



I-345 CONNECTS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



MARCH 2024

PUBLIC MEETING SERIES 1

What is the I-345 Connects Project?

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) Dallas District proposes the reconstruction of I-345 from I-30 to Woodall Rodgers Freeway (Spur 366) in Dallas County, a distance of 2.8 miles, which includes the I-30/I-345 interchange. The existing I-345 bridge will reach its estimated useful service life in approximately 20-25 years, so TxDOT wants to be prepared. This project would replace the existing I-345 bridge.

The existing I-345 facility is an elevated, urban highway that typically consists of three 12-foot-wide mainlanes in each direction with 8 to 10-foot-wide shoulders on each side. The existing discontinuous frontage road lanes are 12-foot-wide with two and three lanes in each direction. There are discontinuous sidewalks and limited bicycle accommodations located within the project limits.

Following the I-345 Feasibility Study completed in 2022, the I-345 Connects project's goal is to environmentally clear the recommended alternative from the feasibility study — the hybrid alternative — which consists of depressed mainlanes and cross streets over the top of the below-ground mainlanes in coordination with the City of Dallas. There is NO proposed right of way (ROW) to be taken in completing this project.

What is the purpose and need of the project?

The purpose of the proposed project is to improve multimodal mobility, meet current design standards, and reduce highway maintenance costs.

The proposed project is needed because the existing I-345 from I-30 to Spur 366:

- Provides limited direct pedestrian and bicyclist amenities (or accommodation) to connect communities to achieve multimodal mobility;
- Does not meet current design standards; and
- Is reaching its useful design life resulting in an increase in maintenance costs

Is the existing bridge safe?

Yes, the existing bridge is safe and was recently rehabilitated with a \$30 million project. It is regularly inspected at least once per year and will be maintained for the duration of its service life. Additionally, a maintenance project for the existing bridges is scheduled to start later this spring. The work is expected to take about a year to complete. The upcoming maintenance project is not related to this project.

What is the purpose of today's Public Meeting?

Today's public meeting is being held to provide an update on the I-345 Connects Project, progress on the environmental study and to receive and consider comments from the public.

Will there be another opportunity to comment on the I-345 Connects project?

Yes, a public hearing will be held Fall 2024, and public comments will be considered and accepted at the hearing. To ask questions or provide comments regarding the project outside of the formal public meetings or hearing, please email TxDOT's Project Manager at 345connects@txdot.gov.

What will the improvements include?

The proposed project includes the reconstruction of I-345 to include three 12-foot-wide through mainlanes in each direction that would be below ground with city street connections over the mainlanes. Auxiliary lanes will be provided for access to interchanges or for entrance and exit ramps as needed. Discontinuous frontage roads would be constructed between Good Latimer Expressway and Hall Street.

Additional cross and side streets would be realigned and reconstructed at ground level to accommodate

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the reconstruction of I-345 and its interchanges with Spur 366 and I-30. The project would also include 10-foot-wide sidewalks at cross streets (both sides) and sidewalks along frontage roads, where reasonable and feasible within existing ROW. Bicycle lanes are included on some city streets, as needed, consistent with the City's Complete Streets Manual, Thoroughfare Plan, and City meetings.

Have TxDOT and the City of Dallas been coordinating?

Yes, TxDOT and City of Dallas staff have been meeting to collaborate on project refinements. The goal of these meetings is to optimize the proposed design and incorporate the May 2023 city council resolution.

Additionally, TxDOT and city staff from multiple departments have formed working subcommittees that meet weekly to focus on:

- City Street Grid Restoration: Working on city street grid modifications and how to maintain connectivity, pedestrian and bicycle access, potential streetcar opportunities and mobility for motorists.
- Surplus ROW: Identifying surplus ROW and opportunities for its use.
- Connect Dallas: Reviewing access to and from businesses and neighborhoods and how connectivity may be modified because of the I-345 Connects project.

