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TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
COMMISSION MEETING

Ric Williamson Hearing Room
Dewitt Greer Building
125 East 11th Street
Austin, Texas

Thursday
November 20, 2014
9:00 a.m.

COMMISSION MEMBERS:

Ted Houghton, Jr., Chair
Jeff Moseley
Jeffrey Austin, III
Fred Underwood

STAFF:

Lt. General Joe Weber, Executive Director
Robin Carter, Interim Chief Clerk
Jeff Graham, General Counsel

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MR. HOUGHTON: You're going to have to bear with me this morning, a little of the allergies going around here in Austin.

It is 9:00 a.m. I call to order the November 20th, 2014 meeting of the transportation commission in Austin, Texas. Note for record that public notice of this meeting containing all items on the agenda was filed with the Secretary of State at 4:30, November 12th.

As customary at this time, please turn your communication devices off or the silent mode.

If you wish to address the Commission today, there are two cards, a yellow for something that's on the agenda, a blue, if you'd like to address us at the end of the meeting on anything that you'd like to talk about. All right. And regardless, you've got to fill out a card.

I'd like to turn the balance of the time over to General Weber.

GENERAL WEBER: Thanks, Chairman.

I'd like to ask our Occupational Safety Specialist Sidney Malloy to please come forward and provide us a quick safety briefing.

Sidney?

MR. MALLOY: Good morning, Commissioners, General Weber, and Mr. Chairman.

1 Well, first of all, I just want to thank you for
2 your strong commitment to safety and our mission is safety.
3 Thank you so much for your commitment and leadership in that
4 area as well. Thank you so much.

5 In the event -- in the event of an active -- thank
6 you, sir -- in the event -- in the event of an active
7 shooter, we'll shelter in place and follow the directions of
8 the law enforcement.

9 In the event of a tornado -- hopefully it will not
10 happen -- but in the event of a tornado, we'll shelter in
11 place as well, away from the windows and outer walls and
12 we'll shelter in place by the stairwells and the designated
13 shelter meeting areas.

14 In the event of a fire -- in the event of a fire,
15 we will evacuate this building, move -- use our exits that
16 are around us and we will meet across the street on the
17 Capitol grounds. Please do not go home. We definitely want
18 to make sure that everybody is accounted for in the event of
19 a fire.

20 Medical emergencies -- medical emergencies, dial
21 9-1-1 for medical emergencies. We do have an ED [sic]
22 available there at the guard station in the event of a
23 medical emergency.

24
25

1 Thank you so much, and I'd like to say also ya'll
2 have a great Thanksgiving week next week as well. Thank you
3 so much.

4 MR. HOUGHTON: How's Gerald doing?

5 MR. MALLOY: Gerald is doing well. His surgery
6 went well. He's at home resting and just keep him in our
7 prayers as well.

8 GENERAL WEBER: Thank you.

9 MR. MALLOY: Yes, sir.

10 GENERAL WEBER: Back to you, Chairman.

11 MR. HOUGHTON: Now, I note for the record that
12 Commissioner Vandergriff had pressing business commitments
13 today and he will not be with us so, at this time, our
14 opening remarks will begin with Commissioner Moseley.

15 Commissioner?

16 MR. MOSELEY: Chairman, thank you. Members, good
17 morning, and all, what a delight to see you on this
18 beautiful fall day.

19 Chairman, I wanted to say thank you for hosting
20 our Commission meeting last month in your hometown of El
21 Paso. It was really delightful to see the community of El
22 Paso and how much it's grown and to see the enhancement
23 projects, the completed bridges, overpasses, the walls, as
24 well as the new lighting. And I wanted to say a special
25 thank you to Stanley Jobe and Allen Russell for our

1 helicopter tour that Commissioner Austin and I enjoyed to
2 get an overview of the ongoing projects in the El Paso area.

3 Chairman, I also wanted to say thanks to Ivan
4 Jaime, the Director of Border Policy and Community Affairs
5 for Union Pacific. Commissioner Underwood and I enjoyed a
6 tour of the UP rail and multimodal facility in El Paso,
7 Santa Teresa, and the Union Pacific's new facility in Santa
8 Teresa really is a wonderful strengthening of Texas'
9 infrastructure by providing much-needed rail capacity to our
10 border region.

11 UP has invested more than 400 million dollars to
12 improve the efficiency of moving trains to and from Texas,
13 and clearly our businesses are enhanced by this multimodal
14 facility. We're next in line for a similar investment by
15 UP -- believe it or not, General -- in southern Robertson
16 County near Hearne, and with over 1200 people per day moving
17 to Texas, we know these transportation assets will bring
18 more goods to market and serve our growing population. UP's
19 announcement makes it clear that we are going to continue to
20 see a Texas-size share of the four billion dollars that UP
21 spends each year on capital enhancements.

22 Chairman, I was very pleased, also, that we had
23 such a wonderful support of Proposition 1, Texas voters
24 overwhelmingly said, by more than 80 percent, that this is
25 the right thing. So we thank the legislative leadership for

1 giving we, the voters, to this opportunity to provide more
2 funding for mobility. It's also pleasing to know that the
3 Legislature will soon begin the process to determine how
4 many funds TxDOT will receive this fiscal year and we're
5 working with the legislative committees and at the local
6 level to determine a fair and effective distribution of
7 these Proposition 1 funds. We appreciate the advisory
8 committee and Johnny Johnson's committee that's already
9 given us some initial guidelines.

10 The focus, of course, is going to be on the energy
11 sector. We know that that is a clear priority and we know
12 that the oil and gas boom is a wonderful problem to have.
13 The Eagle Ford Shale has already generated more than 87
14 billion dollars in total economic output. This is by a
15 study of UTSA Institute of Economic Development, and it's
16 concluded that the shale activity has supported 155,000
17 full-time jobs and provided more than 4.4 billion to local
18 and State governments in 2013. So that's why we know it's
19 important to focus on keeping the road system in these areas
20 safe and maintained.

21 Chairman, I wanted to say a special thanks to
22 Senator Nichols and Representative Pickett for leading the
23 charge on Prop 1; they were like Energizer bunnies and spent
24 a lot of their personal time and effort going around the
25 state talking about the value of supporting Proposition 1,

1 so we thank them for their leadership and we know that the
2 80-percent voter turnout was due, in no small part, to their
3 efforts.

4 With that, Chairman, I yield the balance of my
5 time.

6 MR. AUSTIN: Good morning, everyone.

7 Again, I want to echo Commissioner Moseley's
8 comments about Prop 1 to Chairman Pickett and Chairman
9 Nichols. They traveled around the state really highlighting
10 the need, and the voters of Texas responded. There's a lot
11 of other, I'll say affiliated groups, the Texas Association
12 of Business, AGC, ACEC, a lot of other folks that supported
13 Proposition 1 endorsement. There's one other special group
14 that you don't hear us recognizing very often: the media. I
15 want to say to all of the community newspapers, the large
16 newspapers, a lot of groups around the state that recognized
17 the need that studied it and came out and endorsed it. The
18 citizens responded well and thank you very much to all of
19 those that may be watching or hearing, those that are here,
20 because ya'll's support is critical to help keep Texas
21 moving so we can enjoy the things that we're doing.

22 Also, El Paso -- wow -- is growing. I think we
23 saw the needs of -- when we -- you know, Interstate 10 is
24 going to, you know, be shut down, partially, in a few years
25 to begin on the reconstruction of it. And as we're looking

1 at alternatives, it's too important because that's a gateway
2 coming into Texas and especially with the military assets
3 that we have out there.

4 Over the last couple of weeks, I had the
5 opportunity to attend an event in Wells, Texas on I-69;
6 that's one of the -- well, US 69. That's one of the final
7 bottlenecks that we have on a trunk system route; that's a
8 hurricane evacuation route. TxDOT has committed 22 million
9 dollars, but there's often a lot of partners that come up
10 with funding and grants to make things happen that we can't
11 do. East Texas Council of Governments work with USDA to
12 come up with a rural grant to relocate some utilities to an
13 economically disadvantaged city. So I thank you for all of
14 those entities that help do things that we can't do.

15 Another fun event, I had an opportunity to meet
16 all of our travel directors from throughout the state. I
17 was over in Waskom, Melissa Wilson, who's been with TxDOT
18 for 41 years in the Travel Division, she was -- Waskom is
19 east of Marshall -- that we have our travel center there,
20 and to be able to attend her retirement was wonderful. What
21 was interesting, John Barton, Bob Kaufman, Margo Richards
22 and I were there and we were all put to work because people
23 that were coming into the state stopped by and they're
24 asking for directions, where should we go. And, you know, I
25 had to give directions to a couple of campgrounds -- I hope

1 they made it -- but it is interesting because these are our
2 ambassadors for the state and the greeters to the state --
3 whichever direction they're coming into -- they do a great
4 job, and if you all see them, please stop by and tell them
5 thank you for what they're doing.

6 I know I-69 -- I see Judy Holly here, the Chair of
7 the I-69 Advisory Committee. They're going to have a
8 meeting today to begin looking at moving this project
9 forward and there might be -- hopefully there's some Prop 1
10 dollars in there to move some of these projects forward.
11 But thank you again, for each of you all for being here.

12 MR. UNDERWOOD: Good morning. I want to start off
13 being this is the -- next week will be the Thanksgiving
14 holidays -- I want to thank all the men and women at TxDOT
15 for all of the hard work they do, for keeping our roads
16 safe, for keeping the driving public safe. I want to thank
17 ya'll. We really appreciate it.

18 I want to remind everybody not to text and drive,
19 and the little ribbon means -- not that I'm a Texas fan, I'm
20 a Texas Tech fan -- but it means we would like to go one day
21 without a death on the highways from one of our citizens, so
22 please keep that in mind.

23 I see our mayor here -- Mayor, good to see you.
24 Mayor of Lubbock, Mr. Robertson, he's going to be here.

25

1 I wanted to thank some of our staff members. I
2 wanted to thank Steve Warren for his presentation in
3 Lubbock. They did a study of the -- an outer loop around
4 Lubbock and Steve did an excellent presentation. And you
5 know you're doing a really good presentation when you don't
6 have any questions, so -- and I will say this, and I see
7 Doug in there -- Doug, I didn't know that, you know, when we
8 were doing our presentations that we wore a Hawaiian shirt.
9 That's the first time I've ever seen one of our staff
10 members wearing a Hawaiian shirt giving a presentation, and
11 I say that because outside it was about 19 degrees.

12 (Laughter)

13 But anyway, he did an excellent job. Please tell Steve
14 that I was really impressed with it and they did -- I was
15 proud of it, really proud.

16 I also want to go back and thank the men and women of
17 El Paso for the hard work they do -- our staff. Thank you
18 for all that you do. What you've got going on is
19 impressive, I mean that's amazing. Also, Ted, would you
20 also be sure to tell the president of the college how much
21 we appreciated her -- all the work that she did, all the --
22 the tour and everything else? It was excellent.

23 That is a beautiful campus, if you ever get a chance to
24 see it. It's a Bhutanese -- is that -- am I pronouncing
25 that -- it's amazing, and I'm proud of what we're able to

1 do, being able to help them. The roundabout, the latest
2 one, they've done an architectural piece that if you ever
3 get a chance to see it, it's beautiful. I'm proud that we
4 are TxDOT and we are being able to be part of that and proud
5 to be able to help the college because I appreciate what
6 that lady does.

7 Talking about that, Mr. Chairman, you know, looking at
8 all of that construction, I was looking at those tall
9 bridges, and I don't know if ya'll realize this, but our
10 chairman, when he was in college had a business; he had a
11 bungee jumping business, and I gotta ask you a question:
12 How do you decide how long you make that cord the first
13 jump? I mean I can see, okay, let him go -- Ted, shorten it
14 up a little bit.

15 (Laughter)

16 But anyway, Mr. Chairman, the floor is yours

17 MR. HOUGHTON: Again, I --

18 MR. UNDERWOOD: He says that with safety.

19 MR. HOUGHTON: -- I understand why Ned Holmes did
20 not want to follow Fred Underwood, and I've been doing it
21 now for two years, so ...

22 First of all, a crass commercial announcement, on
23 January 14th through the 16th is the 10th Annual Forum, here
24 in Austin. There's going to be a lot of surprises, new
25 format, interesting direction we'll be taking. So we sold

1 out yet or we're getting close to being sold out on the
2 forum, but we're getting -- you need to be there. We'll
3 have a lot of interesting subject matter and some surprise
4 speakers.

5 As we enter the season of Thanksgiving, I want to
6 pause and give thanks to the people of TxDOT. This
7 organization is on a roll and I am very proud to be a part
8 of it. Two weeks ago the voters of Texas in their
9 overwhelming support of Proposition 1 essentially said they
10 believe in TxDOT and in what we're doing, and I want to take
11 a moment and to amplify that message. In case you missed
12 it, TxDOT had a stellar year and we're still going, and its
13 accomplishments are numerous. While we do not have enough
14 time to mention them all, I would like to mention just a
15 few.

16 TxDOT is delivering on all comprehensive
17 development agreements that the Legislature approved in the
18 last legislative session. The agency is on track to
19 generate 140 million in cost savings, as outlined in
20 Proposition 1. Texas ranked 11th overall in Reason
21 Foundation's annual highway report behind states whose total
22 population is less than ours. Among large states, Texas
23 ranked first and performed three to four times better than
24 the large states compared in those rankings. As furthermore
25 compared, Texas has the lowest percentage of congestion lane

1 miles. Texas has the best rural highway pavement scores.
2 Texas taxpayers are getting a better system for less money
3 per mile, and Texas has the lowest administrative costs per
4 mile, compared to large states.

5 TxDOT has achieved a 92-percent satisfaction
6 rating in customer service in a survey performed by the
7 Texas Legislative Council. Fleet Forward is on track to
8 provide millions in savings while providing the right
9 vehicle for the job at the right time. A re-tooled IT
10 transformation has enabled TxDOT to work with 21st Century
11 tools and replace a decades old system. Enterprise resource
12 planning office has transformed 20 outdated -- 20 outdated
13 computer systems -- can you imagine having 20 systems -- and
14 has replaced them, and to generate millions in savings
15 through improved cash flow, budget, and contract management.
16 The Agency has received national honors for projects like
17 the 7th St. Bridge in Fort Worth, and Commissioner Moseley,
18 the Grand Parkway in Houston.

19 Bottom line, TxDOT believe -- Texas believes in
20 TxDOT and what we are doing. They see transportation as an
21 essential priority following the 80%-approval passage of
22 Prop 1. TxDOT is delivering on all major initiatives
23 assigned by the Texas Legislature, and is executing the
24 best-in-class manner. It has dedicated teams of
25

1 professionals committed to the safe system that increases
2 economic development and enhances the quality of life.

3 Once again, I want to thank all the employees of
4 this great state. We do have the best-in-class agency and I
5 want to thank all of our people and, again, wish you all a
6 very happy Thanksgiving. So with that, we will now move to
7 the first order of business, which is the approval of the
8 minutes.

9 MR. AUSTIN: Chairman, before we do that, there is
10 one other person I neglected to thank. I saw Scott Haywood
11 in the back.

12 Scott, are you here?

13 MR. HOUGHTON: He probably left because you missed
14 him.

15 (Laughter)

16 MR. AUSTIN: Scott traveled the state tirelessly,
17 working, visiting, speaking, visiting with a lot of
18 newspapers, a lot of media, a lot of groups and doing this.
19 Would ya'll please help me thank Scott Haywood for his
20 effort in doing that?

21 (Applause)

22 MR. AUSTIN: Sorry, Chairman.

23 MR. HOUGHTON: That's okay. Well noted.

24 Motion to approve the minutes that's in your
25 package?

1 UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: Second, Chairman.

2 MR. HOUGHTON: All in favor?

3 (Chorus of "Ayes")

4 MR. HOUGHTON: All right. First order of
5 business, General?

6 GENERAL WEBER: Thanks, Chairman.

7 Okay. At this time, I'd like to move to Item 3,
8 our Green Ribbon Landscape Improvement Program recognition,
9 and Deputy Executive Director John Barton will introduce
10 this item. John, Thanks.

11 MR. BARTON: Thank you, General Weber.

12 Chairman Houghton, Members of the Commission, what
13 an honor it is for me to be before you this morning to tee
14 up this item. I please that Commissioner Moseley will be
15 doing much of the presentation of this particular item, but
16 I wanted to remind us all of the presentation that was led
17 by our Houston District Landscape Architect Dana Cote at our
18 commission meeting down in Kemah that we had earlier this
19 year, back in June.

20 At that time, Dana pointed out the value of the
21 partnership that the State of Texas has enjoyed with many of
22 our communities across the state of Texas through a program
23 known as the Green Ribbon Program. This program was
24 initiated several years ago by legislation that was crafted
25 by the distinguished and honorable State Representative from

1 District 147 in Houston, Chairman Garnet Coleman, and since
2 that time, has been the genesis for the reforestation of the
3 highway network in Houston, as well as many other
4 transformational and strongly impactful landscape
5 enhancements on our system in communities all across this
6 great state.

7 Chairman Coleman is a supporter of world-class
8 transportation systems in the state of Texas in a
9 community-friendly way. He's also, in his role in the
10 Legislature, a leader in many areas including a strong
11 advocate, if perhaps the strongest advocate for our county
12 governments in this important role that they play to our
13 great state. Has always been a devoted and passionate
14 supporter of our state employees, and a lot of the things
15 that we, as TxDOT employees, enjoy are because of his
16 leadership and support. And I've had the pleasure of
17 knowing, on a personal basis, Chairman Coleman for about the
18 last seven years and I can tell you that I consider him a
19 truly honorable man and a great individual.

20 So I would like to call Chairman Coleman to the
21 podium at this time and turn it over to Judge Moseley for
22 some official recognition. Thank you.

23 MR. MOSELEY: Chairman Coleman, we are so pleased
24 that you are here today and wanted to publicly say thank you
25 for your vision and leadership that was initiated in 2001.

1 And because of your willingness to step forward, we do have
2 a state law that allows a minimum of one half of a percent
3 of total letting dollars for construction that can go
4 towards landscaping development projects that are in a
5 non-attainment and borderline non-attainment areas. And as
6 a result of this, a few months ago, we were very pleased to
7 have a report on how there's development of grasses to go
8 into some of the drier regions of the state, but in our
9 region, this really has culminated in the reforestation and
10 re-establishing the urban forest, and I think at one point
11 we reached the one-million tree mark and we're well passed
12 that. I think we are approaching nearly two million trees
13 that are being put back into our right of way in the region,
14 and I wanted to say thank you for your leadership and your
15 vision and your willingness in 2001 to step up and provide
16 the legislative remedy to allow TxDOT to fully participate.

17 We know that bringing these urban forests back, it
18 saves us on not having to pay for fuel to maintain those
19 rights of way and at the same time, the right of way doesn't
20 become a point source of pollution for all the exhaust that
21 comes from the equipment that's necessary to maintain that
22 right of way and we get the benefit of having trees planted,
23 which are in their own right, little mini-scrubbers cleaning
24 up the air. So what a wonderful vision and we wanted to say
25 publicly, a thank you for your leadership.

1 MR. COLEMAN: It's my honor.

2 MR. HOUGHTON: I talked to Commissioner Moseley
3 this morning and I said, How many trees? And he said, A
4 million.

5 Commissioner Underwood, do you have a million
6 trees in Lubbock?

7 (Laughter)

8 MR. UNDERWOOD: Sir, we have a couple and they're
9 mesquite.

10 MR. HOUGHTON: I am still in awe of a million
11 trees. And I've been there -- I have two children that live
12 there -- and I travel those areas and it's just amazing.
13 Congratulations.

14 MR. COLEMAN: Thank you very much. Thanks for
15 this honor.

16 MR. MOSELEY: Chairman Coleman, we would like to
17 present a very, very small token of appreciation for your
18 leadership, and Members, if you would join us, we would
19 maybe do a photo-op with Chairman Coleman.

20 (Applause)

21 MR. COLEMAN: I just want to make a few comments.
22 One, Dana Cote, I really have to thank him because he's
23 shouldered something that wasn't in the normal repertoire of
24 the folks at TxDOT. And I remember in the beginning when we
25 were talking about this, trying to pull this together, the

1 thing I heard the most is we're engineers and we don't do
2 landscaping. But I think that this has become a very
3 positive thing for Texas, as Commissioner Moseley said.

4 And one thing that people miss is you see these
5 new, they're like signs or bridges or whatever that have
6 decoration and really kind of change the -- that's part of
7 the Green Ribbon Project, as well, where you can do some
8 architectural enhancements to make the entry to that
9 particular city or county or whatever the case, reflect the
10 community, and I think that's a wonderful part of this. And
11 I'd like to thank the TxDOT employees because, again, it was
12 a little bit of a curve, but they stepped up and made it
13 work, and so that's a good thing.

14 And the last thing is that I want to congratulate
15 the people who worked on Prop 1. It is extremely important.
16 Chairman Nichols and my friend, Chairman Pickett, and a lot
17 of us tried to help by doing social media -- I did -- to
18 make sure that people knew that this was a good thing, and
19 it is amazing for 80 percent. An 80-percent win is an
20 excellent win, and I hope that we continue to do those, the
21 same kinds of things, during the legislative session to give
22 you more resources to work with in order to maintain and
23 improve communities.

24 So I want to say thank you very much. This was a
25 labor of love for me and I'm glad it's continuing to happen.

1 And with the new resources we'll have even more landscaping
2 and tree planting around the state and architectural
3 elements in town pride or city pride. So thank you all
4 very, very much; it is really an honor and I very much
5 appreciate this award. Thank you.

