



Texas Freight Advisory Committee

Kick-Off Meeting

February 28, 2013

Texas Department of Transportation

125 East 11th Street, Austin, Texas

Attendees:

Committee Member	Organization	Attendance
Judge Ed Emmett, Chair	Harris County	Present
Judge Carlos H. Cascos, Vice-Chair	Cameron County	Present
French Thompson replaced Aaron Hegeman	BNSF	Present
Aaron Demerson	Governor's Office of Economic Development	-
Carlton Schwab	Texas Economic Development Council	-
Rigoberto Villarreal	City of McAllen	Present
Kenneth Dierschke	Texas Farm Bureau	Present
Steve Stewart	Gulf Wind International, Inc.	Present
Steve Boecking	Alliance Texas	Present
John Esparza	Texas Motor Trucking Association	-
Jack Todd	Texas Association of Manufacturers	Present
Kevin McIntosh	Kansas City Southern (KCSR)	-
Ron Beeson for James Griffin	East Harris County Manufacturers Association	Present
John LaRue	Texas Ports Association, Port of Corpus Christi	Present
Joseph Adams	Union Pacific	Present
Todd Frease, Sr.	McLane Global Logistics	Present
Mike Graham, Sr.	HEB – San Antonio	Present
Jessica Druce for Col. Leonard Waterworth	Port of Houston	Present
Ronnie Volkening	Texas Retail Association	Present
Michael Dyll	Texas International Freight LLC	Present
K. Alan Russell	The Tecma Group of Companies	Present
Nelson Balido	Border Trade Alliance – San Antonio	Present
Judge Clay Lewis Jenkins	Dallas County	Present

TxDOT & FHWA:

Jeff Austin, Commissioner
 Phil Wilson
 Marc Williams, PE
 Caroline Mays, AICP
 Robert Tally

Texas Transportation Commission, TxDOT
 Executive Director, TxDOT
 Director of Planning, TxDOT
 Freight Plan Manager, TxDOT
 Division Administrator – Texas, FHWA

CDM Smith Consultant Team:

Butch Babineaux, PE
 Keith J. Bucklew
 Paul Bingham
 Nancy Ledbetter
 Randall Dillard
 Chris Holtkamp

CDM Smith
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 Nancy Ledbetter & Associates, Inc.
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1. Introductions and Opening Comments

Judge Ed Emmett, Chair

- It is important that the state understand the importance of freight
- When voters think of transportation, they often think of commuting, not freight
- There is a renewed focus on freight; state and federal interest is growing
- Focus is on transportation as an economic engine; economic health depends on transportation efficiency
- The Freight Advisory Committee website is: www.movetexasfreight.com

Judge Carlos Cascos, Vice Chair

- Thanked TxDOT for putting the committee together

Rigoberto Villarreal

- Mexico is important part of discussion
- Traffic from Texas to Mexico is increasing

Kenneth Dierschke

- Freight is very important to agriculture producers / landowners
- They are interested in moving products to market

Steve Stewart

- Has 41 years in shipping, mostly on the freight side
- Freight is “near and dear to my heart”

John LaRue

- TxDOT has taken a proactive lead when it comes to ports
- Lots of attention by TxDOT to set standards for next 20 years
- Oil and gas driving new port activity

Joe Adams

- UP is focusing on border gateways and the ports, as well as involved with intermodal projects in several cities

Jessica Druce (for Col. Leonard D. Waterworth)

- Port of Houston has seen tremendous growth

Alan Russell

- Interested in land ports in Texas

Nelson Balido

- Need to address legislative and policy issues to facilitate cross border transportation

Judge Clay Lewis Jenkins

- Dallas County has seen benefits from manufacturing and transportation investments
- Great jobs have been created due to logistics and manufacturing

2. Panama Canal Working Group Report Summary

Judge Ed Emmett, Chair

- Expansion of Panama Canal will have impact on Texas
- Represents opportunity to expand Texas' position as a global gateway for the nation
- Potential for exports may end up being higher than imports, so need to plan to handle out-bound traffic
- Improvements are needed to handle transition from larger ships on to trucks and rail, then on to customers.
- Executive Summary of Panama Canal Working Group highlights three key findings:
 - Texas should invest in freight transportation infrastructure
 - Freight transportation infrastructure investments grow commerce
 - Commerce grows the tax base of the state
- MAP-21 puts new emphasis on freight
- Need to consider bulk and specialized shipping, not just containers
- The issue is not just international freight, it is about moving freight within Texas

