



July 2019

# BORDER INFRASTRUCTURE

## Actions Needed to Improve Information on Facilities and Capital Planning at Land Border Crossings

Accessible Version

# GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-19-534](#), a report to congressional requesters

View [GAO-19-534](#). For more information, contact Rebecca Gambler at (202) 512-8777 or [gambler@gao.gov](mailto:gambler@gao.gov).

## Why GAO Did This Study

CBP and GSA own, lease, or manage all of the nation's 167 land border crossings. CBP facilitates trade and travel at these crossings and has identified significant capital investment needs at these facilities.

GAO was asked to review land border crossing infrastructure. This report examines (1) infrastructure constraints CBP faces and the extent CBP and GSA have information on infrastructure condition, (2) the extent CBP prioritizes capital projects and (3) the extent recent GSA capital projects met cost, schedule, and scope goals and challenges CBP and GSA reported.

GAO analyzed land border crossing data and documentation, including CBP and GSA facility assessments, CBP capital investment plans for fiscal years 2014 through 2018, and data for GSA capital infrastructure projects active during those years. GAO also interviewed officials from CBP field offices that oversee all crossings about infrastructure constraints and visited 16 crossings selected based on high traffic volume and border crossings CBP has prioritized for infrastructure improvement.

## What GAO Recommends

GAO is making seven recommendations, including that CBP develop a plan to ensure it conducts facility condition assessments consistent with DHS policy; that CBP and GSA share and use each other's information on facility conditions at land border crossings; and that CBP establish review timeframes for its capital investment plan.

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## What GAO Found

The Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) reported infrastructure constraints at land border crossings including limited inspection capacity, technology challenges, and security limitations. However, CBP does not have complete information on infrastructure conditions at all land border crossings. Specifically, CBP assessed facility conditions at four of the 40 land border crossings it owns from 2016 through 2018. Further, CBP has not developed a plan to ensure it conducts such assessments, consistent with DHS policy which calls for them every three years. Developing and implementing a plan to ensure CBP executes its facility condition assessment program would enable CBP to collect more complete and current infrastructure information. In addition, while CBP and the General Services Administration (GSA) both assess facility conditions at 101 GSA-owned land border crossings, they do not consistently share or use each other's information. Doing so could enable CBP and GSA to improve the accuracy and completeness of their respective assessments.

#### Convent Street Land Border Crossing in Laredo, Texas



Source: GAO. | GAO-19-534

CBP prioritizes land border crossing capital projects in a five-year plan, which by statute is to be submitted with DHS's annual budget request to Congress. In fiscal years 2014 through 2018, CBP submitted two plans on time, submitted two plans more than 100 days after submission of the budget request, and did not submit a plan in one year due to delays in the plan's review and approval process. By establishing timeframes for the review process, CBP would be better positioned to identify and address sources of delay in the review process, and improve its ability to meet statutory reporting requirements by including its five-year plan with its annual budget submission to Congress.

The 10 completed or ongoing GSA land border crossing capital projects in fiscal years 2014 through 2018 generally experienced schedule growth ranging from 0 to 59 percent, but stayed within a 10 percent cost contingency allowance. Circumstances contributing to increased project costs or schedule growth include funding lags between project design and construction, and CBP-requested changes during construction to meet evolving mission needs, according to GSA and CBP officials.

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#### Abbreviations

CBP	U.S. Customs and Border Protection
DHS	U.S. Department of Homeland Security
FCA	Facility Condition Assessment
GSA	U.S. General Services Administration
NII	Non-intrusive Inspection
OFAM	Office of Facilities and Asset Management
OFO	Office of Field Operations
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
RFID	Radio Frequency Identification
SRA	Strategic Resource Assessment

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July 11, 2019

The Honorable Bennie Thompson  
Chairman  
Committee on Homeland Security  
House of Representatives

The Honorable Martha McSally  
United States Senate

The Honorable Filemon Vela  
House of Representatives

In 2017, nearly \$721 billion in trade passed through the nation's land border ports of entry, along with over 252 million inbound pedestrian and passenger entries. U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), is the lead federal agency charged with the dual mission of facilitating legitimate trade and travel at our nation's borders while also keeping terrorists and their weapons, criminals and their contraband, and inadmissible individuals out of the country. To fulfill this mission, CBP operates 110 land ports of entry consisting of 167 separate land border crossings and relies on infrastructure, including inspection lanes and technologies, to identify, screen, and inspect persons and cargo while maintaining an efficient stream of cross-border travel and trade.<sup>1</sup>

The General Services Administration (GSA) owns the majority of land border crossings and has responsibilities related to maintenance, capital planning, and construction at these facilities. Since CBP's operations depend on the condition and functionality of infrastructure at land border

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<sup>1</sup>Ports of entry are facilities that provide for the controlled entry into or departure from the United States. Specifically, a port of entry is any officially designated location (seaport, airport, or land border location) where CBP officers clear passengers, merchandise and other items, collect duties, and enforce customs laws; and inspect persons seeking to enter or depart, or applying for admission into, the United States pursuant to U.S. immigration and travel controls. A single land port of entry may be composed of one or more crossings. For example, the Port of Laredo, Texas, headed by a port director, oversees operations at four separate land border crossings. CBP operates a total of 110 land ports of entry along the northern and southern borders consisting of a total of 167 individual land border crossings. Some ports of entry process vehicles arriving by ferry. However, we did not include those facilities in this review.

crossings, GSA works closely with CBP to design, construct, and maintain these land border crossings.

According to CBP, several of the nation's 167 land border crossings were built more than 70 years ago. Even land border crossings constructed as recently as 15 to 20 years ago may require significant capital investment to meet present day security standards and operational requirements, according to CBP. In addition, infrastructure enhancements are critical to facilitate increasing trade and travel at land border crossings. For example, we reported in 2013 that CBP identified the need for additional infrastructure to facilitate legitimate trade and travel—such as additional passenger vehicle and commercial truck lanes—at some land border crossings.<sup>2</sup>

You asked us to review land border crossing infrastructure. This report addresses the following questions:

1. What infrastructure constraints, if any, does CBP face at land border crossings, and to what extent do CBP and GSA have information about the condition of infrastructure at land border crossings?
2. To what extent does CBP prioritize infrastructure projects across land border crossings?
3. To what extent have recently completed or ongoing GSA land border crossing capital projects met cost, schedule, and scope goals, and what challenges, if any, have CBP and GSA reported in developing land border crossing capital projects?

To determine what infrastructure constraints, if any, CBP faces at land border crossings, we visited 16 land border crossings in California, Arizona, Texas, and New York from June to September 2018 to observe and discuss infrastructure constraints identified by local CBP officers.<sup>3</sup> We selected these locations based on a variety of factors, including high traffic volume; the presence of passenger vehicle, pedestrian, and

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<sup>2</sup>GAO, *U.S.-MEXICO BORDER: CBP Action Needed to Improve Wait Time Data and Measure Outcomes of Trade Facilitation Efforts*, [GAO-13-603](#) (Washington, D.C.: July 24, 2013).

<sup>3</sup>We visited the land border crossings at San Ysidro, Otay Mesa, Laredo Convent Street Bridge, Laredo Lincoln-Juarez Bridge, Laredo World Trade Bridge, and Laredo Columbia Solidarity Bridge, Alexandria Bay, Buffalo Peace Bridge, Niagara Falls Rainbow Bridge, Niagara Falls Whirlpool Bridge, Niagara Falls Lewistown-Queenston Bridge, Calexico West, Calexico East, Andrade, San Luis, and San Luis II.

commercial vehicle processing capabilities; and border crossings that CBP has prioritized for infrastructure improvement within the next five years, among others. We also interviewed officials from the nine CBP Office of Field Operations (OFO) field offices that oversee CBP operations at all 167 land border crossings to discuss infrastructure constraints at the land border crossings they oversee. The results of our site visits cannot be generalized more broadly to all land border crossings. However, they provide important context and insights into the infrastructure constraints CBP faces at such locations.

To determine the extent to which CBP and GSA have information about the condition of infrastructure at land border crossings, we analyzed all CBP Facility Condition Assessments (FCA) and GSA Building Engineering Reviews conducted from 2016 through 2018. We assessed CBP's processes for conducting FCAs against a DHS Directive on the Department's Real Property Management Program to determine the extent to which CBP conducts FCAs in compliance with DHS policy. We also interviewed officials within CBP and GSA who are knowledgeable about each agency's processes to collect information on the condition of infrastructure at land border crossings. We assessed CBP and GSA's processes for sharing and leveraging information on infrastructure condition against key practices for collaboration among federal agencies.<sup>4</sup> We also reviewed system documentation and interviewed officials from CBP's Office of Facilities and Asset Management (OFAM) knowledgeable about TRIRIGA—CBP's real property management system—to determine the extent to which TRIRIGA effectively maintains information on infrastructure condition.<sup>5</sup>

To identify the extent to which CBP prioritizes land border crossing projects, we analyzed CBP's five-year land port of entry capital investment plans for fiscal years 2014 through 2018. These five-year plans include a rank ordered list of land border crossing capital projects—those estimated to cost \$3.1 million or more—and describe a high-level

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<sup>4</sup>GAO, *Results-Oriented Government: Practices That Can Help Enhance and Sustain Collaboration among Federal Agencies*, [GAO-06-15](#) (Washington, D.C.: October 21, 2005). In this prior report, we reviewed academic literature and GAO and Congressional Research Service reports, and interviewed experts in coordination, collaboration, and partnerships to identify key practices that can help facilitate collaboration.

<sup>5</sup>TRIRIGA (not an acronym) is IBM software that CBP uses to manage assets in its real property portfolio.

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process for prioritizing projects.<sup>6</sup> To determine the extent to which CBP adhered to this process to develop each five-year plan, we analyzed supporting documentation. These supporting documents included operational data from CBP's strategic resource assessments and feasibility studies that establish the feasibility, risk, and cost of prospective land border crossing projects, among others. We also interviewed officials from CBP OFAM to discuss its adherence to this process, the extent to which it has established a methodology for executing it, and whether it has formally documented such a methodology and assessed CBP's efforts to do so against *Standards for Internal Controls in the Federal Government*.<sup>7</sup> We also analyzed CBP's five-year plans for fiscal years 2014 through 2018 to determine whether CBP met statutory reporting requirements by completing and submitting each five-year plan with its annual budget request to Congress.

To assess the extent to which recent GSA land border crossing capital projects met, or are on track to meet, cost, schedule, and scope goals, we analyzed information for projects that were active—i.e., under construction—during fiscal years 2014 through 2018 and cost \$20 million or more. Specifically, we analyzed project performance data from GSA's Electronic Project Management system, including project cost and schedule baselines and updated cost and schedule performance data as of January 2019. To assess the reliability of these data, we examined the data for obvious errors and discussed the data with GSA project management officials for each of the 10 projects in our scope. We determined the data to be sufficiently reliable for the purposes of assessing project cost and schedule performance. We also reviewed GSA project documents, such as planning studies, funding requests, and progress reports. Further, to describe challenges CBP and GSA have reported facing developing land border crossing capital projects, we conducted interviews with GSA and CBP officials. These officials included GSA headquarters and project management officials, as well as CBP OFO field office officials and local CBP officers. We also conducted site

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<sup>6</sup>CBP defines projects totaling less than \$3.1 million as maintenance and prioritizes these needs through a separate process. For the purposes of this report, we reviewed CBP's prioritization of capital projects and did not examine CBP's process for identifying and prioritizing maintenance at land border crossings or infrastructure projects estimated to cost less than \$3.1 million.

<sup>7</sup>GAO, *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government*, [GAO-14-704G](#) (Washington, D.C.: Sep. 10, 2014)

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visits to land border crossings with recently completed or ongoing capital projects, as discussed above.

We conducted this performance audit from March 2018 to July 2019 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

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## Background

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### Roles and Responsibilities

CBP facilitates trade and travel, and enforces immigration and customs laws at the nation's 167 land border crossings along the northern and southern border. CBP's OFO is responsible for inspecting and processing pedestrians, passengers, cargo, and other items at all land border crossings.<sup>8</sup> OFO has 20 Field Offices nationwide with nine that oversee the operations of all 110 land ports of entry—which may consist of one or more land border crossings—within their designated areas of responsibility. CBP OFAM manages CBP's portfolio of owned and leased real property, including all 167 land border crossings. OFAM is responsible for capital planning at all land border crossings and for prioritizing capital projects across its portfolio based on need.

GSA owns 101 (60 percent) of the 167 land border crossings, partially owns three, and leases 19 (11 percent). CBP owns 40 land border crossings (24 percent) and leases one directly from private owners. The National Park Service owns two and U.S. Forest Service owns one land border crossing.<sup>9</sup> For the 101 land border crossings that GSA owns, it has occupancy agreements with CBP, which is the principal user of the facilities. GSA has responsibilities related to capital planning and

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<sup>8</sup>See 6 U.S.C. § 211(g) (establishing, and listing duties of, Office of Field Operations, within U.S. Customs and Border Protection); 8 U.S.C. §§ 1185 (U.S. travel controls), 1225 (immigration inspections of applicants for admission); 19 U.S.C. §§ 1461, 1467 (customs inspections of persons, merchandise and baggage).

<sup>9</sup>Land border crossings owned by the National Park Service and U.S. Forest Service fall under the jurisdiction and control of the Department of Homeland Security.

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construction at all 101 GSA-owned land border crossings. Since CBP's operations depend heavily on the condition and functionality of infrastructure at land border crossings, GSA works closely with OFAM to plan, design, construct, and implement capital infrastructure improvements to accommodate ever-growing trade and travel at land border crossings.

GSA-owned and leased land border crossings consist of large, medium, and small crossings along the northern and southern border. Land border crossings owned by other federal agencies—including CBP—tend to be small by comparison and are typically situated in remote locations along the northern border. See appendix I for more information on the nation's portfolio of land border crossings.

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## Infrastructure at U.S. Land Border Crossings

Of the 167 land border crossings at which CBP operates, 120 are located along the northern border and 47 are located along the southern border. Land border crossings vary across the northern and southern border, but are generally designed to process some combination of pedestrian, passenger vehicle, and commercial traffic with separate facilities for each mode. Infrastructure and layout at each land border crossing may vary depending on a variety of factors including the modes of traffic CBP processes at that location, traffic volume, local climate, and area-specific threats, among others. Many large land border crossings, including GSA's Otay Mesa land border crossing in California, are designed to process pedestrians, passenger vehicles, and commercial traffic and are equipped with distinct infrastructure for each mode of traffic. Other land border crossings are designed to process a single mode of traffic, such as San Luis II in Arizona, which processes only commercial trucks. In general, CBP's inspection process at land border crossings follows a standard sequence that includes separate areas designated for preprimary inspection, primary inspection, and secondary inspection for each mode of traffic and a main building which houses administrative and operational support activities, which we describe below.

**Preprimary inspection:** Upon proceeding to cross the border into the United States, pedestrians and vehicles enter the land border crossing and are directed to preprimary inspection, where initial screening takes place. Depending on availability, CBP may deploy officers with canines to walk among the vehicles in preprimary waiting to reach an inspection booth. Overhead signage may be present to help CBP actively manage



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traffic by directing travelers to different lanes according to the type of travel documents they have. For example, CBP may use signs to designate specific lanes for travelers with Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) or other machine readable documents (“Ready lanes”) or for trusted travelers.<sup>10</sup> Infrastructure in the pedestrian preprimary area often includes a space for travelers to queue prior to entering primary inspection. Infrastructure in the preprimary area for passenger vehicle and commercial traffic includes lanes for traffic to queue and radiation portal monitors that are designed to detect radiation and help prevent the smuggling of nuclear material into the United States.<sup>11</sup> The passenger vehicle preprimary area also often includes screening technologies, including license plate readers and RFID readers to capture information on vehicles and RFID-ready travel documents such as passport cards and border crossing cards.<sup>12</sup> At some land border crossings, CBP may use RFID readers in the commercial preprimary inspection area to electronically transmit identification, manifest, and other information to CBP officers prior to entering primary inspection. See figure 1 for examples of preprimary infrastructure.

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<sup>10</sup>Trusted travelers are individuals enrolled in one of four CBP programs—Global Entry, NEXUS, Secure Electronic Network for Travelers Rapid Inspection (SENTRI) and Free and Secure Trade (FAST)—for expedited travel through designated lanes at land border crossings. For additional information, see GAO, *Trusted Travelers: Programs Provide Benefits, but Enrollment Processes Could Be Strengthened*, [GAO-14-483](#) (Washington, D.C.: May 30, 2014).

<sup>11</sup>For additional information on radiation portal monitors, see GAO, *Radiation Portal Monitor: DHS’s Fleet Is Lasting Longer than Expected, and Future Acquisitions Focus on Operational Efficiencies*, [GAO-17-57](#) (Washington, D.C.: Oct. 31, 2016).

<sup>12</sup>In 2008, the Department of State began issuing passport cards as a lower-cost alternative to passports for U.S. citizens. The U.S. State Department issues Border Crossing Cards to eligible Mexican citizens applying for admission as a temporary visitor for business or pleasure. Mexican citizens using the Border Crossing Card may travel 55 miles into the United States—except in the Nogales/Tucson area, where travel to Tucson is authorized.

**Figure 1: Examples of Preprimary Inspection Infrastructure at U.S. Land Border Crossings**



Pedestrian travelers queue in preprimary prior to entering the main building at the Otay Mesa land border crossing in San Diego, California.

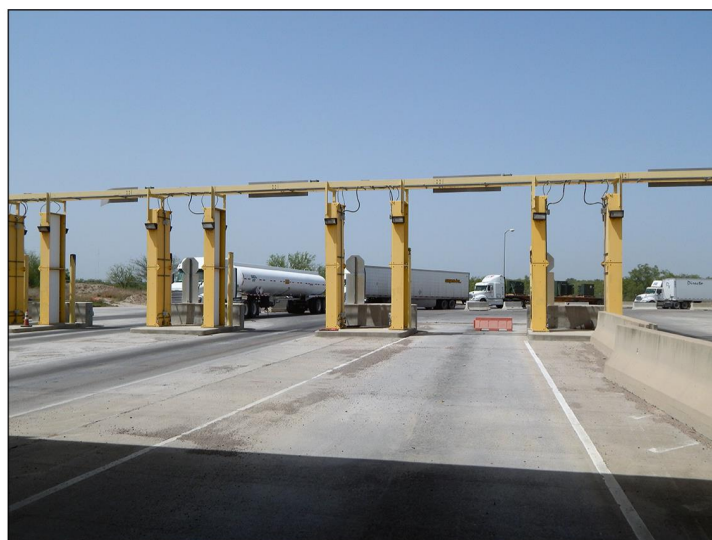


Technologies, including radiation portal monitors and license plate readers, scan inbound vehicles in the preprimary area at the Calexico East land border crossing in Calexico, California.



Vehicles queue in preprimary at the Calexico West land border crossing in Calexico, California. Overhead signs indicate which lanes are reserved for travelers enrolled in one of U.S. Customs and Border Protection's trusted traveler programs and which are for the general traveling public.<sup>a</sup>

Source: GAO. | GAO-19-534



Commercial trucks queue in the preprimary inspection area equipped with radiation portal monitors prior to entering the Colombia Solidarity Bridge land border crossing in Laredo, Texas.

<sup>a</sup>CBP manages four trusted traveler programs designed to expedite crossings for enrolled travelers.

**Primary inspection:** After preprimary inspection, pedestrians enter the primary inspection area, typically located within the main building.

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Infrastructure for pedestrian primary inspection may include one or more lanes and officer booths where CBP officers review traveler information. Passenger vehicles and commercial traffic enter a primary inspection area where CBP officers verify passenger identification and perform an initial inspection of the vehicle, which may include a visual inspection of vehicles' exterior and interior. Infrastructure supporting vehicular primary inspection includes one or more lanes and officer booths. Each booth may be equipped with an HVAC system to keep dangerous vehicle emissions and other fumes from entering the workspace and maintain a safe work environment during extreme heat and cold. Primary inspection booths are designed to be bullet and blast resistant to ensure officer safety. See figure 2 for examples of primary inspection infrastructure.



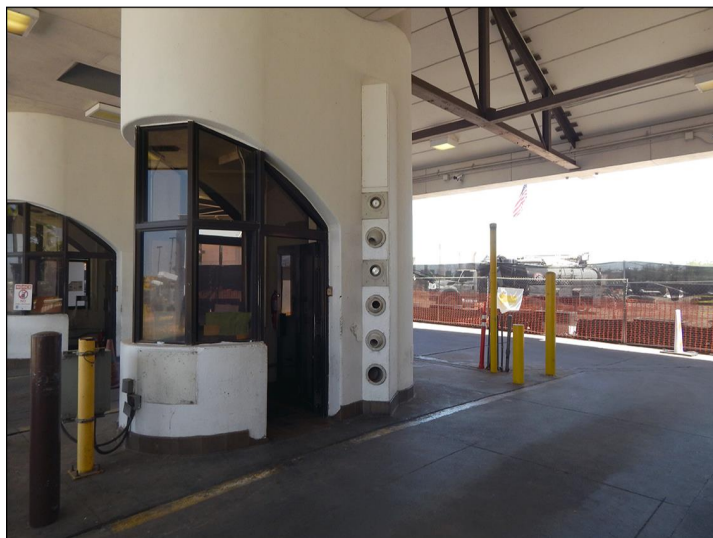
**Figure 2: Examples of Primary Inspection Infrastructure at U.S. Land Border Crossings**



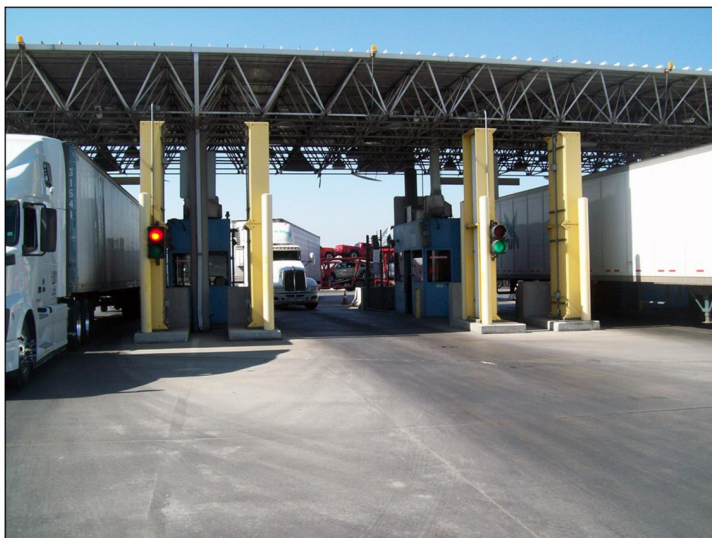
Pedestrians undergo primary inspection at the pedestrian processing facility at the San Ysidro land border crossing in San Diego, California.