6 MR. HOUGHTON: Thank you, Chairman.

7 MR. MOSELEY: Thank you, Chairman.

8 (Applause)

9 GENERAL WEBER: John, if you'll continue on with
10 Item 4(a), discussion of the Proposition 1 funds.

11 MR. BARTON: Thank you, General Weber and Chairman
12 and Commissioners. Again, for the record, my name is John
13 Barton and I have the distinguished honor of serving as the
14 state's Deputy Executive Director at their Texas Department
15 of Transportation.

16 As has already been mentioned this morning,
17 earlier this month, voters overwhelmingly passed Proposition
18 1, the Constitutional amendment that allows the severance
19 taxes or a portion of those that are generated through the
20 oil and gas production, here in the state of Texas, to be
21 transferred to the State Highway Fund to enable us to
22 advance many meaningful and important transportation
23 projects around the state. This is an extremely significant
24 opportunity for Texas and something that we wanted to brief
25 the Commission on this morning. This year alone, it's

1 estimated that the revenues being transferred into the State
2 Highway fund could be as much as \$1.74 billion. I explain a
3 few of the processes that must be followed to get to that
4 ultimate conclusion.

5 And has been mentioned, credit goes to many
6 people, state-elected officials, advocates from a variety of
7 community interests and industry organizations have done a
8 great job of educating voters here in Texas and the
9 overwhelming support that they gave in passing this
10 Constitutional amendment is a testament to the fact that
11 transportation is important to Texans. And as you've
12 already mentioned it goes, without saying, but I believe
13 it's important, to recognize the leadership of Chairman
14 Robert Nichols from the Senate and Chairman Joe Pickett from
15 the House of Representatives who went about the state
16 educating communities about this opportunity and who gave us
17 this opportunity as voters to put forward our opinion about
18 funding for transportation.

19 And with that, I would just like to give you a
20 very brief overview of the process and the Department's
21 response to this opportunity. I know now this is difficult
22 to see, but this is a flowchart that we have put together to
23 help guide our activities in the days ahead of us. When the
24 Constitutional amendment passed on November 4th, many people
25 thought that that immediately transferred money into the

1 State Highway Fund and that projects could be advancing to
2 construction the next day. That impression, unfortunately,
3 is inaccurate. The money that is potentially available to
4 us only becomes available to us after certain steps are
5 taken. And so those processes are reflected in this
6 flowchart and I would like to briefly describe it.

7 On the top left-hand side for you, Commissioners,
8 you'll see the green diamonds that represent that now that
9 the voters have successfully passed Proposition 1, the
10 economic stabilization committee -- excuse me -- Economic
11 Stabilization Fund committees of the House and the Senate,
12 must meet within 30 days of the canvassing of the vote to
13 establish the sufficient balance that must be in the
14 Economic Stabilization Fund or the "Rainy Day Fund," as most
15 of us refer to it. And once they've established that
16 minimum balance or sufficient balance figure that they are
17 comfortable with and are authorizing for consideration of
18 this Proposition 1 passage, the controller will then be able
19 to calculate the amount of money that will be transferred
20 into the State Highway Fund.

21 We believe that these committees will be meeting
22 in early December and will be making a determination voting
23 on the sufficient balance that they will establish for the
24 Rainy Day Fund. Once that process has happened, the
25 controller will calculate the transfer and the transfer

1 should be occurring sometime in the month of December.
2 Again, many people have anticipated that that transfer will
3 be in the order of magnitude of about \$1.7 billion.

4 So while that activity is going on, your Texas
5 Department of Transportation staff have been gathering
6 information, which is reflected in the processes shown on
7 the top right-hand corner of this flowchart in blue. There
8 have been several outreach activities to members of the
9 Legislature, to the organizations that were helping to
10 promote this Constitutional amendment across the state to
11 get insights on what they heard as they spoke to voters
12 across the state, and there have been some official
13 activities by the House select Committee on Transportation
14 Funding, Finance, and Expenditures, as well as the
15 stakeholder working group that you formed to give us insight
16 on this, as well. And in addition to that, our TxDOT
17 planning groups have met with Metropolitan Planning
18 Organizations from around the state.

19 We will be taking all of that input and providing
20 that to you -- and I'll go over that in just a minute -- to
21 help formulate, ultimately, the Department's anticipated
22 distribution of the available funding that comes to us
23 through Proposition 1. As those activities are completed,
24 we expect that to occur in the late-December time frame. We
25 will then be request -- have the opportunity to request

1 appropriation for this funding, and that's an important part
2 for you as a commission and others to understand.

3 Although the funding will likely be transferred
4 into the State Highway Fund in December, we do have to
5 receive appropriation authority in order to be able to
6 utilize or spend any of those resources from the
7 Legislature. There are a couple of different processes that
8 could be used to appropriate those funds, but the Department
9 anticipates, based on the feedback that we received from
10 legislative leadership, that with the overwhelming support
11 for this Proposition, there's an interest by communities all
12 across the state to move forward quickly with the use of
13 these funds to advance meaningful projects, and so we will
14 be requesting these funds through a process that was laid
15 out in Rider 18 of the General Appropriations Act which is
16 allows the Department to request appropriations when
17 additional revenues are made to the Department.

18 And so as that process is carried out, the
19 Legislative Budget Board will review our requests and, if,
20 and should they approve it, we will then ultimately have the
21 appropriation authority to move forward with the utilization
22 of these funds.

23 So looking at the timeline, I just wanted to point
24 out, as you've already heard, 80 percent of the voters
25 approved, which is a strong mandate, the utilization of

1 these severance taxes for the advancement of transportation
2 projects across the state of Texas. That's a resounding
3 statement that this is important and we now, as your Texas
4 Department of Transportation, must execute positively in an
5 expeditious manner, a response that is suitable for the
6 support that the voters have given us.

7 As you can see, we have engaged several groups and
8 individuals -- I've already talked about that. The
9 stakeholder working group that was formed by the commission
10 to look at this, led by Chairman Johnny Johnson as was
11 mentioned earlier, met last week and considered this
12 opportunity to provide us insight on their thoughts about
13 how we should proceed.

14 The select Committee on Transportation Funding,
15 Finance, and Expenditures under Chairman Pickett met last
16 week and deliberated on their thoughts about the
17 distribution of these potential revenues.

18 On November 18th, earlier this week, we met with
19 all the Metropolitan Planning Organizations, some in person,
20 others available to us over a video teleconference, and we
21 got feedback and insight from them, and so today I am
22 briefing you on them. The Department's position, as we've
23 looked at the needs of the state, based on your assessment
24 of congestion levels, safety concerns, and physical
25 conditions of our infrastructure, have been fairly well and

1 articulated over the last several months. We have
2 identified through our own resources and the support of the
3 Texas A&M Transportation Institute and the Center for
4 Transportation Research at the University of Texas that the
5 state of Texas needs about five billion dollars per year in
6 additional revenues to meet our current needs and sustain
7 levels of congestion and system health at the levels that we
8 saw in 2010.

9 Three billion of that additional five billion
10 would need to be directed towards addressing congestion in
11 our growing metropolitan, urban regions, as well as
12 connecting those communities together with one another and
13 other ports of entry to our state to encourage and sustain
14 our economic vitality and development and competitive
15 position in the global market.

16 One billion is needed to maintain the existing
17 system that we have at acceptable levels, and an additional
18 one billion is needed to address this growing energy sector
19 that is providing this opportunity through Proposition 1.

20 Drivers across the state are experiencing
21 challenges, and so if you took the available resources and
22 divided them across that spectrum of identified needs
23 proportionately, you would have 30 percent of the revenues
24 going into our metropolitan areas to address congestion,
25 30 percent to connect those communities with improved major

1 network improvements, 20 percent for maintenance needs, and
2 20 percent for energy sector impacts.

3 When you put all of that together and evaluate how
4 that would address the challenges that we face here in the
5 state of Texas, it's reflected in this chart that's before
6 you. Approximately 50 percent of the revenues ultimately,
7 if you utilize this scheme, would go towards addressing
8 traffic congestion, and growing traffic demands on our
9 system. About 15 percent would be going into addressing our
10 pavement condition, bridge condition systems across the
11 state in trying to sustain acceptable levels on those.
12 Another 14 or so percent would be based upon the size of a
13 network that any particular geographic region of the state
14 is responsible for maintaining in terms of providing
15 services to the communities. You would see about 12 percent
16 of the funding flowing ultimately into specific projects
17 that address those impacts of the energy sector, and then
18 smaller percentages, based on the population and
19 communities, as well as the safety of our system across the
20 state.

21 The feedback that we've garnered from all of these
22 groups that we have talked to has shown general alignment
23 around these global needs. There have been differences of
24 opinion offered about how that distribution should occur.
25 Chairman Joe Pickett offered up a solution that he believes

1 is a better recommendation, and that would put 50 percent of
2 the money into the Metropolitan Planning Organization
3 formula to allow those largest communities across the state
4 to address their highest priority needs in this first year's
5 worth of allocation. He also recommended that 35 percent be
6 given to our districts based on a formula that really looks
7 at population and traffic volumes to address the needs that
8 our 25 TxDOT districts have identified for their
9 communities. And then 15 percent to be specifically
10 directed towards energy sector needs, in those areas where
11 this oil and gas production is currently underway and having
12 significant impacts on our system.

13 As we visited with the Metropolitan Planning
14 Organizations earlier this week, a distribution-approach
15 evolved that would drive 40 percent of the allocations to
16 the Metropolitan Planning Organizations for them to look at
17 congestion challenges that they face, as well as connecting
18 those communities with one another, 40 percent to our
19 districts through that Category 11 formula I just described
20 a second ago, to allow our districts to work with those
21 larger communities and the rural network communities to look
22 at ensuring that those communities are well connected for
23 economic development reasons, and also to look at how we can
24 address safety and maintenance needs, and then ultimately
25 20 percent driven towards the energy sector areas to address

1 those growing challenges, again, that this industry is
2 promoting.

3 So those are kind of the broad spectrums of
4 distribution formulas that have been offered up for
5 consideration. When you look at all of them, the consistent
6 themes are the Metropolitan Planning Organizations need to
7 share in these revenues to address their growing challenges
8 in some way, and that all 25 TxDOT districts also need to be
9 able to have an opportunity to make decisions over a portion
10 of these revenues to address challenges in all areas of the
11 state because this was a unanimously proposition by the
12 voters across Texas. That collaboration and partnerships
13 are key to the success of the utilization of these funds and
14 that we need to be thinking about our transportation system
15 as a whole and not as disparate pieces and parts from around
16 the state.

17 This is a slide that would show you how the
18 Proposition 1 funding would cascade if \$1.7 billion was made
19 available this first year through the formula that staff has
20 brought forward, the 30 to the Metropolitan Planning
21 Organizations, 30 percent to the districts, and then
22 20 percent for maintenance and 20 percent for energy sector.
23 It's just graphic representation that our largest
24 communities, Houston, Dallas, San Antonio, Fort Worth, and
25 Austin would be getting the lion's share of the revenues

1 through that process. About 50 percent would go to those
2 districts and the remaining 50 percent would be districted
3 to the other 20 districts across the street the state.

4 The same type of, I guess, distribution curve
5 would be seen if you follow the recommendation that Chairman
6 Pickett has offered up or that of the Metropolitan Planning
7 Organizations. Staff will continue to ask for and garner
8 input from elected leadership and individual organizations
9 and interest groups from around the state and try to put all
10 of that together for ultimately a consideration and decision
11 in December to allow us to move forward.

12 So in conclusion, there's been a lot of
13 collaboration, communication, and thought put into this so
14 far. We continue to seek input from leadership, both in the
15 House and Senate, as well as other members to make sure that
16 we understood that the challenges and needs that they have
17 heard from their constituency. We have been talking to
18 groups like the Association of General Contractors, the
19 consulting and engineering council, the business industry,
20 the oil and gas industry, and our partners that have been
21 put together through the Move Texas Forward campaign and
22 others to make sure that we fully understand those
23 challenges.

24 With all of that information, we anticipate
25 bringing forward a request to the Legislative Budget Board

1 based on that input in December and would expect that the
2 Legislative Budget Board would then review and respond to
3 that. At the end of the day, ultimately, that legislative
4 process allows them the opportunity to ultimately term how
5 they want to appropriate these funds to the Department. Our
6 job is to thoughtfully consider all the input and offer up a
7 request for their consideration. They'll take that request
8 and hopefully respond in a very quick manner with a clear
9 definition of how they would like to those funds to be
10 distributed and used across our state.

11 So we're excited about this constitute. It is a
12 transformational program that will mean great things for
13 Texans across the state and we're excited about the
14 opportunity to be working on it. With that, I'd be happy to
15 answer any questions that you may have and I believe there
16 may be some present that would like to share some thoughts
17 with you, as well.

18 MR. HOUGHTON: John, you do not need our
19 permission to move forward; you just need direction from us,
20 correct?

21 MR. BARTON: That's correct. We would ask that
22 the Commission give us your thoughts, insight, and
23 direction. We think that moving forward with a request to
24 the Legislative Budget Board in December is important and so
25 we want to be prepared to be able to do that shortly after

1 committees have established the sufficient balance and the
2 controller does the calculations and makes the transfer.

3 MR. HOUGHTON: Are there any other questions?

4 MR. AUSTIN: Just a couple comments. John, I
5 would say thank you all for your input, and I think since we
6 started past presentations, discussions with you, your
7 colleagues, just beginning to look at obtaining input, how
8 we're going to spend this money. I think this has been a
9 very worthwhile process. People may disagree on two or
10 three or four or five percent here and there. Bottom line,
11 this is a great step being able to do something and move
12 some projects forward.

13 A couple cautions, one, getting back to the
14 chairman's question, I would like to see us move forward as
15 quickly as we can once the money is certified, go to the LBB
16 to request being able to move this and get this money out.
17 Now, you people have been waiting on it, the voters spoke,
18 and we need to put it in their hands, and the MPOs, and the
19 districts.

20 Just a couple comments in listening and developing
21 the statewide -- you know, what projects there might be. I
22 love, I think it was one of the quotes in the Austin paper
23 somebody came up and said that all the nieces and nephews
24 are showing up now. Well, this is great because there are
25 problems and this also sends another message, problems

1 meaning congestion, safety, that we need to address. But it
2 also sends a message back to the Legislature -- and I hope
3 that they remember this -- this is not a total solution. As
4 we have been looking at energy prices, this goes back for
5 the history of the prices from the prior year, and if you
6 look at where oil is now, it's going to substantially
7 decrease potentially for the next year; it may be even less
8 than half by some estimates. So we can't take this for
9 granted and we want to make sure that everybody puts the
10 projects that we need.

11 I believe, based on considerations with ya'll --
12 ya'll have looked at the most congested; we have looked at
13 listening to the MPO plans, what they have; we have looked
14 at the statewide rural plan; and UTP, a lot of these
15 projects that have bubbled up and may be ready to go. I
16 have heard some feedback from a couple of the MPOs that
17 they're maybe not quite ready to go and understand that they
18 may be able to engage in some swaps or bank it or swap
19 whatever they can use it based on future allocations, would
20 encourage everybody to work together so we can put this
21 money to work right away.

22 But I just want to come back, again, I would
23 support moving forward to the LBB as quickly as possible,
24 even reaching out to them ahead of time and saying, Hey,

25

1 this is coming -- to the key members -- what impact or what
2 input might they have. Thank ya'll for your help.

3 MR. HOUGHTON: Commissioner Moseley?

4 MR. MOSELEY: Thank you, Chairman.

5 John, it's my understanding that once we make a
6 recommendation on how the money should be put out to work
7 that it goes to the LBB; is that correct? And so we're
8 really making a recommendation to LBB and ultimately they'll
9 sign off and they could make adjustments to our
10 recommendation, is that what I hear you saying?

11 MR. BARTON: That is correct. The process is we
12 submit a request. If they have questions about it or if
13 they just choose to go a different path, then they can do
14 that. We hope that we will have enough communication early
15 and often, as Commissioner Austin mentioned, so that once
16 the request is made, we'll have an understanding of what the
17 Legislative Budget Board's response would likely be so they
18 don't have to spend a lot of time deliberating with us over
19 the actual distribution.

20 MR. MOSELEY: It seems like since really LBB will
21 be so strategic to this process that we would want to make
22 sure and hear from Chairman Nichols from the Senate side.
23 We had the benefit of the input from Chairman Pickett. And
24 it seems like we also might want to reach out to Lieutenant
25

1 Governor Elect Patrick and Governor Elect Abbott and just
2 see what their thoughts are as well.

3 MR. BARTON: Yes, sir.

4 MR. MOSELEY: Thank you.

5 MR. UNDERWOOD: Two things, John. I would
6 dovetail on what Commissioner Austin said. This money is
7 basically coming from the production of oil; is that
8 correct?

9 MR. BARTON: That is correct.

10 MR. UNDERWOOD: And the price of oil, so as the
11 price of oil goes down and the producing of oil goes down,
12 this money will -- this amount will flow up and down?

13 MR. BARTON: That is correct.

14 MR. UNDERWOOD: It is not a fixed amount. I want
15 to make sure that the audience understands that.

16 The second part I have is that in 2009 we took,
17 what, 500 out of maintenance; is that correct?

18 MR. BARTON: That is correct.

19 MR. UNDERWOOD: And we have been doing that every
20 year since 2009; is that correct?

21 MR. BARTON: That's correct.

22 MR. UNDERWOOD: Okay. I just want my colleagues
23 to understand that, because I'm looking at that 60/20/20,
24 and it is critical for maintenance, that 20, is what I'm
25 getting at.

1 MR. BARTON: Yes, sir.

2 MR. UNDERWOOD: Thank you.

3 MR. HOUGHTON: I think what you have -- and I
4 won't speak for the others -- but my support for that 20 in
5 the maintenance. I think we have robbed from that pool and
6 we need to reinvest into that pool.

7 MR. BARTON: All right. Thank you.

8 MR. HOUGHTON: Any other direction for John?

9 MR. AUSTIN: John, I know you went through a bunch
10 of the formulas. I support what you and staff have brought
11 forward, you know, the 30/30, which is 60; 20 percent
12 maintenance; 20 percent energy. I support ya'll moving
13 forward with that with the direction.

14 MR. HOUGHTON: We have -- we have a speaker,
15 Commissioner Will Conley, Chair of CAMPO.

16 MR. CONLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman,
17 Commissioners. My name is Will Conley, Hays County
18 Commissioner, current two-term chairman of the MPO, here in
19 Central Texas.

20 First and foremost, I want to thank all of you in
21 our Legislature and our State leadership for all of the work
22 that they have done and all the advocates on Prop 1. It's
23 not the solution to the problem completely, like ya'll have
24 discussed today, but it's certainly a big step forward.

25

1 I'm here today to really express to the commission
2 two points. Let's face it and let's be honest. The Central
3 Texas Region and the MPO hasn't also been on the same page
4 as the State of Texas. I am happy to say that those days
5 are over, and actions speak louder than words in those
6 circumstances. For the past three years, the MPO, here in
7 Central Texas has developed a wonderful relationship with
8 the District, with the Administration, and I hope with this
9 Board and Commission.

10 We are ready to take any dollars available to us
11 on the federal level, on the state level, continue the
12 millions of dollars of contributions that we have made on
13 the local level through property taxes and sales taxes on
14 the state system, to continue to improve transportation to
15 move goods and services and to provide the highest levels of
16 safety, here in Central Texas, here on our highway system.

17 Specifically, you're about to hear a presentation
18 on I-35 in Central Texas. I want you to know that the MPO
19 Board unanimously supports any new funding coming into the
20 CAMPO region, that we will be working hand in glove with the
21 district, apply those funds to the 800-pound gorilla in
22 Central Texas, which is I-35. We started this process three
23 years ago. We have continued, through our actions, to make
24 good on that word, so, again, we hope that we have your
25

1 trust, that as additional monies hopefully come into our
2 region, that we will simply double-down on those projects.

3 We have projects from Williamson County through
4 Hays County that are on many different stages of
5 development; however, because of our work over the last two
6 to three years, we have projects ready to go and we have a
7 good strategic plan on how to move forward in the upcoming
8 years on how to keep that momentum going.

9 So once again, I just want to thank you for your
10 time. I'm going to submit a letter to you, Mr. Chairman, to
11 your clerk. Those will also be sent out formally to all the
12 commissioners and the Administration. I want to thank
13 General Weber, Mr. Barton, and their staff for all that
14 they've done for us and look forward to working with all of
15 you to resolve a problem for Central Texas, but as you know,
16 really for the entire state. Thank you for your time.

17 MR. HOUGHTON: Thank you, Chairman --
18 Commissioner.

19 I think you have the direction, John.

20 MR. BARTON: Yes, sir. We're excited about the
21 opportunity and we'll continue to work hard on it to get it
22 moving.

23 MR. HOUGHTON: Very good.

24 MR. BARTON: Thank you.

25 GENERAL WEBER: Great lay down, John. Thanks.

1 Next is item 4(b), an update of the I-35 corridor
2 status.

3 Chairman and Commissioners, I have been down the
4 Waco District the last -- several times over the last week
5 and there are two things that are apparent down there. One
6 is the district engineer is not only a great engineer, but
7 he is a fine leader and his leadership permeates throughout
8 that district and it's obvious. But the other thing is
9 quiet apparent is there's a lot of stuff going on, on I-35,
10 which is right in the middle of his district.

11 And, Bobby, thank you for being here this morning
12 to share some of what's going on. Thank you.

13 MR. LITTLEFIELD: Thank you, General Weber,
14 Chairman, and Commissioners. It's good to be here and I've
15 been asked to give you an update on our Interstate 35
16 reconstruction efforts.

17 And what we'll do is kind of break this up into
18 four areas. To start with, I'll give you a general overview
19 of the overall project corridor. We'll move into the kind
20 of progress we're making on getting, especially our new
21 pavement work finished. And then we'll kind of move into
22 what the efforts we're implementing to facilitate safe and
23 expedient travel through those work zones and then finish up
24 with the I-35 communication effort.

