



Freight Advisory Committee
September 3, 2020, 8:00 a.m.
WebEx Webinar

Attendees

Committee Member	Organization	Attendance
Ed Emmett, Chair	Rice University	Present
Vacant	Alliance Texas	Not present
Ron Beeson	East Harris County Manufacturers Association	Present
Russell Boening	Texas Farm Bureau	Not Present
Randy Brogoitti	Brogoitti Construction	Present
Paul Cristina	BNSF Railway	Designee Present (Megan Shea)
Drew Crutcher	Landgraf, Crutcher & Associates	Present
Vacant	Governor's Office of Economic Development and Tourism	Not Present
Michael Dyll	Texas International Freight	Not Present
John Esparza	Texas Trucking Association	Present
Roger Guenther	Port of Houston Authority	Present
Luis Hinojosa	Uni-Trade Forwarding, LLC	Not Present
Judge Clay Lewis Jenkins	Dallas County	Not Present
Carson Landsgard	H-E-B	Designee Present (Phil Purvis)
Sean Strawbridge	Port of Corpus Christi Authority	Present
Vacant	Union Pacific Railroad	Not Present
Kevin McIntosh	Kansas City Southern (KCSR)	Not Present
Jeff Moseley	Texas Association of Business	Not Present
Rolando Ortiz	Killam Development, Ltd.	Not Present
Keith Patridge	McAllen Economic Development Corp.	Present
K. Alan Russell	The Tecma Group of Companies	Present
Carlton Schwab	Texas Economic Development Council	Not Present

Todd Stewart	Gulf Wind International	Not Present
Jack Todd	Trinity Industries, Inc.	Not Present
Texas Transportation Commissioners		
Alvin New, Commissioner	Texas Transportation Commission	Present
Laura Ryan, Commissioner	Texas Transportation Commission	Present
Ex-Officio Members		
Christopher Evilia	Waco MPO	Present
Erin Ford	Retired-Houston County	Not Present
Clark Greer	Coca-Cola	Present
John LaRue	United Corpus Christi Chamber of Commerce	Present
Rep. Armando Martinez	Texas House Member, District 39	Not Present
Rep. Sergio Munoz Jr.	Texas House Member, District 36	Not Present
Mayor Pete Saenz	City of Laredo	Present
Gerry Schwebel	IBC Bank	Present
Sean Stibich	Port of Victoria	Present
Danny Smith	United Parcel Service	Not Present
Paul Treangen	TNW Corporation	Present
Matt Woodruff	Kirby Corporation	Present

Cambridge Systematics Consulting Team

Paula Dowell	Cambridge Systematics
Elizabeth Welch	Cambridge Systematics
Daniel Wong	Cambridge Systematics
Lauren Canales	Nancy Ledbetter & Associates, Inc.

TxDOT & Texas A&M Transportation Institute (TTI)

Marc Williams, P.E.	Deputy Executive Director, TxDOT
Caroline Mays, AICP	Director of Freight, Trade, and Connectivity Section, TxDOT
Pete Alvarez, P.E.	Pharr District Engineer, TxDOT
Brian Barth, P.E.	Director of Project Planning and Development, TxDOT
Quincy Allen, P.E.	Director of District Operations, TxDOT
Roger Beall, P.E.	Deputy Director, TPP Division, TxDOT
David Salazar, P.E.	Laredo District Engineer, TxDOT
John Speed, P.E.	Odessa District Engineer, TxDOT
Peter Epsy	Rail Division Director, TxDOT
Noel Paramanantham, P.E.	Paris District Engineer, TxDOT
Tucker Ferguson, P.E.	Austin District Engineer, TxDOT
Jessica Butler, P.E.	TPP Division Director, TxDOT
Sondra Johnson	TxDOT
Loretta Brown	TxDOT
Kale Driemeier	TxDOT
Casey Wells	TxDOT
Sherry Pifer	TxDOT

Akila Thamizharasan	TxDOT
Eduardo Hagert	TxDOT
Yvette Flores	TxDOT
Tricia Hasan	TxDOT
Roberto Rodriguez	TxDOT
Noah Oaks	TxDOT
Gabriel DeOchoa	TxDOT
GeirEilif Kalhagen	TxDOT
Jarred Shaffer	TxDOT
Chad Coburn	TxDOT
Stacey Strittmatter	TxDOT
Darran Anderson	TxDOT
Katelyn Dwyer	TxDOT
Giacomo Yaquinto	TxDOT
Marty Boyd	TxDOT
Trent Thomas	TxDOT
Emily Hampton	TxDOT
Mary Anne Griss	TxDOT

Nicole Katsikides	TTI
Bill Eisele	TTI
L.D. White	TTI
Allan Rutter	TTI
Jolanda Prozzi	TTI
Dan Middleton	TTI
Curtis Morgan	TTI
Jason Wallis	TTI

