MEETING NOTICE
AND AGENDA

COMMITTEE ON BINATIONAL REGIONAL OPPORTUNITIES (COBRO)

The Committee on Binational Regional Opportunities (COBRO) may take action on any item appearing on this agenda.

Tuesday, April 3, 2007
3:00 – 4:30 p.m.
SANDAG 7th Floor Conference Room
401 B Street, Suite 800
San Diego, CA 92101-4231

Staff Contact: Héctor Vanegas; (619) 699-1972

AGENDA HIGHLIGHTS

• UPDATE ON THE CALIFORNIA BIODIVERSITY COUNCIL’S “BIODIVERSITY ALONG THE BORDER” COMMITTEE

• TIJUANA RIVER WATERSHED AND THE BINATIONAL VISION PROJECT

• SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVE AMONG INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES IN BAJA CALIFORNIA

MISSION STATEMENT

The Committee on Binational Regional Opportunities (COBRO) will advise the Borders Committee of the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) concerning both short- and long-term binational related activities, issues, and actions; provide input regarding binational border-related planning and development; and identify ways to assist and coordinate with existing efforts in the binational area. The COBRO will serve as a working group to the SANDAG Borders Committee to facilitate a better understanding of the binational border-related issues and needs of the California-Baja California region.
Welcome to SANDAG! Members of the public may speak to the COBRO on any item at the time that the Committee is considering the item. Please complete a Speaker’s Slip which is located in the rear of the room and then present the slip to Committee staff. Also, members of the public are invited to address the Committee on any issue under the agenda item entitled Public Comments/Communications. Speakers are limited to three minutes. The COBRO may take action on any item appearing on the agenda.

This agenda and related staff reports can be accessed at www.sandag.org under meetings on SANDAG’s Web site. Public comments regarding the agenda can be forwarded to SANDAG via the e-mail comment form also available on the Web site. E-mail comments should be received no later than noon, two days prior to the COBRO meeting.

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), SANDAG will accommodate persons who require assistance in order to participate in SANDAG meetings. If such assistance is required, please contact SANDAG at (619) 699-1900 in advance of the meeting. To request this document or related reports in an alternative format, please call (619) 699-1990, (619) 699-1904 (TTY), or fax (619) 699-1905.

SANDAG offices are accessible by public transit. Phone 1-800-COMMUTE or see www.sdcommute.com for route information.
COMMITTEE ON BINATIONAL REGIONAL OPPORTUNITIES
Tuesday, April 3, 2007

ITEM #  

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

+2. MEETING SUMMARY  

APPROVE

Summary of March 6, 2007, meeting.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS AND MEMBER COMMENTS  

INFORMATION

Each speaker is limited to three minutes.

+4. UPCOMING EVENTS  

INFORMATION

REPORTS (Items 5 - 8 )

5. REPORT ON CITY OF TJUANA’S SUBCOMMITTEE ON BINATIONAL AFFAIRS (Councilmember Edgar Fernández, City of Tijuana)  

INFORMATION

This oral presentation will provide information on the City of Tijuana’s Subcommittee on Binational Affairs, which was created in May 2006, within the framework of the City’s Municipal Development Plan. SANDAG has been invited to be a member of this Subcommittee.

+6. UPDATE ON THE CALIFORNIA BIODIVERSITY COUNCIL’S “BIODIVERSITY ALONG THE BORDER” COMMITTEE (Janet Fairbanks, CBC; Ron Saenz, SANDAG)  

INFORMATION

The California Biodiversity Council (CBC) formed two working groups to follow up on several issues discussed during its meeting in September 2006. This report will discuss the progress made by the Las Californias Working Group and the Tijuana Estuary Issues Working Group.

