



Texas Freight Advisory Committee Meeting #47

1 p.m. to 5 p.m., June 8, 2026

In-Person Meeting

Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) Stassney Headquarters
Auditorium, 6230 E. Stassney Ln., Austin, TX 78744

COMMITTEE ATTENDEES

- Gerry Schwebel – Chair, International Bank of Commerce (IBC), Attended
- Candice Armenoff, Port Houston, Attended
- Ken Becker, Owner-Operator Independent, Drivers Association (OOIDA), Attended
- Adriana Cruz, Office of the Texas Governor, Executive Director of Economic Development and Tourism, Attended
- John Esparza, Texas Trucking Association, Absent
- Joey Evans, TNW Corporation, Attended
- Laura Freeland, Southern Dallas County Inland Port Transportation Management Association, Attended
- Teclo Garcia, Mission Economic Development Corporation, Absent
- Lauren Garduno, Ports-to-Plains Alliance, Attended
- Nicholas Konen – Vice Chair, Hillwood, AllianceTexas, Attended
- Miriam Kotkowski, TECMA Transportation Services, Attended
- Charlie Leal, Texas Farm Bureau, Attended
- Robert MacDonald, Texas Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (TEMPO), Attended
- Ryan Martin, LDR Partners, Absent
- Tiffany Melvin, North American Strategy for Competitiveness, Absent
- Lindsay Mullins, BNSF Railway, Attended
- Dr. Rolando Ortiz, Killam Development, Ltd., Attended
- Steven Schar, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Attended

COMMITTEE ATTENDEES (continued)

- Clint Schelbitzki, Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR), Absent
- Raquel Espinoza, proxy for Clint Schelbitzki, Attended
- Sean Stibich, Port of Victoria, Absent
- Isaac J. Tawil, City Manager of McAllen/McAllen Economic Development Group, Absent
- Matt Woodruff, Kirby Corporation, Absent

Total Count of Committee Present (includes proxy members): 15

Texas Transportation Commission Attendees

- Commissioner Alejandro "Alex" G. Meade III

TxDOT Attendees

- Loretta Brown
- Jessica Butler
- Christian Campbell
- Andrew A. Canon
- Leah Casey
- Diego Castro-Gonzalez
- Michael Chamberlain
- Marvinna Cephas
- Emily Clisby
- Farideh Dassi
- Jorge Almada Diaz
- Kale Driemeier
- Samantha Fleischman
- Don Franks
- Claudia Lagos Galindo
- Norma Garza
- Humberto "Tito" Gonzalez, Jr.
- Rafael Gonzalez
- Tyler Graham
- Brandye Hendrickson
- GeirEilif Kalhagen
- Nicole Kennedy
- Mildred Litchfield
- David Mass
- Caroline Mays (virtual)
- Romualdo Mena
- Beto Padillo
- Dora Robles
- Allyson Schmitz
- Wesley Starnes
- Sergio Vasquez
- Yuqing Wang
- Aslan Zarafshan

Agency/Consultant Team Attendees

- Paula Dowell, HNTB Corporation
- Eva Esquivel, HNTB Corporation
- Max Hoffman, HNTB Corporation
- Lauren Ramirez, HNTB Corporation
- Jeremy Upchurch, HNTB Corporation
- Robert Elizondo, PCI
- Joseph Bryan, WSP
- Pegah Tootoonchian, WSP
- Lizzie Welch, WSP

Other Attendees

- Callie Barnes, Port Houston
- Savannah Briscoe, North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG)
- Brian Hill, U.S. Maritime Administration
- Tim Juarez, Stanley Consultants
- Bruce Mann, Southwest Association of Rail Shippers
- Juan Mendive, Laredo Webb County Area Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Matthew Moreno, Alamo Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (AAMPO)
- Curtis Morgan, Texas A&M Transportation Institute
- Debra Richmond, Permian Strategic Partnership
- Krishna Satti, AECOM
- Hannah Santiago, Cambridge Systematics
- Jennifer Shepard, Alliance for I-69 Texas
- Jeff Warner, Texas A&M Transportation Institute
- Brendon Wheeler, Alamo Area Metropolitan Planning Organization

TxFAC Welcome, Call to Order, Safety Minute, and New Business

Chair Gerry Schwebel of IBC Bank formally called the meeting to order. He thanked members for joining the meeting and welcomed the attendees to the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) Stassney Campus in Austin. Chair Schwebel provided a snapshot of freight mobility in Texas by highlighting data from the Bureau of Transportation Statistics that demonstrated Texas' importance to North America. He stated that the value of Texas for Washington, D.C. stems from its geography, geology, and job creation.

