



Corridor Advisory Committee Meeting #6

June 18, 2009
6:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
Progress Park
15500 Downey Ave, Paramount

MEETING SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

On Thursday, June 18, 2009, the I-710 Project Team met with the Corridor Advisory Committee (CAC) at Progress Park. The purpose of the meeting was to:

- Provide an update on project status since the last meeting of the CAC on April 16, 2009
- Provide a forum for presentations on health impacts and Health Impact Assessment (HIA) that had been given to the Environmental Subject Working Group (ESWG) on April 13, as requested by the CAC
- Follow up on the progress of the Air Quality/Health Risk Assessment (AQ/HRA) and provide clarifications to CAC questions regarding specific elements included and not included in the analysis

CAC members in attendance were:

Glenna Amos, City of South Gate LAC

Eileen Aparicio, City of Paramount LAC

Craig Carter, City of Long Beach Council District 8 Appointee

John Cross, City of Long Beach Council District 7 Appointee

Bob Eula, CAC Appointee/City of Commerce LAC

Robert Hildebrand, City of Long Beach District 1 Appointee

Allen Hose, CAC Appointee

Angelo Logan, East Yards Communities for Environmental Justice

Dr. Joe Magaddino, California State University Long Beach

Raymond Park, City of Carson LAC

Harold Tseklenis, CAC Appointee

Alina Bokde, Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (for Belinda Faustinos)

Mark Christoffels, TAC (for Bill Pagett)



AGENDA OVERVIEW

Pat McLaughlin of MIG opened the meeting with a round of self-introductions. She then reviewed the meeting agenda which included: a public comment period, a review of the summary of the previous CAC meeting, held on April 16; an update on project schedule and progress of the Subject Working Groups; presentations on public health by Dr. Paul Simon (LA County Public Health) and on Health Impact Assessment by Angelo Logan (CAC member) and Jennifer Lucky (Human Impact Partners); a presentation on and discussion of the Committee's outstanding questions on the AQ/HRA; a brief update on the Cumulative Projects List, which will be discussed in more detail by the LACs; and potential CAC recommendations to the Project Committee.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Esmeralda Garcia of MIG called speakers from the audience to the microphone. Public comments included:

Nathan Mata, East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice and resident of the City of Carson, urged the Project Team to consider a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) because of the impacts his community feels due to I-710 freight movement and associated businesses.

Isella Ramirez, East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice, noted the impacts of air quality on local high school students, stating that poor air quality is linked to low school API scores. She also urged the project team to consider a comprehensive health assessment such as an HIA, to address air quality, noise, and physical changes to the environment.

Maria Becerra, East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice, mother of two children, and City of Commerce resident, asked the CAC to recommend the inclusion of an HIA in the I-710 EIR/EIS.

Edwin Cervantes, East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice and resident of East LA, spoke to the effects of poor air quality on the corridor communities, particularly on children who cannot enjoy normal childhood activities as a result. He urged the CAC to recommend an HIA.

Carolina Cabrera, Junior at South Gate High School, urged the Project Team to pursue an HIA so that people living in the corridor communities can be informed of the physical effects the proposed corridor alternatives will have on them. She noted that these are decisions that should be made by community members, and not distant authorities. She expressed the opinion that traffic alleviation is not enough to justify negative impacts to air quality.

Mark Lopez, who works with youth and has lived or worked in Huntington Park, South Gate, and East LA, spoke on behalf of local high school students who could not attend the meeting because of their graduation ceremony. He compared an EIR/EIS to nutrition facts on a cereal box: they explain the content factually, but do not explain how the content will affect a person physically. He urged the Committee to include a comprehensive study of health impacts.

Robert Cabrales, Communities for a Better Environment and resident of Huntington Park, recommended a comprehensive health analysis, as health is the overriding concern of the corridor communities. He also requested agency support for more representation on the Huntington Park Local Advisory Committee, which currently has one member.

Elina Green, UCLA Center for Occupational & Environmental Health, noted that the USC Particle Center has done research on near-roadway impacts of particulate matter on health. She requested that the CAC recommend these studies be incorporated into the EIR/EIS.

Monica Parrilla, member of the Long Beach Alliance for Children with Asthma (LBACA) non-profit organization and mother of two children, urged the Committee to consider impacts to low-income community members, who often bear unfair burdens of health impacts. She recommended that the EIR/EIS analyze the impacts of the corridor project throughout the duration of the project, and that it include a comprehensive health impact analysis.

Maria Trujillo, also member of LBACA and mother of a thirteen-year-old asthmatic child, shared the difficulties of living with asthma. She urged the Committee to do whatever is possible to improve conditions for people in the communities.

