



Ports-to-Plains
Corridor Feasibility Study (HB 1079)
Segment 2 Committee
Meeting #1 Summary

November 18, 2019, 8:00 a.m.

Hotel Settles
200 East Third Street
Big Spring, Texas

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Attendees

Segment Committee Member	Organization	Attendance
Guy Andrews	Economic Development Director, City of San Angelo	Present
Mayor George Arispe	City of Eldorado	Not Present
Mayor John Baker	City of Tahoka	Present
James Beauchamp	President, MOTRAN Alliance, Inc.	Present
Brad Bouma	President, Select Milk	Not Present
Judge Mike Braddock	Lynn County	Present
Judge Charlie Bradley	Schleicher County	Not Present
Bobby Burns	President and CEO, Midland Chamber of Commerce	Not Present
Kasey Coker	Executive Director, The High Ground of Texas	Present
Judge Bryan Cox	Martin County	Not Present
Judge Steve Floyd	Tom Green County Designee: Commissioner	Designee Present: Rick Bacon
Donna Garrett	Executive Director, Sonora Chamber of Commerce	Not Present
Mayor Brenda Gunter	San Angelo	Present
Judge Kim Halfmann	Glasscock County	Not Present
Judge Debi Hays	Ector County	Not Present
Major Hofheins	Director, San Angelo Metropolitan Planning Organization	Present
Judge Deborah Horwood	Sterling County	Not Present

Mayor Lane Horwood	City of Sterling City	Not Present
Judge Terry Johnson	Midland County	Not Present
H. David Jones	Director, Lubbock Metropolitan Planning Organization	Present
Emma Krabill	President, Scenic Mountain Medical Center	Present
Eddie McBride	President and CEO, Lubbock Chamber of Commerce	Present
Gloria McDonald	City Commissioner, City of Big Spring Designee: Big Spring Economic Development Corporation	Designee Present: Terry Wegman
Karen Mize	President, Lamesa Area Chamber of Commerce	Present
Mayor Jerry Morales	City of Midland	Not Present
Judge Foy O'Brien	Dawson County	Present
John Osborne	Chairman, Ports-to-Plains Alliance Designee: Vice President of Membership and Marketing	Designee Present: Duffy Hinkle
Judge Curtis Parrish	Lubbock County	Present
Bruce Partain	President and CEO, San Angelo Chamber of Commerce	Not Present
Tim Pierce	Executive Director, South Plains Association of Governments	Present
Mayor Dan Pope, Ports-to-Plains Advisory Committee Chair	City of Lubbock	Present
Stephen Robertson	Executive Vice President, Permian Basin Petroleum Association Designee: Community Relations Coordinator	Designee Present: Julie Green
Mayor Wanda Shurley	City of Sonora Designee: City Manager	Designee Present: Arturo Fuentes

Judge Stephen H. Smith, Ports-to-Plains Advisory Committee Vice-Chair	Sutton County	Present
Judge Hal Spain	Coke County	Not Present
Mayor Josh Stevens	City of Lamesa	Present
John Austin Stokes	Executive Director, Concho Valley Council of Governments	Not Present
Mayor Shannon Thomason	City of Big Spring Designee: Assistant City Manager	Designee Present: John Medina
Fred Thompson	Director, Sterling City Economic Development Corporation	Present
Mayor David Turner	City of Odessa Designee: Assistant City Manager	Not Present
Debbye ValVerde	Executive Director, Big Spring Area Chamber of Commerce	Present
Steve Verett	Executive Vice President, Plains Cotton Growers, Inc. Designee: Director of Policy Analysis and Research	Designee Present: Shawn Wade
Cameron Walker	Director, Permian Basin Metropolitan Planning Organization	Designee Present: John B. Love III
Judge Kathryn Wiseman	Howard County	Present
Dana Moore	Texas Trucking Association	Not Present

Elected Officials

Kel Seliger	Texas Senate	Chandra Eggemeyer	Representing Governor Greg Abbott
Ben Watson	Texas Senate	Mary Owen	Representing US Senator Ted Cruz
Jim Depauw	City of Big Spring		
Oscar Garcia	Howard County		
John B. Love III	City of Midland		
Terry McDaniel	City of Big Spring		

Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT)