25

1 The 35 corridor, as you know, runs completely
2 through the state of Texas and my presentation is really
3 going to be focused on the work that's going on in the Waco
4 District. And as you can see by the map there, this is a
5 96-mile corridor through four counties. It starts at the
6 I-35 East or E and I-35W split just north of Hillsboro,
7 continues all the way through to Bell County on the south
8 end, and obviously there's other efforts going on in the
9 Dallas and Fort Worth areas and the Austin districts. I
10 won't be talking about those, but they're certainly
11 important as well.

12 It's been my pleasure to have been involved in
13 this project for about two years now as the district
14 engineer and it's a daily challenge. We have ten active
15 projects and over that 96 miles, we have completed some
16 projects, as you can see. Most of the work in Hill County
17 is completed through Hillsboro, and then the section south
18 of Salado on into Williamson County and Austin District is
19 completed.

20 But what we have currently is about 74 miles from
21 one end to the other under construction, and within 74
22 miles, actually 66 of it is work zone. What I would
23 consider this as unprecedented in my career, we've,
24 obviously, done projects in the state that dollar volume or
25 more, but we've never done one to my recollection that's

1 this long, 74 miles or 96 miles, actually that -- we
2 probably did that much in the original interstate
3 construction days, but we didn't have to contend with the
4 traffic that we do today and that's what presents our
5 biggest challenge.

6 So \$2.5 billion total cost. About \$1.9 billion of
7 that is just construction dollars, and I will say that our
8 MPOs kind of talking in relation to what the gentleman from
9 Central Texas MPO said, our MPO stepped up early on and they
10 went all-in with their dollars for these projects, and the
11 Commission, obviously, supported that and provided the
12 lion's share of the funding, as well. But both our clean
13 Temple MPO in Bell County and our Waco MPO in McLennan
14 County, they leveraged a lot of their money to get this
15 corridor underway, 450 million in right of way and 110
16 million in utility relocation. We had a significant amount
17 of money spent just getting prepared for construction.

18 Traffic volumes, we're running about 55,000 in our
19 rural areas. Our two major urban areas are Waco and Temple
20 and Belton, we're running about 115,000 vehicles a day, and
21 about anywhere from 25 to 35 percent truck volume.

22 One of the things that my predecessors did as they
23 were developing these projects really paid attention to the
24 impacts to the travelers, and, obviously, trying to
25 accommodate that with some of the moving traffic through the

1 corridor, the goal was to keep four lanes, two in each
2 direction, open at all times during the daytime. So lane
3 closures for our contractors are limited to nighttime only,
4 beginning Sunday nights at 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. and then
5 Monday through Thursday, we allow them to work from
6 7:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.; those are planned closures.

7 And what's interesting to note is about 95 percent
8 of the time, there is a lane closure at night, a planned
9 lane closure. We restrict lane closures during weekends and
10 holidays and special events. We have an upcoming
11 Thanksgiving holiday next week and we'll prevent any lane
12 closures starting on Tuesday, extend it all the way through
13 the weekend.

14 Advance notifications, we have a very good
15 communication effort. I'll talk more about that in a little
16 bit.

17 We restricted our contractors to work -- or we
18 asked them in all of our contracts to work six days, and
19 they do. They work on Saturdays most of the time. And then
20 we implemented a lot of incentives to all of our contractors
21 for completing the construction ahead of schedule,
22 obviously, to minimize the length and duration of the
23 impact.

24 So this is just a list of the things that we
25 wanted to include in all of our contracts. It looks like a

1 lot of what you see in the urban areas, where you have three
2 or more lanes, main lanes, in each direction. We added
3 several -- 35 -- some additional crossings to accommodate
4 some of the growth and development that we're seeing in
5 Central Texas. We adjusted some ramps.

6 Another big thing, we had a lot of discontinuous
7 frontage roads, so this project will provide continuous
8 frontage roads. It will all be one-way traffic movement;
9 very important for incident management, and I'll talk a
10 little bit more about incident management in a little bit,
11 but that's our biggest headache, is handling those incidents
12 that typically happen during daytime hours.

13 So with the one-way system, we provided U-turns at
14 our crossings. We've built two safety rest areas, and I'm
15 sure that you've seen those. One is in Hill County in
16 Abbott that just recently opened up, and the other in
17 Salado. Very important to provide that relief for the
18 drowsy driver, and we see a lot of parking, truck parking
19 there at night, overnight.

20 Intelligent Transportation System, this is sort of
21 a linear laboratory of technology where we have implemented
22 and we continue to implement and develop technologies for
23 communication, traveler information. Once we get the three
24 lanes completed, we have approached the local communities
25 and all of our communities that we've approached, as far as

1 getting their concurrence on the truck lane restrictions for
2 the inside lane have agreed, so we are implementing that as
3 we go.

4 Aesthetics, very important to our local
5 communities that we capture some of the culture of those
6 communities, and you'll see a lot of that on our retaining
7 walls where we have captured some of the farming
8 communities, the Czech heritage in the west area, and
9 they're very appreciative of that.

10 This is just a basic view, a cross-sectional view,
11 not unlike what you're familiar with, but it gives that
12 urban look that we'll see all the way through Central Texas,
13 and three lanes in each direction, a flush median with a
14 concrete traffic barrier. Ramps have been -- all the ramps
15 have been redesigned to accommodate current speeds. Two or
16 more lanes in each direction on our frontage roads and all
17 of the reconstruction work has been done with concrete
18 pavement to meet a 30-year lifetime.

19 A little busy slide, but I kind of wanted to
20 highlight, starting in Bell County, and the next one we'll
21 move a little north, but these are the projects that we have
22 either built or are underway in Bell County. And you'll see
23 the numbering convention, Section 1 are south of Temple;
24 Section 2 in Temple; between Temple and Waco, those are
25 Section 3 projects; Waco is Section 4; and then north of

1 Waco is Section 5. So when you see those numbers, that's
2 what that refers to.

3 The projects here in Bell County -- and it does
4 extend a little bit into a little piece of Falls County and
5 into McLennan -- there's five active projects there and
6 every one of them are over a hundred million dollars in
7 contract volume, so they're very high-dollar contracts.
8 Sort of the unique thing here is we have one contractor that
9 is building all of those contracts. It's a good thing
10 because we have coordination between the projects, and a bad
11 thing because he's got a lot of work to deliver, and that's
12 a challenge for them.

13 Similar situation through Hill and McLennan
14 Counties, as I said, Hill, the work in there -- the work in
15 Hill is basically finished with the exception of just a
16 little piece around Abbott. But, again, about five active
17 projects here. Three of these are over a hundred million.
18 We do have a couple smaller projects. If you've been
19 through Waco, you've seen the new bridges there at the
20 Brazos River on our frontage road, to where we connected our
21 frontage road system there. It's very beautiful. I don't
22 have a picture of that in the presentation.

23 MR. HOUGHTON: Did that have anything to do with
24 football?

25

1 MR. LITTLEFIELD: Well, a little bit. It sure
2 did. We did coordinate with our folks at Baylor University
3 and along with the construction of their new stadium there,
4 McLane Stadium.

5 And then Section 4(a) is a small -- I say small,
6 it's 24 million -- frontage road project that we'll be
7 kicking off here pretty soon.

8 Okay. The progress that we're making. One thing
9 that I'm very hopeful of, and this is very encouraging to
10 me, that in about a year from now, about this time next
11 year, hopefully before the end of 2015 or just a little bit
12 after the end of 2015, we'll have 73 miles of that 96 mill
13 corridor substantially complete. We still have some work to
14 do on a couple of our projects, working with our contractor
15 to rephrase some things, but I'm confident that we will be
16 close to that.

17 So what that would mean is that north, from the
18 Bruceville-Eddy area in southern McLennan County, all the
19 way through McLennan and Hill County, through Hillsboro,
20 will be six lanes on new pavement, with the exception of a
21 little piece in Waco, but it's already six lanes. And then
22 from the south end from Temple, down into Williamson County.
23 So I think the message there is, you know, we just be
24 patient for a little over a year now and we'll have
25 substantial completion of some of these projects.

1 The three projects that you see there where we've
2 been able to accomplish this is -- in one project we were
3 able to save nine months through some coordination with our
4 contractor. Six months on the section south of Waco, and
5 then the Williams Brothers contract north of Waco, three
6 months of construction time saved. So good cooperation,
7 coordination with our contractors on that.

8 And then the last 23 miles, which basically is in
9 Temple and between Temple and the Bruceville-Eddy area,
10 we're going to tackle that next and we think that we can
11 achieve some efficiencies there.

12 The next few slides are what I'm calling a stick
13 diagram; it's kind of hard to see, but it kind of gives you
14 an idea of what we have out there currently. In this first
15 diagram to the left, we're basically at Thanksgiving, 2014,
16 as you can see in Hill County, we already have the three
17 lanes of new pavement. We have it south of Salado, and then
18 we have some areas, significant areas that are on two lanes
19 of new pavement. So we've progressed the project to that
20 point and we're getting close to having that third lane in
21 each direction. So everything north of Waco on new
22 pavement, a little bit south of Waco on new pavement today.

23 Moving forward to Memorial Day of 2015 will be --
24 you'll see the project north of Waco will be completely
25 finished and then we'll make some more progress on two lanes

1 of new pavement south of Waco. A little bit more progress
2 through the summer of 2015, and then as I told you earlier,
3 my hope and goal is that sometime a year from now or a
4 little over when we get into the spring of 2016, we'll have
5 what you see over on the far right-hand side, where we have
6 that 73 miles completed.

7 So that leaves the little sections through Temple,
8 which that particular project is the largest project that we
9 have ever ordered in the Waco District, \$241 million
10 dollars; it's a four-year project. It kind of got off to a
11 late start, but we're well underway now. We got some
12 special challenges there because of the traffic accident and
13 the constrained work area, so we're going to start looking
14 at what we can do to try to shorten that time frame, as well
15 as the projects north of Temple.

16 So by Memorial Day of 2017 we should have
17 everything but the Temple project finished, and then under
18 current schedule, Temple will be finished around
19 Thanksgiving of 2018. I really think we can shave a
20 significant amount of time, maybe up to a year, off of that
21 once we start really working with the contractor. And then
22 when Temple is finished, that will actually be four lanes in
23 each direction.

24 So we have approached our contractors and talked
25 to them about what it would take, because our drivers now --

1 we've kind of been in our peak period now for about two
2 years, total construction of three to four years. A lot of
3 fatigue with the travelers experiencing a lot of
4 construction, so our contractors are telling us that the
5 biggest problem is the shallow labor market in Central Texas
6 primarily due to a lot of the work that's going on in the
7 urban areas, Dallas, Fort Worth, Austin, San Antonio, and
8 Houston, and then the energy sector is taking a lot of good
9 workers or skilled workers away from us, and that's really
10 reflected in the truck drivers. They really have a
11 difficult time getting enough truck drivers to meet their
12 needs.

13 So we asked them about, well, what about going to
14 a seven-day work week. They really were not too excited
15 about that. Because of that shallow labor pool, they just
16 don't a lot of depth in their workforce, and especially
17 during the hot summer, they just need that day off to give
18 their workers a break. So they were very reluctant to go to
19 a seven-day work week, so we have maintained a six-day at
20 this time.

21 But the next bullet there talks about the
22 incentives and disincentives that we have in our contract
23 and we have looked -- or we are researching ways to
24 restructure those to possibly give them more financial --

25

1 some more financial incentives for completing these projects
2 a little earlier.

3 As far as moving traffic through the work zone, I
4 mentioned earlier the biggest challenge we have is the
5 incidents that occur almost daily. Some of them are minor,
6 but because of the very constrained travel way through our
7 work zones, sometimes those are very difficult to clear. We
8 are completing a project -- actually, it's not a 35-project;
9 it's a pass-through project with the City of Temple to
10 complete the Loop 363 as a four-lane divided facility. And
11 once that's completed, which we expect by the end of this
12 year, and that will be instrumented with hardware that we
13 can designate that as a permanent alternate route for I-35
14 around Temple, and as that Temple project -- so it will
15 coincide with the uptaking of work on I-35 through Temple.

16 So as an example of what you would see -- and
17 we're using some Bluetooth technologies to capture real time
18 travel data -- in this example if you're approaching, say,
19 from the south, and you see a sign that says "Belton, 10
20 miles, 10 minutes" which we have in place right now, there
21 would be a companion sign if there's no congestion through
22 I-35 corridor and Temple, just drive safe.

23 However, in a congested condition, once we get the
24 363 project finished and we designate it as an alternate
25 route, we will be able to provide a sign such as this where

1 if there is congestion you see going through Belton, Temple
2 area, 25-minute delay. If you took Loop 363, it's 15
3 minutes. So it gives the driver a different choice if they
4 want to take an alternate route.

5 Other alternate routes that we see travelers using
6 right now as an alternate route to the 35W coming out of
7 Fort Worth working their way over to the US 281 corridor and
8 point south there, and similarly on the east side to detour
9 around the 35E and corridor is 45, Interstate 45 to US 79.
10 So although we're not really encouraging people to use this,
11 they are using these alternate routes and we suggest those
12 at times. There's also another alternate route there, you
13 see. This is travel between Waco and around -- another way
14 to get around Temple would be US 84, State Highway 317
15 Route.

16 I wanted to talk about our speed limit situation.
17 It's something that we continually analyze. One of the
18 problems we have with travelers -- and this contributes a
19 lot to our incidents, is the speed of traffic through that
20 corridor -- through those work zones. We're seeing
21 generally averaging 70 or better speed limits. It's a
22 challenge for our law enforcement partners to enforce those
23 speeds simply because of the physical nature of the
24 construction zones. We do have a good relationship with all
25 of our law enforcement partners; in fact, we employ them

1 afterhours, off-duty officers, for our nighttime closures
2 and through our workday at various times with a wolf
3 pack-type enforcement operation with DPS.

4 So, as you can see, this is another stick diagram,
5 but on each end of the project it's 75 miles per hour
6 because those projects are six lanes or better and they're
7 completed, but that presents a problem because traffic is
8 coming through at a 75-mile-per-hour clip and then they're
9 hitting a pretty good length of construction.

10 Now, Temple is -- and Waco, are already 65. We
11 didn't change that. We left those regulatory speeds in
12 place. So the areas in green are where we have somewhat of
13 decisions to make on a daily basis: Should that be 70 or
14 can we reduce that to 60; those are our options. The
15 Commission, about a year and a half ago gave us that
16 authority to utilize 60 miles an hour. We tried to
17 implement it using good engineering and judgment. One thing
18 is whenever we have a nighttime closure, it's always signed
19 as a 60-mile-per-hour zone, but during the daytime where we
20 have non-lane closures, what we try to do is we look at
21 areas where we have concrete barriers on both sides, so the
22 traffic is hemmed in. Where that concrete barrier has
23 encroached on those outside shoulders is reduced that refuge
24 area to a point where it's not feasible to use it as a
25 parking area or a pull-over, so we try to get -- and then we

1 might have a gap where we have those types of situations.
2 If it's less than a mile, we'll just speed zone it 60 miles
3 all the way through.

4 So, again, that's been a challenge. We think
5 that's a prudent implementation of the 60-mile-per-hour
6 zone; the challenge is getting people to observe it. So
7 what we have done is taken additional measures in those
8 zones. Each of them have a, as you're approaching a
9 60-mile-per-hour zone there's a portable changeable message
10 sign that identifies it. The next sign you'll see is a
11 ground-mounted permanent sign that gives an advanced
12 warning. Once you hit that zone, we have implemented a red
13 border which kind of draws attention to the traveler and
14 then in the zone we have started implementing or placing the
15 speed trailers. And when I say "place strategically there,"
16 we do that sort of in conjunction with our law enforcement
17 officers -- find zones where they can actually enforce that
18 easily.

19 So, I mentioned the communications challenge that
20 we've had because of all the traffic through the corridor.
21 You know, we are experiencing 30 million travelers per year.
22 One thing that is interesting to note is that of all that
23 traffic going through the corridor, two-thirds go completely
24 through the corridor; in fact, they're driving through every
25

1 work zone we have in place, two-thirds of the traffic each
2 day.

3 A lot of businesses along the corridor -- 96
4 miles, obviously, a lot of people would be impacted, and
5 what you see here is the recent version of our my35 website
6 which covers the entire corridor through the state and then
7 the part that -- obviously, Waco is central your that you
8 can tap into. We're very proud of that. It's
9 award-winning. Our team was recently awarded Journey
10 Towards Excellence award and we continue to make strides and
11 improvement.

12 So, one of the things that I want to talk about
13 today is tourism. I think Margo Richards is here and she's
14 going to address this.

15 MS. RICHARDS: Thank you, Bobby.

16 Good morning. For the record, my name is Margo
17 Richards and I'm Director of the Travel Information
18 Division. As many of you all know, tourism is a major
19 contributor to the Texas economy; it is second only to the
20 oil and gas industry. In 2013, according to estimates from
21 the Office of the Governor Economic Development & Tourism,
22 there are more than 240 million travelers to and within
23 Texas that spent more than \$67.5 billion. This directly
24 supported 601,000 jobs and generated 4.7 billion in state
25 and local taxes.

1 Within the Waco area MSA specifically, those
2 communities have, too, welcomed millions of visitors each
3 year with a gradual increase since 2011. The Waco
4 Convention and Visitor Bureau operates a visitor center near
5 I-35 and where a bulk of where of the construction was in
6 the center of the city. During the construction, visitation
7 to their visitor center and other attractions along the
8 corridor was drastically reduced almost immediately when
9 construction began; however, in the last two months with the
10 completion of that part of the project, visitation to the
11 visitor center and other Waco-area attractions has returned
12 the levels pre-construction, and that, too, happened almost
13 immediately.

14 The event completion of the I-35 project in the
15 city, Baylor University's McLane Stadium, and then other
16 development along the Brazos River corridor have attributed
17 to many of these positive gains and the public perception of
18 the City of Waco.

19 Currently, the gateway entrance to the city on
20 I-35 is quiet dramatic and catches the traveling public's
21 attention with its unique architecture. People may now
22 think of the City of Waco as possibly a more attractive
23 tourism destination in the state of Texas, versus what they
24 used to.

25

1 In addition, several media outlets are now
2 beginning to pay more attention to the City of Waco and the
3 heart of Texas communities that surround that area, and also
4 looking at it as a true tourism destination. For example,
5 our own Texas Highways recently announced Waco ranked number
6 three in our Texas Highways readers' choice awards as one of
7 the top destinations in the state. San Antonio was number
8 one.

9 And Texas Monthly, CultureMap, and a number of
10 other national publications are now looking at Waco as a
11 top-tourism destination in the state of Texas. So, not that
12 I-35 is the complete attributor to this attention that the
13 City of Waco is getting, but we do feel it is a great part
14 of the piece of that, so thank you.

15 Thanks Bobby.

16 MR. LITTLEFIELD: So let me just wrap up. Get
17 back to our communication effort. This has been a teamwork
18 effort, and as you can see, the last few bullets there, our
19 team con Social Securities of our public information
20 officers, one of which -- I have two -- one of which is
21 completely dedicated to Interstate 35. We have contracts
22 with Texas A&M Transportation Institute to provide mobility
23 coordinators that work with us daily. A lot of the
24 technology that you see out there and that I've talked about
25

1 is a direct result of the research that they've done, and
2 then obviously our construction staff.

3 What you see up there is one of the real time maps
4 that you can access through the website, and I would
5 encourage you that any time that you plan a trip through the
6 corridor, that you access that before you go. When you got
7 to the locations, both our travel information centers are
8 WiFi hotspots so you can get updates. But real time,
9 because we're reflecting, we're capturing real time data and
10 it immediately goes into our dynamic message signs and this
11 map right here.

12 You can see the www.my35.org and also the
13 drivetexas.org websites. The real time information is also
14 reflected, as I said, on dynamic message signs even outside
15 of Waco area: Dallas, Fort Worth, and even as far as Austin
16 will reflect some of the incidents or things we have
17 planned. The social media, how they are used by our PIOs to
18 relay some of those incident alerts to the public, and then
19 finally, this will be probably the next thing that we roll
20 out will be those planned nighttime delays where we can get
21 notification well in advance, as opposed to discovering it
22 closer to the actual site. So if you're approaching from
23 the south, you can actually see a delay as far as
24 Bruceville-Eddy, and as you proceed up the corridor, all the
25 way up to West and Hillsboro. So you can make -- the

1 traveler can make decisions if he wants to pull off and
2 wait, go a different route, or just go ahead and proceed
3 through. So we're looking forward to that implementation.

4 So that conclusion my presentation and I'd be
5 happy to entertain any questions that you may have.

6 MR. AUSTIN: Bobby, I've just got a couple. I
7 really like your stick diagrams. I think it shows a great
8 picture with progress and from the pavement to the speed
9 limits, so thank you ya'll. I really like that.

10 Back to Loop 363 and Temple as a relief route
11 coming around, is that -- you mentioned it's a four-lane
12 divided highway. Is that going to be a controlled access?
13 Are you going to have stoplights along there?

14 MR. LITTLEFIELD: It's not completely controlled
15 access and that's one of the issues, but when we have an
16 incident -- if we have an incident in Temple and we have to
17 designate that as a short-term detour route, my forces,
18 along with some local law enforcement, through our instant
19 management plan will actually man that and will sign that so
20 we can divert traffic and give priority to that 363
21 corridor.

22 The problem with that is the intersections on both
23 ends, where 363 ties back into I-35, those are congested
24 intersections right now. We have a Buc-ee's going in on the
25

1 one on the north side so it's going to get even more
2 congested in time.

