

Position Paper

SAN YSIDRO SMART BORDER COALITION

A voluntary group of key leaders and stakeholders in the immediate region of the San Ysidro Port of Entry

The San Ysidro Port of Entry (SYPOE) is the busiest land border in the World – where 130,000 people cross *each day*, generating over \$3 billion to the San Diego regional economy. **In fact, one of every ten persons entering the US through any point comes through the SYPOE.** An estimated **US\$6 billion** in gross output were **lost** in 2005 between traffic congestion and border wait times at San Diego land port of entries, resulting in the sacrifice of **51,325 jobs**.¹ Crossings at the SYPOE are estimated to increase over 50% by 2020. Reconfiguration of the SYPOE is an immediate must.

The reconfiguration project of the SYPOE offers an unparalleled opportunity to create a showcase of the integration of security, commerce and community; and set precedence for the rehabilitation and construction of land ports of entry throughout our Nation. San Ysidro must have a “Port of the Future” – including and accommodating commerce and the community of San Ysidro, especially pre-existing and location dependent businesses. While efficiently maximizing our country’s security, a successful reconfiguration will bring ease of use, pride, and economic sustainability to the areas immediately adjacent to the border crossings, as well as improve the overall economic success of the region. Conversely, an ill-conceived border – a single-service security compound, will be extremely deleterious for the region. It would be an enormous obstacle for users, it will cripple local and regional commerce, it will make nearby communities unsustainable and force them into position of permanent and perpetual need. It is also in America’s best interest to ensure those borders so close and heavily used by our neighbors are efficient and user-friendly as to entice their best effort in developing or redeveloping their own border facilities and security.

Inclusionary Concept

Border reconfiguration, in addition to security needs, **must** include border users – pedestrian and vehicular, the commercial and/or business entities whose very lifeline *is* the border, and the community in which the POE is situated. The POE does not singularly affect its adjacent area, but is an economic engine driving the region of San Diego and the State of California. The end-result of the border reconfiguration will also have national and bi-national implications. It will have political, economic, and environmental impacts, as well as effects to human rights and respect. Therefore, the impacted entities must be consulted and included in the designing and vetting of any reconfiguration plans.

Design

The design of the SYPOE must fully embrace functional diversity. While the identification, inspection and crossing of people and goods is the primary function of the POE, the port can and must serve many functions. The POE should offer users a secure and friendly crossing amidst a pleasant, environmentally tranquil setting and a commercially vibrant and diverse locale. The aforementioned aspects must be a fundamental part of the reconfiguration design, and not left as collateral requirements forced on the community and/or local governments. This will be achieved by immediately integrating operational interests with opportunities for existing, and even new, commerce **within** the border crossing facilities.

Long Term (overall project requirements):

1. CBP and GSA shall use the anticipated FY 2008 project funding of \$37.7 million, in addition to any other monies allotted for the subject project to **complete** design plans for the SYPOE. This design shall be immediately made available to the San Ysidro Smart Border Coalition; and
2. The San Ysidro Smart Border Coalition requests 60 days from the submission of the CBP/GSA design for public input, before any further promulgation by GSA of said designs; and
3. Design of the SYPOE must include and accommodate commerce and the community of San Ysidro, especially pre-existing and location dependent businesses; and
4. CBP employee parking lots shall only be allowed if underground or are within the existing footprint of SYPOE operation buildings. Should it be budgetarily beneficial, alternative means for CBP employees to arrive at their stations must be further explored and factored into the budget; and
5. Routes for returning to northbound lanes from the southbound lanes, as well as routes for emergency vehicle access must also be provided and factored into the project's design and budget; and
6. All appropriate studies regarding traffic mobility throughout San Ysidro must be considered in the SYPOE reconfiguration – not only for project funding, but to ensure for seamless integration. These include but are not limited to those conducted by SANDAG, Caltrans and the City of San Diego; and
7. CBP and GSA shall coordinate design, planning and mobility implications of the SYPOE with appropriate Mexican officials.

Short Term – (Steps for immediate action):

1. The San Ysidro Smart Border Coalition (SYSBC) fervently requests an official focus within the structure of the US GSA for border stations projects – separate from personnel designated to work on courthouse projects. These are two very different projects requiring very different attention, resources and personnel. The creation of a border stations program will facilitate resolution of all issues herein scribed ; and
2. We respectfully request changes immediately be made to GSA policy, guidelines, design guides and federal building fund allowances permitting the inclusion of private commerce within border facilities – to include but not be limited to authorizing GSA the ability to create space within border facilities for private rental, to charge rents to private companies, lease from private companies and coexist with private companies within same facilities; and
3. The SYSBC requests CBP conclude studies as to the efficiency of “double-stacking” – the placement of two inspection booths (also known as Wal-Mart scheme) in SYPOE lanes, currently being tested on lane #5. We further request study results be made available to the San Ysidro Smart Border Coalition within 10 calendar days of their conclusion; and
4. We request CBP concurrently conduct design feasibility and cost estimates for placement of the maximum number of “stacked booths” throughout the 24 northbound vehicle lanes at the SYPOE. These “stacked booths” shall be temporary, as to maintain costs for such addition at a minimum, in light of a larger reconfiguration in the future; and
5. Should “double-stacking” studies conclude a decrease of border-crossing wait times, we respectfully request the US government immediately make available the full and necessary funds, and CBP personnel, to add temporary “stacked booths” to the maximum possible number of SYPOE lanes; and

