AGENDA

San Diego-Imperial County I-8 Corridor Strategic Plan
Joint Policy Advisory Committee Meeting

Friday, October 31, 2008
11:30 am - 1:00 pm
China Palace Steakhouse
1075 West Adams Avenue
El Centro, CA 92243
(760) 482-4290

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. Approval of the August 1, 2008, Meeting Minutes
   Action

3. Interregional Public Survey (Attachment)
   Discussion
   PMC will provide an overview of findings from the Imperial Valley Resident
   and the I-8 Traveler surveys.

4. Early Actions and Interregional Strategies (Attachment)
   Discussion
   PMC will present an overview of the proposed transportation,
   environmental, economic, and housing strategies discussed during the
   October 16, 2008 Technical Advisory Group meeting and at the October
   24, 2008 Borders Committee meeting.

5. Upcoming Meeting and Next Steps
   Action
   The next meeting of the Joint Policy Advisory Committee is tentatively
   scheduled for Friday, January 23 at 10:00 am in San Diego (SANDAG
   offices). The next Technical Advisory Working Group meeting is scheduled
   for Thursday, November 20, 2008.

6. Adjournment
1. **Welcome and Introductions**

Mr. Carrillo welcomed the attendees and led the self-introductions.
2. **Strategic Plan Overview / Role of the Joint Policy Advisory Committee**

Ms. López-Solís introduced Mr. Whiteaker, who noted that IVAG, in cooperation with Caltrans District 11 and SANDAG, initiated the San Diego-Imperial County I-8 Corridor Strategic Plan, as a first phase of analysis that will look at interregional transportation and transportation-related issues facing Imperial Valley and San Diego County. He outlined the process, recommended schedule, and approach to developing early actions and strategies related to transportation, economic development, jobs/housing balance, the natural environment, and other resource areas. The Joint Policy Advisory Committee will be asked to identify transportation, land use, economic, environmental, and other priorities for analysis in this integrated Strategic Plan.

3-6. **Draft Goals and Objectives, Interregional Public Survey, Draft Existing Conditions, and Upcoming Meetings and Next Steps.**

Mr. Whiteaker led an interactive discussion on the Draft Goals and Objectives, provided an update on the Interregional Public Survey, highlighted preliminary findings as part of the Draft Existing Conditions and noted that the next Joint Policy Advisory Committee is scheduled for October 31, 2008 in El Centro.

The following summary highlights key discussion points and items identified for follow up:

a. Mr. Whiteaker noted that the draft goals and objectives address interregional collaboration, mobility, quality of life, economic vitality, and minimizing negative impacts on the environment.

b. Mr. Carrillo reinforced that the Strategic Plan should incorporate economic development considerations, acknowledging that the two regions will grow together. He noted that Imperial County has available land, water and infrastructure for future development, including expansion of the biotech industry.

c. Mr. Carrillo explained that while IVAG is within the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) metropolitan planning area and SANDAG is the lead agency for the San Diego metropolitan planning area, SANDAG and IVAG share a Caltrans District.

d. Mr. Carrillo indicated that among the travelers currently using the I-8 corridor, approximately 150,000 people come to the sand dunes in
Imperial County during Thanksgiving weekend and many drivers use I-8 for travel between Mexicali and Tijuana to avoid less safe routes in Mexico.

e. Mr. Whiteaker noted that the Interregional Public Survey will use two different approaches: an automated telephone survey of existing travelers in which participants will be asked about their drive on the I-8 and a telephone survey of Imperial Valley residents.

f. Mr. Whiteaker noted that based on existing data available, interregional commuters traveling from Imperial County to San Diego County and from San Diego County to Imperial County represent a small portion of all traffic the I-8, which makes solutions to congestion problems challenging as the traditional solutions targeted to commuters will not address the majority of traffic on the corridor.

g. Ms. McCoy suggested that the Sunrise Powerlink be mentioned in the plan and the possibility that it can run down the freeway. She also mentioned that tribal issues need to be addressed in the plan as well as the project will disturb the natural environment.

