



Draft Coordination Plan

Environmental Impact Statement

Toll 49 Segment 6 from SH 110 to US 271

North East Texas Regional Mobility Authority

Date: May 2025

CSJ: 0910-00-129

County: Smith County

The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried-out by TxDOT pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated December 9, 2019, and executed by FHWA and TxDOT.

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1.0 PURPOSE OF THE COORDINATION PLAN

In accordance with 23 U.S. Code §139(g), the North East Texas Regional Mobility Authority (NET RMA) has prepared this coordination plan for the proposed expansion of Toll 49 in Smith County. The NET RMA is the project sponsor. The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), the agency authorized to approve National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) reviews of federally funded highway projects in Texas on behalf of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), will be the lead federal agency for purposes of environmental review. This plan is intended to establish a schedule and process for coordinating public and agency participation and comment during the environmental review process. The coordination plan is developed early in the environmental and planning process and will be adjusted and updated as input is received from cooperating and participating agencies and as the complexity of potential environmental issues is identified.

2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 Project Location

The proposed Toll 49 Segment 6 project is located east of the city of Tyler, in Smith County, Texas. The limits of the proposed project are from the existing Toll 49 Segment 5 terminus at State Highway (SH) 110, southeast of Tyler, to U.S. Highway (US) 271, northeast of Tyler. **Figure 1** shows the Toll 49 Segment 6 study area, in relation to the city of Tyler and surrounding municipalities. The existing Toll 49 roadway extends from US 69 in northwest Smith County, approximately 25 miles to SH 110 southeast of Tyler.

2.2 Purpose and Need

The proposed project is needed because the current roadway network between SH 110 and US 271 east of Tyler is inadequate to meet current and future traffic volumes, resulting in increasing congestion, inadequate Levels of Service (LOS), and longer travel times. The purpose of the proposed project is to relieve congestion and provide shorter travel times for regional and local traffic traveling between SH 110 and US 271.

2.3 Project History

The Toll 49 Segment 6 project is an initiative of the NET RMA to explore potential route options for a proposed extension of Toll 49 from SH 110 north to US 271. Toll 49 is part of the proposed East Texas Hourglass corridor in northeast Texas connecting Tyler, Longview, and Marshall. The East Texas Hourglass corridor is comprised of three sub-corridors: Toll 49, a NET RMA facility known locally as the outer loop around Tyler, Texas which has been in the planning stages for over 30 years; the Longview Outer Loop, a proposed project of interest by the NET RMA that conceptually connects to Marshall and the US 59/I-369 corridor; and a US 271 connecting link owned and operated by TxDOT. Segment portions of the East Texas Hourglass, including Segment 6, have independent utility and logical termini.

Based on preliminary analysis and feedback from the public, it was determined that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) should be prepared for Toll 49 Segment 6. The EIS will include an evaluation

of a range of alternatives including “No-action” (the no-build alternative) and roadway build alternatives.

