

## Cross-Border Airport Terminal Advances Another Step

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A cross-border airport terminal connecting Tijuana's Rodriguez International Airport with Otay Mesa received a much-anticipated presidential permit, according to the South County Economic Development Council.

The nonprofit business group said Aug 4<sup>th</sup> the permit allows Otay- Tijuana LLC, a binational group that includes real estate mogul Sam Zell, to build a facility that would contain bridge and U.S. customs processing personnel on the U.S. side, enabling air travelers to more easily traverse the border and use Tijuana's airport.

The project, first proposed in 1998 and supported by the SCEDC, will relieve congestion at San Diego's Lindbergh Field, and create a small economic engine for the Otay Mesa area in the form of support transformation services, advocates said.

The privately operated facility would charge fees for the convenience of using the connecting terminal and avoiding long lines of crossing the land borders at either Otay Mesa or San Ysidro. Equity Group Investments, a private enterprise spearheading the investment into the terminal venture, acquired 52 acres in Otay Mesa in 2008 and applied for the permit last year. A representative of EGI said the project still needs approvals from various federal, state and local agencies, but could begin construction in 2011.

Last year, the group said I intended to spend \$60 million to \$70 million on the project's first phase.

According to a study done for the terminal, about 2 million passengers from the United States use Tijuana's airport annually.