

## What is I-69/Trans-Texas Corridor (I-69/TTC) and why is it important?

The U.S. Congress designated I-69 as a high priority corridor through legislative acts in 1991 and 1998. In 2002, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) unveiled the Trans-Texas Corridor (TTC), an initiative to accommodate Texas' future transportation needs. The TTC, a 4,000 mile multi-modal transportation system, would provide car and truck lanes, freight and passenger rail lines, and space for future utility use to improve the international, interstate and intrastate movement of goods and people. As a component of the larger TTC vision, I-69/TTC would help address the state's anticipated transportation needs for the next 20 to 50 years while sustaining and enhancing the economic vitality of Texas.

## What is the I-69/TTC Tier One Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)?

The DEIS is a draft report of the first environmental study phase, or Tier One, for I-69/TTC. It provides details on the project purpose and need, alternatives considered, affected environment, potential for environmental effects, and public input. Importantly, the DEIS is not the final environmental report on the I-69/TTC project and does not identify a final route for the project. Public comments received on the DEIS can have a major impact on the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) final decision.

The goal of the I-69/TTC Tier One study was to identify the corridors that provided the best balance in meeting the project "purpose and need" while minimizing the potential for environmental effects. The evaluation consisted of the following:

- Environmental evaluation - identifies which corridors provide the best opportunity to avoid or minimize the potential to affect environmental resources;
- Transportation planning evaluation - analyzes how well the corridors perform in meeting the "purpose and need" based on improved access and enhanced mobility in serving population centers, ports, and other freight/industry destinations;
- Engineering considerations - includes earthwork, bridges, pavement base, and other elements of construction; and
- Assessment of public and agency input.

For I-69/TTC, the study areas recommended in the DEIS for the second phase, or Tier Two, include existing transportation facilities (US 59, US 77, US 281, SH 44 and other transportation facilities identified for improvement) and a new corridor alternative (see figure on back). If approved by FHWA, these will serve as the new, narrowed study areas for future environmental studies for an I-69/TTC facility.

## What Happens Next?

- Fall 2007 – Circulate DEIS for public and agency review
- Winter 2007/2008 – Hold public hearings to obtain public and agency comments
- Summer 2008 – Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) is prepared which addresses these comments and is circulated for public review prior to federal approval
- Winter 2008 – Anticipated federal approval (Record of Decision, or ROD)

The Tier One FEIS is an official document that must be approved by FHWA but does not authorize property acquisition or construction. If the Tier One Recommended Study Areas are federally approved, these study areas would become the new study areas for a second phase (Tier Two) of environmental studies for an I-69/TTC facility (roadway, rail).

# I-69/TTC Recommended Tier Two Study Areas

