

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

STATE HIGHWAY 242 AT INTERSTATE HIGHWAY 45 TOLLED DIRECT CONNECTORS PROJECT PUBLIC HEARING

On August 18, 2011 the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) held a public hearing to receive comment on the State Highway 242 at Interstate Highway 45 Tolled Direct Connectors Project. TxDOT reviewed three options for the Direct Connectors and the preferred alternative, along with findings of the Environmental Assessment (EA) that was required as a part of the project. No environmental impacts, including noise increases, were identified in the EA that would require remediation in order to build the Direct Connectors.

Three individuals offered oral comments at the hearing. Representatives of Sen. Tommy Williams and Montgomery county Precinct 3 Commissioner Ed Chance spoke in support of the project. Mr. Bob Bagley expressed concern regarding the ability of ambulances to access St. Luke's Hospital with the selected Direct Connector alignment.

TxDOT was not allowed to comment during the hearing, but did address concerns after the hearing closed.

The three proposed Direct Connectors will be tolled via electronic overhead gantry as used on the Hardy Toll road. The toll amount has not been set, but will vary depending on traffic demand. Tolls ranging from 50 cents to \$1.50 would be similar to those found for similar traffic situations in the Houston metro area.

The estimated construction cost is \$49.2 million for the IH 45 Northbound to SN 242 Westbound, and SH 242 Eastbound to IH 45 Southbound connectors. The two connectors have been funded. Estimated contract let is fall/winter 2011.

Funding is not available for the IH 45 Northbound to SH 242 Eastbound connector at this time. It is estimated that the construction cost for this connector will be \$12.7 million.

The public has until September 1, 2011 to submit comments to TxDOT via email or U.S. mail. Written comments must be received or postmarked on or before September 1, 2011 to be included in the official public hearing record.

Comments for the public hearing record must be submitted to the attention of the Director of Project Development, Texas Department of Transportation, P.O. Box 1386, Houston, Texas 77251-1386 or e-mailed to – hou-piowebmail@txdot.gov