

**A RESOLUTION BY SUTTON COUNTY
SUPPORTING THE EXTENSION OF INTERSTATE 27
ALONG THE PORTS-TO-PLAINS CORRIDOR
SOUTH OF LUBBOCK.**

WHEREAS, Congress has already designated the Ports-to-Plains Corridor in Texas as a High Priority Corridor on the National Highway System; and

WHEREAS, the Texas Department of Transportation published an *Initial Assessment Report on the Extension of I-27/Ports to Plains Corridor* in November, 2015 which stated: “The corridor will continue to be a critical link to state, national and international trade, growing population centers and critical energy and agricultural business sectors”; and

WHEREAS, according to the *Texas Freight Mobility Plan*, “By 2040 over 73 percent of Texas’ population and 82 percent of the state’s employment is projected to be located within five miles of an interstate”; and

WHEREAS, Texas has no major north-south interstate west of Interstate 35; and

WHEREAS, the *Texas Freight Mobility Plan* notes that further investment alone on I-35 will not fix the problem saying, “The state must focus not only on improving existing facilities, but also on developing future freight corridors to move products to markets and exports”; and

WHEREAS, the *Texas Freight Mobility Plan* goes on to recommend that TxDOT, “give additional consideration to the extension or designation of other interstate routes. Examples include I-27 and upgrades to portions of US Highway 190 to interstate standards”; and

WHEREAS, the proposed extension of Interstate 27 connects major West Texas population and economic centers including Amarillo, Lubbock, Midland-Odessa and San Angelo in addition to numerous smaller communities; and

WHEREAS, the proposed extension of Interstate 27 intersects with Interstate 40, Interstate 20 and Interstate 10; and

WHEREAS, the proposed extension of Interstate 27 intersects Interstate 10 at Sonora, Sutton County, Texas; This would serve to be a major point of distribution in every direction in West Texas; and

WHEREAS, the proposed extension of Interstate 27 will serve three border crossings with Mexico at Del Rio, Eagle Pass and Laredo; and

WHEREAS, the proposed extension of Interstate 27 will be a major backbone for the energy industry in Texas serving top oil and gas producing counties as well as the growing wind energy industry; and

WHEREAS, the proposed extension of Interstate 27 will also serve the agriculture industry including many of Texas top counties for the production of cotton, cattle, sheep and goats and other commodities; and

WHEREAS, extending Interstate 27 in Texas is also a cost-effective option. The Texas Department of Transportation’s *Initial Assessment Report on the Extension of I-27/Ports to Plains Corridor* estimated that it would cost about \$7 billion to upgrade the nearly 1,000 miles of the Ports-to-

Plains Corridor from the northern tip of Texas to Laredo. To extend Interstate-27 approximately 500 miles from Lubbock to Laredo is projected to cost \$5.2 billion. Compare that to the \$4.8 billion it cost to rebuild 28 mile section of Interstate 35 east from Interstate 635 to U.S. Highway 380 in Dallas County; and

WHEREAS, an additional cost saving option is associated with the primarily east-west, recently designated, Interstate 14 which includes a proposed segment that overlaps the Ports-to-Plains Corridor between Midland-Odessa and San Angelo, presenting an opportunity for that segment to be jointly designated as Interstate 14 and Interstate 27; and

WHEREAS, a future Interstate designation will be a significant new economic development tool for communities along the corridor. Site selectors for manufacturers, warehousing and distribution recommend sites along an interstate highway and travel services businesses such as hotels, truck stops, convenience stores and restaurants, which can have a dramatic impact on small communities will also expand. This will create much needed new jobs and expanded tax base in rural West Texas; and

WHEREAS, while designation as a future interstate is the first step in a very long process before the completion of an interstate highway, that does not lessen the importance of extending Interstate 27.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COMMISSIONERS COURT OF SUTTON COUNTY, TEXAS.

Section 1. That the **COMMISSIONERS COURT OF SUTTON COUNTY** supports the extension of Interstate 27

Section 2. This resolution to be in full force and effect from and after its passage and approval.

Section 3. If any portion or provision of this resolution shall for any reason be held to be invalid or unenforceable, the invalidity or unenforceability of such portion or provision shall not affect any of the remaining provisions of this Resolution, the intention being that the same are severable.

