



Texas Freight Advisory Committee Meeting #48

8:30 a.m. to noon, September 1, 2026

In-Person Meeting

IBC Bank Annex

2418 Jacaman Road, Laredo, TX 78041

COMMITTEE ATTENDEES

- Gerry Schwebel – Chair, International Bank of Commerce (IBC), Attended
- Candice Armenoff, Port Houston, Attended
- Ken Becker, Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association (OOIDA), Absent
- Adriana Cruz, Office of the Texas Governor, Executive Director of Economic Development and Tourism, Absent
- John Esparza, Texas Trucking Association, Absent
- Raquel Espinoza, proxy for Clint Schelbitzki, Attended
- Joey Evans, TNW Corporation, Attended
- Laura Freeland, Southern Dallas County Inland Port Transportation Management Association, Attended
- Teclo Garcia, Mission Economic Development Corporation, Attended
- Lauren Garduño, Ports-to-Plains Alliance, Attended
- Nicholas Konen – Vice Chair, Hillwood, AllianceTexas, Attended
- Miriam Kotkowski, TECMA Transportation Services, Attended
- Charlie Leal, Texas Farm Bureau, Absent
- Robert MacDonald, Texas Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (TEMPO), Attended
- Ryan Martin, LDR Partners, Absent
- Tiffany Melvin, North American Strategy for Competitiveness, Attended
- Lindsay Mullins, BNSF Railway, Absent
- Dr. Rolando Ortiz, Killam Development, Ltd., Attended
- David A. Ramirez, proxy for Steven Schar, Attended

COMMITTEE ATTENDEES (continued)

- Steven Schar, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Absent
- Clint Schelbitzki, Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR), Absent
- Danny Schnautz, proxy for Ken Becker, Attended
- Sean Stibich, Port of Victoria, Absent
- Isaac J. Tawil, City Manager of McAllen/McAllen Economic Development Group, Absent
- Matt Woodruff, Kirby Corporation, Attended

Total Count of Committee Present (includes proxy members): 15

Texas Transportation Commission Attendees

- Commissioner W. Alvin New

Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) Attendees

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| • Robin Ayers | • Rose Guajardo |
| • Loretta Brown | • Humberto "Tito" Gonzalez, Jr. |
| • Andrew A. Canon | • Tyler Graham |
| • Leah Casey | • Raul Leal |
| • Emily Clisby | • Angel Martinez |
| • Chad Coburn | • David Mass |
| • Farideh Dassi | • Humberto Padilla |
| • Kale Driemeier | • Edgar Perez |
| • Lorena Echeverria de Misi | • Jonathan Ramirez |
| • Yvette Flores | • Sergio Vasquez |
| • Denisse Garcia | • Luis Villarreal |
| • Sara Garza | |

Agency/Consultant Team Attendees

- Paula Dowell, HNTB Corporation
- Eva Esquivel, HNTB Corporation
- Max Hoffman, HNTB Corporation
- Jeremy Upchurch, HNTB Corporation
- Cynthia Coss, PCI
- Robert Elizondo, PCI
- Joseph Bryan, WSP
- Paulina Lopez, WSP
- Pegah Tootoonchian, WSP

Other Attendees

- Genevieve Bales, Federal Highway Administration
- Elias Caro, City of Laredo
- Karyme Castillo Castro, Texas A&M Transportation Institute
- Gaston Cedillo, Texas A&M International University
- Jessica Contreras, The Office of Senator Judith Zaffirini
- Daniel Covarrubias, Texas A&M International University
- Olga De Angel, City of Laredo Bridge Department
- Maria De La Luz Hernandez, Port Laredo
- Bill Eisele, Texas A&M Transportation Institute
- Gilysa Garcia, ICF
- Carlos Garza, Texas A&M Transportation Institute
- Jerry Garza, Webb County
- Peter LeCody, Texas Rail Advocates
- Nativido Lozano, IBC Bank
- Martin Lucero, Lubbock MPO
- Stephanie Mendiola, Economic Development Corporation
- Juan Mendive, Laredo Webb County Area Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Glaforo Montemayor, GEMCO
- Melisa Montemayor, LJA
- Candace Rodriguez, Mission Economic Development Corporation
- Jorge Rodriguez, GFT
- Roberto Rodriguez, Entech Civil Engineers
- Don Rodman, Alliance for I-69 Texas
- Felipe Romero, Port Laredo
- Robert Ryan, ICF
- David Salgado, Texas A&M Transportation Institute
- Carlos Silva, Texas A&M Transportation Institute
- John Villarreal, IBC Bank
- Jeff Warner, Texas A&M Transportation Institute

Texas Freight Advisory Committee (TxFAC) Welcome, Call to Order, Safety Minute, and New Business

Chair Gerry Schwebel of IBC Bank formally called the meeting to order. TxDOT Freight Systems Branch Manager Tyler Graham opened the meeting by thanking the members for attending the Texas Freight Advisory Committee (TxFAC) meeting in Laredo. Mr. Graham introduced the TxDOT safety minute, which focused on avoiding road debris accidents. He emphasized the importance of making the least-risk decision and reporting roadway hazards. Mr. Graham highlighted the Drive Like a Texan initiative, which encourages drivers to be kind, courteous, and safe on roadways to protect other passengers and pedestrians.

