

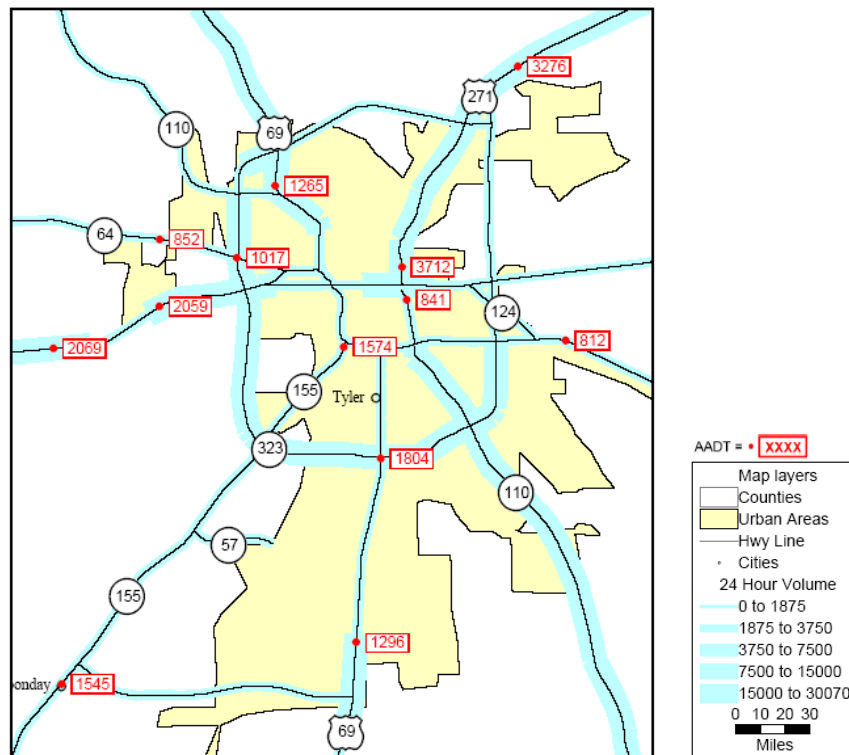
# 9 Freight, Rail, Air, and Intermodal Facilities

## INTRODUCTION

The economic success of a region depends to a large degree on its connections to the rest of the world and its ability to facilitate the movement of people and goods across and within its boundaries. Increased competition in today's global economy rewards those regions that actively plan for and pursue seamless transportation systems, which depend on efficient connections between all modes of travel. Transportation facilities and service levels are important elements that companies consider when locating to a new area because of the cost savings and increased economic competitiveness these regions provide. Beyond the basic travel needs of Tyler and Smith County residents, there are additional travel considerations for moving freight on rail and truck and for personal inter-regional travel via bus, rail, and plane.

## FREIGHT MOVEMENT

There are 21 motor freight carriers with a terminal in the City of Tyler. The majority of motor freight within this area is interstate commerce along I-20. An increase in freight traffic has been seen on the local roadway network as well. **Figure 9-1** depicts truck traffic in Tyler.



Source: TxDOT 2007 Texas Truck Flow Band Map

**FIGURE 9-1 2007 TRUCK FLOW BAND MAP FOR TYLER**

Coordination with private freight transportation providers, either through a task force or some other means, can provide the MPO with a wealth of information if done properly. Private companies are often hesitant to provide government entities with proprietary information. However, through their involvement they may see the virtue in sharing data, especially if it results in improvements to the transportation system that increases freight movement potential.

Freight providers tend to be very knowledgeable about bottlenecks in the systems that hinder truck and other vehicle movements. In addition, they may be aware of signal timing, signage, or geometric (e.g., turning radii) deficiencies in the system. With their involvement, the MPO can develop a detailed list of improvement needs and incorporate them into the transportation improvement program (TIP) for implementation. While long-range freight planning is necessary, short-term results are also important in engaging and maintaining interest from freight providers.

