BORDERS COMMITTEE DISCUSSION AND ACTIONS
MEETING OF MARCH 27, 2009

The meeting of the Borders Committee was called to order by Chair Patricia McCoy (South County) at 12:33 p.m. See the attached attendance sheet for Borders Committee member attendance.

1. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Action: Upon a motion by Councilmember John Minto (East County) and a second by Vice Chairwoman Pam Slater-Price (County of San Diego), the Borders Committee unanimously approved the minutes from the February 27, 2009, meeting.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS/MEMBER COMMENTS

Chair McCoy welcomed Deputy Consul General Martha Rosas (Republic of Mexico) and informed the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) has asked to join the Borders Committee as an advisory member. Staff will work with SCAG to tentatively present its request to the Board of Directors for consideration at the April 24th meeting.

Chair McCoy reported Art Brown, Mayor Pro Tem of the City of Buena Park, was appointed to represent the Orange County Council of Governments (OCCOG) as an advisory member. She commented this is a big step forward because they are actually asking to belong. The Borders Committee has done such great work, such as the San Diego-Imperial County I-8 Corridor Strategic Plan which serves as a blueprint for the region. We also can shape the things that go to the Board.

Chair McCoy reminded Committee members to save the date of Tuesday, June 2, 2009, for the Challenges and Opportunities for Crossborder Climate Change Collaboration Conference from 1:00 – 5:00 p.m., which will take place at Caltrans.

CONSENT ITEM (Item #3)

3. FINAL SAN DIEGO – IMPERIAL COUNTY I-8 CORRIDOR STRATEGIC PLAN (ACCEPT)

Action: Upon a motion by Mayor Crystal Crawford (North County Coastal) and a second by County Vice Chairwoman Slater-Price, the Borders Committee unanimously accepted the Final San Diego - Imperial County I-8 Corridor Strategic Plan.
REPORT ITEMS (#4 through #7)

4. UPDATE ON THE U.S. GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION (GSA) SAN YSIDRO PORT OF ENTRY (POE) RECONFIGURATION AND EXPANSION PROJECT (INFORMATION)

Chair McCoy reported a meeting was held on March 23, 2009, with GSA officials, which included herself, Mayor Crawford, Supervisor Greg Cox (County of San Diego), City of Imperial Beach Mayor Jim Janney, and SANDAG staff. They discussed concerns related to the border crossing reconfiguration including pedestrian and transit issues. She said Mr. Daniel Voll from GSA, along with two representatives from the San Francisco office were in attendance.

Rachel Kennedy, Senior Planner (SANDAG), stated that the agenda item contains four attached letters: a letter sent by SANDAG to GSA in December 2009, GSA’s response in February 2009, and two subsequent letters sent to the GSA Acting Administrator; one, which was signed by the Board and Borders Committee Chairs; and another which was signed by the San Diego region congressional delegation. Ms. Kennedy presented the responses contained in GSA’s letter to SANDAG. GSA states that the global warming issues raised in SANDAG’s letter have been addressed in the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). Ms. Kennedy stated that the RTP does not provide greenhouse gas analysis for specific projects. GSA estimates that the expanded land POE’s carbon footprint will only marginally affect the region’s total carbon budget; however, SANDAG believes that a comprehensive analysis is needed. Ms. Kennedy stated GSA is revising the pedestrian bridge design to move the eastern bridge landing south of the I-5/San Ysidro Boulevard on-ramp in response to safety concerns raised by the community; however, the new proposed bridge will still result in a longer walk for thousands of daily users. The project will also eliminate the majority of Camiones Way, which currently serves as a drop-off location for private vehicles, taxis, jitneys, and contains stops and island spaces for MTS bus routes 929 and 932. GSA’s letter said an area at the intersection of Camiones Way and Camino de la Plaza has been identified for a west side vehicle, taxi, and jitney pick-up and drop-off location. Additionally, the project site area was downsized to accommodate MTS waiting areas on the west side of the land POE. To date, this location has not been delineated to SANDAG, and to SANDAG’s knowledge, is not included as part of the GSA project. The letter also states that Congress has authorized GSA to reconfigure the San Ysidro POE; however, none of the funds are legally available for off-site improvements or related transportation projects regardless of how worthy some projects may be.

