

## Corridor Advisory Committee Meeting #7

August 27, 2009

6:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Gateway Cities Council of Governments Offices  
16401 Paramount Boulevard, Paramount

## MEETING SUMMARY

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### INTRODUCTION

On Thursday, August 27, 2009, the I-710 Project Team met with the Corridor Advisory Committee (CAC) at the Gateway Cities Council of Governments offices. The purpose of the meeting was to:

- Provide an update on project status since the last meeting of the CAC on June 18, 2009
- Conduct a process check-in to review the group's purpose and charge, and discuss desired project outcomes
- Review progress and timeline of the various environmental studies that inform the EIR/EIS
- Give an overview of the Community Impact Assessment and its components

In attendance from the Project Team were Ernest Morales and Devon Cichoski (Metro); Jerry Wood (GCCOG); Jack Waldron (URS); Rob McCann (LSA); Nancy Pfeffer (Network Public Affairs); and Pat McLaughlin and Esmeralda Garcia (MIG).

CAC members in attendance were:

Glenna Amos, City of South Gate LAC

Eileen Aparicio, City of Paramount LAC

Hamid Bahadori, Auto Club of Southern California

Malcolm Carson, Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles

Donna Ethington, Harbor Area Communities

Bob Eula, CAC Appointee (City of Commerce LAC)

Robert Hildebrand, City of Long Beach District 1 Appointee

Alicia Carrera, City of Long Beach District 1 Alternate

Angelo Logan, East Yards Communities for Environmental Justice

Marisa Olguin, City of Vernon LAC



**Metro**



Mario Sotelo, City of Commerce LAC  
Harold Tseklenis, CAC Appointee (City of Downey)  
Mohammad Mostahkami, Representing the 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; review of the summary of the previous CAC meeting, held on June 18; an update on project schedule and progress from the engineering and environmental teams; a mid-course process check-in to review the group's goals and objectives for the project; and an overview of environmental studies with a more in-depth presentation on the Community Impact Assessment (CIA).

Esmeralda Garcia of MIG invited Spanish-speaking participants to listen to a live translation of the meeting on the headphones provided.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Ms. McLaughlin 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, thanked the CAC for recommending a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) to the Project Committee and restated the importance of comprehensive health impact analysis.

Gabriel Santillan, Communities for a Better Environment (CBE), urged the Committee to support an HRA, expressing concern that expanding the freeway would bring more trucks and have a detrimental effect on air quality.

Jocelyn Vivar, East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice, asked the Committee to ensure that the project is truly an improvement project. She emphasized the importance of public health outcomes, asking the Committee to support (1) the launch of the AQAP, (2) a comprehensive health analysis by inclusion of an HIA, and (3) the analysis of construction impacts.

Adrian Martinez, attorney for the Natural Resources Defense Council, expressed concern over the project's approach to determining the significance of air quality impacts. He noted that the NRDC, SCAQMD, and other groups representing the environment and environmental justice, support standards that were developed based on CEQA guidelines, conforming to the Federal Clean Air Act and State Clean Air Act. He urged the project team to use these standards, pointing out that some of the project's funding agencies—specifically the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach—have used SCAQMD significance thresholds in the past. He also reminded the group that traffic data had been requested and asked that the data be made available to the public via Metro's website.

Yolanda Lopez, Long Beach resident who lives close to the I-710 and mother of a 27-year-old daughter with asthma, shared the experience of spending time in hospitals because of her daughter's condition. She spoke of other dangers her family is exposed to as a result of poor air quality, which requires them to keep their home shut at night to protect themselves from pollution. She urged that an action plan for air quality be developed and implemented immediately. She asked the Committee to remain transparent to the community and to always listen to the community's concerns.

Carolina Cabrera, senior at South Gate High School, urged the forwarding of the AQAP. She shared the experience of tracking air quality near Slauson Avenue with a group from CBE, resulting in a measurement of over 30,000 particles in a cubic centimeter. She also requested that the HRA be pushed forward, noting that public health is her top concern.

Robert Cabrales, Communities for a Better Environment, thanked the Committee and consultants for making the meetings happen, and expressed support for the comments made by others. He reiterated support for the HIA and AQAP, to help reach the desired end of true improvements in the corridor.

## **REVIEW OF MEETING #6 SUMMARY**

Ms. McLaughlin referred the Committee to printed handouts of the June 18 meeting summary, directing their attention to page 10 where the Committee's recommendations are listed.

CAC Member Bob Hildebrand noted that a particular recommendation regarding adopting SCAQMD thresholds was missing from the summary. The Committee had reached consensus on this item at the previous meeting.

