



Carson Local Advisory Committee Meeting #6

April 9, 2009

6:00-8:00 p.m.

21156 Santa Fe Ave., Carson

MEETING SUMMARY

SUMMARY

On Thursday, April 9, 2009, the City of Carson held their sixth Local Advisory Committee (LAC) meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to provide an update on the Corridor Project EIR/EIS; to review the alternatives and screening methodologies; to present the recommendation that the TAC proposes to give to the Project Committee on April 30 regarding which alternatives to study in the EIR/EIS; and to get the LAC's feedback on the TAC's proposed recommendation.

In attendance from the Project Team were: Jack Waldron (URS), Rob McCann (LSA), Devon Cichoski (Metro), Esmeralda Garcia (MIG), and Arcelia Arce (The Robert Group).

INTRODUCTIONS AND AGENDA OVERVIEW

Carson LAC Chair Ray Park opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and requesting a round of introductions. He then introduced Esmeralda Garcia who gave an overview of the agenda.

PROJECT UPDATE

Ms. Garcia began by stating that various studies are underway. She distributed a handout to the LAC describing the Alternatives Screening process and TAC recommendations on the screened alternatives. She then introduced Mr. Waldron who gave a quick update on the technical studies that inform the alternatives screening, which in turn forms the basis for the TAC's recommendation on which alternatives can move forward for further study.



Currently, the Project Team is working on detailed traffic modeling, which will feed into the geometrics refinement. Comments on geometrics were received last year and have informed geometric refinements. The traffic modeling will also assist in the environmental assessment, informing the air quality study, as one example.

The Project Team is expected to present the Alternatives Screening recommendations to the Project Committee at the end of April. They have already presented to the Technical Advisory Committee and several other LACs. Once this has been accomplished, the Project Team will be able to move forward in studying the recommended alternatives. The LAC asked whether the current work was in line with previously made recommendations. Mr. Waldron responded that the previously recommended Locally Preferred Strategy was included in the list of recommended alternatives.

SUBJECT WORKING GROUP REPORT

Ms. Garcia gave a brief recap of Subject Working Groups' progress. The Community Enhancements and Local Economy SWG is developing a set of principles that will become overarching guidelines for all enhancements along the corridor. The group will meet again after the next CAC and Project Committee meetings.

At their last meeting, the Transportation and Transit SWG reviewed the different aspects of alternative technologies in detail. The committee will be focusing on the different families of technology that can be used along separated goods movement corridors.

The Environmental SWG is currently focusing on the development of the protocol for the Air Quality/Health Risk Assessment (AQ/HRA). This SWG will be meeting next Monday, April 13 in Commerce.

ALTERNATIVES SCREENING

Mr. McCann provided an overview of the Alternatives Screening Analysis. He stated that the project team was initially charged with reviewing the initial 6 alternatives developed through the Major Corridor Study. Since then, there have been major advancements in alternative technologies. By law, they are required to look at alternatives that might have less impact on the environment and community. The following alternatives were screened against measures for the criteria of air quality, mobility, traffic safety, right-of-way impacts, environmental impacts, and cost:

- Alternative 1: No Build
- Alternative 2: Transportation Systems Management
- Alternative 3: Enhanced Goods Movement by rail and/or Advanced Technology
- Alternative 4: Arterial & I-710 congestion relief improvements
- Alternative 5A: Widen 710 to 10 GP Lanes
- Alternative 5B: Widen 710 to 8 GP + 2 HOV Lanes

- Alternatives 6: Similar to Alt 5 with addition of Freight Movement Corridor

Mobility Findings

Mr. McCann reviewed the mobility screening results with the committee. The findings suggest that there is substantial need for new capacity in the corridor. Only Alternative 6 provides sufficient capacity to reduce peak period I-710 Volume Capacity (V/C) Ratios below 1.0. Reduction in Alternative 6 total screenline V/C suggests potential for significant positive impacts on arterials as compared to other alternatives. The top performing alternatives, in order of performance, included Alternative 6, Alternative 5A and Alternative 5B. Screenlines indicated that at the south end of the corridor the volume to capacity ration was pretty low.

The LAC was concerned regarding plans to limit corridor lanes in the southern portion of the corridor. Most of the traffic in the corridor is generated at the harbor. Traffic also bleeds out onto the different north-south corridors. If lanes are reduced, the traffic will move onto arterial streets. Mr. Waldron responded that while most of the traffic at the southern end is port traffic, more vehicular traffic is picked up at each interchange along the corridor. By the time one reaches the 5 freeway, the traffic is substantially heavier.

The LAC also noted that trucks are now beginning to use other freeways, such as the 91 freeway, so the number of lanes in consideration should not be reduced. Mr. Waldron indicated that the Project Team was only considering reducing the number of auto lanes, not truck lanes. In addition, the southern section would still see an increase in lanes.

Air Quality Findings

All 2035 alternatives may show emission decreases compared to the 2008 baseline. Compared to the 2035 No Build Alternative, Alternative 3 shows greatest reductions in Nitrogen Oxide (NOx), and Diesel Particulate Matter (DPM). 22,400 daily truck trips will be eliminated by clean energy powered container transport technology. Alternatives 5A, 5B, and 6 show appreciable reductions in NOx with a slight increase in DPM. Port truck traffic is reduced by 20% under Alternative 6, thus reducing pollutants.

