

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES
BORDER TRADE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING

Ric Williamson Hearing Room
Dewitt C. Greer Building
125 E. 11th Street
Austin, Texas

8:30 a.m.
Thursday,
February 24, 2022

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

JOHN SCOTT, Presiding Officer
RAFAEL M. ALDRETE
DANIEL AVILA
JON BARELA
LUIS ALFREDO BAZÁN
EDUARDO CALVO
EDUARDO A. CAMPIRANO
ANDREW CANON
SERGIO CONTRERAS
DAVID A. CORONADO
WARREN K. ERDMAN
JOHN ESPARZA
RAQUEL ESPINOSA
JUAN ANTONIO FLORES
DANTE GALEAZZI
CYNTHIA GARZA-REYES
JAKE GIESBRECHT
ILIANA HOLGUIN
LISA LOFTUS-OTWAY
MARGA LOPEZ
MAYOR BRUNO LOZANO
STAN MEADOR
JUAN OLAGUIBEL
JESUS REYNA
TECLO GARCIA for MAYOR PETE SAENZ
MAYOR ROLANDO SALINAS
GERARDO "GERRY" SCHWEBEL
MEGAN SHEA
TOMMY TAYLOR
SAM VALE
CAMERON WALKER

ON THE RECORD REPORTING
(512) 450-0342

ALSO PRESENT:

CAROLINE A. MAYS, TxDOT
LAURA RYAN, Commissioner, TTC

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(8:34 a.m.)

1
2
3 SECY. SCOTT: We'll call this meeting to order,
4 our first meeting of 2022 of the Border Trade Advisory
5 Committee. And I'll ask for y'all's patience today. I have
6 never done one of these. Fortunately, with Caroline here to
7 my left, I think it will go okay. It would go great if she
8 had the microphone the whole time.

9 But with that, we will be on the record, and
10 this is being done pursuant to Texas laws regarding open
11 meetings. We've got a number of people that are
12 participating virtually. One of the things we'll need to
13 do is the roll call to establish a quorum.

14 MS. MAYS: Yes. So, we have -- as Secretary
15 mentioned, we have folks online and then also in the room.
16 So Eduardo's going to handle the roll call, so why don't
17 you go ahead.

18 MR. HAGERT: Rafael Aldrete?

19 MR. ALDRETE: Rafael Aldrete, Texas
20 Transportation Institute, El Paso, present.

21 MR. HAGERT: Daniel Avila?

22 MR. AVILA: [audio interference].

23 MR. HAGERT: Luis Bazán?

24 MR. ROWEN: Fred Rowen [phonetic], tuning in
25 for Mr. Luis Bazán.

1 MR. HAGERT: Thank you. Eduardo Calvo?

2 MR. CALVO: Present. Here. And welcome the
3 Secretary to this committee.

4 MS. MAYS: Yeah. And going back into this
5 topic, Committee Members, when you introduce yourself, if
6 you want to make a quick opening remark, that's okay. So,
7 you know, just as succinct as possible, for expedience,
8 whatever you want to say.

9 SECY SCOTT: Within reason.

10 (General laughter.)

11 MR. HAGERT: Eduardo Campirano?

12 (No response.)

13 MR. HAGERT: Andrew Canon?

14 MR. CANON: Andrew Canon, Executive Director of
15 the RGV New Deal. Excited to be here. Welcome, Mr.
16 Secretary. The RGV is the gateway into Texas, so we look
17 forward to working with your office.

18 MR. HAGERT: Sergio Contreras?

19 (No response.)

20 MR. HAGERT: David Coronado?

21 MR. CORONADO: Dave Coronado, present. Good to
22 meet you, Secretary. Good to be with you all for the
23 first time in two years in person. Happy to be here. The
24 City of El Paso, we own three bridges that go into Juarez,
25 Mexico. So, we operate the bridges, work with the

1 stakeholders, and we also work with [inaudible]. So thank
2 you for having us. I appreciate it.

3 MR. HAGERT: Warren Erdman?

4 MR. ERDMAN: Here.

5 MR. HAGERT: John Esparza?

6 (No response.)

7 MR. HAGERT: Rachel Espinoza?

8 (No response.)

9 MR. HAGERT: Juan Antonio Flores?

10 (No response.)

11 MR. HAGERT: Dante Galeazzi?

12 (No response.)

13 MR. HAGERT: Cynthia Garza-Reyes?

14 MS. GARZA-REYES: Hi. This is Cynthia
15 Garza-Reyes, Pharr, Director of External Relations. Good
16 morning. I apologize, but I'm on the landline, and it's
17 not a great connection, so I'm just going to go ahead and
18 mute myself.

19 MR. HAGERT: Cynthia Garza-Reyes.

20 Jake Giesbrecht?

21 (No response.)

22 MR. HAGERT: Iliana Holguin?

23 MS. HOLGUIN: Good morning. Iliana Holguin.
24 I'm a county commissioner for El Paso County. Good
25 morning, Mr. Secretary.

1 MR. HAGERT: Lisa Loftus-Otway?

2 (No response.)

3 MR. HAGERT: Marga Lopez?

4 MS. LOPEZ: Good morning. Marga Lopez,
5 Progreso International Bridge director.

6 MR. HAGERT: Bruno Lozano?

7 (No response.)

8 MR. HAGERT: Juan Olaguibel?

9 MR. OLAGUIBEL: Good morning, Mr. Secretary,
10 everyone. Juan Olaguibel present, representing the
11 McAllen, Hidalgo and Anzalduas International Bridges.
12 Good morning.

13 MR. HAGERT: Stan Meador?

14 MR. MEADOR: Present. [audio interference.]

15 MR. HAGERT: Jesus Reyna?

16 (No response.)

17 MR. HAGERT: Rolando Salinas?

18 MR. ANTUNA: George Antuna, City Manager here
19 as a proxy for the mayor. Thank you.

20 MR. HAGERT: Pete Saenz, or someone
21 representing the City of Laredo?

22 MR. GARCIA: Teclo Garcia, Director of Economic
23 Development for the City of Laredo. Welcome, Mr.
24 Secretary. We are super glad to be part of this meeting.
25 We apologize for Mayor Saenz not being able to be here

1 today.

2 MR. HAGERT: Gerry Schwebel?

3 MR. SCHWEBEL: Good morning, Secretary. I'm
4 Gerry Schwebel. I'm with the bank in Laredo, Texas where
5 I-35 begins. I look forward working with you. I've been
6 a part of BTAC for a couple of years now, a number of
7 years, so I look forward to working with you with the Port
8 of Laredo, and in all ports of Texas.

9 MR. HAGERT: Megan Shea?

10 MS. SHEA: Good morning, everyone. Megan Shea
11 is on for BNSF Railway.

12 MR. HAGERT: Tommy Taylor?

13 (No response.)

14 MR. HAGERT: Sam Vale?

15 MR. VALE: Present, and as Gerry referred, we
16 were on the very first when they were organized, and I'm
17 telling people that it's not like there's no term limits,
18 but when you own something, you own it so far, in Texas.

19 And we own an international bridge. You don't
20 pay, I'm going to get you. And we work quite a bit with
21 TXDOT. We're very proud of the work you're doing. I
22 think right now TXDOT is the greatest economic driver
23 developer in the state of Texas.

24 SECY SCOTT: I agree 100 percent with that.

25 Nice to meet you.

1 MR. HAGERT: Cameron Walker?

2 (No response.)

3 MR. HAGERT: And someone representing Cameron
4 County Bridge System?

5 (No response.)

6 MR. HAGERT: Okay.

7 SECY SCOTT: Consul General, if you have any
8 opening comments?

9 MALE VOICE: [inaudible].

10 SECY SCOTT: And so from a practical
11 standpoint, I want to make sure that everyone that's with
12 Nuevo Leon, from Chihuahua, from -- I think we have
13 someone from Tamaulipas. I don't believe our friends from
14 Coahuila were able to make it.

15 And so I would like you to please introduce
16 yourselves to the feed and work our way around there, and
17 let us know who -- what you all are from and what your
18 goals are.

19 MR. GONZALEZ: Good morning, Mr. Secretary. My
20 name is Marco Gonzalez. I'm the Regional Development and
21 Agriculture Secretary for the State of Nuevo Leon, and
22 also Port Director of Colombia.

23 We are very glad to become part of the Laredo
24 port. We are very convinced that Colombia can be a
25 strategic partner in Texas.

1 [inaudible speaker.]

2 MR. GONZALEZ: Good morning, everybody. Very
3 welcome, Mr. Scott. I am Ernesto Gonzalez from Tamaulipas
4 government. Secretary Carlos Garcia is going to be here
5 in a minute, and as you know, we have been working with
6 TXDOT for many times, and it's a pleasure to continue
7 working with you.

8 SECY SCOTT: I believe Commission Ryan is
9 online. Commissioner, would you like to say a few words?

10 (No response.)

11 SECY SCOTT: we also have Consul Haley from the
12 Canadian Consul General's Office. Consul Haley, would you
13 like to --

14 MR. HALEY: Thank you. Brian Haley here
15 joining on behalf of the Canadian Consul General's Office.
16 I'm the honorary consul here in Austin, and look forward
17 to participating. We appreciate the invitation.

18 SECY SCOTT: I've got a few brief remarks. I
19 didn't write them. This is not my Joe Biden moment where
20 I'm just to say everything I get from someone else. But
21 they took the time to write them, so I'm going to read
22 them, many of them which I agree 100 percent with.

23 I'd like to extend a special welcome to our
24 friends from Mexico who are joining us virtually or in
25 person. First and foremost, obviously, seeing the Consul

1 General of Mexico representing the Federal Government of
2 Mexico in Texas, Consul General Pablo Marentes.

3 He was the first invitation, the first person I
4 met from another delegation when I took over the role of
5 Secretary of State, and has been as good a friend as a
6 person could have at any level. So thank you for being
7 here.

8 We have from Chihuahua, Anna Alvarez, who's in
9 charge of Bi-national Affairs. We have met some folks
10 from Tamaulipas already, as well as Nuevo Leon. I really
11 want to just get down here to the TxDOT.

12 Marc Williams, I had the pleasure of visiting
13 with him for the first time in preparation for today's
14 meeting, incredible, and I think the State of Texas is
15 very privileged to have him as our executive director who
16 can run the day-to-day operations of the Texas public
17 transportation.

18 Caroline Mays, who I am sitting next to here,
19 if you ever get a chance to visit with her, can tell you
20 about anything. Everybody at TXDOT is the most organized
21 people in the world.

22 Helping as a trial lawyer to the state
23 government, the last thing we do is much preparation about
24 what we're saying a lot of times. We kind of get a read
25 of the crowd, the jury.

1 Everything about what they have done in
2 organizing the master plan and from the implementation and
3 the priorities, that we'll be visiting about today as we
4 go through the process, it's incredible.

5 Marc said his number-one goal which he thought
6 we should make is safety. And I think that's one of the
7 things that I want to make sure that we throw out there to
8 begin with.

9 We have, obviously, Chairman Bugg, as well as
10 Commissioner New and Ryan, who have played a key role in
11 making it to this point, and we thank them for the
12 opportunity in hosting this.

13 When I brought up the issue about safety, I
14 know that that seems like it's been overused a lot of
15 times. But one of the things that I think the folks at
16 TXDOT had observed in a lot of the border crossings is
17 some of the issues related to delays.

18 We're 100 percent back of the issue of safety:
19 safety of pedestrians, safety of folks driving. There was
20 an article the other day in one of the papers that said
21 we've reached 4,000 deaths on the roads, and that's a
22 number that goes back to 1980s, I think. That was where
23 we were able to get that high number again -- or maybe the
24 '70s.

25 It is a horrible number to be now hitting

1 again. But one of the things that goes first and foremost
2 needs to be safety at border passages. And so I think
3 that's something we're going to try and prioritize, as far
4 as the things we implement as quick as possible along the
5 border.

6 One of the things that's clear, visiting with
7 the folks at TXDOT, is they understand better than anyone
8 that one size does not fit all; that what is good in
9 McAllen is not good in El Paso, or it may be good in El
10 Paso. But they recognize that. They recognize that if
11 you're in Webb County, in Laredo, that might work
12 perfectly there, but it may be a horrible idea in Eagle
13 Pass.

14 And so I think that's one of the things that we
15 want to make sure that everyone voices in each of the
16 situations that they are encountering, and make sure that
17 you make that information flow upward. And by upward, I
18 mean the bill.

19 I know your respective ports, we've added -- I
20 thought the Corpus Christi port was going to have a
21 representative here soon, as well as I think we're going
22 to try to invite Houston Port Authority to participate,
23 and Brownsville by statute, also, as a port that
24 participates on the Committee. We want to make sure that
25 the land reports are able to be addressed as efficient as

1 possible.

2 So with that, I'm going to turn it over to
3 Caroline, and then we'll actually make some good time now.

4 MS. MAYS: Well, thank you, Secretary. And
5 [inaudible] the first BTAC meeting.

6 As you can see, we have great attendance, both
7 in person and online and, you know, we're looking forward
8 to working with you to advance on what he mentioned from
9 the Border Master Plan in working with this committee.

10 I've known a lot of these folks for a very long
11 time. You know, we really, really [inaudible] folks
12 [inaudible], you know, in concert with TXDOT. This is
13 something that we believe in. This is part of what we do.

14 This is not just for people but for goods, for
15 trade, facilitating cross border, you know, people and
16 goods, and in concert with our, you know, counterparts
17 from Mexico. So we're really excited to see them here
18 today at the meeting.

19 We will try to do that throughout -- at least
20 for three to four years, especially with the development
21 on the Border Master Plan. So with that, I will -- I want
22 to recognize our TXDOT people that are in here.

23 And Marc said he may drop in and out at some
24 point, but I'd like to start with Jessica, my division
25 director.

1 MS. BUTLER: Hi. Good morning, everyone. My
2 name is Jessica Butler. I'm the Director of Planning and
3 Programming here at TXDOT. I'm so happy to be here in
4 person. I think this is my first opportunity to be in
5 person with all of you for the BTAC. I'm so happy that
6 you all made it here safely, as well, considering the
7 weather.

8 We have a great agenda today. I'm really
9 looking forward to the conversation on safety, as well.
10 I'm just excited to be here; I look forward to a great
11 conversation and again, welcome.

12 SECY SCOTT: Thank you, Jessica. And we have
13 Bill, our chief engineer. Bill, say a few words?

14 Get to the mic right there.

15 MR. HALE: [inaudible].

16 SECY SCOTT: Thank you, Bill. And then also we
17 do have district engineers that are here, and also
18 division directors. Let's start with you, Eddie.

19 MR. VALTIER: Good morning. I'm Eddie Valtier.
20 I'm the District Engineer for El Paso District. I'm
21 happy to be here. We've been doing this for a little
22 while and made some great progress.

23 MR. ALVAREZ: Good morning. My name is Pete
24 Alvarez. I'm the Pharr District Engineer to the Rio
25 Grande Valley. Welcome, Mr. Secretary.

1 MR. SALAZAR: Good morning. My name is David
2 Salazar. I'm the District Engineer of Laredo District. A
3 little cold way coming up here today. We look forward to
4 getting back to where it's a little bit warmer, but happy
5 to be here.

6 MR. CHACON: Good morning. I am Michael
7 Chacon. I am the Director of the Traffic Safety Division
8 here at TXDOT. Pleasure to be here.

9 MS. MAYS: Thank you all. I know we're trying
10 to get Commissioner Ryan; she says she's online.

11 Commissioner Ryan, can you hear us?

12 MS. RYAN: Yes. Good morning, everyone. I
13 apologize if I wasn't on earlier. Secretary Scott, good
14 morning and welcome. And I appreciate -- I will be
15 listening in.

16 I apologize for not being able to be there in
17 person, but I agree I'm excited about the agenda items,
18 and this is always a dynamic and interactive committee,
19 and the time and energy put into it is much appreciated.
20 We can only do what we do with the partners that we have.

21 So, again, just wanted to thank you, and I'll be
22 listening in. So, good morning.

23 MS. MAYS: Thank you, Commissioner Ryan. And
24 again, you know, appreciate everybody being here this
25 morning. A lot of folks are working on logistics because

1 we are having a hybrid meeting. Folks in the room, when
2 you're speaking, make sure you speak into the microphone.

3
4 And also, our court reporter normally sits
5 right here. They're not able to be here because of the
6 weather; they're online. So when you speak, please state
7 your name and then proceed to speak because, you know,
8 they need to document who is making what statement because
9 that's required by statute for BTAC, unlike the other
10 committee meetings. So please speak on the microphone.

11 And then for those of you online, if you're not
12 speaking, please mute yourself, and if you'd like to speak
13 or make a comment, please raise your hand. That's how
14 we're going to be able to identify who needs to speak and
15 try to minimize the noise, the background noises, et
16 cetera. Again, we're trying to accommodate and make sure
17 we run a fairly smooth meeting this morning.

18 And for Committee members that joined us late,
19 do us a favor and just -- I think I see some of you --
20 some of you joined late. If you can just type your name
21 in the chat box to let us know so that we can make sure we
22 document that you are here, especially those joining us
23 virtually.

24 So with that, Secretary, we're ready to go to
25 our next agenda item, which is the adoption of the May 25,

1 2021 meeting minutes.

2 SECY SCOTT: And has everyone had the
3 opportunity to look at the minutes that were forwarded to
4 everyone from the last meeting? And if so, if I could
5 have someone to make a motion so we can have --

6 MR. VALE: So move.

7 SECY SCOTT: A second?

8 MR. SCHWEBEL: Second.

9 MR. VALE: That was Sam Vale that moved.

10 MR. SCHWEBEL: Gerry Schwebel seconds.

11 SECY SCOTT: Hearing no nays, they are adopted.

12 And so I guess we'll go to the next agenda item, which is
13 the recap of the meeting. And I was not there, so I will
14 be turning that on to you.

15 MS. MAYS: Yeah. Thank you. So, yeah, the
16 recap of the last meeting. Giacomo will do that. And
17 will speakers, for the sake of folks online, please go to
18 the podium? Those have better mics and sound for the
19 folks online to hear you. So, thank you.

20 MR. YAQUINTO: All right. Good morning,
21 everyone. I'm Giacomo Yaquinto with the Texas Department
22 of Transportation. I want to thank you all for joining
23 us. Let me give a brief recap of our last BTAC meeting on
24 May 25, 2021.

25 The last BTAC meeting had three tasks. First,

1 we needed to review and discuss the Texas-Mexico Border
2 Transportation Master Plan 2021 booklet and regional
3 reports, which we developed as supporting materials for
4 BTMP final report.

5 Second, we needed to review and discuss
6 COVID-19 impacts on the cross-border movement of people
7 and goods. And third, we needed to provide an overview of
8 the initial BTMP implementation priorities on TXDOT's
9 side, as well as to hear from each region about local
10 priorities and next steps.

11 At the start of the last BTAC meeting, we
12 presented the Texas-Mexico Border Transportation Master
13 Plan 2021 booklet and regional reports. Today, the
14 information included in the BTMP final report are
15 accessible and tailored to specific audiences.

16 We developed a booklet which distilled the
17 information in the executive summary, and we broke the
18 BTMP into regional reports for each three border regions.

19 During our discussion we could see key map-related
20 questions, including our requests to add an interstate
21 shield for I-20 on future maps.

22 We noted that the maps in questions were
23 provided as a general reference, rather than to highlight
24 specific corridors. However, we agreed with the
25 suggestion to add the I-20 shield to future maps given the

1 interstate's importance as an east-to-west corridor.

2 Our next discussion topic looked at COVID-19
3 impacts on the cross-border movement of people and goods
4 between 2019 and 2020. BTAC members noted how interesting
5 it was to observe the way the disruption spread, as well
6 as the variations in their arrival throughout 2020.

7 Rather than continue to focus on COVID's
8 impacts, we heard about the need to start focusing on the
9 lessons learned and how they can be applied in the future.

10 BTAC members identified policies as an area of concern.

11 We heard that the policies implemented directly
12 affected supply chain reactions and determined whether
13 they were resilient or failed, and there is a need to
14 review all the policies implemented and the outcomes
15 they've created.

16 We were reminded that in addition to the
17 pandemic, a hurricane hit the RGV in the summer of 2020,
18 which caused additional disruptions and led to further
19 increases to the cost of doing business.

20 Members pointed out that even though the
21 numbers told a positive story, supply chain challenges
22 would likely endure for at least the next 18 months, or
23 through the 2022 holiday season. We heard about
24 discrepancies between the recovery and commercial crossing
25 figures, and local economic recoveries.

1 We heard related concerns about the time it
2 will take for the border crossing experience to return to
3 normal, and BTAC members expressed an interest in resuming
4 quarterly between CBP and local stakeholders as a means of
5 restarting the dialog and helping to reinstate a more
6 collaborative environment.

7 I have a third discussion area focused on TxDOT
8 and regional implementation priorities. We started with
9 the presentation from the Texas A&M Transportation
10 Institute about their efforts to expand the border wait-
11 time information system.

12 BTAC members voiced support for extending the
13 program, and all agreed that a consistent border-wide data
14 set will aid future planning efforts.

15 As part of the program expansion, we were asked
16 to disseminate data to international bridge users in a
17 timely manner. We heard that TTI will be moving the data
18 to the cloud, which will facilitate developing an app and
19 making data easier to access and use.

20 We heard that TTI is developing a title program
21 to improve data collection and accuracy, and that these
22 efforts would include working with CBP, which would allow
23 them to incorporate automatic license plate reader data,
24 which CBP already collects, as a means of confirming
25 crossing time data.

1 We were asked about southbound data. TTI noted
2 their interest in providing southbound data in the future.

3 We agreed and noted that the lack of southbound data
4 affected BTMP development, and we heard that TTI would
5 work with Aduanas in Mexico on southbound implementation
6 possibilities.

7 The next topic we covered was the USA through-
8 corridor study. Members expressed surprise at the number
9 of crashes along US-83 between RGV and Laredo. We heard
10 that one of the major challenges along the corridor is the
11 number of small towns with stop lights and reduced speeds,
12 which affects efficiency of the movement of people and
13 cargo along the corridor. We heard about the need to
14 explore a loop around Laredo, so that trucks can more
15 directly access the industrial zone on the city's north
16 side.

17 Our third presentation looked at the US-57
18 interstate conversion feasibility study. BTAC members
19 expressed support for the study, since the crossings in
20 Eagle Pass and Del Rio lacked direct connectivity to an
21 interstate highway. We were asked whether the study would
22 analyze commodities crossing, mode, and destination, and
23 we noted that it would.

24 We explained that part of the study's goal is
25 to understand what influences activity on the corridor now

1 and in the future. We also heard that the corridor is
2 especially important, given its connection to the
3 Ports-to-Plains Corridor.

4 Our final presentation came directly from the
5 border regions. The comments we received during this
6 section of the meeting focused on moving fresh produce
7 from the RGV and Laredo regions.

8 We heard that 70 percent of the fresh produce
9 consumed in Texas comes from Mexico, and even though for
10 the rest of the United States the figure is closer to 40
11 percent, in both cases, produce imports are vital to the
12 economy and health of the state and the nation.

13 That concludes the recap. So I'll turn it back
14 to you, Caroline.

15 MS. MAYS: Thank you.

16 SECY SCOTT: We saw our great host, Marc
17 Williams, walk in. One, hi. And number two, if you'd
18 like to make some comments, we'd love to hear from you.

19 MR. WILLIAMS: Certainly, Secretary. Welcome.
20 This is a -- as I hope you have seen already, it is a
21 fantastic group, a tremendous dialog and insight that we
22 received from stakeholders that are here today.

23 Thank you all for taking the time to be here
24 today and for traveling into Austin. I hope your travel
25 was safe, and in particular, I hope your return home later

1 is safe today. We have had, as you might expect, some
2 winter weather around the state that we've been involved
3 with, much of that.

4 It has sometimes a direct, or even an indirect
5 effect of a lot of what we talk about here today, with
6 respect to our border trade and the logistics that impact
7 our border trade statewide. And so conditions are
8 improving, but it is still challenging.

9 So I apologize that I'll be kind of in and out
10 throughout the day today, Secretary. But I'm looking
11 forward to discussing some really good content, in
12 particular, on the safety that's very timely and
13 important. And I appreciate your leadership with this
14 team, sir. Thank you.

15 SECY SCOTT: Thank you, and thank you for being
16 here.

17 MS. MAYS: So, Secretary, we'll jump into our
18 next agenda item, and we have Michael Chacon, who is our
19 Division Director.

20 Michael, if you can go to the podium, I think
21 that will be better. And they can run your slides. Just
22 let them know, next slide.

23 And then moving forward, our District
24 Engineers. And again, as always, this is a dialog. If
25 you have questions while we're going -- you know, the

1 presenters are presenting, please feel free to do that.
2 This is not a shy group. And as mentioned, this is a very
3 important and timely topic.

4 So, Michael?

5 MR. CHACON; All right. Thank you. Good
6 morning again. I'm Michael Chacon. I'm the Director of
7 the Traffic Safety Division, and I'm going to discuss some
8 of the data from 2021 and where we stand on the statewide
9 perspective but also give you data regarding the three
10 corridor districts, as well. So it's a pleasure to be
11 with all of you. Next slide, please.

12 I always like to start with this slide first
13 with any presentation I do; talk about four numbers. So
14 the first number is showing the number of fatalities we
15 had last year on Texas roadways. We had 4,485 fatalities
16 last year.

17 That was an increase compared to 2020, an 8
18 percent increase. And it's something very alarming to us,
19 and I'm going to talk to you more about where we are as
20 far as numbers that I heard the Secretary talk about how
21 this is one of the highest fatalities. I will talk about
22 that on the next slide.

23 224 is the number of work zone fatalities we've
24 had in our state. It's another big issue that we are
25 looking at. As you know, we have a lot of work going on

1 in our state, and we want to ensure that everyone is safe,
2 no matter what type of conditions.

3 So, November 7, 2000, this is a very important
4 date to us. That is our last deathless day on Texas roads
5 due to crashes. So we've gone over 21-1/2 years without a
6 deathless day on Texas roads. This November it will 22
7 years. If we work hard, we can break the streak. We've
8 heard a lot about industry in Texas. That is what that
9 message is about, trying to stop the fatalities on our
10 roadways.

11 The last number, 76,393, that's how many
12 fatalities we've had on Texas roads since that last
13 deathless day of November 7, 2000. We've got to do
14 better. We've got to work hard on this.

15 I know we've got total commitment from our
16 Department, total commitment from our partners here, and
17 it's going to take all of us to get this message out
18 there. It takes all of us to make a difference here.
19 Next slide.

20 So as you can see, I've got 2021 highlighted.
21 This is showing the highest fatalities by year that we've
22 been keeping track of since 1940. In 2020, you could see
23 that we hit one of the top eight on our list at 3,893
24 fatalities.

25 We had been trending in the right direction for

1 three years. From 2017, '18, and '19, we did see a
2 decrease in our fatalities. We were going in the right
3 direction.

4 Unfortunately, in 2020, we saw our fatalities
5 increase by 7 percent, even with less traffic on our
6 roadways due to the pandemic. And then, in 2021, it just
7 went a lot higher.

8 There's a lot of different factors that we have
9 been looking at, and you can see that that is now our
10 second-highest fatality count since 1946 on our roadways.

11 Next slide.

12 So I know there's a lot of colors here, but
13 what we're showing here is we're showing you years 2018
14 through 2020, and the far-left bar is the border districts
15 combined. And that's showing their fatalities rates.

16 And the way that you get fatality rates, you
17 look at the vehicle miles traveled -- in this case, it's a
18 100 million vehicle miles traveled -- versus the number of
19 fatalities. And you come up with the percentage.

20 So, the far left is showing the border
21 districts summarized. And then in the darker blue will be
22 the El Paso District. The orange one in the middle is
23 going to be Laredo. And then kind of the yellowish is the
24 Pharr District. And the far right bar is going to be the
25 statewide percentage.

1 Again, you could see on the fatality rates when
2 you just look at the statewide bar, which is the one on
3 the right for each year, we had been trending downward
4 about 1.3 as far as fatality rate. But in 2020, we did
5 jump up to 1.49.

6 The reason why the fatality rate goes up, your
7 fatalities increase, your vehicle miles traveled went
8 down, but not as many people were driving on the roadways
9 due to the pandemic. So your rate now increases.

10 We don't have the numbers for 2021 yet. We're
11 still trying to finalize the vehicle miles traveled.
12 That's why 2021 is not being displayed on this.

13 But this is showing our statewide fatalities,
14 and just to give you a little perspective of how I'm going
15 to do this -- so I'm going to talk about the statewide
16 numbers first. Then the next slide will be the exact same
17 topic. And in this case, the fatalities, but I'll be
18 talking about the district fatalities for the border
19 districts.

20 So first we're going to talk about the
21 statewide fatalities. So as you can see, in '18 through
22 '21, you could see that slight trend going upwards from
23 '20 to '21.

24 And as I mentioned, we saw a 15 percent
25 increase in 2021 versus 2020. That is very alarming for

1 us. It's a very high number, and we are going to try to
2 do everything we can from our perspective to make sure
3 that we do everything to drop these numbers. Next slide,
4 please.

5 Here's your border district fatalities for the
6 same years, 2018 through 2021. Now, the one thing you're
7 going to see different here is that the statewide
8 fatalities increased by 15 percent. The combined border
9 districts, we saw a 46 percent increase.

10 Now, again, we've got to look at the numbers in
11 perspective again, when you look at the total numbers we
12 went from 220 fatalities for all three border districts in
13 '20, up to 321 for 2021. So just something to point out.
14 Next slide, please.

15 So this is showing our work zone crashes, and
16 the reason why it isn't for very long is we know we have a
17 lot of work going on in our state. This is where we saw
18 33 percent increase in fatalities from a statewide
19 perspective.

20 You can see how we went up from 184 up to 244
21 from a statewide perspective. In retrospect, as we go on
22 to the district slide, you will see that the districts
23 actually had -- could we go to the slide, please.

24 The districts actually had a decrease in their
25 work zone fatalities. So, again, kudos to everyone out in

1 the border districts who are putting a lot of work and
2 effort into the work zones. I'm glad to see that those
3 numbers are down. Next slide, please.

4 So this is something that not only have we seen
5 in Texas; this has been a nationwide trend over the past
6 two years as we have been seeing as this pandemic going
7 on. As less people have been traveling on the roads,
8 we've been seeing speeds have increased.

9 It's been a national trend; it's been a concern
10 for us. We've been looking at this, and as you can see on
11 these numbers, it does show that we had an 8 percent
12 increase in speed-related fatalities in our state.

13 Now, when I talk about speed-related, that's
14 not just speeding. That could not driving to conditions,
15 driving too closely. There's a lot of different factors
16 in there, so I want to make sure you understand there's
17 different definitions for speed-related. But they all tie
18 in together. Next slide, please.

19 For the border districts -- so, again, we had 8
20 percent on a statewide perspective. From the border
21 districts' perspective combined, we saw an increase in
22 speed-related fatalities, so it jumped up from 88 to 120.
23 Next slide.

24 So, DUI-All, so that is any type of alcohol in
25 your system, even if it's below the .08. So if you have

1 any alcohol in your system and it's a factor to the crash,
2 that's taken into account. And what you will see, also --
3 it also considers drugs, as well; alcohol and drugs.

4 So we did see a decrease in DUI-All by 5
5 percent. And then in the next slide, you're going to see
6 that from the districts' perspective, there was a 19
7 percent increase, going from 68 to 81. Again, this is all
8 alcohol and drugs combined.

9 The next slide, we will be showing you just
10 alcohol-related ones. So, now, for alcohol only, we did
11 see an increase from statewide fatalities. We had a 3
12 percent increase. And going to the districts, you're
13 going to see that we had a 23 percent increase in
14 alcohol-related fatalities, as well. Next slide.

15 The motorcycle fatalities, these are also --
16 again, I'm trying to focus on a lot of different areas
17 that we looked at. These are [inaudible] now that we're
18 looking at.

19 So if we start looking at motorcycle
20 fatalities, we did see an increase of 7 percent in
21 fatalities in 2021 compared to 2020. And from the border
22 district perspective, there was a 9 percent increase, as
23 well, which you will see on the next slide. There we go.

24

25 So we actually jumped from 22 to 24. So

1 motorcycle fatalities are relatively low. But again, when
2 I see these numbers, these are still fatalities. This is
3 an area where I see that we could probably make
4 improvements to get to that zero goal that this department
5 is aiming at.

6 We have to take steps in the area. I mean,
7 this is an example of where the 24 fatalities combined
8 among the districts -- and you see in the orange bar,
9 Laredo having one. They were very close to having zero
10 motorcycle fatalities. So it's definitely a goal we can
11 trend towards. Next slide, please.

12 So, here's our pedestrian and bicycle
13 fatalities from a statewide perspective. This one has
14 been very alarming for us in that we have seen increases
15 from 2019, '20, and '21 for pedestrian safety.

16 It is a big area that we have been focusing on
17 at the statewide perspective. We've been talking to our
18 local partners as well, to focus on this. We did see an
19 increase in fatalities for pedestrians, again, 15 percent.

20 As well as our bicycle fatalities also went up by 15
21 percent.

22 So, again, part of our vulnerable road users,
23 we want to more focus on this and see what we can do to
24 make it safe for these folks, as well.

25 So for our districts at the border, you will

1 see their numbers are relatively low again, and you will
2 see that it looks like it was Laredo that had zero bike
3 fatalities this past year, which is really good. That's
4 exactly what we want to see.

5 And again, though the numbers are kind of low
6 for your bicycle fatalities and with your pedestrians,
7 it's still an area of concern. We're seeing statewide
8 that we need to do everything we can to try to protect our
9 pedestrians and bicycles and motorcycles, as well. Next
10 slide.

11 So this is something that you've heard
12 Commissioner Ryan talk about quite a bit and something
13 that we've been putting a lot of focus on, as well. Not
14 only is speed and pedestrians some of the bigger areas
15 that we're seeing -- increases in work zones as well.

16 Unrestrained fatalities keep going up. This is
17 one of the simplest ways for people to save their life.
18 We have about an 89 percent usage rate of seat belts in
19 our state, yet they are accounting for about 28 percent of
20 our fatalities statewide.

21 Now, when you remove the vulnerable road
22 users -- your motorcycle fatalities, your pedestrian
23 fatalities, and your bicycle fatalities -- those three
24 groups don't have the ability to wear a seat belt.

25 So when you remove those three fatalities from

1 the total statewide count and now look at the percentage,
2 you're looking at about 46 percent of our fatalities are
3 due to people not wearing seat belts. We've got to do
4 better in that area. We were pushing that message very
5 hard as one of the simplest ways to save your life.

6 So we did see a 14 percent increase in
7 fatalities in 2021 due to unrestrained from the border
8 districts' perspective. There was an 34 percent increase
9 in that, as well. So, again, you can see them jump from
10 77 fatalities in 2020 to 133.

11 Last I'm going to talk a little bit about
12 commercial motor vehicle fatalities. I know this is
13 something that, in our state, we've got a lot of commerce
14 that goes across our state, a lot of goods being traveled
15 through our roadways.

16 And you will see that we did see a 22 percent
17 increase statewide in commercial motor vehicle-involved
18 fatalities this past year. We jumped significantly from
19 579 to 704. And then from a district-wide perspective, we
20 saw a 57 percent increase. So it went from 30 to 47
21 fatalities.

22 So, again, that is kind of a highlight of where
23 we are with the data. And I'm going to turn it over to
24 our district engineers, who are going to talk about some
25 of things that they are doing from their personal data.

1 Oh, I'm sorry. Go ahead.

2 MS. BUTLER: Just one quick question. A quick
3 question for context. You know, when looking at these
4 numbers, are we just looking at numbers that are on the
5 Texas state highway system? Or on and off?

6 MR. CHACON: The numbers I just presented are
7 both on and off system. They are all roadways open to
8 public travel in Texas.

9 MS. MAYS: Any questions for Michael from the
10 committee members? Gerry?

11 MR. SCHWEBEL: Yes. Gerry Schwebel. Thank
12 you. Great presentation. This is something that, for
13 those of us that are way down in the border, this is not a
14 surprise to me. And one life is one life too many to
15 lose.

16 And I commend Commissioner Ryan for all the
17 work that she and the Commission have done bringing
18 awareness of the safety issues. I also want to put some
19 things in context. I travel every weekend on 35 to Laredo
20 and San Antonio northbound and southbound, and the last
21 two years I have noticed -- very noticeable the number of
22 accidents.

23 And so that, you know, as I look at the number
24 of projects or more construction going on, there is human
25 being drivers who didn't want to slow down or observe

1 first before we slow down for an accident. And that's --
2 I've done it, you know, when you see something.

3 So, I think, in that context, we have to
4 understand that there's a lot of work being done, and I
5 appreciate that. The other thing is that we've had an
6 increase in presence of our friends in DPS on the southern
7 border for all the reasons that everybody in this room
8 knows, a strategy in regards to the human trafficking
9 side.

10 My question to you would be, you know, do you
11 distinguish between how many of those accidents are
12 related to a law enforcement scenario versus a non-law
13 enforcement scenario? That would be one question.

14 And the second question is, is there any
15 data -- is there any way of tracking how many of these --
16 of course, you have the bicycle safety zones. I don't
17 think -- I wasn't aware that many city councils or
18 counties are pushing for more bicycle trails -- and how
19 they select a criteria selecting some of these bicycle
20 trails through major thoroughfares -- if there's a
21 correlation in the increase of those accidents to those
22 newly established bicycle trails, especially in the last
23 two years?

24 And then the final -- it's not a question, but
25 it's just an observation. Has TxDOT considered perhaps

1 conducting any forums of input from large commercial
2 travelers, like, let's say, at HEB, the drivers that
3 travel on the border zone extensively, and reaching out
4 and asking for their input and observations for what they
5 see as feedback to TxDOT in regards to the high incidence
6 of accidents, in the interest of seeing if there's any
7 ideas that they could contribute to this effort?

8 MR. CHACON: All right. Thank you. So let me
9 state all three questions. So, the first question or
10 comment was regarding law enforcement. And you were
11 right. I think when the pandemic started, we started
12 seeing an increase in law enforcement.

13 I think that's been kind of [inaudible] these
14 agencies. And again, it's no fault of their own. There's
15 a lot things going on. We are great partners with the law
16 enforcement. They help us a lot with our enforcement. We
17 give grants to them, go out and enforce a lot of our
18 issues like seat belts and impaired drivers and that sort.

19 As you mentioned, a lot of [inaudible], and I
20 think that we're starting to see some work being done. I
21 know just recently here in Austin, they were talking about
22 the lack of police officers for Austin PD.

23 And so, they're now collaborating with local
24 county sheriffs to see if they can assist them in
25 patrolling because they see the increase in Austin

1 [inaudible]. So I think that's one issue that could help.

2 But definitely we're going to keep working
3 closely with law enforcement because we have seen that we
4 did receive some information from our good folks at DPS
5 that, yeah, law enforcement citations were dropping since
6 2020 during the pandemic. We haven't received the number
7 for 2021 yet. But we know that was happening.

8 As far as citations being given, they had drops
9 in 2020 during --

10 MR. SCHWEBEL: Yeah, we did some research on
11 the citations. Of the border zones in the last year, our
12 numbers showed that the citations actually increased along
13 the border compared to other parts of the state.

14 MR. CHACON: Yeah. And that makes sense
15 because of DPS work down in the border districts. But for
16 the rest of the state, there weren't as many prevalent on
17 the road. And that's something also with the local Austin
18 Police.

19 Just last night, there was a report of local
20 police, about Austin PD, and it showed their citations had
21 dropped significantly. And that's why they're trying to
22 get assistance from their partners in the Sheriff's.

23 Second question was regarding bike fatalities
24 on trails and if there is any data on that. I know we can
25 look into that and look into trails themselves. The

1 crashes that we have are tied to the roadways and vehicles
2 involved with a crash with a bicycle.

3 I know we are working closely in our department
4 with our other division, Public Transportation. They are
5 working a lot on new guidance, and they just issued some
6 new guidance on bike and pedestrian trails and where to
7 put them.

8 And we're looking closely at those to try to
9 improve safety for them, as well, on our roads, whether it
10 be alongside our road or a separate trail. So it's
11 something we are working hard on right now.

12 Did I miss one? There was one more question, I
13 believe.

14 MS. MAYS: Yeah. The last one he asked about
15 input from -- actually the use of -- at the border zones
16 the HEBs and avenues for industry.

17 MR. CHACON: Yes, I know that Caroline has been
18 very involved with our freight and our trucking industry a
19 lot, and we coordinate with them, as well. We also have
20 several projects that are ongoing right now, as a matter
21 of fact, where we have a Texas-connected freight corridor
22 project that includes like a triangle of Texas.

23 So it's Dallas-Fort Worth, down to Houston,
24 back to San Antonio, and back through Austin, and Dallas-
25 Fort Worth. And we're working with HEB and other major

1 companies, with the vehicles right now, as far as trucks.

2

3 And what that's helping do -- what they're
4 doing, they're trying to find the best times when there's
5 less traffic on the roadways, for them to be collecting
6 goods, to try and help minimize delays for the trucks.

7 Another good example that we've been working
8 on, we did a grant here in Texas along with three other
9 states: New Mexico, Arizona, and California. And then, a
10 consultant on -- one who's helping us with that took part
11 in this system called TPAS.

12 What it's doing is for all of our rest areas
13 along I-10 from California through the entire state of
14 Texas, we are putting up some dynamic signs on the side of
15 the road. It's a static sign that shows the next rest
16 area, and then how many spaces are going to be open.

17 What this is helping do with the truckers is
18 when -- they have so many hours they can be on the road,
19 and they've got to pull off and get rest, by federal
20 requirements.

21 By giving them this information ahead of time
22 to let them know the next two or three upcoming truck
23 stops and how far they are distance-wise, and then how
24 many parking spots are available, lets them plan where
25 they can get off safely off the roadway and get the

1 necessary rest that's necessary.

2 So, that's something that we're also working on
3 right now. As a matter of fact, we also applied for
4 another grant similar to the one we just received for this
5 project. And if we get awarded this grant, we're hoping
6 to expand that exact system on I-35, I-45 and I-20, as
7 well. We think it's a great opportunity to enhance safety
8 from our statewide perspective, and we see the benefit in
9 it, but we're still in the planning phase for that right
10 now, getting those signs put by I-10.

11 Thank you.

12 MS. MAYS: And Gerry, one of the things you
13 said on the Trade Advisory Committee -- the next Trade
14 Advisory Committee, we're going to have the same, similar
15 discussion but from the commercial vehicle, truck
16 perspective -- a great perspective for the next Trade
17 Advisory Committee meeting. Be prepared for that.

18 And we have some of those industry folks there.

19 And I know John is on the line here, but yes, we are
20 trying to make a concerted effort to reach out to the
21 private sector industry to get their input, as well, on
22 the safety issues and safety challenges, and some of the
23 strategies. You're going to hear districts talk about the
24 strategies they're using.

25 And now, we need to move on. But I had one

1 question. One more. Yeah, David?

2 MR. CORONADO: Thank you, Caroline. Thank you,
3 Mr. Chacon. This is really -- there is a lot of data here
4 that you have, that you brought us right now that, I
5 think, it's really good to have. I'll look at it after
6 today.

7 There's one slide, though, that really concerns
8 me: I-21, the fatalities for pedestrians and bicycle
9 riders. I mean, if I'm reading this correctly, it looks
10 like fatalities for these folks have increased fourfold
11 compared to the rest of the state of Texas, right? So 50
12 percent compared to 59 percent, I think, in the border
13 communities, which is just disturbing.

14 And so, I mentioned this morning earlier that
15 the city owns three ports of entry in our region of six
16 that we have. So in the next series of presentations,
17 I'll be really curious to see what TxDOT is doing to
18 address this specifically, as it relates to pedestrian and
19 bicycle riders.

20 What we are doing right now at the city is,
21 actually, we're planning to apply for a grant out of the
22 USDOT, funding from the new bill, the new infrastructure
23 bill that is out there through the USDOT. In that grant
24 we're pursuing about \$50 million for these ports of entry
25 to improve conditions for pedestrians: crosswalks,

1 lighting -- not only safety, but also amenities -- you
2 know, kind of these sitting areas, pick up and drop off
3 areas.

