

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

BORDER TRADE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEETING

OPEN MEETING VIA WEBCONFERENCE  
PURSUANT TO GOVERNOR'S MARCH 16, 2020  
TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF CERTAIN OPEN MEETING PROVISIONS

Wednesday,  
June 17, 2020  
10:00 a.m.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

RUTH R. HUGHES, Chair  
RAFAEL M. ALDRETE  
JULIAN ALVAREZ III (absent)  
JON BARELA  
LUIS ALFREDO BAZÁN (absent)  
EDUARDO CALVO  
EDUARDO A. CAMPIRANO (absent)  
ANDREW CANON (absent)  
DAVID A. CORONADO  
PAUL A. CRISTINA (absent)  
ARTURO DOMINGUEZ (absent)  
JOHN ESPARZA  
JUAN ANTONIO FLORES (absent)  
DANTE GALEAZZI (absent)  
JOSUE GARCIA, JR.  
CYNTHIA GARZA-REYES  
JAKE GIESBRECHT  
JAYNE HARKINS (absent)  
BRUNO LOZANO  
LISA LOFTUS-OTWAY  
MARGA LOPEZ (absent)  
BRENDA MAINWARING (absent)  
STAN MEADOR  
VINCENT PEREZ  
JESUS REYNA (absent)  
PETE SAENZ  
GERARDO "GERRY" SCHWEBEL  
TOMMY TAYLOR (absent)  
SAM VALE

*ON THE RECORD REPORTING*  
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P R O C E E D I N G S

1  
2 SECRETARY HUGHS: Well, we will get started  
3 here. Thank you all for joining us today. Bienvenidos.  
4 I am Texas Secretary of State Ruth Hughs, and I want to  
5 thank all of you for joining this video conference.

6 It's our third Border Trade Advisory Committee,  
7 or BTAC, meeting of the year, and you know, we're in  
8 unprecedented times as our nation, our state and our  
9 communities face the challenges of combating COVID-19. So  
10 I appreciate all of your flexibility in making sure that  
11 the work of BTAC continues under these circumstances.

12 Please know that throughout all of this, my  
13 office and I stand ready to assist in any way that we can  
14 and remember to always reach out and do not hesitate to  
15 contact us. We're all in this together and we know, when  
16 hard times hit, Texans stick together.

17 So as the governor likes to say, there's truly  
18 no force more powerful than Texans helping Texans. And  
19 we'll be trying with that daily, as I'm sure many of you  
20 do as well, and please know we're here for you.

21 It is an honor to serve as the chair of this  
22 important Committee. It's my fourth meeting as Secretary,  
23 and our Committee's third meeting of 2020, and as always,  
24 I'd like to begin by thanking our partners at TxDOT and  
25 also our distinguished Commissioners for their service.

1           Commissioners Alvin New and Laura Ryan, thank  
2 you for joining us today. I'm not sure if they're on the  
3 call yet, but they have been actively participating in the  
4 work of BTAC, and your continued commitment to ensuring  
5 that Texas's trade relationship with Mexico grows even  
6 stronger is greatly appreciated.

7           I also have to mention that the instrumental  
8 work of this Committee would not be possible without the  
9 tireless efforts of Caroline Mays and her team at TxDOT,  
10 and I want to thank them for their work in helping to plan  
11 and ensure that our meetings are run smoothly.

12           All of the work that happens behind the scenes  
13 is really impressive, and they work very hard to make sure  
14 that these meetings go smoothly. So we're very fortunate  
15 to have all of you as partners. I'm very grateful for all  
16 the Committee members, and Caroline and your team. We  
17 really appreciate your continued support and dedication to  
18 the state of Texas.

19           As Secretary, I've had the privilege of meeting  
20 with and visiting with many of you, either in Austin or  
21 when we were still traveling. In fact, today, we were  
22 going to try to have this meeting in Laredo, and I'm  
23 really grateful for the continued commitment that you have  
24 in your individual communities and for giving me the  
25 opportunity to see firsthand some of the challenges that

1 face us.

2 I'm really looking forward to being able to get  
3 back on the road one day, as soon as the travel  
4 restrictions ease, and continue to visit our border  
5 communities and hear more about the specific challenges  
6 you face, to further strengthen that relationship and  
7 really get that feedback and input on how we can all serve  
8 you better.

9 The goal of this Committee, and my hope, is  
10 that we work collaboratively to help create a positive and  
11 lasting impact on our border communities. Through our  
12 continued work in establishing a well-defined Border  
13 Transportation Master Plan, we are going to be able to  
14 communicate to our state, federal and international  
15 counterparts on needs and priorities to help our border  
16 communities to thrive.

17 When we last met via video conference in April,  
18 members of this Committee provided invaluable feedback  
19 towards this plan. Members brought up challenges of  
20 current and needed infrastructure, suggested greater  
21 collaboration with Mexican states and federal partners,  
22 expressed concern over potential impacts to the supply  
23 chain in the manufacturing industry and retail sectors, as  
24 a result of the increased wait times at the border, and  
25 really stressed the need for us to make our efforts better

1 known to the public.

2 We took that information to heart. We really  
3 looked at the issues regarding, for example, the  
4 definitions of "essential" and how our guidelines with  
5 Canada are aligned, but with Mexico, they are not. In  
6 fact, the governor wrote a letter to that issue to  
7 President López Obrador.

8 And so we continue to do the work to try to  
9 assist in addressing these concerns that really impact our  
10 state and our nation and our economy, while making sure  
11 that health protocols remain the number one priority.  
12 Many of you brought up these unique challenges that  
13 COVID-19 has presented to the cross-border trade, because  
14 of the mutually-agreed-upon travel restrictions between  
15 the U.S. and Mexico as well, and how they've affected  
16 traffic as well as supplier operations.

17 So these are just a few examples of the  
18 conversations that BTAC has helped to generate between  
19 stakeholders at all levels. To ensure that we continue to  
20 make progress in developing this plan, we need everyone,  
21 and this means every single one of you listening in, to be  
22 fully engaged and actively participating in the Committee  
23 discussions as we near the bench-line here, because that's  
24 really going to help TxDOT and HDR in developing this  
25 crucial plan.

1           We need very specific input and feedback on the  
2 topics that are discussed and presented during the meeting  
3 and after the meeting. This input from all of you is key  
4 to drafting a plan that truly addresses the needs of our  
5 border areas.

6           By continuing to work collaboratively,  
7 discussing new ideas and exchanging critical information,  
8 we will help to forge an even brighter future for our  
9 border communities, our partners and neighbors in Mexico  
10 and the Lone Star State.

11           Now, before we formally begin today's meeting,  
12 I do want to provide you an update on our current  
13 circumstances as a result of COVID, because we know this  
14 crisis has had a profound impact on both international  
15 policy and trade. The last time we met, we discussed that  
16 because of COVID-19, non-essential travel restrictions  
17 have been implemented across our shared border to help  
18 combat the spread of the virus.

19           Since nearly one million Texas jobs are tied to  
20 trade, these restrictions have caused disruptions that  
21 have already been felt and will continue to be for some  
22 time. Across the border, each of our Mexican border  
23 states, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo León and Tamaulipas,  
24 have taken their own actions to help prevent the spread of  
25 this virus, and we thank them for their own swift measures

1 in doing so.

2 I also want to thank our guest representatives  
3 from each of these states for joining us today. From  
4 Chihuahua, Ada Alvarez from the Ministry of Economic  
5 Development is with us. From Coahuila, Guillermo  
6 González, Undersecretary of Infrastructure and Roads.

7 From Nuevo León, Manuel Padillas [phonetic],  
8 the General Coordinator of Promotion and Projects with  
9 COTREM [phonetic]. From Tamaulipas, Carlos García  
10 González, Secretary of Economic Development, who I  
11 understand has an update he'll be sharing with us, so I  
12 will give him the floor after my comments.

13 And we also have the pleasure of welcoming to  
14 our meeting representatives from the Mexican federal  
15 government, Erica Garcia, the Director of Intermodal  
16 Projects at Secretaría de Comunicaciones y Transportes.

17 Thank you for being here with us again at this  
18 meeting. Your input and your expertise are vital in  
19 developing a successful Border Master Plan. Also, we have  
20 my dear friend, Consul General of Mexico in Austin, Pablo  
21 Marentes, and Jorge Salcido, the Consul for Political and  
22 Economic Affairs, to represent the Mexican Ministry of  
23 Foreign Affairs here in Texas, and have been instrumental  
24 during this time in maintaining open lines of  
25 communication with our friends in Mexico.



1           Welcome, everyone, and thank you for working  
2 with us to help create a brighter future for all on both  
3 sides of the border. Last month, I had the opportunity to  
4 join Mexican Governors Miguel Riquelme from Coahuila,  
5 Jaime Rodriguez from Nuevo León, and Gobernador Francisco  
6 Javier García Cabeza de Vaca from Tamaulipas via video  
7 conference to provide an update on behalf of Texas and to  
8 hear from them the actions that we're collectively taking  
9 to ensure the continued safety of those on both sides of  
10 the border.

11           Among our many points of agreement were that we  
12 must increase the sharing of information and continue the  
13 coordination between Texas and Mexico's border states as  
14 we safely and gradually open our respective state  
15 economies, plan transportation infrastructure development  
16 and manage our shared ports of entry. We also recognize  
17 that our collective health and safety, as well as our  
18 economic prosperity, are mutually interdependent. To that  
19 end, now, more than ever, we must continue open lines of  
20 dialogue and further strengthen the trust that we have  
21 built.

22           Both Texans and Mexicans can rest assured that  
23 our respective states' officials are working hand-in-hand,  
24 dealing with this crisis. So I want to thank all of you  
25 for your work in this -- in all of this with BTAC, with

1 USMCA, that we are anticipating will be implemented on  
2 July 1.

3 We'll continue to keep you updated as we learn  
4 more, and please don't hesitate to share with us anything  
5 that will be useful in our work to make sure that our  
6 communities are doing well. Thank you for allowing me to  
7 provide this introduction and update.

8 And before I turn it over to Caroline, I  
9 believe Secretario Carlos García from Tamaulipas might  
10 have an update for us, if he's already joined us? Yes.  
11 And (speaking Spanish).

12 MR. GARCÍA GONZÁLEZ: Thank you, Secretary  
13 Hughs. I really appreciate the opportunity to be in this  
14 Border Trade Advisory Committee meeting. I had the  
15 opportunity to be at the last meeting, and I also had a  
16 chance to be present in your video conference with the  
17 Governors from the States of Coahuila, Nuevo León, and  
18 obviously, my boss from Tamaulipas.

19 I have a three-minute presentation I want to  
20 share with the entire group. I appreciate the time, and  
21 obviously, all the work you guys do, to do a good Master  
22 Plan for our borders. Can you go to the next slide,  
23 please?

24 As you noted, trade flow in the first quarter  
25 of this year was similar to the same quarter of 2019. As

1 a matter of fact, in March, we had more operations through  
2 the borders between Texas and Tamaulipas, and I suspect it  
3 was similar in Nuevo León, Coahuila and Chihuahua.

4 The thing is, since we did not have the  
5 essential aligned at the end of March, you can see the  
6 drop, Secretary, and everybody from TxDOT. In April and  
7 in May, it dropped close to 30 percent, both in customs  
8 operations and in import-export operations.

9 Next slide, please. As you already noted --  
10 but I just want to make a brief announcement. Even though  
11 non-essential travel was issued by the U.S. on March 21,  
12 and you know that yesterday the restrictions have been  
13 extended until July 21. Northbound, it allows essentials  
14 and residents and U.S. citizens to go back and forth of  
15 the border, but in Mexico, we have not done the same.

16 So some states -- Tamaulipas, for example, as  
17 you noted, has been taking additional measures, and we've  
18 been doing it in coordination with the County Judge, in  
19 this case, the U.S. side, in Cameron County, Hidalgo,  
20 Webb. Also, with the city mayors from Laredo, McAllen and  
21 Brownsville.

22 And we've been doing joint efforts to have the  
23 non-essential travel coming obviously southbound and then  
24 going back to a lower level. So we did some restrictions  
25 that I'm going to briefly say. We did some -- we have

1 people in the different ports of entry, Secretary, that  
2 take the temperature check.

3 If they do have a temperature, they go back to  
4 the U.S., and we let them know in the U.S. that people  
5 going back. We have a mandatory use of face masks, facial  
6 cover, in Tamaulipas, and that's still, right now, being  
7 enforced.

8 We have a two-passenger limit per vehicle.  
9 Okay? That way, not entire families cross, especially in  
10 the weekends, because, as you know, that's very -- that  
11 can cause the propagation of the virus. And we also did,  
12 like in the Mexico capitol, a no-driving day, *No Circula*,  
13 depending on the license plate's last digit.

14 So to give you an example, because I don't want  
15 to give an example of every port of entry -- it will take  
16 me several minutes. I will just put one example, my  
17 hometown in Matamoros, with Brownsville. We have three  
18 bridges there that cross commercial vehicles and also  
19 passengers.

20 We were, a month ago, in about 1,500 crossings  
21 per day. We made -- through these filters, we made a drop  
22 to half. Now, it's about 750 on each bridge, and on  
23 average, we return over 100 vehicles a day for any of  
24 these restrictions.

25 So it's been helping to not get a sudden rise

1 in the COVID situation. Next and last slide, please.  
2 Also, as I'm sure you know, yesterday Governor Francisco  
3 García Cabeza de Vaca was in Nuevo Laredo. This has to do  
4 with the infrastructure. That's why I want to share it  
5 with you.

6 In the last meeting we had in April, as you  
7 know, there were -- construction was underway of the new  
8 offices for World Trade Bridge. Well, they're almost  
9 finished. The total investment was over \$11 million. As  
10 a matter of fact, Congressman Henry Cuellar was here  
11 yesterday with the Governor in Nuevo Laredo to do the  
12 ribbon-cutting for this new infrastructure.

13 So we're getting ready for more trade with  
14 Texas and with the U.S. when the restrictions are lifted,  
15 and we can, altogether as a team, go forward after this  
16 COVID-19 pandemic. Many thanks for the time, and you can  
17 count on the State of Tamaulipas to continue working with  
18 you, not only on the Border Master Plan, but with any  
19 other issue, Secretary Hughs, that you may wish.

20 So thank you.

21 SECRETARY HUGHS: Thank you so much for taking  
22 the time to present this to the group. This information  
23 is very valuable, and you know, amigos, (speaking  
24 Spanish). We are really very grateful for the friendships  
25 that we developed and look forward to meeting in person

1 again in the future.

2 I also want to take a moment before I hand the  
3 phone to Caroline, if anyone has any questions for  
4 Secretary García?

5 (No response.)

6 SECRETARY HUGHS: It may be difficult to do.  
7 They -- you might be able to put it in the chat box, and  
8 we can try to facilitate a dialogue that way, as we go  
9 along. I see that Representative Blanco is on the phone,  
10 that Mayor Saenz of Laredo is on the phone.

11 I want to thank you all for your leadership and  
12 for participating, and I will leave the difficult work of  
13 making sure that all of our officials are acknowledged,  
14 when I hand the phone over to Caroline, but I really  
15 appreciate all of you being on the call as well today.

16 So with that, Caroline, I will hand it over to  
17 you.

18 MS. MAYS: Yes. Thank you, Secretary. We will  
19 take the time right now to do our roll call for Committee  
20 members. But I think Commissioner New -- are you on? Do  
21 you have any quick remarks?

22 COMMISSIONER NEW: Good morning, all, and I am  
23 on the call, but I don't have any prepared remarks or need  
24 to talk. I just am calling in and watching the WebEx to  
25 make sure I'm aware of everything going on with the Border

1 Trade Advisory Committee.

2 Happy to be here. So I want to wish you all  
3 Godspeed and look forward to the rest of the meeting.

4 MS. MAYS: Yes. Thank you very much,  
5 Commissioner New for showing up this morning.  
6 Commissioner Ryan -- I know, Secretary, Commissioner Ryan  
7 has -- she has a short time here. She has another meeting  
8 to attend to, so I'm not sure -- is Commissioner Ryan --  
9 are you on?

10 (No response.)

11 MS. MAYS: She might have already stepped away.  
12 So with that, I will, you know, turn it over to Eduardo.  
13 If you can go through and do a roll call for Committee  
14 members?

15 MR. HAGERT: Yes. Good morning. Rafael  
16 Aldrete, which I believe is present.

17 MR. ALDRETE: Yeah. I'm here. Good morning,  
18 everybody.

19 MR. HAGERT: Good morning. Julian Alvarez?

20 (No response.)

21 MR. HAGERT: I didn't see his name on the chat  
22 box or on the phone. Jon Barela?

23 MR. BARELA: Yes, I'm here. I'm joining by  
24 phone.

25 MR. HAGERT: Good morning.

1 MR. BARELA: Good morning, everyone.

2 MR. HAGERT: Luis Bazán, or someone  
3 representing the Pharr Bridge? I saw Ezequiel Ordoñez.  
4 He may be on mute. Ezequiel?

5 (No response.)

6 MR. HAGERT: Okay. Eduardo Calvo, which I see.

7 MR. CALVO: I am here. Good morning,  
8 everybody.

9 MR. HAGERT: Good morning. Eduardo Campirano?

10 (No response.)

11 MR. HAGERT: Andrew Canon?

12 (No response.)

13 MR. HAGERT: David Coronado? I see him.

14 MR. CORONADO: Good morning. Yes, I'm here.  
15 David Coronado at City of El Paso. Thank you.

16 MR. HAGERT: Good morning. Paul Cristina or  
17 someone representing BNSF Railway?

18 (No response.)

19 MR. HAGERT: Art Dominguez?

20 (No response.)

21 MR. HAGERT: John Esparza? I see him here.

22 MR. ESPARZA: Good morning.

23 MR. HAGERT: Good morning.

24 MR. ESPARZA: Yes, sir.

25 MR. HAGERT: Juan Antonio Flores?



1 (No response.)

2 MR. HAGERT: Dante Galeazzi?

3 (No response.)

4 MR. HAGERT: Josue Garcia? I see him here. He  
5 may be on mute. Josue Garcia?

6 (No response.)

7 MR. HAGERT: Okay. Cynthia Garza-Reyes?

8 MS. GARZA-REYES: Hi. I'm here. Good morning.

9 MR. HAGERT: Good morning. Jake Giesbrecht? I  
10 know he's online. We texted. Jake, good morning.

11 (No response.)

12 MR. HAGERT: He may be on mute. I know that  
13 he's present. Jayne Harkins?

14 (No response.)

15 MR. HAGERT: Mayor Bruno Lozano?

16 (No response.)

17 MR. HAGERT: Lisa Loftus --

18 MS. MAYS: I know Mayor Lozano is on.

19 MR. HAGERT: Who's on?

20 MS. MAYS: I know Mayor Lozano is on.

21 MR. HAGERT: Is on? Okay.

22 MS. MAYS: Yes. Yeah, he texted.

23 MR. HAGERT: Lisa Loftus-Otway?

24 MS. LOFTUS-OTWAY: Good morning. I'm here.

25 MR. HAGERT: Perfect. Marga Lopez?

1 (No response.)

2 MR. HAGERT: Brenda Mainwaring, or someone  
3 representing Union Pacific Rail?

4 (No response.)

5 MR. HAGERT: Stan Meador? Present.

6 MR. MEADOR: Stan is present. Good morning.

7 MR. HAGERT: Commissioner Vincent Perez is also  
8 present.

9 MR. PEREZ: Good morning, Madame Secretary,  
10 Commissioner New and Committee members.

11 MR. HAGERT: Jesus Reyna?

12 (No response.)

13 MR. HAGERT: Mayor Pete Saenz?

14 MAYOR SAENZ: Yes. Good morning. Buenos días.  
15 Present.

16 MR. HAGERT: Gerry Schwebel?

17 (No response.)

18 MR. HAGERT: Tommy Taylor?

19 (No response.)

20 MR. HAGERT: Sam Vale?

21 MR. VALE: Here.

22 MR. HAGERT: Someone from the City of Eagle  
23 Pass?

24 (No response.)

25 MR. HAGERT: And someone representing Anzalduas

1 International Bridge?

2 MR. OLAGUIBEL: Hi, good morning, Eduardo.

3 This is Juan Olaguibel present.

4 MR. HAGERT: Good morning. Okay. We have 16;  
5 we're short one member from quorum.

6 MALE VOICE: Josue --

7 MR. HAGERT: I counted him. We're still short  
8 one member.

9 Ezequiel Ordoñez, I know he logged in at 8:04  
10 for Pharr. Ezequiel, are you on the line or present?

11 MS. MAYS: Did we miss anybody, any member that  
12 joined in late, that we didn't account for --

13 MR. GIESBRECHT: This is Jake Giesbrecht. My  
14 phone was muted. I was on.

15 MR. HAGERT: We counted you, too.

16 MR. GARZA: Hello. This is Hector Garza from  
17 the Texas Produce Association.

18 MR. HAGERT: Okay. That represents --

19 MS. MAYS: Okay.

20 MR. HAGERT: So that's quorum.

21 MALE VOICE: Yes.

22 MS. MAYS: Okay. Okay. Thank you, Eduardo.

23 MR. HAGERT: You're welcome.

24 MS. MAYS: Secretary, we do have a quorum, so  
25 we can proceed.

1           SECRETARY HUGHS: All right. Caroline, are  
2 there any specific procedures for Webex that we need to  
3 share with the group? Or if not, we'll just proceed with  
4 the adoption of the April 16, 2020 meeting minutes.

