

Border Crossing Research Visioning Meeting
September 16, 2016. University Suite #312, UTEP

Meeting Minutes

Welcoming remarks:

Patrick Schaefer, Executive Director, Hunt Institute for Global Competitiveness

- Foster dialogue between people from Juarez and El Paso
- Fill the gaps in data and research
- Hunt Institute's data repository

Joe Heyman, Director, Center for Inter-American Border Studies (CIBS)

CIBS- not a standalone research center

- Last giant meeting of this kind for a while
- UTEP needs to be a dynamic center for border studies
- Chamber of commerce, police department, professors- diverse crowd
- El Paso del Norte health foundation
- Finance, trade, economics

Participants Presentations:

Paulina Lopez- Senator Rodriguez's District Office

- Strategies of border infrastructure
- District 29- Presidio POE
- Initiatives to draw more funds towards the border
- BECC-NADBANK fund infrastructure projects
- Creating a unified campaign- the border is a huge driver of economic development
- Funding for the border, establishing relationships with state officials and with Mexico
- How can we get the department of public safety into the mix? Bureaucratic nightmare
- The state now playing a role in border security
- Border crossings are a federal jurisdiction
- Perceptions about the border – Senator changing rhetoric: opportunities, jobs, changing rhetoric, improving funding, relationships for the border and the binational relations.

Mario Porras- Congressman O'Rourke's District Office

- What are the current priorities of the Congressman?
 - El Paso Juarez epicenter of US- Mexico binational relations
 - How can EP/CJ become the capital of binational relations?
 - Research- what is the best method for accurate wait times?
 - The priority is wait times and providing the best customer service
- Population in the border region continues to grow
- How can we connect information that's scientific that can be presented to stakeholders?
- Help at the federal level with homeland security
- Having a long term goal is important among stakeholders: work as a single unit. Great level of communication with the CBP and the City of El Paso.
- Conversation on twitter: #EP BRIDGES.
- Congressman relies heavily on social media to analyze data trends and public opinion.

Adrian Vasquez- BECC/COCEF

- BECC- is one of the greatest results from NAFTA
- Solid waste
- 300 kilometers from the border
- Street paving, clean energy
- Technical assistant program (money directed away from shareholders?); border training; certification program
- Mobility plans- pavement of streets, reduce air pollution, bridges infrastructure, public transportation
- NADBANK – Provides Technical assistance funds
- Slack: Border 2020- challenge with merging of bank and BECC- administrative issue
- Ganster- public outreach components/physical location- what's the discussion with physical location? – main office is in San Antonio for some reason but it serves Juarez

David Galicia- Texas Transportation Institute- Texas A&M

- Center for International Intelligent Transportation
- They've done lots of research on POE- Mexican truck idling, Bluetooth technology, border crossing information system, mass transit viability in El Paso and Ciudad Juarez, Commuting Crossing Cost at Bridge of the Americas, regional master network, black carbon emissions in the Paso del Norte region, pedestrian travel, cross-border transit buses, pope's visit, POE emissions inventory, other collaborations at POEs in San Diego, Tijuana, and Laredo-Nuevo Laredo (and went over many of these articles)
- Border Crossing Emissions Management Model (BCEMM)
- Using Bluetooth to measure crossing time

- Apparently it is really hard to measure border waiting time; using radio frequency
- Location of readers at BOTA
- Website: border crossing information system

Mathew McElroy- City of El Paso International Bridges

- The federal and state invest money ineffectively
- Economy growing but weak peso
- Maquiladora expansion has a big impact for El Paso, so it is important to improve wait times in the international bridges. Developing a Capital improvement program in the long and short run is key.
- Reducing wait times
- What they do at one bridge affects the others
- The aim is to reduce cargo wait times by 15%
- Value stream mapping
- App that will tell you crossing time

Cynthia Pompa- ACLU of New Mexico, Las Cruces, Regional Center for Border Rights

- Stand with border communities and defend constitutional guarantees
- ACLU oldest civil rights group in the US
- Attorneys who take on civil liberties violations
- Policy advocates and field organizers
- The effects of border enforcement- often working in El Paso as well
- Abuse documentation at POE
- Historic settlement- settlement with CBP- Woman who had 8-hour body search- cavity searches, x-rays
- Policy advocacy on the federal level
- Know your rights- don't have to be a citizen for constitution to protect you
- Texas, Arizona, ACLU coalition
- Harassment at POE
- Border wide abuse documentation in 2015
- What are the wider trends that were occurring?
- It was actually difficult to document abuses on paper (though we hear about them all the time)
- Fear of retaliation
- "What are the implications of me talking to you?"
- 150 cases documented (30 cases in our region)
- Verbal and psychological abuse; Detainment
- Coerced into signing specific documents (can get you banned from crossing)
- Physical- cavity searches, handcuffed