Commissioner Alejandro "Alex" G. Meade III also thanked everyone for their attendance and participation. Commissioner Meade described the committee as an important economic entity for Texas and noted the importance of continuing to make Texas competitive. He stressed that although Texas' movement of goods and people operates at a high level, adapting and changing to fit current needs is just as important.

Caroline Mays, Senior Director of Planning and Modal Programs at TxDOT, joined the meeting virtually and welcomed the group. She expressed her excitement for the meeting after viewing the agenda.

Humberto "Tito" Gonzalez, Jr., P.E., Director of Transportation Planning and Programming at TxDOT, greeted the attendees and discussed his enthusiasm for the 2027 Texas Freight Mobility Plan. He then described the interactive map engagement activity, located in the Cortado Room, as critical for this committee. He noted that this interactive activity allows the committee to align their goals as they continue to plan and execute transporting goods and people safely.

Adriana Cruz, Executive Director of Economic Development and Tourism within the Office of the Governor, thanked the group and highlighted that Texas is the national leader in economic development and job creation. Ms. Cruz noted that TxDOT's work is a major reason that Texas leads in economic activity.

Texas Space Corridor Needs Assessment

Ms. Mays introduced Michael Chamberlain, Director of Data Management at TxDOT's Transportation Planning and Programming Division. Ms. Mays briefly provided an overview of the Texas Space Corridor Needs Assessment and highlighted the key support Texas provides for the growth of the space industry. She then noted the constant space-related activity occurring throughout the state.

Mr. Chamberlain discussed Texas' more than a 60-year history of leadership in the space industry, with over 150,000 aerospace sector employees. Mr. Chamberlain then reviewed the purpose of the Space Industry Highway Needs Assessment, noting Texas has identified the space industry as a key sector for economic growth.

He reviewed the following questions:

- What corridors does the space industry depend on moving freight and what are the challenges?
- Does current and planned highway infrastructure accommodate the space industry's growing needs?
- What highway characteristics are critical to accommodate the space industry's freight and job access needs?
- What highway investments are needed to ensure Texas leads the American space industry and economy?

Next, Mr. Chamberlain stated that the stakeholder-informed needs assessment, which included interviews and surveys with space industry companies, research institutions, public and quasi-public agencies, and TxDOT districts and divisions. Stakeholders identified key transportation needs, including roadway access and capacity improvements, roadway operational and safety upgrades, development-centered investment, suitable freight route alternatives, bridge vertical clearances, and overnight truck parking.

Mr. Chamberlain then discussed programmatic challenges, including funding constraints, the need for ongoing communication between TxDOT and the private-sector and lengthy project development timelines. Mr. Chamberlain discussed the six-step, data-driven process used to identify Texas Space Industry Corridors (SICs), a new planning tool that combines stakeholder input and transportation data to help identify and prioritize highway improvements

Texas Space Corridor Needs Assessment (continued)

that benefits the space industry.

The six steps include:

1. Identify and map primary space industry facilities
2. Map stakeholder input
3. Analyze space industry freight OS/OW permit routes
4. Analyze heavy vehicle origin and destination data
5. Synthesize stakeholder input and datasets
6. Validate the corridors

Next, Mr. Chamberlain provided an overview of the critical, primary, and secondary tiers of the 8,587-mile SIC network and discussed transportation needs such as vertical clearance, bridge replacements, and highway widening. Mr. Chamberlain discussed potential future space activity and reviewed the 15-year program of the Texas SIC funding gap. He then outlined future TxDOT organizational strategies for supporting Texas' space industry success, such as dedicated district and division space industry liaisons in the short-term and the optimization of TxDOT's organizational framework to more efficiently address Texas space industry's transportation needs in the medium-term.