Regarding the meeting with GSA officials on March 23, Ms. Kennedy stated they were informed that Mexico has issued a Diplomatic Note regarding the southbound entry point on the eastern side of the POE. Mexico has also requested a new southbound pedestrian entry point on the western side of the POE at Virginia Avenue/El Chaparral. She presented the GSA map which showed the new southbound eastern pedestrian gate and the Virginia Avenue/El Chaparral area where the new western southbound pedestrian gate would be located. She said Mexico is proposing to close the existing southbound pedestrian gate once the two other facilities are opened. Additionally, it was learned that Phase I of the project is fully funded; however, funding is still needed for Phases II and III. SANDAG plans to continue dialogue with GSA, and GSA will continue to provide SANDAG with project updates and follow-up on issues raised at the meeting. Next steps include reviewing
and commenting on the GSA Draft EIS to be distributed in April 2009 along with continuing dialogue with GSA.

Chair McCoy asked Vice Chair Cox and Supervisor Victor Carrillo (Imperial County) if they had additional information as they recently met with GSA officials in Washington D.C.

Vice Chair Cox informed that he and Supervisor Victor Carrillo (Imperial County) were in Washington D.C. attending meetings with the National Association of Counties, the U.S./Mexico Border Counties Coalition, and Mr. Paul Prouty, GSA’s Acting Administrator. Mr. Prouty was called away at the last minute; however, they were able to meet with five policy advisors and other GSA representatives from San Francisco and Fort Worth. While meeting with GSA, they had the opportunity to present both the congressional letter and the letter signed by Chairs McCoy and Pfeiler. They also expressed the concerns and frustration regarding issues related to pedestrians. Vice Chair Cox stated he thought things look like they are very well on line in regards to vehicular access; but, obviously pedestrian access is not acceptable the way it was presented. He thanked Supervisor Carrillo for his assistance and strong advocacy.

Supervisor Carrillo stated the important thing was they were able to meet with GSA and strongly convey the sentiments of SANDAG, the Borders Committee, and stakeholders that are going to be negatively impacted by the current plans for the San Ysidro/Puerta Mexico border crossing. Supervisor Carrillo said GSA made clear their position was to address property security and what Customs and Border Protection (CBP) wanted in that facility; not so much facilitation of commerce, trade, or people crossing, whether it’s by vehicle or on foot. He thought they made tremendous headway and were also able to point out issues regarding the Calexico downtown POE as well as addressing the New River and the downscaled project from $330 million to $275 million expected to break ground next spring. He hoped the dialogue from the Border Counties Coalition presentation and meeting was able to be utilized in establishing positive dialogue at the meeting on March 23rd.

Chair McCoy introduced Mr. Daniel Voll, from GSA Region IX.

Mr. Voll complimented Ms. Kennedy on her accurate portrayal of the results of the meeting on March 23. One of the things he learned from the discussion on March 23 was the fact that they had been remiss in emphasizing the project’s pedestrian improvements and benefits. It’s true that a big piece of the project is to expand vehicle throughput which basically involves expanding eventually the number of lanes to 30, with tandem, or double stacked booths which would allow for 60 inspection stations. The vehicle experience is not going to change significantly. People will go through an inspection booth under a canopy and continue north, without a lot of emphasis on the aesthetics. They are, however, drastically changing the pedestrian experience. Right now, people traveling northbound from Mexico pass through a dark tunneled area into a very unwelcoming subterranean cave, are screened and then are out in the street, going from a very dark area out into the sun. Mr. Voll brought renderings showing the new concept in which pedestrians would travel through an area that is very much like a modern airport. They will travel up a very gradual ramp from Mexico onto the second level of the port, to an area with north facing clear story windows that will allow a lot of light into the space. It’s a much larger and more welcoming area. When leaving, they will go down either another gentle ramp or a staircase.
into the pedestrian plaza where they can get on the trolley or continue on. It will be drastically different from what people experience today and they have put a great deal of emphasis on pedestrian traffic. Regarding the bridge, the conceptual drawing showed it starts with a gentle landscaped slope and goes up into a covered area where there are benches and areas to rest and then continues over to the west side. The new bridge is approximately 200 feet longer than the existing bridge, but does not have any where near the number of switchbacks and circular movement. Mexico has now indicated that they are willing to establish a southbound pedestrian crossing on the east side of the port. When that goes into effect, this bridge will not be used by people going into Mexico anymore. It will be there to allow people to get across the port from one side to the other. Eventually, the issue of walking distance will be moot as this is the temporary measure to be built as soon as possible to get people across the port and into Mexico.

