

Chapter 2. State of the Practice for POE and Transportation Infrastructure Planning

This chapter documents current planning practices followed by Federal, State, regional, and local agencies to determine transportation and POE infrastructure needs and priorities for project implementation. To better understand the current planning practices of these agencies in determining transportation and POE infrastructure needs and priorities, planning documents were reviewed and information was obtained from consultancy reports, books, articles, and academic literature. In addition, telephone and in-person interviews were conducted with a number of TWG members.

Figure 2.1 shows information about funding and mandates of different types of planning agencies. In the case of the United States, Federal agencies establish guiding principles and a regulatory framework for transportation planning at State and regional levels. State, county, and city agencies have strong funding capabilities (i.e., a strong tax collection jurisdiction) relative to Mexican State and regional agencies (i.e., which mostly receive redistributed funds from the Federation) and may seek additional funding from the Federal Government through programs established in transportation regulations that can fund transportation projects entirely or partially.

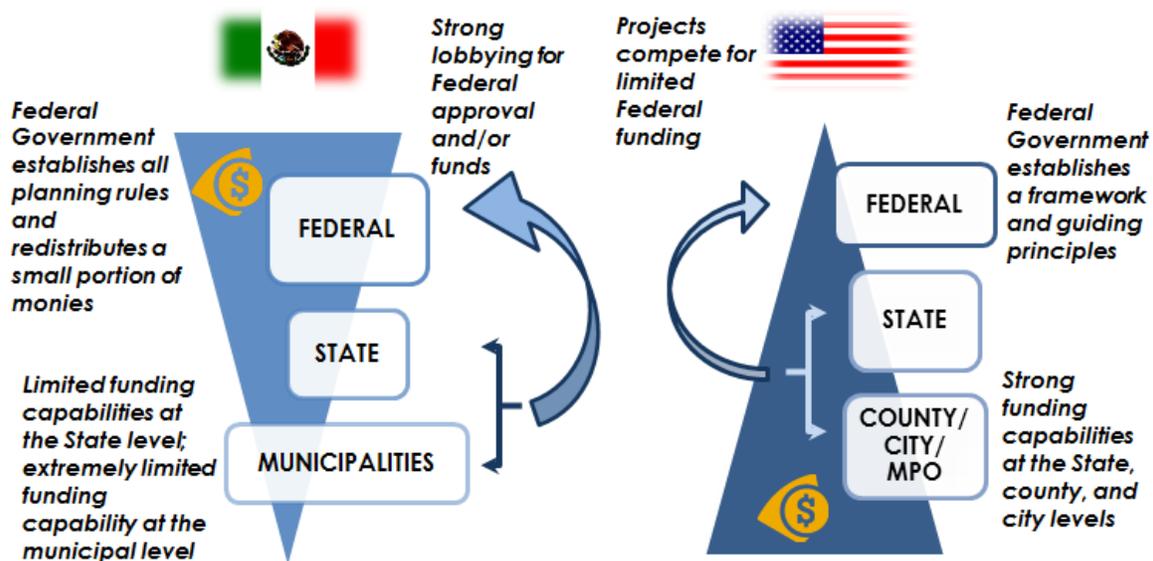


Figure 2.1: Planning Levels and Mandates

In Mexico, Congress and Federal agencies enact six-year planning documents that establish not only the guiding principles and framework for transportation planning at the regional and local levels, but may select which projects will be granted authorization and/or funding. Mexican Federal agencies approve all transportation infrastructure projects irrespective of their funding source (private, public, or a combination of both). Since State and municipal finances are limited, stakeholders have in some cases incurred debt to finance infrastructure projects. This is the direct result of the current fiscal policy framework that limits distribution of Federal funding to States and municipalities.

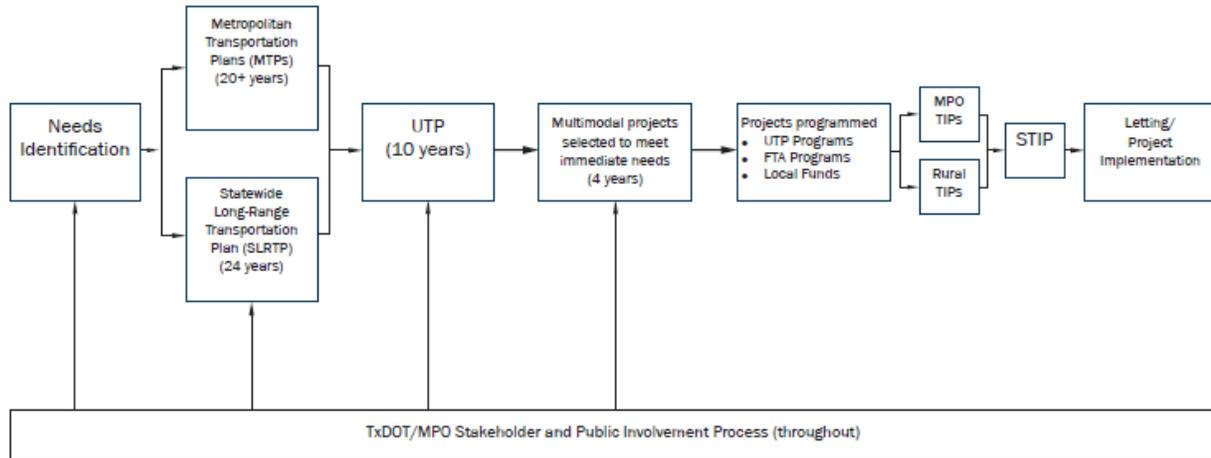
2.1 Transportation Border Infrastructure Planning Practices: United States

For Federal funding, the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) relies on FHWA division offices, the Federal Transit Administration, the Federal Railroad Administration, the Maritime Administration, State departments of transportation (DOTs), and metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) to oversee and conduct transportation planning at the State, regional, and local levels.

2.1.1 Participants in Transportation Border Infrastructure Planning

TxDOT acts on behalf of the governor of Texas in most matters relating to transportation plans. Figure 2.2 provides a summary of the interaction between the entities involved in transportation infrastructure planning in Texas. Projects can be planned at the city, county, and State levels. Projects include traditional roadways as well as projects that support other modes of transportation such as transit, bike paths/lanes, and sidewalks. TxDOT's responsibilities entail the State-maintained road network, which is commonly referred to as "on system." TxDOT also has an Aviation Capital Improvement Program that lists planned projects at general aviation airports in the State, supports the Port Authority Advisory Committee in the development of the *Port Capital Program Annual Report*, and is currently in the process of developing the Texas Freight Mobility Plan.

The metropolitan area boundary of MPOs includes urbanized areas (defined by the U.S. Census and smoothed by the MPO¹) and the area that is expected to be urbanized during a 20-year forecast period. An MPO boundary may include rural areas.



Note: UTP = Unified Transportation Program; FTA = U.S. Federal Transit Administration; MPO TIP = Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program; TIP = Transportation Improvement Program; STIP = Statewide Transportation Improvement Program; TxDOT = Texas Department of Transportation; and MPO = metropolitan planning organization.

Source: TxDOT²

Figure 2.2: Transportation Planning and Programming Process in Texas

2.1.2 Texas Department of Transportation

In general, TxDOT is responsible for planning for the on-system roads over a 20-plus-year period. MPOs are responsible for planning for transportation infrastructure in the current and expected urbanized areas over a 20-year forecast period. Texas’s MPOs vary greatly in organizational size, structure, available resources (both number of employees and available funding), and program emphasis. The most important transportation planning documents developed by TxDOT and the MPOs are illustrated in Figure 2.3. Several of these transportation plans and documents consider changes in population, employment, and economic trends. The documents are briefly described in the following paragraphs.

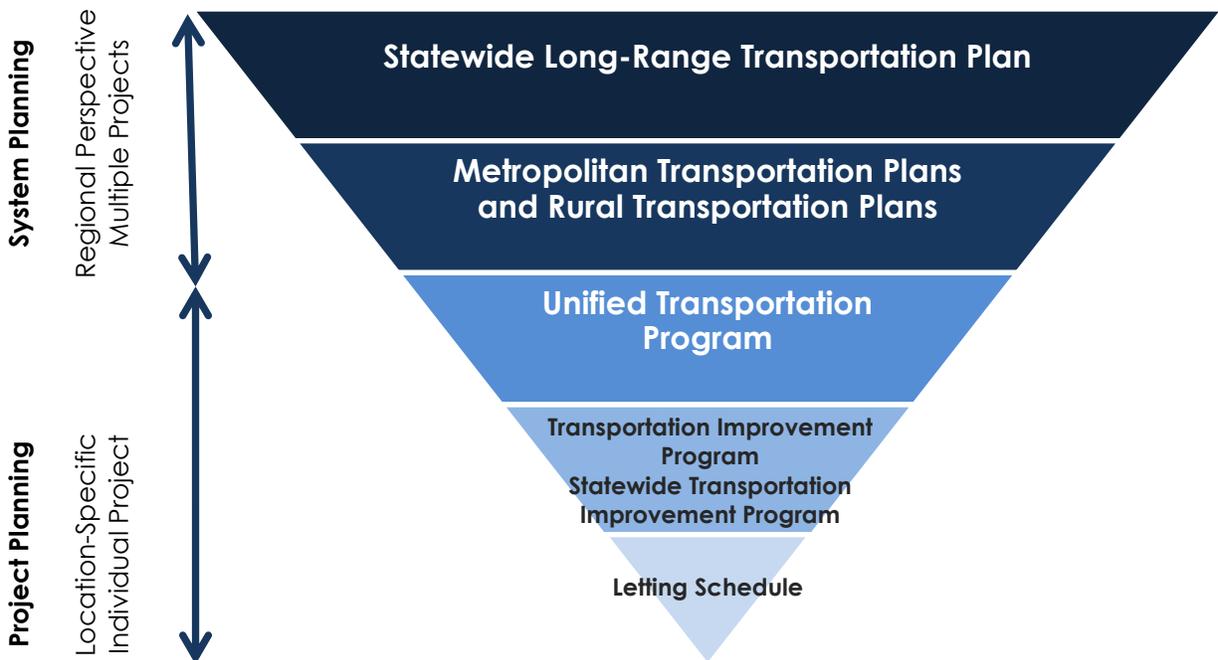


Figure 2.3: Key TxDOT Transportation Planning Documents

The planning documents can be broadly categorized as system planning and project planning documents. As shown in Figure 2.3, system planning initiatives include development of:

- *Statewide Long-Range Transportation Plan (SLRTP)*³—The Statewide Long-Range Transportation Plan 2035 details TxDOT’s long-range (24-year) transportation goals and strategies. The plan includes an inventory of the State’s transportation system—roads, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, transit, freight and passenger rail, airports, waterways and ports, pipelines, and intelligent transportation systems—and includes TxDOT’s Unified Transportation Program and Statewide Transportation Improvement Program by reference.
- *Metropolitan Transportation Plans (MTPs) and Rural Transportation Plans (RTPs)*—MTPs are long-range (20-plus years) transportation plans for urban areas that have more than 50,000 people. These plans are developed by the MPO in cooperation with TxDOT and publicly owned transit services. MTPs identify policies, programs, transportation needs, and projects by travel mode, including road, pedestrian, bicycle, transit, freight and passenger rail, airport, and freight facilities necessary to meet a region’s transportation needs. They may include information on the socio-economic profile of the area and any environmental considerations. The RTP is a component of the SLRTP and includes a long-range (24-year) transportation plan for areas not included in an MPO boundary. RTPs are developed in cooperation with TxDOT, local and regional decision makers, and all transportation stakeholders. The RTP includes a list of needed rural

highway projects and identifies non-highway (pedestrian and bicycle, transit, freight and passenger rail, airport, and waterway and port) needs and projects.

As Figure 2.3 shows, project planning initiatives include development of:

- *Unified Transportation Program (UTP)*⁴—The UTP is a 10-year program used by TxDOT to guide transportation project development and project construction. The UTP is updated annually and authorizes development of included projects. Project development includes activities such as preliminary engineering work, environmental analysis, right of way acquisition, and design. The UTP lists planned projects in terms of 12 funding categories and includes the estimated cost and funding sources for each project. Although important in that projects included in the UTP can move forward in terms of project development, the UTP does not ensure a budget or guarantee that projects will be built.
- *Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs) and Statewide Transportation Improvement Program*—Each MPO and TxDOT district develops a TIP of significant regional (urban and rural, respectively) transportation needs that are consistent with the SLRTP and the MTP. The TIPs represent a short-term (typically four-year) capital improvement program of multimodal transportation projects. All federally funded projects must be included in the TIP. The STIP is a four-year capital improvement program and includes the various TIPs developed by the MPOs and TxDOT districts. The TIPs and STIP include detailed project descriptions, cost estimates, and available funding sources. The TIPs and STIP represent how TxDOT and local agencies plan to allocate available funding resources based on the transportation needs of each region for each fiscal year of the program. In the case of TxDOT’s Pharr District, projects in urban and rural areas are included in these documents.⁵
- *Letting schedule*—The letting schedule lists projects that will be let within the next two years. At this point, the final contract documents—the plans, specifications, and estimates (PS&E) that provide detailed descriptions of projects, construction, and estimated costs—have been or are nearing completion.

In addition to the planning documents described above, TxDOT and the MPOs conduct a number of studies—including land use, safety, traffic and mobility (congestion), major corridor, major investment, and project feasibility studies—that inform system and project planning, as well as project development and alternatives analyses.

Areas that are classified as nonattainment or maintenance areas do not meet or have not met national ambient air quality standards for ozone, carbon monoxide, particulate matter, or nitrogen dioxide.⁶ In this case, MTPs, TIPs, and transportation projects funded or approved by FHWA or the Federal Transit Administration need a

conformity determination. This determination demonstrates that implementation of a plan or project will not cause any new violations of the air quality standard, increase the frequency or severity of violations of the standard, or delay timely attainment of the standard or any interim milestone.⁶ Currently, the Lower Rio Grande Valley area is in compliance with air quality standards and therefore is not included in the Environmental Protection Agency's Green Book or the Texas Air Quality Planning Areas by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.⁷

2.1.3 MPOs

As mentioned earlier, MPOs vary greatly in organizational size, structure, funding levels, and program emphasis.⁸ MPOs were first established as part of the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1962 to conduct regional transportation planning for metropolitan areas with populations of 50,000 people or more. Subsequently, the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) and the Transportation Efficiency Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) extended the MPOs' responsibilities with regard to transportation planning. The latter encouraged a continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative transportation planning process by the States and local communities. The passage of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) in 2005 created further requirements for transportation planning and programs. MPOs are thus designated by the governor in each State to implement this legislative requirement. The Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) was signed into law in July 2012 and succeeds SAFETEA-LU.