Other Attendees

Andrew Canon, Rio Grande Valley MPO
 Bruce Mann, Port of Houston Authority
 Carlos Lopez, HNTB
 Cameron Walker, Permian Basin MPO
 Chad Burke, Economic Alliance Houston Port Region
 Chloe Livingston, Rice University
 Carlos Lopez, HNTB
 David Coronado, City of El Paso International Bridges Department
 Debi Hays, Judge, Ector County
 Eddie Romero, City of El Paso International Bridges Department
 Eduardo Calvo, El Paso MPO
 Georgi Ann Jasenovec, FHWA
 Gerardo Penchyna Cardenas, Rice University
 Grace Kneidel, Rice University
 Gretchen Ivy, HNTB
 Janna Rosenthal, Atkins
 Jeff Hathcock, NCTCOG
 Jennifer Shepard, Alliance for I-69 Texas
 Jessica Attas, Greater Waco Chamber of Commerce
 John Heimsath, ACM Logistics and Consulting

Lauren Trimble, Dallas County
Lindsay Mullins, BNSF Railway
Katherine Parker, Gulf Coast Rail District (GCRD)
Mary York, Governor's Office of Economic Development
Michael Bomba, University of North Texas
Mike Johnson, NCTCOG
Paul Stresow, City of El Paso International Bridges Department
Roberto Tinajero, City of El Paso International Bridges Department
Scott Scheffler, Permian Road Safety Coalition
Tiffany Melvin, NASCO
Tyson Moeller, Union Pacific Railroad
Veronica Green, H-GAC
Yvette Limon, City of Laredo International Bridge System

1. Meeting Overview & Introductions

Chair Ed Emmett, Rice University, opened the Texas Freight Advisory Committee (TxFAC) Meeting at 8:15 a.m. He took the first few minutes to welcome attendees. Sherry Pifer, TxDOT, kicked off the official roll call for TxFAC members present. Those attending members are outlined above.

Concluding roll call, Caroline Mays, TxDOT, and Chair Emmett began the meeting introductions. Chair Emmett identified that at that moment, 73 total participants were on the call. He discussed that this meeting was important because they've been working on this study for many years now and once the Freight Mobility Plan was put in place, it was a nice theoretical plan, but will now look into the reality of the plan for the Permian Basin and Rio Grande Valley in order to make decisions and recommendations to the TxDOT Commission. Chair Emmett continued by sharing his hopes that Commissioner Laura Ryan, Commissioner Alvin New and colleagues can take this information and turn it into a Freight Transportation Policy in Action for the future of the state of Texas.

Chair Emmett then invited Commissioner Ryan and Commissioner New to add any introductory thoughts.

Commissioner Ryan concurred that this meeting was important and the recommendations that come out of this committee are beneficial to the Commission as they use the information, and value it, to make decisions. She thanked the effort of the team and committee members.

Commissioner New concurred that this is all great information, good for Texas, and important for the Commission to listen. He thanked the committee.

Chair Emmett thanked the Commissioners for their service and support on the Commission, and what they do for the State.

Caroline Mays, TxDOT, thanked Chair Emmett and both Commissioners and mentioned that Commissioner New has been a champion on the two studies in the Permian Basin and Rio Grande Valley that will be discussed on today's call. She expressed her appreciation for his support and leadership. In addition, she recognized TxDOT's senior leadership present on the call: Marc Williams, TxDOT Deputy Executive Director; Quincy Allen, TxDOT Director of District Operations; and Brian Barth, TxDOT Director of Project Planning and Development. She allowed each of them to provide their welcoming comments.

Marc thanked the team and Caroline for their effort in pulling this information together.

Brian expressed he was looking forward to the discussion and noted how important the Committee is with the work they produce and that it helps TxDOT planning efforts.

Quincy noted he appreciated all the work and effort of the Committee and accomplishments so far. He mentioned this is a big need to the State and directed specific thanks to the Commission's leadership, Caroline Mays, and Chair Emmett for their leadership and efforts.

Caroline recognized former Division Director Peter Smith, TxDOT, and the new Division Director, Jessica Butler, TxDOT Transportation Planning and Programming Division. She introduced Jessica and gave her the opportunity to provide an introduction.

Jessica introduced herself, describing her background in planning, design, and finance, as well as her 15-year tenure with TxDOT. She looked forward to the upcoming meeting and was grateful to the project team for what they are doing with the Freight and Energy Sector Transportation Plan.

Concluding introductions, Caroline provided a quick overview of what to expect in the upcoming presentation and thanked the team. She then turned the presentation to Sherry Pifer, TxDOT, and Paula Dowell, Cambridge Systematics.

2. Review of March 31, 2020 TxFAC Meeting and Ongoing Freight Planning Activities

Sherry began the presentation with a recap of the March 31, 2020, TxFAC meeting and the Statewide Truck Parking Study discussion. She reviewed why truck parking matters, the current state of truck parking in Texas, truck parking needs assessment, addressing the truck parking needs in Texas, and Texas Parking Availability System (TPAS) – I-10 Coalition.

Sherry continued to present on the Texas Freight Mobility Plan Implementation including Freight Infrastructure Design Considerations, the Freight Network Technology and Operations Plan and the Economic Role of Freight in Texas. She also mentioned the date for the next TxFAC Working Group Meeting is Sept. 29, 2020, and that save the dates were sent out to committee members.