Chair McCoy stated the Committee appreciated him staying in San Diego to be present at the meeting.

Council President Ben Hueso (City of San Diego) thanked Mr. Voll for his presentation and expressed frustration with the process. He had hoped that through this group a good working relationship with GSA to cover all the border crossing issues could be forged. He said given the direction the region is moving, the considerable concerns regarding greenhouse gas, and promotion of pedestrian activity and bicycling, more of an emphasis should be placed on accommodating pedestrians. There have been comments regarding the inappropriateness of funding off-site improvements as they do not fall within the purview of this project; however, the San Ysidro community during the highest peak crossing, whether the morning or afternoon is gridlocked. The inability of people to cross the border efficiently causes traffic to back up into neighborhood streets. Not mitigating this part of the project expansion is not consistent with environmental regulations that say every project has to properly mitigate its environmental impacts. It’s not a question of looking at opportunities to fund other projects; but, it’s an opportunity to properly mitigate the impacts of this enormous facility that is to our region’s best interest. He reported he had been meeting with state and federal representatives about ironies at the border, in which neighborhoods such as San Ysidro are some of the poorest neighborhoods in the state. The housing crisis hit San Ysidro first and businesses are struggling and residents have health problems and low wage jobs. Even though everyone has different jurisdictions the best way to accomplish the best services for the constituents is to work together to develop a comprehensive program that will address everybody’s needs. He hoped they were not missing an opportunity in plowing down a path which will solve one problem but create a multitude of others that will be passed on to local, county, and state governments to resolve. He asked that a better pedestrian plan be developed that properly mitigates the impacts of the increased volume which will be pushed through this community.

Mr. Voll stated a lot of outreach work was done with this project with SANDAG, Caltrans, Casa Familiar, the Smart Border Coalition, San Ysidro Chamber of Commerce, and numerous interested parties to receive their input and do the best within their authorities. He said GSA is not finished, and they will continue to work with all parties. He clarified that the scope of this project is limited to the federal property itself. That’s not to say that GSA doesn’t have an interest in what goes on outside the federal property, particularly when what they do creates a situation that makes it worse than it was before. He said they are not the only
potential funding source or the only way this problem can be addressed. Congressman Filner has indicated a strong interest in the project and they have also started a dialogue with the Federal Transit Authority (FTA), which is part of the Department of Transportation, because their role is in providing funding, grants, and other things for transportation issues in local communities. There is still a lot of work to do. It’s going to take more than just GSA to fix this and come up with funding and solutions. It isn’t that GSA can’t do some of this work outside the port; but, the funding will have to come from somewhere beyond the project budget. If Congress comes up with some money and authority, GSA can certainly incorporate that work into what they are doing, but it’s not within the budget so far.

Council President Hueso commented the letter signed by the San Diego congressional representatives presents a good indication of what they hope to see through this process. It is a unanimous argument and interpretation of what they would like this project to accomplish on the pedestrian level, and properly mitigate the impacts of the project. He said he hoped it would be accomplished.

Mr. Voll agreed and said the congressional delegation is probably going to need to do more than just write a letter. They need to look at how they might be able to help fund some of these improvements, if it’s going to be federally funded beyond what they have given GSA to build the project.

Council President Hueso said a plan is necessary as they need to know how much they need to raise. It begins with having a good understanding of what they need to advocate for in Washington.

