

California-Baja California Border Resiliency Plan (BRP)

Public Outreach and Engagement Strategy

August 2025

DRAFT



Situation Analysis

Since 2008, the state of California and the Mexican state of Baja California have partnered to develop and periodically update the California-Baja California Border Master Plan (BMP). The BMP is a binational effort to coordinate the planning and delivery of projects at land ports of entry and the transportation infrastructure serving them. Historically, the BMP has served as a guiding document supporting multi-agency and binational coordination on border transportation infrastructure. The current BMP, updated in 2021, focuses on mobility – the movement of people and goods – and the international collaboration required to prioritize and advance transportation infrastructure to and from the land ports of entry.

While innovative and progressive in its approach, the current BMP does not fully address the ambitious goals and priorities outlined in the 2021 California Climate Adaptation Strategy, including addressing the impacts of climate change. Climate stressors such as wildfires, floods, severe storms, and heat waves are already impacting the transportation system in the California-Baja California border region. For example, rising temperatures and flooding pose threats to roadway infrastructure, including increased susceptibility to rutting, washout, or other failures.

This region is also home to communities that have been historically overburdened with climate pollution and have fewer resources to cope with these impacts. Climate change threatens existing transportation infrastructure and public health and exacerbates the existing air quality challenges facing these communities, with an increased risk of drought-fueled dust storms, smoke from wildfires, and ozone formation in the hot, stagnant air common during heat waves. Climate-driven flooding, whether from sea level rise or more extreme precipitation events, is particularly detrimental to water quality in this area.

Given the significant environmental injustices facing these communities and the transportation infrastructure that they depend on, SANDAG is currently working to develop a California – Baja California Border Resiliency Plan (BRP) that will assess the climate stressors and impacts and identify adaptation strategies to protect transportation infrastructure and the people who depend on it.

The study area includes ten miles to the north and south of the international border, from the Pacific Ocean east to the California-Arizona state border. Taking a similar approach to partnership development, engagement with community partners, and project coordination implemented during the development of the 2021 BMP, the BRP will identify climate impacts to the multimodal transportation system both in the short and long term and recommend strategies, projects, and policies that will help the transportation system better adapt to climate change stressors. The proposed Plan would include a roadmap for its implementation and could be used by Caltrans in their future efforts to update the 2021 BMP and Environmental Master Plan.

A public outreach and engagement strategy to help inform and engage the public in the development of the BRP is outlined below. This plan should serve as a living document that will be updated and built upon as the project progresses.

Outreach Goals

1. Raise awareness about the California-Baja California BRP as a roadmap for future crossborder climate adaptation solutions.
2. Gather feedback from a diverse and representative range of individuals, organizations, agencies, and local governments in the border region.
3. Proactively engage communities in the U.S. and Mexico with, meaningful opportunities to participate in the public planning process.
4. Foster collaborative relationships with partner agencies to create a unified and coordinated approach to advancing the project.
5. Reinforce commitment to improving the environment and overall quality of life for residents in the California-Baja California region.

Key Audiences

Developing the California-Baja California BRP will require robust input from a range of community partners to better understand lived experiences and the unique climate stressors, vulnerabilities, and challenges affecting those who live, work, and play in the area. This input will help inform climate adaptation strategies and will also create buy-in from important groups and residents. Community groups that should be engaged include, but are not limited to, the following:

Cities, Counties, and Consulates

- City of San Diego
- City of Imperial Beach
- City of Chula Vista
- City of Coronado
- City of National City
- City of El Centro
- City of Holtville
- City of Calexico
- County of San Diego
- County of Imperial
- City of Tijuana
- City of Playas de Rosarito
- City of Tecate
- City of Mexicali
- Consulate General of Mexico – Ministry of Foreign Affairs (SRE)
- Consulate General of the United States; Tijuana, Mexico

Environment

- Environmental Health Coalition
- Comité Cívico del Valle
- Imperial County Air Pollution Control District