5           MS. MAYS: Yeah. Nothing on the Webex,  
6 although I'll ask, if you're not speaking, please mute  
7 your line so we can minimize any disruption during the  
8 meeting.

9           So Secretary, let's just go ahead.

10          SECRETARY HUGHS: Someone needs to mute their  
11 phone. Wonderful. Thank you. At this time, with a  
12 quorum, we will accept the adoption of the April 16, 2020  
13 minutes. You should all have received a copy and I hope  
14 you've had an opportunity to review them.

15          Do you have any questions, comments, concerns,  
16 or do I have a motion to adopt the minutes?

17          MR. GARCIA: This is Josue. I move that we  
18 adopt the minutes.

19          MAYOR SAENZ: And I will second that. This is  
20 Mayor Saenz.

21          SECRETARY HUGHS: Thank you both, and good  
22 morning to you both. And with that, we have a motion for  
23 the minutes. All in favor?

24          (A chorus of ayes.)

25          SECRETARY HUGHS: I guess, more importantly, if

1 anyone on the call is opposed, please speak up now.

2 (No response.)

3 SECRETARY HUGHS: All right then. It looks  
4 like we have an agreement to approve the minutes. And  
5 Caroline, at this time, I'll pass it back to you.

6 MS. MAYS: Okay. Yeah. Thank you very much,  
7 Secretary. I appreciate Committee members, you know,  
8 participating. And Secretary, one thing I know -- we, you  
9 know, called out the names of our Mexican partners. I'm  
10 not sure if we missed anybody.

11 I just want to make sure we acknowledge all of  
12 them. Tim, I know we have several others that we might  
13 have not introduced.

14 SECRETARY HUGHS: I saw that Javier Lagos  
15 [phonetic] has joined us. So I think all the --

16 MS. MAYS: Yes.

17 SECRETARY HUGHS: -- representatives were  
18 specifically named, so is anyone else on the call?

19 MS. GARCIA: Good morning. Erica Garcia from  
20 ICT [phonetic].

21 SECRETARY HUGHS: Yes, yes. I mentioned you.  
22 Erica, thank you so much for joining us again for this  
23 call. I know you were at our last meeting as well. It  
24 was very helpful to have your participation.

25 MS. GARCIA: Thank you.

1 MS. MAYS: And then if we missed any of the  
2 officials -- I know Representative Blanco is on. Did we  
3 miss anybody else?

4 REP. BLANCO: Yes. This is Representative  
5 Blanco. Yes. Secretary Hughs mentioned earlier. Thank  
6 you so much, and great to be with y'all.

7 MS. MAYS: Yes. Welcome. Thank you. So with  
8 that, Secretary, we will jump into the next agenda item,  
9 and I want to just again -- Secretary, you mentioned, we  
10 are deep in the Border Master Plan development.

11 We are still racing to get the plan completed  
12 by December of this year. And as you can see, we have --  
13 pretty much this whole meeting is a work session to  
14 discuss the Border Master Plan, building on what we  
15 presented and discussed with you at the last meeting in  
16 April.

17 Today, we're building on that. And as you  
18 remember, last meeting, we did provide you information on  
19 the introduction of the Border Master Plan. We had a lot  
20 of discussions there, and you'll hear, you know, how we  
21 have kind of addressed some of the comments there.

22 A lot of discussions on Chapter 2, Goals and  
23 Objectives, and primarily on the institution stuff,  
24 process-related issues, some of the challenges with COVID,  
25 and kind of how it shows some of the gaps in the protocols

1 and in the processes and in the coordination and  
2 collaboration, you know, and you know, federal versus  
3 state, local and private sector.

4 So this is all the things we've discussed  
5 there. And also, we did provide a little bit on  
6 Chapter 3, but not a lot. So you'll hear a lot on Chapter  
7 3 today, you know. And then also we did give you a lot of  
8 information on Chapter 4.

9 Today will be kind of a truncated version of  
10 that. And on Chapter 5, this one, I have to let you all  
11 know that I had to pull this out of the agenda, because  
12 it's not ready for prime time, and did not want to present  
13 and have a discussion with you all on, you know,  
14 information that's half-baked.

15 And a lot of you know me. We try to make sure  
16 that, you know, it passes the litmus test before we can  
17 bring it in front of you. So certainly, we're tabling  
18 that discussion.

19 MALE VOICE: Sure.

20 MS. MAYS: But when we get to that, if you have  
21 anything that's absolutely burning, that you say, okay,  
22 this is some of the key needs we need you guys to  
23 consider, then they can bring that up during the meeting  
24 today, you know.

25 And then we'll take a short break, and then

1 we'll come back and we'll have discussions on Chapter 6  
2 and Chapter 7. And these two chapters are really, really  
3 important. And really, you know, one thing I would say we  
4 really need your input today would be on these two  
5 chapters.

6 We're looking into the future. Chapter 3,  
7 we'll talk about past and present, and then Chapter 7,  
8 we'll kind of look into the future, what those, you  
9 know -- the forecast look like, whether it's from people  
10 movement or goods movement, trade, traffic, et cetera.

11 So we're going to need your input there, you  
12 know. I just spoke as realistic, you know, of the  
13 assumptions we're making, you know, in line with, you  
14 know, what you see or your experiences. And the economic  
15 importance of the border will be, you know -- kind of the  
16 preliminary analysis on the economic importance of the  
17 border from different perspectives, you know.

18 Then we'll also, within that -- also we'll talk  
19 about, you know, the economic impact of the border which  
20 is like, you know, for instance, congestion costs,  
21 economic costs of congestion. And we'll talk a little bit  
22 about border wait times, and then other elements of the  
23 system that impedes, you know, the flow of people and  
24 trade across the border.

25 So those two chapters -- again, we, a little



1 bit, over-promote the narrative, but I think it was enough  
2 for us to have a really good dialogue with you all so we  
3 can go back and refine those two chapters and bring it  
4 back to you at the next meeting.

5 And then, of course, our last agenda items  
6 generally give the Committee members a chance to bring any  
7 issues you would like to discuss, and then also we will  
8 talk about the next meeting as well, and then done by  
9 12:00. So with that, I will turn this over to Tim to  
10 start, to the agenda item on the introduction, and work  
11 with the consultants here. Tim?

12 MR. JUAREZ: Good morning. Thank you,  
13 Caroline. Good morning, Secretary of State Hughs,  
14 Commissioners New and Ryan, and all Border Trade Advisory  
15 Committee members. We appreciate you joining us today.  
16 As we go through the presentation, as noted by Secretary  
17 of State Hughs and Caroline, this really is a discussion.

18 So if at any opportunity during the  
19 presentation, if you would like to ask us a question or  
20 have a comment, please do so. We are also monitoring the  
21 chat box, so you have an opportunity to enter your  
22 comments or questions through the chat box, and then of  
23 course there will be opportunity after today's meeting to  
24 provide additional comments as well.

25 Once again, I am Tim Juarez. I serve as the

1 manager for International Trade and Border Planning here  
2 at TxDOT and I'm also TxDOT's program manager for the  
3 development of the Texas-Mexico Border Transportation  
4 Master Plan.

5 As you see on your screen today, here are the  
6 agenda that -- the topics we will cover and that as  
7 Caroline has run through. So to save time, I'm going to  
8 go to the next slide, please, and give a recap of the  
9 previous BTAC meeting.

10 Next slide. Can somebody confirm that you can  
11 hear me?

12 MALE VOICE: We can hear you, but we don't see  
13 any slides.

14 MR. JUAREZ: Okay. And can you confirm you can  
15 see the recap of previous BTAC meetings?

16 MS. MAYS: Yeah. It changed now, Tim.

17 MR. JUAREZ: All right. My apology. So at our  
18 April 20 meeting, we talked about the stakeholder outreach  
19 and the four rounds that we had done not only with BTAC,  
20 but the Binational Regional Steering Committee. Based on  
21 your comments that we received and for the BNRSTs  
22 [phonetic], we made some refinements to Chapter 1, which  
23 is the introduction, as well as goals and objectives and  
24 institutions, as noted in Chapter 2.

25 Primarily, based on comments we received, we

1 updated the base year data of 2018 to 2019. We also got  
2 into additional detail regarding the update of  
3 institutions and agencies that are involved in key aspects  
4 of that binational relationship that impacts both U.S. and  
5 the Mexico border from a policy, program and project  
6 component.

7 We further, based on comments, redefined  
8 Chapter 3, which is the Texas-Mexico border, both past and  
9 present. We noted some efforts regarding the binational,  
10 multimodal transportation network designation, and as  
11 noted by Caroline, we continue to refine the needs  
12 assessment and system performance.

13 One of the key components from that is, we had  
14 a very good discussion on border wait times versus border  
15 crossing times, and you would hear that information today  
16 as well. So to go into the introduction of components, I  
17 would like to introduce Donald Ludlow from the HDR  
18 Consultancy. Donald?

19 MR. LUDLOW: Yes. Thanks, Tim. I hope  
20 everybody's doing well today. I'm looking forward to  
21 talking to you about Chapter 1 and also Chapter 3. Right  
22 now, I'll take you through some of the major changes that  
23 we've made to Chapter 1, and just give you an overview.

24 There's only two slides here, and that's  
25 because last time we went through Chapter 1 in some depth.

1 And really, the main purpose today is to provide a  
2 refresh and also just to update you on the things that  
3 we've changed with Chapter 1.

4 So again, Chapter 1 is the first chapter that  
5 anybody would open up as they were reading the Border  
6 Master Plan. The intent here is to have accessible  
7 language so that a wide audience can understand the unique  
8 conditions and needs and the border story, and really  
9 understand and set the stage for the infrastructure  
10 investment challenges that are facing the border bi-  
11 nationally in the future.

12 So again, the chapter purpose is to orient  
13 people about the Border Master Plan and provide a snapshot  
14 of the way that the border connects our two countries, and  
15 emphasize that transportation issues, needs and  
16 challenges, and also the data that are underpinning all of  
17 this.

18 You asked us to make some changes and we  
19 listened to you. We have made a number of adaptations to  
20 this chapter. Kelly, if you'll advance the next slide,  
21 and we'll go through these. One of the things you asked  
22 is for an update for 2017, as the year that we were using  
23 for baseline conditions.

24 Wherever possible, we have updated that to 2019  
25 or 2018, so that should read better. It should read more

1 current and enable some of those trend lines and snapshots  
2 to more accurately reflect where we were at, as of 2019,  
3 with the latest data available.

4 You also asked us to include more about  
5 cultural ties. And we've made a cognizant effort to go  
6 through Chapter 1 and weave in more of the border story,  
7 more about the trade connections that bring the two  
8 countries together and also the cultural and social ties  
9 that bind the two countries.

10 There's a number of key messages throughout  
11 this first chapter that should jump to the reader, and one  
12 of those is that this is North America's busiest trade  
13 gateway, that the border is a key contributor to local,  
14 regional and state economies, that the border region is  
15 growing rapidly, that the infrastructure is the foundation  
16 that connects the cultural and commercial fabric of the  
17 border region.

18 And then we go through a number of kind of key  
19 statistics, and then talk about how the plan is the  
20 blueprint for the future. One other thing we did is, we  
21 pulled out some of the demographic information and really  
22 focused on providing the details of that in Chapter 3, and  
23 I'll review some of that with you today, although we've  
24 been through that in the last BTAC meeting.

25 So that's the overview of Chapter 1, and we

1 will have an opportunity after we get to our next period  
2 to discuss whether you have any questions or comments.  
3 Caroline had also provided everyone with the download  
4 link, so hopefully we can look at that.

5 Now, Alejandro Soliz will walk you through  
6 Chapter 2 and some of the changes we've made there.

7 MS. MAYS: Donald, you know, can you just stay  
8 on Chapter 1? Just want to make sure that we captured  
9 everything that the Committee had brought up at the last  
10 meeting. So -- because, you know, essentially, you were  
11 going to, you know -- what you see now is addressing those  
12 comments.

13 Are there any other comments we might have  
14 missed?

15 MR. CALVO: Hi, Caroline. This is Eduardo  
16 Calvo in El Paso. I just had one very small comment on  
17 this one. I think the chapter is in really good shape and  
18 reads really good.

19 The only thing, as I was reading it -- it's --  
20 perhaps the only thing that may be missing is a very, very  
21 short statement, when you talk about all the -- about the  
22 border in general terms and the relationship between the  
23 two countries and how important it is, but maybe just  
24 insert a statement that even though, you know, we share  
25 the border with Texas and Mexico, but the border is not a

1 monolithic block.

2           You know, the different regions, you know, are  
3 very different within itself. So you know, I was just,  
4 like, hoping for a small statement there, you know,  
5 reflecting that fact. I don't know if that makes any  
6 sense to you all.

7           MS. MAYS: It makes sense, you know, and  
8 certainly we can take a stab on that, and if you'd like to  
9 send us, you know, your statement so we can add, because  
10 yeah, certainly, you know, the border is not homogeneous.

11         There's, you know, essentially three distinct regions.

12           You've got El Paso, you know, and you've got  
13 Juarez. You've got Laredo, Nuevo Laredo. And you've got,  
14 you know, RGV. And you've got, you know, Reynosa and  
15 Matamoros. So certainly, you know, I think you're right.

16         That statement needs to acknowledge that.

17           MALE VOICE: There's nothing wrong with that,  
18 as long as it doesn't appear to be giving preference to  
19 one area versus another, because we're supporting the  
20 entire border system.

21           MR. CALVO: Absolutely, absolutely, but again,  
22 you know, the importance is that, you know, the -- you  
23 know, it's not a monolithic block, you know. It's not  
24 the -- you know, all the different regions, like Caroline  
25 said, you know, are just different, and --

1           MALE VOICE: Yeah. And different areas support  
2 -- so some more of some type of products than others.  
3 Some are more manufacturing-oriented. Some are more  
4 agricultural-oriented. Some are construction materials.

5           But that's okay, as long as we point out that  
6 we're all working together to be efficient.

7           MR. CALVO: Absolutely.

8           MS. MAYS: Yeah.

9           MR. SCHWEBEL: Caroline, this is Gerry  
10 Schwebel. I'll make an observation as well.

11          MS. MAYS: Yes, sure, Gerry.

12          MR. SCHWEBEL: As you list -- as it flows here,  
13 you list -- you start talking about Mexico and the U.S.,  
14 then you go in to -- in regards to trade, and then you  
15 jump to the border region population. That's the entire  
16 southern border region population, I gather, versus just  
17 Texas border, and then we go --

18          MS. MAYS: It's just Texas-Mexico border.

19          MR. SCHWEBEL: Okay. Well, I just want to make  
20 sure we clarify that for consistency for the reader, we  
21 start off with a -- basically a better picture of Mexico  
22 and trade, and we, you know, continue that on. And then  
23 we go into, you know -- I mean, we -- I still think we can  
24 say, Texas border region, kind of like we say in the  
25 last bullet point, Texas-Mexico border, just for --



1 MS. MAYS: Yes.

2 MR. SCHWEBEL: -- consistency.

3 MS. MAYS: Okay. Do you have a page number  
4 you're referring to?

5 MR. SCHWEBEL: Yeah. It's a refinement to the  
6 end of the first chapter, where you list them in the --

7 MS. MAYS: Okay.

8 MR. SCHWEBEL: -- page.

9 MS. MAYS: Okay.

10 MR. JUAREZ: Yeah. Thanks. Thanks, Gerry.

11 That's a good comment too.

12 MS. MAYS: Yes. And again, you know, as I  
13 mentioned earlier, that we would like your comments now  
14 during the meeting, but also please take the time to  
15 review the document and provide comments. And I know some  
16 of you, Gerry and Mayor Saenz and others on this call,  
17 also serve on the Texas Trade Advisory Committee, and  
18 really, the work of that committee was very effective in  
19 developing the Border Master Plan.

20 It was the commitment of the committee members  
21 to really review, take the time to review the documents  
22 and provide the feedback and insight. You guys know a lot  
23 of this information and using it from your perspective  
24 really helps us to articulate that better in the report  
25 and really capture what you all would like to communicate

1 and see.

2 So I appreciate, you know, you all taking the  
3 time to do that. Any other comments before we move to the  
4 next?

5 (No response.)

6 MS. MAYS: Okay. I will hand it over to  
7 Alejandro.

8 MR. LUDLOW: Over to Alejandro.

9 MR. SOLIS: Thank you, Donald. Thank you,  
10 Caroline. So on Chapter 2, also we spent a considerable  
11 amount of time in the last BTAC meeting two months ago,  
12 and we also want to focus this one, this procedure to  
13 apply to only three or four -- on the changes that we  
14 made, to make sure that we heard what you have to tell us,  
15 and to make sure that we address those.

16 So in particular, we heard that we needed to  
17 update the institutions and the agencies that are involved  
18 in this part of the development, planning and  
19 infrastructure. So we did that. And then we also  
20 differentiated the roles throughout the procedures for  
21 border management.

22 So we go to the next slide, please. This --  
23 you know, what we tried to do, and our understanding  
24 was -- we need to depict better the complexities of the  
25 border, and those complexities are basically hand-in-hand

1 with the large amount of stakeholders and agencies in the  
2 private sector and situations and groups that work  
3 together.

4 And therefore, the first comment we got was  
5 about the coordination. We have to be present for the  
6 border to work on a daily basis. So we took a deeper dive  
7 into that. We included the reference to this  
8 coordination, and we also added a couple of updates that  
9 we thought were relevant, given the COVID-19 situation,  
10 which had to do with border emergency disruptions and  
11 management in terms of resiliency planning.

12 So we addressed that in the new chapter.  
13 Another comment we got was to make sure that we added the  
14 alternative sources of funding, which we did. In  
15 particular, we mentioned a donation [inaudible] program,  
16 and the role of the private sector to foster the  
17 development of infrastructure along the Texas-Mexico  
18 border.

19 And then we also got the comment to add more  
20 visuals. So we started, you know -- we actually  
21 introduced more tables and put more streamlined  
22 information, instead of all being text. We tried to put  
23 it into a format that was more easy to read.

24 In particular, the four points that we expanded  
25 upon was -- we identified the opportunities for better

1 coordination along the border. This is a response to a  
2 comment we got that, yes, there is various high-level  
3 coordination, but there's always room for improvement.

4 So we mentioned that specifically in the  
5 chapter. We also described the resiliency planning and  
6 the joining between management and emergency response,  
7 which again are very, very apropos with the current  
8 situation of disruptions in COVID.

9 We included a discussion on the sister cities  
10 agreement which is one of those mechanisms that allows the  
11 coordinated planning for emergency responses and  
12 disruptions. We also expanded on the list that we have  
13 provided before in terms of agencies leading the planning  
14 efforts, and we've broken down to the inside and outside  
15 the border crossings.

16 And I'm going to spend a little bit more time  
17 on that particular topic in the next slide. And then  
18 finally, we really added the community groups and expanded  
19 upon the -- all of the agencies at the different levels of  
20 the government that are involved in the border.

21 Next slide, please. So again, the purpose of  
22 this chapter, when it comes to the institutions, is just  
23 to show that there is a lot of institutions involved and  
24 that the coordination process is a complex one. So what  
25 these particular slides summarize is the leading agencies

1 for each one of those aspects of the border are important  
2 for planning and operations and policy.

3 So we started with the policy development, the  
4 planning at the border, the management and the operations  
5 of the border, and then the infrastructure of the border  
6 crossings themselves, and then the infrastructure that  
7 connects those border crossings with the rest of the  
8 network.

9 And what you will see here is that from the  
10 Mexican side a lot of this is led by the federal  
11 government. There is a big role for the federal  
12 government on all of these aspects, whereas in the U.S.  
13 side, it is the -- it's a little bit more spread out from  
14 the different actors.

15 So we have a lot of federal agencies involved  
16 in the policy development and the border planning and the  
17 operations. But when we come to the infrastructure  
18 connecting the border crossings, there's a lot of private  
19 sector participation, and also states and cities and  
20 others. So it's a little bit more diverse on the U.S.  
21 side.

22 We also have an aspect of coordination  
23 mechanisms that we identified that align with each one of  
24 these aspects of the operation and planning of the border.

25 And we also identified clearly in the chapter that there

1 are gaps in coordination between the different levels of  
2 government, and also a lack of standardized mechanisms for  
3 the local stakeholders to participate in making all the  
4 border-related decisions. This is something that we also  
5 heard during the previous meeting, and we wanted to make a  
6 specific statement of it.

7 Next slide, please. Finally, we refined a  
8 little bit the description of the planning process on the  
9 two sides of the border.

10 Again, just to convey the message that there is  
11 an inside-the-border-crossing planning process and an  
12 outside-the-border-crossing planning process. Inside the  
13 border crossing normally is CBP and Aduanas who take a  
14 lead, and then outside, it really varies within each one  
15 of the countries.

16 We also added -- on the U.S. side, we -- at the  
17 request of our partners from CBP, we added the document.  
18 It's a five-year planning document on capital investments,  
19 which is the leading document for inside-the-border-  
20 crossing planning.

