Texas Freight Advisory Committee Meeting #49

8:30 a.m. to noon, October 30, 2026

In-Person Meeting

Texas Department of Transportation Stassney Campus

SHQ Auditorium, 6230 East Stassney Lane, 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
- Lauren Garduño, Ports-to-Plains Alliance, Attended
- Nicholas Konen – Vice Chair, Hillwood, AllianceTexas, Absent
- Miriam Kotkowski, TECMA Transportation Services, Absent
- 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
- A.J. Rodriguez, Central Texas Alliance, Absent
- Karen Rugaard Ward, Plains All American Pipeline, Attended
- Steven Schar, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Attended
- Clint Schelbitzki, Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR), Attended
- Sean Stibich, Port of Victoria, Absent
- Isaac J. Tawil, City Manager of McAllen/McAllen Economic Development Group, Absent
- Matt Woodruff, Kirby Corporation, Attended

Total Count of Committee Present (includes proxy members): 14

Texas Transportation Commission Attendees

- Commissioner Alex G. Meade III
- Commissioner Acting Chair W. Alvin New

TxDOT Attendees

- Angel Ayala
- Loretta Brown
- Andrew A. Canon
- Leah Casey
- Emily Clisby
- Chad Coburn
- Nick Coronado
- Farideh Dassi
- Kale Driemeier
- Lorena Echeverria de Misi
- Yvette Flores
- Don Franks
- Humberto "Tito" Gonzalez, Jr.
- Tyler Graham
- Nicole Gray
- Nicole Kennedy
- Carolina Lopez-Herrera
- Caroline Mays
- Humberto Padilla
- Madeline Pelton
- Amy Redmond
- David Romero
- Sergio Vasquez

Agency/Consultant Team Attendees

- Eva Esquivel, HNTB Corporation
- Jeremy Upchurch, HNTB Corporation
- Robert Elizondo, PCI
- Marin Tijerina, PCI
- Joseph Bryan, WSP
- Alejandra Lopez, WSP
- Pegah Tootoonchian, WSP

Other Attendees

- Callie Barnes, Port Houston
- Bill Eisele, Texas A&M Transportation Institute
- Joel Garza, City of Brownsville
- Michele Hagemann, City of Midland
- Nishant Kukadia, Novus
- Peter LeCody, Texas Rail Advocates
- Steve Linhart, BGE Inc.
- Matthew Moreno, AAMPO
- Ajaykumar Patil, AECOM
- Alan Peters, Savills
- Debra Richmond, Permian Strategic Partnerships
- Allan Rutter, Texas A&M Transportation Institute
- David Salgado, Texas A&M Transportation Institute
- Hannah Santiago, Cambridge Systematics
- Carl Seifert, Jacobs
- Sushant Sharma, Texas A&M Transportation Institute
- Emily Weigand, Jacobs
- L.D. White, Texas A&M Transportation Institute
- Daniel Wong, GFT, Inc.
- Priya Vaghani, Jacobs

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

Chair Gerry Schwebel, International Bank of Commerce (IBC) formally called the meeting to order. TxDOT Freight Systems Branch Manager Tyler Graham opened the meeting by thanking the members for attending the Texas Freight Advisory Committee (TxFAC) meeting in Austin. Mr. Graham then introduced the safety minute, which focused on nighttime pedestrian safety during Halloween. Mr. Graham emphasized the importance of staying alert, being visible, slowing down, and staying in well-lit areas.

Chair Schwebel provided opening remarks and welcomed the attendees to the TxDOT Stassney Campus in Austin, Texas. He then welcomed and expressed appreciation for Texas Transportation Commissioners Alex Meade and Acting Chair Alvin New for attending and participating in the TxFAC working meeting.

Commissioner Meade thanked everyone for their attendance and participation. He expressed enthusiasm for the working meeting format and the collaborative discussion that would occur.

Chair Schwebel introduced new TxFAC member Karen Rugaard Ward. Ms. Rugaard Ward represents Plains All American Pipeline, a Houston-based pipeline operator serving the United States and Canada. Chair Schwebel highlighted the valuable perspective she brings from the energy sector.