Jerry Wood of GCCOG reported that the project team has been working on this issue and will be ready to report to the CAC very soon. There is an anticipated meeting with AQMD next week, and Mr. Wood hopes to be able to bring news of the outcomes back to the Committee soon. He also hopes to report on the issue of construction impacts. He noted that illnesses of certain team members have slowed the project team's progress on these issues to some extent.

The group endorsed the recommendation that AQMD thresholds be adopted for the project, in addition to hearing other expert legal opinions on the issue, as had been recorded in the summary.

Based on Mr. Wood's comment, Eileen Aparicio suggested that she would be willing to wait for the report-back from GCCOG and Caltrans on this issue.

Ms. Garcia noted that the summary would be corrected to reflect the Committee's collective recollection of the June 18 recommendation. She noted that in the future, the Wallgraphic can be used as a tool to ensure mutual understanding of all recommendations for the record.

CAC member Mario Sotelo made a clarification point on the summary of the April 16 CAC meeting, noting that the comment on double decking—primarily concerning the I-5—had only been recommended within the Commerce LAC and not in discussion with the CAC. He also noted that other—and perhaps more favorable—ideas had been discussed by the Commerce LAC in the meantime, so the double decking suggestion should not be recorded as a final recommendation. He noted that he would bring this issue back at a future meeting.

## **UPDATES**

### ***Engineering***

Ms. McLaughlin turned the meeting over to Jack Waldron of URS, who gave a brief update on the progress of engineering work and schedule. He reviewed the progress of traffic modeling, which began last year. A draft traffic model is complete, and results of the model are being fed to the traffic analysis team, which is looking at traffic flows at each intersection within the study area to gauge the effectiveness of the geometric plans. Geometric designs are, in turn,

adjusted based on the modeling results. Geometric work is anticipated to be completed near the end of September or early October.

As geometric segments are completed, the highway design team will begin to develop initial staging concepts, which determines how each segment will be built. One outcome of the iterative modeling and design process will be to establish a footprint for the project. The footprint informs the efforts of the environmental team in completing the environmental studies and the EIR/EIS.

Major coordination efforts include the I-5/I-710 interchange, which is managed by Caltrans. There is also significant coordination between the project team and the major utilities, particularly Edison, the Department of Water and Power, and major pipelines. The team is also coordinating with the Army Corps of Engineers since proposed freeway modifications are likely to have some effect on the Los Angeles River.

The Committee had no comments or questions related to the engineering update.

### ***Environmental***

Rob McCann of LSA gave a brief update on the environmental team's progress, noting again that the traffic operational analysis which Mr. Waldron reviewed is a key input to the AQ/HRA. Currently, environmental technical teams are establishing baseline conditions, reviewing literature, and beginning to evaluate impacts based on the design packages that are coming from the engineering team.

Mr. McCann referred participants to printed handouts illustrating the various studies that inform the EIR/EIS, and also a basic schedule for these studies.

Questions and comments regarding progress by the environmental team included:

- CAC member Hamid Bahadori asked whether SB375 implementation efforts will have an impact on baseline assumptions for the I-710 EIR/EIS.
  - Mr. McCann responded that SB375 would not have much direct impact on baseline assumptions. However, as plans are adopted related to SB375 implementation—and translated into local and regional regulations—these will be incorporated into the project. In any case, the environmental document must be carried out consistent with local and regional regulations. SB375 will not impact the project schedule because regulations are constantly changing. The team must respond to the changing regulatory climate throughout the process. AB32 has been an example of this.
- CAC member Angelo Logan requested a presentation on the alternatives screening process, specifically related to Alternative 6B. He had understood that Alternative 6B included Alternative 3. Based on subsequent proceedings, it seems that the TAC and Project Committee concurred on something that was different from what had been presented to the CAC. He expressed concern that wording had been modified and conveyed to the Project Committee without coming back to the CAC.
  - Ms. McLaughlin noted that the project team had given a presentation to the Transportation Subject Working Group on August 17 in response to this issue.

