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AASHTO Awards Program

September 27, 2015

2015 AASHTO Annual Meeting  Chicago, Illinois

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
OF STATE HIGHWAY AND
TRANSPORTATION OFFICIALS
AASHTO

● Rail Transportation ●



TOWER 55 RAIL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT Texas Department of Transportation

This year's President's Award for Rail Transportation is awarded to the Tower 55 Rail Improvement Project of Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT). Project members Russell Zapalac, Marc Williams, Erik Steavens, Gil Wilson, Mark Werner, and Jody Wall are honored for their work on this project.

The public-private partnership between TxDOT, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), BNSF Railway (BNSF), Union Pacific Railway (UP), and the City of Fort Worth was a collaborative effort to fix a major issue. At Tower 55, in the heart of Fort Worth, 11 major rail lines from across the country merge into a single at-grade rail intersection where two north-south lines cross two east-west lines. With 100 trains passing through daily at 90 percent capacity, Tower 55 was one of the nation's most congested rail intersections. The rail lines also intersect in an urban environment, full of at-grade crossings. The \$101 million improvement project was a compilation of track, signal, crossing, bridge, and roadway infrastructure improvements. TxDOT staff worked with project partners to develop a program of projects to address congestion and delays, improve safety, and reduce emissions. TxDOT project team members, BNSF, UP, and consulting engineers held monthly project coordination meetings for oversight and to address any concerns.

By adding a third north-south main line with six new crossing diamonds, approaches and alignments improved. New signals and interlocking's improved performance and reduced delays. New rail bridges over local streets, installing right-of-way fencing, and constructing pedestrian and bicycle facilities improved safety conditions for motorists, bikes, and pedestrians. The project was completed on time, on budget, and with no lost time injuries. The project was also nominated for the WASHTO regional 2015 America's Transportation Awards, nominated in Quality of Life/Community Development category.