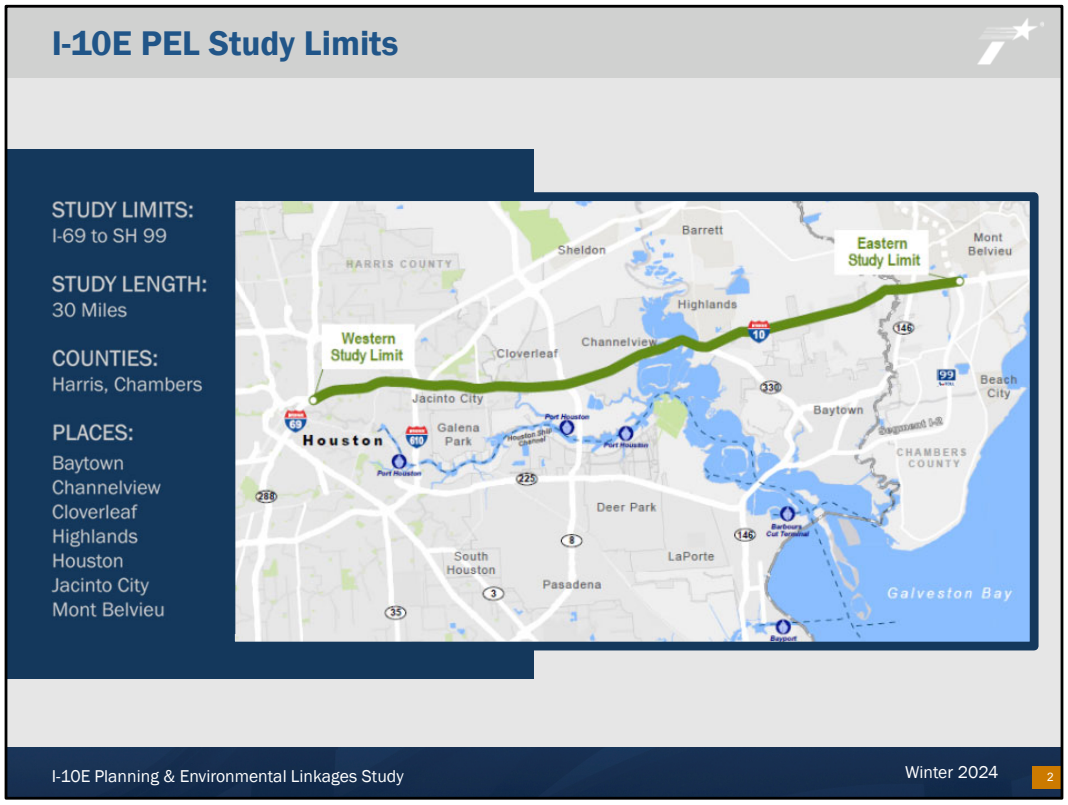
Welcome to the Texas Department of Transportation ("TEX- dot") Houston District's public meeting for the I-10 East Planning and Environmental Linkages ("I-10 East Pel") Study.

A PEL study is an early step in the transportation development process. It is a collaborative approach that can minimize the duplication of effort, promote environmental stewardship, and help reduce costs and time delays in project completion. A PEL study can also streamline the NEPA process, which is the National Environmental Policy Act that requires federal agencies to assess the environmental impacts of a proposed project.

