



Looking At The Problem

Over the last twelve months, the Federal Highway Administration and the Departments of Transportation in Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri, Iowa and Minnesota have combined their efforts to conduct a study of Interstate Highway 35 (I-35).

The study team has been looking at highway capacity, trade flow, the physical condition of the facility, and current and future traffic levels. The team now has a better technical understanding of this high-priority corridor. At the same time, communication with the public and local transportation officials has given the team a better understanding of public priorities.

Finding The Solutions

During this analysis of the I-35 corridor, the study team looked at many options to meet current and future demand. These options included: adding traffic lanes, creating an international rail route parallel to I-35, increasing the size and weight regulations for trucks, creating exclusive truckways, improving the clearance process at the borders, fully utilizing technology and other aspects of an intelligent transportation system (ITS), and

implementing strategies such as improvements to public transit in order to reduce traffic in urbanized areas. Aspects of these options were combined into strategies that could reasonably be expected to improve the corridor and meet current and future travel demand. The most promising of these strategies are being evaluated by the team in detail; one strategy will be recommended by the steering committee after being considered at a public meeting.

Narrowing The Options

The steering committee has decided that each of the following combination strategies is likely to meet the safety and mobility goals they have set, and has asked the study team to evaluate each of them in detail:

- The Status Quo Strategy
- The Urban Congestion Relief Strategy
- The Trade Focus Strategy
- The Combination Strategy

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Narrowing The Options**

The purpose of the I-35 Trade Corridor Study is to assess the need for improved local, intra-state and interstate service on I-35 and clearly define a feasible improvement plan to address those needs.

A special project office has been established to make it easy for you to get information about the I-35 Trade Corridor Study and provide your thoughts and ideas. Comments about the study can be given directly to the study team by mail, telephone or e-mail at the addresses listed below.

I-35 Trade Corridor Study
P.O. Box 410482
Kansas City, MO 64141-0482

telephone — 1-800-590-0066
e-mail — i35Study@hntb.com

Everyone making a comment is sent a response and added to a project mailing list to receive future study-related information.

When Will We Meet Again?

Public meetings were held in the spring of 1998 in eight cities along the corridor. Another set of public meetings is anticipated to take place in the spring of 1999 in the cities of Laredo, San Antonio, Dallas, Oklahoma City, Wichita, Kansas City, Des Moines, and Minneapolis/St. Paul. The study team's findings will be presented and public comment will be solicited. You will be notified in advance of the meetings and your attendance is encouraged. Public input is an important part of this planning process.

Narrowing The Options

The Status Quo Strategy

For comparative purposes, all of the strategies will be judged against the Status Quo Strategy. It consists of routine maintenance of pavement and bridges and the completion of any committed improvements.

The Urban Congestion Relief Strategy

This strategy has as its centerpiece the alleviation of congestion in urban areas. It includes the elements of the Status Quo Strategy as well as the following: adding as many lanes as possible within existing right-of-way sufficient to handle traffic; reliance on relief routes; consideration of double decking the highway in congested urban areas; developing comprehensive ITS programs; and encouraging urban areas to take other means, such as improving public transit, to relieve congestion.

The Trade Focus Strategy

This strategy has all of the features of the Urban Congestion Relief Strategy, but also adds a partial NAFTA truckway (a lane devoted exclusively to trucks) in certain segments of the corridor.

The Combination Strategy

This strategy has all of the features of the Trade Focus Strategy with two additions. In congestion areas, it includes acquiring the right-of-way to add additional lanes (up to a maximum of 12 lanes), as well as implementing additional rail service to displace some automobile and truck traffic.

Study Fact

Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) is a catch-all phrase for technological and other improvements in transportation that do not require adding lane capacity. Some examples of ITS are: traveler information systems, high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes, incident management systems, improving clearance processes for commercial vehicles, ramp-metering, and variable message signs.