Freight movements invariably impact land uses, especially along the corridors utilized by truck and rail traffic. The level of impact is often intensified when sensitive receptors, such as neighborhoods, schools, parks, and so forth, occur along these high traffic routes. Proper long range planning and coordination with appropriate land use planners can serve to alleviate these impacts. This may include periodic designation and update of truck routes, implementation of additional limited-access roadway facilities, and other techniques.

## RAIL TRANSPORTATION

The Union Pacific/Missouri Pacific Railroad provides rail service in Tyler/Smith County. Tyler generally serves as switch point, in that trains come through for the purpose of switching engines and then proceed to other destinations. Currently the railroads provide transportation primarily for various commercial businesses throughout the region. There is potential to improve the railroad services for the commercial businesses. In addition, there may be potential for some type of commuter rail service between the various communities and the City of Tyler. Existing rail lines are identified in **Figure 9-2**.

Through the authority granted to Regional Mobility Authorities (RMA) by the Texas State Legislature, the North East Texas RMA (NET RMA) is authorized to study feasibility, design plans, and construct railways in North East Texas. The NET RMA is currently looking at the possibility of several rail projects. One project includes the purchase of abandoned railroad right of way to preserve corridors for future use. New railway spurs are difficult to establish, therefore, an effort to preserve existing lines would be advantageous to the area in terms of future freight transport. Some existing railway spurs currently being considered by the NET RMA are in need of repair. The cost of such repair may not be financially feasible in today's economic climate. In such a case, the railroad right of way could be purchased and incorporated into the area's regional trail plan until funding is available. This course of action would have dual benefits – it would preserve the right of way while enhancing the quality of life through additional recreational trails. Although there are no current plans to develop new railways, the NET RMA is continually looking for innovative transportation solutions that will enhance the quality of life and improve the economic environment in North East Texas.

