

Ports-to-Plains Segment 1 Committee Meeting #2 Summary

February 6, 2020, 8:00 a.m.

TxDOT San Angelo District Office/WebEx*

4502 Knickerbocker Road

San Angelo, Texas

**Note: WebEx was provided to participants as an option due to inclement weather*

Attendees

Segment Committee Member	Organization	Attendance
Mayor Bob Brinkmann	City of Dumas	Not Present
Kevin Carter	President and CEO, Amarillo Economic Development Corporation	Present via WebEx
Judge Terri Beth Carter	Sherman County	Present via WebEx along with Katie Perkins
Kasey Coker	Executive Director, The High Ground of Texas	Present via WebEx
Judge Ronnie Gordon	Hartley County	Present via WebEx
Mayor Phillip Hass	City of Dalhart Designee: City Manager	Designee: James Stroud present via WebEx
Judge Ernie Houdashell	Randall County	Not Present
Kyle Ingham	Executive Director, Panhandle Regional Planning Commission	Present via WebEx
Joe Kiely	Vice-President of Operations, Ports-to-Plains Alliance	Present
Tonya Keesee	Executive Director, Plainview Chamber of Commerce	Not Present
Judge Harold Keeter	Swisher County Designee: Director, Tulia Chamber of Commerce	Present via WebEx
Gary Molberg	President and CEO, Amarillo Chamber of Commerce	Present via WebEx
Judge David B. Mull	Hale County Designee: County Commissioner	Not Present
Travis Muno	Administrator, Amarillo Metropolitan Planning Org.	Present via WebEx
Mayor Ginger Nelson Designee and Segment #1 Committee Chair: Jared Miller	City of Amarillo Designee: City Manager	Designee: Jared Miller present via WebEx
Milton Pax Segment #1 Vice-Chair	Vice Chairman, Ports-to-Plains Alliance	Present via WebEx

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

Elected Officials

Lane Carter San Angelo City Council

Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT)

Caroline Mays

Loretta Brown

Brian Crawford (WebEx)

Steve Linhart

John Speed (WebEx)

Akila Thamizharasan

Consultant Team

Wendy Travis

Garver

Audrey Koehler

WSP

Kirsten McCullough

Garver

Michael Penic

WSP

Tracy Michel

Garver

Rachel Lunceford

HG Consult

Mike Spayd

Garver

Lena Camarillo

PCI

Sean Wray

Garver

Colin McGahey

PCI

Joe Bryan

WSP

Other Attendees

Cheri Huddleston

Hance Scarborough

Duffy Hinkle

Ports-to-Plains Alliance

Welcome

Mayor Dan Pope of Lubbock thanked everyone for joining the Segment #1 meeting. He commented he had the chance to be in Laredo on Monday, which was a very productive meeting, and joined through WebEx yesterday in San Angelo. He said there was a lot of good information, and this was the first step towards getting the reports ready. He thanked TxDOT and consultant staff and Commissioner New.

Jared Miller, City Manager of Amarillo said he echoed Mayor Pope, especially his comments about Commissioner New. The previous meeting was the baseline, and now we're ready to move on to forecasted conditions.

Recap of Previous Segment Committee Meeting

Caroline Mays, TxDOT Freight, Trade and Connectivity Section Director, started the presentation by providing a recap of the first Segment Committee meeting held November 20, 2019 in Amarillo. She reviewed HB 1079, study goals, and existing conditions. She then updated members on the schedule and process.

Forecasted Conditions

Population Forecast

Kirsten McCullough of the consultant team started the presentation by explaining today's meeting would focus on forecasted conditions projected to 2050. From 2020 to 2050, the overall corridor is expected to grow by 61%. Segment #1 population growth is projected to grow by 21% with the largest growth in Randall and Dallam Counties.

Joe Kiely, Ports-to-Plains Alliance, asked if the recent cheese factory in Dalhart and meat factory in Randall County could affect the increase or decrease of population.

Ms. McCullough responded yes, absolutely.

Judge Wesley Ritchey of Dallam County said Dallam County has had a large increase in population due to the new meat packing plant.

