The Honorable David Dewhurst  
Lt. Governor's Office  
P.O. Box 12989  
Austin, Texas 78711

December 5, 2006

Dear Lt. Governor Dewhurst:

Transportation Code Section 201.207 requires the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) to meet at least quarterly with our Mexican counterparts to discuss issues relating to truck inspections, transportation, and infrastructure. These meetings are known as Cross Border Transportation and Infrastructure meetings.

While we have ongoing meetings outside of the those required by this statute, the meetings held as part of these Cross Border groups have resulted in a report that includes recommendations to increase bilateral relations with Mexico and expedite trade by mitigating delays in border crossing inspections for northbound truck traffic. You will find the 2006 Cross Border Transportation and Trade Report attached.

We have a plan to reduce congestion, improve air quality, expand economic opportunity, enhance safety, and increase the value of our transportation assets. The border region, like other parts of the state, will benefit greatly from the attainment of these goals. Thank you for your interest in transportation. If you should have any questions, you may contact me at (512) 305-9509, or if your staff should have any questions, they may contact Cady North at (512) 463-6082.

Sincerely,

Michael W. Eshrens, P.E.  
Executive Director

Attachment  
Texas Transportation Commission  
James L. Randall, P.E., Director, Transportation Planning & Programming Division, TxDOT  
Bucky Garcia, Border Commerce Coordinator, Secretary of State's Office  
Cady North, Government and Business Enterprises Division, TxDOT

THE TEXAS PLAN  
REDUCE CONGESTION • ENHANCE SAFETY • EXPAND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY • IMPROVE AIR QUALITY • INCREASE THE VALUE OF OUR TRANSPORTATION ASSETS

An Equal Opportunity Employer
Cross-Border Transportation and Infrastructure Report

Michael W. Behrens, P.E., Executive Director
Texas Department of Transportation

December 2006

Submitted in Compliance with SB 569 of the 79th Regular Session
Cross-Border Transportation and Infrastructure Report

Prepared for the:
Texas Department of Transportation

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December 1, 2006
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INTRODUCTION

Senate Bill (SB) 569, 79th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, 2005, Transportation Code, Section 201.207, requires the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) to initiate efforts to meet at least quarterly with the department's counterparts in those Mexican states that border Texas. The objective of the meetings is to discuss issues relating to truck inspections and transportation, as well as infrastructure involved in truck inspections and transportation.

SB 569 also requires that TxDOT, in conjunction with the border commerce coordinator, develop short-range and long-range plans, including recommendations to increase bilateral relations with Mexico and expedite trade by mitigating delays in border crossing inspections for northbound truck traffic.

Currently being implemented are several federal programs that deal with the automation of inspection processes to expedite border trade and crossing. Where feasible, TxDOT is coordinating and cooperating on infrastructure projects to facilitate these programs. Some of the programs being implemented at the southern border include the Free and Secure Trade (FAST), Customs Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (C-TPAT), Secure Electronic Network for Travelers Rapid Inspection (SENTRI), and Automated Commercial Environment (ACE).

TxDOT staff and Mexican officials participate in mutual working committees and transportation planning efforts. Texas has participated in the U.S.-Mexico Joint Working Committee (JWC) for Transportation Planning since its inception in 1994. The JWC meets with U.S. and Mexican federal transportation agencies, customs agencies, immigration, public works, as well as border state transportation agencies.

At the state level, TxDOT meets on a regular basis with other agencies and Mexican counterparts to discuss mutual interests and concerns important to the border region. The Pharr, Laredo, and El Paso Districts have a long history of cooperation with transportation officials in neighboring Mexican states. All three districts have made

1 FAST is a bilateral initiative between the United States and Mexico designed to ensure security and safety while enhancing the economic prosperity of both countries. The program aims to increase the integrity of supply chain security by offering expedited clearance to carriers and importers enrolled in Customs Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (C-TPAT).
extensive efforts to work closely and develop productive working relationships with their Mexican neighbors.

THE TRUCK BORDER CROSSING PROCESS

An international truck shipment from Mexico into the U.S. can originate at an assembly plant either within the border region or further south in the interior of Mexico. In either case, due to federal restrictions on Mexican trucks operating beyond the border commercial zone, a transfer tractor, known as a drayage, would pick up the loaded trailer within the border region to proceed towards the international port.

Once the shipment, with the authorized drayage driver and truck are at the international port, it goes through three main physical areas:

- Mexican export lot,
- U.S. federal compound, and
- State border safety inspection facility.

A description of the main activities that take place in the northbound border crossing process is presented in the following sections and illustrated in Figure 1.

![Figure 1. Northbound Commercial Border Crossing Process](image-url)

2
Mexican Export Lot

The drayage driver with the required documentation proceeds into the Mexican export customs compound. Mexican Customs (Administración General de Aduanas) conducts occasional inspections of outbound freight prior to its export for audit and interdiction purposes. A random selection mechanism determines whether the cargo must undergo an inspection. Shipments that are selected for inspection undergo a physical review of the cargo. Those that are not selected proceed to the exit gate, cross the border, and continue on to the U.S. port of entry.

U.S. Federal Compound

At the primary inspection booth, the drayage driver of the truck presents identification (proof of citizenship, a valid visa or laser card), a copy of the inward Cargo Manifest, and the commercial invoice to the processing agent. Using a computer terminal, the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agent cross-checks the basic information about the driver, vehicle, and load with information sent previously by the U.S. customs broker and the carrier via the e-manifest. The CBP inspector at the primary inspection booth makes a decision to refer the truck, driver, or load for a more detailed secondary inspection of any or all of these elements or releases the truck to the exit gate.

A secondary inspection includes any inspection that the driver, freight, or conveyance undergoes between the primary inspection and the exit gate of the U.S. federal compound. Personnel from the CBP usually conduct these inspections, which can be done by physically inspecting the conveyance and the cargo, or by using nonintrusive inspection equipment (such as x-ray). Within the compound, the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT), Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) have personnel and facilities to perform inspections when required.

Border Safety Inspection Facility

At the majority of the ports of entry, the border safety inspection facilities (BSIFs) are located adjacent to the federal compounds. State public safety personnel interview drivers and inspect conveyances to determine whether they are in compliance with state
safety standards and regulations. If the initial visual inspection reveals any violation, the truck proceeds to a more detailed inspection at a special facility. After leaving the state inspection facility, the drayage driver typically drives to the freight forwarder or customs broker yard to drop off the trailer for later pickup by a long-haul tractor bound for the final destination.

The time required for a shipment to make the complete trip from the Mexican port of entry or the manufacturing plant to the exit of the state inspection facility will depend on the number of secondary inspections required, as well as the number of inspection booths in service and traffic volume at that specific time of day.

