



Transportation and Transit Subject Working Group

August 17, 2009

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

Gateway Cities Council of Governments Offices

16401 Paramount Blvd.

Paramount, CA 90723

MEETING SUMMARY

INTRODUCTIONS AND MEETING OVERVIEW

On Monday, August 17, 2009, the I-710 Project Team met with the Transportation and Transit Subject Working Group (TSWG) 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 TSWG on March 17, 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.
- Review the screening of alternative goods movement technologies and the development of Project Alternative 6b.
- Present findings from the Rail Yard Gate Survey.
- Review traffic forecasting methodologies and findings.

TSWG members in attendance were John Maniatakis (Vernon LAC); Carol Berkeley (South Gate LAC); Connie Turner (Southern California Edison); Bob Eula (Commerce LAC); and Mario Sotelo (alternate, Commerce LAC). Other meeting attendees included Marisa Olguin (Vernon LAC); Lou Baglietto (Butterfield Communications); David Randall (Montebello Unified School District representative to the Environmental SWG); and Peter Greenwald (SCAQMD).

In attendance from the Project Team were Devon Cichoski (Metro); Jerry Wood (GCCOG); Allison Morrow (Caltrans); Jack Waldron, Dave Levinsohn, and Julie Rush (URS); Jayna Goodman (LSA); and Pat McLaughlin and Jesse Froehlich (MIG).

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.



PROCESS CHECK-IN

Ms. McLaughlin reviewed the project goals with the group, referring to a display board noting the goals as they appear in the project Purpose and Need Statement. She noted that the Tier 2 report had been used to guide the scope of the project and the development of the project goals, which are stated 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. McLaughlin then reviewed the group's purpose and charge, and the flow of information between the various community groups and committees that make up the community participation framework for the I-710 Corridor Project EIR/EIS. She then asked the group to share feedback about the experience of serving on the TSWG.

TSWG member Connie Turner expressed appreciation for the open nature of the community participation framework, and the priority placed on listening to and recording community input. She noted that whether or not all input can be translated into project outcomes, it is important for the community to have the opportunity to provide input.

Ms. McLaughlin asked group members to share their desired project outcomes, which were captured as follows:

- A project that works in the long term, based on careful forethought
- Truck lanes that feed directly into the rail yards, minimizing impacts to local surface streets
- Predictability of follow-through on action items that have been requested by the corridor communities, such as the separation of cars from trucks
- Traffic flow improvement
- Environmental improvement
- Appropriate distance between off ramps
- Minimal impact to Edison facilities

Ms. McLaughlin asked the group for feedback regarding process, and effectiveness of TSWG meetings. She also encouraged the group to share topics of interest for future meetings. Group members shared no comments regarding process.

Some discussion ensued regarding appropriate spacing between freeway off ramps, with some members advocating for more frequent access points, while others stressed the benefits of fewer access points. Ms. McLaughlin suggested that the group review the proposed geometrics at a future meeting, including a discussion of the rationale behind the proposed highway designs.

Jesse Froehlich of MIG encouraged group members to submit additional comments on the provided Process Check-In Questionnaires, or by email.

ALTERNATIVE TECHNOLOGY

Jack Waldron of URS referred the group to printed handouts on the screening of alternative technologies, noting that this topic was being addressed again because of recent questions regarding alternative technologies by the Environmental Subject Working Group.

Mr. Waldron gave a brief history of the screening of alternative technologies, beginning with a 2008 study that focused on new goods movement technologies, how viable they are, and how they might be implemented in the context of the I-710 Corridor Project. In 2009, the Project Team began screening the technologies, not for the purpose of selecting a specific technology, but to determine which types of technology may be viable to incorporate into the I-710 Corridor Project. One of the goals of the screening process was to leave a broad range of technologies under consideration. As a follow-up to the screening, the team is currently engaged in industry outreach, with the goal of further monitoring the development of alternative goods movement technologies.

Mr. Waldron reviewed the two families of technologies that were included in the Project Alternatives based on initial screening results: (1) automated fixed guideway systems, and (2) zero emission trucks. In the initial screening efforts, electric trucks outperformed automated fixed guideway systems against the criteria of operational characteristics, cost, environmental impacts, ability to accommodate growth in cargo volume, technology capabilities, design and implementation, and fulfillment of the project's overall purpose and need.

Group questions and comments regarding alternative technologies included:

- TSWG member John Maniatakis asked whether we will have enough power to accommodate electric trucks.
 - The Project Team is working with Edison to accommodate future demand. There is also an effort to utilize more green power, and building transmission for wind/solar from high desert
- Mr. Maniatakis also asked about operating costs
 - Trucks were less costly than fixed guideway systems in terms of both capital and operating costs. Fixed guideways have estimated capital costs of \$13 billion, compared to only \$3 billion for zero emission trucks. This is due to the infrastructure requirements for fixed guideway systems.
- TSWG member Carol Berkeley asked why the Project Alternatives preserve the possibility of an automated fixed guideway system if trucks have proven to be less impactful and more economical
 - Stakeholders would like to see continued development of fixed guideway technology. Although the proposed alternatives would accommodate a fixed guideway system, these systems will not be studied explicitly in the EIR/EIS.
- Ms. Berkeley asked what it would take to convert existing trucks to compressed natural gas (CNG), as Metro has done with buses.
 - Mr. Waldron responded that while CNG is a low emission technology, it is not zero emission.

