



The MPO El Paso website (<http://www.elpasompo.org>) has many useful documents from which to understand the process of future transportation projects currently being put together and for those projected in the future. For those residences that may be affected by this proposed port of entry (POE) on Yarbrough Dr, it may be useful to know its id number and name which is posted at the top of this page.

An optional plan is discussed here as an alternative view to the PV (private vehicle) POE proposal. The Option plan which will be named C018X-A or Cesar Chavez POE option A uses core bordercommerce.com major points:

- Urbanize the borderland- using Smart Code form base code.
- Redevelop or develop the borderland.
- Both sides of the border should be mutually agreeable in land use.
- Security comes from occupation of the borderland as well as placing manpower and physical hindrances.
- Joint security measures on both sides of the border.

Zoning (International Border and Security Infrastructure Code book) both sides of the border area to be affected.
Utilize and incorporate the River Uplift.

One major point to be made of the MPO documents related to the Yarbrough POE is the following; who are the occupants in private vehicles (PV's) traveling between the ports? Although it is estimated from previous data that 25% of those travelers coming from the south are shopping and adding to retail sales, what else is known about the other 75%?

Yet another point is that the Alameda corridor has the largest transit riders now, why would not a pedestrian POE and bus transit and / or carsharing and /or scooter sharing and / or bicycle sharing be a better combination of transportation over personal vehicles in this corridor?

What makes it makes it the obvious choice to have a personal vehicle POE?

The answer to these questions either helps support or invalidates this optional proposal C018X-A, that is to: **Build a pedestrian only POE.**

Much is made of reducing congestion, pollution, and improving the non-attainment status when going over the El Paso MPO documents but building another POE for vehicles does not appear to reduce or abate those issues. A pedestrian POE would intuitively have less emissions as compared to a PV POE. The MPO documents and presentations appear to focus on a PV POE without any possible mention or benefit of a pedestrian only POE.

A pedestrian POE, intuitively, may encourage or provide the following scenarios:

- Urbanization around the POE using Smart code techniques.
- Commercialize the immediate area near and around the POE that is within walking distance of the POE that can provide new jobs and new commerce.
- Utilize mass transportation on both sides of the POE.
- Redevelop and develop areas around the POE and nearby corridor within 2 miles of the POE accessible by mass transit. Alameda may benefit more from a pedestrian POE in terms of redevelopment, increased transit traffic, and job creation.



Proposal

The city of El Paso, should consider building a pedestrian POE in the area around the intersection of Yarbrough and the border Highway. Limited or secondary mode of transportation may come from the use of private vehicles (PV). But the PV option should be secondary to the primary use of the POE as a pedestrian POE.

The new pedestrian POE will be highly reliant on mass transit to move pedestrians to other parts of the city. Carsharing, scooter sharing, taxi and limousine service would also be available as well as PV pickup points. Since most border-crossers will already be on foot when using a pedestrian POE, mass transit is the next logical step in moving people around. Assisted mass transit can come from the integration of carsharing as well. That is, carsharing can be part of the bus transit system fee structure.

The experience in moving people through the El Paso international airport and the current Stanton/Santa Fe POE also serve as examples of processes and methods that would be used to help design a highly functional new pedestrian POE. That is, a structure the feels similar to an airport to move people in and out of the border and the current knowledge that El Paso has gained with such foot traffic around the Stanton/Santa Fe POE would help in the design of a new pedestrian POE.

The area around the pedestrian POE would include a new village where smart code development would convert this intersection into a small urbanize hub along the border. Smart code recommends certain distances a person should be able to walk within a small urbanized area which would create the semi-boundaries of such a village. The village's primary intent would be to act as a redevelopment tool and to create new jobs. The kind of new jobs that don't actually exist in the area at this time!

Modes of transportation would include bus transit, carsharing, scooter sharing, and private vehicles that have access to a main road such as Yarbrough Drive and major freeway access in the Border Highway. A mass transit hub would be available near the POE. Pedestrians would be able to walk around in the village and bicyclist would also share these pathways. In addition, the River Uplift along the borderline itself would offer additional pedestrian walkways and bicycle paths.

