

# I-27 Advisory Committee Meeting Summary

**Bush Convention Center (Meeting Room), Midland, TX/Teams | September 4, 2025**  
**12:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.**

Advisory Committee Member	Organization	Attendance
Judge Curtis Parrish, Committee Vice-Chair	Lubbock County	Present
Mayor Tom Thompson	City of San Angelo	Present
Mayor Alvaro "Al" Arreola	City of Del Rio	Not Present
Mayor Lori Blong	City of Midland	Present
Mayor Robert Moore Proxy: John Medina	City of Big Spring	Proxy Present
Mayor Mark McBrayer	City of Lubbock	Present
Mayor Cole Stanley	City of Amarillo	Present
Mayor Dr. Victor D. Trevino	City of Laredo	Not Present
Mayor Cal Hendrick	City of Odessa	Present
Rick Bacon	Tom Green County	Present
Judge Alicia Law	Sherman County	Not Present
Judge Randy Johnson Proxy: Brian Klinksiek	Howard County	Present
Judge Terry Johnson Proxy: Andrew Avis	Midland County	Present
Judge Lewis Owens	Val Verde County	Not Present
Judge Rowdy Rhoades	Moore County	Not Present
Judge Wes Ritchey	Dallam County	Not Present
Judge Nancy Tanner	Potter County	Not Present
Judge Tano E. Tijerina Proxy: Guillermo Cuellar	Webb County	Not Present
Judge Charlie Bradley	Schleicher County	Present
Judge Dustin Fawcett	Ector County	Present
Tracee Bentley Proxy: Debra Richmond	Permian Strategic Partnership	Proxy Present
John Osborne	Lubbock Economic Development	Present
Gerry Schwebel	IBC Bank	Present
Dee Vaughan	Texas Corn Producers	Present
Victoria Vara	Sonora Economic Development Corporation	Present

## Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT)

Alvin New	Jeremy Dearing
Andrew Canon	Jose Renteria
Aslan Zarafshan	Julie Rogers
Austin Valentine	Laura Kolstad
Billy Dezern	Leah Casey
Blair Johnson	Lorena Echeverria de Misi
Cary Karnstadt	Madeleine Pelton
Chad Windham	Maryann Cedillo
Darlynn Cherry	Michelle Luedke
David Krause	Mildred Litchfield
Emily Clisby	Nehal Atlam
Epigmenio "Epi" Gonzalez	Nicole Lawson
Eric Lykins	Rebecca Herrera
Erick Hernandez	Russell Pehl
Farideh Dassi	Saul Romero
Gabriel Ramirez	Shelley Harris
Jason Britsch	Trent Thomas
	Wesley Starnes

## Consultant Team

Jenelle Romero	Garver	Tracy Michel	Garver
Keegan Doan	Garver	Zachary Ashburn	Garver
Kendall Smith	Garver	Elissa Garza	PCI
Leigh Mercer	Garver	Leigh Darilek	PCI
Nair Barrios	Garver	Robert Elizondo	PCI
Sean Wray	Garver		

## Other Attendees

Lauren Garduno	Ports-to-Plains Alliance	Tommy Gonzalez	City of Midland
Cheri Huddleston	Ports-to-Plains Alliance	David Vela	City of Odessa
Joe Kiely	Ports-to-Plains Alliance	Claire Alvarado	Ector County
Tina Scarborough	Ports-to-Plains Alliance	Fatima Salcido	Ector County
Jon Barnes	City of Amarillo	Jeffrey Avery	Ector County
Travis Muno	City of Amarillo	Angela Gschwend	Lubbock County
Todd Darden	City of Big Spring	Karin Kuykenall	US Rep August Pfluger
David R. Saucedo	City of Eagle Pass	Evan Thomas	Midland COC
Placido Madera	City of Eagle Pass	Cameron Walker	Permian Basin MPO
Suzel Figueroa	City of Eagle Pass	Major Hofheins	San Angelo MPO
Hayden Davis	City of Lamesa	Pete Madrid	San Angelo MPO
Lindsey Adams	City of Midland	Mona Ferguson	Lamesa EDC
Michele Hagemann	City of Midland	James Beauchamp	MOTRAN Alliance
Philip Garvin	City of Midland	Julie Arrington	Abernathy
Ruby Anaya	City of Midland	Mike Peters	PRPC
Brian Stubbs	City of Midland	Bobby Gomez	N/A
Gabe McClelland	City of Midland	Jerry Haddican	RRP
John Burkholder	City of Midland	Madhu Narayanasamy	RRP
Jose Ortiz	City of Midland		

## Welcome and Opening Remarks

Committee Vice-Chair Curtis Parrish, Lubbock County Judge, welcomed the attendees to the I-27 Advisory Committee Meeting and provided opening remarks. Judge Parrish offered a moment of silence in memory of Transportation Chairman, J Bruce Bugg, Jr., and his life work for the State of Texas.

