

**San Diego Association of Governments**  
**BORDERS COMMITTEE**

November 19, 2004

AGENDA ITEM NO.: **1a**

**Action Requested: APPROVE**

**BORDERS COMMITTEE DISCUSSION AND ACTIONS MEETING OF MAY 21, 2004**

The regularly scheduled meeting of the San Diego Association of Governments Borders Committee was called to order at 12:34 p.m. by Chair Crystal Crawford (North County Coastal). Other members in attendance were Patricia McCoy (South County), Ed Gallo (North County Inland), David Allan (East County), Ralph Inzunza (City of San Diego), Greg Cox (County of San Diego), Victor Carrillo (Imperial County), and alternates David Powell (North County Coastal), Phil Monroe (South County), and Judy Ritter (North County Inland). Ex-officio members in attendance were Thomas Buckley (Riverside County), Javier Diaz (Republic of Mexico), James Bond (San Diego County Water Authority), Bill Figge (Caltrans), and Elsa Saxod representing the Committee on Binational Regional Opportunities (COBRO).

Chair Crawford welcomed everyone to the meeting and self-introductions were made.

**1. APPROVAL OF APRIL 16, 2004, MEETING MINUTES**

Action: The Borders Committee voted unanimously to approve the April 16, 2004, meeting minutes.

**2. PUBLIC COMMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS/MEMBER COMMENTS**

Councilmember McCoy announced that next week, on May 27, 2004, California Connections on KPBS will highlight the issue of the triple border fence. Show participants include Duncan Hunter, the lawsuit participants, and various local individuals. The show airs at 8:00 p.m. She felt that this would be of interest to the Borders Committee members as this will impact the environmental integrity of the coastal border between Tijuana and Imperial Beach.

Councilmember Monroe expressed concern that the County of San Diego's representative went on the Roger Hedgecock show and denounced the proposed *TransNet* extension. He added that he was disappointed that she referred to the measure as deceitful and dishonest, which he took personally. He indicated that *TransNet* is important to the entire region and the elected officials should communicate to their individual supervisors how important that is.

Councilmember Bond asked what the County's reasoning is for not supporting the *TransNet* extension. Councilmember Monroe responded that the County wants more funding in the extension to be focused on highways and to eliminate any future changes to the measure, regardless of any new circumstances that may arise.

Councilmember Crawford asked Supervisor Cox if the County Board of Supervisors intends to discuss this issue prior to the next SANDAG Board of Directors meeting. The second reading of the *TransNet* Ordinance will take place at that meeting. Supervisor Cox indicated that the issue will come back before the County Board of Supervisors next month and agreed to bring back any pertinent information to the Committee.

Chair Crawford announced that the Committee has a new alternate from Imperial County, Mayor David Ouzan, from the City of Calexico. Supervisor Carrillo commented that he will bring him to the next meeting to introduce him.

Chair Crawford added that she, along with Councilmembers McCoy, Monroe, and Guerin, recently met with Dr. Robert Bach, the keynote speaker for the upcoming COBRO Summer Conference. From 1994 to 2000, Dr. Bach served in the Immigration and Naturalization Service at the United States Department of Justice as Executive Associate Commissioner for Policy, Planning, and Programs. He has worked extensively on border issues with Mexico and Canada to facilitate economic development while increasing security along the border. Currently, Dr. Bach provides independent consulting services to the United States Department of Homeland Security, Border and Transportation Security Directorate, and the Transportation Security Administration. He has a great deal of knowledge and background in border affairs and has offered to be a resource to SANDAG, specifically to the Borders and Public Safety Committees.

Councilmember Monroe pointed out that Dr. Bach will be a wonderful resource to the Committee. He is very balanced in his thinking about issues and wants to enhance the economic viability of the border along with the national security demands in a way that will benefit the entire region.

Chair Crawford pointed out that the San Diego Congressional Delegation is hosting a Homeland Security meeting and Councilmember Allan (East County) will be representing the Borders Committee at that meeting.

### **CONSENT ITEM**

3. COMMITTEE ON BINATIONAL REGIONAL OPPORTUNITIES (COBRO) SUMMARY AND ACTIONS FOR APRIL 6, 2004

Action: The Borders Committee voted to approve the Consent Item.

### **REPORTS**

4. LAUNCHING OF THE BORDERS SECTION OF THE SANDAG WEB SITE

To reflect the new structure of the Borders Committee and its planning activities, the "Binational" section of the SANDAG Web site has been revamped. The section is now called "Borders," and its structure reflects the three perspectives—interregional, binational, and tribal—that create the working framework for Borders Planning and Coordination. There is an introductory section which includes the guiding principles and goal of the Borders Committee.

