



Ports-to-Plains
Corridor Feasibility Study (HB 1079)
Segment 1 Committee
Meeting #1 Summary

November 20, 2019, 8:00 a.m.
Amarillo Civic Center
401 S. Buchanan Street
Amarillo, Texas

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Attendees

Segment Committee Member	Organization	Attendance
Mayor Bob Brinkmann	City of Dumas	Designee Present: Arbie Taylor
Kevin Carter	President and CEO, Amarillo Economic Development Corporation	Present
Judge Terri Beth Carter	Sherman County	Present
Kasey Coker	Executive Director, The High Ground of Texas	Present
Mayor Phillip Hass	City of Dalhart Designee: City Manager	Designee Present: James Stroud
Judge Ernie Houdashell	Randall County	Not Present
Judge Ronnie Gordon	Hartley County	Not Present
Kyle Ingham	Executive Director, Panhandle Regional Planning Commission	Present
Joe Kiely	Vice-President of Operations, Ports-to-Plains Alliance	Present
Tonya Keesee	Executive Director, Plainview Chamber of Commerce	Present
Judge Harold Keeter	Swisher County Designee: Director, Tulia Chamber of Commerce	Designee Present: Tyson Willis
Gary Molberg	President and CEO, Amarillo Chamber of Commerce	Present
Judge David B. Mull	Hale County Designee: County Commissioner	Designee Present: Harold King
Travis Muno	Administrator, Amarillo Metropolitan Planning Org.	Present
Mayor Ginger Nelson	City of Amarillo Designee: City Manager	Designee Present: Jared Miller
Milton Pax	Vice Chairman, Ports-to-Plains Alliance	Present

Ashley Posthumus	President, Dalhart Chamber of Commerce	Present
Mayor Ricky Reed	City of Stratford	Not Present
Judge Johnnie “Rowdy” Rhoades	Moore County Designee: County Commissioner Precinct 3	Designee Present: Dee Vaughan
Judge Wesley Ritchey	Dallam County	Not Present
Judge Nancy Tanner	Potter County Designee: Director, Road and Bridge Dept.	Designee Present: Sebastin Ysaguirre
Carl Watson	Executive Director, Dumas Chamber of Commerce	Present
Ross Wilson	President and CEO, Texas Cattle Feeders Association	Designee Present: Savannah Barksdale
Advisory Committee Members		
Mayor Dan Pope, Ports-to-Plains Advisory Committee Chairman	City of Lubbock	Present

Elected Officials

Four Price Texas House of Representatives
Clinton Hale City of Dalhart

Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT)

Caroline Mays	Kylan Francis
Kit Black	Sonja Gross
Loretta Brown	Krista Jeacopello
Blake Calvert	Steve Linhart
Brian Crawford	Roy Neukam
Bernardo Ferrel	Akila Thamizharasan

Consultant Team

Wendy Travis	Garver	Audrey Koehler	WSP
Kirsten McCullough	Garver	Rachel Lunceford	HG Consult
Mike Spayd	Garver	Lena Camarillo	PCI
Sean Wray	Garver	Colin McGahey	PCI
Joe Bryan	WSP	Robert Ryan	Blanton & Associates
Casey Carlton	WSP		

Other Attendees

Cody Balzen	Amarillo MPO	Krista Perkins	PRPC
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John Bertsch	Ports-to-Plains Alliance	Edward Secoell	Kimley-Horn
Jason Harrison	Amarillo Chamber		
Floyd Hartman	City of Amarillo		
Duffy Hinkle	Ports-to-Plains Alliance		
Cheri Huddleston	Ports-to- Plains Alliance		
Dustin Meyer	PRPC		
Gary Molberg	Amarillo Chamber		
Dipaic Patel	Route 66 Development		

Welcome

Caroline Mays, TxDOT Director of Freight, Trade and Connectivity, welcomed the attendees to the Segment 1 Committee Meeting. She commented it was very exciting to be in Amarillo and she was looking forward to a productive meeting. She told members Peter Smith, TxDOT's Director of Transportation Planning and Programming Division, could not attend the meeting. She said on behalf of TxDOT, this is a very important undertaking. There are a lot of resources devoted to successfully executing this study. She told members Texas Transportation Commissioner Alvin New is the champion of this project and wasn't able to attend today but is committed to this process. Ms. Mays said Lubbock Mayor Dan Pope was in attendance. He is the Chair of the Ports-to-Plains Advisory Committee, which will ultimately submit the feasibility study report to the Legislature and Governor.

Jared Miller, City Manager of Amarillo welcomed members to Amarillo on behalf of Mayor Nelson, the Chamber, and City Council. He said he was grateful to be kicking off the Segment 1 Committee process. He said he was glad everyone was there and was looking forward to the process.

Mayor Dan Pope of Lubbock noted there were a number of faces he saw at Big Spring this week at the Segment 2 Committee meeting and earlier in November in Del Rio at the Segment 3 Committee meeting. He said this was the third Segment Committee meeting, and he wanted to share a little from those other two meetings to set some expectations and give encouragement. Those living in this part of Texas have always questioned how much support there is in south Texas for the extension of I-27. Mayor Pope said he was there to tell them there is a lot of support. He noted the Del Rio Mayor Bruno Lozano and the Webb County Judge Tano Tijerina are the Chair and Vice Chair of the Segment 3 Committee and San Angelo Mayor Brenda Gunter and Lubbock County Judge Curtis Parrish are the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Segment 2 Committee. He told members they would be electing a Chair and Vice Chair for the Segment 1 Committee later in the meeting.