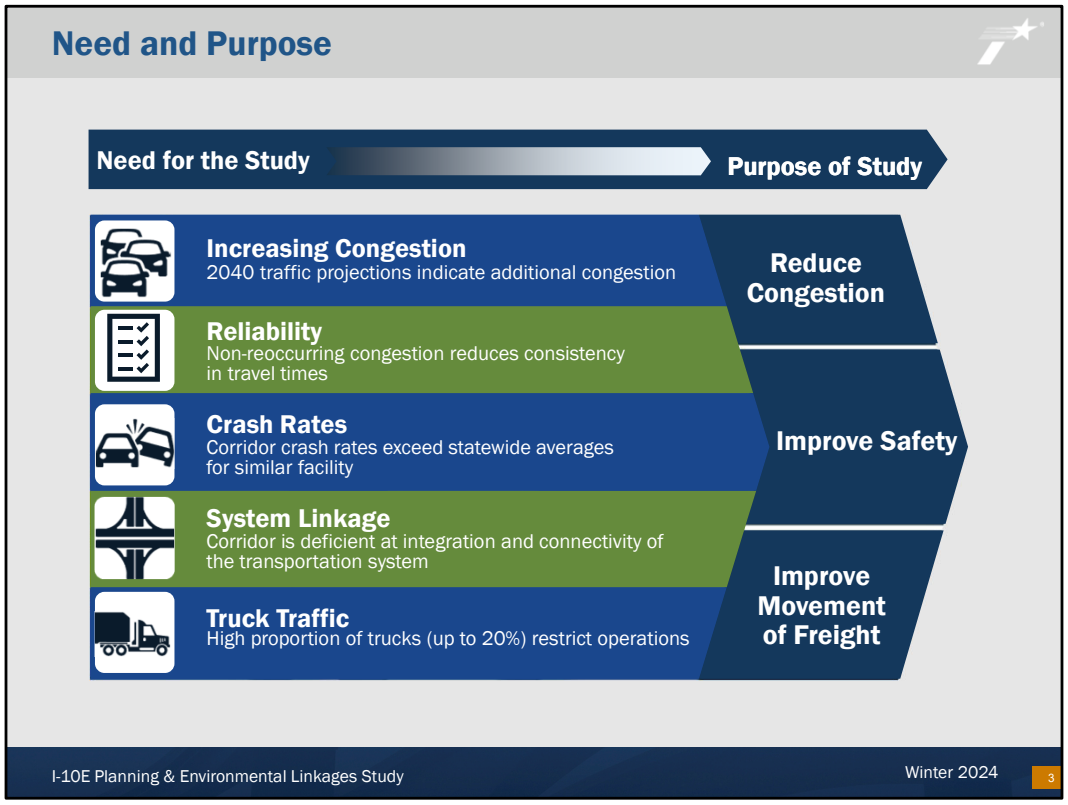
This is the second public meeting being conducted for the I-10 East PEL Study. This prerecorded presentation was developed to present the study process and describe the Universe of Alternatives.



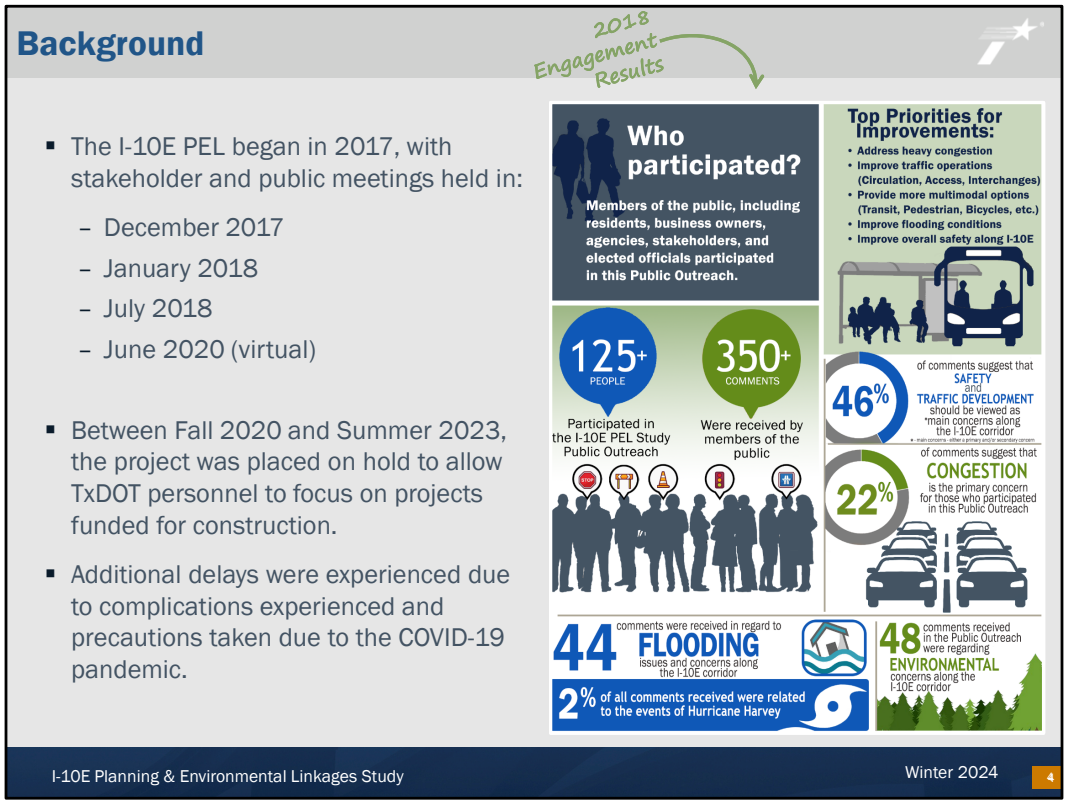
The I-10 East PEL Study consists of 30 miles of interstate from I-69 in Harris County to State Highway 99, or Grand Parkway, in Chambers County.