Building a pedestrian POE

Although a PV POE may be the preferred choice, the pedestrian POE might possibly be the better choice in the long run.

Using the El Paso MPO Mission Statement¹ as a guide, the following statements could be made about the pedestrian POE

“Incorporate sustainable solutions that balance transportation-related needs with finite resources:”

Use Smart Code to redevelop area around the POE as a high density urban area.

“while promoting a safe and pleasant environment, advancing the quality of life...”

Creating a village allows the localize community to own their part of El Paso.

“expanding commerce and economic opportunity”

The pedestrian POE will be an economic hub from which to build the village around using Smart code development. That means new businesses, real estate ventures, redevelopment, and green urbanization.

“and improving accessibility and mobility with multi-traveling options in our community”

The pedestrian POE first level of transportation is walking or bicycling, then mass transit and personal vehicles for greater distances.

The pedestrian POE will serve commercial interest of a personal nature unlike BOTA which serves maquiladora commercial interest as well as PV access. Stanton/Santa Fe POE demonstrates the economic benefit of having a pedestrian POE. A new pedestrian POE may not be exclusively reliant on retail only. Greater market segmentation can produce new services and markets at the new pedestrian POE that the current Santo and Santa Fe POE do not offer now. Some of the new services are related to real estate, retail, and business services.

A pedestrian POE, as compared to a PV POE, should offer greater benefits when included in any **Congestion Management System (CMS)**. For every 10,000 weekly pedestrians crossing the POE versus every 10,000 individuals in private vehicles, greater achievement in the pedestrian scenario should come about in the areas that include efficiency of mobility, conservation of energy and reduced congestion.

If a goal is to ***“provide convenient intermodal connections between all elements of the regional transportation system (transit, rail, surface, air) to achieve a seamless travel network,”*** then it appears that a pedestrian POE puts center-front a competitive option to connect to rail, transit and air. A pedestrian POE would put transit as its main go between with rail, and air. Taxis and PV would be secondary modes of transportation.

A PV POE is less likely to ***“support compact, pedestrian-oriented land use development”*** through ***“planning efforts regarding transportation facilities.”*** There is a considerable disconnect in the rationale for a PV POE where as a pedestrian POE is dependent on such transit transportation facilities.

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<http://www.elpasompo.org/Portals/0/TransBorder2035/TransBorder%202035%20TCR%20Attachments/11.04%20Attachments%20TransBorder%202035%20MTP%20Files%2012%2020%202007/Chapter%202%20Goals%204.pdf>

The pedestrian POE also can support the redevelopment of the local area and to create a village that creates new jobs, new services, and new real estate opportunities. A PV POE simply passes vehicles to their next destination which might negatively impact the local area in increased pollution and congestion but not offer any other substantial economic benefit to this small localized area. Also there will be an ugly urban bridge that may increase the possibility of vagrants, homeless people and thugs parking themselves under the new PV POE bridge. Litter and graffiti will be common and an increasing eye sore of this urban project. Also furthering the disconnect people of El Paso have with their nearby river and levee.

The pedestrian POE can be part of creating a village of increased urban density that would encourage new redevelopment in the area, infill development with mixed land uses of higher density that would enhance the transit hub that could be developed there with the principal affected residences also being the principal beneficiaries.

Environmental Justice, Air Quality

A pedestrian POE would focus on building a commercial hub unlike a PV POE. Current information on the PV POE shows it to be a typical overhead bridge road with port of entry stalls that are typical of other neighboring POEs. The pedestrian POE purposely proposes to create a hub modeled like an airport terminal or a grand central station. Imagine having a Union Plaza, like in downtown El Paso, at this location.

This may add jobs to an area that can use jobs closer to home. There would be typical jobs in services and transportation as well as federal jobs in customs and border patrol.