7. TJUANA RIVER WATERSHED AND THE BINATIONAL VISION PROJECT (Co-Chairs Elsa Saxod and Laura Silvan, Border Liaison Mechanisms’ Binational Watershed Advisory Committee)  

INFORMATION

This presentation will describe the development of the Vision for the Tijuana River Watershed, which was prepared for the Binational Watershed Advisory Council for the Tijuana River Watershed. The goal of this project was to provide a binational vision for the Tijuana River Watershed based on stakeholder opinions regarding the present and future conditions of the watershed.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>ITEM #</th>
<th>RECOMMENDATION</th>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVE AMONG INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES IN BAJA CALIFORNIA (Horacio Gonzalez Moncada, ADESU)</td>
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<td>La Alianza para el Desarrollo Sustentable en las Comunidades Indigenas de Baja California (ADESU) is a project that unites indigenous communities, private and public sector organizations dedicated to pursuing economic development strategies that preserve the cultural heritage of Baja California tribal communities, while protecting their environmental assets. Horacio Gonzalez Moncada, Director of ADESU, will brief the Committee on current initiatives in the areas of artcraft and ecotourism.</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>NEXT MEETING DATE AND LOCATION</td>
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<td>The next meeting of the Committee on Binational Regional Opportunities will be held in Tijuana on Tuesday, May 8, 2007, at 3 p.m. Location to be determined.</td>
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+ next to an item indicates an attachment
1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The March 6, 2007, Committee on Binational Regional Opportunities (COBRO) meeting was called to order by Chair Paul Ganster. The meeting was held at SANDAG.

Members present were: Paul Ganster, Institute for the Regional Studies of the Californias; Consul Lydia Antonio, Consulate General of Mexico in San Diego; Cindy Gompper-Graves, South County Economic Development Council; Carlos de Orduña, Asociación Industrial de la Maquiladora; Sergio Pallares, Caltrans; Gustavo Perez, City of Chula Vista; Gary Brown, City of Imperial Beach; Kathya Yruretagoyena and Claudia Pedrero, City of Mexicali; Larry Van Wey, City of San Diego; Gerardo Chavez, City of Tecate; Diego Ceballos, City of Tijuana; Yolanda Walther-Meade, Fundación Internacional de la Comunidad; Luis Ruben Rodriguez, IMPlan; Tatiana Suro, Otay Mesa Chamber of Commerce; Nathan Owens, San Diego Dialogue; Angelika Villagrana, San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce; Dave Fege, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); Thomas Currie, San Ysidro Chamber of Commerce; and James Snider, Customs and Border Protection (CBP).

Advisory Members present were: Lisa Dye, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

2. MEETING SUMMARY

Angelika Villagrana, San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce, entertained a motion to approve the February 6, 2007, meeting summary. Yolanda Walther-Meade, Fundación Internacional de la Comunidad, seconded the motion. The meeting summary was approved.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS/COMMUNICATION/MEMBER COMMENTS

Héctor Vanegas, SANDAG, briefed COBRO on the new 511 service. He emphasized that it will provide dial-up border wait times information through the Customs and Border Protection’s (CBP) information system. This new service will be accessible from any mobile or land line phone and is also available through the Internet at www.511sd.com.

Chair Ganster stated that the service works and provides important information about freeway driving, transit routes, and border wait times.
Cindy Gommper-Graves, South County Economic Development Council, thanked those who assisted in the development of the “Neighboring San Diego Tijuana Region” fact sheet. The fact sheet is now available on South County EDC’s Web site. Ms. Gommper-Graves also thanked SANDAG staff for providing information and comments about the fact sheet.

James Snider, CBP, announced CBP’s recent press release regarding the new daylight saving time (DST) change. Baja California will not change to DST until late March and, as a result, cross-border travel times will be affected. A plan was developed to accommodate enrolled SENTRI user’s travel demands. An additional hour will be added to the SENTRI lanes schedule at the San Ysidro and Otay Mesa Port of Entries for the next three weeks (March 11 through March 31).

Angelika Villagrana, San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce, thanked SANDAG staff and South County EDC for the First Mobile Seminar on February 27. She also announced that the San Diego Border Alliance will meet with Congressman Bob Filner on April 4 at SANDAG. She invited COBRO members and members of the public to attend.