Rosi Gonzalez, local student, noted the effects of air pollution on student athletes such as herself.

REVIEW OF MEETING #5 SUMMARY

The Committee requested revisions to the previous meeting summary, with general agreement that the summary as written does not reflect the extent and intensity of the discussion on certain items such as the AQ/HRA protocol and construction impacts. Ms. McLaughlin noted that some of the issues regarding the AQ/HRA had remained pending with the Committee due to the difficulty of discussing such a lengthy technical document in a short meeting, and that this topic would be discussed in more depth at this evening's meeting. She thanked the Committee for their feedback on the summary, reminding them that CAC meeting summaries, as with past Tier 2 meeting summaries were intended to synopsise meeting discussions and report outcomes rather than serve as detailed meeting minutes. She also noted that the summaries are considered drafts pending CAC review, and that the group's comments will be incorporated into a revised summary.

CAC Member Angelo Logan stated the importance of the meeting summaries in conveying information to the Project Committee and others who had not attended the meeting. Ms. McLaughlin reminded the group that they would have a formal opportunity to make recommendations to the Project Committee at the end of the meeting.

Before moving on with the agenda, CAC Member Allen Hose thanked the members of the public who had shared comments, noting the importance of such comments for helping the Committee to understand community issues and perspectives.

UPDATES

Engineering

Jack Waldron of URS gave a brief update on the progress of technical work and schedule. He reported that the traffic modeling has recently been completed, an important component that feeds traffic projections into the comparison of alternatives in the EIR/EIS. Highway geometrics are currently being refined based on the new traffic figures, as well as comments from the LACs, TAC, and FHWA. The geometrics are scheduled to be completed in September of this year, and will provide the footprint for study in the EIR/EIS.

Questions and comments raised by the Committee included:

- Given the current national economic difficulties, has the Project Team considered a possible decrease in truck traffic?

- The Project Team is using the SCAG model, updated with recent port data to reflect changes in cargo. Although current volumes are down, long range projections assume various economic cycles, and it is not anticipated that cargo traffic will decrease in the long run.
- Do port projections anticipate how much of the goods movement can be accommodated by rail?
 - Yes, the modal split is included in the port projections, and those percentages are reflected in the technical analysis.
- CAC Member Harold Tseklenis noted that at the end of the Major Corridor Study, the Tier 2 Committee had requested air quality monitoring stations to establish baseline conditions and to gauge future improvements. How can modeling findings be correlated with existing conditions in a way that community members can understand the impacts? (Mr. Tseklenis also suggested that schools would be ideal locations for air quality monitoring stations.)
 - Air quality monitoring stations are part of the Gateway Cities COG's Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP). The AQAP will be carried out on a parallel timeline to the EIR/EIS, but because the Draft EIR/EIS will be completed in summer 2010, baseline data from new air quality monitoring stations will not feed into the EIR/EIS.
- What is the timing of the AQAP?
 - Funding has been secured and GCCOG is in the process of defining the scope of the plan. The next step will be to find a consultant who can perform studies.

Ms. McLaughlin suggested the possibility of Jerry Wood presenting the scope of the AQAP at a future meeting. The CAC expressed interest in this topic, and further requested that Mr. Wood present details of plans for monitoring station locations. The Committee recorded a recommendation to consider air quality monitoring stations at schools along the corridor.

Environmental

Rob McCann of LSA gave a brief update on the environmental team's progress, noting the technical studies such as the AQ/HRA and the Community Impact Assessment. The team is currently establishing baseline conditions for the various technical studies. By August, the team plans to have draft Community Profiles for the LACs to review. As a final point, Mr. McCann mentioned the comparison matrix that he had presented to the ESWG on June 4, addressing the research questions that had been presented by Human Impact Partners. The matrix outlines the way in which the I-710 EIR/EIS addresses each of these questions, and provides brief reasoning for any questions that will not be addressed.

Questions and comments raised by the committee included:

- John Cross, CAC member representing Long Beach, commented that there are many current peer-reviewed studies available that are relevant to these environmental topics. He asked whether the Project Team will review these studies and use them as part of a baseline analysis, or rely solely on their own analysis.

- The technical team will review any studies that are identified as being relevant to the I-710 Corridor Project and will reference them relative to baseline conditions if they are relevant to the topics of study as they relate to the comparison of the four project alternatives.
- Alina Bokde of the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy asked whether equestrian uses would be considered in the analysis of parks and trails, and also noted the general importance of trails to the connectivity of regional transportation systems.
 - Yes, these factors will be considered in relation to how each of the alternatives will affect park and trail resources, and regional connectivity.
- Mr. Hose expressed concern with item 6 on the comparison matrix, related to community deprivation and social assault due to race and income level. While the matrix suggests that this issue does not appear to be relevant to the project and is subjective, Mr. Hose posed that this issue is of utmost importance, especially related to health care, and can be tracked through census data.

