

# Ports-to-Plains Segment 3 Committee Meeting #5 Summary

**June 9, 2020, 8:00 a.m.**

**WebEx\***

*\*Note: WebEx was required due to COVID-19 shelter in place orders*

## Attendees

Segment Committee Member	Organization	Attendance
Sid Cauthorn	Ports-to-Plains Alliance	Present via WebEx
Miguel Conchas	Laredo Chamber of Commerce	Present via WebEx
Anna De La Garza	Eagle Pass International Bridge System	Present via WebEx
Liliana Flores	Del Rio Port of Entry	Not Present
Nick Gallegos	Middle Rio Grande Development Council	Not Present
Melissa Huddleston	Laredo Motor Carriers Association	Not Present
Blanca Larson	Del Rio Chamber of Commerce	Not Present
Morris Libson	Eagle Pass Business and Economic Development Council	Not Present
Yvette Limon	Laredo International Bridge System	J. Kent Richard (Designee) Present via WebEx
Mayor Bruno Lozano Segment #3 Committee Chair	City of Del Rio	Present via WebEx
Sandra Martinez	Eagle Pass Chamber of Commerce	Not Present
Leo Martinez	Del Rio Economic Development Corporation	Oriana Fernandez (Designee) Present via WebEx
Margie Montez	Del Rio International Bridge	Present via WebEx
Judge Lewis G. Owens, Jr.	Val Verde County	Not Present
Judge Francisco G. Ponce	Dimmit County	Not Present
Mayor Pete Saenz	City of Laredo	Not Present
Judge David R. Saucedo	Maverick County	Not Present
Mayor Wayne Seiple	City of Carrizo Springs	Ronnie Guest, City Manager (Designee) Present via WebEx
Judge James Tullis Shahan	Kinney County	Present via WebEx
Mayor Luis Sifuentes	City of Eagle Pass	Not Present

Kirby Snideman	Laredo Urban Transportation Study (Metropolitan Planning Organization)	Not Present
Judge Tano E. Tijerina Segment #3 Committee Vice- Chair	Webb County	Present via WebEx
Raul S. Villareal	Laredo Licensed U.S. Customs Brokers Association, Inc.	Not Present
Mayor Dan Pope, Ports-to- Plains Advisory Committee Chairman	City of Lubbock	Present via WebEx
Judge Stephen Smith, Ports-to- Plains Advisory Committee Vice Chairman	Sutton County	Not Present

### Elected Officials

Shannon Harmon      State Senator Perry's Office

### Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT)

Caroline Mays	Julie Jerome
Roger Beall	Steve Linhart
Loretta Brown	Terry Martinez
Carlos Calle	Sherry Pifer
Blake Calvert	Roberto Rodriguez
Emily Clisby	Jarred Shaffer
Gabriel De Ochoa	Peter Smith
Eduardo Hagert	Akila Thamizharasan
Cory Henrickson	Marc Williams
Krista Jeacopello	

### Consultant Team

Wendy Travis	Garver	Mike Spayd	Garver
Michele Lopez	Garver	Sean Wray	Garver
Tracy Michel	Garver		

### Other Attendees

Michael Garcia	City of Del Rio
Duffy Hinkle	Ports-to-Plains Alliance
Cheri Huddleston	Hance Scarborough
Joe Kiely	Port-to-Plains Alliance
Matt Wojnowski	City of Del Rio

The Chair of the Segment 3 Committee and City of Del Rio Mayor Bruno Lozano called the meeting to order on 8:02 a.m. A roll call was taken.

## **Introduction**

Caroline Mays, TxDOT Director of Freight, Trade, and Connectivity introduced the TxDOT staff participating on the call.

TxDOT representatives (Marc Williams, TxDOT Deputy Executive Director, Peter Smith, TxDOT Transportation Planning and Programming (TPP) Division Director, and Roger Beall, TxDOT TPP Division Deputy Director) thanked everyone for their participation.

Advisory Committee Chair and City of Lubbock Mayor Dan Pope thanked all the Segment Committee members. He said he regrets the committee is not meeting face to face and Tuesdays are busy for members with meetings for councils and other duties. He said the report looks good; he had time to review, and he felt good of the progress and we have a lot to go over today.

Mayor Lozano echoed the thanks of Mayor Pope and added that it is unfortunate not to meet in person, but he appreciates everyone's participation despite the current situation.