21 And on the Mexican side, we clarified that  
22 Aduanas does all of the planning inside the border  
23 crossing, but FCT also has a role, in particular when it  
24 comes to the bridge, international bridge structures.  
25 They are under the purview of FCT.

1           So those are the refinements we made to this  
2 chapter overall. And I guess we'll -- just like in the  
3 previous chapter, we'd like to hear from you, if we  
4 addressed the problems that you had, or if there is any  
5 particular comments you would like -- that you would like  
6 us to add as part of this chapter.

7           MS. MAYS: Anything else? Did we miss any of  
8 your comments from the last meeting? Or once you reviewed  
9 the chapter again you saw anything that, you know, we need  
10 to add or articulate differently.

11          MR. ZAPATA: Hey, Caroline, Alejandro? This is  
12 David Zapata. Can you hear me?

13          MS. MAYS: Yes, David.

14          MR. ZAPATA: I just had a question for  
15 reference, as how the information about how the different  
16 organisms, governmental organisms and private that connect  
17 on this border first at the federal and state and local  
18 level -- how are they going to be presented?

19                I mean, are they going to be presented in some  
20 sort of "organa-gram" where there's kind of like a list  
21 of, like, where something starts and goes up the chain, or  
22 is it just going to be presented in a paragraph? I was just  
23 curious about that, because for people that are unfamiliar  
24 with it, I mean, you'd make better sense to have a better  
25 picture of how things work and where an idea of a project

1 goes from -- after coming out of a city or the other way  
2 around.

3 MR. SOLIS: Yes, David. There are a couple of  
4 figures on the chapter that talk about the planning  
5 process on each side of the border, where we make that  
6 distinction between inside the border crossing and outside  
7 the border crossing, and then list all of the different,  
8 let's say, elements that are involved in it.

9 So we're presenting it for the two countries  
10 precisely to create that contrast, and to show that it's  
11 terribly complex within each country, but if you have any  
12 particular questions on those diagrams, or if you want to  
13 see another type of diagram, we'll be happy to discuss it  
14 with you and to provide as much clarity as possible into  
15 this.

16 It is -- again, as I mentioned, it's a complex  
17 process. It has not been mapped out completely, to my  
18 knowledge, so it is -- we're taking a stab at doing that,  
19 and we welcome any feedback.

20 MR. ZAPATA: Yeah. No. I think that  
21 definitely from the members, of course -- I think that  
22 having the clearest picture possible as to how the process  
23 works will be very beneficial when the plan is ready to be  
24 presented to stakeholders and elected officials that may  
25 not be as familiar with border dynamics as the people in



1 the Committee.

2 Thank you.

3 MS. MAYS: Yeah. And David, you know, I think,  
4 yeah -- that's a really good question and idea to ponder,  
5 because the folks on the border, all the Committee  
6 members, are well entrenched in it, but I don't think the  
7 outside world, outside of the border, actually understands  
8 how it works.

9 So it is definitely an idea that we're going to  
10 have to ponder and figure out how we draw that picture of  
11 straw men, or okay, this is at a high level how the border  
12 operates, because a lot of people don't understand it, and  
13 it's very different when you're looking at the goods  
14 movement, like, for trucks, and you're looking at rail,  
15 and you're looking at the people movement, from  
16 pedestrians, to bicyclists, to P of E, or to buses.

17 So yes. It's something that I think we'll take  
18 that back and kind of visit a little bit, and it might  
19 require talking to some of the BTAC members.

20 Any comments from the BTAC members? Any  
21 reaction to David's comments?

22 MR. CALVO: Caroline, this is Eduardo again.  
23 The -- just a minor comment that's somehow related to  
24 that. In looking at Table -- I think it's 2.33, where  
25 you're listing all the different stakeholders from the

1 U.S. and Mexico, from public and private sector -- the  
2 only one that I think I did not see in talking on the  
3 private sector side, on the Mexican side, is really the  
4 big groups that -- or I mean, the groups that identify the  
5 maquilas, you know, like INDEX, or what used to be AMAQ,  
6 the Association of Maquiladoras.

7 That's a big group that I did not see listed on  
8 the tables.

9 MS. MAYS: Okay. Yeah. We'll definitely  
10 revisit that. We know INDEX very well. We, you know,  
11 have a great relationship with the leadership there, and  
12 they have participated in meetings, I think, if I'm not --  
13 yeah.

14 We, you know, had meetings with them in Mexico  
15 City. They're very interested in the process. So  
16 absolutely. Any of the other organizations that we might  
17 have missed, and this may not be a completely exhaustive  
18 list of everything, but we want to be as comprehensive as  
19 possible.

20 So thank you.

21 MR. CALVO: Absolutely. And I do have some  
22 other, you know, more like editorial comments that I will  
23 save. I'll just send them to you when -- you know, so  
24 like, in-track changes on the documents themselves.

25 MS. MAYS: Okay. That would be great. Thank

1 you, Eduardo.

2 MR. SOLIS: Thank you, Eduardo. That would be  
3 very helpful.

4 MS. MAYS: Any other thoughts, comments from  
5 BTAC on this chapter?

6 (No response.)

7 MS. MAYS: If not, we will move on to  
8 Chapter 3, and I think that's Donald.

9 MR. LUDLOW: Thank you, Caroline. Thanks, BTAC  
10 members. I'm going to walk you through Chapter 3 today.

11 Chapter 3 is now titled, "Texas-Mexico Border:  
12 Past and Present." I think some of the comments that we  
13 heard about Chapter 1 are already addressed in Chapter 3,  
14 including language about the different regions and  
15 providing a regional focus throughout the chapter,  
16 differentiating between the different trends and  
17 characteristics of the transportation infrastructure that  
18 we see across the entire Texas-Mexico border region.

19 So the purpose of this chapter is really to  
20 identify the trends that are impacting both the demand and  
21 the supply of the transportation infrastructure. Up to  
22 this point, what we've provided is mostly an overview of  
23 the socioeconomic trends, but what we've done in this  
24 latest iteration of the chapter is to focus on the  
25 conditions and current performance of the multimodal

1 infrastructure as well.

2           So today, as I walk you through the findings  
3 here, I'm going to focus more on the infrastructure side  
4 than on the socioeconomic side, in part because we've  
5 presented that previously. I think most of the BTAC  
6 members are familiar with it.

7           I will provide an overview of it, but we will  
8 be mostly focusing on infrastructure performance today.  
9 The key messages remain the same, except with more focus  
10 on the infrastructure: the fact that the border region is  
11 growing, that the drivers of transportation demand are  
12 growing, including income and education, all of which lead  
13 to greater transportation demand; and then the message is  
14 that not only does this infrastructure sustain the region,  
15 but it also, in many situations, has not kept pace with  
16 population and trade growth, especially on the trade  
17 growth side.

18           We went through a number of changes, and if  
19 you'll move to the next slide, Kelly, I can go through  
20 those with everyone. Based on the comments that you  
21 provided to us, this is how we've addressed things. I'll  
22 go through each of these quickly.

23           The first one is, you told us that we needed to  
24 update the current editions to 2019. We've, again, done  
25 that in this chapter. The main difference is, up to 2019

1 on infrastructure data, as well as socioeconomic and trade  
2 data, where possible.

3           You asked us to provide additional information  
4 on border crossing wait times. We did. We amplified the  
5 border wait-time trends in the chapter to illustrate the  
6 changes over time. Quite a bit of the chapter is  
7 dedicated to that, and I've got a number of slides today  
8 to walk you through that.

9           We also appreciate the feedback that we've  
10 received in talking to several of you who reached out  
11 directly after the April meeting to kind of talk in more  
12 detail about the way that you look at border crossing  
13 times at individual bridges and in individual  
14 jurisdictions.

15           You asked us to consider ways to collect  
16 southbound movements more accurately. We did continue to  
17 work with SST and SAT [phonetic] to examine their sources.

18           While we do have southbound data and it's collected  
19 differently in different places on 17 crossings, we do not  
20 have anything comprehensive that covers the entire border.

21           It continues to be a gap to have consistently  
22 collected southbound data. So we have anecdotal  
23 information that helps us understand this, and we've used  
24 some of the data where possible, but it is not as robust  
25 as the northbound, and the northbound continues to be the

1 basis for a lot of the work that we've done.

2           You asked us to show data on commerce between  
3 ports and more details on the transportation of goods, so  
4 we've done that. We've added more detail on maritime,  
5 including some of the characteristics of short-sea  
6 shipping across the Gulf, and additional details are  
7 available in technical papers.

8           So we can provide more information on that, but  
9 we've got a summary of it in the chapters. Finally, you  
10 asked us to enhance the border story to weave in cultural  
11 and geographic ties, something you also asked us to do in  
12 Chapter 1.

13           We have improved this border story with  
14 specific language examples and bullets. Hopefully, some  
15 of those anecdotes are tangible, talking about specific  
16 supply chains, automotive, the things we eat, many  
17 products that are important, as well as family and  
18 cultural and social ties.

19           So we hope that we've addressed that. In terms  
20 of what's been covered already, I'm not going to spend a  
21 lot of time on this slide, because this is all material  
22 that you have seen before. We have just packaged it, I  
23 think, more succinctly and developed more of a trend-line  
24 focus to really show how things have changed since 1990 to  
25 2019.

1           So there's a lot of trend lines that show the  
2 movement of all of these elements, and in every case, the  
3 direction is up. Population is growing, employment,  
4 income, education. The other key pieces that are  
5 summarized in Sections 3.1 to 3.6 are history.

6           I will spend a little time on history, just to  
7 summarize what we've put in the history section, as well  
8 as a little bit more information on trade. Next slide.

9           So on the history side, we have provided an  
10 overview and set the stage for the history. We thought  
11 this was important for readers. A lot of them are  
12 unfamiliar with the way that the border has developed and  
13 the infrastructure has developed over time.

14           We make the point that the bridges in this  
15 region -- many of them date back to the early 20th  
16 century, and facilitate social, cultural and economic  
17 relations between the two countries. The map that you see  
18 here shows the latest year of investment in border  
19 crossing.

20           We also know that, you know, trade has tripled  
21 since NAFTA. Only 10 bridge crossings have been built or  
22 improved since 1994. September 11 is profiled in the  
23 chapter, as well as some summary of construction, and some  
24 of the trends in periods of time when bridges were  
25 developed, really starting with the ratification of a

1 treaty, the U.S.-Mexico Rio Grande Rectification Treaty of  
2 1933.

3 We do focus on the distinct eras and regions in  
4 this chapter. Move on to the next slide. The next piece  
5 that we go into some detail on is the trade connections.

6 We really made a concerted effort to show  
7 visually the linkages between the Texas-Mexico border and  
8 Texas counties and U.S. states. We know that all  
9 industries in Texas rely -- all industries in all Texas  
10 counties rely on cross-border trade to connect to Mexico,  
11 whether it's high tech industries in North and Central  
12 Texas or agricultural in the Panhandle, food processing in  
13 East Texas, petroleum and manufacturing in West Texas.

14 So these maps show some of the intensity of  
15 those connections by northbound and by southbound. The  
16 darker the color, the more intense. The connection is  
17 measured in billions of dollars in trade. When we move to  
18 the next map, we will -- the next slide, we see this  
19 similar pattern.

20 Now, we have this data at the state level for  
21 the U.S. and all states in Mexico. It's showing the same  
22 thing, showing these connections between the two  
23 countries, and specifically to every state. We know that  
24 the bi-directional automotive supply chain, for example,  
25 connects Puebla to Michigan, that Nebraska and Jalisco are



1 connected.

2           You know, we always -- often use the example of  
3 the beer supply chain, grain moving from Nebraska to  
4 Jalisco, and northbound, there's beer. We know that there  
5 are many states that are not close to Texas that depend on  
6 the Texas-Mexico border, and similar, there are many  
7 states that are not close to our four Mexican border  
8 states that depend on the border as well, and that's  
9 really the message that we wanted to paint here.

10           In Chapters 6 and 7, we see this importance  
11 growing in the future, and Chris Williges will go through  
12 that with you today. Next slide. Much of the rest of the  
13 chapter focuses on the current state of the border  
14 transportation infrastructure system, and this is  
15 really -- what we go into in the chapter is both the  
16 condition and the role of each component of the  
17 binational, multimodal transportation system.

18           And we do that at the both border-wide level  
19 and where possible at the regional level, to be able to  
20 look closely at that. We start with highways, and noting  
21 their importance. And then we move into the other modes.

22           Just a second here.

23           So we know that on the highway side, Texas-  
24 Mexico border added seven new bridges right after NAFTA.  
25 We know that the highway system is the primary conduit for

1 goods and facilitates daily life for millions of people.  
2 The freight rail system supports a very fast-growing  
3 carload demand across the border system, and also the  
4 unified cargo processing and inter-modal have become a  
5 major feature of this.

6 Aviation, seaports and pipelines are also  
7 profiled. We note that aviation supports business and  
8 personal travel and cargo movements. We note the trend of  
9 people moving across the border from Texas to Mexico to  
10 access flights at growing airports in the Mexico border  
11 region, and the cargo also has become more pronounced.

12 This chapter talks about short-sea shipping and  
13 seaport shipping alleviating congestion. It also talks  
14 about the important role of pipelines, especially for U.S.  
15 export. Over the next few slides, I'll go into some of  
16 the key trends, especially on the highway and rail side.

17 And so can we advance to the next slide? So in  
18 this first slide, we note that the border region is served  
19 by over 30,000 lane miles. If we look at the density of  
20 the road system, we notice that the highway system is  
21 about three times denser on the Texas side than the -- of  
22 the border than the Mexico side.

23 Overall, the system has struggled to evolve  
24 with the changing needs, and system capacity has not kept  
25 pace with the growth in demand. In other words, the

1 number of lane miles -- if you look at the bottom right,  
2 we've got the number of lane miles on the Texas side by --  
3 excuse me -- by El Paso, Laredo and RGV has not kept pace  
4 with the population growth and the growth in the demand  
5 for trade.

6 Truck trade has increased just by 50 percent,  
7 just even over the last 13 years, for example. And  
8 passenger vehicle miles traveled in the border region has  
9 increased by 35 percent. While we know that a number of  
10 passenger border crossings has not necessarily increased,  
11 and has decreased across the board, the movement of people  
12 within the border region and on the facilities that access  
13 the border has increased dramatically, and that has placed  
14 stress, even if people aren't crossing the border, on the  
15 system that serves the border.

16 I hope that makes sense. We also note in the  
17 chapter that this entire roadway system connects the  
18 interior with the border and beyond, and tells the story  
19 of long-distance and short-distance commuting including  
20 for school and local drayage.

21 Next slide. So this is also a key message,  
22 just the dramatic increase in the number of trucks during  
23 this period, and that between 2005 and 2018, especially,  
24 the commercial VMT in the region has increased by -- also  
25 by 17 percent.

1           In particular, the Laredo region experienced  
2 the highest level of trade growth and truck VMT growth,  
3 but the other regions have experienced significant growth  
4 as well. So all of those details are provided in this  
5 section of the chapter, broken down by vehicle miles  
6 traveled by cars and by trucks in the region and crossing  
7 trends.

8           Next slide. So on the people side, we know  
9 that the number of people who crossed decreased between  
10 1996 and 2019 by 3.8 percent, but millions of people  
11 continue to cross this border annually, and it really does  
12 connect the binational economies of North America.

13           In particular, between 1996 and 2019, personal  
14 northbound vehicles declined by 24 percent, and buses by  
15 3.8 percent, but bicycles and pedestrians increased by  
16 17 percent. That has to do with the shared mobility  
17 phenomenon, where people are potentially taking Uber or  
18 Lyft near the border and then crossing on foot.

19           Also has to do with just the congestion of  
20 crossing by car, and sometimes it's much faster to cross  
21 by foot. So there is a lot of good information here. The  
22 trends show either -- the first trend on the left shows  
23 the northbound personal vehicles and how that's declined  
24 overall for the three regions.

25           It shows the uptick, especially recently, in

1 the number of pedestrians, and it shows the variation over  
2 time in buses with, recently, an uptick in the number of  
3 buses, but an overall slight decline. Next slide. As we  
4 move to the freight rail side, we tell the very important  
5 story of rail at the border and the fact that really it  
6 does -- it really removes some of the demand on the  
7 highway system and has grown significantly, about 305  
8 percent.

9           So three times faster even than the truck  
10 percentage has grown over this period of time, the number  
11 of rail cars. The trend line shows -- and we've got it  
12 for northbound and southbound by the total trade -- but it  
13 shows growth for both, but especially on the northbound  
14 side, Mexico exporting by rail to the United States.

15           Much of this is automotive and specialized  
16 equipment, which is highly valuable, but this continues to  
17 be a really critically important aspect. We note in the  
18 chapter that a lot of the rail growth in activity has been  
19 fueled by intermodal railyards in El Paso, Laredo and  
20 Brownsville that support multimodal movements.

21           This is often due to the lack of major class  
22 one intermodal facilities being available in Northern  
23 Mexico. Unified cargo has also created cross-border rail  
24 trade efficiency, and we've also seen some growth in the  
25 number of rail track miles in the region over this period

1 of time.

2 So the chapter breaks this down by specific  
3 areas. The El Paso region saw the greatest increase in  
4 percentage of rail cars, about a 415 percent increase  
5 during this period. So it's a little bit different story  
6 than truck. Laredo is a 351 percent increase, and RGV was  
7 around 95 percent increase.

8 Next slide. So now, I'd like to transition for  
9 the next few slides to something that I know is really  
10 very important to the BTAC and to the individual members  
11 and communities, and that is a discussion of the wait  
12 times.

13 In order to really look at the wait times, we  
14 have to have data that were consistent across the border,  
15 and for that purpose, we used the CBP wait times that CBP  
16 generously made available to the study. This historical  
17 trend, looking at the northbound wait times across the  
18 entire border.

19 And we looked at this from -- through a few  
20 different lenses. This first slide shows commercial  
21 vehicles from 2003 to 2019. It shows that the median wait  
22 times were relatively steady. We looked at both 50th  
23 percentile wait times, which is on the left, and the 90th  
24 wait times, which are the more exceptional wait times  
25 occurring, on the right.

1           And what this is showing is, overall, an  
2 increasing trend. The median times were relatively  
3 steady, although there was a significant uptick in '18 and  
4 '19, but the 90th percentile wait times show a dramatic  
5 climb, especially just over the last few years.

6           And this trend is consistent across the border  
7 for each of the border crossing regions, and really  
8 signals the strong and continued growth of commercial  
9 vehicles and also some of the challenges that face the  
10 border region. I should clearly note that CBP wait time  
11 is only part of the experienced total crossing time.

12           So this is something that's an indicator, but  
13 not -- does not perfectly capture the entire crossing  
14 time. There's no consistent data source that does that,  
15 across the whole border.

16           Next slide. And I know, we may have a  
17 chance --

18           MS. MAYS: Donald?

19           MR. LUDLOW: -- going back -- sure.

20           MS. MAYS: Yeah. Donald, you know, I know it's  
21 a lot of information. I wanted you to maybe pause, and  
22 you know --

23           MR. LUDLOW: Yeah. Sure.

24           MS. MAYS: -- see if BTAC members have a  
25 chance -- because it's a lot of information we've provided

1 already. So just pause for a little bit and see if anyone  
2 has any comments or any take on the information?

3 MR. LUDLOW: Okay. Sure. Thanks, Caroline.  
4 Happy to discuss anything that has come to mind.

5 MR. SCHWEBEL: Donald, this is Gerry Schwebel.  
6 How can we relate in this chapter -- you know, one of the  
7 things -- the fact of what we've been experiencing since  
8 March, that we take for granted so many times how  
9 integrated our border communities on both sides of the  
10 border are.

11 We've seen, as we identified non-essential  
12 restrictions, that the integration of our medical  
13 communities and health care, together with education, you  
14 know, play a far greater, you know -- a role in the level  
15 of activity between our two cities, but it was, like I  
16 said -- we've been taking it for granted.

17 But in addition to that, just the flow of  
18 people back and forth, whether they -- in the scenarios,  
19 or you know, my company -- I've got 100 employees that,  
20 because there's no school or there's no day care, they  
21 don't have -- they go and drop off their kids, you know,  
22 in Laredo, for you know -- just for day care purposes,  
23 there's no other alternative.

24 So you know, we -- that's a way of life for us  
25 down here, and that adds to the crossing element. And I



1 don't know if the culture or -- in the Chapter 3, where we  
2 talk about the past and present, that I think we need to  
3 kind of relate some of that information that only we that  
4 live on the border can understand it.

5 And I would convey that message to understand  
6 that adds to the infrastructure challenges of our border  
7 that impacts daily trade or impacts other areas as well.  
8 So I just put that on the table for the Committee members  
9 to consider.

10 I've experienced it. I'm sure many others on  
11 this Committee have experienced it as well. How can we  
12 tell that story? Because it is having an impact in our  
13 way of life, especially for those of us who rely on tolls  
14 from bridges, that if we stop that and -- we basically  
15 freeze a major part of our economy.

16 MR. LUDLOW: Yes. Thanks, Gerry. That's --  
17 those are great comments. And just -- do any of the other  
18 BTAC members have any thoughts or reactions to what Gerry  
19 said?