Passenger vehicles undergo primary inspection at the Lewiston-Queenston Bridge in Lewiston, New York.



CBP officer booth in the passenger vehicle primary inspection area at the Lincoln-Juarez Bridge land border crossing in Laredo, Texas.



Commercial trucks undergo primary inspection at the Otay Mesa land border crossing in San Diego, California.

Source: GAO. | GAO-19-534

**Secondary inspection:** If a pedestrian, driver, passenger or vehicle gives reason for suspicion or if the CBP officer is unable to complete the inspection at primary inspection for any reason, the officer may refer them

to secondary inspection.<sup>13</sup> Infrastructure in the pedestrian secondary inspection area is typically located within the main building and may include a processing area and a separate secure room where CBP officers can perform more thorough inspections for travelers suspected of criminal activity. Infrastructure in the passenger vehicle secondary inspection area may include work areas where CBP officers can search vehicles, vehicle lifts, and non-intrusive inspection x-ray technologies to identify contraband hidden in concealed compartments. Passengers may wait in the pedestrian secondary inspection area while CBP officers inspect vehicles. Infrastructure in the commercial secondary inspection area may include a loading dock where CBP officers can manually examine cargo and use x-ray technologies to identify hidden contraband. In addition, CBP uses canines at some land border crossings to conduct secondary inspections in the pedestrian, passenger, and commercial environments. See figure 3 for examples of secondary inspection infrastructure.

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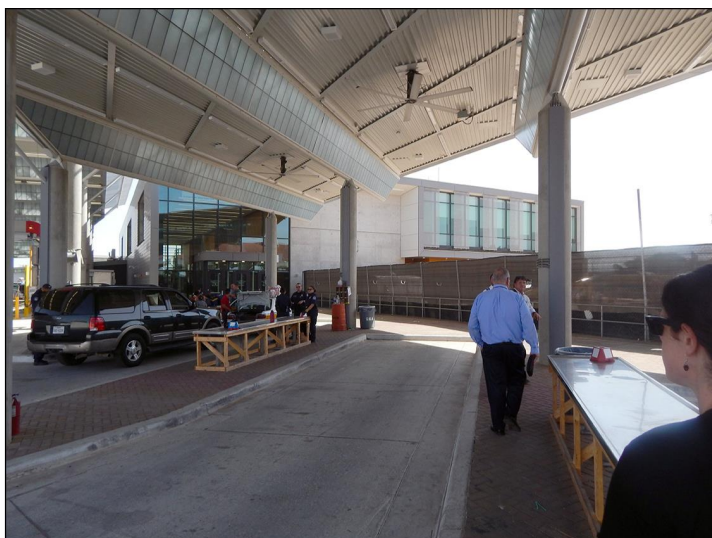
<sup>13</sup>If questions or issues are unresolved about the admissibility of persons or clearance of cargo at primary inspection, a more thorough inspection is required and the travelers are to be referred for secondary inspection. Travelers can be directed to secondary inspection for a wide range of issues, including when radiation is detected (either on the traveler or from his or her vehicle), if a traveler does not have required travel documents or an officer has any questions about the validity of travel documents, if the traveler's information matches to derogatory information from law enforcement or intelligence databases, or if the officer suspects that the traveler is carrying contraband. Foreign visitors to the United States (with the exception of Canadian citizens and Mexican citizens using border crossing cards) may also be referred to secondary inspection to complete processing of their admission records, referred to as Form I-94s. Additionally, CBP selects passenger vehicles at random to be sent to secondary for a Compliance Examination.



**Figure 3: Examples of Secondary Inspection Infrastructure at U.S. Land Border Crossings**



Secondary inspection area at the Rainbow Bridge land border crossing in Niagara Falls, New York.

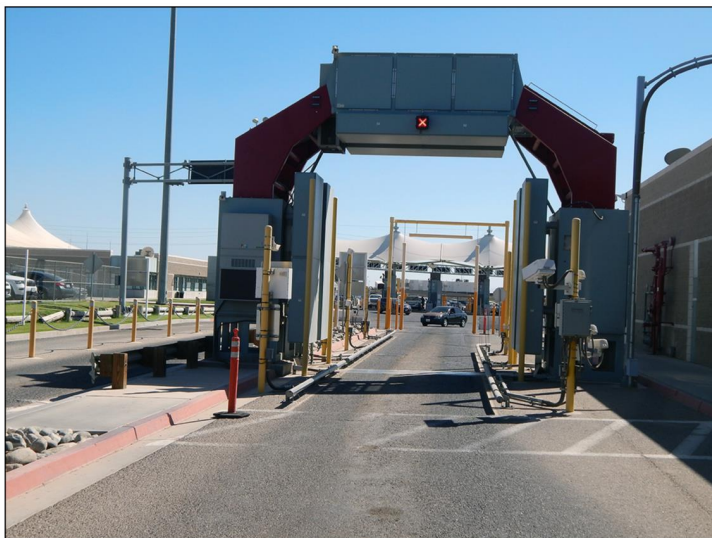


Passenger vehicle secondary inspection area at the Lincoln-Juarez Bridge land border crossing in Laredo, Texas.



Commercial truck parked at the secondary inspection dock at the Calexico East land border crossing in Calexico, California. CBP officers may offload and inspect contents for contraband.

Source: GAO. | GAO-19-534



Non-intrusive inspection x-ray technology used to scan vehicles for concealed contraband at the Calexico East land border crossing in Calexico, California.

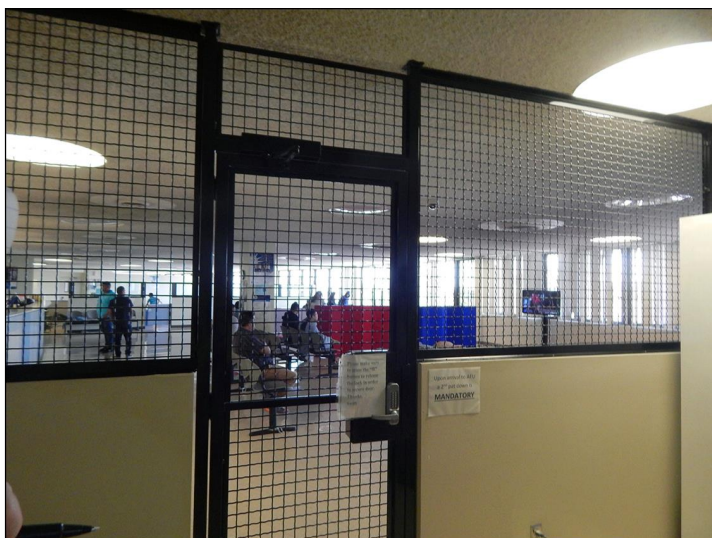
**Main buildings:** Land border crossings may have facilities that support various administrative and operational activities. Infrastructure at CBP's main buildings may include agricultural labs, commercial facilities, traveler processing areas, holding rooms, staff work areas, and locker rooms,

among other infrastructure. See figure 4 for examples of main building infrastructure.

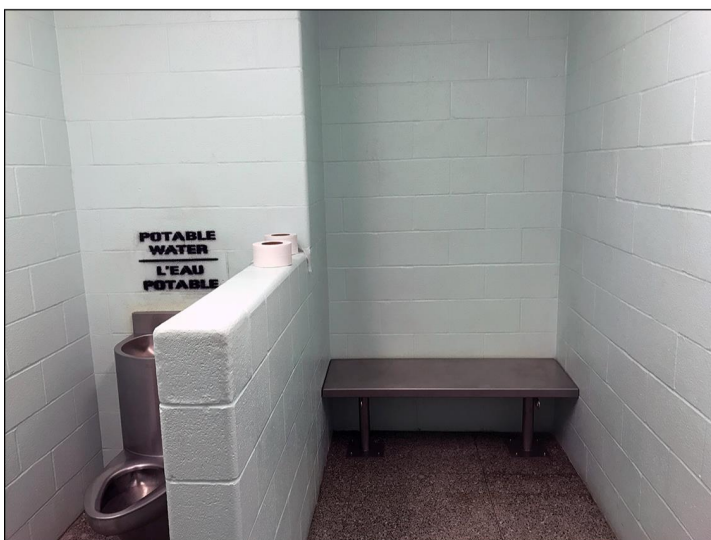
**Figure 4: Examples of Main Building Infrastructure at U.S. Land Border Crossings**



Agricultural lab at the San Luis II land border crossing in San Luis, Arizona.



Holding area at the Calexico West land border crossing in Calexico, California.



Holding room at the Peace Bridge land border crossing in Buffalo, New York.

Source: GAO. | GAO-19-534



Traveler processing area at the Convent Street Bridge in land border crossing in Laredo, Texas.

**Outbound infrastructure:** Pedestrians and vehicles leaving the United States at land border crossings exit through the outbound area. Outbound



infrastructure in the passenger vehicle, bus, commercial, and pedestrian area typically consists of one or more exit lanes and may also include inspection booths, inspection technologies, a secondary inspection area and support facilities, among others, to process traffic leaving the United States. See figure 5 for examples of outbound infrastructure.

**Figure 5: Examples of Outbound Infrastructure at U.S. Land Border Crossings**



Outbound cargo inspection booth at the San Luis II land border crossing in San Luis, Arizona.

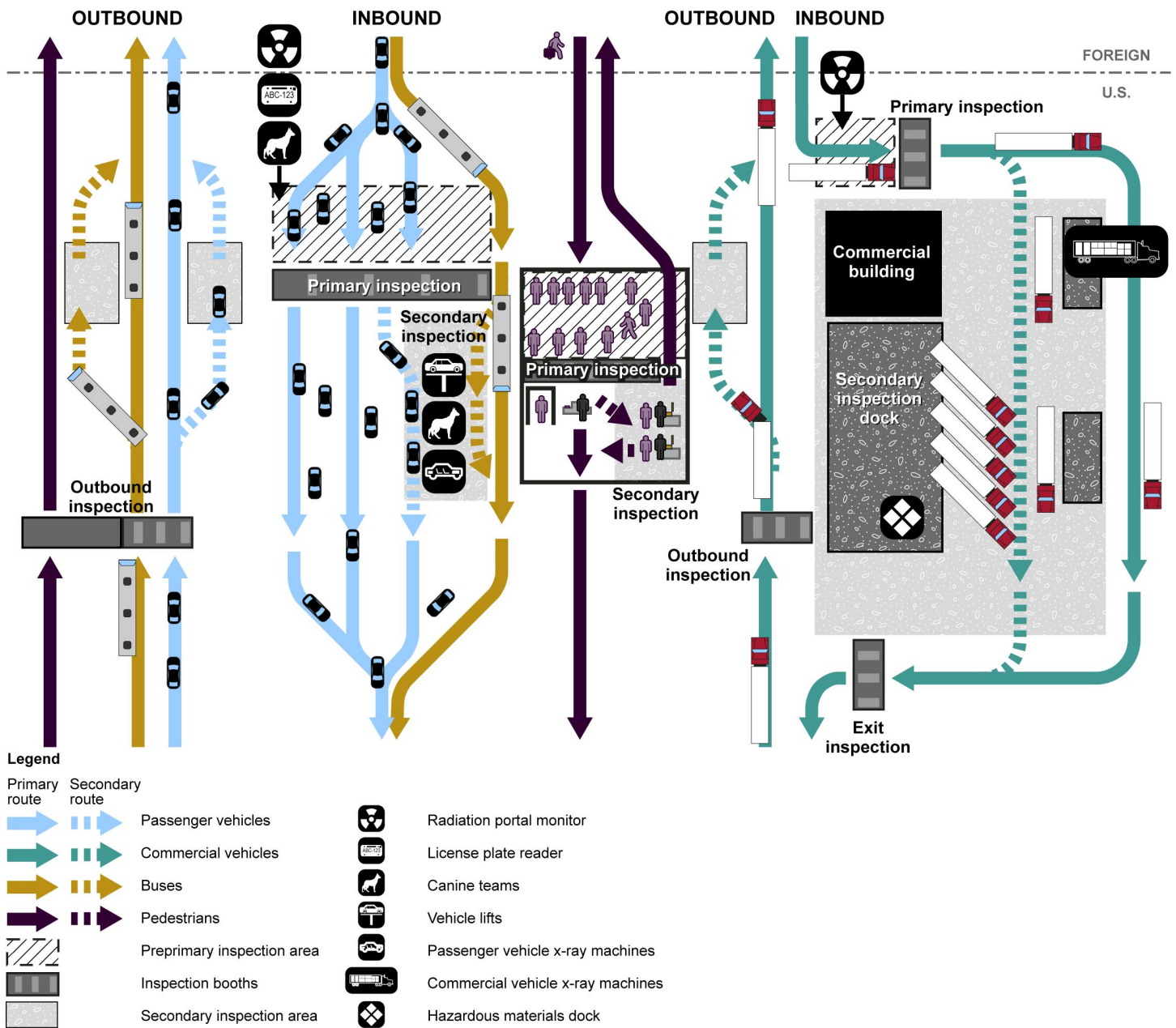
Source: GAO. | GAO-19-534



Outbound passenger vehicle and pedestrian lanes at the Andrade land border crossing in Andrade, California.

Figure 6 depicts a generic layout of a land border crossing with all modes of traffic.

Figure 6: General Layout of a Land Border Crossing



Source: GAO analysis of U.S. Customs and Border Protection information. | GAO-19-534

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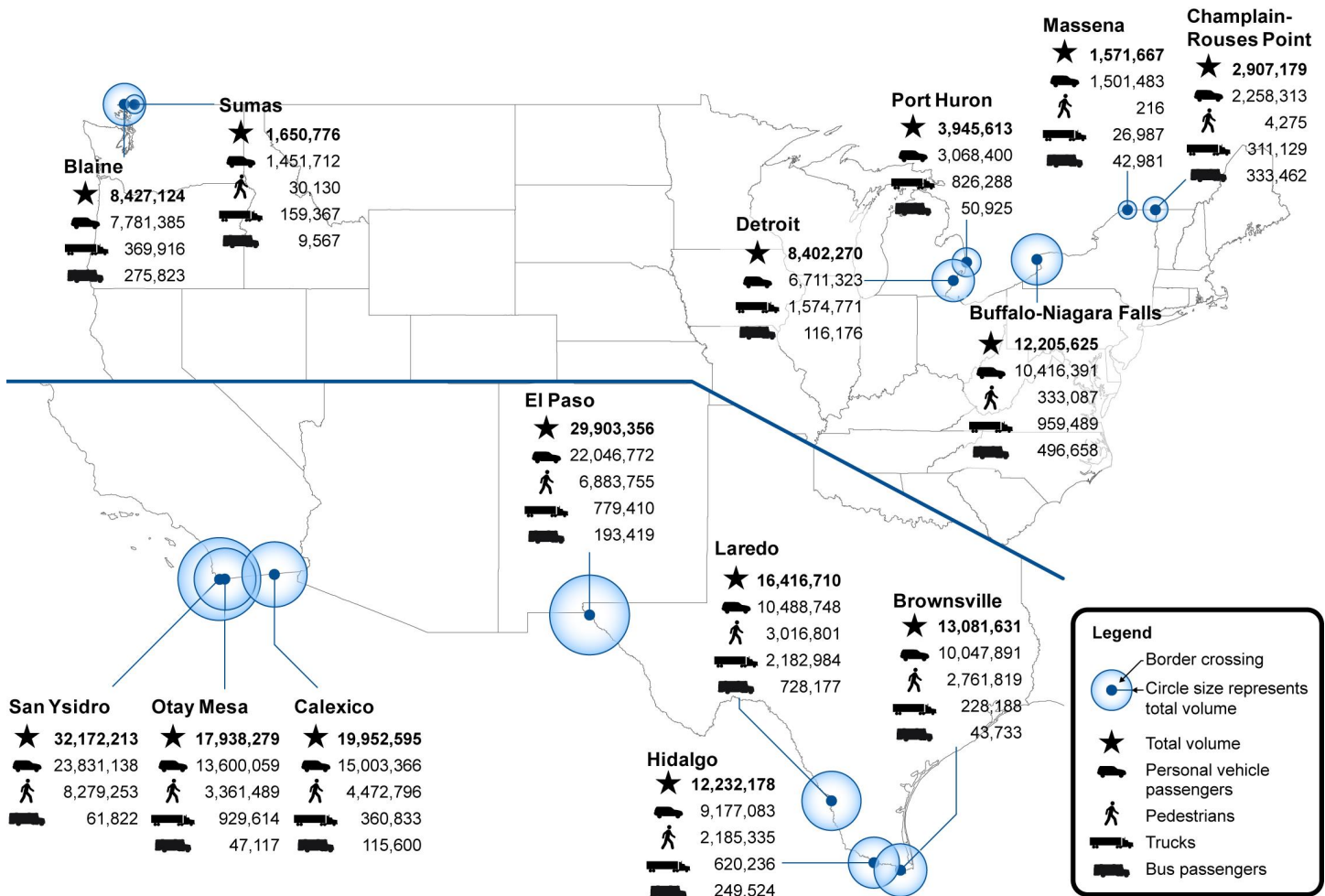
## Travel, Trade, and Law Enforcement at U.S. Land Border Crossings

**Travel:** The volume of traffic at land border crossings varies across the northern and southern borders. At the nation's busiest land border crossing—San Ysidro in California—CBP processed over 32 million entries in 2017. Conversely, at the Whitlash land border crossing in Montana—one of the smaller land border crossings—CBP processed 1,339 entries that same year. In total, CBP processed over 252 million entries in 2017 including 43 million pedestrian entries, 209 million passengers traveling to the United States in over 104 million passenger vehicle entries, 256,000 buses, and nearly 12 million commercial truck crossings.<sup>14</sup> Figure 7 shows the largest northern and southern border U.S. land ports of entry by volume in 2017.

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<sup>14</sup>To identify the total number of U.S.-bound persons processed at land ports of entry in 2017, we analyzed data from the Department of Transportation's Bureau of Transportation (BTS) Statistics' Border Crossing/ Entry database. We assessed the reliability of these data by reviewing the steps BTS takes to ensure data quality and determined these data are sufficiently reliable for our purposes. We also compared BTS border crossing data with entry data maintained by CBP and discussed these data with BTS officials. Note that an entry does not represent a unique traveler since a single traveler may have entered the United States multiple times in 2017.

Figure 7: Largest Northern and Southern Land Ports of Entry by Volume of Entries into the United States in 2017

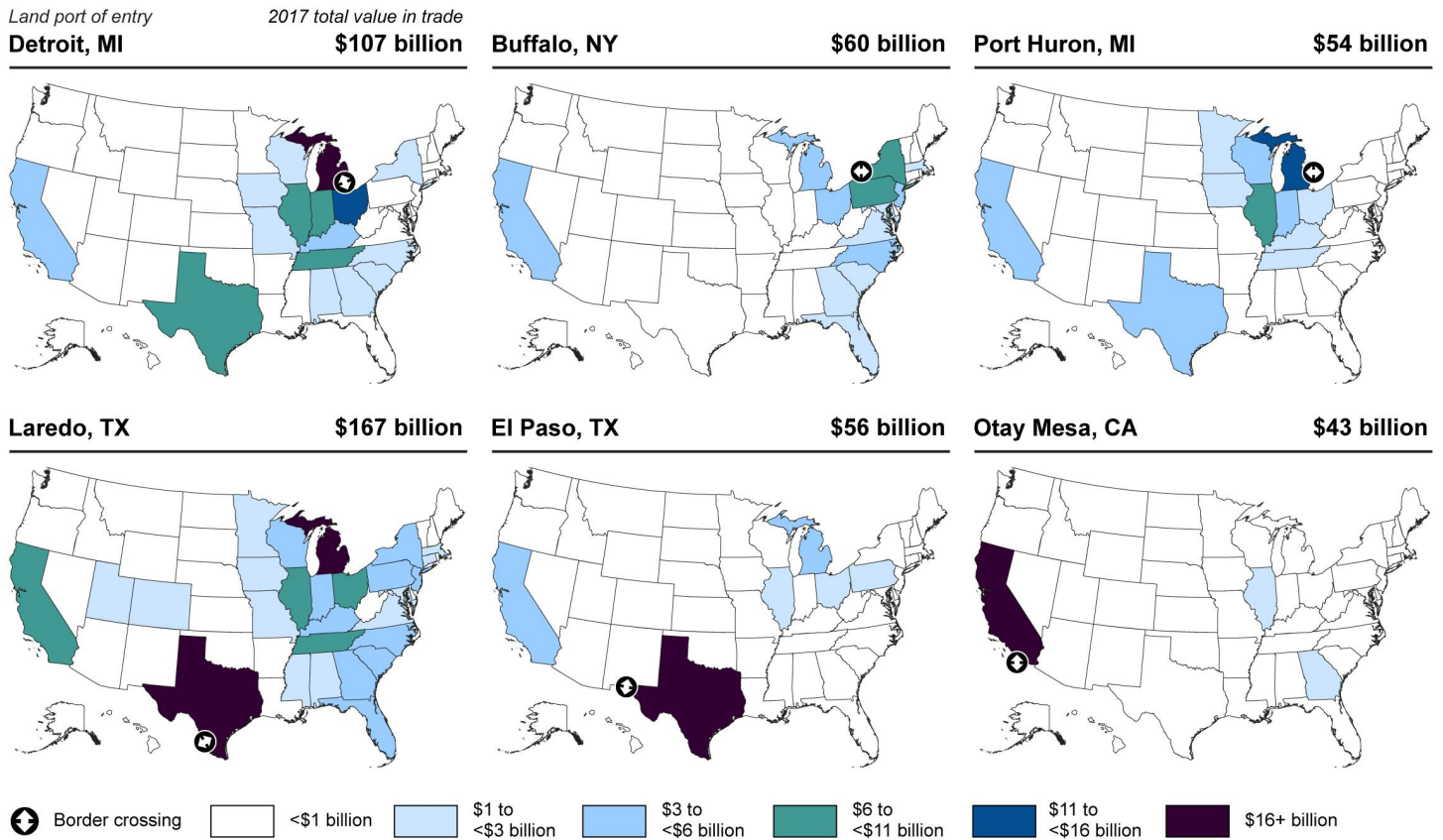


Source: Source: GAO analysis of Bureau of Transportation Statistics data; MapInfo (map). | GAO-19-534

Note: U.S. Customs and Border Protection and the Bureau of Transportation Statistics compile crossing data at ports of entry, which may include one or more land border crossings. The Bureau of Transportation Statistics does not report the number of passengers in U.S.-bound commercial trucks. Therefore, "Trucks" represent the number of commercial trucks entering through a U.S. land port of entry.