I-10 is the southernmost continuous roadway that connects the Pacific Ocean on the west coast to the Atlantic Ocean on the east coast. One third of that length of I-10 lies entirely within the state of Texas.

Our 30-mile corridor encompasses numerous cities, communities, and businesses. It connects directly with four major regional roadways — I-69, I-610, Beltway 8, and Spur 330 — and includes Port Houston, whose freight movements heavily influence traffic in the Houston region. In addition, a portion of the I-10 study limits serves as a designated hurricane evacuation route.



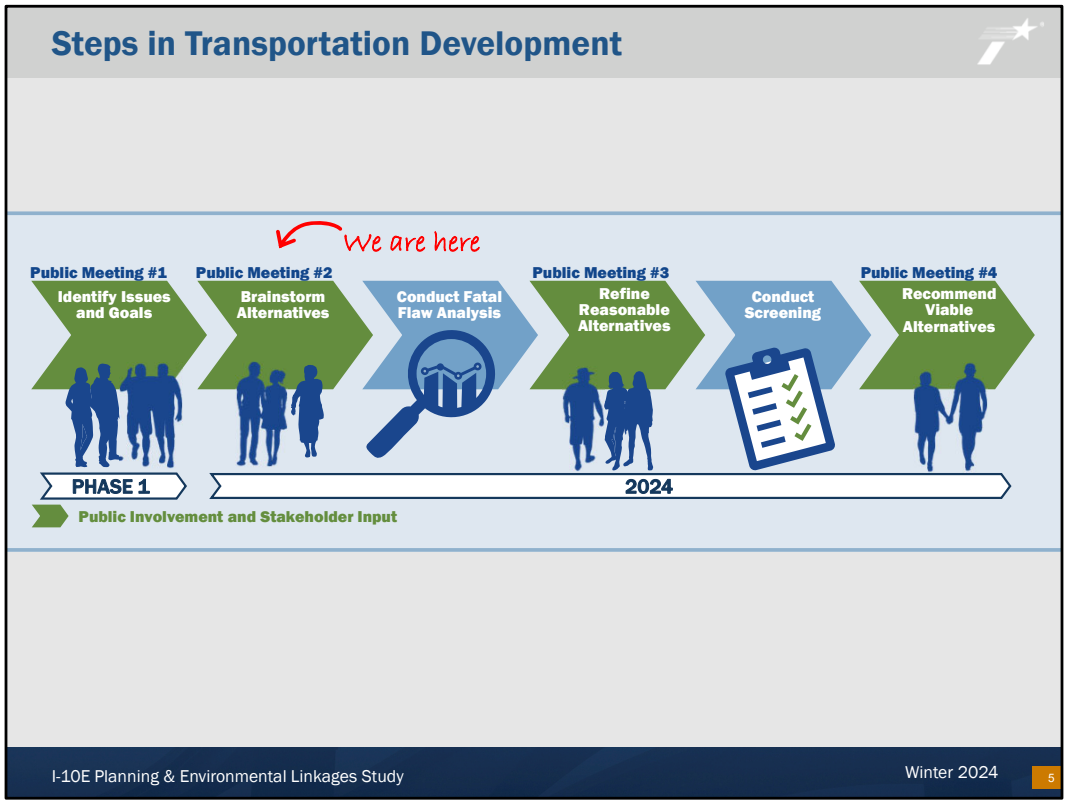
One of the most important parts of a PEL study, the Purpose & Need, is used to define the corridor's visions and goals and helps narrow down the Universe of Alternatives. This guiding document was developed using public input. Congestion, reliability, crash rates, system linkage, and truck traffic are the key needs identified for this study and relate to the study's purpose — reduce congestion, improve safety, and improve freight movement.