Caroline Mays	Loretta Brown
Brian Barth	Blake Calvert
Roger Beall	Emily Clisby

John DeWitt
Michael Haithcock
Cliff Hallford
Krista Jeacopello
Carl Johnson
Mark Jones
Steve Linhart

Gene Powell
Roberto Rodriguez
Randee Shields
John Speed
Akila Thamizharasan
Steve Warren
Neil Welch

Consultant Team

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

Other Attendees

Karen Alexander	-
Ron Alton	TPWD
Jarrett Atkinson	City of Lubbock
Chuck Bagwell	Al's BBQ
Carol Becker	-
Lawrence Becker	-
Joan Beil	Citizen
Virginia Beleur	Permian Basin Regional Planning Committee
Raul Benavides	Big Spring EDC
Stormy Bradley	Bulldog Steel
Linda Burchett	Double LBBQ
Deanna Burnett	-
Tabitha Clark	Citizen
Sean Cudnoski	Kimley-Horn
Teresa Darden	Big Spring EDC
Kelley Daria	SPAG
Juan Delgado	Senator Kel Seliger
Scott Emerson	Big Spring Issues
Erik Escamilla	Self
Malinda Fleincken	Citizen
Jan Foresyth	Big Spring Community Foundation
Rafael Gallego	Public
Jonathan Greer	Self
Angela Grimsley	SMMC
Jan Hansen	Citizen
Terry Hansen	Howard College
Greg Henry	Big Spring Area Community Foundation
Linda Henry	Citizen

Hayley Herrera	City of Big Spring
Carolyn Horvatick	Citizen
Carl Johansen	Self
Terri Johansen	Citizen
Randy Johnson	Forsan ISD
Jane Jones	-
Wally Jones	Reece Albert Inc.
Brian Klinksiek	Howard County
Dee Lindsey	Citizen
James Little	City of Big Spring
Larry McLennan	Big Spring
Mitchell Mitchell	Public
Veronica Modisette	BSISD Bus Barn
Diana Newton	Citizen
Paschal Odon	City of Big Spring
Kim Parrish	Chamber Big Spring Leadership
PJ Porter	Landowner
Rene Rivera	Reece Albert Inc.
Elinor Rodriguez	Public
Irene Rodriguez	Public
Fabian Serrano	Howard College
Kelli Settles	Public
Dorothy Sheppard	-
Gene Sheppard	Citizen
Shirley Shroyer	TRTA
Pat Simmons	KBSB
Peggy Skiles	KBSB
Steve Smith	Howard College
Cheryl Sparks	Howard College
Mike Stratton	Tubb Quarry
Peter Wassdorf	Hance Scarborough

Welcome

Roger Beall, Texas Department of Transportation's (TxDOT) Deputy Director of Transportation Planning and Programming Division welcomed the attendees to the Segment 2 Committee Meeting. He commented it was a great turn out, and applauded members for attending. He explained this was a participatory committee, and the opinions and thoughts of members was important. He encouraged lots of interaction, and asked members to say their name before proceeding with their comments so their comments can be documented properly. He said he was looking forward to a productive meeting, and then introduced Caroline Mays, TxDOT Director of Freight, Trade and Connectivity.

Caroline Mays welcomed members and said how excited she was to be there. She explained the Segment 3 Committee had met two weeks ago in Del Rio, and Segment 1 would meet on Thursday in Amarillo. She told members it was going to be a full day and looked forward to active participation.

Meeting logistics (coffee/tea, etc.) were discussed as well as Mentimeter information and handout packets. She then introduced the Chair of the Advisory Committee and Mayor of Lubbock, Dan Pope.

Mayor Pope thanked Ms. Mays and TxDOT for pulling the meeting together. He said it was wonderful to be in Big Spring, and although Brint Ryan was not in attendance, he was part of the board, and it was his hard work and love of this community that went into this hotel. He said he was thankful to be at Hotel Settles. Two weeks ago, the Segment 3 Committee met in Del Rio, and on Thursday, the Segment 1 Committee would be in Amarillo. He stated he was excited to see what the support was like for House Bill (H.B.) 1079 in south Texas; he was blown away by the support at Segment 3 Committee meeting. He said there was a great turnout and folks from Laredo were present. Mayor Pope explained for the past twenty-one years, Ports-to-Plains has been predominately centralized in central Texas to the Panhandle, so to have the support of south Texas is very positive. He said there is a lot of work to be done and their job is to study and make the case for a north-south interstate that connects? the vast area from I-35 to I-25 including all of west Texas, eastern New Mexico, and a good part of central Texas. It is critical to build a case not just for Texas today, but for Texas in 2045-2050, when there are 50 million people. He said not everyone could live in Houston, Dallas, San Antonio, or Austin. West Texas is a gateway to the west and Midwest and the interstate is needed for safety and mobility. It's very important to build this case. Mayor Pope then introduced Senator Kel Seliger, and said he represents this part of the world.

