

5.0 Priority Corridors

5.1 Introduction

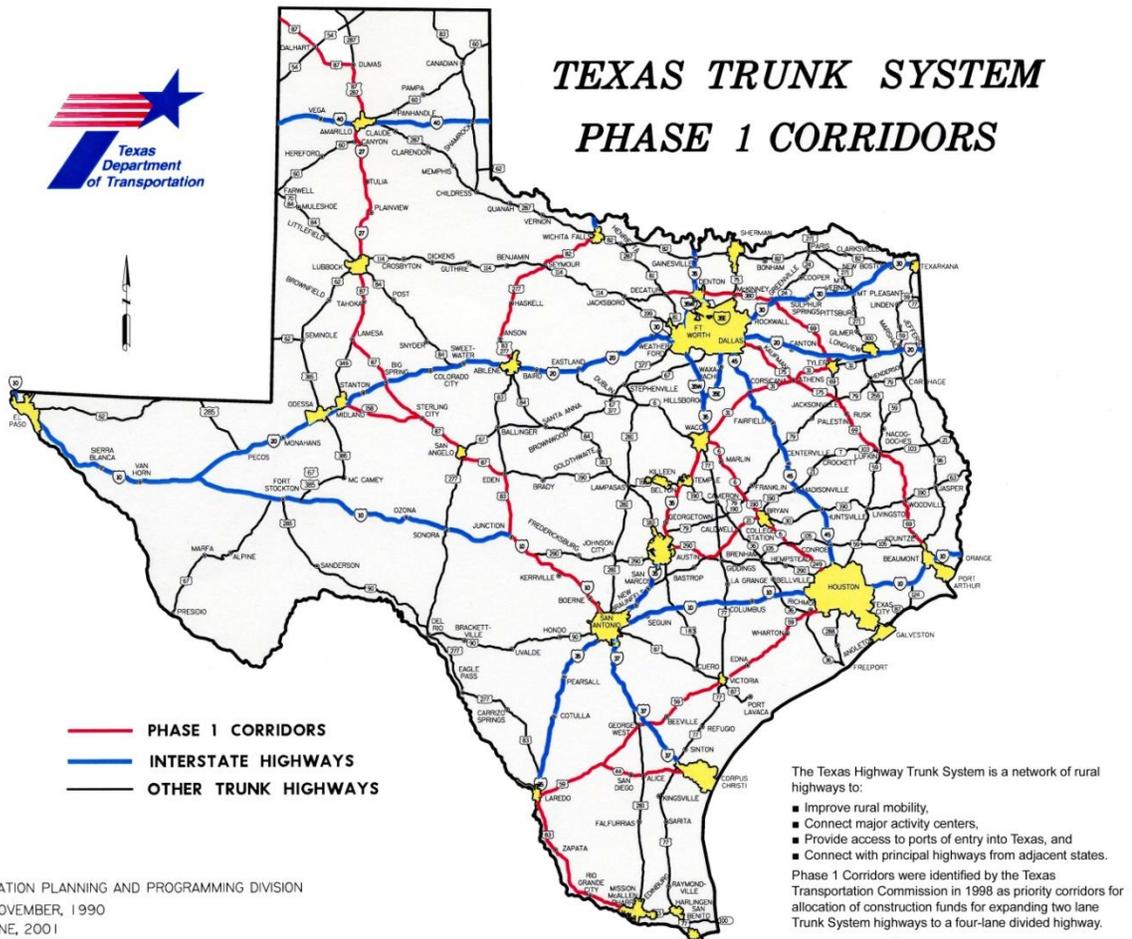
The Texas Highway Trunk System was initially adopted by the Texas Transportation Commission in 1990 to establish a network of four-lane divided rural highways to improve rural mobility, connect major activity centers, and provide access to ports of entry into Texas. The Texas Highway Trunk System complements and includes the 3,233-mile Interstate Highway System. The original Texas Highway Trunk System designation included approximately 10,050 miles. The system was last amended in 2001 to add approximately 475 miles and is shown on Figure 5-1. The system mileage from 2001 represents approximately 13 percent of the state highway system.

The criteria used to evaluate candidate corridors for the Texas Highway Trunk System are provided in 43 Texas Administrative Code (TAC), Part 1, Subchapter D, §15.42, as follows:

1. Maximize the use of existing four-lane divided roadways;
2. Minimize circuitous or indirect routing;
3. Connect principal roadways from adjacent states;
4. Connect with principal deep water ports with channel depths of 40 feet or more;
5. Connect with principal Mexican ports of entry (defined as crossings at or exceeding 5,000 vehicles per day);
6. Serve significant military or other national security installations;
7. Serve tourism and/or recreational areas;
8. Comprise major truck routes;
9. Be located within 25 miles or less of cities of 10,000 population or greater;
10. Close gaps in the existing Texas Highway Trunk System; and
11. Provide system connectivity.



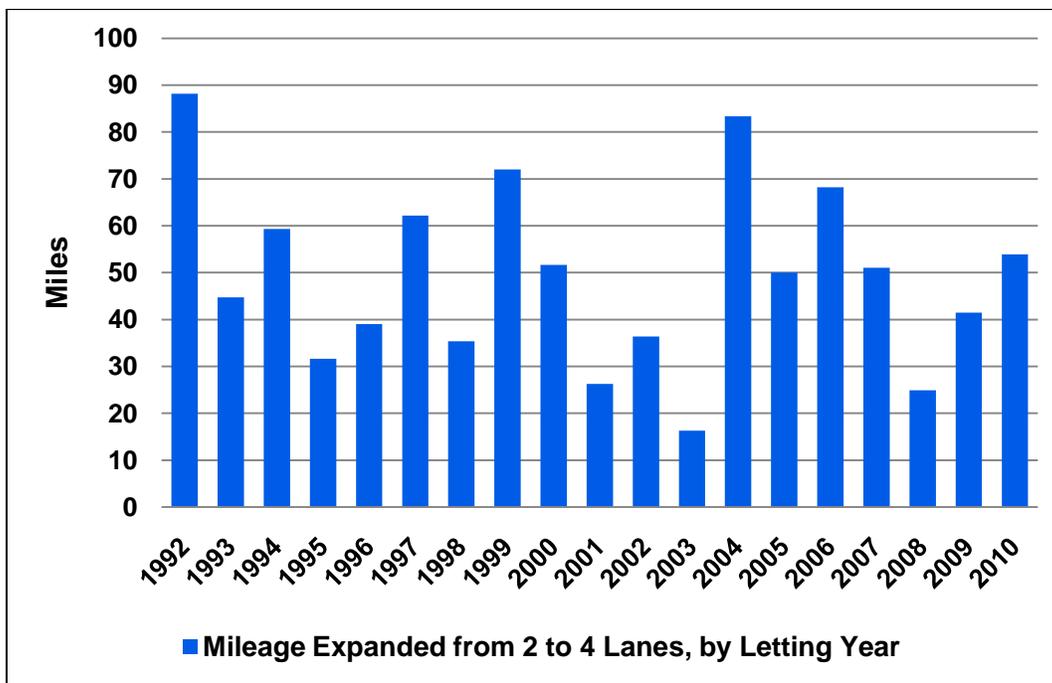
Figure 5-1: 2001 Texas Highway Trunk System





