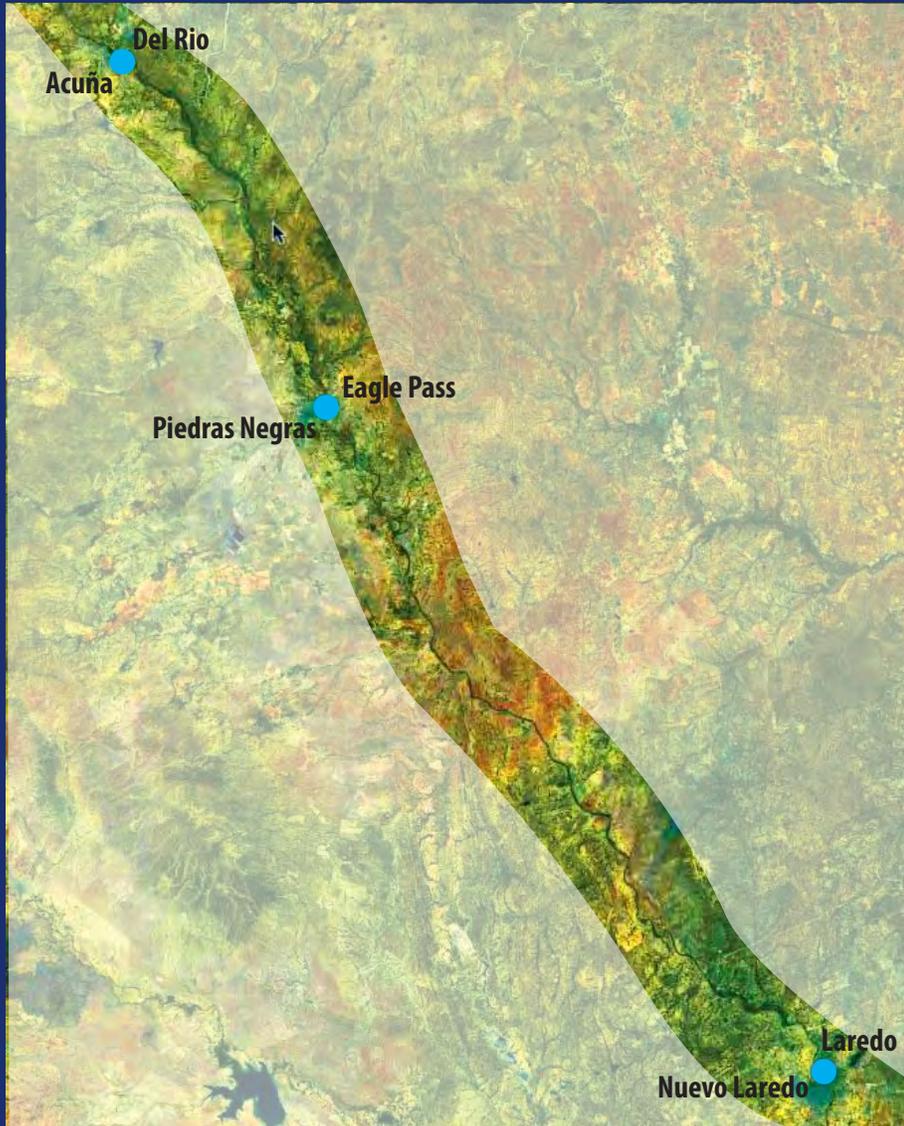


# Laredo District Coahuila/Nuevo León/Tamaulipas Border Master Plan



**Executive  
Summary  
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**Submitted to :**

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## **Executive Summary**

### **Introduction**

Border Master Plans, as defined and supported by the U.S./Mexico Joint Working Committee on Transportation Planning and Programming, the Federal Highway Administration, and the U.S. Department of State, are comprehensive long range plans to inventory transportation and port of entry (POE) infrastructure that facilitate trade, and prioritize planned transportation and POE projects within a defined study area. The Border Master Plans represent binational stakeholder efforts to (i) prioritize and promote POE and related transportation projects; (ii) inform decision-making; (iii) allocate limited funding sources, and (iv) ensure continued dialogue and coordination on future POE and supporting transportation infrastructure needs and projects.

The Laredo-Coahuila/Nuevo León/Tamaulipas Border Master Plan (Border Master Plan) is the second Border Master Plan that on the U.S.-Mexico border and followed a similar approach as the California-Baja California Border Master Plan.

