



Texas Freight Advisory Committee Meeting #44

September 10, 2025, 8 a.m. to noon

In-Person Meeting at Embassy Suites Downtown
 Yellow Rose Ballroom, 550 South Buchanan St., Amarillo, TX 79101

ATTENDEES

Committee Members	Organization	Attendance
Judge Ed Emmett – Chair	Rice University	Yes
Ken Becker	Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association (OOIDA)	Yes
Adriana Cruz	Office of the Governor	Did not attend
John Esparza	Texas Trucking Association	Yes
Laura Freeland	Southern Dallas County Inland Port Transportation Management Association	Yes
Teclo Garcia	Mission Economic Development Corporation	Did not attend
Lauren Garduno	Ports-to-Plains Alliance	Yes
Brenda Gunter	Ports-To-Plains Alliance	Yes
Charlie Jenkins	Port Houston	Did not attend
Miriam Kotkowski	TECMA Transportation Services	Did not attend
Russell Laughlin	Hillwood, Alliance Texas	Did not attend
Charlie Leal	Texas Farm Bureau	Did not attend
Robert MacDonald	Texas Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (TEMPO)	Yes
Ryan Martin	LDR Partners- Evolve Houston	Did not attend
Tiffany Melvin	North American Strategy for Competitiveness	Did not attend
Lindsay Mullins	BNSF	Yes
Dr. Rolando Ortiz	Killam Development Ltd.	Yes
Steven Schar	Texas Commission on Environmental Quality	Yes
Clint Schelbitzki	Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR)	Yes

Committee Members	Organization	Attendance
Gerry Schwebel	International Bank of Commerce, San Antonio	Yes
Sean Stibich	Port of Victoria	Yes
Isaac Tawil	McAllen Economic Development Group	Yes
Paul Treangen	TNW Corporation	Did not attend
Matt Woodruff	Kirby Corporation	Did not attend
Proxy Members	Organization	Attendance
Candice Armenoff	Port Houston	Yes

Total Count of Committee Present (includes proxy and ex officio members): 16

Texas Transportation Commission

Commissioner Alvin New

TxDOT

Jose Bocanegra
Andrew A. Canon
Leah Casey
Emily Clisby, Office of Commissioner Alvin New
Chad Coburn
Farideh Dassi
Kale Driemeier
Lorena Echeverria de Misi
Rafael Gonzalez
Tyler Graham
Rose Guajardo
Blair Johnson
Jemillatu Lewally
David Mass
Caroline Mays
Wesley Starnes

Agency/Consulting Team

Eva Esquivel, HNTB
Jeremy Upchurch, HNTB
William Long, Poznecki-Camarillo, LLC

Elected Officials

Cole Stanley, Mayor, city of Amarillo
Les Simpson, Mayor Pro Tem and Councilmember Place 4, city of Amarillo
Tom Thompson, Mayor, city of San Angelo

Other Attendees

Genevieve Bales, Federal Highway Administration
Will Baresi, BGE
Joe Bryan, WSP
Jimmy Dutchover, Pecos Economic Development Corporation
David Garcia, Real Strategic Solutions
Ernie Gonzalez, EMC Strategy Group
Brian Hill, United States Maritime Administration
Roger Horton, Shea Transportation
Tim Juarez, Stanley Consultants
Josh Knott, RaceTrac
Matt Larseingue, BNSF
Peter J. LeCody, Texas Rail Advocates
Charles Lino, City Manager, Town of Pecos City
Bruce Mann, RCR Rail Company
Allan Rutter, Texas A&M Transportation Institute
David Salgado, Texas A&M Transportation Institute
Carlos Silva, Texas A&M Transportation Institute
Cameron Walker, Permian Basin MPO
Jason Wallis, Texas A&M Transportation Institute
Jeff Warner, Texas A&M Transportation Institute

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

Tyler Graham, TxDOT freight systems branch manager, opened the meeting at 8:32 a.m. with a safety minute on school zone awareness as the school year begins. He mentioned the TxDOT “End The Streak” safety campaign and noted the importance of railroad crossing safety.

Judge Ed Emmett, Texas Freight Advisory Committee (TxFAC) chair and fellow in energy and transportation policy at Rice University’s Baker Institute for Public Policy, welcomed the committee, brought the meeting to order and then led the committee through introductions.

