

TEXAS TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

VARIOUS Counties

MINUTE ORDER

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VARIOUS Districts

Transportation Code, Section 201.114 requires the Texas Transportation Commission (commission) to appoint members of the Border Trade Advisory Committee (committee). The purpose of the committee is to define and develop a strategy and make recommendations to the commission and governor for addressing the highest priority border trade transportation challenges.

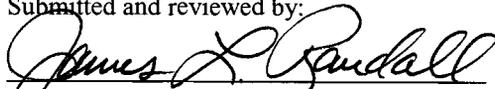
The committee previously identified four main goals, which are documented in the first Border Trade Advisory Committee Report (report) dated November 16, 2006. These goals are: (1) promoting the development of ample and expandable trade transportation corridors, (2) developing coordination mechanisms to foster trade between Mexico and Texas, (3) leveraging safety and security measures to enhance trade efficiencies, and (4) demonstrating the economic benefits of international trade at the national, state, and local levels. The committee also identified strategies, implementation actions, measures, and responsible parties related to each goal.

The committee continued to meet during 2009 and 2010, and the members provided information regarding the efforts their respective organizations have taken to meet the goals developed in 2006. The 2010 report, which is set forth in Exhibit A, contains an update detailing the actions taken by each entity to address the committee's recommendations.

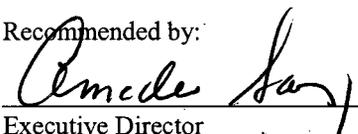
Transportation Code, Section 201.6011 requires the Texas Department of Transportation to update the International Trade Corridor Plan biennially and report to the presiding officer of each house of the legislature no later than December 1 of each even-numbered year. The plan must address implementation of the recommendations made by the committee.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the 2010 Border Trade Advisory Committee Report, as set out in Exhibit A, is accepted by the commission and will be further incorporated into the International Trade Corridor Plan as required by law.

Submitted and reviewed by:


Director, Transportation Planning
and Programming Division

Recommended by:


Executive Director

112496 NOV 18 10

Minute
Number

Date
Passed

Border Trade Advisory Committee Report

Amadeo Saenz, Jr., P.E., Executive Director
Texas Department of Transportation

November 2010



Submitted in Compliance with Sec. 201.6011. Transportation Code

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Overview

The Border Trade Advisory Committee (BTAC) was originally established in 2001 by Transportation Code, Sec. 201.114. Members of this committee are appointed by the Texas Transportation Commission. The current BTAC members can be found in Appendix A of this report. According to the Texas Transportation Code, "The committee shall define and develop a strategy and make recommendations to the commission and governor for addressing the highest priority border trade transportation challenges. In determining action to be taken on the recommendations, the commission shall consider the importance of trade with the United Mexican States, potential sources of infrastructure funding at border ports, and the value of trade activity in the department's districts adjacent to the border with the United Mexican States."

Goals

The BTAC has met several times since its formation, and identified four main goals. These are documented in the first BTAC report dated November 16, 2006. These goals are: 1) promoting the development of ample and expandable trade transportation corridors, 2) developing coordination mechanisms to foster trade between Mexico and Texas, 3) leveraging safety and security measures to enhance trade efficiencies, and 4) demonstrating the economic benefits of international trade at the national, state, and local levels. Strategies the committee formulated to address these goals are outlined below.

- Trade Transportation Corridors
 - Support major trade corridors
 - Develop policies to facilitate trade at both state and federal levels
- Coordination with Mexico
 - Coordinate with Mexico to ensure proper planning of trade corridors
 - Promote more efficient international border crossings
 - Promote cooperation with and understanding of U.S. policies
- Safety and Security Measures
 - Promote efficiencies at international border crossings
 - Develop international border crossings that take advantage of the latest technologies and procedures
 - Review the Presidential Permit policy to facilitate international bridge construction
 - Provide a balance between required inspections and efficient trade flow
- Economic Benefits of International Trade
 - Identify national, statewide and international benefits of trade

It is important to note that international trade must function within the parameters set at both the Federal and State levels. These two levels, while separate, are not totally independent. While some of the strategies developed by the BTAC are designed to be carried out at the state level, some of the issues that the

strategies address are beyond the control of the State of Texas and are the responsibility of various Federal agencies. Each specific proposal, along with its implementation actions, measures of success, and responsible party(ies) are presented in Appendix B of this report.

Status

Each BTAC member representing a governing body, as well as other agencies along the border, was asked to update the Office of the Secretary of State and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) on the efforts their organization has taken to meet the goals developed in 2006. These efforts have been compiled and analyzed in order to provide this November 2010 status report. A summary of these responses follows.

- The majority of responding members' efforts focused on U.S.-Mexico border crossing issues. Most respondents heavily emphasized supporting the construction of new international bridges, coordinating with Mexican transportation officials, and facilitating transportation studies at larger border crossings. These efforts include, but are not limited to:
 - Proposing the expansion of the Ysleta-Zaragoza Bridge in El Paso
 - Examining the possibility of constructing two new commuter bridges in the El Paso region
 - Constructing a second span of the Veterans International Bridge at Los Tomates
 - Organizing bi-national workshops with Mexican stakeholders
 - Coordinating studies to assess safety and environmental impacts of commercial trade between Texas and Mexico, border crossing operations, and regional transportation planning issues
- Studies involving the automatic measurement of northbound commercial freight border crossing times are currently underway at the following locations:
 - The Bridge of the Americas in El Paso, Texas
 - The Pharr-Reynosa International Bridge on the Rise in Pharr, Texas
- Truck traffic between Mexico and Texas is the main focus for most BTAC members. Some members, however, emphasize rail transportation for certain strategies. These members include:
 - The Port of Corpus Christi
 - The Midland Odessa Transportation Organization
 - Cameron County Regional Mobility Authority
- Both city and state level BTAC members have mutually beneficial relationships with their counterparts / corresponding agencies in Mexico. These Mexican agencies include:
 - Secretaria de Comunicaciones y Transportes (SCT) – Mexican Ministry of Communications and Transport

- Caminos y Puentes Federales de Ingresos y Servicios Conexos (CAPUFE) – Federal Roads, Bridges, and other Services Agency
- Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores (SRE) – Foreign Relations Secretary
- Instituto Municipal de Investigación y Planeación (IMIP) – Municipal Institute for Planning and Research in Ciudad Juárez
- City government officials
- The Mexican states of Tamaulipas, Nuevo Leon, Coahuila, and Chihuahua

Summaries of the responses submitted by BTAC governing bodies as well as other agencies along the border are listed in Appendix C of this report.

Challenges

Members of the BTAC were again asked to list challenges they face in regards to international trade. Previously submitted challenges are listed in Appendix B. Newly submitted challenges are listed below with the submitting member in parentheses:

- The effectiveness of many strategies and actions recommended by the BTAC depend on actions and collaboration from federal agencies (DHS, USDOT, USCBP). How can the BTAC recommendations more effectively influence federal policy (CBP, DHS, USDOT)? The “Successes” example below could serve as a model. (TTI – El Paso)
- Having to start from step one following the election of new Mexican officials is a challenge. (Hidalgo County MPO)
- The current economic challenges facing cities along the international border is another challenge. (Hidalgo County MPO)

Successes

Along with submitting specific challenges facing their organization/region, several BTAC members also provided examples of their successes. Previously submitted successes are listed in Appendix B. Newly submitted successes are listed below with the submitting member in parentheses:

- Border communities had an opportunity to participate in an initiative led by US Customs and Border Protection Commissioner Alan Bersin, to identify project ideas and concepts to improve secure mobility at the border (New Border Vision, http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/newsroom/highlights/bersin_ep.xml). Project concepts or initiatives from each border community (El Paso, Laredo, and McAllen) were presented face-to-face to the Commissioner, and selected for implementation. The success lies in the fact that community leaders, businesses, and government agencies had the opportunity to have a receptive dialog with CBP leadership, focused on searching for solutions to the community’s most pressing border crossing efficiency issues. (TTI – El Paso)

- One successful effort was when the Memorandum of Agreement was in place, the City of Reynosa, Mexico shared their street network, transportation projects plan (long & short term), land use, etc. (Hidalgo County MPO)
- Another success is that the Hidalgo County MPO has established a great working relationship with the City of Reynosa, Mexico. (Hidalgo County MPO)
- Multiple highway projects that are part of the La Entrada al Pacifico trade corridor have been and are being constructed in Mexico. (Midland-Odessa MPO / Midland-Odessa Transportation Alliance)
- The State of Coahuila officially joined the Ports to Plains Alliance (TxDOT-LBB)
- Multiple agencies have highlighted the success of the Coordinated Border Infrastructure program projects
- Eagle Pass/Piedras Negras is becoming the largest rail port on the southern border. Rail operations are continuous. Grupo Modelo Brewery has begun to export Corona. These export numbers will continue to increase. 80% rail 20% commercial carrier. Highway 57 corridor will continue to expand (Chad Foster).

