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TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
COMMISSION MEETING

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

Thursday
January 29, 2015
9:00 a.m.

COMMISSION MEMBERS:

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

STAFF:

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

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MR. HOUGHTON: Okay. Now it's 9:00 a.m. by the digital clock up here on the dais and I call to order the January 29th, 2015 meeting of the Texas Transportation Commission in Austin, Texas.

Note for public record that the notice of this meeting containing all items on the agenda was filed with Secretary of State at 3:21 p.m. on January 21st, 2015.

As customary, before we begin the proceedings, please turn your communication devices in the off or silent mode, and if you wish to address the Commission, a blue card in the open session, which is at the end of the meeting, and a yellow card on an agenda item. Regardless of the card, we'd like to have your comments restricted to at least no more than three minutes.

Before we turn the mic over to the general -- I think we're ready to go, General, it's all yours.

GENERAL WEBER: Okay. Thanks, Chairman.

And I'd like to thank our Occupational Safety Division Director Jerral Wyer to come forward with our traditional safety briefing.

Thanks, Jerral.

MR. WYER: Thank you, General Weber.

Thank you and the Commission for your continued support of safety mission zero. Doing a great job. Thank

1 you, so much.

2 For the audience this morning, just a quick
3 reminder of our emergency procedures for the Greer Building.
4 If we have a first-aid incident, please make your way, if
5 possible, to the entry area and we'll get the proper
6 response for you. We have an AED on campus in the front
7 lobby there, if needed, and a first-aid kit, and of course,
8 our location being 11th and Congress Street.

9 If there's a fire response needed, I'm going to
10 ask that you make your way to the nearest exit; safely cross
11 the roadway over to the Capitol grounds; that will be our
12 gathering point.

13 In the event -- and we're not expecting any severe
14 weather this morning -- but if there is a tornado warning,
15 we're going to ask that you make your way to the interior
16 corridor, into the hallway and stairway, if needed, and
17 we'll also have space down in the basement area.

18 I'll ask everyone to please drive safely on their
19 way home today. And before I leave, I want to turn it over
20 to Mr. Barton, who has a presentation about some of the
21 response our TxDOT employees have been involved with in our
22 winter conditions up in the Panhandle.

23 Thank you so much.

24 MR. BARTON: Thank you, Jerral.

25 Good morning, Commissioners, Chairman Houghton,

1 General Weber.

2 I wanted to just briefly take this opportunity, as
3 we're thinking about safety, to share with you what I
4 believe is a tremendous recognition of the fine work that
5 the men and women of this agency provide for our citizens
6 each day and especially when they're faced with these
7 extreme weather events. And we know we've had a lot of snow
8 in Austin, Texas, due to a couple of storms over the past
9 several weeks. Our teams from all across the state
10 responded, working 24 hour days, seven days a week, taking
11 care of the challenges that we faced.

12 And we were fortunate enough that The Weather
13 Channel reached out to us to our district engineer in
14 Amarillo, Ron Johnston, and asked to interview him, and they
15 were able to show the public what we were facing out there
16 and the response that the Department's team was putting
17 together in response to that storm. I'm very proud of the
18 work that they've done. I know that you have expressed
19 those same thoughts of appreciation, and I thought it would
20 be appropriate to share with you shall video today.

21 So, John, if you'll go ahead and roll the video, I
22 want to make this available for the Commissioners this
23 morning.

24 (Whereupon, a portion of video is played back.)

25 "UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It was the fourth snowiest

1 January day on record, and when you're talking about 11 to
2 14 inches of snow in Amarillo -- more snow than a lot of
3 northern cities have had this time -- something is going on
4 with the pattern.

5 Dave Malkoff, let's talk about that snow that you
6 guys got, because right now you look like the winter
7 wonderland that so many of the northern cities are missing
8 out on.

9 MR. MALKOFF: Hey, how you doing?

10 There is a show of force here from TxDOT. We see
11 these two snowplows coming. We just had another one come
12 through. They're doing a good job of taking all that snow
13 off the road, but it's still very slippery. Let me show you
14 an example of how slippery it was just earlier this morning.
15 We had one woman who was going about 20 miles an hour and
16 then spun out of control right into the drift on the side of
17 the road.

18 This is Ron Johnston who is the leader of the
19 entire team here in this section of Texas for TxDOT. We
20 just saw your crews coming in for the next twelve-hour
21 shift. What does it mean after the sun comes up for you
22 here, what is going on with the roadways?

23 MR. JOHNSTON: Well, safety is the number one
24 priority at TxDOT, safety of the travelling public and
25 safety for our employees. When the sun comes out, you saw

1 the trucks working in tandem. What we try to do is we try
2 to get the snow off the road. The motorists will try to --
3 as the motorists move through, they're going to dry off the
4 pavements. If we can keep that pavement dry throughout the
5 day -- if we can get everything off the road, we can get the
6 pavements dry, we can prevent re-freeze at the end of the
7 day.

8 MR. MALKOFF: And that way the water doesn't get
9 on the roadway and it gets to ice, so you're trying to get
10 all that off there?

11 MR. JOHNSTON: Right. Right.

12 MR. MALKOFF: Big job ahead, still, for Ron
13 Johnston.

14 Thank you, so much.

15 MR. JOHNSTON: I want to say that the employees of
16 TxDOT work, they work tirelessly; they've been out here all
17 night.

18 MR. MALKOFF: Yeah.

19 MR. JOHNSTON: And they'll continue to work
20 through the day. I thank the support from the other
21 districts. We have a great bunch of employees and I'm very
22 proud of the work that they're doing and they do a great
23 job.

24 MR. MALKOFF: Can we get a round of applause for
25 the TxDOT workers back there?

1 (Applause)

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You certainly can because,
3 Dave, it's absolutely true, in looking at the roads around
4 that area, they did a great job in trying to get out there.
5 Let's just hope that folks are driving carefully this
6 morning and kind of following the ..."

7 (Whereupon, a portion of video playback is stopped.)

8 MR. HOUGHTON: That was very special that they
9 cued the trucks and they were right on schedule, right?

10 (Laughter)

11 MR. BARTON: Well, I wish it was that
12 well-orchestrated, but the truth of the matter is that they
13 were out there working their shift as we normally do, and
14 we're all over the place taking care of the public when we
15 have these events. And for those of us who don't have to
16 work those around-the-clock shifts and be out in those
17 conditions it's hard to understand.

18 But I can tell you, you should be very proud of
19 the 12,000 men and women who proudly serve this agency and
20 the state of Texas and thank you for encouraging us to focus
21 on our safety, as well as that of the travelling public.
22 They're doing a great job, General, Chairman, Commissioners,
23 and I think I can tell you with all honesty and with a great
24 deal of pride that they have never let you down and they
25 should be thanked for all that they do.

1 Thank you for letting me share that.

2 MR. HOUGHTON: John and Jerral --

3 GENERAL WEBER: Thanks, and back to you, Chairman.

4 MR. HOUGHTON: All right. We will now hear from

5 my fellow commissioners, beginning to my far right.

6 Commissioner Vandergriff, welcome.

7 MR. VANDERGRIFF: Well, it's a pleasure to be here

8 with everybody today, and I'm looking forward to the

9 meeting, so I'll pass the mic.

10 MR. MOSELEY: Chairman, Members, General Weber,
11 and friends, guests, what a delight to be here today, and I
12 wanted to just speak very briefly about a great Houstonian
13 who, since we met last time, has passed away, that's former
14 chair of the Texas Highway Commission, former mayor of
15 Houston, Bob Lanier.

16 Bob made a very lasting impact on the State of
17 Texas as a member and chair of the Texas Highway Commission
18 from 1983 to 1987. He was a strong supporter of paving the
19 way to re-build our state's transportation system. We
20 recognize his leadership working with, then, Governor Marc
21 White, to persuade the Legislature for a gasoline tax that
22 75 percent of which has come straight to this agency, and
23 that hasn't been done in over 20 years, but he had that kind
24 of passion for mobility.

25 As the newly appointed chair of the Texas Highway

1 Commission, Bob Lanier immediately set on a mission to find
2 more efficiencies and cut out the fat of the huge Highway
3 Department budget and he began with in-depth briefings from
4 every section of the Department. One story, though,
5 Chairman and Members, that really sums up how he managed
6 relates to anti-litter effort. Texas highways were growing
7 rapidly and each year the taxpayers had to spend 17 percent
8 more on cleaning up litter just to keep up with all the
9 trash. This trend was going on all across America and no
10 one really had a good idea on how to reverse this trend.
11 Bob Lanier took it in and after a presentation, stopped, and
12 there was an annual increase request of 17 percent. The
13 room was quiet. Bob Lanier, in his typical fashion, pushed
14 his glasses down, looked up and said, Excellent
15 presentation, now, tell me, again, what is the purpose of
16 the program?

17 No one spoke until the head of the division stood
18 up and said, Well, the purpose is to make our Texas highways
19 clean and beautiful and keep up with the spirit of Lady Bird
20 Johnson's vision of keeping Texas beautiful. Lanier nodded,
21 he peered out of into space, then he made this observation:
22 Has anyone ever thought about the notion of asking Texans
23 not to litter so that littering goes down each year, and
24 therefore, our budget goes down? And you can imagine
25 silence took hold of the room. The mandate did, though,

1 send us into this whole new area of talking to Texans about
2 how we can take responsibility for our roadways. And the
3 purpose it brought to life was one of the most well-known
4 taglines in America, "Don't Mess With Texas." And we,
5 Texans, rallied around this wonderful idea and changed the
6 face of Texas in a way that no one could have predicted.
7 And littering, by the way, took a nosedive and was reduced
8 by 70 percent over the next five years and we're still proud
9 of this initiative today.

10 As chairman of Metro from 1988 to '89, we might
11 remember that Bob Lanier opposed the mayor, then-mayor of
12 Houston, Kathy Whitmire, who wanted to design and build a
13 monorail system. And the dispute became so open that he
14 decided to run against her for mayor and was elected and
15 served from '92 to '98.

16 When Bob Lanier became mayor of Houston, he
17 cancelled the monorail system and pushed Metro funds into
18 fighting crime and into HOV lanes. Houston today has one of
19 the most sophisticated high-occupancy vehicle lane systems
20 in America because of his vision. Members, Bob Lanier
21 served two, three-year terms as mayor of Houston and most
22 likely would have been re-elected, but was term-limited; we
23 know he remained very active in politics since his service.

24 So it's in the spirit of Bob Lanier, Members, that
25 I'd like to give you a quick update that the Texas Ports

1 Association will be visiting the Capitol this coming Monday,
2 February 2nd, and in the spirit of the Texas Department of
3 Transportation push to being intermodal and being more
4 vigorous, I'm pleased that we will be introducing our ports
5 report and brochure, and each of you have a copy of that at
6 the dais. We are very pleased after working well over a
7 year, that this document is now available to talk to our
8 Legislature about the valued proposition of strategic
9 investments in our Texas ports and our maritime system.
10 There will be a reception Monday evening at 5:30 p.m. So
11 I'm very pleased, Chairman, and the Members, an advanced
12 copy of this.

13 A quick shout-out and a thanks to our partners who
14 have helped us over the months. I want to thank each of you
15 on the dais for your contributions. I know our staff
16 members and you have had chances to give input. We've also
17 enjoyed our strong relationship with the Texas Ports
18 Association, the U.S. Coast Guard, TTI, U.S. Corps of
19 Engineers, and numerous other partners, we're very, very
20 pleased to have received inputs for this document. The
21 brochure describes the maritime system and how vital it is
22 to trade and how these ports are serving this significant
23 economy of \$1.2 trillion that we call our state economy.

24 The last item of business, Members, we've had
25 numerous calls, I know, related to our highways and the

1 TxTag toll system, voicing frustration with customer service
2 of Xerox's billing operations, and I'm hopeful that our team
3 will work very closely -- I'm convinced they will -- to
4 understand the contract that we have with Xerox and to be
5 assured that we will review the situation and come up with
6 some significant resolutions.

7 In closing, Members, Roy Spence, Jr. wrote a book
8 entitled, It's Not What You Sell, It's What You Stand For.
9 I think that sums up the spirit of this agency. It sums up
10 Bob Lanier. And, clearly, we stand for these values here
11 and will continue to strive to achieve and be the
12 best-in-class agency. Thank you.

13 MR. AUSTIN: Good morning, everyone.

14 I echo Commissioner Moseley's comments, we will
15 find a solution to get these things fixed with the TxTags.
16 It is important to keep Texas moving and make sure you get a
17 fair and accurate billing.

18 First of all, I would like to say thank you to
19 each and everyone one of you who attended the forum. We are
20 really pleased with the success of the forum. New
21 innovative ideas, anything from SpaceX to technology,
22 looking at roads, solutions, Senator Nichols laying out a
23 wonderful plan -- presentation showing how we got to where
24 we are, as it relates to the funding and really setting the
25 tone for the need that we face as an agency to keep Texas

1 moving. And there's more than one right answer, but it's
2 going to take a lot of collective efforts. And I want to
3 say thank you to the members of the Legislature and
4 leadership who have made transportation a priority right up
5 front, that way we can go to work and begin working on plans
6 and put people to work and -- again, I'm going to keep
7 saying it -- keep Texas moving, because it is important.

8 I also had the opportunity earlier this week to be
9 in D.C. to visit with our three new members of the Texas
10 congressional team, and one of them, Congressman Babin from
11 southeast Texas, is on the Transportation and Infrastructure
12 Committee. He also has part of the port -- the Gulf Coast,
13 so it's really important as he looks and ties in with
14 multimodal aspects of moving freight and roadways.

15 Also had a wonderful call from Congressman
16 Cuellar; he's on Appropriations. But now he's on the
17 Subcommittee for Transportation. Where I'm leading -- along
18 with our other Members of Congress, Congressman Farenthold,
19 Eddie Bernice Johnson -- we have folks up there ready to go
20 to bat for us: Federal. I mention that because while we're
21 in session across the street, federal funding representing
22 about 42 percent of our LAR, and while we tend to focus just
23 on the state, we can't give up focus and what's happening in
24 D.C., so we can make sure that we get our fair share back.

25 A couple things of note, I know the bike committee

1 met earlier this week, and I think they had some really
2 robust discussion. I look forward to hopefully having a
3 report from them in March. But one thing that's unique, the
4 Chairman of the Bicycle Advisory Committee, Billy Hibbs, is
5 working on a pilot program -- and he's an Eagle Scout, so I
6 know he's a little thrifty -- and went back to finding a way
7 to use some engineering expertise by partnering, as many
8 other folks have done. Mr. Chairman, I think in El Paso
9 ya'll, when there was some resurfacing, did some bike lanes
10 and UTEP had participated with identifying those with our
11 district.