Traffic Safety Findings

The team indicated that there are various existing physical design deficiencies. Proposed design improvements and heavy duty truck reductions should substantially reduce accident rates. Alternative 6 has the lowest percentage of heavy duty trucks on general purpose lanes as it separates cars and trucks. Alternative 6 and Alternative 3 performed best against the criterion of traffic safety. Alternative 5A and 5B also provide safety benefits.

Right-of-Way Findings

All alternatives are consistent with the project objective of minimizing ROW impacts. Mobility and traffic safety benefits are trade-offs to residential impacts. Alternatives 3, 5, and 6 have a substantially greater impact to regional transmission utilities; Alternatives 1, 2 and 4 have the fewest ROW impacts.

Environmental Impact Findings

These screening measures include: ROW impacts on waters of the United States; ROW impacts on Section 4(f) properties; and an assessment of environmental justice issues. The results indicated that there would only be one ROW impact on a Section 4(f) property: Cesar Chavez Park. The environmental justice assessment—performed using demographic data—did not distinguish meaningfully between alternatives at the screening level of analysis and did not account for potential benefits as a result of project implementation. Alternative 6 had the highest level of impact to the waters of the United States.

Capital Cost Findings

Alternatives 3 and 6 have the highest capital cost, however they also provide the most benefits as demonstrated by the other screening criteria. The committee wanted to know operational costs would also be factored in.

Summary:

- Alternative 6 (updated Hybrid LPS) best meets the Mobility element of Purpose and Need
- Alternative 6 is the best performer on Traffic Safety
- Alternative 6 reduces NOx but slightly increases freeway daytime DPM compared to the No Build scenario
- Alternative 6 impacts (affected properties, waters of the US, cost) are highest compared to other alternatives
- Alternative 3 (Alternative Technology) has highest capital cost followed by Alternative 6

The screening recommendations are drawn from the initial set of alternatives. The project is required to carry Alternative 1 (No Build) forward under CEQA/NEPA as a future (2035) baseline. “No Build” does include planned and committed projects such as: Enhanced Goods Movement by Rail, Clean Trucks Program, Expanded Night Gate Operations at Ports, I-710 Pavement Rehabilitation Project, added lanes to I-5 between Orange County Line and I-605, and traffic signal coordination projects on key arterials throughout the I-710 Corridor Study Area.

Alternative 5A is the second alternative that is being recommended for further study. This alternative has less impact than Alternative 6 and provides measurable benefits. It also provides a basis for comparison of the benefits, cost and impacts of the freight corridor in Alternative 6. The project team can also reevaluate and adjust the number of lanes based upon refined traffic forecasting.

Alternative 6 is being split into two separate Alternatives, 6A and 6B, which are both consistent with the Major Corridor Study’s Locally Preferred Strategy (LPS). Alternative 6A includes the 10 general purpose lanes, plus 4 freight movement lanes for conventional trucks, assuming a mix of conventionally powered trucks per new air quality regulations. The possibility still exists to reevaluate and adjust the number of lanes based upon refined traffic forecasting.

Alternative 6B differs from 6A in that it assumes exclusive use of the freight movement lane by Zero Emission Trucks rather than conventional trucks. Zero emission trucks may be externally or internally powered. The freight corridor will follow highway design alignment and loading

standards, and be designed to allow for possible future conversion to a Fixed Guideway zero emission system.

Alternatives 2 (TSM/TDM/Transit) and 4 (Arterial Highway/Freeway Congestion Relief) are not being recommended as stand-alone alternatives because they do not provide adequate improvements by themselves to address the purpose and need for the project. They will however be included as part of the recommendations in Alternatives 5A, 6A and 6B.

Alternative 3 (Goods Movement Enhancement by Rail and/or Advanced Technology) also does not provide adequate improvements by itself to address the purpose and need for the project. Goods Movement Enhancement by Rail is included in all screened alternatives beginning with Alternative 1. Advanced technology component will be included as part of recommended screened Alternative 6B.

Alternative 5B (Widen I-710 to 8 General Purpose and 2 HOV Lanes) results in lower mobility performance and yet the same costs and impacts as its counterpart, Alternative 5A, and is therefore not recommended for further study.

LAC FEEDBACK

The LAC had general questions regarding project funding. The project team explained that the environmental phase is currently funded. Project funding can't be allocated until an EIR/EIS is adopted and Record of Decision is issued. Measure R includes funding for some Early Action projects, and these would focus on safety improvements. The project is not far enough along to qualify for federal stimulus funding.

The LAC also inquired as to the estimated project finalization date. The team estimated that the Record of Decision would be issued in September 2011. After that, it typically takes 4 years before construction can start, assuming that funding is available.

The committee was also interested in learning how other regional projects would impact the I-710 project such as planned intermodal yards. It was explained that the initial traffic study reviewed scenarios that included the intermodal yards and those that did not. What they found was that there was not much of a difference in terms of traffic, not enough to make a difference in the number of lanes needed along the corridor.

Mr. McCann indicated that the environmental studies look at the cumulative impacts of the projects as well as other planned projects and whether they are going to add impacts to the I-710.

The committee was interested in learning whether a dedicated truck lane would include access points along the corridor. It was explained that there may be 3 access points in areas where there is a lot of trucking or warehousing activity and trucks would still have the ability to use the General Purpose lanes.

NEXT STEPS

The CAC will be meeting on April 16, 1009 at 6 p.m. at Progress Park in Paramount. The LAC was invited to participate. The CAC would also be making recommendations on the Screening Alternatives. The LAC recommended that the project team make a presentation to the Carson City Council.

A corridor newsletter will be released after the Project Committee adopts the final recommendations on Screening Alternatives.

The LAC will be notified of future meeting dates.