San Diego Association of Governments

BORDERS COMMITTEE

April 15, 2005

AGENDA ITEM NO.: 1b

Action Requested: APPROVE

BORDERS COMMITTEE DISCUSSION AND ACTIONS
Meeting of March 18, 2005

The regularly scheduled meeting of the San Diego Association of Governments Borders Committee was called to order at 12:37 p.m. by Chair Patricia McCoy (South County). The attendance sheet for the meeting is attached.

Chair McCoy (South County) welcomed all visitors and thanked them for attending. Self-introductions were made.

Chair McCoy (South County) pointed out that there is good attendance at today’s meeting. She requested that the Borders Committee meet in a bigger room next month.

1. APPROVAL OF BORDERS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Chair McCoy (South County) mentioned that in reference to the minutes for the February 18, 2005, meeting there were changes that needed to be made to last month’s attendance sheet. An updated attendance list was distributed to all.

Deputy Mayor Crawford (North County Coastal) mentioned that the following people who were in attendance at that meeting should be recognized including SANDAG’s 2nd Vice Chair, Santee Councilmember Jack Dale; Tijuana’s Liaison to SANDAG, Alfonso Bustamante; and SANDAG Executive Director Gary Gallegos.

Kevin Siva, Chairman of the Reservation Transportation Authority (RTA), noted that the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) was created after the Civil War, not by Public Law 280, which was passed in 1953. He requested that change be made to the minutes. Public Law 280 was a transfer of legal authority (jurisdiction) from the federal government to state governments, including California, which significantly changed the division of legal authority among tribal, federal, and state governments.

Action: Deputy Mayor Crawford (North County Coastal) made the motion and Supervisor Slater-Price (County of San Diego) seconded the motion to approve the minutes from the February 18, 2005, meeting to include the above-mentioned changes.
2. PUBLIC COMMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS/MEMBER COMMENTS

Chair McCoy (South County) introduced Gail Acheson, the new Director of the Bureau of Land Management’s (BLM) Palm Springs/South Coast field office. She thanked her for attending.

Chair McCoy (South County) stated that the Borders Committee has been asked to consider changing its meeting date to the fourth Friday of each month. The meeting will begin at 12:30 p.m., following the SANDAG Board of Directors Business meeting. Committee members discussed the issue and they were agreeable to the date change.

Supervisor Cox (County of San Diego) asked when the next Borders Committee meeting will be held. Chair McCoy (South County) responded that the issue of rescheduling Borders Committee meetings to a new day and time will be forwarded to the SANDAG Board for discussion and approval. The Borders Committee will be notified of the SANDAG Board’s action.

Deputy Mayor Crawford (North County Coastal) suggested that the Borders Committee add to the next agenda the issue of an ex officio member from the tribal governments to be added to the Committee’s membership. She added that she would like to see the Committee follow up on the action items in the minutes from last month’s meeting with the tribal governments. Chair McCoy (South County) noted that she will refer the issue to staff to add to a future meeting agenda.

Chair McCoy (South County) noted that the presentation from Chantal Saipe, from the County of San Diego, on their Tribal Liaison program was rescheduled for April 15, 2005. In addition, she noted that SANDAG, in coordination with RTA, is holding a special workshop dedicated to an introduction of SANDAG technical services and how to use socio-demographic data for grant proposals. The workshop will be held from 2 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday, April 27, 2005, at the SANDAG offices in the 7th Floor Conference Room. The workshop is limited to 24 participants because of computer access.

Chair McCoy (South County) announced that the Consul General of Mexico wanted to make a brief presentation, but that issue will be trailed to the end of the meeting.

CONSENT ITEMS (3 and 4)

3. COMMITTEE ON BINATIONAL REGIONAL OPPORTUNITIES (COBRO) MEETING SUMMARY AND ACTIONS (INFORMATION)

4. UPDATE ON SENATE BILL 18 (BURTON) (INFORMATION)

Action: Deputy Mayor Crawford (North County Coastal) made the motion and Vice Chair Carrillo (Imperial County) seconded the motion to accept Consent Items 3 and 4.
5.  **2005 BINATIONAL CONFERENCE UPDATE (APPROVE)**

Dr. Paul Ganster, Chair of the Committee on Binational Regional Opportunities (COBRO), reported that COBRO formed a Task Force to consider options or alternatives to make the Binational Conference a better, more effective tool for binational planning. COBRO determined that an interesting model to pattern itself after would be the I-15 Interregional Partnership with Western Riverside County, in respect to looking at the Otay Mesa Corridor and Tijuana. He noted that the Otay Mesa-Mesa de Otay Corridor is an area of opportunity to implement a binational planning partnership. He noted that COBRO is proposing some modifications to the Binational Conference in an effort to establish such a binational planning partnership.

