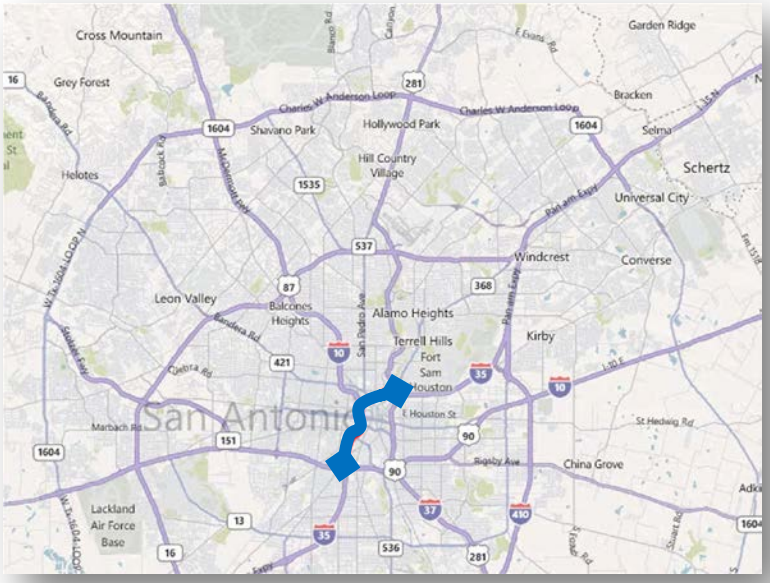
IH 35 (N. PAN AM EXPY)

Loop 353 (Nogalitos St.) to US 281

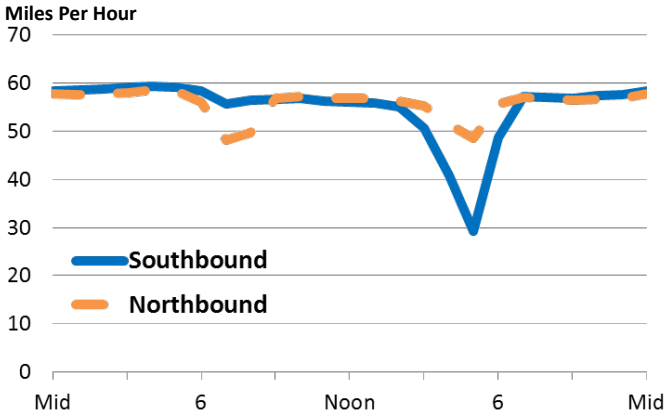
Current Conditions

IH 35, a major interstate freeway and international trade corridor, passes through the city of San Antonio from northeast to southwest. IH 10 West joins with IH 35 along the western side of downtown. IH 35 splits into upper and lower levels (two lanes each) across the north side of downtown. This section of IH 35 follows a typical morning inbound/evening outbound congestion pattern; however, the evening rush hour period experiences significantly slower speeds than the morning period.

- Segment Length: 4.2 miles
- Road Type: Multi-lane expressway
- Annual Hours of Delay: 850,000
- Texas Congestion Index: 1.40
- Commuter Stress Index: 1.53



2010 Rank: 48	**2013 Rank: 39**
Annual Hrs. of Delay/Mile:	**205,000**
Congestion Time:	**4 Hours**
Annual Cost of Delay:	**$22.1 Million**
Average Daily Traffic:	**167,000 Vehicles**



Possible Congestion Causes

The corridor has complex configurations near downtown, with upper and lower decks on IH 35 and major interchange ramps connecting facilities (IH 37/US 281, IH 10, US 90). IH 35 is a major NAFTA trade route in the south central US, and commercial traffic from Laredo (IH 35) and Corpus Christi and the Lower Rio Grande Valley (IH 37) combine with daily commuter and visitor traffic in this corridor. On the west side of downtown, the IH 35 and IH 10 routes overlap, and northeast of downtown IH 35 serves Fort Sam Houston and the San Antonio Military Medical Center.

Projects in Progress or Completed

TransGuide Monitoring

The corridor is monitored by the TransGuide (TxDOT San Antonio) traffic management center, using video cameras and dynamic message signs throughout the corridor.