**Trade:** In 2017, CBP processed and inspected nearly \$721 billion in traded goods (imports and exports) through U.S. land ports of entry.<sup>15</sup> As shown in figure 8, trade in goods transported via commercial truck through the largest northern and southern border land ports of entry impacted states across the country.

**Figure 8: Distribution of Trade in Goods across U.S. States Facilitated by the Largest Northern and Southern Land Ports of Entry by Total Value of Trade in 2017**



Source: GAO analysis of Bureau of Transportation Statistics data; Map Resources (map). | GAO-19-534

Note: The dollar values identify the total nominal value of trade in goods transported by commercial trucks through land ports of entry. A land port of entry may consist of one or more land border

<sup>15</sup>To identify the total value of trade through land ports of entry in 2017, we analyzed data from the BTS's TransBorder Freight database. We assessed the reliability of these data through an interview with BTS on the steps it takes to ensure the quality of TransBorder Freight data and determined these data are sufficiently reliable for our purposes. We also compared these data with trade data maintained by the U.S. Census Bureau for anomalies.



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crossings. These totals do not include trade in goods transported through other modes, including the mail, pipelines, or railways or services. The state of origin and destination identified in the figure may not be the state of initial origin or final destination since some goods may be routed through distribution centers where they are then dispersed.

**Law Enforcement:** Land border crossings serve a critical role in enabling CBP's enforcement of immigration and customs laws. According to CBP, its officers encountered nearly 139,000 inadmissible individuals at land border crossings in fiscal year 2018.<sup>16</sup> According to CBP, the lack of required travel documents, such as a visa, was the most common reason CBP officers determined individuals to be inadmissible. Further, according to the Drug Enforcement Administration, the nation's land border crossings remain a target for exploitation by transnational criminal organizations. Specifically, the Drug Enforcement Administration's 2018 National Drug Threat Assessment found that the most common smuggling method used by Mexican transnational criminal organizations involves transporting illicit drugs through U.S. land border crossings in passenger vehicles with concealed compartments or commingled with legitimate goods on tractor trailers. In fiscal year 2018, CBP seized 363,000 pounds of drugs at land border crossings, including approximately 265,000 pounds of marijuana, 70,000 pounds of methamphetamine, 20,000 pounds of cocaine, and 1,400 pounds of fentanyl.<sup>17</sup>

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## CBP and GSA Capital Planning and Project Development Process

As part of its capital planning process, CBP is responsible for identifying land border crossing infrastructure needs and prioritizing capital projects across its portfolio of 167 land border crossings. At CBP-owned land border crossings, CBP generally funds these projects and hires a contractor to plan and execute capital infrastructure projects.<sup>18</sup> At GSA-

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<sup>16</sup>Upon inspection by a CBP officer at a U.S. port of entry, a foreign national may be determined to be inadmissible to the United States and denied entry if they fall within the classes of inadmissibility defined in the Immigration and Nationality Act, as amended, Pub. L. No. 82-414, tit. II, ch. 2, § 212(a), 66 Stat. 163, 182-87 (1952) (classified, as amended, at 8 U.S.C. § 1182(a)) (e.g., foreign nationals who have engaged in terrorist or criminal activities or previously violated U.S. immigration law).

<sup>17</sup>We currently have a review underway looking at CBP's inspection activities at land ports of entry. We plan to issue a report on our findings in summer 2019.

<sup>18</sup>According to CBP officials, CBP may partner with GSA to execute capital projects at CBP-owned land border crossings.

leased land border crossings, CBP and GSA typically work with the property owner to plan and execute capital projects. The owner of the land border crossing funds these projects, while CBP funds any alterations needed to fulfill its mission.<sup>19</sup>

At GSA-owned land border crossings, CBP typically works with GSA to complete a feasibility study and uses this information to prioritize infrastructure projects. According to GSA policy documents, feasibility studies are intended to determine the technical and economic viability of a project, define the project budget and scope, and establish an initial project design. GSA and CBP are to further refine land border crossing capital projects with a program development study, which updates project plans and budgets and provides the necessary information to pursue project funding.<sup>20</sup> Each year, the Office of Management and Budget reviews each project included in GSA's budget request and Congress authorizes projects and appropriates project funds as part of the federal budget cycle. GSA typically includes CBP's top priority land border crossing capital infrastructure projects in its annual budget submission. GSA may pursue project funding for design and construction in separate budget requests or in a single appropriation, depending on the contract vehicle used. Once funded, GSA hires one or more contractors to design and execute the project.

Figure 9 identifies funding for CBP and GSA-owned land border crossings in fiscal years 2009 through 2019.

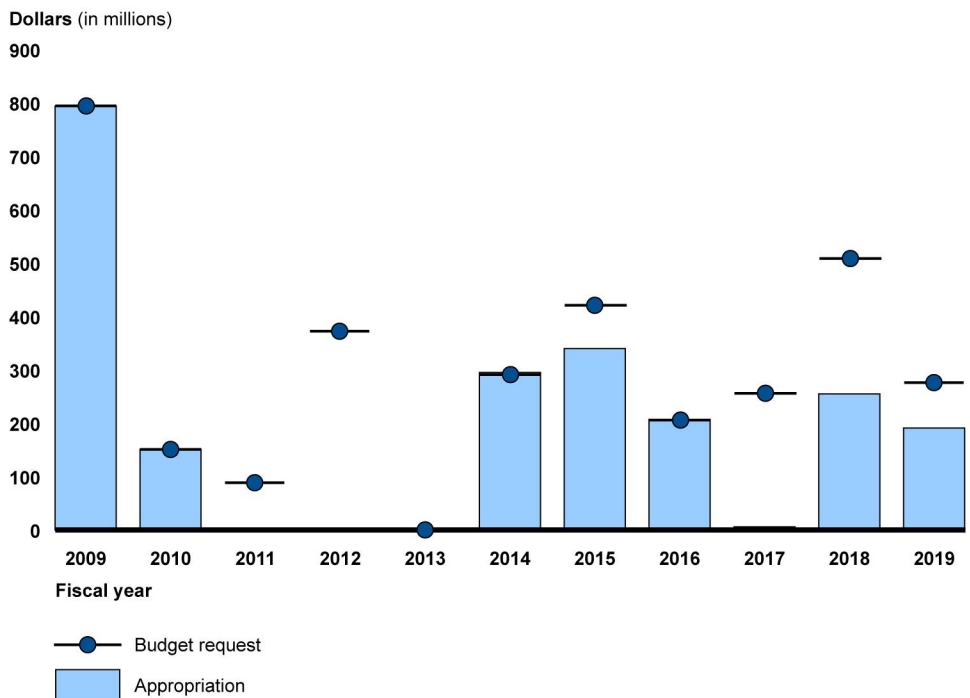
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<sup>19</sup>CBP amortizes the costs of improvements over the lease term, paying the port owner through GSA, which manages the lease on behalf of the U.S. government.

<sup>20</sup>Feasibility studies and program development studies may be combined into one document. According to GSA officials, this may be done in order to provide a more accurate cost estimate to Congress earlier in the planning process, or because the project is using a one-step contract vehicle, with Congress funding design and construction concurrently.



**Figure 9: Budget Requests and Appropriations for Land Border Crossing Capital Projects in Fiscal Years 2009 through 2019**



Source: GAO analysis of U.S. Customs and Border Protection Information. | GAO-19-534

Note: Appropriations include appropriated funds, as reported by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), for fiscal years 2009 through 2019, for the General Services Administration's (GSA) Federal Buildings Fund, and for GSA and CBP through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Pub. L. No. 111-5, 123 Stat. 115), as well as reprogrammed funds and project transfers. CBP reported not receiving funds for land border crossing capital projects in fiscal years 2011 and 2012. CBP reported that GSA and CBP did not request or receive funds for any land border crossing capital projects in fiscal year 2013. Appropriation totals for each year are in nominal dollars.

CBP defines its general land border infrastructure requirements in its Land Port of Entry Design Standards, which describe various infrastructure at land border crossings and detail how this infrastructure should operate. According to CBP, it updates these standards every few years to ensure the standards reflect CBP's changing mission, including new technologies and infrastructure requirements.

## CBP Identified Various Infrastructure Constraints at Land Border Crossings, but

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## Does Not Have Complete Information on Infrastructure Condition at All Crossings

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### CBP's Reported Infrastructure Constraints at Land Border Crossings Include Limited Capacity and Technology Challenges

CBP officers we spoke with at 16 land border crossings and OFO field offices that oversee land border crossings reported examples of land border crossing infrastructure constraints they face at each stage of the inspection process including preprimary, primary, and secondary inspections. CBP relies on infrastructure to fulfill its mission at land border crossings. Specifically, according to CBP, well-functioning infrastructure is a critical factor in its ability to effectively screen persons and cargo, and facilitate cross-border travel and trade. For example, CBP officials stated that the number of operational inspection lanes is a key variable that affects traffic wait times. These officers also identified land border crossing infrastructure challenges with office space and port security. Examples of infrastructure constraints identified by CBP officers include:

- **Limited space in the preprimary inspection area.** According to CBP officers, land border crossings with primary inspection booths located in close proximity to the border line with Mexico have restricted space for CBP to conduct operations in the preprimary area.

Figure 10 below shows a photo of restricted space in the preprimary area at a land border crossing on the southern border.

**Figure 10: Example of a U.S. Land Border Crossing With Limited Space in the Preprimary Area**



Photo of the primary inspection area at a land border crossing on the southern border taken from the international border line showing limited space in the preprimary area—approximately two car lengths.

Source: GAO. | GAO-19-534

- **Non-functioning screening technology in the preprimary inspection area.** CBP officers stated that vehicle inspection technologies may not always function correctly. For example, at a land border crossing on the southern border, license plate readers and radiation portal monitors are inoperable at least once a week during summer months due to overheating, according to CBP officials. Temperatures can exceed 120 degrees Fahrenheit and the technology is exposed to the sun.

Figure 11 shows license plate readers and radiation portal monitors in the preprimary area exposed to the sun at a land border crossing on the southern border.

**Figure 11: License Plate Readers and Radiation Portal Monitors on the Southern Border**



Technology in the preprimary area that CBP officers identified as experiencing periods of inoperability due to high temperatures and exposure to sunlight.

Source: U.S. Customs and Border Protection; GAO (photo). | GAO-19-534

- **Officer inspection booths in the primary inspection area in need of repair.** CBP officers stated that officer inspection booths may be inadequately cooled or heated resulting in officers more frequently rotating out of the booths for health and safety reasons. At one land border crossing, officers stated that the booth windows provide limited visibility since the old bullet resistant glazing has deteriorated and clouds officers' view. At another land border crossing we visited, we observed that the doors on the primary inspection booths do not have working locks. Officers stated that as a result, when the land border crossing closes overnight they are unable to secure the booths or the computer equipment inside.
- **Inadequate holding facilities in the secondary inspection area.** Holding facilities at several land border crossings we visited had holding rooms that did not meet current CBP safety requirements, according to CBP officers. Officers at two land border crossings stated that safety concerns included inadequate ventilation. Officers at another land border crossing identified exposed wiring in a holding



room as a safety hazard. Other land border crossings we visited did not have holding rooms and officers stated they detain individuals in the lobby of the administration building as a result.

Figure 12 shows examples of holding facilities at land border crossings on the northern and southern borders that CBP officials identified as not meeting CBP requirements.

**Figure 12: Examples of Holding Facility Constraints at U.S. Land Border Crossings**



Park bench bolted to the floor with attached handcuffs located in the waiting area at a land border crossing on the northern border that CBP uses in place of a holding room.

Source: U.S. Customs and Border Protection; GAO (photo). | GAO-19-534



CBP officers identified that exposed cabling accessible to detainees as seen in this photo is a safety hazard at a land border crossing on the southern border.

- **Lack of availability of non-intrusive inspection (NII) technology in the secondary inspection area.** CBP officers stated that the availability of NII technology improves their ability to conduct inspections. However, NII technology is not always available because it may need maintenance or repair, or CBP may share the technology

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with multiple land border crossings.<sup>21</sup> Officers stated they may perform manual inspections of vehicles when NII technology is not available, which they noted can be less effective.

- **Inadequate facilities for canine inspection in the secondary inspection area.** CBP officers provided examples of limited facilities for inspection canines. For example, officers at one land border crossing stated they do not have a dedicated area to exercise inspection canines. Officers at another land border crossing stated they recently converted a storage closet into a climate-controlled canine kennel within the secondary inspection building. Previously, the CBP officers at this land border crossing kept the canines in running vehicles with air conditioning to keep them cool.
- **Impeded traffic flow within the land border crossing.** CBP officers identified challenges with facilitating traffic flow within the land border crossing. For example, the layout at a commercial land border crossing on the southern border impedes the flow of traffic because it requires commercial trucks to make a series of sharp turns as they travel through the border crossing. In addition, commercial traffic referred for secondary inspection must cut across four primary egress lanes to enter and exit the secondary inspection area. According to CBP officers, commercial trucks proceeding toward the border crossing exit may need to stop or reverse direction to create space for the trucks entering or exiting the secondary inspection area which creates delays in processing commercial traffic.

Figure 13 shows an aerial view of a land border crossing with a diagram of where CBP officers identified that the land border crossing layout impedes traffic flow.

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<sup>21</sup>NII technologies assist CBP in detecting contraband such as narcotics and weapons, as well as materials that pose potential nuclear and radiological threats. NII technologies include large-scale x-ray and gamma-ray imaging systems, radiation detection equipment, small-scale baggage x-ray systems, and portable hand-held devices.

**Figure 13: Diagram of Traffic Flow Impediments at a Commercial Land Border Crossing on the Southern Border**

- A** Inbound commercial trucks from Mexico make a 180 degree turn as they enter the United States.
- B** Commercial trucks make a 90 degree turn to enter primary inspection.
- C** Commercial trucks not referred to secondary take a second 180 degree turn after primary inspection to the exit lanes/booths where officers verify they are cleared to enter the United States.
- D** Trucks referred to secondary inspection make a 90 degree turn toward the non-intrusive inspection technology and inspection docks in the secondary inspection area.
- E** After secondary inspection, trucks re-join the queue and make a 180 degree turn to proceed toward exit booths.
- F** After passing through the exit booths, trucks make a final 90 degree turn to exit the facility.



Source: U.S. Customs and Border Protection; Art Explosion (clip art). | GAO-19-534

- **Insufficient capacity to accommodate the volume of traffic.** CBP officers stated that the number of travelers can exceed the capacity of the facility. For example, CBP officers stated that insufficient number of inspection lanes can result in lengthy wait times for travelers.
- **Limited administrative space.** CBP officers stated that insufficient administrative office space can be a challenge at land border crossings. For example, one land border crossing we visited did not have sufficient space for officer lockers and as a result placed some lockers in the contraband seizure room.

Figure 14 shows lockers located in the contraband seizure room at a land border crossing on the northern border due to insufficient administrative space.



**Figure 14: Officer Lockers Located in the Contraband Seizure Room at a Northern Land Border Crossing**



Source: GAO. | GAO-19-534

- **Port security limitations.** CBP officers also described challenges with land border crossing security. For example, officers stated the lack of measures to prevent travelers from exiting the crossing without authorization, such as vehicle barriers and security gates, impedes CBP's ability to stop drivers from fleeing the land border crossing and entering the United States without inspection.

Figure 15 shows exit lanes constructed with temporary barriers to control the flow of traffic leaving the land border crossing and entering the United States.

**Figure 15: Constructed Exit Lanes to Control Traffic Leaving the Land Border Crossing**



According to officers at a land border crossing on the northern border, the land border crossing lacks measures to prevent vehicles from speeding through the crossing without authorization. This photo shows exit lanes constructed with temporary barriers to control the flow of traffic as it leaves the land border crossing.

Source: U.S. Customs and Border Protection; GAO (photo). | GAO-19-534

- **Lack of inspection facilities for outbound traffic.** CBP officers at land border crossings without facilities to inspect outbound traffic can face difficulties when inspecting traffic exiting the United States. For example, at one land border crossing without outbound inspection facilities, officials stated they park CBP vehicles in the outbound traffic lanes to slow traffic so that CBP officers can stop and inspect vehicles exiting the United States.

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## CBP Has Limited Information on the Current Condition of Infrastructure across Land Border Crossings

### CBP Has Assessed Facility Conditions at Some but Not All Land Border Crossings

CBP collects information on the condition of infrastructure at some land border crossings through contracted Facility Condition Assessments (FCA), but has not assessed conditions at all land border crossings.<sup>22</sup> FCAs are engineering inspections that evaluate the condition of the facility and identify repair and improvement needs. The output of an FCA is a report that describes infrastructure deficiencies at a facility and represents the condition of the land border crossing infrastructure at the time of the FCA.<sup>23</sup>

From 2016 through 2018, CBP and GSA assessed the condition of infrastructure at 95 of the 167 land border crossings. As of December 2018, CBP had conducted FCAs at 74 of the 167 land border crossings within the previous three years. In addition, according to CBP officials, in 2016 GSA funded and conducted Building Engineering Reviews at 21 land border crossings in response to conversations between CBP and GSA on how to improve GSA service delivery at land border crossings.<sup>24</sup> CBP officials stated they use facility condition information from the 2016 Building Engineering Reviews because they contain information similar to

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<sup>22</sup>For GSA-owned and leased land border crossings, CBP submits Reimbursable Work Authorizations to GSA to obtain a contractor to conduct FCAs. For CBP-owned crossings, CBP conducts FCAs through contractors or the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

<sup>23</sup>FCAs calculate the land border crossing present replacement value (in dollar amounts), facility condition index (0-10% good, 10-20% fair, 20-30% poor, and 30-100% critical), and remaining service life index value for each land border crossing infrastructure asset (100-0% service life remaining). The facility condition index is a ratio of the costs to correct the facility deficiencies divided by the total replacement cost of the facility. The remaining service life index (RSLI) is defined as a ratio of service life remaining based on the facility's age and design life and weighted by the facility's current replacement value. A low RSLI indicates the building is aging, where a high RSLI would indicate most of the infrastructure at the facility was recently installed.

<sup>24</sup>GSA Building Engineering Reviews were visual inspections of facilities that identified infrastructure in need of repair. Similar to FCAs, Building Engineering Reviews calculated the total costs to repair land border crossings as well as the current replacement value of the facilities. According to GSA officials, GSA generally no longer conducts Building Engineering Reviews and instead uses their Building Assessment Tool to collect information on the condition of infrastructure at GSA facilities.

what CBP collects through an FCA. According to GSA officials, GSA now rarely conducts Building Engineering Reviews because they are costly and their data quickly become obsolete. GSA now uses other tools to assess infrastructure condition and GSA officials were not aware of any reviews at land border crossings since 2016. See table 1 for a breakdown of the land border crossings that CBP and GSA have assessed.

**Table 1: Facility Assessments at Land Border Crossings 2016-2018**

Land Border Crossing by Ownership	Number of Facility Assessments	Number of Land Border Crossings
General Services Administration Owned (including partially owned)	73	104
General Services Administration Leased	18	19
U.S. Customs and Border Protection Owned	4	40
Other <sup>a</sup>	0	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>167</b>

Source: GAO analysis of U.S. Customs and Border Protection information | GAO-19-534

<sup>a</sup>This includes one land border crossing that U.S. Customs and Border Protection directly leases from private owners.

According to the assessments, the condition of infrastructure varies across land border crossings. The facility condition index—the ratio of the costs to correct facility infrastructure deficiencies to the total replacement value of the facility—ranges from 0 percent to 69 percent across the 95 FCAs and Building Engineering Reviews conducted between 2016 and 2018. These assessments identified approximately \$140 million in estimated infrastructure deficiencies and the average facility condition

index is 16 percent.<sup>25</sup> See table 2 for the distribution of facility condition indices across land border crossings by ownership type. See appendix I for facility condition index scores across CBP's land border crossing portfolio.

**Table 2: Facility Condition Index Scores at Land Border Crossings 2016-2018**

Land Border Crossing by Ownership	Average Facility Condition Index (%)	Facility Condition Index Range (%)	Number of Facility Assessments
General Services Administration Owned (including partially owned)	17	0-58	73
General Services Administration Leased	17	0-69	18
U.S. Customs and Border Protection Owned	6	0-20	4
Other <sup>a</sup>	N/A	N/A	0
<b>Total Across All Land Border Crossings</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>0-69</b>	<b>95</b>

Source: GAO analysis of U.S. Customs and Border Protection information | GAO-19-534

<sup>a</sup>This includes one land border crossing that U.S. Customs and Border Protection directly leases from private owners.

Note: The facility condition index is a ratio of the costs to correct the facility deficiencies divided by the total replacement cost of the facility: (0-10% good, 10-20% fair, 20-30% poor, and 30-100% critical). Of these 95 facility condition assessments, 21 were Building Engineering Reviews conducted by the General Services Administration. According to U.S. Customs and Border Protection officials, facility condition assessments and Building Engineering Reviews are largely interchangeable and provide similar facility condition index scores.

