

May 7, 2024

**❑ SIZING UP THE FUNDING GAP** – Transportation Commissioners got a preview of the upcoming Statewide Long Range Transportation Plan which looks at needs over the next 25 years. What they heard about future funding needs should start a fresh conversation about how to pay for future projects. The Plan sets out to address goals for safety, preservation, mobility, connectivity, economic vitality and stewardship. The state's population is projected to grow by about 50% by 2050 and total vehicle miles traveled in Texas by mid-century is expected to increase by 42%. Modeling estimates that the minimum total investment over those years should be \$665 Billion to \$740 Billion or about \$30 Billion a year in 2024 dollars. That is about twice the \$13 Billion a year TxDOT has to spend now and reveals a funding gap on the order of \$17 Billion a year. All elements of the I-69 System in Texas are recognized in the long range plan. The public comment period on the draft Plan, known as Connecting Texas 2050, begins May 10th. (See TxDOT graphics on Page 2).



US 59 closed to traffic in San Jacinto County

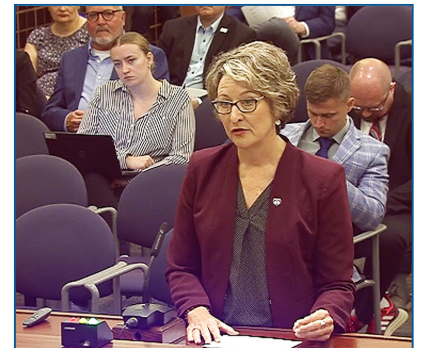
**❑ FLOODING STOPS TRAFFIC** - Sections of US 59 (Future I-69) in East Texas were closed to traffic by flood waters during the first week of May. The result was long lines of stopped trucks and substantial detours. Closures happened in San Jacinto and Polk Counties, areas where the busy existing highway consists four lanes divided by a grassy median. The current end of Interstate 69 development is at the north end of Cleveland, some 45 miles north of downtown Houston. The stretch from Cleveland to Livingston (25 miles) crosses the Trinity River floodplain and major creeks. The potential for high water lane closure will be greatly reduced or eliminated by improved drainage facilities and raised roadway elevations once US 59 is improved to interstate highway standards. Work is beginning on the first 6.6 miles of the section from Cleveland to Shepherd under a \$190 million contract.

**❑ WASHINGTON REPORT** – We had good participation in this year's I-69 DC Fly-In with most regions of our Texas corridor

represented plus delegations from several of the other 8 states on the I-69 Corridor. Michigan, Indiana and Kentucky, where I-69 is almost 100% complete, were well represented and helped deliver the message that completing I-69 to move people and goods is of national and international importance.

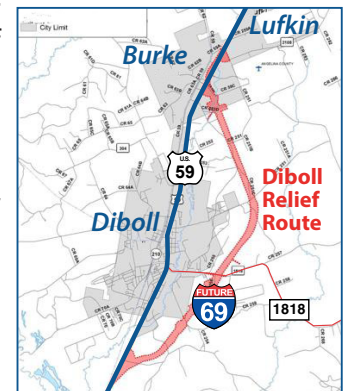
**❑ THANKING COMMISSIONERS & DISTRICT ENGINEERS**

Alliance Executive Director Jennifer Shepard spoke to the members of the Transportation Commission in April stressing the importance of TxDOT's statewide long range planning and highlighting inclusion of I-69. She thanked commissioners for their commitment to continuing progress on I-69 development. She



pointed to the tremendous effort being made by the eight I-69 TxDOT district engineers in planning and championing I-69 projects for funding in the UTP. That work has been critical in bring us record numbers of projects and levels of investment. Shepard also made the point that I-69 development is already being leveraged to attract new businesses to Texas such as the Tesla lithium refinery being built in Nueces County and the multi-plant Steel Dynamics complex at Sinton.

**❑ DIBOLL RELIEF ROUTE** – Work began in 2020 on the new US 59/Future I-69 relief route around the east side of Diboll a few miles south of Lufkin. Weather permitting, the 8 miles of interstate standard relief route is expected to be complete in mid-2025. A final phase of the \$141 million project will be connecting the new freeway lanes to the existing highway on the north and south including building flyovers that will allow local traffic to flow smoothly in and out of Diboll. Work on both connections is now underway.



**❑ WHARTON GROUNDBREAKING** – The Future I-69 Wharton Relief Route project groundbreaking is now scheduled for 10 a.m. on Wednesday, May 22nd. The event marking the start of the \$343 million project will be held on the east side of US 59 about one mile north of the FM 102 at the US 59 intersection with the newly built connecting section of FM 1301.

# The Statewide Long Range Transportation Plan is Revised Every 5 Years. The Transportation Commission Will Vote on Adoption of the 2024 Version in July.

## Connecting Texas 2050 – Challenges

- Managing growing demand and changing demographics**

Increase in total vehicle miles traveled in Texas by 2050: **42%**
- Reducing fatal and severe injury crashes**

Increase in annual number of fatal crashes in 2023 over the past five-year average: **6%**
- Preserving and strengthening existing transportation assets**

Largest network of transportation assets with **50%** more roadway lane miles than California

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## Connecting Texas 2050 – Opportunities

- Supporting economic competitiveness**

Increase in employment projected by the year 2050: **50%**
- Leveraging technology and innovation**

50+ Initiatives to integrate Cooperative and Automated Transportation technology across TxDOT
- Optimize multimodal transportation funding**

Consider funding opportunities for all modes of transportation

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## Minimum Total Investments to Meet 2050 Targets

**\*Minimum Total Investment of \$665B to \$740B**

**\$470B to \$520B**

### \*Minimum UTP Investments to Meet 2050 Targets

<b>Safety</b> \$80B - \$90B**	<b>Pavement Preservation</b> \$75B - \$80B	<b>Bridge Preservation</b> \$45B - \$50B	<b>Congestion - Urban</b> \$185B - \$205B	<b>Connectivity - Rural</b> \$85B - \$95B	<b>Development Costs</b> \$160B - \$180B	<b>Routine Maintenance Contracts</b> \$35B - \$40B

\*Minimum Investments for 2025 through 2046 (22 years) in 2023 US Dollars  
\*\*Investment will require additional efforts from others to meet target

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