In addition to the subcommittee meetings, TxDOT and City Department heads meet monthly to summarize the subcommittee progress, discuss various City plans for incorporation into the I-345 Connects project, next steps, action items and the project timeline.

TxDOT also briefs the city council every six-months as required in the May 2023 city council resolution.

Have the identified cross streets been coordinated with the City of Dallas?

Yes, TxDOT and the City of Dallas coordinate in the weekly City Street Grid Restoration subcommittee to discuss various design items related to the I-345 Connects Project, including to ensure that the project accommodates the following:

- Proposed pedestrian accommodations that include a 10-foot-wide sidewalk with a 5-foot buffer between the curb and sidewalk.
- Proposed bicycle lanes are 5-feet-wide and are median or curb separated from vehicles and pedestrians.
- All proposed cross streets and bridges can accommodate future streetcars, if warranted, in coordination with the City of Dallas.
- Amenities, including items like planters, decorative pavers, benches, etc. can be accommodated on the proposed bridges by the City of Dallas.
- The number of proposed lanes shown on the typical sections has been coordinated with the City of Dallas. Turn lanes will be further evaluated with traffic analysis and provided where reasonable and feasible within existing right of way. The number of lanes is preliminary and subject to change in coordination with the City of Dallas Thoroughfare Plan and the Complete Streets Manual.

What other agencies has TxDOT been coordinating with?

TxDOT has and will continue to coordinate the I-345 Connects Project with the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) and Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART).

Has TxDOT been coordinating with other stakeholders?

Yes, TxDOT and the City will continue to coordinate with various stakeholders, including but not limited to Downtown Dallas, Inc. (DDI), Deep Ellum Foundation (DEF), Baylor Scott and White Hospital, and Fair Park.

What environmental studies are being conducted?

An Environmental Assessment will be prepared for the I-345 Connects Project to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The Environmental Assessment will identify and assess potential impacts to the natural and human environment, including air quality, archaeological resources, non-archeological

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historic properties, community impact assessment, biological resources, hazardous materials, indirect and cumulative impacts, traffic noise, water resources and public involvement. The draft Environmental Assessment will be available for review at the public hearing (Fall 2024).

How will the project impact Carpenter Park?

The project may potentially impact the areas of the existing parks currently located within TxDOT right of way (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 ROW, which could be redeveloped by others. The project provides capping opportunities that will be determined later with City of Dallas coordination in addition to surplus ROW.

The cost of reconstruction of existing park facilities within the MUA areas impacted would be paid for 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.

What is the status of the traffic analysis?

The project team collected traffic counts in September 2023 and have since developed draft traffic forecasts for both the Opening Year 2037 and Design Year 2057 for the no-build and build conditions. The traffic forecasts are anticipated to be approved March 2024 for use in the environmental technical reports such as the noise analysis. TxDOT is updating the traffic operational analysis based on the latest traffic projections and updates to the design for completion by August 2024.

Additionally, in response to proposed interstate access changes associated with our project, we will be preparing an Interstate Access Justification Report (IAJR) as mandated by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). This report will include the outcomes of our traffic and safety analysis with a draft version targeted for release in September 2024. The IAJR will be available at the public hearing (Fall 2024).

How is safety incorporated into the project?

Safety is TxDOT's number one priority. A safety analysis is required as part of the IAJR. The IAJR will be developed according to the latest standard operating procedures and will be approved by TxDOT's Design Division and FHWA. Safety improvements along the mainlanes include updating roadway geometrics to the latest design criteria for things like vertical clearance, sight stopping distance and ramp spacing as well as improved weaving and merging to minimize vehicle conflict points.

In addition, TxDOT is designing the cross streets with wider sidewalks and separate bike lanes separated from vehicle traffic by buffer zones or medians and curbs to improve safety and make walking and biking more comfortable.

What is the timeline for this project?

