



OFFICE OF CITY REPRESENTATIVE
CHRIS CANALES
EL PASO CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT 8

February 7, 2024

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to you representing the interests and concerns that I share with many of my constituents in District 8 and in consideration of the significant role of the Bridge of the Americas Land Port of Entry (BOTA) as a vital gateway between El Paso and Ciudad Juárez. I wish to express my position on the ongoing modernization project for BOTA, with particular concern for the role of commercial traffic in the Port's future. I recognize the importance of modernizing our infrastructure to meet evolving standards and demands, and I appreciate the efforts of the General Services Administration (GSA) in overseeing this significant project. I value the opportunity for public input provided through public meetings and scoping sessions, and that is why I am submitting this letter to be considered as part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) scoping process that the GSA is currently engaged in.

Having reviewed community feedback and concerns, as well as alternative proposals presented during the public scoping meeting on December 13, 2023 including *Action Alternative #4– No Commercial Traffic*, there has emerged a prevailing sentiment among area residents regarding the impact of commercial vehicle traffic. Many community members, including representatives from various neighborhood associations and advocacy groups, have expressed serious misgivings about the adverse effects of idling commercial vehicles on air quality, public health, and the overall well-being of nearby residents. In light of these concerns, which are backed by historical data on air quality and the incidence of respiratory disease, I am writing to formally convey my preference for the removal of commercial truck traffic from the Bridge of the Americas, a preference that I also shared when I met with the GSA's Regional Project Manager Daniel Partida several months ago. I believe that such an adjustment would align with the City of El Paso's commitment to the health and welfare of our residents and contribute to the sustainability and livability of the surrounding communities. I want to commend the GSA and its Federal government counterparts for the work already done leading up to the public presentation of Alternative #4, including significant consultation with our critically important partners in Mexico.

I recognize the crucial importance of cross-border trade and connectivity. However, I firmly believe that any modernization efforts should also prioritize the safety, health, and quality of life of the residents who call El Paso home. I understand that the GSA is undertaking a comprehensive Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) as part of the NEPA process to assess the various alternatives and their potential implications. I encourage the GSA to consider the input received from the community and explore alternatives that mitigate concerns related to commercial truck traffic while still achieving the overall objectives of the modernization project. Other El Paso-area ports of entry with less densely populated surrounding areas, particularly those in nearby Tornillo and Santa Teresa, are uniquely positioned to absorb the commercial traffic demand of the region with significantly less impact.

I am committed to working collaboratively with the GSA, federal agencies, and the community to ensure that the modernization of the Bridge of the Americas aligns with the best interests of the residents of my district. I appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to continued dialogue and cooperation. Thank you for your dedication to this critical project, and I anticipate positive outcomes that will benefit BOTA's users, stakeholders, and community members alike across the El Paso Borderland region.

Good wishes,

Chris Canales
City Representative
El Paso City Council, District 8

cc: Hon. Mayor of El Paso Oscar Leeser
Hon. Members of the El Paso City Council
El Paso Interim City Manager Cary Westin
Eduardo Calvo, Executive Director, El Paso MPO
Daniel Partida, Regional Project Manager, GSA
Karla R. Carmichael, NEPA Program Manager, GSA