3. Permian Basin Freight and Energy Sector Transportation Plan Overview

Casey Wells, TxDOT, began his overview of the Permian Basin Freight and Energy Sector Transportation Plan. He reviewed the previous meetings and workshops in the Permian Basin. In addition, he went over a detailed list of TxFAC Policy and Program Recommendations for different freight and energy sector initiatives outlined in the Texas Freight Mobility Plan (i.e. rural connectivity; energy sector development transportation; pipeline infrastructure; institutional coordination and collaboration; freight movement education and public awareness; economic development and economic competitiveness; global trade and logistics; multimodal freight planning, programming and implementation; and urban freight movement). Casey presented an overview of the current Permian Basin Freight Plan Steering Committee members from the private sector, public sector, and non-committee attendee/participants who have provided feedback during the study. He made note that the Permian Basin Metropolitan Planning

Organization (PBMPO) is adapting the Steering Committee members and future meeting schedule. The Committee will now be called the Permian Basin Freight Advisory Committee and will be operated by the PBMPO, similarly to TxFAC.

Paula Dowell, Cambridge Systematics, then provided a thorough overview of the Permian Basin Freight Plan. The topics discussed in more detail were: 1) Planning for Freight and Energy Sector Transportation in the Permian Basin, 2) Permian Basin Freight Network Challenges, Conditions and Opportunities, 3) Addressing the Freight Needs and Challenges and 4) Permian Freight Plan Implementation.

Paula provided an opportunity for comments after she concluded this portion of her presentation.

Chair Emmett asked if we look at the various truck trips, how many are tied to fracking and do we build an infrastructure for fracking knowing that it may not be here in the future? He mentioned these are the kinds of questions that should be raised and was interested to see the panel discussion on these topics.

Gerry Schwebel, IBC Bank, asked about issues related to truck activity in regard to weight limits for sand along any of our roads (whether they be Farm-to-Market roads) and is there a difference if you track truck activity? He also inquired about speed limits for these trucks.

Paula replied that Gerry made a particularly good point and that oversized/overweight trips are a big issue both literally and figuratively. She continued that it is not just sand but also trucks with large equipment that must be moved during pad construction in rig assembly. She mentioned that the team did some study, with assistance from TTI, of the oversize/overweight activity that she will present later along with the recommendations that came from the study. In addition, Paula continued that enforcement is a big issue not only with oversize/overweight, that John Speed, TxDOT Odessa DE, can talk about bridge strikes because of equipment moving through, but also with driver behavior and safety as well. She mentioned that more of that will be discussed as they get to the needs, opportunities and strategies portion of the presentation.

In the chat box, Sherry Pifer, TxDOT, replied to Gerry's comment by disclosing, "Sand trucks cube out but heard from stakeholders they commonly run a little overweight and speed is a big concern."

In the chat box, John Esparza, Texas Trucking Association, added, "With truck weight -- there has more recently been some changes to address the concerns of over weights in particular when a truck is loaded and the certificate of weight is inaccurate or not provided. If a trucker doesn't confirm a weight at the nearest scale -- especially as once they start movement and more experienced drivers can feel they might be heavy, the only defense they have is from the loader who is to provide a certification on weight. There is liability and improvement in the process here to help ensure accuracy of weights. I believe TXDMV just announced at the last board meeting some improvements that would impact enforcement of truckers for the shipper's certification of weight and thus more focus to help this problem." Commissioner Ryan commented about how she has had conversations with some of the organizations in the area regarding safety and fatalities in the Permian Basin. She continued that the heat map display on the presentation (showing the truck crashes per mile and hard braking events) was also part of the ingress/egress and further suggested that it could be helpful to overlay the heat map based on crashes and fatalities. That data will be helpful especially when we are making decisions.

Paula responded that was a great suggestion, and they do have that data and can lay fatalities on top of the map.

Paula concluded this section of the presentation and asked the group if they had any questions or comments, or if they saw anything surprising in the presentation.

Via the chat box, John Esparza, commented that, "When looking at that heat map it occurs to me also that TXDPS engagement and input is essential - that should be germane with what they are seeing in practice as well."

In reply via the chat box, Casey thanked John for the note and the Texas Department of Safety participated in the Permian Basin Freight Plan.

Via the chat box, Chris Evilia, Waco MPO, asked, "Is there any discussion regarding system resiliency? I know the region only receives 6 inches of rain a year, but I've heard that you ought to be there the hour they receive it."

In reply via the chat box, Casey replied to Chris stating, "We heard (and experienced) the same thing. They practiced 'turn around, don't drown' in one memorable drive along one of the interstate frontage roads near Odessa. Drainage improvement was noted as one of the District's priorities."

Paula continued with the next portion of the presentation which provided an extensive overview of the final strategies and recommendations for operations, programs, policies/outreach/coordination and infrastructure. During the discussion on infrastructure, Paula detailed the Permian Basin Freight Plan stakeholder proposed projects, projects impacting the Permian Basin and advancing infrastructure strategies.

Chair Emmett asked who would operate the recommended Traffic Operations Center.

Paula replied that would have to be part of the overall TxDOT feasibility assessment to determine the governing, whether it be something done at the county level (for example the Permian Basin counties would get together to operate the regional Traffic Operation Center) or there could be something done at the district level. She continued that they would want to take a look at TranStar and notable practices throughout the state for operating these centers and what would be transferable to this region. She added with combination of the data coming in, and the ability to get the private sector on board with the Traffic Operation Center, they could help provide traffic information and support it in many other ways.

