

## Using Designated Routes to Keep Oversize/Overweight Freight Moving in Texas

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Adequate management of oversize/overweight (OS/OW) permit loads throughout the state of Texas is critical to maintaining a vibrant state economy. The growth in the number and size of permit loads in recent years is clear evidence that new tools and new techniques are needed to match this growth without causing undue delays to permit applicants. Problems such as increasing prevalence of reroutes due to maintenance and other district activities, along with potential damage to the highway infrastructure from permit loads led to this research project. One other significant commitment to help resolve these issues, which is already underway, is development of a new automated routing program—Texas Permit Routing Optimization System (TxPROS). Its completion coincides with this research project, so this project can achieve its objectives even more effectively. Research objectives are to: • identify the most common OS/OW dimension and weight groups, • identify criteria for assigning these OS/OW groups to existing road networks, and • identify criteria for assigning current and projected OS/OW groups to the future road network upgraded to meet future demand. Recommended actions could include the use of technologies to improve verification that the permit requirements were met during the move and that establish near real-time communication between the Texas Department of Transportation's Motor Carrier Division (MCD), the carrier, and the district(s). The research project will result in a statewide map recommending primary and alternate OS/OW route networks for the most common origins and destinations based on historical MCD routing and load characteristics. Such designated routes across the state are intended to overcome barriers to heavy haul movements and keep the state economy vibrant.