TEXAS-MEXICO INTERNATIONAL BORDER CROSSINGS

The Texas-Mexico border currently has 25 international border crossings, 14 of which serve commercial vehicles. Table 1 shows the Mexican and U.S. cities where the 14 commercial crossings are located, and the 2005 northbound commercial vehicle volume. Figure 2 shows the location of the crossings and the four Mexican states that border Texas.
Table 1. International Commercial Vehicle Bridge Crossings on Texas – Mexico Border

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bridge</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>2005 Northbound Traffic Volume</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Veterans International Bridge at Los Tomates</td>
<td>Brownsville</td>
<td>Matamoros</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Free Trade Bridge</td>
<td>Los Indios</td>
<td>Lucio Blanco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Progreso International Bridge</td>
<td>Progreso</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Pharr-Reynosa Int. Bridge on the Rise</td>
<td>Pharr</td>
<td>Reynosa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Rio Grande City-Camargo Bridge</td>
<td>Rio Grande City</td>
<td>Camargo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Roma-Ciudad Miguel Alemán Bridge</td>
<td>Ramí</td>
<td>Ciudad Miguel Alemán</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Lake-Falcon Dam Crossing</td>
<td>Falcon Heights</td>
<td>Ciudad Guerrero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 World Trade Bridge</td>
<td>Laredo</td>
<td>Nuevo Laredo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Laredo-Colombie Solidarity Bridge</td>
<td>Laredo</td>
<td>Colombia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Camino Real International Bridge</td>
<td>Eagle Pass</td>
<td>Piedras Negras</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Del Rio-Ciudad Acuña int. Bridge</td>
<td>Del Rio</td>
<td>Ciudad Acuña</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Presidio Bridge</td>
<td>Presidio</td>
<td>Ojinaga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Ysleta-Zaragoza Bridge</td>
<td>Ysleta</td>
<td>Zaragoza</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Bridge of the Americas</td>
<td>El Paso</td>
<td>Ciudad Juárez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The World Trade Bridge in Laredo is the crossing with by far the highest commercial vehicle volume, not only in Texas, but throughout the U.S.-Mexican border, with approximately 1.1 million northbound truck crossings in 2005.

The El Paso-Ciudad Juárez area is served by two bridges (Ysleta-Zaragoza Bridge and the Bridge of the Americas), which together moved more than 700,000 commercial vehicles in 2005.
The Pharr-Reynosa International Bridge on the Río—-with more than 450,000 crossings in the northbound direction in 2005—is the largest crossing (in terms of volume) serving the Río Grande Valley.

**Figure 2. Texas’ International Commercial Vehicle Border Crossings**
THE CROSS-BORDER TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE MEETINGS

Five meetings, involving representatives from Mexico and U.S. federal agencies, state and local governments, and TxDOT districts, took place between February and December 2006. The following lists the meeting dates and locations of the quarterly TxDOT meetings with the Mexican counterparts. Agendas and meeting notes can be found in the appendix.

February 27-28, 2006 Laredo, Texas
May 9, 2006 Monterrey, Nuevo Leon
May 22-23, 2006 Chihuahua City, Chihuahua
July 27, 2006 Pharr, Texas
October 24, 2006 Del Río, Texas

The initial meeting in Laredo was attended by members of TxDOT’s administration, divisions, offices, and the three border districts of El Paso, Laredo and Pharr. U.S. federal agencies that participated included CBP, U.S. Department of State, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), FMCSA and General Services Administration. State agencies represented included the Texas Secretary of State’s Office and the Department of Public Safety (DPS). Representatives from local governments and the private sector also attended this initial meeting. Attending from Mexico were public works and transportation officials from the four Mexican border states (Nuevo León, Chihuahua, Coahuila and Tamaulipas), Mexican federal transportation officials, bridge operators and Mexican Customs. The other four meetings were held to address matters within that region.

Participating in the regional meetings were TxDOT’s district representatives, Mexican counterparts from state and federal transportation agencies, and U.S. and Mexican private sector bridge operators and truck carriers.

The subjects discussed during the meetings have been divided into those that were identified as relevant throughout the Texas-Mexico border and those that were identified for a particular region or Mexican state.
Border-Wide Subjects

• Inspection process
  o Reduce or consolidate the multiple inspections northbound and southbound, including local police, on trailers crossing back and forth within the commercial zone.
  o Share inspection information between federal and state agencies.
  o Co-locate federal and state inspections.
  o Clarify violation responsibility for the drayage carrier community when trailer doesn’t pass inspection (shipper or carrier).
• Examine new technologies to facilitate freight movement, such as radio frequency identification (RFID), global positioning systems (GPS), and intelligent transportation systems (ITS).
• Reduce commercial border crossing wait times through improved inspections and immigrations and security procedures.
• Clarify local level involvement in rail relocations/new international bridges.
• Provide consistency in hours of operation among inspection stations along the border and in the U.S. and Mexico.
• Provide incentives to cross during off-peak periods.
• Understand Mexico’s infrastructure needs.
• Shorten time for infrastructure development (highways, bridges, and presidential permits).
• Provide pita for inspection of buses and bus-passengers entering the U.S.
• Develop southbound safety inspection infrastructure.
• Modernize toll collection systems.
• Understand financing needs and the different U.S. and Mexico financing mechanisms and timelines.
• Share the Coordinated Border Infrastructure program project selection process.
• Conduct binational traffic studies at potential ports of entry to identify potential traffic flows and optimal layout.
Subjects Discussed with the State of Nuevo Leon

• The rail corridor and international rail crossing at Colombia need to be constructed. In addition, the necessary connections between Monterrey, Colombia, and the US must be completed to ensure optimal trade efficiency.

• Highway improvements from the Colombia crossing to Monterrey are needed.

Subjects Discussed with the State of Chihuahua

• TxDOT is having difficulty coordinating with Chihuahua on bilateral infrastructure issues due to the involvement of multiple Mexican agencies at the federal, state and municipal levels.

• La Entrada al Pacífico Corridor
  o The Ojinaga-Presidio Bridge is only open for a few hours in the evening.
  o There are no freight-forwarders/customs-broker firms on site at the Ojinaga-Presidio Bridge.
  o There is potential difficulty in getting Mexico’s federal government to support conducting a feasibility study for the corridor in Mexico. Financial support from the Texas and New Mexico governments is needed.
  o Infrastructure on the Mexican part of the corridor limits the potential of the project.
    • There are severe limitations at the port of Topolobampo.
    • The existing rail line has 88 tunnels, steep grades and curves that preclude the use of double-stack rail.
    • The rail line between Chihuahua and Ojinaga has different weight restrictions than those in the U.S.

