

# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Transportation Equity Act of the 21st Century (TEA-21) enacted by Congress in May of 1998, authorized highway and other surface transportation programs for the period 1998 through 2003. One element of TEA-21 was the designation of additional *High Priority Corridors* on the National Highway System (NHS), including the Heartland Expressway Corridor, the Ports to Plains Corridor, and the Theodore Roosevelt Expressway. Together, these three corridors form the Ports to Plains Alliance Corridor connecting Canada to Mexico as shown in Figure 1.1.

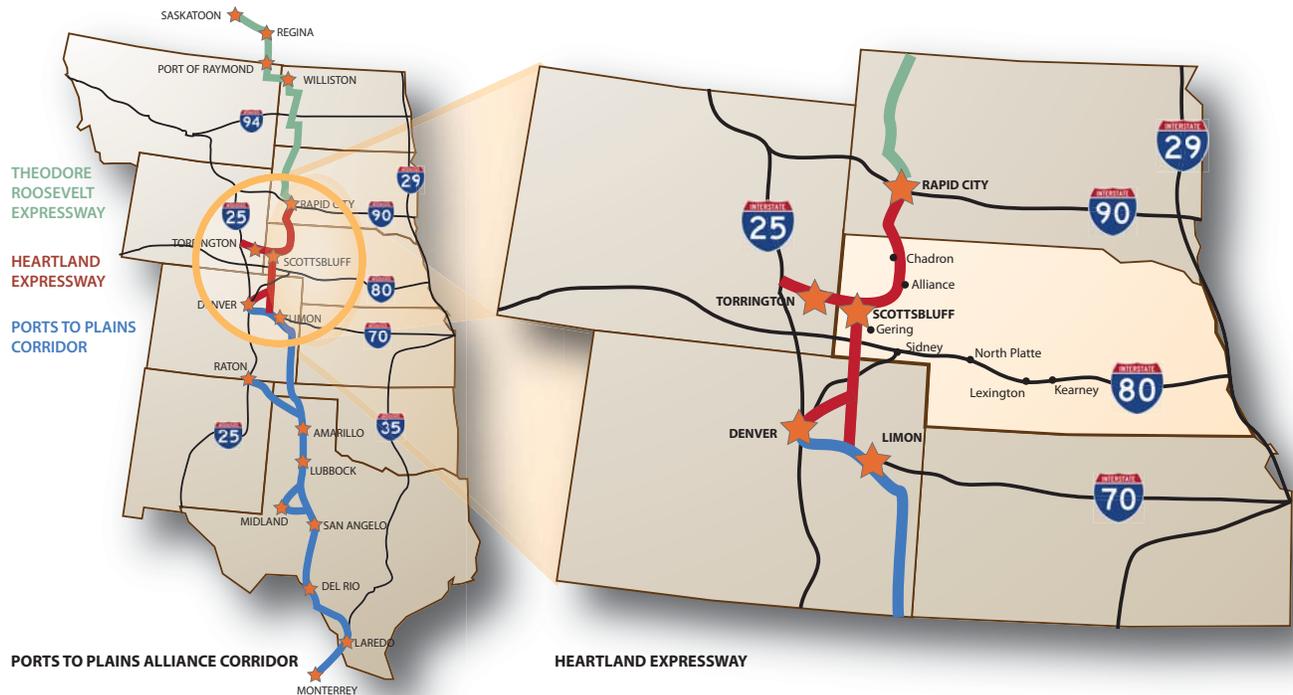


Figure 1.1- The Ports to Plains Alliance Corridor

The Ports to Plains (PTP) Alliance Corridor is a high-speed highway corridor that promotes and enhances domestic and international trade in North America, provides connectivity to east/west interstate system components, provides an essential economic development tool for the rural Great Plains, and improves Homeland Security throughout the Great Plains by connecting metropolitan cities and regional trade centers from Canada to Mexico via the Great Plains.

