

## **Overview of SANDAG's Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Introduction**

SANDAG serves as the forum for regional decision-making for the 18 cities and county government within its jurisdiction. As the San Diego region's primary public planning, transportation, and research agency, it plays a critical role in regional policies about growth, transportation planning, environmental management, housing, open space, energy, public safety, and binational collaboration. As a result of Senate Bill 1703, which consolidated all of the roles and responsibilities of SANDAG with many of the transit functions of the Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) and the North County Transit District (NCTD), SANDAG also is responsible for transit planning, funding allocation, project development, and construction in the San Diego region.

SANDAG is governed by a Board of Directors composed of mayors, councilmembers, and county supervisors from each of the region's 19 local governments (with two representatives each from the City of San Diego and the County of San Diego). Voting is based on membership and the population of each jurisdiction. Supplementing these voting members are advisory representatives from Imperial County, Caltrans, MTS, NCTD, the U.S. Department of Defense, San Diego Unified Port District, San Diego County Water Authority, Southern California Tribal Chairmen's Association, and Mexico.

Monthly Board of Directors and policy advisory committee meetings provide the public forums for making decisions on regional matters. Citizens and community representatives are involved in the planning and approval process by participating in committees, workshops, and public hearings.

### **What SANDAG does binationally?**

Planning in the San Diego region was traditionally considered as bounded by San Diego County. However, over the years, our perceived borders have expanded. SANDAG recognizes that the San Diego region has close ties to its neighboring counties, tribal reservations, and the Republic of Mexico. The region's distinct characteristics present a variety of opportunities and challenges for planning and coordination along our binational and interregional borders. How our region grows inevitably impacts those around us, just as growth around us impacts our region. This report summarizes SANDAG's activities that are focused on work related to the United States – Mexico border. It includes work that is directly under SANDAG's purview, reports produced utilizing primary data from partner agencies, and projects where SANDAG participates or contributes as a stakeholder.

### **SANDAG's Regional Environmental Work**

In addition, broader regional efforts such as the Environmental Mitigation Program and the Smart Growth Grant Incentive Program carry beneficial impacts felt across the region, in neighboring counties and south of the border. The *TransNet* Extension Ordinance and Expenditure Plan, approved countywide by voters in November 2004, includes an Environmental Mitigation Program (EMP) which is a funding allocation category for the costs to mitigate

habitat impacts for regional transportation projects. The EMP is a unique component of the *TransNet* Extension in that it goes beyond traditional mitigation for transportation projects by including a funding allocation for habitat acquisition, management, and monitoring activities as needed to help implement the Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) and the Multiple Habitat Conservation Program (MHCP). This funding allocation is tied to mitigation requirements and the environmental clearance approval process for projects outlined in the Regional Transportation Plan). Funding includes \$440 million over the ten years for the Biological Mitigation Fund and \$40 million for the Regional Habitat Conservation.

Although SANDAG has no land use authority, the acquisition of MSCP land influences land use from being used for agricultural or residential purposes. It also determines where residential development will not take place. This has the effect of local jurisdictions to require more infill dense developments to accommodate the lack of available land for urban expansion and sprawl.

SANDAG also promotes development in non-sensitive parts of the watershed through policies identified in the Regional Comprehensive Plan (RCP) which calls for better coordination between land use and transportation. A key implementation step in the RCP is the preparation of a “Smart Growth Concept Map” that identifies locations within the region that can support smart growth and transportation investments. It also promotes infill development through its Smart Growth Incentive Program which funds transportation and transportation-related infrastructure improvements and planning efforts that support smart growth development. Smart Growth promotes a compact, efficient, and environmentally-sensitive urban development pattern. It focuses future growth and infill development close to jobs, services, and public facilities to maximize the use of existing infrastructure and preserve open space and natural resources.