Following this series of public meetings, the project team will review the public meeting comments, incorporate them as appropriate in coordination with the City of Dallas and finalize the design schematic and the environmental analysis in the summer or fall of 2024. A public hearing would then be held in Fall 2024, with an anticipated environmental clearance in Spring 2025.

Has a value engineering study been conducted as part of the I-345 Connects project?

Yes, a three-day value engineering (VE) study was conducted February 27–29, 2024. A VE study is required for all projects on the National Highway System (NHS) that utilize Federal-Aid Highway Program (FAHP)

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funding with an estimated total project cost of \$50 million or more. Recommendations from the VE study will be considered, along with the public meeting comments, as the design schematic is finalized to be presented at the public hearing (Fall 2024).

What is the projected construction cost for the project and when will it start?

The total estimated construction cost for the project is approximately \$1.65 Billion. The project is currently unfunded for construction.

The I-345 Connects Project's Anticipated Ready to Let Date is 2027-2028 and would take approximately 5 years to construct. "Letting" is when TxDOT notifies the construction community that a project is ready to be bid on. Construction on a project begins after the letting process is complete.

Will any additional ROW be required?

Currently there is no additional ROW required for this project, and there are no anticipated displacements or relocations.

Will there be surplus ROW?

The I-345 Connects Project offers a surplus ROW totaling approximately 9.5 acres. From the 2022 I-345 Feasibility Study Report, 8.7 acres was reported as potential surplus ROW for the recommended alternative. Through design refinement and coordination with the City of Dallas, potential surplus ROW has increased by 0.8 acre. The potential surplus ROW is preliminary and subject to change based on public and stakeholder input and technical review.

What will be done with the surplus ROW?

TxDOT has a process in place that gives priority to local government agencies who may be interested in acquiring such areas. The process begins once construction is complete and is handled by TxDOT's ROW division. Surplus tracts would:

1. Be offered for purchase at the appraised value to the City of Dallas, Dallas County, and Dallas Independent School District. If none of these entities is interested in a surplus ROW tract,
2. It is next offered for purchase at its appraised value to abutting property owners. If this does not result in sale of the tract,
3. The public is notified of the opportunity to submit a sealed bid offer to purchase, and the property would be sold to the highest bidder.

Potential surplus ROW land use would ultimately be determined by the future owner according to City of Dallas land use rules and regulations.

How have potential capping areas been identified?

The preliminary potential capping areas shown have only been analyzed for enough vertical elevation to allow for structures over the mainlanes. Capital costs; maintenance costs and fire, life and safety elements have not been studied yet and would be determined at a later design stage. The capping locations and the number of caps will be determined later with City of Dallas coordination. Funding for capping elements will be covered by others, not TxDOT. Potential capping areas are preliminary and subject to change based on public and stakeholder input and technical review.

From the 2022 I-345 Feasibility Study Report, nine acres were reported as potential capping areas for the recommended alternative. Through design refinement and coordination with the City of Dallas, potential capping areas have decreased to 7.7 acres due to revised city street typical sections and street grid realignment.

What type of feedback are you looking for?

TxDOT would like your thoughts on safety concerns, questions about access and wayfinding, additional environmental constraints not currently identified and any future development that TxDOT should know about.



All comments will be fully considered and responded to in the project record and made part of the final environmental document for this proposed project.

What is the status of the I-345 Feasibility Study?

TxDOT completed the I-345 Feasibility Study at the end of 2022 and published the report on [TxDOT.gov](https://www.txdot.gov). The team looked at five alternatives, including the no-build, and ultimately identified the “hybrid” alternative as the recommended alternative. TxDOT has advanced the recommended alternative into the schematic and environmental review phase, otherwise known as the I-345 Connects Project.

To view project information from the feasibility study, including responses to public comments received, visit www.345study.com.

How can I stay informed about the project?

To ask questions, 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. Visit the project website for all public meeting material at www.345connects.com.

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