Mayor Lori Blong, City of Midland, welcomed the committee to the City of Midland. She encouraged other communities to consider hosting future meetings and emphasized the value of in-person collaboration as a way to share ideas, strengthen relationships, and foster unity across regions.

Terry Johnson, Midland County Judge, welcomed the committee and expressed gratitude for the quality of attendees and excitement for the future of the I-27 committee.

Commissioner Alvin New attended the meeting virtually. He thanked everyone for their work on the Advisory Committee and added that it is his pleasure to listen and use this as part of his job as Commissioner to do the best he can to help the process. Judge Parrish thanked Commissioner New.

## New Members

Judge Parrish provided a brief background highlighting the purpose and composition of the committee. He welcomed new members, including those added from HB 2775: Mayor Cal Hendrick, City of Odessa; Judge Charlie Bradley, Schleicher County; Judge Dustin Fawcett, Ector County; Mayor Tom Thompson, City of San Angelo and Victoria Vara, Executive Director of the Sonora Economic Development Corporation, who was elected during the last meeting as the economic development professional representing Segment 2.

## Roll Call/Safety Minute

Judge Parrish introduced Lorena Echeverria de Misi, TxDOT Transportation Planning and Programming (TPP) Corridor Planning Branch Manager. Ms. Echeverria de Misi took roll call.

Ms. Echeverria de Misi provided a safety minute, focusing on rural vs. urban crashes along the future I-27 corridor in the past five years. Traffic safety data from 2020 through 2024 indicated seventy-five percent of all crashes within the five-year period were in urban areas, while rural areas accounted for more fatal crashes. Twenty-nine percent of all crashes, roughly one-third of the total crashes involved rear ending and side swiping. She shared a positive take away of the downturn in fatalities from 2020 to 2024 and concluded by providing tips on basic safety and urging the attendees to join in raising awareness with family, friends, and within their communities on the efforts of the End the Streak Campaign.

Commissioner Alvin New further emphasized the points made with annual studies performed by the Texas Transportation Institute and TxDOT. The studies show that around 90 percent of Texans wear seatbelts, while about ten percent consistently do not wear seatbelts. Regarding crash fatalities, approximately 45 percent of deaths come from the 10 percent who do not wear seatbelts. He stressed the chance of survival is dramatically improved by wearing a seatbelt and encouraged attendees to advocate for seatbelt use with friends and family. He further discussed factors such as distracted driving, alcohol, drug use, and speeding involved in fatal crashes.

## **Election of New Chair and Vice Chair; Election of Economic Professional Member**

Judge Curtis Parrish explained the vacancy of Chair occurred when the mayoral term expired for previous Chair, Mayor Brenda Gunter of San Angelo, and opened the floor to nominations. Mayor Lori Blong nominated Judge Parrish, and this was seconded by John Osborne, Lubbock Economic Development Corporation. Judge Parrish was elected Chair by unanimous vote.

Judge Parrish then opened the floor to Vice-Chair nominations. Judge Terry Johnson nominated Mayor Lori Blong, and this was seconded by John Osborne. Mayor Blong was elected Vice-Chair by unanimous vote. Judge Parrish congratulated Mayor Blong and reminded members of the importance of the committee. He explained the purpose of the committee is to advise TxDOT and advise the legislature on what is happening in their communities regarding transportation, specifically I-27. He further explained the corridor touches many aspects of our lives and it is very important to make sure transportation is in the forefront of what the Texas legislature, Transportation Commission, and our leaders in Washington are thinking about. He reminded members that the I-27 project is a vital interstate connecting the port of Laredo all the way to Canada, and while the committee is focused on the Texas portion, it is good to remember that this is a very large project.

He next addressed the economic professional member vacancy for Segment 3. Mr. Osborne explained the vacancy for an economic professional in Segment 3 and that economic development offices are in different areas across the state. He suggested Jorge Ramon, Economic Director, City of Del Rio. Judge Parrish opened the floor for nominations and Mayor Lori Blong nominated Mr. Ramon and Mayor Thompson seconded the nomination. Jorge Ramon was elected to Segment 3 by unanimous vote.