- San Diego County Air Pollution Control District
- California Coalition for Clean Air
- California Air Resources Board (CARB)
- San Diego Pediatricians for Clean Air
- San Diego Regional Climate Collaborative
- Climate Action Campaign Public Health Advisory Council
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- Tijuana River National Estuarine Research
- National Wildlife Refuge
- Secretariat of the Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT)
- Secretariat of Agrarian, Territorial and Urban Development (SEDATU)
- Instituto Nacional de Ecología y Cambio Climático (INECC)
- International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC)
- Imperial County Air Pollution Control District (APCD)
- Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC)
- Border Environment and Cooperation Commission (BECC)
- California Environmental Protection Agency
- California State Water Quality Resources Board
- California State Parks
- California Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
- Pronatura Noreste
- Scripps Institution of Oceanography
- Comisión Estatal del Agua de Baja California (CEA)
- CICESE (Centro de Investigación Científica y de Educación Superior de Ensenada)
- COLEF (El Colegio de la Frontera Norte)
- WILDCOAST/COSTASALVAJE

Economic Development

- San Diego Regional Economic Development Corporation
- South County Economic Development Corporation
- Tijuana Economic Development Corporation
- Imperial Valley Economic Development Council
- Otay Mesa Chamber of Commerce
- Greater Brawley Chamber of Commerce – Calexico Office
- San Diego Port Tenants Association
- San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce

Other Community-Based Organizations

- San Diego Organizing Project (SDOP)
- San Diego Black Workers Center
- Center on Policy Initiatives (CPI)
- Mundo Gardens
- Olivewood Gardens and Learning Center
- Paradise Creek Educational Park, Inc
- San Ysidro Health Center

- Community Housing Works
- Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment (ACCE)
- MAAC Project
- Chicano Federation
- Casa Familiar
- California Truckers Association – San Diego/Imperial Chapter
- UCSD Center for Community Health

Tribal Nations

- Barona Band of Mission Indians
- Campo Band of Mission Indians
- Ewiiapaayp Band of the Kumeyaay Nation
- Inaja-Cosmit Band of Indians
- Jamul Indian Village of California
- La Jolla Band of Luiseño Indians
- La Posta Band of Mission Indians
- Lipay Nation of Santa Ysabel
- Los Coyotes Band of Cahuilla and Cupeño Indians
- Manzanita Band of the Kumeyaay Nation
- Mesa Grande Band of Mission Indians
- Pala Band of Mission Indians
- Pauma Band of Luiseño Indians
- Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians
- San Pasqual Band of Diegueño Indians
- Sycuan Band of the Kumeyaay Nation
- Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Nation
- Fort Yuma Quechan Indians
- Cocopah Indians
- San Antonio Necua
- Juntas de Nejí
- Southern California Tribal Chairmen’s Association (SCTCA)

Additionally, it will be important to provide regular updates to federal, state, and local elected officials in the U.S. and Mexico to ensure they are apprised of project happenings and can provide feedback that will be incorporated into the final BRP. A list of elected officials and an expanded list of key community groups will be included in the community partner database, which will be developed and updated by the Project Team and Task Force throughout the life of the project.

Timeline & Milestones

- Establish Binational Interagency Taskforce – **Spring 2025**
- Begin Community Partner Outreach – **Summer 2025**
- Conduct Public Survey – **Fall/Winter 2025**
- Participate in Community Events – **Fall/Winter 2025**
- Conduct Focus Group Interviews – **Winter 2025**
- Development of Climate Adaptation Strategies – **Spring/Summer 2026**

- **Conduct 2nd Public Survey – Spring/Summer 2026**
- Present Draft Plan to Borders Committee – **Fall/Winter 2026**
- Hold Community Workshops – **Fall/Winter 2026**
- Release Final Plan – **Summer 2027**

Phased Outreach Approach & Engagement Strategies

Initial outreach efforts will focus on gathering information from those closest to the issue who have a technical understanding, such as city and county staff. Using information gathered during this initial outreach phase, a broader public engagement program will be launched, utilizing a variety of bilingual feedback gathering mechanisms to provide equitable access to resources and participation in the planning process. Key strategies for each phase are outlined below.

Phase I: Preliminary Research & Planning (April – July 2025)

- A. Proactively engage and solicit input from the Interagency Taskforce to inform the development of the BRP.
- B. Research community partners and events where staff can conduct outreach and presentations to meet the community where they are.

Phase II: Public Awareness & Education (August – October 2025)

- A. Support Planning in presenting to interested parties and community partners and start building relationships.
- B. Create multiple communication channels to engage the public (ex. website, project email, newsletter etc.).
- C. Conduct outreach to community partners encouraging them to sign up to receive email updates and share project resources with their networks.