CBP began conducting FCAs at CBP-owned land border crossings in 2008. OFAM officials stated they set a goal of conducting FCAs at each

<sup>25</sup>While FCAs identify deficient infrastructure and estimate the cost of fixing these deficiencies, these assessments do not necessarily identify the extent to which existing infrastructure meets CBP's requirements or other capital needs. For example, an FCA may determine that facilities at a land border crossing are in good condition, but fail to identify whether these facilities meet CBP's current operational requirements. Further, FCAs may not identify whether a crossing's existing infrastructure is adequate to facilitate the volume of traffic CBP processes at that location. In one such instance an FCA at the Calexico East land border crossing found the condition of passenger vehicle primary inspection infrastructure to be in good condition. However, CBP officials stated that the number of passenger vehicle primary inspection lanes at the Calexico East land border crossing do not provide sufficient capacity to efficiently process traffic. We previously reported that in 2015, CBP identified \$5 billion to meet infrastructure and technology requirements, see GAO, *U.S. Ports of Entry: CBP Public-Private Partnership Programs Have Benefits, but CBP Could Strengthen Evaluation Efforts*, [GAO-18-268](#) (Washington, D.C.: March 15, 2018).

CBP-owned land border crossing on a three-year cycle, but have not always been able to do so due to resource constraints. Our analysis identified that CBP conducted FCAs at only four of the 40 CBP-owned land border crossings over three years—2016 to 2018—when its goal was to have conducted FCAs at all 40 facilities over this time frame (see table 1 above). CBP also began conducting FCAs at GSA-owned facilities in 2016, and at GSA-leased facilities in 2017. According to CBP officials, they plan to conduct several FCAs at selected GSA-owned facilities each year to obtain information on the condition of infrastructure at these facilities, though there is no required interval at which they must assess these facilities. CBP officials stated they prioritize GSA land border crossings in need of capital investment when selecting which facilities to assess.

DHS Directive 119-02-004 “DHS Real Property Facility Condition Assessment” instructs each DHS component—including CBP—to implement and maintain a program to ensure that the condition of real property is assessed every three years and updated each fiscal year through FCAs beginning in fiscal year 2018. The Directive applies to land border crossings owned by CBP and is intended to ensure that CBP collects information on the condition of infrastructure across these facilities.<sup>26</sup> Although CBP has a goal of conducting FCAs at CBP-owned land border crossings every three years, it has not met this goal in recent years as CBP assessed only four of the 40 land border crossings from 2016 through 2018. According to CBP officials, FCAs older than three years may not accurately reflect the current condition of infrastructure at land border crossings. According to OFAM officials, they have not developed a plan to ensure that CBP implements its program consistent with the Directive by conducting FCAs on a three-year cycle going forward due to limited resources to conduct the assessments. Specifically, CBP officials stated that CBP has not been able to fully fund the FCA program due to other competing facility priorities. However, developing a plan that accounts for the new requirements under the Directive could assist CBP in planning funding needs for the FCA program. Further, developing and implementing a plan to ensure CBP executes its FCA program consistent with Directive 119-02-004 would assist CBP in making resource decisions for this program. Implementing its FCA program consistent with DHS Directive 119-02-004 would enable

<sup>26</sup>According to the Office of the Chief Readiness Support Officer—the DHS office that developed and monitors the Directive— DHS Directive 119-02-004 does not apply to land border crossings owned or leased by GSA.

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CBP to collect more complete and current information on the condition of infrastructure at land border crossings it owns.

CBP and GSA Have Not Routinely Shared Information with Each Other about Land Border Crossing Facility Conditions

CBP and GSA conduct separate assessments of facility conditions at GSA-owned land border crossings; however, they do not routinely share or use the results of each other's efforts to inform their assessments of facility condition. More specifically, separate from CBP's process for assessing facility condition, GSA uses its Building Assessment Tool to assess the condition of infrastructure across its entire real property portfolio, including land border crossings. This process is intended to assist GSA in estimating its future costs for repairing and maintaining the buildings in its portfolio.

Although the CBP FCA and the GSA Building Assessment Tool both assess elements of facility condition, these assessments have different methodologies, scopes, and purposes. We reviewed a 2018 CBP comparative analysis of the FCAs and Building Assessment Tool processes. CBP's analysis showed that FCAs are detailed assessments of all building systems that CBP uses at a land border crossing. According to CBP officials, CBP uses FCAs to collect information on the condition of infrastructure at land border crossings and to inform land border crossing capital infrastructure projects. In comparison, GSA's Building Assessment Tool is a standardized assessment used across GSA's federal real property portfolio to identify, plan for, and prioritize repair and maintenance needs across GSA properties. As a result, while the two types of assessments may be related in some aspects, officials from each agency stated they could not use the other's facility assessment in place of their own.

GSA officials assessing land border crossing infrastructure condition are not required to consult with CBP officials who operate the port or review any existing CBP FCAs, according to GSA officials. CBP provides GSA with pre-assessment questionnaires prior to conducting FCAs at GSA-owned land border crossings. These questionnaires inquire about available GSA information on facility condition. However, CBP officials stated they do not specifically request GSA Building Assessment Tool data, and as a result, have not generally received these data prior to conducting a FCA.



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GSA officials stated that CBP FCAs and GSA Building Assessment Tool assessments differ in scope and as a result GSA does not use FCAs in place of their Building Assessment Tool assessments. However, FCAs identify infrastructure needs at land border crossings and the results could provide GSA with an understanding of infrastructure needs identified by CBP at land border crossings. Likewise, GSA's Building Assessment Tool is used to identify infrastructure in need of repair and could provide CBP with an understanding of infrastructure needs identified by GSA.

We have previously identified key practices for collaboration among federal agencies. Specifically, agencies can enhance and sustain their collaborative efforts by identifying and addressing needs by leveraging resources.<sup>27</sup> According to CBP officials, improving information sharing on facility condition could help ensure that both CBP's and GSA's assessments are as accurate and complete as possible. Moreover, using each other's facility condition information could enable CBP and GSA to improve the accuracy and completeness of their respective assessments of facility condition at land border crossings.

CBP Does Not Maintain Reliable Information on the Current Condition of Land Border Crossing Infrastructure, but Is Taking Steps to Improve Its Reliability

CBP uses a software system called TRIRIGA to manage its real property asset portfolio, but information in this system is not fully reliable. Among other functions, CBP uses TRIRIGA to track infrastructure needs and the condition of facilities at land border crossings. CBP identifies infrastructure needs through FCAs and records these data in TRIRIGA. CBP also identifies additional infrastructure needs as they arise and records these data in TRIRIGA. For example, an infrastructure need may arise at a building and be recorded in TRIRIGA in the months following a CBP FCA. CBP uses TRIRIGA data to calculate a score reflecting the overall current condition of infrastructure at a land border crossing. CBP uses this score on condition to inform internal planning and prioritization of maintenance and repair projects at the local level, according to CBP

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<sup>27</sup>GAO, *Results-Oriented Government: Practices That Can Help Enhance and Sustain Collaboration among Federal Agencies*, [GAO-06-15](#) (Washington, D.C.: October 21, 2005).

officials.<sup>28</sup> In addition, CBP's goals for facility condition data in TRIRIGA include making facility condition information available in real time, starting with TRIRIGA for responses to data calls and reporting, and using data in the system for more efficient planning and decision making. However, according to CBP officials, land border crossing facility condition data in TRIRIGA have not been consistently reliable because some data on infrastructure needs are duplicative, out of date, or incomplete.

- **Duplicate Data:** CBP officials stated that in the past, OFAM officials responsible for entering infrastructure needs into TRIRIGA created duplicate entries in some instances. For example, OFAM officials have identified, and entered into TRIRIGA, infrastructure needs at land border crossings that had already been identified and entered in the past. As a result, TRIRIGA double-counted the costs associated with these duplicate infrastructure needs which impacted the reliability of the calculation of the score on facility condition for the associated land border crossing. According to OFAM officials, they have taken several steps to improve the TRIRIGA data entry processes. During the course of our review, OFAM officials identified internal confusion regarding who had the authority to remove infrastructure needs from TRIRIGA. In response, in April 2019 OFAM developed new guidelines clarifying roles and responsibilities for accurately entering FCA data and removing infrastructure needs from TRIRIGA. OFAM officials stated they expect this process to avoid duplicative data entry in the future. Further, as described earlier, by conducting FCAs for each CBP-owned land border crossing every three years, updating them annually consistent with DHS Directive 119-02-004, and then entering the results into TRIRIGA in accordance with the new guidelines for reviewing existing infrastructure needs and removing them as needed, CBP would be positioned to more frequently review and validate these data in the system on an ongoing basis.
- **Out of Date Data:** Officials stated that FCA data for some land border crossings in TRIRIGA originate from as early as 2013, the last time CBP conducted an FCA at those border crossings. As a result, TRIRIGA does not accurately reflect the current condition of these facilities. Historically, CBP has updated TRIRIGA with facility condition information collected through FCAs. As described earlier, DHS Directive 119-02-004 directs CBP to conduct FCAs for each CBP-

<sup>28</sup>CBP also plans to use the facility condition indices from TRIRIGA to inform capital project prioritization in the future. However, CBP had not finalized the new capital project prioritization process at the time of this review.

owned land border crossings every three years and update them annually. By developing and implementing a plan to complete more timely FCAs at CBP-owned land border crossings, CBP will be better positioned to ensure that TRIRIGA is updated to reflect more current condition information. In addition, as CBP continues to conduct FCAs at GSA owned and leased land border crossings, CBP can continue to update TRIRIGA with more current information on facility condition consistent with OFAM's April 2019 guidance on TRIRIGA data entry.

- **Incomplete Data:** Officials stated that because CBP oversees maintenance and repair work at CBP-owned land border crossings, data in TRIRIGA are more reliable for these land border crossings than for GSA-owned land border crossings where GSA is responsible for planning and executing maintenance and repair work. CBP officials said that while they do identify infrastructure needs at GSA-owned land border crossings and enter related information into TRIRIGA, the information on these needs can be incomplete. CBP officials stated that for example, a past CBP FCA may have identified a building roof in need of repair. Following the FCA, CBP would then enter a record of this infrastructure need in TRIRIGA. If GSA repaired the roof during the following year as part of its planned maintenance work, but did not inform CBP headquarters, TRIRIGA would continue to identify a deficient roof at the land border crossing after GSA repaired it. CBP officials stated that GSA may conduct maintenance or repair work to address an infrastructure need without CBP's knowledge because CBP and GSA did not have a process for GSA to notify CBP of maintenance and repair work the agency conducts at land border crossings. According to OFAM officials, GSA began sharing with OFAM monthly summary-level data on maintenance GSA performs at land border crossings. However, these data do not include the level of detail required to update condition data or close out deficiencies in TRIRIGA. We previously identified key practices for collaboration among federal agencies, including that agencies can enhance and sustain their collaborative efforts by identifying and addressing needs by leveraging resources.<sup>29</sup> Sharing information on GSA maintenance and repair work at GSA-owned land border crossings at the level of detail necessary for CBP to update TRIRIGA would enable CBP to improve the completeness and accuracy of data in the system. As a result, CBP would have access to more complete and accurate data to use when planning and prioritizing infrastructure maintenance activities, improving the availability of real-time facility

<sup>29</sup>[GAO-06-15](#).

condition information, and responding to data calls and reporting. For example, more complete and accurate data in TRIRIGA would better position CBP to identify and report to Congress on improvements needed at land ports of entry. Specifically, the 2018 United States Ports of Entry Threat and Operational Review Act requires CBP to submit to Congress a threat and operational analysis that includes, among other elements, an assessment of current and potential threats due to security vulnerabilities and unlawful entry, and improvements needed at ports of entry to enhance travel and trade facilitation and reduce wait times.<sup>30</sup> CBP officials stated they have not yet determined which data they will use to develop this report, but this reporting requirement is one potential example of how more reliable data from TRIRIGA could be used to effectively report on the condition of land border crossing infrastructure.

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## CBP Prioritizes Infrastructure Projects in Its Annual Plans but Has Not Submitted the Plans on Time or Used a Consistent Methodology

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### CBP Prioritizes Projects in Five-Year Capital Investment Plans but Has Not Consistently Submitted the Plans as Required

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CBP prioritizes prospective land border crossing projects within its annual Five-Year Land Port of Entry Capital Investment Plan (five-year plan). CBP is statutorily required to complete a detailed five-year plan each fiscal year and include it with its annual budget submission to Congress (i.e., President's budget), which typically occurs in February.<sup>31</sup> Each five-year plan is to cover all federal land border port of entry projects with a

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<sup>30</sup>Pub. L. No. 115-372, 132 Stat. 5107.

<sup>31</sup>The Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act for fiscal year 2009 required beginning in fiscal year 2010 and every year thereafter, that CBP's annual budget submission for construction include, in consultation with GSA, a detailed five-year plan for all federal land border port of entry projects with a yearly update of total projected future funding needs. See: Pub. L. No. 110-329, div. D, tit. II, 122 Stat. 3652, 3658 (2008). The fiscal year 2010 DHS appropriation included the same language. See Pub. L. No. 111-83, tit. II, 123 Stat. 2142, 2148 (2009). In fiscal year 2012, the DHS appropriation included similar language for fiscal year 2012 and thereafter, but also required that the projected future funding needs be delineated by land port of entry. See Pub. L. No. 112-74, div. D, tit. II, 125 Stat. 943, 949 (2011) (classified, as amended, at 6 U.S.C. § 214 note).

yearly update of total projected future funding needs delineated by land port.<sup>32</sup> According to CBP officials, CBP generally completes an initial draft of the five-year plan in November or December each fiscal year and submits it to CBP and GSA leadership, DHS leadership, and the Office and Management and Budget for review and approval. However, our analysis of CBP's five-year plans for fiscal years 2014 through 2018 identified that CBP completed its five-year plan after the annual budget submission in fiscal year 2016 and 2018 and did not complete a plan at all in fiscal year 2017. Specifically, CBP submitted its fiscal year 2016 five-year plan in July 2016—163 days after CBP's annual budget submission—and its fiscal year 2018 plan in October 2018—235 days after CBP's annual budget submission. Table 3 identifies the days between CBP's submission of its five-year plan and budget to Congress in fiscal years 2014 through 2018.

**Table 3: Days between U.S. Customs and Border Protection's (CBP) Five-Year Plan and Annual Budget Submission to Congress**

CBP Five-Year Plans By Fiscal Year	Five-Year Plan Submission Date	Annual Budget Submission Date	Days Between Five-Year Plan and Budget Submission Dates
2014	03/11/2014	03/04/2014	7
2015	02/02/2015	02/02/2015	0
2016	07/21/2016	02/09/2016	163
2017	N/A <sup>a</sup>	05/23/2017	N/A
2018	10/05/2018	02/12/2018	235

Source: GAO analysis of CBP information | GAO-19-534

<sup>a</sup>CBP did not complete or submit a five-year plan in fiscal year 2017.

CBP officials stated they completed the five-year plans after the annual budget submission in fiscal years 2016 and 2018, and did not complete a five-year plan for Congress in fiscal year 2017, due to delays in the review and approval process. CBP officials stated the review and approval process may take several months to complete due to revisions at various stages and competing priorities among stakeholders that may slow the process. Officials also said they have little control over how long it takes stakeholders within CBP leadership, DHS, and the Office of Management and Budget to review and approve the five-year plan. Consequently, according to CBP officials, CBP has not attempted to establish time frames for completing the plan. While we acknowledge that

<sup>32</sup>6 U.S.C. § 214 note.



setting time frames for completing the plan may not guarantee timeliness, establishing time frames for each stakeholder could help measure and assess progress in reviewing and approving the draft plan. *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government* state that management should define objectives so that they are understood at all levels, including by outlining the time frames for achievement of those objectives.<sup>33</sup> By establishing time frames for stakeholders throughout the five-year plan review and approval process, CBP would be better positioned to identify and address sources of delay and could improve its ability to meet statutory reporting requirements by including its five-year plan with its annual budget submission to Congress.

### CBP Has Not Followed a Consistent Methodology for Prioritizing Capital Projects

CBP develops a list of roughly eight to twelve priority land border crossing capital projects each year and presents these projects to Congress in the five-year plan, but the agency has not established a consistent methodology in developing this list. CBP's five year plans note five broad steps CBP follows in developing the list of priority capital projects. These steps are applicable to the entire land border crossing portfolio—regardless of ownership—and include:

1. **Strategic Resource Assessment (SRA):** According to the five-year plan, CBP conducts SRAs cyclically to compare infrastructure requirements across its portfolio and present a uniform picture of capital investment needs at all land border crossings along the northern and southern borders.
2. **Capital Project Scoring:** Using data generated during the SRA, CBP scores and ranks each land border crossing by criticality and relative urgency of infrastructure needs.
3. **Sensitivity Analysis:** CBP then applies a sensitivity analysis and updates its initial ranking based on factors unaccounted for through the SRA, including unique regional conditions, bilateral planning with partners in Canada and Mexico, or interests of other federal, state, or local agencies.
4. **Assess Feasibility and Risk:** CBP coordinates with project stakeholders—including GSA for all GSA-owned land border

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<sup>33</sup>[GAO-14-704G](#)

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crossings—to evaluate the feasibility, risk, and cost associated with project implementation by completing a feasibility study. These studies analyze alternatives and review environmental, cultural, and historic preservation requirements as well as land acquisition requirements and procurement risks. CBP also assesses the likelihood of obtaining funding for the proposed project.

5. **Establish a Five-year Capital Investment Plan:** After the SRA and the scoring, analysis, and assessment phases, CBP prioritizes land border crossing capital projects and develops a five-year capital investment plan in coordination with GSA. CBP updates the plan annually, taking into account the changing conditions at land border crossings.

Although CBP has outlined the five broad steps it uses to prioritize projects, our analysis of CBP's five-year plans for fiscal years 2014 through 2018 identified that CBP did not follow a consistent methodology across the years or across projects when prioritizing prospective land border crossing projects. For example, in some five-year plans CBP prioritized projects by comparing relative need at land border crossings using more recent SRA data for some land border crossings and older data for other land border crossings.<sup>34</sup> In one such instance in fiscal year 2018, CBP compared relative need using 2015 data for some land border crossings and data dating as far back as 2007 for other land border crossings. Although CBP's five-year plan states that CBP performs SRAs cyclically, CBP has not established the frequency at which SRAs are to be completed. In 2015, CBP completed a partial SRA update for 36 of 167 land border crossings that it considered high-priority, but has not completed a portfolio-wide SRA since 2007.

Our analysis of CBP's five-year plans for fiscal years 2014 through 2018 also identified that CBP had feasibility studies for some, but not all,

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<sup>34</sup>As of March 2019, CBP continues to rely on SRA data from 2007 and 2015 to inform its prioritization of capital projects. However, CBP officials noted that they may use more recent data on land border crossings not produced via an SRA as they are available to inform prioritization decisions.

projects listed in the five-year plans.<sup>35</sup> Specifically, our analysis identified that CBP had feasibility studies for approximately two thirds (28 of 41) of the projects it prioritized over these years. CBP officials told us that due to the limited shelf-life of feasibility studies (two to three years), CBP and GSA target high-priority land border crossing projects for feasibility studies that are likely to receive funding within the next two to three years. However, of the top five projects CBP ranked as the highest priority in each of its five-year plans in fiscal years 2014 through 2018, CBP completed feasibility studies for approximately half (12 of 20) of these projects.<sup>36</sup> Further, among the 12 projects CBP ranked in the top five in its fiscal years 2014 through 2018 five-year plans that had feasibility studies, 10 of 12 projects had a feasibility study that was more than five years old when CBP prioritized them.

In addition, CBP prioritized projects on each of its five-year plans by comparing cost estimates developed through different methodologies. Specifically, CBP prioritized projects using detailed cost estimates developed as part of a feasibility study for some projects and order of magnitude cost estimates for projects that do not have a feasibility study

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<sup>35</sup>CBP prioritizes land border crossing projects at all land border crossings regardless of ownership. If CBP chooses to pursue a capital project at a GSA-owned land border crossings, CBP requests that GSA fund and complete a feasibility study. According to GSA officials, GSA generally initiates project feasibility studies at GSA-owned land border crossings when directed to do so by CBP and bases feasibility studies on CBP-identified infrastructure requirements. However, GSA may conduct feasibility studies at GSA-owned land border crossings if an infrastructure need is identified by GSA or another tenant agency at a land border crossing.

<sup>36</sup>To calculate this figure, we reviewed the top five land border crossing projects CBP prioritized in each five-year plan in fiscal years 2014 through 2018 for a total of 20 projects (CBP did not complete a five-year plan in 2017). CBP may prioritize a single land border crossing project in the top five in more than one five-year plan if it remains an unfunded priority from one year to the next. In fiscal years 2014 through 2018, CBP prioritized a total of 12 distinct projects in four separate five-year plans. Among these 12 distinct projects, CBP eventually completed feasibility studies for 10 projects, but in eight separate instances, did not do so before prioritizing these projects on a five-year plan. In some instances, CBP completed a feasibility study for a project after prioritizing it on prior five-year plans. In these cases, we calculated CBP as not having completed feasibility study to inform its prioritization of this project on all prior five-year plans, but calculated CBP as having a completed feasibility study to inform its prioritization of this project on all subsequent five-year plans.

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or that had an out-of-date feasibility study.<sup>37</sup> These order of magnitude cost estimates were significantly different from the cost estimates that were later produced for these projects through feasibility studies. For example, CBP's fiscal year 2015 plan included an order of magnitude cost estimate of \$95 million to implement a single project at two separate crossings—San Luis I and II. However, after completing a feasibility study for the project in October 2017, GSA estimated it would cost \$289 million—a nearly 300 percent cost increase—to complete the project.

