

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

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Action Requested: INFORMATION

2007 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN WHITE PAPER:
PUBLIC SAFETY AND HOMELAND SECURITY

File Number 3000400

Introduction

SANDAG has identified several key components to be developed for the 2007 Comprehensive Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). For each of these areas, staff is preparing a white paper to stimulate discussion and gather input from SANDAG's policy advisory committees and working groups. The white papers highlight several of the unique inputs and analyses that will enhance the development of the RTP. The Public Safety and Homeland Security white paper focuses on the existing plans and organizations in place to deal with the safety and security of the transportation system and highlights areas that warrant further analysis or action.

Discussion

SANDAG is currently updating the RTP. SANDAG's last full update of the RTP, MOBILITY 2030, was adopted in March 2003. A technical update was completed in February 2006 to meet federal air quality conformity requirements and will serve as the foundation for the 2007 Comprehensive RTP. The 2007 RTP will incorporate a new regional growth forecast, strategic initiatives from the Regional Comprehensive Plan, the Independent Transit Planning Review, goods movement, and several other white papers on topics not previously covered in the RTP, including public safety and homeland security. The information included in this white paper will be incorporated as a section within the 2007 Comprehensive RTP.

In August 2005, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) was signed into law. This transportation reauthorization bill calls for a new emphasis to be placed on the safety and security of the transportation system and requires for that information to be included in the RTP.

There are a wealth of issues that could be discussed within the realm of transportation safety and security. But on a regional planning scale, SANDAG staff has identified three key areas of concern: (1) the ability to plan for and react to natural disasters; (2) the capability to respond effectively to man-made events; and (3) the interoperability of various public safety communication systems. The goal of this white paper is to document existing plans and organizations that provide for the safety and security of the regional transportation network and to identify additional areas of improvement which can be explored in the 2007 RTP or other policy planning efforts.

The Public Safety and Homeland Security white paper identified that the following items should be examined further when developing the 2007 RTP or other safety and security efforts:

- Transit Emergency Operations Plans: Transit operators, local jurisdictions, and safety agencies should work together to develop plans to evacuate transit-dependent populations in the event of natural or man-made disaster.
- SANDAG should continue its work via the Public Safety Committee to enhance and improve interoperability and communications between local, state, and federal public safety agencies and to find opportunities to leverage and most effectively utilize transportation and public safety resources in support of this effort.
- Enhancements to existing communications centers and options for a centralized communications center should continue to be explored.
- Recommendations from the Interstate 15 (I-15) Traffic Incident Management Plan should be implemented in a timely manner to ensure that the I-15 Managed Lanes are utilized with maximum efficiency under emergency situations.
- There should be further coordination of emergency planning and implementation among various local, state, and federal agencies to allow for effective responses and eliminate duplication of efforts.

This paper also identified the continued challenge of balancing security and the efficient movement of people and goods through the San Diego-Baja California Ports of Entry. SANDAG will further examine this issue in the Cross-Border Transportation white paper.

To ensure that the most important areas of focus have been included in this white paper, SANDAG staff solicited input the Stakeholders Working Group at its April 18, 2006, meeting and the Public Safety Committee at its June 16, 2006, meeting. Comments received were incorporated into the white paper (Attachment 1) as appropriate. This white paper will be used in developing the Draft 2007 RTP, which is expected to be released for public comment in May/June 2007.

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Attachment: 1. Public Safety and Homeland Security White Paper

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PUBLIC SAFETY AND HOMELAND SECURITY WHITE PAPER

Introduction

In light of heightened public concern regarding terrorist attacks and natural disasters, enhancing the safety and security of our transportation system is one focus of the 2007 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). There are a wealth of issues that could be discussed within the realm of transportation safety and security. But on a regional planning scale, three key areas of concern have been identified: the ability to plan for and react to natural disasters, the capability to respond effectively to man-made events, and the interoperability of various public safety communication systems.

Objectives for 2007 RTP

In August 2005, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) was signed into law. This transportation reauthorization bill calls for a new emphasis to be placed on the safety and security of the transportation system and requires this information be included in the RTP. This white paper identifies the current measures in existence or under development to deal with safety and security of the transportation network and highlights areas that warrant further analysis or action. The information included in this white paper will be incorporated within the 2007 Comprehensive RTP.