Texas Transportation Commissioner Alvin New welcomed the committee, noted the importance of freight in Texas and thanked the members for their participation. The commissioner discussed the data behind the TxDOT “End The Streak” safety campaign. He stressed the importance of wearing seatbelts. Ten percent of the people involved in vehicular crashes in Texas that could have been wearing a seatbelt account for 45% of fatalities each year. The commissioner added that speed is a factor in most crashes and encouraged everyone to slow down.

Lindsay Mullins, Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway, said she has seen more Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) officers out on the road and asked if that increase was a part of the safety campaign.

Commissioner New said TxDOT focuses on engineering, education, enforcement and innovation. He added that Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) are asked to work with local law enforcement. He noted that DPS officers have had to deal with border operations, crime task forces, legislative activities in Austin and a wave of retirements. More officers are now on the road because the Texas Legislature authorized additional hiring, allowing DPS to focus on their core tasks. The commissioner emphasized that innovations in transportation technology and engineering remain a priority for TxDOT.

2. Welcome to Amarillo – Open Spaces, Endless Opportunities

Mayor Cole Stanley, city of Amarillo, welcomed everyone to Amarillo and discussed the importance of transportation in the region. He explained that infrastructure is a priority and provided examples of economic development projects that will impact transportation planning. Mayor Stanley thanked the Texas Transportation Commission and TxFAC for their efforts to improve transportation in the Amarillo region. The mayor emphasized West Texas’ rapid growth and evolving needs, noting efforts to improve water and energy infrastructure to attract major employers. He provided examples of this growth including Bell Textron’s helicopter business, the Project Matador hybrid energy and data infrastructure campus, increased water-rights investments and natural gas resources. The committee had no comments or questions.

3. Roundtable: Member Updates and State of Freight Discussion

Chair Emmett led the committee through member updates and provided an update on his current work with the Baker Institute. He suggested the committee visit the institute’s website and review their work on highways in the city of Houston area. The institute is studying fuels of the future and the chair gave examples of fuels being used. Mobility around Texas ports is critical to the movement of fuel and goods.

3. Roundtable: Member Updates and State of Freight Discussion - continued

Laura Freeland, Southern Dallas County Inland Port Transportation Management Association, shared progress on the Loop 9 project, designed to offer an alternative to I-20. The number of direct jobs related to the inland port went from 30,000 to 40,000 in the last two years. A truck-parking facility and a hydrogen fuel station are being built on the port's property across from the Amazon facility.

Isaac J. Tawil, McAllen Economic Development Group, provided an overview of the two land ports that the city of McAllen operates. He outlined the Anzalduas Land Port of Entry expansion, which includes new facilities for commercial and vehicle inspection. Infrastructure improvements are needed for traffic leaving the port. The city of McAllen is actively engaged with TxDOT and federal partners to address anticipated challenges.

Clint Schelbitzki, Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR), thanked TxDOT for their support of grade separations at highway-railroad crossings. It is important for the state to create mobility around roadways and railways. Moving freight by rail is the safest land option. He mentioned UPRR's TrackSafe Houston program, which shares rail-safety information with Houston Independent School District staff and students. Eagle Pass is UPRR's busiest rail crossing and the railroad is working on an initiative to improve gateway fluidity. Mr. Schelbitzki noted the merger with Norfolk Southern Railroad, which will reduce rail transit times.

Candice Armenoff, Port Houston, discussed Port Houston cargo growth and the Houston ship channel. Port Houston remains the fastest growing port in the nation, although the amount of tonnage shipped through their facility is down from last year. Project 11, which will widen the ship channel, is fully funded and should be completed in the next two years. Project 12 is a feasibility study underway to deepen the ship channel. 99% of container traffic is by truck with less than 1% moving by rail. Port Houston is focusing on transportation advocacy related to improving road infrastructure around the port. Some of the port's growth is likely due to tariff-related frontloading, which is expected to taper off as the year progresses and tariffs are enforced.

Dr. Rolando Ortiz, Killam Development Ltd., said the Anzalduas International Bridge Project will help alleviate some traffic congestion in the area. Laredo has four interstates, all of which have need for improvements. Dr. Ortiz suggested TxDOT convert I-69 from Laredo to Goliad into a divided highway to help alleviate traffic on I-35 and I-10. He thanked the Texas Transportation Commission for investments in Laredo and the Rio Grande Valley. Dr. Ortiz added his hope for additional funding to be allocated for freight mobility.