Ms. McCullough continued the presentation by discussing median household income. Overall corridor median household income is projected to grow by 161%. In Segment #1, it's projected to grow by 186%, with Hartley and Palmer Counties having the highest projected growth. Overall corridor employment is projected to grow by 17% while Segment #1 employment is projected to grow by 8% with most being in Randall and Oldham Counties. Corridor employment by industry is projected to be government and trade, transportation and utilities. Segment #1 forecasted employment by industry is projected to be government, trade, transportation and utilities, manufacturing, natural resources and mining, professional, and construction. Corridor domestic product is expected to grow by 69% while Segment #1 is projected to grow by 47% with the highest growth in Randall and Carson Counties.

Ms. McCullough ended the discussion with land use in the corridor and in Segment #1. Along the corridor, 76% of the land is considered developable while 81% is developable in Segment #1.

Mentimeter Question #1: What factors do you think are influencing future population, economic, and land use conditions?

There were 11 responses. The number of responses is in parentheses. They are summarized as: agriculture (6), manufacturing and distribution growth (4), energy production, i.e. renewable and petroleum based (3), and economic diversification (1).

Mr. Miller commented what we're doing here with the interstate is going to have almost as much impact on future population and economic growth as everything else combined.

Mentimeter Question #2: Do you envision the local population, economy, and land use changing if improvements are made to the Ports-to-Plains Corridor? If so, where?

There were 10 responses. The number of responses is in parentheses. They are summarized as: yes, more economic development in the region and connection to international trade with Mexico (5), interstate development has helped to spur growth along its path with a need for support services (1), and yes, high volume of truck traffic will increase with the corridor as it is improved for freight movement (1).

Forecasted Traffic Conditions

Michael Penic of the consultant team continued the presentation by discussing traffic. He explained traffic counts and how the TxDOT travel demand model called the Statewide Analysis Model (SAM) is used for future traffic conditions. The team reviewed traffic growth scenarios that included No Build, 4-lane Divided Highway, and Interstate Highway. After applying the SAM to each scenario, it was found growth in a 4-lane Divided Highway scenario was very similar to the No Build scenario. Urban mobility and reliability are an issue in both scenarios. For the Interstate Highway scenario, there was 100 to 200% growth in all three segments. Mr. Penic continued with data about current traffic volume on Texas rural interstates and Ports-to-Plains Corridor rural traffic volume as an interstate in 2050.

Mr. Kiely commented HB 1079 requires looking at both north of Dumas to Oklahoma, and US-87 to New Mexico. The slide correctly says that US 87 provides a path to US 287 and Colorado, but the statement about US 287 not being improved in Oklahoma is not true. Much of it has been updated to Super Two and other improvements.

Mr. Penic responded we didn't include improvements outside of Texas, but other states may have plans to improve their highways.

Mr. Penic concluded with traffic forecasts in Segment #1 included US-87 near New Mexico, US-87 north of Amarillo, and I-27 north of Lubbock.

Mayor Pope commented first and foremost, it is important to note that even though this segment is the furthest developed, an interstate would still have significant impacts on Segment #1. When you look at what it does to Segments 2 and 3, these are the slides that you star when you highlight the forecasted conditions.

Mr. Kiely said he was struggling with the I-27 north figure and the correlating numbers. They seem small.

Mr. Penic explained the interstate already exists in that area, so it is still growing by 10,000.

Katie Perkins, Sherman County, commented the slide talks about US 87 traffic near New Mexico, but it omits US-87 to Oklahoma, which there was a traffic study done 15 years ago, but that was prior to the pig farms, dairies, and the FedEx location being built.

Mr. Penic responded certain places were selected to highlight for the presentation, but we do have every piece accounted for in the full forecasted conditions data.

Mentimeter Question #3: What are the opportunities and challenges related to the difference in traffic volumes between the 4-lane divided and interstate options?

There were 14 responses. The number of responses is in parentheses. They are summarized as: Opportunities: potential for business expansion (3), safety and traffic flow (2), interstate provides more growth and attraction for travelers, job growth, and connectivity. Challenges: lack of crossings as well as irrigation challenges for farmers and agricultural production (2), access management (2), need for fueling stations, rural communities will need time to adapt to increased traffic volumes and divergence from their usual traffic patterns, and funding.

Freight Forecasts

Joe Bryan of the consultant team proceeded with freight forecasts. Total truck tonnage is projected to grow by 78% through 2050 along the corridor. Corridor truck traffic connects across the state and is forecast to grow broadly. He noted the US-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) trade deal was passed very recently, so the uncertainty of trade with Mexico is gone. Shipping across oceans is at a much higher cost, and the top recipient of sourcing change is Mexico.

