



Texas Freight Advisory Committee Meeting #42

November 12, 2024, 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.

In-Person Meeting at TxDOT Greer Building – Ric Williamson Hearing Room
125 E. 11th St., Austin, TX

ATTENDEES

Committee Members	Organization	Attendance
Judge Ed Emmett – Chair	Rice University	Yes
Ken Becker	Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association (OOIDA)	
Adriana Cruz	Office of the Texas Governor	Yes
John Esparza	Texas Trucking Association	Dana Moore serving as proxy
Laura Freeland	Southern Dallas County Inland Port Transportation Management Association	Yes
Lauren Garduno	Ports-to-Plains Alliance	Yes
Tecló Garcia	Mission Economic Development Corporation	Yes
Roger Guenther	Port Houston	Did not attend
Brenda Gunter	Mayor, City of San Angelo	
Miriam Kotkowski	Tecma Transportation Services	Yes
Russell Laughlin	Hillwood, Alliance Texas	Yes
Charlie Leal	Texas Farm Bureau	Did not attend
Robert MacDonald	Texas Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (TEMPO)	Yes
Ryan Martin	Evolve Houston	Yes
Tiffany Melvin	North American Strategy for Competitiveness	Yes
Lindsay Mullins	BNSF Railway	Yes
Rolando Ortiz	Killam Development Ltd.	Yes

Committee Members	Organization	Attendance
TBD	McAllen Economic Development Corp.	
Steven Schar	Texas Commission on Environmental Quality	Yes
Clint Schelbitzki	Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR)	Raquel Espinoza as proxy
Gerry Schwebel	International Bank of Commerce, San Antonio	Yes
Sean Stibich	Port of Victoria	Did not attend
Paul Treangen	TNW Corporation	Joey Evans as proxy
Matt Woodruff	Kirby Corporation	Did not attend

Total Count of Committee Present (includes proxies): 17

Texas Transportation Commission

Commissioner Alejandro “Alex” G. Meade, III
Commissioner W. Alvin New

TxDOT

Amanda Austin
Marty Boyd
Jessica Butler
Andrew Canon
Leah Casey
Michael Chacon
Kale Driemeier
Yvette Flores
Jessica Geray
Humberto “Tito” Gonzalez Jr.
Tyler Graham
Cory Henrickson
Erika Kunkel
Caroline Mays
Roberto Rodriguez
Trent Thomas
Marc Williams
Giacomo Yaquinto

Elected Officials

Name	Organization
Rep. Jill Dutton	Texas House of Representatives District 2
Brad Johnson	Texas House of Representatives District 2 Legislative Staff
Jenny Sellers	Texas House of Representatives District 2 Legislative Staff

Agency/Consulting Team

Name	Organization
Eva Esquivel	HNTB
Justine Carreon	HNTB
Jeremy Upchurch	HNTB
William Long	Poznecki-Camarillo, LLC
Robert Elizondo	Poznecki-Camarillo, LLC

Other Attendees

Name	Organization
Kristina Satti	AECOM
Don Rodman	Alliance for I-69 Texas
Matt Miller	Cambridge Systematics
Seema Singh	Cambridge Systematics
Eduardo Calvo	El Paso MPO
Genevieve Bales	FHWA
Kevin Keller	HDR
Summer Lawton	HNTB
Carlos Swonke	HNTB
Jolanda Prozzi	Jacobs
Dan Seedah	Jacobs
Vicky Carrasco	Kleinman Consultants
Lauren Freriks	Office of Texas Governor
Cameron Walker	PBMPO
Debra Richmond	Permian Strategic Partnership
Michael Looney	San Angelo Chamber Economic Development
Binny Paul	SH 130 Concession Company
Mike Razniewski	SH 130 Concession Company
Tim Juarez	Stanley Consultants
Steven Schar	Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
Brittney Gick	Texas A&M Transportation Institute
Tony Moritz	Texas A&M Transportation Institute
Allan Rutter	Texas A&M Transportation Institute
Jason Wallis	Texas A&M Transportation Institute
Jeff Warner	Texas A&M Transportation Institute
Dean Ash	Truckers Paradise
Howard Barker	Truckers Paradise
Grayson Perry	Woodside Energy
David Dutton	

1. Welcome and Introductions

Tyler Graham, Freight Systems Branch Manager with TxDOT's Freight Planning Branch, opened the meeting with a safety minute.