## **Meeting Agenda Overview and Public Meeting Overview**

Ms. Mays provided overview of the meeting agenda, which is predominantly a final opportunity for the Segment Committee to review and revise its report before it is submitted to the Advisory Committee per House Bill 1079 (1079). She continued to provide a summary of the May 11, 2020 public meeting, conducted virtually because of the COVID-19 virus situation. The public meeting is a requirement of the HB 1079 to present preliminary Segment Committee recommendations and provide the public an opportunity to comment. The meeting had good attendance. TxDOT received one written comment which was a comment in support of the study. No questions or comments were raised by the committee.

## **Segment Committee Draft Report Review**

### Chapter 1 (Introduction) and Table of Contents

Ms. Mays provided an overview of Chapter 1 which summarizes HB 1079, Segment Committee membership, the study development process, and the organization of the report.

Mayor Lozano stated he did not receive any major comments from members and asked for feedback from the committee on Chapter 1.

The following comments were provided:

- Page 5 states 600 miles between I-35 and next interstate. City of Del Rio City Manager Matt Wojnowski asked if this is the longest distance within US between north-south interstates. If it is, that would be a good nugget to add to report.
- Add titles to Appendices and descriptions to the Table of Contents to help the reader navigate the report.

Mayor Lozano stated he had some grammatical errors to fix and asked committee members to send any additional comments and grammar corrections to Ms. Mays. Ms. Mays asked the committee to send additional comments today. She will be handing the final reports off to the Segment Committee

chairs to submit to Mayor Pope and the Advisory Committee. The deadline is fast approaching, and she reiterated that this is the final time for the committee to look and make the final comments.

#### Chapter 2 (Existing Conditions and Needs Assessment)

Ms. Mays provided an overview of Chapter 2 which discusses the existing conditions of the corridor. She noted the committee spent quite a bit of time going over this information to lay the foundation for the study including safety, truck traffic, roadway conditions, socioeconomic factors, key issues of energy, agriculture, international trade, land use, and environmental issues of the corridor.

The following comment was provided:

- Page 14 states that Segment 3 is part of the Texas Highway Freight Network, etc. Mr. Wojnowski asked to define what those systems are somewhere in the document.

Mayor Lozano thanked everyone for giving their input on this section and acknowledged that this was a lot of work to put the information together.

#### Chapter 3 (Forecasted Corridor Conditions)

Ms. Mays provided an overview of Chapter 3 which discusses the forecasted conditions.

The following comments were provided:

- Mr. Sid Cauthorn asked if it would be appropriate to have further explanation to navigate this chapter and remind the reader. In the beginning of the chapter, it is written nicely but would like to provide same information throughout the chapter. He will send over some language to Ms. Mays.
- Page 34 has the number of counties in Segment 3 as 9 and page 12 has 6 counties in Chapter 2. Need to reconcile. (Mr. Cauthorn)
- Page 43 – 47 – additional language to remind the reader to what the study entails.
  - Mayor Lozano would provide that language to Ms. Mays.
- Page 51 – relates to future traffic conditions, Section 3.7 – important transition to Section 3.8
  - Mr. Cauthorn to provide some language to strengthen the discussion.
- Page 55 – reducing rates of fatalities, is it possible to show the estimated number of fatalities? (Mr. Wojnowski)

#### Chapter 4 (Interstate Feasibility Analysis and Findings)

Mayor Lozano opened the floor for committee members to provide comments to Chapter 4.

Mr. Cauthorn asked if he could send his comments to Ms. Mays in writing.

Mayor Lozano stated it is fine to send to Ms. Mays.

Ms. Mays asked the committee to please send comments today and raise any comments during the meeting.

The following comments were provided:

- Page 77-78 – add 2050 to the table in 3<sup>rd</sup> bar, state 2050 interstate to show the comparison is between 2050 baseline and 2050 interstate. (Mayor Lozano)
- Page 82 – distribution warehouses figure – it highlights how those areas do not have access to interstate. That really is important and helps Laredo Port of Entry.

- Page 78 – economic impacts for the rest of TX – include savings from reduction of loss of life. Not sure if that has ever been done before and understands that this is a sensitive topic. (Mr. Wojnowski)
  - Ms. Mays stated that this information might come from a national statement with national data and will double check. She understood that that is a sensitive topic.
  - Mr. Wojnowski agreed to consider including if that has been something included in other documents.

#### Chapter 5 (Public Involvement and Stakeholder Engagement)

Ms. Mays provided an overview of Chapter 5 as three components for the process of engagement: role of the Segment Committee; public involvement requirements under HB 1079; and, Segment Committee coordination with TxDOT Districts. No comments or questions were raised by the committee on Chapter 5.

