

1 **DRAFT**
2 **FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**
3 **ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR THE PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION,**
4 **REPAIR, AND MAINTENANCE OF THE LAREDO SOUTH ALL-WEATHER ROAD,**
5 **U.S. BORDER PATROL, LAREDO SECTOR, LAREDO, TEXAS**
6

7 **Introduction**
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9 Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), U.S. Customs and Border Protection
10 (CBP), a component of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), has prepared an
11 Environmental Assessment (EA), which is attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference, to
12 document its consideration of the potential environmental impacts of a proposal for the proposed
13 repair, minor additional construction and ongoing maintenance of approximately 1 mile of road.
14 The Laredo South All-Weather Road lies within the U.S. Border Patrol (USBP) Laredo South
15 Station's Area of Responsibility, located within the Laredo Sector (LRT), in Laredo, TX. This
16 project would be performed using a combination of commercial contracting and military training
17 construction conducted under the auspices of the Joint Task Force–North (JTF-N) Program.
18

19 CBP is charged with the dual mission of securing the United States' borders while facilitating
20 legitimate trade and travel. In supporting CBP's mission the USBP has multiple missions; to
21 apprehend terrorists and terrorist weapons illegally entering the United States, deter illegal
22 entries through improved enforcement and to detect, apprehend and deter smugglers of humans,
23 drugs, and other contraband.
24

25 **Proposed Action**
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27 The Laredo South All-Weather Road is an existing USBP road located in Laredo, Texas. The
28 road is approximately 2 miles long and is located adjacent to the Rio Grande River. The existing
29 road is approximately 5,500 feet in length. It is deteriorating and is in need of repair and
30 maintenance. In some instances, the existing road along the riverside has totally eroded, thus it is
31 proposed that certain new segments of road approximately 4,500 feet in length be installed. All
32 of the road segments would be 20 feet wide with 2 feet on each side to create usable shoulders.
33 No segments of existing road are proposed for closure, reclamation or abandonment as a result of
34 the new road segments and Maintenance and Repair of existing Segments. The project would
35 also repair multiple sections of the roadway with poor drainage conditions by incorporating a
36 combination of culverts, low water crossings, and drainage ditches into the road design. A total
37 of 4 culverts and/or low water crossings are proposed.
38

39 **Purpose and Need**
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41 The mission of CBP is to secure the borders of the United States and to prevent terrorists and
42 terrorist weapons from entering the United States. As an important component of CBP, USBP's
43 mission is to detect and prevent terrorists and terrorist weapons from entering the country
44 between official Ports of Entry. USBP will continue to advance its legacy mission to detect,
45 interdict, and apprehend those who attempt to illegally enter or smuggle any person or
46 contraband across identify, classify, respond, and resolve emerging threats along the sovereign

Draft Finding of No Significant Impact
Environmental Assessment for the Proposed Construction, Repair, and Maintenance of the Laredo South
All-Weather Road, U.S. Border Patrol, Laredo Sector, Laredo, Texas

1 borders of the United States. The primary sources of authority granted to USBP agents are the
2 Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 (Public Law 82-414) contained in Title 8 of the United
3 States Code (USC) “Aliens and Nationality” and other statutes relating to the immigration and
4 naturalization of aliens. The USBP implemented the 2012–2016 Border Patrol National Strategy,
5 which now puts these capabilities to the most effective use to meet all threats. The new strategy
6 is a risk-based approach to border security which uses information, integration, and rapid
7 response to achieve two overall goals: secure America’s Borders and strengthen the Border
8 Patrol.

9
10 The Border Patrol Facilities and Tactical Infrastructure Program Management Office is charged
11 with ensuring that all USBP facilities and tactical infrastructure (including fencing, patrol roads,
12 and lighting) are properly constructed, maintained, and repaired to support USBP operations and
13 agent and personnel safety. The purpose of the Proposed Action is to facilitate the primary goals
14 and objectives of USBP’s strategy: to enhance enforcement activities while providing safe
15 working conditions for USBP agents. Current increasing trends in illegal border activity require
16 increased access and shortened response times to enhance the operational capabilities of USBP
17 and to protect personnel. The need for the Proposed Action is to provide the following:

- 18
- 19 ◆ More efficient and effective means of assessing cross-border activities.
- 20 ◆ Rapid detection and accurate characterization of potential threats.
- 21 ◆ Coordinated deployment of resources in the apprehension of illegal aliens.
- 22 ◆ Increased surveillance and interdiction efficiency.
- 23 ◆ Enhanced deterrence of illegal cross-border activity.
- 24 ◆ Long-term viability of critical infrastructure.
- 25 ◆ Enhanced safety and security of USBP agents and border communities.
- 26

27 Alternatives

28
29 Two alternatives were considered: Alternative 1: No Action Alternative and Alternative 2:
30 Proposed Action.