Chair Schwebel then congratulated TxFAC members Sean Stibich and John Esparza on their recent professional achievements. Mr. Stibich was elected Chair of the Port Authority Advisory Committee, and Chair Schwebel noted that he is a valued member of TxFAC. Mr. Esparza was honored with the Russel H. Perry Award by TxDOT and the Texas A&M Transportation Institute, a distinguished recognition. Chair Schwebel encouraged the committee members to reach out and congratulate their fellow members on these accomplishments.

TxDOT Director of Transportation Planning and Programming Humberto “Tito” Gonzalez, Jr., P.E., greeted the attendees and emphasized the importance of the working meeting. Mr. Gonzalez noted that TxDOT received 60 comments in response to the prompts sent out prior to the meeting, and that those comments would be reviewed as part of the working meeting discussion.

TxDOT Director of Freight, Trade and Connectivity Andrew A. Canon thanked the committee members for their attendance and expressed gratitude to TxFAC

Welcome, Call to Order, Safety Minute, and New Business (continued)

TxDOT staff, the committee members, and partners for their efforts across the state throughout the year. Mr. Canon reiterated the purpose of the working meeting was to engage with the committee members and gather input for the 2027 Texas Freight Mobility Plan (TFMP). He noted that Texas has about $400 million available to support freight projects and stated that these investments demonstrate the state's projected economic growth to the federal government. As an example, Mr. Canon stated that I-35 should not be viewed as a construction project, but as an economic project that reflects the growth and success around the state.

Chair Schwebel thanked TxDOT for their ongoing efforts and recognized the challenging work taking place across the state. He acknowledged that construction projects can cause disruption but noted that, once completed, mobility is stronger and safer in Texas. Chair Schwebel then discussed a Wall Street Journal article on driverless 18-wheelers, citing it as an example of the fast-paced nature of technological advances in the transportation industry. He added that the committee members must remain open-minded about technology innovations that impact mobility, infrastructure projects, and funding mechanisms. He stated that he would share the article with the committee at the conclusion of the meeting, describing it as indicative of the progress and change taking place in the industry. Chair Schwebel then encouraged the committee members to be proactive and engaging in the working meeting to help develop the best freight mobility plan in the country.

2027 Texas Freight Mobility Plan Progress Report

TxDOT Freight Systems Branch Manager Tyler Graham provided an update on the progress of the 2027 Texas Freight Mobility Plan (TFMP). Mr. Graham noted that the project team has been working on this effort for the past 14 months. He explained that the TFMP is a federally required plan that states must update every four years. Mr. Graham expressed enthusiasm about sharing the progress update of the study's findings and stated that the information presented would help inform the discussion of the TxFAC working meeting.

Mr. Graham stated the purpose of the progress update was to review the technical frameworks, confirm recommendations that reflect statewide freight needs, and understand connections to the Freight Investment Plan. He noted

2027 Texas Freight Mobility Plan Progress Report (continued)

that this was the final progress update before the project team seeks approval of the TFMP in January 2027.

Mr. Graham reviewed the plan requirements in the following key areas:

- Trends, conditions, and forecast
- Freight assets and operations
- Policy and investment
- Network needs and solutions
- Resilience and special freight
- Stakeholder input and plan cycle
- Technology and market change

Mr. Graham reviewed the goals and objectives of the 2027 TFMP:

- move Texas freight safely
- optimize freight system performance
- deliver an adaptive freight network
- reinforce security on the freight network
- prioritize the most impactful investment
- promote responsible stewardship of resources.

He noted these objectives are fully aligned with the Statewide Long-Range Transportation Plan.

Mr. Graham reviewed the aspects that have changed since the previous plan. He noted that recent federal guidance has put more emphasis on reshoring jobs and supporting critical national industries. Updated asset impact guidance asks for more details on how heavy vehicles affect assets. He explained that tonnage forecasts are based on 2024 data and look ahead to 2050, noting that the previous plan was based on 2019 Transearch data.