A total of 936 centerline miles of the Texas Trunk System were widened from two to four lanes between 1992 and 2010 as shown on Figure 5-2.

Figure 5-2: Trunk System Expansion, 1992–2010¹⁶³



5.2 Previous Prioritization of Texas Highway Trunk System Corridors

In 1998, the Texas Transportation Commission identified Phase 1 Corridors to prioritize a group of two-lane highways for expansion to the desired four-lane divided facility. The remaining corridors, identified as Other Trunk Highways on Figure 5-1, either have four lanes or are lower-priority two-lane corridors. Proposed improvements to the Texas Highway Trunk System are limited to the rural areas outside of MPO areas. MPO areas include fully or partially urbanized counties that are within the planning influence area of a major urban area. The MPO boundaries reflected on Figure 5-1 are those that existed in 2001.

The Texas Highway Trunk System criteria were reviewed in the year 2000. Two criteria were added (close the gaps in the existing Trunk System and provide system connectivity) resulting in approximately 500 miles being added to the system and 25 miles being removed. The population, employment and traffic volumes in Texas have

¹⁶³ TxDOT Transportation Planning and Programming Division



increased dramatically since 1998, but not uniformly across the state. Consequently, it is appropriate to revisit the remaining needs and establish priorities for future improvements to the Phase 1 Texas Highway Trunk System based on the current distribution of overall traffic demand, roadway capacity, population, and gaps in the system.

Since inception of the Texas Highway Trunk System, 936 miles of the system have been widened to four lanes. This number includes projects under construction and scheduled for letting through August 2010.

Table 5-1 provides the definitions of the Phase 1 Corridors based on the current (2010) MPO boundaries as shown on Figure 5-3.

Table 5-1: Phase 1 Corridor Definitions

Highways	Corridor Limits
SH 31	Tyler MPO Boundary to McLennan county line
US 69	Tyler MPO Boundary to Hunt/Rains county line
US 277/US 82 [^] /US 83	Wichita Falls MPO Boundary to Abilene MPO Boundary
US 59	Laredo MPO Boundary to Wharton/Fort Bend county line
US 83	Laredo MPO Boundary to Hidalgo county line
SH 44	Freer to Corpus Christi MPO Boundary [#]
US 69/US 175	Hardin/Tyler county line to Kaufman county line (Mabank)
SH 21	Brazos/Burleson county line to Lee/Bastrop county line, north of US 290
SH 6/US 190*/SH 105/FM 1774	McLennan/Falls county line to Robertson/Brazos county line, Brazos/Grimes county line to Grimes/Waller County Line
US 87/I-27/US 87/ US 83/I-10	New Mexico to Bexar/Kendall county line
SH 158/US 87	Midland-Odessa Transportation Organization Boundary to San Angelo MPO Boundary

Source: TxDOT; URS 2010

The current (2010) MPO boundaries were used to evaluate the rural needs in the SLRTP.

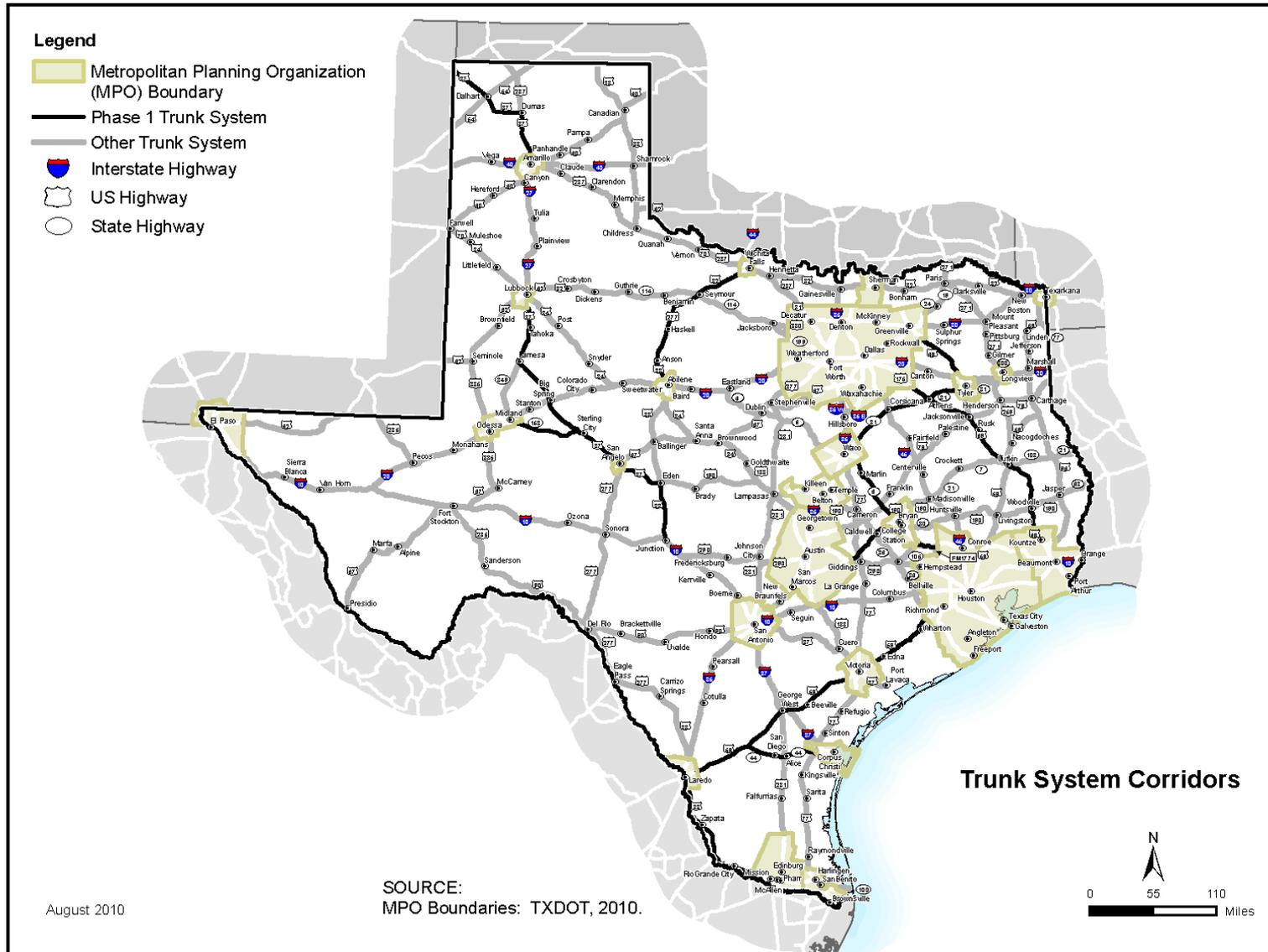
[^]The concurrent section of US 277 and US 82 between Seymour and Wichita Falls is coded in RHINO as US 82.