- Ms. McLaughlin noted that when Metro first brought on CNG buses it required new and different fueling facilities because of the different requirements of CNG versus diesel or gasoline.
- Mr. Waldron added that the trucking industry is now looking at hybrid CNG/electric technology.
- Jerry Wood of GCCOG reminded the group that CNG trucks (as well as newer diesel trucks) will be evaluated under Alternative 6a, which is projecting what conventional trucks may be like in 2035.
- David Randall of Montebello Unified School District commented that CNG conversions are not as easy or efficient as building CNG engines from the ground up. Fueling infrastructure must also be planned for.
- Mario Sotelo asked about the cost of underground versus overhead powering infrastructure for electric trucks.
 - Underground technology is newer, and therefore likely to be more expensive. If hybrid trucks are used, they would not need electric powering infrastructure off the freeway.
- Mr. Wood noted that Alternative 6b is intentionally “technology neutral” so that technologies can continue to be explored, and the community can continue to develop desired outcomes related to implementation of alternative technologies. The intention of this approach is to determine how to operate a freight corridor to the benefit of the communities, and consistent with the project purpose and need.
 - Mr. Waldron added that the industry outreach has generated lots of interest among the technology industries, and the team is enthusiastic about continued development of the technologies.

RAIL YARD GATE SURVEY

Julie Rush of URS introduced the Rail Yard Gate Survey, explaining that its purpose was to close the information gap related to non-port truck trips, and to help the agencies understand where these non-port trucks are coming from, and where they are going. The study consisted of a short-form survey that was given to truck drivers to determine domestic intermodal truck patterns from BNSF and Union Pacific rail yards. Each rail yard was surveyed for two days, which generated 2500 valid surveys. The surveys focused on three questions:

- Which city are you going to/coming from?
- What freeway did you use?
- If you used the I-710, what was your entrance or exit?

The study found that the largest share of non-port trucks is going to and coming from the Gateway Cities and the Inland Empire, followed by East LA County. Long Beach and Ontario are the biggest feeder cities for truck traffic to Union Pacific, while Carson, Vernon, Santa Fe Springs, and Ontario are the biggest feeder cities for BNSF.

The largest share of trucks approach the rail yards from the north on I-710, though many also approach from the south on I-710. Some come in on the I-5 and take surface streets into the rail yards, avoiding the I-710 altogether. SR 60 is the most common feeder route to the I-710 and I-5 freeways.

A TSWG member asked how port trips compare to non-port trips. Ms. Rush responded that she did not know, but that the information is readily available from the ports.

TRAFFIC FORECASTING

Dave Levinsohn of URS gave an overview of the traffic forecasting methodology and results for the I-710 Corridor Project study area, which includes the 110 to the west, the 605 to the east, and the major crossing freeways and surface streets contained within the study area.

The model framework is based on the SCAG model with an additional cargo component from the ports. The I-710 model is further refined with “down-to-the-hour, down-to-the-ramp” detail, specific to the I-710 study area. The model allows the Project Team to compare the Project Alternatives in terms of mobility and air quality. It also provides detailed traffic estimates by specific freeway segment and on specific ramps, to evaluate how well each alternative would serve projected traffic volumes.

As the Project Alternatives are based on the planning horizon year 2035, certain assumptions for the future have been incorporated, including socio-economic inputs of population growth and employment rates. The operating assumption for cargo volumes is 43 million annual twenty-foot equivalent units (TEU’s), which is based on port projections for 2035.

Daily vehicle miles traveled (VMT) are projected to grow to 46 million by 2035, from 42 million daily VMT currently. Corresponding vehicle hours of delay are expected to increase by 300,000 by 2035. Mr. Levinsohn explained that the Project Alternatives are designed to address increased traffic volumes and reduce delays. Alternative 5a reduces vehicle hours of delay by almost 20,000, and Alternatives 6a and 6b almost double that time savings.

Group questions and comments regarding traffic forecasting included:

- A TSWG member asked whether expansion to ten lanes would reduce travel time to the ports
 - Yes, but Mr. Levinsohn was unsure how much
- Mr. Maniatakis expressed doubt that cities would really allow trucks on arterials without slowing them down with traffic lights, which would, in turn, discourage trucks from traveling the surface streets.
 - The model does not assume that the cities would enhance arterial capacity to serve truck trips, but it does assume that more trucks will try to use existing lanes because of anticipated freeway congestion.
 - There was some discussion about the “what ifs” implied by city ordinances and policy action, and how those “what ifs” might be addressed in the traffic model.
- Following some discussion of energy issues, Ms. Turner noted that in the case of all forecasts—including traffic, energy, and other forecasts—it must be recognized that the context may change significantly in the future.

CONCLUSION

Ms. McLaughlin thanked the group for the discussion on desired outcomes, and expressed that meeting discussions are essential for ensuring that the project meet those outcomes. She then asked the group for desired future meeting topics. These include:

- Discussion of rationale for geometric designs
- Presentation from the ports regarding response to the economic downturn and recent reduced cargo volumes
- Update on power supply from Edison, especially with regard to the assumptions that affect the I-710 Corridor Project

Ms. McLaughlin reminded members of the Corridor Advisory Committee meeting taking place the following week, noting that the CAC may identify more issues that they would like the TSWG to discuss per the charge of the Subject Working Groups. She encouraged TSWG members to attend the CAC meeting.

Mr. Eula expressed a final concern with direct access to the rail yards for trucks, stating that he has yet to hear confirmation from the rail yards that they are in fact supporting direct access. Mr. Waldron assured the group that the rail yards are in support of the proposed geometrics, which include direct access to the rail yards. This solution is of benefit to the rail yards as well as the communities.

Ms. McLaughlin adjourned the meeting at 8:20 p.m.