3 MR. AUSTIN: And I ask that because as you look at
4 these relief routes around town, they're very important to
5 move traffic and give an alternate route. One that comes to
6 mind is Lufkin; you've got controlled access going around.
7 That really helps move traffic and I'm really appreciative.
8 That's on 59 and 69.

9 The last thing I wanted to look at: Slide 17, as
10 you look at your alternate routes, coming down 45, you know,
11 you're looking at 79, 281, this really highlights the need
12 to work and improve our trunk system, because a lot of these
13 trunk system routes are US highways are good alternate
14 routes to get traffic off 45, 35, and Interstate 10. I
15 believe these routes right here -- I know we mentioned
16 earlier when we were talking to John -- were on that rural
17 transportation plan. So this just highlights -- whether
18 it's this -- I know in West Texas, you know, there's a lot
19 coming up through Lubbock, Ports-to-Plains, but as we look
20 at these routes, please keep the emphasis on these because
21 sometimes spending a little time on these projects can go a
22 lot further quicker than 35 -- additional capacity on 35.

23 MR. LITTLEFIELD: Yeah, and to add on to that, in
24 my district, US 281 is one of those alternate routes and we
25 currently have a Super 2 project all the way through

1 Hamilton County. Unfortunately we kind of got a late start
2 on that. It's under construction now, but we're getting --
3 we're making good progress on that, so that will help us
4 through the remainder of some the work coming up.

5 MR. AUSTIN: Final comment, in working with these
6 communities to eliminate lights or good shoulders, that will
7 help these routes pick up and improve. Thank you, good
8 presentation.

9 MR. MOSELEY: Chairman, I appreciate
10 Mr. Littlefield's presentation maybe more than most. About
11 25 years ago when I was serving as County Judge, a group of
12 us organized between the Rio Grande and the Red River, to
13 put the I-35 Corridor Coalition together talking about the
14 next generation of I-35, specifically, as related to the
15 North American Free Trade Agreement having been signed into
16 law and the Transportation Efficiency Act becoming the
17 Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act and
18 embedding trade corridors into that legislation. And we
19 came down here -- I never will forget this, Chairman -- we
20 came down here to make a presentation right after. We were
21 so happy we had organized and talked about a corridor and we
22 had one request of TxDOT at the time and that was could
23 the -- I think at that time there were five district
24 engineers along the entire alignment -- could they please
25 talk to one another and look at the roadway as a system,

1 systematically, rather than segmentally, and it offended
2 TxDOT so much, I think we were shown the door at that point.

3 (Laughter)

4 So it's good to be in this presentation today where we
5 are looking at the roadway as a strategic trade corridor and
6 the data really is dramatic and this is clearly an economic
7 engine for the State, and so your presentation is really
8 wonderful. The fact that you're not only meeting your
9 schedule and you're completing ahead of schedule, that's
10 also wonderful news because this kind of work can be very,
11 very hard on the corridor and businesses do have to pay a
12 price for this overhauling. So I am so pleased that you're
13 really seeing the construction being done timely and ahead
14 of schedule.

15 One question that is probably too late to ask, but for
16 a little over a year and a half or so, we have talked about
17 the value of squeezing capacity out of a corridor by using
18 movable barricades, and I think we actually own equipment on
19 I-20, is that correct, and every day these machines can take
20 a concrete barrier and move it and reverse flow and add
21 capacity to a lane. And as it relates to concrete traffic
22 barriers, it would be wonderful if paragraphs that concrete
23 is poured and those are permanent barriers, if there might
24 be some ability to talk about how we could install the same
25 type of barrier and from time to time we have the

1 flexibility to add capacity northbound or southbound,
2 depending on the need -- if there's a hurricane evacuation
3 or whatever the need is and we're not locked into a
4 permanent design -- maybe I'm too late to ask that question,
5 but at least it's a thought maybe for future design.

6 I really think this is a beautiful roadway, but I think
7 we need to be thinking about how to squeeze capacity out of
8 them and not be locked into a concrete barrier that really
9 limits our ability to enhance the capacity.

10 MR. UNDERWOOD: One last thought. I appreciate
11 what ya'll have been able to get done, because I think for a
12 local person, they say that they're frustrated because of
13 the construction and they're used to normally being able to
14 get where they want to get or go which town they want to go
15 to, I think they forget that our population in Texas is
16 growing 400 to 500,000 people per year and so they're going
17 to be using those roads.

18 MR. LITTLEFIELD: Right.

19 MR. UNDERWOOD: So, anyway, thank you ya'll for
20 what you're doing, Bobby.

21 MR. HOUGHTON: Bobby, thank you very much.

22 Moving on.

23 GENERAL WEBER: Thanks, Bobby. Great work. We
24 appreciate your leadership on this highly visible project.

25

1 Next is identity 4(c) discussion of the I-27
2 corridor extension study and our Director of Transportation
3 and Planning, James Koch will present.

4 James?

5 MR. KOCH: Good morning, Mr. Chairman, Commission
6 Members and General Weber. For the record, my name is James
7 Koch, Transportation, Planning and Programming Division
8 director for TxDOT.

9 Identity 4(c) is to discuss the potential of
10 extending Interstate 27 to the north of Amarillo and to the
11 south of Lubbock. As you can see from the map, most north
12 and south interstates and future interstates, I-69, provide
13 connections to our ports, to Mexico, to our neighboring
14 states and beyond. Although I-45 does not connect to a
15 border, it does connect to another interstate that does tie
16 the borders together. Even I-44 connects to Oklahoma.

17 You'll notice that these north and south
18 connections are predominately in the eastern part of Texas.
19 One of the exceptions is I-27; I-27 provides the commerce
20 and trade connection to an important east/west interstate,
21 I-40; an important connection tying the cities of Amarillo
22 and Lubbock together, but that's where it stops.

23 In the mid-1990s, local leaders in the Texas
24 Panhandle saw the potential of a north/south corridor using
25 I-27 as a starting point. Several studies have been

1 conducted to determine possible routes and interstate
2 potential. The last feasibility study was conducted in 2001
3 in connection with the Ports-to-Plains corridor efforts.
4 The feasibility study evaluated impacts and feasibility of a
5 four-lane divided highway from Mexico to Colorado. The
6 study looked at several different existing highways,
7 including US 287, US 87, US 277, US 83, State Highway 349,
8 State Highway 158, and US 84. At that time, a continuous
9 four-lane divided facility was not feasible.

10 As you're well aware, the discovery of the shale
11 plates in south and West Texas have caused an exponential
12 growth in truck traffic. Also, there's been a steady
13 increase in trade with Mexico and is projected to increase;
14 this puts an even more strain on our existing interstate
15 system.

16 As previously stated, local leaders saw the
17 potential of a north/south corridor in West Texas. Through
18 their efforts, the Ports-to-Plains corridor was designated
19 as a high-priority corridor in the Transportation Equity Act
20 for the 21st Century or TEA-21. It was generally described
21 as a connection from the Mexican border to Denver, Colorado,
22 via I-27. The Texas Transportation Commission adopted the
23 route shown here in June, 2001. This route was adopted by
24 Congress; however, it was not identified as a future
25 interstate.

1 There's been significant local and regional
2 interest and support in looking at extending I-27 to the
3 north and to the south. This summer, TxDOT was invited to
4 speak with local officials about extending I-27 north of
5 Amarillo and south of Lubbock. Local officials assemble
6 more than 40 leaders to discuss the possibilities with
7 Commissioner Fred Underwood and TxDOT staff. The champion
8 in this discussion is City of Lubbock Mayor Glenn Robertson.

9 Commissioner Underwood, TxDOT staff, and the mayor
10 met at the Ports-to-Plains conference in October to discuss
11 the interest in potential studying. The mayor has also
12 continued to talk with local leaders all along the corridor.
13 At this time, I would like to introduce the City of Lubbock
14 Mayor, Glenn Robertson, so talk about this support.

15 MR. ROBERTSON: Well, first, I'd like to thank the
16 Chairman, the Commission Members and General for allowing me
17 to come here. I have good and bad news. The bad news is I
18 have a whole page of notes. The good news is, as you will
19 see -- Fred and I come from the same city, we act a lot
20 alike; I can't read my own handwriting, so I'm going to try
21 to respect your time.

22 (Laughter)

23 I would like to start by thanking you for your
24 leadership, and more importantly than that, thank you for
25 the partnership that Lubbock's been able to have with the

1 TxDOT Commissioners and the TxDOT system for over ten years.
2 We have worked very well hand in hand starting with Marshal
3 Sharp Freeway, now on the tremendous work done by the staff
4 on the outer route, and I'm extremely proud -- I think to be
5 the first city that has done a comprehensive agreement on
6 the Turnback Program, and I really hope that that's a model
7 that other cities throughout the state will follow because I
8 think it's great for everybody

9 I need to thank the folks that are here in support.
10 We've got a lot of people in from Lubbock that I didn't know
11 were coming. We have members of the chamber here. We have
12 members of the Texas Real Estate Association, the Lubbock
13 Real Estate Association, our MPO, president of our
14 Ports-to-Plains corridor, a tremendous amount of support.

15 I started this effort about a year ago. It is
16 ground-based up and the support that I've received, the
17 comments, the e-mails, we had the meeting in Lubbock on
18 September 8th, had over 40 people come to Lubbock with less
19 than a two-week notice. There's a tremendous amount of
20 interest in West Texas for the studying of this possible
21 future interstate.

22 My key issues are really three and I'll go over them
23 real briefly, but number one is safety. The impact of the
24 energy sector in West Texas has been overwhelming. Driving
25 from Lubbock to Midland-Odessa, from Midland-Odessa to San

1 Angelo, on in to our border cities has become dangerous.
2 The truck traffic is overwhelming our system. It's a curse
3 and a blessing at the same time.

4 Commerce is next on my list. What we are seeing,
5 especially with the new shale play developing in Mexico and
6 with the pricing of oil having a tendency now to hover into
7 the \$72 to \$75 range, this shale play in Mexico is going to
8 be real. We're anticipating it's going to be larger than
9 Williston, North Dakota. Their production costs are going
10 to be a very small percentage of ours, so the need for a
11 transportation system between Lubbock and especially
12 Midland-Odessa, which is our core for shale play in West
13 Texas, through Del Rio and Laredo is going to be critical.

14 I think that the overall reason -- they asked me what I
15 wanted on the screen when I talked and I told them just the
16 map. Because the idea is the total interconnectivity that
17 we would get 20 to 30 years down the road of our interstate
18 system in Texas. We would finally tie Amarillo to Lubbock
19 to Midland-Odessa to El Paso to Del Rio, to Eagle Pass to
20 Laredo. With Laredo being the largest inland port in the
21 United States and growing every day, with the maquiladora
22 program in Del Rio and Acuna exploding, I think it's
23 critical that we start planning for this future growth.

24 I told you I wouldn't be able to read my notes; it's a
25 combination of my handwriting and new trifocals. I'm going

1 to blame it on the glasses. I think the other key thing --
2 and I'm going to close with this, and I'm going to be
3 available after staff wraps up -- it's appropriate that we
4 follow the I-35 discussion. The traffic coming out of Nuevo
5 Laredo today has one option, the truck traffic, I-35 North.
6 We've got to provide that industry, the logistics industry,
7 an option of how to get their products through the port and
8 through the western part of the state, as far as -- as well
9 as the western United States. We need to tie Laredo to El
10 Paso. We need to tie Laredo to Lubbock and Amarillo and
11 hopefully up to Denver some day. I think in doing so, we
12 would help solve a lot of the issues that we battle every
13 day on that I-35 corridor.

14 Before I close, I've got to thank you for the staff
15 you've provided us for the Lubbock District. I cannot speak
16 enough about Doug Eichorst, Steve Warren -- yes, in his
17 Hawaiian shirt, but it's all right; we allow it on Fridays
18 in council chambers. But the staff that they have in
19 Lubbock is unbelievable. There's never a time that I need
20 something that I can't pick up the phone, set up a meeting,
21 sit down, have a good discussion. And your folks in the
22 Lubbock District want to solve problems, and I want to thank
23 you for that.

24 I will be available afterwards for questions and I
25 appreciate ya'll for allowing me the time.

1 MR. KOCH: Thank you, Mayor Robertson.

2 The next steps will be to initiate a study to
3 evaluate the possible extension of I-27. The original
4 identification of the I-27 corridor began as a grassroots
5 effort in the 1950s. This grassroots involvement heritage
6 will be carried forward in this study. We will begin with
7 setting up a working group to include the wide interests in
8 the corridor. The mayor has done a great job of canvassing
9 the local entities about I-27 and we would like to continue
10 that effort, as well as identify any concerns.

11 The study will include the analysis of current
12 needs and conditions, seek to use new information to update
13 and build off of previous study efforts, and then see what
14 the future may hold concerning traffic growth and trade
15 growth. Also, we would like to investigate if extending
16 I-27 would relieve traffic on other interstates like I-35.
17 As indicated in the last bullet, the ultimate goal of this
18 effort is to determine if an interstate is needed, and if
19 so, when?

20 This concludes my presentation and we would be
21 happy to answer any questions at this time.

22 MR. HOUGHTON: We have one speaker, James Beecham
23 (ph).

24

25

1 MR. BEECHAM: Mr. Chairman, thank you.
2 Commissioners, we appreciate the opportunity to be here
3 today.

4 When we first learned about this, we got pretty
5 excited. We're one of the efforts that came out of the
6 original 1993 to '97 study, along with Ports-to-Plains, and
7 if you were going to look at this again, right now is a
8 pretty good time to look at it from a Midland-Odessa
9 perspective. If you want to look at population issues, if
10 you want to look at traffic, economics, all those sorts of
11 things, that's in a report that we have here for you. This
12 would be a good time to do that.

13 But as we got to looking at a little bit more of
14 this we started looking at traffic counts along the existing
15 corridors, along both of those northern corridors and the
16 three southern corridors, and what we found ultimately is at
17 the end of the day, is that several of them have lost
18 traffic and a few of them have gained traffic. So I mean
19 there are some things that you look at there, but most of it
20 has been driven by the energy industry. So, again, from a
21 Midland-Odessa perspective, this would be a great thing to
22 look at and a great time to look at it and there's a part of
23 us that's excited in that way.

24 But along with that explosive growth that would
25 help us make that case, we've also seen explosive growth in

1 the fatalities; there's a hundred percent increase from 2011
2 to '13 in Midland and Ector Counties. We've heard your
3 words and despite our pleas and what have you, there are a
4 lot of financial constraints for this state and we get that.

5 There's some money that may be coming down the
6 pike from the LBB and if that happens, we are very
7 appreciative, but what I will tell you, of that amount of
8 funding that's potentially allocated for our area, 67
9 percent is targeted to go on the Interstate, and most of
10 that is for maintenance of the existing Interstate in the
11 Odessa District. So what we're talking about is those least
12 restrictive, most flexible state dollars that this agency
13 can do a lot of things with, are having to be funneled into
14 maintaining the existing Interstate system.

15 Locally, there's a plan underway from our local
16 district to convert our frontage roads on I-20; that's an
17 expensive project. There's no identified funding for it,
18 and part of the report calls for looking at local funding,
19 including vehicle registration fees, RMAs and things of that
20 nature. So at that point, it's not just now state dollars,
21 but potentially could be the local dollars having to fund
22 the existing Interstate system.

23 And that brings us to our question in this which
24 is, if we are unable to adequately fund the existing
25 Interstate system today with those federal funds that we

1 have, why would we look at adding to it at this time? And I
2 understand part of this is, well, it's just a study. The
3 problem is the things we study we tend to plan and then
4 ultimately we tend to build. And it concerns us, given some
5 very simple things we have going on and needs we have with
6 regard to safety, the impact that this may have ultimately.

7 Our recommendations would be to look at that
8 original study in 1997 and complete those recommendations
9 which have not been completed, to look at the cost benefit
10 of this before proceeding forward, and, finally, if the
11 effort does move forward, we would ask the Commission to
12 make sure that there's adequate representation from all of
13 those previous corridors, and the reason I say that, I
14 believe under your current rules today, there's a limit of
15 24 members for an advisory committee; there are 35 original
16 counties, so there could be a little bit of an issue there.

17 But, again, we appreciate the opportunity. We
18 appreciate the time to address the Commission and we'll
19 leave this with you. Thank you.

20 MR. HOUGHTON: Thanks, James.

21 Fred, do you have something?

22 MR. UNDERWOOD: Yeah, I have a quick question for
23 staff. He said advisory committee -- as far as I know, a
24 working group doesn't have any limitation; is that correct,
25 John?

1 MR. BARTON: Yeah, it does.

2 MR. UNDERWOOD: It does have a limit?

3 MR. BARTON: No, a working group does -- I do not
4 believe have the same limitations --

5 MR. UNDERWOOD: It doesn't have any limit of --

6 MR. BARTON: -- that our rules that establish for
7 advisory.

8 MR. HOUGHTON: Advisory does.

9 MR. UNDERWOOD: Right. That's the difference?

10 MR. HOUGHTON: Right.

11 MR. UNDERWOOD: So I just want to make sure that
12 we're talking about a working group, and I want to make sure
13 that everybody understands, looking at something -- to me, I
14 think this is important to be able to look at it and plan
15 ahead. It could be 50 years from now, but you'd have an
16 idea of what you're trying to do, and to me, I'm in favor of
17 this, so I just wanted my fellow commissioners to understand
18 that, in favor of a working group that allows to get
19 everybody involved in it that's going to be involved.

20 And I agree with Mr. Beecham that, you know, we do
21 have funding problems, but that doesn't mean that we should
22 stick our head in the sand. We should be reaching out and
23 figuring out -- because right now we're looking at buying --
24 if we're moving -- -- spending money on I-35, we're paying
25 by the square inch -- by the square foot, and not by the

1 mile agree not by the acre, so to speak. So if we plan
2 ahead of time it makes more sense. We do this all the time.
3 Ya'll understand that. So anyway, thank you.

4 MR. HOUGHTON: Thanks, Fred.

5 GENERAL WEBER: Moving along is Item 5(a), the
6 2015 and 2016 Port Capital Program our Director of Maritime,
7 Dan Harmon will present. Dan, thank you.

8 MR. HARMON: Thank you, General Weber.

9 Good morning, Chairman Houghton, Commissioners.
10 For the record, my name is Dan Harmon, Director of the
11 Maritime Division. Chapter 55 of the Transportation Code
12 requires the Commission appoint a seven-member Port
13 Authority Advisory Committee and provide the -- and provides
14 that the Committee prepare a two-year Port Capital Program
15 that enlists -- that includes a list of capital projects
16 recommended by the Committee.

17 This Committee met on October 10th, 2014, and
18 formally adopted the 2015/2016 Port Capital Program, which
19 includes a report on Texas maritime ports, as well as a
20 priority list of nine capital improvement projects. These
21 projects vary in scope, ranging from rail and overpass
22 projects to dock and general cargo improvements, and even
23 include a cruise terminal and expansion project.

24 All projects fall within the constraints of the
25 Port Access Account Fund in Chapter 55. The total costs of

1 all nine projects is \$95 million dollars with the State
2 requests being \$52 million dollars, which represents a
3 50 percent match for large ports and a 75 percent match for
4 smaller ports.

5 At this time, sir, if you'd let me, I'd like to
6 introduce John LaRue the Chair of the Port Advisory
7 Committee, and then Mr. John Roby from Beaumont to
8 discuss -- they would like to make a few comments.

9 MR. LaRUE: Morning.

10 MR. HOUGHTON: Welcome, gentlemen.

11 MR. LaRUE: Thank you. Pleasure to be here. John
12 LaRue, port advisory -- Port Authority Advisory Committee,
13 and John Roby. We've both been members of that group since
14 its inception, so we have seen every one of the capital
15 programs that you have before us and I think I can say, and
16 I think John will agree, this is the best one that we have
17 ever done.

18 I want to congratulate the Commission and the
19 staff for the leadership in making TxDOT a multimodal
20 organization, and that's what's led, I think, to this
21 report. It's a pleasure to go to those meetings and then to
22 participate in this.

23 I would like to thank Commissioner Moseley who's
24 taken on the role as port advocate, and I think has visited
25 every port in Texas, so he has a good understanding of what

1 our issues are. And the Maritime Division staff, led by
2 Dan, has just done a great job in putting this together. We
3 know we still have a lot of work to do with this, and in
4 2015 as we get ready for the next one, we'll be working on
5 some of the eligibility criterias [sic], making sure the
6 small ports are protected, so the large ports don't just
7 suck up all the money and there's nothing left.

8 We are very proud of this document. We are
9 hopeful that -- and we're going to work hard to try to get
10 the Port Access Fund some money in this legislative session
11 so we can move on with this project.

12 John, do you want to add something?

13 MR. ROBY: Thank you, John.

14 For the record, my name is John Roby. I am the --
15 I work for the port of Beaumont. I am also a member of the
16 Port Authority Advisory Committee. John and I have been on
17 this advisory committee for so long, I was looking at my
18 notes and he said everything that I was going to say, but I
19 do want to add just my personal thanks. We have stood in
20 this very spot before and we have asked the Commission to
21 establish Maritime Division, and so I personally have no
22 complaints because ya'll have done what we have asked you to
23 do.

24 It's a very small division. It's very small, but
25 it's tightly packed, and I think you will like the work that

1 they have done to lead to the point of where we have this
2 capital program. It's something that we're proud of. I
3 think it's something that you can be proud of.

4 And I just want to conclude for thanking you all
5 individually for your vision and your leadership to get us
6 to the point that we are today. Thank you on behalf of the
7 maritime ports, and on behalf of the people of Texas.

