Five-Year Study Finds 4-Lane US 190 Feasible

The final report on the US 190/I-10 Feasibility Study that has been underway since 2007 and its results set the stage for highway upgrade projects along the route of the Gulf Coast Strategic Highway.

The study was done for the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and involved extensive public input across 26 counties.

The study was conducted by a consultant team headed by CDM Smith and Atkins. The study presents an analysis of existing highway conditions, traffic demand projects and transportation improvement strategies for the 900 mile route from El Paso to the Texas-Louisiana boundary at the Sabine River.

The study finds upgrading US 190 to four-lane divided standard is “highly feasible” between Killeen, home of Fort Hood in Central Texas, and Livingston on US 59 in East Texas. The cost-benefit ratio for completing this entire 210-mile section of $4 in value for $1.50 in cost.

The report finds that when the US 190 route is combined with the multi-state I-14/Gulf Coast Strategic Highway the route becomes “very feasible” for extending the four-lane divided upgrades from Livingston all the way to the Louisiana border.

The report also finds strong public support for the four-lane divided upgrade on the entire route and strong support for upgrade to freeway standard on some portions of the route. Freeway lanes already exist on US 190 in Coryell, Bell and Brazos Counties.

The study results will be used by TxDOT in prioritizing potential upgrade projects along the US 190/I-10 Corridor as funds are identified to develop and construct them. The study recommends individual projects and divides them into three future categories: [1] Near-Term, [2] Mid-Term and [3] Long-Term.

Recommended projects range from a $3 million passing lane south of Temple to major relief routes in more densely developed areas.

The study provides sufficient technical information and comparisons of the impacts and feasibility of various improvements that could be considered to address existing and future transportation needs. It will be used by TxDOT District offices as a planning document going forward. The final 140-page report can be reviewed or downloaded at: http://www.txdot.gov/project_information/projects/us_190/final_report.htm
US 190/Gulf Coast Coalition Comments on Rural Plan

In comments filed for the GCSH Coalition on the Texas Rural Transportation Plan, Judge John Thompson said, “I would call to your attention the fact that the US 190 route travels through what is primarily rural Texas from where it exits I-10 in West Texas to where it crosses the Texas/Louisiana border.” Further, he pointed out that “linkages to strategic ports at Corpus Christi and Beaumont pass through long stretches outside urban areas.” The Judge also pointed out that the east-west US 190 route was included in the priority corridor section of the Statewide Long Range Transportation Plan (SLRTP) 2035 adopted by the Commission in November 2010.

James L. Randall, P.E., Director of Transportation Planning and Programming, responded and thanked Judge Thompson for his letter on “the importance of the US 190 corridor” and further that TxDOT “is committed to improving the planning process by which needs are identified and projects are selected with the limited funding available.”

Coalition Partners With Transportation Advocates

Transportation Advocates of Texas (TAoT) is a non-profit group made up of local governments, mobility coalitions, economic development organizations, regional alliances, state associations and employers dedicated to helping find solutions to the mobility challenges facing Texas. TAoT is committed to providing leadership in development of robust, predictable and sustainable transportation financing solutions to fund new highway construction.

Now that US 190 Gulf Coast Strategic Highway Coalition has moved from a feasibility study to advocating the development of individual projects for construction, we have become a member of TAoT.

Gary Bushell, our consultant, is Chairman of the TAoT Communications Committee and serves on their Legislative Committee. Gary will be working with them as they seek additional funding for transportation project development and construction.

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