

FIT NEWS

Transportation Planning and Programming Division
Freight and International Trade Section | Summer 2016

Freight and International Trade Section

Contents:

Texas Freight Advisory Committee.....	2
Border Trade Advisory Committee.....	3
Joint Working Committee.....	4
Bridges and Border Crossing Group.....	5
7 Ways They are Shaping the Future.....	6

FIT staff:

Caroline Mays
Director

Sondra D. Johnson
Freight Planner

Kale Driemeier
Freight Planner

Eduardo Hagert
International Relations Specialist

Manuela Ortiz
International Relations Specialist

Mary Aparicio
Administrative Assistant

Freight and International Trade Section
125 E 11th Street
Austin, TX 78701
www.movetexasfreight.com



FREIGHT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE COMMITTEES

The Freight and International Trade Section oversees and coordinates four major committees: the Texas Freight Advisory Committee; the Border Trade Advisory Committee; the U.S. – Mexico Joint Working Committee; and the U.S. – Mexico Binational Bridges and Border Crossing Group.

These committees are critical to achieving the goals of the department and facilitating efficient and safe movement of freight and international trade in order to enhance the state's economic competitiveness. Each committee brings together a diverse group of stakeholders composed of elected and public sector officials, private sector business leaders, and association representatives. Each committee has a unique function allowing them to focus on various aspects of freight and international trade. Together, the committees provide a wide range of expertise and experience to TxDOT in developing strategies to address the state's freight and international trade needs and challenges.

Texas Freight Advisory Committee

The Texas Transportation Commission established the Texas Freight Advisory Committee (TxFAC) in January 2013. Chaired by Harris County Judge Ed Emmett, its 22 members and seven ex-officio members include private-sector business leaders, modal representatives and elected officials from throughout Texas.

For more, see page 2.



Senator Sylvia Garcia, Judge Ed Emmett, and Lauren Garduño discuss at the August TxFAC meeting.

Border Trade Advisory Committee

The Border Trade Advisory Committee provides a forum for the exchange of communications between the Transportation Commission, TxDOT, the Governor and committee members representing border trade interests. The committee's advice and recommendations provide them with a broad perspective regarding the effect of transportation choices on border trade in general and on particular communities.

For more, see page 3.



Secretary of State Carlos Cascos speaks at the BTAC meeting in April 2016.

TEXAS FREIGHT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TXFAC)

TxFAC was instrumental in the development and adoption of the first Texas Freight Mobility Plan and is currently working with TxDOT to guide development of the Updated Texas Freight Mobility Plan, due in October 2017.

What is the Committee's Purpose?

The TxFAC advises TxDOT on freight issues, priorities, projects and funding needs for freight improvements, and works to elevate freight transportation as a critical component of the state's economic vitality and competitiveness. The TxFAC was formed as a permanent advisory body to support the development of the TFMP and TxDOT's freight planning and investment decisions. In general, the committee meets on a quarterly basis, with a total of 13 meetings to date.

What Are TxFAC's Goals?

- Ensure the participation of private sector freight stakeholders in TxDOT's transportation planning process.
- Ensure that freight transportation needs are addressed in TxDOT's transportation planning, programming, investments, and implementation processes.
- Provide input into the development of the Statewide Freight Plan.
- Help TxDOT identify and target freight investments.
- Assist TxDOT in prioritizing freight investments by identifying high priority and strategic freight transportation projects that facilitate safe and efficient movement of freight throughout the state.
- Develop TxDOT's Freight Transportation Action Items on Key Freight Issues.



From Left: Senator Sylvia Garcia and TxFAC Chair: Judge Ed Emmett at the August 4th, 2016 meeting.

TxFAC's Mission

To advise TxDOT on freight issues, priorities, projects and funding needs for freight improvements, and elevate freight transportation as a critical component of the state's economic vitality and competitiveness.

What Has TxFAC Accomplished?

The TxFAC was instrumental in guiding the development of the Texas Freight Mobility Plan, TxDOT's first comprehensive plan that focuses on the state's freight transportation needs. The committee provided input on developing goals and objectives, providing freight network recommendations, freight plan policy, program, and project recommendations, and reviewed final plan content.



Inside TxFAC's August 4th, 2016 meeting at the Greer building in Austin, TX.

What Will TxFAC Accomplish?

