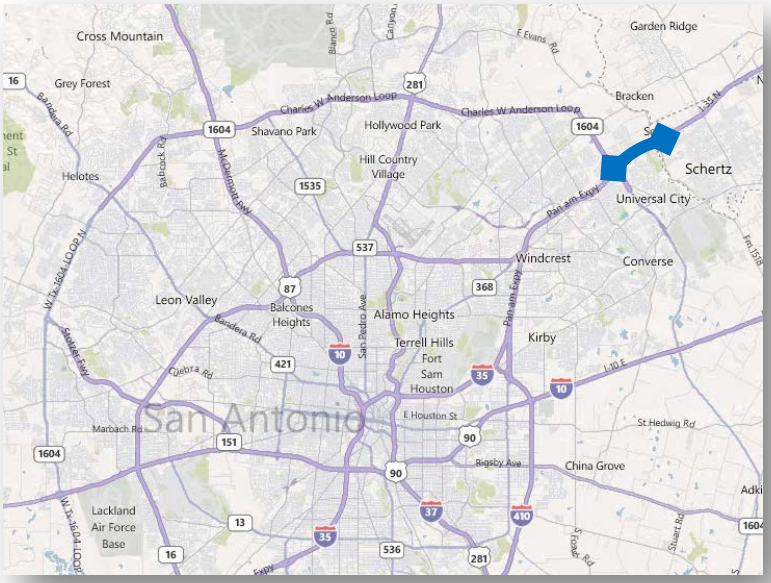
IH 35

FM 1518 (Evans Road) to Loop 1604

Current Conditions

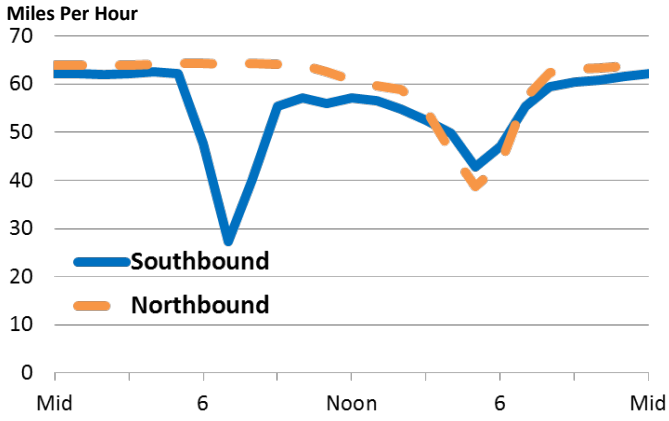
IH 35, a major interstate freeway and international trade corridor, serves a mixture of commuting and freight traffic during a typical weekday. Immediately north of Loop 1604, IH 35 is a 6-lane freeway with continuous frontage roads. This more suburban section of IH 35 follows the traditional daily commute congestion pattern: inbound morning/outbound evening traffic. Southbound traffic still experiences slowdowns in the evening in addition to northbound traffic.

- Segment Length: 2.1 miles
- Road Type: 6-Lane expressway
- Annual Hours of Delay: 444,000
- Texas Congestion Index: 1.56
- Commuter Stress Index: 1.84



2010 Rank: 49 2013 Rank: 37*

Annual Hrs. of Delay / Mile:	**212,000**
Congestion Time:	**6 Hours**
Annual Cost of Delay:	**$12.0 Million**
Average Daily Traffic:	**235,000 Vehicles**



Possible Congestion Causes

Rush hours feature high levels of inbound morning and outbound evening traffic. Daily commuter traffic mixes with international commercial traffic in this major central US NAFTA corridor, which connects to the high-volume inland port of Laredo and sea ports in Corpus Christi and Brownsville. Local communities around this portion of IH 35 (i.e., Live Oak, Universal City, Selma) are not partners with VIA Transit and have limited modal options.

Projects in Progress or Completed

TransGuide Monitoring

This portion of the IH 35 corridor is monitored by TransGuide (TxDOT San Antonio) and the Combined Transportation, Emergency, and Communications Center (TxDOT Austin) staff, with monitoring cameras and dynamic messages signs throughout the corridor.

Truck Restrictions

There are left-lane truck restrictions along IH 35 north of Loop 1604.