Judge Ed Emmett, Texas Freight Advisory Committee (TxFAC) Chair and Fellow in Energy and Transportation Policy at Rice University's Baker Institute for Public Policy, welcomed the committee at 1:59 p.m. Chair Emmett commended the committee's work and noted Texas's strong position for the future.

Commissioner W. Alvin New and Commissioner Alejandro G. Meade III of the Texas Transportation Commission also expressed appreciation for the committee's contributions, emphasizing its role in Texas's competitiveness.

Marc Williams, TxDOT Executive Director, thanked the committee and TxDOT staff for their participation. Mr. Williams highlighted significant investments in freight infrastructure statewide.

Chair Emmett then introduced Texas State Representative Jill Dutton, who spoke about rural rail districts. Representative Dutton emphasized the importance of short-line rail systems for rural areas, particularly in her district. Representative Dutton advocated for more funding for the Northeast Texas Rural Rail District (NETEX) and upgrading its rail system to a Class 2 designation. Representative Dutton also highlighted the need for infrastructure improvements, showcasing outdated rails as evidence. Representative Dutton concluded by emphasizing the future importance of rail in the U.S. and Texas.

Chair Emmett thanked Representative Dutton for her insights and asked TxDOT to identify existing rural rail districts. Chair Emmett then recognized new committee members and thanked them for their participation.

Caroline Mays, TxDOT Director of Planning and Modal Programs, thanked Chair Emmett for his leadership and the committee members for their valuable insights. Ms. Mays also recognized TxDOT staff for their support.

2. Freight Plan Implementation Update

Tyler Graham, TxDOT, updated the committee on the progress of the TxDOT Freight Plan. Mr. Graham detailed the recommendations related to programming and communications.

The slide features the Texas Department of Transportation logo and the slogan 'Connecting you with Texas.' in the top left and right corners, respectively. The main title is 'Summary of Program Recommendations'. Below this is a blue header with the word 'SUPPORTIVE' in white. The body of the slide contains five light blue rectangular boxes, each containing a recommendation. The slide number '12' is located in the bottom right corner.

SUPPORTIVE
Create a rural freight connectivity program.
Develop a multimodal freight network resiliency enhancement plan.
Establish a first and last mile intermodal connector program.
Coordinate on a freight and logistics workforce development program.
Develop and expand truck parking facilities at key gateways and freight generators.

Figure 1. Freight Plan Implementation Update; slide from TxFAC #42 Presentation.

Mr. Graham then led the committee through a prioritization exercise where members were asked to prioritize recommendations through a series of questions.