12 We're looking at a pilot potentially in Tyler
13 using University of Texas at Tyler Engineering School and
14 they're beginning to work. And you've got a lot of
15 partnership -- where I'm leading, there's a lot of answers
16 out here of education and using resources that are right up
17 under us to help come up and frame solutions.

18 We're going to be discussing Prop 1. There's been
19 a lot of input and I hope ya'll have had an opportunity to
20 look at the -- where we're going to be spending the money
21 based on the recommendations coming from grassroots and the
22 districts. I just wished there was more, and I know
23 Representative Ashby, you know, Appropriations, we're
24 counting on you as we're going to look at some of these new
25 solutions. But I am excited that we can get the money out

1 the door pretty quickly.

2 Another thing I'd like to do is we're talking
3 about being thrifty -- is Ben Asher and James Bass in here?
4 I think I see James. There's Ben. I want ya'll to take a
5 good look at these guys and I want to share something that
6 just happened.

7 (Laughter)

8 MR. ASHER: You can explain why.

9 MR. AUSTIN: And I'm going to explain why.

10 MR. ASHER: Thank you.

11 MR. AUSTIN: Ya'll come on up to the front just
12 for a second. I know Ben's going to be on the agenda in a
13 few minutes.

14 Last week was a historic day -- I'll say not just
15 for TxDOT, but also for the State of Texas -- we refinanced
16 the Central Texas Turnpike System; it was a \$1.6 billion
17 refinance and we paid off TIFIA loan that we had of \$900
18 million. But for those of ya'll that have been around, we
19 have a benchmark that we have to obtain; it's a
20 three-percent net present value savings whenever we have to
21 refinance or we do something.

22 This one, golly, the three percent was surpassed
23 by a few digits: Twenty-one percent, net present value
24 savings of about \$380 million on this last -- I believe
25 that's the largest net present value savings in Texas

1 history, and I want to say, Gentlemen, for what ya'll have
2 done -- I know there's members in here that are on the
3 underwriting pool and the different teams, if ya'll would
4 raise your hands -- I want to say thank ya'll for everyone
5 that's participating because ya'll are managing our balance
6 sheet and what we have; that's history. I want to say that
7 ya'll deserve beyond a round of applause. Thank ya'll for
8 what you do, and for paying attention to the little details.

9 (Applause)

10 Now, I just want ya'll to know that that money is
11 not available right now; it's going to be spread out over 30
12 years. I was quick to hear that.

13 To my fellow commissioners, thank ya'll for what
14 ya'll have done. I've learned a lot. I hope ya'll will be
15 back next month, but we'll see, and, obviously, I look
16 forward to talking to ya'll a little bit later. But thank
17 ya'll for what everybody is doing and I look forward to
18 continuing to hear from you, and I still want your list of
19 projects, Mr. Chairman, that you haven't finished yet.

20 MR. HOUGHTON: Yeah, I've got them right here.

21 MR. UNDERWOOD: I appreciate the comments. When
22 you say you didn't know if I was going to make it back next
23 month, I didn't know if you were talking about my wife's
24 cooking or what, I had to think about that a minute.

25 (Laughter)

1 John, a question for you -- thank you -- be sure
2 to tell Ron Johnston and his staff we appreciate him. I
3 thought he did a very professional job of representing the
4 State, TxDOT, and we really appreciate that. Be sure to
5 pass that on.

6 A question for you, John: Also with the -- was it
7 the national championship game in Arlington, how many people
8 did we send for that to make sure that that went off all
9 right?

10 MR. BARTON: I'm not sure that I have the
11 number -- Randy Hoppman or Bill Hale might -- but we brought
12 in crews from all the surrounding districts to be there in
13 Dallas/Fort Worth so that as that national championship came
14 and went, if there were any weather-related events, we would
15 be able to respond and make Texas proud. We were fortunate
16 that they did a good job and the weather for the most part,
17 behaved itself.

18 MR. UNDERWOOD: Exactly.

19 MR. BARTON: We had a couple hundred people or
20 more up there from the surrounding districts to support that
21 very important national event.

22 MR. UNDERWOOD: And I just wanted the audience to
23 understand that you get to see what Ron did, but our people
24 are always behind the scenes trying to protect our fellow
25 citizens and taking care of our roads, and I just wanted

1 that, and thank you, John, for helping me bring that out. I
2 appreciate that.

3 I really don't have much else to say. I just
4 always like to leave our chairman with a thought. Chairman,
5 always remember that being able to express your opinion
6 without fear of reprisal is what distinguishes a democracy
7 from a marriage, and I'll turn it over to you.

8 (Laughter)

9 MR. HOUGHTON: Do you know my wife? Do you know
10 her?

11 MR. UNDERWOOD: No.

12 (Laughter)

13 MR. HOUGHTON: Well, thank you, Fred. That's a
14 nice lead-in to my comments. Thanks, everybody, for coming.
15 We have State Representative Trent Ashby here from Lufkin,
16 from the eastern side of the state.

17 Welcome, Representative Ashby, glad to have you
18 here.

19 I was getting my tea this morning and Patrick
20 Morada reminded me of something that when we were having
21 trouble, which we have every so often finding resources or
22 funds to make projects work, about Colby Chase used to talk
23 about having bake sales and he said, You know we -- do you
24 remember that, Fred, he talked about having bake sales?

25 Well, Patrick sent me an article from Iona,

1 Michigan, and there was a bridge in Iona that carried about
2 600 cars a day and the State allocated -- it was a \$3.6
3 million construction contract or design for this bridge and
4 the State only had 2.9. Well, for a three-year period,
5 Iona, Michigan, held bake sales and sold lemonade to fill in
6 the gap of \$700,000.

7 And he e-mailed me this article this morning and I
8 said, I guess it's come full circle, it has come true. The
9 governor of Michigan says it's really unfortunate that we
10 have to resort to these kinds of things. But hopefully in
11 the state of Texas, John and General, we don't have to
12 resort to bake sales, you know, to fill in the gap. Our
13 friends across the state, Representative Ashby and others,
14 can help us get the resources needed to take care of this
15 great state.

16 But, thank ya'll for coming, and the first order
17 of business is to approve the minutes that you have in your
18 binder, fellow commissioners.

19 And if there's a motion?

20 MR. UNDERWOOD: So moved.

21 MR. VANDERGRIFF: So moved.

22 MR. AUSTIN: Second.

23 MR. HOUGHTON: All in favor?

24 (Chorus of "Ayes") ** 2

25 MR. HOUGHTON: Thank you.

1 General? ** 3a

2 GENERAL WEBER: Thanks, Chairman.

3 And now at this time, I'd like to move on to
4 Item 3(a), a resolution for retiring Bryan District Engineer
5 Catherine Hejl. Deputy Executive Director John Barton will
6 present this resolution.

7 John?

8 MR. BARTON: Thank you, General Weber.

9 Chairman, Members of the Commission, after these
10 recognitions, we will be passing around the offering plates
11 for the love offering for various projects somewhere in
12 Texas -- just a joke.

13 It is my honor to stand before you this morning to
14 share with you some resolutions that have been prepared on
15 your behalf, as well as a resolution from the Senate of
16 Texas and I believe that Representative Ashby is here to
17 share a few remarks.

18 Recognizing the outstanding career and
19 accomplishments of one of my very best friends and someone
20 that I trust, respect, admire, and choose to try to emulate
21 on a daily basis, Ms. Catherine Hejl, who currently serves
22 us as the district engineer for our Bryan District.
23 Catherine has long served the agency well. Her
24 accomplishments are many, and it's certainly a distinct
25 honor and privilege for me to present these resolutions to

1 her today. So, Catherine, I'm going to ask you if you would
2 please come stand beside me as I read the Commission
3 resolution and the Senate resolution after that.

4 But if you'll -- so this is resolution from the
5 Commission. I'll present it to you and then I'd like to
6 read it for the audience. And this is what the resolution
7 says:

8 "Whereas, the Texas Transportation Commission
9 takes great pride in recognizing Catherine W. Hejl, P.E.,
10 for her outstanding service to the Texas Department of
11 Transportation after a distinguished career of thirty years,
12 most recently serving as the Bryan District engineer;

13 And, whereas, Ms. Hejl earned her bachelor's
14 degree in civil engineering from Texas A&M University in
15 1985 and immediately began her TxDOT career as an engineer
16 assistant with the Walker County area office in the Bryan
17 District;

18 And, whereas, she went on to serve her entire
19 TxDOT tenure in the Bryan District, she quickly moved up the
20 management ranks to assistant area engineer in the Bryan
21 area office, Bryan District maintenance engineer, and Bryan
22 area engineer where she oversaw transportation operations in
23 Brazos County;

24 And, whereas, in 2004, she became the Bryan
25 District director of operations, and in 2009 was named Bryan

1 District engineer, overseeing the planning, designing,
2 building, operation, and maintenance of state transportation
3 systems for the ten-county district that includes 300
4 employees and construction projects totalling more than \$400
5 million;

6 And, whereas, Ms. Hejl received the 2007 Dewitt C.
7 Greer Award for outstanding contributions to Texas
8 transportation and the 2014 Outstanding Women in Texas
9 Government Award from the State Agency Council for
10 motivating others to achieve the best possible results;

11 And, whereas, her leadership has exemplified
12 communication, partnership, and innovative ideas between the
13 Department, elected officials, community leaders, and
14 employees;

15 Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Texas
16 Transportation Commission does hereby extend its sincerest
17 best wishes to Catherine W. Hejl, P.E., in recognition of
18 her professional achievements in a career of loyal service,
19 on behalf of the State of Texas and its citizens, presented
20 this day, Thursday, the 29th day of January, 2015."

21 Catherine, congratulations, and I know the
22 Commission very much appreciates your service, as do all of
23 us at the Texas Department of Transportation.

24 (Applause)

25 I also have two copies of a resolution that was

1 passed through the Senate, and I would like to note was
2 signed, perhaps, one of the first, if not the first, Senate
3 resolution signed by our new Lieutenant Governor Dan
4 Patrick, so that's quite an honor that you're receiving this
5 today, Catherine. It was authored by one of your favorite
6 members of legislature, our senator, Lois Kolkhorst. And so
7 I would like to read this for the audience, as well:

8 "Whereas, Catherine Hejl is retiring, as Bryan
9 District engineer for the Texas Department of Transportation
10 on January 31st, 2015, concluding an exemplary career that
11 has spanned thirty years with the agency;

12 And, whereas, one of the highest-ranking female
13 engineers at the Department, Ms. Hejl oversees nearly 300
14 employees and directs projects totalling more than \$400
15 million, she has proven an exceptional, talented manager,
16 building a strong team and challenging and motivating her
17 personnel to achieve superior results;

18 Under her leadership, the Bryan District has
19 received numerous awards from national and state
20 organizations including the Cement Council of Texas Highway
21 Division, the National Asphalt Pavement Association, the
22 Texas Asphalt Pavement Association, and the Associated
23 General Contractors;

24 And, whereas, in 2005 as Hurricane Rita approached
25 the Texas coast, Ms. Hejl guided the contraflow of 113 miles

1 of Interstate 45 through Walker, Madison, Leon, and
2 Freestone Counties; she worked with employees across her
3 district and the two neighboring districts to successfully
4 complete the contraflow from Houston to Dallas, and by
5 ensuring a smoother evacuation process, she helped save
6 countless lives;

7 Among the accolades she has received, are the 2014
8 Outstanding Women in Texas Government Award and the 2007
9 TxDOT Dewitt C. Greer Award and the Greater Brazos Valley
10 Excellence in Transportation Award;

11 And, whereas, this dynamic Texan earned her
12 bachelor's degree in civil engineering from Texas A&M
13 University and in 1985 she joined TxDOT as an engineering
14 assistant in Walker County area office of the Bryan
15 District, through her skill and unyielding commitment to
16 excellence, she has risen steadily through the ranks in the
17 district, serving as assistant engineer, Bryan District
18 maintenance engineer, and Bryan area engineer, before
19 becoming the Bryan District director of operations in 2004;
20 she was appointed to the top post in the district five years
21 later;

22 And, whereas, an outstanding engineer and
23 administrator, Catherine Hejl has earned the deep respect
24 and admiration of her colleagues and her contributions will
25 continue to benefit the State of Texas in the years to come;

1 Now, therefore, be it resolved, that the Senate of
2 the State of Texas, 84th Legislature, hereby congratulates
3 Catherine W. Hejl, on her retirement as Bryan District
4 engineer for the Texas Department of Transportation and
5 extend to her sincere best wishes as she embarks on the next
6 exciting chapter of her life;

7 And be it further resolved that an official copy
8 of this resolution be prepared for Ms. Hejl as an expression
9 of our high regard from the Texas State Senate."

10 Catherine, congratulations on these noted
11 accomplishments, this recognition. I'm so proud to have
12 worked with you.

13 And Commissioners, Chairman, General Weber, I want
14 to allow you an opportunity to share some words about one of
15 our best and brightest, Ms. Catherine Hejl.

16 (Applause)

17 MS. HEJL: Thank you, John. Thank you,
18 Commissioners. Thank you, General Weber.

19 First, I wanted to say thank you for your service,
20 Commissioner Underwood and Chair Houghton. I thoroughly
21 enjoyed your presentation at the forum where John was asking
22 questions, and I've had a lot of comments about how much
23 they enjoyed that insight to being a commissioner, so thank
24 you for your service.

25 I want to introduce my family: my mother, Shirley

1 Watts, is here; and my older brother, Marc Watts is here;
2 and my younger brother, Phil Watts is here. I was fortunate
3 enough to grow up in a family that really set a good
4 example. They have all trained and been educated very well
5 and been very successful in their careers, but remained very
6 good fathers and mothers and spouses. So very appreciative
7 of their support through the years and their example.

8 I also want to thank Representative Ashby for
9 being here; that's quite an honor and I appreciate that.

10 I wanted to thank a few people who helped guide me
11 in my career. Alan Prichard hired me in 1985. He has long
12 since retired, but we remain friends. I actually met with
13 him in December, so very appreciative of him.

14 Patrick Williams, I probably worked for longer
15 than anybody else, and he is the gentleman that -- he not
16 only gave me good design experience, but he then put me in
17 charge of construction, and that was very helpful to make me
18 well-rounded in my career.

19 Lonnie Traywick (ph) hired me as the Brazos County
20 area engineer. He was a great boss because he lived in the
21 same county which I did, which is always difficult for an
22 area engineer to be in the same county as their district
23 engineer, but he didn't call me daily with little things, he
24 pretty much tried to let me handle the county, and so I
25 thought that was a good learning experience.