Mayor Pope told members that the team would be asking for their input. He said we need to follow the process and be patient. Involvement is critical. He said the route for Ports-To-Plains is well established. House Bill (H.B.) 1079 is prescriptive in terms of the route we are studying. If there is an alternative that members think needs to be considered, it will be noted, but that is not where the bulk of the effort is going to be spent. That's likely not as significant in this Segment as in others. There may be a point we get to in south Texas where some feel there is a better route. Mayor Pope then shared some words from Commissioner New. We need to think about Texas in 2045 and 2050 as we do this work. The state demographers most recent work showed that Amarillo and Lubbock will each have half a million people. The Permian Basin, which is larger than Midland and Odessa, will have somewhere around 1.3 million people. Texas will be 45-50 million. This is about

establishing a north-south interstate between I-35 and I-25. He told members to keep that in mind, that short term needs exist, and some of those are being addressed. He told everyone that he appreciates them being there and being part of the process. He then said it was important to recognize the sponsor of this bill in the State House of Representatives, Representative Four Price. He asked if Representative Price would like to make any comments.

Representative Price thanked everyone for being at the meeting. He said it was gratifying to see the participation of everyone who were the advocates and the reason the H.B. 1079 was completed in the first place. He said he saw lots of faces who were instrumental to make sure they did it correctly. The wording of the bill is prescriptive, and they wanted the end product to be something useful. They didn't want TxDOT to just check some boxes. If they weren't prescriptive it might not be as useful as it needs to be. He thanked Mayor Pope for chairing the Advisory Committee and said providing feedback is critical at the Segment level, here in Amarillo, Del Rio, and in Big Spring. It's really great to see a good turnout.

He thanked State Senator Charles Perry from Lubbock and State Senator Kel Seliger – without their leadership in Senate, it would not have passed. He thanked Governor Abbott and TxDOT and Amarillo District Engineer Brian Crawford. He said he was thankful TxDOT is taking this matter seriously and organizing the meetings so well. He said he will be in and out today and he's thankful members have carved out time to participate in such an important process. It is really a critical thing that is not just going to impact on communities, but when you look at the state demographer's expectations for changing Texas, it's dramatic. When you look at the state population doubling by 2050, it's pretty amazing and hard to conceptualize. He said he used to think it wasn't realistic, until he heard in the 1970's there were 12 million people, and we have doubled in that period of time. Where will those people go? Where will the commerce happen? He told members he was very grateful for their participation and thanked them for coming.

Ms. Mays thanked Representative Price and said she appreciated him being at the meeting, as well as his thoughtful language in the Bill. She told the Segment 1 committee members that for the Segment 3 Committee meeting in Del Rio, the Mexican delegation came. They indicated this corridor is vital for cross-border trade. They were from Acuna, and they have also heard from people from the border cities of Piedras Negras and Nuevo Laredo. A lot of the equipment used in the Permian Basin and for wind energy is being produced in Mexico, which is vital for the economy of Texas. Ms. Mays then provided a safety briefing for the building and an overview of the information contained in the packet members received.

At this time, Committee Members, TxDOT staff and consultant staff introduced themselves.

Overview of Study

Blake Calvert, TxDOT Legislative Liaison presented information about H.B. 1079. He explained this was a very tight timeline to accomplish the necessary work. He said the Segment Committees would be doing the heavy lifting for the Bill requirements. The corridor is being studied as defined in the Texas Transportation Code, and it cannot deviate from the Bill. Section 225.069 lists the specific roadways the Segment Committees will be focused on. Mr. Calvert provided an overview of the Bill and discussed cost and logistics. He explained the Bill requires the Advisory Committee meet twice

annually in Lubbock and San Angelo and the Committee consists of Elected Officials or their designees. Mr. Calvert explained the Segment Committee was made up of volunteers representing Cities, Counties, ports, Metropolitan Planning Organizations, chambers of commerce, economic development corporations, the trucking industry, and other interested parties. The Segment Committee members can also appoint designees. He said at today's meeting the Committee will elect a Chair and a Vice Chair.

He continued by providing an overview of the reporting requirements of the Segment Committee, which includes submitting a report to the Advisory Committee. Another component of the Bill is to engage the public. Public Meetings are to be held quarterly in Amarillo, Laredo, Lubbock, and San Angelo on a rotational basis. Once the reports are finalized, they will be viewed by the public for comment. Mr. Calvert finished the presentation by reviewing important dates including a timeline for Advisory Committee meetings, Segment Committee meetings, and report due dates. TxDOT will submit the final Feasibility Study Report to the Governor and Legislature by January 1, 2021.

Mayor Pope commented the next Advisory Committee Meeting will be changed to February 19, 2020 instead of January 23, 2020.

Mr. Calvert noted November 7, 2000 was the last deathless day on Texas roadways. He told members to be safe, with the holidays coming up, there will be lots of people on the roads. It's important to slow down and be nice to fellow drivers and urged them and anyone they came into contact with to be safe on Texas roadways. This is one streak TxDOT wants to see end.

