

Rural Texas — Making the Connection



The transportation needs in rural Texas are as diverse as the citizens who live here. Whether it's maintenance of existing roadways, paving a runway at a community airport, or adding buses to a rural transit system, there are more projects than the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) can afford to build with current revenue sources. Over the past nine months, TxDOT has been developing the Texas Rural Transportation Plan 2035 (TRTP). The TRTP will include a prioritized list of highway projects that will allow TxDOT to focus its limited highway planning funds, as well as a qualitative discussion of non-highway needs such as general aviation, public transit, rail, and bicycle and pedestrian.

Highway Component

The study team reviewed nearly 600 highway projects in rural Texas that would provide added capacity and that are not currently funded in the Unified Transportation Program (UTP). In addition to these projects that would add travel lanes, projects were also included that would convert an existing four-lane undivided highway to a four-lane divided highway, and projects that would add a two-way left-turn lane of one mile or more in length. These two-way left turn lane projects were considered for their improvement of traffic operations.

Truck traffic can slow traffic on two-lane highways. To address this, TxDOT is improving traffic operations on highways with high truck volume by building "Super 2" configurations. "Super 2" configurations provide a travel lane in each direction with passing lanes—up to one mile in length—every 4 or 5 miles to improve traffic flow without the high cost of adding full travel lanes in each direction.

Analysis of Highway Projects

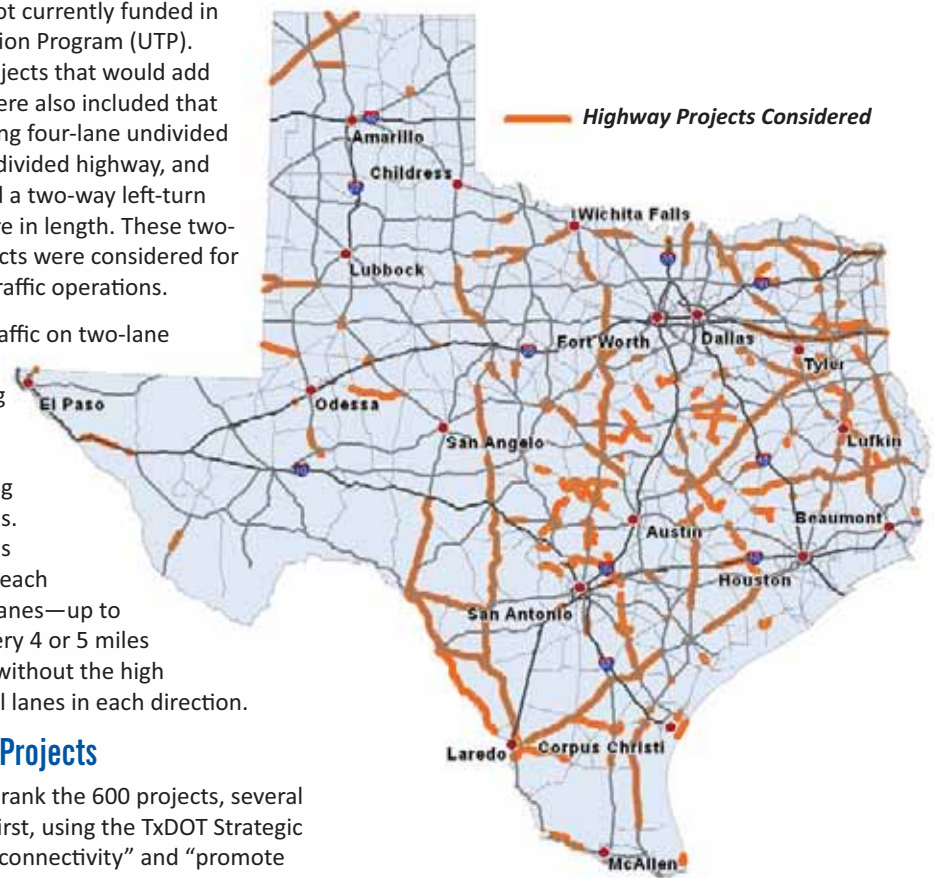
In order to analyze and rank the 600 projects, several key steps were taken. First, using the TxDOT Strategic Plan goals of "enhance connectivity" and "promote

congestion relief...", *connectivity* and *mobility* were used as broad categories to establish criteria for evaluating projects.

Next, data was collected for each project. TxDOT and the study team considered various mobility and connectivity measures including, but not limited to:

- Existing and projected total traffic
- Existing and projected truck traffic
- Freight movement
- Proximity to population centers
- Population in the specific project area
- Cost effectiveness using the latest cost estimates
- Safe passing needs along 2-lane highways

Finally, the project data was analyzed and the projects ranked.