Lauren Garduno, Ports-to-Plains Alliance, mentioned that the Federal surface transportation bill is up for renewal in September 2026 and there are active discussions about how to move forward. He shared a brief history of infrastructure bills that supported development of the national highway system, noting that legislation over the past 30 years has not addressed interstate funding for corridors across the United States. Three coalitions, including I-27, I-69 and I-14, have joined forces and have added the I-37 corridor coalition on the East Coast and the I-11 coalition in Arizona and Nevada. These groups are working to draft legislation for inclusion in the upcoming surface transportation reauthorization, which would serve as a third Interstate Highway Act and establish a dedicated funding source for future interstates.

3. Roundtable: Member Updates and State of Freight Discussion - continued

Steven Schar, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, noted that he is available if anyone had questions about permitting and compliance.

Sean Stibich, Port of Victoria, provided an update on infrastructure projects at the port. The road and rail infrastructure improvements would allow service expansions and bring jobs to the region.

Ken Becker, Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association (OOIDA), shared that they are working with the United States Department of Transportation on a “Pro-Trucker” package of initiatives designed to enhance conditions for professional drivers. The initiatives include increasing truck parking capacity; withdrawing speed-limiter rules; expanding hours-of-service flexibility; improving the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration resource website; reforming DataQ to ensure fairer enforcement records; modernizing the National Consumer Complaint Database; addressing unlawful brokering; maintaining Electronic Logging Devices (ELD) exemption on pre-2000 engines and removing unnecessary regulations. When Chair Emmett asked how many truckers are independent owner-operators, Mr. Becker replied about 40% nationwide.

Brenda Gunter, former mayor of San Angelo, mentioned the city installed the first I-27 signs, marking progress for the Ports-to-Plains corridor.

Robert MacDonald, Texas Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (TEMPO), shared that MPOs across the state focus on safety and develop regional safety action plans. He stressed the importance of safe systems planning. Mr. MacDonald discussed Vision Zero and the plans to implement safety improvements in the Corpus Christi region. He encouraged committee members to discuss freight with their local MPO representatives to help advance planning. Mr. MacDonald noted that the MPOs refer to the Port Authority Advisory Committee reports to identify ways to implement local projects. He encouraged TxDOT to collaborate with MPOs as they develop the next freight plan. Mr. MacDonald mentioned the ribbon cuttings for the new Corpus Christi Harbor Bridge and the ship channel expansion, which will remove limits on the size of vessels they can accommodate.

John Esparza, Texas Trucking Association, stated that when TxDOT is successful then the trucking industry is successful. He mentioned that English language proficiency has been challenging in the border trade zones and shared industry concerns related to those changes. As of 2024, there were over 210,000 Commercial Driver’s License (CDL) drivers in the state of Texas with about half being independent owner-operators. The association is collaborating with autonomous vehicle companies on plans to roll out their services.

Gerry Schwebel, International Bank of Commerce, San Antonio, said more than \$1 billion in much needed major infrastructure projects has come to the Laredo region. Port Laredo has four commercial bridges with Presidential Permits to expand the bridges. Port Laredo has eight trains crossing the border per day. Regulations related to English proficiency have created disruptions to the supply chain network and major delays are anticipated due to lack of drivers meeting the new requirements. Mr. Schwebel said the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) is up for renewal and will be a challenging process due to ongoing tariff uncertainty.

3. Roundtable: Member Updates and State of Freight Discussion - continued

Mr. Schwebel stressed the need for adequate highway connectivity from ports of entry to major highway networks. Texas is vital to the success of the North American economic region and Mr. Schwebel noted that the USMCA must be protected. He also noted the importance of private and public sector input.

Chair Emmett shared memories of Texas Transportation Commission Chairman J. Bruce Bugg, Jr. and discussed how his passing will impact Texas.

Commissioner New added that Chairman Bugg was a unifying force who helped the commissioners secure federal support for major transportation projects. Commissioner New discussed Chairman Bugg's legacy and his ability to help move projects forward.

