

Brownsville/Matamoros West Rail Relocation Project

Presidential Permit Application

Submitted by Cameron County Texas

Brownsville/Matamoros West Rail Relocation Project

Cameron County
West Rail International Bridge

Presidential Permit Application

Submitted to the
Department of State,
Pursuant to the Provisions of the
International Bridge Act of 1972 (Public Law 92-434) and
Executive Order 11423

Developed for Cameron County
by JWH and Associates, Inc.

June 2003



GILBERTO HINOJOSA
COUNTY JUDGE

964 E. HARRISON ST.
BROWNSVILLE, TEXAS
78520

COUNTY COURTHOUSE
(956) 544-0830
FAX: 544-0801

June 17, 2003

Mr. Dennis Linskey
Coordinator
U.S.-Mexico Border Affairs
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

RE: West Rail Presidential Permit Application

Dear Mr. Linskey:

Cameron County, as the Project Sponsor, is pleased to submit the Presidential Permit Application to construct the new International Rail Bridge located approximately at river mile 70.2 for the Brownsville/Matamoros West Rail Project. The new location is approximately 15 river miles upstream from the existing B&M Bridge. The West Rail Project is a Bi-National project between Brownsville, Texas and Matamoros, Tamaulipas.

The West Rail Project is proposed as an alternative to constructing a series of grade separations along the existing Union Pacific Railroad route in the residential and downtown areas of Brownsville as originally proposed in the 1975 Environmental Impact Statement. The elimination of the rail operations through the middle of the residential and downtown areas will greatly improve the quality of life in the two communities and would complete the railroad relocation project originally begun in the early 1970's.

I am providing copies of the Presidential Permit Application to the agencies listed in the contact list that is enclosed. Cameron County requests the support of the appropriate federal, state and local agencies for this project.

The State of Tamaulipas is the Project Sponsor on the Mexican side and in the last three years Cameron County has been coordinating the Project with them. Cameron County requests your expeditious consideration of our Presidential Permit Application.

If you require additional information, contact Pete Sepulveda at 956.574.8771.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gilberto Hinojosa", is written over a printed name and title.

Gilberto Hinojosa
County Judge

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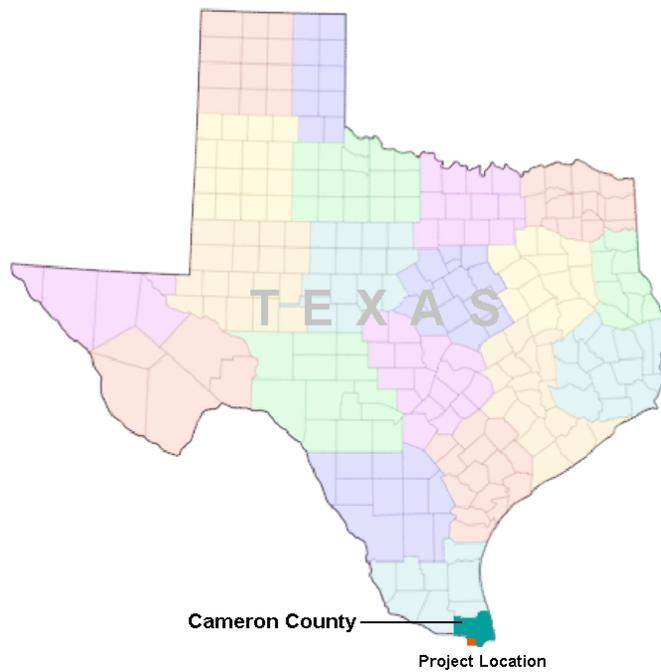


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Presidential Permit Application

Brownsville/Matamoros West Rail Project

B&M Bridge Company's New International Rail Bridge





Permit Identification



This is an application for a Presidential Permit for a new international railroad bridge in Cameron County, Texas. The new single-track rail bridge will replace the existing Brownsville & Matamoros Bridge Company (B&M Bridge) rail bridge in downtown Brownsville, Texas and Matamoros, Mexico. The site of the new rail bridge is approximately 15 river miles upstream of the existing rail bridge and is located approximately at Rio Grande River Mile 70.2. The new bridge is being constructed to remove railroad operations from downtown Brownsville and Matamoros, Mexico. A similar plan has been coordinated in Mexico in which their switchyard and railroad operations will also be relocated west of Matamoros.

The existing B&M international rail bridge, constructed in 1907, will remain in place and be utilized by the B&M Bridge Company for other vehicle and pedestrian transportation purposes. The new bridge in west Brownsville will provide connections between the new switchyards in Brownsville and Matamoros.

Cameron County is the United States project sponsor and intends to construct the project and then transfer the Presidential Permit, right-of-way and ownership of the international rail bridge and its facilities to the B&M Bridge Company. The right-of-way and the remainder of the rail track approach will be transferred to the Union Pacific Railroad Company (UPRR). The City of Brownsville is serving as a partner in the project with Cameron County. The same operation, ownership and track operating rights proposed for the new rail project are as follows:

NEW INTERNATIONAL RAIL BRIDGE

Owner: Brownsville & Matamoros Bridge Company

Contact Person: Jose Galvan, President

Address: 1300 Mexico St.
Brownsville, Texas 78520

Phone: 956-542-8558

Cameron County presently operates three international bridges; Gateway International Bridge in downtown Brownsville, Free Trade Bridge at Los Indios and the Veterans International Bridge at Los Tomates in Brownsville. Additional information regarding the international bridges is contained herein.

Statutory Authority

The application is submitted pursuant to the International Permit Application Process, Executive Order 11423 of August 16, 1968 (33 FR 11741), Executive Order 12847 of May 17, 1993 (58 FR 29511), International Bridge Act of 1972 (33 U.S.C. Section 535 et seq.) and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. Section 4321 et seq.). The Environmental Assessment for the project is being submitted under a separate document. Early environmental consultations began with the state and federal environmental agencies in 2000 and have continued throughout the development of the project.

The authority to make the following application is granted in accordance with provisions specified in the International Bridge Act of 1972, (Public Law 92-434), 86 Stat. 731, dated September 26, 1972, Section 3, to wit:

“The consent of Congress is hereby granted for a State or subdivision or instrumentally thereof to enter into agreements... with the Government of

Mexico... for the construction, operation, and maintenance of such bridge in accordance with the applicable provisions of this Act.”

Cameron County is a Texas County created in 1850 and organized in 1857 through action of the State Legislature of Texas.

Cameron County General Description

Cameron County is the southernmost county in Texas, bordered by the Republic of Mexico to the south, the Gulf of Mexico to the east, and by Hidalgo and Willacy Counties to the west and north. The (Revised) 2000 U.S. Census reports the County population to be 343,806, up 32 percent from the 1990 U.S. Census population of 260,120, which, in turn, increased 27.4 percent since 1980. Approximately 83 percent of the county’s population is Hispanic. The County’s land area is 906 square miles. It is commonly referred to, along with the counties of Hidalgo, Willacy, and Starr, as the Rio Grande Valley. The Rio Grande Valley population is estimated to be approximately 1.0 Million. Immediately south of the Rio Grande River are the Mexican cities of Matamoros and Reynosa, both of which have a combined population projected to be over 1.5 Million. Brownsville, the county seat, has a projected population of 140,000 and is the largest city in the Rio Grande Valley. It is located on the County’s southern border.

The U.S./Mexico border cities of Brownsville and Matamoros share a unique bicultural heritage. From 18th century rancheros who held Spanish land grants on both sides of the river to 19th century merchants with operations in both cities to 20th century citizens who shop, dine, work and attend cultural events “*al otro lado*” or “across,” the inhabitants of the area have shared their lives and experiences with their international neighbors. In recent decades public officials and community organizations have recognized the significant importance of the history of their cities and have worked to preserve and promote its histories¹.

Economic Profile

The economy is well diversified based upon agricultural production, fishing industries, manufacturing plants and tourism. Major agricultural crops include citrus, cotton, grains and sugar cane. Principal manufacturing products include offshore drilling platforms, fiberglass products, dairy products, clothing, electric equipment and frozen foods. The County is the only port of entry from Mexico that provides all four methods of transportation – sea, air, highway, and rail. Brownsville and Detroit are the only ports of entry in the U.S. that have all four methods of transportation.

¹ Anthony Knopp, professor of history, <http://www/utb.edu>

Tourist attractions include South Padre Island, Laguna-Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge, Birding Centers, Audubon’s Sabal Palm and the Gladys Porter Zoo. Eco-tourism is an ever-growing industry in the County. The Port of Brownsville is one of the world’s largest shrimp loading points and a very important link between the United States and Mexico. Cameron County, Texas economic information is reported nationally as the Brownsville-Harlingen-San Benito Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA).

Employment Statistics

Cameron County’s unemployment rate has increased, just as it has for the entire State of Texas. Changes in unemployment in the Rio Grande Valley seem to move quicker than the rest of the State. This situation indicates that employment fluctuations occur in sectors that include manufacturing and its related support industries. International Toll Bridge crossings also reflected a weakening of the maquiladora manufacturing sector months before September 11, 2001. The table below presents the County’s key demographic/economic indicators.

KEY DEMOGRAPHIC/ECONOMIC INDICATORS

	Cameron County			Texas		
	2002 ²	2001	2000	2002	2001	2000
Civilian Labor Force	135,879	134,863	129,403	10,715,009	10,494,260	10,295,082
Total Employment	121,955	121,209	118,658	10,103,679	9,949,982	9,827,121
Total Unemployment	13,924	13,654	10,745	611,330	544,278	467,961
Percentage Unemployment	10.2%	10.1%	8.3%	5.7%	5.2%	4.5%

² Average as of January 2003

(<http://www.twc.state.tx.us/lmi/lfs/type/unemployment/unemploymentwdab.3.htm>)

CAMERON COUNTY QUICK FACTS PROVIDED BY THE U.S. CENSUS

Demographic and economic indicators for Cameron County, the State of Texas, and the United States are provided in this table for comparative purposes.

People	Cameron County	Texas	USA
Population, 2001 estimate	344,782	21,325,018	284,796,887
Population, 2000 (Revised)	343,806	20,851,820	281,421,906
Population, percent change, 1990 to 2000	32.0%	22.80%	13.10%
Persons under 5 years old, percent, 2000	9.50%	7.80%	6.80%
Persons under 18 years old, percent, 2000	33.80%	28.20%	25.70%
Persons 65 years old and over, percent, 2000	11.10%	9.90%	12.40%
Female persons, percent, 2000	52.10%	50.40%	50.90%
White persons, percent, 2000 (a)	80.30%	71.00%	75.10%
Black or African American persons, percent, 2000 (a)	0.50%	11.50%	12.30%
American Indian and Alaska Native persons, percent, 2000 (a)	0.40%	0.60%	0.90%
Asian persons, percent, 2000 (a)	0.50%	2.70%	3.60%
Persons reporting some other race, percent, 2000 (a)	16.00%	11.70%	5.50%
Persons of Hispanic or Latino origin, percent, 2000 (b)	84.30%	32.00%	12.50%
White persons, not of Hispanic/Latino origin, percent, 2000	14.50%	52.40%	69.10%
Living in same house in 1995 and 2000, pct age 5+, 2000	58.50%	49.60%	54.10%
Foreign born persons, percent, 2000	25.60%	13.90%	11.10%
Language other than English spoken at home, pct age 5+, 2000	79.00%	31.20%	17.90%
High school graduates, percent of persons age 25+, 2000	55.20%	75.70%	80.40%
Bachelor's degree or higher, pct of persons age 25+, 2000	13.40%	23.20%	24.40%
Mean travel time to work, workers age 16+ (minutes), 2000	20.7	25.4	25.5
Housing units, 2000	119,654	8,157,575	115,904,641
Homeownership rate, 2000	67.70%	63.80%	66.20%
Housing units in multi-unit structures, percent, 2000	20.10%	24.20%	26.40%
Median value of owner-occupied housing units, 2000	\$53,000	\$82,500	\$119,600
Households, 2000	97,267	7,393,354	105,480,101
Persons per household, 2000	3.4	2.74	2.59
Median household money income, 1999	\$26,155	\$39,927	\$41,994
Per capita money income, 1999	\$10,960	\$19,617	\$21,587
Persons below poverty, percent, 1999	33.10%	15.40%	12.40%
Business	Cameron County	Texas	USA
Private nonfarm establishments, 1999	5,751	467,087	7,008,444
Private nonfarm employment, 1999	83,540	7,763,815	110,705,661
Private nonfarm employment, percent change 1990-1999	40.40%	32.40%	18.40%
Nonemployer establishments, 1999	15,509	1,236,927	16,152,604
Manufacturers shipments, 1997 (\$1000)	1,732,776	297,657,003	3,842,061,405
Retail sales, 1997 (\$1000)	1,903,987	182,516,112	2,460,886,012
Retail sales per capita, 1997	\$5,993	\$9,430	\$9,190
Minority-owned firms, percent of total, 1997	66.60%	23.90%	14.60%
Women-owned firms, percent of total, 1997	21.00%	25.00%	26.00%
Housing units authorized by building permits, 2000	3,111	141,231	1,592,267
Federal funds and grants, 2001 (\$1000)	1,467,024	112,530,383	1,763,896,019
Local government employment - full-time equivalent, 1997	15,256	850,380	10,227,429
Geography	Cameron County	Texas	USA
Land area, 2000 (square miles)	906	261,797	3,537,438
Persons per square mile, 2000	370.1	79.6	79.6

(a) Includes persons reporting only one race.

(b) Hispanics may be of any race, so also are included in applicable race categories.

FN: Footnote on this item for this area in place of data

Source U.S. Census Bureau: State and County QuickFacts. Data derived from Population Estimates, 2000 Census of Population and Housing, 1990 Census of Population and Housing, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates, County Business Patterns, 1997 Economic Census, Minority- and Women-Owned Business, Building Permits, Consolidated Federal Funds Report, 1997 Census of Governments

Ref: <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/48/48061.html> 3/11/2003

Retail Trade

Cross border retail trade is important to both Brownsville and Cameron County. U.S. merchants enjoy patronage from consumers south of the border. In past years, the Brownsville economy was heavily reliant on consumer trade with Mexican shoppers. Now the economy of the County is more diversified. No longer is one segment of the economy dominant especially with the recent surge in manufacturing plants within the area. In past years, when a hard freeze occurred or Mexican currency experienced devaluation, the local economy would be weakened severely. No longer is the region reliant on agriculture and consumer trade with Mexico. Personal income of County residents continues to lag behind the rest of the State. Per capita income was \$10,960 for the Year 1999, just 50.8 percent of the U.S. average.

Border Manufacturing and Assembly Plants (Maquiladoras)

International trade has always influenced Cameron County's economy. Ranching and farming industries evolved as important components in the local economy during the late 1800's and early 1900's. During 1965, the Mexican government initiated the Border Industrialization Program (Maquiladora Program) in which a factory or assembly plant operated in Mexico under preferential tariff programs established by the U.S. and Mexican governments to encourage development of industry in the region. Raw materials from the U.S. are exported into Mexico for manufacturing or assembly, and then upon their export back into the U.S., tariffs would be assessed only on the value of the value added to the product. Before NAFTA, maquiladora plants were required to export all of their production out of Mexico to avoid creating unfair competition for Mexican industry. NAFTA has now eliminated requirements on how much production must be exported; products can now be sold into the Mexican market. The primary advantage for a U.S. company to operate a maquiladora manufacturing or assembly plant is the lower cost of labor in Mexico. Labor typically

costs \$21 per hour in the United States, compared to about \$5 an hour in Mexico. Mexico has more favorable labor laws and fewer union-driven work rules. NAFTA has consolidated Cameron County as a gateway for U.S./Mexico commerce. Commerce, job creation, and construction growth in the County are greatly influenced by the Mexican economy. The Mexican currency has had two great periods of devaluation – 1983 and late 1994. The peso devaluation in 1983 strongly affected the local economy; however, the devaluation that occurred during late 1994 only temporarily slowed the economic growth in this region.

One of the favorable economic forces is the low cost of labor in the County. The low-cost of the labor force along the border creates an industry of twin manufacturing plants known as “*Maquiladoras*.” The Maquiladora Program currently has 130 manufacturing plants, employing 61,866 people in Matamoros, Tamaulipas. Products are partially assembled in Mexico, then transported to Brownsville where final assembly is completed in the “sister plant.” Employment in the maquiladora plants decreased by 5.6 percent during 2002.

Intermodal Transportation

Cameron County is one of the few counties in the United States that possesses a complement of transportation options. Within the county are rail lines with national and international connections, two international airports, intercoastal canal, deep-water ports, four vehicle international bridges, one international rail bridge and an extensive highway system.

U.S. Highways 77, 83, and 281; State Highways 4, 48, 107, and 345; and nine Farm-to-Market roads traverse the County. Fifteen motor freight-trucking firms provide services to and from Brownsville. The U.S. Congress designated the proposed U.S. Interstate Highway 69 as a high priority corridor of national significance to serve as a primary trade route from Mexico through Texas to Canada. The proposed corridor will traverse eight states

and end at two southern points of border entry – Laredo and the Rio Grande Valley. Interstate Highway 69 is intended to link with the Veteran’s International Toll Bridge in Brownsville. TxDOT has commenced a multi-year program to improve Expressway 77/83 from a four-lane highway to a six-lane highway. When complete, Expressway 77/83 will be six lanes of east/west traffic thoroughfare extending between Brownville in the east to Mission in the west with complete highway interchanges to north-bound highways 281 and 77 located in Pharr and Harlingen.

The Union-Pacific Company and the Transportacion Ferroviaria Mexicana (TFM) presently provide rail service to the Rio Grande Valley and Mexico. Burlington-Northern-Santa Fe (BNSF) has rail-operating rights to the Brownsville Navigation District, although no service has taken place since the Union Pacific and Southern Pacific merger. The Brownsville-Matamoros international rail crossing into Mexico is one of four international rail crossings between Texas and Mexico.

Southwest Airlines, Continental Express Airlines and Sun County Airlines (during winter months) provide

commercial air service to Cameron County through Harlingen’s Valley International Airport. Federal Express, Airborne Express, Burlington Air Express, Emery Worldwide, Team Air Express, and United Parcel Service provide airfreight services. Continental Airlines provides commercial air-passenger service at the Brownsville - South Padre Island International Airport. The County owns a general aviation airport with some of the longest runways in South Texas. The County currently employs Southwind Aviation, Inc. as the Fixed Base Operator.

The Port of Brownsville is the main shipping port for the Rio Grande Valley and South Texas. Port facilities include a man-made basin, connected by seventeen miles of channel to the Gulf of Mexico, various docking and terminal facilities, warehousing and railway switching operations that serve worldwide shipping lines, and barge transportation. There still remains a significant shrimp boat fleet located at the Port of Brownsville and Port Isabel, however, the industry faces serious challenges. Various manufacturers have located facilities in the area, further diversifying the economy.

PORT OF BROWNSVILLE²
Total Activity (in Metric Tons)

Commodity	YTD October 2002	YTD October 2001	Tonnage Change	Percent Change
Break Bulk	1,914,058	1,778,043	136,015	7.6%
Liquid	50,297	43,299	6,998	16.16%
Petroleum	1,811,773	1,363,611	448,162	32.87%
Grain	19,709	25,550	(5,841)	-22.9%
Containers	2,035	505	1,530	303.0%
Machinery	2,233	7,455	(5,222)	-70.0%
Total	3,800,105	3,218,463	581,642	18.1%

² Border Business Indicators, College of Business Administration & Graduate School for International Trade, Texas A&M University, Vol. 25, No. 12. Dec. 2002. p.15.

The Port of Brownsville has had an 18.1 percent increase in total cargo tonnage compared to the same twelve-month period ending October 2002. The table below illustrates the total port activity in metric tons.

CARGO TONNAGE OF THE PORT OF BROWNSVILLE

Calendar Year ⁽¹⁾	Inbound Tonnage	Outbound Tonnage	Total Tonnage	Number of Vessels ⁽³⁾	Foreign Trade	
					Zone Traffic Value (000)	Foreign Trade Zone Tonnage
1991	1,904,852	236,806	2,141,658	3,346	\$2,387,046	870,502
1992	1,615,230	364,370	1,979,600	3,180	2,570,000	1,174,479
1993	1,863,115	385,954	2,249,069	3,325	2,720,000	1,131,000
1994	2,206,041	340,725	2,546,766	2,852	3,182,000	1,902,679
1995	1,088,436	1,090,575	2,179,011	3,140	1,900,000	⁽²⁾
1996	1,539,939	700,321	2,240,260	3,104	2,300,000	⁽²⁾
1997	1,958,241	509,831	2,468,072	1,325	2,300,000	⁽²⁾
1998	3,019,916	226,839	3,246,755	1,298	3,200,000	⁽²⁾
1999	2,615,330	283,592	2,898,922	1,592	230,000	⁽²⁾
2000	2,957,703	234,372	3,192,075	1,385	808,000	⁽²⁾
2001	2,646,332	291,643	2,937,975	1,112	384,848	⁽²⁾
2002	N/A	N/A	5,145,111*	951*	966,468	⁽²⁾

⁽¹⁾ As of December 31st. (information provided by the Port of Brownsville Staff)

⁽²⁾ The Port no longer records FTZ tonnage.

⁽³⁾ Includes domestic shrimp boat activity through 1996 only. Domestic shrimp boat activity is no longer recorded.

* 257 cargo ships and 694 barges, 4,645,111 tons water born tonnage with approximately 500,000 tons non-water born tonnage (information supplied via phone March 6, 2003-Sabin)

Agriculture

Cameron County, Texas has more than 230 growing days a year. Agriculture land use is 395,000 acres of cropland, 25,000 acres of pastureland, 100,000 acres of rangeland, and 68,000 acres for wildlife. The major crops include upland cotton, grain sorghum, corn for grain, sugar cane, cabbage, onions, bell peppers, sweet corn, tomatoes, carrots, citrus and specialty crops such as aloe vera. In the area of horticulture production, nursery operations have become second to cotton in agriculture income in the county. The agricultural economy in the county is losing land to urban development. An increased demand is being placed on agriculture irrigation water by urban areas for domestic and industrial use. The current pressing water shortage situation has also contributed to lessen water availability for both rural and urban areas. The farm economy within Cameron County could suffer the loss of millions of dollars if water shortage for irrigation continues. Water conservation and protecting water quality will continue to be a very important issue. Farming, although no longer as dominant, continues to be a significant industry within the County.

Tourism/ Recreation

Several years ago, the State of Texas enacted strict fishing laws aimed at conservation. The impact has been so positive that the sport fishing industry has evolved with a full array of services from fishing guides to the manufacturing of specially designed, shallow draft fishing boats. The re-discovery of this fishermen’s paradise has further enhanced the tourism industry.

Eco-tourism has become a major economic force in this region. The Rio Grande Valley is known nation-wide for the number of bird varieties found nowhere else in the United States. A national “Birding Center” satellite location is being planned for this area. Bird watching has become a very popular activity for visitors to the County.

Because of a year-round semi-tropical climate, South Padre Island beach and its proximity to Mexico, tourism has replaced farming as the County’s number one industry for a number of years. The County’s warm climate provides the opportunity for residents and visitors to participate in sports and recreational activities year-round. In Cameron County, there are at least ten

regulation golf courses and a number of par three courses. The latest golf course is currently open in the Laguna Madre area. The Cameron County Park System owns and operates Isla Blanca Park, Andy Bowie Park, Adolph Thomae Park, E.K. Atwood Park, public beach access and four community parks. The County Park System's mission is to provide quality recreation opportunities to the citizens of Cameron County at an affordable price. In addition, the Park System seeks to develop and protect the County's coastal resources.

The Park System provides beach access for day-use enjoyment, offering parking, stores, restaurants, beach equipment rental, and covered areas to escape the summer sun. Fishing, surfing, volleyball and strolling along the edge of the shoreline are the main activities enjoyed at the County parks in South Padre Island. Thomae Park is located on the Arroyo Colorado River,

three miles from the Laguna Madre Bay. It caters to fishing enthusiasts by providing a boat ramp, fish-cleaning facilities, vehicle and trailer parking, picnic areas and campsites.

The Park System provides controlled access to the miles of public beaches north of Andy Bowie Park. The Park System also provides commissioned officer park ranger patrol to the parks and unincorporated public areas.

Cameron County Revenues and Other Resources

The following schedule presents a summary of General Fund, Special Revenue Funds, and Debt Service Funds revenues for the fiscal year ended September 30, 2002, and the amount and percentage of increases and decreases in relation to the prior year's amounts.