Mr. Graham stated that Texas is North America's freight gateway, which has led to growth pressure on major corridors like I-35, I-10, and I-45. He added that advanced industries require specialized supply chains, technology advancements, and investments in capacity and resilience, all of which are reshaping Texas freight. Mr. Graham then briefly touched on the National Highway Freight Program (NHFP) funding and stated that thanks to the work of TxFAC, over $569 million in NHFP funding was allocated within the Unified Transportation Program (UTP) since Texas Delivers 2050. He stated that this

2027 Texas Freight Mobility Plan Progress Report (continued)

funding has supported projects such as U.S. 59/Loop 20 Interchange in Laredo, I-20 Widening Project in Abilene, and I-10 Widening Project in Yoakum.

Mr. Graham said the Texas Highway Freight Network (THFN) identifies the key highways that support movement across Texas, noting it incorporates data and stakeholder feedback. He explained that the THFN evaluates freight needs related to freight activity, safety, reliability, connectivity, operations, and future demand. Mr. Graham stated that the initial analysis covers roughly 80% of the freight tonnage on the THFN, which represents 24% of total THFN mileage.

Mr. Graham then highlighted the following freight needs types for the 2027 TFMP:

- Bridge asset preservation
- Connectivity
- Freight design
- Mobility and reliability
- Technology
- Pavement
- Resilience
- Safety
- Truck parking

Mr. Graham summarized the THFN needs results, noting that across categories, U.S. highways present the greatest need, not interstates. He noted that U.S. 59 is the corridor with the most miles with high needs across more than three categories. He added that U.S. 59 is the future I-69, so improvements will reduce the miles with high need.

Mr. Graham explained how the project overlay analysis identifies needs that are being addressed by the UTP to determine where investment gaps exist. He stated that UTP project corridors with high need are considered to have no gap and are included in the investment plan. Conversely, non-UTP project corridors with high need are considered to have a gap and help inform investment opportunities.

Mr. Graham then reviewed the process used to develop freight investment recommendations. He explained the process begins with establishing the THFN, followed by a needs assessment to identify challenges and opportunities. The

2027 Texas Freight Mobility Plan Progress Report (continued)

project team then overlays projects included in the UTP to determine where gaps remain. The final step is recording freight investment projects and gaps.

At this point in the meeting, Chair Schwebel recognized and thanked Commissioner Alvin New for joining the TxFAC meeting virtually. Commissioner New addressed the committee briefly, stating that he was listening to the working meeting's recommendations to ensure he can be an effective representative. He then thanked the group for their active participation and stated his intent to listen closely to the discussion.

TxDOT Freight Systems Branch Project Development Manager Kale Driemeier, provided an overview of what the project team heard through stakeholder engagement. Mr. Driemeier stated that detailed input was gathered through various groups including TxFAC meetings, district interviews, focus groups, regional workshops, other state DOT interviews, corridor map engagement, and supply chain interviews.

Mr. Driemeier reviewed key data points conducted during the TxFAC meetings held in March, June, and September in 2026. He stated that these data points include planning for future freight demand, prioritizing safety, reliability, and community impacts, and connecting the plan to investment and implementation opportunities.

Mr. Driemeier stated that the project team received 21 comments across seven statewide and regional maps through the corridor map engagement conducted in June 2026. He noted that input focused on emerging freight generators and future growth, planned infrastructure and anticipated demand, and network continuity and connectivity.

Mr. Driemeier stated the project team held two rounds of regional workshops across the state that had over 500 combined registrants in the following major Texas freight regions: El Paso, Midland, Lubbock, Fort Worth, Dallas, Tyler, Austin, Houston, Baytown, San Antonio, Laredo, Pharr, and Brownsville. He explained that the round one workshop format included a technical presentation, breakout discussions, and an interactive activity that focused on truck parking, new major freight generators, and technology investments. The round two workshop format included a technical presentation, Mentimeter activity, and an interactive map activity that discussed improvements in freight

2027 Texas Freight Mobility Plan Progress Report (continued)

reliability, investments in smart freight operations, and economic competitiveness that strengthen Texas' distribution economy.

Mr. Driemeier reviewed the prioritization results for maintaining Texas' competitiveness. He noted that the stakeholders ranked the strategies in the following order: improving intermodal efficiency, addressing roadway capacity, addressing freight bottlenecks, improving operational efficiency, and investing in border trade infrastructure. Mr. Driemeier indicated that all responses scored in the "Most Important" and "Most Urgent" quadrant.