• El Paso-Juárez border crossing
  o The group should support the new border crossing at Guadalupe-Tomillo.
• Rail relocation in Ciudad Juárez
  o A committee with representatives from Texas, New Mexico and Mexico is
    analyzing alternatives to relocate the rail line that crosses through Ciudad Juárez
    into El Paso.
  o Rail transportation demand has grown substantially.
  o International rail crossing hours of operation are limited to night movements to
    avoid blocking vehicle traffic in Ciudad Juárez.

Subjects Discussed in Pharr
• CBP does not have sufficient staff to meet demand, which causes delays.
• Not all carriers have an adequate Internet connection, which creates problems in
  completing the ACE e-manifest.

Subjects Discussed in Del Rio
• The proposed location of the second international bridge in Del Rio is on
  National Park Service land. This will make it difficult to obtain the necessary permits.
  It was recommended to analyze the expansion of the existing bridge as a more
  viable solution.
• Expansion of the existing bridge in Del Rio should be analyzed to accommodate
  truck-only or FAST lanes and SENTRI lanes.
• Coordination with CBP is needed for the development of FAST and SENTRI lanes at
  Del Rio and Eagle Pass.
• The Coahuila Secretary of Public Works and Transportation is analyzing a short
  term solution for trucks circulating through downtown Ciudad Juárez. The
  Consortium of La Linda (COLINDA) will continue working on preparing the
  necessary documentation to request the opening of the La Linda Bridge. TxDOT is
  willing to work with COLINDA when needed.

PROPOSED SHORT- AND LONG-RANGE PLANS

The commercial border crossing process is complicated due to the interaction
between many different stakeholders with diverse objectives (Table 2). Public and
private sector stakeholders from the two countries interact in a process that lacks a single entity or coalition responsible for overseeing the successful functioning of the border crossing system. CBP is the agency with the largest control over the process; however, as mentioned earlier, Mexican authorities and the DPS also play an important role in the northbound crossing process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector / Level</th>
<th>United States</th>
<th>Mexico</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federal</td>
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<td>Administración General de Aduanas</td>
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<td></td>
<td>U.S. Department of Transportation</td>
<td>Secretaría de Comunicaciones y Transportes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>General Services Administration</td>
<td>Instituto de Administración y Avalúos de Bienes Nacionales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>Texas Department of Transportation</td>
<td>Tránsito Estado</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Department of Public Safety</td>
<td>Public Works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City</td>
<td>City</td>
<td>Municipal Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Sector</td>
<td>Receiver</td>
<td>Shipper</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Customs Broker</td>
<td>Drayage Carrier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Long-haul Carrier</td>
<td>Customs Broker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bridge Operator</td>
<td>Bridge Operator</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TxDOT participates in the Border Crossings Work Table, which meets during the annual Border Governors’ Conference and makes recommendations to improve border crossings. The Work Table has recommended promoting the expansion of FAST, as well as coordination between FMCSA and border-state commercial vehicle inspectors to establish the best approach for border crossing inspections in order to minimize dual inspections and streamline the process.

The recommended plan to improve bilateral relations with Mexico and expedite trade by mitigating northbound truck traffic delays in border crossing inspections is divided into short- and long-term activities. The proposed short-term plans resulting from the cross-border meetings include those activities that can be implemented in 1-3 years and usually solve operational issues. The long-term plan includes those recommendations that take longer to implement and are usually those related to
changes or additions in infrastructure. The proposed plan identifies all stakeholders that should be involved in order to maximize the results.

**Short-Term Recommendations**

**Streamline safety inspection processes and establish monitoring system**

The vehicle safety inspection process is one area in which the state has control over most of the process. As mentioned earlier, the vehicle safety inspection is only one of several that occur during the overall northbound commercial border crossing process. Improving safety inspection procedures will make the process more efficient and could be the first step toward a coordinated safety and security inspection process.

TxDOT plans, designs, and builds BSIFs. Commercial vehicle safety inspections are handled by the DPS and require modern facilities and equipment, including ITS, weigh-in-motion and static scales, and inspection bays. A Model Port of Entry Study was completed in 2002 by the Center for Transportation Research and the Texas Transportation Institute for TxDOT. This study examined the feasibility of facilitating trade and enhancing inspection responsibilities through an expedited process. As a result, eight ports of entry have temporary BSIFs that are functional. The permanent facilities are in varying stages of progress. Because of these improvements, according to DPS, the condition of Mexican trucks that cross the border has improved remarkably. The out-of-service rate is now about the same as for U.S. trucks.

The recommendation for TxDOT to incorporate an express lane in their planning and design of BSIFs will expedite pre-cleared vehicles. The Department of Public Safety's proposed Safety Inspection Express Lane program, similar to the federal FAST program, would expedite the whole crossing process using a pre-clearance system that would reduce unnecessary stops for those trucks that comply with safety regulations.

In order to judge the effectiveness of the proposed recommendation, the second part of the plan is to develop a program measuring overall crossing time, which will be used to monitor every commercial border crossing on a constant basis. Currently, TxDOT is conducting a Border Crossing Travel Time Study, which will identify and document traffic congestion and operational deficiencies on the U.S.-side state and
local roadways that lead to and from all the Texas-Mexico international border crossings. The study should be complete by the end of 2007.

The first part of the implementation of the Safety Inspection Express Lane has been initiated by the DPS on a pilot project in El Paso. The system is being developed and the measuring devices installed during the construction of the permanent BSIF at the Bridge of the Americas.

The next phase will be to work with the trade community, the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance (CVSA)\(^2\), and commercial carriers to expand the system to include trailer safety certifications. As mentioned during the previous bi-national meetings, a great portion of truck safety violations are on the trailer, not the tractor.

The monitoring system is essential to measure the success of this and any other program implemented at the border. The proposal is to define a system that can monitor overall crossing time from the Mexican border region to just beyond the U.S. border region. The FHWA is interested in this concept and is funding an initial assessment. The next phase of the monitoring system would be to implement a pilot at one port of entry and then expand it to include all commercial border crossings. In order to make this a successful program, key stakeholders—federal, state and municipal agencies from both sides of the border and drayage carriers—should be involved and actively participate.

The benefits of this system are more than the measurement of crossing times. Results can also be used for transportation and trade purposes, and for other areas such as vehicle emissions monitoring and real-time traffic information.

**Long-Term Recommendations**

Retrofit existing ports of entry to accommodate latest security and safety programs

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\(^2\) CVSA is a non-profit organization of federal, state, and provincial government agencies and representatives from private industry in the United States, Canada and Mexico dedicated to improving commercial vehicle safety. A certified officer performs inspections and affixes decals to the commercial vehicles that pass the inspection. Decals are valid for a period not to exceed three consecutive months, and vehicles displaying a valid decal generally will not be subject to re-inspection.
Private sector participation in pre-clearance security programs has not been as high as expected, because current port of entry infrastructure does not allow the programs to provide users with tangible benefits. Lengthy wait times for FAST participants still exist due to a lack of sufficient lanes to segregate traffic (FAST and non-FAST) from Mexico and throughout the process.

