

Approval of Resolution Affirming Funding Partnership for Segment 2 of the North Houston Highway Improvement Program (NHHIP) and the Mitigation of Adverse Community Impacts

Background

The Texas Transportation Commission (TTC) has initiated preparation of the FY 2020 Unified Transportation Program (UTP), which contains a program of state and federally funded projects to be implemented during the next 10 years. A draft was released for public comment on July 11th. The document is located at <https://www.txdot.gov/government/programs/utp.html>. Public comment will be received through August 12th with Commission action scheduled for its August 29th meeting.

The UTP includes transportation funding decisions made by its Districts, Divisions and Metropolitan Planning Organizations. It also includes specific transportation investments funded at the discretion of the Texas Transportation Commission, such as the Texas Clear Lanes projects used to relieve some of the State's most congested roadways. Because of the severity of traffic congestion on Segment 2 of the North Houston Highway Improvement Program (NHHIP), it has been identified as a candidate for discretionary funding by the Texas Transportation Commission.

Segment 2 of the NHHIP is located on IH-45 North from IH-610 North to IH-10. This portion of the NHHIP includes reconstruction and widening of IH-45 North and replacement of the IH 610 North/IH 45 North interchange. The current estimated total project cost for Segment 2 is \$1.225B. The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) is requesting the Transportation Policy Council consider a commitment of \$100M in sub-allocated funding to the Metropolitan Planning Organization to demonstrate the region's desire for advancing this investment.

This project (along with Segments 1 (from Beltway 8 North to just north of IH-610 North) and Segment 3 (which includes portions of IH-10, IH-45 and IH-59 around downtown Houston) were included in the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan. The Transportation Policy Council funded Segment 3 in its 2015 Call for Projects and it is scheduled to begin construction within the next two years.

Current Situation

The Environmental Impact Statement for the North Houston Highway Improvement Program is expected to receive approval later this year. (For more information, see the project web site at <http://www.ih45northandmore.com/>). During the public comment period for the environmental document and in subsequent public meetings, TxDOT has received comment concerning the potential adverse impact of Segment 2, including:

- residences, businesses, parks and other institutions which will be acquired to accommodate additional right of way needed by the project;
- increased noise and air pollution for remaining residents, businesses and institutions near the project;
- increased flood risk; and
- the need to accommodate high capacity transit in the corridor.

Based on the feedback from the June discussions with the Technical Advisory Committee and the Transportation Policy Council, staff has prepared the following recommendations for TPC consideration.

Staff Recommendations

1. Commit \$100M in Category 2 funds for the implementation of Segment 2 of the North Houston Highway Improvement Program; and
2. Commit \$1.5M for community planning activities which will complement TxDOT's ongoing efforts to identify additional measures to mitigate potentially adverse impacts of the NHHIP on communities adjacent to Segment 2. This planning effort may include:
 - a. New or improved pedestrian and bicycle paths and trails providing connectivity to community destinations and transit services;
 - b. Enhanced landscaping, lighting, signage, transit stops and other transportation related amenities that support neighborhood cohesion and livability;
 - c. Identifying transportation related investments that strengthen the historical and cultural identity of affected neighborhoods;
 - d. Creation of a "low emissions zone" including neighborhoods adjacent to Segment 2 which would establish priorities for reducing vehicle emissions within the low emissions zone such as:
 - i. Low or no emissions school buses,
 - ii. Reduced truck idling,
 - iii. Public access to electric vehicle recharging facilities,
 - iv. Replacement of high emission, heavy duty trucks operating within the zone with low or no emissions vehicles, and
 - v. Enhanced air quality monitoring; and
3. Commit an additional \$50M of eligible federal transportation funds for the implementation of recommendations from the community planning activities described above.
4. Require regular updates by TxDOT and H-GAC staff on the development of mitigation measures based on refinement of the project scope and design including any proposed updates to the environmental impact statement.

The Technical Advisory Committee has recommended the TPC approval of the resolution at the July meeting to commit \$100 million of Category 2 funds to the North Houston Highway Program Segment 2 implementation; \$1.5 million in Surface Transportation Block Group funds and 300,000 Transportation Development Credits for the Segment 2 Community Plans; reserve \$50 million of eligible federal funds for the implementation of transportation related recommendations from the Community Plan, and require regular updates to the Transportation Policy Council on refinement of the project scope and design including any proposed updates to the environmental impact statement.

Action Requested

TPC approval of the attached Resolution 2019-19.



Resolution

NO. 2019-19

A RESOLUTION AFFIRMING A FUNDING PARTNERSHIP WITH THE TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FOR CONSTRUCTION OF SEGMENT 2 OF THE NORTH HOUSTON HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM AND THE MITIGATION OF ADVERSE COMMUNITY IMPACTS

WHEREAS, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) has proposed a funding partnership with the Transportation Policy Council for implementation of Segment 2 of the North Houston Highway Improvement Program (NHHIP); and

WHEREAS, during the public comment period for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and in subsequent meetings with concerned citizens, local governments and other stakeholders TxDOT has received comment concerning the potential adverse impact of Segment 2, including:

- residences, businesses, parks and other institutions which will be acquired to accommodate additional right of way needed by the project;
- increased noise and air pollution for remaining residents, businesses and institutions near the project;
- increased flood risk; and
- the need to accommodate high capacity transit in the corridor; and

WHEREAS, the Transportation Policy Council supports expeditious resolution of these concerns but recognizes that inclusion of this project in TxDOT's Unified Transportation Program may be essential to provide the additional funding necessary to fully identify and incorporate desired mitigation measures; and

WHEREAS, the Transportation Policy Council supports development of community-based plans to identify priorities for the mitigation of adverse impacts on them and supports the dedication of funding for implementation of these mitigation measures.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TRANSPORTATION POLICY COUNCIL FOR THE HOUSTON-GALVESTON TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT AREA THAT IT COMMITS TO THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS:

1. \$100M in Category 2 funds for the implementation of Segment 2 of the North Houston Highway Improvement Program; and
2. \$1.5M for community planning activities which will complement TxDOT's on-going efforts to identify additional measures to mitigate potentially adverse impacts of the NHHIP on communities adjacent to Segment 2. This planning effort may include:

TPC Agenda Item 8B
Mailout – 07/19/19

- a. New or improved pedestrian and bicycle paths and trails providing connectivity to community destinations and transit services;
 - b. Enhanced landscaping, lighting, signage, transit stops and other transportation related amenities that support neighborhood cohesion and livability;
 - c. Identifying transportation related investments that strengthen the historical and cultural identity of affected neighborhoods;
 - d. Creation of a “low emissions zone” including neighborhoods adjacent to Segment 2 which would establish priorities for reducing vehicle emissions within the low emissions zone such as:
 - i. Low or no emissions school buses,
 - ii. Reduced truck idling,
 - iii. Public access to electric vehicle recharging facilities, Replacement of high emission, heavy duty trucks operating within the zone with low or no emissions vehicles, and
 - iv. Enhanced air quality monitoring; and
3. \$50M of eligible federal transportation funds for the implementation of recommendations from the community planning activities described above.
 4. Require regular updates by TxDOT and H-GAC staff on the development of mitigation measures based on refinement of the project scope and design including any proposed updates to the environmental impact statement.

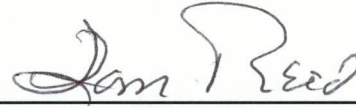
PASSED AND APPROVED this 26th day of July 2019, by the Transportation Policy Council.

APPROVED:



Hon. Kenneth Clark, Chairman
Transportation Policy Council

ATTEST:



Hon. Tom Reid, Secretary
Transportation Policy Council