



CARLOS H. CASCOS, CPA
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COUNTY JUDGE MEETS WITH OFFICIALS ON STIMULUS PACKAGE

County Judge Carlos H. Cascos, returned from Washington where he met with Chairman James Oberstar of the House Transportation Committee to discuss important transportation and infrastructure projects in South Texas. Cascos, who was invited by Congressman Solomon P. Ortiz to this important meeting, was accompanied by County Commissioner Edna Tamayo and Cameron County Regional Mobility Authority Chairman David E. Alex.

“The U.S. Congress is currently working on an economic stimulus package and there is funding that will be allocated to the Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT) to use on projects that are commonly referred to as “shovel ready”, Cascos indicated. TXDOT has identified a multitude of projects in Cameron County that can get started immediately.” As it currently stands under the stimulus package, TXDOT will be the agency responsible for ensuring that any funding for transportation improvements is directed to those projects that are ready-to-go statewide.

Under the current funding scenario TXDOT and the area MPO’s identified and submitted projects to the appropriate officials in Washington, D.C. In Cameron County this represents approximately \$64 million dollars worth of new construction and improvements to the area. “I am extremely pleased at the amount of projects that we have ready to let in Cameron County, Judge Cascos stated.” Among the projects identified were the North Rail (Harlingen) and West Rail (Brownsville) projects. In addition, Primera Rd. (Primera/Harlingen), F.M. 732 (San Benito area), F.M. 509 (San Benito/Harlingen area), F.M. 106 leading to the Laguna Madre area, Dixieland Road Extension in Harlingen, as well as several flood control projects along F.M. 506 from La Feria to Santa Rosa and F.M. 800/Bass Blvd.

“These flood control projects are ones that we helped identify after the storms this past summer, Commissioner Tamayo stated. I am appreciative of TXDOT’s decision to include these drainage projects in this package. However, there are many projects still pending that we will continue to pursue in this stimulus and in other future legislative proposals.” The group also met with Senator Cornyn and staff to Senator Hutchison to express their strong interest on the priorities of Cameron County.

Additionally, the group continued to discuss the crucial importance of U.S. 77 upgrade to Interstate standards and the eventual designation of an Interstate to the Lower Rio Grande Valley connecting via I-37 at Corpus Christi to Brownsville. “All of the officials we met with agreed that the U.S. 77 corridor was further along in the process and its eventual development would lead to the build out of other future components of I-69”, Cascos emphasized. “We will continue to work with officials at the federal and state level to ensure this project which is important to many of us in South Texas remains a priority”.

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TXDOT/MPO Funding Priority Projects for Cameron County in Stimulus Package

FM 732 (BUS 77 to US 77/83; 1057-02-023) -	\$2.3 million
FM 732 (US 77/83 South; 1057-02-021) -	\$3.7 million
Dixieland Rd. Extension (0921-06-185) -	\$5.3 million
FM 106 – General Brandt rd. (2243-1-009) -	\$12.6 million
West Rail (0921106073) -	\$8 million
FM 509 (0.23 mi. N. of Bus 77 to FM 106; 236901016) -	\$8 million
FM 1479 (142504020; widen to 4 lanes at 1.06 mi. S of US 77 to Thieme Rd.) -	\$2.5 million
Primera Rd. (Stuart Pl Rd to US 77; 092106187) -	\$6.1 million
FM 800 (reconstruct 0.1 mi of Trimpe Lane to FM 3067; 113602025) -	\$4 million
FM 800 (reconstruct 113602040) -	\$925,000
FM 506 (address flooding – 087204025) -	\$770,000
North Rail -	\$5 million
Causeway PR 100 (033104053; Paint Bridge) -	\$3.9 million
Causeway PR 100 (033104062, Replace Light Poles and Fixtures) -	\$600,000
Total =	\$63.6 million