8 MR. HOUGHTON: Thank you, gentlemen.

9 MR. LaRUE: Thank you.

10 MR. HOUGHTON: Not only a Department, but a
11 chair -- a director of the maritime --

12 MR. LaRUE: Yes, sir.

13 MR. HOUGHTON: -- and a very good one, too.

14 MR. UNDERWOOD: Chairman, I just wanted to add. I
15 appreciate John LaRue, John Roby, thank you for your
16 willingness to become so engaged in this very critical
17 topic. There's this -- this report that's attached is just
18 wonderful, but there's one page, Members, on page 6, Table
19 1, and it shows how other states are moving out and funding
20 part infrastructure, so I think that is a clarion call to
21 our agency and to the Legislature to show that the new
22 shipping lane in Panama, fracking, population explosion, the
23 economy in Mexico, are all driving more and more value for
24 investment in port infrastructure. So thank you for helping
25 us with that discussion and I look forward to working with

1 you next legislative session, because this is very useful
2 foundational information that we can all talk about.

3 Dan Harmon, thank you for your work, you and Sara,
4 have done a real good job of helping coordinate this, but
5 thank you both for your leadership and appreciate it.

6 MR. HARMON: Thank you.

7 MR. AUSTIN: I was going to say Johns -- we're
8 used to the Jeffs up here -- thank you for your work. I
9 know going back over the last couple of years, I've been up
10 with Commissioner Moseley up in DC, and for the from time to
11 time we have collaborated with the ports, manufacturers, the
12 trucking industry, because we are multimodal, and if you
13 look at what you represent up and down the coast, it's the
14 source and destination of a lot of traffic that coming into
15 the state or leaving the state.

16 As we look at exports -- it's not all about
17 imports -- but exporting is tremendous for the State. As we
18 talk about Mexico, Panama Canal, we can go on and on, but
19 one thing I think ya'll can really celebrate because of your
20 coordinated efforts and working with our federal team is the
21 WRDA Bill because we're able to expand and add depth to a
22 couple of the ports that's going to be so vital for the
23 State, potentially LNG exports and you can go on and on, the
24 military, Homeland Security, and a lot of the other
25 containers and tonnage that comes in and out of the ports.

1 And I know that part of our legislative action request is
2 also looking at potentially rail access, improving rail
3 coming in and out of the ports and finding quarters, as
4 you've heard the presentations, to move the traffic.

5 So thank you all for your coordination. Stay
6 close to us. I know you are with Sara and Dan. This is
7 extremely important to the State that ya'll are part of us,
8 and what Dan has done to coordinate a lot of these, thank
9 you.

10 MR. LaRUE: Thank you.

11 MR. ROBY: Thank you.

12 GENERAL WEBER: Dan, please continue with Item
13 5(b) our Gulf Coast Intercoastal [sic] Waterway Report.

14 MR. HARMON: Thank you, sir. Commissioner,
15 General, thank you, again. For the record, my name is Dan
16 Harmon, Director of the Maritime Division.

17 Chapter 51 of the Transportation Code requires the
18 Commission's continually evaluate the impact of the Gulf
19 Intercoastal [sic] Waterway on the State and to publish and
20 present a report to each regular session of the Legislature.

21 Over the past year TxDOT has worked with TTI to
22 conduct an in-depth study of the GIWW and produce a master
23 plan to assess the maintenance needs of the Texas portion
24 and present recommendations to address those steps -- those
25 needs. The finding of the master plan were presented to the

1 Commission in the workshop in June. Of note, the master
2 plan identified the Brazos River floodgates as the greatest
3 challenge in terms of safety and navigational efficiency
4 along the waterway.

5 At the June commission meeting you set aside
6 funding in the UTP to perform a feasibility study on the
7 reconstruction or reconfiguration of the floodgates. Since
8 that time, the Maritime Division has been working with our
9 partners at the Army Corps of Engineers to develop a
10 memorandum of agreement for TxDOT to perform the federally
11 required feasibility study. We are working towards
12 finalizing this agreement in the near future so that we can
13 move forward with the study in 2015.

14 The master plan also documents the added cost
15 industry of a practice known as light-loading barges due to
16 the shallow depth of the waterway. Although the authorized
17 dimensions of the GIWW are twelve foot by one twenty-five,
18 many portions of the channel are not being maintained to
19 those specifications. A lack of federal funding has
20 necessitated that the Corps prioritize and thus limit
21 maintenance practices. As a result, carriers have to
22 light-load barges or load them less to their rated
23 capacities to reduce their draft.

24 In 2013, the need to light-load barges increased
25 the cost of doing business by roughly \$58 million dollars or

1 nearly 15 percent. These costs at some point be passed on
2 to these customers. It should be noted that the TxDOT
3 legislative appropriations request includes an exceptional
4 item for funding the Corps to help dredge the full length of
5 GIWW in Texas to its authorized depth. The Maritime
6 Division is working with the Corps to ensure that the
7 legislative -- if the Legislature appropriates these funds,
8 the Corps will be able to put them to use as they were
9 intended.

10 Staff recommends approval of the Gulf Intercoastal
11 Waterway Report, sir.

12 MR. HOUGHTON: Questions?

13 MR. AUSTIN: So moved, Chairman.

14 MR. UNDERWOOD: Second.

15 MR. HOUGHTON: All in favor?

16 (Chorus of "Ayes")

17 MR. HOUGHTON: Thank you.

18 MR. HARMON: Thank you, sir, General.

19 GENERAL WEBER: Thanks, Dan.

20 From water ways to roadways, Item 5(c) is the
21 Grand Parkway Association Report and will be introduced by
22 Chief Planning and Projects Officer, Russell Zapalac.

23 Russell, thank you.

24 MR. ZAPALAC: Thank you, General.

25 Good morning, Chairman, Commissioners.

1 TxDOT's administrative rules require the
2 Transportation Corporations appear and report to the
3 Commission on an annual basis. This morning, the Grand
4 Parkway Association will be making their annual presentation
5 to discuss progress on Grand Parkway, events and activities
6 over the last year. So with that, I would like to introduce
7 their chairman, Chairman Billy Burr [sic]. I think he would
8 like to say a few words and then David Gornet will do the
9 actual presentation.

10 MR. BURGE: For the record, my name is Billy
11 Burge, and I will say a short, brief statement because David
12 has a report that will not be long, but will be very
13 positive and I think will stimulate really great questions.

14 For a long time, the Grand Parkway has lived for
15 the day about a year ago when a major section opened up and
16 all of a sudden transportation and thinking ahead of the
17 curve became a reality. And the people ask us all the time,
18 What's the Grand Parkway Association all about, besides
19 being an arm of TxDOT? Are you a cheerleader? Do you have
20 money?

21 We hope we're neither of the above, but what we
22 really hope to do is stay ahead of the growth, and that's
23 what makes transportation work and that's what makes -- is
24 very cost -- savings. So the lesson learned from the
25 segment that is now operative and ahead of projections, we

1 are now moving into what we call the weak links or those
2 that here to date, have not had the heavy growth that we
3 have had west, northwest, and southwest, which is Chambers
4 County, Galveston County, Brazoria County, and portions of
5 Fort Bend, and the elected officials are now starting to
6 say, Hey, maybe this isn't so bad after all, and maybe we
7 can get ad valorem taxes ahead out here and we can work on a
8 private/public partnership, not with the contractor, but
9 more importantly with the end user which is a residential
10 project here, commercial, whatever follows so that corridor
11 can come in with some sort of simultaneous with the
12 construction with some taxing-type districts that allow you
13 to do the things that developers really need which is once
14 you get off the freeway, where do you go? How do you really
15 create a critical mass and how do you get your
16 transportation laid out?

17 So we hope that this will continue and I think the
18 chairman for his strong support on this. At the end of the
19 day it's all about leadership. Ned was the right guy at the
20 right time. Jeff is definitely the right guy at this time.
21 He's a doer.

22 I'd like to do a little sidebar. I know what he
23 wrestled with with our friends at Metro in terms of looking
24 a gift horse in the mouth and saying they weren't sure they
25 wanted \$25 million dollars. Well, Commissioner, if you ever

1 have that opportunity again and they say no, you have my
2 home number. We'll take it in a minute because we have a
3 place to make it happen.

4 But I know how hard he worked with the private
5 sector, all the associations, all the things out there and
6 hit it right on target. And as Metro often does, there's a
7 hiccup and they don't see the long-term of things, but
8 hopefully it will work out for you, but Jeff made this
9 happen. I want to thank him very much. I want to thank him
10 for his support, and I want you to know that really, again,
11 the Board, I've not met, but welcome General Weber. I've
12 heard a lot of positive things from my buddies and this
13 whole Commission has been great to work with and I hope that
14 we continue with this last leg will be final golden leg of
15 180 miles.

16 And we will have a plan at the end of his
17 presentation of how we will slide off into the sunset also
18 so you don't have to continue to fill in a bunch of
19 deadbeats.

20 MR. MOSELEY: Chairman, I wanted to -- before
21 Chairman Burge stepped down, just to say a public thank you
22 for his willingness to lead the Grand Parkway Association.
23 Let's go back in time a little bit, but when Bob Lanier was
24 looking to have an individual lead this, he reached out and
25 invited Billy Burge to step up as chair, and, of course,

1 he's not only the former chairman of this commission and
2 former mayor of Houston -- and Billy, how many years have
3 you served as chair? It's been a distinguished tenure that
4 you've had.

5 MR. BURGE: (Indiscernible.)

6 MR. MOSELEY: Yeah, at the Grand Parkway.

7 MR. BURGE: Eighteen years.

8 MR. MOSELEY: Only 18 years?

9 MR. BURGE: I was a little younger.

10 MR. MOSELEY: Well, we appreciate almost two
11 decades of volunteer service and what a record of
12 accomplishment that you've had with the Grand Parkway
13 Association. We look forward to hearing David's
14 presentation, but thank you for what you've done.

15 MR. GORNET: Good morning, Chairman Houghton,
16 Commissioners, General Weber. I'd like to thank Mr. Burge,
17 Mr. Zapalac for the introduction, and Mr. Burge and the
18 Board for the opportunity to serve the Grand Parkway
19 Association.

20 For the record, my name is David Gornet; I am
21 speaking today as the executive director of the Grand
22 Parkway Association, and I'm going to present the annual
23 report. One comment of note is this is our 30th
24 anniversary, October 20 -- thirty, plus one month, October
25 25th, 1984, the Grand Parkway Association was created by an

1 act of the Commission, and for the past 30 years and one
2 month, we have been serving the city of Houston -- the
3 metropolitan area of Houston, its residents, and the State
4 of Texas in promoting the development of the Grand Parkway.

5 As Billy noted it's about 180 miles, a 184 miles.
6 It's not a complete loop. It stops along 146, but if you
7 include that portion of 146 from the Fred Hartman Bridge,
8 south through Harris County, into Galveston County, down to
9 Texas City, where we would connect back up to Segment A, it
10 makes a 200-mile loop around the metropolitan Houston area.
11 It might be quite a bike ride when we get all of that
12 finished. We can have the Houston 200 or something going
13 around there.

14 Covering each of the segments, as I mentioned
15 Segment A, Segment A, we completed a feasibility study a
16 number of years ago. That remains unchanged. That we would
17 propose no new road construction there, rather than
18 expansion of existing facilities and/or dual designation of
19 some of those existing State facilities to be designated as
20 either business 99 or State Highway 99.

21 Segment B from I-45 to State Highway 288, through
22 Galveston and Brazoria Counties, in this area Galveston and
23 Brazoria both have primacy for that segment that they
24 asserted in 2009. The final environmental impact statement
25 is being prepared and will be submitted in spring. We

1 expect to have that approved and we would request a Record
2 of Decision during the summer of 2015.

3 Segment C through Fort Bend and Brazoria Counties,
4 from State Highway 288 to US 59 was approved. It's final
5 environmental impact statement signed in 2013, Record of
6 Decision issued in 2013. Again, Fort Bend and Brazoria have
7 primacy there and Fort Bend is looking to implement some
8 elements of State Highway 99 south of US 59 as part of the
9 widening of Crabb River Road that they're considering.

10 Segment D, the oldest portion of the Grand Parkway
11 was opened in 1994, August of 1994; it's 20 years old now.
12 When Fort Bend took primacy, they saw a need to do work
13 there. They went and invested \$145 million dollars and this
14 year, this spring, we saw the reflection of that as they cut
15 the ribbon on nine new overpasses that completed the
16 controlled-access then portion of Segment D and eliminated
17 the at-grade intersections that the users would have to
18 traverse.

19 They opened those in April. Since then, they've
20 been collecting tolls on that to help pay off the debt that
21 they incurred on that. The public can now travel those 18
22 miles nonstop from US 59 all the way up to I-10.

23 As Mr. Burge mentioned, the big deal this year for
24 fiscal '14 was the opening of Segment E from I-10 to US 290.
25 In December, 2013, Commissioner Moseley cut the ribbon on

1 that. The next week we opened it to traffic right before
2 Christmas. We saw quite a bit of use of that segment. We
3 opened it initially in a non-toll environment, as a free
4 road, but as we know, no roads are free, but we gave people
5 an opportunity to use it, to see how it might benefit them
6 and we were recording about 34,000 vehicles a day using it
7 before we started charging tolls on February 1st.

8 We saw a corresponding decrease in traffic on
9 February 1st. Early February we dropped down to about
10 19,000 vehicles a day; however, by the end of the fiscal
11 year, we were back up to 28,000 vehicles a day, and as of
12 the end of October, we are running about 30,000 vehicles a
13 day on our average. Now, the public, as they could from
14 I-10 -- from 59 to I-10, they can drive all the way to 290,
15 33 miles without you going through stoplights.

16 Earlier this summer, General Weber, you were there
17 at the ribbon cutting for the direct connectors at I-10 on
18 June 16th, I believe. And so now we have all that fully
19 directional interchange at I-10 completed.

20 Segments F-1, F-2, and G continue their
21 development with our design build partner, Zachry-Odebrecht
22 Parkway Builders. Their project, all 38 miles, is to be
23 opened in late 2015, a mere 12 months from now. That is
24 eagerly anticipated by all the folks that live up in that
25 side of town. We get numerous calls about when it's going

1 to be completed. Last year I had 40 invitations to go and
2 speak to various interest groups, realtors that want to know
3 how it's going to impact their area, chambers of commerce,
4 cities, homeowners' associations; in fact, tonight I go to
5 speak to another homeowners' association up near the
6 Woodlands on what the project is going to bring to them in
7 the next year.

8 Segments H and I-1 through Montgomery, Harris,
9 Liberty, and Chambers County are the next segments that we
10 see being developed. The Commission took action in fiscal
11 2014 to authorize the Department to pursue a procurement for
12 that project. A request for qualifications was issued in
13 July of this year that followed the approval of the final
14 environmental impact statement and the issuance of a record
15 decision by federal highways that is allowing us to move
16 forward on that. We, at the Grand Parkway Association, are
17 currently involved in doing a re-evaluation of that final
18 environmental impact statement in response to some
19 developments that have occurred in the vicinity of the
20 approved route.

21 Segment I-2, from I-10 east in the Mont Belvieu
22 area on around into Baytown, a portion of that opened in
23 2008. Part of this procurement that you authorized this
24 summer also allows us to advance the balance of Segment I-2
25 from FM 1405 west ward over to State Highway 146. We refer

1 to that as Segment I-2(b). And we look forward to
2 continuing to work with the Department in procuring that.

3 In respect to your time, that completes my report
4 for the Association. I would like to thank you, the Austin
5 staff, the Houston staff, the Beaumont District staff for
6 all of your efforts this year and in years past to develop
7 the Grand Parkway and for allowing the Association and
8 myself the opportunity to work with you and all of the
9 superior individuals that work for the Department.

10 MR. HOUGHTON: Any questions of David?

11 MR. MOSELEY: Chairman, I wanted to say a thank
12 you to David for his service, as well, to the Grand Parkway.

13 You've been with the Grand Parkway how many years?

14 MR. GORNET: Fifteen years directly with them and
15 I worked as a consultant for fifteen years prior to that.

16 MR. MOSELEY: So you really have a distinguished
17 record of service nearly from the very beginning of the
18 creation, and I want to say thanks for that.

19 As David mentioned, as Chairman Burge mentioned,
20 Grand Parkway Association has been so successful it's
21 working itself out of a job because we are looking at the
22 last segments of that and maybe, David, you'd like to share
23 some of the discussions that you're having with Chairman
24 Burge and with your Board about some next steps and how you
25 see the future of the Grand Parkway Association?

1 MR. GORNET: Yes, sir, Commissioner.

2 As I noted, we're doing the re-eval on Segment H
3 and we're finishing up the final environmental impact
4 statement on Segment B. That will complete the charge that
5 has been delivered by the Commission to the Association,
6 unless you all choose to give us all some more work to do,
7 which we would welcome.

8 We have tried to identify ways to reduce our
9 costs. Seeing that at one time we had multiple segments
10 under study, now we annual have these two and those will be
11 completed here probably at least the end of calendar year
12 '15, if not fiscal '15, so we have come up with a
13 transaction plan. Coincidentally, our office lease was
14 expiring the end of November here. Our office space, the
15 landlord wanted to raise the rate by 50 percent and wanted
16 us to sign a six-year lease which was not in the best
17 interests of the Association or the Department, so we have
18 extended that two more months. We have also coordinated
19 with the Houston District and Mike Alford has identified
20 that he has some office space available that we can move
21 into and use there at the Houston District.

22 Likewise, as a full-time employee of the
23 Association, I have suggested to the Board that it would be
24 appropriate that at the end of the year that I no longer be
25 a full-time employee, I become a part-time employee of the

1 Association; likewise, my administrative assistant Donna,
2 she could do so. I would think that two days a week or
3 whatever number of hours a day it takes to answer the phone
4 and respond to communications, do presentations if
5 necessary, will be suitable for the time being.

6 I will, of course, be available to the Department
7 as they continue to do their procurements on H and I-1 or
8 complete those on F-1, F-2, and G, as they need it. Our
9 intent is to be transparent to the public so that as people
10 are calling and asking for information, that they can still
11 call our phone number; they can still go to our web page; I
12 can still receive e-mails and all that. I would just
13 transfer to the TxDOT office and use their space there as
14 our mailing address for the Association. We believe that
15 will cut our costs in half for this year and as new tasks
16 come up or we complete the tasks of working with the
17 Department on the completion of procurements or with the
18 counties that have primacy, that those will -- our needs
19 will diminish, and eventually, as you noted, Commissioner,
20 we are working ourselves out of a job.

21 MR. MOSELEY: Well, I appreciate it, Chairman, and
22 Members, hearing that the Grand Parkway Association isn't
23 waiting for us to ask them for an exit strategy. They have
24 already taken an initiative to provide that for us and I was

25

1 very pleased to hear this initiative on behalf of Grand
2 Parkway.

3 Thank you, David.

4 MR. GORNET: Thank you, Commissioner.

5 MR. HOUGHTON: Thank you, David, very much.

6 MR. AUSTIN: I've got one quick question. One,
7 congratulations on your success, but one of the initial
8 objectives, I guess, missions of the Grand Parkway
9 Association was to help secure right of way around the
10 entire corridor. As we look at the next sections, are ya'll
11 working or do you have some to the best -- what you can say
12 right now, are you able to move forward in that direction?

13 MR. GORNET: We have -- have developed and are
14 working on relationships with all the landowners throughout
15 the corridor, the northeast side, Segments H and I-1, as
16 well as on the south side. The -- yes, the goal was to get
17 as much of the right of way secured or donated or at least
18 to keep it from developing so that when we need to build the
19 road that we're not trying to buy somebody's house; we have
20 a quarter that's been protected.

21 We have some -- have had some large numbers of
22 success in protecting the corridors. Donations have been a
23 little more difficult to come by in the current business
24 environment. There are -- there are some, particularly
25 large landowners who have said, okay, we think that we can

1 make that work, and we're looking at that. We're working
2 with some down south that appear to be willing to do that in
3 League City, Galveston County area also, and in other areas
4 of Fort Bend and Brazoria County.

5 MR. AUSTIN: Thank you.

6 MR. HOUGHTON: Thank you, again, David.

7 Moving on.

8 GENERAL WEBER: Next is Item 6, award of our
9 aviation, federal, and state grant funding, and our Director
10 of Aviation, Dave Fulton will present.

11 MR. FULTON: Thank you, General Weber, Chairman
12 Houghton, Commissioners. For the record, my name is Dave
13 Fulton, director of TxDOT's Aviation Division. This minute
14 order contains a request for grant funding approval for five
15 airport improvement projects. The total estimated costs of
16 all requests shown in Exhibit A is approximately \$1.8
17 million dollars; approximately \$1.1 million federal,
18 \$200,000 in State funds, and \$500,000 in local funds.

19 A public hearing was held on October 24th. No
20 comments were received. We would recommend approval of this
21 minute order.

22 MR. HOUGHTON: Is there a motion?

23 MR. AUSTIN: So moved.

24 MR. UNDERWOOD: Second.

25 MR. HOUGHTON: All in favor?

1 (Chorus of "Ayes")

2 MR. HOUGHTON: Thanks, Dave.

3 GENERAL WEBER: Item 7, award of transportation
4 development credits, Director of Public Transportation, Eric
5 Gleason will present.

6 Eric?

7 MR. GLEASON: Good morning, General Weber,
8 Mr. Chairman, Members of the Commission. For the record, my
9 name is Eric Gleason, TxDOT Director of Public
10 Transportation. Agenda Item 7 awards 240,000 transportation
11 development credits to the Texarkana Urban Transit District.
12 These TDCs, will be used to match Federal Transit
13 Administration Discretionary Program Funds awarded to
14 Texarkana for the purchase of replacement fleet. We
15 reviewed Texarkana's requests prior to their submission for
16 funding and agreed that if they were successful in obtaining
17 federal funds for these purposes, that we would recommend an
18 award of TDCs by the Commission for match purposes. This
19 award is consistent with previous Commission actions in
20 support of fleet replacement efforts.

