-610 at North Main St	Enhanced accessibility to Independence Heights Residential Historic District and two other National Register sites
3 (3D)	Shared Use Path on Brazos St from Pierce St to Pease St and along St. Joseph Parkway adjacent detention pond	Enhanced accessibility to Antioch Missionary Baptist Church site
3 (3D)	Reconnection of Andrews St with dedicated bike-pedestrian crossing over the Downtown Connector	Accommodates the Emancipation Trail within the project limits as noted in the VRA
3 (3D)	17-foot pedestrian realms either side of Dallas St over the Downtown Connector	Enhanced accessibility to Headquarter for the Ancient Order of Pilgrims Texas Historical Site and Kellum-Noble House at Sam Houston Park
3 (3D)	20-foot pedestrian realm with two-way bike path along Heiner St from Allen Parkway to Cleveland St	Strategic link between historic sites in Midtown and the Buffalo Bayou Trail with direct access to Andrews St and the Emancipation Trail

6.5. Support for Olivewood Cemetery Listing in National Register of Historic Places (IV.6.k.vii)

TxDOT is coordinating with the Descendants of Olivewood Inc. to help in efforts of listing the Olivewood Cemetery in the National Register of Historic Places.

On May 10, 2024, TxDOT representatives met with the Descendants of Olivewood Cemetery at Olivewood cemetery for a tour of the cemetery and to discuss the current status of this important site. Subsequent to that visit, Olivewood Cemetery suffered damage from a derecho that hit Houston the next week and then Hurricane Beryl on July 8, 2024. Listing the cemetery in the National Register of Historic Places would be very helpful for Olivewood to qualify for FEMA grants now and in the future.

On July 31, 2024, TxDOT executed a work authorization with SWCA, a global environmental consulting firm, and Legacy Cultural Resources to write a National Register of Historic Places nomination for the cemetery. SWCA and Legacy will also prepare an Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) StoryMap about the cemetery that will tell the stories of people buried there and the history uncovered as part of their work. The plan is to bring the nomination to the Texas State Board of Review meeting in January 2026. TxDOT and the consultant team will be scheduling a site visit to Olivewood in September 2024 to start work activities.

7. Access During Construction (IV.7)

7.1. School Access (IV.7.a)

During detailed design of individual projects TxDOT is identifying schools near the project that access could be impacted due to construction. Three specific schools were identified and coordinated with in Project 3B-2. These were the Young Women’s Preparatory Academy, the A Plus Middle School and the Houston Academy for International Studies. TxDOT met with representatives of the schools and HISD to exchange information and coordinate concerning development of construction project phasing and detours, and to understand the internal circulation of each school campus and how buses, drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists access the campus. TxDOT developed the construction sequencing and traffic control final design based on this understanding of school access.

TxDOT also coordinated with the City of Houston concerning potential pedestrian detours during construction and evaluated routes for ADA accessibility and current standards in accordance with VRA Article IV.7.a. The City of Houston has two locations outside the project limits that are included in the City’s school sidewalk program. If the City has not performed improvements on these two locations prior to TxDOT’s need for use as a detour, then TxDOT will have these improvements performed under the 3B-2 construction project before implementing detours that use these sidewalks.

TxDOT will use the same approach for design of the other NHHIP projects. TxDOT will continue to identify and meet with impacted schools throughout final design and construction.

7.2. Transit Access (IV.7.b)

During detailed design of individual projects TxDOT is coordinating with METRO to identify transit stop locations, bus routes, light rail routes, and upcoming work to be performed by METRO in and around the project area. Reoccurring meetings have been taking place between METRO and TxDOT to discuss how the planned construction will affect the existing bus stops and routes.

Reference Table 7-1, METRO Meetings and Submittals for a list of coordination meetings with METRO as well as correspondence and submissions to METRO for the Segment 3 projects.