20 MR. VALE: It's unfortunately out of our  
21 control because these decisions are made without regard to  
22 the economic situations along the border. The --  
23 fortunately, they did allow the commercial traffic to keep  
24 going, because that's important to the overall economy of  
25 the United States, but the restrictions that are being

1 placed by both sides are really affecting the border more  
2 than they are the interiors of the countries.

3 MR. LUDLOW: That was Sam Vale. Correct?

4 MR. VALE: Yes.

5 MR. LUDLOW: Thanks. We do -- we would ask, if  
6 you're going to make a comment, just please note your name  
7 so we have that for the record. I think we all know your  
8 voice, though, Sam, but this is for the court reporter as  
9 well.

10 MR. VALE: You're right. I'm sorry. I just  
11 didn't think about it.

12 MR. LUDLOW: That's okay. We appreciate it.  
13 Other comments? I mean, Gerry, going back to your  
14 original note, the border is a way of life. I think we do  
15 need to go back to Chapter 3 and make sure that we do  
16 weave more of that human side into the -- we've tried to  
17 do that, but I think we may need more.

18 We talk about the fact that there's a slight  
19 reduction in the number of people crossing the border over  
20 time, but there's still 85 million northbound crossings a  
21 year. That's extraordinary and really does reflect kind  
22 of daily crossing pattern for many people, and you know, I  
23 think you're right.

24 A lot of people outside the region simply don't  
25 understand how these communities are tied together. Any

1 other thoughts or comments?

2 MS. GARZA-REYES: Cynthia Garza with Pharr EDC.

3 I'm just throwing it out there. Just because 2020 is  
4 just such a significant year, that none of us have gone  
5 through our regions or even our port of entries, could it  
6 be that -- I mean, obviously, this Master Plan is -- it's  
7 a continued document.

8 So could it be that, at the end of 2020, that  
9 we have a special chapter that just signifies everything  
10 that trade went through for 2020, since we're going  
11 through an international pandemic that none of us have  
12 ever seen before?

13 Could be an addition somehow to dovetail off --

14 MS. MAYS: Yeah. And absolutely, when we  
15 started the Border Master Plan, definitely COVID wasn't  
16 here, and I think, you know, certainly, you know, a great  
17 suggestion, and we'll definitely, you know, include that  
18 here.

19 It's out of, kind of the uncertainty and some  
20 of the things that have been raised, you know, throughout  
21 this process, especially with COVID coming. And again, I  
22 think throwing that to the Committee on how they would  
23 like us to couch that, because this is, you know, our  
24 lifetime event, and how it's impacted the border, you  
25 know, the shutting down of the border and the non-

1 essential, all of those things and some of the things you  
2 all raised, I think -- yes.

3 I think this plan needs to capture that,  
4 whether there's a chapter in the end or one of these  
5 chapters, I think, you know -- much appropriate. So thank  
6 you. Any thoughts from the Committee members?

7 MS. VALE: Caroline, there is -- this is Sam  
8 Vale again. There is also going to be some issues  
9 associated with how the Congress and the administration  
10 come together on an infrastructure package, because I do  
11 think that this is an opportunity for us to demonstrate  
12 the value that the border has to the rest of the country,  
13 because they're all going to be impacted to some degree,  
14 but they're also going to be impacted in the  
15 employment and economic development area.

16 So I think that we need to look at that. I --  
17 yesterday, I talked with Congressman McCaul, a Republican,  
18 and Congressman Cuellar, a Democrat. Both are saying the  
19 same things, that they need to find a way to make the  
20 border more resistant to these types of activities and  
21 that's a whole new process.

22 That's not just about staffing. It's --  
23 there's safety. There's health issues. It's very  
24 complex, and hopefully, we can be prepared as we come out  
25 of this thing with a good Master Plan that addresses the

1 future, as opposed to the exception, which is hopefully  
2 going to be not more than a year, a year and a half.

3 MS. MAYS: Yeah, absolutely, because the plan  
4 has to be forward-thinking. I think in Chapter 3, what  
5 we're trying to paint here is this trend, but I think the  
6 bulk of what you all want to include in the  
7 recommendations has to be forward-looking, you know, to  
8 future, you know, as opposed to the past.

9 But I think what we are in currently, as  
10 Cynthia mentioned, the COVID, sadly, it will have to be a  
11 big part of when you guys go to the recommendations,  
12 whether it's the policy recommendations, programmatic  
13 processes, protocol and things you guys want to recommend,  
14 and then specific projects. Whether it's on the border  
15 crossing side or it's on the corridor side, you will have  
16 to really be able to look into the future and see what  
17 would that look like and how can all of the  
18 recommendations make for a better border, a better region,  
19 that facilitates, you know, continued movement of people  
20 and goods, and you know, economic prosperity for not just  
21 the border region, but the border states and in both  
22 countries, and in this case, the three countries, Canada,  
23 U.S. and Mexico.

24 MR. SCHWEBEL: I think -- this is Gerry  
25 Schwebel. I have a comment following up on Sam's

1 comments. You know, we, like Sam and others, have been  
2 working on this over so many years.

3 We always find it interesting that, in the  
4 statistic that you show right now, a 52 percent increase  
5 in foot traffic in the last 13 years. How do we relate  
6 that increase to the number of funding for infrastructure  
7 for new ports of entry or improvements for ports of entry  
8 in those same 13 years, whether it be dollars, you know.

9 We feel this demand, and all these challenges  
10 strained, but we don't see the funds coming to meet that  
11 demand, and that's what we're hoping with this Master  
12 Plan, to provide trade assistance. But I think we need  
13 to -- we can't be too politically correct.

14 We need to put it there, but it just has got,  
15 you know -- that increase in traffic, commercial. It  
16 cannot -- does not tie in with the funding and the  
17 adequate infrastructure demand being met by federal or,  
18 for that matter, the state, you know.

19 So why don't we put that in there in a way that  
20 says, look. You know, we've doubled our trucks, but hey,  
21 our infrastructure's been the same; hasn't really improved  
22 that much, or in proportion.

23 MS. MAYS: Yeah. And Gerry, that's a great  
24 comment. I think that's what Donald started homing on in  
25 those last few slides that looked at kind of history, you

1 know, that although freight volumes have grown -- but you  
2 know, when you look at the infrastructure, it lags behind  
3 that.

4 So freight is growing, but infrastructure is  
5 not keeping pace with that, and certainly, yes, that's the  
6 message. But again, you all can, you know, help, you  
7 know, mold that. It's very, very clear, because that's a  
8 need.

9 That's a gap that the Border Master Plan will,  
10 you know -- hopefully will articulate very clearly, so  
11 everybody understands that the need for investments and  
12 identifying those steps is going to be very important,  
13 because when you look at just the trends, it's very  
14 apparent that, you know, it's not been -- it's, you  
15 know -- the investments have not kept pace with the demand  
16 and the growth.

17 COMMISSIONER NEW: Caroline, this is Alvin New,  
18 and --

19 MS. MAYS: Yes?`

20 COMMISSIONER NEW: -- I want to kind of  
21 piggyback on what Gerry just said. When you think about  
22 the Panama Canal and what's happened just in the last  
23 50 years with the increase in traffic that's now coming to  
24 Texas, and then you think about the pandemic and what I  
25 read about what different companies are doing to change

1 maybe some of their supply points [inaudible] China,  
2 there's no indication that -- there is only an indication  
3 that Mexico is likely to become more important as an  
4 avenue for anything from the Far East, as well as just a  
5 direct trade partner.

6 So somehow that stuff needs to be captured like  
7 you describe the way things are likely to go on the  
8 border, which would exacerbate the problem that Gerry  
9 just --

10 MS. MAYS: Yeah, absolutely. Thank you,  
11 Commissioner New for those comments. Absolutely. You  
12 know, that's forward-thinking and forward-looking on, you  
13 know, the implications both for the pandemic, but also,  
14 you know, USMCA, taking -- going into effect.

15 All of those, you know, combination of  
16 different things, you know, it's probably a different  
17 border in the next five to 10 years, and the growth is  
18 going to continue, especially on the trade side. You  
19 know, people side might still see some decline, but I  
20 think on the trade side, we can certainly expect a  
21 continued growth, whether it's at a faster rate, or you  
22 know, a much more moderate rate, you know, it's again  
23 something we definitely -- you all to think about and help  
24 us, you know, couch that in the plan.

25 COMMISSIONER NEW: Well, and I'd just emphasize



1 that his point, Gerry's point, that it's a national and  
2 state issue because of security.

3 MS. MAYS: Yeah.

4 MR. LUDLOW: These are all great comments. I  
5 was just -- also just going to remind folks, if you're not  
6 talking, if you could please mute? That would be helpful.

7 It seems like we're getting a little bit of background.  
8 Other thoughts, before we move on?

9 And appreciate also the comments that are  
10 coming up in the comment box as we go along.

11 Sure. Go ahead.

12 MR. PEREZ: This is County Commissioner Vince  
13 Perez of El Paso County. You know, it might be helpful,  
14 you know, when looking at some of the spikes, in looking  
15 at and perhaps providing context to some of those  
16 disruptions that happened during that time.

17 I mean, I find it very surprising when you, you  
18 know -- you look at, you know, how different -- how it  
19 was, you know, with the violence that occurred during that  
20 time, compared to other regions, but I'm sure it had  
21 nonetheless a network-wide impact.

22 You know, it's not just -- you know, the  
23 violence that took place during that time, but also, you  
24 know, September 11 and seeing how that -- the comment was  
25 made earlier, how, you know, 2020 is unique, and certainly

1 those disruptions perhaps may be put into context.

2 You're going to have workers entering the  
3 workforce soon that were born after 9/11, and I think it's  
4 important at this time to maybe, perhaps, outline that a  
5 little bit more. Just a suggestion.

6 MR. LUDLOW: That's a great suggestion. I  
7 think for some of those key dates where we see a major  
8 peak or trough, it would definitely be worthwhile filling  
9 that out, in part because it just -- it will maybe help us  
10 understand what we're going to face in 2020's future.

11 MR. CALVO: Hey, Donald, this is --

12 MR. LUDLOW: Hi.

13 MR. CALVO: -- yeah. This is Eduardo again  
14 with El Paso. And you know, just to take you back again  
15 on the discussion that, you know, Sam and Gerry brought  
16 up.

17 Yes, you know, COVID-19, that has impacted us  
18 tremendously here on the border with the -- you know, with  
19 the federal policy, you know, limiting or closing the  
20 border. It's restricting the flow of people coming back  
21 and forth.

22 But let's not forget also that something  
23 similar happened last year, 2019, with the immigration  
24 crisis that we had. You know, that -- so it's -- once  
25 again, it's another issue at the federal level, but for us

1 here at the border, we take it on the chin.

2 So it's been -- 2019 had an impact because of  
3 that, and now, 2020 with COVID. And I'm just a little bit  
4 concerned and frustrated that the impacts that we feel at  
5 the border are tremendous.

6 MR. CORONADO: Hey, this is David Coronado with  
7 the City of El Paso. So piggybacking on what County  
8 Commissioner Perez said and also was mentioned, I think  
9 that looking at annual data for -- especially on wait  
10 times.

11 I think crossings have been started, but waits  
12 are special and it's really sort of tricky to get the  
13 whole story on the context of what's happening in the  
14 background. 2003 was also impacted, you know, right after  
15 [inaudible] crossings back then.

16 Then -- and then 2019 is also a really abnormal  
17 year to use as a comparison. I know that it's been the  
18 most recent year, but perhaps it's best if we use 2018,  
19 especially for wait times, which is actually what we're  
20 doing right now on bridges.

21 It's looking at pre-imposed COVID-19. We're  
22 not even looking at 2019, we're looking at 2018. 2018 was  
23 more of a typical year, if you will. There's no such  
24 thing as an average bridge crossing, but there's always  
25 something happening, whether it's our pandemic, migrant

1 crisis.

2 We've had a huge wave of violence on the  
3 Mexican side that also drives crossing wait times. You  
4 know, protests. There's always something happening with  
5 the bridge system, and so I think there's no such thing as  
6 an average or normal year.

7 But for sure, 2019 was not, by far, the  
8 right -- the most -- the best benchmark or baseline to  
9 use. And so I think that you miss a lot of the context  
10 and the background that that's happening. You could focus  
11 more in the last three, five, 10 years at the most, but I  
12 think going back to 2003 is going a little bit too far, in  
13 my opinion, especially when it comes to wait times.

14 MR. VALE: You know, we've also got -- this is  
15 Sam again. We've also got another issue that's really  
16 starting to grow, and that's -- CBP yesterday announced  
17 something to the effect of that they were \$400 million  
18 short, because they're not collecting all of the user fees  
19 they normally would do.

20 So that's going to impact. That much money  
21 shortfall for an agency that clears ports of entry is  
22 going to be dramatic.

23 MS. MAYS: Yes, because I think, you know,  
24 certainly the funding issues, you know, is going to have  
25 to be discussed. And you know, from several perspectives,

1 CBP -- you all at the local level, but also at the federal  
2 level.

3 Sam, you mentioned the new infrastructure bill  
4 and the discussion there. Will border and border  
5 infrastructure be, you know, kind of addressed in the  
6 infrastructure bill? So all of those, I think, are things  
7 that will have to be discussed, and looking at what will  
8 be the funding gap.

9 With border recommendations what will be the  
10 funding gap? What will be, you know, the potential  
11 funding sources that can be used to bridge those funding  
12 gaps, like you mentioned. Yeah. I certainly expect that,  
13 you know, from all agencies, you know, throughout the  
14 system.

15 MR. VALE: Well, Caroline, any way you put it,  
16 we have a pretty large Congressional delegation, and we  
17 need to educate our own people about the needs of the  
18 state and how it's tied to a lot of these activities. And  
19 hopefully they will be able to work together in some way  
20 to take care of the needs for TxDOT, and at the same time,  
21 encourage more reliable funding for CBP, because we all  
22 depend on that.

23 MS. MAYS: Yes. I mean, you know, we have the  
24 plan, and hopefully, we will be able to articulate that  
25 and provide the analysis and information to all our

1 elected leaders for them to be able to represent the needs  
2 of the state.

3 I think that's where the plan is going to come  
4 very handy, you know, there. But I think that discussions  
5 with the transportation bill right now is something that,  
6 you know, folks need to be involved in, being some of the  
7 information.

8 I could honestly tell you that, yes, there's  
9 some elements there interjecting border in there, but I  
10 think it could be a lot better. A lot of language on the  
11 freight plan, but there's no language on Border Master  
12 Plan.

13 So you know, again, I'm not trying to tell  
14 anybody what to do, but I'm just -- from my assessment,  
15 there's no language in the versions of the bill right now  
16 that I've seen that specifically, you know, talks about  
17 investments outlined in the Border Master Plan to address  
18 border infrastructure needs.

19 MR. VALE: So we need the -- Sam again. We  
20 need some of the language that used to be in the  
21 coordinated border infrastructure, but not called that,  
22 and we -- because they don't like that name anymore, but  
23 finding a way to where it all fits together for the  
24 benefit of the state of Texas.

25 MR. CONTRERAS: Good morning, Caroline. This

1 is Sergio at the RGV Partnership. Can you hear me?

2 MS. MAYS: Yes, we can hear you, Sergio.

3 Welcome.

4 MR. CONTRERAS: Thank you. Looking at the  
5 slide that has been on the screen there for a while,  
6 understanding that this will be using structure and data,  
7 which is great, thank you for working on this.

8 Relates to economic impact, the importance of  
9 infrastructure, also utilizing it to call for additional  
10 investment. So here, this illustrates only CBP, and it  
11 illustrates it in minutes. Can something be done to  
12 showcase more of a true picture, knowing that there are at  
13 times hour, two-hour wait times, three hours,  
14 understanding that you may not have it, but working  
15 individually with individual bridges, you may be able to  
16 get a better understanding versus showcasing this to  
17 Congressional members?

18 And also, we only see 21 minutes. That ain't  
19 bad. We know that it's not 21 minutes. That make sense?

20 MS. MAYS: Yeah. A couple of things, and I'll  
21 let Donald kind of answer on the data. This is a little  
22 bit high-end level.

23 We're looking at regions and not necessarily  
24 border crossings. And I think what we were trying to do  
25 is be consistent in the data, you know, to do kind of this

1 high-end level, and certainly, you know, you see that  
2 we've all been looking at each of the bridges to  
3 understand the unique issues there when it comes to wait  
4 times.

5 And then on your comment about economic impact,  
6 we're actually going to cover that in Chapter 7. So you  
7 will see some of the preliminary analysis on the impact of  
8 border delays and border wait times quantified from an  
9 economic perspective.

10 Donald, you want to take that? Maybe comment  
11 on the data?

12 MR. LUDLOW: Yeah. No. You've nailed it,  
13 Caroline. And in the chapter, there's additional detail  
14 on specific crossings and how that varies, and there is  
15 quite a bit of variation, just in terms of growth, by mode  
16 and by crossing.

17 So I hope that the information that's in the  
18 chapter is helpful in getting down to the level of detail  
19 that you want. We do have that for every crossing.

20 MS. MAYS: Donald, we can probably --

21 MR. LUDLOW: Okay.

22 MS. MAYS: -- move to --

23 MR. LUDLOW: Okay. Move on. Okay. Yeah. No.  
24 Thank you very much. This has been a very good  
25 discussion and we really appreciate your comments. We've



1 written them down, and we will address them as we continue  
2 to make improvements to the next version of Chapter 3.

3 Without further ado, let's move on to the next  
4 one. This is personal vehicles, and you see here a  
5 similar trend, this upward tick. I'm going to move a  
6 little bit more quickly through some of the rest of the  
7 slides, but I will stop to gain some more comments.

8 So the main takeaway here is that the median  
9 time for personal vehicles increased by 213 percent during  
10 this period, about 17 minutes. Again, this is border-  
11 wide, so there's going to be variations on specific  
12 bridges.

13 But we know that, for example, you know, just  
14 pulling a couple of them out really quickly. At Santa  
15 Teresa, the median wait times grew by 600 percent. That's  
16 30 minutes. We know that at Laredo-Colombia Solidarity,  
17 we have the highest median wait time increase of 700  
18 percent, or 18 minutes.

19 So these all add up collectively, and this is  
20 kind of a holistic view of the whole border, but we have  
21 that broken down by specific crossing in the chapter. The  
22 next slide presents the same story, but also by bicycles  
23 and pedestrians.

24 And we know that bicycle and pedestrian  
25 crossings have increased significantly by 17 percent, with

1 the biggest uptick over the last few years. So you're  
2 seeing some wide variation there again in the total trend  
3 border-wide and in the specific regions.

4 As we go in the chapter, down to the specific  
5 bridges, we'll start to see some of those very  
6 individualized kind of patterns emerge, and that will help  
7 us as we move into the needs, and also developing kind of  
8 the project lists in terms of what really is driving that,  
9 and what needs may need to be addressed more specifically  
10 in the future.

11 Moving on, I want to take you through a few  
12 slides that summarize some of the analysis that we've done  
13 on roadway delay and congestion. Of course, we have a lot  
14 of anecdotal information that many of you have provided  
15 through the focus groups, through BTAC, through VNRSCs,  
16 and through consultations that we've had.

17 So that's very helpful. In terms of looking at  
18 the data, we know that in the three regions we're seeing  
19 that the most congestion in the border regions occurs on  
20 I-10, and FH 45 in El Paso, North and South IH-35, and FH  
21 85 and I-69 in Laredo region, and in Rio Grande Valley,  
22 significant congestion occurring on I-69 CE, and on I-2.

23 And again, these are for the entire region. We  
24 know that there's specific border-related days -- excuse  
25 me -- border-related delays at crossings. So in the

1 chapter, there are breakouts showing some of the  
2 congestion, that we have developed.

3 It's using a method that TxDOT uses statewide,  
4 which is a car spacing method that's uniform and  
5 consistent and allows us to look at that throughout the  
6 regions. Just highlighting, here's some of the major  
7 facilities that are experiencing the most congestion.

8 The first one is El Paso. The next one, if you  
9 can advance to that, is Laredo, and then finally, RGV.  
10 All of this detail is in the chapter, along with the maps.

11 The next piece that we move into is safety and  
12 security, and we track this over time, because we know  
13 that this is also, just like congestion and delay, an  
14 important driver of the need for improvements. Overall,  
15 the commercial vehicle and pedestrian/cyclist crashes have  
16 steadily declined.

17 Crashes in Mexico have also declined  
18 significantly over the past few years. We do have fairly  
19 good data from Mexico on this, and this has been good to  
20 see.

21 We've broken this down into the specific  
22 regions again, and you can see the downward trend in these  
23 crashes, and there has been a slight uptick recently in  
24 the pedestrian and cyclist crashes, which is something  
25 that needs to be addressed, as well as total commercial

1 vehicle crashes. When we talk about the trend, it's  
2 through that whole region and whole time period.

3 Next slide. We also looked at rail, and also  
4 rail continues to improve on safety. Rail incidents  
5 declined by 78 percent and remained constant on the Mexico  
6 side during this period of time.

7 We were able to use rail insurance claims in  
8 Mexico, as well as FRA data in Texas, to be able to have a  
9 similar snapshot. And when we talk about incidents, we've  
10 got a wide variety of things that we're looking at,  
11 including at-grade crossing incidents and other safety  
12 incidents on the railroads themselves. The chapter goes  
13 into more detail on those.