To help alleviate this problem and encourage participation in the security pre-clearance programs, additional lanes at international bridges, reconfiguring existing and new ports of entry to accommodate the latest security programs, and use of new technologies will be necessary. The Safety Inspection Express Lane program, proposed as a short-term recommendation, could also benefit from the retrofitting. All bi-national stakeholders from the three levels of government should be coordinated in order to maximize the benefits of the port-of-entry retrofit. An analysis should be done on a port-by-port basis to identify needs and funding sources.

TxDOT has coordinated with the federal government in implementing FAST programs in Brownsville, Pharr, Laredo and El Paso. CBP's border crossing wait times website shows that most trucks using FAST lanes cross much faster than those using other lanes at the same crossings.

A new federal program authorized by the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: a Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) is the Coordinated Border Infrastructure (CBI) program. Texas was provided with $211 million over the six-year period, with funding allocated to each of the TxDOT border districts. TxDOT made the decision to allow the local communities to select projects that will be funded with the CBI money. Projects identified to date include the installation of ITS at two border crossings in the El Paso District, improvement of FAST lanes at two different bridges in the Pharr District, and realignment of a connection road and grade separation in the Laredo District.
The appendix includes the agendas from the Laredo and Del Rio meetings. Meeting notes are included for the Laredo, Nuevo Leon, Chihuahua, and Pharr meetings.

1.1 Laredo Agenda; February 27-28, 2006
1.2 Laredo Meeting Notes; February 27-28, 2006
2.1 Nuevo Leon Meeting Notes; May 9, 2006
3.1 Chihuahua Meeting Notes; May 22-23, 2006
4.1 Pharr Meeting Notes; July 27, 2006
5.1 Del Rio Agenda; October 24, 2006
5.2 Del Rio Meeting Notes; October 24, 2006
1.1 LAREDO AGENDA: FEBRUARY 27-28, 2006

Cross-Border Transportation and Infrastructure Meeting
Holiday Inn Civic Center, Salon A & B
Laredo, Texas, February 27-28, 2006
Moderator: Gus De La Rosa, Director, International Relations Office
Texas Department of Transportation

Sunday, February 26, 2006

4:00 p.m. Registration opens

6:00 – 8:00 p.m. Reception – Holiday Inn Civic Center, Salon A & B

Monday, February 27, 2006

8:00 – 8:30 a.m. Registration

8:30 – 8:45 a.m. Opening and Purpose
Amadeo Saenz, P.E., Assistant Executive Director for Engineering Operations, Texas Department of Transportation

8:45 – 8:55 a.m. Welcome
Buddy Garcia, Border Commerce Coordinator
Texas Deputy Secretary of State

8:55 – 9:10 a.m. Introductions of Guests
Gus De La Rosa, Director, International Relations Office
Texas Department of Transportation

9:10 – 9:40 a.m. Lic. Pedro Contreras López, Administrator of Aduanas in Nuevo Laredo, Aduana Mexico

9:40 – 10:10 a.m. José Ramos, Assistant Director, Mission Support
Laredo Field Operations
U.S. Customs and Border Protection

10:10 – 10:40 a.m. Break

10:40 – 11:10 a.m. Arq. Selene Milian Roldan, Subdirectora de Planeación y Normas, Instituto de Administración y Avaluos de Bienes Nacionales (INDABIN) (Assistant Director of Planning and Regulations)

11:10 – 11:40 a.m. Larry Warner, Border Planning Coordinator
U.S. General Services Administration
1.1 LAREDO AGENDA: FEBRUARY 27-28, 2006 (CONTINUED)

Monday, February 27 (continued)

11:40 a.m. – 12:10 p.m. Ing. Jorge Salvador Organiza Barba, Dirección General del Centro SCT Tamaulipas Secretaria de Comunicaciones y Transportes (SCT) (Director General)

12:16 – 12:40 p.m. Ing. Gerardo Michel Cuen, Dirección de Supervisión del Autotransporte Federal Secretaria de Comunicaciones y Transportes (SCT) (Federal Motor Carrier Enforcement Director)

12:40 – 2:00 p.m. Lunch – Holiday Inn Civic Center, Mezzanine B

2:00 – 2:30 p.m. Manuel Espinosa, Special Programs Manager U.S. Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

2:30 – 3:00 p.m. Buddy Garcia, Border Initiative Coordinator Texas Secretary of State

3:00 – 3:30 p.m. Lic. Octavio Vial Torres, Délégo Regional VIII Zona Noreste Caminos y Puentes Federales (CAPUFE) (Delegate to Region 8, Northeast Zone)

3:30 – 4:00 p.m. Break

4:00 – 4:30 p.m. Commercial Motor Carriers Michael Dewbre, Supervisor, Public Assistance Programs, Motor Carrier Division, Texas Department of Transportation

4:30 – 5:00 p.m. Cose (Gus De La Rosa)

7:00 – 10:00 p.m. Dinner – Holiday Inn Civic Center, Salon A & B Guest Speaker – Commissioner Hope Andrade Texas Department of Transportation

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

8:00 – 8:15 a.m. Recap from Monday (Gus De La Rosa)

8:15 – 8:45 a.m. Intelligent Transportation Systems Al Kosik, P.E., Director, Traffic Management Section, Traffic Operations Division, Texas Department of Transportation
1.1 LAREDO AGENDA: FEBRUARY 27-28, 2006 (CONTINUED)

Tuesday, February 28 (continued)

8:45 – 9:15 a.m. Rail Border Crossings
Mark Werner, P.E., Transportation Engineer, Multimodal Section, Transportation Planning and Programming Division
Texas Department of Transportation

9:15 – 9:45 a.m. Border Safety Inspection Facilities
Major Mark Rogers
Texas Department of Public Safety

9:45 – 10:15 a.m. Break

10:15 – 10:45 a.m. U.S./Mexico Joint Working Committee on Transportation Planning
Sylvia Grijalva, Southwest Border Coordinator
Federal Highway Administration

10:45 – 11:15 a.m. Commercial Border Crossings
Danny Garza, Pharr Region, Vehicle Titles and Registration Division, Texas Department of Transportation

11:15 – 11:45 a.m. Trans-Texas Corridor 35 & Trans-Texas Corridor 69
Phillip Russell, P.E., Director, Texas Turnpike Authority Division, Texas Department of Transportation

11:45 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. Binational Bridges and Border Crossings Group
Robert Waldrop, Border Affairs Officer, Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, U.S. Department of State

