

A BETTER BORDER FOR A BETTER AMERICA

El Paso, TX

September 20-21, 2023

The Better Border for a Better America Conference is an informative and engaging event focused on improving connectivity and efficient mobility across the U.S.-Mexico border. Keynote speakers, panel presentations, and a field trip will showcase innovative solutions for border trade and transportation challenges.

The Conference provides a unique opportunity for engineers, planners, administrators, and researchers to exchange information and explore the benefits of recent research and practical case studies related to the U.S.-Mexico border pertaining to:

- Policy and Regulation
- Infrastructure
- Planning
- Operations
- Resiliency
- Technology
- Economic Competitiveness

All sessions will be held at the Double Tree Hotel in Downtown El Paso, Texas. **The conference language is English.**

6:00 pm - 9:00 pm: WELCOMING RECEPTION AND REGISTRATION
Double Tree Hotel Downtown, El Paso, TX

Tuesday,
September 19th

7:30 am - 8:30 am: BREAKFAST AND REGISTRATION

Wednesday,
September 20th

8:30 am - 10:00 am: PLENARY SESSION

Rafael Aldrete, Texas A&M Transportation Institute, presiding

Welcome:

- Representative Veronica Escobar
- Senator John Cornyn
- Secretary of State Jane Nelson

Presentations:

- Genevieve Bales, Statewide Transportation Planner, Federal Highway Administration
- Commissioner Bobby Janecka, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality

Keynote Address

Caroline Mays, Director of Planning and Modal Programs, Texas Department of Transportation

10:00 am - 10:30 am: BREAK

10:30 am - 12:00 pm:

TECHNICAL SESSION 1: ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS

Jolanda Prozzi, Texas A&M Transportation Institute, presiding

Presentations:

- Jon Barela, Chief Executive Officer, Borderplex Alliance
- Michael Bomba, Research Professor, University of North Texas
- Jesus Cañas, Senior Business Economist, Dallas Federal Reserve Bank
- Mayra Maldonado, Director of the Hunt Institute for Global Competitiveness, University of Texas at El Paso

TECHNICAL SESSION 2: POLICY AND REGULATIONS

Sergio Vasquez, Texas Department of Transportation, presiding

Presentations:

- Andrew Edwards, Southern Border Coordinator, Federal Highway Administration
- Gerry Schwebel, Executive Vice President, IBC Bank
- Juan Villa, Research Scientist, Texas A&M Transportation Institute
- Mario Porras, Director of Binational Affairs, El Paso Community Foundation (Invited)
- Carlos Santillán, Chief Executive Officer, Ciao (International and Transportation Operations)

12:00 pm - 12:45 pm: LUNCH BUFFET

12:45 pm - 4:30 pm: STREET CAR TOUR TO UTEP*

Agenda

Street Car Tour to the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP):

SunMetro, public transportation provider serving the **City of El Paso**, is providing street cars to transport participants to the **UTEP Campus**. **UTEP** staff will provide a walking tour through the campus. Participants will be divided into groups of 20 and assigned a guide.

1:00 pm: Depart the Franklin/El Paso Street Car Station (across from the Library and Museum and one block from conference hotel)

1:30 pm: Arrive at the University Street Car Station for tour of UTEP

4:10 pm: Depart University Street Car Station

4:30 pm: Arrive at Franklin/El Paso Street Car Station

***Please wear comfortable shoes and bring water.**

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Thursday,
September 21st

7:30 am - 8:30 am: BREAKFAST AND REGISTRATION

8:30 am - 10:00 am:

TECHNICAL SESSION 3: OPERATIONS

Eduardo Calvo, El Paso Metropolitan Planning Organization, presiding

Presentations:

- Roberto Tinajero, Assistant Director, City of El Paso: International Bridges
- Tony Hall, Acting Assistant Director of Field Operations, Customs and Border Protection
- Daniel Mendoza, Director of Mexico Operations, BNSF Railway Company
- Allan Russel, Chief Executive Officer, TECMA

TECHNICAL SESSION 4: RESILIENCY

Jeff Shelton, Texas A&M Transportation Institute, presiding

Presentations:

- Javier Dominquez, Transportation Planner, Lower Rio Grande Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Nicole Ferrini, Chief Resilience Officer, City of El Paso
- Veronica Gonzalez-Sepulveda, Chief Resilience Officer, Juarez Municipality
- John Moore, Environmental and Sustainability Team Leader, Marathon Petroleum

10:00 am - 10:30 am: BREAK

10:30 am - 12:00 pm:

TECHNICAL SESSION 5: INFRASTRUCTURE

Juan Villa, Texas A&M Transportation Institute, presiding

Presentations:

- Homerio Bernal, International Programs Planner, New Mexico Department of Transportation
- Lauren Garduno, President/CEO, Ports to Plains Alliance
- Jesse Hereford, Head of Strategic Partnerships & Stakeholder Engagement, North American Development Bank (NADBANK)
- Marco Grajeda, Executive Director, New Mexico Border Authority
- Rogelio Fernandez, Director of the Chihuahua Border Bridges Trust

TECHNICAL SESSION 6: TECHNOLOGY

Juan Carlos Espinosa, Texas A&M Transportation Institute, presiding

Presentations:

- Mark Sanders, Director of the Office of International Affairs, Arizona Department of Transportation
- Carlos Silva, Research Specialist, Texas A&M Transportation Institute
- Swapnil Samant, Senior Software Engineer, Texas A&M Transportation Institute
- Bernardo Ortiz, Chief Executive Officer, CEO IBI Group
- Alonso Baca, Head Operations System Department, Chihuahua Border Bridges Trust

12:00 pm - 1:00 pm: LUNCH BUFFET

Remarks: Chairman Bryan Daniel, Texas Workforce Commission

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1:00 pm - 2:30 pm:

TECHNICAL SESSION 7: PLANNING: International Bridges

Rafael Aldrete, Texas A&M Transportation Institute, presiding

Presentations:

- Roberto Ransom, Economic Development Director, El Paso County
- Pete Sepulveda, Executive Director, Cameron County Regional Mobility Authority
- Alma Saldana Cruz, Marketing Director, Port of Laredo
- Fred Brouwen, Director of Operations, City of Pharr
- Homero Balderas, Bridge Director, Port of Eagle Pass

TECHNICAL SESSION 8: PLANNING: Transportation

Jolanda Prozzi, Texas A&M Transportation Institute, presiding

Presentations:

- Okan Gurbuz, Assistant Research Scientist, Texas A&M Transportation Institute
- Eduardo Calvo, Executive Director, El Paso Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Raul Ortega, Director of Transportation Planning and Development, Texas Department of Transportation, El Paso District
- Arq. Roberto Mora, Director, Instituto Municipal de Investigacion y Planeacion de Ciudad Juarez
- David Galicia, Research Scientist, Texas A&M Transportation Institute

2:30 pm - 3:00 pm:

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Sponsorships

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Special Thanks