Chair Schwebel provided opening remarks and welcomed the attendees to his hometown and the IBC Bank Annex in Laredo, Texas. He noted the Texas Freight Mobility Plan (TFMP) is in its final stages and highlighted the ongoing stakeholder workshops. Chair Schwebel stated that he looked forward to the conversation ahead and then introduced Texas Transportation Commissioner Alvin New, thanking him for his commitment to TxFAC.

Commissioner New thanked everyone for their attendance and participation. He discussed the committee's responsibility to manage the transportation needs of rural Texas, noting the continued evolution of freight demands in those areas. Commissioner New stated that the committee's advocacy efforts helped increase funding to the Laredo District, noting that international trade is a big part of the Texas economy. He encouraged the committee to think big when it comes to multimodal freight transportation in Texas.

TxDOT Director of Transportation Planning and Programming Humberto "Tito" Gonzalez, Jr., P.E., greeted the attendees and discussed the importance of freight movement across the state and the nation. Mr. Gonzalez described freight as the lifeline of the Texas economy and noted the innovative work being done to keep goods moving safely and efficiently. He highlighted efforts such as TxFAC and the TFMP that bring stakeholders together to identify policies, programs, and projects that provide new ways to move freight across the state.

Commissioner New stated that Texas has significant opportunities for future development. He discussed the importance of providing routes that allow freight to move west (for example, to Los Angeles) without traveling through major Texas cities to improve efficiency. He stated that the committee's planning efforts are vital to addressing growth in Texas.

TxFAC Welcome, Call to Order, Safety, and New Business (continued)

Chair Schwebel then acknowledged Webb County Judge-Elect Jerry Garza and recognized his background in public service.

Update on Federal Funding

Robin Ayers, with the Government Affairs Division at TxDOT, provided an update on the current federal funding for the state of Texas. Ms. Ayers explained that transportation funding is formula-based and authorized through federal legislation. She noted that the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) expires on Sept. 30, 2026, and that the Senate passed a short-term extension through Dec. 11, 2026. Ms. Ayers added that Congress is simultaneously considering the BUILD America 250 Act, a five-year surface transportation authorization proposal totaling about \$580 billion.

Ms. Ayers stated that the bipartisan BUILD America 250 Act was praised by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials. She explained that the bill focuses on public works and highways and noted that the midterm elections will dictate the result of the House package. She then added that the administration provided input on the legislation's principles and generally supports the House proposal. Ms. Ayers stated that TxDOT is not expecting a shutdown but is prepared and actively monitoring the situation. Ms. Ayers also noted that TxDOT has short-term borrowing authority.

Ms. Ayers discussed the advance appropriations included in the IIJA for procurement. She explained that the previous formula looked at the percentage of poor bridges in comparison to the total number of bridges. Because TxDOT maintained a small percentage of poor bridges, Texas did not receive much funding. Ms. Ayers stated that TxDOT successfully advocated for a change to the funding formula. The formula now combines a state's total bridge deck area with its total bridge deck area in poor condition. Ms. Ayers added that the National Highway Freight Program also added eligibility for high-priority corridors.

Update on Federal Funding (continued)

Chair Schwebel discussed the Highway Trust Fund and noted that Texas is one of the main donor states. Texas contributes more funding than it receives to support federal transportation throughout the country. He encouraged the committee to convey to congressional policymakers the importance of maintaining funding mechanisms and educating legislators. Chair Schwebel also highlighted the recent meetings between Laredo groups and congressional leaders such as U.S. Speaker of the House Mike Johnson and U.S. Representative Steve Scalise.

Danny Schnautz, Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association, asked for additional information about the extension timeline. Ms. Ayers explained that TxDOT is informed of the amount it will receive and the amount it can obligate. However, TxDOT does not know how much funding it will have for 2027 and will have to take a piecemeal approach as the extensions continue. Mr. Gonzalez added that the previous Unified Transportation Program (UTP) exceeded \$100 billion in funding. He stated that TxDOT factored in a 4% decrease this year, reducing the funding to about \$95 billion.

