

Project Milestones

- » Fall 1997: Project initiation and data gathering
- » Spring 1998: Initial development of public involvement approach. Public meetings and workgroup sessions; initial alternatives identified
- » Summer 1998: Initial environmental and engineering studies
- » Fall 1998: 2nd agency meeting; conceptual set of alternatives completed
- » Winter 1998: Refined set of alternatives completed; capital cost estimates and potential impacts identified
- » Winter 1999: Final environmental and engineering studies, traffic forecasts, and cost estimates completed; final set of alternatives recommended
- » Spring 1999: 2nd round of public meetings and workshops; final evaluation report
- » Summer 1999: Preferred alternative report; adoption into formal plan

The I-10 West Study Begins

The El Paso District of the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) has begun a Major Investment Study (MIS) of the 23-mile I-10 West Corridor from US Highway 54 to the New Mexico State Line. The study also includes part of US 54 from Loop 375 (Border Highway) north to Trowbridge Drive.

This is a comprehensive study that will determine the long- and short-term transportation needs of the Corridor resulting in a recommended strategy to meet those needs. The study is "multimodal," meaning that it will consider more than just automobile needs, but also transit, freight, bicycle, and pedestrian transportation needs.

According to federal law, an MIS is required before planning, designing and spending public funds on urban area transportation improvements with significant costs. This is necessary to receive federal funding. Typically, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) funds a significant portion of transportation improvements in interstate highway corridors and, in Texas, TxDOT generally pays the remaining costs.

This study provides the opportunity for TxDOT and other government agencies to address long-term transportation issues and needs in the Corridor while assessing future

directions and options. The study will focus on developing and evaluating several alternatives for highway, transit, and bicycle/pedestrian modes of transportation. This would also include currently planned transportation projects. Final recommendations could include such things as: widening Interstate 10 and/or parallel roadways, adding rail transit facilities, high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes, or developing other options requiring minimal construction and capital costs.

El Paso is also an air quality "nonattainment area" under the provisions of the federal Clean Air Act, meaning that the metropolitan area does not meet federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) clean air standards. The MIS will consider alternatives that would contribute to the El Paso region meeting those standards.

Be sure to visit our site on the world wide web.

www.dot.state.tx.us/mis/mis.htm

- » Catch the latest developments concerning the I-10 West Corridor Major Investment Study.
- » Link to related web sites.
- » Use the electronic feedback form to give us your two cents.

I-10 West Corridor Study Area

The study area for the I-10 West Corridor is illustrated in the figure below and includes the central and northwestern areas of El Paso; the communities of Sunland Park, Anthony, Vinton, and Canutillo; and undeveloped areas. The study area lies between the Franklin Mountains on the east and the Rio Grande / Mexico border on the south and west. It includes older, urban areas of central El Paso, and newer, urban and suburban areas in the northwest El Paso region.

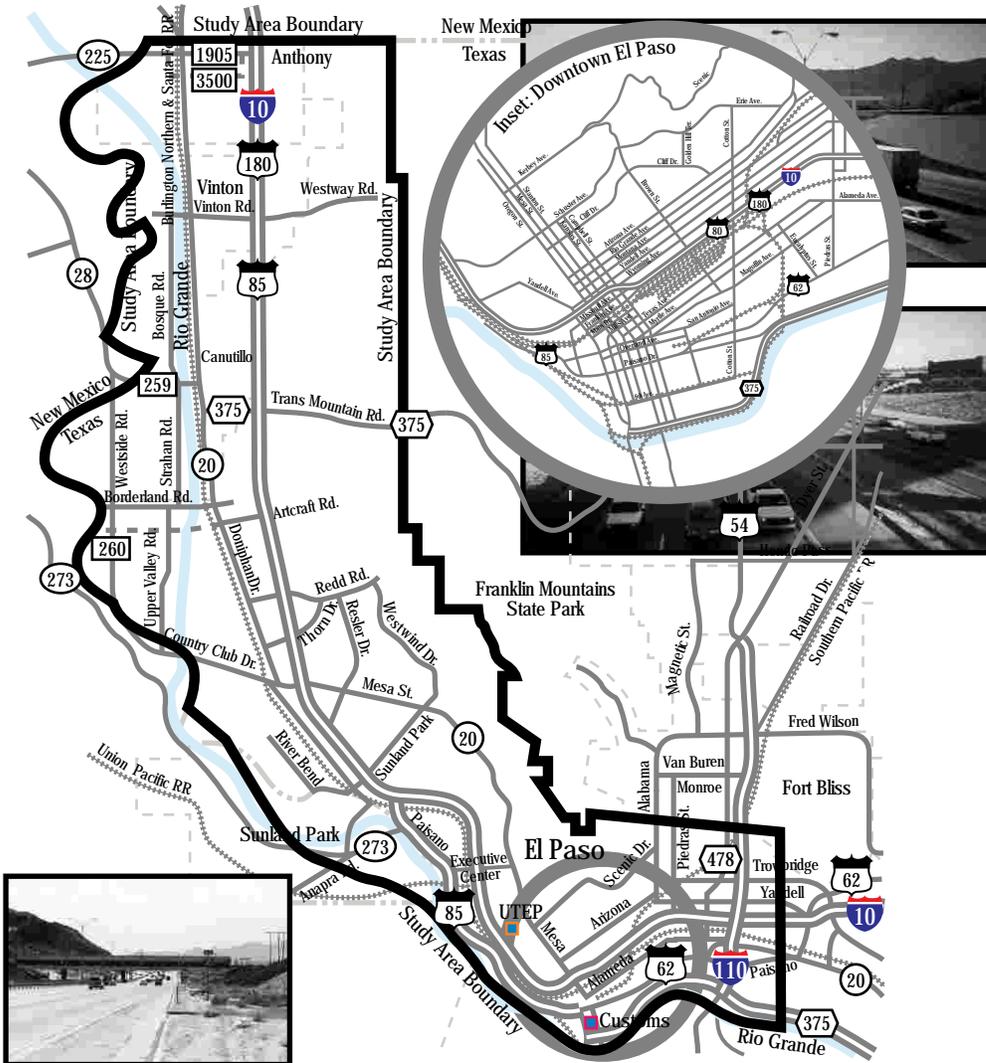
I-10 is the primary transportation route in the Corridor and for the El Paso region. Other major roadways in the Corridor that parallel I-10 include State Highway 20 (Mesa Street/ Doniphan Drive), US 85 (Paisano Drive), and Border Highway (Loop 375). Major roadways that cross I-10 include Vinton Road, Trans Mountain Road (Loop 375), Artcraft Road, Sunland Park Drive, Executive Center Boulevard, several cross streets in the Downtown area, and US 54.