Appendix A

Border Trade Advisory Committee (BTAC) Members

Metropolitan Transportation Organizations

- Laredo MPO, City of Laredo, Mayor Raul Salinas, Policy Board
- Hidalgo County MPO, City of Edinburg, Commissioner Joe Garza, Policy Board Chair
- Harlingen-San Benito MPO, City of San Benito, Mayor Joe Hernandez, Policy Board Chair
- Brownsville MPO, City of Brownsville, Mayor Pat Ahumada, Policy Board Chair
- El Paso MPO, Town of Horizon City, Mayor Walter Miller, Policy Board Chair
- Midland Odessa Transportation Organization, City of Odessa, Council member Dr. Jimmy Goates, Policy Board Chair

Ports of Entry

- Pharr-Reynosa International Bridge on the Rise – Jesse Medina, Bridge Director, City of Pharr
- Veterans International Bridge at Los Tomates, Free Trade Bridge at Los Indios, Gateway International Bridge – Pete Sepulveda, Jr., Director, International Bridge System, Cameron County
- McAllen-Hidalgo and Anzalduas International Bridges – Rigo Villarreal, Superintendent for McAllen-Hidalgo and Anzalduas Bridges
- B & M Bridge – Juan Pablo Sepulveda, Director of Operations, Brownsville & Matamoros Bridge Company
- Progreso International Bridge – Sam R. Sparks, President, B & P Bridge Company of Weslaco
- Starr-Camargo Bridge Company – Sam F. Vale, President
- Lake Falcon Dam Crossing, Lake Amistad Dam Crossing, Fort Hancock-El Porvenir Bridge, Fabens-Caseta Bridge, Bridge of the Americas – Ed Drusina, Commissioner, U.S. Section, International Boundary and Water Commission
- Ysleta-Zaragoza Bridge, Good Neighbor Bridge, Paso del Norte Bridge – Said Larbi-Cherif, P.E., International Bridges Director, City of El Paso
- Presidio Bridge – Michael O’Toole, Director, Project Development, Bridge Division, TxDOT

University Research Centers

- College of Engineering, Center for Transportation Research, The University of Texas at Austin - Robert Harrison, Deputy Director
- Center for International Intelligent Transportation Research, Texas Transportation Institute, Texas A & M University System, El Paso - Rafael M. Aldrete, Ph.D., Director

Regional Mobility Authorities

- Cameron County – David Alex, Chair

City and County Officials

- Del Rio - Mayor Efrain Valdez
- Eagle Pass - Mayor Chad Foster
- Zapata County - Judge Rosalva Guerra

Others

- Port of Corpus Christi - Judy Hawley, Port Commissioner
- International Bank of Commerce (IBC Bank) – Eddie Aldrete, Senior Vice President
- Port of San Antonio – Jorge Canavati, Vice President, Business Development
- Laredo Development Foundation – Roger Creery, Executive Director

Appendix B

Previously Identified Challenges and Successes

Challenges

- While the infrastructure needs on the U.S. side of the border are relatively well defined, there is a general lack of knowledge about infrastructure needs on the Mexican side of the border. Meeting common goals for international trade requires proper infrastructure planning on both sides of the border. (TxDOT Laredo District)
- The U.S. and Mexico have different financing mechanisms and timelines. With few exceptions, it is impermissible to use U.S. funds for infrastructure projects on the Mexican side of the border. (TxDOT Laredo District)
- More bi-national traffic studies at potential ports of entry are needed. (TxDOT Laredo District)
- The capabilities of Intelligent Transportation Systems along the southern border are very limited compared to those on the U.S. northern border. (Texas Transportation Institute - El Paso)
- Border crossing infrastructure on the Mexican side of the border is inadequate and insufficient. Also, funding needed to improve this infrastructure is extremely limited. (Texas Transportation Institute – El Paso)
- The interface between U.S. and Mexican agencies (particularly in agriculture) is somewhat slow and undependable. (Port of Corpus Christi)
- The on again/off again status of a pilot program allowing Mexican domiciled carriers to operate in the U.S. (and vice versa) complicates long term planning for efficient and seamless transportation. (Port of Corpus Christi)
- The Port of Corpus Christi lies outside the 25 mile commercial zone along the border where Mexican-domiciled trucks are allowed to operate in the U.S. Extending the commercial zone from the border to Corpus Christi, would make border crossing operations for freight destined for the city more efficient. (Port of Corpus Christi)
- Staffing at border crossing inspection facilities on the U.S. side is inadequate, specifically at the federal level. (City of El Paso)
- Expected economic growth in the State of Coahuila will require major infrastructure improvements in the region, especially along U.S. 57. Coahuila represents approximately 2.5% of the population of Mexico, but generates approximately 25% of the new jobs in that country. (City of Eagle Pass)

- Coordination between various local, state, federal, and Mexican entities and stakeholders in the bridge inspection process can be difficult. (TxDOT Bridge Division)

Successes

- The State of Texas, the State of Tamaulipas, and the Kansas City Southern Railway are currently working together to construct a new international rail bridge crossing in Laredo. This rail bridge will complement Laredo's outer loop multimodal corridor project, providing an alternative to crossing the border in the center of Laredo. (TxDOT Laredo District)
- TxDOT's Laredo District and the State of Nuevo Leon are working together on plans to build infrastructure between Monterrey, Laredo, and the Port of Corpus Christi. (TxDOT Laredo District)
- Stakeholders in the El Paso area have set up an interagency ad hoc committee to improve border crossing operations. TxDOT, the City of El Paso, the El Paso Metropolitan Planning Organization, Customs and Border Protection, and Ciudad Juárez will work together to analyze measures to reduce border wait times and expedite their implementation. (Texas Transportation Institute – El Paso)
- The Federal Highway Administration, TxDOT, and the Border Trade Alliance are funding two separate studies by the Texas Transportation Institute to automatically and accurately measure and collect border crossing times for commercial freight in El Paso and Pharr. (Texas Transportation Institute – College Station)
- Agricultural products from Texas to the Port of Lázaro Cardenas are expected to increase in volume, providing a more regular flow of both agricultural and food product traffic through the region. (Port of Corpus Christi)
- TxDOT has identified U.S. 77 as a priority and will update it interstate standards. (Port of Corpus Christi)
- Local officials in both the U.S. and Mexico have heavily emphasized coordination as both countries understand the importance of communication to efficient trade. (City of Eagle Pass)
- 55,000 new jobs have been created in the State of Coahuila. This is largely due to manufacturing plants moving into the region, such as the brand new freight liner assembly facility. (City of Eagle Pass)
- International exports from the Midland-Odessa area increased by nearly 200% between 2005 and 2006. (Midland Odessa Transportation Organization)
- The success of the West Texas Export Assistance Center has encouraged the U.S. Commercialization Office to open a new export assistance center

in El Paso and spurred the creation of the U.S.-Mexico Border District Export Council (California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas). (Midland Odessa Transportation Organization)

- TxDOT has established a bridge inspection schedule to effectively coordinate inspection efforts with Mexico. This schedule allows TxDOT district offices to coordinate bridge inspections with local officials, thus minimizing confusion and delays. (TxDOT Bridge Division)
- The second annual Border to Border Conference is scheduled to take place in November of 2008. This conference provides an opportunity for stakeholders to meet and discuss international border crossing issues along the Texas-Mexico border. (Hidalgo County Metropolitan Planning Organization)
- Cameron County, the City of Brownsville, and the Cameron County Regional Mobility Authority (RMA) have been working with the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) as well as officials from the State of Tamaulipas and the Secretaria de Comunicaciones y Transportes (SCT – Mexican Ministry of Communications and Transport) on the “West Rail Project.” This project is proposed as an alternative to constructing a series of grade separations along the existing UPRR route through residential and downtown areas of Brownsville, Texas and Matamoros, Mexico. (Cameron County)
- Cameron County has been working with federal, state, and local officials on both sides of the border to construct a second span of the Veterans International Bridge at Los Tomates. Cameron County and the SCT have agreed to begin construction on this project in April of 2009. (Cameron County)
- Cameron County, the City of Harlingen, and the Cameron County RMA have been working with the UPRR to relocate the switching operations from downtown Harlingen to the Olmito switchyard in North Brownsville. A proposal from the UPRR is currently under review by these entities and a Memorandum of Understanding is being developed that will outline each entity’s responsibilities. (Cameron County)

Members submitted several other success stories. These successes, although not the direct result of actions taken by committee members, are important because of their positive impact on transportation along the border and are listed below:

- The low cost, wallet-sized Passport Card (often referred to as the PASS Card) provides an alternative to the U.S. Passport. This PASS Card is valid at international border crossings and meets the requirements of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI) for cross-border travel at U.S. land and sea ports of entry.

