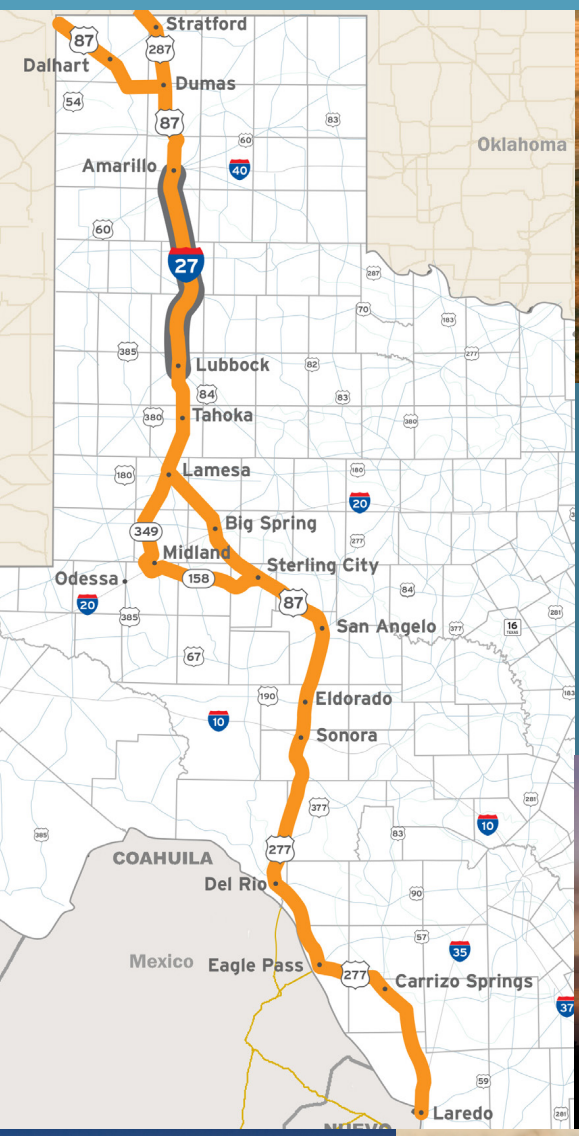
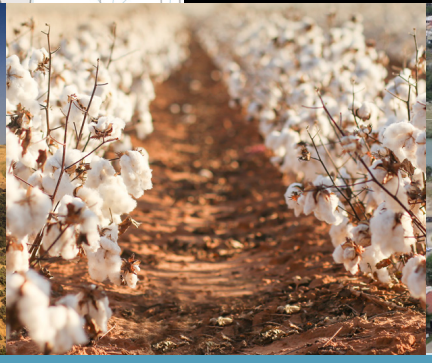
PORTS-to-PLAINS CORRIDOR INTERSTATE FEASIBILITY STUDY

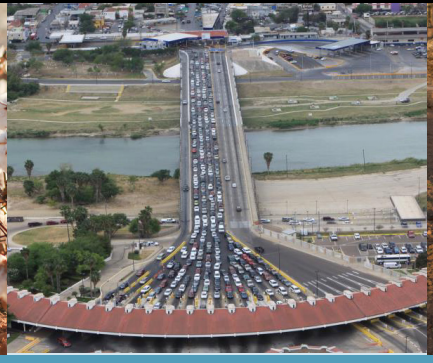
(HOUSE BILL 1079)

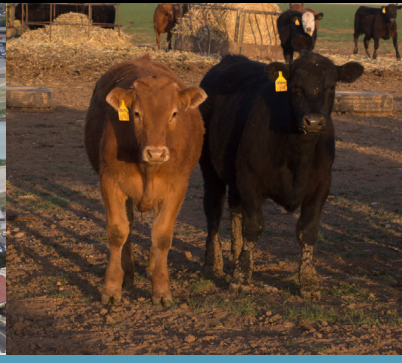


ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

OCTOBER 15, 2020







THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.

Ports-to-Plains Corridor Interstate Feasibility Study Advisory Committee Letter from the Chair

I would like to personally show my appreciation to the members of the Advisory Committee for their dedication to this significant interstate feasibility study on the Ports-to-Plains Corridor. I also want to thank each member on the three Segment Committees from the communities along the Corridor who offered a local perspective through their recommendations to the Advisory Committee. In addition, my gratitude goes out to the citizens of Texas for participating in the process by providing input on both the study and the Committee's recommendations. The commitment of the committee was critical in our efforts in developing our recommendations for the interstate upgrade of the Ports-to-Plains Corridor.

The Ports-to-Plains Corridor is the only north-south transportation route connecting and integrating Texas to the nation's most strategic economic engines of agriculture and energy production as well as international trade. The Corridor supports the largest agricultural production in the country, generating $11 billion per year. This project is vital for the nation's energy production, supporting both the Permian Basin and Eagle Ford Shale. In 2019, the Permian Basin accounted for over 39% of U.S. crude oil production and the Eagle Ford Shale accounted for over 11%. In addition, in 2019, the Permian Basin contributed $9 billion in taxes and royalties to the state. In 2016, the Eagle Ford Shale contributed $3.1 billion in state and local revenues. The Corridor provides advantageous connectivity of the resources with the state's and nation's strategic gateways of trade being Laredo, Eagle Pass, and Del Rio. Together, these three border crossings accounted for $262 billion, or 66%, of Texas-Mexico cross-border trade and 50% of U.S.-Mexico trade in 2019.

The Advisory Committee recommends upgrading the Ports-to-Plains Corridor to an interstate facility. This is essential to improve the connectivity, facilitate the flow of goods and international trade, safety and mobility, efficiency in travel time and travel cost, create jobs and economic opportunities and expand the local tax base.

The Committee also recommends conducting relief route projects near communities where upgrading the existing infrastructure to interstate standards is not feasible. We also recommend safety and operational projects along the Corridor, which are low-cost strategies that complement the upgrade to infrastructure and improve the safety and operations of the Corridor.

The report outlines an implementation plan prioritizing projects starting in the short-term (present day - 5 years), mid-term (6 - 10 years), and long-term (10+ years). In addition, we identify several policy recommendations to advance the execution of the recommendations. Although our recommendations and implementation plan are not financially constrained, it serves as a blueprint for deliberate and concerted project planning, as well as development and programming to upgrade the Corridor to interstate standard within the next 30 years.

The Advisory Committee estimates $23.5 billion will be needed to upgrade 811 out of the 963 miles of the Corridor to an interstate standard. The infrastructure improvements would bring a 76% return on the investment. Not upgrading the entire Ports-to-Plains Corridor to an interstate will result in the significant loss of these economic benefits and stifle the prosperity of the region, the state of Texas, and the nation. These significant benefits will stimulate economic development in communities along the Corridor and provide additional opportunities for continued growth. I look forward to the future of this project and am deeply appreciative to all those who have contributed to the efforts in paving the way forward on the Corridor.

Dan Pope
Mayor, City of Lubbock
Ports-to-Plains Advisory Committee Chair

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

APPENDICES

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.

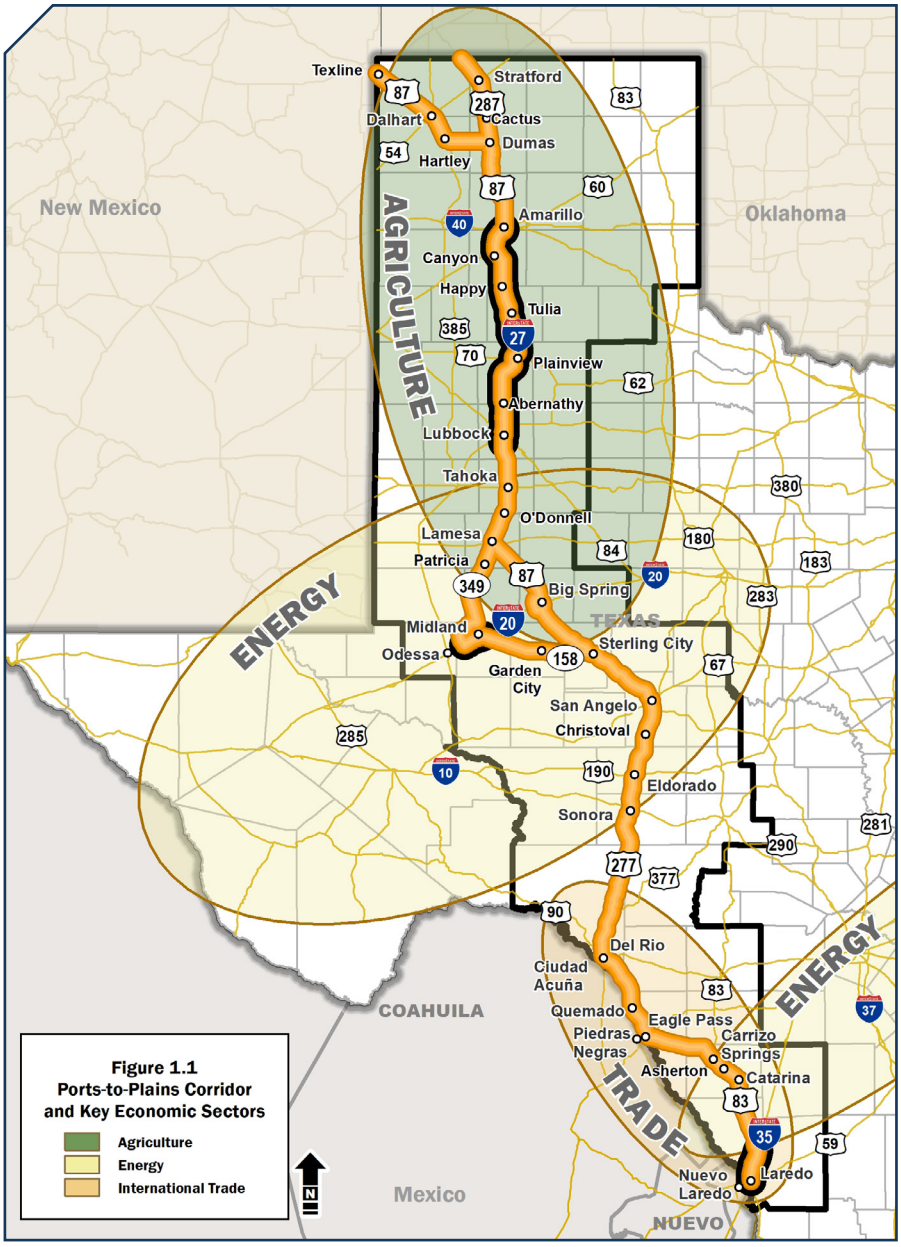
CHAPTER 1

Introduction

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The Ports-to-Plains Corridor is an international, national, state, regional and locally significant north-south transportation corridor that connects and integrates Texas' key economic engines of international trade, energy and agricultural production. It supports the growing population and economic centers in South and West Texas and serves as the only north-south corridor facilitating the movement of people and goods. While the state is served by several east-west interstate highways, there is only one existing north-south interstate (I-35), and portions of I-69, which is still under development. **Figure 1.1** shows the Ports-to-Plains Corridor and the key economic sectors of agriculture production, energy production and international trade that are discussed in more detail in the next section.



As population, employment, international trade, energy production, and agricultural production in the Ports- to-Plains Corridor continues to grow, it will become increasingly important to develop an interstate facility in South and West Texas that supports the efficient and safe movement of people and goods in the future. The Corridor:

- Traverses approximately 963 miles of primarily rural area in West and South Texas.
- Was designated by Congress as a High Priority Corridor on the National Highway System in 1998.
- Spans 26 counties in Texas and is comprised of sections of Interstate 20 (I-20), Interstate 27 (I-27), Interstate 35 (I-35), US 83, US 87, US 277, US 287, State Highway 158, and State Highway 349.
- The existing 124 miles of I-27 was authorized in 1968 and completed in 1992, more than 28 years ago.

Why is the Ports-to-Plains Corridor Important to Texas and the Nation?

The **Ports-to-Plains Corridor** is the only north-south transportation corridor that **connects and integrates the nation's and Texas' most strategic economic engines of agriculture production, energy production and international trade** and it supports growing population and economic centers of West and South Texas.

Agriculture Production

Agriculture is a Key economic engine in the Ports-to-Plains Corridor and for the State of Texas.

The Ports-to-Plains Corridor supports the largest agricultural production in the country. The Ports-to-Plains Corridor supports the production and export of agricultural products, generating approximately $11 billion a year in agricultural product sales.[1] Statewide, the three top agricultural commodities are: cattle generating over $12.3 billion a year, cotton over $2.6 billion a year, and milk products generating over $2.1 billion a year.[2] The production and export of quality agricultural products (crops, livestock, dairy, etc.) generates billions of dollars and relies directly on highway networks for transport of products to market. Delays in the transport of livestock may create health and safety issues for the animals.

The Ports-to-Plains Corridor supports the largest agricultural production in the country.

[1] United States Department of Agriculture, Census of Agriculture 2017.
[2] Texas Department of Agriculture, Texas Agriculture Statistics, Top 10 Commodities, 2017.

The Ports-to-Plains Corridor is vital for the nation's energy production supporting the Permian Basin and the Eagle Ford Shale.

Energy Production

The Ports-to-Plains Corridor facilitates the transportation of supplies for development of energy products to refineries in the Texas Gulf and to border crossings and seaports for exports to global markets. In April 2020, the Permian Basin accounted for over 39 percent of U.S. crude oil production, up from slightly over 18 percent in 2013.[3] In 2019, the Permian Basin contributed $9 billion of the $13.4 billion (67 percent) in taxes in royalties to the state.[4]

The Eagle Ford Shale extends over 26 counties, five within the Ports-to-Plains study area.

The Eagle Ford Shale extends over 26 counties, five of these are within the Ports-to-Plains study area counties. It stretches from the Mexican border between Laredo and Eagle Pass up through counties east of Temple and Waco. The share of U.S. oil produced in the Eagle Ford Shale has also grown rapidly. In January 2010, the Eagle Ford Shale accounted for one percent of U.S. crude oil produced, but in April 2020, it accounted for 11.3 percent of the nation's crude oil production.[5] In 2016, the Eagle Ford Shale contributed $3.1 billion in state and local revenues.[6]

Wind is also a critical piece of the energy economy in South and West Texas. In 2019, Texas led the country in wind power additions representing a record amount of 3,938 megawatts. Texas represents more than 25 percent of U.S. 105 gigawatts per the newly released Wind Powers America Annual Report 2019.[7] The central section of the Corridor was responsible for 60 percent of all Texas alternative energy. Wind turbine equipment is large and requires specialized overweight/oversize transportation.

Much of the U.S. wind energy production comes from counties along the Ports-to-Plains Corridor.

International Trade

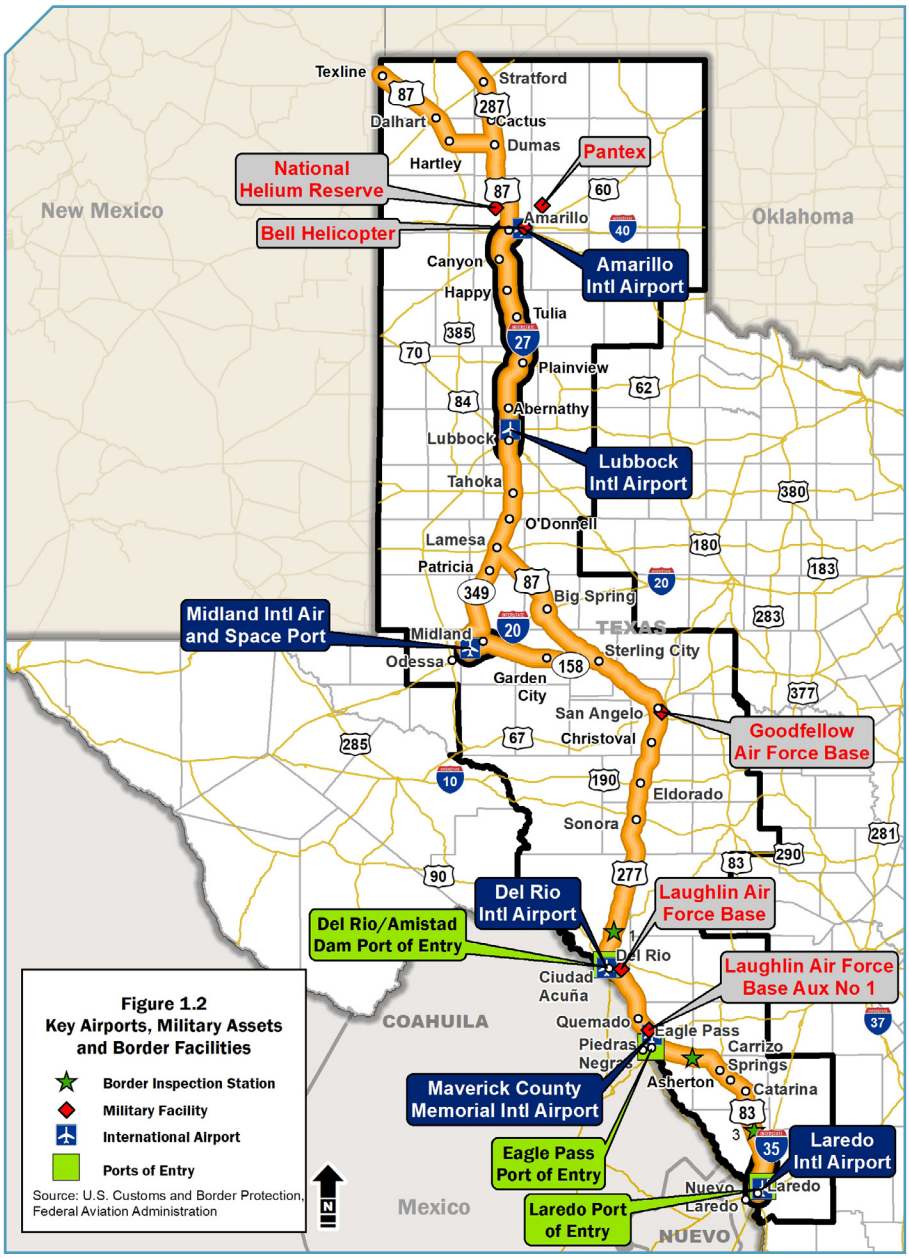
The Corridor connects the state's and the nation's strategic trade gateways of Laredo, Eagle Pass, and Del Rio to destinations north, west and east. In 2019, Laredo, Eagle Pass, and Del Rio border crossings handled over $262 billion, or 66 percent, of Texas-Mexico cross-border trade and 50 percent of U.S.-Mexico trade, and over 2.6 million northbound truck crossings.[8]

[3] Calculated by the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas from the U.S. Energy Information Agency, Drilling Productivity Report, July 13, 2020.
[4] Calculated by Permian Basin Petroleum Association Report Developed with the Texas Taxpayer and Research Association.
[5] Calculated by the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas from the U.S. Energy Information Agency, Drilling Productivity Report, July 13, 2020.
[6] Economic Impact of the Eagle Ford Shale - Business Opportunities and the New Normal, Scope of Study 2014-2016. Institute for Economic Development, Center for Community and Business Research, The University of Texas at San Antonio. June 2017.
[7] American Wind Energy Association 2019 U.S. Wind Industry Market Reports.
[8] United States Customs and Border Patrol Truck Volumes by Bridge, 2009-2018 and Bureau of Transportation Statistics Transborder Freight Data 2006-2019.

The Ports-to-Plains Corridor connects the state and the nation's strategic international trade gateways of Laredo, Eagle Pass, and Del Rio to the rest of Texas.

The Corridor is vital to the continued viability of these international trade gateways, especially with the recent passage of the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA). Trucks carrying this freight rely on the Ports-to-Plains Corridor for direct access from the border to the north, northwest, and northeast. Currently, I-35 is the only interstate connection to and from Laredo, which does not efficiently serve trips headed northwest.

Figure 1.2 shows the key airports, military assets, and border facilities in the Ports-to-Plains Corridor.



National Defense and Security

The Ports-to-Plains Corridor plays a key role in the nation's defense and security with several military installations and border security and enforcement facilities located along the Corridor. The Strategic Highway Network (STRAHNET) is a network of highways that are important to the United States' strategic defense policy and which provide defense access, continuity and emergency capabilities for defense purposes.[9] Approximately 469 miles of the Ports-to-Plains Corridor is on the STRAHNET. The portions of the Corridor that are on the network consist of:

- IH 27 from Amarillo to Lubbock
- US 277 from San Angelo to Del Rio
- US 277 from Del Rio to Carrizo Springs
- US 83 from Carrizo Springs to I-35
- I-35 at US 83 to Laredo

Population

The Ports-to-Plains Corridor traverses rapidly growing population centers. The population of the 56 counties in the Corridor study area grew from 1.36 in 1990 to 1.81 million in 2017, an increase of 33 percent.[10] The population is projected to grow from 1.99 million in 2020 to 3.20 million in 2050, an increase of 61 percent.[11] This growth is projected without an interstate upgrade.

The counties in the Ports-to-Plains Corridor comprise 6.6 percent of the total Texas population.

Employment

The Ports-to-Plains Corridor has experienced a significant increase in employment. Employment in the 56 counties in the Corridor study area grew from approximately 619,000 in 1990 to 845,000 in 2017, an increase of 37 percent.[12] Employment in these counties is projected to grow from approximately 895,000 in 2020 to 1.04 million in 2050, an increase of 17 percent.[13]

Employment in the Ports-to-Plains Corridor counties is projected to increase 17 percent from 2020 to 2050.

Key National Defense and Security Assets Along the Corridor

- **Laughlin (Del Rio) Air Force Base**
  Conducts pilot training for fixed wing aircraft
- **Goodfellow (San Angelo) Air Force Base**
  Conducts training installation educating airmen in fire emergency and intelligence professions
- **Pantex (Northeast of Amarillo in Carson County)**
  United States Department of Energy's primary facility for the final assembly, dismantlement and maintenance of nuclear weapons
- **Federal Helium Reserve**
  The United States Bureau of Land Management operates and maintains a helium storage reservoir, enrichment plant, and pipeline system near Amarillo, Texas (Cliffside Gas Field and Plant)
- **Bell Helicopter (Amarillo)**
  Military Aircraft Assembly and Delivery Center

[9] The STRAHNET is critical to the Department of Defense's (DoD) domestic operations. The STRAHNET is a 62,791-mile system of roads deemed necessary for emergency mobilization and peacetime movement of heavy armor, fuel, ammunition, repair parts, food, and other commodities to support U.S. military operations.
[10] United States Census Bureau 1990 and American Community Survey 2017.
[11] American Community Survey 2017.
[12] United States Census Bureau 1990 and American Community Survey 2017.
[13] Moody's Data Analytics Forecast accessed January 2020.

What are the Key Corridor Challenges?

Economic Development

- The existing 124 miles of I-27 was authorized in 1968 and completed in 1992, more than 28 years ago and prior to the North American Free Trade Agreement being ratified in 1994.
- The value of trade has changed since 1992. Trade through Laredo, Eagle Pass and Del Rio was $25.1 billion in 1994. Today it is $261.6 billion, and is projected to be $676 billion in 2050.
- Importing materials and equipment for extraction relies on the Ports-to-Plains Corridor for energy sector growth. The Corridor plays a critical role in the energy industry's ability to move energy products to market efficiently and stay competitive.
- The lack of an interstate in the Corridor will affect the ability to attract robust economic activity in the future.

Connectivity

- The nation's largest border crossing, its largest agricultural production, and the primary source of its energy independence are all located in this single part of Texas, which is not supported by an interstate facility.
- There are approximately 600 miles between I-35 in central Texas and I-25 in New Mexico; this is as far as a truck can drive in a full day's work, without a north-south interstate highway making it one of the longest gaps without interstate connectivity in the United States.
- There is no north-south interstate connecting Texas' agriculture and energy production to the three border crossings at Laredo, Eagle Pass and Del Rio.

Safety

- Between 2014 and 2018, there were 17,554 total crashes in the Corridor.
- The Corridor includes 350 miles of two-lane roadway and 95 miles of four-lane undivided roadway – these facilities have statewide crash rates that are 48% to 97% higher than statewide crash rates for interstate facilities.
- Crash rates for 227 miles of roadway segments within the Corridor, which includes 88 miles of two-lane facilities, exceed the respective statewide rate.

Access and Mobility

- The population of the Corridor in 1990 was 1.36 million. Today, it is 1.99 million and is projected to be 3.20 million in 2050. Most of this population is not within 25 miles of an interstate facility. San Angelo, without interstate access, is an example of an urbanized area that is farther than 25 miles from an interstate.
- Many of the 56 counties, cities, and communities along the Ports-to-Plains Corridor do not have access to an interstate, and this has created a barrier to economic opportunities and quality of life. Historically, access to an interstate has been credited with spurring national, state, regional, and local economic development growth.
- Eagle Pass and Del Rio are the only southern border crossings without direct access to an interstate highway, which has impacted their ability to attract cross-border related trade activities compared to Laredo.

Corridor Interstate Feasibility Study Charge

On June 10, 2019, Governor Greg Abbott signed House Bill (HB) 1079 into law, charging the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) with conducting an interstate feasibility study of the Ports-to-Plains Corridor, as defined by Section 225.069, Texas Transportation Code, from Laredo to the Oklahoma and New Mexico state lines in West Texas. The purpose of the study is to evaluate the feasibility of, and costs and logistical matters associated with improvements that create a continuous flow, four-lane divided highway that meets interstate standards to the extent possible, including improvements that extend I-27.

The Ports-to-Plains Corridor Interstate Feasibility Study considered eight goals including an examination and determination of:

Freight movement along the Ports-to-Plains Corridor.

Areas preferable and suitable for interstate designation.

Project costs related to the improvement or expansion of the Ports-to- Plains Corridor.

Ability of the energy industry to transport products to market.

Federal, state, local, and private funding sources for a project improving or expanding the Ports-to-Plains Corridor.

Whether improvements or expansion of the Ports-to-Plains Corridor would relieve traffic congestion.

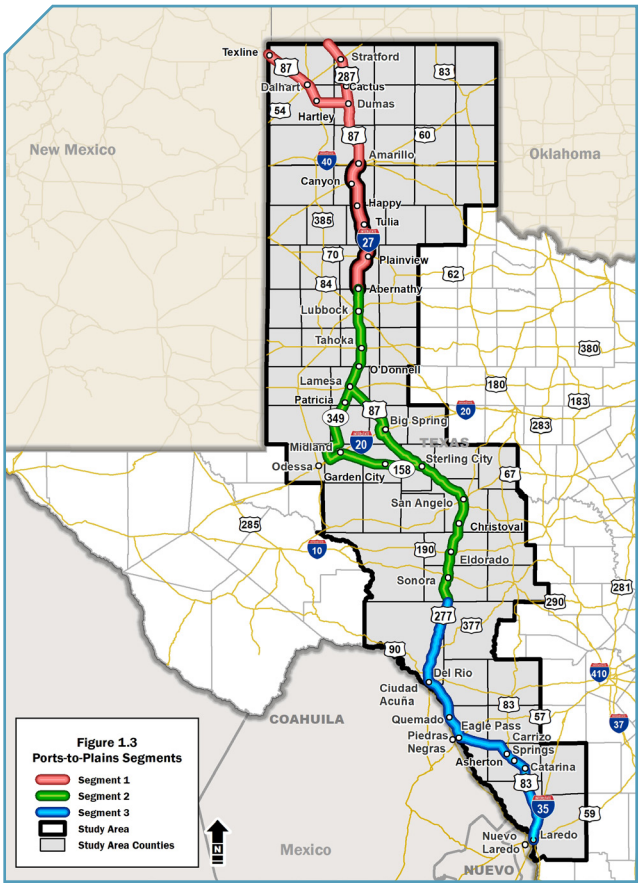
Economic development impacts of the Ports-to-Plains Corridor, including whether the improvement or expansion of the Ports-to-Plains Corridor would create employment opportunities in Texas.

Prioritization of improvements and expansion of the Ports-to- Plains Corridor that are warranted in order to promote safety and mobility, while maximizing the use of existing highways to the greatest extent possible and striving to protect private property as much as possible.

Advisory Committee

To fulfill the requirements of HB 1079, TxDOT established the Ports-to-Plains Corridor Advisory Committee on August 29, 2019. The Advisory Committee is comprised of City Mayors and County Judges, or designees, along the Ports-to-Plains Corridor. The list of Ports-to-Plains Advisory Committee members is included in **Appendix A**. A copy of HB 1079 is included in **Appendix B**. The Committee's charge was to make recommendations to TxDOT based on the Segment Committee reports by October 31, 2020. The Committee was required to meet on a rotational basis in Lubbock and San Angelo. Between October 2019 and October 2020, the Advisory Committee met six times. The first two meetings were held in-person on October 1, 2019 in Lubbock and February 19, 2020 in San Angelo, and the last four were conducted virtually due to the COVID-19 virus pandemic and stay-at-home orders.

Segment Committees



In accordance with HB 1079, TxDOT in consultation with the Ports-to-Plains Corridor Advisory Committee established Segment Committees on October 1, 2019 to guide the Ports-to-Plains Corridor Interstate Feasibility Study. **Figure 1.3** shows the three geographical segments. The Segment Committees comprised of representatives from municipalities, counties, metropolitan planning organizations, ports, chambers of commerce, economic development organizations, the oil and gas industry, trucking industry, department representatives, and other interested parties. The Segment Committees' charge was to provide input to the interstate feasibility study conducted by the Department, develop recommendations, and address the eight study goals. The Segment Committees met five times during the study development to provide feedback on the analysis, findings, and recommendations. Segment Committee 3 met two times in person and three times virtually. Segment Committees 1 and 2 met once in person and four times virtually. Virtual meetings were held because of inclement weather and the COVID-19 virus pandemic and stay-at-home orders. The Segment Committee Final Reports were submitted to the Ports-to-Plains Corridor Advisory Committee on June 30, 2020.