In addition, if a village is built around the transit hub, professional jobs and other types of jobs would become available not found in a typical PV POE. These may be jobs that are needed in an area not dominated by strong income earning positions in the “immediate” area.

A hub driven by bus transit should directly relate to reduced emissions as compared to emissions created from a new PV POE. When future transit buses begin to include engine technologies such as hybrid, electric, or hydrogen fuel engines, then further decreases in emissions in the area would also be expected.

Transit

A successful transit hub located by a pedestrian POE will be determined by the volume of crossing pedestrians and those who will then use the transit system. A PV POE would be

less likely from the initial point to some future maturity point of creating the population densities necessary to support a transit transportation hub that a pedestrian POE can achieve in the same period of time.

If a pedestrian POE is built, then a small transit system could be built and grow as demand grows. Again, the El Paso airport provides a great example of how to build a facility that has matured in time and to give such a hub time and land to mature similarly.

Additionally, there are two goals an initial transit system would provide that cannot directly be provided by a PV POE. The transit system, most likely will initially be a bus service, would provide a loop around the area which would significantly ride along Alameda Ave- a considerable trading route and the largest transit corridor in El Paso.

The other goal is to provide the local area and along the lower valley, a pickup point to and from the El Paso airport. This would first be promoted to the local community to support their local village and later it can be promoted in Cd Juarez as the crossing point on the border with the most frequent trips to the El Paso airport directly from the pedestrian POE. In time, it will be promoted as the port on entry for travelers in Mexico to stop into Cd Juarez airport, cross the international border and resume flights out of the El Paso International airport to other many US destinations.

Considerable effort will be made in the future to market the Cd Juarez airport as the connecting point across the border to resume US flights through El Paso. The pedestrian hub at this pedestrian POE will be directly responsible for this connection.² This would create one of many market segments to be fully marketed. Another example of a market segment are those 25% border crossers that cross the border for the purpose of retail shopping and a third example would be the promotion of this pedestrian POE to both bus transit operators on both sides of the border as a convenient and important destination and origin terminal.

Even while officially, through the TransBorder 2035 document, stating that the goal is to expand public transportation system, the only proposal for a new POE appears to be a PV POE and no mention of a pedestrian POE and transit mix. Although any mix where the PV POE is dominate over pedestrian POE will probably doom the pedestrian POE in the long run. Why use public transit when one can continue using a vehicle to reach and cross the border.

The same document continues to describe transit-oriented development (TOD) but the new proposed bridge seems to fail to even account for this pedestrian POE option or a mix that largely includes a pedestrian POE. The proposed commercial hub is a deliberate means of using bus transit and creating a mixed-used high density village for this purpose, as would TOD suggest.

² See http://bordercommerce.com/uploads/covena_portuosus_concretus_ver1a.pdf for more and joint air space.

Lastly, the pedestrian POE can help grow a bi-national transit system if a transborder transit were implemented in this part of El Paso also. If the predicated increase in pedestrian crossings were 12%³ as calculated, it would be an additional boast and reason for a pedestrian POE. Transborder transit was a topic also discussed in the TransBorder 2035 document for those wondering where the “transborder” topic came from.

Highlights of a Pedestrian POE as it relates to transit

1. Creates new urban bubble with the creation of transit hub and village.
2. Opens a new BRT corridor between the border highway and Alameda Ave taking advantage of the highest use of all El Paso corridors
3. Places one more node on the border highway for future expanded BRT or light rail along the Border highway which is not even on future plans now.
4. Short trips to Alameda Ave and Socorro transit center will keep initial transit cost down. Long term goals of reaching both airports in the US and in Mexico increase cost but are targeted to un-tapped market of transit users.
5. Improves Sun Metro’s capability to capture cross-border commuters and shoppers.
6. BRT design and technology started from the ground up at new urban location.
7. PRT⁴ or light rail design and planning started from the ground up targeting corridor south into Cd Juarez airport and north into El Paso airport.
8. Redevelopment prospects improve transit success and growth.
9. River Uplift corridor generates several high density nodes requiring new BRT, PRT, light rail, bus transit strategies along and in conjunction with the border highway.
10. Carsharing using electric or air motor vehicles as part of the mix in transportation options.