- Mr. McCann clarified that Alternative 6B does include Alternative 3 in terms of alternative goods movement technology. Alternative 3 looked at two families of alternative goods movement technologies: zero emission trucks and fixed guideway systems. Zero emission trucks were incorporated into Alternative 6B, and this was approved by the TAC. Subsequent to the TAC meeting, wording was strengthened to clarify that fixed guideway systems would not be precluded in Alternative 6B.
- Mr. Wood added that the TAC acted on the Project Committee's recommendation (which had been unanimous, including AQMD's support). Subsequently, Peter Greenwald of AQMD requested a language change. The TAC agreed to reconsider, with the intention of clarifying the fact that a fixed guideway system would be included as a possibility—which had always been the intention. The wording change will go back to the Project Committee in October.
- Ms. McLaughlin noted that the TAC's suggested revision could be brought to the CAC, and the CAC would then have the option to deliver a separate recommendation to the Project Committee if they see fit.
- Mr. Logan noted the process-related concern that input had been given by the CAC, and that by the time it was concurred by the Project Committee, it was not what the CAC had agreed to. In cases such as these, changes should come back to the CAC for review.
- CAC member Malcolm Carson suggested the analogy of the US Congress, where motions must be agreed upon by both houses before they can move forward for executive approval, no matter how long it takes. He requested clarification on whether Alternative 6B had or had not included both families of alternative technologies all along.
- Mr. Wood responded that the wording was worked out carefully to clarify what had always been the case. Alternative 6B specifies a zero emission system, no matter what that system may be. Mr. Greenwald had requested to change the wording to strengthen the understanding that a fixed guideway system is allowed for in Alternative 6B.
- Mr. Carson asked whether the impacts of a fixed guideway system would be analyzed in the EIR/EIS.
- Mr. Wood repeated that the EIR/EIS would analyze the impacts of a zero-emission system, no matter what that system may be. The difficulty is that the proposed technologies don't yet exist, so specifics will need to be revisited in the future as the technology evolves. The team's technical reports have been sent to the industry to see what developments are on the horizon, as the project team maintains constant interest in monitoring the progress of the alternative goods movement technologies.
- Mr. Logan requested that the CAC have an agenda topic on Alternative 6B.

- Ms. McLaughlin noted that the committee can discuss anything they agree upon, but also reminded the group that this topic had been brought back and revisited. It may be more worthwhile for the CAC to address current topics such as the environmental studies, and how the CAC can help the LACs to process these issues.
- CAC member Bob Eula expressed that the Committee is simply asking to be notified when there's a change to a recommendation moving forward.
- Mr. Sotelo expressed concern over the perception that suddenly trucks were back under discussion after the fixed guideways had been presented.
- Mr. Wood reminded the group of the distinction between Alternatives 6A and 6B, and that 6B does not include diesel trucks. The 6A/6B distinction allows the project team to isolate the incremental benefit of moving goods with zero-emission technology—whatever form that may take in the future—versus conventional trucks.

## **PROCESS CHECK-IN**

Ms. McLaughlin turned the floor over to Ms. Garcia for the process check-in portion of the meeting. Ms. Garcia gave a brief review of the evolution of the I-710 community participation framework beginning with Major Corridor Study, referring participants to a printed poster illustrating the flow of information between the community groups and committees for the I-710 Corridor Project EIR/EIS. She also referred to a poster of project goals as outlined in the Project Purpose and Need Statement. These goals had been developed based on input from the communities throughout the Major Corridor Study. She asked the group to share their own desired outcomes. Committee members expressed the following desired project outcomes:

- A mutually satisfactory project.
- Safe, efficient traffic and goods movement along the I-710 freeway.
- A design that relieves congestion without increasing impacts, and improves air quality.
- Sound walls (for Thunderbird Villa), reduced noise, and increased safety.
- Improved air quality, reduced noise, improved health of residents along the corridor, and improved congestion and safety in the corridor.
- Cleaner air and safer streets.
- To complete a project that is truly great; something for the 21<sup>st</sup> century; something we can be proud to pass along to our children.
- For the City of Commerce to maintain cohesion. The City has been cut up too much by the many freeway and freight projects.
- The most logical engineering processes that can be applied with low impact, and benefits to businesses, health, and air quality.
- An alternative that has broad community support and consensus, with a good process for compromise. The worst outcome is to delay the process because 100% of 0 is 0.
- Improved air quality and public health.
- No net increase in emissions—perhaps even a reduction—while reducing congestion and enhancing safety.

- Separation of cars and trucks, and zero-emission cargo movement to improve public health and air quality.

Ms. Garcia thanked the group for their input, noting the many common themes between Committee members' desired outcomes and the project goals. She noted the Committee's importance in helping to forward the goals that had been discussed.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES OVERVIEW**

### ***Process and Timeline***

Mr. McCann gave a brief review of environmental proceedings to date, including how CEQA and NEPA processes were followed through scoping, and are now informing the preparation of the Draft EIR/EIS. He presented the I-710 Corridor study area as illustrated on a project map, which includes the corridor communities, and not just the freeway itself.