## **Border Activities Under SANDAG’s Purview**

### SANDAG Borders Committee

On November 16, 2001, SANDAG’s Board of Directors authorized the creation of the Borders Committee as one of the Policy Advisory Committees of its newly reorganized structure. The Borders Committee membership consists of representatives and alternates from the cities of each sub-region in the San Diego region and the advisory members needed to fulfill its mission. Senate Bill 1703 (SB 1703) enacted on January 1, 2003, reaffirmed the creation of the Borders Committee, including a representative from the County of Imperial. Mexico is represented by the Consulate General of Mexico in San Diego. The Borders Committee meets at 12:30 p.m., on the fourth Friday of every month, at SANDAG. More information is available at [sandag.org](http://sandag.org).

### SANDAG Committee on Binational Regional Opportunities

The Committee on Binational Regional Opportunities (COBRO) was formally established in 1996 as a Policy Advisory Committee to the SANDAG Board of Directors. In 2002, COBRO began serving as a working group to the SANDAG Borders Committee in order to facilitate a better understanding of binational border-related issues and needs of the California-Baja California region. COBRO meets approximately six times a year at 3 p.m., at SANDAG on the

first Tuesday of predetermined months. Usually, one meeting a year is held in Baja California. More information is available at [sandag.org](http://sandag.org).

## Policies and the SANDAG Legislative Program

The SANDAG Legislative Program is approved by the Board of Directors on an annual basis. The program includes the agency's legislative policies and sets priorities for possible federal and state legislation and local activities for the calendar year. As part of the Legislative Program, the Board also approves a list of transportation projects for funding consideration during the annual federal appropriations process. The following goals focus on infrastructure projects on the U.S.-Mexico border:

- 1A - Work with federal, state, and local stakeholders to implement Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21), including appropriate funding levels, goods movement and border programs, transit investment and reforms, process improvements (including streamlined environmental processes), non-motorized transportation, and tribal transportation planning. (2007, 2012).
- 6A - Pursue efforts that address border transportation infrastructure needs consistent with the Regional Transportation Plan, Regional Comprehensive Plan, and California-Baja California Border Master Plan. (2012).

Most recently, on December 21, 2012, the Board of Directors approved Resolution No. 2013-12 requesting that various federal agencies, specifically, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the U.S. General Services Administration, consider joint efforts with local governments and private industry to finance and build new border crossing infrastructure. (December 21, 2012, Board of Directors meeting, Agenda [Item No. 6](#), at [sandag.org](http://sandag.org)).

## SANDAG Annual Binational Event

Every year since 1997, SANDAG has organized a Binational Conference to address a variety of border related issues. COBRO is tasked to support the preparation and organization of this annual event. These binational events have included a wide range of topics, from water and energy supply and crossborder climate change to border wait times and homeland security issues. The purpose of these events has been to bring together stakeholders from both sides of the border, to address these issues, seek out solutions, and identify opportunities. Outcomes from the annual events are discussed by COBRO and presented to the Borders Committee and the SANDAG Board of Directors as possible recommendations for follow up actions. More information on these events is available at [sandag.org/binationalevent](http://sandag.org/binationalevent).

## San Diego Regional Plan - Public Involvement Plan

The future growth and development of the San Diego region is currently guided by two primary long-range planning documents: the Regional Comprehensive Plan (RCP) adopted in 2004 and the 2050 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS) adopted in 2011. In May 2012, the SANDAG Board of Directors approved merging the RCP update with

the next RTP/SCS. Combining these two major planning efforts will give citizens a single, easily accessible document that includes an overall vision for the San Diego region and an implementation program to make that vision a reality. In addition, the consolidation will enhance public participation opportunities, as well as save staff time and resources. This new plan will include a White Paper focusing on binational issues.

A comprehensive and innovative draft Public Involvement Plan (PIP) to support the development of the regional plan has been released for a 30-day review and comment period through February 7, 2012. Among various public engagement techniques, the PIP includes a tribal consultation plan and a process to engage low-income and minority populations through a network of community-based organizations. Furthermore, the plan will include a series of public workshops, use of social media, visualizations, and other means for involving the public and receiving input. More information, including the summary from the regional plan public workshop held on October 19, 2012, is available at [sandag.org/regionalplan](http://sandag.org/regionalplan).

