

# 36A PROJECT

HOUSTON DISTRICT  
FEBRUARY 2021

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## Project Purpose

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) is preparing a study for a potential highway corridor connecting SH 36/I-69 southwest of Rosenberg northward to US 290/SH 6 north of Hempstead. The purpose of the project is to (1) address anticipated mobility/congestion issues based on projected growth, (2) improve north/south freight movement, (3) improve north/south system linkage/ connectivity and (4) improve safety and increase hurricane evacuation route capacity within the study area and region.

## Background

The 2013 Regional Goods Movement Plan completed by the Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC) indicated a need to route traffic around the west side of Houston's urban core to provide adequate facilities for north/south freight movement, system linkage and connectivity. Such a facility would also provide enhanced emergency evacuation opportunities. The concept shown generally followed existing SH 36 from Freeport north to Rosenberg then northward through Fort Bend and Waller counties to SH 6 north of Hempstead. The recommendations of this plan were incorporated into H-GAC's 2040 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).

Participating entities in the Regional Goods Movement Plan realized that the proposed concept would complement the needs identified locally for north-south mobility in the fast-growing areas southwest of Houston. The Highway 36A Coalition was formed to advocate for improved mobility and goods movement through Brazoria, Fort Bend and Waller Counties. Their interests include both rail and highway improvements.

With the Highway 36A Coalition's advocacy and with the support of H-GAC's Transportation Policy Council, H-GAC provided funding for the initial phase of an environmental study. TxDOT agreed to advance the study of a proposed new location highway from southwest of Rosenberg along I-69/US 59, northward, to SH 6 north of Hempstead, approximately 55 miles, using in part, funds appropriated by H-GAC.

**Proposed Project:** The proposed 36A project is envisioned as a four-lane highway on new location, and as such, 23 CFR 771.115(a) states that this type of project normally requires preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The HOU district began work on the 36A EIS in 2018. Since 2018, the HOU district has developed a draft Purpose and Need statement, draft Project Coordination and Public Involvement Plan, and a draft Alternatives Development and Screening Methodology.



Houston District:  
7600 Washington Ave.  
Houston, TX 77007  
Ph: (713) 802-5000  
Fax: (713) 802-5400

### PROJECT LOCATION

Counties of Austin, Fort Bend, Harris, and Waller

### PROJECT LIMITS

36A South from SH 36 south of Needville to I-10/US 90  
36A North from I-10/US 90 to US 290/SH 6 north of Hempstead

### PROJECT LENGTH

65 miles total (South=33 miles; North=32 miles)