4. TxDOT Amarillo District Update

Blair Johnson, TxDOT Amarillo District engineer, provided a district update. He discussed the importance of agriculture and how the highway system is integral to the movement of freight across the country. The district's goal is to upgrade all major corridors to a four-lane divided standard to improve safety and mobility. Texas provides 20% of cattle to the United States with most coming from the panhandle region. Mr. Johnson discussed the various types of energy produced in the region. He noted the major nuclear weapons manufacturer that is also in the area.

Mr. Johnson shared details about the future I-27 Ports-to-Plains corridor in the district and other area corridor improvements.

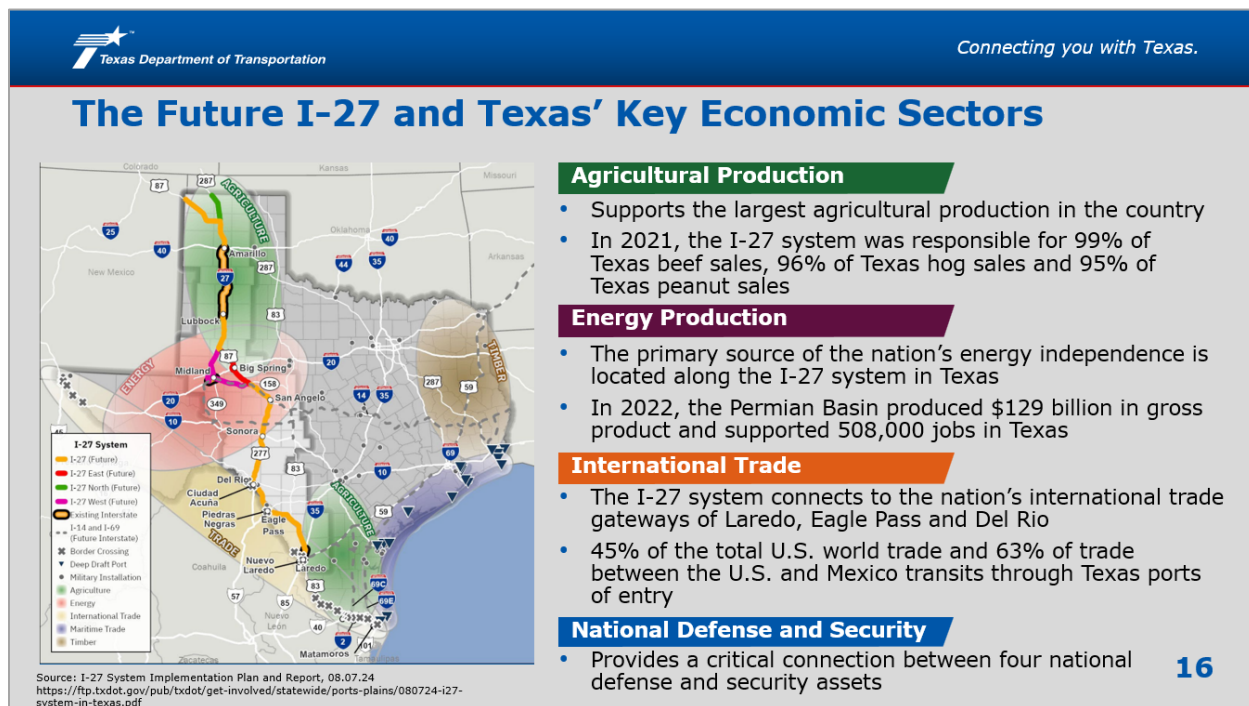


Figure 1. TxDOT Amarillo District Update; slide from TxFAC #44 Presentation.

4. TxDOT Amarillo District Update - continued

Mr. Johnson discussed future needs, interchange improvements and feasibility studies on the Dumas Relief Route. He shared details on expansions to the future I-87, I-40 and US 54. The committee had no comments or questions.

5. Texas Freight Mobility Plan: Implementing *Texas Delivers 2050* and Announcing the 2027 Texas Freight Mobility Plan Update

Mr. Graham discussed the impact of Texas Delivers 2050 and the 2027 Texas Freight Mobility Plan Update. He noted economic data related to the freight network in Texas and expected increases over the next decade. Mr. Graham mentioned the purpose and need of state freight plans. He provided a historical overview of freight planning at TxDOT and stressed the importance of funding freight planning projects. Mr. Graham presented key statistics from the development of the Texas Freight Mobility Plan. He discussed policy and program recommendations from Texas Delivers 2050, including recommendations that will continue to the implementation phase in the 2027 Texas Freight Mobility Plan.