The Freight Plan was adopted in January 2016 and met MAP-21 requirements. The federal transportation bill – the FAST Act (which was signed into law in December 2015) established new requirements for state freight plans, including the establishment of critical rural and urban corridors. The TxFAC will guide the development of the Freight Plan Update, which is required to be submitted to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) by December of 2017. TxFAC will also continue to support the Freight Plan implementation and TxDOT's freight planning initiatives.

BORDER TRADE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Border Trade Advisory Committee provides a forum for the exchange of communications between the Transportation Commission, TxDOT, the Governor and committee members representing border trade interests. The committee's advice and recommendations provide them with a broad perspective regarding the effect of transportation choices on border trade in general and on particular communities. The members of the committee also provide an avenue for interested parties to express opinions with regard to border trade issues.

The state's border commerce coordinator currently the Texas Secretary of State serves as chair of the committee. The Transportation Commission appoints the members of the committee. Members are appointed to staggered three-year terms expiring on August 31 of each year, except the Transportation Commission may establish terms of less than three years for some members in order to stagger terms. Members include the border commerce coordinator, representatives from the MPOs located along the border, ports of entry, universities that conduct research on transportation or trade issues, and local officials.

What is the Committee's Purpose?

The BTAC was created in 2001 by the 77th Texas Legislature to define and develop a strategy and make recommendations to the commission and the governor for addressing the highest priority border trade transportation challenges. The BTAC recommendations are included in border reports that are presented to the presiding officers of the State House and State Senate.

What are BTAC's Goals?

The Committee's Five Main Goals are to:

1. Ensure the participation of port-of-entry stakeholders in TxDOT's Transportation Processes.
2. Ensure that the Texas-Mexico Border transportation needs are addressed in TxDOT's transportation planning.
3. Provide input into the development of the Border Strategic Transportation Initiatives Plan.
4. Contribute to the development of a comprehensive Texas Border Transportation Master Plan.
5. Advise TxDOT on trade issues, priorities and projects and funding needs for freight improvements to support the state's economic vitality and global competitiveness.

What Has BTAC Accomplished?

By identifying issues, priorities, projects, and funding needs at the Texas - Mexico border, BTAC has influenced TxDOT's central role in the state's economy and Texas' effect on the global market as the nation's top exporting state in the past twelve years. For example, the BTAC conducted a study regarding effects on international trade of wait times at ports of entry between the United States and Mexico." The report titled, Study Regarding International Trade: Economic Impacts of Border Wait Times noted that while improving the ability of commerce flow between Mexico and the United States is primarily a federal responsibility, the recommendations mentioned in the report are Texas-specific:

- Modify staffing and increase hours of operation at the land POEs to reduce peak demand volumes and to meet demand.
- Implement a phased and then a permanent rollout of 24-hour operations.
- Improve use of technology to speed up document verification; implement travel information system to provide cross-border information to private and commercial vehicles; track trailers to avoid duplication of inspections; and develop and use a single electronic portal that all inspections agencies can access similar information.
- Improve consistency and precision of wait time data collection; Provide an accurate measure of wait times/crossing times for industries to use for logistics decisions; and examine alternative means of data collection/dissemination, such as GIS maps of dynamic traffic conditions.

What Will BTAC Accomplish?

Currently, the BTAC is developing the Texas Strategic Transportation Blueprint, a report that will identify strategic trade transportation needs and recommendations along the Texas-Mexico border and the state's major trade transportation corridors. The BTAC will also play a key role in the planned updates of TxDOT's Border Master Plan and in the Border Wait Time Studies.



U.S.-MEXICO JOINT WORKING COMMITTEE (JWC)

Created in 1994, the U.S.-Mexico Joint Working Committee (JWC) is a binational group whose primary focus is to cooperate on land transportation planning and the facilitation of efficient, safe, and economical cross-border transportation movements. The group is comprised of transportation professionals from FHWA and the Mexican Secretariat of Communication and Transportation (SCT). In addition to FHWA and SCT, the members of the JWC include representatives from the U.S. Department of State (DOS), the Mexican Secretariat of Foreign Relations (SRE), the four U.S. border state Departments of Transportation (DOT), and the six Mexican border States. The General Services Administration (GSA) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) of the Department of Homeland Security also participate in JWC meetings.

What is the Committee's Purpose?

The JWC promotes effective communication concerning transportation planning between U.S. - Mexico Border States and works to develop a well-coordinated land transportation planning process along the border. Among other efforts, the JWC works to:

- Establish methods and procedures to analyze current and future transportation infrastructure needs;
- Evaluate transportation demand and infrastructure impacts resulting from future changes in land transportation traffic.