The objectives of the Laredo-Coahuila/Nuevo León/Tamaulipas Border Master Plan were to:

- design a stakeholder agency involvement process that is inclusive and ensure the participation of all involved in POE projects and the transportation infrastructure serving those POEs;
- increase the understanding of the POE and transportation planning processes on both sides of the border;
- develop and implement a plan for prioritizing and promoting POE and related transportation projects, including evaluation criteria and rankings over the short, medium and long term; and
- establish a process to ensure continued dialogue among federal, state, regional, and local stakeholder agencies in Texas and Mexico to ensure continued coordination on current and future POE and supporting transportation infrastructure needs and projects.

The Border Master Plan documents the region’s needs and priorities, and recommends a mechanism to ensure coordination on current and planned future POE projects and supporting transportation infrastructure to serve the anticipated demand imposed by a growing population and an increase in economic activity in the study area.

### **Study Area**

Similar to the California-Baja California Border Master Plan, the Border Master Plan’s study area included an “Area of Influence” and a “Focused Study Area.” The “Area of Influence” was the geographic area 60 miles (or 100 km) north and south of the Texas-Coahuila/Nuevo León/Tamaulipas international border. In Texas, it included the counties – all or

partially – of Crockett, Dimmit, Duval, Edwards, Frio, Jim Hogg, Kinney, La Salle, Maverick, McMullen, Real, Sutton, Uvalde, Val Verde, Webb, Zapata and Zavala. On the Mexican side, it included the municipalities – all or partially – of:

- Acuña, Allende, Guerrero, Hidalgo, Jiménez, Juárez, Morelos, Múzquiz, Nava, Piedras Negras, Sabinas, San Juan de Sabinas, Villa Unión and Zaragoza in Coahuila;
- Anáhuac, Lampasos de Naranjo, Parás, Sabinas Hidalgo, Vallecito and Villaldama in Nuevo León; and
- Guerrero and Nuevo Laredo in Tamaulipas.

The “Focused Study Area” was an area 25 miles (or 40 km) north and south of the Texas-Coahuila/Nuevo León/Tamaulipas international border. The study area’s east and west boundaries were roughly aligned with the Texas Department of Transportation’s (TxDOT’s) Laredo District (see Figure ES1). The identified short-, mid-, and long-term planned POE and transportation infrastructure projects in the “Focused Study Area” were prioritized.

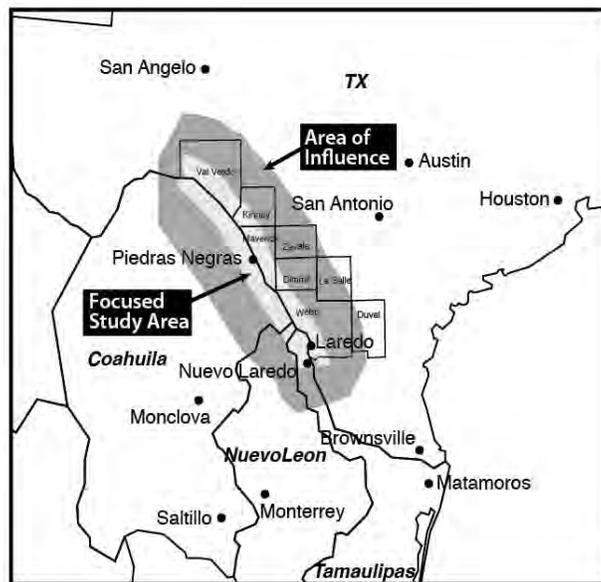


Figure ES1: Border Master Plan Study Area

## Stakeholder Participation

Similar to the California-Baja California Border Master Plan, stakeholders were represented by a Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) – consisting of executive level managers – and a Technical Working Group (TWG) – consisting of senior technical staff. The mandate of the PAC members was to review the study objectives, evaluate the proposed work plan, define the study area, designate the TWG members, endorse the prioritization criteria, weights, and scores used by the study team to prioritize identified projects, and endorse the Border Master Plan document.

The mandate of the TWG members was to provide the study team with data on existing and planned transportation and border facilities serving the POEs in the study area, to verify the collected information, to participate in a workshop to select the criteria, scores, and weights that were used to prioritize individual projects, and to review the content of the draft Border Master Plan document developed and submitted by the study team.

Membership of the PAC and TWG were limited to government agencies and rail companies whose mandate encompass border transportation infrastructure planning, programming, construction and/or management. The following is a list of the PAC and TWG member agencies that participated in the development of the Border Master Plan.