21 Staff recommends your approval of this minute
22 order.

23 MR. HOUGHTON: Questions? Motions?

24 MR. AUSTIN: So moved.

25 MR. UNDERWOOD: Second.

1 MR. HOUGHTON: All in favor?

2 (Chorus of "Ayes")

3 MR. HOUGHTON: Thanks.

4 MR. GLEASON: Thank you.

5 MR. HOUGHTON: Thanks, Eric.

6 GENERAL WEBER: Item 8(a)(1), proposed adoption of
7 rules to Chapter 4, employee practices. Chief of staff,
8 Rich McMonagle will present.

9 Chief?

10 MR. McMONAGLE: Thank you, General Weber. Good
11 morning, Chairman Houghton and Commissioners. My name is
12 Rich McMonagle and I'm the chief of staff.

13 Before addressing the item at hand, I would like
14 to introduce David McMillan, who is our new Human Resource
15 Division Director.

16 MR. HOUGHTON: Howdy, David.

17 MR. McMILLAN: Hello.

18 MR. McMONAGLE: David started last Monday and he
19 comes to us with vast experience in the HR field, all in the
20 private sector.

21 Now, on to the minute order before you which will
22 enhance the Department's management of our substance abuse
23 program by making it more equitable and reduce confusion by
24 changing a term which has a different meaning in USDOT
25 regulations. It authorizes the Department to conduct random

1 drug and alcohol testing on all employees who perform duties
2 that could pose a threat to public safety if performed while
3 impaired.

4 It further specifies that causing a serious
5 vehicle or non-vehicle incident constitutes reasonable cause
6 to believe that an employee is working under the influence
7 of drugs or alcohol, permitting the Department to require
8 the employee to undergo drug and alcohol testing and
9 requires current employees to pass drug and alcohol tests
10 before being transferred or promoted into a position as a
11 commercial driver, safety-sensitive employee, or vestal crew
12 member.

13 Restrictions on the number of off-duty alcohol and
14 drug-related driving offenses are also tightened, therefore,
15 staff recommends approval of this minute order now before
16 you. I'll be happy to address your questions.

17 MR. HOUGHTON: Motion?

18 MR. UNDERWOOD: So moved.

19 MR. AUSTIN: Second.

20 MR. HOUGHTON: All in favor?

21 (Chorus of "Ayes")

22 MR. HOUGHTON: Thanks, Rich.

23 GENERAL WEBER: Next is Item 9, Compliance, Ethics
24 and Investigations Report, Director of the Office of

25

1 Compliance Ethics and Investigations, Suzanne Latimer will
2 present.

3 Suzanne?

4 MS. LATIMER: Good morning. I would also like to
5 thank the Commission for their time this month in the ethics
6 training. I appreciate you all setting time aside for me to
7 come and visit.

8 For the record, I am Suzanne Latimer, Director of
9 the Office of Compliance, Ethics, and Investigations for
10 TxDOT. The purpose of this report is to provide a summary
11 of information related to investigations for the month of
12 October, 2014, in accordance with Transportation Code
13 201.452 and 201.454. There were 17 allegations were
14 assigned for investigation. Eighteen investigations were
15 closed in during October and four of these were
16 substantiated.

17 No further action is needed. Thank you.

18 MR. HOUGHTON: Thank you, Suzanne.

19 GENERAL WEBER: Item 10, the Unified
20 Transportation Program will be presented by Director of
21 Transportation Planning and Programming, James.

22 MR. KOCH: For the record, my name is James Koch,
23 Transportation Planning and Programming Division Director
24 for TxDOT.

25

1 This minute order approves updates to the 2015
2 UTP. The UTP is the ten-year transportation planning
3 document that guides and is intended to control project
4 development efforts for the Department. The Commission
5 approved the 2015 UTP on August 28th, 2014. A statewide
6 public meeting was held via WebEx on Thursday, October
7 16th, 2014, to discuss the proposed updates to the 2015 UTP.
8 A briefing regarding the proposed updates was also provided
9 during the October Commission meeting.

10 The formal public hearing to receive comments and
11 testimony was conducted Thursday, November 6th, 2014, at
12 10:00 a.m. Comments regarding the proposed amendments were
13 accepted until November 17th, 2014 at 4:00 p.m. No formal
14 comments were received.

15 This minute order also authorizes \$402 million
16 dollars of funding for energy sector and safety projects in
17 response to the recent approval from the LBB and the
18 Governor's Office. A change to note is that at the request
19 of the Administration, we are deferring action to transfer
20 \$25 million dollars of funding from the IH 610 busway in
21 Houston. This action will be reconsidered in the February
22 UTP.

23 Staff recommends approval of the proposed updates
24 to the UTP. We will be glad to address any questions the
25 Commission may have.

1 MR. HOUGHTON: We got no formal comments --

2 MR. KOCH: No, sir.

3 MR. HOUGHTON: -- regarding the UTP?

4 MR. KOCH: No, sir.

5 MR. HOUGHTON: Okay.

6 MR. AUSTIN: I just had one comment. I think the
7 project in Dallas, US 75, there's been some local action
8 requesting that they don't want that on their plate any
9 more, but because of a time frame, we have to include it in
10 here right now. We can't remove it. That would require
11 subsequent action later?

12 MR. KOCH: That's correct. Yes, we can do that in
13 the February update.

14 MR. AUSTIN: Okay.

15 MR. HOUGHTON: Which project is this, the
16 Blacklands?

17 MR. AUSTIN: No, the Blacklands -- I don't think
18 US 75 going north -- the Blacklands, actually.

19 MR. HOUGHTON: It's the Blacklands.

20 MR. KOCH: Blacklands.

21 MR. HOUGHTON: Yeah, described as the Blacklands,
22 okay.

23 We can't do anything about that, not yet?

24 MR. GLEASON: We'll be able to consider that as
25 part of the February update to the UTP.

1 MR. HOUGHTON: Did the locals -- excuse me -- the
2 locals take this off their plan?

3 MR. WILLIAMS: Yes, the locals elected to take
4 that off their plan here recently. The only reason the
5 project was in our plan was as an illustrative purpose.
6 Because it was in the local plan --

7 MR. HOUGHTON: Okay.

8 MR. WILLIAMS: -- there's no funding that we have
9 on it, so it would be appropriate for us to consider a
10 corresponding change to the UTP for the February revision.

11 MR. HOUGHTON: Okay. Very good.

12 MR. UNDERWOOD: Marc, before you step down, of
13 this, this is basically taking and reallocating the money
14 that that'll be released; is that correct?

15 MR. WILLIAMS: Yes, sir. As we briefed the
16 Commission last month, with the letter that we received from
17 the LBB for approval and with the discussion and the
18 direction that we received from the Commission, we have been
19 working with staff and our districts to identify all of the
20 projects and your action today will include allocations of
21 the \$402 million dollars for safety and energy sector
22 projects around the state.

23 MR. UNDERWOOD: And my question -- I'm waiting for
24 the second question, and, John, of this money, if I remember

25

1 correctly, about \$69 million of it is going to go to the
2 Odessa, Midland-Odessa area; is that correct?

3 MR. WILLIAMS: Yes, sir. I think it's in that
4 range. Yes, sir.

5 MR. UNDERWOOD: Okay. So this should address
6 Mr. Beecham's comments earlier that we're not taking care
7 of, you know, their area.

8 MR. WILLIAMS: It's a pretty significant step by
9 this Commission to request --

10 MR. UNDERWOOD: Sixty-nine --

11 MR. WILLIAMS: Yes, sir.

12 MR. UNDERWOOD: I want a little over 69 --

13 MR. HOUGHTON: Well, that's the first wave of
14 money.

15 MR. UNDERWOOD: Exactly.

16 MR. HOUGHTON: Right.

17 MR. UNDERWOOD: But I'm just saying that out of
18 the, what, 200 million, 69 of it is just going to the
19 Midland-Odessa area is my point.

20 MR. WILLIAMS: It's a good point. Good point,
21 Fred.

22 MR. HOUGHTON: Any other questions?

23 MR. UNDERWOOD: I move for --

24 MR. HOUGHTON: Wait a minute.

25 MR. UNDERWOOD: Oh, you got --

1 MR. HOUGHTON: Sorry. Where's Gary?

2 Come on, Paul, since you're here. Paul Wageman,
3 Board member, Dallas Area Rapid Transit. Just change the
4 name.

5 MR. WAGEMAN: Chairman Houghton, good morning,
6 Members of the Commission, General Weber. My name is Paul
7 Wageman, I'm a member of the board of directors of the
8 Dallas Area Rapid Transit up in North Texas. We just wanted
9 to take a minute this morning to indicate our support for
10 the UTP amendments that you're going to consider here
11 shortly. We thank you for your commitment to these
12 important projects.

13 DART is particularly appreciative of its
14 longstanding relationship with TxDOT in providing
15 transportation options for the citizens of north Texas. We
16 particularly appreciate the relationship that we've had with
17 your engineer up there, Bill Hale, and we're going to miss
18 him in North Texas, but are grateful that the State will now
19 have the benefit from his talents and expertise.

20 Thank you again for the opportunity to appear
21 before you this morning and for your support of these
22 projects.

23 MR. HOUGHTON: Does this remind you of days gone
24 by, Paul?

25

1 MR. WAGEMAN: This is a much friendlier group that
2 I appeared before.

3 (Laughter)

4 But I have many fond memories of the partnerships that
5 this agency has with all the transportation providers in
6 North Texas and very much appreciate your support and
7 friendship.

8 MR. MOSELEY: On a personal note, thank you for
9 all of your leadership for North Texas.

10 MR. WAGEMAN: Thank you.

11 MR. HOUGHTON: Yes, Paul, thank you.

12 MR. MOSELEY: And people don't really appreciate
13 all the time that you've given. He did not have gray hair
14 when he started this process.

15 MR. WAGEMAN: Again, thank you.

16 MR. HOUGHTON: Thanks, Paul.

17 Now, I'll entertain the motion.

18 MR. UNDERWOOD: So moved.

19 MR. MOSELEY: Second.

20 MR. HOUGHTON: All in favor?

21 (Chorus of "Ayes")

22 MR. HOUGHTON: Thank you.

23 GENERAL WEBER: James, if you'll continue with
24 Item 11(a) concerns the designation of I-69 East in Oasis
25 County.

1 MR. HOUGHTON: You been out hanging signs again --

2 MR. KOCH: There we go.

3 MR. HOUGHTON: -- in Austin?

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes, sir.

5 MR. HOUGHTON: Have you?

6 MR. KOCH: Good morning, again. For the record,

7 my name is James Koch, Transportation, Planning and

8 Programming Division Director for TxDOT.

9 I would like to take a moment to recognize Mr. Al
10 Alonzi, our FHWA Division Administrator. Is he still
11 here -- Al -- okay -- for his assistance in coordinating
12 these designations with the Washington office.

13 I'll begin with an overview of both Items 11(a)
14 and 11(b) and then staff recommendations for each individual
15 item. Two highway segments within the I-69 system are
16 currently under construction and are nearing completion and
17 are eligible to be designated on the State Highway System as
18 part of the I-69 system concurrent with their existing route
19 number. In accordance with Appendix B to 23 CFR, Part 470,
20 Subpart A, and the policies of the Federal Highway
21 Administration and the American Association of State Highway
22 and Transportation Officials, AASHTO, the Department has
23 made individual requests to designate these two highway
24 segments as part of the United States Interstate Highway
25 System. Before these segments can be added to the

1 Interstate system, AASHTO must approve the Department
2 application to recognize and number the highway system as
3 part of the Interstate system.

4 These were approved at the 2014 AASHTO spring
5 meeting; furthermore, FHWA must confirm that the highway
6 segment meets the applicable FHWA interstate designation
7 regulations and criteria and approve any associated design
8 exception requests. Upon confirmation, the FHWA
9 administrator must take action to approve the addition
10 highway segment to the interstate system.

11 Since these segments are under construction, the
12 Texas division of the Federal Highway Administration has
13 conditionally approved these segments. Final approval will
14 be effective upon formal notification that the work has been
15 completed to Interstate standards and approval by the
16 administrator of the FHWA.

17 Item 11(a) is a minute order designating a 1.6
18 mile segment of US 77 in Oasis County from the existing
19 I-69E terminus in Robstown to south of FM 892 to extend
20 I-69E south. This designation will be effective upon formal
21 notification from FHWA that the work has been completed to
22 Interstate standards and approval by the administrator of
23 the FHWA.

24
25

1 Staff recommends approval of this highway segment
2 as shown in Exhibit A to be designated on the State Highway
3 system concurrent with the existing route number.

4 MR. HOUGHTON: I'm waiting.

5 MR. AUSTIN: I am honored to make the motion to
6 move.

7 MR. UNDERWOOD: Second.

8 MR. HOUGHTON: All in favor?

9 (Chorus of "Ayes")

10 MR. HOUGHTON: Please continue, James, with the
11 designation of I-69C in Hidalgo County.

12 MR. KOCH: For the record, again, my name is James
13 Koch, Transportation Planning and Programming Division
14 Director for TxDOT. Item 11(b) is a minute order
15 designating a 4.5 mile segment of US 281 in Hidalgo County
16 from the junction of FM 490 to the existing I-69C terminus
17 in Edinburg to extend I-69C north.

18 This designation will be effective upon formal
19 notification from FHWA that the work has been completed to
20 Interstate standards and approval by the administrator of
21 the FHWA.

22 Staff recommends approval of this highway segment
23 as shown in Exhibit A to be designated on the State Highway
24 System concurrent with the existing route number.

25

1 MR. AUSTIN: I will make the approve this also,
2 but I have just one quick question.

3 MR. KOCH: Yes, sir?

4 MR. AUSTIN: With the designation of this six
5 miles of these two projects, that will bring us, Marc or
6 James, you might know, close to 200 miles.

7 MR. KOCH: 147 miles.

8 MR. AUSTIN: 147?

9 MR. KOCH: Yes, sir.

10 MR. AUSTIN: And we have some others that are
11 underway right now also?

12 MR. KOCH: We have a 12-mile segment in Houston
13 that we hope to get cleared this winter.

14 MR. AUSTIN: Great. Thank you.

15 MR. HOUGHTON: Outstanding work.

16 MR. UNDERWOOD: I second Commissioner Austin's
17 motion to approve.

18 MR. HOUGHTON: All in favor?

19 (Chorus of "Ayes")

20 MR. HOUGHTON: Thank you.

21 MR. KOCH: Thanks, James.

22 GENERAL WEBER: Item 12(a) the Central Texas
23 Turnpike System revenue bonds, our Chief Financial Officer,
24 James Bass will present.

25

1 MR. HOUGHTON: Mr. Bass graces us with his
2 presence.

3 MR. BASS: Thank you. Good morning, Mr. Chairman.
4 Commissioners, for the record, my name is James Bass and I'm
5 Chief Financial Officer at TxDOT.

6 Item 12(a) would approve an amended and restated
7 seventh supplemental indenture authorizing the issuance of
8 one or more series of refunding bonds for the Central Texas
9 Turnpike System. This particular item is very similar to
10 one that the Commission took last month that was associated
11 with the Mobility Fund and that earlier this year you gave
12 staff authorization to issue refunding bonds, but thanks to
13 rates staying low and even going lower in the market, there
14 could be an opportunity to achieve more savings by refunding
15 additional bonds. The main thing that this item does is
16 increases the cap of the amount of refunding bonds we can
17 issue and we will do so subject market pricing at the time
18 we go to market.

19 Staff recommends your approval and I would be
20 happy to answer any questions you may have.

21 MR. HOUGHTON: And you take responsibility for the
22 right movement, too, don't you?

23 MR. BASS: Yes, sir.

24 MR. HOUGHTON: Or Finance Division does?

25 MR. BASS: Yes.

1 MR. HOUGHTON: I thought so.

2 MR. AUSTIN: What is our projected net present-day
3 savings?

4 MR. BASS: Around in excess of 200 million.

5 MR. HOUGHTON: Which is amazing.

6 MR. AUSTIN: Which is amazing, yeah, in a
7 percentage that's --

8 MR. BASS: On the par amount of the bonds, I'm not
9 sure if it quite gets to ten percent, but it's well in
10 excess of our guideline of a minimum of three percent.

11 MR. AUSTIN: Three percent. And that's what I
12 wanted to point out, is that what you, Ben, and your team
13 are doing to manage our balance sheet and really save some
14 funds, wow. Thanks to the interest rates, too, but I thank
15 you all for what you're doing and I make a motion that we
16 approve.

17 MR. UNDERWOOD: Second.

18 MR. HOUGHTON: All in favor?

19 (Chorus of "Ayes")

20 GENERAL WEBER: James please continue with 12(b,
21 the Texas Mobility Fund.

22 MR. BASS: Item 12(b) would direct staff to enter
23 into an agreement on a project that was recently approved in
24 the UTP and staff would then enter into an agreement with
25 the Capital Metro Transportation Authority here in Austin to

1 transfer funds to them so they could manage and implement
2 the earlier previously-approved project.

3 Staff recommends your approval and would be happy
4 to answer any questions.

5 MR. HOUGHTON: No one showed up? No one, really?
6 Hard to believe.

7 Is there a motion?

8 MR. AUSTIN: So moved.

9 MR. UNDERWOOD: Second.

10 MR. HOUGHTON: All in favor?

11 (Chorus of "Ayes")

12 MR. BASS: Thank you.

13 MR. HOUGHTON: Thanks, James.

14 GENERAL WEBER: Item 13 is our professional
15 services contracts and it's being presented by Chief
16 Procurement and Field Operations Officer, Lauren Garduno.

17 Lauren, thanks.

18 MR. GARDUNO: Thank you, General, Chairman,
19 Commissioners. For the record, my name is Lauren Garduno,
20 and I'm the Chief Procurement and Field Support Operations
21 for the Texas Department of Transportation.

22 Item 13 authorizes the Department to exceed the
23 contract term restrictions for the procurement of statewide
24 engineering and land surveying services under the indefinite
25 deliverable contracts. These contracts will provide for

1 consultant services associated with the planning,
2 development, and implementation of statewide transportation
3 projects that the Department identifies as candidates for
4 being innovatively funded or developed using non-traditional
5 delivery methods.

6 In connection with these efforts, the Department
7 intends to enter into up to 20 indefinite deliverable
8 contracts with the sum of all contracts not to exceed a
9 total of \$300 million dollars and a single contract not to
10 exceed a contract dollar value of 20 million.

11 Initial work authorizations may be issued no
12 longer than six years after the contract is executed. These
13 contracts will be for the provision of general engineering
14 consultant services, design services, construction oversight
15 services, independent engineering services, operations and
16 maintenance services, statewide public/private partnership
17 procurement engineering consultants, and program management
18 consultant services for statewide right of way acquisition
19 oversight and right of way lease procurement services that
20 include roadway engineering and land surveying.

21 Longer potential terms for these contracts are
22 essential to allow these professionals to oversee the
23 various 3P projects efficiently.

24 Staff recommends approval of this minute order and
25 we're here to answer any questions.

1 MR. HOUGHTON: Motion?

2 MR. AUSTIN: So moved.

3 MR. UNDERWOOD: Second.

4 MR. HOUGHTON: All in favor?

5 (Chorus of "Ayes")

6 MR. HOUGHTON: Thanks, Lauren.

7 GENERAL WEBER: Item 14(a) consists of the
8 awarding of contracts for maintenance and department
9 building construction contracts. Our Director of
10 Construction, John Obr, will present.

11 MR. OBR: Good morning. For the record, I'm John
12 Obr, Director of Construction Division.

13 Item 14(a) is for consideration of the award or
14 rejection of highway maintenance and department building
15 construction contracts let on November 4th and 5th of 2014.

16 We present 19 projects today. The average number
17 of bids per project was 3.89. The low-bid value was
18 \$32,240,721.51. We had an overall underrun of 3.97 percent.

19 Staff recommends award of all maintenance
20 projects.

21 MR. HOUGHTON: Motion?

22 MR. AUSTIN: So moved.

23 MR. UNDERWOOD: Second.

24 MR. HOUGHTON: All in favor?

25 (Chorus of "Ayes")

1 GENERAL WEBER: John, please proceed with Item
2 14(b), the construction contracts.

3 MR. OBR: Item 14(b) is for consideration of the
4 award or rejection of highway and transportation enhancement
5 building construction contracts. Let on November 4th and
6 5th, 2014. We present 42 projects to date. The average
7 number of bids per project was 4.17. The low-bid value was
8 \$200,451,155.54.

9 The awards are split as three projects on mobility
10 totaling \$67,510,977.69 and 39 projects and preservation
11 totaling \$132,940,177.85. We had an overall underrun of
12 1.09 percent.

13 Staff recommends award of all construction
14 projects.

15 MR. HOUGHTON: Do you have a motion?

16 MR. AUSTIN: So moved.

17 MR. UNDERWOOD: Second.

18 MR. HOUGHTON: All in favor?

19 (Chorus of "Ayes")

20 MR. OBR: Thank you.

21 MR. HOUGHTON: Thanks, John.

22 GENERAL WEBER: Okay. This brings us to Item 15,
23 the eminent domain proceedings. Our director of right of
24 way, John Campbell, will present.

25

1 MR. CAMPBELL: Good morning, for the record, my
2 name is John Campbell, director of right of way division. I
3 would like to present for your consideration, Item 15, which
4 authorizes the filing of condemnation proceedings necessary
5 to progress the acquisition of 26 parcels by exercise of
6 eminent domain.