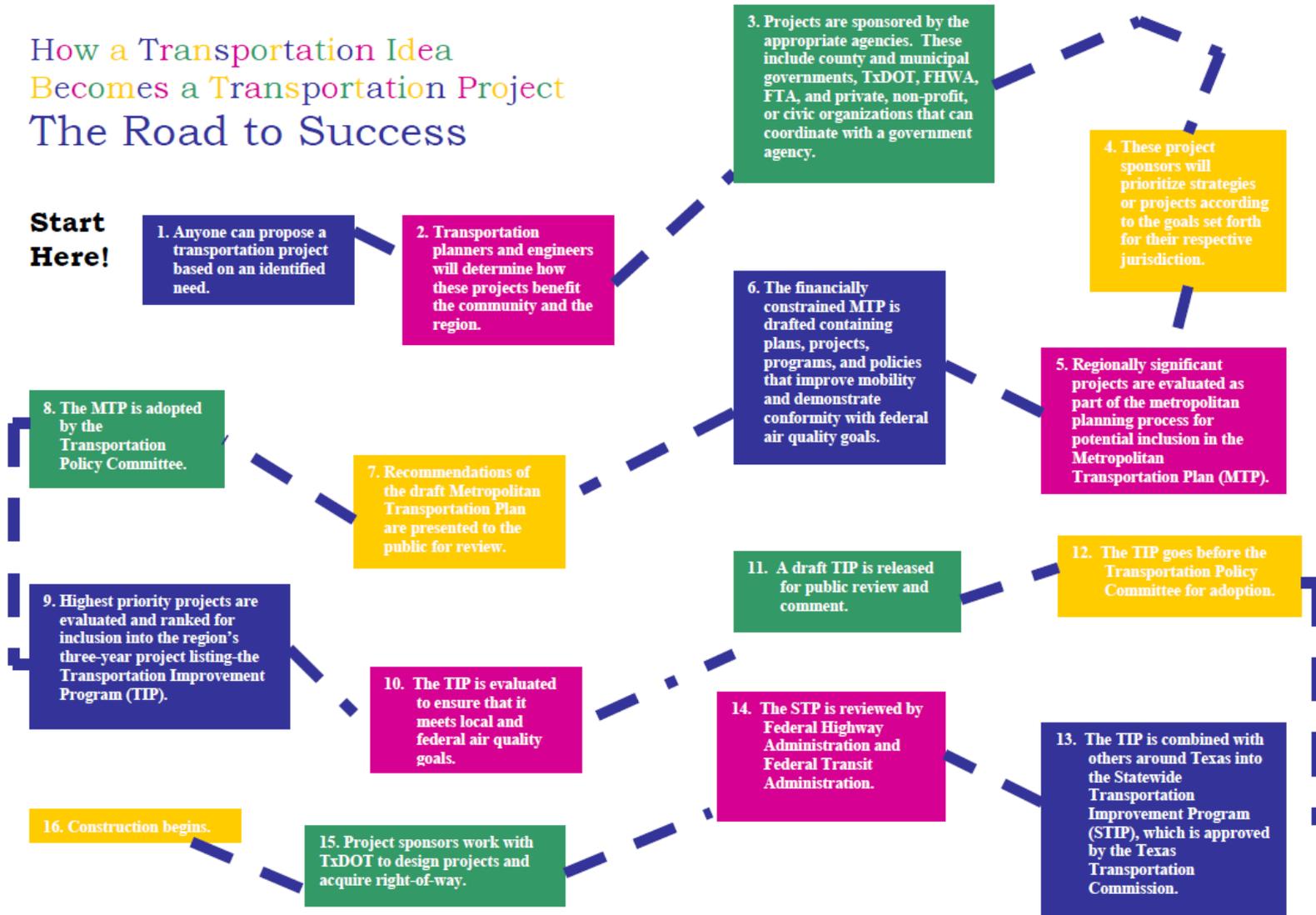
Figure 2.4 shows that all State and federally funded projects in metropolitan areas are selected through the metropolitan planning process (MPP). Any local government anticipating using State or Federal funds for a transportation project must coordinate with the State DOT and the relevant MPO to assure that the project is included in the transportation plans. Also, all projects on the State or Federal-aid highway system must be included in the approved transportation plan regardless of funding source to maintain the integrity of the planning process. Local governments are encouraged to coordinate with MPOs for projects off the State and Federal system using no State or Federal funds.⁹

Three MPOs operate in the study area: the Brownsville MPO (BMPO), Harlingen/San Benito MPO (HSBMPO), and Hidalgo County MPO (HCMPO). BMPO is responsible for transportation planning in the Brownsville urbanized area (shown in Figure 2.5). This MPO has two committees: the MPO Technical Committee (an advisory group that examines technical issues and makes recommendations) and the MPO Policy Committee (the group that makes final decisions for the MPO). Three full-time staff members conduct all tasks and related transportation planning activities.

How a Transportation Idea Becomes a Transportation Project

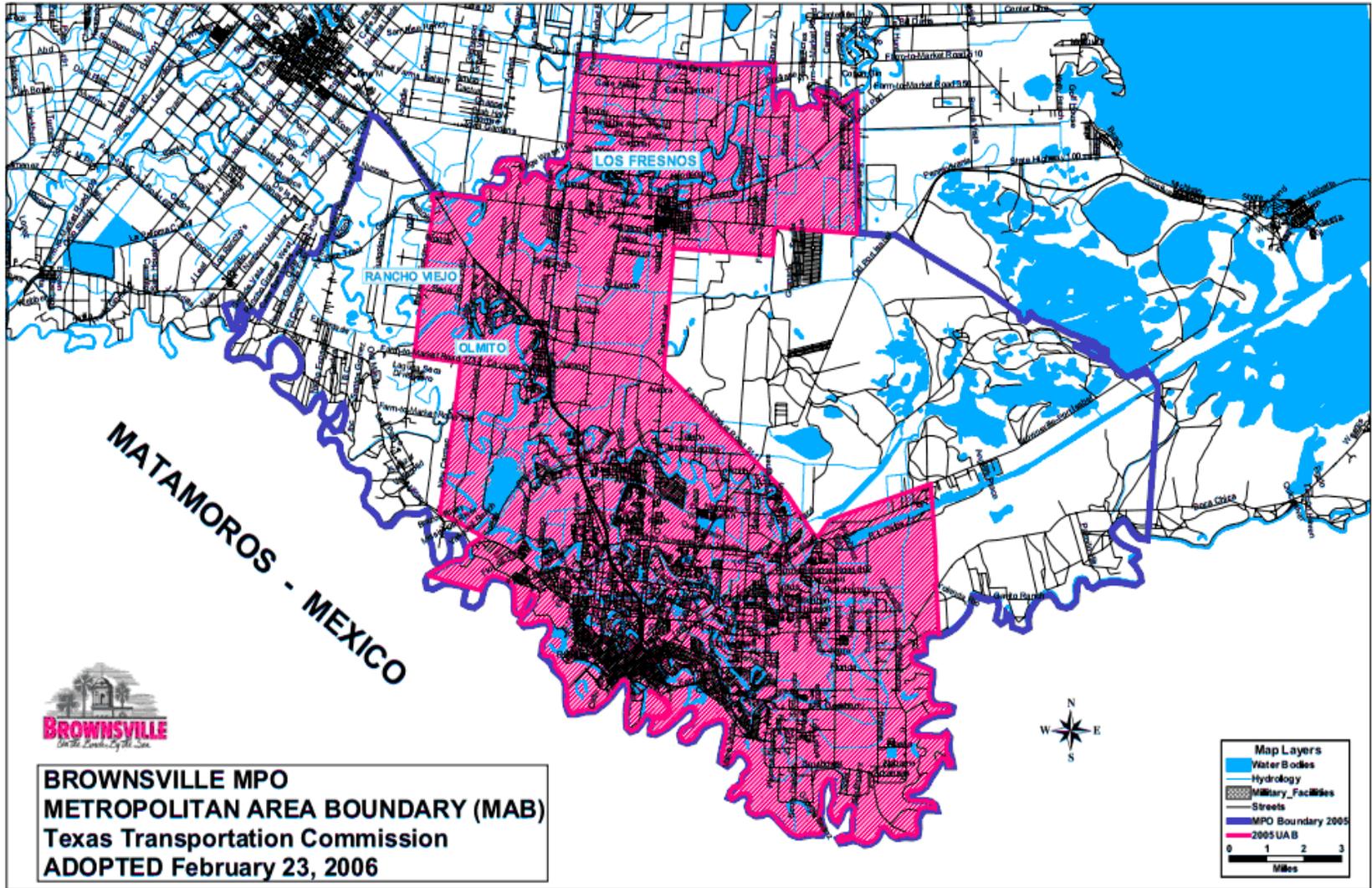
The Road to Success

Start Here!



Source: HCMPO¹⁰

Figure 2.4: Transportation Planning Process for HCMPO

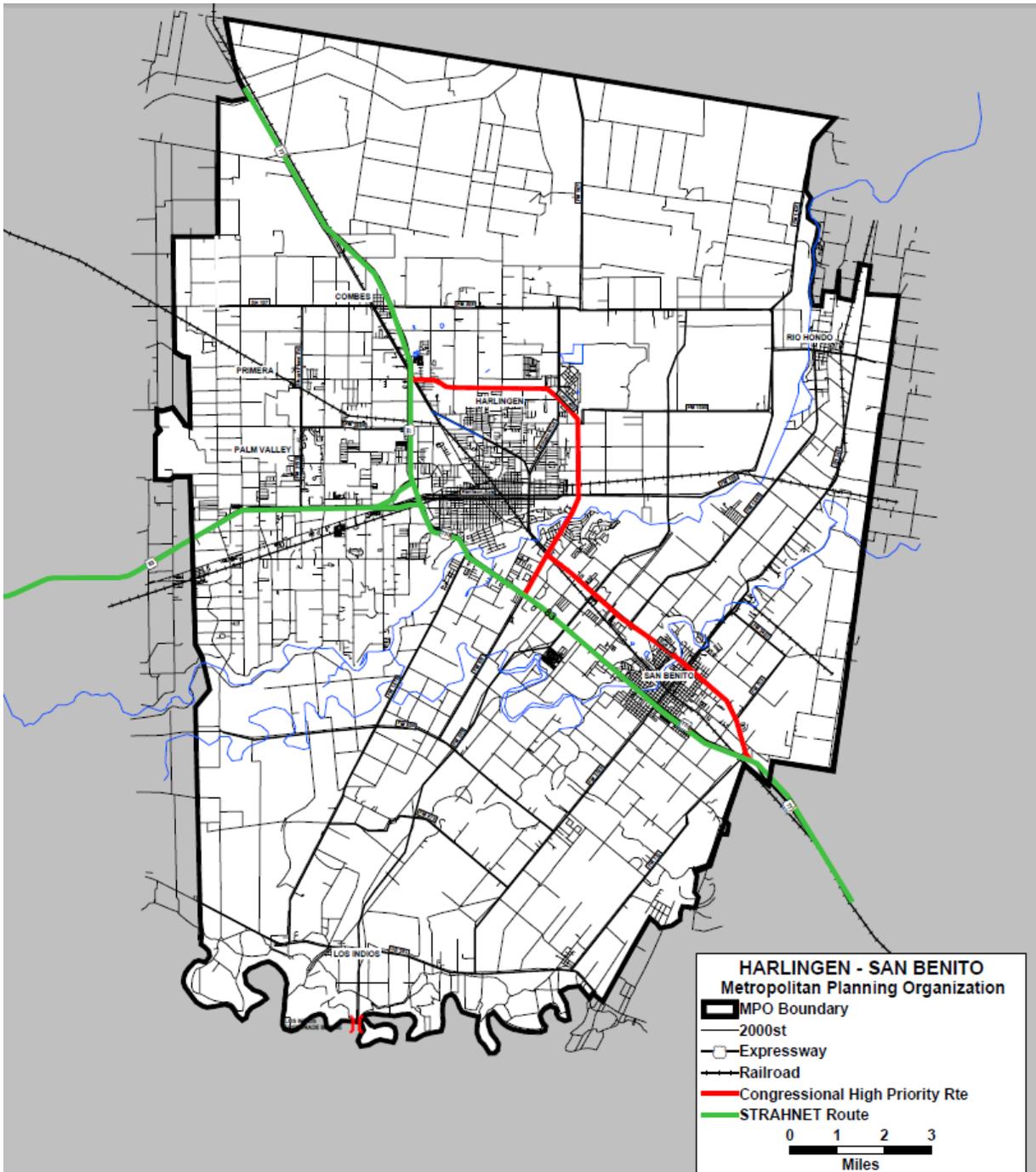


Source: BMPO¹¹

Figure 2.5: BMPO Area Boundary Map

HSBMPO was established in 1988 in an agreement between the City of Harlingen and the Office of the Governor in an effort to accomplish sound planning in the Harlingen-San Benito metropolitan urbanized area (shown in Figure 2.6). HSBMPO serves as a forum for cooperative decision making by elected officials and the local government responsible for urban transportation planning. HSBMPO has a Transportation Policy Committee (a decision-making committee) and a Technical Advisory Committee (a group of local, municipal, and county government representatives appointed by the Transportation Policy Committee). Four full-time staff members conduct all tasks and related transportation planning activities in the MPO area boundary.

On April 27, 1993, Governor Ann Richards designated the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council as the MPO responsible for transportation planning for Cameron, Hidalgo, and Willacy Counties, with the provision that the Transportation Policy Committee be the decision-making entity for regional transportation policy in the urbanized area. HCMPO ensures that transportation planning is satisfactorily coordinated in the urbanized area and integrated with other comprehensive planning efforts in the State. This MPO conducts several plans and publishes several documents on its website. HCMPO employs eight full-time staff members.¹² Every two years, HCMPO organizes a special conference (Border to Border) that brings together U.S. and Mexican transportation professionals. HCMPO's planning area is reviewed every five years and has expanded (see Figure 2.7) because of the county's growing population.



Source: HSBMPO¹³

Figure 2.6: HSBMPO Area Boundary Map

2.1.4 Transportation Management Areas

A Transportation Management Area (TMA) is an area designated by the secretary of transportation and having an urbanized area population of over 200,000. TMAs were designated through the *Federal Register* on July 8, 2002, and were updated in 2012, according to Census Bureau information.¹⁵ In the Lower Rio Grande Valley area, McAllen and Brownsville are considered TMAs.

According to 23 USC 134 (i), areas that have been designated as TMAs must address the following issues:

- Transportation plans and programs within a TMA must be based on a continuing and comprehensive transportation planning process carried out by the MPO in cooperation with the State and transit operators.
- The transportation planning process must include a Congestion Management System.
- FHWA and the Federal Transit Administration must certify the transportation planning process no less often than once every three years.

