



**TEXAS  
FREIGHT  
ADVISORY  
COMMITTEE**



## Freight Advisory Committee

August 4, 2016, 9:30 a.m.

TxDOT Offices, 125<sup>th</sup> E 11<sup>th</sup> Street  
Austin, Texas 78701

### Attendees

Committee Member	Organization	Attendance
Judge Ed Emmett, Chair	Harris County	Present
Secretary Carlos H. Cascos, Vice Chair	Texas Secretary of State	Not Present
Ron Beeson	Lubrizol Corp.	Designee Present (Scott Campbell)
Steve Boecking	Hillwood Properties	Present
Russell Boening	Texas Farm Bureau	Present
Paul Cristina	BNSF Railway	Present
Michael Dyll	Texas International Freight	Present
John Esparza	Texas Trucking Association	Present
Todd Frease	McLane Global Logistics	Not Present
Roger Guenther	Port of Houston Authority	Designee Present (Bruce Mann)
Luis Hinojosa	Uni-Trade Forwarding, LLC	Not Present
Judge Clay Lewis Jenkins	Dallas County	Designee Present (Martin Molloy)
John LaRue	Texas Ports Association, Port of Corpus Christi	Present
Brenda Mainwaring	Union Pacific Railroad	Present
Kevin McIntosh	Kansas City Southern (KCSR)	Not Present
Rolando Ortiz	Killam Development, Ltd.	Present
Keith Patridge	McAllen Economic Development Corp.	Present
Juan-Carlos Ruck	HEB	Present
K. Alan Russell	The Tecma Group of Companies	Not Present
Carlton Schwab	Texas Economic Development Council	Not Present
Steve Stewart	Gulf Winds International, Inc.	Designee Present (Gabriel Allen)
Jack Todd	Trinity Industries, Inc.	Designee Present (Elise Johnson)
<b>Ex-Officio Members</b>		
Senator Sylvia R. Garcia	Texas State Senate, District 6	Present
Rep. Armando Martinez	Texas House Member, District 39	Not Present

Rep. Sergio Munoz, Jr.	Texas House Member, District 36	Not Present
Rep. Poncho Nevarez	Texas House Member, District 74	Not Present
Joseph Adams		Not Present
Judge Erin Ford	Houston County	Present
Gerry Schwebel	IBC Bank	Present
Mayor Pete Saenz	City of Laredo	Present

### **TxDOT & Texas A&M Transportation Institute (TTI)**

Victor Vandergriff	Commission
Lauren Garduño, PE	Director of Project Planning and Development, TxDOT
Caroline Mays, AICP	Director, Freight and International Trade Section, TxDOT
Bill Orr	TxDOT
Blake Calvert	TxDOT/SLA
Darcie Schipull	TxDOT/SAT
Gil Wilson	TxDOT/RRD
Homer Bazan, Jr.	TxDOT/PHR
Kale Driemeier	TxDOT
Melissa Meyer	TxDOT
Pete Alvarez	TxDOT/LRD
Roger Schiller	TxDOT
Sarah Bagwell	TxDOT
Allan Rutter	TTI

### **Cambridge Systematics Consultant Team**

Paula Dowell	Cambridge Systematics
Kelsey Ahern	Cambridge Systematics
Isabel Victoria-Jaramillo	Cambridge Systematics
Janna Rosenthal	Atkins
Joe Bryan	WSP   Parsons Brinckerhoff
Tina Walker	WSP   Parsons Brinckerhoff
Randall Dillard	Nancy Ledbetter & Associates

### **Other Attendees**

Barbara Koslov, Harris County  
 Derek Darnell, Office of Senator Garcia  
 Gary Bushell, Alliance for I-69 Texas  
 Gary Pedigo, Texas State Legislative Board  
 Georgi Ann Jasenovic, FHWA  
 Glen Jones, Texas Farm Bureau  
 Henry Sauvignet, IBC Bank  
 Jeff Hathcock, NCTCOG  
 Jing Xu  
 Jose R. Ramos, Jr. Alamo Area MPO TAC, City of Seguin  
 Judge Loyd Neal, Nueces County  
 Lindsay Wood, HNTB  
 Michael Bomba, University of North Texas  
 Michael Reeves, Ports to Plains Alliance