Dr. Ganster added that there are many areas of border planning that are not adequate. COBRO wants to develop an operational partnership with Tijuana-Baja California to assist in planning efforts on both sides of the border. The Binational Conference will be the first step to develop a language to communicate effectively with our neighbors across the border. He noted that COBRO is recommending the Borders Committee approve the following changes to the Binational Conference.

1. The title for the Conference be “Cross-Border Collaborative Planning for Otay Mesa-Mesa de Otay,” with a focus on transportation, housing, economic development, and conservation.

2. There will be two workshops instead of one summer conference, with one workshop held in Tijuana and the other in San Diego. Both workshops will be held sometime during the first two weeks of October.

3. Participation will include SANDAG and other stakeholders with jurisdiction within the international border region, including Caltrans, the Secretariat of Infrastructure and Urban Development of Baja California (SIDUE), and the Planning Institute of Tijuana (ImPlan).

Dr. Ganster concluded that COBRO doesn’t have a specific agenda for the workshops at this time, but, with the Border Committee’s approval, will develop one over the next few months with representatives from Tijuana and will bring the proposed agenda back to the Committee for discussion and review.

Chair McCoy (South County) stated that COBRO has brought forward some excellent ideas. She indicated that she appreciated his and COBRO’s efforts.

Supervisor Cox asked when the workshops would be held. Dr. Ganster responded that the workshops would be held sometime in early October.

Councilmember Monroe (South County) stated that it could be challenging for COBRO to model itself after the I-15 Interregional Partnership (IRP). The IRP received a grant from Caltrans and the group required a lot of staff time. He asked how this effort will be funded.
Staff replied that a binational planning partnership has been included in SANDAG’s FY 2006 Overall Work Program (OWP), so there is some funding available for the proposed work. In addition, staff has applied for a grant with Caltrans to augment current funding.

Deputy Mayor Crawford (North County Coastal) asked what the impact of not having the conference in the summer will be. These conferences have been held since 1996, and people have gotten used to them and look forward to them. She asked whether COBRO has discussed how to notify people and not disappoint them. Dr. Ganster mentioned that issue will be discussed at a future meeting.

Staff added that the SANDAG Web site can be updated and staff can begin to notify people of the changes.

Vice Chair Victor Carrillo (Imperial County) noted that past conferences have been held at school sites, which hasn’t been a problem because the events were usually held in the summer when school was not in session. He asked if the location will remain the same this year, and if that will pose a problem holding the conference at a school site during the school year. Dr. Ganster stated that he will let the staff handle the logistics of the Summer Conference, which shouldn’t be a problem.

Action: The Borders Committee voted to approve COBRO’s recommendations.

6. OTAY RIVER WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN (INFORMATION)

Trish Boaz, Environmental Resources Manager with the County of San Diego, provided the Committee with an overview of the Otay River Watershed Management Plan. The purpose of the Watershed Management Plan (WMP) is to create future funding opportunities for the Otay Valley Regional Park, the Multiple Species Conservation Program, municipal infrastructure, storm water, and water quality projects. She added that the WMP allows cross-jurisdictional coordination, facilitates integrated land use planning, and long-range general plan updates. The Otay River Watershed includes the County of San Diego and the cities of San Diego, Chula Vista, National City, and Imperial Beach. Those jurisdictions entered into a Joint Exercise of Powers Agreement on March 24, 2004 (JEPA), with other agencies, and hired a consultant to assist with the WMP. She highlighted some of the WMP projects and components that make up the WMP. (Her intention was to show the Committee the Web site tool on the Internet; however, the computer system was temporarily inoperable.) She mentioned that the County of San Diego hosted a tour of the Otay River Watershed, which was very well-attended. The tour provided insight regarding the diversity of the watershed. She noted that the WMP document is currently being reviewed by its Working Group and science advisors. All documents pertaining to the WMP can be reviewed at www.mscp-sandiego.org. Ms. Boaz concluded that she will send the Web site link to staff along with her contact information and is happy to be part of the program.