The Pedestrian POE

The pedestrian POE can either be on the east or west side of Yarbrough Dr. All options for a PV POE create a bridge over the river which is what is probably possible with a

³ See <http://www.elpasompo.org/Portals/0/TransBorder2035/TransBorder%202035%20TCR%20Attachments/11.04%20Attachments%20TransBorder%202035%20MTP%20Files%2012%2020%202007/Chapter%2011%20International%205.pdf> for further details.

⁴ See <http://www.personalrapidtransit.com/> for details in English or Spanish.

pedestrian POE as well. Another alternative would be to create the first subterranean pedestrian POE.

This would make the east side of Yarbrough Dr. more attractive since any future expansion can be under JP Shawver Park. The land next to JP Shawver Park appears to be already county or city owned. Also, the opposite side of this area in Cd Juarez still has large undeveloped tracts of land. With a subterranean pedestrian POE, there is also the possibility of building close to the access road along the border freeway and similarly in Cd Juarez. This would better utilize land already limited on the El Paso side as well as develop on two levels on this same limited land.

It would be expected that the run between both countries would be the shortest in a subterranean pedestrian POE as compared to an overhead bridge; that is the corridor that connects both countries. Cost for subterranean construction would be higher but the utilization or ability to develop above grade is created where a typical PV POE does not even have that potential. Some of the cost for construction under grade can be recouped in the development of private interest above grade. Where will all this earth be moved? The River Uplift needs to be developed which would mean widening the usable land for the River Uplift Deck and unloading all this earth is readily accessible through the border highway at Yarbrough dr. which is less than two blocks away.

Creating a subterranean pedestrian POE may also allow for Private Vehicles. This may be limited access whereby the pedestrian POE is the primary method of cross-border travelers. Although the proportionality of a pedestrian and PV POE can be researched where pedestrian traffic is not reduced but encouraged. Also, tolls of a PV POE portion of the pedestrian / PV POE can be based on weight of the vehicle as an incentive to allow small fuel efficient cars to pass at a lower cost than heavier vehicles but would not consider busses or other high occupancy vehicles as “heavier vehicles.”

With proper planning, both the pedestrian POE and PV POE can have underground corridor easements that allow for future expansion so as to allow for growth and accessibility to future development funds. Also with proper planning, any queuing of personal vehicles done underground will allow for installation of an emissions capturing system which will remove polluting emissions before released into the general air mass. With vehicles basically traveling less than 20 miles per hour and ready to stop in case of an emergency or fire, an escape access tunnel with doors every 20 feet can be built for safety. These doors can be secured from emergencies or fire and allowed for safe return to their home country above ground. All these practices and civil engineering projects already exist worldwide and are typical practical construction methods.

The Transit Hub

If there is no pedestrian POE then there is small need for a transit hub but that is the primary focus. Move cross-border travelers on local transit and reduce less the need to

use a PV. By building a PV POE, it forces people to use a vehicle and even more so encouraging Cd Juarez to go the way of the automobile instead of mass transit.

If it is one of the goals of the city to develop smart urbanism with high density using mass transit to relieve congestion, then how is it that a pedestrian POE is not considered the primary option for a new bridge/connection?

Creating the pedestrian POE is a deliberate attempt to reduce congestion, increase transit use, and to market transit transportation in the regional area. The El Paso airport has a beautiful terminal that provides food services, ample space for airline gates and car rental stalls. A transit hub can use a similar model where airline gates are bus companies and car rental companies can share space with bicycle and scooter rental centers.

First, the transit hub will develop short access links along Yarbrough dr. and along Alameda Ave. It may be a possibility to consider bringing the abandoned street cars to this area since it does not appear to take root in downtown El Paso anymore. Those street cars may be added once ridership has been established where street cars can become a viable option. The land north of independence looks very attractive for some kind of bus or rail for this new pedestrian POE. This is where a canal and some shoulder can be found.

