



## **2020 PROJECT REPORT**

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**December 18, 2020**

### **Background -**

The Webb County City of Laredo Regional Mobility Authority (WCCL RMA) was formally petitioned jointly by Webb County and the City of Laredo to the Texas Transportation Commission for its formation on April 15, 2013 (City of Laredo) and August 18, 2013 (Webb County). The Texas Transportation Commission approved the creation of the WCCL RMA on February 27, 2014.

The WCCL RMA is unique in Texas as it is the only RMA that was jointly formed by both a City and a County. The WCCL RMA Board of Directors consists of nine (9) members. Four members of the Board of Directors are jointly selected by City Council Districts 1 and 2, Districts 3 and 4, District 5 and 6 and Districts 7 and 8. Four members of the Board of Directors are individually selected by members of Commissioners Court from each of the four precincts. The ninth member is the Chair of the Board of Directors who is directly appointed by the Governor of the State of Texas. Each Director serves as a volunteer and is not compensated for any of his or her time spent in service on the Board of Directors. Furthermore, no Director can have any financial interest that would benefit from the actions of the WCCL RMA.

Since its formation, the RMA Board was entrusted to organize the agency which entailed hiring consultants, developing policy, holding meetings and filing regulatory annual and periodic reports, including the annual audit as required by the City and County.

The single revenue source for the RMA is from the \$10 fee per vehicle registered in Webb County which was approved by the 83<sup>rd</sup> Texas Legislature to fund long-term transportation projects of a regional mobility authority. With these monies, the RMA has been able to perform its role in developing solutions for helping to advance mobility priorities for Webb County and the City of Laredo. It should be noted that, at this time, the RMA does not have any paid employees or facilities from which to conduct its business; however, it does have operating expenses. TxDOT and other entities have provided their facilities and resources for RMA Board meetings.

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic for the majority of 2020, the WCCL RMA has conducted the majority of its day-to-day business virtually via WebEx, Zoom and/or Microsoft Team Meetings. These virtual



meetings consisted of regular Board meetings, project status meetings or coordination meetings with partner agencies such as the TxDOT Laredo District and the City of Laredo.

As of November 30, 2020, the WCCL-RMA has an asset balance of **\$10,228,283.48**.

The current members of the Board of Directors are the following:

1. Chairman of the Board of Directors – Mr. Jed A. Brown
2. County Precinct No. 1 Director – Mr. Jesus D. Romero
3. County Precinct No. 2 Director – Mr. Oscar O. Lopez, Treasurer
4. County Precinct No. 3 Director – Mr. George Beckelhymer
5. County Precinct No. 4 Director – Ms. Viridiana Fernandez
6. City District 1 & 2 Director – Mr. Jose Murillo
7. City District 3 & 4 Director – Alfonso Mendiola
8. City District 5 & 6 Director – Douglas B. Howland, Vice Chair
9. City District 7 & 8 Director – Arturo Dominguez, Secretary

Please note, that starting in January 2021, Mr. Tony Arce will replace Jesus Romero as the Board Member as appointed by the County Commissioner for Precinct 1.



#### What has the WCCL RMA done to date?

- I. *Initial Project - Vallecillo Road, from FM 1472 to the IH-35 Southbound Frontage Road (February 2015 to Present)* - The Laredo MPO Policy Committee requested that the RMA take on this new location roadway in early 2015, to assist in alleviating congestion on FM 1472. Improvements consist of the installation of a 5-lane roadway with curb, sidewalk, lighting and utilities for a total length of 2.75 miles. The project would begin at the eastside of the intersection FM 1472 and Muller Memorial Blvd. and will extend approximately 2.75 miles to the East and terminate at the southbound frontage road of IH 35. The implementation of this project will provide a relief route for egress from the commercial area to IH 35 which will decrease the level of congestion along FM 1472. The implementation of this project will also provide a direct egress route for the Citizens of Laredo living in the La Bota Ranch Subdivision that is located on the west end of Muller Memorial Blvd. This roadway also opens prime property for industrial development and leads to future developments east of IH 35. To date, the WCCL RMA has investigated multiple avenues to develop funding for the implementation of the project through local, state, and federal sources as well as the feasibility of a corridor Transportation Reinvestment Zone (TRZ). The current **total project cost** (including the value of the donated ROW which is roughly \$10 million) for the implementation of Vallecillo Road is **\$41,471,000**. The current **total construction cost** of the project is **\$26,825,000**. Due to the importance of the project to the community, the WCCL RMA, the City of Laredo and local businesses are contributing to implement the project.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. WCCL RMA =                          | \$4,000,000 (9.7% of Total Project Cost)                           |
| 2. City of Laredo =                    | \$5,000,000 (12.1% of Total Project Cost)                          |
| 3. Killam Company (Private Business) = | \$5,000,000 cash + \$10,000,000 land (36.2% of Total Project Cost) |