Chair McCoy (South County) apologized for the technical difficulties. She indicated that she is really interested in this issue, noting that she was one of the original members of the Otay River Watershed Committee. Since that time, a lot of changes have been made and the current people that are working on this project have made a good effort to move the
Chair McCoy (South County) thanked Ms. Boaz for her presentation and noted that she will invite her back to a future meeting for an update.

**Action:** The Committee received this item for information.

Chair McCoy (South County) announced that in the interest of time, the Borders Committee will now move to Item #8 – Oral Report on Sewage Infrastructure Issues along the International Border.

8. **ORAL REPORT ON SEWAGE INFRASTRUCTURE ISSUES ALONG THE INTERNATIONAL BORDER (INFORMATION)**

Chair McCoy (South County) stated that this item is being brought to the Committee by City of Coronado’s Councilmember Frank Tierney.

Councilmember Tierney (City of Coronado) stated that he was appearing before the Borders Committee today to discuss a very important problem, which up to now has either been handled at the local community level or has been the purview of others at the federal and state levels. The problem is the sewage infrastructure along the international border. This has resulted in both human and animal problems on both sides of the border. Local communities have taken opposite viewpoints in terms of possible solutions and who should implement those solutions, either private or governmental. This failure of regional consensus has resulted in others, primarily the federal government, trying to forge a solution which may or may not support the practical requirements over an extended period for the end user—the San Diego region. An estimated 40-60 percent of housing across the border is not connected to sewage infrastructure. This problem needs a regional solution. Both sides of the border will lose heavily if this issue is not addressed. Both health and economic problems will begin to affect those farthest away from the Border because many workers from Mexico work in San Diego County. SANDAG is the only agency that can handle such a problem. A plan needs to be developed for the region for the greater good. The Borders Committee could bring all necessary parties to the table and come to a reasonable solution. This issue can no longer be put off due to the lack of political effort. He urged the Borders Committee to consider taking the lead in developing a solution to this very important issue. He then noted that additional comments on this issue will be made by Elsa Saxod, City of San Diego, followed by Scott Huth, Public Works Director for the City of Coronado.

Elsa Saxod, representing the City of San Diego, stated that she considers this to be a federal issue. Currently, the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are looking to seek a resolution to this problem. She added that there are a number of organizations in Tijuana that are studying this issue. A Master Plan has been prepared by the City of San Diego, and the Baja California government has developed a feasibility study using recommendations from the master plan. Officials from Mexico need to move this issue forward.

Councilmember Tierney (Coronado) commented that all of the pieces to resolve this issue are there, but they should be brought together. There needs to be an overview of the issue. The Borders Committee is the ideal arena to bring all the pieces together to develop an end-
The federal government usually decides the end-user result, sometimes to the detriment of local communities.

Councilmember Inzunza (City of San Diego) agreed with both Councilmember Tierney (Coronado) and Ms. Saxod. There needs to be action taken at the federal government level. What the issue boils down to is funding. The region needs to know what the IBWC is doing. He is hopeful that they will be able to build the type of plants that are needed in this area to resolve this issue with private funding. If that doesn't happen, the beaches in Imperial Beach and Coronado will be closing.

Javier Diaz (Consulate General of Mexico) stated that the Consulate's office has been following this issue for quite some time. He noted that this situation is a regional problem. There have been terrible effects on both sides of the border, which is a common concern. Water issues are federal; therefore, the need for the IBWC. Recently, the IBWC has signed an agreement for secondary water treatment to be done. He added that the company to move forward with this issue has not yet been determined. Funding is needed and they will seek any funding options that are available. Bank of America is already in discussions with the Mexican government. He indicated that the Mexican Consulate's office will do what it can to have the necessary people discuss this issue with the Borders Committee.

Scott Huth, Director of Public Services for the City of Coronado, stated that he is responsible for wastewater and storm water issues for his city. He noted that looking to different areas to pull the resources together at a regional level to assist the federal government is positive. He is happy to see the Committee moving in that direction.

