

## Texas Lags on Rural Road Investments

State-administered roads in rural parts of Texas have some of the highest speed limits in the state, and see more fatal crashes than urban roads.

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Reporting for the Houston Chronicle, [Dug Begley outlines](#) the plight of Texas’s rural roads, which, “Despite carrying about 21 percent of the state’s daily miles driven, ... represent 34 percent of all highway deaths.”

As Begley writes, “In [‘Keeping Rural Texas Connected,’](#) researchers found that 251 projects to improve highways outside metro and suburban areas were completed since 2015, at a cost of \$7.5 billion, and another 127 valued at \$7.2 billion are under construction according to the Texas Department of Transportation.” Yet the Texas Trunk System, “the 30-year-old goal state officials set to make sure every area of Texas with a population of more than 20,000 is connected by a safe, four-lane divided road,” is still short \$27.8 billion in backlogged projects.

“One of the challenges to garnering support for rural roads,” according to Texas Transportation Commissioner Alvin New, “is that Texas is becoming more urban, but much of its transportation needs remain decidedly rural.”

Begley writes that “Safety advocates argue Texas highway officials must combat one of the most common reasons for severe crashes — excessive speed. As roads are rebuilt and widened, care needs to be made to not enable faster trips that actually increase risk, they say.” As Jay Crossley, executive director of nonprofit Farm & City, puts it, “In rural, suburban, and urban Texas, the facilities designed for the highest speeds are our state on-system roadways, where there are terrible results of someone driving 70 miles an hour every day.”