- Damage of property
- Retaliation or preventing someone from filing a complaint- sometimes people don't know how or are scared to
- Difficult to explain what is a POE to national media- people not in the region hard to grasp border life
- Most people who they talked to were US citizens (75%)
- Good response from CBP- implementing accountability measurements

Sam Pena- City of El Paso Fire Department

- Here at the border residency doesn't necessarily indicate citizenship
- Lack of collaboration on health care issues in this community
- Emergency responses to the border
- Lack of binational mechanism to help community of both sides
- Issues that affect citizens in Mexico affect US ones as well
- Sharing information is critical
- Calls to fire department medically related
- Calls to POE
- Paso del Norte one of most popular addresses in the country
- Lots of childbirth (obstetrics) calls (high risk) 50%
- Deliver women to hospital with no information
- Sometimes the women are not full-term
- They lose track of those people
- There can be long-term health effects
- Our laws prevent us from sharing too much information
- No collaboration with clinics in Mexico
- Need more research on long-term impact on high risk pregnancies that happen in our community
- We absorb the cost of those services

Lauren Baldwin- City of El Paso Resilience and Sustainability

- Did not attend the meeting.

Adam Train- City of El Paso Economic Development

- Providing business development to EPCJ
- Create jobs, expand tax base and existing businesses
- El Paso #11 largest exporter of goods in the nation
- City wide revitalization
- Sustainable cities incentive

- Regional strategic recommendations report- work with regional partners for entrepreneurship, infrastructure, destination factor
- Defense in aerospace, tourism

Joe Gudenrath, Downtown Management District

- Promote economic development by providing services that champion a vibrant downtown El Paso
- Downtown is important and unique
- We got crossing bridges
- Research- demographics (who is coming in; why?), destinations, market data, quality of life (for example, trash in the street)
- Market with economic information, we can better services
- Their group is separate from the city
- Not as many people visiting downtown- moving to other places (in El Paso) or are the patterns of border crossers changing?

Jose Contreras CANACO

- Tornillo bridge?
- Export broken down vehicles
- Tremendous amount of cars parked all over the place
- Via NAFTA pressure Mexican government to open the border properly
- Ysleta- 4-5 lanes into two lanes
- Mexican government has no money and limited number of space
- Texas department of public safety- we need officers at peak hours
- Border bridge – empty trucks
- The opening of lanes erratic
- Experiment at bridges- the union stopped opening the lanes at 6am
- CBP works with them
- People will not follow procedures- exacerbates waiting time (for example showing birth certificates instead of passport)

Tracy Yellen, Paso del Norte Health Foundation

- The region was like an “Environmental wild west”
- 1990’s ASARCO smelter
- Fertilizer in Sierra Blanca
- Burning tires
- No water treatment in Juarez in the early 90s
- Hazardous waste dumped in Mexico (from US)

- Improvements to gasoline betters air quality
- They get a lot of grants \$
- What makes us healthy- what we spend on being healthy
- Our health- 50% caused by healthy behavior
- We spend 88% on medical services- far more on reactionary rather than preventative care
- Social determinants of health
- El Paso- diabetes, obesity, alcohol, tobacco, access to care, teen pregnancy, low prenatal care, mental health care
- Curbing smoking has actually been successful thanks to policy
- Juarez has different numbers- 37% live below poverty, 19% are illiterate
- Priorities: healthy eating and active living; tobacco and alcohol control; mental and emotional wellbeing; healthy relationships; health relationships
- One World Play
- Big growth of non-profits in Juarez

Christian Corrales, UTEP, border crossing students. Director for community relations

- Why would students come to UTEP?
- Mexican Students Demographics
- What percentage of students are dual citizenship? (no one knows)
- About 1,119 Mexican national students
- 724 from Juarez
- Daily border crossing students
- CFR- show that they can pay for school
- Students need border commuter status
- Financial assistance to Mexican national students
- Why aren't we promoting this in other universities?
- Visibility of UTEP- how can we draw international students?
- Parents don't want to send students to El Paso because of Juarez's reputation
- What's the percentage of students with dual citizenship at UTEP?
- F3 and F1 students differences?
- Program of financial assistance PASE Program 92% qualify for this program and grants them in state tuition
- Financial, transportation, peso issues for mobility: impact more students to come to UTEP
- Help from the chambers of commerce to promote UTEP in Mexico
- How many Mexican students take the SATs here?

What have we heard?