Phase III: Public Outreach Ramp-Up (November 2025 – April 2026)

- A. Launch online and paper public survey in English and Spanish to gather information on existing climate stressors and associated public impacts.
- B. Hold Focus Group interviews with community members in the U.S., Mexico, and tribal lands to gather initial input from regional experts.
- C. Participate in community presentations, pop-ups, and other events on both sides of the border to encourage participation in the BRP.
- D. Provide interested and engaged parties with regular updates to keep them involved leading up to the release of the Draft BRP.

Phase IV: Continued Engagement (May – December 2026)

- A. Inform target audiences on the strategies, programs, and projects proposed in the Draft BRP and encourage feedback to help further refine.
- B. Present Draft BRP and policy recommendation to Borders Committee and other public forums and encourage public attendance.

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- C. Launch follow-up survey to solicit feedback on the prioritized list of strategies and projects proposed in the Draft BRP.

Phase V: Final Plan Development & Adoption (January – June 2027)

- A. Hold community workshop(s) to educate the public about the strategies outlined in the Draft BRP and encourage feedback.
- B. Present Final BRP to SANDAG’s Borders Committee and other public forums in San Diego, Imperial County, Tecate, Tijuana, Mexicali, and Playas de Rosarito.
- C. Utilize communications channels established in previous phases of outreach to announce and garner excitement about next steps.

Outreach Tactics

The following tactics will be implemented throughout the five phases of the public outreach and engagement program. To support outreach and promote equitable participation in the planning process, all materials will be developed in English and Spanish (at minimum) and simultaneous interpretation will be used during public meetings and events held throughout the study area.

- 1. Project Email** – A project email will be created and included on all external facing materials. The SANDAG Outreach team will actively monitor the inbox/hotline and will work closely with the Project Team to respond to community inquiries and/or comments in a timely manner. An inquiry log will be created and maintained throughout the life of the project.
- 2. Project Website** – A webpage will be developed and housed on sandag.org containing project information, educational resources, survey links, and other ways to provide feedback.
- 3. Collateral Materials** – To support public outreach efforts, it will be important to develop a suite of educational resources to be used in both digital and in-person communications. These materials will include, but are not limited to:
 - Fact sheet
 - Presentation template/slide deck
 - Project map(s)
 - Timeline
 - Exhibits
- 4. Community Partner Database** – A community partner database will be developed with input from the Interagency Taskforce and will be updated as needed throughout the life of the project to keep contacts up to date. The database will include federal, state, and local resource agencies, elected officials, and other organizations (from both sides of the border) to engage throughout the planning process. Contact information will be provided for each person and/or organization listed wherever possible.

5. Interagency Taskforce Coordination – SANDAG’s BRP Interagency Taskforce will be engaged as the primary advisory committee throughout the project. This advisory committee will provide input into the development of climate strategies and will report to the SANDAG Borders Committee. The Taskforce is made up of transportation and resource agencies, environmental groups, economic development organizations, municipalities, and community-based organizations. Participants are outlined below.

U.S.

- SANDAG
- Caltrans
- Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG)
- Imperial County Transportation Commission (ICTC)
- Municipalities (San Diego, Imperial Beach, National City, Chula Vista, Coronado, El Centro, Holtville, Calexico)
- County of San Diego
- Imperial County
- San Diego Air Pollution Control District
- Imperial County Air Pollution Control District
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- California Air Resources Board (CARB)
- California Environmental Protection Agency
- California State Water Quality Resources Board
- Consulate General of the United States, Tijuana, Mexico

Mexico

- Consul General of Mexico – Ministry of Foreign Affairs (SRE)
- Secretariat of the Environment and Natural Resource (SEMARNAT)
- Secretariat of Territorial, Agrarian, and Urban Development (SEDATU)
- State of Baja California, Secretary of Economy and Innovation
- State of Baja California, Secretary of the Environment and Natural Resources (SMADS)
- State of Baja California, Secretary of Infrastructure and Urban Development (SIDURT)
- Municipalities (Tijuana, Tecate, Mexicali, Playas de Rosarito)
- Tijuana Municipal Institute of Planning (IMPLAN Tijuana)
- Tecate Institute of Municipal Development Planning (INPLADEM Tecate)
- Rosarito Municipal Institute of Planning (IMPLAN Rosarito)
- Mexicali Municipal Institute of Research and Urban Planning (IMIP Mexicali)
- National Commission of Water (CONAGUA)

Binational

- International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC)/Comisión Internacional de Límites y Aguas (CILA)
- North American Development Bank (NADB)

Tribal

- Southern California Tribal Chairman's Association (SCTCA) and counterparts in Mexico

6. Focus Groups – The project team will work with key community partners to solicit feedback about the plan. Each focus group will center on groups based on geographic areas and will gather information about community challenges and preferences. These interviews will encourage participants to share as much information as possible to inform future approaches to surveys and/or outreach strategies. A questionnaire will be developed to help guide each group.

