

Trade Transportation Activities Report

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Introduction

The Texas transportation system plays a critical role in the economic and social well-being of all Texans. It provides the basic infrastructure that supports our economy and quality of life. Our roads, rail, airports, and transit move people to and from work and school; move goods to and from Texas' manufacturers, distributors, businesses, and consumers; and move freight through Texas to destinations across the globe. Travel demand for people and goods is growing, the costs of construction are increasing markedly, and the purchasing power of our fuel tax revenues is declining. These factors are likely to continue even as our transportation needs grow.

Due to the ever-increasing effects of expanded international trade and its impact on the economy, the transportation infrastructure and the environment, the Texas Department of Transportation's (TxDOT's) involvement in international activities continues to grow. In addition, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) accelerates and expands the range and number of TxDOT's binational and multinational connections.

Texas' expansive border with Mexico, one of the United States' most significant trade partners and also a significant conduit for Asian imports arriving to the United States via Mexico, requires focused communication and collaborative planning.

The International Relations Section (IR) of TxDOT supports efforts to improve transportation infrastructure along the border and internationally by means of facilitating coordinated planning and informational exchanges with various countries. The section provides liaison and support to TxDOT district offices and divisions, and to other governmental entities, such as the Governor's Office and the Office of the Secretary of State. The IR serves as TxDOT's representative on international committees and is responsible for compiling data and reporting related to TxDOT's international activities.

The large amount of commercial trade that crosses the Texas-Mexico border heightens the importance of the roles of the Pharr, Laredo and El Paso Districts. These districts have long cooperated with transportation officials in neighboring Mexican states and they continue working closely with their counterparts on the border. The three border district engineers and other division directors are involved in many border-related projects.

More information relating to TxDOT's interactions with Mexico can be found in the *International Activities Report* found on TxDOT's web site.

One way to accelerate the next generation of projects along the border and across the state is to use all available financial tools to build transportation projects. Models like the Hidalgo County, Cameron County and Camino Real regional mobility authorities will empower local and regional leaders to solve local and regional transportation problems. In addition to demanding consumer-driven decisions that respond to traditional market forces, we are also committed to increasing competition, which will drive down the cost of transportation projects.

The Border Technology Exchange Program (BTEP) is to promote and sustain the development of a safe and efficient transportation system for an effective and efficient movement of commerce and people within the U.S.-Mexico border region by improving technical skills and knowledge through the exchange of technology and information. The different types of activities conducted to meet the objective include training courses on value engineering, demonstration projects, personnel exchanges, workshops, conferences, site/field visits, videotapes and documents, technology transfer centers and maintenance seminars.

Another development illustrating these strategies includes statewide voter approval of the Rail Relocation and Improvement Fund. The use of this fund may allow the Port of Brownsville and the city of El Paso to construct new rail bridges outside of their city centers, eliminating congestion and allowing trains to bypass downtown. While the fund exists, it requires appropriations before TxDOT can use the fund.

The following pages present transportation improvement projects proposed in TxDOT's El Paso, Laredo, and Pharr Districts. The types of projects emphasized are projects related to Interstate Highway 35 (I-35) and I-69 (formerly Trans-Texas Corridor (TTC) projects, pass-through financing, Border Safety Inspection Facilities (BSIF), freight rail studies, Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), feasibility studies, general aviation improvements, and public transportation regional coordinated planning. These types of projects help us reach our goals of reducing congestion, enhancing safety, expanding economic opportunities, improving air quality, and preserving the value of our transportation assets.

It is important to note that major changes are underway for the TTC, including the project's name, vision and scope. Whether in far south Texas, the northeast region of the state or somewhere in between, major corridor projects will be comprised of several small segments. Each segment will be referred to by its original name, such as I-35, I-69 and SH 130. The changes are detailed in *Innovative Connectivity in Texas/Vision 2009* (http://www.keeptexasmoving.com/var/files/File/Vision_2009_Brochure.pdf), the revised version of Crossroads of the Americas, the TTC's original concept document.

Border District Pass-Through Financing Projects

The Pass-Through Financing program was established as a means to benefit local areas by accelerating improvements in mobility and safety on the state highway system. Texas Transportation Code, §222.104(b) authorizes TxDOT to enter into an agreement with a public or private entity for the payment of pass-through tolls as reimbursement for costs associated with the planning, construction, or operation of a toll or non-toll facility on the state highway system. The pass-through reimbursement is a dollar amount that is tied to a measure of actual usage of a highway.

The schedule of pass-through payments is calculated based on TxDOT's traffic projections for the highway and the number and frequency of payments are negotiated between TxDOT and the public or private entity. The amount of the total reimbursement is based on actual traffic counts and also incorporates TxDOT's estimated cost to construct the facility. Unless otherwise authorized by the Texas Transportation Commission (Commission) and incorporated in the pass-through agreement, TxDOT's liability under a pass-through agreement shall be neither increased nor decreased by cost overruns or under runs.

During the latter part of 2007, it became clear that the available pass-through financing dollars had been committed and that cash flow forecasts would not support the repayment of funds for additional pass-through projects from Category 12, Strategic Priority. In December 2007, TxDOT informed the sponsors of pending applications that the pass-through financing program would be suspended until funding sources to support the program could be identified. Proposed changes to the pass-through program rules were approved by the Commission in October 2008. The proposed changes would give the Commission added flexibility if funding is available to restart the program, albeit, at a very limited funding level.