Mr. Driemeier reviewed the prioritization results for growing freight capacity in Texas. The results indicated that maintaining and improving pavement conditions and maintaining and improving bridge conditions ranked highest in both importance and urgency, while accommodating oversize and overweight needs, developing truck parking to meet demand, and applying safety interventions were grouped together as secondary priorities. Mr. Driemeier noted that all responses scored in the "Most Important" and "Most Urgent" quadrant.

Mr. Driemeier reviewed the prioritization results for transforming Texas freight transportation. The results indicated that supporting implementation of advanced air mobility and supporting delivery of digital infrastructure ranked highest in both importance and urgency, followed by providing integrated, real-time operational management across agencies and industry. Enhancing preparedness for connected and autonomous freight vehicles and ensuring access and connectivity for emerging industries, such as commercial space industry transportation, were identified as lower priorities.

Mr. Driemeier discussed the results identified by TxDOT districts and divisions, including operational challenges, freight demand and generators, asset and corridor concerns, data and monitoring gaps, and coordination and implementation. He then stated that the TFMP translates those results into four areas of focus: plan for growth and changing demand, preserve and connect the freight system, improve operations, safety, and reliability, and strengthen coordination and implementation.

Mr. Driemeier summarized the outreach of the coordination meetings held in September 2026 with neighboring state transportation departments in Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and New Mexico. He noted that common

2027 Texas Freight Mobility Plan Progress Report (continued)

freight issues included corridor continuity and capacity, truck parking and technology, multimodal and border connections, and practical freight plan engagement strategies. He also highlighted that Texas leads in Freight Advisory Committee engagement, both during and between plan updates.

Mr. Driemeier discussed how stakeholder input and coordination with partner agencies informed the recommendation responses for the 2027 TFMP. He stated that repeated needs included emerging freight generators and future demand, corridor continuity and first- and last-mile gaps, safety and operational conflicts, truck parking constraints, and the need for implementation and funding clarity. These needs were then translated into recommendations focused on preserving strategic corridors, improving connectivity, advancing safety and operational improvements, expanding truck parking and traveler information, and linking recommendations to project prioritization and investment.

Chair Schwebel asked whether the high-need corridors identified in the analysis in the needs results summary, specifically U.S. highways, differ from interstate highways and Farm-to-Market (FM) roads in terms of weight limitations. He emphasized the importance of designing facilities to accommodate heavier freight loads as freight is transferred from rail to trucks.

Lauren Garduño, Ports-to-Plains Alliance, responded that TxDOT made changes to bridge clearance standards 10 years ago and stated that oversize and overweight freight needs to be evaluated when planning for future design improvements.

Lindsay Mullins, BNSF Railway, emphasized the need to consider oversize and overweight freight with the costs of construction, maintenance, and congestion relief.

Chair Schwebel added that continuing existing practices should not be expected to produce better results. Chair Schwebel then asked about emerging technologies used for construction.

In response, Acting Chair New described the use of portable weigh-in-motion (WIM) technology as an advanced data collection tool. He explained that these devices work extraordinarily well at providing accurate information on truck weights and roadway usage. Acting Chair New stated that this information

2027 Texas Freight Mobility Plan Progress Report (continued)

helps better understand freight activity, identify overweight trucks, assess pavement conditions, and inform project teams about roadway improvements

prior to major reconstruction. He also noted that data is being shared with districts across the state.

Ms. Mullins thanked Acting Chair New for the information and highlighted the benefits of sharing data and forming partnerships with enforcement agencies like the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS).

Lastly, Chair Schwebel asked whether the 500 registrants for the regional workshops included virtual participants. Mr. Graham confirmed that one of the sessions was held in a hybrid format and focused on oversize and overweight freight.

Working Session 1: Policy and Program Recommendations

Mr. Graham began the working session by emphasizing that the input received would help determine the direction of the 2027 TFMP and inform how TxDOT will address freight trends. He explained that the draft recommendation framework falls into two categories: policy and program recommendations and project recommendations. He defined policy and program recommendations, which identify actions TxDOT should take, and project recommendations, which identify specific transportation improvements and investment priorities.