2.1.5 Non-MPO Areas

For the areas in the study area that are not within an MPO jurisdiction, TxDOT issued in June 2012 the Texas Rural Transportation Plan (TRTP), which is the rural component of the 2035 SLRTP. As part of the SLRTP, the TRTP outlines the planning processes in the rural areas that will guide the collaborative efforts between TxDOT, local and regional decision makers, and all transportation stakeholders.

2.2 Transportation Infrastructure Planning Practices: Mexico

Mexico has legislative concurrence in transportation issues; therefore, transportation project planning, financing, and implementation may be regulated by Federal, State, and municipal legislation.

2.2.1 Planning Documents

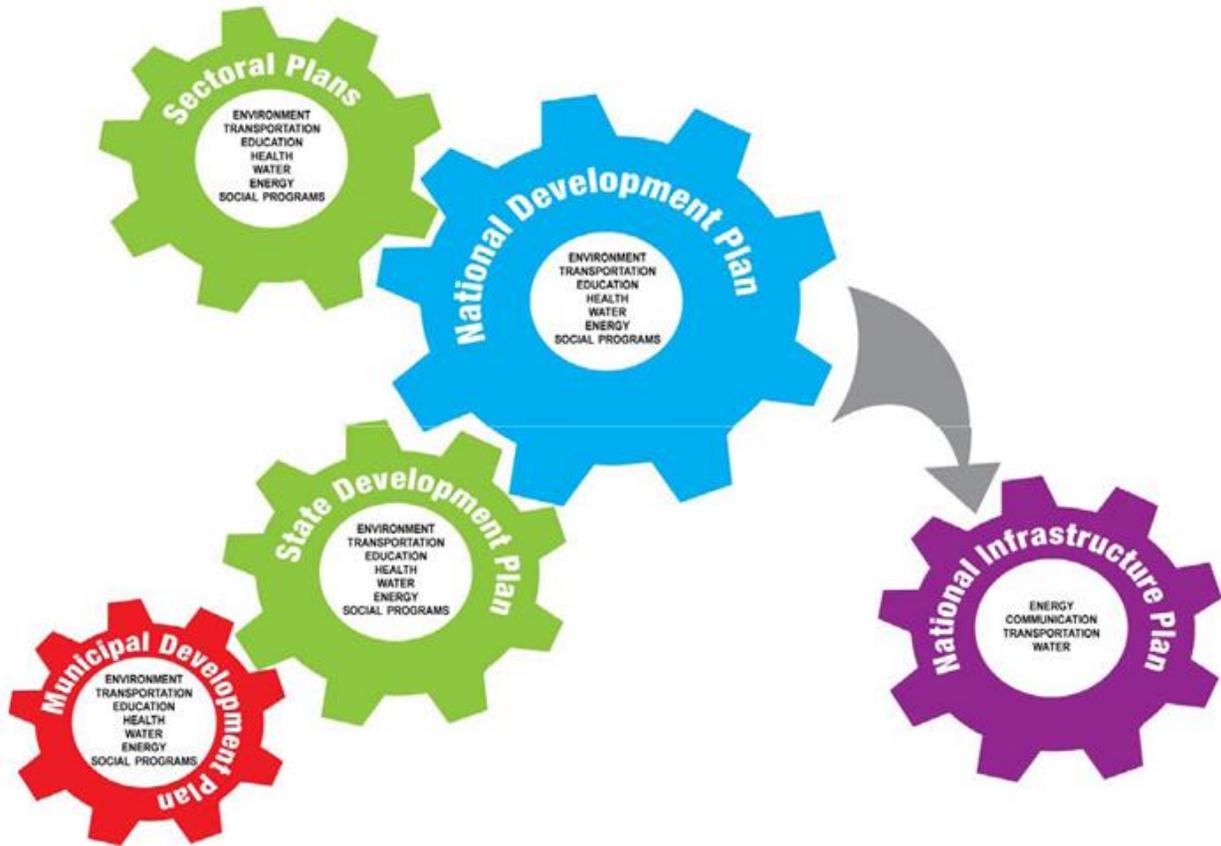
In terms of planning documents, the National Development Plan (Plan Nacional de Desarrollo) is Mexico's most important document. Issued every six years when a new president comes into power, the plan provides the blueprint, specific goals, and commitments for the ensuing years. The document is not only updated every six years, but is dramatically changed to satisfy each president's agenda. No specific format is thus established for this document, and some National Development Plans have a longer planning horizon than others.

President Felipe Calderón’s National Development Plan focused on the rule of law, economic growth, climate change, enhanced competitiveness, and the reduction of monopoly power in Mexico. However, the president’s support for infrastructure development was evident in his issuance of a National Infrastructure Plan (Plan Nacional de Infraestructura). In an unprecedented effort to reverse the neglect and decline in infrastructure investment in Mexico, the National Infrastructure Plan focused primarily on transportation infrastructure investments and the encouragement of public-private partnerships. The National Infrastructure Plan thus included significant investments in the expansion of highway, railway, port, and airport infrastructure.

Sectoral plans or programs adopt and elaborate on the National Development Plan’s goals and commitments in a specific economic sector (e.g., transport, education, health, or energy). The Communications and Transportation Sectoral Program 2007–2012 (Programa Sectorial de Comunicaciones y Transportes 2007–2012) sets the specific goal for the Communications and Transportation Secretariat (Secretaría de Comunicaciones y Transportes [SCT])—a Federal agency—to construct and upgrade 10,835 miles of the national highway network and rural roads, which include 100 high-priority road projects. When complete, these projects would increase the Federal network by 72 percent to 90 percent.¹⁶ By 2012, SCT thus has to conclude the modernization of the north-south and east-west main corridors, including the 100 high-impact road projects. In addition to the Sectoral Program, SCT issues an annual Working Program (Programa de Trabajo) with specific goals and objectives for the fiscal year (January 1 to December 31).

Under a different jurisdiction, State Development Plans are developed to set forth the specific goals the State governor wants to accomplish. The six-year State governor term usually constitutes the planning horizon for State Development Plans. Because the presidential and governorship terms might cover different time periods, State Development Plans may differ in focus and priorities from the National Development Plan, but the State plan has to include the applicable projects or objectives of the national plan. Finally, Municipal Development Plans have a planning horizon of three or four years (depending on the length of a mayor’s term).

Figure 2.8 describes the interaction among Mexico’s most relevant planning documents. At the agency level, the most pertinent planning agencies are SCT at the Federal level and the Public Works/Transportation/Economic Development Secretariats in each State.



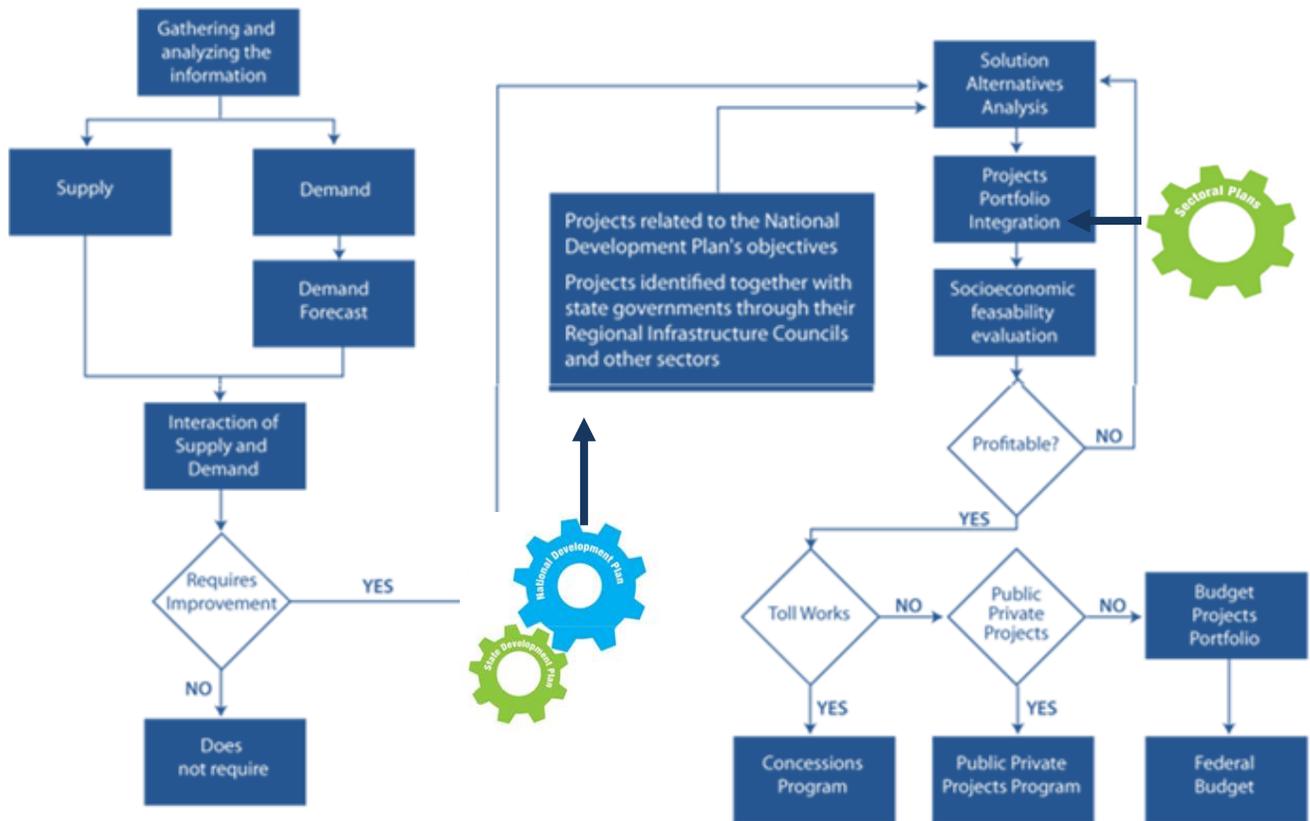
Source: CTR¹⁷

Figure 2.8: Interaction among Relevant Mexican Planning Documents

2.2.2 Federal Project Planning Processes

SCT is responsible for the planning, prioritization, and implementation of all Federal transportation projects. Figure 2.9 illustrates SCT’s decision-making process in selecting its project portfolio for funding. During the project portfolio development process, SCT officials ensure projects are included in national or State planning documents and subsequently in the agency’s own sectoral planning documents.

The project selection process can be initiated by a promoter or by an SCT official identifying a need. Stakeholders such as State and municipal authorities can start to promote a project at SCT’s regional office (Centro SCT Tamaulipas). Regional SCT offices might be more familiar with the needs or characteristics of the regions than State or Federal officials and therefore can help to promote the project at SCT’s central offices.

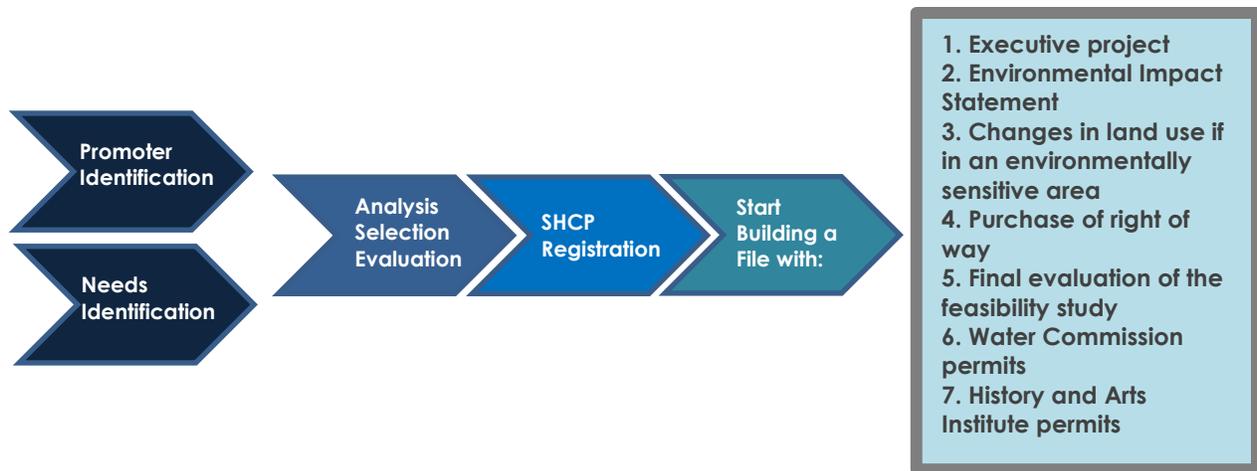


Sources: SCT¹⁸

Figure 2.9: SCT Project Portfolio Development

Once a project is selected to be included in the following year’s project portfolio, two evaluations are conducted: one by SCT and one by the Public Credit and Treasury Secretariat (Secretaría de Hacienda y Crédito Público [SHCP]). Once an SHCP registration number is issued, SCT officials start the formal planning and permitting procedures as indicated in Figure 2.10.

At the Federal level, the Secretariat of Social Development (Secretaría de Desarrollo Social [SEDESOL]) is responsible for preparing the National Program of Urban Development (Programa Nacional de Desarrollo Urbano) and for coordinating planning activities and providing technical assistance (with regard to planning and urban development issues) to State and municipal governments. The agency develops background and supporting material for municipal plans and programs in the border region, such as the Land Port of Entry Urban Development Program (Plan o Programa Parcial de Desarrollo Urbano de Puerto Fronterizo), which is available online.



Source: SCT¹⁹

Figure 2.10: SCT Project Selection: Planning Process

2.2.3 State and Local Planning Processes

Public Works or Transport Secretariats at the State level and Municipal Planning Institutes (Institutos Municipales de Planeación [IMPLANs]) at the local level are responsible for preliminary needs and project identification and planning. IMPLANs were created to ensure planning continuity at the local level since administrations and officials change every three to four years.

Tamaulipas Public Works Secretariat

The State of Tamaulipas’s current Public Works Secretariat (Secretaría de Obras Públicas del Estado de Tamaulipas [SOP]) was created by Governor Egidio Cantú in 2011. A formal secretariat for public works had been absent for 30 years. Its functions had been undertaken by the Secretariat of Human Settlements, Public Works, and Services (1981–1994) or the Secretariat of Social Development (1994–2005). During the past several years (2005–2011), the public works functions were conducted by the Secretariat of Urban Development and Ecology.