What are JWC's Goals?

The U.S. - Mexico Joint Working Committee has set goals to:

1. Promote Effective communication for transportation planning between U.S. & Mexico border states, and to
2. Work to develop a well-coordinated land transportation planning process along the border

What Has JWC Accomplished?

The JWC has analyzed, developed, and coordinated border transportation plans and programs reflecting the needs of both countries. Specifically, the (JWC) has created a

Among JWC members, Texas has been the leader in this area and has implemented Border Wait Times Studies at seven ports of entry:

1. Veterans Bridge in Brownsville, TX and Matamoros, MX
2. Pharr Bridge in Pharr, TX and Reynosa, MX
3. World Trade Bridge in Laredo, TX and Nuevo Laredo, MX
4. Colombia Solidarity Bridge in Laredo, TX and Colombia, MX,
5. Camino Real International Bride in Eagle Pass, TX and Piedras Negras, MX
6. Bridge of the Americas in El Paso, TX and Juarez, MX
7. Zaragoza-Ysleta Bridge in El Paso, TX and Ciudad Juarez, MX



Secretary of State Carlos Cascos addressed the JWC in Sept. 2015.

compendium of border-wide regional border master plans with a comprehensive and prioritized assessment of transportation needs along the border including at the Ports of Entry (POE). The Regional Border Master Plans provide the next logical step in a comprehensive, binational transportation planning process. The three Texas Border Master Plans include:

- West Texas/New Mexico/Chihuahua
- Laredo/Nuevo Leon/Coahuila/Tamaulipas
- Lower Rio Grande Valley/Tamaulipas

Another major initiative by the JWC is the Border Wait Time and crossing time's studies for commercial vehicles. Crossing and wait times for commercial motor vehicles are key indicators of transportation, and of land port-of-entry (POE) and international supply-chain performance.

The goal is to have 95% of commercial truck traffic included in the monitoring and near real-time dissemination of border wait times and cross-border wait times along the entire U.S.-Mexico border.

- Federal Highway Administration

In an effort to establish a baseline and ongoing measurements of border crossing and wait times, members of the U.S. - Mexico Joint Working Committee for Transportation Planning (JWC) have implemented an automated border crossing and delay time measuring systems at major POEs along the U.S. - Mexico border.

Among JWC members, Texas has been the leader in this area. The TxDOT sponsored Border Crossing Information System (BCIS) is a product of this effort. The crossing time data at these ports of entry is stored in the BCIS (www.bcis.tamu.edu) and it includes information on expected wait times and expected crossing times of U.S. bound commercial vehicles, expected wait times of US bound passenger vehicles and Mexican bound passenger vehicles, and historic data of actual wait times and actual crossing times.



U.S.-Mexico Binational Bridges and Border Crossing Group (BBBXG)

The BBBXG was formed in 1981 to address existing border crossing needs, operational issues, transportation access, and to lead in the international bridge process for proposed crossings. The Group is responsible for assuring that border crossing projects are of national significance for both countries, and to assist the project sponsors through the permit process by collaborating with federal and state level border crossing stakeholders.

The U.S. – Mexico Binational Bridges and Border Crossing Group's Co-chairs are the U.S. Department of State and the Mexican Secretariat of Foreign Relations. Group members include delegations from the federal and state governments of the United States and Mexico, border state DOTs, Customs and Border Protection (CBP), the Dept. of Homeland Security (DHS), the General Services Administration (GSA), the U.S. Coast Guard, the Animal Plant

Health Inspection Service (APHIS), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Federal Railroad Administration, the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) and other border authorities. The Group invites border crossing project sponsors from both countries to attend the public portion of the meetings to provide updates and critical information on their respective projects. Since the group members are all border crossing stakeholders, this is an excellent forum for border project sponsors to obtain guidance and support for their projects.

What is the Group's Purpose?

The Group's focus is to maintain open communication between the U.S. and Mexico, at the state and federal levels, concerning border crossing issues at existing and proposed border crossings.

What Are the Group's Goals:

The Group's ultimate goal is to work with border stakeholders on all aspects of the crossings to improve and maintain the safe and effective crossing of people and goods between both countries. Other goals include:

- Maintaining open communication between both countries at the state and federal levels regarding border crossing issues related to existing and proposed border crossings.
- Collaborating with border stakeholders to improve and maintain the safe and effective crossing of people and goods.

What Has BBBXG Accomplished?

