

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) is proposing to upgrade US Highway (US) 77 to a controlled access facility that meets interstate standards. The project area extends from the interchange of US 77 and Interstate Highway (IH) 37 in Corpus Christi to the interchange of US 77 and US 83 in Harlingen, with proposed improvements between Robstown and Combes.

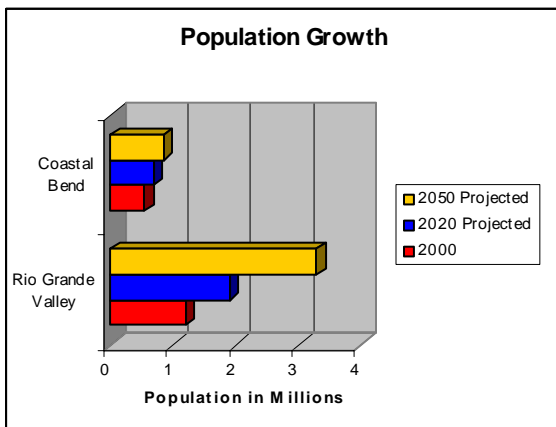
Parts of the project area, such as from IH 37 to State Highway (SH) 44 near Robstown and from Harlingen to Combes, have recently been improved to interstate standards and are therefore not included in the proposed construction area of this project. The proposed construction area is approximately 109.5 miles long.

Among the alternatives being considered are alternate routes (relief routes) for the areas of Driscoll and Riviera that would avoid potential community impacts, including residential and commercial displacements. These possible relief routes would likely be tolled and require additional right of way. A limited amount of right of way may be required in certain other areas.

TRAFFIC & POPULATION GROWTH

Traffic within the project area is expected to grow by approximately 75% between 2004 and 2024. Population growth, as shown in the graph below, is one of the factors associated with this projected traffic growth.

Another factor affecting projected traffic growth is trade. Truck traffic already represents 20% to 25% of the traffic on US 77 within the proposed project area. The Ports of Brownsville and Corpus Christi have announced plans to increase their capacity, and planned highway improvements in Mexico are likely to result in increased truck traffic on US 77. As traffic increases, the need to separate high-speed, through traffic from crossing traffic becomes increasingly important to ensure traffic flow and safety.



PURPOSE

The purpose of the proposed project is to improve mobility and safety for traffic traveling on US 77 and for communities along this highway.

Local traffic currently must cross or enter the highway without the benefit of overpasses, traffic signals or entrance ramps. High-speed traffic turning from US 77 on to cross streets must slow down and turn without the benefit of exit ramps. The lack of overpasses at intersections and frontage roads with entrance and exit ramps slows traffic flow on US 77 and increases the risk of serious accidents.

The proposed upgrade would improve safety by separating through and cross traffic at major intersections, cross streets, driveways and gates. Mobility would be improved by allowing through traffic to proceed without having to reduce its speed to accommodate cars entering or exiting the highway. The construction of entrance and exit ramps would allow a smoother transition for traffic entering or exiting the highway.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Please submit your comments by March 24, 2008, to US 77 Highway Upgrade, P.O. Box 3706, Corpus Christi, TX, 78463-3706. For more information about the project, please call 1-800-490-9933 or 361-884-2626.

Project information is available at:
www.corpuschristi-mpo.org
<http://planning.cob.us/mpo/index.asp>
www.myharlingen.us/new_mpo.htm

Environmental Process Timeframe

- Round #1 - Public Meetings..... March 2008
- Round #2 - Public Meetings (Alternatives)..... Summer 2008
- Draft Environmental Assessment Complete..... Spring 2009
- Round #3 - Public Hearings (Recommended Alternative)..... Late Spring 2009
- Possible Environmental Approval..... Fall 2009