1. CALL TO ORDER

The joint meeting of the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) Borders Committee and The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) Southwest Compact Task Force was called to order at 11:24 a.m. by Hon. Ron Roberts, President of SCAG and Chair of SCAG’s Southwest Compact Task Force. He thanked and welcomed all for attending.

2. SELF-INTRODUCTIONS

Hon. Crystal Crawford, Chair of SANDAG’s Borders Committee, thanked everyone for taking time out of their busy schedules to attend this important meeting. She invited all meeting participants to introduce themselves. The attendance sheet for the meeting is attached.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Juan Pujol, member of the public, indicated that prepaid cell phones can be used for illegal activity and mentioned that in Japan crime is rising as a result of prepaid phone use, according to a recent newspaper article. This service of prepaid cell phones is connected to illegal immigrants, and is easy to obtain because the purchase of prepaid cell phones does not require any personal information. He suggested that the Committee consider promoting legislation similar to that of Japan regarding prepaid cell phone use. Japan is currently drafting legislation to change the laws associated with acquiring prepaid cell phones because these phones can be used for terrorist purposes. He concluded that this is an issue that should be addressed in San Diego, specifically in San Ysidro near the border.

4. AMERICA 2050 “THIRD CENTURY INITIATIVE” (INFORMATION)

Gary Gallegos, Executive Director of SANDAG, mentioned that he and Mark Pisano, Executive Director of SCAG, participated in the National Association of Regional Councils’ (NARC) 3rd Annual Metropolitan Organization Regional Summit, which was held in
New York in September 2004. The Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, the Regional Plan Association, and the University of Pennsylvania School of Design are looking at opportunities arising from the country’s changing demographics in order to become more globally competitive.

Currently, the Europeans are joining forces and crossing boundaries to compete with the United States. He highlighted three maps, which focused on increased population, metropolitan areas growing beyond political boundaries, and the creation of “super cities” or “super regions.” There needs to be a way to figure out how to collaborate and work better together.

During the discussion the question of how to fund a super region was brought up. The United States has become accustomed to a top-down process—meaning that monies are being paid to the state and distributed back down to the regions and local jurisdictions in return. That model may not serve well in the future. Neither will the regions be able to rely on federal funding from Washington, D.C. The proposed model is a bottom-up approach, where there are public-private partnerships. To remain globally competitive, the “super regions” need to come together and collaborate with one another. This is the new trend.

Mr. Pisano provided the group with a PowerPoint presentation entitled, “America 2050.” The presentation showed what is happening to the major metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) in the country, how trends are changing, proposed goals and objectives, and a strategy for the future. He noted that there are solutions for the existing and future problems. A steering committee of MPOs along with the research units in the country have been meeting to discuss this issue in-depth. Changes are not only occurring in growth but also in economic composition. According to the presentation, presently there are six American trends: the building out of suburban America; infrastructure reaching capacity; uneven and inequitable growth patterns within and between regions; inefficient urban forms; environmental and public health degradation; and emerging “macropolitan” regions (truly large emerging areas).

Competitors are organizing to overpower the United States by coordinating their resources. Currently, Asia is ahead of Europe. Europe is organizing its resources into something called “The French Pentagon,” and has an area identified as “The Blue Banana,” where the industrial cores of most of the European cities are located. They are establishing a host of economic policies, which are not based on the military. In Asia, they have a similar economic integration called the “Beseto” Corridor.

The question is how to stay globally competitive. America should remain globally competitive by design, not by default. There have been major national efforts headed by several U.S. Presidents such as Thomas Jefferson, who indicated that America will grow by expanding west. Following the Civil War, President Lincoln fought to bind the country together through Infrastructure projects like railroad construction. President Theodore Roosevelt began the natural resource management effort and revitalized the construction of the Panama Canal. President Franklin D. Roosevelt added electricity infrastructure development and the highway interstate system.
Now that we are in the 21st century—what do we do? There are eight emerging Macropolitan regions in the United States. An objective of the Macropolitan regions is to extend the networks of metropolitan centers linked by interstate highway and rail corridors. The Macropolitan regions are the gateways to the borders. There needs to be partnerships among groups representing rail, goods movement, airports, and seaports to discuss how the Macropolitan regions can be competitive with Western Europe and Asia. To further the thinking, there are certain things that need to be done including: promoting relationships between existing metropolitan areas; supporting sustainability and long-term vitality; streamlining transportation and land use patterns; fostering better economies and encouraging cost-saving measures through cooperation.

Mr. Gallegos (SANDAG) highlighted the work of the elected officials in San Diego and noted that when President Eisenhower had created his federal highway system, there was a vision. Currently, the nation needs a vision to make major investments on large corridors happen. There also is a need to look at a new transportation system that connects Southern California. The key to this work is to collaborate with the other Macropolitan regions in the country to become allies, not competitors.

Mr. Pisano (SCAG) commented that he recently traveled to Washington, D.C., to lobby for funding and the major focus was that Southern California wants its fair share of funding. More funding for regions would be available if the federal government would change its policy on the experimental projects such as public-private partnerships to fund major transportation and corridor projects. This can be the wave of the future; however, it would need federal legislative support. There needs to be a new national agenda.