1 Bryan Wood hired me as director of maintenance, so
2 that kind of completed the three things we do. I've been
3 involved in designing, planning, and construction, then I
4 got the maintenance. So very thankful for Brian, given me
5 that opportunity.

6 And, finally, Amadeo hired me and had the
7 confidence to hire me as district engineer in 2009, with the
8 help of John and David Casteel kind of making sure I didn't
9 screw up really bad. I appreciate all of their support, and
10 most recently, Randy Hoppman's support.

11 But the people I want to thank the most and the
12 people that I really will miss the most is the employees of
13 the Bryan District. John said 300 -- I'm glad he said that,
14 because I am over-hired; I'm supposed to be at 292 -- but as
15 was stated earlier, I was hired in Bryan and I spent my
16 whole career there and I'm probably the second-most tenured
17 person there so I know everybody. And those guys are -- I
18 know every DE gets up here and says we have the best
19 employees, but I'm the one that's telling the truth.

20 (Laughter)

21 I have the greatest employees. They have a lot of
22 passion. They have a lot of dedication. They were out
23 there Thanksgiving day when we had a road wash out the day
24 before, and that's just what kind of employees they are
25 there, and without a doubt, they have supported me

1 throughout my career.

2 And I didn't mention my three kids -- they're not
3 here. One's working in Bryan; one is supposed to be at
4 class at Texas A&M; and one is supposed to be at class at
5 U.T., but I had all three of those kids working for the
6 Department, and the benefits that we get here are very
7 special because I had all three of those children and was
8 still able to progress in my career. So I have the greatest
9 fondness and respect for TxDOT and will miss it very much,
10 so I thank everybody for that.

11 (Applause)

12 MR. HOUGHTON: Please.

13 MR. ASHBY: Thank you, Mr. Chair, Commission
14 Members. I thank ya'll for the invitation to be here with
15 you today. General, great to see you again.

16 First thing I want to do is to echo what Jerral
17 said to you in your safety briefing: Should there be a
18 reason to leave the building and move across the street to
19 the Capitol, I just want to tell you that the House and
20 Senate are both in recess, so it should be safe over there
21 on the Capitol grounds.

22 (Laughter)

23 But I'm really here this morning to echo what has
24 already been said and certainly to bring just a few
25 additional comments about how invaluable employee Catherine

1 Hejl has been to TxDOT, and how much she's meant to me over
2 the last two years that I've served in my public capacity.

3 I'll never forget, right after I was sworn in a
4 couple of years ago, almost to the day, I asked my staff to
5 call Catherine's office and set up a meeting with the
6 engineer in Bryan, which covers Leon and Madison Counties
7 that I'm blessed to represent, and I'll never forget, they
8 came back to me and said, Well, she said she can be here
9 tomorrow, and I thought, Wow, talk about responsiveness;
10 this lady leads from the front and she leads by example, and
11 that display of responsiveness is really what has made her a
12 standout district engineer in my opinion

13 This may surprise some of you, but occasionally,
14 we'll have a citizen or a county commissioner or a mayor
15 call us with a transportation-related issue, and without
16 question and without a doubt, every time we got a call and
17 we referred that to Catherine and her staff, they have
18 gotten on it, posthaste, and really gone out of their way
19 to, I think, to exhibit what TxDOT really stands for, and
20 that is public safety, and your willingness, through your
21 employees, to communicate with the over 26 million Texans
22 that are blessed to call this state home. It really is
23 something to be proud of.

24 And so, it's just been a delight to work with you,
25 Catherine, over the past couple of years. As I've told

1 several of you, and I mentioned this to John last week when
2 I saw him there in the dungeon of the Capitol, I said, If
3 ya'll can find a way to talk Catherine from retiring -- I
4 know it's been thirty years, and she hardly looks thirty
5 years old -- but if you can convince her not to retire, you
6 would be doing all of us a great service. But she has
7 certainly earned the right to enjoy some days ahead and I
8 know she's ready and excited to start the next chapter of
9 her life.

10 But, like you, we're going to miss her desperately
11 over in the Bryan District, and I just wanted to say,
12 Catherine, I appreciate your friendship and thank you for
13 your invaluable service to our great state of Texas.

14 MS. HEJL: Thank you so much.

15 MR. ASHBY: You're welcome.

16 (Applause)

17 MR. HOUGHTON: Commissioners, before we get to the
18 next retiree?

19 MR. VANDERGRIFF: That was a heck of a speech.

20 And I've not had the privilege of getting to work
21 with you directly, but all who have sing your praises and
22 your leadership and the excellence in your department, so I
23 want to congratulate you on a job well done, and leadership
24 well-delivered.

25 MS. HEJL: Thank you, Commissioner Vandergriff.

1 MR. MOSELEY: Catherine, thank you so much for
2 your dedicated service. Texas, no doubt, is a better place
3 because of your contributions and I know when you talk about
4 your family being there, I know that they've been important
5 as a part of your dedicated support. So thank you so much
6 for what you've done.

7 And what a delight to see your mother here and
8 your brothers, and I've had the privilege of working with
9 your brother, Marc, and so when you talk about the core
10 values, I get that, and it's so good to have them here
11 today.

12 Representative, good to have him here, as well,
13 but congratulations. We wish you the very best. God bless
14 you in your next chapter.

15 MS. HEJL: Thank you very much, Commissioner
16 Moseley.

17 MR. AUSTIN: Catherine, Representative Ashby left,
18 but I want to say that of all the districts, the one
19 district engineer I hear the most positive comments from was
20 you, and Ashby calls me all the time and says that. And
21 actually, the day after I learned you were leaving, he
22 asked, Can you talk her out of leaving; he was worried.

23 But working on Highway 79, Interstate 45, with
24 those areas -- energy sector -- and with you being in Bryan,
25 you get a lot of advice, and I'm sure coming out with TTI

1 close by with all of our Aggie friends that are over there.

2 Thank you for your service, and what you've done,
3 and I know you'll be close to us going forward.

4 MS. HEJL: Thank you, Commissioner Austin.

5 And I assured Representative Ashby that we were
6 going to keep working on that 79 Bill.

7 (Laughter)

8 MR. UNDERWOOD: Catherine, thank you very much for
9 what you do.

10 And to your family, I hope you realize how much
11 she's meant to TxDOT, how much she's meant to the District,
12 and what a quality job she's done and how well she's
13 represented your family, as well as thank you for
14 representing us at TxDOT.

15 And one quick question: I didn't realize -- you
16 went to A&M -- thirty years; is that correct?

17 MS. HEJL: Yes.

18 MR. UNDERWOOD: You graduated at 15 from A&M?

19 (Laughter)

20 But anyway, congratulations, young lady.

21 MS. HEJL: Thank you, Commissioner Underwood.

22 MR. UNDERWOOD: Thank you for what you've done.

23 MS. HEJL: Thank you.

24 MR. UNDERWOOD: And for your family, thank you for
25 the loan of your sister, your daughter; we appreciate it.

1 Thank you.

2 MR. HOUGHTON: Our heartfelt congratulations to
3 you, but this is the chapter turn here. Now, what? What
4 are you going to do? Can you give us a preview?

5 MS. HEJL: I'm going to go to work -- I want to
6 stay in the transportation industry, but I can't retire. I
7 can't sit at the house and do gardening right now. I want
8 to work, so I'm going to work.

9 MR. HOUGHTON: You got something lined up and
10 ready to go?

11 MS. HEJL: Pretty much.

12 MR. HOUGHTON: Good, good for you.

13 Well, I imagine we'll see your face somewhere --

14 MS. HEJL: I hope so, yes, sir.

15 MR. HOUGHTON: -- in these meetings, or in
16 district meetings or other places like that.

17 Congratulations to you very much, Catherine.

18 MS. HEJL: Thank you much, Chair Houghton.

19 MR. HOUGHTON: All right.

20 GENERAL WEBER: Catherine, I think your legacy is
21 all the men and women whose lives you've touched, your
22 employees, over the last thirty years: you coached them;
23 you taught them; you mentored them; you made them better
24 mothers, fathers, took care of their families; you made them
25 better citizens of the great state of Texas, and that's your

1 true legacy, and thank you for doing that. That's as
2 selfless of service as you can offer. Thank you.

3 MS. HEJL: Thank you, General Weber.

4 And I do want to say the employees have much
5 enjoyed your visit and we really do appreciate that. Thank
6 you very much. ** 3b.

7 MR. BARTON: Okay. Continuing on with the
8 recognitions this morning, we have the honor of recognizing
9 Doug Woodall who is retiring from the Department as the
10 director of our Toll Operations Division. James Bass, our
11 chief financial officer, has had the pleasure of working
12 with Doug and providing executive leadership with Doug for
13 our toll operations for the last few years, so he's asked if
14 he can come forward and present the resolution on behalf of
15 the Commission for Doug.

16 So, Doug, thank you.

17 MR. BASS: Thank you, John.

18 It's my honor and privilege to join you this
19 morning in recognizing Doug Woodall for his thirty-one-year
20 career serving the state of Texas and our agency at TxDOT,
21 so, Doug, if you wouldn't mind stepping up here. I'm going
22 to call out some of the highlights of the resolution. As
23 you might imagine, a thirty-one-year career is rather
24 lengthy, so I'll hit some of the highlights.

25 Commissioner Underwood, you may or may not know

1 that Mr. Woodall graduated from Texas Tech University in
2 1983. After that, he joined TxDOT and served in our Midland
3 residency and served a number of jobs there in Midland
4 before, in 1987, moving to Austin in the Design Division,
5 again, handling a number of jobs in the Design Division,
6 which included overseeing the Transportation Enhancement
7 Program. So Doug has been drawn to jobs that have a lot of
8 interest over the years.

9 In 2002, Mr. Woodall was named director of our
10 turnpike design for the Texas Turnpike Authority, and during
11 that time, he oversaw the construction and the development
12 of the over \$2.4 billion construction of the Central Texas
13 Turnpike Project. Shortly after that, Department
14 reorganization, he became the turnpike planning and
15 development director in our Texas Turnpike Authority
16 Division; that included overseeing another project that many
17 of you may recall, State Highway 121, that, in effect,
18 Mr. Chairman, I think resulted in about a \$3.2 billion bake
19 sale for the Dallas/Fort Worth region, and they can use
20 those resources to deliver additional projects in the
21 Metroplex.

22 We advance forward and in 2012, Doug was named the
23 director of our newly formed Toll Operations Division, and
24 under his direction, during that time, TxDOT has been
25 awarded three awards of excellence from the International

1 Bridge, Tunnel and Turnpike Association, as well as a
2 Journey Towards Excellence Quality Award for our Fleets
3 Program.

4 Commissioner Austin, you talked about the teamwork
5 earlier for the refunding that saved the state a great deal
6 of money. It truly was a team effort, and a key part of
7 that team, visiting with investors and others were Doug and
8 his team, from the operations standpoint, and letting them
9 know what is going on, on the roadway day-to-day.

10 So, now, therefore, be it resolved, that the Texas
11 Transportation Commission does hereby extend its sincerest
12 best wishes to Doug Woodall, P.E., in recognition of his
13 professional achievements in a career of loyal service on
14 behalf of the state of Texas and its citizens.

15 It's been a true honor for myself to have worked
16 with Doug over the past few years and we will certainly miss
17 him, but thank him for his service.

18 Thank you, Doug.

19 (Applause)

20 MR. WOODALL: Thank you, I appreciate that.

21 Over thirty-one years you've seen a lot of
22 commissioners come and go, a lot of new members of
23 administration come and go, each with their own style and
24 approach, their way of doing things, but what has always
25 been consistent is commissioners' and the administration's

1 dedication to public safety and to public service.

2 So I get a chance to come up here and do something
3 other than just read a minute order to you, I just want to
4 take the opportunity to thank you for your public service,
5 all of you; it's very much appreciated.

6 I'm honored to have here with me, my wife of
7 twenty-seven years, love of my life and best friend, Luanne,
8 and I also have my little twelve-year-old daughter here,
9 Abigail; she's a terrific kid. I couldn't ask for a better
10 daughter, and it's just been a joy for us to have. It's
11 another expression of appreciation, this is how I've
12 provided for my family and put a roof over there head, so,
13 again, thank you.

14 I've worked since 1984 with just some of the best
15 people that you can imagine. I've worked on some of the
16 biggest and most challenging projects the state has had to
17 offer, so to the Commission, Administration, my co-workers,
18 and my friends, I'd like to thank you for 31 good years of
19 public service; it's been an honor.

20 Thank you very much.

21 (Applause)

22 MR. HOUGHTON: Commissioners?

23 MR. VANDERGRIFF: Doug, I just have to say that
24 having served, prior to this service, six years on a toll
25 authority, I understand what you do, probably all too well,

1 and therefore appreciate the service and the leadership that
2 you have provided there.

3 MR. WOODALL: Thank you, sir.

4 MR. MOSELEY: Doug, thank you so much, for three
5 decades, plus. We know that it takes a lot of energy and
6 you have moved around in different assignments and excelled
7 in all of those areas, so congratulations on having
8 succeeded over the last three decades. And what a delight
9 to have your wife and your precious daughter here today.
10 We're so pleased that Abigail can be with us today, too.

11 MR. WOODALL: She was excited to get to cut
12 school.

13 MR. MOSELEY: Yeah.

14 (Laughter)

15 MR. MOSELEY: But congratulations to you and God
16 bless you in your next chapter. Thank you for your service.

17 MR. WOODALL: Thank you, sir.

18 And to your comments earlier, continuing to
19 work -- I only have one more day -- but we're increasing our
20 customer service staff by approximately a third. We're
21 looking at increasing our phone line capacity, and we've
22 also been offered -- part of the TxDOT family, everybody
23 chips in -- IT folks are looking to provide assistance as
24 well.

25 MR. MOSELEY: Fantastic.

1 MR. WOODALL: So we're trying to take advantage of
2 the entire team to try to rectify that situation.

3 MR. MOSELEY: Thank you, Doug. Congratulations.

4 MR. AUSTIN: Doug, thank you.

5 I share the comments of my fellow commissioners.
6 And, you know, I think back to my days at the NET RMA, much
7 like Commissioner Vandergriff at NTTA, you helped us do a
8 lot of things and we partnered with ya'll instead of trying
9 to go out and contract outside, and I appreciate that. A
10 lot of people don't realize the services that TxDOT can do,
11 with and for, other agencies.

12 But I was going to say you took the approach, how
13 can we and actively, jointly save a lot of money? And I
14 know you've been involved in discussions and different
15 things as we look at toll operations. Not every road is
16 right to be a toll road, but those that are voting with
17 making a choice and driving, you're right there at central
18 operations seeing the thousands of transactions that people
19 are going back and forth.