7 Staff recommends your approval.

8 MR. HOUGHTON: Is there a motion?

9 MR. MOSELEY: Chairman, on behalf of behalf of
10 Commissioner Vandergriff, I am pleased to move that the
11 Texas transportation Commission authorized the Texas
12 Department of Transportation to use the power of eminent
13 domain to acquire the properties described in the minute
14 order set forth in the agenda for the current month for
15 construction, reconstruction, maintenance, widening,
16 straightening, or extending the highway facilities listed in
17 the minute order as a part of the State Highway System, and
18 that the first record vote applies to all units or property
19 to be condemned.

20 MR. UNDERWOOD: I'll second his motion.

21 MR. HOUGHTON: All in favor?

22 (Chorus of "Ayes")

23 MR. HOUGHTON: Thank you, John.

24 GENERAL WEBER: Item 16 contains the routine
25 minute orders, including donations to the Department, our

1 real estate dispositions and donations, reports, highway
2 designations, access control, and speed zones.

3 MR. HOUGHTON: Is there a motion on the routine
4 minute orders?

5 MR. AUSTIN: So moved.

6 MR. UNDERWOOD: Second.

7 MR. HOUGHTON: All in favor?

8 (Chorus of "Ayes")

9 MR. HOUGHTON: Any other items on the agenda?

10 GENERAL WEBER: We have several people that would
11 like to speak in open session. The first would be Jeff Kahn
12 (ph), is that your name? Jeff, from Lubbock Association of
13 Realtors? Not here.

14 The other members -- now, I want to remind those
15 in open session that first, it's three minutes. Would you
16 limit your comments to three minutes, and we cannot engage
17 in that conversation with you all; we'll hear what you have
18 to say.

19 We have about a dozen and this is State Highway 68
20 Project Rio Grande Valley, Hidalgo County, the president,
21 Phillip Rivera, Rivera's Machinery. Phillip?

22 MR. UNDERWOOD: Before ya'll -- they start, I
23 would like to thank ya'll that are here for waiting this
24 long. Thank you for your patience. We appreciate it. It
25 is important, what you have to say, and we understand that,

1 but we also have our business that we have to take care of
2 for the State.

3 MR. HOUGHTON: Thank you.

4 MR. UNDERWOOD: You're welcome.

5 MR. RIVERA: Chairman Houghton, Commissioners of
6 TxDOT, thank you very much for the opportunity for
7 allowing -- and allowing time and a forum for us, as
8 citizens of Texas to come and express our opinions and
9 concerns. Also let me say thank you for the important work
10 that TxDOT does throughout our state.

11 My name is Phillip Rivera, President of Rivera's
12 Machinery, a farm equipment dealership located on Interstate
13 2, Donna, Texas, in Hidalgo County.

14 The reason for my appearance before you today is
15 in regards to the devastating effect of the proposed routing
16 of State Highway 68 will have on our business. At stake for
17 us, along with our 13 employees, is nothing less than the
18 survival of our business. This proposed route will close
19 our business of 40 years and is something from which we
20 might not be able to financially recover from.

21 Start-up costs for a new location in our business
22 are very expensive. Current land and building construction
23 costs will make relocating to a comparable site, a
24 cost-prohibitive adventure.

25

1 In 1990, a highway project forced us to move from
2 our McAllen location to the site where we are now. Why not
3 move again? Land and building costs for a comparable site
4 are now ten times higher than they were then.

5 Since TxDOT will not pay replacement costs for
6 re-establishing a business, we probably won't be able to
7 afford a relocation, so say nothing of the time and efforts
8 that would be involved with such a move. I believe that we
9 have a viable alternative in our case that will save our
10 business. In 2009, the Hidalgo County Regional Mobility
11 Association proposed a route that passed just to our east
12 through an open hay field and coincidentally, it's for sale.
13 This area has no businesses or homes on it, but this slight
14 shift to our east could literally be the difference between
15 our business surviving or not, as well as save the State
16 valuable highway dollars.

17 I believe it's in the State's interests to keep
18 good tax-paying businesses in operation and not force their
19 closing. Such actions are contrary to the image of a
20 business-friendly environment promoted and encouraged by our
21 great state. We sell and service two brands of farm
22 tractors and literally have hundreds of customers who depend
23 on us to keep their machinery productive. We have the
24 distinct and high privilege of working with farmers and
25 ranchers, salt-of-the-earth people, and all we are asking

1 for is your assistance in helping us continue in this now
2 third-generation business that we love.

3 In 40 years we have seen hurricanes, droughts,
4 freezes, peso devaluations and have survived all manner of
5 these financial challenges. It would be a shame to lose our
6 business after all that to a State Highway project. I
7 appeal to your sense of fairness, decency, which compels me
8 to respectfully ask for your help in this matter.

9 Thank you, good day.

10 MR. HOUGHTON: Thank you very much.

11 The next speaker, Daniel Fike.

12 MR. DANIEL FYKE: Thank you for seeing us today
13 and a little background on us; we're the Fike family. We
14 have been farming in the area for 40 years, 50 years
15 almost -- well, since the '40s and I'm a fourth generation
16 farmer in the family. We have the fifth coming up right
17 now.

18 The road will devastate our area. Our farm will
19 be cut off from 80 percent of its land and it's going to be
20 too hard to bring heavy equipment across a six-lane highway.
21 We first heard about this project in 2009, it was an RMA
22 project. We met with the guys. We gave them alternative
23 routes to what they were thinking, and it died. They said
24 it was unfeasible, so we thought it was over.

25

1 The next time we heard about this project was
2 August 26th of this year. They sent us the letter in the
3 mail, which I still have not received a letter, even though
4 I'm -- I should have received one. It said we're having a
5 meeting to let everybody in the area know about a road
6 project; that's all it basically said. We went to the
7 meeting. We lined up. We told them our names. They gave
8 us a number. You go look on a map and you see that your
9 house is being destroyed by a road.

10 They sit your down, this PowerPoint presentation
11 telling you all of this stuff about what's going to happen.
12 They said about eight months we're going to be acquiring
13 land and you're going to have to move. And at this meeting,
14 they never said nothing about a -- it's going to be a toll
15 road and they said nothing about a toll road.

16 They're having another meeting September 20th. I
17 still didn't receive another meeting -- another letter
18 saying nothing about this meeting, so September 26th was --
19 we went to that meeting -- sorry. We basically -- we told
20 them our concerns and they said, Well, this is the preferred
21 route and we're not going to be able to -- they said, We'll
22 try to work with you. We'll try to work with you. We had
23 several meetings with TxDOT; they came out to our farm. We
24 went to the headquarters and they said, Okay, we can try

25

1 this, we can try this, but this is the preferred route and
2 this is where it's going.

3 And at that 26th, meeting, they basically told us
4 it's for an overload cargo route for trucks from Mexico. So
5 they're basically taking our land, taking our livelihood for
6 car go from Mexico to put us out of business. We have given
7 them plenty of alternative routes. They can expand their --
8 there are State roads every two miles. There are County
9 roads every half a while. Why do they need to just come and
10 bulldoze a new road in amongst all of that?

11 In conclusion, the farming population is aging
12 already. We are young farmers and we do not want to lose
13 our farm to a road. Texas always says that we're here to
14 help farmers. We're here for -- we need younger farmers.
15 We are younger farmers and we do not need to lose our
16 business.

17 Thank you.

18 MR. HOUGHTON: Thank you, Daniel.

19 Next is Josh Fike.

20 MR. JOSH FIKE: Hello everybody. I thank you all
21 for listening -- or giving us time to comment on this today.

22 As my brother was saying, we're farmers. We never
23 got into -- we're not much politicking [sic], you know, we
24 just want to live our lives and do our work. We don't want
25 to interfere with anybody and then they come and tell us

1 that they're going to put a road through the middle of our
2 farm and devastate us.

3 When they had the plans, like they said, back in
4 '09, they said these are the three perspective routes and so
5 we looked at them and we're like, Well, if it's here, here
6 or here, it's going to affect us, but not horrible, we can
7 live with this. And then TxDOT comes up with the road not
8 even in the same spot when the RMA proposed it in 2009 and
9 when we went to the first meeting, they told us, Well, if
10 you didn't know about think -- I don't know where you've
11 been, this has been on the book since 2009.

12 Well, the RMA decided that it was not feasible to
13 do because there was no -- there was nobody who would put up
14 the money to build the road and so they let it die. And
15 then TxDOT comes up and says, Well, we resurrected it.

16 Oh, well, you didn't tell us about it. The first
17 thing we hear about it is: Move. We didn't know nothing
18 about this road going through and they told us eight months
19 we're going to buy your property. They told us at that
20 first meeting, do not try to stop us. We will make it worse
21 for you.

22 How can you make it worse for us? They're taking
23 our farmland. They're taking our houses. They're dividing
24 our farm and hurting our family.

25

1 Now, Texas is a business-friendly state. Where we
2 live, in between 107 and 281, there are ten businesses that
3 will be adversely affected and probably killed because of
4 this and they tell us there's nothing you can do about it;
5 we're going to do this, just stand aside and let us do it.
6 Don't try to stop us. Should TxDOT employees be telling
7 people, Do not try to stop us because we will make it worse
8 for you? That is not a way that people should be
9 representing themselves to the people that they represent.

10 There is several other alternatives. TxDOT has
11 given us so many excuses for why they have to put the road
12 here but none of them make sense and when you poke holes in
13 their argument on why the road needs to be here or why they
14 can't fix an existing road or expand it, they say, Well, we
15 can't expand that road because it will uproot too many
16 people.

17 Uproot too many people? You're going through the
18 middle of farms and families and people's livelihoods and
19 tearing them out of their houses. And on an existing road,
20 people come to expect that. TxDOT comes in and they expand
21 the road. People that live on a road know it. My dad put
22 his house 600 feet off the road so no matter how big the
23 road in front of his house got in his lifetime, it would
24 never reach his house, and now they're tearing through the
25 middle of the ground to get to his house.

1 So thank you for your time and thank you for
2 listening to us. You have a great day.

3 MR. HOUGHTON: Thank you, Josh. Thank you.
4 Karen Fike?

5 MS. KAREN FIKE: Good morning. I'm going to try
6 to get through this. Those two boys are my sons, and like
7 they said, they are going through my house -- going through
8 my daughter's house, too, which will be talking in a few
9 minutes.

10 Like we said, we've had our farm for a very long
11 time. Our father-in-law -- my father-in-law is the one --
12 and his dad, they started it. They've passed away now.
13 When we built our house, we built it from scratch. We
14 didn't get any loans or anything. We tore a building down
15 at Mohr Field (ph) to get the lumber because my husband
16 wanted to build a house that would never be torn down; that
17 it would be strong, even if a hurricane came through.

18 Well, we don't have to worry about a hurricane.
19 We went through hurricanes and they're fine, but the
20 hurricane that we're going through now is TxDOT, and I just
21 want to mention a few things. They keep talking about a
22 toll road. I don't know if you know it or not, but Hidalgo
23 County is one of the poorest counties in Texas. We have in
24 Region 1, which is all of the school districts, most of the
25 school districts in the Rio Grande Valley. There's 39

1 school districts. Thirty-three of them, the children are on
2 free lunches which shows you that we are a poor area and we
3 can't see that a toll road would even be feasible in that
4 area, and plus the fact, this road is being built not four
5 miles from expressway 281 or 69C or whatever the number is
6 now. It's not that far.

7 And also about Hidalgo County, Hidalgo County is
8 one of the most corrupt counties in Texas and in the United
9 States, so I would be careful how you -- I'm not saying
10 TxDOT is crooked, but I'm telling you that Hidalgo County,
11 you have to watch the County Commissioners, the County
12 Judges, the sheriff has just been put in jail. So, you
13 know, you need to be careful how you allocate this money to
14 our County and you need to -- lots of times when you get
15 allotted money, you think, oh, man, I've got to spend this
16 money. I've got to do it now and they don't -- to me
17 they're not thinking about how it's going to impact people.

18 It's not -- they just -- they called it like a
19 minor inconvenience; that's what they told us at the first
20 meeting. It will be a minor inconvenience, but we're going
21 to pay you for everything and everything is going to be
22 fine. Well, it is not a minor inconvenience; they're taking
23 our livelihood, our livelihood. So I kind of compare the
24 money -- just a few more minutes -- just one more minute.

25

1 I'm a retired schoolteacher. I'm a Texas
2 schoolteacher; I'm retired and we used to get money to buy
3 our supplies for school. We were allotted money, maybe \$200
4 or \$300. We had to go spend it at a certain place and we
5 had to buy certain items. We couldn't buy just anything.
6 So I mean construction paper, how much construction paper
7 can you get for a fifth grade class? I mean you needed
8 other things, but they said, no, no, no, you just need to
9 buy these certain things, okay?

10 And other teachers would say, Karen, you gotta go
11 spend your money. If you don't spend your money, you're
12 going to lose it. Well, I don't need anything in my
13 classroom, so lots of times, I would let my money go back to
14 the principal and the principal can buy other things that we
15 needed like copy paper. We were always running out of copy
16 paper. She could buy that where we couldn't. But some of
17 the teachers were so, you know, like, we gotta spend this
18 money. It didn't matter if they were wasting the money. It
19 didn't matter.

20 But to me, that's what TxDOT is doing by trying to
21 build this road. They want to build -- they have just
22 enough money to buy the -- to build the frontage roads in a
23 certain area, not the whole 20-something miles, just in a
24 certain area, which is over my house, and then they gotta
25 have enough money -- they don't have enough money to even do

1 the middle part, to do the toll road. Toll road is not
2 feasible; it's just not feasible.

3 And so I know what's going to happen. They're
4 going to tear my daughter's house down. They're going to
5 tear my house down or ya'll are or TxDOT and it's -- and
6 then the frontage roads will be built and nothing else will
7 happen. And here we are with our headquarters where all our
8 barns, our tractors, everything is there, and over here is
9 our farmland and then we have to see that every day, that
10 our house was torn down and nothing is being built.

11 So I appreciate your time and I hope you consider
12 things, because as my t-shirt says, we would like to stop
13 this highway from where it's going right now. I think it
14 can go a better place. Thank you very much.

15 MR. HOUGHTON: Thank you very much, Ms. Fike.

16 Rachel Villarreal?

17 MS. RACHEL VILLARREAL: Good morning. It's almost
18 afternoon, right?

19 I'm Rachel Villarreal. I'm actually her daughter
20 and those other two sister. I grew up on the farm and of
21 course I was the farmer's daughter and I needed to find my
22 own way. I got married. I left the farm. I went with my
23 husband. We joined the United States Navy. We lived in
24 South Carolina and New Jersey and then on September 11th, he
25 was deployed.

1 Since we lived there in New Jersey I decided to go
2 back to school. I attended Rutgers University and I devoted
3 all my time to study while he was deployed so that when he
4 got back he could go back to school as well when he got out.
5 So in that time that he was gone, I was alone in New Jersey
6 by myself away from the small Hidalgo County, Edinburg that
7 I grew up in, the farm life, and all I could dream about was
8 going back, getting back home to live across the street from
9 my grandma that I grew up from, living next door to my
10 brother, living next door to my mom and dad and down the
11 street from my other brother, and not to mention down the
12 street from my two uncles. So I have quite a bit of family
13 on that road.

14 In the process, I decided to join the Army to
15 complete my education because I was going to be a dietitian
16 and the Army offered excellent education for dietitians at
17 Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio and that was one
18 step closer to the Valley. So we moved back. My husband
19 was actually deployed still. I moved. I went through OBC.
20 I served at Brooke Army Medical Center after my education
21 was completed there and I served two more years serving the
22 two soldiers coming back from Iraq, burns, amputations and I
23 did that for my country.

24 When my time was up, we had already had our first
25 son and I decided -- we decided that we needed to get back

1 to the Valley so that my parents and my grandparents and his
2 parent could also be around their children, their
3 grandchildren. So we moved back to the Valley. My grandma,
4 generously, along with my dad and his brothers gifted us ten
5 acres across from headquarters. This was two years ago. I
6 built my house two years ago. Got a building permit from
7 the County after living in Navy housing in South Carolina,
8 Navy housing in Colts Neck, New Jersey, living in San
9 Antonio, Corpus, and now back to the Valley, we finally got
10 to build our own house.

11 And then we get a letter in August that we need to
12 go to a letter on September 9th at the local high school to
13 find out about a local project. So we arrive and we're
14 given a number to go look at a map where I see the gray area
15 is right over my house. It's been my lifelong dream to get
16 back to the Valley. It's a small town. We like it. That's
17 why I came back. We've lived all over -- New York -- I mean
18 we want to be around my family, and now it will take my
19 parents, my house, and my grandmother, who's 86 years old
20 will be on one side of it and my brother will be on the
21 other because we're right in the center.

22 Thanks for listening.

23 MR. HOUGHTON: Thank you.

24 Daniel Villarreal.

25

1 MR. VILLARREAL: Chairman, Commissioners, General,
2 thank you for the time and consideration that you've given
3 our family here today. Like my wife said, we've always
4 tried to do things right. I graduated high school, joined
5 the Navy. Put my wife through school, she joined the Army.
6 We have moved six times in 13 years.

7 Two years ago I thought I moved the last time in
8 my life and apparently that may not be true. Two years ago
9 with the help of my father, I built -- my father and my
10 father-in-law -- we built our custom home on that ten acres
11 about 400 feet south of my father-in-law, 400 feet east of
12 my wife's grandmother, 300 feet west of my brother-in-law,
13 and probably 300 feet from any road in case the roads
14 expand, as the Valley is growing.

15 About two months ago we went to that meeting and
16 found out that State Highway 68 is going to go right on top
17 of our property. I'm not against growth. The Rio Grande
18 Valley is growing tremendously. I left in 1999 and since
19 then, when I came back, it's almost unrecognizable as farms
20 have been turned into businesses and dirt lanes have been
21 turned into five-lane roads.

22 My problem with this highway is not just that it's
23 going to go over my house; it's where it's going. This
24 highway is going to be on Highway 83, six miles east of
25 Highway 281, and on 107, which is near where I live, is

1 going to be no more than four miles east of 281. So we're
2 going to have two north/southbound highways just miles apart
3 from each other servicing the Rio Grande Valley, when we
4 have 281 and Highway 77, 32 miles apart from each other.

5 We have much more to the Rio Grande Valley than
6 just Pharr and McAllen and Edinburg. We have Mercedes and
7 West that go all the way to Harlingen and I've heard excuses
8 as far as northbound mobility in the event of a hurricane.
9 Right now we have 77 and 281. I think it would make more
10 sense if we by sect the Valley and put a highway somewhere
11 in the middle which would about east of Edcouch-Elsa which
12 is less densely populated than where we are right now, and I
13 think that would also bring more growth to the middle Valley
14 versus just congesting the western area near the Pharr,
15 McAllen with those two highways, Highway 68 and Highway 281.

16 I appreciate you listening to us today. I hope
17 that you take our words into consideration and maybe we can
18 put this highway in a more strategic location. Thank you
19 very much.

20 MR. HOUGHTON: Christina Villarreal?

21 MS. CHRISTINA VILLARREAL: Hello, my name is
22 Christina Villarreal, and like my brother I served in the
23 Navy and have lived all over the country. And a year and a
24 half ago I was living in Austin as a pharmacist and I
25 decided that the city life really want for me anymore. I

1 wanted to get back to my ranching and farming community that
2 I came from. And I moved back down to the Valley, and since
3 then I have been looking for land to buy because I would
4 like to have my own little farm and ranch.

5 And that's when my brother got his notice that
6 they're beginning to put a highway straight through a lot of
7 farms and ranches and businesses, and I kept going to these
8 meetings hearing TxDOT officials tell us that, you know, we
9 have to think about the growth and the future of the area.
10 And what they were saying is, you know, think about Houston
11 and Dallas and Fort Worth; we don't want congestion like
12 that. But actually that is what I was trying to escape by
13 moving back to the Valley. Like I don't want to live in a
14 city that's like Houston or Fort Worth or Dallas. I would
15 have moved there if that's what I wanted.

16 I moved back to the Valley because it's a farming,
17 ranching, agricultural community. Everybody embraces that
18 kind of lifestyle, and by telling me that the future of the
19 Valley is more of a large city and saying that we have to
20 just live with that, it's kind of disheartening, because the
21 majority of the people in the Valley support the
22 agricultural community and we want to keep it that way.

23 And what I see for my future and for my children's
24 future is actually for them to be able to have a farm and
25 ranch and actually see what a cow looks like and what crops

1 look like, you know, touch the soil and grow something and
2 see it produce and be able to eat that. You know, I would
3 like to have that in my future, not all these highways and
4 concrete and asphalt, and along with all of these meetings,
5 it's also being put in an area that doesn't make the most
6 sense unless you're a Mexican truck driver coming off the
7 Donna Bridge and going to the Edinburg Airport.

8 So that doesn't really benefit the community.
9 Like public transportation and public traffic won't be going
10 down that road. It will just be for truck drivers and I'm
11 not sure why we're going to build a highway just for them
12 when we need to think about the public's safety and their
13 driving and what direction they're moving in.

14 Thank you so much for your time, I know you guys
15 are very busy.

16 MR. HOUGHTON: Jeremy Salazar?

17 MR. SALAZAR: Thank you, gentlemen. I appreciate
18 ya'll listening to us. I don't have enough time to tell you
19 how good this family is. The stuff that they've done in the
20 community is unbelievable. They help the Act (ph) program.
21 They've donated countless hours and time to the agricultural
22 programs throughout the high schools.

23 I mean I am the person that I am today because of
24 this family and to go through here and experience what
25 they're experiencing right now is devastational [sic] to

1 what they can do for the community. You're hurting them,
2 you know, not only financially, but physically. These
3 houses were built by their own two hands; it was the
4 American dream. I mean people dream of this.