Interchange Improvements

The Loop 410 South Interchange (i.e., IH 35/ Loop 410 South) near Fort Sam Houston and the San Antonio Military Medical Center (formerly Brooke Army Medical Center) will have $25 million of additional improvements under construction beginning in 2013 from a Department of Defense Office of Economic Adjustment Grant to the City of San Antonio.

Operations Improvements
Operational improvements funded by Proposition 12 began in 2013 along IH 35 north of this congested segment. TxDOT issued a Notice of Interest to consultants in October 2011 to bid on the analysis and development of plans for $18.5 million of congestion reduction improvements to the IH 35 corridor between IH 10/US 90 and the IH 35/Loop 410 North Interchange. A contractor has been hired for this work and design plans are being developed for critical operations improvements needs. There is, however, no funding to make physical improvements to IH 35 between IH 10/US 90 and IH 37/US 281.

Bus and Park and Ride Services
VIA has added express bus service and multiple transit routes to the University of Texas at San Antonio's (UTSA) downtown campus, which is adjacent to the corridor west of downtown.

Future Transit Center
VIA purchased property west of downtown and IH 35 for a future west side transit center.

Bus Rapid Transit
VIA adopted a long-range plan known as SmartWaySA in July 2011 that outlines phases of transit improvements for the greater San Antonio area and includes a near-term (2015) implementation of bus rapid transit (BRT) in the corridor northwest of downtown.

VIA's first BRT line, initiating VIA Primo service, is now operational and extends from its future west side transit center along Fredericksburg Road through the South Texas Medical Center to the UTSA main campus on Loop 1604. This route provides a viable connection between the UTSA campuses, the South Texas Medical Center, and downtown, removing some IH 10 traffic using IH 35 near the downtown area. Additionally in Fall 2011, the Federal Transit Administration's Bus Livability Program funded an extension of the VIA Primo service to serve the suburban community of Leon Valley.

SmartWaySA includes an east-west and north-south urban streetcar rail service component in the downtown area. The east-west line connects an existing transit center east of downtown with VIA's future west side multimodal transit center; the north-south line parallels IH 35 and IH 37 in the downtown area. In line with SmartwaySA, VIA adopted a five year capital improvements plan to include funding the north-south and east-west downtown streetcar system, improvements to the east transit center (Robert Thompson), Phase 2 Improvements to the west-side multimodal facility, the US 281 Park and Ride, and the Brooks Transit Center totaling $240 million. In late 2011, the City of San Antonio, Bexar County, and VIA made an agreement to jointly fund these projects with the consideration of ATD bonding capacity and other funding mechanisms.

Planning Efforts to Date

Needs Assessment
The Alamo RMA and TxDOT partnered on a Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study to determine the long-term needs and viable improvement alternatives for the IH 35 corridor from US 281/IH 37 to FM 1103. This study is now complete, and TxDOT is now moving forward with a NEPA study (environmental assessment, or EA) for this corridor. The EA study began in March 2013 and is expected to be complete in fall 2014.

Expansion of IH 35
The MPO TIP currently includes the following project related to this portion of IH 35: expand from a 6-lane to 10-lane expressway (tolling the four new mainlanes)

- From US 281/IH 37 to near the Loop 410 South interchange.
- Total project cost of $335.5 million is estimated for this improvement.

My35
The recent award-winning public involvement process and long-term planning initiative, My35, conducted by TxDOT on the IH 35 corridor

through Texas recommended a number of short-term operational improvements and long-term freeway expansion needs along this portion of the IH 35 corridor.

My35—Short Term Adjustments
Immediately implementable short-term recommendations that could affect this portion of IH 35 included:

- Improve incident management and related agency coordination so collisions and disabled vehicles can be cleared quicker and delays can be minimized.
- Use improved technology such as electronic signs to provide updated traffic information, alternative routes, and other traffic management solutions to travelers.