14 Next slide. The next piece of information that  
15 we have is asset preservation, and we wanted to look at a  
16 few different areas there. We looked at pavement  
17 conditions. We also looked at bridge conditions.

18 And between this period, we know that pavement  
19 conditions stay relatively consistent on the Texas side.  
20 We note that in Mexico the border states' pavement  
21 conditions are of higher quality than national averages.  
22 So we're able to -- you can see in the chart on the lower  
23 right -- look at the difference between deficient  
24 pavements in the border Mexican states versus the national  
25 averages.

1           See that all four of the states on the Mexico  
2 side are much -- are at least trending better than the  
3 national averages. And this is important. It just is an  
4 indicator of kind of quality and maintenance of the  
5 infrastructure system. And we're using that to inform the  
6 needs and also eventually the prioritization.

7           The next slide shows bridge conditions. And  
8 what we're seeing here is also a basic improvement in the  
9 bridge conditions. On the Texas counties between 2012 and  
10 2014, we see an improvement, but then we've been seeing  
11 some declining conditions since then.

12           And in 2019, conditions in the El Paso and RGV  
13 regions, that are higher than the average score in the  
14 Texas border-wide region, while bridge condition scores in  
15 the Laredo region are lower. So there's some regional  
16 variation.

17           It depends on the bridge. There are very new  
18 bridges in each area in the overall border-wide  
19 transportation system, and there are some that have  
20 existed for a long time. So this is a case-by-case basis,  
21 but overall, the conditions are trending a little bit  
22 downward since 2014.

23           Next slide. When we look at the border  
24 crossings in particular, we know that there is -- we've  
25 applied a rating here of fair or good or poor, and so this

1 map essentially provides a snapshot of those current  
2 conditions. Many of the structures may require future  
3 investments to ensure transportation needs are met in the  
4 future.

5 And at this point, I'm going to transition to  
6 some feedback slides, just to make sure that we have a  
7 final chance. I know we've presented a lot of information  
8 today in Chapter 3. Again, the purpose of Chapter 3 is  
9 really to set the story -- to tell the story that there's  
10 been a growth in demand, but that the infrastructure has  
11 not necessarily kept pace.

12 Safety performance has improved in some  
13 circumstances and declined in others. Wait times are up  
14 overall, but there are certainly differences in some of  
15 the other regions. This is an opportunity for us also to  
16 get feedback from you on whether we're adequately  
17 addressing your comments from the last BTAC meeting.

18 So if you have Mentimeter open, we would  
19 appreciate your validation or feedback on this. And then  
20 the question I'll ask you in a moment is whether there are  
21 other topics that need to be included in this chapter. So  
22 start thinking about that.

23 I know that several of you made some great  
24 suggestions of some things that we can include in  
25 Chapter 3.

1 MS. MAYS: And Donald, there are also some  
2 questions in the chat.

3 MR. LUDLOW: Okay.

4 MS. MAYS: So I think Gerry mentioned that we  
5 need to talk about who is responsible for maintenance of  
6 POE facilities.

7 MR. LUDLOW: Okay. Yeah. No. Those are great  
8 comments. So we've got that, and also several of you have  
9 commented on specific facilities, including US 83 and  
10 Mines Road, that need to be included.

11 MS. MAYS: Yeah. And I think, you know --  
12 yeah. Gerry's comments kind of raised something in my  
13 head, that probably on the infrastructure side, it might  
14 be good to kind of provide an overview lay of the land, on  
15 who is responsible for the border crossings themselves and  
16 kind of who is responsible for the rest of the  
17 transportation system, whether it's the rail, highways,  
18 you know, maritime and other modes.

19 I think it might help. Because again, I don't  
20 think everybody knows who is responsible for, you know,  
21 being the actual one building and maintaining this  
22 infrastructure. I know we talk a little bit of that in  
23 Chapter 2, but I think here it might be helpful to have,  
24 you know, something short to remind folks.

25 MR. LUDLOW: Yeah. Thanks a lot. I think even

1 having a table in Chapter 2 or 3 that summarizes those  
2 responsibilities would be really helpful --

3 MS. MAYS: Yeah.

4 MR. LUDLOW: -- and specifically outlining kind  
5 of the TxDOT and local partnership responsibilities as  
6 well.

7 MS. MAYS: Yeah, yeah.

8 MR. LUDLOW: Okay.

9 MS. MAYS: So for Committee members, I think  
10 right now Donald has Menti up here wanting to get feedback  
11 on any of the topics that we need to include in this  
12 chapter.

13 MR. LUDLOW: Yeah. And in addition, just  
14 recapping a few things, the border as a way of life,  
15 really highlighting daily use of the border more  
16 specifically. I heard medical, dental, and child care as  
17 very important during this period of time.

18 There was a comment that I think is a general  
19 comment about COVID, really kind of assessing the impact  
20 of 2020. That may be done in this part of the Border  
21 Master Plan or in a separate chapter, but there's  
22 definitely some interest by the Committee, taking a look  
23 at what's really happened, using the best data. We know  
24 there's about a two-month lag in when we can capture the  
25 BTS cross-border data, but the trade data takes a little



1 bit longer to start to materialize, but we'll take that  
2 into consideration.

3 This broader idea of increasing, the  
4 increase -- the gap between increase and demand. Gerry  
5 cited a 52 percent increase in truck versus how much has  
6 been invested during that same period. So those are some  
7 of the things we have here.

8 Commissioner Perez from El Paso also mentioned  
9 citing some of the rationale for these spikes or troughs  
10 in the trends that we're seeing. So all of those are  
11 things that we plan to address. Are there other thoughts  
12 or comments here?

13 (No response.)

14 MR. LUDLOW: So United Cargo Processing and the  
15 role of that. We've mentioned that on the rail side, but  
16 it sounds like we need to maybe do a little bit more  
17 there. And then on technological trends, I don't know if  
18 some of these want to elaborate on what they have in mind.

19 Growing medical tourism -- very good. So  
20 technical funding investment. Sorry. Unified Cargo  
21 Processing. I think that's what you meant by United --  
22 United Cargo Processing. All right. Somebody mentioned  
23 technological trends.

24 I don't know if that person wants to elaborate?  
25 And I think -- Commissioner New says, is this the right

1 place to talk about demographics and the growth of  
2 population in Texas and Mexico? That's a great question.

3 We have summarized that in Chapter 3, in terms  
4 of what's happened since 1990, but in Chapters 6 and 7 --  
5 and Chris Williges will profile this today. We'll go into  
6 detail about what will happen in the future. We seem to  
7 have some other great comments here that we'll capture  
8 related to pedestrians, some of the other facilities that  
9 should be included, and some other points.

10 So I was trying to get whoever was talking  
11 about technological trends to chime up, but I think we're  
12 good there. We will now transition over to Chapter 4.  
13 Thank you very much, everybody.

14 MR. JUAREZ: Yes. This is Tim Juarez. So on  
15 Chapter 4, I would like to introduce Steve Decker with the  
16 project team. Steve?

17 MR. DECKER: Okay. Much of this information,  
18 we've shown you before. We've got your comments and we've  
19 defined this process for developing the binational,  
20 multimodal transportation corridors. And the purpose of  
21 this chapter is to really define the multimodal  
22 transportation designations, transportation network, in  
23 Texas and the local regions, Mexico, and its four border  
24 states, U.S. and Mexico, and really, with an emphasis on  
25 three border regions.

1           And we've talked about the five planning  
2 spheres. And we've talked a little bit about the  
3 designation criteria in April and previous to that. And  
4 we've defined these 11 multimodal corridor designations  
5 that make up the whole network.

6           So we'll talk about that in this chapter. So  
7 the reason for this, the requirements and changes -- and  
8 the reasons for developing this designated system is to  
9 provide a consistent framework to identify the needs and  
10 to identify those project solutions that we were just  
11 talking about, through the last discussion on Chapter 3.

12           Certainly, we want to identify the integration  
13 and connectivity between the entire system, from the  
14 border crossings, to the connectivity in the border  
15 regions, and border-wide to those border crossings, to the  
16 overall transportation network and corridors into and out  
17 of Texas and Mexico.

18           So we'll talk about this process starting with  
19 the border crossings and expanding geographically, and  
20 we'll end up discussing the north-south movements into  
21 crossing the border, of those designated corridors, which  
22 include the entire spectrum of the network. And then  
23 east-west designated corridors as well that provide  
24 connectivity to those northbound connections into and out  
25 of the border region.

1           Next slide, Kelly. So certainly we've had  
2 feedback, and we've added, you know, certain, you know,  
3 corridors through the stakeholder outreach process,  
4 certainly the Mazatlán and the Monterey-Reynosa corridor.

5           We've added the Port of Brownsville and  
6 included the Port of Matamoros. We did not add that  
7 because it was not completed, but certainly that will be  
8 part of the Chapter 8 discussion on future needs  
9 strategies, and the needs also in Chapter 5, and then the  
10 solutions in Chapter 8 to meet those needs.

11           So in terms of multimodal designation, this  
12 shows the sphere one, which is the 60-mile border region  
13 into and out of the U.S. from the border, and it shows  
14 the -- the green dot shows the 10-mile buffers of the  
15 multimodal corridors with the primary foundation, the  
16 roadway corridor, that we spoke to previously. This would  
17 be I-10, and also I-10/25, into FH 45 into Mexico.

18           And then all those connections of the different  
19 modes, including freight rail, pedestrian movement at the  
20 border, other types of impacts in terms of personal  
21 vehicles, trucks crossing on the roadway. Those things  
22 are included.

23           And then we show the Presidio area as well, and  
24 that is an emerging corridor here that we wanted to  
25 highlight as an emerging designated corridor with those

1 connections as well. There's the El Paso region. And  
2 then we show the Laredo region as well in sphere one, and  
3 then the Rio Grande Valley in sphere two.

4 We show the different designations. It's hard  
5 to pick up, but we're looking at, you know, I-69 C, I-  
6 69 E, in the north-south and Rio Grande Valley. And then  
7 we're looking at IH-35, 277, and various corridors in  
8 the -- US 277, FH 29 in the Laredo region. And we list  
9 those later in the presentation in terms of what their --  
10 what the designations are. Kelly?

11 So here is the corridor designation, the  
12 network. And it shows the foundation, which are the --  
13 sort of the international corridors, roadway corridors,  
14 with the 10-mile buffers with those connections to  
15 different modes, crossing the border, and shows the east-  
16 west, north-south connections to the 29 border crossings.

17 So these, you know, are key binational trade  
18 corridors, both north-south, and then those connections  
19 east-west, to get into other destinations in the U.S.,  
20 Mexico and Canada. The multi modes are defined,  
21 identified, to support these corridors, and these are  
22 intended to show the multimodal connectivity integration,  
23 as we look at the multimodal needs and project solutions,  
24 you know, for the BTMP.

25 So I -- we have -- you know, obviously, this is

1 a very quick presentation. We have gone through the  
2 process in detail before with you folks. I think in April  
3 we went into pretty significant detail. So we did  
4 designate the border crossings that connected to the  
5 designated corridors and that designation process as well.

6 So are there any missing corridors that -- I  
7 know we did incorporate some of the missing corridors into  
8 the analysis previously from your comments. Are there any  
9 others that we might need to add or to consider adding?

10 MR. GIESBRECHT: Hello. This is Jake from  
11 Presidio. Are we working -- I was just wondering if we  
12 could add a link to Durango, the state of Durango? We're  
13 crossing a lot of cattle from the state of Durango through  
14 Presidio, and if we could link to our corridor to Durango?

15 MR. DECKER: Okay. Yeah. I think -- would  
16 that be -- you know, for example, that might be a need and  
17 then a project. Is that what it is focused on? Because  
18 that's what we can focus our work on, unless there are  
19 already corridors defined that you would want to expand or  
20 to build into that, you know, existing network.

21 But certainly we're going to look at the needs  
22 for improvement and project solutions, you know, as an  
23 example, to get more cattle to the border, that kind of  
24 thing.

25 MS. MAYS: Yes. Steve, Jake is just asking for

1 us to highlight the corridor to Durango at this point.  
2 Yeah.

3 MR. DECKER: Yeah. We can do that.

4 MS. MAYS: So Jake, we will -- yeah --  
5 certainly work with you to make sure we highlight that,  
6 and just kind of want to, you know, just let the Committee  
7 know that what we'll present here is really the draft  
8 final network that we're going to be using to identify the  
9 needs.

10 So today or this week, if you happen to have a  
11 comment, please let us know. So I appreciate your  
12 comment, Jake, but after this, this is really -- is going  
13 to form the basis for the needs assessment.

14 MR. GIESBRECHT: Yeah. Okay. Yeah. That's  
15 perfect. Yeah. That's correct. Thank you.

16 MS. MAYS: Yes. Thanks. So let's move --

17 MR. DECKER: Yes.

18 MALE VOICE: Yes.

19 MR. DECKER: Yeah. Are there other elements --  
20 we -- that we've listed?

21 MS. MAYS: Let's just move to the next portion.

22 MR. DECKER: Okay. That sounds good. So Tim,  
23 I'll turn it back over to you, unless there -- and Kelly.

24 MR. JUAREZ: Okay. So I believe at this time,  
25 Caroline, did we want to go ahead and take that break for

1 the Committee members?

2 MS. MAYS: Yeah. Secretary, if you're okay, we  
3 will still take -- I think we have 15 minutes scheduled.  
4 Can somebody please mute their line, with the dogs barking  
5 and all of that, please? Secretary?

6 SECRETARY HUGHS: I'm happy to say that's not  
7 me.

8 MS. MAYS: I know, I know.

9 SECRETARY HUGHS: Yes. I've been taking notes  
10 quietly here. But yes, let's take a break, and let's see  
11 what we have on the calendar in terms of how long.  
12 Fifteen minutes? Is that enough for everyone? We're a  
13 little ahead of schedule on the break since we had it  
14 scheduled for 10:30, but let's go ahead and just take that  
15 now, and circle back at 10:25, 10:30, whatever you think  
16 is best --

17 MS. MAYS: Yeah.

18 SECRETARY HUGHS: -- Caroline.

19 MS. MAYS: Yes. Let's do 10:25, because I  
20 think we're going to need a little bit more time for the  
21 other two chapters.

22 SECRETARY HUGHS: All right. And thank you  
23 all --

24 MS. MAYS: Yes. Thank you. We'll keep the  
25 line open, and we can get a drink and be back. Thank you.



1 (Whereupon, at 10:09 a.m., there was a short  
2 recess.)

3 (10:25 a.m.)

4 SECRETARY HUGHS: Welcome back, everyone.

5 MS. MAYS: Yes. Thank you, Ms. Secretary.

6 SECRETARY HUGHS: I apologize. I'm a couple  
7 minutes late. Did we lose everyone?

8 MS. MAYS: No, no. That's fine. No. We have  
9 folks -- actually, we have a lot of people in the chat box  
10 sending -- providing a lot of comments. So I think  
11 everybody should be back. Do we have everybody on the  
12 consultants side back?

13 Hello?

14 MR. JUAREZ: Yes. I'm here with Alejandro.

15 MS. MAYS: Okay.

16 MR. JUAREZ: Yeah.

17 MS. MAYS: So --

18 MR. JUAREZ: Chris Williges, do we have you?

19 MS. MAYS: Tim, before we go to Chris, there's  
20 just a lot of comments in the chat box, and --

21 MR. JUAREZ: Yeah.

22 MS. MAYS: -- if we could address that? So  
23 we're going to take the lead in addressing the comments in  
24 the chat box.

25 MR. JUAREZ: So Alejandro, I will start, and

1 then you can fill in as needed. Will that work well?

2 MR. SOLIS: Yes, that's fine. Sorry. I was on  
3 double mute. Yes.

4 MR. JUAREZ: That's okay. Okay. So we  
5 appreciate the comments on the chat box. Just to let you  
6 know, my team and the project team continue to monitor  
7 this. So we definitely will incorporate them into the  
8 summary of minutes, and then our responses, and as we have  
9 provided today, we'll make the necessary adjustments as  
10 applicable to the chapters' components.

11 So we received a lot of information  
12 regarding -- or comments regarding the network  
13 designation. Please note that the plan continues to be  
14 multimodal, and so where we do have the rail ports of  
15 entries, where we do have the railroad line, the  
16 pipelines, water, air, et cetera, that is being  
17 incorporated as part of this 10-mile buffer that we have  
18 on the formats that we presented.

19 It is our intent to have insets of the  
20 detailed, more urbanized areas, so that you can see that  
21 level of information. We are taking into account  
22 pipelines and impacts into the overall economic  
23 components.

24 So we will also include that. There is the  
25 continued opportunity for you to weigh in on corridors.

1 We've received several comments on that, and we'll  
2 continue to move forward on that.

3 Just to note that some of the proposed  
4 corridors, either on the Mexican or U.S. side, as they are  
5 connecting to existing corridors, we're only highlighting  
6 the proposed corridor from emerging or proposal, as noted,  
7 and we can provide more detail on that.

8 We are looking at the Port of Brownsville and  
9 other water ports, such as Port of Corpus Christi, Port of  
10 Houston, that connectivity not always -- connection to the  
11 transportation network, but also the supply chain effort.

12 So we will have that identified as well.

13 Alejandro, any additional comments or  
14 responses?

15 MR. SOLIS: The only thing, Tim, is that a lot  
16 of the comments we captured are related to corridors on  
17 the Mexican side. So Erica Garcia, I know that you are  
18 here. We will touch base with you to run those corridor  
19 sites' FCT and make sure that they are part of the FCT  
20 network and plans and priorities.

21 MR. JUAREZ: Okay. And so one comment to note  
22 is that we -- in order for us to move forward with the  
23 needs assessment, we have to finalize what these overall  
24 corridors look like and that designation, because we want  
25 to be able to be sure.

1           So we will look at these comments. If you have  
2 additional comments regarding Chapter 4, please let us  
3 know as soon as possible. But we'll go on from there.  
4 Caroline, did you want to add additional comments?

5           MS. MAYS: I think, you know, some of the  
6 specific comments -- I know Jake has brought up, you know,  
7 the [indiscernible] corridor. We already have that on the  
8 map, and then Mayor Saenz has brought up a lot of  
9 comments.

10           Some of those, we actually do have the  
11 information, and the rest, we will definitely address  
12 those specific comments. But as I mentioned earlier, we  
13 need to get a final draft of this designation for the  
14 corridors, because they will form the basis for the needs  
15 assessment.

16           So if you can provide us with any additional  
17 comments by the end of this week, that will tremendously  
18 help us in crafting Chapter 5, the needs assessment. I  
19 just kind of want to emphasize the sense of urgency in  
20 completing that task for that chapter so we can move  
21 forward with, you know, the rest of the analysis.

22           So with that, we can go, Secretary, to  
23 Chapter 6. Chris?

24           MR. WILLIGES: Hi. This is Chris Williges. I  
25 will provide an update on Chapter 6. At our last BTAC

1 meeting, you saw a preliminary introduction to it. Now, I  
2 will present some preliminary analysis and findings.

3           So just to remind you, the purpose of this  
4 chapter is to provide future forecasts to 2050 of the  
5 movement of people and goods across the Texas-Mexican  
6 border. And it will help us assess the future demand on  
7 the binational transportation system serving the border.

8           A few of the key messages that we're going to  
9 have in this chapter are that the forecast account for  
10 historical trends and future factors -- we have some  
11 future scenarios that assess things like changes in  
12 employment and national economic activity, exchange rates  
13 and border policies, and that the forecast that you will  
14 see today and that will be included in the chapter has  
15 been forecasted for both people and goods, by mode, POE,  
16 and various levels of geography. So you'll see results at  
17 the binational level, the national level, state level,  
18 regional and local level, you know, all the way down to  
19 POE, although we're not going to show the POE results  
20 today.

21           Just a couple of high-level findings from the  
22 forecast. We're seeing, on the movement of people side,  
23 an additional 3 million people who will cross the border.

24           They will cross the border by all modes you currently  
25 have today, you know, by foot and bike, using personal

1 vehicles and buses, but the majority of those people will  
2 cross by personal vehicle.

3           On the movement of goods side, we see the  
4 movements for both truck and train almost triple, which  
5 will really strain the border infrastructure capacity, as  
6 you look into the future. And the value of trade will  
7 more than triple, and this reflects the fact that when you  
8 look at the various supply chains and how they are  
9 projected to grow in the future, you're going to see  
10 supply chains that carry heavier goods and actually have  
11 more value in the future.

12           So in the next slide, we show a profile of the  
13 future, and this profile is actually a mirror image of  
14 what Donald showed you earlier in Chapter 3. He talked  
15 about, you know, what does the border look like today?  
16 This is what it looks like in the future.

17           In terms of population, we see the border-wide  
18 population increasing another 18 percent between now and  
19 2050, reaching a population of about 8.8 million people  
20 living along the border in both United States and Mexico.

21           On the employment side, we see continued growth in the  
22 border region.

23           On the U.S. side, that translates to about a  
24 2.1 percent growth per year, and we'll also see continued  
25 growth in Mexico as well. Income, we expect income to

1 continue to increase, and on the Texas border side, we  
2 expect it to grow by about 0.5 percent per year, which  
3 means continued decline in poverty, and we also expect  
4 incomes in the Mexican border states to continue to grow  
5 over the same time period.