Mr. Gonzalez discussed current construction costs and noted that TxDOT is seeing increased bid competition for transportation projects. He highlighted TxDOT's efforts to have a strong portfolio of projects that are ready to move forward and stated that some projects are being delivered earlier than expected. Mr. Gonzalez noted that TxDOT continues to monitor the National Highway Construction Cost Index. Mr. Gonzalez then discussed how inflation changes transportation funding. He explained construction purchasing power in 2017, citing the dollar in the UTP was valued at \$1, while that same dollar's value in 2026 is 55 cents. He added that inflation continues to negatively affect TxDOT's ability to advance highway projects to construction.

Joey Evans, TNW Corporation, discussed the Surface Transportation Bill and noted that the bill has significant funding for short-line railroads. He stated this investment has accelerated projects and driven economic growth. Mr. Evans then stated that railroads received \$35 million in awards, generating \$200 million in growth in rural Texas. Ms. Ayers responded that rail, transit, and highways compete for funding. She stated that TxDOT does not prefer the discretionary grant funding because it is political in nature and limits flexibility. Ms. Ayers added that TxDOT would rather have formula funding, so the department decides how to allocate it.

Update on Federal Funding (continued)

Vice Chair Nicholas Konen, Hillwood, AllianceTexas, asked for additional information regarding the Highway Trust Fund. Ms. Ayers stated that the Ways and Means Committee members do not always discuss transportation and transportation funding receives limited attention. She added that support for transportation funding is not limited to a single party affiliation.

I-35 Corridor Study: A Path to 2050

TxDOT Portfolio Planning Engineer Lorena Echeverria de Misi expressed gratitude for being able to present an I-35 Texas Corridor Study update to the committee. Ms. Echeverria de Misi highlighted the international significance of I-35, describing it as a vital north-south trade artery that provides connectivity to the Laredo and Eagle Pass ports of entry. She stated that I-35 is an economic engine that supports 50% of Texas' gross regional product (GRP), supports more than 7.6 million jobs and serves as the primary logistics backbone for supplying key industries such as retail, manufacturing, healthcare, and technology across the U.S.

Ms. Echeverria de Misi explained that the purpose of the I-35 Texas Corridor Study is to develop prioritized multimodal improvements and corridor-wide strategies to address transportation needs, enhance intermodal coordination and integrate innovative technologies across urban, rural and border areas of the I-35 Texas Corridor over the next 25 years.

Ms. Echeverria de Misi stated that the I-35 corridor supports key economic sectors, including the supply chain network, freight-intensive industries and national security. She noted that cross-border trade value between Texas and Mexico has increased by 85% to \$306 billion and is expected to continue to rise. Ms. Echeverria de Misi also highlighted the Bi-National Automotive Manufacturing Cluster, which includes over 50 auto manufacturers and suppliers located along I-35.

I-35 Corridor Study: A Path to 2050 (continued)

Ms. Echeverria de Misi discussed the role of the I-35 corridor in supporting Texas' growing population. She stated that 50% of Texans live within the study area and noted an expected population growth of 38% by 2050. She also highlighted the I-35 corridor's capacity to support the expected 116% growth in GRP from \$1.3 trillion in 2023 to \$2.8 trillion in 2050. Next, Ms. Echeverria de Misi discussed projected employment growth along the corridor and stated that employment is expected to increase by 89% from 2023 to 2050. She noted that Travis County is projected to rise among the top counties of employment along the I-35 corridor. Ms. Echeverria de Misi stated that international trade along the I-35 corridor currently totals \$188 billion and is projected to reach \$480 billion in 2050, representing an increase of 155%.

Ms. Echeverria de Misi discussed truck freight flow and commercial motor vehicle (CMV) crashes along the I-35 corridor. She stated that 67% of CMV crashes occurred in the Dallas, Waco and San Antonio areas. She highlighted North of Loop 1604 in Selma, SH 45 to Georgetown and Waco as the top three segments with the most intense freight flow in 2025. Ms. Echeverria de Misi then explained that while I-35 experienced lower urban crash rates than the statewide average, rural crash rates were higher. She noted that 0.7% of all crashes between 2021 and 2025 were fatal, stating that Dallas and Austin have the highest fatal crash density.

Ms. Echeverria de Misi discussed truck parking needs along I-35. Currently 5,700 parking spaces are available. She stated that 94% of truck parking spaces are privately owned and 74% of the truck parking facilities are over capacity. She emphasized that increasing truck parking capacity is integral to the I-35 corridor study. Ms. Echeverria de Misi also reviewed technology and innovation along the I-35 corridor, stating that the key challenges include high truck volumes, congestion in urban areas, construction and traffic incidents. She explained that the TxDOT Cooperative and Automated Transportation (CAT) Implementation Program and Framework provides guidance for integrating technology in the following six focus areas: connected and automated vehicles, freight, border technology, incident management, work zones, and traffic flow.