Mr. Bryan continued the presentation with freight growth in Segment #1. Total truck tonnage in Segment #1 is projected to grow by 59%. The fastest growth is forecasted in Castro, Hansford, and Moore Counties. Inbound freight is projected to grow 43% in Segment #1. Outbound freight growth is projected to grow 73% in Segment #1. Truck trade growth is expected to grow in the corridor and Segment #1 as well.

Mr. Bryan also discussed the corridor supply chain network. The corridor trade network is extensive and is forecast to grow everywhere. Food and agriculture categories and energy/oil field products are forecast to remain the same in 2050.

Mr. Kiely commented by looking at the data on petroleum it seems to indicate that the production area is not the only area affected by oil and gas, it affects the entire corridor.

Mentimeter Question #4: What are the opportunities and challenges related to the increase of freight within the corridor?

There were 13 responses. The number of responses is in parentheses. They are summarized as: Opportunities: ancillary industry growth to support trucking and freight movement/distribution (3), need for hotels, restaurants and fueling stations, effective traffic management planning with bypass/diversion routes, and economic capacity and growth.

Challenges: safety concerns with increased truck movement in small towns (3), infrastructure maintenance (regularly scheduled and increased need) (3), and lack of full interstate impedes freight movement.

Mr. Kiely commented there are issues in urban areas; there's a bottleneck in Amarillo already. The same in Dumas and Dalhart. He said the committee being able to make recommendations on the importance of reliever routes, or the interstate moving around urban areas, was important.

Planned and Programmed Projects

Akila Thamizharasan, TxDOT Corridor Planning Branch Manager started the presentation by defining planned and programmed projects. A planned project is a project identified in a TxDOT or Metropolitan Planning Organization Plan. A programmed project has been funded or partially funded. Within Segment #1, there are 212 miles of 4-lane divided or controlled access roadway. Five miles of planned and programmed projects will be upgraded to 4-lane divided or better. Ms. Thamizharasan reviewed each planned and programmed project within Segment #1.

Identification of Gaps

Ms. Thamizharasan continued the presentation by identifying gaps. For this study, a gap in the corridor is where the existing roadway is not a 4-lane divided roadway or interstate. A gap is also where there are no planned or programmed projects that will upgrade the existing roadway to a 4-lane divided roadway or interstate. She reviewed known gaps within Segment #1.

Next, a work session was conducted so committee members could identify gaps within the Segment #1 corridor. An online, interactive map was provided for members using the WebEx.

Brian Crawford, TxDOT District Engineer in Amarillo, commented there are plans within the next 10 years to expand I-27 from Amarillo to Canyon from four to six lanes.

Mayor Pope commented the route goes through downtown Amarillo where I-27 ends. We know there are safety issues there. We would like to eventually put a loop around Amarillo. We need to be careful about that, but it's pertinent to the conversation.

Mr. Crawford said a similar situation was occurring in Dumas, just on a smaller scale.

Milton Pax, Port-to-Plains Alliance, commented there is a lot of congestion in Dumas and sometimes you sit through two or three lights downtown. He asked if there were plans for any type of education about relief routes for the public.

Ms. Thamizharasan responded we need to stick to the bill for now, but when we get into the planning study, then we can let the public know the pros and cons of relief routes.

Preliminary Corridor Feasibility Analysis

The presentation continued with Ms. Thamizharasan explaining the definition of a feasibility analysis and how it's performed. She explained the difference between a 4-lane divided highway and an

Interstate with frontage roads. She also explained the feasibility analysis criteria is detailed in HB 1079.

Next, Mr. Penic continued a discussion of the feasibility analysis and whether a Ports-to-Plains Corridor would relieve traffic condition and provide reliability, as freight traffic relies heavily on this. Next, Mr. Penic explained diversions. Modeling did not show any significant diversion from other routes with 4-lane option versus the 2050 No Build. He discussed the diversions from the Interstate option and showed where anticipated diversions would be statewide and nationally. Statewide diversions were low to moderate from I-35 and I-45, and moderate from I-10 and I-20. Significant diversion occurred on US 385 south of Hartley, US 385 to US 62 between Odessa and Lubbock, and US 84 between Lubbock and I-20. Diversions in Segment #1 included north of Amarillo: SH 354, US 385, and FM 1061; US 287 southeast of Amarillo: from I-40 west of Amarillo; and demand to US 87 and I-40 west of Amarillo.