These commitments have been codified via an Inter Local Agreement between the WCCL RMA and the City of Laredo, executed on September 18, 2020. It has also been codified via a Memorandum of Understanding between the WCCL RMA and the Killam Company, executed on October 2, 2020. The private-public team will be approaching members of the Texas Transportation Commission to request approximately \$17,471,000 which equates to 42.0% of the total project cost in financial assistance from TxDOT to finalize the funding plan for the project and ultimately take ownership of the Corridor. As the project leader, the WCCL RMA will enter into an Advanced Funding Agreement with TxDOT for the funding and ownership component. The WCCL RMA will continue as the lead agency for the



development of the project, complete the development of the project schematic, complete the environmental clearance through an Environmental Assessment with TxDOT and perform the development of the Plans, Specifications and Estimate. TxDOT will take the lead in construction of the project. The WCCL RMA anticipates construction completion in 2025.

As part of the overall development of the project, the RMA implemented both traffic and geotechnical studies in 2020 (Resolution 20-03 and Resolution 20-11).

### Vallecillo Road

NET LENGTH OF PROJECT = 14,918 FT = 2.83 MI  
NET LENGTH OF ROADWAY = 14,918 FT = 2.83 MI

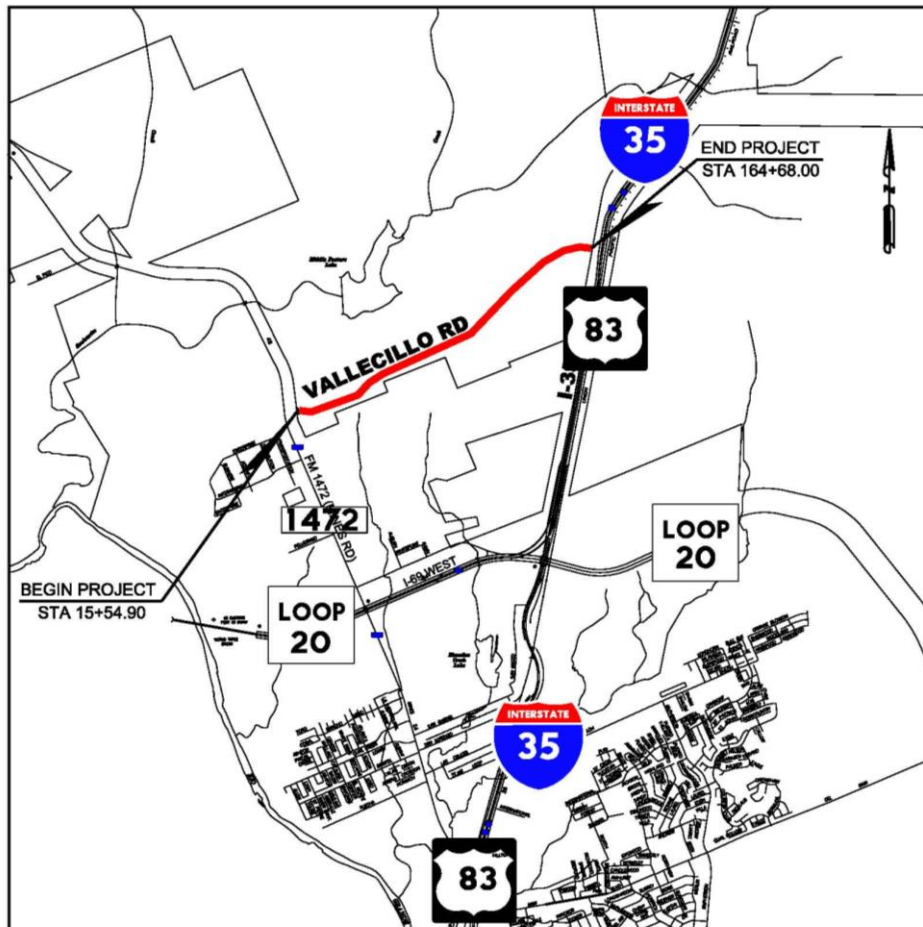


Figure 1 – Location Map



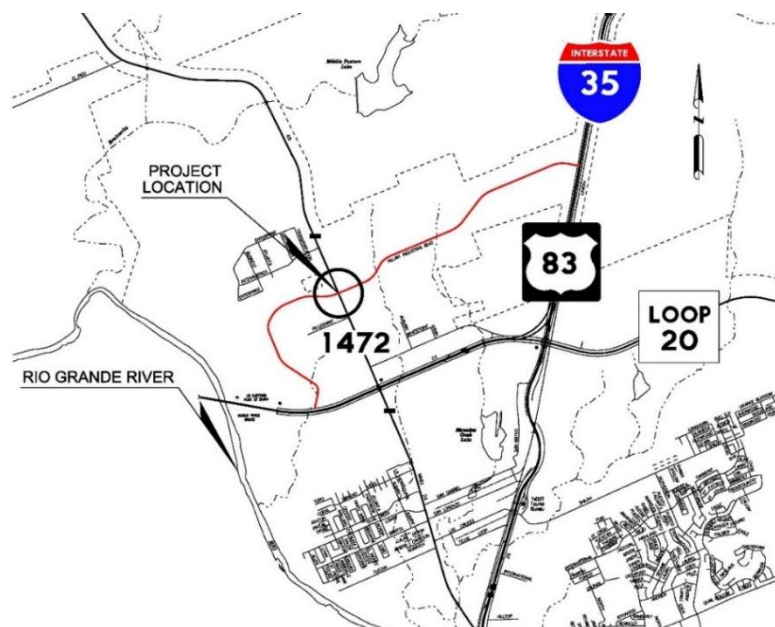
- II. Killam Industrial Blvd and FM 1472 Turn Lane Additions** – RMA developed plans, specifications and estimate for the implementation of proposed right turn lanes on FM 1472 heading northbound approaching Killam Industrial Blvd. and on Killam Industrial Blvd. heading westbound approaching FM 1472. Construction of the project let in November 2020 and is to be constructed by the TxDOT Laredo District. As part of the overall project development, the RMA implemented plans, specifications and estimate development for the relocation of a 12-inch water line as part of the overall project (Resolution 20-04). The RMA also entered into an Advanced Funding Agreement with TxDOT for construction of the project (Resolution 20-07 and Resolution 20-08).

Total cost of the project is \$2,121,568.80. A breakdown of the funding of the project is below:

- |                            |                |
|----------------------------|----------------|
| 1. WC-CL RMA =             | \$861,408.05   |
| 2. City of Laredo =        | \$1,161,158.75 |
| 3. TxDOT Laredo District = | \$99,002.00    |

This project is due to commence construction in **December 2020** and scheduled for completion by **October 2021**.

