

San Diego Association of Governments
BORDERS COMMITTEE

December 12, 2003

AGENDA ITEM NO.: **1**

Action Requested: APPROVE

APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER 7, 2003 MEETING MINUTES

The meeting of the San Diego Association of Governments Borders Committee was called to order by Chair Crystal Crawford (North County Coastal). Other members in attendance were Ed Gallo (North County Inland); Ralph Inzunza (City of San Diego); Victor Carrillo (Imperial County); and alternates David Powell (North County Coastal); Phil Monroe (South County); Judy Ritter (North County Inland); and Pam Slater (County of San Diego). Ex-Officio members in attendance were Thomas Buckley (Riverside County); James Bond (San Diego County Water Authority); Bill Figge (Caltrans); Javier Diaz de Leon (Consulate General of Mexico); and Elsa Saxod (COBRO).

Chair Crawford welcomed everyone to the meeting. Self introductions were made.

CONSENT ITEMS (1 and 2)

1. ACTIONS FROM AUGUST 15, 2003 BORDERS COMMITTEE MEETING (INFORMATION)
2. COMMITTEE ON BINATIONAL REGIONAL OPPORTUNITIES (COBRO) SUMMARY OF SEPTEMBER 2, 2003 MEETING AND ACTIONS

Action: The Borders Committee approved the consent agenda items.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Elsa Saxod, COBRO, informed the Committee that the Department of Homeland Security has announced the extended hours of operation for the SENTRI Lanes at the San Ysidro Port of Entry and the Otay Mesa Port of Entry, beginning November 16, 2003. The extended hours for San Ysidro will be from 5:00 a.m. until 12:00 midnight, all days of the week. The extended hours for Otay Mesa will be 5:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m., all days of the week.

Ms. Saxod also announced that at its November 4, 2003 meeting, the COBRO accepted the recommendations from the Survey and Analysis of Trade and Goods Movement between California and Baja California, Mexico (Maquiladora Survey) developed by Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC) for SANDAG and Caltrans. In addition to the Maquiladora Survey's recommendations, four other recommendations were added by the COBRO to reflect its views. These recommendations will be formally presented as an action item at the December 12th Borders Committee meeting.

Ms. Caridad Sanchez, Congresswoman Susan Davis' office, invited the Borders Committee members to attend the upcoming U.S. VISIT Program's Update for Elected Officials. This

update will be held November 17, 2003 from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. in the SANDAG Board Room.

Ms. Sanchez also reported that, immediately following the Update for Elected Officials meeting, there will be a U.S. VISIT Program Forum meeting for border stakeholders, from 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., also in the SANDAG Board Room.

Mr. Javier Diaz de Leon, Consulate General of Mexico, reported that a bilateral agreement was recently signed in the city of Tijuana between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Mexico's Procuraduria Federal de Proteccion Abiental (PROFEPA) concerning hazardous materials response and cooperation at the border.

Councilmember Ralph Inzunza updated the Committee on the ongoing search for possible locations for expansion of the San Diego airport. Mr. Inzunza stated that it is apparent that large numbers of people will oppose the airport moving into their locality, no matter which area is suggested.

REPORTS

4. COBRO RECOMMENDATIONS FROM SANDAG'S ANNUAL BINATIONAL SUMMER CONFERENCE

Chair Crawford invited Elsa Saxod, COBRO Chair, to share the recommendations from the SANDAG's 2003 Summer Conference with the Borders Committee.

The COBRO Chair presented the following recommendations to the Borders Committee:

1. Promote the San Diego border region to appropriate authorities such as the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the U.S. Senate, and the House of Representatives among others, as the ideal test-site for new homeland security technology along the U.S. southwestern border.
2. Request periodic written reports from DHS on technology related implementations and other security issues.

A further recommendation was made to the Consul General of Mexico, in his capacity of advisory liaison to the SANDAG Board of Directors, to promote the Summer Conference recommendations with the appropriate authorities in Mexico.

The Committee accepted these recommendations without any changes.

Comments on the recommendations were as follows:

1. Javier Diaz de Leon noted that these recommendations have already been submitted to the Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He stated that Mexico shares the same goals as the San Diego region in relation to border issues.
2. Victor Carrillo stated that decisions are sometimes made by U.S. and Mexican governments without first fully taking into consideration issues with the border.
3. With regard to border issues and usage, the right message is not getting out to the public. Certain local media parties have not presented responsible or positive depictions of the border and its issues. This perspective has been detrimental to the public's view of border operations. During further discussion, it was suggested that Borders Committee members continue to think about ways in which SANDAG may be able to help improve the border's image.
4. It would be good to reach out in some manner to the media to ensure a more positive border portrayal.
5. More studies should be done on how we live and work at the border and what businesses are using the border facilities in transporting their goods.
6. Staff was directed to review where COBRO recommendations concur with the draft RCP.

Action: The recommendations of COBRO were accepted by the Borders Committee and will be forwarded to the SANDAG Board of Directors for approval.

5. BORDER ENERGY ISSUES GROUP (BEIG)

The update on the Border Energy Issues Group was tabled until the December 12, 2003 meeting of the Borders Committee.