Table 7-1: METRO Meetings and Submittals

Segment (Project)	Date	Activity	Subject
3 (3B)	2/1/2024	Meeting	Projects 3B-1 and 3B-2 design coordination meeting
3 (3A)	2/1/2024	Submittal	Draft Traffic Control Plan, Narrative, Bus Routes
3 (3A)	2/5/2024	Submittal	Track geometry review
3 (3B)	3/7/2024	Meeting	Projects 3B-1 and 3B-2 design coordination meeting
3 (3A)	3/27/2024	Submittal	I-69 CSJ 0027-13-201 Spur 527 Traffic Control Plan
3 (3B-1)	3/15/2024	Submittal	100% St. Emanuel Submittal (Project 3B-1)
3 (3B)	4/17/2024	Meeting	Projects 3B-1 and 3B-2 design coordination meeting
3 (3A)	4/23/2024	Submittal	Draft site layout with 11-foot lanes at Main/Wheeler intersection
3 (3B)	4/30/2024	Meeting	CCB Final Presentation
3 (3A)	5/2/2024	Submittal	Options for bi-directional track operations during construction
3 (3A)	5/7/2024	Submittal	Track alignment options and matrix
3 (3A)	5/22/2024	Submittal	30% Plan set update
3 (3B-2)	5/23/2024	Meeting	90% Interchange Plans Comment Resolution
3 (3A/3B)	6/4/2024	Meeting	University BRT discussion

Segment (Project)	Date	Activity	Subject
3 (3B)	6/6/2024	Meeting	Projects 3B-1 and 3B-2 design coordination meeting
3 (3A)	6/26/2024	Submittal	WTC 30/60/90 Deliverables List
3 (3B)	7/11/2024	Meeting	Projects 3B-1 and 3B-2 design coordination meeting
3 (3A)	7/12/2024	Submittal	Refined track alignment with turnout on bridge structure
3 (3A)	7/17/2024	Submittal	Traffic Control Plan and Bus Route comment matrix
3 (3A)	7/24/2024	Submittal	I-69 CSJ 0027-13-201 Spur 527 Traffic Control Plan
3 (3B)	8/1/2024	Meeting	Projects 3B-1 and 3B-2 design coordination meeting
3 (3A)	8/9/2024	Submittal	WTC revised layout for new tie-ins for Main and Fannin at Wheeler

7.3. Traffic Management (IV.7.c)

TxDOT has developed detailed traffic sequencing plans for Projects 3B-1 and 3B-2. TxDOT hosted a meeting with business owners along St. Emanuel Street on February 20, 2024, to review proposed plans for 3B-1 and construction sequencing. Project 3B-1 uses multiple phases and steps to focus on a specific block and associated detours to limit construction activities within each area. Construction sequencing exhibits for utilities and project storm sewer and pavement construction were available for review at the July 18, 2024, meeting and were referenced during various community group meetings.

TxDOT also continues to work with partner agencies and is still working on getting a meeting of the Innovative Traffic Steering Committee which includes representatives from the City, County, Houston-Galveston Area Council, and METRO to discuss traffic phasing and other area projects. This will provide the Committee specific traffic control phasing to provide feedback on and to consider in other agency projects to help manage mobility and mitigate potential impacts to traffic. Input from the Committee will be considered for inclusion into the construction plans to manage mobility. TxDOT will support the Committee in identifying and pursuing Federal funds to support minimizing adverse impacts of construction.

TxDOT is committed to providing 14 calendar days public notice of bus and light rail service disruptions on the project webpage during the construction phase. TxDOT is coordinating with METRO and would expect to begin providing these notices as Project 3B-1 begins construction in October 2024.

8. Meaningful Access for Persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) (IV.8)

TxDOT is utilizing Language Assistance Plan as coordinated with FHWA, to ensure language assistance services are adequately provided and documented on all TxDOT projects including the

NHHIP, The Plan is consistent with the U.S. Department of Justice's 2002 LEP guidance on updating recipient LEP plans.

8.1. Language Access Program (IV.8.a)

TxDOT is implementing its language access program in accordance with Title VI and DOT regulations and consistent with Title VI guidance issued by DOT.