## **Roundtable: Member Updates and State of the I-27 Corridor**

Judge Parrish suggested members briefly discuss events in their community or county specifically regarding I-27. He offered the first comments with Lubbock County and the expansion of I-27 further south from Lubbock. The expansion was marked by a groundbreaking ceremony attended by elected officials and other Advisory Committee members. He discussed the significant amount of bridge construction along the I-27 corridor in Lubbock County. The Yucca Avenue bridge will be completed soon per the District Engineer. There are several projects around State Loop (SL) 88 that are under the Lubbock District and the Lubbock MPO. He then opened the floor to other members to discuss their areas.

Judge Randy Johnson, Howard County, discussed the reliever route on the west side of Big Spring and the industrial park development that is forthcoming. He noted local enthusiasm related to I-27 and the access the I-27/I-20 crossroads will bring to the area.

Mayor Tom Thompson, City of San Angelo, described three resolutions were passed on August 4, 2025, regarding I-27, including the highway financial program, future feasibility study, and future design. He explained this is key for how San Angelo moves forward, and initial meetings are scheduled with Lauren Garduno (Ports-to-Plains Alliance) to discuss the bypass. It is the short-term goal to at least have the initial steps of a shovel ready project

to do the bypass as soon as possible. He stated they are here to support everyone, and it is great to see everyone along the corridor all on the same page.

Debra Richmond, Permian Strategic Partnership, stated the Permian Basin area is staying busy and increased economic growth means redundant transportation is needed for safety and economic benefits. This year, the Permian Basin contributed over \$12.9 billion in direct taxes and of that, \$5.8 billion was oil and gas severances to the economy. The area will continue to give back to Texas and the State Highway Fund and are ready to build out infrastructure where needed.

John Osborne stated clients, and their associated entities have also passed resolutions of support, and he encouraged others along the corridor to pursue the same. He noted this is a federal issue they are working on to improve transportation along the corridor.

Mayor Mark McBrayer, City of Lubbock, echoed Judge Parrish's comments for Lubbock and expressed excitement for the extra four miles of interstate. The City of Lubbock is looking forward to the Ports-to-Plains conference in October and the mayor welcomed all members to attend as they continue efforts to make this a real priority. He noted they have also completed resolutions and encouraged everyone to make the resolutions on a letter of support.

John Medina, City of Big Spring, echoed the remarks of Judge Johnson and the expansion of infrastructure at the airport area near the reliever route. He stated the city is spending about \$9.2 million to expand water and sewer and has had interest in the west side of the airport. He expects to see increased activity from the reliever route and in the investments being put into the ground.

Judge Dustin Fawcett, Ector County, stated June 2025 was the highest oil production year in United States history with 13.58 million barrels per day and nearly 50 percent of that comes from the Permian Basin. The Permian Basin had a record year. Twenty-two percent of the State Highway Fund is funded from oil and gas revenues and nearly one-quarter of all TxDOT roadways and State Highway Funds are from portions of the Permian Basin and Eagle Ford at the southern portion of I-27.

Judge Parrish concluded the roundtable by encouraging future communication to keep I-27 in the forefront.

## **Review of Legislation Related to I-27**

Judge Parrish introduced Lauren Garduno, Executive Director, Ports-to-Plains Alliance. He encouraged the committee to contribute to Mr. Garduno's efforts at the federal level. Judge Parrish opened the floor to Mr. Garduno.

Mr. Garduno provided an update on three key resolutions currently in development related to the Ports-to-Plains Corridor. The first resolution focuses on establishing a funding mechanism to support construction efforts. The other two resolutions pertain to extending I-27 beyond Texas, identifying it as a high-priority corridor that would ultimately connect to Canada. He emphasized the importance of showing unified support for these resolutions to

help communicate the broader vision of extending I-27 from Texas to Canada. A critical next step in this process is initiating a feasibility study. Mr. Garduno is actively pursuing congressional designation for the remainder of the I-27 corridor, including segments outside of Texas and New Mexico. He noted that this effort is ahead of progress in those two states and is moving forward with resolution support.

To provide historical context, Mr. Garduno referenced the 1968 highway bill, which added 4,000 miles to the Interstate Highway System originally established in 1956. That bill included 120 miles of I-27 from Lovington. Of the 102 designated corridors in the U.S., Texas is home to three: Ports-to-Plains, the Heartland Expressway, and the Theodore Roosevelt Expressway. He pointed out that, until recently, there has been little national focus on funding future interstate programs due to a lack of long-term vision. However, this is beginning to change. The proposed resolutions aim to support future funding opportunities and a potential new Interstate Highway Act. Currently, 22 states have identified future multi-state corridors, and Texas leads with three: I-14, I-27, and I-69.

