

San Diego Association of Governments
BORDERS COMMITTEE

May 25, 2007

AGENDA ITEM NO.: **1**

Action Requested: APPROVE

**BORDERS COMMITTEE DISCUSSION AND ACTIONS
MEETING OF APRIL 27, 2007**

The meeting of the Borders Committee was called to order by Chair Patricia McCoy (South County) at 12:34 p.m. See the attached attendance sheet for Borders Committee member attendance.

1. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Action: Upon a motion by Councilmember Dave Allen (East County) and a second by Councilmember Jack Feller (North County Coastal), the Borders Committee approved the minutes from the March 23, 2007, meeting.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS/MEMBER COMMENTS

Pedro Orso-Delgado (Caltrans) informed that the California Transportation Commission approved \$80 million to be used for right-of-way cost increases on SR 905.

Supervisor Greg Cox (County of San Diego) asked if it would be broken into two projects; the first project to begin construction and the second project would be dealt with after the property acquisitions.

Mr. Orso-Delgado responded affirmatively.

REPORT ITEMS (#3 through #7)

3. SAN YSIDRO PORT OF ENTRY EXPANSION PROJECT

Daniel Voll, Deputy Assistant Regional Administrator of the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA), explained the San Ysidro Port of Entry expansion project is a joint effort between U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and the GSA, and is challenging due to its size and the fact that it has to be built while the Port is operational. He introduced Steve Baker, the Project Manager, and Ramon Riesgo, the person in charge of the intergovernmental and international coordination for border projects.

Mr. Baker gave a brief history of the area and explained that the project's goal is to improve safety and security, and make it technologically advanced. The GSA is currently engaged in the master planning of the Port of Entry, which involves roadway configurations and building footprints. Both the GSA & CBP are proposing the demolition of the entire facility except for the old historical Port. There would be a new primary inspection booth plaza, secondary inspection areas, support buildings, including administration and pedestrian facilities, and the southbound roadway on Virginia Avenue meeting up with El Chaparral on the Mexican side.

The proposed project could cost over \$500 million to implement. The project will have three phases: first, the capacity of the Port; second, northbound structures; and third, the southbound facility, as it is the most complex due to private property acquisitions, potential environmental issues, and Mexico's Port of Entry. Construction should begin in 2009 and be completed in 2014.

Chair McCoy welcomed Congressman Bob Filner, 51st District, and asked if he would like to comment.

Congressman Filner remarked that cooperation is necessary to accomplish such a large and complicated task.

Director Adele Fasano, (CBP) said a project of this magnitude presents significant challenges in terms of budget requirements and is going to present huge consequences for the border region for the foreseeable future. The entire U.S./Mexico border infrastructure is in serious need of renovation and replacement. CBP Commissioner Ralph Basham designated this as his top priority facility project within CBP nationwide, which includes Border Patrol. He is working directly with the GSA Administrator on outreach packages to send to Congress to inform the key members on the critical importance of this project and the funding requirements. She explained one way to accelerate the pace of the project would be to supplement the traditional GSA process with the use of their building funds to securing a direct appropriation from Congress to supplement the GSA funding.

Supervisor Pam Slater-Price (County of San Diego) asked Congressman Filner if an organization of border states is still operational in Congress.

Congressman Filner responded that it is actually called a Border Caucus which consists of approximately 15 members.

Supervisor Slater-Price added that it would be an excellent focal point upon which to plan something.

Congressman Filner recommended that the business community join in the coalition also, as they all share common objectives.

Councilmember Ed Gallo (North County Inland) commented the money spent on border improvements is money well spent when reviewing the cost of the project and the cost in wait times.

Councilmember Ben Hueso (City of San Diego) thanked Congressman Filner for his attendance and said there is certain disconnect between Washington D.C. and the community in terms of integrating such an important resource into the community. It appears, however, the new proposal will address concerns and create a well-designed project. He asked when the design objectives would be presented.

Mr. Baker explained that they are currently in the master planning phase, and they will be presented probably in six to eight months.