Chair Emmett replied that TranStar does a lot of things well and that the traffic operation part of it is good. He asked if there is a similar center anywhere else in the state.

Paula stated that there are a couple of Department of Transportation Traffic Operation Centers in Texas. For example, North Central Texas has one, and there are similar systems that provide traffic information to the 511's (a transportation and traffic information hotline) in other urban areas such as Austin and San Antonio. She continued that at the next TxFAC meeting they will dive more into the Freight Network Technology and Operations Plan while looking deeper into these Traffic Operations Centers and mentioned that they are developing a concept of operations on how to take the successes within the state and expand statewide.

Chair Emmett responded that he believes it will be an important consideration to have some consistency in those operations centers.

In the chat box, Casey replied “With the Freight Tech/Ops plan, we are conceptualizing a Statewide Traffic Ops Center (TOC) to coordinate with the various regional traffic management centers (TMCs), including TranStar, as well as TMCs in adjacent states. For the Permian Basin effort, private sector had great interest in a regional TMC, including as a potential PPP.”

Gerry Schwebel, IBC Bank, commented that one of the things they face in South Texas and with the Eagle Ford Shale is volatility of driver shortage. He continued that when activity picks up it pulls from the workforce of the drivers out there because they pay higher wages for the oil sector than to other commercial drivers. He noted the volatility of the price of oil and gas might be something to keep on the radar. In addition, Gerry also mentioned the increase in trucking activity leading to increase in liability or lawsuits and the impact to the business because the trucking industry could be targeted for trucking accidents. He asked if that would fit into this discussion.

Paula replied that labor force was a big issue heard about everywhere they went, not only from the trucking industry. Also, she liked Gerry’s take on the spill over impacts on moving freight in the rest of the state because they attract workforce from all over, not only Texas, but all over the nation; and also not just truck drivers but engineering and professional services – they are all coming into the Permian Basin. She continued that we need to consider Gerry’s comments about the labor force not only with the Permian Basin, but statewide as well. Additionally, she mentioned that they had had a call early on from a large workman’s comp insurance company and they were very interested in the safety data from the study because safety is a big issue in terms of payouts from accidents. It does impact insurance on several different fronts in terms of the lawsuits Gerry mentioned. Paula also pointed out that while a lot of these institutional issues were brought up and significant, they had to maintain focus of the effort on transportation, infrastructure, programs, and policies directly impacted. While the other issues were noted, the team did not focus development of strategies and recommendations to address those other issues.

Gerry Schwebel, IBC Bank, commented that John Esparza, Texas Trucking Association, may have some additional information he could share with the group regarding liabilities for trucking companies.

John replied that it is a growing issue and they are doing a lot behind the scenes.

Paula continued with her presentation on advancing operations, technology and infrastructure strategies, as well as Permian Basin Freight Plan stakeholder proposed projects and prioritization. During this portion of the presentation, Casey Wells, TxDOT, clarified that prioritization was in terms of freight mobility, so this was the freight scoring that these projects went through.

Commissioner Ryan thanked Paula for the presentation and the work that has been done and noted she liked to see more actionable content.

Via the chat box, Chris Evilia, Waco MPO, commented, “The needs in New Mexico are beyond our scope, but since there are NM counties identified in the study area” and asked, “Is there any coordination with NMDOT on needs or projects as part of this effort?”

In reply via the chat box, Casey stated “We actively coordinated with NMDOT at the state level as well as the Roswell District level. They participated in each of our Steering Committee

meetings and workshops. We coordinated with them especially on identification of the regional freight network.”

A five-minute break was taken before the panel portion of the meeting.

4. Permian Basin Panel: Local Perspective

Panelists:

- Debi Hays, County Judge, Ector County
- Cameron Walker, AICP, Executive Director, Permian Basin MPO
- John Speed, P.E., District Engineer, TxDOT Odessa District
- Scott Scheffler, Executive Director, Permian Road Safety Coalition

After the break, Sherry Pifer, TxDOT, introduced Casey Wells, TxDOT, who would be moderating the panel discussion.

Casey thanked the panel members for their participation and support. Due to time constraints the bios were referenced on the agenda, and not formally presented. He discussed the purpose of the panel and the focus of the discussion, which included getting a local perspective of the interregional impact from freight, since the panelists deal with these issues daily.

Question 1: How does the freight and energy sector affect your role?

Judge Debi Hays, Ector County, thanked everyone for their participation and put together the Regional Freight Plan Study. She also thanked Commissioner New for allowing her to chair the Permian Basin Regional Freight Plan Committee. She applauded the work of the team, especially through this current environment. In response to the question, she discussed that when energy was on the upswing, they were not prepared, whether it was from structure of roads to the traffic path of freight, to the increased loads in water and sand trucks in rural areas; trucks would be lined end-to-end and school buses full of children sandwiched in the middle. She mentioned that it was a learning experience, and they have gone from chaos to a steadier path and are more prepared for another surge in the energy market. This study will play a significant role in future preparedness. As a county judge, she explained that it has affected them overall with housing and employee shortages and budget constraints to repair rural roads which are struggles, but moving forward we can do a better job from this study.

