

September 9, 2021

☐ **2022 UTP APPROVED** – The Transportation Commission has approved the \$74.4 billion, 10-year 2022 Unified Transportation Program. Among the I-69 projects programmed for letting in the next four years are:

- US 77 Riviera Relief Route - \$118 million
- US 59 Corrigan Relief Route - \$160 million
- I-69C extension north of Edinburg - \$145 million
- US 77 upgrade at Ricardo - \$118 million
- US 281 Alice Relief Route - \$118 million
- Wharton Relief Route north - \$98 million
- Wharton south - \$154 million
- US 59/I-69W Laredo Loop projects - \$205 million

After extended public input the \$9 billion North Houston I-45 project was kept in the UTP but that decision will be revisited in December depending on whether a federal hold on all project activity is lifted. One element of the multi-section project is the reconstruction of Interstate 69 from Montrose Blvd to the I-69/I-10 interchange north of Buffalo Bayou.

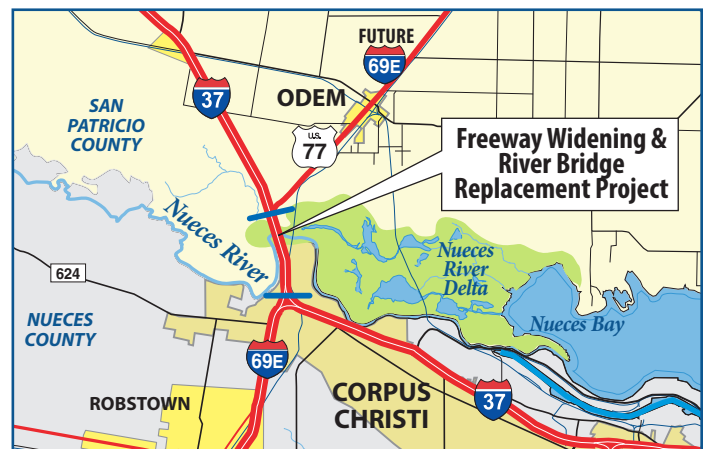
☐ **2023 FREIGHT PLAN** – It’s time to produce a new version of the Texas Freight Mobility Plan. Stakeholder workshops will be held around the state from Oct. 24 to Nov. 5. We urge Alliance members and I-69 friends to engage and help keep the spotlight on I-69. The assessment of future freight needs will continue through May, a draft plan will be ready in July and a commission vote is expected next September.

☐ **WASHINGTON REPORT** – On Aug. 10 the Senate passed the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill including a five year extension of Highway Construction authorities and significant funding increases for almost every highway program. The measure is to be considered in the House by Sept. 27 and expectations are it will be approved without change and sent to the President for his signature. Amendments requested by the Alliance were not included despite having been included in a similar bill approved by the House earlier this year. Efforts are underway to include the amendments in additional legislation in the House.

☐ **LEGISLATURE COMING BACK** – The Legislature will meet in Special Session #3 starting Sept. 20th. Redistricting will be the primary topic. That includes redrawing districts for Congress, Texas Senate and Texas House. The ideal population for each: 38 US House seats - 766,987; 31 State Senate seats – 940,178; and 150 State House seats – 194,303. You can be sure there will plenty of new district lines to reflect the 4 million new Texans since 2010, most of whom live in metro regions. Lawmakers will also be dealing with how to allocate \$16 billion in federal Covid-19 relief funds.

☐ **MORE I-69E PROGRESS** – TxDOT is wrapping up a 6.5-mile project to upgrade US 77 in South Texas to interstate standard. The section begins at the current terminus of I-69 East just north of Raymondville in Willacy County and extends into Kenedy County. This section can be added to the national Interstate Highway System and signed as I-69E in the coming year once a post-construction technical review is complete and final designation is approved.

☐ **NUECES RIVER CROSSING** – Work begins this month on an \$86 million project to replace Nueces River bridges and increase coastal evacuation capacity at a critical chokepoint on I-37/Future I-69E. The project covers a 3-mile section from the current end of I-69E to the I-37/US 77 interchange in San Patricio County. The roadways will be widened to four lanes in each direction plus a hurricane evacuation lane and wider shoulders will be added.



☐ **VICTORIA UPGRADE PROJECT** – The Transportation Commission has awarded a \$13.5 million contract to upgrade a busy 1-mile section of US 59 in Victoria to interstate highway standard. One-way frontage roads will be built between US 87 and SH 185. Also awarded was a \$1.1 million landscaping project on a stretch of I-69 in northeast Fort Bend County. In August the Commission awarded \$1.35 billion in projects statewide. In FY 2021, which ended Aug. 31, TxDOT awarded 1,326 projects for a total of \$8.06 billion.

☐ **SHIP CHANNEL PROJECT** – Final agreements are now in place to commence the \$1 billion Houston Ship Channel widening and deepening work known as Project 11. Dredging will deepen the channel to 46.5 feet operating depth, enabling the port to accommodate larger vessels and allow more efficient vessel movements. I-69 provides essential freight movement connectivity to and from the Port of Houston.

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