



PORTS-TO-PLAINS

ALLIANCE

Securing the Benefits of Commerce to
North America's Energy & Agricultural Heartland

News Release - For Immediate Release

December 23, 2015

Contact: Michael Reeves
(806) 775-2338
michael.reeves@portstoplastains.com

Role of Highways in Economic Development

Economic development and transportation systems, particularly highways, are related. One only needs to look at a map of the interstate system and the growing populated areas of the United States to recognize the role that highways play in where business and industry locate. The Federal Highway Administration has provided an interactive map showing the growth of population densities overlaid on an interstate map. You are encouraged to look at the locations and changes in population densities at <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/interstate/densitymap.cfm> from 1950 to 2000.

The original concept for the Ports-to-Plains corridor came from the need to reach markets in Mexico with cotton grown in the Texas Panhandle. In Texas, Interstate 27 provides an excellent connection between the economies of Lubbock and Amarillo, but not to other portions of the country and North America.

Since its inception the goal of the Ports-to-Plains corridor has been expansion of existing two-lane roads to four-lane divided highways. One of the benefits of expanded four-lane highways is travel time savings. By increasing speed and expanding access, freight costs are also reduced.

In the Corridor Development and Management Plan completed in 2004, the benefits of travel time savings were estimated for auto and trucks. Between 2011 and 2030, the total auto travel time savings benefit was estimated to be \$273.7 million. Between 2011 and 2030, the total truck travel time savings benefit was estimated to be \$268.2 million.

Site Selection is a publication serving the professional economic development community. Its survey of corporate real estate executives identified transportation infrastructure as the factor most important in location decision-making, followed by work force, taxes, utilities, and land and buildings. It is not that highways, railways, seaports, or airports are more important than labor force, available land, suppliers, or educational institutions — it is that transportation infrastructure is how these resources are linked together.

Highway accessibility is traditionally at the top of the short list for site selection criteria. In fact, 97.3 percent of respondents to *Area Development's* Corporate Survey considered highway accessibility to be very important or important. Companies are not only targeting locations that are in close proximity to

prime transportation arteries, but they also are making sure they have easy access both on and off of those major interstates and highways.

Transportation infrastructure is critical to retaining and recruiting business and industry to our communities. Without expanded infrastructure, they will locate where that infrastructure is available.

-30-

Ports-to-Plains is a grassroots alliance of over 275 communities and businesses, including major alliance partners Heartland Expressway, Theodore Roosevelt Expressway and Eastern Alberta Trade Corridor Coalition, whose mission is to advocate for a robust international transportation infrastructure to promote economic security and prosperity throughout North America's energy and agricultural heartland including Mexico to Canada. Additional information on the Ports-to-Plains Alliance is available at <http://www.portstoblains.com/>.

Graphic:

