

Twenty First Century Border Management *Cross-border bridge that creates jobs and growth*

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REQUEST: Within the framework of Laredo Chamber of Commerce, a core priority is encourage and engage the private sector and governments through Public Private Partnership mechanisms to develop a positive long-term vision for cooperation to foster Laredo Texas and United States growth and competitiveness, and ultimately achieve economic benefits to its citizens. In that sense this **Chamber requests the construction of the new international bridge No. 5 for Laredo, otherwise known as project 4/5**. We believe that this bridge in south Laredo will serve to alleviate the congestion the commercial and light traffic suffers every day at the other existing bridges, in deterioration of North American competitiveness, and will create a diverse range of opportunities for the Laredo citizens.

This new bridge will be sponsored in the U.S. by the city of Laredo Texas, the Webb County, and in Mexico by the SCT (Secretaria de Comunicaciones y Transportes. Mexico's counterpart of U.S. Department of Transportation) and will be built in the land owned by "The D.D. Hachar Charitable Trust Foundation of Laredo, Texas", this land will be donated by this charity organization to the U.S. sponsors of the project. (In excess of 350 Acres)

This project is seen as a community driven, since the proceeds of the real estate developments will fund The D.D. Hachar Charitable Trust – *The sole purpose of this trust is to provide scholarships and grants to high school graduates of this community to attend colleges and universities in Texas.*

Background: With a population of 260,000, Laredo is the third-most populated city on the U.S.-Mexico border and the largest Inland Port in the United States. Its economy thrives on commercial and industrial warehousing, transportation, imports and exports – every major U.S. third party logistics and trucking company has a local presence. Laredo boasts:

- The third largest U.S. Customs District in the nation after Los Angeles and New York handling over \$284 billion in total trade – more than the districts in Southern California, Arizona, New Mexico and West Texas combined;
- A direct connection to I-35 and I-69 in the United States, highway 85 in Mexico, and the only air cargo service with both U.S. and Mexican customs agents to pre-clear cargo flights destined for Mexico;
- Four international bridges that cross 16,000+ trucks per day – more than 50 percent of all trade between the U.S. and Mexico; and
- A railway bridge, serviced by Kansas City Southern and Union Pacific, which plays a significant role for automakers, whose supply chain moves car parts across the border at Laredo several times as it works its way to completion.

One of the nation's busiest trade corridors, Laredo connects the industrial markets in the Midwest, northeast, central states and even the western seaboard to Mexico.

Issue: In late 2012, the U.S. Federal government sought and fund through the US-Mexico joint working committee (JIT) on planning and transport, an evaluation of all transport projects and binational and border crossings along the Texas border with Coahuila, Nuevo Leon and Tamaulipas.

- This study was named “The Border Master Plan”, its objective was to assess, inventory and prioritize projects along the US-Mexico border, based purely on its merit, regardless of political variables, or other subjective factors.
- The focus of the study was in the categories of congestion / capacity, demand, cost effectiveness / home preparedness, security, environmental impacts, and regional economic impacts.
- The rating entities of this study were authorities from federal, state and local governments, (GSA General Services Administration, Department of State DOS, Federal Highway Administration FHWA , Home Land security DHS , Customs and Border Protection CBP , International Boundary and Water IBWC Commission , Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration and FMCSA , TxDot , City of Laredo Texas, Webb County) and their Mexican counterparts.
- The plan for this bridge **ranked 1st, in POE and Roads categories both in Mexico and the U.S.**
- Over 200 projects were evaluated, and the projects that went positioned first places in both the United States and Mexico, where related to a proposed new International Bridge 5 in Laredo Texas, and their respective interconnections to highways US-83, US-59(future IH-69) and Mex-85, in the category of international crossings and highways respectively.
- More information:
http://www.borderplanning.fhwa.dot.gov/documents/LaredoBMP_Report_Exec_Sum.pdf

Advantages of this new international bridge

Promoting competitiveness, better environment quality and connectivity

- Eliminating backlogs at the most important commercial border crossing of America.
- Increased competitiveness in the logistics chain and certainty on the times of import-export and delivery of consumer goods at the centers of consumption and production (Just in Time)
- Better connectivity of existing roads
- It will relieve the atmosphere from air pollutants caused by the idling tractors and cars waiting to cross the border for long periods of time
- Promote private investments with proceeds benefiting public education
- Since this bridge will be the prototype of “The border of the twenty first century”, an area of immigration and inspection for joint offices is planned, which will:
 - ✓ Raise comfort and speed in processing tourists, while increasing binational security with the use of specialized detection equipment for: smuggling weapons, money, drugs and human traffic
 - ✓ Increase competitiveness and speed of each container
 - ✓ Reduce personnel, costs, and equipment used by Federal agencies of both countries
 - ✓ Joint inspection Port of Entry (U.S. and Mexico); Motto “Inspected once, accepted twice”

(a) No action consequences

- Today’s value of losses due to wait times are in the order of **USD \$3,650 million** (Woodrow Wilson International Center).
- It is estimated that by 2020, the losses will have increased to the order of **USD \$5,880 million** (Bloomberg Government).