Patrick Mandapaka, H-GAC  
Steven Smith, North Highland  
Vince Mantero, CH2M  
Will Smithson, HNTB

## Meeting Action Items

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- Provide an update of the FAST Act freight provisions and dedicated freight funding and implications for Texas and the Texas Freight Mobility Plan
- Discuss freight plan implementation progress since adoption and activities moving forward
- Discuss the freight plan as a Commission priority
- Discuss specific projects and process of prioritization

## 1. Welcome & Introductions

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Each TxFAC member introduced themselves.

Judge Ed Emmett welcomed the group and thanked them for their participation and contributions leading to the completion of the Texas Freight Mobility Plan. He indicated that the committee's work is just beginning, however. The Texas Freight Advisory Committee (TxFAC) will serve as a working group to help TxDOT prioritize projects in the Freight Plan and position freight projects to take advantage of funding opportunities as they arise. He emphasized the importance of the group's continued participation and elevating the awareness of freight issues among state and local political leaders.

Lauren Garduño provided some additional opening remarks, officially stepping into the role previously filled by Marc Williams. The agency is moving toward a performance-based project selection process, and TxDOT's 10-year, \$68B Unified Transportation Program (UTP) is scheduled for adoption in August. One of the committee's challenges will be to prioritize and weight freight projects in such a way that they start to emerge on the top of the state's overall project list. He also reiterated the need to leverage the committee to raise awareness of the freight needs in Texas and help freight projects be successful in discretionary grant programs (TxDOT's recent three FASTLANE proposal submittals were unsuccessful).

## 2. FAST Act – Freight Provisions and Dedicated Freight Funding

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Melissa Meyer started by providing an update since the last TxFAC meeting. The interim National Multimodal Freight Network (NMFN) was released in June 2016. Comments are due on September 6, 2016 and a final map will be released in December 2016. The NMFN includes the National Highway Freight Network (NHFN) as well as Class I freight railroads, ports, inland and intracoastal waterways, Marine Highways, and the top 50 airports with the highest annual landed weight. TxDOT is currently preparing comments on the interim NMFN map.

The National Highway Freight Network (NHFN) determines where TxDOT can use its freight funding. The NHFN will consist of four components:

1. **Primary Highway Freight System.** This network was finalized by USDOT under MAP-21. The Texas portion of the system includes 3,727.77 miles.
2. **Critical Rural Freight Corridors.** States are tasked with identifying a network of critical rural freight corridors meeting certain requirements. Texas may designate 745.5 miles of Critical Rural Freight Corridors.
3. **Critical Urban Freight Corridors.** MPOs, in consultation with the State, are tasked with identifying a network of critical urban freight corridors that meet certain requirements. If an MPO region has a population over 500,000, the MPO takes the lead in determining the urban freight corridors in consultation with the State. If less than 500,000, the State leads in consultation with the MPO. Texas may designate a total of 372.7 miles of urban freight corridors.
4. **Interstates Not Already Identified as Part of the PHFS.** As a clarification, Texas cannot use Federal freight funds on segments identified in this category. Federal freight funds may be applied only to items 1-3 above.

Judge Emmitt, Mayor Pete Saenz, and Bruce Mann inquired about the process to get I-69 on the map. A state can recommend that additional highway lines be added to the multimodal map (NMFN), but there is no funding attached to that map. For the Primary Highway Freight System map (PHFS) that is tied to FAST Act formula funding, the lower portion of I-69 is included. To add to the PHFS map, Texas is capped in the mileage of critical freight corridors it can put forward, so I-69 will need to be considered among all of the other corridors in the state. Senator Sylvia Garcia asked at what point in the future the rest of I-69 could be added to the Federally-designated Primary Highway Freight System? The Federally-designated freight map will be revisited during the next reauthorization of the surface transportation bill slated for 2020 at the earliest.