12:15 – 1:30 p.m. Lunch - Holiday Inn Civic Center, Mezzanine B

1:30 – 2:00 p.m. Re-cap for day

Bilateral roundtables – Government Officials Only

2:00 – 3:30 p.m. Identify issues of concern for region.
Plan future meetings for further issue discussions and development of action plans.
Salon A – El Paso region
Salon B – Laredo region
Mezzanine B – Lower Rio Grande Valley region

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1.2 LAREDO MEETING NOTES: FEBRUARY 27-28, 2006

Border-Wide Subjects
- Get handle on Mexico’s infrastructure needs. We have a good idea of what the needs are in the U.S., but not in Mexico. Joint Working Committee may be able to provide information.
- Financing needs – who has funding when? U.S. and Mexico have different financing mechanisms and timelines.
- Co-location of federal and state inspections/inspectors.
- Infrastructure development takes too long (highways, bridges, and Presidential Permits).
- Need a formal decision for not performing inspections in Mexico.
- Multiple inspections northbound and southbound, including local police.
- Not considering new technologies in the movement of freight besides trucks and trains – (airports, containers).
- How will Coordinated Border Infrastructure Program funding be used when selecting individual projects, or district-wide?
- Share information between federal and state agencies for inspections.
- The image of wait times, inspections, immigrations and security needs to be improved.
- What is the involvement at the local level for rail relocations/new international bridges?
- Binational traffic studies at potential ports of entry.
- Inspection of buses and bus-passengers entering the U.S. Need plans to inspect buses.
- Need to improve infrastructure for inspections performed prior to entering Mexico.
- Don’t know who is responsible if trailer doesn’t pass inspection.
- Current procedures cause unnecessary delays, lack efficiency, take too long to approve customs brokers, and don’t include new technologies.
- There are not consistent hours of operation among inspection stations along the border and in the U.S. and Mexico.
1.2 LAREDO MEETING NOTES: FEBRUARY 27-28, 2006 (CONTINUED)

Subjects Discussed at the Laredo and El Paso breakout session

- Coordinate transportation planning process between the United States and Mexico.
  - Identify infrastructure needs.
  - Are there any metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) in Mexico?
  - Obtain more knowledge of the border planning processes.
  - Understand Mexican organization structures.
  - Coordinate with state, city, MPO, etc.
  - Coordinate with private sector stakeholders (customs brokers, shippers, truckers, etc.).
- Provide training for drivers and carriers (solution). Carrier responsible for trailer/tractor.
- Need southbound safety inspection infrastructure.

Action Items

- Include all stakeholders in regional meetings – Customs and Border Protection, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, customs brokers, federal agencies, police departments, sheriff offices, private sector
- Coordinate TxDOT and DPS meetings, but keep them separate (law enforcement vs. infrastructure)(discuss Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance)
- Include U.S./Mexico Joint Working Committee on Transportation Planning websites with information on previous studies.
  - http://www.borderplanning.fhwa.dot.gov/
- Define date/location for next meeting

Subjects Discussed at the Valley breakout session

- Numerous entities involved at ports of entry (both in U.S. and Mexico).
  - Need to reduce the red tape currently required for entering/leaving the U.S. and Mexico.
- Many of the issues are outside the state’s purview.
- Local Customs and Border Protection may be allies while the federal agency doesn’t provide the same support.
- Improve use of FAST lanes and study SENTRI lanes.
- Reduce wait time by providing incentives to cross off-peak.
  - Off-peak will require more staffing and/or overtime pay.
- Describe projects planned at border – highways – and their impact on Mexico.
  - Share information relating to projects/toll roads/truck routes.
1.2 LAREDO MEETING NOTES: FEBRUARY 27-28, 2006 (CONTINUED)

- Modernize toll collection when crossing bridges.
  - Facilitates trade
  - TxEAG or another interoperable device/card
  - Determine how to apportion revenues to cities, counties, state and federal governments, etc.
- Provide international insurance coverage.
- Trailer inspections should be held outside commercial area if just crossing back and forth within the commercial zone.
  - Is it necessary to have multiple inspections?
  - Is it necessary to have Level I, Level II, and Level III inspections?
- Place level of effort where problems are (How many accidents involve Mexican trucks?).
- Is it always necessary to give a vehicle an out of service infraction for a “possible” incident?

Action Items

- Involve TxDOT and others in CBP meetings and involve CBP in TxDOT/DPS meetings.
  - Involve SCT, DPS, USDOT, and CBP in joint meetings.
- Hold meetings with stakeholders at designated times in one day to avoid too many meetings.
- Encourage more bridge operators to attend future meetings.
- Make clear what meeting attendees are expected to contribute.
2.1 NUEVO LEON MEETING NOTES: MAY 9, 2006

On May 9th, Amadeo Saenz, P.E., Assistant Executive Director for Engineering Operations, TxDOT, and Mario Medina, P.E., Laredo District Engineer, TxDOT, met with representatives from the Corporacion para el Desarrollo de la Zona Fronteriza de Nuevo Leon (Corporation for the Development of the Nuevo Leon Border Zone) Codefront, SCT and Webb County. A proposed rail corridor and international rail crossing at Colombia, Texas along with the necessary connections to the existing rail system in both the U.S. and Mexico was discussed. Also, the group discussed the status of the highway improvement project to provide a direct route from the Colombia rail crossing to Monterrey Nuevo Leon.

The meeting began with an introduction of each participant. This was followed by a presentation by Mr. Carlos Villarreal (Webb County Rail District President) which provided a summary of activities the county has conducted in the development of a rail line from the existing Colombia crossing to the existing rail line at I-35. Plans call for the utilization of the existing Toll Road 255 (Camino Colombia) right of way for the rail corridor.

Mr. Regino A. Villarreal Lozano - Codefront provided information regarding the status of the rail line on the Mexican side from Colombia to Monterrey.

Mr. Oscar Herrera Hosking - General Director for Roadway Systems of Nuevo Leon provided information regarding the status of the proposed highway from Colombia to Monterrey. This proposed roadway is being developed with sufficient right of way width to provide for a rail line adjacent to the roadway improvements. This additional right of way would provide an existing corridor for placement of a rail line from Colombia to Monterrey.

Mr. Amadeo Saenz provided information regarding TxDOT’s TTC - 35 and the status of development. Also, since TxDOT’s TTC - 35 Comprehensive Development Agreement with Cintra-Zachary includes the development of a rail facility, Mr. Saenz recommended that the county and Codefront begin dialogue with Cintra-Zachary regarding a rail connection from Colombia to TTC-35 proposed rail facility. Both the county and Codefront will be meeting with representatives from Cintra-Zachary to discuss the proposed project.