Marc Williams, TxDOT

- Freight Advisory Committee feedback is important
- Any ideas are important
- Questionnaire included in handout will be sent out electronically to capture feedback

Judge Ed Emmett, Chair

- Encouraged members to check their contact information in the briefing books and send any corrections to TxDOT

Phil Wilson, TxDOT Executive Director

- Thanked committee members for their service
- Stressed TxDOT is fully committed to ensure the committee's success
- Stressed the importance of a collaborative process to provide sustainability for the next decade

3. MAP-21 Freight Overview

Bob Talley, Division Administrator, FHWA

- Texas is number one in waterborne commerce
- The state has the 12th largest economy in the world
- Four of the top 20 water ports in the U.S. are in Texas
- Three of the top 20 freight gateways are in Texas
- There are staggering projections for the growth in Texas freight traffic
- The work of the Freight Advisory Committee is critical in developing a strategic statewide plan
- MAP-21 creates a streamlined, performance-based, multimodal program to address transportation challenges
- It sets the stage for Congress to move forward
- MAP 21-is focused on freight at Federal level
- MAP-21 will define National Freight Policy, including National Freight Plan, focused on 27,000 centerline miles of Federally designated National Freight System

- MAP-21 allows for up to 95% Federal matching for approved projects
- Policy efforts to make truck size and weight standards consistent
- Policy efforts to make Toll systems compatible
- States set performance measures
- A provision for Projects of National and Regional Significance (not funded by Congress)
- State process will drive coordination with Federal program and funding
- Encourages – but does not require – state freight plans to provide a comprehensive plan for immediate and long-range planning
- Texas is stepping up and developing a state based plan

Jeff Austin, TxDOT Commissioner

- Texas is seen as a leader
- TxDOT is about moving people and products
- It is not a highway department, it is a Department of Transportation
- TxDOT needs help with information about freight and how to share that information
- Committee can provide ideas and communication between public and private sectors
- Specifically, the committee can provide advice on policy, priorities, investments, coordination among different players and safety needs
- Safety is non-negotiable
- Texas must move freight
- The state perspective is important in the consideration of imports, exports, interstate, and intrastate freight
- Help find funding resources

Judge Carlos Cascos, Vice Chair

- Nominates Judge Ed Emmett to serve as the Texas representative on the National Federal Freight Advisory Committee
- The nomination is approved

4. TxDOT Freight Planning Overview

Marc Williams, TxDOT

Caroline Mays, TxDOT

- Freight planning has been a challenge in the past
- Advisory Committee can help by providing focus and attention on the issue
- Key objective is to determine how to measure freight system performance
- The committee can address freight issues and how to maximize federal matching funds
- Need to think across modes and functions to address freight issues and coordinate efforts
- External Communication is critical – the committee can help in public engagement and identifying stakeholders
- There is a need to identify gaps in knowledge and opportunities; need to think differently
- Eight issues regarding the committee framework were covered in a PowerPoint presentation, including: the committee need, purpose, mission, goals, objectives, roles/responsibilities, governance and performance measures
- The importance of TxDOT learning from the committee was stressed
- The committee provides an opportunity to collaboratively address critical freight transportation issues in Texas

- TxDOT pledged to be available to the committee at any time for questions and needs

Judge Ed Emmett, Chair

- Committee members need to share information and resources
- Members should not be afraid to think outside the box and not disregard ideas even if they seem a stretch
- Members should utilize Caroline Mays (TxDOT) as point of contact to share ideas
- There is no definite end date for committee

5. Texas Freight Mobility Plan Overview

Keith Bucklew, CDM Smith

- Freight is the economy in motion; if it stops, the economy stops
- The Texas Freight Plan should include all modes of freight movement
- The plan needs to coordinate with Statewide Transportation Plan, meet MAP 21 requirements, and National Freight goals
- Improving freight mobility is the overarching objective and includes reducing congestion and improving safety, while stimulating economic development and improving quality of life
- Vehicle traffic has doubled in last 25 years (similar growth expected over next 25 years), while infrastructure has only grown 5 to 7 percent
- Average American consumes 45 tons of “stuff” in a year
- Improving intermodal connectivity includes providing options that maximize customer service and minimizes cost
- The Texas Freight Plan will be developed in an 18 month schedule
- Stakeholder involvement is “near and dear” to the project
- The challenge is that Texas is a huge freight state
- The Freight Advisory Committee can help Texas move ahead