Mayor Crawford reported the meeting on March 23 was very helpful and one that Mr. Voll attended along with colleagues. She learned about the process with GSA and CBP, who is the “tenant” for the POE that is driving the requirements and planning. Phase I has been fully funded, which includes lanes, inspection stations, a parking structure, and pedestrian bridge. She said there is no money in Phase I funding to resolve the impacts to the existing multimodal or intermodal types of facilities. There was discussion about how phasing could be changed, particularly now that a Diplomatic Note from the Republic of Mexico was received indicating they agreed to move the southbound entry to the east side. Two particularly pertinent items learned were CBP requirements for the facility can be found in a prospectus which Mr. Voll and his staff are helping to get a copy of; and, the master plan for the footprint had additional acreage authorized that would have expanded the footprint of the facility beyond what the federal government currently owns. Through the master planning process, however, the design was revised and uses consolidated so that it is now seven acres smaller. Mayor Crawford asked if the original authorized footprint included the purchase and acquisition of an additional seven acres, now that the seven acres are not necessary, can that money be used to purchase some part which is off the site for some of the facilities being removing as part of Phase I. She said Mr. Voll indicated that GSA is constrained in what they can do by their statutory authority. They feel they are not required to mitigate as they are governed by NEPA, which has different requirements. Mr. Voll will provide the Committee the statutory citation to the federal law that clarifies they are not required to mitigate for the impacts off-site. Mayor Crawford wanted to know how to use the change of circumstance to reconfigure the overall plan to recalibrate Phase I
to have a more user-friendly result and accomplish the results the Committee and community have been seeking over many years.

Executive Director Gary Gallegos (SANDAG) suggested encouraging GSA to look at technology and how it might help improve the pedestrian atmosphere and develop a pedestrian system that works. Amenities could be built as within an airport, such as stairs, escalators, elevators, or moving sidewalks. He stated there are creative and innovate opportunities to improve the pedestrian experience. Even within the constraints, it is still possible to make a much better, much more palatable project that will not only enhance the vehicular piece, but also will enhance the pedestrian and transit piece. He explained the Committee is adamant to get this right because it will probably be used for the next 50 years.

Cindy Gompper-Graves (COBRO) said she is very aware of what GSA is doing with the community and appreciates it. As much as the POE is a security mechanism, it is also a gateway for commerce and the front door to two countries. She challenged GSA to come up with ways to make the POE the most efficient and most beautiful in the world because it is the busiest.

Councilmember Minto asked why spend the money to build the bridge when it is not going to be used much because it will be retired from service in a very short period of time.

Mr. Voll stated assuming things go as expected from Mexico; the new north/south bridge will be deleted from the project as Mexico plans to close the area. The east/west bridge will be built to get pedestrians into Mexico in the short term. Eventually it will become a way to get across the freeway.

Vice Chair Cox thanked Mr. Voll for making himself available on March 23 and at this meeting. He said the Committee's purpose was not to beat up on him, rather to come up with a better solution. He asked for guidance on what could be done to get the eastbound pedestrian crossing into Phase I. He thought this would address a lot of the concerns expressed by the San Ysidro Chamber of Commerce, SANDAG, and other community groups which have been pretty unanimous about the fact that while the pedestrian portion is certainly an improvement, it is not acceptable; however, if the new eastern southbound entrance to Mexico were included in Phase I, it would be a large improvement.

Mr. Voll agreed. He said in an effort to expedite it, GSA will be having a series of meetings with Mexico to review their plan, determine where the actual crossing point would be, and what their schedule is. If there's a way for GSA to advance that part of the project and meet up with Mexico's schedule, they would be very anxious to do that. He said security is not the only driving force behind this project. It may be the primary concern of CBP, but GSA certainly goes beyond that. The designs here are not based only on requirements from CBP; they're based also on what was heard from the community as to what they would like to see experience in coming through the port.

Councilmember Dave Allan (East County) requested an effort be made to ensure that jobs could stay local once building began.
Chair McCoy reported the Committee will soon have a chance to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and there will be many more informative meetings. She thanked Mr. Voll for his attendance.

Mr. Voll commented he would be glad to come back whenever needed, and not to hesitate to ask.

**Action:** This item was presented for information only.

### 5. CALIFORNIA - BAJA CALIFORNIA BORDER MASTER PLAN (INFORMATION)

District 11 Director Pedro Orso Delgado (Caltrans) introduced Elisa Arias, Principal Planner (SANDAG), and Karlo Limón, SIDUE (Secretariat of Infrastructure and Urban Development of Baja California). He said they developed a master plan that would tell what needed to be done on both sides of the border instead of people saying what they wanted done. He also introduced Jorge d’Garay, Special Advisor to the former governor, who was also instrumental in helping put this together.

