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I-345 CONNECTS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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WHAT IS THE STATUS OF THE I-345 FEASIBILITY STUDY?

TxDOT started the I-345 Feasibility Study in 2018 and completed the study at the end of 2022. The published report is online at www.TxDOT.gov. The team looked at five alternatives and ultimately identified the “hybrid” alternative as the recommended alternative. TxDOT has advanced the recommended alternative into the schematic and environmental review phase. To view project information from the Feasibility Study, including responses to public comments received, visit www.345study.com.

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WHICH IS THE RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE, AND WHY WAS IT SELECTED?

The I-345 Feasibility Study recommended the “hybrid” alternative as the recommended alternative. This alternative was selected because it was the best compromise to combine elements from the other alternatives. This design places the interstate main lanes on a lower level (similar to US 75) and provides existing and new city street connections above. The alternative includes three thru (travel) lanes in each direction, similar to the existing I-345. Additional improvements includes:

- Wider city streets connecting above I-345 with wide sidewalks
- Enhanced pedestrian and cycling options
- Opportunities for future capping and development above the interstate
- Maintaining the existing number of highway travel lanes while still providing an important south-north connection for the downtown district and regional commuters
- Modified access to improve safety and wayfinding and reduce weaving on the mainlanes

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HOW WILL ADJACENT PROJECTS (SUCH AS THE I-30/CANYON AND I-30 EAST CORRIDOR) BE CONSIDERED ALONG WITH THE I-345 CONNECTS PROJECT? WILL THEY BE COORDINATED?

TxDOT and the City of Dallas are working closely to coordinate the I-30 and I-345 projects. The project teams are coordinating design, file sharing, and understanding both projects' history. TxDOT

project managers are invited to the coordination meetings for each project to stay updated as the projects progress.

The I-30 design, like I-345, is being closely coordinated with the City of Dallas, North Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG), Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART), local community groups and stakeholders.

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WHY IS THIS PROJECT NEEDED?

The existing I-345 bridge is reaching its estimated remaining useful service life. TxDOT recently spent \$30 million to rehabilitate and maintain the bridge and extend its service life approximately 20-30 years. This project would replace the existing I-345 bridge.

5

WHAT WILL THE IMPROVEMENTS INCLUDE?

Improvements include the reconstruction of the I-345 corridor between the I-30 and SH 366 junctions which encompasses three below grade thru (travel) lanes in each direction with ground level city street connections over the top of I-345. No additional frontage roads are planned and the South, Southern, and North Dallas connections are maintained. The improvements also allow for enhanced pedestrian and bicycle access along I-345 and at cross streets. The project would include sidewalks at cross streets (both sides) and along existing frontage roads.

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IS THERE ANY PROPOSED RIGHT OF WAY (ROW) ACQUISITION?

Currently, the proposed project would not require additional ROW.

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WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO ANY SURPLUS ROW NEAR I-345?

TxDOT and the City of Dallas will work together to consider how best to utilize any areas of potential surplus ROW. The recommended alternative provides 8.7 acres of potential surplus ROW and 9.0 acres of potential capping areas/future decking for a total area of 17.7 acres. The City of Dallas will receive the

opportunity to purchase the surplus ROW from TxDOT at fair market value. If the City does not to move forward with the purchase, the ROW will be sent to bid.

8

WHAT IS THE TIMELINE FOR THIS PROJECT?

A round of public meetings will be scheduled to occur in the spring of 2024, followed by finalizing the design schematic and the environmental analysis in the summer of 2024. A public hearing would then be held in the fall of 2024, with an anticipated environmental clearance in the spring of 2025.

9

WHAT IS AN ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (EA)?

An Environmental Assessment (EA) under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is a concise public document that provides sufficient evidence and analysis used to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of a proposed project, plan, or policy before it is approved or implemented. The primary purpose of an environmental assessment is to identify and understand how a project may affect the natural environment and the communities that depend on it.

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WHAT FACTORS ARE BEING CONSIDERED IN THE EA?

The following resources are being evaluated in the EA. These areas of potential impacts include natural, social, and cultural resources as well as potential impacts to adjacent and surrounding land use. The technical documentation will address the potential impacts identified during the engineering and design phase of the proposed project. Please note that these environmental studies are ongoing and any findings will be shared at future public involvement events and posted online.

- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Community Impacts
- Archeological Resources
- Historical Resources
- Hazardous Materials
- Indirect and Cumulative Impacts
- Traffic Noise

- Water Resources
- Waters of the U.S./Wetlands
- Section 4(f) Properties*

*Section 4(f) refers to the original section within the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966 which provided for consideration of park and recreation lands, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, and historic sites during transportation project development.

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WILL ALL OPTIONS BE CONSIDERED IN THE EA?

TxDOT is only considering the recommended alternative and the no-build option as part of the EA. Alternative design refinements to the recommended alternative will be considered and evaluated as the schematic design is further developed.

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WHAT ENGINEERING TASKS ARE BEING DONE BY TxDOT?

TxDOT is developing the schematic design for the recommended alternative, developing horizontal and vertical alignments, customizing typical sections for different locations, developing ramp locations and interchanges, calculating more detailed cost estimates, evaluating and designing drainage, considering bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, and determining the constructability of the project. Schematic design is being developed in collaboration with the City of Dallas. The following features are included in the schematic design:

- Mainlanes (travel lanes)
- Ramps
- Frontage roads
- Horizontal and vertical alignments
- Bridges or elevated structures
- Retaining walls
- Surplus ROW
- Existing utilities
- Accommodation of potential transit lines

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DID TxDOT CONSIDER PUBLIC INPUT OR INPUT FROM LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN THE SELECTION OF THE RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE?

TxDOT considered input from the public and from local governments in its selection of the recommended alternative. During the feasibility study, TxDOT briefed the Dallas City Council members and staff, and engaged more than 2,900 stakeholders. In addition to this input, TxDOT considered traffic volumes, anticipated population growth and impacts to nearby communities to find the best compromise to combine elements from the other alternatives in the recommended alternative design.

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WHAT SAFETY MEASURES ARE BEING CONSIDERED?

The proposed project will rebuild the highway to current design standards, addressing roadway deficiencies such as vertical/horizontal curvature, bridge vertical clearances, ramp spacing, weaving distances, and shoulder widths of the existing facility relative to current design standards. Bicycle and pedestrian safety improvements are planned on the cross streets.

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WILL NOISE BE EVALUATED DURING THE EA?

Traffic noise is evaluated as part of the EA. A traffic noise study will be completed in accordance with TxDOT's [Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)-approved] Traffic Noise Policy (2019) to determine if the project would result in traffic noise impacts. If the project results in traffic noise impacts, noise abatement will be considered and evaluated.

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WILL AIR QUALITY BE EVALUATED DURING THE EA?

Air quality is evaluated as a part of the EA. TxDOT is performing studies to evaluate how the project will impact air quality and to confirm compliance with regional and federal air quality standards, including the Clean Air Act.

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HAS TxDOT STUDIED THE CUMULATIVE IMPACTS OF THE PROJECT?

TxDOT is in the process of analyzing cumulative impacts as part of the EA.

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WHAT WILL THE IMPACT BE TO DAMS, WETLANDS, FLOODPLAINS, AND OTHER SENSITIVE RESOURCES?

Because no new ROW is proposed for the recommended alternative, impacts to natural resources including wetlands, streams, farmlands, wooded areas or floodplains, or other sensitive resources are not anticipated.

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WILL THE RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE REQUIRE DISPLACEMENTS?

Because the recommended alternative would not require any additional ROW, displacements are not anticipated.

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HOW IS ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE (EJ) EVALUATED?

Environmental Justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. The EJ populations within the project area will be identified in the environmental constraints section of the EA. TxDOT will deploy traditional and nontraditional public engagement strategies to obtain feedback from the community and EJ populations.

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HOW WILL THE PROJECT IMPACT CARPENTER PARK?

