

July 16, 2025



**2026 UTP REFLECTS AVAILABLE FUNDING** - TxDOT's annual Unified Transportation Program document allocating anticipated project funding over the coming decade is out for public comment and includes major I-69 projects. Significant near-term I-69 projects on the list are located in Harrison, Nacogdoches, Polk, San Jacinto, Harris, Wharton, Jim Wells, Refugio, San Patricio, Hidalgo and Webb Counties.

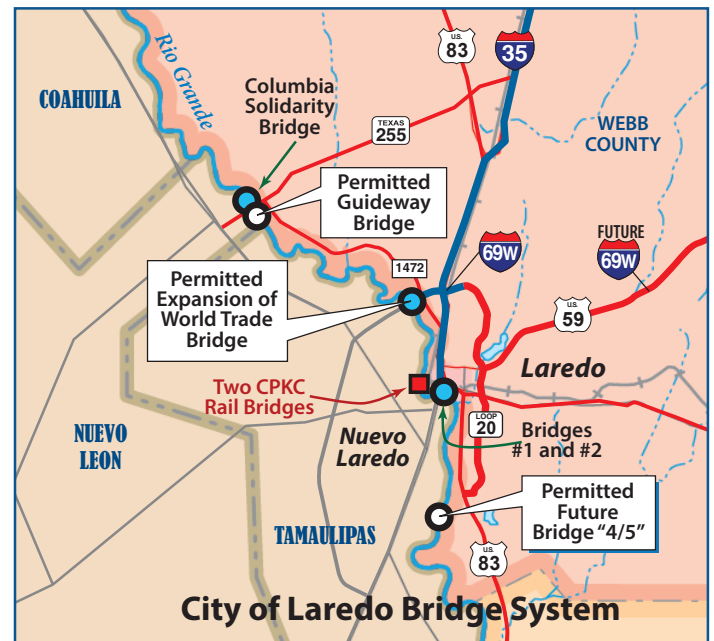
The draft 2026 UTP allocates \$101 billion in projected available revenue over 10 years, down from the \$104 billion projected in the 2025 UTP. In addition to less projected revenue, buying power is reduced by the 7.5% inflation in highway construction cost in the past year. The annual UTP public involvement process is underway including an online public hearing on July 23. The deadline for public comments is Monday July 28 and the Commission vote on adoption is scheduled August 21. The Alliance will submit comments in support of I-69 project funding.

**FEDERAL FUNDING ACTION ALERT** - The I-69 Alliance Executive Committee has approved a resolution calling for the proposed federal Future Interstate Highway Formula Funding Program to be included in the next federal surface transportation authorization bill. The proposal would establish a guaranteed level of federal funding commitment toward completion of congressionally authorized Future Interstates with funding allocated to each state based on the number of unconstructed interstate miles. Committee hearings on the upcoming transportation bill have started and the Senate committee is working to have a draft by the end of the year. Alliance Chairman Sydney Murphy is urging communities and organizations to pass support resolutions quickly. A sample resolution can be downloaded [HERE](#) at the Alliance website. Please provide copies of your approved resolutions to the Alliance staff so they can be bundled and shared with Congress.

**FOLLOWING THE LEGISLATURE** - A special session of the Texas Legislature begins July 21 with no transportation issues on the initial agenda. East Texas Senator Robert Nichols has announced he will not run for re-election next year. His 10 sessions in the Senate and time as chair of Senate Transportation

Committee have been very important to increasing funding for highways.

**LAREDO AREA BRIDGE PERMITS APPROVED** - Multiple efforts are underway in Laredo to accommodate increasing commercial traffic volumes, improve security and reduce northbound wait times. In June, President Trump approved a permit allowing construction of a new elevated guideway bridge just south of the Columbia Solidarity Bridge. Issued to Green Corridors LLC, the permit allows construction of a freight shuttle system to move cargo between Monterrey and Laredo. In 2024 a federal permit was issued for doubling the capacity of Laredo's World Trade Bridge which directly connects to I-69W. Also approved was future development of a new bridge to be located on the south side of Laredo, currently dubbed Bridge 4/5. Another important multi-modal development for the region was the completion in December by the CPKC Railroad of a second Rio Grande railway bridge which allows trains to operate in both directions at the same time.