Feasibility Study Purpose, Goals, Scope and Schedule

Purpose and Goals

Ms. Mays started the presentation by explaining the goal of the study is to look at a four-lane divided highway and determine the feasibility of an interstate. She gave an overview of the corridor feasibility study purpose is outlined in H.B. 1079. In summary, it states the study must evaluate the feasibility of costs and logistical matters associated with improvements create a continuous flow, four-lane divided highway and meets interstate standards, including improvements that extend Interstate 27. Ms. Mays continued with showing how the three segments were divided and reviewed each goal. Goals included transporting energy products, employment opportunities, relieve traffic congestion, freight movement, maximizing the use of existing highways and protecting private property, interstate designation, project costs, and funding sources.

Ms. Mays told committee members that the TxDOT study team drove the corridor yesterday and had never seen so much agriculture, including grain and cotton. She said it provided a good sense of the differences between the three segments. She said everything boils down to cost, and sources are limited so we have to prioritize.

Mentimeter Question #1: Which goals of the corridor feasibility study are most important to you?

There were 20 responses. The number of responses is in parentheses. They are summarized as: freight movement (15), economic development (14), safety and mobility (14), traffic congestion (8),

existing infrastructure (5), interstate designation (5), funding sources (4), energy products (2), project costs (2), and private property (0).

Ms. Mays told members this is their voice, and please provide input. She pointed out the feedback from this question is fairly consistent with what was expressed during the Segment 2 Committee and Segment 3 Committee meetings. The three goals that seem to be noted most often are economic development, freight movement, and safety and mobility. She asked if anyone wanted to comment on those.

Jared

Miller commented that safety and mobility is an issue in Amarillo. As mentioned, I-27 transitions into Buchanan and depending on where you are at downtown, there are 9 to 13 traffic lights transitioning to US 287. If you multiply by four, that's how many lights are in this Segment. All cattle and freight are coming through that corridor. Thousands of people are crossing that corridor – they could be walking to a baseball game and have to jump back because a light turns red. It's a real challenge from a safety and freight standpoint.

Mayor Pope commented he was thinking the same thing as he was driving downtown and there was a rancher pulling a horse trailer. We love them, but don't want them downtown.

Milton Pax with Ports-To-Plains Alliance commented we have so many school zones in Dumas, we need some help there. It really affects congestion.

Kyle Ingham with the Panhandle Regional Planning Commission commented we need to remember what we do north of I-40, into Dumas, Dalhart and Stratford, improving roads and making sure we have 4-lane going north, it's important for economic development.

Ms. Mays said while driving to Stratford, they were behind an oversized load on a 2-lane roadway, the truck was taking up both lanes and causing dangerous passing conditions for 10 to 15 minutes. They couldn't see to pass. People get frustrated and it leads to head-on collisions. Time is money for the freight industry. When cotton has to be sent to markets, it has to get on trains, and the train doesn't wait for you, it needs to be there before it leaves which translates to economic development.

Ashley Posthumus, with the Dalhart Chamber of Commerce, commented her husband is in the dairy industry, and dairy machines come from Holland through ports. As many trucks pass through Dalhart as they do in ports. This is better than an alternate truck route from an economic development perspective.

Ms. Mays commented Houston is a port for oversized and overweight freight and goes all the way north to Canada and comes through this region. Also, wind blades are not manufactured here, they are coming in from Mexico.

Teri Carter, Sherman County Judge, commented there are similar issues in Sherman County with traffic from Dumas to Boise City (Oklahoma), there are trucks from Canada, Mexico and locals. Every

kind of agricultural product imaginable including bacon, ribeye, jeans, t-shirts, it's all coming through Sherman County. There is as huge need for transportation.

Ms. Mays commented some of the roads in this corridor, not just local traffic, need to support the agriculture industry and pass-through trucks, especially on the US 287 section, there are a lot of non-Texas plates. We saw UPS and FedEx not just serving this corridor, but the corridor is being used as a regional/bi-state corridor to move goods back and forth. We have not heard much about passenger vehicle traffic.

Mr. Pax commented that's something the Ports-to-Plains Alliance is concerned about in Dumas. When you talk about safety and congestion, if you have a lot of issues, the public will find a way to avoid your town, and it hurts us economically. They will find a way around, and it hurts businesses.

Carl Watson with the Dumas Chamber of Commerce commented his chamber office is on US 287, and every day they have 10,000 trucks or more pass by. They go six blocks to US 87 north. From a safety standpoint, this is critical. A young man was killed by a truck at a wedding reception. We are very concerned. We have two different areas where schools are. It's a high priority for Dumas where we have 15,000 people and 10,000 trucks.

Tyson Willis with the Tulia Chamber of Commerce said looking at it from an area with I-27, we used to have the same problem, but the economic side was booming. When I-27 was built and went around communities, businesses will decline. He wanted to note that while traffic will be relieved, it also affects businesses within the city.

Mr. Ingham commented in the Panhandle, from a philosophical standpoint, the way you were raised is what you think is normal. Those of us with five stop lights in town think it's normal. When you go to I-27 you can get to Lubbock in 1.5 hours. This is new to us. It's been 50 years since the interstate went south, but as we start going north, we need guidance from TxDOT on what keeps us safe.

Ms. Mays said transportation is one aspect, but you need to have other things in place like economic development, land use strategies, and city planning and development to improve that. You need to consider growth. Can you move people and goods with the infrastructure of the 1950s? How do you adapt?