My35—Long-Term Improvements
Long-term, capital-intensive recommendations for this portion of IH 35 included:

- IH 35 improvements from the Williamson/Bell County Line to IH 10; estimated cost $2.7 billion to $3.85 billion for a minimum of four lanes in each direction (8-lane facility).
- IH 35 HOV/toll lane from SH 45SE in Austin to IH 10 (estimated cost $6.2 billion to $8.85 billion, excluding right-of-way).
- IH 35 improvements from US 90 to the Atascosa County Line to provide four travel lanes each direction (estimated cost $150 million, not including right-of-way).
- Passenger rail alternatives from Laredo to Dallas/Fort Worth (estimated cost $30 billion to $50 million).
- Freight rail relocation to allow commuter rail to use existing tracks paralleling IH 35 between San Antonio and Taylor (estimated to exceed $2.4 billion based on studies performed by TxDOT in 2008).
- Improvements to alternative routes within San Antonio to link with SH 130 in Seguin, including IH 10 from SH 130 to IH 35, Loop 410 from IH 10 to IH 35, and Loop 1604 on the south side of San Antonio from IH 10 to US 90. Collectively, these projects are expected to cost between $3.2 billion and $4.65 billion, not including right-of-way.

Commuter Rail
LoneStar Rail District Commuter Rail Project from Austin to San Antonio is currently in the preliminary phase of the development process. The project costs are estimated at $2 billion, but the project is not funded.

Expansion of SH 130
SH 130 from Georgetown to IH 10 (in Seguin) was completed in October 2012 and is expected to provide some traffic relief through downtown San Antonio. TransGuide dynamic message signs are actively informing motorists in San Antonio about the new alternative IH 35 route.

Next Steps

- There is local agency agreement and support for more aggressive incident management methods to improve mobility and congestion in the San Antonio area. **Improved incident management and related agency coordination** in quickly clearing crashes and disabled vehicles will reduce incident-related delay and congestion.
- **Broad deployment of advanced traveler information systems** (including dynamic message signs and camera monitoring) in cooperation with TxDOT has been identified as a city-wide congestion management measure. TransGuide can be improved with electronic signs, which provide updated traffic information and other traffic management solutions to travelers. Funding for the expansion and maintenance of additional traffic management devices and services has not been identified. A study of traffic management improvement needs for San Antonio was funded under Rider 42; this study began in the summer of 2013.
- There is local agency agreement and support for **increased travel demand management activity and strategy deployment** in San Antonio. Likely champions of these activities in the San Antonio region are the Alamo Area Council of Governments and VIA Metropolitan Transit. Studies can determine the most effective travel demand management strategies for the region and determine the potential to form Transportation Management Associations (TMAs) in cooperation with major employers in the region. TxDOT is funding a study on travel demand management in San Antonio, and this study will be underway in the fall of 2013.
- **Provide support and feedback to TxDOT** and their consultants on the IH 35 operational improvements study that began in the winter of 2011 (from IH 10/ US 90 to Loop 410 North).
- **Conduct Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) studies** on IH 35 in the downtown area and along alternative routes to IH 35 in San Antonio. PEL studies and their proactive public involvement efforts will define the type and scope of long-term improvements to the IH 35 corridor and its alternate routes (i.e., Loop 410 southwest, Loop 410 south and east, IH 10 east, and Loop 1604 east), including consideration of past corridor planning efforts and strategies to reduce congestion. Each PEL study will identify both near-term and longer-term, large-scale improvements and the scope and cost associated with recommended projects. These studies, funded by Rider 42, began in the spring of 2013.
- **Conduct a parking management study** for downtown San Antonio and major employers. Local transportation agencies have identified parking management as one potential strategy for alleviating congestion along major travel routes (such as IH 35) into the urban core. The proposed study will examine available parking resources and examine parking pricing and policy options for their potential to influence traveler behavior and mode choice into the downtown area. TxDOT is funding a parking management study in San Antonio, and the study will be underway in the fall of 2013.

- Work with local agencies (most likely VIA) to **identify a champion for a study of temporary shoulder use (bus on shoulder)**. Though bus use of shoulders is currently precluded by state law, the IH 35 corridor in downtown San Antonio is limited in opportunities for capacity expansion. Buses using the shoulder has been identified as one method of supporting VIA Metropolitan Transit's future downtown transportation center initiatives.