Public Meetings

HB 1079 required the Segment Committees hold public meetings quarterly on a rotational basis in Amarillo, Laredo, Lubbock, and San Angelo during the study to gather public feedback on improvements or expansions to the Ports-to-Plains Corridor to an interstate facility. The Segment Committees held eight public meetings, including five in-person and three that were held

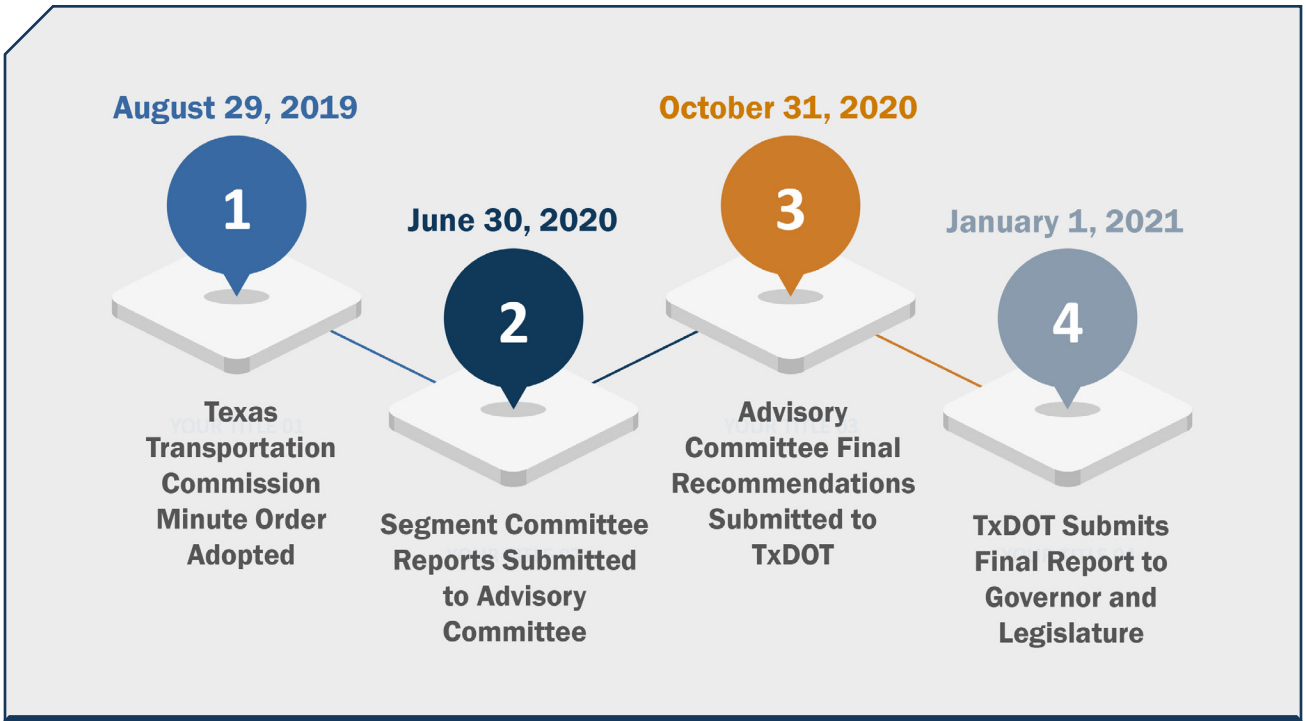


Figure 1.4: Ports-to-Plains Corridor Interstate Feasibility Study Milestones

virtually due to the COVID-19 virus pandemic, to get input on Corridor challenges, needs and findings of the analysis, and on their preliminary recommendations. The Advisory Committee held two public meetings in August 2020 to receive public input on their preliminary recommendations. Due to the COVID-19 virus pandemic, these two public meetings were held virtually.

Figure 1.4 shows the Ports-to-Plains Corridor Interstate Feasibility Study milestones as outlined in HB 1079.

What is the Process Used for the Interstate Feasibility Study?

To develop their recommendations and Final Report, the Advisory Committee utilized the analysis findings and recommendations from the three Corridor Segment Committees Final Reports that were submitted on June 30, 2020.

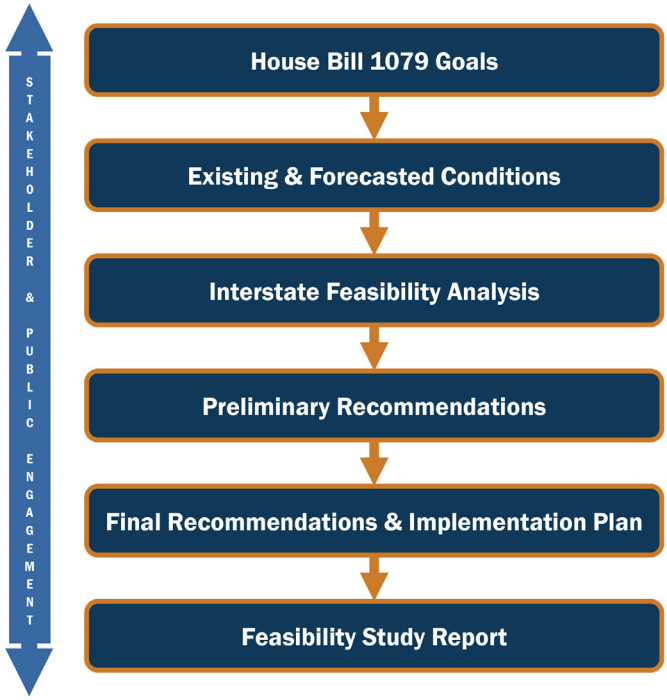


Figure 1.5: Ports-to-Plains Corridor Interstate Feasibility Study Advisory Committee Process

Figure 1.5 shows the Ports-to-Plains Corridor Interstate Feasibility Study process.

Organization of the Report

This Advisory Committee Report addresses the requirements of HB 1079. The Report summarizes the study process, stakeholder and public involvement, analysis, and findings. It also outlines the Advisory Committee findings and recommendations for the improvements of the Ports-to-Plains Corridor to an interstate facility. The Report is organized into five chapters and accompanied by appendices.

Chapter 1 provides an overview of the Ports-to-Plains Corridor, its importance, key challenges, study charge, and study process.

Chapter 2 outlines and assesses current and future trends and factors that will shape and influence the Ports-to-Plains Corridor, from growing population, employment, income, freight movement, energy development, agriculture production, to international trade.

Chapter 3 summarizes the Corridor Interstate Feasibility Analysis and Findings. The findings show that an interstate is feasible in the Ports-to-Plains Corridor. An interstate facility would improve freight mobility, enhance ability of energy and agricultural products to move to markets, improve congestion and mobility, enhance safety, and spur economic development. In addition, the chapter outlines the approximate cost of upgrading the Corridor to an interstate facility and an estimated return on investment.

Chapter 4 describes the public involvement and stakeholder engagement that occurred during the study process. It summarizes the Segment Committee and the Advisory Committee meetings, as well as the public involvement outreach that was conducted.

After summarizing the committee's findings in previous chapters, **Chapter 5** presents the Advisory Committee's recommendations and implementation plan. It presents the blueprint for upgrading the Ports-to-Plains Corridor to an interstate facility. In this chapter, the Advisory Committee offers several policy recommendations including:

- TxDOT establishing an I-27 Corridor Advisory Committee charged with providing advice and guidance to TxDOT on the implementation priorities of the interstate feasibility study project recommendations.
- TxDOT developing a Ports-to-Plains Corridor improvement implementation strategy within six months of the Ports-to-Plains Corridor Interstate Feasibility Study Report to the Governor and Legislature.
- TxDOT submitting a proposal requesting designation of the Ports-to-Plains Corridor as a future interstate by FHWA.
- Completing planned and programmed projects on the Corridor.
- Further conducting detailed project level planning and development process, including planning for future connections and interchanges with the proposed interstate.
- Undergoing an extensive environmental review process and public input and comment for any relief route project.
- Recognizing the importance of community support for the future interstate.

CHAPTER 2

Current and Future Conditions and Needs Assessment

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.

Chapter 2: Current and Future Conditions and Needs Assessment

This Chapter provides a comprehensive understanding of the current and future Ports-to-Plains Corridor conditions and needs assessment. The analysis was guided by the three Segment Committees and focuses on key factors influencing travel demand in the Ports-to-Plains Corridor today and in the future. These factors include population, employment, median household income, Gross Domestic Product (GDP), traffic conditions, safety, and freight flows. The Ports-to-Plains Advisory Committee reviewed current and forecasted conditions for the Ports-to-Plains Corridor to determine future needs and challenges of the Corridor between 2020 and 2050. The future analysis presents the baseline condition, which includes the existing roadways in the Corridor, plus any currently planned and programmed projects by TxDOT or Metropolitan Planning Organizations in the Corridor. The baseline condition does not include upgrading the Corridor to an interstate.

The Ports-to-Plains Corridor is designated as a High Priority Corridor on the National Highway System

Corridor Characteristics

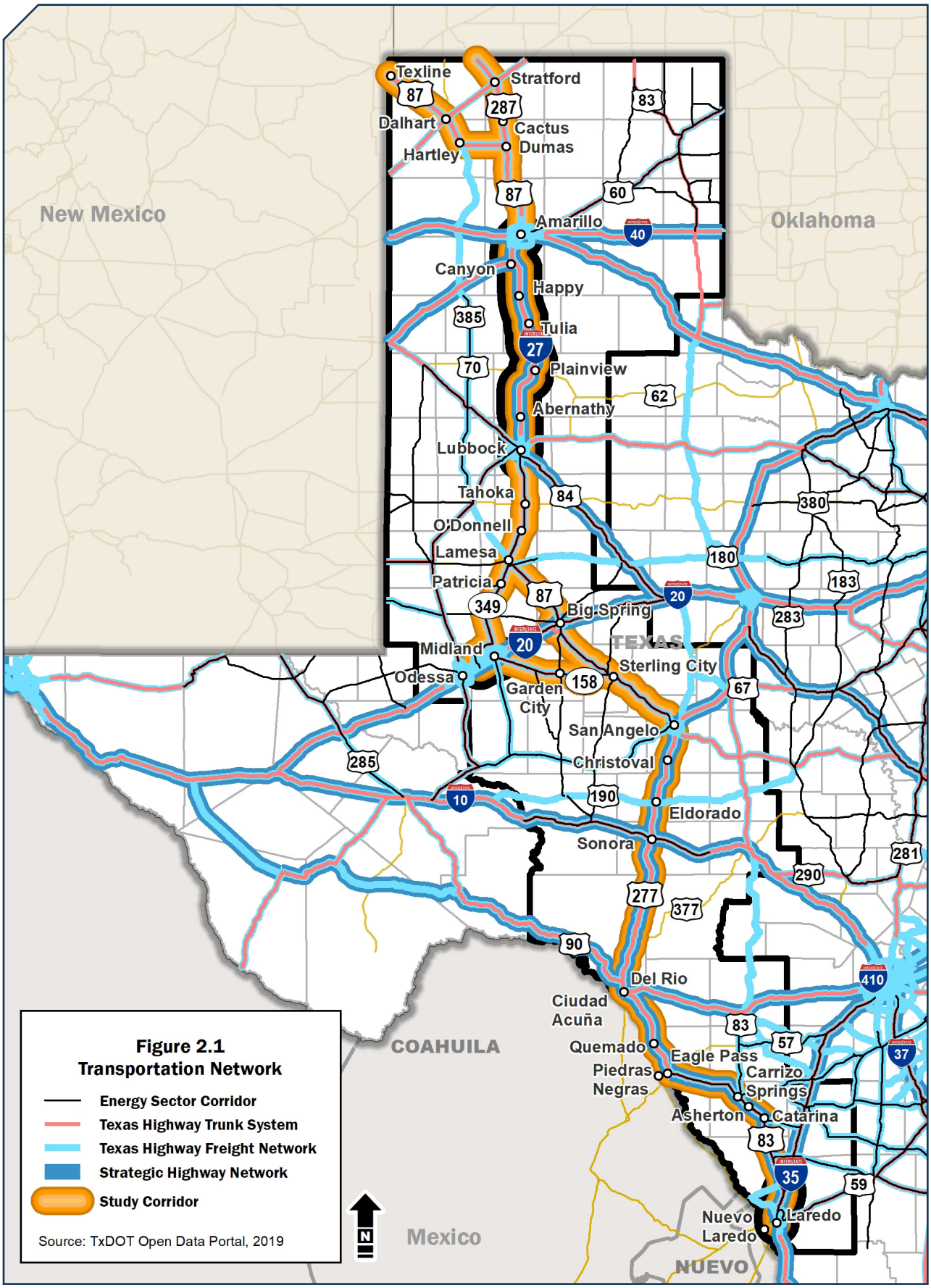
The Ports-to-Plains Corridor is the primary north-south transportation facility for moving people and freight in West and South Texas. In Texas, **the Corridor stretches 963 miles**, from the I-35/Juarez-Lincoln Bridge in Laredo and passes through three international trade gateways of Laredo, Eagle Pass and Del Rio. It traverses the Eagle Ford Shale energy development in the south, the Permian Basin energy development in the Midland-Odessa region, and the agricultural plains in the northern portion of the Corridor and terminates at the Oklahoma and New Mexico state lines in the Panhandle.

Portions of the Ports-to-Plains Corridor are on:

- **Texas Highway Freight Network**
- **Texas Trunk Highway System**
- **TxDOT-designated Energy Sector Corridor**
- **Strategic Highway Network**

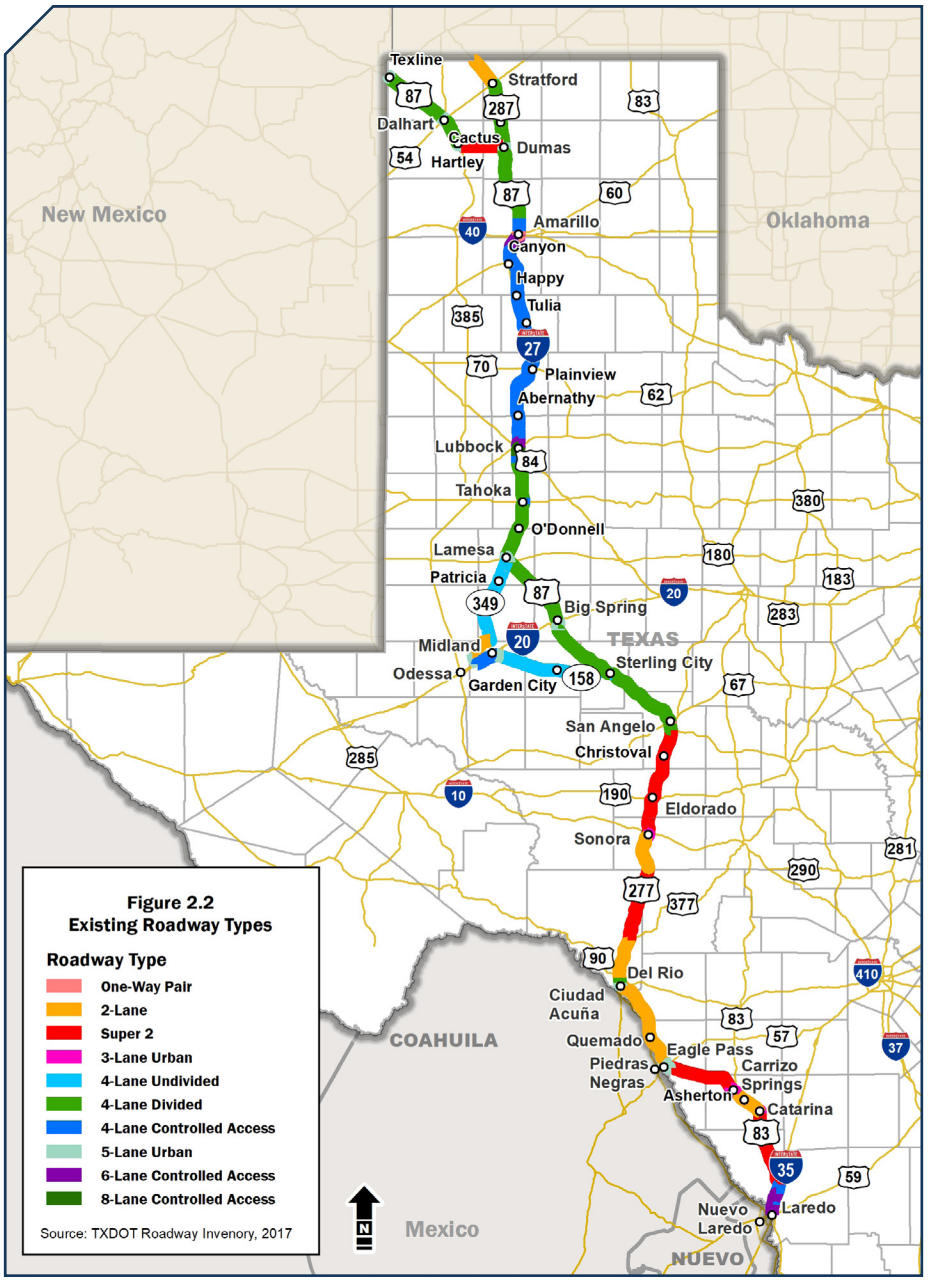
Figure 2.1 shows the transportation network in Texas and which highways make-up the Ports-to-Plains Corridor. The Corridor was designated by Congress in 1998 as a High Priority Corridor on the National Highway System. It is also designated on the Texas Highway Freight Network, Texas Trunk Highway System, Strategic Highway Network, and is designated as an Energy Sector Corridor. In addition, the entire Corridor is on the National Highway System. These system designations emphasize the importance the Ports-to-Plains Corridor plays in South and West Texas, in the state, nationally, and bi-nationally.

Other airports, military assets, and security facilities within the Corridor include Air Force bases, strategic defense manufacturing locations, railroads, airports, intermodal and border facilities. Commercial airports serve Amarillo, Lubbock, Midland, Odessa, San Angelo, Laredo, and Del Rio. Smaller airports in the Corridor consist of general aviation and private airfields in rural areas.


New Mexico
Oklahoma
TEXAS
COAHUILA
Mexico
Texline
Stratford
Dalhart
Cactus
Dumas
Hartley
Amarillo
Canyon
Happy
Tulia
Plainview
Abernathy
Lubbock
Tahoka
O'Donnell
Lamesa
Patricia
Big Spring
Midland
Odessa
Garden City
Sterling City
San Angelo
Christoval
Eldorado
Sonora
Del Rio
Ciudad Acuña
Quemado
Piedras Negras
Eagle Pass
Carrizo Springs
Asherton
Catarina
Nuevo Laredo
Laredo
87
287
83
60
40
385
27
70
62
84
380
180
183
349
20
283
158
67
285
10
190
281
290
277
377
90
410
57
37
35
59
Figure 2.1
Transportation Network
Energy Sector Corridor
Texas Highway Trunk System
Texas Highway Freight Network
Strategic Highway Network
Study Corridor
Source: TxDOT Open Data Portal, 2019
N

The existing 963-mile Corridor is comprised of:

- 124-miles of I-27 (which was completed in 1992, between Lubbock and Amarillo)
- 11 miles of I-20
- 17 miles of I-35
- 95 miles of four-lane undivided roadway sections
- 288 miles of four-lane divided roadway sections
- 350 mile of two-lane undivided roadway sections
- 78 miles of other types of roadway sections, including 3 and 5-lane urban sections.
- In total, the existing Corridor includes 152 interstate miles and 811 miles non-interstate roadway. **Figure 2.2** shows the existing roadway types in the Corridor.

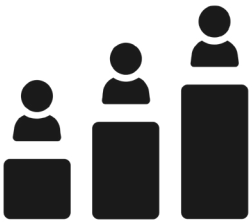


What are the Population Trends in the Ports-to-Plains Corridor?

The findings of the analysis show counties along the Ports-to-Plains Corridor experienced steady growth from 1990 to 2017, growing from 1.36 million in 1990 to 1.81 million in 2017, an increase of 33 percent. During that same period, the population of Texas grew rapidly, increasing by approximately 67 percent, from 17 million in 1990 to 28 million in 2017. Certain counties in the Corridor grew at the same or higher growth rates as the state. For example,Webb County had the largest population growth rate at 101 percent; whereas Hartley (66 percent) and Maverick (60 percent) counties had similar population growth rates as the state.

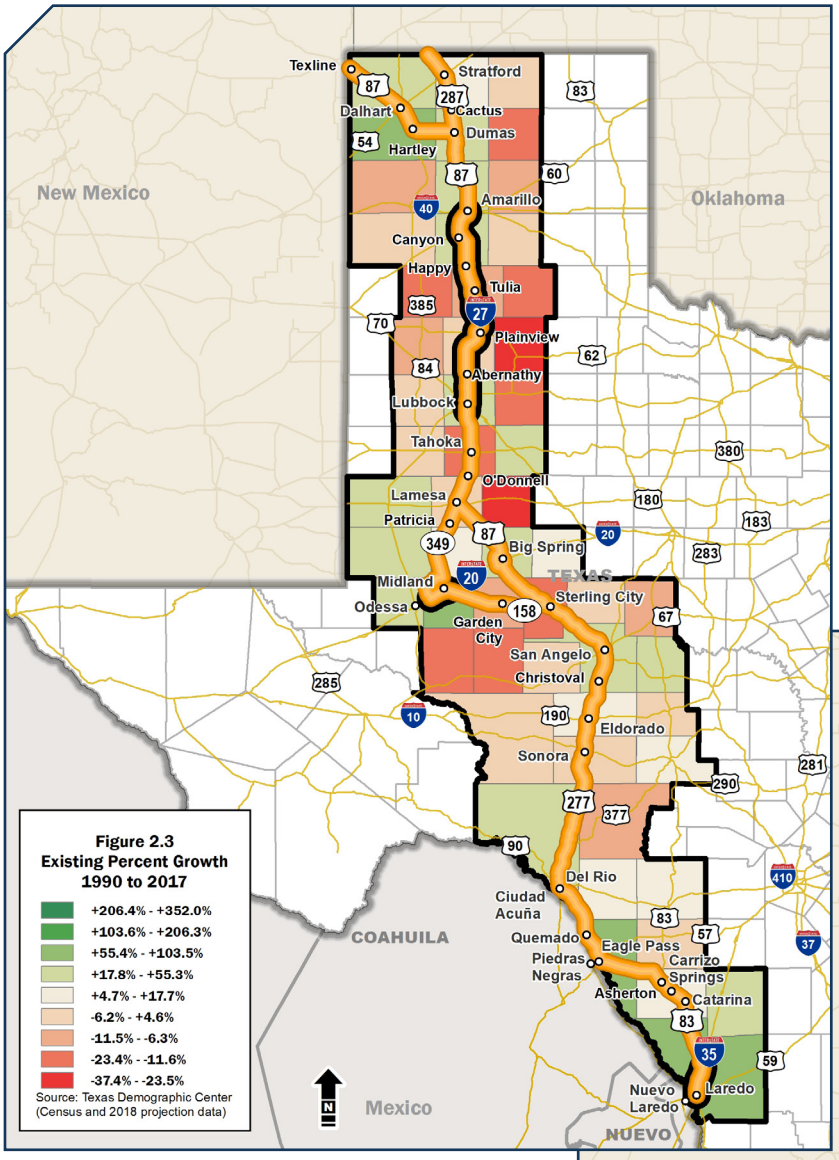
Forecasted Corridor Population Growth

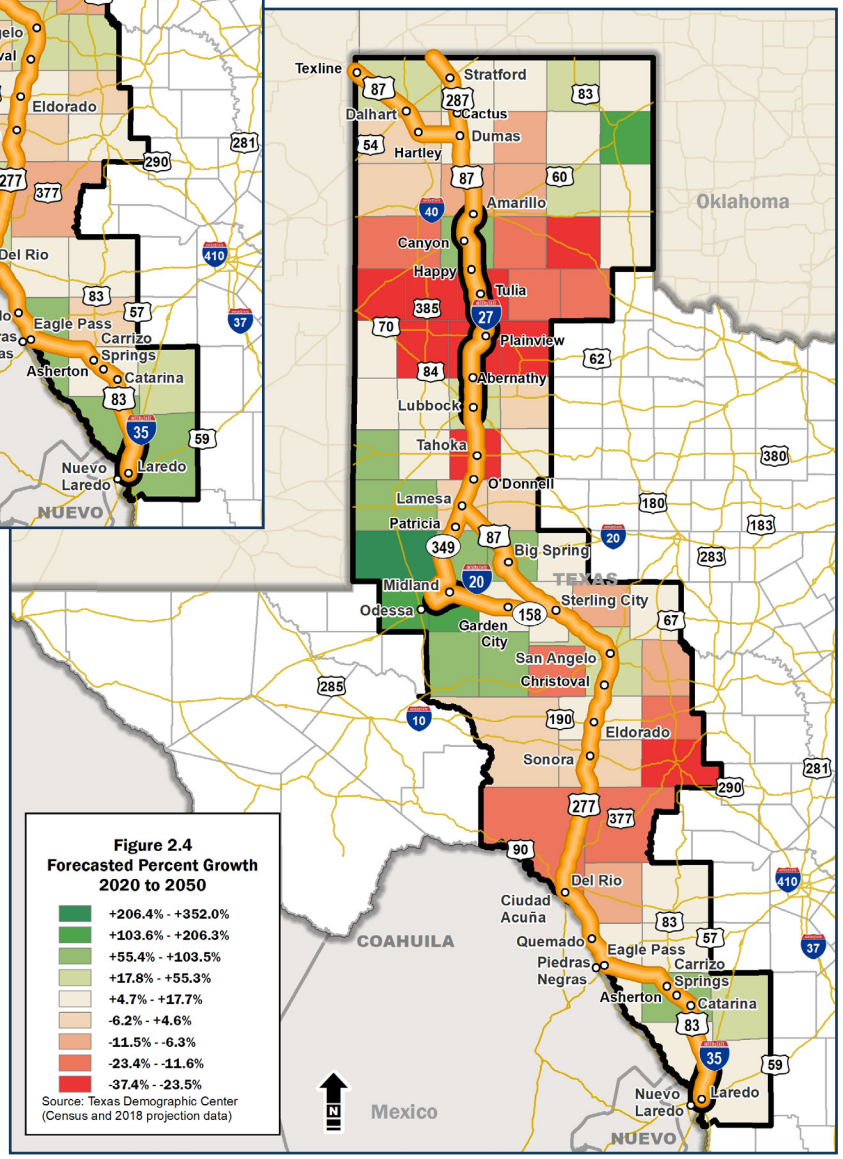
The Corridor population grew **33%** between 1990 and 2017, but it is projected to grow nearly twice that rate (**61%**) between 2020 and 2050.

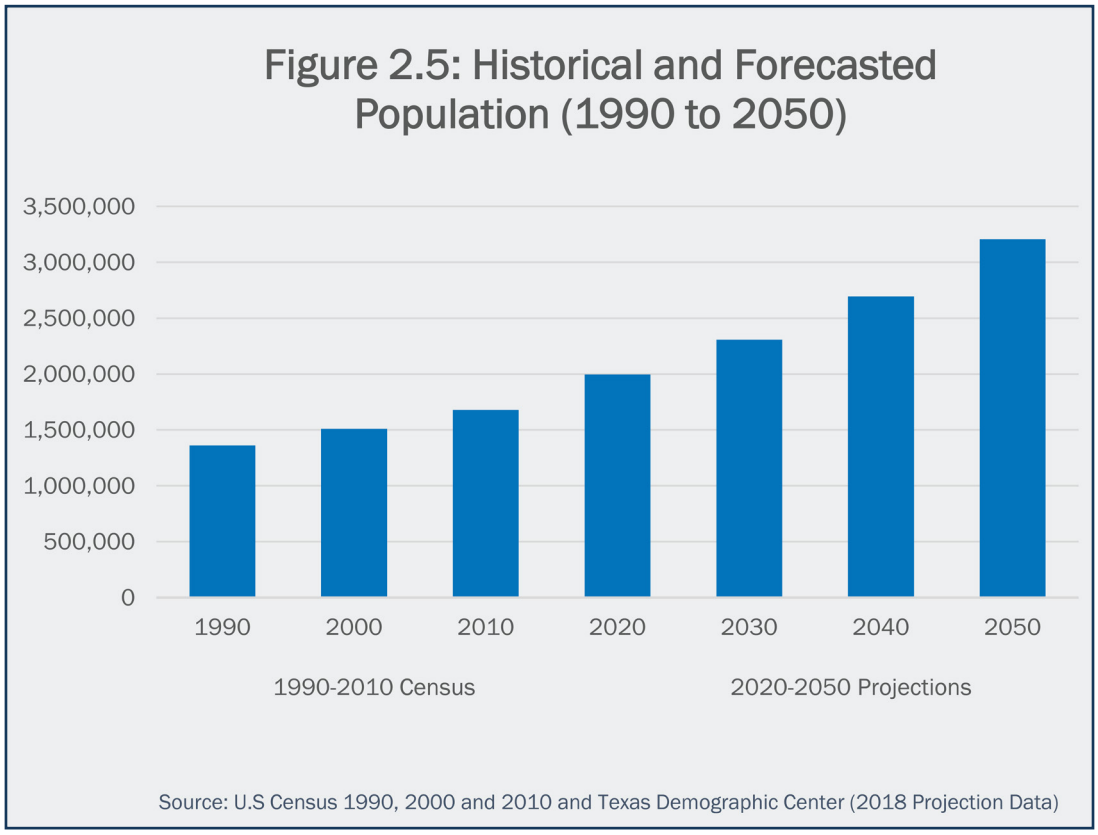


The findings of the analysis also show over the next 30 years, from 2020 to 2050 for the baseline, the Corridor's population growth is expected to outpace the rate of the State's population growth and population growth experienced between 1990 and 2017. From 2020 to 2050, the Corridor is projected to grow 61 percent, adding over a million people, from 1.99 million in 2020 to 3.20 million in 2050. By comparison, the Texas population is projected to increase 60 percent, from approximately 30 million in 2020 to over 47 million in 2050. **Figures 2.3** and **2.4** compare population from 1990 to 2017 and from 2020 to 2050.[14] The Corridor's historical and forecasted population growth from 1990 to 2050 is shown in **Figure 2.5**.

