

# CHAPTER 7

## RAILROADS AND TRUCKING

### Introduction:

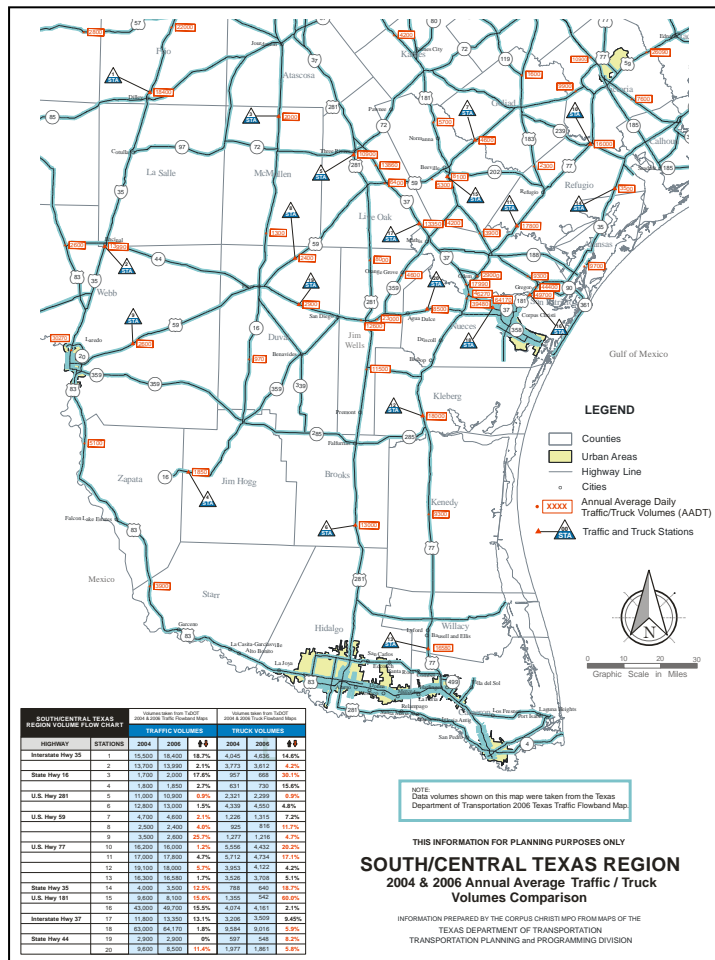
Railroads and trucking are efficient modes of transportation for freight and bulk cargo and are an integral part of developing economic opportunities. Because of their size and scale, rail, truck and multimodal facilities need planning to minimize conflict with other modes of transportation and to foster safety and efficiency. Corpus Christi MPO previously conducted a Freight and Hazardous Movement Study in 2004 to identify and explore issues related to freight movement in the MPO planning area.

The study identified key issues affecting freight movements in South Texas with particular emphasis on the two-county area and discussed major area bottlenecks and potential projects that could produce major changes in the local conditions. While the focus of the study report was primarily truck-related movements, information on freight transportation by rail, barge, and pipeline were also discussed.

The identified issues include continued upgrade of US 77 (a segment recently completed provides Interstate Highway standards from IH-37 through the urbanized area south), monitoring the progress of the La Quinta Intermodal Facility, continuing efforts toward the replacement of the Harbor Bridge, identifying improvements to SH 358 SPID (Phase 1 of the ramp reversal project has recently gone to contract) and reviewing access management policies in terms of truck needs (a consulting project is underway).

The MPO reached out to private freight operators through their local association, surveys and individual contact to make sure they were included as part of the interagency consultation process, and projects specific to the needs of the

**Map 1 - South/Central Texas Region Traffic/Truck Volumes**



freight community and related to intermodal freight programs and projects are a part of the long-range transportation plan and TIP. These include the development of the Joe Fulton International Trade Corridor, the improvements to Port Avenue, the Military Deployment and Joe Fulton rail improvements.

**Railroad Goals and Objectives:**

Current goals and objectives include.

1. Coordinate railway facilities with other transportation modes and adjoining land uses to encourage desirable development patterns.
2. Promote safe and efficient movement of hazardous cargo and general freight within the study area.
3. Coordinate the freight planning process with the Port of Corpus Christi Authority particularly as it relates to the strategic deployment of military cargo and the La Quinta intermodal facility.

The goals lead to specific action items.

1. Identify issues with current rail alignments and identify opportunities to provide grade-separated crossings between heavily used rail lines and high-volume streets.

The grade-separated crossings are essential to avoid interference of rail activity with the flow of vehicular traffic. An evaluation of current rail services and the identification of locations for grade-separated crossings are under consideration as a subtask in the 2008-2009 UPWP.

2. Provide adequate safety protection at crossing of streets and rail lines where grade separation is not feasible.

Where grade separation is not feasible, special efforts should be made to alert motorists of approaching trains. Depending upon rail and motor traffic, the crossing should be protected by crossing gates, flashing lights, or internationally recognized signs.

3. Encourage the development of compatible land uses in areas adjoining rail lines.

Industries and heavy commercial activities are generally the land uses which are most compatible with railroad facilities. The Joe Fulton International Trade Corridor is an example of compatible industrial land use being developed to be served by road, rail and ship.

4. Facilitate joint development between rail districts.

Facilitate the development of a regional rail plan with the Nueces and San Patricio County Rail Districts and the Port of Corpus Christi Authority - particularly as it relates to the strategic deployment of military cargo, the Robstown Inland Port of the Americas and the La Quinta Intermodal Facility.

**Trucking Goals:**

1. Provide for the safe and efficient movements of trucks in the metropolitan area.

2. Engage trucking companies and other stakeholders in regional coordination and planning efforts.
3. Identify and enhance routes and corridors that would provide connectivity for trucks particularly as it relates to the La Quinta Intermodal Facility, the Robstown Inland Port of the Americas and the Joe Fulton International Trade Corridor.

The goals lead to specific policies.

1. Locate compatible land uses along major streets to encourage trucks to confine their travel to arterials, expressways and freeways.

Control of truck traffic can be exercised through zoning and subdivision regulations. Given proper land use and subdivision design, most trucks will tend to use the major arterial system. Bridge clearance and roadways that are not designed for trucks contribute to congestion and safety concerns. Designation of a corridor as a “freight route” or “important for freight” can help focus the identification of mobility projects that would eliminate the barriers to safe, reliable and efficient movement of goods such as wider lanes, lane widths needed for increased turning radius and design standards that would accommodate heavy loads.

2. Discourage truck travel through residential neighborhoods.

Prohibit truck through traffic on all local and collector streets with residential zoning to eliminate noise, danger, and street maintenance costs. Provide signage that alerts trucks to low clearances, overhanging trees, children at play to discourage regular use.

3. Provide adequate off-street loading spaces for businesses which receive or distribute goods by truck.

Delivery trucks should be prevented from blocking the flow of vehicular traffic. Businesses should provide off-street loading spaces. Development of local commercial use policies that provide design standards for proper loading zones, adequate off-street parking and easy access for delivery vehicles as well as emergency service vehicles.

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