El Paso District

Table 1 – El Paso District Pass-Through Financing Project Applications

Highway No.	Application Status	Pass-Through Amount	Length (miles)	Project Description
Spur 601	Agreement signed 8/30/2007	\$312,450,000	7.4	Design and construct Spur 601 from US 54 to Loop 375 in El Paso County

Laredo District**Table 2 – Laredo District Pass-Through Financing Project Applications**

Highway No.	Application Status	Pass-Through Amount	Length (miles)	Project Description
Loop 20 Interchange in Laredo	Application withdrawn 3/6/2008	\$14,400,000	--	Construct International Blvd. overpass and connectors at Loop 20
US 277 Relief Route	Agreement signed 1/9/2008	\$75,000,000	12	Develop a relief route to US 277 from US 90 north of Del Rio to US 277 southeast of the city

Pharr District**Table 3 – Pharr District Pass-Through Financing Project Applications**

Highway No.	Application Status	Pass-Through Amount	Length (miles)	Project Description
Various	Minute Order to Negotiate approved 4/27/2006 Negotiations suspended 12/31/2007	\$48,496,261	20.4	Improvements to various roads in Hidalgo County Road District 5

I-35/TTC (Oklahoma to Mexico/Gulf Coast)

The I-35 TTC project concept has changed significantly since it was introduced over five years ago. Rather than a single project concept, an alternative corridor to I-35 will likely be a series of individual transportation solutions tailored to regional needs. When and where possible, routes would improve existing roadways, railways and use already acquired right of way before breaking new ground. Specific routes have not been determined.

The new vision for the corridor continues to evolve based on input from key stakeholders, corridor and segment advisory committees, and the public. Public hearings on the I-35/TTC Tier One Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) were held in July and August 2006. Over 50 public hearings were conducted in locations throughout the study area. The I-35/TTC project received over 6,000 comments during the DEIS comment period. TxDOT continues to work with corridor and segment advisory committees and local communities to identify needs and potential solutions.

Environmental Study

The goal of the environmental process for any transportation project is to determine the best location for a facility. Likewise, the environmental process for I-35/TTC will find the best route based on the need. The environmental study for I-35/TTC is being conducted in two phases (or tiers). Tier One is a broad-based corridor analysis. If approved, Tier One will result in a 10 mile wide study area and is expected to be complete by early 2009. More environmental studies will be needed as part of Tier Two to narrow the study area into specific facility alignments, and Tier Two can begin as soon as Tier One is complete.

The proposed corridor is approximately 600 miles long and generally parallels I-35. The recommended preferred corridor alternative extends from the Oklahoma border north of Dallas/Fort Worth near Gainesville to the border with Mexico near Laredo as shown in Figure 1. If the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) selects a corridor in their Tier One Record of Decision, that corridor would serve as a study area in which future environmental studies for proposed I-35/TTC facilities would be conducted.