6 In terms of education, we see a continuation of  
7 trends that you saw in historical data, which is  
8 increasing graduation rates, high school, college,  
9 technical schools, and we expect more border residents on  
10 the Mexican side of the border to complete secondary and  
11 upper education.

12 And in terms of trade, I mean, the big story in  
13 the long term is USMCA, and we expect USMCA to continue  
14 the kind of economic competitiveness that we've seen under  
15 NAFTA, where the integrated economies between United  
16 States and Mexico have enabled our region to be more  
17 competitive with the world.

18 But as I think we saw in many comments, COVID-  
19 19 is in the short term resulting in trade declines. In  
20 the longer term, it could have an interesting effect. It  
21 may lead to nearshoring of manufacturing, which would  
22 actually put even more pressure on the border.

23 I want to drill down a little bit more on  
24 population. This slide is one that you've seen before.  
25 You've seen these statistics in our April meeting. We did

1 update the population -- the forecast slightly because we  
2 included some more recent population data and extended the  
3 forecast out.

4           They are consistent, though, with what you see  
5 in the last BTAC presentation for the future. Now, one of  
6 the things that is very interesting about population is  
7 that it hasn't always been a good predictor of the  
8 movement of people across the border, because despite the  
9 social and cultural ties on the two sides of the border,  
10 there are other factors that help predict the movement of  
11 people across the border even better.

12           And if we go to the next slide, some of those  
13 factors include employment, employment opportunity,  
14 exchange rate, gasoline prices, and then the policies of  
15 the border that affect the movement of goods. And as we  
16 heard earlier today, I mean, the policies that have been  
17 in place with COVID-19 have restricted movement of people,  
18 have restricted trade.

19           So I mean, those border policies are also key.  
20       If we look at employment, we're expecting employment to  
21 grow. This shows the statistic I had shown earlier about  
22 a 2.1 percent growth rate on the Texas side of the border.  
23       Currently we do not have comparable forecasts for Mexico.

24           But one of the things that is also an  
25 interesting thing to think about, and it's important for



1 us as we do the forecast: the majority of the movement of  
2 goods -- of people start and end within 60 miles of the  
3 border. That means it's local.

4 And that really gets back to the social and  
5 economic trends, and one of the big drivers, again, is  
6 employment in Texas. That's why this forecast of  
7 employment is important.

8 When we think about the movement of goods, the  
9 movement of goods spans much further than person movement.

10 While person movement tends to be located along the  
11 border, the movement of goods has origins and destinations  
12 within Texas, the Mexican border states, but actually far  
13 further into the United States and Mexico. It really is a  
14 binational system with a wide-ranging reach.

15 What this means is, you actually have to look  
16 at wider trends when you're forecasting the movement of  
17 goods. In particular, national and international economic  
18 trends and particularly the U.S. economy are what drives  
19 the movement of goods.

20 If we look at the forecast of the U.S. economy,  
21 trade is actually expected to grow faster than economic  
22 growth in the United States. And at the bottom of the  
23 slide, we show some statistics from the U.S. Congressional  
24 Budget Office. In a second, I'm going to show you the  
25 forecast that we have for goods movement, and you'll see

1 it's this economic growth that's really driving those  
2 trends.

3 I'm going to tell you a little bit about the  
4 methodology we use to forecast the movement of people and  
5 goods. We forecasted the movement of people and goods by  
6 POE, by port of entry, and if we advance the slide, you'll  
7 see that. For the forecast, on the persons side, we  
8 forecasted the number of people, the number of passenger  
9 vehicles, buses, pedestrians. On the goods movement side,  
10 we forecasted things like number of trucks, railcars,  
11 tonnage and value.

12 And one thing -- I know there was some comments  
13 in the chat box before we went to the section about some  
14 of the other modes, like maritime, aviation. We did  
15 forecast those as well. I won't show you those results  
16 today, but we have included those forecasts.

17 So the way that we generated these forecasts by  
18 POE is, we took into account those local and national  
19 trends, and we generated a forecast of the most likely  
20 scenario. We call this the mid-case forecast, but it's  
21 where we think the future will look.

22 Once we generated that forecast, we then  
23 allocated the POE-level forecast to the border crossings,  
24 and you can also aggregate it up to the other various  
25 levels of analysis, you know, to each of the different

1 regions, to the border states, to the national level, et  
2 cetera, and we made sure that we calibrated our forecast  
3 against other sources.

4 One of the things that we also did -- and I do  
5 want to go back to that last slide for a second -- one of  
6 the things we also did is, we compared our forecast  
7 against what we've observed over the last 20 years. So we  
8 did a forecast, what you call a backcast.

9 We looked at trying to forecast the data for  
10 the last 20 years using the same methodology, and tried to  
11 see, does it match what we saw? And as you can see on  
12 this graph, it matched pretty closely. So we felt pretty  
13 good about these forecasts.

14 On the next slide, we talk a little bit about  
15 the calibration of the forecast. We tried to have an  
16 approach that was consistent with planning reports and  
17 research. We used a number of inputs into the forecast,  
18 data from VTS, the Texas Travel Demand Model, Texas  
19 Demographic Center and other sources.

20 We also validated those sources against the  
21 2018 Freight Plan, federal databases of freight flows,  
22 like the FAF Framework and Transearch forecast, as well as  
23 some other forecasts that the Federal Highway  
24 Administration in the United States did, of looking at the  
25 border. And we found that in all of these cases, we were

1 very consistent with those forecasts, and one of the  
2 things that we're able to do with these forecasts that are  
3 different than others have done is, we really were able to  
4 allocate it down to the POE and crossing level.

5 We also reviewed Metropolitan Planning --  
6 (Pause.)

7 MS. MAYS: Chris, we lost you. I think  
8 somebody muted everybody, and muted Chris, too.

9 MR. WILLIGES: Ah. I am now unmuted. Sorry  
10 about that.

11 MS. MAYS: Okay.

12 MR. WILLIGES: Where did I drop off?

13 MR. SOLIS: Right at the review of the  
14 Metropolitan Planning Organization plan.

15 MR. WILLIGES: Yeah. Ah. Okay. So the point  
16 there was that we did look at the long range plans from  
17 the NPO along the Texas-Mexican border, to make sure that  
18 we're working consistent with those plans, and make sure  
19 that our forecasts were very consistent with those plans.

20 On the next slide, we provide high-level  
21 summary of our forecast for movement of people through the  
22 Texas-Mexican border. What we're seeing is, between  
23 now -- or 2017 and 2050, about a 28 percent growth in the  
24 number of people crossing the border.

25 And what you see in this bar chart is number of

1 people. We did forecast the number of vehicles as well.  
2 We put people here because we did them add them up across  
3 the modes.

4 But what you'll see is that personal vehicles,  
5 people traveling in vehicles are still the major mode of  
6 travel. We still have bike and ped. We still have bus  
7 route passengers, and both of those will increase as well  
8 between 2017 and 2050.

9 On the next slide, we further break this  
10 movement of people down into each of the different  
11 regions. So what you'll see is that, across the region,  
12 along the border, that there is a fairly even  
13 distribution. In some corridors, there's a little bit  
14 heavier emphasis on bus than in others, but the mix of  
15 personal vehicles and pedestrians is fairly consistent  
16 across all regions, and really the movement of people is  
17 broadly distributed across all three border regions.

18 And again, these are forecasts for 2050. So  
19 for the movement of goods, again, I'm showing you truck  
20 and rail. We do have the other modes as well. But when  
21 you look at truck and rail, between 2017 and 2050, we're  
22 expecting to see truck travel more than triple.

23 This means 189 percent growth, from 4.3 million  
24 to 12.3 million. Just imagine what that means on our  
25 infrastructure, to have this kind of growth in truck

1 travel. We're also expecting railcars to more than  
2 double, from about one million today to 2.6 million in  
3 2050.

4 You can see the breakdown --

5 MS. MAYS: Chris, Chris? If you --

6 MR. WILLIGES: Yes?

7 MS. MAYS: -- can just pause there, and really  
8 want to get Committee's input on some of this, because I  
9 think this is a lot of, you know, great information, and I  
10 kind of want to get a reaction from the Committee. I know  
11 we have some railroad folks here, you know, the border --

12 MR. GARCIA: Yeah.

13 MS. MAYS: -- you know --

14 MR. GARCIA: Chairman, this is Josue, Cameron  
15 County. I heard you mention nearshoring, and I think with  
16 the -- with China, the coronavirus, and the trade problems  
17 that the United States is having with China, I think --  
18 you know, I don't know if the numbers that you're  
19 presenting takes that into consideration, where, you know,  
20 if it's not going to China, most of it will come back down  
21 into Mexico. And that will further, you know, erode some  
22 of the highways, and all of what we've taken into  
23 consideration was that it will really exponentially grow.

24 So I guess that's my question. Are we -- you  
25 know, it doesn't matter who you talk to, the CFOs of the

1 big, major companies at Apple and a lot of those companies  
2 that are bringing things back, Mexico to U.S.

3 MR. WILLIGES: Yeah. That's a great comment.  
4 And we -- what you're seeing right now is a forecast that  
5 is a continuation of prevailing trends over the last  
6 20 years or so.

7 What I will show you though, in addition to  
8 this, in a few slides, is alternative forecasts, where we  
9 have one forecast that shows what happens if we have an  
10 overall decline in trade, because with COVID-19, maybe  
11 there's more nationalism, and people tend not to trade as  
12 much. Maybe the overall economy is a bit slower.

13 But then we also look at a high-end forecast,  
14 and by high, we mean a lot more demand, where there is a  
15 lot more integration between United States and Mexico,  
16 driven a lot by that nearshoring. So we'll also share  
17 with you a set of forecasts, with that taken into account  
18 as well.

19 MR. JAIME: Caroline, this is Ivan Jaime. Can  
20 you hear me?

21 MS. MAYS: Yes, we can hear you, Ivan.  
22 Welcome.

23 MR. JAIME: Okay, great. Well, good morning,  
24 everyone. I can't speak to the exact growth there, but I  
25 do think that freight railroads are operating under the

1 assumption that we're going to be expected to shoulder  
2 more of the load as congestion grows on highways and money  
3 becomes scarcer on the public side to continue to build  
4 highways.

5 So I do think that freight rail is going to be  
6 having to take on a lot more freight. I also think that  
7 there's going to be intermodal growth, where trucks might  
8 cross the bridge and then go to an intermodal terminal,  
9 like the one that UP just invested in in Laredo. About a  
10 \$90 million investment to expand that terminal to be able  
11 to handle trucks crossing the border and then hopping on  
12 the rail in Laredo.

13 So I'm thinking about, you know, some of what  
14 I've heard John Esparza say in terms of the driver  
15 shortages and how it might be vice versa; they might cross  
16 on rail and then hop on a truck to make the rest of the  
17 trip. So I think this would be consistent with, you know,  
18 some of what we're -- some of our underlying assumptions  
19 for the future.

20 And then I was just going to say that as well,  
21 in terms of the modeling and the projecting, I think the  
22 intermodal aspect is going to be something, you know, to  
23 keep an eye on. But you know, trucks might cross the  
24 border, but then they hop on the rail system in Laredo,  
25 and they make their truck cross the state on rail or vice



1       versa.

2                       So just something to consider, that I think  
3       there's going to be a lot more intermodality in the  
4       future.

5                       MS. MAYS:   Okay.   No.   That's great, great to  
6       hear, and thanks for those comments, you know, that  
7       there's -- it's on par with kind of you all's, you know,  
8       predictions and what you kind of foresee coming up in the  
9       future.

10                      So thanks for that.   Any other comments from  
11       Committee members on this?

12                      MR. SCHWEBEL:   This is Gerry, Gerry Schwebel  
13       again.   I --

14                      MS. MAYS:   Yes.

15                      MR. SCHWEBEL:   -- am really looking at these  
16       numbers of population growth, which are mind-boggling, yet  
17       what we focus so much attention on trucks and cars or  
18       ports of entry.   But you know, maybe we should also  
19       consider, you know, the people that are crossing every day  
20       back and forth, and what -- going back to my original  
21       point of the cost of the canopies or the people standing  
22       in line, not just right now under the COVID scenario, but  
23       you know, just people just standing out there in 100-plus  
24       degree weather, just to get processed, and we don't --  
25       we're not, you know -- just a little canopy is not going

1 to cut it, you know.

2 I think we need to think outside the box as  
3 communities, because these are -- we welcome these people  
4 to come and shop that are crossing, either by bike or  
5 walking. And I know we put more emphasis on cars and on  
6 trucks, or we should, but we cannot forget the pedestrians  
7 that may be coming in and walking across back and forth,  
8 every day.

9 And I don't know if we could -- how we  
10 incorporate a message of the growth in population tying  
11 in, to making sure that we have adequate, I guess,  
12 infrastructure for the pedestrians as well.

13 MS. MAYS: Yeah. I think, Gerry -- thanks for  
14 the comments. I think Chris has projections for, you  
15 know, the people side, the movement of people side, from,  
16 you know, the modal perspective as well.

17 So certainly, yes, because the challenges, you  
18 know, at the border crossing itself, but also connectivity  
19 of, once they've crossed into Texas and now they have to  
20 walk to whatever their destination is, or if they're going  
21 to go take transit, et cetera. There's issues there, when  
22 it comes to the pedestrians and that some of them have to  
23 cross high-traffic streets.

24 And in some instances, these sidewalks are not  
25 connected for this issue of first and last mile issues for

1 pedestrians and bicyclists in the border region, just as  
2 much as the first and last mile issues for P of E and for  
3 commercial vehicles.

4 So certainly, you know, point well taken, and  
5 certainly, it's something that needs to be articulated,  
6 because it's not just the trade and the goods. People  
7 live in the border region. People live there every day.  
8 And like you mentioned, there are people that cross the  
9 border every day.

10 So how do we address those needs as well? And  
11 I think the goal of this plan from the beginning has  
12 always been -- you know, there's two groups that, you  
13 know -- that we address. There's the goods movement side,  
14 but then there's also people movement side.

15 So we're going to keep that message very  
16 consistent throughout the plan and even in the  
17 recommendations. So I appreciate those comments.

18 MR. MEADOR: Caroline, this is Stan Meador with  
19 Texas Pacifico. And I don't know that I've got anything  
20 really -- anything to add that hasn't already been stated,  
21 but since, you know, you were kind of probing on the rail  
22 side of this current slide, I think we definitely  
23 concur -- I do -- with the comments that have been made  
24 today, including the nearshoring and the potential for  
25 cross-border increased traffic, Mexico, U.S., and

1 specifically, Texas here I think is what we're  
2 anticipating and seeing real potential growth for.

3 MS. MAYS: Yes. Thank you. Any other  
4 comments? Otherwise, Chris, you can move forward. I just  
5 wanted to make sure, at least, we get, you know, input  
6 from the Committee, as we move along here.

7 MR. WILLIGES: Sure. Yes. Thank you. Thanks  
8 for that. And we got a lot of really good input.

9 This next slide shows the same forecast that  
10 you just saw, by truck and railcar, but broken down for  
11 each of the different regions. And what you'll see is  
12 that there is an increase or forecast amount of both truck  
13 travel and rail movements across all regions, although,  
14 you know, a lot of the travel occurs through one of the  
15 regions.

16 But what you'll find is, when you look at  
17 person movement, that kind of flips, where it's fairly  
18 even distribution, but we have a little less person  
19 movement through Laredo.

20 On the next slide, we talk a little bit about  
21 tonnage. Now, tonnage is expected to more than triple,  
22 with even faster growth in the northbound direction. And  
23 one of the interesting things is, if you compare the  
24 tonnage growth to the growth in the number of vehicles,  
25 tonnage is growing even faster, which means that the mix

1 of commodities we see in the future -- we're going to see  
2 heavier commodity.

3 In just a second, when I jump ahead to value,  
4 you will see that the value is growing even faster again.

5 We do see truck tonnage growing faster than rail tonnage,  
6 and that growth is occurring in both the northbound  
7 direction and the southbound direction.

8 On the next slide, we show the value of trade.

9 Now, this value is connected fairly directly to the  
10 tonnage, but it's the actual value of the commodities.  
11 And what you'll see is that the value of trade is growing  
12 250 percent, which is much faster than the movement of  
13 goods at 184 percent.

14 This means the value of trade is growing more  
15 than three and a half times what it was from 2017 to 2050.

16 One of the messages we want to weave into this chapter is  
17 that Mexico is U.S.'s largest trading partner, and that  
18 the movement of these goods is very important, and that,  
19 if you look at the movement of goods, more than half of  
20 the trade is actually Mexican exports coming into the  
21 United States.

22 So you have a considerable flow going the  
23 opposite direction, in the southbound direction. So on  
24 the next slide, we show alternate scenarios. So what I  
25 showed you up to here were the forecasts that we did based

1 on the continuation of prevailing trends.

2 So it includes growth in employment, growth in  
3 the U.S. GDP overall. It assumes that we have fairly  
4 stable currency exchange rates, with what you have today,  
5 and that the level of trade integration is roughly the  
6 same as what we see today.

7 Now, we tested this with a low case scenario  
8 and a high case scenario. And so for the low case  
9 scenario, this is really intended to represent the  
10 decline-in-trade scenario, and there's several factors  
11 that we see contributing to that decline in trade.

12 One, that there is slower employment growth  
13 overall, that the U.S. national economy grows slower than  
14 it has or is expected to in the future, and that there is  
15 a devaluation in the peso, which also makes the  
16 competitiveness less competitive for trade. And then  
17 there are restrictive border and trade policies that  
18 further constrain the trade. That's the low case  
19 scenario.

20 Now, in the high case scenario, this is the  
21 scenario where we're thinking about greater integration.  
22 So the greater trade integration -- part of that is going  
23 to be due to nearshoring. Another part of it may be due  
24 to even leveraging USMCA even more than NAFTA has been to  
25 date. And then there are the other sorts of things that

1 may lead to higher demand.

2           If there's more investment in the  
3 infrastructure that would facilitate the movement, that  
4 could lead to higher demand. Higher employment growth,  
5 higher national growth, and appreciation of the peso. So  
6 this is how we defined the low case scenario and the high  
7 case scenario.

8           And in just a second, I'll show you what those  
9 results look like, but I guess I wanted to pause and just  
10 see if these alternate scenarios make sense to you. And  
11 we actually have a Menti poll, where we can see, I  
12 guess -- yes/no answers, but I'd be happy to entertain  
13 some comments, too.

14           MS. MAYS: Yeah. Thanks, Chris. We're really  
15 not looking for yes/no answers. I think really we're  
16 looking for the Committee to weigh in on the assumptions,  
17 and I think I'd rather have you go back to the slide, so  
18 we can kind of methodically go through the low case  
19 scenario assumptions, and then the high case scenario  
20 assumptions.

21           Because I really think an open dialogue here is  
22 important, because these are assumptions, you know, we're  
23 making based on information like you mentioned, but I want  
24 to hear from BTAC.

25           So let's just start with the low case. When

1 you look at these four bullets, what's your take on that?

2 And Gerry, I know you have something to say, so --

3 MR. SCHWEBEL: You know me well. You know me  
4 well, Caroline. Yeah, yeah.

5 I just -- these restrictive border trade  
6 policies, I think is going to be, you know -- could become  
7 more prevalent, you know, in the coming years, not just  
8 with this administration, but just in general. And I  
9 think it's important to, you know, really -- you know, we  
10 don't know what -- you know, we live day to day by tweets  
11 or we live day to day by, you know, hey, I had a breakfast  
12 meeting with the President of Mexico.

13 We really need to really, I think, move that up  
14 and understand really what the thinking of both federal  
15 governments -- in our daily way of life on the border, you  
16 know. They don't know us. They don't understand us, but  
17 they put out these restrictive policies that are impacting  
18 our economy and our well-being.

19 And we've got to project it in a different way.  
20 You know, it starts off either at the state level or up  
21 to the federal level. We depend so much on our Governor  
22 to have a good relationship with our President, to make  
23 sure we're keeping him informed on these issues.

24 And you know, so I know the Secretary does a  
25 great job of that. But I really think it's going to be



1 becoming more and more important that these restrictions  
2 be put in context of what they mean, versus just saying,  
3 well, it sounds like we restrict, because there's an  
4 immigration inflow.

5 We restrict because there's a health, you know,  
6 crisis. We restrict because of this. Every restriction  
7 has a cost and has a price, and it starts off at the local  
8 level. It affects other levels.

9 And I'll tell you right now: these  
10 restrictions are hurting us even more than peso  
11 devaluations, because we've got to adapt to peso  
12 devaluations a lot faster, but we cannot adapt quickly to  
13 restrictive measures and policies.

14 MS. MAYS: Yeah. Thank you for those comments.

15 And certainly, you know, the restrictions also create  
16 this uncertainty in future policies, you know. So the  
17 restrictions kind of give you an idea, but also, it gives  
18 you an idea of the uncertainty that could happen, and that  
19 definitely can, you know, like you mentioned, have an  
20 impact on economic activity across the border, but also  
21 economic activity throughout the state and the nation.

22 So certainly -- yeah -- those are, you know,  
23 really good comments, and I'm glad that you see  
24 restrictive policies --

25 MR. SCHWEBEL: And also, how do we align -- how

1 can we align those restrictions on both sides of the  
2 border? One side does one set of restrictions and the  
3 other side does another set, and you know, we have, like,  
4 dialogue about our cities. But you know, there could be  
5 different reasons and different thinking at the local,  
6 state and federal levels on both sides of the border that  
7 impacts, you know, our economy, because of those  
8 respective restrictions.

