



Environmental Subject Working Group

August 18, 2009

Gateway City Council of Governments Offices, Paramount

DRAFT MEETING SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

On Tuesday, August 18, 2009, the I-710 Project Team met with the Environmental Subject Working Group (ESWG) at the Gateway Cities Council of Governments offices in the City of Paramount. The purpose of the meeting was to:

- Update the group on project happenings since the last meeting of the ESWG on July 15, including progress by the environmental and engineering teams.
- Conduct a process check-in to review the group's purpose and charge, and discuss desired project outcomes.
- Begin to consolidate the group's feedback on focus issues for conveyance to the Corridor Advisory Committee (CAC) and Project Committee.

ESWG members in attendance were Angelo Logan (Commerce LAC); Susan Nakamura (SCAQMD); Andrea Hricko (USC, Keck School of Medicine); Connie Turner (Southern California Edison); Clay Sandidge (Future Ports); Susan Ahn (Long Beach Unified School District); and Roye Love (Carson LAC). Louisa Franco represented the LA County Department of Public Health in Paul Simon's absence. Other meeting attendees included Bill Pagett, representing the City of Paramount and the TAC; Ian MacMillan (Los Angeles Unified School District), Martha Cota and Elena Rodriguez (Long Beach Alliance for Children with Asthma); Jocelyn Vivar (East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice); Adrian Martinez (NRDC); Lou Baglietto (Butterfield Communications); Karl Rodenbaugh (The Planning Center); and Erin Huffer (MemorialCare).

In attendance from the Project Team were Ernest Morales and Devon Cichoski (Metro); Brian Manor and Garrett Damrath (Caltrans); Sue Lai (Port of Los Angeles); Jack Waldron and Julie Rush (URS); Rob McCann and Jayna Goodman (LSA); Pat McLaughlin, Esmeralda Garcia, and Jesse Froehlich (MIG); and Nancy Pfeffer (Network Public Affairs).

MIG facilitator Pat McLaughlin called the meeting to order and began with a round of self-introductions. She briefly reviewed the agenda for the evening, which included a process



check-in, and encouraged members to fill out the provided feedback questionnaires as an additional way of providing process feedback.

PROJECT UPDATES

Environmental

Rob McCann of LSA gave a brief status update on the technical studies that are used to analyze the three Build Alternatives against the 2008 baseline scenario and the projected 2035 No-Build Alternative. The environmental team is currently completing the process of defining of baseline conditions and the affected environment. The next step will be to analyze the impacts of each of the alternatives. There is significant collaboration between the environmental and engineering teams during this phase, as geometric plans and traffic modeling feed into the environmental studies.

To address the group's interest in reviewing and discussing study findings, Mr. McCann noted that the group's feedback will be particularly valuable to the process of developing mitigation measures. He clarified that the Funding Partners must review technical reports before they can be reviewed by the ESWG. Once reports have Funding Partner approval, the ESWG will have the opportunity to review study findings and give input to mitigation measures before the draft EIR/EIS is completed in summer 2010.

- ESWG member Angelo Logan asked for a clarification regarding the integration of alternative goods movement technologies into the proposed project alternatives, noting some concern over the process of deciding that alternative technologies would not be studied as a stand-alone alternative, but rather as part of alternative 6B.
 - Ms. McLaughlin noted that the ESWG had been invited to the Transportation Subject Working Group (TSWG) meeting which took place the previous evening, where this item had been discussed. She then asked Jack Waldron of URS to give a brief recap of the previous evening's presentation.
 - Mr. Waldron explained that Alternative 3 (the stand-alone alternative technology alternative) had been screened out based on the initial screening criteria, but that the alternative technologies component had moved forward as part of Alternative 6B, which includes a four-lane goods movement corridor for exclusive use by zero tailpipe emission vehicles. He clarified that 6B would be studied based upon zero emission vehicles, but would be designed in such a way so as not to preclude a fixed guideway system if the technology becomes feasible in the future. This wording had been agreed upon by the TAC with input from AQMD.
- Mr. Logan presented the perceived concern that Alternative 6B may not include all elements that Alternative 3 had included. He requested clarification as to exactly what would be studied in the EIR/EIS.
 - Mr. Waldron explained that the freight corridor would be an elevated structure that could accommodate electric trucks or a fixed guideway system. 6B allows for any zero-emission goods movement technology. The team is conducting industry outreach concurrently, to encourage continued development of the alternative technologies. The goal is to have an environmental document that clears the

footprint for a project. If Alternative 6B is cleared, it will allow for implementation of the zero-emission technology deemed most appropriate at the time.