Arbie Taylor with City of Dumas commented going back to safety, people in Dumas don't realize having trucks go downtown, we have businesses right up to the right-of-way. Everyone complains about cattle trucks, but a lot of hazardous waste moves through the town. We have a planning group that gets together and discusses what happens if a tanker truck or a truck carrying ammunition wrecks as it's going through town. As this highway develops, how close will hazardous waste be to your community? Think about what would happen.

Ms. Mays said she was glad Mr. Taylor brought up that we often don't know what is moving in trucks. When it is hazardous materials, it takes even longer and resources to respond might not be local. There is delay due to clean up in the event of an incident. It's more than just transportation. Several things need to be in place around the region.

Joe Kiely with the Ports-To-Plains Alliance commented regarding impacts on the local economy and moving trucks out of downtown, we have to look at that balance. The changes that have taken place in retail, lodging, chain retail – a local retailer can't buy 50 different dresses now. The effect of interstate development has already taken place shows the strength of the economy.

Mr. Willis commented now that the interstate went around, there is now a business park on the interstate. He said he was not being negative, but it will shift business patterns, but the process of small towns expanding their horizons, we'll have to deal with people who don't want that for their business.

Mr. Taylor said his City (Dumas) Commission has been discussing where this traffic is going to go in 15 years. With the development of the US 87 corridor, they are looking at where they need to concentrate resources to move and meet that demand. They want to be proactive, when the route starts decreasing traffic downtown, we need to put resources where traffic is going to be. We are planning for that.

Ms. Mays said the discussion of relief routes for downtown is to have a comprehensive strategy that addresses economic development, land use, and resources. There are communities that have relief routes and the downtown is thriving, and people can sit outside. You can't do that in Dumas. A relief route changes the game. There are short term impacts, but you can also have strategies to mitigate so you can have a win-win situation.

Study Scope

Wendy Travis, a member of the consultant team, resumed the presentation by reviewing the study scope. She said this type of study is standard for what transportation agencies do to assess the feasibility of a transportation facility. The process starts with determining a purpose and need for the study, followed by existing conditions and needs assessment. Next, you will be assessing forecasted conditions. Staff will get feedback from the Segment Committee meeting on how to incorporate those findings into the report. The feasibility of a four-lane divided facility and where the corridor may be feasible for an interstate level facility will be studied. She explained staff will be helping the Committee look at economic impacts, strategies for improvement, developing a financial plan, and an implementation plan, so they can make their recommendations. She said TxDOT will submit the final Feasibility Study Report to the Governor and Legislature by January 1, 2021. She noted stakeholder engagement will be going on throughout this entire process.

Mr. Kiely asked when doing the forecasting, will you be able to forecast the impact of what the interstate will do versus existing conditions?

Ms. Travis responded yes, it is what we will be doing and will have that information for you at the next meeting.

Ms. Mays said it's more of a scenario analysis, if the whole corridor was interstate, what would that look like? What if portions are 4-lane divided, interstate and so on.

Ms. Travis said they would also be looking at programmed projects from TxDOT and the Metropolitan Planning Organizations. Having the Committee's support for those projects often makes the project move forward even faster. We show you what are the projects already programmed and what are the gaps. You will look at the best solutions to close those gaps.

Ms. Mays said it is important to note there is a lot of work we are already doing. The TxDOT Districts have lots of work going on. Many of those projects will lay the groundwork for meeting the short-term needs, safety and operational issues. Your support and input will help Districts make a business case for accelerating or funding those projects.

Study Schedule

Ms. Travis proceeded by discussing the study schedule and milestones. She explained today's meeting would be reviewing existing conditions in Segment 1. The next Segment 1 Committee meeting will be in February and will cover forecasting, economic development, and planned projects within the Ports-To-Plains corridor. In April, staff will work with the Committee on developing corridor alternatives and present the results of an economic model that looks at potential job creation. The committee will then identify improvements and costs and determine the prioritization of improvements. The final meeting in June will be where the Committee develops the implementation plan and finalize their report. The Committee's report is due to the Advisory Committee by June 30, 2020. She stressed the schedule for this study consisted of lots of work in a short amount of time, but said it is achievable. She also said at the next meeting; members would be reviewing the first three chapters of their Segment Reports.

Existing Segment Conditions and Needs

Akila Thamizharasan, TxDOT Corridor Planning Branch Manager, started the presentation by referencing the discussion about H.B. 1079 from earlier this morning. She explained staff would be presenting about existing conditions next but wanted to start off with a couple of questions.

Mentimeter Question #2: What are the key needs and challenges in Segment 1?

There were 15 responses. *The number of responses is in parentheses. They are summarized as: connectivity, freight & agricultural movement and congestion (6), safety and mobility (8), economic development (1), and lack of access-controlled highways (1).*

Mayor Pope commented this is something he sees along the corridor. Today, he got to drive on a totally access controlled route. In other areas, trucks enter the roadway, there is a lot of traffic on our 4-lane divided roads with no access control. To Blake's point, it's been 19 years since a day without someone being killed on Texas highways.

Mr. Ingham commented one of his major concerns with this process is we don't build for the next five years. As traffic diverts from I-35 to I-27 in 25 years, we need to build it to adequate capacity for what it will be.

Ms. Thamizharasan said we are analyzing corridor needs for year 2050.