Nathan Owens, San Diego Dialogue, invited members to participate in the upcoming “Forum Fronterizo, The Life Sciences: A New Path to Prosperity for California and Mexico” on March 29. This event is being organized by San Diego Dialogue and San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce Mexico Business Center. Some key speakers will include Mexico’s Secretary of Economy, Eduardo Sojo, and Francisco Gutierrez, President and CEO of Merck Sharp & Dhome. The online registration system will be available soon. (Note: This event was later postponed.)

4. **UPCOMING EVENTS**

SANDAG staff provided an attachment for the upcoming events.

*Due to the postponement of Item #6, Report on the City of Tijuana’s Subcommittee on Binational Affairs, the Agenda followed this order: Agenda Item #7, and then #5.*

7. **BINATIONAL PLANNING CONTACTS GUIDE FOR THE SAN DIEGO–BAJA CALIFORNIA REGION**

Arturo Vázquez, SANDAG, provided a report on the Binational Planning Contacts Guide, which lists the different groups and agencies involved in binational related planning issues. The Contacts Guide is now available on the SANDAG Web site under the Binational section.

The Binational Planning Contacts Guide allows the viewer to see, in alphabetical order, the different agencies involved in the region. Moreover, the guide has a function which organizes these agencies by planning areas such as economic development, energy and water supply, environment, homeland security, job housing, transportation, and others. A shortcut will be created to find this document in a more expeditious way (www.sandag.org/binationalcontact). He added that the Binational Contacts Guide will be updated on a quarterly basis.

Hector Vanegas, SANDAG, added that there is a “find” tool on the Contacts Guide, which allows for the viewer to locate a particular agency by typing the actual name of this agency.
Chair Ganster introduced the Draft Otay Mesa–Mesa de Otay Binational Corridor Strategic Plan. He presented Elisa Arias and Ron Saenz from SANDAG; and Luis Ruben Rodriguez, Deputy Director of the City of Tijuana’s Municipal Planning Institute (IMPlan). The Draft Otay Mesa–Mesa de Otay Binational Corridor Strategic Plan is being released for a 30-day public review process.

Elisa Arias and Ron Saenz, SANDAG, gave a presentation on the Draft Otay Mesa–Mesa de Otay Binational Corridor Strategic Plan.

The following topics were discussed: project background; collaboration process; the strategic planning process including Early Actions, Proposed New Actions, and Next Steps. A staff transmittal report was provided as part of the agenda and highlights key points.

Chair Ganster opened the forum for member and public comments.

Cindy Gommper-Graves, South San Diego County Economic Development Council, thanked SANDAG staff for addressing some of her concerns prior to the meeting. First, Cindy asked in terms of industrial land supply if the study is just looking at the Otay Mesa Community Plan Update and not the San Diego region.

Elisa Arias, SANDAG, responded that this will be done by the City of San Diego, as part of the Otay Mesa Community Plan Update.

Ms. Gommper-Graves added that it is imperative that SANDAG look at the entire region’s industrial land supply since there are discussions that the region is running out of developable industrial land and that Otay Mesa represents the last large swath of developable industrial land. She added that factual information is needed to help move SANDAG’s position on industrial land supply forward in not just Otay Mesa but in the rest of the region’s planning by taking into account how it relates to other community plans currently being developed. Ms. Gommper-Graves suggested that SANDAG reevaluate the developable industrial land supply for the entire region by focusing on land that is buildable (e.g., not including land that has development constraints such as slopes, which you can’t build on).

Ms. Arias responded that the Regional Economic Prosperity Strategy (REPS) Working Group is currently discussing this item as a possible action of the strategy.

Ms. Gommper-Graves added that she is a member of the REPS Working Group, and the issue has already been brought up.

Secondly, Ms. Gommper-Graves asked for clarification on whether SANDAG has been working with the City of San Diego, City of Chula Vista, and County of San Diego.

Elisa confirmed that SANDAG has been working with the agencies mentioned above.
Ms. Gommper-Graves requested that SANDAG send the “Draft Otay Mesa–Mesa de Otay Binational Corridor Strategic Plan” to the different planning directors for the specific jurisdictions included in the study area as part of the review process. This will give the planning directors the opportunity to provide comments and/or send letters of support, which is important in moving forward. She added that this information could be used on both sides of the border for different planning issues.