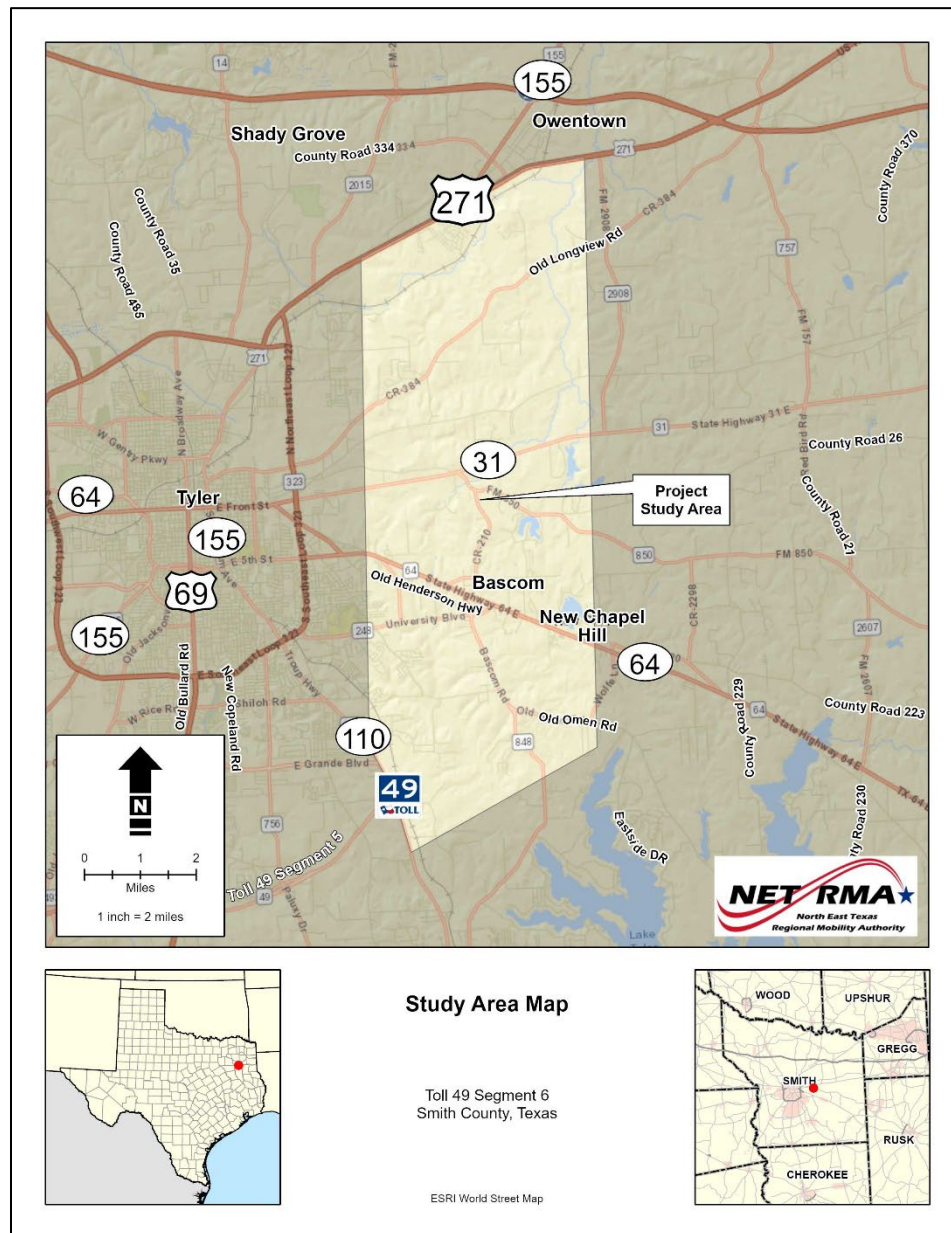


Figure 1 • Study Area Map

3.0 AGENCY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 Lead Agency

TxDOT will serve as the lead agency for the proposed project for purposes of environmental review. The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable federal

environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by TxDOT pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) dated December 9, 2019, and executed by FHWA and TxDOT.

3.2 Project Sponsor

The NET RMA will be responsible for the following:

- Providing all reports, documents, analysis, and information required for completion of TxDOT's environmental review process as specified in ENV's guidance and instructions provided on ENV's Environmental Compliance Toolkits web page on txdot.gov;
- Obtaining all required permits, authorizations, and approvals required by applicable environmental laws and regulations;
- Ensuring that the proposed project complies with all applicable environmental laws and regulations; and
- Performing any mitigation identified during the environmental review process.

3.3 Cooperating Agencies

Cooperating agencies are federal and tribal agencies and that have either jurisdiction by law regarding aspect(s) of the proposed project or special expertise pertaining to the proposed project. The NET RMA invited potential cooperating agencies to participate. Cooperating agencies assist in the preparation, coordination, and review of the EIS. If a federal agency chooses to decline the invitation to become a cooperating agency, the agency's response (electronic or hard copy) should state that the agency has no jurisdiction or authority with respect to the project, has no expertise or information relevant to the project, or does not intend to submit comments on the project. If the federal agency's response does not state the agency's position in these terms, the agency should be treated as a participating agency. An agency invited to be a cooperating agency can also voluntarily elect to be a participating agency instead by stating their intent in the response. See **Appendix A** for copies of the cooperating agency invitation letters.

3.4 Participating Agencies

State, regional, and local government agencies that may have an interest in the project were invited to serve as participating agencies. **Appendix A** contains copies of the invitation letters to participating agencies. The roles and responsibilities of participating agencies include, but are not limited to:

- Participating in the scoping process;
- Participating in the NEPA process with regard to development of the purpose and need statement, range of alternatives and methodologies and level of detail for analyzing alternatives; and
- Identifying and providing early input on issues of concern regarding the project's potential impacts to the human or natural environment.

Accepting a role as a participating agency does not imply that an agency supports the project or has jurisdiction or special expertise with respect to the evaluation of the project. **Table 3-1** summarizes the roles and responsibilities of cooperating and participating agencies identified to date.

Table 3-1: Cooperating and Participating Agencies			
Agency	Role	Response	Responsibility
Federal Aviation Administration	Cooperating	Pending	Provide input and technical assistance on potential project impacts to airports and civil aviation.
Federal Railroad Administration	Cooperating	Pending	Provide input and technical assistance on potential project impacts to rail.
Federal Transit Administration	Cooperating	Declined	Provide input and technical assistance on potential project impacts to transit.
National Park Service	Cooperating	Pending	Provide input and technical assistance on potential project impacts to Section 6(f) resources.
Environmental Protection Agency	Cooperating	Pending	Provide technical assistance on NEPA compliance and other subject matter such as wetlands, water quality, air quality, and environmental justice. Ensure compliance with Clean Air Act Amendments (CAAA) under Section 309.
United States Army Corps of Engineers, Fort Worth District	Cooperating	Pending	Ensure compliance with Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.
United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Texas Coastal & Central Plains ESFO	Cooperating	Pending	Ensure compliance with Section 7 of Endangered Species Act.
United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Southwest Region	Cooperating	Declined	Ensure compliance with Section 7 of Endangered Species Act.
United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service	Cooperating	Pending	Ensure compliance with the Farmland Protection Policy Act.
Federal Emergency Management Agency	Cooperating	Declined	Provide input and technical assistance on project's potential impacts to floodplains.
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development	Cooperating	Pending	Ensure compliance with 24 CFR part 50 – "Protection and Enhancement of Environmental Quality" and the Housing and Urban Development Amendment Act of 1974.
Absentee Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma	Cooperating	Pending	Protection of Tribal rights, lands, and cultural materials. Consulting parties under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.
Caddo Nation	Cooperating	Pending	
Cherokee Nation	Cooperating	Pending	
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma	Cooperating	Pending	
Delaware Nation	Cooperating	Pending	
Jena Band of Choctaw Indians	Cooperating	Pending	