Each subsection contains current projects, resources, publications, and committees and working groups associated with that subsection. Through the process of restructuring the site, staff was able to pilot several new features to the general SANDAG site, such as on-line registration for conferences. Staff noted that this is a work in progress and encouraged all Committee members to go to [www.sandag.org](http://www.sandag.org), look under "Borders" in Programs on the right bar menu, review the Web site and provide any additional input and/or changes that need to be made.

Councilmember Monroe suggested that in order to make the Web site more user-friendly, in addition to posting downloadable PDF files on the Web site staff also should consider converting downloadable files into an HTML format. *Staff responded that creating HTML files is very resource and labor-intensive. At this time, there is insufficient personnel and resources to be able to convert all files on the Web site to HTML format. Staff will explore other methods of making html files available, such as being able to search for a specific word or phrase.*

Chair Crawford applauded staff's efforts and looks forward to the evolution of the Borders section of the SANDAG Web site.

Action: The Borders Committee accepted this report for information.

#### 5. BORDERS COMMITTEE WORK PLAN FOR FY 2005

Staff reviewed the FY 2005 Borders Committee Work Plan with the Committee, which includes the Committee's priorities and strategic initiatives that were accepted for inclusion in the Implementation Chapter of the Regional Comprehensive Plan (RCP). The framework for this Work Plan is the Borders Chapter of the RCP. The Borders Chapter of the RCP addresses border issues from three perspectives: binational (for the issues that are related to the border with Mexico), interregional (for the issues related to Imperial, Riverside, and Orange Counties), and tribal government (for the issues related to the 17 tribal governments within the region). The Borders Chapter identifies several planning areas including access to affordable housing, transportation, water and energy supply, environment, economic development, and homeland security. The Borders Committee decided to concentrate its efforts on obtainable goals over the next year. Staff prepared a calendar for FY 2005, which suggests that each month the Borders Committee focus on a specific issue and relationship, have a goal, and have a product.

Chair Crawford commented that the calendar will give the Committee the opportunity to make sure that it focuses on a limited number of issues but addresses key issues with each neighboring region.

Councilmember Monroe stated that the Committee should focus some additional attention on tribal governments and Orange County. *Staff noted that they are currently working on establishing a liaison program with the tribal governments.*

Councilmember Buckley suggested that tribal governments be discussed in February 2005, along with the County of Riverside issues. *Staff concurred, and added that an update on the report entitled "Rural Transportation Needs Assessment" could be provided at that time. This study focuses on tribal governments and transportation issues.*

Chair Crawford mentioned that in October 2004, the Committee could include Imperial County on that agenda and discuss common issues that are shared along the U.S./Mexico border.

Councilmember McCoy would like to see water issues on a future agenda, as they relate to tribal governments.

Councilmember Monroe noted that the issue of undocumented immigration is not listed on the calendar and questioned whether that was an oversight. *Staff stated that undocumented immigration subject was not included because there needs to be a meeting with the subcommittee to discuss the timing a workshop on that issue.*

Action: The Borders Committee approved the Borders Committee Work Plan for FY 2005.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NEW LEADERSHIP AND ISSUES RELATED TO MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE ON BINATIONAL REGIONAL OPPORTUNITIES (COBRO)

Chair Crawford commented that the current Committee on Binational Regional Opportunities (COBRO) Chair, Elsa Saxod, will be leaving her position next month. She noted that Ms. Saxod has been the Chair for the past two years and has done a wonderful job leading that Committee. She thanked Ms. Saxod for all her efforts and hard work.

Elsa Saxod, COBRO Chair, thanked the Committee for the opportunity to serve the COBRO Chair for the past two years. She recommended that Paul Ganster, representing the Institute for Regional Studies of the Californias, San Diego State University (SDSU), and Cindy Gompper-Graves, representing the South San Diego County Economic Development Council, serve as the COBRO Chair and Vice Chair, respectively, for the term May 2004 to May 2006. She added that the new Chair and Vice Chair will do fine and felt that the Borders Committee will be pleased with their performance. In addition, Ms. Saxod highlighted some changes that the COBRO would like to have made in regard to the COBRO criteria and membership. Those changes are listed in the staff report.

Councilmember McCoy suggested that a representative from the Tijuana River Natural Estuary Research Preserve be added to the COBRO. If they cannot be added as a member of the Committee, at a minimum, they should be invited as a resource to participate in the COBRO meetings. There are approximately 24 preserves nationwide; however, this is the only one that sits on an international border.

Action: The Borders Committee approved the COBRO recommendations.

7. REPORT ON U.S. BUREAU OF CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES (CIS) AS PART OF CONSOLIDATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Chair Crawford introduced Debra Rogers, San Diego District Director for the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services, and John Ramirez, Community Liaison Officer for the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services to the Committee.