Expansion

$21 million in Proposition 12 funding is being applied to the corridor between Judson Road (inside Loop 1604) and FM 3009. A lane addition will be provided to improve operations from FM 3009 to Loop 1604, and ramp improvements will facilitate flow through the Forum Parkway and Loop 1604 interchanges with IH 35. Construction on these operational improvements began in the fall of 2012.

Operations Improvements
Operations improvements funded by Proposition 12 will begin in 2013 along IH 35 south 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 was hired and design work is currently underway. There is, however, no funding to make physical improvements to IH 35 between IH 10/US 90 and IH 37/US 281.

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 in 2013 from a Department of Defense Office of Economic Adjustment Grant to the City of San Antonio.

Planning Efforts to Date

Needs Assessment
The Alamo RMA and TxDOT partnered on an IH 35 Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) study. The outcome of the PEL study will frame the environmental study necessary for future facility improvements. This study was completed in early 2013.

Expansion of IH 35
The MPO TIP currently includes the following projects related to this portion of IH 35:

- Expansion from a 6- or 8-lane facility to a 12- or 14-lane expressway (toll six new mainlanes) from the Loop 410 South interchange to Schertz Parkway, including a new tolled direct connector interchange at Loop 1604 and tolled direct connectors at Loop 410 South and Loop 410 North. Total project cost is estimated to be $2 billion.

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 that accidents and disabled vehicles can be cleared more quickly and delays can be minimized.
- Use and improve upon technology, such as electronic signs, to provide updated traffic information, alternative routes, and other traffic management solutions to travelers on IH 35.

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

- IH 35/Loop 1604 and IH 35/IH 410 interchange improvements (estimated cost $600 to $900 million, not including right-of-way).
- Loop 1604 improvements from IH 35 to IH 10 (estimated cost $300 to $400 million for freeway construction, not including right-of-way).
- 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, not including right-of-way).

- IH 35 alternative route improvements to IH 10 from Seguin to IH 35 in San Antonio (estimated cost $950 million to $1.4 billion, not including right-of-way).
- Passenger rail alternatives from Laredo to Dallas/Fort Worth (estimated cost $30 billion to $50 million per mile).
- 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).

Managed Lanes

A Major Investment Study (MIS) of the IH 35 corridor conducted in 1996 for the San Antonio-Bexar County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) suggested the addition of barrier-separated express, truck, and/or HOV lanes to this freeway. In addition, a "Basic Improvements Package" was also recommended including signal improvements, better signage, ramp modifications, expansion of the TransGuide (TxDOT) system, addition of pedestrian facilities and bicycle routes, improved bus service, and operational improvements to both Loop 410 interchanges (north and south) and the Loop 1604 interchange. The signal, signage, and TransGuide improvements have already been completed, and some operational improvements have been made for southbound traffic at the Loop 410 South Cutoff interchange.[1]

Commuter Rail

Lone Star Rail District commuter rail project from Austin to San Antonio is currently in the preliminary phase of the development process. There is no funding for the $2 billion project.

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.

[1] Text for this section adapted from http://texashighwayman.com/ web site. Ste created and managed by Brian Purcell. Site accessed 11/11/2011.

Next Steps

- **Provide support and feedback to TxDOT** and their consultants on the IH 35 operational improvements study from Judson Road to FM 3009.
- Utilize the findings of TxDOT/Alamo RMA PEL study (completed in early 2013) to **conduct an Environmental Assessment (EA)** for the corridor between downtown and FM 1103. The NEPA (EA) study began in March 2013 and is expected to be complete in the fall of 2014. The environmental study performed will outline a plan for IH 35 improvements to meet long-range needs as well as provide fundamental travel demand data for all corridor users. The EA will refine concepts, project scope and costs for future, large-scale IH 35 expansion. Public involvement for the NEPA study is expected to begin in the fall of 2013.
- 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 congestion. Improving incident management will be one component of a Rider 42-funded traffic management study in San Antonio that began in early 2013.
- **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 is being funded under Rider 42. Work on this study began in early 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 is expected to begin in late 2013.
- In order to fully analyze the potential for IH 35 alternate routes to accommodate traffic strategically diverted from the interstate, **utilize Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) studies planned along alternate routes to IH 35**. Roadway corridors that provide viable alternative routes to IH 35 in northeastern San Antonio include Loop 410 South, IH 10 East (toward SH 130 in Seguin), and Loop 1604 on the east side of the city. This Rider 42-funded study began in the summer of 2013.