Table 3-1: Cooperating and Participating Agencies

Agency	Role	Response	Responsibility
Kiowa Tribe	Cooperating	Pending	
Mescalero Apache Tribe	Cooperating	Pending	
Seminole Nation of Oklahoma	Cooperating	Pending	
Shawnee Tribe	Cooperating	Pending	
Thlopthlocco Tribal Town	Cooperating	Pending	
Tonkawa Tribe of Oklahoma	Cooperating	Pending	
United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians	Cooperating	Pending	
Wichita and Affiliated Tribes	Cooperating	Pending	
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department	Participating	Pending	Provide input on potential threatened and endangered species and habitat that could be impacted by the project.
Texas Historical Commission	Participating	Pending	Determine Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act compliance and eligibility, ensure compliance with the Texas Antiquities Code and with the TxDOT/THC/SHPO programmatic agreement, consult on the Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 process, and coordinate cultural resource consultations.
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality	Participating	Pending	Determine project impacts to hazardous material sites, compliance with the Texas Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (TPDES), and air quality issues.
Railroad Commission of Texas	Participating	Pending	Provide input and technical assistance on project's potential impacts to underground utilities within the project area.
Texas General Land Office	Participating	Declined	Provide input and technical assistance on project's potential impacts to Texas state land and mineral rights.
Public Utility Commission of Texas	Participating	Pending	Provide input and technical assistance on project's potential impacts to utilities within the project area.
Texas Department of Agriculture	Participating	Pending	Provide input and technical assistance on project's potential impacts to agriculture soils and land.
Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs	Participating	Pending	Provide input on interests regarding housing and development within the project area.
Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board	Participating	Pending	Identify and provide input on interests regarding impacts to soil and water resources within the project area.
Texas Department of Public Safety	Participating	Pending	Identify and provide input on impacts relating to driver and road safety within the project area.
East Texas Council of Governments	Participating	Pending	Identify and provide input on interests regarding impacts to regional planning priorities.

Table 3-1: Cooperating and Participating Agencies			
Agency	Role	Response	Responsibility
Tyler Transit	Participating	Pending	Identify and provide input on interests regarding impacts to transportation planning priorities.
Smith County	Participating	Accepted	Identify and provide input on interests regarding the project effects within the county's jurisdiction.
Smith County Historical Commission	Participating	Pending	Provide input on historic resources that could be impacted in the project area.
City of Tyler	Participating	Pending	Identify and provide input on project effects to areas within the city limits and area of extraterritorial jurisdiction.
City of New Chapel Hill	Participating	Pending	Identify and provide input on project effects to areas within the city limits and area of extraterritorial jurisdiction.
City of Longview	Participating	Accepted	Identify and provide input on project effects to areas within the city limits and area of extraterritorial jurisdiction.
City of Whitehouse	Participating	Pending	Identify and provide input on project effects to areas within the city limits and area of extraterritorial jurisdiction.
Tyler Area Metropolitan Planning Organization	Participating	Accepted	Responsible for plans and programs leading to the development of an integrated, intermodal transportation system that facilitates the efficient, economic movement of people and goods.
Longview Area Metropolitan Planning Organization	Participating	Accepted	Responsible for plans and programs leading to the development of an integrated, intermodal transportation system that facilitates the efficient, economic movement of people and goods.
Tyler Economic Development Council	Participating	Accepted	Involved with programs and activities that promote, assist, and enhance economic development within Tyler.
Longview Economic Development Corporation	Participating	Pending	Involved with programs and activities that promote, assist, and enhance economic development within Longview.

4.0 PROJECT COORDINATION

4.1 Agency Coordination

The NET RMA will facilitate the agency coordination process through the scheduling of an agency scoping meeting to ensure meaningful participation during the project development process. **Section 5.0** identifies key agency coordination points throughout the project development and NEPA process. This list does not preclude additional coordination opportunities with these agencies during the EIS process.

4.2 Public Involvement and Stakeholder Outreach

Given the regional and local importance of the proposed Toll 49 project, the public involvement activities that have been carried out to date and the public involvement planned for the proposed project include a comprehensive public involvement program designed to proactively engage and encourage participation of all interested stakeholders. A copy of the Public Involvement Plan (PIP) is included in **Appendix C**. The PIP will be periodically updated as a result of ongoing public involvement and input. Additionally, issues specific to this project may require adjustments to the PIP to address communication obstacles encountered during public outreach efforts.

During early project evaluation in 2018, the NET RMA launched a Feasibility Study. The overarching goal of the study was to be community driven. A stakeholder working group was established and included elected officials, city and county representatives, and other stakeholder groups. The stakeholder working group met four times throughout the course of the study in 2018 and 2019. Also, during this timeframe two public workshops were held.

5.0 PROJECT MILESTONES

Major milestones and general timeframes are identified in **Table 5-1**. It is the intent of the NET RMA to develop a more detailed schedule reflecting these milestones.

Table 5-1: Major NEPA Project Milestones	
Milestone	Timeframe
Publication of Notice of Intent (NOI) in the Federal Register	March 2020
Draft Purpose and Need	Spring 2025
Draft Coordination Plan	Spring 2025
Develop Range of Alternatives	Spring 2025
Public Scoping Meetings	May 2025
Agency Scoping Meeting	Spring/Summer 2025
Stakeholder Meetings (including Advisory Group Meetings)	Late 2024 through Summer 2027
Screening of Preliminary Alternatives	Spring/Summer 2025
Refine Purpose and Need; define range of reasonable alternatives and develop methodologies and level of detail for analyzing alternatives	Summer 2025
Public Meeting/Open House; the range of reasonable alternatives, alternatives analysis will be presented	Mid-2026
Preparation of Draft EIS; identification of recommended Preferred Alternative and potential environmental impacts and mitigation	Winter 2025 – Spring 2028
Notice of Availability and DEIS Circulation; the Draft EIS will be made available for review and comment prior to the public hearing and will identify a recommended Preferred Alternative	Early 2028
Public Hearing Presentation of Draft EIS and Preferred Alternative	Mid-2028
Final EIS Preparation	Early-2029
Combined Final EIS and Record of Decision	Mid-2029

Potential issues that may affect the schedule include community concerns, impacts to cultural resources (such as archeological sites and historic properties); and impacts to natural resources, (such as wetlands and potential threatened and endangered species habitat). The schedule may be extended pending unforeseen circumstances but may only be shortened with the concurrence of

affected cooperating agencies. The updated schedule reflecting major project milestones will be available at public and agency coordination meetings and on the project website.