*United States*

- U.S. General Services Administration (GSA)
- U.S. Department of Homeland Security/Customs and Border Protection (CBP)
- U.S. Department of State (DOS)
- U.S. Department of State/Consulate of the United States (DOS)
- International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC-DOS)
- U.S. Department of Transportation/Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
- U.S. Department of Transportation/Federal Motor Carrier Administration (FMCA)
- Texas Department of Public Safety
- Texas Department of Transportation
- Maverick County
- Val Verde County
- Webb County
- City of Del Rio
- City of Eagle Pass
- City of Laredo
- Laredo Metropolitan Planning Organization

*Mexico*

- Administración General de Aduanas
- Instituto de Administración de Avalúos de Bienes Nacionales (INDAABIN)
- Instituto Nacional de Migración (INAMI)
- Secretaría de Comunicaciones y Transportes (SCT)
- Centro SCT Coahuila
- Centro SCT Nuevo León

- Centro SCT Tamaulipas
- Caminos y Puentes Federales (SCT-CAPUFE)
- Instituto Mexicano del Transporte (SCT-IMT)
- Secretaría de Desarrollo Social (SEDESOL)
- Secretaría de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (SEMARNAT)
- Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores (SRE)
- Comisión Internacional de Límites y Aguas entre México y EE.UU. (SRE-CILA)
- Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores/Consulado General de México
- Estado de Coahuila de Zaragoza
- Secretaría de Obras Públicas y Transporte de Coahuila (SOPT)
- Municipio de Acuña
- Municipio de Piedras Negras
- Estado de Nuevo León
- Corporación para el Desarrollo de la Zona Fronteriza de Nuevo León (CODEFRONT)
- Sistema de Caminos de Nuevo León
- Estado de Tamaulipas
- Secretaría de Obras Públicas de Tamaulipas
- Municipio de Nuevo Laredo
- Instituto Municipal de Investigación, Planeación y Desarrollo Urbano del Municipio de Nuevo Laredo (IMPLADU)

#### *Rail Companies*

- BNSF Railway Company
- Ferrocarril Mexicano S.A. de C.V.
- Kansas City Southern de México S.A. de C.V.
- Kansas City Southern Railway Company
- Union Pacific Railroad

In addition, a number of other agencies and companies were identified that have an interest in the development of the Border Master Plan and/or are impacted by POE or transportation infrastructure projects implemented in the study area. These agencies and companies were invited to participate as Border Partners in the development of the Border Master Plan. Border Partners could attend all meetings and provide input at the meetings. Border

Partners however, did not have a vote in selecting the criteria categories, category weights, criteria, criteria weights, and scoring metrics that were used to prioritize projects.

## Study Approach

The study team hosted seven stakeholder meetings in different cities in the study area over the course of the study period. During the meetings, stakeholders were briefed on the study team’s progress and actively engaged in reviewing collected information and data, as well as selecting/agreeing on the criteria categories, category weights, criteria, criteria weights, and scoring metrics to prioritize projects.

A fundamental component of the Laredo–Coahuila/Nuevo León/Tamaulipas Border Master Plan was the selection of the criteria categories, category weights, criteria, and criteria weights to be used in the ranking/prioritization of the planned POE, road and interchange, and rail projects. The study team adopted a Delphi type process to reach consensus. Classroom Performance System (CPS) technology – i.e., i>Clickers – allowed for anonymous voting and facilitated the reaching of consensus.

To facilitate the development of a list of project priorities for the study area, it was recommended by the study team, agreed with the TWG, and finally endorsed by the PAC that the criteria categories and weights would be the same across the different project types. The criteria categories and the category weights endorsed can be found in Table ES1.

**Table ES1: Border Master Plan Ranking Categories**

| Criteria Categories                   | Category Weights |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|
| Capacity/Congestion                   | 25%              |
| Demand                                | 23%              |
| Cost Effectiveness/ Project Readiness | 17%              |
| Safety                                | 20%              |
| Regional Impacts                      | 15%              |

However, different criteria comprised the criteria categories given the project type, because of the fundamental differences among POE, road and interchange, and rail projects.

## Study Findings: Socio-Demographics and Planning Processes

- Population and total employment in Laredo-Coahuila/Nuevo León/Tamaulipas is anticipated to increase by approximately 20% and 38%, respectively in the next 20 years. From 2000 to 2010, the Laredo – Coahuila/Nuevo León/Tamaulipas study area accounted, on an average, for 27% of pedestrian, 27% of passenger only vehicle (POVs), 50% of bus, and 53% of truck traffic that crossed into the U.S from Mexico on the Texas-Mexico border. In the case of traffic that crossed into Mexico from the U.S. on the Texas-Mexico border, the three POEs accounted, on average, for 28% of pedestrians, 30% of POVs, and 63% of truck traffic from 2000 to 2010. Rail imports and exports through the study area accounted for on average 70% of train traffic, 78% of loaded container traffic, and 60% of empty container traffic from 2000 to 2010 between U.S. and Mexico.