Brenda Mainwaring brought up the importance of considering rail infrastructure and intermodal connectors when thinking about critical rural and urban freight corridors and inquired about the mechanism for doing so. Melissa Meyer reiterated that TxDOT and the MPOs have not yet started the process of identifying the critical rural and urban freight corridors. The TxFAC will be involved in that process when it begins.

Judge Loyd Neal stressed the importance of designating at least portions of I-69 on the rural and urban freight corridors. That designation will be critical to the success of I-69.

Steve Boecking asked if the state could designate portions of a given corridor as rural or urban, as appropriate. Melissa responded yes, but the corridors must meet the specific criteria to be appropriately designated as rural or urban.

Lauren Garduño indicated that the TxDOT planning department will be making a recommendation to the Commission for identifying strategic corridors based on evaluation criteria tied to the Long Range Plan. Freight corridors will be included among them.

Judge Erin Ford inquired about the Texas apportionment of Federal funds. Slide 4 of the presentation shows the total apportionment of Highway account apportionments to Texas, not just freight.

Bruce Mann mentioned the importance of including port connectors as part of the multimodal network (NMFN) and the need to look at all ports. Caroline Mays indicated that she is working

with the Maritime Division on this now and together they are assembling comments on the NMFN to submit to USDOT.

Martin Molloy indicated the need to establish logical termini for the critical corridor designations and that those will have to be accommodated within the miles budgets of each category (rural and urban). Lauran Garduno added that planned projects on the corridors will also need to play a factor when identifying critical corridors.

John LaRue inquired how often the rural and urban critical corridors can be updated? Melissa explained that the designation of critical corridors is a rolling process that can change at any time. Once a project receives Federal freight funding, it can be removed from the list and another corridor added. Judge Emmett and Ms. Meyer both agreed that Texas will need to get creative with the process to maximize the state's ability to fund freight projects.

Switching over to a discussion of freight program funding, Ms. Meyer went on to explain that there are two pots of Federal money for freight projects: (1) Formula funds, which amount to \$551 million for Texas over the next five years; and (2) Discretionary funds, the FASTLANE grants will provide \$4.5 billion over the next five years. To be eligible for formula funds, a project must be identified in the state freight plan, and a max of 10 percent of the funds can be spent on non-highway projects.

Discretionary funds will be issued through the competitive FASTLANE grant program. To be eligible, projects must meet certain criteria as outlined on the slides. There is a \$500 million cap for non-highway projects over five years like freight rail or inside the fence port projects; therefore, Melissa Meyer advised TxDOT submit for these projects in early years since the funds will likely run out early. Each applicant is limited to three applications per round. TxDOT submitted three applications (described on the slide) in the first round of FASTLANE; Texas is statutorily limited to three projects. Ultimately 18 projects were awarded in 16 states; none of the Texas projects were selected

Ms. Meyer explained that states must develop a FAST Act compliant freight plan by December 2017 to be eligible to continue using federal formula funds. Texas will lose access to these funds if a FAST Act compliant plan is not produced by December 2017. TxDOT/TxFAC will need to update the Texas Freight Mobility Plan by designating the critical rural and urban freight corridors and prioritize projects within a fiscally constrained plan (projects that realistically can be funded within 5 years). The TxFAC will also play a key role in determining which projects to submit for future rounds of FASTLANE applications.

Mayor Saenz asked if the successful grants were in part due to communities partnering up? Ms. Meyer responded that you always have a stronger project when you have groups coming together financially to fund a project. The committee agreed that an important next step would be to glean lessons learned from the winning FASTLANE applications. TxDOT will be requesting a debrief on the three applications submitted by the agency. Judge Emmett indicated a preference for requesting a debrief on all Texas project submittals together. The USDOT will start conducting debriefs after a 60-day window following award.