Texas is collaborating with other corridor states to advocate for a future interstate funding bill, which they hope to present to the President next year during the surface transportation reauthorization process. Resolution Two proposes a \$10 million feasibility study for interstate designation extending from Texas through Oklahoma and up to Montana. Resolution Three supports the formal designation of a future interstate from Texas to Montana. Mr. Garduno encouraged committee members to return to their communities and work toward passing these resolutions locally, so they can be presented in Washington, D.C. Several advocacy trips are planned for this winter to engage with key congressional leaders during reauthorization discussions.

He also noted that AASHTO's policy recommendations are expected to align with those of the U.S. Department of Transportation, ensuring that the proposed funding program will supplement, rather than reduce, the rate of return for state DOTs. This would provide additional resources without impacting existing transportation funding.

Mr. Garduno remarked that with the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) set to expire next year, and a significant portion of its \$1.2 trillion still unspent, there is a timely opportunity to redirect those funds toward building the next generation of the interstate system. While he acknowledged that IIJA funding may not have been ideal for past projects, he believes it is well-suited for this future-focused initiative.

Mr. Osbourne expressed his appreciation for the coordination between the I-69, I-27, and I-14 interstates and working together. He further noted the region of West Texas will be impacted by two of the interstates.

Mr. Garduno noted that most of the national high priority corridors are oriented north-south. Although I-14 is not a north-south interstate, it serves a strategic need agriculturally, particularly in facilitating the movement of goods into Texas and the Midwest. He noted that connecting I-14 with I-27 will be critical for efficiently moving agricultural products from the Gulf region.

Mr. Garduno expressed further optimism about the positive economic impacts of linking these corridors to the nation's two largest oil reserves: the Permian Basin of Texas and the Bakken in North Dakota. He underscored the potential for enhanced energy security this connection will bring. He concluded by highlighting the upcoming Ports-to-Plains meeting in Lubbock, encouraging all members to attend and to continue advocating for I-27 at the federal level. He thanked Judge Parrish for the opportunity to speak and for ongoing support.

Commissioner Alvin New provided additional information regarding the corridor and brought the committee's attention to the TxDOT Project Tracker. Ms. Echeverria de Misi showed the online TxDOT Project Tracker. Mr. New outlined a flyover coming into the Unified Transportation Program (UTP) in the Laredo area that redirects traffic from I-35 to future I-27. Additionally, he noted the Super 2 project between Hartley and Dumas that is converting from a two-lane to a divided four-lane on the corridor. He further explained that a proposed feasibility study from Amarillo to Dumas will play an important role in advancing overall progress. He also noted the significance of the loop in Eagle Pass as part of the broader corridor strategy.

Judge Parrish turned the floor to Wesley Starnes, State Legislative Liaison for TxDOT.

Mr. Starnes opened by expressing appreciation to the hosts and noted that Trent Thomas, Director of Government Affairs, was unable to attend due to a scheduling conflict. He then provided an overview of the recent Texas Legislative Session, which lasted 140 days from January 14 to June 2. One of the session's primary goals was the passage of the state budget.

He explained that Senate Bill 1, the General Appropriations Act, allocated \$338 billion for the biennium, covering all state agencies, institutions, and programs. TxDOT's share of the budget is \$39.92 billion, representing approximately 11.8 percent of the total and marking a 6.5 percent increase from the previous fiscal year. Mr. Starnes noted that federal funds currently make up 30 percent of TxDOT's budget, while the remaining 70 percent comes from state sources. A significant portion of this state funding is derived from Proposition 1, which is based on oil and gas severance taxes and contributes around \$8 billion, and Proposition 7, which draws from sales and vehicle-related taxes and adds approximately \$7.4 billion. Traditional motor fuels tax revenues, which feed into the State Highway Fund, account for about 25 percent of TxDOT's funding.

He went on to describe how TxDOT plans to use these funds. About 89 percent, or roughly \$35 billion, is dedicated to project development, delivery, and maintenance. Much of this investment is tied to UTP, which outlines over \$100 billion in planned projects over the next ten years. Additional spending includes \$860 million for multimodal transportation initiatives such as aviation, maritime, transit, and rail. Approximately \$900 million is allocated for IT and infrastructure improvements, and \$180 million in general revenue will support various projects across the state.

