



Through the National Endowment for the Arts Creativity Grant that Casa Familiar received, the agency organized and hosted:

- San Ysidro Sin Limites/Unlimited Community Workshop and presented the four GSA Options to the community for discussion.
- A national panel of architects, urban planners and landscape architects as well as a transportation expert.
- This presentation is the summary of the work which included: a personal border crossing experience by auto, public transportation, or pedestrian experience; 2 community input sessions one from residents the other from businesses; an 8-hour long discussion & work session; and a presentation of both the missed opportunities and the possibilities.



## BORDER DIALOGUES

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### PANEL STATEMENT #1



*The GSA base diagrams could be substantially improved, while maintaining their objectives for higher security and traffic capacity, these diagrams could DO many other things better.*

The panel reviewed the four options by the GSA.

Their conclusion was that while they understood that the goals of the SY Border Expansion Project revolved around security & traffic capacity, they felt that all of the options could be substantially improved.



## BORDER DIALOGUES

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### PANEL STATEMENT #2



*The panel discussed four strategic categories to illustrate the issues that these diagrams do not address.*

- A. Missed Opportunities*
- B. Movement*
- C. Environment*
- D. Community/Regional Impact*

So, from the discussions and dialogues, bouncing ideas back and forth, challenging concepts and design decisions as well as reminding each other of the testimony from the residents and businesses, the panel developed four different issues that the panel thought had not been sufficiently addressed in the GSA Options.

- The notion of MISSED OPPORTUNITIES that could have been looked at.
- In particular to that were issues relating to MOVEMENT: multi-modal movement; pedestrian movement and alternate modes of transportation and the trolley movement.
- The panel also felt that the issues relating to ENVIRONMENT had not been adequately addressed: wide range of issues relating to landscape, relating to air quality and water quality.
- Finally the IMPACTS that all the diagrams produce really needed another look. Community impacts, regional impacts, bi-national impacts. It came down to asking questions about the scale of the project and what, for example, is the impact area of the traffic?



## BORDER DIALOGUES

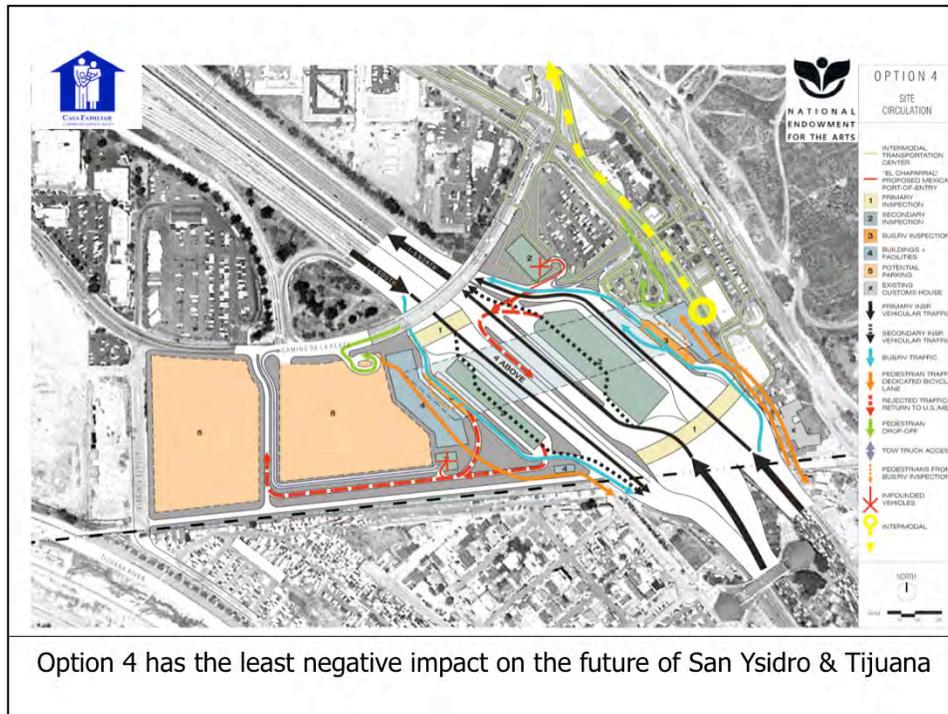
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### MISSED OPPORTUNITIES