Ms. Arias informed one of the initial tasks was to understand the planning practices for those agencies responsible for implementing POE and associated transportation planning projects. A key task was to develop evaluation criteria that could be applied to develop rankings for border crossings and associated transportation network. The U.S.–Mexico Joint Working Committee (JWC) proposed the creation of the border-wide compendium of regional plans along the U.S.-Mexico border. The JWC is co-chaired by the U.S. Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Secretary of Communication and Transportation (SCT), FHWA’s counterpart in Mexico. It also includes participation from the Department of State, Secretariat of Foreign Relations in Mexico (known as SRE), CBP, Aduanas (Mexican Customs), GSA, and the Instituto Administración y Avalúos de Bienes Nacionales (INDAABIN), GSA’s counterpart.

Caltrans and SIDUE coordinated the California-Baja California project, the first to be developed along the U.S.-Mexico border. The main goals and objectives of the Border Master Plan were to increase the understanding of the planning practices for transportation and border crossing on both sides of the border; develop a workable plan to prioritize and advance both border crossing and transportation projects; develop criteria that could be used to prioritize projects on both sides of the border; and, establish a process to institutionalize the dialogue among local, state, regional, and federal stakeholders in both countries.

The decision-making structure included a policy advisory committee comprised of executive-level staff from agencies from both sides of the border. Their main roles were to establish the parameters for the study, review and approve the evaluation criteria, and approve the rankings that came about after applying the criteria. A technical working group was also created and provided information used to analyze and evaluate this project and also provided recommendations to the policy advisory committee.
The project study area includes a 60-mile boundary to the north and 60-miles to the south of the international border. The focus study area includes a 10-mile bandwidth north and south of the border. The study area was evaluated for transportation projects associated with the border crossings and all data was for a study horizon area year of 2030. Questionnaires were completed by all the stakeholder agencies and some of the key findings were: 1) There is a very complex planning process with multiple stakeholders at all levels of government in both countries; 2) POE planning also relies on a shorter term planning horizon, usually a five-year planning horizon; while the transportation facilities associated with those projects include longer planning horizons, anywhere from 20 – 30 years; 3) Not all planning documents include both the border crossings and the associated transportation networks in the same plans; 4) Stakeholders followed very diverse project evaluation processes ranging from overall qualitative assessment to very detailed quantitative evaluations; and 5) Coordination and communication among stakeholders is taking place, but there are definite opportunities to improve communication.

Key outcomes for the Border Master Plan include binational evaluation criteria that was applied to projects in California and Baja California; a prioritized list of border crossing projects and the associated transportation network was developed; and, recommendations for stakeholders to use as outcomes in planning processes as they compete for funding and to follow a systematic approach for implementing border projects in the California/Baja California area were created. Some recommendations include: Caltrans and SIDUE, in collaboration with the U.S./Mexico Joint Working Committee and the Border Master Plan Policy Advisory Committee, will take the lead in conducting the two types of updates: an annual update, which will be more technical in nature; and comprehensive updates, which will take place every four years.

The Border Master Plan Policy Advisory Committee will meet at least once a year to provide direction and rely on existing forums that already deal with transportation or coordination issues such as the U.S./Mexico Joint Working Committee, the U.S./Mexico Binational Group on Bridges and Border Crossings, and the Border Liaison Mechanism. Also, the Border Governors Conference is a forum to institutionalize this Border Master Plan process. The Border Governors Conference recommended that all states develop similar border master plans as the one developed for California and Baja California.

Chair McCoy remarked this is the first time it has been presented in San Diego and it was presented yesterday for the first time in Tijuana.

Ms. Arias added it was taken to the Committee on Binational Regional Opportunities last month.

Chair McCoy stated it is a model for the entire border and sounds as if would be very efficient and save a lot of costs.

Mayor Crawford asked how long it took to produce.

Ms. Arias reported it took almost two years. It was a lot of work with many stakeholders gathering data from both sides of the border and analyzing it.
Supervisor Carrillo thanked and complimented Ms. Arias, her staff, and others. He said it would stand as a model in efficient planning for not only both Imperial and San Diego counties and Baja California, but the remaining 24 counties along the southwest border that border with the Republic of Mexico.