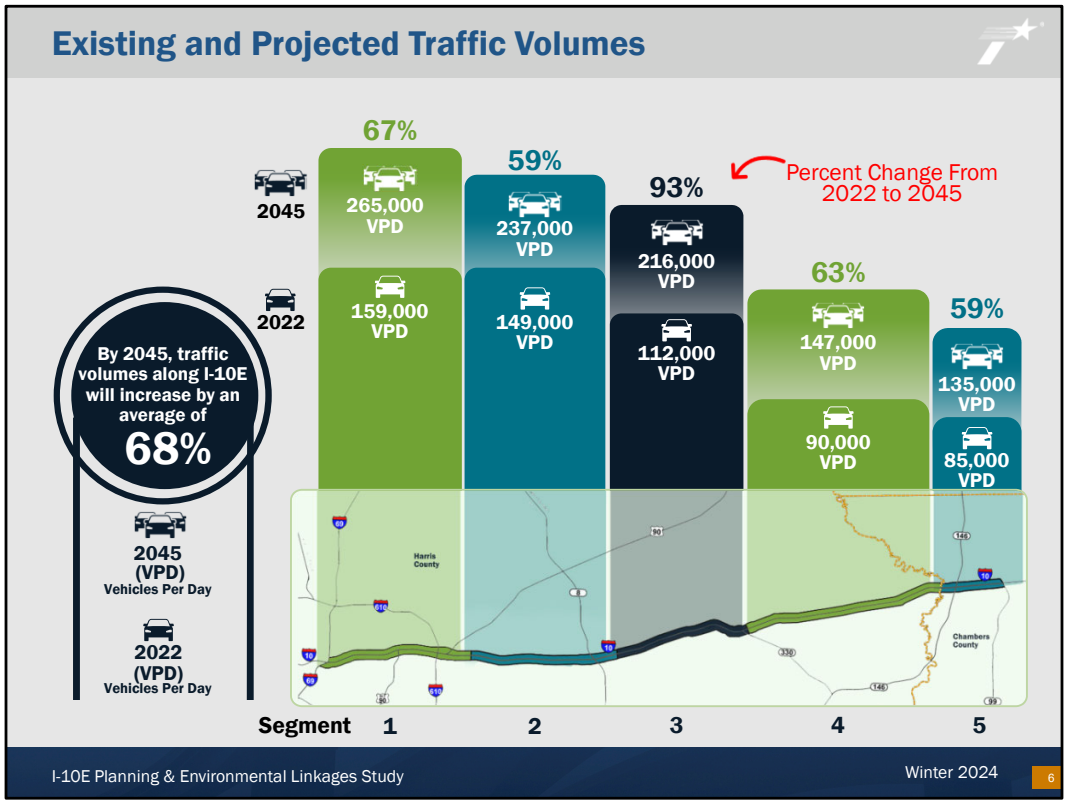
The I-10 East PEL began in 2017, with stakeholder and public meetings held in 2017, 2018, and 2020.

Between Fall 2020 and Summer 2023, the project was placed on hold to allow TEX-dot personnel to focus on projects funded for construction.

