

Public Meetings Held In Eight Cities Along The Corridor

State department of transportation officials in six states along the I-35 trade corridor hosted a series of eight public meetings this spring. Starting in Kansas City, members of the I-35 study team traveled to Wichita, Des Moines, Minneapolis/St. Paul and Oklahoma City, as well as to Dallas, Austin and Laredo, Texas. In each city, state department of transportation officials and local planning organization staffers discussed I-35 corridor issues with each other and with members of the public. Discussions focused on important issues to be considered by the study team which will ultimately recommend strategies for improving the I-35 corridor.

A member of the HNTB/Wilbur Smith study team then made a presentation on corridor issues which included some data about existing conditions. State department of transportation officials and members of the local planning organizations focused on local concerns. These local concerns ranged from a discussion about how to alleviate traffic at the border in Laredo to the planned installation of Intelligent Transportation Systems to improve traffic flow in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area. An open discussion period followed.

A second set of public meetings is planned for late fall 1998. The study team will be returning to seven of the

Each meeting included an official welcome by a state transportation official and a brief video which described the study, outlined its objectives and discussed some of the critical issues being considered by the study team.



Video Available For Interested Groups

The video shown at the spring series of public meetings describes the I-35 study corridor and the issues being considered by the study team. Interested groups can obtain a complimentary copy of the video by contacting the project office at 1-800-590-0066.

These issues range from addressing local congestion at points along the corridor to opportunities for enhancing trade flow along the 1,500-mile route that stretches from Canada to Mexico.

cities already visited, with the exception of Austin. The Austin-San Antonio area meeting will be held in San Antonio in the fall.♦

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) 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 purpose of the study is to assess the need for improved local, intrastate 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.

Moving Freight In The I-35 Corridor

As the major highway that stretches from border to border through the heartland, I-35 moves a lot of freight by truck. However, the study team is also looking at other ways that freight moves within the corridor. Freight movement occurs by rail, air and ship. The corridor has an extensive system of rail freight lines and includes five major rail lines. Thirty-three airports are located within the study area, as well as a network of ports and major waterways.

continued on page 4 - Moving Freight

Traffic Congestion Along I-35

Traffic congestion is a critical issue along I-35 and understanding traffic flow will be fundamental to any improvement strategies recommended by the study team. The I-35 study team has been tracking existing traffic volumes along the corridor in both urban and rural areas. The volume of cars and trucks using a highway is one factor in measuring congestion; another is capacity, which can be loosely defined as the number of lanes available to handle traffic.

On most rural sections of I-35, automobile traffic volumes in both directions range from 9,000 to 12,000

vehicles per day, making for usually smooth traffic flow even where there are only two lanes in each direction. Rural volumes in Texas are considerably higher, reaching almost 50,000 vehicles per day in places between San Antonio and Austin.

Auto traffic volumes increase dramatically as I-35 passes through urban areas. Daily volumes range from 100,000 to 200,000 vehicles in Minneapolis/St. Paul, Kansas City, Oklahoma City, San Antonio and Austin. In the Dallas/Fort Worth area the number rises to nearly 230,000 autos per day on I-35.♦

Truck Traffic Along I-35

Mixing heavy truck traffic and auto traffic on I-35 represents a concern for some members of the public. Trucks constitute between 21 to 24 percent of traffic on rural sections of I-35, but only 12 percent of traffic in urban areas. The greatest absolute numbers of trucks are at the Mexican border in the Laredo area, where over 19,000 trucks per day use I-35. At the northern end of I-35, the number diminishes significantly to approximately 8,000 trucks per day in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area and just 2,000 trucks per day near Duluth.♦