Background

Several natural disasters and acts of terrorism have brought the safety and security of our transportation system to the forefront. The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and on the public transit systems in Madrid and London have heightened awareness of the vulnerability of our transportation system. Natural disasters also have caused loss of life and property. Hurricane Katrina served as an important wake-up call to regional agencies on the need to have evacuation plans for persons who do not drive or own private automobiles. And Hurricane Rita highlighted the need to have plans in place to utilize the existing transportation infrastructure to its maximum potential during evacuations. On a local level, the 2003 San Diego region wild fires demonstrated a need for improved communications for emergency personnel and the importance of establishing evacuation plans.

On August 10, 2005, President George W. Bush signed the SAFETEA-LU, which authorizes the federal surface transportation programs for the five-year federal fiscal year period 2005-2009. The bill calls for an increased emphasis to be placed on the safety and security of the transportation system and for each of these elements to be accounted for as stand-alone planning factors.

The San Diego region contains an extensive transportation network that includes regional rail (COASTER), light rail, highways, ports, local and express bus service, local roads, and bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. San Diego County is served by three major interregional freeways; the Interstate 5 (I-5) and Interstate 15 (I-15) provide north-south access throughout the region and to Orange County and Mexico, while Interstate 8 provides east-west access to Imperial County. Interstate 15 (I-15) contains two reversible managed lanes, which are used on a daily basis to provide additional traffic flow in the peak-period direction. The managed lanes also can be used for additional traffic flow or emergency vehicles in the case of an incident or disaster.

Current Conditions

The San Diego region currently has a number of existing organizations, plans, and infrastructure in place to provide for the safety and security of the regional transportation system. The following sections outline the current and pending efforts of specific organizations to plan for and respond to large-scale natural or man-made disasters and improve public safety communications systems.

Existing Plans and Programs

Unified San Diego County Emergency Services Organization

The Unified San Diego County Emergency Services Organization is composed of the 18 incorporated cities within the region and the County of San Diego. The Unified Organization provides for a single Operational Area for the coordination of disaster activities relating to mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. The Unified Disaster Council (UDC) is the governing body of the Unified Organization. The County of San Diego Office of Emergency Services (OES) serves as staff to the UDC and is a liaison between the incorporated cities, the State Office of Emergency Services, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), as well as nongovernmental agencies such as the American Red Cross.

The OES coordinates the overall county response to disasters and is responsible for: alerting and notifying appropriate agencies, coordinating agency responses, ensuring resources are available and mobilized in times of disaster, developing plans and procedures for response to and recovery from disasters, and providing preparedness materials to the public. The OES directs the Operational Area Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and coordinates the efforts of county departments, cities, special districts, and other agencies within the county, as well as with the state and federal agencies.¹

City of San Diego Office of Homeland Security

The San Diego Office of Homeland Security (SD-OHS) was established in January 2003 as part of the restructuring of the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department and is under the direction of the Deputy Chief Operating Officer for Public Safety/Homeland Security. The SD-OHS oversees the City of San Diego's preparation for major disasters through the coordination of disaster planning efforts; training of City employees; integration of emergency plans; facilitating information flow to the public and business communities; and interfacing with county, state, and federal jurisdictions.² The SD-OHS also has been successful in securing and managing grants from federal and state agencies related to homeland security.

The SD-OHS maintains the City's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in a "ready-to-activate" status and manages the EOC during responses to multidepartment and citywide emergencies, providing for coordinated response activities and a fully integrated City response.³ The SD-OHS also is responsible for the development and maintenance of a number of emergency operations documents, including the Emergency Operations Plan and EOC Activation Guide.

¹ County of San Diego. Unified San Diego County Emergency Services Organization. http://www.co.san-diego.ca.us/oes/docs/OES_Brochure.pdf.

² City of San Diego. Office of Homeland Security Annual Fiscal Year 2006 Budget. <http://www.sandiego.gov/budget/annual/volume3/pdf/29v3homeland.pdf>.