Mentimeter Question #3: What are the potential opportunities in Segment 1?

There were 17 responses. The number of responses is in parentheses. They are summarized as: economic development (10), job creation (1), safety (2), growth along the corridor (3), and relief route to I-35 (1).

Kevin Carter with the Amarillo Economic Development Corporation commented the key is to get this to interstate standards. If we can get some of the traffic going to I-35 and bring it west, it gives the communities opportunities for logistics and warehouse type jobs.

Ms. Thamizharasan commented developing alternative reliable corridors is important to the state economy.

Judge Carter commented they have 3,000 people but lose to one million cattle and two to three million pigs. All products are a huge economic impact, but a bottleneck for transportation. With US 87 going north-south and US 54 going east-west, it all comes to a head in Stratford. There are 20,000 trucks a day at that US 87/US 54 intersection; everyone has to stop.

Savanna Barksdale with the Texas Cattle Feeders Association commented with the amount of time animals are on a truck, it's better for their welfare and making sure they are hauled safely. There is an opportunity to make it better.

Gary Molberg with the Amarillo Chamber of Commerce commented Amarillo is not a destination point, it's a pass through. Last year, there was \$840 million spent in Amarillo tied to tourism. There is a tremendous amount of traffic going through the city. Safety issues need to be addressed as the population increases.

Mr. Kiely commented there is an opportunity to work with communities in Colorado and Nebraska through Affiliated Foods. The company provides groceries throughout the corridor and makes northern movement important.

Overall Segment Characteristics

Ms. Thamizharasan continued the discussion by explaining experts have reviewed the corridor existing conditions information and presented it at the Advisory Committee Meeting. She summarized the discussion review and pointed out each topic would be covered today. She continued by providing an overview of overall corridor and segment characteristics including number of corridor miles, counties, TxDOT districts, major Cities, and Ports of Entry located in the entire corridor. Ms. Thamizharasan continued the presentation by discussing the details of corridor miles, counties, TxDOT districts, major Cities, and Ports of Entry, existing highways and access control for Segment 1. She noted the majority of Segment 1 does not have access control.

Traffic, Pavement, and Bridge Conditions

Mike Spayd, a member of the consultant team started the presentation by discussing average daily traffic along the entire corridor and in Segment 1. He explained traffic volumes in the corridor and Segment 1 vary considerably. I-27 ends near downtown Amarillo which results in a 1-way road network that carries 35,000 vehicles per day. In Segment 1, Hartley had the highest rate of growth and growth is strongest at end points. The largest truck volumes along the entire corridor and in

Segment 1 are between Amarillo and Dumas. Mr. Spayd also discussed average speeds. Most of the entire corridor and Segment 1 have travel speeds of 60-70 miles per hour in rural segments and city segments have 30 mph or less, which can be found in Dumas and Amarillo.

Mentimeter Question #4: Where are the bottlenecks for traffic in Segment #1, and what is the cause?

There were 15 responses. The number of responses is in parentheses. They are summarized as: freight movement, especially with oversize and overweight loads (5), increased truck traffic (1), construction between Canyon and Amarillo (1), and lack of access control and traffic through cities/downtowns (3). Specific locations included: Amarillo (downtown) (11), Dumas (9), Dumas to Hartley, two-lane (1), Dalhart (1), Stratford (1), transition from four to two-lanes north of Stratford (1), intersection of 287 and 54 caused by excessive truck traffic (1), and Hale County, curves on the highway (1).

Mr. Miller commented construction causes bottlenecks, but we want that. We have a project between Canyon and Amarillo that will take care of capacity.

Brian Crawford, Amarillo District Engineer, commented in the section from Canyon to Amarillo, there is a need to upgrade from 4-lane to 6-lane.

Mentimeter Question #5 – What do you think will influence future traffic conditions in Segment #1?

There were 15 responses. The number of responses is in parentheses. They are summarized as: population growth (6), economic growth (5), more pressure on secondary roads if primary routes are not made more efficient (1), alternative routes including: SL 335 in Amarillo (2), hope for relief route in Dumas and reduction of traffic lights (1), transition of traffic from I-35 to I-27 (1), and weight capacity (1).

Mr. Spayd continued the presentation with pavement condition. Overall, both the corridor and Segment 1 roads are in good to very good condition. The bridges and bridge vertical clearance are also rated highly overall throughout the corridor and within Segment 1.

Mentimeter Question #6 – What are the key pavement and bridge needs and challenges in Segment #1?

There were 13 responses. The number of responses is in parentheses. They are summarized as: truck volume and weight of vehicles (1), oversize/overweight loads (2), bridge and overpass clearances (4), simultaneous construction projects compound delays and traffic (3), workforce development (1), pavement quality and maintenance of current conditions (3), and snow and ice issues are common in Segment 1 (2).

Mr. Miller commented there were a lot of bridges recently done at once. It had a big impact on traffic and cross-country traffic. Everyone wants it done but doesn't want to deal with the hassle.

Mr. Kiely commented since our goal is determining where an interstate is reasonable, he's not sure if pavement conditions give us the answer.

Ms. Mays commented part of the pavement issue is safety. Some of the needs are operational, some are safety. Pavement conditions can have implications on safety.

Mr. Kiely said he understands the connection to existing conditions, and congratulations on the high numbers on existing, but how does pavement condition tie to where we need to have 4-lane or interstate?