Mr. Chamberlain noted that one way the space industry has discussed reducing Texas SIC investment needs and the number of trucks on the Texas Highways is by producing oxidizers on-site. As a follow-up, Lindsay Mullins, BNSF Railway, asked about the timeline for producing oxidizer on-site. Mr. Chamberlain said that it is under construction now.

Lastly, Mr. Chamberlain highlighted that robust investment in the Texas highway network will enable efficient space industry freight movement and stated that the industry is forecasted to be valued at \$1.8 trillion by 2035.

Lauren Garduno, Ports-to-Plains Alliance, suggested considering the incorporation of new corridors to support space-related transportation, citing the future I-27 extension in Laredo. He emphasized the importance of overlaying multiple planning efforts, like the Border Transportation Master Plan (BTMP), into space industry transportation needs. He then encouraged the team to consider transportation investments along the Texas border, as it could also help with homeland security initiatives.

Texas Space Corridor Needs Assessment (continued)

Ms. Mays responded that the Texas Space Commission is incorporating different layers of input into this strategic effort to contribute to the mapping process. She explained that they overlay all the projects to identify space industry corridors. She said the analysis began with previous planning efforts and stakeholder input to better understand the space industry. She also highlighted that the study is considering future interstates such as I-69, I-14 and I-27. Mr. Garduno expressed appreciation for considering the I-69 corridor. He stated that the Ports-to-Plains Alliance relies on multiple funding sources to build their programs and noted his concern that important corridors could be overlooked because they are not currently designated as high priority on the National Highway Freight Network.

Mr. Gonzalez, Jr. stated that the study should take a holistic approach and consider initiatives identified in broader studies, like the BTMP, as additional planning tools. He noted that transportation needs continue to grow and that some TxDOT districts may not fully understand how this industry and its transportation demands could affect their programs.

Mr. Garduno added that it will be important to figure out economic and trade numbers for these transportation investments and their overall contribution to the state's gross domestic product.

Robert MacDonald, Texas Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (TEMPO), referenced information presented regarding funding. He stated that TEMPO conducted work for Space Force that required roadway access. He noted that Space Force would constantly discuss safety. He added that training the military and private-sector employees requires significant time and money. He emphasized the need to work with local Metropolitan Planning Organizations and TxDOT to maintain safety as the highest priority. He added that this includes providing alternative truck routes to avoid oversize and overweight trucks on local city roads.

Miriam Kotkowski, TECMA Transportation Services, stated that she is concerned with the lack of discussion around freight coming from El Paso. She stated that Chihuahua leads in aerospace and data center manufacturing. She noted that forty percent of oversized freight, as well as workforce resources and equipment, travel along the El Paso corridor from Mexico. She also

Texas Space Corridor Needs Assessment (continued)

highlighted the challenges associated with obtaining routing permits.

Mr. Gonzalez, Jr. explained that the study was completed in March 2025 using data through the end of 2024 and noted that the plan will be updated annually. Ms. Mays added that the plan is tentative, and the goal was to highlight infrastructure needs for the space industry, not a comprehensive plan on all transportation issues. She explained that the study focuses on the supply chain that supports the space industry and incorporates information from companies such as Blue Origin. She added that the study should be viewed as a living document that will be refreshed over time.

Chair Schwebel noted that the future of space transportation hubs will be driven by congestion levels, as well as private- and public-sector investments. He encouraged the study team to use their relationships with local county and city governments to build partnerships that can support transportation improvements that benefit everyone.

Texas Economic Development & Tourism Office Update

Adriana Cruz thanked the committee for the opportunity to brief them on the Texas Economic Development and Tourism Office (EDT). She highlighted EDT's mission, which is to positively impact the economic prosperity of Texas. She further discussed Texas as a premier business location and tourist destination.

The Texas EDT Office promotes the state of Texas as a leading global business location and premier travel destination through the following divisions: Business Development, Economic Development Finance, Texas CHIPS Office, Texas Workforce Investment Council, Texas Music Office, Travel Texas, and Texas Film. Ms. Cruz highlighted the five regional offices in the Texas Panhandle, West Texas, South Texas, North/Central Texas, and East Texas. She described their role as working directly with the local governments and stakeholders to increase economic development through workshops, business meetings, and chambers of commerce.