4 Right now, the goal is that during peak times,
5 it's a really cast out place for pedestrians. People get
6 dropped off. They double, triple park on the gateway, on
7 the frontage road, which is just not acceptable, right?

8 And so, we're trying to address those needs
9 right now in that port of entry. El Paso runs second in
10 crosses for pedestrians on the US-Mexico border. So, we
11 have a ton of traffic.

12 And so, you know, we ask for your support in
13 that application. We're going to be submitting it within
14 the next month or so. And the City will put in the match
15 of 20-25 percent out of full revenues from bridges.

16 So, we're trying to reinvest back in the bridge
17 system, working with the stakeholders, working with TxDOT,
18 and with you all. And so, just ask for your support, you
19 know, in those kinds of efforts to improve the system. We
20 are going to be briefing the stakeholders next week --
21 CBP, aduanas, and everybody else that's involved,
22 including DPS.

23 So this is just one really shocking slide
24 that -- it bothers me. And so, I'd really work on it.
25 Thank you.

1 MS. MAYS: Thank you for making that remark for
2 us. Marc?

3 MR. WILLIAMS: Yeah. Thank you, David. And
4 thank you, Michael, as well. And Secretary, thanks for
5 allowing us to have an opportunity to talk about this
6 issue that's important not only statewide, but
7 particularly important in the border region because of
8 this sharp increase that we've seen in fatalities across
9 the board.

10 Both pedestrian-related -- and if you look at
11 the statistics, and, you know, take some time to look at
12 it, you can see in just about every single category, not
13 only fatalities as a whole, but in subcategories, as
14 well -- speeding, DUI, others. The border region has
15 increased at multiples over what the state has as a whole.

16 And so, that's -- we need to get your input on
17 it, your insight. Reaching out, as well -- as you
18 mentioned, Gerry -- to others like HEB is something that
19 we're going to be doing. But the Commission is also very
20 committed to us increasing our investment in this area.

21 And they have proposed right now additional
22 increase in funding that's going to safety. Some of that
23 money is going out through the districts. So, folks like
24 David and Pete, Tomás in El Paso have got some additional
25 safety funds.

1 One other program that we have going on right
2 now is working with our MPOs. We have got a task force
3 established between our districts and our MPOs. Eduardo
4 and Andrew are part of that task force that are looking at
5 how we can work collaboratively to look at the different
6 sources of funding that we all share and manage, and put
7 those together.

8 Collectively, if you look at our UTP, there's
9 about \$14 billion worth of funds in our UTP as a whole
10 that's dedicated towards projects with safety components.

11 And some of that is already allocated to projects, but
12 some of that is still available now.

13 And so, it's through these types of
14 initiatives, through getting your dialog and input on
15 things that you're seeing on the ground locally in your
16 region, that we can make some decisions about how to
17 prioritize what those investments are. And it's not just
18 TxDOT. It is our MPO partners, as well, that are part of
19 this.

20 So it's a very timely and important
21 conversation that we're having. The Commission is also
22 going to be, in April, having a specific safety discussion
23 conversation, a special mission meeting in April that is
24 going to be looking at this topic statewide in more
25 detail.

1 But getting this input now and being able to
2 share this, and providing it with you all now is a very
3 important priority for us, for the Department right now.
4 Thank you.

5 MR. CALVO: May I? It's Eduardo.

6 MS. MAYS: Yes.

7 MR. CALVO: This is Eduardo Calvo with the El
8 Paso MPO. Michael, a question for you -- in all of these
9 statistics, are you able to separate fatalities or
10 incidents that are with drivers coming in from the Mexican
11 side of the border? For example, you know, license plates
12 or for vehicles, trucks, or pedestrians?

13 And the question really is, if there is a
14 higher incidence, right, of Mexican drivers? Or private
15 vehicles, pedestrians, and all that? Is there a need to
16 also increase our efforts, in terms of education and all
17 that, for drivers?

18 I'll tell you that my observation -- and
19 especially now that the border reopened, because remember,
20 it was closed for 18 months for nonessential travel. The
21 only ones that are driving the speed limit on I-10 in El
22 Paso are Chihuahua license plates. Everybody else is
23 speeding.

24 So, I don't believe it's a higher incidence of
25 drivers coming from across the border, but it's my

1 question to you. I mean, are we able to track that? Are
2 we able to see that?

3 MR. CHACON: So, yeah, we would have to go into
4 each crash report and look at the information. We can dig
5 into that if we get a little more time. But we can
6 definitely look into that.

7 MS. MAYS: Okay. Yeah. Thank you. We will
8 continue this. Want to give time to the district
9 engineers to present.

10 So, Peter, I think you're next. And then,
11 we'll continue with the dialog.

12 And then, if you are asking questions or
13 speaking, please speak into the microphone because we're
14 having folks online saying that they cannot hear. They
15 are having a hard time hearing. So, please.

16 MR. ALVAREZ: Good morning, everyone. Let me
17 start off by saying thank you. Thank you for this
18 opportunity, and thank you, Michael, for that informative
19 summary that was presented for us here. Safety is our top
20 priority, as was mentioned earlier, and we will continue
21 to focus on safety, not only in the entire state, but in a
22 lot of the border regions, as well.

23 My goal today is to look at the big picture
24 when it comes to some of the stats regarding the Pharr
25 District. I looked at an opportunity to take advantage of

1 the low-hanging fruit, things that could be done that are
2 easy, low cost, can be implemented in a timely manner to
3 see results.

4 As far as the safety measures -- you know, we
5 talk about the three E's -- engineering, education, and
6 enforcement. But at the end of the day, it's up to the
7 drivers. It's up to the passengers to abide by the rules,
8 the laws, the policies, the regulations.

9 It's unfortunate that we still have some of the
10 stats that Michael shared -- unbuckled, unrestrained
11 passengers. I just don't get it. I mean, that rule came
12 into play, I believe, in 1986, and yet we still have folks
13 not buckling up.

14 And I was sharing before the meeting started
15 with one of the individuals here that as a driver, you
16 buckle up. If you have your children -- my children know,
17 my kids buckle up. Can I take off my seat belt if I'm
18 traveling back to the valley? No. I need to take a nap.

19 Lay over, but you're still going to be buckled up.

20 Well, you can do that with children. You can't
21 do that, to a certain extent, with adults, right? We have
22 to step up. If you're the driver, you take responsibility
23 for that vehicle and do not move until somebody, or at
24 least all of them are buckled up.

25 When we look at some of the measures that have

1 been taking place, you know, we talk about law
2 enforcement. Gerry brought it up, I believe -- law
3 enforcement along the border. One day, traveling back
4 from a hunting lease in Zapata back to Mission, Texas --
5 60 miles, counted 52 DPS troopers in those 60 miles.

6 And so, we talk about enforcement on a
7 statewide basis -- well, if these troopers are not
8 distributed, I should say, throughout the state, well,
9 then, you have more violators because there's less
10 enforcement. And so, I'm not going to go all political.
11 That's not my intent here.

12 My point being is when you have a higher
13 concentration in certain areas, you are going to have a
14 higher amount of citations given, right? But it's the
15 others that are not being cited that is, in my personal
16 opinion, the risk and the concern on a statewide basis.

17 The numbers have gone up, Eduardo, when the
18 border opened back up. And I'll talk a little bit about
19 the pedestrian aspect.

20 We have a lot of pedestrian traffic,
21 international travelers, if you will, that walk across the
22 border and do shopping. They walk to their destination.
23 So, it's a little bit of a challenge, but we'll continue
24 to move forward.

25 Looking at the big picture. Over the past

1 three years, in the Pharr District, we have seen an
2 increase in fatalities. However, I want to point out that
3 the Pharr District -- Michael, you correct me if I'm
4 wrong -- is still the lowest, or one of the lowest rates
5 in the entire state, which is is a good thing.

6 We should focus on zero, zero fatalities, a
7 zero rate. That is our goal. But we will continue to
8 push forward and correct some of these initiatives.

9 And breaking down stats, 105 out of the 133
10 fatalities in the Pharr District were in our two most
11 urbanized areas, Cameron County and Hidalgo County -- 1.5
12 billion in population. And so, if you think about that,
13 80 percent of the fatalities in the Pharr District were in
14 two counties.

15 However, 74 out of the 133 -- 74 were in rural
16 areas. But wait a minute. Just talked about population,
17 but the fatalities -- 55 percent -- that's what that
18 number translates to -- happened in rural areas. Well, 45
19 percent obviously in urban.

20 So, let's focus on US-281 and US-77, the major
21 in-and-out arteries into the valley along US-83 to Laredo.

22 And so, we've looked at doing projects -- for example, a
23 cable barrier, looking at speed limits, things of that
24 nature to keep major corridors.

25 I'll point out one accident in August of 2021:

1 one accident on US-21, 10 fatalities. It was human
2 trafficking. The individual, for whatever reason, was
3 speeding, lost control, hit the pylons. That is
4 unfortunate.

5 And so, we will look at opportunities, if you
6 will, along these major in-and-out corridors to address
7 some of these concerns. Breaking it down a little
8 further, when you look at the accident rates in the Pharr
9 District, 58 percent increase in the Pharr District versus
10 15 percent increase statewide. That just goes to
11 reiterate what Michael was pointing out earlier. I will
12 focus on some of these areas here shortly.

13 Work zones. We're very proud and pleased to
14 have \$1 billion in construction in the valley. That is
15 outstanding. A lot of work happening.

16 But yet, we're only at one-third the rate when
17 it comes to work zone incidents, 58 -- I'm sorry -- 92
18 percent, approximately, statewide, 33 percent in the RGV.

19 So, we're very proud of that. We take work zone and
20 signing and enforcement and things of that nature very,
21 very seriously. We work very close with the agency to
22 make sure that that happens.

23 When we talk about speed control, right -- and
24 so, statewide increased 8 percent. In the Rio Grande
25 Valley, Pharr District, 83 percent. That's almost nine to

1 10 times the rate, and that is unacceptable.

2 We look at our heat maps Traffic Safety
3 Division provides. We look at those areas and tried to
4 look at an opportunity, if you will, to adjust speeds, to
5 take control, if you will, for the drivers to be informed
6 of what's happening -- whether there is additional
7 signage, doing PSAs and things of that nature to ensure
8 that we are consistent with our speeds. Doing speed
9 surveys is another initiative that we have implemented
10 here in the Pharr District to ensure that a corridor
11 analysis is complete, so we don't have that fluctuating
12 speed throughout that corridor.

13 DUI and alcohol. Very, very sad and we're not
14 proud of this, but Cameron and Hidalgo County,
15 historically, have been in the top 10 counties when it
16 comes to abuse. And so, obviously, the higher the abuse,
17 the higher the chance of incidents happening with folks
18 driving under the influence.

19 Statewide, the number's 5 percent, negative 5
20 percent -- I'm sorry -- negative 5 percent. And in the
21 Pharr District, 59 percent. And so, there are many
22 factors. That's a 12 percent -- or 12 time increase.

23 There are many factors here. We'll reiterate,
24 the valley is one of the lower income areas, if you will,
25 of the entire state. You can see that we have ADC in

1 seven out of our eight counties. You have disadvantaged
2 county programs and such and such.

3 So we'll look into continuing to do PSAs,
4 public service announcements, if you will, campaigning
5 spring break at South Padre Island, the hot spot. Our
6 traffic safety specialists will be out there during spring
7 break to inform the folks and college students and others
8 about the importance of not driving under the influence.

9 And we'll continue to work with the Traffic
10 Division with the various grants that can be provided to
11 law enforcement as a whole, to basically pay a little bit
12 of overtime to get folks that are not on the clock to come
13 in and provide that enforcement that is much needed. What
14 about alcohol -- very similar to DUI, so I'll skip that.

15 When it comes to motorcycles, 7 percent
16 increase statewide, 150 percent increase in the Pharr
17 District. Now, that seems -- 150. That's fivefold.

18 That's five -- five too many, nonetheless, as
19 far as motorcycle fatalities, but we will continue to push
20 campaigns, that Look Twice, to ensure that we take into
21 account motorcycles.

22 Pedestrians is another area of focus for us.
23 Statewide, the numbers increase 15 percent. In Pharr
24 District, it increased 72 percent. That's almost five
25 times the amount.

1 Now, what is the reason for this? Open
2 borders, increased pedestrian activity. I mentioned
3 low-income families, a low-income region as a whole.

4 We have taken some steps in adding more raised
5 median projects, as an example. Over the last 10 years, I
6 can think of four or five major corridors that we have
7 implemented a raised median. And then, six lanes, three
8 lanes in each direction that provide, basically, a refuge
9 area for these very wide roadways.

10 So, we'll continue to push the raised median.
11 That won't just help pedestrians. It really helps safety
12 as a whole.

13 I mentioned the unrestrained fatalities. The
14 numbers there are 14 percent statewide, 58 percent in the
15 Pharr District. That's basically four or five times the
16 average.

17 Seat belt usage needs to go up. Enforcement,
18 grants once again -- we can have grants to law enforcement
19 to be able to go in there and give citations and continue
20 the PSAs.

21 Some of the challenges that we're facing in the
22 valley -- older drivers. We do still have the winter
23 Texans. They come in six months out of the year to avoid
24 this type of winter weather up in Minnesota and places
25 like that.

1 But we also have a lot more younger drivers,
2 inexperienced drivers. I have one at the house that
3 started driving in September, 17 years old. And I've
4 tried to teach him the principles that we're taught here
5 in TxDOT because it's really, really important.

6 A lot of international visitors have come our
7 way. Also of note, our population in the valley has
8 doubled over the last 25 years. We're expected to double
9 again within the next 25 years.

10 So, obviously, infrastructure needs are
11 important. But safety measures in those infrastructure
12 improvements are our focus area.

13 One of the things that we get noticed in the
14 valley -- and perhaps it's the same everywhere else --
15 people running red lights. I mean, this is a problem.
16 And when I'm sitting at a red light and I do the look
17 left, right, left we were taught, once again. And then,
18 here comes a vehicle running a red light.

19 You've got to look across the street, and
20 there's a PD officer right there that did not give a
21 citation. That bothers me. Because at the end of the
22 day, we're not enforcing it.

23 All it takes is to get one ticket, right? The
24 young man got that speeding ticket -- after that, five
25 miles below the speed limit. On the way up here

1 yesterday, 70. You can do 75?

2 I'm doing 70 on cruise control. I don't have
3 to call and let them know I got a speeding ticket, right?

4 So this is an enforcement issue, folks, that we need to
5 take full advantage of.

6 Overall, there are challenges just like there
7 are in Laredo, El Paso, and the rest of the state for that
8 matter. We will continue to focus, continue to improve
9 communication, focus with the traffic safety division and
10 various initiatives. I'm sure Laura Ryan does an
11 outstanding job pushing the safety initiative, as well.

12 And safety is the top priority for Pharr
13 District, and we will continue to look at those
14 opportunities.

15 Thank you for the opportunity to speak today,
16 and I'm open for any questions y'all may have.

17 MS. MAYS: Anyone have questions for Pete?

18 I think that's a lot of steps you've brought
19 op. Then, Marc, when you talked, you talked about --
20 asked about our very unique issues to the border, why
21 we're seeing all of these increases. So, I think that's a
22 theme we'll probably hear from the other district
23 engineers.

24 And then, we'll talk about it later -- the
25 unique issues of the border, which you've highlighted, and

1 I think David Coronado also highlighted. The sheer amount
2 of pedestrians, people don't understand. I know the
3 northern border, I know the southern border. Nobody walks
4 across the northern border.

5 Not a single person walks. Everything,
6 everybody goes by vehicle or truck. So, that's very, very
7 unique to the south, unfortunately.

8 Thanks. Any questions for Pete? If not, we'll
9 go to David.

10 MR. ALVAREZ: Thank you.

11 MR. SALAZAR: Good morning. Thank you, Pete.
12 Thank you, Michael. Great presentations.

13 I've got two presentations here. My eyesight
14 isn't as good as it used to be. So, if we can get my
15 slide going. Caroline, please, first slide?

16 So, what I want to do here, I wanted the size
17 of the trend that we have in Laredo District for the past
18 10 years. So, they are rising. There is a trend that
19 they seem to be coming down. Also, the issues that we are
20 watching throughout the district.

21 There is some that are identified; I will give
22 my presentation about that. But overall, in general, what
23 I want to show here is that our issues, there is downward
24 trend over the past 10 years that will continue. Next
25 slide, please.

1 This is the one that I'm going to focus on my
2 presentation today. And this is our Laredo District
3 fatalities and our trends. If you can notice, seat belts
4 jumped up, and if you notice, on high speed, they're
5 pretty high. Those are the highest trends that we have
6 when it comes to total fatalities in the Laredo District.
7 Next slide, please.

8 So, according to a recent study conducted by
9 TTI that included 18 cities across the state, the highest
10 combined driver and front seat passenger belt use in 2021
11 was observed in Laredo District at 93.9 percent. Laredo
12 had exceptionally high passenger restraint use at a 97.4
13 percent. Although we had the highest, which is 10
14 percentm in seat belt research, now unbelted passengers
15 accounted for 65 percent of fatalities in 2021.

16 We are experiencing an increase of high-speed
17 chases between law enforcement and vehicles transporting
18 illegal immigrants. Typically these passengers are not
19 wearing seat belts, resulting in multiple fatalities
20 within a single crash. To put things in perspective, of
21 the 52 total fatalities, 21 of them, which is 40 percent,
22 were related to high-speed chases.

23 To put that in perspective, Mr. Chacon
24 mentioned a 46 increase across our districts. Our
25 increase can be contributed -- if you take these 21

1 fatalities away, they drop that number by 40 percent.

2 Furthermore, there were seven crashes this
3 year, 31 of them high-speed chases, not wearing seat
4 belts, 21 fatalities within six cases in our 2021 numbers.

5 So we have to put that into perspective.

6 The subject of crashes related to illegal
7 immigration has been discussed at all the Traffic Safety
8 Coalition meetings. Mr. Gerry Schwebel mentioned what are
9 we doing to reach out to the communities?

10 So we meet with the Safety Coalition and bring
11 people from [inaudible], and we discuss these issues.
12 Some of the following options have been discussed when it
13 comes to high trafficking of illegal immigrants in our
14 district.

15 Converting a portion of IH-35 [inaudible] to a
16 one-way, and Border Patrol seems to control traffic, and
17 reduce high-speed chases. The local PD and DPS will not
18 change, for the demon is a dangerous situation.

19 DPS will encourage the use of helicopters to
20 follow the vehicles. This is something that came up at
21 our safety meetings where we saw our numbers increase and
22 jumping upwards, and that will help.

23 The other number that I want to talk about is
24 pedestrian fatalities. In our district, we had six
25 pedestrian fatalities. Three out of those six were

1 pedestrians running from law enforcement that
2 unfortunately were killed in the act of trying to get away
3 from law enforcement. So, again, you take the three away
4 from the six, that's a 50 percent drop within our
5 district. Next slide, please.

6 So what are we doing, as far as a district, to
7 try to bring these numbers down when it comes to
8 pedestrians, illumination, traffic signal improvements,
9 widening, passing, and hazard information, what is the
10 district doing as a whole?

11 The district has spent over \$20 million in 31
12 safety improvement projects since fiscal year 2020. We
13 have analyzed hot spots with high collision rates, and our
14 strategically-planned projects include the installation of
15 bracing medians, concrete cable barrier, concrete median
16 barrier, paving, widening, and pedestrian improvements, and
17 traffic management measures. Next slide, please.

18 The Laredo District [inaudible] profile markings
19 as it covers of the District's roadways. These highly
20 effective lane departure countermeasures are being included
21 on every project that is submitted in the Laredo District.

22
23 A cable median barrier safety project on I-35
24 will cover the last seven-mile gap in our district, taking
25 to us to 100 percent of cable median barrier of I-35 in

1 Webb and LaSalle County. Additionally, we are adding a
2 total of 10 miles of cable median barrier on two of our
3 main divided highways, US-83 and US-90.

4 Why is this important? These are major
5 corridors in our district: US-83 and US-90, and I-35.
6 This is where we're seeing the high-speed chases that have
7 contributed to 50 percent of the fatalities in our
8 district. So we're hopeful that with this last seven-mile
9 gap that we'll be able to eliminate those completely.
10 Next slide, please.

11 Let's talk a little bit about concrete median
12 barriers and raised medians. A section of US-59 in Laredo
13 with many fatalities was closed off with a concrete
14 median. But the important thing here is that there was
15 two fatalities that occurred in this location -- same
16 location, same spot within a year. We were able to take
17 some of our safety dollars and provide this concrete
18 median barrier to eliminate that from happening again.

19 Construction is underway for a raised median
20 project that addressed urban high crash rates from cities
21 like Eagle Pass to Del Rio to Laredo. The project cost
22 was \$3.5 million, and the total close to 10 miles of
23 raised medians throughout the city in order to reduce
24 fatalities in our district. Next slide, please.

25 When it comes to pedestrian intersection

1 safety, our annual program pedestrian improvement projects
2 totaled about \$7 million and covered about 10 miles.
3 These projects include sidewalks, ADA ramps, pedestrian
4 signals, illumination.

5 These pedestrian improvements were along US-90
6 in Del Rio, along State Loop 20, State Highway 359 in
7 Laredo, and also on FM 1433 in Crystal City. Ongoing
8 projects are adding communication to our traffic signals
9 to help improve signal timings and overall prevention on
10 the main corridors.

11 District is planning to have communication of
12 100 percent for our signals this year. We are adding
13 three timed signals to safely cross the intersection of
14 high crash streets. Also, we're adding two more traffic
15 signals for driving in areas of high truck traffic.

16 We are adding queue detection systems at
17 various locations to improve intersection safety. And we
18 are working on achieving 100 percent EMS runtime through a
19 combination of construction and maintenance dollars. Next
20 slide, please.

21 When it comes to speed zone reduction, you
22 heard Mr. Chacon mention that we were reducing the number
23 of accidents in work zones. These are some of the things
24 that we're doing with speed reduction in construction
25 zones. Driver feedback speed signs -- or radar signs, as

1 people call them -- are being incorporated at strategic
2 locations to deter speeding. Accordingly, the District
3 has 10 locations with DFSS signs, US 277 in Eagle Pass, US
4 277 Del Rio, you will see Laredo and four locations on
5 State Highway 359 -- again, the major corridors in our
6 district.