[14] The Segment Committees decided to use an additional nine counties for the forecasted data collection and analysis to fully capture the area the Corridor influences.


Texline
Stratford
Dalhart
Cactus
Dumas
Hartley
Amarillo
Canyon
Happy
Tulia
Plainview
Abernathy
Lubbock
Tahoka
O'Donnell
Lamesa
Patricia
Big Spring
Midland
Odessa
Sterling City
Garden City
San Angelo
Christoval
Eldorado
Sonora
Del Rio
Ciudad Acuña
Quemado
Eagle Pass
Piedras Negras
Carrizo Springs
Asherton
Catarina
Nuevo Laredo
Laredo
New Mexico
Oklahoma
COAHUILA
Mexico
NUEVO
TEXAS
Figure 2.3
Existing Percent Growth
1990 to 2017
+206.4% - +352.0%
+103.6% - +206.3%
+55.4% - +103.5%
+17.8% - +55.3%
+4.7% - +17.7%
-6.2% - +4.6%
-11.5% - -6.3%
-23.4% - -11.6%
-37.4% - -23.5%
Source: Texas Demographic Center
(Census and 2018 projection data)


Texline
Stratford
Dalhart
Cactus
Dumas
Hartley
Amarillo
Canyon
Happy
Tulia
Plainview
Abernathy
Lubbock
Tahoka
O'Donnell
Lamesa
Patricia
Big Spring
Midland
Odessa
Sterling City
Garden City
San Angelo
Christoval
Eldorado
Sonora
Del Rio
Ciudad Acuña
Quemado
Eagle Pass
Piedras Negras
Carrizo Springs
Asherton
Catarina
Nuevo Laredo
Laredo
Oklahoma
COAHUILA
Mexico
NUEVO
TEXAS
Figure 2.4
Forecasted Percent Growth
2020 to 2050
+206.4% - +352.0%
+103.6% - +206.3%
+55.4% - +103.5%
+17.8% - +55.3%
+4.7% - +17.7%
-6.2% - +4.6%
-11.5% - -6.3%
-23.4% - -11.6%
-37.4% - -23.5%
Source: Texas Demographic Center
(Census and 2018 projection data)



The findings of the analysis conducted by the Segment Committees indicate that between 2020 and 2050, several counties in the Ports-to-Plains Corridor are projected to have higher population growth rates than the state's projected 60 percent growth. These include: Andrews (352%), Dimmit (62%), Ector (168%), Gaines (104%), Hemphill (148%), Martin (94%), Midland (206%), Randall (81%), Reagan (93%), Upton (65%), and Yoakum (67%) counties. The highest population growth is projected in counties primarily located within the Permian Basin where oil and gas production are the predominant industries.

Counties with Highest Projected Population Growth

Between 2020 and 2050, Andrews (352%) and Midland (206%) counties led the Corridor in projected population growth, potentially due to oil and gas continuing to play a prominent economic role in the Corridor.

As the population in West and South Texas experience this rapid growth, the Ports-to-Plains Corridor will experience significant increase in travel demand as well as **increased mobility, accessibility, safety, and connectivity needs** over the next 30 years.

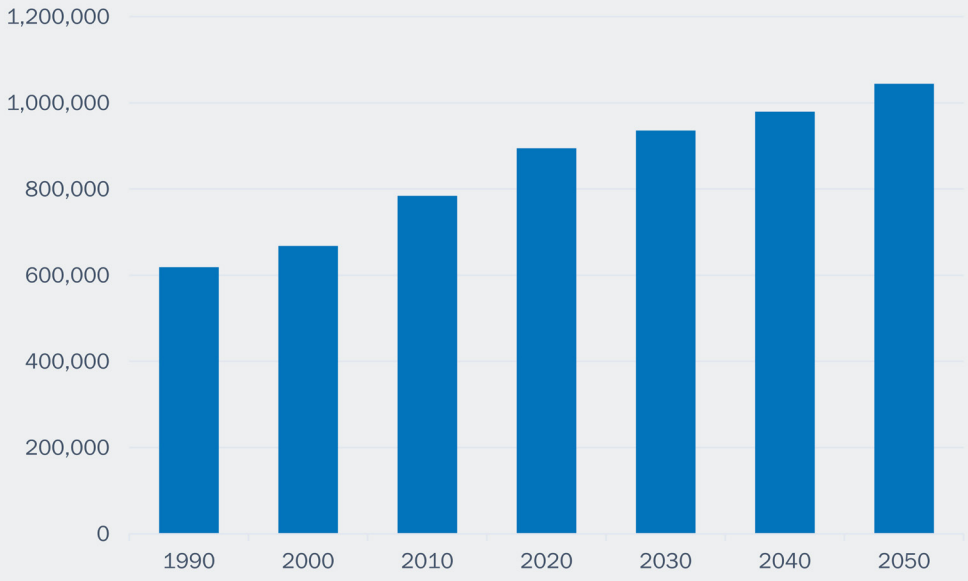
What is the Current and Future Economic Outlook for the Corridor?

The economy of West and South Texas has grown consistently over the last 20 years. The expanding economy fueled by international trade in the southern portion of the Corridor, energy development in the central part of the Corridor, and agricultural production on the northern part of the Corridor has contributed to the economic development and enhanced quality of life for all communities in the region and has created jobs and increased incomes and GDP in the region. These economic growth trends are anticipated to continue over the next thirty years.

Employment Growth

Employment in the Ports-to-Plains Corridor grew by 37 percent from approximately 619,000 in 1990 to 845,000 in 2017. By comparison, employment in Texas grew by 62 percent over that same period from over 8 million in 1990 to 13 million in 2017. Employment projections show the Ports-to-Plains Corridor employment will grow by 17 percent from approximately 895,000 in 2020 to 1.04 million in the 2050 baseline. During that same period, Texas employment is projected to grow by 42 percent from approximately 13 million in 2020 to over 18 million in 2050. The findings show the counties and communities in the Corridor lag behind in employment growth compared to the state. These projections do not include any job growth benefit from an interstate upgrade. In addition, they were made prior to the passage of the USMCA and the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020. Both of these recent occurrences are causing companies to rethink manufacturing in favor of domestic and continental locations. This could make the Ports-to-Plains Corridor much more attractive for future manufacturing, warehousing, and employment growth than previous models predicted. **Figure 2.6** shows the historical and forecasted employment growth from 1990 to 2050.

Figure 2.6: Corridor Historical and Forecasted Employment (1990 to 2050)



Source: U.S. Census 1990, 2000, 2010 and Moody's Analytics (2018 Projection Data)

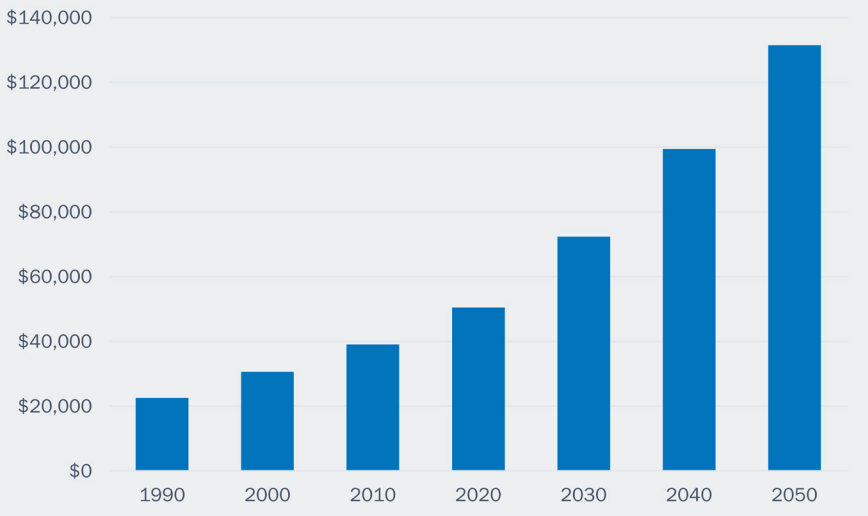
Median Household Income

Another key indicator of economic growth and prosperity is median household income. The findings of the analysis show the Ports-to-Plains Corridor median household income more than doubled from $21,000 in 1990 to $51,000 in 2017. The Corridor's median household income is greater than the 2017 Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) poverty threshold of $25,094 for a family of four. During that same period, the State of Texas median household income grew from approximately $30,000 in 1990 to $60,000 in 2017. The findings show a majority of the counties and communities in the Corridor still lag behind in median household income growth compared to the state. The highest median household incomes in 2017 in the Corridor were in Andrews, Borden, Martin, and Midland Counties at approximately $70,000, exceeding the state by approximately $10,000. These four counties are in the Permian Basin region where oil and gas with higher wage jobs is a prime industry.

Median household income in the Ports-to-Plains Corridor is **projected to increase 161 percent** from approximately $50,500 in 2020 to $131,500 in 2050. By comparison, the median household income for the State of Texas is projected to triple from nearly $64,000 in 2020 to $196,000 in the 2050 baseline (207 percent increase). This shows the counties and communities in the Corridor will continue to fall behind the rest of state in the growth in median household income in the future. The historical and forecasted median household income growth from 1990 to 2050 are shown in **Figure 2.7.** The highest 2050 projected median household income in the Ports-to-Plains Corridor is for Hartley and Glasscock County. These counties are projected to far exceed the growth projected for the state or the rest of the Corridor with projected median incomes estimated well over $100,000.

Between 1990 and 2017, a majority of the counties and communities in the Corridor have lagged behind in median household income growing from $21,000 to $51,000 compared to the state of $30,000 to $60,000.

Figure 2.7: Corridor Historical and Forecasted Median Household Income (1990 to 2050)



Source: U.S. Census 1990, 2000, 2010 and Moody's Analytics (2018 Projection Data)

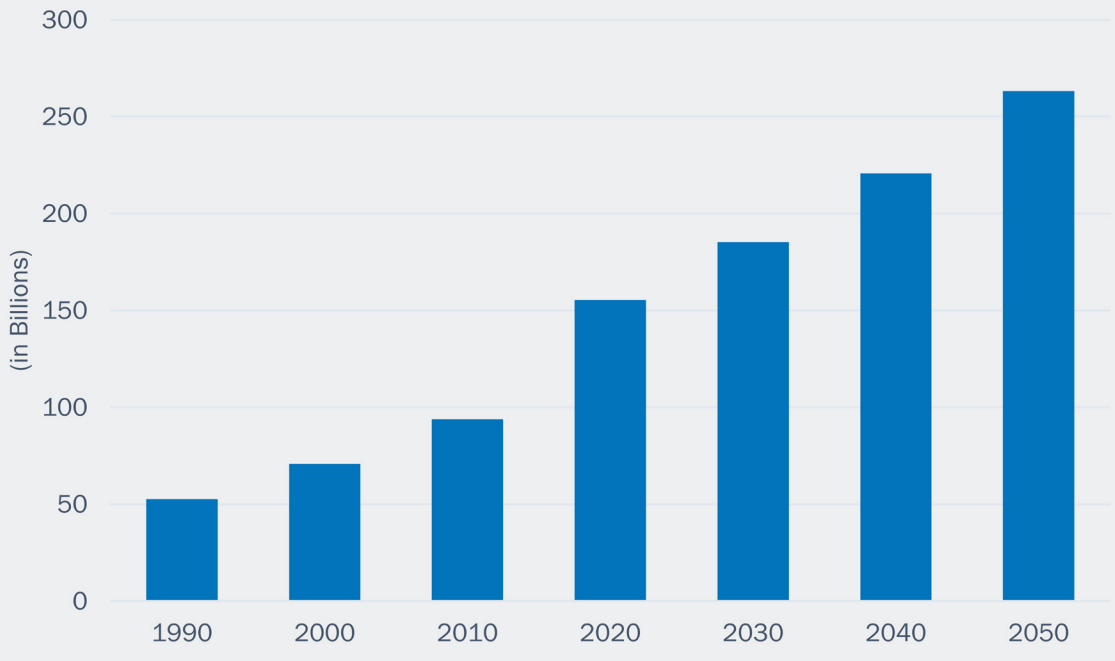
Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

Gross Domestic Product measures the value of goods and services produced. **Figure 2.8** shows the historical and forecasted GDP for the Ports-to-Plains Corridor. The findings of the analysis show GDP in the Corridor more than doubled from $53 billion in 1990 to $135 billion in 2017, an increase of 158 percent. By comparison, the Texas GDP also doubled from $624 billion in 1990 to $1.7 trillion in 2017, representing an increase of 168 percent. From 2020 to 2050, the Ports-to-Plains Corridor **GDP is projected to increase 69 percent** from $155 billion to $263 billion, respectively. For the entire state, the Texas GDP is projected to more than double from $1.7 trillion in 2020 to $4.1 trillion in the 2050 baseline, an increase of 143 percent.

The Texas and Corridor GDP growth is largely due to the energy sector including oil and gas production. The Bureau of Economic Analysis reported the energy sector was the leading contributor to the increase in GDP in Texas in 2019 and the state was reported as the fastest growing state in the country. The findings show by 2050, Midland, Lubbock and Ector counties will have the highest projected GDP in the Corridor with the leading industries being mining and energy sector. These three counties will account for a combined 2050 projected GDP of $139 billion and make-up 53 percent of the Corridor's total projected GDP of $263 billion in 2050.

Projections show by 2050, Ector, Lubbock, and Midland Counties will account for 53% of the GDP in the Ports-to-Plains Corridor.

Figure 2.8: Corridor Historical and Forecasted GDP (1990 to 2050)



Source: Moody's Analytics 2018 Projection Data

Energy

The Ports-to-Plains Corridor is a vital energy trade corridor that connects the Permian Basin and Eagle Ford Shale production areas with refineries and seaports in the Texas Gulf Coast and land port of entries for export and imports of supplies. The United States Energy Information Administration (USEIA) estimates the remaining proven reserves in the Permian Basin exceed 20 billion barrels of oil and 16 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, making it one of the largest hydrocarbon-producing basins in the United States and the world. There are a total of 31,971 oil wells and 15,894 natural gas wells located in the Ports-to-Plains Corridor. Counties with the largest oil production in 2017 include Midland, Martin, and Howard Counties. The largest natural gas production in 2017 was in Webb, Dimmit, and Sutton Counties.

Texas leads the country in wind power additions representing a record amount of 3,938 megawatts in 2019.

Wind is also a critical component of the energy economy in West and South Texas. Much of the U.S. wind energy production comes from west of I-35, from counties along the Ports-to-Plains Corridor. In 2019, there was a total of 2,821 wind turbines located within the Ports-to-Plains Corridor. Wind turbine equipment is generally large and requires specialized overweight/oversize transportation. The Corridor serves as an important route for the movement of this equipment, including to other states such as Oklahoma and Colorado where wind energy is also growing. Texas was the sixth-largest producer of solar power in 2019. The largest solar farm in Texas is located in Upton County.[15]

Agriculture

Agriculture is especially important in the northern section of the Ports-to-Plains Corridor and is a key driver of economic industry. Inbound products such as feed, fertilizer, and fuel also rely on the Ports-to-Plains Corridor. The top livestock product in the Corridor are cattle and calves. Top crops include cotton, wheat and grain, and forage.

The total agricultural product sales for the Ports-to-Plains Corridor is approximately $11 billion.

The production and export of quality agricultural products (crops, livestock, dairy, etc.) generates billions of dollars and relies directly on highway networks for transport of products to market. Transporting these products requires a highway system that can provide an efficient, safe, and healthy way to transport livestock and crops.

International Trade

The Ports-to-Plains Corridor connects the state's and nation's strategic gateways of Laredo, Eagle Pass, and Del Rio, handling $262 billion in U.S.-Mexico trade in 2019. These three border crossings accounted for 50 percent of U.S.-Mexico cross-border trade and 66 percent of Texas-Mexico cross-border trade. Laredo overtook the Port of Los Angeles as the top international trade gateway in the U.S. in March 2019 and again in February 2020.[16] With an expected 214 percent increase of 10.6 million additional tons between 2018 and 2050, imports are projected to grow faster than exports.

Laredo, Eagle Pass, and Del Rio handled $262 billion in U.S.-Mexico trade in 2019.

[15] U.S. EIA, Electric Power Monthly (February 2020)
[16] Analysis of U.S. Census Trade Data by WorldCity, as reported by FreightWaves

What are the Present and Future Traffic Conditions?

This section presents the findings of the analysis of existing traffic conditions and the projected 2050 traffic. The 2050 traffic analysis includes the existing roadways in the Corridor, plus any currently planned and programmed projects by TxDOT or the Metropolitan Planning Organizations in the Corridor. It does not include upgrading the Corridor to an interstate.

Total Traffic Volumes

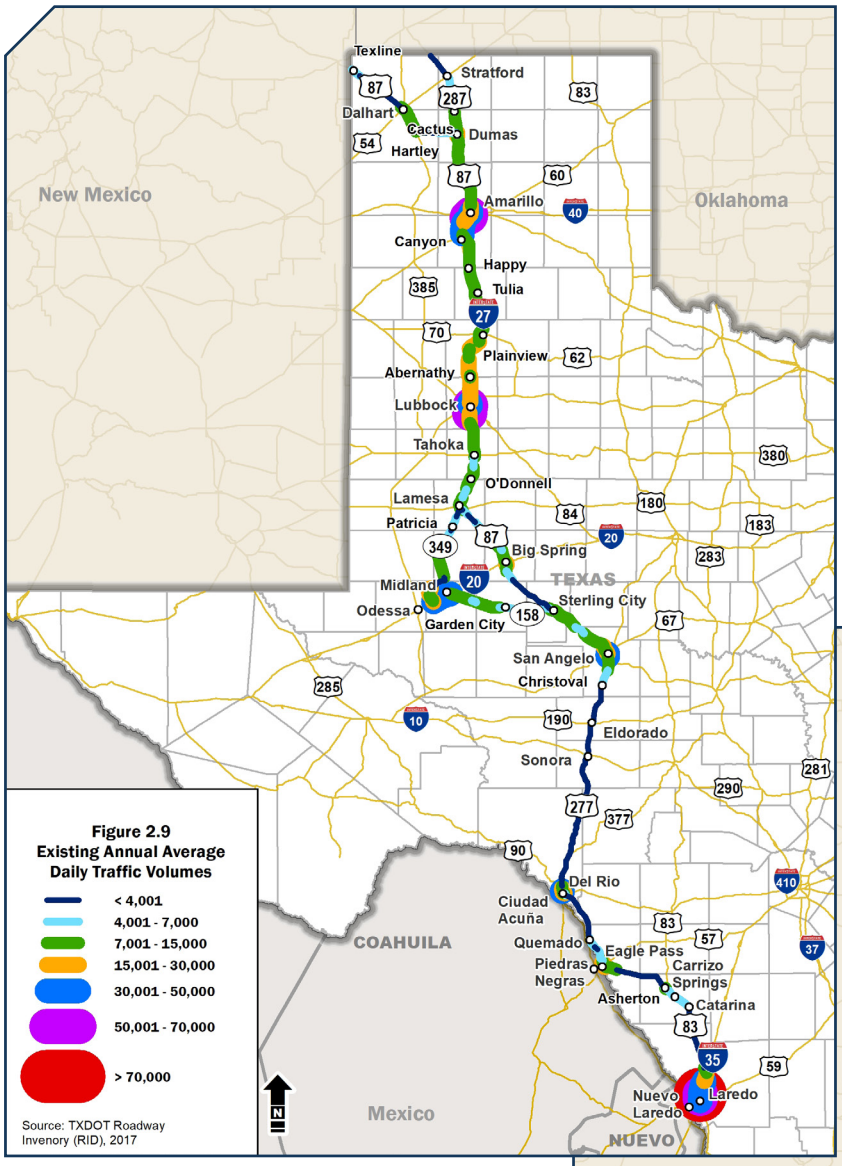
The Ports-to-Plains Corridor serves local, regional, state, national, and bi-national traffic flows. Existing traffic volumes vary considerably on the Ports-to-Plains Corridor. Traffic volume is the heaviest on the existing interstate highways in Laredo, Lubbock, and Amarillo. **Figure 2.9** shows the existing traffic volumes in the Ports-to-Plains Corridor from the Texas Roadway Inventory Database (RID). **Figure 2.10** shows the forecasted 2050 baseline traffic volumes in the Corridor from the Statewide Analysis Model (SAM) for 2050. The Corridor carried an average of 10,600 vehicles per day (vpd) in 2018. The findings of the traffic projections show the Corridor will carry an average of approximately 17,700 vpd in 2050 with approximately 80 percent of the growth being attributed to demographic changes.

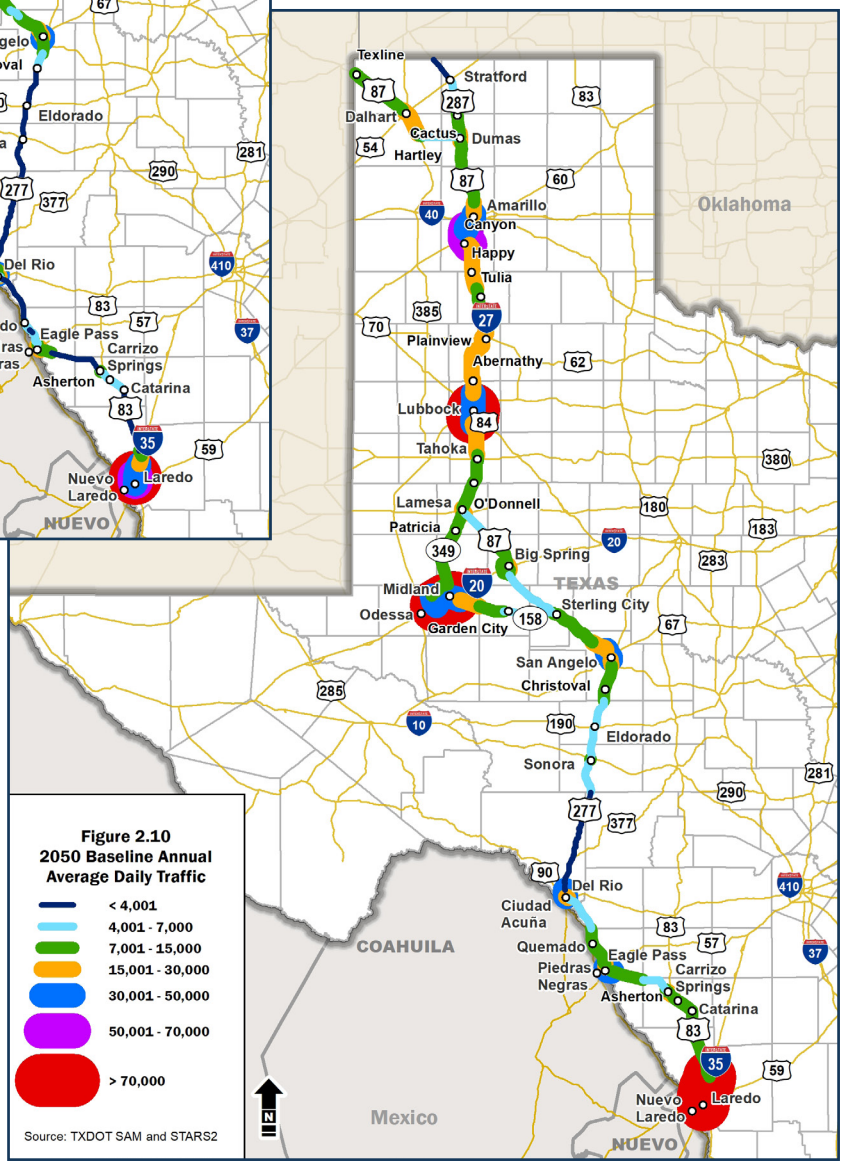
Traffic volumes are projected to increase 67% from 10,600 vehicles per day in 2018 to approximately 17,700 vehicles per day in 2050.

Truck Traffic Volumes

Truck traffic is anticipated to increase in the Ports-to-Plains Corridor from an average of 2,200 in 2018 to 3,800 in the 2050 baseline with the growth in population and economic opportunity. Laredo had the highest truck traffic volumes of the Corridor in 2018 with up to 17,000 trucks per day due to the presence of the largest land port of entry. Trucks comprise 30 percent or greater of the total traffic volumes between Amarillo and the Oklahoma state line and near the Midland area where the Permian Basin generates heavy truck demand from oil and gas industries. Truck traffic is anticipated to remain heavy on the portions of the Corridor that are already interstates in cities such as I-35 in Laredo, I-20 in Midland, and I-27 south of Amarillo. The south end of the Corridor will also exceed 3,000 trucks per day on rural two-lane segments.

Truck volumes are projected to increase 73% from 2,200 trucks per day in 2018 to approximately 3,800 trucks per day in 2050.


Texline
Stratford
Dalhart
Cactus
Dumas
Hartley
Amarillo
Canyon
Happy
Tulia
Plainview
Abernathy
Lubbock
Tahoka
O'Donnell
Lamesa
Patricia
Big Spring
Midland
Odessa
Garden City
Sterling City
San Angelo
Christoval
Eldorado
Sonora
Del Rio
Ciudad Acuña
Quemado
Eagle Pass
Piedras Negras
Carrizo Springs
Asherton
Catarina
Nuevo Laredo
Laredo
New Mexico
Oklahoma
TEXAS
COAHUILA
Mexico
NUEVO
Figure 2.9
Existing Annual Average Daily Traffic Volumes
< 4,001
4,001 - 7,000
7,001 - 15,000
15,001 - 30,000
30,001 - 50,000
50,001 - 70,000
> 70,000
Source: TXDOT Roadway Invenory (RID), 2017


Texline
Stratford
Dalhart
Cactus
Dumas
Hartley
Amarillo
Canyon
Happy
Tulia
Plainview
Abernathy
Lubbock
Tahoka
O'Donnell
Lamesa
Patricia
Big Spring
Midland
Odessa
Garden City
Sterling City
San Angelo
Christoval
Eldorado
Sonora
Del Rio
Ciudad Acuña
Quemado
Eagle Pass
Piedras Negras
Carrizo Springs
Asherton
Catarina
Nuevo Laredo
Laredo
Oklahoma
TEXAS
COAHUILA
Mexico
NUEVO
Figure 2.10
2050 Baseline Annual Average Daily Traffic
< 4,001
4,001 - 7,000
7,001 - 15,000
15,001 - 30,000
30,001 - 50,000
50,001 - 70,000
> 70,000
Source: TXDOT SAM and STARS2

What are the Travel Times in the Ports-to-Plains Corridor?

For the existing Corridor in 2018, average travel times were 16.3 hours, peak travel times were 17.6 hours, and free flow travel times were 13.7 hours. For the 2050 baseline, those travel times are anticipated to reduce slightly to 16 hours for the average travel time, 17.3 hours for the peak travel time, and 13.4 hours for the free flow travel time.

What are the Safety Conditions in the Corridor?

The findings of the safety analysis based on TxDOT's Crash Records Information System (CRIS) show there were **17,554 total crashes** in the Corridor between 2014 and 2018. Of the 17,554 crashes, **242 were fatal crashes** resulting in 297 fatalities. The highest crash rates in the Corridor occurred through urban areas of Amarillo (where I-27 terminates into one-way streets in the central business district), Big Spring, San Angelo, and Del Rio. Smaller cities in the northern part of the Corridor (Dalhart, Dumas, and Cactus) experience high crash rates as well as rural segments such as US 277 in Edwards and Val Verde Counties. **Figure 2.11** shows the 5-year crash total from 2014-2018 in the Corridor. **Table 2.1** shows the Ports-to-Plains Corridor crash rates per 100 million vehicle miles traveled (100 MVMT) by route type compared to the statewide rate.

Table 2.1: Actual Ports-to-Plains Corridor Crash Rates (per 100 MVMT) by Route Type

Route Type	P2P Corridor	Statewide Rate
Urban - 4 Lane Undivided	254.54	283.09
Rural - 4 Lane Undivided	82.16	97.61
Urban - 4 Lane Divided	247.59	158.28
Rural - 4 lane Divided	54.72	62.95
2-lane urban	185.11	213.77
2-lane rural	125.37	102.13
Urban Interstate	175.48	158.28
Rural Interstate	47.53	62.08

The analysis indicates that of the **17,554 total crashes, seventeen percent or 2,958** were truck-related crashes. Truck crash rates were highest in urban areas such as Big Spring, Midland, Amarillo, Dumas, and Dalhart where truck volumes are higher and the route features at-grade intersections and increased crash exposure through towns. Overall truck crash rates were lowest on the current I-27 Corridor, including Lubbock, when compared to the other larger cities in the Corridor. The overall fatality rate is 1.31 per 100 MVMT, slightly over the statewide average of 1.29.

The 2050 baseline, which would improve the Ports-to-Plains Corridor from the construction of planned and programmed projects, is expected to reduce the 2018 average crash rate of 115 crashes per 100 MVMT to 86 crashes per 100 MVMT Corridor-wide by year 2050.