Mr. Starnes also discussed House Bill 500, a supplemental appropriations measure that added \$504 million to transportation funding. Of that, \$250 million is designated for rail



grade separations at off-system railroad crossings, enabled by Senate Bill 1555. He explained that Texas has around 11,000 rail crossings, with 8,000 classified as off-system.

He highlighted a corridor-related investment, noting that the Reeves Lubbock Redevelopment Authority received \$40 million for redevelopment efforts at the former Reeves Airport. He also discussed House Bill 4520, which allows TxDOT and the Commission to offer reduced matching requirements for general aviation airports located in economically disadvantaged counties. This applies to approximately 130 airports across about 100 counties.

Additionally, two new infrastructure grant programs were created during the session that advanced multimodal transportation initiatives. The first, Senate Bill 1555, provides \$250 million for off-system rail, grade, pedestrian, and vehicle crossings with a 10 percent local match. The second, Senate Bill 2366, establishes a framework for short line railroad development, although it was not funded this session.

Mr. Starnes concluded by directing members to the Moving Texas Forward summary document available on the TxDOT website for additional information.

Judge Parrish opened the floor for questions. Hearing no questions, he continued the meeting.

## **I-27 Implementation Plan Summary of Progress and What's Next for the I-27 Designation**

Ms. Echeverria de Misi provided an overall summary in order of magnitude in terms of progress along the corridor. She noted two items TxDOT is evaluating. One is the progress coming from the adoption of the I-27 Implementation Plan, which was adopted in 2024, and tracking projects that are being programmed by the districts to build interstate facility, which is a key metric. The second, which is a program called the Statewide Rural Connectivity Program focused on rural safety, mobility, and connectivity that focuses on upgrading large portions of the corridor to a minimum four-lane median divided highway. She explained two additionally important efforts; building out the actual footprint of an interstate and building out the minimum four-lane median divided highway that is currently underway. She highlighted synthesizing information via the I-27 Implementation Plan Dashboard that was revealed in April and explained District Engineers provided updates on their projects. TxDOT is very receptive to feedback regarding the dashboard and have continued to polish and analyze meaningful information in real time. She further noted that the dashboard is useful not only to the committee, but also to TxDOT in order to make decisions on progressing the I-27 Implementation Plan.

Mr. Osborne asked where the dashboard can be found. Ms. Echeverria de Misi explained the dashboard has not been officially published due to carefully evaluating the data, but the target date for publishing is by the end of the year.

Mr. Osborne expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to provide comments during the dashboard planning and his excitement for its publication.



Ms. Echeverria de Misi went on to show the landing page of the dashboard and explained the nomenclature used when discussing the dashboard, such as specific definitions/buckets regarding funding status. She explained Category 1-12, are fully funded and contain three projects which are currently in the 2026 UTP and have an estimate construction cost of \$113 million, while 34 unfunded/partially funded projects outside of the 10-year UTP timeline with a current estimated construction cost of \$8.7 billion and have been authorized for the districts to start developing. She thanked the committee for their feedback and explained they are trying to simplify the dashboard so information will be readily available for conversations with stakeholders. She noted the current implementation plan estimated cost of \$31.2 billion which is the base point. She then focused on Category 2, 4, and 12 which are mobility and connectivity categories that fund large projects such as added capacity and interstate facility.

Mr. Osborne requested clarification on the planning portion and the \$6.8 billion shown versus the \$1 or 2 billion from a few years ago. Ms. Echeverria de Misi stated she could not say what the number was a few years ago but believes \$1 or \$2 billion was the estimated cost four to five years ago. Mr. Osborne expressed excitement over the fact that the number continues to climb and is impressed at the effort being put into planning projects for the corridor.

Ms. Echeverria de Misi continued to present historical UTP investments from the last five years, which show steady growth across three categories that focus on mobility, connectivity and strategic priorities for the state. She then discussed the total estimated construction costs for added capacity projects. Added capacity projects currently under construction comprise \$793 million. Fully funded projects include a total of \$1.7 billion. Unfunded/Partially Funded projects include a total of \$1.7 billion. She shared the breakdown of the number of projects by district and total mileage.

Ms. Echeverria de Misi then discussed what is next for the I-27 designation and stated TxDOT is seeking dual designation for I-27/I-35 in Laredo District. TxDOT is seeking direction from FHWA on what is needed to obtain dual designation for the 18.25 miles of existing I-35. This section of interstate corresponds to the statewide corridor ranking number one based on the I-27 Implementation Plan. As-builts and technical reports are being reviewed as part of the process.