Marc Williams

- Committee activities will tie into Statewide Freight Plan
- Need to help define freight system

6. Discussion

Judge Ed Emmett, Chair

- Future quarterly meetings need to be long enough to allow the committee to get as much done as possible, but be respectful of peoples’ time
- If member can’t make meeting, please send alternate
- Asked what legal restrictions are there on Freight Advisory Committee meetings (Response from TxDOT: There are no specific legal restrictions but recommends meetings be open and transparent. Also, the committee has an advisory role.)
- Suggests that meetings be educational for members and that each agenda includes at least two “meaty” issues
 - Example: Rural Rail Districts
 - How does Texas utilize Rural Rail Districts?
 - Why are many inactive?

- Can they enhance the freight network in Texas?
- What are the assets for freight transportation?
- What is the impact of natural gas as a fuel?
- How does new technology impact freight transportation?
- Following a discussion about the time and location of future meetings, the committee decided the next meeting would be held on Wed. June 5 (with people arriving on the 4th for dinner) in the Dallas/Fort Worth Area
- Possible locations for other future meetings include San Antonio, El Paso, Laredo, Amarillo, Houston and Waco.
- Future meetings dates may also include tours of local freight facilities or of other sites related to freight transportation.

John LaRue

- Need to consider pipelines, how to incorporate into the freight system

Judge Ed Emmett, Chair

- Lots of pipelines being developed in Eagle Ford Shale area, what's the plan for that and potential impacts?

Mike Graham

- Get agendas up front so people can prepare and research
- Incorporate research and education into meetings

Judge Ed Emmett, Chair

- Need discussion of retail, distribution
- Need to consider many factors in distribution system, it's the producers, wholesalers, etc. (Flowers go through Miami from South America and are then shipped to Texas. Produce goes to North East US then comes to Texas.)

Steve Stewart

- Need to consider air freight

Judge Ed Emmett, Chair

- Short haul sea freight (Short Sea Shipping), like from Florida to Brownsville, Texas is under-utilized

Nelson Balido

- \$12 billion in monthly trade from Mexican ports come into Texas
- Huge bottlenecks at Port of Entry, for both truck and rail
- 75% of NAFTA traffic goes through Texas
- Laredo and Eagle Pass are largest inland ports

French Thompson

- Need to address bottlenecks from ports, back up in transferring from ship to rail or truck to move out of port area
- Rail expansion would reduce truck traffic and impacts
- Consider more inland facilities to process shipments (customs, etc.) rather than at ports

Michael Dyll

- Intermodal transfers are where the backups happen, difficult to transition from one mode to another

Judge Clay Lewis Jenkins

- Pilot projects in other states are studying impacts of super heavy loads (100,000 lbs on 6 axles) on trucks and impacts on facilities, may be an option in Texas

Judge Ed Emmett, Chair

- Truck size and weight is an issue (as noted earlier in FHWA presentation) and can be a controversial issue
- Committee shouldn't be afraid of controversy; don't shy away from challenging issues

Mike Graham

- Look at gaining efficiencies across modes; they may increase capacity without adding infrastructure

Steve Boecking

- Panama Canal report has tons of good information, especially on ports; review the report

Jack Todd

- Don't forget exports; most discussion focused on imports, but exports are growing
- Need to consider 'through traffic' as well, that which comes through but doesn't stay in Texas
- Need to consider intrastate traffic as well

Ronnie Volkening

- Need to address issue of "last mile", how to get goods to final store destination
- This is highly visible and significant issue, many local roads not designed for trucks, major impacts on traffic, etc.

Caroline Mays

- The last mile is very important; not all roadways are designed for trucks

Carlton Schwab

- NASCO is studying freight with a focus on the "last mile"

Tiffany Melvin, Executive Director, NASCO

- Texas has several cities with test projects underway for technology solutions to the "last mile" issue
- Studies are looking at ways to optimize delivery
- Regional Working groups are moving this forward and identifying solutions

Kenneth Dierschke

- Wants more information about MAP-21

John LaRue

- Barges need to be considered, especially for bulk cargos on the GIWW

Rigoberto Villarreal

- Superhighway under construction in Mexico with the potential to double traffic to the border
- Need to plan for that traffic

7. Meeting Photos

