



2026

THE CITY OF EL PASO

INTERNATIONAL POLICY AGENDA

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I. Introduction and Purpose

The International Policy Agenda is intended to strengthen international relationships, attract foreign investment, advance binational infrastructure projects, and promote coordination among key stakeholders like Ciudad Juarez, the State of Chihuahua, and the federal government of Mexico. It also establishes a formal process to inform City Council, enabling staff to support Council's direction in executing projects that drive revenue and economic growth.

Policy Implementation Actions

The International Policy Agenda serves as a guiding framework, fostering coordination, alignment, and a shared vision among City Departments and Agencies with international partners. To effectively execute, City staff will establish a unified framework and policy roadmap to guide decision-making and inform resource allocation, ensuring a strategic, long-term vision for El Paso's international agenda. The International Policy Agenda is jointly implemented by Economic and International Development and Strategic and Legislative Affairs.

International Bridges	Economic Development	Strategic and Legislative Affairs
<p>Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International bridges modernization • City facilities updates <p>Land Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EP Water land / industrial parks • Land adjacent to ports • Land purchases <p>Communications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Bridges Strategy • Counter-messaging • Cross-border media management 	<p>Business Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FDI leads • International Trade Missions • International event planning <p>Business Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Port user surveys 	<p>Policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Policy Agenda • Intergovernmental Affairs • Presidential Permit • USMCA Negotiations <p>Funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grants, appropriations, riders • Legislative bills • MX Proyectos Ejecutivos • Foreign Visa Investments • Private-sector donations for infrastructure
<p>Metrics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # Projects CIP • \$ Revenues from bridges • # of crossings • # of projects and funds allocated 	<p>Metrics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # FDI leads • MOUs, MOAs, agreements 	<p>Metrics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$ for international ports • Presidential Permits

Implementation Actions

Strategic and Legislative Affairs

- Establishing joint programs with key international partners, including Ciudad Juarez and other strategic global cities
- Coordination with Mexican state governments
- Coordination with foreign national governments, with a focus on Mexico and Canada

Infrastructure

- Modernizing Ports of Entry
- Utilizing City-owned land
- Expanding Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ) 68 and improving FTZ 68 offerings and programs
- Advocacy to resolve inconsistencies in rules and incentives between FTZ and USMCA rules

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Program

- Business One Stop Shop
- International Transition Assistance Program
- FDI Prospecting / Trade Missions
- Tariff impact mitigation and tracking
- FDI targeted incentives

Advancing other priorities from City programs participating in the International Affairs Committee

- Public Health
- Office of Emergency Management
- FTZ 68 (Airport)
- International Bridges
- Destination El Paso

II. Policy Goals and Guiding Principles

Enhance Cross-Border Economic Integration

1. Strengthen International Partnerships

- Facilitate high-level engagement with Federal Government agencies in Washington, D.C., Mexico City and other global capitals through strategic visits and discussions
- Launch Joint trade missions with the Mayors of the City of El Paso and the Municipal President of Ciudad Juarez and other strategic international partners
- Develop cross border workgroups to encourage communication, data sharing, and growth in regional supply chains
- Continue City of El Paso Committees and Work Groups, including, but not limited to, Committee on Border Relations, Sister Cities International, and International Affairs Committee

2. Improve Border Infrastructure for Trade and Mobility

- Develop new financing options for international ports of entry
- Modernize and expand existing infrastructure to accommodate commercial traffic from the anticipated Bridge of the Americas commercial lane closure
- Increase collaboration with El Paso County and the Marcelino-Serna (Tornillo) International Port of Entry

3. Facilitate Trade and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)

- Expand the International Transition Assistance Program
- Improve FTZ 68 programs, including customer access and expanding authorities via federal legislation
- Develop targeted incentives for FDI to attract international businesses
- Support the development of workforce programs to match regional labor demand and supply

Legislative Priorities for the International Program

This policy agenda is intended to help the City of El Paso in strengthening its role in advocating for border-related policy improvements at the State, Federal, and international levels by enhancing communication and advocacy efforts.