Mr. Osborne asked if the designation is something that must go through Congress or if it is through the highway system. Ms. Echeverria de Misi responded that the designation is officially through AASHTO. She then discussed I-27 corridor investments for all 2026 UTP projects, which include 30 ongoing projects within the UTP 10-year window comprised of: 11 added capacity projects at \$1.8 billion, six interchange projects at \$750 million, eight new location projects at \$413 million, three rehab/maintenance projects at \$36 million, and two intersection/operational & safety improvements at \$12 million for a total estimated construction cost of \$3 billion.

Judge Parrish thanked Ms. Echeverria de Misi and encouraged committee members to share the information with constituents who are asking how it is all working together. He said that when the dashboard is available, they will get it to the committee as soon as possible.

## **I-27 Implementation Plan Project Updates**

Judge Parrish turned the floor over to the District Engineers.

Epi Gonzales, Laredo District Engineer, began by highlighting the improvement on the portion of I-35 with dual designation, which is commonly referred to as the Uniroyal project. This will be the first under construction at an estimated cost of \$300 million and will include expanding I-35 and I-27 to six lanes with improvement to the frontage roads with a new I-35 overpass at State Highway (SH) 84 in Webb County.

The next project is a segment to the north at the I-35 and US 83 split/future I-27. This will provide a direct connector from northbound I-35 to northbound I-27. The district finished Super 2 projects along US 83 in Webb County and have another project started in Dimmit County on US 83 that is a rehab and Super 2 project that is currently under construction.

He then described CSJ 0299-14-010. SL 480, which is the last segment of SL 480 and is let early next year in February. SL 480 will complete the missing gap from US 57 to US 277 that will allow the district to continue the footprint of I-27 north of SL 480. The district recently went through the selection process and are in the negotiation process for two General Engineering (GEC) contracts that will help them manage the different segments of I-27. He continued with several projects which will require relief routes around communities of Catarina, Asherton, Carrizo Springs, and Eagle Pass. In Del Rio, the district will be expanding SL 79, which will be part of I-27, and they will continue north all the way to Sonora as their tie-in point.

Lauren Garduno asked about the GEC contracts and wanted to know if the district will be able to begin and if they need help with funding.

Mr. Gonzalez responded they can start with the GEC and mentioned the communities going north through Catarina, Asherton, and Carrizo Springs are where they will start looking at possible alternatives and ultimately where the relief route will be located.

Judge Parrish thanked Mr. Gonzalez and called on Russel Pehl, Transportation Planning and Development Director, San Angelo District.

Mr. Pehl first discussed the northern relief route, CSJ 0907-24-055. This route is on the north side of San Angelo that connects US 67 to US 87. The project is about 60 percent complete and is scheduled to let in April 2032 with an estimated construction cost of \$113 million to construct frontage roads. Main lanes will be constructed later. The Sonora relief route is in the southern portion of the district where I-10 and I-27 will intersect. San Angelo is partnering with the Laredo District on this project for geometric study and feasibility study. This project is in the early stages, and they have begun negotiations with consultants to help with the feasibility study.

Mr. Osborne asked Mr. Pehl if the fact that San Angelo is being impacted by both interstates, and do they have to combine some of their projects.

Mr. Pehl replied, yes, and stated I-14 and I-27 will merge in San Angelo, so they will be planning on the south side of town where they will intersect where US 87 and US 277 merge. They are taking that into consideration and how to make those direct connections between the two interstates, but the primary focus right now is I-27.

Judge Parrish stated that it is good to have Schleicher County on board and wants to make sure the San Angelo District knows how important it is to make sure these two projects are ultimately connected. He then called on Jeremy Dearing, Abilene District Engineer.

Mr. Dearing stated the Abilene District has one joint project (CSJ 0069-01-061) along US 87 between Howard and Glasscock Counties; this is the last section of four-lane undivided US 87 along the corridor. They will construct it to interstate standards. He added the project is fully funded, including funding for right of way. Abilene district is also reviewing the relief route in Big Spring and will investigate what that will take to move it to interstate standards. He noted the main lanes are complete, but they must look at frontage roads, turnarounds, intersection improvements, and also the I-20/I-27 interchange.

Commissioner New remarked that this is an educational opportunity from Sterling City to Midland. The cost is described as utility movement, but in this case, it will be oil field equipment, pipeline, etc. It gets very expensive to go from four-lane undivided to four-lane divided. He expressed understanding of the process that will take place for upgrades and the expense involved in right of way development.