Ms. Cruz then touted that Texas is the eighth-largest economy in the world based on GDP and ranks first in exporting jobs added in 2025 and foreign trade zone economic impact in the nation. She then discussed the national

Texas Economic Development & Tourism Office Update (continued)

recognition Texas has received from numerous prestigious organizations for its business climate and economic development. Texas was also recognized as a leading growth state in job-creating business investments and population. Additional accolades highlight Texas' strength among best states to start a business and has the most Carnegie Tier 1 Research Universities. Ms. Cruz then discussed Texas' multimodal access to the world markets. Texas' central location, ports and investment in road, rail and air networks have positioned Texas as the leader in movement of people and goods. Texas ranks first in jobs supported by exports and leads the nation in high-tech exports. Ms. Cruz noted Texas' top trade partners are Mexico and Canada.

Ms. Cruz provided an overview of business development in 2025, stating that there were 1,400 new projects announced with a total of \$75 billion and over 42,000 jobs created. She highlighted that the top project by investment is Google data centers, and the top project in jobs created is Southwest Airlines New Crew Base.

Ms. Cruz then discussed the more than 455 projects in the pipeline for development. She noted the boom that occurred from the pandemic in 2020 to over four times as many projects in development in 2026. She noted there are multiple projects exceeding \$1 billion all over the state. To depict the diversification of these projects, she stated that over half of the active projects are involved in the advanced manufacturing industry, followed by energy, petroleum refining and chemicals, and artificial intelligence (AI). Ms. Cruz discussed several 2025 project announcements including Lilly, Meta, and Google. She noted the financial services industry movement to Texas referencing the saying, "From Wall Street to Y'all Street." Ms. Cruz noted SpaceX and Collins Aerospace as 2025 announcements, acknowledging the previous space industry presentation.

In 2024, EDT developed a five-year economic development strategic plan for the state and the blueprint for continued economic prosperity:

- Establishing a unifying vision for the future of our Texas economy
- Identifying target industry sectors and clusters expected to drive strategic economic growth and job creation
- Outlining objectives and initiatives to advance the state's domestic and

Texas Economic Development & Tourism Office Update (continued)

- international competitiveness
- Providing data and recommendations to inform economic development decisions across the state

Ms. Cruz stated that although Texas has enjoyed economic success, it is important not to become complacent and lose its competitive edge. She also stated that the plan reflects Texas' decentralized economic development approach, creating an environment where Texas communities, industries and businesses can lead the way to growth and prosperity. She explained that this plan was developed in partnership with state agencies, business and community leaders, regional representatives, and statewide associations. The plan also incorporates data on demographic trends, peer states and countries, industry performance, workforce needs, and the entrepreneurship landscape.

Ms. Cruz described the plan as a snapshot of Texas' economy presently, the interconnected economic development ecosystem and a unifying vision for the future economy with objectives and initiatives that cement the state's position as a global leader. Additional tools in the profile include regional profiles, target sector profiles, and an innovation and entrepreneurship catalog.

Ms. Cruz stated that the following 10 industry sectors will drive growth and create jobs across regions: Advanced Manufacturing; Energy Evolution; Food and Livestock Products; Hospitality, Tourism and Culture; Information Technology; Life Sciences and Biotechnology; Petroleum Refining and Chemicals; Professional Services and Corporate Operations; Rare Earth Elements and Mineral Mining; and Transportation and Logistics.

Ms. Cruz then discussed the following four economic pillars that will advance regional priorities and target sector growth:

1. Thriving businesses and industries
2. Robust innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem
3. Nimble workforce training environment
4. Resilient infrastructure network.

In closing, Ms. Cruz emphasized that the future starts with Texas and expressed excitement about the fortunate opportunity the committee has to

Texas Economic Development & Tourism Office Update (continued)

build bigger in a transformational moment.

Chair Schwebel thanked Ms. Cruz and added that the committee plays a key role in the state's continued development.