h. Mr. Allen suggested that closures due to fire and consideration of fire evacuation routes be addressed in the plan.

i. Mr. Whiteaker highlighted the following as key preliminary findings in terms of existing conditions:

   ii. Existing congestion along the corridor is limited.

   iii. Commuters and truckers account for less than a third of the traffic at the county boundary, suggesting the need to non-traditional solutions to future traffic problems.

   iv. Imperial County is not a bedroom community to San Diego County today.

   v. The two economies are linked, but independent.

j. Mr. Whiteaker noted that the next steps include finalizing the existing conditions, conducting the Interregional Public Survey and developing early actions and interregional strategies.

k. Ms. Sanders suggested that the region be broadened into a “mega-region” and that with tourism, movement of goods and services, and others, we need to think on a more broad scale. With
a plan like this, San Diego and Imperial Counties are intertwined with the Counties of Los Angeles, Riverside, San Bernardino, and others.

l. Mr. Sáenz added that the Mega Region was planning to include this study in their report which would be released after this study is complete. In addition, the president of the Mega Region initiative has been invited to participate in the Technical Advisory Working Group.

m. Mr. Allen suggested that a first time home buyer program linked to foreclosed housing should be considered.

n. Mr. Carrillo mentioned that this is a positive plan because more stakeholders and the general public are being included in decisions.

o. The next meeting will be on October 31st with a tour of the area included. Mr. Figge will look into reserving a van for the day.
INTERREGIONAL PUBLIC SURVEY

Background

The I-8 Corridor Strategic Plan is intended to serve as the first phase of a planning effort to improve mobility for people and goods and enhance the quality of life and economic vitality of Imperial County. The Strategic Plan will identify issues, establish goals and objectives, and develop interregional strategies in the areas of transportation, housing, and employment to ensure adequate levels of service on the I-8 corridor. To facilitate the development of these strategies, IVAG, Caltrans District 11, and SANDAG, are gathering land use, socio-economic, demographic, as well as data on public opinion and behavior. The Interregional Public Survey is designed to profile residents and commuters and better understand the factors, rationales, and decisions of residents that may contribute to traffic congestion and increased interregional commuting.

The proposed Interregional Public Survey approach is divided into two distinct parts based on 1) targeting people who currently use the I-8 corridor and 2) the larger community of potential future I-8 commuters. Initial findings from the Interregional Public Survey will be presented to the Joint Policy Advisory Committee at the October 31, 2008 meeting.

Discussion

The following presents preliminary results of two public opinion surveys conducted in August and September of 2008. The first study, a survey of Imperial Valley residents, was conducted using traditional telephone interviewing methods and was designed to address: (1) perceived quality of life in Imperial Valley; (2) current commute patterns; (3) future commute patterns; and, (4) non work-related travel. The second study, an automated telephone or IVR survey, specifically targeted users of Interstate 8 (I-8), the primary corridor linking Imperial and San Diego counties. The survey instruments with frequencies are attached.

The residential survey included interviews with 401 Imperial Valley residents, yielding an overall margin of error of +/-5 percent at the 95 percent confidence level. A total of 264 surveys were conducted with English-speaking residents and 137 with Spanish-speaking residents.
The I-8 traveler survey included automated telephone interviews with 486 drivers, also yielding an overall margin of error of +/-5 percent at the 95 percent confidence level. A total of 457 surveys were conducted with English-speaking drivers and 29 with Spanish-speaking drivers.

Key findings are presented below for the residential survey, followed by results for the I-8 traveler survey.

**Key Findings: Residential Survey**

**Quality of Life in Imperial Valley**

- The majority of Imperial Valley residents rated the overall quality of life in their communities as “good” or “excellent” (61 percent), with fewer than 10 percent rating the quality of life as “poor” (9 percent).

- When asked what attributes were most important to them in selecting a community, residents identified personal safety, medical care, education, affordable housing, and job opportunities as their top priorities.

- In those areas ranked as most important, residents gave Imperial Valley high marks for personal safety and education, but low ratings for access to medical care, nearby job opportunities and affordable housing, particularly among low-income residents.