### Killam Industrial Blvd. Turn Lanes



**Figure 4 – Location Map**



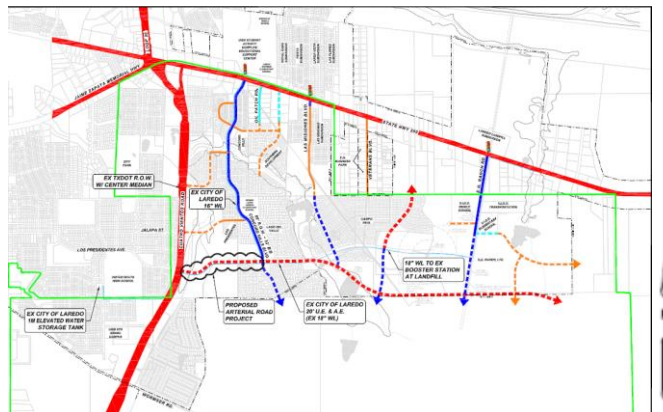


**III. Los Presidentes Phase 1 and Phase 2A from Loop 20 South (Cuatro Vientos) to Brownwood Street** – RMA developed plans, specifications and estimate for the implementation of a new location Modified Major Arterial that will extend East from the intersection of Los Presidentes and Loop 20 South (Cuatro Vientos) for a length of 0.85 miles to the intersection of Los Presidentes and Brownwood Street in 2020. Construction of the project let in November 2020 and will be constructed in 2021, overseen by the City of Laredo. The project will also include an acceleration and deceleration lane on Loop 20 South (Cuatro Vientos). This portion of the project will be let for construction by the TxDOT Laredo District in October 2021. Construction of the TxDOT portion of the project will be constructed in 2022. Completion of the construction of the City of Laredo portion of Los Presidentes will occur in 2022. Originally, the project only consisted of the portion from Cuatro Vientos to Concord Hills, known as Phase 1. The RMA implemented additional project development efforts to extend the limits of the project from Concord Hills to Brownwood Street as part of the overall construction advertisement (Resolution 20-13, Resolution 20-20, Resolution 20-21 and Resolution 20-22). The extension is known as Phase 2A. Total cost of the project is \$5,736,625.00. A breakdown of the funding of the project is below:

1. WC-CL RMA =	\$1,893,000.00
2. City of Laredo =	\$2,429,000.00
3. Webb County Drainage District No. 1 =	\$770,000.00
4. TxDOT =	\$644,625.00

This project is due to commence construction in **March 2021** and scheduled for completion by **August 2022**.

### Los Presidentes



**Figure 3 – Location Map**



**IV. North Laredo Webb County Transportation Planning Study** - The RMA completed a long-term transportation study for mobility improvements in North Webb County from Loop 20 to Camino Columbia along FM 1472 in order to remove the current and future congestion on FM 1472 in 2020. The Study provided a clear assessment of mobility conditions in North Laredo and to provide a roadmap for growing the transportation network that can meet increasing mobility demands into the future. The goals of the study were to:

- Identify feasible projects that will help relieve congestion impacts in North Laredo
- Promote safety for all uses of the transportation network.
- Coordinate implementation and planning efforts comprehensively with International Bridge, Port-of-Entry logistics and the Freight Network.
- Coordinate private land development and public investments in mobility infrastructure
- Promote efficient movement of goods while reducing impacts of freight operations on neighborhoods and sensitive land.
- Improve overall transportation network connectivity and resiliency in North Laredo.

The study process included public input in the form of stakeholder meetings and public meetings, planning and engineering to define and evaluate transportation solutions for the development of an ultimate implementation plan that will have a list of project priorities for the community to program and execute over the next 20 years. Total estimated cost of the Study was \$634,421. Funding for the study consisted of both federal and local vehicle registration fees monies. Eighty percent of the study was funded by the Coordinated Border Infrastructure (CBI) money which is federal money that is supervised by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT). The remaining twenty percent was funded by the Webb County Vehicle Registration Fees which supervised by the WC-CL RMA. Below was a breakdown of the funding for the study:

1. TxDOT = \$507,538.80
2. WC-CL RMA = \$126,884.20

At the completion of the study, the study was forwarded to the Laredo MPO Executive Director and staff, the TxDOT Laredo District, the City of Laredo City Engineer, the Webb County Engineer, the Honorable Mayor Pete Saenz, the Honorable Council Member George Altgelt, the Honorable Judge Tano Tijerina, the Honorable Commissioner Cindy Liendo, the Honorable State Representative Richard Raymond, the Honorable State Representative Tracey King, the Honorable State Senator Judith Zaffirini and the Honorable Congressman Henry Cuellar.