2027 Texas Freight Mobility Plan Update: Freight Network Designation- Part 1

Kale Driemeier, Project Development Manager of Freight Systems Branch at TxDOT, presented the 2027 Texas Freight Mobility Plan (TFMP) Update. Mr. Driemeier initially reviewed the questions for the interactive maps and encouraged participation by providing a QR code for attendees to review the network and submit comments.

Next, Mr. Driemeier defined the National Highway Freight Network (NHFN) as a network of primary freight routes designated by the U.S. Department of Transportation. He noted that projects on the NHFN are eligible for federal funding through the National Highway Freight Program (NHFP). He then discussed the Texas Multimodal Freight Network (TMFN), TxDOT's designated critical network for goods movement and planning tool for recognizing the most important roadways. He defined the Texas Highway Freight Network (THFN) as the planning tool supporting TxDOT freight-related investments and noted that it is re-evaluated with each update to the freight plan. Mr. Driemeier then reviewed the four non-highway modes: rail, ports, air cargo, and pipelines. He explained that all freight rail in Texas is included in the TMFN. He highlighted the number of miles for both Class I and III Rail while noting that Texas does not have any Class II Railroads. He further discussed that of the twenty-three ports in Texas, ten maritime ports are on the TMFN, with Port Houston as the highest ranked port in the country. When discussing air cargo, Mr. Driemeier highlighted that Texas added four additional airports to the TMFN in 2022 based on their role in facilitating the movement of air cargo across the state, bringing the total to ten air cargo hubs. He added that all pipelines in Texas are part of the TMFN, accumulating over 345,000 miles of pipeline.

2027 Texas Freight Mobility Plan Update: Freight Network Designation- Part 1 (continued)

Max Hoffman, HNTB, discussed the Highway Network Evaluation. He stated that TxDOT evaluates the network using four primary criteria: economic competitiveness, goods movement, supply chains, and market access. Mr. Hoffman added that this network does not establish truck routes but is a planning tool to identify the most important roadways for freight movement. Mr. Hoffman stated that the evaluation of the THFN helps prioritize investments, provides a consistent statewide evaluation framework, and tracks changes in freight activity over time.

Tyler Graham, Freight Systems Branch Manager at TxDOT, stated that the team is trying to identify the roads across the state that are most critical for freight movement. Mr. Graham noted that the data they have is the first component, while the feedback provided by the committee is the second.

Mr. Hoffman then reviewed the 2026 Statewide Network Evaluation Results. He noted that urban areas typically have stronger evaluation results than rural areas. He stated that the top five areas for growth were Houston, Beaumont, Dallas, Corpus Christi, and Yoakum. Mr. Hoffman continued by highlighting the growth of the east-west interstate corridors, specifically I-20 from Dallas to I-10. He noted that these changes were driven by industrial growth in Midland and Odessa. He also discussed the border trade trends for West Texas, with more than 30,000 commercial motor vehicle (CMV) crossings in 2025 compared to 2022 and 400,000 more CMV crossings in South Texas in the same period. While discussing changes in unique urban areas from 2022 to 2026, he highlighted that loop corridors carry the majority of freight tonnage in Houston, while arterial corridors carry their freight tonnage in San Antonio.

He then reviewed the following considerations for updates to the freight network: consecutive segments meeting evaluation criteria, connects freight infrastructure or employment more directly than the existing network, and logical connections to existing network.

Chair Schwebel discussed the importance of I-10 and I-20, noting that much of the freight originates from distribution hubs in Dallas and Houston and travels east and west across the country. Because of the importance of Texas' role in the larger freight network, Chair Schwebel stated that freight

2027 Texas Freight Mobility Plan Update: Freight Network Designation- Part 1 (continued)

planning must account for national distribution patterns.

Mr. Garduno noted that the growth comparisons of I-20 and I-10 highlight the efforts to relieve pressure out of I-35 by providing alternative freight routes. He encouraged the study team to incorporate different freight commodities, like agricultural and electronic products, into the evaluation criteria. He emphasized the need to capture freight needs for rural networks.

Mr. Hoffman stressed the need for comments on the interactive maps and noted how critical it is for future planning. He added that the data they review only goes so far, and the committee feedback can fill in the gaps.

