



INNOVATORS TAKE THE STAGE: TEXAS TAKES AN ENTREPRENEURIAL APPROACH TO TRANSPORTATION

Transportation leaders from across the state convene in the Texas Innovation Invitational

SAN ANTONIO (July 29, 2024) – Texas mobility leaders are joining forces to modernize and integrate advanced technologies into today’s transportation system to help improve safety and decrease congestion. The [Texas Department of Transportation \(TxDOT\)](#), [University of Texas at Austin Center for Transportation Research \(UT CTR\)](#), [VIA Metropolitan Transit](#), [Southwest Research Institute \(SwRI\)](#), [Port San Antonio \(Port SA\)](#), and [Bexar County](#) are hosting the 2024 Texas Innovation Invitational from July 29-31 in San Antonio. Leaders are gathering to discuss the latest in transportation technology and present novel ideas for tackling safety, traffic operations, and connectivity challenges.

The Invitational kicks off with a [Tech Showcase](#), an interactive experience with over 30 exhibitors representing a variety of transportation technologies in both the public and private sectors. Attendees can climb into the cab of an autonomous truck, take an electric bike for a spin, discover creative data visualizations, see live video from a drone, and even take flight in an aerospace simulator.

In partnership with Port SA and Greater SATX, middle and high school STEM organizations are welcomed into the Tech Showcase to learn more about the possibilities of transportation.

“This event is a window into the incredible world of transportation technology and highlights the San Antonio region’s investment in a talented and skilled workforce,” said Jim Perschbach, Chief Executive Officer of Port SA. “These technologies are here today and we are finding ways to safely integrate them into the Texas transportation system.”

On day two, the Invitational focuses on the link between transportation and the economy. Notable speakers include Chairman Robert Nichols of the Texas Senate Transportation Committee, Texas Senator Kelly Hancock, Jennifer Harris of the US Department of Commerce, San Antonio Councilwoman Dr. Adriana Rocha Garcia, and former US Housing and Urban Development Secretary Henry Cisneros.

“San Antonio is honored to host the Texas Innovation Invitational. Collaboration at the local, state, and federal levels is key to developing and implementing innovative solutions,” Councilwoman Rocha Garcia said. “This event is timely as San Antonio advances its Vision Zero SA program and capitalizes on federal grant opportunities to protect our pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers.”

The Invitational culminates in public sector pitches, where regional teams have the opportunity to present an innovative solution to address a major transportation challenge. Teams will receive feedback and guidance from a panel of expert judges, including Darran Anderson (TxDOT’s Director of Strategy and Innovation), Caroline Mays (TxDOT’s Director of Planning and Modal Programs), Kirk Steudle (former Director of the Michigan Department of Transportation), David Zipper (Senior Fellow at the MIT Mobility Initiative), and Lora Byala (Founder and CEO of Foursquare Integrated Transportation Planning).

“The pitch presentations apply an entrepreneurial and collaborative approach to innovation,” said Darran Anderson of TxDOT. “The process is designed to assist public agencies with defining a challenge, aligning local-state-federal goals, and crafting a compelling story that can attract federal funding.”

The judges will announce up to three winners on July 31, who will receive the Smart Transportation & Advanced Roadways (STAR) Award. Eligible projects will be submitted to TxDOT for consideration for the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) State Transportation Innovation Council (STIC) incentive program and an opportunity to receive up to \$125,000 in grant funds. FHWA will announce one recipient of the STIC incentive program funds in fall 2024, which will support the implementation of the innovative project.

Built on a spirit of collaboration, the Invitational is an open call for innovation that will enable Texas to tackle its transportation challenges with bold, new solutions.

About the Texas Innovation Invitational

The Texas Innovation Invitational is a three-day event that brings together transportation leaders and practitioners from across the state to learn about the latest developments in transportation. The event offers participants the opportunity to:

- **Experience** an interactive technology showcase that spans automated vehicles, drones, connected infrastructure, scooters, e-bikes, and more!
- **Discover** the latest mobility trends through insightful plenary sessions, technical breakouts, and engaging networking opportunities.
- **Connect** with industry leaders, from both the public and private sectors, cultivating relationships that lead to beneficial partnerships, collaborations, and future opportunities.
- **Engage** with regional teams as they pitch their cutting-edge projects, fostering interaction and exploration of their innovative ideas.

For more information on the Texas Innovation Invitational and full schedule of events, visit: <https://bit.ly/TII2024>