In addition, Cindy stated that in the Introduction chapter, it looks like the Draft Otay Mesa–Mesa de Otay Binational Corridor Strategic Plan approval process went through SANDAG on this side of the border for approval and then through the City of Tijuana separately, since there is no SANDAG counterpart in Mexico. She suggested that the approval process section in the Introduction needs to be clarified as to how SANDAG worked in conjunction with other cities.

Elisa commented that the Otay Mesa–Mesa de Otay Binational Corridor Early Action Plan was approved by the SANDAG Board of Directors, which includes Mayors and other elected officials.

Finally, Cindy asked whether the “Draft Otay Mesa–Mesa de Otay Binational Corridor Strategic Plan” is available online.

Elisa added that the Draft Plan is available on the COBRO Web site along with the agenda. After the COBRO meeting, the Plan will also be available on the Otay Mesa-Mesa de Otay Binational Corridor Project Web page.

Tatiana Suro, Otay Mesa Chamber of Commerce, thanked SANDAG staff on the “Draft Otay Mesa–Mesa de Otay Binational Corridor Strategic Plan.” However, there are a couple of issues that SANDAG could address in the report. These are related to the Otay Mesa Community Plan Update process.

Ms. Suro stated that the “Draft Otay Mesa–Mesa de Otay Binational Corridor Strategic Plan” apparently still shows that more than 1,500 acres of industrial land are available in Otay Mesa when, in fact, the City of San Diego reported in January 2007 that the actual number of available industrial acres is close to 1,000 acres. These acres do not reflect truck parking needs in Otay Mesa. The Otay Mesa Chamber of Commerce would like SANDAG to take this into consideration.

In addition, the “Draft Otay Mesa–Mesa de Otay Binational Corridor Strategic Plan” does not state any type of co-location criteria relating to the placing of residential development next to existing truck routes, which are currently being proposed by the City of San Diego and SANDAG in the Smart Growth Concept Map within this report. The Otay Mesa Chamber of Commerce believes that comments relating to protecting trade movement are very appropriate for SANDAG to consider, especially for the freight movement strategy as it has been presented to COBRO in the past.

Finally, no environmental justice concerns are being mentioned as part of the report. These concerns relate to placing residential developments next to truck routes. This is taking into consideration that SANDAG is currently working with the City of San Diego on projects that will cost millions of dollars to re-route trucks for Barrio Logan away from residential developments. The Otay Mesa Chamber of Commerce would like SANDAG to consider these points.

Dave Fege, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, congratulated SANDAG and IMPlan for their work on the “Draft Otay Mesa–Mesa de Otay Binational Corridor Strategic Plan.”
Mr. Fege elaborated on the Air Pollution Control District’s (APCD) cross-border clean diesel demonstration project. He added that the U.S. EPA is very concerned about air pollution, especially from diesel trucks on the border, and they are looking for ways to reduce it.

In terms of diesel oxidation catalyst, which is primarily a retrofit technology that takes off the muffler of a semi-truck and replaces it with a new one in order to reduce particulate matters, the U.S. EPA is currently funding the District with approximately $200,000. The program has already retrofitted about 50 to 55 trucks in Tijuana that routinely cross the border.

A second program being funded, which was not listed, is with the APCD to retrofit five Tijuana trucks with diesel particulate filters, since these are more expensive. The U.S. EPA is hopeful that other fleet owners will see the environmental benefit of these demonstration projects.

Mr. Fege added that the U.S. EPA also is concerned with trucks idling in line to cross the border, since they do not turn off their engines. One of the technologies that SANDAG could consider, especially for the new Port of Entry (POE), includes Truck Stop Electrification technology. This technology is being used at truck stops where drivers usually take a mandatory ten hours off before they can continue driving. Normally, trucks continue to idle for the entire ten hours at the truck stop. Truck Stop Electrification is a way that one can turn off the engine; and be plugged into the electric grid. These facilities provide services such as movies on the Web, e-mail, and other services. This concept can be included for the new proposed port.