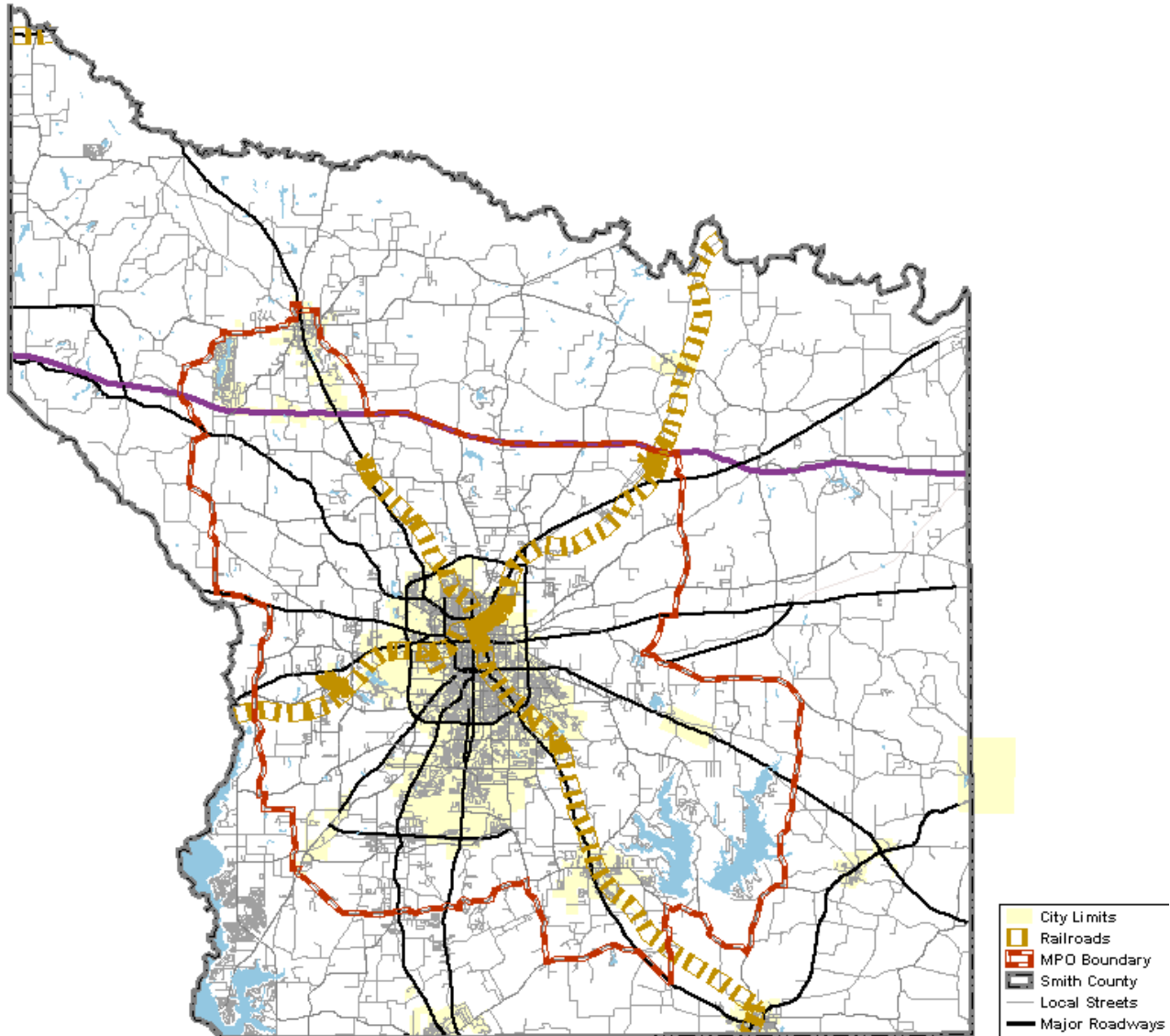
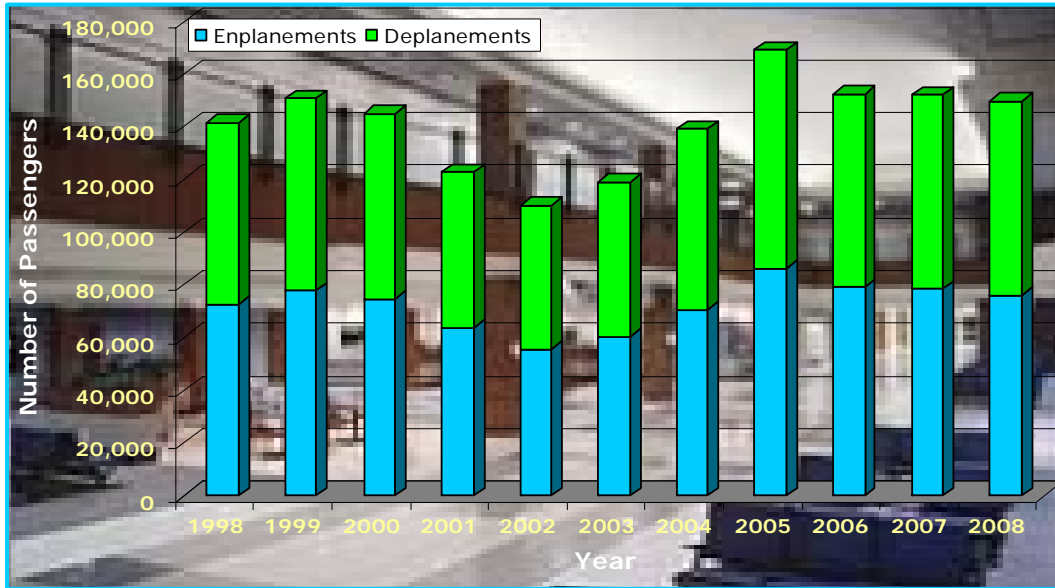