7 Border Patrol inspection stations have DFSS
8 signs on their posts to alert drivers to slow down at
9 Border Patrol station approaches. These radar signs are
10 being used on construction projects on construction and
11 maintenance projects as we speak now to help alert traffic
12 and reduce their speed as they come into our work zones.

13 Laredo District will continue to utilize the
14 safety funds available for each outside team, [inaudible]
15 program costs, as well as incorporating program safety
16 countermeasures throughout all construction and new
17 projects. This traffic safety team maintains continuous
18 communication with local law enforcement coalition units,
19 with areas of concern, and expand that safety initiative
20 throughout. Next up, local government and local office.

21 With that, I will pause briefly for questions.

22 If anybody has any questions -- if there's something
23 they'd like to ask -- again, a reminder and the request I
24 get the most -- I know that Mr. Schwebel was asking about
25 I-35 and if we're tracking the incidents that are DPS-

1 related. Certainly we are.

2 He asked, and we saw the northbound and
3 southbound. We see how many in each direction. But we
4 are tracking that and looking to the numbers.

5 I'm not very good with numbers. I'm just an
6 engineer. But, you know, it's a sad case that we have.
7 It's something that we have to address when it comes to
8 the increasing rates. But again, 40 percent increase
9 attributed to high-speed chases when it comes to illegal
10 immigration in the Laredo District.

11 Any questions?

12 MS. MAYS: Thank you, David. Any questions?
13 Yes?

14 MR. GARCIA: Thank you, Caroline. David, this
15 year -- or last year, 2021, for Laredo had reported \$240
16 billion in total trade between Texas and Mexico. That's
17 how much the port handled. And we handle about 5.1
18 million trucks across our bridges. Both of those are
19 record numbers.

20 The port and those numbers are combined more
21 than for all the other land ports handle in Texas. How
22 has that impacted the numbers that you're telling us here,
23 given the huge increase in trucks?

24 MR. SALAZAR: So, we have noticed, beginning in
25 the better part of 2019 when the bridges were shut down

1 completely, there was a drop in traffic. And TxDOT tracks
2 both numbers and we saw a downward trend on the metrics
3 that we measure, which is expected.

4 I was cautious because I knew, at some point,
5 those bridges were going to open again. Those numbers
6 were going to start rising. And lo and behold, I believe
7 it was -- I can't recall the gentleman that mentioned it,
8 and it's true: once the bridges opened up, the numbers
9 increased.

10 We cannot specifically track them to whether
11 the drivers are from the US or from Mexico. I can tell
12 you that it is added vehicles -- the lane miles, the rates
13 did go up.

14 Unfortunately, in Laredo, we don't get too much
15 pedestrian traffic. Little that we do get, there were a
16 few fatalities that were pedestrian were not in Laredo.
17 They were in other parts of the district, which were less
18 populated.

19 But we did see an increase. It is picking up.

20 But again, the major percentages of our increase is
21 through illegal immigration, high-speed chases.

22 MS. MAYS: Yes, Stan?

23 MR. MEADOR: Yeah, this is Stan Meador, Texas
24 Pacifico. Is there any data or analysis you had on the
25 driver feedback speed signs that you referenced?

1 I know you got -- I'll just say it. A bit of
2 an anecdote, I was driving through a work zone the other
3 evening after dark in West Texas. And that sign had the
4 red and blue lights on it. And it was amazing noticing
5 the number of taillights that you saw -- brake lights,
6 rather -- and people slowing down as you approach that.

7 Of course, at night, the visibility of that --
8 particularly, those red and blue lights on it, I think
9 that they had, you know, quite an impact. I don't know
10 how long it lasted, but I'm curious about that.

11 MR. SALAZAR: Absolutely. We noticed that our
12 work zones, that we're reducing the speeds more often with
13 that sign. And we have noticed that radars will catch
14 somebody's eye, because they can actually physically see
15 this is how fast I'm going.

16 But as Mr. Chacon had mentioned, we have some
17 of those features statewide in construction zones. I can
18 tell you that for our district, we put them on all those
19 projects and we have seen -- yes, sir? Mr. Schwebel?

20 MR. SCHWEBEL: I'll tell you one -- another
21 observation in the radars. Those at the borders we
22 have -- Border Patrol checkpoints -- and we see the
23 increase in longer lines and delays. So, for checkpoints,
24 personnel issues, et cetera.

25 So when you have the long lines people are

1 making at the Border Patrol checkpoints, people are trying
2 to get to San Antonio or to the other parts. They want to
3 catch up. What do they do? They speed up because they
4 need to meet a deadline. They need to get there faster.
5 That's another observation I think we have to keep in
6 mind.

7 And then, on the energy side, production side,
8 because we see energy production go back, and our numbers
9 show in the past history that when we have that type of
10 traffic over our energy sector -- on our roads and
11 highways, those numbers tend to increase.

12 So, I don't want to get too pessimistic, but
13 with energy production comes back into play in the roads
14 along the border, as well, or other parts of Texas, that
15 we've got to take action now in making sure that we reach
16 out to them and create that awareness.

17 MR. SALAZAR: You're absolutely right, Mr.
18 Schwebel. In the past, I think we've looked at the first
19 five presenters and we saw a downward trend starting -- a
20 downward trend starts at the heights of Eagle Ford shale.

21
22 Since then, in the past four years, due to the
23 direction of administration and especially Commissioner
24 Ryan, we've been able on these major corridors, and we've
25 seen figures on 277 and US-90, the major corridors that

1 we're traveling in the sector traffic, being able to put
2 countermeasures, rumble strips.

3 We've been able to provide some medians and
4 illumination to, hopefully, if it comes to that point
5 where we start seeing an increase in [inaudible] at this
6 time and those numbers will continue to trend down.

7 But you're absolutely right. That was a high
8 impact on the fatalities that we were having.

9 MS. MAYS: Yeah, David, we have one question
10 online. So, Mr. George, if you can unmute yourself and
11 ask your question.

12 MR. ANTUNA: Good morning, everybody, and good
13 morning, David. Thank you for the informative
14 information.

15 You know, here in Eagle Pass, you know, the
16 second land port -- the largest land port in the district
17 of Laredo, we're experiencing high traffic over -- you
18 know, for us, the growth that we're seeing -- over \$33
19 billion in trade has been pretty awesome. And trying to
20 see it here, and we're growing, as you can imagine.

21 One of the things that we really, really want
22 to see, David, is, obviously, the completion of our Loop
23 480 from 57 all the way to 277, so as to connect over to
24 the Del Rio north area.

25 Can you please give us some information on

1 that? And, obviously, we're always still partnering up
2 with our brothers south of here in the city of Laredo and
3 the county of Webb to make sure that we're still keeping
4 into consideration the FM 1021 connection between Eagle
5 Pass and Laredo.

6 Just to kind of put it in perspective, it would
7 shave off over an hour in travel time, just about. From
8 our courthouse here in Eagle Pass to the courthouse there
9 in Laredo -- the city of Laredo -- it's only 70 miles.
10 And so, that would be a great way to be able to do that,
11 and working forward on that.

12 So, just wanted to just let you know that we
13 are really pushing for that, obviously. So, if you could
14 just answer those two items, I'd greatly appreciate it.

15 Thanks a lot, guys. Have a great morning and
16 great meeting.

17 MR. SALAZAR: Thank you, Mr. Antuna. And I
18 kind of like that description, the second largest land
19 port in the Laredo District. I got to say that I like
20 that.

21 So, let me answer your first question. The
22 continuation of State Loop 480 to connect from 57 to US
23 277 -- currently, that project is under design. We are at
24 90-95 percent of the design of that project.

25 It is a priority for the Laredo District, and

1 we will be submitting it on our 2023 ETP for selection,
2 hopefully. It will be competing statewide. But to answer
3 your question, we're 95 percent complete. It's a priority
4 of the Laredo District, and we're hoping to submit it in
5 the 2023 ETP for funding.

6 To answer your other question, FM 1021 seems to
7 be a popular topic. Mr. Schwebel and I were just
8 discussing that topic. So, as we move forward, certainly
9 an alternate route to US-83 will alleviate some traffic
10 off of that, and it's always good when you have alternate
11 routes to reduce traffic.

12 The current status of that -- I hate to call it
13 a project -- that conceptual idea, I guess, could be that
14 currently, we're asking for a feasibility study to be
15 completed to make sure that the road is feasible to kind
16 of bring it forth.

17 So, at this point right now, I know that we are
18 currently meeting with elected officials from the City of
19 Laredo to discuss this further. And I believe that,
20 currently, there is a meeting scheduled with elected
21 officials from Maverick County and Webb County that will
22 be meeting on this topic itself.

23 So, to answer your question, we're at the
24 feasibility part of this project and, hopefully, looking
25 forward to the completion of that feasibility study by

1 those other than TxDOT. So, we're very interested in
2 that, and you can certainly count on me attending those
3 meetings whenever possible, Mr. Antuna.

4 MR. ANTUNA: Thank you, David.

5 MS. MAYS: Thank you, David.

6 So, let's move on to Eddie. And then -- we're
7 running a bit behind --

8 MR. SALAZAR: Thank you.

9 MS. MAYS: -- committee Members, please feel
10 free to go grab a coffee. We will not wait because we're
11 running behind schedule.

12 MR. VALTIER: Good morning. My name is Eddie
13 Valtier, Deputy P.E. in El Paso. And so what we're going
14 to do is, I'm going to actually show you projects that
15 have demonstrated some safety issues and some of the
16 solutions that we're trying to mitigate. Next slide.

17 So, we chose three projects in the urban area,
18 and we'll start from the west to the east. And then,
19 Artcraft Road project, a wrong-way-driving project that
20 we're working on, as well as our State Loop 75 project.

21 So, we'll start with Artcraft. So this is a
22 little bit more project-specific, but what I'd like to
23 demonstrate here is that we have -- when you look at the
24 map up on the screen, you have the Santa Teresa port of
25 entry. And so that's actually New Mexico port of entry,

1 but what it does is it connects to the New Mexico State
2 Highway 136.

3 In the process of doing that, we also have the
4 UPRR that has established a intermodal facility. It's
5 about 5,500 acres; it has about the capacity for 4,000
6 carrier parking stalls. So what we're seeing is that
7 we're getting a lot of traffic that goes up -- down 136,
8 and 136 turns into Texas State Highway 178. Next slide.

9 And so this is the result of what we're
10 getting. Just this one example first, but we've seen this
11 throughout the state. What this does is it ties up
12 traffic. It causes accidents. We, in the last five
13 years, had 817 crashes at this location.

14 So for El Paso District, we look at high
15 numbers like that and say each one of these accidents,
16 crashes is a risk for a fatality, and of course, we want
17 to mitigate that. So there's other examples of this.
18 That whole area is generating a lot of heavy industrial
19 type vehicles.

20 And here -- you don't see I-10, but it's kind
21 of going underneath that bridge right there. Those four
22 quadrants are currently being developed. We have some
23 retail. We have some entertainment venues. We have fast
24 food chains.

25 And so what it's causing is a mixture of really

1 heavy industrial vehicle, residential folks that are
2 driving around, and then we have pedestrian -- I don't
3 know if you can see -- developing there, trying to cross
4 the street. So we feel that this is really an area that
5 we need to focus on because of the types of conflicts that
6 we're going to have.

7 So, we're proposing to put some direct
8 connectors, separate the traffic, make sure that we have
9 those heavy type of vehicles clearing or making sure they
10 get through the interchange without any harm to others.
11 Next slide.

12 So as we go farther to the east, in the map
13 you'll see our downtown El Paso right down the center.
14 And on the bottom portion is Mexico, so this is right
15 parallel to the Rio Grande. And here we have a situation
16 where we have a trend going from one of our roadways that
17 connects to State Loop 375.

18 So, we've had a series of wrong-way drivers,
19 and in this case, it's only been about three or four. But
20 in the district, we've had 53 cases in the last five years
21 district-wide. And again, that's 53 too many.

22 So we've chosen this location, so we're going
23 to implement a targeted left, a wrong-way-driver device
24 there -- system, and it's about \$1.28 million, and we're
25 currently under construction. Next slide.

1 And what it's going to do is it will take this
2 local roadway to see where installing some raised medians
3 to penalize the traffic to make it a little more difficult
4 for vehicles to go into the wrong direction. What it also
5 does is install a lot of components.

6 Working with traffic division, Michael, has
7 been a great help. And what we'll do is we'll detect it.
8 We'll be able to verify it through our ITS personnel, our
9 traffic centers. And then they'll be able to contact our
10 law enforcement officials and try to intercept those
11 vehicles.

12 We're not fully complete. So, that bright sign
13 you see -- that dynamic message sign you see there, that's
14 not in El Paso. That's just an example of the type of
15 messages that we will be flashing when we detect a wrong
16 way driver.

17 Again, you know, 53 is just way too many. This
18 is only one area that we're constructing right now. But
19 we are looking at various projects that we have in the
20 planning stages, and trying to see if this is something
21 viable we do for each location. Next slide.

22 As we move farther east, near an area we have a
23 series of projects. This is really a great story because
24 this whole corridor has been plagued not only by
25 congestion and mobility issues, but truly some really

1 heavy safety issues.

2 And what we've done is we've been able to --
3 it's really a team work story. We've been able to
4 collaborate with the City of El Paso, the El Paso MPO, El
5 Paso County, the CRM Regional Mobility Authority. And you
6 can see a series of projects there that have been planned
7 out.

8 Funds have been put to good use here. There
9 have been some Rider 11 TIP funds in this corridor effort.

10 But what's interesting here is what you see in the yellow
11 line.

12 That's the City of El Paso project, and we
13 coordinated with them. We were getting build-up of trucks
14 going into Zaragosa port of entry, right there on the
15 right hand side of your screen, that would back up all the
16 way up to our railroad tracks right off the center of the
17 screen.

18 So, what this project does is it reverses
19 ramps. It widens the facility, and then it makes -- that
20 queuing that was happening in our main lanes is now going
21 to happen on that yellow line that you see, taking it off
22 of the high-speed facilities and creating a much safer
23 condition. Next slide.

24 So we're going to try to -- I'm not sure if
25 technology's going to work, and so Giacomo is going to

1 work his magic there. There is a sample of what we were
2 getting prior to the project. And this is northbound.
3 So the issue is happening in both directions heading to
4 the port of entry on our state entry side.

5 As you go through, some of the issues that
6 we've seen some cars trying to get into the queue crossing
7 the border areas -- you see at times the lines were not
8 moving at all. So you would see drivers of the trucks and
9 passenger cars getting out of their vehicles, stepping
10 into traffic.

11 Here you're going to see a little bit of an
12 issue that happened. And this was an everyday occurrence,
13 particularly on Fridays. We get just a tremendous amount
14 of volume trying to force in.

15 I'm going to show you one more video on the
16 next slide, and it's a little bit higher-level view. But
17 just to demonstrate what the border traffic can do for
18 safety issues, what things we're challenged with everyday.

19 You know, how do you get a vehicle out of an exit ramp
20 when you have that line towards port of entry?

21 So we do have our challenges in this project.
22 I'm happy to say that, you know -- next slide. So we
23 identified not only that issue; we identified some
24 operational issues at Alameda which, the intersection was
25 too close to the off ramp, so we had two main issues.

1 We had all sorts of things going on, 48 percent
2 of the crashes were happening in between Alameda and North
3 Loop. The rest of them were happening at the border.
4 And so what we did -- next slide. So we analyzed it and
5 we looked at the hot spots. You know, trying to see where
6 we could put our money, what we could do to solve these
7 problems. Next slide.

8 So, as you saw in the previous one, there was
9 about 875 crashes in this area. There is a merging issue
10 that we have. So you have frontage roads, but you don't
11 have any way to cross the over the railroad because it
12 involves a U-turn.

13 So this is where backups happen. There's a
14 Super Walmart right there at the corner. Everything backs
15 up off of main. Next slide.

16 So, of course, we're building the structures
17 over. We don't have any of those issues anymore. And
18 between this portion here and us taking the queues from
19 the border area, we've managed to clear up that whole area
20 of traffic well.

21 There's still some projects in progress in this
22 area, but the traffic is expected to flow much smoother
23 without conflict as we had before. Next slide.

24 So, now then, we'll look a little bit a farther
25 out. You know, that was all urban things that we're doing

1 there in the west area. So, here we have been working
2 with Customs Border Patrol.

3 And somebody mentioned this issue earlier. So,
4 here what we we're trying to do is we do have these
5 checkpoints, and the checkpoints, you know, are pretty
6 fast, but once you slow down traffic going 80 miles an
7 hour, it stacks up. And we've had some fatalities in this
8 area, as you see. There's fatalities and there's a lot of
9 crashes, and they're all centralized in that area.

10 So what we're doing is -- next slide -- we're
11 putting in a queue detection system, and it stretches
12 about eight to 10 miles. So, it's going to have some
13 advance warning. It has some cameras. It has some TMS
14 microwave technology that, of course, Michael and his
15 group have also been helping us with.

16 And so, our goal, of course, is to decrease the
17 accidents, make the traveling public aware that there's a
18 queue coming up. And then, that way, you know, if they're
19 aware, maybe they can step off that pedal a little bit,
20 slow it down, and get through that checkpoint safely.

21 So, now, we have to work on how they speed up.

22 So, we're not quite there yet. I think we do have a
23 problem right after checkpoint. So, you're right, Gerry.
24 We have an issue there.

25 But we're on this issue and we're working

1 really well to see if we can get this. And there's some
2 devices that work to do that.

3 Next. So we also mentioned raised medians. So
4 the El Paso District has been really aggressive on safety
5 projects, and we have these corridors working with, again,
6 Michael and his group. We have submitted more safety
7 plans, \$12.8 million is what the District received. They
8 are either in construction or about to be let.

9 And you know, there is a little bit of -- the
10 community, sometimes isn't used to these. So they are
11 asking a lot of questions, trying to explain to them that
12 these are safety projects and it can reduce the accidents
13 with pedestrians, the accidents trying to turn left.

14 A lot of these were -- it's the left turn lane
15 and center, and a lot of head-on collisions that happened.

16 So, these are definitely projects that are going to
17 improve safety, and we are currently constructing them.

18 Next slide.

19 And the last little really -- far east here in
20 our District, we had US-67 corridor studies, 142 miles of
21 US-67 that we studied. And so, we can't forget rural. It
22 was also mentioned that sometimes in the rural areas, the
23 speeds are higher because there's not so much traffic.

24 So we work with all stakeholders in the area,
25 and what we're trying to do now in our studies is

1 incorporate safety analysis components into every project.

2 And so, what we'll do is we'll have our consultants,
3 ourselves team up together with stakeholders. It's very
4 important to get their input in. It makes a project.

5 And so we've come up with a -- this is only
6 five. There were over 100 safety items that they
7 identified. But we're trying to group those into
8 locations so that we can put them out as projects.

9 So we're working on that. We're not quite
10 there. This is more of a study level. We do have a
11 safety plan that we're incorporating all these projects
12 into so we can start checking them off as we go. Next
13 slide.

14 And before I go to questions, I wanted to
15 mention about two other things that we're doing more on
16 the public relations side. And our district is being
17 really proactive at the border -- it's trying to be. And
18 what we're trying to do is we have programs where we go
19 out and hand out brochures at the port of entries on
20 safety, seat belts.

21 And so, that way, when you're crossing the
22 border, it's just a little bit of reminder, you know, as
23 you come in, be a little bit more safe when you're driving
24 in Texas or in Mexico. It doesn't matter. Just be a
25 little more safe.

1 The other thing that we're doing is we have
2 safety belt stickers that we're putting at the booths at
3 the border. So, again, just a visual reminder. I think
4 at all our districts, we have a visual reminder when we're
5 leaving the district.

6 You'd better put your seat belt on when you get
7 in your vehicle. So, this is a good reminder to travelers
8 either coming down, coming into the -- they just see a
9 nice sticker right in front of them saying, "Buckle up."

10 One last thing I'd like to mention that I think
11 is also a team effort -- and the El Paso MPO helped us out
12 tremendously on this -- is the HERO Program. So, El Paso
13 has instituted a HERO Program.

14 And when you talk about safety, it's just been,
15 you know, a blessing. That's all I can say, because we've
16 had so many accidents now that can be helped, and the
17 safety of our employees, and the safety of people that
18 have gotten into the accidents, the law enforcement --
19 they are so happy to have us out there with this program.

20 And you would be surprised how people will
21 respect it. When there's an accident, they come to those
22 areas and they see our folks trying to manage the traffic
23 around the accident, and we don't get as many people
24 cutting in and out trying to cause another accident.

25 So, you know, highly valuable. I think it's

1 money well spent on that program, and we look forward to
2 extending that program to help with the MPOs.

3 With that, any questions you all have?

4 SEC. SCOTT: Great presentations. Thank you
5 very much. You did great with the pointers. But, sure.
6 One of the things that stands out to me is, is there a
7 ratio that you all have developed -- non-fatal accidents
8 to fatalities?

9 So, we've got all these statistics on
10 fatalities, but it seems like the non-fatal accidents are,
11 what is it, 100 to 1? I'm not sure what that ratio might
12 be.

13 MR. VALTIER: I think Michael has.

14 MR. CHACON: Yeah, we do keep track of all the
15 crashes, as well. We look at serious injuries, as well.
16 And we look at non-injury crashes. But we keep track of
17 all that.

18 I don't know the exact percentage, but serious
19 injury crashes and all the crashes are significantly
20 higher as a percentage. We do look at both fatalities and
21 serious injuries whenever we do a lot of our efforts in
22 trying to look at countermeasures and how to address
23 safety because those serious injuries -- most people just
24 survive by luck, when it comes down to it. Because some
25 of them are really horrific crashes and they still

1 survived.

2 So, we do look at all crashes --

3 MR. WILLIAMS: Secretary, I was going to just
4 comment. And Michael, correct me if I'm wrong. I don't
5 know exactly how the data applies to the border region,
6 but statewide, when we talk -- we've been talking about
7 this huge increase that we've seen in fatalities over the
8 last several years, over the past two years. That's been
9 more specifically related to fatalities and serious
10 crashes.