Second, the transit hub will be on the forefront of developing connections between both the El Paso and Cd Juarez airport. Promote, for instance, Love field to El Paso flights, which there may be six flights during the day throughout the week, to connect in Cd Juarez for continuation of Mexico flights. This would be done by frequent pickups at the El Paso international airport and taking travelers to the new pedestrian POE drop off point for airline travelers. The Cd Juarez side will pickup these travelers that are cleared to travel in all of Mexico and use domestic gates at the Cd Juarez international airport.⁵ This works in the reverse and holds true to a bordercommerce.com goal; equal economic opportunity on both sides of the border.

There are no large cities in the US to help as an example because El Paso/Cd Juarez are the only large cities other than San Diego/ Tijuana that can do this. That is why it may seem an improbable proposition. But El Paso and Cd Juarez have to break new ground on economic advantages they share of which there are few or no examples.

Thirdly, the transit hub will cater to trans-regional transportation that typically comes from the east. New Mexico communities like Alamogordo, Tularosa, Cloudcroft, Ruidoso, Roswell, Artesia, Carlsbad, Hobbs, and Lovington. In Texas, communities like Fort Hancock, Sierra Blanca, Van Horn, Fort Davis, Marfa, Alpine, Pecos, Valentine, Balmorhea, Fort Stockton, Presidio and Big Bend National Park.

Initially, these trips may not be frequent but may be promoted as seasonal getaways as well. Winter or summer weekend trips promoted of some of the more popular winter or

⁵ See http://bordercommerce.com/uploads/covena_portuosus_concretus_ver1a.pdf for more explanation and details.

summer communities. If El Paso citizens are not willing to travel to these communities by transit bus, how do they expect other people from other parts of the country to use El Paso as a staging area to make those connections?

There may be current bus lines from these areas that can be re-routed from downtown El Paso to this new pedestrian POE. Or as either a second stop from downtown El Paso on their way out to these New Mexico and Texas communities.

And lastly, the transit hub can take advantage of current economic segments in the twin city economies of El Paso and Cd. Juarez. There is the possible transit route between the new POE and medical centers in either El Paso or Cd Juarez; El Paso with its new medical school and Cd Juarez with its reported tourist medicine. One does not cannibalize the others medical facilities but instead, the region can create an industry from the combined strengths of both countries.

A carsharing terminal can also play a role at the transit hub that is run by the car rental companies or Sun Transit or both. Even though mass transit is promoted as the first transportation mode of choice, personal vehicles will also be needed or carsharing vehicles. If carsharing is used as a preferred choice to personal vehicles, much can be done to encourage the use and purchase of a non polluting vehicle fleet.

The Village

The meaning of this can vary and it is an option for the community. The village can consist of two or more structures besides the transit hub. It can be one hotel and one public building with some retail. It could also be an Italian style plaza with four sides of 4 story living apartments and condos on top of a subterranean transit hub. It could be the only development block or it could become the beginning of a redevelopment effort in the area that would convert small portions of existing subdivisions into higher density residential areas.

The village may remain small or it as stated above; become a redevelopment tool for the area around it. It could be any of these combinations or none at all depending on the surrounding community. Yarbrough dr. appears to be a redevelopment candidate just north of the border highway. By using smart code development techniques, can this be further expanded so that both residential and commercial developments take place to reshape this area and community?

Why a village?

With a PV POE, there will be great change in the area that may create some commercial development along Yarbrough dr. and Alameda Ave.

A pedestrian POE will create the urban mass which makes local transit much more available which may require more immediate services in the area if people are on foot. That would be for food services and small retail purchases. It is possible that cross-

border travelers simply want to purchase something readily available across the border within walking distance and return. That should be a good thing and similar to what already happens at the Stanton/Santa Fe bridges.