- The planning of transportation infrastructure and POE projects is a binational, multi-step, multi-agency process that involves all levels of government in both the U.S. and Mexico.
- The federal, state, regional, and local agencies on both sides of the border have different project evaluation processes in the preparation of POE and transportation planning documents, respectively. These evaluation processes range from qualitative assessments to detailed quantitative studies (e.g., feasibility studies and cost benefit analysis).
- Planning horizons for POE and transportation infrastructure projects differ. POE project planning has a seven year planning horizon, while the planning horizon for transportation infrastructure is typically longer (e.g., 20 years) in the U.S. In Mexico, planning horizons are shorter and typically correspond to presidential (e.g., 6 years), gubernatorial (e.g., 6 years) or mayoral mandates (e.g., 3 or 4 years).
- Collaboration and communication is critical to ensure coordinated project implementation. However, staff turnover, budget schedules, and bureaucratic processes have impacted coordination in the development of POE facilities in the past.
- The development of Border Master Plans represents an effort to ensure continued coordination and communication among all levels of government in developing a list of binational priorities for both POEs and the transportation infrastructure serving those POEs.
- A review of existing transportation infrastructure and current and projected traffic volumes in the study area shows that overall road level of service varied significantly in the U.S border cities. Vehicle traffic through Laredo surpassed that of Eagle Pass and Del Rio and is projected by TXDOT to grow by an average 3% each year. If this growth rate materializes, the majority of the major highways and arterials serving POE traffic in Laredo will be congested with associated low speed stop-and-go traffic by 2035. The issue of congestion will be aggravated by scarce land resources for roadway expansion. On the other hand, the road infrastructure in Eagle Pass and Del Rio will have excess capacity after accommodating the expected 2% annual traffic growth rate in these areas by 2035. The road infrastructure corridors in Eagle Pass and Del Rio can thus serve as alternatives for the traffic between the U.S and Mexico traversing Laredo.

### **Priority POE and Transportation Facilities**

On the U.S. side, 14 planned POE projects, 88 planned road and interchange projects, and three planned rail projects were identified. On the Mexican side, 37 planned POE projects, 44 planned road and interchange projects, and five planned rail projects were identified. Projects from the U.S. were ranked separately from that of Mexico because of the limited data that was provided for Mexican projects. The prioritization/ ranking of both countries' projects together would have resulted in most of the Mexican projects receiving a lower priority/rank. Each country's projects were thus prioritized/ ranked separately. Projects were then ranked by type – POE, road and interchange, and rail projects.

On the U.S. side, the project priorities are presented by major cities (i.e., Laredo, Eagle Pass, and Del Rio) and on the Mexican side, the project priorities are presented by Mexican states (i.e., Tamaulipas, Nuevo León, and Coahuila). The locations of the planned projects - for which adequate location information were obtained - are illustrated in maps in the final report by planning horizon (i.e., short, medium, and long term). Projects for which no time period was provided were categorized as “unknown.” The highest ranked POE, road and interchange, and rail projects by major U.S. City and Mexican state are shown in Figure ES2. These projects are briefly described in this Executive Summary.