Elisa Arias asked whether this new technology could be used for the existing Port of Entry.

Mr. Fege responded that such technology could be used in connection with the existing POE. However, such technology is not that simple since it includes a lot of technological applications.

One last project in the works is to encourage maquiladoras to use shipping companies that use environmentally-reliable engines to run their operations. This project also encourages fleet owners to use the FAST lane to reduce idling. Maquiladoras would get recognition as good environmental stewards if they employed fleet owners that participate in FAST.

Chair Paul Ganster asked whether low sulfur diesel was available in Baja California.

Mr. Fege responded that in January the U.S. switched to require ultra-low sulfur diesel fuel for diesel trucks. The concentration prior to 2007 was 500 - 515 parts per million of sulfur in diesel fuel. The new regulation calls for 15 parts per million. The new fuel works in old trucks and new trucks. The U.S. EPA also issued national standards that would reduce pollution in diesel trucks. In 2007, Mexico committed to having ultra-low sulfur diesel fuel available in border cities.

PEMEX has estimated that it will cost $2 billion to retrofit the refineries to provide for ultra-low sulfur diesel. In the meantime, to meet this requirement border cities are trying to import this diesel. They have imported it from Asian sources to facilities in Rosarito; however, because they do not have enough fuel to supply all the gas stations in Tijuana, they have been blending it with high ultra-low sulfur diesel.

Gustavo Perez, City of Chula Vista, thanked SANDAG for its work on the “Draft Otay Mesa-Mesa de Otay Binational Corridor Strategic Plan.” In reiterating the issue of industrial land supply, the main
concern is that the Otay Mesa Community Plan Update points out that there will be “deficit in land available for housing and a surplus of employment lands.” The land analysis has not yet been reviewed by the Regional Prosperity Strategy Update. The Strategic Plan does not specifically make reference of this issue, which may open the door for the development community to start submitting plan amendments to the General Plan, such as in the City of Chula Vista. The “Draft Otay Mesa-Mesa de Otay Binational Corridor Strategic Plan” needs to reemphasize on the data. Secondly, the “Draft Otay Mesa-Mesa de Otay Binational Corridor Strategic Plan” mentions the importance of SR 905 to the Transit Corridor and to the future development of the area; however, the Plan does not mention this as an action item. Gustavo suggested emphasizing this as an action item in an effort to get the SANDAG Board of Directors committed to fully fund the development of SR 905 before looking at SR 11 and other projects. The development of the SR 905 is necessary in order to continue moving forward.

Chair Ganster encouraged COBRO members and the public to submit written comments on the Strategic Plan.

7. NEXT MEETING DATE AND LOCATION

The next meeting of the COBRO meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 3, 2007, at SANDAG.

Gary Brown, City of Imperial Beach, asked about scheduling a COBRO meeting in Tijuana.

Hector Vanegas, SANDAG, pointed out that the May 8, 2007, COBRO meeting will be held in Tijuana. He reminded COBRO members and the public about the second mobile seminar, which will be held in Tijuana on March 27, 2007.
UPCOMING EVENTS

WHAT:  San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce New Members Reception
WHEN:  Thursday, April 5, 2007
WHERE:  Holiday Inn On the Bay
MORE INFO:  San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce at (619) 544-1331
eventregistration@sdchamber.org

WHAT:  Holiday Inn Grand Opening Mixer
WHEN:  Wednesday, April 25, 2007
WHERE:  Holiday Inn Otay Mesa, Otay Mesa, CA
MORE INFO:  Otay Mesa Chamber Events at (619) 661-6111

WHAT:  First Wednesday Program:  A Roundtable Discussion on Regional Issues
WHEN:  Wednesday, May 2, 2007
WHERE:  402 W. Broadway, Suite 1000, San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce, Golden Board Room
MORE INFO:  SDRCC at (619) 544-1331 or eventregistration@sdchamber.org

