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, December 2, 2003

3 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

SANDAG, 7th Floor Conference Room
401 B Street, Suite 800
San Diego, CA 92101-4231

Staff Contact: Hector Vanegas
(619) 595-5372
hva@sandag.org

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 recommendations 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.

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COMMITTEE ON BINATIONAL REGIONAL OPPORTUNITIES
Tuesday, December 2, 2003

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<td>3. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS</td>
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<td>+5. STAFF REPORT (page 7)</td>
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<td>+6. UNITED STATES VISITOR AND IMMIGRATION STATUS INDICATOR TECHNOLOGY (U.S. VISIT) (ANGELIKA VILLAGRANA, SAN DIEGO REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE) (pages 8 to 9)</td>
<td>INFORMATION/DISCUSS</td>
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<td>Ms. Villagrana will give the Committee an overview of the recent visit to San Diego by program director, Jim Williams. Mr. Williams briefed elected officials and stakeholders on the status of the U.S. VISIT program and its effect on the local community.</td>
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7. STATE ROUTE 905 UPDATE (JOSE NUNCIO, SANDAG) | INFORMATION/DISCUSS |
| The Committee members will receive an update of the status of SR 905. |  |

8. ADJOURNMENT AND NEXT MEETING DATE AND LOCATION | DISCUSS/APPROVE |
| The Committee’s next meeting is January 6, 2004 from 3:00 to 4:30 p.m. at SANDAG’s 7th floor conference room. |  |

An (+) next to an item indicates attached report/material.

Visit us on the Web at:
www.sandag.org (under binational)
www.borderbase.org
COMMITTEE ON BINATIONAL REGIONAL OPPORTUNITIES SUMMARY OF NOVEMBER 4, 2003.

The November 4, 2003, COBRO meeting was called to order by Chair Elsa Saxod

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed the COBRO members and guests to the meeting and thanked everyone for attending. Self-introductions were conducted.

2. MEETING SUMMARY OF OCTOBER 7, 2003

The meeting summary for August 5, 2003, was accepted with minor revisions.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND COMMUNICATION

There were no public comments at this time.

4. CHAIR AND COBRO MEMBERS REPORT

The Chair thanked COBRO member Paul Ganster, Institute for Regional Studies of the Californias, and COBRO Vice-chair Alejandra Mier y Teran, Otay Mesa Chamber of Commerce, for presiding over the September and October COBRO meetings respectively, in her absence.

The Chair also publicly acknowledged the support offered by the cities of Tijuana and Mexicali during the recent fire disasters in San Diego County in terms of equipment and firefighter teams.

The Chair commented on the recent signing of the Binational Hazardous Materials Prevention and Emergency Response Plan among the County of San Diego, the City of San Diego, and the City of Tijuana. The event took place at the Tijuana City Hall on October 24, 2003 and was attended by representatives of the County and both cities, as well as representatives from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Mexico’s environmental agency, Profepa, among others.

Gustavo Perez, City of Chula Vista, commented on the recent efforts by Governor-elect Schwarzenegger’s transition team to save the Governor’s Office of California-Mexico Affairs in Mexico City. This effort is in response to recent State budgets cuts and is being headed by transition team member Carlos Olimendi. The Chair encouraged members of the COBRO to send letters supporting this effort. Paul Ganster, Institute for Regional Studies, commented that another significant effort that should be supported is the Commission of the Californias.
Paul Ganster, Institute for Regional Studies, informed the Group that the certificate program in Transborder Governance and Public Administration offered jointly by San Diego State University (SDSU) and the Autonomous University of Baja California (UABC) would start on Friday, November 7, 2003.

Alejandra Mier y Teran, Otay Mesa Chamber of Commerce, informed the Committee about the recent pilot program upon which the Customs of Border and Bureau Protection (CBP) and Mexico’s Customs Agency have agreed. The pilot program will extend the U.S.-Mexico commercial northbound border operations through the month of November. Both agencies have agreed to this joint effort to provide extra travel time to commercial truck drivers crossing the border and to see what impact it has on traffic at the commercial port of entry. The trial schedule is from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on weekdays and from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Saturday’s.

