



El Paso/Santa Teresa/Chihuahua Border Master Plan (BMP)

Binational technical group meeting

October 2, 2014 UTEP - Kelly hall building, room 401

****Meeting Minutes****

On October 2, 2014 the members of the *Bi-national Technical Group* part of the *El Paso/Santa Teresa/Chihuahua Border Master Plan* (BMP) (<http://texasbmps.com/>), met for the first time with the members of the newly established *Paso del Norte (PdN) Interdisciplinary Research Platform* at UTEP (see platform project proposal attached to this e-mail).

The main purpose of this meeting was to discuss the recent developments of the *Bi-national Technical Group*, specifically in relation to the Cross-border rail infrastructure projects. Members of the *Bi-national Technical Group* presented the current activities (especially on the Mexican side) developed under the BMP. The idea was to learn more about the rail transportation planning process currently taking place, to coordinate the Cross-border rail infrastructure project activities, in order to find possibilities for cooperation and to avoid redundancies.

The meeting was hosted at the offices of the *Hunt Institute for Global Competitiveness (HI)* at UTEP. Patrick Schaefer, Executive Director of the HI opened the meeting, welcomed the participants, and mentioned the importance of the Cross-border rail infrastructure projects for the economic development of the PdN region.

Subsequently, Manuel Lopez, Consultant from IMIP started the presentation entitled: *A regional view for the shared border: the approach of Ciudad Juarez* (see presentation slides attached to this e-mail), which he divided in five main sections:

1. PdN Region (definition of the geographical area that we consider for this rail infrastructure study)
2. Cross-border rail infrastructure project (Analysis of the main projects underway in Ciudad Juarez)
3. How do we define the border region? (Past – Present – Future of cross-border projects /International Ports of Entry)
4. Meso-regional View (Situation of ongoing and future rail infrastructure projects at a national level in Mexico and impact for the U.S. (E.g. Expansion of the automotive industry))
5. What should we focus on? What are we currently doing? (Salvador Barragan from IMIP proposed a series of alternatives for improvement:
 - a. **Better coordination** with Mexican federal agencies regarding the land use plan for Juarez.
 - b. **Follow up** of the New Mexico – Chihuahua initiative to establish a binational community (San Jeronimo/Anapra and Santa Teresa/Sunland Park)
 - c. IMIP keeps encouraging the realization of **periodic informal meetings among regional stakeholders** in order to update and **exchange information** for the creation of a **consolidated data base**.



- d. Follow up initiatives/projects carried out at the **bi-national level (US-MEX Governments)** (E.G. Modernization of the International port of entry Tornillo, TX/Guadalupe, Chih)
- e. Find a **common path to work together as a region**, taking into account the common opportunities and the potential to reach a **stronger regional competitive capacity**.
- f. **Coordinate rail infrastructure activities** in the PdN region in order to **avoid redundancies** and to strengthen the **trilateral cooperation** (*West Texas, Southern New Mexico and Northern Chihuahua*).
- g. Communicate the **regional message** and educate other stakeholders.
- h. Importance of promoting the idea of PdN Region by designing a **strong marketing campaign that can be exported locally, nationally and internationally**.

Comments/conclusions/questions of participants:

- Who can deliver this regional message? We need an entity in charge of promoting the region. Perhaps the Hunt Institute could be this **centralized/neutral** entity in charge of strengthening this regional view.
- There are a multiplicity of cross-border rail initiatives, which all tend to work on the same issues. We need to **organize the ideas** and **consolidate one single regional initiative to avoid redundancies and conflicts**.
- If we manage to coordinate our efforts locally and create one single and coordinated message, we will have better opportunities to succeed as the PdN region.
- Informal meetings like this one, are an excellent opportunity to communicate and coordinate efforts and to get to know the regional actors.
- Recently, the Hunt Institute proposed the creation of a multidisciplinary research platform that received a **grant** from the Office of Research and Sponsored Projects at UTEP. This platform aims to **fill the gap in research and data about rail transportation infrastructure in El Paso del Norte Region (PdN) and provide crucial information to key regional stakeholders**. Considering the exponential increase of trade volumes that go through the region, there will be higher demand for more and better rail infrastructure in the next decades. Composed by members of three UTEP Colleges (Business Administration, Liberal Arts and Engineering) and two external members from New Mexico and Chihuahua (University of New Mexico and the IMIP), the PdN interdisciplinary research Platform constitutes an **unprecedented example of academic cooperation in the cross-border region**.