I-35 Corridor Study: A Path to 2050 (continued)

Ms. Echeverria de Misi highlighted the efforts of the I-35 Steering Committee and Working Group Chairs to lead a community-centered approach. The committee members are Denton County Judge Andy Eads, Tarrant County Judge Tim O'Hare, Williamson County Judge Steven Snell and Bexar County Judge Peter Sakai. She then reviewed the study approach and timeline, discussing the four rounds of stakeholder engagement and stating that the final study is expected to be completed by the spring of 2027.

Dr. Rolando Ortiz, Killam Development, Ltd., asked about the source that was used for the trade data. Ms. Echeverria de Misi cited Transearch.

Chair Schwebel emphasized the importance of educating and communicating the movement of freight through all modes to the elected officials who may not understand the presented data. Ms. Echeverria de Misi agreed and noted that the committee provides an international trade focus to the I-35 corridor through these efforts.

Dr. Ortiz stated that the committee's efforts have helped increase the importance of the border ports of entry and international trade, noting that funding to Laredo was lacking 10 years ago. Ms. Echeverria de Misi agreed and noted that international trade must remain at the forefront of the I-35 corridor study.

Miriam Kotkowski, TECMA Transportation Services, stated that U.S.-Mexico trade continues to grow and cited a 22% increase in cross-border trade activity. She stressed the need to address border technology and freight mobility challenges. Ms. Kotkowski highlighted the growing importance of short-line railroads and the last-mile connections they support in supply chains. She noted that wait times at the border can exceed five hours in regular lanes compared to two hours in the Free and Secure Trade (FAST) lanes. She stated that this delay limits the number of cross-border trips drivers can make in a day. Ms. Kotkowski also expressed concern regarding driver shortages and encouraged improvements in border technology. She then recommended that U.S. Customs and Border Protection increase staffing at the border and open additional lanes.

I-35 Corridor Study: A Path to 2050 (continued)

Vice Chair Nicholas Konen, Hillwood, AllianceTexas, asked how the study coordinates with districts along the corridor and whether alternative routes and farm-to-market (FM) roads are considered. Ms. Echeverria de Misi responded that TxDOT districts are key collaborators of the plan. She explained that the study is concept-driven, adding that stakeholder input and qualitative components of the study are important because it is a comprehensive evaluation. She stated that the districts provide engineering and the study team focuses on planning, adding that the study team does not evaluate specific designs.

TxDOT Director of Freight, International Trade and Connectivity Andrew Canon stated that the study team has reviewed the efforts related to the I-27 corridor and the U.S. 83 planning effort. Mr. Canon explained that the study evaluates alternative freight corridors that can help reduce the pressure on I-35. He then cited that investments in alternative corridors, such as Ports-to-Plains, help improve resiliency. Chair Schwebel shared his concern about regulations and requirements that affect mobility, citing the driver requirements and safety inspections as operational constraints. He emphasized the need for continuous advocacy to advise elected officials regarding the importance of international trade along the I-35 corridor.

Raquel Espinoza, Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR), stated that the study highlights the benefits of rail, adding that shifting more freight to rail can improve safety and reduce truck volume on Texas highways. Ms. Espinoza advocated for preserving rail capacity along major freight corridors in anticipation of future growth.

Chair Schwebel stated that FM roads will become more important as alternative routes help reduce congestion on the major freight corridors.

2027 Texas Freight Mobility Plan Update: Supply Chain Analysis and Texas Multimodal Freight Network Implications

TxDOT Senior Transportation Planner Farideh Dassi provided an overview of the 2027 Texas Freight Mobility Plan (TFMP). Ms. Dassi stated that the plan will help identify freight needs and improve mobility and economic growth in Texas.

2027 Texas Freight Mobility Plan Update: Supply Chain Analysis and Texas Multimodal Freight Network Implications (continued)

Ms. Dassi explained that TxDOT is focusing on freight volumes and the transportation system in the following eight sectors:

- Petroleum
- Food and Agriculture
- Transportation Equipment and Aerospace
- Electronics
- Warehousing and Distribution
- Construction
- Life Sciences and Biotechnology
- Military

Joseph Bryan, WSP, discussed freight supply chain patterns associated with the petroleum industry. Mr. Bryan stated that oil and gas production is concentrated in Midland, east of Eagle Pass, Houston and Corpus Christi, adding that the consumption patterns occur in the same locations. He explained that Canada and Mexico are the major trading partners for oil and gas, with a fair amount of domestic trade occurring with states including Pennsylvania and Louisiana. Mr. Bryan stated that the tonnage directional split of oil and gas is transported outbound from Texas through pipelines, while inbound movements occur to Texas through water.