IMPLAN Matamoros

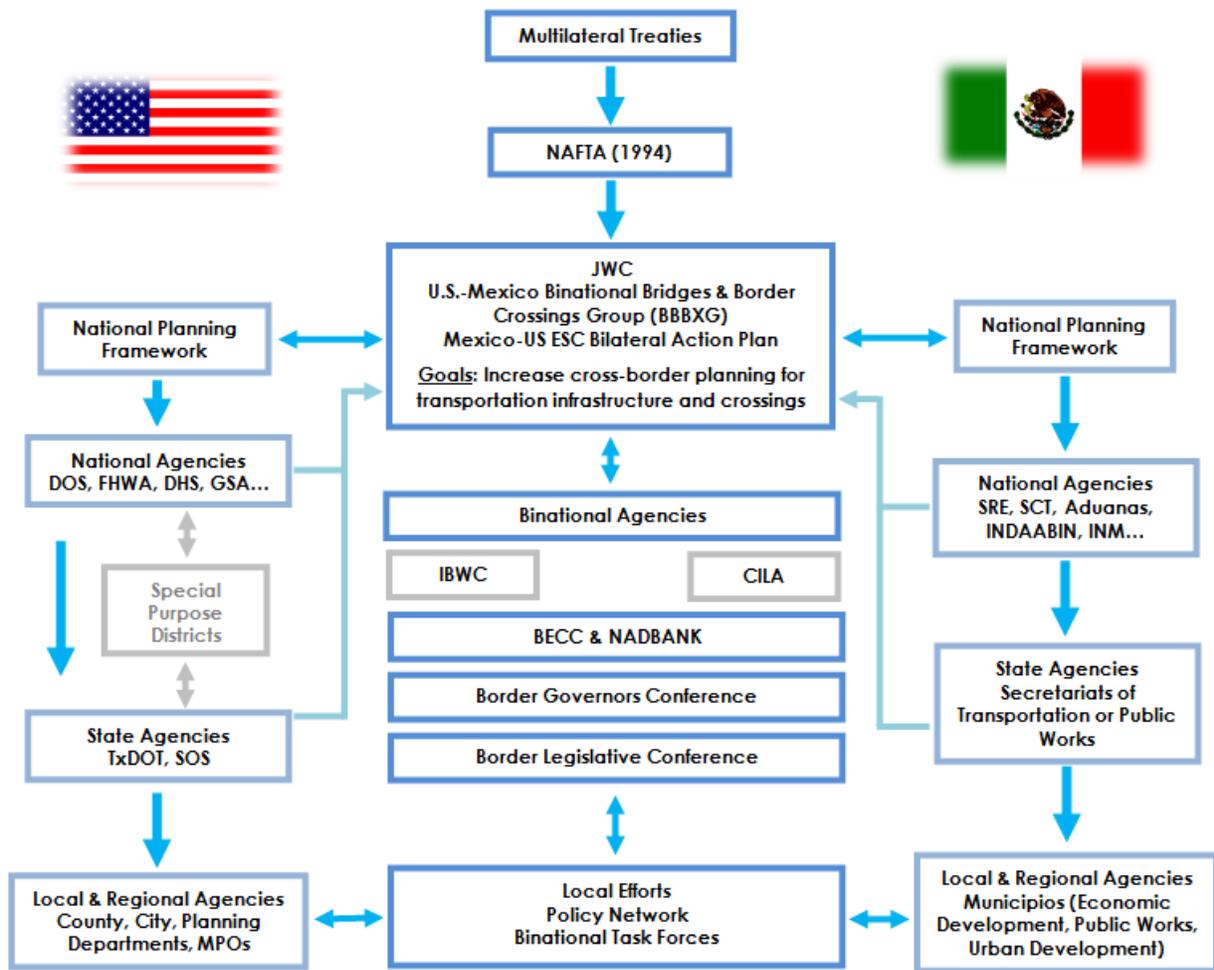
IMPLAN Matamoros was created through an executive decree in September 1998. It currently acts under the direction of a Directive Advisory Committee and a Technical Committee. It employs 10 full-time staff members. Its jurisdictional boundaries correspond to the municipal boundaries of the Municipality of Matamoros. In 2011, this IMPLAN was 100 percent funded by the Municipality of Matamoros.²⁰ The entity has supervised and conducted several studies that have been published online.

IMPLAN Reynosa

IMPLAN Reynosa was created through an executive decree in May 2009 but was not staffed until 2011.

2.3 Cross-Border Planning Practices for Transportation Infrastructure and POEs

Figure 2.11 describes the binational planning being conducted for transportation infrastructure, including POEs. Multilateral treaties, such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), prompted coordination and creation of institutions and mechanisms for improving cross-border planning among agencies.



Note: NAFTA = North American Free Trade Agreement; JWC = U.S./Mexico Joint Working Committee on Transportation Planning and Programming; U.S.-Mexico ESC = U.S.-Mexico Executive Steering Committee; and SOS = U.S. Secretary of State.

Source: Adapted to transportation from Sergio Peña²¹

Figure 2.11: Cross-Border Planning for Transportation Infrastructure

2.4 POE Planning Practices: United States

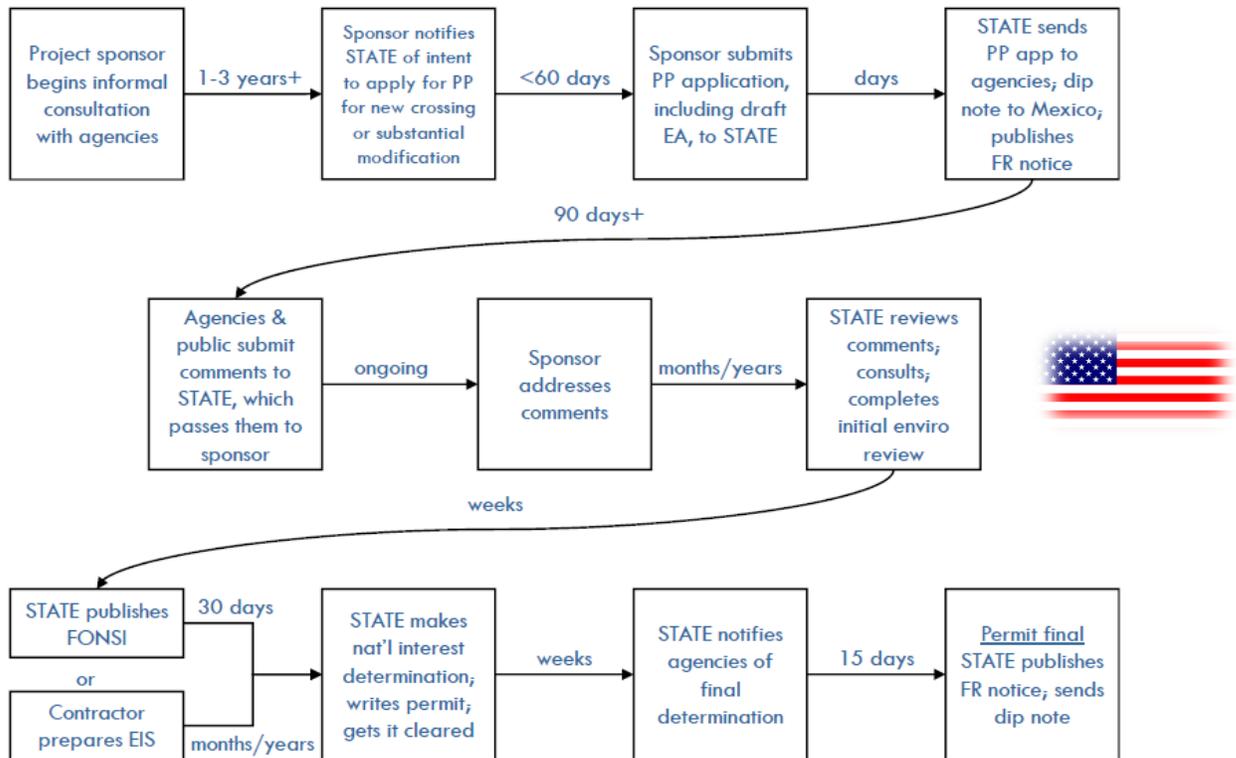
2.4.1 U.S. Department of State

Executive Order 11423 (1968), as amended,^{22,23} authorizes USDOS to issue Presidential Permits (PPs) for certain cross-border facilities including, since 2004, land border crossings. Substantial modifications to an existing border-crossing facility also require a permit or amendment. USDOS has identified three categories of projects:²³

- Notification to USDOS and a new or amended PP are required for all new border crossings and all proposed changes that would substantially modify an existing border crossing.
- Notification to USDOS is required—and USDOS determines whether a PP is required—for proposed changes in capacity, traffic flow, operation, or maintenance responsibility for an existing border crossing that may constitute a substantial modification, including changes that may be expected to have a material effect on the Mexican Government’s operations in Mexico.
- No USDOS notification or PP is required for changes in the proximity of the border that are not expected to have a material effect on the Mexican Government’s operations in Mexico and are neither a new border crossing nor a substantial modification to an existing border crossing. However, USDOS is responsible for determining whether the change is material, and USDOS should be consulted in the initial planning stages of the proposed project.

To issue a PP, USDOS must determine that the new or modified border serves the “national interest.” An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is a key element before the national interest determination. Consultations are conducted with other Federal agencies, including CBP and the General Services Administration (GSA), before USDOS determines whether the facility or improvement serves the national interest.

Figure 2.12 explains the process and approximate timeline for obtaining a PP. The PP process might be initiated by a U.S. Federal, State, or local entity or a private promoter (e.g., a rail company or business group). Cities, counties, and State agencies can identify POE needs in their planning documents. Any one of the agencies specified in the Executive Order may object to the proposed project and request that the decision be referred to the president. In addition, the new POE or improvement has to comply with GSA and CBP’s LPOE design manuals.



Note: PP = Presidential Permit; EA = Environmental Assessment; FR = Federal Register; FONSI = Finding of No Significant Impact; and EIS = Environmental Impact Statement.

Source: Daniel Darrach²⁴

Figure 2.12: Presidential Permit Process and Timeline

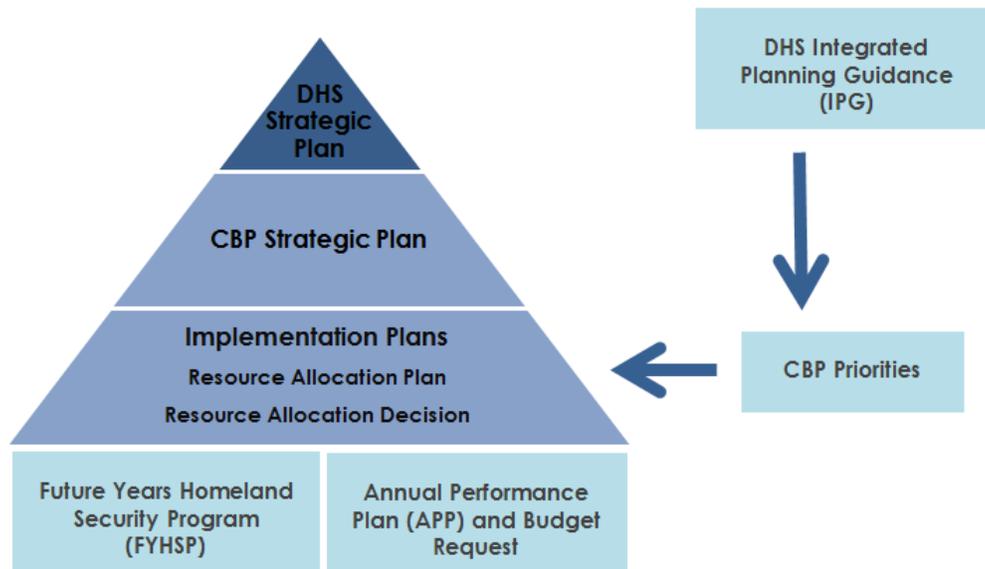
During 2009, USDOS reviewed several PPs that had been issued in the past decades but have remained unused. In addition, it established that future PPs would be issued with an expiration date for the commencement and completion of construction.²⁵ The following PPs were granted for proposed projects in the Focused Study Area and have not resulted in the construction of the proposed projects:

- Permit 97-01 authorizes the Brownsville Navigation District to construct, operate, and maintain two international bridges: one for vehicular traffic and one for railroad traffic between Brownsville in Cameron County, Texas, and Matamoros, in Tamaulipas, Mexico, at about Mile 24 on the Rio Grande River.²⁶
- The City of Mission, Texas, was granted a PP more than 30 years ago to build an international rail and vehicular bridge.

2.4.2 U.S. Customs and Border Protection

CBP is part of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). As shown in Figure 2.13, several documents assist DHS in developing and implementing multiyear program plans and budgets:²⁷

- *DHS and CBP Strategic Plans*—These plans are an important first step in fulfilling DHS’s mission by setting long-term direction and enabling decisions on near-term priorities.
- *Integrated Planning Guidance (IPG)*—This guidance is issued each year by the secretary of DHS. It articulates the secretary’s investment priorities and guides the development of CBP’s Resource Allocation Plan (RAP) and the subsequent Resource Allocation Decision (RAD).
- *Future Years Homeland Security Program (FYHSP)*—FYHSP outlines a five-year plan to achieve the long-term performance goals of specific programs. Each program aligns to a DHS strategic objective with a set of measures to demonstrate the program’s strategy and progress in meeting that objective. This information is captured electronically in the FYHSP system, which officially records performance measure results, targets, and annual milestones. Information in the FYHSP is presented to Congress each year.
- *Annual Performance Plan (APP)*—The APP is submitted to Congress along with the annual budget request. The plan links resources to strategic results by displaying what CBP will accomplish during the budget year if given the resources requested.



Source: CBP²⁷

Figure 2.13: CBP Planning Documents

The POE needs identified by CBP are published in a Strategic Resource Assessment (SRA) report that is prepared for each field office.²⁸ In addition to planning and programming practices, CBP and Mexico's General Customs Administration (Administración General de Aduanas [Aduanas]) are involved in joint initiatives to improve transportation planning and programming, training, technology exchange, and other activities.

Initiatives by CPB and Aduanas to Improve Planning

The Southern Border Initiative provides for cross-border coordination with Aduanas. Through the initiative, two CBP teams are coordinating with their Aduanas counterparts to assess immigration and commerce issues at Mexico's southern border.

The Bilateral Strategic Plan (BSP) was implemented in August 2007. Through the BSP, Aduanas, CBP, and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) established working groups to strengthen law enforcement and enhance security, while improving trade partnerships, promoting border efficiencies, and increasing the professionalism of border law enforcement agencies. CBP and Aduanas share information/data and coordinate inbound and outbound enforcement operations to stop the flow of illegal arms and currency across the border. In 2009, two successful pilot operations in Nogales and Eagle Pass provided the necessary impetus to expand the plan to other POEs before the end of FY2009. Aduanas employed 1,400 new and better trained agents and has asked CBP to provide technical support, basic training, and credibility assessment assistance. These activities are consistent with the BSP and are supported with Merida Initiative (MI) funding.