- *Options do not enhance what is special about this place: the potential of being the LARGEST BI-NATIONAL community in the world*
- *Protect the interests of San Ysidro residents*
- *In the context of this potential, real estate is so valuable that it does not make sense to cover it with surface parking*
- *This could be a model for other border regions*
- *These proposals fail to promote the possibility for a Bi-National planning strategy*
- *Region interests VS. National Interests*
- *Create Bi-National Coalitions working with Tijuana*
- *Cross-border shared infrastructure*

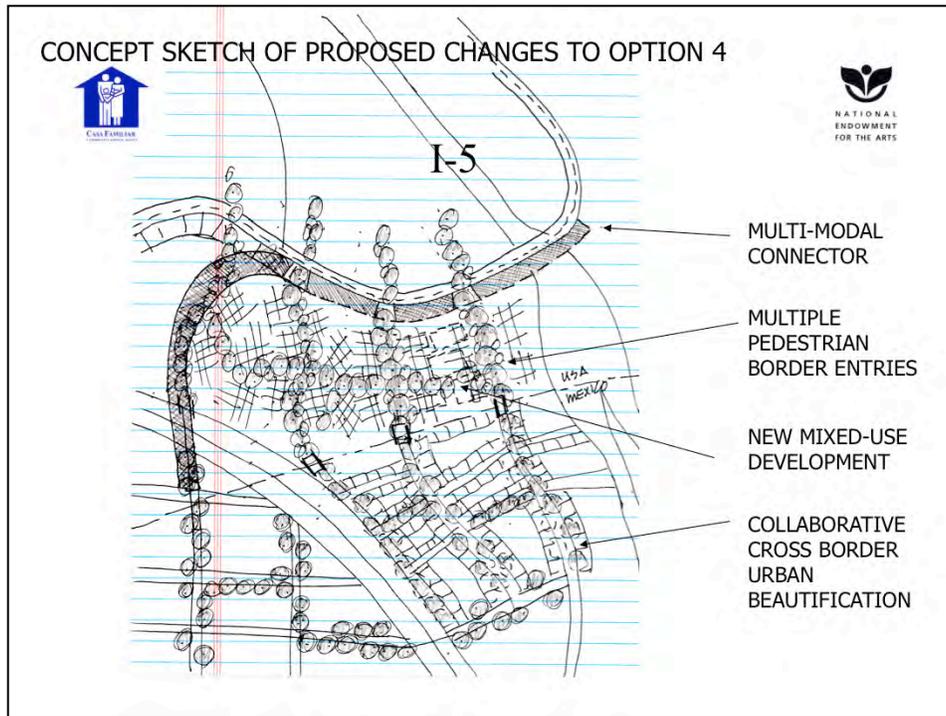
1. This is an enormously important place, not just a border crossing issue and therefore, enormously important project and that the project needs to understand that it is the largest border crossing in the world and not only look at the security and tech. questions but also look at the international and community questions.
2. Take time and note what the residents had to say. They called it a long session with the residents of the community, but one that we felt was necessary for them to hear. They heard from residents of San Ysidro, businesses of San Ysidro and other residents from the San Diego area. They heard that this community feels that they have been forgotten community. That it has always been in the way between San Diego and Tijuana and has always been treated like it's in the way. Heard that people just want to get through San Ysidro and unfortunately, people that just want to get through San Ysidro has a profound impact on San Ysidro and that so far it's mostly been negative. We heard that people want to get treated with dignity at the border and in their community. We heard from people with disabilities and that they have special concerns and their being treated with dignity extended to a lot of physical issues like access and surface treatments. We also heard that in addition to the inconvenience of long lines for getting to the United States or Mexico, those are especially magnified for the residents of the area who cross on a daily basis and SUFFER on a daily basis in their ability to get through. We heard issues of security and safety, and not just national security and national safety, but personal security and personal safety. We heard from businesses that there are substantial impacts that these types of projects have on their livelihood and that those need to be taken into account very carefully. Then finally we heard from one resident in the end who really summed up the feeling of most of the morning and that was that there really needs to be ONE San Ysidro. That a lot of things have happened to this community historically, the freeways, this port of entry, among other things have destroyed and divided this community up into pieces. That foremost what has to happen with this project is to use the opportunity to re-unite the community rather than further dissect it.
3. In reviewing the four alternatives, the panel was struck by the fact that the light brown areas should be the most valuable real estate in the world and that currently propose surface parking lots. Just from a land value point of view it is a "Silly" way to use such a valuable resource.
4. Also understood that this isn't the only border crossing in the world and that what happens here in San Ysidro-Tijuana will affect other decisions along the border all the way to Brownsville and that when one is in the business of creating a model for a border crossing, one also has the responsibility for making sure the model is as good as it can be. Because it is likely to be repeated many times and if it is a mistake that is to be repeated many times then it will become a very serious problem.
5. Also discussed some detail, the importance of Bi-National strategies, bi-national meaning looking really at both communities that there are complex issues affecting communities that can be studied one at a time. Strategy cannot be at the level of the higher echelons of government because the real problems are down in the infrastructure of those communities. The planning strategy has to happen at the level of people who understand the infrastructure of those communities, not just at the political or policy making levels.
6. Also discussed issues of Regional Interests VS National Interests. We understand that we live in a post-9/11 time and understand what the national interest are and that they are very important and very difficult, but this is also a regional facility affecting the creating San Diego Tijuana Area. Those Regional interest are sometimes in conflict with some of the security and the National safety issues and that those conflicts need to be studied carefully and not simply trumped by the national safety concerns.
7. There needs to be close cooperation in coalition with Tijuana, not just at the government level, not just at the level of