[#]The western limit was adjusted to eliminate overlap with US 59.

*The concurrent section of SH 6 and US 190 between Hearne and Bryan is in RHINO as US 190.



Figure 5-3: Texas Trunk System Revised MPO Boundaries





5.3 Potential Improvement Corridors

Texas Highway Trunk System routes are shown on Figure 5-3. The Texas Highway Trunk System routes and the interstate highways were evaluated from two perspectives. The first perspective identified highway corridors that do not meet the minimum roadway design criteria for a Texas Highway Trunk System corridor.¹⁶⁴ The second perspective identified highway corridors that need additional capacity to meet the needs of the projected 2035 traffic. The analysis used the 2008 RHINO database, consequently improvements completed after 2008 are not reflected in the analysis.

5.3.1 Highway Groups

The Texas Highway Trunk System and interstate highways were evaluated in three groups with the same matrix and scoring criteria.

Phase 1 Corridors: Phase 1 Corridors consist of eleven corridors that have been a priority since 1998. The original corridor descriptions are provided in Table 5-1. Corridors that have been modified based on changes in MPO boundaries are identified. The goal of this analysis was to identify short sections, referred to as “gaps,” that are still two lanes or four lanes without medians and also need additional capacity based on projected 2035 traffic. This analysis may be used to develop a program of projects when funding becomes available.

Interstate Highways: Texas has nine interstate highways of widely varied length. While all of the interstates meet the Texas Highway Trunk System design criteria, this network of priority corridors provides the skeleton for interstate and intrastate commerce. This evaluation sorts those routes that need additional capacity in limited areas to the top of the ranking and then compares the rest of the corridors by primarily considering traffic volumes and size of the MPO areas served by each route.

Other Trunk System Corridors: These corridors include routes that already meet the minimum design criteria for substantial distances and routes with lower priority than the Phase 1 Corridors. As with the other two groups of highways, the goal was to identify and quantify gaps in the four-lane highways that warrant expansion based on anticipated traffic volumes.

¹⁶⁴The minimum roadway design criteria for the Texas Highway Trunk System specify that each highway should be at least a four-lane divided facility.

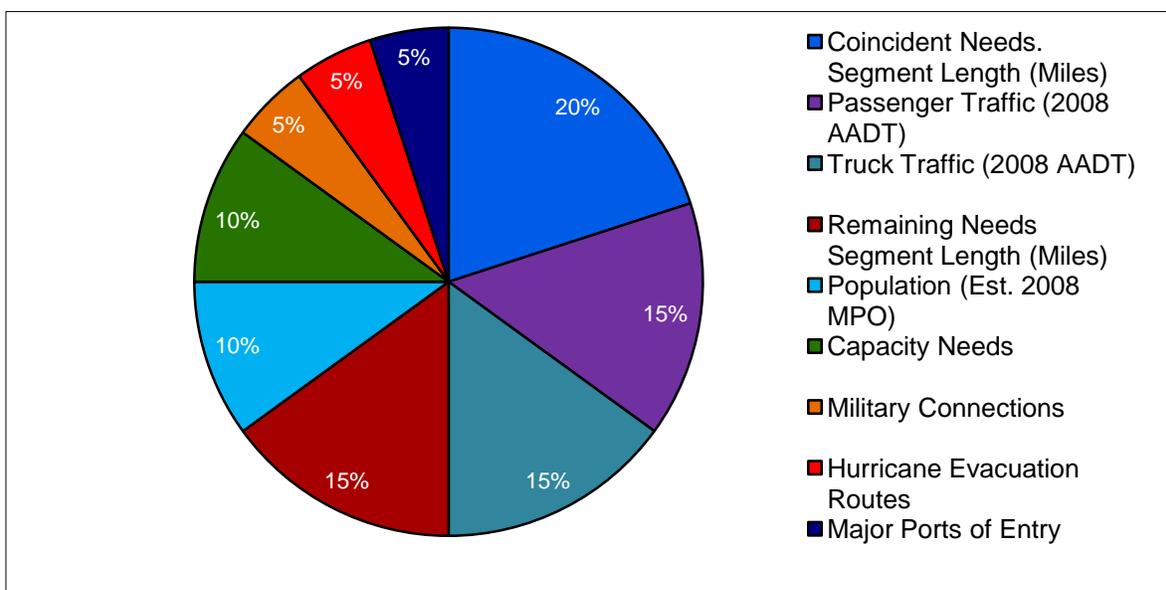


5.3.2 Evaluation Scoring

An evaluation methodology was developed using a combination of criteria from the 2001 reevaluation process as well as criteria based on the amount and type of improvements needed (i.e., two-lane to four-lane or four-lane undivided to four-lane divided) to bring a corridor up to the full standards of a four-lane divided highways. The process was quantitative, with ten points assigned to each criterion. Additionally, each criterion was assigned a weighting factor, with emphasis given to prioritize those corridors with comparatively short segments of two-lane highway on an otherwise four-lane highway facility.