The Corridor includes 350 miles of two-lane roadway and 95 miles of four-lane undivided roadway – these facilities have statewide crash rates that are 48% to 97% higher than statewide crash rates for interstate facilities.


Texline
Stratford
Dalhart
Cactus
Dumas
Hartley
Amarillo
Canyon
Happy
Tulia
Plainview
Abernathy
Lubbock
Tahoka
O'Donnell
Lamesa
Patricia
Big Spring
Midland
Odessa
Garden City
Sterling City
San Angelo
Christoval
Eldorado
Sonora
Del Rio
Ciudad Acuña
Quemado
Eagle Pass
Piedras Negras
Carrizo Springs
Asherton
Catarina
Laredo
Nuevo Laredo
New Mexico
Oklahoma
TEXAS
COAHUILA
Mexico
NUEVO
Figure 2.11
5-Year Crash Total
2014 to 2018
16 - 75
75 - 160
160 - 280
280 - 440
440 - 885
Source: TxDOT CRIS
(Crash Record Information System)
N

Freight Flow

The strongest outbound truck demand is from Laredo.

The findings for the freight analysis presented in this section reflect the flows without the diversion from other routes that would result from upgrading the Ports-to-Plains Corridor to an interstate. The American Transportation Research Institute (ATRI) database is based on 2019 data and does not include the interstate upgrade or the baseline with planned and programmed projects. In addition, these projections do not account for the stimulating influence Corridor improvements would have on regional economies along the Corridor and the promotion of economic development. As described earlier in this Chapter, truck traffic currently using the Corridor connects across Texas and beyond and is expected to grow significantly as trucks continue to transport international trade, energy, and agricultural products.

Freight flow along the Corridor is generated by the three international border crossings of Laredo, Eagle Pass and Del Rio. Almost 80 percent of trade moving across these border crossings is moved by trucks. Outbound truck trips originating from these border crossings respectively, tracked for a 7-day period as compiled by ATRI, are shown in **Figures 2.12 through 2.14.** These figures illustrate the magnitude and the national reach of truck traffic flowing from the international crossings along the Corridor with thicker red lines indicating the heaviest flows.

Both Eagle Pass and Del Rio ports lack interstate connectivity, which limits their ability to attract economic development opportunities.

As shown on **Figure 2.12**, the truck flows from Laredo reach all regions of the United States and into Canada. **Figures 2.13 and 2.14** show truck flows from the Eagle Pass and Del Rio international border crossings. The lack of an interstate facility at these two ports of entry limits their ability to attract business and be economically competitive.

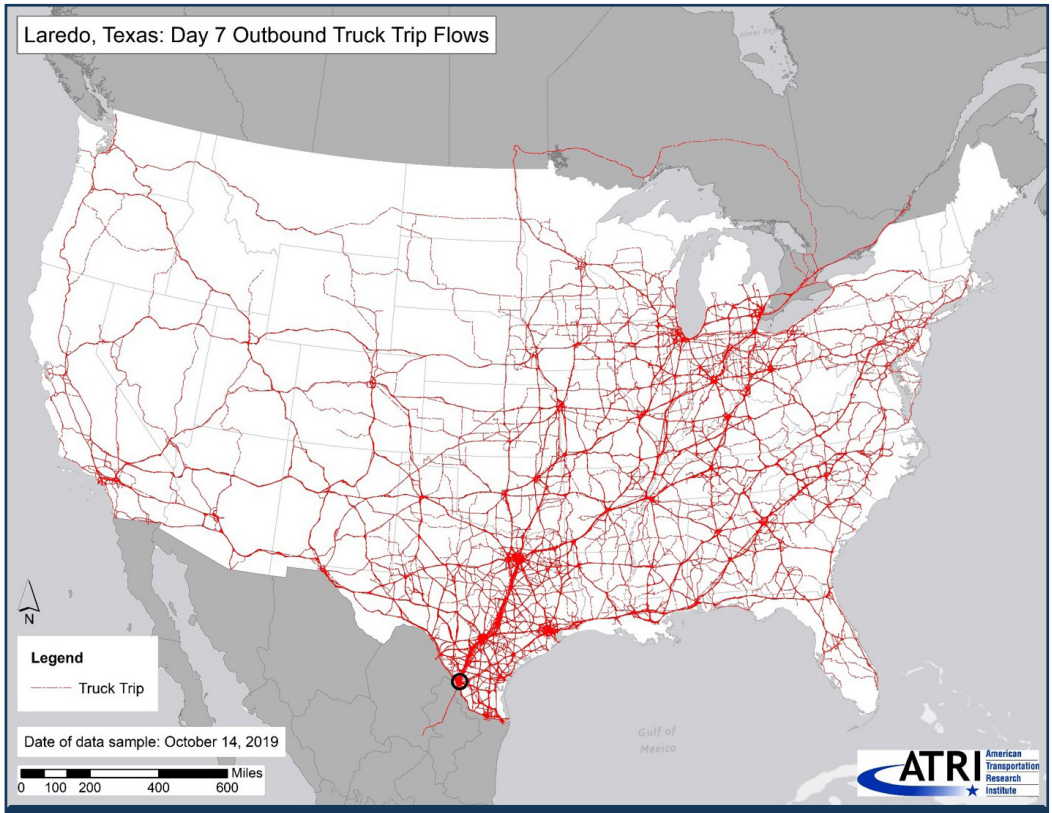


Figure 2.12: Laredo: Day 7 Outbound Truck Trip Flow
Source: ATRI, 2019

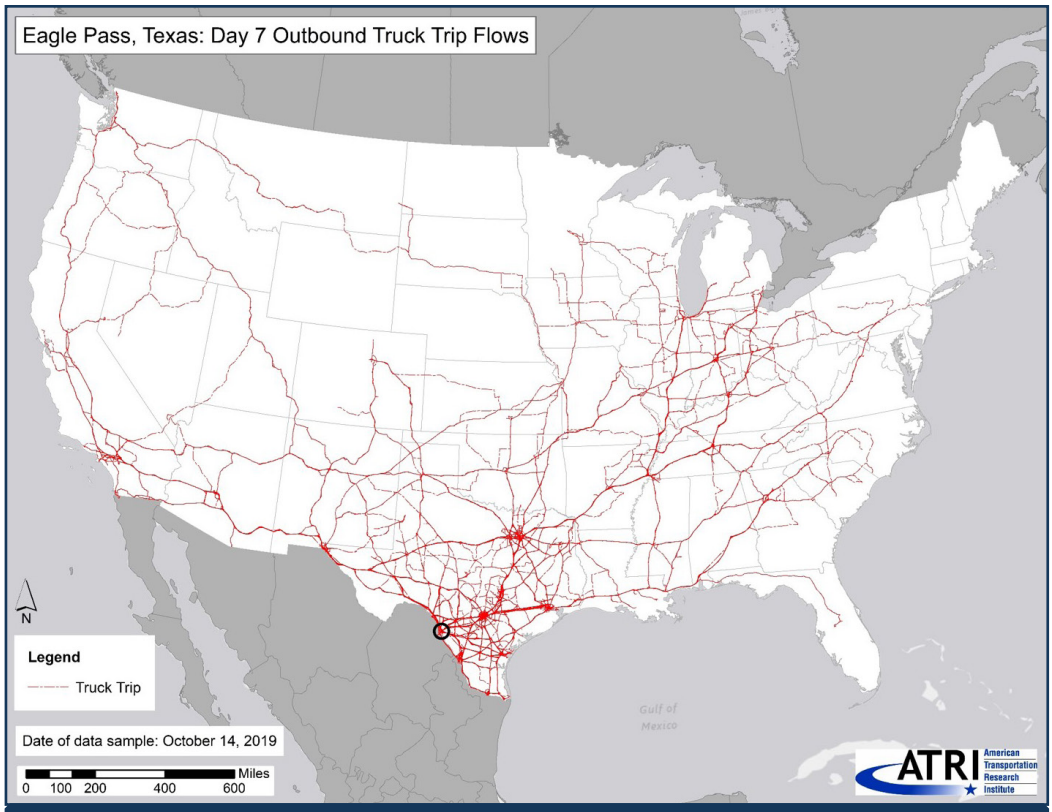


Figure 2.13: Eagle Pass: Day 7 Outbound Truck Trip Flow
Source: ATRI, 2019

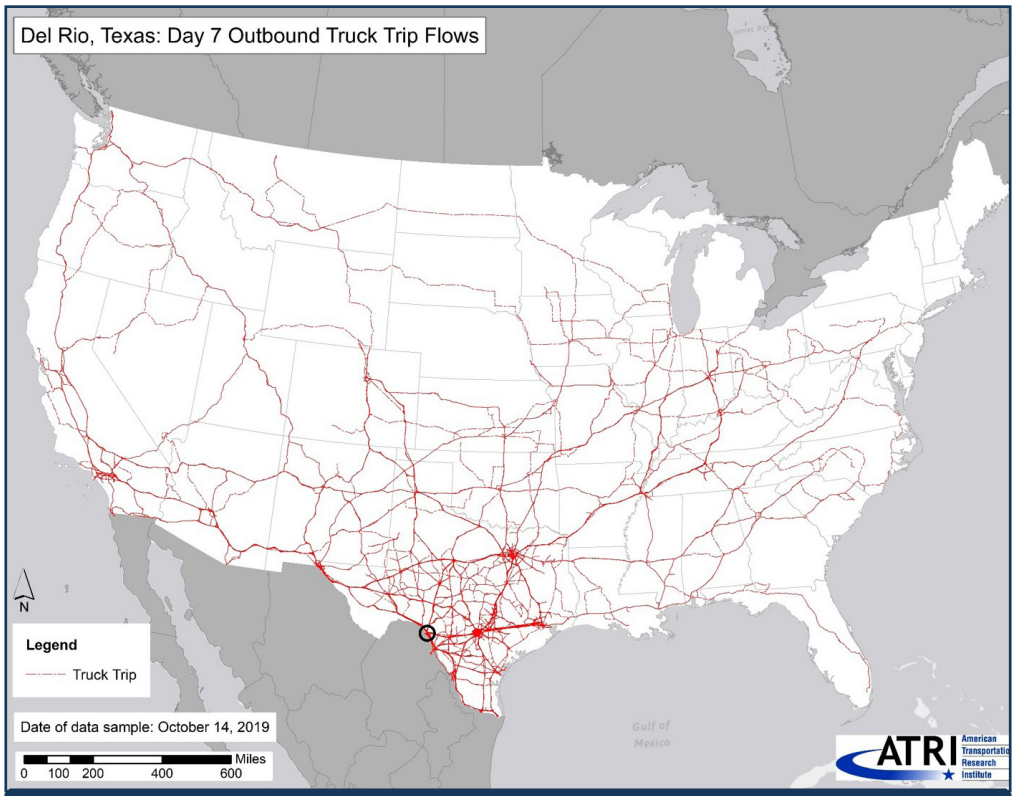


Figure 2.14: Del Rio: Day 7 Outbound Truck Trip Flow
Source: ATRI, 2019

Freight Tonnage

Freight tonnage is based on models that project economic changes on global, national, and regional levels that integrate these forecasts, and then estimate the impact these changes will have on freight movement. These models assess shifts in market activity, the likely level of demand for goods, and volumes of freight needed to move goods from locations of production to areas of demand. The tonnages discussed below are also measured by truck mode and no other freight transport modes, such as rail. Data presented in this section represent the baseline 2050 condition, which assumes a Ports-to-Plains Corridor with only the planned and programmed projects and not the interstate upgrade.

Freight volumes in the Ports-to-Plains Corridor are expected to grow by 78 percent between 2018 and 2050, resulting in 73 million tons of freight added. The total volume transported is anticipated to reach 167 million tons with the top locations generating new tonnage consisting of Laredo (Webb County), Midland/Odessa (Midland/Ector counties) and Lubbock (Lubbock County). These three areas represent industrial groups that drive the Corridor economy: international trade, energy, and agriculture.

Agriculture and food products are anticipated to **add nine million tons of outbound truck movement** and **three million tons of inbound truck movement** of additional truck freight by 2050.

Construction-related bulk materials such as sand, minerals, and cement, are expected to **add eight million tons** outbound and **four million tons inbound** of additional truck freight by 2050.

Figures 2.15 and 2.16 show 2018 and the 2050 baseline total freight tonnage originating or terminating in the Ports-to-Plains Corridor without the interstate upgrade. As shown, truck traffic using the Corridor connects across Texas and is expected to grow significantly.

International Trade

The Ports-to-Plains Corridor improves freight movement and service to Mexico for all states throughout the United States, making it faster, safer, and less costly to trade. The economies of these states will benefit from this trade, and their businesses will be more competitive. The total type and tons of commodity being exported and imported in the Ports-to-Plains Corridor in 2018 and the 2050 baseline are shown in **Figure 2.17.**

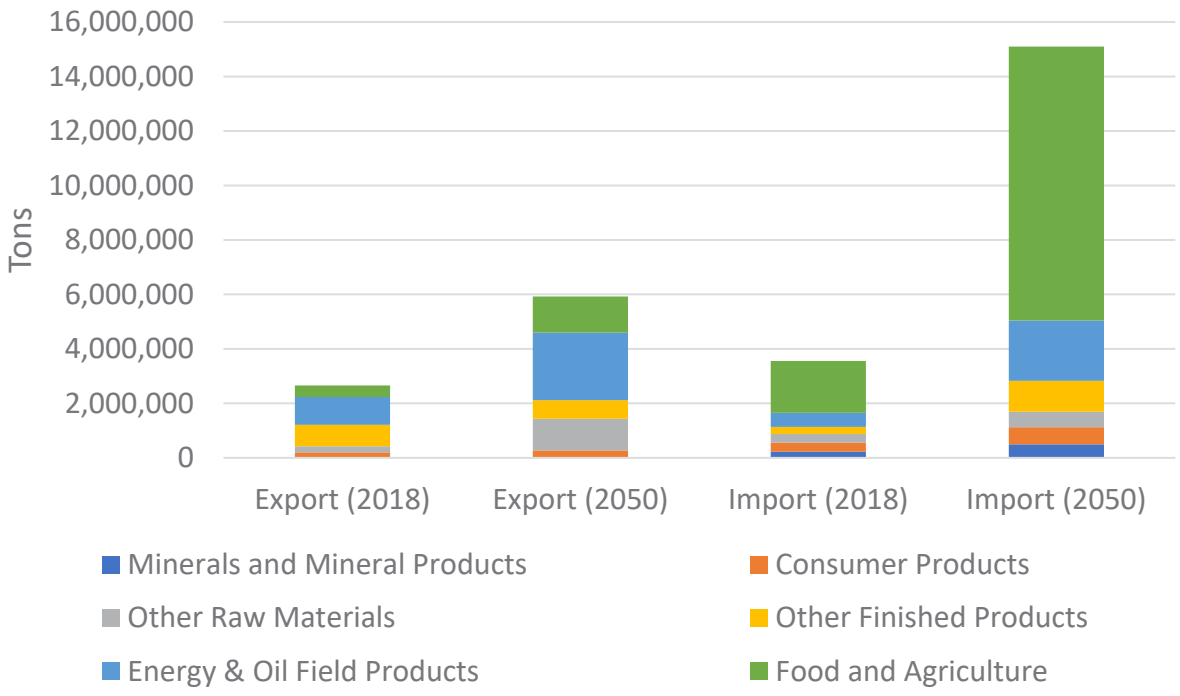
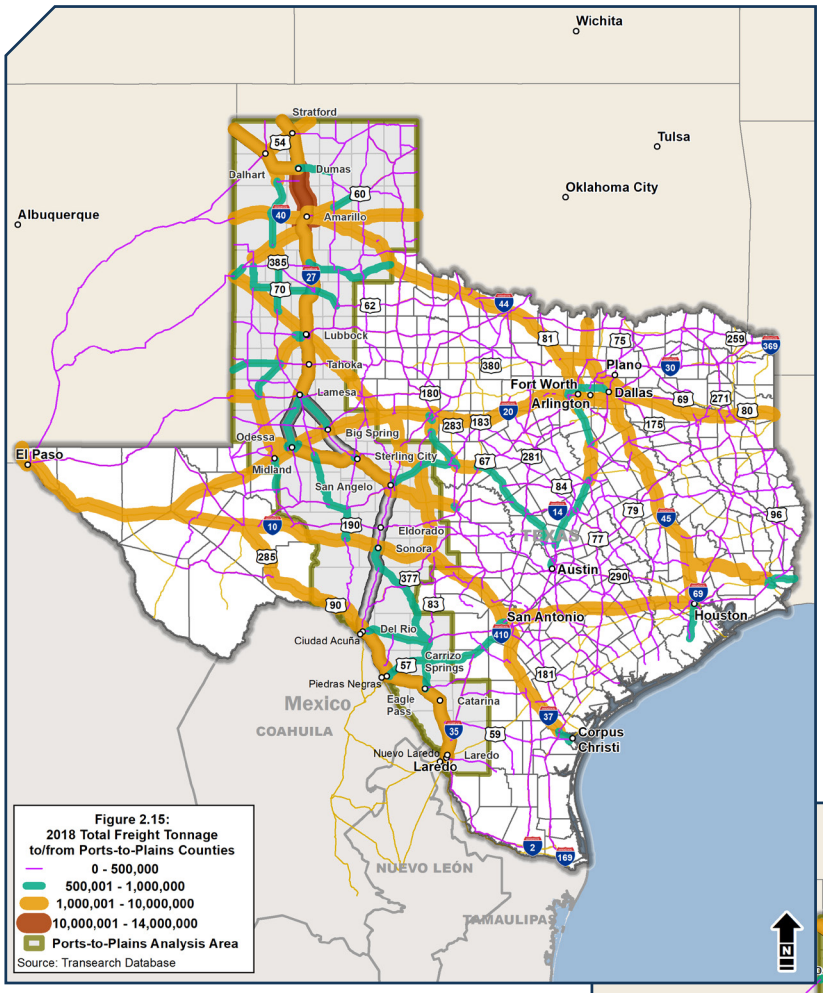
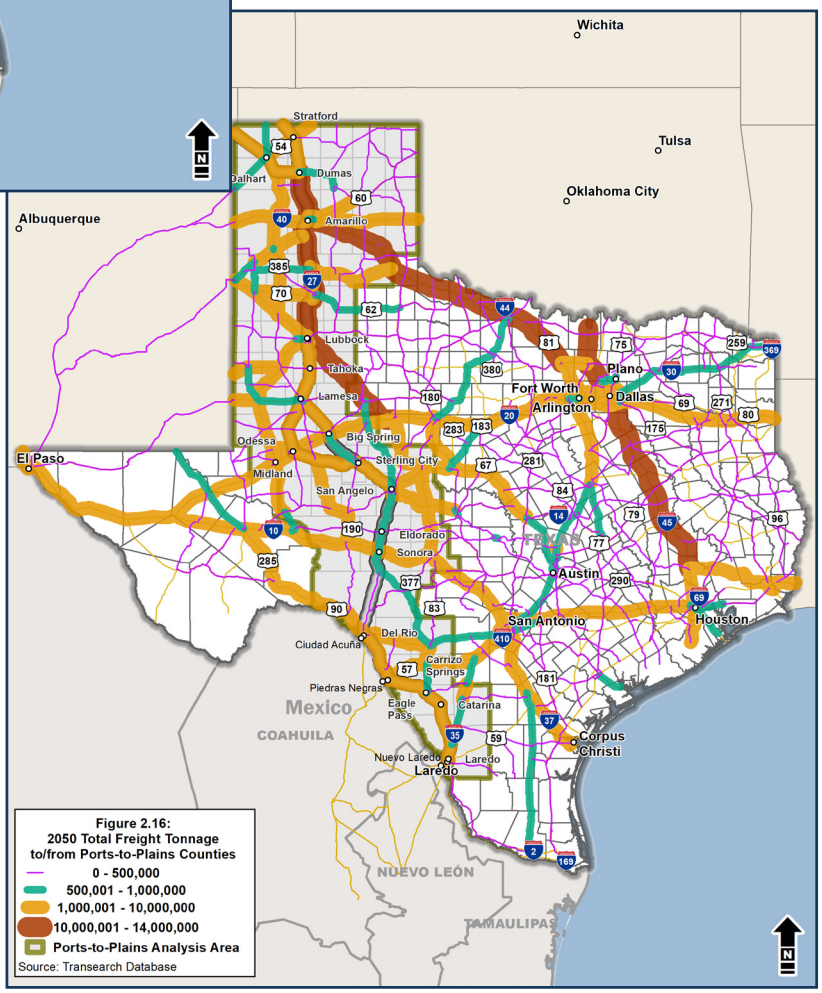


Figure 2.17: 2018 and 2050 Commodity Export and Import Tonnage
Source: Transearch


Wichita
Tulsa
Oklahoma City
Albuquerque
Stratford
Dalhart
Dumas
Amarillo
Lubbock
Tahoka
Lamesa
Plano
Fort Worth
Dallas
Arlington
Odessa
Big Spring
El Paso
Midland
Sterling City
San Angelo
Eldorado
Sonora
Austin
San Antonio
Houston
Del Rio
Ciudad Acuña
Carrizo Springs
Piedras Negras
Eagle Pass
Catarina
Mexico
COAHUILA
Corpus Christi
Nuevo Laredo
Laredo
NUEVO LEÓN
TAMAULIPAS
Figure 2.15:
2018 Total Freight Tonnage
to/from Ports-to-Plains Counties
0 - 500,000
500,001 - 1,000,000
1,000,001 - 10,000,000
10,000,001 - 14,000,000
Ports-to-Plains Analysis Area
Source: Transearch Database

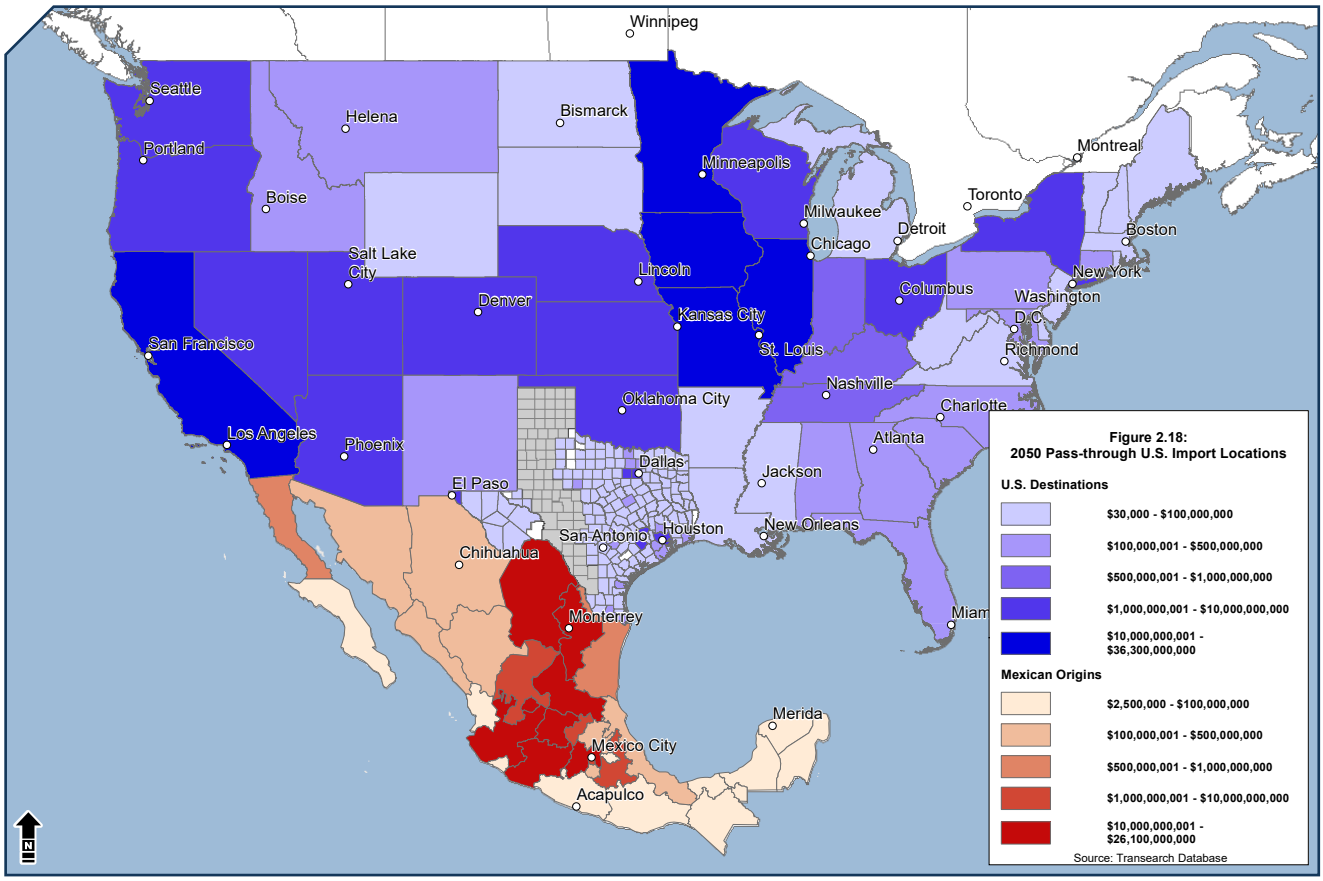

Wichita
Tulsa
Oklahoma City
Albuquerque
Stratford
Dalhart
Dumas
Amarillo
Lubbock
Tahoka
Lamesa
Plano
Fort Worth
Dallas
Arlington
Odessa
Big Spring
El Paso
Midland
Sterling City
San Angelo
Eldorado
Sonora
Austin
San Antonio
Houston
Del Rio
Ciudad Acuña
Carrizo Springs
Piedras Negras
Eagle Pass
Catarina
Mexico
COAHUILA
Corpus Christi
Nuevo Laredo
Laredo
NUEVO LEÓN
TAMAULIPAS
Figure 2.16:
2050 Total Freight Tonnage
to/from Ports-to-Plains Counties
0 - 500,000
500,001 - 1,000,000
1,000,001 - 10,000,000
10,000,001 - 14,000,000
Ports-to-Plains Analysis Area
Source: Transearch Database

Figures 2.18 and 2.19 show the 2050 United States-Mexico truck tonnage that is forecasted to use the Ports-to-Plains Corridor in the 2050 baseline to destinations throughout Texas and the nation.

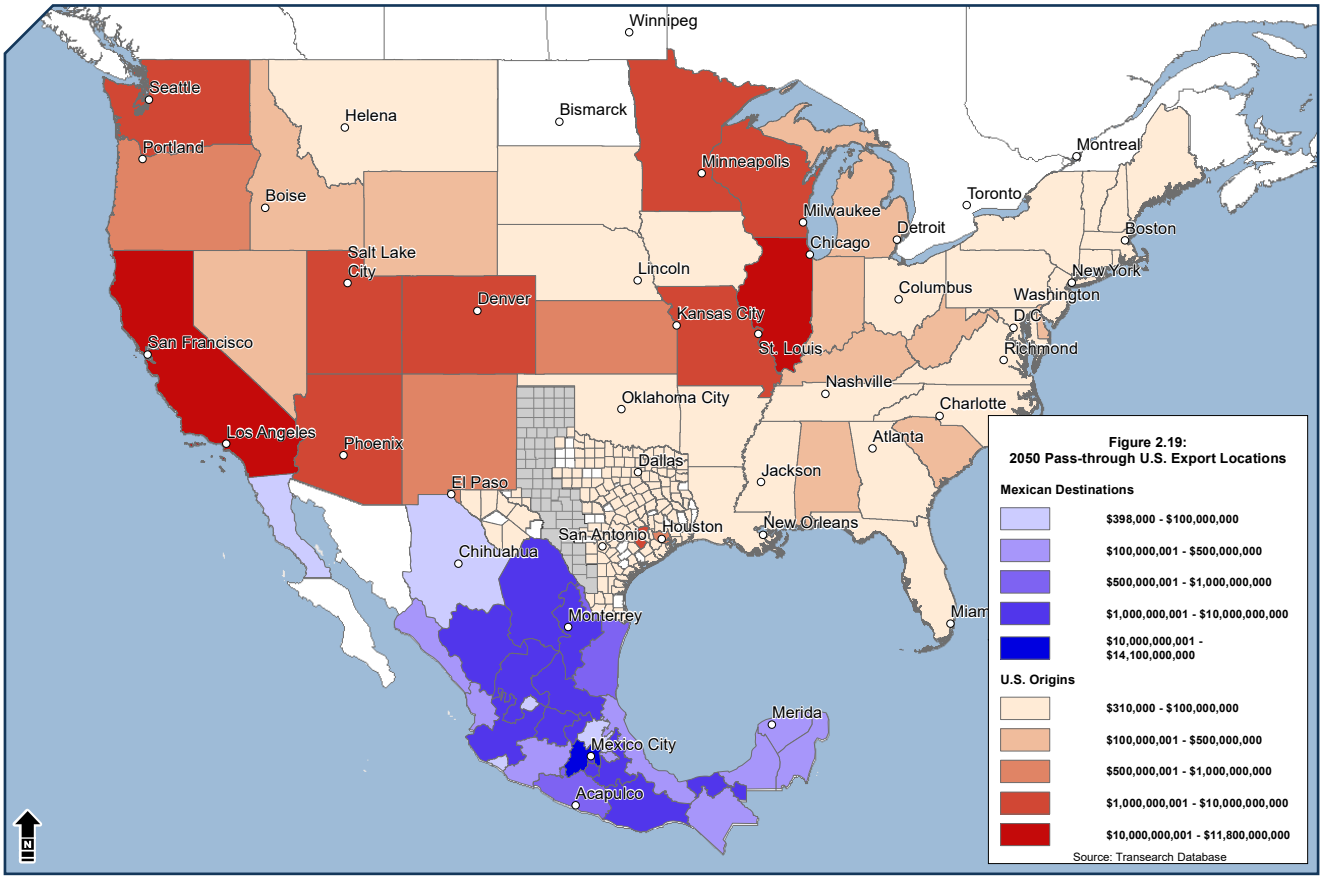
Figure 2.18 shows the 2050 total truck tonnage for United States imports from Mexico, and **Figure 2.19** shows the 2050 total truck tonnage for United States exports to Mexico.

