



## Environmental Subject Working Group Introductory Meeting

January 14, 2009  
6:00 pm to 7:30 pm  
*Gateway Cities Council of Governments*

### MEETING SUMMARY

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#### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this first meeting of the I-710/Environmental Subject Working Group was to:

- describe the purpose and role of the working group
- give an update on the current status of the development of the draft Environmental Impact Report and Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) for the I-710 Corridor Project
- provide an overview of the Air Quality and Health Risk Assessment proposed for the I-710 Project that will be used in the draft EIR/EIS
- get suggestions for discussion topics the working group would like to explore in future meetings

#### WORKSHOP GROUP ORIENTATION

Following self-introductions by all members of the Environmental Subject Working Group, Pat McLaughlin from MIG reviewed the history of the I-710 project and the purpose of the Working Group.

- Ms. McLaughlin explained that the Air Quality and Health Risk Assessment had emerged from the I-710 Major Corridor Study (MCS) which had identified health and air quality as the number one concern of all the communities located in the corridor. This was documented in the Tier 2 Report officially adopted three years ago by the I-710 Oversight Policy Committee and the Metro Board of Directors. It was noted that this was only the first major corridor EIR/EIS for a transportation project in the nation to require that a health assessment be completed from the outset. (The SR 47 EIR/EIS incorporated a Health Risk Assessment upon recirculation).



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- The Subject Working Groups will provide an opportunity for community stakeholder discussions to explore certain topics more deeply than was possible during the MCS.

## **CORRIDOR PROJECT UPDATE**

Jack Waldron, from URS provided the update on the technical work for the I-710 EIR/EIS Corridor Project. Mr. Waldron explained that they were nearing the end of the screening phase.

- The next step is to determine the environmental impacts of the six alternatives that came out of the MCS with the goal of identifying two alternatives for the rest of the planning process. The six alternatives are:
  - No Build
  - Transportation Systems Management/Transportation Demand Management
  - Goods Movement Enhancement by Rail and/or Alternative Technology
  - Arterial Highways and I-710 Congestion Relief Improvements
  - Improvements to mainline I-710 freeway
    - Option A: 10 general purpose lanes
    - Option B: 8 general purpose lanes plus 2 HOV lanes
  - Locally Preferred Strategy Hybrid Design: 10 general purpose lanes plus four-lane freight movement facility.
- Improvements to congestion and mobility are major criteria for evaluation of the alternatives.
- The engineering team will need feedback from all the subject working groups to make sure the concerns of the community are being addressed.

Questions and comments from the Working Group following this initial introduction included:

- What alternative technologies are being explored?
  - There are two families of technologies being studied: fixed guideway technologies and alternative fuel trucks (electric, LNG, magnetic propulsion systems)
  - The goal is to develop feasible low or zero emission methods for shipping containers/cargo through the corridor.
  - Fitting fixed alternative technology guideways into the existing freeway envelope is a challenge. It appears to be feasible throughout the length of the freeway but at both the north and south ends large loading and unloading facilities will be required. The latter would require new rights-of-way.
  - The 2nd family of technologies being explored, the alternative fuel/propulsion trucks would not have that particular problem.
- Will truck lanes or guideways be accessible along the middle stretch of the 18 mile freeway? If the access is limited, how will that work for all the warehouses and facilities located along the corridor?

- There will be two intermediate on-off locations for trucks along the freeway corridor.
- A fixed guideway cannot go to every warehouse located along the corridor.
- There is a SCAG study underway to explore the potential of extending these alternative technologies throughout the LA Basin, especially to the inland ports in Riverside and San Bernardino counties. If that were to occur, then I-710 would just be the first leg of the countywide alternative technology system.
- Will additional environmental watchdog groups be considered for participation in this working group? It would be better to involve them now rather than have them oppose action later or after the completion of the planning process.
  - Two key groups to include are the Communities for Better Environment and the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)
  - Ms. McLaughlin indicated participation of these groups is encouraged. The Project Committee has the responsibility for appointing representatives to the Subject Working Groups. They require a written request with the recommended appointments.
  - Groups interested in appointment are encouraged to indicate their interest to the Gateway Cities COG, which will forward this interest to the Project Committee for potential appointment.