Mr. Gallegos (SANDAG) added that while in New York, a group met with administrative officials to discuss global competitiveness and national cohesion. The United States still has a competitive edge, but can’t expect to always be that way. Economic competitiveness is the answer.

Mr. Pisano (SCAG) questioned how the MPOs can help keep this country together when approximately one-half of the country is not economically viable. Connecting large Macropolitan regional connections with the rural areas is a way to sustain the economy. In order to move this concept forward, he noted the following America 2050 objectives:

1. Facilitate the emergence of Macropolitan regions that can compete with similar networks in Europe and Asia by partnering with research institutions;

2. Create the capacity for growth and global competitiveness in the nation’s transportation and infrastructure systems;

3. Provide intermodal resiliency, redundancy, and capacity in the nation’s infrastructure. To do this, there will need to be connectivity between the seaports, airports, and ports of entry;

4. Revitalize bypassed urban and rural areas; and
5. Protect and reclaim natural resource systems and promote less land-consuming patterns of growth.

To accomplish this, the America 2050 Strategy is to:

1. Support the creation of partnerships between metropolitan areas;
2. Seek federal support to provide coordination and incentives; and
3. Create public-private partnerships to execute strategic investments in infrastructure.

Mr. Pisano (SCAG) made reference to the Southwest Compact. The Southwest Compact would include the Texas Triangle and the Southern California areas. This also includes two countries—the United States and Mexico, 10 states, and one goal. If this area can come together, then it will be able to compete with Europe and Asia. However, if Mexico is not able to come onboard, it will make them less competitive which, in turn, will make the United States less competitive.

Mr. Gallegos (SANDAG) stated that there is also a group that has formed called the West Coast Corridor Coalition (WCCC), which includes Washington State, Oregon, and California. The folks in Washington are leading that effort. If this Corridor were united with the Southwest Compact, there would be a large force in the United States that would be connected.

Mr. Pisano (SCAG) indicated that he has been working on a bill that is currently in both houses. However, the President’s priorities have changed since the events of 9/11, and homeland security has since been the focus of attention. He is hopeful that will change and the country will begin to focus again on the economy. How do regions enable the country to create a network to compete globally? It has to be a goal that is supported by transportation, environmental, and growth policies to foster economic development. The key is to figure out how to make the trading entry points cohesive with the current system. The Southern California region’s efforts are the best laboratory in the country and are being recognized for that. He encouraged the group to provide feedback, comments, criticism, and references.

5. SOUTHWEST COMPACT REGIONAL CONGRESSIONAL (INFORMATION)

Mr. Pisano (SCAG) stated that he recently met with Senators Bingham and Feinstein to introduce legislation for the Southwest Compact concept and added that a Congress person needs to be willing to introduce the bill on the House side. There is a need to regain the attention of the Federal Administration. This bill can be an important component in moving people and goods. This bill can also introduce the concept of a Commission for Homeland Security purposes. To be successful, there needs to be seamless borders, which the Homeland Security department is against.

Chair Crawford (Del Mar) noted that a lot of things that the Borders Committee wants to do can be tied into the Department of Homeland Security’s (DHS) strategic priorities in order to tap their funds.
Supervisor Carrillo (Imperial County) mentioned that the question is how we can move goods, commerce, traffic, and people. There are more than 21 million people in Southern California. In 2000, the Department of Education taught 88 languages in the school system. That shows the diversity of the state. Local jurisdictions need to deal with social and cultural issues of transportation as well. That needs to happen in order to grow smartly.

Mr. Gallegos (SANDAG) commented that at the state level, there are 10 states that are already working together. That could be the basis for something to build on. There needs to be a way to inventory and understand what the infrastructure needs are at the border and there needs to be a common base. Caltrans created the Transportation Border Infrastructure Needs Assessment Study (BINS), which took a 100-mile section on both sides of the border and conducted an economic analysis, which served to create a needs assessment. Instead of competing with Texas, we need to collaborate with it to receive more funding. According to San Diego’s cross-border transportation model forecast, border crossings will double over the next 20 years. Right now, the ports of entry cannot handle that. There needs to be more investment in the ports of entry to ensure they will be the most efficient and effective in the world.

Mr. Pisano (SCAG) stated that transportation can be used as a backbone and basis of the group. SCAG has similar issues and efforts with the border in Calexico. He added that if everyone works together collectively, the policymakers in Washington, D.C., will see that.

Supervisor Carrillo (Imperial County) asked if the BTA and the BCC are onboard with the Southwest Compact efforts because they are very active in Texas.

Mr. Gallegos (SANDAG) indicated that the work being done with the Joint Working Committee at Caltrans does not include those groups.

Chair Crawford (Del Mar) noted, however, that there are other mechanisms and organizations that are meeting and talking about similar issues.

Mr. Gallegos (SANDAG) commented that even though the groups are meeting and talking, they need a work product that they can embrace.