WHAT:  Otay Mesa Chamber of Commerce MEXPORT 2007
WHEN:  Thursday, May 3, 2007
WHERE:  Ocean View Hills Corporate Center, Otay Mesa, CA 92154
MORE INFO:  Tatiana Suro at (619) 661-6111 or tsuro@otaymesa.org

WHAT:  19th Annual Business Expo
WHEN:  Tuesday, May 22, 2007
WHERE:  Town & Country Resort and Convention Center
MORE INFO:  San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce at (619) 544-1331
eventregistration@sdchamber.org
WHAT: Small Business Awards Luncheon
WHEN: Thursday, June 28, 2007
WHERE: San Diego Marriott Hotel & Marina
MORE INFO: San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce at (619) 544-1331 eventregistration@sdchamber.org

WHAT: ULI San Diego/Tijuana is currently accepting Award Nominations for its Annual Smart Growth Awards Program
WHEN: June 2007
WHERE: Location TBD
MORE INFO: Mary M. Lyndon, Executive Director, ULI San Diego/Tijuana at mlydon@ULI.org or (858) 344-1034
UPDATE ON THE CALIFORNIA BIODIVERSITY COUNCIL’S
“BIODIVERSITY ALONG THE BORDER” COMMITTEE

Introduction

Since the last update to COBRO on November 7, 2006, the California Biodiversity Council’s (CBC) newly created “Biodiversity along the Border” Committee held two meetings in January and February 2007. At these meetings, the Committee created two working groups: the Tijuana Estuary Issues Working Group and the Las Californias Working Group. This report outlines the progress made by these two Working Groups.

On January 30, 2007, the “Biodiversity along the Border” Committee discussed its purpose and function, and established the working groups mentioned above. This meeting included participants from both sides of the border.

At the February 27, 2007, meeting it was also agreed that the Tijuana Estuary Issues Working Group would focus on conservation easements and issues related to the Tijuana River Valley management. The Las Californias Working Group would focus on exploring the implementation of actions outlined in the Las Californias Binational Conservation Initiative report.

Discussion

Tijuana Estuary Issues Working Group

During the January 30 and February 27, 2007, Tijuana Estuary Issues Working Group meetings, each member agency committed to completing the following tasks:

- Develop a proposal(s) to fund new sediment basins in canyons that drain into the estuary
- Develop a neighborhood sewer project(s) in Los Laureles Canyon
- Preservation of land through dedicated conservation easements
- Prevention and/or management of tires and trash washing into the estuary

In upcoming months, the Tijuana Estuary Issues Working Group plans to synthesize the information from the above tasks into a scope of work and budget for potential grant opportunities. The identification of granting agencies that could provide funding for the identified projects and the identification of appropriate agencies to serve as grant applicators and recipients also will need to be completed.
Las Californias Working Group
During the first Las Californias Working Group meeting, each member agency committed to completing the following assessment of the Las Californias Binational Conservation Initiative and related issues:

- Review the Las Californias Binational Conservation Initiative
- Identify opportunities for linkages with existing programs and projects
- Identify potential sources of funding for the program
- Evaluate barriers to effective cooperation, as well as opportunities
- Create an action plan that includes leaders and timelines
- State and federal agencies committed to investigating existing barriers for contributing state financial and technical assistance in Mexico

Following up on these items at the second meeting, the California Department of Fish and Game representative stated the agency’s willingness to consider cooperative conservation work along the border with other interested agencies. The Department is willing to engage the Wildlife Conservation Board, the state agency that manages conservation funds, about potential purchases or easements of key private parcels. At the federal level, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service reported that it is possible to use mitigation funds in Mexico for impacts that occur in California. However, the agency would still need to investigate the guarantee of long-term protection of mitigated lands.

It is important to note that the Las Californias Working Group’s initial findings support proposed environmental actions contained in the draft Otay Mesa–Mesa de Otay Binational Corridor Strategic Plan.

Progress reports on the upcoming activities of the “Biodiversity along the Border” Committee will be presented to COBRO periodically.

Key Staff Contact: Ron Saenz, (619) 699-1922, rsa@sandag.org