## **AIR QUALITY AND HEALTH RISK ASSESSMENT (AQ/HRA)**

The major activity of the evening was a PowerPoint presentation by Julia Lester from ENVIRON International explaining the purpose of the Air Quality and Health Risk Assessment (often referred to as the AQ/HRA) and describing the nature of the analyses to be conducted, including the types of pollutants to be analyzed. (A copy of the presentation is attached.) Questions and comments during her presentation included:

- What about “ultrafines”? Can they be addressed?
  - Ultrafines are several orders of magnitude smaller than particulate matter (0.1 micron vs. 2.5 microns for PM). As a result, ultrafines can get deeper into the lungs and possibly cross cell membranes.
  - Ultrafines are the products of combustion, including diesel, gasoline and natural gas combustion.
  - There are currently no standards established for ultrafines and there is no methodology to quantitatively assess the project-specific impacts of ultrafines. However, they have been qualitatively assessed based on near-roadway monitoring studies.
  - The South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) sponsored a conference on ultrafines in May 2006 that discussed the state-of-the-science for health effects, monitoring, mitigation, and regulatory activities.
- What about air quality impacts from construction of the I-710 improvements? How is that going to be addressed?
  - Currently, the AQ/HRA Protocol calls for calculation of total Project-related construction emissions. Caltrans noted that there are measures to

mitigate impacts on nearby communities during construction; these measures would be included in the draft EIR/EIS.

- Will you also be looking at indirect emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG)?
  - The current AQ/HRA Protocol calls for the calculation of direct Project-specific GHG emissions (e.g., GHG emissions from traffic). Electric vehicles can still be an indirect source of GHG depending on the nature of the power plant from which they draw power. Those emissions may be quantified if it is deemed that they can be accurately quantified and that their quantification would be useful in distinguishing impacts among the alternatives. It is not proposed to calculate “life-cycle” emissions (e.g., GHG emissions from the production of Project-related cement / concrete production and transportation) based on current technical challenges as to how these emissions should be quantified and lack of information, as well as the indeterminate nature of the currently evolving regulatory guidance..
- Will there be a way to determine the air quality and health related impacts of specific communities, such as East LA? One SWG member noted that a recent study identified the 90746 zip code in Carson as having the highest asthma rate. Is there a way to identify the current pollutant levels in each community? Will the AQ/HRA include local monitoring?
  - It was discussed that the modeling of Project-specific incremental impacts does not require monitoring information beyond that currently available. The model results will be used to determine the relative impacts of the Project alternatives compared to the 2008 baseline project-related impacts and 2035 No Build project-related impacts; they will also be used in the conformity determination (e.g., CO hot-spots). This approach is consistent with EPA guidance and current CEQA/NEPA practice. A SWG member noted that the air model proposed, AERMOD, was one typically used and approved in these types of analyses.
  - The current monitoring being done by the South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD) was discussed, and a SWG member noted that additional community monitoring was being done.
    - Here is the link to the SCAQMD’s web site information on their monitoring program: <http://www.aqmd.gov/tao/AQ-Reports/AQMonitoringNetworkPlan/2008AQnetworkplan.htm>.
    - Maps can be found at: <http://www.aqmd.gov/tao/AQ-Reports/AQMonitoringNetworkPlan/Draft2008AMNetworkPlanAppendixA.pdf>.
    - Information on the Harbor Communities Monitoring Study (HCMS) can be found at: <http://www.arb.ca.gov/research/mobile/hcm/hcm.htm>.
  - For information on air toxics (both monitoring and modeling), the SWG was referred to the South Coast AQMD Multiple Air Toxics Exposure Study (MATES) III, the latest regional air toxics study. This MATES III study utilizes results from recent air quality monitoring and regional modeling of air toxic sources, including diesel vehicles. An interactive map on the MATES III website identifies cancer risks by geographic

location and can be accessed at

[www.aqmd.gov/prdas/matesIII/matesIII.html](http://www.aqmd.gov/prdas/matesIII/matesIII.html). The full MATES III study can also be found at this web site.

- Committee members raised additional questions regarding the environmental analysis:
  - Will the study also be taking into account the visual, aesthetic, and psychological impact of looming elevated freeway structures on nearby communities?
  - Will you be taking into account other types of pollutants such as light and noise?
  - What about the displacement of powerlines along I-710 and the potential impact of electromagnetic frequencies (EMF) on nearby communities?
  - The powerlines will move closer to the LA River and further from nearby communities.
  - What about the potential EMF impact from alternative technologies such as maglev?
  - Mr. Waldron indicated that all of these issues are addressed as part of the EIR/EIS.

## **FUTURE DISCUSSION TOPICS**

Suggested discussion topics for future meetings included:

- Alternative Technologies (per results from report prepared by URS)
- Technical Nature of Health Assessment – develop understanding of the protocols, tools and outputs
- Understand What Cumulative Impacts Mean: Get assistance from the group in identifying other projects in their communities that will have an impact. The Environmental Team will put together a draft of the related projects (re: cumulative impacts) and bring that back to the SWG at a later meeting.
- What Are the Health Risks to Be Studied (Lung Cancer, etc.)?

Other subject areas of interest

- The impact on businesses during construction
- A need to visualize what the different alternatives will actually look like; e.g. graphic renderings, computer visualizations. (Ms. Cichoski indicated that this is being addressed in the Community Enhancements Subject Working Group.)
- Overall economic impact on nearby communities, including jobs.

## **NEXT MEETING**

The tentative date for the next meeting is February 19. This meeting will also be held at the Gateway COG offices.