



NEWS

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SAN DIEGO REGION TO BE AWARDED \$49 MILLION TO COMPLETE BORDER FREEWAY AND CONNECTORS PROJECT WILL FACILITATE CROSSBORDER COMMERCE

The U.S. Department of Transportation is slated to award SANDAG and Caltrans \$49.28 million to complete Segment 2 of State Route 11 (SR11) in Otay Mesa along with two southbound connectors linking SR 905, SR 125, and SR 11, federal officials announced today.

This border infrastructure project is critical to facilitating the growing volume of trade between the United States and Mexico, and alleviating chronic congestion along the San Diego-Tijuana border. SR 11 will eventually connect to a new state-of-the-art border crossing, known as Otay Mesa East. The goal is to operate this port of entry (POE) with a 20-minute border wait time to reach primary inspection.

SANDAG and Caltrans, which are leading the effort to build the SR 11/Otay Mesa East Port of Entry Project, garnered the funding through a highly competitive grant application process under a program called FASTLANE (Fostering Advancements in Shipping and Transportation for the Long-term Achievement of National Efficiencies). In order to qualify for FASTLANE funding, projects must provide nationally significant freight and highway enhancements. The FASTLANE allocation is slated to become final after 60 days. The SR 11 project is the only California project to be awarded a FASTLANE grant.

"This FASTLANE grant is a major boost to our region's effort to build a modern system of border infrastructure to meet the needs of the California-Baja California mega region," said SANDAG Board Chair and County Board of Supervisors Chair Ron Roberts. "These investments in roadways – and in the future port of entry – will provide enormous dividends not just to our economy, but also to our

environment. Reducing border congestion will help cut air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions associated with idling vehicles waiting to cross the border.”

Currently, all border crossings in the San Diego region are congested. Border delays cost the U.S. and Mexican economies an estimated \$7.2 billion in gross economic output (value of goods and services produced) and more than 62,000 jobs each year, according to a 2007 SANDAG study (which is in the process of being updated). The SR 11/Otay Mesa East Port of Entry Project, which will serve both commercial and personal vehicles, is designed to address that problem.

SR 11, a four-lane highway, is a key component of the planned Otay Mesa East Port of Entry, as it will serve as the dedicated roadway to access the new Otay Mesa East POE. When SR 11 is completed, it will operate as a tolled facility, providing border travelers the ability to get to the border more quickly by paying a fee.

“State Route 11 and the Otay Mesa East Port of Entry Project is truly a partnership effort. Caltrans, the San Diego Association of Governments, the Federal Highway Administration, as well as our counterparts in Mexico are working to make this improved trade corridor a reality,” said Caltrans Director Malcolm Dougherty.

The SR 11/Otay Mesa East Project is the result of collaboration by a number of key local, state, and federal agencies in both the United States and Mexico, including the General Services Administration, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the U.S. Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration, Mexico’s Secretaría de Comunicaciones y Transportes, Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, and Mexican Customs/Aduanas.

In July 2014, under the leadership of the California Secretary of Transportation Brian Kelly and Gov. Brown, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed by California and Mexico to expedite construction of the project.

“It is incredible to see how the border region infrastructure has grown in the last five years, and with this funding, we are excited to see these projects further transform the border. We will continue to move forward to achieve our vision for this important trade corridor – on both sides of the border,” said Laurie Berman, Caltrans District Director for San Diego and Imperial counties.

The SR 11/Otay Mesa East project is highlighted as a top priority project in the High-Level Economic Dialogue between the United States and Mexico. Project partners believe the new POE is vital to economic growth and quality of life for their citizens, as the border population and volume of bilateral trade continue to grow. The combined population for San Diego County, the Tijuana, Tecate, Playas de Rosarito Metropolitan Zone of Baja California is expected to increase from 5.1 million today to almost 6.1 million by 2030.

Trade between California and Mexico has grown an average of 10 percent annually since the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement in 1993 – exceeding the growth rate of trade between the U.S. and the rest of the world.

Segment 1 of SR 11 opened to traffic from SR 905 east to Enrico Fermi Drive in March. This stretch, including connectors to SR 905, is about 1.7 mile. Segment 2 will extend the highway another mile to the border.

The newly completed Segment 1 is already providing traffic relief in the border area. Trucks departing the existing Otay Mesa Port of Entry’s Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Facility now have direct access to the state highway system. Segment 1 also connects cross border trucking and industrial facilities

on the eastern end of Otay Mesa directly to the highway system. Previously, trucks relied heavily on local roads, such as La Media Road and Airway Road, to get around.

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