After Careful Evaluation

Between now and next spring, the study team will be reviewing the four strategies retained for detailed study. Each will be carefully measured against the study objectives, which serve as our evaluation criteria. For each strategy, the study team will ask the following questions:

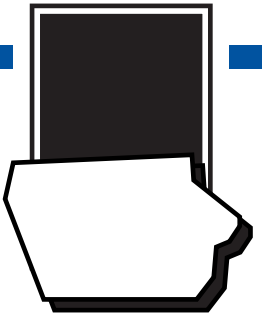
- Does the strategy provide needed mobility and safety improvements?
- Does the strategy maintain environmental quality?
- Does the strategy enhance economic development along the corridor?
- Is the strategy fiscally responsible and cost effective?
- Is the strategy likely to have public and institutional support?

The most promising strategy will be advanced for further public scrutiny.

If additional lanes were the only strategy considered by the I-35 corridor state transportation departments, some sections of I-35 would require up to 18 lanes to meet projected demand.

Study Fact

Notes from Iowa



Dennis Tice
Director, Planning & Programming Division
Iowa Department of Transportation



Several Iowa-related activities have taken place within recent weeks concerning this important study.

First, I attended the fourth meeting of the steering committee, which is comprised of representatives from each of the state departments of transportation. The purpose of that meeting was to review the status of the overall program and schedule, review two task

reports on adequacy of existing facilities and investment strategies, and preview forthcoming analyses.

Second, the Iowa Department of Transportation participated in a Red River Trade Region Summit where discussion concerned trade corridors in the five-state region. This summit focused on strategies for development in the Red River Region of North America's Superhighway, and the preparation of a work plan to include Iowa's portion of I-29 in this five-state study. It is anticipated that this study will be closely linked to the I-35 Trade Corridor Study.

Third, the Iowa DOT reviewed and commented on the consultant's report on "Investment Strategies". This report consisted of a five-step process of identifying potential scenarios, evaluating each of these scenarios, identifying the best candidate alternatives, comparing these alternatives, and recommending four viable investment alternatives.

Fourth, the keynote speaker at the 1998 Iowa Transportation Planning Conference was Judge Jeff Moseley of Denton, Texas. The Iowa Department of Transportation and the Iowa Association of Regional Councils sponsored this conference. Primary attendees were from Iowa Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) and Regional Planning Affiliations (RPA). Judge Moseley spoke on the importance of the I-35 Trade Corridor. He was the founder of the initial multi-state coalition working to designate I-35 as an international trade corridor.

These four items reflect the growing interest in this corridor study. The importance of this study to Iowa is evidenced by the diversity of activities involving discussion of the I-35 Trade Corridor.

Continuing Public Input

The I-35 Steering Committee is composed of senior transportation officials from the six states through which I-35 travels. Whether you are part of the freight community, a resident of an area impacted by I-35, a traveler on I-35 or a concerned citizen, the Steering Committee is interested in hearing from you.

There are several ways for people to learn about the I-35 trade corridor and the activities of the Steering Committee, and to make their views or concerns about the corridor known:

Meetings

Public meetings are planned for the spring of 1999. You will receive notice of the meetings in your area via a post-card invitation. The meetings will also be publicized through your local media.

Video

Interested groups may contact the project office for a free copy of the video shown at the spring public meetings.

Media

Study information is made available to the media and may appear in your local newspaper, or on radio and television stations.

Written or Verbal Comments

A special comment form is included with this newsletter. Comments or questions about the study can be communicated directly to the study team by mail, telephone or e-mail at the addresses listed below. Everyone who makes a comment is sent a response and added to the project mailing list to receive future study information.

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Newsletter

This is the third of four newsletters being created in conjunction with the I-35 Trade Corridor Study. Volumes I and II of the I-35 Trade Corridor Study Newsletter are currently available for review on the department of transportation web sites for Texas, Kansas, Missouri, and Iowa.

Texas

www.dot.state.tx.us/mis/mis.htm

Kansas

www.state.ks.us/public/kdot/pubinfo

Missouri

www.modot.state.mo.us/info/pubs.htm

Iowa

www.state.ia.us/government/dot/sitemap.htm#pubs