Mr. McCann then reviewed five key steps of the environmental process, beginning with the regulatory setting that the document must adhere to; then the establishment of methodology; determination of the affected environment (which is the portion that is now underway); evaluation of the environmental consequences or impacts; and finally, the development of avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures. Each technical report provides a comparative analysis of each of the three Build Alternatives against the 2035 No-Build Alternative and a 2008 baseline scenario.

Mr. McCann noted that mitigation measures carry beyond the EIR/EIS all the way through to design, construction, and operation. He then referred participants to printed handouts illustrating how the topics of the EIR/EIS are grouped, and which technical studies inform each of the topics.

Group questions and comments related to the overview of environmental studies included:

- Does AB32 affect the greenhouse gas analysis in the EIR/EIS?
  - Inclusion of greenhouse gas analysis is an outgrowth of AB32. Prior to AB32, there was no analysis of greenhouse gases in an EIR/EIS.
- Is LSA following the "Environmental Collaborative" approach for this project—working collaboratively with agencies throughout the process?
  - Yes, this process involves a great amount of active coordination with the agencies, and also with the Army Corps of Engineers on river-related issues. As results of studies come in, there will be opportunities to coordinate with other agencies as needed.
- So the product is reviewed by lots of different interests before it is completed?
  - Yes.

### ***Community Impact Assessment (CIA) Overview***

Mr. McCann then began a more in-depth presentation on the Community Impact Assessment (CIA), which is one of the major studies to inform the EIR/EIS. He reviewed the community concerns that had been outlined in the Tier 2 Report, including air quality and health risks;

business impacts; environmental justice; access and mobility; visual impacts; noise impacts; and construction impacts. The process for the CIA—as with all of the environmental studies—is to establish baseline conditions and the affected environment for each component of the study; analyze the impacts to each component; compare the project alternatives in terms of impacts; and finally to develop avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures.

The components that comprise the CIA include land use; park and recreation facilities; community character and cohesion; development trends/growth; environmental justice; economics; community facilities and services; relocations; access/parking; and community perspectives. Some of these components are analyzed quantitatively, others qualitatively, and others with a combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis.

Mr. McCann emphasized the importance of LAC input for helping the project team to understand what is important to the local communities. Local review of community profiles will be an essential part of the process. The team is nearing completion of the draft community profiles, and will be scheduling meetings with LACs to get input on these.

The draft CIA is expected to be completed near the end of 2009, and preliminary findings can be presented to the community groups in early 2010. Mr. McCann noted that the greatest value of community input will be in the development of avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures. There will be time for ongoing refinement of these measures between the release of the study findings and the ultimate completion of the Draft EIR/EIS in late summer 2010.

Group questions and comments related to the CIA overview included:

- In terms of relocations, are all of the realities of relocation considered, or just the physical ability to relocate?
  - The analysis includes everything that's required by law under the Federal Uniform Relocation Act.
- How does the team track the progress of each of the environmental studies?
  - Through regular reviews with each of the specialty technical teams. A 10-page Critical Path Schedule is the tool that's used to track the studies.
- Is there a way to share milestones from the Critical Path Schedule with the group?
  - Each study has two primary milestones: the draft and the final. Lots of work goes into developing the draft, so there are also internal milestones.
- What is an example of a finding for something like a noise impact assessment? What is the product?
  - The Federal Highway Administration has developed noise abatement criteria, which dictate that noise should not exceed a certain level—typically 65 decibels. Noise measurements are taken and correlated with traffic volumes. Changes in noise levels are estimated for each alternative, and if noise levels approach or exceed the federal criteria level, then noise abatement measures such as soundwalls are evaluated.
- Are health impacts assessed?
  - Yes, for example hearing loss would be a health impact related to noise.
- Does the study consider impacts such as helicopters that also travel the corridor, but do not travel the freeway?

- All noise is picked up by the noise monitoring equipment, but what is really being analyzed is the incremental difference between the Build Alternatives versus the No Build. All background noise would be accounted for as part of the baseline measurement.
- Do you do night-time measurements?
  - Yes, 24-hour measurements are taken in some locations.
- Have you established baseline noise levels?
  - No, this process is in progress.
- Have you determined where you will take measurements?
  - Caltrans is reviewing previous data that has been collected for the Long Life Pavement project and is determining the applicability for the I-710 Corridor Project EIR/EIS.