CBP outlines the five broad steps it is to take in general to develop a list of priority projects each year and establish an annual five-year plan and these steps are documented at a high level. However, there is not a detailed planning methodology that would help ensure officials consistently and appropriately develop and assess priority projects each year. For example, the five-year plans do not define what minimum steps CBP personnel are to take at each step in the process, such as guidance and procedures on which projects require feasibility studies. The plans also do not include time frames for completing each step, such as establishing expectations for the frequency at which CBP personnel are to update SRA data. As a result, CBP officials told us they rely on informal processes and procedures to complete these steps and prioritize land border crossings in its annual five-year plans. CBP officials acknowledged that they have not issued formal guidance documenting the steps in its prioritization process or establishing procedures and time frames for each step, but stated that they plan to do so going forward. Specifically, officials told us that CBP plans to document its process for prioritizing land border crossing projects to improve transparency, better educate staff on roles and responsibilities, and help ensure CBP consistently applies this process each year. While these would be positive steps, CBP was not able to provide information on specific plans or expected time frames for implementing these steps.

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<sup>37</sup>GSA and CBP develop a total project cost estimate through a feasibility study. These cost estimates are based on project requirements and cover design, site acquisition, and construction, among other costs. CBP and GSA develop order of magnitude cost estimates for projects without defined requirements or a completed feasibility study and base these estimates on the cost of past capital projects at land border crossings similar in size. CBP did not identify whether cost estimates it listed for projects in its five-year plans for fiscal years 2014 through 2016 were produced via a feasibility study or through an order of magnitude estimate based on the size and location of the land border crossing.

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*Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government* state that management should define objectives so that they are understood at all levels by outlining what is to be achieved, how it will be achieved, and the time frames for achievement.<sup>38</sup> The standards also establish that management should implement control activities through documented policies.<sup>39</sup> To achieve this, management should document policies that establish each unit's responsibility for achieving the objectives related to an operational process.

Establishing and documenting a methodology for CBP's annual land border crossing capital prioritization process, including procedures and time frames for each step, could help ensure that CBP identifies key activities needed to prioritize projects and that CBP personnel follow a consistent methodology across projects and across years. For example, such a methodology could help CBP identify which projects require feasibility studies in a given fiscal year, and how they are to use information on project feasibility, risk, and cost when prioritizing projects. Further, having time frames for each step could help CBP determine how often to update SRA data across its portfolio for purposes of comparing relative infrastructure needs at land border crossings. Lastly, establishing and documenting a land border crossing prioritization methodology could help CBP ensure it consistently provides Congress with more up-to-date and complete information in its five-year plans.

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## Recent GSA Capital Projects Generally Experienced Schedule Growth, but Met Cost and Scope Goals; CBP and GSA Reported Some Challenges Developing Projects

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### Most of GSA's 10 Land Border Crossing Projects Experienced Schedule Growth, but Stayed within Cost Contingency Allowances at Full Scope

From fiscal years 2014 through 2018, GSA initiated or completed 10 capital infrastructure projects at eight land border crossings. Among these

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<sup>38</sup> [GAO-14-704G](#)

<sup>39</sup> [GAO-14-704G](#)



projects, six were complete and four were ongoing as of March 2019. Projects at three of these border crossings—Alexandria Bay, Calexico West, and San Ysidro—consist of multiple phases. GSA manages each phase as a distinct project funded under separate congressional appropriations and executed through separate contracts.<sup>40</sup>

Across all 10 projects, the amount of schedule growth against the original schedule baselines ranged from 0 percent growth to 59.2 percent growth, though several of these projects revised their baselines to account for the schedule growth. Half of the projects experienced less than 10 percent schedule growth above their original schedule baselines, and the other half experienced more than 10 percent schedule growth.

When accounting for projects for which schedule baselines were revised, among the 10 projects, six have met or are on track to meet schedule baselines. The Alexandria Bay project, which GSA expects to complete in January 2020, is the only project on track to meet its original schedule baseline.<sup>41</sup> GSA revised its schedule baselines during construction for the remaining five projects and all have met or are on track to meet these revised baselines.<sup>42</sup> More specifically, Calexico West, Derby Line, and Nogales West-Mariposa are the three projects that are complete and met revised schedule baselines. San Ysidro phases II and III are the two ongoing projects that are on track to meet their revised schedule baselines as of January 2019. See table 4 below for a breakdown of project schedule performance.

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<sup>40</sup>For the purposes of this report, we describe each separately funded phase as a distinct project. Project cost, schedule, and scope performance metrics, for the purposes of this report, refer only to the project construction phase.

<sup>41</sup>All projections in this report for expected project completion dates are as of January 2019.

<sup>42</sup>GSA establishes original baselines at the beginning of project construction. GSA may revise schedule baselines due to schedule changes or delays resulting from natural disasters, customer-requested changes, or other major setbacks. GSA leadership must approve all revised schedule baselines.

Table 4: General Services Administration Land Border Crossing Capital Project Schedule Performance, as of January 2019

Project (Phase)	Expected to Meet Original Baseline Date?	Expected to Meet Revised Baseline Date?	Percent Schedule Growth Against Original Baseline	Percent Schedule Growth Against Revised Baseline
Alexandria Bay, NY <i>Phase I</i>	Y	N/A	0.0	N/A
Calexico West, CA <i>Phase I<sup>a</sup></i>	N	Y	16.2	0.0
Columbus, NM	N	N	7.9	1.2
Derby Line, VT <sup>a</sup>	N	Y	16.2	-1.2
Laredo, TX <sup>a</sup>	N	N	7.4	3.5
Nogales West-Mariposa, AZ <sup>a</sup>	N	Y	12.5	0.0
San Ysidro, CA <i>Phase I<sup>a</sup></i>	N	N/A	9.8	N/A
San Ysidro, CA <i>Phase II</i>	N	Y	11.4	0.0
San Ysidro, CA <i>Phase III</i>	N	Y	2.3	0.0
Tornillo-Guadalupe, TX <sup>a</sup>	N	N	59.2	10.1

Source: GAO analysis of General Services Administration data | GAO-19-534

<sup>a</sup>Capital project is complete.

Note: "N/A" = not applicable. Percent schedule growth is measured by determining the amount of time a project is completed after its schedule baseline, and dividing this amount by the project's total planned duration. Because some projects are still ongoing, the expected completion date as of January 2019 is used for those projects. Projects without data for revised baselines are still using their original schedule baselines.

Four of GSA's 10 projects did not meet, or are not expected to meet, their schedule baselines. The Tornillo-Guadalupe project experienced the most schedule growth of the projects we reviewed. GSA completed the Tornillo-Guadalupe project in October 2014, 470 days later than its original baseline in July 2013 and 80 days later than its August 2014 revised baseline. Schedule growth at Tornillo-Guadalupe was primarily due to delays in the construction of corresponding Mexican infrastructure, unstable soil conditions, and contractor performance, according to GSA

officials.<sup>43</sup> In addition to Tornillo-Guadalupe, the San Ysidro I and Laredo projects did not meet their schedule baselines, and the Columbus project is not on track to meet its schedule baseline, as of January 2019. Of the four projects that experienced schedule growth against their final schedule baselines, two projects had less than 5 percent growth and two projects had about 10 percent growth.

While none of the 10 projects kept costs at or below baselines, eight projects stayed within their 10 percent cost contingency allowance.<sup>44</sup> The Tornillo-Guadalupe and Derby Line projects both exceeded their cost contingency allowance. GSA completed the Tornillo-Guadalupe project in October 2014 at a final construction cost of \$59 million—18.7 percent above its cost baseline—due to challenges described above. GSA completed the Derby Line project in November 2018 with a final construction cost of \$26.4 million—10.6 percent above its cost baseline—mainly due to CBP-requested changes, according to GSA officials.<sup>45</sup> The total baseline construction cost for all 10 projects, as of January 2019, is \$1.03 billion and the combined current contract value is \$1.09 billion—which is about \$62.9 million (6.1 percent) over baseline budgets. See table 5 below for a breakdown of project cost performance.

**Table 5: General Services Administration Land Border Crossing Capital Project Cost Performance, as of January 2019 (dollars in millions)**

Project	Met Cost Baseline	Stayed Within 10% Cost Contingency	Construction Cost Baseline (\$)	Current Contract Amount (\$)	Percent Above Baseline
Alexandria Bay, NY Phase I	N	Y	90.9	91.8	1.0
Calexico West, CA Phase I	N	Y	88.9	<b>94.6</b>	6.4
Columbus, NM	N	Y	67.9	70.2	3.3

<sup>43</sup>For the purposes of this report, construction completion date refers to each project's substantial complete date, which is the date GSA considers the project space suitable for occupancy.

<sup>44</sup>Construction contingency is an allowance for changes to costs that may occur during construction as a result of unexpected circumstances or incomplete design documents. Depending on the type of capital project, contingency of 7 to 10 percent is included in the project budget. OMB's Capital Programming Guide indicates that, as a general guide, a cost variance of plus or minus 10 percent or more should trigger formal reporting so that management can take corrective action. Therefore, for the purposes of this report, cost performance for all select projects was measured against 10 percent cost contingency.

<sup>45</sup>While CBP-requested changes are typically paid through CBP-funded Reimbursable Work Authorizations, in this case GSA agreed to cover the costs because it had sufficient budget available.

Project	Met Cost Baseline	Stayed Within 10% Cost Contingency	Construction Cost Baseline (\$)	Current Contract Amount (\$)	Percent Above Baseline
Derby Line, VT	N	N	23.9	26.4	10.6
Laredo, TX	N	Y	92.9	98.8	6.3
Nogales West-Mariposa, AZ	N	Y	139.3	<b>146.9</b>	5.5
San Ysidro, CA Phase I	N	Y	160.0	<b>168.8</b>	5.5
San Ysidro, CA Phase II	N	Y	148.0	153.5	3.8
San Ysidro, CA Phase III	N	Y	166.9	181.2	8.6
Tornillo-Guadalupe, TX	N	N	49.7	<b>59.0</b>	18.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>0 of 10</b>	<b>8 of 10</b>	<b>1,028.3</b>	<b>1,091.2</b>	<b>6.1</b>

Source: GAO analysis of General Services Administration data | GAO-19-534

Note: Current Contract Amounts in bold represent final costs for completed projects.

GSA has completed, or expects to complete, nine out of the 10 projects at full scope. GSA reduced scope for one project—Laredo, TX—due to cost concerns after the construction contract award. During Laredo project construction, GSA removed plans to build a footbridge spanning the passenger vehicle primary lanes and cosmetic finishes to buildings to avoid further cost overruns, according to GSA and CBP officials. See appendix II for detailed descriptions of the ten projects.

## GSA and CBP Reported Facing Various Challenges Related to Planning, Designing, and Constructing Infrastructure Projects at Land Border Crossings

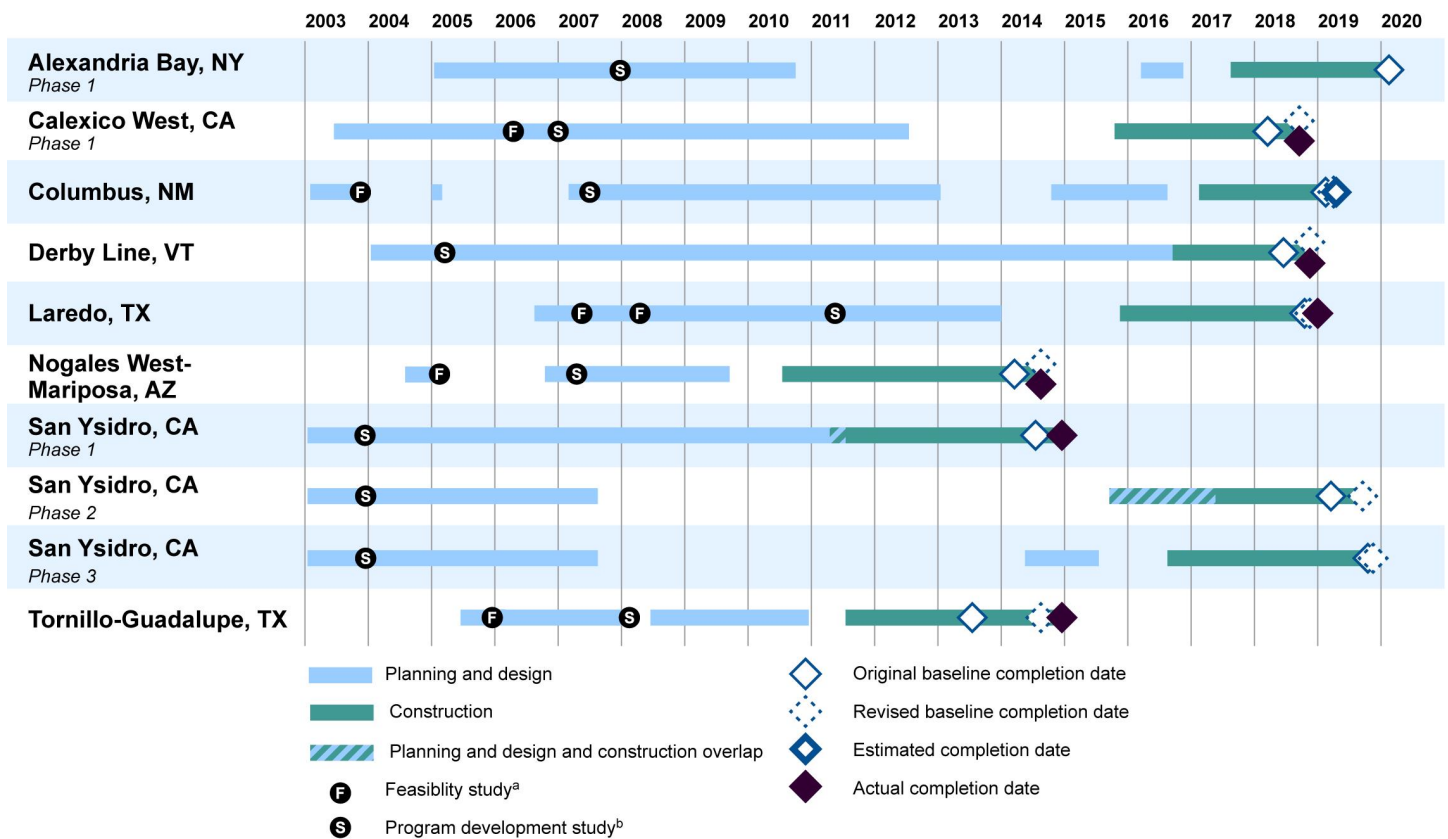
### Project Challenges During Planning and Design

GSA reported facing challenges planning and designing land border crossing capital projects. These challenges included delays between design and construction and the division of large projects into smaller phases, which GSA officials reported led to higher costs and longer development timelines.

**Funding Lags.** GSA officials reported that funding lags between project design and construction can increase costs and extend construction timelines. GSA has requested separate appropriations for project design and construction using a model known as design-bid-build, which created

the potential for funding lags to occur.<sup>46</sup> According to CBP and GSA officials, the process from requesting an infrastructure project to completing the project lasts approximately 7 years. However, GSA experienced funding lags of up to 10 years between design and construction. Figure 16 identifies development timelines from initial planning through construction for our 10 selected land border crossing capital projects.

**Figure 16: General Services Administration (GSA) Land Border Crossing Project Development Timelines as of January 2019**



Source: GAO analysis of General Services Administration information. | GAO-19-534

<sup>a</sup>GSA conducts feasibility studies at U.S. Customs and Border Protection's (CBP) request to determine the technical and economic viability of a project, identify what infrastructure improvements may be necessary, and determine the project's estimated cost.

<sup>46</sup>Under the design-bid-build delivery method, GSA requests funding from Congress for design, and solicits and contracts with a design firm to develop a 100-percent design. Then, GSA requests funding for construction, and once received, solicits and contracts with a construction contractor.



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<sup>b</sup>As part of a program development study, GSA and CBP refine the project created in the feasibility study to provide the necessary information to pursue construction funding. The study is to review and update project plans and budgets, and propose an implementation strategy for the project.

Note: "Completion date" refers to each project's substantial complete date, which is the date the project space is suitable for occupancy. Years without the presence of timelines indicate an absence of specific planning, design, or construction activity. According to GSA and CBP officials, these may be caused by a variety of factors, including funding delays or changing CBP priorities.

The cost of labor and materials can escalate when funding lags occur between design and construction. For example, after completing design for the Calexico West project, GSA requested construction funding in fiscal year 2010, but did not receive funding until five years later. As a result, estimated construction costs escalated from \$78.5 to \$90.8 million (16 percent). To keep project cost estimates up-to-date during funding lags, GSA officials explained that GSA typically increases project cost estimates over time to account for inflation, changes in the labor market, and the cost of materials, among other factors. To help address cost escalation, contractors have purchased materials upfront, and GSA has combined projects that would otherwise be constructed separately. To address increasing materials costs for the Alexandria Bay project, the contractor purchased steel upfront in order to avoid future cost increases due to import tariffs, according to GSA officials. The Laredo project faced significant labor and material cost growth due to a boom in the Texas construction market. As a result, GSA decided to combine the two Laredo crossings into one contract to lock in prices and avoid paying higher prices in the future.

According to GSA officials, funding lags between design and construction may result in outdated project designs that do not reflect newer CBP infrastructure requirements. In such instances, GSA must invest additional time and resources to update project designs and incorporate new CBP requirements, such as newer inspection technologies or facilities. According to GSA officials, design refreshes can be challenging due to a lack of continuity and staff turnover at the architecture and engineering firms that originally designed the project. In some instances, according to GSA officials, the original firms may not be available or interested in redesigning the project and GSA may need to hire a new firm. For example, GSA spent \$3.3 million on design for the Columbus project in fiscal years 2007 and 2009. However, the funding lag between design and construction required a \$7.4 million design refresh in fiscal year 2014.<sup>47</sup> In another example, GSA established the Calexico West

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<sup>47</sup>In this case, Congress not funding any land border crossing capital projects from fiscal years 2011 through 2013, as well as changing CBP priorities, resulted in an extended development timeline.

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project's design concept in fiscal year 2007, but didn't receive construction funding until fiscal year 2015. According to officials, GSA had to spend approximately \$1 million for a design refresh to account for new CBP requirements, which resulted in a longer development timeline.

To address risks of funding lags with the design-bid-build approach, GSA has shifted toward using contract vehicles for land border crossing capital projects that combine design and construction into a single appropriation.<sup>48</sup> This approach allows for more precise planning, less risk from delays, and less time for costs to escalate, according to GSA officials.

**Project Phasing.** According to GSA officials, OMB may request that GSA and CBP divide large projects into separate phases when high-cost projects are unlikely to be funded in a single appropriation. For example, of the eight border crossing locations represented across the 10 projects in our review, CBP and GSA broke three projects at three locations into phases to obtain approval: Alexandria Bay, Calexico West, and San Ysidro.

However, for similar reasons as those related to funding lags between design and construction, breaking up projects into smaller phases can increase overall costs and add years to project timelines. According to GSA and CBP officials, when appropriations do not align with project schedules, contractors may leave the site after completing a single phase to pursue new work opportunities. Additionally, by the time GSA receives appropriations for latter phases, the contractor must remobilize equipment and labor, costs of labor and material may have increased, and projects may need design refreshes, as described above. For example, after Calexico West phase II remained unfunded two years after phase I was completed, GSA estimated that project costs increased by \$27.7 million due to increases in labor and materials and potential redesign work. In another example, GSA officials told us that after originally designing the Alexandria Bay project as a single-phase in 2010, OMB directed GSA to break the project into two phases in 2014 to increase the likelihood of funding. According to GSA officials, redesigning Alexandria Bay as a two-

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<sup>48</sup>These include both design-build and construction manager as constructor contract vehicles. Under the design-build method, GSA contracts with a single firm to provide both design and construction services. Under the construction manager as constructor method, GSA contracts with separate design and construction firms concurrently, under separate contracts.

phase project added as much as \$16.5 million to total project costs. Construction costs escalated by about \$58.4 million from the single-phase estimate in fiscal year 2011 to fiscal year 2017 when phase I construction began, an increase of 36 percent. Further, completing the Alexandria Bay project in two phases added an additional three years to the project timeline.

While breaking projects into phases can potentially lead to higher costs, GSA officials told us that doing so can be an effective way to start work on a large capital project when funding for the entire project is not available in a single year and can be cost effective when GSA receives appropriations for each phase in line with its planned schedule.

### Project Challenges During Construction

GSA and CBP have reported facing challenges constructing land border crossing projects, including those related to CBP-requested changes, geographical and environmental factors, and inadequate or incomplete infrastructure in neighboring countries.

**CBP Change Requests.** CBP may request modifications to ongoing projects through Reimbursable Work Authorizations to meet changing infrastructure requirements, such as incorporating newer technologies and CBP design standards.<sup>49</sup> These requests range from installing new information technology and security equipment to enhancing office, holding facilities, or public-facing areas of the port. CBP change requests are often necessary because the span between design and construction can last up to 10 years, according to CBP and GSA officials. While CBP typically pays for the cost of these modifications, GSA must incorporate changes into existing project plans, which can result in schedule growth, according to GSA officials. CBP-requested changes led to cost and/or schedule growth at the Calexico West, Columbus, Derby Line, Nogales West-Mariposa, and San Ysidro land border crossing projects, according to GSA officials. In one example, GSA revised the Nogales West-Mariposa project's schedule baseline from March 2014 to August 2014 to incorporate a \$10 million Reimbursable Work Authorization from CBP that added an outbound inspection facility.

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<sup>49</sup>According to CBP officials, CBP updates its land port of entry design standards every 2 to 3 years. Officials said a project is bound by the design standards established when the design is funded, and there is not a requirement to update designs to current standards for construction; however, efforts are made to update what is feasible.

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**Environmental and geographical challenges.** Environmental and geographical factors including extreme climates, remote locations, and limited space, can create construction challenges, according to CBP and GSA officials. Extreme climates can disrupt construction activities, such as concrete work at land border crossings. CBP officials said that at some southern crossings concrete may crack when it dries too quickly due to extreme heat, requiring contractors to pour concrete in the early morning when temperatures are cooler. However, officials said that because this work typically occurs outside of regular business hours, it often comes at a premium and can increase project costs. Along the northern border, contractors may not be able to do concrete work during the winter months because temperatures can be too cold to pour concrete. At Derby Line, because of delays earlier in construction, work extended into an additional winter season, contributing to cost and schedule growth because contractors were slowed or limited by weather, according to GSA officials.