#### Chapter 6 (Recommendations and Implementation Plan)

Ms. Mays provided an overview of Chapter 6. It included two components: the committee recommendations and the implementation plan.

The following comments were provided:

- In general, for any appendix noted, include the title of that appendix to go along with previous comment. (Mr. Wojnowski)
- Page 92 – \$4.1 billion per year, my impression is that it was the state, not the corridor.
  - Ms. Travis responded that will be fixed.
- On corridor wide economic gains, should it also include \$640 million of Texas for GDP? (Mr. Cauthorn)
  - Mayor Pope agreed that is appropriate.
  - Ms. Mays said that can be added.
- Page 92 – should we call out travel cost savings? Might be a good place to mention it. (Mayor Pope)
  - Ms. Mays stated that can be added because it is one of the key aspects of the corridor to upgrade the interstate and to carry that message is important.
- The other item not mentioned in this section is also safety. (Mayor Pope)
  - Ms. Mays said those two data points can be added.

#### Appendices

Ms. Mays provided an overview of the Appendix contents.

Mayor Lozano asked for any final thoughts for the final version of the draft as presented. He reiterated that the grammar fixes that need to be made will be sent to Ms. Mays.

Ms. Mays thanked Mayor Lozano and asked the committee to please send comments today.

#### Executive Summary

Ms. Mays provided an overview of the executive summary.

The following comments were provided:

- Page 12-15 traffic and safety –add text about loss of lives based on safety improvements for this corridor. (Mr. Wojnowski)
  - Ms. Mays: we will look at that and see how we can incorporate that in there.

- Page 84 – add graph to page 17 – just to show how disconnected these communities are. This would be empowering to our committee to see.
  - Ms. Mays: the text associated with exhibit would also be critical as well.
- Page 18 – if this return of investment information is corridor-wide, can we add segment data?
  - Ms. Mays – the data is not available for segment level and is difficult to get at that level.
- Add the 7-day outbound truck trip flow map (from Laredo): I think it is a powerful visual. (Judge Tano Tijerina)
  - The team will get that map and see where it can be incorporated into the executive summary.
  - Mayor Lozano added that comment is exactly what we are trying to accomplish and is a great comment.
- Mayor Lozano asked about adding an appendix for maps to include, the major maps such as warehousing corridor-wide, that would be significant. He added that this might apply to other segments that have similar exhibits so that there's connectivity.

Mr. Cauthorn asked how the edited version would proceed and if the Chair and Vice chair would move it forward.

Mayor Lozano said that he would be okay receiving the edited version and this meeting discussion has helped to work on the next version and the committee would not need to reconvene.

Judge Tijerina seconded and Mayor Pope said that it seemed reasonable to him.

Mayor Lozano said that he, Judge Tijerina and Mayor Pope can continue that process with Ms. May's guidance.

Ms. Mays asked the committee to confirm that Mayor Pope, Judge Tijerina and Mayor Lozano agree to continue for the committee to finalize this report.

Committee members did not object.

## **Open Discussion**

Judge Tijerina thanked Caroline and her team.

Ms. Mays thanked Mayor Lozano, Judge Tijerina, and committee members for their due diligence and leadership as well as Mayor Pope who participated in all the committee meetings.

Mayor Pope said for those who are not on the Advisory Committee, they will be updated on the progress, and the information and report will be presented to the state legislature and he appreciates the committee's participation.

Judge Tijerina thanked Mayor Lozano and added that he was proud of the committee and hopeful this process works out.

Mayor Lozano thanked the partnership with TxDOT. He added that Mayor Pope's participation was instrumental. He thanked Judge Tijerina for his perspective and representing the southern-most

point of the corridor and thanked all the committee members for their effort and input. He also thanked the Ports-to-Plains Alliance for participating.

Ms. Thamizharasan, TxDOT Corridor Planning Branch Manager, thanked everyone for their participation and reminded members to send comments today.

Mr. Smith stated that this has really been an impressive process for this committee and it has been a challenge to get to this point in other projects and to be here is a testament to everyone on the call for the last months efforts. He said he appreciates everyone's help on this.

Mr. Beall thanked everyone for their time and energy and said he appreciates all the hard work that the committee put into it.

Mayor Lozano adjourned meeting at 9:19 am.

**Action Items:**

- Committee members will submit final comments by end of the day (6/9/20).
- Mayor Lozano, Judge Tijerina and Mayor Pope to finalize the Segment Committee report when they meet the week of June 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- The final Segment Committee report will be sent to the Advisory Committee by June 30, 2020.