Councilmember Hueso asked if the design would be included in the EIR.

Mr. Baker said the environmental impacts are probably more related to site layouts and the environmental process goes parallel with the planning and design process.

Councilmember Hueso asked for confirmation that the EIR would be completed in 2008.

Mr. Baker stated it should be completed in spring 2008.

Councilmember Hueso said that they will not have a budget until the project impacts are known.

Mr. Baker replied the master plan gives a better idea in terms of the overall budget, and some estimated numbers for the FY 09 budget will be compiled prior to the completion of the master planning.

Councilmember Hueso commented he looks forward to seeing the work being completed as it will have huge impacts on the San Ysidro community depending on how the impacts are mitigated.

Congressman Filner remarked that Councilmember Hueso's comments on the importance of design elements and the economic life of the community were excellent. He said members of the Caucus recently met with GSA and CBP to reinforce the fact that this is not just a security dynamic; it is of great importance to the people at the border and whole community. He spoke positively about the work the GSA has done with the architecture.

Mr. Baker said the design team selected for the project was selected for their expertise and excellent design experience and the federal government is encouraging all design teams to create projects that will have a positive impact to the communities.

Mr. Voll added that the government is now focusing on design excellence in which each construction project makes a statement, does not look like the other, fits into the community, and is an attractive secure and functional space.

Councilmember Dave Allan (East County) asked if companies within the County of San Diego would be used once the construction phase begins.

Mr. Baker answered that generally a project of this size will get bids from local and regional contractors.

Councilmember Allan asked if the point of having County companies could be stressed when the jobs go out for bid.

Mr. Baker said he was unsure of the requirements for construction firms and would follow up on it.

Consul General Luis Cabrera C. added all border projects require coordinated work with Mexican authorities and institutions. Mexico continues to work closely with the GSA and CBP on all the projects. These measures will require funds, and support for the staffing process and he hoped Congressman Filner would help with these items on the United States side.

Councilmember Phil Monroe (South County) expressed concern over the pedestrian route heading south and the closure of the southbound pedestrian bridge. He asked what the plans were for southbound pedestrians.

Mr. Baker responded that currently the pedestrian bridge runs next to the CBP administration building. From the intermodal plaza and trolley stop, some distance will be added, but the walk overall is probably on average no further than it is now.

Councilmember Monroe was concerned for those getting off at the trolley.

Mr. Baker stated that they would be dropped off in the Caltrans Friendship Plaza and the distance is greater due to how close the bridge can be to CBP operations.

Chair McCoy suggested the use of a people mover in order to assist the disabled and those with children.

Councilmember Monroe expressed concern about adding the extra distance. He then asked if the pedestrian bridge would be closed.

Director Adele Fasano stated there is no plan presently to close the current bridge that goes through the Port of Entry even though there are long standing security issues. The CBP Passenger Working Group, which meets with the Stakeholders on port of entry issues, established a working group to review issues and options to provide better security in the area. They have been asked to review the option of a reduction of hours the bridge is open, as there are more problems during the evening hours. Discussions with the community are likely to occur in order to receive options and ideas in order to meet security needs and provide for public safety at the same time. Once the group is convened and options are developed, there will be continued dialogue with the community until a conclusion is reached.

Dr. Paul Ganster (COBRO) thanked Congressman Filner for his letter supporting the stacked booth concept. He asked Ms. Fasano when she expected the study results from the stacked booth concept.

Director Adele Fasano responded that most likely it would be within the next 60 days. At the same time, however, they are working on an expansion plan as well.

Pedro Orso-Delgado added that Caltrans is collaborating on this study and confirmed that it should be 60 days or sooner.

Gary Gallegos (SANDAG) asked the representatives from the GSA if they are able to return to Congress and propose perhaps different financing mechanisms such as lease-backs.

Mr. Voll explained that the funding currently comes from the Federal Building Fund. The fund is comprised of the rent that tenant agencies pay. This year, there was approximately \$700 million in the fund for capital improvements, which had to be spread across multiple requirements. The GSA's authority to enter into public/private partnerships is very limited and would probably require legislation.

