



### **EL PASO, TEXAS – FEBRUARY 27, 2002**

- The Northeast Parkway Bypass Study, currently underway, will allow drivers to bypass greater El Paso and connect to I-10 at the northernmost point of El Paso.
- I-10 is the primary connector from downtown to Mesa Street, the city's east-west artery.
- Three international bridges in El Paso are dependent on I-10. Adequate data on El Paso and other ports of entry are important to the study.
- Frontage roads are needed along the I-10 corridor to reduce off-system traffic, improve air quality, encourage economic development, improve mobility, alleviate congestion and enhance safety.
- El Paso Airport has plans to develop new cargo transportation facilities.
- There needs to be an alliance of air cargo, rail and truck transportation, with a focus on multimodal alternatives. Currently, there is a lack of air and rail cargo use.
- Air cargo is time efficient, since most freight is transported to Mexico.
- Cross-traffic from I-10 to I-70 needs to be addressed. Alternate routes to alleviate congestion should be included in the study.
- The interchange at Verizon Street, and improvements to ramps, should be included.
- Heavy storms cause flooding in the basins surrounding I-10 and result in flood damage. Planning for I-10 should include adequate storm drainage and numerous feeders.
- The study needs to look at alternative fuels for trucks, effects of congestion, air quality, and environmental issues.
- In rural areas, I-10 is vulnerable to traffic accidents and needs to be maintained for timely response. Due to the number of accidents, there is a strong need for ambulance services in bedroom communities adjacent to El Paso.

### **SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS – FEBRUARY 25, 2002**

- Marked increase in truck traffic going through area on I-10
- Increased truck traffic on SH 46 and development along that highway; studies show there is not sufficient capacity for truck traffic on SH 46; need to protect right of way for future expansion.
- San Antonio recently mandated a specific hazardous materials route through the city, which has encouraged more trucks to use SH 46. Consider a bypass route for hazardous materials trucks.

- There is a need for alternate truck traffic routes in San Antonio and nearby towns, including possible relief routes around small towns. Through traffic needs to be pulled out of major metropolitan areas like San Antonio.
- San Antonio is an ideal location for a combined intermodal transportation facility. Consider the idea of a “freight village” or virtual warehouses at the edge of the city.
- Rail is the most cost-competitive land transportation for trips of 700+ miles. Union Pacific is looking for opportunities to increase the use of rail, and has put money into lines from El Paso to Los Angeles and from El Paso to Dallas. Three lines meet west of El Paso and combine into one line through Texas. Current conditions include a single-track railroad that carries 25 trains per day. The capacity of railroad varies depending on location. It is close to capacity in Arizona and New Mexico; and some freight is diverted to Dallas to avoid San Antonio and Houston. Intermodal transportation sites are important in areas like Houston. The two UP sites in San Antonio could be combined, possibly at the old Kelly Air Force Base, which would make intermodal more viable. There is also one in interior California (San Bernardino area). In Los Angeles and Long Beach most shipments come by rail into the port. This is not so with the Port of Houston. They typically make short trips to Dallas and other places. There are constraints on the UP yard in El Paso because it is located in the city.
- San Antonio is the largest city with air attainment; fueling issues are a concern.
- Consider double-bottom trucks, Sunday bans on truck travel and having facilities only accept deliveries at night. Note that New Jersey has a ban on trucks on the Jersey Turnpike.
- Interest in the development of new truck stops along I-10, east of San Antonio. The primary concern is the efforts of the City to develop a corridor plan for I-10 east that was unfavorable to new truck stops.
- The group along I-10 (east perimeter of San Antonio) is opposed to truck stops and is interested in how potential improvements to the corridor would correspond to the I-10 East Perimeter Plan. The creation of an eastern gateway to the city, which does not perpetuate the current light industrial look of the corridor, is also an interest.
- Need to preserve corridors
- San Antonio and Houston could benefit from additional capacity and particularly truck lanes.
- There is a large volume of traffic from west of Houston (Brookshire) to Beaumont. Circumventing the Houston area is still a problem – no routes are presently available to go around, from the Baytown area over to Brookshire.
- This study will look at how truck traffic and freight moves through local areas. We are working on a national “freight travel demand” model, using data supplied by Reebie & Associates. We will study freight traffic in detail, identify the potential for alternate routes and consider diversion due to constraints. We will also be looking at the major connectors to I-10.
- Questions were asked about the study including:

**Q:** How will truck origin and destination be considered?

**A:** *Truck origin and destination information is being collected and, hopefully, will help show where to concentrate efforts by pinpointing needs*

**Q:** Will the Trans-Texas Corridor Plan by Governor Perry be factored into this study?

**A:** *We are wrapping up existing conditions, but will look at this plan and consider planned improvements as part of this study.*

**Q:** What is the possibility of considerable expansion of the Panama Canal and how would this affect truck and rail traffic?