GENERAL FUND, SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS, AND DEBT SERVICE FUND

2001-2002 Schedule of Revenues, Transfers In and Financing Proceeds

Funding Sources	Amount	Percentage of Total	Increase (Decrease) From 2001-2000	Percentage Of Increase (Decrease)
Taxes	\$28,065,146	38.65%	\$2,492,912	9.75%
Licenses and permits	2,993,076	4.12%	715,777	31.43%
Intergovernmental	17,438,750	24.01%	1,790,590	11.44%
Charges for services	7,020,642	9.67%	2,034,416	40.80%
Fines and forfeitures	2,136,603	2.94%	(155,369)	(-6.78%)
Miscellaneous	5,286,391	7.28%	683,302	14.84%
	\$62,940,608	86.67%	7,561,628	13.65%
Transfers in and financing proceeds	9,678,751	13.33%	1,855,606	23.72%
TOTALS	\$72,619,359	100.00%	\$9,417,234	14.90%

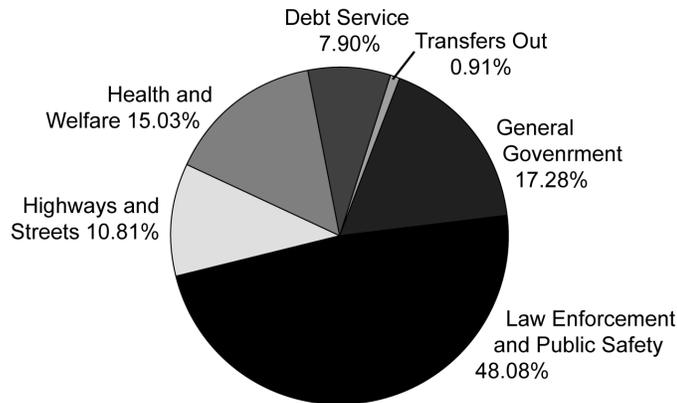
Expenditures and Other Uses

The following schedule presents a summary of General Fund, Special Revenue Funds, and Debt Service Fund expenditures for the fiscal year ended September 30, 2002, and the percentage of increases and decreases in relation to the prior year's amounts.

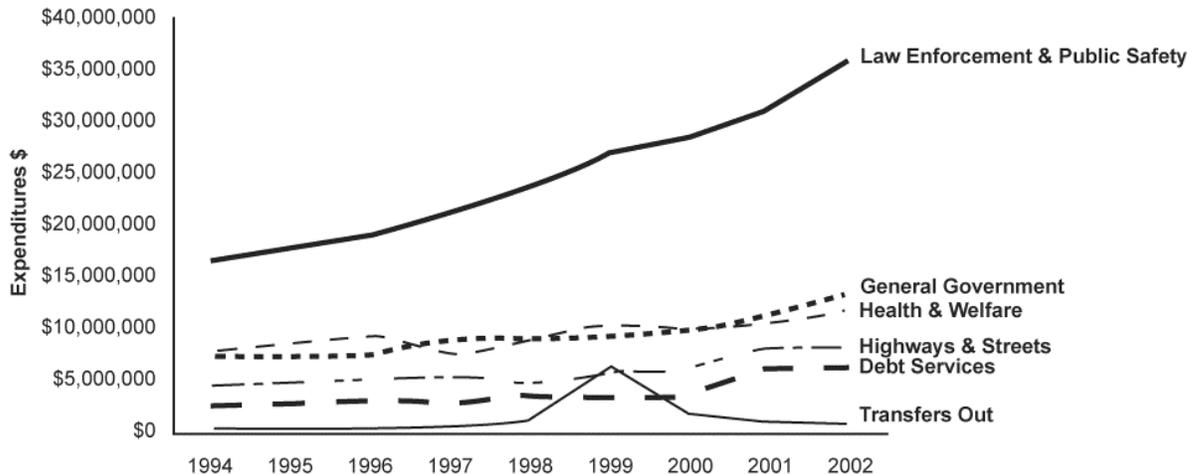
GENERAL FUND, SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS, AND DEBT SERVICE FUND

2001-2002 Schedule of Expenditures

Funding Uses	Amount	Percentage of Total	Increase (Decrease) From 2000-2001	Percentage Of Increase (-Decrease)
General Government	\$12,596,819	17.28%	\$1,963,028	18.46%
Law Enforcement and Public Safety	35,061,555	48.08%	4,583,518	15.04%
Highways and Streets	7,879,632	10.81%	76,454	0.98%
Health and Welfare	10,959,784	15.03%	872,351	8.65%
Debt Service	5,760,246	7.90%	85,065	1.50%
Subtotal	72,258,036	99.09%	7,580,416	11.72%
Transfers Out	660,632	0.91%	8,149	1.25%
TOTAL	\$72,918,668	100.00%	\$7,588,565	11.62%



GENERAL FUND, SPECIAL REVENUES, AND DEBT SERVICE EXPENDITURES SINCE 1994



International Toll Bridge System

The Cameron County International Toll Bridge System is composed of three international bridges. Cameron County purchased Gateway International Toll Bridge on April 14, 1961 from the Gateway Bridge Company and operated it as its only bridge until 1992 when the Free Trade Bridge at Los Indios opened. Gateway International Bridge was originally

constructed in 1927-1928 and was formally called the Brownsville/Matamoros Gateway Bridge. The Veterans International Bridge at Los Tomates began operations on April 30, 1999. Two of the bridges, Gateway International Bridge and Veterans International Bridge at Los Tomates are located in the City of Brownsville, while the Free Trade Bridge is located eight miles south of Harlingen and San Benito.

INTERNATIONAL BRIDGE TOLL RATES

The following schedule illustrates the change in tolls over the past two years and the tolls that are in effect as of October 1, 2002:

<u>Classification</u>	<u>Sept. 30, 2001</u>	<u>Sept. 30, 2002</u>	<u>Oct. 1, 2002</u>
Pedestrian	\$0.35	\$0.40	\$0.50*
Motorcycle	0.35	0.40	1.80*
Passenger	1.40	1.40	1.80*
Commercial Vehicles			
Two Axle	4.00	6.00*	7.00*
Three Axle	6.00	9.00*	10.50*
Four Axle	8.00	12.00*	14.00*
Five Axle	10.00	15.00*	17.50*
Six Axle	12.00	18.00*	21.00*

**Increased Toll Fees*

For the fiscal year ending September 30, 2002 a total of 8,579,522 vehicles and pedestrians had crossed into Mexico through the County's International Toll Bridges. Total crossings increased 2 percent from year 2001 totals. Total crossings have averaged a 1.6 percent increase each

year for a total increase of 24 percent since 1989, however, pedestrian crossings have declined 16 percent since 1989, where vehicle crossings increased by 1,883,089, a 55 percent increase for that same period.

HISTORICAL CROSSING SUMMARY					HISTORICAL REVENUE SUMMARY			
Fiscal Year	Vehicle Crossing	Pedestrian Crossings	Total Crossing	Percent Change	Vehicle Revenue	Pedestrian Revenue	Total Toll Revenues	Percent Change
1989	3,743,650	3,185,584	6,929,234	N/A	\$3,069,772	\$318,059	\$3,387,831	N/A
1990	3,584,881	3,054,936	6,639,817	-4.2%	\$2,944,282	\$305,494	\$3,249,776	-4.1%
1991	3,144,584	3,309,911	6,454,495	-2.8%	\$2,766,080	\$742,763	\$3,508,843	8.0%
1992*	2,914,499	3,208,658	6,123,157	-5.1%	\$3,150,762	\$870,617	\$4,021,379	14.6%
1993	3,836,648	3,011,457	6,848,105	11.8%	\$5,071,802	\$819,857	\$5,891,659	46.5%
1994	4,212,779	2,925,720	7,138,499	4.2%	\$5,707,830	\$795,626	\$6,503,456	10.4%
1995	4,219,762	2,930,748	7,150,510	0.2%	\$5,660,014	\$732,687	\$6,392,701	-1.7%
1996	4,408,861	2,991,645	7,400,506	3.5%	\$5,825,085	\$747,911	\$6,572,996	2.8%
1997	4,479,652	3,083,604	7,563,256	2.2%	\$6,115,200	\$770,901	\$6,886,101	4.8%
1998	4,282,335	3,006,193	7,288,528	-3.6%	\$6,885,285	\$914,279	\$7,799,564	13.3%
1999**	5,050,937	2,756,200	7,807,137	7.1%	\$7,964,106	\$965,233	\$8,929,339	14.5%
2000	5,541,512	2,605,429	8,146,941	4.4%	\$10,125,265	\$911,900	\$11,037,165	23.6%
2001	5,755,538	2,674,850	8,430,388	3.5%	\$11,312,332	\$936,198	\$12,248,530	11.0%
2002	5,952,314	2,627,208	8,579,522	1.8%	\$12,333,515	\$1,050,883	\$13,384,398	9.3%

*Free Trade Bridge at Los Indios opened November 2, 1992

** Veteran s International Toll Bridge at Los Tomates opened April 30, 1999

International Bridge Crossings By Category

INTERNATIONAL TOLL BRIDGE SYSTEM — SOUTHBOUND CROSSINGS

	FY 2001 — 2002		FY 2000-2001	
Autos	5,626,739	66.0%	5,432,411	64.4%
Commercial Vehicles	258,320	2.8%	263,954	3.1%
Bike & Motorcycles	16,829	0.2%	16,285	0.2%
Buses	16,829	0.2%	17,198	0.2%
Misc. & Extra Axle	33,597	0.3%	25,690	0.3%
Pedestrian	2,627,208	30.5%	2,674,850	31.7%
Total	8,579,522	100.0%	8,430,388	100.0%

Over the past year, passenger vehicle crossings increased by 4%, while commercial truck crossings declined by 2%. Bus and pedestrian traffic also declined by 2 percent again as a result of the slowing economy.

Veterans International Toll Bridge at Los Tomates continued to grow in crossings and experienced a 6 percent growth compared to the past year's totals. All commercial trucks within Brownsville have been routed to Veterans International Toll Bridge. Commercial truck crossings are nearly nonexistent at Brownsville's other two international toll bridges. Total crossings at Veterans International Toll Bridge grew by 142,315, whereas, crossings at Gateway International Toll Bridge

fell by 70,818, primarily pedestrian traffic, and at the Free Trade Bridge at Los Indios crossings increased by 77,641.

Revenues

International Toll Bridge System Revenues earned \$13,827,154 for the Fiscal Year ended September 30, 2002. Although total revenues grew by \$863,254 or by 6.7%, overall crossings grew by 1.8%. The increase in revenues can be significantly attributed to the increase in toll rates implemented October 1, 2001. Rental and interest income totaled \$155,694, up by \$107,358 and interest on investments was \$287,062, down by \$379,972 for the same period the previous year.

FISCAL YEAR 2002 REVENUE AT EACH OF THE COUNTY'S THREE BRIDGES IS AS FOLLOWS:

	Gateway International	Free Trade Bridge at Los Indios	Veterans at Los Tomates
Tolls	\$5,206,265	\$1,535,757	\$6,642,376
Rental & Other Income	149,333	6,306	55
Interest on Investments	166,426	22,621	98,015
Total	\$5,522,024	\$1,564,684	\$6,740,446
Allocation	40%	11%	49%

Bridge Expenses

Total operating expenses for the International Toll Bridge System for fiscal year 2002 were \$4,217,945, which was 1.8 percent lower than last year, a savings of \$77,167. Depreciation expense recorded for the System was \$1,143,711. The Bridge System retired \$1,275,000 in revenue bonds during the year and incurred \$1,143,963 in interest and related fee payments. The coverage ratio for the Bridge System climbed to 4.45, up from 3.80 reported in fiscal year 2001.

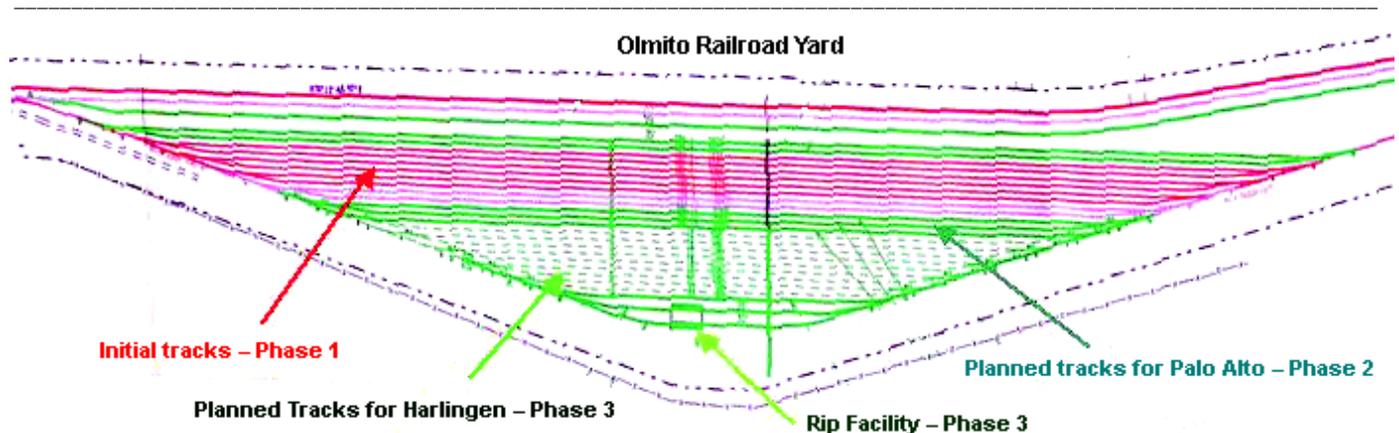


Background of Railroads and Relocations in Brownsville

The intersection of the street and rail system at grade or ground level is not, nor has ever been desirable in terms of safety, congestion and efficiency. Brownsville’s efforts to relocate the railroads began in the early 1970’s when Brownsville was selected as one of twelve federally chosen sites for demonstration projects. Those projects focused on eliminating the hazard of at-grade street and rail crossings. The Brownsville Navigation District served as project sponsor for the railroad relocation project.

Brownsville’s initial railroad relocation program was approved in 1975 with funding limited to technical studies and the development of an Engineering Report and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). At that time the Missouri Pacific Railroad Company (MoPac) and the SP Railroad Company (SPRR) provided rail service to Brownsville. The MoPac provided rail service to Mexico. Between 1970 and 1985 the technical studies evolved into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for implementation of the railroad relocation project. Since 1984 local and federal relocation funding in the amount of \$40 million has included major phases of that plan as follows:

- New grade separations over the proposed north rail loop have been constructed at SH 48, FM 511, FM 1847 and US 77/83 Expressway.
- The new Palo Alto switchyard has been constructed near the Port of Brownsville and the original SPRR between Sixth and Seventh Streets in downtown Brownsville has been removed. The Palo Alto switchyard was recently purchased by the Brownsville Navigation District from the UPRR.
- A new rail north loop has been constructed between the Port of Brownsville and west of US 77/83.
- The final phase of the plan, including the construction of a new switchyard at the Olmito site (shown below), is planned to begin operation in June 2003.
- Following the construction of the Olmito switchyard and its connecting tracks into the main UPRR “Brownsville Subdivision Track” the Port of Brownsville trackage through the City of Brownsville along Harrison St. in front of the County Courthouse and the Federal courthouse will be removed. Figure 1 (next page) shows a concept drawing of the Railroad Relocation Project and the proposed West Rail Relocation Plan.



A United States Presidential Permit was issued to the Brownsville Navigation District in 1995, although to date, Mexico has not exchanged Diplomatic Notes for the construction of the international bridge. During the 30 years of rail relocation in Brownsville, no construction action has taken place in Mexico to complement the United States portion of the project.

The existing international rail crossing into Mexico spans the Brownsville & Matamoros Bridge (B&M Bridge), owned by a partnership with the UPRR and the Federal Government of Mexico. Further historical data and discussions of the B&M Bridge are included later within this report.

Railroad Consolidation — U.S. and Mexico

The nation's rail industry has been and continues to evolve through bankruptcies of railroad companies and mergers. Penn Central Railway bankruptcy in the 1970's continues to be felt in Texas and Cameron County. In 1980 Congress passed legislation partially deregulating rail rates and services to improve efficiencies. During this time rail carriers formed mergers and consolidations for financial stability and growth. The most significant change felt in Cameron County occurred in 1982 when the UPRR, Missouri Pacific and the West Pacific combined to form the UPRR.

In 1995 the UPRR and SP railroad announced their plan to merge creating a railroad serving 25 States, Mexico and Canada over 31,000 miles of operating rail. Following this action, the 1995 merger of the UPRR with the Southern Pacific (SP) resulted in only one Class I rail carrier to serve the Rio Grande Valley of Texas. In response to criticism of this merger from shippers, railroads, and State officials that the merger was anticompetitive, the UPRR officials granted trackage operating rights to the Burlington Northern-Santa Fe (BNSF) Railroad. Such action provides that the BNSF has access to UPRR trackage in Cameron County and the Port of Brownsville. As of this date, no service from BNSF has been proposed to the Cameron County area. The local rail carriers such as the Rio Valley Switching Company (RVSC) operating between

Harlingen and McAllen and the Brownsville Rio Grande (BRG) railroad at the Port of Brownsville continue to rely on the UPRR through negotiated operating and tariff agreements.

In addition to rail consolidations in the United States, the Federal Government of Mexico privatized the Country's railroads and awarded concessions to competing railroad companies. The Mexican concessionaire in the northeast region of Mexico and serving the area between Eagle Pass and Brownsville is the Grupo Transportacion Ferroviaria Mexicana (TFM). The following map reflects the TFM routes in Mexico.

THE NETWORK BETWEEN THE TFM AND THE UPRR IS SHOWN ON THE MAP.



In the United States the railroad companies own rights-of-way while in Mexico the rail rights-of-way ownership is still retained by the federal government. This issue is critical in Mexico relative to the transfer, sale or award of concession for the future use of the right-of-way.

West Rail Relocation Project Background

A west rail relocation plan for Brownsville and Matamoros is being proposed as an alternative to constructing a series of grade separations along the existing UPRR route in the residential and downtown areas of Brownsville. On March 29, 2000 the City of Brownsville held a public hearing regarding construction of two of the previously planned seven overpasses over the UPRR through-line into Mexico. The comments presented during the public hearing were balanced between the pros and cons for the project. Following the public hearing and at the direction of the local elected officials to seek a compromise, another alternative was explored, namely relocating the UPRR outside of the downtown Brownsville area to the west and included Matamoros as a partner similarly by relocating their rail to the west.

The west rail plan, alternative 1 being proposed and as shown on Figure 2 (page 19) would begin at the UPRR's rail junction with the route to the Olmito switchyard south of Olmito. It would then continue westward north of the future World Birding Center then turn southward to US 281 and continue across the Rio Grande River to a site, 15 river miles upstream from the existing B&M rail bridge, for its connection into the TFM route to Monterrey, Mexico. The aerial photograph reflects design constraints throughout the area and corridor. A schematic design will be developed following the issuance of a "Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)" for the environmental assessment and the issuance of a Presidential Permit. Participating in the planning of this alternative have been the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), Cameron County, City of Brownsville, UPRR, TFM, City of Matamoros, State of Tamaulipas, and the Federal Government of Mexico through the Secretaria de Comunicaciones Y Transportes (SCT).

Cameron County is the project sponsor in the United States and is supported by the City of Brownsville. TxDOT cannot participate in the funding of a rail project due to State regulations, although it may support a rail project by other means. As such, the West Rail

Relocation Plan also includes the purchase of the existing UPRR right-of-way by TxDOT followed by the construction of a new four-lane west highway within the vacated right-of-way. The construction of the west highway by TxDOT will provide an additional transportation corridor needed to access west Brownsville, Amigoland area and the B&M International Bridge.

The original major thoroughfare plan as contained in Brownsville's Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) and the Long Range Plan provided for constructing grade separations along the UPRR. The approximate estimated cost for the overpasses was \$43 million. The advantages and benefits of the West Rail Relocation Plan as compared to the original transportation plan of constructing a series of grade separations are as follows:

- (1) Removes the rail system from the residential and downtown areas of Brownsville and Matamoros.
- (2) Eliminates 14 existing at grade street-rail crossings in Brownsville where 65,000 vehicles cross daily with 20-year projections at 200,000 vehicles.
- (3) Eliminates rail and rail switching operations in downtown Matamoros.
- (4) Reduces rail freight travel time from the Brownsville UPRR switching yard to Monterrey.
- (5) Eliminates the current three-hour time restriction for trains to cross the international bridge during the AM and PM traffic peaks in Matamoros due to heavy traffic conditions.
- (6) Improves traffic safety and reduces traffic congestion.
- (7) Creates the opportunity for a new transportation corridor, a "west highway" for the two communities.
- (8) Improves emergency access to west Brownsville.
- (9) Improves the environment.

The elimination of rail operations through the middle of the residential and downtown areas of Brownsville and Matamoros would greatly improve the quality of life in the two communities and would complete the railroad relocation project originally begun in the early 1970's. This plan also provides Brownsville with a new transportation corridor to a critical area of the downtown area and one that will be capable of accommodating an additional 24,000 to 35,000 vehicles per day within west Brownsville. A similar transportation corridor, Avenida Las Americas, is proposed in west Matamoros.

The coordination of this Plan involves agencies and companies through inter-local agreements, competitive rail tariffs and rail operations, and a balanced funding plan. The plan is to proceed following the issuance of a Presidential Permit with the U.S. Coast Guard Permit, engineering plans and the submittal of bridge plans to

the U.S. section of International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) for their approval.

Safety — Rail Versus Vehicles

Along the existing rail routes, school children, elderly persons, and shoppers in the central business district presently cross at-grade rail lines daily. The relocation of the rail to the west will eliminate this measured hazardous condition.

Between 1990-1998 there were 30 vehicle-train accidents resulting in 23 people injured and one fatality in Brownsville. These 30 accidents over the nine-year period, averaging 3.3 accidents per year, are relatively small in terms of the annual accidents that occur in Brownsville, although Cameron County ranked fourth in the State in terms of automobile-railroad accidents. In Matamoros there were 17 fatalities recorded over a two-year span between 2000-2002.

FIGURE 2. WEST RAIL RELOCATION MAP



The preferred alternative, alternative 1, for the West Rail Relocation Plan as developed through the public involvement phase of the environmental assessment.



Train-Truck Accident In Cameron County

In addition to the recorded accidents there have been numerous derailments throughout the community.



Train Derailment Near Palm Blvd. Shopping Center



Derailment April 2003 in Los Fresnos

Seventy percent of rail vehicular accidents occurred at major highway crossings, US 281, FM 802 or FM 3248. The US 281 crossing shown in the photograph is one of the critical safety problems that would be eliminated.



UPRR at West US 281 at grade crossing

From a safety standpoint, the local community would receive both short and long term benefits from eliminating the at grade rail crossings as shown in the adjacent photograph. Each at grade location represents a hazard to motorists and the railroad. Seven of these at grade crossings have been identified for grade separations.

Rail And Vehicle Volumes

There has been a significant increase in international rail traffic across the Rio Grande in recent years that is contributed to NAFTA. In 2001 the total rail traffic northbound and southbound across the B&M Bridge reached 197,352 crossings. This total includes the Port of Brownsville’s rail cars representing approximately 30 percent of the total rail traffic. As trains travel into Brownsville to reach the B&M Bridge they must cross many at grade crossings, travel adjacent to elementary schools and generally create congestion throughout the urban route. Vehicular volumes across the 14 at grade crossings in Brownsville were 65,000 vehicles per day in 1999 and are projected to reach 200,000 vehicles per day in 2025. When combined with six trains per day, these conflicts represent a significant hazard to the community. The table below shows the 1999 and future vehicular crossing volumes at the at-grade crossings in Brownsville that would be eliminated as a result of the west rail plan.

STREET VEHICLE VOLUMES AT RAIL CROSSINGS BROWNSVILLE, TEXAS

Street	1999 ADT Volumes	2025* ADT Volumes
Palm Blvd.	13,680	39,044
West 5th St.	2,340	15,309
West 8th St.	449	8,370
West 11th St.	10	15
West 13th St.	810	6,169
Elizabeth St.	60	65
Washington St.	70	75
US 281	15,210	38,580
Old Military Hwy.	4,390	8,780
Los Ebanos	6,560	11,262
FM 802	9,010	16,992
Fm 3248	8,440	17,669
Tandy Rd.	230	460
Fish Hatcheries Rd.	240	480
Sixth St. — planned	0	16,877
Seventh St. — planned	0	14,880
Morrison Rd. — planned	0	5,000
Total ADT Volume	61,499	200,027

ADT = Average Daily Traffic

*Year 2025 volumes from traffic assignment projections by the TxDOT



Existing Brownsville/Matamoros Rail Bridge

Existing Brownsville and Matamoros Rail Bridge

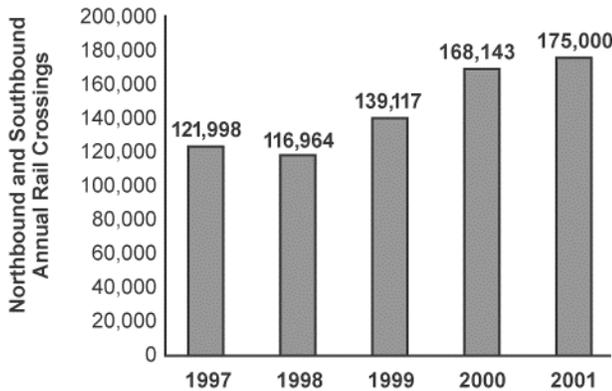
The St. Louis, Brownsville and Mexico Railroad arrived in Brownsville in 1904. The Rio Grande separated the U.S. railway from the Mexican national railway line. Congressman John Nance Garner (1868-1967), later Vice President of the United States, introduced a bill into Congress in 1908 providing for the construction of a bridge spanning the river and connecting the two railways.