Paul Cristina inquired if TxDOT has a position on the extent to which the agency supports projects across the state as a way to show a unifying front? Lauran Garduño explained that TxDOT receives many requests for letters of support, but remains selective in the projects they officially support. TxDOT is trying to communicate with communities to help prioritize which projects are most competitively positioned and writes only a few letters of recommendation to

throw their weight behind the projects they think are best candidates for being selected. Ms. Mays clarified that grant applicants don't have to go through TxDOT, they can submit themselves, but the committee can influence what projects get submitted; if members know a community is putting together a project the member should consider whether it fits into the goals of the freight plan. The limit is three grants per applicant, so TxDOT can submit three applications and other entities in the state can submit their own applications (up to three). However, submitting too many applications from a given state dilutes the state's chances of winning; it makes it hard to see what the state's priorities are. Therefore, it behooves Texas to bring all stakeholders into the fold to put forward the projects that are most likely to be successful.

Mayor Pete Saenz clarified the TxFAC's role in facilitating the selection of projects to put forward. Ms. Mays responded that the committee can serve as the body to communicate with communities and vet projects to put forward.

Ms. Meyer closed with the reminder that the next administration may have new priorities and the discretionary program is a bit of a guessing game every time. Paula Dowell indicated that there is pressure from agencies and communities across the country for more transparency in the project selection process.

### **3. Freight Plan Implementation**

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Caroline Mays introduced the consultant team that will be assisting with freight plan implementation over the next few years. Paula Dowell provided an overview of the Cambridge Systematics team. The team brings a combination of national expertise, firms with continuity to the development of the Freight Mobility Plan, and niche freight expertise.

#### **Freight Plan Recap**

Ms. Mays provided a recap of the Texas Freight Mobility Plan (TFMP) and summarized some of the state's freight challenges, including capacity/congestion, systems operations, safety, connectivity, institutional coordination, border/ports of entry, public awareness/education, and funding. To address these myriad challenges, the Freight Plan provides recommendations in three categories: policies, programs, and projects. The plan also establishes the Texas Freight Network that is much broader than the National Multimodal Freight Network (NMFN). The Texas Freight Network will serve as the baseline for establishing the critical urban and rural freight network discussed previously.

Among the plan's recommendations are three strategic freight planning initiatives and studies that will be undertaken as part of plan implementation:

- Freight-centric design guidelines [Keith Patridge asked whether TxDOT will take into consideration new technologies, such as crash reduction strategies, connected/autonomous vehicles, etc., when developing the freight-centric design guidelines; to which Ms. Mays replied yes.]
- Truck parking needs assessment study
- Economic impact of freight

#### **Freight Plan Implementation Progress Since Adoption in January 2016**

Among the 878 highway projects identified in the TFMP, 25 percent will be let in FY2016 and FY2017 with TxDOT funding. Bruce Mann commented that it is important not to lose sight of the projects that did not make it into the TFMP but are advancing through project development. Steve Boecking asked whether the three projects submitted for FASTLANE grants are still included in the pipeline. The response was yes, they are still in the pipeline to be funded in the future.

Mayor Saenz asked what funding sources are being considered for the remaining projects that have yet to be let. Are there sources other than TxDOT and Federal funding identified for these? The Committee agreed that an action item for future presentation to TxFAC would be a comprehensive list of funding sources for freight projects.

Rather than funding top ranked projects with state funding, Juan-Carlos Ruck offered up the strategy of putting forward the state's top ranked, most competitive projects for discretionary grants. The projects TxDOT puts forward would have to meet certain criteria (environmental cleared, etc.), but would otherwise be among the most competitive. Other members urged caution, indicating that USDOT tends to award projects that would not otherwise receive funding if it did not receive the discretionary grant. It is a balancing act.

