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# The Miller Hull Partnership Unveils New Designs for San Ysidro U.S. Land Port of Entry

## **Busiest land port in the world will also be greenest border crossing with targeted LEED Platinum certification and net zero energy for all occupied buildings**

August, 2010 — The San Ysidro Land Port of Entry is designed to be the port of the future, not only operationally, but also in terms of high-performance buildings. Designed by the award-winning architectural firm, [The Miller Hull Partnership](#), all three phases of the project are targeted to achieve LEED Platinum certification due to energy efficiency, water conservation strategies, and an integrated design process. Most notably is the potential of achieving net zero energy in all the occupied spaces (the buildings, on a net annualized basis, will provide as much power as they consume), the first facility open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year, to achieve this in the United States.



Approximately 102,000 people cross the border here between Mexico and the United States daily. The redevelopment project is to improve operational efficiency, security and safety for cross-border travelers and federal agencies at the San Ysidro Land Port of Entry. The project includes accommodating 34 lanes of traffic—each with two stacked inspection booths, a 200,000-square-foot administrative and operations facility, 110,000 square-feet of primary and secondary vehicle inspection canopy, a new northbound and southbound connection to Mexico’s planned El Chaparral Land Point of Entry facility, and ancillary buildings for the Department of Homeland Security.

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“Border crossing structures are meant to be the first impression of the country, and for the first-time visitor, the experience should be uplifting and memorable, said Craig Curtis, partner at Miller Hull. “However, these are also critical facilities for national security, and their primary goal is to serve the needs of the officers charged with maintaining these borders. We worked closely with Customs and Border Protection to develop new ways to process cars, buses and pedestrians, and for providing officer comfort in this harsh environment. This project will set a new standard for land ports of entry, not only for surpassing General Service Administration’s sustainability goals but for enhanced processing of visitors and increased security measures.”



"Two out of 10 people who enter the United States each day go through the San Ysidro border," said Oscar Preciado, who was the port director for ten years and is now the program manager for San Ysidro U.S. Land Port of Entry. "The officers here are working to protect our country from terrorism, and so it was imperative that security and safety were paramount design variables."

Construction of phase one will begin next year, and comprises the following elements: the northbound primary inspection lanes and booths, the northbound secondary inspection facilities, and associated canopies that cover these facilities.

Four 100-foot iconic masts will extend from a 725-foot “pillow” canopy that covers lanes of traffic going into the United States. These masts will include security cameras and lighting and will pump fresh air into the inspection booths below the canopy. The canopy here, as well as the one covering the second inspection facility, is composed of ETFE, or Ethylene Tetrafluoroethylene, the same material used for the National Aquatics Center for the 2008 Beijing Olympics. This material allows for rain and sun protection for the officers in booths, and because of its translucent nature allows for natural light thereby requiring no

artificial lighting during the day. The design reasoning behind the use of the canopies was also for security: the canopy's thin nature provides unimpeded views to cars queuing at the border.

The second phase of the project includes the construction of the pedestrian walkways and building as well as the bus lanes and inspection booths. The current wait for pedestrians and cars can be as long as 90 minutes, and the new design is on target to reduce that time to 30 minutes. According to research conducted by the San Diego Association of Governments, wait times at the border have a direct correlation to local economics. If wait times were to increase by just 15 minutes, an additional \$1 billion in productivity and 134,000 jobs would be lost in the border region.

The third phase of the project includes the construction of the secured employee parking structure that will accommodate 400 vehicles on four above-grade floors of parking. Furthermore, this is the phase that moves Interstate 5 to the west to connect to Mexico's border crossing facility, El Chaparral Land Point of Entry. Total cost of construction for all three phases is budgeted to be \$395 million.



"We have received a mandate from President Obama to set the bar for green buildings in this country," said Maria Ciprazo, Regional Chief Architect for the GSA. "If we can get this project to be net zero within our budget, then the private sector can do it as well. This border is the doorway into our country, so it's been vital to design a facility that is both welcoming and safe for all who work there as well as pass through this portal into the United States. Coupled with the sustainable elements, the architects at Miller Hull have brought it all together and created a project that will benefit the larger San Ysidro border community."

Sustainable water management strategies include a 700,000 gallon rainwater reclamation system that incorporates filtration and infiltration into the landscape while specifying native plants that require low-water use and maintenance, and low-flow fixtures and controls. The proposed reduces the water consumption by over 12 million gallons per year (enough water to supply over 100 typical households), with the goal of water neutrality in sight. Photovoltaic panels and a closed-loop, ground-coupled geexchange system will offset port energy use. Because the primary booths will have the highest energy use at the port, the design team worked to reduce energy use and increase officer comfort by using radiant heating and cooling panels as part of the booth's HVAC system. An intelligent flow design impacts operational sustainability in order to reduce "tail pipe carbon" by decreasing idle time for automobiles.

The Miller Hull Partnership was selected over nine other national architectural firms for the project, and began working on the design in January of 2010. The firm specializes in award-winning design for public works buildings that actively engage their communities. The firm's projects, such as schools, higher education facilities, nature centers, community centers, mixed use buildings, laboratories and corporate



offices have created a new architectural vocabulary for civic works. The Miller Hull Partnership won the National Firm Award from the American Institute of Architects in 2003.

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