## North Laredo Webb County Transportation Planning Study

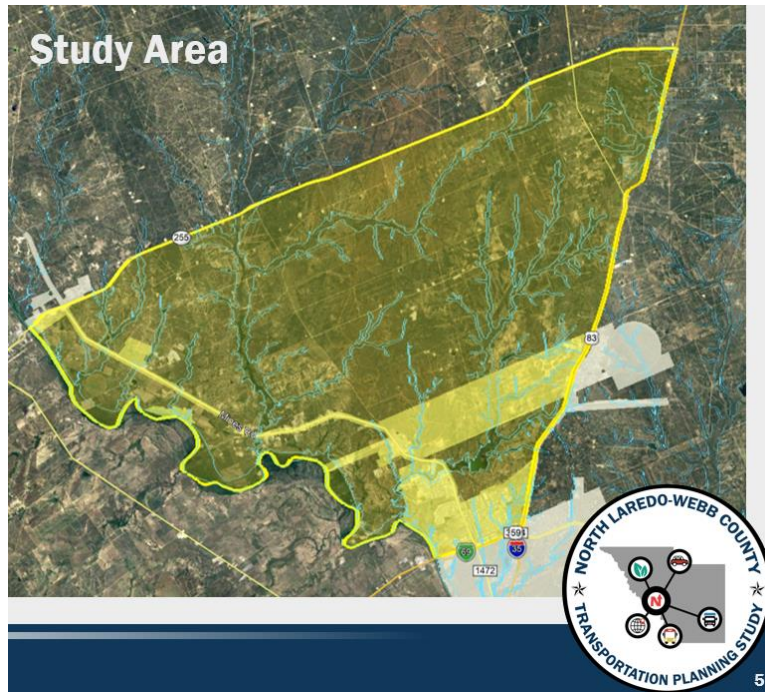


Figure 2 – Study Area





- V. **Springfield Road Extension Project** – RMA passed a resolution (Resolution 20-12) to provide financial support to the City of Laredo in the development and implementation of extending and inter-connecting Springfield Road in north Laredo from Del Mar to US 59 in July 2020. The RMA will enter into an Inter-Local Agreement with the City of Laredo to provide up to \$2,000,000 for the construction of the project.

