



# Project Summary

Texas Department of Transportation

## 0-5606: Creating Partnerships with Local Communities to Manage and Preserve Corridors

### Background

Corridor management (CM) is the management of land development in concert with roadway design, access control, and traffic operations along an *existing* transportation corridor. Corridor preservation (CP) is the practice of acquiring, preserving, or protecting right-of-way (ROW) needed for a *future* transportation corridor. Both CM and CP include ROW acquisition and protection and require coordinated application of state and local plans, regulations, and authority.

In Texas and across the country, typical corridor problems include numerous and poorly spaced driveways, roadway designs conducive to strip development, closely spaced traffic signals, lack of interconnectivity between adjacent developments, and the inability to preserve or protect ROW for future corridors due to development. The objective of this research project was to develop methods and guidelines for coordinated partnerships for corridor management and preservation practices.

### What the Researchers Did

The research reviewed the role of statewide, regional, and local transportation plans in CM and CP and assessed existing state and local authority in these activities. It compared the ability to undertake CM and CP activities in cities, extra-territorial jurisdictions of cities, and counties in Texas. The research looked at how TxDOT's current access guidelines, ROW acquisition abilities, and design policies can be used in CM and CP activities. It also assessed tools stemming from local zoning and subdivision regulations that can be used to manage development and protect and preserve right-of-way for existing and future TxDOT facilities.

Researchers reviewed current practices and case studies in CM and CP in Texas and in selected states across the country. They surveyed Texas cities to collect information on previous and on-going CM and CP efforts at the local level and interviewed TxDOT right-of-way administrators from urban and rural districts to review and compare ROW acquisition methods. The research assessed methods to acquire and/or preserve ROW for future transportation corridors and reviewed the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) environmental clearance process relative to TxDOT's project development process.

#### Research Performed by:

Texas Transportation Institute (TTI),  
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#### Research Supervisor:

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## What They Found

To effectively practice CM along TxDOT roadways will require partnerships with local governments in the application of their subdivision and development regulations. TxDOT currently has some abilities to perform CM using access management and roadway design measures, namely non-traversable medians. The use of CM plans utilizing zoning overlay districts was identified as a good approach for TxDOT and cities to partner in practicing CM. It was found that 63 percent of Texas cities have used zoning overlay districts, many of which are on TxDOT roadways.

Texas, like most states, does not have statutes in place to address or fund activities for the long-term preservation of ROW for future transportation corridors. The primary challenges for practicing CP in Texas include:

- NEPA regulations that require that the environmental clearance process be completed before federal funds can be used to acquire ROW on a widespread basis,
- lack of funding to acquire ROW early and the fact that ROW funding is usually tied to construction funding, and
- the environmental clearance process beginning too late in TxDOT's project development process.

## What This Means

Coordinated local-state partnerships in CM and CP will help integrate transportation and land use planning and help improve coordination between land use and transportation decision making in Texas.

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