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Louis C. Cusimano,

Assistant Executive Director for General Aviation Operations, Aviation Rulemaking Advisory Committee.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Highway Administration

Environmental Impact Statement: Smith County, TX

AGENCY: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of intent.

SUMMARY: The FHWA is issuing this notice to advise the public that an environmental impact statement (EIS) will be prepared for a proposed new location highway project in Smith County, Texas.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: John Mack, P.E., Acting District Engineer, Federal Highway Administration, Room 826, Federal Office Building, 300 East 8th Street, Austin, Texas 78701. Randy Hopman, P.E., Director of Transportation Planning and Development, Texas Department of Transportation, PO Box 2031, Tyler, Texas 75710.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The FHWA, in cooperation with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) on a proposal to construct the western section of Loop 49, an approximately 40 mile circumferential controlled access highway around the urbanized area of Tyler in Smith County, Texas. The western section of the proposed Loop 49 extends from State Highway 155 northward to Interstate Highway 20 in western Smith County. The length of the project varies, depending on the selected alternative, averaging approximately 28.3 kilometers (17 miles). The proposed action is intended to provide access and increased mobility to the western Tyler/Smith County area and the Northeast Texas region; and to provide a safer, more convenient route for traffic traveling through the Tyler area.

Alternatives to the proposed action to be discussed in the EIS consist of (1) taking no action; and (2) improving existing roadways in the urbanized areas of Smith County. The build alternatives include five alternative alignments along new location rights-of-

way connecting State Highway 155 to Interstate Highway 20.

Impacts caused by the construction and operation of Loop 49 will vary according to the alternative alignments utilized. Generally, impacts would include the following: Transportation impacts (construction detours, construction traffic, and mobility improvement), air and noise impacts from construction equipment and operation of the roadway, water impacts from construction area and roadway storm water runoff, impacts to waters of the United States including wetlands from right-of-way encroachment, wildlife habitat impacts, and impacts to residents and businesses including potential relocations.

Letters describing the proposed action and soliciting comments have been sent to appropriate Federal, State and local agencies, and to private organizations and citizens who have previously expressed interest in the proposal. A Major Investment Study has been completed in compliance with the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act. In addition, several meetings have been held by the Loop 49 Steering Committee, composed of representatives of local governments, agencies, and interested organizations and citizens. A public meeting was held on August 28, 1997, at the Harvey Convention Center in Tyler, Texas, at which public comments on the proposed action and alternatives were requested. In addition, a public hearing will be held after publication of the Draft EIS. Public notice will be given of the time and place of the hearing. The Draft EIS will be available for public and agency review and comment prior to the public hearing.

To ensure that the full range of issues related to this proposed action are addressed and all significant issues identified, comments and suggestions are invited from all interested parties. Comments or questions concerning this proposed action and the EIS should be directed to the FHWA or TxDOT at the addresses provided above.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program Number 20.205, Highway Research Planning and Construction. The regulations implementing Executive Order 12373 regarding intergovernmental consultation on Federal programs and activities apply to this program)

Issued on: October 21, 1997.

John Mack,

Acting District Engineer, Austin, Texas.

[FR Doc. 97-28865 Filed 10-30-97; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Highway Administration

Environmental Impact Statement: Travis and Williamson Counties, TX

AGENCY: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of intent.

SUMMARY: The FHWA is issuing this notice to advise the public that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be prepared for a proposed highway project in Travis and Williamson Counties, Texas.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. John Mack, P.E., Federal Highway Administration, 826 Federal Office Building, 300 E. 8th Street, Austin, Texas 78701, and Ms. Dianna Noble, P.E., Director, Environmental Affairs Division, Texas Department of Transportation, 125 E. 11th St., Austin, Texas 78701.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The FHWA, in cooperation with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), is considering an upgrade to the existing road network in Travis and Williamson Counties. Under this proposed action State Highway 45 (SH 45) would be constructed within a corridor beginning FM 685 north of Pflugerville, Texas, and running west to a terminus with U.S. Highway 183, a distance of approximately 14 miles. Improvements to be considered in this project include constructing a roadway on new or existing locations, and/or improving alternative transportation modes in the community. The proposed SH 45 would extend west from FM 685 along a new location right-of-way to Louis Henna Boulevard. The proposed roadway would follow Louis Henna Boulevard to its interchange with IH 35, briefly follow FM 1325 west from its intersection with IH 35, and then utilize new right-of-way location to connect with RM 620 west of Round Rock, Texas. The SH 45 roadway would follow RM 620 to its western terminus at U.S. Highway 183. Ultimate facility design is anticipated to be a six-lane roadway with frontage roads and overpasses at major thoroughfares and direct connection ramps at IH 35, Loop 1 and SH 130.

An EIS will be prepared for this project pursuant to 23 CFR part 771 and 40 CFR parts 1500 through 1508. The corridor being considered for SH 45 closely parallels a needed transportation corridor identified by the Austin Transportation Study. Two preliminary Draft EIS's were prepared in 1990 as part of the SH 45 planning process.