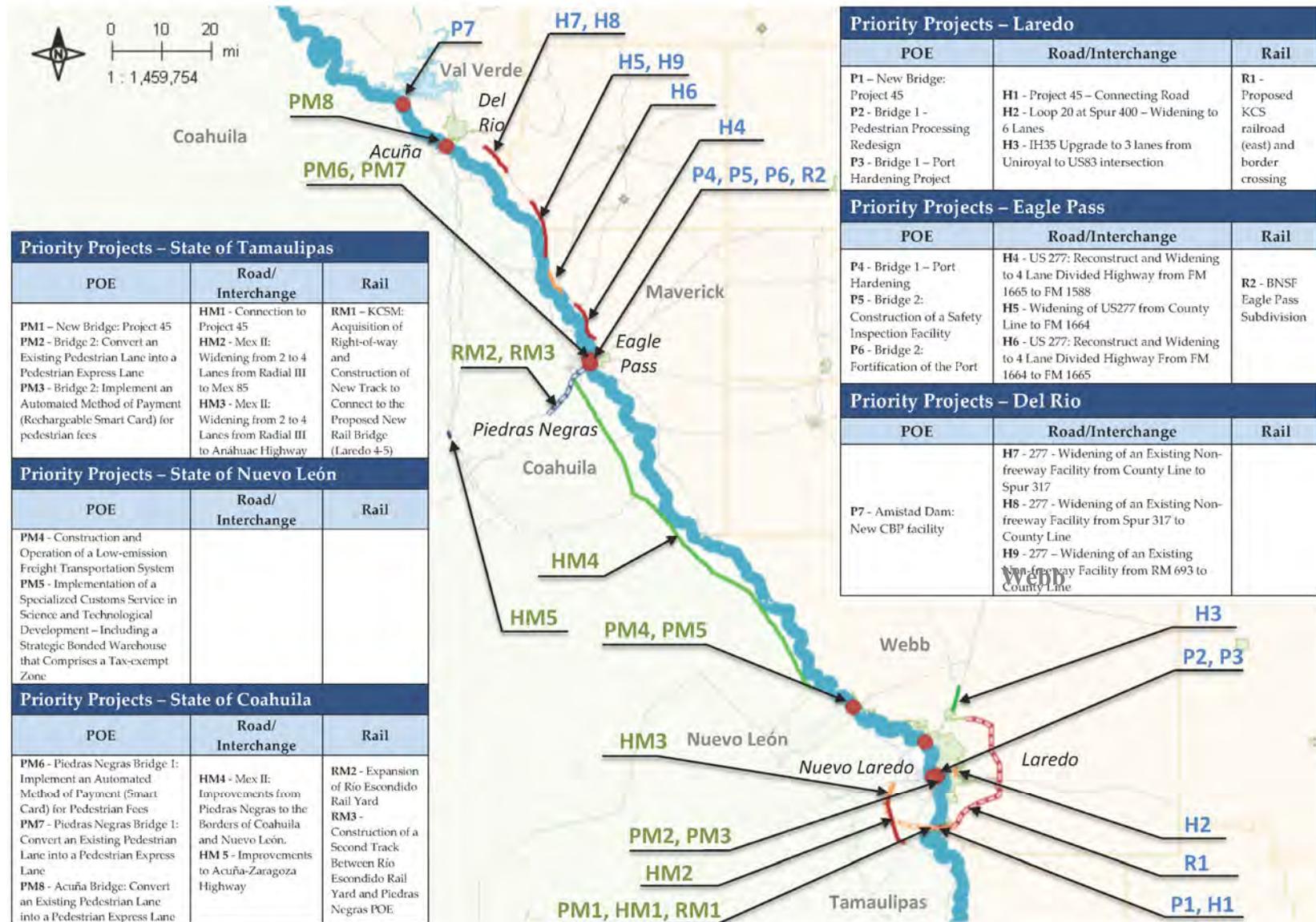


Figure ES2: Priority Projects—U.S.-Mexico

## ***Laredo Projects***

### Laredo POE Projects

Planned POE projects were identified for the Gateway to the Americas Bridge, Juárez-Lincoln Bridge, World Trade Bridge, and the Laredo-Colombia Solidarity Bridge. In addition, a new crossing (i.e., Project 4-5) was identified south-east of Laredo.

As shown in Figure ES2, the highest ranked U.S. POE project in the study area was Project 4-5 (*P1*). The information provided to the study team showed that Project 4-5 will result in a shorter and less congested corridor between Mex-85 and the major U.S. highways: IH-35 and US-83. In addition to the large number of booths – i.e., 23 that will eventually be constructed – the promoters also plan to build FAST lanes to accelerate cross-border truck processing. Finally, it is anticipated that the project will facilitate development of nearby communities on the U.S. side, which will translate into economic and social benefits for the region. By 2035, it is estimated that more than 7,000 trucks will cross the bridge daily. In addition, 11,900 POVs and 5,600 pedestrians are expected to cross the bridge by 2035. Finally, the promoters have argued that Project 4-5 will divert hazardous material from the city center to the outskirts of Laredo assuming the necessary permit approvals.

Two other POE projects that ranked high in the Laredo area are the conversion of eight temporary pedestrian booths at the Gateway to the Americas Bridge to eight permanent booths (*P2*) and a new bus processing facility at the Juárez-Lincoln Bridge (*P3*).

### Laredo Road and Interchange Projects

Of the 88 planned road and interchange projects identified in the U.S., 66 were in Laredo (Webb County). The highest ranked road project in Laredo is the access road that connects US-83 with the planned Project 4-5 (*H1*). The road will be a 2.6 mile four lane divided highway (i.e., two lanes in each direction) with four lanes of access road (i.e., 2 lanes in each direction). Four new access lanes on US 83 connecting to this new road are also planned. The current Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) of 13,900 on US 83 is projected to increase to 63,000 by 2035 with trucks representing 40% of the AADT. The road will also be used by hazardous material traffic and alleviate congestion in the central business district of Laredo.

