

San Diego Association of Governments
COMMITTEE ON BINATIONAL REGIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

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AGENDA ITEM NO.: **5**

Action Requested: INFORMATION

OVERVIEW OF THE SAN DIEGO REGION INTERNATIONAL LAND
PORTS OF ENTRY

File Number 3400200

Introduction

The San Diego region has three land Ports of Entry (POEs): San Ysidro, Otay Mesa, and Tecate, while a fourth is planned at Otay Mesa East and a crossborder passenger connection to the Tijuana International Airport will start construction in the near future. The San Ysidro Land POE is known as the world's busiest international border crossing, while the Otay Mesa POE is the main commercial gateway for international trade between California and Mexico. The following report provides an overview of the existing conditions at these POEs and planned modernization and construction projects. This report is a brief synopsis and 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.

San Ysidro Land Port of Entry

The San Ysidro Land POE in San Diego County is a federal multi-modal inspection facility that provides service for pedestrians, passenger vehicles, buses, and freight rail. The San Ysidro POE currently has 15 pedestrian and 25 passenger vehicle lanes (currently, all vehicle lanes have double stacked inspection booths, except for three lanes which do not due to structural design requirements), including one bus lane. During construction, the POE operates a reduced number of inspection lanes, resulting in more than 17 booths due to the stacking of lanes. In 2012, the POE handled 11,481,951 passenger vehicles, 68,194 buses, and 8,134,479 pedestrian inspections in the northbound direction.

The San Ysidro POE handled 27.75 million border travelers traveling from Tijuana to San Diego in 2012. It is estimated that a similar number of crossings take place from San Diego to Tijuana, which means there were approximately 55.5 million crossings through the POE last year. The number of travelers almost equals that of the Los Angeles International Airport (LAX), which accommodated 63.6 million air passengers in 2012. In past years, the San Ysidro POE equaled or even surpassed LAX, but 2012 shows a decrease in the number of passengers crossing the border at San Ysidro.

The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) is the lead agency for the reconfiguration of the San Ysidro POE. This project calls for a new expanded northbound inspection facility, including primary booths, a secondary inspection area, administration space, and a pedestrian processing facility. Improvements to southbound capacity also are part of the project.

The project is planned to be built in three phases: Phase 1 includes northbound vehicle capacity improvements, the acquisition of required property for the phase, a new east-west pedestrian bridge, a new southbound pedestrian egress on the eastern side of the POE, and a new bi-directional pedestrian access on Virginia Avenue. Phase 2 will include the replacement or construction of new northbound pedestrian and administrative buildings, and Phase 3 will include construction of southbound roadways and facilities. When completed, the POE would increase its capacity from 24 northbound lanes to 34 northbound lanes. All lanes will have double stacked inspection booths, except for three which cannot due to structural requirements. The number of northbound pedestrian lanes will increase from 13 to an undetermined total of more than 20 lanes. In addition, there is a temporary connection of the I-5 with the El Chaparral POE on the Mexican side. When the realignment of I-5 is complete, it will terminate at Camino de la Plaza to provide direct access to Virginia Avenue on the U.S. side, and will increase the number of southbound vehicle lanes from six to 12. Both sides of the POE, eastern and western, will have bidirectional pedestrian access.

The total cost for this project is approximately \$732 million. Funding in the amount of \$34.2 million was approved in FY 2004 for site acquisition and preliminary design. Additional funding of approximately \$199 million was approved in FY 2008 (\$37.7 million for site acquisition and design and \$161.4 million for partial construction of phase 1), and \$58.9 million was approved for FY 2009 for the completion of the Phase 1 construction. An additional \$6.2 million of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds was approved for FY 2011 towards the completion of Phase 1 construction. President Barack Obama's proposed budget for FY 2014 includes \$226 million for the San Ysidro POE reconfiguration and expansion project. If approved, subsequent funding will be needed in future fiscal years to complete the project.

As part of Phase 1, the new east-west pedestrian bridge opened in early 2011 and the southbound pedestrian access was relocated to the east in late 2012 to allow vehicle access to Mexico's new facilities at El Chaparral, on the western side of the POE. The main part of Phase 1 will be completed by September 2014, and the new facility at Virginia Avenue, which is part of Phase 1, is estimated to be completed in summer of 2015.

Phase 2, which includes the construction of the pedestrian facilities and restoration of the Historic Customs House, and Phase 3, which involves the realignment of I-5 southbound lanes, are not yet scheduled as they are waiting to be funded.

Otay Mesa Land Port of Entry

The Otay Mesa Land POE in San Diego County is a federal multi-modal inspection facility that provides service for pedestrians, passenger vehicles, buses, and commercial vehicles. The Otay Mesa POE currently has six pedestrian and 12 passenger vehicle lanes, one bus lane, and 10 inbound commercial inspection booths and four exits.

The Otay Mesa POE is one of the ten busiest land POEs in the country and is the busiest commercial border crossing on the California-Baja California border. In 2012, the Otay Mesa POE handled 5,384,009 passenger vehicles (buses and private vehicles), 778,929 trucks, and 3,205,792 pedestrian

inspections in the northbound direction. Otay Mesa Commercial is the 2nd largest cargo facility along the U.S. southern border by volume (after Laredo and followed by El Paso.)