After the group reviewed the four options and also a community iteration to just look at the things that were presented and to look at which option presented the most positive implications on this border crossing. Unanimously it was decided that Option 4 had the least negative impact on the area.

The other options began to segregate what happens between the Camino de la Plaza overpass and Tijuana, between the parts of the community by San Ysidro Boulevard and communities on the other side of I-5.

The strategy of Option 4 to have the South Bound facility at the edge, liberates in many ways the possibility for connectivity not only across the east-west axis but also potential connectivity for the north-south axis.



We began with a conceptual sketch.

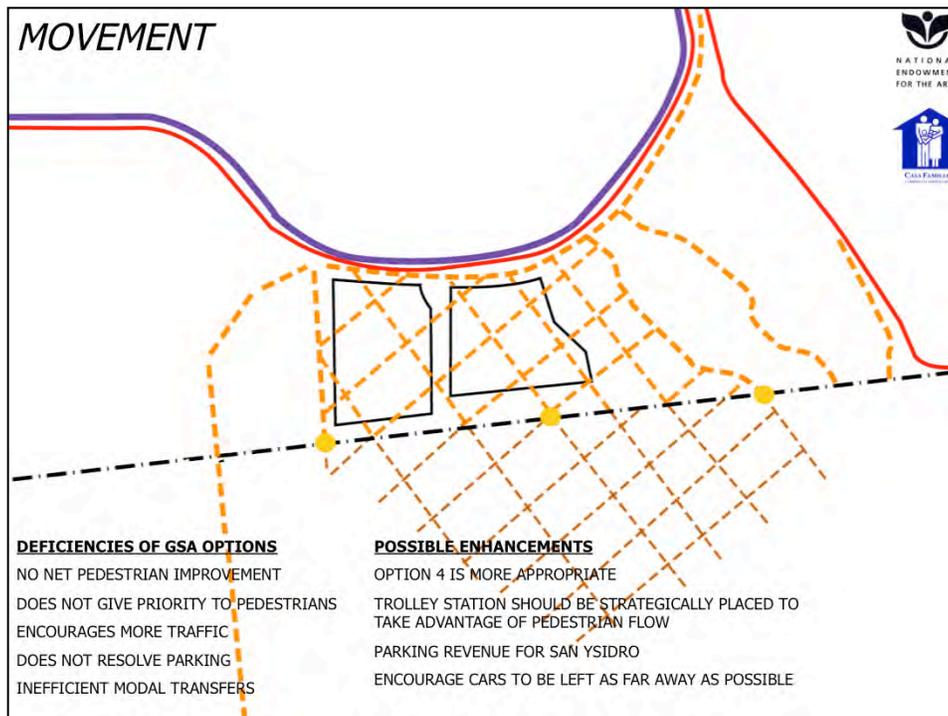
I-5

Over pass

US-Mexico border

The sketch contains four basic ideas

1. The idea of creating a multi-modal connector. This urban infrastructure is intended to combine the trolley, the road and pedestrian activity with a linear building that could be a mixed use type of condition, with a raised overpass, similar as it is now and gives a prospect over the border area and also allows for occupying the space under and on the other side of the overpass. Strategy one seeks to bridge the condition that now is very under-utilized and make it easier to get through and make it easier to make a connection to the heart of Tijuana.
2. The second strategy was the idea of a few pedestrian portals to promote pedestrian activity which is much better for the economy, is better for the environment and might actually become one of the infrastructure pieces which streamlines the passage back and forth and continues into Tijuana. The thing to remember is that this is not a wall, that we are talking about 100,000 people daily moving through and that this is a very permeable area as a border. And in many ways we don't think this should be designed as a wall but more as a cohesive piece of fabric. Obviously the border will still be there, but the portals would be placed in strategic locations that tie into the existing pedestrian passageways of Tijuana. This is a more pedestrian scale environment which offers potential for shade and landscape.
3. Between the pedestrian networks would be more opportunities for mixed-use developments. We are not planning what that is, what we are trying to say with the conceptual diagram is that this could happen more organically. There may be some government offices, there may be some mixed-use developments, there may be a whole variety of developments that take advantage of the space on both sides of the overpass.
4. These developments could begin cross border collaborative with Tijuana. The improved landscape and street elements are things that Tijuana might also implement to beautify their northern quarter



This is Series of very simple diagrams of the three basic ideas of the way in which we are proposing Option 4 be adapted.

The first has to do with movement and really looking at movement and where there is a need to be met at the present time rather than just a way to get through.

There are two components to this first is the idea that the trolley system not merely terminate here but to allow the system to come across in tandem with the vehicular overpass.

Coming around here In order to do two things

one to tie the two areas separated by I-5 and provide much better access to this other shopping

At the same time by providing possible stops on this side this begins to suggest the first of the pedestrian border crossings mentioned earlier.