Mr. Graham reviewed examples of policy recommendations from the Texas Delivers 2050 plan. He explained that these recommendations focused on both developing strategies, policies, and methodologies for improving the multimodal freight transportation system and linking transportation investments to the state's economic development goals.

Mr. Graham also reviewed examples of program recommendations from the Texas Delivers 2050 plan. He noted that these recommendations focused on supporting freight operations and technology implementation across Texas. He added that these recommendations included implementing the safety warning device program, the WIM program, and a Truck Parking Availability System (TPAS).

Working Session 1: Policy and Program Recommendations (continued)

Mr. Graham highlighted the high-priority mobility projects included in Texas Delivers 2050. The projects included the Austin Region I-35 Capital Express Project that received $1.7 billion, the El Paso Region SH 178 (Artcraft Road) construction project that received $209 million, and the Odessa District SH 349 Intersection and Operational Improvements that received $1.3 million.

Mr. Graham informed the committee members that the engagement session would follow this process: review the policy and program recommendations submitted by the committee, vote, then report out the results.

Mr. Graham told the committee members that the policies and program recommendations the project team received were separated into six categories:

- Safety and security on the freight network
- Optimize freight system connectivity
- Assess freight network needs, impacts, and competitiveness
- Support an international, intermodal freight network
- Support and implement innovative technology in freight mobility
- Optimize freight planning at TxDOT

Mr. Graham reviewed the following important considerations for the member-submitted recommendations: TxDOT cannot advocate for funding programs; grant pursuits are authorized by TxDOT's Government Affairs Division and the Governor's Office; and a county aiming to establish a new regional mobility authority (RMA) must petition the Texas Transportation Commission.

Mr. Graham then explained the working session exercise, which involved reviewing, discussing, and prioritizing recommendations through Mentimeter, the engagement platform, across the six focus areas to help inform development of the 2027 TFMP.

Safety and Security on the Freight Network

- When appropriate, support the Texas Department of Public Safety in protecting the state's supply chains along the freight network (Schelbitzki/Ward).
    - Clint Schelbitzki, Union Pacific Railroad, highlighted the growing issue of organized cargo theft that remains unique to the rail industry. He noted that organized crime groups target high-value

Safety and Security on the Freight Network (continued)

goods on shipments when trains are parked, saying there are over 75,000 instances of theft resulting in more than $200 million worth of impact nationwide. He then noted that theft-deterrent measures are needed, citing Tennessee's strict penalties to address these issues.

- Ms. Rugaard Ward emphasized the need to improve safety for commercial users, noting that commercial motor vehicles (CMVs) were involved in a significant number of fatal crashes.
- As a follow-up to Mr. Schelbitzki's comments, Chair Schwebel asked if there were cybersecurity issues with cargo theft. Mr. Schelbitzki stated that they are focused on the physical cargo theft. Ms. Mullins clarified that the goods are stolen and then sold online.

- Facilitate safe and efficient bi-directional freight movements at border gateways (Schelbitzki).
  - Mr. Schelbitzki highlighted rail practices at the international border, noting that moving trains efficiently at border crossings in Eagle Pass and Laredo can improve safety and reduce risk. He stated "a train at rest is a train at risk," explaining that stopped trains are vulnerable to theft and can block crossings and create delays.
  - Chair Schwebel asked whether nonintrusive inspection technology can be used for freight screenings. Mr. Schelbitzki confirmed that sealed shipments are screened using that technology, with physical inspections occurring when issues are flagged.
- Monitor the usage of oversize/overweight freight along the highway network (Rodriguez).
  - Candice Armenoff, Port Houston, stated that this issue includes both infrastructure and permitting regulations that are considered by the state legislature. Chair Schwebel asked whether restrictions should be considered on oversized loads during daytime hours to address public concern.
- Expand truck parking studies to additional areas (Ward, Becker).