Ms. Mays indicated that 10 projects from the TFMP were submitted in FY2016 for Texas' \$98.6 million apportionment under the National Highway Freight Program. The projects had to meet three criteria: (1) be included in the TFMP, (2) be located on the FHWA-designated Primary Highway Freight System, and (3) be available to be let within the year. Given the time constraints and the "use it or lose it" requirements, TxDOT staff were unable to vet the project list through the TxFAC. TxDOT put forward the 10 "ready to go" projects (listed on slide 15), which frees up funding to work on other projects. Rolando Ortiz asked for clarification on this point. Ms. Mays clarified that the Federal freight funding is not "new" money. It is money that TxDOT previously received, but now is required for a freight program purpose.

Looking at the project list, Judge Erin Ford asked for additional details about the project receiving only \$32k. In response, the funding amount shown on the slide may not represent the full cost of the project.

Bruce Mann asked why no projects in Harris County were advanced for FY206 freight formula funds. The response was that none of the projects in Harris County were ready to let within the year.

Ms. Mays then went into more detail on the three projects that TxDOT submitted for the FASTLANE grant program (detailed on slides). Martin Molloy suggested that TxDOT put forward the projects that are most likely to win discretionary funding, regardless of where they are located. Discretionary funding is additional bonus money, but would prefer to see more formula funding and less discretionary.

The FASTLANE debriefs will take place in Washington, DC. Judge Emmitt suggested that a representative from Laredo, the Grand Parkway, and Dallas/Fort Worth attend the debrief alongside TxDOT. It will be good to have some stakeholders present as well as representation from the state's Congressional offices. As has been the case with the TIGER program, many projects have won following a second or third submittal following a debrief to strengthen the application.

### **Freight Plan Implementation: The Path Forward**

Paula Dowell provided an overview of the upcoming implementation activities that TxDOT will initiate soon. In addition to identifying the critical rural and urban freight network and updating the TFMP to be fiscally constrained, TxDOT is planning to initiate three work authorizations to address the program recommendations mentioned earlier: freight-centric design guidelines, truck parking needs assessment study, and an assessment of the economic impact of freight. Implementation activities fall into four buckets: (1) Stakeholder engagement and outreach; (2) Strategies for Immediate Implementation; (3) Freight network masterplan; and (4) Prioritization for long-term program.

**Stakeholder Engagement and Outreach.** In coordination with MPO and TxDOT districts, a key implementation component will be “telling the freight story” to communicate the role of freight in supporting Texans’ lifestyle as well as the economic importance of freight (making the business case). In addition, the team plans to conduct a series of regional workshops to solicit input from both public and private sectors on the critical rural and urban freight corridors (round 1) and present the draft updated TFMP (round 2). The regional workshops will also engage participants in a scenario planning exercise to help TxDOT anticipate future unknowns. TxDOT will provide timely updates to stakeholders via the TxDOT website and quarterly newsletters with profiles of freight activities and stakeholders.

**Strategies for Immediate Implementation.** Immediate activities include developing a FAST Act-compliant freight plan, completing a cross-tabulation of UTP projects in DCIS with high freight priorities, developing freight-centric design standards and specifications, developing a freight component within the TxDOT UTP process to ensure that freight gets its due representation among other state priorities, identifying TFMP recommendations that can be advanced to further project development, and identifying candidates for FASTLANE grants (which could entail the TxFAC issuing a call for projects to consider for advancement).

**Texas Freight Network Masterplan.** Dr. Dowell introduced the concept of developing a Freight Network Masterplan that would entail establishing regional freight industry working groups to maintain open channels of stakeholder communications and ensure project/policy synergy (discussed on more detail later in the agenda). The team would conduct scenario planning workshops with the regional working groups and work to institutionalize methods for making the business case for freight.

Mayor Pete Saenz suggested it would be helpful to have a better understanding of the different funding pots that can be used for freight projects. Lauren Garduno offered to bring staff to the next TxFAC meeting to provide an overview of funding flows.

