I-35 CORRIDOR PROJECT

The Texas A&M Transportation Institute (TTI) was asked by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) to assist in the application and refinement of prior research to accomplish some key goals during the reconstruction of the I-35 corridor from Hillsboro to Salado (90 miles total). Currently, TxDOT is conducting 10 construction projects along this corridor. More than 30 million drivers, including travelers, shippers and intercity commuters, use the corridor each year.

TTI’s three main responsibilities for the project are:

- Minimize impacts of construction on I-35 travelers and adjacent businesses and landowners.
- Provide reliable real-time traffic information to I-35 travelers, businesses and freight operators to allow them to make informed travel decisions.
- Develop a long-term concept plan for operation and infrastructure in major corridors to continue to provide the best information to the public.

I-35 Mobility Coordinator

TTI has successfully developed state-of-the-art skills and approaches to serve as a mobility coordinator during individual construction projects. The Mobility Coordinator is responsible for anticipating mobility challenges and ensuring that stakeholder concerns are satisfied in support of timely project completion. TTI is expanding the current state-of-the-art, single-project approach to multiple projects with multiple contractors in a single corridor with additional rural challenges. The experience gained is being documented to contribute to the state-of-the-practice in transportation engineering.

Responsibilities:

- Serve as a project ombudsman, representing the needs of the traveling public and local stakeholders between and among TxDOT, contractors and engineers.
- Facilitate open lines of communication among key stakeholders.
- Coordinate and facilitate an expert traffic management team.
- Support an ongoing public information campaign to educate property owners, businesses and the general public about the project and its impacts.
- Assist TxDOT in making presentations to public officials, and civic and service organizations as requested to enhance communication about the project.
I-35 Traveler Information System Developer and Implementer

The economic and mobility importance of the I-35 corridor requires an unprecedented real-time travel information system to inform travelers, freight operators and businesses of the potential impacts of travel delay and other travel challenges during construction. The size and characteristics of the corridor, as well as the presence of multiple contractors and staggered staging, mandates a unique approach that combines real-time monitoring with prediction capabilities developed during the project. TTI is well-positioned to tackle these high-risk, high-public-reward types of problems. TTI is integrating proven research tools with the best technology available from the private sector, and in some cases, creating new tools to develop and implement this system.

Responsibilities:

- Develop a concept of operation for a first-of-its-kind, multi-region construction corridor traveler information system, leveraging experience from ongoing national research and deployment projects such as the Dallas Integrated Corridor Management Project.

Integrate the following existing or to-be-developed innovations to support the highest quality traveler information system:

- Implement proven Bluetooth® travel time monitoring research developed by TTI, which can be accomplished at a fraction of the cost of traditional monitoring approaches.
- Develop a first-of-its-kind, multi-contractor construction activity clearinghouse.
- Integrate a private sector-developed and deployed lane closure monitoring system.
- Based on user-defined needs, develop an innovative travel information dissemination tool using social media, in-vehicle devices, smart phones, etc. This effort includes guidance from TTI’s distracted driver research team to ensure maximum traveler safety.
- Deploy a construction closure assessment tool recently developed by TTI to predict the lengths, durations and combined impacts of queues when multiple lane closures are planned simultaneously in the corridor.
- Based on recent and ongoing research, develop a methodology for tailoring traveler information to the needs of varied travel segments (commuter, trucking, etc.) using real-time and historic data (and developing the state’s first predictive methodology for future conditions).
- Continually evaluate system performance to establish and document best practices for use in future TxDOT corridor reconstruction projects.

I-35 Communications Support to TxDOT Waco District

Getting the right information to the right people in the right time is the purpose for the My35 campaign. Communicating lane closures, detours and incidents is key to the success of the campaign. My35.org is the portal for delivering that information.

TTI is assisting the Waco District with the district’s My35 communications initiatives and public information campaign. TTI is also supporting TxDOT’s overall My35 statewide campaign as needed.

Long-Term Plan for I-35 Corridor

TTI is using the experience gained from the I-35 Corridor Project to develop a long-term plan for TxDOT to use in implementing significant operation and infrastructure investments in major corridors.