Judge Parrish echoed Mr. New's comments and added the importance of meetings like this is hearing those individual challenges as we get further north and the issues that keep us from going to a four-lane divided. He thanked Mr. New for his statement.

Mr. Garduno added that he drove the corridor yesterday and everyone needs to be reminded that you do not have to build an interstate to a typical footprint. He added that Commissioner New is correct that it will be a very expensive corridor to clear utilities on, but it does not have to be typical, so it is important to evaluate alignment of the interstate

Judge Parrish then called on Erik Lykins, Odessa District Engineer.

Mr. Lykins started with the I-20 project that is dual designation. The project is being let in 2027 and is from east of County Road 1250 interchange to just east of SH 349. He went on to discuss the next active I-20 construction projects that fall on that dual designation with I-27 West: Cotton Flat and Midkiff, which are close to completion, and I-20 in Midland County, which is about two years away from completion.

He then discussed upcoming planning including an intersection improvement on SH 349 at County Road (CR) 3200. Regarding the segment from CR 1788 at I-20 on the west side of Midland to the Craddock Reliever around SH 349 and then north to SH 176. Mr. Lykins described the next phase for schematic development for the Garden City highway portion of I-20 and SH 158 to the Glasscock County line. The final phase for I-27 segments will be from SH 176 to Lamesa. He added once they get to the Dawson County line, they cross into the Lubbock District, but they are taking the lead on development into Dawson County and Lamesa. They anticipate schematic development to begin next year to convert that to a freeway section and then a critical piece of the whole stretch will be deciding what will happen at Lamesa regarding relief routes and they anticipate starting that work next year.

Mr. Gonzalez noted a challenge they have in Laredo is working with Customs and Border Protection on the inspection facilities. At some point, they need to discuss locations of safety rest areas.

Debra Richmond asked if there is any overlap with truck parking and if the design of the interstate included additional truck parking anywhere or allow for that.

Mr. Gonzalez stated they are considering locations for truck parking. As they begin to identify right of way and looking for potential truck parking along the corridor, they have areas along US 83 and some existing on US 277 where they have additional right of way and are converting those areas to truck parking.

Ms. Richmond suggested if we already have the funds to start some schematics and if we can expand the scope, we wouldn't go back and recreate the wheel later and add on truck parking.

Commissioner New stated there is some overlap with the division and the maintenance to plan out rest areas. They are looking for existing areas, for example: an old rest area that can be converted into truck use. It also involves coordination with the private sector. They are offering private parking. It is not a travel center but consists of buying former pieces of property from developments and charging for parking which is taking off in the Houston and Dallas areas. One of the places they mentioned was the Permian Basin, specifically Midland/Odessa, that is being tackled in different areas because truck parking is scarce. Funding is slim but the private initiative is taking off.

Judge Parrish thanked Commissioner New and Mr. Lykins. Shelley Harris, Transportation Planning and Development Director, provided an update for Lubbock District.

Mr. Harris noted the district has four projects for I-27. The largest project is their project from Lubbock 30 miles south to Tahoka, which will be a high-level schematic to see what is feasible. This was made possible by earmark from Senator Arrington. Second, I-27 and Marsha Sharp Freeway interchange, which is also part of that earmark fund. This project will add direct connectors. Both projects have already started schematic design. The next project is SL 88 and I-27 interchange. This is a \$300 million project with two direct connectors from the interstate to SL 88, so it will be the eastbound SL 88 to northbound I-27 and I-27 southbound to westbound SL 88. The final project is connection to Lamesa, which splits US 87 to BUS 87.

Judge Parrish stated he receives many calls about overpasses on FM 41.

Mr. Harris replied they have finished design and are going to bid in December with construction in the spring.

Next, Blair Johnson, Amarillo District Engineer, provided updates.

Mr. Johnson stated they do not have a viable north-south route for I-27 yet. He referenced their first project that started in 2017 and began leading a series of projects along their west loop to develop to interstate standards with the vision being the future I-27 around Amarillo. This is the last project to complete a 4-lane divided highway around Amarillo. The district has built frontage roads to the west side. This was a \$133 million project that will wrap up in the next six months. The next project is a conversion of the existing interstate from a four-lane to a six-lane between Amarillo and Canyon, which sets up a future interchange between SL 335 and I-27. The third project, CSJ 0425-02-037, is US 87

between Dumas and Hartley, and should start in the next couple of months. The next funded project is a \$250 million project at the south interchange of SL 335 and I-27 that will connect the SL 335 main lanes over I-27 and build two direct connectors. This will allow travel on a four-lane divided around Amarillo without having to go through downtown. The district evaluated the north interchange of US 87 and SL 335 north of Amarillo as well as a relief route around Dumas. The study resulted in a relief route option around Dumas that will have a future connection for I-27.