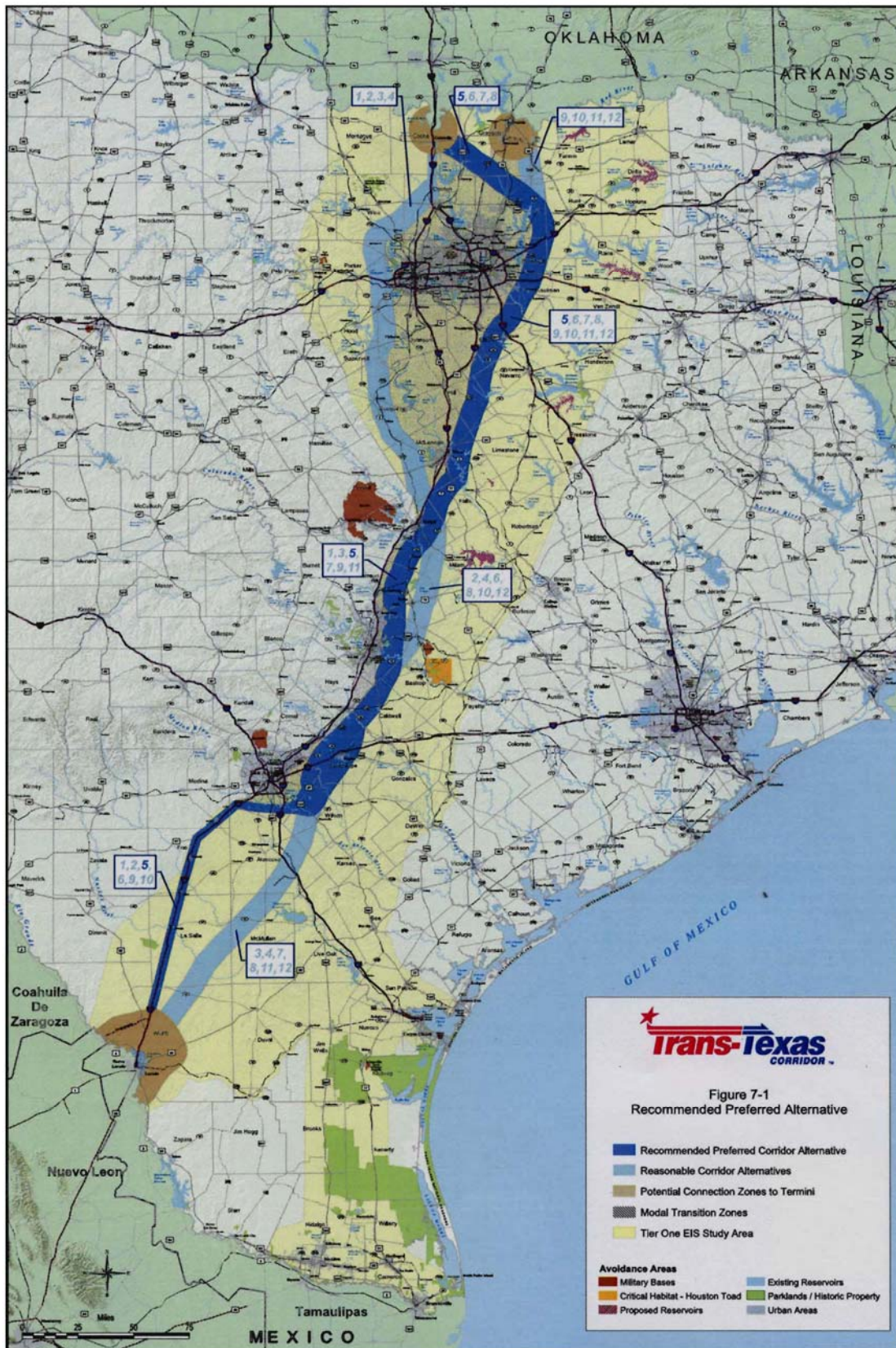
Planning and Development

In March 2005, following a competitive procurement process, TxDOT and Cintra Zachry signed a Comprehensive Development Agreement for I-35/TTC. This agreement authorized an initial \$3.5 million corridor master planning effort. In September 2006, TxDOT released the Master Development Plan for I-35/TTC. The plan outlines potential phasing, planning and development of facilities within the corridor. Facilities in the master development plan will be subject to environmental clearance. The plan is a living document that will continue to evolve and change.

On November 29, 2007, TxDOT requested an update of the master development plan. The update will include revised traffic forecasts for projects in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, additional analysis, and information on other project delivery methods. TxDOT has not awarded any I-35/TTC construction contracts; however, TxDOT and Cintra Zachry signed a facility concession agreement for the \$1.35 billion State Highway 130 (SH 130) Segments 5 and 6, a potential connecting facility to I-35/TTC. Construction is anticipated to begin by early 2009 with the opening in 2012.

For more information, go to www.keeptexasmoving.org.

Figure 1 – I-35/TTC Recommended Preferred Corridor Alternative



I-69/TTC (Northeast Texas to Mexico)

I-69 is a planned 1,600-mile national highway connecting Mexico, the United States and Canada. Eight states are involved in the project. In Texas, the corridor will be developed in segments using existing facilities to the greatest extent possible.

General Location

The proposed I-69/TTC extends from Texarkana/Shreveport to Mexico (either at the Rio Grande Valley or Laredo or both). The initial study area is roughly 650 miles long. Refer to Figure 2 for the location of the most likely existing facilities to be upgraded.

Environmental Study

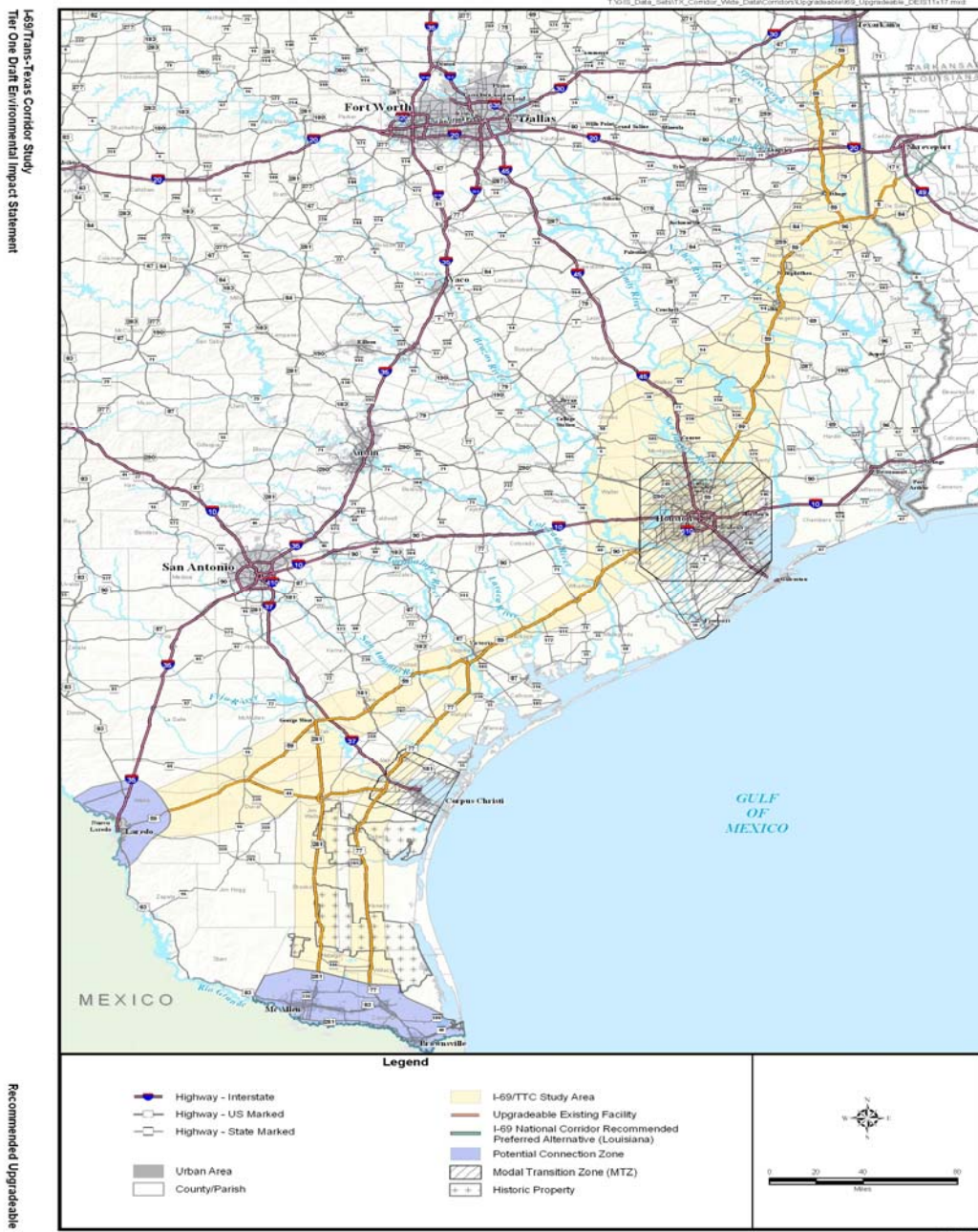
The environmental study for I-69/TTC will be conducted in two phases (or tiers). Tier One is a broad-based corridor analysis, while Tier Two will be alignment and segment specific. The Tier One environmental study for I-69/TTC began in early 2004, when TxDOT held meetings to receive public input on possible locations for the corridor. Public informational meetings were held in summer 2005. This phase of the environmental process resulted in a final study area roughly four miles wide. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement was issued in November 2007. A series of public hearings were held in the winter of 2008 to review and comment on this narrowed study area. As a result of those hearings, TxDOT will follow a strategy that will use existing facilities to the greatest extent possible. The Tier One study should be completed in 2009. More environmental studies will be needed to identify the final alignment as part of the Tier Two studies.