Chair McCoy (South County) commented that the City of Imperial Beach has its own Clean Water Initiative Policy, which she would be happy to share with the Committee. She pointed out that the IBWC Citizen's Forum meets in Imperial Beach. She read a quote from IBWC Environmental Engineer Carlos Peña, from The San Diego Union-Tribune, who commented on the difficulty of trying to work out a solution to an international problem. He said, “Mexico is a sovereign nation. There are so many stakeholders in this issue and a lot of opinions as to how the problem is to be resolved. We are working on the issue diligently. The Tijuana Master Plan is just part of the solution. It's a very complex issue.” She added that $1 million has been allocated for this project, which is inadequate.

Supervisor Cox (County of San Diego) indicated that over the last 10 years there has been close to $600 million contributed by numerous agencies toward resolving this issue, but the ongoing problem with the sewage makes that amount less than what it should be. The problem is there hasn't been coordinated action taken to reach a better solution, as Councilmember Tierney has stated. SANDAG can play a positive role because most of the players are already at the table. We should bring this issue to a higher level of attention by having the Borders Committee or SANDAG Board address this issue.

Chair McCoy (South County) said that forecasts have shown that there is exponential growth on both sides of the border, which does not always include infrastructure to support it. Even though there may already be a portion of the solution, the western portion of Tijuana doesn't have the funding to resolve the problem. Local agencies need to apply pressure on
the federal government for a solution. She suggested that staff take this issue to the SANDAG Board to consider.

Chairwoman Slater-Price (County of San Diego) stated that the Mexican government should allocate funding for this issue.

Vice Chair Carrillo (Imperial County) commented that there is a similar situation in Imperial County with the New River, which is the most polluted river in the United States. Imperial County has been trying to resolve this issue through 12 Mexican governments, and has been unsuccessful. One problem is that the infrastructure was developed for 100,000 people in a city that now has over 1 million. The federal government on the U.S. side sees this as a state or local issue, while Mexican officials see this as a U.S. issue. It is going to take public-private funding to resolve this problem. It also would be helpful if toll monies on the Mexican side could be used toward infrastructure. The local federal delegation needs to engage with its counterparts in Mexico to expedite a resolution to this issue. Collectively, all of the players need to be at the table. He added that he recently went to Washington, DC, to seek reimbursement from the federal government for border cities and the request appeared to fall on deaf ears. Local elected officials need to make sure they are on the radar screen of the federal government to gain attention to their issues.

Deputy Crawford (North County Coastal) stated that a large part of what can be done at SANDAG is educating the elected officials. If the Borders Committee will be taking on this issue, then the Regional Planning Committee should also hear this issue. She was reluctant to see the Borders Committee take on this issue without looking at the entire Borders work plan. Everything that the Committee wanted to accomplish could not be included in the work plan. In order to add this issue, something would need to be taken out. She agreed that most of the members that need to hear this are already at the SANDAG table. This issue could be moved forward by taking this information to the Regional Planning Committee as well as the Executive Committee. Other elected officials need to hear this in order to seek a local solution to an international problem. She concluded that funding is needed to move forward.

Mayor Pro Tem Gallo (North County Inland) pointed out that people have been talking about this issue for years. However, agencies on both sides of the border have to commit to resolving this problem. He agreed that the Borders Committee is the appropriate venue to address this issue, and the Committee should stand up and have something done.

Chair McCoy (South County) referred this issue to staff so they can come back with recommendations for the Committee to consider.

**Action:** The Committee received this item for information.

The computer issues were resolved and Trish Boaz provided the Committee with a demonstration of the GIS-based Otay River Watershed Decision Support Tool.