20 And to Abigail, I know you missed school today,
21 but you can take pride as you go around the state, you can
22 tell your friends, My dad helped build that road.

23 MS. WOODALL: She does do that.

24 (Laughter)

25 MR. AUSTIN: And she does do that every day, so

1 thank you.

2 And I know you get him back, and thank you for
3 being here. Doug, thank you very much.

4 MR. WOODALL: Thank you, sir.

5 MR. UNDERWOOD: Doug, thank you. Appreciate it.
6 Always appreciate your smile, always appreciate your
7 patience, your steadiness.

8 And to your family, TxDOT is much better because
9 of your dad, because of your husband, and thank you to your
10 bride for the loan of him for thirty-one -- is that right --
11 thirty-one years, because I know that's hard sometimes,
12 because there's a lot of demands on that job, so thank you
13 very much. Appreciate it. I appreciate what you stand for,
14 I really do.

15 And, John, it makes me sad to see we're going to
16 lose one of our real, actual people with a really good
17 degree from TxDOT, you know.

18 (Laughter)

19 We're going to lose a Raider, you know, that's sad
20 to me. But, anyway, thank you.

21 MR. WOODALL: I was very proud when you were
22 appointed to the Commission.

23 (Laughter)

24 There's not very many of us; there's more Aggies
25 and U.T., you know?

1 MR. UNDERWOOD: I was more proud to find you among
2 all these Aggies.

3 (Laughter)

4 But, anyway, thank ya'll very much. I appreciate
5 what you do, sir.

6 MR. HOUGHTON: Doug, again, you know, I call you
7 unflappable. We'd get you up here and grill you on a lot of
8 things in the days when we were building -- and we continue
9 to build -- but first started out on the CDA programs and
10 those were some rough times --

11 MR. WOODALL: Yes, sir.

12 MR. HOUGHTON: -- but we got through that briar
13 patch and now we're blowing through projects, and a lot of
14 it because of you and I thank you for that. Thank you for
15 being that calm person in the storm, and it was a lot of
16 fun.

17 MR. WOODALL: Yes, sir, it was.

18 MR. HOUGHTON: It was a lot of fun, and now we're
19 relishing in the success, but thank you very much for your
20 service.

21 And now, turning that chapter, like Catherine, do
22 you have something else in mind?

23 MR. WOODALL: Don't have anything specific lined
24 up, but I'm in my early 50s, so I've got a long way to go
25 before I retire.

1 MR. HOUGHTON: You sure do. Congratulations to
2 you.

3 MR. WOODALL: I'm looking forward to working --

4 MR. HOUGHTON: What we're going to do -- go ahead.

5 MR. WOODALL: I'm looking forward to working on
6 projects, possibly that don't end with the word "billion."

7 (Laughter)

8 MR. HOUGHTON: Got it.

9 We're going to take pictures with Catherine and
10 Doug, so we're going to -- do you have something to say?
11 Did I cut your off, General?

12 GENERAL WEBER: No, I --

13 MR. HOUGHTON: As, usual.

14 Go right ahead.

15 GENERAL WEBER: What I appreciate most about you,
16 in addition, to your certainly selfless leadership and --
17 selfless service and leadership is your sense of humility.
18 It was never important that you got credit for things; it
19 was important that your people who worked for you got credit
20 for things. And Commissioner Vandergriff is right, you had
21 a job where you had to march to the sound of the guns, and
22 that's take on the tough jobs, and you did that, and you
23 always accomplished the mission, but you made sure that your
24 people got that credit and I thank you for that.

25 MR. WOODALL: Thank you, sir. I appreciate that,

1 General.

2 MR. HOUGHTON: Okay. Now, we'll take pictures.

3 (Whereupon, photographs were taken with the
4 Commission.)

5 MR. HOUGHTON: Okay. General?

6 GENERAL WEBER: We're going to move forward to
7 Item 9, Hidalgo County Toll Road. ** 9

8 MR. HOUGHTON: Katie, is this your item? Whose
9 item is this? Russell?

10 This is kind of an item that's been on again/off
11 again/on again, as far as the agenda is concerned. What we
12 would like to do today is that there's an agenda item to
13 approve an agreement with Hidalgo County RMA development
14 agreement. What we would like to talk about today is a
15 little bit of the history of what this agency has done for
16 RMAs and going forward, what we would like to attempt to do.

17 And, Counselor, I'm not negotiates from the dais,
18 but I would like to have Randy Sweeten -- Randy, are you --
19 come on. Randy is the chair of the Hidalgo County RMA.

20 We've had -- the RMA has been in existence for
21 about what, ten years?

22 MR. SWEETEN: Eight years.

23 MR. HOUGHTON: Eight years.

24 Why don't you come on up.

25 And it has struggled to get some projects -- a

1 project on the ground, and I think this was an attempt to do
2 that. And we met with staff yesterday and we've looked at
3 the history of what we have done for other RMAs, most
4 notably, when Jeff Austin -- Commissioner Austin was
5 chairman of the NET RMA, what we've done for the CTRMA, what
6 we continue to do for the CTRMA, what we continue to do for
7 the Camino Real RMA in El Paso, and Cameron County RMA. You
8 can go through them.

9 And I think what we would like to talk about is
10 some of that, what we have done. I think Commissioner
11 Austin has been involved with us on the other side, Randy,
12 when he was in your position, on how we got their projects
13 off the ground and an attempt to get your projects off the
14 ground.

15 Jeff, I think you have some thoughts based on your
16 history with the NET RMA and the Texas Department of
17 Transportation.

18 MR. AUSTIN: Randy, I want to say, first of all,
19 thank you and congratulations on your appointment, and I
20 know you come into an RMA with a history with some of the
21 projects and planning. I think each of us have been down
22 there from time to time to look and review what's going on.
23 There's a big wish list and I think one thing that's really
24 exciting is this list was developed, as was the reason why
25 RMAs were formed, is to put it back in the hands of the

1 locals to be able to develop and move projects forward.

2 That list was developed -- a couple may have been
3 on our list, but it was done by ya'll and the Region, the
4 MPO, and the grassroots input as to what is right. And the
5 citizens spoke to form an RMA to be able to bring it back to
6 have local control.

7 Each of the RMAs around the state have a different
8 geography, different projects, different personalities,
9 different complexities across the board. They're not all
10 the -- we have the same governing statute, but the
11 personalities and the projects are all a little bit
12 different.

13 When we formed ours -- this is after ya'll up in
14 Tyler -- we wanted to move some projects forward. I want to
15 say, hands down, we could not have done it without TxDOT and
16 a lot of our other partners. We made a choice to instead of
17 doing some things or going straight to the public market or
18 straight to issue debt, we partnered with TxDOT through a
19 multitude of choices -- toll equity loans, SIB loans were
20 the tools that we had available; a couple of them I think
21 are getting ready to be paid off -- but we did that, and in
22 some cases, we contracted back with the funds that we were
23 obligated for, contracted back with TxDOT to do design,
24 engineering, even maintenance on a lot of the projects in
25 construction. Together, I know one of the last sections

1 that I participated in before I left the RMA to come to the
2 Commission, we embarked on a design-build. That
3 design-build, and in working with our TxDOT partners --
4 Russell, I think you were involved in that -- saved us \$20
5 million.

6 And where I'm leading, there's more than one right
7 way to develop it, and sometimes I know we get lost. It has
8 to go one particular way or the way it's always been done.
9 I would encourage you, your board, and the boards of other
10 RMAs to think openly, is there an opportunity that we can
11 jointly work to help, if that's what ya'll want. Maybe
12 there's instances where we can save you some money by using
13 our design team that are already here on staff working with
14 other projects that can help you do a lot of these things.
15 So I just throw that out as an idea from my experience. We
16 want to help, but we're not going to help where we're not
17 wanted, and I think that's where it's up to you, your team.

18 And I would just say this, I had an opportunity to
19 visit the Laredo delegation yesterday and I was there in the
20 early stages of forming -- very early stages of forming
21 their RMA. And when I look at the other RMAs around the
22 state, some are successful for different reasons. We just
23 talked about the Central Texas Turnpike System. Some are
24 going to have greater success, but it's critical to get
25 these projects on the ground and demonstrate the success.

1 And I want to come back to an overriding theme of
2 enabling legislation that created an RMA. It's not all
3 about toll roads. There's a lot of other things in
4 partnering -- you know, our RMA partnered with Russ County
5 to work within Henderson on a loop-around for the design.
6 That was not a -- that's not a toll road and never will be.

7 There's other projects that we had working with
8 our airports to work with grants, and we took the
9 approach -- I think it turned out to be really successful --
10 we don't care who does the project. If we end up being a
11 facilitator to help get it done, whether it's the county,
12 the city, outside of the RMA or TxDOT -- the bottom line is
13 that the project gets done.

14 MR. SWEETEN: Yes, sir.

15 MR. AUSTIN: And there's more than one way, and we
16 want to be a partner with ya'll. Let us help you how we
17 can.

18 MR. SWEETEN: Yes, sir.

19 MR. HOUGHTON: Any other thoughts from the other
20 commissioners?

21 (No audible response.)

22 If not, John, you've had -- with all due respect,
23 Russell -- John, you have the history with most of the RMAs
24 and talk about how we have partnered with the other RMAs in
25 getting them started as far as using the talents of the

1 Department of Transportation to get them off the ground.

2 MR. BARTON: Yes, sir.

3 For the record, my name is John Barton. I have
4 the honor of serving Texas as the deputy executive director
5 at the Texas Department of Transportation.

6 Regional Mobility Authorities are a key and
7 valuable partner to the State of Texas and to the Texas
8 Department of Transportation, and like any new start-up
9 organization, often times, the history has been when these
10 organizations are first created and are looking at their key
11 initial projects, we've been able to partner with them to
12 provide the history, the talent, the expertise of the
13 agency, to oversee the design and construction of some of
14 those first projects, if you will, to get them up and
15 running and able to then have a project that's generating
16 revenues and helping them sustain their program, giving them
17 the opportunity to have their staff and consultants gain the
18 same experiences that we have had through the course of
19 delivering that project.

20 So, as an example, the NET RMA in the Tyler area
21 has developed a Loop 49, Toll 49 Project and the first phase
22 of that was developed by the Department, designed, overseen
23 the construction. The RMA staff and leadership were
24 developed in understanding that, monitoring it, and then as
25 they continued to progress, they started building the next

1 phases of those projects with design-build, tools and
2 others.

3 Similarly, as we worked here in Central Texas with
4 the Central Texas RMA on the 183 projects, we were there
5 helping to develop the environmental document, getting the
6 design in place, working with the RMA staff and their team,
7 with them, to get the construction done and in place.

8 And that's been our experience out in El Paso with
9 the Camino Real RMA. We delivered the 375, Loop 375 César
10 Chávez Project for the RMA. Allowed them and their team to
11 understand how it works, to build stronger relationships
12 with the industry through our consultants and our
13 construction partners. And now that they've had that
14 experience, we're working with them on the development of
15 the Border Highway express project on the west side of town.

16 So that's kind of how we've worked with the
17 various RMAs around the state of Texas. It's been a
18 successful model, and it gives us a chance to help them get
19 an early success, to have a tangible asset on the ground,
20 and then build experience for their own teams that they can
21 use in the future to deliver more.

22 MR. SWEETEN: Thanks.

23 MR. BARTON: Thank you.

24 MR. HOUGHTON: With Commission permission, what
25 I'd like to see is -- Randy, and your permission; it's your

1 choice, these projects are yours and you have primacy on
2 them -- is figure out some way that we can step in and get
3 you a jump-start, a quick jump-start, based upon our
4 experience with the other RMAs around the state. And,
5 again, Counselor, I'm not negotiating, but I'd like to move
6 forward if ya'll are ready to move forward, and I know you
7 need to go back to your Board, so ...

8 MR. SWEETEN: Absolutely. But we are absolutely
9 on the same page. Everyone one of you said the same thing
10 and that is: We are in this together.

11 And hearing the folks that are retiring out here,
12 I need to tell you that the folks out in our Far District,
13 Toribio is in charge of it, but he's got a phenomenal team;
14 they have been beyond belief in what they are able to
15 accomplish in our, you know, district. So, we are on the
16 same page, it's just a matter of the devil is in the detail.
17 So we'll go get that figured out, sir.

18 Thank ya'll very much.

19 MR. HOUGHTON: And I know you have to get back and
20 that's why I wanted to get you up on the front-end of this
21 agenda.

22 MR. SWEETEN: Thank you, sir.

23 MR. HOUGHTON: Thanks, Randy.

24 MR. SWEETEN: Thanks.

25 MR. HOUGHTON: There's one speaker that wanted to

1 sign up, landowner, Joshua Fike; Fike Farm, property owner.

2 Joshua, did you want to --

3 MR. FIKE: I wanted to ask a question about this
4 toll road.

5 MR. HOUGHTON: No -- well, we're not doing that.
6 We're not taking any action on this item today.

7 MR. FIKE: Oh.

8 MR. HOUGHTON: So we are deferring action on this
9 item, okay?

10 MR. FIKE: All right.

11 MR. HOUGHTON: Thank you, sir.

12 Okay. We'll move on to the agenda. ** 4

13 GENERAL WEBER: Okay, Chairman.

14 Back to Item 4, the discussion of the Texas
15 Transportation Plan 2040, and Transportation Planning and
16 Programming Division Deputy Director Michelle Conkle will
17 present.

18 Michelle, thank you.

19 MS. CONKLE: Thank you, General Weber.

20 Thank you, Chairman Houghton and the rest of the
21 Commission.

22 Again, my name is Michelle Conkle. I'm a planner
23 with the Transportation, Planning and Programming Division
24 and it is my privilege to be here today to represent TP & P
25 to provide you an overview of Texas Transportation Plan 2040

1 development and the contents of that plan.

2 Basically, the plan development team took a
3 performance-based planning approach to the development of
4 this plan. The TTP 2040 will be TxDOT's first
5 performance-based, long-range multimodal plan. The plan has
6 basically laid the framework to enable TxDOT to align
7 planning goals with Department strategic goals, as outlined
8 in the Strategic Plan to link transportation planning
9 efforts with programming decisions to achieve better
10 performance, to implement long-term investment strategies
11 that provide economic growth, and in the near future, enable
12 the Department to monitor the impacts and effectiveness of
13 projects and programs implemented and adjust strategies, if
14 needed, to continue to meet our goals.