- In 2007, Congressman Ciro Rodriguez and U.S. Senator Kay Bailey Hutchinson introduced H.R. 4309 and S. 2425 to study the scope and impact of growing delays at all U.S. land ports of entry.
- In 2008, Congressman Silvestre Reyes introduced H.R. 5662 which would fully staff all U.S. ports of entry and invest \$5 billion in infrastructure at all U.S. land border crossings.
- The General Services Administration has requested a list of small-ticket (less than \$2 million) recommendations for ports of entry. This list will serve as a catalog for future potential border crossing improvements.

Finally, realizing how important it is to work hand in hand with Mexican stakeholders who share common trade goals, the BTAC has asked for participation from Mexican entities. Last year, the Texas Office of the Secretary of State invited representatives from the Asociación Mexicana de Distribuidores de Automotores, A.C. - AMDA (Mexican Automotive Dealers Association) to update committee members on the most important challenges they face. As a result, the BTAC members agreed to support AMDA's objectives, which include the following actions:

"The members of the BTAC are willing to collaborate with the Mexican Automotive Dealers Association (Asociación Mexicana de Distribuidores de Automotores, A.C. – AMDA), as well as to petition to the pertinent authorities and parties when outside of their scope, the following points:

- A) SAFETY – exchange information between appropriate parties to prevent stolen cars from crossing the border in either direction.
- B) ENVIRONMENT – exchange information and advance efforts to coordinate inspections, so that vehicles which do not meet U.S. emission standards are not allowed to circulate in Mexico either.
- C) TRADE – exchange information and data regarding vehicle sales, imports, and exports along the border."

Appendix C

Border Trade Advisory Committee (BTAC) Strategies

A. Trade Transportation Corridors

Promote the development of ample and expandable trade transportation corridors.

1. Strategy: Support the development of major identified trade corridors to assist the expansion of Texas' international trade. Efficient multimodal trade corridors in Texas with connections to the Mexican transportation system will foster Texas trade with Mexico and other regions of the world.

Implementation Action 1.1: Develop consensus and support for international trade corridors.

Measure 1.1: Local delegations demonstrate broad support through testimony at Texas Transportation Commission meetings/hearings.

Responsible Parties 1.1: Local.

Implementation Action 1.2: Develop consensus and support for all major trade corridors.

Measure 1.2: Local delegations demonstrate broad support for future Texas transportation projects.

Responsible Parties 1.2: Local.

Implementation Action 1.3: Develop local support for public-private partnerships to fund international trade corridors.

Measure 1.3: Sufficient financial support to accelerate international trade corridor development.

Responsible Parties 1.3: Local, state.

2. Strategy: Develop policies to facilitate trade at both state and federal levels. Trade policies supported by adequate transportation infrastructure will stimulate the flow of goods in the state and improve existing commercial corridors.

Implementation Action 2.1: Develop common measures of efficiency to reflect trade throughput at all trade corridors to serve as a basis for establishing funding priorities.

Measure 2.1: Completion and adoption of measures by state and federal entities.

Responsible Parties 2.1: Local, state, federal.

B. Coordination with Mexico

Develop coordination mechanisms to foster trade between Texas and Mexico.

3. Strategy: Coordinate effectively with Mexico to ensure the planning and development of through trade corridors. Formal and informal coordination efforts with Mexican federal and state government agencies are important to ensure the development of efficient U.S.-Mexico trade corridors.

Implementation Action 3.1: Enhance bi-state multimodal corridor planning efforts through coordinated workshops – Short Term.

Measure 3.1: Number of workshops held for high-level bi-state multimodal corridor planning.

Responsible Parties 3.1: State, Mexico.

Implementation Action 3.2: Develop prioritized bi-national local improvement plans.

Measure 3.2: Number of prioritized bi-national local improvement plans developed.

Responsible Parties 3.2: Local, Mexico.

4. Strategy: Promote more efficient international border crossings. Existing international border crossing procedures and infrastructure should be examined on a continuing basis to identify efficiencies that can be gained by coordinating with Mexican stakeholders. Future international border crossing plans should be developed in close coordination with Mexican and U.S. stakeholders to promote the efficient use of the latest technologies, procedures, and infrastructure on both sides of the border.

Implementation Action 4.1: Harmonize private and public sector activities and schedules to achieve maximum effective use of available international border crossing infrastructure.

Measure 4.1: Reduced average delay at all international border crossings.

Responsible Parties 4.1: Federal.

5. Strategy: Promote cooperation with and understanding of U.S. policies. Constant changes in U.S. security and safety policies impact the international border crossing process and the overall trade between Texas and Mexico. It is important to support cooperation efforts with Mexican government agencies and the trade community so that new rules are understood and their impact on international trade is minimized.

Implementation Action 5.1: Organize and promote attendance to local workshops for presentations by federal and state regulatory bodies, to include extensive question and answer sessions with private sector and trade communities.

Measure 5.1: Number of workshops and attendance.

Responsible Parties 5.1: Federal.

C. Safety and Security Measures

Leverage safety and security measures to enhance trade efficiencies.

6. Strategy: Promote efficiencies at international border crossings. By evaluating, recommending, and implementing various procedures, efficiencies can be gained throughout international border crossings. Some of the efforts that have been discussed include eliminating the duplication of the vehicle safety inspections, combining security facilities, implementing interoperable technology, modifying hours of operation, increasing staffing levels, and applying demand management techniques like off-peak incentives and value pricing.

Implementation Action 6.1: Expand the use of the FAST (Free and Secure Trade) program, and the proposed express lane at the Department of Public Safety (DPS) inspection stations.

Measure 6.1: Number of local stakeholders willing to participate in and promote FAST and DPS programs.

Responsible Parties 6.1: Local.

Implementation Action 6.2: Evaluate the design of international border crossings and local access points to ensure efficient use of FAST lanes – Short Term.

Measure 6.2: Crossing time for FAST trucks compared to non-FAST trucks.

Responsible Parties 6.2: Federal.

Implementation Action 6.3: Evaluate operations at existing international border crossings to ensure they are performing at optimum efficiencies.

Measure 6.3: Commercial vehicle crossing time.

Responsible Parties 6.3: Federal.

7. Strategy: Develop international border crossings that take advantage of the latest technologies and procedures. New procedures and technologies significantly impact the way international border crossing inspections are carried out and therefore the infrastructure needs at international border crossings. Planned international border crossings should be designed with enough flexibility to benefit from the latest technology and expedite the design and construction process, as well as to make it easy to change in the future when new technologies are implemented.

Implementation Action 7.1: Work with the General Services Administration and other U.S. federal agencies to develop flexible user-oriented configurations and practices for new or rehabilitated international border crossings.

Measure 7.1: Conduct joint workshops with federal officials intended to achieve a modified approach to international border crossing design.

Responsible Parties 7.1: Federal.

8. Strategy: Review Presidential Permit policy to facilitate international bridge construction. Current Presidential Permit procedures to construct or modify international bridges are lengthy and difficult to obtain. A streamlined procedure will smooth the progress of any required modification to take advantage of new technologies or processes.

Implementation Action 8.1: Develop and coordinate with bi-national federal officials an approach to facilitate improvements to existing international border crossings.

Measure 8.1: Revised procedures for national consideration.

Responsible Parties 8.1: Local.

Implementation Action 8.2: Coordinate permitting process for new international border crossings.

Measure 8.2: Time required obtaining permits.

Responsible Parties 8.2: Local.

9. Strategy: Provide a balance between required inspections and efficient trade flow.

Implementation Action 9.1: Ensure proper staffing, resource management and appropriations for new international border crossings or expansion of existing international border crossings that will allow for adequate inspections yet ensure efficient trade flow.

Measure 9.1: Commercial vehicle crossing time and security level.