9 MS. MAYS: Yeah, yeah. And certainly, I think,  
10 you know, that goes along what you guys have discussed in  
11 the last few years, is the continued dialogue, our  
12 collaboration at all levels of government and to all the  
13 avenues, you know, that facilitate that dialogue, you  
14 know, between the two countries.

15 Any other Committee member want to chime in on  
16 this, on the low case scenario?

17 MR. CALVO: Hey, Caroline. This is Eduardo  
18 again with the El Paso NPO. I think I agree with Gerry  
19 that that variable, restrictive border trade policies  
20 probably has a lot more impact, but on the other side,  
21 what I was going to say is, you know, assumptions are  
22 assumptions.

23 Right? You know, if it's not 10 percent,  
24 should it be 15 percent to 20 percent, you know? We don't  
25 know. What -- I'm more anxious to see what the -- what

1 these different scenarios -- what the results are.

2 Because I know I'm jumping the gun, but what  
3 I'm afraid is that, even in the low case scenario, you  
4 know, we're going to see a tremendous growth, and  
5 therefore, the need, even under a low case scenario --  
6 we're going to show that there's a tremendous need for  
7 additional infrastructure.

8 In other words, the growth for the movement of  
9 goods and people is going to be huge. But again, back to  
10 the question, are these, you know, good assumptions? I  
11 mean, they're as good as anything else at the -- that we  
12 can say.

13 MS. MAYS: Yes. Okay. No. Thank you for  
14 that. I will get to -- we will get to the preliminary  
15 results here in a little bit. Just wanted to at least  
16 hear from you all that there's reasonable assumptions for  
17 this scenario.

18 So I probably want to jump into the high case,  
19 because I think this one, you all probably will have, you  
20 know -- some of you already brought up, you know, the  
21 impact of COVID and some of this changing, you know,  
22 global economic landscape that certainly we might see a  
23 lot more nearshoring, coming back to Mexico and the U.S.,  
24 but also USMCA.

25 So I just want to hear from the Committee

1 again. Are these assumptions here reasonable? Are they  
2 in line with, you know, what you all know, see or think?  
3 Again, these are just assumptions.

4 (No response.)

5 MS. MAYS: No comments, meaning we're on point?  
6 So we'll move to the results, Chris.

7 MR. WILLIGES: Okay. So on the next slide, we  
8 show a comparison of the 2017 forward movement of people,  
9 the 2017 movement today, to the light blue bar, the mid  
10 case, that you've already seen. So that one, 12.4  
11 million, that's the forecast you've been seeing up to now.

12 The low and the high, compared to that, you see  
13 it creates this band around it where the high, we're going  
14 to have many more people crossing the border, and the low,  
15 we'll have fewer, and in fact, we'll have fewer than we do  
16 currently today. That would be the impact of the various  
17 assumptions on the low case.

18 On the next slide, we show the impact on goods  
19 movement. Now, here, you see an impact that I think is  
20 very consistent with what we heard from the El Paso NPO,  
21 which is, even with these restrictive trade policies in  
22 the low case scenario, you still see fairly explosive  
23 growth for both truck and container movement in the low  
24 case scenario.

25 And you know, let's say, instead of 10 percent,

1 we make it 15 percent restrictive. That 9.3 million on  
2 the low for trucks and the 1.8 million for rail will go  
3 down, but they're still going to be more than they are  
4 today, and you're still going to be seeing a lot of strain  
5 on the goods and infrastructure.

6 MS. MAYS: I think, Chris, the biggest  
7 message -- you can go back to that slide. The biggest  
8 message -- I think the key message here on both the people  
9 movement and the goods movement side is that no matter  
10 what the scenario is or the assumptions are, we're going  
11 to see growth.

12 And it's going to be a lot more than what we've  
13 seen today and in the past, as compared to the trends,  
14 because of some of the things that you all have raised or  
15 -- I think, Gerry, to your point, that's really the key  
16 message, that this is going to continue to grow,  
17 regardless of what happened.

18 The rate, it might be low. It might be medium.  
19 It might be high. You know, so I think that's really  
20 what we're trying to do here with this kind -- this  
21 alternative scenario, not knowing exactly the exact thing  
22 that is going to happen, the exact growth rate, but at  
23 least giving magnitude of growth rates here.

24 Okay. We can move on, Chris.

25 MR. WILLIGES: Okay. So just continuing that

1 theme of our infrastructure being strained. With these  
2 forecasts, I mean, we expect commercial vehicle travel to  
3 grow and strain our capacity at our border crossings.

4 It also means that the wait times and the  
5 crossing times that Donald showed in Chapter 3 will be --  
6 will increase significantly if no action is taken. This  
7 will also impact the roads that access the border.

8 We have a few comments here on the screen about  
9 roads on the U.S. side of the border, but it's also going  
10 to impact north-south roadways on the Mexican side of the  
11 border as well, providing that connectivity to the border  
12 crossings.

13 So overall, what do these results mean for the  
14 Border Master Plan? One, that the usage of POEs along the  
15 Texas-Mexican border are going to increase, regardless of  
16 the future scenario we look at. We're going to need  
17 infrastructure improvements to accommodate this future  
18 demand, and we are going to see a general mix of traffic  
19 shifting towards the movement of goods.

20 But I think, as Gerry and others had mentioned,  
21 I mean, we can't forget that personal movement side, and  
22 we're seeing growth in personal movement. If you look  
23 back at the wait times that Donald has showed in Chapter  
24 3, there are places on the border where we have  
25 significant wait times for pedestrians, and as you see the

1 growth in pedestrians, those will grow too. So we can't  
2 forget the movement of people side of the equation as  
3 well.

4 Well, Caroline, I think we just ask kind of a  
5 general question here at the end. Just overall, now that  
6 you've seen all the results, do these results make sense  
7 to you? What kind of feedback do you have?

8 MS. MAYS: And I think we probably got that in  
9 this -- Chris, there's several comments on the chat box.  
10 And if you want to take a look at that quickly, you know,  
11 I think John Esparza has a lot of comments related to  
12 previous ones, and certainly, you know, there are other  
13 comments on here that we will take into account.

14 So for the interest of time, Chris, I think,  
15 you know, we can let people kind of provide -- and here, I  
16 think, you know, provide any comments that you may have.  
17 It's not just -- you make sense -- want to make sure that  
18 this kind of an open dialogue.

19 Is there anything in particular you would like  
20 to see, you know, on this? Yeah. I know, Mayor Saenz,  
21 you made comments on COVID. And certainly, you know, this  
22 continues to be an evolving pandemic issue.

23 And certainly, I think you all have seen that  
24 the U.S. and Mexico have extended the restriction, you  
25 know, for non-essential travel across the border. And you

1 heard earlier on from Secretary Garcia what measures  
2 Mexico is doing in terms of testing people and sending  
3 people back to the U.S.

4 And so yes. I think those will continue. But  
5 in terms of the forecast, we just wanted to make sure we  
6 capture kind of the, you know -- the future here to the  
7 best that we can.

8 So Chris, in the interest of time, can you move  
9 to the next chapter, the economic analysis?

10 MR. WILLIGES: Sure. So in Chapter 7, we're  
11 going to talk about the economic importance of the border,  
12 and I just want to share a couple of preliminary findings  
13 with you, high-level findings. The border generates more  
14 than 268 billion annually in GDP, in both the United  
15 States and Mexico, which generates about 4.9 million jobs  
16 in both countries.

17 We're finding that the majority of the impact  
18 is due to the movement of goods, but I mean, there's also  
19 a significant impact for the movement of people as well.  
20 It's 9.0 billion annually in GDP, just the movement of  
21 people.

22 And so if you ask your neighbor as to how big  
23 \$9 billion is, that's a big number. And then border  
24 crossing delays represent missed opportunities. And I'm  
25 going to get into that a little bit more. We have a



1 number here of 2.7 billion.

2 It depends a little bit on how you measure  
3 border delays. As I know all of you have talked about  
4 before, you know, all the distinctions between the VTS  
5 wait times, the CBP wait time data, versus you know,  
6 crossing data, that TTI has collected.

7 And we'll talk about that a little bit too.  
8 But overall, our key messages are that the border supports  
9 the economy in the U.S., Mexico, at the border region, at  
10 the state level, at the national level, and that the  
11 benefit of trade extends to the U.S. and Mexican states  
12 beyond the border. And that when you look at current  
13 delays, just the value of what it's doing to the movement  
14 of people and the movement of goods, they represent lost  
15 opportunities.

16 If we can reduce some of those delays, you will  
17 have increased economic activity. And in addition, as the  
18 delays grow in the future because of increased demand that  
19 you just saw, you have even more opportunities, if you can  
20 address those delays.

21 So just digging a little bit deeper into some  
22 of the numbers. On the next slide, the border generates  
23 about 268 billion in GDP. And by the way, I'm giving you  
24 a little bit of foreshadowing.

25 I just want to give you some high-level

1 results, and then I'll talk a little bit more about how we  
2 got these and dig into that. But overall, the border  
3 generates about 258 billion annually in GDP.

4 168 billion of that is in the United States,  
5 100 billion in Mexico, which impacts -- is the total  
6 impact to both people and the movement of goods. But we  
7 drilled down in each of those separately, and we've done  
8 that at the national level, the state level, the regional  
9 level and the local level, and you'll see those results in  
10 a little bit.

11 In addition, the movement of people and goods  
12 generates jobs. It generates 4.9 million jobs on both  
13 sides of the border. 3.4 million of these jobs are in  
14 Mexico, and 1.5 million of these jobs are in the United  
15 States.

16 When we go to the next slide, you'll see these  
17 numbers. These job estimates can be broken down by the  
18 national impact, the impact on the border states, and by  
19 that, I mean, Texas and also the Mexican states along the  
20 border, as well as the border region.

21 And I just want to mention one thing on this  
22 graph, because you'll see a chart like this a little bit  
23 later in the presentation again. This bar chart shows --  
24 total bar shows the total number of jobs at the national  
25 level.

1           The bar from the blue plus the yellow is what  
2 happens in the border states, either in Texas or the  
3 Mexican states along the border. And the blue is the  
4 border region, that area near the border, within the  
5 border states.

6           We could not break out the border region for  
7 Mexico, so you see a bigger yellow bar there. But that  
8 yellow bar for Mexico corresponds to the yellow plus blue  
9 in the United States. So just a little aside on how to  
10 interpret these charts.

11           Okay. So I want to go into a little bit more  
12 detail about how we estimated these and did these from our  
13 more detailed results. So first, let's talk about trade.

14           We looked at the total economic impact, the impact by key  
15 supply chains, and then we looked at that binational,  
16 national, state and regional level impact.

17           So the way that we estimated the impact of  
18 cross-border trade in goods is, we looked at the value by  
19 supply chain and origin by port of entry, and we used the  
20 supply chain profile data that Donald has shown you the  
21 results of from Chapter 3.

22           This is an aggregation of a number of different  
23 sources. And then we estimated impact of exports in each  
24 country using an economic model called an input-output  
25 model. Now, what it does is, it tells you what the

1 multiplier effects are of the value of those supply  
2 chains, and what those impacts are on the economy.

3 We used a source called IMPLAN. IMPLAN  
4 provided us data for 2018 for the United States. The most  
5 recent data they had for Mexico is 2015, but it should be  
6 very similar, because the data basically tells you the  
7 relationships between industries, rather than absolute  
8 values, and we don't expect that to change much from 2015  
9 to 2018.

10 The kind of results that we show are the effect  
11 on GDP, the gross domestic product in both the U.S. and  
12 Mexico, employment and labor income. Now, on all the rest  
13 of these slides, I'm going to show GDP impact, but we do  
14 have those employment and labor income statistics as well.

15 So this map shows the percentage of GDP in  
16 every single state in Mexico and in the United States that  
17 is dependent on trade across the Texas-Mexican border.  
18 And you'll see that every single state in both countries  
19 is touched upon, and in some states, a sizeable percentage  
20 of their GDP is actually dependent on the trade across the  
21 Texas-Mexican border.

22 Part of this is due to the manufacturing  
23 integration of NAFTA as well in allowing North America to  
24 be more competitive with Asia. If there is nearshoring,  
25 obviously the importance of the border will increase in

1 the future. Keep in mind that the results I'm showing you  
2 right now are the current importance of the border.

3 On the next slide, we look at one what happens  
4 when you break the impact of goods movement down by supply  
5 chain. So we looked at, I believe, 13 different supply  
6 chains. We show the results for three supply chains plus  
7 all the other supply chains combined.

8 But what you see overall is that higher value-  
9 added manufacturing and durable goods, including high-tech  
10 and motor vehicles, but also machinery, are contributing a  
11 lot of the value to both the U.S. and the Mexican economy,  
12 and that this is enabled by goods being able to move  
13 across the border, taking advantage of Mexican labor and  
14 U.S. technology, that really is that partnership between  
15 United States and Mexico that allows this kind of economic  
16 activity to be generated.

17 We can also look at the impact to trade by  
18 geography. So what this slide shows is the same impact  
19 for both the United States and Mexico, broken down at the  
20 national level, for the border states and also for the  
21 border region.

22 And we can also look at how the border  
23 crossings in each region contribute to national impact.  
24 So what you see on this slide is the breakdown between the  
25 three regions along the border on both the U.S. and the

1 Mexican side of the border. You can see how much they are  
2 contributing to this overall gross domestic product  
3 impact, GDP impact.

4 So that's goods movement. We also looked at  
5 the economic importance of -- yes -- we also looked at the  
6 economic impacts of movement of people across the border,  
7 and again, here, we looked at the overall impact. We  
8 looked at it by mode and region. And we also looked at  
9 the impacts on the hospitality industries which are the  
10 industries that benefit from that cross-border movement  
11 and the expenditures that people make along the border.

12 So a quick overview of our methodology. We  
13 estimated the expenditure by category. So we looked at  
14 various hospitality industries, hotels, restaurants,  
15 recreation. We also looked at retail and other  
16 miscellaneous categories, and one of the industries that  
17 fits in there is medical, as well.

18 So there are a number of other industries here  
19 that are just not shown on this table. We used crossing  
20 data and expenditure estimates, and then the value of  
21 those expenditures, we once again could use our regional  
22 economic model, the input-output model, to look at the  
23 impact of those expenditures.

24 And then once again, we estimated GDP,  
25 employment, labor income impacts, but for right now, I'm

1 going to show you the GDP impacts. This slide shows the  
2 economic impacts for movement of people on GDP, and what  
3 you see is -- you see it broken down for the binational  
4 impact, which is about 9 billion.

5 It's the 6.5 plus the 2.8 billion combined.  
6 You can also see it by region along the border. And one  
7 thing to keep in mind is that the movement of people  
8 across the border generally occurs within about 50 miles  
9 of the border.

10 About 99 percent of all the movement of people  
11 occurs within the border. And it's really that local,  
12 integrated economy that are generating a lot of this  
13 movement, although, you know, there also are shopping  
14 trips and medical trips and other kinds of trips in  
15 addition to the social and cultural ties that we see  
16 between the two countries.

17 About 79 percent of this impact is generated by  
18 people traveling by personal vehicles. Twenty percent is  
19 generated by pedestrians and bicyclists. So if you think  
20 about Gerry's comment earlier about the wait times people  
21 are experiencing, 20 percent of \$9 billion, so almost  
22 \$2 billion of economic activity is generated by those  
23 people walking back and forth over the border. And about  
24 one percent of economic activity is generated by bus, and  
25 you'll see that it's a fairly even spread across the

1 region.

2 On Slide 79, we show the breakdown by industry.

3 And one of the interesting things that you'll see here is  
4 that there is a much larger slice on the retail industry  
5 in Texas, and that is to the benefit of Mexican nationals  
6 shopping on the U.S. side of the border, although some of  
7 that is shifting a little bit, as the mix of retail on  
8 both sides of the border is changing.

9 But you still see quite a bit of the new retail  
10 on the Texas side of the border. On the Mexican side of  
11 the border, you see a slightly different mix. On the  
12 Mexican side of the border, you see restaurants and hotels  
13 and medical being impacted, and it's this gold  
14 miscellaneous box of 17 percent, that's where medical is  
15 included. That's why that slice is bigger than the  
16 smaller slice on the Texas side.

17 MS. MAYS: So Chris, before we jump into this,  
18 I want to give Committee members a chance to weigh in on  
19 kind of the economic importance of the border. We couched  
20 it from a goods movement, but also from a people's  
21 movement.

22 So I just kind of want to hear the Committee's  
23 thought on that before we move into the cost of --  
24 economic impact to the cost of congestion, border delays,  
25 et cetera.



1                   Nothing? We're good?

2                   MR. SCHWEBEL: I believe the chats are saying a  
3 lot. You know, I'm particularly interested in hearing  
4 from the mayors, you know, on this and how they feel about  
5 this data.

6                   MS. MAYS: Yeah.

7                   MAYOR SAENZ: Thank you, Gerry. Yeah. If I  
8 may, thank you, Chairman, and thank you all for the --  
9 your excellent presentation. You know, without a doubt,  
10 the impact that border communities, you know, have, trade  
11 in particular, Texas and Mexico, you know, would be  
12 enlightening to -- for some of us, including myself, but  
13 the NPO, even council members.

14                   So maybe some way, somehow, we can get the data  
15 which I know it's available, and myself being the mayor or  
16 others here, the economic development director can -- you  
17 know, can reproduce this and show our people here, the  
18 policymakers, as to what truly the impact is. And this is  
19 very, very -- extremely helpful, and I appreciate that  
20 very much.

21                   MS. MAYS: Yeah. Thank you, Mayor. Certainly,  
22 this is then preliminary and we're going to be digging a  
23 little bit deeper at the regional level, POE level, as  
24 well, on all the information you're seeing here on the  
25 economic impact. Because we really want to, like you

1 said, you know, communicate this, you know, not just at  
2 the local level, but at the state level and the national  
3 level.

4 This economic impact of -- the economic  
5 importance of the border, why the border matters, you  
6 know, and essentially, this is why the border matters. So  
7 I want to hear from the two regions -- El Paso, I know we  
8 have representatives here, and then the RGV, to kind of  
9 weigh in on this.

10 MR. CALVO: Caroline, this is Eduardo with the  
11 NPO in El Paso. I was hoping for David Coronado to make a  
12 comment. I think he had to jump out of this call for a  
13 little bit. But I mean, clearly, you know, the numbers  
14 reflect the situation that we have here in El Paso.

15 I mean, the cross-border, you know, movement of  
16 people and the economic impact on both communities is  
17 tremendous. I know that the City of El Paso has a lot of  
18 information, and they've been doing, you know, their  
19 surveys and economic analysis of the impact of cross-  
20 border movement, of the people crossing from Juarez and  
21 shopping in El Paso, and the negative impact that they've  
22 been suffering now.

23 So you know, this information that you're  
24 providing, I mean, it's a lot. We need to digest and  
25 compare to the numbers that we have, but overall, I mean,

1 you know, whether -- there may be some slight differences  
2 in the data.

3 The message here, like the Mayor, Mayor Saenz  
4 said, and Gerry said, you know, it's obvious that there is  
5 a tremendous economic benefit by having an efficient  
6 cross-border movement of people on both economies.

7 MS. MAYS: Yeah. And you know, thank you for  
8 those comments, Eduardo, since I think, you know, one  
9 thing we definitely want -- that's why I'm asking you all  
10 to weigh in, but also you economic development folks, and  
11 I know in El Paso with Jon Barela, they've also -- they've  
12 put numbers out.

13 We just want to make sure that we're capturing  
14 this. And the data and the analytical tools might be  
15 different and their results might not necessarily match,  
16 but like you say, if the message is consistent and it's  
17 showing, you know, a consistent message, I think that's  
18 what's key here.

19 So RGV, I want to give you guys a chance to  
20 weigh in on this.

21 MR. GARCIA: Caroline, this is Josue, Cameron  
22 County.

23 MS. MAYS: Yes.

24 MR. GARCIA: I know that even from, you know,  
25 the tolls that are collected. You know, Cameron County,

1 just from our Gateway International Bridge, we bring in  
2 over -- close to \$3 million a year. I mean, that's just,  
3 you know, the bridge system itself, and imagine what that  
4 creates for the city of Brownsville.

5 Our downtown is -- I can see it suffering quite  
6 a bit with the sanctioned crossing of folks coming from  
7 Mexico. So definitely it does, you know, create a big  
8 impact. I know that the judge, Eddie Treviño, he's the  
9 Chairman of the Texas Border Coalition, and he's making  
10 that known about through the state and also to the  
11 Department of Homeland Security.

12 Obviously, you know, that's very important to  
13 Cameron County.

14 MS. MAYS: Okay. Great. And we have comments  
15 in the chat box, and we'll come back to that later. Any  
16 other comments before Chris moves into kind of the  
17 negative -- kind of the economic impact?

18 (No response.)

19 MS. MAYS: Chris, go ahead.

20 MR. WILLIGES: Okay. Well, yeah. This is the  
21 negative part of the economic impact, but I like to think  
22 of it as an opportunity for us, if we can solve some of  
23 the infrastructure constraints along the border.