³ City of San Diego. Office of Homeland Security Annual Fiscal Year 2006 Budget. <http://www.sandiego.gov/budget/annual/volume3/pdf/29v3homeland.pdf>.

SANDAG Public Safety Committee

The SANDAG Public Safety Committee (PSC) advises the SANDAG Board of Directors on major policy-level matters related to public safety. Composed of 14 voting members, including six elected officials; local, state, and federal public safety representatives; and regional transit agencies, the group strives to improve the quality of life in the region by promoting public safety and justice through collaboration, information sharing, effective technology, and objective monitoring and assessment. The PSC provides a unique forum for local officials and public safety professionals to collaborate on issues such as crime prevention, communications, and mapping.

The Chiefs'/Sheriff's Management Committee promotes regional collaboration in the acquisition, maintenance, and sharing of public safety information and technology. This Committee, which reports to the SANDAG PSC, approves and implements the ARJIS and Criminal Justice Research annual work program and budget. It establishes and recommends public safety policies that relate to ARJIS and Criminal Justice Research.

The PSC also is the governing Board for the Automated Regional Justice Information System (ARJIS), which supports 71 justice agencies representing local, state, and federal government within San Diego and Imperial Counties. Chartered with supporting a regional Web-based secure network that contains a variety of information to support law enforcement activities, ARJIS is used daily by 11,000 officers, investigators, and analysts. Other efforts conducted by ARJIS include the crime mapping system and deploying law enforcement information into the field via hand-held wireless devices.

United States Department of Defense

The United States Department of Defense (DOD) has a large presence in the San Diego Region. The San Diego County Office of Emergency Services (OES) has a military liaison and informal working relationships with the Navy, Marines, and Coast Guard and is currently in the process of setting up an informal working group that will include these entities. OES currently coordinates with the Marines on emergency management plans in relation to the San Onofre nuclear power plant, participates in emergency drills and trainings with the Navy regarding nuclear submarine incidents, and coordinates with the U.S. Coast Guard on maritime security and oil spills.

In the case of a large-scale emergency, the DOD is authorized to provide resources when response and recovery requirements are beyond the capabilities of civil authorities (as determined by FEMA or another lead federal emergency response agency) and these efforts do not interfere with its primary mission or ability to respond to operational contingencies. Requests for Defense Support to Civilian Authorities (DSCA) are made thru the local, county, and state authorities as a Request for Assistance to the Federal Coordinating Official in the appropriate Lead Federal Agency and is normally accompanied by, or submitted after a request from the State Governor for a natural disaster declaration from the President. The Defense Coordinating Officer coordinates the DOD resources to be provided. The California National Guard (CNG) may be activated as part of the DSCA and can provide law enforcement support, crisis management and consequence management services. Activation of the National Guard for local support during emergencies is done by the Governor via the California Office of Emergency Services.

Public Transit Agencies

Hurricane Katrina demonstrated the importance of having plans to evacuate persons without access to private vehicles. San Diego has an extensive transit system comprised of regional rail (COASTER), light rail (trolley), and a local and regional bus system. The COASTER and buses in North County San Diego are operated by the North County Transit District (NCTD). The Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) operates the San Diego Trolley and buses in central and southern San Diego County.

Both NCTD and MTS have emergency preparedness/evacuation plans to evacuate passengers from transit vehicles and stations. Currently neither MTS nor NCTD has official written emergency operations plans to evacuate residents via transit in the case of large-scale emergency or disaster, such as an earthquake or act of terrorism. Officials from NCTD have been working with North County jurisdictions to develop emergency operating plans. MTS has been collaborating on a limited basis with cities in San Diego County who are in the process of creating or updating their municipal evacuation plans. MTS plans to take a more active role in evacuation planning in the near future.