The recommended alternative may potentially impact the areas of the existing parks currently located within TxDOT ROW. These parks include Barks Park, Julius Schepps Park, and Carpenter Park. These parks were constructed by the City of Dallas partially within TxDOT ROW under the Multiple Use Agreement (MUA) signed in 1992 between the City of Dallas and TxDOT. Per the MUA, TxDOT did not relinquish the state's right to use the land when required for

the construction or reconstruction of the highway but consented to the construction of these facilities within TxDOT ROW on an interim basis. The recommended alternative was developed to minimize impacts to those areas covered by the MUA and does offer surplus land and ROW, which could be redeveloped and potentially capped for development by others. The cost of reconstruction of existing park facilities within the MUA areas impacted would be paid by other parties. TxDOT is not able to fund the cost of rebuilding Carpenter Park amenities within the impacted area covered by the MUA or other future local enhancements.

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DOES THE RECOMMENDED ALIGNMENT ACCOMMODATE DART'S D2 LINE? IF D2 IS NOT BUILT, WILL TxDOT HAVE TO CHANGE ITS PLANS?

TxDOT has had extensive coordination with DART to ensure the future I-345 improvements will not prohibit the future D2 line.

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WILL THE PROJECT IMPACT ANY HISTORIC PROPERTIES?

The recommended alternative is not anticipated to impact historic properties. However, a final determination on potential impacts to historic resources will be determined as part of the EA.

24

IS TxDOT COORDINATING WITH THE CITY OF DALLAS?

TxDOT and the City of Dallas meet regularly to discuss the project and are committed to working together. TxDOT and the City formed four subcommittees examining specific issues like surplus ROW and street grid connection. The subcommittees meet weekly. TxDOT meets with senior City staff during a regular monthly meeting.

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HOW WILL TxDOT INCORPORATE CITY INPUT ON PRIORITIES INCLUDING HOUSING, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TRAFFIC, RACIAL EQUITY AND CLEAN AIR?

TxDOT is coordinating with the City of Dallas and engaging staff from multiple departments through the four subcommittees that meet weekly. These meetings provide an opportunity for City staff to provide TxDOT information on City priorities such as housing, economic development, traffic, racial equality and clean air. The City staff are also able to provide direction and details to ensure

the project is integrating relevant city design elements, plans, and policies, to the extent feasible, including but not limited to:

- the Comprehensive Environment & Climate Action Plan
- the Racial Equity Plan
- the Economic Development Policy; and
- the Street Design Manual.

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WILL THE PROJECT INCLUDE A TRAFFIC ANALYSIS?

A comprehensive traffic study was completed as part of the Feasibility Study and a large data collection effort was completed during the project initiation to provide a complete picture of traffic volumes including origin and destination data. TxDOT will complete an updated traffic analysis based on the recommended alternative during the schematic design and environmental analysis phase.

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IS THE EXISTING I-345 BRIDGE SAFE?

The existing bridge is safe and was recently rehabilitated with a \$30 million project. It is regularly inspected and will be maintained for the duration of its service life.

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WHEN WILL CONSTRUCTION BEGIN?

A construction schedule and funding have not been identified for the project improvements. After the multi-year schematic and environmental process is completed, construction plans and ultimately construction of the recommended alternative will occur. Traffic will be maintained during construction. If any changes are proposed for the project, they will need to be updated in the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) Mobility Transportation Plan (MTP), TxDOT's unified transportation plan (UTP), City of Dallas Thoroughfare Plan (if necessary), and funding identified.

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WHAT IS THE COST OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT?

The cost identified in the Feasibility Study for the recommended alternative was approximately \$1 billion for construction based on 2021 cost. As the design is further refined during the schematic design and environmental phase, the project cost will be updated.

30

WHY SHOULD I PROVIDE INPUT IF TxDOT HAS A RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE?

As the design progresses and becomes more detailed and refined, the public can provide feedback on design refinements, access, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

31

WILL THERE BE ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE PUBLIC TO PROVIDE INPUT?

TxDOT will host a series of public meetings in spring 2024 and a public hearing in fall 2024. Additional public outreach is planned with stakeholders and the community. You can attend these meetings or keep up to date on the project by visiting www.keepitmovingdallas.com/I345 or email comments or questions to the project manager at 345connects@txdot.gov.

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WHO CAN I CONTACT AT TxDOT ABOUT THE PROJECT?

To ask questions or provide comments regarding the project, or to be added to the mailing list to stay up-to-date and be informed of future public meetings, contact TxDOT's Project Manager.

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