6.0 REVISION HISTORY

Table 6-1: Revision History	
Effective Date	Reason for and Description of Change
November 2019	Initial draft version for TxDOT review and comment.
January 2020	Addressed TxDOT comments.
May 2025	Updated Draft, including timeline/milestones.

APPENDIX A

Cooperating and Participating Agencies Invitation Letters



Gary Halbrooks
Chairman

Andrea Williams-McCoy
Vice-chair

Board Members

Bowie County
Cory Floyd
Andrea Williams-McCoy

Camp County
Curtis Rath

Cass County
Matthew A. Nelson

Cherokee County
Ben Hamilton

Gregg County
Dan Droege
Keith Honey
Dave Spurrier

Harrison County
Rush Harris
Mac Abney

Kaufman County
Robert Messer

Panola County
Dr. John Ray

Rusk County
John Cloutier

Smith County
Marcia Daughtrey
Howard Patterson
Matthew Watts

Titus County
Nathan Tafoya

Upshur County
Larry Morse

Van Zandt County
Chet Clayton

Wood County

May 2, 2025

RE: Invitation to Become a Cooperating and/or Participating Agency
Toll 49 Segment 6 from SH 110 to US 271
CSJ: 0910-00-129

Name, Title
Agency
Address
City, State Zip Code

Dear Agency Representative:

The North East Texas Regional Mobility Authority (NET RMA) is initiating an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for a proposed transportation project referred to as Toll 49 Segment 6. The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), the agency authorized to approve NEPA reviews of federally funded highway projects in Texas on behalf of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), will be the lead federal agency for purposes of environmental review.

The proposed project would be a new location roadway from State Highway (SH) 110 to United States Highway (US) 271, east of the city of Tyler in Smith County, Texas. The purpose of Toll 49 Segment 6 is to relieve congestion and provide shorter travel times for regional and local traffic. Additional information regarding the proposed project can be found in the enclosed Notice of Intent (NOI).

Your agency may have an interest in the proposed project due to the potential effects on the natural and/or human environment and input from your agency may also be required. Therefore, NET RMA respectfully requests your agency's participation as a Cooperating Agency in preparing the Draft EIS and Final EIS in accordance with 40 Code of Federal Regulations §1501.6 of the Council on Environmental Quality's Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provision of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). As a Cooperating Agency, your special expertise permits you to develop information and prepare environmental analyses for the EIS.

Your agency may choose to participate in the proposed project as a Participating Agency. Pursuant to Title 23 U.S. Code, Chapter 1, Section 139, Participating Agencies are similar to Cooperating Agencies, but have lesser authority, responsibility, and involvement in the environmental review process.

As a Cooperating Agency, responsibilities include identifying, as early as practicable, any issues of concern regarding the project's potential environmental or socioeconomic impacts that could substantially delay or prevent an agency from granting a permit or



other approval that is needed for the project. Therefore, we suggest that your agency's role in the development of the project include the following:

- Providing meaningful and early input on the coordination plan, the purpose and need, the range of alternatives, and the methodologies and level of detail for analyzing alternatives.
- Participating in coordination meetings and joint field reviews, as appropriate.
- Providing timely review and comment on environmental documents to reflect the views and concerns of your agency on the adequacy of the document, alternatives considered, and the anticipated impacts and mitigation.

Please respond to the NET RMA in writing, by mail or email, with an acceptance or declination of the invitation within 30 days of the date of this letter. Please specify if your agency would like to be a Cooperating Agency or Participating Agency. If your agency declines, the response should state your reason for declining either invitation. If you choose to decline, please specifically state in your response that your agency:

- (a) Has no jurisdiction or authority with respect to the proposed project;
- (b) Has no expertise or information relevant to the proposed project; or
- (c) Does not intend to submit comments on the proposed project.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss the project in more detail or the NET RMA's respective roles and responsibilities during the preparation of this EIS, please contact:

Jason Buntz
Operations Manager
Hicks & Company
1504 W. 5th St.
Austin, Texas 78703
jbuntz@hicksenv.com

Thank you for your cooperation and interest in this proposed project.

Sincerely,

Glenn H. Green, Executive Director
North East Texas Regional Mobility Authority
1011 Pruitt Pl
Tyler, TX 75703

Enclosures:

NOI

Public scoping meeting flyer



Gary Halbrooks
Chairman

Andrea Williams-McCoy
Vice-chair

Board Members

Bowie County
Cory Floyd
Andrea Williams-McCoy

Camp County
Curtis Rath

Cass County
Matthew A. Nelson

Cherokee County
Ben Hamilton

Gregg County
Dan Droege
Keith Honey
Dave Spurrier

Harrison County
Rush Harris
Mac Abney

Kaufman County
Robert Messer

Panola County
Dr. John Ray

Rusk County
John Cloutier

Smith County
Marcia Daughtrey
Howard Patterson
Matthew Watts

Titus County
Nathan Tafoya

Upshur County
Larry Morse

Van Zandt County
Chet Clayton

Wood County

May 2, 2025

RE: Invitation to Become a Participating Agency
Toll 49 Segment 6 from SH 110 to US 271
CSJ: 0910-00-129

Name, Title
Agency
Address
City, State Zip Code

Dear Agency Representative:

The North East Texas Regional Mobility Authority (NET RMA) is initiating an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for a proposed transportation project referred to as Toll 49 Segment 6. The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), the agency authorized to approve NEPA reviews of federally funded highway projects in Texas on behalf of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), will be the lead federal agency for purposes of environmental review.

