



Vernon LAC Meeting #4

April 15, 2009
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
3801 Santa Fe Avenue, Vernon

MEETING SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

On Wednesday, April 15, 2009, the City of Vernon held their fourth Local Advisory Committee (LAC) meeting at the Vernon Chamber of Commerce. 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.

Present at the meeting were LAC members Marisa Olguin and John Maniatakis. In attendance from the Project Team were Devon Cichoski (Metro), Dave Levinsohn (URS); and Jesse Froehlich (MIG).

Jesse Froehlich of MIG called the meeting to order at 10:15 and thanked participants for coming. She gave a quick review of the committee meeting calendar, including the TAC meeting taking place later the same afternoon; the Corridor Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting to be held the following evening, April 16; and the Project Committee meeting on April 30, where the TAC would be making a recommendation on alternatives to study in the EIR/EIS.

SUBJECT WORKING GROUP REPORT

Devon Cichoski of Metro gave an update on the most recent Subject Working Group (SWG) activities, and encouraged the Vernon LAC to participate actively in the SWGs.

Environmental Subject Working Group (ESWG)

The ESWG has been debating the Air Quality/Health Risk Assessment (AQ/HRA) Draft Protocols, which outline how to proceed with quantifying air pollutants and correlating



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them with health risks in the project corridor. The ESWG has been advocating for qualitative assessments in cases where quantitative analysis is not possible, and for quantifying construction impacts.

Community Design and Local Economy Subject Working Group (CSWG)

The CSWG has been discussing design themes, including elements such as sound walls, landscaping, bridge design, and beautification and enhancement measures.

Transportation and Transit Subject Working Group (TSWG)

The TSWG has been discussing zero tailpipe emission alternative technologies that are incorporated in some of the project alternatives. These include Zero Emission Trucks and Automated Fixed Guideway technologies.

PROJECT UPDATE

Ms. Cichoski introduced Dave Levinsohn of URS, who gave a brief overview of the project history and development of the Locally Preferred Strategy (LPS), which had emerged at the conclusion of the Major Corridor Study in 2004. The LPS was carried into the current phase of study as Alternative 6. Now the Project Team is seeking input on how to refine the current six alternatives into a maximum of four, to be recommended for more detailed study in the EIR/EIS.

ALTERNATIVES SCREENING

Mr. Levinsohn referred the LAC to PowerPoint handouts that outlined the current six alternatives, which build on each other such that each alternative includes the elements from the previous alternative. Mr. Levinsohn emphasized that the current set of alternatives was developed to reassess the LPS, projecting impacts further into the future (while Major Corridor Study had assessed impacts for the year 2025, the current study is projecting impacts for 2035) and adding a zero tailpipe emissions alternative technologies component, which had not been part of the original LPS.

Mr. Levinsohn then went on to review the alternatives with the group, engaging in discussion throughout the presentation. Points, questions, and clarifications that arose during the group discussion on Alternatives Screening included:

Alternative 1: No Build

- The “No Build” scenario (Alternative 1) assumes completion of pre-approved projects and increased goods movement by rail.
- On-dock rail currently represents a 20% share of all cargo, and this share is projected to double to 40% by 2035. In absolute terms, however, on-dock rail volume will more than double because the overall cargo volume is also expected to rise.
- The Alameda Corridor is currently operating at around 50% capacity. It had been designed to accommodate cargo volume growth projected through 2020, and is roughly on track with what had been planned.

- How will other projects such as the widening of the Panama Canal and expansion of ports in Oakland and Mexico affect cargo volumes on the I-710 Corridor?
 - With the large volume of cargo that comes through the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, other port expansions will not have a large effect on cargo volumes coming through the San Pedro Bay.
- What about cargo being diverted to other ports because of fees?
 - Even with the imposition of fees, it has continued to be the most economical option for many to import through POLA and POLB. The fees, in turn, are applied to infrastructure enhancements (goods movement and storage), so they have proved to be a win-win.
- How to mitigate noise impacts for people who live near cargo facilities?
 - Noise is a difficult issue. There tends to be a trade-off between noise and other benefits, such as improved air quality, mobility, and the economy. The rest of the alternatives include public transit options, which are a large benefit to the impacted communities.

Alternative 2: Transportation System Management/Transportation Demand Management/Intelligent Transportation Systems/Transit

There were no comments on this alternative.