Mr. Garduno stated he lives in Abilene and described the need to evaluate how AI data centers and distribution will impact the freight network maps.

Laura Freeland, Southern Dallas County Inland Port Transportation Management Association, stated that data centers offer fewer jobs while increasing traffic. Ms. Freeland highlighted the need for short-term changes to address major issues with construction and truck parking spaces.

Lindsay Mullins, BNSF Railway, asked how transportation needs can be planned for in the future. Ms. Mullins then emphasized the importance of providing a roadmap for funders and implementers. Lastly, she stressed the need to not only address congestion that exists currently, but to anticipate future congestion as well.

Chair Schwebel expressed enthusiasm at the opportunity to share the committee's information with policymakers, noting Ted Cruz's role in commerce. He stressed the need for constant education and outreach to government staff because the assumption that they are up to speed on current information is incorrect.

Mr. Graham expressed his appreciation for the timing of this discussion, noting the importance of understanding the projected growth of Texas. He discussed the holistic effort that is required to understand the Texas economy and population, highlighting the importance of having the right roads today to be

2027 Texas Freight Mobility Plan Update: Freight Network Designation- Part 1 (continued)

prepared for further creation in the future. Lastly, Mr. Graham stated his desire to remain ahead of emerging trends in transportation and technology.

Vice Chair Nicholas Konen, Hillwood, AllianceTexas, noted that the study provides a guiding torch for Farm-to-Market (FM) roads. He observed that if the growth continues in all identified corridors, there will be added stress to neighboring FM roads. Vice Chair Konen also noted that the data centers using FM roads for construction and distribution add stress on roads that were not built for that purpose, potentially affecting the surrounding communities.

2027 Texas Freight Mobility Plan: Freight Network Designation Discussion- Part 2

Leah Casey, Freight Planner at TxDOT, discussed the Critical Urban Freight Corridors (CUFC) and Critical Rural Freight Corridors (CRFC). Ms. Casey noted that states receive a mileage limit for corridor designations, and that Texas has 386 CUFC mileage and 747 CRFC mileage.

Ms. Casey reviewed the existing and proposed CUFC mileage by MPOs. She stated that the current message is a rebalancing of efforts to align with current needs. Ms. Casey said that most MPOs are focused on maintaining the existing corridors, noting the efforts are centered around refinement and not expansion.

Ms. Freeland asked why there is not more expansion, stating that she thinks the Dallas/Fort Worth area needs warrant more corridor designations.

Mr. Graham stated that Texas' designated mileage has increased over time. The FHWA designated 386 miles as part of the CUFC network. TxDOT reached out to MPOs across the state to identify primary corridors to eventually apply for federal funding. He cited San Antonio's Loop 1604 project as an example of a corridor segment that has been removed from consideration because federal funding is no longer required as the project nears completion. He emphasized that those miles are not lost, just shifted to another critical freight corridor.

Chair Schwebel questioned who establishes the benchmark for these

2027 Texas Freight Mobility Plan Update: Freight Network Designation- Part 2 (continued)

designations. He noted that the FHWA makes determinations based on established criteria from Congress and suggested that Texas should be viewed through a different lens due to the size and transportation needs of the state.

Mr. Garduno stated that decision-makers have difficulty trying to determine whether to use federal funding for existing freight systems or newly designated crucial networks. He suggested that the flaw of this process is once a corridor is fully built out; it may be removed from the CUFC network, forcing the state to adjust corridor designations.

Ms. Casey continued discussing the CUFC, saying Houston-Galveston Area Council (HGAC), North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) and Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) will not have any changes in this cycle. She added that the Alamo Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (AAMPO), Rio Grande Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (RGV), and El Paso Metropolitan Planning Organization (ELP) have submitted changes.