Environmental conditions surrounding construction sites also led to construction challenges, and in turn, cost and schedule growth. The area surrounding the Columbus land border crossing is prone to severe flooding, and major flood events have forced CBP to close the port several times a year, according to GSA officials. Officials also said flooding posed a potential risk of deteriorating port structures. After GSA spent \$3.3 million to develop the original design, it spent an additional \$7.4 million on a design refresh to incorporate flood protection and update CBP requirements to prepare for construction. In another example, GSA and the contractor discovered unstable soil conditions during the Tornillo-Guadalupe project that resulted in a two month delay and \$1.3 million cost increase (about 3 percent of the project budget) to mitigate.

GSA officials told us they may also experience challenges accessing labor, materials, and utilities for projects at remote land border crossings. For example, Alexandria Bay's remote location created logistical challenges for transporting concrete to the site. Because the land border crossing is on an island and only accessible via toll bridge, the contractor determined it was more cost effective to construct a temporary concrete plant onsite. GSA officials also stated the labor market in Alexandria Bay is limited—due in part to its remoteness—and that labor costs were high because the contractor had to temporarily relocate its employees to the area. In another example, officials reported challenges with transporting construction materials to the Tornillo-Guadalupe site due to its remote location, contributing to 2.5 months in schedule growth.

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Natural features and dense population centers surrounding land border crossings can create challenges for contractors during construction. For example, the Alexandria Bay project—which will triple the crossing’s footprint when complete—required contractors to blast massive rock formations to create more room for facilities. GSA officials stated the rock removal entailed significant coordination with CBP because GSA required CBP to temporarily halt vehicle processing for safety reasons when GSA’s contractor was using dynamite. Officials also told us that snow removal is a challenge at Alexandria Bay because there are limited places to put plowed snow without impeding traffic and interrupting CBP operations.

**Corresponding international infrastructure.** Inadequate or incomplete infrastructure in neighboring countries can lead to project delays. GSA officials explained that because land border crossings on both sides of the border need to connect, capital infrastructure projects in the United States are largely dependent on the readiness of Mexican or Canadian infrastructure. For example, GSA completed the Tornillo-Guadalupe project in October 2014, but delayed opening cargo processing facilities due to Mexico’s delays in completing its new commercial facilities and bridge system required for commercial traffic. As a result, CBP did not begin processing inbound cargo at Tornillo-Guadalupe until March 2016—16 months after it began processing passenger vehicles. Furthermore, after processing 277 trucks in 14 months, CBP suspended commercial inspection operations in May 2017, citing low traffic volumes. CBP officials said that commercial transporters were unwilling to use underdeveloped Mexican infrastructure in the region, leading to low commercial traffic volumes, and in turn, CBP’s decision to suspend commercial operations. Similarly, GSA had to delay work for 3 months on the Calxico West project because Mexico was behind schedule on its infrastructure project, according to GSA officials. To address this issue, GSA slowed work in that area and Mexico accelerated its schedule so that GSA and Mexico could complete their sections simultaneously.

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## Conclusions

CBP is charged with facilitating billions of dollars in trade and travel at the nation’s border, while also preventing terrorists, criminals and other inadmissible individuals from entering the country. Given that CBP relies on infrastructure at land border crossings to fulfill its mission, maintaining the condition of the infrastructure is critical and can also be challenging, as many land border crossings were built more than 70 years ago. By

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developing and implementing a plan to ensure CBP executes its FCA program to assess the condition of infrastructure at CBP-owned land border crossings consistent with DHS policy, CBP would be able to maintain more complete and current information on its overall infrastructure needs. Also, given that GSA owns many of the land border crossings out of which CBP operates, sharing and using certain relevant information with each other—such as their respective facility assessments and repairs at land border crossings—could help both agencies improve the accuracy and completeness of their respective assessments of facility condition.

Additionally, while CBP develops five-year plans to prioritize capital projects at land border crossings, establishing time frames for stakeholders who review and approve the plans would better position CBP to identify and address sources of delay and could improve its ability to complete a plan each year and include it in the budget submission to Congress. Furthermore, by also establishing a methodology for prioritizing its capital projects—including key required procedures and time frames—CBP could better ensure consistency in its approach from year to year.

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## Recommendations for Executive Action

We are making a total of seven recommendations, including five to CBP and two to GSA:

The CBP Commissioner, in conjunction with the DHS Office of the Chief Readiness Support Officer, should develop and implement a plan to ensure that CBP executes its FCA program by conducting FCAs at each CBP-owned land border crossing consistent with DHS Directive 119-02-004. (Recommendation 1)

The CBP Commissioner should share FCA reports with GSA and use facility condition information in GSA's Building Assessment Tool to inform FCAs. (Recommendation 2)

The GSA Administrator should share Building Assessment Tool reports with CBP and use facility condition information in CBP's FCAs to inform its assessments through the Building Assessment Tool. (Recommendation 3)



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The GSA Administrator, in conjunction with CBP, should share with CBP information on GSA maintenance and repair work at GSA-owned land border crossings at the level of detail necessary to inform CBP's data in TRIRIGA. (Recommendation 4)

The CBP Commissioner should use information on maintenance and repair work conducted by GSA at GSA-owned land border crossings to update facility condition information in TRIRIGA on an ongoing basis. (Recommendation 5)

The CBP Commissioner should establish review time frames for stakeholders involved in its Five-year Capital Investment Plan review and approval process. (Recommendation 6)

The CBP Commissioner should establish and document a methodology for its annual land border crossing capital prioritization process that includes procedures and time frames for each step. (Recommendation 7)

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## Agency Comments and Our Evaluation

We provided a copy of this report to DHS and GSA for review and comment. DHS and GSA provided comments, which are reproduced in full in appendix III and appendix IV, respectively, and discussed below. DHS also provided technical comments, which we incorporated as appropriate.

In its comments, DHS and GSA concurred with our seven recommendations and described actions planned to address them.

With respect to our first recommendation that CBP develop and implement a plan to execute FCAs at CBP-owned land border crossings consistent with DHS Directive 119-02-004, DHS stated that CBP intends to develop a plan for completing FCAs at CBP-owned land border crossings consistent with the Directive.

With regard to our second recommendation that CBP share FCA reports with GSA and use GSA's Building Assessment Tool to inform CBP FCAs, DHS stated that CBP plans to provide FCA data to GSA. DHS also stated it has already begun receiving Building Assessment tool reports from GSA and will determine how to best use the information to inform CBP FCAs.

With respect to our third recommendation that GSA share Building Assessment Tool reports with CBP and use CBP's FCAs to inform its assessments, GSA stated it is developing a plan to share Building Assessment Tool information and use FCA information to inform its assessments.

With regard to our fourth recommendation that GSA share information on its maintenance and repair work at GSA-owned land border crossings at the level of detail necessary to inform CBP's data in TRIRIGA, GSA stated it will develop a plan to share information on GSA maintenance and repair work at the level of detail necessary to inform CBP's data in TRIRIGA.

With respect to our fifth recommendation that CBP use information on maintenance and repair work conducted by GSA at land border crossings and update facility condition information in TRIRIGA on an ongoing basis, DHS stated it has already begun receiving data from GSA on corrective maintenance work at land border crossings and that CBP will develop a plan for updating facility condition information in TRIRIGA using the data.

With regard to our sixth recommendation that CBP establish time frames for stakeholders involved in its Five-year Capital Investment Plan review and approval process, DHS stated that CBP will establish a policy that outlines time frames for stakeholders involved in the review and approval process.

DHS also concurred with our seventh recommendation that CBP establish and document a methodology for its annual land border crossing capital prioritization process that includes procedures and time frames for each step. Specifically, DHS stated that CBP will document the process and procedures, and provide time frames, for each step in the process.

We are sending copies of this report to the appropriate congressional committees, the Acting Secretary of Homeland Security, and the Administrator of the General Services Administration. In addition, this report is available at no charge on the GAO website at <http://www.gao.gov>.

If you or your staff have any questions about this report, please contact me at 202-512-8777 or [gablerr@gao.gov](mailto:gablerr@gao.gov). Contact points for our Office of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last

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page of our report. GAO staff who made key contributions to this report are listed in appendix V.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebecca Gambler". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name and last name clearly distinguishable.

Rebecca Gambler  
Director, Homeland Security and Justice

# Appendix I: U.S. Land Border Crossings along the Northern and Southern Borders

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) operates at 167 land border crossings along the northern and southern borders. Of the 167 land border crossings, CBP owns 40. The General Services Administration (GSA) fully owns 101, partially owns three, and leases 19. The National Park Service owns two and the U.S. Forest Service owns one. One land border crossing is privately owned. Further, CBP and GSA have assessed the condition of 95 of the 167 land border crossings along the northern and southern borders and calculated a facility condition index (0-10% good, 10-20% fair, 20-30% poor, and 30-100% critical) and identified the total cost of infrastructure deficiencies at each crossing. Table 6 identifies land border crossings by name, state, ownership, year constructed, the year last renovated, facility condition index score, and the cost of known infrastructure deficiencies, according to CBP data, and is for informational purposes only.

**Table 6: List of U.S. Northern and Southern Land Border Crossings and Facility Conditions, as of December 2018**

Land Border Crossing Name and State	Ownership	Year Constructed	Year Last Modernized	Facility Condition Index (%)	Total Cost of Infrastructure Deficiencies (\$)
Alcan, Alaska	General Services Administration (GSA)	1974	N/A	56	3,809,500
Dalton Cache, Alaska	GSA	1979	N/A	29	1,275,450
Poker Creek, Alaska	GSA	1999	N/A	N/A	N/A
Skagway, Alaska	GSA	1976	1994	51	1,570,034
Raul Hector Castro - Douglas, Arizona	GSA	1936	1993	13	2,320,932
Lukeville, Arizona	GSA	1976	N/A	28	2,090,300
Naco, Arizona	GSA	1936	1995	21	1,438,766
Nogales East, Arizona – DeConcini and Morley Gate	GSA	1935	1998	18	3,173,367
Nogales West, Arizona - Mariposa,	GSA	1973	2014	5	3,538,436

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San Luis II, Arizona	GSA	2010	N/A	7	2,183,819
San Luis, Arizona	GSA	1984	N/A	34	5,444,082
Sasabe, Arizona	GSA	1937	1997	25	1,034,348
Andrade, California	GSA Owned/GSA Leased	1958	1992	6	244,603
Calexico East, California - Imperial Valley	GSA	1996	N/A	15	8,702,854
Calexico West, California – Downtown	GSA	1933	2018	N/A	N/A
Cross Border Express, California	Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Leased from Private Owners	2015	N/A	N/A	N/A
Otay Mesa, California	GSA	1984	1994	17	14,114,553
San Ysidro, California	GSA	1932	2019 <sup>a</sup>	N/A	N/A
Tecate, California	GSA	1933	2005	7	945,372
Eastport, Idaho	GSA	1989	N/A	N/A	N/A
Porthill, Idaho	GSA	1967	N/A	2	231,165
Bridgewater, Maine	CBP	1976	2012	N/A	N/A
Calais, Maine - Ferry Point	GSA	1935	2008	15	769,759
Calais, Maine - Int'l Avenue	GSA	2009	N/A	4	1,152,296
Calais, Maine - Milltown	GSA	1940	N/A	2	9,278
Coburn Gore, Maine	GSA	1932	N/A	7	167,086
Easton, Maine	CBP	2001	2012	N/A	N/A
Estcourt, Maine - St. Francis	GSA Leased	1953	N/A	69	152,947
Forest City, Maine	CBP	1965	2013	N/A	N/A
Fort Fairfield, Maine	GSA	1933	1990	19	322,983
Fort Kent, Maine	GSA	1981	N/A	16	496,102
Hamlin, Maine	CBP	1972	2012	N/A	N/A
Houlton, Maine	GSA	1985	N/A	10	1,138,239
Jackman, Maine	GSA	1963	2010	N/A	N/A
Limestone, Maine	GSA	1933	1990	31	246,167
Lubec, Maine	GSA Leased	1964	N/A	17	177,140
Madawaska, Maine	GSA	1959	N/A	15	328,834
Monticello, Maine	CBP	1970	N/A	N/A	N/A
Orient, Maine	GSA	1974	N/A	13	156,539
St. Aurelie, Maine	GSA Leased	1963	2001	0	2,728

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St. Juste, Maine	GSA Leased	2004	N/A	0	0
St. Pamphile, Maine	GSA	1995	N/A	N/A	N/A
St. Zacharie, Maine	GSA Leased	2004	N/A	3	18,023
Van Buren, Maine	GSA	1965	2013	0	85,734
Vanceboro, Maine	GSA	1964	N/A	28	676,076
Detroit, Michigan - Ambassador Bridge	GSA Owned/GSA Leased	1984	2006 (Cargo)	3	1,065,326
Detroit, Michigan - Windsor Tunnel	GSA Leased	1977	N/A	17	1,319,347
Port Huron, Michigan - Blue Water Bridge	GSA Leased	1996	N/A	7	1,097,796
Sault St. Marie, Michigan	GSA	2005	N/A	5	703,670
Baudette, Minnesota	GSA	1997	N/A	N/A	N/A
Crane Lake, Minnesota	GSA Leased	1953	N/A	N/A	N/A
Ely, Minnesota	U.S. Forest Service	1993	N/A	N/A	N/A
Grand Portage, Minnesota	GSA	1965	N/A	54	1,921,378
International Falls, Minnesota	GSA	1991	2003	3	122,501
Lancaster, Minnesota	CBP	2004	N/A	N/A	N/A
Pinecreek, Minnesota	CBP	1958	2012	N/A	N/A
Roseau, Minnesota	CBP	2004	N/A	N/A	N/A
Warroad, Minnesota	GSA	1962	2010	N/A	N/A
Chief Mountain, Montana	GSA	1938	1940	18	407,353
Del Bonita, Montana	CBP	1962	2012	N/A	N/A
Goat Haunt, Montana	National Park Service	1965	N/A	N/A	N/A
Morgan, Montana	CBP	1963	2011	N/A	N/A
Opheim, Montana	CBP	2004	N/A	N/A	N/A
Piegan, Montana	GSA	2000	N/A	0	3,408
Raymond, Montana	GSA	2005	N/A	3	225,630
Roosville, Montana	GSA	2002	N/A	5	380,654
Scobey, Montana	CBP	1978	2011	N/A	N/A
Sweetgrass, Montana	GSA	2004	N/A	N/A	N/A
Turner, Montana	GSA	1992	N/A	5	96,870
Whitlash, Montana	CBP	1974	2013	N/A	N/A
Wild Horse, Montana	CBP	1964	2011	N/A	N/A
Willow Creek, Montana	CBP	2004	N/A	N/A	N/A



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Pittsburg, New Hampshire	CBP	1960	2011	N/A	N/A
Antelope Wells, New Mexico	CBP	1971	2013	1	39,720
Columbus, New Mexico	GSA	1989	2019 <sup>a</sup>	N/A	N/A
Santa Teresa, New Mexico	GSA	1997	N/A	19	3,588,118
Alexandria Bay, New York - Thousand Islands	GSA	1974	2020 <sup>a</sup>	N/A	N/A
Buffalo, New York - Peace Bridge	GSA Leased	1927	1998	13	3,177,504
Cannons Corner, New York	CBP	1974	2012	N/A	N/A
Champlain, New York	GSA	1967	2009	N/A	N/A
Chateaugay, New York	GSA	1932	N/A	35	1,055,241
Churubusco, New York	CBP	1968	2012	N/A	N/A
Fort Covington, New York	GSA	1933	N/A	28	697,812
Massena, New York	GSA	1952	2010	N/A	N/A
Mooers, New York	GSA	1933	N/A	58	936,691
Niagara Falls, New York - Lewiston Bridge	GSA Leased	1961	N/A	57	6,860,494
Niagara Falls, New York - Rainbow Bridge	GSA Leased	2000	N/A	8	1,597,598
Niagara Falls, New York - Whirlpool Rapids	GSA Leased	1897	2018	14	895,555
Ogdensburg, New York	GSA Leased	2003	N/A	25	4,330,204
Overton Corners, New York - Route 276	GSA	1933	N/A	N/A	N/A
Rouses Point, New York - St. John's Highway	GSA	1933	N/A	16	1,074,802
Trout River, New York	GSA	1931	N/A	48	1,395,732
Ambrose, North Dakota	GSA	1931	2006	30	307,348
Antler, North Dakota	CBP	1961	2011	N/A	N/A
Carbury, North Dakota	CBP	1963	2011	N/A	N/A
Dunseith, North Dakota	GSA	1974	N/A	7	203,062
Fortuna, North Dakota	CBP	2004	N/A	N/A	N/A
Hannah, North Dakota	CBP	1961	2012	N/A	N/A
Hansboro, North Dakota	CBP	1963	2011	N/A	N/A
Maida, North Dakota	CBP	1961	2011	N/A	N/A
Neché, North Dakota	CBP	1965	2011	N/A	N/A
Noonan, North Dakota	CBP	1975	2011	N/A	N/A

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Northgate, North Dakota	CBP	2004	N/A	N/A	N/A
Pembina, North Dakota	GSA	1999	N/A	N/A	N/A
Portal, North Dakota	GSA	1934	2013	0	71,817
Sarles, North Dakota	CBP	1961	2012	N/A	N/A
Sherwood, North Dakota	CBP	1981	2011	N/A	N/A
St. John, North Dakota	GSA	1931	2005	N/A	N/A
Walhalla, North Dakota	CBP	1962	2011	N/A	N/A
Westhope, North Dakota	CBP	1974	2011	N/A	N/A
Amistad Dam, Texas	CBP	1969	2013	4	119,959
Boquillas, Texas	National Park Service	2013	N/A	N/A	N/A
Bridge of the Americas (BOTA) , Texas	GSA	1967	2003	13	5,128,387
Brownsville, Texas - Brownsville and Matamoros (B&M)	GSA	1991	N/A	9	818,791
Brownsville, Texas - Gateway International Bridge	GSA	1950	1989	9	1,573,582
Brownsville, Texas - Los Tomates - Veterans International Bridge	GSA	1999	N/A	N/A	N/A
Del Rio, Texas	GSA	1967	2009	N/A	N/A
Donna, Texas	GSA	2010	N/A	N/A	N/A
Eagle Pass I, Texas - Piedras Negras Bridge	GSA	1960	2006	14	1,683,176
Eagle Pass II, Texas	GSA Owned/GSA Leased	1999	N/A	6	1,358,730
Tornillo-Guadalupe (Fabens), Texas	GSA	2014	N/A	N/A	N/A
Falcon Dam, Texas	CBP	1953	N/A	20	1,397,553
Fort Hancock, Texas	GSA	2003	N/A	1	51,583
Hidalgo, Texas	GSA Leased	1982	N/A	22	3,138,003
Laredo Bridge I, Texas - Convent St.	GSA	1943	2018	N/A	N/A
Laredo Bridge II, Texas - Lincoln Juarez	GSA	1974	2019	6	1,731,485
Laredo Bridge III, Texas – Colombia Solidarity	GSA	1991	N/A	13	4,400,874

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Laredo Bridge IV, Texas - World Trade Bridge	GSA	2000	N/A	N/A	N/A
Los Ebanos Ferry, Texas	CBP	1979	2013	0	3,846
Los Indios, Texas - Free Trade Bridge	GSA	1992	N/A	9	2,634,919
McAllen Anzalduas, Texas	GSA	2009	N/A	N/A	N/A
Paso Del Norte, Texas - Santa Fe Street Bridge	GSA	1967	2009	3	680,263
Pharr, Texas	GSA	1996	N/A	14	4,488,897
Presidio, Texas	GSA Leased	1988	2001	10	1,154,532
Progreso, Texas - B&P Bridge	GSA Leased	1982	N/A	15	1,105,623
Rio Grande City, Texas - Starr-Camargo Bridge	GSA Leased	1966	2001	9	989,067
Roma, Texas - Starr County International Bridge	GSA Leased	1989	N/A	13	862,152
Stanton Street DCL, Texas - Good Neighbor Bridge	GSA Leased	1999	N/A	8	281,606
Ysleta, Texas	GSA	1991	1996	12	5,976,049
Alburt Springs, Vermont	GSA	1935	N/A	28	341,046
Alburt, Vermont	GSA	1988	N/A	41	385,123
Beebe Plain, Vermont	GSA	1937	N/A	22	163,355
Beecher Falls, Vermont	GSA	1932	N/A	6	120,879
Canaan, Vermont	GSA	1933	N/A	19	240,151
Derby Line, Vermont - I-91	GSA	1965	2018	N/A	N/A
Derby Line, Vermont - Route 5	GSA	1931	N/A	35	596,608
East Richford, Vermont - Route 105	GSA	1931	N/A	34	950,123
Highgate Springs, Vermont	GSA	1997	N/A	24	2,785,961
Morses Line, Vermont	CBP	1934	N/A	N/A	N/A
North Troy, Vermont	GSA	2005	N/A	N/A	N/A
Norton, Vermont	GSA	1932	2007	10	339,109
Pinnacle Road, Vermont	CBP	1971	2011	N/A	N/A
Richford, Vermont - Route 139	GSA	1932	N/A	26	641,196
West Berkshire, Vermont	GSA	1934	N/A	29	479,357
Blaine, Washington - Pacific Highway	GSA	1999	2005	N/A	N/A

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Blaine, Washington - Peace Arch	GSA	1978	2011	N/A	N/A
Boundary, Washington	CBP	1978	2013	N/A	N/A
Danville, Washington - Carson	GSA	1988	N/A	N/A	N/A
Ferry, Washington - Curlew	GSA	1936	1980	N/A	N/A
Frontier, Washington	CBP	1956	2011	N/A	N/A
Laurier, Washington	GSA	1935	1981	18	292,343
Lynden, Washington	GSA	1988	N/A	18	850,596
Metaline Falls, Washington	GSA	1931	N/A	24	278,894
Nighthawk, Washington	CBP	1962	2012	N/A	N/A
Oroville, Washington	GSA	2005	N/A	N/A	N/A
Point Roberts, Washington	GSA	1997	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sumas, Washington	GSA	1988	N/A	3	156,991

Source: GAO analysis of U.S. Customs and Border Protection data | GAO-19-534

<sup>a</sup>Land border crossing is currently undergoing a capital infrastructure project. Crossings with ongoing projects listing the "year last modernized" as 2019 or later are based on expected completion dates as of January 2019.