- More than one-quarter of residents currently living in Imperial Valley (28 percent) reported that they have considered moving within the last two years. The most frequently cited reason for possibly moving out of the area was lack of employment opportunities or inadequate medical care.

- Imperial Valley retains aspects of a “small town” environment with the majority of residents reporting that they were born and raised in the area (37 percent) or relocated to be closer to friends and family (20 percent). Another 21 percent of residents surveyed moved to the area to pursue a job. Only 5 percent of residents surveyed reported that they moved to Imperial County to find affordable housing.

**Current Commute Patterns**

- More than nine-out-of ten workers surveyed (91 percent) reported that they worked within Imperial County.

- The average commute for Imperial Valley residents is 20 minutes, with one-third of workers commuting 10 minutes or less. When asked what is the
maximum amount of time they would be willing to spend traveling one-way to get to work, respondents answered 29 minutes on average.

- Most workers conduct their commute five days a week or more (81 percent).
- Single occupancy vehicles are the primary mode of transportation to and from work for Imperial Valley residents. More than eight-out-of-ten residents drive alone (83 percent), followed by 10 percent who carpool. Fewer than 4 percent of residents take public transportation, bike, walk, or use another mode.
- Approximately one-third (30 percent) of Imperial Valley workers travel along the I-8 as part of their commute.
- Among those residents currently employed, the most frequently cited job industry was working for a government agency (17 percent) or educational institution (17 percent), followed by healthcare.

**Future Commute Patterns**

- Among workers, 38 percent reported that they would be “somewhat likely” or “very likely” to carpool with a co-worker, 41 percent reported that they would be likely to join a vanpool, and 38 percent reported that they would be likely to take public transportation to work if they could catch a single bus (i.e. take one bus without transfers) near their home.

- Workers were statistically more likely to report that they would be willing to work from home rather than carpool, vanpool, or take public transportation. A total of 72 percent of commuters reported that they would be “somewhat likely” or “very likely” to work at home, a statistically significant difference.

**Non-Work Travel**

- The most common reason residents travel outside of Imperial county, not including travel for work, is to visit family and friends (36 percent), followed by shopping, recreation, and medical/dental appointments.

- When traveling for non-work related trips, residents are less likely to drive alone.
Key Findings: I-8 Traveler Survey

Overview of I-8 Travel (figures include truck divers, unless otherwise noted with an asterisk [*])

- During the fall, two-thirds of weekday drivers using the I-8 are traveling for work or business (67 percent). All other trip purposes, including recreation, vacation, or medical services each make up less than 10 percent of I-8 traffic.

- More than three-fourths of all drivers begin their trips in Imperial or San Diego Counties (43 percent, and 35 percent, respectively). Nine-out-of-ten drivers (93 percent) are traveling to a destination within San Diego County.

- Two-thirds of all drivers surveyed (66 percent) reported that the traffic was “light” on the day they received the survey invitation. Only 2 percent of those surveyed described the traffic congestion as “heavy.”

- More than half of drivers surveyed make the same commute at least once a week (52 percent). Another quarter of drivers make the trip several times a year (24 percent), primarily as a vacation or recreational traveler. *

- Most weekday travel along the I-8 is year-round (90 percent).*

- More than two-thirds of weekday drivers (68 percent) reported that their one-way trip takes at least one hour. Nearly one third of those drivers (30 percent) reported that it takes them two hours or more to reach their destination.*

- Of the drivers surveyed, 70 percent live in San Diego County, and 23 percent live in Imperial County. A total of less than 7 percent of drivers surveyed reported living in Los Angeles, Riverside, San Bernardino, or Orange Counties. Less than 1 percent of those surveyed were from Mexicali or Mexico.

- Among those respondents currently employed, 20 percent reported working for a government agency, followed by 13 percent who work in construction and 12 percent in healthcare. (The remaining proportion was employed in miscellaneous industries.)