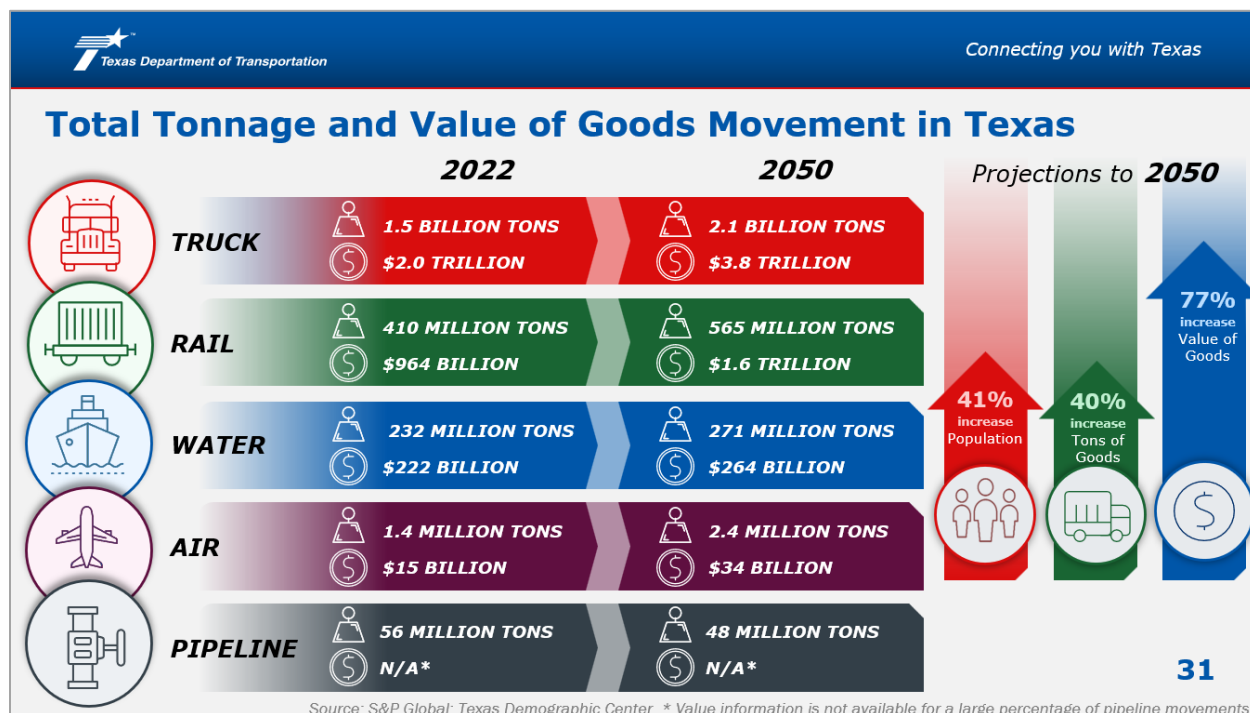


Figure 2. Texas Freight Mobility Plan: Implementing *Texas Delivers 2050* and Announcing the 2027 Texas Freight Mobility Plan Update; slide from TxFAC #44 Presentation.

5. Texas Freight Mobility Plan: Implementing *Texas Delivers 2050* and Announcing the 2027 Texas Freight Mobility Plan Update - continued

Mr. Graham then asked the committee how TxDOT can maintain a world-class freight network and received the following responses:

Mr. Schwebel noted that trucks do not begin their journey in San Antonio. He said that I-35 from Laredo to San Antonio needs to be widened to six lanes along with other rural connections between major cities. Border checkpoints and random weight checks create delays on major freight corridors, prompting drivers to speed to keep their schedules.

Ms. Armenoff said there is a need to widen roadways and also a need to better use the current infrastructure. She suggested reviewing alternative methods such as permitting and time-of-day restrictions along with toll road usage. TxDOT can play a leading role in connecting all freight network partners to develop solutions.

Mr. Garduno said it is important to plan how freight will move in the future and add capacity to the network over time to meet the growing demand. He emphasized the need for greater resiliency, redundancy and long-term maintenance of the network.