Laredo Border Crossing

$138 billion worth of imports from Mexico will pass through the Ports-to-Plains Corridor in 2050, trucked to states other than Texas. California ($36 billion) and Illinois ($22 billion) are the two largest import beneficiaries. $102 billion, or nearly three-quarters of the total imported value, will be bound to states west of the Mississippi River, with $36 billion bound to states in the east.



$53 billion worth of U.S. exports to Mexico will pass through the Ports-to-Plains Corridor in 2050, trucked from states other than Texas. California ($12 billion) and Illinois ($11 billion) are the two largest export beneficiaries. $36 billion, or just over two-thirds of the total exported value, will come from states west of the Mississippi River, with $17 billion coming from states in the east.



In summary, the information presented in this chapter assesses the current and future conditions of the Ports-to-Plains Corridor without the interstate upgrade. The data shows the existing Ports-to-Plains Corridor is anticipated to experience continued population, economic, freight and traffic growth from 2020 to 2050. The information from this chapter was used to determine the findings for the Corridor Interstate Feasibility Analysis presented in Chapter 3. Chapter 3 presents the findings of the feasibility analysis and compares the 2050 baseline (existing Corridor plus planned and programmed projects) to the 2050 interstate upgrade for each HB 1079 goal previously outlined in Chapter 1.

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.

CHAPTER 3

Corridor Interstate Feasibility Analysis and Findings

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.

Chapter 3: Corridor Interstate Feasibility Analysis and Findings

The Corridor Interstate Feasibility Analysis concluded an Interstate is Feasible in the Ports-to-Plains Corridor.

This chapter provides the Advisory Committee's summary of the findings of the Corridor interstate feasibility analysis informed by the comprehensive technical analysis and stakeholder input conducted by three Corridor Segment Committees and outlined in their Final Reports. The primary purpose of the analysis was to determine if upgrading the entire Ports-to-Plains Corridor to an interstate facility was feasible.

The Corridor interstate feasibility analysis compares the baseline, which includes capacity projects that are currently planned and programmed for the Ports-to-Plains Corridor by the year 2050, against upgrading the Corridor to an interstate. The findings of the Corridor interstate feasibility analysis shows an interstate facility would have far reaching benefits at the local, regional, state, national and international levels by improving freight movement and facilitating the efficient flow of goods and international trade; improving access to markets for energy and agricultural projects; improving connectivity, safety, congestion and reliability, and mobility; reducing travel time costs within the Corridor; creating jobs, warehouses and distribution facilities; and, expanding the local tax base and state sales tax revenue and spurring economic opportunities at the local, regional, state, and national level.

EXTENDING INTERSTATE 27 IS ESSENTIAL TO:

- **Improve Connectivity, Safety, and Mobility**
- **Improve Travel Time and Reduce Travel Time Cost**
- **Improve Freight Movement**
- **Increase Access to Markets for Energy and Agricultural Products**
- **Alleviate Congestion and Improve Reliability**
- **Facilitate the Flow of Goods and International Trade**
- **Create Jobs and Economic Opportunities**
- **Increase and Expand the Local Tax Base and State Sales Tax Revenues**

Promoting Safety and Mobility

What are the Safety Benefits for Upgrading the Corridor to an Interstate?

Table 3.1 depicts Texas' state-wide average crash rates and are provided by highway system (Interstate, U.S. Highway, etc.) and road cross- section type (2-lane undivided, 4 or more lanes divided and 4 or more lanes undivided).

- Interstate routes are the safest of all systems in both urban and rural areas because they include design features known to be safest: divided medians, multiple lanes per direction for passing, and full control of access with no side-street intersections.
- Divided highways are always safer than undivided highways.
- Multi-lane highways are safer than two-lane highways in rural areas.

The baseline would improve safety in the Ports-to-Plains Corridor due to the planned and programmed projects expected to be in place by 2050. These projects include upgrades of current two-lane segments to four-lane undivided segments or Super 2 segments, new interchanges that replace at-grade intersections, and specific safety projects such as cable median barriers, rumble strips, and turn lane improvements. These changes to the network will increase safety over the current configuration.

By Highway System

Highway System	Traffic Crashes per 100 million vehicle miles	
	Rural	Urban
Interstate	62.08	144.32
U.S. Highway	72.08	177.84
State Highway	94.10	217.69
Farm-to-Market	118.18	225.28

By Road Type

Road Type	Traffic Crashes per 100 million vehicle miles	
	Rural	Urban
2 lane, 2 way	102.13	213.77
4 or more lanes, divided	62.95	158.28
4 or more lanes, undivided	97.61	283.09

Table 3.1. Texas State Crash Rates 2018
Source: TxDOT Crash Statistics 2018

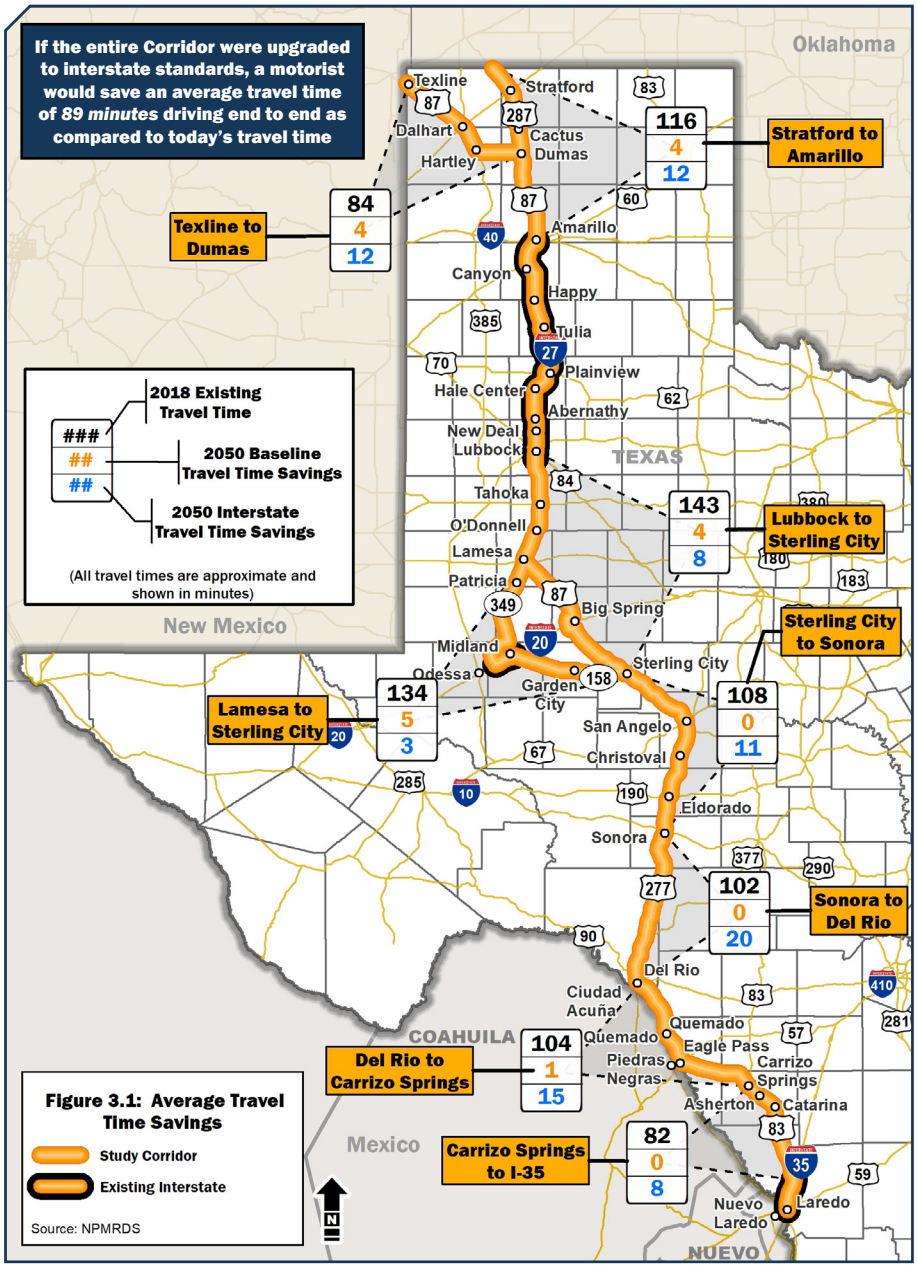
The Texas state crash rates shown in Table 3.1 indicate the interstate upgrade would have 15 to 25 percent fewer crashes than a typical U.S. Highway and 35 percent fewer crashes than a typical State Highway. These findings indicate the interstate upgrade would lower crashes over the baseline.

The interstate upgrade is estimated to **reduce the crash rate by 21 percent Corridor-wide** relative to the baseline. **Crash reductions** would result in a Corridor-wide **average economic benefit of approximately $450 million annually.**

What is the Travel Time Benefit of Upgrading the Corridor to an Interstate?

The baseline improves mobility by reducing delay on segments in which improvements occur. In the baseline, for the entire Ports-to-Plains Corridor, the free flow travel time savings is 9 minutes, average travel time savings is 17 minutes and peak travel times savings is 22 minutes, when applying travel time data by upgrade route type from the National Performance Management Research Data Set (NPMRDS).

The **interstate upgrade will provide a travel time benefit over the baseline due to greater travel speed provided by full access control.** When, compared to 2018 existing conditions, the interstate upgrade for the entire Ports-to-Plains Corridor would reduce free flow travel times by 44 minutes, average travel times by 106 minutes, and peak travel times by 168 minutes, respectively. When compared to the 2050 baseline, the interstate upgrade for the entire Ports-to-Plains Corridor would reduce free flow travel times by 34 minutes, average travel times by 89 minutes (1.5 hours), and peak travel times by 146 minutes, or over two hours. Thus, the findings demonstrate that the interstate upgrade would provide a travel time benefit over the existing facility, as shown in **Figure 3.1.**



How Will the Interstate Improve Freight Movement?

The findings of the analysis demonstrate the Ports-to-Plains Corridor plays a critical role in moving freight at the local, regional, state, national, and international levels, as shown in **Figure 3.2.** The regional economy produces commodities and transportation demand related to agriculture, energy, and international trade, both inbound and outbound. Minerals and mineral products, food and agricultural products, and consumer products are all key commodities across the Corridor.

The interstate upgrade would create a fully access controlled facility for the entire Corridor with improved safety, travel times and additional capacity for freight to address times of peak demand and better mitigate route reliability variances during incidents.

Reduce Travel Time for Transportation of People and Goods

The interstate upgrade would **reduce Corridor-wide average travel times from 979 minutes (2018) to 873 minutes (2050), a savings of 106 minutes** or over one and a half hours. This means faster, more reliable travel times for both people and goods along the Corridor saving industry transportation cost and cost savings for consumers. The interstate would make it possible for a truck to make a roundtrip from Del Rio to Sterling City that cannot reliably be completed in one day currently.

Make the Corridor More Accessible for Trucks

The interstate upgrade would attract truck traffic from nearby parallel routes, as well as national routes like I-10, I-35 from Laredo to San Antonio, and I-35 to I-70 from Dallas to Denver. The interstate upgrade would increase Corridor average daily truck traffic from 3,800 in the 2050 baseline to 5,100 in 2050, an increase of 34 percent. In addition, the interstate upgrade would provide a safer and more reliable route when traveling through cities and small towns.

Facilitate More International Trade

The interstate upgrade would provide improved access to international trade gateways of Del Rio, Eagle Pass and Laredo and facilitate efficient movement of energy and agriculture products and raw materials and supplies, manufactured and consumer goods.

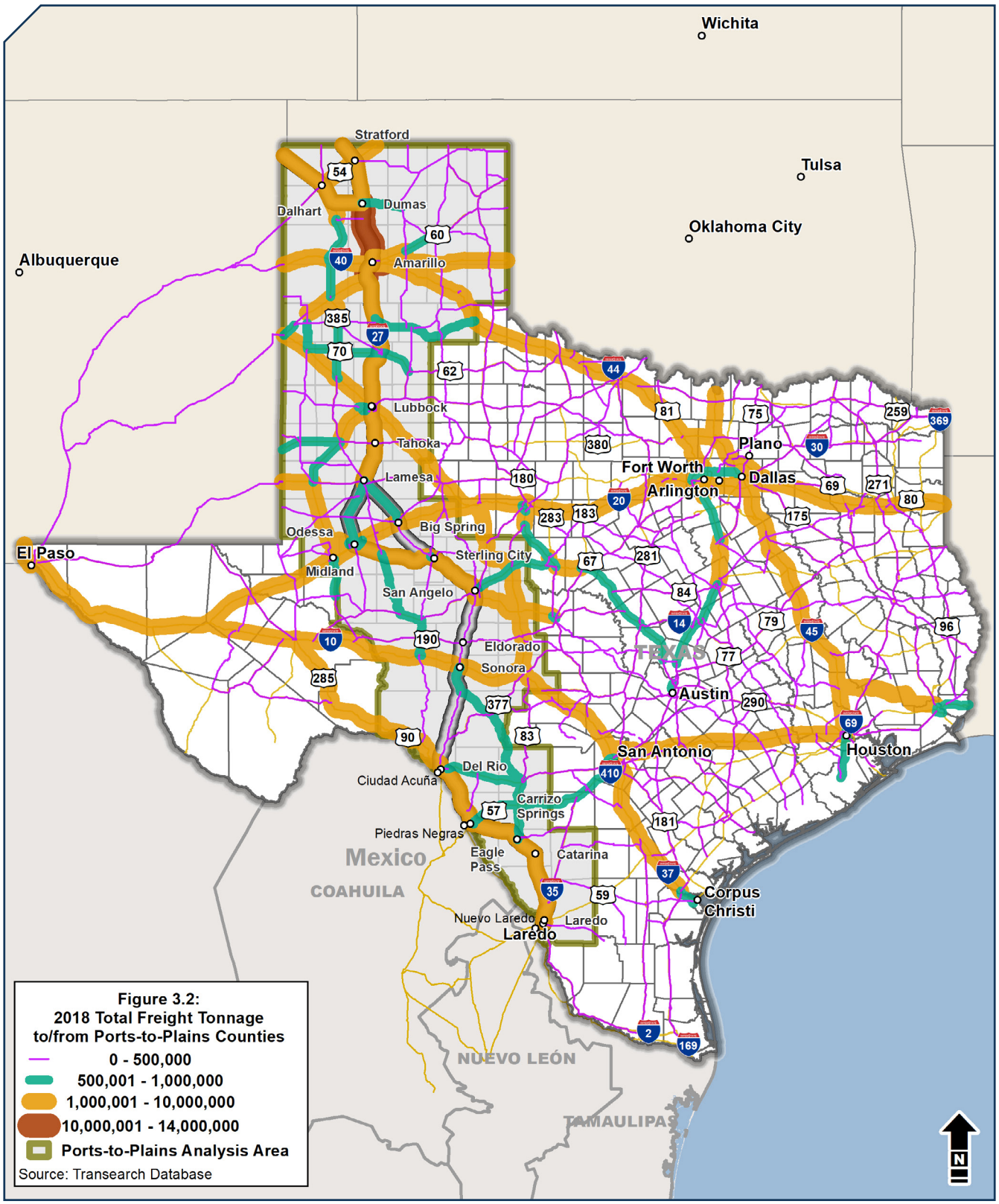


Figure 3.2:
2018 Total Freight Tonnage to/from Ports-to-Plains Counties

- 0 - 500,000
- 500,001 - 1,000,000
- 1,000,001 - 10,000,000
- 10,000,001 - 14,000,000
- Ports-to-Plains Analysis Area

Source: Transearch Database

How Will the Interstate Help the Energy Industry Get Products to Market?

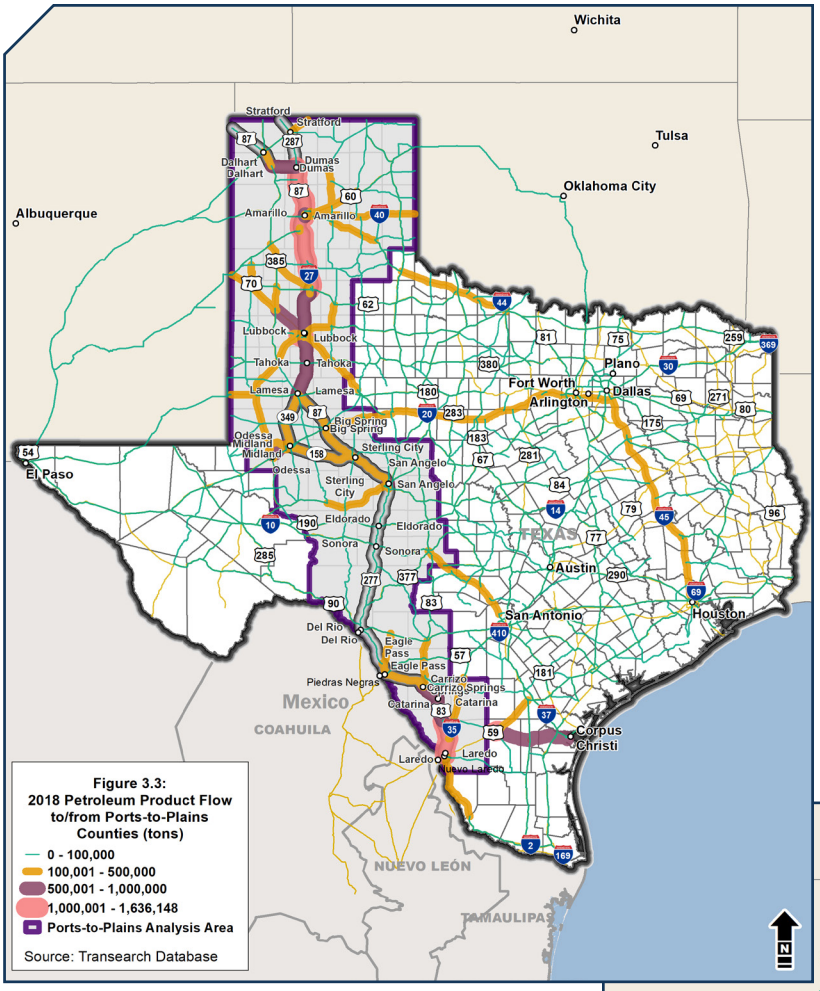
The movement of energy products to market is critical within the Ports-to-Plains Corridor, where activity generated by the oil fields supports not only the economy of the region, but the state and the country. Energy products are projected to remain among the top commodities in the Corridor in 2050.

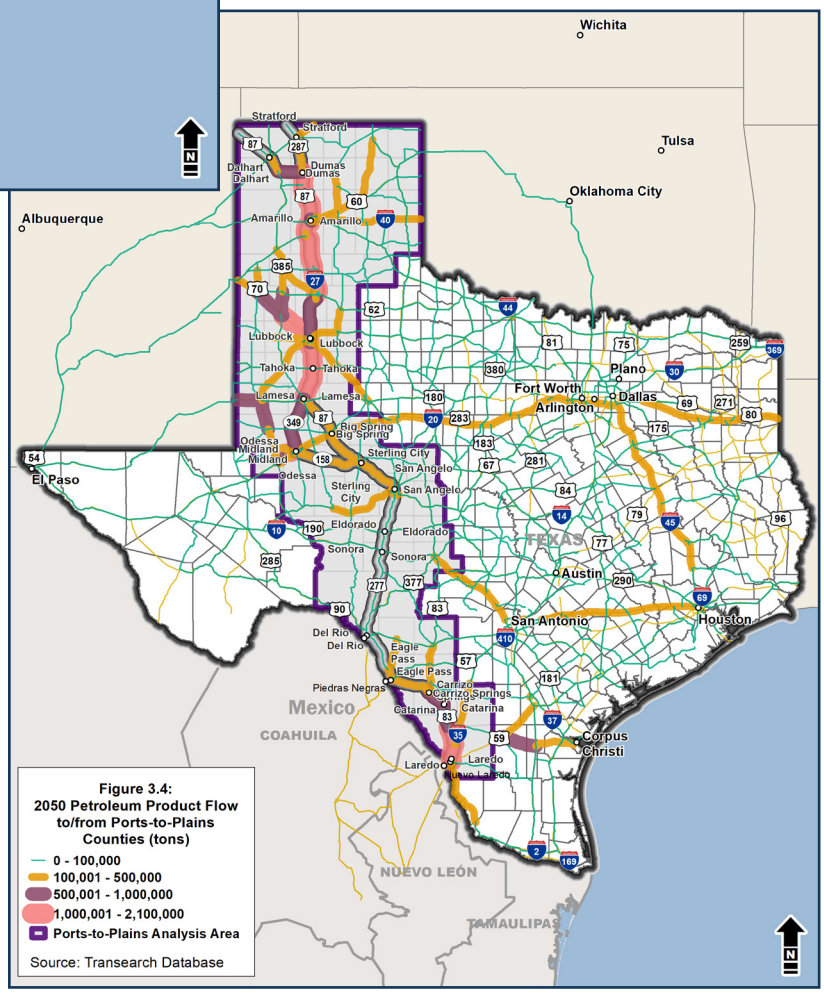
The interstate will provide improved travel times and reliability for trucks transporting energy products to market.

The reduction in travel time, increased market access radius, and increase in route reliability provided by the interstate upgrade will help the energy industry transport products to market. The existing energy product flows are shown in **Figure 3.3**. The map shows heavy energy production flows in the Ports-to-Plains Corridor as well as parallel corridors that will be better served by interstate access. Total 2050 forecasted energy production flows is shown in **Figure 3.4.** The map shows high freight tonnage projected for South and West Texas by the year 2050.

The **baseline does not provide significant travel time advantages to create meaningful truck traffic diversion** within the Corridor. The current facility has many two-lane routes with limited passing opportunities and traverses through communities not designed for trucks resulting in slower speeds. This leads to trucks having reliability issues and seeking alternative routes to transport energy products to markets.

The **interstate upgrade would create a fully access controlled facility for the entire Corridor with improved travel times and reliability for freight, including trucks transporting energy products to market.** The interstate upgrade would reduce travel times from between 34 to 146 minutes (more than two hours) across the entire Corridor. This reduction in travel time, increased market access radius, and increase in route reliability (smaller differences between average and worst-case travel times) provided by the interstate upgrade will help the energy industry transport products to market. The high freight tonnage projected for South and West Texas by the year 2050 support the need for an interstate to efficiently transport energy products to market and help keep the industry competitive.


Wichita
Tulsa
Oklahoma City
Albuquerque
Stratford
Dalhart
Dumas
Amarillo
Lubbock
Tahoka
Lamesa
Big Spring
Odessa
Midland
Sterling City
San Angelo
El Paso
Eldorado
Sonora
Plano
Fort Worth
Dallas
Arlington
Austin
San Antonio
Houston
Del Rio
Eagle Pass
Piedras Negras
Carrizo Springs
Catarina
Laredo
Corpus Christi
Mexico
COAHUILA
NUEVO LEÓN
TAMAULIPAS
TEXAS
Figure 3.3:
2018 Petroleum Product Flow to/from Ports-to-Plains Counties (tons)
0 - 100,000
100,001 - 500,000
500,001 - 1,000,000
1,000,001 - 1,636,148
Ports-to-Plains Analysis Area
Source: Transearch Database


Wichita
Tulsa
Oklahoma City
Albuquerque
Stratford
Dalhart
Dumas
Amarillo
Lubbock
Tahoka
Lamesa
Big Spring
Odessa
Midland
Sterling City
San Angelo
El Paso
Eldorado
Sonora
Plano
Fort Worth
Dallas
Arlington
Austin
San Antonio
Houston
Del Rio
Eagle Pass
Piedras Negras
Carrizo Springs
Catarina
Laredo
Corpus Christi
Mexico
COAHUILA
NUEVO LEÓN
TAMAULIPAS
TEXAS
Figure 3.4:
2050 Petroleum Product Flow to/from Ports-to-Plains Counties (tons)
0 - 100,000
100,001 - 500,000
500,001 - 1,000,000
1,000,001 - 2,100,000
Ports-to-Plains Analysis Area
Source: Transearch Database

How will the Interstate Improve Congestion and Reliability?

The interstate will reduce congestion on other facilities in 2050 as compared to the baseline condition.

The interstate upgrade would result in relatively higher speeds throughout the Ports-to-Plains Corridor when compared to the Corridor without the interstate. As a result, traffic would divert from parallel and intersecting roadways to take advantage of the improved travel time on the Ports-to-Plains Corridor.

The Interstate Upgrade is Anticipated to Cause Regional, Statewide, National, and Bi-National Traffic Diversions from Other Corridors.

Regional

- Diversion of east/west trips from the US 57 (Eagle Pass to San Antonio) and US 90 (Del Rio to San Antonio) corridors.
- Diversion of north/south trips from US 83, SH 55, and I-35 between Laredo and San Antonio.

Statewide

- Significant traffic diversion of more than 5,000 vehicles per day from US 385 south of Hartley, US 385 to US 62 between Odessa and Lubbock, and US 84 between Lubbock and I-20.
- Moderate diversion from I-35 from Laredo to San Antonio.

National

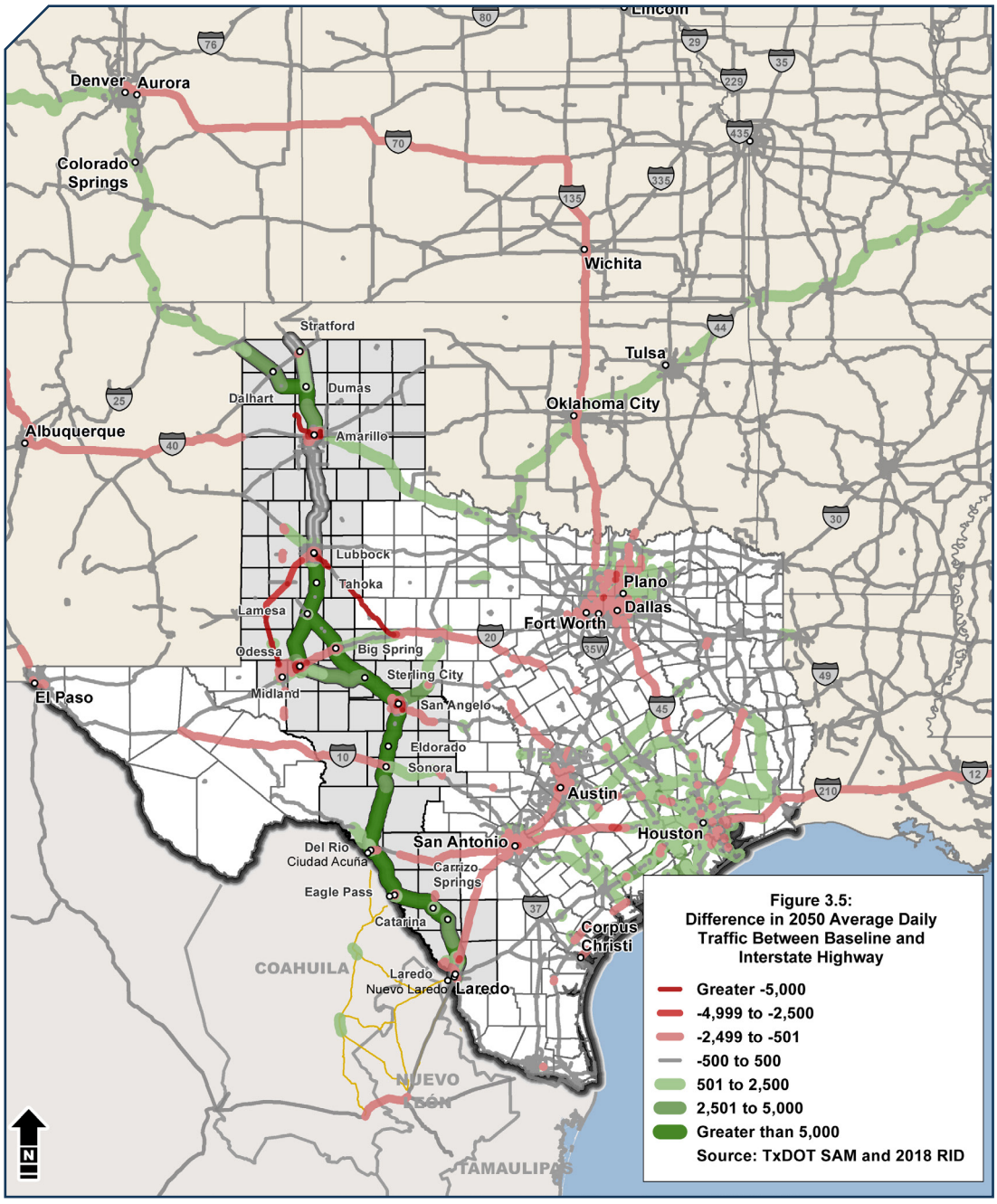
- Diversions from key national corridors such as I-40, I-70, I-35, and I-10, and alters long-distance travel patterns between different regions of the United States and either Mexico or the Gulf of Mexico coast.
- Diversions from the I-70/I-135/I-35 route from Denver to Dallas and instead favoring I-25 through New Mexico and connecting to US 87 in Texas.
- Smaller national diversions – such as trips from the Pacific Northwest being attracted across the Rockies towards Denver and southward to the Ports-to-Plains Corridor were traced with diversions from I-10 and I-40 to the west.
- Trips are attracted to I-44 from St Louis, Missouri to Wichita Falls and continuing towards the Corridor while diverting trips away from other east-west routes east of Texas, such as I-10.