Responsible Parties 9.1: State, federal.

D. Economic Benefits of International Trade

Demonstrate the economic benefits of international trade at the national, state, and local levels.

10. Strategy: Identify national, statewide, and international benefits of trade. Increased land commercial trade not only benefits the local international border crossing where the transaction takes place but also has a ripple effect that benefits the state and the nation as a whole. The Alameda Corridor Project in California is an example of how a trade corridor improvement can benefit not only the region but the whole nation.

Implementation Action 10.1: Review and implement previous recommendations to quantify local, regional, and national benefits of improved trade at the Texas-Mexico border.

Measure 10.1: Identify which actions must occur at the state or federal level to provide trade benefits.

Responsible Parties 10.1: State.

Implementation Action 10.2: Perform economic impact analysis of trade on local, state and national levels.

Measure 10.2: Complete economic impact analysis of trade.

Responsible Parties 10.2: State.

Implementation Action 10.3: Establish an advocacy program led by the four U.S. border governors to promote the benefits of trade efficiencies at the state, national and international level.

Measure 10.3: Success of advocacy program in Washington, D.C.

Responsible Parties 10.3: State.

Appendix D

Border Trade Advisory Committee (BTAC) Status Update Matrix

*Note: Each implementation action item in this matrix contains the wording/terminology as submitted by each responding member of the BTAC.

Strategy 1: Support the development of major identified trade corridors to assist the expansion of Texas' international trade. Efficient multimodal trade corridors in Texas with connections to the Mexican transportation system will foster Texas trade with Mexico and other regions of the world.

Implementation Action 1.1 – Develop consensus and support for international trade corridors.

<p>El Paso Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In December 2007, FHWA approved the TransBorder 2035 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) to build several transportation projects to improve the regional and international connectivity between Mexico and El Paso, including the Northeast Bypass, Cesar Chavez-Border Highway, the Border Highway West Extension, and a new highway to connect the Tornillo-Guadalupe port of entry (POE) to I-10. • Approved feasibility studies to examine the need for future POEs in El Paso and Socorro, Texas, and a new POE in Sunland Park, New Mexico. • In the El Paso 2035 MTP, there is the construction of the Tornillo-Guadalupe commercial POE that is located in Tornillo, Texas. It is currently being constructed and should be completed by 2011. • An additional bridge at the Ysleta-Zaragoza POE is to be constructed with six commercial lanes including a Free and Secure Trade (FAST) lane. The existing commercial and passenger bridges will be used for passenger and dedicated commuter lane usage. Completion of the project is expected by 2015.
<p>City of El Paso</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worked with other entities to place a dedicated commuter lane at the Stanton Street Bridge and at the Ysleta-Zaragoza Bridge. • Helped Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to delineate the commercial bridge in order to provide a separate FAST lane.
<p>Port of Corpus Christi</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly attends the I-69 Alliance and the U.S. 77 Coalition meetings. • The chairman of the port commission is also the chairman of the Corpus Christi MPO. • Other port commissioners regularly participate in BTAC and other regional transportation initiatives such as TEX 21 and the Border Trade Alliance.
<p>Midland Odessa Transportation Organization (MOTOR)</p>	<p>Attended meetings in August 2008 with officials from the City of Chihuahua, the State of Chihuahua, including Chihuahua Governor Reyes Baeza, federal officials from Mexico, as well as, U.S. Congressman Mike Conaway, regarding the development of the La Entrada al Pacifico Trade Corridor.</p>
<p>TxDOT – ELP</p>	<p>La Entrada al Pacifico Study - The study was finished and no final presentation of study results was taken to the public due to the desired project scope being unfeasible. Other various smaller projects (like turn lanes or climbing lanes) were identified for future implementation. This study was conducted out of TxDOT - TPP. Peggy Thurin in TPP was the</p>

	lead on the project study.
Brownsville MPO	Coordinated with the Harlingen-San Benito MPO on the ARRA funding application for the Olmito Switchyard (rail) project. Coordinated with the Harlingen-San Benito MPO on Cameron County Hazardous Cargo Route Study.
Corpus Christi MPO	Hosted BTAC meeting in March 2010.

Implementation Action 1.2 – Develop consensus and support for all major trade corridors.

<p>El Paso MPO</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In August 2007, the Transportation Policy Board adopted the Mission 2035 Metropolitan Transportation Plan that sets the foundation for funding future transportation projects. • Actively supports the use of pass-through financing to build the Inner Loop project (Spur 601). The Inner Loop project has the support of Fort Bliss officials, and the entire Texas congressional delegation.
<p>City of El Paso</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • February 2007, created a regional mobility authority. • Proposing expanding the Ysleta-Zaragoza commercial POE. This proposal will add six to ten commercial lanes to facilitate the implementation of a FAST lane in each direction. The existing commercial bridge will become a passenger bridge to include a Secure Electronic Network for Travelers' Rapid Inspection (SENTRI) lane as well as a transit SENTRI lane. Completion for this project is estimated by 2015. • Also proposing building a new secured travelers POE between the Bridge of the Americas and the Ysleta-Zaragoza POE which will promote the crossing of pre-cleared travelers. This will allow for better distribution of vehicles which would reduce wait times and improve air quality.
<p>TxDOT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BTEP and the El Paso District staff visited with officials from the State of Chihuahua to discuss the La Entrada al Pacifico trade corridor. • Involved in various meetings regarding the development of U.S. 281 and U.S. 77. Both transportation corridors are being improved as soon as funding becomes available.
<p>Cameron County RMA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively supports all local, state, national, and international initiatives dealing with highway, rail, and port development projects. • Provides testimony when necessary in support of beneficial development projects.
<p>Cameron County</p>	<p>Actively supports all local, state, and federal initiatives that pertain to the development of trade corridors. Owning three international bridges, Cameron County understands the importance highway infrastructure brings to trade and economic development.</p>
<p>Port of Corpus Christi</p>	<p>The Port coordinates with the Corpus Christi MPO to provide strong representation in regional transportation programs such as the I-69, TEX 21, and U.S. 77 Coalition and also regularly initiates strategy sessions with regional partners such as Laredo, Valley, and San Antonio organizations.</p>

Implementation Action 1.3 –Develop local support for public-private partnerships to fund international trade corridors.

<p>El Paso MPO</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The El Paso MPO is working together with TxDOT on an El Paso Regional Ports of Entry Operations Plan study to examine traffic efficiency and POE facility needs system-wide within the El Paso MPO study area. This study is to be completed by May 2011. • The City of El Paso together with the El Paso MPO has implemented Transportation Reinvestment Zones (TRZs) that allow property tax dollars within the zones to be preserved for transportation investments. Within the 2008 CMP there is TRZ funding programs in the Mission 2035 MTP for two direct connectors on Loop 375 (Americas) at IH 10. Other projects on Loop 375 are programmed in the Mission 2035 MTP to utilize TRZ funding. Additional TRZ funding will come into the region as they accumulate. A combination of TRZ, Category 2, Coordinated Border Infrastructure (CBI) and ARRA funds were authorized for this project. • The El Paso Regional Ports of Entry Operations Plan study sponsored by TxDOT will examine the Commuter international POE that is being proposed. This proposed POE will promote the use of dedicated commuter lanes and high occupancy toll lanes to reduce congestion and commuter wait times at the Bridge of the Americas and Ysleta-Zaragoza Bridge. This project is expected to begin construction sometime between 2016 and 2025.
<p>City of El Paso</p>	<p>The federal government is recommending the formation of public-private partnerships which the City of El Paso is hoping to venture in with the proposed new POE.</p>
<p>Port of Corpus Christi</p>	<p>The Port and Corpus Christi MPO assembled a local delegation which was successful in an effort to exempt the region south of Refugio from the Comprehensive Development Agreement moratorium.</p>
<p>MOTOR</p>	<p>Actively encouraging support for state and federal funding for upgrading the existing South Orient Rail Line in Texas, and development of the La Entrada al Pacifico Trade Corridor.</p>
<p>Harlingen-San Benito MPO</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On June 2009 the HSBMPO revised its 2005-2030 MTP to reflect US 77 Improvements within the HSBMPO, which will be funded through the I-69 Comprehensive Development Agreement. • On December 2009 the HSBMPO had its 2010-2035 MTP update and the US 77 Improvements from the 2005-2030 MTP were reflected. • The HSBMPO is currently making revisions to the 2011-2014 TIP due November 1, 2010 to include the US 77 Improvements and will be presented to the Policy board for action on October 13, 2010.