John Speed, TxDOT Odessa District, introduced himself as the District Engineer for the TxDOT Odessa District which includes agricultural production in Permian Basin. He described that there is not anything that does not affect daily activities in the oil field, even in down times like now. He continued that he asked for the regional study due to concerns he had about statewide freight mobility and that the study didn't pick up regional corridors with traffic, didn't provide much useful information at the state level for the current Permian Basin roadway conditions, and it did not allow for planning future demands. He mentioned that this study confirms previous ideas on what they thought they knew because it added critical details, such as the area has 16 times the average freight haul per capita and that ninety percent of the trucking loads are generated locally and never leave the Permian Basin; those are critical observations that can be used to accurately and cost effectively plan for improvements, not just in the Permian Basin, but in other areas such as the Eagle Ford Shale and anywhere there is solar or wind energy produced because traffic loads are similar. He discussed that the key to success with this plan

is implementation and the findings outlined from the study need to go on the ground to see real results. John continued that the Odessa District has been trying to catch up with the pace of which the Permian Basin is growing and ongoing research contracts with Texas A&M Transportation Institute (TTI) and Texas Tech University to generate needed data and are implementing results of that research on the fly. He continued that the Odessa District is working on asset maintenance, the rehabilitation of roadways from Farm-to-Market to something the energy sector can use. The Odessa District has just under 50 projects, worth about \$770 million in construction. In addition, the District will complete \$120 million of those projects and another \$100 million more for additional projects in the next couple of months. This fiscal year will have about \$500 million in construction. This is a large program with the same number of staff as in 2011, therefore the District is reliant on studies and consultants to augment ongoing processes. John continued that as they move forward and implement those ideas and some concepts presented today, they will put those solutions into asset preservation projects because they are safety related (e.g. pavement design and enhanced driveway and access controls). He noted some of that work is done with public/private partnerships. He mentioned that the District has already added enhanced signage improvements and selected implementation of super-two roadways. Radar-based Wave Tronix products for traffic monitoring are being used as a low-cost alternative to traditional traffic monitoring systems. In 2019, traffic fatalities dropped 19 percent in the Odessa District which goes against the local area trend, even with the same traffic volumes. This was a result of completed roadway improvements, improved access points and improved super twos. This study gives us a framework to expand our corridor studies and most importantly, it brought public and private sectors together, one of the biggest pluses of this study.

Scott Scheffler, Permian Road Safety Coalition (PRSC), introduced himself, his role at the PRSC, what the PRSC includes and focuses on and who works with the organization. He continued that their number one goal is safety and the number one non-technical risk in the industry is driving. He continued about the start of the PRSC and how it got funding to focus on safety and work with projects and raise awareness for areas of concern. This plan helped because PRSC is uniquely positioned to be the voice of the drivers and engage the drivers. Feedback and experience from drivers and operators has provided the most important industry data to this study, which helps to make the most informed decisions and recommendations. PRSC understands the value of being a part of the process and having a seat at the table.

Cameron Walker, Permian Basin MPO, thanked Casey for his effort and ability to be on the panel. He noted there has been a cyclical nature of the freight industry for the many years he has lived in the area. In 2009, when the nation was suffering, this area was marginally hit but it was relatively a short period of time of impact. Technological changes in the industry and investment in massive properties developed for energy products, enabled a high growth rate in the area beginning in about 2012, that has been sustained. Even with the last year/early 2019, when things fell off a bit, with the price of oil and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, building permits are currently happening at the same scale or frequency as 2012 through 2014. The impact on the population resources, focusing on urban areas such as overcrowded schools, healthcare centers, daycares, etc. has been greatly impacted since 2012. In response to being part of this study, quoting Mr. Scheffler "how the sausage was made," he described that the data sets from this work are amazing, especially those established for public records and private data sets tied to the oil industry. The MPO recommend to the policy board what projects should be put on the TxDOT Unified Transportation Program (UTP) and commit funding. In recent years, the UTP has reflected the needs of the Permian Basin MPO and TxDOT to the Texas

Transportation Commission. In 2016 TxDOT looked at the modernization of the I-20 corridor (plus or minus 42 miles) inside the MPO boundary. The idea is that the frontage roads, which are currently two-way, would be converted to one-way with additional Texas U-turn opportunities and interchanges along I-20. These improvements were needed due to bridge strikes happening on frontage roads on a regular basis and increased train traffic in the area, slowing time at at-grade rail crossings. Those traffic slow-down examples are factors that are used by the MPO to make decisions and investments. He noted an example of an occurrence last week at the Transportation Commission meeting where TxDOT backed what the MPO had committed to building, funding for about \$340 million, and in this case it was to add another lane for an 18 mile piece of I-20. These decisions have a big impact on freight and the MPO is part of the decision process.

Question 2: What does the Permian Basin Freight Plan mean to the region and...

- **its elected officials?**

Judge Debi Hays, Ector County, replied that the freight study has uncovered where we have struggled in the past and opened doors to where we want to be in the future. It has identified how much the Permian Basin is an asset to the growth of Texas and the nation. As the population continues to increase, this study and making short-term and long-term plans and goals, will help with freight and economic growth and quality of life in the Midland/Odessa area.