Mr. Bryan explained that livestock is mostly a domestic operation with the production occurring in the Texas Panhandle, Abilene and Luling regions. He noted that consumption is processed near production areas. Mr. Bryan stated the trading patterns mostly occur within the United States and Texas. He added that trucking is the preferred method of movement outbound from Texas, inbound to Texas and within Texas.

Mr. Bryan stated that the production of vehicle manufacturing occurs in Arlington (General Motors), Austin (Tesla), San Antonio (Toyota), Houston and Laredo. He explained that consumption is concentrated within the Texas Triangle and along the I-35 corridor. Mr. Bryan stated that Mexico, California and Illinois are the biggest vehicle manufacturing trading partners. He noted that outbound and inbound freight movements occur by rail and truck, while movement within Texas occurs via truck.

2027 Texas Freight Mobility Plan Update: Supply Chain Analysis and Texas Multimodal Freight Network Implications (continued)

While discussing the electronics supply chain, Mr. Bryan noted that Transearch has limitations when reporting on the value of semiconductors but stated the overall movement patterns are accurate. He explained that production is rooted in Austin, Dallas and San Antonio, while consumption occurs in the Texas Triangle and border regions. Mr. Bryan stated that Mexico is the most notable trading partner for semiconductors, citing this as a global business and vital component for electronics. Because semiconductors are sensitive, high-value products, the preferred method of movement for outbound activity from Texas and inbound to Texas is air.

Mr. Bryan stated that general warehousing and cold chain production is concentrated in Laredo and Dallas. He noted that the most general and cold chain consumption occurs in the Texas Triangle. Mr. Bryan explained that the most active trading partners are within the state, with food coming from California. He stated that trucking is the preferred method of movement for the general and cold chain production outbound from Texas and inbound to Texas.

Mr. Bryan stated that the production of lumber and wood occurs in East Texas and areas surrounding San Antonio. He noted that consumption stays within East Texas and extends into Dallas and Houston. Mr. Bryan explained that the trading partners for lumber and wood are Texas' neighboring states. He noted that cross-border trade is limited. Mr. Bryan stated that trucks and rail are the preferred method of movement inbound to Texas, outbound from Texas and within Texas.

Mr. Bryan stated that pharmaceutical production occurs in Houston, Austin and Waco. He explained that the consumption occurs at hospitals everywhere around the state. Mr. Bryan noted that the most prevalent trading partners for pharmaceuticals are within the United States, citing New York, North Carolina, South Carolina and California as popular trading hubs. The preferred mode of movement inbound to Texas, outbound from Texas and within Texas is trucks.

2027 Texas Freight Mobility Plan Update: Supply Chain Analysis and Texas Multimodal Freight Network Implications (continued)

Prior to discussing the military supply chain, Mr. Bryan noted that the military data is not publicly reported in detail for national security reasons. He explained that the military moves energy, like gasoline and diesel, products and supplies, such as ammunition and uniforms, and contractors for training and storage. Mr. Bryan then discussed the three strategic military ports located in Corpus Christi, Beaumont and Port Arthur. Mr. Bryan also discussed the Power Projection Platform (PPP), which identifies designated routes to travel during times of deployment. He also added that both highway and rail are used to access PPP facilities.

Commissioner New noted that the Texas Triangle contains about 60% of the state's population, leaving about 10 million people who live outside the triangle in rural Texas. He stated that only eight states have populations greater than rural Texas and 40 states share a similar marketplace. Commissioner New emphasized the importance of considering rural Texas in statewide planning efforts.

Chair Schwebel pointed out that the total trade volume in Laredo is bigger than that of some states, noting that the political side fails to understand that. He agreed with Commissioner New's comments and said the bigger picture must also include the border areas of Texas.

2027 Texas Freight Mobility Plan: Freight Network Finalization and Freight Bottlenecks and System Needs

TxDOT Freight Systems Branch Manager Tyler Graham highlighted TxDOT's efforts to better understand the Texas highway network that supports freight movement and supply chains throughout the state. Mr. Graham noted that the team is reviewing stakeholder input to develop recommendations for the 2027 Texas Freight Mobility Plan (TFMP).

Mr. Graham provided an overview of the Texas Highway Freight Network (THFN) Update, defining it as a planning tool supporting TxDOT freight-related investments. He noted that the network is updated with each freight plan. He explained that the network is designated by TxDOT as a critical freight planning network, meaning it is critically important for freight and gives additional considerations for vertical clearance on roadways.