The region has not fully defined the role that transit operators should play in the evacuation of residents in the event of a large-scale disaster. Plans to transport transit-dependent populations in the case of a disaster that requires mass evacuations need to be developed. One of the challenges noted by transit providers and emergency preparedness experts is maintaining sufficient staff to operate the transit system in an evacuation situation. Transit operators recognize that transit drivers also have needs to evacuate their own families during these times. Making transit operators “essential personnel” for certain types of disasters and allowing drivers to evacuate their families with other passengers are two ideas that have been explored.⁴

U.S. Customs and Border Protection

More than 60 million people and 730,000 trucks cross through the San Diego-Baja California ports of entry (POEs) in the northbound direction each year.⁵ As neighbors and key trade partners, assuring safe and time-efficient travel is critical to the economies of both California and Baja California. Since September 11, 2001, there has been a greater emphasis on border security to prevent the entrance of terrorists and smuggling of weapons. Due to increased security at the border, delays to cross into the U.S. (the San Diego region) have been growing and have become more unpredictable.

Housed in the Department of Homeland Security, the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CPB) contains all frontline personnel and law enforcement functions at the nation’s borders. The CPB has many systems in place to prevent the entrance of potentially dangerous persons and materials, including *Project Shield America*, which is focused on keeping nuclear components out of the hands of adversaries.⁶

Many physical, technology, and policy systems are in place to ensure the safety and security of the border region. The San Diego-Mexico border currently contains a 14-mile fence, as well as Border Patrol and Customs officials at the San Ysidro, Otay Mesa, and Tecate Ports of Entry (POE). Border

⁴ Victoria Transport Policy Institute, *Lessons from Katrina- What a Major Disaster Can Teach Transportation Planners*, September 2005.

⁵ SANDAG, *Economic Impacts of Wait Times at the San Diego-Baja California Border*, January 2006.

⁶ U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/border_security/antiterror_initiatives/safeguarding_america.xml.

Patrol agents patrol the border on foot, horseback, and in vehicles and aircraft suitable for the terrain and patrol area.⁷

Border Master Plan

In order to better facilitate the movement of people and goods through the San Diego-Baja California POEs, Caltrans District 11 has initiated the development of a *Border Master Plan*. The Border Master Plan will establish a process to institutionalize dialogue among local, state, and federal stakeholders in the United States and Mexico to understand their processes to identify land POEs and connecting transportation infrastructure needs.

The Master Plan's ultimate objective is to develop criteria that can be used in future studies to prioritize improvements to existing or new POEs within a bi-state framework. The Master Plan will consider short-term, mid-term and long term needs and help to foster consistency among individual agency planning processes to create a unified process for periodic plan updates.

San Diego Unified Port District

The United States Coast Guard and San Diego Harbor Police provide security for the Port of San Diego. In order to protect the public a number of moving and fixed security zones have been established for ships operating within the Port of San Diego. No vessel is allowed within 100 yards of a U.S. naval vessel or cruise ship, unless authorized by the Capitan of the Port of San Diego, or his designated representative. A one-mile security zone has also established around the San Onofre nuclear generating stations.⁸

The Coast Guard has created a pilot-armed escort program, the Sea Marshals program, in the Ports of San Francisco, Los Angeles, and San Diego. This program is designed to reduce the threat of using a commercial vessel as a terrorist instrument. The Sea Marshal concept employs preventive measures to neutralize tactics that could be employed by terrorists attempting to gain control of a large commercial carrier. The Sea Marshals armed escort provides security for the pilot, master, and the bridge navigation team on board a vessel during its transit in U.S. navigable waters.⁹

Transportation Management Center (TMC)

The San Diego Transportation Management Center (TMC) integrates Caltrans Traffic Operations, Caltrans Maintenance, and California Highway Patrol (CHP) communications in a unified, co-located communication and command center. The TMC provides the communications, surveillance, and computer infrastructure necessary for coordinated transportation management on state highways during normal commute periods, as well as for special events and major incidents. Additionally, in an emergency, the TMC becomes a command center for directing relief throughout the region. The TMC is designed with the latest technologies to survive earthquakes, power outages, and communications disruptions. With secure communications and focused, prepared responses, the TMC becomes a valuable asset for the survival and recovery of the San Diego region. The TMC encompasses a large number of safety operations from fielding calls from freeway "call boxes" to

⁷U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/border_security/border_patrol/border_patrol_sectors/sandiego_sector_ca/overview/sandiego_overview.xml.