The criteria used for the evaluation are a combination of those used to establish and expand the Texas Highway Trunk System and additional factors that relate to existing traffic volumes, predicted 2035 capacity needs, population, length of gaps in the corridor and identification of capacity needs on existing four-lane segments. Crash data were not evaluated for this effort but are recommended for subsequent analyses needed to prioritize specific projects to move forward into development. Figure 5-4 shows the weighting assigned to each criteria. The maximum score is 1,000 points.

Figure 5-4: Screening Criteria Weight Factor



Since rural interstate highways are at least four lanes with a median, the scoring for sub-standard design was not applicable. Scoring for the Other Texas Highway Trunk System was limited to evaluation of the individual highways which were not combined into corridors.



5.4 Evaluation Results

In order to meet the minimum design criteria for a Texas Highway Trunk System route, the roadway must have at least four lanes and a divided median. A divided median is defined as either a depressed grassy median, raised median or a flush median over 16 feet wide.

5.4.1 Phase 1 Corridor Needs

The Phase 1 Corridors were examined to determine those segments that either did not meet the minimum design criteria (i.e., four lanes and divided) or capacity criteria (i.e., need for additional lanes due to traffic volumes in 2035). In some cases, corridors met both conditions. All eleven Phase 1 Texas Highway Trunk System corridors require improvements over varying lengths of each route.

Table 5-2 depicts the eleven Phase 1 corridors evaluated to determine a priority ranking for improving the sections of each corridor that are below Trunk System standard design and/or have capacity needs. Some highways were evaluated in sections where there was a change in traffic characteristics such as significant change in truck volumes, or the Texas Highway Trunk System designation did not follow the entire length of the route, or because of the way corridors were defined between cities. For these highways, a letter was added to the route name to denote each defined segment.

Based on the screening analysis, the corridor from Waco to Houston-Galveston MPO along SH 6, US 190, SH 105, and FM 1774 ranked first, while the corridor between the Midland/Odessa MPO and the San Angelo MPO along SH 158 and US 87 ranked as the lowest priority.



Table 5-2: Evaluation Results – Phase 1 Corridors

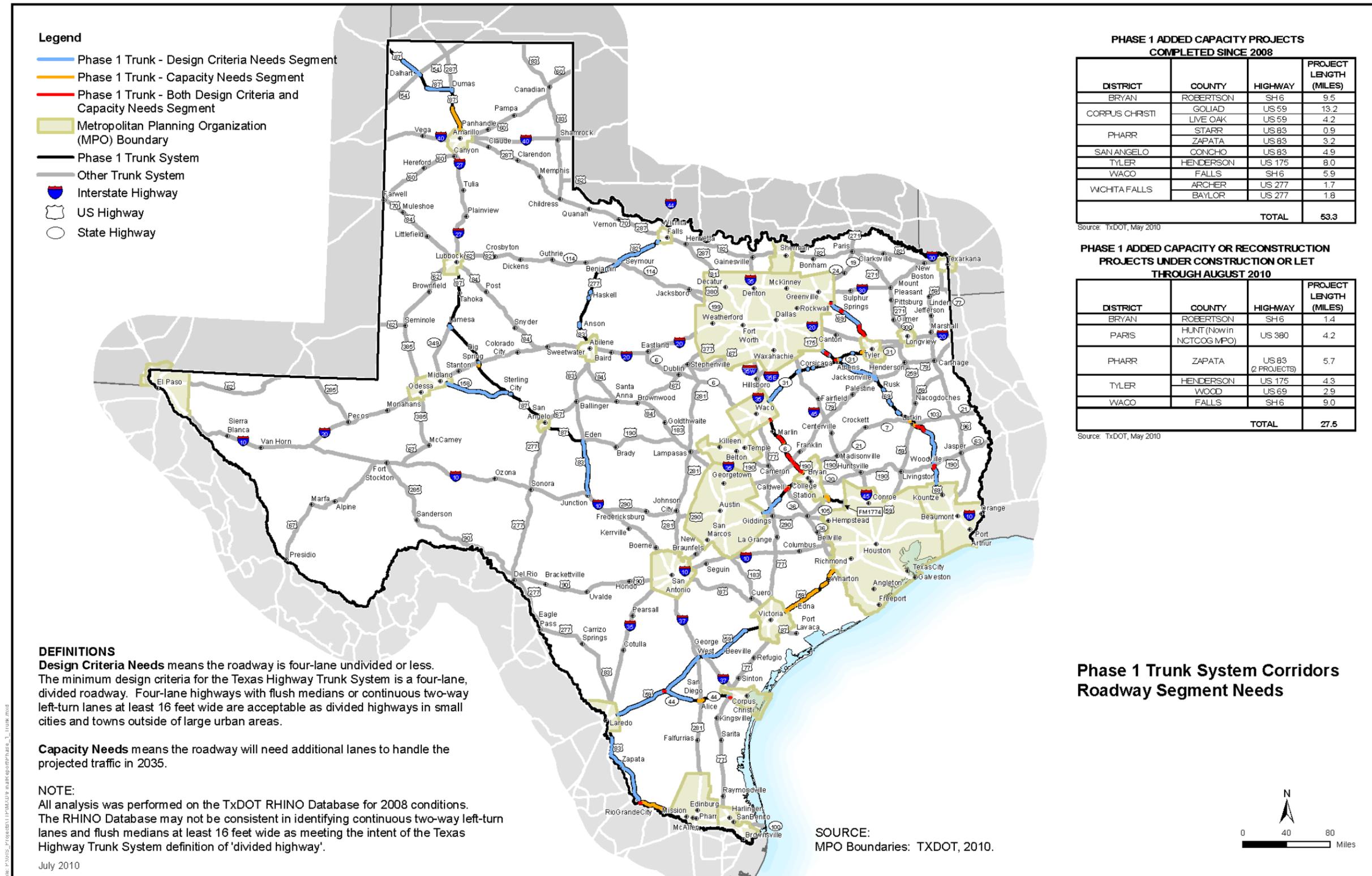
Highway(s)	Corridor Description	Improvement Needed			Priority Score	Ranking
		Length (miles)	Type of Improvement			
			Design Criteria	Capacity Needs		
SH 6, US 190, SH 105, FM 1774	McLennan County Line, southeast of Waco, to Bryan/College Station MPO; Bryan/College Station MPO to Navasota, Navasota to Houston-Galveston Area Council of Governments (MPO) at Montgomery County Line	35	✓	✓	650	1
US 59	Houston-Galveston Area Council of Governments (MPO) to Laredo MPO	164	✓	✓	590	2
US 83	Hidalgo County Line at Sullivan City to Laredo MPO	78	✓	✓	580	3
US 175, US 69	North Central Texas MPO at Mabank to Jacksonville and Jacksonville to Southeast Texas Regional Planning Council (MPO) at Tyler/Hardin County Line	104	✓	✓	530	4
SH 44	Corpus Christi MPO to Freer	30	✓	✓	500	5
US 69	North Central Texas MPO at Hunt/Wood County Line to Tyler MPO	39	✓	✓	480	6
SH 31	Tyler MPO to Waco MPO at McLennan/Hill County Line	20	✓	✓	455	7
SH 21	Bryan MPO to Capital Area MPO at Lee/Bastrop County Line, north of US 290	23	✓	✓	440	8
US 87, US 83 (excludes I-27 and I-10 links)	New Mexico State Line to Amarillo MPO, Lubbock MPO to San Angelo MPO, and San Angelo MPO to San Antonio MPO	117	✓	✓	405	9
US 277, US 82, US 83	Wichita Falls MPO to Abilene MPO	51	✓		275	10
SH 158, US 87	Midland-Odessa Transportation Organization to San Angelo MPO	59	✓		200	11