Construction

To date, no contracts have been awarded for development or construction of I-69/TTC. The Texas Transportation Commission has made a preliminary award to Zachry American Infrastructure, Inc. and ACS Infrastructure Development, Inc. (Zachry ACS) and has directed TxDOT to negotiate a Comprehensive Development Agreement for the preparation of a Master Development Plan for the corridor. A Comprehensive Development Agreement to develop the plan could be concluded by winter 2008.

For more information, go to www.keeptexasmoving.org.

Figure 2 - I-69/TTC Tier One Draft Environmental Impact Statement



Laredo-Corpus Christi Truck-Only Tollway

The Laredo and Corpus Christi district offices of TxDOT engaged a consulting team, led by Turner Collie and Braden, to study the feasibility of constructing and operating a Laredo-Corpus Christi area roadway for the exclusive use of trucks. The feasibility and costs of constructing and maintaining an exclusive truck-only tollway (TOT) facility extending from the Port of Laredo to the Port of Corpus Christi has been completed. The study identified three conceptual route alignments to assess project feasibility from a land use and environmental perspective. Various design alternatives in terms of the number of lanes, pavement type, and barrier type were considered. Project costs for the alternatives range from \$709 million for two lanes with flexible pavement to \$1.6 billion for four lanes with concrete pavement.

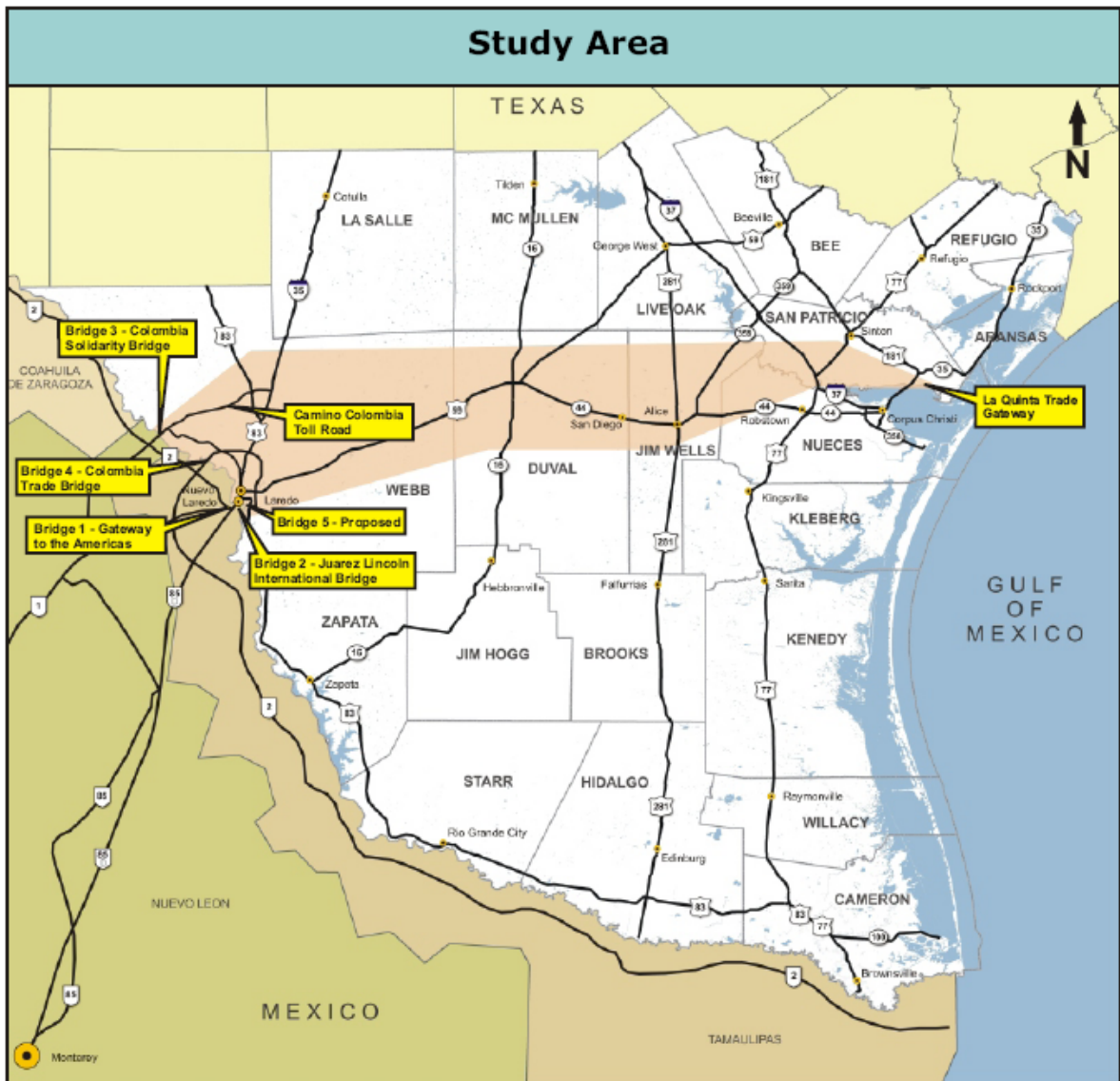
Freight flow and demand forecasts were developed using trade flow forecast databases, existing traffic, and other sources. The study's traffic and toll revenue analyses were used to prepare traditional and non-traditional financing options, including bonding scenarios and private sector development.

