



INTERSTATE 30 – DOWNTOWN FORT WORTH

Interstate 30 opened through the southern end of downtown Fort Worth in 1958, eight years before 4(f) became law. It ran immediately above Lancaster Avenue, a major thoroughfare once part of one of America's early coast-to-coast auto routes. Looming over the now-dreary Lancaster Avenue, I-30 separated a string of significant historic buildings on its south side -- including the 1931 Texas and Pacific Passenger and Freight Terminals and the 1933 U.S. Post Office -- from the rest of downtown.

Section 4(f) became a key tool for residents who wanted something better. In the early 1980s, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) proposed widening this section of I-30 so that it extended to within 40 feet of the facades of the buildings along its south side. A local coalition known as I-CARE, together with the National Trust, sued the Federal Highway Administration and TxDOT, arguing that the agencies had failed to follow Section 4(f)'s requirement to protect historic places unless there was no "feasible or prudent alternative." The highway agencies argued that Section 4(f) did not apply because, despite the looming threat posed by the widening, the project would not "use" any historic properties. The U.S. Court of Appeals disagreed, and in 1985 it ordered the agencies to comply with Section 4(f) by seeking a less damaging alternative; they also had to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement. After an extensive public review process, which included working with Fort Worth officials and community members, TxDOT decided in 1986 to move I-30 south of the historic buildings along Lancaster – a prudent and feasible alternative that would avoid damaging the boulevard's historic structures.



When the old I-30 was torn down in 2002, Lancaster Avenue and the historic structures lining it were reunited with downtown Fort Worth. The Texas and Pacific Railroad Terminal's ground floor waiting room was beautifully restored and now serves as the western terminus of the Trinity Railway Express, a commuter rail line reaching to Dallas. Thanks to Section 4(f), the city of Fort Worth is now in the midst of creating a master plan to revitalize the Lancaster Avenue corridor, making into a dynamic, attractive, pedestrian-friendly gateway to downtown.