Ms. Mays responded good point, but this is just existing conditions. It won't be considered for future conditions. For future conditions, we will project traffic. When we do that, the cost needs to consider the cost of pavement. Interstate standards costs are different, pavement will be a factor in that. The Districts can weigh into that.

Safety

Mr. Spayd continued the presentation by reviewing total crashes throughout the entire corridor and in Segment 1 (data from 2014-2018). The highest rate of crashes is near cities, except for Lubbock. In Segment 1, the highest crash rates are through downtown Amarillo. Truck crashes are higher in Dalhart, within/north of Dumas and central Amarillo in Segment 1. Fatal crashes are highest in Amarillo and north of Dumas. He explained contributing factors to crashes are similar in the entire corridor and within Segment 1. Speeding and failure to stop/yield are the most common reasons for crashes along the corridor and in Segment 1

Mentimeter Question #7 – What areas and issues contribute to safety needs and challenges in Segment #1?

There were 13 responses. The number of responses is in parentheses. They are summarized as: access control and availability of access roads (4), downtown traffic signals cause delays for trucks with full loads (5) and need for access-controlled highways with physical barriers (2). Specific locations include: cross traffic in Cactus, near the meat-packing plant (1), Stratford – two highways and two railroads crossings cause major congestion (1), Dumas to Hartley – two lane segment (1), and trucks entering traffic on 287 north of Dumas (1).

Ms. Mays explained this is where specificity is very important. If you know areas/portions of the corridor with safety concerns, or if you feel things are missing, please let us know. This is very important. As you make your recommendations, these types of improvements will be some of the short-term improvements. Things that need to be done now.

Mr. Pax commented they have a unique situation in Cactus. There is a meat packing plant that employs 3,500 people, and there is also a BNSF railroad line next to the plant. When a shift change occurs, there is terrible congestion along US 287. Most people in Cactus want to walk everywhere they go, including grocery shopping and to work, and they have to cross a 4-lane highway to get to the plant. There have been major fatalities. Whether it stays 4-lane or is I-27, it's an issue that must be addressed.

Dee Vaughan, Moore County Commissioner commented north of Dumas on US 287, trucks enter the highway which causes high crash rates. There are cotton gins, freight elevators, and loaded trucks

coming in and out that take a lot of time to get up to speed. He sees rear end collisions with people coming up on trucks from behind.

Mayor Pope announced there would be an agenda change, and nominations of a Segment 1 Chair and Vice Chair would happen next before moving on with the remainder of the presentation.

Nominations and Elections

Mayor Pope opened the floor for nominations.

Kevin Carter nominated Jared Miller for Chair and Milton Pax as Vice-Chair.

Kyle Ingram made a motion to cease the vote.

Commissioner Vaughan seconded the motion.

Mayor Pope asked who was in favor for the Chair and Vice Chair nominations, and all raised their hands of the 19 members present.

Mr. Miller and Mr. Pax accepted their positions of Chair and Vice-Chair.

Population and Economic Characteristics

Kirsten McCullough, a member of the consultant team, continued the presentation by providing an overview of current corridor population growth for the entire corridor and for Segment 1. Population growth was summarized from years 1990-2017. She explained there was decent growth in this timeframe (18%), and in Segment 1, Hartley County and Randall County had the most growth.

Ms. McCullough continued the presentation by discussing median household income along the entire corridor and in Segment 1 from years 1990-2017. Overall, there was an increase in median household income. She pointed out in Segment 1, Armstrong County and Floyd County had the highest increases in income.

Ms. McCullough then moved on to total employment along the entire corridor and in Segment 1 from years 1990-2017. Once again, total employment increased along the overall corridor and in Segment 1. In Segment 1, Dallam and Randall Counties had the largest employment growth.

Mentimeter Question #8: What factors do you think will influence population, income, and employment in Segment #1 over the next 30 years?

There were 15 responses. The number of responses is in parentheses. They are summarized as: economic Development, jobs and population growth (7), underemployment (2), improved infrastructure (2), water resources (1), housing shortage and expense (1), and waste disposal with increased population (1).

Mr. Ingham commented people are working, lower than the state average, but working one job that pays them half of per capita income and have to work a second job. Even with working two jobs, they

are still below 80% of the national average. There are situations where families are moving from rural communities in Gruver to Dumas, and then to Amarillo. Small communities move to large communities and then to urban areas.

Mr. Molberg commented by doing some research, year in and year out we have more than one family member working. There are impacts to the number of traffic vehicles on the roadway when both husband and wife are driving.

Mr. Miller commented water planning will have a role on how agriculture as well as the whole area grows. If you secure water rights, water rules will facilitate rural and urban growth.

Mr. Ingham commented that our aquifer is a finite resource, whereas we look at the aquifer that comes up and own.

Freight Movement

Joe Bryan, a member of the consultant team, started the presentation by giving an overview of total freight. He explained inbound freight referred to goods including household items, supplies, etc., while outbound freight referred to products of industry, or goods from warehouses, including crops. He told members he would be discussing overall freight in the entire corridor as well as freight in Segment 1.

He explained the principal points for truck freight along the entire corridor are Amarillo, Lubbock, Midland, and Laredo. The corridor crosses large, rural areas and provides more access to markets for nearby counties. Within Segment 1, the principal point for truck freight is Amarillo. It also crosses large, rural areas and provides more access to markets for nearby counties. Next, he discussed inbound and outbound freight along the entire corridor. The Panhandle ships more freight than it receives, while Amarillo and Midland/Odessa receive more freight than they ship. The Port of Entry at Laredo is busy in both directions.