11 When you're looking at total crashes as a
12 whole, we have not seen that same increase in the number
13 of fatalities. And so, the things that are going on are
14 driving, you know, not just are driving that particular
15 component. We haven't seen the big jump in total crashes,
16 but it's specific to fatalities and serious crashes.

17 MR. CHACON: You're absolutely correct, Marc.
18 And I will tell you that when we were tracking during
19 2020, unfortunately the majority of the year was almost in
20 a pandemic, we saw about 15 percent decrease in crashes.
21 But we saw 7 percent increase in fatalities in '20.

22 So, it is interesting. And we're still getting
23 all the data together for 2021 to look at what percentage
24 of crashes are versus fatalities. It looks like our
25 crashes might have increased in 2021 versus 2020, only

1 because the volume of traffic in 2020 decreased so much.
2 So, we are looking at that.

3 MS. MAYS: And the data was not coming in.

4 SEC. SCOTT: We've got online --

5 MR. CORONADO: David Coronado, City of El Paso.
6 So, a couple of things -- so, first one is, I think that
7 it would be interesting looking at data -- essentially, I
8 think you have a lot of data on these accidents and
9 fatalities.

10 I think to your point, Secretary, you know, on
11 the vehicle safety has dramatically improved over the
12 years, technology, just the vehicle, the [inaudible]
13 vehicle. Right? So I think data mining is crucial, in
14 this case, to really understand what it's tracking in
15 fatalities on a case-by-case basis. So that's one point.

16 The second point -- you know, Eddie came up
17 here, and his team in El Paso have been fantastic to work
18 with -- the corridor project, the new entry way and exit
19 way for the loop, our office is actually a block away from
20 that intersection. And we work with them tremendously to
21 redesign that whole layout and to actually address all our
22 of concerns: the City's concerns, Border Patrol's
23 concerns. So, I think that will help the safety for that
24 intersection.

25 And the last point with the truck traffic that

1 you saw, the queue in the video -- you know, the City also
2 works quite a bit with TxDOT and with the MPO to invest in
3 a road extension. We added four miles of additional
4 queuing capacity for trucks to remove those trucks from
5 the loop and put them on the side road, so that has
6 cleared up the traffic. And so, working with that
7 project, and also, the ramp reversals -- that has made a
8 huge difference for the east side, for our town.

9 So, again, I think El Paso, TxDOT, the City,
10 the MPO, and all the HCs have really made a lot of
11 progress over the last few years. And those two projects
12 are just a few examples of that. So, thank you.

13 MS. HOLGUIN: Thank you. I just wanted to
14 follow up on David's comment, and to thank TxDOT for the
15 efforts there near the Zaragosa port of entry. It has
16 made just a tremendous difference. Not only TxDOT's work,
17 but also the Windrow [phonetic] project through the city.

18 I actually live about a mile away from the port
19 of entry, so I drive that stretch of road every single
20 day. I got flashbacks when I was looking at the video
21 because, honestly, it was one of the scariest things in
22 the world to have to drive past those trucks -- hundreds
23 of them -- that weren't just taking up the entire
24 shoulder, but a portion of that outside lane, as well.
25 And then, seeing how the cars were trying to get around.

1 So I just wanted to thank you for your efforts
2 with regards to that project. It has made a tremendous,
3 tremendous difference.

4 MR. CAMPOS: Hello. This is Jaime Campos.
5 Jaime Campos from the Chihuahua State Government.

6 MR. SCHWEBEL: -- you were saying -- this is
7 Gerry Schwebel, by the way. Public relations are bringing
8 a greater awareness, what you're doing in handing out at
9 the ports of entry. I think that's a great idea. I think
10 it's -- I think we should do more of that, perhaps in all
11 of our ports of entry. I don't know how to do it, but
12 whatever it is, you know, obviously, I think we probably
13 could do it.

14 The other area is not only talking to our
15 Border Patrol checkpoint folks and say, Look, instead of
16 having a billboard with a guy or a lawyer saying, I'm
17 going to -- you know, how about if we put up a sign that
18 says, Hey, buckle up?

19 For every one of those, I'd like to see a
20 safety -- when you put up a billboard like that, put up a
21 billboard for safety, too, you know? And I think we
22 should all, the citizens -- corporate citizens, wish for
23 that.

24 MS. MAYS: Thank you.

25 MR. CHACON: Yes. We do try to put billboards

1 across the state at strategic places that attract a lot of
2 people, like you said. Not only do we use billboards, but
3 we use our dynamic message boards. They're across the
4 statewide system, as well, with safety messages, as well,
5 so we're going to continue to do that.

6 MS. MAYS: Thank you. We do have a hand
7 online. So, I'm going to online for a second.

8 So, Jaime, please unmute your line and ask your
9 question.

10 MR. CAMPOS: Yes, thank you very much,
11 Caroline. It's good to be here with all of you. I just
12 got a -- I have a question. Do you have any updates
13 regarding the completion of the bridge at
14 Ojinaga-Presidio?

15 MR. VALTIER: So, the update from the District
16 would be that, you know, we are currently waiting for some
17 documents to come through, and Caroline has nothing on
18 there?

19 MR. WILLIAMS: Not a specific update, but
20 other -- knowing that we're getting close. I know that's
21 not very specific. That doesn't narrow it down very much,
22 but we've been having regular conversations answering some
23 questions that we received from some of the other agencies
24 that are reviewing that document.

25 But I'm hopeful we'll have some good news on

1 that here pretty soon.

2 MR. CAMPOS: Thank you very much.

3 MS. MAYS: Yeah, thank you. Any other
4 questions for Eddie, Pete, David or Michael before we get
5 off this agenda item?

6 Jessica, a question? Okay. Go ahead.

7 MS. BUTLER: A coordinated effort in here.
8 This is just a general comment, and I think it was alluded
9 to by David earlier. But just to throw it out there, you
10 know, under the new Federal Highway Bill, there actually
11 is a Safe Streets and Roads for All discretionary grant
12 program.

13 It's actually only available to local
14 governments and MPOs, so the State is not an eligible
15 recipient. So I encourage everyone to take a look at that
16 and maybe start planning for that.

17 MS. MAYS: Thank you, Jessica, for that.

18 And Marc, you have a comment?

19 MR. WILLIAMS: Just going to say, even though
20 we're not an eligible recipient, we're certainly -- and
21 this is, you know, something that I think -- well, it's
22 coming in our quarter, in our MPO District Audit
23 Committee -- we can be a key partner in those
24 applications.

25 We can't lead the application effort, but I

1 know that in these types of grant programs, FHWA, USDOT
2 look favorably on these partnerships and joint projects,
3 so I think that's one of those things we're wanting to try
4 to accomplish with this committee of MPOs.

5 MS. MAYS: Thank you for that. And thank you,
6 again, to, you know, Michael, David, Pete, and Eddie for
7 leading the discussion. Again, this is the first time
8 we're having this with BTAC. And so, they look forward to
9 future discussions with BTAC on this issue.

10 And I appreciate all the committee members,
11 your input, as well, on the safety issues. And, like was
12 mentioned over and over again, this is a key priority for
13 Marc, the Commission, the leadership at TxDOT, and all the
14 staff at TxDOT. You know, I don't think that a day goes
15 by that we're not reminded, within all our efforts, that
16 we need to be diligent about, you know, safety on our
17 roadways, but also, safety within. Appreciate that input
18 today.

19 So, we're going to go to our next agenda item,
20 and I just want to kind of underscore this -- that what
21 we're going to see, the next item presentations is really,
22 you know, a direct result of all of you, you know, with
23 the Border Master Plan, and outlining not just the issues
24 and needs, but also recommending things that we need to be
25 doing as TxDOT, but also, collectively.

1 So, what we're showing you here is really what
2 we as TxDOT are doing. And I hope that in future
3 meetings, we come back and you all can showcase and share
4 what you're doing from your perspective, in terms of
5 addressing, you know, the recommendations out of the
6 Border Master Plan.

7 And I failed to recognize our counterparts from
8 Mexico. Ericka is on the line from SCT. They are very
9 instrumental in helping us with this effort, so I wanted
10 to just acknowledge that she's here.

11 Also, our fellow partner is Federal Highway, is
12 here. FMCSA -- you know, they've been a great partner.
13 So we'll have all our federal partners online on both US
14 and Mexico. So, I just want to acknowledge that as we
15 move forward to the next set of presentations.

16 So, the first one, we'll do US-83, and I think
17 David and Pete, you know, have this. They're very
18 important, east-west corridor. We heard from you all
19 about don't just look at north-south, but look at
20 east-west, because it's a lot of good plan there.

21 So, first presentation, and then we'll talk
22 about US-57 and then I-10. And then, you know, for our
23 friends in El Paso, I-10 is very, very critical. But also
24 to Eagle Pass and Del Rio, access to I-10 is very
25 critical, as well. And then we'll talk about the other

1 items.

2 So, we'll go to the first agenda -- first item
3 there, and US-83. Go ahead, Steve.

4 MR. LINHART: Good morning. I'm Steve Linhart.
5 I'm a Project Development Manager in the Corridor
6 Planning Branch of TxDOT. I want to share some insights
7 with you with our upcoming US-83 Corridor feasibility
8 study.

9 So, an overview of the study -- the study
10 limits -- it's approximately 130 miles in length, starting
11 at the Interstate 2 terminus, west of Palmview to the
12 US-59 State Loop connection in Laredo. It covers the
13 Pharr and the Laredo Districts, along with four counties.

14 The corridor is predominantly rural. We have
15 key networks along this corridor, including the Texas
16 Highway Freight Network. It is also a hurricane
17 evacuation route.

18 The study is expected to begin next month. We
19 are just wrapping up contract negotiations and processing
20 the agreement with the consultant to support us, and
21 should conclude around August 2023 of next year.

22 So, the purpose of the study is to enhance the
23 connectivity between the Greater Laredo area and the Rio
24 Grande Valley communities. The objectives that we have
25 here with this study are to assess the existing and future

1 operational conditions to identify transportation needs,
2 including crashes and safety -- which have been mentioned
3 during this meeting as a critical area of analysis --
4 traffic flow and congestion conditions, hurricane
5 evacuation. We also want to look at the roadway geometry
6 of this corridor.

7 And through this process of planning, we'll
8 identify solutions to address those needs that may come
9 out of this study. And another element of the study is,
10 we'll be evaluating the feasibility of upgrading the
11 highway to interstate design standards as a potential
12 extension of Interstate 2.

13 So, a word about the connectivity. While we
14 see that the US-83 connects Laredo to the western greater
15 area of the Rio Grande Valley, you also see here in the
16 context, its connections to the interstate system with
17 Interstate 2 and 35, 369, I-69 interstates, in addition to
18 a spur of 169 that leads into the Port of Brownsville.

19 You also have a number of maritime ports down
20 in the lower Rio Grande area. You have the Marine Highway
21 69, which is the Gulf Intercoastal Waterway, but that was
22 changed to, also, a marine highway by the US Maritime
23 Administration a few years ago.

24 And then, you have a deep draft port going into
25 the Port of Brownsville and the Port of Isabel, along with

1 other ports of Harlingen and Port Mansfield. And as
2 you'll see in the graphic at the bottom, there are a
3 number of South Texas US ports of entry along this
4 corridor.

5 So, the anticipated schedule and milestones for
6 this corridor feasibility study -- we plan to start this
7 next month. During the spring and summer months,
8 collecting data and performing technical analyses. During
9 the fall and through the winter of 2023, identifying those
10 needs, and then coming up with recommendations for
11 improving the corridor.

12 And then, a key element and deliverable of our
13 study will be preparing a program development plan that
14 will identify projects or studies and sort of the
15 sequencing of when those would occur. Say, in like a
16 short-term range, a mid-term range, or a long-term range.

17 And a key element of this study is going to be
18 our engagement process. We're anticipating conducting an
19 online survey this spring. And then, organizing and
20 arranging for stakeholder and focus groups, and to meet
21 with them throughout the study process.

22 And then, we're also looking to have a public
23 meeting in the summer of 2023 to get feedback from the
24 local communities and other interested parties. And as I
25 had previously mentioned, that we're anticipating that the

1 study would conclude in the summer around August of next
2 year.

3 Anybody have any questions?

4 MS. MAYS: Any questions?

5 Pete?

6 MR. ALVAREZ: Yes. Good morning. Just wanted
7 to acknowledge this feasibility study -- very, very
8 important. We, in the Pharr District -- I'm sure the
9 Laredo District staff are more than willing to assist in
10 any way we can.

11 I did want to bring up a project that is vital,
12 that's State Loop 195. Although it's identified as State
13 Loop 195, in essence, it is a relief route for US-83
14 through Pharr County. It's a 22-mile project that will
15 project some relief for the various congestion concerns
16 that we have in that area.

17 MS. MAYS: Thank you. Yes, go ahead, Teclo.

18 MR. GARCIA: Thank you, Caroline. On this
19 study -- or maybe I address it to the consultant -- what
20 stretch is being this part of the study of 83? Is it all
21 the way to Laredo? Is it to Brownsville? If someone can
22 explain.

23 MS. MAYS: Yes, it's all the way from Pharr,
24 where it ends at Interstate 2. And then, all the way to
25 35 and Laredo.

1 Pete?

2 MR. ALVAREZ: My understanding is from the
3 Penitas area in western Hidalgo County all the way to
4 Laredo.

5 MR. GARCIA: Okay. I appreciate it. Thank
6 you.

7 MS. MAYS: And I want to also mention, Steve
8 talked about the connectivity and David talked about US-83
9 in Laredo. This actually connects to that, although it
10 does end on 35.

11 But, you know, US-83 goes, continuing north,
12 that's the Ports-to-Plains Corridor. You guys remember
13 with this study that the feasibility of turning that into
14 an interstate corridor -- so again, we're not looking at
15 this in isolation. So, that's why I think we highlight
16 the connectivity of this corridor.

17 Because, again, we're trying to look a system-
18 wide approach to the investments we're making, or the
19 needs we're identifying. And this one was specifically
20 identified as part of the Border Master Plan. But the
21 other piece is also very relevant here.

22 Any other questions, comments on this before
23 we --

24 MR. LINHART: Caroline, this is Steve. I just
25 wanted to add that the US Highway 59 and the State Loop 20

1 are part of the Interstate 69 system that the State is
2 developing. And I know that in the Laredo District, that
3 they have a number of projects that are programmed or
4 under construction along that highway, US-59 and State
5 Loop 20, that they are building up to interstate highway
6 standards to ultimately be signed and designated as I-69W.

7 MS. MAYS: Yeah, thank you, Steve, for that.

8 MR. SCHWEBEL: Caroline, this is Gerry
9 Schwebel. I think Andrew, Sam, anybody from Laredo to
10 Brownsville says thank you, thank you, thank you. This is
11 what we need to do.

12 MS. MAYS: Yes, Gerry, along with you. But,
13 yeah, we definitely -- there's a commitment here and the
14 two district engineers sitting next to you are very
15 familiar to that. So, we'll -- they're involved. And
16 certainly, the stakeholders -- the input we're going to
17 need your help to help us get industry involved, by also
18 getting the local elected officials and the public
19 involved.

20 And it's because we need that input, as we've
21 done with all our studies to be able to get really, you
22 know, a great study with great recommendations that we can
23 move forward with. So, thank you.

24 So, we'll move to the next agenda item, which
25 is the US-57 corridor study. I'll give you a little bit

1 of context on this. This was identified in the Border
2 Master Plan that also we had a special request from
3 Representative Morales for us to study the feasibility of
4 making this corridor an interstate corridor.

5 So, I'll turn it over to Paul. Go ahead.

6 MR. TRUBAN: Good morning. Can you all hear
7 me?

8 MS. MAYS: Yes.

9 MR. TRUBAN: Okay. Good morning. My name's
10 Paul Truban. I am also with TxDOT's Corridor Planning
11 Unit, and today I'm here to talk about the 57 Corridor
12 Study and give you all a quick -- very quick overview of
13 the work we've completed to date, as well as some of the
14 upcoming work efforts and schedule.

15 In the essence of time, I've been asked to go
16 through this a little quick, pretty quickly. So, I'll be
17 cutting through these slides pretty quick just to give
18 folks time on the rest of the agenda. So, bear with me as
19 I run through this for you to give you an overview.

20 Just to give you an idea to start with, my plan
21 today was to provide a brief overview and status of the 57
22 interstate feasibility study and, of course, bonding
23 activities, you see listed above here. I'm not going to
24 go through them, but essentially, the primary ones are
25 defining the purpose, the existing conditions, our

1 stakeholder outreach program, and our study schedules.
2 And the series of slides here I have, which I'm going to
3 try and go through that.

4 So, just starting with an overview -- I'm
5 trying to show a brief overview of the study corridor here
6 and the area of influence. Here you will see the study
7 corridor in shades of brown, which extends approximately
8 100 miles within the state of Texas, and runs from the
9 Eagle Pass International Bridge at the Texas-Mexico border
10 eastward and northward a bit to I-35 and more.

11 Route 57, by the way, is classified as a
12 principal arterial roadway, currently. And it's also on
13 our freight highway network.

14 This corridor covers two TxDOT districts:
15 Laredo and San Antonio. It's running through three
16 counties: Maverick, Zavala, and Frio, which you can see
17 here on the map, and three cities: Eagle Pass, La Pryor,
18 and Batesville. The study area covers the area shown, as
19 well as the Mexico side of the border, which is also shown
20 here in gray.

21 There are three border crossings involved
22 within this area. And I'm going to get into those in a
23 little more detail in the next slide. So here we're
24 zooming in on the Eagle Pass section of the corridor,
25 where we see the three border crossings -- the Eagle Pass

1 Bridge, which is for passenger vehicles, the Camino Real
2 Bridge, which is for commercial vehicles, as well as the
3 Union Pacific International Bridge, which carries freight
4 rail traffic.

5 Future plan construction projects, or projects
6 in general anticipated are shown here with the orange
7 dashed line. So, you see the extension of the 480 Loop
8 going up to to 277 just dotted in here. The most
9 important thing to note, though, about the Eagle Pass port
10 of entry here -- and we want to note -- is that it ranks
11 number eight nationally, based on border crossings by
12 value.

13 And I'm going to transition from that into our
14 feasibility study purpose. And quite simply, we have it
15 boiled down to four parts. Number one, improve east-west
16 connectivity and capacity. Number two, enhance corridor
17 safety. Three, provide consistency with some of the other
18 plans that are noted here. And number four, support
19 economic opportunities in this region.

20 And what I have to follow is some data that's
21 been collected that represents some of that activity on
22 the following slides. So, very briefly, I'm running
23 through this. But, in essence, what we're trying to show
24 here -- population growth between 2021 and 2050. We're
25 looking at about 35 percent within this study area.

1 If we go to the next slide, we're showing
2 growth in GDP from the same time frame, which we
3 anticipate being about 51 percent over that 30-year
4 window. And the third graphic we have here is just to
5 also show employment -- growth in employment. Similar
6 GDP, employment expected to grow by 34 percent from 2021
7 to 2050.

8 Now, I'm just going to jump into -- just take a
9 minute, 30 seconds to talk about some of the industries
10 served by this corridor, which runs also into Mexico. So,
11 here we're trying to show some of the key industries that
12 are being served.

13 The largest contributors to the GDP that you
14 saw in the other slide -- or the growth in GDP, we see
15 likely will be coming from the auto parts and the beverage
16 imports industry, which currently -- they also currently
17 account for almost 80 percent of the total import value.
18 And they currently serve as the major traffic generators
19 along 57. So, we see that continuing in the future --
20 those growth in those same industries.

21 And on the next slide, what we are trying to
22 just give you a snapshot of is what's expected to be
23 coming up in terms of freight tonnage in this area. So,
24 regarding freight tonnage along 57 -- it's anticipated to
25 grow from about 0.7 million tons in 2015 up to 3.7 million

1 tons in 2045. And with that heavy forecasted growth in
2 Laredo and San Antonio, the Laredo port of entry is going
3 to carry a majority of that trade. However, we also want
4 to note that Eagle Pass is also going to play an important
5 role in that border trade traffic in the future, as well,
6 because of that heavy growth.

7 And the next slide just kind of emphasizes sort
8 of the movements at the port of entry. So, here we're
9 focusing on the port of entries of Del Rio, Eagle Pass,
10 and Laredo that we mentioned. Current imports and exports
11 are being shown here to demonstrate the significance of
12 these ports and the role that both Eagle Pass and US-57
13 play in freight movement across this segment of the
14 border.

15 So what you'll see here is the size of the
16 circle is representing the value of the imports and
17 exports at each point of entry. So you see the relative
18 scale in terms of the amount of freight that's moving at
19 each crossing by those circles.

20 And on the next slide, just quickly showing
21 daily traffic growth between 2019 and 2050. Currently,
22 around 5,000 vehicles per day. We anticipate that going
23 up to about 9,000 vehicles per day in 2050.

24 And on the next slide, we are very quickly
25 showing commercial vehicle traffic. So, here we see the

1 anticipated truck growth along the corridor going from
2 about 1,000 trucks per day up to 2,500 trucks per day in
3 that same time period, 2019 to 2050.

4 The other thing that's important to note with
5 the commercial truck traffic is that it constitutes 25
6 percent of all vehicles along the US-57 corridor today,
7 which is higher than a typical truck percent for similar
8 facilities. And we're going to be looking at whether that
9 percentage goes up or not in the future as we look at the
10 future forecast.

11 And the next slide, we briefly show a review of
12 some of the crash data. We had -- between 2016 and '20,
13 we had about 1,000 crashes -- 1,066. Out of that, 15
14 fatalities along 57. The commercial vehicle component of
15 that makes up about 8 percent of those crashes.

16 And the point that we want to note here is that
17 there's really a small segment along 57 as you get close
18 to the Eagle Pass border where that rate -- the crash
19 rate -- is at 2.6 percent, which is higher than the
20 statewide average. So that's the only portion of the
21 corridor where the accident rate is above the statewide
22 average. The rest of the corridor, you'll see, is green.

23 So, that's really a primary area of focus.

24 And then, I'm going to transition into sort of
25 the timeline for this project. This has a pretty quick

1 timeline. And the stakeholder outreach program has sort
2 of been tailored to meet that timeline.