The proposed project would be a new location roadway from State Highway (SH) 110 to United States Highway (US) 271, east of the city of Tyler in Smith County, Texas. The purpose of Toll 49 Segment 6 is to relieve congestion and provide shorter travel times for regional and local traffic. Additional information regarding the proposed project can be found in the enclosed Notice of Intent (NOI).

With this letter, we extend your agency an invitation to become a Participating Agency with the NET RMA in the development of the EIS for the Toll 49 Segment 6 project. This designation does not imply that your agency either supports the proposal or has any special expertise with respect to the evaluation of the proposed project. Pursuant to Title 23 U.S. Code, Chapter 1, Section 139, Participating Agencies are responsible to identify, as early as practicable, any issues of concern regarding the project's potential environmental or socioeconomic impacts that could substantially delay or prevent an agency from granting a permit or other approval that is needed for the project. We suggest that your agency's role in the development of the project include the following:

- Providing meaningful and early input on the coordination plan, the purpose and need, the range of alternatives, and the methodologies and level of detail for analyzing alternatives.
- Using this process to address any environmental issues of concern to your agency.



Please respond to the NET RMA in writing by mail or email with an acceptance or declination of the invitation within 30 days of the date of this letter. If you have any questions or would like to discuss the project in more detail or our agencies' respective roles and responsibilities during preparation of this EIS, please contact:

Jason Buntz
Operations Manager
Hicks & Company
1504 W. 5th St.
Austin, TX 78703
jbuntz@hicksenv.com

Thank you for your cooperation and interest in this proposed project.

Sincerely,

Glenn H. Green, Executive Director
North East Texas Regional Mobility Authority
1011 Pruitt Pl
Tyler, TX 75703

Enclosures:

NOI
Public scoping meeting flyer

APPENDIX B

Notice of Intent

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number 59008)

James Rivera,

Associate Administrator for Disaster Assistance.

[FR Doc. 2020-06408 Filed 3-26-20; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8026-03-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Highway Administration

Environmental Impact Statement: Smith County, Texas

AGENCY: Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Department of Transportation.

ACTION: Federal notice of intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

SUMMARY: The FHWA, on behalf of TxDOT, is issuing this notice to advise the public that an EIS will be prepared for a proposed transportation project to construct Toll 49, Segment 6 located partially within and just east of the City of Tyler in Smith County, Texas. The project is sponsored by the North East Texas Regional Mobility Authority.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Scott Ford, Project Delivery Manager, Environmental Affairs Division, Texas Department of Transportation, 125 E 11th Street, Austin, Texas 78701-2483, telephone (512) 416-2687, email: scott.ford@txdot.gov. TxDOT's normal business hours are 8:00 a.m. to 5 p.m. (central time), Monday through Friday.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by TxDOT pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated December 9, 2019, and executed by FHWA and TxDOT.

Toll 49, Segment 6 will be an extension of Toll 49 from the Toll 49, Segment 5 eastern terminus at State Highway (SH) 110 to United States (US) 271. There is no existing facility; therefore, the project is proposed on a new location. The proposed roadway will consist of an interim two-lane facility (one lane in each direction) with an intermittent single passing lane that alternates direction along the length of the corridor (Super 2) and an ultimate four-lane divided highway.

The EIS will evaluate a range of build alternatives and a no-build alternative. Possible build alternatives include three route options identified in the Toll 49,

Segment 6 Feasibility Study completed in November 2019. The three route options begin at the Toll 49, Segment 5 terminus at SH 110, end at different locations on US 271, and range from 10 to 13 miles long. TxDOT will issue a single Final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision document pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 139(n)(2), unless TxDOT determines statutory criteria or practicability considerations preclude issuance of a combined document.

In accordance with 23 U.S.C. 139, cooperating agencies, participating agencies, and the public will be given an opportunity for continued input on project development. A public scoping meeting is planned for Spring 2020 at a location to be determined. An agency scoping meeting will also be held with participating and cooperating agencies. The agency and public scoping meetings will provide an opportunity for the participating/cooperating agencies and public to review and comment on the draft coordination plan and schedule, the project purpose and need, the range of alternatives, and methodologies and level of detail for analyzing alternatives. In addition to the agency and public scoping meetings, a public hearing will be held. Public notice will be given of the time and place of the meetings and hearing.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program Number 20.205, Highway Planning and Construction.)

Issued on: March 12, 2020.

Michael T. Leary,

Director, Planning and Program Development, Federal Highway Administration.

[FR Doc. 2020-05601 Filed 3-26-20; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration

[Docket No. PHMSA-RSPA-2003-15122]

Pipeline Safety: Request for Special Permit; Texas Eastern Transmission, L.P.

AGENCY: Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: PHMSA is publishing this notice to solicit public comment on a request from Texas Eastern Transmission L.P., (TET) to renew a previously issued special permit. TET is seeking continued relief from compliance with certain requirements

in the Federal pipeline safety regulations. At the conclusion of the 30-day comment period, PHMSA will review the comments received from this notice as part of its evaluation to grant or deny the special permit renewal request.

DATES: Submit any comments regarding this special permit request by April 27, 2020.