- The typical I-8 driver is 49 years old, male, employed, and with above median income.
Current Commute Patterns

- Drivers who commute at least once a week for work were examined separately. The one-way work trip for most commuters (54 percent) is at least one hour and only 3 percent report a one-way commute under 30 minutes. Travel patterns among commuters are consistent regardless of the season, with 98 percent reporting that they make this type of trip year round.

- Despite the long commute, 90 percent of commuters report that they are “somewhat satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their current commute. Nearly three-fourths of I-8 commuters (71 percent) have been conducting their current commute for more than two years. Of those, more than one-third (35 percent) have been making the commute for more than five years.

- Most commuters drive alone. A total of 58 percent of drivers report that they rarely or never ride with other people.

Future Commute Patterns

- When asked how likely they would be to carpool with a co-worker who lived nearby, just under half of I-8 commuters (49 percent) reported that they would be “somewhat likely” or “very likely” to do so.

- When asked how likely they would be to join a vanpool that picked them up from a centralized location and drove them to work for less than they pay now in travel costs, 43 percent of commuters reported that they would be “somewhat likely” or “very likely” to do so.

- Similarly, less than half of all commuters surveyed (46 percent) reported that they would be “somewhat likely” or “very likely” to take public transportation.

- There were no statistical differences in the proportion of commuters who were willing to opt for one alternative mode of transportation over another.

Super Commuters

- Super commuters, defined as commuters traveling between counties, tend to have longer one-way trips than commuters in general, with 91 percent of super commuters reporting that they drive at least an hour one way. More than a quarter of super commuters (26 percent), report that their one-way commute takes at least two hours.
A total of 91 percent of super commuters report that they are “somewhat satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their current commute, similar to commuters in general.

Super commuters tend to have higher incomes, are slightly older, and are more likely to be male compared to other commuters.

There were no statistical differences between super commuters and other commuters with regard to their interest in alternative modes of transportation to work; namely, carpooling, vanpooling, or public transportation.

More than three-fourths of super commuters report that they would not be likely to move closer to work even if they could find quality housing for 25 percent more than they pay now. Similarly, 77 percent reported that they would not be likely to take a job that is located closer to their home for 10 percent less pay.

Approximately two-thirds of super commuters (65 percent) reported that they would not be likely to move closer to their work even if gas prices exceeded $6 a gallon.

**Recommendation**

Discuss possible implications of the survey findings, particularly as it relates to the identification of possible early actions and interregional strategies (Agenda Item 4).

**Attachments**

Appendix A Resident Telephone Survey with Frequencies
Appendix B1 IVR Survey with Frequencies ALL RESPONDENTS
Appendix B2 IVR Survey with Frequencies EXCLUDING TRUCKERS
Early Actions and Interregional Strategies

Background

The I-8 Corridor Strategic Plan is intended to serve as the first phase of a planning effort to improve mobility for people and goods and enhance the quality of life and economic vitality of San Diego and Imperial counties. The Strategic Plan will identify issues, establish goals and objectives, and develop interregional strategies in the areas of transportation, housing, and employment to ensure adequate levels of service on the I-8 corridor.

Discussion

Using existing conditions findings and the initial findings from the interregional public survey (Agenda Item 3), the following areas have been identified for potential early actions and interregional strategies by the Technical Advisory Work Group and considered by the SANDAG Borders Committee:

- Regional Collaboration
- Community Outreach
- Economic Development Strategies
  - Job Creation
  - Reducing Border Wait Time
  - Education and Workforce Training
- Housing Affordability
- Job-Housing Balance
- Transportation Strategies
  - Rideshare Programs
  - Transit Service
  - Transportation Demand Management Strategies
  - Goods Movement
  - Highway/Arterial Improvements

PMC will lead the Joint Policy Advisory Committee in a discussion of the above potential early actions and interregional strategies and will solicit additions or replacements as appropriate. It should be noted that the Technical Advisory Working Group has recommended a working definition for early actions as those strategies that can be implemented or initiated within six months.
**Recommendation**

On October 31, 2008, provide policy direction and other recommendations for potential early actions and interregional strategies that address issues identified in the existing conditions document, interregional public survey findings and others as identified by Joint Policy Advisory Committee members.