Optimize Freight System Connectivity

- Study southern connectivity to the Rio Grande Valley (Garduño).
- Examine multimodal first-mile and last-mile freight connections (Evans).
- Establish an Agricultural Freight Corridor Priority Network (Leal).
  - Ken Becker, Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association, noted the importance of considering agricultural goods, such as produce from the Rio Grande Valley and wheat from North Texas, that rely on specific corridors during different seasons.
  - Charlie Leal, Texas Farm Bureau, stated that continued population

Optimize Freight System Connectivity (continued)

growth and large-scale development, such as data centers and manufacturing hubs, are increasing pressure on rural highways that farmers have relied on for generations. He then suggested that they better identify and prioritize agricultural routes.
    - Mr. Garduño proposed that passenger and freight patterns be evaluated during peak travel times to fully consider how they can design corridors that benefit agriculture freight travel within the community.
- Conduct a freight-specific study on roadways at peak congestion times (Armenoff/Barnes/Ward).
    - Ms. Armenoff stated that existing congestion metrics are often based on 24-hour, 7-day-a-week averages and do not accurately reflect freight activity during typical business hours. She then suggested that they evaluate congestion during peak freight movement times to better understand the conditions impacting traffic.
    - Chair Schwebel agreed, noting that border crossings do not operate on a 24-hour, 7-day-a-week schedule.
- Include the completion of federally designated Future Interstates as a statewide freight policy priority and accelerate their development through increased coordination (Garduño).
    - Mr. Garduño noted that Future Interstates 14, 27, and 69 are not represented on the freight network despite their potential to expand freight connectivity and distribution more effectively across the state.

Assess Freight Network Needs, Impacts, And Competitiveness

- Analyze the impacts that freight-focused projects have on other infrastructure within the statewide network (Armenoff/Evans/Garduño).
    - Ms. Armenoff briefly emphasized the need to be more collaborative with local Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs).
- Assess current Permian Basin freight mobility needs (Ward).
    - Ms. Rugaard Ward praised the state's investment and progress in the Permian Basin, highlighting the region's oil and gas production as critical to customers around the world. She stated that shifts in global demand should result in a reevaluation of unfunded projects to ensure transportation support meets the rising demand.
- Examine supply chain competitiveness compared to other states (Armenoff).
    - Ms. Armenoff stated that it is imperative to constantly evaluate the cost of cargo that moves throughout Texas, highlighting that this is

Assess Freight Network Needs, Impacts, And Competitiveness (continued)

where Texas maintains competitive advantages. She added that if costs continue to rise, freight movement in Texas will suffer and may shift to other states such as Georgia and Alabama.

- Study the transportation opportunities and impacts of intermodal hubs (Armenoff, Rodriguez).

Support an International, Multimodal Freight Network

- Weigh the importance of maritime commerce to the state in project development (Woodruff).
- Support policies that maintain and protect future freight capacity on existing rail corridors as the state economy and industrial sector expand (Schelbitzki/Evans/Mullins).
- Promote the grade separation program along the Texas Multimodal Freight Network (TMFN) to address additional needs across the state (Mullins/Schelbitzki).
- Support eligible railroads and rail districts in aligning statewide goals and project development (Evans).
- Integrate border crossings with the highway corridors that serve them (Garduño, Melvin).

Support and Implement Innovative Technology in Freight Mobility

- Support the development of innovative technologies across all modes (Schelbitzki, Melvin).
    - Mr. Schelbitzki emphasized the importance of supporting innovative technologies across all freight modes, noting that the rail industry is trying to keep pace with the advances in the trucking industry. He then stated that the committee must be conscious of the technology being deployed and how it tilts the competitive balance, stating the need to focus on multimodal parity.
    - Chair Schwebel asked whether artificial intelligence (AI) should factor more into these discussions, noting the rapid rising use in the industry.
    - Mr. Garduño commented that AI presents both opportunities and challenges for the transportation industry.
- Ms. Armenoff noted that AI presents security risks due to its ability to share enhanced information across transportation networks.
- Include advanced air mobility in freight planning (Rodriguez).
    - Matt Woodruff, Kirby Corporation, asked for clarification on the term "advanced air mobility."
    - Mr. Graham explained that advanced air mobility includes

Support and Implement Innovative Technology in Freight Mobility (continued)

technologies such as drone deliveries and vertical landing aircraft.