The B&M Bridge Company, owned equally by the St. Louis, Brownsville and Mexico Railway and the Mexican National Railway, was incorporated in 1909 to handle bridge operations. In 1909 St. Louis, Brownsville and Mexico railway magnate Benjamin F. Yoakum (1859 – 1929) met with representatives of the Mexican national railway. An agreement was reached, and Yoakum hired the Foundation Company of New York to build the concrete foundations and the Wisconsin Bridge Company of Milwaukee to erect the steel spans. Work on the structure began in April 1909. The entire structure, a swing bridge of riveted construction, was completed in the summer of 1910. It was swung open in July of that year for inspection and was photographed by Robert Runyon. By that time, Rio Grande River traffic in the area had ceased, and the swing function was unnecessary. The cost of the bridge, which totaled 227

feet in length, was \$225,000. The bridge was renovated for automobile traffic in 1953 and 1992. A parallel vehicular bridge was constructed adjacent to the rail bridge and opened in 1997.

International rail traffic at the B&M Bridge continues to increase through Brownsville. The table below reflects more recent trends between 1997 and 2001.

Total Railroad Crossings at the B&M Bridge 1997 — 2001



Source B&M Bridge Company

In the United States the B&M Bridge Company presently owns the single track approach, a distance of 3,859 feet north and west of the center of the Rio Grande River. Along this section are the steel truss railroad bridge over the Rio Grande River, a concrete railroad bridge over Mexico Blvd. and the B&M Bridge Company office building. The location of the ownership transition from the B&M Bridge Company to the UPRR occurs approximately 100 feet east of 5th Street in Brownsville. From that point west the main track and the existing Amigoland switchyard continues. The tracks within the switchyard are to be removed since switching operations were officially transferred to the Olmito switchyard on June 7, 2003.



Train crossing B&M International Rail Bridge southbound



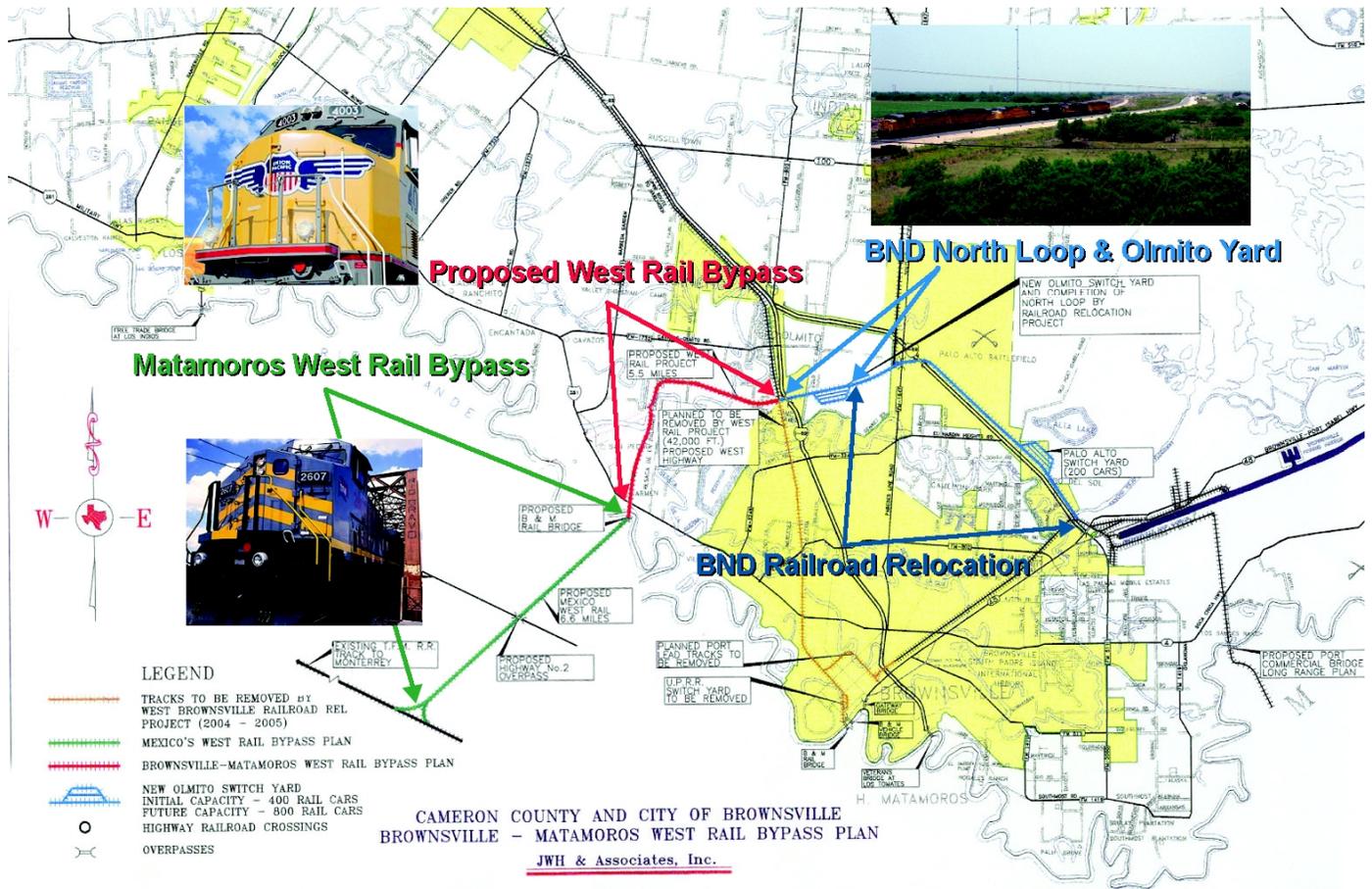
Proposed Project

Proposed Project Description

A continuation of the relocation of railroads is proposed locally for that portion of the UPRR and the TFM routes traversing the downtown areas of Brownsville and

Matamoros as shown on the drawing, Figure 3. The portion shown in red represents the U.S. West Rail Relocation. The green indicates Mexico's project.

FIGURE 3. WEST RAIL PROJECT AND BROWNSVILLE S ORIGINAL RAILROAD RELOCATION



It is proposed to construct 5.2 miles of new rail trackage between the Olmito's UPRR rail junction and the Rio Grande River. Similarly in Mexico, it is proposed to construct 6.6 miles of new rail trackage between the existing west trackage to the Rio Grande River. Jointly, a new international rail bridge is proposed to be constructed for the B&M Bridge Company. The existing B&M Bridge would continue to be owned and operated by the B&M Bridge Company and will be utilized to add vehicular traffic capacity for the urbanized international crossing. The elements presently planned by the various private and governmental agencies are as follows:

- Construct 5.2 miles of new single-track rail in the U.S. between Olmito and the Rio Grande River.
- Mexico will construct 6.6 miles of new rail trackage in Mexico.
- Construct a new rail-only international bridge at the approximate corridor location of Rio Grande River mile location 70.2.
- Mexico will construct a new rail switchyard to the west and remove the existing switchyard and tracks from downtown Matamoros.
- It is proposed that TxDOT will purchase the existing UPRR 100 feet of right-of-way between FM 3248 (Flor de Mayo) and Sixth Street. A minute order has been requested following the issuance of the Presidential Permit.
- TxDOT will plan for construction of a four lane divided highway within the acquired rail right-of-way. The first priority would be that segment from US 281 to Sixth Street.

A hydraulic analysis of the water lows in the Rio Grande will be performed based on the proposed bridge design. Such analysis will be submitted to IBWC for their approval. Bridge plans will be submitted concurrently with the hydraulic analysis.

Engineering Criteria

The engineering criteria for the railroad relocation project will follow the same standards that have been utilized for the original railroad projects. A brief summary of the design criteria is included in this section.

The selected design hurricane conditions for this project conform to a 100-year return frequency storm and include:

1. Sustained design wind of 100 mph
2. Tidal surge elevation of +10.2 feet MSL

The hydraulic design practices for this project will be in accordance with current TxDOT and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) design policies and standards. The railroad facility will permit the conveyance of a 100-year flow without causing significant damage to the railroad, streams or other properties.

The primary source of flooding along the project corridor is from water accumulating in the drainage ditches and resacas serving the corridor that are not adequate for the rainfall. Railroad facilities will generally be constructed at or above the elevation of the adjoining terrain. A three-foot minimum embankment will be utilized along much of the corridor. The international bridge will span from the US 281 northern bridge embankments in the U.S. to the Comisión Internacional de Límites y Aguas (CILA) levee in Mexico.

The UPRR was contacted to provide design criteria, standard specifications and design detailed drawings to be used for planning the west rail facility. This new west segment would be constructed to the applicable standards and would meet the following criteria:

ENGINEERING DESIGN STANDARDS

Design Element	Standard
1. Maximum Grade	1%
2. Maximum Horizontal curvature	3 degrees
3. Clearances	criteria
4. Rail section	115 #/yd
5. Tie spacing	19 1/2
6. Minimum grade for ditches	0.2%
7. Ballast material	Crushed stone, 15 to 19
8. Sub-ballast material	Selected materials
9. Sub-grade	Lime stabilized and compacted
10. Min. right-of-way	100
11. International bridge	Mexico/U.S. coord.
12. Train design speed	50 MPH
13. SKEW	30 _i max.

This new track will be constructed to the described specifications and to the cross-sections shown on Figure 5 (next page). Side drainage ditches will be constructed

to minimize borrow materials. For drainage, corrugated metal pipe culverts or pre-cast concrete boxes would be provided under the track, at drainage ditches. Pre-cast concrete trestles supported on pre-cast concrete piles will be provided at resacas.

The at grade rail crossing at New Carmen Road will initially contain flashers and gates for safety protection. The acquisition of right-of-way for an ultimate overpass for New Carmen Road will be undertaken concurrently with the rail right-of-way.

Proposed International Rail Bridge

The proposed international rail bridge will span over U.S. 281, the IBWC levee, the floodway and the Rio Grande River. Coordination is underway for a similar design in Mexico where the bridge will continue over their floodway and then tie into the south bridge abutment south of the Mexican levee. A concept schematic drawing is shown of the proposed bridge on Figure 4.

FIGURE 4. PROPOSED B&M RAIL INTERNATIONAL BRIDGE

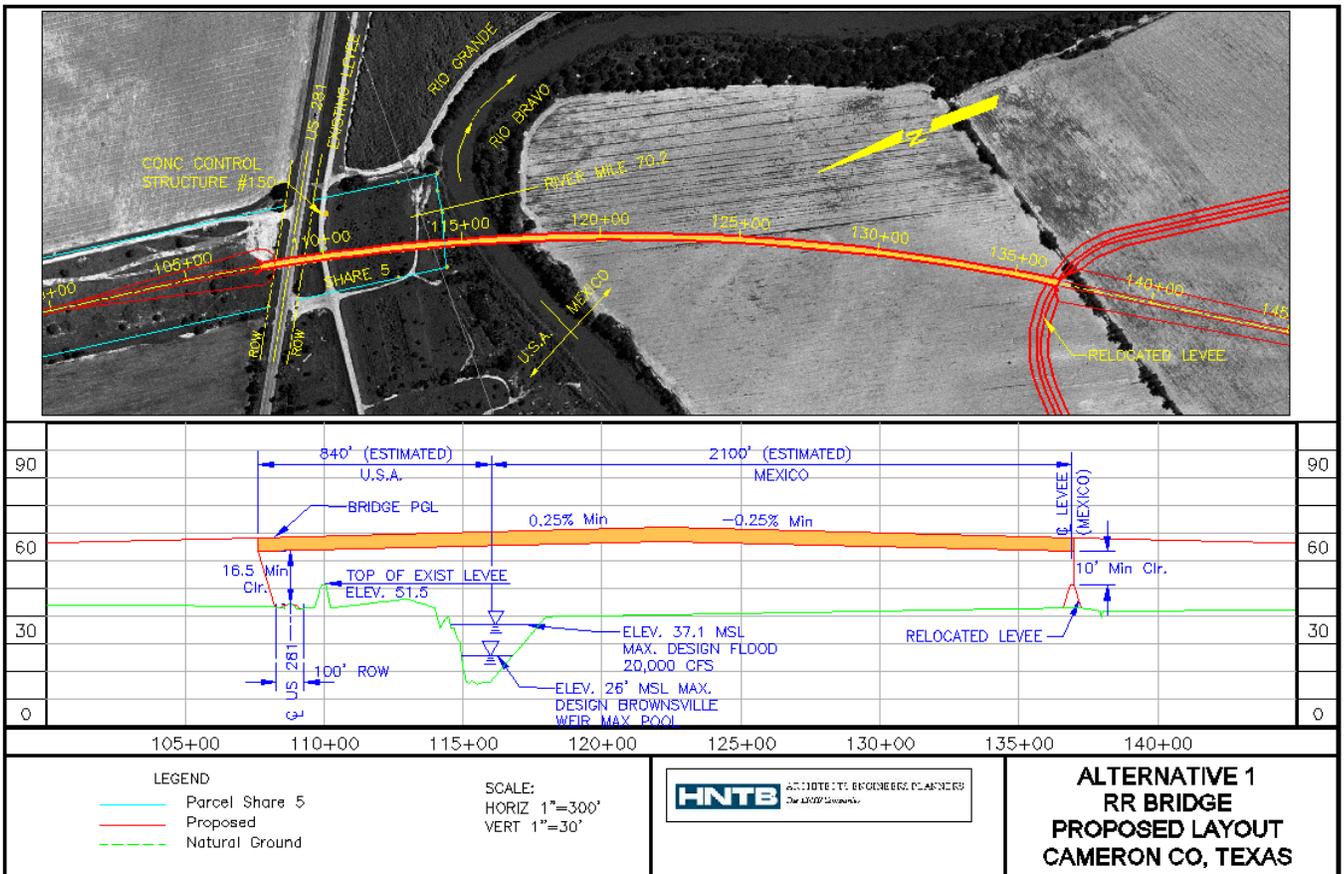
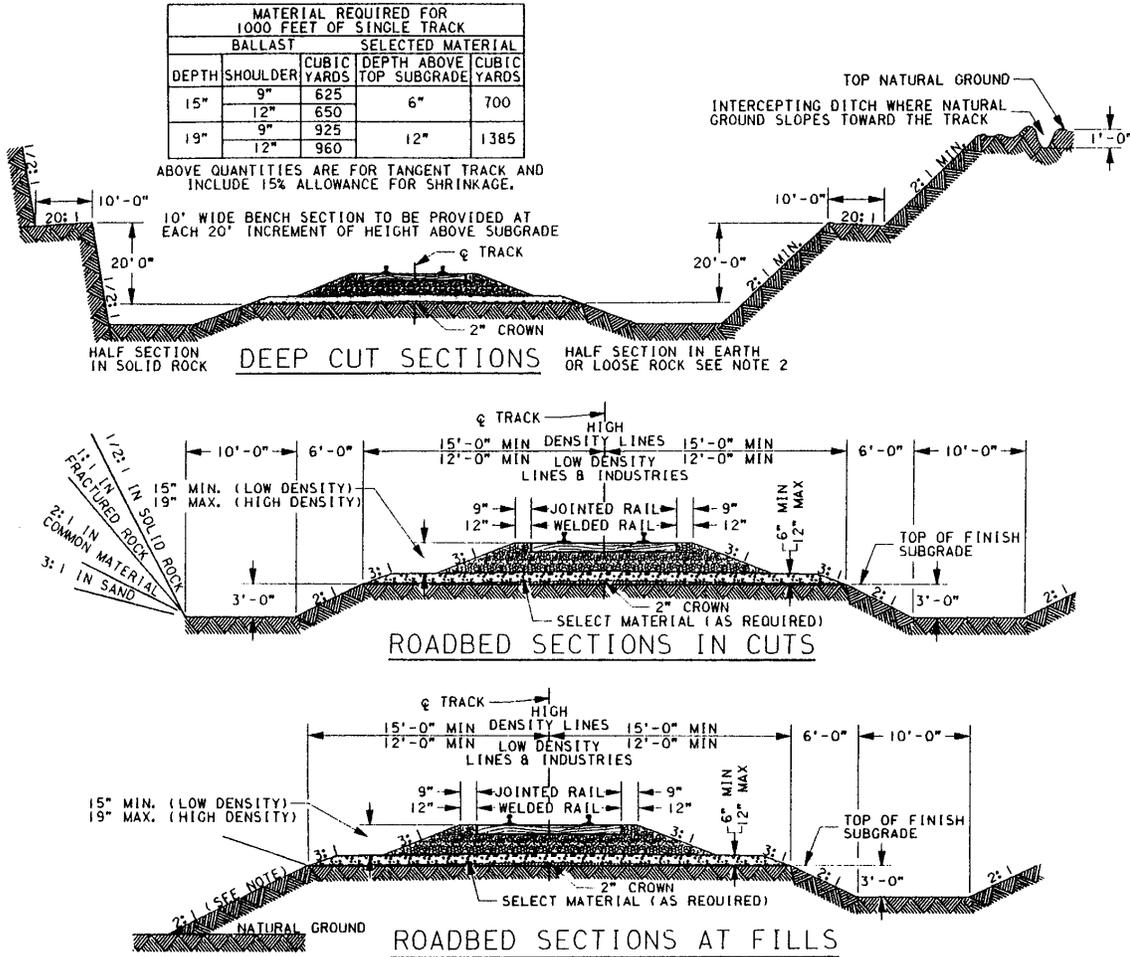
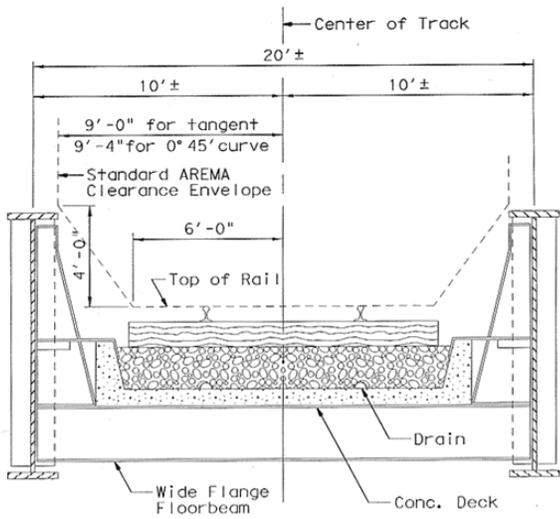


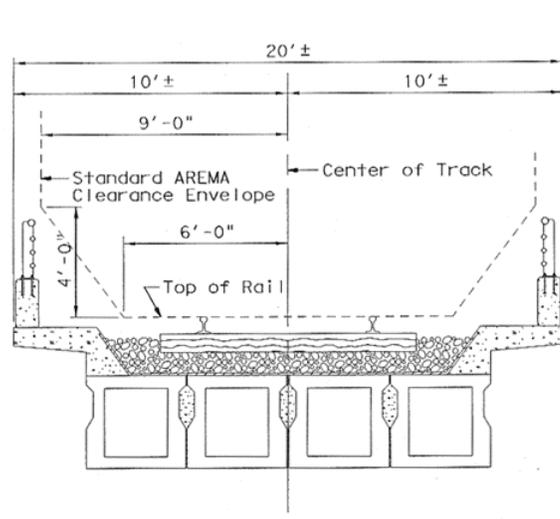
FIGURE 5. CROSS SECTIONS OF INTERNATIONAL RAIL PROJECT



Roadbed Sections



Steel Bridge Section



Concrete Bridge Section

Presentations of the proposed bridge were made to the U.S. and Mexican Sections of IBWC. The details regarding the final proposed bridge design will be undertaken following the issuance of the Presidential Permit. Geotechnical surveys will be developed along the proposed bridge alignment to determine the bridge foundation design and superstructure design. Hydraulic studies will be undertaken concurrently with the bridge design to determine the impact to the river flows.

The bridge schematic has included the proposed Brownsville Weir Dam as part on the planned design. The weir dam is expected to increase the water levels through this area to an elevation of 26 feet mean sea level (msl). Coordination of the bridge location, design and operation has been underway with the Brownsville Public Utility Board (PUB).

International Crossing Site

The site of the proposed international rail bridge is at the border of the United States and Mexico on the Rio Grande River, approximately 15 river miles upstream from the existing B&M Rail Bridge and is defined at River Mile 70.2.



Proposed international rail bridge crossing Rio Grande River



U.S. and Mexican project meeting at future rail Rio Grande River Crossing

In Mexico the rail location is west of the Municipality of Matamoros. The land north and south of the Rio Grande River is farmland. The U.S. and Mexican sections of the IBWC control the river levee and land developments between the levee and the river. Discussions with IBWC indicated that this reach of the river does not contain a vegetation management plan.

Proposed Railroad Border Operation and Inspection Facilities

International railroad operations presently include stopping all trains at the border while the railroad crews are changed. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) sections, formally the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and Customs, manage federal border railway inspections. Inspections of rail cargo take place at the border and through the use of the Vehicle and Cargo Inspection System (VACIS) Gamma Ray machine. The railroad relocation project includes the moving of the VACIS unit to the new rail international bridge crossing. A building for the B&M Bridge Company will be constructed near the proposed rail bridge for the B&M Bridge Company personnel and DHS personnel. Coordination for the building facility is underway with the B&M Bridge Company, and the Bureau of Customs and Border Protection as per direction from General Services Administration (GSA). All utilities are available in the area of the proposed rail crossing near U.S. 281. If needed an access road will be provided to the facility.

The B&M Bridge Company presently charges a toll of \$13 per rail car crossing the existing B&M Rail Bridge. Such charges are accounted for through railroad train manifest records and not through actual counts of the trains. The same toll accounting process is being proposed to continue.

The preliminary space allocation in the building is proposed to accommodate B&M Bridge Company personnel, UPRR personnel and DHS personnel. Spaces for the following will be included in the design:

- 1 office – B&M Bridge personnel
- 1 office – UPRR personnel
- 1 office – DHS (customs personnel)
- Restrooms
- Parking for 6 to 10 vehicles

Utilities will include electricity, water, sewer and telephone.

Local DHS (Customs) personnel will provide a final space requirement, specifications for the space and any other operational features necessary for the site.

The railroad tracks will contain security fencing, gates at the U.S. and Mexican end of the bridges and a gate at the center of the Rio Grande River.

The VACIS unit will be provided with a power source, foundations and facility as exists at its present B&M rail bridge location.

Proposed Mexican Project

The State of Tamaulipas is proposed to be the Mexican sponsor for their rail relocation project. The State of Tamaulipas presently has underway feasibility studies, environmental studies and is exploring funding alternatives. The State of Tamaulipas, the Municipality of Matamoros and the TFM are working jointly on each phase of the development of the Mexican project. A summary of the components of their project is as follows:

- New switchyard west of the City of Matamoros
- New 6.6 miles of single-track rail to the international bridge
- Construction of a new international rail bridge (jointly with the U.S.)
- Redevelopment of their downtown area vacated by their switchyard
- Relocation of a portion of their levee
- Acquisition of right-of-way property

Future Plans For The Existing B&M Rail Bridge

The B&M Bridge Company owns the present rail bridge in partnership with the UPRR in the United States and with the Mexican Government. The historical steel truss bridge will continue to remain in operation as a vehicle bridge, transit, and/or pedestrian bridge. The B&M Bridge Company has applied for a special use bridge crossing, an “emergency lane” priority system. The existing bridge is maintained regularly by the B&M Bridge Company and will continue under their authority.

Brownsville Navigation District Proposed Rail Bridge

The Brownsville Navigation District presently has a Presidential Permit to construct a commercial vehicle and railroad international bridge at the Port of Brownsville. Based on schematic plans developed by the Brownsville Navigation District a rail line would loop around Matamoros and would connect into the TFM’s main line to Monterrey in the area of the Rosita switchyard. To date, Mexico has not issued a permit to construct the rail or commercial bridge.

The initial planning for such international bridge began in the early 1970’s when the Brownsville Navigation District served as the project sponsor for the Brownsville Railroad Relocation project.³ The project was planned to remove the SP and MOPAC rail lines

³ Brownsville Railroad Relocation Plan, Brownsville Navigation District, Project Engineering Report and Environmental Impact Statement, 1975

and switchyards from downtown Brownsville. Mexico was not a partner in the project. The main MOPAC line through the City of Brownsville was planned to remain in operation. The engineering report and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) did not include the international bridges as part of the study and plan.

The plan included the relocation of the SP switchyard to be relocated from the downtown Sixth and Seventh Street area to the Palo Alto switchyard located near the Port of Brownsville. The MOPAC switchyard located in Amigoland southwest of the central business district was to be relocated to an area west and north of the City of Brownsville. Today the location is east of Olmito and is called the Olmito switchyard. The Palo Alto switchyard was constructed first and the Olmito switchyard was opened June 7, 2003.

The 1975 planning study and environmental impact statement has been the guide for the railroad and switchyards relocations although ownership of the railroads has changed significantly. No longer are there two private railroads competing for business as mergers and acquisitions have resulted in a single Class 1 railroad, the UPRR, operating and owning the rail system in Brownsville.