As part of the PTP Alliance Corridor, the vision for the Heartland Expressway Corridor consists of a high-speed highway that will promote and enhance domestic and international trade as it connects Denver, Colorado Springs, and the PTP Alliance Corridor to Rapid City and the Theodore Roosevelt Expressway. The Heartland Expressway also provides an essential economic development tool for rural areas in Colorado, Nebraska, South Dakota, and Wyoming and improves Homeland Security in the nation's Heartland.

The Heartland Expressway Corridor will provide many national, regional, and local benefits. Some of the most noteworthy national benefits include:

- Connection of metropolitan cities and regional trade centers
- Develops a significant North American Free Trade Act (NAFTA) corridor
- Provides an alternative to avoid urban congestion and delay along Interstate 25
- Completes an integral segment of the PTP Alliance Corridor, a trans-national corridor
- Enhances the national freight network and freight movements
- Provides safer travel
- Provides a north/south high speed corridor
- Enhances delivery capacity and efficiency to Great Plains markets
- Provides essential economic development infrastructure to the Great Plains
- Develops a significant tourism corridor

The Heartland Expressway Corridor will provide an opportunity to improve the efficiency and reliability of freight movements. Currently, many trucking companies schedule shipments to avoid urban congestion times. A rural route to bypass urban congestion along the I-25 corridor will provide opportunities for trucking companies to improve the efficiency and timeliness of shipments within the critical freight network.



Figure 1.2- The Heartland Expressway Corridor

This Heartland Expressway Corridor Development and Management Plan (CDMP) is focused on the portion of the Heartland Expressway within the State of Nebraska. The CDMP has been prepared in compliance with Section 1118(d) of TEA-21<sup>1</sup> which is similar to the work previously completed for the Port to Plains corridor in 2005. Section 1118(d), entitled “Corridor Development and Management Plan” declares that:

“A state or metropolitan planning organization receiving an allocation under this section shall develop, and submit to the secretary for review, a development and management plan for the corridor, or a usable component thereof, with respect to which the allocation is being made. Such plan shall include, at a minimum, the following elements:

- A coordinated corridor development plan and schedule, including a timetable for completion of all planning and development activities, environmental reviews, permits, and construction of all sections;
- The results of any environmental reviews and mitigation plans;
- A complete and comprehensive analysis of corridor costs and benefits;
- A finance plan, including any alternative financing methods and, if the corridor is a multi-state corridor, a state-by-state alternative of corridor finances;
- The identification of any impediments to the development and construction of the corridor, including any possible environmental, social, political, and economic objections.”

The Heartland Expressway Steering Committee has agreed to pursue the following long-term improvement concepts that meet the overall Ports to Plains Alliance corridor vision. These improvements were identified in the 1993 Heartland Expressway Economic and Engineering Feasibility Study:

- Four-lane divided highway, except in sections where more than four-lanes exist or are planned, with a stepped development process to achieve the ultimate four-lane corridor;
- A Super-2 facility as an interim improvement which includes: two 12-foot lanes and ten-foot shoulders with eight feet paved. The Super-2 facility is a two-lane highway with passing lanes located at optimum locations.

In addition, potential relief routes, at-grade railroad crossing upgrades, intelligent transportation systems (ITS) improvement, intersection improvement and safety improvement needs will be identified.

**The Heartland Expressway Steering Committee is composed of the following individuals:**

|                |                                     |
|----------------|-------------------------------------|
| Randy Peters   | Nebraska Department of Roads (NDOR) |
| Mike Owen      | NDOR                                |
| Craig Lind     | NDOR                                |
| Doug Leafgreen | Nebraska Highway Commission         |
| Lane Danielzuk | Heartland Expressway Association    |
| Travis Hiner   | Heartland Expressway Association    |
| Deb Cottier    | Heartland Expressway Association    |
| Joe Kiely      | Port to Plains Alliance             |

<sup>1</sup>TEA-21 was the applicable law during the preparation of the majority the Heartland Expressway CDMP. The Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act ( MAP-21) was put signed into law in 2012, and revisions to this document have been made where possible to reflect changes brought about by the passing of MAP-21.