ADDRESSES: Comments should reference the docket number for this special permit request and may be submitted in the following ways:

- *E-Gov Website:* <http://www.Regulations.gov>. This site allows the public to enter comments on any **Federal Register** notice issued by any agency.
- *Fax:* 1-202-493-2251.
- *Mail:* Docket Management System: U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590.
- *Hand Delivery:* Docket Management System: U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590, between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

Instructions: You should identify the docket number for the special permit request you are commenting on at the beginning of your comments. If you submit your comments by mail, please submit two (2) copies. To receive confirmation that PHMSA has received your comments, please include a self-addressed stamped postcard. Internet users may submit comments at <http://www.Regulations.gov>.

Note: There is a privacy statement published on <http://www.Regulations.gov>. Comments, including any personal information provided, are posted without changes or edits to <http://www.Regulations.gov>.

Confidential Business Information: Confidential Business Information (CBI) is commercial or financial information that is both customarily and actually treated as private by its owner. Under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (5 U.S.C. 552), CBI is exempt from public disclosure. If your comments responsive to this notice contain commercial or financial information that is customarily treated as private, that you actually treat as private, and that is relevant or responsive to this notice, it is important that you clearly designate the submitted comments as CBI. Pursuant to 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) § 190.343, you may

APPENDIX C

Public Involvement Plan



Public Involvement Plan

Toll 49 Segment 6 from SH 110 to US 271

North East Texas Regional Mobility Authority

Date: May 2025

CSJ: 0910-00-129

County: Smith County

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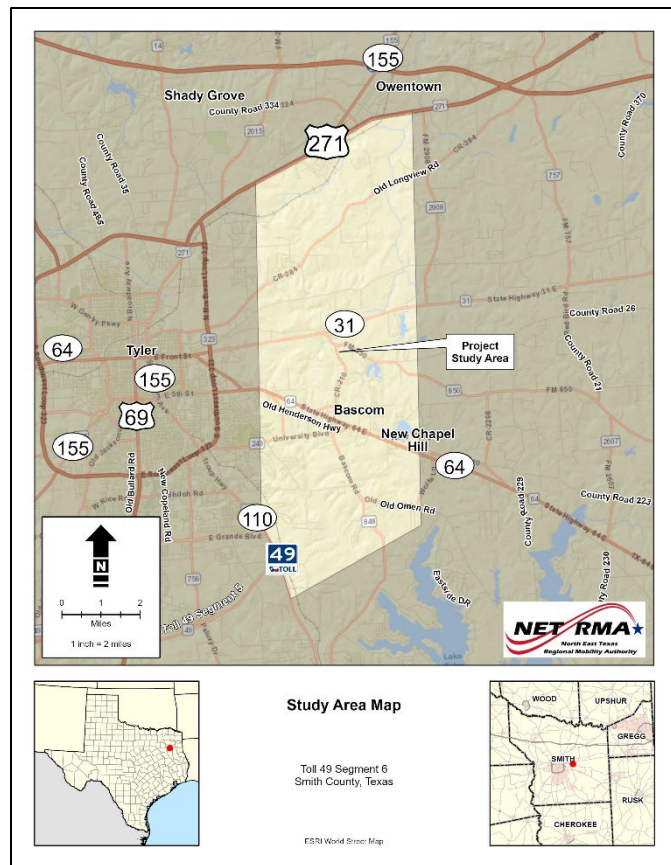
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NET RMA Mission

The North East Texas Regional Mobility Authority (NET RMA) mission is to implement infrastructure solutions that will enhance the quality of life and the economic environment in our area.

Project Description and Background

The proposed project would include the construction of a new toll road potentially implemented with an interim and ultimate phase. The interim phase could either be a two-lane controlled access highway or a two-lane with a passing lane-controlled access highway. The ultimate phase would consist of a four-lane divided controlled access highway. The project would require right-of-way acquisition and could be built in segments depending on the availability of funding.



Project Goal

The goal of the proposed project is to relieve congestion on existing highways and shorten travel times within the study area.

Proposed Project Study Area

Purpose of Public Involvement Plan

Public participation is a critical component of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. The purpose of this Public Involvement Plan is to describe the public involvement approach the team will take to ensure:

- Proactive engagement with the public, stakeholders, and agencies throughout the process;
- Clear communication of the project goals, alternatives, and potential impacts of the improvements;
- Transparency of the decision-making process and encouragement of active participation;
- Implementation of public involvement strategies that best suit the community; and
- Development of a project design that best meets the needs of the public.

This Public Involvement Plan is subject to change based on the NET RMA scheduling and public needs. Components of the plan—including objectives, issues, stakeholders, strategies, methods, and timelines—will be updated as needed as the project development progresses.

Public Involvement Objectives

The public involvement objectives described below have been developed to initiate early engagement with the public, stakeholders, and agencies; establish effective communication protocols; encourage meaningful participation and collaboration; and elicit feedback.

Key elements of effective public involvement include:

- Initiating early engagement of members of the public, stakeholders, and agencies by reaching out at the beginning of the environmental process;
- Building on existing relationships and lines of communication to ensure continuity and communication of a consistent message;
- Facilitating a collaborative environment to encourage feedback and participation;
- Directly addressing project concerns of the public, stakeholders, and agencies including displacements and relocations; changes in access and mobility; impacts to emergency service response times; bicycle and pedestrian accommodations; changes in mobility associated with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990; construction timeframe, cost, and letting; construction-phase impacts; and other issues;
- Providing adequate notice of public involvement opportunities using multiple methods of communication that are tailored to those anticipated to be affected by the proposed project or with a demonstrated interest in the proposed project;
- Ensuring that public involvement events are held in welcoming, ADA-compliant facilities that are familiar to the public and easy to access;
- Going beyond the standard method of notification of adjacent property owners to include important community facilities and organizations that serve persons with limited English proficiency (LEP) and other special accommodation needs; and
- Defining a detailed public involvement approach while maintaining flexibility throughout the process to allow for adjustments to better suit the public, more effectively communicate information, and gather input.