Materials that will be developed to support focus groups include:

- Email invitation to participate in a group
- Group questionnaire
- Presentation slides
- “Thank you for participating” email

7. Print/Online Survey(s) – A baseline public survey will be conducted in both English and Spanish (in addition to other languages if/as requested). The survey questions will be developed using information and insights gathered during initial task force interviews and feedback from the Project Development Team (PDT) group. The goal of the survey is to gather input on climate stressors and impacts facing residents and commuters in the California-Baja California border region, such as air pollution, water quality, extreme heat, flooding, wildfires, and landslides, among more. This initial survey will focus on asking the public to identify challenges and/or concerns in order for the Project Team to develop transportation solutions that could provide short- and long-term relief. Once the Draft BRP is released, a second survey will be promoted, asking the public to provide input on the strategies proposed in the Draft BRP. This data will help the Project Team better understand the concerns and preferences of those most affected and help refine the strategies, projects, programs, and plans proposed as part of the BRP.

8. Interactive Mapping Tool – An interactive mapping tool could be considered for us in one or more surveys. The mapping tool would allow survey participants to drop a comment on a specific location within the study area. This map could also be posted to the project website for website visitors to view and provide feedback.

9. Community Events / Workshop(s) – The Outreach team will participate in up to ten community events and pop-ups to gather feedback during public comment periods, with at least six held in environmental justice communities in Imperial Valley, San Diego County, and Baja California. All events will have materials in both English and Spanish and a bilingual staff member to help

collect feedback. In addition to the project's standard collateral, such as fact sheets, the following materials will also be developed for each event:

- Display boards
- QR code signage

Additionally, community workshop(s) may be conducted to help educate the public about the strategies outlined in the Draft BRP. Workshops will be determined on an as-needed basis, and with community member requests in mind.

10. Working Group/Committee Presentations – The Project Team will provide regular updates to committees and working groups. These groups include, but are not limited to, the following:

- SANDAG Borders Committee
- SANDAG Social Equity Working Group
- SANDAG Sustainable Communities Working Group
- SANDAG Tribal Transportation Taskforce
- SANDAG Mobility Working Group
- Imperial-Mexicali Binational Alliance (IMBA)
- International Border Community Steering Committee
- Calexico-Heber-El Centro Community Steering Committee (CSC)
- San Diego-Tijuana Crossborder Strategic Group
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11. Community Presentations – To help further spread the word about the BRP and encourage public participation, the Project Team will participate in community group presentations in every city and/or county within the study area surrounding project milestones (e.g., survey launch). Print collateral materials, such as fact sheets and surveys, will be provided to attendees and follow-up e-toolkits will be shared following each presentation for community groups to share the resources digitally with their networks.

12. Elected Official/Staff Briefings – Any elected official and/or staff briefings will be coordinated with Government Relations. Briefings may be provided to elected officials, staff, and other interested parties, as requested.

13. Eblasts – Regular eblasts will be developed and shared with subscribers to keep interested parties informed and engaged as the project progresses.

14. Social media – Social media will be used to reach and engage audiences on Facebook, Instagram, X, YouTube, and/or WhatsApp. Postings may include project updates, workshop information, and/or links to the project webpage and/or survey. While SANDAG has its own social media channels, it will be important to engage local agencies and community groups who can share the posts to their own social media feeds to reach a larger audience. Social media posts may also be geotargeted and promoted to target audiences during key project milestones, such as public meetings and survey comment

periods to help maximize participation. All content will be provided in English and Spanish.