1. Advance Infrastructure Investments

- Secure funding for transportation projects (e.g., highways, transit, multimodal) particularly high-cost projects including modernizing facilities and inspections equipment
- Equip ports of entry with Intelligent Transportation Systems
- Establish procedures to reduce idling time at bridges/ports of entry and support binational mobility
- Expand federal tax incentives to encourage energy resilience and alternative energy sources at ports of entry
- Protect funding claw backs from programs that can fund international ports of entry (e.g., U.S. Federal Highway Administration grants, Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, Inflation Reduction Act)

2. Secure Presidential Permits for the Ysleta-Zaragoza Port of Entry

- Establish the Ysleta-Zaragoza Port of Entry as a priority in federal planning documents in both countries
- Secure funding for final design documents and construction
- Secure statements of support for the project (federal, state, local, and private-sector)
- Secure user commitments from logistics and manufacturing companies that would utilize the expanded port

Appendix A: Supporting Documentation

The following documents were used to create the International Policy Agenda and are available via the hyperlinks below. Contact Adriana Pulecio at pulecioam@elpasotexas.gov if you have additional questions or are unable to access the documents.

1. [City of El Paso Strategic Plan 2024](#)
2. [Federal Legislative Agenda for the 119th Congress](#)
3. [State Legislative Agenda for the 90th Legislative Session](#)
4. [Tariff Mitigation Strategy](#)
5. [Foreign Direct Investment Strategy 2024-2025](#)
6. [Foreign Trade Zone 68 Program](#)

Appendix B: Major Initiatives

1. Joint International Trade and Policy

Biannual Visits to Mexico City

The City of El Paso, in collaboration with the municipal government of Ciudad Juárez will coordinate biannual visits to Mexico City to strengthen relationships with federal government agencies such as the Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores (SRE), Secretaría de Economía, Secretaría de Comunicaciones y Transportes (SCT), and customs and border security entities. These visits are critical to advancing shared infrastructure priorities, promoting foreign direct investment (FDI), and advocating for the region's interests in binational trade facilitation and economic development. Meetings will also engage with Mexico's federal legislative bodies to ensure alignment on strategic initiatives such as the Ysleta-Zaragoza Port of Entry Expansion and the development of energy, water, and transportation corridors that support regional industry.

Biannual Visits to Washington, D.C.

The City of El Paso hosts Ciudad Juárez will coordinate biannual visits to Washington, DC to ensure that both cities maintain a consistent presence and engagement with key federal agencies and congressional offices, conveying accurate representation of the border and regional needs. These visits will focus on advocating for funding opportunities, regulatory improvements, and policy reforms that impact cross-border commerce, infrastructure, workforce development, and immigration. Meetings with U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), the Department of Transportation (DOT), the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR), and relevant Congressional Committees will be central to reinforcing the City's role as a national leader in international trade and border innovation. These engagements also provide a platform to elevate local and regional needs related to climate resilience, energy security, and port modernization.

Joint Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Prospecting

The City of El Paso and Ciudad Juárez will launch a Joint FDI Prospecting Program in collaboration with key business support organizations including CONCANACO, CANACO, CANACINTRA, and INDEX. This initiative utilizes coordinated outreach strategies, investment promotion events, and tailored business intelligence tools to attract domestic and foreign companies seeking to invest in the El Paso–Juárez binational region. The program will target businesses in manufacturing, logistics, clean energy, and advanced technology sectors, offering a pipeline of investment-ready opportunities. Customized site visits, investor roundtables, and business matchmaking efforts will enhance visibility and reduce barriers for international firms interested in acquiring, relocating, or expanding operations in the region.

Joint Supply Chain Tracking

A shared data framework will be developed to track and analyze supply chain activity across the El Paso–Juárez region, with the goal of improving operational efficiency and reducing delays at ports of entry. This initiative involves cooperation between both cities, customs agencies, and private sector partners to establish key performance indicators (KPIs), monitor inventory movement, and anticipate disruptions. Data will inform strategic investments in infrastructure, labor force alignment, and logistics planning. The joint system will also support long-term planning for nearshoring and reshoring efforts by providing real-time insights into binational supply chain dynamics.

Trade Events

The City of El Paso, in collaboration with Ciudad Juárez and regional business organizations, will organize and participate in strategic trade events that position the region as a global hub for commerce and innovation. These include participation in international trade expos, border innovation summits, sector-specific investment forums, and joint city presentations at high-profile economic development conferences in North America, Europe, and Asia. Trade events will showcase the unique advantages of the El Paso–Juárez binational region, highlight industrial and logistics assets, and foster connections with site selectors, investors, and multinational corporations. A calendar of annual events will be created in coordination with the binational working group to ensure alignment and maximize impact.