Strategy 2: Develop policies to facilitate trade at both state and federal levels. Trade policies supported by adequate transportation infrastructure will stimulate the flow of goods in the state and improve existing commercial corridors.

Implementation Action 2.1 – Develop common measures of efficiency to reflect trade throughput at all trade corridors to serve as a basis for establishing funding priorities.

El Paso MPO	Actively working with local, state, and federal officials to ensure the El Paso region’s transportation plans meet all federal, state, and local objectives.
City of El Paso	Working with state and federal officials to ensure the City’s transportation plans meet all federal, state, and local objectives.
Port of Corpus Christi	<p>Regularly monitors U.S. Department of Transportation data to identify trends and make adjustments to bottlenecks particularly related to border bridge, rail, and vehicular traffic along the border.</p> <p>Active participants in the “South Coastal Freight Stakeholders Focus Group.”</p>
International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member of the permitting approval process for federal Presidential Permits for international crossings. • Posted requirements for the permit application process on IBWC website. • Currently focusing on expediting the permit review process.
Cameron County	Has played an active role in trade organizations, such as the Border Trade Alliance, that work towards the facilitation of legitimate commerce and trade.
TxDOT – Office of International Relations	<p>TxDOT is installing on-going border crossing travel time ITS measurement at the principal commercial border crossings for commercial trucks entering in the state. These systems will give close to real time border crossing information to business and industry, bridge operators and inspection services which can be used to optimize traffic at various Ports of Entry. This data will be collected as one component of a broader system in order to better analyze the performance of the U.S. / Mexico border transportation system. The data will be archived for mid- and long-term reporting of crossing times and delays. These studies will supply benchmark data against which to measure any improvements to border crossing infrastructure or processes. Systems are installed in Pharr, Bridge of the Americas in El Paso and are in progress at Laredo World Trade and Colombia Bridges and in Brownsville at Veterans Bridge. Equipment to monitor and record crossing times will be installed at the Zaragoza border crossing in El Paso in the coming year. The systems are internet based and are managed out of the El Paso Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) offices. The studies are cooperative efforts with FHWA, CBP, local stakeholders, with TTI as the contractor for the studies. A prototype webtool will be developed so that the data can be used and viewed by the larger community involved with international freight movements between the U.S. and Mexico.</p>

Strategy 3: Coordinate effectively with Mexico to ensure the planning and development of through trade corridors. Formal and informal coordination efforts with Mexican federal and state government agencies are important to ensure the development of efficient U.S.-Mexico trade corridors.

Implementation Action 3.1 – Enhance bi-state multimodal corridor planning efforts through coordinated workshops.

<p>El Paso MPO</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The El Paso MPO coordinates all of its transportation planning efforts with planning officials in the City of Juarez, Mexico on a daily basis. • Established a respective and long standing relationship with transportation officials at the highest levels of municipal, state, and federal government in Mexico. • Participating together with TXDOT on an El Paso Regional Ports of Entry Operations plan study to examine traffic efficiency and POE facility needs system-wide within the El Paso MPO Study area to be completed by May 2011
<p>City of El Paso</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has been coordinating all transportation planning efforts with planning officials in the City of Juarez, Mexico. • Has also established relationships with transportation officials at the highest levels of municipal, state, and federal levels. • Has assisted and participated with TXDOT in El Paso Regional Ports of Entry Operations plan study to examine traffic efficiency and POE facility needs systemwide within the El Paso MPO Study area. • Held a successful bi-national Road Safety Assessment workshop with the FHWA.
<p>TxDOT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TxDOT coordinated workshops addressed during various meetings that include the bi-national Bridges and Border Crossings meetings and the JWC. Additionally, TxDOT participated in logistics workshops in January 2006, January 2007, and October 2007. • The FHWA is undertaking a Freight Performance Measurement initiative aimed at measuring travel times in freight-significant corridors, including border waiting times at major U.S. land border crossings. TxDOT and TTI are participating in this initiative. Once hard data is available for crossing times, it will be possible to measure the success of improvements that are implemented at the border. • TxDOT is involved in the FHWA/TTI border crossing time study. • There have been meetings between the Laredo District and the states of Tamaulipas and Nuevo Leon to discuss the planning efforts taking place with multimodal corridors, the Laredo outer loop project, and the Port to Port Toll Only Truck Project.

Port of Corpus Christi	On a quarterly basis (approximately) the Port and appropriate officials from Laredo meet to plan support measures related to the World Trade Bridge and the Laredo-Columbia Solidarity Bridge.
Hidalgo County MPO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Hidalgo County MPO hosted a meeting with Juan Jose Erazo, the current Director of Analysis and Intermodal Projects for the General Directors Office of the Secretaria de Comunicaciones y Transportes (SCT – Mexican Ministry of Communications and Transport) in Mexico City. • At this meeting, Mr. Erazo gave a presentation on highway development in Mexico and the proposed outer loop in the City of Reynosa. • Follow-up to previous item - The HCMPO and the City of Reynosa, Mexico, signed a Memorandum of Agreement to coordinate and share transportation information. The MOA expired when new government took office.
MOTOR	Actively working with the Midland-Odessa Transportation Alliance on development of the La Entrada al Pacifico Trade Corridor, including regular updates between the States of Chihuahua, Sinaloa, and Texas, through workshops and annual planning conference.

Implementation Action 3.2 – Develop prioritized bi-national local improvement plans.

El Paso MPO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently working with public and private sector stakeholders in the El Paso and Mexico region to develop a comprehensive plan designed to improve the efficient movement of people and commerce through all POEs in the region. • The El Paso MPO, Juarez Instituto Municipal de Investigacion y Planeacion (IMIP – Municipal Institute for Planning and Research in Ciudad Juárez), CBP, and TTI are implementing a system at the Bridge of the Americas to accurately and automatically measure commercial freight border crossing times using radio frequency identification (RFID) technology. This data will not only help in reducing wait times but also help the CBP in assessing their staffing and operational needs. • Co-organized the bi-national Bus Rapid Transit Workshop in El Paso, an initiative aimed at promoting the implementation of rapid transit in the El Paso region, including a cross border rapid transit service.
City of El Paso	The City of El Paso is working with several local private and public entities and several Juárez entities to develop a comprehensive plan on expediting the movement of people and goods through the El Paso POEs in a timely manner.
TxDOT	The El Paso District coordinated multiple meetings between local, state, and federal agencies on both sides of the border in order to discuss current and future operations in regards to bi-national trade in the region.
Port of Corpus Christi	During the summer of 2007, port officials and local agricultural exporters traveled to Monterrey to discuss rail transportation issues related to Texas exports through Mexico to Asia.
	Participate within all the “Texas-Mexico Trade Competitiveness

	Conferences” as prepared though Texas A&M International University (F. Barry Lawrence, Ph.D.).
Hidalgo County MPO	The Hidalgo County MPO is hoping to move forward on a signed agreement with the City of Reynosa that will continue a mutually beneficial relationship in regards to developing transportation projects and sharing the knowledge and technology to do so.
Cameron County	Works very closely with the Cameron County RMA, the City of Matamoros, Mexico, the State of Tamaulipas and the Secretaria de Comunicaciones y Transportes (SCT – Mexican Ministry of Communications and Transport) to plan and implement transportation infrastructure projects.
TxDOT – Office of International Relations	<p><u>Regional Border Master Plans</u></p> <p>57% of border ports of entry are over capacity and 67% of the buildings are at or over capacity and in need of modernization according to a CBP assessment done 5 years ago. As is the case for many agencies, CBP does not receive the appropriations necessary to address all of these issues. Since not all improvements can be addressed in the near term, Regional Border Master Plans facilitate binational planning and regional priorities for improvements at the border crossings and the needed transportation links, as well as the possibility of new crossings. TxDOT’s Regional Border Master Plan Study for the Laredo District and the bordering states of Tamaulipas, Nuevo León, and Coahuila has received widespread backing and participation from local stakeholders and is well underway. Funding for the Pharr District and bordering Tamaulipas is being identified. A more comprehensive study is underway in El Paso. The Department of State and its sister agency in Mexico are urging the U.S. and Mexican border states to complete their Regional Border Master Plans so that Federal investments at border crossings align with the priorities of the regions.</p>
TxDOT – PHR	Cameron & Hidalgo County freight Origin & Destination Study. This is funded by a tier 2 federal grant and matching district funds. We will be concentrating on freight movements from our three designated international land ports, the port of Brownsville, the rail switching yards, and airports. Phase 1 which roads are being used for destinations within the two counties, Phase 2 which roads are used for transport out of the counties. Study starts in Nov 2010 and is scheduled to complete in mid 2011.
Midland-Odessa MPO / Midland-Odessa Transportation Alliance	<p>Multiple highway segments on the La Entrada al Pacifico corridor and connecting roads in Mexico have been improved, as a result of coordination among agencies in Mexico and the United States, including the following between Chihuahua City and the Port of Topolobampo:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expansion of bridge between Aldama and the City of Chihuahua from 2 to 4 lanes • Paving of 2 miles of roadway between San Rafael and Bahuichivo • Paving of 20 miles of new roadway from the La Entrada Corridor connecting to the community of Basaseachi • Paving of 1.5 miles of new roadway from the La Entrada corridor to Sisoguichi • Construction of rural roadway from Bahuichivo through Cerocahui