In April 2009, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) was awarded approximately \$21.3 million of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds for some initial Otay Mesa POE modernization projects. These funds were used to cover the cost of land acquisition and a portion of the design for the expansion project. The expansion project would make improvements to both commercial and non-commercial portions of the existing port. The Otay Mesa POE Modernization includes the expansion of the passenger vehicle crossing from 12 to 18 inbound primary inspection lanes, the use of the newly acquired 10.5 acre parcel immediately east of the commercial facility to accommodate four new commercial inspection booths, and the relocation of the existing hazardous waste truck crossing inspection facility located just west of the southbound vehicle crossing in Otay Mesa.

In July 2009, the U.S. GSA awarded the Architecture and Engineering design contract for the Otay Mesa POE Modernization project. This began a design phase that reached 60 percent completion before funds were depleted. Completion of the Port's design, Environmental Impact Statement, and construction are subject to the availability of funding that has not yet been authorized by Congress. The upgrades are expected to cost \$120 million.

Tecate Land Port of Entry

The Tecate Land POE in San Diego County is a multi-modal inspection facility that provides service for pedestrians, passenger vehicles, buses, commercial vehicles, and freight rail (the rail line crosses at Campo, located east of the POE). The Tecate POE currently has two passenger vehicle lanes, two pedestrian lanes, and one commercial vehicle lane. In 2012, the Port handled 773,757 northbound passenger vehicles, 43,245 northbound trucks, and 702,742 northbound pedestrian inspections.

Two rail projects (both in the conceptual planning stage) to modernize and double-stack the Desert Line have been proposed to increase the market potential of this route for international and interstate movement of goods. In Mexico, a new Cargo POE is planned on a five-hectare plot, expanding the cargo inspection facilities, as well as one new road and two roadway improvements are planned to facilitate traffic to and from the POE. The new road, Defensores Boulevard, is planned for completion in 2015. Otherwise, there are no mid- or long-term projects planned for this POE in the United States.

Otay Mesa East Port of Entry and State Route 11

SANDAG and Caltrans, in cooperation with U.S. GSA and other project stakeholders, are proposing to construct a new toll highway, State Route 11 (SR 11), the new Otay Mesa East POE, and a Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Facility (CVEF). Local, regional, and binational land use studies have identified the eastern side of Otay Mesa as the preferred general location for the Otay Mesa East POE, and a corresponding POE site has been identified on the Mexican side of the border. The proposed Otay Mesa East POE will be located approximately two miles east of the existing Otay Mesa POE and would be the fourth land border crossing along the San Diego region's border with Baja California (the San Diego-Tijuana Airport Cross-Border Facility is considered as a hybrid port of entry).

The 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. The project has been split into three segments for implementation phasing and expedited project delivery: Segment 1 consists of the construction of the SR 905/SR 11 freeway-to-freeway connectors; Segment 2 includes the construction of SR 11 and the Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Facility, and Segment 3 is the construction of the Port of Entry. Segment 1 design and right-of-way certification were completed in early 2013. The award of a construction contract for Segment 1 is anticipated in late fall 2013.

SANDAG and Caltrans are working jointly to develop a financial strategy to build the SR 11/Otay Mesa East POE project. SANDAG and Caltrans have engaged Barclay's Capital as the Senior Investment Underwriters and Public Financial Management (PFM) to assist with bond placement and other elements of the project financing. SANDAG and Caltrans are also coordinating with Mexico to conduct a binational investment grade Traffic and Revenue Study (T&R) for the project. The construction, right-of-way, and other support costs are estimated at approximately \$750 million, and are to be funded through tolls, fees, and other revenues, such as California's Proposition 1B Trade Corridors Improvement Fund. SR 11 and the POE are anticipated to be open to traffic in December 2017.

San Diego-Tijuana Airport Cross-Border Facility

The San Diego-Tijuana Airport Cross-Border Facility (CBF) is a project led by a public-private partnership and would enable ticketed airline passengers who pay a toll to travel between Mexico's Tijuana International Airport (TIJ) and San Diego, California, via an enclosed, elevated pedestrian bridge. The CBF will consist of a main building on the U.S. side of the border housing U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) inspection facilities along with shops and services to accommodate travelers; an approximately 525-foot pedestrian bridge from the main building on the U.S. side connecting into TIJ's passenger terminal on the Mexican side; and parking facilities and areas for car rentals and potentially bus service on the U.S. side. The CBF is expected to serve 2 million passengers annually, a number that is forecasted to increase to 4.9 million by 2030.

In 2008, in an effort to advance the CBF, a private investment group called the Otay-Tijuana Venture, LLC, purchased 52 acres of undeveloped industrial land in Otay Mesa to develop the U.S. side of the crossborder airport terminal project. Its intent is to build a full-service crossborder passenger facility.

The following summarizes the latest project developments:

- Approval of the Presidential Permit from the U.S. Department of State was granted on August 4, 2010.
- The City of San Diego City Council approved this project on January 10, 2012.
- The project developer (Otay-Tijuana Venture, LLC.) anticipates that the CBF Phase 1 program will be under construction by the end of 2013 with an anticipated opening in late 2014.

Next Steps

Project development will be monitored and periodic updates will be provided as needed.

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