5 I moved around a lot. I didn't have a place to go
6 to -- to call home all the time. You know, I'm 33 years
7 old. My mother moved around a lot. If there's nowhere that
8 I can go in this world, I can always go back to their home
9 and call it my own. They've taken [sic] me in. They take
10 other people in. They've helped -- it's just amazing what
11 they've done and I really wish that they could consider
12 moving this highway because it's -- the countless hours that
13 they've put in and just -- they built this home back in the
14 '50s, and they just built this farm up and this is what the
15 American Dream is about.

16 And for someone like a young person like myself to
17 go out and try to do that, I want to know that I can do that
18 without someone coming in and taking it away from me. These
19 fields have been rotated and levelled to the point where
20 there's irrigation for them. They can't just get up and
21 move their farm. It's irreplaceable for what they have and
22 what they do. It really can't be. A lot of people say you
23 can just build a road and move your farm and it's not just
24 like that. They have to defend their home right now against
25 the State of Texas which, I think, is -- we have enough

1 problems defending this country all around the world and now
2 we have to defend it against the State and I don't think
3 that's fair.

4 I just wanted to come up and kind of explain what
5 this family does for the community. They don't just look
6 out for themselves; they're putting food on the table across
7 the country and I think we need to take care of people like
8 this and try not to destroy their businesses, and I
9 appreciate you listening.

10 MR. HOUGHTON: Norma Saldana.

11 MS. SALDANA: For the record -- can you hear me --
12 there. For the record, my name is Norma Saldana and I would
13 like to thank the Commission for giving us the opportunity
14 to speak today. I want to start off by -- also, my husband
15 is a veteran; he served his country 31 years. He just
16 retired and he's a disabled veteran at that.

17 His long-life dream was to build a ranch, which we
18 did. We have horses that we adopted through the Federal
19 Land Board. We have mustangs that we took in which will be
20 displaced. We will have children that will be displaced,
21 because, again, Hidalgo County is one of the poorest
22 communities.

23 Down the street from us, San Carlos, where I was
24 raised, there's children that will be displaced and have
25 nowhere to go. I had a neighbor tell me, Yes, Mrs. Saldana,

1 but I have a lien on this home, so I'm going to be without a
2 home and the money they gave me, I have to pay back to the
3 lienholder, so I'm done. What am I going to do?

4 TxDOT, we've had several meetings with them, as
5 they have told us, the Fikes, we received letters eight
6 business days right before the meeting told you have eight
7 months to prepare to move because we are going to be
8 acquiring land. If this is a proposed road, why do they
9 speak as if it's something that's going to be done?

10 We come before you to please ask them to give us
11 more transparency. We have been given the runaround. I
12 have asked for maps, big maps, so we can tell the
13 community -- several, several people have not even gotten
14 letters. TxDOT refused. Do you know what they told me? Go
15 through the public information website -- I don't know
16 what -- and ask for them, when they're taking our land. The
17 least they can do is give us maps that we can use for our
18 community.

19 We have had -- we -- like they've mentioned, we
20 have come together as a community and we're trying to get --
21 we're trying to get people to listen to us; that's why we
22 are here today. We made the trip. A lot of people can't
23 come up here. For them, financially, they can't, so we're
24 here to speak for them and we need your help to please ask
25 TxDOT to have transparency and also what is the urgency?

1 They have an environmental study that they want to
2 push in less than eight months. Why? They tell us that
3 they have money to build the frontage roads, but they can't
4 tell us how many stops those frontage roads are going to
5 have. And that the -- Toribio is here and he's told us that
6 in 15, maybe 20 years, that's when the toll roads will come
7 in. So they're going to be left, what, undone with a mess
8 and leave the mess -- not only take our community, leave a
9 mess for us and nothing is going to be finished. If they
10 have a shortfall of other 13 million for the first phase --
11 because it's in three phases -- why start a project when you
12 don't even have the answers? And as a community, we deserve
13 that, and I ask you to please look into it.

14 And the other thing is, yes, Hidalgo County is
15 very corrupt; we're not throwing, you know, shade at
16 anybody. We just want you to please look into it. And what
17 is the urgency that in 2015, they already have it slated to
18 start construction. They say that they have this slated to
19 start, but then they also call it proposed, so what is it,
20 is it proposed or is it really slated to start and they're
21 just using proposed to kind of just throw us out of our
22 homes within eight months. And also the environmental
23 study, again, why the urgency to get it pushed in, in less
24 than eight months?

25

1 And, again, thank you for your time, and please
2 look into it. Thank you.

3 MR. HOUGHTON: Thank you very much.

4 Marisela De León, you're going to put this all in
5 a nice package, aren't you? Wrap it up.

6 MS. De LEÓN: I'm going to wrap it up for you.

7 Thank you, Commissioners, Chairman, for listening
8 to these families of San Carlos, East Edinburg. My name is
9 Marisela De León. I am, by profession, a legislative
10 consultant, but today I also stand before you as neighbor to
11 these individuals, the ones who are present and the ones who
12 are unable to be here today because it was not financially
13 feasible for them.

14 So on behalf of the Fike farms, the Perez farms,
15 Mrs. Saldana, Lupe De Los Santos, and others who have asked
16 for help in obtaining information and having effective
17 communication within the state agency and the impact to
18 property owners, I would ask that you really listen to their
19 plea. I think that their concerns are legitimate and it
20 merits ultimate investigation as to where this is going.

21 I grew up in San Carlos. I grew up in San Carlos;
22 it's a very poor, rural community. Growing up, and at times
23 in professional circles, I would hear comments that that
24 area is rural Mexico, and at times I would finds of to it,
25 but I know that it comes with the environment that I'm in

1 and I have just grown to brush that off. But when my
2 neighbors come to me with a project that's going to hurt
3 them; hurt their livelihood; hurt children within the
4 community whose parents don't have a voice, as it is
5 students don't have a voice in their school districts.
6 Personally, I help those children with school supplies every
7 year, annually, to date, over 2900 students who aren't able
8 to go to school with the educational tools that they need, I
9 help that, I help supplement that.

10 The community of San Carlos just received -- and
11 I'm 32 years old, I just celebrated my birthday two days
12 ago -- and less than eight months or so, that community just
13 got sidewalks, and I grew up in San Carlos Elementary. I
14 wish I could have walked on sidewalks then. So the
15 infrastructure that's being invested in that community, I
16 would see for it to go to waste on a project that's being
17 proposed as in a highway expansion project with frontage
18 lanes, and later to be a toll road.

19 I think we all know how toll roads are in the
20 state. We do know that there's an effort to have them, and
21 at times they are good, but I think in this case these
22 families are asking for transparency and accountability.
23 There have been TxDOT meetings from September 9th and the
24 25th, but no -- their questions have not been answered.
25 They have been getting runarounds and I will attest to that

1 because in me having some meetings on their behalf, I have
2 been getting the runaround and I think that I respect TxDOT.
3 I respect you. I respect our Government. I respect how
4 Texas functions, and in an effort to have their voice heard
5 effectively and efficiently, they've only been asked to be
6 considered and listened to, and I don't think that that's
7 happened.

8 So in an effort for them, I come before you, as
9 their neighbor, and ask that you look into this further and
10 their hopes to stop Highway 68.

11 MR. HOUGHTON: Marisela, and I apologize for
12 getting your first name wrong.

13 MS. De LEÓN: It's okay. I'm not reading very
14 well obviously. But thank you, thank you very much.

15 Counselor, can I talk to you for a minute? Can I
16 talk to my staff right now?

17 MR. GRAHAM: Chairman, you do not have the ability
18 to comment or have a discussion on this item. You can
19 certainly direct staff to do whatever you want.

20 MR. HOUGHTON: John, John, we think -- I think
21 most of us believe that we always do the right thing. We
22 have a Department that listens and there's been some things
23 said here today that troubles me. Can you look into, at the
24 staff level, at the highest levels and make sure that these

25

1 people have been treated ethically and morally correct and
2 in the TxDOT spirit on what we believe in?

3 MR. BARTON: I certainly will.

4 MR. HOUGHTON: I know Commissioner Underwood has
5 some thoughts too.

6 MR. UNDERWOOD: You understand what we're saying.
7 We understand the legalities that we deal with. It
8 understand that part of it, but I'll dovetail with my fellow
9 commissioner about ethically and morally and make sure that
10 what we're doing, as staff, is correct.

11 Does that make sense, John?

12 MR. BARTON: Absolutely. I'll look into it
13 personally.

14 MR. HOUGHTON: Thank you.

15 MR. UNDERWOOD: Make sure that staff -- that
16 everybody down the line understands as we go through this
17 process.

18 MR. BARTON: I think I'm a very clear
19 communicator, sir. They'll understand.

20 MR. UNDERWOOD: Thank you.

21 MR. HOUGHTON: Thank you.

22 MR. AUSTIN: John, may I ask -- or Counselor, I'm
23 trying to understand. Is this a true TxDOT project or is
24 this an RMA project?

25

1 MR. GRAHAM: Chairman Austin [sic], you're almost
2 getting into that back and forth discussion on this item, so
3 if we can leave it at directing staff?

4 MR. AUSTIN: Okay. Okay. I'm just trying to
5 understand.

6 MR. HOUGHTON: Thanks, Jeff.

7 I've got a couple more -- well, five more
8 speakers -- four more speakers that want to talk about Jeff
9 Austin's favorite subject: bicycle funding and pedestrian
10 projects.

11 So Mike Stine, BikeTexas -- Mark -- Mark -- Mark.
12 Pardon me.

13 MR. STINE: Good morning or good afternoon, now,
14 Mr. Chairman, Commissioners, and General Weber. Thank you
15 for the opportunity to speak. My name is Mark Stine. I am
16 retired in my career. For at least ten years, I was staff
17 at BikeTexas and I still do volunteer work for BikeTexas and
18 a couple other nonprofits.

19 And today I would like to speak to you about, as
20 you pointed out, the topic of funding for bicycle/pedestrian
21 projects. We're all aware that some monies from the TAP
22 program were put into the general STP funds, but are legally
23 and technically still eligible for bicycle/pedestrian
24 funding. And I wanted to make you aware of one project in
25 particular, in addition to many other projects that would be

1 very well-suited for this type of funding on a larger scale,
2 and that is a project that's known as Old Texas 20 bike and
3 hikeway between Houston and Austin.

4 Old Texas 20 was one of the early highways built
5 by TxDOT, back then, the Texas Highway Department in the
6 1920s, and it followed the railroad and went directly
7 through a number of towns such as Brenham and Hempstead,
8 Elgin, Giddings.

9 When 290 was built, large sections of it tended to
10 bypass that original alignment, so these roads became county
11 roads, but they still offer for a bicyclist a very direct
12 connection between Houston and Austin, and in fact my wife
13 and I have ridden it several times. It takes us three days
14 because we are slow and all day, and we have taken friends
15 along and we have also worked within BikeTexas to have this
16 become a formal inner-city bike trail. That's pursuant to
17 Texas Transportation Code 201.9025, which was the Bicycle
18 Tourism Trails Act, which was passed in 2005 that talks
19 about these types of facilities.

20 There's good support for these facilities. Among
21 the communities along the way, two counties, Waller County
22 and Lee County have put together -- the Commissioners have
23 put together resolutions in support, as has the City of
24 Giddings and we have had a strong inquiry and interest from
25 places like Hempstead, and Elgin, and Brenham.

1 So I'd like to point out that parts of it is in
2 place, in fact, from Austin, the recently completed South
3 Walnut Creek Trail goes from Govalle Park in southeast
4 Austin almost to Manor now and in Houston, the Cady Trail
5 comes from downtown Houston out to -- close to 610. And so
6 there's -- this would connect two very large population
7 centers, but it would also serve well the populations in
8 between in places like Brenham and Giddings and Elgin.

9 So I would like to request that you consider the
10 use of these STP funds that originally came from TAP for
11 these -- for projects such as Old Texas 20 and some of the
12 other very fine projects that you have already heard of.

13 Thank you very much for your time.

14 MR. HOUGHTON: Thank you, Mark.

15 James Steenhagen (ph)?

16 MR. STEINHAGEN: Mr. Chairman, Commissioners,
17 General, thank you for the opportunity to speak.

18 My name is Jim Steenhagen and I'm a retired
19 economist living in San Marcos, one of our fastest-growing
20 small towns, and I would like to suggest that San Marcos
21 could be an ideal centrally located town for a demonstration
22 bike/pedestrian project. Our rapid growth and the expansion
23 of Texas State University means increased traffic and
24 significant infrastructure projects, a perfect time to

25

1 include alternative transportation projects to match
2 development patterns.

3 Rather than piecemeal projects over many years,
4 like a \$35 million dollar project could transform our town
5 into a showcase for other small Texas cities. A
6 well-planned, fully connected network of sidewalks,
7 protected bike lanes, and bike/ped trails could show what
8 could be done to create a viable alternative for commuters,
9 students, and others, relieving road and parking congestion.
10 San Marcos has the right scale and the high density to be
11 fully walkable and bikeable if people are convinced that
12 it's a safe and convenient option.

13 The demand is there with considerable interest in
14 biking from the large university population and several
15 cycling clubs that total more than 600 members, even in our
16 small town, ranging in age from high school to retirees.
17 Currently San Marcos' inadequate sidewalks and bike lanes
18 are absent or not connected and one friend I have who's deaf
19 has a really treacherous bike commute to his restaurant job
20 right now. I try to bike everywhere I go around town and
21 not use a car, so I know this involves being on the roadways
22 and being in traffic.

23 Thirty-five million could build a network of some
24 20 miles of trails and 50 miles of physically protected bike
25 lanes circling the university and extending to neighborhoods

1 outside and arteries that go outside the congested city
2 center. That could still leave about ten million for other
3 infrastructure, including sidewalks, enabling pedestrians,
4 or people in wheelchairs to get to school or run errands for
5 the recent road congestion.

6 Also, as an economist, I think that a bike and
7 pedestrian-friendly culture benefit economic development.
8 It can be very attractive to dynamic new businesses and
9 residents. It's a fiscally -- it's fiscally sound in terms
10 of costs and maintenance. It's environmental. It fits the
11 next generation that's not so car-centric, which is the
12 demographic in San Marcos. This is an area that has the
13 beginnings of being a cycling Mecca. Like my former home in
14 Boulder, Colorado, we have the climate, the Hill Country,
15 and a large cycling community.

16 So please keep the 35 million in TAP and return
17 the flex funds. I urge you to spend it on fewer bigger
18 projects for bike and pedestrian-friendly infrastructure,
19 here in Central Texas. Thank you.

20 MR. HOUGHTON: Thank you.

21 Tom Wald?

22 MR. WALD: Hi. Good afternoon, Commissioners.
23 Thank you for your time.

24 My name is Tom Wald; I'm a resident of Austin,
25 former executive director of Bike Austin. I'm coming here

1 to talk with you about \$150 million dollars that could
2 improve Austin mobility by building an all-ages and
3 abilities bikeway network, and this can be used -- you know,
4 obviously, TAP funds would be something that could be
5 devoted toward that.

6 So I think you all are familiar with the regular
7 painted bike lanes that you see in shoulders. I think in
8 your district you see people biking on shoulders of
9 high-speed roads. That's not what I've come here to talk
10 about. That only serves -- there's just a small fraction of
11 the population -- in Austin, it's been shown about
12 20 percent of the people will consider using a facility like
13 that. Not enough of the people.

14 So what I've come here to talk about is to build
15 an all-ages and abilities network that includes protected
16 bike lanes where there's actually a physical barrier between
17 the fast-moving traffic and where the bikes are. It also
18 includes urban trails and quiet side streets. It builds a
19 network that can attract 55 percent or more of the
20 population, as shown in Austin.

21 Some examples in Austin that you may have noticed
22 are on Guadalupe. Next to campus there's a new bikeway that
23 went in about a year ago. Barton Springs Road, there's a
24 trail that -- it looks like a trail, but it goes right along
25 the side of the road and people can use it instead of being

1 in car traffic on Barton Springs Road, and you can find more
2 information on this -- on these sort of designs in the NACTO
3 Bikeway Design Guide; that's National Association of City
4 Transportation Officials. It is a new design guide for
5 these new bikeways that serve a broader portion of the
6 population, including our kids who can't drive themselves.

7 So I wanted to mention, you know, each different
8 mode serves different distances. When you walk, you're
9 going to take a trip up to a mile. When you bike, you go up
10 to a few miles. When you drive a car, you can go many more
11 miles. So this is about capturing short trips in Central
12 Austin. What we can -- what we find is that conservatively,
13 we can attract 15 percent of the trips that are less than
14 three miles and seven percent of the trips are less than
15 nine miles. That would -- most of the short trips in Austin
16 occur between Old Tariff (ph) and 22. Twenty-two in Central
17 Austin, 50 percent of the trips that go through Sixth and
18 Lamar, Sixth Street and Lamar, which is a very congested
19 intersection, if you've been through there. Fifty percent
20 of those are short trips and could be captured by bicycling.

21 We've seen other cities who make a great
22 investment on this be able to increase their bike percentage
23 of trips from half a percent up to seven percent in just the
24 matter of a few years, and that's what we're asking for
25 here. Again, protective bike lanes, quiet streets,

1 intersection treatments and trails makes an all-ages and
2 abilities network that we can build in Central Austin. We
3 can connect the central city, suburban transit centers,
4 schools and so on, and other population and employment
5 centers.

6 The cost is negligible. Fifty to five hundred
7 thousand dollars per mile, compared to fifty-one million
8 dollars per six-lane freeway mile, and we can do this in
9 just a few years.

10 Again, this is a very modest investment, \$150
11 million dollars, comparable to the MOPAC improvement project
12 which has a similar return on investment, as far as trips
13 just in the downtown, but this bikeway network for the same
14 costs would reduce a hundred -- it would reduce driving
15 trips by 170,000 daily trips. And when I say reduce, what
16 it would actually do is it would actually increase the
17 capacity of the mobility network -- and I'll wrap up in just
18 a moment, thanks. It would also save individuals \$170
19 million dollars every year, and that's the cost of the
20 entire network to build it out. So what I'm asking for is
21 that funding to -- funding for that bikeway network and I'm
22 asking that you keep the \$35 million dollars in the TAP and
23 return the funds that you've already flexed and also to
24 spend it on fewer bigger projects, such as this one, that
25 would have a huge impact on Austin mobility.

1 Thanks for your time, and thank you for letting me
2 go over just a little bit. I appreciate it.

3 MR. HOUGHTON: Thank you.

4 Last, but certainly not least, Krista Sherwood
5 representing the National Park Service.

6 So Krista, you're going to wrap all of this up for
7 us?

8 MS. SHERWOOD: I'll try. Thank you.

9 Good afternoon, my name is Krista Sherwood and I
10 am a transportation and community planner for the National
11 Park Service and I'm here to share with you how the
12 Transportation Alternatives Program benefits communities,
13 gateway communities of areas with national parks.

14 There are 401 national parks across the nation and
15 each of these sites serve as destination sites and visitors,
16 whether they be local or they're traveling across the state
17 or across the country or across the world, they visit these
18 destinations. Visitors spend time and money in these
19 communities with national parks and the spending really
20 generates a considerable amount of economic activity.

21 In 2013, National Park Service visitors spent over
22 \$14 billion dollars in communities within 60 miles of a
23 national park. This contribution resulted in nearly 240,000
24 jobs and an output of over \$26 billion dollars.

25

1 In Texas there are 12 national parks and two
2 national historic trails. In 2013, visitors spent over \$173
3 million dollars in surrounding communities resulting in over
4 2300 jobs and an output of nearly \$230 million dollars that
5 benefits these communities.

6 When we consider the transportation systems that
7 connect these nationally significant test nation sites with
8 communities and visitors, it's important to incorporate
9 alternative transportation options because we recognize that
10 not everyone has access to a vehicle or even the ability to
11 drive, and many visitors even prefer active transportation
12 and recreational options when they're visiting.

13 The Transportation Alternatives Program is an
14 excellent funding source for communities to be able to build
15 safe bicycle and pedestrian paths and for gateway
16 communities to be able to connect their national parks with
17 the community. The funding source provides an opportunity
18 to enhance alternative transportation connections. It
19 bridges gaps between resources and creates more reasons for
20 visitors to explore Texas further, stay longer, and
21 ultimately create more economic activity.

22 As an example, I've brought with me a recent study
23 that we have developed in partnership and it has also gone
24 through public involvement process and it's titled "A Vision
25 of Opportunities" and I'll provide copies, if you're

1 interested. This example identifies bicycle and pedestrian
2 improvements that would connect a national park that's just
3 south of San Antonio with multiple communities and their
4 resources. The study area includes two counties, 11
5 communities, multiple jurisdictions and extends beyond an
6 MPO boundary.

7 The concerns that were identified with these
8 opportunities were related to the ability to pay for these
9 opportunities. The Transportation Alternatives Program can
10 help these communities achieve these opportunities and
11 realize tremendous benefits such as cultural and
12 recreational connections, economic involvement, healthy
13 living and so much more.

14 Thank you for your time. I have copies for you
15 guys if you're interested. Thank you.

16 MR. AUSTIN: Mr. Chairman, I want you to know I
17 have my national parks app.

18 MR. HOUGHTON: You do?

19 MR. AUSTIN: I do.

20 MR. HOUGHTON: Any other speakers?

21 Robin, none?

22 Seeing none, the most privileged motion is in
23 order.

24 MR. UNDERWOOD: So moved.

25 MR. AUSTIN: Second.

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MR. HOUGHTON: All in favor?

(Chorus of "Ayes")

MR. HOUGHTON: We are adjourned at 12:27 p.m.

(Proceedings concluded at 12:27 p.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, KIMBERLY C. McCRIGHT, CET, certified electronic transcriber, do hereby certify that the foregoing pages 1 through 155 constitute a full, true, and accurate transcript from electronic recording of the proceedings had in the foregoing matter.

DATED this 4th day of December, 2014.



Kimberly C. McCright, CET

Certified Electronic Transcriber