USMCA Advocacy and Regional Trade Alignment

The City of El Paso will advance a coordinated USMCA advocacy strategy to ensure trade policy reflects the needs of border communities. This includes ongoing monitoring of USMCA implementation and the 2026 review process, with a focus on trade facilitation, infrastructure, and regional competitiveness. The City will prioritize FTZ and USMCA parity to support North American manufacturing and cross-border production, while advancing unified regional positions on port modernization, integrated logistics, local government engagement, and supply chain resilience.

International Engagements

The City of El Paso will pursue targeted engagement with priority international markets and key trade corridors, logistics hubs, and industry clusters to expand trade, investment, and institutional partnerships. These efforts will include participation in international forums, trade missions, and coordinated engagements with foreign government agencies, industry leaders, and multilateral organizations. The goal is to position El Paso as a strategic gateway for global commerce, strengthen relationships beyond the U.S.–Mexico corridor, and attract diversified foreign direct investment aligned with the City's economic priorities.

Binational Tourism Promotion

The City of El Paso, in collaboration with Ciudad Juárez as well as with other Mexican Cities, States and regional partners, will advance coordinated tourism efforts through joint marketing, digital cross-promotion, and shared participation in trade and travel industry engagements.

Binational Sustainability and Resilience

The City of El Paso, in collaboration with Ciudad Juárez and regional partners, will advance coordinated sustainability and resilience efforts through policy alignment, program development, and support for climate, energy, and environmental initiatives across the border region.

2. Sister Cities

A sister city, county, or state relationship is a broad-based, long-term partnership between two communities in different countries. A relationship is officially recognized when the highest elected or appointed officials from both communities sign an agreement to establish sister city ties.

Founded in 1956 with the mission to promote peace through mutual respect, understanding, cooperation - one individual, one community at a time. This mission reflects the belief in the power of personal connections. Since inception, Sister Cities International has worked to create global relationships based on cultural, educational, informational, and trade exchanges.

Sister Cities International serves as the national membership organization for sister city programs in over 400 communities, with over 1,800 partnerships in more than 140 countries.

Each sister city organization is independent and pursues activities and thematic areas that are important to them and their community, including municipal, business, trade, educational, and cultural exchanges and projects with its sister city.

El Paso International Sister Cities Agreements to Date

- Torreón, Mexico: A Sister City agreement was authorized by the El Paso City Council in 2023.
- Chihuahua City, Mexico: Signed in 2002 and rectified in 2008 and 2021 to solidify collaboration in economic development, tourism, culture, and education.
- Parras de la Fuente in Coahuila, Mexico: Established in 2020 to foster bilateral ties, enhance cross-border collaboration, and promote joint tourism, cultural exchange, and economic development.
- Ciudad Juárez, Mexico:
 - April 2005: Signed our initial Sister Cities agreement.
 - March 27, 2018: This pact was designed to promote binational tourism, commerce, transportation, and culture.

- Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico. Signed in 2018 to strengthen cultural ties and promote tourism and economic development in both communities.
- Hadera, Israel: Established in May 2015 to promote cross-border economic investment, cultural exchange, and technological collaboration, specifically in water desalination.
- Jerez de la Frontera, Spain: Formalized in the spring of 1998 celebrating shared Spanish colonial heritage of the region, emphasizing cultural exchange, economic development, and educational ties between our two historic cities.
- Zacatecas, Mexico: Officially established in 1998, encouraging bilateral promotion of both cities and establish a framework for collaborative activities in areas of mutual benefit.
- Querétaro, Mexico: Officially established in 1998, committing to bilateral promotion of their respective cities.

Expanding Sister City Engagement

A city may have multiple sister cities, with community involvement ranging from a handful to hundreds of volunteers. In addition to volunteers, sister city organizations may include representatives from nonprofits, municipal governments, the private sector, and other civic organizations.

As part of the International Policy Agenda, the City may explore additional sister city agreements where there is clear alignment with El Paso’s economic, cultural, educational, and binational priorities. These agreements should be pursued as practical platforms for cooperation, relationship-building, and exchange, with an emphasis on partnerships that advance shared interests and create opportunities for residents, institutions, and businesses.