Keith Patridge commented that scenario planning is a good component to include in the Masterplan. He asked to what extent will the TxFAC be involved in the scenario planning workshop? He also asked the team to consider trends and factors south of the border in the scenario planning process. Dr. Dowell indicated that the team could hold a TxFAC meeting focused on scenario planning, but that the focus of the regional working groups would be on the key supply chains in the region. She referenced an NCFRP study underway by MIT focused on future freight flows and also noted the Cambridge Systematics successfully used a similar framework for the Gateway Corridors concept for FHWA.

Gerry Schwebel generously offered up the use of IBC Bank facilities for any TxDOT stakeholder meetings along the border, up to Corpus Christi, etc.

## 4. Texas Transportation Commission Remarks

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Commissioner Victor Vandergriff addressed the committee, indicating that this group's work is a high priority for the Commission. The Commission's top priorities include border trade, maintenance and preservation (encompassing safety, highway maintenance, and bridges), the energy sector, and freight. Approximately \$0.50 of every \$1 spent by TxDOT goes toward "the holy trinity": safety, maintenance, and bridges. Beyond that, priorities are driven by performance measures to determine the highest and best use of transportation dollars. Key areas of emphasis include connectivity, mobility, and process (performance measures and stress tests). Mobility project priorities are particularly prone to infighting; however, Commissioner Vandergriff pointed to a successful example of a stakeholder-driven process to develop a holistic approach for establishing priorities – the Dallas City Map. The final deliverable outlines very succinctly the importance of freight.

## 5. Freight Project Prioritization

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To lead off the discussion, Dr. Dowell provided additional detail on the concept behind the development of the Texas Freight Network Masterplan. The approach would allow TxDOT to prioritize projects including key gateways, nodes and intermodal connectors, while also recognizing that policies and programs benefits all components of the network. The process would establish Freight Industry Working Groups (FCWG), and the prioritization process would be developed in coordination with TxDOT using the collective input from the TxFAC and the FCWGs. The result is a program of prioritized projects organized around supply chains of key industries allowing for both supply chain masterplans as well as a statewide multimodal freight masterplan.

The benefits of a masterplan approach include the ability to prioritize across mode while addressing both urban and rural regions, align projects with funding allocations/opportunities, incorporate freight into corridor and long range plans and better understand agglomeration effects of a program of projects; and can mitigate the challenge of political feasibility of any prioritization process that picks "winners and losers" by designating priorities for key supply chains across the entire state.

Opening up the conversation to group discussion, Caroline Mays shared that as a starting point, all projects are drawn from the 10-year UTP, which includes MPO projects. Staff applied criteria to screen out projects that are not relevant to freight and identified projects that are included in the TFMP or Texas Freight Network. However, it will be important to take into account projects that not included in the UTP. When the plan is updated we will need to include a new project list and how do we prioritize them?

Judge Ford asked if there will be project prioritization recommendations in the plan update, or just a laundry list of projects? Lauren Garduño responded that going forward, in accordance with HB 20, there will be a more rigorous performance-based project prioritization process to identify projects in the UTP; connectivity will be a major consideration. The process will start with a prioritization of corridors to get into the UTP followed by the development of project list to advance projects along the corridor over the 10-year timeframe.

Brenda Mainwaring asked how TxDOT will incorporate multimodal projects in the process. Is there a process to rapidly advance a multimodal project in the process similar to the Federal discretionary process? Mr. Garduno replied no, the key difference being the funding

mechanism. Staff are working to identify performance measures that can give some weight to multimodal projects, but this is a topic that will need to be revisited.

Mayor Pete Saenz asked where TxDOT is in the process for the 10-year UTP? Mr. Garduno responded that FY2017 UTP funding nearly doubled due to Proposition 1, Proposition 7, and the FAST Act. The Commission will be approving a \$68 Billion funding program in August with an update expected in November/December 2016 to tie the funding to specific projects. TxDOT is still working to incorporate the performance-based process required by HB 20.