The original Relocation Plan included the construction of seven overpasses along the existing UPRR line through downtown Brownsville. It was during the implementation of the construction of the overpasses when the West Rail Relocation Plan evolved as a new alternative for the overpasses. In addition, Mexico has supported the relocation of rail to the west and has included the relocation of their switchyard from downtown Matamoros to the west.

The Railroad Relocation Plan in 1975 contained a letter from the MOPAC opposing the sharing of their rail access line to Mexico with the Brownsville Navigation District's BRG railroad. In 1984 an agreement was signed between the Brownsville Navigation District and the railroads agreeing that MOPAC, now UPRR, would maintain exclusive operating rail rights from the new Olmito switchyard to Mexico. Recently, the Brownsville

Navigation District purchased the Palo Alto switchyard from the UPRR.

The Brownsville Navigation District's continued effort to provide for their private access to Mexico over a new rail bridge is based on their desirability to create a more favorable competitive market for commercial freight. The City of Brownsville and Cameron County have supported the Brownsville Navigation District plans for a new rail bridge.

The estimated cost for the vehicle and rail bridge and the rail loop in Matamoros is \$186 million⁴. The financial analysis for the Brownsville Navigation District rail bridge was developed by URS⁵ and included rail traffic projection over a twenty-year plan. Such projections included an assumption that UPRR traffic would be diverted to the Port's new rail bridge at a rate of 10 percent per year over a 10 year time period until all rail through downtown Brownsville and Matamoros was eliminated. UPRR has not been consulted regarding the diversion of rail traffic.

West Rail Bridge

The west rail bridge evolved following a March 2000 public hearing to construct the first two of seven overpasses along the UPRR line into Mexico. Opposition to the construction of overpasses within the downtown historical district led elected officials to develop an alternative plan. Between June and September 2000 the West Rail Relocation Plan evolved as the alternative and at a cost of less than 50 percent of constructing the overpasses. The west rail plan for both Brownsville and Matamoros are focused at improving the infrastructure of the two cities and removing rail to the west. In order to account for future population growth over the next 100 years, overpasses have been included in the plan for all public streets and highway crossings between the two switchyards.

The West Rail Relocation Plan requires a new Presidential Permit in the United States even though the

⁴ Port of Brownsville, presentation handout, Bi-national conference, September, 2000

⁵ Feasibility study, Brownsville MPO, 1999 with updates.

ownership and operation of the rail is to be the same. The new rail location is approximately 15 river miles from the existing B&M rail bridge. The estimated cost of the West Rail Relocation Plan is \$20 million versus \$43 million for the overpass plan.

The west rail plan has been developed on a 42-month project schedule with the opening of the new bridge in March 2005. The schedule has been maintained by the United States and Mexico. The west rail draft environmental assessment is scheduled for completion in June 2003 and will be submitted to the Department of State with an application for a new Presidential Permit. The Brownsville area will still contain only two Presidential Permits for rail as the rail system through the downtown areas of Brownville and Matamoros will no longer exist.

Summary of Brownsville s Two Proposed Rail Bridges

The two rail bridges in Brownsville are planned for separate purposes. The Brownsville Navigation District rail project is focused on creating additional competition for the commercial rail freight service along with creating economic development while the focus of the West Rail Relocation Plan is on removing rail from the two cities and improving infrastructure. The West Rail Relocation Plan is not intended to generate additional revenues to the local government and is actually a financial liability to the government similar to constructing the originally planned overpasses. Such cost is greatly reduced from the original overpass projects.

Permits

The applicant is aware of the various permits that are required for the project. During the initial phase of the project, Cameron County consulted with TxDOT regarding the State of Texas requirement that all international bridge projects are required to get a permit from the State before proceeding to apply for a Presidential Permit. Since this project is entirely a railroad international bridge and does not include vehicular traffic, the State's legal counsel issued a letter

of opinion that Cameron County would not be required to obtain the State's permit.

Other permits or agreements planned include the approval of bridge plans by International Boundary and Water Commission, an application to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), formally the U.S. Coast Guard, for an international bridge permit, agreement between Cameron County and Mexico for the construction of the bridge, agreements between Cameron County and the UPRR for the technical agreements on construction, funding and the time frame for such.

Diplomatic Notes are required between the State Departments of the United States and Mexico. Mexico transmitted a Diplomatic Note on June 5, 2002 for this project specifying commitments to undertake technical studies and planning leading to the construction of the project.

Cameron County is prepared to complete the applications and submittals for each of the required documents.



Justification

Introduction

The new rail bridge will be a continuation of the existing international rail operation in Brownsville. Presently there are two international rail bridge permits for rail traffic operation and, following the Presidential Permit issuance for this rail bridge, there will continue to be only two international permits for rail bridges in the Brownsville/Matamoros area. The Brownsville Navigation District (BND) was issued a Presidential Permit at the Port of Brownsville for a combined international rail bridge and a commercial vehicle bridge. The Brownsville Navigation District has been in negotiations with Mexico for a construction permit. The B&M Bridge Company has authority to operate both the rail bridge and the vehicle bridge at their existing site. Their new vehicle bridge was constructed and opened in 1997. This chapter briefly outlines the basis for the continued rail bridge operation and its relocation to a new site west of the two cities.

National Interest

The relocation of the rail bridge to the west will continue to support international commercial trade with Mexico in the spirit of NAFTA. A continuous rail operation since 1910 has proven its value and justification throughout the years of its operation. The increase in the number of rail crossings since NAFTA has shown the continuous need for the B&M Rail Bridge and its benefit to the United States. Its close proximity to the Port of Brownsville provides for a combination of land and sea for international shipments. The following are brief elements on the reasons for the continued justification for the rail bridge and its relocation:

- Will eliminate 14 at grade rail-street crossings in Brownsville

- Will eliminate the potential vehicle-train collisions, injuries and fatalities
- Will provide positive environmental impacts
- Reduced air emissions
- Reduced noise to businesses and residents
- Reduces the chances of a major chemical or hazardous spill in a populated area.
- Will eliminate urban congestion created by trains blocking crossings
- Will allow for urban redevelopments

The continued population growth in south Texas and Cameron County was reflected earlier within the Cameron County general summary facts. Such growth includes the industrial maquiladora operation in Cameron County as it interfaces with the large industrial plants east and west of downtown Matamoros.

Related Rail Ports of Entry

In Texas there are four international rail Ports of Entry at the following locations:

- Brownsville
- Laredo — 280 miles northwest of Brownsville
- Eagle Pass — 400 miles northwest of Brownsville
- El Paso – 801 miles northwest of Brownsville

Brownsville is the only rail international Port of Entry directly adjacent to an international seaport and adjacent to Mexico.

Conclusions

The relocation of the B&M Rail Bridge upstream will continue the international and national interest criteria specified in the application instructions. Local rail volumes have been described in previous sections that support its continued operation and improved operation west of the two cities. The operation will not increase federal inspection responsibilities above those presently underway.



Construction and Financing of Project

This chapter describes the planned construction of the rail relocation project and a proposed schedule that has been maintained since the beginning of the project. Cameron County serving as the project sponsor will develop plans, acquire the right-of-way and construct the project. During the process, plans will be reviewed by B&M Bridge Company for the international bridge and by UPRR for the rail approach and right-of-way. Upon the issuance of the Presidential Permit and upon final funding approval, a technical agreement will be developed between Cameron County and UPRR for construction of the project and for transfer of ownership and permits to the appropriate companies. The international bridge plans will be submitted to U.S. section of the International Boundary and Water Commission for their approval and then will be submitted to the Mexican Agencies of CILA and SCT. An agreement between Cameron County and Mexico will be developed outlining the details for the design and construction of the rail bridge.

Project Cost

The estimated project cost for the approach rail and international bridge is \$19.6 million dollars.

International bridge (1/2 cost)	\$ 3,707,600
Prepare right-of-way	\$ 155,000
Earthwork	\$ 1,842,000
Railroad	\$ 5,096,000
Structures	\$ 1,046,000
Mobilization	\$ 1,000,000
Engr., Adm. mgmt.	\$ 1,158,337
Contingencies	\$ 3,970,063
Materials & geotech	\$ 25,000
Right-of-way	\$ 1,100,000
EA, permits, schematic	\$ 500,000
Construction Cost Total	\$ 19,600,000

Federal Inspection Facilities

The final decision for space requirements for the new B&M Rail Bridge office building and federal facilities for inspection personnel will be made by DHS. Preliminary discussions with local personnel have been underway and the above costs include a facility containing offices, rest rooms and parking area. The main rail inspection federal facilities for rail car inspections are being located at the new Olmito switchyard. Necessary equipment will be provided in the facility.

Financing of the project

The financing of this project is very unique since no additional toll revenues are being proposed on the U.S. side as is common for most international bridges and border crossings. In this case the governmental agencies on both sides of the border are requesting privately owned railroads to move out of the downtown urban areas of the two cities. The railroads are cooperative in the fact of supporting the move but remain in the position that they should not be burdened with the total or major cost of the relocation. As such, the rail relocation project financing includes a combination of funding from Cameron County, the City of Brownsville, UPRR, TxDOT and the federal government. An explanation of each will be described below.

Funding — City of Brownsville

The City of Brownsville has committed \$1.8 million to the relocation project based on previously approved bond funds in 1995 to construct street-rail overpasses. The Sixth and Seventh Street overpasses were approved for funding by the City (\$3 million) and by TxDOT (\$2.5 million) where the West Rail Relocation Plan evolved as an alternative to construct a total of seven

future overpasses. Based on this shift to the west rail alternative, the city's bond counsel issued an opinion that such bond fund balance could be applied to the relocation project for rail. The City of Brownsville's balance of the bond funds has now been directed to the west rail project. Such funds have been utilized for advance planning, environmental assessment, schematic design and aerial photography.

Funding — Cameron County

Cameron County has agreed to match the City of Brownsville expenditures over the time period of the project based on a 50 percent split of costs and expenses. This cost is budgeted at \$2.0 million. Cameron County funding has been utilized for the advance planning and coordination phases.

Funding — UPRR

The UPRR has pledged in writing the financial support of the relocation project based on their sale of the existing right-of-way to the TxDOT. Such costs are estimated to be between \$3.0 and \$4.0 million.

Funding — TxDOT

In October 2001, a delegation from Cameron County, City of Brownsville and the Brownsville Navigation District appeared before the Texas Transportation Commission requesting the agency to purchase the rail right-of-way proposed to be vacated following rail relocation and for funding of an overpass at U.S. 281. The Commission expressed support of the project but stated that their commitment was too early in the process and it would need to follow the issuance of a Presidential Permit. Although such timing is not helpful to the County, continued discussions are underway with TxDOT for the issuance of a Minute Order on a contingency basis of the Presidential Permit.

Funding — U.S. Federal Funds

Congress in the FY 2003 has approved federal funding in the amount of \$875,000. Originally, such funding was committed to construct overpasses through the downtown area. An additional \$2.0 million has been requested for the FY 2004 appropriation budget.

An application for the balance of funding has been submitted to Congress for the TEA21 Reauthorization, now named SAFETEA, presently being developed. Originally 50 percent to 80 percent federal funding was available for the construction of grade separations along the street and highways at the rail intersections. Unfortunately, similar type funding is not available for rail relocations unless it is for the reconstruction of a highway adjacent to the rail line.

Based on the local participation by the City, County and UPRR, local funds in the amount of 30 percent to 50 percent are presently earmarked for this project.

Project Schedule

The project schedule (shown on next page) for the West Rail Relocation Plan was developed at the beginning of the project and details a schedule of 42 months for planning, permitting and construction. The schedule also includes actions by Mexico and has been reviewed, updated and modified with further details during the process. The schedule generally allows 12-16 months for the environmental assessment, 12-14 months for the right-of-way acquisition, and 12 months for bidding and construction. Along with these items are other required steps such as coordination with governmental agencies, bi-national presentations, engineering design and public involvement meetings that overlap and run concurrently with actions in Mexico.



Coordination with Mexico

This project requires extensive coordination with Mexico not only for the international bridge portion but also for all aspects of the project including the relocation of their switchyard, construction of a new switchyard, extension of new rail service to the border and for financing these improvements. The initial contact with Mexico was in June 2000 with the City of Matamoros and following their support contact was made with the State of Tamaulipas. Based on the support of these two governmental agencies presentations were held with the federal government of Mexico, SCT's railroad section. Continued support from those agencies has been maintained through the project and letters of support are contained in the appendix.

Local support has been provided from the following and letters of support have been received from many of those listed. The letters are contained in the Appendix.

United States

- Brownsville Navigation District
- City of Brownsville
- Cameron County
- Union Pacific Railroad
- Chamber of Commerce
- B&M Bridge Company
- Brownsville School District
- Texas Southmost College
- University of Texas at Brownsville
- Brownsville MPO

Mexico

- City of Matamoros
- State of Tamaulipas
- Transportacion Ferroviaria Mexicana
- Matamoros Chamber of Commerce

The need for support from the private railroad, TFM, was necessary during the early planning phases of the

project. Similar to the UPRR, the TFM expressed their interest in the project and expressed support for the plan on the basis that it would provide additional safety and efficiency to railroad operations in Matamoros. From a regional standpoint TFM expressed the opinion that the plan would result in a time savings of approximately 2-1/2 hours from the Olmito switchyard in Brownsville to Monterrey, Mexico.

During the development of the U.S. environmental assessment, Mexico began its feasibility study. Approval of the agreement for the study included the following signatures:

- City of Brownsville
- Cameron County
- Transportacion Ferroviaria Mexicana
- City of Matamoros
- State of Tamaulipas
- Secretaria de Comunicaciones y Transportes

The UPRR issued through a separate letter their support of Mexico's technical studies and the project. A copy of the agreement and letter is contained in the appendix.

Continuous coordination with Mexico's project sponsor, the State of Tamaulipas, has included joint monthly meetings and joint presentations. Joint presentations have included the following:

- State Department's Bi-national conferences
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S. Department of State
- U.S. Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison's staff
- U.S. Senator John Cornyn's staff
- U.S. Congressman Solomon P. Ortiz
- North American Development Bank
- Mexico's SEDESOL
- Mexico's Secretaria de Hacienda
- Mexico's SCT



Environment Assessment and Public Involvement

The environmental assessment (EA) was prepared for the West Rail Relocation project in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Such document was provided to the Department of State and circulated to the appropriate state and federal agencies. The complete EA is considered to be a part of the Presidential Permit application included as separate documents. Full details of the EA are contained within the document and are not repeated herein.

Public involvement has been a continuous process through the development of the project. Initially, workshops were held at Cameron County’s Commissioners Court, PowerPoint presentations were made and public comments were received. Based on public comments, the project details have changed during this process. The initial rail alignment was proposed to traverse through the local Community of San Pedro and, with their strong opposition to its route location, the alignment was changed to its present location.



Local workshop presentations- Feb. 3, 2003



Local workshop presentations-March 3, 2003

During the development of the Environmental Assessment, local public meetings were held at the community center nearest to the proposed alignment. Workshops were held February 3, 2003 and March 3, 2003. Attendance at these meetings ranged from 80 to 100 persons. Additional details of questions asked during these meetings are contained in the EA.

A public hearing for the EA was held on June 5. The agenda is contained in the appendix for the public hearing.



Public hearing – June 5, 2003



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Letter from TxDOT – regarding waiver of State of Texas Permit



Texas Department of Transportation

DEWITT C. GREER STATE HIGHWAY BLDG. • 125 E. 11TH STREET • AUSTIN, TEXAS 78701-2483 • (512) 463-8585

January 29, 2002

John W. Hudson, Jr., P.E.
JWH & Associates, Inc.
3014 Fairway Drive
Sugar Land, Texas 77478

RE: Brownsville/Matamoros Railroad Relocation –
State Permit Process for Railroads

Dear Mr. Hudson:

We have received your January 2, 2002 letter concerning the state permit process for a new international crossing.

Section 201.610 of the Texas Transportation Code provides that a political subdivision or private entity authorized to construct or finance the construction of a bridge over the Rio Grande must obtain the approval from the Texas Transportation Commission for the construction of the bridge before requesting a Presidential Permit.

After a thorough review of Section 201.610, it is our opinion that the statute does not apply to the construction of a new railroad crossing. We believe that the legislature clearly intended the statute to apply to highway crossings only.

If you have any questions or need further assistance, please call me or Bob Jackson at 512/463-8630.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard Monroe", written in a cursive style.

Richard Monroe
General Counsel

S:\ATTORNEYS\BJM1-LETTER FORMAT.DOC

Letters of Support



Friday, November 10, 2000

The Honorable Judge Gilbert Hinojosa
Cameron County Courthouse
964 E. Harrison St.
Brownsville, TX 78520

Re: West Railroad Relocation Project

Dear Judge Hinojosa:

The Brownsville Navigation District is pleased to join the County and the City in discussions towards interlocal agreements that could result in the relocation of the Union Pacific Railroad to the western area of Brownsville. The project will greatly improve existing rail accessibility to the Port of Brownsville and seems to have a strong support in Mexico. The relocation of the rail outside of the downtown areas of Brownsville and Matamoros will open the opportunity for increased rail business to the Port, without introducing increased congestion to the two communities.

We were also very happy to hear you say, at our meeting of October 27th, that you supported the Port of Brownsville truck bridge project. We would also like to begin discussions with the County about how the County and the Navigation District can cooperate to make that project a reality.

Please express the Brownsville Navigation District's support to the U.S. Department of State and to Mexico's delegation.

Sincerely,

Roy de los Santos
Chairman of the Brownsville Navigation District

c: Commissioners
Rail/Bridge file

Brownsville Navigation District
General Manager and CEO
1000 Foust Road • Brownsville, TX 78521 • (956) 831-4592 • (800) 378-5395 • Fax (956) 831-5006
www.portofbrownsville.com

Blanca S. Vela
Mayor



November 7, 2000

The Honorable Gilberto Hinojosa
County Judge
Cameron County
964 E. Harrison
Brownsville, Texas 78520

Dear Judge Hinojosa:

The City of Brownsville is pleased to join with the County and the Brownsville Navigation District as a partner in support of the West Railroad Relocation Project, which would relocate the Union Pacific Railroad to an area west of Brownsville. The project will greatly improve accessibility for the City and brings forth the opportunity to construct the much needed "West Loop" along the vacated Union Pacific Railroad right-of-way. The project will also bring to a close the proposed construction of numerous overpasses along the existing rail route. We are especially pleased with the Brownsville Navigation District's support of this project and anticipate success in this joint venture.

We look forward to entering into agreements with the County and other entities involved to begin technical studies, environmental assessments and development of a Presidential Permit application for this project.

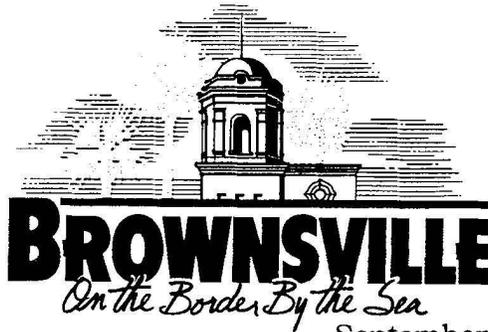
Please express the City of Brownsville's support of the West Railroad Relocation Project to the United States Department of State and to Mexico's delegation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Blanca S. Vela", written in a cursive style.

Blanca S. Vela
Mayor

City of Brownsville
P.O. Box 911 / City Hall / Market Square / Brownsville, Texas 78522
(956) 548-6000
<http://www.ci.brownsville.tx.us>
EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER



September 5, 2000

The Honorable Gilberto Hinojosa
Judge, Cameron County
964 East Harrison Street
Brownsville, Texas

Re: Proposed West Railroad Bridge Project.

Dear Judge Hinojosa:

Pursuant to the proposed West Railroad Bridge Project, please be advised that the Brownsville City Commission is supportive of this proposed project.

This project proposal would eliminate the main north-south line of the Union Pacific Railroad that has bisected our community for years. Further, through such elimination of this main line, emergency vehicles and regular through traffic will again be able to access these residential/commercial areas where heretofore, were isolated due to railroad switching activities and railroad traffic.

The City of Brownsville is interested in partnering with Cameron County, the Texas Department of Transportation and Union Pacific Railroad in eliminating the existing north-south Union Pacific Railroad main line in favor of the proposed West Railroad Bridge Project.

Sincerely,

Blanca S. Vela
Mayor

Carlton J. "Bud" Richards
City Commissioner

Harry E. McNair Jr.
City Commissioner

Ernie L. Hernandez
City Commissioner

John Wood
City Commissioner

**RESOLUTION
BROWNSVILLE MPO POLICY COMMITTEE**

WHEREAS, the Policy Committee of the Brownsville Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) has reviewed the recommendation the MPO Technical Committee and MPO staff as concerns amending the MPO's Thoroughfare Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Policy Committee of the Brownsville MPO finds that the proposed changes will afford improvements to the Brownsville MPO's area transportation system to promote both the general welfare and economic development of the Brownsville MPO area; and

WHEREAS, the Brownsville MPO Staff, Policy & Technical Committee members will work in cooperation with TxDOT staff to plan and implement these improvement projects listed below, in compliance with applicable state and federal guidelines:

- Listing of Alignment #2 of the West Rail Project as part of the MPO's Thoroughfare Plan; to establish a new rail line connection to the Republic of Mexico through the building of an international rail bridge.

Note: West Rail Alignment #1 is hereby deleted from the MPO's Thoroughfare Plan.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE RESOLVED that the revised Brownsville MPO Thoroughfare Plan dated December 11, 2002 is officially adopted by the Policy Committee of the Brownsville Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Signed:



Blanca S. Vela, Mayor
MPO Chairperson



Mario Jorge, P.E.
TxDOT District Engineer
TxDOT Pharr District

Dated: 12-11-02

UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD COMPANY

STEVE BARKLEY
Regional Vice President
Southern Region

24125 Aldine Westfield Rd
Spring Texas 77373
(281) 350-7201



October 1, 2001

The Honorable Gilberto Hinojosa
County Judge
Cameron County
964 E. Harrison St.
Brownsville, TX 78520

A small, handwritten mark or signature in the right margin of the letter.

Dear Judge Hinojosa:

This is in response to your letter of July 2, 2001 requesting that we acknowledge our support of the West Rail Project at Brownsville, TX.

Regarding item 1, the Union Pacific Railroad supports and agrees with the conceptual plan for the West Rail Project.

With regard to item 2, we agree with the concept to pledge funding to the project equal to the purchase price of the vacated right of way by the TXDOT, but reserve the right to review the economics as the plan develops and details become available.

Finally, Union Pacific Railroad agrees with the general location of the Rio Grande River crossing. Our ultimate commitment, however, will come with our review and acceptance of a surveyed plat that pinpoints the precise location of the bridge.

Trusting these commitments are in line with your request, Union Pacific Railroad looks forward to working with Cameron County on this mutually beneficial project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Steve Barkley".

Steve Barkley

cc: Dennis Duffy
Ron Olson
Bill Wimmer
Gary Davidson
Jerry Rugg



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Railroad
Administration**

Administrator

1120 Vermont Ave., NW.
Washington, DC 20590

JUL 10 2002

Mr. Pete Sepulveda, Jr.
Bridge System Director
Cameron County International Bridge System
Veterans International Bridge At Los Tomates
3310 South Expressway 77
Brownsville, TX 78521

Dear Mr. Sepulveda:

Thank you for the information concerning the proposal to relocate the Union Pacific International Rail Bridge from downtown Brownsville to the west of Brownsville. I understand Cameron County is serving as the sponsor of the project, known as the West Rail Bypass.

While the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) does not have safety oversight of the proposal itself, the agency is available to answer any questions relating to the safety of proposed new rail operations. Additionally, as a member of the Department of State's U.S.-Mexico Binational Committee on Bridges and Border Crossings, FRA participates in the review process to grant permits or approval for new or modified U.S.-Mexico border crossings and related infrastructure.

FRA staff recently met with Mr. Rick Meyers, a representative of the project, to discuss the State Department permitting process and the range of technical and financial assistance opportunities that might be available under the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21).

My staff and I remain available to discuss this and other rail related issues of mutual interest.

Sincerely,

Allan Rutter
Administrator



Comisión de Cooperación Ecológica Fronteriza
Border Environment Cooperation Commission



C5367/AGE2002
October 22, 2002

Mr. Pete Sepulveda, Jr.
International Bridge System
Cameron County
PO Box 109
Brownsville, TX 78520

Subject: Response to the Application for Project Certification - West Rail Project:
Brownsville – Matamoros

Mr. Sepulveda:

Thank you for submitting the Application for Project Certification for the proposed **West Rail Project Brownsville – Matamoros**, in Texas. The information received has been reviewed by BECC staff for compliance with the BECC objectives and priorities. Staff found that the project is within BECC's priorities under its mandate expansion; however, further information will be required in order to proceed with development of the project.

Specifically, the BECC will require evidence of legal authority for implementing the improvement project. This requirement may be satisfied by providing a letter of support by the Railway owners, both the US and Mexican ownership, or amending your application to include the Railway owners as Co-Sponsors. In addition, please provide a letter from NADB, which states they are interested in participating in the project. NADB participation is fundamental because one primary source of funding could potentially be a NADB loan. Once this information has been received by the BECC, we will be in a position to proceed with the project.