15 Our development team committed early on to an
16 extensive outreach effort to ensure meaningful input to the
17 involvement of the plan. We wanted grassroots support of
18 the plan objectives and goals from within the Department,
19 and we sought input on the development of transportation
20 priorities and draft goals from an internal technical
21 advisory committee comprised of division, district, and
22 administrative support office staff members.

23 We also understood that informed stakeholders will
24 feel more engaged in the process and are more likely to give
25 us some meaningful comments and input to the plan, and to

1 that end, we developed a pretty extensive outreach campaign.
2 We had two rounds of public involvement. Round one, taking
3 place in November of 2013 and round two taking place from
4 June through August of 2014; we basically held 72
5 stakeholder and public meetings. In rounds one and two we
6 received 212 written comments, 2,183 completed surveys and
7 345 demographic surveys which also helped the Department
8 promote its Title VI goals. The slide in front of you right
9 now is demonstrative of where those comments and that input
10 came from and we hope that it leaves you with the impression
11 that we were committed to going around the state and
12 listening to everybody in every area of the state while
13 developing the plan.

14 Again, our development team and our technical
15 advisory committee drafted six plan-specific goals for the
16 TTP 2040, but we also understood that we needed to bridge
17 the Department's Strategic Plan goals with national
18 performance goals in the Moving Ahead for Progress in the
19 21st Century Act. So, again, to that end we developed six
20 draft goals that you will see there in the middle of the
21 slide. We took those out to our stakeholders in the public
22 in round one, and during our conversations with our
23 stakeholders, they suggested that we adopt an additional
24 seventh goal to identify financially sustainable funding
25 sources, so we added that goal to the original six for your

1 consideration.

2 Between rounds one and two of our outreach
3 campaign, the development team completed a thorough analysis
4 of the state's demographic growth, current transportation
5 system performance and future freight and passenger needs
6 and demand on the system. Basically, what we found is the
7 population is expected to increase by 17 million to nearly
8 45 million people between 2014 and 2040. We know that
9 population and economic growth are outpacing capacity. We
10 know that roads and bridges are currently in good condition,
11 but will deteriorate without additional funding in the next
12 few years, irrespective of how current funding is allocated.
13 Finally, we know that attempting to address preservation and
14 congestion using current investment practices and without
15 additional funding will result in declining performance for
16 both.

17 This slide is our average annual funding for
18 long-term performance. The top bar represents 2014 revenue
19 forecasts of \$5.5 billion. The second bar on the graph
20 represents the 2014 revenues with the addition of the five
21 billion identified by the Texas 2030 Committee to maintain
22 current highway conditions. The third bar represents funds
23 approximated to achieve state of good repair for highways
24 and promote economic competitiveness; a state of good repair
25 being defined to the public for roadways and bridge

1 pavements with minimal cracking and potholes and providing a
2 smooth riding surface. And then the fourth bar are \$21
3 billion approximated annually in additional funds to achieve
4 a state of good repair for all modes and economic
5 competitiveness, and state of good repair being defined for
6 other modes as -- such as buses and trains -- as being
7 clean, comfortable and reliable.

8 Again, we felt it important to inform our
9 stakeholders in the public as to the funding challenges
10 faced by the Department and the team developed a tool in
11 cooperation with MetroQuest that was bilingual, interactive
12 and allowed the stakeholders in the public to engage in some
13 scenario planning. It allowed our users to rank and rate
14 investment priorities, and also allowed them to visualize in
15 realtime their trade-offs and how those trade-offs impact
16 system performance.

17 What we learned from the MetroQuest tool, we had
18 over 2,000 users -- at the Transportation Planning
19 Conference in Corpus Christi and across the state, during
20 round two, over 2,000 users actually use the tool, and over
21 500 of them completed it all the way through creating their
22 own budget. What we found was that traffic congestion,
23 maintenance and highway expansion were their top investment
24 priorities, and also through an open-ended survey at the end
25 of that tool, we found that users supported allocating more

1 money towards transportation.

2 For the TTP implementation, we are working on
3 recommendations that basically advise the Department to
4 develop a transparent, performance-based project
5 prioritization process. We're encouraging the evaluation of
6 preventative treatments versus system expansion to optimize
7 investments. We feel it very important to make strategic
8 capacity enhancements in key passenger and freight
9 corridors, to continue our partnerships with our
10 transportation partners to develop and implement new
11 technologies and demand management strategies, as well as
12 options for transportation improvements, and most
13 importantly, to work with our elected officials to develop
14 sustainable funding sources now and into the future.

15 In summary, what we'd like the Commission to take
16 away, as you consider adopting the plan is that, again, the
17 TTP 2040 will link planning goals to programming decisions;
18 that you understand that we engaged in a very comprehensive
19 outreach effort to solicit input at key decision points and
20 believe that we really did develop this plan through a
21 round-up approach; that you understand that stakeholders in
22 the public were very supportive of TxDOT, of the challenges
23 that TxDOT faces, and they supported additional funding for
24 transportation; and then most importantly, the draft final
25 TTP chapters that comprise a document were made available

1 for public comments on January 23rd. They can be reviewed
2 and commented upon by accessing them through our website,
3 and we have a public hearing scheduled for
4 February 11th, 2015.

5 And in closing, I would like to thank my
6 colleagues, Casey Dusza and Laura Perez, who helped
7 tremendously with the development of this plan; our
8 development team that was headed by CH2M HILL; members and
9 staff all across the Department that participated on our
10 technical advisory committee, the district staff members
11 that so graciously hosted us -- that's every district for
12 round two and some of them twice because we went to eight
13 districts in the first round; my managers in TPP, all the
14 way up to the director of planning; and you for providing me
15 with the opportunity to make this presentation today. Thank
16 you.

17 MR. HOUGHTON: Question, can you -- does anybody
18 have a question?

19 MR. AUSTIN: Yeah.

20 MR. HOUGHTON: Could you put the slides back up.
21 Go ahead.

22 MR. AUSTIN: I was going to ask you to go to slide
23 six; that's the average annual funding for long-term --
24 right there.

25 MS. CONKLE: Yes?

1 MR. AUSTIN: Looking at this, you know, where our
2 current revenue forecast is, looking out ahead, those are
3 different numbers and we have different needs than the
4 revenues we have coming in to support that.

5 MS. CONKLE: Yes, sir.

6 MR. AUSTIN: And, I guess, those numbers are built
7 for inflation or are those aggregate numbers?

8 MS. CONKLE: Well, the numbers are aggregate
9 across the system, but they are 2014 constant dollars.

10 I think what's important to point out is that,
11 basically, this is scenario planning; it's looking at
12 approximated totals to achieve state of good repair. There
13 are any number of scenarios we could evaluate; these are
14 just the ones that we are bringing to you.

15 MR. AUSTIN: Going through this, one thing that
16 crossed my mind is years ago when I served on a school
17 board, we put in a new track and I asked the contractor and
18 the firm that came in, What is the useful life of that track
19 before we have to come back and resurface it?

20 They said it would range anywhere from seven to
21 nine years, depending on weather, et cetera, et cetera.

22 We had a discussion of do we begin -- because we
23 know that we're going to replace it -- do we begin to
24 reserve for the replacement of it or do we kick the can down
25 the road and kind of deal with it when it comes up? That

1 was the decision that we made.

2 You know, as I look at this, we can't afford to do
3 that and build a reserve to pay for it when we have to
4 replace it. We struggle right now to come up with the
5 existing funds to maintain the road as it.

6 MS. CONKLE: Yes, sir.

7 MR. AUSTIN: And where I'm leading, I think, more
8 and more as we go into the detail of this, of looking to
9 maintain a safe system, a lot of the roadways that we've
10 built, the farm-to-market roads that we see by the energy
11 sector, they're going to need more and more funding with the
12 traffic. As we look back -- you know, I think back to one
13 of the slides where Senator Nichols shared during Prop 1
14 discussion, I believe our appropriations was almost 36 or 37
15 percent forty years ago of the state budget, and now we're
16 about nine.

17 MS. CONKLE: Uh-huh.

18 MR. AUSTIN: And we begin looking at the
19 purchasing power of -- the revenues from the gas tax that
20 come back in are grossly deflated; in essence, we're going
21 backwards.

22 MS. CONKLE: Yes, sir.

23 MR. AUSTIN: So this is very good. I think to be
24 able to share this with the Legislature and the
25 appropriators to make sure they understand the need, this is

1 going to be extremely helpful.

2 Thank ya'll for your work.

3 MS. CONKLE: We're happy to provide you with
4 additional information, should you need it.

5 MR. HOUGHTON: Any other questions?

6 (No audible response.)

7 I have an observation. Can you go to the slide
8 where you have your goal area and the far right, "Become a
9 best in class"; I would say "Retain the best-in-class
10 designation."

11 MS. CONKLE: Yes, sir. I will --

12 MR. HOUGHTON: We've been becoming for a long
13 time, but I think we're there, personally.

14 MS. CONKLE: I'll make sure that future versions
15 of this graphic --

16 MR. HOUGHTON: No arrogance there at all, it's
17 just ...

18 MS. CONKLE: No, I agree with you. Actually, I
19 agree with you.

20 MR. HOUGHTON: Thank you.

21 Any other questions?

22 (No audible response.)

23 Thank you very much, I appreciate the
24 presentation, Michelle.

25 MS. CONKLE: Thank you.

1 GENERAL WEBER: Next we have Item 5, the award of
2 our rural transportation assistance funds. Director of
3 Public Transportation Eric Gleason will present.

4 Eric? ** 5

5 MR. GLEASON: Good morning. For the record, Eric
6 Gleason, TxDOT director of public transportation.

7 Agenda Item 5 awards \$70,000 of Rural
8 Transportation Assistance Program funds to the City of South
9 Padre Island to conduct a comprehensive assessment of their
10 services.

11 This look at efficiency and effectiveness will
12 allow the Transit District to determine how best to address
13 demand for employment services, even as the Discretionary
14 Program funds available for this purpose under previous
15 authorization SAFETEA-LU, but not made available under
16 MAP-21, even as these funds run out. The Island needs to
17 make decisions on how best to finance services for this new
18 demand from its current system, and what they're attempting
19 to do out there is they have a fairly large market of
20 service employees that live off-island and every day travel
21 in their cars onto the island for work. What the transit
22 system is trying to do is set up a service for those
23 employees. It will be convenient, reliable, and it will
24 also work to reduce traffic congestion on the island. And
25 so we provide funds for studies such as this all over the

1 state and it's an example of technical assistance that we
2 provide to support decision-making at the local level.

3 So, staff recommends your approval of this minute
4 order.

5 MR. HOUGHTON: Questions of Eric?

6 (No audible response.)

7 Is there a motion?

8 MR. UNDERWOOD: So moved.

9 MR. AUSTIN: Second.

10 MR. HOUGHTON: All in favor?

11 (Chorus of "Ayes")

12 MR. GLEASON: Thank you.

13 MR. HOUGHTON: Thanks, Eric. ** 6a

14 GENERAL WEBER: Next is Item 6(a)(1), our final
15 adoption to rules of Chapter 9, Contract and Grant
16 Management. Chief of Procurement & Field Support Operations
17 Lauren Garduño will present.

18 Lauren, thanks.

19 MR. GARDUÑO: Thank you, General.

20 Chairman, Commissioners, good morning. For the
21 record, my name is Lauren Garduño and I'm chief of
22 procurement & field support operations.

23 Before you is a minute order for the final
24 adoption of amendments to §9.3, under Title 43 of Texas
25 Administrative Code related to the protest of Department

1 purchases under the State Purchasing and General Services
2 Act. The amendments to §9.3 are as a result of a new
3 administration structure within TxDOT. The title of the
4 chief procurement and deputy administrative officer has
5 changed to chief of procurement & field support operations.
6 There were no comments received on the proposed amendments
7 and the staff recommends approval.

8 MR. HOUGHTON: Questions?

9 MR. AUSTIN: No questions, but, Lauren, I wanted
10 to say I have a greater respect and understanding of what
11 you do. I have just completed my SB 1681 contracting video.
12 I think all of us are required to attend -- it's something
13 new. So we have a greater respect for what you do and a
14 greater understanding.

15 With that, I make a motion.

16 MR. UNDERWOOD: Second.

17 MR. HOUGHTON: All in favor?

18 (Chorus of "Ayes")

19 MR. HOUGHTON: Thank you.

20 MR. GARDUÑO: Thank you.

21 GENERAL WEBER: Next is Item 6(a)(2), final
22 adoption to rules of Chapter 21, Leasing of Highway Assets.
23 Our Real Estate Division Director Roland Tilden will
24 present.

25 Roland? ** 6 a2

1 MR. TILDEN: Thank you, General.

2 Chairman, Commissioners, good morning, and for the
3 record, I'm Roland Tilden, director of Real Estate
4 Management and Development, and I'm presenting Item
5 6(a)(2) for your consideration.

6 This minute order before you adopts amended
7 Title 43, Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 21, Leasing of
8 Highway Assets, §21.602, §21.603, §21.604, and §21.606. The
9 amendments to the existing rules establish a centralized
10 internal lease program, streamline the process for the
11 public, provide a variety of methods to be utilized for
12 leasing the Department's diversified real estate assets, and
13 enhance the visibility of lease opportunities by utilizing
14 the Department's Internet website. The amendments proposed
15 by minute order are 114094, dated October 30th, 2014.

16 The Texas Press Association submitted a written
17 comment during the comment period that ended on
18 December 15th, 2014. A public hearing was held on
19 January 7th, 2015, with the Texas Press Association offering
20 an oral comment.

21 In total, the Department received four written
22 comments and one verbal comment. Each requested a
23 continuation of lease advertisement in newspapers. In
24 response to these comments, the original rule language
25 concerning newspaper advertisement has been retained.

1 Staff recommends approval of this minute order.

2 MR. HOUGHTON: Questions?

3 MR. MOSELEY: Chairman, this is a little bit of a
4 runoff, but talking about right of way, we haven't had a
5 death-free day on Texas highways since 2000 and so many
6 times it's not uncommon for somebody's death to be
7 memorialized on our right of way, and I just wonder how that
8 relationship plays out over time and if somebody wants to
9 memorialize somebody, do we have a relationship where we
10 agree in writing and there's an understanding about the
11 ability to use right of way to memorialize versus not.

12 We don't need to solve that in this meeting, but I
13 just think maybe your office could help --

14 MR. HOUGHTON: Commissioner Moseley, would you
15 turn our mic on, please. Thank you.

16 MR. MOSELEY: Yeah, pardon me.

17 It just seems like more and more we're seeing more
18 memorials -- our right of way being used to memorialize, and
19 so how is our relationship established with these memorials,
20 and at a certain point, if we determine that for public
21 safety that we need to move a memorial, how does that get
22 carried out? And not to solve it in this meeting, but as we
23 talk about use of right of way I think that's one of those
24 areas that we should be aware of.