A TOT facility is an innovative and relatively untried concept that is being studied nationally as well as in Texas. Tolls or other forms of user revenue would be needed to potentially fund some or all of the costs associated with this type of facility. The roadway could offer certain benefits to the movers of freight, such as increased speed limits, higher weight limits, expedited custom and other processing, and enhanced Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS). There could also be benefits to communities, such as enhanced safety and economic development opportunities. If this analysis determines a truck-only facility is feasible, then either TxDOT or possibly a private company could develop and operate the roadway. In either case, the required process for roadway development would provide opportunities for additional public participation and comment as the development process continues.

The recent Comprehensive Development Agreement (CDA) with Zachry ACS for I-69/TTC-69 includes the possible development of this TOT route. In the CDA proposal, the developer is considering a freight shuttle connecting the ports of Laredo and Corpus Christi.

Figure 3

Port to Port Study Area Map



Freight Rail Studies

El Paso District

Presidio and Brewster Counties

South Orient Rail Line Rehabilitation

The South Orient Rail Line, as one of only seven rail gateways between the United States and Mexico, has the potential to relieve some of the congestion at other border crossings through the diversion of rail traffic to the gateway at Presidio/Ojinaga. However, the bridge at Presidio was destroyed by a fire on February 29, 2008 and has not been replaced. This line is currently maintained and operated by Texas Pacific Transportation, Ltd.

El Paso County

El Paso Rail Relocation

Congestion and safety issues have created such significant problems between El Paso and Ciudad Juarez that authorities in Ciudad Juarez have limited train operations across the border to the hours between midnight and 6:00 a.m. As one of only seven rail gateways in Texas, this has become a serious problem for the railroads trying to increase the shipment of goods through this port of entry. Projects being considered to alleviate this problem include building a new rail port of entry approximately ten miles west of El Paso in the area of Santa Teresa, New Mexico, or creating a depressed rail channel similar to the Alameda Corridor in Los Angeles. Both of these would allow freight and vehicular traffic to move freely over a 24 hour period and would avoid at-grade crossings with roadways that generate congestion and safety issues. SAFETEA-LU included a \$14 million Congressional earmark to New Mexico that was intended to pursue the relocation of existing rail facilities in El Paso to New Mexico. The earmark was recently re-written to enable the State of New Mexico to fund roadway improvements leading to the new refueling facilities that will be built by Union Pacific Railroad in Strauss, New Mexico. The use of the earmark funds is being overseen by the New Mexico Department of Transportation.

Laredo District**Regional Freight Study**

TxDOT is planning a regional freight study which will include both Laredo and Pharr districts. These studies have been completed in other areas of the state and include an analysis of the existing highway and rail freight networks. Bottlenecks will be identified and possible solutions presented with their costs and public and private benefits.

Webb County**Camino Colombia Toll Road**

TxDOT has finalized a study determining the feasibility of a rail connection from the Colombia International Crossing to the existing Union Pacific Railroad main track that parallels I-35. This rail connection would be located within and adjacent to the Camino Colombia Toll Road right of way. Such a connection would provide an alternate rail corridor for goods movement with Mexico, and ease rail congestion within the city of Laredo. The findings of the study are being coordinated with the Webb County Rural Rail District. Webb County has submitted a Presidential permit for the Colombia Rail Bridge to Washington, D.C. for approval. The permit is currently under review by resource agencies.

Pharr District**Regional Freight Study**

TxDOT is planning a regional freight study which will include both the Laredo and Pharr districts. These studies have been completed in other areas of the state and include an analysis of the existing highway and rail freight networks. Bottlenecks will be identified and possible solutions presented with their costs and public and private benefits.

Cameron County**West Rail Relocation**

Cameron County continues to work on the "West Rail Project," which consists of constructing a new rail line from the US 77/83 Expressway north of Brownsville to the Rio Grande River including a new international railroad bridge over the Rio Grande River. This would complete a rail loop around the city of Brownsville from the Port of Brownsville

east of the city to the new international crossing west of the city. An agreement between Cameron County and Tamaulipas, Mexico is currently being finalized and the necessary diplomatic notes are expected soon. The county is also finalizing their agreement with UP. Project funding for the \$23 million project includes \$6,635,600 in federal participation provided through Federal Demonstration funds as well as High Priority funds included in SAFETEA-LU. Construction of the international bridge facility is currently scheduled to begin in April 2009. The West Rail Relocation Project would provide significant safety benefits by removing the rail system from the residential areas and downtown streets of Brownsville and Matamoros, eliminating 14 existing highway-rail grade crossings in Brownsville, and six highway-rail grade crossings in Matamoros. In addition, freight train transit time from Brownsville to Monterrey, Mexico would be cut by approximately two-and-one-half hours, congestion would be reduced, and a new highway corridor would be available for development in the city of Brownsville.