Mr. Gallegos responded that he recognizes it would probably require legislation. He cited the military as an example of going to the private sector with a lease-back period.

Congressman Filner said it would take a group like this to give this type of creativity and leadership.

Action: This item was presented for information only.

4. GOOD NEIGHBOR ENVIRONMENTAL BOARD'S (GNEB) TENTH REPORT: ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND BORDER SECURITY ON THE U.S. – MEXICO BORDER

Dr. Paul Ganster (COBRO), Good Neighbor Environmental Board (GNEB) Chairman, explained that the GNEB is a federal advisory panel established to advise the President and Congress about infrastructure and environmental issues along the southern border. The GNEB also prepares an annual report to the President and Congress. This year the GNEB's Tenth Report focuses on environmental protection and border security.

Regarding undocumented human crossings and rural stretches, the report recommends:

- Employing a mix of technology and infrastructure to reduce the enforcement footprint
- The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) work to identify and protect sensitive areas
- The creation of a federal office with expertise on security impacts on the environment
- Federal funding of tribes, private landowners, rural communities and land management agencies in order to address solid waste issues

The report cited the following concerns:

- The interruption of wildlife migratory paths
- Limited opportunities for collaboration between security and land management agencies.
- Hazardous materials moving through the urban crossings

Challenges included:

- Limited training for hazmat inspectors at ports of entries
- Lack of tracking and chemical data
- Problems regarding moving emergency responders and their equipment back and forth across the border
- Liability for crossborder emergency responders
- Inadequate technology, equipment, and personnel for emergency response
- The need for an overarching strategic plan to coordinate security and environmental personnel at the urban crossings

In an effort to address the above-mentioned items, the Baja California Emergency Management Institute (BCEMI) was established. It is collaboration between the County of San Diego through the 2012 Committee and the counterparts in Mexico. A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was signed by the County of San Diego, City of San Diego, and the City of Tijuana, which serves as an Emergency Response Communication Plan. Also, there was a desire to establish an institute that would continually train Mexican first responders and emergency responders at the same level they are trained in the United States. In April 2006, there was a general agreement on academic, scientific, technological, and cultural collaboration between Autonomous University of Baja California (UABC) California Civil Protection Administration, the Tijuana Fire Department and Municipal Civil Protection Administration, Mexico's Federal Attorney General and the Protection for the Environment; the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), California Governors Office of Emergency Services, and the County of San Diego in setting up this institute in Baja California. The Institute is now in its first stages of being set up through the UABC. The hope is that this institute will branch out throughout Mexico.

Dr. Ganster reported the next annual report will examine natural hazards in the border region and the impacts on human populations, natural systems, and preparedness response and recovery in the areas of hurricanes, storm events, earthquakes, and wild fires.

Councilmember Allan commented that in past occasions fire strike teams were sent from San Diego stations to fight fires in Tijuana and suggested tapping into the Bombero Program.

Mr. Dorsey responded that there are some issues such as sovereign immunity and workers compensation that need to be addressed at the federal level first.

Councilmember Allan asked if legislation could be passed at the State level, so the State's workers compensation would cover the problem and not make it a federal issue.

Mr. Dorsey responded that at the local level, they would have to unite with the Unified Disaster Council.

Councilmember Allan offered Mr. Dorsey his assistance to resolve this issue.

Action: This item was presented for information only.

5. UPDATE ON THE CALIFORNIA BIODIVERSITY COUNCIL'S (CBC) "BIODIVERSITY ALONG THE BORDER: COMMITTEE

Janet Fairbanks, the CBC Consultant, stated that the Biodiversity Council formed the Biodiversity Along the Border Committee in 2006, and was formed to represent federal, state, and local governments as well as non-profit organizations that work on environmental issues on both sides of the border. They focus on habitat conservation, wildlife corridor issues and urban runoff issues that are affecting the Tijuana River Estuary. They were charged with three objectives: pursue the "next steps" that are outlined in the Las Californias Binational Conservation Initiative; identifying new conservation easements along the border; and, seeking funds for water quality improvements that would help sustain the Tijuana River Estuary.