John Speed, TxDOT Odessa District, replied that it is the guidebook in which the District can plan and operate for corridor enhancements. The development of these plans/recommendations instigates the District's responsibility to interface with the Permian Basin MPO for the large urban areas in our district (Odessa and Midland) ultimately to better sync our corridor enhancement goals with one another. Small safety observations were put in place and either reinforced what we were doing through TTI studies or plans, or provided new ideas. The Permian Basin Freight Plan means the District can have an operation plan without having to add additional staff.

- **the MPO?**

Cameron Walker, Permian Basin MPO (PBMPO), replied that this is a landmark study. It is the first of its kind and has lots of muscle power behind it. It has extremely helped the PBMPO in decision making by creating relationships with the stakeholders in the area. The work has brought to light the important issues for different elements of the energy sector and to make knowledgeable recommendations and decisions related to funding. Although funding is tied to urban specific boundaries, this plan provides an opportunity to interface with rural areas. How this all ties together is a vast change in a positive direction.

- **...the private sector?**

Scott Scheffler, Permian Road Safety Coalition (PRSC), replied that overall road safety will improve as a result of the plan and stakeholders aligned through this plan. The plan has done a great job at identifying opportunities to see this region be successful economically, see companies perform well and community members and workers get home safely. While the PRSC works with behavioral safety pieces through training and awareness/other presentations, it is important to also demonstrate through these trainings that the drivers/operators' voices are heard about safety and the condition of the roads. It is important that to demonstrate their feedback is heard. This plan shines light on all the opportunities.

Question 3: What are challenges and next steps and what is your role in the implementation of the plan?

Judge Debi Hays, Ector County, replied next role is formation of the Permian Basin Regional Freight Advisory Committee at a local level. The plan will become like the “bible” to the process of improving freight mobility through the region. Elected officials will continue the conversation with other stakeholders. Efforts in the Permian Basin will pick back up, and when it does, plans will be in place based on the work of the last two years to address safety on the roads. It is anticipated the population over time in the Midland/Odessa region will hit 725,000. This plan will also address housing, schools, retail, etc. solutions.

Cameron Walker, Permian Basin MPO, noted the top issue is the advanced warning system and installation of ITS devices in the 22-county area. There are already projects underway, such as the use of “I-beam” technology that would sense height of truck in time, before they reach a bridge, and warn them. Those technology changes to the region would really help with prevention of crashes and travel time delay. In 2018, the PBMPO board approved a three-county thoroughfare plan. This effort could possibly be widened because there is a standard for widths, etc., or a minimum standard for what is built as it pertains to those roads within the region. The regional traffic operations center is also important. When John Speed took the District Engineer job, one of the early agenda items was synchronization of traffic signals in urban areas. Traffic operations centers could play the same role, not necessarily in areas that have traffic signals. You could coordinate the movement of freight vehicles through this operations center to help traffic flow.

John Speed, TxDOT Odessa District, replied that next steps are to take the recommendations and incorporate them to the District playbook. Over the next three months, the District will assign an effectiveness to each of the recommendations and then determine the cost value and overall risk profile in terms of safety. Safety is main priority and the District can be more proactive with better knowledge of traffic patterns.

Scott Scheffler, Permian Road Safety Coalition (PRSC), noted that the downturn is a great opportunity to collectively organize plans and action mode. This oil industry is not going anywhere so in the next 30 years truck traffic in the area will remain an issue. The PRSC is proud to be a part of the plan and committed to being a partner with the goal of safety on these roads.

Casey Wells, TxDOT, then turned it over for additional questions for the panel.

Chair Emmett directed a comment to Judge Hays, mentioning that the 725,000 population by year 2050 caught his attention because it would make the area urban, no longer rural. Judge Hays replied that the population in the Midland/Odessa area will double by 2035. The study is important to help address known needs for population growth.

Chair Emmett commented that this type of meeting leads people to wonder what the long-term impact of freight and mobility improvements will be. Folks are going to move out of traditional urban areas to places like Midland-Odessa to do business, and 725,000 could be an underestimate so now is the time to make plans.

Cameron Walker, Permian Basin MPO, addressed Chair Emmett directly with a comment mentioning that he had met Chair Emmett back in 2014 when he coordinated a meeting with the Texas Freight Advisory Committee to come out and get a firsthand view of what’s going on out

in this area (particularly I-20), and while there also took a visit to a well site. The group bussed out there in the morning around 5:15 a.m., witnessing the traffic delays the area. This project is a great next step.

Judge Debi Hays, Ector County, commented that the Permian Basin region is important to Texas and the U.S. When you have the U.S. President come here to speak of energy, infrastructure and growth, and then visit a local well site and deliver a speech, it speaks volumes to the dedication of the office of the President to the State of Texas and to the Permian Basin's continued success.

Casey Wells, TxDOT, mentioned that in response to comments about the population, one of the biggest challenges with this study and the transient work force is not captured in the population and yet they make up half of the work force. So those impacts to the community service in the region far outweigh what TxDOT was able to document. The population may double in 15 years, so workforce impacts need to be looked at as well.

Casey then asked if the commissioners had any questions.

Commissioner New commented that he is here to listen, and this has been a learning experience for him, and thanked the group.

Casey asked if any of the TxDOT leadership had questions for panel.