3. Ysleta-Zaragoza Port of Entry Expansion Project: Feasibility Study

The Ysleta International Port of Entry provides a critical link between the largest Mexican concentration of maquiladora manufacturing activities in Juárez and distribution centers and consumer markets across the United States.

- Over \$145 billion of trade between the United States and México passed just through the City of El Paso in 2024, of which \$84 billion crosses via the Ysleta-Zaragoza Port of Entry.
- Expanding the Ysleta-Zaragoza International Port of Entry is necessary to accommodate a growing volume of trade and to absorb commercial traffic from Bridge of the Americas (BOTA).
- This project has garnered statements of support from partners in the United States and Mexico (both public and private sectors), which is necessary to secure Presidential Permits for the project.
- There is significant private sector demand for warehousing in land adjacent to the Ysleta International Port of Entry, including land owned by the City of El Paso and Riverside Industrial Park.
- The feasibility study will result in data, planning, and design work necessary to secure approximately \$500 million for implementation.

Total Estimated Cost Breakdown

Task	Description	Cost
1	Traffic Study (Port modeling)	\$1,500,000
2	Off-System vs. On-System Study	\$1,500,000
3	Inspection Stations Usage Study	\$2,000,000
4	Preliminary Design & Feasibility Estimate	\$5,000,000
	Total	\$10,000,00

Task 1. Port Modeling: Current vs. Post-BOTA Commercial Traffic Removal

- Data collection and stakeholder engagement
- Origin-destination and mode split analysis
- Microsimulation of current and future scenarios
- Final report with recommendations

Task 2. Off-System vs. On-System Impacts Study

- Roadway condition inventory
- Connectivity and access study
- GIS mapping and traffic forecasting
- Infrastructure impact report

Task 3. TxDOT and Texas DPS Inspection Station Usage Study

- Baseline usage data collection
- Truck flow and inspection rate analysis
- Demand forecast modeling
- Conceptual facility design for expansion

Task 4. Preliminary Concept Design & Feasibility-Level Cost Estimate

- Up to 3 conceptual site layout options
- Cross-border flow diagrams and access points
- Conceptual utility layouts
- Cost estimates at feasibility-level accuracy



4. Paso del Norte and Stanton Ports of Entry Project Development Study

Program Summary

The Paso del Norte (PDN) and Stanton International Bridges Project Development Study focuses on improving mobility, safety, equity, economic development, and transportation challenges with more than 500,000 pedestrians and 650,000 vehicles crossing northbound and southbound at the Paso del Norte and Stanton ports of entry on a monthly basis.

Total Estimated Cost: \$2,000,000

The project scope of work will result in data, planning, and design work necessary to secure approximately \$200 million for implementation. Tasks include:

T1: Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plan

T2: Analysis of Needs and Demands

T3: Pedestrian Safety and Amenities Infrastructure Analysis

T4: Traffic Control Infrastructure and Requirements Analysis

T5: Bridges Conceptual Design and Expansion Gap Analysis



- T6: Infrastructure Cost Estimates
- T7: Alternatives and Constraints Analysis
- T8: Benefit-Cost Analysis
- T9: Environmental Summary
- T10: Final Report

High Traffic Incidents: There is a high incidence of speed-related and intersection-related incidents in the study area, leading to traffic delays and accidents. The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) Crash Records Information System (CRIS) Query system shows that a total of 664 speed-related incidents and 2,537 intersection-related incidents were recorded within the study area from February 2018 through February 2023 (TxDOT 2023).

Pedestrian Safety: Pedestrian safety improvements are needed to protect pedestrians and cyclists from high-speed and distracted traffic. From 2015 to 2021, within a one-mile radius encompassing Downtown El Paso and neighborhoods adjacent to the PDN and Stanton International Bridges, 189 incidents involving pedestrians occurred. Of those 189, nine were fatal.

Responding to BOTA Closures: Although GSA has told regional stakeholders that there will not be a full closure of personal vehicle and pedestrian crossings for the Bridge of the Americas (BOTA) Modernization Project, the City of El Paso expects that much of that traffic will utilize the PDN and Stanton Ports of Entry.

Presidential Permit: Much of the work planned by the City of El Paso will not require a Presidential Permit. Improvements will occur along ingress and egress routes like Stanton Street and in City rights of way.