Chair McCoy asked when the next meeting would take place.

Ms. Arias stated the next meeting would take place within the next year. The Policy Advisory Committee approved the Plan in September 2008, the Joint Working Committee approved it in December 2008, and Caltrans and SIDUE are already collaborating to get additional funding for the next update.

Chair McCoy asked if the exponential increase in population was included in the 10-mile bandwidth.

Ms. Arias said the 10-mile bandwidth focuses on transportation projects only. The economic and demographic profile was prepared for the 60-mile study area north and south of the border.

Chair McCoy asked if it addressed water, as it will be a limiting factor.

Ms. Arias replied it did not. It takes water into account only in the sense that the different growth forecasts received from the different jurisdictions take the constraints into account. It was not specifically addressed in the Border Master Plan. It will be reflected in the Border Master Plan as projections are received from the metropolitan planning organizations and the State of Baja California, and as long as those constraints are reflected in those growth forecasts.

Chair McCoy said growth depends on water, and if it’s unavailable, then presumably this would change the structure of this report.

Ms. Arias responded that would be one of the reasons to do a comprehensive update every four years, as new growth forecasts reflect current conditions.

Mayor Crawford asked how the stakeholders are going to use this and what concrete next steps they have said are going to come out of this.

Mr. Gallegos stated we are one of the stakeholders, and this would be an important tool to use to update the RTP in 2011. We would rely on the Border Master Plan to help prioritize some of the investments that we would be proposing to the Board in terms of border dollars and border investments. The Border Master Plan would help us articulate not only the investments we are making, but also how they complement investments that are being made south of the border to make sure things connect and everyone is working on things in the right phase.
Mayor Crawford commented it is very helpful for the public to understand that this planning effort is not something that is going to sit on the shelf. Multiple agencies and multiple branches of government on both sides of the border are going to be better able to be in step as far as planning, financing, and construction.

Mr. Gallegos added one other positive benefit would be with the next federal transportation bill, as the last couple of bills have had border elements. This work will help Caltrans, SANDAG, California, as well as other states advocate for what is needed at the federal program. The same kind of thing should be happening on the Mexican side. The partnership also allows us to advocate together as was seen with the bill to toll the road. The governor’s staff was a little hesitant about signing the bill, so we reached out to our friends in Baja California to weigh in with the Governor’s Office. These things help also advocate for more funding at the national level.

Supervisor Carrillo informed Congressman Silvestre Reyes, representing the El Paso area along the Texas border, is asking for $5 billion over the next five years to support GSA in implementing the restructuring and renovation of existing POEs. The average age of a POE along the southwest border is 42 years and it may be another 50 years before we add to this port or build a new port. We want to make sure that it is not over subscribed or under serving, or, more importantly, outdated before it even opens.

Karlo Limón (SIDUE) commented the State of Baja California’s State Development Plan includes all these projects and the Border Master Plan. More than 40 percent of the projects have already obtained federal funding due to the Border Master Plan.

Chair McCoy stated this shows that it is a living plan, not gathering dust somewhere. This is good because it is a model.

Mr. Orso-Delgado added we started this here and now is part of several of the binational groups that we have. It is going to be done throughout the south border region with all of the other border state pairs. They are moving ahead and the idea is to have it done within the next two years.

**Action:** This item was presented for information only.

6. **INITIATION OF COMPREHENSIVE FREIGHT GATEWAY STUDY (INFORMATION)**

Christina Casgar, Goods Movement Policy Manager (SANDAG), said the Comprehensive Freight Gateway Study will provide a forecast of regional freight traffic in San Diego and Imperial counties through the year 2040. It will provide an analysis of intermodal system issues that impact regional goods movement, including commercial movements at the border and how those moves interact with the seaport, air cargo facilities, pipelines, rail, truck, and warehousing networks. The study will serve as a planning tool for SANDAG and the Imperial Valley Association of Governments (IVAG) to help plan for a sustainable freight network. There will be two study deliverables, a comprehensive freight forecast going out to 2040, and a series of subsequent gateway trackers that keep track of policy issues and freight movements in the region.
Southern California is the nation’s largest gateway for international trade. SANDAG was successful in securing $400 million for the San Diego region and IVAG secured $49 million. Projects funded under Prop. 1B include SR 905, SR 11 and the new border crossing at Otay Mesa East, Port of San Diego Freeway Access and terminal improvements, South Line Rail and San Ysidro Rail Yard improvements, improvements to the north rail line on the LOSSAN corridor, and the Brawley Bypass in Imperial County.