Harlingen Railroad Relocation Project

The city of Harlingen, in conjunction with Cameron County and the Cameron County Regional Mobility Authority, is currently developing a railroad plan for the Harlingen-San Benito area in northern Cameron County. The project relocates the existing and operating freight rail lines away from incorporated and unincorporated areas of Cameron County, in particular in and around Harlingen. An effective relocation of the existing freight rail facility will not only improve freight rail operations to and from the U.S./Mexico border, but may aid in the enhancement of air quality for the area, improve the safety of the traveling public with regard to the freight rail/passenger interface, improve the response time of emergency vehicles, minimize if not eliminate the transport of hazardous material via freight rail through towns, improve traffic congestion and ultimately enhance the economic development of the region. Initial estimates to construct seven overpasses at major highway-rail intersections range from \$36 million to \$40 million. Construction of these overpasses would significantly reduce the number of vehicles crossing railroad lines. Two basic alignments are being studied for bypassing the cities of Harlingen and San Benito. The first alternative involves reconstructing the former Southern Pacific line, the "Brownsville Branch", from the Olmito Yard in Brownsville, northward. The project would cost between \$14.3 million and \$56.1 million, depending upon the routing of the bypass, and would eliminate between 52 and 83 highway-rail grade crossings. The second alternative would use portions of UP "Brownsville Subdivision", coupled with portions of the first alternative, and would

bypass San Benito, Harlingen, Rio Hondo, and Los Fresnos. The initial estimates of project costs range from \$52.1 million to \$53.6 million, and this alignment eliminates 87 highway-rail grade crossings. The city of Harlingen continues to oversee the development of the Harlingen Railroad Relocation Plan, as well as the funding and associated environmental issues. A time table for design and construction has yet to be determined. The Harlingen Railroad Relocation project received \$9.48 million in appropriations through Federal Demonstration funds and SAFETEA-LU.

Hidalgo County

McAllen Intermodal Project

Local entities (McAllen Economic Development Corporation and the city of McAllen) in south Texas have supported a project to construct a Regional Multimodal Center in McAllen within its foreign trade zone. The overall project involves a truck-to-rail transfer facility, with necessary access to the local road system and the construction of approximately 16,000 feet of railroad track. Cost for the facility is estimated at \$14 million. A total of \$1.6 million in federal funding through SAFETEA-LU was provided to assist with access to the local road system. Construction is expected to begin in late 2009.

Coordinated Border Infrastructure (CBI) Program

SAFETEA-LU was signed by President George W. Bush on August 10, 2005. Funding for this program is intended to facilitate and expedite cross-border motor vehicle and cargo movements. Border crossing infrastructure, highway and safety enforcement facilities, electronic data exchange, and international coordination of transportation planning qualify for this program.

In October 2005, TxDOT convened a working group made up of representatives from the TxDOT district offices and metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) within 100 miles of the Texas-Mexico border. This working group came to the consensus that the CBI funds should be used within 50 miles of border crossings and that funds should be distributed using the same criteria and formulas used by the FHWA.

The commission allocated \$200 million to the three border districts in March 2006. The amounts allocated per district are:

- El Paso District \$53,575,843
- Laredo District \$81,867,221
- Pharr District \$64,556,936

Because most of the border crossings are within metropolitan planning area boundaries, the districts are coordinating project selection with the MPOs. The following projects have been identified for each district.

Table 4 - El Paso District CBI Projects

Highway No.	Estimated Cost	CBI Funding	Project Description
Loop 375	\$47,000,000	\$25,000,000	Construct mainlanes and interchanges from Dyer Street to Gateway South
Various	\$3,601,901	\$3,601,901	Equip 30 commercial vehicles with GPS, real time communication and clean fuel technologies
New location	\$32,730,958	\$17,233,091	Construct two-lane undivided roadway with grade separated overpass from Fabens Port of Entry to I-10
Various	\$200,000	\$200,000	Construct new dedicated exit gate for FAST traffic from the Bridge of the Americas to Delta Street
Totals	\$83,532,859	\$46,034,992	

Table 5 - Laredo District CBI Projects

Highway No.	Estimated Cost	CBI Funding	Project Description
US 57 (awarded)	\$1,198,710	\$1,198,710	Widen roadway northeast of FM 481 to provide passing lanes (Super 2)
US 57 (awarded)	\$2,289,400	\$2,289,400	Widen roadway northeast of FM 481 to Maverick / Zavala County Line to provide passing lanes (Super 2)
US 57 (awarded)	\$3,651,338	\$3,651,338	Widen roadway from the Maverick/Zavala County Line to US 83 to provide passing lanes (Super 2)
Port of Entry	\$4,500,000	\$4,500,000	Upgrade Eagle Pass International Bridge II
Relief Route	\$2,750,000	\$2,750,000	Construct relief route from Qualia Drive to Spur 239 and Alderete Lane
New location	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	Construct two-lane undivided roadway from Del Rio-Ciudad Acuna International Bridge to Industrial Park
New location	\$30,151,200	\$19,000,000	Construct new location four-lane divided roadway from 2.6 miles south of SH 359 to 1.0 mile south of SH 359
New location	\$7,173,616	\$7,173,616	Construct new location four-lane divided roadway from 1.0 mile south of SH 359 to SH 359
Port of Entry	\$2,320,000	\$2,900,000	Replace toll booth gates and ITS at Del Rio-Ciudad Acuna International Bridge
BSIF	\$4,041,400	\$4,041,400	Construct seven federal inspection booths at the World Trade Bridge
Various	\$19,000,000	\$19,000,000	Reconstruct truck routes and streets in various industrial parks
Totals	\$80,075,664	\$69,504,464	