The MI has provided funding to complement other efforts. MI funds have been used to train Aduanas agents (using the same criteria applied to other Mexican Federal police forces), to purchase canine and non-intrusive inspection equipment, and to share technical advice and best practices to ensure Aduanas is more closely aligned with CBP.

2.5 POE Planning Practices: Mexico

2.5.1 Interagency Group on Bridges and Crossings

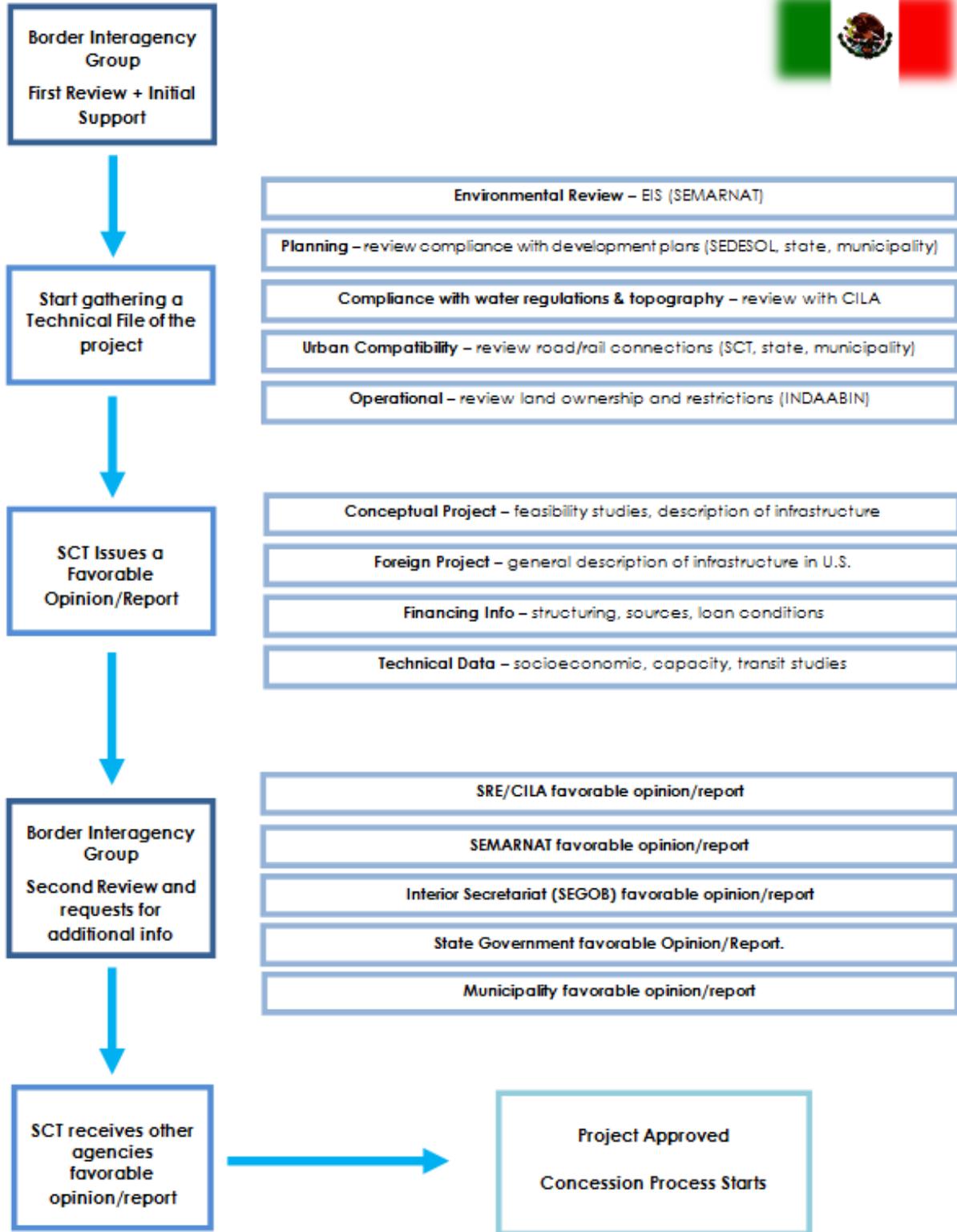
In accordance with Mexico's legislation and Supreme Court rulings, international bridges and crossings are solely under Federal jurisdiction. Projects may be initiated at the local, State, or Federal agency level, for example, by Aduanas, SCT, or the National Property Managing and Appraisal Institute (Instituto de Administración y Avalúos de

Bienes Nacionales [INDAABIN]). In all cases, the Federal Government maintains exclusive power of ownership. The bridge or crossing might be constructed with Federal funding or through a concession given to a private entity, a State, municipality, or a special-purpose vehicle (a fideicomiso trust) composed of various stakeholders.

A key first step is that the proposed project secures support at the Interagency Group for Bridges and Border Crossings (Grupo Intersecretarial de Puentes y Cruces Fronterizos), also called the Border Interagency Group. Created in 1995, the Border Interagency Group is a national gathering where Mexican Federal agencies meet to develop a common position with regard to POEs. The group discusses issues involving negotiations, construction, operations, and maintenance of POEs and the services provided at the POEs. The group also evaluates and approves proposed new POEs, and works to implement projects once they are approved. In the past few years, the group has served to establish agreements between local, State, and Federal agencies on actions that benefit border communities in both nations.²⁹

The Border Interagency Group meets on an as-needed basis for as many times per year as required to address specific issues. Agreements reached at the national level are then disseminated at regional meetings where specific border projects are discussed. The members of the Border Interagency Group also meet with their U.S. counterpart agencies at the Binational Bridges and Border Crossings Group (BBBXG), co-hosted by the Secretariat of Foreign Relations (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores [SRE]) and USDOS at least twice a year. Regional meetings (for both western and eastern POEs) focusing on regional projects are hosted once every six to nine months. Each meeting traditionally consists of two parts: a public session and a technical session for Federal and State agency participation only.²⁹

Figure 2.14 provides a simplified summary of Mexico's planning process for international POEs.



Source: SCT³⁰

Figure 2.14: Mexico's POE Planning Process (Simplified)

2.5.2 General Customs Administration

The Tax Administration Service (Servicio de Administración Tributaria [SAT]) is part of SHCP. SAT was created in July 1997 and celebrated its first 15 years of service in 2012. The agency was established as a decentralized entity with management, technical, and budget autonomy. Based on the SAT mandate, SAT personnel determine and collect Federal taxes, and are responsible for customs administration in Mexico. Aduanas is part of SAT.

Documents

During the 2006–2012 presidential tenure, the following planning and guiding documents directed Aduanas’s actions:

- *SAT’s Strategic Plan 2007–2012*³¹ delineated the challenges and initiatives for a six-year period. The objectives of this strategic plan were to facilitate and encourage voluntary compliance; combat evasion, smuggling, and the informal economy; increase the efficiency of tax administration; and integrate the organization to improve efficiency, ethics, and commitment.
- *Customs Modernization Plan 2007–2012*³² was developed under three premises: integrate processes to strengthen infrastructure and facilities and introduce technology to better compete globally; end smuggling by detecting and resolving irregularities, optimally through stricter controls applied in the customs system and through national and international collaboration; and ensure transparency and improve the image of customs services.

Aduanas: Future Long-Term Projects

In the last decade, Aduanas has been slowly evolving from a revenue-collection agency to a de facto enforcement agency. However, many internal challenges remain.

Small Steps

In 2009, the Federal Government started to transform its Federal police force and investigators. On paper, Aduanas was not always considered for funding or included in law enforcement programs and training. In practice, not all Aduanas agents carried firearms nor were they authorized to arrest suspects at the border. Aduanas agents relied on Fiscales, the armed enforcement element of Aduanas, for arrests. The Fiscales were Aduanas officials, but they maintained a high degree of operational autonomy. On August 15, 2009, the Government of Mexico announced that Aduanas would not renew the expiring contract of the Fiscales. Backed by the temporary deployment of Mexican military personnel, all 722 Fiscales (the entire armed workforce) were relieved of their responsibilities and replaced by 1,400 newly trained Aduanas agents. While the transition appeared sudden, the agency had worked closely with the United States to train, vet, and polygraph a corps of replacement agents using Merida Initiative funding.

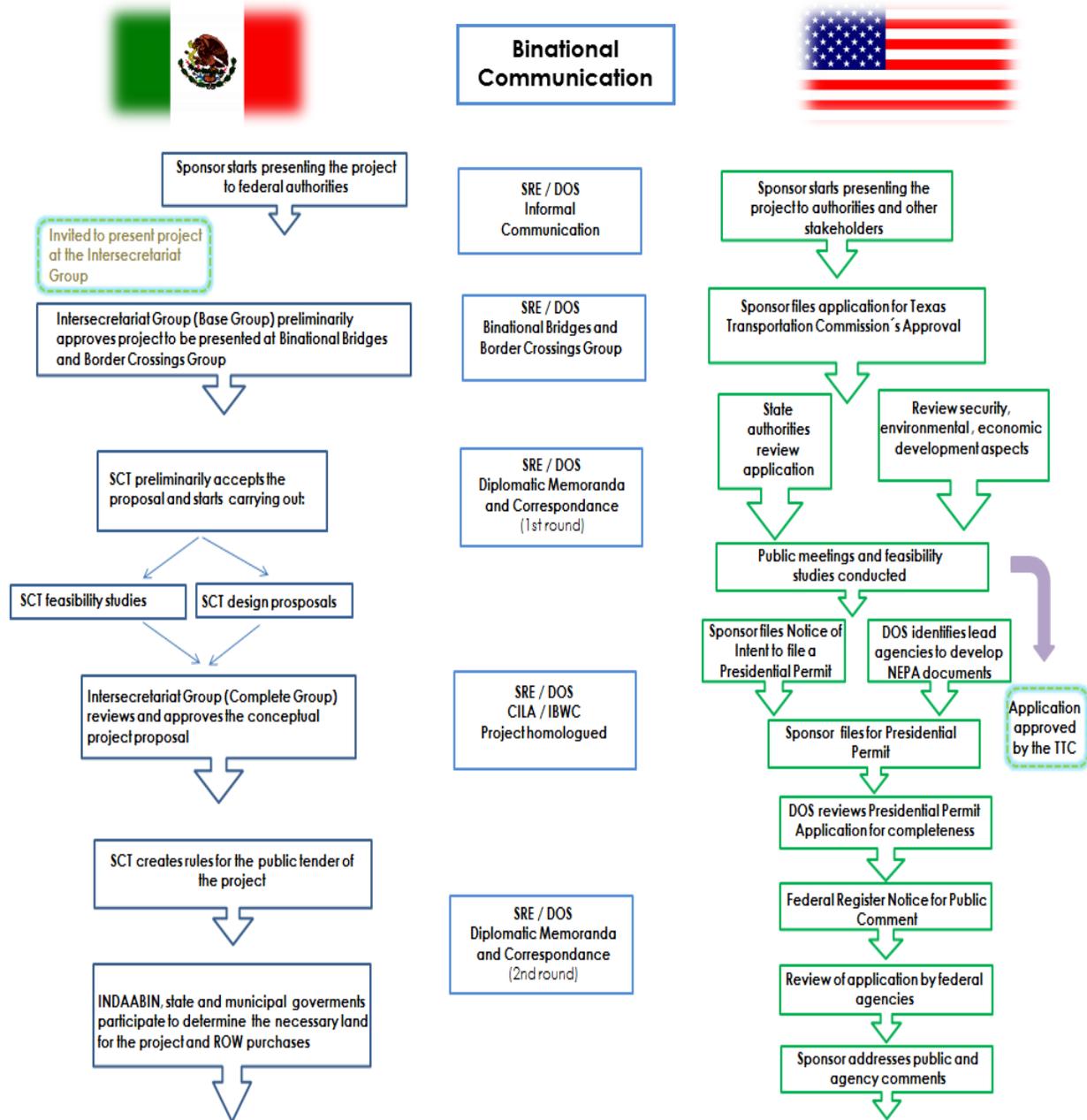
Institutional Strengthening Project

The Mexico Customs Institutional Strengthening Project is a US \$54.87 million project, of which the World Bank intended to finance US \$10.025 million in loans. The project's development objective was to improve the efficiency of Aduanas's processes, thereby contributing to improving Mexico's competitiveness and facilitating trade with foreign parties. The project intended to aid the institutional redesign and redefinition of the services and processes supporting Aduanas's operations; improve the human capital at Customs by creating an incentive system as part of a Fiscal Career Service Scheme; and improve change management at Customs. The four practical objectives of the project were to strengthen the controls function in Aduanas to minimize internal and external customs irregularities (such as contraband and under-valuation); increase border security; achieve cost reductions for citizens and government; and improve processing times and contribute to improved performance of Customs personnel through increased professionalism and strengthening of the link between pay and performance. In 2012, the project was canceled. The reasons given were lengthy documentation and bureaucratic procedures in 2009, the project's redesign in 2010, and inadequate time before foreseeable administrative changes (after the election in mid-2012).