Armando Castro mentioned that five years ago he went to Mexico City with a delegation and met with elected officials. He noted that he had the opportunity to present the Southwest Compact efforts to the heads of the BTA. At that time, they received the support of the elected officials in Mexico City. Afterwards, the delegation met with the Governors of the six border cities. The Mexican elected officials are aware of the issue and were receptive five years ago.

Chair Crawford (Del Mar) stated that there is a need to have regular presentations to the Mexican elected officials because governments frequently change.

Supervisor Pam Slater-Price (County of San Diego) noted that national security was not an issue until 9/11. The DHS’s efforts should require technology, a secure ID card, and passes for the regular daily crossers. They also should require background checks—something similar
to the SENTRI crossing. They need to find a way to retrofit and update their current system. Issues need to be resolved in order to move the barriers at the border.

Mr. Pisano (SCAG) indicated that there is a Worker-ID System being proposed by the current legislature.

Mr. Pisano (SCAG) mentioned that headway also is being made on the goods movement side. The Governor asked for a white paper on how to effectively move the goods in California. If the transportation work could be connected to the goods movement issue and is justified as more than a business as usual concept, there may be some help available.

Mr. Gallegos (SANDAG) stated that SANDAG is in the process of developing an economic model. When the border tightens up, it affects the economy. The model can be shared with the policymakers at the local, state, and federal levels.

Chair Crawford (Del Mar) pointed out that talking to policymakers also includes the discussion of funding.

Mr. Pisano (SCAG) mentioned that there are lots of different work activities that can be put together to develop a mutual rationale.

Chair Crawford (Del Mar) stated that if the group agrees, it can work with SCAG on a mutual legislative program, she can take the concept to the Borders Committee for discussion, and forward those discussions to the Executive Committee and then on to the SANDAG Board for approval.

Mr. Gallegos (SANDAG) commented that he can start that process.

Chair Crawford (Del Mar) stated that the Borders Committee recognizes the need to work interregionally. If there is a way to work with the Southern California region, everyone is willing.

Chair Crawford (Del Mar) indicated that the state can try to influence what is happening in Washington, D.C. Working with the Governor’s office is one example.

6. AIRPORT/MAGLEV ISSUES

Congressman Filner faxed a letter to Chair Crawford, requesting that SANDAG’s Borders Committee and SCAG consider Imperial County as the location for the next San Diego regional airport. The letter also stated Congressman Filner’s support for Maglev, noting that an airport site in Imperial County/Southern California would only be a 20-minute Maglev (magnetic levitation) train ride from downtown San Diego. Congressman Filner’s letter noted that high-speed Maglev trains are perfectly suited for the San Diego/Imperial County corridor and for other train corridors in Southern California. They travel at 300 mph, have minimum environmental impact, and can go up and down mountains without any loss of speed. He added that more importantly, a Maglev train line could be constructed with Federal Aviation Trust Funds, which currently have an $11.7 billion surplus due to the
scarcity of new airports. His letter encouraged SANDAG and SCAG to take the opportunity to think in terms of transportation solutions for the 21st century.

Mr. Pisano distributed a map which included the Maglev system that SCAG is looking at for its region. He noted that they are currently seeking funding for the project. The system would serve approximately 3.2 million passengers. Maglev would connect to the L.A., Palm Springs, San Diego, and John Wayne airports. He noted that they did not have the time or resources to calculate the costs of the implementation of the system. If there was an opportunity to extend the line, there would be funding that could be developed. However, between San Diego and Los Angeles, there isn’t sufficient ridership. They will be looking to extend the line to Palmdale and also to the Imperial Airport. The concept that is being developed is being presented without funding, so there probably would not be voter approval. The SCAG Board indicated that there needs to be a self-financing system before they are willing to approve the project.

Sandy Shapery stated that the Maglev system can be funded out of monies from public-private partnerships. They have the capability of connecting regional airports. Looking at this area from an economic standpoint, the first potential phase is the implementation of the system on the I-5 between Los Angeles and San Diego. SCAG has done a tremendous job of doing its analysis. As mentioned, the project can be privately funded and doesn’t require federal funding aside from the initial environmental study work. He is comfortable with estimates regarding potential costs and ridership. If implemented, the number of commuters on highways can be cut in half and can reduce the construction costs of building more freeways and highways.

Chair Crawford (Del Mar) mentioned that this discussion would be good for SANDAG’s Transportation Committee to hear.

7. NEXT STEPS (INFORMATION/POSSIBLE ACTION)

It was suggested that this group meet in a few months.

Mr. Gallegos (SANDAG) stated that in the meantime, he would work with Mr. Pisano to develop a work plan to discuss with their respective Committees and Boards.

Chair Crawford (Del Mar) noted that the next steps would be to discuss this issue at the next joint SCAG/SANDAG meeting, which is tentatively scheduled for April 2005.

One member pointed out that there has been no representation from Orange County on the SANDAG Borders Committee, which would really be helpful.

Mr. Pisano (SCAG) stated that he would work on resolving that issue.

8. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 1:35 p.m.