Texas State Senator Kel Seliger said he was happy to be here. He said he was on the board of directors of Ports-To-Plains. He said we talk about feasibility, and of course it's feasible. Its advantageous, and it's something we need to look to get done. When matters like the I-35 corridor need to be done, they get done at very great expense. He said this is going to make a huge difference in this part of the state and appreciates the opportunity to be at the meeting and representing this community is a real privilege in the state of Texas.

John Medina, Assistant City Manager of Big Spring, commented about the very nice facility, Hotel Settles. Brint Ryan, with cooperative help from the City, County, and pledged money from Mr. Ryan, led to this great facility. He noted there is a lot of development going on in downtown Big Spring. Prior to Hotel Settles being constructed, it was a dying downtown. Mr. Ryan and the City has addressed. Now it's been addressed, and a thriving community can be seen. He told members to visit the stores, restaurants, and night life. If you haven't been here, get the word out, you'll probably love it. He said there have been a lot of cooperative partnerships in Big Spring. There are a few to mention. First off is the landfill that's about a year from opening. The County helped fund the landfill and made it self-sustaining, so future generations won't have to worry. Next he mentioned EMS with the County. They help with roads, work with the county, and the more folks are participating in studies, such as Ports-to-Plains, the better. He said during the October 1, 2019 Advisory Committee meeting, there were goals in mind for safety, better routes, and economics that will come with it. Everyone was striving toward the same goal. Every community in the area will benefit. Although the study will occur in a short time, we hope to get it done before the next legislative session in Austin. It's been ongoing, and he thanked Ports-To-Plains, TxDOT, and the EDC.

Mr. Medina said an example of this cooperative effort was the reliever route around Big Spring. It took five districts to fund the reliever route, and they never thought they'd see it in their lifetime, but they did. Lastly, he recognized Bill and Joyce Crooker for their continuous work in the community.

At this time, the Segment 2 Committee Members introduced themselves along with TxDOT staff and the consultant staff.

Overview of Study

Blake Calvert started the discussion by giving an overview of H.B. 1079. He started by saying November 7, 2000 was the last deathless day on Texas roadways. Everyday, someone's mother, father, daughter or son gets killed on Texas roads. He reminded everyone whenever we get in cars, buckle up and slow down. Thanksgiving is just around the corner – make sure we buckle up and drive safe, and make sure your family members do too.

He continued the presentation 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 between Lubbock and San Angelo and 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 (MPO), 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.

James Beauchamp, MOTRAN Alliance, stated this study is defined by the legislation to be looked at, but won't really have a NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) compliant feasibility study, where you looked at all those options. So, at the end of the day, when the study is complete, if it's not NEPA compliant, so what are we trying to accomplish.

Mr. Calvert responded by the end of the study, there should be recommendations and priorities. The study can be used as a roadmap when talking to the Texas Transportation Commission and Legislators. As far as NEPA compliance, he deferred to Ms. Mays.

Mr. Medina commented there is some idea of what this is going to cost, at least an assessment, so information is in TxDOT's back pocket.

Ms. Mays commented this is a feasibility study, and it will not get to the NEPA level. We are studying the corridor to determine the feasibility of a four-lane divided highway and where an interstate is feasible along the corridor. Those are the items need to be looked at first.

Mr. Beauchamp said this wouldn't be something to take to Washington without a NEPA review to get interstate designation.

Ms. Mays responded we needed to get back to the discussion. Once we get to the information will be presented and discussed later in the day, we could address it then. Let's look at four-lane and interstate discussion first before having this discussion.

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 determining 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 to 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. She noted at the meeting in Del Rio, much of the discussion was about cross border trade, and Mexicans from the City of Acuna traveled to the meeting, and even requested for the information to be presented to them as well due to the effect the corridor will have on them.