Bi-National

- Diversion of trips between the Mexican states of Coahuila, Nuevo Leon, and Tamaulipas south of Texas, the Rocky Mountain and Midwest states of New Mexico, Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Missouri, and trips between the Gulf of Mexico coast toward the north Mountain and Pacific Northwest states.

The magnitude of diversion and growth is also a response from increases in foreign trade with industrial areas of Mexico, and international seaport trade that can more easily reach Gulf of Mexico ports due to the Panama Canal expansion.

The diversion of traffic from other corridors is shown in **Figure 3.5.**



What is the Cost to Upgrade the Corridor to an Interstate?

Of the 963 miles of the Ports-to-Plains Corridor, 811 miles are currently non-interstate. A planning-level cost estimate for the Corridor was developed using a methodology typically used to develop costs during the Corridor feasibility stage.[17] The methodology used planning- level software with available mapping data for the Corridor and assumptions developed in consultation with the TxDOT Laredo, Lubbock, Abilene, Odessa, San Angelo, and Amarillo Districts. The cost estimate for upgrading the entire Ports-to-Plains Corridor to an interstate facility is projected to be $23.5 billion. This cost estimate is preliminary for planning purposes only and may be updated based on more detailed right-of-way and design information during future stages of each project development along the Corridor.

$23.5B

Projected capital cost to upgrade the entire Ports-to-Plains Corridor to an interstate facility

The cost estimate was adjusted to account for planned and programmed projects and used 2020 dollars.

The planning-level cost estimate included the following inputs and assumptions:

- A 75-mile per hour design speed and interstate standards for curves and grades.
- 2019 TxDOT District bid tabs to calculate prices for pavement, earthwork, and bridges for the TxDOT Laredo, Lubbock, Abilene, Odessa, San Angelo, and Amarillo Districts.
- Major utility relocations based on available mapping data, and minor utilities as a percentage of costs.
- Seeding, mulching, lighting, and traffic control as a percentage of costs based on similar projects.
- Frontage roads in all urban areas.
- Frontage roads for approximately 553 miles in rural areas.[18]
- Right-of-way costs as ten percent of the construction costs.
- Major utility relocation costs such as parallel pipelines, oil and gas wells, water wells, and parallel railroads.
- Full reconstruction of the Corridor.[19]

What are the Economic Impacts and Return on Investment of an Interstate Upgrade?

The analysis is comprised of the economic development impacts resulting from upgrading the Corridor to interstate and the economic return on investment of upgrading the Corridor to interstate. The economic benefits described in this report would result from the interstate upgrade of the entire Corridor.

[17] Costs are preliminary for planning purposes only, subject to change. Costs are in 2020 dollars.
[18] The mileage was determined based in consultation with the TxDOT Districts on where frontage roads may be warranted in rural portions of the Corridor.
[19] Costs may be reduced if existing pavement can be used, contingent on the pavement condition and the ability to meet design speeds.

The findings of the analysis demonstrate that upgrading the Ports-to-Plains Corridor to an interstate facility is critically important to the economic prosperity and future growth of the cities, counties and all communities along the Corridor, and of West and South Texas and the state. If the entire Ports-to-Plains Corridor were upgraded to interstate by the year 2050, the following economic benefits are projected to occur:

Annual Travel Cost Savings
- **$3.4 billion** Corridor-wide
- **$690 million** for the rest of Texas

Annual Employment Growth
- **17,710 jobs** Corridor-wide
- **4,400 jobs** in the rest of Texas

Annual Growth in Gross Domestic Product
- **$2.2 billion** Corridor-wide
- **$640 million** in the rest of Texas

Create Permanent Jobs in the Corridor

- **+ 1,050** jobs in Food and Agriculture
- **+ 2,550** jobs in Warehousing and Distribution
- **+ 3,120** jobs in Energy
- **+10,990** jobs in other Industries
- **17,710** total jobs

Increase Average Annual GDP from the Interstate Upgrade in the Corridor

- **+$80 million** in Food and Agriculture
- **+ $450 million** in Warehousing and Distribution
- **+ $400 million** in Energy
- **+$1.27 billion** in Other Industries
- **$2.2 billion** total

Average Annual Savings to Industries and Consumers

- **$295 million** travel cost reduction in Food and Agriculture
- **$365 million** in more direct Warehousing output
- **$505 million** time and cost savings in Energy

These lower travel costs to transport goods and services will ultimately save consumers money as well.

Long-term Economic Returns for Upgrading the Corridor to an Interstate

The numbers above express economic outcomes based on the 2050 horizon year, comparing the interstate upgrade to a baseline in that year. However, the impacts of the interstate will extend well beyond a single year, providing ongoing economic gains for 20 years through the year 2069. There are two primary ways of considering these long-term economic impacts, relative to the costs:

Return on Investment: Return on Investment (ROI) is a common measure for determining whether an investment is worthwhile. In this case, it is calculated as the gain in GDP relative to the upfront capital cost.

- Over the first 20 years of interstate operations, statewide GDP gains total $55.6 billion, or $41.3 billion in new GDP once the time value of money (using a 3 percent discount rate) is taken into account.

- These GDP gains are $17.8 billion more than the upfront capital costs of $23.5 billion, representing a return on investment of 76 percent ($17.8B/$23.5B). The ROI calculation excludes operating and maintenance costs.

Benefit-Cost Ratio: Another way of looking at whether a project is worth pursuing is the benefit-cost ratio (BCR), which compares economic benefits—such as travel cost savings and crash reductions—to upfront capital costs and ongoing operating & maintenance (O&M) costs. This type of analysis is required by the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) for many discretionary grant programs; the methodology recommended by USDOT was followed for this analysis.[20]

- Statewide economic benefits of the interstate accumulate to $90.3 billion over 20 years of operations, which translates to $66.6 billion when discounted using a 3 percent rate.
- Statewide costs of the interstate accumulate to $27.4 billion, including $23.5 billion in upfront capital costs plus $3.9 billion in cumulative discounted O&M costs.
- The benefit-cost ratio is calculated by dividing the total discounted benefits by the total discounted costs ($66.6B/$27.4B), reflecting a value of 2.4. A benefit-cost ratio above 1 is considered a worthwhile investment.

On both the ROI and BCR measures, converting the Ports-to-Plains Corridor to an interstate performs very well, indicating that the investment will generate economic benefits that far outweigh the costs.

In addition to the ongoing impacts discussed above, construction of the interstate will also create temporary statewide economic impacts totaling $17.2 billion in cumulative GDP and 178,600 job-years, spread out across the duration of the design and construction period.21 Ongoing maintenance of the interstate will also support 2,090 long-term jobs and $185 million in annual GDP statewide. These jobs would primarily support the construction industry, but through multiplier effects would also provide opportunities in countless other industries.

The economic impact of an interstate upgrade of the Ports-to-Plains Corridor, will benefit not only large communities, but small and medium communities as well.

The interstate upgrade would improve access to jobs, access to education, and create jobs within the small and medium-sized communities and allow them to retain population and existing jobs and expand access to recreation activities.

With an interstate upgrade, there is greater demand for gas stations, truck stops, restaurants, lodging, and other businesses serving passenger and commercial travelers. This provides opportunities for development and expansion of roadside businesses in communities across the Corridor. The economic benefits to small and medium-sized communities also include the safety and mobility benefits. The interstate upgrade will reduce crash rates and improve travel times around bottlenecks that typically occur in urban areas and small communities.

Table 3.2 provides a summary of the benefits of upgrading the Ports-to-Plains Corridor to an interstate. The table shows breakdowns in Corridor annual travel cost savings, annual increase in GDP, and increase in employment for the agriculture, energy, and warehousing industries as well as for the rest of Texas. As shown in the table, other industries and households represent a significant majority of the corridor benefits.

[20] U.S. Department of Transportation, Benefit Cost Analysis Guidance for Discretionary Grant Programs, January 2020, https://www.transportation.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/2020-01/benefit-cost-analysis-guidance-2020_0.pdf
[21] One job year = one job held for one year = 2 jobs held for ½ year, etc.

Table 3.2. Summary of Ports-to-Plains Corridor Benefits (opening year 2050)[22]

Total Capital Costs		**$23.5B**	
Operating and Maintenance (O&M) Costs		**$3.9B**	
Total O&M and Capital Costs		**$27.4B**	
Total Annual Travel Cost Savings		**$4.1B**	
Corridor Annual Travel Cost Savings		***$3.4B***	
Food & Agriculture	$295M (7.2%)		
Energy & Extraction	$505M (12.3%)		
Warehousing & Distribution	$197M (4.8%)		
Other Industries and Households*	$2.4B (75.7%)		
Rest of Texas Travel Annual Cost Savings		***$690M***	
Annual Economic Benefit from Corridor-wide Crash Reductions		**$450M**	
Benefit Cost Ratio / Net Present Value*** **		**2.4**	**$39.2B**
Total Annual Increase in GDP		**$2.8B**	
Corridor Annual Increase in GDP		***$2.2B***	
Food & Agriculture	$80M (3.6%)		
Energy & Extraction	$400M (18.2%)		
Warehousing & Distribution	$450M (20.5%)		
Other Industries	$1.27B (57.7%)		
Rest of Texas Annual Increase in GDP		***$640M***	
Return on Investment** **		**76%**	**$17.8B**
Total Increase in Employment		**22,110**	
Corridor Increase in Employment		***17,710***	
Food & Agriculture	1,050 (5.9%)		
Energy & Extraction	3,120 (17.5%)		
Warehousing & Distribution	2,550 (14.4%)		
Other Industries	10,990 (62.2%)		
Rest of Texas Increase in Employment		***4,400***	

*Includes travel savings for all other industries and consumers in the Corridor.
**The benefit-cost ratio reflects an opening year of 2050 and is calculated by dividing the total discounted benefits by the total discounted costs ($66.6B/$27.4B), reflecting a value of 2.4. A benefit-cost ratio above 1 is considered a worthwhile investment.
***The net present value is stated for the year 2050. It reflects the discounted benefits over the subsequent 20 years minus the discounted capital and O&M costs over the subsequent 20 years.
****The annual GDP gains accumulate over 20 years to equal $55.6 billion or $41.3 billion when discounted 3 percent. These GDP gains are $17.8 billion more than the upfront capital costs of $23.5 billion, representing a return on investment of 76 percent ($17.8B/$23.5B). The ROI calculation excludes operating and maintenance costs.

Source: TREDIS

[22] Food and agriculture and energy/extraction are key industries in the Corridor in the TREDIS economic model. Warehousing and distribution was also a focus of the economic analysis since that industry is anticipated to be significantly impacted by the interstate upgrade.

Increased Attractiveness of the Corridor to the Warehousing and Distribution Industry

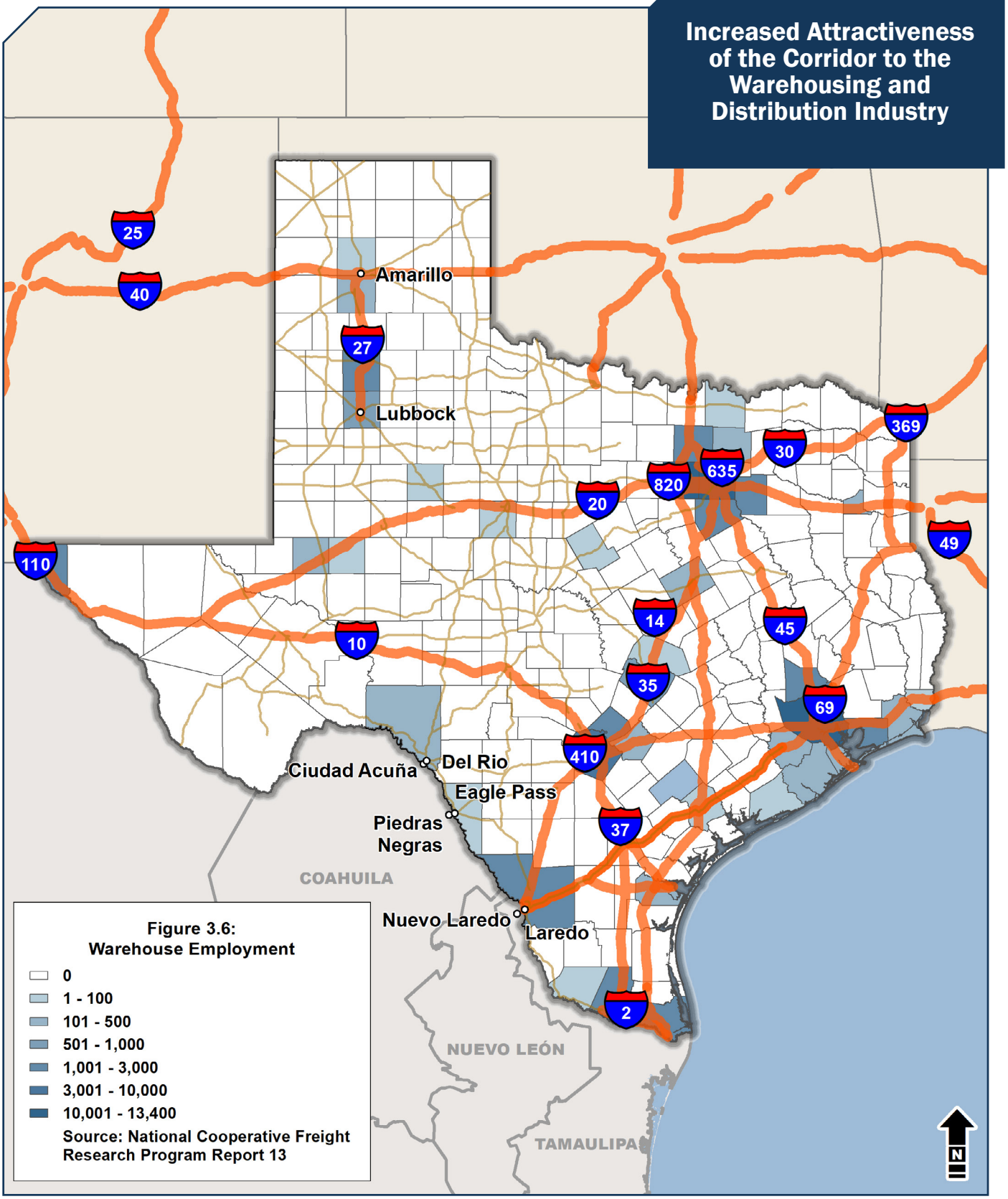


Figure 3.6:
Warehouse Employment

- 0
- 1 - 100
- 101 - 500
- 501 - 1,000
- 1,001 - 3,000
- 3,001 - 10,000
- 10,001 - 13,400

Source: National Cooperative Freight Research Program Report 13

As shown in **Figure 3.6,** current warehouse and distribution sector development in Texas is driven by access to interstate highways. The map shows only counties with direct access to an interstate within the Corridor feature warehouse/distribution development except for Val Verde and Maverick Counties.

Both counties have an international port-of-entry but have notably less dense warehouse/development than Webb County, which is connected to I-35. Thus, an interstate upgrade of the Ports-to-Plains Corridor, has the potential for opening doors to warehousing and distribution and economic development that today remain closed.

Research by the National Academy of Sciences (National Cooperative Freight Research Program Report, "Freight Facility Site Selection: A Guide for Public Officials") found the two most important criteria in logistics facility site selection are access to key markets and interaction with the transportation network, which for highway transportation specifically means proximity to interstates and freeways. With the USMCA taking effect in July 2020, north-south trade is going to expand and a second north-south corridor along the nation's longest border with Mexico answers need and opportunity. These are among the influences enabling strong, positive economic impacts and an attractive return from the upgrading of the Ports-to-Plains Corridor to an interstate.

Expanding I-27 answers needed opportunity since trade is going to expand with the passage of the USMCA along the nation's longest border with Mexico.

Supporting cross-border trade is doubly important in 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic is encouraging American industries to reconsider global supply chains in favor of domestic and continental locations. This was already an emerging trend because of rising costs and other influences, but the pandemic is accelerating it, and the arrival of the USMCA is further reason for the eyes of supply chain managers to turn to Mexico. An emerging trend further accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic is American industries. In addition, the availability of broadband internet access will make West and South Texas more attractive for companies to locate in the future.

The COVID-19 pandemic is encouraging American industries to reconsider global supply chains in favor of domestic and continental locations and a possible movement in the future towards on-shoring manufacturing.

Determination of Areas Preferable and Suitable for Interstate Designation

The Ports-to-Plains Corridor is currently designated as a High Priority Corridor by a congressional act, but the route is not currently designated as interstate under a congressional act. The ways to obtain interstate designation include:

Administrative Path

A State (or States) requests FHWA designation of a route as interstate by presenting a case for the Corridor to be designated as a logical addition to the Interstate System, coordinating with other States and with Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), where appropriate, and making a commitment to complete the route to an interstate design level within 25 years and requests FHWA designation.

Congressional Path

The Corridor may be designated as a future part of the Interstate System by a congressional act.

The Segment Committee Reports analyzed the ways to obtain interstate designation. In their analysis, the Segment Committees concluded although portions of the 963-mile Ports-to-Plains Corridor are already designated interstate (17 miles of I-35, 11 miles of I-20, and 124 miles of I-27), the remaining 811 miles of the Corridor are on U.S. and state highways, consisting of generally two to four lanes, and have lower design speeds with smaller right-of-way widths that do not currently meet interstate standards or are suitable for interstate designation. In their findings and recommendations to the Advisory Committee, the three Segment Committees concluded:

- TxDOT could submit a request to the FHWA for interstate designation in coordination with neighboring state agencies.
- The Advisory Committee could pursue a congressional act designating I-27.

What are the Potential Funding Sources for an Interstate Upgrade?

Various potential funding sources would need to be explored from the local, state, and federal perspective to construct an interstate highway. The graphic below shows the sources of public funding. Potential private sources of funding include public-private partnerships and County Energy Transportation Reinvestment Zone opportunities.

Federal

- **Federal-Aid Highway Program**
  Supports state highway systems
- **USDOT BUILD Grant Program**
  Max award is $25M. Projects should have significant local and/or regional impacts.
- **Infrastructure for Rebuilding America Grant Program**
  Grant to rebuild aging infrastructure and may be used for up to 60% of project's eligible cost

Local

Metropolitan Planning Organizations

- Amarillo MPO
- Lubbock MPO
- San Angelo MPO
- Permian Basin MPO
- Laredo Webb County Area MPO

State of Texas

- **Proposition 1**
  Tax-based to construct, maintain, or acquire ROW for public roadways
- **Proposition 7**
  Tax-based to construct, maintain, or acquire ROW for public roadways; or repay bonds
- **State Infrastructure Bank**
  At or below market rate loans for ROW acquisition, utility relocation, etc.
- **State Highway Fund**
  Primary source of transportation funding for Texas
- **2019 Legislative Session**
  SB 500 and HB 1 fund county roads in energy sectors. Grant process. Local match.

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.

CHAPTER 4

Public Involvement and Stakeholder Engagement

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.

Chapter 4: Public Involvement and Stakeholder Engagement

The development of the Ports-to-Plains Corridor Interstate Feasibility Study was guided and informed by the Advisory Committee, three Segment Committees, and an extensive stakeholder and public engagement process. The Advisory Committee also consulted with the Amarillo, Lubbock, Odessa, Abilene, San Angelo, and Laredo TxDOT District leadership throughout the study.

Advisory Committee Chair and Lubbock Mayor Dan Pope speaking at the Advisory Committee Meeting in Lubbock, Texas.

Advisory Committee Meetings

The Advisory Committee met six times between October 2019 and October 2020. The first two meetings were held in-person on October 1, 2019 in Lubbock and February 19, 2020 in San Angelo, and the last four were conducted virtually due to the COVID-19 virus pandemic and stay-at-home directives. At the first meeting, the Advisory Committee elected Lubbock Mayor Dan Pope, as the Committee Chair, and Sutton County Judge Steve Smith as the Committee Vice Chair. Advisory Committee Meetings were open to the public, but only committee members participated in the discussions, questions, map exercises, and committee recommendations. Meetings included:

- A presentation and handouts for the committee members.
- An online interactive engagement tool called Mentimeter to facilitate committee discussion and gather input.
- Electronic interactive and hardcopy maps for committee members to provide input and develop recommendations.

Advisory Committee Meeting on October 1, 2019.

Segment Committee Meetings

Segment Committee #1 Meeting in Amarillo on November 20, 2019.

The Segment Committee Members were selected by the Ports-to-Plains Corridor Advisory Committee. The Segment Committees are comprised of representatives from municipalities, counties, MPOs, ports, chambers of commerce, economic development organizations, the oil and gas industry, trucking industry, department representatives, and other interested parties. Each of the three Segment Committees met five times for a total of 15 meetings from November 2019 to June 2020. The Segment Committee Reports with their findings and recommendations were submitted to the Advisory Committee on June 30, 2020. The Segment Committee findings and recommendations serve as the basis for the Advisory Committee recommendations and Final Report.

Public Involvement

Stakeholder engagement for the Ports-to-Plains Corridor Interstate Feasibility Study involved a robust public engagement process in accordance with the requirements of HB 1079. The purpose of the outreach was to:

- Establish early and continuous public participation opportunities
- Provide information about transportation issues and decision-making processes to all interested parties
- Provide access to information about the study to enhance the public's knowledge and ability to participate in the development of the study
- Receive feedback on the study and preliminary recommendations

Strategies and tools used to gather meaningful input from the public included:

- A project mailing list
- Webpage on www.txdot.gov
- Fact sheets
- Frequently asked questions
- Meeting notifications (postcards, email, newspaper advertisements)
- Study-specific email (portstoplains@txdot.gov)
- In-person and online public meetings
- Online/interactive engagement tools

The Segment Committees held eight public meetings, including five in-person and three that were held virtually due to the COVID-19 virus pandemic, to get input on Corridor challenges, needs and findings of the analysis, and on their preliminary recommendations. As required by HB 1079, the Advisory Committee held two virtual public meetings in August 2020 to receive public input on their preliminary recommendations. The public was given 15 days to submit comments following each public meeting. A total of 308 people participated in the meetings and 41 comments were received. Public meeting summary reports with responses to any comments received were developed for each meeting and posted on www.txdot.gov (keyword search: Ports-to-Plains Public Meetings).

Public Meeting in San Angelo on February 19, 2020.

TxDOT District Coordination

The Ports-to-Plains Corridor crosses six TxDOT Districts: Amarillo, Lubbock, Odessa, Abilene, San Angelo, and Laredo. Coordination with District leadership occurred throughout the Ports-to-Plains Corridor Interstate Feasibility Study. The Districts provided information regarding current studies, roadway construction projects, and planned and programmed projects along the Corridor. The Districts reviewed and provided input in the cost estimates development process. TxDOT District leadership also participated in the Advisory Committee meetings, Segment Committee meetings, and the public meetings.

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.

CHAPTER 5

Recommendations and Implementation Plan

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.

Chapter 5: Recommendations and Implementation Plan

The Advisory Committee recommends **a full upgrade of the Ports-to-Plains Corridor to an interstate including relief routes.** In addition, the Advisory Committee **recommends safety and operational improvements** to address immediate needs in the Corridor. The Advisory Committee also **outlines several policy recommendations** to advance the implementation of the recommendations in this report. Although the Committee's recommendations and implementation plan is not financially constrained, it serves as a blueprint for action that should be carried out through deliberate and concerted Corridor-wide project planning, development and programming to upgrade the Ports-to-Plains Corridor to an interstate facility within the next 30 years.

This comprehensive recommendation is designed to meet the transportation needs of West and South Texas as well as serve the nation's #1 international trade gateway and the #1 energy and agricultural producing regions. **The Advisory Committee's recommendations and implementation plan is supported by the Segment Committee recommendations**, which were developed from a comprehensive data-driven technical analysis and input from stakeholders within the Ports-to-Plains Corridor. In addition, it is also based on the premise that for more than 50 years, the Interstate Highway System has been instrumental in supporting and shaping the nation's population, economic, social, and spatial expansion. When the Interstate System was envisioned, it was not based on traffic demand, but primarily as a catalyst for future economic development by integrating local, regional, multi-state, national and bi-national economies. The existing Interstate Highway System connects and integrates the nation's urban and rural areas, production areas to markets and consumers. In addition, the Interstate Highway System has been credited with expanding access to skilled workforce for businesses and expanding access to jobs by allowing people to commute further and in return improving quality of life.

The Ports-to-Plains Corridor is an international, national, and state significant transportation route connecting and integrating Texas' and the nation's key economic engines, ranked #1 international trade, #1 for energy production and #1 for agriculture production. It is the only north-south corridor facilitating the movement of people and goods in South and West Texas and plays a vital role in supporting the growing population and expanding economic centers of the region and the state.

The existing Corridor places West and South Texas at an economic competitive disadvantage compared to the rest of State. The Federal Highway Administration Interstate designation criteria used to make decisions to expand or upgrade corridors to interstate does not consider international trade, energy production, agriculture production, interregional traffic movement to support local, regional, state and national economic development. Therefore, unless a commitment is made at the state and federal level to fully upgrade the Corridor to an interstate facility within the next 30 years to address the looming challenges outlined in this Report, the negative economic, safety, mobility, and quality of life impacts will be felt far beyond the Corridor, region and the state of Texas.

The analysis and findings of the study show the following high benefits of upgrading the Ports-to-Plains Corridor to an interstate facility:

Improve Safety – An interstate facility is estimated to **reduce crashes by 21 percent compared to the 2050 baseline.** In addition, based on United States Department of Transportation guidance, the reduction in crashes from the interstate upgrade would provide a statewide monetary benefit of approximately $450 million.

Support Economic Development and Competitiveness – The findings demonstrate the economic importance of an interstate to the daily lives of West and South Texans and the many businesses that utilize the Corridor to move goods. When the interstate upgrade is completed, **the improved connectivity would put all counties in West and South Texas in a better position to compete for economic development projects**, create jobs and improve the quality of life for residents. The lack of interstate access to some of the key international trade gateways of Del Rio and Eagle Pass is a major barrier in successfully attracting economic activity in those areas.

Improve Access to Markets –The interstate will create a fully access-controlled facility for the entire Corridor with **improved travel times and reliability for freight, including trucks transporting energy products to market**. It will also provide a more reliable travel route while traveling through cities and small towns for trucks carrying products to market. The interstate facility would provide efficient linkage and access leading to and from the international trade gateways of Del Rio and Eagle Pass, the two ports of entry currently not served by an interstate facility.

Reduce Travel Costs – Upgrading the Corridor to an interstate facility would improve the state's economic competitiveness by making transportation costs for personal travel and for moving goods less expensive. The findings demonstrate that an interstate would result in **$4.1 billion annually in statewide** travel costs savings.

Improve Travel Times – The interstate would increase speeds and decrease delays in the Corridor and improve reliability for freight movement. This would enhance the ability of communities in West and South Texas to attract more business. An interstate facility would reduce travel time for both personal trips and freight movement from total **Corridor average travel time of 962 minutes (16 hours) with the 2050 baseline (existing plus planned and programmed projects) to 873 minutes (14.6 hours) with an interstate, a savings of 89 minutes or nearly 1 1/2 hours** that would not be wasted traveling.

Improve Mobility and Reliability – The findings show upgrading the Ports-to-Plains Corridor to an Interstate facility would **more effectively serve local, regional, state and national movement of people.** The interstate would reduce congestion and improve mobility by creating shifts in travel patterns at the local, regional, state and national level. At the regional and state level, an interstate facility would improve congestion on US 57, US 67, US 82, US 84, US 90, US 385, and SH 137. An Interstate facility would also create shifts in national and bi-national travel patterns, increasing mobility on I-10 I-35, I-40, and I-70.

The findings demonstrate that an interstate facility would help West and South Texas be more competitive in attracting new businesses and population. It would translate to:

Over 17,710 additional jobs in counties along the Corridor and an additional 4,400 jobs statewide. This translates to economic prosperity to all communities in South and West Texas and statewide.

More than 1,000 jobs in agriculture sector, 3,000 jobs in energy industry, and 2,500 jobs in warehousing and distribution.

Over $2.2 billion in annual GDP Corridor-wide and $640 million in GDP for the rest of Texas. Annually, the energy sector will generate more than $400 million in GDP, agriculture sector $80 million in GDP and warehousing and distribution industry will generate more than $450 million in new GDP.

An interstate facility will support Texas' future innovation and facilitate regional manufacturing renaissance as global supply chains may shift post COVID-19 pandemic.

More than $4.1 billion in annual statewide travel cost savings and $450 million in statewide safety benefits.

The construction of the interstate upgrade will create temporary statewide economic impacts totaling $17.2 billion in cumulative GDP and 178,600 job-years. In addition, ongoing interstate highway maintenance for the entire Corridor once it is completed, will also support 2,090 long-term jobs and $185 million in annual GDP statewide.

Return on Investment - The Advisory Committee estimates that $23.5 billion will be needed over the next 30 years to upgrade the 811 out of the 963 miles of the Corridor to an interstate facility. The interstate upgrade would bring a **total return of $41.3 billion or $17.8 billion over the cost resulting in a 76 percent return on investment**.[23] Return on investment describes the percent of return above the initial investment. The project has a benefit cost ratio of 2.4, demonstrating that more benefits are returned than the cost required for the interstate upgrade. These numbers are consistent with economic returns on highway investments during the 1950s and 1960s when the Interstate Highway System was constructed --- estimated average of 50 to 60 percent return (Mudge, 2018, 19-20).