### Springfield Road Extension

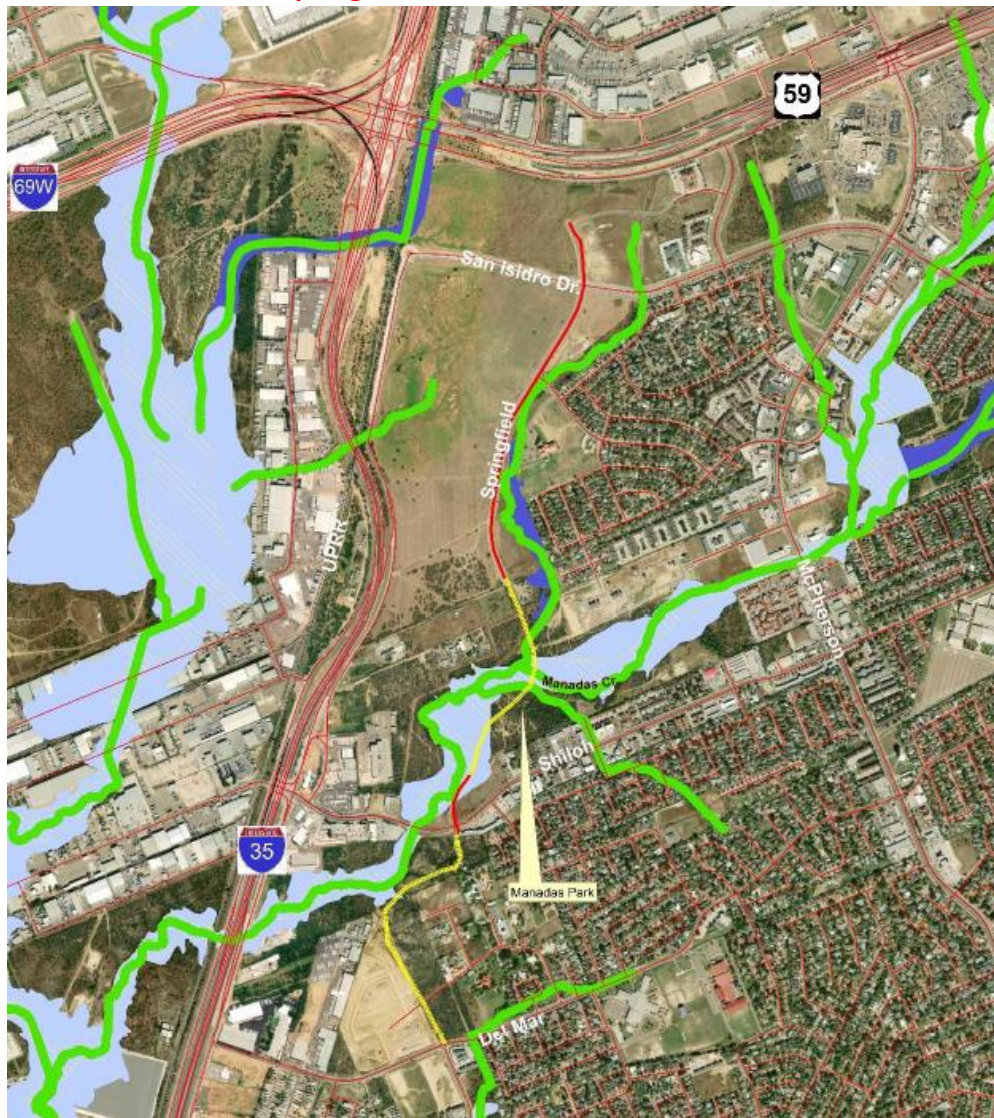


Figure 5 – Location Map



- VI. **Webb County Fairgrounds (Life Downs) Master Plan Traffic Study** – RMA passed a resolution (Resolution 20-14) to support Webb County in developing a traffic study to forecast the traffic impacts of the proposed improvements from the recently developed master plan and provide recommendations of traffic operation improvements in the surrounding roadway facilities to mitigate the increase in traffic.

### Life Downs Fairgrounds Traffic Study



Figure 6 – Location Map





**VII. *IH 69 W Improvements (Upgrade US 59 to Interstate Standards from International Blvd. to Business 59, to Duval County Line and ultimately to Houston, TX.)***

This is a Priority Project for the RMA and one of the main reasons for the formation of the RMA. The Corridor is a designated major truck route that provides connectivity between the World Trade Bridge, US 83 and the future I-69W Corridor to Corpus Christi, as well as rail and freight handling facilities on the north and east sides of Laredo. The City of Laredo is arguably the main land port of commerce in the United States with Mexico via the World Trade Bridge with over 15,000 trucks crossing daily millions of dollars of economic value are lost for every minute of delay in Truck traffic. Congestion and other delays associated with traveling this corridor have a direct and indirect impact on jobs in Texas, in the U.S. and in North America. For these reasons, IH 69W is a priority to the WCCL RMA, the City of Laredo, Webb County, the Laredo MPO and the TxDOT Laredo District. As part of the overall effort to improve IH 69W, the RMA GEC has regular representation at the Alliance for I-69 Texas meetings. The Alliance is a coalition made up of cities, counties, port authorities and community leaders building grassroots support for upgrading the entire Interstate 69 route in Texas.

In addition to working with the Alliance to advocate policy makers for the improvement of IH 69W, the RMA developed a financial plan to improve a segment of the Corridor from International Blvd. to US 59 to interstate standards via Design Build with Finance. The financial plan determined that the use of TRZ from IH 35 to US 59 coupled with current funds projected to be dedicated to the Laredo Community from federal and state sources could advance the project for completion within five years. To that end, the RMA conducted an industry review workshop with prospective design build developers to gauge the level of interest from the developer community and followed-up the industry review workshop with a series of one-on-one meetings with prospective design build developers.