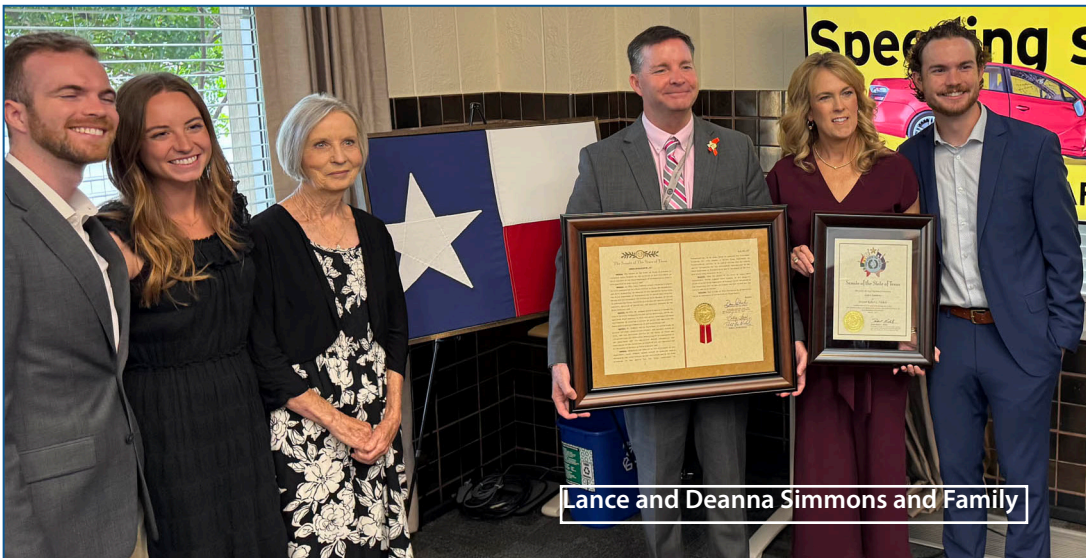
**NEW LIFE FOR OPPORTUNITY ZONES** - The concept of opportunity zones was introduced in 2017 and designed to utilize federal tax incentives to stimulate investment in underserved communities. The One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBB) extends opportunity zone authorization through 2033. A key change is that 33% of zones must be in rural areas, defined as an area with less than 50,000 residents. Opportunity zones and development of I-69 will have a synergistic effect to spur economic growth in rural communities. The current 628 zones in Texas can be viewed on a detailed map at: [Texas Opportunity Zones](#)



Harbor Bridge Project photo

## New Harbor Bridge Open to Traffic

After two decades of planning and construction the dramatic new Corpus Christi US 181 Harbor Bridge is now open to traffic. The bridge is a key connector linking I-69E to the Port of Corpus Christi and to Bay Area communities and industry. TxDOT joined local and state leaders in celebrating the bridge's completion with a June 28th ceremony atop the cable-stayed bridge with its 538 foot tall support towers. With a center span of 1,661 feet the bridge provides 205 feet of vertical clearance for ship passage compared to 135 feet for the 1959 steel truss bridge which will be removed and disassembled starting later this year.



Lance and Deanna Simmons and Family

## Lance Simmons Honored

TxDOT Chief Engineer Lance Simmons has retired after 32 years of service to the department and was honored by the Transportation Commission in a June ceremony that included his family and many friends. Simmons has a long history with US 59 and the I-69 Corridor. His wife Deanne Simmons retired from TxDOT earlier this year and is now director of engineering for the North East Texas RMA, a member of the I-69 Alliance. Both Lance and Deanne worked for many years in the TxDOT Atlanta District which includes Texarkana, Queen City, Atlanta, Linden, Jefferson, Marshall and Carthage on the Future I-369 corridor. Simmons spent 6 years as district engineer for the Bryan District before becoming TxDOT's Director of Engineering and Safety Operations and later Chief Engineer.



Alliance for I-69 Texas

Alliance Contacts: Jennifer Shepard, Alliance Executive Director & State Representative - (703) 963-3822; [Jennifer@jgshepard.com](mailto:Jennifer@jgshepard.com)  
 Larry Meyers, Washington Representative - (202) 484-2773; [LMeyers@hslawmail.com](mailto:LMeyers@hslawmail.com)  
 Don Rodman - State Adviser & Communications - (361) 877-0409; [don@therodmanco.com](mailto:don@therodmanco.com)  
 Judge Sydney Murphy, Alliance Board Chairman - (936) 327-6813; [smurphy@co.polk.tx.us](mailto:smurphy@co.polk.tx.us)  
 101 N. Shoreline, Suite 500, Corpus Christi, Texas 78401

[www.i69TexasAlliance.com](http://www.i69TexasAlliance.com)

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