The study will provide regular updated traffic forecast information on freight flows that will help with policy decisions, investments, and keep in tune with market conditions that affect goods movement in both counties. It will also serve as a useful planning tool for IVAG, SANDAG, and other local planning agencies and provide a rationale and analytic framework for infrastructure investments. Meetings have been held with stakeholders and some supporters of the study include: SANDAG, IVAG, Caltrans, Port of San Diego, San Diego Regional Airport Authority, Customs, GSA, MTS, NCTD, and Mexican planning agencies. It will also be of benefit to public agencies and commercial agencies such as the San Diego Chamber of Commerce, San Diego World Trade Center, and Otay Mesa Chamber. The study team is comprised of HDR Decision Economics, supported by Global Insight Cambridge Systematics, and Crossborder Group.

Chair McCoy remarked this is important because the lifeblood of our economy depends on goods movement.

**Action:** This item was presented for information only.

7. **SAN DIEGO REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (EDC) AND IMPERIAL VALLEY EDC’S MEGA-REGION INITIATIVE (DISCUSSION)**

Christina Luhn of the San Diego Regional EDC stated the Mega-Region Initiative is a long-term economic development project designed to partner San Diego and Imperial counties with Baja California for global competition. She said the United States has approximately ten emerging mega-regions and San Diego is considered part of the Southern California mega-region. The San Diego Regional EDC received $225,000 in funding from the Department of Commerce’s Economic Development Administration (EDA), with $90,000 in matching funds. An advisory board was made up of the different organizations and companies that provided the matching funds. The partnership between the San Diego Regional EDC and Imperial Valley EDC has been working the last year on how to compete and attract foreign direct investment and other forms of economic development activity on the southern border, including northern Baja California. The proposed mega-region includes Baja California as well as Imperial and San Diego counties that both have very strong economic and cultural ties south of the border. The EDA was supportive, with the caveat that federal dollars could not be spent south of the border. A marketing strategy for the binational mega-region consists of the access that companies have to affluent consumer markets, diversity, intellectual capital, inexpensive lands and labor, and a mature manufacturing base concentrated within 35,000 square miles. One of the goals was to develop an economic strategy and action plan. In developing the strategy, it was found that San Diego and Imperial share clean tech, alternative and renewable energy generation, applied biotech, bioag, biofuels, medical devices, and specialized manufacturing as
important industry clusters. Both counties would like to retain and grow these clusters and improve logistics which are critical to efficient goods movement. One of the most important accomplishments has been the outreach. During the process, over 200 distinct organizations participated ranging from private industry to educational institutions, key utilities, and a variety of government agencies. Accomplishments to date include workforce and infrastructure assessments which were turned into a strategic action plan. A consulting firm has been hired to help with branding and marketing. The new name, logo, and marketing materials should be rolled out next month. A policy and business incentive focus group identified as one of the most important challenges is not just attracting new companies into the region, but also retaining and growing what is there. One of the goals of this focus group will be developing a series of recommendations on how to retain these very important industries. The long-term strategic action plan is a vision of where we would like to see this mega-region in 25 years in terms of workforce needs, educational standards and skills that would allow the region to be very competitive, language, and a quality of life. The short-term items are designed to significantly move forward in the next five years. Year one is designed to lay the framework for connecting industries and opportunities with resources that people hadn’t thought about. It’s a win/win scenario because the money stays in the region, is spent in the region, and the region grows; thus making the region more competitive. Meetings and workshops have been held with stakeholders in all three regions, and an effort has been made to understand what the real values are. The next steps include unveiling the marketing tools; convening action teams; a final report to the EDA; a template for replication; securing Phase II funding; and, finish developing the marketing plan and implementing it. Next year’s work plan includes facilitating the action teams to help them realize very specific goals, convening workshops, and making presentations to a broader group of stakeholders that still need to be brought into this process. Important research needs to be done to support the marketing and help stakeholders make important decisions about economic development around the high tech industries. Promotional activities are being developed by the three regions to take to a variety of conferences and trade missions to market together in order to develop a communication strategy for greater visibility of this mega-region.