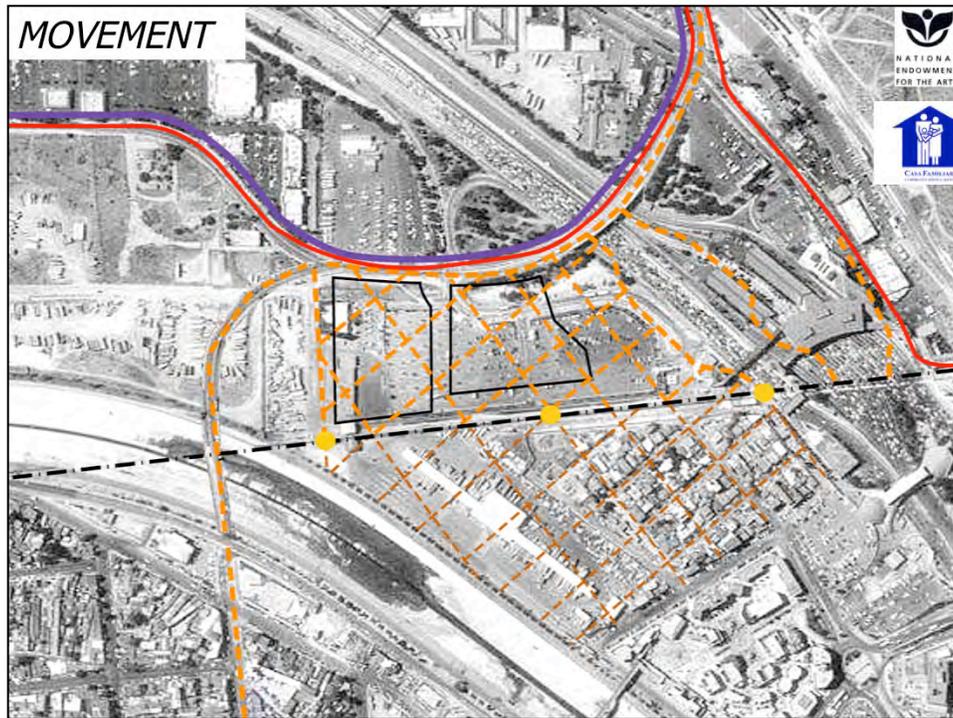
This helps to tie closer to the center of Tijuana

In Addition to public transportation there is still vehicular as well as pedestrian circulation as well and also retail development in what was defined as an urban connector that extends the activity of San Ysidro Boulevard.

The second idea which is very important urbanistically as well as environmentally is to provide multiple pedestrian points of crossing. This will not only provide a greater ability in the way to get through but, more choices in the way that people get across as pedestrians. There may be encouragement for people to be dropped off and cross on foot or on bicycle and not be entirely dependant on vehicular transportation.