24 But what we're -- what we looked at was --  
25 what's the impact of congestion on the economy? And so we

1 looked at the impact of border wait times and crossing  
2 times, and I'll talk about the distinction. And we also  
3 looked at the impact of wait times for the movement of  
4 people and goods.

5 What we have not done to date is, we have not  
6 looked at the impact of the access routes to the border  
7 which also experience congestion, and we know there are  
8 constraints there. We know that has congestion, and  
9 that's something that will be added to this analysis.

10 But I wanted to show you these results of the  
11 border wait times and crossing times first. So the way  
12 that we calculated the cost of congestion was that, on the  
13 goods movement side, we looked at what would be the lost  
14 exports. On the person movement side, we looked at what  
15 our lost expenditures.

16 Similar to what you already saw, but due to the  
17 delays at the border. And what we used were something  
18 called elasticities, which really is just an economic term  
19 meaning we thought about how industries and people would  
20 react to delays at the border, and we saw how their trip  
21 making and expenditures would change.

22 This data then allowed us to look at changes in  
23 value that's crossing the border. We could use our input-  
24 output models again to estimate the overall impact, and  
25 again, we can provide results by GDP, employment, and

1 labor income. And we do have those results, but I'm going  
2 to show you just the GDP impact today.

3 So overall, if you use wait time, and wait time  
4 here is defined as the CBP wait time -- and that's the  
5 queue that the CBP officer can see. If you use that as  
6 your estimate of the border wait time, the impact of  
7 delays to both people and goods is about 2.7 billion  
8 annually.

9 Now, if you expand that definition to include  
10 the full crossing time, and this is what TTI measured, and  
11 it's going from one side of the border all the way to the  
12 other side, that impact to that total crossing time, that  
13 delay due to crossing, is 4.5 billion.

14 This 4.5 billion is a little bit of an  
15 overestimate, and here's why. The crossing time is how  
16 long it takes you to get from one side of the border to  
17 the other, but part of that -- if you're in a car, you're  
18 having to drive.

19 If you're in a train, you have to go -- there's  
20 a certain amount of this time you have to do anyway, and  
21 it has nothing to do with any sort of restriction or  
22 capacity issues along the border. So the value of the  
23 delay that people are experiencing is probably somewhere  
24 between the value of the wait time and the value of the  
25 crossing time.

1           The kind of impact you have is that delays at  
2 the border make transportation costs more expensive for  
3 goods that are crossing the border. Delays also are often  
4 correlated with reliability.

5           So as you have more delays, you'll also see  
6 increased unreliability of crossing the border, which  
7 makes just-in-time delivery on a logistic operation on the  
8 goods movement side a lot harder. And it reduces the  
9 competitiveness of the Texas-Mexican collaboration,  
10 relative to other nations.

11           You also see here, the breakdown in these  
12 charts, the impact from both the United States and Mexico.

13           You see the impacts on both nations are relatively  
14 comparable.

15           On the next slide, we focus on the wait times.

16           There's that smaller delay that's estimated by CBP. This  
17 shows the value of that 1.5 million to the United States  
18 and the one -- sorry, billion -- and the 1.2 billion for  
19 Mexico, broken down by the region, and you can see that  
20 there are delays at border crossings in each of the  
21 regions.

22           These represent missed opportunities or losses  
23 in economy due to these delays in all three regions. It's  
24 fairly even across all three regions. On the next slide,  
25 we show it by level of geography. So the national level,

1 the number again is the total.

2 The border state is the yellow plus the blue  
3 bar for the United States, and the blue is the border  
4 region. Now, you may wonder, well, why is it -- these  
5 numbers smaller than what you saw before? Previously, we  
6 were showing you the movement of people and goods.

7 On this slide, this is just the goods movement.

8 In just a second, I'll show you the person movement. But  
9 for goods movement, you're seeing an impact of just under  
10 \$2 billion due to delays at the border, and you see that  
11 the majority of this, or more than 50 percent of this  
12 impact, is actually occurring nationally to both Mexico  
13 and the United States, because remember, goods movement  
14 travels long-distance.

15 It actually goes beyond our border states. So  
16 this is having impacts outside of Texas and all of the  
17 Mexican border states. It's having impacts inside as  
18 well.

19 On this slide, we show the breakdown by supply  
20 chain. And one of the things that you'll see here is that  
21 there's an impact on our durable goods, but you see a  
22 significant impact for fruits and vegetables and grains,  
23 where you have a perishability issue, and any kind of wait  
24 time you have has a significant economic impact.

25 And then we look at the value of the wait time



1 for the movement of people. And the value of wait time is  
2 actually quite significant for the movement of people. In  
3 fact, if you were to compare these values for the person  
4 movement to the goods movement, you're looking at about 80  
5 percent of the same value.

6 So the impact of people being delayed at the  
7 border for people movement is quite significant, and  
8 remember, this keeps people from being able to do their  
9 shopping trips or medical trips, and really taking  
10 advantage of the social and cultural ties across the  
11 border.

12 This chart shows the breakdown of the economic  
13 impacts for wait time by region. Again, you can see it's  
14 fairly evenly split across the three regions. And I  
15 wanted to summarize just with -- what do these economic  
16 impacts mean for the Border Master Plan overall?

17 MR. CONTRERAS: I have a question.

18 MR. WILLIGES: Sure.

19 MR. CONTRERAS: Thank you. This is Sergio  
20 Contreras from the Valley. On that slide there, that is  
21 in relation to what? Is that the 70 million per minute,  
22 per hour, or overall? What does that relate?

23 MR. WILLIGES: This is the impact on the gross  
24 domestic product, so on the overall economy.

25 MR. CONTRERAS: Okay.

1 MR. WILLIGES: Okay. Are there other -- I know  
2 I've shown a lot of data. Are there other comments before  
3 we move on to a summary for the Border Master Plan?

4 MS. MAYS: Yes. Committee members, any  
5 comments on the cost of congestion, and in this case,  
6 border wait times, as you've seen here? Any, you know,  
7 response, good -- this is a big issue. It comes up all  
8 the time. And again, this information is preliminary.

9 We will come back at the next meeting with a  
10 little bit more detail, breaking this down a little bit  
11 further to share with you all.

12 MAYOR SAENZ: Yeah. Caroline, again, this is  
13 Mayor Saenz.

14 MS. MAYS: Yes.

15 MAYOR SAENZ: I think Sergio makes a good  
16 point, that it's going to be relative to a certain  
17 measure. I realize these are dollars, and if we could  
18 establish that, minute, hour or whatever -- or you know,  
19 whatever the measuring stick would be.

20 But also, too, do we as a group also come up  
21 with potential solutions for that? And then I'm just  
22 sorting that out but thank you.

23 MS. MAYS: Yes. It's only -- you know, if I  
24 can answer the first one? The measure, we'll go back and  
25 definitely look at that, and come back, and you know, at

1 the next meeting, outline the measures. Your second  
2 comment about coming up with solutions -- yes.

3 That's what you all will come up with in the  
4 recommendations. Now that you're seeing, you know, this  
5 cost of congestion and border delays, what are potential  
6 strategies and solutions? And in this case, we're looking  
7 at it -- you know, we're going to look at it from the view  
8 of the border crossing number as well.

9 So certainly, yeah. You all start thinking  
10 about all of the strategies and potential recommendations  
11 to address some of these issues that we've identified here  
12 based on the data and analysis.

13 MR. GARCIA: Caroline, this is Josue with  
14 Cameron County. We have done, you know, those kind of  
15 studies of a person delayed cross, on waiting by volume,  
16 by, you know, wait times, especially in the delay in hours  
17 and the cost of fuel, you know, per gallons.

18 So you know, that is a very real cost, and you  
19 know, those numbers that you're showing are very  
20 comparable to what we have in our studies we've done here  
21 in the last couple of years.

22 MS. MAYS: Yeah. No. Thank you for that  
23 comment. Certainly -- yeah -- you know, this again, we're  
24 just showing more on the GDP level, additional analysis,  
25 looking really at, you know, value of time, you know,

1 things like wasted fuel. Because on the goods movement  
2 side, that's normally how that cost is looked at as well,  
3 as you mentioned.

4 Yeah. Certainly, you know, again, if you can  
5 share with us what you all have done for that, we can make  
6 sure that we're capturing and doing the analysis here to  
7 mirror, you know, how you guys have done that. The  
8 challenge is the data.

9 Having the data helps with -- and consistent  
10 data, because we don't want to do, you know, analysis just  
11 for one region or one border crossing, because again, not  
12 really sure how to compare apples to apples, but  
13 consistent data helps with the story.

14 Telling a compelling and a consistent story is  
15 very important. But if you have varying data, it's very  
16 challenging to be able to tell that story.

17 MR. GARCIA: I will.

18 MS. MAYS: Yes. Chris, want to go ahead and  
19 let's try to wind down. We're running short on time.

20 MR. WILLIGES: Sure. So I'll make this brief.

21 Just a couple of high-level points about what these  
22 economic impact results mean for our plan.

23 I think, consistent with all the comments  
24 today, investments in the border crossings and the border  
25 regions will help reduce delays, facilitate the flow of

1 goods, which is important for both the U.S. and Mexico to  
2 remain competitive with other nations, and that  
3 investments will also increase regional trade and high  
4 value-added manufacturing goods, thereby preserving jobs  
5 in both countries.

6 And again, I know I only showed you the high-  
7 level jobs. We have the retail job numbers as well. I  
8 think one other thing that we didn't mention on this  
9 slide, but we probably should have, when -- in our  
10 chapter, we're also emphasizing the importance of the  
11 social/cultural side and the economic impacts of the  
12 person movement.

13 So we'll make sure we include that.

14 MS. MAYS: Yeah. And I think we can skip this.

15 MR. WILLIGES: I don't know that we necessarily  
16 need to do a poll on this one, but --

17 MS. MAYS: No.

18 MR. WILLIGES: -- I'd be interested, if there  
19 are any -- if anybody is interested? And so far, we've  
20 showed GDP. It sounds like some other measures like  
21 employment or labor income would be helpful to see as  
22 well, but just I think --

23 MS. MAYS: Yeah.

24 MR. WILLIGES: -- for the next meeting, that  
25 would be nice.

1 MS. MAYS: Yeah. And if you are able to  
2 mention kind of, you know, the other measures, value of  
3 time, fuel wasted, all of that time, all of that measures  
4 as well -- so yes, besides those other measures. Okay?  
5 Okay. So --

6 MR. WILLIGES: So --

7 MS. MAYS: -- thank you, Chris. I'll hand it  
8 over to Tim, quickly.

9 MR. JUAREZ: Yeah. Okay. Caroline, if I may?  
10 So BTAC members, here is a three-month look ahead.  
11 Please note that we will come back and add Chapter 5,  
12 needs assessment and system performance on this, but this  
13 gives you a look ahead, as to where you will go.

14 As a reminder, we will be having the next round  
15 of BNRC meetings: Laredo, June 30; RGV, July 1; and El  
16 Paso, July 2. We are anticipating the next BTAC meeting  
17 to be held on July -- in July. And then note that we're  
18 going to continue to move forward with the refinement of  
19 the presentations of the chapters provided here, and then  
20 it's our goal to add Chapters 8 and 9 to this component  
21 for July.

22 So July will definitely be a very busy month  
23 for y'all. I want to go ahead and put out what the  
24 schedule looks like in the next diagram, please. So this  
25 gives you an idea of where we're going and what the next

1 steps will be.

2 We have it all the way up to August. Please  
3 note that we plan on providing the final report to the  
4 Texas Transportation Commission in September. We'll  
5 continue to do and receive input and comments with  
6 proposed adoption of the BTMP in December 2020.

7 That's what we have to provide to you today on  
8 the Border Transportation Master Plan, and I will turn  
9 this over to Caroline and Secretary of State Hughs. Thank  
10 you so much for your time and attention. Caroline?

11 MS. MAYS: Yeah. I will turn it over to  
12 Secretary Hughs for open discussions and kind of next  
13 steps.

14 SECRETARY HUGHS: Great. Well, thank you all  
15 so much. And Caroline, you've done such a great job as  
16 we're moderating the discussions. The presentations were  
17 very clear. I thought the slides were very well --  
18 succinct.

19 And then I appreciate the Committee members and  
20 the information they shared in the chat room. Let me ask,  
21 Caroline. For purposes of the record and the recording of  
22 this meeting, will the comments in the chat box be  
23 incorporated as well?

24 MS. MAYS: Yes, yes, Secretary, yes. The  
25 comments will be incorporated in the summary of the

1 meeting minutes, and then also certainly we will take all  
2 of those comments this meeting.

3 It's being recorded, and then we'll take those  
4 comments and incorporate it in terms of what we will  
5 address, coming back to the next meeting, and show BTAC's  
6 members questions or comments raised and how we'll address  
7 them.

8 SECRETARY HUGHS: Great. And I saw several  
9 others had questions. I just wanted to make sure --

10 MS. MAYS: Yeah.

11 SECRETARY HUGHS: -- they were addressed and  
12 appreciate that you're being very responsive in the chat  
13 box as well. So I think everyone's had the opportunity to  
14 comment as we've gone through, and I want to be mindful of  
15 everyone's time, but we do have this opportunity for open  
16 discussion, if there's anything anyone wants to mention in  
17 particular.

18 If not, please know that the conversation  
19 continues. Our next meeting will be coming up very  
20 quickly. As mentioned, it's going to be July 9, so  
21 between now and then, please, you know, keep on the  
22 lookout for emails, additional information, chapters,  
23 because the more you can review before a meeting and have  
24 your input ready to share, the more helpful that will be  
25 to keep this moving and keep us on track.



1 Any open discussion comments?

2 MR. SCHWEBEL: Madame Secretary, this is Gerry  
3 Schwebel. Thank you very much for your continued  
4 leadership, and kudos to Tim and Caroline and the whole  
5 team.

6 This has been very, very productive for me, and  
7 I've been doing this stuff for a while, but it's -- also I  
8 just wanted to inform the BTAC -- my colleagues in the  
9 BTAC -- we shared this with your office -- that here  
10 shortly this afternoon, we have a group of us conducting a  
11 border summit to discuss the whole issue of the extension  
12 of the restrictions on the private sector.

13 We'll be sharing some information on both sides  
14 of the border, what's going on with the private sector  
15 involvement, to try to make sure we have the right  
16 information out there, where hopefully it becomes less  
17 painful. They have been very faithful to us and the  
18 extension is costing jobs.

19 It's costing money. And we need to really, you  
20 know, unite our forces so that we can make sure that the  
21 pain is not as severe. So I just wanted to remind -- some  
22 of you will be -- expressed -- and responded to that  
23 meeting, and also with you all.

24 So I appreciate you all participating.

25 SECRETARY HUGHS: Thank you. And I believe

1 David Zapata in my office will be there, and any time that  
2 our office can facilitate any discussions, please know  
3 that we have been doing that quite actively for many  
4 different industries.

5           And so we would have liked to see a quicker  
6 response and recognition of ways to keep the economy  
7 growing on both sides of the border, but I am very  
8 grateful and impressed with the response that we've  
9 received from our partners in Mexico in addressing some of  
10 these matters, in looking at some of the supply chains  
11 that have been impacted, and looking at them even more  
12 individually, where necessary, to see if maybe the overall  
13 restrictions don't necessarily need to apply where health  
14 protocols are in fact in place or where a company is  
15 willing to work with them, whether it's on bus  
16 transportation or other issues, to avoid large groups  
17 gathering and really maintain that safety, that it needs  
18 to be first and foremost, but we certainly need to make  
19 sure the economy keeps moving.

20           I know that many businesses are hit, seeing  
21 that reality that you're so aware of, that that  
22 interdependence that we share, and really are going to  
23 need to consider their supply chain and where they get  
24 things and whether that is going to make sense for their  
25 company to be invested in one area.

1           It's a tremendous opportunity for our friends  
2 in Mexico. And so I'm really grateful that you all are  
3 taking that time to also look at how we can facilitate  
4 that discussion and really strengthen that partnership.  
5 So thank you for that and for your leadership always.

6           Really appreciate your involvement in this  
7 Committee and in so many others that help our state.

8 So --

9           MAYOR SAENZ: Madame Secretary, this is Mayor  
10 Saenz. If I may? Yeah. I just want to congratulate you,  
11 and of course, your team that has presented this, but  
12 also -- if I may -- I echo the same sentiments as what  
13 Gerry had brought up as well, that you know, I've been  
14 between two meetings here.

15           They're all important. But I do want to  
16 express also, you know, my concern. I've -- you know, we  
17 just met with CBP this morning, the people that, you know,  
18 operate our bridges, and regarding, you know, what  
19 they're doing and how they're doing as far as, you know,  
20 dealing with this COVID-19 personally.

21           Their operations are -- you know, they have  
22 over 1,100 personnel here in Laredo proper. And they've  
23 only had a handful of -- you know, these folks, as you  
24 know, deal with thousands of people every day, and they  
25 only have a handful of people that have come up positive,

1 and of course, they're dealing with that.

2 But that just shows you that people only -- you  
3 know, possibly it's mandated, because I know we're having  
4 an uptick here now, across other communities, to the point  
5 that if we can mandate that, I think, data shows that what  
6 experiment then -- the CBP officers, that they -- that  
7 they're required to. And of course, they have a regimen  
8 there that they have to use the face coverings, and of  
9 course, social distancing. Of course hygiene as well, and  
10 that's worked for them.

11 So -- and I know other communities now are  
12 asking, and we'll still -- we'll be asking as well, but  
13 this is something that I and others will take to council,  
14 but you know, urging our Governor to please consider at  
15 least where certain pockets throughout the state are  
16 experiencing an uptick.

17 You know, we would hate for things to truly get  
18 out of hand. Laredo in particular, you know, we were  
19 doing very well, but of course, you know, we opened up and  
20 the people are getting, you know, more careless, and  
21 taking things for granted.

22 So -- but for us to coexist, I think it's very  
23 clear. We need commerce. We're desperate here in the  
24 border area for more economic activity. We depend so  
25 heavily on the Mexican shopper, and of course, the Mexican

1 commerce as well.

2 So this is something that is evolving and I  
3 think we have to adapt. But I would ask that -- we have  
4 to coexist and we can't shut the economy, and for us to  
5 coexist, we have to follow those preliminary health  
6 guidelines that all of us have been professing and pushing  
7 forward.

8 Yeah. Thank you for the opportunity to express  
9 myself, and I'm here to help in whichever capacity. Thank  
10 you.

11 SECRETARY HUGHES: And thank you as well for  
12 your leadership. I think in our press release, you may be  
13 seeing a photo of when we were walking to the bridge, in  
14 the absence of being together, since we were scheduled to  
15 be in Laredo.

16 And I look forward to getting to be there again  
17 sometime soon, and I appreciate that you're following the  
18 numbers closely and making sure that you take the measures  
19 that you need to keep the city safe. And I hope that  
20 businesses understand that as well and are great partners  
21 in making sure that they take all the necessary  
22 precautions for their employees and to keep the doors  
23 open.

24 So anyone else on open discussion or regarding  
25 our future meeting? Of course, it will be on July 9. At

1 this point, it would appear it will be another Webex  
2 meeting, and we will at that time probably have Chapter 5,  
3 and then revisions to anything that we reviewed today.

4 All right. Well --

5 MS. MAYS: Yes. Secretary, if --

6 SECRETARY HUGHS: Yes?

7 MS. MAYS: -- can I add just a few things?  
8 Yes. So the meeting will be via Webex, and then we want  
9 to stress that we did send Chapter 3 out. Please review  
10 that.

11 I think that's new material that we would like  
12 to get feedback from you. And I'll probably say, if you  
13 can get us that, you know, by next Friday, that would be  
14 great to have that.

15 And then be on the lookout for, you know --  
16 we'll send the rest of the presentation, I think -- you  
17 all -- Chapter 6 and 7 and maybe 4. And then certainly  
18 between now and the July meeting, we'll be sending  
19 additional chapters for you all to review and have the  
20 discussion in July.

21 So we're on a fast track, and certainly look  
22 forward to you all being engaged and really being vested  
23 in developing this Master Plan. So thank you, and thank  
24 you, Secretary.

25 SECRETARY HUGHS: Thank you all. Stay well,

1 and I look forward to gathering again on July 9. Thank  
2 you.

3 MS. MAYS: Yes. Thanks. Good afternoon.

4 SECRETARY HUGHS: Yes. I should say, at that  
5 point, is there a motion to adjourn?

6 MR. CALVO: So moved. This is Eduardo Calvo,  
7 the NPO in El Paso.

8 MR. GARCIA: Second that. Josue, Cameron  
9 County.

10 SECRETARY HUGHS: All right. With that, we are  
11 now -- any objections to adjourning?

12 (No response.)

13 SECRETARY HUGHS: All right. All in favor?

14 (A chorus of ayes.)

15 SECRETARY HUGHS: We are now adjourned. Thank  
16 you.

17  
18 (Whereupon, at 12:03 p.m., the Border Trade Advisory  
19 Committee was adjourned.)  
20

21 I certify that the foregoing is a correct transcript  
22 from the electronic sound recording of the proceedings in  
23 the above-entitled matter.  
24

25 /s/ Nancy H. King  
26 Certified Electronic Reporter  
27 AAERT No. CER/CET-153

6/25/2020  
Date