Source: URS 2010

Figure 5-5 shows the location of the specific roadway segments in need of improvement within each Phase 1 Texas Highway Trunk System corridor based on the 2008 RHINO data. In most cases, the roadway segments that need improvement are not contiguous. The figure includes tables listing the Phase 1 improvements completed since 2008 and those currently under construction that are not reflected on the map.



Figure 5-5: Phase 1 Corridors – Roadway Segment Needs





5.4.2 Rural Capacity Needs on Interstate Highways

The interstate highways were evaluated for future needs due to their importance to intrastate as well as interstate commerce. From the capacity analysis performed for the needs analysis, four corridors will need additional capacity by 2035. Future corridor studies will determine whether the needed capacity is to be provided by travel lanes, improved freight rail, or passenger rail.

The four corridors were evaluated and ranked using the same criteria as the Phase 1 Texas Highway Trunk System Corridors, with the exception of sub-standard design, to establish a priority ranking for these needs. As with the Phase 1 Corridors, interstates within the current MPO boundaries were not included in this analysis. The maximum score was 800 points.

Table 5-3 presents the priority score and overall ranking of each interstate highway corridor in need of additional capacity at specific locations in rural areas.

Table 5-3: Interstate Corridors Prioritization Evaluation

Highway	Generalized Limits	Improvement Needed			Priority Score	Ranking
		Length (Centerline Miles)	Type of Improvement			
			Design Criteria	Capacity Needs		
I-35	Oklahoma State Line to Laredo MPO	49	N/A	✓	715	1
I-10	El Paso MPO at El Paso County Line to Houston - Galveston Area Council at Waller/Ft. Bend County Line	33	N/A	✓	670	2
I-20	I-10 to Louisiana State Line	24	N/A	✓	645	3
I-45	North Texas MPO, north of Corsicana, to Houston-Galveston Area Council (MPO) at Walker/Montgomery county line	111	N/A	✓	615	4

Source: URS 2010

Except for I-45 which has capacity issues over the length of the corridor, the capacity needs associated with the interstates are identified in specific locations. On I-35, there are three sections that will need additional capacity: from San Antonio south towards Pearsall; between New Braunfels and San Marcos; and in Hill County, north of Waco. Additional capacity on I-10 will be needed east of Seguin and between Columbus and the Waller County Line. The need for additional capacity on I-20 is expected to extend from the Dallas/Fort Worth area MPO boundary to east of Canton.



5.4.3 Other Texas Highway Trunk System Highways

The remaining Texas Highway Trunk System highways not included in Phase 1 are labeled as Other Trunk Highways as shown on Figure 5-1. The same evaluation methodology was used to prioritize the Other Trunk System. Highways were not aggregated into corridors.

Table 5-4 provides a summary of the Other Trunk Highways rankings. Some highways were evaluated in sections where there was a change in traffic characteristics such as significant change in truck volumes, because a portion of a route is included in Phase 1, or because the Texas Highway Trunk System designation does not include the entire length of the route. For these highways, a letter was added to the route name to denote each defined segment.

Table 5-4: Other Trunk Highways Prioritization Evaluation

Highway	Generalized Limits	Improvement Needed			Priority Score	Ranking
		Length (miles)	Type of Improvement			
			Design Criteria	Capacity Needs		
US 59	Texarkana MPO Boundary to Houston-Galveston Area Council MPO Boundary at San Jacinto/Liberty C/L	165	✓	✓	720	1
US 79	Louisiana State Line to Thorndale	223	✓	✓	680	2
US 290	Houston-Galveston Area Council MPO Boundary at Waller/Washington C/L to Capital Area MPO Boundary at Bastrop/Lee C/L and Capital MPO Boundary at Hays/Blanco C/L to I-10	112	✓	✓	595	3
SH 36	Cameron to Houston-Galveston Area Council MPO Boundary at Austin/ Ft Bend C/L	75	✓	✓	595	3
US 77	Victoria MPO Boundary at Victoria/Refugio C/L to Harlingen – San Benito MPO Boundary	83		✓	590	5
SH 100	South Padre Island to Los Fresnos	5	✓	✓	575	6
US 281	Stephenville to San Antonio/Bexar County MPO Boundary at Comal/Bexar C/L and Three Rivers to Brooks/Hidalgo C/L	176	✓	✓	570	7
US 259	Longview MPO Boundary to Nacogdoches	19	✓	✓	570	7