Note: "N/A" = not applicable

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# Appendix II: Land Border Crossing Project Profiles

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## Overview of Recent GSA Land Border Crossing Capital Projects

To provide an overview of recent land border crossing capital infrastructure projects, we developed a profile for each project that was active during fiscal years 2014 through 2018.<sup>1</sup> These profiles contain background information on each crossing, along with basic travel, trade, and law enforcement data. Each profile also contains information on how infrastructure constraints affected U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) operations, and how CBP and the General Services Administration (GSA) addressed those constraints through the capital project. Finally, the profiles include an assessment of project cost and schedule performance.

We compiled information in the following project profiles from a variety of federal sources. We provide background information on each land border crossing in the “At A Glance” section of each profile. Some land ports of entry contain multiple land border crossings. While each project, and associated project performance data, refers to a single crossing unless otherwise noted, all throughput and trade data in this section is provided at the port-level.<sup>2</sup> Law enforcement data are provided at the port-level,

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<sup>1</sup>GSA’s Public Buildings Service Cost and Schedule Management Policy Requirements state that earned value management—through which GSA tracks cost, scope, and schedule performance against baselines—are only required for projects valued at \$20 million or more. As a result, our scope only includes projects with construction costs of at least \$20 million.

<sup>2</sup>Among the project profiles, the Derby Line, Laredo, and Nogales land ports of entry each have multiple crossings, with throughput, trade, and law enforcement data provided for the entire land port of entry. Data for Calexico West are provided at the crossing-level, and does not include data from the Calexico East land border crossing. According to BTS officials, throughput data for Tornillo-Guadalupe and Columbus include passenger vehicle data for nearby small, non-commercial crossings; Tornillo-Guadalupe includes passenger vehicle data for the Fort Hancock crossing, and Columbus includes passenger vehicle data for the Antelope Wells crossing. For Alexandria Bay and San Ysidro, the port of entry has only one crossing, and data represent the entire port of entry. The Laredo project included renovation of two different crossings.

with the exception of arrests, which is provided at the crossing level. Daily CBP officers assigned to the port refers to the daily average for fiscal year 2017. We obtained condition, staffing, and law enforcement data from CBP's Office of Facilities and Asset Management. Condition information includes the year GSA built each individual crossing and when GSA last modernized it through a major capital project. The number of arrests refers to arrests at land border crossings made by CBP Office of Field Operations officers, and does not include Border Patrol apprehensions. We analyzed data on imports, exports, and trade values from the Department of Transportation's Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) TransBorder Freight Data. These data are collected by CBP, processed and validated by the U.S. Census Bureau, and analyzed by BTS. Value of trade includes the combined totals of imports and exports for 2017.<sup>3</sup> We also analyzed BTS's Crossing/Entry Data to determine throughput for pedestrians, passenger vehicles, and cargo trucks.

We analyzed project cost and schedule performance data from GSA's Electronic Project Management system. These data included project cost and schedule baselines, and updated cost and schedule performance data as of January 2019. For multi-phase projects with only one phase included in our scope, phase costs may not equal total project costs when combined because certain project costs, such as site acquisition, cannot be attributed to an individual phase.<sup>4</sup> Under schedule performance, original completion date refers to the project's baseline substantial completion date.<sup>5</sup> Revised completion date, if applicable, refers to a project's updated substantial completion as revised by GSA to address project setbacks or delays.<sup>6</sup> For ongoing projects, expected completion

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<sup>3</sup>Data in these sections are reported for calendar year 2017 because BTS aggregates and reports data in calendar years. Certain ports of entry do not report commercial throughput or trade data because they do not have commercial facilities. For these ports without commercial facilities, we labeled trade information as not applicable.

<sup>4</sup>The projects include Calexico West phase I and Alexandria Bay phase I. For example, while Congress appropriated about \$105 million for Alexandria Bay phase I, total phase I costs equal about \$125 million because it includes site acquisition and design costs that are not attributed to a distinct phase, and are shared between the two phases.

<sup>5</sup>A project's substantial complete date refers to the date the project space is suitable for occupancy.

<sup>6</sup>GSA establishes original baselines at the beginning of project construction. GSA may revise schedule baselines due to schedule changes or delays resulting from natural disasters or other major setbacks. GSA leadership must approve all revised schedule baselines.



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date is the date when GSA officials expect to complete the project.<sup>7</sup> For completed projects, the actual completion date is the date the project reached substantial completion.

We obtained information on crossing infrastructure constraints and project plans through interviews with GSA and CBP officials and project documents. These officials included GSA headquarters and project management officials, as well as CBP Office of Field Operations field office officials and local CBP officers. “Infrastructure Impacts on CBP Operations” refers to infrastructure constraints that existed prior to GSA’s recent capital project, while “Infrastructure Improvement Plans” describes each project’s scope and performance.

To assess the reliability of project performance data from GSA’s Electronic Project Management system, we examined the data for obvious errors, and discussed the data with GSA project management officials. We determined the data to be sufficiently reliable for our purposes. To assess the reliability of trade data, we reviewed documentation and conducted interviews with officials from the U.S. Census Bureau, the original source of the validated data. Specifically, we analyzed procedures by agencies responsible for collecting the statistics, and reliability assessments by those agencies and outside sources. After reviewing data dictionaries and BTS’s quality control measures for analyzing the Census data, and conducting data quality checks, we determined that the trade data, originally collected by Census and released by BTS, are sufficiently reliable for providing contextual information about the value of trade. To assess the reliability of BTS crossing/entry data, we reviewed relevant documentation and procedures for analyzing the data, and met with BTS officials to discuss potential limitations. We determined the data to be sufficiently reliable for the purposes of reporting entry data for pedestrians, passenger vehicles, and trucks. Finally, we found the dates land border crossings were built and last modernized may be inconsistently recorded as provided by CBP’s Office of Facilities and Asset Management, but we provided accurate information in the project profiles.

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<sup>7</sup>For example, the Columbus project has an expected completion date of April 11, 2019 and a Revised Completion Date of 4/2/2019 (as of January 2019). While a Revised Completion Date represents a new schedule performance baseline due to challenges during construction, the Expected Completion Date of April 11, 2019 signifies that GSA officials do not expect to complete the project before the revised baseline.



## Alexandria Bay, New York (Phase I)

Built in 1974, Alexandria Bay is the seventh busiest commercial border crossing between the United States and Canada, as of 2017. In 2017, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) processed about 4,100 passengers, 1,600 passenger vehicles, 4 buses, and 600 trucks per day at Alexandria Bay. The majority of people crossing into the United States through Alexandria Bay in passenger vehicles are tourists traveling from the Ottawa, Kingston, Toronto, and Montreal regions, according to General Services Administration (GSA) project documentation. In 2017, GSA began phase I of a capital infrastructure project at Alexandria Bay.

### Alexandria Bay at a Glance

#### Condition

Built: **1974**

Last Modernized: **N/A**

#### Throughput

Calendar Year (CY) 2017 Pedestrians: **0**

CY17 Passenger Vehicles: **596,887**

CY17 Commercial Trucks: **203,717**

#### Trade

CY17 Value of Trade: **\$13.9 billion**

CY17 Top Exports: **Computer-related machinery, aluminum, and vehicles**

CY17 Top Imports: **Aluminum, stones and metals, computer-related machinery**

#### Law Enforcement

Daily CBP Officers Assigned to Port: **96**

Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 Arrests: **872**

FY17 Drug Seizures (pounds): **2.3**

Note: Trade data refer only to trade from trucks.

Source: CBP and Bureau of Transportation Statistics



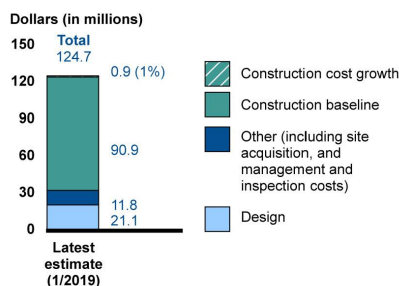
Source: General Services Administration. | GAO-19-534

### Infrastructure Impacts on Operations

Prior to the project, the existing crossing lacked capacity to process growing traffic volumes which led to significant backups. These delays effectively brought cross-border traffic to a standstill, with traffic backups sometimes stretching three miles into Canada. The preprimary area did not provide adequate space for commercial traffic because the bridges connecting the United States and Canada were not designed to support prolonged periods of heavy traffic caused by backups. The commercial inspection facility provided enough space to unload a single commercial truck at a time and CBP's commercial office space was housed in mobile trailers. GSA's projected increases in traffic volume and updated CBP security procedures would necessitate an increase in the federal workforce beyond the existing crossing's capacity.

### Capital Project Performance

#### Cost Performance



Source: GAO analysis of General Services Administration information. | GAO-19-534

#### Schedule Performance

Start of Construction: **8/1/2017**

Original Completion Date: **1/31/2020**

Expected Completion Date: **1/31/2020**

### Infrastructure Improvement Plans

Phase I of this two-phase project will feature a new commercial building and warehouse, new commercial inspection lanes, and a new veterinary services building, among other enhancements. The completed two-phase project will more than double building space and triple the crossing's footprint. Phase I will include five commercial inspection lanes—some of which will be equipped to process both commercial and passenger vehicles. After phase II, the crossing will feature five more passenger vehicle lanes and five more commercial lanes than the existing facility. An improved traffic pattern throughout the crossing will increase queuing space and allow safe and secure processing of traffic entering from Canada. Total funding for the entire project is \$238 million, including \$105 million for phase I, and construction began in August 2017. Phase I remains largely on budget and on schedule for completion in January 2020. GSA is expected to begin phase II in January 2020 and complete the project in July 2022.



## Calexico West, California (Phase I)

Calexico West, located in downtown Calexico, California, processes pedestrians and passenger vehicles. Inbound commercial and bus traffic are processed at the nearby Calexico East land border crossing, which opened in 1997 after Calexico West ceased commercial operations. Calexico West is the main crossing linking the California Imperial Valley agricultural industry to the Mexican state of Baja California and, according to U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officials, processes large volumes of farm workers during harvest season.

### Calexico West at a Glance

#### Condition

Built: **1933**

Last Modernized: **1987**

#### Throughput

Calendar Year (CY) 2017 Pedestrians:

**4,212,342**

CY17 Passenger Vehicles: **4,409,648**

CY17 Commercial Trucks: **0**

#### Trade

CY17 Value of Trade: **N/A**

CY17 Top Exports: **N/A**

CY17 Top Imports: **N/A**

#### Law Enforcement

Daily CBP Officers Assigned to Port: **437**

Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 Arrests: **6,568**

FY17 Drug Seizures (pounds): **4,522**

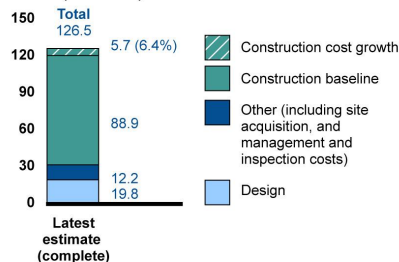
Note: Trade data refer only to trade from trucks.

Source: CBP and Bureau of Transportation Statistics

### Capital Project Performance

#### Cost Performance

Dollars (in millions)



Source: GAO analysis of General Services Administration information. | GAO-19-534

#### Schedule Performance

Start of Construction: **10/6/2015**

Original Completion Date: **3/24/2018**

Revised Completion Date: **9/10/2018**

Actual Completion Date: **9/10/2018**



Source: General Services Administration. | GAO-19-534

### Infrastructure Impacts on Operations

CBP and General Services Administration (GSA) officials reported that the crossing's facilities were undersized relative to current traffic volumes and obsolete in terms of inspection officer safety and border security. According to GSA, the crossing's layout was also inefficient, resulting in bottlenecks and long lines for passenger vehicles and pedestrians. Passenger vehicle wait times regularly exceeded 1.5 hours during peak travel times, with outbound traffic often extending 1.5 miles into the United States. Facilities in the main building, including agricultural inspection laboratories, storerooms, holding cells, waiting areas, and officer work areas, were inadequate and undersized. CBP faced challenges finding space to install newer inspection equipment and technologies in the existing facilities, according to CBP officials. Finally, the passenger vehicle secondary inspection area was open to public view, enabling individuals to observe CBP inspections.

### Infrastructure Improvement Plans

CBP and GSA officials reported that phase I of this two-phase project reconfigured and expanded the existing crossing to reduce congestion and created five times more building space. Phase I delivered a new main building, 10 of 16 planned inbound vehicle inspection lanes, and five outbound vehicle inspection lanes. It also included a secondary vehicle inspection facility with canine kennels. The new preprimary inspection area is significantly larger, allowing CBP to actively manage traffic and reduce congestion. Further, the larger preprimary inspection area allows CBP officers to safely and effectively patrol this area with canine units, improving the effectiveness of CBP's inspections. GSA completed the \$94.6 million phase I construction in September 2018, about 6.4 percent above its cost baseline and six months later than planned. Delays associated with a corresponding infrastructure project in Mexico and CBP-requested modifications contributed to schedule growth. Phase II received partial funding in February 2019—two years after Phase II was scheduled to begin.





## Columbus, New Mexico

Built in 1989, Columbus processes commercial traffic, passenger vehicles, and pedestrians. It is the only 24-hour pedestrian border crossing in New Mexico. Commercial traffic has steadily increased from about 5,700 trucks in 2007 to over 14,100 trucks in 2017. Historically, according to a GSA planning study, commercial traffic spiked in August and September during harvest season because produce is one of Columbus's primary imports. Pedestrian traffic is higher during the harvest months due to farm workers and the winter when seasonal visitors cross the border. In 2017, the General Services Administration (GSA) began a capital infrastructure project at Columbus.

### Columbus at a Glance

#### Condition

Built: **1989**

Last Modernized: **N/A**

#### Throughput

Calendar Year (CY) 2017: **257,998**

CY17 Passenger Vehicles: **380,308**

CY17 Commercial Trucks: **14,114**

#### Trade

CY17 Value of Trade: **\$91.1 million**

CY17 Top Exports: **Clothing, stone and cement, computer components**

CY17 Top Imports: **Vegetables, fruit, and other food products**

#### Law Enforcement

Daily CBP Officers Assigned to Port: **62**

Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 Arrests: **231**

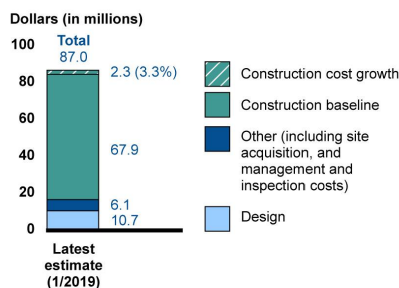
FY17 Drug Seizures (pounds): **348.6**

Note: Trade data refer only to trade from trucks.

Source: CBP and Bureau of Transportation Statistics.

### Capital Project Performance

#### Cost Performance



Source: GAO analysis of General Services Administration information. | GAO-19-534

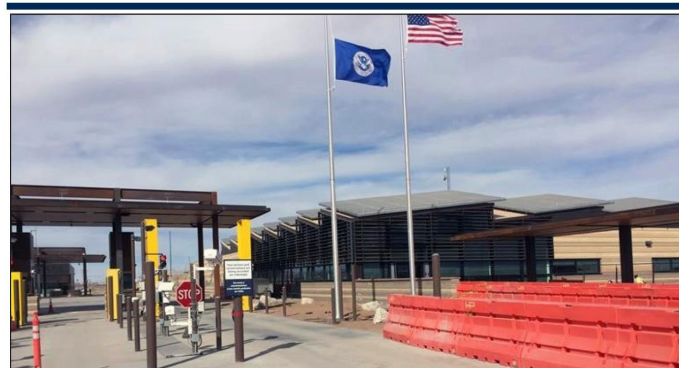
#### Schedule Performance

Start of Construction: **2/12/2017**

Original Completion Date: **2/12/2019**

Revised Completion Date: **4/2/2019**

Expected Completion Date: **4/11/2019**



Source: General Services Administration. | GAO-19-534

### Infrastructure Impacts on Operations

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and GSA officials reported that prior to this project, CBP operated from deteriorating facilities that were reaching the end of their useful lives. The volume of commercial trucks and travelers has increased significantly since the crossing opened and is expected to continue to grow. Over the years, GSA added additional facilities that, in turn, impeded traffic flow, caused backups, and threatened officer safety. Prior to the project, CBP could inspect two trucks at a time at the cargo loading dock. CBP also lacked the space to completely offload cargo, limiting inspection effectiveness. The site experienced significant flooding during major rain events that further limited inspection space and further deteriorated infrastructure, according to officials.

### Infrastructure Improvement Plans

CBP and GSA officials reported that the project involves a complete demolition of existing facilities and more than triples the crossing's footprint with donated land. New facilities include a separate commercial processing facility and an expanded main building with new Non-Intrusive Inspection technologies, a hazardous material inspection area, canine kennel, narcotics vault, and site drainage improvements to address flooding. Processing capacity will expand from one pedestrian lane to four, from two passenger vehicle lanes to three, and from zero commercial lanes to one, and will increase usable commercial dock spaces from two to 12. GSA spent \$3.3 million on design from 2007 to 2009. It spent another \$7.4 million in 2014 on a redesign that incorporated flood protection and new CBP standards. GSA expects to complete the \$87 million project in April 2019--about 3 percent above its cost baseline and two months later than planned due to CBP requested changes.



## Derby Line, Vermont (Interstate 91)

Built in 1965, Derby Line I-91 is the busiest land border crossing in Vermont. The crossing processes passenger vehicles, buses, cargo, and pedestrians. There are two border crossings in Derby Line, at I-91 and about a half mile west on Route 5. The I-91 crossing is a large facility located on a major highway whereas the Route 5 crossing is relatively small, located on the village's Main Street. U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) processed about 3,000 passengers per day in 2017, along with about 1,500 passenger vehicles and 300 trucks. In 2016, General Services Administration (GSA) began a capital infrastructure project at the Derby Line I-91 crossing.

### Derby Line at a Glance

#### Condition (I-91 Crossing)

Built: **1965**

Last Modernized: **N/A**

#### Throughput

Calendar Year (CY) 2017 Pedestrians: **362**

CY17 Passenger Vehicles: **529,719**

CY17 Commercial Trucks: **94,902**

#### Trade

CY17 Value of Trade: **\$2.3 billion**

CY17 Top Exports: **Aircraft; spacecraft and parts, paper, and plastics**

CY17 Top Imports: **Computer-related machinery and parts, wood, and paper**

#### Law Enforcement

Daily CBP Officers Assigned to Port: **76**

Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 Arrests: **357**

FY17 Drug Seizures (pounds): **0.92**

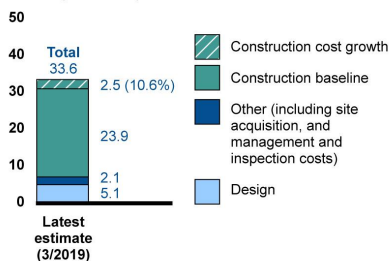
Note: Trade data refer only to trade from trucks.

Source: CBP and Bureau of Transportation Statistics

### Capital Project Performance

#### Cost Performance

Dollars (in millions)



Source: GAO analysis of General Services Administration information. | GAO-19-534

#### Schedule Performance

Start of Construction: **9/7/2016**

Original Completion Date: **6/15/2018**

Revised Completion Date: **11/25/2018**

Actual Completion Date: **11/14/2018**



Source: General Services Administration. | GAO-19-534

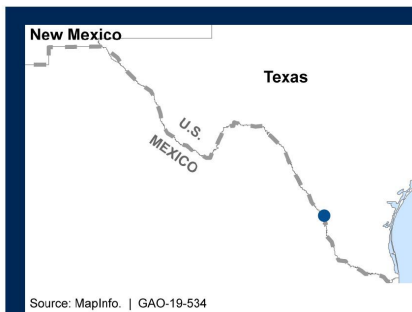
### Infrastructure Impacts on Operations

CBP and GSA officials reported that CBP substantially increased staffing at the crossing over the years, resulting in overcrowded conditions. The administrative building lacked sufficient office and storage space, had limited secure areas to perform interviews and searches, and lacked a secure holding area. Due to insufficient space and outdated IT systems, the crossing could not accommodate newer inspection technologies. The commercial secondary inspection area was too small to completely offload cargo trucks for inspection and the vehicle lift was inoperative. The facility also lacked sufficient space to inspect buses and luggage. The crossing had poor lighting and inadequate perimeter security, and lacked measures to prevent travelers from exiting the crossing without authorization. Finally, poorly designed inbound primary inspection lanes made it difficult for commercial trucks to navigate through the crossing, at times resulting in long traffic delays, according to officials.

### Infrastructure Improvement Plans

CBP and GSA officials reported that the capital project will reduce cross-border travel times and improve the traveler experience. The project expanded the crossing's footprint from 0.25 to 23 acres and improved traffic flow around the crossing, while adding measures to prevent travelers from exiting the crossing without authorization. Site improvements included new lighting, fire protection, and storm water management systems, among others. The project included a main building, and a commercial secondary inspection facility for CBP to offload and inspect trucks. GSA completed construction in November 2018 about 5 months later than originally planned and 11 percent above its cost baseline. Cost and schedule growth were primarily due to CBP-requested changes and contractor performance.





## Laredo, Texas (Bridges 1 & 2)

The Laredo Land Port of Entry is made up of four land border crossings, each with its own bridge. In January 2019, the General Services Administration (GSA) completed a capital project at two of these crossings—the Convent Street Bridge (Laredo 1), and the Lincoln-Juarez Bridge (Laredo 2). Laredo 1 and 2 are located in downtown Laredo and process passenger vehicle and pedestrian traffic. The other two crossings—the Colombia Solidarity Bridge (Laredo 3) and the World Trade Bridge (Laredo 4)—primarily process cargo. The city of Laredo owns and maintains these bridges, while GSA owns and maintains the crossings and all property inside the crossing facilities.