Current Issues to Address

The need for, purpose of, and objectives of the proposed project have been developed in a collaborative manner to allow for public input on the problems the project should be designed to address.

Currently, traveling along the current roadway network between State Highway (SH) 110 and United States Highway (US) 271 east of Tyler can be a challenge. Data suggests that the current roadway network is inadequate to meet current and future traffic volumes resulting in increasing congestion, inadequate Levels of Service (LOS), and longer travel times.

The project team has identified the following goals that could be addressed by the proposed project:

- Improve LOS on existing roadways
- Shorten travel times

The project team identified potential consequences of not addressing these problems including:

- Poor LOS and longer travel times
- Cost of delays:
 - Quality of life issues
 - Frustration of motorists
 - Lack of mobility options

Stakeholders

In late 2018 to early 2019, the NET RMA conducted a Feasibility Study for Toll 49 Segment 6 with the goal to be community driven. The NET RMA established a Stakeholder Working Group to guide the study and provide locally focused input. Stakeholder working group members included elected officials, city and county representatives, and representatives from other stakeholder groups. The goals and objectives, study area, evaluation criteria, and preliminary route options were developed with input from and the concurrence of the stakeholder working group.

It is the intent of the NET RMA to reconnect with those stakeholders that were involved in the Feasibility Study and additionally those with a demonstrated interest in the proposed project including school districts, community residents and businesses, partnering agencies, LEP populations, and other individuals or groups who may be impacted by and/or interested in the proposed project. A database of project stakeholders will be maintained throughout the project.

Tactics, Tools, Roles & Responsibilities

This section provides an active list of communication tools that will be used throughout the project development phase. The overall strategy includes two public scoping meetings, an agency scoping meeting, a public meeting, and a public hearing as required by NEPA. A proposed timeline of public involvement events is included in this Public Involvement Plan. All public meeting activities will follow the TxDOT Public Involvement Toolkit guidance and be in compliance with the Texas Administrative Code requirements for public involvement. A full implementation timeline is included in the next section of this plan.

In-Person Public Involvement and Comment Methods

Scoping meetings are a requirement of the NEPA process, involving the public and federal, State, and local agencies that have an interest in or regulatory jurisdiction over the project. Scoping meetings will be conducted to identify important issues for consideration during development of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), among other objectives.

Public Scoping Meetings—A virtual public scoping meeting with two in-person options are scheduled to be conducted in Tyler and Longview on May 6 and May 8, 2025, respectively. The Tyler meeting will be held at the Tyler Rose Garden Center, 420 Rose Park Dr., Tyler, TX 76207; and the Longview meeting will be held at the Longview Exhibit Center, 1123 Jaycee Dr., Longview, TX 75604. Both in-person public meeting venues are of adequate capacity with parking and are ADA accessible. Security will also be provided. The virtual public meeting will be available online from May 6 to May 23, 2025. Comments will be accepted at in-person meeting locations as well as via mail, email,

voicemail, or directly online. Materials to be developed will include:

- NET RMA project web page (www.netrma.org/projects/segment-6)
- Social media posts
- Press release
- Newspaper display ads
- Meeting notice/flyer available online, mailed, and/or emailed to adjacent property owners, stakeholders, elected officials, community facilities, and interested parties
- Postcards
- Comment cards
- Sign-in sheets
- Exhibit boards and displays
- Preliminary route maps
- Project fact sheet for the public
- Nametags
- Wayfinding signs
- PowerPoint public scoping meeting presentation
- LEP materials:
 - Meeting notice/flyer with Spanish language instructions to obtain information in Spanish
 - Spanish-speaking translator present at in-person public scoping meetings
- Internal materials:
 - Frequently asked questions (FAQ) document for meeting staff
 - Facility layout plan(s)
 - Wayfinding plan(s)

Following the public scoping meeting, documentation will be provided per TxDOT guidelines.

Agency Scoping Meeting—The agency scoping meeting is planned to be conducted virtually in Spring/Summer 2025. Following the agency scoping meeting, documentation will be provided per TxDOT guidelines.

Public Meeting—A virtual public meeting with an in-person option will provide a status on the development of the project and an opportunity for the public to give input on their comments and concerns for the proposed project. The in-person public meeting venue will provide adequate capacity and parking and be ADA accessible. Security will also be provided. The virtual public meeting will be posted per the date and time indicated in the notice and will remain online for the entire 15-calendar day comment period or longer. Comments will be accepted at the in-person meeting location as well as via mail, email, voicemail, or directly online. Materials to be developed will include:

- NET RMA project web page
- Social media posts
- Press release
- Newspaper display ads

- Meeting notice/flyer available online, mailed, and/or emailed to adjacent property owners, stakeholders, elected officials, community facilities, and interested parties
- Postcards
- Comment cards
- Sign-in sheets
- Exhibit boards and displays
- Reasonable Alternative maps
- Project fact sheet for the public
- Nametags
- Wayfinding signs
- PowerPoint public meeting presentation
- LEP materials:
 - Meeting notice/flyer with Spanish language instructions to obtain additional information in Spanish
 - Spanish-speaking translator present at in-person public meeting
- Internal materials:
 - Frequently asked questions (FAQ) document for meeting staff
 - Facility layout plan
 - Wayfinding plan

Following the public meeting, documentation will be provided per TxDOT guidelines.