This would also help the immediate area and lower Yarbrough dr. Other services like hospitality may be needed as they are around the El Paso airport.

Real Estate services may be needed for people choosing to live near a transit hub and easy access through a POE. Those types of services may require building nearby townhomes, condos, and other mix type of residential living which includes single family homes.

“The bottom line,” a village is a generator of new jobs and income for the immediate area. A pedestrian POE can be a large economic development tool to redevelop the area which can be further expressed by a village.

It does not have to be, geographically, a large area and should be dominated by foot traffic to keep it small and high density.

Job creation is the primary motivation for the creation of a village. It taps into several desires to consolidate several economic activities that includes the above stated job types above. If a small local company with a need to build a small office tower in this new village were built, it would be another example of the job creation and income growth that can be generated by this local village.

The River Uplift

The River Uplift⁶ can enjoy an incredible amount of support from a pedestrian POE. A span either from the park or nearby would allow pedestrians to walk over the border highway onto the River Uplift. There they can walk or bicycle along the River Uplift.

As describe in the River Uplift guide, an Economic Extension, can be connected by a Span to a promenade from the village or transit hub so that both the River Uplift and the village are connected. Both the US and Mexico should have an Economic Extension, promenade and a Span connected to their River Uplift.

The River Uplift long range purpose is to simply be occupied by way of pedestrians and bicyclist, and possibly by some form of very low weight scooter traffic. It is hopeful that it can be a continuous surface from the Texas / New Mexico border all the way past Zaragoza. It would make it one of the largest pedestrian walkways in El Paso, the border, and create a new, positive, iconic image of what a border town is like. Especially leveraging its value is the hubs, nodes, and economic activities that it attaches to on both

⁶ See bordercommerce.com

sides of the border. There is no comparable or parallel goal that creates this wholesale image building effort in El Paso or Cd Juarez. Consider reading about the River Uplift at bordercommerce.com.

Final word on the Pedestrian POE

The pedestrian POE goes to the heart of some economic goals desired by the city and its citizens. That is with the inclusion of a transit hub, village, and River Uplift. It flat out requires the pedestrian POE to have measurable effects on transit, redevelopment, and job creation in the localized area. That it can grow to rival some economic centers around El Paso will ultimately depend on how successful pedestrian traffic can be generated within the 24 hour cycle that is available in one day and what services and business will be created around this POE, transit hub, and village. The goal has to be stated first before private business becomes the major component of development in the area.

This area will be a new economic hub that does not exist currently. It will be reliant on transit both to reduce congestion and reduce but not eliminate the need for private vehicles.

The village is just an expansion of the economic activities that can take root in a small geographical area and can be considered a mini El Paso downtown. This will be just a new place for job creation as well as downtown El Paso and will never rival it. It is not suppose to. It will remain relatively small so that the community around it can share in the pride and job creation of this small village near by.

The River Uplift is a promise kept to take back the border and occupy it. Pedestrians and bicyclist nearby will use it for recreation and for short transportations trips between spans. These spans will hopefully be numerous and connected to other economic nodes or important locations along the border.

It will give the residents in the area a choice to renew their area or continue with the same, which is what a PV POE will most likely give them.

From two miles of this POE, it is a choice of how many new jobs are created from this POE by either a PV POE or a pedestrian POE.

It is no coincidence that a POE is to be built at Yarbrough dr. and the border highway. It is strategically located and can be an important POE. The choice should reflect what the city has stated as their goals and what the citizens have determined are their needs. A PV POE has not demonstrated very convincingly those goals or needs.

Does a pedestrian POE compete with the downtown border international hub? NO. If the demand is there and success comes from a Yarbrough pedestrian POE would only mean that an untapped need was met that had not previously been addressed.

El Paso needs to consider a pedestrian POE as an alternative to a PV POE. They must consider what happens when either is developed and what the long term outlook will look like in 30 years and which they prefer from such analysis.

Have a healthy discussion with your elected leaders and let them know you have questions.