Due to the magnitude and complexity of the issues, they decided to form two subgroups. The Tijuana Estuary Issues Working Group is working on developing a grant that will identify funding sources and the fund recipients for projects such as developing new sediment basins on both sides of the border to protect the Tijuana River Estuary; developing a neighborhood condominium sewage project in Las Laureles Canyon (a colonia in Mexico) as a demonstration project; finding ways and money to create, sustain, manage, and build conservation easements; and developing ways to manage, remove, and recycle the debris and trash that is making its way into the Estuary.

The other group, the Las Californias Working Group, is in charge of reviewing the initiative and identifying opportunities for binational cooperation for preserving the habitat on the Mexican side and the wildlife corridor between both countries; identifying sources of funds and reviewing the mitigation process to see if there's an opportunity in Mexico to preserve some of the habitat that has been identified to be of importance. They also are looking at ways to create a national protected area in Mexico that would align with the Anza Borrego State Park.

Chair McCoy expressed that one of the concerns that has not been addressed, and needs to be added, is an addendum addressing climate change because that is going to have a tremendous impact at some point.

Pedro Orso-Delgado (Caltrans) said due to the State Route 11 (SR 11) project, Caltrans met with the Council of Environmental Quality in Washington D.C. to discuss the possibility of binational mitigation that would create a habitat and wildlife corridor. He stated that based on these discussions, this prospect looks very promising.

Dr. Ganster said Mr. Orso-Delgado's information is exactly the type of thing necessary to make things work along the border and a lot of interest also exists in pollution credit training or emissions credit training across the border.

Action: This item was presented for information only.

6. SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVE AMONG INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES IN BAJA CALIFORNIA

Horacio Gonzalez Moncada, Director of ADESU, the Alliance for the Sustainable Development of the Indigenous Communities in Baja California, briefed the Committee on a project involving various indigenous communities, including: the Kumiai, Cucapah, Kiliwa, and Paipai. The Alliance seeks to unite the indigenous communities, private and public sector organizations of Mexico and the U.S., to conserve their cultural and natural heritage through sustainable development in the native lands of Baja California. Current participants include the Kumiai indigenous communities of San Antonia Necua and San Jose de la Zorra, the native artisans of Baja California, Terra Peninsular, the Native Cultures Institute of Baja California (CUNA), the Interamerican Foundation, and other volunteers from Mexico and the United States.

Javier Cesena, (Kumiai from San Antonio de Necua), ADESU Community Coordinator gave an overview of ADESU's role in the communities. In an effort to retain their cultural identity, the indigenous communities are working with ADESU on two economic development initiatives to provide the population with alternatives to migration. One is an ecotourism program in which individuals, schools, churches, and other groups from the outside visit their communities to learn about their culture, history, and their natural resources management practices.

The second program involves indigenous artcraft. ADESU is working with the native artisans of Baja California to strengthen their traditional artcraft, including basketweaving and pottery. Rito Silva, President of the Native Artisans of Baja California, from the Kumiai community of San Jose de la Zorra briefed the Committee on the crafts made by the different artisans. ADESU is building a Web-based directory of the artisans of Baja California among the Kumiai, Cucapah, Kiliwa, and Paipai. Currently the registry contains information on approximately 200 artisans located in Baja California.

Everyone was encouraged to attend the next Arts Festival (Feria Artesanal) to take place in Ensenada, Baja California on July 29 – 30.

Chairman Christopher Devers (SCTCA) commented that there are significant challenges facing the indigenous communities in Baja. The tribal nations in San Diego are working hard to help their cousins in Mexico. The political border between the U.S. and Mexico means little to the tribes. The economic and infrastructure needs of the indigenous communities in Mexico are substantial. He urged the Borders Committee, when considering regional issues to keep in mind the people in Mexico and their attempt to better their lives.

