

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

IH-35E: FROM PRESIDENT GEORGE BUSH TURNPIKE TO FM 2181 LAKE LEWISVILLE DALLAS AND DENTON COUNTIES U. S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, FORT WORTH DISTRICT

Description of Action. The Federal Highways Administration (FHWA) and Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) are proposing to widen IH-35E from President George Bush Turnpike to FM 2181 in order to relieve traffic congestion in the IH-35E corridor. This expansion would cross U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Property at Lake Lewisville. TxDOT currently has an existing easement of 77.8 acres for the existing IH-35E. The proposed project would require USACE to grant an easement to TxDOT for an additional 20.7 acres of easement, for a new total of 98.6 acres of permanent right-of-way; therefore, the USACE Federal action is to grant TxDOT an additional 20.7 acre easement at Lewisville Lake in Denton County, Texas. FHWA and TxDOT, with USACE as a Cooperating Agency, has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) dated January 2011 for the proposed IH-35E expansion which discloses the impacts to the entire footprint of the proposed project from President George Bush Turnpike to FM 2181. USACE has adopted the January 2011 EA and has prepared this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the impacts to the environment as a result of executing a lease for an additional 20.7 acres of USACE property at Lake Lewisville.

Anticipated Environmental Effects. Alternatives considered include the build plan, which is the proposed action, and no action as described in the EA. The proposed action would grant TxDOT an easement to facilitate the utilization of Federal property as part of the IH-35E expansion project.

There will be no significant adverse impacts on the human and natural environment associated with proper implementation of the proposed action. No significant adverse impacts are anticipated for geology, soil, water, biological or cultural resources within the subject property. No adverse impact is expected to occur to plant or animal species that are proposed or listed as threatened or endangered according to the Endangered Species Act.

Recreational facilities in Copperas Branch Park that would be temporarily impacted include the gatehouse complex, 1000 linear feet of park roads, signage, parking, 2 baseball diamonds, 2 soccer goals, 6 precast picnic tables and grills, 1,728 linear feet of metal rail fencing, 100 barrier posts, 2 gates and landscaping. All of these facilities would be replaced as part of the proposed action. In addition, the beach complex would be restored and an additional parking area would be constructed under the Lewisville Lake Bridge to facilitate access to the 38 acre portion of Copperas Branch Park located on the east side of the bridge which is currently undeveloped. To ensure no net loss to recreation classified lands, basic amenities are proposed on the eastern portion of Copperas Branch Park including a new park road, a primary trail head to connect both

sides of the park, minimum sanitary facilities, parking access at sanitary facilities, a trailhead and a 1 mile 10-foot wide trail.

Approximately 32.2 acres of impacts to natural resources would occur as a result of the proposed action in and the proposed easement and as a result of the new recreation facilities in Copperas Branch Park. These impacts would be mitigated as a direct payment to the Lewisville Lake Environmental Learning Area (LLELA) or onsite at Copperas Branch Park to control non-native and/or invasive species. Temporary impacts to the mowed/maintained herbaceous vegetation would be mitigated by reestablishing following construction.

There would be no net loss of flood storage at Lewisville Lake and it is anticipated to result in an overall positive benefit to flood storage.

Facts and Conclusions. Based on my review of the information contained in this EA, I have concluded that the implementation of the proposed granting of an easement for the IH-35E expansion is not a major Federal action, which would significantly affect the quality of the human environment within the meaning of Section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended.

DATE 2 Feb 2011



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