Public Hearing—A virtual public hearing with in-person option is tentatively scheduled to occur in Spring 2028. During the in-person public hearing, a formal presentation will be given, followed by a comment period for those who wish to provide their comments verbally. The public hearing will provide a time for the public and stakeholders to review the proposed improvements and environmental documents and provide comments and feedback. The public hearing venue will provide adequate capacity and parking and be ADA accessible. Security will also be provided. The virtual public hearing will be posted per the date and time indicated in the notice and will remain online for the entire 15-calendar day comment period or longer. Comments will be accepted at the in-person hearing location as well as via mail, email, voicemail, or directly online. Materials to be developed will include:

- NET RMA project web page
- Social media posts
- Press release
- Newspaper display ads
- Hearing notice/flyer available online, mailed, and/or emailed to adjacent property owners, stakeholders, elected officials, community facilities, and interested parties
- Comment cards
- Sign-in sheets
- Exhibit boards and displays
- Preferred Alternative maps
- Project fact sheet for the public

- Nametags
- Wayfinding signs
- PowerPoint public hearing presentation
- Media packets
- LEP materials:
 - Hearing notice/flyer with Spanish language instructions to obtain information in Spanish
 - Spanish-speaking translator present at in-person public hearing
- Internal materials:
 - Frequently asked questions (FAQ) document for hearing staff
 - Facility layout plan
 - Wayfinding plan

As verbal comments will be accepted at the in-person option for the public hearing, a court reporter will be present to transcribe the hearing and verbal comments. Following the public hearing, documentation will be prepared per TxDOT guidelines.

Information and Notification Methods

Mailout Notices—Notices will be mailed to adjacent property owners, elected officials, interested parties, and stakeholders. Important community facilities and organizations will also receive a notice and will be contacted to offer additional copies of the notice (in English and/or Spanish as applicable) to distribute to members of the public. Additionally, postcards will be utilized to target residents of adjacent or nearby neighborhoods.

Social Media Content—The NET RMA will utilize social media platforms (e.g., Facebook and X) and media activities, such as press releases and media advisories, to appropriately distribute public information and advertise public input opportunities.

Newspaper Advertisements—Notifications will be published in the newspapers 15 days prior to each public involvement event. Affidavits of publication and/or tear sheets will be obtained from each newspaper as proof of publication.

Media Relations—The project team will provide project information to the local media. A press release will be created to promote coverage of the meetings. Materials will also be gathered for the media, as needed. Notices and/or display advertisements for all public involvement events will be placed in local newspapers. Media kits will be available at the in-person public hearing.

Changeable Message Signs—The NET RMA may elect to utilize changeable message signs for display of project information and the date and location of upcoming meetings.

Comment Processing—Comments received during the comment period will be entered into a comment database. A comment-response matrix will be developed for the public meetings and public hearing. The matrix will follow the guidelines and templates set forth in TxDOT's Public

Involvement Toolkit and will be included in the documentation for each public involvement event, which in turn will be posted to the project web page.

Specific Areas of Environmental Concern

Limited English Proficiency—Individuals who have a limited proficiency in reading, writing, or understanding the English language are considered to have limited English proficiency (LEP). Executive Order 13166 “Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency” requires agencies to examine the services they provide; identify the need for services to LEP persons; and develop and implement a system to provide those services so that LEP persons can have meaningful access to them.

To improve access for LEP populations, the following measures will be taken, if needed or as required:

- Meeting notice/flyers and comment forms will include Spanish language instructions to obtain additional information in Spanish
- Spanish translators will be present at the in-person public meetings and hearing
- Translation services will be available upon request
- Additional locations or organizations will be identified for outreach and to post or disseminate public meeting details (e.g., churches, community centers, community service facilities)

Timeline

The following timeline presents a preliminary public involvement schedule, intended to support the overall project design and delivery process. It is assumed that environmental clearance will be achieved by Summer 2029, and all dates have been derived from this goal. A proposed timeline follows:

Task	Responsible Party	Assisting Party	Deadline
Develop public involvement plan	Consultants	NET RMA	Ongoing
Public Scoping Meetings	Consultants	NET RMA	May 2025
Prepare public scoping meeting documentation	Consultants	Consultants	30 days following meeting
Agency Scoping Meeting	Consultants	Consultants	Spring/Summer 2025
Prepare agency scoping meeting documentation	Consultants	Consultants	30 days following meeting
Public Meeting	Consultants	NET RMA	mid-2026
Prepare public meeting documentation including comment and response matrix	Consultants	Consultants	30 days following meeting
Public hearing	Consultants	NET RMA	mid-2028
Prepare public hearing summary and analysis including comment and response matrix	Consultants	Consultants	30 days following hearing

Note: This proposed timeline is subject to change.

Evaluation

Public involvement efforts will be tracked to ensure effective and efficient communication. If the public involvement methods are determined to be insufficient or ineffective, the methods will be modified to the extent necessary. The following components of the public involvement process will be evaluated:

- Number of public meetings and hearings conducted
- Number of registered attendees at each public involvement event versus number of notices distributed
- Number of informational materials distributed
- Number of public comments received per public involvement event
- Evaluation of how public comments were used in the decision-making process
- Number of public recommendations used throughout project development

Notes

Media Request Protocol

The media will seek information from multiple sources. These will potentially include project team members, neighborhoods, businesses, or other stakeholders within the project area. Media requests for information internal to the project team will be directed to Mitzi Ellison, President of Nancy Ledbetter Associates (NLA), at (512) 761-2711.

Approval Process for Communication Products

Any communication product (e.g., notice, fact sheet) created by a consultant must go through a multi-level QA/QC review prior to the approval process.

Project Team

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Note: For NEPA Review Purposes Only

Reminder: This public involvement plan is a living document that is subject to change, based on public needs. The plan may be updated at any time to add or remove objectives, stakeholders, strategies, or methods as needed to adapt to new and changing circumstances as project development progresses.