	<p style="text-align: center;">to Urique</p> <p>Improvements have also been made between Chihuahua City and the cities of Delicias and Parral (south of Chihuahua City) that will improve access to manufacturing facilities in those cities.</p> <p>The State of Sinoloa (where the Port of Topolobampo is located) has made the following improvements on the La Entrada al Pacifico corridor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Widening of the highway from San Blas to El Fuerte to 40 feet, including 12 foot lanes and 8 foot shoulders • Widening of 5 miles of highway from El Fuerte to Choix to 40 feet in 2009 and another 5 miles was scheduled for widening in 2010 <p>In addition, approximately \$22 million (US) have been allocated for construction of paved roadway from Choix to the Sinaloa/Chihuahua state line. These funds will pay for half of the remaining 30 miles of roadway needed to complete the Sinaloa side of the project through Copper Canyon.</p> <p>The States of Sinoloa and Chihuahua have plans to invest \$200 million (USD) to complete the roadway improvements to the Sinoloa/Chihuahua state line.</p> <p>Significant progress is being made on improvements at the Port of Topolobampo that will facilitate increased marine traffic from Asia to the La Entrada al Pacifico corridor.</p>
TxDOT – LBB	<p>The State of Coahuila officially joined the Ports to Plains Alliance on October 14, 2010. Coahuila is currently taking bids on road improvements between Acuna and Torreon. This highway connects with a new road through the mountains between Torreon and Durango, connecting to Mazatlan. When completed in approximately two years, it will reduce the drive time from Mazatlan to Torreon from 9.5 hours to 5 hours.</p>

Strategy 4: Promote more efficient international border crossings. Existing international border crossing procedures and infrastructure should be examined on a continuing basis to identify efficiencies that can be gained by coordinating with Mexican stakeholders. Future international border crossing plans should be developed in close coordination with Mexican and U.S. stakeholders to promote the efficient use of the latest technologies, procedures, and infrastructure on both sides of the border.

Implementation Action 4.1 – Harmonize private and public sector activities and schedules to achieve maximum effective use of available international border crossing infrastructure.

<p>El Paso MPO</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Commuter international POE is being proposed and examined through the El Paso Regional Ports of Entry Operations plan study. This POE was mentioned earlier in Implementation Action 1.3. • In addition the El Paso Regional Ports of Entry Operations plan study will examine another tolled passenger POE that is being considered within the Sunland Park city limits. This POE will help relieve passenger vehicle traffic at the Paso Del Norte POE (which has the third highest volume of passenger vehicle arrivals in the region.) This project is being studied and is to be completed by 2015.
<p>City of El Paso</p>	<p>Proposing to expand the existing Ysleta-Zaragoza Bridge and construct a new secured traveler POE that would include dedicated commercial Free and Secure Trade (FAST) lanes.</p>
<p>TxDOT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducted a travel time study aimed at analyzing passenger and freight flows in the roadway network within a 2-5 mile area of all the international border crossings in Texas and identified bottlenecks for U.S. bound and Mexico bound traffic. The study results are posted on TxDOT's web site. • Coordination with the General Services Administration (GSA), City of Laredo, and the State of Texas helped secure funding of a toll booth expansion project at the World Trade Bridge to reduce delays.
<p>Cameron County RMA</p>	<p>Collaborates with a Mexican corporation that fosters trade between Texas and Mexico through a public/private business relationship.</p>
<p>Port of Corpus Christi</p>	<p>Port officials met three times in 2007 with CODEFRONT (Corporación para el Desarrollo de la Zona Fronteriza de Nuevo León – Corporation for the Development of the Nuevo Leon Border Region) officials from Nuevo Leon to plan ways to expedite Texas exports to Mexico at the Laredo-Columbia Solidarity Bridge.</p> <p>Attending monthly meetings within the “Free Trade Alliance-Mexico Group” which promotes trade between Mexico and the United States.</p>

<p>TTI – El Paso</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently conducting research projects aimed at measuring border crossing times for freight at the Bridge of the Americas and the Pharr - Reynosa International Bridge on the Rise. RFID equipment has been deployed at BOTA with FHWA funding with readers in El Paso and Ciudad Juarez. Similar systems are being deployed at Pharr and Laredo with TxDOT funding and at Nogales with Arizona DOT funding. The crossing times are being measured and relayed in real time, with updates every 15 minutes. The BOTA crossing times are available to the public at http://eptraffic.com. • Conducting research on the application of wireless technologies (Bluetooth) currently used at the Canadian border to measure passenger vehicle border crossing time at El Paso's passenger and pedestrian border crossings. • Participates in the El Paso MPO Port Improvement Committee on Border Crossing Improvements. • TTI in collaboration with the City of El Paso International Bridges Department and Promofront, the Mexican concessionaire of the Zaragoza POE, has an ongoing pilot to measure passenger vehicle crossing times and volumes at the Zaragoza POE in El Paso. The pilot is based on Bluetooth technology and has showed positive results. Funding is being sought to expand the Pilot into a formal deployment of technology to measure and relay crossing times to the public and border agencies. • Funded by Federal Highway Administration, the first phase of a system that monitors wait times of commercial vehicles through Radio Frequency identification (RFID) tagging of commercial vehicles has been established at Bridge of the Americas. FHWA has incorporated more funding to add additional readers at the BOTA commercial facility. • TTI has been participating with regional stakeholders in the El Paso Region Model Border Port Initiative, coordinated by the Paso Del Norte Group. The objective of the initiative is to prepare a proposal to US Customs and Border Protection for a Model Border Port. • TTI is conducting a feasibility assessment for the deployment of the Universal Freight Shuttle System, an advanced automated container transport concept, in El Paso and Ciudad Juarez. The project is a new approach to reduce congestion and increase the safe and environmentally sound movement of freight across the border. For this assessment, TTI is collaborating with the El Paso Regional Development Corporation, the City of El Paso, the government of Ciudad Juarez, and private sector stakeholders. • TTI is assisting El Paso County to manage its Secure Border Trade project, a project aimed at securing and monitoring cargo moved by drayage trucks from its point of origin in Ciudad Juarez to its destination in El Paso, using a combination of high tech hardware and next generation intelligent software. TTI is currently assisting the County in the procurement process to select the contractor that will implement the system.
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IBWC	Willing to use IBWC processes to help gather together and expedite projects to reduce delay at international border crossings.
Cameron County	Works hand in hand with their counterparts in Mexico on the day-to-day operations at each international border crossing in the region as well as long term planning for future international bridges.
TxDOT – ELP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Port of Entry (POE) Operations Plan (excerpt from Cambridge's report)- The objective of the El Paso Regional Ports of Entry Operations Plan (Operations Plan) is to review all existing ports of entry within the El Paso region, analyze how they currently function, and develop recommendations to improve cross-border mobility. A critical component to developing the Operations Plan involves stakeholder outreach and public involvement to ensure that all interested groups in the region, including both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border, are actively engaged in the planning, development, and implementation of the Operations Plan. Early in the study, prior to beginning the technical tasks of screening projects, evaluating improvement scenarios, and developing recommendations, the project team initiated a three-tiered public outreach process. The three activity areas, conducted throughout spring 2010, included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional public opinion survey – A random sample of 1,000 residents from the U.S. counties and Mexican municipalities that comprise the El Paso border region to understand public attitudes and perceptions concerning the region's border crossing needs; • Targeted interviews/focus groups – A series of 10 facilitated group discussions with targeted members of the local business community, manufacturers, freight shippers and carriers, and neighborhood residents; and • Public meetings – Six open house-style meetings distributed across the region from Fabens to Santa Teresa, allowing one-on-one conversations with participants as well as a group question and answer session. • The objectives of the public outreach activities were to educate the public about the purpose of the Plan; define critical issues, needs, and impacts related to the region's border crossings; and establish a comprehensive set of project solutions and evaluation criteria for subsequent screening. In conjunction with these activities, press releases, a project web site, calendar announcements, and other media strategies were used to inform people about the Plan's initiation and milestones. • This overview summarizes our approach for each initial public outreach activity and compiles the key themes of the comments we received. The project team will use this information to identify and screen operations improvement alternatives and develop recommendations that address critical regional needs and issues. Following the technical evaluation phase, the project team will conduct a second round of public meetings in the fall 2010. The purpose of these meetings will be to review initial findings and recommendations from the technical analysis. After receiving additional public input, the project team will finalize the Operations Plan recommendations by the end of 2010. (This study is being lead by TxDOT-TTA.)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bridge of the Americas (BOTA) Study - TxDOT - El Paso District Staff attended in 2009 coordination meetings for Bridge of the Americas (BOTA) study. Study was suspended pending outcome of new TTA's POE Study.
Laredo MPO and City of Laredo	<p>There are on-going discussions regarding a 5th international vehicle bridge and a 2nd international railroad bridge.</p> <p>The City has begun discussions with TxDOT, GSA, and Border Protections regarding a proposed bus processing facility that would handle tour buses. This facility would be located at Bridge 2 and have a safe, secure area with comfort facilities for passengers to use while the buses and passengers are processed.</p> <p>The City, with MPO coordination, added 7 new toll booths at the World Trade Bridge.</p>
Brownsville MPO / Cameron County RMA	<p>East Loop project to be constructed – environmental studies underway, construction should start within four years. This road will provide a new connection from the Veteran's International Bridge at Los Tomates to the Port of Brownsville. It will also improve access to the airport and foreign trade zones.</p>