So what we are suggesting in a conceptual way that there be two or possible three pedestrian crossing points in the two directions that would be used in tandem with a more intensive commercial development where right now the surface parking lots are called for with the assumption being that there would be two parking structures flanking the facility which will show up on a later slide.

Lastly in an ideal situation we are also calling for an extension of the McDonalds' spur to allow possible transfers to the Tijuana Airport



This is showing the overlay over the area.

You can see the overpass would be activated and suggestions for where the pedestrian crossings could happen.



The second component we looked at was Environment.

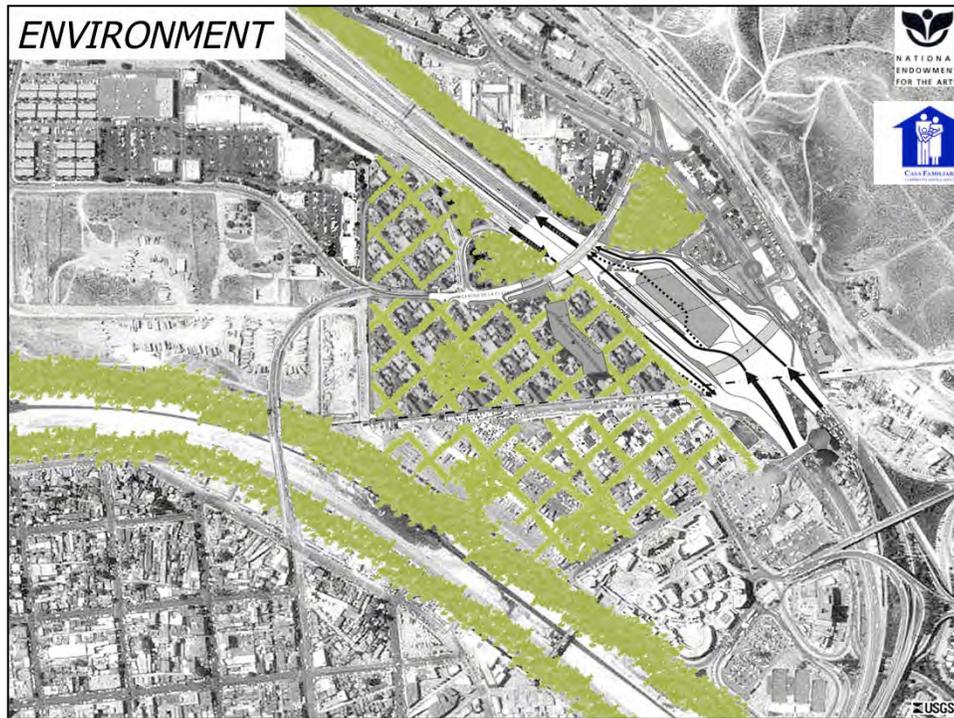
Looking at the four proposed options we were very concerned about the issues around environmental impacts looking at the large parking lots and traffic impacts and notions of heat island effects and air quality.