2027 Texas Freight Mobility Plan: Freight Network Finalization and Freight Bottlenecks and System Needs (continued)

Mr. Graham discussed the Critical Urban Freight Corridors (CUFCs) and Critical Rural Freight Corridors (CRFCs), which are dictated by the federal government and establish mileage limits. He explained that these designations help identify corridors eligible for National Highway Freight Program (NHFP) funding. Mr. Graham then discussed the recent changes to the CUFC network in San Antonio due to the completion of the west segment of Loop 1604. He added that mileage is now available for other corridors that can address freight movement.

Chair Schwebel asked what officially defines what is urban and what is rural. Mr. Graham stated that it is based on metropolitan planning organization (MPO) boundaries.

TxDOT Freight Systems Branch Project Development Manager Kale Driemeier presented an overview of the Bottleneck Assessment, which evaluates freight performance across the THFN. He noted the following metrics for the Bottleneck Assessment overview:

- Delay, which measures the cumulative hours of delay experienced along a roadway segment
- Reliability, which measures the reliability and consistency of truck travel times on a roadway segment
- Crashes, which measures the occurrence of truck-involved crashes along a roadway segment

Mr. Driemeier then reviewed the statewide hours of truck delay data and noted that urban bottlenecks account for 96% of total truck delays statewide. He stated that the Houston and Dallas-Fort Worth regions experience the highest levels of truck delay, followed by Austin and San Antonio. He also highlighted Laredo's freight bottlenecks despite its smaller population size in comparison to the other listed metropolitan areas.

2027 Texas Freight Mobility Plan: Freight Network Finalization and Freight Bottlenecks and System Needs (continued)

Mr. Driemeier stated that the top congested segments are in the Dallas-Fort Worth region, specifically citing I-35E and I-35W. He added that those top congested segments in Dallas and Fort Worth account for 25% of all delays on the THFN. For the Houston region, the top congested segments account for 37% of all delays on the THFN, specifically citing Loop 610, I-10 and I-69. Mr. Driemeier stated that I-35 is the primary bottleneck corridor between Austin and San Antonio.

Mr. Driemeier added that the top congested segments account for 35% of all delays on the THFN in San Antonio and Austin. Mr. Driemeier noted that there are about \$10 billion in TxDOT projects between Austin and San Antonio that will greatly improve mobility in the future. Mr. Driemeier discussed hours of truck delay near the border regions. Bottlenecks are located on Mines Road, SL 20 and at the World Trade Bridge in Laredo, I-10 and Zaragoza Road in El Paso and I-2 in the Rio Grande Valley. While discussing hours of truck delay in rural areas, Mr.

Driemeier stated that the top congested segments account for 8% of all delays on the THFN in rural areas. Chair Schwebel suggested accounting for cross-border traffic produced on the Mexico side entering the U.S.

Max Hoffman, HNTB, explained that truck travel time reliability measures the difference in travel time between the least congested times of the day and the most congested times of the day.

Mr. Hoffman stated that truck crash counts are measured by the total number of annual crashes. He highlighted that I-35 is a frequent site of truck crashes in Dallas, Fort Worth, San Antonio and Austin, adding that the level of concentration of crashes on that corridor surprised the project team.

Mr. Hoffman reviewed the planned 49 congestion-relief projects for bottlenecks in the next five years, representing more than \$9 billion in estimated state investment.

2027 Texas Freight Mobility Plan: Freight Network Finalization and Freight Bottlenecks and System Needs (continued)

Mr. Hoffman provided a summary of evaluation results for the following trends:

- Major bottlenecks – congestion costs for Dallas-Fort Worth and Houston are roughly \$500 million each.
- Safety and mobility – top freight corridors such as I-35 in Dallas-Fort Worth and the Austin and San Antonio corridor, and I-10 in Houston and El Paso, experience elevated crash risk compared to non-THFN roadways.
- Urban and rural importance – like urban bottlenecks, rural bottlenecks are heavily concentrated among a handful of segments, including I-10 outside El Paso, I-35 in Webb County, and SH 59 in Harrison County.
- Data and stakeholder insights – stakeholders helped identify additional delay segments and closely reviewed rural bottlenecks through an interactive mapping exercise conducted during June's TxFAC meeting.

Mr. Hoffman reviewed the next steps for the TFMP:

1. Multimodal data inventory, needs, and collection
2. Update goals and objectives
3. Critical Freight Facility Assessment
4. Update modal profiles and military freight
5. Freight Bottleneck Assessment
6. Freight Network Needs Assessment

Commissioner New highlighted DriveTexas.org, a website that provides information on current construction activities and locations. He encouraged the committee to think of all of Texas, not metropolitan 'or' rural areas but metropolitan 'and' rural areas.