- Bill Pagett added that, while Alternative 6A will separate trucks from cars, 6B allows the team to assess the additional benefit to air quality of including a zero emission freight corridor.
- Mr. Logan requested a copy of the wording that had been approved by the TAC. This wording can be distributed, and can also be found in the agenda for the April 30 Project Committee meeting.
- ESWG member Susan Nakamura expressed that it seems unlikely that a fixed guideway would be built if it were necessary to tear up and re-build the freight corridor.
 - Mr. Pagett clarified that this would not be necessary as the corridor would be built to accommodate either system.

Engineering

Mr. Waldron continued with an update from the engineering team, stating that a detailed traffic operations analysis had begun in June. As the results of this analysis become available, traffic volumes are fed to the geometrics team for use in assessing the geometric plans' ability to accommodate traffic volumes. Geometrics are being released in packages, and as they are approved internally, will be presented to the TAC and then to the LACs. Ms. McLaughlin added that the TSWG had requested to review the assumptions that went into the geometrics design, and reminded the group that all are welcome and encouraged to attend meetings of other groups.

Community Participation

Esmeralda Garcia of MIG gave a brief update on community participation. Ms. Garcia noted that the LACs have been fairly quiet over the summer, but that meetings would resume in the fall to review geometrics and environmental studies. The Project Committee will be meeting again in October. The next major project milestone will be the completion of the Draft EIR/EIS, and it is expected there will be lots of community activity leading up to this milestone as community input will help to influence mitigation measures and geometric concerns.

PROCESS CHECK-IN

Ms. Garcia began the process check-in by reviewing the group purpose and charge. She also reviewed the Major Corridor Study, and how that process informed the formation of the Subject Working Groups for the I-710 Corridor Project EIR/EIS. She emphasized that the Project Team intends to support the SWGs in conveying feedback and information to the CAC. She then referred to a display board noting the project goals as they appear in the project Purpose and Need Statement, noting that the Tier 2 report had been used to guide the scope of the project and the development of the project goals. She reviewed each of the goals as follows:

- Improve air quality and public health
- Improve traffic safety

- Address design deficiencies
- Address projected traffic volumes
- Address projected growth in population, employment, and economic activities related to goods movement

Ms. Garcia then asked each person at the table, including ESWG members and members of the Project Team, to share their desired outcomes for the project. Many at the table stated the desired outcome of meeting the project goals. Many also placed particular emphasis on the goal of improving air quality and public health. Other desired project outcomes were captured as follows:

- Consider uneven distribution of impacts among corridor communities (Environmental Justice issues).
- Achieve safe, sustainable (“greener”) goods movement
- Thoroughly analyze goods movement solutions other than heavy-duty diesel trucks
- Carefully analyze the necessity to widen the freeway
- Build a project that works—and can last
- Build a project that interfaces with the best possible zero-emission goods movement system, taking into account the recent port projections indicating delayed growth
- Fully quantify impacts relative to publicly accepted thresholds
- Build a project that everyone can live with
- Achieve greatness in the corridor
- Ensure that the project goals are defined for maximum benefit to the communities
- Avoid new negative impacts
- Ensure that the long construction process doesn’t affect schools and communities negatively

Ernest Morales, project director from Metro emphasized that the I-710 Corridor Project is a community driven project. Port projections are in constant flux, but the communities are the element that remain. Therefore, the project must ultimately serve the corridor communities.

Ms. Garcia thanked everyone for their feedback. She then referred to a display board illustrating the flow of information between the various community groups and committees that form the project’s community participation framework, and how the group’s goals and feedback would be conveyed to the project policy-makers.

- Ian MacMillan of the Los Angeles Unified School District shared the perception that there is apparent consensus among the group on certain items, but that there seems to be some kind of wall that’s inhibiting action on these items.
 - Mr. Morales noted that these are complicated legal, policy, and even societal issues. He ensured the group that the policy makers have heard the group’s

feedback. Often the difficulty is the complexity of the issues, and on some issues, it is not realistic to expect a policy change within the timeframe of the project.