Mr. Osbourne had a comment/question regarding dual signage and asked if they had started changing the signs.

Mr. Johnson confirmed they are.

Judge Parrish thanked the districts and voiced his appreciation for their work.

### **Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Update**

Judge Parrish introduced Cameron Walker, Executive Director of the Permian Basin MPO. Mr. Walker provided an overview of the MPO's role relevant to the I-27 corridor, and recent updates in the MPO's funding strategy.

Mr. Walker began by thanking the committee members and explaining that MPOs are federally mandated agencies responsible for regional transportation planning. The Permian Basin MPO was established in 1965 and initially included the cities of Midland and Odessa, along with portions of two counties. Over time, its boundaries have expanded to encompass more of those counties and now include a small portion of northern Martin County.

He noted that MPOs operate under state highway legislation, currently the IIJA, and receive both federal and state funding. MPOs are accountable to these agencies and must report accordingly, depending on the nature of the projects.

One of the MPO's core responsibilities is maintaining a fiscally constrained long-range transportation plan. Mr. Walker emphasized that while visionary ideas for corridor expansion are valuable, they must be supported by realistic funding strategies. In November 2024, the Permian Basin MPO board approved a 25-year transportation plan extending through 2050. This plan reflects significant increases in funding allocations since 2018, particularly through the UTP.

He highlighted that I-27 has received a substantial share of Category 12 funding in recent years. Based on this trend, the MPO assumed continued support for interstate projects and applied a four percent annual growth rate to UTP funding projections. Over the life of the plan, this equates to approximately \$3.5 billion in funding, with 15–20 percent earmarked for I-14 and I-27.

Mr. Walker also pointed out a unique regional contribution: in 2017, the Midland and Odessa Economic Development Corporations invested around \$30 million in on-system projects. This local funding accelerated project timelines and demonstrated strong regional commitment. While individual projects may have been relatively small (\$2–\$3 million each), the collective investment signaled to the state the importance of these initiatives. The MPO anticipates continued contributions from both corporations at a modest rate of \$1 million annually over the plan's duration.

The approved plan outlines how funding from Categories 2, 3, 4, and 12 can be leveraged to reach the \$3.5 billion target, supporting long-term infrastructure development across the region.

Mr. Walker opened the floor for questions.

Judge Parrish shared a personal mission tied to his work with the Lubbock MPO, emphasizing the importance of collaboration among city, county, and TxDOT partners. He noted that when statewide projects demonstrate strong local cooperation, they tend to be viewed more favorably by decision-making committees. Local alignment and shared commitment are key indicators of project viability and community support.

Judge Parrish thanked Mr. Walker for the reminder that MPOs are composed of local stakeholders, including those in the community and in attendance. This reinforces the idea that meaningful progress depends on active participation and unity at the local level.

Mr. Garduno informed the committee of a formal request made to TxDOT regarding the designation of I-27 as a rural SMART corridor. He explained that TxDOT has a division focused on SMART technology and SMART corridor development, referencing the I-45 corridor out of Houston as an example of current efforts.

He shared that discussions have taken place with representatives from that division, and the request aims to incorporate SMART corridor features into the ongoing development of I-27. This designation would help address several concerns raised during the meeting, including truck parking, Customs and Border Protection accommodation, and other infrastructure needs.

Debra Richmond requested information from Mr. Garduno on how the committee can support this initiative. She stated that automated trucking is already active in the Permian Basin.

Mr. Garduno shared that several businesses are currently engaging in and exploring the use of new materials and emerging technologies in transportation infrastructure. He emphasized the importance of incorporating these innovations into the development of I-27, particularly in ways that enhance safety, communication, and freight mobility. Mr. Garduno reiterated that a formal request has been submitted to TxDOT to designate I-27 as a rural SMART corridor.

## **Closing Remarks**

Judge Parrish opened the floor to final comments and questions. In his closing remarks, he emphasized the long-term impact of the committee's work, noting the decisions made today will significantly shape the future, regardless of whether they personally witness the outcomes. He expressed gratitude to the committee members, TxDOT, the communities involved, and the constituents for their dedication and collaboration.

Mr. Gonzales added a final comment underscoring the importance of incorporating resiliency in highway design. He stressed that infrastructure must be built to endure both natural and human-caused disasters, ensuring long-term reliability and safety.

## **Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned at 2:37 p.m.