

Working to Better Connect Texas Communities and Create Economic Opportunities

March 13, 2024

**MORE I-69 INCREMENTAL STEPS** – Since 2018 TxDOT has been making steady progress on a Statewide and Rural Connectivity Program focused on improving segments of the Highway Trunk System. The Trunk System was initiated in 1988 to create a network of rural highways meeting at least four-lane divided standard. The Trunk System is one of the few mechanisms that facilitates funding projects in rural areas. The two decade “funding drought” before Prop 1 and Prop 7 meant few projects were initiated. But in 2018 TxDOT selected four key corridors to push. One of those is US 59/I-69 from Laredo to Houston. Others are US 281 north of San Antonio, US 69/US 175 in East Texas, and US 87/US 83 in West Texas. A fifth segment, US 277/US 83, was added in 2023.

The US 59/I-69 section is 252 miles long and includes 104 miles now at 4-lane divided status or better. Seventeen miles are fully funded and 49 miles have partial funding for development or are unfunded. A total of 82 miles (33%) are still only two lanes wide. The full US 59 section checks all the boxes to justify priority funding. It is a future interstate, an official evacuation route, an international trade corridor, part of the state Highway Freight Network, and serves to relieve traffic demand on existing interstates I-35 and I-10.

TxDOT intends to add more “key corridors” as the five currently in the program move toward full 4-lane status. During Commission discussion of the program, Commissioner Alvin New said he believes the US 59/I-69 section in East Texas from north of Cleveland to Texarkana should be the next corridor added to the priority connectivity program. (See More on Page 2)



Laredo I-69W Groundbreaking Ceremony

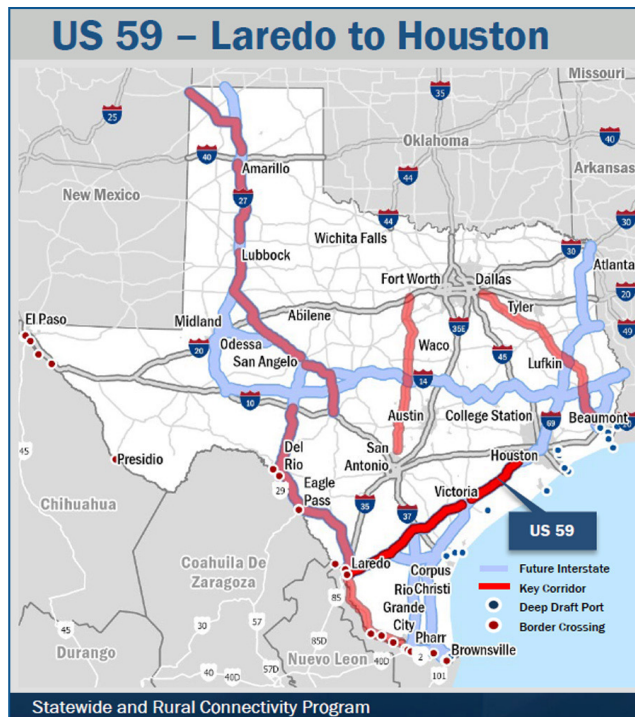
**I-69 GROUNDBREAKING MARKS PROGRESS** - Laredo and Webb County community leaders gathered in February along US 59 to celebrate the start of work on the \$360 million project to transform 4.7 miles of the Bob Bullock Loop into I-69 West. Among those speaking were Congressman Henry Cuellar, State Sen. Judith Zaffirini and Webb County Judge Tano Tijerina. Cuellar called the Laredo Loop upgrade a transformative project. Sen. Zaffirini, now dean of the Senate, called it a wonderful day for Laredo and noted that the Alliance has worked passionately since the 1990s to secure support and funding for I-69. Judge Tijerina said the I-69W loop project is particularly important because it will save lives.

**WHARTON IS NEXT** – You are invited to participate in a groundbreaking ceremony at 10 a.m. on April 23 celebrating the start of work on the 7.5 miles of I-69 inside the city of Wharton. The \$343 million project will extend freeway construction to the south side of the Colorado River. Stay tuned for more details.

**PLANTO FLY-IN** – Your community should be part of the Alliance delegation meeting with Members of Congress and federal highway officials in this year’s **I-69 DC Fly-In** on April 17-18. Capitol Hill tunes in when constituents tell the I-69 story. Register at [www.i69TexasAlliance.com](http://www.i69TexasAlliance.com). Also consider sponsoring the Fly-In as a way to show your community’s support for the project. Sponsorship information and registration information can be found at [www.i69TexasAlliance.com](http://www.i69TexasAlliance.com)

**NEW FEDERAL FUNDING** – The recently enacted FY 24 federal funding legislation includes \$3.6 million for an upcoming I-69 project in Wharton County on the north side of El Campo. The congressionally directed appropriation was requested by Congressman Troy Nehls (TX-21). Also included was \$3 million requested by Congressman Pete Sessions (TX-17) for pre-construction work on the US 59/US 259 interchange project on the north side of Nacogdoches. The Alliance continues to facilitate the efforts of local entities seeking federal appropriations for I-69 projects that are consistent with local TxDOT plans.

**LUFKIN LEADERS** – In February the Alliance provided an I-69 update to about 75 participants in Leadership Lufkin at the State Capitol. Questions from the group focused on how the community can help in getting I-69 built faster.