3 So, what we want to note here -- it's important
4 to note some of these outreach events. And in the near
5 term, the next thing we have coming up is a meeting
6 scheduled with Representative Morales on March 10th.

7 And then following that, in the future we have
8 meetings that are currently being planned with Mayor
9 Salinas, the City of Eagle Pass, Eagle Pass Chamber of
10 Commerce, and also, the Mexican Delegation. And then, we
11 will also be holding some virtual public meetings when we
12 get towards the end in June. So, that is sort of our
13 timeline, which is pretty fast.

14 And then, lastly, I'm just ending with that,
15 essentially, we're doing this in a nine-month time frame,
16 and that's what this schedule slide is showing you here.
17 We had a kick-off meeting back in November of '21, and as
18 I just mentioned, we were expecting to have the final
19 report due in June.

20 And in a nutshell, that's pretty much what I
21 wanted to cover today. I know I ran through that pretty
22 quickly. But we will have opportunities to dive into this
23 in a little more detail as we advance our outreach program
24 noted here going forward.

25 And I just want to thank you for your time

1 today. And if there's time for questions, we'll entertain
2 them.

3 MS. MAYS: Yes. Thank you very much, Paul.
4 Are there any questions of Paul in the room? And then,
5 we'll go online. Anybody? Okay. No questions.

6 Thank you very much, Paul, for your
7 presentation.

8 So, we'll move to the next corridor update,
9 which is the I-10 Corridor update.

10 MS. BUTLER: Caroline, there's one more.

11 MS. MAYS: There's one more? Oh, okay. I
12 think it's George. Yeah.

13 Okay, George, unmute your line and ask your
14 question.

15 MR. ANTUNA: No question. Once again, thank a
16 lot. Great presentation. We really, truly appreciate it.
17 And we're looking forward to working with you guys on
18 this project. Thank you so much.

19 MS. MAYS: Yeah. Appreciate it. Thank you.
20 Mayor? Go ahead, Mayor.

21 Good morning, Mayor Salinas.

22 MR. SALINAS: Oh, yes. Good morning. I'm
23 sorry. I didn't know if you could hear me. I just wanted
24 to say that we definitely concur with this project. This
25 would be something very beneficial for the whole border

1 region.

2 As you all know, the city of Eagle Pass brings
3 in a lot, a lot of trade through our ports because of our
4 safety. So, we definitely contribute a lot to the
5 community. But this will also help us just in our growth
6 to bring jobs to our people. So, we're ready to work with
7 TxDOT, with any entity that's ready to make this possible.

8 So, I want to thank you all for the
9 presentation, and we're here to work together. Thank you.

10 MS. MAYS: Thank you very much, Mayor. We also
11 look forward to working with you and appreciate your
12 partnership always in working with us, as well. So, thank
13 you.

14 MR. SALINAS: Thank you.

15 MS. MAYS: Okay. I don't see any other
16 questions.

17 So, let's move on to I-10. And now we'll go to
18 Cary.

19 MR. KARNSTADT: Thank you, Caroline. Well,
20 good morning, everyone. I'm Cary Karnstadt. I'm with the
21 Texas Department of Transportation here in Austin,
22 Corridor Planning. I'm also the Project Development
23 Manager for the I-10 Texas Corridor Study. I appreciate
24 everyone's time this morning.

25 I'd like to give everyone just kind of a brief

1 overview of the study. So, why are we doing this study?
2 The I-10 Texas Corridor Study is unique in that it will be
3 the first time we've looked at the entire corridor from
4 state line to state line.

5 Typically, in the past, we've had studies along
6 various corridors where we've usually just looked at
7 portions along it. But this time, we're going to actually
8 be looking at the whole entire corridor, Texas portion.
9 So we're taking the opportunity to look at the entire
10 corridor as a whole, just kind of filling in any gaps that
11 hasn't been studied, just to kind of give us a better
12 understanding of where our corridor currently stands from
13 various considerations.

14 So, identifying key issues along this corridor
15 will be the purpose of this study. So, some of the issues
16 that we're looking at -- safety is number one. As we all
17 know, TxDOT's number one focus on any study is safety.
18 This will be an opportunity to recognize, where are we
19 currently on safety on this particular corridor?

20 We'll also take a detailed look at crash data
21 along the corridor. We're going to identify some hot
22 spots where crashes and fatalities also were occurring.

23 Other key issues could be operations and
24 maintenance. As TxDOT continuously works to preserve our
25 transportation assets, we will continue to maintain the

1 quality of our highways by monitoring items such as
2 pavement quality, drainage, ridges, and frontage roads.

3 Connectivity is another one that we'll be
4 looking at. Identifying existing highways that connect to
5 I-10; reducing distances between key destinations for both
6 freight and personal travel; improving local pedestrian
7 and bicycle infrastructure, and congestion management.

8 And truck parking is another one that we will
9 be taking a look at, too, as we strive to meet the need
10 and demand for freight travel along this corridor. Next
11 slide, please.

12 So, considering that the I-10 Corridor is
13 approximately 2,400 miles long, Texas covers a significant
14 portion -- 880 miles, to be exact. Along those 880 miles,
15 we will be working with various counties, TxDOT districts,
16 as well as cities adjacent to the corridor.

17 Each region has a role in sharing their input
18 from various levels, such as city, county, state, private
19 entities. Understanding how our connectors rely so
20 greatly on I-10 establishes the demand, as well as being a
21 main economic engine to transporting goods and services
22 along the I-10 corridor. Next slide, please.

23 So, as we look at this slide, we can kind of
24 see some background of how vital the I-10 Corridor is from
25 a state perspective. Did you know that 32 percent of

1 Texas employment falls along the I-10 Corridor?
2 Considering how many folks live in the state of Texas, 30
3 percent live along the I-10 Corridor.

4 So, as the demand for the movement of freight
5 increases in Texas, over 20 percent of that falls along
6 the I-10 Corridor. So, as more demand is being placed on
7 this particular corridor, we're identifying hot spots
8 along the corridor -- urban and rural -- where crashes
9 take place, as well as identifying diverse traffic volumes
10 along the Texas corridor. So, next slide, please.

11 So, not only does I-10 play a very important
12 role in supporting the Texas economy, as well as other
13 states, but also, it's vital in supporting international
14 economies. Examples of north and south connections, such
15 as I-35, I-37, US-77, and US-85 from our ports to major
16 interstates, such as I-10, ensures the transportation of
17 our imported goods, as well as exported goods, are being
18 routed in the most efficient way.

19 Identifying the north and south routes will
20 give us a better understanding of how these connectors
21 rely a great deal on I-10 to transport goods in all four
22 directions. Next slide, please.

23 Our study began last fall with a kick-off
24 meeting with various districts along the I-10 Corridor.
25 We are in the process of holding our first steering

1 committee meeting in March to share our findings of
2 existing conditions along the I-10 Corridor.

3 We will then follow up with extensive
4 stakeholder engagement like no other, with three separate
5 regional working group meetings -- west, central, and
6 east -- to take a deeper look into each region to discuss
7 more about existing conditions, identify needs, and
8 filling in the gaps. We will work closely with private
9 businesses, corporations to gather their input and what
10 they are seeing currently, and how the future growth and
11 demand will affect their businesses along the I-10
12 Corridor.

13 Identifying improvement strategies, as well as
14 privatization will follow. And then, finish up with
15 development of an implementation plan as we finish up our
16 study in the summer of 2023.

17 So, this concludes my overview of this
18 particular study. I'd be happy to answer any questions if
19 anybody has any.

20 MS. MAYS: Yeah, thank you so much, Cary. So,
21 I'll open it up for questions or comments. And I know our
22 friend from El Paso -- Eduardo, go ahead. Thank you.

23 MR. CALVO: Thank you, Caroline. This is
24 Eduardo Calvo with the El Paso MPO.

25 First of all, thank you, TxDOT, for finally

1 putting this study together and starting it. We're
2 tremendously excited.

3 You've heard me say this many times, you know,
4 there's a lot of effort at the State level, and a lot of
5 interest in I-35, right? And rightly so. And so, very
6 important north-south border. But I-10 is also
7 tremendously important, as we saw in some of the slides
8 for east-west travel. So, we're tremendously excited and
9 more than happy to participate and help in this study.

10 The slide that you showed -- and I don't know
11 if we can go back -- I think it's slide 87 -- that shows
12 the relationship of I-10 with the international ports of
13 entry. You see there on the far west portion where the El
14 Paso District is, and mostly within the urbanized areas.
15 Our ports of entry are right next to I-10.

16 So, you saw also in Eddie Valtier's
17 presentation that a lot of the work that has to do right
18 now with connecting ports of entry -- ultimately, though,
19 that traffic goes to I-10, right? So, all the traffic
20 gravitates to I-10. So, I-10 is, you know, not just
21 important on a national level or the state of Texas, but,
22 of course, for us locally, as well.

23 So, again, you know, just emphasizing the
24 importance of the corridor and how excited we are to
25 participate in the study. Thank you.

1 MS. MAYS: Thank you very much, Eduardo. And
2 yes, go ahead.

3 MS. HOLGUIN: Yes, I've got a question. Who's
4 making up the steering committee, and also the regional
5 working groups?

6 MS. MAYS: Yeah, Cary, do you want to go ahead
7 and answer that?

8 MR. KARNSTADT: So, for the steering committee,
9 we will have mostly county judges. There will be some
10 county and city officials, as well.

11 And then, as far as our working groups, we'll
12 have -- again, we'll have some county officials, will be
13 some county judges. There will also probably be some
14 private business owners along that corridor. And again,
15 we'll have some, like, Chamber of Commerce folks, Farm
16 Bureau folks, just to kind of give you some examples of
17 that.

18 MS. MAYS: And we're still within the early
19 stages of that. We're going to be holding the first
20 meetings next month. So if you have any ideas in terms of
21 representation, or folks that you feel that would be very
22 important, especially on the border side, we're wanting to
23 make sure that we got representation from El Paso, we've
24 got Presidio, Eagle Pass, Del Rio, and but also, Laredo
25 because, you know, you've heard a lot of conversations

1 from Eagle Pass and Del Rio.

2 I-10, they don't have direct connection to
3 that. So, we want to make sure that -- we want industry,
4 public sector. You know, mix of all the voices. Users of
5 the system are part and really issues unique to all the
6 regions that I-10 -- it's probably one of the most diverse
7 and unique corridors.

8 We've got border. We've got energy sector.
9 We've got ports. We've got open areas. We've got rural.

10 So we have a lot of things we're trying to address.

11 And as Cary mentioned, this is going to be
12 probably our most extensive stakeholder engagement. And
13 we always say that. We did that for Ports-to-Plains, on
14 I-20. But this one, because our steering committee and
15 working groups we're trying to keep the numbers low. And
16 we just could not.

17 So, then, we end up with a fairly big group.
18 But we want to make sure that no voice is not heard, that
19 we hear everybody, because we want to make sure this is
20 comprehensive. So, let us know if you have anybody that
21 you want to add.

22 Any other comments before we move to the next
23 agenda item? Cary, thank you very much.

24 And we'll move to our next agenda item. And I
25 think we have Juan Carlos online, going to be presenting

1 on a border wait time measurement system. And I want to
2 kind of -- again the BTAC -- the data that came out of
3 this was very insurmountable when we did the Border Master
4 Plan in identifying roadway time and real time. So, one,
5 we'll talk about -- you know, what we're going to be doing
6 to expand the system so we cover more border crossings
7 than what we did.

8 Juan?

9 MS. VILLA: Thank you, Caroline. Good morning,
10 everyone. So, yeah, I'll move really fast because we're
11 running late, but feel free to ask questions at the end.
12 So, Giacomo, can we move to the next slide, the next one?

13

14 Basically, this is where we stand on the border
15 wait time system. You know, border wait time measurement
16 system provides current information on northbound trucks
17 and southbound and northbound POV, privately open -- you
18 know, private vehicles.

19 So, the system has been improving throughout
20 the years and that's what I would like to share with you
21 today. Next.

22 So, the commercial border crossing system is
23 based on RFID technology. We have four locations
24 throughout the border crossing process: at the end of the
25 queue, at the Mexican toll booth when there's a toll booth,

1 and then, at CBP primary, and then, at the exit of the DPS
2 facility where there's one.

3 In the next slide, we can see how the POV
4 works -- you know, the privately owned vehicle system
5 works. This one uses bluetooth and wifi technology. And
6 the reason for that is because most of the POVs don't have
7 a tag, an RFID tag.

8 So we identified this as a technology that
9 could work. However, we have been making some research,
10 and in the next slide, we can see what we call the hybrid
11 system, which is basically using these two technologies to
12 be able to measure border wait time for both POV, as well
13 as for commercial vehicles. So, especially -- it's not
14 going to show in the next slide -- especially for the
15 crossings that we're currently doing -- the six additional
16 crossings -- this will be really helpful.

17 Just to give you an idea, this is the Rio and
18 we can see on the left side of the screen, you know, the
19 approach into the bridge. And you can see in blue, the
20 commercial vehicles, and in the orange, the POVs.

21 So we can install a set of bluetooth readers on
22 the end of the queue. Then we can have a combination of
23 both RFID and bluetooth as we move along. And then, at
24 the end, we can have RFID to be able to segregate, you
25 know, fast and non-fast trucks for the commercial

1 vehicles. And we can also segregate the ready, SENTRI,
2 and the regular lanes for the POVs, if that actually
3 exists.

4 So, again, at the stages of this -- next --
5 well, this is information that probably you are aware. We
6 provide both real time information, or close to real time
7 information, as well as historical data on the next slide.

8 So you can go and query the BCIS and obtain information
9 from the past.

10 Important to note, we've moving the system to a
11 cloud-based server, and the reason for that is because we
12 have a lot of data now. We have been collecting data for
13 many, many years now, and the system is getting very slow.

14 So, we're moving that to the cloud, and it's
15 moving along pretty well. So, probably in the next
16 meeting, I can show you where we stand on the cloud
17 system. Next.

18 So, this is the existing systems. In red, we
19 have the commercial vehicles, and in blue, we have the
20 POVs in -- basically, in El Paso. And then in the next
21 slide, we can see what's planned for the future.

22 On the left column, we have the commercial
23 vehicle crossings that we're planning to do this year.
24 There's six of them. And then, on the other columns, we
25 have the POVs that we'll be doing between now and 2024.

1 So, it's a lot of work, obviously, but we have made some
2 progress so far. Next.

3 This is where we stand. We already -- my team
4 already visited five of the six commercial vehicle
5 crossings for the northbound system. The one I'm showing
6 you on the table on the left, we only have
7 Presidio-Ojinaga we haven't visited. But we're going to
8 try to do this either early March, also making a trip to
9 El Paso to work on the POV systems, as well. So, next.

10 So the plan, again, is to do in 2022 these
11 crossings. You know, the commercial vehicles that we're
12 going to do is four of them. And then, we're going to do
13 a combination, as I mentioned earlier, of both POV and
14 commercial vehicles in Del Rio, as well as in Ojinaga.

15 And the reason for that is because it has a lot
16 of savings -- savings in time, savings in operation and
17 maintenance. So that will be really helpful for us, for
18 TxDOT and for the actual users of the information that
19 we're going to providing. Next.

20 So, this is our schedule for the next years.
21 Again, the key task at the beginning are the site visits
22 and developing an implementation plan, because that will
23 guide throughout the rest of the activities that we need
24 to do for the implementation.

25 You know, equipment -- for example, RFID has a

1 long lead time, but we have already ordered some of the
2 readers. The POV and the bluetooth -- those are
3 relatively faster to obtain. So, that way, we can move
4 forward. And that's another advantage that we have with
5 the hybrid system. Next.

6 So, again, this is where we stand right now.
7 What we identified in the trip we did is that some of the
8 RIs -- what we call R1 in the diagram -- was farther
9 south, the one at the end of the queue. Those are very
10 remote and they don't have any infrastructure where we can
11 have RFID reading stations.

12 So, that's why we are proposing to use the
13 bluetooth and the wifi technology. Because again, it's a
14 smaller box where the equipment is not very visible. So,
15 we can put it high in a pole or any other infrastructure
16 that we find. And that will also save, again, costs of
17 implementation.

18 Also, the other thing we identified is that
19 most of the sites visited have a toll booth. So, we can
20 also use commercial vehicles and POVs at the same time,
21 again, saving resources. Only Los Indios and Del Rio have
22 a fast program. So, that's where we will need to do the
23 RFID system, so we can segregate fast and non-fast. Next.

24 So, what do we need from you? Especially, I
25 saw that Ericka just joined the call. So, that's very

1 good.

2 We need help on both sides of the border to
3 work with the local stakeholders for permits, for access
4 to the facilities, and working with you -- not only the
5 implementation, but also, throughout the operation of the
6 system.

7 Because what we have identified is that
8 sometimes there's new stuff, especially on the Mexican
9 side. They don't know what this system is all about. So,
10 there's a lot of questions.

11 We need to travel to these locations and
12 respond to them. Or sometimes, they even disconnect the
13 power from the system. So, that's what's going on.

14 And the other thing that we're doing is we need
15 feedback from you on how to move forward. As I mentioned
16 right now, we have border wait time on a close to real
17 time basis, as well as historical data. But what else do
18 you need? You know, what other information do you need?

19 Because we have a task that we have working
20 with Caroline to transform data into information. So this
21 is where we will need to have your input, and we can move
22 forward in this. You know, we can work in parallel,
23 working with the implementation of the system, but also
24 trying to start working on the data to come into
25 information and develop some dashboards.

1 You know, we have new technologies that will be
2 really helpful for you to have this information you can
3 use for your decision making. So, that's all I have.
4 Again, open the line for questions.

5 Thank you.

6 MS. MAYS: Yeah, thank you, Juan. We have a
7 question from the room, and then we have two online. So,
8 we'll start with David. And then, Gerry.

9 MR. CORONADO: David Coronado, City of El Paso.
10 So, a couple of things. So, the first one is that --

11 MS. MAYS: Yeah, we can't have more than one
12 mic at a time, so just --

13 MR. CORONADO: Sorry about that. So, a couple
14 of things. So, the first one is that we are working with
15 the El Paso TxDOT office and DTI to expand the BCIS system
16 at the border and ports of entry for vehicles and trucks.

17
18 So, the City of El Paso and TxDOT are making
19 investments in those two ports. And so, that's in the
20 works right now, which is good news.

21 So, but if you go to slide 101, please, you
22 don't see -- with this project, you don't see El Paso on
23 that map. And so, we really need help with urgent
24 resources to complete the system in El Paso. El Paso was
25 one of the pioneers with the BCIS, but the system is not

1 completed yet. And so, we are making strides in
2 completing it, both in El Paso and in Juarez.

3 And so, you know, I'm not thrilled by not
4 seeing El Paso on this map or this project. But,
5 anyway -- so, just want to say that. Thank you.

6 MS. MAYS: Yes. Thank you, David.

7 MR. VILLA: David --

8 MS. MAYS: -- going to talk a little bit. So,
9 we'll let Gerry go first. Juan, and then, you can
10 probably of both questions.

11 MR. VILLA: Yes.

12 MR. SCHWEBEL: Thank you. Gerry Schwebel. The
13 questions at -- one, in regards to the -- I'm glad to see
14 that we have our friends from Mexico here. Secretary
15 Garcia with Tamaulipas, who we have -- I guess Tamaulipas
16 and whole ports of entry, particularly, Secretary -- that
17 when we look at these on the Mexican side, stakeholders --
18 that we look at stakeholders from Mexico.

19 They are key players in our wait time, that we
20 understand one of the challenges they're having on the
21 Mexican side, or policies that the government -- whether
22 they're in the inspection process or a change or some of
23 the operators, whether they're -- either the bridge
24 operators or trucking companies -- understanding clearly
25 the picture of what's coming down the pipe on the Mexican

1 side, that they impact these border wait times.

2 And we could be doing the planning on the US
3 side, or the Texas side, but we don't understand what's
4 going on on the Mexican side, or any updates, or any
5 changes. But we stay ahead of the curve. We're going to
6 have that ongoing dialog.

7 So I would encourage that from our friends from
8 Chihuahua, Coahuila, Tamaulipas and Nuevo Leon. But
9 that's to Juan.

10 And also, the other challenge that we have --
11 Juan, and I don't know how much dialog there is. Are you
12 having to track the CBP 21st century guidelines, in
13 regards to non-intrusive technologies that are being used
14 that maybe speeds up the process of that type of traffic,
15 whether it would be fast or keep that certified
16 procurement programs?

17 MS. MAYS: Yeah, I'll let Juan answer. But
18 I'll tell you that in the past -- and not sure we're still
19 now -- but CBP has actually provided funding for this
20 project. So I think it's something they use, and they are
21 very interested in it.

22 And actually, Juan may mention, too, that they
23 expanded this to the other states, this same system. They
24 based it on what we're doing. We've been doing this for
25 several years. So, that is something that CBP is

1 interested in.

2 But to your point, I think a lot of those, you
3 know, elements -- this is not just on our side --
4 understanding the Mexican side is very, very crucial. And
5 I think David does an excellent job in El Paso with his
6 steering committee that is bi-national. I think that's a
7 model.

8 And we've talked a lot, Gerry, on, really,
9 engaging on a regular basis both sides of the border.
10 It's very, very important to understand what's going on.

11 MR. CORONADO: Yeah, if I can chime in. But I
12 think Gerry's spot on. I think in El Paso, we are working
13 really hard to complete the system on both sides.

14 We've engaged with Fideicomiso de Puentes, who
15 is our counterpart on the Mexican side. They own the
16 other half of the port, or the bridge structure.

17 So, we're working with Rafael Aldrete and his
18 team at Fideicomiso to make sure that their ITS upgrades
19 are compatible with ours, and that the PTA system collects
20 data from both the Mexican side -- which is their
21 equipment -- and even the guys involved. They were the
22 ones installing it.

23 But now we're working to make sure that's in
24 grade with theirs and with ours so that bridge-crossers
25 have a one-stop shop for all data, northbound and

1 southbound trips.

2 So, next time you come, Secretary, to El Paso,
3 we'll definitely give you a tour and brief you on our
4 efforts.

5 MS. MAYS: Juan, go ahead and answer the
6 question now.

7 MR. VILLA: Yes. Thank you, David. Yes, you
8 know we're working with -- also, with the Fideicomiso to,
9 you know, do the maintenance on the POV sites. We have
10 three sites in El Paso. There were some changes in Juarez
11 that basically interrupted the data reading.