2. Freight Plan Implementation Update- continued

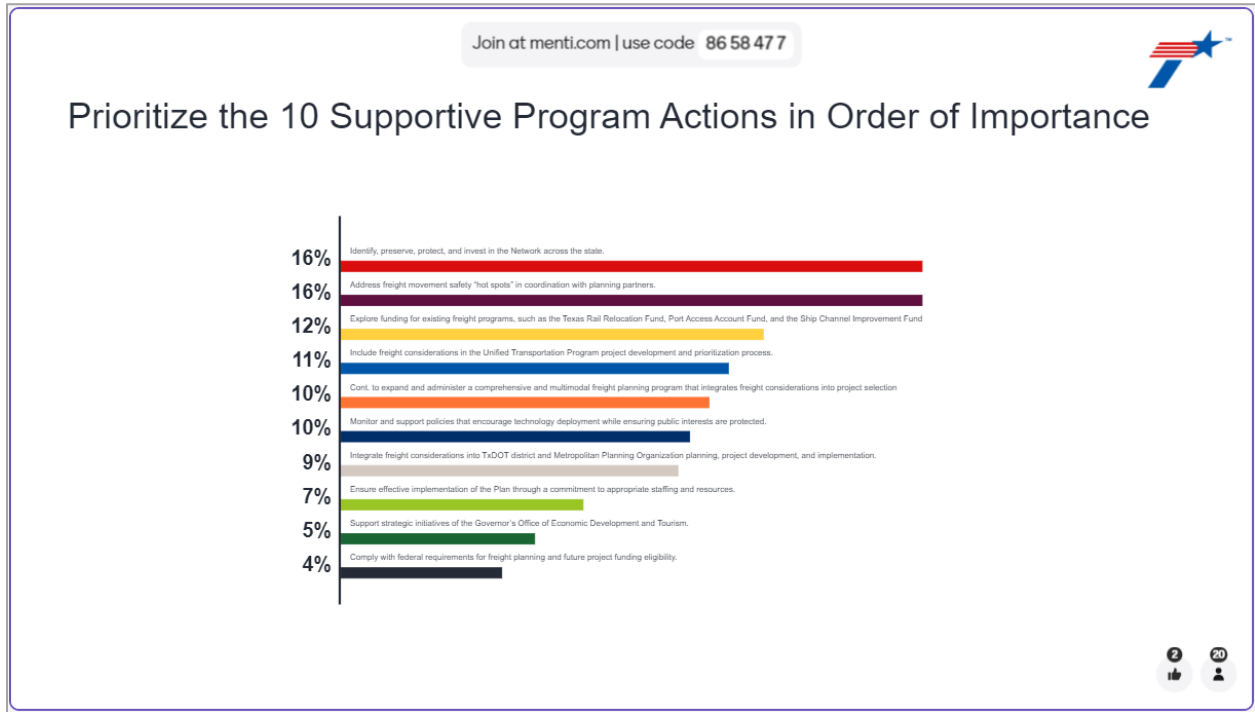


Figure 2. Freight Plan Implementation Update; slide from TxFAC #42 Presentation.

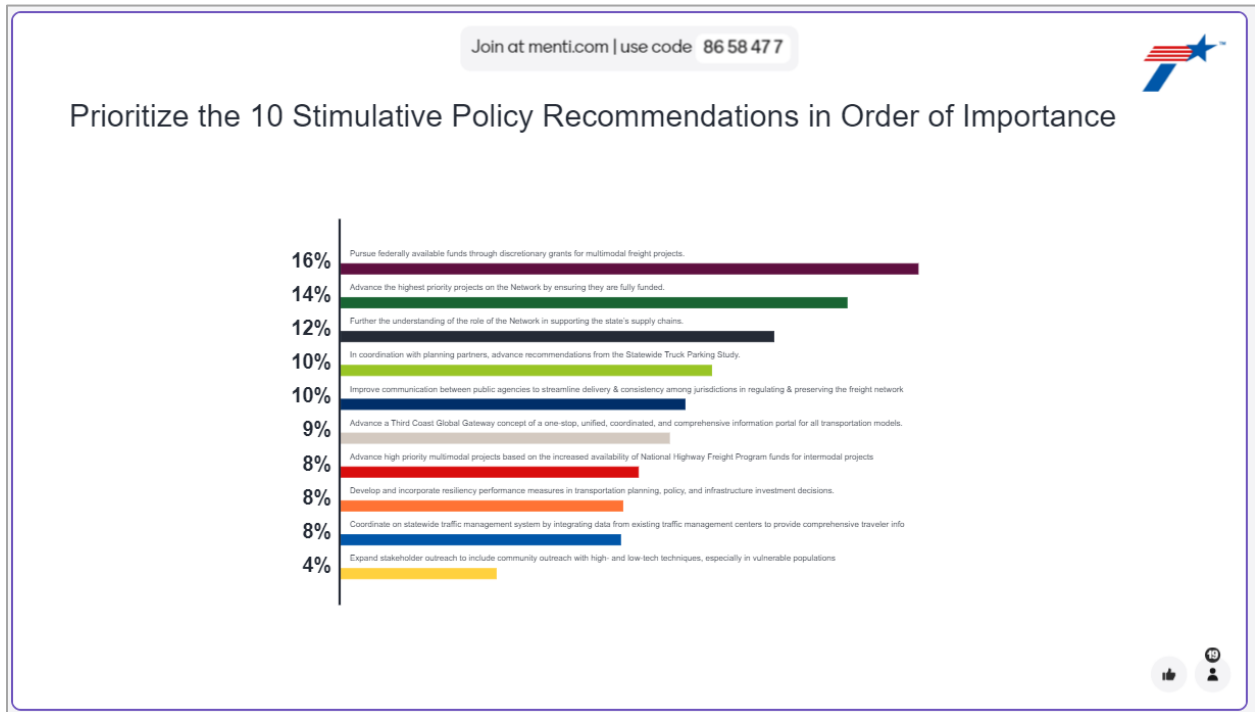


Figure 3. Freight Plan Implementation Update; slide from TxFAC #42 Presentation.