⁸ U.S. Coast Guard, Sector San Diego. <http://www.uscg.mil/d11/sandiego/prevention/portsec.htm>

⁹ United States House of Representatives. *Implementation of the Maritime Transportation Security Act*, June 2004.

CHP Dispatch using Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) to assign Officers and Freeway Service Patrol trucks. The TMC also controls and operates the reversible I-15 HOV Express Lanes, Highway Advisory Radio (HAR), and Changeable Message Signs (CMS)¹⁰.

The CMS are controlled through the Caltrans District 11 Advanced Transportation Management System (ATMS) and currently are used to post information on significant accidents, Amber alerts, and/or safety campaign messages. There are approximately 29 CMS in the region, including three currently under construction. An additional 12 signs, managed by the contracted toll operator's system, are used specifically to provide status and toll information for the I-15 Managed Lanes. SANDAG currently is working with Caltrans to enhance their ATMS to allow for automatic calculation and posting of travel time estimates in alignment with SANDAG's 511 Traveler Information Service. The long-term vision includes utilizing the signs as a key dissemination tool to create informed system users, promote mode choice, and provide for more efficient system usage.

Reverse 911 Telephone Alert System

In August 2005, the County of San Diego contracted to install a new Reverse 911 system. The system allows county and city officials to call residents' land-line telephones to inform them of disasters in their neighborhoods, including warnings to evacuate. The system, which is housed in the Sheriff's Communications Center, can send out 264 warning calls per minute, for a total of 15,840 calls per hour. The system does require functioning power and phone lines¹¹. The system is available to residents in the unincorporated communities and the nine local cities that contract with the San Diego Sheriff's Department for law enforcement¹².

San Diego County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan

The Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan for San Diego County was published by the San Diego County Office of Emergency Services (OES) and the Unified Disaster Council (UDC) in March 2004¹³. The document, which satisfies Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and California Office of Emergency Services and Security (COESS) requirements, was developed in collaboration with the 18 incorporated cities in the region and identifies potential natural and man-made disasters, as well as the existing mitigation plans in place to deal with these occurrences. The plan serves many purposes; it strives to enhance public awareness and understanding, create a decision tool for management, promote compliance with state and federal program requirements, and enhance local policies for hazard mitigation capabilities.

Pending Plans and Programs

I-15 Traffic Incident Management Plan (TIM)

SANDAG, in partnership with Caltrans, will be developing a Traffic Incident Management (TIM) Plan for the I-15 Managed Lanes that will prescribe the level of incident/emergency response, agencies involved, and the appropriate actions to be taken. The TIM plan will discuss incident detection, notification, dispatch, control, and monitoring activities. The plan also will establish emergency notification procedures to convey information to Caltrans, SANDAG, transit operators (MTS, NCTD), emergency responders (CHP, freeway service patrol, (local police and fire, ambulance, etc.) and the

¹⁰ Caltrans, District 11. Traffic Operations Center. <http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist11/operations/tmc.htm>.

¹¹ Government Technology. <http://www.govtech.net/news/news.php?id=96297>.

¹² Conaughton, Gig. "County Buys Reverse 911 System." North County Times, August 11, 2005.

¹³ County of San Diego. *Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan San Diego County, CA*, March 2004.

public. Plans for utilization of the regional advanced traveler information system (511) and changeable message signs (CMS) also will be included. The TIM Plan will discuss what circumstances, if any, are appropriate to open the I-15 managed lanes to general purpose/mixed-flow traffic, e.g., during a major incident that shuts down all main lanes of traffic in one direction.

The development and implementation of the emergency response plan will enable the transportation agencies, I-15 Managed Lane operators, and other emergency responders to have a coordinated and efficient mechanism to deploy assets to resolve freeway incidents and emergencies. The development of the TIM will commence in April 2006, with a final plan anticipated in September 2006.