Several planned road improvements on various sections of Loop 20 and IH-34 also ranked high. Planned improvements include increasing the number of lanes, widening of several road sections, and construction of overpasses, ramps and rail grade crossings. These improvements are expected to meet the forecasted demand associated with the expected traffic growth and alleviate congestion.

### Laredo Rail Projects

Three planned U.S. rail projects were identified in the study area, but only two were ranked because of limited data for the third rail project. The planned rail projects in Laredo are shown in Figure ES2. The proposed KCS rail project in Laredo ranked first (*R1*). This planned rail project comprises the construction of rail tracks from the UP Port Laredo yard to the KCSM Sanchez Yard (7.5 miles east of the Tex-Mex Laredo yard). The project comprises the building of 21 miles of rail track on the U.S. side, 15.75 miles on the Mexican side, and the construction of a rail crossing adjacent to the proposed bridge (Project 4-5). The

proponents of Project 4-5 and KCSR/KCSM discussed a joint border crossing at the Project 4-5 site to minimize infrastructure costs and to consolidate customs and security functions at one location. It is expected that the proposed rail project will divert traffic away from downtown Laredo and Nuevo Laredo, while retaining vital rail connections to the rail yards in both cities. A presidential permit application for the rail crossing was submitted by KCS on December 31, 2008. In the application it was stated that the East Loop Rail Bypass project would “provide for additional rail capacity, enhance corridor safety, and improve the efficiency of cross-border rail crossings.”

### ***Eagle Pass Projects***

#### Eagle Pass POE Projects

Three planned POE projects were identified in Eagle Pass (*P4*, *P5*, and *P6*). Two of the planned POE projects in Eagle Pass ranked among the top twelve POE priorities in the study area. The projects aim to enhance the safety of the POE facilities and to monitor commercial vehicles entering the U.S., respectively. The projects are not expected to provide additional infrastructure to increase throughput.

#### Eagle Pass Road and Interchange Projects

In total 18 planned road and interchange projects that serve the Eagle Pass POEs were identified. The reconstruction and widening of a section of US 277 is the highest ranked U.S. road and interchange project in Eagle Pass and the fifth highest ranked U.S. road and interchange project in the study area. Furthermore, ten of the 18 planned road and interchange projects in Eagle Pass pertain to US 277. These projects involve the reconstruction and widening of sections of the highway from a two lane divided highway to a four lane divided highway, and the restoration and addition of passing lanes (*H4 to H6*).

#### Eagle Pass Rail Project

The planned rail project in Eagle Pass was ranked second out of the three U.S. rail projects (*R2*) identified. The project includes double-tracking segments between the BNSF and UP sidings and between the UP siding and the rail tracks in the vicinity of the bridge to Piedras Negras. The planned project will also provide additional sidings where stopped rail traffic can be inspected by U.S. Customs and Border Protection, thereby allowing through traffic to pass unhindered on the existing track.

### ***Del Rio Projects***

#### Del Rio POE Projects

Two planned POE projects were identified in Del Rio, but a lack of information prevented the study team from ranking the proposed new bridge. The new CBP facility (*P7*) – that will replace the current outdated facility - at the Lake Amistad Dam crossing ranked first in Del Rio and 6th out of the 14 U.S. POE projects identified in the study area.

### Del Rio Road and Interchange Projects

In total, five planned road and interchange projects were identified in Del Rio. All five the projects involved the widening of several sections of US 277 from two to four lanes (*H7* to *H9*). The resultant increase in capacity will allow US 277 to maintain its LOS A through 2035 assuming a 2% annual traffic growth rate for the corridor.

### Del Rio Rail Projects

No planned rail projects were identified for Del Rio.

## ***Tamaulipas Projects***

### Tamaulipas POE Projects

The Tamaulipas POEs facilitate a very large percentage of the total number of crossings in the study area. Planned POE projects were identified for the Gateway to the Americas Bridge, Juárez-Lincoln Bridge, and the World Trade Bridge. In addition, a new planned crossing (i.e., Project 4-5) was also identified to the east of Nuevo Laredo.