Study Fact

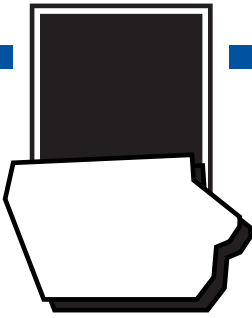
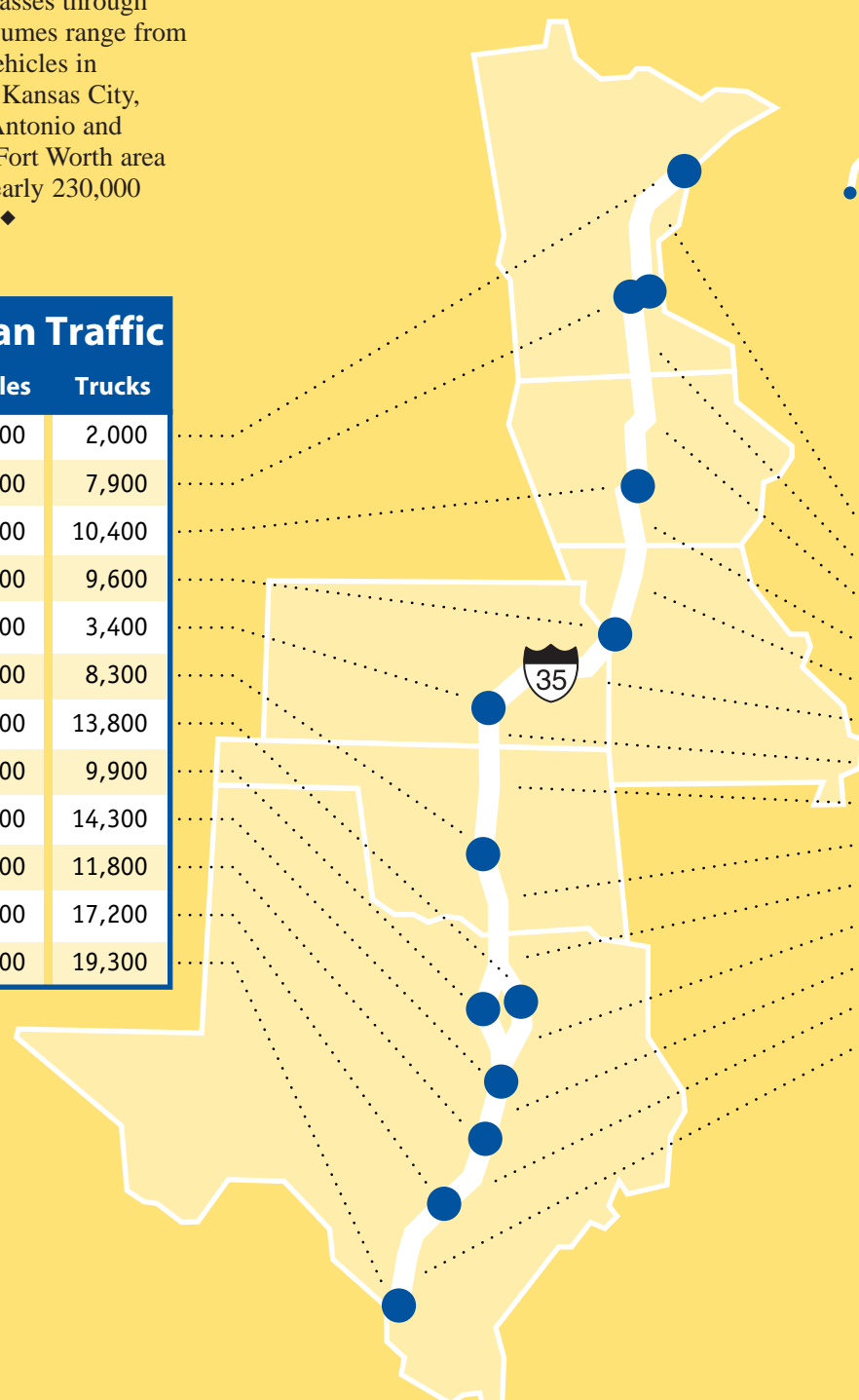
The percentage of truck traffic that is involved in international trade is as high as 80 percent in the areas around San Antonio and Laredo, Texas. On most of I-35, however, truck traffic primarily transports cargo to and from domestic destinations. International truck traffic constitutes only about 5 percent of truck traffic for the portion of I-35 north of Dallas, Texas to Duluth, Minnesota.