Bruce Mann inquired how to get exceptional items into the process and prioritized as they develop? Do project sponsors have to wait for them to get in the process (add to TIP, add to UTP, get in pipeline)? How do we get TxDOT to prioritize the development of freight roads? Mr. Garduno responded that the mechanism TxDOT has in place to get projects funded is through the TIP/STIP. Project sponsors are expected to work with the TxDOT Districts to move projects through the process. TxDOT is trying to get away from having rush projects arrive on the doorstep without advance awareness. Judge Emmett commented that freight project prioritization is not going to be an easy process, and adding in a project late in the process will cause a lot of angst.

Gerry Schwebel commented that there are many participants in the room involved on the Border Trade Advisory Committee that will also be identifying freight projects and priorities. Mr. Garduno responded that his view is the statewide program and the challenge becomes how to balance the priorities by all the different committees, coalitions, and stakeholders throughout the state, such as the I-69 Committee, Border Trade Advisory Committee, energy sector, etc. The goal is to put in place a robust, transparent process to objectively prioritize projects from a statewide perspective. Paula Dowell added that there will also be some Federal requirements for freight performance measures, largely related to reliability.

Pete Alvarez, Laredo District Engineer, reminded the Committee that communication is key to success and that if you have any questions, please work through your District Engineer to assist with the project development process.

Judge Emmett summarized the discussion prior to the lunch break. When we talk about freight project priorities, we are going to have to make tough choices (border needs vs. Houston vs. I-69, etc.) In the end, the committee is going to have to come together. Within each of these nodes, we are also going to need to identify the priorities that are most important and then determine how they could be funded (some may need to go after discretionary funding). The job never ends; the pipeline continues to refresh.

## **6. Texas Freight Mobility Plan Update – FAST Act Compliant**

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Caroline Mays and Paula Dowell walked through the steps required to update the TFMP to make it FAST Act compliant. Ms. Mays reminded the committee that the freight plan is currently MAP-21 compliant but FAST Act created additional freight plan criteria; it is critical that the plan meet federal requirements in order to be eligible for federal funds. Dr. Dowell specified the key tasks under FAST Act include designating the critical rural (745.55 miles) and urban (373.78 miles) freight corridors, develop performance measures that meet Federal requirements as well as TxDOT-specific measures, and develop a freight investment plan in coordination with the TxFAC, TxDOT Districts, MPOs, and stakeholders. The updated plan has to be submitted to

USDOT by December 1, 2017 so will need to be submitted and approved by TxDOT prior to that meaning there is not much time to get everything done.

### Critical Corridors

Dr. Dowell revisited the process and requirements for defining critical rural and urban freight corridors and opened up the floor for additional comments and questions. Stakeholder input will be essential for developing the corridors.

Judge Emmett mentioned the regional workshops and that the committee would not participate in all of them but he urges the committee members in the regions where they will take place to attend.

Sen. Garcia asked about the timeline for the meetings. Ms. Mays responded that she will provide that information to the committee as soon as it is determined. Dr. Dowell added that the meeting schedule should be ready in 3-4 weeks.

Brenda Mainwaring noted that the urban criteria do not specifically mention intermodal connectors as justification for inclusion on the critical network, whereas the rural criteria do. She suggested that TxDOT include this in their comments back to USDOT.

Rolando Ortiz asked whether the discussion of the critical corridors is intended to be included in the regional freight stakeholder workshops. Dr. Dowell and Ms. Mays responded affirmatively.

