

## CITY COUNCIL REPORT

**DATE:** December 3, 2019

**TO:** Mayor and Councilmembers

**FROM:** Dawn Prince, Deputy City Manager

**CC:** Jerene Watson, City Manager; Leadership Team

**SUBJECT: Port of Entry tour of San Ysidro on November 22, 2019**

This report is to provide an update to all of City Council since not everyone was able to attend the San Ysidro Port of Entry Tour on November 22, 2019.

### **DISCUSSION:**

Councilmembers Morales and Shelton, Luis Ramirez and Corrine Ray and I toured the San Ysidro Port in San Diego to gain lessons learned from their port experiences. This is the 4<sup>th</sup> and final port we have planned to tour before meeting with the GSA again in January.

The San Diego area has several ports of entry, including a pedestrian only port, called the Cross-Border Xpress, which connects an Airport Terminal in San Diego directly to the Tijuana International airport, to facilitate air travel to various Mexican and other destinations. The largest and busiest of the Ports in San Diego is the Port at San Ysidro which we spent quite a bit of time touring, and which gets upwards of 100,000 crossers a day. During the tour, we were escorted through the different areas to witness the flow of traffic and pedestrians and to talk about what was working and what recommendations they have for us as we create our port. We toured the pedestrian queuing area, the northbound traffic lanes set-up area, the first and second level screening areas, and the CBP facility.

Here are ideas we learned relative to our new port design:

- It is imperative to work collaboratively with Mexico on the design of their lane queuing before the traffic gets to the port to minimize any bottle necks and help keep border crossing times down.
- Lanes need to be flexible to allow traffic to flow both ways when the crossings are particularly heavy one way or the other
- Consider the future. When designing the port, including any infrastructure, be sure to plan for adding more lanes to accommodate for your border crossing numbers as they grow.
- Wait times need to be evaluated and corrected as soon as possible as they could interfere with the volume of commercial traffic that choose to use our port.
- There is a need to consider the experience of the crossers in the design of the port. Shading and sufficiently designed waiting areas are important.

- There is also a large amount of produce and flowers being brought in from international locations which both require a significant port inspection set-up and partner business network to ensure these imports remain viable.

During our visit we also learned that due to long wait times at the ports in the area, they are looking to create an additional port just east of Otay Mesa which will have varying tolls based on wait times and volume of crossers. The hope is to drive traffic to the Otay Mesa East port by making it less expensive to cross there during peak busy times.

In addition to visiting the port and learning about port operations, we also had the opportunity to receive presentations and gain insight from the San Diego Economic Development staff, the South County Economic Development Council, the San Diego Tourism Authority, and the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce. During the presentations and conversations, we learned about their regional efforts being made to highlight/support/create a draw for the entire region.

Their largest industry is Tourism, with Audio Video, Hardware and Medical Equipment manufacturing, and Aviation as some of the other important industries. The drone industry is also a growing industry for them. Also discussed was their major focus on bi-national business and bi-national education. Particularly fascinating related to bi-national education are the 9 cross-border agreements for higher education and their current project to create a bi-national/ multi-university Higher education campus in Chula Vista.

#### **RECOMMENDATION / CONCLUSION:**

This report is for information and to be used with the Douglas Port of Entry Technical Team in preparation for our next meetings with GSA.