

FM1960 Utility Relocations Update

TxDOT is completing construction on the widening of FM1960 between Twigsworth Lane and the Lake Houston bridge, which includes areas within Harris County Municipal Utility District No. 132 (“the District”). As the project evolved, TxDOT’s acquisition of additional road right-of-way along FM1960 necessitated the District relocate some of its existing water and sanitary sewer lines out of the expanded right-of-way. This process required the District to engineer new lines and obtain new water and sanitary sewer line easements.

TxDOT’s contractor for the roadway widening project, Webber LLC (“Webber”), performed the relocation of the District’s utilities. Prior to commencement of construction, the District was required to escrow its estimated 15% share of the utility relocation construction costs. Webber commenced construction on the roadway widening and utility relocation work in 2021, and while the overall roadway project is expected to be finished this year, the utility relocation scope was completed in late 2021.

The utility relocation work involved relocation of approximately 6,000 linear feet of water line and approximately 1,700 linear feet of sanitary sewer force main. The majority of the water line being relocated involved an existing 16-inch diameter water line on the north side of FM1960, between Kings Park Way and West Lake Houston Parkway. The project also included water line relocations along FM1960 near the intersections of Dinero Drive, Pinehurst Trail Drive, Pine Echo Drive, and Atascocita Shores Drive. The relocated 18-inch diameter sanitary sewer force main is located on FM1960 between Farmington Road and Pinehurst Trail Drive.

The District was required to obtain 26 new easements (18 water line easements and 8 sanitary sewer easements) from 19 different property owners at a total cost of \$1,141,795. The District was able to negotiate the purchase of the easements with all but two of the property owners. Special Commissioners’ Hearings were held to determine the easement costs for the remaining two properties. One property also required mediation. The District also expended \$1,199,176 for engineering, legal expenses and utility operation costs and escrowed \$511,595 with TxDOT for the District’s share of construction costs.

The District had entered into an agreement with TxDOT under which 100% of the easement costs and 85% of all other District costs would be reimbursed by TxDOT. TxDOT reimbursed the District \$961,876 in March 2022 and \$1,079,621 in May 2024. As of July 2024, TxDOT is still holding \$119,958 in retainage. The District expects to be reimbursed for the retainage and any remaining construction escrow deposit after a TxDOT internal final audit.

The District funded its obligations for this utility relocation project from sales tax revenue generated by the Strategic Partnership Agreement with the City of Houston signed in 2005 to prevent annexation. There was no increase in the District’s ad valorem property tax rate needed to meet the District’s financial obligations for the project.

July 15, 2024