Apart from the Design Build with Finance approach, the City of Laredo, Webb County, TxDOT Laredo District and Laredo MPO is focusing on implementing this section of the Corridor via the Design-Bid-Build approach. As part of this effort, the Laredo MPO has programmed Category 2, 10 and 12 funding for construction letting in 2021, 2022 and 2023, and the TxDOT Laredo District has contracted multiple consultants for the development of plans, specifications and estimates for the full ultimate corridor improvements (main lanes and frontage roads). To support this effort, the WCCL RMA submitted a grant application 2016 via the FASTLANE Act and provided grant application services to the City of Laredo and TxDOT to obtain a \$42 million INFRA Grant in 2019 from the Federal Highway Administration.



IH 69-W

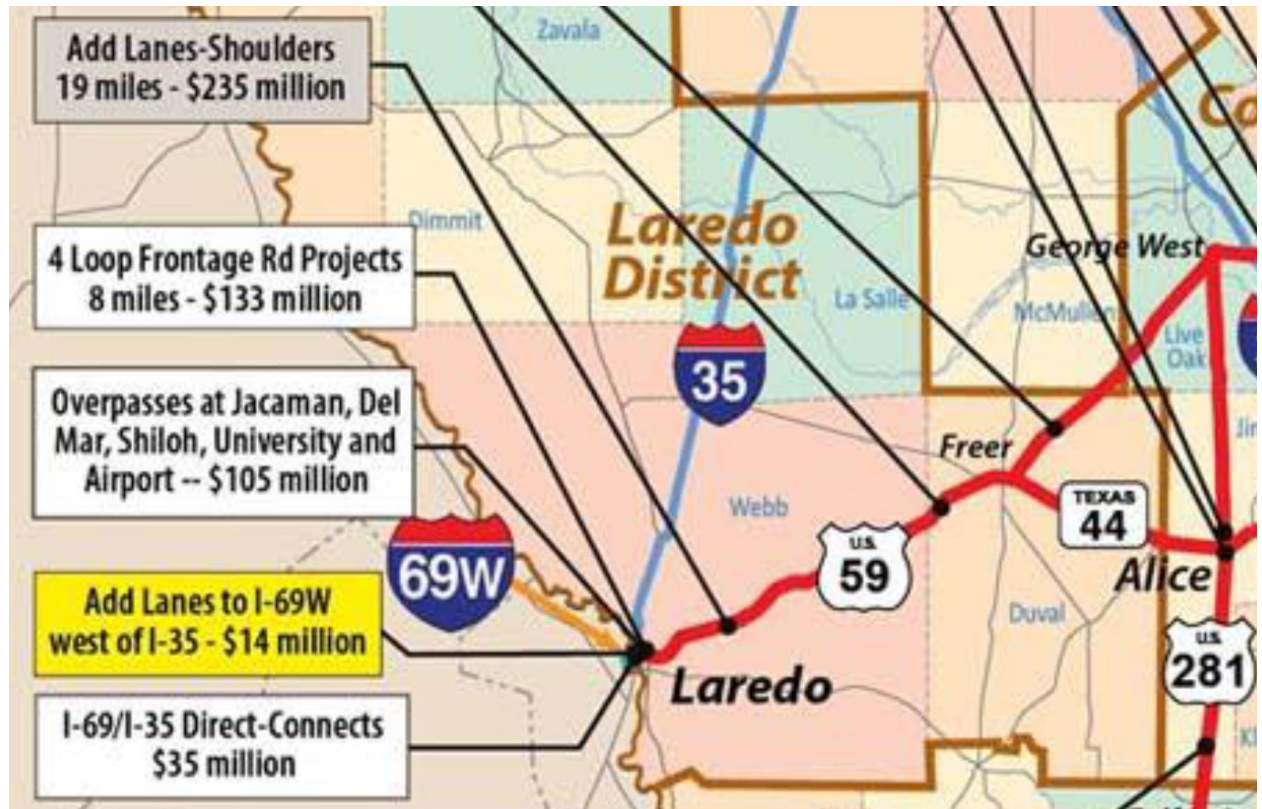


Figure 7 – Location Map



**VIII. Transportation Reinvestment Zone Studies (TRZ)** – The RMA has performed the following TRZ efforts to date:

- In its efforts to advance the Vallecillo Road Project and the Loop 20 Project, the RMA commissioned its GEC to perform TRZ Feasibility Studies for the advancement of Vallecillo Road.
- The RMA commissioned its GEC to perform a Countywide TRZ Study for the advancement of all road projects in the Webb County area.
- In 2018, the RMA commissioned its GEC to perform a TRZ Study for the advancement of Loop 20 South from US 59 to US 83 to upgrade the existing rural divided facility to a controlled access freeway facility with a direct connection to the future Port of Entry, International Bridge 5.
- Upon final concurrence by the City of Laredo, the RMA will work with the City of Laredo to develop a defined zone for Loop 20 South from US 59 to US 83. The Zone could also be extended along SH 359, westward from Loop 20.

**IX. WCCL RMA Plans for 2022 and Beyond**

- A. International Bridge 4-5
- B. Loop 20 (Cuatro Vientos)
  - 1. Southern Extension from Mangana Hein Road to US 83
  - 2. Loop 20 Overpasses from SH 359 to US 83
  - 3. Extend Loop 20 (Cuatro Vientos) South of US 83 to intersect with the Future Outer Loop and Ultimately the International Bridge 4/5.
- C. FM 1472 (Mines Road)
  - 1. Mines Road – Superstreet Improvements
  - 2. FM 3338 Improvements and connections to FM 1472 and SH255
  - 3. Extension of Mines Road to Eagle Pass
- D. Hachar Road