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

There were 26 responses. The number of responses is in parentheses. They are summarized as: economic development (19), freight movement (18), safety and mobility (18), traffic congestion (15), interstate designation (13), energy products (9), funding sources (6), existing infrastructure (4), private property (2), and project costs (1).

Ms. Mays asked if there were any further comments from those who answered economic development.

Eddie McBride, Lubbock Chamber of Commerce, said jobs.

Ms. Mays asked for any comments on safety or movement.

Howard County Judge Kathryn Wiseman said there were lots of fatalities on I-20, and she was very concerned about it.

San Angelo Mayor Brenda Gunter said the corridor was important for movement of food, fuel, and fiber.

Tahoka Mayor John Baker commented oil products out of the Permian Basin and to the rest of the world.

Mayor Pope commented we need to get people back and forth. He said he left Lubbock at 6 a.m. and commented to the City Manager there was a lot of traffic every day and it continues to rise. The safety piece is also critical, and the Permian Basin is at the top of our minds; every week we read about a bad wreck.

Ms. Mays commented the Committee would see this data, but TxDOT wants to hear from members.

Mayor Pope noted Commissioner Alvin New did a great job at the October 1, 2019 Advisory Committee meeting and told members by 2040-2050, it's expected there will be a half million people in Lubbock and in Amarillo.

Ms. Mays commented if you don't have access and development, you can't have the population.

Study Scope

Wendy Travis, a member of the consultant team, resumed the presentation by reviewing the study scope. She said she was excited to be at the meeting and these studies can be paramount to the future. The process starts with determining a purpose and need for the study, followed by existing conditions and needs assessment. Next will be assessing forecasted conditions. Staff will get feedback from the Segment Committee meeting on how to incorporate those findings into the report. After these are evaluated, the feasibility of a four-lane divided corridor will be studied and where the corridor may be feasible for an interstate level facility. She explained staff will be helping the Committee look at economic impacts, strategies for improvement, 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.

Study Schedule

Ms. Travis proceeded by discussing the study schedule and milestones. She explained today's meeting would be reviewing existing conditions in Segment 2. The next meeting will be in February and will cover forecasting, economic development, and planned projects within the Ports-To-Plains corridor. In April, staff will present corridor alternatives and an economic model for 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. 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. She noted a comment about NEPA came up. She explained the feasibility study documents a process that can move into the NEPA process.

For example, the purpose and need and goals can move forward once individual projects from the implementation plan move into the NEPA process.

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 2?

There were 25 responses. The number of responses is in parentheses. They are summarized as: connectivity, freight movement and congestion (8), safety and mobility (5), population growth (1), accessibility of roads and routes (3), economic development (1), emerging freight corridors feeding into I-27 (1) and funding floodplains (1).

Mayor Gunter asked if this was the same as the first question.

Ms. Mays explained this question is directed specifically at Segment 2, not the entire corridor like the first question. This question is looking for more detail.

Guy Andrews, City of San Angelo, said along US 67 to Presidio, with new freight rail coming in, and merging into San Angelo, it was an issue.

Mentimeter Question #3: What are the potential opportunities in Segment 2?

There were 26 responses. The number of responses is in parentheses. They are summarized as: economic development (12), job creation (5), safety (4), growth along the corridor (3), and energy production (1). Specific locations included: US 87 to I-20, Intersection FM 41 and US 87, and 158 to I-20 in Midland.

Mr. McBride noted post-NAFTA; it is important we fit closely into entire environment (US-Mexico-Canada Agreement).

Overall Segment Characteristics

Ms. Thamizharasan continued the discussion by explaining experts have reviewed 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 2. She noted the majority of Segment 2 does not have access control.

Mayor Pope noted we all live it to some degree. He said twice today on the way down, they saw two trucks pull out in front of them. At this time of year with cotton gins running and goods and services

being distributed, it's the perfect storm. We are used to not having access control, but it is a death wish.

Ms. Thamizharasan agreed access control was key.

Mr. Beauchamp commented access control is an issue, and John Speed from their District has had issues. He said we also need to be looking at weights and overweight permits on this road. There are going to be a lot more restrictive weights on a federal road versus our state highways. That is a huge issue if you are a cotton farmer. They may have to look at other routes.