The meeting concluded with an agreement to continue dialogue between the various parties.
3.1 CHIHUAHUA MEETING NOTES: MAY 22-23, 2006

Notes collected during the visit of the TxDOT El Paso District (TxDOT - El Paso) delegation to the city of Chihuahua, Chih., Mexico, on May 22nd and 23rd, 2006. The meeting is part of a series of border infrastructure meetings called for by the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America initiative, signed by President Bush, President Fox and Prime Minister Harper. The TxDOT - El Paso delegation was composed of Messrs. Charles H. Berry, P.E. (El Paso District Engineer), Efrain Esparza, P.E. (District Design Engineer), and Agustín De La Rosa (Director, TxDOT’s International Relations Office). The TxDOT delegation was supported by Rafael M. Aldrete, Ph.D., Program Manager of TTI-El Paso.

Visit to Chihuahua City Traffic Control Center – Monday May 22nd

Participants:

- TxDOT-El Paso: Charles Berry, Efrain Esparza, Gus De La Rosa, and Rafael Aldrete (TTI)
- Chihuahua City Traffic Control Center – Mr. Gonzalez-Islas (Traffic Delegate), Ms. María de los Angeles Ortiz (Technician), and a law enforcement representative at the center.

Key points:

- The Chihuahua City Traffic Control Center is part of the Traffic Engineering Department, under the Traffic and Civil Protection Directorate of the State of Chihuahua’s Secretariat of Public Safety.
- Traffic Control Center staff demonstrated center operations, and discussed the technology in use (video cameras, iTS and computer systems, etc.), which shares the same platform as that used in El Paso’s Transvista center and in the Mexican city of Aguascalientes.
- The group agreed that recent Chihuahua and El Paso staff exchanges had been valuable experiences and TxDOT offered to continue hosting Chihuahua staff at Transvista in the future. Mr. Esparza (TxDOT) mentioned that it might also be beneficial for some TxDOT staff to visit Chihuahua.

Meeting at the Autonomous University of Chihuahua [Universidad Autonoma de Chihuahua (UACH)], Monday May 22nd

Participants:

- TxDOT-El Paso: Messrs. Berry, Esparza, De La Rosa, and Aldrete (TTI)
- Chihuahua Secretaria de Comunicaciones y Obras Publicas (SCOP) [Secretariat of Communications and Public Works]: Mr. Joaquin Barrios (Planning Coordinator).
3.1 CHIHUAHUA MEETING NOTES: MAY 22-23, 2006 (CONTINUED)

- UACH, Faculty of Engineering: Mr. Oscar R. Herrera-Lagunas (Director), Dr. Manuel Portillo (Director of Transportation Technology Transfer Center), Mr. Jimmy Dzul-Gongora (Doctoral Transportation Program Lead).

Key Points:

- TxDOT stated that the purpose of the visit of the TxDOT delegation to Chihuahua was primarily to jointly establish a framework for future quarterly meetings between TxDOT and the Government of Chihuahua, in support of the commitments made in the Security and Prosperity Partnership initiative. As part of the State of Texas support for the initiative, the Texas Legislature requires TxDOT to have quarterly meetings with its Mexican counterparts. The objective of these meetings is to coordinate and address issues that have a regional impact, and identify issues that should be considered by the Binational Joint Working Committee (JWC).

- Mr. Barrios (SCOP) stated that two main issues for Chihuahua were rail relocation in Ciudad Juarez and the La Entrada al Pacifico (Gateway to the Pacific) corridor. These projects are seen as important initiatives in Chihuahua’s efforts to streamline its transportation system and not to lose trade to other Mexican states.

- On rail relocation in Ciudad Juarez, Mr. Barrios stated that Ferromex (Mexican Railway) had made a proposal to the State government and the Municipality of Juarez to build a series of bridges and overpasses along the current alignment of the railway through Juarez to overcome its current problems and allow for longer hours of operation. Ferromex proposed to cover one third of the cost, with the State of Chihuahua and the Juarez Municipality covering the remaining two thirds. However, this proposal seemed to be difficult to justify, as it would not be a permanent solution to the problem. Rail relocation in Juarez is a priority, as trade demand is growing so quickly that it is necessary to provide alternatives to truck transportation in order for Chihuahua to remain competitive.

- On the La Entrada al Pacifico, Mr. Barrios stated that although the corridor presents severe limitations at the port of Topolobampo (depth is a problem and a fair amount of dredging needs to take place), and along the rail line (68 tunnels): the State’s Tourism Secretariat is a strong supporter for a feasibility study of the corridor.

- Mr. Barrios stated that some other problems on the La Entrada al Pacifico corridor included the rail line between Chihuahua and Ojinaga which is only 90 lbs, as opposed to 115 lbs on the U.S. side, that the Ojinaga-Presidio bridge only opens for a few hours in the evening, and that there are no freight forwarders/customs clearance firms (Agentes Aduanales) on site.

- Mr. Berry (TxDOT) stated that TxDOT is about to begin a feasibility study for the La Entrada al Pacifico corridor, but he was not aware at the moment of the scope of the study. He offered to find out and let Chihuahua know.
3.1 CHIHUAHUA MEETING NOTES: MAY 22-23, 2006 (CONTINUED)

- TxDOT expressed concerns about the difficulty it’s experiencing in coordinating with Chihuahua on bilateral infrastructure issues, due to the fact that there are multiple Mexican Federal, State and Municipal agencies that are responsible for different issues (rail relocation, border crossings, etc.).
- Mr. Barrios (SCOP) stated that his agency is beginning to transition out from the Binational JWC, to let the Chihuahua’s Industrial Development Agency transition in and take responsibility for all border crossing infrastructure issues. SCOP will still provide technical support to the Agency. Mr. Barrios (SCOP), Mr. Herrera-Lagunas (UACH) and Dr. Portillo (UACH) also stated that UACH, through the Transportation Technology Transfer Center (T²) would also provide technical support to the State Government to allow for Chihuahua to move with one single coordinated voice.
- Mr. Esparza stated that TxDOT would organize and coordinate responsibilities from the Texas side.
- After the meeting, UACH staff took the TxDOT delegation, and Mr. Barrios for a tour of its Faculty of Engineering facilities, including the T² Center funded under the auspices of the U.S. – Mexico Border Technology Exchange Program (BTEP).
- Mr. Herrera-Lagunas, Dr. Portillo, and Mr. Dzul-Gongora (UACH) expressed strong interest in collaborating with TTI as they start their Doctoral Transportation Program in 2007. Dr. Aldrete offered to follow up on this request, and through TTI’s El Paso office liaise with the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP), to try to establish a collaboration framework that includes all three institutions.