- 15. Fliers** – Fliers with survey and/or workshop information will be developed and shared with businesses and community organizations located in both the U.S. and Mexico.
- 16. E-Toolkits** – E-toolkits will be developed for CBOs, elected officials, federal and state agencies, environmental groups, and large employers, among others, to share with their networks. The e-toolkits will be used primarily to promote surveys and/or other ways to provide feedback that will inform the BRP. Content in the e-toolkits will include newsletter copy, social media posts, and graphics, where available and appropriate.
- 17. Community Pop-Ups** – The Project Team, with input from the Interagency Taskforce, will identify and participate in community pop-ups in the project study area, with a particular focus on environmental justice communities, to help maximize reach and engagement in the BRP. Print collateral, such as fact sheets and survey hand-outs, will be provided.
- 18. Media Advisories/Releases** – Media advisories and/or news releases will be developed by SANDAG PIO and distributed around key project milestones and/or events to help maximize public participation in the planning process.
- 19. Media Relations and Inquiries** – All media relations and inquiries will be coordinated with SANDAG PIO. On some occasions, spokespeople will be asked to participate in interviews. SANDAG PIO will work closely with the Project Team to identify and coordinate with the spokesperson(s) as inquiries come in to ensure accurate, timely communications.
- 20. Outreach Trackers** – A comprehensive outreach tracker will be developed and updated on a weekly basis to ensure all public outreach and engagement efforts are logged. In addition, all feedback, both written and verbal, will be included.
- 21. Metrics and Reporting** – A final Outreach Summary Report will be provided following the release of the Final BRP. The Report will include a summary of all community interactions.

Key Messages

The following outlines preliminary key messages to be used in public outreach and communications efforts. These messages will be further refined and expanded upon as the project evolves.

1. The California-Baja California Border Resiliency Plan will identify innovative, tangible transportation solutions to address adverse climate impacts in the border region, while promoting economic growth and trade.

2. The California-Baja California Border Resiliency Plan is being developed with input from community, business, nonprofit, and government organizations in the U.S. and Mexico to ensure that projects, programs, and strategies will address the unique climate stressors, vulnerabilities, and challenges affecting those who live, work, and play in the California-Baja California border region.
3. The California-Baja California Border Resiliency Plan could support future updates to the California-Baja California Border Master Plan, a comprehensive, binational approach to coordinate the planning and delivery of projects at land ports of entry and the transportation infrastructure serving them.

Key Performance Metrics

Tracking and monitoring progress throughout the public outreach program will be imperative to ensure the project team is receiving the qualitative and quantitative data needed to develop the Draft BRP. The SANDAG Outreach team will keep a detailed log of all public outreach and communications activities implemented throughout the life of the project and will perform quarterly assessments to identify successes as well as any challenge areas that may require an additional level of effort. To help the team best identify if/when an outreach approach needs to pivot, the following metrics will be considered. These metrics will be tracked and analyzed by subregion – San Diego County, Imperial County, Tijuana, Tecate, Mexicali, and Playas de Rosarito) and by language (e.g., English and Spanish).

Objective	Key Performance Indicator
<p>Raise awareness about the BRP as a roadmap for future cross-border infrastructure improvements related to climate adaptation needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of email sign-ups • Newsletter click-through rates • Number of website visits • Number of social media likes/comments/reach • Number of QR code scans • Social media post reach • Number of meetings, presentations, and other events held and number of participants
<p>Proactively engage environmental justice communities and members of the public with numerous, meaningful opportunities to participate in the public planning process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of events and people engaged in environmental justice communities • Number of feedback gathering mechanisms (e.g., print surveys, online surveys, phone, email, etc.) • Number of materials translated • Number of events with simultaneous interpretation available
<p>Gather feedback from a broad range of individuals, organizations, agencies, and local governments in the Cali-</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of public comments provided via email, interactive map, or physical comment forms

<p>Baja California border region to inform strategies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response quality: depth and detail provided via open-ended survey questions • Feedback implementation rate: % of responses/comments implemented into proposed strategies/projects • Number of questions/comments made during community presentations • Number of survey responses collected, both verbal and written • Number of community members engaged during presentations, pop-ups, and other events • Number of overall comments received per type and location • Thematic, content, and narrative analysis
<p>Foster collaborative relationships with partner agencies to create a unified and coordinated approach to advancing the project</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of Interagency Taskforce meetings and attendees • Number of CBOs who shared project resources on SANDAG's behalf • Number of Taskforce members who agree with strategies outlined in the BRP • Taskforce satisfaction ratings
<p>Reinforce commitment to improving the environment and overall quality of life for residents in the California-Baja California region</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of positive comments made during public meetings and events • Number of media hits focused on SANDAG's commitment

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