### PROJECT REFERENCE # (CSJ)

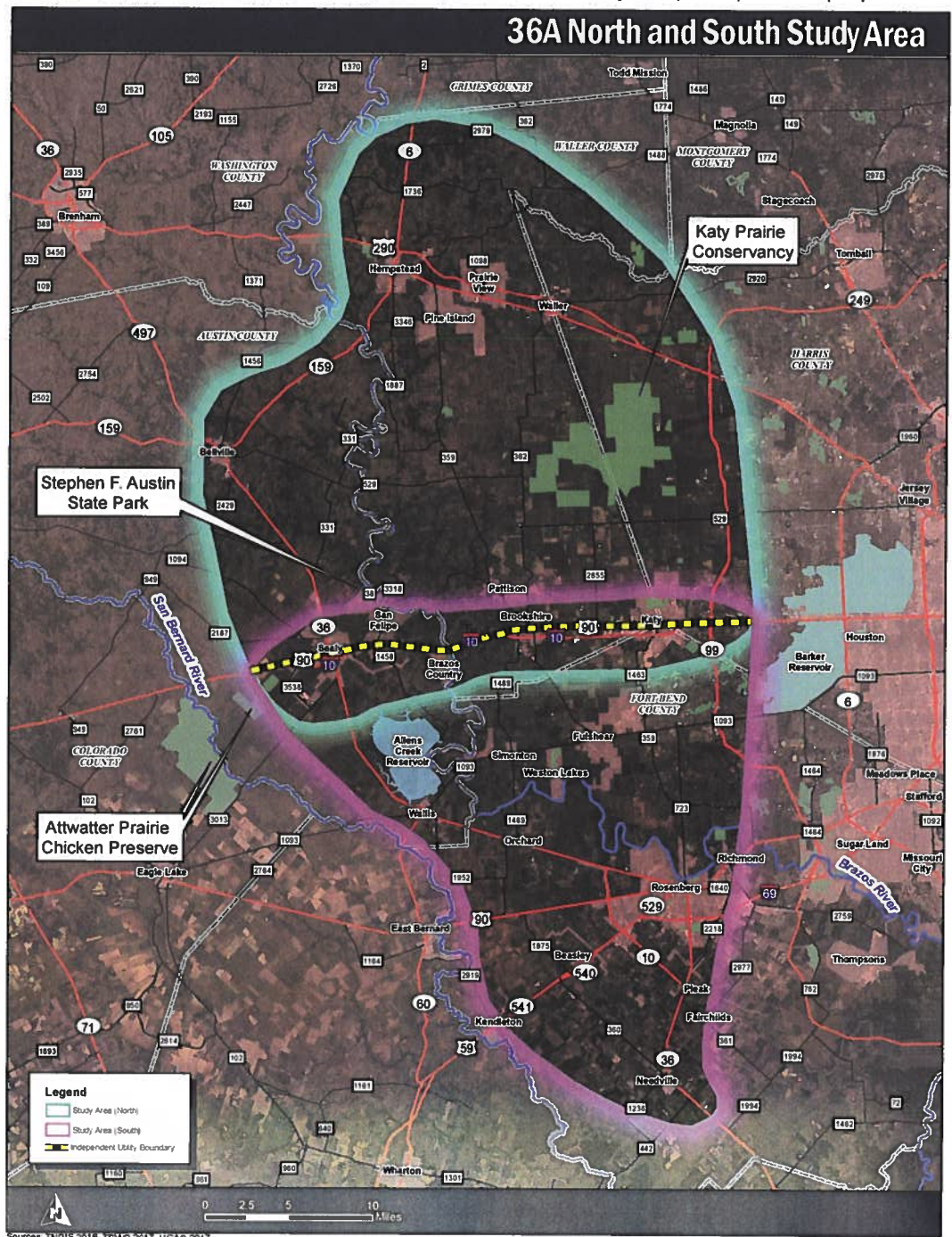
CSJ: 0912-00-544 (South) and 0912-00-646 (North)

## Split of Proposed 36A Project

Pre-Notice of Intent (NOI) meetings have been held with multiple stakeholders in the Study Area, including Austin County, Fort Bend County, Harris County and Waller County, as well as with major landowners and public interest groups such as the Greater Fort Bend Economic Development Council and the Katy Prairie Conservancy. Through this public involvement, the project team received comments regarding the proposed purpose and need of the project and major development constraints to be considered. Further, stakeholders requested the project to be split into two segments with Interstate 10 dividing the southern and northern segments. In addition, stakeholders requested the southern terminus be extended further southwest to SH 36, south of Needville, increasing the overall 36A project length from 55 miles to approximately 65 miles.

While this proposal would separate the larger project into two separate segments of independent utility (SIU), the Houston district believes the integrity of the environmental analysis will not be compromised. As the SIU designation suggests, both projects can function independently to meet their individual purpose and need without the necessity of the other project. Environmental clearance under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for the proposed 36A corridor would be accomplished through preparation of separate EISs for each of these SIUs. The Houston district believes this separation will have the benefit of allowing each SIU to progress independent of the other, on their own schedules, and allow focus and flexibility in addressing the unique issues, concerns or constraints of each of the SIUs without compromising the integrity of the environmental analysis.