#### Otay Mesa - Mesa de Otay Binational Corridor Strategic Plan

The binational border planning vision found in the RCP is a key element of the Otay Mesa- Mesa de Otay Binational Corridor Strategic Plan (Strategic Plan). The RCP calls for the creation of a partnership with Mexico to address binational border planning issues with a focus on transportation and infrastructure, energy and water, homeland security, and the environment. Following this direction, the Strategic Plan was prepared to serve as a tool to achieve a more effective binational collaboration and planning between the San Diego region and Tijuana, Baja California. The Strategic Plan was approved by both the SANDAG Board of Directors and the City of Tijuana in 2007. Every year since 2007, SANDAG holds Joint Meetings of the Borders Committee, the Committee on Binational Regional Opportunities (COBRO), and the City of Tijuana to hear progress made on the Strategic Plan. For more information visit the project website at [sandag.org/otaymesa](http://sandag.org/otaymesa).

#### Future Otay Mesa East Port of Entry and State Route 11

SANDAG and Caltrans, along with a number of key local, state, and federal agencies in the United States and Mexico, are executing an aggressive plan to self-finance a new border crossing in the San Diego/Baja California region. Annually, \$54 billion worth of goods move across the region's borders, and delays regularly exceed two hours. To sustain vibrant and effective commercial cross border activities, this diverse group of partners is creating a new port of entry (POE) and connecting state highway.

The State Route 11 (SR 11)/Otay Mesa East POE project reached an important milestone in September 2012 when the Record of Decision (ROD) was issued by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for the project's Tier 2 Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) clearing the way for the project to proceed to construction once other necessary studies are completed and project funding is secured.

Segment 1 of the project is now moving forward to the design phase. Segment 1 design is scheduled for completion in mid-2013. Caltrans is also moving forward with the appraisals of

right-of-way needed for the acquisition process for Segment 1 of the project. Right-of-way certification is anticipated for completion in mid-2013 and the award of a construction contract is anticipated in July 2013.

Additionally, a Traffic & Revenue (T&R) Study for the toll facility must be developed as part of the project. This study, expected to be complete in early 2013, will provide an estimate of the revenue-generating capacity of the project, providing extensive data to the investment community detailing the financial feasibility of the project. For more information visit the project Web site at [sandag.org/sr11](http://sandag.org/sr11).

#### San Ysidro Intermodal Transportation Center Study

Planning is underway to redesign and expand the San Ysidro Intermodal Transportation Center (SYITC), which currently supports more than 22,000 daily transit boardings and arrivals. The San Diego Trolley and local buses provide public transit access to and from the border station.

SANDAG and the City of San Diego—in partnership with Caltrans, the Metropolitan Transit System (MTS), other agencies, and community members—have bigger plans than just improving efficiency and the transit customer experience. They are working to make the SYITC an iconic development and welcoming gateway to California that complements massive border crossing improvements underway. Done with care and significant community input, the project will provide economic benefits for the region as a whole. For project information and updates visit [sandag.org/syitc](http://sandag.org/syitc).

#### Virginia Avenue Intermodal Transportation Center Concept

Currently, the San Ysidro POE is undergoing a major expansion project, in three phases, to increase its capacity. As part of the project, in September 2012, the southbound pedestrian crossing was relocated to the eastern side of the POE, and a future new bi-directional pedestrian crossing facility is planned at Virginia Avenue. SANDAG, Caltrans, the City of San Diego, and MTS developed alternatives and presented to the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) a concept for new Intermodal Transportation Center (ITC) that would be located at Virginia Avenue. For more information on the Virginia Avenue ITC concept see the November 16, 2012, Board of Directors meeting, Agenda [Item No. 11](#) at [sandag.org](http://sandag.org).