25 MR. TILDEN: Thank you, Commissioner Moseley.

1 Thank you.

2 MR. AUSTIN: I just has one question. This
3 section with the advertising in there, is that included in
4 here or not included in here?

5 MR. TILDEN: Yes, it is included.

6 MR. AUSTIN: I know I want to be sensitive to some
7 of the needs of the press, but at the same time, we're being
8 asked upon by legislators, editorials in the press, et
9 cetera, to be more transparent and more efficient. This is
10 one thing that will drive some savings for us.

11 I think one thing in visiting with using
12 technology, I believe, if I understand, the Texas Press
13 Association receives from the member papers and it pulls up
14 the postings for public notices. Maybe we can work with our
15 IT team to send them all of them instead of waiting for the
16 paper. It's much quicker, because you get into challenges
17 that I know ya'll deal with, with a daily, weekly, or
18 monthly publication. Maybe we can send a link with all of
19 those things in there to help them be more efficient to have
20 the access to the data more quickly, if that's possible?

21 MR. TILDEN: That's a great suggestion and we'll
22 certainly explore that.

23 MR. AUSTIN: So, anyway, thank you.

24 I'll make the motion, Chairman.

25 MR. MOSELEY: Second.

1 MR. HOUGHTON: All in favor?

2 (Chorus of "Ayes")

3 MR. TILDEN: Thank you.

4 MR. HOUGHTON: Thanks, Roland.

5 GENERAL WEBER: Next is Item 6(b), the re-adoption
6 of rules. General Counsel Jeff Graham will present.

7 Jeff? ** 6b

8 MR. GRAHAM: Thank you, General.

9 Good morning, Gentlemen, Robin.

10 State law requires state agencies to review each
11 of its rules every four years to determine if they're still
12 needed; if they need changes; if they need to be modified;
13 or if they're no longer needed. TxDOT does this on a
14 rotating basis so we don't get hit with all of our rules at
15 any specific meeting.

16 In this case, we're discussing readoption of Texas
17 Administrative Code Title 43, Chapters 10 and 16. These
18 particular chapters were reviewed by staff, found that the
19 reasons for adopting these rules still exist. No public
20 comments at all were received. The item has no substantive
21 changes or any changes at all for that matter.

22 Staff recommends that you adopt this.

23 MR. VANDERGRIFF: Motion.

24 MR. AUSTIN: Second.

25 MR. HOUGHTON: All in favor?

1 (Chorus of "Ayes")

2 Thank you, Counselor. ** 7

3 GENERAL WEBER: Item 7, we have a presentation on
4 our unified transportation plan. Our Director of
5 Transportation Planning and Programming James Koch will
6 present.

7 MR. KOCH: Good morning, Mr. Chairman, Commission
8 Members, and General Weber. For the record, my name is
9 James Koch, transportation planning and division director
10 for TxDOT.

11 Item 7 will provide an overview of the proposed
12 February updated to the 2015 UTP. We'd like to begin our
13 UTP briefings with a reminder to the Commission on the UTP
14 process. We start the update process by developing an
15 initial draft of proposed revisions, then we host a
16 statewide public meeting via WebEx which provides an
17 overview of the proposed changes and information on how the
18 public can submit comments or questions. We then move into
19 a 30-day comment period, during which we provide Commission
20 briefings as a means of improving both public and Commission
21 awareness of key changes proposed for consideration, as part
22 of the UTP. During this time we review and address any
23 comments that may have been received, as well as host a
24 public hearing, prior to bringing you the final proposed
25 revisions before the Commission for potential adoption.

1 The UTP is a plan developed and based on a set of
2 assumptions regarding the revenue and funding availability
3 we will have. As those funding assumptions change or new
4 information is made available, we incorporate them into the
5 UTP through quarterly updates.

6 In this update, the significant change in
7 forecasted funding is the distribution of \$1.74 billion in
8 Proposition 1 funds. This is based on local Metropolitan
9 Planning Organization and district input. There's ongoing
10 coordination with MPO programming efforts and updates to the
11 TIPs, and adjustments may be considered, based on public
12 involvement or comments received.

13 During the UTP updates, we will also provide a
14 report on administrative changes. Administrative changes
15 are those projects or funding changes that are minor in
16 administrative nature. Examples would be the movement of
17 projects within the first two years of the Letting Schedule,
18 the carryover balances at the end of the fiscal year, and
19 reporting on transportation development credit balances.

20 During the UTP updates we also address changes to
21 project-specific programs. The following are proposed
22 modifications to existing funding commitments -- so in this
23 case, we are not asking for additional funding -- this
24 includes revisions to previously authorized Category 12 CMAC
25 funds for pedestrian and bicycle improvements in El Paso

1 County; revisions to Category 10 coordinated border
2 infrastructure funds to authorize improvements at the Donna
3 International Bridge; and revisions to previously authorized
4 Category 12 safety, maintenance, and energy sector projects
5 in San Antonio and Laredo.

6 We are also proposing new program authorizations
7 in this UTP update to incorporate Proposition 1 projects.
8 To assist the public and our stakeholders in reviewing the
9 proposed Proposition 1 projects in their area, TxDOT has
10 created a new webpage.

11 If you could bring that up. There we go.

12 This page allows people to search by county, TxDOT
13 district or legislative district. It also offers a map that
14 identifies the location and limits of each project, as well
15 as summarizes the amount of Proposition 1 for each project.
16 So you can go in there -- anybody can check any district,
17 any legislative boundary. We also now have a statewide
18 link, if you want to look at all the statewide projects.

19 So as you go through there -- in this particular
20 example, they pulled up the Austin District. It gives you a
21 list of the projects that are in Austin. As you click on
22 that individual project, you get a map of where that project
23 is located and at the bottom of this, it tells you how much
24 Prop 1 funding is dedicated to that project. So, it's been
25 a very useful tool. From January 16th to

1 January 25th, we've had over 2800 page views or hits on this
2 new system, and there's a link to this webpage on our UTP
3 public involvement site.

4 Going back to our presentation, the administrative
5 amendments to project and programs are available for viewing
6 online. Examples of administrative changes in the exhibit
7 online include the removal of the Blacklands Corridor
8 Project. This project was only shown with local funding and
9 we are removing the project from the UTP due to it being
10 removed from the local MPO plan.

11 To recap, the Proposition 1 timeline, on
12 November 4th, 2014, Texas voters approved the ballot measure
13 known as Prop 1 authorizing a constitutional amendment for
14 transportation funding. Under the amendment, half of the
15 money that would normally go to the State Economic
16 Stabilization Fund will be redirected to the State Highway
17 Fund. Without creating any new taxes or fees, the amendment
18 simply changed where a portion of existing oil and gas tax
19 revenues will be deposited. Prop 1 passed with 80 percent
20 approval.

21 December, 2014, the Legislature's joint select
22 committee to study the balance of the Economic Stabilization
23 Fund set the minimum balance or floor, which resulted in a
24 \$1.74 billion distribution in FY '15 to the State Highway
25 Fund. On December 12th, Proposition 1 Stakeholder Working

1 Group confirmed the distribution plan to TxDOT. On
2 December 15th, we received letters of approval from the
3 Legislative Budget Board and the Office of the Governor for
4 the following distribution: 40 percent to address
5 congestion, using the Category 2 formula; 30 percent to
6 address system connectivity using the Category 11 formula;
7 15 percent to address maintenance needs using Category 1
8 formula; and 15 percent to address energy sector using a
9 hybrid version of the Senate Bill 1747 formula. From
10 December through today, there's been coordination with MPOs
11 and TxDOT districts on project selection. On
12 February 26th, the Commission will consider the first update
13 to the UTP with Prop 1-funded projects.

14 This slide illustrates how much Proposition 1
15 funding is currently allocated to each TxDOT district or
16 region based upon the proposed distribution. Information
17 regarding the allocations and specific amounts by district
18 or MPO is posted in our draft exhibit online.

19 Scheduled events for this UTP update are as
20 follows: On January 20th, a public meeting was held to
21 accept questions and comments regarding the proposed
22 changes; on January 23rd, a notice was posted to The Texas
23 Register regarding the public hearing scheduled for
24 February 12th, this also officially begins the 30-day
25 comment period for the proposed changes;

1 January 29th, today, staff is providing an overview of the
2 proposed changes under consideration for the February UTP
3 update; on February 12th at 10:00 a.m., we will host a
4 public hearing; on February 23rd at 4:00 p.m. is the
5 deadline to submit formal comments regarding the proposed
6 UTP updates; on February 26th, staff will present the final
7 proposed changes to the Commission for consideration and
8 potential approval.

9 The next step in the process is to continue
10 accepting comments through February 23rd at 4:00 p.m.
11 Comments can also be submitted online or e-mailed to
12 TPP_UTP@TxDOT.gov. We also accept comments by phone or by
13 mail. To date, we have received in excess of 100 comments
14 by e-mail, in person, through our districts, or by phone.
15 Staff is working with local districts to provide responses
16 to these comments as appropriate.

17 The public hearing to receive testimony on the
18 proposed updates will take place February 12th at
19 10:00 a.m., here in Austin at the Riverside campus. We will
20 bring the final proposed amendments before the Commission
21 for consideration and potential adoption on February 26th.

22 This concludes my presentation. I'd be happy to
23 answer any questions at this time.

24 MR. HOUGHTON: Questions?

25 MR. VANDERGRIFF: I don't have a question, per se,

1 but, James, I wanted to commend you and the rest of the
2 staff. The website has worked; it's been very successful.
3 I've -- I kid you not, probably ten phone calls or e-mails
4 from people that have commented on the ability to see
5 things, including a couple who wondered why there was no
6 project in their particular district, as well. But it's
7 good work.

8 MR. KOCH: I'd like to recognize Michael
9 Chamberlain and his staff from our data management section.
10 He's done an awesome job.

11 MR. HOUGHTON: That's great.

12 MR. KOCH: Thank you.

13 MR. AUSTIN: One other comment.

14 MR. KOCH: Yes, sir?

15 MR. AUSTIN: I agree on the webpage, but the input
16 that came from the districts and the MPOs and everybody, I
17 want to commend the Dallas area. They actually came forth
18 with what, a four-year plan? I know there's still some
19 discussion and how they're going, but begin looking at four
20 years out and what's going to happen and knowing that that
21 same level of funding may not be there next year, but that's
22 showing some foresight that I think is -- it's got a lot of
23 buy-in.

24 MR. HOUGHTON: Thank you very much.

25 MR. KOCH: Thank you, sir. ** 8

1 GENERAL WEBER: Next is Item 8, compliance, ethics
2 and investigations report, and our Chief Audit and
3 Compliance Officer Benny Ybarra will present.

4 Benny?

5 MR. YBARRA: Thank you.

6 The purpose of this report is to provide a summary
7 of information related to investigations for the month of
8 December, 2014, in accordance with Transportation Code
9 201.452 and 201.454.

10 For December, eight allegations were assigned for
11 investigation and twelve were closed. Three of these were
12 substantiated. No further action is required.

13 Thanks.

14 MR. HOUGHTON: Thank you, Benny. ** 10 a.

15 GENERAL WEBER: Moving to Item 10(a), Texas
16 Mobility Fund bonds. Debt Management/Innovative Financing
17 Officer Ben Asher will present.

18 MR. ASHER: Thanks, General.

19 Good morning, General, Commissioners. For the
20 record, I'm Ben Asher, I'm the innovative financing/debt
21 management officer here at TxDOT.

22 This and the following three agenda items relate
23 to providing annual delegation to the chief financial
24 officer and other Department officials to authorize the
25 issuance of bonds for projects, as well as refunding bonds

1 to take advantage of favorable low-interest rates. Current
2 delegation expires at the end of this month. The items
3 address the specific authorization sought for each of the
4 bond programs. This item seeks authorizations for the
5 issuance of additional Texas Mobility Bonds, as well as
6 refunding bonds if targeted debt-service savings of three
7 percent can be achieved.

8 Staff recommends approval, and I'd be happy to
9 answer questions.

10 MR. HOUGHTON: Questions? Motion?

11 MR. AUSTIN: So moved.

12 MR. HOUGHTON: All in favor?

13 (Chorus of "Ayes")

14 Thank you. ** 10 b

15 GENERAL WEBER: Continue with 10(b), Ben.

16 MR. ASHER: Thank you, General.

17 This item is similar to the one just discussed,
18 but it's for the State Highway Bond -- Revenue Bond Program
19 authorizing additional bonds, as well as refunding bonds,
20 again, if targeted debt-service savings of three percent can
21 be achieved.

22 Staff recommends approval and I'd be happy to
23 answer questions on this one.

24 MR. HOUGHTON: Questions? Motion?

25 MR. AUSTIN: So moved.

1 MR. VANDERGRIFF: Second.

2 MR. HOUGHTON: All in favor?

3 (Chorus of "Ayes") ** 10 c

4 GENERAL WEBER: 10(c), Ben, Highway Improvement
5 General Obligation Bonds.

6 MR. ASHER: Thanks, General.

7 This item seeks authorization for the issuance of
8 additional Highway Improvement General Obligation Bonds, and
9 staff recommends approval.

10 MR. HOUGHTON: Questions? Motion?

11 MR. AUSTIN: So moved.

12 MR. VANDERGRIFF: Second.

13 MR. HOUGHTON: All in favor?

14 (Chorus of "Ayes")

15 Thank you. ** 10 d

16 GENERAL WEBER: And, Ben, please continue with
17 Item 10(d), our Central Texas Turnpike System Revenue Bonds.

18 MR. ASHER: This item seeks authorization for
19 issuing Central Texas Turnpike Revenue Bonds if targeted
20 debt-service savings of three percent can be achieved. And
21 while we don't expect it, we like to have the annual
22 delegation here when we recommend approval of this.

23 MR. HOUGHTON: Okay. Questions? Motion?

24 MR. AUSTIN: So moved.

25 MR. ASHER: Thank you.

1 GENERAL WEBER: Thanks, Ben.

2 Next is Item 11, an amendment to purchase order.
3 Chief of procurement & field support operations, Lauren
4 Garduño will present.

5 Lauren? ** 11

6 MR. GARDUÑO: Thank you, General.

7 Chairman and Commissioners, for the record, again,
8 I'm Lauren Garduño, chief of procurement & field support
9 operations.

10 The following is a minute order to amend a
11 purchase order to allow the Department to purchase some
12 additional gift cards. The Department issued purchase order
13 NAPS, it's B442014003521000, which is now until the ERP
14 system which starts with a number 601 and ends in number
15 1826. That purchase order was made on March 5th, 2014.