2. Freight Plan Implementation Update- continued

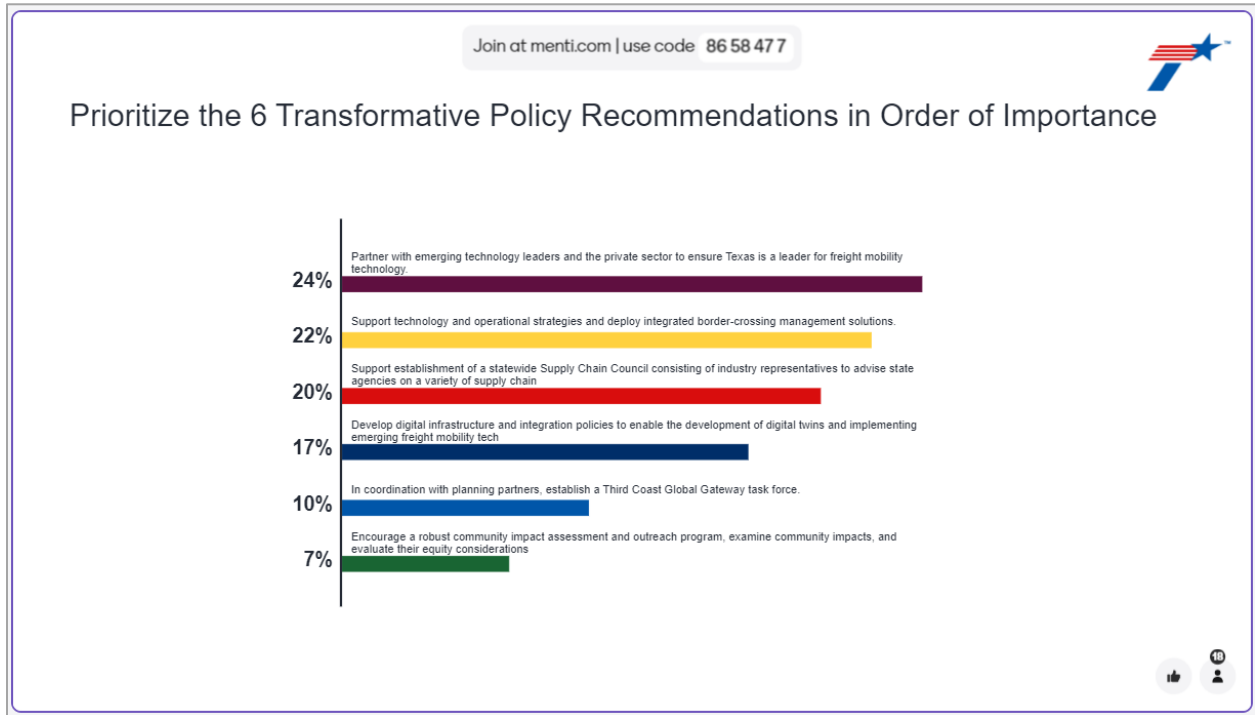


Figure 4. Freight Plan Implementation Update; slide from TxFAC #42 Presentation.

TRANSFORMATIVE	
In coordination with planning partners, establish a Third Coast Global Gateway task force.	Partner with emerging technology leaders and the private sector to ensure Texas is a leader for freight mobility technology.
Support establishment of a statewide Supply Chain Council consisting of industry representatives to advise state agencies on a variety of supply chain challenges and opportunities.	Develop digital infrastructure and integration policies necessary to enable the development of digital twins and implementation of emerging freight mobility technologies.
Encourage a robust community impact assessment and outreach program related to freight movement that includes examining community impacts and evaluating and communicating the equity considerations of those impacts.	Support technology and operational strategies and deploy integrated border-crossing management solutions.

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Figure 5. Freight Plan Implementation Update; slide from TxFAC #42 Presentation.

2. Freight Plan Implementation Update- continued

Lauren Garduno of the Ports-to-Plains Alliance asked for an update on the third coast task force. Mr. Graham said an update would be provided at a future meeting.

Chair Emmett suggested changing the task force’s name. Ms. Mays clarified that “third coast” was a play on the East/West Coast concept. Adriana Cruz of the Governor’s Office noted the entire state is considered the third coast. Mr. Garduno suggested keeping the name to help outsiders understand the importance of the Texas border and coast.