Ms. Thamizharasan said yes, they were looking at agriculture and weights.

Mayor Pope commented the weight point was not exactly true. It's a good point to bring it up, but it would be something would be discussed in the process.

Mr. Beall noted for I-69, weights were grandfathered in and required congressional approval to allow oversize, overweight movement.

Ms. Mays said it was true they are not allowed on interstates but can use frontage roads. There are a lot of regulatory requirements for moving oversize and overweight freight.

Ms. Thamizharasan said this study was in the early stage for discussing regulations.

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 2. He explained traffic volumes in the corridor and Segment 2 vary considerably. State Highway (SH) 349 in Midland and US 87 in San Angelo have very high average daily traffic. He also discussed growth in traffic volumes, which also vary. In Segment 2, Midland, Big Spring, and Sterling City had the highest rate of growth. The largest truck volumes along the entire corridor and in Segment 2 are in Midland and Lubbock. Mr. Spayd also discussed average speeds. Most of the entire segment and Segment 2 have travel speeds of 60-70 miles per hour in rural segments and city segments have 30 mph or less.

Mentimeter Question #4: Where are the bottlenecks for traffic in Segment #2, and what is the cause?

There were 18 responses. The number of responses is in parentheses. They are summarized as: freight movement, especially with oversize and overweight loads (5), need for more lanes (3), and lack of access control and traffic through cities/downtown (3). Specific locations included: San Angelo (2), Big Spring, Sonora, Eldorado, Sutton County, US 87 at Sterling City, Lamesa, and uncontrolled access.

Judge Wiseman commented congestion is a problem from I-20 to SH 87, especially at the interchange.

Mentimeter Question #5 – What do you think will influence future traffic conditions in Segment #2?

There were 20 responses. The number of responses is in parentheses. They are summarized as: population growth (6), economic growth (5), deteriorating road conditions (5), energy production and truck traffic (4), reliever routes (3), overpass clearances (1), confluence of I-14 with I-27 (1), emerging freight corridor on US 67 from Presidio intersecting with I-27 (1), and over 40% of the area funding denoted by the Commission for energy funding (\$1.8 billion) was spent in Lubbock and San Angelo, which produces less than 2/10ths of a percent of Permian Basin production. The money needs to cover the region (1).

Mr. Spayd continued the presentation with pavement condition. Overall, both the corridor and Segment 2 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 2.

Mentimeter Question #6 – What are the key pavement and bridge needs and challenges in Segment #2?

There were 15 responses. The number of responses is in parentheses. They are summarized as: oversize/Overweight freight vehicles (5), bridge and overpass clearances (4), increased congestion (2), intersections in towns (1), improvements to I-20 (1), pavement quality and maintenance of current conditions (1), and our District Engineer knows best (1).

Safety

Mr. Spayd continued the presentation by reviewing total crashes throughout the entire corridor and in Segment 2 (data from 2014-2018). The highest rate of crashes is near cities, except for Lubbock. In Segment 2, the highest crash rates are through Midland and Big Spring. Truck crashes are higher north of Big Spring, Midland, and Glasscock County in Segment 2. Fatal crashes are highest in Lubbock and Midland. He explained contributing factors to crashes are similar in the entire corridor and within Segment 2. Speeding and failure to stop/yield are the most common reasons for crashes along the corridor. Failure to stop/yield are the most common in Segment 2.

Mentimeter Question #7 – What areas and issues contribute to safety needs and challenges in Segment #2?

There were 20 responses. The number of responses is in parentheses. They are summarized as: access control and availability of access roads (4), energy production and development (3), agriculture equipment (3), multiple lanes with limited access (1), development of relief routes (2), and the lack of development of a freeway design loop in Amarillo and Odessa, and a complete Loop in Midland by TXDOT, also need to look at CMV (commercial motor vehicle) crashes and fatalities as interstates are supposed to support freight movement (1). Specific locations include: Big Spring intersection crashes, US 87/277/Loop 306 interchange south of San Angelo, and reduced speed from 75 to 60 mph through Carlsbad.

Arturo Fuentes, City Manager of Sonora, commented when it comes to safety, he was not seeing anything about first responders being able to cover area. In southern Sutton County, they must reach out to Edwards County for help, and he said he was curious what challenges others have.