Statewide and Rural Connectivity Program

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# Trunk System Program Improvements Can Provide Incremental Steps Toward Full Interstate Standard Development

## What is the Texas Trunk System and How was it Designated?

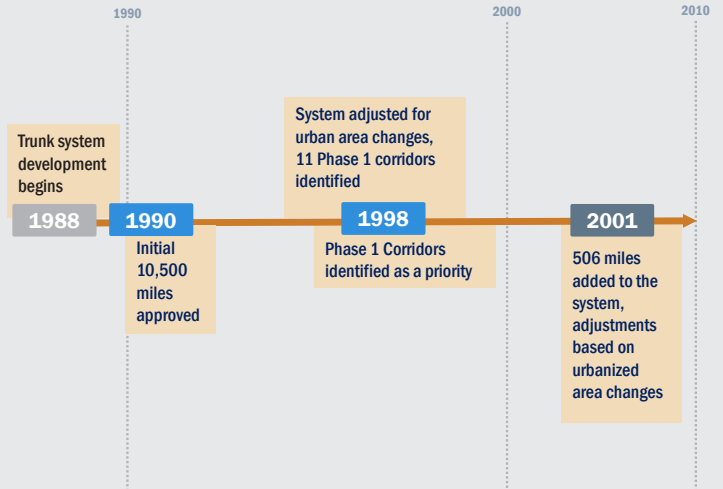
### Origin and Purpose of the Trunk System

The Texas Trunk System is a rural network of four-lane divided highways or better.

It serves as a principal connector for:

- Texas cities with over 20,000 population, and
- major activity centers, maritime ports, and points of entry.

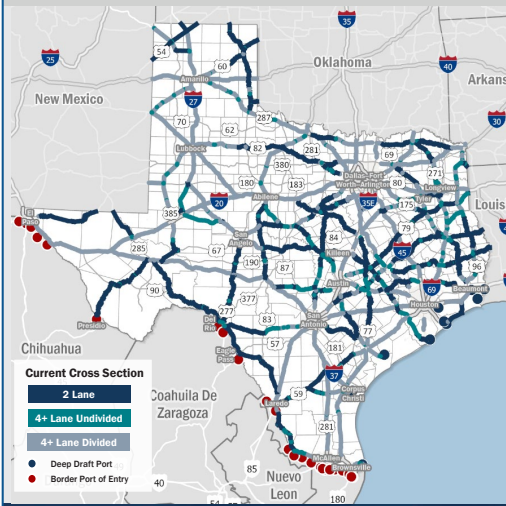
The Trunk System is one of the few mechanisms that facilitates funding projects in rural areas of Texas.



Statewide and Rural Connectivity Program

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## Summary of Progress on Texas Trunk System to 4-Lane Divided



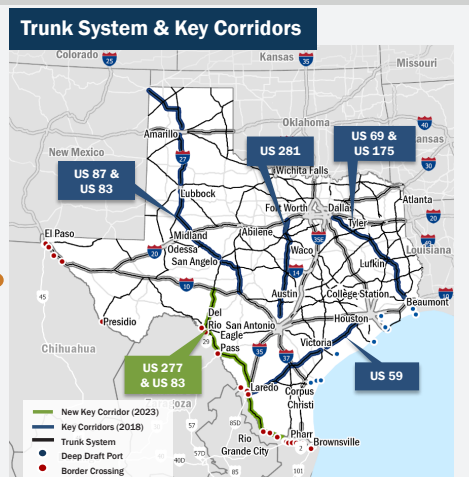
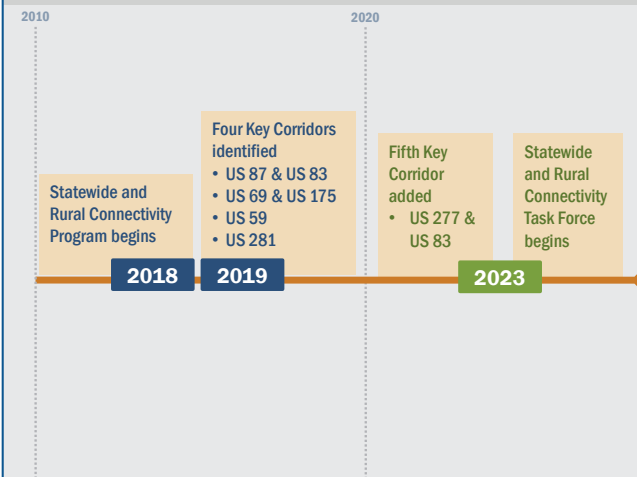
Trunk System Corridors	Total	4-lane or more divided	2-lane undivided	4-lane or more undivided
Rural Interstate	2,184	2,184	-	-
Phase 1	1,679	955	418	306
Other	6,176	2,011	3,102	1,063
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,039</b>	<b>5,150</b>	<b>3,520</b>	<b>1,369</b>

**Completed Upgrades**  
**51% (5,150 miles) is 4-lane divided or higher, including rural interstate highways.**

- Remaining Upgrades**
- 35% (3,520 miles) of 2-lane roadways
  - 14% (1,369 miles) of 4-lane undivided roadways

Source: TxDOT Roadway Inventory 2022. Includes segments passing through small communities.

## Statewide and Rural Connectivity Program and Task Force



Alliance for I-69 Texas

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