



BRAZOS VALLEY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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January 30, 2009

2030 Committee
c/o Texas Transportation Institute
3000 Briarcrest, Ste. 502
Bryan, TX 77802

To Whom It May Concern:

I would like to take this opportunity to comment on the 2030 Committee – Texas Transportation Needs Report. While the report attempts to be well thought out and do speak to many of the future needs of the state of Texas, we feel that attention needs to be paid to several areas that are not adequately addressed in the report.

- 1). There is a lack of mention of the use of existing planning organizations. TxDOT should utilize a systems approach to planning future modes through the use of regional planning. It is important to plan on a regional scale. Actions taken in one area often affect the surrounding towns and counties as well. Local Council of Governments (COGs) and the Rural Planning Organizations (RPOs) are already in place to assist TxDOT in ascertaining the projects most beneficial to their region. RPO's can be used to build consensus on project in and through each region. TxDOT should use their talents and expertise when planning any future projects.
- 2). Local option should be extended to ALL communities. A communities' ability to generate additional local income should be dependent on the vote of its local citizens and not the size of its population. Why is a metroplex viewed as more capable of handling local decision making but a small community of 20,000 is not? Having this ability will enable communities to make future plans when its citizens are convinced of the need. The report talks of the lack of funding available in numerous areas (including airports and rail relocation projects). Local option would give all communities a chance to fill some of these funding gaps locally.
- 3). Multimodalism is addressed only slightly in the report. Projects addressing the movement of freight should include component parts addressing movements by air, rail, highway and water. Passenger transportation should include more rail, pedestrian and bicycle. With tax dollars in greater demand than ever, multi modal system solutions must be implemented. If we don't provide alternatives to the automobile, we risk putting the future economic development of the state at risk.

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As part of the multimodal picture—we must add High Speed Rail (220+mph). High Speed Rail is currently the only mode of transport that can be operated using locally derived energy sources. Using electricity generated from wind or solar energy, high speed rail will give Texas a transportation component that will be unaffected by the actions of other states or nations. With overall end-to-end travel times equal to flying in medium distance markets (less than 400 miles)-high speed rail can be used in conjunction with local airports and commercial airlines, thereby freeing up airspace for long haul flights, while still allowing travelers from smaller communities easy access to air service. And with high speed trains being significantly faster than driving, valuable resources can be saved from having less need to enlarge highways, and less spent on gasoline for long distance driving. When operated in co-operation with other public transport services, high speed rail will make it possible to greatly increase the mobility of Texas citizens without completely tying them to the needs of the automobile. Rail has been proven to be an economic stimulator in the areas around stations. This leads to the rebuilding of areas around the stations, a rise in the value of nearby properties, and the generation of higher income for the community. It could even be accomplished with Comprehensive Development Agreements.

With the aforementioned additions to the 2030 Plan, we are convinced that Texas will be ready for its transportation needs for the future!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Parks", written in a cursive style.

Michael Parks, AICP
Assistant Executive Director
Brazos Valley Council of Governments