Is there a way to begin to develop a strategy that could reinforce some of the pedestrian enhancements and also help environmentally.

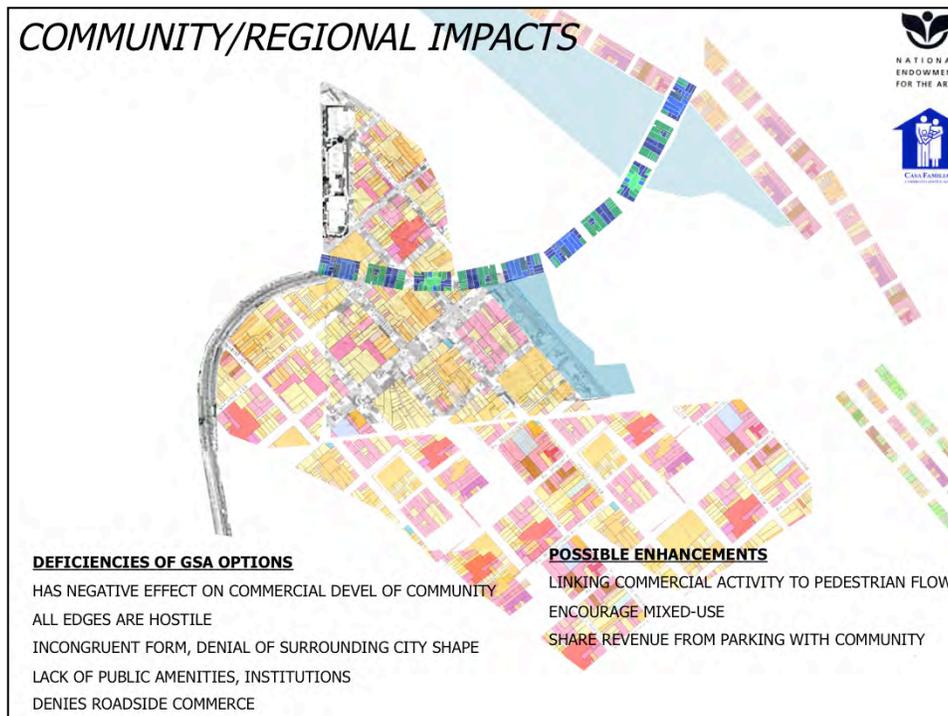
The development should look at providing areas for ground water percolation, landscaping to provide shade and Plant life that could help with oxygen production.

The strategy is fairly simple that these pedestrian networks on both sides would employ landscaping strategy that could begin to provide shade. This is intended to be the kind of infrastructure that would then allow for other redevelopment to occur.

Also to propose to improve the river area on both sides and begin to help setup beautification strategies to set up the cross border collaboration.



Here it is in the context. Again this is the conceptual idea for looking around the area on how to connect where people are coming from and where they are going. You can see the suggestion also of small public open spaces and improvements along the highway buffers.



The third idea which has to do with community and regional impacts and the encouragement of more commercial development for the adjacent San Ysidro-Tijuana area.