Renata Manning-Gbogbo, Financial Planning Manager, has been designated to lead the evaluation of your project and is available to assist you if you have any questions.

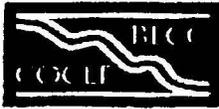
The BECC appreciates your commitment to improve your community infrastructure through the conservation, protection and improvement of human health and the environment in a sustainable manner.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Fernando R. Macias".

Fernando R. Macias
General Manager

CC: Raul Rodriguez, NADB Managing Director



Comisión de Cooperación Ecológica Fronteriza
Border Environment Cooperation Commission



C5373/AGA2002
Octubre 22, 2002

Lic. Arturo de las Fuentes Hernández
Representante del gobierno de Tamaulipas en el Distrito Federal
Gobierno del Estado de Tamaulipas
Paseo de la Reforma No. 195-4to piso Col. Cuauhtemoc
Distrito Federal, México C.P 06500

Asunto: Recepción del documento Etapa I para el proyecto "West Rail Project –
Brownsville - Matamoros".

Estimado Lic. de las Fuentes:

Por este conducto, y a nombre de la Comisión de Cooperación Ecológica Fronteriza (COCEF), deseo agradecer el Formato Etapa I para el proyecto *West Rail Project Brownsville – Matamoros*, mismo que nos fuera enviado el pasado 23 de Agosto del año en curso. Después de una revisión detenida de la información presentada, nuestro personal determinó que el proyecto cumple con los criterios básicos de elegibilidad establecidos por esta institución. No obstante, con el fin de estar en posibilidades de dar por aceptado formalmente el proyecto y proceder con su desarrollo, requerimos de cierta información adicional.

En primer término, nos interesa conocer si el promotor del proyecto cuenta con el apoyo formal de la entidad que es propietaria del sistema ferroviario. Esto puede acreditarse con alguna carta por parte de dicha entidad en la que se exprese su consentimiento para el desarrollo del proyecto, o bien, mediante su participación como co-promotor del proyecto.

Por otro lado, requerimos de una carta del Banco de Desarrollo de América del Norte (BDAN) en la que dicha institución manifieste su posible interés en participar en el financiamiento del proyecto, con base en un análisis preliminar del mismo. La participación del BDAN resulta fundamental debido a que la principal fuente de financiamiento para los proyectos de este tipo podría provenir del programa de créditos y garantías de dicha institución.

Finalmente, le informo que el Ing. Jorge Hernández, analista financiero de esta Comisión, ha sido designado como punto de contacto para evaluar la factibilidad del proyecto y estará a sus órdenes, para aclarar cualquier duda al respecto.

La Comisión le agradece anticipadamente su interés por el bienestar de la gente de la región fronteriza entre México y Estados Unidos, a través de la preservación, protección y mejoramiento del ambiente en forma sustentable. Sin otro particular por el momento, reitero a usted mis más altas consideraciones.

Atentamente


Javier Cabrera Bravo
Administrador General Adjunto

Ccp: Ing. Raúl Rodríguez Barocio, Director General, BDAN



**PROCURADURÍA FEDERAL DE PROTECCIÓN AL AMBIENTE
“ LA LEY AL SERVICIO DE LA NATURALEZA “**

OFICIO N° PFFPA/ 070

México, D.F., 30 ENE 2003

**SECRETARÍA DE MEDIO AMBIENTE
Y RECURSOS NATURALES**

**LIC. ARTURO DE LAS FUENTES HERNÁNDEZ
REPRESENTANTE DEL GOBIERNO DEL ESTADO
DE TAMAULIPAS EN EL DISTRITO FEDERAL
P R E S E N T E .**

Me dirijo a usted con relación al “Proyecto Ferroviario Binacional Matamoros – Brownsville, Alternativa Poniente”, consistente en la reubicación de la línea ferroviaria que cruza ambas ciudades y la construcción de un libramiento ferroviario al poniente de la zona urbana, que el Gobierno del Estado de Tamaulipas pretende realizar en fecha próxima y que esa representación a su digno cargo diera a conocer ante esta Procuraduría.

Al respecto, me permito comentarle que el proyecto expuesto por usted, permite apreciar principalmente una serie de beneficios de índole social, los cuales impactan positivamente en bienestar de la población que habita las zonas aledañas al cruce de las vías férreas que se pretenden reubicar; el desahogo que se produciría de estas vialidades, que como demuestra el proyecto serían en áreas de una alta densidad poblacional y contribuirá sin duda por un lado, a modificar los patrones anárquicos de desarrollo urbano así como a una sustancial mejoraría en la calidad de vida de la población que habita en la mencionada zona.

Con relación al componente ambiental, es de esperar una reducción sustancial de las emisiones contaminantes a la atmósfera provenientes de fuentes móviles (autotransportes), que son de control y supervisión de autoridades locales, adicionalmente, esta Procuraduría reconoce la importancia de reubicar las estaciones de servicio y mantenimiento de este tipo de transporte ferroviario fuera de los centros de población, ya que, no sólo facilita el manejo, carga, descarga y transportación de materiales y sustancias peligrosas que se llevan a cabo en los patios de mantenimiento de estas instalaciones, sino que reduce significativamente la ocurrencia de accidentes que pudieran provocar desequilibrios ecológicos así como daños a la salud.

Finalmente, le expresamos nuestra satisfacción en el proyecto, ya que muestra la instrumentación de acciones que propician el desarrollo sustentable de la región en cuestión, procurando el cuidado y mejoramiento del medio ambiente, demostrando que es posible armonizar el crecimiento social y económico con el cumplimiento de la normatividad ambiental.

**A T E N T A M E N T E .
SUFRAGIO EFECTIVO. NO REELECCION.
EL PROCURADOR**

LIC. JOSÉ CAMPILLO GARCÍA.



Cd. Victoria, Tam., a 4 de septiembre de 2010.

GOBIERNO DE TAMAULIPAS
PODER EJECUTIVO

SR. GILBERTO HINOJOSA
Cameron County Judge
964 E. Harrison
Brownsville, Texas 78620
P r e s e n t e.

Distinguido Juez Hinojosa:

Con relación al plan alternativo para reubicar el puente ferroviario al poniente de las ciudades de Brownsville y Matamoros le preciso lo siguiente:

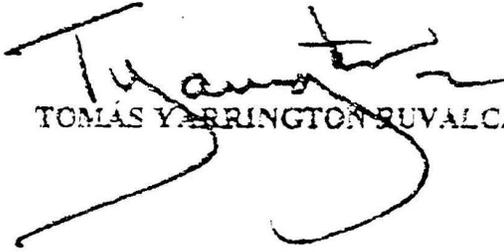
La eliminación de las operaciones del ferrocarril por zonas residenciales y del centro de las ciudades mencionadas mejorará la calidad de vida de sus comunidades, además de generar algunos otros beneficios adicionales, principalmente dar vialidad al tráfico internacional, que actualmente enfrenta serias demoras.

El Gobierno de Tamaulipas apoya plenamente el proyecto y está dispuesto a realizar las acciones que sean necesarias para que las autoridades federales que intervengan en el proceso de reubicación otorguen los permisos necesarios.

Le reitero que la cristalización de este proyecto es de suma importancia para mi administración, y estoy seguro de que con nuestra labor conjunta podremos lograrlo en un mediano plazo, eliminando un problema que ha aquejado a nuestras comunidades por muchos años.

Sin otro particular, aprovecho la ocasión para enviarle un cordial y afectuoso saludo.

ATENTAMENTE
"SUFRAGIO EFECTIVO. NO REELECCIÓN."
EL GOBERNADOR CONSTITUCIONAL DEL ESTADO


TOMÁS YARRINGTON DUVALCABA



PRESIDENCIA MUNICIPAL
H. Matamoros, Tam.

DEPENDENCIA: *PRESIDENCIA MUNICIPAL*

SECCION: *SECRETARIA DEL AYUNTAMIENTO*

NUM. DE OFICIO: 1185/00

28 de Septiembre del 2000

SR. GILBERTO HINOJOSA
CAMERON COUNTRY JUDGE
964 E. HARRISON
BROWNSVILLE, TEXAS 786220
P R E S E N T E.

Con relación al proyecto de reubicación del puente ferroviario al poniente de Brownsville y Matamoros, le quiero decir que con agrado me sumo a las tareas para que ese proyecto se lleve a cabo, ya que sin duda traería enormes beneficios a nuestras ciudades hermanas, su reubicación eliminaría las operaciones del ferrocarril por las zonas residenciales y comerciales de ambas ciudades, lo cuál mejoraría substancialmente la calidad de vida de nuestros habitantes.

El R. Ayuntamiento de Matamoros apoyará en todo lo posible el proyecto de reubicación y esta dispuesto a emprender las acciones para que el Gobierno del Estado intervenga en ello, no tenemos la menor duda de contar con el apoyo del Gobernador **TOMAS YARRINGTON RUVALCABA**, para lograr que las Autoridades Federales de México otorguen los permisos correspondientes.

Por último cuento que en mi calidad de Presidente Municipal de esta gran ciudad, pondré todo mi empeño para la realización de ese proyecto, con el apoyo de Ustedes, estoy seguro que lo lograremos.

Aprovecho la ocasión para enviarle un cordial saludo.

A T E N T A M E N T E
“SUFRAGIO EFECTIVO, NO REELECCIÓN”
EL C. PRESIDENTE MUNICIPAL

LIC. HOMAR ZAMORANO AYALA

c.c.p Archivo
LIC. HZG*cve*

Diplomatic Note from Mexico

La Embajada de México saluda atentamente al Departamento de Estado de Estados Unidos y tiene el honor de referirse a la propuesta de reubicación del cruce ferroviario Matamoros-Brownsville, denominada "Alternativa Poniente", entre los estados de Tamaulipas y Texas.

Sobre el particular, la Embajada de México manifiesta al Departamento de Estado el interés del Gobierno de México en que se realicen los estudios que permitan la integración del expediente técnico sobre dicho proyecto, que ha sido presentado en el marco de la XXXI Reunión Binacional México-Estados Unidos sobre Puentes y Cruces Internacionales.

La Embajada de México aprovecha la ocasión para reiterar al Departamento de Estado las seguridades de su más alta y distinguida consideración.

México, D.F., a 5 de junio de 2002



Al Departamento de Estado de
Estados Unidos de América,
Washington, D. C.

Memorandum of Agreement

Cameron County and City of Brownsville

STATE OF TEXAS §
 §
CAMERON COUNTY §

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

THIS MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT (MOA) is entered into between the COUNTY OF CAMERON, TEXAS, hereinafter referred to as “County” and the CITY OF BROWNSVILLE, TEXAS hereinafter referred to as “City”, Pursuant to V.T.C.A., Government Code, Chapter 791, whereby:

1. PURPOSE OF THE MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT: It is proposed to relocate the Union Pacific Railroad outside of the Brownsville Urban area by constructing 5.8 miles of single railroad track and a new international rail bridge. Similarly, Mexico proposes to relocate their rail and switchyard to the west. Cameron County and the City of Brownsville enter into this agreement to advance the Brownsville West Rail Bypass Plan hereinafter referred to as the “Project”, through the environmental assessment and permit phase.
2. PROJECT TO BE COMPLETED: To develop the Environmental Assessment and the United States Presidential Permit for the Brownsville Rail Bypass Plan.
3. COUNTY HEREBY AGREES:
 - a. To serve as the Project sponsor;
 - b. To coordinate with Texas Department of Transportation, City of Brownsville, Brownsville Navigation District and the Union Pacific Railroad on activities necessary to advance the Brownsville West Rail Bypass plan through the environmental and permit process.
 - c. To meet regularly with representatives to discuss project activities and provide progress reports of activities.
 - d. To develop environmental assessment and permits necessary to advance the “Project” to the right-of-way, engineering and construction phase.
 - e. To develop the Presidential Permit for a replacement rail bridge across the Rio Grande
 - f. To coordinate and provide for a presentation to the Texas Department of Transportation Commission for the inclusion of the Project into a plan for highway funding for those items eligible under the present highway guidelines.
 - g. To request federal funding for the Project.
4. CITY HEREBY AGREES:
 - a. To provide funding for the above tasks from its Six and Seventh Street railroad overpass bond funds up to a maximum of \$492,000. Such funding will be on a reimbursement basis to the County.

- b. To provide technical support and assistance for meetings in Washington D.C. related to a request for federal funding and work related to the project, being included in TEA21 reauthorization for year 2004.
 - c. Should federal funding be obtained this agreement would be amended at the termination phase of a task defined in paragraph 3.0 to reduce the City's funding commitment. Future task would be completed utilizing federal funds and providing a local share as required.
5. It is specifically understood and agreed that in the event insufficient funds are appropriated and/or budgeted concerning the obligations under this MOA on behalf of either of the parties, then the party with the insufficient funds shall notify the other parties and this MOA shall thereafter terminate and be null and void on the last day of the fiscal period for which appropriations were made without penalty, liability or expense to the party.
 6. This MOA constitutes a one-time agreement between the parties and does not constitute a continuing agreement for right-of-way acquisition or construction of the Project.
 7. The rules, regulations and orders of the COUNTY shall govern this Interlocal Agreement and the Parties agree that the COUNTY shall supervise the performance of this Interlocal Agreement.
 8. This MOA shall have no legal force or effect until such time as it is properly adopted and approved by the CAMERON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT and the BROWNSVILLE CITY COMMISSION.

9. ENTIRE AGREEMENT

This instrument contains the entire agreement between the parties relating to the rights herein granted and obligations herein assured. Any oral representations or modifications concerning this instrument shall be of no force or effect excepting a subsequent modification in writing, signed by the party to be changed.

10. BREACH OF OBLIGATION

The failure to perform any of the material obligations or conditions of this agreement shall constitute a breach, which may result in termination. Any party claiming that a material condition has been breached shall have the right to terminate this agreement.

11. LAW COVERING

This Agreement shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Texas.

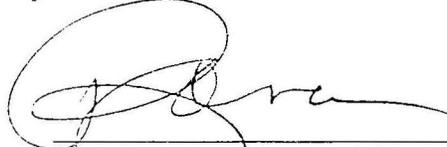
12. VENUE

The obligations and undertakings of each of the parties to this Agreement shall be performable in Cameron County, Texas.

Executed on this 5th day of February, 2002.



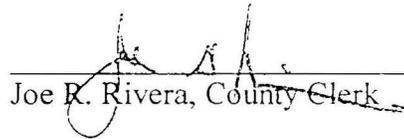
Gilberto Hinojosa, County Judge



Joseph A. Zavaletta, M.D.
Mayor Pro-Tem

Attested By:





Joe R. Rivera, County Clerk

**PROYECTO FERROVIARIO BROWNSVILLE-MATAMOROS
PROPUESTA PONIENTE**

A través de la presente Carta de Intención, la Secretaría de Comunicaciones y Transportes, en representación del Gobierno Federal de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos; el Condado de Cameron de los Estados Unidos de América, al que en lo sucesivo se le denominará "El Condado"; el Estado de Tamaulipas, México, al que en lo subsecuente se aludirá como "El Estado"; la Ciudad de Brownsville, Texas; el Municipio de Matamoros, Tamaulipas y la empresa Transportación Ferroviaria Mexicana confirman la intención de llevar a cabo los estudios de reubicación de las vías del tren y del Puente Internacional B&M, a través de la construcción tanto de un nuevo cruce de Puente Internacional, como de instalaciones y vías del tren en el área oeste de Brownsville y Matamoros. Las instancias antes citadas, que en su conjunto serán referidas en este instrumento como "Las Partes", con base en el entendimiento, acordaron los puntos que a continuación se mencionan respecto al desarrollo de "El Proyecto".

1. "El Condado" es el promotor de "El Proyecto" por el lado de los Estados Unidos, y "El Estado" lo es, por el lado mexicano.
2. "El Proyecto" deberá incluir un Nuevo Puente Internacional y nuevas vías del tren, además de ser diseñado para proporcionar toda la infraestructura necesaria para el flujo eficiente y rápido de los trenes utilizados para la transportación de productos.
3. "Las Partes" están de acuerdo en atender los resultados que arrojen los estudios ambientales y de ingeniería y los planes financieros para la mejor ubicación del nuevo cruce internacional en un área localizada al poniente de Brownsville y Matamoros, tomando en cuenta las necesidades de las compañías ferroviarias que cruzan el puente, así como las expectativas de aumento de tráfico que se espera con la realización de este nuevo puente.
4. También es necesario realizar un estudio de prefactibilidad en Matamoros que, además de estar en consonancia y coordinación con el estudio que "El Condado" ha preparado como con el de carácter ambiental que se está llevando a cabo, deberá incluir alternativas para la ubicación tanto de la estación ferroviaria como del libramiento, así como los costos, beneficios y planes de financiamiento.

5. "El Condado" apoyará el estudio de prefactibilidad con su personal y consultor en lo relativo a estudios de alineamientos, datos de cruces y el desarrollo de información ambiental. Asimismo en conjunto con las partes del lado mexicano, "El Condado" participará en la coordinación de "El Proyecto" y proveerá asistencia técnica e información que respalde el estudio de prefactibilidad en el lado mexicano.

"Las Partes" entienden que "El Proyecto" es una parte integral y esencial para el desarrollo económico continuo de las vías en ambos lados de la frontera, por lo que acuerdan trabajar en equipo en el desarrollo total de los planes maestros para la reubicación de las vías en sus respectivos territorios, sujeto a los términos y condiciones que eventualmente se pacten por "Las Partes" en los convenios respectivos.

En el Anexo 1 de esta Carta de Intención, se consignan las distintas propuestas hechas por las partes involucradas, y que son fundamentales para la ejecución del proyecto, y a partir de las cuales se establecerá una agenda de trabajo para discutir y desahogar en los meses siguientes cada uno de los puntos que ahí se incluyan, con el objeto de que "El Proyecto" pueda llegar a buen término.

Esta Carta de Intención se firma el día 10 del mes de febrero del año 2003.

SECRETARÍA DE COMUNICACIONES
Y TRANSPORTES

Óscar S. Corzo Cruz
Director General de Tarifas, Transporte
Ferroviario y Multimodal
Testigo de Honor

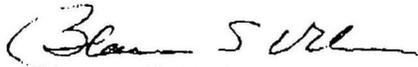
CONDADO DE CAMERON


Gilberto Hinojosa
Juez del Condado de Cameron

ESTADO DE TAMAULIPAS


Tomás Yarrington Ruvalcaba
Gobernador de Tamaulipas

CIUDAD DE BROWNSVILLE



Blanca S. Vela
Alcaldesa

MUNICIPIO DE MATAMOROS



Mario Zolezzi García
Presidente Municipal

TRANSPORTACIÓN FERROVIARIA
MEXICANA



Mario Mohar Ponce
Director General

Anexo 1
Propuestas de "Las Partes"

Transportación Ferroviaria Mexicana

1. TFM aporta los terrenos que se desocupan en el patio actual, a cambio de que el Gobierno de Tamaulipas aporte los terrenos necesarios y construya el nuevo patio en Rosita.
2. El pago por cruce de puente tanto en el lado americano como en el mexicano se mantiene igual.
3. Todas las vías que hoy día se utilizan para servir a la industria continuarán operando normalmente.
4. Que el Puerto de Brownsville tenga garantizado un acceso y servicio competitivo de y hacia TFM.

Letter of Intention – UPRR

UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD COMPANY

STEVE BARKLEY
Regional Vice President
Southern Region

24125 Aldine Westfield Rd
Spring Texas 77373
(281) 350-7201



March 5, 2003

VIA FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION: 281-242-1799

John W. Hudson, P.E.
JWH & Associates, Inc.
3014 Fairway Drive
Sugar Land, TX 77478

RE: West Bridge Rail Project at Brownsville/Matamoros

Dear Mr. Hudson:

As you are very much aware, several governmental entities on both sides of the border have proposed that consideration be given to a project (the "Project") that would dramatically alter the current rail infrastructure at Brownsville, TX/Matamoros, Tamps. The Project would include the relocation of Union Pacific Railroad Company's ("UPRR") line in Brownsville and Transportacion Ferroviaria Mexicana's ("TFM") line in Matamoros from their current locations to the west side of Brownsville and Matamoros and the construction of a new railroad bridge over the Rio Grande/Rio Bravo (the "New Bridge"). Upon the completion of Project construction, rail traffic to and from Mexico would be re-routed from the existing Brownsville & Matamoros Bridge Company ("B&M") rail bridge (the "Old Bridge") to the New Bridge. The total cost of the Project is currently estimated at approximately \$39 million (U.S.).

UPRR understands that the Project is sponsored by the County of Cameron, Texas in the United States and the State of Tamaulipas in Mexico. These sponsors commissioned a study of the Project's feasibility (the "Feasibility Study"). The Feasibility Study has been completed for the U.S. portion of the Project, but is on-going for the Mexican portion. The sponsors have asked that UPRR review the Feasibility Study when completed, and express its interest, if any, in participating in the Project.

It is impossible for UPRR to commit to participate in an undertaking as complex and far-reaching as the Project at this early stage in its development. UPRR will, however, cooperate with the efforts of the sponsors to analyze the feasibility of the Project. Subject to its analysis of the findings of the Feasibility Study, UPRR will also give due consideration to its possible participation in the Project. All potential participants in the Project should be made aware, however, of a number of fundamental requirements of UPRR that would have to be addressed to its satisfaction before it

would agree to participate in the Project. Such requirements include, but are not limited to:

Continued ownership of the Old Bridge by B&M;

Ownership of the New Bridge by B&M;

No portion of the Project will be financed through new or increased tolls on the Old Bridge, the New Bridge or rail traffic;

The Project will not adversely affect the competitive position of any participant as it existed prior to the Project. In particular, and as is the case today, the Port of Brownsville/Brownsville & Rio Grande Railroad will not have direct interchange access to or from TFM following the completion and implementation of the Project;

UPRR consent will be required for any aspect of the Project that would impact UPRR's operations;

Any financial commitment toward the Project by UPRR could at UPRR's sole election take the form of an in-kind payment (e.g... credit for transfer of UPRR right-of-way); and

All necessary parties must enter into a definitive agreement setting forth the terms and conditions under which the Project would proceed and be implemented, including points 1 - 6, above, and other provisions relating to construction and financing commitments.

Sincerely,

Steve Barkey

cc:

Arturo de las Fuentes
Representante del Gobierno del Estado
de Tamaulipas en el Distrito Federal
Av. Paseo de la Reforma #195, Piso 4
Col. Cuauhtemoc
Mexico, D.F., Mexico 06500

Oscar S. Corzo
Director General de Tarifas,
Transporte Ferroviario y Multimodal
Secretaria de Comunicaciones y
Transportes
Nueva York #115 PH
Col. Napoles
Mexico, D.F., Mexico 03810

Gilberto Hinojosa
Cameron County Judge
974 E. Harrison Street
Brownsville, TX 78520

Blanca S. Vela
Mayor
City of Brownsville
P.O. Box 911
Brownsville, TX 78522-0911

Mario Praxedis Zolezzi
Presidente Municipal de Matamoros
Calle 6a entre Morelos y Gonzalez
H. Matamoros, Tamaulipas 87300

Mario Mohar
CEO
TFM, S.A. de C.V.
Periferico Sur 4829, Piso 4
Col. Parques del Pedregal
Mexico, D.F., Mexico 14010

Mr. Jose F. Galvan
President and Chief Operating Officer
Brownsville & Matamoros Bridge Co.
1300 Mexico Blvd.
Brownsville, TX 78520

County official says progress made on West Rail Relocation Plan

BY EMMA PEREZ-TREVINO

THE BROWNSVILLE HERALD

After attending a conference in Saltillo, Mexico, Cameron County officials said the West Rail Relocation Plan is making good progress.

The conference, which started Tuesday, involved the U.S.-Mexico Binational Bridges and Border Crossings Group — an organization charged with recommending approval of the project.

"We just finished our presentation and it went real well. They were very receptive," Precinct 2 Commissioner John Wood said by telephone Wednesday afternoon from Saltillo.

Wood, who was expected to return late Wednesday to Texas, said the plan is on a fast track.

"The project is a 42-month project and we are on month 21," he said of the West Rail plan, which proposes removing Union Pacific railway operations from Brownsville and Matamoros to west of the cities.

The Group, composed of government officials from Mexico and the U.S., recommends approvals of bridges and border crossings to the U.S. State Department, which then evaluates the recommendation for the U.S. presi-

The West Rail proposal calls for replacing the rail portion of the B&M Bridge with a new one between the San Pedro and River Bend communities. Furthermore, a West Loop is planned within a corridor of railroad rights of way — from the former Amigoland Mall area to Olmito — that Union Pacific would sell to the Texas Department of Transportation.

dent's final approval. A presidential permit is required to proceed with the project.

Founded in 1983 and co-chaired by officials with the U.S. Department of State and the Mexican Secretariat of Foreign Relations, the Group meets semiannually to review and receive updates on proposed and existing projects.