Source: World Bank³³

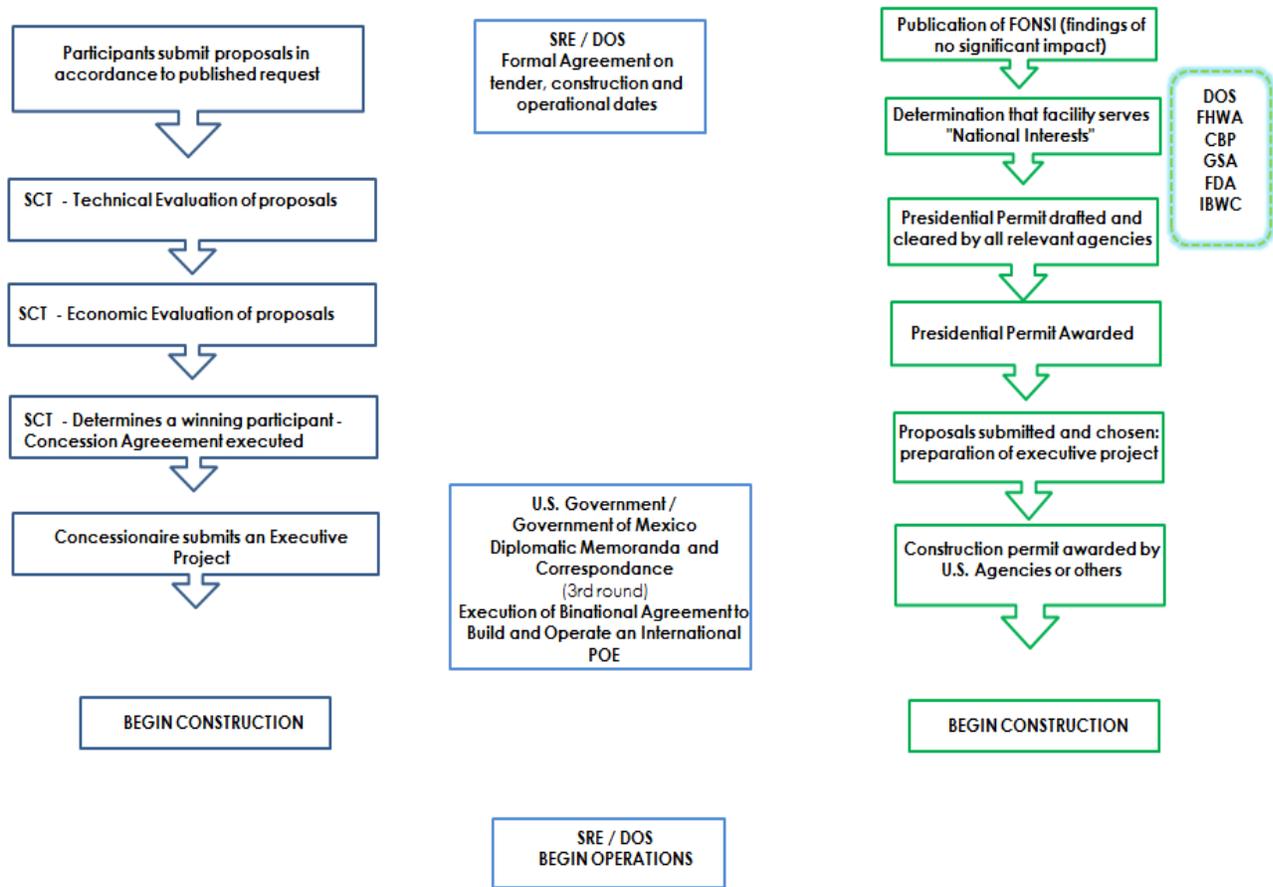
2.6 Summary of Planning Processes and Practices for New POEs

Figure 2.15 provides a simplified summary of processes for authorizing the construction of a new POE for Mexico and the United States. Both processes are coordinated by USDOS and SRE through diplomatic communications (diplomatic notes).



Source: Baltazar Romero, State of Chihuahua³⁴

Figure 2.15: New POE Binational Planning Process—Part 1



Source: Baltazar Romero, State of Chihuahua³⁴

Figure 2.15: New POE Binational Planning Process—Part 2

2.7 Project Selection, Prioritization, and Funding

Border master plans prioritize planned POE projects and planned transportation infrastructure serving these POEs. Although there are other modes on the border, the emphasis has been on the current planning practices for roads and highways that serve the POEs. Rail and marine project selection, prioritization, and funding are typically conducted by private rail companies and the port authorities, respectively.

2.7.1 United States

Transportation Infrastructure

In the United States, several agencies use quantitative and qualitative data to evaluate, rank, and prioritize transportation projects. For roads and highways, criteria include project cost and cost-effectiveness, current and projected average daily traffic (ADT) or AADT, current and projected LOS, benefits to freight movements,

connectivity or modality, traffic accident rates, and environmental and socio-economic impacts, among others.

In the case of TxDOT, project selection involves matching high-priority highway transportation needs with forecasted funding and authorizing the development of selected projects. The following projects are included in the UTP:³⁵

- Identify the highest-priority, most-needed, and most cost-effective projects for development.
- Achieve the transportation objectives established by State and Federal law and by the Texas Transportation Commission (TTC) as documented in TxDOT's Strategic Plan and SLRTP.
- Equitably address the transportation needs of the entire State.
- Authorize the development of sufficient high-priority projects to effectively use the anticipated funding in each of the UTP categories.

Transportation projects can be selected in a number of ways. Projects involving the State roadway network or improvements to existing highways are generally selected by TxDOT's districts and divisions unless the project is inside an MPO boundary. Other proposed projects are submitted by government officials, individuals, MPOs, or regional transportation planning committees. The majority of the State's transportation programs are, however, determined by local officials or TxDOT's district offices. Finally, due to project planning and development requirements, projects are selected 5 to 10 years in advance given anticipated funding.³⁶

The selection criteria used for highway projects vary by UTP funding category, but a cost-effectiveness measure is used in several funding categories for prioritizing projects on a statewide basis. Although exceptions exist, the measure is usually a ratio of project cost to the traffic (in vehicles per day) served by the project.³⁵ The TxDOT district engineer determines the selection criteria for highway projects in his or her district, except for projects in UTP categories, where the MPO is authorized to select projects. In the latter case, the MPO is responsible for deciding the project selection criteria to be used for the UTP categories. Table 2.1 summarizes the various funding categories and project selection by funding category.

Each project undergoes three funding authorization stages: planning, development, and construction. First, a project will receive approval for its planning phase. Once planning and development are complete, the project must be approved for funding to be constructed or implemented.

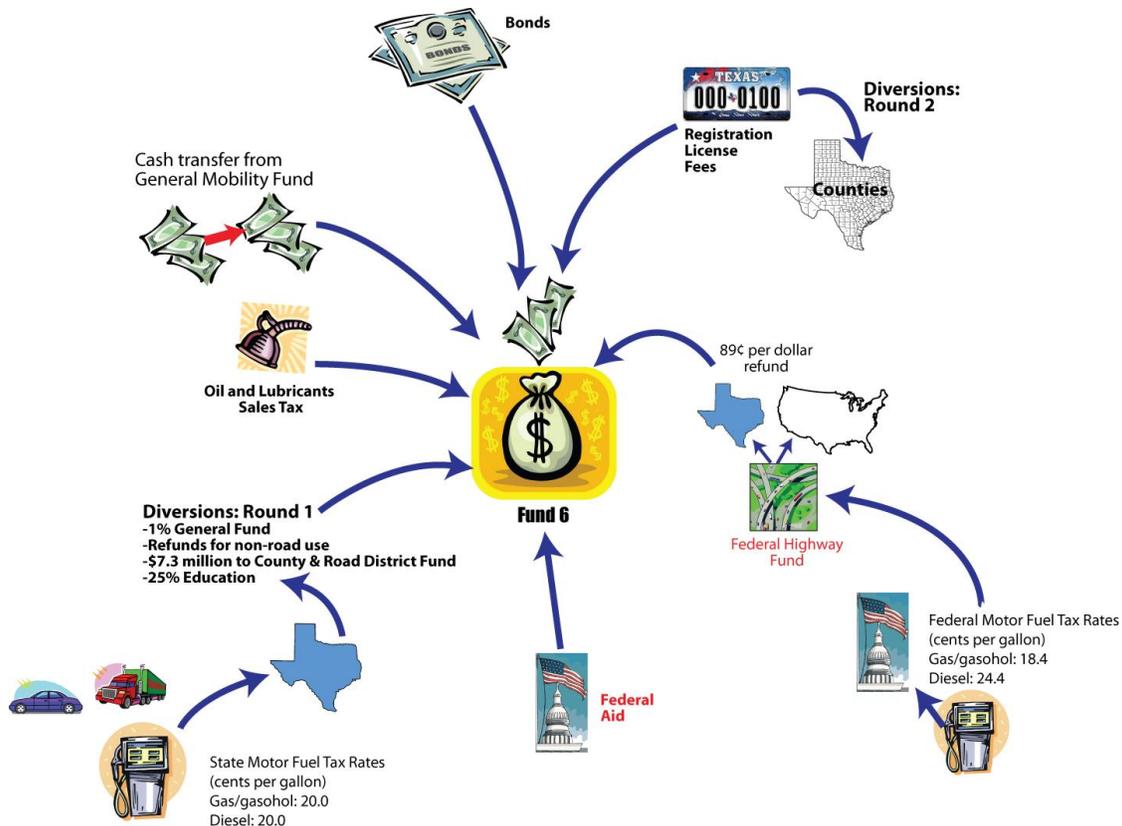
Table 2.1: TxDOT’s Funding Categories and Project Selection

Funding Category	Project Selection	Usual Funding
1— Preventive Maintenance and Rehabilitation	Projects selected by districts. TTC allocates funds through Allocation Program.	Federal 90%, State 10% or Federal 80%, State 20% or State 100%
2— Metropolitan and Urban Area Corridor Projects	Projects selected by MPOs in consultation with TxDOT. TTC allocates funds through Allocation Program.	Federal 80%, State 20% or State 100%
3— Non-traditionally Funded Transportation Projects	Project selection varies based on the funding source, such as Proposition 12, Proposition 14, Pass-Through Toll Finance, Regional Toll Revenue, and Local Participation.	Federal 80%, State 20% or State 100% or Local 100% Varies by agreement and rules
4— Statewide Connectivity Corridor Projects	Projects selected by TTC based on corridor ranking. Project total costs cannot exceed TTC-approved statewide allocation.	Federal 80%, State 20% or State 100%
5— Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement	Projects selected by MPOs in consultation with TxDOT and funded by district’s Allocation Program. TTC allocates money based on population percentages within areas failing to meet air quality standards.	Federal 80%, State 20% or Federal 80%, Local 20% or Federal 90%, State 10%
6— Bridges: Federal Highway Bridge Program (HBP) and Federal Railroad Grade Separation Program (RGS)	Projects selected by the Bridge Division as a statewide program based on the Federal HBP and RGS eligibility and ranking. TTC allocates funds through statewide Allocation Program.	Federal 90%, State 10% or Federal 80%, State 20% or Federal 80%, State 10%, Local 10%
7— Metropolitan Mobility/Rehabilitation	Projects selected by MPOs in consultation with TxDOT and funded by district’s Allocation Program. TTC allocates money according to Federal formula.	Federal 80%, State 20% or Federal 80%, Local 20% or State 100%
8— Safety: Federal Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP), Federal Railway-Highway Crossing Program, Safety Bond Program, Federal Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program, and Federal High Risk Rural Roads (HRRR)	Projects selected statewide by federally mandated safety indices and prioritized listings. TTC allocates funds through statewide Allocation Program. Projects selected and approved by TTC on a per-project basis for Federal SRTS Program.	Federal 90%, State 10% or Federal 90%, Local 10% or Federal 100% or State 100%
9— Transportation Enhancements (TE)	Local entities make recommendations, and a TxDOT committee reviews them. Projects selected and approved by TTC on a per-project basis. Projects in the Safety Rest Area Program are selected by the Maintenance Division.	Federal 80%, State 20% or Federal 80%, Local 20%

Funding Category	Project Selection	Usual Funding
10—Supplemental Transportation Projects: State Park Roads, Railroad Grade Crossing Replanking, Railroad Signal Maintenance, Construction, Landscaping, Landscape Cost Sharing, Landscape Incentive Awards, Green Ribbon Landscape Improvement, Curb Ramp Program, Coordinated Border Infrastructure (CBI) Program, Comprehensive Development Agreements (CDAs), and Congressional High Priority Projects (CHPP)	Projects selected statewide by Traffic Operations Division or Texas Parks and Wildlife Department; local projects selected by district. TTC allocates funds to districts or approves participation in Federal programs with allocation formulas. CBI Program funds allocated to districts according to the Federal formula.	State 100% or Federal 80%, State 20% or Federal 100%
11—District Discretionary	Projects selected by districts. TTC allocates funds through Allocation Program.	Federal 80%, State 20% or Federal 80%, Local 20% or State 100%
12—Strategic Priority	TTC selects projects that generally promote economic opportunity, increase efficiency on military deployment routes, retain military assets in response to the Federal Military Base Realignment and Closure Report (BRAC), or maintain the ability to respond to both man-made and natural emergencies. Also, TTC approves pass-through financing projects to help local communities address their transportation needs.	Federal 80%, State 20% or State 100%

Source: TxDOT³⁶

Most of TxDOT’s highway projects are funded through Fund 6, the State Highway Fund. This fund includes, for example, revenues from the motor fuel tax, vehicle registration fees, oil and lubricant taxes, and Federal aid or refunds on Federal fuel taxes. Figure 2.16 illustrates all funding sources that enter into Fund 6 for the financing of transportation projects in Texas.



Source: CTR³⁷

Figure 2.16: Fund 6, State Highway Fund

In addition, TxDOT can finance transportation projects through debt financing, pass-through financing, toll revenues, and public-private partnerships (PPPs) or CDAs.³⁸

Ports of Entry

As defined by GSA, an LPOE is a facility that provides controlled entry in and out of the United States for people and goods. It houses CBP and other Federal inspection agencies responsible for the enforcement of Federal laws. An LPOE is Federal jurisdiction and includes the land, buildings, on-site roads, and parking lots occupied by the POE. GSA is responsible for building and maintaining most of the nation’s LPOEs, as well as the maintenance, repair, and management of the facilities.³⁹

For major capital projects, GSA, CBP, FHWA, and USDOS have established a process to develop border master plans to assist in the prioritization of POE and transportation infrastructure projects. Border master plans are developed on a regional basis with Federal, State, and local stakeholders from both the United States and Mexico.

Border master plans have significant impact on what projects are included in CBP's annual submission of its *Land Port of Entry Modernization: Promoting Security, Travel and Trade* report. This report lays out the basis for prioritizing capital investments in the LPOE infrastructure, which factors in safety and site deficiencies in addition to operation and workload considerations. Included in the report is CBP's national list of projects that GSA and CBP have targeted for the next five years.

For those GSA Region 7 LPOE projects that are identified in CBP's list of projects targeted for the next five years, Region 7 works with the GSA Central Office to determine the possibility of requesting funds as part of GSA's Annual Capital Program submission. Through direction from the Office of Management (OMB), the GSA Central Office works to establish a budget target for LPOEs annually. Many LPOE projects have received partial funding (either for an initial phase of a multi-phase project or for site/design) and still await the remaining funding piece to complete the project. These projects are considered based on their placement on CBP's five-year plan (issued annually) and on the ability to fund per the budget target. If a project has not received any initial funding, GSA works with CBP to establish the best planning/funding scenario (projected budget year request) in the context of the overall LPOE inventory nationwide.

LPOEs must be designed in accordance with GSA's *P-100, Facilities Standards for the Public Buildings Service* and the U.S. *Land Port of Entry Design Guide*.⁴⁰ LPOEs must also conform to either the building code adopted by the local jurisdiction responsible for fire emergency services or the building code adopted by GSA. Finally, LPOEs must conform to State highway regulations.