Mr. Graham then discussed next steps for the Freight Implementation Plan. He thanked the committee for its participation in the prioritization exercise. Mr. Graham explained that his team would review and incorporate the committee’s prioritized recommendations into the document.

3. Texas Rail Plan Update

Chad Coburn, Rail Planning and Programs Section Director, with TxDOT’s Rail Division, introduced Kevin Keller, with HDR, to discuss the Texas Rail Plan.

Mr. Keller began with a safety minute on rail safety and then discussed updates to the Texas Rail Plan. He explained that the plan is federally mandated to be updated every four years. Mr. Keller reviewed the requirements for state rail plans, saying they are based on a comprehensive, coordinated, and continuing planning process for all transportation services within the state.

The slide features the Texas Department of Transportation logo and tagline 'Connecting you with Texas.' in the top right. On the left, the text 'WHY update the Texas Rail Plan?' is displayed in large, bold letters. To the right, under the heading 'Additional Reasons for Update:', there are four red circular icons with corresponding text: a group of people icon for 'Gain guidance for future rail priorities from dialogue with stakeholders and the general public.', a list icon for 'Assess rail needs and develop a list of potential rail improvement projects.', a speech bubble icon for 'Communicate to the public and decision makers about rail’s benefits to Texas and its role within the Texas transportation network.', and a train icon for 'Understand needs and issues of the rail industry.' The number '31' is in the bottom right corner.

Figure 6. Texas Rail Plan Update; slide from TxFAC #42 Presentation.

3. Texas Rail Plan Update- continued

Mr. Keller noted that the plans are developed with opportunities for participation by people interested in rail activity in the state and adjacent states, where appropriate. He emphasized the importance of Texas Rail Plan stakeholders. Mr. Keller reviewed corridor ID program awards, discussed freight long-distance service, highlighted top themes heard from stakeholders, and outlined the overall schedule. Lastly, he said they plan to have an update ready for review by the end of the year and discussed how people can stay informed.

The slide features the Texas Department of Transportation logo and the slogan 'Connecting you with Texas.' in the top blue header. The main content is on a light grey background. On the left, a vertical red line separates a grey box containing the text 'WHAT TxDOT has already heard' from the rest of the slide. To the right of this line are three categories, each with a blue circular icon: 'Modernization/ Technology:' (with a gear and document icon), 'Economic Development:' (with a globe icon), and 'Expanded Connectivity:' (with a train icon). Each category has a list of bullet points. The number '45' is in the bottom right corner.

WHAT TxDOT has already heard

- Modernization/ Technology:**
 - Performance standards
 - Technology to identify potential bottlenecks
 - Alternative fuel sources
- Economic Development:**
 - New industrial centers
 - Cross-border trade
 - Development of supporting uses (i.e., air carriers, amenities)
- Expanded Connectivity:**
 - Interstate and intercity passenger service
 - Support for multiple routes including Dallas to Austin, Austin to San Antonio, San Antonio to Houston, and Dallas to Houston
 - Connections to border cities
 - Increased service for routes and frequencies, both on existing and new routes
 - Interstate connection from Dallas to Oklahoma to Louisiana along I-20 and I-10, on to New Mexico
 - Opportunity for intra-state trips with fewer stops and higher speeds
 - Population centers exist for increased routes
 - Coordination between service types so riders can make transfers (i.e., airport, transit hubs)

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Figure 7. Texas Rail Plan Update; slide from TxFAC #42 Presentation.

Lindsay Mullins of BNSF said the committee should participate to ensure freight voices are heard during the planning process. She mentioned attending a meeting in San Antonio and noticing that most comments were related to vehicular traffic.

Raquel Espinosa of Union Pacific added that many communities throughout the state should be engaged and have their feedback solicited.

Russell Laughlin of Hillwood Developers noted that huge volumes of freight move through intermodal freight terminals and should be considered when discussing freight.

Chair Emmett questioned TxDOT's role in freight and passenger rail facilities. Executive Director Williams replied that TxDOT is the statewide planning entity and federal funding passes through them. Mr. Williams added that TxDOT lacks the legal ability to fund passenger rail but has statutory planning efforts and coordinates with rail agencies.

3. Texas Rail Plan Update- continued

Jeff Warner of Texas A&M Transportation Institute (TTI) noted the rail division is the only division that can enter into an agreement with railroads.