16 The purchase order is referenced in your minute
17 order for the purchase of these gift cards to be given to
18 employees as part of the Department's Safety Incentive
19 Recognition Program, and it's under the authority provided
20 by Government Code Chapter 2155. A copy of the purchase
21 order is included in Exhibit A.

22 The Department requires additional gift cards
23 beyond the quantity set forth in the initial purchase order;
24 therefore, the Department proposes to amend the purchase
25 order to allow the Department to purchase the additional

1 gift cards. The amendment would increase the total
2 consideration to be paid under the purchase order from
3 \$608,000 to \$1.744 million which is an increase of more than
4 10 percent of the initial amount of the purchase order, and
5 a copy of the amendment is attached to Exhibit B.

6 Government Code Section 2155.088 requires that the
7 governing body of a state agency at a meeting consider a
8 material change to a contract for goods or services awarded
9 under Government Code Chapter 2155 and consider why that
10 change is necessary. An increase of at least 10 percent of
11 the total amount paid under a purchase order is considered a
12 material change under that statute.

13 The Department would typically re-advertise a
14 material change to a purchase order such as the change
15 that's being addressed in this amendment; however, after the
16 solicitation for gift cards was advertised competitively
17 three times on the open market, Walmart, the vendor under
18 the purchase order, was the only responding vendor who would
19 meet the Department's requirements, which also included the
20 requirement that the cards be issued without an
21 administrative fee. In the past, employees received this
22 award in this paycheck, but this program has proven to be
23 more effective and it was well received by the employees,
24 hence the movement towards the total gift cards for the
25 employees.

1 Staff recommends approval of this minute order and
2 we'll take any questions.

3 MR. HOUGHTON: Any questions for Lauren? None?

4 (No audible response.)

5 Is there a motion?

6 MR. AUSTIN: So moved.

7 MR. VANDERGRIFF: Second.

8 MR. HOUGHTON: All in favor?

9 (Chorus of "Ayes")

10 Thanks, Lauren.

11 GENERAL WEBER: Item 12(a) consists of the
12 awarding of contracts for maintenance and department
13 building construction contracts. Director of Construction
14 John Obr will present. ** 12a

15 MR. OBR: Thanks, General.

16 Good morning, for the record, I am John Obr,
17 director of the Construction Division.

18 Item 12(a) is for consideration of the award or
19 rejection of Highway Maintenance and Department Building
20 Construction contracts let on January 6th and 7th of 2015.
21 We present 36 projects today. The average number of bids
22 per project was 3.75. The low-bid value was \$43,547,614.82.
23 We had an overall underrun of .85 percent.

24 Staff recommends award of all maintenance
25 projects.

1 MR. HOUGHTON: Any questions of John?

2 (No audible response.)

3 Motion?

4 MR. AUSTIN: So moved.

5 MR. VANDERGRIFF: Second.

6 MR. HOUGHTON: All in favor?

7 (Chorus of "Ayes")

8 GENERAL WEBER: John, please proceed with
9 Item 12(b), our construction contracts. ** 12 b

10 MR. OBR: Item 12(b) is for consideration of the
11 award or rejection of highway and transportation enhancement
12 building construction contracts let on January 6th and 7th
13 of 2015. We present 56 projects today. The average number
14 of bids per project was 3.84. The low-bid value was
15 \$254,552,300.37. The awards are split as one project in
16 mobility totaling \$2,478,552.06 and 55 project and
17 preservation totaling \$252,073,748.31. We had an overall
18 overrun of 3.57 percent.

19 Staff recommends award of all construction
20 projects, except for the following, is a Floyd County
21 project STP 2014269, we received one bid for this project
22 which came in at 29.81 percent or roughly \$3.2 million over
23 the engineer's estimate of \$10.9 million. This project is
24 for rehabilitation of existing road. The District
25 recommended the bid be rejected due to the lack of

1 competition and would like the opportunity to make necessary
2 design changes to that project.

3 We concur with this plan of action, therefore, we
4 recommend the project be rejected and relet at a later date.

5 MR. HOUGHTON: Are there questions for John?
6 Construction contracts?

7 Motion?

8 MR. AUSTIN: So moved.

9 MR. VANDERGRIFF: Second.

10 MR. HOUGHTON: All in favor?

11 (Chorus of "Ayes")

12 Thanks, John.

13 MR. OBR: Thank you.

14 GENERAL WEBER: This brings us to Item 13, the
15 eminent domain proceedings. Our Director of Right of Way
16 John Campbell will present.

17 John? ** 13

18 MR. CAMPBELL: Good morning. For the record, my
19 name is John Campbell, director of Right of Way Division.
20 I'd like to present for your consideration Item 13 which
21 authorizes the filing of condemnation proceedings necessary
22 to progress the acquisition of 30 parcels by exercise of
23 eminent domain, twenty-two of these parcels along
24 non-controlled facilities, eight of them along
25 controlled-access facilities.

1 Staff recommends your approval.

2 MR. HOUGHTON: Is there a motion?

3 MR. VANDERGRIFF: I move that the Texas
4 Transportation Commission authorize the Texas Department of
5 Transportation to use the power of eminent domain to acquire
6 the properties described in the minute order set forth in
7 the agenda for the current month for construction,
8 reconstruction, maintenance, widening, straightening, or
9 extending the highway facilities listed in the minute order
10 as a part of the state highway system, and that the first
11 record vote applies to all units of property to be
12 condemned.

13 MR. HOUGHTON: Is there a second?

14 MR. UNDERWOOD: Second, Chairman.

15 MR. HOUGHTON: All in favor?

16 (Chorus of "Ayes")

17 Thank you.

18 Hey, John --

19 MR. CAMPBELL: Yes, sir?

20 MR. HOUGHTON: -- are you in rock band or
21 something?

22 MR. CAMPBELL: No, sir.

23 MR. HOUGHTON: I was just wondering.

24 MR. CAMPBELL: I aspire one day to play that well.

25 MR. HOUGHTON: Well, your hair is looking a little

1 long in the back.

2 MR. CAMPBELL: Yeah, I've got an appointment, sir.
3 I'm working on it.

4 (Laughter)

5 Thank you.

6 MR. HOUGHTON: Thanks, John. ** 14

7 GENERAL WEBER: Okay. Item 14 contains our
8 routine minute orders, including our donations to the
9 Department real estate dispositions and donations, finance
10 reports, transportation planning, access control and speed
11 zones.

12 MR. HOUGHTON: Is there a motion -- has everyone
13 looked through the minute orders to make sure we are all in
14 compliance?

15 MR. AUSTIN: Chairman, I'd like to make one
16 comment.

17 I want to compliment Bill Hale and some of the
18 team of really going through reviewing a lot of these. I
19 know I've had a chance to look at this, and in particular,
20 some that I get complaints about, Interstate 20 where you
21 come in -- where you're driving 70 and then all of a sudden
22 it drops down. And I think by bringing some consistent
23 patterns to our speed zones where it's safe and where it
24 makes sense, that's going to keep traffic moving and help
25 congestion.

1 MR. HOUGHTON: Save some money, too.

2 MR. AUSTIN: Absolutely.

3 MR. HOUGHTON: For the driving public.

4 MR. AUSTIN: For the driving public.

5 I know the truckers will love it. I love it.

6 Commissioner Vandergriff can get to Tyler quicker, so thank
7 you.

8 I'll make that motion.

9 (Laughter)

10 MR. HOUGHTON: Is there a second?

11 MR. VANDERGRIFF: Second.

12 MR. UNDERWOOD: Second.

13 MR. HOUGHTON: All in favor?

14 (Chorus of "Ayes")

15 Okay. It passes. ** comment

16 We are in open comment session and there are a
17 couple of people signed up. The Fike family, I believe,
18 wanted to talk about Highway 68 and the Rio Grande Valley.

19 Mrs. Karen Fike?

20 MS. FIKE: I promise not to cry this time. I
21 don't know if ya'll remember me from last time?

22 MR. HOUGHTON: I do.

23 MS. FIKE: A lot of my family couldn't make it
24 today; they're -- my husband is in a beef club that supports
25 the FFA and the 4-H and they're having a big barbecue today,

1 so a lot of my family is helping out with that.

2 I just want to thank you for giving me the
3 opportunity to speak again. I'm here -- and what amazes me
4 about coming here is hearing how ya'll care about so much
5 about safety and saving money, and I'm here to talk about
6 Highway 68, and for the ones of you who don't remember, it's
7 a highway from Expressway 83, which is now 2, all the way to
8 281 and they want to make it a toll road. It does not go
9 along any existing roads; it just cuts across everybody's
10 property. It's a twenty-two mile toll road.

11 And last time we talked about our farm being
12 divided from the headquarters and 90 percent of our land was
13 going to be on the other side of it and luckily, ya'll
14 listened to us. You sent us Mr. Hoppman and we had a really
15 good meeting with him in December and then yesterday we had
16 a meeting with Mr. Hoppman and Mr. Grimes and we were very
17 pleased. They want to move the highway behind our farm
18 headquarters so that won't cause us any problem getting all
19 of our equipment to our fields. The only problem, it comes
20 really close to my brother-in-law's house and my nephew's
21 house, but we're still all on the same side of the road.
22 We're all farmers and we all work together. And I also want
23 to tell Mr. Barton, he was a lot of help, and Mr. Hale. My
24 son has been talking to Mr. Hale a lot.

25 But what I want to talk to you today about is we

1 don't understand why this road has to go through all this
2 land. There are state highways every two miles in our area
3 that go from the freeway, Highway 83 or Interstate 2, all
4 the way to 490 which hooks up with 281. Every two miles
5 there is a state highway, north and south. There is a
6 county road every half mile, every half mile going north and
7 south and east and west, all in this area.

8 Because we are -- we started out as a farm
9 community. We're not a big metropolitan area because we are
10 just a whole group of small towns. The towns are growing
11 together, but each town wants to have their own town; they
12 don't want to join together. So when you take this road,
13 this toll road, which nobody's going to use, because one of
14 our state representatives, he's pushing for this road to
15 bring in Mexico trucks to get to the Edinburg Airport and to
16 meet up with Highway 281.

17 And we had a -- my son has it -- we had a paper
18 from the RMA from 2012. It says in that paper, it's not
19 feasible to have a toll road there because 80 percent of the
20 Mexico cars are not going to pay a toll. Sixty percent of
21 the Mexico trucks are not going to pay a toll. They're just
22 going to ride free.

23 So we have our state representatives, which just
24 one of them, really, he has called us names. He's called us
25 racist because we didn't want the Mexico trucks to come

1 through. He's called us -- we're not -- we don't want to
2 have any -- we don't want the valley to grow.

3 We know the valley is growing. We just want the
4 road -- why not put it on an existing road like 493; it's an
5 existing road. It's a state road, and it's already on the
6 RMA to be expanded, so why not make it a bigger road? And
7 it would connect with the Donna Bridge, which is where they
8 want to bring those trucks through.

9 Why take good, hard-working taxpayers' money and
10 farmers' land just to bring in these trucks?

11 So thank you very much. I hope I didn't -- did it
12 go over?

13 MR. HOUGHTON: Yes, ma'am, but that's all right.

14 MS. FIKE: I'm sorry.

15 MR. HOUGHTON: No, that's all right.

16 John, clarify something: Is this a toll road?

17 (No audible response.)

18 Sixty-eight isn't -- what we're going to build is
19 not a toll road eventually. I know we can't --

20 MR. BARTON: Yes, sir.

21 MR. HOUGHTON: Please clarify.

22 MR. BARTON: Yes, sir.

23 So the project that's in question that Ms. Fike
24 spoke of is State Highway 68 and I think the location of it,
25 its proximity and beginning and ending term that she

1 described were fairly accurate.

2 It's part of the Regional Mobility Authority's
3 envisioned loop, if you will, around the Hidalgo County
4 area. The project that we're working on is to build the
5 frontage roads that will ultimately have main lanes that
6 will be tolled, but the frontage road project that we're
7 working on will not be tolled.

8 MR. HOUGHTON: Okay. Thank you -- just
9 clarifying.

10 Okay. Josh Fike?

11 I don't know how you can follow -- is that your
12 mother?

13 MR. FIKE: Yeah, that's my mom.

14 MR. HOUGHTON: I don't know how you can follow
15 your mother, but she's a neat, nice lady.

16 MR. FIKE: Well, I don't know, either.

17 (Laughter)

18 It's a pleasure to see ya'll this morning. I
19 really appreciate ya'll listening to us.

20 Like my mom was saying, the valley is a grid; it's
21 got roads every half a mile. And I really appreciate
22 Mr. Hoppman coming down there and showing us -- they showed
23 us maps of around our farm and then they showed us maps of
24 493.

25 But they're comparing apples to oranges. They're

1 saying, Well, over here you're taking this much and over
2 here you're getting this many people, but if you look at it,
3 on the map that they used on 493, they were measuring a
4 600-wide corridor versus where they're going through on us
5 is 350. And, plus, if you have a road already existing,
6 it's usually not the same landowner on this side of the road
7 as it is on here.

8 So they said it would take out 600-something
9 people. Well, if you cut that in half and only use one side
10 of the road, it would cut it in half. And then they,
11 themselves, counted the people that are going -- that would
12 be in a town that is north on 493, and they, themselves,
13 told us, Well, we wouldn't be going through that town; we
14 would be looping around it.

15 Well, why did you count those 300-something houses
16 that you said that you'd have to be taking out when they're
17 not even planned to be taken out because you'd put a loop
18 around the town going to 490?

19 The Highway 68 Project, I understand. It is kind
20 of necessary and kind of not. If you're trying to line
21 construction companies' pockets and being a waste of money,
22 go ahead, do Highway 68. You've got county roads, state
23 roads, farm roads all over the place out there. Let's just
24 pave the whole area. Get rid of all the farmers.

25 Where we farm, we are in about a three-mile block.

1 We intentionally did it like that so that we have all of our
2 farm land and we don't have to cross any major highways
3 because of the liability of crossing these huge pieces of
4 equipment across major highways.

5 So we just ask that you move it to the outside or
6 493 just so that we don't have to put up with the headache
7 of trying to get across these roads. And I know it's a --
8 the community is growing. The world is getting -- the
9 amount of people are getting bigger, but the amount of
10 traffic that we have down there does not merit this sort of
11 nonsense.