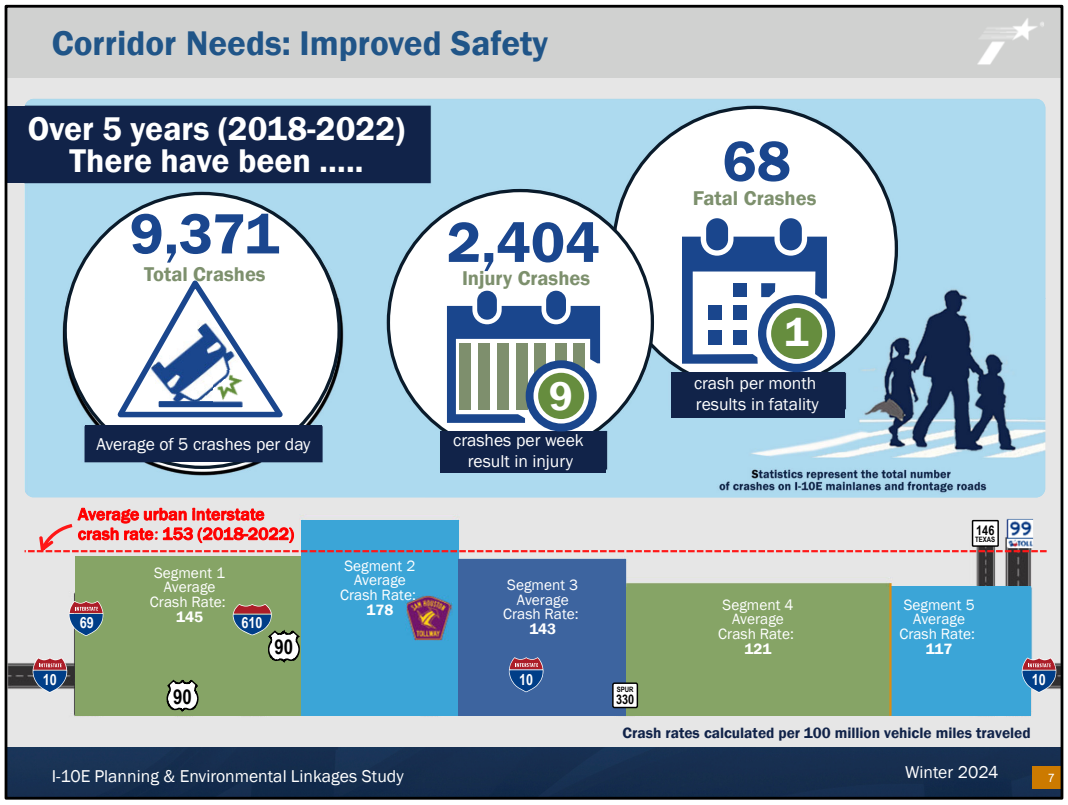
Additional delays were experienced due to complications experienced and precautions taken due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



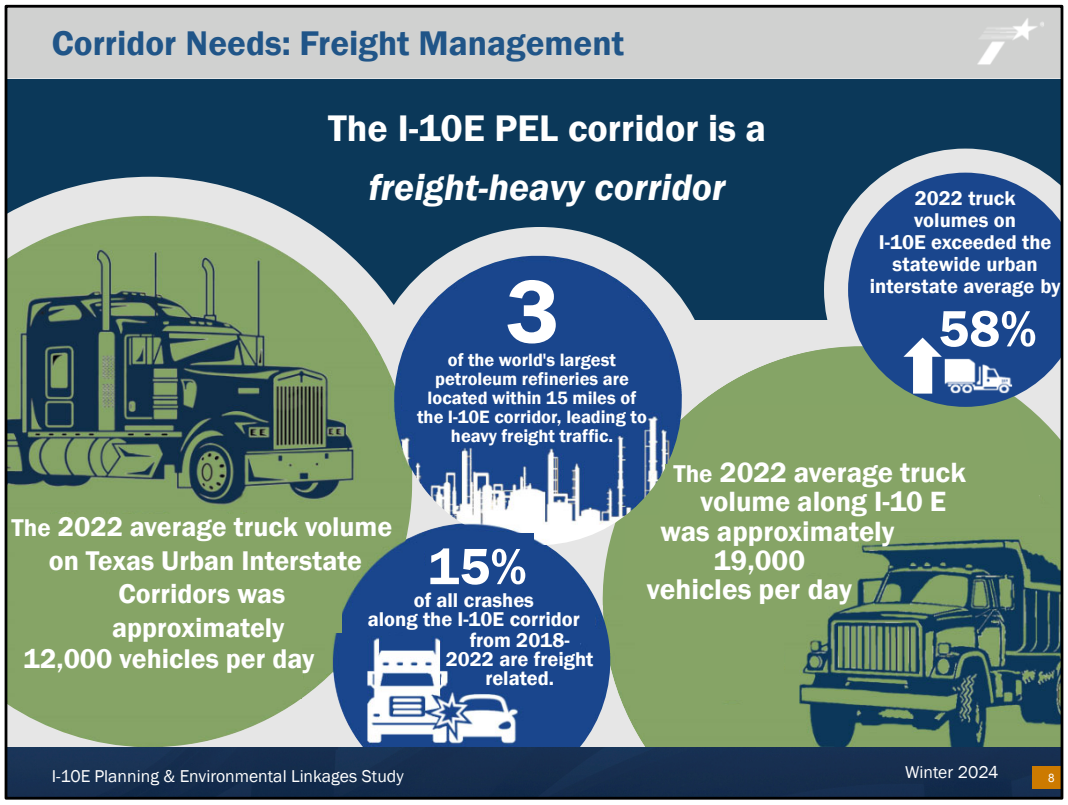
Public meeting #2 is being held in early 2024. Once input is received on the Universe of Alternatives, the study team will conduct the fatal flaws analysis, followed by another public meeting in mid-2024. Reasonable alternatives will be presented for comment at Public meeting #3. Public input will be considered, in addition to screening criteria. The study team will recommend viable alternatives for further study at public meeting #4.