Environmental Subject Working Group (ESWG)

Mr. Logan gave a brief update on the recent meetings of the ESWG, emphasizing the following topics:

- Responding to the ESWG's concerns regarding construction impacts, Caltrans had posed that not enough is known at this point about project funding and construction phasing to study the impacts of construction at that level (including dispersion modeling). An ESWG member representing SCAQMD had recommended that Caltrans study a reasonable worst case scenario.
- Absolute significance thresholds for impacts related to air quality are not included in the I-710 AQ/HRA Protocol or the Caltrans Standard Environmental Reference, and significance determinations will not be made until after the AQ/HRA is completed. This is an issue for the ESWG, and was left unresolved as Caltrans policy is to determine significance based on study findings.
 - Ms. McLaughlin reminded the Committee that there would be an opportunity to discuss this topic later in the evening's agenda.

The CAC noted that the next ESWG meeting will take place on July 15 in the City of Carson. Ms. McLaughlin mentioned that the primary topic at this meeting would be Environmental Justice, presented by Nancy Pfeffer of Network Public Affairs, the URS Team subconsultant for subject matter expertise in environmental justice, and encouraged interested CAC members to attend.

CAC Member Bob Eula noted that CARB has done a study that should be considered in the EIR/EIS, estimating cancer risk in his community at 140% higher than the baseline. Mr. Eula urged the Project Team to incorporate such studies in the EIR/EIS. Mr. Eula's suggestion was recorded as a recommendation to the Project Committee.

INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATIONS BY LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND HUMAN IMPACT PARTNERS

Dr. Paul Simon of LA County Department of Public Health was introduced as the first resource speaker on health impacts. He gave a short PowerPoint presentation entitled *Assessing Health Impacts of the I-710 Project: A Public Health Perspective*. The presentation focused on the examples of motor vehicle crash injuries and the obesity epidemic, and how the I-710 Corridor Project can be framed as an opportunity to have a positive impact on these public health issues and others. After providing a snapshot of data related to motor vehicle crashes, Dr. Simon made the case that the EIR/EIS should address motor vehicle crash injury incidence and severity. He also pointed out the opportunity for the I-710 Corridor Project to consider how obesity rates—which tend to be particularly high in the communities along the corridor—would be affected by the I-710 project’s impacts on green space, bicycle and pedestrian accessibility, traffic congestion, public transit, and economic conditions.

A second presentation was given by Jennifer Lucky of Human Impact Partners (HIP), entitled *Considering Health Impacts of the I-710 Freeway Project*. Ms. Lucky first asked Mr. Logan to provide some context from the Major Corridor Study and Tier 2 Report. She then introduced Health Impact Assessment (HIA) as a tool for comprehensively addressing health impacts related to the I-710 Corridor Project and elaborated on how various aspects of the I-710 Corridor Project, such as noise and traffic volume, could impact public health (outlined as “pathways from 710 project activities to health outcomes”). She then provided sample research questions related to these aspects. She noted that the comparison matrix prepared by the Project Team addresses many of these questions, but that she still sees some lack of clarity on the team’s methodologies for addressing these questions, and what data will be used. She encouraged the team to consider local studies on near-roadway impacts, and to analyze health impacts comprehensively, linking results to current literature on public health and the built environment. She suggested including key research questions, followed by public health statements based on current literature.

In response to the presentations, Committee members raised the following questions and comments:

- Mr. Cross made the suggestion that in addition to obesity rates, asthma rates should also be monitored in schools. Asthma, in turn, affects obesity. Also, consider the economic impacts of health care costs.
 - Dr. Simon responded that LA Public Health has found elevated asthma rates in Long Beach and especially around the ports. He also reminded the group that the intention of the corridor project is to improve conditions, and that any improvement to public health would have a positive effect on the economy.
- How do LA County obesity trends compare to the rest of the state and country?
 - According to Dr. Simon, the trends are consistent with nationwide trends, but absolute rates are higher in LA County. The built environment should be considered a tool for providing venue for physical activity, thus reducing the rate of obesity.
- Would an HIA look at each of the highway alternatives?
 - Dr. Simon answered that yes, at this point it’s all about comparing the alternatives, including the No Build. He noted, however, that he believes the No