8.2. Translation Services (IV.8.b)

TxDOT has been and will continue to provide translation services for vital print or digital communications without relying solely on automatic translation. TxDOT provides print and digital communication in English and Spanish as a standard practice. Seven languages, including English and Spanish, have been identified to be spoken in the Project area and TxDOT has provided print and digital communication in these languages to accommodate those who have limited English proficiency. The NHHIP website can be translated into several languages and includes information to receive translations of specific graphics, images, and PDFs on the website.

8.3. LEP Needs of Pending Displacements (IV.8.c)

TxDOT will continue to document, track, and monitor the LEP needs of anyone still to be displaced. TxDOT's SOPs provide guidance on how staff and consultants are to handle this effort.

8.4. Timely Language Assistance Services (IV.8.e)

TxDOT is committed to making language assistance services available in a timely way for relocation and acquisition services. TxDOT has not delayed language assistance services to individuals with LEP and times for receiving information, benefits, or other aspects of the relocation and acquisition activities have been on at times consistent with individuals with non-LEP. If such a situation arises, TxDOT will document this per the commitment in the VRA.

8.5. Documentation of Future Interactions (IV.8.f)

Interactions between TxDOT's resource providers and relocation contractors and persons with LEP are documented to include the person's name, the specific language(s) and dialects needed, how spoken and written language needs are identified, date language assistance services are requested, date language assistance services are provided, and how language assistance services were provided to that person. TxDOT's LEP Right of Way SOP includes documentation requirements for LEP encounters. This documentation is reported to TxDOT's CIV Division quarterly and then a Title VI questionnaire is reported annually at the end of each fiscal year.

8.6. Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) Development (IV.8.g)

TxDOT developed SOPs for both the Environmental Affairs Division and the Right of Way Division, as both Divisions employ personnel who potentially interact with LEP individuals. The SOPs describe the roles and responsibilities for TxDOT resource providers, relocation contractors, and TxDOT staff regarding interactions with persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP). The SOPs include procedures for documentation, communication, notice of

free language assistance services available to persons with LEP, language access complaints, and issue resolution.

8.7. TxDOT Provided Interpreter (IV.8.h)

The LEP Right of Way SOP includes direction that TxDOT will have an agency-sponsored interpreter present to ensure accuracy and completeness of presented information when an individual with LEP prefers to bring an interpreter of their choosing. This direction is captured in a note for Item 6.1.3 in TxDOT's LEP Right of Way SOP.

TxDOT-sponsored interpreters were present at the July 2024 public meeting.

8.8. Translation of Documents and Materials (IV.8.i)

TxDOT's Right of Way SOP includes direction to staff and consultants on the requirements to provide all translated relevant documents and materials to displaced persons in their preferred language prior to requesting signatures or other legal commitments.

8.9. LEP Training (IV.8.j)

TxDOT developed a training to educate TxDOT employees and consultants on the LEP SOP implementation. The training, which was initially performed on June 27, 2023, was recorded for future use. As new TxDOT staff or consultants begin working on the NHHIP, they will be required to watch the training to become familiar with the SOPs and their use.

A training session was held on June 27, 2024, in advance of the 2024 public meetings, with the pre-recorded video also provided to TxDOT staff and consultants. A total of 46 additional personnel received training in advance of the meetings.

8.10. Survey of Displaced Individuals (IV.8.k)

TxDOT sent a survey to assess the sufficiency of translation, interpretation, and other language assistance services to the previously displaced residents and businesses by mail and email on June 23, 2023. In accordance with the VRA, TxDOT submits reports every 60 days until the provision of the supplemental LEP services to all who request them and any additional services resulting therefrom are completed. Since surveys were sent out through the reporting period no requests for supplemental LEP services have been requested.

8.11. Language Assistance Services During Public Engagement (IV.8.l)

The meetings and the outreach materials for the July 2024 public meeting were all in English and Spanish. The public meetings were staffed with professionals fluent in English, Spanish and Mandarin, with staff wearing badges in the language of their fluency. An American Sign Language translator was available.

The public meeting notification included a statement that public meeting attendees who needed language accommodations beyond English and Spanish were asked to submit those requests to TxDOT three days in advance of the meeting. No requests for language accommodation were received in advance of the meetings.