#### San Ysidro Freight Rail Yard Improvement Project

This project will replace aging rail infrastructure, expand, and reconfigure the facility's existing footprint to increase freight capacity and efficiency. The improvements will provide more opportunities for cargo transfer and eliminate some truck trips on freeways in the region. This project will construct two new track extensions and reconfigure the tracks within the rail yard to provide additional storage capacity and the ability to switch rail cars outside of the constrained operating windows without interrupting the San Diego Trolley service operated by MTS. The project also will improve access and circulation by building a new truck access road; a new one-way, entrance-only driveway on East Beyer Boulevard; and more offloading areas within the rail yard. Additionally, the project will include drainage improvements to alleviate flooding and

sediment build-up. More information is available at [KeepSanDiegoMoving.com/SanYsidroRailYard](http://KeepSanDiegoMoving.com/SanYsidroRailYard).

### South Bay Bus Rapid Transit

The South Bay Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Project will offer passenger high-quality transit that is fast-frequent, and comfortable. The project will provide new upgraded vehicles and enhanced stations resulting in a premium transit service. The 12 stations' architectural design will reflect the surrounding community's character, and will serve major activity centers in downtown San Diego and the South Bay, including offices, shopping, recreational facilities, residential communities, and park-and-ride lots, as well as the Otay Mesa POE on the border with Mexico. The South Bay BRT is expected to go into service in mid-2015. More information is available at [sandag.org](http://sandag.org).

### Border Health Equity Transportation Study

The upcoming Border Health Equity Transportation Study, commencing in March 2013, will develop a model to bring together existing studies under the umbrella of public health in order to provide health outcomes analysis and recommendations to impact decision-making. The study will assess the health impacts and benefits of providing active transportation facilities and access to public transit to and from the San Ysidro border. It will also serve as a model for other border analyses and for jurisdictions with similar issues. Overall objectives of this project are: (1) Utilize the Health Impact Assessment (HIA) method to engage low-income, minority, youth, and other under-represented populations surrounding the San Ysidro border crossing on transportation related issues, (2) Capitalize on existing air quality, social equity, economics, travel time, and access to medical services research in order to identify health disparities and to mitigate impacts from existing projects in the study area, and (3) Integrate health considerations into the project decision-making process to highlight the benefits of active transportation and public transit enhancements on human and environmental health. SANDAG with the assistance of consultant services will perform this work and is anticipated to be completed by February 2015.

### **Border Projects that Gather Information from Partner Agencies**

#### INEGI 2010 Census Geodatabase

SANDAG worked with Tijuana's Metropolitan Planning Institute (IMPLAN Tijuana) to consolidate information contained in two INEGI (Mexico's National Institute of Statistics and Geographic Information) GIS datasets that contain geographic files that describe the location and attributes of civil infrastructure and administrative boundaries across zones in Tijuana, Tecate, and Playas de Rosarito, Baja California. Multiple files for every data category (type of infrastructure or boundary) across zones were merged into a single file (feature class) in a single geodatabase for ease of data management and use. Metadata (information describing the data) was added to each dataset and merged feature class. INEGI also provided two gridded elevation

datasets. One dataset represents the elevation of constructed surfaces and the other represents natural terrain only.

### San Diego – Baja California Border Crossings and Trade Statistics

Every year, COBRO agendas include summaries of border crossings and trade statistics at the San Diego – Baja California land POEs starting in 1998. Data is gathered from the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Research and Innovative Technology Administration (RITA), based on data from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), and is presented in two main categories: vehicles (private vehicles, buses, and trucks) and individuals (pedestrians and passengers in vehicles). For trade statistics the two main categories are trade carried by trucks and by rail. For more information on border crossings and trade statistics see the September 4, 2012, COBRO meeting, Agenda [Item No. 9](#) at sandag.org.