- Ms. Bokde noted that many of the research questions related to obesity in the corridor were designated as not relevant in the comparison matrix. She suggested the possibility of engaging LA County Public Health to help resolve some of these issues.
 - Dr. Simon responded that LA County Health would be happy to supply data, and that other organizations such as HIP and local universities are also potential resources. He further suggested that a commitment of funding may be necessary to retain a consultant to ensure that the best information is being used, perhaps \$50,000 - \$100,000 of the \$23 million budget for the EIR/EIS.
- Mr. Tseklenis asked if a Health Impact Assessment is included in the scope of the EIR/EIS?
 - Mr. McCann responded that there will not be a standalone HIA of the form that Ms. Lucky had presented, but that the purpose of the comparison matrix was to demonstrate how the HIA research questions would be addressed in the various technical studies that inform the EIR/EIS. He noted that because of the discussion with the ESWG related to HIA, Caltrans had agreed to include a section related to health impacts in each of the technical reports that relate to public health. Ms. McLaughlin added that this would be the first time Caltrans would be including a public health section by topic in an EIR/EIS.
- Mr. Logan recommended that health impacts be addressed as illustrated in the “pathways to health outcomes,” utilizing the best tools possible. He further recommended that this effort be funded.
 - The recommendation was recorded. Ms. McLaughlin also asked Mr. Logan to share this recommendation, as had been prepared by the Commerce LAC, at the end of the meeting.
- CAC Member Joe Magaddino asked whether the HIA is a qualitative or quantitative analysis. In some cases damages can be offset, but in qualitative cases, damages cannot necessarily be measured and offset, and decision-makers must determine if the benefits outweigh the costs of a project. What does an HIA add to this process?
 - Mr. Logan suggested that the EIR/EIS provides the quantitative data on impacts of a project on the physical environment, and that the HIA links these environmental impacts to health outcomes.
 - Ms. Lucky added that an HIA includes both quantitative and qualitative analysis. What an HIA does that a traditional EIR/EIS doesn't, is to frame all analysis in relation to public health issues, making the links to health impacts in all cases.
 - Dr. Simon noted from his experience with LA County health impact assessments, that it would be important not to overpromise. While the analysis would serve to distinguish the alternatives based on measures of incremental changes to public health, it is unlikely the results would predict absolute numbers.

Before moving on with the agenda, Ms. McLaughlin thanked the guest presenters, and noted the importance of remembering that all of these discussions must be framed in terms of comparison of the four alternatives.

FOLLOW-UP ON THE AQ/HRA

Mr. McCann began by recapping the discussion on the AQ/HRA protocols at past meetings, noting that tonight's presentation would follow up on items that had raised concern for the CAC at their April 16 meeting. He briefly reviewed the purpose of the AQ/HRA, emphasizing that it will evaluate conditions based on each of the three build alternatives as compared to the No Build alternative. The Project Purpose and Need specifies that the project must improve air quality and public health, so each alternative will be evaluated against measures of these criteria. Furthermore, legislation and regulations related to CEQA/NEPA require analysis of certain air pollutants, the study of which is already underway.

Mr. McCann outlined the elements that are included in the AQ/HRA based on Caltrans' requirements, and the additional seven elements that were approved for inclusion based on the AQ/HRA Working Group's recommendation. Of the elements recommended by the ESWG and the Agency Air Technical Working Group, Ultrafine Particulates qualitative assessment will be included. Mr. McCann introduced Ron Kosinski of Caltrans to review the six outstanding items that are not included.

Mr. Kosinski began by stating that if the project is not found to improve air quality, it will not be built. He also noted the difficulty of the range of opinions amongst experts and agencies regarding air quality and health risk analysis. SCAQMD, the State Air Resources Board, the US EPA, and the FHWA all bring different perspectives on technical aspects of the protocols, and whether specific elements are useful in differentiating the four project alternatives.

Mr. Kosinski then outlined the elements not included as follows:

- Quantitative assessment of PM2.5 mortality and morbidity monetary benefits/impacts
 - Project-level methodologies and information are not available, and there is a lack of regulatory consensus and guidance.
- Use of SCAQMD CEQA significance thresholds
 - Caltrans will review project effects using various thresholds (including SCAQMD's) to determine significance but will not choose a specific threshold in advance.
- Full AQ/HRA modeling for combined operations/construction impacts at interim project phases
 - There are no funding commitments to date that allow for definition of scopes/timeframes of project construction phases that would allow this level of modeling with any accuracy.
- Inclusion of specialized "near source" modeling of PM2.5/PM10
 - Regulatory consensus and guidance on this is lacking.
- Inclusion of a quantitative assessment of PM mortality
 - There is a lack of regulatory consensus and guidance for project-level analysis.
- Analysis of "life-cycle" greenhouse gas emissions
 - Regulatory consensus and guidance is lacking, and there are technical and information limitations.