- Expand technology usage for real-time travel information, including Truck Parking Availability System (TPAS) and Dynamic Messaging Signs statewide (Becker/Rodriguez).
    - Mr. Becker noted the inconsistencies with the TPAS, stating that drivers lose time when directed to park at locations with no spaces available on arrival.
- Coordinate with autonomous trucking entities to promptly address safety concerns (Becker).
    - Mr. Becker noted that autonomous trucking is coming to Texas and stated the importance of regulating its deployment to ensure safety for road users.

Optimize Freight in Planning at TxDOT

- Regularly monitor and report the status of implementing completed transportation plans (Rodriguez).
- Increase coordination with industry to better capture up-to-date needs along the freight network (Melvin).
- Collaborate with MPOs and COGs to better capture local freight policies and priorities (MacDonald).
- In partnership with the Texas Secretary of State, increase the collaboration between the Texas Freight Advisory Committee and the Border Trade Advisory Committee (BTAC) (Melvin).
    - Chair Schwebel noted that coordination between TxFAC, BTAC, and the Texas Secretary of State is critical to the state's freight system.
    - Mr. Canon noted that TxDOT has increased information sharing between freight and international trade. He highlighted first-mile and last-mile freight movements, data sharing, and technology information as ongoing collaboration efforts.

The following question was posed to the committee members via the engagement platform Mentimeter: "What Is Missing?" Those responses are detailed below:

- Funding
- I second the funding comment
- We covered a lot of stuff!
- Execution
- Air freight mobility data to merge with all other modes
- General reassessment to determine freight priorities throughout the state. Looking at selection criteria process and weights for each. Let

Optimize Freight in Planning at TxDOT (continued)

TxFAC review and approve final list.
- Highway safety in construction zones

Mr. Graham thanked the members for all the recommendations.

Working Session 2: Project Recommendations

Jeremy Upchurch, HNTB, reviewed the process for identifying freight project recommendations. Mr. Upchurch explained that the process begins with projects on the THFN that are included in the UTP, while also identifying unconstrained projects that are not included in the UTP. He added that the project team is particularly focused on corridors where a need has been identified but no project is currently planned in the UTP's 10-year work program.

Mr. Upchurch then displayed the online mapping tools and project tracker to committee members, highlighting that projects can be reviewed by corridor, project type, and region. He encouraged the committee members to use the tools to identify freight project needs in their respective regions.

Ms. Armenoff asked about the criteria used to determine whether projects are included in the freight plan. Mr. Upchurch responded that the projects are evaluated based on the potential to address the specific freight transportation need and the potential benefits they would provide for the freight network.

Mr. Becker requested access to the online mapping tool. Mr. Graham stated that the project team will distribute it after the meeting.

The following question was posed to the committee members via the engagement platform Mentimeter: "Which programmed UTP projects, locations, or corridors should receive the highest priority consideration for inclusion in the Freight Investment Plan?" Those responses are detailed below:

- I-35 Corridor
- I-30 Corridor East to Texarkana
- Those projects that are companion to or complement the local city and county projects in the MPOs plans. Also, projects that can be expedited.
- Ensure areas of high current and future freight growth are prioritized accordingly.
- Projects in the Port Mission Plan

Working Session 2: Project Recommendations (continued)

- Permian Basin projects critical to freight movement, safety and econ dev, including SH 302, I-20, SH 176, US 285S, Pecos Relief Route, SH 349, I-10 in Pecos Reeves and Culberson, and I-27 and I-14.

Multimodal Discussion

The committee members discussed emerging multimodal freight trends to better understand future transportation demands.

Ms. Armenoff noted that the continual widening of the Houston Ship Channel has implications for pipelines, rail, and other port channels.

Chair Schwebel asked how TxDOT is planning for autonomous trucks, citing the pilot projects in Houston and Dallas.

TxDOT Senior Director of Planning and Modal Programs Caroline Mays explained that the deployment of autonomous trucks is being led by the private sector, noting the current operations on key freight corridors such as Interstates 35, 45, 10, 20, and 30 extending to Oklahoma.

