

SUBJECT: Agreements by TxDOT and counties to identify transportation corridors

COMMITTEE: Transportation — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 7 ayes — Krusee, Phillips, Callegari, Casteel, Deshotel, Hamric, West
0 nays
2 absent — Flores, Hill

WITNESSES: None

BACKGROUND: Transportation improvements in the state are planned by various entities, including Regional Mobility Authorities (RMAs), the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), and local governments. TxDOT is charged with documenting transportation plans across the entire state in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP), which periodically is submitted to the federal government.

DIGEST: HB 2021 would allow TxDOT and counties to enter into agreements to identify future transportation corridors inside a county. The identified corridors would be from existing plans adopted by TxDOT, the Texas Transportation Commission, a county or a metropolitan planning organization.

The bill also would require lease a agreement or purchase contract between developers and lessees or buyers of land planned for future transportation projects to contain a statement notifying the buyer or lessee that the land was located on a future transportation corridor.

The bill would allow a commissioner's court to require dedication of land for a state highway consistent with a thoroughfare plan of a county or metropolitan planning organization.

HB 2021 would also require TxDOT to provide public notice of the transportation plans through publication in the Texas Register and a local newspaper in the relevant county. Plans would also be available at one or more TxDOT offices.

The bill would take effect on September 1, 2005.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

HB 2021 would help solve the problem of people purchasing property without knowing it had already been identified for upcoming highway improvements. The buyer or lessee should be able to consider such information before renting or purchasing property.

The bill would allow for greater coordination and communication between different levels of government. It is important that all levels of government are included in the state's transportation plans. HB 2021 would allow counties to play a more central role in the process of planning future transportation projects. The bill also would give counties access to important information regarding transportation projects that have been planned by other entities, such as Regional Mobility Authorities and TxDOT.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

HB 2021 would help pave the way for the construction of the massive Trans-Texas Corridor. The singular focus of the Corridor plan is to build transportation corridors that connect regions of the state, intentionally bypassing urban centers. Under this bill, counties would be better able to facilitate identification of potential corridors in their areas, but they would have no additional authority to prevent locating the corridors within their jurisdictions if they objected to them.