2.7.2 Mexico

Transportation Infrastructure

SCT has the authority for transportation planning and programming in Mexico. Transportation planning decisions consider available funding resources and the priorities established by the State SCT centers. Local agencies have minimal involvement in transportation planning and programming decisions that address medium- and long-range issues and formulate future planning solutions since they are not responsible for the development and implementation of infrastructure projects. SCT, as the agency that regulates and administers transportation activities, thus has authority and control in decision making. For example, to receive financial support, the States and municipalities must comply with Federal standards established by SCT. Contrary to the process in Texas, a dedicated funding source for transportation projects does not exist. Thus each POE project has to compete with other projects related to

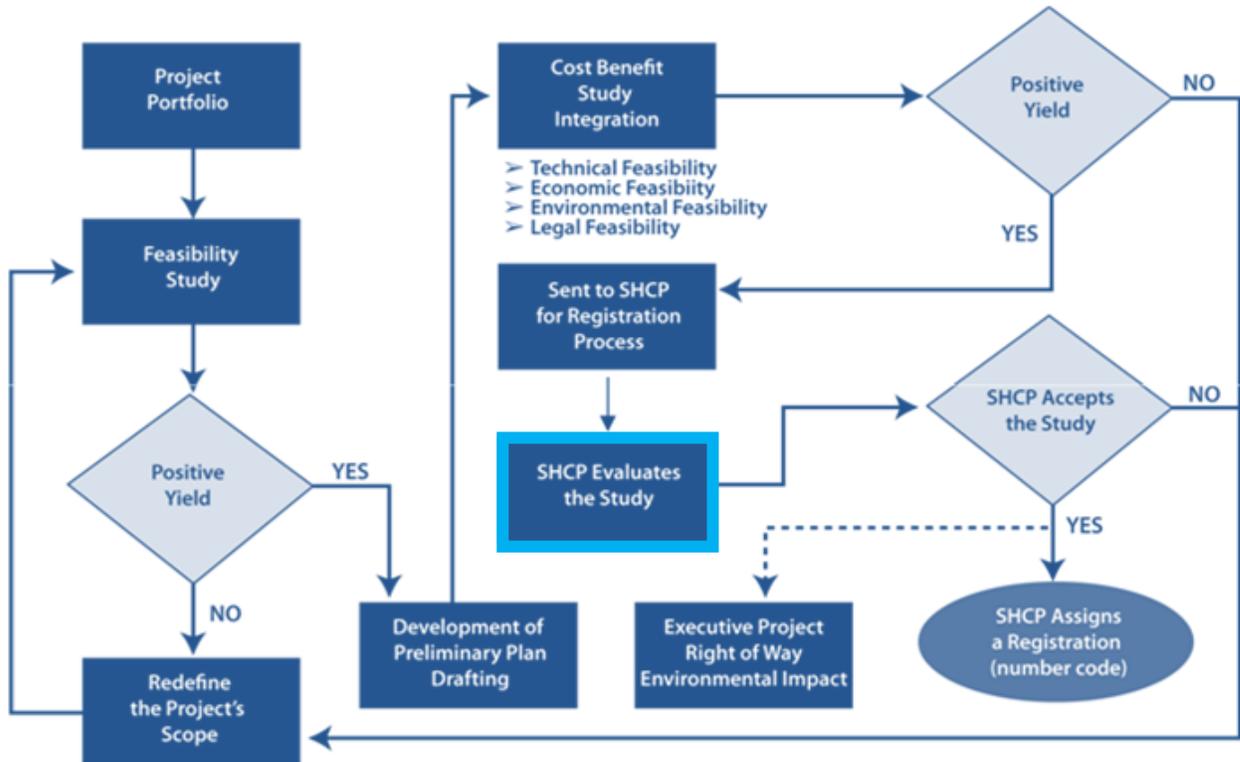
transportation (e.g., highways and interchanges) and non-transportation (e.g., hospitals, schools, and government buildings) infrastructure.

State governments can promote their own projects or serve as an intermediate entity between the strategic transportation planning conducted by SCT and the municipalities' needs. State government funds also represent another funding source for the municipalities, although projects frequently have to comply with State government objectives.

Municipal planning of urban development and transportation systems is therefore directed toward meeting short-term objectives since municipal administrations have a three-year or four-year tenure. The municipalities' main planning document—the Municipal Development Plan—therefore lacks long-term goals, is often not comprehensive, lacks specific milestones and objectives, and frequently does not include specific time commitments. Nevertheless, municipalities try to execute and complete as many infrastructure projects as possible because one of the efficiency measures for their administration is typically the number of infrastructure projects completed. For this reason, the organizational structure of most municipalities is directed to the construction of public works and is deficient in terms of planning structure.⁴¹

State and Federal governments often have a strong planning involvement with municipalities that facilitates binational commercial trade and international cross-border people movements. In these cases, State governments are usually the mediators between local and Federal agencies, and some municipalities may even request the State government become responsible for local planning. In other cases, State governments may impose planning solutions on municipalities, even when contrary to municipal expectations, because the State provides the funding.

Figure 2.17 illustrates SCT's methodology for prioritizing transportation projects for inclusion in the official SCT project portfolio. As shown in Figure 2.17, the outputs of the feasibility and cost-benefit studies are critical decision points as to whether to move forward with a transportation project.

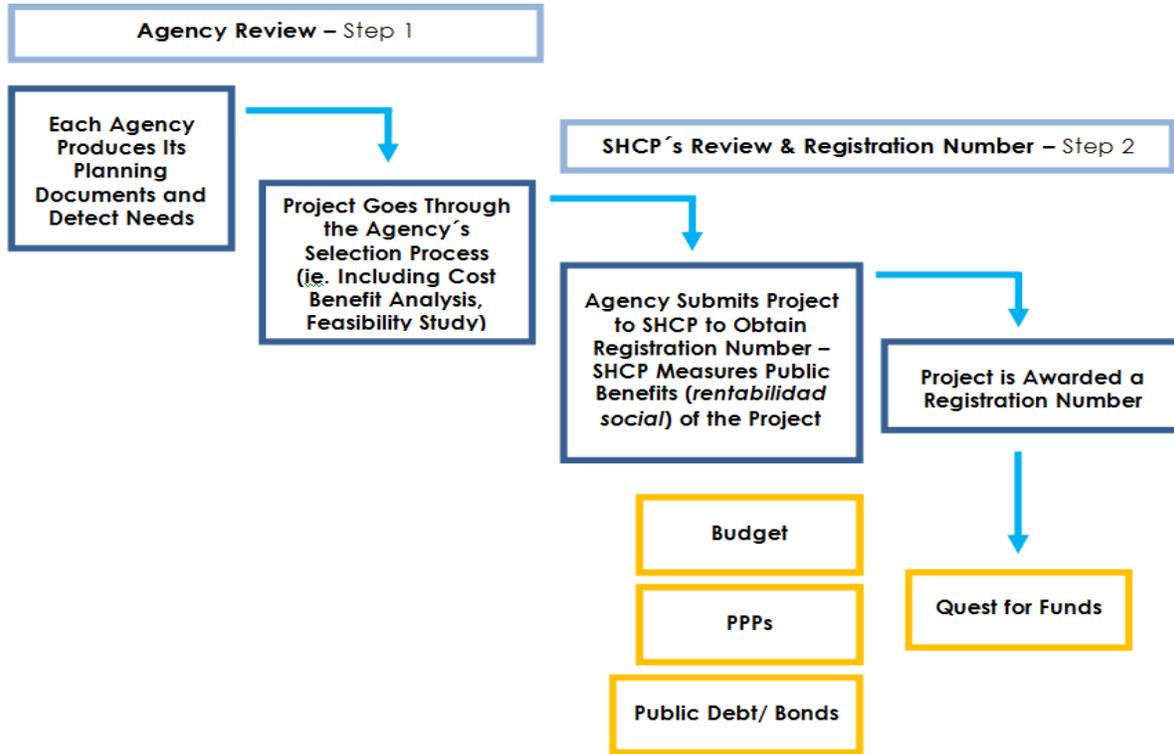


Source: SCT¹⁹

Figure 2.17: SCT’s Decision Tree for Prioritizing Transportation Projects

On April 1, 2006, the Federal Budget and Revenue Responsibility Act (Ley Federal de Presupuesto y Responsabilidad Hacendaria) established new and concise parameters for public investments in infrastructure projects (Sistema de Inversión Pública). The Responsibility Act thus not only establishes accounting and administrative processes, but also instructs public officials to responsibly budget expenditures in compliance with the principles of legality, honesty, efficiency, efficacy, economy, rationality, austerity, and transparency, among others. The Responsibility Act requires SHCP give all projects a registration number for the project to be included in the annual Federal budget project portfolio.

SHCP has its own rules and programs that establish clear operational procedures for agencies to follow when applying for an SHCP registration number. For example, SHCP requires that the cost-benefit analysis measure public benefits (rentabilidad social) of the project. An SHCP registration number is a prerequisite for any infrastructure project to be included in the Mexican Government’s project portfolio. Regardless of the funding mechanism used for the project (private, public, or a combination), a project cannot be considered without this registration number. Figure 2.18 illustrates this two-step procedure.



Source: SHCP⁴²

Figure 2.18: Mexico's Two-Step Project Selection Process

Mexico does not have a dedicated funding source for transportation projects. Transportation projects thus compete with education and social programs or other infrastructure projects, among many other categories, for a share of the general revenue. An SHCP registration number does not guarantee that the project will be included in the annual budget. This lack of public funding has translated into an innovative PPP and concession-friendly environment.⁴³

Contrary to funding access in Texas, State and local governments in Mexico have limited access to transportation project funding. Notwithstanding recent administrative decentralization efforts, States and municipalities still have little to no taxing authority. Public debt and bonds, when executed or issued by a local or State entity, will generally be guaranteed through Budget Account Number 28 (Ramo 28), petroleum revenue distributed by the Federation to States and municipalities. Ramo 28's revenue is distributed by SHCP to all States or municipalities by means of an irrevocable fideicomiso⁴⁴ (trust).

States and municipalities need congressional (State) or council authorization to enter into debt or issue bonds. In addition, municipalities have to sign a document titled "irrevocable instruction" that orders SHCP to repay the loan (e.g., 30 percent of the

municipality's monthly Ramo 28 Federal revenues will go to the lender). Lenders generally receive repayment directly from the trust. The structure of the transaction determines each bank's or lender's priority in terms of repayment (first, second, or third priority). Because Ramo 28's revenue may differ from month to month (e.g., changing oil prices), reserve sub-accounts may be created in the trust for repayment of interest and principal. The State or municipality receives the remnants after all repayments are made. At the local level, debt levels can be dramatic. In some cases, mayors may come into power only to find that more than 70 or 80 percent of the municipality's main revenue source, Ramo 28, has been irrevocably committed to repay the loans of previous administrations.

Ports of Entry

In accordance with the Roads, Bridges and Motor Carrier Act (Ley de Caminos, Puentes y Autotransporte Federal) and Supreme Court rulings, international bridges and crossings are Federal jurisdictions. At the Federal level, the planning for and prioritization of transportation projects in the border region are accomplished independently by the various Federal agencies (SCT, SRE, Aduanas, and INDAABIN) and through interagency committees (Border Interagency Group, Base Group, and Full Group).

Whenever a new POE is being promoted, INDAABIN determines the suitability of the land for the proposed POE. However, INDAABIN's mandate does not allow the agency to purchase property. All land thus needs to be donated to the agency for negotiations to proceed. The land is generally donated by an interested municipality or a private party. Administratively, when land is donated to INDAABIN, it becomes the property of Mexico's Federal Government, which authorizes INDAABIN to build and maintain the POE and SCT to manage or concession the POE.

All donated land needs to be "clean" (no buildings or constructions) and clear of liens. However, in practice, POE promoters who wish to accelerate the process can generally start to construct the POE buildings and facilities given INDAABIN's authorization and following all agencies' instructions and manuals. Aduanas, INDAABIN, and SCT have different requirements for POE design and specifications.⁴⁵ Upon completion of the construction, the promoter needs to donate all land and improvements to INDAABIN.

If SCT concedes the POE, the POE promoters receive all international bridge tolls for a specified time period (e.g., 50 years renewable). The promoters may hire Caminos y Puentes Federales de Ingresos y Servicios Conexos (CAPUFE), an SCT entity dedicated to managing concessioned infrastructure, or another entity to manage and operate the POE facilities. If SCT does not concession the POE or the concession has

expired, then the POE is managed and operated by CAPUFE. In this case, Mexico's Federal Government retains all toll proceeds except for 12.5 percent that reverts back to the municipality and another 12.5 percent that reverts back to the State to compensate the municipality and State, respectively, for any damages imposed to their infrastructure.⁴⁶ Unless otherwise specified in the concession, 100 percent of customs and related tax proceeds are retained by the Federal Government.

SCT is responsible for identifying the most appropriate funding source for building and maintaining Mexico's international bridges and border crossings based on the outcome of specific project studies and analyses. The studies include stated preference surveys to estimate value of time. The major funding sources include the public resources identified in the Federal budget, private financing through concessions, or a combination of the two funding sources.

A characteristic distinguishing Aduanas from other Mexican agencies is its project funding mechanism. The agency created an infrastructure fund in which 1 percent of all revenues obtained through its operations (e.g., taxes, duties, and import fees) are deposited. This enables Aduanas to fund projects that are considered a priority, for example, in terms of security, without competing for Federal funding against social or other infrastructure projects.

Any project wishing to use this Aduanas funding must be submitted to a senior committee composed of three executive Aduanas officials. Once the project is reviewed and approved by the senior committee, it still needs to obtain an SHCP registration number.

2.8 Public Participation

2.8.1 United States

In the United States, State, regional, and local agencies are mandated to establish processes to receive public comment and input. Formal requirements and guidelines for public involvement are included in several laws, including MAP-21, the Council of Environmental Quality regulations, and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

MAP-21 considers public involvement a hallmark and establishes opportunities for public participation in transportation decision making. MAP-21 requires that States, MPOs, public transportation providers, and resource agencies be aware of the impacts of the proposed transportation project and how it will be viewed by affected communities. It is argued that early and continuing public involvement allows project sponsors to be aware of the problems and impacts and to avoid, minimize, or mitigate issues early.⁴⁷ Specifically, USDOT guidance has argued, "If the demographics, values,

and desires of a community and the impacts on the community are known early and reviewed on a continuing basis through an effective public involvement process in both the transportation planning and the project development phases, then the project sponsor can better incorporate the values and desires of the community into the design of the project.”⁴⁸

TxDOT’s *Environmental Manual* (2004)⁴⁹ regards public involvement as a key element of project planning. According to the manual, public involvement shall be initiated by the TxDOT district office and will depend on and be consistent with the type and complexity of the specific transportation project (see Table 2.2). The manual also states that TxDOT district staff shall maintain a list of individuals and groups interested in transportation project development and shall provide notification of public hearing activities to these individuals and groups.

