Texas is growing.

And the future success of our great state depends, in large measure, on keeping our transportation system advancing to meet increased traffic. The citizens of Texas have the opportunity to direct the development of I-69 Texas into a modern transportation system carrying goods to market and families to their destinations, while respecting the communities and private property rights along the highway. Simply put, the future of I-69 will be "Driven by Texans."

I-69 is a proposed national interstate that extends from Michigan through Texas. In Texas, the route for I-69 includes several existing highways:

U.S. 59 | U.S. 77 | U.S. 84 | U.S. 281 | SH 44

Let's talk about how we make that happen.

INTERSTATE 69

Driven by Texans

Driven by Texans

Over 50 years ago, the national interstate system was built as a brand new set of roadways. I-69 will be created differently. Instead of simply building brand new roads, I-69 will be developed as a series of improvements using these existing highways as much as possible. Completing all sections of I-69 will take time. This is an ambitious project, a project that will be needed by and beneficial to future generations of Texans.

Five groups of citizens, representing communities and interested parties from the Texas-Arkansas and Texas-Louisiana borders to the Texas-Mexico border, have been planning and making recommendations on how I-69 can best be developed. Each community along the I-69 route has its own transportation needs and challenges. The I-69 Segment Committees have found common principles they feel will contribute to the success of the interstate. These are the main points driving the discussion on I-69 Texas.

Existing highway footprints should be used for I-69. The routes of existing highways (U.S. 59, U.S. 77, U.S. 84, U.S. 281, SH 44) should be used to develop I-69 to minimize impact to existing businesses, homes and other property owners to the greatest extent possible. Redesignating suitable existing freeway sections as I-69 should be done as soon as possible.

Public input is vital in developing I-69. Local communities along the routes will have multiple opportunities to provide feedback on developing I-69 in their area. The projects identified by the segment committees are conceptual and have not been designed. As projects move from the conceptual to design stage and beyond, citizens will have multiple opportunities to offer input and feedback on project development and design.

Communities will benefit from I-69 Texas. I-69 Texas will offer a host of community benefits, including improved mobility and connectivity, greater highway safety, and economic benefits that come with convenient interstate access.

Here are some important issues that are driving the discussion on I-69 Texas.

Population and Traffic Growth

Texas grew by 4.3 million people between 2000 and 2010, an increase of 20.6%. The counties along the I-69 Texas system grew even more, by 23%, and have 8 million residents. Some counties along the I-69 system had population increases over 50% from the 2000 to the 2010 Census. Ports along the Texas Gulf Coast and inland ports on the Texas-Mexico border anticipate a dramatic increase of cargo in the coming years.

Safer Travel

Interstates provide greater safety because they have bridges and overpasses at crossroads and entrance and exit ramps. A four-lane divided interstate can reduce severe traffic accidents as compared to the current two-and four-lane roads. Based on 2009 statewide crash rates, interstate highways in Texas experience 20-30 percent fewer crashes than US highways in Texas. [1]

1 2009 Texas Department of Transportation Statewide Traffic Crash Rates

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Emergency Evacuation Routes

The highways along the proposed I-69 are close to or directly serve the Texas Gulf Coast. In times of hurricane evacuations, an interstate would have greater capacity and wider shoulders to accommodate evacuating Texans and emergency personnel. I-69 could shoulder more of the traffic load in a crisis situation.

Economic Development

High quality transportation infrastructure and convenient interstate access are a must for today's businesses. One East Texas town, which is along the proposed I-69, lost out on a new manufacturer partly because it lacked interstate highway service. Interestingly, the manufacturer chose Tunica, Mississippi which is on a recently completed section of I-69.

Funding Challenge

There is no current funding to build I-69; however, there is a possibility of getting a section of I-69 in Texas soon. Designating existing suitable freeway sections as I-69 will establish the interstate in Texas. From there, using the citizens' plan for I-69, TxDOT and state leaders can begin to identify funding sources to continue improvements on additional sections of roadway and extend I-69 Texas.

Our motto for this important effort is "I-69, Driven by Texans." It sends a meaningful message about involving citizens to determine the transportation future of our state along the I-69 route. Here's how you can be a productive part of the much-needed solutions for I-69.

★ Visit **www.txdot.gov/DrivenByTexans** to offer feedback on your ideas for I-69 Texas.

★ **Invite a segment committee member** to come speak to your local civic or business organization.

★ Call **512-334-3841** to receive a comment card to complete and return by mail.

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I-69 Segment Three: Preliminary Planning

The I-69 Segment Three Committee area includes counties along U.S. 59 and U.S. 77 from Harris County southward to Bee and Refugio counties. Members of the I-69 Segment Committees represent metropolitan planning organizations, counties, cities, chambers of commerce, economic development organizations, ports, Texas Farm Bureau, and community and business leaders along with private citizens.

The Segment Three Committee studied the mobility, safety and economic development needs of their communities that could be provided by I-69. The Committee recommends using the existing footprints of U.S. 59 and U.S. 77 and, to the greatest extent possible, staying within the existing right of way.

The Committee recognizes that in some areas, existing right of way on these highways is narrow and improving the existing highways into an interstate may affect existing properties. To minimize impacts to communities and preserve properties, the Committee recommends relief routes in some areas.

The Committee welcomes your comments on I-69 Texas and our recommended relief routes and project priorities. Please refer to the Segment Three map for details on these recommendations.