Due to the binational collaborative efforts of this group, many border crossing projects have been completed during the group's existence. (See box)

The Group has maintained coordination between both countries at the local, state and federal levels on issues and timeliness of projects. Many operational issues have been resolved, but most importantly the Group has worked to maintain clear lines of communication between both countries to assure that infrastructure on both sides of the border is suitable for handling cross-border trade and traffic.

Current Bridge Projects include:

- Construction of a second span at the Presidio
- Vehicular Bridge
- Reconstruction of the Presidio Rail Bridge

TxDOT has participated in BBBXG since 1994 and FIT has been instrumental in coordination efforts for the construction of 7 Texas-México Crossings since then.

- Pharr (1995)
- Veterans (1999)
- Camino Real (1999)
- World Trade Bridge (2000)
- Donna (2010)
- Anzalduas (2010)
- Guadalupe-Tornillo (2016)



View of a Binational Bridges and Border Crossings Group Meeting.

What Is FIT's Role With Each Committee?

TxFAC

The Texas Freight Advisory Committee (TxFAC) is coordinated by the Freight and International Trade Section. FIT works with TxFAC to ensure public and private stakeholders have a forum to communicate important decisions affecting freight mobility in Texas. FIT liaises with each of the 29 TxFAC members to escalate key recommendations to executive management and the Texas Transportation Commission. FIT works closely with the Office of Harris County Judge Ed Emmett, the TxFAC chair, to coordinate meeting schedules, locations, and agenda items.

BTAC

FIT works hand-in-hand with the Border Trade Advisory Committee in the definition and the development of a strategy for addressing the highest priority border transportation challenges and in making recommendations to the Texas Transportation Commission and the governor on how to best tackle these issues. FIT ensures the participation of port-of-entry stakeholders in TxDOT's transportation processes and ensures that the Texas-Mexico border transportation needs are addressed in TxDOT's transportation planning. Currently, FIT is supporting the committee in the development of the Texas Strategic Transportation Blueprint, a report that will identify strategic trade transportation needs and recommendations along the Texas-Mexico border as well as major trade transportation corridors in the state.

JWC

The FIT Section actively participates and contributes in this committee. Participation in this group is important because Texas shares the border with four Mexican states – Tamaulipas, Nuevo León, Coahuila, and Chihuahua – the most of any U.S. state. FIT plays a vital role in the development of a well-coordinate land transportation process along the border. FIT has spearheaded the development of Texas-Mexico border master plans which provide a comprehensive and prioritized assessment of transportation needs along the border including at the ports-of-entry. FIT has also spearheaded the Border Wait Time and crossing time studies for commercial vehicles. Crossing and wait times for commercial vehicles are key indicators of transportation and international supply-chain performance.

BBBXG

The Freight and International Trade Section of TxDOT represents Texas in this group. Texas' participation in the group is important because there are a total of 28 international bridges and border crossings connecting Texas and Mexico with 1,250 miles of common border – more than any other border state. The FIT Section uses the information obtained from this group for improving binational efforts to facilitate the efficient and safe crossing of people and goods between Texas and Mexico. When FIT is well informed about what the policies and projects are on the Mexican side of the border, and vice versa, both countries will benefit.



7 WAYS

THESE COMMITTEES ARE SHAPING THE FUTURE OF TEXAS FREIGHT

1. Economic Competitiveness

The committees have been instrumental in the development of the TFMP and provided input to other freight and trade related studies. These plans have emphasized the need for transportation investments to align with the state's economic development goals and to keep pace with the growth in freight, population, energy sector development, and international trade.

2. Mobility and Reliability

Efficiently utilizing capacity on the freight transportation system and addressing congestion and bottlenecks to improve the freight network's performance are key discussion topics for these committees.

3. Multimodal Connectivity

The Freight Plan identified several opportunities for improving connectivity between freight transportation modes. Improved landside connections to seaports, inland ports, airports and border crossings are critical goals for each committee.

4. Safety

The committees help with identification of policies and strategies to address safety and highlight the need to build upon the strengths of the existing efforts outlined in TxDOT's Strategic Highway Safety Plan.

5. Technology

Leveraging technology and innovation to improve the efficiency of freight transportation is an important topic for TxFAC, BTAC, JWC, and the BBBXG.

6. Asset Management

The implementation of numerous policies, programs and projects identified in the TFMP and through the various committees will help TxDOT to preserve freight assets.

7. Customer Service

The Freight Plan outlines both policies and programs to address education and public awareness, including the continued engagement of the TxFAC, BTAC, JWC, and BBBXG.