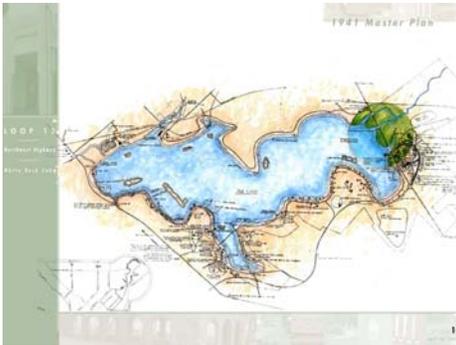


## NORTHWEST HIGHWAY AT WHITE ROCK LAKE PARK



Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT)

2002 - Present

Project Type: Urban Freeway; Rehabilitate, Reconstruct

### PURPOSE

Northwest Highway (Loop 12) at White Rock Lake Park is part of the national highway system and carries over 50,000 cars daily around central Dallas. Post World War II suburban development at the upstream portion of the White Rock Creek watershed had accelerated and worsened seasonal flooding within TxDOT's right-of-way over existing bridges and roadway. The three-quarter-mile project, bounded on both sides by White Rock Lake Park, involved replacing six low-water-crossing bridges and elevating the reconstructed roadway above the 100 year flood elevation set by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and confirmed by a City of Dallas hydrologic study. Three of the bridges were built in 1931, the others in 1961, and all in major disrepair. The increased flooding of the bridges and connecting roadway caused public safety threats to the motorists, pedestrians, and recreational users who travel and cross Loop 12.

### DESCRIPTION

TxDOT contracted HNTB to conduct an Environmental Assessment of the project with a heavy emphasis on urban design since the corridor bisects a highly valued and heavily used city park. The study became the turning point of the project. Special interest groups, the City of Dallas, highway engineers, and mainly the nearby residents embraced the study's findings. They saw that the new bridges and highway could be designed as a part of the park, not a concrete flume of cars. The study examined the effects of bringing the lake back to its original footprint and adding fountains, quiet pools, stone obelisks, and sculpture parks.

### PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- TxDOT requested assistance from the two Dallas City Council Members whose districts flanked the bridge project for recommendations on who might be the most appropriate individuals to represent the northern, eastern, and western portions of the White Rock Lake neighborhoods. From these recommendations, invitations were sent to these individuals requesting their assistance in meeting with TxDOT and HNTB to guide and review design proposals.



**CONTEXT SENSITIVE SOLUTIONS APPROACH**

- This newly formed White Rock Neighborhood Advisory Group met monthly with the design team to discuss the project, environmental, and neighborhood concerns, as well as the views of Dallas Parks & Recreation and Public Works representatives. In attendance were senior representatives from City of Dallas, Friends of the Lake, Dallas Council Members, and Park Board members.
- Through a series of four neighborhood public meetings, the project overview and designs were presented, discussed, and commented on by the various neighborhoods in the region.
- A public meeting for review and approval was held prior submitting to the Environmental Assessment to the regional FHWA Office.

HNTB's environmental, public involvement, and urban design staff worked closely with TxDOT's engineering team, a technical advisory group, and concerned neighborhood groups to develop solutions that would visually enhance the adjoining park, provide bridges, introduce park trails, and design significant entry markers for White Rock Lake Park at either sides of the project.

Involved Agencies: TxDOT, City of Dallas Parks & Recreation (staff and Board), City of Dallas Public Works, FHWA, TX Dept of Fish & Wildlife; The Friends of the Lake

**OUTCOME**

After studying many alternatives, the project team has selected a style for the roadway corridor that is compatible with the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and Work Progress Administration (WPA) structures within White Rock Lake Park. The final project, currently slated for construction in 2006, meets TxDOT's goals of safety and environmental stewardship within a community protected park.

**CHALLENGES**

The new bridges that would replace the old ones would significantly change the existing relationship of a prewar, level, open, green parkway that the local community had become accustomed to seeing and experiencing.

**FUNDING**

Funding is coming from TxDOT, Federal TEA 21, and Dallas bond funds.

**LESSONS LEARNED**

- Involve the public early and often.
- Identify neighborhood concerns and develop appropriate solutions.
- Look at opportunities to move multilane bridges apart at the median to allow daylight at ground level.
- Anticipate the use of trails below bridges.
- Reflect the character of the historic park structures in the design of the bridges.

**KEY WORDS** *Applicable Project Delivery Stages:* Administration, Planning, Design



*Applicable Transportation Professionals:* Highway Engineers, Structural Engineers, Landscape Architects, Wetland Biologists, Historians

*Applicable Transportation Modes:* Highway, Bicycle, Pedestrian, Waterway

*Transportation Topics:* Visual Quality, Environmental Justice, Safety, Mobility, Context Sensitive Solutions/Design, Transportation Enhancement, Mitigation

**WEB LINKS** <http://www.dot.state.tx.us/>

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