Meeting at the Secretaria de Comunicaciones y Obras Publicas, Monday May 22nd:

Participants:

- TxDOT-El Paso: Messrs. Berry, Esparza, De La Rosa, and Aldrete (TTI)
- Chihuahua Secretaria de Comunicaciones y Obras Publicas (SCOP) [Secretariat of Communications and Public Works]: Mr. Luis Alfonso Fernandez-Casillas (Secretary), Mr. Joaquin Barrios (Planning Coordinator),
- Chihuahua Secretaria General de Gobierno (Secretary of State): Mr. Chaquer Robana-Silva (Director of Transportation), Mr. Fernando Rodriguez-Cerna (Technical Secretary of the Asset Management Committee),
- Promotora de la Industria Chihuahuense (Chihuahua Industrial Development Agency): Mr. Cesar Chavez-Alvarez (Director)
3.1 CHIHUAHUA MEETING NOTES: MAY 22-23, 2006 (CONTINUED)

Key Points:

- After the formal introductions, Mr. Berry and Mr. Barrios provided a short summary of the purpose of the meeting.
- Mr. De La Rosa explained the requirement from the Texas Legislature that mandates that TxDOT hold quarterly meetings with its Mexican counterparts. He added that there’s some confusion as to what meetings and what Mexican authorities/agencies are to attend.
- Chihuahua officials agreed on the importance of coordination, and Mr. Fernandez-Casillas (SCOP) stated that all border infrastructure issues would be coordinated by the Industrial Development Agency, and that SCOP only provide technical support through Mr. Barrios. However, it was key that the themes to be dealt with at the meetings are known well in advance, in order to determine what agencies/authorities should be attending. He stated that Mesrs. Chavez-Alvarez and Barrios would be the contact points to coordinate Chihuahua’s inputs and they would convene the appropriate parties.
- Mr. Esparza (TxDOT) stated that TxDOT would be the contact agency for Texas.
- Mr. Fernandez-Casillas (SCOP) stated that Chihuahua has great interest in the La Entrada al Pacifico corridor, the new border crossing in Ciudad Juarez (the proposed Guadalupe-Tomillar crossing), and in rail relocation in Ciudad Juarez.

**La Entrada al Pacifico Corridor**

- TxDOT commented on the La Entrada al Pacifico corridor and the upcoming TxDOT funded study.
- Mr. Fernandez-Casillas (SCOP) and Mr. Chavez-Alvarez commented that Chihuahua officials have already visited Topolobampo port in Sinaloa, and have agreed with the states of Sonora and Sinaloa to establish a common vision that encompasses three transportation modes (rail, roads and ports). However the Mexican states consider that it is of crucial importance to reach consensus on this vision with U.S. states. Chihuahua, Sinaloa and Sonora are planning to present a proposal to the Mexican federal government to conduct a feasibility study of the corridor, along with resources to conduct it. The support of New Mexico and Texas would make the proposal a stronger case to get the buy-in from Mexico’s federal government.
3.1 CHIHUAHUA MEETING NOTES: MAY 22-23, 2006 (CONTINUED)

- Chihuahua officials continued to explain that Chihuahua has a road project to cross the mountains from Chihuahua into Los Mochis (Sinaloa) and then into Topolobampo. The existing road is not adequate for freight transport. The rail line also presents challenges, tunnels (88 total, with one of them being a horseshoe curve), and steep grades. The port, however, already has funds to increase its depth. They also stated that Ferromex has demonstrated interest in the project and they believe that it would also have money to invest in developing such a project.

- Chihuahua officials believe that a single feasibility study cannot be coordinated for the entire corridor (from San Angelo to Topolobampo) with U.S. and Mexican funds, at the very least there should be close coordination between the Chihuahua and TxDOT studies.

- Mr. Chavez-Alvarez stated that Chihuahua will have a meeting in three weeks with Sinaloa to get a better understanding on what the current status of the project is, and what other state and federal agencies should be included in any follow-up meetings. He stated that having more details about TxDOT’s feasibility study prior to the meeting would be very valuable.

New El Paso-Juarez Border Crossing

- Mr. Barrios (SCOP) asked about the status of the new border crossing that is being considered in El Paso. He stated that Chihuahua is currently in the process of securing land for Customs yards on the Mexican side (Recinto Fiscal).

Rail Relocation in Ciudad Juarez/El Paso

- Mr. Fernandez-Casillas (SCOP) stated that transportation demand in Ciudad Juarez has grown substantially and the railway’s constrained hours of operation are becoming a problem. Options that can help solve the problem temporarily have been offered (the proposed bridges mentioned previously), but nothing that can solve the problem permanently. The problem caused by current location of the railway is growing by the day, and it affects not only the flow of trade cargo, but the city itself.

- Mr. Berry (TxDOT) offered to come back to make a presentation on the El Paso rail relocation study.

Other

- Mr. Rohana-Silva (Secretaria General de Gobierno) thanked TxDOT for the visit to the Chihuahua Traffic Control Center, and the invitation to Transvista in El Paso for the center’s staff. He also mentioned that Frank Spencer is promoting a new border crossing in Ojinaga/Presidio, and that he believed that funds were available on the U.S. side.
4.1 PHARR MEETING NOTES: JULY 27, 2006

Cross Border Transportation and Infrastructure Meeting
Pharr Country Club
July 27, 2006

Representatives from various state and federal agencies and the private sector attended the meeting, including:

- Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS)
- Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT)
- U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT)
- Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA)
- U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP)
- Pharr-Reynosa International Bridge
- Cameron County Bridge System
- Texas Transportation Institute
- Mexican Ministry of Transportation and Communication (SCT)
- CANACAR (Trucking Association)
- CONATRAM (Trucking Association)
- Tamaulipas Public Works Department

- On May 4, 2006 the USDOT, DPS, SCT, CANACAR and CONATRAM met in Pharr to discuss issues affecting commercial border crossings. The minutes from that meeting were summarized in this meeting.

- DPS officials mentioned that the most common problems that Mexican trucks face are non-working brakes and lights.

- CANACAR representative mentioned that DPS safety violation fines are not very high but very frequent. The most common faults are brakes, lights, air leaks and other similar issues. Statistically, Mexican carriers have improved safety, but safety violation tickets are still very frequent. They requested that truckers have the opportunity to fix minor infractions prior to incurring the fine.

- CANACAR requested cooperation from CBP to expedite border crossing. Trucks used to make between 2 and 3 crossings per day and now they can only do one.

DPS mentioned that approximately 40,000 vehicles cross the border and from those only 1,900 have safety violations, which is 4 percent. From those with violations only 20 percent are out of service vehicles. DPS is working with the local county judge to maintain an updated list of companies that are not current on safety violation fine payment. Trucks from these carriers would be stopped at the safety inspection station when found in violation. Other trucks will be allowed to proceed and pay the fine within 15 days.
4.1 PHARR MEETING NOTES: JULY 27, 2006 (CONTINUED)

- DPS also mentioned that it is common to have violations on the trailer and not on the tractor. Six hundred CVSA (Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance) stickers are issued every three months. The trucking organizations agreed that the owner of the trailer will be informed of any violation.