Mr. Kosinski also noted the costs of carrying out additional detailed analyses such as health risk assessments, stating the importance of balancing expenditures on analysis with expenditures on eventual mitigations. If particular studies cannot be assured of yielding meaningful results in terms of comparing alternatives for purposes of improving air quality or other conditions for purposes of potential mitigation, they should not be funded.

Group questions and comments regarding the AQ/HRA update included:

- What are the AQMD's significance thresholds and standards?
 - AQMD has guidance on numerical thresholds that are available on a one-page sheet on the AQMD website.
 - Mr. Kosinski stated that Caltrans is not ready to commit to a specific numerical threshold because studies may find that overall project benefits outweigh the costs of an alternative that only slightly exceeds a pre-determined threshold.
 - Henry Hogo of SCAQMD confirmed that the AQMD has recommended numerical thresholds, which tend to be tighter than in the South Coast Air Basin than in other areas because of the severity of air quality issues in the region. Under CEQA, the lead agency may adopt significance thresholds that have been approved in a public hearing.
- Dr. Magaddino asked whether the elements "not included" will be excluded altogether, or will they be discussed in some way in the document?
 - Mr. Kosinski stated that in the case of significance thresholds, the decision will simply be made at a later date. For example, obesity can be addressed in the sense that it is affected by access to parks and open space.
- Mr. Hose expressed a concern with the non-inclusion of operations and construction impacts from the perspective of a resident who lives three blocks from the freeway. He suggested that in the current construction project, traffic be re-routed to I-710 South to North Willow, instead of to Wilmington.
 - Mr. Kosinski agreed that the detour plan for the current project is not ideal. The issue in the case of the I-710 Corridor Project is that funding is not yet secured for building the project, so construction phasing and staging cannot be determined at this time.
- CAC Member Eileen Aparicio asked how lack of consensus between agencies is dealt with, given that it surely must be an issue in all projects.
 - Mr. Kosinski said that this is an ongoing issue, and federal mediators have been brought in to help resolve the interagency dispute between USEPA and FHWA on air quality protocol issues.
- Mr. Logan asked for clarification as to whether the Committee was expected to take an action regarding the AQ/HRA Protocol.
 - Mr. Kosinski noted that there is no action for the Committee to take, but that the Project Team was hoping for the CAC's support.
 - Mr. Logan stated he believes it is unacceptable not to determine significance thresholds in advance of studies, and also not to include full AQ/HRA modeling of construction impacts.
 - Mr. Kosinski noted the legal barriers to this suggestion, stating that Caltrans lawyers would not allow pre-determination of significance thresholds.

- CAC Member Craig Carter recommended that Caltrans adopt the SCAQMD thresholds, which are based on real conditions of the region. He felt that the CAC should hear the recommendations of other agency experts on air quality, and not just hear from Caltrans.
- Ms. Bokde stated agreement with the importance of determining significance thresholds in advance of studies, and analyzing construction impacts. She concurred with the recommendation to adopt AQMD standards.

Ms. McLaughlin noted the time, and suggested that the group begin establishing consensus on the recommendations that had been brought up throughout the meeting.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The CAC made the following recommendations to the Project Committee:

- Adopt SCAQMD's air quality significance thresholds for the evaluation of alternatives in the I-710 Corridor Project EIR/EIS.
- Hear other expert opinions (such as AQMD's) that appear to counter Caltrans' current legal advice regarding significance thresholds.
- Consider locating air quality monitoring stations at schools.
- Implement the tools and methodologies presented for the HIA, specifically the "pathways to health outcomes," and fund this effort.
- Consider the most current and up-to-date studies in the EIR/EIS.

OTHER ITEMS

Many CAC members asserted that construction impacts should be addressed and modeled in the EIR/EIS. Dr. Magaddino did not concur with this position because of the speculative nature of construction scenarios at this point in the process. Other CAC members pointed out that, at this point, there may not be group consensus on this topic. The Committee requested more information, explanation, and analysis of how construction impacts would be addressed through both the studies and the project itself, and agreed that this should be discussed at a future meeting of the ESWG. Near-source modeling was another topic suggested for the Subject Working Groups.

The Committee agreed that addressing the Cumulative Projects would best be done at the LAC level.

Ms. McLaughlin adjourned the meeting at 9:10 p.m.