Non-Highway Component

Non-highway modes include inter-city buses, rural transit and paratransit, rural aviation/air access, rural port access, bicycle/pedestrian facilities, and freight rail. Intermodal connectivity in rural areas is also important. While they are an integral component of the state's multi-modal transportation system, planning and funding for these non-highway modes are different from highways. Although these modes are typically not operated by TxDOT, TxDOT provides coordination support, distribution of federal funds, and in some cases provides state funds.

TxDOT has gathered information related to each of the non-highway modes regarding specific needs and, where available, future projects.

The study team is working closely with the individual TxDOT modal divisions that coordinate transportation services, such as rail (freight and passenger), public transportation (including paratransit), and aviation. They have also contacted private sector firms that provide rural transportation, such as railroads. The study team is identifying other state and federal agencies that have a direct interest in (and may have funds available for) providing rural transportation services.

While analysis is ongoing, many needs have already been identified, together with ways in which local agencies and private companies have coordinated with TxDOT to address these needs. Current non-highway transportation planning activities have been identified. Other opportunities to address rural transportation needs using non-highway modes are being analyzed. Specific examples of both include:

- **Passenger Rail** – TxDOT is studying passenger rail services in the corridor from Oklahoma City to South Texas.
- **Freight Rail** – In some circumstances, rail offers the potential to transfer freight traffic from trucks, potentially reducing highway maintenance costs.
- **Ports/Inland Waterways** – Inland waterways may provide alternate routes for freight traffic if deeper channels can be dredged.
- **Aviation** – In a state as large as Texas, General Aviation in rural areas facilitates economic activity by enabling high freight and special workers and executives to travel faster between business hubs. TxDOT recently collaborated with federal and county agencies to extend the runway at Dumas General Aviation airport to enable larger jets to land, and to encourage local economic expansion.
- **Rural Transit** – Transit is a critical service that connects rural Texas to employment centers, health care, and other essential services. Coordination of rural transit services has been identified as a means to make these services more efficient and cost effective. TxDOT facilitated the development of rural transit regional coordination plans by local planning agencies in 2006. These coordination plans are in the process of being updated in parallel with the TRTP.
- **Bicycles and Pedestrians** – Feedback from the Texas cycling community regarding enhancements to highway infrastructure in rural Texas included specific safety-related needs such as the position of rumble strips on highway shoulders, the roughness of the pavement surface, and sealant material. The cycling community noted the concept of "Complete Streets" which focuses on an approach to townscape design that is appealing to all users, rather than just drivers.

Stakeholder Outreach

To promote widespread, meaningful participation, TxDOT is engaging transportation stakeholders, elected officials, and the public in rural areas of the state throughout the development of the TRTP. The next steps are important. TxDOT needs to hear from you—the public. We need your input and concerns regarding the development of rural transportation in Texas.

Please plan to participate in one of the upcoming public open-house style workshops. TxDOT will provide information on the highway projects, the criteria measures used to rank the projects, and the preliminary results of this ranking effort. We will also be providing information gathered to-date on the needs for non-highway modes of transportation in rural areas which will include aviation, rail, transit, bicycle and pedestrian travel, and ports/inland waterways. Ensure your voice is heard. Join us at the meetings and provide your input.

Get involved and stay connected:

- Visit our website at http://www.txdot.gov/public_involvement/rural_2035/
- Email comments to us at TPP_textranplan@txdot.gov
- Write to: Peggy Thurin, P.E., Project Manager
Texas Rural Transportation Plan 2035
4544 Post Oak Place, #224
Houston, TX 77027
- Call us toll-free at 1-855-TX-RURAL (1-855-897-8725)
- Follow TxDOT on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube
- Attend a public meeting



Open-House Style Public Meeting for the Texas Rural Transportation Plan 2035

Please join us to help shape the future of Texas:

- Help guide where and how transportation dollars should be spent
- View exhibits
- Ask questions
- Provide written comments
- Sign-up for the newsletter mailing list

Attend the location most convenient for you. Come and go any time between the hours of 4:00 – 7:00 pm.