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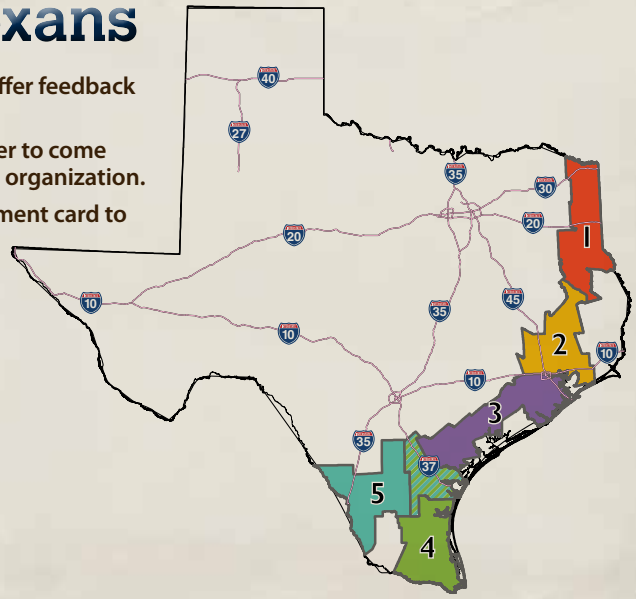

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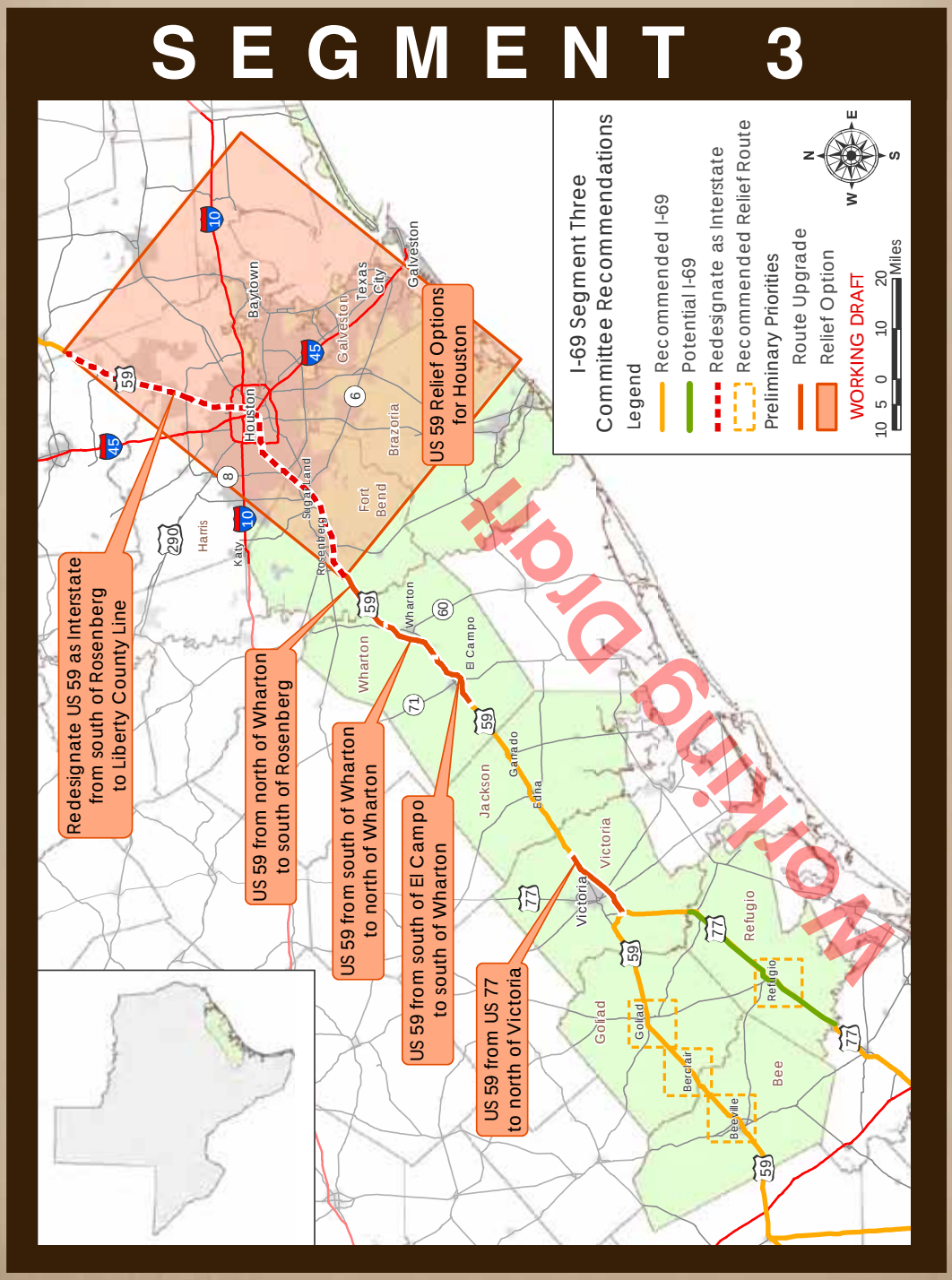
Segment Three Committee Recommendations

The map below displays Segment Three Committee's recommendations for the I-69 route, relief routes and Committee's preliminary priority projects. Visit the I-69 Texas website at www.txdot.gov/DrivenByTexans for more information about I-69 Texas and your community. Your comments and questions are welcomed and encouraged.



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Let Us Hear From You!

Please provide your comments and question on I-69 below and mail the card to us (postage is paid). You can also give us your thoughts electronically by going to our website www.txdot.gov/DrivenByTexans.

Comments/Questions _____

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How did you learn about I-69? _____

Please provide your **Zip Code** _____ or **City** _____

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