Project 4-5 (*PMI*) is the highest ranked Mexican POE project – as is its U.S. Project 4-5 counterpart – in the study area. The proposed bridge will connect Mex 85 to US-83 and the Cuatro Vientos Beltway on the U.S. side. In addition to the large number of booths – i.e., 32 booths on the Mexican side are planned in Phase 1 – the promoters also plan to include FAST, SENTRI, and HOV lanes in the new bridge’s design. The large number of booths is expected to expedite the processing of commercial vehicles, passenger vehicles, bicycles and motorcycles, and pedestrians. The promoters are currently conducting a feasibility study that is partially funded by a Federal Government (SCT) allocation of \$1.2 million. In terms of the schedule, the promoters would be ready to start the bridge’s construction in November 2012 and begin operations in 2015. However, the project needs a Presidential Permit and other binational negotiations are still pending.

Two other Tamaulipas POE projects also ranked among the top 10 Mexican POE projects planned in the study area. The first project would convert an existing pedestrian lane at the Gateway to the Americas Bridge into an express lane (*P2*). The project ranked 6th and is expected to significantly reduce pedestrian crossing times. The second project ranked 7.5th and would implement “intelligent or smart” card technology to automatically charge pedestrian tolls at the Gateway to the Americas Bridge (*P3*). The implementation of this technology is also expected to significantly reduce pedestrian crossing times.

### Tamaulipas Road and Interchange Projects

Eight of the top 10 ranked Mexican road and interchange project priorities in the study area are in the State of Tamaulipas. The highest ranked Mexican road project in Tamaulipas and the study area is the planned access road (*HMI*) that will connect Mex 85 with the proposed new bridge (Project 4-5).

In addition, two other road and interchange projects in Tamaulipas were ranked 2nd and 3rd out of the 44 Mexican road and interchange projects identified in the study area. These two projects entail capacity improvements (i.e., road widening and increasing the number of lanes) on Mex II (*HM2* and *HM3*). These projects will decrease congestion and improve the

LOS on Mex II between Nuevo Laredo and Monterrey - a major commercial center in Mexico.

### Tamaulipas Rail Projects

Five rail projects were identified in the study area in Mexico. Two of the rail projects are in the State of Tamaulipas – specifically Nuevo Laredo. However, only one of the two rail projects was ranked. The ranked project involves the acquisition of right-of-way and the construction of new track (*RMI*) to connect to the proposed new rail bridge (Project 4-5).

### ***Nuevo León Projects***

#### Nuevo León POE Projects

A number of planned POE projects that is expected to enhance U.S.-Mexico trade crossings at the Laredo-Colombia Solidarity Bridge were identified. The data provided; however, only allowed for the ranking of two of the identified projects.

The construction and operation of a low-emission freight transportation system (*PM4*) was the highest ranked POE project in Nuevo León. This project also ranked 7.5th out of the 37 planned Mexican POE projects identified in the study area. The second ranked POE project in Nuevo León and the 10th ranked Mexican POE project identified in the study area is the implementation of specialized customs services and the construction of a Strategic Bonded Warehouse (Recinto Fiscalizado Estratégico) – *PM5*. The Bonded Warehouse will provide shippers with access to handling, storage, assembling, repair, manufacturing, exhibition, distribution, and sales services. It is believed that this project will enhance socio-economic development in the region.

#### Nuevo León Road and Interchange Projects

Two planned road and interchange projects were identified in the study area in Nuevo León. The first involves widening of the Sabinas-Colombia highway and the second involves providing an access road from La Gloria to the Laredo-Colombia Solidarity Bridge. None of the identified projects could; however, be ranked because of insufficient data.

#### Nuevo León Rail Projects

One rail project was identified in the State of Nuevo León. It involves the construction of approximately 35 miles of railroad track from Camarón Station to Colombia (i.e., Colombia Branch Line), development of the Camarón Station, and the implementation of the Colombia-Webb Intermodal Freight Terminal. A lack of data; however, prevented the study team from ranking the project.

### ***Coahuila Projects***

#### Coahuila POE Projects

In total 17 planned POE projects were identified for the Piedras Negras, Acuña, and Amistad Dam crossings. Of the 17 planned POE projects only five were ranked. Several of

the highest ranked Mexican POE projects in the study area are in the State of Coahuila. Three of the top 10 Mexican POE projects pertain to Eagle Pass Bridge I and two of the top 10 Mexican POE projects pertain to the Del Rio – Ciudad Acuña International Bridge.

The highest ranked POE project in the State of Coahuila is the implementation of an automated method of payment (i.e., rechargeable smart card) for pedestrian fees (*PM6*). It is believed that the use of rechargeable smart cards will expedite the crossing process and thereby reduce crossing times. In addition, the planned conversion of an existing pedestrian lane into a pedestrian express lane (*PM7*) will further reduce crossing times and enhance the efficiency of pedestrian crossings.