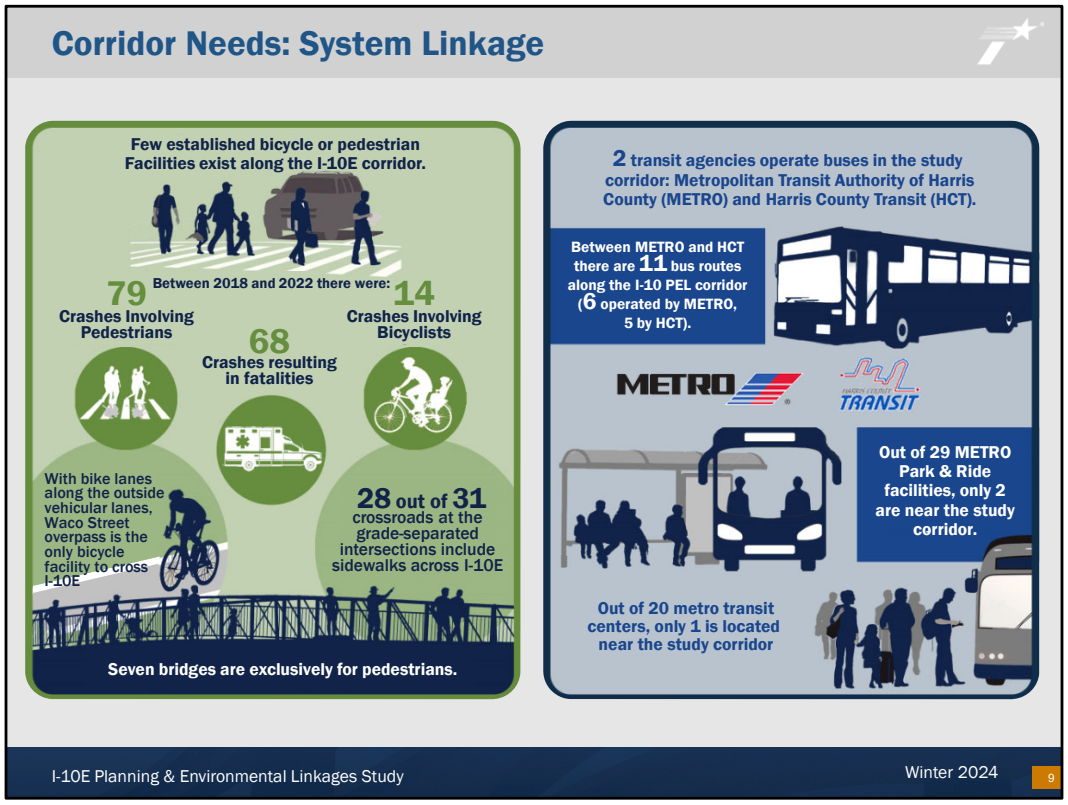
We compared the current and projected number of vehicles on the road on an average day, which is called Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT). This chart shows traffic volumes for 2022, and projections for 2045 within five individual segments of the I-10E corridor. Projected growth ranges from 59% to 93% for the five segments, with an average projected growth rate of 68%.