ADOPTED AND APPROVED this 13th day of MARCH, 2017.

Steve Smith

Title Sutton County Judge



ATTEST

Rachel Chavez Duran
Title



PORTS-TO-PLAINS ALLIANCE

Securing the Benefits of Commerce to
North America's Energy & Agricultural Heartland

THE CASE FOR EXTENDING INTERSTATE 27



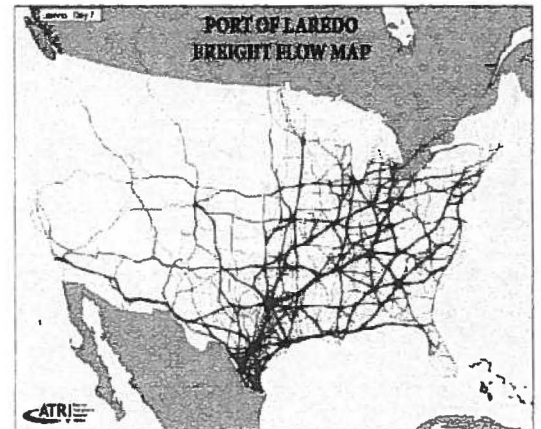
When the Ports-to-Plains Corridor Coalition originated in the mid-1990's it envisioned extending Interstate 27 to serve as a major corridor for NAFTA trade. Conditions at the time did not warrant expansion to interstate standards, and the coalition has worked to upgrade the corridor to four-lane divided with truck relief routes where needed. Those efforts have led to more than \$1 billion in upgrades to the corridor. NAFTA trade and freight has grown dramatically and congestion in Texas' metropolitan areas has continued to increase. Considering the long-term proposal of upgrading the Ports-to-Plains Corridor in Texas to interstate standards, it is imperative to designate an extension of Interstate 27 to Laredo from its current end point in Lubbock.

Although completely upgrading the Ports-to-Plains Corridor to four-lane divided highway will be very beneficial, a full upgrade to interstate standards is important. According to the Texas Freight Mobility Plan, "By 2040 over 73 percent of Texas' population and 82 percent of the state's employment is projected to be located within five miles of an interstate." An extended Interstate 27 is critical for the economic competitiveness of West Texas.

Texas does not have a major North-South interstate west of Interstate 35. Where Interstate 69 can serve as an alternative for freight moving to the northeast, an extended I-27 can be an I-35 relief route to the northwest.

Undoubtedly NAFTA and increased trade with Mexico have had a tremendous impact on freight movement through Texas. Data published by the Bureau of Transportation Statistics show that the value of U.S. - Mexico trade and Texas-Mexico trade increased by 99.2% and 90.9% respectively between 2004 and 2015. That report showed that in 2015 U.S.-Mexico trade amounted to almost \$513 billion. The office of the U.S. Trade Representative reports that in 2015 U.S. goods and services trade with Mexico totaled \$583.6 billion. The Bureau of Transportation Statistics reported in 2015 that on average more than 85.7% of US-Mexico trade is transported by surface modes, and trucks move 82.8% of the value of U.S.-Mexico surface trade. Furthermore approximately 60% of U.S.-Mexico trade crossed at a Texas land port in 2015, with Laredo being far and away the largest land port and Eagle Pass ranked third in Texas.