- Ms. Nakamura supported Mr. MacMillan's point by pointing out the note from the previous meeting summary promising Julia Lester's (ENVIRON's) presence at the following meeting.
 - Mr. McCann responded that Ms. Lester was unavailable this evening due to vacation schedule. Additionally, the team felt there would be value to dedicating this evening's meeting to a process check-in. The team will be coming back with a statement on how determinations of significance are made at Caltrans, to supplement the discussion on what is not being done.
 - Ms. Nakamura recommended that the group establish a list of action items at the end of each meeting, and that action items be reported on at the beginning of the following meeting. She also noted that at times the characterization of ESWG discussion feels fragmented and does not capture the nature of the discussion. She suggested that summaries be reviewed by members before they are posted.
- In response to Mr. MacMillan's earlier concern, Devon Cichoski of Metro referred the group to the agenda, noting the time that had been allocated to help the group form their recommendations for the CAC.
 - Ms. McLaughlin suggested that the Project Team work with the ESWG in the time between this evening's meeting and the October Project Committee meeting to shape those recommendations. She referred to the list of studies that certain ESWG members had submitted to the Project Team as an example of a helpful conveyance of information that was useful to the Project Team. She highlighted the complexity of the issues on the table, but emphasized that some changes to the process and protocol had been made based on ESWG recommendations. Other larger issues, as Mr. Morales had stated, may not be able to be addressed within the context of the I-710 Corridor Project.
- ESWG member Andrea Hricko expressed concern that the I-710 Corridor Project is not as community-driven as the Project Team purports. She posited that Metro and Caltrans are actually responding to the interests of the ports and retailers in increasing throughput from Asia, and that the public has had to respond to those interests.
 - Mr. Morales responded that Metro is constantly pushed by the communities to start construction on the project to meet the community's goals. The communities have said that the project horizon is too long for them, so Metro has allocated Measure R funds to initiate over 21 early action projects, with the intention of addressing the communities' issues, including unsafe access points and noise. He emphasized the position that GCCOG and Metro work closely with the communities and are answerable to them.
 - Mr. Logan noted that he has never heard a community member request a wider freeway. He acknowledged that the communities desire improved conditions, but urged the team to consider what this really means in terms of how to address community concerns. It's not necessarily 14 lanes.

- Mr. Pagett suggested that widening is the proven way to meet the goals expressed by the communities.
- Mr. Logan noted that this position is debated.
- Ms. McLaughlin noted that projects like these make it possible to continue developing alternative technologies for goods movement.
 - Speaking from his previous experience as Manager of Infrastructure for Electric Stratification at Edison, Mr. Morales noted that electric vehicles failed only because there was a lack of demand for them. Building on that experience, Mr. Morales echoed that this project—by providing the infrastructure—could build the demand. He stated that his personal goal would be to build a project with a zero emission corridor.

Ms. McLaughlin returned the group's focus to the process check-in, noting that the team would still like to begin recording the group's feedback to deliver to the CAC. She reviewed the CAC's previous recommendations, including, for example, to seek expert legal opinion that contrasts with Caltrans' position on adopting pre-determined significance thresholds. Mr. McCann reminded the group that the Project Team is working on an explanation of how determinations of significance are made at Caltrans.

- Ms. Nakamura referred to the summary of the June CAC meeting, citing Ron Kosinski's quote that "if the project is not found to improve air quality, it will not be built." She asked how improved air quality would be defined, be it at a localized or regional level.
 - Mr. McCann responded that he cannot speak for Mr. Kosinski with certainty, but acknowledged that there may be different definitions of improved air quality. He suggested that the group may want to prepare a statement defining how they would like to see "improved air quality" defined.
 - Ms. Nakamura pressed that the term needs to be defined.
 - Mr. Morales offered that the project may actually improve air quality at a global level, as a large greenhouse gas reducing project.
- Ms. Hricko noted that even if all new vehicles are electric, the impacts of the conventional vehicles on the road will still exist, and perhaps more so because of the widening of the freeway.
 - Mr. Morales responded that with the trends in technology—including rapid development of electric vehicles and the infrastructure to support them, and rising public demand—he would expect to see tremendous growth in the proportion of zero and near-zero emission vehicles on the road. He stated that this project supports continued development of these technologies and enables their use. He further asked the group to consider the scenario in which electric vehicles are used on a non-improved I-710 freeway, noting that air quality goals may be met, but the traffic and safety issues that affect the communities would not be addressed. The communities have urged for improved infrastructure for many reasons.