FIGURE 9-2 RAILROADS IN TYLER/SMITH COUNTY

## AIR TRANSPORTATION

The Tyler Pounds Regional Airport provides commercial air service that is the gateway for East Texas to all major U.S. cities and destinations around the world. It is a publicly-owned community airport located approximately 4 miles west of Loop 323 along State Highway 64. Two air carriers provide frequent, nonstop regional service. American Airlines offers American Eagle prop and Jet service to Dallas/Forth Worth airport in Dallas with 5 daily flights. Continental Airlines operated by Colgan Air, offers 6 daily flights to Houston's Intercontinental Airport. **Figure 9-3** depicts the annual enplanements and deplanements over a ten-year period from 1998 to 2008. As shown, there was a significant decline in passengers from 2001 to 2003 and started to come back up from 2004 with a peak in 2005 of 86,183 enplanements. In 2006 enplanements dropped to 78,971 and remain relatively steady in 2007 and a slight decrease in 2008. Besides commercial flights, Tyler Pounds Regional Airport is also open to corporate and general aviation activities.



**FIGURE 9-3 TYLER POUNDS REGIONAL AIRPORT ENPLANEMENTS AND DEPLANEMENTS**

Tyler Pounds Field has three operating runways identified as 13-31, 17-35 and 4-22. The three intersection runway configuration was originally designed to accommodate smaller propeller-type aircraft which are more susceptible to varying degrees of crosswinds. The 150-foot wide runways have an asphalt surface with the longest runway length at 7,200 feet. The other two runways are 5,200 and 4,849 feet in length. The airport has a variety of lighting and navigational aids available to assist in the identification, approach, landing and taxing operations at night or in poor weather conditions. The taxiway system at Tyler Pounds is a series of parallel and connecting taxiways. The network consists of eight taxiways, all of which are fifty feet wide.

In addition to the airport's aircraft operating areas, there are a number of landside facilities. These include the terminal building, aircraft parking apron, hangar areas, vehicle parking and airport access road. The airport offers two types of parking with varying costs – short-term and long-term parking. Fixed based operations are also a part of the landside facilities and include passenger waiting areas, pilot lounge, aircraft sales/leasing/brokerage, fuel storage, parking, courtesy transportation, public telephone, restrooms, etc. The airport has two fixed based operators — Jet Center of Tyler and Johnson Aviation — providing the above-mentioned services.

The airport is also equipped with Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting services. These services and equipment are provided on a twenty-four hour basis for regularly scheduled aircraft, as well as unscheduled air carriers. In addition, the airport is operating an aviation training school with five flight instructors and three single engine aircrafts.

The City of Tyler opened a new terminal building to the west side of the airport in 2002. The new terminal has over 38,000 square feet, which is more than twice the size of the old terminal. Land was acquired to provide adequate space for future terminal expansion forecasted for the next forty years.

Several construction projects to improve airport facilities has been carried out in recent years. These include improvement runway 13-31 and associated taxiways which have been rejuvenated and sealed to enhance and prolong the life of the pavement. All runway and taxiway markings within the project comply with new FAA marking standards. In 2009 the Runway Visibility Zone (RVZ) Clearing Project to clear and grub an area was completed.

## INTERMODAL FACILITIES

Intermodal facilities refer to facilities where people or goods transfer between modes (e.g., combined commuter rail and bus stations, rail/truck freight transfer facilities, etc.). Intermodalism is the concept that binds the modes together so that people and freight movements can be made in the most efficient manner possible.

**Figure 9-4** displays existing freight and intermodal facilities in the Tyler MPO area. As shown, the majority of intermodal facilities consist of major distributors in the Tyler Area, including Tyler Pipe, located northwest of Tyler along I-69, Target Distribution Center in Lindale and Southwest Foods located northeast of Tyler along US 271. Also shown on the map is Greyhound Bus Lines, which is located on Bois D'Arc Avenue in Tyler.

Air, rail, truck, and inter-city bus industries are essential components in the local economy and play a fundamental role in the Tyler transportation system. The MTP individual modal system plans represent a comprehensive effort to build a multimodal transportation system. Additional efforts are needed, however, to link these individual modes in one connected and seamless system that further supports the efficient movements of people and goods and helps the region maintain its economic competitiveness and attractiveness of the region. Since many of these planning elements involve private sector entities, it is imperative to involve them in the planning process.