Ms. Casey then discussed the existing CUFCs for CAMPO, HGAC, and NCTCOG, highlighting the fact that the network maintains existing corridors and meets the current needs. Ms. Casey then reviewed the key changes for AAMPO, the removal of Loop 1604 from Northwest I-10 to Judson Road, and the addition of Loop 1604 from US 90W to SH 16. For the El Paso MPO, the key changes include the removal of North US 54 from Loop 375 to New Mexico Border and the addition of US 54 from Loop 375 to I-10 and Loop 375 from I-10 to Zaragoza Port of Entry (POE). The change from ten to twelve miles reflects a more complete freight pathway, with an emphasis on cross-border efficiency and continuity. For the RGV MPO, the CUFC mileage saw a reduction from forty to twenty-three miles with a focus on first and last mile POE connections and I-2 extension. She added that this prioritizes routes that enable crossings.

Ms. Casey then discussed preliminary 2026 CRFC recommendations. She added that the CRFC recommendations are not final and are subject to feedback. She also highlighted the new CRFC corridors, US 277/377 and US 287. In closing, she stated that feedback is critical and thanked the committee for their time.

2027 Texas Freight Mobility Plan Update: Freight Network Designation- Part 2 (continued)

Ms. Kotkowski asked about freight corridor designations near the US-Mexico border. Mr. Graham explained that the El Paso MPO routes are located entirely within Texas and that the recent designation change involved the New Mexico border.

Chair Schwebel suggested inviting representatives from the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, specifically Administrator Derrick Barrs, to future meetings. He stated his experience could prove valuable in these discussions.

Mr. Graham reiterated that the purpose of the CUFC designation process is to identify critical corridors that can qualify and receive federal funding.

Mr. Evans asked about rail infrastructure's role in the CUFC process. He cited Texas' robust rail network, including the growth of short lines and Class I railroads. He added that additional funding for rail can play a major component in driving freight traffic away from state highways. He observed that FM roads are not designed for current and future freight demands. In response, Mr. Graham stated that local MPOs have identified at-grade crossings that are designated as critical for funding.

Chair Schwebel emphasized the importance of understanding how freight funding is distributed. He stressed that the investments are not a one-time deal, but a continued investment in making Texas' freight network critical to the future.

Raquel Espinoza, Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR), echoed Chair Schwebel's comments regarding freight funding. She expressed appreciation for the state's leadership that focuses on at-grade separations and freight infrastructure needs. She noted that freight demand continues to grow, citing an example in Laredo that has the construction of new warehouses with trucks queuing on I-35. She acknowledged that the current efforts are a great start but added that Texas is still behind in keeping pace with freight demands. Lastly, she added that Union Pacific Railroad will fund infrastructure on their side of the network that assists with providing a relief valve for Texas communities.

Roundtable Updates from TxFAC Members

Vice Chair Konen, Hillwood, AllianceTexas, discussed the rapid growth occurring at AllianceTexas. He stated that the AllianceTexas 10X facility is under construction and will support defense-related materials, magnets, and autonomous vehicles. Vice Chair Konen stated that growth in the AI supply chain has exceeded expectations and will continue to impact freight and transportation needs. He maintained that the relationship between private- and public sectors is paramount to ensuring that future infrastructure matches the expected growth.

Chair Schwebel noted that the growth of e-commerce, data centers and quantum computing will impact future transportation planning.

Charlie Leal, Texas Farm Bureau, stated that Texas farmers provide for the world. He highlighted that the Rio Grande Valley exports produce that goes to different destinations across the world. Mr. Leal stated that the Texas Farm Bureau is heavily engaged at the federal level and looks forward to continuing an equitable partnership with Mexico and the United States. He expressed his thanks to the staff and the committee for their efforts in supporting farmers. Mr. Leal then transitioned to discussing the cases of the parasitic screwworm fly that feeds on living tissue. He stated that the committee should expect concerns to grow but noted the U.S. Department of Agriculture is on the ground working with the Texas Animal Health Commission. He stressed that this outbreak does not affect the safety of meat products and discussed the importance of fighting misinformation. He encouraged attendees to report suspected cases through the proper channels and visit the official government website to find additional information. He also expressed concern regarding water use associated with data centers.

Ms. Cruz discussed AI data centers and the closed-loop water system they use that reduces impacts on local utilities. She acknowledged that communities are concerned and stressed the importance of educating the public. She emphasized that these opportunities are transformational for many regions.

Robert MacDonald, Texas Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (TEMPO), noted that local MPOs are actively reviewing legislation. He highlighted that the Alamo Area MPO completed their own freight plan and will provide it to the committee so they can comment on the maps and networks.