Table 6 - Pharr District CBI Projects

Highway No.	Estimated Cost	CBI Funding	Project Description
US 83 (awarded)	\$2,824,182	\$2,824,182	Convert US 83 and Garcia Street in Roma to one-way parallel streets from FM 650 to Gonzales Avenue
US 83 (awarded)	\$2,874,675	\$2,874,675	Convert US 83 and Garcia Street in Roma to one-way parallel streets from Gonzales Avenue to US 83
US 281	\$13,000,000	\$3,926,424	Construct a four-lane divided roadway from Spur 600 to FM 907
US 281	\$20,500,000	\$7,000,000	Widen to a four-lane divided roadway from FM 1479 to FM 509
Spur 241 (awarded)	\$1,576,138	\$1,300,000	Widen to a six-lane divided roadway from Spur 115 to the McAllen-Hidalgo-Reynosa Bridge
FM 511 (awarded)	\$32,444,671	\$10,386,936	Widen to a four-lane divided roadway from US 77/83 to FM 3248
Port of Entry	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	Construct concrete perimeter road at the Progreso International Bridge
Port of Entry	\$15,500,000	\$5,000,000	Make improvements at the McAllen-Hidalgo-Reynosa Bridge
BSIF (awarded)	\$320,000	\$320,000	Construct parking lot at the Free Trade Bridge in Los Indios
BSIF	\$9,550,000	\$6,250,000	Make improvements to the Veterans International Bridge at Los Tomates
FM 755	\$4,300,000	\$1,900,000	Re-align roadway at US 83 North
FM 1015 (awarded)	\$6,032,343	\$2,400,000	Widen to a four-lane divided roadway from floodway south to US 281 (Military Highway)
Spur 115 (awarded)	\$14,157,927	\$10,694,663	Widen to a six-lane divided roadway from FM 1016 to Spur 241
FM 396 / Anzalduas Road (New location) (awarded)	\$24,680,056	\$8,680,056	Extend FM 396/Anzalduas Road from FM 1016 north to Bryan Road and construct new four-lane divided facility and overpass at FM 1016 and Rio Valley Railroad
Totals	\$148,759,992	\$64,556,936	

Border Safety Inspection Facility Program

Border Safety Inspection Facility (BSIF) Sites

The BSIF Program consists of temporary and permanent facilities at each of the eight locations noted below. TxDOT constructed temporary facilities to inspect and weigh commercial vehicles while permanent facilities are being developed and constructed. Each permanent BSIF, using ITS, will provide an efficient method of inspecting and weighing commercial vehicles entering the United States at the Texas-Mexico border. All eight permanent facilities are tentatively scheduled to be completed by the middle of 2012. The following sites are included in the BSIF Program:

Bridge of the Americas, El Paso
Ysleta-Zaragoza Bridge, Ysleta
Camino Real International Bridge, Eagle Pass
Laredo-Colombia Solidarity Bridge, Laredo
World Trade Bridge, Laredo
Pharr-Reynosa International Bridge on the Rise, Pharr
Free Trade Bridge, Los Indios
Veterans International Bridge at Los Tomates, Brownsville

Status of Temporary Border Safety Inspection Facilities

Temporary border safety inspection facilities are complete and operational at six of the eight locations. Two of the eight locations, Bridge of the Americas and Ysleta-Zaragoza Bridge, both in El Paso, now have permanent facilities. Therefore, the temporary facilities there have been removed.

Status of Permanent Border Safety Inspection Facilities

Bridge of the Americas, El Paso

The construction project was awarded in August 2004. Facility construction began November 2004 and was completed in early 2007 with the exception of the ITS which was bid separately. The Department of Public Safety (DPS) occupied and opened the facility to truck traffic in December 2006 with limited ITS deployment. Phase I of the ITS is complete and Phase II is currently under construction.

Ysleta-Zaragoza Bridge, Ysleta

The construction project was awarded in August 2005. Facility construction began January 2006 and was completed in September 2007 with the exception of the ITS which was bid separately. DPS occupied and opened the facility to truck traffic in September 2007 with limited ITS deployment. ITS are currently under construction.

Camino Real International Bridge, Eagle Pass

FHWA approved the Environmental Assessment (EA) as satisfactory for further processing in February 2007. Due to the funding shortfall, project award has been delayed until December 2010 and facility construction is now estimated to be complete by May 2012.

Laredo-Colombia Solidarity Bridge, Laredo

A state environmental Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was approved by FHWA. The Laredo District is now seeking federal funding for the project. Due to the change in funding source, the environmental process has been re-initiated through FHWA. Due to the funding shortfall, project award has been delayed until August 2009. Construction duration is anticipated to take 15 months. The city of Laredo has issued a resolution agreeing with the location of the BSIF.

World Trade Bridge, Laredo

As a result of changes to the project and the decision to proceed as a federally funded project, a new site selection process was started. Due to rapid development in the surrounding area, additional alternatives were developed. The Build Alternative has been selected and work is on-going. Due to TxDOT's funding shortfall, the project award and facility construction are tentatively scheduled for January 2011. Construction duration is estimated at 15 months.

Pharr-Reynosa International Bridge on the Rise, Pharr

As a result of the public hearing, a new conceptual alternative was developed and documented. The preferred alternative was endorsed by local entities, property owners, and the public. A complete set of construction drawings are tentatively expected in February 2009.

Free Trade Bridge, Los Indios

As a result of the public hearing, a new conceptual alternative was developed and documented. The preferred alternative was endorsed by local entities, property owners, and the public. A complete set of construction drawings are tentatively expected in February 2010.

Veterans International Bridge at Los Tomates, Brownsville

As a result of the public hearing, a new conceptual alternative was developed and documented. The preferred alternative was endorsed by the local entities, property owners, and the public. A complete set of construction drawings are tentatively expected in February 2009.

Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) at Border Stations

TxDOT and DPS are working together to develop eight border safety inspection facilities along the border. TxDOT is assisting in the design and implementation of basic ITS components and systems for these sites, which includes the integration of ITS capabilities with weigh-in-motion equipment, support vehicle transponders, the Free and Secure Trade (FAST) program and the ability to provide basic traffic management systems to direct commercial vehicles through the border safety inspection facilities. The first border safety inspection facility is currently installed and is undergoing system testing at the Bridge of the Americas in El Paso.

ITS have been implemented in both the El Paso and Laredo urban areas. The system consists of a network of road sensors, high-tech dynamic message signs, computers, and cameras designed for freeway and incident management in these cities. This allows TxDOT and local jurisdictions to monitor and detect congestion and traffic incidents and alert motorists. It also allows motorists to divert to alternative routes where possible and allows these obstructions to be cleared faster. Although not directly related to cross-border transportation, these systems are used to alert motorists of delays and other border-related issues that may be occurring at border crossings and can also support border-related commercial vehicle operations.