Candice Armenoff, Port Houston, asked why they used warehouses as opposed to commodities as a metric for the cold chain supply. Mr. Bryan stated the study team is reviewing the data as a whole and then looking at the individual sectors. Ms. Armenoff followed up by asking how the study team determined if the warehouse is consumption or production. Mr. Bryan answered the study team traces the flow into the warehouse versus out of the warehouse.

Danny Schnautz, Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association, asked whether SH 225 is included on the freight network, stating it is currently in "bad shape." Jeremy Upchurch, HNTB, confirmed it is on the freight network.

2027 Texas Freight Mobility Plan: Freight Network Finalization and Freight Bottlenecks and System Needs (continued)

Raquel Espinoza, Union Pacific Railroad, requested additional information regarding how they calculated bottlenecks. Mr. Hoffman said they measure the three main metrics of delay, reliability and crashes. He added that they focus on the top 5% of roadways and decide what level is useful when the results are filtered.

Chair Schwebel noted that congestion at checkpoints is important to consider and stated that they are not being managed properly at the state level. He said crash and mobility factors should be considered. Matt Woodruff, Kirby Corporation, noted that the numbers for oil and gas trading are inaccurate. He then suggested that the project team use the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers data for accurate reporting. Mr. Bryan stated their source is Transearch and noted he would follow up with Mr. Woodruff after the meeting to get more information regarding the data presented.

Perspectives on the Congressionally Authorized Future Interstate (CAFI) Coalition

Lauren Garduño, Ports-to-Plains Alliance, discussed that the coalition's purpose is to influence the language of the reauthorization bill to resurrect interstate construction. He noted that future interstate corridors including I-27, I-14 and I-69 are represented in the Congressionally Authorized Future Interstate (CAFI) Coalition.

Mr. Garduño noted that the nation marked the 70th anniversary of the Interstate Highway System, established by President Dwight D. Eisenhower. He stated that the network took 30 years to build and changed the face of transportation in the United States. In 1992, the interstate system was completed with the addition of the Texas corridor, I-27.

Perspectives on the Congressionally Authorized Future Interstate (CAFI) Coalition (continued)

Mr. Garduño then stated that the CAFI Coalition was formed to urge Congress to include a Multi-State Future Interstate Highway Program providing formula funding in the next Surface Transportation Authorization Bill. He stated that the economic impacts could provide significant benefits yet every reauthorization bill since 1991 has not adequately addressed the need for a next generation interstate system. He added that Texas has three future interstate highway corridors totaling 2,711 miles and said Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) Federal Discretionary Programs have provided limited benefits to TxDOT due to the low percentage of funding. Mr. Garduño then highlighted the potential benefit of the CAFI formula program on the Texas UTP, including an estimated \$2 billion to \$3 billion in additional, predictable federal funding annually.

Mr. Garduño said TxDOT could benefit from the CAFI funding formula to develop future interstates that have languished due to funding, help Texas stay ahead of economic demand for an expanded transportation system and contribute to closing the TxDOT funding gap. Mr. Garduño discussed the administration's priorities for determining the final transportation bill and noted that the administration has expressed support for expanding the system and accelerating development of future interstate corridors.

Mr. Garduño highlighted the national support that currently exists for the CAFI Coalition and stated that the CAFI Coalition continues to seek letters of support to send in to congressional leadership for their formula funding program.

Laura Freeland, Southern Dallas County Inland Port Transportation Management Association, asked what would make this an 'and' resolution instead of grant money here 'or' there. Mr. Garduño stated they reviewed the IIJA funding

programs, ultimately deciding that some programs are specialized and should be left alone. He noted that Surface Transportation Accelerator Grant (STAG) program and Rebuilding American Infrastructure and Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) were included. The CAFI Coalition concluded that formula-based grant funding provides better reliability for Texas to benefit.

Roundtable Updates from TxFAC Members

Candice Armenoff, Port Houston, shared that the port growth is 16% over the previous year. She explained that this growth has exceeded the post-COVID-19 recovery rate, further showing the need for an upgraded transportation system.

Joey Evans, TNW Corporation, stated that addressing growth through short-line railroad investment continues to be a priority. He then reminded the committee that it is not rail 'versus' truck but rail 'and' truck.

Laura Freeland, Southern Dallas County Inland Port Transportation Management Association, stated that there needs to be long-term investment planning that addresses growth as it outpaces the transportation system. Ms. Freeland shared her appreciation for the TxFAC updates and noted that the collaboration of this committee is key to optimization.