The Chair commented that the SANDAG Borders Committee would be presented with the COBRO Summer Conference recommendations on Friday, November 7, 2003 and asked whether any further additions to the recommendations should be included. The Committee accepted the recommendations with no further revisions.

The Chair asked the Committee for volunteers to form a sub-committee to help organize the 2004 SANDAG Binational Summer Conference. The Chair requested that recommendations be made to the Committee by the January, 2004 meeting. Angelika Villagran and Viviana Ibañez, San Diego Chamber of Commerce; Paul Ganster, Institute for Regional Studies; and Lydia Antonio, Consulate General of Mexico volunteered for the effort. Notification of the first meeting will be sent to all members of the Committee.

5. MAQUILADORA SURVEY

Geoffrey Bogart, Science Application International Technology, SAIC, reviewed the presentation made to the group during the October 7, 2003 meeting in Tijuana on The Survey and Analysis of Trade and Goods Movement between California and Baja California (Maquiladora Survey). The study focused on looking at border conditions from a user perspective, more specifically, the commercial user, while taking into consideration the following issues: shipping, congestion, hours of operation, infrastructure, and types of vehicles.

The study recommends support for the following actions:

- Road infrastructure improvements,
- Dedicated lanes for expedited process,
- Increased inspection agency staffing, resource management, and use of technology,
- Longer and more flexible operating hours,
- Binational, interagency cooperation, and
- Documentation of the cost of delays.

The Committee agreed to support the recommendations contained in the study and to immediately bring it to the Borders Committee for consideration. It also suggested that the following actions also be included as part of those recommendations:
• To stress that SR-905 is one of the priorities for the region;
• To recognize that southbound trucking is more than a local issue and needs to funded accordingly;
• To prolong the current Customs trial period of extended hours at the Otay Mesa Port of Entry from one month to three months; and
• To establish competitive wait times of no longer that one hour in both north and southbound directions.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT IN THE MEXICAN CHEMICAL SECTOR

Veronica Medina-Ross, PhD, shared the findings of her research on chemical companies operating in Mexico City and the State of Mexico. She stated that her research had four main objectives:

• To assess which factors have been motivating chemical companies to implement voluntary environmental management initiatives;
• To examine the obstacles that have been hindering this process;
• To evaluate the role of relevant stakeholders; and
• To explore the implications of these initiatives on future environmental management in Mexico.

Findings from her research included:

• That environmental regulations have been key drivers for voluntary environmental initiative implementation in Mexico;
• That regulatory framework presents deficiencies; and
• That the greatest limitation is the absence of efficient monitoring and verification mechanisms.

She concluded by stating that voluntary environmental initiatives should be implemented within a policy mix framework; that they should be considered as alternatives to environmental regulations; and that they provide opportunities for the improvement of environmental management and performance.

7. ADJOURNMENT AND NEXT MEETING DATE, AND LOCATION

The Committee’s next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday December 2, 2003 from 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. in SANDAG’s 7th floor conference room.

THE ATTENDANCE LIST IS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST.
UPCOMING EVENTS

WHAT: Judicial Activism and Public Authority Compliance: The Role of Public Support in the Mexican Separation-of-Powers Systems
WHEN: Wednesday December 3, 2003 from 3:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
WHERE: Copley Conference Center, Institute of the Americas Complex
MORE INFO: Call (858) 534-4503 or visit http://usmex.ucsd.edu
SPONSOR: The Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies

WHAT: Urban Border Ecology
WHEN: Thursday December 4, 2003 from 12:15 p.m. to 1:45 p.m.
WHERE: USD Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice
MORE INFO: Call (619) 260-4090 or TransBorder@sandiego.edu
SPONSOR: USD Transborder Institute

WHAT: Legislators Reception-San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce
WHEN: Thursday December 4, 2003 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
WHERE: Emerald Ballroom, Wyndham San Diego at Emerald Plaza
MORE INFO: Call (619) 544-1338
SPONSOR: Sempra Energy; AMR; SBC; Healthcare Association of San Diego and Imperial County