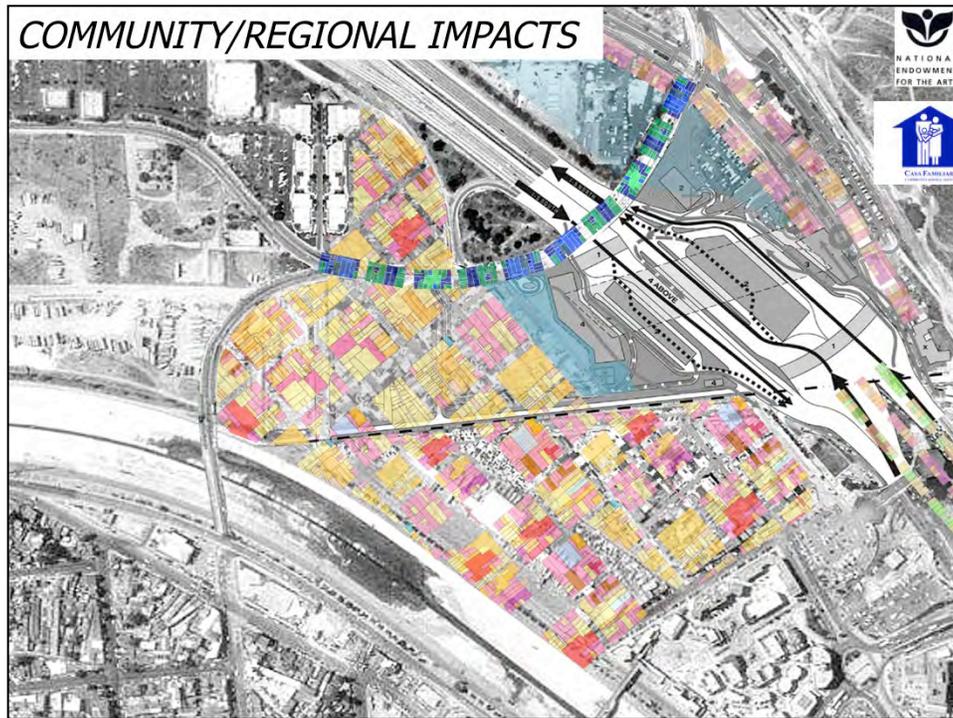
The surface parking lots take up a lot of area that could be used as a valuable tax base for the San Ysidro Redevelopment Project Area and also what seems to exist both from a revenue standpoint as well as from an urbanistic standpoint is that this is prime territory to be taken advantage of for a mixed-use nature.

That would in the way shown here, would mimic or continue the pattern and scale of what happens on the Tijuana side.

You can see the mixed use development could continue onto the other side of Camino de la Plaza as well as a mixed use component that parallels the overpass along Camino de la Plaza.

You can see that the intent is to tie, or stitch together not only from east to west, but also in some relation to Tijuana, the possible development that could occur in the project area with possible redevelopment that could happen along San Ysidro Boulevard. So in other words as opposed to right now where the project concretizes and creates another separation, we on the other hand are proposing that the project brings opportunity to tie these two things closer together creating a more powerful statement of economic development as well as a more powerful social statement and that this is not necessarily at odds with national safety concerns.

Also, shown in blue are the areas of parking garages that were mentioned before. These would flank the border facility and private as well as public parking could be designated in these areas.



Again this is simply the overlay on the aerial showing a possible context.

This is not a finished process, but it is a good time to discuss the analysis of the scope of the project.

We saw four alternatives as well as a fifth community alternative and realized that we are dangerously close to the time when one of these options will be locked in and then there will be a one way process and these issues will never get looked at again.

There are bunch of issues that are extremely important that should be part of this project that are not yet part of this project and that this is absolutely the time when the dialogue has to remain open.

We understand that GSA has a job to do, especially with the security issues that have arisen over the past couple of years, but that does not excuse the issues that are important to folks and we don't have all of the answers yet.

The panel reviewed the four GSA Options as well as a community option and started from there but found that there were other issues that were not being expressed clearly and that there were things we wanted to add.

So what we are proposing today is the next iteration of the discussion of this project.



Border Dialogues  
Casa Familiar & the National Endowment for the Arts



**THANK YOU!**  
**GRACIAS!**