Commissioner New said more data is now available to help TxDOT know what improvements are needed throughout the network. A constant problem is the reliance on outdated data and he emphasized the importance of having current information.

Mr. Garduno gave an example of how the Permian Basin used data to manage the surge of heavy vehicles during the region's oil boom. He emphasized the need to use available data and new material technologies to upgrade the network for future demands.

Chair Emmett noted that no major shippers, such as Walmart or Amazon, are involved in this process and emphasized the need for a better way to engage those industries so they can share their freight movement plans and allow for appropriate accommodations.

Caroline Mays, TxDOT senior director of planning and modal programs, discussed global repositioning and noted significant manufacturing activity is coming to Texas. Companies like Apple, Samsung and Texas Instruments are expanding operations near the cities of Sherman and Denison. Corporate relocation is another factor that should be addressed in the planning process. She noted that the team should engage the private-sector companies who are focusing on truck parking and other projects. Commissioner New added that infrastructure improvements are needed to supply sufficient energy for all the new developments.

Mr. Schwebel said all the projects shown for 2050 are outdated because projections become obsolete as soon as they are presented due to rapid industry change.

Ms. Mays said they will incorporate planning scenarios into the freight plan development.

Mr. Graham added that a proper analysis will be conducted on trade along the third coast and Texas' role as the trade gateway to North America. He then introduced the TxDOT freight corridor staff and the projects they will be leading.

6. Regional Rail Update from BNSF

Lindsay Mullins, executive director of public affairs for BNSF Railway, provided a historical overview of BNSF and their rail network. BNSF is the intermodal and rail industry leader.

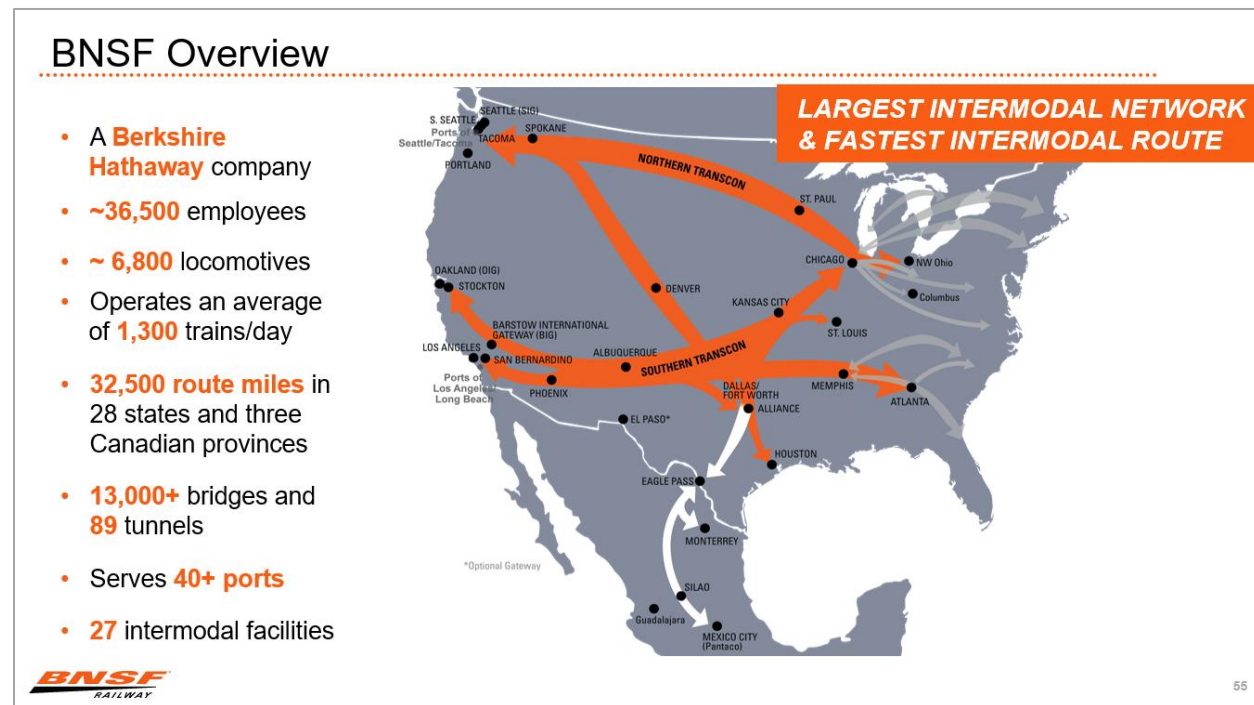


Figure 3. Regional Rail Update from BNSF; slide from TxFAC #44 Presentation.