WHAT: Tequila Talks with Governor Arturo Montiel, State of Mexico
WHEN: Thursday December 11, 2003 at 6:00 p.m.
WHERE: Weaver Center, Institute of the Americas
MORE INFO: Call (858) 453-5560 ext. 107
SPONSOR: Loretta Consulting Group; Institute of the Americas

WHAT: SANDAG Borders Committee
WHEN: Friday December 12, 2003 from 12:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.
WHERE: SANDAG’s 7th Floor Conference Room
MORE INFO: Contact Alex Hidalgo at (619) 595-5627
SPONSOR: San Diego Association of Governments
UNITED STATES VISITOR AND IMMIGRANT STATUS INDICATOR TECHNOLOGY (US VISIT)

Introduction

In 1996, the U.S. Congress passed a law to develop an automated entry and exit control system to collect records of arrival and departure from every foreign visitor entering and leaving the United States, known as the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (IIRIRA), Section 110. In 2000, Congress amended Section 110 with the Immigration and Naturalization Service Data Management Improvement Act (DMIA) and required:

- The implementation of an integrated entry and exit data system that would use available data to record alien arrivals and departures in an electronic format, without establishing additional documentary requirements;
- Implement the entry exit data systems at airports and seaports no later than Dec. 31, 2003;
- Implement the entry exit data system at the 50 highest traffic land border Ports of Entry no later than Dec. 31, 2004; and
- Implement the entry exit data system at all remaining ports of entry no later than Dec. 31, 2005.

Discussion

After the tragic events of September 11, 2001, Congress passed the USA PATRIOT Act (Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act of 2001, Public Law 107-56), which calls for an expedited process in the implementation of a comprehensive entry-exit system.

In 2003, the United States Visitor and Immigration Status Indicator Technology (US VISIT) office was established as part of a Department of Homeland Security (DHS) program to: enhance the security of U.S. citizens and visitors; expedite legitimate travel and trade; ensure the integrity of the immigration system; and safeguard the personal privacy of people visiting the U.S.

On Monday November 17, 2003, Jim Williams, Director of the US VISIT program, visited San Diego to address concerns associated with the implementation at the region’s air, sea, and land ports of entry. Mr. Williams addressed staffs of state and federal elected officials and border stakeholders in two separate sessions during the day. The program for airports and seaports will be implemented in 2004. In addition, he mentioned that:
Airports and Seaports:

- Consulates and embassies around the world already are collecting biographic and biometric data as they issue visas.
- Biometric identifiers will use two finger-scans and a digital photograph to verify identity and update travel records.
- By December 31, 2003, entry capabilities will be in place in 115 airports and 14 seaports. Processing of biometric data will begin on January 5, 2004 in order not to impact holiday traffic.
- By December 31, 2003, exit capabilities will be piloted in a small number of airports and one major seaport.
- The pilot will involve the placement of kiosks at various locations in the airport.
- By October 2004, all 211 visa-issuing posts will be collecting biometric data.

Land Ports of Entry (POE):

- Capabilities will be put in place at the 50 busiest land POE by the end of 2004. It will include all three local POE. By this time, US VISIT needs to meet the minimum requirements of the law.
- The remaining land ports will be operational by the end of 2005.
- The public and private sectors are being engaged to help DHS develop the best overall solution for US VISIT at land POE, to help meet the two main objectives of enhancing national security, while facilitating legitimate travel and trade.

Mr. Williams mentioned that US VISIT is working on a radio-frequency (RF) technology which would scan “chips” on visas to expedite the crossing. Only visa holders will be affected. (Out of approximately 350 million crossers annually, only 4 to 4.5 million crossers are visa holders.) Addressing participants’ concerns, Mr. Williams said that some visitors such as residents of border communities who possess border crossing cards, may be exempt. He also stated that his office understood the need for an expedited process and the economic, cultural, and social interconnectivity that exists between the San Diego and Baja California. He further mentioned that a priority for the development of this program was to protect trade between the U.S., Mexico, and also among the local border communities.

Mr. Williams recognized the lack of available information from his office and offered to provide updates through his staff. He also mentioned that he would seek the help of local stakeholders as the development of the program continues to move forward.