Other transportation modes in the study area include the Sun Metro bus system, the Burlington Northern Santa Fe and Union Pacific railroads, and a number of bicycle trails and routes.



Initial Alternatives Evaluated

The initial I-10 West Corridor alternatives include a wide range of highway, transit, and operational transportation options. These alternatives were presented at the April 1998 public meetings where meeting participants suggested additional alternatives. This resulted in 20 alternatives. The study team is developing and evaluating these 20 alternatives. In August, TxDOT and the City of El Paso representatives will review the recommended alternatives to be further evaluated. In addition, the study's technical Working Group, will also review the alternatives evaluation and make recommendations in August. The Working Group includes representatives from TxDOT, the Cities of El Paso and Sunland Park, Sun Metro, Federal Highway and Transit Administrations, federal and state environmental agencies, El Paso County, the Department of Public Safety, and the US Army Corps of Engineers. The study team will continue to develop, refine, and evaluate the alternatives based on these recommendations.



Initial Public Meetings Held

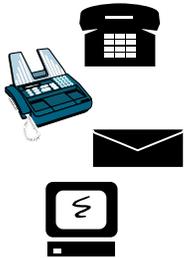
On April 28 and 30, 1998, TxDOT and its consultant team, led by Parsons Brinckerhoff, held the first I-10 West Corridor MIS public meetings. These meetings introduced the public to the study process, draft goals and objectives, study participants, corridor transportation issues, and the initial list of alternatives. After being introduced to these elements, participants were encouraged to comment on the corridor's transportation problems and needs.

The initial public meetings were held in two locations including El Paso High School on April 28 and Franklin High School on April 30. Nineteen people attended the Tuesday evening (April 28) meeting and 41 attended the Thursday (April 30) meeting. The meetings were conducted with an open house format allowing the public to walk through a series of displays while accompanied by a study team member. This format allowed participants to express their concerns openly to a study team member.

Participants provided their comments by speaking to study team members, writing on flip charts or working maps, and filling out comment sheets. Phone calls and letters have also been received by TxDOT. Participants provided comments on: traffic, safety, the environment, suggested roadway improvements, transportation system management, other travel modes, border crossings, and other suggestions.

These meetings were effective in obtaining public input. In addition to identifying problems and opportunities among the issues listed above, participants commented on the study team's suggested alternatives and offered some of their own. The input from the public meetings assists the study team in evaluating the possible alternatives for improving the I-10 West Corridor.

For a Spanish translation of this newsletter, please contact Cecilia Vazquez with Technology & Communications Gateway, Inc. 915/532-1171



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- Comment by Fax 915/774-4263
- Comment by Mail Judy Ramsey TxDOT P.O. Box 10278 El Paso, TX 79994
- Comment by Internet <http://www.dot.state.tx.us/mis/mis.htm>



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Please help us improve transportation in your community by sending us your ideas and comments. We want to hear from you. Comments and questions can be addressed to Texas Department of Transportation project staff:

Project Manager - Judy Ramsey
(Advance Transportation Planning Administrator)

Deputy Project Manager - Mark Sprick
(Transportation Planner).