In Segment 1, many counties ship out more than they take in, but population centers including Amarillo, Plainview, and Dumas take in more than they ship out. Mr. Bryan continued the discussion by giving an overview of commodities. Prominent outbound commodities along the entire corridor include food and agriculture in the Panhandle, mineral products in the Permian Basin, and consumer products in the south. Energy and oil are important across the entire corridor. Outbound commodities important in Segment 1 include mineral/mineral products, food and agricultural products, and energy and oil field products. He then discussed inbound commodities. Along the entire corridor, the most common inbound commodities are the same as the outbound, which is the case for Segment 1.

Mr. Bryan continued the freight discussion with shipping and receiving. Like the entire corridor, Segment 1 freight generating businesses are in population centers. Foreign truck trade is at the border with Mexico, with some Canadian and overseas traffic. All counties within Segment 1 have some level of involvement in foreign trade, and Amarillo has the strongest imports due to I-40 and by being a population center.

Mentimeter Question #9: What are key needs and challenges for moving people and freight in Segment 1?

There were 14 responses. The number of responses is in parentheses. They are summarized as: connectivity and traffic flow (4), infrastructure, roadway design with controlled access (5), traffic congestion (4), oversize/overweight permitted loads are increasing through Segment 1 (1), and trade opportunities (1).

Mr. Ingham commented he got a call this week from Judges in those counties, asking about this meeting and what it means. In our region, the geography in this area is large, it goes from New Mexico to Oklahoma, but drive times are small. Hemphill, Childress, and Collingsworth Counties will be affected by this corridor, even if the highway doesn't go through there. It will directly impact how their economies operate.

Mr. Kiely commented in terms of oversize and overweight permits, looking north, Colorado has three interstates and five different interstate entrances to the state. US 287 is the second largest entry to the state of Colorado. They are definitely coming through here.

Mr. Bryan commented the same issue occurs in Oklahoma.

Mentimeter Question #10 – what factors do you think will influence future freight movement in Segment #1?

There were 14 responses. The number of responses is in parentheses. They are summarized as: connectivity, access roads and entry points (6), economic growth and competition (6), economic development and business growth (2), congestion and safety (2), interstate standards and increased mobility (3), and international trade and competitiveness (1).

Energy Sector and Agricultural Production

Mr. Bryan continued the discussion on oil and gas production within the entire corridor and Segment 1. The counties with the most natural gas production include Moore, Sherman, and Hansford. The largest oil production occurs in Hale, Potter, and Hutchinson Counties. For wind energy production, Carson, Floyd, and Oldham Counties have the largest number of wind turbines and highest capacity output in Segment 1.

After a review of the energy sector, Mr. Bryan focused on agriculture production. The highest agricultural sales in the corridor are in Segment 1. Top crops along the corridor include cotton, forage, wheat, corn for grain, and pecans. Livestock includes cattle, goats, and sheep. In Segment 1, cotton is the top crop by acre, and other important crops include wheat and corn. Cattle and calves are the top livestock products in 17 of 18 counties in Segment 1. Goats are the top livestock product in Sherman County.

Mentimeter Question #11: How does energy production influence the transportation needs in Segment #1?

There were 13 responses. The number of responses is in parentheses. They are summarized as: growth in Texas and US will continue to place more pressure and demand on energy industry (4),

increased demand for substantial infrastructure, i.e. higher and wider overpasses and bridges to manage truck traffic (6), changing crop types to adapt to water availability will evolve over the scope of this project (1), increased wind energy (3), and even if production materials are carried via pipeline, service trucks will continue to increase (1).

Mr. Ingham commented there is a \$12 billion project of moving wind energy out of the panhandle. It's predictive of where wind farms will be coming in and where trucks will be. The eastern Panhandle is in the economic viewshed of this corridor. When oil and gas goes over \$80-85 a barrel, we see development. It's a boom/bust cycle. There may not be a lot in the near future, but it could increase if an interstate comes on board.

Mentimeter Question #12: How does agricultural production influence transportation needs in Segment #1?

There were 13 responses. The number of responses is in parentheses. They are summarized as: increased need to efficiently move products to market at lower cost (5), production requires enhanced and efficient transportation infrastructure to facilitate continued growth of agricultural exports (3), changing crop types to adapt to water availability will evolve over the course of this project (1), heavy trucks move slowly (1), and agricultural production is key to the economy of the Panhandle for beef, cotton, and dairy (3).

Commissioner Vaughan commented there is more production in Moore County. Cotton is more efficient with water than grain, so expect a shift to that. Cotton doesn't stay here; it goes to the international market. There is also dramatic growth in dairy, and the outlook looks strong. One dairy operator expects expansion from 70,000 to 240,000 head, and will be the largest dairy in the country, if not the world – in Moore County.