The West Rail proposal calls for replacing the rail portion of the B&M Bridge with a new one between the San Pedro and River Bend communities.

Furthermore, a West Loop is planned within a corridor of railroad rights of way — from the former Amigoland Mall area to Olmito — that Union Pacific would sell to the Texas Department of Transportation.

Wood, joined by an official

with the governor's office of the State of Tamaulipas, gave the Group an update on the project. Matamoros city officials were also present to support the project.

Officials with Mexico's Secretariat of Communications and Transportation also voiced support, Wood said.

Environmental assessments are underway, and officials expect they'll be ready to request the presidential permit by July.

"Everyone seems to be pleased with the project," Wood said. "It certainly will benefit both communities to remove the at-grade rail crossings from the cities."

County International Bridge System Administrator Pete Sepulveda also attended the conference.

Railway Collision



JOE HERMOSA/THE BROWNSVILLE HERALD

Investigators examined wreckage of an 18-wheeler which was hit by a northbound train Tuesday north of Rancho Viejo near the Barrera Road exit.

Minor injuries reported in accident involving truck and train

BY RACHEL BENAVIDEZ
THE BROWNSVILLE HERALD

A Union Pacific Railroad train collided with an 18-wheeler cargo truck early Tuesday morning just north of Rancho Viejo, shoving the rig and its driver several hundred feet.

The accident happened at Villa Boulevard, an isolated intersection between Carmen Avenue and

Barreda Road, a few miles north of the upscale neighborhood.

Emergency personnel, including the Department of Public Safety, San Benito Fire Department, Cameron County Emergency Managers and Harlingen EMS, responded to the scene.

Surprisingly, both the truck driver and train conductor escaped with only

minor injuries and were taken to Valley Baptist Medical Center in Harlingen, DPS officials said.

Neither of the drivers' names, nor the truck company, were released at the time of the accident.

A single sign stands to warn drivers of the intersecting tracks where the truck and train collided. But there is no crossing signal at

the lonely road, no flashing lights, bells or barriers to enforce it.

Still, DPS officials faulted the truck driver for failing to yield the right of way to the oncoming northbound train, but would not comment regarding a citation for the driver.

Union Pacific officials on the scene declined to comment, except to say the incident is under investigation.

Rail relocation route at issue

Location: Archeological survey due on preferred path.

BY EMMA PEREZ-TREVIÑO
THE BROWNSVILLE HERALD

Although the path for the West Rail Relocation Plan has not been officially selected, an archeological survey on what Cameron County officials call the plan's preferred route will begin in

about two days.

The plan, which entails moving Union Pacific Railroad operations and the rail portion of the B&M International Bridge to the west of the city, was discussed at Tuesday's Cameron County Commissioners Court meeting.

The court approved a supplemental agreement with the project's engineering firm of Howard, Needles, Tammen and Bergendoff Inc. at the request of county International Bridge System Director Pete Sepulveda.

Commissioners have allocated \$17,000 to conduct the archeological survey on the route, which Sepulveda said is a combination of two options initially unveiled in a February public hearing.

Both routes cross the Rio

Grande between the San Pedro and River Bend communities, county officials said.

The last public hearing on the five possible routes will be held June 5. But property owners who believe the track's relocation will adversely affect their properties' development weren't surprised that the county apparently has zeroed in on a route, saying leaders had made up their minds about which site they preferred

before the public hearings began.

"I told them from the beginning that the site had already been picked," said area property owner Ricky Cardenas. "I'm not new to this game."

At the first public hearing in February, Cardenas expressed concern that the proposed routes would bisect and wall-in his property, posing access problems.

PLEASE SEE RAIL, 312

RAIL

FROM PAGE A1

County Judge Gilberto Hinojosa defended the court's actions to move forward with the archaeological survey.

County officials believe the preferred route affects the least amount of people.

"Technically speaking, the site has not been picked, (but) it's almost the only site available and they can't really say that unless they do an archeological study," Hinojosa said. "The reason we are doing it this way is that (county staff) did not want to get us on record approving the site until we clear the archaeological review."

If archaeological problems are discovered during the study, he said staff wouldn't have to go to the court with "their tails between their legs" because

The last public hearing on the five possible routes will be held June 5.

the site has not been officially selected.

"It's not a question of formality," Hinojosa said. "It's a question of choices, and there are very few choices left."

The consultants will unveil the preferred route at the June 5 public hearing, Sepulveda said, and the public will have 10 days after the hearing to comment.

Sepulveda acknowledged, however, that something "very extreme and significant (would have to happen) for us to change the alignment." And he said concerns like those voiced by Cardenas could be resolved.

"That will be addressed," he said. "Whatever that solution is, it will be addressed."

Binational bridge conference backs Rail Relocation Plan

BY EMMA PEREZ-TREVIÑO
THE BROWNSVILLE HERALD

The Brownsville Navigation District joined Cameron County and Brownsville in presenting a united front for the West Rail Relocation Plan at the Binational Conference on Bridges and Border Crossings.

Cameron County Judge Gilberto Hinojosa said that U.S. and Mexico officials attending the recent conference in Juarez gave the plan favorable reviews.

Brownsville Navigation District Executive Director Raul Besteiro joined Hinojosa in making the presentation, the judge said.

Under the plan, Union Pacific railway operations in Brownsville and Matamoros would be moved to the west.

The rail portion of the B&M Bridge would be replaced with a new international railroad bridge about eight miles west of the city.

During the presentation, Hinojosa announced the county's and Brownsville's support for BND's international truck bridge.

Besteiro, in turn, declared BND's full support for the rail plan, Hinojosa said.

"Now that the Port, the county and city have worked out their differences, the Mexican government wants to go forward," Hinojosa said, referring to BND's past hesi-

tancy to support the project.

BND had been seeking a railroad bridge on the east side, along with the truck bridge, but Mexican officials nixed the rail bridge and hoped BND would support the county's project.

Hinojosa said he is pleased that the county and BND came together to address the transportation problems.

He further said that assistance from federal officials is an important step toward the completion of the projects.

The projects will go a long way toward solving some of the city's most pressing transportation problems and will have a significant impact on the local economy and trade between the two coun-

tries.

"Through these projects, we will be able to transform rail and truck traffic from engines of growth in the last century to pathways to prosperity in the new century. It's an exciting time," Hinojosa said.

The trip to Juarez followed a visit to Brownsville from top level Mexican officials in early April, where they voiced support for the plan.

County officials are preparing for a trip to Mexico City in a few weeks and they are hoping that Mexico will be ready to issue the preliminary diplomatic notes, approving start of the planning phase.

City studies overpass proposal

By DANIEL BORUNDA
The Brownsville Herald

A pair of proposed overpasses would make access to the Amigoland Mall area easier, but the idea has already met with opposition.

The Sixth and Seventh Streets Overpass project is one of two transportation proposals discussed at a City Commission workshop on Thursday. The other plan is the East Loop, which is in its very early stages.

Plan offers new corridor to B&M Bridge

The \$6 million overpass plan would provide a new corridor to the B&M Bridge and the mall that would go over the railroad tracks. Slow or stopped railroad traffic occasionally blocks off the area.

"Unless you are marooned in the Amigoland area, you don't realize the dan-

ger (of being cutoff from emergency vehicles)," said Jose F. Galvan, president of the B&M Bridge. "We are against any further delay of the project."

The Brownsville Chamber of Commerce also voiced support for the project.

The project concept was first proposed in

1973 but was delayed for various reasons for more than two decades. It will be financed by about \$4 million local dollars and a \$2.2 million Texas Department of Transportation grant. The cost of the project is a 1998 estimate.

The overpass idea is a "dinosaur," said

resident Corina Robertson. She voiced concerns about truck traffic and the bridges affect on historical preservation in the neighborhood. Supporters of the overpass said that international truck traffic is being rerouted to Veterans International Bridge at Los Tomates.

"I know Brownsville is behind the times, but this is ridiculous," Robertson said adding that some larger cities have moved
(See OVERPASS, Page A12)

(Cont. From Page A1)

away from building overpasses because they are unsightly.

Palm Boulevard and 12th Street, which are the two routes to the mall area, are already at traffic capacity, said Larry Brown, Brownsville director of planning and community development.

The project would begin at the alley between St. Francis and St. Charles streets and bridge over Fronton Street. Landscaping and decorative bridge work and columns would be part of the plan.

But Commissioner Harry McNair, whose family owns land that the overpasses would go over, wasn't pleased.

"I can't believe we will have the railroad hold us hostage. ... There's nothing attractive about an overpass," McNair said.

The public will be able to get more information and voice concerns on the projects at a pair of public meetings. Some homes would have to be relocated. Homeowners would be compensated and have moving expenses paid.

A lot of good can come to projects when there is public input, said project planner John Hudson.

Funding sought for West Rail project

Train: County wants TxDOt at active partners.

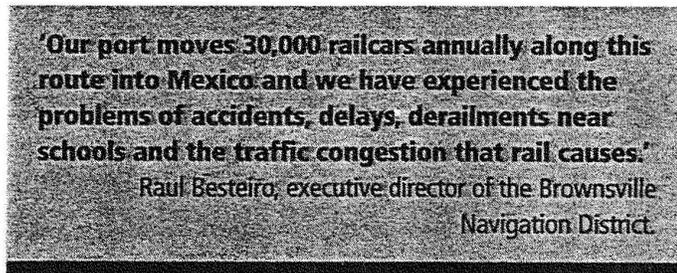
BY STEVE TAYLOR
THE BROWNSVILLE HERALD

AUSTIN — Cameron County leaders want the Texas Department of Transportation to become active partners in the Brownsville-Matamoros West Rail Bypass Project.

At a Texas Transportation Commission meeting in Austin on Thursday, a delegation that included state Rep. Rene Oliveira and County Judge Gilberto Hinojosa asked commissioners to commit \$5 million towards the indirect costs of the \$19.6 million project.

The Texas Department of Transportation would build an overpass on U.S. Highway 281 over the new rail line, purchase right of way to be vacated by the Union Pacific Railroad and construct a four-lane highway within the old railroad right of way.

"This is a case where the needs of the many outweigh



the needs of the few," Oliveira, D-Brownsville, said. "The original proposal would have cost \$42 million. This will cost half that. This is a united delegation."

The savings would come from not having to build overpasses over the railroad at Palm Blvd., Boca Chica Boulevard, FM 802, FM 3248, and Sixth and Seventh streets. Under the plan, the city of Brownsville is prepared to take over maintenance responsibility for Central Boulevard and Elizabeth Street.

Hinojosa said the goals of the project were to eliminate 17 street-rail crossings and the need to construct overpasses, reduce traffic congestion, cut down noise in urban areas, improve traffic safety and create a new transportation corridor.

"We have had 30 auto-train accidents including one fatality along this line in Brownsville in 1990. Cameron County has ranked as high as fourth in the state in auto train accidents in the state. This is not a statistic that we like," he said.

The rail bypass project involves the construction of five miles of new rail to the west of U.S. Highway 77/83. It involves building an overpass on U.S. 281 west of Brownsville and the construction of a new international rail bridge across the Rio Grande.

Mexican partners will build a 6.6-mile rail bypass in Matamoros, sharing the cost of the new international bridge and relocating their switchyard from downtown to the western area of the city.

"The city of Brownsville has \$2 million in bond funds to

pledge to the project. We believe that by sharing the construction cost for this project, we soften the financial burden to the local community," City Commissioner Henry Gonzalez said.

"Our port moves 30,000 railcars annually along this route into Mexico and we have experienced the problems of accidents, delays, derailments near schools and the traffic congestion that rail causes," said Raul Besteiro, executive director of the Brownsville Navigation District.

"This plan will greatly assist rail flow between the Port of Brownsville and Mexico."

Brownsville resident David Duncan, who owns land to the north and west of the city, near the proposed new railroad track, was the only person to speak against the project. Texas Parks and Wildlife officer John Herron said his agency did not support or oppose the plan but he wanted to point out the railroad would run close to the projected World Birding Center.

The three-member commission did not make a decision on the request for funds.

Bridge funds moved to West Rail plan

BY EMMA PEREZ-TREVIÑO
THE BROWNSVILLE HERALD

The U.S. House of Representative's appropriations committee is recommending to the full House that \$875,000 in federal funds already allocated for Brownsville's Sixth and Seventh Street Overpass Project be diverted to the city's and Cameron County's West Rail Relocation Plan instead. U.S. Rep. Solomon P. Ortiz, D-Corpus Christi, announced a few days ago that the appropriations committee approved the reprogramming.

It still needs final approval, but the appropriations committee recommendation advances the issue, officials said.

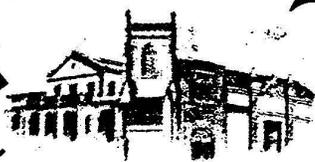
"It's very positive news," Brownsville Transportation Planner Mark Lund said.

In further developments, County Commissioners Court also recently approved a close to \$500,000 agreement with the engineering firm HNTB for an environmental assessment, aerial photography and schematic design of the relocation project.

County staff left for Washington D.C. Monday to meet with the Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of the Treasury to discuss the project.

Attempts to access funding from the North American Development Bank also continue, officials said.

BROWNSVILLE The Herald



THURSDAY, APRIL 5, 2001

BORN ON THE FOURTH OF JULY 1892

50 CENTS

Mexico pledges support for West Rail Plan

Timeline: Diplomatic notes may be exchanged later this month.

BY EMMA PEREZ-TREVIÑO
THE BROWNSVILLE HERALD

The diplomatic notes that will formalize the studies and advance Cameron County's proposed West Rail Relocation Plan could be

secured as early as this month, County Judge Gilberto Hinojosa said.

Amid emphatic vows of support for the project from top level Mexican officials at a meeting Wednesday, Hinojosa predicted that offi-

cial could be announcing the exchange of diplomatic notes between the United States and Mexico for development of the project at the U.S.-Mexico Binational Conference on Bridges and Border Crossings in Juarez later this month.

"We are very pleased with the progress," Hinojosa said. "Officials see that it's a good, positive project and that it is do-able," he said.

"One can plan all sorts of things but the projects that draw interest are the ones that can be accomplished," the judge said.

The project calls for moving Union Pacific railway

operations in Brownsville and Matamoros to the west.

The rail portion of the B&M Bridge would be replaced with a new international railroad bridge about

eight miles west of the city near San Pedro.

"We have followed this project with a lot of interest since its inception," Alfonso Salazar, representing Tamaulipas Gov. Tomas Yarrington told a group that gathered at Veterans International Bridge at Los Tomates to discuss the project.

"The governor has given us precise instructions to par-

ticipate, to be with you and support this project because it is extremely important for the development and safety of Brownsville, Matamoros, Tamaulipas and the region," Salazar said.

"I want to make it very clear that the state is supporting the project, we want it to happen and we want to participate in its development," the

PLEASE SEE RAIL, A12

RAIL

FROM PAGE A1

Matamoros Mayor Homar Zamorano Ayala said that this project has long been wanted.

"You can count on us and on our support to assist in the finalization of the multitude of processes that are involved," Zamorano said.

"We congratulate the group for the important progress that has been made in the past three months and we are sure that progress will continue in the coming three months," Zamorano added.

People in economic development in Matamoros support the project, he said.

Industrialist Sergio Arguelles of the FINSA Arguelles Group, developers of an industrial park west of the city and adjacent to the Free Trade Bridge at Los Indios, also voiced his support for the project.

The relocation eliminates health, safety and traffic haz-

ards caused by the movement of toxic materials through the communities, Arguelles said.

Amado Athie with the Federal Secretariat of Communications and Transportation said that the agency sees the project favorably.

Representatives from the Mexican railway Transporte Ferroviario Mexicano (TFM) said the project is an interesting one that will be studied.

The next step is for the group to reach consensus on the location of the bridge, Hinojosa said but insurmountable debate is not anticipated.

Following the briefing, officials were flown over the county's proposed route by helicopter.

EVITARÍA EMBOTELLAMIENTOS EN MATAMOROS Y BROWNSVILLE

Solicitarán agilicen construcción de cruce ferroviario internacional

La petición se hará en la reunión binacional en Monterrey

Por FELIPE VALLE JR.

La reunión binacional entre los presidentes de México y Estados Unidos, a celebrarse dentro de poco en la ciudad de Monterrey, será aprovechada para solicitar se agilicen los trámites de autorización para la construcción del nuevo cruce internacional para el ferrocarril entre Matamoros y Brownsville, lo que ayudaría a agilizar el tráfico entre ambas ciudades, además de que se eliminarían las constantes molestias que causan las diarias maniobras, al retirarse los patios hacia el poniente de la ciudad, afirmó ayer Pete Sepúlveda.

El anuncio fue hecho por el titular de la Administración de Puentes Internacional del Condado de Cameron, durante la ceremonia de bienvenida de la reu-



Pete Sepúlveda explica el proyecto del puente ferroviario.

nión, también binacional, entre funcionarios de diversas dependencias de México y Estados Unidos, que desde hace días recorren la frontera norte del país.

Estos funcionarios, realizaron ayer una visita de verificación en los 4 cruces internacionales que unen Matamoros con Brownsville para constatar personalmente

la operatividad de los mismos y conocer los problemas que se tienen para después, buscar alternativas de solución que optimice el cruce entre uno y otro lado.

Por parte de la delegación norteamericana, arribaron funcionarios y representantes del Servicio de Inmigración y Naturalización y Aduana, en tanto

que por parte de México, de dependencias federales involucradas con el movimiento y operación de los puentes, como el Instituto Nacional de Migración, Aduana de Matamoros, CABIN y CAPUFE.

El recibimiento que autoridades federales ofrecieron a los visitantes, se hizo en las oficinas del Puente Libre Comercio, en donde, por parte de México estuvieron el administrador de la Aduana local, José María González, el delegado del INM Rogelio Arnulfo Villarreal, Juan Enrique Lara, de la Sagarpa y Sergio Arturo Delgado, de Cabin.

Los anfitriones, hicieron a la comitiva binacional, una amplia exposición de la forma en que se operan los cruces internacionales locales, así como las cifras del flujo en uno y otro sentido, tanto peatonal, vehicular de turismo y de carga, así como ferroviario.

En el mismo acto, el titular de la Administración de Puentes Internacionales del Condado de Cameron, Pete Sepúlveda, dio a conocer que dentro de los programas para agilizar el tráfico ferroviario de carga entre Matamo-

ros y Brownsville, el proyecto para la construcción de un nuevo cruce especial para el ferrocarril va muy adelantado en la parte norteamericana.

Para ejemplificar lo anterior, dijo que incluso, los costos para la construcción de dicho cruce tendría un costo de 19 millones de dólares en cada lado de la frontera, y estaría ubicado al poniente de las 2 ciudades.

En lo que respecta a la realización del proyecto, dijo que para agilizar todos los trámites, entre estudios y permisos, se aprovecharía la reunión que sostendrán en Monterrey, Vicente Fox y George W. Bush en los próximos días y que inclusive, en lo que respecta a la ciudad de Brownsville, en los próximos días se licitarían los estudios de impacto ambiental necesarios para esta obra, en la que destacó los grandes beneficios que traería consigo, porque se eliminaría de tajo los problemas de congestionamientos que causan las constantes maniobras del ferrocarril por el puente Viejo Internacional al cambiarse las vías y estaciones hacia un nuevo punto, a 9 millas al poniente de las 2 ciudades.

Ante Comisión Binacional de Proyectos

Presentan trabajos de la reubicación de puente ferroviario

POR LAURA ALVAREZ RIVERA

BROWNSVILLE.- Autoridades del Condado de Cameron y la ciudad de Brownsville presentaron ante la Comisión Binacional de Proyectos el trabajo que se está elaborando para la reubicación del puente ferroviario.

De las 24 presentaciones que se presentaron durante la conferencia, este proyecto fue el que más interés por su relevancia y el interés de las autoridades por aliviar los múltiples problemas que se han registrado en los últimos años.

Por su parte, Pete Sepúlveda, integrante del proyecto, dijo que en los siguientes seis meses se tiene que empezar con los estudios técnicos que serán entre los dos países para que Estados Unidos haga los análisis ambientales.

"Estuvieron impresionados por el trabajo que estamos haciendo, además de que lo calificaron como una obra de mucho beneficio y de importantes avances".

Otros de los aspectos que se tomaron en cuenta fue la restauración del Centro Histórico para que la ciudad se conserve como una de las más atractivas.

Tanto el Condado de Cameron, Puerto de Brownsville y la ciudad de Brownsville aportarán apoyo económico para poder cristalizar el proyecto que tomará hasta 3 años reubicar.

Aseguró que el interés de las autoridades mexicanas ha sido muy importante para participar con Estados Unidos, ya que el trabajo involucra a las dos ciudades.

Trabajará con Matamoros en puente ferroviario

POR LAURA ALVAREZ RIVERA

BROWNSVILLE, TX.- El gobierno estadounidense espera tener un convenio donde todas las agencias involucradas en la construcción del puente ferroviario de Matamoros y Brownsville, queden de acuerdo en que la ubicación sea al poniente de ambos municipios.

La administración municipal de la vecina ciudad ha estado trabajando en conjunto con el Condado de Cameron para lo que será la construcción.

Autoridades de la vecina ciudad revisan últimos avances que lleva el Condado

Lo anterior lo dio a conocer Pete Sepúlveda, coordinador de este proyecto, al resaltar que el gobierno mexicano aceptó construir este acceso desde el 2001 y ahora el presidente municipal Mario Zolezzi ha estado analizando el trabajo junto con las autoridades norteamericanas.

Manifestó que la semana pasada tuvieron una reunión con el Instituto Municipal de Planeación de Matamoros, donde verificaron los últimos avances que lleva el Condado de Cameron.

"Para esto hemos tenido reuniones en las que hemos hecho recorridos para tener toda la información necesaria para llegar a un acuerdo".

Agregó, "seguimos en comunicación con el gobierno de Tamaulipas, con la Secretaría de Comunicaciones y Transporte, Transportación Ferroviaria Mexicana y Union Pacific".

Asimismo, mencionó que se estima contar con el inicio de edificación en enero del 2004.



CAMERON COUNTY/BROWNSVILLE WEST RAIL RELOCATION PROJECT



Project Overview

The Environmental Assessment (EA) of the West Rail Relocation Project has begun. The project proposes to construct a new international rail bridge and nearly 12 miles of new rail track west of Brownsville and Matamoros. Cameron County and the City of Brownsville are partners in this project, with Cameron County serving as the project sponsor.

This railroad relocation plan is proposed as an alternative to constructing a series of overpasses, or grade separations, along the existing Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) route. Its many advantages include:

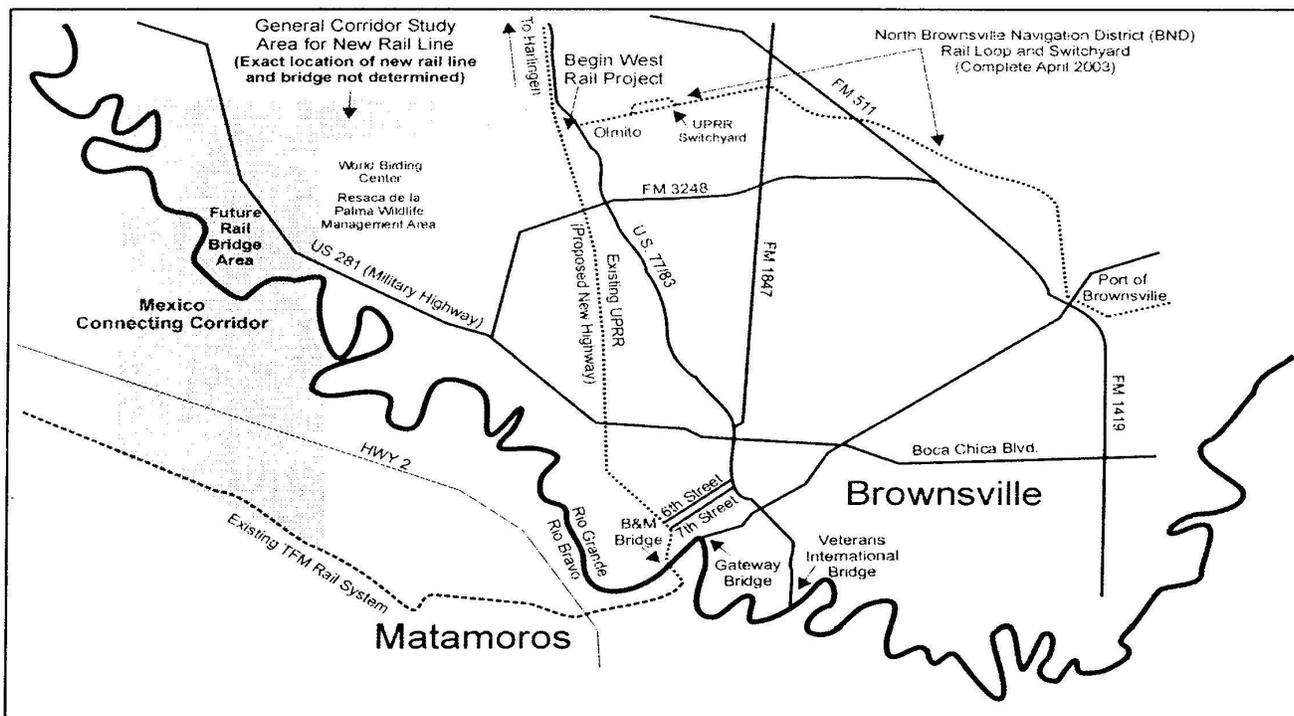
- Increasing safety by moving the current rail system from residential and downtown areas in Brownsville and Matamoros;
- Improving emergency access to west Brownsville;
- Reducing congestion and traffic delays;
- Improving air quality;
- Allowing for longer trains, thus fewer trains to move the same amount of freight;

Public Meeting - February 3, 2003
 Brownsville Police Substation, 1763 U.S. 281
 (Please see page 3 for more information.)