Chair McCoy suggested that staff follow up and arrange a tour for the Borders Committee and any other interested elected officials to participate in an ecotour of the indigenous communities in Ensenada arranged by ADESU. Perhaps it could be coordinated with the Nativa 2007 Festival.

Councilmember Allan suggested promotion of the July 29 – 30 event.

Mr. Gallegos stated that he would promote the event to all SANDAG Board members.

Action: This item was presented for information only.

7. REPORT ON THE SAN DIEGO – BAJA CALIFORNIA MISSION TO MEXICO CITY

Consul General Luis Cabrera C. relayed a binational delegation of 47 participants from San Diego and Mexico met with federal authorities in Mexico City to convey the vision and cooperation that must prevail in the region. They met with individuals from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mexican Customs, Economic Secretary, Communication and Transportation Secretary, Energy Secretary, PEMEX, Tourism Commission, and the President of the Energy Commission of the Chamber of Deputies, representatives from the private sector who gave important insight into the future economic development in Mexico. They also met with the Technical Secretary of the Economic Cabinet.

Mayor Mary Sessom (City of Lemon Grove) thanked Consul General Cabrera C. for his assistance in making the mission such a success and relayed that President Calderon and the Mexican Congress are very enthusiastic about the projects.

Crystal Crawford (North County Coastal) expressed concern over the coordination of timing and funding sources on both sides of border.

Consul General Cabrera C. said two regional technical commissions have been created under the auspices of the Border Liaison Mechanism to ensure advancements are made at the same pace and secure the necessary funds.

Mr. Gallegos added that Otay II (East Otay Mesa port of entry) is a great opportunity for binational public/private partnerships.

Chairman Devers commented that there has been some success to help tribal communities along the border corridor and dialogue should continue.

Action: This item was presented for information only.

8. UPCOMING MEETINGS

The next meeting of the Borders Committee is scheduled for Friday, May 25, 2007, at 12:30 p.m.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Chair McCoy adjourned the meeting at 2:30 p.m.

Attachment: Attendance Sheet

**CONFIRMED ATTENDANCE
BORDERS COMMITTEE MEETING**

April 27, 2007

12:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

GEOGRAPHICAL AREA	JURISDICTION	NAME	MEMBER/ ALTERNATE	ATTENDING	
				Yes	No
South County	City of Imperial Beach	Patricia McCoy (Chair)	Member	✓	
	City of Coronado	Phil Monroe	Alternate	✓	
Imperial County	County of Imperial	Victor Carrillo	Member		✓
	City of Calexico	David Ouzan	Alternate		✓
North County Coastal	City of Oceanside	Jack Feller	Member	✓	
	City of Del Mar	Crystal Crawford	Alternate	✓	
North County Inland	City of San Marcos	Jim Desmond	Member	✓	
	City of Escondido	Ed Gallo	Alternate	✓	
East County	City of La Mesa	David Allan	Member	✓	
	City of Santee	John Minto	Alternate	✓	
City of San Diego	----	Ben Hueso	Member	✓	
	----	Brian Maienschein	Alternate		✓
County of San Diego	----	Greg Cox (Vice Chair)	Member	✓	
	----	Pam Slater-Price	Alternate	✓	

**ADVISORY/LIAISON
MEMBERS**

COBRO	----	Dr. Paul Ganster	Member	✓	
	----	Cindy Gompper-Graves	Alternate		✓
	---	Angelika Villagrana	Alternate	✓	
County of Riverside	City of Lake Elsinore	Thomas Buckley	Member		✓
Republic of Mexico	Consul General of Mexico	Luis Cabrera C.	Member	✓	
	Deputy Consul	Ricardo Pineda	Alternate		✓
	Deputy Consul	Lydia Antonio	Alternate		✓
Southern California Tribal Chairmen's Association	Pauma	Christopher Devers	Member	✓	
	Mesa Grande	Mark Romero	Alternate		✓
Caltrans	----	Pedro Orso-Delgado	Member	✓	
	----	Bill Figge	Alternate	✓	
San Diego County Water Authority	----	Howard Williams	Member	✓	
County of Orange	----	Debbie Cook	Member		✓