Ms. McLaughlin encouraged the Committee to consider which studies they are interested in as the CAC, and which they think their individual LACs may be interested in hearing more about.

- Mr. Hildebrand commented that communities in Long Beach are complex because City Council members represent many distinct sections of town. A challenge may be to establish a process to work with neighborhoods, beyond Council committees.
  - Mr. McCann noted that the community profile for Long Beach has been very challenging because there are so many distinct neighborhoods in Long Beach.
  - Ms. McLaughlin added that the outreach team is working with the City, the Council, and the TAC representatives to engage Long Beach communities in the process. The team must work within the established processes in the city itself in getting input from the communities. Long Beach representatives sitting on the CAC are one very valuable vehicle for communicating the various Long Beach community concerns.
- Mr. Logan noted that the CIA appears to be closely related to the CAC's recommendation to implement Health Impact Assessment (HIA) tools. He asked how the HIA would overlay with the CIA if the Project Committee decides to pursue an HIA.
  - Mr. McCann noted that the current approach is to include a section in each study focusing on public health considerations, regardless of the PC decision. If the PC acts to pursue a separate HIA, the team would probably draw on the public health sections of the environmental studies to prepare the HIA. The current approach to the EIR/EIS mirrors the HIA research questions closely, but if the PC gives direction to pursue a separate HIA element, the team will take that direction and figure out how to implement it.
- CAC member Glenna Amos asked whether the Committee could help cities with the RFP process for obtaining stimulus money for beginning some of these projects.
  - Ms. McLaughlin noted that the best thing communities may be able to do is to identify improvements of local priority.
  - Ms. Amos noted that her community has been talking about these improvements for 5 years, and nothing has been done.
  - Ms. McLaughlin noted that a timeline of interim improvements may be ideal. The COG has discussed this with the cities. Early Action Projects are also an item that relate to this.

- Mr. Waldron added that Early Action Projects have been identified. These could include sound walls, improvements to substandard on- and off-ramps, and other safety improvements. There is no timeline at this point, but a timeline will be developed as projects are identified. There is also an ongoing discussion on bringing additional funding to these efforts.
- Did the TAC prioritize Early Action Projects?
  - Mr. Waldron responded that no; there was some discussion of prioritization, but to date, the TAC has focused on identifying projects. Cities have been asked to identify local priority projects, and also to identify funding that may be meshed with Measure R funds.
- Will there be CAC or LAC input on these, or is it just a TAC Process?
  - Mr. Wood responded that the TAC is addressing this from the technical perspective. Outcomes of the TAC process would go to the LACs, and then to the CAC, but it is still early in the process.
- At the macro level, is the COG working now with the key elected officials to ensure funding and viability of these projects?
  - Mr. Wood stated that yes; the COG has strong support from the congressional delegation, particularly from Congresswoman Richardson.
- Will the recommendations from Kimley Horn's Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) report be integrated, including real-time traveler information?
  - Mr. Wood noted that the COG is excited to implement ITS measures with Metro's support. The team is currently working with Congresswoman Sanchez to get funding to further advance this effort.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Ms. McLaughlin asked the group to revisit the recommendations and suggestions that had come up throughout the meeting.

### ***Recommendations to the Project Committee***

The CAC made no recommendations to the Project Committee but wanted to ensure that the June 18 CAC meeting summary be modified to include the CAC's recommendation to adopt SCAQMD significance thresholds for the I-170 Corridor Project EIR/EIS. The group also had numerous process points and suggestions for future agenda items.

### ***Requests for Information and Materials:***

The CAC requested the following information and materials:

- Provide a "look-ahead" schedule of environmental studies.
- Redistribute the Cumulative Projects List.
- Provide the CAC with early notification of potential Early Action Projects.

### ***Process Points***

The CAC made the following suggestions related to process:

- Revisit items with the CAC that are modified by the TAC or Project Committee, for example, when there are changes to CAC recommendations or to information that has been presented to the CAC.
- Provide a TAC update at each CAC meeting.
- Create the next meeting agenda at the conclusion of each meeting.
- Include report-back on action items and CAC requests as part of all engineering and environmental updates.
- Emphasize CAC decision points, or areas that the CAC can impact.

### ***Future Agenda Topics***

The CAC requested discussion on the following topics at future meetings:

- Outcomes of discussion with AQMD on significance thresholds and construction impacts
- Presentation on Alternative 6B
- Early Action Projects
- Updates on environmental studies in order of potential relevance to the Committee as suggested by the Project Team

Ms. McLaughlin adjourned the meeting at 8:50 p.m.