**A:** *Travel time is one issue. Another is where the shipment is going.*

**Q:** Is there a way to separate truck traffic from vehicular traffic?

**A:** *Some states are currently looking at truck-only routes.*

**Q:** What is the truck-train concept?

**A:** *This is a concept where rubber-tire trains ride on a separate right of way. It is currently being done in Australia. We looking at what is happening in transportation and what different approaches are being taken worldwide as part of this study.*

- ITS was the subject of some questions, such as:

**Q:** How far have companies come with ITS solutions?

**A:** *Second and third generation ITS solutions are in testing, using guidance systems without adding additional lane miles. Test sections of roadway are in existence. Automobile manufacturers are working in tandem with ITS companies, but this technology is not perfected.*

**Q:** What types of vehicles might have ITS; and where would this type of technology go into effect – truck only lanes or separated lanes?

**A:** *ITS is still in the test stages, and it will most likely be at least 5-10 years to implementation.*

## **HOUSTON, TEXAS – FEBRUARY 26, 2002**

- The lack of maintenance of I-10 is a problem.
- The increasing amount of truck traffic versus other traffic on I-10 and other interstates was noted.
- Specific locations of concern identified included:
  1. Chambers County (bottlenecks in several areas on I-10, two-way frontage/service roads, the need to replace the Trinity River Bridge, and local development issues)
  2. The Deweyville Exit, westbound on SH 12 where trucks overturn
  3. The 46/90 interchange
  4. The Katy Freeway, which will experience a severe disruption when improvement work begins
  5. Alternate routes or relocation as opposed to expansion of I-10
- I-10 runs parallel to the old SP railroad line, then the CXF railroad line.
- In rural areas where pipelines are parallel to I-10, the pipelines are very close to the existing right-of-way.
- Issues discussed in terms of the Grand Parkway included: making the parkway a free facility with Katy Freeway a tolled facility and the potential for bottlenecks at either end of the Grand Parkway. Other ways to use tolls to divert truck traffic around major cities was also discussed.

- A number of suggestions or comments were offered about the trucks and freight movements including:
  1. The impact of trucks versus passenger vehicles on roadways
  2. Changes in operating hours to encourage truck movements at non-peak periods
  3. Transit-truck HOV lanes
  4. "Truck-only" lanes
  5. The problems associated with trucks driving in the left lanes on major highways
  6. The effect of the 55 mph speed limit on trucks
  7. The preference of truckers for standard, as opposed to differential speeds
  8. Safety concerns associated with trucks from Mexico
  9. The concept of freight-villages
- It was stated that there is a need to consider non-attainment and attainment areas in terms of location of trucks stops. It was suggested that there is higher truck traffic east of Jackson, Mississippi on I-20 than on I-10, and that one of the largest volumes of truck traffic occurs on US 81, from Atlanta, Georgia to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.
- The desirability of increased use of barge and rail was noted, but it was suggested there is a need to change habits and improve these systems.
- Texas Representative, Talmadge Heflin, stated the need to consider the public policy issue of honoring states' rights versus federalization of the corridor.
- Comments and questions about the time frame of the study were raised –

**Q:** Isn't there a need to look beyond 30 years and the time frame, if money were available?

**A:** *Typically, planning studies of this type use a 30-year time frame. Funding is not always the only limitation, but at a minimum, it might 10-20 years to implement improvements.*

- Other questions included:

**Q:** What about the volume of truck traffic versus other traffic on I-10; and how does truck traffic on I-10 compare to other Interstates?

**A:** *The volume of truck traffic versus other traffic varies depending on the location along I-10. This study plans to compare truck traffic on I-10 to truck traffic on other Interstates.*

**Q:** Which states have lane restrictions on trucks, and will the study consider common traffic laws?

**A:** *This study will look at lane restriction requirements in the eight I-10 states and consider common traffic laws and enhanced construction requirements for truck-only lanes. The proposed 55 mph speed limit change will also be considered.*

**Q:** If capacity is increased, then how much will traffic increase; and how will this study address the Trans-Texas Corridor plan?

**A:** *The national freight model being developed in this study will address the issues of increased volume in traffic and capacity. The study will consider planned improvements, such as the Trans-Texas Corridor plan.*

**Q:** Will ozone formation studies be done in conjunction with this study?

**A:** *This study will only address specific issues, such as air quality and ozone, in a general sense.*

- During the open house, representatives of Congressman John Culberson's office voiced the need to reduce truck traffic on I-10 through the 7th Congressional District. An

attendee noted that SH 87 is washed out, though it is shown on the map. Information was provided about a group working to upgrade US 90 to link military bases and ports. If successful, this proposed "Gulf Coast Strategic Highway System" could provide relief routes for Interstate traffic. An attendee noted his skepticism about the study and new technologies, as well as his concerns about the safety record of trucks from Mexico.

- Two written comments were received. One noted the concept of using HOV lanes for through traffic, even during off-peak hours, raises safety and operational issues which could outweigh travel-time benefits. The other stated there is too much traffic for I-10's condition in the Houston area, and "on-the-book" projects need to be done now.