*PM8*, which ranked 3rd out of the 37 planned Mexican POE projects identified in the study area, involves the implementation of an automated method of payment for pedestrian fees at the Del Rio-Ciudad Acuña Bridge.

### Coahuila Road and Interchange Projects

Twenty planned road and interchange projects that serve the Piedras Negras, Acuña, and Presa La Amistad POEs were identified in the study area. Only two of these planned projects could; however, be ranked given the data that were provided to the study team. The highest ranked road and interchange project in the State of Coahuila is the improvements to a section of Mex II between Piedras Negras and the Nuevo León-Coahuila border (*HM4*). These improvements will enhance connectivity to the POE and reduce congestion associated with POV and commercial traffic. The latter would translate into an improved LOS on this section of road. The second highest ranked road and interchange project in the State of Coahuila (ranked 9th out of the 44 Mexican road and interchange projects identified) is the improvements to the Acuña-Zaragoza Highway (*HM5*). This project will improve the LOS on the highway and increase access to major commercial centers such as, Saltillo, Monclova, and Monterrey.

### Coahuila Rail Projects

Two rail projects were identified in the study area in the State of Coahuila. Both projects serve the Piedras Negras POE. The first project (*RM2*) comprises the widening/ expansion of the Río Escondido rail yard from seven to 15 rail tracks. This project is the 2nd highest ranked Mexican rail project in the study area. This project will almost triple the number of rail cars that can be handled, thereby improving the efficiency of rail operations in the region. The 3rd highest ranked Mexican rail project – *RM3* – comprises the construction of a second rail track between the Río Escondido Rail Yard and the Piedras Negras POE. This project will increase the number of rail cars that can be moved in the corridor, thereby also improving the efficiency of rail operations in the area.

## **Institutionalizing the Dialogue**

It is recommended that Border Master Plans be updated periodically to keep the content and inventories current and to ensure that these documents continue to represent the region's vision and goals. However, it is recommended that the Border Master Plans be updated only given major changes in the content of the Border Master Plans. For example, if a number of

priority projects have been completed or if a number of planned initiatives have emerged since the Border Master Plan was developed. The timing of the updates may thus differ from region to region.

It is recommended that the PAC convene every year to determine the need for updating the Border Master Plan. Information on all completed priorities and any planned initiatives that have emerged since the completion of the previous Border Master Plan should be presented. This will allow the PAC to make an informed decision about the need to update the technical data of the Border Master Plan. Similarly, the PAC will determine the need for a comprehensive update to the plan. The latter would involve revisiting the forecasted year, the geographic boundaries of the study area, the socio-economic data, cross-border travel demand changes, and re-visiting the criteria that were used to prioritize projects. Finally, it is recommended that a representative of the PAC make regular informative presentations to the JWC regarding the need to update the existing Border Master Plan or progress with the updates of the Border Master Plan.

## **Recommendations for Border Master Plan Development and Updates**

The study team offers the following observations and recommendations for consideration in the development of future Border Master Plans and updates of Border Master Plans:

- A number of U.S. States on the southern border are investing in the development of Border Master Plans. To remain a viable planning tool, the development of these Border Master Plans has aimed to reflect the different region's needs, interests, and priorities. However, if the ultimate goal is to establish U.S.-Mexico project priorities, it is recommended that a similar – although not necessarily the same – approach be followed in the development of these Border Master Plans.
- Border Master Plans currently provide detailed inventories of planned project priorities in a study area. Two enhancements to the current scope of work should be considered: identify funding opportunities for high priority projects in the study area and development of technical tools to evaluate the potential impact of investments. The need for the former has been repeated by a number of stakeholders that participated in the development of the Laredo-Coahuila/Nuevo León/Tamaulipas Border Master Plan. Secondly, the feasibility of developing technical tools to determine how investment in a specific project would impact demand for other projects should be determined. For example, the implementation of some of the high priority projects identified could potentially reduce the need for or delay the need for implementing some of the other high priority projects. As currently conducted, Border Master Plans do not evaluate the impact of an investment in specific projects on the crossings or traffic in the region.
- Ensure participation by actively reaching out to stakeholders, keeping stakeholders engaged in the development of Border Master Plans, ensuring a process where every stakeholder has an equal voice in the selection of the criteria that will be used to prioritize projects, and by ensuring that all reports and information disseminated are available in English and Spanish. Ultimately; however, continued support for the development of the Border Master Plans will only prevail if results can be demonstrated – i.e., the securing of funding and the implementation of the identified high priority projects.