Chair Emmett said some rail projects significantly affect roadways, referencing the U.S. 90-Dayton rail issue.

Ms. Mullins said she doesn't think a statutory requirement for coordination is necessary, noting BNSF often engages TxDOT throughout its projects.

4. TxDOT Legislative Appropriations Request (LAR) Update


Trent Thomas and Cory Henrickson from TxDOT's Government Affairs Division provided a detailed update on the legislative appropriations request (LAR). Mr. Thomas began by discussing Senate Bill 1, which will be a primary focus for TxDOT this legislative session. He then discussed TxDOT's funding sources and budget uses. Mr. Thomas explained the number of staff members needed for various TxDOT departments, and then reviewed full-time equivalents and exceptional items needed for projects.

Executive Director Williams stated that many initiatives and items are identified by citizen-led committees, such as TxFAC. Mr. Williams noted that funding has not kept pace with all requests and initiatives, leading TxDOT to request more funding from the State Legislature.

Lindsay Mullins thanked TxDOT for listening to rail lines and considering their feedback. She praised TxDOT as a model for rail transportation coordination and planning nationwide.

Lauren Garduno asked if the south is considered on-system and if priorities 9 and 10 are already project-specific or available to all short lines. Mr. Thomas responded that the south is on-system and the priority list discussion is ongoing with the Texas Legislature.

4. TxDOT Legislative Appropriations Request (LAR) Update- continued



Exceptional Items Discussion

Priority	Exceptional Items	FY 2026-27 LAR Amount
1	Additional Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs) - 301	*
2	Public Transit - 2020 Census Impacts: Sustain State Transit Program at 2010 Per Capita Funding Levels	\$3,770,000
3	Aviation - Flight Services Fuel Facility Improvements	\$20,000,000
4	Maritime - Ports Capital Investment - Port Authority Advisory Committee (PAAC)	\$900,000,000
5	Maritime - Brazos River Flood Gates West Gate Construction	\$140,000,000
6	Rail - Amtrak Heartland Flyer Financial Support	\$2,126,450
7	Public Transit - Rural Area Program State of Good Repair	\$25,000,000
8	Maritime - Ship Channel Improvement Revolving Fund - Port Authority Advisory Committee (PAAC)	\$200,000,000
9	Rail - Local Rail Grade Crossing Separations	\$175,000,000
10	Rail - Short Line Development	\$25,000,000
Total Exceptional Items		\$1,490,896,450

*FTEs would be funded within various strategy amounts, so no additional general revenue dollars have been requested.

Figure 8. TxDOT Legislative Appropriations Request Update; slide from TxFAC #42 Presentation.

Gerry Schwebel of IBC Bank asked what grant programs are available so cities can identify funding sources when planning projects. He noted a lack of understanding of the process in small and rural communities.

Executive Director Williams said TxDOT’s Federal Affairs team has a list of available state and federal funding sources. He added that TxDOT staff can help endorse grant applications. Mr. Williams suggested anyone with questions reach out to the TxDOT Government Affairs group for more information on available grants. Mr. Thomas confirmed they have information about programs offered in the districts and added that “grants and funding” can be searched on TxDOT’s website. Mr. Williams said he could send the link to the information.

Chair Emmett asked if it’s true TxDOT cannot spend money on rail projects. Executive Director Williams said TxDOT is responsible for planning and has funding for related projects.

5. Truckers Paradise: Innovative Approaches to Private Truck Parking

Tyler Graham introduced Dean Ash, owner of Truckers Paradise. Mr. Graham mentioned the company’s unique solution to the truck parking issue.

Mr. Ash thanked TxDOT for the opportunity and discussed the company’s services. He explained the company’s history and business model development. Mr. Ash said they took over an outlet mall and added a law enforcement substation on-site. He explained their facility as an expansive rest-stop offering long- and short-term parking for all truck sizes. Mr. Ash said the establishment boasts state-of-the-art lounges with comfortable seating, entertainment, and refreshments. He noted their plans for mobile fuel vehicles and remote app support for ordering services.

5. Truckers Paradise: Innovative Approaches to Private Truck Parking- continued



Figure 9. Truckers Paradise: Innovative Approaches to Private Truck Parking; slide from TxFAC #42 Presentation.

Mr. Ash said Truckers Paradise features a shopping center catering to truckers' needs. He mentioned full access to the shopping center as a key benefit of membership. Mr. Ash added that services are designed to minimize driver downtime, allowing efficient refueling and cleaning.