6. REVISED BORDERS CHAPTER OF THE REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (RCP)

Hector Vanegas of SANDAG presented the latest working draft of the Borders Chapter of the Regional Comprehensive Plan (RCP). He updated the Committee on the status of the draft RCP, which will be presented to the full Board of Directors in December.

Committee comments and discussions included:

1. There needs to be a study to show how the cost of time lost waiting at the border justifies the expense of border facilities expansion. Documentation is needed to show cost of delays. Staff was directed to look into this issue and find whether such documentation exists.
2. Care should be taken toward tracking the status of issues in the plan, especially those not yet approved. There are many "moving targets" that need to be watched.

3. A comment was made concerning action item #12 of the Transportation section of the Borders Chapter of the RCP, concerning the proposed formation of a working group made up of representatives from SANDAG, Caltrans, the County of San Diego, and the various tribal governments. There are numerous tribal councils, each a sovereign body. Sovereignty is a major concern, as there is no single tribal official to represent all the groups.
4. It was said that in some cases, state-enforced time constraints required haste in the actions of many of the tribal governments and casinos. It is possible that if they had had more time, tribal governments may have evolved more cohesively with one another.
5. One issue that Californians are going to have to confront is that we may need to legalize casinos due to the impact of transient occupancy (TOT) tax losses.
6. Concerning binational water rights, the laws are clear but regional water authorities do not always agree with these laws. Water has been, and will always be, one of the most contentious infrastructure issues.
7. The desalinization of water could have a positive impact on regions, and we need to continue to explore cost-efficient methods.
8. It was stated that last year Lake Elsinore became the first body-contact lake in California to have its water reclaimed for public consumption.
9. Staff was directed to look into enhancing and strengthening the sections on water policies in the Border Chapter of the RCP.
10. Staff was directed to create a closing paragraph to end the Borders Chapter of the RCP.
11. Staff received several compliments on the excellent work performed to date in producing the Borders Chapter of the RCP.

Action: The committee accepted the Borders Chapter for its inclusion in the Regional Comprehensive Plan, which will be presented to the SANDAG's Board of Directors this December.

7. EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT

Chair Crawford turned the meeting over to Thomas Buckley (Riverside County) who presented his concept for equitable development. Mr. Buckley asked the Committee to consider the concept when working on future projects. Mr. Buckley stated that in his proposed formula an ad hoc committee could be formed by representatives of the impacted jurisdictions to produce a memorandum of understanding detailing equitable development for projects.

Committee comments and discussions included:

1. This concept would be an excellent approach to keep infrastructures integrated.
2. It is a complex concept in terms of equivalency units; hard to determine what they are.
3. A full-blown EIR does this in a less effective, less "human" way. This concept is better.
4. This concept could be incorporated into the Borders Chapter of the RCP.
5. This process might be better applied as an appendix to the Borders Chapter, as it is currently too controversial and will take time to develop the details.
6. Staff was directed to continue pursuing this concept.
7. Phil Monroe, Thomas Buckley and Gary Gallegos should meet to flesh out further ideas.

Action: The Committee approved a motion to allow Chair Crawford and Phil Monroe to further work with Thomas Buckley in pursuing the equitable development concept with staff.

8. PRESENTATION ON LAS CALIFORNIAS BINATIONAL CONSERVATION INITIATIVE

Chair Crawford introduced Anne McEnany, International Community Foundation, who gave the Committee an overview of her organization. Ms. McEnany then presented a new study in need of funding which will identify, design, and develop binational conservation areas to protect flora and fauna along the U.S.-Mexico border.

Ms. McEnany's presentation illustrated that the California/Baja California border lies within the California Floristic Province, which has been identified as one of 25 Global Biodiversity Hotspots. The goals of this organization and its partners are as follows:

1. Create a Study Area specifically looking at the five border corridors in terms of endangered species, watershed planning, land use and innovative cross-border tools.
2. Preserve the best and most intact examples of coastal sage scrub and chaparral.
3. Link to existing protected areas on the US side, including archaeological and cultural sites that currently have no legal status.
4. Promote federal, state, and local collaboration on land use, endangered species, and watershed conservation issues.

Committee comments and discussions included:

1. It was an excellent presentation. It brought up the issues of habitat collaboration which have been in need of revisiting.

2. The Committee should try to incorporate some of this information into the Borders Chapter of the RCP.
3. The Committee should fully support this study and effort; it is an excellent example of what the Committee was formed to do.
4. There should be conversation with technical staff regarding providing an extension of SANDAG's mapping service resources.
5. Staff was directed to add this to the December meeting as an action item for the Borders Committee.
6. Congressman Filner should be approached regarding funding.

Action: The Committee approved a motion to prepare a list of recommendations to be presented at the next Borders Committee meeting on December 12, 2003 for SANDAG's Board of Directors support.

9. NEXT MEETING DATE AND LOCATION

The Committee's next meeting will take place on Friday, December 12, 2003, from 12:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. in SANDAG's 7th floor conference room. The I-15 Interregional Partnership will meet Friday, January 16, 2004, in Temecula, County of Riverside.

Chair Crawford adjourned the meeting at 3:40 p.m.