Paul Ganster remarks

- “The border is not being managed properly”
- We lack a mechanism to manage the border
- We’re incurring real problems on emergency management, health, transaction costs
- More research needed on governments and border management mechanisms
- Fed gov not doing its job with El Paso so having to do it ourselves
- Public-private partnerships
- Academic analyses of these set of issues
- Border studies expanded enormously in the past decade
- European Union- supposedly eliminating borders but not really
- How borders are managed worldwide
- Federal, local, and state at POE
- Discontinuities when administration changes on either side of the border
- Not brought up: moving goods and people across the border
- NAFTA creates dialogue centered around economics
- Pedestrians get left out of this
- Pedestrian experiences in crossing- waiting times in sun, no bathrooms, inhaling pollutants
- The effect of the border crossing experiences- physically, psychologically
- How does this separate people?
- Long term better planning of POE
- Separate vehicles (and their emissions) from people
- Solid scientific research needed

Joe Heyman remarks

- Officers themselves at POE
- CBP one of the more substantial concentration of well-paid and stable jobs on the border
- Years ago most of the INS officers were from the communities themselves (but BP wasn’t)
- CBP a hard job- air quality, interaction dynamics, clearance within 30 seconds
- Different experiences from daily crossers than someone who flies a few times a year
- Critical institutions in making border society
- Heyman not allowed to stand on the bridge anymore?
- Entire range of issues that are brought up when we talk about transportation, traffic, and costs
- Cost not just economic or monetized view
- That’s important but there are health, social costs
- Limited collaboration across borders because crossing times

- Transportation as part of an entire set of processes
- The challenge is how to implement this
- Potential project: Estimates of numbers of people who are on one side but consider their home on the other side; sudden flows of people across borders; don't know how to arrive at an estimate for those people
- Managing border processing has been focused on commercial vehicles; what about regular crossers and pedestrians
- Stratified system of crossing
- Large number who are daily crossers who are not in the system of pre-clearance
- People can't afford to or don't want to pay those fees
- High traffic at the free bridge
- Infrastructure was designed for US interests and inspection- don't have adequate southbound infrastructure. When Mexico uses it for intercepting weapons and cash, its complicated
- Security goals of each country in border inspections
- POE are much more likely to be the security gaps
- Narrative is always US centered but Mexico feels flooded with weapons and cash
- Big picture thing- the border as walls and interdiction – a place where stuff is simply stopped
- POE is a place where someone enters- not yet known to be entering legally
- The discussion about normal, expectant, legal crossing is not part of the narrative of the border
- Getting that to be recognized is a huge challenge
- UTEP students who are educated in Mexico
- Health- most people don't cross the border in urban areas- Juarez population don't have permission to cross; El Paso people may not have ties to Juarez
- How the society is affected when you have a large piece of the population is trans-border but not the majority?
- Indirect effects
- People who buy things in El Paso and sell goods in Juarez
- What is the effect of these various subpopulations?
- What about San Diego students who study in Mexico?
- How many international students who graduate actually enter the workforce?
- Students likelier to choose STEM related fields
- Limited employment opportunities in the area for students
- US side of the border- used goods trade
- NAFTA an economic success in many ways? But it was designed for business rather than regular people
- We don't have free trade. Or free movement
- POE friendlier to people in border communities

- We don't understand the border economy- we don't document economic processes well
- Two statistical systems that stop at the border
- This guy disagrees that NAFTA doesn't allow for the free movement of goods
- Anthropology confirms economics
- NAFTA improved standards of living
- Things that can't cross because of hidden regulations
- Questions of trade regulations
- Specific interests/barriers in each country
- Methodological challenge- sometimes appropriate to look at border crossing- for effects of crossing not so much. Need a similar sample of people who don't cross.

Patrick Schaefer, Presentation: research on cross-border flows

- The manner in which we see the border
- Geographic location- a very special geological constellation of trade routes
- El Paso at the crossroads of significant trade route
- Atlantic and pacific trade routes
- Over time trade routes industrialized especially with NAFTA
- Increasing movement of goods, more and more industrialized
- Few trade routes as cost-effective as ours
- Special convergence of north/south trade routes colliding with east/west routes
- Industrialization, demographic flows, goods from one side of the border to the other
- Human rights challenges, health, equity, planning, labor rights
- Don't always have the resources to deal with the magnitude of this collision
- 3 different jurisdictions- fractured by sovereigns
- Fed, state, counties, municipalities, special districts involved
- Hunt Institute- elucidate different jurisdiction and structures that affect our daily lives- energy and natural resources, water, public health, urban planning and infrastructure
- Data sets, analysis, maps, economic impact modeling
- Create common frame of reference, starting with data sets
- Trade indicator of our region
- How important we are to economic future of both US and Mexico
- Massive development with electrical generation is separate grid from ours (I personally didn't understand the comment on new mexico jurisdiction trigger thing)
- Minimize jurisdiction- political boundaries
- Transboundary regional economic impact model
- Remi and IMPLAN Softwares
- Economic impact between El Paso and Dona Ana county
- Want to expand that to ciudad Juarez
- We have value because of the challenges we face- we know what it's like to balance two worlds.