Mr. Penic continued to discuss safety and mobility. He reviewed travel time savings in the corridor and within Segment #1. He also presented data on 2050 truck traffic not diverted by a 4-lane corridor and 2050 truck traffic diverted to a full interstate corridor and within Segment #1.

Mr. Kiely commented there has not been anything presented that looks at the possibility of going north of Dumas. It would be helpful to provide what that would look like if both routes moved to Interstate. He said he would like to see that discussion in the report.

Mr. Penic said it could be added to the report.

Mayor Pope commented it is important that we do not just gloss over the safety information, especially with the effort TxDOT is taking to End the Streak. The impact of the Interstate has much more benefit than just economic development. Our fatalities doubled in Lubbock last year and we are trying hard to reduce that.

Mr. Miller commented as you have seen today and in all our meetings, with credit to TxDOT and the consultant team, they have provided great information, but it is like drinking out of a firehose. When we agree with what we are hearing it sounds like we are not engaged, but we are very engaged. I want to encourage everyone to provide comments and ideas. Our unique, local expertise will help the entire project. Today we will review chapters one and two, continue meetings in April, and then provide a draft of our final recommendation in May. As far as comments and input, if you have any comments on chapters one and two, please give them to Caroline and the team.

Judge Ritchey commented he would like to echo Mr. Miller's comments. He said it is a great plan, all the issues in our area have been addressed. As we go forward, there will be a lot more discussion, but how it is laid out, it is great.

Mr. Miller said he thinks the one thing that is important to discuss is that we have a study of how it works with Interstate and how it does not. There are huge opportunities from an interstate perspective, if you can articulate that, it is a compelling story for the other segments.

Review and Discussion of Report Chapters 1 and 2

Ms. Mays reviewed changes made to the Segment Committee Report outline before asking committee members for comments and questions on draft Chapters 1 (Introduction) and 2 (Existing Conditions and Needs Assessment).

Overall, the members would like to see more Segment #1 unique information added to Chapter 1. They want to show how Segment #1 stands out from the rest of the Corridor. In Chapter 2, they would like to see an emphasis on safety and more discussion about the Permian Basin and its statistics. All comments were noted during the meeting and are listed in the table below.

Ms. Mays extended the deadline for committee members to provide comments to TxDOT on the two draft chapters to February 14, 2020. All comments that were received during the meeting and by the Feb 14 deadline will be added to a comment matrix to ensure each was addressed.

Comments from Segment #1 Meeting

Comment	Commenter
Chapter 1 Comments	
We refer to west Texas, but we need to recognize both west Texas and south Texas	Joe Kiely
Need to capture the uniqueness of each segment	Mayor Pope
Need to consider roads outside of Texas (where does Interstate lead to)	Judge Carter
Need to include other major cities in Segment 1: Happy, Canyon, Tulia, Plainview, Hill Center, Abernathy	Joe Kiely
Need to mention Cactus (where JB packing plant is located)	Milton Pax
Agriculture is at the root of importance to this region – exporting out to the rest of the country. Also add quality of product.	Kasey Coker
We could be more specific about agriculture, focus on beef, cattle, and dairy	Mayor Pope
Dairy is very prominent, might add that out of the top 10 milk producing counties in the state, 8 are in Segment 1	Kasey Coker
Mention cotton and wind energy	David Hall
Issue with movement of livestock – delays, health and safety issue	Joe Kiely
Chapter 2 Comments	
Key safety issues in Segment 1 – north of Amarillo (where I-27 stops), JB Packing Plant (people crossing a 4-lane highway)	Jared Miller/Milton Pax
Reference to BNSF –there is also an intermodal rail facility in Plainview	Joe Kiely
The results for historical population growth are confusing. Dates seem to overlap.	Joe Kiely
Need to talk about wind energy production capacity	Joe Kiely
Tower manufacturer that employs 300, GE has a facility	Kevin Carter

Next Meeting

The next meeting is proposed to be held Wednesday, April 1st in Amarillo at the Amarillo Civic Center.

The meeting adjourned at 11:25 a.m.

Action Items:

Schedule the next Segment Committee Meeting on Wednesday, April 1, 2020