Mr. Spayd noted rural response time is critical and helps prevent additional crashes. He said the study team will be getting into those details and reliability as the study moves forward.

Mr. Fuentes noted there was an hour-long dead zone in southern Sutton County. A car could be turned over, and there would be a very long response time.

Judge Wiseman said Judge Kim Hoffman of Glasscock County could not make the meeting but wanted to state her objections of the leg of the corridor that goes from Midland to Sterling City. Many stop at Midland and go to I-20 due to truck crashes and fatalities. Judge Hoffman strongly wants that leg stopped.

Mayor Pope responded it's a great point to bring up, but this study is focusing on what is being prescribed by the bill. We need to study what has been identified.

Mr. Beauchamp said there is a horrible problem in Amarillo on the loop that goes around the City. There are places on the loop have higher traffic counts than I-35. That is the reason you build loops, and we're still seeing an issue where loops were not built. There's a need to look at loops if you're concerned about safety. These areas also have higher commercial vehicle issues. Trucks are having to go down city streets.

Lamesa Mayor Josh Stevens commented he would like to see more community involvement in the planning of a route to and through Lamesa. They just opened the Southern Cross south of Lamesa, and when it was proposed they strongly disagreed with it because it denied FM 2052 access to US 87. TxDOT built a connection at an angle with a stop sign and it caused a major safety issue including seven accidents, many injuries, and one death within 45 days. The community asked for the route to go back to FM 2052 without the stop sign. We are in favor of I-27, but in a community involved manner.

-BREAK-

Mayor Pope announced there would be an agenda change, and nominations of Segment 2 Chair and Vice Chair would happen next before moving on with the remainder of the presentation.

Nominations and Elections

Mayor Pope told the members Segment 3 Chair was Del Rio Mayor Lozano and Vice Chair was Webb County Judge Tijerina. He opened the floor for nominations.

Mr. McBride nominated San Angelo Mayor Gunter as Chair and Lubbock County Judge Parrish as Vice-Chair.

Lynn County Judge Mike Braddock seconded the nomination.

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

Mayor Gunter and Judge Parrish 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 2. Population growth was summarized from years 1990-2017. She explained there was substantial growth in this timeframe (29%), and in Segment 2, Midland County and Gaines County had the most growth.

Ms. McCullough continued the presentation by discussing median household income along the entire corridor and in Segment 2 from years 1990-2017. Overall, there was an increase in median household income. She pointed out in Segment 2, Martin County and Mitchell County had the highest increases in income.

Ms. McCullough then moved on to total employment along the entire corridor and in Segment 2 from years 1990-2017. Once again, total employment increased along the overall corridor and in Segment 2. In Segment 2, Midland and Gaines Counties had the largest employment growth.

Mentimeter Question #8: What factors do you think will influence population, income, and employment in Segment #2 over the next 30 years?

There were 20 responses. The number of responses is in parentheses. They are summarized as: energy sector production (8), economic development, jobs and population growth (6), improved infrastructure (2), agricultural production (2), housing shortage and expense (1), and election results (1).

Major Hofheins with the San Angelo MPO commented they were already starting to see growth due to the energy industry but also from the agriculture industry. He sees transportation as a huge issue and is looking at rail options as well. He also noted because they sit on the edge of the Permian Basin, they are also seeing a lot of chemical industries moving in and wants bypasses to be part of I-27.

Debbye ValVerde with Big Spring Area Chamber of Commerce noted we also need to be looking at schools. For the future, bus routes need to be studied for the safety of students going to and from school.

Emma Krabill with Scenic Mountain Medical Center noted access to healthcare was also something needed to be looked at as we study economic development.

Mayor Gunter commented broadband internet availability was necessary for first responders. As we look at growth, we need to have broadband internet.

Ms. McCullough agreed and commented transportation corridors often provide expansion on availability.

Freight Movement

Alex King, 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 2.

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 2, the principal points for truck freight are at Lubbock Midland/Odessa, and San Angelo. 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 2, freight coming and going is generally balanced. Midland/Odessa receives more than it ships, while Lubbock, Tom Green, and Howard Counties are busy in both directions. Mr. King 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 2 include mineral/mineral products, energy and oil field products, and other raw materials. 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 2.

Mr. King continued the freight discussion with shipping and receiving. Like the entire corridor, Segment 2 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 2 have some level of involvement in foreign trade.