Interstate Facility Design Features

Ms. Thamizharasan reviewed the H.B. 1079 requirements of conducting a comprehensive study and evaluating the feasibility of improvements to create a continuous flow, four-lane divided highway that meets interstate highway standards. She reviewed the existing highways and access control located along Segment 1. She then explained the difference between four-lane divided highway and interstate with frontage roads. Four-lane divided highways have driveway access, lower design speeds, smaller right-of-way widths, and at-grade intersections with other roadways. She provided examples of four-lane divided highways. Interstate with frontage roads have no driveways, no stop signs or signals, higher design speeds, necessary overpasses, and larger right-of-way widths. She also showed examples of interstates with frontage roads.

Mr. Kiely commented as you look at interstate standards, you always include frontage roads, but this is not a requirement everywhere. Will we differentiate where they are required versus not required?

Ms. Thamizharasan said when looking 30 years out, you need to start planning for frontage roads, and that when exactly you might need them could be phased out.

Ms. Mays commented we are not necessarily required to build frontage roads, but it has been the practice. It benefits local businesses in terms of access where they can't get directly on the

interstate. One comment that comes up is 2-way frontage roads versus 1-way frontage roads. There are safety issues with 2-way frontage roads, and in urban areas we do not build 2-way frontage roads due to safety. In rural areas, it's a different situation. It's up to the committees to make those recommendations. There are right-of-way and cost implications that need to be considered.

Mr. Kiely commented there are frontage roads in most of this segment that are going to be really important, but we should be looking at other places where there is existing infrastructure where we do not need them. Who looks at that first? TxDOT? Consultants? Committee members?

Ms. Mays explained the whole study is based on the Segment Committee making recommendations. Of course, TxDOT is at the table, and the District has engineering expertise to help the committee vet engineering expectations. If recommendations are made in a vacuum or are not feasible, then they won't move forward. There are checks and balances. The consultants are here to provide expertise on the feasibility of options. For the interstate, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is involved and their input must be received for federal approval.

Mr. Kiely asked if TxDOT would be giving them examples to comment on.

Ms. Mays responded they are not going to dictate the process, but it does have to be approved by the FHWA.

Mr. Ingham commented the section from Dumas to Hartley could be a process of laying access roads first and then coming in later with the interstate (like San Antonio). Where in the process would that come in?

Ms. Mays responded this is way down the line. We are just looking to see if this is feasible. When the District does design, they will look at all the options. Most Districts are doing that approach of frontage roads first, which helps with disruptions to traffic. There is less impact on main lane construction. We're seeing it in San Antonio, I-69, I-20 in the Odessa District, those are all examples of using this approach. The bottom line is the footprint needs to be considered so districts can acquire right-of-way early.

Ms. Posthumus asked for a small town like Dalhart, would you build around it, or go over it?

Ms. Mays responded they are only looking at the Ports-To-Plains corridor as defined for this study. We will be documenting what you mentioned and talking about relief routes. When we do the cost estimates, we will assume relief routes around cities, if that's been recommended by the Segment Committee. We are not examining or looking at any relief routes. Many Districts are doing those now.

Report Outline

Ms. Mays discussed the Segment Committee Report outline and the annotated outline of Chapters 1 through 3. She explained each Segment Committee will provide a report. She challenged members to roll up their sleeves to work on this report. It will consist of an executive summary, letter from the Segment Committee Chair, introduction, public and stakeholder engagement, existing conditions and needs assessment, forecasting and future conditions, segment feasibility analysis, economic

development impacts of the Segment, Segment improvement strategies, Segment Committee findings and recommendations, a financial plan, and an implementation plan. It will also include figures, tables, and appendices.

Ms. Mays explained the report will be sent to the Advisory Committee to use in the full, final report. She said elected officials will be focusing on the executive summary.

Mr. Crawford commented TxDOT talked about an implementation plan. There are already some short and mid-range improvements underway or at least in the planning process. At what point are we going to talk about those projects already underway regardless of how this study turns out?

Ms. Mays responded we are going to be bringing that up in the next meeting. We are not changing any of those projects.

Mr. Crawford commented all members need to have that information so we can make informed decisions.

Ms. Mays said if we have a plan for 4-lane divided, we want to make sure the committee does not recommend it if it's already in the books. We will also help identify other needs, so you can be thinking about it.

She continued by saying there is a lot of work to do and this is a working committee. The expectation at the next meeting is you will review three of the report chapters in advance and bring your comments. It needs to be done quickly. We will need your review and input. We will also be talking about forecasting and feasibility.

Next Meeting

Ms. Thamizharasan explained there will be four rounds of Segment Committee Meetings and Public Meetings. The first round is in November. She showed dates for each location. She also explained the goal of the public meetings is to inform, consult and collaborate, and engage with the public. The public meeting locations will occur in Amarillo, Lubbock, San Angelo, and Laredo.

She discussed the overview agenda for the future Segment Committee meetings. She proposed the next Segment 1 Committee Meeting to be February 6, 2020 in Amarillo.

Mayor Pope commented this was great participation by the Segment Committee. Your interest is important and well noted. You should get the draft Segment 1 report roughly two weeks prior to our February 6th meeting. You need to come to that meeting with your edits and input. We won't have time to do that day, but we will talk about it. This work will be done in a year, and there are a lot of meetings between now and then. It won't magically be done by 2025, but this is the right work to do for Texas, for our kids and grandkids.

Ms. Mays said she appreciated the participation. She told members to let them know if they didn't notify them directly or if there was anyone they needed to add.

The meeting adjourned at 11:58 a.m.

Action Items:

Schedule the next Committee Meeting on February 6, 2020 in Amarillo.