### Laredo at a Glance

#### Condition

Built: **Laredo I: 1943;**  
**Laredo II: 1974**  
Last Modernized: **Laredo I: 1991**  
**Laredo II: N/A**

#### Throughput

Calendar Year (CY) Pedestrians:  
**3,016,801**  
CY17 Passenger Vehicles: **4,990,649**  
CY17 Commercial Trucks: **2,182,984**

#### Trade

CY17 Value of Trade: **\$166.6 billion**  
CY17 Top Exports: **Computer and electrical machinery and parts**  
CY17 Top Imports: **Vehicles, computer and electrical machinery and parts**

#### Law Enforcement

Daily CBP Officers Assigned to Port: **897**  
Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 Arrests: **15,141**  
FY17 Drug Seizures (pounds): **83,460**

Note: Trade data refer only to trade from trucks, and represents trade through bridges 3 and 4. Number of arrests is combined from bridges 1 and 2.

Source: CBP and Bureau of Transportation Statistics



Source: GAO. | GAO-19-534

### Infrastructure Impacts on Operations

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and GSA officials reported that volume at Laredo 1 and 2 have increased significantly in recent decades. Prior to the capital project, facilities at Laredo 1 did not effectively separate vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians within the crossing, creating congestion, safety concerns, and pedestrian queues that could extend across the bridge into Mexico. GSA is unable to make extensive alterations or expand Laredo 1 because it is a U.S. Historic Site and is surrounded by businesses and homes. Laredo 2 was unable to efficiently process current traffic volumes. For example, GSA originally designed Laredo 2 to process up to 10 buses per day. However in 2017, Laredo 2 processed approximately 110 buses and 2,000 bus passengers each day. To accommodate these volumes, CBP converted Laredo 2's passenger vehicle secondary facility to inspect buses and moved secondary vehicle inspections to a temporary facility.

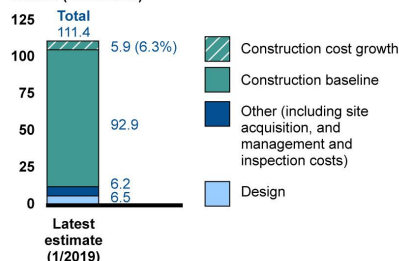
### Infrastructure Improvement Plans

CBP and GSA officials reported that the capital project focused on improving efficiency, safety, and security while expanding pedestrian capacity at Laredo 1 and bus capacity at Laredo 2. GSA combined improvements at the two crossings into one estimated \$96.6 million project (\$33 million for Laredo I and \$63.6 million for Laredo II) to save on labor and material costs. At Laredo 1, GSA replaced the main building, expanded pedestrian lanes from eight to 14, and reconfigured vehicle lanes to integrate newer inspection technologies. At Laredo 2, GSA enlarged the main building, built a facility to process passenger vehicle and bus passengers, and expanded bus processing capacity from two to eight lanes. GSA scoped out a footbridge and scaled back aesthetic finishes to control costs. GSA completed Laredo 1 in April 2018 and Laredo 2 in January 2019—about 3 months later than originally planned and 6 percent above cost baseline.

### Capital Project Performance

#### Cost Performance

Dollars (in millions)



Source: GAO analysis of General Services Administration information. | GAO-19-534

#### Schedule Performance

Start of Construction: **10/28/2015**  
Original Completion Date: **10/16/2018**  
Revised Completion Date: **11/30/2018**  
Actual Completion Date: **1/10/2019**



## Nogales West-Mariposa, Arizona

Nogales West-Mariposa is one of three land border crossings in Nogales, Arizona and is one of the busiest land border crossings in the United States. It serves as the southern border's main entry and distribution point for produce entering from Mexico. Nogales West processes about half of the agricultural commodities entering the United States from Mexico and has facilities for pedestrian, passenger vehicle, and commercial traffic. The other crossings in Nogales are the DeConcini (pedestrians and passenger vehicles) and Morley Gate crossings (pedestrians). In 2010, the General Services Administration (GSA) initiated a \$180 million capital infrastructure project.

### Nogales at a Glance

#### Condition (Nogales West-Mariposa)

Built: **1973**  
Last Modernized: **1987**

#### Throughput

Calendar Year (CY) 2017 Pedestrians: **3,349,123**  
CY17 Passenger Vehicles: **3,806,449**  
CY17 Commercial Trucks: **333,941**

#### Trade

CY17 Value of Trade: **\$16.5 billion**  
CY17 Top Exports: **Electrical machinery and computer-related machinery**  
CY17 Top Imports: **Electrical machinery, vegetables, fruit, and nuts**

#### Law Enforcement

Daily CBP Officers Assigned to Port: **388**  
Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 Arrests: **108**  
FY17 Drug Seizures (pounds): **53,682**

Note: Trade data refer only to trade from trucks.  
Source: CBP and Bureau of Transportation Statistics



### Infrastructure Impacts on Operations

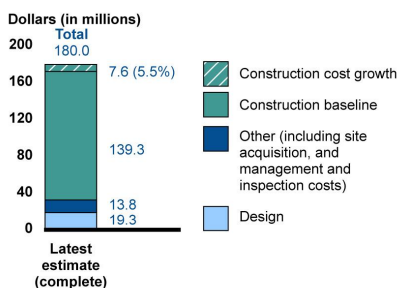
U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and GSA officials reported that facilities and technologies at the original Nogales West-Mariposa land border crossing were outdated. The crossing's layout was also inefficient resulting in bottlenecks, congestion, and commercial traffic backups that extended for miles into Mexico. GSA subsequently added new facilities to accommodate bus and pedestrian inspections, but did so in a way that further constrained space, impairing traffic movement within the crossing, according to officials. Wait times of up to eight hours resulted in spoilage or reduced shelf-life of perishable goods, resulting in financial losses for businesses. The original crossing also lacked adequate space and CBP repurposed some facilities to accommodate operational needs, including storing evidence in holding areas.

### Infrastructure Improvement Plans

CBP and GSA officials reported that the capital project focused on improving operational efficiencies, processing capacity, and security and safety of officers and the traveling public. The project entailed demolishing all existing structures and replacing them with new facilities, including new inspection areas, a main building, and other support facilities. GSA added 13 acres to the crossing's footprint and expanded processing capacity from three to eight cargo primary lanes, one to five commercial exit lanes, 23 to 56 cargo docks (including six for refrigerated inspection), four to 12 passenger vehicle primary lanes, and eight to 24 passenger vehicle secondary inspection spaces. GSA completed the \$180 million project in August 2014 more than 5 months later than originally planned and 5.5 percent above its cost baseline. This was due to CBP-requested changes, design deficiencies, and high site utility costs, among other reasons, according to officials. The project resulted in reduced wait times, but led to higher than expected operational and maintenance expenses.

### Capital Project Performance

#### Cost Performance



Source: GAO analysis of General Services Administration information. | GAO-19-534

#### Schedule Performance

Start of Construction: **7/13/2010**  
Original Completion Date: **3/7/2014**  
Revised Completion Date: **8/20/2014**  
Actual Completion Date: **8/20/2014**





## San Ysidro, California

Built in 1932, San Ysidro is the busiest land border crossing in the western hemisphere, with 24/7 operations. San Ysidro processes pedestrians, passenger vehicles, and buses. The crossing does not have any commercial facilities for screening cargo. In 2017, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) processed about 65,000 northbound vehicle passengers and 23,000 northbound pedestrians each day at San Ysidro. The General Services Administration (GSA) began construction on a three-phase, \$741 million project in 2011, with plans to complete all three phases by late 2019.

### San Ysidro at a Glance

#### Condition

Built: **1932**

Last Modernized: **1974**

#### Throughput

Calendar Year (CY) 2017 Pedestrians:

**8,279,253**

CY17 Passenger Vehicles: **13,777,990**

CY17 Commercial Trucks: **0**

#### Law Enforcement

Daily CBP Officers Assigned to Port: **971**

Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 Arrests: **21,620**

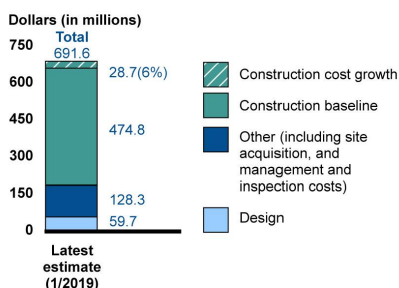
FY17 Drug Seizures (pounds): **39,846**

Note: San Ysidro does not have commercial facilities.  
Source: CBP and Bureau of Transportation Statistics



### Capital Project Performance

#### Cost Performance



Source: GAO analysis of General Services Administration information. | GAO-19-534

#### Schedule Performance

##### Phase 1

Start of Construction: **2/14/11**

Original Completion Date: **7/14/2014**

Actual Completion Date: **12/22/2014**

##### Phase 2

Start of Construction: **9/21/2015**

Original Completion Date: **3/21/2019**

Revised Completion Date: **9/2/2019**

Expected Completion Date: **9/2/2019**

##### Phase 3

Start of Construction: **8/8/2016**

Original Completion Date: **10/25/2019**

Revised Completion Date: **11/25/2019**

Expected Completion Date: **11/25/2019**

### Infrastructure Impacts on Operations

CBP and GSA officials reported that queues and wait times at San Ysidro steadily increased over the years and that existing facilities could no longer accommodate the traffic volume. CBP also reported that outdated infrastructure in the pedestrian primary inspection area created officer safety concerns and that renovations were necessary to provide a safe and secure work environment for CBP staff. For example, CBP officials stated that the design and location of the existing pedestrian primary inspection booths obstructed officers' view of pedestrians as they entered the primary inspection area.

### Infrastructure Improvement Plans

CBP and GSA officials reported that to better accommodate traffic growth and CBP's requirements, GSA's capital project is expanding and reconfiguring the crossing. The project entails demolishing existing structures and constructing new primary and secondary passenger vehicle inspection areas, a new main building, and other support structures. The project also includes two pedestrian processing areas—on the east and west sides of the crossing—that connect with transportation centers in Mexico and the United States. Once complete, the crossing will have 34 passenger vehicle lanes with 62 booths, including stacked booths that allow CBP officers to simultaneously inspect two vehicles in most lanes. The crossing will also add a dedicated bus lane and a total of 36 pedestrian primary inspection lanes across its two pedestrian facilities. GSA is building the \$741 million project in three stand-alone phases, with expected completion in November 2019.



## Tornillo-Guadalupe, Texas

Tornillo-Guadalupe (also known as the Marcelino Serna land border crossing) opened in 2015. Tornillo-Guadalupe replaced the Fabens land border crossing, which dated back to 1938. U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) currently processes passenger vehicles and pedestrians at Tornillo-Guadalupe. Although Tornillo-Guadalupe has commercial processing facilities, CBP ceased using these facilities in 2017 due to low volumes of commercial traffic.

### Tornillo at a Glance

#### Condition

Built: **2014**  
Last Modernized: **N/A**

#### Throughput

Calendar Year (CY) 2017 Pedestrians: **34,636**  
CY17 Passenger Vehicles: **327,202**  
CY17 Commercial Trucks: **104**

#### Trade

CY17 Value of Trade: **\$7.1 million**  
CY17 Top Exports: **Vehicles, computer-related machinery, and electrical machinery**  
CY17 Top Imports: **Computer-related machinery**

#### Law Enforcement

Daily CBP Officers Assigned to Port: **96**  
Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 Arrests: **532**  
FY17 Drug Seizures (pounds): **188**

Note: Trade data refer only to trade from trucks.  
Source: CBP and Bureau of Transportation Statistics



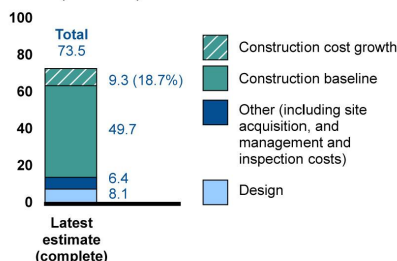
### Infrastructure Impacts on Operations

CBP and General Services Administration (GSA) officials reported that the original Fabens land border crossing was unable to process high traffic volumes and that the existing bridge connecting the United States and Mexico was no longer structurally sound enough to support commercial crossings. CBP ceased all commercial operations at Fabens in 2001, limiting CBP to pedestrian and passenger vehicle traffic processing. The number of CBP personnel at the crossing exceeded facility capacity and the limited space hindered CBP's ability to process, interview, isolate, and detain travelers, according to CBP officials. Further, the existing septic system was not designed for the number of employees at the facility and the original water system was insufficient. CBP had to haul water on site to operate its facilities and provide bottled water for its employees and the public to drink, according to officials.

### Capital Project Performance

#### Cost Performance

Dollars (in millions)



Source: GAO analysis of General Services Administration information. | GAO-19-534

#### Schedule Performance

Start of Construction: **5/16/2011**  
Original Completion Date: **7/18/2013**  
Revised Completion Date: **8/12/2014**  
Actual Completion Date: **10/31/2014**

### Infrastructure Improvement Plans

CBP and GSA officials reported that the recent capital project delivered new passenger vehicle and pedestrian inspection facilities along with a new main building. The project also included a dedicated bus inspection area and a parking lot for seized vehicles. Commercial facilities included a new bridge and commercial building, 10 covered secondary inspection docks, two primary inspection lanes with a canopy, a hazardous materials containment area, agriculture lab, and seized narcotics storage. The project also added an additional 109 acres of donated farmland to the original crossing's 6 acre footprint. GSA completed the \$73.5 million construction project in October 2014, about 15 months later than planned and 19 percent above its cost baseline. Unstable soil conditions and contractor performance issues contributed to cost and schedule growth, according to GSA. Delays associated with infrastructure in Mexico delayed the start of cargo processing by 16 months. Despite investing in new commercial processing facilities at the crossing, CBP suspended cargo processing in May 2017 after 14 months, citing low traffic volumes due to underdeveloped infrastructure in Mexico.

## Appendix III: Comments from the Department of Homeland Security

U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
Washington, DC 20528



Homeland  
Security

June 25, 2019

Rebecca Gambler  
Director, Homeland Security and Justice  
U.S. Government Accountability Office  
441 G Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20548

Re: Management Response to Draft Report GAO-19-534, "BORDER  
INFRASTRUCTURE: Actions Needed to Improve Information on Facilities and  
Capital Planning at Land Border Crossings"

Dear Ms. Gambler:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on this draft report. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) appreciates the U.S. Government Accountability Office's (GAO) work in planning and conducting its review and issuing this report.

The Department is pleased to note GAO's recognition of the important role U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) has as the lead federal agency charged with the dual mission of facilitating legitimate trade and travel at our nation's borders while also keeping terrorists and their weapons, criminals and their contraband, and inadmissible individuals out of the country. Managing the Land Port of Entry (POE) portfolio and associated infrastructure across the U.S. borders is one of CBP's utmost priorities. CBP continues to work in partnership with the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) and take advantage of opportunities for improvement within the Land POE portfolio to develop, deliver, and sustain these critical assets along our nation's borders.

Opportunities for improvement identified in GAO's draft report represent areas where CBP continues to focus and has efforts already underway to address and create an optimal future end state meant to increase organizational efficiencies. For example, CBP has improved its efforts to mature processes in the areas of prioritization, capital planning, and data management. CBP and GSA have also begun making great strides to improve information sharing on facility condition assessments (FCAs) via reports generated from GSA's Building Assessment Tool. These reports will better inform both agencies on the infrastructure needs and priorities at land border crossings, as well as help inform the capital planning process.

The draft report contained seven recommendations, including five for CBP with which the Department concurs. Attached find our detailed response to each recommendation. Technical comments were previously provided under separate cover.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on this draft report. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. We look forward to working with you again in the future.

Sincerely,



JIM H. CRUMPACKER, CIA, CFE  
Director  
Departmental GAO-OIG Liaison Office

Attachment



**Attachment: Management Response to Recommendations  
Contained in GAO-19-534**

GAO recommended that the Commissioner of CBP:

**Recommendation 1:** In conjunction with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of the Chief Readiness Support Officer, develop and implement a plan to ensure that CBP executes its FCA program by conducting FCAs at each CBP-owned land border crossing consistent with DHS Directive 119-02-004.

**Response:** Concur. CBP's FCA program regularly conducts assessments, but does not have a written plan specific to land border crossings. The CBP Office of Facilities and Asset Management (OFAM) will develop a plan for completing FCAs at all land border crossings consistent with DHS Directive 119-02-004. It is important to note, however, that the timely completion of assessments once the plan is finalized will be subject to the availability of funds. Estimated Completion Date (ECD): November 30, 2019.

**Recommendation 2:** Share FCA reports with GSA and use facility condition information in GSA's Building Assessment Tool to inform FCAs.

**Response:** Concur. CBP OFAM has already begun receiving Building Assessment Tool (BAT) reports for land border crossings from GSA and is incorporating the information into FCAs being conducted through January 31, 2020 at 26 GSA-managed facilities. CBP intends to analyze the effectiveness of incorporating BAT data into FCAs at the conclusion of these FCA activities, then determine how best to conduct these assessments moving forward. In addition, CBP will continue to share with GSA all FCA results conducted at GSA-owned/leased facilities. ECD: May 31, 2020.

**Recommendation 5:** Use information on maintenance and repair work conducted by GSA at GSA-owned land border crossings to update facility condition information in TRIRIGA on an ongoing basis.

**Response:** Concur. CBP OFAM has already begun receiving summary data from GSA on corrective maintenance at land border crossings and continues to work with GSA to improve the quality and delivery of the information. CBP will develop a plan for updating facility condition information in TRIRIGA using GSA corrective maintenance data and will work with GSA to develop the format that will best support the updates. The CBP plan will be completed by September 30, 2019 and the TRIRIGA updates implemented within three months of receiving sufficient data from GSA. ECD: May 31, 2020.

**Recommendation 6:** Establish review time frames for stakeholders involved in its Five-year Capital Investment Plan review and approval process.

**Response:** Concur. CBP OFAM will establish a policy that outlines time frames for stakeholders to review and approve the annual Five-year Capital Investment Plan. CBP's efforts will include a review of the current statutory requirement, current process and procedures used to develop the annual Five-year Plan, and the timeline currently being followed to deliver the plan to Congress. After a careful review of the current process, CBP will further document the process and procedures to include time frames for reviews and approvals of the plan. ECD: September 30, 2019.

**Recommendation 7:** Establish and document a methodology for its annual land border crossing capital prioritization process that includes procedures and time frames for each step.

**Response:** Concur. CBP OFAM will review and assess the current prioritization process for making capital investments at Land POEs. After a careful review of the current process, CBP will further document the process and procedures in greater detail, and provide timeframes for each step of the process. ECD: September 30, 2019.

## Appendix IV: Comments from the General Services Administration



The Administrator

June 18, 2019

The Honorable Gene L. Dodaro  
Comptroller General of the United States  
U.S. Government Accountability Office  
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Mr. Dodaro:

The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) appreciates the opportunity to review and comment on the Government Accountability Office (GAO) draft report, *BORDER INFRASTRUCTURE: Actions Needed to Improve Information on Facilities and Capital Planning at Land Border Crossings* (GAO-19-534).

GAO made the following recommendations to GSA:

1. The GSA Administrator should share Building Assessment Tool reports with CBP [U.S. Department of Homeland Security–Customs and Border Protection] and use facility condition information in CBP's facility condition assessments to inform its assessments through the Building Assessment Tool.
2. The GSA Administrator, in conjunction with CBP, should share with CBP information on GSA maintenance and repair work at GSA-owned land border crossings at the level of detail necessary to inform CBP's data in TRIRIGA [CBP's real property management system].

GSA agrees with the recommendations and is developing a plan to address them.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at (202) 969-7277 or Jeffrey A. Post, Associate Administrator, Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs, at (202) 501-0563.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Emily W. Murphy".

Emily W. Murphy  
Administrator

1800 F Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20405-0002  
[www.gsa.gov](http://www.gsa.gov)



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# Appendix V: GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments

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## GAO Contact

Rebecca Gambler (202) 512-8777 or [gablerr@gao.gov](mailto:gablerr@gao.gov)

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## Staff Acknowledgments

In addition to the contact named above, Michael Armes (Assistant Director) Kirk Kiester (Assistant Director), Bruce Crise (Analyst in Charge), Lilia Chaidez, Michele Fejfar, Eric Hauswirth, Susan Hsu, Daniel Kuhn, Jeremy Manion, Mara McMillen, Marc Meyer, and Sasan J. “Jon” Najmi made significant contributions to this report.

# Appendix VI: Accessible Data

## Data Tables

**Data table for Figure 9: Budget Requests and Appropriations for Land Border Crossing Capital Projects in Fiscal Years 2009 through 2019**

Fiscal year	Appropriation	Budget request
2009	794.114	794.114
2010	151.129	151.129
2011	0	85.911
2012	0	370.063
2013	0	0
2014	295.086	287.686
2015	339.89	420.46
2016	205.245	203.145
2017	5.749	253.962
2018	254.827	506.787
2019	191	275.9

## Agency Comment Letters

Text of Appendix III: Comments from the Department of Homeland Security

### Page 1

June 25, 2019

Rebecca Gambler

Director, Homeland Security and Justice

U.S. Government Accountability Office 441 G Street, NW

Washington, DC 20548

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Sincerely,

Jim H. Crumpacker, Director

Departmental GAO-OIG Liaison Office

Attachment

Page 3

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Contained in GA0-19-534**

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---

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Page 4

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---

**Text of Appendix IV: Comments from the General Services Administration**

June 18, 2019

The Honorable Gene L. Dodaro

Comptroller General of the United States

U.S. Government Accountability Office Washington, DC 20548

Dear Mr. Dodaro:

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GSA agrees with the recommendations and is developing a plan to address them.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at (202) 969-7277 or Jeffrey

A. Post, Associate Administrator, Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs, at (202) 501-0563.

Sincerely,

Emily Murphy Administrator



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