Strategy 5: Promote cooperation with and understanding of U.S. policies. Constant changes in U.S. security and safety policies impact the international border crossing process and the overall trade between Texas and Mexico. It is important to support cooperation efforts with Mexican government agencies and the trade community so that new rules are understood and their impact on international trade is minimized.

Implementation Action 5.1 – Organize and promote attendance to local workshops for presentations by federal and state regulatory bodies, to include extensive question and answer sessions with private sector and trade communities.

El Paso MPO	As of October 2007, the El Paso MPO has been active in the development of the Port Improvement Committee on Border Crossing Improvements that has been examining short term, midterm, and long term solutions for the international border. Committee members consist of the El Paso MPO, CBP, the IBWC, Instituto Municipal de Investigacion y Planeacion (IMIP–Municipal Institute for Planning and Research in Ciudad Juárez), the City of El Paso, TTI–El Paso, the Environmental Protection Agency, the City of Juárez, Mexico and the Camino Real RMA.
City of El Paso	The City of El Paso in conjunction with the FHWA sponsored a Road Safety Assessment training session that included approximately 25 people with half the participants being from Mexico.
TxDOT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through the BTEP, road safety audit courses were made available in El Paso to the four Mexican border states. It was agreed that Mexican officials would begin conducting road safety audits at the border crossings. • Also through BTEP, Mexican engineers attend conferences (such as the American Traffic Safety Services Association conference) which result in a better understanding of U.S. policies and increased cooperation between the two countries.
TTI – El Paso	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The border crossing time measurement projects have provided TTI an opportunity to work with Mexican stakeholders. The Instituto Municipal de Investigacion y Planeacion of Ciudad Juarez assisted with the deployment of the RFID equipment on the Mexican side of the border. Promofront, the Mexican Concessionaire of the Zaragoza Bridge, has also been deeply involved and assisting in the deployment of equipment in their facilities. • Similarly, for the assessment of the Universal Freight Shuttle study, researchers have been in contact with the maquiladora industry in Ciudad Juarez to understand their interest and willingness to use a new transportation mode to cross the border. • As part of the El Paso County Secure Border Trade project TTI has been collaborating with Mexican private trucking companies in developing the project requirements. • TTI has been participating in the El Paso Model Border Port Initiative Committee coordinated by the Paso Del Norte Group.
IBWC	Willing to use IBWC processes to help gather together and expedite projects dealing with international trade.
Cameron County	Active in trade organizations at the national level in both the U.S. and Mexico. The County is also active in the local Maquiladora Association and

	Custom Broker Association.
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Strategy 6: Promote efficiencies at international border crossings. By evaluating, recommending, and implementing various procedures, efficiencies can be gained throughout international border crossings. Some of the efforts that have been discussed include eliminating the duplication of the vehicle safety inspections, combining security facilities, implementing interoperable technology, modifying hours of operation, increasing staffing levels and applying demand management techniques like off-peak incentives – value pricing.

Implementation Action 6.1 – Expand the use of the FAST (Free and Secure Trade) program, and the proposed express lane at the Department of Public Safety (DPS) inspection stations.

El Paso MPO	An additional bridge at the Ysleta-Zaragoza POE is to be constructed with six commercial lanes including a FAST lane. The existing bridge will be used for passenger vehicles and contain dedicated commuter lanes. Completion of the new bridge is expected by 2015. The El Paso MPO is working with the El Paso Chamber of Commerce and TxDOT is working with local stakeholders during this effort.
City of El Paso	Proposing constructing six to ten additional commercial lanes at the Ysleta-Zaragoza Bridge. This will allow for the placement of north and southbound FAST lanes. The existing commercial structure would be turned into a designated commuter lane for passenger and transit vehicles (mentioned previously in <i>Implementation Action 1.2</i>).
TxDOT – Office of International Relations	A FAST lane was implemented at the Laredo-Colombia Solidarity Bridge in 2007; this brings the number of FAST lanes at Texas crossings to 6, with the others located at Veterans in Brownsville, World Trade in Laredo, Pharr, and Zaragoza and Bridge of the Americas in El Paso.

Implementation Action 6.2 – Evaluate the design of international border crossings and local access points to ensure efficient use of FAST lanes.

<p>El Paso MPO</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducted a study to examine how many commercial inspection booths are needed to keep the queue contained within the Ysleta-Zaragoza POE. • A feasibility study will examine the expansion of the Ysleta-Zaragoza Bridge. This study should be completed by 2015. • The Ad Hoc Committee on Border Crossing Improvements has been reviewing a number of strategies to separate FAST from non-FAST facilities at both the Ysleta-Zaragoza Bridge and the Bridge of the Americas.
<p>City of El Paso</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking a proactive stance on the FAST lane and is currently segregating a lane on the commercial bridge strictly for FAST users. • Installing a system using RFID technology to measure commercial freight border crossing times at the Bridge of the Americas.
<p>TxDOT</p>	<p>Active support of a FAST lane at the World Trade Bridge and the Laredo-Colombia Solidarity Bridge.</p>
<p>TTI</p>	<p>Currently conducting border crossing time measurement studies for commercial freight at the Bridge of the Americas and the Pharr - Reynosa International Bridge on the Rise. This research is ongoing. RFID equipment has been deployed at BOTA with FHWA funding with readers in El Paso and Ciudad Juarez. Similar systems are being deployed at Pharr and Laredo with TxDOT funding and at Nogales with Arizona DOT funding. The crossing times are being measured and relayed in real time, with updates every 15 minutes. The BOTA crossing times are available to the public at http://epttraffic.com</p>
<p>MOTOR</p>	<p>Actively recommending the cooperation between Mexico and U.S. federal officials to synchronize hours of operation at Texas – Mexico POEs.</p>
<p>IBWC</p>	<p>The IBWC is willing to use their role as part of the presidential permitting process to help gather together and expedite related projects.</p>
<p>Cameron County</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A second bridge structure at the Veterans International Bridge at Los Tomates that will segregate commercial traffic from passenger vehicles will be under construction in December 2010. There will be 8 lanes at this facility. • The West Rail Relocation project will be under construction in December 2010. This project involves the relocation of the main Union Pacific rail line from an urban area in Brownsville/Matamoros to a rural area. • Currently working with TTI and TxDOT to do border wait studies at the Veterans Bridge.
<p>TxDOT – PHR</p>	<p>There are approximately \$27.7 million in construction projects planned for letting between FY 11 to FY 14 funded and qualified under the Coordinated Border Infrastructure program.</p>

Implementation Action 6.3 – Evaluate operations at existing international border crossings to ensure they are performing at optimum efficiencies.