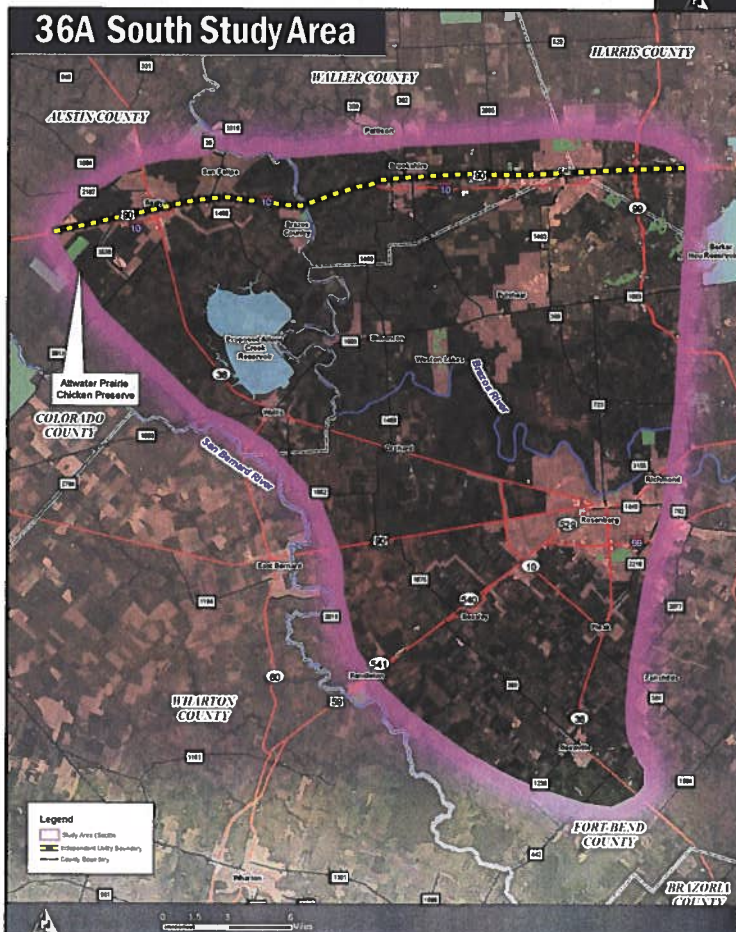
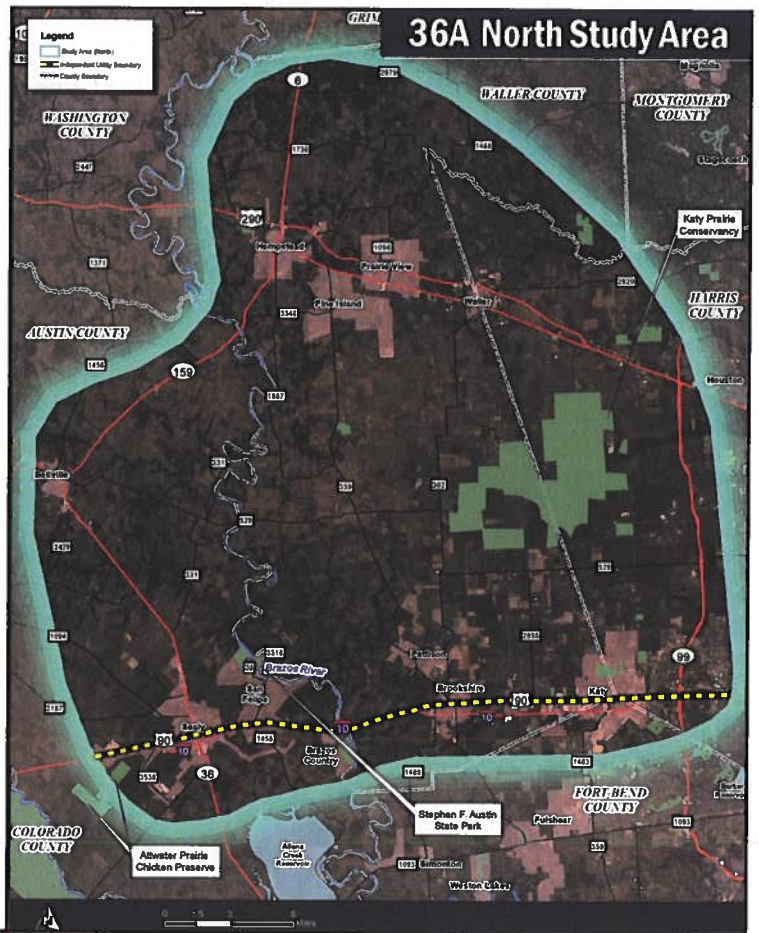
The I-10/US 90 corridor is proposed as logical termini between the southern and northern SIUs. The I-10/US 90 corridor meets FHWA's guidance on the development of logical termini (FHWA 1993). FHWA's guidance defines logical termini as: (1) rational end points for a transportation improvement, and (2) rational end points for a review of the environmental impacts. Additionally, I-10/US 90 is a major traffic generator.