- Providing an uninterrupted rail route from the Port of Brownsville into Mexico; and
- Reducing rail freight travel time from Brownsville to Monterrey by more than two hours.

Once the new rail line and bridge are operational, a separate project is planned for re-use of the existing UPRR track that runs from Olmito through downtown Brownsville to the B&M Bridge. A four-lane highway, planned within this old rail right of way, will provide additional access to the Amigoland area, the B&M Bridge and other areas in west Brownsville.

This is the first of two newsletters to be distributed during the project. For additional information on this project, or to be added to the mailing list, please write to: The Cameron County/Brownsville West Rail Relocation Project, Cameron County, 964 E. Harrison, Brownsville, Texas 78520 or call Pete Sepulveda, Jr., at (956) 574-8771.



El Proyecto de Reubicación del Ferrocarril Poniente implica la construcción futura de vías de ferrocarril y un puente de ferrocarril en hacia el poniente de Brownsville. Una vez terminado dicho proyecto está proyectada, la construcción de una carretera de cuatro carriles en el derecho de vía del ferrocarril existente. Para información sobre el proyecto en español, por favor llamar a Pete Sepulveda, Jr. a (956) 574-8771. Para ser incluido en la lista de correspondencia, por favor escribir a: El Condado de Cameron/Brownsville Proyecto de Reubicación del Ferrocarril Poniente, El Condado de Cameron, 964 E. Harrison, Brownsville, Texas 78520.

Addressing the Issues

The numerous at-grade railroad crossings in downtown Brownsville and Matamoros cause congestion and accidents, as well as delays for vehicles, rail shipments and emergency response vehicles. The conflict between rail and local traffic also increases air pollution and noise.

In the 1970s, a plan was developed to address these issues. It included the relocation of the Southern Pacific Railroad (SPRR) tracks and a series of overpasses (grade separations) along the existing UPRR route at the following locations:

- Sixth and Seventh streets,
- FM 802 (Ruben M. Torres Senior Boulevard),
- FM 3248 (Flor de Mayo),
- U.S. 281 (Military Highway),
- Palm Boulevard, and
- Morrison Road.

Construction estimates for the overpasses totaled \$43 million. In the 1990s, federal funds were allocated for some of the overpasses.

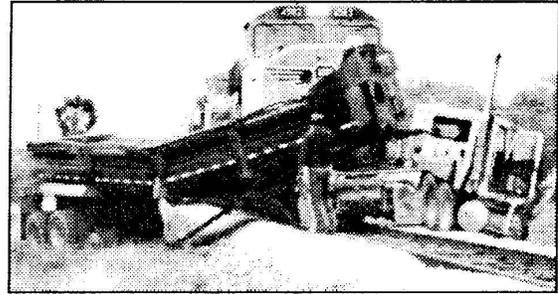


At-grade crossing in Matamoros.

In March 2000, the City of Brownsville held a public meeting to discuss plans for the Sixth and Seventh street overpasses. More than 280 people attended, expressing mixed reactions to the overpass plan. Elected officials decided to seek a compromise, and the West Rail Relocation Project was developed as an alternative. This new plan will provide for an even safer route, possible cost savings of \$23 million and the potential for a new highway.

Officials worked to redirect the federal funds from the overpass project to the relocation project. County officials also passed a resolution pledging to keep the route from bisecting the community of San Pedro.

The project team is developing specific alternative routes, but the relocation route would generally begin near Olmito at the UPRR junction with the rail route to the Port of Brownsville. It would continue westward (north of the Resaca de la Palma State Park), turn southward to U.S. 281, and then cross the Rio Grande approximately 20 river miles



Train - truck accident in Cameron County.

upstream from the existing B&M rail bridge. The route would then connect to the Grupo Transportacion Ferroviaria Mexicana (TFM) route to Monterrey.

Since 1984, approximately \$35 million has been spent to improve the rail system. A new rail loop to the Port of Brownsville is complete. Overpasses have already been constructed at SH 48, FM 511, FM 1847, and U.S. 77/83 to reduce the conflict between rail and vehicular traffic. The new UPRR switchyard near Olmito will be complete in April 2003.

The West Rail Relocation Project requires coordination with local, state and federal officials from the U.S. and Mexico, as well as state and federal regulatory agencies. Preparation of the EA began in October 2002 and is scheduled for completion in 2003. Once the draft EA is complete, it will be submitted to regulatory agencies for review. Following a decision from the U.S. Department of State, an application for a presidential permit will be submitted. This rail project is expected to be complete within four years.

Coordination with Mexico

Close coordination with authorities in Mexico is very important to the development of the entire project. Officials from Cameron County and Brownsville have held meetings with key individuals, including representatives from Matamoros, Tamaulipas, the federal government of Mexico, the Secretariat of Communications and Transportation, and the TFM Railroad.

This rail relocation plan will also benefit Matamoros. At-grade crossings will be removed, and rail switching operations will be relocated. Downtown traffic congestion will be relieved and rail freight travel time will be significantly decreased. Required technical studies are being conducted in Mexico.

Public Meetings

Two public meetings will be held in order to provide the public opportunities to learn about the project, make comments and discuss the project in an informal setting with the project team and city and county officials.

At the first meeting on February 3, 2003 project information, such as alternative alignments (or routes) and environmental constraints, will be discussed. The second meeting will be held to announce the preferred alternative and is tentatively scheduled for March 3, 2003.

Please mark your calendars and plan to attend the first meeting. If you are unable to attend, you may send comments to:

The Cameron County/Brownsville West Rail Project
Cameron County
964 E. Harrison
Brownsville, Texas 78520

Monday, February 3, 2003

Open House 5:00 PM

Public Meeting 6:00 PM

**Brownsville Police Substation
1763 U.S. 281 (Military Highway)**

Persons with disabilities who plan to attend the meeting and need auxiliary aids or services, or who will require Spanish translation, are requested to contact Pete Sepulveda, Jr. at (956) 574-8771 by January 27, 2003.

Personas con impedimentos auditivos que piensen asistir a la reunión y deseen asistencia auxiliario aquellas o que deseen traducción al español, por favor llamar a Pete Sepulveda, Jr. al (956) 574-8771 antes del 27 de enero.

Environmental Issues

The Environmental Assessment (EA) will evaluate the social, economic and environmental impacts of the project as well as the cost of alternative investments, property impacts, right of way acquisition and alignment locations. Major environmental issues that will be addressed during this EA include:

Threatened and Endangered Species

The purpose of this evaluation is to identify threatened and endangered species in the project area and any possible impacts on these species. Coordination is ongoing with federal and state regulatory agencies.

Historical and Archaeological Resources

The potential for encountering culturally significant historical or archaeological resources in the project area will be evaluated.

Land Use

Potential impacts on property along the route will be identified.

Noise

This evaluation analyzes existing and anticipated noise impacts at specific locations along the possible routes.

A New Highway

After the railroad relocation project is complete, the existing track will be abandoned, thus allowing for the future construction of a new transportation corridor in Brownsville. The proposed four-lane divided highway would be constructed on existing UPRR right of way and would improve access to many residential areas and undeveloped land in west Brownsville.

The new highway would be capable of accommodating 24,000 vehicles per day. In addition, the Sixth and Seventh street connections would be opened to Mexico Boulevard. It has been requested that TxDOT purchase the right of way from UPRR to construct this highway. A similar corridor is proposed in Matamoros.

Project Funding

Various funding alternatives have been planned for the U.S. portion of the project. Cameron County, the City of Brownsville, UPRR, and TxDOT have worked to secure a portion of the estimated \$19.5 million required for the rail line and bridge project. The remainder is being requested from the U.S. Department of Transportation. Other funding sources are being explored.

Presidential Permit

A presidential permit will be required for the new international rail bridge to be constructed. A presidential permit gives permission for the construction and maintenance of a facility that connects the United States with a foreign country.

Permit applications are processed by the U. S. Department of State, which is responsible for coordinating compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and other environmental policies. Coordination and planning with federal, state and local authorities in the U.S. and Mexico is required, and the public is invited to comment.

Federal agencies consulted during this process include General Services Administration, Federal Inspection Services, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Coast Guard, Federal Railway Administration, and U.S. Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission. State agencies consulted include Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Texas Department of Transportation, and Texas Historical Commission.

Project Schedule

Cameron County has requested that this project be put on the “fast-track.” That means the Project Team will be working diligently to complete the Environmental Assessment (EA) within nine months. Upon completion of the environmental studies, the design of the project and the acquisition of right of way can begin. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2004. The following time table outlines the steps involved in greater detail.

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TASK</u>
October 2002	Preparation of EA Began
November 2002	Aerial Survey Work Began
January 2003	First Newsletter Mailed
February 3, 2003	Public Meeting - Present Alternatives Open House - 5:00 PM & Public Meeting - 6:00 PM Brownsville Police Substation, 1763 U.S. 281
March 3, 2003 (tentative)	Public Meeting - Announce Preferred Alternative
March 2003	Second Newsletter Mailed
April 2003	Draft EA Complete
May 2003	Public Hearing
June 2003	Request Environmental Approval
	Submit Presidential Permit Application
July 2003	Begin Design & Purchase Right of Way
January 2004	Construction Begins
February 2005	Complete Project

Produced by Olivarri & Associates, Inc. with HNTB Corporation for Cameron County and the City of Brownsville.

01/03



CAMERON COUNTY/BROWNSVILLE WEST RAIL RELOCATION PROJECT

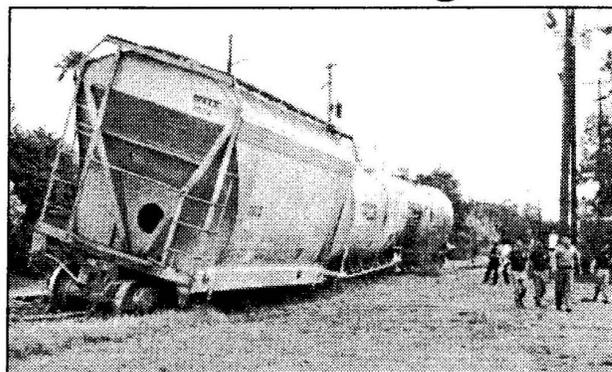


Preferred Route to be Announced at Hearing

Cameron County and the City of Brownsville will conduct a public hearing on Thursday, June 5, 2003 to present the preferred route for the Cameron County/Brownsville West Rail Relocation Project and review the results of the Environmental Assessment (EA). The public will have an opportunity to comment. Please see the inside of this newsletter for additional information on the hearing.

The project team initially identified three alternative routes, and through public involvement, identified an additional three alternatives. Please refer to the insert in this newsletter for detailed information about these alternative routes. Detailed engineering and environmental analyses were conducted on the six alternatives, and a preferred route was selected.

The project includes the construction of a new international rail bridge and new rail track west of Brownsville and Matamoros. This project would relocate the existing Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) route away from residential and downtown areas. Relocating the rail track was proposed as an alternative to constructing a series of overpasses, or grade separations, along the existing rail route.



A train derailment in the Brownsville Business District

In the 1970s, Cameron County began assessing the need for improvements and relocation of the existing rail route. A plan was developed that included both relocation and construction of a series of overpasses at several locations. In the 1990s, federal funds were allocated for the construction of overpasses. After the public expressed opposition to the overpass project, the relocation project was selected as an alternative, and the funds were redirected.

The relocation project has many benefits, including increased traffic safety and reduced noise and congestion in downtown Brownsville and Matamoros. It will also allow uninterrupted rail service from one switching yard to another and eliminate a number of street/rail crossings.

Once the new rail line and bridge are operational, a four-lane highway is planned for the re-use of the existing UPRR track that runs from Olmito through downtown Brownsville to the B&M Bridge. This highway project is separate from the rail relocation project. It will provide additional access to the Amigoland area, the B&M Bridge and other areas in west Brownsville.

This is the second of two newsletters to be distributed during the project. For additional information, please write to: The Cameron County/Brownsville West Rail Relocation Project, Cameron County, 964 E. Harrison, Brownsville, Texas 78520 or call Pete Sepulveda, Jr. at (956) 574-8771.

BY THE NUMBERS (CAMERON COUNTY)

- 180 At-grade crossings
- 500,000 Vehicles/day crossing rail tracks

Cameron County Railroad Safety (1990s)

- 15 Fatal vehicle-train accidents
- 197 Vehicle-train accidents
- 132 Injuries
- 14 Train derailments
- \$6.8 million Cost of vehicle-train accidents

Vehicle & Person Delays at Rail Crossings in Brownsville (2002)

- 1.4 million hours/year in vehicle delays
- 2.1 million hours/year in person delays
- \$21 million/year cost to motorists

El Condado de Cameron tendrá una reunión pública el jueves, el 5 de junio de 2003 para anunciar la ruta preferida del Condado de Cameron/Brownsville Proyecto de Reubicación del Ferrocarril Poniente y para presentar el estudio ambiental. El público tendrá la oportunidad de comentar. Para información sobre el proyecto en español, por favor de llamar a Pete Sepulveda, Jr. al (956) 574-8771 o por favor de escribir a: El Condado de Cameron/Brownsville Proyecto de Reubicación del Ferrocarril Poniente, El Condado de Cameron, 964 E. Harrison, Brownsville, Texas 78520.

Selecting a Route

A variety of engineering and environmental studies have been conducted. The studies and analyses are used to develop the Environmental Assessment (EA). Some of the issues addressed include land use; air quality; traffic and railway noise; floodplains; wetlands; wildlife and vegetation; threatened and endangered species; historical and archeological resources; right of way acquisitions, displacements and relocations; social and economic issues; and secondary and cumulative impacts. Certain studies and their results are outlined below.

Noise

The goal of this study is to determine the impact of the noise and vibrations associated with rail traffic along the existing and alternative routes. Monitors were placed at various locations along the existing route to calculate information such as locomotive type and quantity, number of train cars, hourly train volume, and train speed. The information that was gathered was used in two models to assess noise levels on the existing route. Because additional train traffic is anticipated, increased noise levels were also used in the models. This information was then used to assess noise in the area near the rail corridor. The preferred alternative would increase noise levels in the area, but is expected to have minimal impact.

Wetlands

This study identifies potential wetland areas along the proposed route and determines the amount of impact to wetlands from the project. National Wetlands Inventory and Flood Insurance Rate maps were examined and the U.S. Army

Corps of Engineers and the International Boundary and Water Commission were consulted. The proposed route crosses two resacas. This route, along with the other alternatives, also cross a navigable river. Coordination with regulatory agencies will continue.

Threatened and Endangered Species

The purpose of this study is to identify the threatened and endangered species in the project area and any possible impacts on these species. A database analysis of federal and state-listed species and a field survey were conducted. In addition, work was coordinated with resource agencies. Species of concern that may be in the project area include two feline species, the alomado falcon and two plant species. The proposed route is not anticipated to disrupt wildlife habitat.

Air Quality

This study reviewed the air quality monitoring data from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality for existing conditions and proposed future conditions. Currently, the region is in attainment for all criteria pollutants. Increased rail traffic on the existing route is expected to increase vehicle delay time at crossings, thus increasing idle emissions. The proposed relocated rail line would reduce emissions from idle vehicles and will help the area maintain air quality.

The EA will be reviewed by the U.S. Department of State and other federal and state agencies. The application for a Presidential Permit, which is required for the new international rail bridge, will also be submitted to the Department. It is anticipated that a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) will be issued.

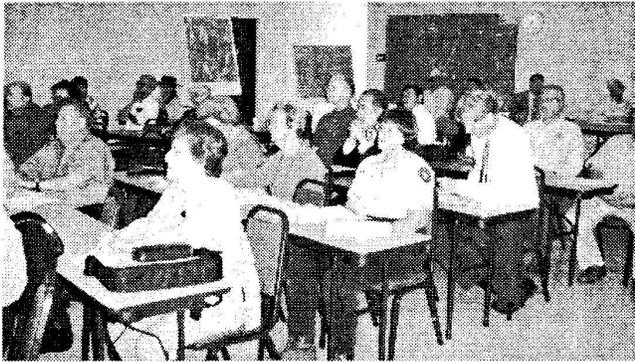
Comparison of Routes

Below is a comparison of the results of some of the engineering and environmental studies that were conducted for each alternative route.

	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	Alternative 4A	Alternative 4B	Alternative 5
Length (miles)	6.0	6.4	8.0	5.3	4.7	9.3
Land Use (approximate farmland lost, acres)	46	51	96	57	53	65
Noise - World Birding Center (WBC)	No impact	No impact	No impact	Minor impact	Minor impact	Minor Impact
Noise - Residential	No impact	No impact	Minor impact	Minor impact	Minor impact	Significant impact
Wetlands	2 resacas	2 resacas	1 resaca	2 resacas + 1 wetland	2 resacas + 1 wetland	2 resacas
Biohabitants/ Threatened & Endangered Species	20 acres lost	20 acres lost	No impact	Abuts WBC	Abuts WBC	Abuts WBC
Natural Historic Preservation	No impact	No impact	No impact	No impact	No impact	No impact
Socio-Economic	No impact	No impact	4-5 homes displaced; bisects community	No impact	No impact	No impact
Water Quality	No impact	No impact	No impact	Potential impact	Potential impact	No impact
Preliminary Estimated Costs (millions)	\$21.6	\$29.6	\$39.5	\$47.2	\$25.0	\$30.9

Public Meetings

Cameron County and the City of Brownsville have hosted two public meetings as part of the public outreach program for this study. The meetings were held on February 3, 2003 and March 3, 2003. These meetings gave the public the opportunity to meet with county and city officials and the consulting team, learn about the project, and make comments.



Citizens listen during the second public meeting

Both meetings were well attended, and there was considerable discussion. At the first meeting, project manager Tom Ellis, P.E., explained the purpose of and need for the project and presented three alternative routes. Based on public comments, three additional routes were identified and evaluated.

At the second meeting, the project team responded to questions and comments raised at the February meeting. They also explained the process that was used to analyze the various alternative routes and the results of the alternatives analysis.

At both meetings, a number of people spoke in favor of the project and the benefits of relocating the current rail line. Concerns were expressed about the potential impacts on the neighboring areas, particularly certain large tracts of land, the residential areas, the World Birding Center, and the Resaca de la Palma Wildlife Management area. The preferred route minimizes environmental and property impacts, and it is also the most cost-effective.



Project Manager Tom Ellis, P.E. makes a presentation at the first public meeting

Public Hearing

Cameron County and the City of Brownsville will conduct a public hearing on Thursday, June 5, 2003 at 5:00 PM regarding the proposed relocation of the existing Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) route through downtown Brownsville.

Maps and the draft Environmental Assessment will be available for public inspection at the public hearing. These documents will also be available for review prior to the hearing at the Veterans International Bridge office, located at 3310 South Expressway 77. A tentative schedule for construction may also be obtained at the bridge office.

Persons interested in attending the hearing who have special communication or accommodation needs are encouraged to contact Pete Sepulveda, Jr. at (956) 574-8771 by May 29, 2003. The hearing will be conducted in English. Requests for language interpreters should also be made to Mr. Sepulveda by May 29, 2003.

All interested citizens are invited to attend this hearing to express their views. Verbal and written comments relative to the proposed project may be presented at the hearing.

Thursday, June 5, 2003

Open House - 5:00 PM, Public Hearing - 6:00 PM

Westside Community Network Center

1763 U.S. 281 (Military Highway)

Written comments may also be submitted and will be included with official public hearing documentation. Comments should be mailed to: The Cameron County/Brownsville West Rail Relocation Project, Cameron County, 964 E. Harrison, Brownsville, Texas 78520, and will be accepted for a period of ten days after the hearing, or by Monday, June 16, 2003.

Para mayor informacion acerca del proyecto, traducciones al español, o asistencia personal favor de comunicarse con Pete Sepulveda, Jr. al (956) 574-8771. Personas con impedimentos auditivos favor de comunicarse antes del 29 de mayo de 2003 para asistencia. El Condado de Cameron hará lo posible para asistirlos. También se puede mandar comentarios escritos hasta diez días después de la reunión o del 16 de junio de 2003. Por favor mandar comentarios a: El Condado de Cameron/Brownsville Proyecto de Reubicación del Ferrocarril Poniente, El Condado de Cameron, 964 E. Harrison, Brownsville, Texas 78520.

Next Steps

Mark Your Calendars
PUBLIC HEARING
JUNE 5, 2003

While much work has been done on this project, there are still several steps left that must be completed before construction can begin. These steps are outlined below.

- **Conduct Public Hearing**

The public hearing is scheduled for Thursday, June 5, 2003 at the Westside Community Network Center, located at 1763 U.S. 281 (Military Highway). An open house will begin at 5:00 PM to allow the public an opportunity to view maps and the draft Environmental Assessment prior to the public hearing. The project team will be available during the open house to answer questions on the project. The formal presentation and public comment session will begin at 6:00 PM.

- **Request Environmental Approval**

The Environmental Assessment (EA) is sent to the U.S. Department of State and other federal and state agencies for comment. If the Department determines that the project would have no significant environmental impact, a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) will be issued.

- **Submit Application for Presidential Permit**

A Presidential Permit is required for the new international rail bridge to be constructed. The application will be processed by the U.S. Department of State and is coordinated with federal, state and local authorities in the U.S. and Mexico.

- **Begin Design and Purchase Right of Way**

Once environmental studies are complete, the design of the project and the acquisition of right of way can begin.

- **Begin Construction**

Construction is scheduled to begin in 2004 and is expected to be completed in February 2005.

Chronology

The chronology of the process involving coordination of the United States agencies and the agencies in Mexico has been intensive as shown in the following sequence of activities:

June 19, 2003	Submitted Presidential Permit application and EA to Department of State and other Federal Agencies
June 16, 2003	EA public comment deadline
June 12, 2003	Coordination meeting with John Hudson
June 10, 2003	Presentation on Status of project to Commissioners Court
June 6, 2003	Briefed U.S. Vice Consul Robert Waldrop
June 5, 2003	Held Public hearing for Project EA
June 3, 2003	Coordination meeting with John Hudson
June 1, 2003	Published Notice for Public Hearing
May 29, 2003	Meeting with EA Project Team to review presentations
May 28, 2003	Made presentation on status of project before the Bi-National Commission on Bridges and Border Crossings
May 20, 2003	Meeting with SCT and Project Partners to present the status report of the Mexican feasibility study
May 19, 2003	Meeting with Project Partners to receive update on the status of the pre-feasibility study on the Mexican side.
May 11, 2003	Published notice for the public hearing that will be held on June 5, 2003
May 4, 2003	Published notice for the public hearing that will be held on June 5, 2003
April 28, 2003	Meeting with Raba Kistner to receive first draft of the environmental assessment.
April 28, 2003	Meeting with Lyle Hamm from UPRR
April 14, 2003	Meeting in El Paso with the U.S. section of the IBWC
April 2, 2003	Meeting with Mario Jorge to discuss issues related to receiving a minute order and/or presentation before Texas Highway Commission.
April 2, 2003	Meeting with John Hopkins from UPRR
March 26, 2003	Met with the State Department regarding the entire process for the Presidential Permit Application.
March 24, 2003	Met with the City of Matamoros.
March 17, 2003	Met with Arturo de las Fuentes, Ing. Juan M. Gonzalez, Ing. Reyes Juarez and Ricardo Pena from Felipe Ochoa & Associates, John Hudson and Pete Sepulveda represented Cameron County. Discussed in detail the work plan for the Mexican feasibility study and updated everyone on the status of the project.
March 12, 2003	Met with John Hopkins and Lyle Hamm from UPRR and discussed several operational issues in regards to the West Rail Project.
March 11, 2003	Meeting with Humberto Acosta and Roberto Hernandez from the City of Matamoros. Met to discuss the crossing alternatives.
March 3, 2003	Held second environmental assessment public meeting in Brownsville.
March 2, 2003	Published Notice for West Rail public meeting in the Brownsville Herald.
February 25, 2003	Briefing of Commissioners Court on the status of project, rail alternatives and upcoming activities regarding proposed public meeting.
February 24, 2003	Published notice for second environmental assessment public meeting.
February 20, 2003	Held coordination meeting with Ing. Roberto Hernandez from the City of Matamoros to discuss aerial photography and rail site location.
February 20, 2003	Met with Mario Jorge, District Engineer and gave him a status report on the project. Mario will advise on when it is necessary to go before the Highway Commission for a second presentation.
February 19, 2003	Made presentation to the Brownsville Economic Development Corporation.
February 16, 2003	Published notice for second environmental assessment public meeting.
February 10, 2003	Meeting was held in Mexico City at the Secretaria de Comunicaciones Y Transportes with the project partners. First part of meeting was to sign agreement and second part was to review scope of services for feasibility study.