- DPS agreed to give a course on vehicle safety to the Mexican trucking organizations in Texas, as DPS and USDOT officials are not allowed to cross into Mexico to offer the course.

- CANACAR mentioned that the implementation of the ACE (Automated Customs Environment) e-manifest will create severe problems as not all the carriers have access to high speed Internet connection. CBP mentioned the date has been set for August 1st for the e-manifest start up, so long lines are expected at the border crossings.

- TxDOT mentioned that there are plans to add a FAST lane at the Pharr-Reynosa Bridge on the U.S. side. The cost of this investment is $80 million dollars. CANACAR representative mentioned that the problem is that Customs (CBP) is not processing fast enough and that creates delays. Mr. Jesse Medrano, Pharr-Reynosa Bridge Director, mentioned that the problem's that CBP does not have sufficient staff to cope with the demand.

- TxDOT presented the list of potential RMA (Regional Mobility Authority) roadway improvements planned for the region, and mentioned that the permanent Border Safety Inspection Facility will start construction in 1.5 years and is planned to be in operation in 3 years.

- Mario Medrana, TxDOT’s Laredo District Engineer presented a list of highway projects planned for the Laredo District.
5.1 DEL RIO AGENDA: OCTOBER 24, 2006

Cross-Border Transportation and Infrastructure Meeting
Del Rio Bank and Trust
1200 Veterans Blvd.
Del Rio, TX 78840
October 24, 2006 1:00-5:00 pm

1:00 – 1:15
I. Welcome/Introductory Remarks
Mario G. Medina, P.E.

1:15 – 2:45
II. Presentation of Projects

1:15 – 1:35
TxDOT Laredo District
Baltazar Avila, P.E.

1:40 – 2:00
TxDOT El Paso District
Celia Salazar, E.I.T.

2:05 – 2:20
La Linda Bridge COLINQA
Presentation
Mr. Tyrus Fain
Mr. Mike Davidson

2:25 – 2:50
Gobierno del Estado de Coahuila
Ing. Noe Garcia

Del Rio International Bridge II
FAST and SENTRI Lanes
Transportation Projects in the Region

2:50 – 3:00
BREAK

3:00 – 3:30
III. Funding
Baltazar Avila, P.E.

CBI Program.

3:30 – 4:45
IV. Issues from last meeting
held in Laredo
Baltazar Avila, P.E.

Coordinate transportation planning process between the U.S. and Mexico
Identify infrastructure needs
Are there any MPOs in Mexico?
Obtain more knowledge of the border planning process
Understand Mexican organization structures
Coordinate with state, city, MPO, etc.
Coordinate with private sector stakeholders (customs brokers, shippers, truckers, etc.)
Provide training for drivers and carriers (solution)
Carriers responsible for trailer/tractor
Need southbound safety inspection infrastructure
5.2 DEL RIO MEETING NOTES: OCTOBER 24, 2006

- Thirty-three representatives from TxDOT, the Office of the Secretary of State, cities of Del Rio and Eagle Pass, Val Verde County, the Secretary of Public Works and Transportation of the State of Coahuila (SOPT), Adjutante Mexico in Ciudad Acuña (Mexican Customs), the Consortium of La Linda (COLINDA), customs brokers from Piedras Negras/Eagle Pass and Ciudad Acuña/Del Rio, and the Texas Transportation Institute attended the meeting.

- Baltazar Avilla, P.E., with TxDOT’s Laredo District presented the current and future projects in the City of Del Rio and the City of Eagle Pass. Projects in Del Rio include the U.S. 90 rehabilitation and the Del Rio relief route. The total budget for ongoing and future construction projects in Del Rio is $228,895,000.


- Celia Salazar, E.I.T., with TxDOT’s El Paso District made a presentation on current projects in the region. Projects include the El Paso Mobility Plan, and the La Entrada al Pacifico. In this project TxDOT is currently working on SH 17, U.S. 67 and U.S. 67/90 adding passing lanes, widening culverts and performing safety enhancements.

Future and potential projects in the El Paso District include: U.S. 67 South from Marfa to Presidio, formation of a Regional Mobility Authority in Presidio, expansion of the Presidio International Bridge, and the development of a new port of entry. The El Paso District has no plans for the bridge at La Linda, but is willing to work with the public for any future needs.

- The Consortium of La Linda (COLINDA) is a partnership between two non-profit corporations. Tyrus Fain of COLINDA and Mike Davidson of the Big Bend Texas Mountains Travel Association and the Brewster County Tourism Council gave a joint presentation on behalf of reopening the bridge linking La Linda, Coahuila and FM 1627 in Brewster County, Texas.
Ing. Noe García with the Secretary of Public Works and Transportation of the State of Coahuila (SOPT) gave a presentation on the road construction projects that the state of Coahuila is performing. The state of Coahuila is interested in linking the Eagle Pass/Piedras Negras area with the Trans-Texas Corridor. Points of interest to the state of Coahuila include:

- New International bridge at Ciudad Acuña/ Del Río
- La Linda Bridge
- Commercial traffic restructuring in Ciudad Acuña (Espiral Vial)
- SENTRI and FAST lanes
- Increase hours of operation in the Ciudad Acuña/Del Rio International Bridge

- Baltazar Avila, P.E. presented information on the Coordinated Border Infrastructure (CBI) program. The presentation included a description of the requirements to qualify under the CBI program, how the funds are distributed, the project eligibility criteria, the use of funding and the criteria for using the funds in Mexico. Mr. Avila mentioned that the Laredo District has $81,067,221 for FY 2005-2009 and $21,398,000 for FY 2010. The Laredo District has not selected projects to be funded with CBI monies at this time.

- Mario G. Medina, P.E., TxDOT’s Laredo District Engineer summarized the topics that were discussed, as follows:
  - Infrastructure
    - Del Rio Bridge II
    - Truck connection at the Del Rio International Bridge
    - U.S. 90 4 lanes
    - U.S. 57 4 lanes
  - Operations
    - FAST lanes at Ciudad Acuña/Del Rio coordinate with CBP
    - Add lanes at the Ciudad Acuña/Del Rio Bridge to allow truck only lanes at the bridge
    - Analyze SENTRI lanes for Eagle Pass/Piedras Negras and Ciudad Acuña/Del Rio

These topics will be discussed in more detail in future separate meetings in Eagle Pass and Del Rio.

- It was mentioned that the proposed location of the second international bridge in Del Rio is on National Park Services land and this will make it difficult to obtain the necessary permits. It was recommended to analyze the expansion of the existing bridge as a more viable solution.