Caroline Mays, TxDOT, took the opportunity to thank Judge Hays for her leadership on the study and the Steering Committee. In addition, she thanked John Speed, TxDOT Odessa District Engineer for being a project champion. She also thanked Cameron Walker, Permian Basin MPO, for his involvement and Scott Scheffler, PRSC, for mobilizing the private sector to get the input. She thanked the stakeholder involvement throughout the process and the project team. In addition, Caroline commented that now is when the work begins through implementation of the plan and keeping the advisory committee active. TxDOT will guide the region to see the implementation of the plan moving forward.

Commissioner Ryan commented that she appreciated the panel and inside information, and agreed with Commissioner New that it has been educational and informative. She continued that there is a high fatality rate in this area and safety is key, and would asked the panel to follow up with the Commission because they are working hard on safety projects, task force and "End the Streak". The Nov. 7 date (Nov. 7, 2020 is a date that TxDOT hopes to #EndTheStreak and have one full day without a fatality on Texas roads) is coming fast, so if there is anything between now and then that the Commission can do to reinforce that safety message, please reach out for assistance.

Casey concluded the discussion and allowed each panelist the opportunity to provide closing remarks.

Judge Debi Hays, Ector County, concluded by saying this study was needed and thanked John Speed and Commissioner New for putting this together, and thanked the Transportation Committee for looking at it without blinders and realizing that West Texas is just as important at I-35. She expressed continued appreciation and that they will be using this plan as a "bible" to make sure they grow forward in a positive way.

Cameron concluded by saying there has been so much momentum in this region. The passage of Propositions 1 and 7 brought more money to transportation projects in this area. The

availability of funding, the Permian Promise and the private/semi-private sectors that are helping behind the scenes to promote this region has really grown in last 3-5 years. This work is an important piece of the overall effort to address energy sector needs. He thanked everyone and was pleased to be involved with the work.

John concluded that Judge Hays has been an integral part of this regional effort. In addition, he mentioned that Cameron was instrumental to get this study highlighted and understood. He noted that he and Scott Scheffler, PRSC, worked together and a lot are huge supporters of our efforts on safety. It is all about safety and it translates to dollars and better life for all. Focus will be on safety and implement elements as cost effectively as possible.

Scott concluded by thanking the team and that everything has been 100 percent first class. He noted it was a remarkable study process. In addition, Scott mentioned that he would accept Commissioner Ryan's invite to get in contact with her office to chat about opportunities. He continued that the #EndTheStreak TxDOT event on Nov. 7 was important for the Permian Basin and would appreciate their involvement in outreach related to outreach.

Casey Wells, TxDOT, concluded and thanked the panelists and looked forward to continued work and efforts with them.

5. Rio Grande Valley Freight and Trade Transportation Plan

Casey segued into the final portion of the presentation to discuss the Rio Grande Valley (RGV) Freight Plan. He discussed previous meeting dates during the study, in addition to program recommendations. He delved into the Steering Committee membership and future plans for the RGV to adopt the Steering Committee that will ultimately become the RGV Freight Advisory Committee.

Before the presentation began, he introduced Pete Alvarez, District Engineer, TxDOT Pharr District and Andrew Canon, Rio Grande Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (RGVMPO), and asked if they would provide remarks.

Pete thanked Casey and commented that this freight plan for the RGV will be instrumental, with 14 ports-of-entry crossing into Mexico and the amount of exchange of freight/trade, including gas and oil, has increased. TxDOT's role is in all modes of transportation, not just by land, water and rail, and they are looking for ways to successfully and safely move freight across the region. He mentioned that the District has a long-range plan they have developed that will provide a platform for us to do the necessary planning, development and construction in the various trade zones from Brownsville to Star County and up into the major corridors of I-69C, I-69E and US 83 routes. He continued that the District works with partners, such as the RGV MPO, making great strides working with MPOs, water ports and rail opportunities. He noted counties and cities also play an integral part and TxDOT will continue those partnerships as well. The District may not be as well versed in third-party logistics and are ready to learn from the community, business owners, trucking industry and others, so that the District is in line with the challenges.

Andrew Canon, RGV MPO, thanked Casey for the opportunity. He started off by stating he would echo much of what Pete previously said. Even as the RGV MPO, he mentioned they are always here to listen and learn but will be glad to share efforts of the RGV Freight and Trade Transportation Plan. The plan has been instrumental to the area and continues to be. He discussed how many aspects in the Odessa region that impact RGV the same. The RGV has concerns about thoroughfare plans and traffic synchronization. They currently have TxDOT Category 7 funding (Category 7 is part of the Surface Transportation Program that is set aside

for urbanized areas with populations greater than 200,000) that the RGV MPO has used, with our partners, for ongoing improvements to movement of freight. Although in different regions, the needs are common. He mentioned that the RGV utilizes more modes of transportation than anywhere in Texas because they will be launching rockets in the state, which presents an interesting dynamic in the way freight, traffic and goods are moved across the state. The RGV Freight and Trade Transportation Plan has been instrumental in identifying those needs.

Casey turned the presentation to Elizabeth “Lizzie” Welch, Cambridge Systematics, to present.

Lizzie presented an outline for the RGV Freight and Transportation Plan which included a detailed discussion of 1) setting the stage with the goals of stakeholder outreach, 2) the Regional Multimodal Freight Network, 3) commodity flows and forecast, 4) conditions, needs and opportunities, 5) preliminary strategies and 6) next steps.

