



**For Immediate Release**

**January 3, 2014**

## **"RED ALTERNATIVE" IDENTIFIED FOR NEW HARBOR BRIDGE ROUTE**

*Final decision will be made after additional public review, comment*

CORPUS CHRISTI – The “Red Alternative” is the preferred alternative route for the Harbor Bridge replacement project here, according to a preliminary assessment released today by the Texas Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration.

The “Red Alternative” is identified in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIS), which examines economic, environmental and social effects of the proposed project and was developed following extensive public comment and participation. The Draft EIS considered four potential routes and a “no-build” option. A final route decision will be made following additional public review and comment.

“We are excited that this historic project has reached another milestone and continues to move ahead. We look forward to the public hearing on the recommended route scheduled for Feb. 18 and we appreciate the hard work and support of the public, elected officials and key stakeholders,” said Lonnie Gregorcyk, P.E., district engineer for TxDOT’s Corpus Christi District.

Under the Red Alternative, the new bridge would be about 1,000 feet west of the existing bridge. In addition to replacing the existing span, the project would reconstruct portions of US 181, I-37 and SH 286 (Crosstown Expressway), including a new interchange at I-37 and SH 286 with four direct connector ramps.

Entities officially endorsing the Red Alternative include the city of Corpus Christi, Port of Corpus Christi Authority, Nueces County and Corpus Christi Metropolitan Planning Organization. The purpose of the project is the continued, long-term operation of a US 181 crossing over the Corpus Christi Ship Channel and improved safety for the traveling public, including during hurricane evacuations.

Following a public hearing Feb. 18 at the Ortiz Center and public comment, which closes March 3, TxDOT and the Federal Highway Administration will determine whether the Red Alternative should be selected. A final decision is expected in late 2014 followed by permitting, right of way acquisition and preparation of a construction plan. The project is expected to take about four years with an estimated completion date of 2020.

Construction costs for the project range from \$558 million to \$679 million (in 2013 dollars), according to the Draft EIS. TxDOT has set aside \$633 million for the project and local sources have dedicated

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another \$100 million. The new bridge would have three 12-foot travel lanes in each direction, a median barrier, 12-foot inside and 10-foot outside shoulders and a 10-foot bicycle / pedestrian path.

The Draft EIS is available online at the Harbor Bridge project website: <http://www.ccharborbridgeproject.com> and is available for review in hard copy at these locations in Corpus Christi: La Retama Central Library, Oveal Williams Senior Center, TxDOT Corpus Christi District Office and Solomon Ortiz Center.

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