Chair McCoy (South County) expressed her appreciation for Ms. Boaz’s level of expertise and welcomed her back to make another presentation in the future.
7. LAS CALIFORNIAS BINATIONAL CONSERVATION INITIATIVE UPDATE (INFORMATION)

Anne McEnany, representing the International Community Foundation (ICF), came before the Committee in November 2003, when the ICF was just getting started. Since that time, the SANDAG Board forwarded a letter to Congressman Filner to obtain funding to conduct a wilderness study. Because of the impacts of 9/11, the wilderness study was never funded. She provided the Committee with a document entitled, “Las Californias Binational Conservation Initiative – A Vision for Habitat Conservation in the Border Region of California and Baja California,” and highlighted some issues and projects that ICF is currently working on. She noted that ICF has two very important partners—The Conservation Biology Institute and Pronature Noroeste, which have been instrumental in ICF’s progress. She described why ICF cares about the region—primarily because it is a global “hot spot” for habitat protection. She also noted that Tijuana is growing by 100 acres per day. The U.S. federal, state, and local governments have made a tremendous effort to preserve land near the border. ICF is working hard to try to save some of the binational corridors in the region.

Dr. Michael White, from the Conservation Biology Institute (CBI), commented that this project would not have happened without the collaboration and assistance from partners in Baja California. San Diego is one of a kind in the entire world. He highlighted that San Diego and Baja are connected by their natural resources and noted that both countries should work together to preserve those resources. He provided the Committee with the project’s historical background. All parts of the region are important from a conservation standpoint, but have human-dominated land uses. He indicated that there is a very small window in time to preserve this area.

Councilmember Allan (East County) stated that the region should develop a better relationship with the State of California to assist with this project. Dr. White replied that the question is how to maintain the connections, which is a perfect issue for the Borders Committee to think about. It is in the best interest of the agencies in the U.S. to work with their counterparts across the Border.

Ms. McEnany (ICF) requested that the Borders Committee allow staff to explore some of the ideas that were presented to the Committee and include this effort in the Regional Comprehensive Plan. She added that Congressman Filner is willing to include monies in the Appropriations Bill but cannot get the level of interest up.

Vice Chair Carrillo (Imperial County) asked if ICF took into account the tribal governments and their issues. Ms. McEnany responded that this is the first forum where the results of their work have been made public. She added that this should be a tri-national issue. The intent is to take this information to all of the groups that are or will be affected by this project for discussion.

Chair McCoy (South County) asked whether COBRO can dedicate a segment of its conference to discuss this issue. Dr. Ganster responded that one of the issues to be discussed at the conference is conservation. Including that topic should not be a problem.
Dr. White (CBI) commented that in order to accomplish a relationship with the tribal governments there needs to be respect for the sovereignty of all agencies and organizations involved. He showed the Committee an aerial photo of the area being discussed and mentioned that ICF wants to maintain the connectivity to the south.

Jerre Stallcup, representing the Conservation Biology Institute, indicated that ICF would like to connect the open space in the U.S. with the open space in Mexico. Chair McCoy (South County) stated that it would be beneficial to look at the proposed housing in Mexico in that area.

Anne McEnany (ICF) suggested that SANDAG can support this project when starting the implementation of TransNet by expanding data collection to LCBCI area and promoting visibility to this effort.

Chair McCoy (South County) mentioned that the Committee was fortunate to have received this presentation. She requested that staff come back to the Committee with recommendations regarding the environmental portion of the presentation.

**Action:** The Committee received this item for information.

**Additional Discussion**

Consul General of Mexico, Luis Cabrera C., presented Borders Committee’s Immediate Past Chair, Deputy Mayor Crystal Crawford, with a Certificate of Appreciation commemorating the efforts of her tenure as Chair of the Borders Committee. He thanked her for her strong leadership and collaboration skills.

Deputy Mayor Crawford thanked Consul General Cabrera and the Borders Committee for allowing her to serve in such an important capacity. She added that she will still be active in the Committee and will make herself available when necessary.

Councilmember Allan announced that as a result of last month’s meeting, he received an invitation to go to San Francisco to participate in a case study for tribal casino gaming issues. Even though he was honored to receive the invitation, he declined because he felt his knowledge of the subject is not where it needs to be in order to participate in such a capacity.

9. **NEXT MEETING DATE AND LOCATION**

The next meeting of the Borders Committee will be held at 12:30 p.m. on Friday, April 15, 2005, at the SANDAG offices in the Board Room.

10. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:31 p.m.
## CONFIRMED ATTENDANCE
### BORDERS COMMITTEE MEETING
March 18, 2005
12:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

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<th>GEOGRAPHICAL AREA/ORGANIZATION</th>
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