



Gulf Coast Strategic Highway Coalition

Connecting U.S. Army Facilities and Texas Strategic Ports

State Advances Designation of First Section of I-14 in Bell County

April 28, 2016

AUSTIN - The Texas Transportation Commission Thursday took the next major step in making the first section of Interstate 14 a reality in Central Texas.

The commission voted to submit an application that is part of a multi-step process that will lead to designation of an existing 25-mile stretch of US 190 freeway in Bell County as I-14. The highway section from Copperas Cove and Fort Hood east to I-35 in Belton has been undergoing upgrades in recent years and additional widening projects are planned.

The commission is petitioning the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) to include the segment of US 190 as part of the national Interstate Highway System as I-14.

Separately, the Texas Department of Transportation is working with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to review elements of the existing highway to confirm they meet interstate highway design standards. That review is expected to be complete later this year. Once authorized by FHWA, the final designation can be approved by the Texas Transportation Commission and I-14 signs can be added to the highway and to directional signage on Interstate 35 and other intersecting roadways.

The federal highway bill approved by Congress last year designated the Central Texas Corridor and established it as future Interstate 14. The congressionally designated corridor generally follows the route of US 190 across the state running from I-10 in West Texas to Fort Hood at Killeen and east through Belton, Bryan/College Station, Huntsville, Livingston, Woodville and Jasper before terminating at the Sabine River near Fort Polk.

John Thompson, former county judge of Polk County and board chairman of the Gulf Coast Strategic Highway Coalition, said, "We want to thank the Transportation Commission for being our partner in this effort to make Interstate 14 across Texas a reality. We look forward to continuing to work together on planning, funding and constructing additional upgraded sections of the entire Strategic Highway System which will eventually provide improved connections to I-35, I-45, I-69, I-37, I-10 and I-20."

Major Gen. Kendall Cox, U.S. Army (ret), executive director of the Heart of Texas Defense Alliance supporting Fort Hood, said that the future interstate and other improvements supported by the Gulf Coast Strategic Highway Coalition to connect Army facilities to strategic seaports will create additional military value that is essential to the continued viability of the state's military installations.

About the Coalition

The Gulf Coast Strategic Highway Coalition is made up of cities, counties, local authorities and economic development organizations in Texas and Louisiana. The organization has been working for more than a decade in support of highway upgrades that will improve access between major U.S. Army installations at Fort Bliss, Fort Hood and Fort Polk and the Texas strategic deployment seaports that support them – the Port of Corpus Christi and the Port of Beaumont.

Contact: John Thompson, Former County Judge, Polk County
Board Chairman, Gulf Coast Strategic Highway Coalition
(936) 328-6444; email: zimmercreekconsultantsllc@gmail.com

Gary Bushell, Executive Director, Gulf Coast Strategic Highway Coalition
(512) 478-6661; email: gebushell@aol.com