Upgrading the Ports-to-Plains Corridor to an interstate will facilitate economic benefits and stimulate the prosperity of the region, the State of Texas, and the nation.

[23] This number represents the discounted value of the total new GDP over 20 years resulting from the projects.

Advisory Committee Policy Recommendations

Creation of an I-27 Corridor Advisory Committee

The Ports-to-Plains Advisory Committee recommends TxDOT establish an I-27 Corridor Advisory Committee. The Corridor Advisory Committee will be charged with providing advice and guidance to TxDOT on the implementation priorities of the interstate feasibility study project recommendations to upgrade the Corridor to an interstate facility and the interstate designation of the Ports-to-Plains Corridor in Texas. The Committee will also be responsible for engaging national, state, regional and local stakeholders on I-27 extension status and project development.

I-27 Corridor Implementation Strategy

The Advisory Committee recommends TxDOT develop a Ports-to-Plains Corridor improvements implementation strategy within six months of TxDOT's Ports-to-Plains Corridor Interstate Feasibility Study Report submission to the Governor and State Legislature.

Detailed Project-Level Planning and Development Process

The Committee recommends TxDOT continues to further conduct detailed project-level planning and development to implement the project recommendations in this document. The activities should include:

- Developing detailed TxDOT District-level implementation plans outlining the project development process for each recommended project.
- Determining the specific location of items like frontage roads, bridges, and grade separations (over and underpasses) as the planning and development process progresses.
- Planning for future connections and interchanges with the proposed interstate to other regional highways serving the region.

Complete Planned and Programmed Projects

The Advisory Committee recognized TxDOT has already begun the process of funding projects that will improve highways in the Ports-to-Plains Corridor by enhancing safety and mobility in the Corridor. The Advisory Committee endorses TxDOT's efforts to complete these projects already planned and programmed.

Proposal Requesting Interstate Designation

The Advisory Committee recommends TxDOT submit a proposal requesting designation of the Ports-to-Plains Corridor as a future interstate by FHWA that includes developing agreements with the New Mexico Department of Transportation, Oklahoma Department of Transportation, and Colorado Department of Transportation committing to the construction of the Corridor to interstate standards within 25 years that includes extending:

- US 287 for 190 miles through Oklahoma and Colorado, terminating at I-70 in Limon, Colorado, and
- US 87 for 90 miles through New Mexico, terminating at I-25 in Raton, New Mexico

Environmental Review and Public Input

The Advisory Committee recommends construction of any relief route undergo an extensive environmental process and require public input and comment.

Importance of Community Support

The Advisory Committee recognizes the importance of community support and has included a resolution supporting future interstate designation adopted by 72 communities, counties, organizations, and businesses along the Ports-to-Plains Corridor.

What are the Committee's Project Recommendations?

The Advisory Committee concurs with the Segment Committees to upgrade the entire Corridor to an interstate highway and recommends twenty projects that would extend I-27 by upgrading 811 miles of the remaining non-interstate highway to an interstate standard. The interstate upgrade projects identified would have to go through the project planning, development, and programming process prior to any construction to upgrade the Corridor to an interstate-level facility.

20
Interstate Upgrade Projects

26
Relief Route Projects

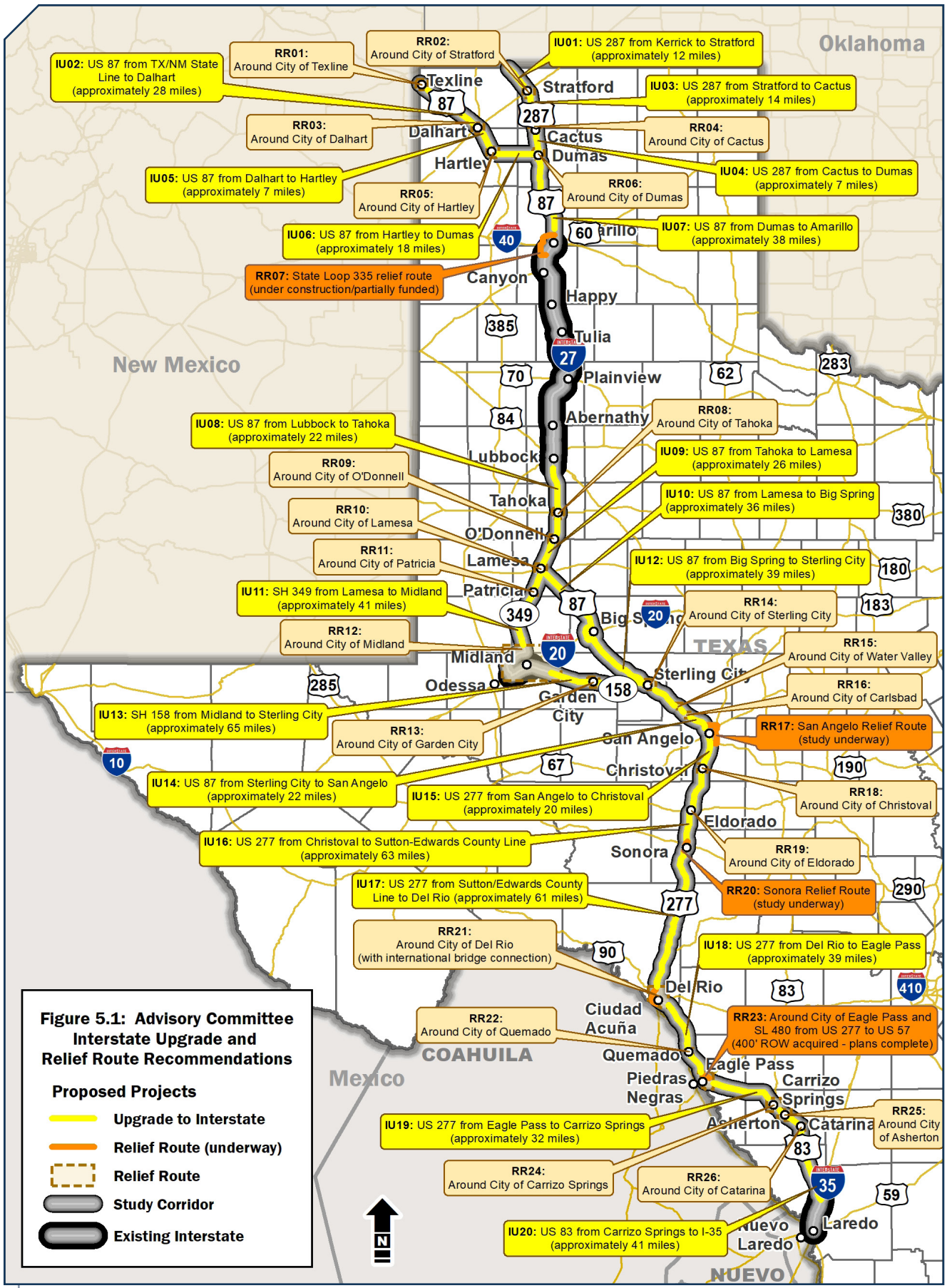
The Advisory Committee concurs with the Segment Committees and recommends twenty-six relief route projects for cities along the Corridor. The relief route projects are recommended around communities where upgrading the existing facility to interstate standards would not be feasible. The Advisory Committee concurs with the Segment #1 Committee's recommendation to make State Loop (SL) 335 in Amarillo a relief route for an interstate upgrade for Amarillo and to dually designate it as SL 335 and US 87 with the existing US 87 being re-designated by TxDOT as Business 87. The Committee supports the completion of the current San Angelo Northern Relief Route Study as a relief route for an interstate upgrade for San Angelo. The Committee also concurs with the Segment #3 Committee's recommendation on implementing relief route projects from Eagle Pass to Laredo as a single plan. **Figure 5.1** includes a map showing the location of the interstate upgrade and relief route projects along the Ports-to-Plains Corridor.

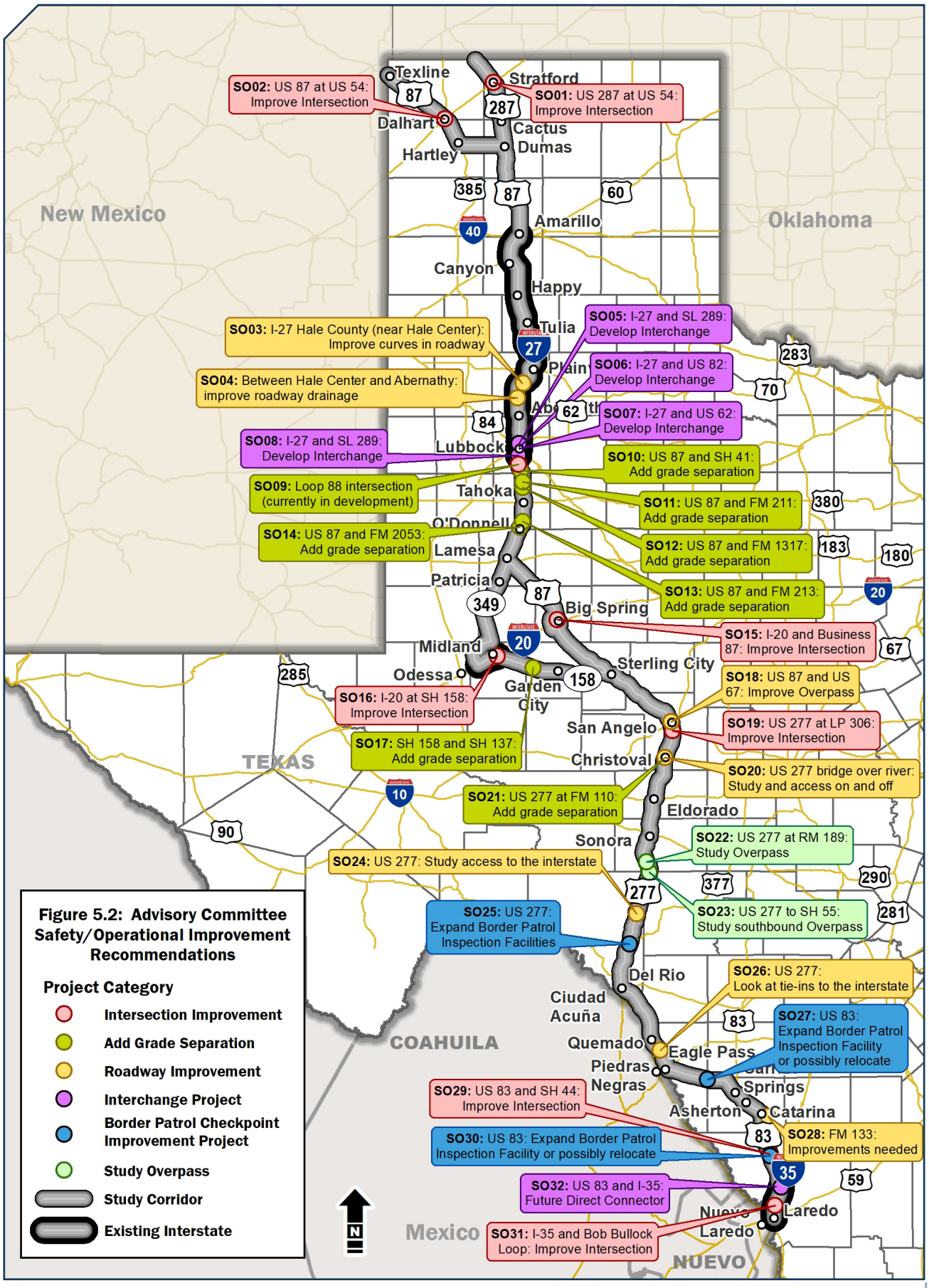
32
Safety and Operational Improvement Projects

The Advisory Committee concurs with the Segment Committees and recommends thirty-two safety and operational improvement projects along the Ports-to-Plains Corridor. These projects compliment the interstate upgrade and are low-cost strategies to improve safety and operations along the existing Corridor. The types of safety and operational improvements are categorized into the following types of projects:

- Intersection improvements
- Grade separation projects
- Interchange projects
- Roadway improvements
- Border patrol check point improvements
- Overpass projects

Figure 5.2 includes a map showing the location of the recommended safety and operational improvement projects along the Ports-to-Plains Corridor.


Oklahoma
New Mexico
TEXAS
Mexico
COAHUILA
NUEVO
RR01: Around City of Texline
RR02: Around City of Stratford
RR03: Around City of Dalhart
RR04: Around City of Cactus
RR05: Around City of Hartley
RR06: Around City of Dumas
RR07: State Loop 335 relief route (under construction/partially funded)
RR08: Around City of Tahoka
RR09: Around City of O'Donnell
RR10: Around City of Lamesa
RR11: Around City of Patricia
RR12: Around City of Midland
RR13: Around City of Garden City
RR14: Around City of Sterling City
RR15: Around City of Water Valley
RR16: Around City of Carlsbad
RR17: San Angelo Relief Route (study underway)
RR18: Around City of Christoval
RR19: Around City of Eldorado
RR20: Sonora Relief Route (study underway)
RR21: Around City of Del Rio (with international bridge connection)
RR22: Around City of Quemado
RR23: Around City of Eagle Pass and SL 480 from US 277 to US 57 (400' ROW acquired - plans complete)
RR24: Around City of Carrizo Springs
RR25: Around City of Asherton
RR26: Around City of Catarina
IU01: US 287 from Kerrick to Stratford (approximately 12 miles)
IU02: US 87 from TX/NM State Line to Dalhart (approximately 28 miles)
IU03: US 287 from Stratford to Cactus (approximately 14 miles)
IU04: US 287 from Cactus to Dumas (approximately 7 miles)
IU05: US 87 from Dalhart to Hartley (approximately 7 miles)
IU06: US 87 from Hartley to Dumas (approximately 18 miles)
IU07: US 87 from Dumas to Amarillo (approximately 38 miles)
IU08: US 87 from Lubbock to Tahoka (approximately 22 miles)
IU09: US 87 from Tahoka to Lamesa (approximately 26 miles)
IU10: US 87 from Lamesa to Big Spring (approximately 36 miles)
IU11: SH 349 from Lamesa to Midland (approximately 41 miles)
IU12: US 87 from Big Spring to Sterling City (approximately 39 miles)
IU13: SH 158 from Midland to Sterling City (approximately 65 miles)
IU14: US 87 from Sterling City to San Angelo (approximately 22 miles)
IU15: US 277 from San Angelo to Christoval (approximately 20 miles)
IU16: US 277 from Christoval to Sutton-Edwards County Line (approximately 63 miles)
IU17: US 277 from Sutton/Edwards County Line to Del Rio (approximately 61 miles)
IU18: US 277 from Del Rio to Eagle Pass (approximately 39 miles)
IU19: US 277 from Eagle Pass to Carrizo Springs (approximately 32 miles)
IU20: US 83 from Carrizo Springs to I-35 (approximately 41 miles)
Texline
Stratford
Dalhart
Cactus
Hartley
Dumas
Amarillo
Canyon
Happy
Tulia
Plainview
Abernathy
Lubbock
Tahoka
O'Donnell
Lamesa
Patricia
Big Spring
Midland
Odessa
Garden City
Sterling City
San Angelo
Christoval
Eldorado
Sonora
Del Rio
Ciudad Acuña
Quemado
Eagle Pass
Piedras Negras
Carrizo Springs
Asherton
Catarina
Laredo
Nuevo Laredo
87
287
40
60
385
27
70
62
283
84
380
180
183
349
20
158
285
67
190
10
277
290
90
83
410
35
59
Figure 5.1: Advisory Committee Interstate Upgrade and Relief Route Recommendations
Proposed Projects
Upgrade to Interstate
Relief Route (underway)
Relief Route
Study Corridor
Existing Interstate
N


SO02: US 87 at US 54: Improve Intersection
SO01: US 287 at US 54: Improve Intersection
SO03: I-27 Hale County (near Hale Center): Improve curves in roadway
SO04: Between Hale Center and Abernathy: improve roadway drainage
SO05: I-27 and SL 289: Develop Interchange
SO06: I-27 and US 82: Develop Interchange
SO07: I-27 and US 62: Develop Interchange
SO08: I-27 and SL 289: Develop Interchange
SO09: Loop 88 intersection (currently in development)
SO10: US 87 and SH 41: Add grade separation
SO11: US 87 and FM 211: Add grade separation
SO12: US 87 and FM 1317: Add grade separation
SO13: US 87 and FM 213: Add grade separation
SO14: US 87 and FM 2053: Add grade separation
SO15: I-20 and Business 87: Improve Intersection
SO16: I-20 at SH 158: Improve Intersection
SO17: SH 158 and SH 137: Add grade separation
SO18: US 87 and US 67: Improve Overpass
SO19: US 277 at LP 306: Improve Intersection
SO20: US 277 bridge over river: Study and access on and off
SO21: US 277 at FM 110: Add grade separation
SO22: US 277 at RM 189: Study Overpass
SO23: US 277 to SH 55: Study southbound Overpass
SO24: US 277: Study access to the interstate
SO25: US 277: Expand Border Patrol Inspection Facilities
SO26: US 277: Look at tie-ins to the interstate
SO27: US 83: Expand Border Patrol Inspection Facility or possibly relocate
SO28: FM 133: Improvements needed
SO29: US 83 and SH 44: Improve Intersection
SO30: US 83: Expand Border Patrol Inspection Facility or possibly relocate
SO31: I-35 and Bob Bullock Loop: Improve Intersection
SO32: US 83 and I-35: Future Direct Connector
Texline
Stratford
Dalhart
Cactus
Dumas
Hartley
Amarillo
Canyon
Happy
Tulia
Plain
Lubbock
Tahoka
O'Donnell
Lamesa
Patricia
Big Spring
Midland
Odessa
Garden City
Sterling City
San Angelo
Christoval
Eldorado
Sonora
Del Rio
Ciudad Acuña
Quemado
Eagle Pass
Piedras Negras
Asherton
Catarina
Laredo
Nuevo Laredo
New Mexico
Oklahoma
TEXAS
COAHUILA
Mexico
NUEVO
Figure 5.2: Advisory Committee Safety/Operational Improvement Recommendations
Project Category
Intersection Improvement
Add Grade Separation
Roadway Improvement
Interchange Project
Border Patrol Checkpoint Improvement Project
Study Overpass
Study Corridor
Existing Interstate

Implementation Plan

The Advisory Committee outlines a practical and realistic implementation plan based on the recommendations of the three Segment Committees and input from the six TxDOT Districts along the Corridor. The Committee understands it will take TxDOT many years to complete these projects as they will go through several phases from planning, environmental analysis, right-of-way acquisition, design, engineering and construction. Therefore, the Advisory Committee recommends a full upgrade of the Ports-to-Plains Corridor to an interstate facility with projects in the short-term (0-5 years), mid-term (6-10 years), and long-term (10+ years). These include **fifty-nine projects starting in the short-term, thirteen starting in the mid-term, and six starting in the long-term.**

Table 5.1 contains the list of recommended projects and the Committee's recommended implementation phasing for each project. The recommended projects are not prioritized. The table also shows the recommended project development phase within each timeframe. The implementation phases include project feasibility (PF), preliminary design (PD), environmental (E), final design (FD), right-of-way acquisition (RA), and construction (C). The implementation timeframes are the Advisory Committee's recommendations for planning purposes. However, projects may be accelerated or decelerated based on funding opportunities and other resource allocations needed for implementation and construction.

Table 5.1: Implementation Plan for Recommended Projects

Map ID	Project Type	Description of Work	Phases in the Short-Term (0-5 years)	Phases in the Mid-Term (6-10 years)	Phases in the Long-Term (10+ years)
RR02	Relief Route	Around City of Stratford[f]	PF[c]	PD/E/FD	RA[b]/C
RR04	Relief Route	Around City of Cactus[f]	PF[c]	PD/E/FD	RA[b]/C
RR06	Relief Route	Around City of Dumas[e]	PF[c]/PD/E	FD/RA/C	C
IU07	Interstate Upgrade	US 87 from Dumas to Amarillo (approximately 38 miles)[a]	PF[c]/PD/E	FD/RA/C	C
RR07	Relief Route	State Loop 335 relief route off US 87, extends along west side of Amarillo **(under construction/partially funded)**	PF/FD/RA/UR/C	C	
RR03	Relief Route	Around City of Dalhart[d]	PF[c]	PD/E/FD	RA[b]/C
SO02	Safety/ Operational Improvement	US 87 at US 54: Improve Intersection	Completed as part of interstate development		
RR05	Relief Route	Around City of Hartley[e]	PF[c]	PD/E/FD	RA[b]/C

PF = Project Feasibility, PD = Preliminary Design, E = Environmental, FD = Final Design, RA =Right-of-Way Acquisition, C = Construction

Map ID	Project Type	Description of Work	Phases in the Short-Term (0-5 years)	Phases in the Mid-Term (6-10 years)	Phases in the Long-Term (10+ years)
S003	Safety/ Operational Improvement	I-27 Hale County (near Hale Center): Improve curves in roadway	PF[c]	PD/E	FD/RA/C
S004	Safety/ Operational Improvement	I-27 improvement to roadway drainage between Hale Center and Abernathy	PF[c]	PD/E	FD/RA/C
S006	Safety/ Operational Improvement	I-27 and US 82: Develop Interchange	PF[c]/PD/E	FD/RA/C	
S009	Safety/ Operational Improvement	Loop 88 intersection **(currently in development)**	FD/C		
S010	Safety/ Operational Improvement	US 87 and SH 41: Add grade separation	FD/C		
IU08	Interstate Upgrade	US 87 from Lubbock to Tahoka (approximately 22 miles)[a]	PD/E	FD/RA/C	
S011	Safety/ Operational Improvement	US 87 and FM 211: Add grade separation	PD/E	FD/RA/C	
S012	Safety/ Operational Improvement	US 87 and FM 1317: Add grade separation	PD/E	FD/RA/C	
RR08	Relief Route	Around City of Tahoka	PD/E	FD/RA/C	
IU10	Interstate Upgrade	US 87 from Lamesa to Big Spring (approximately 36 miles)[a]	PD/E	FD/RA	C
S015	Safety/ Operational Improvement	I-20 and Business 87: Improve Intersection	PD/E	FD/RA	C
S016	Safety/ Operational Improvement	I-20 at SH 158: Improve Intersection[g]	To be incorporated into Midland Relief Route		
S019	Safety/ Operational Improvement	US 277 at LP 306: Improve Intersection	PF[c]/PD/E	FD	RA/C

PF = Project Feasibility, PD = Preliminary Design, E = Environmental, FD = Final Design, RA =Right-of-Way Acquisition, C = Construction

Map ID	Project Type	Description of Work	Phases in the Short-Term (0-5 years)	Phases in the Mid-Term (6-10 years)	Phases in the Long-Term (10+ years)
IU12	Interstate Upgrade	US 87 from Big Spring to Sterling City (approximately 39 miles)[a]	PF[c]/PD/E	FD/RA	RA/C
RR14	Relief Route	Around City of Sterling City[i]	PF[c]/PD/E	FD/RA	C
RR15	Relief Route	Around City of Water Valley[i]	PF[c]/PD/E	FD	RA/C
RR16	Relief Route	Around City of Carlsbad[i]	PF[c]/PD/E	FD	RA/C
IU14	Interstate Upgrade	US 87 from Sterling City to San Angelo (approximately 22 miles)[a]	PF[c]/PD/E	FD/RA	C
RR12	Relief Route	Around City of Midland	PF[c]/PD/E	FD/RA	C
RR17	Relief Route	Around East side of San Angelo **(study under-way)**	PD/E/FD	RA/C	
SO18	Safety Operational Improvement	US 87 and US 67: Improve Overpass	To be supplanted by San Angelo Relief Route		
RR20	Relief Route	Around City of Sonora **(study underway)**	PD/E/FD	RA/C	
RR23	Relief Route	SL 480 from US 277 to US 57 around Eagle Pass (400' ROW acquired - plans complete)[n]	FD/C		
SO17	Safety/ Operational Improvement – Intersection Improvement	SH 158 and SH 137: Add grade separation	C		
IU15	Interstate Upgrade	US 277 from San Angelo to Christoval (approximately 20 miles)[a]	PF[c]/PD/E	FD	RA/C
SO20	Safety Operational Improvement	US 277 bridge over river: Study and access on and off	To be incorporated in San Angelo to Christoval segment development		

PF = Project Feasibility, PD = Preliminary Design, E = Environmental, FD = Final Design, RA =Right-of-Way Acquisition, C = Construction

Map ID	Project Type	Description of Work	Phases in the Short-Term (0-5 years)	Phases in the Mid-Term (6-10 years)	Phases in the Long-Term (10+ years)
RR18	Relief Route	Around City of Christoval[j]	PF[c]/PD/E	FD	RA/C
SO21	Safety Operational Improvement	US 277 at FM 110: Add grade separation	To be incorporated into Christoval Relief Route		
RR19	Relief Route	Around City of Eldorado[k]	PF[c]/PD/E	FD	RA/C
IU16	Interstate Upgrade	US 277 from Christoval to Sutton-Edwards County Line (approximately 63 miles)[a]	PF[c]/PD/E	FD	RA/C
SO22	Safety Operational Improvement	US 277 at RM 189: Study Overpass	To be incorporated into Christoval to Sutton/ Edwards County Line segment development		
RR21	Relief Route	Loop 79 extension around City of Del Rio including international bridge connections[m]	PF[c]/PD/E	FD/RA	C
IU17	Interstate Upgrade	US 277 from Sutton/ Edwards County Line to Del Rio (approximately 61 miles)[a]	PF[c]/PD/E	FD/RA	C
IU18	Interstate Upgrade	US 277 from Del Rio to Eagle Pass (approximately 39 miles)[a]	PF[c]/PD/E	FD/RA	C
SO23	Safety/ Operational Improvement	US 277 to SH 55: Study Overpass	Completed as part of Interstate Development		
SO24	Safety/ Operational Improvement	US 277: Study access to the interstate	Completed as part of Interstate Development		
SO25	Safety/ Operational Improvement	US 277: Expand Border Patrol Inspection Facilities	Coordination with CBP on Interstate Development		

PF = Project Feasibility, PD = Preliminary Design, E = Environmental, FD = Final Design, RA =Right-of-Way Acquisition, C = Construction

Map ID	Project Type	Description of Work	Phases in the Short-Term (0-5 years)	Phases in the Mid-Term (6-10 years)	Phases in the Long-Term (10+ years)
SO26	Safety/ Operational Improvement	Look at tie-ins to the interstate of US 277 north of Eagle Pass	Completed as part of Interstate Development		
RR22	Relief Route	Around City of Quemado[m]	PF[c]/PD/E	FD/RA	C
RR24	Relief Route	Around City of Carrizo Springs[n]	PF[c]/PD/E	FD/RA/C	
IU19	Interstate Upgrade	US 277 from Eagle Pass to Carrizo Springs (approximately 42 miles)[a]	PF[c]/PD/E	FD/RA/C	
SO27	Safety/ Operational Improvement	US 83: Expand Border Patrol Inspection Facility or possibly relocate	Completed as part of Interstate Development		
RR25	Relief Route	Around City of Asherton[o]	PF[c]/PD/E	FD/RA/C	
RR26	Relief Route	Around City of Catarina[o]	PF[c]/PD/E	FD/RA/C	
IU20	Interstate Upgrade	US 83 from Carrizo Springs to I-35 (approximately 41 miles)[a]	PF[c]/PD/E	FD/RA/C	
SO28	Safety/ Operational Improvement	FM 133: Improvements needed	Completed as part of Interstate Development		
SO29	Safety/ Operational Improvement	US 83 and SH44: Improve Intersection	Completed as part of Interstate Development		
SO30	Safety/ Operational Improvement	US 83: Expand Border Patrol Inspection Facility or possibly relocate	Completed as part of Interstate Development		
SO31	Safety/ Operational Improvement	I-35 and Bob Bullock Loop: Improve Intersection	Planned and Programmed		
SO32	Safety/ Operational Improvement	Future direct connector for US 83 to I-35 and I-35 to US 83	Completed as part of Interstate Development		
SO01	Safety/ Operational Improvement	US 287 at US 54: Improve Intersection	Completed as part of Interstate Development		

PF = Project Feasibility, PD = Preliminary Design, E = Environmental, FD = Final Design, RA =Right-of-Way Acquisition, C = Construction

Map ID	Project Type	Description of Work	Phases in the Short-Term (0-5 years)	Phases in the Mid-Term (6-10 years)	Phases in the Long-Term (10+ years)
IU03	Interstate Upgrade	US 287 from Stratford to Cactus (approximately 14 miles)[a]		PF[c]/PD/E/FD	RA[b]/C
IU04	Interstate Upgrade	US 287 from Cactus to Dumas (approximately 7 miles)[a]		PF[c]/PD/E/FD	RA[b]/C
IU05	Interstate Upgrade	US 87 from Dalhart to Hartley (approximately 7 miles)[a]		PF[c]/PD/E/FD	RA[b]/C
IU06	Interstate Upgrade	US 87 from Hartley to Dumas (approximately 18 miles)[a]		PF[c]/PD/E/FD	RA[b]/C
IU09	Interstate Upgrade	US 87 from Tahoka to Lamesa[a]		PD/E	FD/RA/C
RR09	Relief Route	Around City of O'Donnell		PD/E	FD/RA/C
RR10	Relief Route	Around City of Lamesa		PD/E	FD/RA/C
SO13	Safety/ Operational Improvement	US 87 and FM 213: Add grade separation		PD/E	FD/RA/C
SO14	Safety/ Operational Improvement	US 87 and FM 2053: Add grade separation		PD/E	FD/RA/C
RR11	Relief Route	Around City of Patricia		PD/E	FD/RA/C
IU11	Interstate Upgrade	SH 349 from Lamesa to Midland (approximately 41 miles)[a]		PF[c]/PD/E	FD/RA/C
RR13	Relief Route	Around City of Garden City[h]		PF[c]/PD/E	FD/RA/C
IU13	Interstate Upgrade	SH 158 from Midland to Sterling City (approximately 65 miles)[a]		PF[c]/PD/E/FD/RA	C
IU01	Interstate Upgrade	US 287 from Kerrick to Stratford (approximately 12 miles)[a]			PF[c]/PD/E/FD/ RA/C
RR01	Relief Route	Around City of Texline[d]			PF[c]/PD/E/FD/ RA/C

PF = Project Feasibility, PD = Preliminary Design, E = Environmental, FD = Final Design, RA =Right-of-Way Acquisition, C = Construction

Map ID	Project Type	Description of Work	Phases in the Short-Term (0-5 years)	Phases in the Mid-Term (6-10 years)	Phases in the Long-Term (10+ years)
IU02	Interstate Upgrade	US 87 from TX/NM State Line to Dalhart (approximately 28 miles)[a]			PF[c]/PD/E/FD/ RA/C
SO05	Safety/ Operational Improvement	I-27 and SL 289: Develop Interchange			PF/PD/E/FD/ RA/C
SO07	Safety/ Operational Improvement	I-27 and US 62: Develop Interchange			PF[c]/PD/E/FD/ RA/C
SO08	Safety/ Operational Improvement	I-27 and SL 289: Develop Interchange			PF[c]/PD/E/FD/ RA/C

PF = Project Feasibility, PD = Preliminary Design, E = Environmental, FD = Final Design, RA =Right-of-Way Acquisition, C = Construction

Next Steps

The Advisory Committee will submit this final report to TxDOT as required by HB 1079. Based on the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, TxDOT will submit a Feasibility Study Report to the Texas Legislature and to Governor Abbott on January 1, 2021.