February 10, 2003 Met in Mexico City with Ing. Reyes Juarez, Ing. Juan Manuel Gonzalez from Felipe Ochoa & Assoc., Mexican consultant for the feasibility study, Arturo de las Fuentes. Reviewed presentation for meeting with project partners.

February 6, 2003 Met with EPA in Dallas including Bill Luthans, Oscar Ramirez and Gilbert Tellez. Cameron County represented by John Wood, John Hudson and Pete Sepulveda. The State of Tamaulipas represented by Arturo de las Fuentes. A detailed overview of project was given to EPA staff. A request was made to fund Mexico s feasibility study.

February 4, 2003 City of Brownsville approves agreement between US and Mexican agencies involved in the project.

February 4, 2003 Commissioners Court approved a proposed agreement between the County, the City of Brownsville, UPRR, B&M Bridge Company, the State of Tamaulipas, the City of Matamoros, Transportacion Ferroviaria Mexicana, and Secretaria de Comunicaciones Y Transportes.

February 3, 2003 Held first environmental assessment public meeting.

February 3, 2003 Met with EA Project Team to review presentation for the public meeting.

February 3, 2003 Meeting with Ing. Humberto Acosta and Ing. Roberto Hernandez from the City of Matamoros. Toured the proposed bridge location sites on the Mexican side.

February 2, 2003 Published notice for West Rail Public meeting in the Brownsville Herald.

January 31, 2003 Meeting in Mexico City with Grupo Protego, City of Matamoros financial lobbyists, and Arturo de las Fuentes regarding project financing.

January 31, 2003 Meeting in Mexico City with Ing. Reyes Juarez and Ing. Juan Manuel Gonzalez from Felipe Ochoa & Associates, and Arturo de las Fuentes regarding Mexico s pre-feasibility study.

January 26, 2003 Published West Rail Public Meeting Notice in the Brownsville Herald.

January 23, 2003 Presentation before the Brownsville Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors.

January 22, 2003 Presentation before the Noon Brownsville Rotary Club at the VICC.

January 19, 2003 Published West Rail Public Meeting Notice in the Brownsville Herald.

January 16, 2003 Meeting in Brownsville with Arturo de las Fuentes, Matamoros Mayor Ing. Mario Zolezzi Garcia, Humberto Acosta, Judge Hinojosa, Comm. Wood, Mark Yates, Comm. Henry Gonzalez, Lanny Lambert, John Hudson and Pete Sepulveda to discuss agreements for the project.

January 15, 2003 Coordination meeting with Arturo de las Fuentes to outline financing plan for the project.

December 12, 2002 Conference call was held with Matt Witosky from the EPA Region VI Office to discuss air quality issues. Included in the conference call were John Hudson, Arturo de las Fuentes, Comm. Wood, John Jaeckel from HNTB and Pete Sepulveda.

December 12, 2002 Meeting was held with the Port of Brownsville to discuss possibility of Port becoming a partner on the West Rail Project.

December 11, 2002 The Brownsville MPO amended the City of Brownsville Thoroughfare Plan to include the new proposed West Rail alignment that avoids the community of San Pedro.

December 11, 2002 A presentation was made on the West Rail Plan to U.S. Congressman Don Young, Chairman of the House of Representatives Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. We requested authorization of the project to be included in the next transportation bill, TEA 21 Reauthorization (2004 — 2010).

December 10, 2002 Held environmental assessment monthly progress meeting with HNTB and Raba Kistner.

November 20, 2002 Attended and briefed the Brownsville MPO on the proposed new alignment for the West Rail Project.

October 28, 2002 Received letter from the BECC advising of approval of West Rail Project Mexican feasibility study.

October 23, 2002 Meeting was held with Helena Colyandro, Director, Texas Border and Mexican Affairs Division, Secretary of State, and Fernando Centeno, Border Affairs Coordinator. John Hudson, John Wood and Pete Sepulveda provided a briefing on the West Rail and North Rail Plans.

October 22, 2002 Agenda item in Commissioners Court to consider the designation of possible West Rail Corridor and the requiring of notice of the alignment of the West Rail Relocation Project on subdivision plats.

October 21, 2002 Met with Morris Edelstein, Chairman of the Brownsville Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, and Frank Field, Chamber President and gave them a detailed presentation regarding the West Rail Project.

October 15, 2002 Met with John Taylor, Undersecretary for International Affairs, U.S. Treasury (Chairman, NADBank Board of Directors), Mark Jaskowiak, Director, Office of Specialized Development Institutions, U.S. Treasury, Allen Manuel Rodriguez, Deputy Director, Office of Specialized Development Institutions, Sarah Sowell, U.S. EPA, Coordinator, U.S.-Mexico BECC/NADBank, Dennis Linskey, Coordinator, U.S.-Mexico Border Affairs, Department of State and Ben Muskovitz from the Department of State.

October 15, 2002 Met with Dennis Linskey and provided him a status on the commencement of the environmental assessment process.

October 14, 2002 Met with Arturo de las Fuentes to discuss status of project on U.S. and Mexican side and to review presentation.

October 9, 2002 Met with Gurdit Dhillon, Customs Management Center Director, U.S. Customs, and briefed him on the West Rail project. Requested letter of early coordination from him.

October 9, 2002 Sent letter to Mike Triminsky, District Director from INS along with copy of study. Requested letter of early coordination from him.

October 9, 2002 Sent letter to Anabel Unwin, Port Director for U.S.D.A. along with a copy of the study. Requested letter of early coordination from her district office.

October 9, 2002 Spoke to Laura Brown from NADBank in Mexico City regarding meetings in Washington with U.S. Treasury, EPA, and State Department.

October 7, 2002 Submitted a packet of information regarding the project to Alfredo Coy from the EPA Region 6 Office in Dallas. Gave him a brief description of project over phone.

October 7, 2002 Submitted a packet of information regarding the project to Helena Colyandro, Director of the Texas Border and Mexican Affairs from the Secretary of State's Office in Austin.

October 4, 2002 Submitted agreement for the preparation of the environmental assessment, schematic design and aerial photography to HNTB for their execution.

October 2, 2002 Judge Gilberto Hinojosa, Lic. Arturo de las Fuentes and John Hudson gave a presentation on the progress of the West Rail Project before the Bi-National Commission on Bridges and Border Crossings in San Diego, California.

October 2, 2002 Met with Arturo de las Fuentes to discuss the plan of action for the next six months and what needs to be accomplished for the next bi-national meeting.

October 1, 2002 Met with Ed Wueste from the TxDOT and gave him a status report on the project.

October 1, 2002 Met with Claude Cortez from the Secretaria de Comunicaciones Y Transportes and gave him a status report on the Project.

September 30, 2002 Met with Arturo de las Fuentes to review and go over presentation before the Bi-National Commission.

September 24, 2002 The contract with HNTB was approved by Commissioners Court.

September 23, 2002 Met with Jaime Anaya from the City of Matamoros to discuss the presentation at the Bi-National meeting in San Diego.

September 19, 2002 Met with Humberto Acosta from the City of Matamoros to brief him and discuss the presentation at the Bi-National Meeting in San Diego.

September 18, 2002 Sent letter with copy of study to Carlos M. Ramirez, Commissioner of IBWC.

September 16, 2002 Met with Brownsville City Commissioner David Betancourt to brief him on the West Rail Project.

September 10, 2002 Met with Carrie Cate from the Texas Parks & Wildlife and the World Birding Center to discuss project. Provided updated information regarding the progress on the U.S. side.

September 5, 2002 Met with Arturo de las Fuentes in Mexico City regarding the presentation before the Bi-National Commission at their San Diego Meeting.

August 27, 2002 Met with Carrie Cate from the Texas Parks & Wildlife and the World Birding Center to go over certain aspects of the project and to exchange maps and information.

August 23, 2002 Met with Jaime Betancourt Anaya from the City of Matamoros to discuss the West Rail Project.

August 22, 2002 Met with Dan Stoppenhagen, a consultant from TXDOT, to brief him on the West Rail Project and see how it fits into Governor Perry's Trans Texas Corridor Project.

August 15, 2002 Met with Jaime Betancourt Anaya from the City of Matamoros to discuss West Rail Project.

August 14, 2002 Met with Arturo de las Fuentes in Mexico City to review documents and presentation for the NADBank meeting.

August 14, 2002 Met with Laura Brown from NADBank in Mexico City to submit funding request to NADBank.

August 14, 2002 Met with Ing. Amado Athie Rubio and Claude Cortez from SCT to brief and update them on the West Rail Project.

August 14, 2002 Met with Ing. Juan Manuel Gonzalez from Felipe Ochoa & Associates regarding the West Rail Project.

August 14, 2002 Met with Arturo de las Fuentes to review and prepare the final documents to be submitted to NADBANK.

August 6, 2002 Met with Arturo de las Fuentes and Laura Brown from NADBANK to consider a request for funding from NADBANK.

August 5, 2002 Met with Arturo de las Fuentes in Mexico City to discuss project and go over presentation to NADBANK.

July 23, 2002 Commissioners Court interviewed TCB and HNTB and selected HNTB as the consultant to prepare the EA, Schematic Design, and Aerial Photography.

July 9, 2002 The EA Committee submitted a recommendation to Commissioners Court on the selection of a consultant to prepare the Environmental Assessment, schematic design, and aerial photography.

June 19, 2002 A meeting was held in Mexico City with Dr. Aaron Dichter, Undersecretary for SCT, Oscar Corso, Director General, SCT Railroad Division, Antonio Lozada Bautista, SCT Railroad, Arturo de las Fuentes, State of Tamaulipas, Mario Zolezzi Garcia, Mayor of Matamoros, Humberto Acosta, City of Matamoros, Mario Mohar Ponce, Director General de TFM, Jorge Licon, Executive Director of Operations for TFM, Francisco Mariel, Grupo BM, Abigail Calleja Fernandez, Relaciones Exteriores. The meeting highlighted Mexico's need to complete its feasibility study. Funding from TFM was assured. Pete Sepulveda and John Hudson represented Cameron County.

June 19, 2002 Had a planning meeting with Ing. Mario Zolezzi Garcia, Mayor of the City of Matamoros, Lic. Arturo de las Fuentes, and Humberto Acosta from the City of Matamoros.

June 19, 2002 Had a coordination meeting with Lic. Jorge Licon and Mario Mohar Ponce from TFM.

June 18, 2002 The EA Committee conducted interviews of two of the firms submitting RFP's. TC&B and HNTB were interviewed.

June 14, 2002 Rick Meyers, lobbyist for the City of Brownsville met with JoAnne McGowan from the Federal Railway Administration.

June 12, 2002 Met with Rick Meyers and Larry Meyers, lobbyists for the City of Brownsville and Arturo de las Fuentes, State of Tamaulipas and provided them a detailed briefing of the West Rail Project. Copies of existing legislation on railroad bypass funding were provided by Meyers & Associates.

June 12, 2002 Met with staff persons for the Surface Transportation Subcommittee in Washington, D.C. Funding for the 2003 Appropriation & TEA 21 Reauthorization were discussed with the legislative personnel.

June 12, 2002 Met with Dennis Linskey, Coordinator for Mexican Border Affairs for the State Department, Arturo de las Fuentes and Rick Meyers. He acknowledged the receipt of the diplomatic note from Mexico supporting the West Rail Project.

June 11, 2002 A meeting was held in Washington, D.C. with Senator Hutchison's staff, Arturo de las Fuentes from the State of Tamaulipas, and Rick Meyers, lobbyist for the City of Brownsville. The Legislative Aides stated that they would attach the West Rail Project funding request on several bills.

June 11, 2002 Met with Senator Gramm's staff in Washington, D.C. along with Arturo de las Fuentes from the State of Tamaulipas and Rick Meyers, lobbyist for the City of Brownsville. The Legislative Personnel emphasized the need to work with Senator Hutchison's office for the rail funding of both projects for Cameron County.

June 5, 2002 Had a planning meeting with Lic. Arturo de las Fuentes and Humberto Acosta from the City of Matamoros.

June 5, 2002 The Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores through the Mexican Embassy in Washington, D.C., sent a diplomatic note to the United States Department of State supporting the Brownsville/Matamoros West Rail Project.

June 5, 2002 The EA Committee met to review the RFP's submitted for the EA preparation. Carter Burgess, TC&B, and HNTB submitted RFP's.

June 4, 2002 A meeting was held in Mexico City with Juan Felipe Ordoñez from SEDESOL (Urban Renewal/EPA), Sotero Ortiz Castañeda from SEDESOL, Arturo de las Fuentes from the State of Tamaulipas, Ing. Antonio Lozada Bautista from SCT Railroad Division, Humberto Acosta from the City of Matamoros, and Abigail Calleja Fernandez from Relaciones Exteriores. Pete Sepulveda and John Hudson represented Cameron County. Ordoñez emphasized Mexico's need to complete their feasibility study.

May 31, 2002 Met with Joe Hinojosa, Director of Environmental Services for the City of Brownsville, to gather information to attempt to quantify the benefits to the environment by relocating the rail to West Brownsville. Mr. Hinojosa provided a letter of support for the project in terms of its benefits to the environment.

May 30, 2002 Met with TXDOT officials regarding the West Rail Project and discussed their role in the project. Amadeo Saenz is interested in the coordination of the bypass around Harlingen, San Benito and Brownsville relative to Governor Perry's Trans Texas Corridor.

May 28, 2002 Received three RFP's from consulting firms for the Environmental Assessment. The firms submitting RFP's were Carter Burgess, HNTB and TCB.

May 24, 2002 A meeting was held in Mexico City at the Palacio Nacional with Ricardo Ochoa, Secretaria de Hacienda and Credito Publico, Director General de Financiamientos Internacionales, Abigail Callejo Fernandez from Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores, Ing. Rivas from SCT Railroad Division, Arturo de las Fuentes representing Governor Yarrington, Dr. Jaime Betancourt Ayala from the City of Matamoros and Ing. Francisco Mariel from Grupo B&M. Pete Sepulveda and John Hudson represented Cameron County. The West Rail Plan was presented to the group and advised them of a request for assistance from NADBANK.

May 24, 2002 Met with Ing. Francisco Mariel and Ing. Armando Sortibrán and discussed the new rail alternative between Cameron County and the City of Matamoros. Their preliminary opinion was positive although they have not begun their detailed study of the plan.

May 24, 2002 Presented the new rail alternative to Dr. Jaime Betancourt Ayala, Director of Environmental Services for the City of Matamoros.

May 21, 2002 The County Commissioners Court approved a resolution that the West Rail route alternatives would not traverse through the San Pedro community. The new alternative was submitted to Mexico and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

May 14, 2002 Met with Humberto Acosta, Director of Planning for the City of Matamoros and presented a new rail alternative between Cameron County and the City of Matamoros. The alternative is east of the San Pedro Community.

May 10, 2002 Attended a meeting in San Pedro regarding the rail alternative.

May 9, 2002 Met with Raul Rodriguez, Managing Director of NADBANK, Laura Brown Parra from NADBank, Arturo de las Fuentes representing Governor Yarrington, Francisco Mariel from Grupo B&M, Ing. Antonio Lozada Bautista from SCT Railroad Division and Humberto Acosta with the City of Matamoros, to request funding from NADBANK. The meeting was held at the World Trade Center in Mexico City.

May 9, 2002 Met with Arturo de las Fuentes, Governor Yarrington's representative. Arturo advised us that the West Rail Project is included in the Partnership for Prosperity Program of the Bush and Fox Administration. The West Rail Project was discussed at the March Monterrey meeting between both Presidents and consequently the West Rail Project was placed on the list.

May 9, 2002 Met with Ing. Francisco Mariel and Ing. Armando Sortibrán from Grupo B&M, Mexico's rail consultants, and presented a new rail alternative between Cameron County and Matamoros.

May 8, 2002 Met with representatives from the Community of San Pedro to review and discuss different rail alternatives.

May 7, 2002 A group of people from the San Pedro Community in West Brownsville appeared before the County Commissioners Court opposing the rail alternative through their community.

May 1, 2002 The committee appointed by Commissioners Court met and unanimously decided to request RFP's from three firms. The RFP's will be due on May 28, 2002.

April 23, 2002 County Judge Gilberto Hinojosa, Matamoros Mayor Mario Zolezzi Garcia, Lic. Arturo de las Fuentes (State of Tamaulipas), John Hudson and Eduardo Barousse from Grupo BM made a joint public presentation to the members of the Bi-National Commission on Bridges and Border Crossings at their Meeting in Matamoros.

April 22, 2002 Received four (4) Letters of Interest from consulting firms in response to our advertisement for a consultant to prepare the Environmental Assessment.

April 16, 2002 Met with Lic. Arturo de las Fuentes, representing the Governor of Tamaulipas, Ing. Francisco Mariel from Grupo BM, engineers for Mexico's portion of the West Rail Project to prepare presentation for the Bi-National Meeting and to receive a scope of services on the Mexican technical study.

April 4, 2002 Met with Carrie Ann Cate from Texas Parks and Wildlife and the World Birding Center to provide update on the project.

March 28, 2002 Met with Ana Maria Garcia from Senator Phil Gramm's office to discuss West Rail Project and submit request for the reprogramming of funds and request additional funds.

March 24, 2002 Advertised in the Brownsville Herald for letters of interest from consultants in order to select a firm to begin the environmental assessment process.

March 20, 2002 Met with Dennis Linskey and Bill McLeese from the State Department and briefed them on the West Rail Project. We outlined the beginning of the EA and the fact that their office would serve as the coordinating agency for the EA. Both were supportive of this project and reflected Mexico's interest in the Project. They will schedule a trip to Brownsville to visit the project as well as community leaders.

March 20, 2002 Met with Lencho Rendon, Mac King and David Garcia from Congressman Ortiz's office to request (1) reprogramming of the \$ 875,000.00 of existing ISTEA and TEA 21 appropriations from the rail overpasses to West Rail Project; (2) requested \$ 3 million of earmarked funds in the 2003 appropriations budget; (3) requested assistance for the inclusion of \$ 10 million in TEA 21 Reauthorization of the Transportation Bill. Lencho assured the City and County that the reprogramming was assured although it was going to be difficult to obtain the additional \$ 3 million funding request in the 2003 appropriation budget because of the reduction of available funding.

March 20, 2002 Met with Ken House, Chief Staffer for the Subcommittee on Transportation and Infrastructure to request reprogramming of funds for West Rail Project. The County and City are in line with the request to reprogram funds and will continue to work through Congressman Ortiz's office.

March 13, 2002 A brief status report was given to the members of the Bi-National Commission that attended the border walk in Matamoros. Pete Sepulveda provided such briefing.

March 13, 2002 Met in Matamoros with Lic. Arturo de las Fuentes and the City of Matamoros representatives to discuss project.

February 20, 2002 Met with Lic. Arturo de las Fuentes, SCT Railroad Division officials, representatives from TFM and the City of Matamoros, in Matamoros, to discuss project. Mexico's feasibility study was outlined.

February 5, 2002 The Brownsville City Commission approved the transfer of \$492,000 bond funds to Cameron County to begin the Environmental Assessment and Presidential Permit process.

January 29, 2002 The TxDOT provided letter from staff legal counsel advising that the project will not need a State of Texas International Bridge Permit.

January 8, 2002 Met with Lic. Arturo de las Fuentes in Brownsville to review and discuss the needed commitments from Mexico. A site visit took place along the proposed alignment.

December 19, 2001 Met in Mexico City with Lic. Arturo de las Fuentes, the State of Tamaulipas appointed coordinator for their portion of the West Rail Project and other officials from the State of Tamaulipas.

December 2, 2001 Met with personnel from the UPRR in Brownsville and received their commitment to participate in the funding of the West Rail Project. Their proceeds from the sale of their right-of-way will be reinvested in the West Rail Project.

November 14, 2001 Meeting between Cameron County, City of Brownsville and TXDOT to review and receive status of project. Attendees were as follows: Pete Sepulveda, John Hudson, Juan Bernal, Ernesto Hinojosa, Larry Brown, Ben Medina, Gary Ellis, Robin Longwell, Behrooz Badiozamani, and Mark Lund. Aside from a briefing on the project the need to protect the corridor was a major issue discussed with city staff.

November 7, 2001 Mr. Besteiro and Judge Hinojosa made a joint presentation of the West Rail Project during the Bi-National Conference of Bridges and Border Crossings in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The Port of Brownsville expressed their support for the West Rail Project.

October 25, 2001 City Commissioner Henry Gonzalez, County Judge Hinojosa, Mr. Besteiro, Rep. Oliveira and John Hudson made a presentation before the Texas Transportation Commission to request funding support for the West Rail Project. Letter of support was provided to the Highway Commission from Senator Eddie Lucio.

August 8, 2001 A joint meeting was held in Matamoros, Mexico with the City of Matamoros, the Transportacion Ferroviaria Mexicana (TFM) and Cameron County to discuss the status of the project.

July 3, 2001 Mac King from Congressman s Ortiz visited the site and toured the proposed project alignment. He indicated support from their office for the reprogramming of ISETEA and TEA 21 funds.

June 2001 The State of Tamaulipas formally submitted a request to NADBank for the funding of their feasibility study.

May 24, 2001 Cameron County presented the West Rail Plan in Mexico City to SCT-Railroads and Concessions, SRE, Transportacion Ferroviaria Mexicana (TFM), and the B&M Bridge officials.

May 17, 2001 Representatives from the County, City and Port met with Congressman Ortiz in Washington, D.C. to request reprogramming of the 6/7TH St. demonstration funds to the West Rail Project.

April 23, 2001 Cameron County, the City of Brownsville, and the Brownsville Navigation District jointly presented the West Rail Relocation Project at the Bi-National Conference on Bridges and Border Crossings in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico.

April 11, 2001 Presentations of the project have been made to the Brownsville MPO. The modification to the Brownsville Thoroughfare Plan and the inclusion of the West Rail Relocation Project on the plan was approved at the April 11, 2001 MPO meeting. One property owner submitted a letter objecting to the route crossing his property.

April 4, 2001 Site visits via helicopter along the proposed rail and river crossing corridors were conducted. Included in the project planning were County Judge Gilberto Hinojosa, Mayor of Matamoros Homar Zamorano, Representatives from the Governor of Tamaulipas and a federal representative from SCT. TFM and UPRR personnel also participated in the flights and planning operation.

March 22, 2001 Meetings were held with the TFM Railroad in Monterrey. Their engineering staff was committed to develop and prepare an analysis of the proposed rail-crossing site on the Rio Grande and will develop costs estimates for Mexico s portion of the rail relocation project.

February 27, 2001 David Randolph, Coordinator for U.S./Mexico Border Affairs, U.S. Department of State, visited with the County, City and Port of Brownsville officials to discuss the West Rail Project.

February 23, 2001 Site coordination has been underway with U.S. Customs and INS for their input to their needs at the rail river crossing. A small facility near the levee and river is included in the plan. GSA stated that Cameron County should coordinate the small facilities directly with the federal user agencies.

January 31, 2001 Coordination meetings have taken place with the City of Matamoros, State of Tamaulipas and the Federal Government of Mexico. A presentation of the West Rail Plan took place in Mexico City on January 31, 2001 before SRE/SCT and other key agencies of the Mexican Government. Support for the project from these agencies has been positive.

January 11, 2001 Meetings have been underway with the UPRR and the B&M Bridge Company to gain their support of this project. Negotiations for the long-range rail bridge tolls and the operating agreement between the UPRR, B&M Bridge and the Port of Brownsville began on January 11, 2001.

December 2000 Early coordination with the environmental agencies has been favorable with positive statements from the USFWS, IBWC, and the THC. Coordination with the Brownsville World Birding Center officials has been continuous during the last several months.

September 2000 Various funding alternatives have been explored for the U.S. portion of the project that includes the City, County, UPRR, TxDOT and the U.S. Department of Transportation. Demonstration funds are being pursued at the federal level to reduce the local cost of this project. The County has requested to be placed on the Texas Transportation Commission agenda to present the project and to request funding. Funding through NADBank is also being pursued.

July 2000 The TxDOT has provided preliminary commitments for the acquisition of the vacated UPRR right-of way and for the construction of a new four lane divided highway along such corridor to bring the needed improved access to Amigoland and the B&M Bridge. The TxDOT has made other funding commitments to Cameron County for construction of Merryman Rd and Old Alice Rd to provide new access to the County s new jail facility at FM 511 and Old Alice Rd. The plan also includes dropping of Central Blvd., and Elizabeth St. from the State s highway system.

June 2000 Coordination meetings have taken place with the City, County, Port of Brownsville, UPRR and our Mexican counterparts. Inter-local Agreements have been executed in support of the West Rail Relocation Plan by the County and City. The Port of Brownsville reviewed the agreement and supports the project, and plans to pass the agreement. Concurrently, the City and County have agreed to support the Port s commercial bridge. Cameron County will serve as the Project Sponsor for the West Rail Project.

Last Updated
June 19, 2003

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