12 And Mondo Martinez, the guy that got the money for
13 this said that it's to alleviate the stress on Highway 281
14 or Corridor 69 or whatever they're calling it now; they've
15 changed the names of the road down there and I really don't
16 know what they're called now. But the main problem is the
17 interchange and people are fighting to get the interchange
18 expanded, and Mondo Martinez took that money to go put it on
19 this road that is not going to service anything, except the
20 trucks coming out of Mexico, which, if they just expanded
21 the mistake that they made 20 years ago, only making one
22 lane on an interchange for a four-lane highway going to one
23 lane, the engineers need to see their faults and fix the
24 problem that they caused, not cause more problems by making
25 another mistake and wasting countless taxpayer dollars.

1 I'm sorry I went a little long, and I thank ya'll
2 for listening. Ya'll have a great day.

3 MR. HOUGHTON: Thank you.

4 To our engineers, thank you very much for working
5 with these folks. It just shows the level of concern,
6 Mrs. Fikes, that we have for the people of the state of
7 Texas and I want to thank our staff, John, for doing that.
8 Thank you very much.

9 We have Mark -- is it Beauchamp --

10 MR. BEAUCHAMP: Beauchamp.

11 MR. HOUGHTON: -- a traffic superintendent, City
12 of Wichita Falls.

13 What are you talking on, Mark?

14 MR. BEAUCHAMP: The TAP funds.

15 MR. HOUGHTON: Oh, it didn't say. Okay.

16 MR. BEAUCHAMP: Good morning, Commission, General
17 Weber, Mr. Chairman. I thank you for your time this
18 morning. My name is Mark Beauchamp. I'm the traffic
19 superintendent for the City of Wichita Falls Traffic
20 Department, as well as the Wichita Falls bicycle
21 coordinator.

22 Wichita Falls has a thriving bicycle community.
23 If you're not aware, we host the nation's largest bicycle
24 event, the Hotter N'Hell 100. It impacts almost 15,000
25 participants annually, with a community support of over

1 2,000 volunteers. It's quite a large event. If you've
2 never been down, I would encourage you to come and visit us
3 sometime.

4 Well, back in 1987, Wichita Falls began
5 construction on what we now call the Circle Trail. It was a
6 planned 26-mile loop that encircled the population center of
7 our city. The Circle Trail is a misnomer. Our Circle Trail
8 is incomplete; it remains broken to this day, even though we
9 have a section under construction currently. This is in
10 spite of massive community support.

11 Our citizens, our mayor, our council, and our MPO
12 have determined that this Circle Trail is our second-most
13 important transportation project that we have. But just
14 beyond completing our Circle Trail, our citizens understand
15 that active transportation options create a healthy and
16 vibrant community with the Circle Trail being our center
17 hub, if you will.

18 Our community vision includes a region-wide
19 network of active transportation options. There's one
20 rail-to-trail project that would link Wichita Falls with the
21 Holliday community to our west that's been undertaken by a
22 citizens' group and is nearing completion.

23 Another rail-to-trail project would link our
24 Circle Trail with the Sheppard Air Force Base to the north
25 and could potentially go on to Burnet. This project would

1 also see the rehab of a historic bridge that's currently
2 unusable. Making this bridge a pedestrian or bikeway would
3 connect our Circle Trail to our Wichita Mountain bike trail,
4 our Wichita Falls BMX track, but it would also provide a
5 surface link for bicycle and pedestrian transportation to
6 our newly constructed over-the-road and public
7 transportation hub that's just a few blocks away.

8 An additional rail-to-trail project would begin
9 near our western edge of our community; it would pass over
10 the Circle Trail; pass directly through the heart of our
11 retail shopping district; alongside of both MSU --
12 Midwestern State University -- and Vernon College. But
13 beyond Rails-to-Trails, there's numerous trail links along
14 aquifers. There are will also cycle tracks that we've
15 identified and on-pavement areas that we've identified that
16 we would love to do.

17 With our current funding sources, it's taken us 28
18 years to piecemeal 18 miles of trail together. So it's not
19 due to lack of effort on our part; it's due to a lack of
20 comprehensive funding available.

21 While we applaud the structure of the current TAP
22 grant call which allows Wichita Falls to compete favorably
23 with similar communities on small projects, we ask that an
24 additional 36 million, shown on this chart, be appropriated
25 in larger chunks. If we were allotted the ability to go

1 after the 36 million, we would go after it with full zeal.
2 We think it should be a competitive effort. If we're
3 awarded, so be it; if we're not awarded, we will learn from
4 others' triumphs and learn from our mistakes and press on
5 and know that we would have that ability the following year;
6 however, if we continue down the previous funding path,
7 sadly for me, I'll never walk on our completed vision.

8 I thank you for your time this morning.

9 MR. HOUGHTON: Thank you.

10 Chris Riley, San Antonio, TAP funding.

11 MR. RILEY: Good morning, Commissioners.

12 My name is Chris Riley -- and just a correction, I
13 am actually not from San Antonio; I live on San Antonio
14 Street here in Austin, just down the road -- I have lived --
15 I am a native Austinite, born and raised here in Austin.

16 MR. HOUGHTON: Sorry about that.

17 MR. RILEY: And until earlier this month, I served
18 on the Austin City Council. I served for five and a half
19 years on the Austin City Council. I also served on our
20 local MPO, the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning
21 Organization, as well as our local transit agency, Capital
22 Metro, throughout the time that I served on council.

23 So I have a fairly good understanding of the
24 demands that we face in terms of transportation
25 infrastructure, and with all that in mind, I want to add my

1 voice to those who are calling for the Commission to make
2 available the \$36 million of TAP funding for
3 bicycle/pedestrian improvements, the \$36 million chunk that
4 the previous speaker referred to.

5 My sense, based on my experience, both as a
6 cyclist and as a council member, and an MPO member, is that
7 any money invested in bicycle infrastructure is an
8 investment very well made, especially right now. Here in
9 Austin, we have a fairly significant number of people who
10 are already on their bikes going about their daily routine;
11 in fact, in the central city, some five percent are already
12 using -- report that they are regularly using their bicycle
13 as their primary mode of transportation for their daily
14 commutes. In certain neighborhoods within Austin, we have
15 upwards of 12 and 13 percent who are already regularly using
16 the bicycle to commute to work.

17 The numbers are growing, both in Austin and in
18 other cities. We're seeing explosive increases in biking,
19 and most notably what we see is there is a significant
20 pattern of ridership following investments in
21 infrastructure. When you build appropriate facilities that
22 provide a safe alternative, then you see more and more
23 people making use of that. That's significant, because it
24 means that we're not just talking about something for the
25 recreational benefit of a few; we're talking about

1 investments that can actually benefit everyone whoever
2 travels on our roads. Because it enables us to provide a
3 safe path for cyclists and it means fewer cars on the road
4 and fewer conflict for those who are out using those
5 facilities.

6 The timing is especially appropriate right now,
7 here in Austin, for additional investments in bicycle
8 infrastructure. We recently approved an update of our
9 bicycle plan and it calls for an all-ages, all-abilities
10 network, which is really a new approach to bicycle
11 facilities. We're no longer building facilities for those
12 few people who are out there in the fancy outfits, you know,
13 racing for miles recreationally; we're building
14 infrastructure for a different purpose. We're building
15 infrastructure for people who just -- who aren't normally
16 considered cyclists, just regular people who want to make
17 use of bicycle facilities as a safer alternative. And more
18 and more people are finding that it is a great way to get
19 around, especially for those shorter trips.

20 We have done a careful analysis of what is causing
21 the congestion, here in Austin. We have identified where
22 the short trips are. And what we see is that we can make a
23 very significant impact on traffic-impact congestion by
24 providing a safe alternative, especially for those shorter
25 trips, trips of three miles or less. You can have a very

1 significant impact on the congestion problem that we have.

2 There are also those who want to take longer
3 trips, up to seven miles. And what we know is that even
4 those longer trips will be -- there are many who will make
5 use of bicycle infrastructure, even for those longer trips,
6 and if Austin continues to -- is able to continue being a
7 leader, we will set an example for other cities here in
8 Texas and across the country, who can look to Austin and see
9 what progress we can make by providing the safe
10 infrastructure to provide that alternative that is going to
11 enable people to get about their daily routine in a
12 healthier way that's better for the environment, but
13 actually alleviates the congestion on the road by providing
14 an alternative so that people don't have to be out is there
15 clogging up the roads in cars.

16 So I urge you to consider making that full \$36
17 million of the TxDOT share TAP funding, making that full
18 share available for additional bicycle and pedestrian
19 infrastructure. It's not expensive infrastructure, relative
20 to the typical costs of highway and other roadway
21 investments, and you get a very significant bang for the
22 buck, in terms of the impact on congestion, the impact on
23 public health, the impact on economic development, as more
24 and more people are drawn to places that actually have the
25 appropriate infrastructure to support a healthy level of

1 bicycling and pedestrian activity.

2 So I hope you will bear those comments in mind and
3 make every effort to allot the full \$36 million in TAP
4 funding for bicycle and pedestrian improvements in the
5 upcoming year. Thank you so much for your time.

6 MR. HOUGHTON: Thank you.

7 Fernando Martinez, BikeTexas?

8 Chris just took a minute, forty of your three
9 minutes, okay?

10 MR. MARTINEZ: Okay. Good morning.

11 Thank you, Chairman, Commission Members for giving
12 me the opportunity to speak this morning. My name is
13 Fernando Martinez. I represent BikeTexas and work in
14 Brownsville, Texas. And we partner with the City of
15 Brownsville, City of Los Fresnos, Rancho Viejo, with
16 Brownsville MPO and Cameron County on a multimodal active
17 transportation project.

18 I'm here today to ask you to give the \$35 million
19 [sic] per year on a TAP funding -- in a TAP program, instead
20 of flexing the funding to build infrastructure projects that
21 will benefit the community that gets grants, so other
22 communities can learn from example.

23 Brownsville has a hike and bike master plan, a
24 hike and a bike network. Thirty-five million dollars will
25 allow us to implement the City's bike and trail master plan

1 sooner, instead of spreading it out over the next ten years.
2 Principals and goals of the bicycle master plan, the system
3 is of street-share -- the use by street bicycle facilities
4 and (indiscernible - 11:07:37) recommended in these plans
5 will enhance transportation, as well as the appearance of
6 Brownsville.

7 This plan is both visionary and practical. The
8 visionary component will assist a network of connected
9 corridors that will seamlessly allow a user to move from a
10 place in Brownsville to another, walking or biking. The
11 practical side envisions connection to all neighborhoods,
12 via a readily accessible, wide, and safe, attractive
13 facilities.

14 All over the U.S. and some parts of Texas, trails
15 have been one of the most popular recreation features that a
16 community can provide, but trails and bike facilities in
17 Brownsville are more than just recreational features. A
18 well-planned and interconnected system can serve an
19 alternative mode of transportation, a new push to be active,
20 and people to avoid traffic congestions in cities. A series
21 of off-the-street facilities can be an easy way for
22 Brownsville residents to commute to work, to school, and
23 places to shop, eat or have fun.

24 By engaging the (indiscernible -
25 11:08:41) transportation, a user could transport by bike to

1 a bus stop, travel a longer distance, we need people that
2 can take a bike on a bus, bike ride for free in this case,
3 building a city or a multimodal and active transportation,
4 making Brownsville a model for Texas and for the U.S.

5 In 2010, Metropolitan Transportation Plan was
6 developed by the Brownsville Metropolitan Planning
7 Organization. This plan recognizes that the future bikeway
8 and trail development will provide alternative
9 transportation options for residents to commute to work and
10 shopping and to commute. The MPO encourages local
11 governments to fund improvement that will facilitate biking
12 and walking transit use. This project is bringing in
13 economic development to the area.

14 Brownsville is an international entrance to the
15 U.S. Over 7,000 people, cyclists, people on bikes, crosses
16 the international bridge monthly. It is faster, cheaper.
17 People live more -- and Brownsville has the only bridge that
18 (indiscernible - 11:09:43) where people can commute by bike
19 internationally from both sides. There's about a million
20 people that live on the Matamoros, Mexico side that come to
21 Brownsville by bike -- that has the option to come by bike.

22 Some people that uses bike for transportation, and
23 these people are prospects to help with the economy in
24 Brownsville. People come to the university, to shop in
25 downtown, visit family, or simply to use the infrastructure

1 available on the side of the country that they do not have
2 on the other side.

3 Connectivity in the RGV, making Brownsville a
4 destination: If we connect the other cities near
5 Brownsville or we can connect the Rio Grande Valley by bike.
6 There's a historic (indiscernible - 11:10:26) plan that
7 connects the three (indiscernible - 11:10:29). We need the
8 students to stay in Brownsville after graduating. If we
9 give them a reason to stay, they will stay.

10 I have a nine-year-old daughter that I would like
11 for her to attend the UTRGV, and if she needs to leave for a
12 reason, she can come back to Brownsville.

13 We have the new SpaceX Project coming to
14 Brownsville. U.T. and SpaceX are joining forces and we need
15 to provide another mode of transportation, especially for
16 the students. We can connect the City of Brownsville for
17 the next new SpaceX. Bringing people by bike to the new
18 development area: The SpaceX and bike facilities will help
19 economic development. Brownsville (indiscernible -
20 11:11:08) work for SpaceX and Texas.

21 Public and health, an obesity problem --
22 Brownsville has obesity and diabetes rates among the highest
23 in Texas which takes a toll over economy and quality of
24 life. A connected bicycle facility or network that allows
25 for active transportation and recreation can make a dent on

1 our poor-health crisis and lead to healthier citizens, and
2 less of a strain on our health system.

3 Please keep in mind the \$35 million could do a lot
4 for a community like Brownsville. Thirty-five million
5 dollars per year (indiscernible - 11:11:44) money in the TAP
6 Program for competitive grants for cities and rural
7 communities all over Texas.

8 So I'm basically asking to just keep in mind --
9 keep that in TAP. That's what we're asking for.

10 MR. HOUGHTON: Thank you.

11 MR. MARTINEZ: Thank you.

12 MR. HOUGHTON: Any other people sign up, Robin?

13 None?

14 (No audible response.)

15 Seeing none, the most privileged motion is in
16 order.

17 MR. VANDERGRIFF: So moved.

18 MR. AUSTIN: Second.

19 MR. HOUGHTON: All in favor?

20 (Chorus of "Ayes")

21 We are adjourned at 11:11.

22 (Proceedings concluded at 11:11 a.m.)

23

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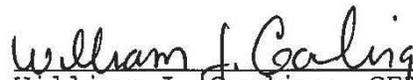
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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, WILLIAM J. GARLING, CET, certified electronic transcriber, do hereby certify that the foregoing pages 1 through 105 constitute a full, true, and accurate transcript from electronic recording of the proceedings had in the foregoing matter.

DATED this 11th day of February, 2015.


William J. Garling, CET
Certified Electronic Transcriber
CET**D-543