Tracking safety is of upmost importance for designing an effective transportation system. In five years between 2018 and 2022, there were 9,371 total reported crashes, which resulted in 2,404 injuries. There were 68 fatal crashes during the time period, or one deadly crash per month. Segment 2 is above the average crash rate for urban interstates.

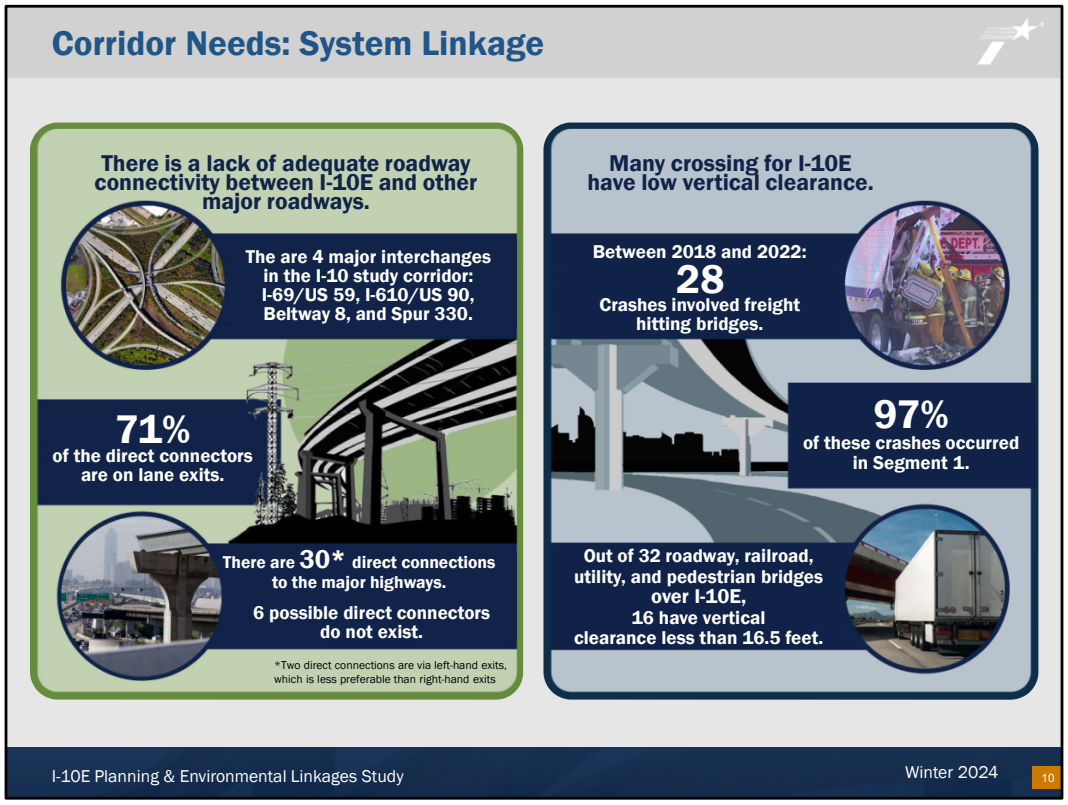


The corridor experiences high truck traffic, in part because of the area's industrial character. Three of the world's largest petroleum refineries are located within 15 miles of the corridor and there are more than 50 intermodal facilities nearby. Because of this, the I-10 East PEL corridor is a critical freight route. Crash data showed that 15% of all accidents in the study area between 2018 and 2022 were freight related. Data from 2022 shows that freight truck volumes along the corridor were 58% higher than the average freight truck volumes along Texas urban interstate corridors.



An effective transportation system links various methods of travel, such as bicycle, pedestrian, and transit modes. The study corridor has many linkage gaps. For example, there are few facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists along the corridor. Waco Street overpass is the only road crossing in the I-10E PEL corridor that includes bicycle facilities. Only 7 bridges are exclusively for pedestrians and Waco street is the only overpass with a bicycle facility crossing I-10. Between 2018 and 2022 there were 79 crashes involving pedestrians and 14 crashes involving bicyclists. 68 of these crashes resulted in fatalities.