Average Annual Daily Traffic on I-35

Urban Traffic	
Vehicles	Trucks
22,500	2,000
161,000	7,900
63,400	10,400
147,500	9,600
18,100	3,400
103,600	8,300
229,000	13,800
121,000	9,900
71,000	14,300
191,000	11,800
162,000	17,200
64,300	19,300

Rural Traffic	
Vehicles	Trucks
11,200	1,550
11,200	2,540
12,100	2,500
9,700	3,360
10,307	2,474
9,115	3,295
11,728	3,105
11,300	1,909
8,300	2,600
20,000	3,540
16,100	4,137
38,000	9,856
49,000	8,714
8,400	2,785

- DULUTH
- MINNEAPOLIS/ST. PAUL
- DES MOINES
- KANSAS CITY
- WICHITA
- OKLAHOMA CITY
- DALLAS/FT. WORTH
- WACO
- AUSTIN
- SAN ANTONIO
- LAREDO



Notes from Iowa

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



Thursday, March 12, the Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT) hosted a public information meeting in Des Moines, Iowa, regarding the I-35 Trade Corridor Study. Twenty-four persons attended the meeting, with most participating in a discussion of local, regional and international transportation issues.

In his opening remarks, Don Ward, director of IDOT's Office of Systems Management, suggested the importance of I-35 to Iowa's economy. He noted that companies in Iowa trade extensively with both

Mexico and Canada in manufactured and agricultural goods. A large share of those commodities are transported on I-35.

Mr. Ward also mentioned the recent adoption of Iowa's long-range State Transportation Plan, known as Iowa in Motion, and that IDOT is currently developing modal investment plans. Together these plans will guide improvements to the interstate highway system over the next 25 years. The interstate system is clearly identified in these plans as a top priority of Iowa's highway program.

After the audience watched a brief video on the study, Scott Smith of HNTB Corp. gave a presentation that focused on the I-35 Trade Corridor Study process and issues. Following the presentation, Tom Kane, the executive director of the Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), shared information about several local and regional transportation initiatives and improvement projects. These projects will have an impact on the efficient operation of I-35 through the metropolitan area.

The MPO presentation was followed by a question and answer discussion session that looked at several related topics. Topics included:

- a new intermodal facility at the Des Moines airport
- need for expansion of the state-owned fiber optics system
- rail opportunities parallel to I-35
- increased demand in Mexico for Iowa products
- factors affecting growth of traffic on I-35

Other interesting comments were heard including those by the director of logistics for the largest bottler in Mexico. He presented his perspective regarding the need for improvements to the corridor, as well as the severely congested border crossing.

The high level of public discussion during this meeting, in concert with the wide variety of participants, is an indication of the deep interest and excitement in Iowa concerning the I-35 Trade Corridor Study.♦

I-35 And The Public

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

The first set of public meetings has been concluded. A second round of public meetings will be conducted in late fall. You will be notified about the meeting dates in the next issue of this newsletter. At these meetings, the recommendations of the study team will be discussed and you will have the opportunity to review and comment on them.

Newsletter

This is the second in a series of four newsletters. Subsequent newsletters will address the recommendations of the study team and the study outcome. To be included on the study's mailing list and receive future issues of the newsletter, contact the project office at 1-800-590-0066.

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, radio and television stations.

Written or Verbal Comments

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.

PROJECT OFFICE

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continued from page 2 -

Moving Freight...

A number of intermodal facilities are also located throughout the corridor, and enhance the flow of trade. At intermodal facilities major transfers of cargo occur between two or more transportation modes. For example, cargo that has traveled by rail from Oklahoma City to Kansas City might be transferred to truck for final delivery in Ames, Iowa.

To ease this transfer, standard-sized trailers or containers are often used, making unpacking of the trailer unnecessary as the entire container can be moved between truck, rail and ship.

The corridor also contains many autoramps where automobiles or equipment are transferred from railroads to trucks.

These intermodal facilities and autoramps facilitate the shipment of all types of commodities along the I-35 trade corridor and into Mexico and Canada.♦

Thirty-three airports are located within the study area, as well as a network of ports, major waterways... and five major rail lines