31
32 ***Alternative 1: No Action Alternative.*** Under the No Action Alternative, CBP would continue to
33 maintain and repair the existing road segments through CBP’s Comprehensive Tactical
34 Infrastructure Maintenance and Repair Program evaluated in the Environmental Assessment
35 Addressing Proposed Tactical Infrastructure Maintenance and Repair Along the U.S./Mexico
36 International Border in Texas or the Categorical Exclusions available to the Department of
37 Homeland Security. However no drainage improvements, alternative accesses, minor road
38 construction, or major road improvements would be conducted. Existing roads that could
39 continue being repaired under the No Action Alternative are approximately 4,500 feet in length.
40 The No Action Alternative would serve as a baseline against which the impacts of the Proposed
41 Action can be evaluated. The No Action Alternative does not satisfy the purpose and need for the
42 project.

43
44 ***Alternative 2: Proposed Action.*** The Proposed Action Alternative, CBP’s Preferred Alternative,
45 includes the construction of new road segments and the continued maintenance and repair of

Draft Finding of No Significant Impact
Environmental Assessment for the Proposed Construction, Repair, and Maintenance of the Laredo South
All-Weather Road, U.S. Border Patrol, Laredo Sector, Laredo, Texas

1 existing and new road segments. In addition CBP would add drainage improvements to allow for
2 better all-weather use of road and prevent accelerated road deterioration due to water damage
3 from heavy rain or flooding.

4
5 This alternative includes upgrading the road to CBP standard Road Specifications. The Proposed
6 Action includes entrances to the Laredo South All-Weather Road from the southern terminus of
7 Marcella Avenue, south of Guatamozin Street, and from Market Street via the existing access
8 road to the City Wastewater Treatment Plant (a/k/a Springfield Avenue) to its intersection with
9 Jameson Street on the eastern end. In addition, temporary construction access is planned across
10 the adjacent railroad yard via Market Street and other existing public streets. This alternative
11 would include installing culverts as a bridge across an unnamed arroyo that empties into Zacata
12 Creek and three other culverts and/or low water crossings. The alternative would involve
13 clearing and grubbing as required to expand the width of the existing roadway to a full 20 feet
14 plus 2 feet on each side to create usable shoulders. Clearing and grubbing would be completed
15 with side boom mowers, rotary tillers, and/or bladed excavation equipment (e.g., bulldozer,
16 bucket loader). Culverts, low water crossings, and drainage structures would then be installed in
17 accordance with approved highway engineering practices. The roadway would then be surfaced
18 by hauling, placing, and compacting soil and gravel bases to the required bearing capacity
19 needed to support expected traffic loads.

20
21 **Public Involvement**

22
23 CBP consulted and coordinated with Federal, state, and local agencies during the preparation of
24 the EA. Copies of this correspondence are provided in Chapter 6 of the EA and include formal
25 and informal coordination conducted with the following agencies:

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|----|----------------------------------|----|---------------------------------|
| 26 | | 33 | |
| 27 | Federal Agencies: | 34 | Native American Tribes: |
| 28 | • U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service | 35 | • Alabama-Quassarte Tribal Town |
| 29 | | 36 | • Apache Tribe of Oklahoma |
| 30 | State Agencies: | 37 | • Comanche Nation of Oklahoma |
| 31 | • Texas Historical Commission | 38 | • Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana |
| 32 | | 39 | • Quawpaw Tribe of Oklahoma |
| | | 40 | • Thlopthloco Tribal Town |
| | | 41 | • Tonkawa Tribe of Oklahoma |
| | | 42 | • Wichita and Affiliated Tribes |
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44
45 A Notice of Availability (NOA) for the draft EA and FONSI, in both English and Spanish, was
46 published in representative newspapers of local and regional distribution. This was done to
47 solicit comments on the Proposed Action and No Action Alternative and involve the local
48 community in the decision-making process. Substantive comments from the public and other
49 Federal, state, and local agencies were considered and incorporated into the Final EA.

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2 During the 45-day public review and comment period for the Draft EA and draft FONSI, CBP
3 accepted comment submissions by email, through the project-specific Web site, and by mail
4 from the public; Federal and state agencies; Federal, state, and local elected officials; stakeholder
5 organizations; and businesses.

6 7 **Environmental Consequences**

8
9 CBP prepared a Biological Assessment (BA) in accordance with the legal requirements set forth
10 under regulations implementing Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (50 Code of Federal
11 Regulations [CFR] 402; 16 United States Code [U.S.C.] 1536[c]). The purpose of this BA was to
12 review the Proposed Action in sufficient detail to determine if it could affect any federally
13 threatened or endangered species or their critical habitat.

14
15 CBP obtained a list of federally listed species from the USFWS online database of threatened,
16 endangered, and proposed species that occur within Webb County. CBP determined that 5
17 federally-listed species and one candidate species are known to occur within or near the action
18 area.

19
20 Best Management Practices (BMPs) would be implemented to avoid or minimize impacts on
21 federally-listed species and will also apply to state species of concern.

22
23 Based on the description of the Proposed Action, the descriptions of the 6 species and their
24 habitat, the environmental baseline, the evaluation of potential effects of the Proposed Action,
25 and BMPs developed to avoid or minimize impacts, CBP concluded that implementation of the
26 Proposed Action is not likely to adversely affect the 6 species considered in the BA, or any
27 designated critical habitat of those species.