Same 2,000 Trucks After 7 Days

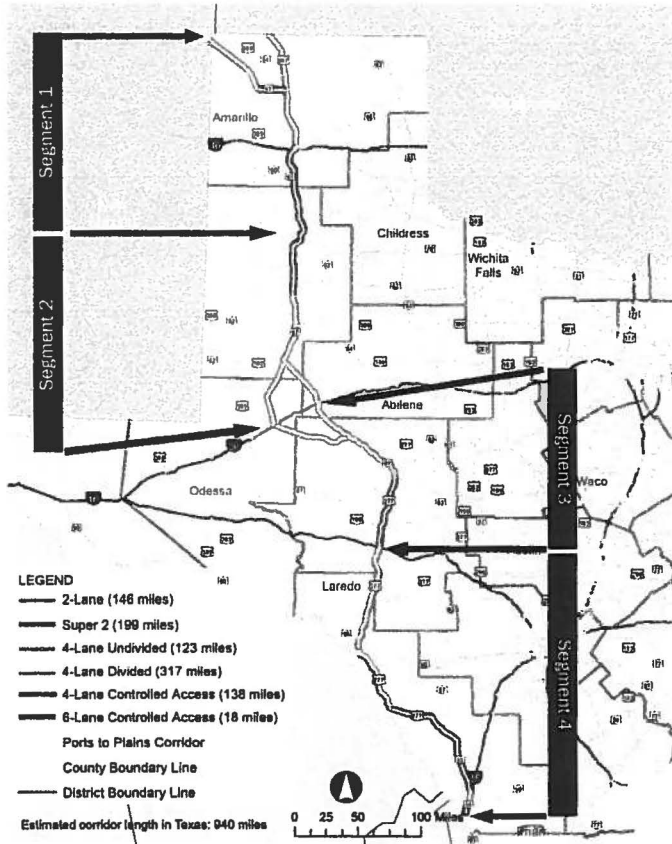


Much of that freight moves up I-35 and has led to a tremendous increase in congestion. The Interstate 35 segment through Travis County is the number 1 ranked corridor for truck congestion in the state. This truck congestion has a detrimental impact on the communities through which it passes.

Many of the counties through which I-35 passes experience higher frequencies of fatal and total crashes related to commercial motor vehicles than other counties. Several cities within the large metro regions served by the I-35 corridor do not currently abide with TCEQ and EPA 8-hour ozone standards.

The Texas Freight Mobility Plan notes that further investment alone on I-35 will not fix the problem. The Plan says, "The state must focus not only on improving existing facilities, but also on developing future freight corridors to move products to markets and exports." It goes on to recommend that TxDOT, "give additional consideration to the extension or designation of other interstate routes. Examples include I-27 and upgrades to portions of U.S. 1-90 to interstate standards."

PROPOSED TEXAS I-27 EXTENSION



Map furnished by Texas Department of Transportation

The proposed extension of Interstate 27 connects major West Texas population and economic centers including Amarillo, Lubbock, Midland-Odessa and San Angelo in addition to numerous smaller communities. It will cross I-40, I-20 and I-10 and serve three border crossings with Mexico at Del Rio, Eagle Pass and Laredo. The Interstate will be a major backbone for the energy industry in Texas serving top oil and gas producing counties as well as the growing wind energy industry. Furthermore, it will serve the agriculture industry including many of Texas top counties for the production of cotton, cattle, corn, grains, sheep and goats and other commodities.

Extending Interstate 27 in Texas is also a cost-effective option. A 2015 study from TxDOT estimated that it would cost about \$7 billion to upgrade the nearly 1,000 miles of the Ports-to-Plains Corridor from the northern tip of Texas to Laredo. To extend I-27 approximately 500 miles from Lubbock to Laredo is projected to cost \$5.2 billion.

Compare that to the \$4.8 billion it cost to rebuild 28 mile section of I-35 E from I-635 to U.S. 380 in Dallas County. And even though the recently designated Interstate 14 is primarily an east-west route, there is a

proposed segment that overlaps the Ports-to-Plains Corridor between Midland-Odessa and San Angelo, presenting an opportunity for that stretch to be jointly designated as I-14 and I-27.

A future interstate designation will be a significant new economic development tool for communities along the corridor. Manufacturers, warehousing and distribution will be drawn to the new Interstate. Travel services businesses such as hotels, truck stops, convenience stores and restaurants, which can have a dramatic impact on small communities will also open. This will create much needed new jobs and expanded tax base in rural West Texas.

Designation as a future interstate is the first step in a very long process before the completion of an interstate highway. The original designation of the current 124 mile Interstate 27 came in 1968. Construction did not begin until 1975 and was completed in 1992 at a cost of \$453 million, at a time that transportation funding was much more adequate to meet demands. Extending I-27 approximately 500 miles from Lubbock to Laredo will certainly take much more time and money. That is why it is so important to take that first step now and designate an extension of Interstate 27 to Laredo. The state has significant demands for a very limited transportation budget, but that does not lessen the importance of extending Interstate 27.