Implementation Plan Table Notes:
[a] The mileage included in the table are approximations and do not include miles along the Corridor covered by relief route recommendations.
[b] Coordination with Railroad would be required.
[c] This report is a Feasibility Study of the entire Ports-to-Plains Corridor. Project Feasibility listed in this table are project specific feasibility studies required before Preliminary Design.
[d] Environmental to be completed with US 87 TX/NM State Line to Dalhart interstate upgrade.
[e] Environmental to be completed with US 87 Hartley to Dumas interstate upgrade.
[f] Environmental to be completed with US 287 Stratford to Cactus interstate upgrade.
[g] Assuming a freeway to freeway connection.
[h] To be conducted in conjunction with SH 158: Midland to Sterling City interstate upgrade project development process. Time frames shown here are contingent on development of that segment.
[i] To be conducted in conjunction with US 87: Sterling City to San Angelo interstate upgrade project development process. Time frames shown here are contingent on development of that segment.
[j] To be conducted in conjunction with US 277: San Angelo to Christoval interstate upgrade project development process. Time frames shown here are contingent on development of that segment.
[k] To be conducted in conjunction with US 277: Christoval to Sutton Edwards CL interstate upgrade project development process. Time frames shown here are contingent on development of that segment.
[l] A portion of this project, widening from 2-lane to 4-lane undivided from 1 mile north of SH 255 to US 83/I-35 underpass, is included in the Planned and Programmed Projects and in TxDOT's Unified Transportation Program (UTP).
[m] Environmental to be completed with US 277 Eagle Pass to Del Rio interstate upgrade.
[n] Environmental to be completed with US 277 Carrizo Springs to Eagle Pass interstate upgrade.
[o] Environmental to be completed with US 83 I-35 to Carrizo Springs interstate upgrade.

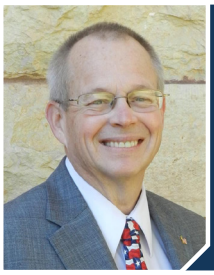
Appendix A

Advisory Committee Members

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.

Appendix A: Advisory Committee Members

Dan Pope
Mayor, Committee Chair
City of Lubbock



Stephen H. Smith
Judge, Committee Vice-Chair
Sutton County

Ginger Nelson
Mayor
City of Amarillo

Jared Miller*
City Manager
City of Amarillo

Shannon Thomason
Mayor
City of Big Spring

Wayne Seiple
Mayor
City of Carrizo Springs

Phillip Hass
Mayor
City of Dalhart

Bruno Lozano
Mayor
City of Del Rio

Bob Brinkmann
Mayor
City of Dumas

Luis Sifuentes
Mayor
City of Eagle Pass

George Arispe
Mayor
City of Eldorado

Josh Stevens
Mayor
City of Lamesa

Pete Saenz
Mayor
City of Laredo

Patrick Payton
Mayor
City of Midland

David Turner
Mayor
City of Odessa

Brenda Gunter
Mayor
City of San Angelo

Wanda Shurley
Mayor
City of Sonora

Lane Horwood
Mayor
Sterling City

Ricky Reed
Mayor
City of Stratford

John Baker
Mayor
City of Tahoka

Hal Spain
Judge
Coke County

Wesley Ritchey
Judge
Dallam County

Foy O'Brien
Judge
Dawson County

Francisco G. Ponce
Judge
Dimmit County

Souli Asa Shanklin
Judge
Edwards County

Kim Halfmann
Judge
Glasscock County

David B. Mull
Judge
Hale County

Ronnie Gordon
Judge
Hartley County

Kathryn Wiseman
Judge
Howard County

James Tullis Shahan
Judge
Kinney County

Curtis Parrish
Judge
Lubbock County

Mike Braddock
Judge
Lynn County

Bryan Cox
Judge
Martin County

David R. Saucedo
Judge
Maverick County

Terry Johnson
Judge
Midland County

Johnnie "Rowdy" Rhoades
Judge
Moore County

Nancy Tanner
Judge
Potter County

Ernie Houdashell
Judge
Randall County

Charlie Bradley
Judge
Schleicher County

Terri Beth Carter
Judge
Sherman County

Deborah Horwood
Judge
Sterling County

Harold Keeter
Judge
Swisher County

Steve Floyd
Judge
Tom Green County

Lewis G. Owens Jr.
Judge
Val Verde County

Tano E. Tijerina
Judge
Webb County

*Jared Miller served as a designee for Ginger Nelson.

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.

Appendix B

House Bill 1079

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.

Appendix B: House Bill 1079

Chapter 756

H.B. No. 1079

AN ACT

relating to a study by the Texas Department of Transportation of the Ports-to-Plains Corridor, including an evaluation of the feasibility of certain improvements to Interstate Highway 27.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. (a) In this Act:

(1) "Advisory committee" means the Ports-to-Plains Advisory Committee established under this section.

(2) "Department" means the Texas Department of Transportation.

(3) "Improvement" has the meaning assigned by Section 221.001, Transportation Code.

(4) "Port of entry" has the meaning assigned by Section 621.001, Transportation Code.

(5) "Ports-to-Plains Corridor" means the highways designated as the Ports-to-Plains Corridor under Section 225.069, Transportation Code.

(b) The department shall conduct a comprehensive study of the Ports-to-Plains Corridor. The study must evaluate the feasibility of, and the costs and logistical matters associated with, improvements that create a continuous flow, four-lane divided highway that meets interstate highway standards to the extent possible, including improvements that:

(1) extend Interstate Highway 27:

(A) from its southern terminus to Interstate Highway 20;

(B) from Interstate Highway 20 to Interstate Highway 10; and

(C) from Interstate Highway 10 to the port of entry located in Laredo;

(2) extend Interstate Highway 27:

(A) from its northern terminus to Dumas;

(B) from Dumas to Stratford; and

(C) from Stratford to the Oklahoma state border; and

(3) extend Interstate Highway 27:

(A) from its northern terminus to Dumas;

(B) from Dumas to Dalhart; and

(C) from Dalhart to the New Mexico state border.

(c) In conducting the study under Subsection (b) of this section, the department shall:

(1) use the reports submitted to the department by the advisory committee under Subsection (j) of this section; and

(2) hold quarterly public meetings on a rotational basis in Amarillo, Laredo, Lubbock, and San Angelo to gather public feedback on improvements or expansions to the Ports-to-Plains Corridor.

(d) The department shall establish a Ports-to-Plains Advisory Committee to assist the department in conducting the study under Subsection (b) of this section.

(e) The advisory committee is composed of:

(1) the county judge, or an elected county official or the administrator of the county's road department, as designated by the county judge, of each county along the Ports-to-Plains Corridor, including the counties along the possible extensions of Interstate Highway 27 described by Subsection (b) of this section; and

(2) the mayor, or the city manager or assistant city manager, as designated by the mayor, of Amarillo, Big Spring, Carrizo Springs, Dalhart, Del Rio, Dumas, Eagle Pass, Eldorado, Lamesa, Laredo, Lubbock, Midland, Odessa, San Angelo, Sonora, Sterling City, Stratford, and Tahoka.

(f) The advisory committee shall meet at least twice each year on a rotational basis in Lubbock and San Angelo.

(g) The department, in conjunction with the advisory committee, shall establish segment committees for each geographic segment along the Ports-to-Plains Corridor as determined by the department. The segment committees are composed of:

(1) volunteers who may represent:

(A) municipalities, counties, metropolitan planning organizations, ports, chambers of commerce, and economic development organizations along that segment of the Ports-to-Plains Corridor;

(B) the oil and gas industry; and

(C) the trucking industry;

(2) department representatives; and

(3) any other interested parties.

(h) A segment committee established under Subsection (g) of

this section for a segment along the Ports-to-Plains Corridor shall submit a report to the advisory committee providing input for the study conducted by the department under Subsection (b) of this section. The report must include:

(1) an examination of the ability of the energy industry to transport products to market;

(2) an evaluation of the economic development impacts of the Ports-to-Plains Corridor, including whether the improvement or expansion of the Ports-to-Plains Corridor would create employment opportunities in this state;

(3) a determination of whether improvements or expansion of the Ports-to-Plains Corridor would relieve traffic congestion in the segment;

(4) an examination of freight movement along the Ports-to-Plains Corridor;

(5) a determination and prioritization of improvements and expansion of the Ports-to-Plains Corridor that are warranted in order to promote safety and mobility, while maximizing the use of existing highways to the greatest extent possible and striving to protect private property as much as possible;

(6) a determination of the areas that are preferable and suitable for interstate designation;

(7) an examination of project costs related to the improvement or expansion of the Ports-to-Plains Corridor; and

(8) an assessment of federal, state, local, and private funding sources for a project improving or expanding the Ports-to-Plains Corridor.

(i) Not later than June 30, 2020, each segment committee established under Subsection (g) of this section shall submit to the advisory committee the report described by Subsection (h) of this section, including priority recommendations for improvement and expansion of the Ports-to-Plains Corridor.

(j) Not later than October 31, 2020, the advisory committee shall review and compile the reports submitted by each segment committee under Subsection (i) of this section and submit to the department:

(1) the reports submitted by each segment committee; and

(2) a summary and any recommendations based on those reports.

(k) The advisory committee and each segment committee shall conduct extensive public involvement campaigns for feedback on preliminary recommendations made by the committees before submitting the reports under Subsections (i) and (j) of this section.

(l) Not later than January 1, 2021, the department shall submit a report on the results of the study conducted under Subsection (b) of this section to the governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the house of representatives, and the presiding officer of each standing committee of the legislature with jurisdiction over transportation matters.

(m) This Act expires August 31, 2021.

SECTION 2. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as

provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this Act takes effect September 1, 2019.

President of the Senate

Speaker of the House

I certify that H.B. No. 1079 was passed by the House on April 24, 2019, by the following vote: Yeas 143, Nays 1, 2 present, not voting; and that the House concurred in Senate amendments to H.B. No. 1079 on May 22, 2019, by the following vote: Yeas 126, Nays 16, 2 present, not voting.

Chief Clerk of the House

I certify that H.B. No. 1079 was passed by the Senate, with amendments, on May 15, 2019, by the following vote: Yeas 30, Nays 1.

Secretary of the Senate

APPROVED: 6-8-2019

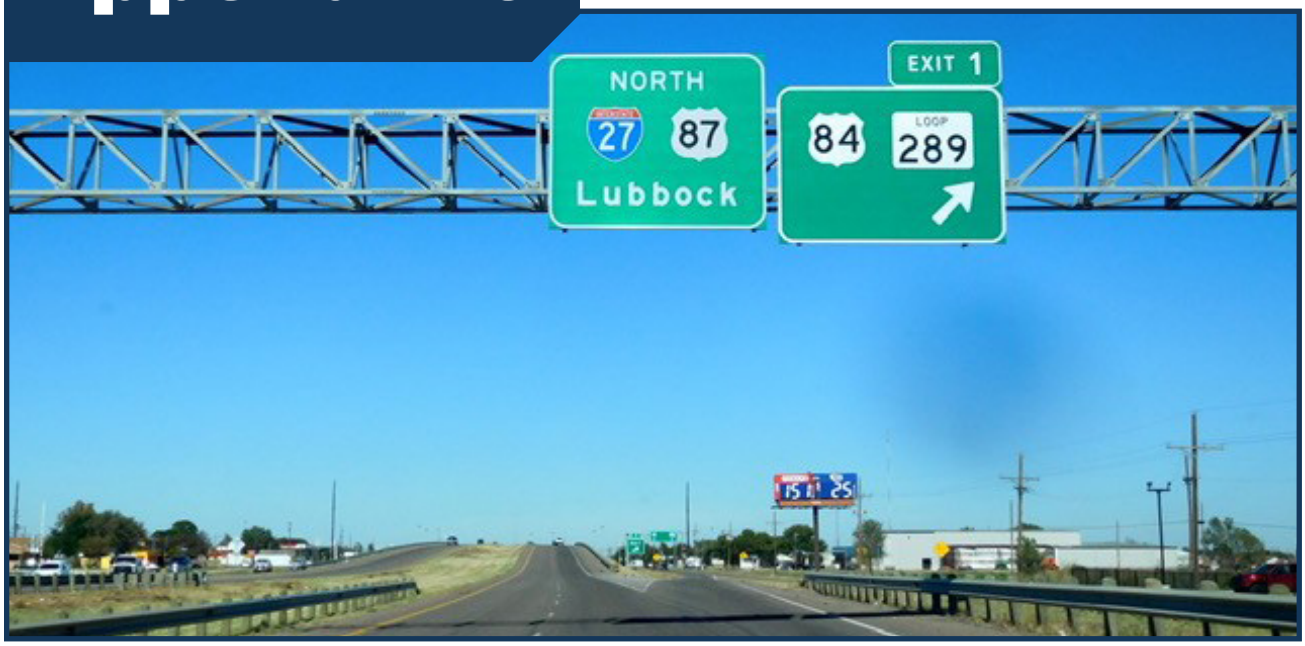
Date

Governor

FILED IN THE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE
7:00 P.M. O'CLOCK
JUN 10 2019
Secretary of State

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.

Appendix C



A Resolution Supporting the Designation of an Extension of Interstate 27 as a Future Interstate in Texas

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.

Appendix C: A Resolution Supporting the Designation of an Extension of Interstate 27 as a Future Interstate in Texas

A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE DESIGNATION OF AN EXTENSION OF INTERSTATE 27 AS A FUTURE INTERSTATE IN TEXAS.

WHEREAS, Congress has already designated the Ports-to-Plains Corridor in Texas as a High Priority Corridor on the National Highway System; and

WHEREAS, the Texas Department of Transportation published an *Initial Assessment Report on the Extension of I-27/Ports to Plains Corridor* in November, 2015 which stated: "The corridor will continue to be a critical link to state, national and international trade, growing population centers and critical energy and agricultural business sectors"; and

WHEREAS, according to the *Texas Freight Mobility Plan*, "By 2040 over 73 percent of Texas' population and 82 percent of the state's employment is projected to be located within five miles of an interstate"; and

WHEREAS, Texas has no major north-south interstate west of Interstate 35; and

WHEREAS, the *Texas Freight Mobility Plan* notes that further investment alone on I-35 will not fix the problem saying, "The state must focus not only on improving existing facilities, but also on developing future freight corridors to move products to markets and exports"; and

WHEREAS, the *Texas Freight Mobility Plan* goes on to recommend that TxDOT, "give additional consideration to the extension or designation of other interstate routes. Examples include I-27 and upgrades to portions of US Highway 190 to interstate standards"; and

WHEREAS, the proposed extension of Interstate 27 connects major West Texas population and economic centers including Amarillo, Lubbock, Midland-Odessa and San Angelo in addition to numerous smaller communities; and

WHEREAS, the proposed extension of Interstate 27 intersects with Interstate 40, Interstate 20 and Interstate 10; and

WHEREAS, the proposed extension of Interstate 27 will serve three border crossings with Mexico at Laredo, Eagle Pass and Del Rio; and

WHEREAS, the proposed extension of Interstate 27 will be a major backbone for the energy industry in Texas serving top oil and gas producing counties as well as the growing wind energy industry; and

WHEREAS, the proposed extension of Interstate 27 will also serve the agriculture industry including many of Texas top counties for the production of cotton, cattle, sheep and goats and other commodities; and

WHEREAS, extending Interstate 27 in Texas is also a cost-effective option. The Texas Department of Transportation's *Initial Assessment Report on the Extension of I-27/Ports to Plains Corridor* estimated that it would cost about $7 billion to upgrade the nearly 1,000 miles of the Ports-to-Plains Corridor from the northern tip of Texas to Laredo. To extend Interstate-27 approximately 500 miles from Lubbock to Laredo is projected to cost $5.2 billion. Compare that to the $4.8 billion it cost to rebuild 28 mile section of Interstate 35 east from Interstate 635 to U.S. Highway 380 in Dallas County; and

WHEREAS, an additional cost saving option is associated with the primarily east-west, recently designated, Interstate 14 which includes a proposed segment that overlaps the Ports-to-Plains Corridor between Midland-Odessa and San Angelo, presenting an opportunity for that segment to be jointly designated as Interstate 14 and Interstate 27; and

WHEREAS, a future Interstate designation will be a significant new economic development tool for communities along the corridor. Site selectors for manufacturers, warehousing and distribution recommend sites along an interstate highway and travel services businesses such as hotels, truck stops, convenience stores and restaurants, which can have a dramatic impact on small communities will also expand. This will create much needed new jobs and expanded tax base in rural West Texas; and

WHEREAS, while designation as a future interstate is the first step in a very long process before the completion of an interstate highway, that does not lessen the importance of extending Interstate 27.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE _____ OF THE _____, _____

Section I. That the _____ supports the designation of the extension of Interstate 27 as a Future Interstate by Congress and urges the Texas Department of Transportation to support such designation.

Section 2. This resolution to be in full force and effect from and after its passage and approval.

Section 3. If any portion or provision of this resolution shall for any reason be held to be invalid or unenforceable, the invalidity or unenforceability of such portion or provision shall not affect any of the remaining provisions of this Resolution, the intention being that the same are severable.

ADOPTED AND APPROVED this _____ day of _____, 2019.

_____
Title

(S E A L)

ATTEST

_____
Title

A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE DESIGNATION OF AN EXTENSION OF INTERSTATE 27 AS A FUTURE INTERSTATE IN TEXAS.

The Ports-to-Plains Alliance has received the following Resolutions to date Supporting Future Interstate Designation from Texas.

Amarillo Chamber of Commerce
Dated: June 20, 2019
Executed by: Executive Vice President, Business Development and Governmental Affairs, Jason Harrison

Amarillo College
Dated: July 2, 2019
Executed by: President Russell Lowery-Hart

Amarillo Economic Development Corporation
Dated: April 16, 2019
Executed by: Chairwomen Laura Street

Amarillo Metropolitan Planning Organization
Dated: July 18, 2019
Executed by: Vice Chairman, MPO Policy Committee Jared Miller

Big Spring Chamber of Commerce
Dated: May 23, 2019
Executed by: President Randy Johnson

Big Spring Economic Development Corporation
Dated: April 16, 2019
Executed by: President Jeff Ward

Central 57 Importers & Exporters, Inc.
Dated: August 1, 2019
Executed by: Assistant Secretary of the Organization Sonia Shannon

City of Amarillo
Dated: April 18, 2019
Executed by: Mayor Ginger Nelson

City of Big Spring
Dated: March 26, 2019
Executed by: Mayor Larry McLellan

City of Canyon
Dated: September 9, 2019
Executed by: Mayor Gary Hinders

City of Dalhart
Dated: March 12, 2019
Executed by: Mayor Phil Hass

City of Del Rio
Dated: March 12, 2019
Executed by: Mayor Bruno J. Lozano

City of Dumas
Dated: March 18, 2019
Executed by: Mayor Pat L. Sims

City of Eagle Pass
Dated: June 4, 2019
Executed by: Mayor Ramsey English Cantu

City of Eldorado
Dated: July 8, 2019
Executed by: Mayor George Arispe

City of Hale Center
Dated: March 19, 2019
Executed by: Mayor W.H. Johnson

City of Happy
Dated: May 21, 2019
Executed by: Mayor Sara Tirey

City of Lamesa
Dated: June 18, 2019
Executed by: Mayor Josh Stevens

City of Laredo
Dated: February 18, 2020
Executed by: Mayor Pete Saenz

City of Lubbock
Dated March 26, 2019
Executed by Mayor Dan P. Pope

City of New Deal
Dated: March 20, 2019
Executed by: Mayor Pro-tem Gayla Tetter

City of O'Donnell
Dated: April 9, 2019
Executed by: Mayor Mark Roye

City of Plainview
Dated: April 4, 2019
Executed by: Mayor Wendell Dunlap

City of San Angelo
Dated: March 19, 2019
Executed by: Mayor Brenda Gunter

City of San Angelo Development Corporation
Dated: March 27, 2019
Executed by: President Todd Kolls

City of Sonora
Dated: July 15, 2019
Executed by: Mayor Pro-tem Juanita Gomez

City of Tahoka
Dated: April 8, 2019
Executed by: Mayor John B. Baker

City of Tulia
Dated: March 19, 2019
Executed by: Mayor Russell Procter

Dalhart Area Chamber of Commerce
Dated: July 5, 2019
Executed by: Chairman Tim Yee

David L. Hettler PC
Dated: July 9, 2019
Executed by: President David Hettler

Del Rio Area Development Foundation
Dated: June 7, 2019
Executed by: President Frank Larson

Del Rio Chamber of Commerce
Dated: June 7, 2019
Executed by: Executive Director Blanca Larson

Del Rio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
Dated: August 14, 2019
Executed by: President Sergio Diaz

Dumas Economic Development Corporation
Dated: April 8, 2019
Executed by: Board President Shawn Frische

Dumas / Moore County Chamber of Commerce
Dated: June 17, 2019
Executed by: President Carl Watson

Eagle Pass Chamber of Commerce
Dated: July 30, 2019
Executed by President William W. Davis

Hale County
Dated: March 25, 2019 0020
Executed by: County Judge David B. Mull

High Ground of Texas
Dated: July 18, 2019
Executed by: Executive Director Kasey Coker

Howard College
Dated: July 30, 2019
Executed by: Board Chairman John E. Freeman

Howard County
Dated March 20, 2019
Executed by: County Judge Kathryn G. Wiseman

Lamesa Economic Development Corporation and Lamesa Economic Project Board of Directors
Dated: June 19, 2019
Executed by: President Scott Leonard

Levelland Economic Development Corporation
Dated: August 5, 2019
Executed by: President Elgin Conner

Lubbock Christian University
Dated: July 29, 2019
Executed by: Vice President for University Relations John King

Lamesa Chamber of Commerce
Dated: June 10, 2019
Executed by: Chairman Mark Ray

Lubbock Chamber of Commerce
Dated: May 30, 2019
Executed by: Chairman Abel Castro

Lubbock County
Dated: May 28, 2019
Executed by: County Judge Curtis Parrish; Commissioner Precinct 1 Bill McCay; Commissioner Precinct 2 Jason Corley; Commissioner Precinct 3 Gilbert A Flores; Commissioner Precinct 4 Chad Seay

Lubbock Economic Development Alliance
Dated: May 22, 2019
Executed by: President/CEO John Osborne

Lubbock Metropolitan Planning Organization
Dated: May 21, 2019
Executed by: Chairperson of LMPO Transportation Policy Committee Jeff Griffith

Lynn County
Dated: June 24, 2019
Executed by: County Judge Mike Braddock

Moore County
Dated: March 25, 2019
Executed by: County Judge Rowdy Rhoades

Panhandle Regional Planning Commission
Dated: July 25, 2019
Executed by: Chairman Ricky White

Permian Basin Regional Planning Commission
Dated: January 8, 2020
Executed by: Chair Foy O'Brian

Plains Cotton Growers, Inc.
Dated: June 17, 2019
Executed by: President Stacy Smith

Plainview Chamber of Commerce
Dated: July 12, 2019
Executed by Executive Director Tonya Keesee

Plainview Convention & Visitor Bureau
Dated: August 5, 2019
Executed by: President Ranada Jack

Plainview Hale County Economic Development Corp
Dated: March 28, 2019
Executed by: Executive Director Michael Fox

Reece Albert, Inc.
Dated: June 17, 2019
Executed by: President/CFO Roger Albert

Ryan and Ryan International
Dated: June 18, 2019
Executed by: Chairman and CEO Brint Ryan

San Angelo Chamber of Commerce
Dated: August 14, 2019
Executed by CEO Bruce Partin

San Angelo Metropolitan Planning Organization
Dated: June 24, 2019
Executed by: Chair Policy Board Brenda Gunter

Sherman County
Dated: September 11, 2019
Executed by: County Judge Terri Beth Carter

Sonora Economic Development Corporation
Dated: April 9, 2019
Executed by: President Jim Polonis

Stratford Grain Company
Dated: May 13, 2019
Executed by: President Donald K. Riffe

Sonora Chamber of Commerce
Dated: June 28, 2019
Executed by: Executive Director Donna Garrett

South Plains Association of Governments
Dated: August 13, 2019
Executed by: President Lee Norman

Sutton County
Dated: June 24, 2019
Executed by: County Judge Steve Smith

Swisher County
Dated: March 25, 2019
Executed by: County Judge Harold Keeter

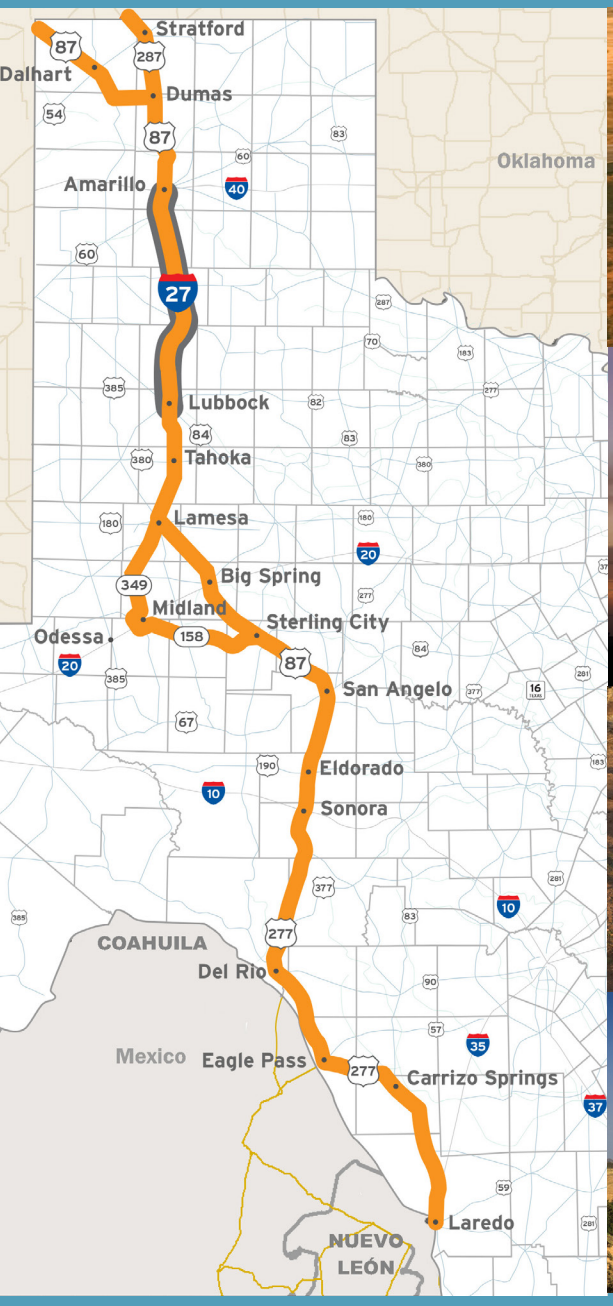
Tom Green County
Dated: March 19, 2019
Executed by: County Judge Steven C. Floyd; Commissioner Ralph Hoelscher; Commissioner Sammy Farmer; Commissioner Rick Bacon

Valero Energy
Dated: July 10, 2019
Executed by: Refinery Controller Benton Murphy

Val Verde County
Dated: July 24, 2019
Executed by County Judge Lewis G. Owens Jr.

Wayland Baptist University
Dated: August 21, 2019
Executed by: Chair David Foote

Webb County
Dated: November 12, 2019
Executed by: Judge Tano Tijerino



For more information:
Caroline A. Mays, AICP
Director, Freight, International Trade, and Connectivity Section
(512) 936-0904
caroline.mays@txdot.gov

Texas Department of Transportation
125 East 11th Street
Austin, TX 78701