Mr. Ash said the establishment aims to enhance the overall driver experience by catering to their specific needs.

Ms. Mullins asked about the old outlet mall near Hillsboro and the availability of a gym. Mr. Ash said they've considered the outlet mall, and a gym will be at their current location.

Mr. Laughlin questioned security with multiple access points and buildings. Mr. Ash said they'll use AI, local security teams, and invite local law enforcement to establish a substation.

Mr. Garduno liked the idea of repurposing outlet malls, and asked about improving highway access to the facility. Mr. Ash said they're discussing options with TxDOT as they develop the land, and consider expansion.

Chair Emmett asked about Wi-Fi availability. Mr. Ash said the preference is to get drivers out of their trucks and into facilities. He noted their soft opening this week and shared photos of project progress.

5. Truckers Paradise: Innovative Approaches to Private Truck Parking- continued



Figure 10. Truckers Paradise: Innovative Approaches to Private Truck Parking; slide from TxFAC #42 Presentation.

6. Future Workshops and Updates from Texas A&M TTI

Allan Rutter of Texas A&M Transportation Institute (TTI) discussed TTI's efforts to leverage the committee's work. He detailed an upcoming truck parking workshop on Dec. 4, 2024, and invited everyone to attend.

Mr. Rutter then discussed a Truck Parking Measurement Test Bed using lidar sensors to measure truck and space occupancy. He said this project allows testing of new technologies and tracking industry usage. Mr. Rutter explained current methods truckers use to check space availability, such as portable messaging signs and other notifications.

6. Future Workshops and Updates from Texas A&M TTI- continued


Connecting you with Texas.

Parking Availability Expansion Possibilities


- TxDOT Maintenance Division briefed TxFAC in July 2024 on their Truck Parking expansion projects
- Expanding the Walker County truck parking testbed to the I-45 Navarro County Safety Rest Areas
- Districts examining options for truck parking outside of Safety Rest Areas. Example Paris District converting rest area on I-30 two miles west of Mt. Vernon to truck parking; adding a truck parking information system



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Figure 11. Future Workshops and Updates from TTI; slide from TxFAC #42 Presentation.

Mr. Rutter then discussed Freight Policy Monthly Update Briefing Papers. He suggested that anyone who wants to get their monthly emails should reach out to Mr. Graham.


Connecting you with Texas.

Freight Policy Monthly Update Briefing Papers

- Part of Freight Policy Analysis task, reports provided to TxDOT and TTI freight planning staff
- Monthly papers highlight:
 - Federal Agency:
 - Rulemakings affecting freight modes
 - Grant programs with freight impacts
 - Reports on freight data
 - Congressional funding and hearings — freight transportation focus
 - Texas Legislative activity on freight transportation
 - Other national, regional, and state news of significance to Texas on all freight modes



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Figure 12. Future Workshops and Updates from TTI; slide from TxFAC #42 Presentation.

6. Future Workshops and Updates from Texas A&M TTI- continued

Chair Emmett requested that everyone on the committee be added to their email distribution list.

7. Final Remarks

Tiffany Melvin of North American Strategy for Competitiveness said FHWA encourages DOTs working on major corridors to share information with other states, citing I-35 in Iowa as an example.

Chair Emmett asked about the committee's next steps.

Mr. Graham said the next state freight plan is due to the legislature in February 2027. He said his team will reach out with findings based on recommendations and provide updates on truck parking and statewide freight plans.

Ms. Mays noted they will review the current freight plan, identify completed and remaining tasks, and understand what's coming in from other states.

Commissioner New said speed of truck processing, and bypassing urban areas are important concerns.

Mr. Schwebel said the committee often focuses on freight mobility and inbound goods, but the state's success relies on a balance of imports and exports. He requested an update on Texas exports and challenges that make the third coast a more attractive alternative.

Mr. Garduno mentioned conversations with green operators about wheat exports. He said there's a focus on intrastate product movement and increasing transportation speed.

Ms. Mays said the current freight plan details inbound and outbound state goods. She said they conducted analysis to understand network demand and the need to understand inbound goods from other states.

Rolando Ortiz of Killiam Development suggested a subcommittee to research alternative routes, using the Houston-Dallas corridor as an example.

Chair Emmett thanked everyone and adjourned the meeting at 4:45 p.m.