Roundtable Updates from TxFAC Members (continued)

Dr. Rolando Ortiz, Killam Development, Ltd., emphasized the importance of alternative freight routes, highlighting I-27 and Ports-to-Plains to alleviate traffic on I-35 and I-10. He encouraged the committee to continue investments in the Laredo area and Rio Grande Valley, citing the opening of the Rio Grande Valley Bridge to commercial traffic. Chair Schwebel added that the committee must consider highways and FM roads when planning future projects to ensure the network can accommodate increased freight traffic.

Steven Schar, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), thanked the presenters and did not provide any additional updates.

Candice Armenoff, Port Houston, discussed the ongoing efforts to identify ports and roadways funding. She said Port Houston is working on ways to improve the project development process and trying to figure out how to be more efficient with funding, noting that the dollar doesn't go as far as it used to. Ms. Armenoff stated that access to data, land, and supply chains is the key to using assets more efficiently. She concluded that it is important to be careful about innovation because it does not always lead to success.

Ken Becker, Owner-Operator Independent, Drivers Association (OOIDA), provided an update on the Build America 250 Act and described it as one of the most pro-trucking highway bills. He then reviewed a few items that are written in the legislation such as \$750 million for truck parking, upgraded restrooms for truck facilities and protection from predatory lease-to-own schemes. Mr. Becker emphasized safety remains the main concern. Chair Schwebel thanked Mr. Becker and added that truck driving is a noble profession.

Ms. Espinoza reported that rail freight volumes increased, with grain products experiencing the most growth since the 1990s. She cautioned that growth depends on economic factors such as inflation. She then thanked Commissioner Meade for attending the Transportation Advisory Group (TAG) and touring the UPRR Englewood Yard. She described the railway as the heartbeat of Texas' freight network. She then extended an invitation to the committee to visit the facility. Ms. Espinoza also highlighted UPRR's role in planning upcoming FIFA World Cup activities, including efforts to support safety and security. UPRR also participated in an educational news conference

Roundtable Updates from TxFAC Members (continued)

on human trafficking, promoting the “see something, say something” approach.

Joey Evans, TNW Corporation, discussed the Build America 250 Act and its potential impacts on short line railroads across the state. Mr. Evans stated that the legislation includes \$1 billion for a consolidated rail improvement fund and could accelerate rail improvements by as much as 15 years. He then expressed his concern about the proposed changes in funding that could slow future rail improvements. He emphasized the importance of educating policymakers and advocating for short line railroads in Texas due to the industry’s rising growth rate.

Ms. Freeland discussed the project development process to bring in new business. She expressed appreciation to TxDOT for maintaining private and public partnerships in transportation. She then stated her concern for growth that expands before infrastructure. She also discussed workforce development in Southern Dallas and highlighted the partnership between Walmart and community colleges to ensure workers get properly certified for automation roles.

Mr. Garduno discussed the Build America 250 Act and the development of future Texas interstate corridors, citing I-27, I-69 and I-14. He acknowledged the limited investment that has been made in interstate construction since 1994. Mr. Garduno discussed the coalition that includes thirteen future corridors across twenty-two states and added that there is value in building the next generation of interstates. He noted that coordination in the development of future corridors can support border security, freight movement, and other economic opportunities.

Ms. Kotkowski stressed that AI is coming and not slowing down. She then discussed the importance of international freight movement and cross-border trade, specifically in El Paso. She stated freight crossings in Laredo are approximately three hours, while El Paso varies from two to seven hours. She then expressed concern for the planned project that closes six critical commercial lanes in El Paso, staffing shortages for U.S. Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) and challenges for truck drivers to remain certified.

Final Remarks and Adjourn

In closing, Chair Schwebel thanked TxDOT staff, presenters and committee members for their contributions to a productive meeting. He emphasized that the work of the Texas Freight Advisory Committee is ongoing and noted that the committee's role and input are critical to Texas' transportation future.

Andrew Canon, Director, Freight Trade and Connectivity at TxDOT, encouraged the committee and attendees to visit the Cortado Room to participate in the interactive map activity. The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.