28
29 BMPs were also developed for the following resource areas:

- 30 • Migratory Birds
- 31 • Wildlife
- 32 • Vegetation
- 33 • Land Use
- 34 • Water Resources
- 35 • Air Quality
- 36 • Geology and Soil Resources
- 37 • Noise
- 38 • Cultural Resources
- 39 • Roadways and Traffic
- 40 • Hazardous Materials and Waste Management.

41
42 A complete detailed description of BMPs can be found in Appendix B of the EA and are
43 incorporated here by reference.

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Draft Finding of No Significant Impact
 Environmental Assessment for the Proposed Construction, Repair, and Maintenance of the Laredo South
 All-Weather Road, U.S. Border Patrol, Laredo Sector, Laredo, Texas

1 Impacts on the previously listed resources under the Proposed Action and No Action Alternative
 2 are listed below in **Table 1**.
 3

Resource Area		Alternative 1: No Action	Alternative 2: Proposed Action
Geology/ soils	Soil	Short-term: Minor, direct and indirect, adverse impacts on soils.	Short-term: Minor, direct and indirect adverse effects on soils.
		Long-term: Minor, direct and indirect, adverse impacts on soils.	Long-term: Minor, direct and indirect adverse effects on soils.
	Prime farmland	Short-term: no impact.	Short-term: no impact.
		Long-term: no impact.	Long-term: no impact.
	Seismic activity	Short-term: no impact.	Short-term: no impact.
		Long-term: Minor adverse impact	Long-term: Minor beneficial direct impact.
	Geology	Short-term: no impact.	Short-term: Localized, minor, adverse effects that are localized to the areas where ground disturbance has occurred.
		Long-term: no impact.	Long-term: Localized minor beneficial effects from stabilization of roadways and drainage structures.
Vegetation		Short-term: Minor to moderate, direct and indirect, adverse effects.	Short-term: Minor direct adverse impacts would be minimized through the use of appropriate best management practices.
		Long-term: Minor to moderate, direct and indirect, adverse effects.	Long-term: Minor beneficial direct impact.
Threatened and endangered species	All species	Short-term: No impact.	Short-term: CBP concludes this project is unlikely to adversely affect the six species considered in this EA.
		Long-term: No impact.	Long-term: CBP concludes this project is unlikely to adversely affect the six species considered in this EA.
	Plant species	Short-term: No impact.	Short-term: Potentially negligible direct adverse impacts.
		Long-term: No impact.	Long-term: Potentially negligible direct adverse impacts.
	Bird species	Short-term: No impact.	Short-term: Insignificant direct impact.
		Long-term: No impact.	Long-term: Insignificant direct impact.
	Mollusk species	Short-term: No impact.	Short-term: Unlikely to adversely effect.
		Long-term: No impact.	Long-term: Negligible, insignificant direct impacts.
	Cat species	Short-term: No impact.	Short-term: Insignificant to negligible adverse direct effects
		Long-term: No impact.	Long-term: Insignificant to negligible adverse direct effects

Draft Finding of No Significant Impact
Environmental Assessment for the Proposed Construction, Repair, and Maintenance of the Laredo South
All-Weather Road, U.S. Border Patrol, Laredo Sector, Laredo, Texas

Resource Area		Alternative 1: No Action	Alternative 2: Proposed Action
Water resources	Hydrology and groundwater	Short-term: No impact.	Short-term: Minor direct adverse impacts would be minimized through the use of appropriate best management practices (BMPs).
		Long-term: No impact.	Long-term: Negligible, unlikely to adversely effect.
	Floodplains	Short-term: No impact.	Short-term: Minor direct adverse impacts would be minimized through the use of appropriate BMPs.
		Long-term: No impact.	Long-term: Negligible, unlikely to adversely effect.
Air quality		Short-term: No impact.	Short-term: Negligible adverse localized short-term impacts.
		Long-term: Negligible adverse localized impacts.	Long-term: Moderate beneficial impact.
Noise		Short-term: Negligible to minor adverse impacts.	Short-term: Negligible to minor adverse impacts.
		Long-term: Negligible to minor adverse impacts.	Long-term: Long-term, periodic, and negligible to minor, adverse effects on the ambient noise environment.
Cultural resources		Short-term: No impact.	Short-term: No impact.
		Long-term: No impact.	Long-term: No impact.
Roadways and traffic		Short-term: No impact.	Short-term: Short-term, negligible to minor, adverse effects on transportation.
		Long-term: Minor to moderate adverse impacts.	Long-term: Long-term, minor to moderate, beneficial effects on transportation.
Hazardous materials and waste management		Short-term: No impact.	Short-term: Negligible to minor adverse impacts.
		Long-term: No impact.	Long-term: Negligible to minor, adverse impacts.

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Environmental Assessment for the Proposed Construction, Repair, and Maintenance of the Laredo South
All-Weather Road, U.S. Border Patrol, Laredo Sector, Laredo, Texas

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Finding

Based on the results of the EA and the environmental design measures to be implemented the Proposed Action, CBP’s Preferred Alternative, is not expected to have a significant effect on the environment. There, no additional environmental documentation under NEPA is warranted, and the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

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