Mentimeter Question #9: What are key needs and challenges for moving people and freight in Segment 2?

There were 20 responses. The number of responses is in parentheses. They are summarized as: trade opportunities (6), infrastructure, roadway design (5), traffic congestion (4), intermodal and intercity bus service (2), training and funding for first responders (1), and weight-limited truck routes (1).

Mentimeter Question #10 – what factors do you think will influence future freight movement in Segment #2?

There were 18 responses. The number of responses is in parentheses. They are summarized as: economic growth and competition (6), national politics and international trade agreements (4), congestion on I-35 and diversion of freight vehicles to I-27 (2), energy sector growth (3), and driverless vehicles (1).

Energy Sector and Agricultural Production

Mr. King continued the discussion on oil and gas production within the entire corridor and Segment 2. Most of the energy in Segment 2 is oil and gas, and accounts for some of the largest numbers along the entire corridor. The counties with the most natural gas production include Crockett, Sutton, and Upton. The largest oil production occurs in Midland, Martin, and Upton Counties. Energy/Oil field tonnage is dominated by petroleum products corridor wide and within Segment 2. For wind energy production, Sterling, Glasscock, and Lynn Counties have the largest number of wind turbines and highest capacity output in Segment 2.

After a review of the energy sector, Mr. King focused on agriculture production. The highest agricultural sales in the corridor are in the Panhandle. Top crops along the corridor include cotton, forage, wheat, corn for grain, and pecans. Livestock includes cattle, goats, and sheep. In Segment 2, cotton is the top crop by acre, and other important crops include forage and wheat. Cattle and calves are the top livestock products. Goats, sheep, and lambs are the top livestock product in some of the southern segment counties.

Mentimeter Question #11: How does energy production influence the transportation needs in Segment #2?

There were 21 responses. The number of responses is in parentheses. They are summarized as: oil and gas industry produces funding for transportation infrastructure and drives demand for improved infrastructure in the Permian Basin (6), increased demand for substantial infrastructure, i.e. higher and wider overpasses and bridges (4), roads are ill-equipped to carry quantity or weight (3), increased production, demand for transportation and freight movement (3), connecting the food and fiber centers – Amarillo, San Angelo and Lubbock – to Texas and the world is critical (1), and more chemical companies that are pipeline related are locating in San Angelo. Provide chemicals that are used in pipelines to reduce friction (1).

Mayor Pope commented on Proposition 1, the last number he saw was \$3.5 million in profits from oil/gas reserves. He said we need to make sure we get some of back and use it for something like interstate development.

Major Hofheins stated he thought some of the biggest opportunities are multi-modal freight up and down the corridor.

Mentimeter Question #12: How does agricultural production influence transportation needs in Segment #2?

There were 17 responses. The number of responses is in parentheses. They are summarized as: increased need to efficiently move products to market at lower cost (10), production requires intermodal connectivity (3), transportation must be geared to shorter route due to shorter shelf life of products (1), and size of equipment (1).

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 2. 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.

Mark Jones, TxDOT San Angelo District Engineer, asked if they had total miles for Segment 2.

Ms. Thamizharasan replied there were 419 miles.

Judge Wiseman commented in this consideration, in Howard County, there are lots of little roads with just a stop sign connect to mainlanes and asked if those were being accounted for as access points to mainlanes.

Ms. Thamizharasan replied yes they would be considered as access points.

Judge Wiseman asked, so you're talking about any little roadways and driveways?

Ms. Mays said yes, and intersections, whether it be an FM road, driveway, etc.

Ms. Thamizharasan said anything that interrupts the flow of traffic to the mainlanes is considered access point.

Videos were shown of a four-lane divided and interstate facility within the corridor.

Mayor Pope said he was interested in what people's comments are about the interstates without full access control. There are a lot of towns in west Texas that have that, and he'd like feedback.

Mayor Gunter commented everyone knows which intersections have deaths at them. We can identify those more specifically when we design them.

Judge Braddock commented as far as parts of Lubbock, Lynn, and Dawson Counties; they almost must have access roads due to farming equipment. It's more feasible to have those frontage roads as two-way.

Ms. Thamizharasan said TxDOT is leaning towards one-way frontage roads with u-turns for safety purposes on interstate highways.