  - 1. Hachar Rd. Direct connectors: North bound FM 1472 to East bound Hachar Rd, South bound FM1472 to East Bound Hachar
- E. Vallecillo Road
  - 1. Vallecillo overpass at Vallecillo Rd and IH35
  - 2. Vallecillo Direct connectors/ Overpass with dedicated right turn lanes
    - North bound FM 1472 to East bound Vallecillo
    - South bound/ Overpass with dedicated left turn lanes from FM1472 to East Bound Vallecillo





3. Vallecillo Loop from IH 35 to SH59 - Possible expressway/ freeway section (main lanes and frontage roads)
- F. River Bend Road from Aquero Rd to FM 1472
- G. Outer Loop - Construction of the Outer Loop, from US 83 in southern Webb County to Camino Colombia north of Laredo with priority emphasis on the segment from Hwy 59 to Hwy 359.
- H. International Bridge 5/6 between existing Columbia and WTB Bridges
- I. Rail Improvements
  1. New International Rail line aligned crossing Bridge 4/5 and aligned with Outer Loop (East Rail By-Pass)
  2. Improvements to existing at grade crossings and potential future route for hyperloop/express rail for passenger/light freight
- J. Ports to Plains
  1. Improvements (widening) to Hwy 83 to Eagle Pass & Del Rio and to I27
  2. Connectors/interchanges at SH255 and Hwy 83
- K. Bridge Operations
  1. Increase use of automation and dynamic scanning to increase freight movement
  2. Best practices at ports should be shared with others
- L. Technology
  1. Lanes dedicated to autonomous vehicles
  2. Integration of 5G network (or newer) with autonomous vehicles and traffic signalization

In summary, the RMA has historically been utilized by communities in different ways. Due to the vast powers of the RMA, it has been used as a vehicle for the development of toll roads, to pool the tax bases of multiple pre-dominantly low moderate-income Counties to apply for a State Infrastructure Bank Loan, to develop multi-modal solutions for communities, etc. Here in Laredo, the RMA can utilize its funding sources to perform studies to help develop new funding sources for transportation, team with its partner agencies to advance local projects that improve mobility, work to develop projects and make them shovel ready for future funding from the state and federal sources, and can act as bridge in project delivery between the County, the City, TxDOT, Mexico, etc. How it is utilized is at the behest of the leaders of our community.