Ms. Mullins discussed its major lines and future expansion projects; 70% of intermodal volume moves on only 7% of BNSF's route miles along the Southern Transcon rail line. Barstow International Gateway is a new facility developed to help distribute freight along the Southern Transcon main line. Ms. Mullins discussed supply chain risks, including rail-related crime, and noted that railroad police are working with federal and local agencies to address crime.

Mr. Esparza noted that the trucking industry is facing rising crime. Legislative measures are being developed to address transportation-related crime. He also outlined steps the private sector is taking to address crime.

Ms. Armenoff said that while ports sometimes face issues outside of their facilities, they have none within their own due to strong security measures.

Ms. Freeland recommended collaboration grants as an opportunity to identify how technology might offer a solution.

6. Regional Rail Update from BNSF - continued

Mr. Esparza mentioned that high-tech theft, such as falsified documents to steal loads, should also be included in discussions on how to address crime.

Ms. Mays said crime is a national- and state-level issue. She provided examples of crime throughout the freight network and said it is also being addressed at the federal level.

Mr. Schelbitzki said sophisticated organized crime is seen throughout the rail network and there are special agents focusing on southern California. He suggested enacting appropriate laws and reducing tolerance for that type of crime.

Ms. Mullins provided an overview of the BNSF facilities in the Amarillo region and noted that over 100 trains go through the area per day. She thanked the city of Amarillo leaders and TxDOT for partnering with BNSF on the grade separation program, which helps off-system road authorities fund such projects.

7. Future Interstate Highways Implementation Update: I-27, I-69 and I-14

Lorena Echeverria de Misi, TxDOT corridor planning branch manager, provided an update on future interstates within the Texas highway system. She gave a historical overview of the national highway system and the interstate highway system in Texas.