Chair McCoy thanked Ms. Luhn for her report and said she wanted to link the San Diego - Imperial I-8 Corridor Strategic Plan with this study. She said Councilmember Minto, Supervisor Carrillo, and Councilmember Allan have worked closely on the I-8 Corridor and it would join in very nicely with this. She asked Supervisor Carrillo if he had any comments on this plan.

Supervisor Carrillo stated it is an excellent plan. Ms. Luhn has done an outstanding level of work bringing all the stakeholders together. There is a lot of commonality of those that share not only the borders of Southern California with San Diego County and Imperial County, but once again, alluding to our partners in the south and a very important partner to see how this would develop as a mega-region becomes a major player not only inner-nationally, but inter-nationally. Demosthenes, in the fourth century B.C. said, “The foundation of every government is the education of its youth.” It is very important that we bring in the educational institutions like San Diego State University (SDSU) and the University of California in San Diego (UCSD), along with the SDSU branch in the Imperial Valley, Calexico, and Brawley. It is important to develop Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) curriculums and careers, that are already established
south of the border at universities in Baja California. It is good to establish roots on both sides of the border so that it’s a sustainable economic engine that will drive this area for many years into the future.

Chair McCoy added that she thought the level of education in many Latin American countries is something that is often overlooked. She taught in Colombia for several years and was astonished that they not only knew English but also French.

Councilmember Minto stated he wanted to remind everyone that even though they have their particular components, most people forget that economic development and economic development strategies are big especially when looking at master planning. It is important to remind everyone that economic development is huge. The idea of working with another county such as Imperial, which has geothermal energy, is necessary to become better educated because there is nothing like being on the ground floor and getting your feet wet. He thanked Ms. Luhn for her hard work and said he looked forward to hearing more.

Ms. Gompper-Graves complimented Ms. Luhn and the San Diego EDC for taking this on. She reminded the Committee that she made a presentation at the last Borders Committee meeting and talked about the difference between a mega-region effort and the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). She said she wanted to assure everyone these are not diametrically opposed things and they are also not replicated. What they are doing is building it into the CEDS and institutionalizing it so when the San Diego EDC needs to go to the EDA for additional funding, they will have mechanisms to do that. Economic development is huge and touches every single aspect of folks that have anything to do with business all the way down to infrastructure, education, and our quality of life. So it is big, and the more players on the team make for a stronger and better mega-region.

Councilmember Sam Abed (North County Inland) said it is certainly a good effort. The good news is the region over the last several years has produced jobs but the bad news is they are mostly in the lower income level, so having higher income level jobs is critical. He said he hoped that they would coordinate this effort with Gary Knight of the North County Economic Development Council so they would be a part of this effort.

Ms. Luhn informed Mr. Knight has been very involved and all of the EDCs have been contacted. Although this is an incredibly ambitious project, organizations like SANDAG, Caltrans, and committees like this, increase the chances of success because they are not starting from scratch. There are really important existing economic ties and relations throughout the entire region which are critical to this working.

Chairman Chris Devers (Pauma Band of Mission Indians) of the Southern California Tribal Chairmen’s Association (SCTCA) stated he liked the idea and thought it intriguing. He asked if there is a component that looks at the regulatory pitfalls that one would encounter using the transportation system or anything else that may be a deterrent to making the mega-region.

Ms. Luhn responded it has been looked at to some degree. Regulation came up in both focus groups as something that has to be addressed when they began discussing policy recommendations, business incentives, and other kinds of ideas.
Chair McCoy said it should probably go in tandem with what they are doing.

Chair McCoy adjourned the meeting informing the next two meetings will be on the I-15 IRP and issues other than the border.

**Action:** This item was presented for discussion only.

8. **UPCOMING MEETINGS**

The next meeting of the Borders Committee is scheduled for Friday, April 24, 2009, at 12:30 p.m.

9. **ADJOURNMENT**

Chair McCoy adjourned the meeting at 2:13 p.m.

Attachment: Attendance Sheet
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**ADVISORY/ LIAISON MEMBERS**

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