John Speed, TxDOT Odessa District Engineer, said right now, they are in the process of taking two-way frontage roads and converting them to one-way, but it's happening in urban or quasi-urban areas. They will come out ahead in terms of congestion if you have one-way, and safety is a real improvement. For non-agriculture energy areas, you can't make a turn on a two-way frontage road, so one way is better with a turn under the bridge. 200-foot footprint for divided, access control is not

going to be reasonable due to the need for a wider median. You need enough room for trucks to get across the median. 70 feet or so is as little as you can get away with.

Judge Wiseman noted both frontage roads in the video example are two-way.

Mr. Beall noted those are older designs from the 1950s and 1960's. A lot was learned from that timeframe, especially in safety. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is highly resistant to two-way frontage roads.

Judge Wiseman commented in rural areas, educating people about frontage roads turning into one-way roads is difficult and a tough nut to crack.

Mr. Beall responded if you start with one-way frontage roads, you don't have to re-educate.

Major Hofheins commented the whole point of an interstate is to get from one point to another safely. If there is enough of a shoulder, it should help the agriculture community quite a bit.

Dawson County Judge Foy O'Brien commented he would like to reiterate what Judge Braddock said. He said he understands the safety issue. Along with being a judge, he is a farmer, and farms both sides of the road. If the frontage roads are one-way, he would travel 11 miles out of direction from Andrews to Lamesa one-way to turn around. He said he understands safety, but at what point is there a little give and take to help the rural community.

Mr. Speed said right now, they are only looking at converting two-ways roads near areas of population 5,000 and above.

Mr. Beall commented the FHWA is highly resistant to two-way frontage roads. He said he's not going to say they won't allow them at all, but the probability of them allowing it is very small. The challenge is getting to one part of a ranch to the other. We need to find logical places for grade separation or going over or under a facility.

Steve Warren, TxDOT Lubbock District Engineer, asked Mayor Pope if he was asking the group to weigh in on frontage roads, or one-way or two-way, or all.

Mayor Pope replied all, there are some areas we may not need frontage roads but wanted to make sure it was covered.

Mr. Warren responded that along I-27 from Lubbock to Amarillo, frontage roads are two-way, except in Lubbock and Plainview, and the primary use of those frontage roads is agriculture. The equipment is very large, and to get some of those units on bridges, it would require a much wider bridge. There are no plans to change in the near future.

Mayor Pope commented he remembered when Plainview had two-way frontage roads. They thought the conversion to one-way would kill the community. Today it's thriving.

Report Outline

Ms. Mays discussed the Segment Committee Report outline and the annotated outline of Chapter 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. She asked members to think about the messaging and how they wanted to document it.

Major Hofheins commented he was looking at the implementation plan, and asked if they were looking for something that coordinates with the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and other plans.

Ms. Mays responded yes, it must fit into the programming process at the district and state level.

Ms. Mays continued by saying the handouts give more details, but they would be back in February with the first three chapters for the Committee to review. The report will be as good as your input, but TxDOT and consultant staff will be putting in a lot of effort, too. There will be checks and balances along the way.

Mayor Pope asked how far in advance of the next meeting they will get the chapters to review.

Ms. Mays said the goal was to get the draft to the members two weeks before the meeting but may be sending it in pieces.

Mayor Gunter commented there was a lot of work to be done.

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 2 Committee Meeting and Public Meeting to be February 5, 2020 in San Angelo. The Committee Meeting would be in the morning, and the Public Meeting in the evening. Mayor Gunter said this date would work.

Ms. Mays noted the first Public Meeting was in Del Rio and was well attended. The next public meeting will be on Thursday evening in Amarillo, and she encouraged members to spread the word.

Mayor Pope reminded members of the Advisory Committee the next meeting will tentatively be on January 23, 2020 at the San Angelo City Hall.

Judge Wiseman asked the time of the meeting.

Ms. Mays said it will likely be from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

She asked for any comments from the Chair or Vice Chair.

Mayor Gunter said there was lots of work, especially with the holidays approaching, but she'll be getting everything together and ready in the next 60 days.

Judge Parrish told members if they had communities have questions or comments, please let him know.

Ms. Mays thanked everyone for coming and said to travel safe.

The meeting adjourned at 11:40 a.m.

Action Items:

Schedule the next Committee Meeting on February 5, 2020 in San Angelo.