**Table 5-4: Other Trunk Highways Prioritization Evaluation**

Highway	Generalized Limits	Improvement Needed			Priority Score	Ranking
		Length (miles)	Type of Improvement			
			Design Criteria	Capacity Needs		
US 69	Tyler MPO Boundary to Jacksonville	16	✓	✓	560	9
US 90	San Antonio/Bexar County MPO Boundary at Bexar/Medina C/L to Sanderson	201	✓	✓	560	9
US 87	Brady to Eden, San Antonio/Bexar County MPO Boundary at Bexar/Wilson C/L to Victoria MPO Boundary at Victoria/DeWitt C/L, and Victoria MPO Boundary at Victoria/Calhoun C/L to Port Lavaca	97	✓	✓	555	11
US 190	Brady to Lampasas, Central Texas MPO Boundary at Bell/Milam C/L to Cameron, Milano to Hearne, and Huntsville to Jasper	204	✓	✓	555	11
US 67 (G)	North Central Texas MPO Boundary at Johnson/Somervell C/L to San Angelo MPO Boundary	112	✓	✓	510	13
US 77 (H)	Waco MPO Boundary at McLennan/Falls C/L to Victoria MPO Boundary at Victoria/DeWitt C/L	163	✓	✓	510	13
US 277	San Angelo MPO Boundary to Carrizo Springs	246	✓	✓	495	15
SH 30	Huntsville to Bryan/College Station MPO Boundary at Brazos/Grimes C/L	37	✓	✓	490	16
US 287	North Central Texas MPO Boundary at Wise/Montague C/L to Amarillo MPO Boundary and Oklahoma State Line to Dumas	40	✓	✓	485	17
US 183	Goldthwaite to Capital Area MPO Boundary at Williamson/Burnet C/L and South of Capital Area MPO Boundary at Caldwell/Gonzales C/L to Cuero	98	✓	✓	480	18
SH 105	Houston-Galveston Area Council MPO Boundary at Montgomery/Grimes C/L to Plantersville and Navasota to Brenham	29	✓	✓	480	18
US 82	Texarkana MPO Boundary to	260	✓	✓	465	20



Table 5-4: Other Trunk Highways Prioritization Evaluation

Highway	Generalized Limits	Improvement Needed			Priority Score	Ranking
		Length (miles)	Type of Improvement			
			Design Criteria	Capacity Needs		
	Henrietta and Seymour to Lubbock MPO Boundary					
US 96	Tenaha to South East Texas Regional Planning Council Boundary at Jasper/Hardin C/L	69	✓	✓	450	21
US 385	Seminole to Midland-Odessa Transportation Organization Boundary and Midland-Odessa Transportation Organization Boundary to McCamey	22	✓	✓	440	22
SH 31	Longview MPO Boundary to Tyler MPO Boundary	14	✓	✓	440	22
US 271	Oklahoma State Line to Longview MPO Boundary	77	✓	✓	425	24
US 84	Muleshoe to Lubbock MPO Boundary, Lubbock MPO Boundary to I-20 at Sweetwater and Abilene MPO Boundary to Goldthwaite	77	✓	✓	385	25
US 60	Oklahoma State Line to Amarillo MPO Boundary and Amarillo MPO Boundary to New Mexico State Line	73	✓	✓	380	26
SH 103	Milam to SH 7, West of Lufkin	62	✓	✓	365	27
SH 6	Waco MPO Boundary at McLennan/Bosque C/L to I-20 at Eastland	102	✓	✓	340	28
US 83 (C)	Oklahoma State Line to US 62	117	✓	✓	340	28
SH 300	Gilmer to Longview MPO Boundary	4	✓		325	30
US 70	Muleshoe to New Mexico state line	3	✓		315	31
US 377	North Central Texas MPO Boundary at Hood/Erath C/L to Stephenville	13	✓		310	32
US 83 (E)	Carrizo Springs to Laredo Urban Transportation Study Boundary	60	✓		305	33
US 62	Oklahoma State Line to US 83, Lubbock MPO Boundary to New Mexico State Line, and New Mexico State Line to El Paso MPO Boundary	125	✓		295	34



Table 5-4: Other Trunk Highways Prioritization Evaluation

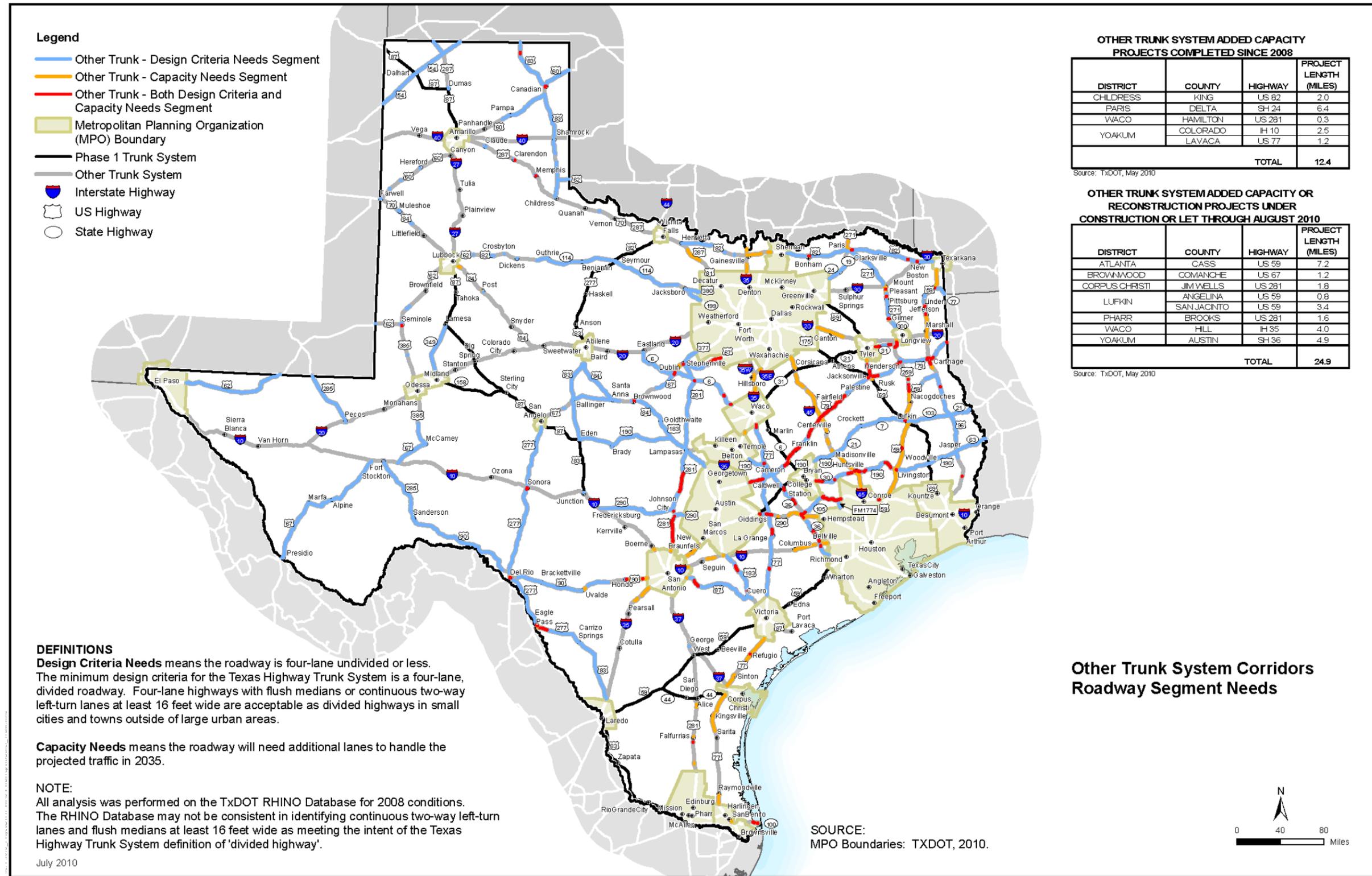
Highway	Generalized Limits	Improvement Needed			Priority Score	Ranking
		Length (miles)	Type of Improvement			
			Design Criteria	Capacity Needs		
SH 24	SH 19/SH 24 Junction to Commerce	16	✓		290	35
SH 199	North Central Texas MPO Boundary at Wise/Jack C/L to Jacksboro	11	✓		280	36
SH 19	Paris to SH 24/SH 19 Junction	1	✓		275	37
US 380	North Central Texas MPO Boundary at Wise/Jack County Line to Jacksboro	13	✓		250	38
SH 114	Jacksboro to Seymour	65	✓		235	39
US 67 (F)	McCamey to Presidio	170	✓		225	40
SH 7	SH 103, West of Lufkin to Crockett	33	✓		210	41
US 54	Oklahoma State Line through Dalhart to New Mexico State Line	92	✓		205	42
SH 349	Lamesa to Midland-Odessa Transportation Organization Boundary	46	✓		200	43
SH 63	Louisiana State Line to Jasper	30	✓		200	43
US 83 (D)	Abilene MPO Boundary to Eden	73	✓		195	45
SH 21	Crockett to Madisonville	44	✓		180	46
SH 77	Louisiana State Line to Atlanta	10	✓		160	47
US 285	New Mexico State Line to Pecos and Ft. Stockton to Sanderson	116	✓		150	48