El Paso MPO	Working with TTI on implementing a system using RFID technology to measure commercial freight border crossing times (previously mentioned in <i>Implementation Action 3.2</i>).
City of El Paso	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting a border travel time study with the purpose of performing a travel time analysis of passenger and freight flows. • Installing a RFID system to measure commercial freight border crossing times at the Bridge of the Americas.
TxDOT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Strategic Resource Assessment (SRA) is part of the CBP Border Infrastructure Modernization Program on land border crossings. The SRA identifies how border facilities may be improved to accommodate traffic in the future. TxDOT and border metropolitan planning organizations met with CBP to discuss traffic projections and planned infrastructure projects that will affect border crossings. • The TxDOT Bridge Division regularly coordinates interaction between local, state, and federal officials at major POEs along the Texas – Mexico border. • Recently completed a targeted assessment of the short-term improvement options for passenger and freight flow roadways within the immediate study area of each international border crossing along the Texas-Mexico border.
Cameron County RMA	Actively works with federal agencies on both sides of the border to address Immigration and Naturalization Services and customs issues, especially in the area of staffing, facilitating services, and political involvement.
TTI – College Station	Currently conducting border crossing time measurement studies for commercial freight at the Bridge of the Americas and the Pharr - Reynosa International Bridge on the Rise. This research is ongoing. RFID equipment has been deployed at BOTA with FHWA funding with readers in El Paso and Ciudad Juarez. Similar systems are being deployed at Pharr and Laredo with TxDOT funding, and at Nogales with Arizona DOT funding. The crossing times are being measured and relayed in real time, with updates every 15 minutes. The BOTA crossing times are available to the public at http://eptraffic.com
TxDOT – ELP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic/Transvista - TxDOT has been working w/TTI on Transvista's data base at the POE's and other studies to develop a dataset warehouse of gathering and monitoring vehicle data crossing the POE's. The project is still ongoing. • Model Port's Initiative Research - There was or is research project that dealt with this matter. Could not get formal documentation of it.

Strategy 7: Develop international border crossings that take advantage of the latest technologies and procedures. New procedures and technologies significantly impact the way international border crossing inspections are carried out and therefore the infrastructure needs at international border crossings. Planned international border crossings should be designed with enough flexibility to benefit from the latest technology and expedite the design and construction process, as well as to make it easy to change in the future when new technologies are implemented.

Implementation Action 7.1 – Work with the General Services Administration and other U.S. federal agencies to develop flexible user-oriented configurations and practices for new or rehabilitated international border crossings.

El Paso MPO	In October 2007, a meeting was held with the mayors of the cities of Juárez, Mexico and El Paso, GSA, and CBP to examine the new commuter POE and examine how to apply the most recent technology to reduce wait times.
TxDOT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through the JWC, CBP has told stakeholders that all lanes at new crossings will be SENTRI compatible. • Border crossings are currently being designed and built at Anzalduas and Donna in the McAllen area, and at Guadalupe-Tornillo east of El Paso.
Cameron County	Working with CBP on the second span of the Veterans International Bridge at Los Tomates (mentioned previously in <i>Implementation Action 6.2</i>).
TxDOT – Office of International Relations	The new Anzalduas crossing in Mission/McAllen opened in December, 2009. The new crossing in Donna is under construction with a targeted completion date of October 2010. The Guadalupe-Tornillo crossing east of El Paso is under development with tentative start for construction of Spring 2011. A second span of the Veterans Bridge in Brownsville is under development to facilitate the flow of commercial and private vehicle traffic and to optimize the use of the FAST lane.
Hidalgo County MPO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Anzalduas International Bridge officially opened for traffic on December 15, 2009. The new bridge serves as the most direct and efficient route between the Rio Grande Valley and Mexican cities such as Monterrey and Mexico City, reducing travel time. The bridge has four entrance lanes, including a SENTRI Lane in the United States, and a pedestrian walkway with lanes elevated to preserve nearby U.S. Fish and Wildlife Refuge. • The Pharr-Reynosa International Bridge handles commercial vehicles as well as passenger operated vehicles. It has GAMA Rays and Fast and Secure Trade program, known as FAST are implemented by both the U.S. and Mexican Customs. The bridge connects U.S. 281 to the City of Reynosa, Tamaulipas, Mexico. The bridge connects two countries at a length of 3.2 miles.

Strategy 8: Review Presidential Permit policy to facilitate international bridge construction. Current Presidential Permit procedures to construct or modify international bridges are lengthy and difficult to obtain. A streamlined procedure will smooth the progress of any required modification to take advantage of new technologies or processes.

Implementation Action 8.1 – Develop and coordinate with bi-national federal officials an approach to facilitate improvements to existing international border crossings.

El Paso MPO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has been active in the development of the Ad Hoc Committee on Border Crossing Improvements (previously mentioned in <i>Implementation Action 5.1</i>). • Working to streamline the procedure for acquiring presidential permits, especially for newly proposed ports of entry.
City of El Paso	Participating with different entities in an effort to streamline the process of acquiring presidential permits.
TxDOT	An interagency workgroup was established to seek clarification and ways to implement the Executive Order signed in 2004 (regarding the presidential permit application process) in an efficient way. The workgroup's recommendations are under review by the Department of State.
IBWC	Willing to use IBWC processes to help gather together and expedite projects dealing with international trade.

Implementation Action 8.2 – Coordinate permitting process for new international border crossings.

El Paso MPO	As results of the El Paso Regional Ports of Entry Operations plan study are obtained in 2011, the Port Improvement Committee will examine the presidential permit application processes for both the Commuter and Sunland Park commuter POEs if determined viable.
City of El Paso	Proposing a new crossing and is participating with TXDOT on Border Crossing Improvements which is reviewing the time it takes to obtain a presidential permit.
IBWC	Willing to use IBWC processes to help gather together and expedite projects dealing with international trade.
City of Laredo	Amending a Presidential permit application to allow non-radioactive hazardous materials and developing a hazardous materials containment facility for the World Trade Bridge.

Strategy 9: Provide a balance between required inspections and efficient trade flow.

Implementation Action 9.1 – Ensure proper staffing, resource management and appropriations for new international border crossings or expansion of existing international border crossings that will allow for adequate inspections yet ensure efficient trade flow.

El Paso MPO	Coordinating with the TTI – El Paso on their efforts to install RFID technology at the Bridge of the Americas (previously mentioned in <i>Implementation Action 3.2</i>).
City of El Paso	Participating with the El Paso MPO in the Ad Hoc Committee on Border Crossing Improvements.
TxDOT	Currently involved in border wait times and border travel times studies.
TTI – El Paso	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participated in the El Paso MPO Ad Hoc Committee on Border Crossing Improvements. • Coordinating with the El Paso MPO, the Ciudad Juarez Instituto Metropolitano de Investigacion y Planeacion (Municipal Institute for Planning and Research in Ciudad Juárez), TxDOT, and Texas Department of Public Safety on the installation of RFID technology at the Bridge of the Americas.

Strategy 10: Identify national, statewide, and international benefits of trade. Increased land commercial trade not only benefits the local international border crossing where the transaction takes place but also has a ripple effect that benefits the state and the nation as a whole. The Alameda Corridor Project in California is an example of how a trade corridor improvement can benefit not only the region but the whole nation.

Implementation Action 10.1 – Review and implement previous recommendations to quantify local, regional and national benefits of improved trade at the Texas-Mexico border.

El Paso MPO	Currently assessing an economic impact study to determine the benefits of improved trade.
TxDOT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided recommendations for two legislatively mandated reports and the North American Free Trade Agreement Study Update. TxDOT is installing intelligent transportation systems at all border safety inspection facilities (lack of funding has put this on hold). SENTRI lanes have been built and are now operational at Brownsville, Hidalgo, Laredo, and El Paso international border crossings. • Provides continued support for TTC-35, Port to Port Toll Only Truck Project, and TTC 69.

Implementation Action 10.2 – Perform economic impact analysis of trade on local, state, and national levels.

El Paso MPO	Currently assessing an economic impact study to determine the benefits of improved trade.
TxDOT	Once delay times are established at Texas POEs (through studies previously mentioned), an economic impact analysis can take place using the methodology established through the JWC in the State of California.
TTI – El Paso	Preparing a research project to design a methodology to assess the economic impact of border crossing waiting times.

Implementation Action 10.3 – Establish an advocacy program led by the four U.S. border governors to promote the benefits of trade efficiencies at the state, national and international level.

No responses given to this Implementation Action.