Teclo Garcia, Mission Economic Development Corporation, emphasized the need to monitor overweight truck corridors, specifically security and efficient border-crossing operations. Mr. Garcia explained that the Anzalduas International Bridge in Mission cannot take cargo due to several delays. He stated the solution is to have dual inspections on both the Mexican and American sides. Lastly, he added that the work on I-69 is continuous and progressing well.

Lauren Garduño, Ports-to-Plains Alliance, stated that they are requesting letters of support for the extension of I-27 from U.S. 83 to Laredo to receive designation, adding that I-27 was identified by TxDOT in 2023 as a key connectivity corridor.

Miriam Kotkowski, TECMA Transportation Services, thanked Chair Schwebel for his work on the committee. Ms. Kotkowski stated how impressive it is to see Texas' value in trade worldwide. She then stated that the six-lane port in El Paso is commissioned to be closed, even though El Paso accounts for about 25% of trade between Mexico and the United States. She highlighted the short time it takes drivers to load and cross due to the closeness of the port to the border. She added that short travel times are key because of the value of the electronics that are being transported. She then encouraged the committee members to support the El Paso port, noting it should not close before alternative transportation systems in Tornillo and Zaragoza are created.

Roundtable Updates from TxFAC Members (continued)

Robert MacDonald, Texas Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (TEMPO), stated that TEMPO will incorporate the data presented at the meeting into their regional freight plans. He noted that although some MPOs have their own region-specific freight plans, Corpus Christi relies on TxDOT's updates to their statewide freight plan. Mr. MacDonald serves on the Reauthorization Committee and spoke with U.S. Secretary of Transportation Sean Duffy, who pushed to keep the freight momentum going. In that meeting, he stated that Secretary Duffy announced new national safety initiatives for rail crossings, interstates and farm-to-market roads. He then encouraged members to attend the upcoming TEMPO meeting in October in Austin and a Texas House Transportation Subcommittee, during which they will discuss TxDOT funding.

Matt Woodruff, Kirby Corporation, highlighted the crossing of the Brazos River Floodgates as the most congested and most frequently damaged intracoastal waterway crossing. Mr. Woodruff explained that it has not been funded even after the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers designated this crossing as dangerous. He stated that they will use operations and maintenance funding to replace part of it but added that it needs to be a top priority project. He expressed appreciation to TxDOT and the staff of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for highlighting the importance of this crossing through the years of data.

Raquel Espinoza, Union Pacific Railroad, congratulated TxDOT for securing \$800 million in funding to support rail crossings. Ms. Espinoza stated that railroads carry heavy goods in a safe and efficient manner. She added that Texas has turned a corner with the establishment of the off-system grade separation grant program. She expressed desire to maintain this momentum as the needs are greatest in rural and urban areas, specifically at the ports and West Texas. Ms. Espinoza then thanked the committee for their constant support of the freight network.

Danny Schnautz, Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association, stated that there is no truck driver shortage and noted that the efficiencies in trucking have come at the expense of driver wages. Mr. Schnautz said the U.S. Department of Transportation efforts and the BUILD America 250 Act are the best two things to happen to the trucking industry in decades.

David Ramirez, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, thanked the committee and did not provide additional updates.

Roundtable Updates from TxFAC Members (continued)

Dr. Rolando Ortiz, Killam Development, Ltd., thanked Chair Schwebel for a successful meeting and recognized Commissioner New's daily efforts to bring money to border communities.

Tiffany Melvin, North American Strategy for Competitiveness, stated her responsibility is to manage the trade landscape of tariffs and trade wars in the United States. Ms. Melvin stated that educating lawmakers on trilateral relationships and supply chains is important. She stated that her trip to Washington, D.C. in November will provide that opportunity to educate new members in Congress following upcoming federal elections. She then added that regional MPOs should be invited to attend TxFAC to inform the committee about their own freight plans.

Vice Chair Nicholas Konen, Hillwood, AllianceTexas, thanked Chair Schwebel for his hospitality at IBC Bank in Laredo. Vice Chair Konen stated that AllianceTexas is the busiest they have been, stating they have over three million square feet of development that is currently under construction. He credited this to a variety of industries, including traditional logistics companies and data centers in the Denton and Dallas areas. He then thanked the committee for their participation.

Final Remarks and Adjourn

In closing, Chair Schwebel thanked TxDOT staff, presenters and committee members for their contributions to a productive meeting. He noted that the next Texas Freight Advisory Committee meeting was moved to Friday, Oct. 30, 2026, at the TxDOT Stassney Campus in Austin. The meeting adjourned at 12:05 p.m.