Once Lizzie concluded the presentation, Casey asked if anyone from the committee had questions.

Matt Woodruff, Kirby Corporation, commented that he is the “token barge guy” on the committee, and he saw that the team had flagged some maritime items still need to be addressed. He mentioned he did not hear anything about pipelines in the discussion either. As the primary product that goes by barge down to the RGV is liquid cargo, refinery products, lube oils, etc., the amount of gas products that go down there (by barge) depends on what is being moved by pipeline. He continued that there is at least one pipeline that can move products down there. So, as you look at population and freight growth that will affect fuel needs, pipeline capacity and ultimately barge capacity is necessary to supplement that. He asked if they were looking at pipelines in maritime projections.

Lizzie responded that currently there is no pipeline traffic between the RGV and Mexican customers who are the primary consumers of those fuel products, so those are currently diverted to trucks. She continued that the Port of Brownsville and Port of Harlingen communicated they foresee a continued trend of those products coming into the Valley by water modes and leaving the Valley by truck, or rail as well. The main feedback on pipeline movements so far was regarding the interaction (between modes of transportation), and when the pipelines were open, products were coming in by water, and leaving by pipeline. People are seeing and expecting continued commodities coming in by water, but they are now leaving by truck or rail. She mentioned that Matt had a good thought about the commodities coming into the region domestically by pipeline and the pipeline/barge balance is something the team will keep an eye on moving forward.

Matt in reply mentioned that the pipeline coming into the RGV impacts barge movements and recognized the separate issue of pipelines to Mexico which currently diverts product to truck. He mentioned he thinks that there is cargo being barged into the RGV currently and transshipped to trucks for delivery to Mexico or wherever else it is going.

Pete Alvarez, TxDOT Pharr District, replied that a lot of these are shipped out of Port of Brownsville and then moved to the Pharr port-of-entry which presents challenges as well.

Casey mentioned he would get with Matt Woodruff to explore his comments about the pipeline, and additionally asked for parting thoughts from Pete Alvarez and Andrew Canon.

Pete Alvarez, TxDOT Pharr District, shared his screen with the group showing the long-range plans. One of the challenges is the population growth. The whole county has about one million residents, Cameron County has half a million, and the Mexican side has 2.5 million, so there is a population of about 4 million total in the area. He continued by showing specific areas of the map, pointing out ports-of-entry from McAllen to Pharr to Harlingen and then to Brownsville, and

mentioned that the Military Highway runs through all of those ports-of-entry. He described a recently completed project that enables passing lanes through a new super-two road configuration along the Military Highway. As they continue to grow in population and the needs of moving freight between Cameron County and Hidalgo County grow, the need to explore the opportunity for 4-lane divided highway become more necessary. This is important because the ports-of-entry are utilizing city streets not designed for heavy truck loads. He mentioned there is large mix of regular traffic with commercial traffic going through school zones, downtown, etc. that do not provide free flow opportunity to get product from trade zones up to I-2 onto the U.S. highways. These areas are going to be a challenge moving forward and the goal is to work with partners to find ways to move freight. He provided project examples such as, Toll 365, IBTC [International Bridge Trade Corridor] and the US 281 collector. The goal is to provide additional opportunities for regular traffic to minimize congestion in the future. The District wants to be ahead of the game as there is continued growth in the RGV.

Caroline Mays, TxDOT, commented about the east/west connection between ports-of-entry and border crossings being addressed in the Border Master Plan. Especially for the Pharr region, there have been strikes and protests on the Mexican side that shut down entry on the bridge. But the problem is the lack of connection between the border crossings and being able to divert traffic to divert people and goods. She added that the east/west connectivity is huge and the Military Highway is critical. There are some synergies between this plan and the Border Master Plan.

Chair Emmett commented about the population, and that Hidalgo County is the 8th most populous county in the State, and Cameron County is the 13th, and it is continuing to grow so it will become a large urban area. We really must push the area needs the attention as an urban area.

Caroline commented that on the border side, the RGV region is growing faster than Laredo and El Paso.

6. Next Steps and Wrap-Up Discussion

Sherry thanked the group for their participation. She mentioned that these are two important plans to the State and that final copies of the Permian Basin Regional Freight Plan will be available in mid-September and the RGV Plan will be available in December. She reminded everyone that the next TxFAC meeting will be on Nov. 5, 2020, and explained what will be covered in that meeting.

Chair Emmett concluded by thanking everyone on the team and hoped that the Nov. 5 meeting would be in-person. He believes that the in-person meetings provide a lot more opportunity for feedback.

Caroline chimed in to conclude as well and thank everyone, in addition to thanking Chair Emmett directly.

Via the chat box, Eduardo Calvo, El Paso MPO, suggested that coordination with the Border Master Plan (BMP) team continue given that the data from the BMP is being refined and improved. Seems that the path to completion for both BMP and RGV plan is almost identical. He also mentioned the great job on both the Permian Basin and RGV Plans.

In reply via the chat box, Casey responded that they would continue to coordinate with the BMP team. They are exchanging findings biweekly, including economic impact analysis and strategy recommendations.

Meeting adjourned at 11:58 a.m.