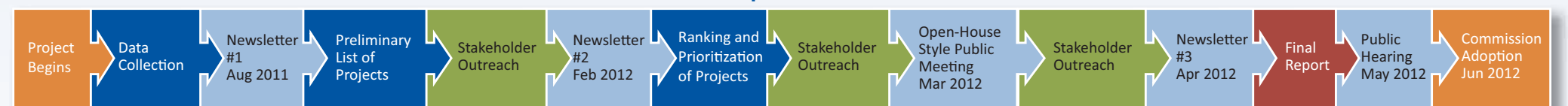
Date	TxDOT District	District Contact	Open-House Style Public Meeting Location
March 8	Abilene	Blair Haynie, 325-676-6810	TxDOT, Nolan County Maintenance Office, 7526 North I-20, Sweetwater, TX, 79556
March 8	Amarillo	Paul Braun, 806-570-6301	TxDOT, Amarillo District Office, Large Conference Room, 5715 Canyon Dr, Amarillo, TX, 79110
March 8	Atlanta	Deanne Simmons, 903-799-1308	TxDOT, Atlanta District Office, 701 E. Main St, Atlanta, TX, 75551
March 6	Austin	Ed Collins, 512-832-7041	TxDOT, Austin District Office, Building 7, 7901 North IH 35, Austin, TX, 78753
March 7	Beaumont	Phillip Lujan, 409-896-0274	First National Bank, Community Room, 301 E. Houston Street, Jasper, TX, 75951
March 6	Brownwood	Elias Rmeili, 325-643-0415	TxDOT, Brownwood District Office, 2495 Highway 183 North, Brownwood, TX, 76802
March 8	Bryan	Bob Appleton, 979-778-2165	Larry J. Ringer Public Library, 1818 Harvey Mitchell Parkway South, College Station, TX, 77840
March 6	Childress	Charles Steed, 940-937-7191	Childress City Auditorium, Room A, 1000 Commerce Street NW, Childress, TX, 79201
March 6	Corpus Christi	Paula Sales Evans, 361-808-2222	Coastal Bend College, Room V119, 3800 Charco Road, Beeville, TX, 78102
March 8	Corpus Christi	Paula Sales Evans, 361-808-2222	TxDOT, Alice Area Office, Conference Room, 1071 North US Highway 281, Alice, TX, 78332
March 6	Dallas	Wes McClure, 214-320-4461	Corsicana Public Library, 100 N. 12th St, Corsicana, TX, 75110
March 7	El Paso	Blanca Del Valle, 915-790-4200	TxDOT, Sierra Blanca Maintenance Office, Loop 460, Sierra Blanca, TX, 79851
March 8	Fort Worth	Judy Anderson, 817-370-6710	Mineral Wells High School, Cafeteria, 3801 Ram Blvd., Mineral Wells, TX, 76067
March 6	Laredo	Melisa Montemayor, 956-712-7456	Eagle Pass International Center for Trade, 3295 Bob Rogers Drive, Eagle Pass, TX, 78852
March 5	Lubbock	Steven Warren, 806-748-4490	TxDOT, Lubbock District Training Center, Mesquite Room, 135 Slaton Rd, Lubbock, TX, 79404
March 8	Lufkin	Cheryl Flood, 936-633-4349	TxDOT, Lufkin District Office, 1805 N. Timberland Dr, Lufkin, TX, 75901
March 8	Odessa	Matt Carr, 432-498-4761	TxDOT, Odessa District Office, Large Conference Room, 3901 E. US Hwy 80, Odessa, TX, 79761
March 5	Paris	Rick Mackey, 903-737-9300 (ext. 375)	Paris Junior College, McLemore Student Center, 2400 Clarksville Street, Paris, TX, 75460
March 8	Pharr	Homer Bazan, 956-702-6242	TxDOT, Pharr District Conference Center, 600 West US Expressway 83, Pharr, TX, 78577
March 6	San Angelo	John DeWitt, 325-947-9265	TxDOT, San Angelo District Office, Training Room, Building E, 4502 Knickerbocker Rd, San Angelo, TX, 76904
March 8	San Antonio	Jonathan Bean, 210-615-5839	TxDOT, Bexar Metro Area Office, 9320 S.E. Loop 410, San Antonio, TX, 78223
March 6	Tyler	Vernon Webb, 903-510-9296	TxDOT, Tyler District Office, Assembly Room, 2709 W Front Street, Tyler, TX, 75702
March 6	Waco	Ed Kabobel, 254-867-2731	Waco Transit System, 301 South 8th St, Waco, TX, 76701
March 6	Wichita Falls	Danny Brown, 940-720-7740	TxDOT, Wichita Falls District Training Center, 1601 Southwest Parkway, Wichita Falls, TX, 76302
March 6	Yoakum	Paul Frerich, 361-293-4347	TxDOT, Yoakum District Office, Training Room, 403 Huck Street, Yoakum, TX, 77995

Persons who have special communication or accommodation needs may call the District Contact listed above. Requests should be made no later than three days prior to the meeting. Every reasonable effort will be made to accommodate special needs.

June 2011

Texas Rural Transportation Plan 2035 Schedule

June 2012



PUBLIC COMMENTS WELCOME