12 On the two commercial vehicle sides -- both
13 BOTA and Ysleta-Zaragoza -- it's working fine. Again, we
14 need to do some improvements to the system. So, I think
15 we're working on that, and we're covering it, obviously,
16 and with the Fideicomiso to be able to get that system up
17 and running again, especially the POV, and also, make
18 improvements with the technologies that I mentioned.

19 As far as Gerry's comment -- yeah, I mean,
20 we -- it's a challenge. And that's why we are asking for
21 your help on the Mexican side to be able to have all the
22 stakeholders participating in the system and help us with
23 implementation, operation, and maintenance. Because as
24 you say, there's a lot of new players sometimes, that they
25 don't know the system.

1 And then, finally, on the CBP, we have great
2 coordination with CBP on this project throughout the
3 border. And we are aware of these new technologies that
4 hopefully, you know, could help expediting the processing
5 of cargo. And again, this system will allow us to see
6 what's the difference between now and what happens when
7 these new technologies are implemented.

8 So, that's -- we can start doing some
9 benchmarking and see how things are improving throughout
10 the border.

11 MS. MAYS: Okay. So, we do have --

12 [Audio interference.]

13 MS. MAYS: Okay. If you're online and you're
14 not speaking, please mute your line, because I think we --
15 George, you have a question. Please unmute your line and
16 ask your question.

17 MR. ANTUNA: Mr. Villa, this is George Antuna
18 once again -- Eagle Pass. I heard you, and I heard Gerry
19 make comments and reference to discussing how we're
20 speaking with our counterparts right across the river
21 here.

22 I know that Tamaulipas is on, and I just want
23 you guys to know that Coahuila is actively pursuing their
24 expansion on their major thoroughfares, major expressways,
25 interstates on their end so that they can continue to

1 increase the commercial side. Eagle Pass, Piedras Negras
2 is their largest port of entry.

3 So, I just wanted to let you know that they're
4 actively doing that, because we need to start engaging
5 them, if you haven't already, Mr. Villa. Thank you very
6 much.

7 MR. VILLA: Thanks for your comment. And if
8 you can share with us your contacts at the Coahuila and
9 Piedras government because, again, there is -- you know,
10 at the federal level, we can work with SCT and INDAVIN
11 [phonetic]. But at the local level, sometimes we don't
12 have the right contact. So, if you can help us with that,
13 that would be ideal.

14 MR. ANTUNA: Absolutely, sir. I'll get it over
15 to David Salazar, our District Engineer, and you'll get it
16 forwarded over to you, for sure. But even the President
17 of Mexico just was here early part of the week, as well.
18 And so, they're actively trying to pursue more commerce
19 through Piedras Negras.

20 So, we'll get you that information. Thank you.

21 MR. VILLA: Thanks.

22 MS. MAYS: Yeah, and one quick question online,
23 Juan, is, are we planning to do anything in Brownsville
24 area? And then, Jake from Presidio says, "When you go to
25 Presidio, please stop by." And then our friends from

1 Chihuahua are just saying that they're working on things,
2 and they're willing and ready to collaborate with us in
3 the efforts.

4 So, I think in the interest of time, let's move
5 on to Jolanda. And certainly, again, this is -- we just
6 kind of wanted to give you a teaser on what we're doing to
7 actively continue to implement the BTMP recommendations
8 you guys have worked on. And this one is going to be very
9 interesting.

10 So, Jolanda? Juan, thank you again very much.

11 And --

12 MR. VILLA: Thank you. Bye.

13 MS. MAYS: -- we'll keep working on this.

14 MS. PROZZI: Good morning. My name is Jolanda
15 Prozzi. [inaudible] the Environment Division. Thank you.

16 My presentation this morning is on the BTMP
17 implementation tracker. I have a -- in the beginning I
18 was just going to revisit the BTMP and some of the
19 recommendations that were included in the BTMP. But for
20 the interest of time, I'm just going to go over that
21 pretty quickly, things like the BTMP implementation
22 tracker.

23 So, as the Committee knows, the Texas-Mexico
24 Border Transportation Master Plan is a comprehensive
25 multimodal Texas-Mexico long-range plan that covers the

1 entire border, from El Paso to Brownsville. Included in
2 the BTMP was 22 policy recommendations, 153 program
3 recommendations, and 361 project recommendations. These
4 recommendations are listed in Appendix A and Appendix D of
5 the Plan.

6 What we've been tasked to do at TTI was to
7 develop an implementation tracker. And the implementation
8 tracker is just another illustration of TxDOT's commitment
9 to implementing the recommendations in the BTMP.

10 So, the purpose of this tracker is to allow
11 users and TxDOT to track and report progress on the
12 implementation of these projects and programs. It's there
13 to promote transparency.

14 And so, the way we've set up the tracker, the
15 format of the tracker, is it takes the form of a series of
16 interactive dashboards that users can open as specifying
17 specific criteria. And this will become more evident when
18 I actually will demonstrate the tracker to you.

19 So, if you click on the web page of the
20 tracker, it brings you to this landing page. And from
21 this landing page, we can navigate to either the project
22 stats we've included in the BTMP, or the policies and
23 programs.

24 So by clicking on the projects, the
25 visualization opens and provides summary information for

1 all the BTMP projects that were included in the tracker.
2 And so, from here, you can open the list of projects by
3 region, by contracts, by impact, by status, by funding, by
4 viability, by project time.

5 So, what I'm going to illustrate in a few
6 minutes that I have remaining is that the status and the
7 progress towards TxDOT projects that were included in the
8 BTMP.

9 So, again, the focus allows you to focus,
10 identify the strength by project time, by funding, status,
11 or by project status, funding source, or project class.
12 But as you can see here, I hope, from the visual is, there
13 were 88 projects included in the BTMP in the El Paso --
14 click on El Paso. It shows that of its 88 projects, 81
15 are in the planning stage and 7 are currently under
16 construction. Of the 88 projects, 26 are fully funded,
17 four are partially funded, and 58 are not funded.

18 Similarly, for the Laredo District, of the 55
19 projects that we included in the BTMP, 48 are in the
20 planning stage, six are under construction, and one
21 project has been completed.

22 For the Pharr District, it shows that of the 90
23 projects included in the BTMP, 81 are in the planning
24 stage, five are under construction, one has been
25 completed, and three were canceled or closed.

1 So, these visualizations provide us with
2 summary information and allows us to fully visualize on
3 various matrix. But we've also included a map view that
4 provides this summary information, but also, help us to
5 visualize where these projects are in the different
6 districts. So, this is Pharr. This is Laredo. And this
7 is El Paso.

8 So, for the interest of time, I'm going to
9 limit my presentation to just this brief overview of the
10 tracker. But similar to Juan's presentation, we would
11 like to receive input from the Committee regarding what
12 kind of information do you want to see in this tracker.

13 So, what is important to know about the
14 programs and the projects that were included in the BTMP?

15 And, you know, if the Committee would like to see similar
16 information as what we've included for the TxDOT projects,
17 and just highlight it in the slide, the kind of
18 information that we would need to visualize the project
19 status.

20 So, with that, a quick overview. I'm happy to
21 answer any questions.

22 MS. MAYS: Yeah. So, thank you very much,
23 Jolanda.

24 And for the BTAC Members and Secretary, one of
25 the things, when the previous Border Master Plans were

1 developed, the question -- when I came and took over this,
2 the question was, show us the progress. What has been
3 done since those Border Master Plans were completed?

4 And we didn't really have a process for
5 tracking implementation progress and showing people that,
6 Look, you spent so much time doing this. You identified
7 this recommendation. This is how we implemented and went
8 forward with it. So, this was our attempt to now start
9 packaging this in a way that we can show progress and we
10 can show the stakeholders, Now, look, we don't develop
11 plans for the sake of developing plans. We develop plans
12 that we can implement.

13 And here we asked Jolanda to help us look at
14 taking TxDOT projects, because we have all this
15 information and plug it in here, and let's show what that
16 looks like. So, really, you know, this is our first
17 attempt, and we're still -- this is a work in progress.

18 We spoke with Jolanda last week, and I'm like,
19 adding all the things. But she's like, Look, I can't get
20 that before BTAC. So, it's a work in progress.

21 But I think the broader question is, we have
22 661 projects. A lot of those projects are not TxDOT.
23 They're bridge projects, border crossings, and the local
24 projects. And then, we have projects from our
25 counterparts in Mexico. We want to make sure that, at

1 some point, we include all of that.

2 But that's going to depend on you all providing
3 us with this input, with that information on a regular
4 basis so we can do that. Our goal is to, at least once a
5 year, have a comprehensive update to BTAC of the progress
6 we're making. This is only almost one year later.

7 The BTMP was adopted in March of 2021. And
8 now, we're in about March of 2022. This is progress we've
9 made as TxDOT. But we need the information, as Jolanda
10 mentioned, from all of you. And then, what else is
11 important to include in this tracking information.

12 So, I just wanted to comment. But David --
13 removing your mask, David. And then --

14 MR. CORONADO: Real quick, David Coronado, for
15 the record, with City of El Paso. So, I think this a
16 really good start, Jolanda. I appreciate how you're
17 trying to make it visible for everybody to see, so
18 everybody's on the same page and we see what others are
19 doing, what the valley -- you know, everybody's doing. I
20 think it's good.

21 The only couple -- I guess one question first.

22 I see, for example, in El Paso, you show 88 projects on
23 this dashboard. I recall -- I think we came up with 292
24 projects for the El Paso area for border and highway
25 projects. So, I don't know where the 88 was coming from.

1 Maybe you can help clarify that?

2 MS. PROZZI: So, David, these 88 projects are
3 only TxDOT projects. So, they are only projects that's in
4 the TxDOT system that we extracted.

5 MS. MAYS: Yeah, the easiest one. So, that's
6 for our purpose earlier. It was easier for them to this
7 prototype with TxDOT projects. We had the information
8 readily available for them to do the quick run.

9 But yes, you know, we acknowledge that we still
10 have a lot of projects that are non-TxDOT projects we need
11 to include.

12 MR. CORONADO: Okay. Thank you. I must have
13 missed that. Sorry about that.

14 So we will be more than happy to go in and
15 submit updates on our CIP that we have -- the City of El
16 Paso. And then, also, request Aduanas, Fideicomiso, CBP,
17 the GSA. But they also help us inputting as active and as
18 real-time as possible.

19 So, we can -- if you don't mind, Jolanda, we
20 have a -- I know it's short notice -- we have a meeting
21 with a registering committee next week on Thursday. It'd
22 be great if you or somebody else with TxDOT can attend
23 virtually. It's a Teams meeting.

24 So, they can see this firsthand coming from
25 you, not from us. And then, I can also help you with, you

1 know, okaying for them to go in and helping -- making this
2 map lit up.

3 MS. MAYS: Yeah, absolutely. I think one at a
4 time, but we'll ask Jolanda to do this, just the border
5 crossing projects, separate where we can look and see and
6 just say, Oh, these are the border crossing projects that
7 were recommended. What is the status, et cetera?

8 And then, we're looking at, you know, the
9 corridor separate. We're looking at a little slice and
10 dice in different ways so we make sure that all the
11 stakeholders take ownership of their projects in terms of
12 providing us progress reports on that so we can put in
13 here.

14 So, a lot of work to still be done. But we
15 wanted to at least get this in front of you so you guys
16 know that we're taking this seriously. And I want to make
17 sure that, you know, all the information is provided to
18 you under the team so they can go ahead and put it in
19 there.

20 So, glad to hear that. We'll talk to Jolanda
21 later and see if we can get that meeting. Thank you,
22 David.

23 Yeah, Gerry?

24 MR. SCHWEBEL: Gerry Schwebel. That was a
25 pleasure to see all the hard work you did for Texas.

1 I think one of the challenges that we have --
2 this is for my colleagues with the Committee and for Mr.
3 Secretary. One of the challenges that we have of a plan
4 of this magnitude is constantly having to educate our
5 local public officials down in city as to what this plan
6 is all about.

7 And I think we have this constant repetition
8 and reminder to the officials of when we do local
9 planning, that we have CIPs or we have, you know, other
10 local priorities. They understand the purpose of what
11 this plan is all about and what the intent of Governor
12 Abbott -- when he charged us with this.

13 It's a responsibility, and I don't think we do
14 enough of it, quite frankly. I mean, I'll be honest with
15 you -- in Laredo, I have made -- I can't tell you how many
16 times I've passed on executive summary about this border,
17 this master plan, and it's never enough. They don't read
18 it.

19 And that's just an executive summary, much less
20 the, you know, 500-page document. And you have to
21 constantly go in back and remind them, that project that
22 you now want to prioritize, it's not even on the, you
23 know, UTP. It's not even in the BTMP. And yet, they want
24 to push it. And then, they wonder why TxDOT doesn't
25 respond quickly, if it's now their priority.

1 So, I think it's -- I don't know if we can do
2 more in the outreach, or if you have to actually schedule
3 updates quarterly. For sure, not less than a year, with
4 all due respect to our present TxDOT. I think it's
5 incumbent upon all of us to provide and update city and
6 county leaders on what this plan is all about, because it
7 makes it easier on staff sometimes.

8 I'm sure it would make it easier on TxDOT when
9 you have these MPO meetings or these RMA meetings and
10 nobody -- when somebody throws something up, and they say,
11 Well, what about the BTMP? Is it on the BTMP? Or is it on
12 the UTP? And they don't even understand or they don't
13 even know.

14 We have a lot of new changes. We have
15 elections coming up. We have a few city council members.
16 We have new officials. It's a constant, constant
17 education, never, never enough.

18 So, that's something I wish we could even
19 emphasize more. We try to do our part at the local level
20 as stakeholders. But the public, in general, needs to
21 understand, too.

22 You know, not just the freight or those -- just
23 the local constituents, until some of these council
24 members will get pressured to relieve congestion on the
25 Mines Road, perhaps, in Laredo, or some other part. And

1 they don't understand that, wait a minute. There is a
2 process here. There is a plan -- plans that nobody's
3 doing anything.

4 MS. MAYS: No, thank you, Gerry, for that. And
5 I think that's what we -- definitely, at TxDOT, we try
6 very hard to do that. We have the districts here. They
7 are local. They attend the MPO meetings and RMAs and they
8 try to do a concerted effort.

9 And as you know, we adopted the BTMP pretty
10 much in the middle of the pandemic. So, we really
11 couldn't do the outreach that we were doing in the past.
12 And we really had grand plans of doing that, the road
13 shows we were talking about, going to your city council
14 meetings and other meetings.

15 Even with our Mexican counterparts, we've not
16 been able to do as much as we wanted. But that's
17 something that we're going to really continue to do, is
18 educate, educate. Because, you know, model for changes
19 that happen.

20 So, we understand that. It's not a one-time
21 thing. It's a continuous process to educate and help
22 people understand the importance of the BTMP, but the
23 planning process, in general, and how decisions are made.

24 But again, not just TxDOT, but also, the rest
25 of the stakeholders. Because with the border, it's not

1 just TxDOT. We have a very small piece of the pie that
2 we're responsible for. So --

3 MR. SCHWEBEL: Thank you very much. I think
4 it's exactly my point. This is Gerry Schwebel, again.

5 Mr. Secretary, when you make your first visit
6 to the border of Laredo, Texas -- sorry to our El Paso
7 friends --

8 MS. MAYS: That's too easy.

9 MR. SCHWEBEL: Let me take the opportunity as
10 part of your visit up and down the border to emphasize the
11 importance of the BTMP.

12 MS. MAYS: Any other comments for Jolanda?
13 Questions before we move forward to the next agenda item?

14 And I recognize we're running super late today, but it's
15 been a great discussion.

16 So, anything? Yes?

17 MR. CALVO: A short question -- the actual
18 Phase 2 Border Master Plan -- are you going to give an
19 update of that later? Or can I ask that as a question
20 now?

21 MS. MAYS: You can ask that as a question now.
22 That's fine. Yeah.

23 MR. CALVO: Okay. So, when is basically the
24 Border Master Plan going to start? And can you give us an
25 update on that?

1 MS. MAYS: We've pretty much already started
2 with the process. We have a consultant on board, and we
3 have our first work authorization executed. So, we're
4 going to start ramping up with that effort.

5 We're actually working on work application two,
6 and we'll bring that back to BTAC. We just don't have
7 tangible -- like, what you seen with the corridors -- that
8 it's we don't have tangible things yet to share with BTAC
9 right now. But the next BTAC meeting, we will share with
10 you what we're doing specifically with that contract that
11 was part of the Phase 2 implementation.

12 But the presentation from the corridor study,
13 those are all part of the Phase 2 implementation. We were
14 just using other contracts so we can run a little bit
15 quicker than waiting for the BTMP's specific contract.

16 So, we're already doing that work, Eduardo.
17 You know, it's not just we're waiting for the contract
18 itself.

19 Okay. Thank you, Jolanda. Yes?

20 MR. GARCIA: If I may, I was a little bit late,
21 Secretary. I had to fly down here from Harlingen, and
22 there's no direct flight, so I had to go to Houston. But
23 I'm here because the State of Tamaulipas has always tried
24 to be in the border trade alliance committees, and
25 participate actively.

1 We're very happy that after a couple of years
2 now, it's hybrid. Not everybody of the stakeholders are
3 here right now. But for us, and like Gerry said, it's not
4 about the quantity of border process we have through
5 Tamaulipas. It's about the quality.

6 We're very happy, Secretary Scott, that this is
7 your first meeting and I got a chance to meet you in
8 person. With Caroline, we've been working for several
9 years now.

10 In the State of Tamaulipas, we are very
11 enthusiastic about the different studies that have been
12 done about the increase in the commercial flow between the
13 US and Mexico through the different borders of Tamaulipas.

14 Some people say it's not going to duplicate in the next
15 20 years. It's going to triplicate.

16 So, we are doing our own studies, and Governor
17 Cabeza de Vaca asked me if in the next meeting, he can
18 participate and give our studies about not only what we're
19 doing on the Mexican side to make the Nuevo Laredo-Laredo,
20 Texas border crossing more efficient on our side, on our
21 state budget.

22 But also, studies we're doing about the
23 possibility of having a new bridge through [indiscernible]
24 port of entry. As a matter of fact, yesterday, there was
25 a meeting of the World Transport Organization.

1 We are -- in the Ministry of Economic -- the
2 undersecretary of economic development, Luz Maria De La
3 Mora from the federal government, said that 60 percent of
4 all the commercial flow by land is crossing through
5 Tamaulipas, and that the Mexican federal government is
6 really thinking about trying to have a new bridge through
7 Nuevo Laredo and Laredo, Texas, which would be the tenth
8 bridge on your side and the fourth on the Mexican side.

9 So, we have to do it at the same time, continue
10 investing in the World Trade Bridge, but also, think that
11 we're going to need another border bridge in the next
12 several years for the increase in volume that we expect in
13 the next couple of decades.

14 So, thank you again for having the State of
15 Tamaulipas in this Committee. We're happy to see that in
16 the Border Master Plan, most of the projects that are for
17 Laredo and Pharr are either in planning, and about a dozen
18 now are in construction. We appreciate that.

19 And whatever you guys need, also, in regards to
20 the Border Crossing Information System -- as you all know,
21 the World Trade Bridge is administered by the State of
22 Tamaulipas. So, if you need any information, Mr. Ernesto
23 Gonzalez is in Nuevo Laredo for my office.

24 And also, Mr. Raul Drat [phonetic], which is
25 the Port Administrator for the World Trade Bridge on the

1 Mexican side. We are happy to help you out in anything
2 you need.

3 Thank you, Mr. Scott.

4 SEC. SCOTT: Secretary Garcia, what a great
5 pleasure to meet you. Thank you so much for that. I
6 think that TxDOT really appreciates the idea of
7 facilitating the unification and traffic and stepping
8 through just to understand which is the best route for
9 everyone to take.

10 So, thank you for offering to do that. I'm
11 sure we'll take you up on it.

12 MS. MAYS: Oh, yeah. Absolutely. Yeah, we've
13 worked with Secretary for a number of years and continue
14 to do that.

15 I think we're now in the most important time
16 for the planning. It's actually working together to make
17 things happen. So, that's what I'm excited about, and I'm
18 glad to hear to hear that you're excited about it.

19 We'll welcome the Governor and welcome you all
20 any time you would like to come and be part of this
21 discussion. When we plan the next meeting, to make sure
22 you all are on the agenda and to be able to provide that
23 input. So, thank you again. Thank you for being here.

24 Go ahead.

25 MR. GONZALEZ: First of all, I want to thank

1 the Secretary for his participation for the first time in
2 this meeting. This is the administration of the State
3 Governor of Nuevo Leon. We're going to be very active.

4 I'm letting you, all the Committee Members know
5 the importance of our only border, the Colombia Solidarity
6 Bridge. In each part of the port of Laredo, we have to
7 recognize that it's the number three of 19 commercial
8 crossings of importance of tax collection for the whole
9 country -- the number three. It's the number one bridge
10 for fresh produce and agricultural crossing to the US.
11 And next -- in less than two weeks, Jalisco and Michoacan
12 will start exporting most of 80 percent of the avocado
13 consuming in the United States -- will be crossing to
14 Colombia.

15 Also, we want you to know that we have a
16 highway master plan, the State Highway Master Plan that we
17 want to present in the next meeting. We cannot depend on
18 the federal government. On this, we have to do fast
19 actions with quick steps, but we can get this done in six
20 years.

21 But we already have working on the Highway
22 Master Plan, and in a -- a new Custom Master Plan, also.

23 The State seats the Colombia Solidarity Bridge as a top
24 three state project. That's why the bridge and the port
25 depends on the Secretary.

1 It's no longer in the second level. It's on
2 the first level, importance of the bridge.

3 Also, we have only .5 percent of the land
4 between the US and Mexico. We have only 14 kilometers of
5 crossing border, but we have the possibility to build a
6 new border starting from zero level.

7 Like, we start -- we are planning to build this
8 logistic center, a massive logistic center with most of
9 Nuevo Leon investments. Nuevo Leon, as you know, is the
10 most industrialist state in Mexico. All of our exports
11 usually go through Tamaulipas.

