



Working to Better Connect Texas Communities and Create Economic Opportunities

October 14, 2024

Alliance Annual Meeting

PLAN TO ATTEND THE ALLIANCE ANNUAL MEETING – The I-69 Alliance annual meeting will be held Friday, December 6th, at the headquarters of the Greater Houston Partnership near Minute Maid Park. We are honored to have Steven Alvis, a member of the Transportation Commission, as the keynote speaker. Mr. Alvis is the co-founder and managing partner of NewQuest Properties, the largest privately held shopping center developer in Texas. Through his impressive career in commercial development, Commissioner Alvis has a keen understanding about the inextricable tie between highway infrastructure and economic development. Join us to hear more about TxDOT’s efforts to build I-69 and how that can spur economic growth along the corridor. You will soon receive information on making Annual Meeting reservations. If your organization would like to be a sponsor, please contact Alliance Executive Director Jennifer Shepard (Jennifer@jgshepard.com).

TXDOT KICKING OFF I-69 PROJECTS IN HOUSTON – In September the Transportation Commission awarded the largest contract yet for construction of a project on the I-69 Corridor. The \$695 million contract is the second in a multi-project program to rebuild the freeway system flowing through central Houston. Known as Project 3B-2, it covers about 1.5 miles of I-69 from the intersection with SH 288 to the intersection with I-45 on the edge of the Midtown area. The reconstruction of this complex set of roadways will include a trio of signature bridges crossing the freeway at Elgin, Tuam and McGowen Streets. Work on 3B-2 will begin in 2025 and continue until 2033.



This week TxDOT will celebrate the groundbreaking for Project 3B-1, the first of many projects to eventually rebuild I-69 and I-45 adjacent to Downtown. The \$121 million underground drainage project will follow St. Emanuel St. and carry stormwater from the freeways north to a detention pond and then into Buffalo Bayou. It will include a pump station at the south end. This project must be finished before the adjacent freeways can be rebuilt beginning in 2030. A third project in the I-69 sequence (3A), west of SH 288, is projected to go to bid in 2026 with completion in 2032.

MARSHALL RELIEF ROUTE – Last week TxDOT published the final Environmental Assessment for the first phase of the future I-369 freeway relief route around the east side of Marshall. The relief route has been divided into 3 phases including two north of I-20 and one to the south. Phase One has been allocated funding in the 2025 UTP.

DISTRICT ENGINEERS – Jeff Vinklerek has been named DE for the TxDOT Yoakum District where he has worked for 22 years, most recently as Planning Director. He has been involved in I-69 planning and development through Wharton, Jackson and Victoria Counties. Mo Bur has been named interim Houston DE. He is currently statewide Director of Project Development and previously served as Dallas District Engineer.



Jeff Vinklerek

RIVIERA RELIEF ROUTE – TxDOT agreed to pay for utility relocations for the Riviera Water District, one of the final steps needed before awarding a contract for the 4-mile Riviera Relief Route on I-69E/US 77 in Kleberg County.

NEW LAREDO BORDER BRIDGE APPROVED – On Oct. 2 the federal government issued the presidential permit authorizing future construction of a new international bridge to be located on the south side of Laredo. This location will connect to future I-69W and I-35 via Loop 20 and a future Outer Loop. Known as Bridge 4/5, the facility will be the fifth bridge in Webb County and will address booming cross-border freight movement.

DONNA BRIDGE – The City of Donna has been granted a \$35.9 million State Infrastructure Bank loan to build inspection facilities and other improvements at the Donna Rio Bravo International Bridge. When complete it will allow for commercial border crossings and an additional I-69 System route for trade with Mexico.

WASHINGTON REPORT – Current Federal transportation funding levels are being carried forward through the election season under a continuing resolution. The Administration has allocated \$55.7 billion in 2025 highway funding with \$5.5 billion allocated to Texas.

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REPORT: Gulf Intracoastal Waterway Has Major Economic Impact

GIWW REPORT AVAILABLE – TxDOT has issued its latest biennial report to the Legislature evaluating the impact of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (GIWW) on the state.

The GIWW follows the Texas Coast and mirrors the route of Interstate 69 running from Brownsville to Galveston. It has an important economic impact on the I-69 communities that have seaports along the coast and communities with busy recreational users.

The GIWW runs from Brownsville to Florida and the portion in Texas spans a length of 379 miles. It connects ports and private terminals while allowing for efficient and safe transport of cargo along the Texas Coast and beyond. Transport along the GIWW reduces congestion on Texas' highways and rail networks and serves as an important passage for the import and export of commodities. The GIWW helps produce \$77 billion in annual economic output to the state and supports 261,000 total Texas jobs.

TxDOT serves as the non-federal sponsor and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Galveston District serves as the federal sponsor for the GIWW. Federal responsibilities include channel and infrastructure maintenance, overseeing new construction and reviewing and denying or approving permits for construction under their authority.

TxDOT's main responsibility includes the acquisition of dredge material placement areas for the Army Corps. TxDOT also has the ability, but not responsibility, to fund the incremental cost for the beneficial use of dredge material.

Among stakeholders in the GIWW are the private industries, deepwater and shallow draft ports, waterway associations, recreational users, the Coast Guard and non-government organizations.

You can **DOWNLOAD** the current GIWW report [HERE](#).

www.i69TexasAlliance.com



Alliance for I-69 Texas

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