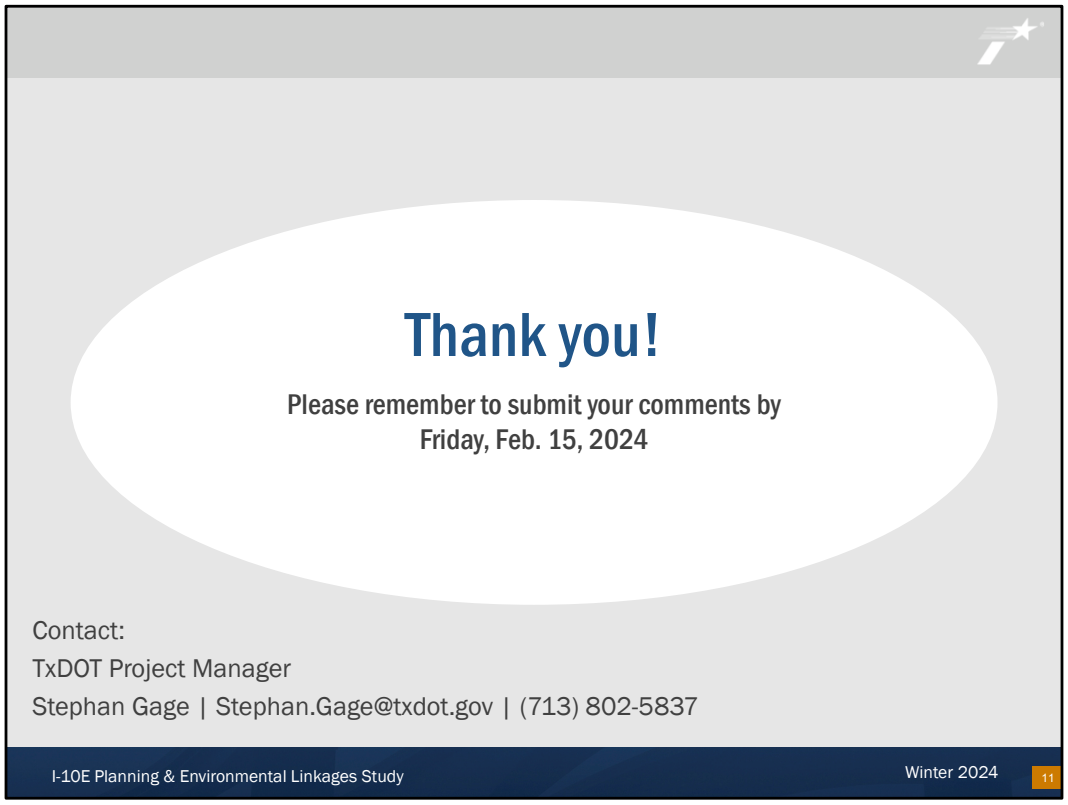
The study area has limited transit service. Two transit agencies operate 11 bus routes along the corridor: Metropolitan Transit Authority (METRO) and Harris County Transit (HCT). Of 29 Park & Ride facilities in the Houston region, only 1 is within the study corridor. And out of the 29 regional METRO transit centers, only 2 are located near the corridor.



There is a lack of adequate roadway connectivity between the I-10 East PEL corridor and the other major highways. The 4 major interchanges along the corridor include I-69/US 59, I-610/US 90, Beltway 8, and Spur 330. Of the 31 direct connections between I-10 and these major highways, 71% are only one lane. This limited capacity frequently causes backups onto the mainlines during peak travel times. There are also 6 locations that could accommodate connections, but those connections do not currently exist.

Many of the overpasses that cross the I-10 East PEL corridor have low vertical clearance, creating safety hazards for tall trucks. Out of 32 roadway, railroad, utility, and pedestrian bridges over the I-10 East PEL corridor, 16 have a vertical clearance less than TxDOT's standard of 16.5 feet. Between 2018 and 2022, 28 crashes involved freight hitting bridges, with 97% of those crashes occurring in Segment 1.

Additionally, the I-10 East corridor will plan facilities for vulnerable road users such as pedestrians and bike-users, with whom 68 crashes were involved.



Thank you for participating in this virtual public meeting for the I-10 East PEL Study. Please remember to submit your comments by Friday, February 15, 2024. You may also submit comments or questions at anytime during the study process by contacting Stephan Gage, TxDOT project manager, at (713) 802-5837 or Stephan.Gage@txdot.gov.