12 We see Tamaulipas as a component. We should
13 see each other as a region, Coahuila, Tamaulipas, and
14 Nuevo Leon. We can become one of the most important ports
15 of the whole world.

16 We are not competing with Tamaulipas. And I
17 have to say with Carlos -- we were federal congressmen
18 together. We get along very well.

19 But we have to let you know that Nuevo Leon is
20 extremely serious about this bridge. We are also planning
21 to bring Governor Samuel Garcia -- I know you're in
22 Monterrey in two weeks' time, and you will meet with
23 Governor Samuel Garcia.

24 Samuel Garcia wants to present, also, all these
25 projects as I say. This is our new government. We are

1 barely starting. So, we have six years to go. And this,
2 we can make commitments for long-term and not short-term.

3

4 Thank you.

5 MS. MAYS: Thank you. Any other comments from
6 anybody? You can come on, but we're probably going to
7 truncate and I'd have to come back. So, if you can just
8 give BTAC, and then we can pull it up later when we're
9 done.

10 MR. WILLIAMS: Absolutely. My name's Mike
11 Williams. I'm with [indiscernible].

12 Happy to be here today to give you a brief
13 overview of Senate Bill 1308 study. To start with, we
14 just want to -- we didn't have a slide -- just quickly, to
15 set the stage with some definitions to keep us all kind of
16 on the same page.

17 So this Senate Bill is looking specifically at
18 automated interconnected driving systems and other
19 emergent technologies that support those, but we'll talk a
20 little bit about the legislation in a moment.

21 But when you think about those new
22 technologies, ADS is actually defined in Texas Code as
23 hardware or software that when installed on your vehicle
24 and engaged are collectively capable of performing without
25 any intervention from a human operator. So that's how

1 we're looking specifically -- ADS, also you hear it as CAD
2 or automated vehicles, AV, as well. It's covered in that
3 definition.

4 Connected driving systems are also hardware and
5 software, but they're designed to enable vehicles to
6 receive both safety and mobility information between
7 vehicles, between people in vehicles, other roadway uses
8 with transportation management systems.

9 And finally, other emergent technologies -- you
10 can pick up really -- could accomplish any possible number
11 of technologies that are out there. But within the
12 context of this study, they're underlined as
13 transportation-related applications that will potentially
14 have direct interaction with the ADS and CDS systems as
15 defined above.

16 If we go to the next slide, for any of you who
17 haven't read through the legislation or the sample
18 language, it's really defined here as a study that's
19 charged TxDOT with the Department of Public Safety to
20 conduct a study and consultation with TTI to look
21 specifically at the potential impacts of ADS and CDS, and
22 the other recent technologies as we just defined, to
23 alleviate motor vehicle traffic congestion at ports of
24 entry along the Texas-Mexico border.

25 So, we've heard a lot about the congestion

1 challenges that you've had today, as well as some of the
2 safety implications. And so, it's going to address that.

3
4 There's two other questions called out by the
5 legislation, as well. First is to look at those same
6 technologies and their impacts on transportation industry
7 workforce across the state. So, what do these different
8 technologies, what do driverless vehicles in certain
9 industries do to our workforce, both from a perspective of
10 new jobs -- any kind of retraining that might need to be
11 required. And also, on public safety.

12 And we got a great briefing today about some of
13 the safety concerns statewide and along the border. And
14 one of the charges of the study was to look out how these
15 areas' technologies impact that safety moving forward. Go
16 to the next slide.

17 So, our schedule, our time frame is pretty
18 tight. We started last fall, and we have to have our
19 report ready for the Governor's office and the legislature
20 no later than January 1st of 2023.

21 Our first phase, which was completed in the
22 fall, was our baseline assessment. We looked at state
23 practice, big picture view, what's out there today, new
24 current needs and challenges are.

25 If we go to the next click, right now, we are

1 in our benefits and impact analysis. This is where we'll
2 take everything that we've learned and continue with our
3 stakeholder engagement to define what those future
4 scenarios might look like -- if it will be the overall
5 framework for how we're estimating those impacts and
6 benefits of various technologies.

7 That will be wrapped up later this spring, and
8 we'll be moving into our draft report development. We owe
9 our first draft report to TxDOT and DPS by June 30th.
10 Then we will spend the remainder of the year going through
11 briefings.

12 We'll be back to talk with you again, as well
13 as we do have a working group that is guiding us. And
14 then, back -- if you flip one more, Giacomo -- our
15 finalization process. We have several months built in to
16 go through all the various leadership briefings that we
17 need to, to give the buy in and approval of our findings.

18
19 So a very quick kind of study here. And the
20 next slide gives you a very quick overview of our
21 approach. On the left hand side, you can see for each of
22 those three areas, this really is three studies within
23 one.

24 So you can see we've organized it that way.
25 So, we did literature search, state of practice, inventory

1 of what's out there, and also, the development of use
2 cases, which we'll talk about in just a moment across of
3 those three questions.

4 You can see we've already completed that work
5 in one more click. And then, if you click it two more
6 times, Giacomo -- what we're working on now is the
7 scenario development and our stakeholder engagement is
8 ongoing. As I mentioned, after we complete that analysis,
9 we'll spend the latter part of the project with the
10 documentation.

11 I know that we don't have a lot of time here
12 today, so I'll be fairly brief. But one of the things we
13 will -- we have a survey prepared to send out to you all
14 following this meeting, which will give you a chance to
15 provide a little more input on some of our use cases and
16 the framework that we're using to develop our scenarios.

17 But just here to kind of set the stage for when
18 you look at that -- why are we using use cases in
19 scenarios? We really want to be able to provide a
20 defensible and comprehensive answer to those three
21 questions that the Senate asked us to answer.

22 Use cases will -- as we've defined, your use
23 cases are the specific situations in which the different
24 technological applications can be put in place within each
25 of those three environments -- the border, workforce, and

1 safety. And the scenarios are how we package those
2 different use cases to provide a narrative on what those
3 mean.

4 Real quick, if we go to the next slide -- on
5 the use cases, we have to provide a survey to request
6 feedback on that since we're out of time here today. And
7 also, the frameworks -- once we have that in place, that's
8 really what will be the models. So, both transportation
9 travel impact models, as well as economic impact models.
10 And some spreadsheet models to bring it all together to be
11 able to measure those complex -- all informed by the
12 baseline assessment, all informed by the stakeholder
13 engagement.

14 There's part of that engagement in the
15 individual data project. Move to the next slide. I'm not
16 going to go through these in detail. I won't even spend
17 that much time on it because I know we're out of time.

18 But we came up with use cases -- nine use
19 cases, specific work -- the border operations specifically
20 looking at all the technologies, looking at the method to
21 alleviate congestion. And you can read that there here
22 quickly, but we'll sum it up.

23 It looks at things like driverless trucks,
24 autonomous trucks, driverless vehicles. What we do with
25 the clearance? Do you need dedicated lanes? Can they

1 operate into your current expedited lanes, or what does it
2 look like if you operated in mixed traffic?

3 We've got these type of use cases defined for
4 both commercial vehicles or personal vehicles, as well as
5 transit vehicles. And if you go to the next slide,
6 Giacomo, it's number 4. Again, I want to just run over --
7 and then, we were going to talk about some questions here
8 for you. But you'll see these questions in the survey for
9 you to respond to in the next week or so.

10 Just to quickly note on the next slide, our
11 scenario of framework is built on three different levers.

12 These levers include ADS/CDS capabilities. So, what are
13 the technologies actually able to accomplish? How far
14 would we go down as far as whether you're driverless,
15 whether you still need a vehicle to drive.

16 The infrastructure and system readiness. So
17 have we put in place the necessary veins, the necessary
18 infrastructure, technology for these systems to operate?
19 You know, if we're not connected for a connected driver
20 system, do we have those connections in place for the
21 market and structure? It connects to your traffic
22 management centers to help you better manage your queue as
23 a federal border.

24 And then, finally, the ADS/CDS usage show how
25 many of our trucking companies, how many of our residents

1 are actually invested in purchasing and using these
2 technologies. And that's really the market penetration
3 component. So, whether these are high or low really
4 impact which use cases can be effectively used.

5 And so, we look at our future -- particularly,
6 for the border, if we go to the next slide, Giacomo --
7 we're looking at high, medium, and low forecasts. And
8 we've got a great amount of information to follow what
9 you've all done, and TxDOT has done on the Border
10 Transportation Master Plan. It provides a great forecast
11 of what that delay is going to look like in the future,
12 what the impacts of economic cost of that are.

13 And so, we'll be using that to help us with our
14 estimate about how these technologies help benefit some of
15 that congestion in port. If we go to the next slide, kind
16 of our -- this is going to wrap up in a few more moments
17 here.

18 This shows you how we define our low, medium,
19 and high scenarios within our border framework. And I
20 just want to set the stage [audio skip] to read, but what
21 we're doing for low -- this would be our conservative
22 estimate. So we will make some progress by 2050 from
23 where we are today, but it's by no means going to be kind
24 of where we even expect to be.

25 The medium estimate we've labeled as our best

1 estimate. So based on all the stakeholder input, all this
2 statement of practice, all the research that has been
3 done, this is going to be most likely where we think we
4 can get to by 2050. So, it's not going to be as far as
5 some folks think we're going to get, but it's going to be
6 further [audio skip].

7 Then at the high level, that's really saying,
8 Hey, look, we solved way more of the challenges than we
9 think we may actually solve by 2050. This is what that
10 optimistic estimate of the deployment of each of those
11 numbers might look like.

12 Again, the bottom section here, I'm not going
13 to go through the numbers. But for each of three levers,
14 we provide the description of how we are characterizing
15 and defining those levers within a low, medium, and high
16 environment.

17 You'll see the percentages, for example, on
18 usage, or whether it's commercial vehicle, personal auto.

19 The percentages go up over the course of low, medium, and
20 high.

21 And so, one of the things we'll also be asking
22 you is, do those percentages make sense? Do they seem
23 realistic to you? Are they -- you know, are we pushing it
24 too high on the high end? Or not high enough?

25 And there's lots of different perspectives.

1 We've already heard from our working group, back from
2 TxDOT, and CAB Task Force. So we reached out to a lot of
3 folks and been getting a lot of input on this.

4 If we just go to the next slide. As I
5 mentioned, we have three questions to deal with. We just
6 kind of went through a big piece of what could work on the
7 border looks like. The impacts for workforce and public
8 safety are going to be driven and based off of statewide
9 performance.

10 And additional use cases you can look at at
11 your leisure. So, we have nine additional use cases to
12 look at. These technologies, in similar light, but across
13 the entire state on the state highway system. And so,
14 then, again, that covers trucks, personal auto vehicles,
15 transit, on the left.

16 So if we click back to the next slide, Giacomo,
17 you can see the second four. And we go to next slide.
18 Obviously, workforce is going to be measured a little bit
19 differently than congestion or safety.

20 So, you can quickly see on the left hand side
21 the things you're interested in on a workforce, the net
22 effect these technologies have on employment, on
23 employment by sector, and all the other types of
24 demographics that we're looking at. And then, you can
25 just see kind of what one of our bases for this would be,

1 the trend in different types of transportation-related
2 industries across the -- on the graph on the right.

3 That's kind of our starting point. With that,
4 if you go to the next slide, you can see we provided the
5 same definition of what a low, medium, and high might look
6 like. Now, we go to statewide in these cases. Did we
7 impact workforce?

8 Then, we go to the next slide -- our safety.
9 Again, you've heard a lot about this already today, but
10 just look on the left hand side of the slide. The key
11 factors that we are obviously looking to impact with
12 technology is what happens with crashes by type, crashes
13 by severity, different technologies.

14 And again, these, in particular, are designed
15 to help address different behavioral causes of accidents.

16 And so, you think of -- you talked a lot about the
17 impacts of drugs and alcohol, just earlier today.
18 Technology is one of the great ways that we can take the
19 driver out of the mix to address those types of accidents.

20 So, on the right hand side of the slide, you
21 can see on the bottom that the types of focus areas where
22 the crashes exist line up with where could these
23 technologies have the most impact upon trying to set off
24 some of these crash causes. You can go to the next slide
25 and see we have that same set of low, medium, and high

1 definitions for safety, as well.

2 So, we'll send out some questions for you
3 following this to let you weigh in and spend a little time
4 looking at the slides in detail, and hopefully, give us
5 some feedback. And more than happy to, I think, probably
6 be back. Maybe next meeting I could give more of an
7 update.

8 On the upcoming activities, really, we can see
9 that survey is part of our key focus. Over the next month
10 or so, we need to finalize our use cases and scenarios and
11 start that process of building up our narratives for what
12 those future scenarios look like so that we can align it
13 with the various tools and data sources that we could have
14 and get our estimate of what the benefits and impacts of
15 the technologies might be.

16 We also know have, as I mentioned, a very, very
17 comprehensive outreach program. We're going to get
18 underway with the stakeholder interviews. I'm sure some
19 of you are going to be on our list of persons we talk to.

20 Just sitting here listening today, I know there's lots of
21 great info we can get from you all on this study.

22 We also will be briefing the taskforce
23 subcommittees in a couple weeks, and the BNRSVs that were
24 used to support the Border Transportation Master Plan are
25 going to be activated in the next month or two to also

1 provide additional feedback on the study, as well.

2 So, happy to get any questions if you have any,
3 and sorry for moving so quickly. But look forward to more
4 conversations --

5 MS. MAYS: Yeah, thank you very much, Mike, for
6 the presentation. And I think what I want to underscore
7 here is the order of component. The bill charged us with
8 looking at how can technologies -- emerging technologies,
9 autonomous trucks, autonomous vehicles be a tool for
10 alleviating border congestion, border delays? So, that's
11 the charge here.

12 So one of the scenarios Mike talked about is
13 what if you had, you know, 20 percent of the trucks coming
14 across are autonomous trucks? They don't have to stop on
15 the border. They're just moving forward.

16 And then it moves progressively to 2050. So,
17 we really want to get BTAC's input on that, and really
18 provide us with what -- are we in the ballpark?

19 And then, also, it was mentioned earlier we
20 need participation from our Mexican counterparts on this
21 because the border exists on both sides. And, you know,
22 hopefully, like Mike mentioned, we really want to talk to
23 the Aduanas and talk our federal counterparts on working
24 on this to make sure that what we're doing, when we come
25 up with recommendations or something, that we can work

1 together and look from a cross-border perspective on this.

2 How do we solve, or potentially solve, the wait
3 time on border congestion using technology, and what that
4 looks like. So, we'll be reaching to you all to
5 definitely help support this effort moving forward. This
6 was a big component of BTMP; border congestion, border
7 delays was the number one issue.

8 So, yeah, go ahead. Another one.

9 MR. GARCIA: Absolutely, Caroline. So, one of
10 the things that we were working on on the Colombia Bridge
11 is trying to make sure that we get a lot of the dedicated
12 cargo that are not going to enter the city of Laredo
13 because I know like Mines Road is super congested. I
14 mean, it takes up to, like, one hour, two hours -- depends
15 on the day -- to get from, like, Colombia to the city of
16 Laredo.

17 So, the idea is trying to work with carriers on
18 trying to get them to go straight through to, like, all
19 the way to I-35. So, we have been able to work with a lot
20 of the auto manufacturing facilities on adjusting time
21 because we are now working with CBP and Aduanas and
22 actually trying to get the 20 minutes -- like border
23 crossing time.

24 So that is allowing us to bring a lot of the
25 auto body manufacturers that are super congested and

1 trying to shorten the time between six hours of like
2 waiting on the border to like 20 minutes and they can be
3 on their way to like Austin, San Antonio, all the Toyotas
4 or the Teslas.

5 We've been working with NavStar, too, as well
6 and we've been exploring adjusting time. We have also
7 settled dedicated lines on our bridge. So, that way, that
8 bridge simply only carries dedicated lines, and they can
9 just queue us and go through all the way to the US border
10 to get inspection. And then, go on to their way.

11 So, that's -- we'd love to see how we can
12 collaborate on that, and we'll also want to see what the
13 expansion plans and things are for Mines Road. I know
14 there's been a lot of accidents lately on that road. It's
15 a heavy congested road.

16 So, I know Gerry and all the Laredo Master
17 Plans are probably working on it. I just would like to
18 see, because we're doing a significant investment in the
19 Mexico side for that road connecting to Monterrey to most
20 of the industry from the stateside, and connecting to the
21 US.

22 So, as we bring almost like \$300 million worth
23 of investment, we want to see -- we also want to get a new
24 master plan so the state works into like making those
25 roadways in the US so we can -- otherwise we're going to

1 have like a bottleneck.

2 MS. MAYS: It definitely takes partnership.
3 And again, you know, we will work with you all. And then,
4 you have a question? Go ahead.

5 MR. GONZALEZ: I'll be very brief. Just to
6 comment on that, as well. We had an opportunity last week
7 with the Ambassador Ken Salazar. He was with the Governor
8 of Nuevo Leon and Coahuila and Tamaulipas. And of the
9 three main topics, one of them was bi-national
10 infrastructure.

11 So, I think that if indeed the Secretary and
12 Caroline to maybe get in touch with the Office of the
13 Ambassador, because they did talk about trying to align --
14 people from CBP were there. And they were thinking of
15 getting more bridge crossings with -- for example, the
16 mutual recognition program that is going to help
17 facilitate the border times.

18 So, I think that it's a great job what
19 Ambassador Ken Salazar is doing. There were also people
20 there from the Mexican Federal Government. So if we can
21 get all levels of government in sync, I think that we can,
22 together as a region, work on having very competitive
23 bridge crossings through El Paso all the way to
24 Brownsville.

25 Thank you.

1 MS. MAYS: Thank you very much. And again,
2 technology -- the good thing with technology is that we
3 can maximize the infrastructure that we have today without
4 building new lanes.

5 And I think this is one area that I think if we
6 just think about it, we have issues with capacity in some
7 of our border crossings. How can we maximize those using
8 technology? And then I think that's what we're trying to
9 do.

10 So, yeah, go ahead.

11 MALE VOICE: And I think what my friend Carlos
12 and Eduardo said -- it's vital to have Aduanas. I can
13 arrange them. Aduanas have a big investment from all the
14 border crossings, for Tamaulipas, Coahuila, and Nuevo
15 Leon, especially.

16 We are building our master plan, also, with the
17 federal government. Governor Samuel wants to present what
18 the state has, but it is vital also to include that
19 federal master plan that is going to, like Carlos said,
20 we're going to see like one of the strongest regions --
21 we're looking to be the number one region for the world.

22 MS. MAYS: Sorry. I think that's it for the
23 discussion.

24 Eduardo, you have a comment?

25 (Simultaneous discussion.)

1 MR. CALVO: So, two important announcements
2 from -- or updates. The first is that the highway that
3 connects the bypass that connects the Samalayuca to the
4 Tornillo port of entry, that project is under
5 construction. I was actually a little bit surprised to
6 see how far that they're already into the construction of
7 that. And I know that that's a -- you know, that bridge
8 is in the county.

9 It's outside of the city limits of El Paso.
10 But it was an important piece that was missing to at least
11 give all the traffic that is coming north from Chihuahua.

12 If they don't have business in Ciudad Juarez, well, they
13 can take this bypass to cross through Tornillo-Guadalupe
14 and go to El Paso. So, that's an update.

15 The second one is that the last Thursday, there
16 was an official announcement that came from our
17 Congresswoman's office, Congresswoman Veronica Escobar,
18 about announcing \$600 million coming to the Bridge of the
19 Americas in El Paso for improvements, which is great. I
20 mean, it's a truckload of money to improve the bridge. I
21 mean, very needed.

22 I mean, Bridge of the Americas is also one of
23 the most important commercial crossings, as well, for
24 people. So, we're tremendously excited to hear about
25 that.

1 My understanding is that the way that it's
2 going to managed, the GSA, the General Services
3 Administration, which is part of the federal government,
4 will be managing the project. We know that there is a
5 feasibility study that was completed in 2018. I haven't
6 seen it, so I'm not really sure what that means.

7 They haven't shared that. But I was assured
8 that there is going to be a lot of stakeholder involvement
9 at the local level, the state level to see really what
10 these improvements are.

11 And, of course, we can't think of improving any
12 crossing without coordinating, also, our counterparts in
13 Ciudad Juarez in the State of Chihuahua. So, again, it
14 was a little bit of a surprise for us. But man, I wish we
15 had surprises like that everyday, right?

16 Thank you.

17 SEC. SCOTT: So, if -- does anyone else have
18 any other closing comments? It's great to see our friends
19 from Mexico exuberant about building new roadways into the
20 great State of Texas, because we're as exuberant about
21 building roadways and passage to Mexico. So, thank you,
22 everyone of y'all, for participating, and those online, as
23 well.

24 I look forward to getting to meet and know
25 everybody. Thank you all so much for your patience. It's

1 my first meeting doing this, and thank the good Lord for
2 Caroline.

3 Sorry, one last thing before I adjourn the
4 meeting. David Zapata is the Assistant Secretary of
5 State. He has been a vital cog in our machine of
6 operation. Most of you have worked with him.

7 David has accepted a job. He's going to be
8 working at the Texas Association of Business and Chambers
9 of Commerce.

10 We have asked -- I visited with Glenn Hamer, he
11 runs that organization -- if we could still keep David
12 involved on a regular basis with us throughout. He has
13 agreed to do that.

14 But I'd like us to take a moment to give him a
15 hand, because he is a wonderful --

16 (General applause.)

17 With that, I will adjourn the meeting, hearing
18 nothing more. Do I hear a motion? Second?

19 MALE VOICE: Second.

20 SEC. SCOTT: So second. So let it be done.
21 We're through.

22 Thank you.

23 (Whereupon, at 12:15 p.m., the meeting was
24 concluded.)

C E R T I F I C A T E

MEETING OF: TxDOT Border Trade Advisory Committee

LOCATION: Austin, Texas and virtual

DATE: February 24, 2022

I do hereby certify that the foregoing pages, numbers 1 through 164, inclusive, are the true, accurate, and complete transcript prepared from the verbal recording made by electronic recording by Elizabeth Stoddard before the Texas Department of Transportation.

DATE: March 8, 2022

/s/ Anna Marie Reyes
(Transcriber)

On the Record Reporting &
Transcription, Inc.
7703 N. Lamar Blvd., Ste 515
Austin, Texas 78752