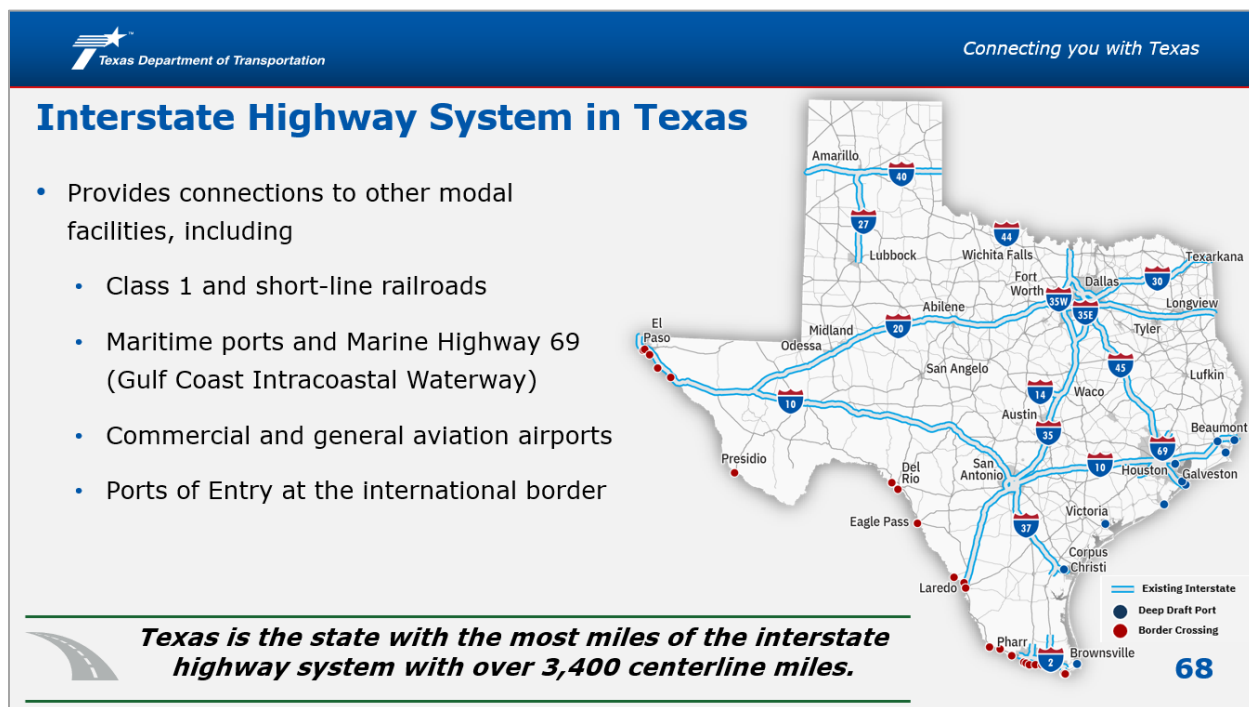


Figure 4. Future Interstate Highways Implementation Update: I-27, I-69 and I-14; slide from TxFAC #44 Presentation.

Ms. Echeverria de Misi spoke about industry standards for interstate safety and the benefits of interstate highways. She highlighted the congressionally designated high-priority corridors planned as future interstates, including I-27, I-69 and I-14. Ms. Echeverria de Misi discussed trade in Texas and main economic sectors within the state.

7. Future Interstate Highways Implementation Update: I-27, I-69 and I-14 - continued

Ms. Echeverria de Misi mentioned the investments needed to upgrade each of the three future Texas interstates to interstate standards. 24 projects related to the three future interstate corridors are fully funded in the current Unified Transportation Plan (UTP), with three additional projects fully funded in the 2026 UTP. Ms. Echeverria de Misi emphasized the importance of freight and trade along the three future interstate corridors. She explained the strategies guiding TxDOT's efforts to bring the three corridors up to interstate standards.

Ms. Echeverria de Misi shared how TxDOT engages stakeholders through the future interstate advisory committees and advocacy groups. She then discussed the implementation dashboard created to track the progress and level of investment in the future interstate highway system.

Ms. Mays explained how the TxDOT freight corridor staff coordinates and develops freight plans. She used the I-35 corridor between Laredo and San Antonio as an example of current projects underway. Ms. Mays thanked Ms. Echeverria de Misi and the TxDOT team for their extensive efforts on all corridor studies throughout the state.

8. Statewide Truck Parking Inventory Update

Commissioner New noted that economics have changed. Estimates show that roughly 11 trucks are competing for each available truck parking spot. A chain of truck stops are investing in more amenities and security for truck drivers.

Leah Casey, TxDOT freight planner, provided an overview of the TxDOT statewide commercial motor vehicle (CMV) parking facilities assessment. She discussed the study goals and objectives.

Jeremy Upchurch, consultant with HNTB, continued the presentation on the statewide CMV parking facilities assessment and provided an overview of the 2025 truck parking space inventory. He shared information on both public and private truck parking across TxDOT districts.

8. Statewide Truck Parking Inventory Update- continued



Figure 5. Statewide Truck Parking Inventory Update; slide from TxFAC #44 Presentation.

Mr. Graham pointed out that the total number of spaces has increased by 34%.

Mr. Upchurch discussed the parking capacity across districts and how conditions have improved since 2020. Overall parking spaces increased from more than 26,000 to over 35,000 statewide. Stakeholder development surveys are being prepared for distribution to applicable divisions. Mr. Upchurch shared an example from the Maritime Division survey.

Mr. Upchurch discussed the data analysis and next steps then asked if anyone had any questions or comments. The following responses were received:

Mr. Schwebel asked Mr. Esparza if the growth of private parking areas was due to companies that use trucking teams.

Mr. Esparza said that might be part of the issue and added that electronic logs have reduced flexibility. New members are joining the Texas Trucking Association to network with carriers and trucking companies.

Ms. Mays said that safety is an important factor in where truck drivers choose to park and added that addressing both economic and safety issues is key.

Commissioner New mentioned that security concerns are creating opportunities for the industry to provide private facilities.

8. Statewide Truck Parking Inventory Update- continued

Mr. Esparza explained that some city governments restrict where trucks can park. The Texas Trucking Association is working with private companies to establish locations for overnight or in-transit truck parking.

9. Final Remarks

Mr. Esparza asked that the meeting be adjourned in memory of Chairman Bugg.

Chair Emmett agreed, thanked everyone for their attendance and adjourned the meeting at 12:03 p.m.