Regional Needs Assessment and Interoperability Plan

The SANDAG Public Safety Committee (PSC) contracted with a consultant to conduct a regional public safety needs assessment to help establish short- and long-term goals to enhance regional safety and benefit member jurisdictions and public safety agencies. A final report was released in July 2005. The needs assessment focused on four priority efforts: communications and interoperability, creation of a regional information center, technology acquisition and maintenance, and training. Interoperability allows agencies with different communications systems to interact with each other. Stakeholders from the public safety community identified communications and interoperability as the key area of needed reform.

In most agencies, communications and interoperability issues are focused around radio communications. However, this topic also can include issues such as wireless and traditional data networking and information sharing.¹⁴ One of the key challenges facing public safety professionals in times of emergency is the inability to communicate with other local, state, or federal agencies that do not utilize the same radio technology. Interoperability would provide a system whereby safety officials in different agencies could communicate with each other via radio, wireless, or other forms of information sharing.

Currently, most agencies in the county use the Regional Communications System (RCS) for their radio communications service. While users are able to communicate with other agencies in the county on the RCS system, they are not able to communicate with the San Diego Police Department (SDPD).¹⁵ The SDPD and Sheriff's Department currently are working together to implement a patching capability between their respective radio systems that will allow for connections to be established in the event of a critical incident. There also is concern that local agencies cannot communicate with state, federal, and other non-local agencies.

As a follow-up to the *Regional Needs Assessment*, in July 2005 the PSC approved an interoperability and communications work program with the goal of providing the foundation necessary to develop a agreed-upon regional strategic plan. The core of this effort has been workshops on interoperability that have included local and national experts on the topic. The first workshop, held in January 2006, focused on establishing what interoperability means to the San Diego region and highlighted interoperability challenges faced on a national and regional level. The second workshop, held in March 2006, identified current interoperability efforts within the region. A third workshop, planned for July 2006 and will complete the series, will include a facilitated discussion to

¹⁴ Public Safety Committee, *Regional Needs Assessment Final Report*, July 2005.

¹⁵ Public Safety Committee, *Regional Needs Assessment Final Report*, July 2005.

begin the development of a strategic plan, collaborate on potential regional solutions, and develop action items to address the priorities identified during the workshops.

Transit Station Safety

The safety of both transit riders and vehicles parked at regional park-and-ride locations is an important element of the regional transportation system. In order to obtain a better understanding of crimes and crime patterns at transit stations and improve crime prevention techniques to increase public transit usage, SANDAG included research on identifying crime patterns at transit stations in the Fiscal Year 2007 Overall Work Program (OWP). The project also will develop a Geographical Information System (GIS) based crime analysis methodology for crime event and crime pattern analysis. This proposed work element responds to the needs of the local transit security personnel, transit planners, and law enforcement. This project is being funded by a planning grant obtained through Caltrans.

Conclusions/Recommendations

The San Diego region has a number of emergency preparedness and response plans in place. Identified coordination and response agencies provide for a systematic response to natural and man-made disasters, and existing infrastructure such as the CMS and Reverse 911 telephone system allow for information to be shared with portions of the population in an expeditious manner. However, important infrastructure and procedural improvements still are needed to further increase the safety and security of the San Diego region.

The following items should be examined further when developing the 2007 RTP or other safety and security efforts:

- Transit Emergency Operations Plans: Transit operators, local jurisdictions, and safety agencies should work together to develop plans to evacuate transit-dependent populations in the event of natural or man-made disaster.
- SANDAG should continue its work via the Public Safety Committee to enhance and improve interoperability and communications between local, state, and federal public safety agencies and to find opportunities to leverage and most effectively utilize transportation and public safety resources in support of this effort.
- Enhancements to existing communications centers and options for a centralized communications center should continue to be explored.
- Recommendations from the I-15 Traffic Incident Management Plan should be implemented in a timely manner to ensure that the I-15 Managed Lanes are utilized with maximum efficiency under emergency situations.
- There should be further coordination of emergency planning and implementation among various local, state, and federal agencies to allow for effective responses and eliminate duplication of efforts.

This paper also has identified the continued challenge of balancing security and the efficient movement of people and goods through the San Diego-Baja California Ports of Entry. SANDAG will further examine this issue in the Cross-Border Transportation white paper.