Adriana Cruz, Executive Director of the Economic Development and Tourism (EDT) division within the Office of the Governor, noted that major economic development projects are not always in long-range transportation plans due to the fast-paced nature of these projects. She echoed the importance of coordination among regional communities, economic development organizations, and TxDOT to address infrastructure needs in a timely manner.

Mr. Garduño suggested a planning exercise for the committee members that would anticipate future freight scenarios in Texas, including cattle movement, data center development, and oil and gas production.

Ms. Mays stated that there are challenges associated with predicting economic development, such as data centers, in rural areas. She noted that TxDOT is seeking ways to anticipate developments and incorporate them in future planning projects. Ms. Mays also stated that, in most cases, TxDOT is not involved in economic developments and finds out after they have been announced.

Full Committee Prioritization and Recommendation Check

Mr. Graham reviewed the Mentimeter prioritization results for safety and security recommendations. The committee members ranked facilitating safe and efficient bi-directional freight movements at border gateways and supporting DPS as the highest priorities, followed by monitoring the usage of oversize and overweight freight movement along the highway network and expanding truck parking studies to additional areas.

Mr. Graham reviewed the Mentimeter prioritization results for optimizing connectivity recommendations. The committee members ranked establishing an Agricultural Freight Corridor Priority Network and conducting a freight-specific study on roadways during peak congestion periods as the highest priorities, followed by examining multimodal first-mile and last-mile freight connections, future interstate development, and studying southern connectivity to the Rio Grande Valley.

Mr. Graham reviewed the Mentimeter prioritization results for assessing needs, impacts, and competitiveness recommendations. The committee members ranked analyzing the impacts of freight-focused projects on other infrastructure within the statewide network as the highest priority, followed by assessing current Permian Basin freight mobility needs, examining supply chain competitiveness relative to other states, and studying the transportation opportunities and impacts of intermodal hubs.

Mr. Graham reviewed the Mentimeter prioritization results for recommendations that support an international, multimodal freight network. The committee members ranked weighing the importance of maritime commerce to the state in project development, promoting grade separation programs along the TMFN, and integrating border crossings with the highway corridors that serve them as the highest priorities. Secondary priorities included protecting future rail corridor capacity and supporting eligible railroads and rail districts in aligning statewide goals and project development.

Mr. Graham reviewed the Mentimeter prioritization results for recommendations supporting and implementing innovative technology. The committee members ranked supporting the development of innovative technologies across all modes as the highest priority, followed by expanding technology usage for real-time travel information, including TPAS and Dynamic Message Signs statewide, and coordinating with autonomous trucking entities

Full Committee Prioritization and Recommendation Check (continued)

to promptly address safety concerns. Advanced air mobility in freight planning received the lowest priority ranking.

Mr. Graham reviewed the Mentimeter prioritization results for recommendations to optimize freight planning at TxDOT. The committee members ranked regularly monitoring and reporting the status of completed transportation plans as the highest priority, followed by increasing coordination with industry to better capture current freight needs and increasing collaboration between the Texas Freight Advisory Committee and the Border Trade Advisory Committee. Collaborating with MPOs and Councils of Governments (COGs) to better capture local freight policies and priorities also received a high-priority ranking.

Laura Freeland, Southern Dallas County Inland Port Transportation Management Association, asked whether the committee should provide specific economics when submitting policy recommendations.

Mr. Graham stated that supporting regional information would be helpful and encouraged the committee members to continue submitting feedback during the public comment period in December.

Final Freight Plan Timeline and Next Steps

Mr. Graham reviewed the next steps and key dates for the 2027 Texas Freight Mobility Plan. He noted that the public comment period begins on December 18, 2026, and ends one month later. Mr. Graham also stated that an informational webinar will be held before the public comment period begins for stakeholders to ask questions. After the public comment period ends, TxFAC will review the final plan in mid-January 2027 before it is presented to the Texas Transportation Commission at the end of January 2027.

Mr. Graham reviewed the 2027 TxFAC meeting dates:

- Thursday, January 21
- Wednesday, April 14
- Tuesday, July 13
- Wednesday, October 20

Final Remarks and Adjourn

In closing, Chair Schwebel thanked TxDOT staff, presenters, and committee members for their contributions to a productive meeting and expressed his gratitude for their work during the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 11:40 a.m.