## Report on Ports of Entry Infrastructure Projects

The San Diego region has three land POEs: San Ysidro, Otay Mesa, and Tecate, while a fourth is planned at Otay Mesa East. The San Ysidro Land POE is the world's busiest international border crossing, while the Otay Mesa POE is the main commercial gateway for international trade between California and Mexico. This periodic update provides an overview of the existing conditions at these POEs and planned modernization and construction projects. Its brief synopsis is intended to serve as a quick reference for future points of discussion. Detailed information can be accessed through project lead agencies identified in this report.

### Border Wait Times

In 2006, SANDAG and Caltrans developed a model to Estimate Economic Impacts of Border Wait Times in the San Diego – Baja California POEs. This study was updated in 2007 and results are available at [sandag.org/bwt](http://sandag.org/bwt). Currently, SANDAG is working on a new set of heat maps of border wait times for the Otay Mesa and San Ysidro POEs passenger vehicle crossings, which would be updated monthly. The border wait time data is collected from the CBP Web site. This data will support SANDAG's modeling efforts on border crossings.

### Calendar of Events

SANDAG provides a list of upcoming relevant binational events included in the bi-monthly COBRO agenda. This is a standing item and is one of the few resources that provide a comprehensive list of monthly binational events announced in the border region. For more information on the calendar of binational events see COBRO meetings, Agenda Item No. 4 at [sandag.org](http://sandag.org).

## **Border Projects where SANDAG Participates or Contributes as Stakeholder**

### California - Baja California Border Master Plan (2008 & Update)

The California - Baja California Border Master Plan is a comprehensive binational effort designed to coordinate planning and delivery of projects at land POEs and transportation infrastructure serving those POEs. The California - Baja California Border Master Plan was commissioned by the U.S.-Mexico Joint Working Committee (JWC) to the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), and the Secretariat of Infrastructure and Urban Development of Baja California (SIDUE). The SANDAG Service Bureau serves as the consultant for the update of this project.

More information is available at:

<http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist11/departments/planning/pdfs/systplan/10-California-BajaCaliforniaBorderMasterPlanSeptember2008.pdf>

## Collaboration with Border Stakeholders

SANDAG staff participates at the U.S. GSA Community Representatives Committee (CRC) and the Government Liaison Group (GLG) for the San Ysidro POE Reconfiguration and Expansion Project. Staff also participates at meetings of the CBP Port Working Group and Cargo Working Group. Other meetings include participation on the Board of Directors of the South San Diego County Economic Development Council, and the Smart Border Coalition of the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce.

## IMPLAN Advisory Board and PEM

Since 2008, SANDAG participates as advisory member of the City of Tijuana Metropolitan Planning Institute (IMPLAN)'s Governing Board. In this role, SANDAG assisted in the preparation of the Tijuana, Tecate, and Playas de Rosarito Metropolitan Strategic Plan (PEM in Spanish), coordinating the binational work table. In 2013, IMPLAN's Governing Board will be addressing issues related to the second phase of the PEM.

## Binational Planning Contacts Guide

The Binational Planning Contacts Guide for the San Diego – Baja California Region consists of a list of local, state, federal, and binational groups, U.S. and Mexican Agencies, financial Institutions, and U.S. legislators. In preparing the Binational Planning Contacts Guide for the San Diego – Baja California Region, the key planning areas of the Borders Chapter described in the RCP were considered, including: access to jobs and housing; transportation; energy and water supply; environment; economic development; and homeland security.

## Bike to Work Day and Tijuaneando-en-BiCi

Organized by the SANDAG iCommute program and several sponsors, the San Diego Bike to Work Day offers, among several amenities and activities, pit stops - places where bicyclists can stop to reenergize while they are on the road. Since 2011, a pit stop was up in the San Ysidro Trolley Station to serve bikers in the area and those crossing the border. In the spirit of the Bike to Work Day celebration, the City of Tijuana also promotes bike mobility and healthier transportation on this same date through the program "Tijuaneando en BiCi" that in the past two years has included bike rides on different bike paths throughout the city, and a border crossing event at the San Ysidro POE.

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