Alternative 3: Enhanced Goods Movement by Rail and/or Advanced Technology

- With regard to Zero Emission Trucks, would we expect problems with electrical power supply if there is suddenly a large surge in overnight demand for electricity as trucks (and other battery applications that may proliferate in parallel) need to recharge?
 - This is not expected to be a problem because SCE and LADWP are keyed into trends of changing technology and are likely to respond to a rise in demand. Also, clean technologies are developing to supplement the current electrical supply, and improved energy efficiency is expected to offset some of the demand. It is a benefit that the additional load requirement will come at night, not overlapping with current daytime peak load periods.
- Battery technology is improving. The Chinese have designed a truck battery with a 100-mile range.
- Maglev technology would require over 60 miles of guideway to connect the ports to the railyards even though the ports and railyards are only about 16-miles apart. This is due to the extra guideway length needed to connect from each port terminal to the I-710 freight corridor alignment.
- What about electrifying rail?
 - The projections the region and our study are using imply that the regional railroad train capacity will be fully utilized by 2035. Even with rail lines moving cargo at full capacity, cargo forecasts indicate that about 60% of containers would still need to be moved on trucks. In addition, electrifying the railroads is a regional, if not national program, as electrification is not practical on only segments of the railroad system.

- Expanding on the idea of flexibility that comes with trucks and overhead catenary wires, what about a truck that's designed to travel on or off of guideway tracks?
 - A key objective of the study is to make sure the space and infrastructure are in place for any technologies—such as this LAC member's suggestion— that may become viable in the near future.
- Will port unions be resistant to the advent of advanced technology because it reduces the demand for direct labor?
 - As always, negotiations will need to take place in order to accommodate change. While advanced technologies may not require as many operators, they are likely to require more maintenance, so workers may need to be re-trained to perform different tasks. One LAC member noted that often unskilled labor cannot be trained for skilled jobs. The group noted the societal challenge of creating a more skilled labor pool.

Alternative 4: Arterial& I-710 Congestion Relief Improvements

There were no comments on this alternative.

Alternatives 5a and 5b: Mainline Improvements

- With dedicated truck lanes, trucks would still be allowed in general purpose lanes (GPL) because of the need for shorter-distance on/off access, but percentages of trucks traveling in the general purpose lanes will be lowest if there are four truck lanes. There would be five points of entry/exit to the truck lanes.

Alternative 6: Hybrid LPS

- This alternative includes direct access ramps to/from from the Hobart and East Los Angeles railyards.

Alternatives Screening and TAC Recommendation

Mr. Levinsohn outlined the six screening criteria used to evaluate the six alternatives. This preliminary phase of screening is designed to give results that will allow the 710 committees to decide which alternatives to study in greater detail. He then went on to share the recommendation the TAC is planning to present to the Project Committee on April 30 regarding which alternatives to study in the EIR/EIS. These are:

- Alternative 1, the No Build scenario, which is required as a baseline.
- Alternative 5a, Mainline Improvements with 10 GPL.
- Alternative 6a, the Hybrid LPS.
- Alternative 6b, the Hybrid LPS with the addition of zero tailpipe emissions alternative goods movement technologies. This alternative will be assessed with the assumption that the truck-only lanes will be used exclusively by electric trucks, with the potential for future development of an automated fixed guideway system or other, as yet to be developed, zero emission container movement technology.

Mr. Levinsohn explained that this selection of alternatives allows for a solid analysis of the incremental costs and benefits of the individual improvements that are suggested in

each alternative. For example, Alternative 5a versus 6a allows the Project Team to study the incremental benefits to adding dedicated freight lanes. Alternative 6b was developed after the initial round of screening to allow the Project Team to assess the incremental benefit of adding alternative technologies to the LPS. The alternative technologies had not been introduced to the project at the time the LPS was developed, but generated lots of support from the I-710 communities, committees and working groups in this phase of the project.

Mr. Levinsohn then asked the LAC for their reaction to the TAC's proposed recommendation. The group supported the recommendation overall, raising the following points:

- Mr. Maniatakis had favored maglev technology, but after the group's discussion, he was in favor of Alternative 6b including Zero Emission Trucks.
- Ms. Olguin supports the idea of four dedicated truck lanes with five access points.
- Mr. Maniatakis supports the way the alternatives really minimize right-of-way impacts.
- Ms. Olguin stressed that health concerns are a top priority for most of the corridor communities, and that the alternatives seem to show that alternative technologies can really help balance health impacts with freight movement needs, which are of top concern in Vernon.

Before the meeting concluded, Ms. Cichoski noted that the CAC would be going over the same presentation the following evening, and encouraged the Vernon LAC members to attend.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:15 p.m.