Bruce Mann asked how the process is going to work when we identify more miles of critical corridors than Texas is allowed? Does the Committee decide what makes the cut? Do the MPOs choose? Caroline Mays responded that staff will likely bring forward three scenarios to consider, tying the network back to the resulting freight investment plan. Since this is a rolling system, we can swap out corridors as projects get funding. She advised that each region should go ahead and designate as many miles as they deem priorities and most critical to the system (remembering that interstates are already included), but the corridors will be selected based on the projects that are ready for funding. Keep in mind that critical corridors are **in addition to** what has already been identified in the NHFN.

Mayor Saenz asked, when it comes to project prioritization, will TxDOT look at possible funding as a scoring criteria to give projects with strong local commitment and edge? Is there a set formula for incorporating local funding commitment into the project score (such that a project with 50 percent funding match would get a bigger boost than a 20 percent funding match)? Ms. Mays responded that projects with a local match are stronger candidates as it shows local support. Judge Emmett added that there will be no written formula to address this, to avoid project sponsors from buying their way to the top of the list. Dr. Dowell mentioned, however, that it is important to recognize that the discretionary programs do tend to reward projects that have a high level of local commitment and funding match.

Martin Molloy asked if we will be starting from the work that was done to develop the Texas Freight Network map when developing the critical corridors map? Ms. Mays responded that the Texas Freight Network was created prior to the federal Primary Highway Freight System map. Our map is broader in terms of coverage and was not mileage capped so we will continue to use that map, we might tweak it, but it will always be broader than the federal map. Judge Emmett clarified that new projects could be added but they may not be eligible for federal funding.

## Performance Measures

Dr. Dowell provided an overview of the MAP-21 proposed freight performance measures, considerations for selecting measures, as well as some commonly used types of performance measures.

## Develop Freight Investment Plan

**The TFMP must be updated and submitted to FHWA by December 1, 2017.** To achieve this schedule, Dr. Dowell walked through a tentative 14-16 month timeline to update the plan (see slides).

Senator Garcia requested that the TxFAC be notified about the timing of the regional freight stakeholder workshops well in advance to maximize committee participation in those meetings. Ms. Mays and Dr. Dowell agreed and responded that TxDOT and the consulting team will be looking to the TxFAC to help identify stakeholders in each region and to help fill the room for those workshops. The sooner the TxFAC members know the locations of the meetings, the sooner committee members can start contacting groups within their communities to generate interest.

Bruce Mann requested that committee and regional workshop participants receive the meeting materials in advance so that they could review prior to the workshop.

## 7. Open Discussion

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John LaRue asked if there is a way to use Port Access funds to our advantage to leverage projects overall? Ms. Mays responded that those funds could be part of the matching portion for a FASTLANE grant; need to think of creative ways like this to push nontraditional projects forward.

Gerry Schwebel asked, in light of the aggressive schedule to update the TFMP, what can we start doing now to advise the stakeholders in our community? November is a busy month in South Texas (hunting season) and also a busy time for freight shipping ahead of the holidays. Ms. Mays responded that we'll be developing the schedule in consideration of other events and activities, indicating that we may do the first regional workshops in January and second set in the summer.

Dr. Dowell asked the committee how much lead time is optimal for scheduling the regional workshops. Senator Garcia responded that two weeks lead time at a minimum, with one month being preferable. Ms. Mays added that project team can attend already scheduled meetings, such as chamber of commerce meetings. She asked that the committee members let her know of upcoming events in their community schedule so that the team can start to incorporate them into the outreach strategy.

Martin Molloy inquired about the primary changes to the freight plan expected in the next update? Ms. Mays responded that we need to include critical corridors and a 5-year financially constrained investment plan. The TxFAC will present the revised plan to the TCC and once the TCC adopts it will be submitted to FHWA.

Judge Emmett asked how often will the Plan be updated? Ms. Mays responded that the project list will need to be updated every year for the UTP, but from the FHWA perspective the five-year

plan satisfies the criteria. Judge Emmett added that including projects in the plan makes them eligible for federal funding.

Date for next meeting TBD; It will NOT take place on November 10, but will take place before Thanksgiving.

**Meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m.**

DRAFT