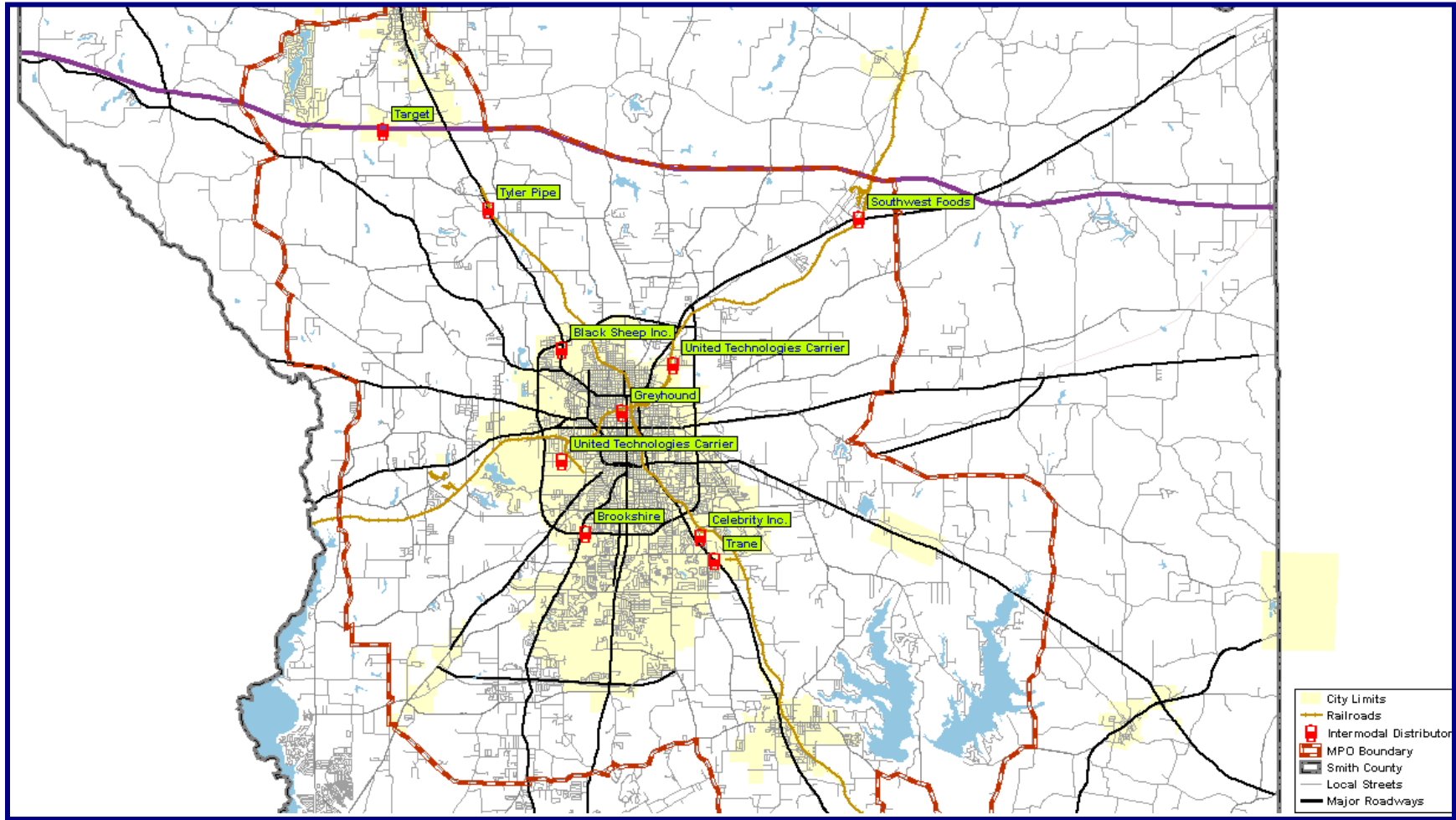


FIGURE 9-4 EXISTING INTERMODAL FACILITIES IN TYLER