La Entrada al Pacifico Corridor Feasibility Study

The La Entrada al Pacifico (La Entrada) Corridor Feasibility Study will include analyzing the feasibility of improving the La Entrada Corridor (Figure 4). Some of the issues to be considered include determining the effects of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) on projected traffic demand along the corridor. The effects of port improvements along the Mexican Pacific coast will also be analyzed to determine the impacts for the corridor. The feasibility analysis will evaluate both existing and planned infrastructure in northwestern Mexico.

The alternatives to be studied include, but are not limited to, the following:

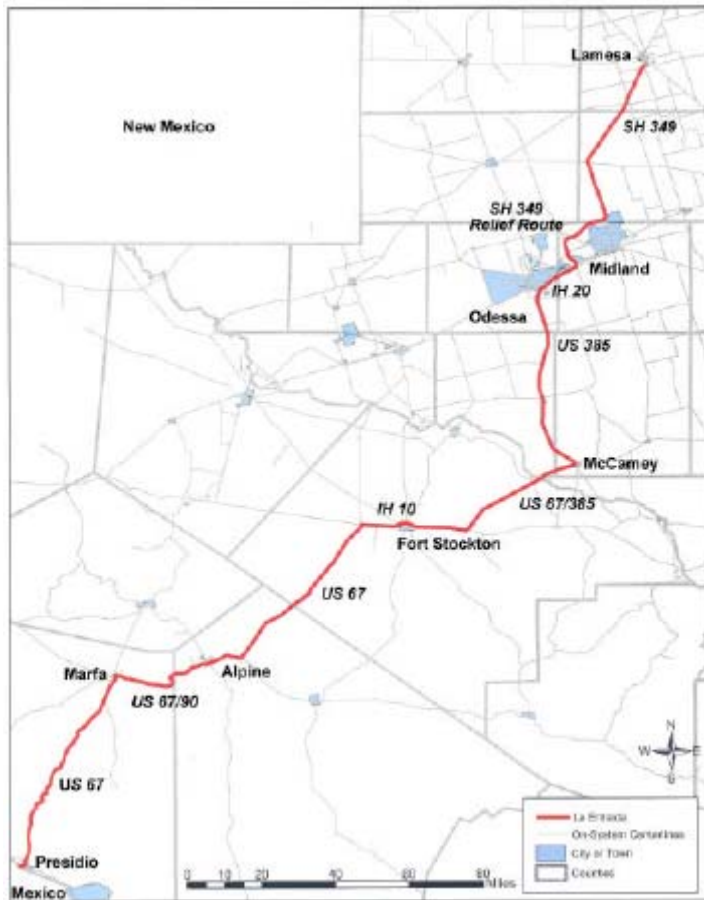
- La Entrada Corridor - widening from two- to four-lane capacity.
- Corridor Enhancements - to include targeted improvements to the corridor, such as shoulder widening, upgrades to standards, partial realignments, relief routes, etc.

The outcome of the study will be a determination of feasibility for the corridor and a listing of priority improvements that will facilitate trade between Mexico and the Midland/Odessa area of Texas.

Status

HDR Engineering, Inc. was selected to perform the feasibility study. Preliminary alternatives have been selected and presented to the public. The study will be complete by Fall 2009.

Figure 4 – La Entrada al Pacifico Corridor



General Aviation Capital Improvements

Listed below are general aviation improvement projects for local airports along the border. The projects listed are those projects which are expanding the current capacity of the airport.

El Paso District

Table 7 – El Paso District General Aviation Projects

County	Airport	Scheduled Completion Date	Estimated Cost	Project Description
Brewster	Alpine-Casparis Municipal	Construction contract executed. No estimated completion date.	\$135,000	Construct hangar access taxiway
Presidio	Marfa Municipal	Design complete. Construction pending Commission approval.	\$425,000	Construct hangar access taxiway

Laredo District

Table 8 – Laredo District General Aviation Projects

County	Airport	Scheduled Completion Date	Estimated Cost	Project Description
Val Verde	Del Rio International	Project approved by the Commission. No estimated completion date.	\$375,000	Construct hangar and hangar apron

Pharr District

Table 9 – Pharr District General Aviation Projects

County	Airport	Scheduled Completion Date	Estimated Cost	Project Description
Brooks	Brooks County	Project under construction. Estimated completion end of calendar year 2008.	\$3,630,400	Extend runway and construct partial parallel taxiway
Cameron	Port Isabel – Cameron County	Project has not been taken to the Commission for approval. No estimated completion date.	\$400,000	Construct hangar
Hidalgo	Edinburg International	Project approved by the Commission. No estimated completion date.	\$1,150,000	Construct cargo apron

Public Transportation Regional Coordinated Planning

TxDOT's Public Transportation Division contracts with entities in each of the state's planning regions including five that border with Mexico to oversee the development and implementation of regional coordinated public transportation plans. Although border-regions acknowledge that large numbers of people cross the U.S.-Mexico border for many reasons, these regions do not specifically address international trade in their coordinated regional plans. However, they often note in these plans that the funding mechanisms for public transportation, typically through local option sales tax and/or grants based on U.S. Census population, tend to overlook the impact of cross-border visitors on the local public transportation systems. Regions do involve Texas workforce agencies in their planning process, but do not specifically address international trade.

Each region completed a regional plan in 2006. Planning continues on some projects while implementation has begun on others. These regional plans were developed to eliminate waste in the provision of public transportation services, generate efficiencies that will permit increased levels of service and further the area's efforts to reduce air pollution. These plans were mandated by the Texas Legislature in Transportation Code, Chapter 461, and by the United States Congress in SAFETEA-LU. For certain project categories, SAFETEA-LU specifically requires plans to address the coordination of human services and public transportation services.