Based on the analysis, US 59 north of the Houston MPO boundary to the Texarkana MPO boundary was the highest rated corridor in need of improvement, while US 285 (from New Mexico State Line to Pecos and Ft. Stockton to Sanderson) was the lowest rated corridor.

Figure 5-6 shows the location of the specific roadway segments in need of improvement on these highways. In many cases, the identified needs are in multiple locations along the highway.



Figure 5-6: Other Trunk Highways – Roadway Segment Needs





5.5 Completion of the Texas Highway Trunk System

An estimated construction cost was developed for completing the network to four or more lanes with a median. For estimating purposes, a new parallel roadbed was assumed for each scenario to provide the additional safety associated with depressed (grassy) medians on rural low-volume, high-speed traffic. These costs for both the Phase 1 corridors and the other Trunk System corridors are provided in Table 5-5. Cost estimates for improving the four-lane without median are based on building a separate two-lane roadbed to provide the depressed grassy median. It should be noted the cost for upgrading any Trunk System highway that was let to construction as of August, 2010 is not included in the table.

Table 5-5: Estimated Cost to Complete Texas Highway Trunk System Sub-Standard Design Segments Only

Improvement Type	Centerline Miles*	Estimated Lane Miles	Estimated Cost (\$ Millions, 2010)
Phase 1 Corridors			
Widen from 2 lanes to 4 lanes with median	480	960	873
Widen from 4 lanes without median to 4 lanes with median	77	0	140
Other Trunk System Corridors			
Widen from 2 lanes to 4 lanes with median	2,385	5,412	4,654
Widen from 4 lanes without median to 4 lanes with median	572	0	988
Total	3,514	6,372	6,655

Source: Data – TxDOT, Analysis –URS 2010

* Rounded to nearest mile

Table 5-6 provides the estimated cost to address the capacity needs on the Interstate System and on the Texas Highway Trunk System. Several roadway segments needed more than two additional lanes; therefore, the unit of measurement is lane-miles instead of centerline miles. The same unit costs as the capacity analysis were used to generate the estimated costs.



Table 5-6: Estimated Cost to Complete Texas Highway Trunk System Segments with Capacity Needs

Rural Highway Network Type	Centerline Miles*	Estimated Lane Miles Needed*	Estimated Cost (\$ Millions, 2010)
Small urban (5,000 to 50,000 population)			
Interstate	20	41	92
Texas Trunk System – Phase 1	22	66	74
Texas Trunk System – Other	95	280	314
Rural			
Interstate	193	478	664
Texas Trunk System – Phase 1	145	353	304
Texas Trunk System – Other	490	1,355	1,165
Total	965	2,573	2,613

Source: Data – TxDOT, Analysis - URS, PBS&J

* Rounded to nearest mile

5.6 Ongoing Corridor Studies

TxDOT is currently facilitating citizen-led improvement studies on I-35 and the Congressionally designated I-69 corridor to get local decision makers involved early in the transportation planning process on these two vital trade corridors. Each route has Corridor Segment Committees to evaluate needs and make preliminary recommendations through a Corridor Advisory Committee to the Texas Transportation Commission.

The need for these corridor improvements is supported by the Texas Highway Trunk System needs analysis within the Interstate and the Other Trunk System Highways analysis.

5.6.1 Interstate 35

The I-35 Corridor Advisory Committee published a report in November 2008 that included numerous recommendations to improve the planning efforts for developing the needed capacity improvements to the I-35 corridor. Responding to the suggestion that local decision makers need to be involved throughout the planning process, the Texas Transportation Commission established four segment committees that cover the following areas:

- ★ Oklahoma State Line to I-20 in Dallas-Fort Worth
- ★ I-20 in Dallas-Fort Worth to Bell County



- ★ Williamson County to I-10 in San Antonio
- ★ I-10 in San Antonio to the Texas-Mexico border in Laredo

Named MY 35 (www.My35.org), the segment committees, organized in 2009, have been working since January 2010 and will be presenting concepts to the public in September 2010, with final segment reports being submitted to the Corridor Advisory Committee by the end of 2010. The Corridor Advisory Committee will consider the reports and then make overall corridor recommendations to the Texas Transportation Commission in the MY 35 Plan.