## Northern SIU Considerations

The proposed northern SIU would extend from the I-10/US 90 corridor northward to US 290/SH 6 north of the city of Hempstead, for a total of approximately 32 miles. This area is less developed than the southern segment and has somewhat different characteristics. Within the northern segment there are manufacturing, warehousing and industrial distribution facilities, retail/commercial developments, Houston Executive Airport, and proposed master planned communities. Areas of natural concern include prairie lands that are protected and managed by the Katy Prairie Conservancy, prime and unique farmlands, Stephen F. Austin State Park, potential of a Brazos River crossing or floodplain impacts, the headwaters of Cypress Creek, and potential riparian impacts.

36A North Project Emails: [36ANorth@txdot.gov](mailto:36ANorth@txdot.gov)



## Southern SIU Considerations

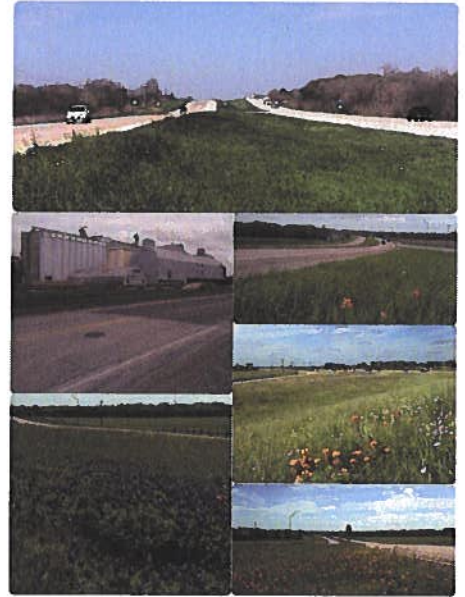
The proposed southern SIU would extend from SH 36 south of Needville (southwest of Rosenberg) northward to the I-10/US 90 corridor, for a total of approximately 33 miles. Although the original limits of the study began at I-69/US 59, coordination with county officials and H-GAC led to the conclusion that an extension of the southern terminus to south of Needville would better accommodate the growing traffic demands and safety needs of the area. The southern segment has experienced a high growth rate, and the project has strong support from elected/public officials. SH 36 south of Needville is currently being improved by TxDOT to provide improved emergency evacuation, enhance access to southern Brazoria County and improve freight mobility with Port Freeport. Within the southern segment there are rail intermodal yards, manufacturing, warehousing and industrial distribution facilities, retail/commercial developments and large master planned communities. Areas of natural concern include prime and unique farmlands, the Attwater Chicken Preserve, the proposed Allens Creek Reservoir, the potential of a Brazos River crossing, or floodplain impacts and potential riparian impacts.

36A South Project Emails: [36ASouth@txdot.gov](mailto:36ASouth@txdot.gov)

# GET INVOLVED

TxDOT will continue to host stakeholder outreach to gather feedback for the 36A Project and/or specific SIUs. We would like to extend to you or a representative of your office an opportunity to provide input and attend virtual or in-person pre-scoping meetings regarding the 36A Project.

"TxDOT commits to purposefully involve the public in planning and project implementation by providing for early, continuous, transparent and effective access to information and decision-making processes. TxDOT will regularly update public involvement methods to include best practices in public involvement and incorporate a range of strategies to encourage broad participation reflective of the needs of the state's population." As adopted by the Texas Transportation Commission on Jan. 27, 2011.



## Houston District Leadership

**Eliza C. Paul, P.E.**  
District Engineer

**James Koch, P.E.**  
Director of Transportation  
Planning and Development

**Sue Theiss**  
Director of Advanced Project  
Development

## Project Contacts

**Project Manager Contact**  
**Carrington Wright, P.G.**  
Project Manager  
TxDOT Houston District  
(713) 802-5408

**Media Contact**  
**Public Information Officer**  
TxDOT Houston District  
HOU-PIOWebMail@txdot.gov  
(713) 802-5076

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.