- Mr. Logan mentioned the need to consider multimodal solutions to get people out of their cars. He noted that it is not apparent that this project is forwarding that objective.
 - Mr. Morales expressed agreement with Mr. Logan's suggestion.
 - Ms. McLaughlin noted that public transportation aspects are often hidden in the way they are embedded in the alternatives as TSM/TDM etcetera.
- Ms. Garcia made a comment on calendar and schedule, noting that the Project Team is willing to dedicate resources to the group so that they can meet enough times to meet their goals. The Project Team can work with the group to develop consensus on recommendations, and package them for the CAC to the group's satisfaction. She noted that immediate action items would be to deliver the recommendations that had been made by the CAC, and also to re-distribute the explanation of the alternatives.
- Mr. Logan noted that the CAC was looking for specific recommendations on the items listed under agenda item IV: significance thresholds, construction impacts, and near-source modeling. The CAC had specifically charged the ESWG with discussing construction impacts.
- ESWG Member Susan Ahn of the Long Beach Unified School District expressed concern over the lack of clarity as to whether recommendations have actually been delivered to the Funding Partners.
 - Mr. Morales asked Mr. Waldron to add Funding Partner actions to his engineering reports.
- Mr. Logan asked about the next level of project related decision-making, beyond the Project Committee.
 - Mr. Morales explained that he makes presentations to the MTA Board on the actions that the Project Committee has taken. The Executive Committee also makes recommendations. MTA Planning and Programming generally receives and files, unless Mr. Morales requests an action.
- Ms. Hricko mentioned that she had heard Mr. Morales speak about electric trucks and programs in a presentation to MTA Planning and Programming, and that this information had taken her by surprise, as it had not come through the community process.
 - Mr. Morales responded that in that particular case, he needed to bring the idea to the Board before presenting it to the public, for the sake of ensuring his organization's support.

LAST POINTS AND NEXT STEPS

The group agreed to discuss the three items under agenda item IV at the next meeting. The project team will prepare a summary of the discussion to date on these items.

- Ms. Nakamura asked whether it would be beneficial to bring ENVIRON back before the group prepares a recommendation.
 - Mr. McCann suggested that the only reason this would be beneficial is if Ms. Lester could clarify certain things that had been presented in the past. He noted

that many handouts and materials have been presented in the meantime explaining what is and is not included in the protocol.

- Ms. Nakamura noted that the materials provided still left some uncertainty as to what exactly would be done as opposed to what may be done in a typical project.
- Mr. MacMillan expressed the concern that while recommendations travel between and among the groups and committees, studies and engineering are being conducted *now*. He asked how the group can be assured that their input can actually influence the process.
 - Ms. McLaughlin identified three kinds of input: “quick fixes” or add-ons, which can be decided upon immediately; process changes, which can often be accommodated to some degree by agency decision-makers; and larger policy issues that need to be considered at the inter-agency or state level, or even the federal level. Some of these larger issues may raise concerns for the group, but the project needs to proceed in the meantime.
- Ms. Nakamura raised a concern with the protocol under section 3-1.b., a summary of additional analyses that are not currently proposed in the I-710 EIR/EIS study related to construction activity. She expressed that her comments are not inconsistent with what her agency had expressed prior, and that she believes she should still be allowed to suggest changes.
 - Mr. McCann referred her to 3-1.a., in which it is explained what is being done. He referenced the matrix of response that LSA and Caltrans had prepared to address the concerns of the CAC and ESWG, and suggested that that information may be helpful to the ESWG in developing further recommendations.
- Ms. Hricko asked whether the Army Corps of Engineers (ACE) is involved in the project.
 - Mr. Waldron noted that ACE would be involved with any interface between the project and the LA River. ACE will also be involved with Clean Water Act compliance.

Mr. Morales recapped the action items that had been discussed:

- Allow the group the opportunity to review and comment on the minutes.
- Review action items from the meeting prior at the beginning of each meeting.
- Recap Funding Partner actions and actions of other committees at the beginning of each meeting.

Ms. Garcia asked the group whether they would like to extend future meetings to 2.5 hours to accommodate the long discussions that typically occur. Mr. MacMillan requested that at a future meeting the group establish a schedule for discussing items such as water and other topics of interest. Ms. Garcia encouraged the group to fill out and return the process questionnaires, which ask for future topics of interest.

Ms. McLaughlin adjourned the meeting at 8:25 p.m.