The I-35 Corridor Program is consistent with and compliments the strategic goals outlined in TxDOT’s *2011-2015 Strategic Plan* as shown in Table 5-7.

Table 5-7: I-35 Program Outcomes

Project Outcomes	TxDOT 2011–2015 Strategic Plan Goals	Focus Area
Improve the international, interstate, and intrastate movement of goods and people through north, central and south Texas	2, 4, 5	Congestion, Safety
Address localized safety, congestion, and mobility problems experienced in many of the cities located along I-35	2, 4, 5	Congestion, Safety
Provide improved mobility along the I-35 Corridor to enhance accessibility for international trade, commercial, business, tourist, and personal travel	1, 5	Economic
Concentrate on utilizing and upgrading the existing I-35 corridor in an effort to preserve the value of existing transportation assets	3	Assets
Explore where the introduction of multimodal solutions can enhance regional access and mobility as part of the development of an I-35 Corridor Program	1, 4, 5	Congestion, Air Quality
Develop a program of individual transportation improvement projects tailored for utilizing a broad range of financing mechanisms and prioritized based on demand	1, 6	Assets

Source: TxDOT, A Citizens’ Report on the Current and Future Needs of the I-35 Corridor

5.6.2 Interstate 69

I-69 was legislatively authorized by the United States Congress and signed into law under the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA). It is proposed to extend the existing I-69 (which currently exists from Indianapolis, Indiana to the Canadian border at Port Huron, Michigan) to the Texas-Mexico border. The I-69 Corridor Program being studied in Texas extends from Texarkana, Texas, and Stonewall, Louisiana, to Laredo and the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas. With Houston near the midpoint, Interstate 69 will improve regional mobility and provide new



freight movement capacity accessing seaports at Houston, Freeport, Victoria, Point Comfort, Corpus Christi and Brownsville. It will extend the reach of Texas ports into new national and international markets.

Interstate 69 in Texas is being developed as a series of upgrades to existing highways in the corridor. Over time, these projects will bring the entire route to interstate highway standards. The process has been underway for two decades and TxDOT has been designing and building all new projects along these routes to interstate standards. More than 160 miles of freeway have been completed along these highway routes in anticipation of being added to the Interstate Highway System.

The Texas Transportation Commission appointed the I-69 Corridor Advisory Committee to evaluate the current and long-term needs for I-69 corridor. The committee published a report in December 2008 that provided similar recommendations as the I-35 analysis. The I-69 program has five segment committees covering the corridor along US 59 from Texarkana to Laredo, and US 77 from Victoria to the Lower Rio Grande Valley (LRGV), and US 281 from Victoria via US 59 to the LRGV. The five segment committees cover the following geographic areas:

- ★ Texarkana to Lufkin
- ★ Lufkin to Houston
- ★ Houston to Refugio and Goliad counties
- ★ Live Oak and San Patricio counties to the LRGV
- ★ Live Oak and San Patricio counties to Laredo

The segment committees have been working since spring 2009 with the primary emphasis on improving the existing highways with provisions for relief routes where needed. The segment committees have been tasked with identifying and prioritizing regional projects that will contribute to the completion of Interstate 69 in Texas. The committees plan to host public workshops on improvement concepts.

The I-69 Corridor Program is consistent with and compliments the strategic goals outlined in TxDOT's 2011–2015 Strategic Plan as shown in Table 5-8.



Table 5-8: I-69 Program Outcomes

Project Outcomes	TxDOT 2011–2015 Strategic Plan Goals	Focus Area
Improve the international, interstate, and intrastate movement of goods and people through south and east Texas on an officially designated interstate highway	2, 4, 5	Congestion, Safety
Address localized safety, congestion, accessibility, mobility, connectivity, and system continuity problems experienced in many of the towns located along US 59, US 77, US 281, SH 44, and US 84 in south and east Texas	2, 4, 5	Congestion, Safety
Provide improved connectivity and mobility along the Gulf Coast to enhance accessibility to existing and planned Texas ports thereby increasing the economic competitiveness of the ports to serve the increased cargo traffic associated with the Panama Canal Expansion	1, 5	Economic
Sustain and enhance the economic vitality of East Texas, the Gulf Coast of Texas, and the Rio Grande Valley by providing access to an interstate highway, as most of the towns in these regions do not presently have direct interstate access	5	Economic
Concentrate on utilizing and upgrading existing specified routes to interstate standards in an effort to preserve the value of existing transportation assets and to be responsive to the citizens of Texas' transportation needs	3	Assets
Explore where the introduction of multimodal solutions can enhance regional access and mobility as part of the development of an I-69 Corridor Program	1, 4, 5	Congestion, Air Quality
Develop a program of individual transportation improvement projects tailored for utilizing a broad range of financing mechanisms	1, 6	Assets

Source: TxDOT, *A Citizens' Report on the Current and Future Needs of the I-69 Corridor*

5.6.3 US 190 Corridor and Port Connectors to Support U.S. Army Forts

The US 190 Corridor connects Fort Bliss, Fort Hood and Fort Polk in Louisiana. A feasibility study of the US 190/I-10 Corridor is underway to evaluate future freeway projects. The public will have several opportunities to provide input and comment on proposed improvements. The US 190 Corridor segment across Central Texas is being studied as a connector to the Interstate 69 corridor and the I-35 corridor. Also, portions of the north-south route between Fort Hood and the Port of Corpus Christi are being evaluated as part of the I-35 corridor planning effort.



The U.S. Department of Defense is the largest single employer in Texas with more than 230,000 active duty military, civilian personnel, and Reserve and National Guard forces. Thousands more work in defense industries and total 2008 military expenditures in Texas were \$65 billion. Fort Hood in Central Texas houses two Army divisions and has more than 50,000 troops supported by 12,000 civilian employees. After the full implementation of the 2005 BRAC realignments, Fort Bliss in West Texas will also house two divisions and is expected to have more than 37,000 soldiers and 6,000 civilian personnel. These two forts are designated as Army Power Projection Platforms that prepare forces for worldwide deployment and redeployment.

Fort Hood and Fort Bliss deploy and return their equipment mostly by rail through the designated Strategic Deployment Ports at Corpus Christi and Beaumont. Despite rail being the preferred mode for moving equipment, it is important to have efficient highway connectivity both as an alternative for moving equipment and for the movement of personnel.