

Executive Summary

City of Douglas officials recently took a tour of various Commercial Land Ports of Entry along the U.S. – Mexico border in Texas, Arizona, and California. The tours were hosted by the cities of El Paso, Calexico, San Luis, and San Ysidro. The purpose for the port of entry tours was to study lessons learned during initial construction of each port as well as to gauge a better understanding of best operational practices for optimal efficiency.

The items below aim to serve as a guide when considering the infrastructure needs for this project.

Port Infrastructure

- CBP has previously stressed that future expansion of the port must be taken into consideration during the planning phase.
 - San Ysidro Port of Entry is limited to 50 acres which poses a challenge to expansion.
 - San Luis and Calexico commercial LPOEs sit on 80+ acres of land, leaving room for expansion if needed.
- Building the port right at the international boundary restricts the ability to add new prescreening infrastructure to the inspection process.
- San Ysidro POE is completely self-sufficient in terms of natural resources needed for operation.
 - Solar, wind and water sources are used for energy consumption
 - Water treatment is all on-site
- Reversible lanes and multipurpose lanes help increase the throughput capacity of the port during peak hours.
- Convenient employee parking was emphasized as extremely important.
- Need to be conscious of bottlenecks that may exist as traffic approaches and leaves the port.
- Items were recommended to be considered when designing and building a new port of entry:
 - Adequate lighting for surveillance
 - Ensuring emergency vehicles have the proper entry and exit access within the port
 - Having sufficient servers and broadband for the current and future technological needs for port operations
 - Throughput capacity that allows for adequate lanes and space that minimizes the creation of bottlenecks for entry and exit is key to efficient processing
- GSA and CBP have design and construction standards and requirements for all land ports of entry.
- POE infrastructure amenities are limited by funding constraints.

Challenges

The following challenges were identified as it relates to constructing a port of entry and economic development.

- Limited wastewater capacity inhibits expansion.

- Lack of availability of natural gas poses a threat to industrial investment.
- More development is needed around the port like hotels and gas stations as well as industrial, light industrial, commercial, and residential developments.
- The need for state-of-the-art infrastructure on the ground to recruit companies
- Not developing on the land around the POE could potentially make Douglas a pass-through as exhibited in Calexico.

Themes and Observations

These are general areas that deserve to be considered as planning is progressing on the new port of entry and the modernization of the existing port of entry in Douglas.

- Ports need to be designed with the possibility of future expansions.
- Affordable housing for CBP employees and the community is essential in any long-term economic development strategy.
- Infrastructure is key to recruiting and economic development.
- Quality of life is a big consideration for recruitment efforts.
- Small issues such as turning radius can impact the efficiency of commercial operation at the POE.
- Pedestrian pick up and drop off areas require attention from both safety and congestion.
- Transportation access is critical to industrial/manufacturing operations and tourism.