

*Congressman Henry Cuellar
Ribbon Cutting International Bridges I Renovation Projects
Friday, April 20, 2018
11:30 a.m. CT
100 Convent Ave. Laredo, TX*

Acknowledgements:

Bobby Babcock GSA Regional Administrator for
Region 7

Sylvia Hernandez Former GSA Regional
Administrator for Region 7

Raul Moreno Senior Project Manager - GSA

David Higginson, Director of Field Operations,
Laredo

City of Laredo, Mayor Pete Saenz

General Contractor Brasfield & Gorrie,

Richter Architects (Laredo 1) / Hacker Architecture
(Laredo 2) – and the construction crews

Downtown Business Owners for your input and
patience

Senator John Cornyn

I thank my colleagues in House and Senate

Appropriations Committee for helping me secure the
funding for this project.

Project Facts:

- The Laredo 1 Administration Building is more than 70 years old and is the only pedestrian crossing between the downtown areas of Laredo, TX and Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas.
- Its last major renovation was more than 25 years ago.
- The work done at Convent Avenue POE includes a complete renovation and modernization of the historic administration building along with an expansion and optimization of the interior spaces.
- The project was also redesigned the way pedestrian and vehicular traffic flow through the port.
- Added a new, high-performance automobile secondary inspection canopy.

- All of these improvements will allow people and automobiles to move faster, safer and more efficiently through our port of entry.
- This project is part a 100-million-dollar federal investment (\$100,686,000.00) for the renovation of Bridge 1 (34.9 million) and Bridge 2. (65.7 million)
- One of the largest federal investment in Laredo ever.

Laredo 1 - Convent Port of Entry

- Reconfigured and expanded non-commercial vehicular and pedestrian processing area for increased operational efficiency
- Increased number of pedestrian processing lanes from eight to fourteen
- Reconfigured and modernized Administration Building

- Positive separation of automobile, pedestrian and bicycle traffic for optimal safety
- Reconfigured automobile secondary inspection areas
- Creation of a new dedicated bicycle inspection lane. Currently, bicycles and automobiles share a lane resulting in a documented slow-down for both. The new design positively separates the two resulting in an improvement in automobile wait times.
- Computer modeling shows the new design reduces **pedestrian peak wait times** by 42%. Since the study was completed, the design team was able to add six more booths. It can be surmised the throughput will see an even greater improvement.
- The new design also shows a **55% reduction in automobile peak wait times**.

- This project will not only improve operations but the beautiful new appearance will make downtown Laredo a more pleasant place to do business.

CBP SENTRI Lane to Move to Gateway to the Americas Bridge

- Due to a shift in the traffic in the third construction phase that would adversely impact SENTRI program users, (CBP) Office of Field Operations announced that the SENTRI Lane will shift from Juarez-Lincoln Bridge to Gateway to the Americas Bridge effective April 29 to coincide with the restart of vehicular traffic there.
- SENTRI users will be able to continue to use the SENTRI lane at Juarez-Lincoln Bridge for 30 more days, through May 29, in order to enable a smooth transition to the new location

FACTS about POE

Bridge 1

- In 2016, 3,573,992 people passed through Laredo 1, making it the 4th busiest pedestrian port in the nation.
- In 2016, 405,679 automobiles were processed although the bridge was closed to inbound traffic on 29 April 2016 due to construction.

Project milestones & Current Status:

- On April 29, 2016, Bridge 1 (Convent Avenue Bridge) was closed to auto traffic and work began.
- As the construction was being performed the ports are operational 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.
- Since the start of construction, inbound **pedestrian traffic** has increased by 0.9%.
- **Laredo Port of Entry 1 will officially re-open to automobile traffic April 29, 2018.**

Conclusion

- Our goal is for travelers to have a pleasant experience when visiting our city, with the hope that they return frequently.
- We achieved that with this project by optimizing CBP operations, allowing people and automobiles to move faster, safer and more securely through our port.
- This beautiful building makes downtown Laredo a more pleasant place to do business

Finally, what does this means for Laredo & Nuevo Laredo

- With all of the rhetoric these days about the border and our two countries
- This project says to our neighbors you are welcomed and we are open for business.

- Thank You

Bridge 2 Background

- In 2016, Laredo 2 processed 41,856 buses and 1,039,605 bus passengers. Considering all ports of entry nationwide, 25% of all passengers entering the U.S. by bus from both Canada and Mexico did so at Laredo 2.

- Laredo 2 processed 4,605,050 automobiles in 2016.
- Work began at Bridge 2 (Juarez-Laredo Bridge) in October 2015
- As the construction was being performed the ports are operational 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.
- While there has been a minor decrease in automobile traffic by 4% (most likely due to closing 5 of an available 19 combined inbound lanes between the two ports due to construction);
- The temporary facilities at the Laredo Port of Entry 2 continue to operate very efficiently.
- bus traffic is up 4.5% and bus passengers are up 6.4%.
- Since 1995, bus traffic has increased 98% and bus passengers by 233%.

- **Laredo Port of Entry 2. - Full substantial completion is now expected December 2018**
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