Ms. Rogers stated that the purpose of her visit today is to introduce the agency to the Committee. The Bureau is one of many under the Department of Homeland Security. It provides

services to immigrants in San Diego and Imperial Counties, such as information regarding immigration and citizenship issues and makes decisions on applications and petitions that are filed with the agency. The agency also is focused on improving national security; all of the applications received go through an extensive security background check before being processed. Some goals for the agency, both nationally and locally, are: (a) to improve customer service by eliminating the backlog of applications; (b) to be consistent and reasonable in the decisions that are made on applications through training; and (c) to improve information through innovation and outreach. Currently, two applications are available to be filed on-line: the employment application and the application for advance enrollment. Six more applications will be available on-line over the next six weeks. There also are three district offices: Downtown San Diego; Chula Vista Customer Service Center; and Imperial Valley Sub-Office. There are also application support centers in San Marcos and on El Cajon Boulevard. The Bureau answers approximately 150,000 questions per year through its information line and completes approximately 50,000 applications per year.

Councilmember McCoy questioned what kind of flexibility the bureau has for permanent residents that have language barriers or another type of disability. *Ms. Rogers indicated that provisions are made. The language requirement is waived for permanent residents who have been in the United States for more than 15 years. The language requirement also is waived for those who have been in the United States for less than that time, but who have a medical condition or difficulty learning the language.*

Supervisor Carrillo commented that there is cultural barrier for those immigrants on the Mexican side of the border because they do not understand or have access to electronic technology. *Ms. Rogers agreed and pointed out that the San Diego offices still provide over-the-counter services and will continue to do so.*

Ms. Rogers indicated that the Bureau also handles customers via e-mail, which may eliminate the need for an applicant to physically visit the office. In addition, the bureau is working on reducing the processing time, which is how long it takes the Bureau to qualify an applicant for an interview once an application has been submitted.

Javier Diaz commented that the Consul General's office has been working closely with the Department of Homeland Security and is willing to help do whatever it can to assist the Bureau in its efforts.

John Ramirez noted that there is a summary of a report included in the information packets distributed to the Committee from the Urban Institute, which discusses issues regarding naturalization and citizenship. The full report is available on-line at the Urban Institute's Web site at [www.urban.org](http://www.urban.org).

Councilmember Monroe stated that this was a wonderful presentation and he applauded their efforts to do better. He was surprised that an e-mail response could take up to two weeks. *Ms. Rogers commented that two weeks is the maximum response time that an applicant will have to wait. Usually, e-mail response time is no longer than three days.*

Chair Crawford thanked them for the presentation and welcomed them back anytime.

Action: The Borders Committee accepted this report as information.

8. NEXT MEETING DATE AND LOCATION

The next meeting of the Borders Committee will be held on Friday, June 18, 2004, at 1:30 p.m. at Temecula City Hall and will be the final meeting of the Inter-Regional Partnership (IRP).

**San Diego Association of Governments**  
**BORDERS COMMITTEE**

November 19, 2004

AGENDA ITEM NO.: **1b**

**Action Requested: APPROVE**

**BORDERS COMMITTEE DISCUSSION AND ACTIONS SPECIAL SESSION ON NEW CALIFORNIANS MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 9, 2004**

The Special Session on New Californians was called to order by Committee Chair Crystal Crawford (North County Coastal) at 3:11 p.m. The attendance sheet for the meeting is attached.

**1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Chair Crawford thanked and welcomed the guests for attending. She announced that the regularly scheduled meeting of the Borders Committee, to be held on Thursday, September 30, 2004, could potentially be cancelled. Details will be forthcoming.

**2. PUBLIC COMMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS**

Thomas Buckley (Riverside County) commented that March Air Force Base (AFB) will be converted into a Homeland Security Center, which will eliminate the site from being considered as a passenger terminal. However, cargo and freight will still be transported. He added that there is a proposal to link March AFB and San Diego together, and provided a report to the Borders Committee Chair on this issue.

**3. REPORT FROM THE LITTLE HOOVER COMMISSION ON NEW CALIFORNIANS (INFORMATION)**

Chair Crawford noted that she requested that Mayor Pro Tem Monroe, a member of the Borders Committee, be the facilitator for today's meeting.

Mayor Pro Tem Monroe (City of Coronado) pointed out that this issue was originally brought to the SANDAG Executive Committee by Councilmember Jack Feller (Oceanside). The Executive Committee referred the issue to the Borders Committee for discussion at one of its meetings. In April 2004, the Borders Committee discussed this issue and tasked a group of its members to further investigate this issue. Mayor Pro Tem Monroe indicated that today the Borders Committee will hear from Mitch Mitchell and Toby Ewing, representatives from the Little Hoover Commission (LHC). The Little Hoover Commission, formally known as the Milton Marks "Little Hoover" Commission on California State Government Organization and Economy, is an independent state oversight agency that was created in 1962. Its mission is to investigate state government operations and - through reports, recommendations and legislative proposals - promote efficiency, economy, and improved service. By statute, the Commission is a balanced