Table 2.2: Public Involvement Required for TxDOT Transportation Projects

If the project involves...	Then public involvement might be...
Minor improvements; no additional right of way	None needed
Minor improvements; a minor amount of additional right of way; projects with minor design changes; temporary easements	Meetings with affected property owners
Multiple alternatives being analyzed in an early phase; when public opinion is needed/desirable to make decisions	Public meeting
Added capacity improvements; no/little/some additional right of way needed (minimum typical for EA/FONSI)	Opportunity for public hearing
Roadway on new location; added capacity improvements; controversial projects (EA or EIS)	Public hearing

Source: TxDOT⁴⁹

Public involvement is required and occurs during all phases of the transportation life cycle: planning, development, and implementation. At the planning phase, public input is required regarding the strategic direction and long-range objectives of the transportation agency. While it is typically more challenging to engage the public at this stage, there are tremendous value and benefits in engaging the public during this phase.

All MPOs in the Lower Rio Grande Valley area have published public participation programs that present guidance and roadmaps of processes to include

residents; community and neighborhood groups and associations; non-profit groups; business-sector groups; transportation providers; Federal, State, and local government agencies; and other stakeholders to participate in a proactive, predictable planning effort that provides full access to making key transportation decisions.^{50, 51, 52}

In the case of POEs, U.S. Government agencies involve the public in the decision-making process regarding POE projects as required by the NEPA process. All agencies, organizations, Native American groups, and members of the public having a potential interest in proposed POE projects are thus invited through published communications to participate in the decision-making process. CBP's Environmental Planning Program (2006)⁵³ guides the public opportunities for participating in decision making on proposed projects. Outreach sessions conducted by GSA and CBP are a standard component of POE project planning and execution. In addition, a 30-day public comment period allows for the public to provide written comments on shared project planning and environmental compliance information for the project. The public comment period is a requirement for conducting environmental assessments in accordance with NEPA and the general procedures for the FONSI for POE authorizations.

In the case of Texas, it is important to highlight that a pilot project under SAFETEA-LU enabled five states (California, Alaska, Ohio, Texas, and Oklahoma) to assume the role of the Federal Government during the NEPA process. MAP-21 expands the opportunity to participate in the program to all States. States that take part in this authorization can conduct their own environmental reviews, potentially saving time as a result of not having to go through multiple Federal agencies. Since MAP-21 was enacted, Texas and California have applied for delegation of Federal environmental responsibilities.⁵⁴ The American Road and Transportation Builders Association supported the applications of both states in comments submitted to USDOT.

While the reasons for non-participation by other States have varied, potential liability and litigation costs have been an overriding issue because the State must also assume Federal responsibilities for litigation over any project where delegation was used.

2.8.2 Mexico

In accordance with Article 26 of the Mexican Constitution, all planning activities should be democratic by allowing public participation of diverse social sectors and by incorporating the public's input into the development of sectoral plans (e.g., SCT's Sectoral Plan). Recently, public consultation has been accomplished by inviting associations, stakeholders, and potentially interested parties or experts to provide input regarding a planned project or a potential policy. Public consultation aimed at

involving the general population typically has resulted in low participation levels. This is possibly a reflection of the fact that the population generally believes that their input will have no impact. Mexico’s public participation model thus struggles to secure general population input.⁵⁵

When soliciting public input, SCT organizes public consultation forums that bring together academic experts, associations, and other stakeholders. In addition, several task groups, councils, or committees may be created to investigate a specific project or issue in detail. SCT’s Comptroller’s Office (Contraloría) provides an avenue for citizens to complain or voice their opinions regarding the agency or a specific officer’s functions.

Local governments and IMPLAN are mandated to involve the public in project planning and implementation. Similar to those run by SCT, public consultation forums are used to bring together academic experts, associations, and other stakeholders during a meeting or through committees that may be created to investigate a specific issue.

The Border Interagency Group, which includes Federal, State, and municipal representatives as well as private-sector stakeholders and academic experts, serves as a public consultation mechanism for the planning of new POEs. Attendance at the group’s meetings is by invitation only. The group does not have a website and does not need to comply with Federal Government transparency requirements.

INDAABIN seeks the advice of the Federal operational departments, the occupants of the facility, and the Federal authorities and municipalities responsible for national, regional, and local planning in INDAABIN’s development of all POE projects. In addition, INDAABIN participates in the meetings that the local governments organize to present and promote POE projects, as well as to receive comments from different public and private entities.

2.9 Other Study Area Considerations

The Focused Study Area for this Border Master Plan contains maritime ports and a case where existing infrastructure is not optimally used (at the Progreso International Bridge). This section of the document discusses a number of considerations relating to maritime ports and the Progreso Bridge.

2.9.1 Maritime Ports

Port of Brownsville

The Port of Brownsville, located 5 miles northeast of Brownsville, Texas, was officially opened on May 15, 1936. SH 48 parallels the 17-mile Brownsville Ship Channel

that connects the port to the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (GIWW). The port is the southernmost connection to the GIWW.

The ship channel was originally 32 feet deep and 200 feet wide. The turning basin is 36 feet deep and 1,200 feet wide; it is located 17 miles (14.5 nautical miles) inland from the Brazos Santiago Pass.

After World War II, the volume of agricultural produce exported at the Port of Brownsville increased as vegetable and citrus farming in the Rio Grande Valley expanded. In 1949, the GIWW was extended to the Port of Brownsville, and the ship channel was expanded to accommodate larger vessels. It currently has an authorized bottom width of 250 feet with an authorized depth of 42 feet.

Cotton, introduced to the area on a large scale in the late 1940s, saw a marked increase in the early 1950s, and for a time the Port of Brownsville became a leading exporter of cotton. During the 1970s, the southern side of the port was expanded to 350 feet wide and 1,900 feet long. By 1980, the port had 48 piers, wharfs, and docks, with 17 facilities in the Brownsville Ship Channel, 17 in the fishing harbor, and 14 on the Brownsville Turning Basin.⁵⁶

In 2012, the Port of Brownsville handled about 7.1 million metric tons of cargo. It is a major importer of steel, most of which is then exported to Mexico by both trucks and rail. However, similar to agricultural products, steel is subject to substantial fluctuations in demand. This complicates long-term capital planning to improve the efficiency of steel handling. With careful planning, there is potential to use rail and the GIWW for steel shipments, particularly between Brownsville and Houston. Developing economies, such as Turkey, India, Mexico, and China, are some of the main destinations for raw steel exports through Texas ports.⁵⁷

The Port of Brownsville is currently served by the Brownsville and Rio Grande International Railroad that interchanges with Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) at its Olmito yard, with Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway via an intermediate switch with UPRR, and with Kansas City Southern de Mexico. Dry storage warehouses, bulk liquid storage, marine repair plants, dry-docking facilities, and a grain elevator are also available at the port.

Port of Harlingen

The Port of Harlingen is located within the HSBMPO boundary, and representatives from the Port of Harlingen are ex-officio members of the MPO's Transportation Policy Committee. The Port of Harlingen provides efficient and economical transportation to destinations as close as Corpus Christi and as far as the Great Lakes. Terminal docks and other facilities serve shipments into and out of the

Port of Harlingen. Sites of up to 150 acres (on and off the Harlingen Channel) are available to industrial clients requiring attractive transportation and land lease rates. The Harlingen channel is maintained to a width of 125 feet and a depth of 12 feet (16 feet in the turning basin) and is supplied by the Arroyo Colorado, a fresh-water river.¹³

The Gulf Intracoastal Waterway

The GIWW is a 1,300-mile man-made canal along the Gulf of Mexico coastline from Brownsville to St. Marks, Florida. The GIWW links Texas ports with other state ports (see accompanying figure below). The GIWW is part of the larger Intracoastal Waterway on the Atlantic seaboard that stretches from Key West, Florida, to Boston, Massachusetts.



Texas handles more than 50 percent of the GIWW's traffic. Specifically, the 423-mile segment in Texas handles up to 90 million tons of freight annually. It enables Texas Gulf Coast ports to be key hubs for shipping throughout North America. Texas Gulf Coast ports are at the center of the State's multimodal transportation plan that includes trucking, rail, and marine shipping.

TxDOT is charged with working with other stakeholders to maintain the Texas segment of the waterway. In addition, Texas statute requires TxDOT to engage the Port Authority Advisory Committee (PAAC) when developing or implementing policies that affect Texas ports.

The PAAC, as required by Texas statute, provides a forum for the exchange of information among the ports, TxDOT, and TTC. Committee advice and recommendations guide TxDOT and TTC when they develop policies that affect Texas ports.

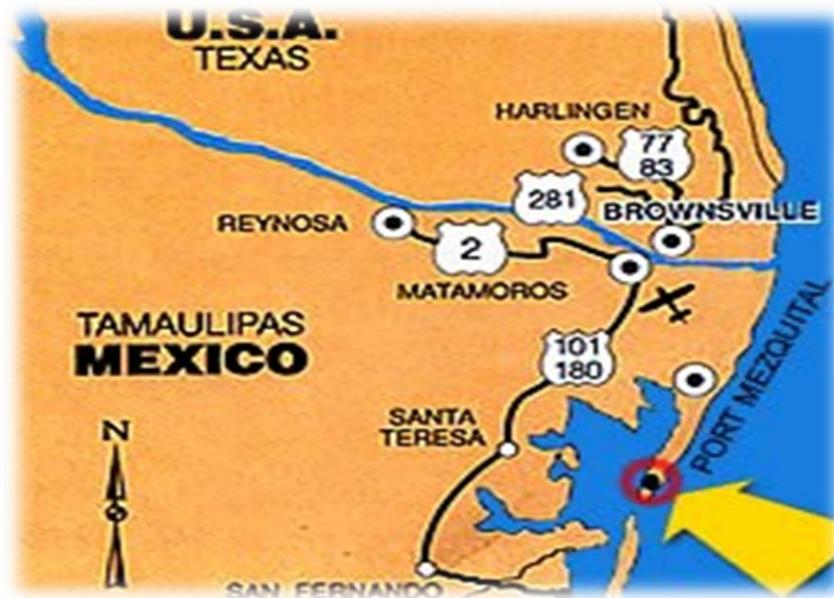
Source: TxDOT⁵⁷

Port Isabel-San Benito Navigation District

Port Isabel is a deep-water port with a depth of 36 feet. The port was created in 1929 to lower the transportation costs of the agricultural shippers in San Benito and the marine interests of Port Isabel. Currently, the port has more than 27 tenants that employ more than 600 people. The principal mission of the port is to facilitate lower-cost transportation and provide land for industrial development.

Port of Matamoros

Figure 2.19 shows the location of the Port of Matamoros, also known locally as the Port of Bagdad or El Mezquital. During the American Civil War (1861–1865), the Port of Matamoros was one of the leading commercial ports in the world. The city changed radically after the Port of Matamoros declared itself an international free trade zone in 1858. This resulted in urbanization, industrialization, and the expansion of the port, which experienced an economic boom during the American Civil War because it was the only port through which mercenaries for the Confederate States of America could enter. After the collapse of the Confederacy, Matamoros's markets shut down, many businesses went almost bankrupt, and ships were rarely seen—a crisis that until 2011 the port seemed to have never recovered from.



Source: Nicho's Lodge⁵⁸

Figure 2.19: Port of Matamoros (El Mezquital)

At the end of 2011, Mexican Petroleum (Petróleos Mexicanos), the state-owned petroleum company, discovered large crude-oil off-shore reserves (Supremus I and Trion I) off the coast of Tamaulipas. Tamaulipas is promoting investments to develop

and dredge the Port of Matamoros and enhance the connecting transportation infrastructure.

2.9.2 Infrastructure Disconnect: Progreso-Nuevo Progreso International Bridge

The Progreso-Nuevo Progreso International Bridge links the border towns Las Flores and Progreso, Tamaulipas, and Progreso Lakes, Texas. The bridge is approximately 20 miles east of the McAllen-Hidalgo-Reynosa International Bridge.⁵⁹ Although authorization for the Progreso-Nuevo Progreso International Bridge dates back to 1928, the bridge at its current location has been in operation only since 1952. During the initial years, the bridge had relatively few pedestrian, automobile, and commercial crossings. This situation started to change in the 1970s. A new bridge structure was completed in 2003, featuring four lanes for vehicles and broader covered walkways on each side of the bridge.

In 2008, separate concrete lanes were built on the east side (the East Side Truck Lane) to remove all heavy truck traffic from the four-lane bridge. These lanes were built to handle heavier truck traffic because Mexico's truck size and weight regulations allow heavier/larger trucks than do U.S. regulations. On the U.S. side, these heavier trucks have authorization to cross to a parking lot adjacent to the bridge (see Figure 2.20).

The southbound East Side Truck Lane has never been in operation. Figure 2.20 illustrates that although all transportation infrastructure, including the inspection booths on the U.S. side, has been completed, trucks are unable to cross southbound using this special lane. Instead, the truck traffic continues to cross at the four-lane bridge, together with cars and pedestrians. The inspection booths on the Mexican side still need to be constructed; International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) levee regulations and determination of an appropriate location for these booths have delayed the project.

On the U.S. side, the truck lane was funded mostly from private investments. However, the following related projects were constructed with public funds:

- A \$6 million investment that widened FM 1015 to four lanes from the floodway south to US 281. The project was let in March 2007 and completed in November 2008. The funding used included \$2.4 million in CBI funding. FM 1015—the main connection to the bridge—is now a four-lane facility all the way to US 83.
- Operational improvements at the bridge, which used \$678,444 in CBI funding, were completed in September 2010. The improvements include concrete paving to accommodate commercial truck traffic and the installation of a flashing beacon at the commercial truck exit connecting to FM 1015.



Figure 2.20: Progreso Bridge and Truck Lane Map

On the Mexican side, the customs and inspection facility is still pending. However, all transportation infrastructure (concrete lane) necessary for trucks to cross has been constructed.

2.10 Concluding Remarks

The planning of transportation infrastructure and POE projects is a binational, multi-step, multi-agency process that involves all levels of government in both the United States and Mexico. The Federal, State, regional, and local agencies on both sides of the border have different project evaluation processes in the preparation of POE and transportation planning documents. These evaluation processes range from qualitative assessments to detailed quantitative studies (e.g., feasibility studies and cost benefit analysis). Furthermore, planning horizons for POE and transportation infrastructure differ.

Collaboration and communication are thus critical to ensure coordinated project implementation. However, staff turnover, budget schedules, and bureaucratic processes have inhibited coordination in the development of POE facilities in the past. The development of border master plans represents an effort to ensure continued coordination and communication among all levels of government in developing a list of binational priorities for POEs and the transportation infrastructure serving POEs.

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