



Metro

Meeting Notes

Subject: **Congestion Reduction Demonstration Project “FastLanes”**
 I-10 Corridor Advisory Group (CAG)

Date: Monday, February 2, 2009

Time: 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Location: Monterey Park Bruggemeyer Library, 318 S. Ramona Ave., Monterey Park, CA 91754

In Attendance:

CAG Members	Organization
Marianne Kim	Southern California Auto Club
Alex Gonzalez	City of Covina
Howard Sherman	Music Center
Kevin McDonald	Foothill Transit
Rob Charles	Assemblymember Hernandez
Ted Powl	San Dimas Chamber of Commerce
Monica Aleman	Assemblymember Eng
Bob Isomoto	East LA College
Dave Gondek	City of El Monte
Rene Bobudilla	City of El Monte
Eugene Moy	City of El Monte
Jonathan Avalos	CSULA Public Safety
Ken Wong	Asian American Architects & Engineers Association
Christina Romero	Representative Waxman
Dr. Mary Gallagher	Los Angeles Trade-Technical College
Presenters	Organization
Lynda Bybee	Metro
Stephanie Wiggins	Metro
Conan Cheung	Metro
Charles Fuhs	PB
Sgt. Michael Stefanoff	CHP
Other Attendees	Organization
Officer Jennifer Connelly	CHP
Susan Gilmore	Metro
Shahrzad Amiri	Metro
Paula Faust	Metro
Annelle Albarra	Metro
Ben Jong	Metro
Alice Wiggins	PB
Charles Fuhs	PB
Heidi Stamm	HSPA
Barry Sedlick	Titan
Pat McLaughlin, MIG	SCAG Consultant
Dan Beal, MIG	SCAG Consultant
Representative	Monterey Park Traffic Commission
Roxi Reeves	LA Group
Veronica De Silva	LA Group
Edgar Gutierrez	LA Group
Kwame Smith	LA Group

I. Introductions

Lynda Bybee facilitated the meeting, welcomed and thanked the participants for their attendance at our second quarter CAG meetings. CAG members were asked to introduce themselves. Hand-outs were sent prior to the meetings via e-mail so that participants would have the opportunity to review the materials which included: meeting notes from the November CAG meetings, the meeting agenda, the CAG Roster and a list of other HOT lane projects in the United States. These materials were also provided in hard copy at each of the three meetings.

II. Concept of Operations

- Stephanie Wiggins - Project Overview & Current Status
 - Project background/history was provided.
 - “FastLanes” was made possible through a federal grant.
 - A key component of our outreach efforts are the CAG meetings.
 - Regarding project goals, we want to manage the flow of traffic and maximize capacity.
 - We are looking to improve the quality of all the various modes of transportation.
 - An extensive community outreach plan is very important, as we are looking at a number of different improvements.
 - FastLanes Budget is \$291M (50% transit facility; 20% transit operations; 5% parking management; 25% toll technology and infrastructure).

- Conan Cheung – Transit Operations & Transit Facilities
 - In order for this project to be successful, 1) we need to make sure there is enough bus service; 2) bus service needs to be attractive in order to compete with automobiles.
 - There needs to be increased bus service on each corridor.
 - One component is to put a portion of the funding toward transit priority.
 - Our goal is to form 100 new vanpools “FastLanes.”
 - Regarding transit facilities, El Monte Busway/Transit Plaza Connector and El Monte Transit Center will be funded and there will be additional parking at Pomona Transit Center.
 - Additional improvements include Harbor Transit Facility, increased safety measures and more frequent service.

- Stephanie Wiggins - Intelligent Parking Management (IPM)
 - IPM goal is to reduce the time spent “cruising” for parking spots.
 - We want to improve the image of the “FastLanes” project and encourage the public to shift their mode of transit. We are looking at new parking technology and demand-based parking.
 - One project benefit is to relieve congestion.

- Charles Fuhs - Tolling
 - We have lost efficiency on carpool lanes.
 - How does pricing work? If demand can be handled with a higher volume, the price will decrease.
 - “Free” users would be carpoolers (e.g. 2+ and 3+).
 - How do you pay? By use of a transponder.
 - We want to be able to provide full information to each operator about how much it cost to use the HOT lanes.
 - Concept of Operations: All tolls would be electronic “open-road” tolling. Dynamic, segmented pricing assembled by trip. There is the potential for differential payment.
 - There will be guarantee of 45 mph, by limiting access to vehicles via demand pricing and number of people per vehicle.

- The goal is to make public transit use a viable option at any time of the day.
- The El Monte Busway will be re-stripped to create two HOT lanes. The I-110 Adams Blvd off-ramp will be re-stripped to create another right hand turn lane and Adams Blvd will be widened between the off-ramp and Flower Street to add a left hand turn to improve traffic flow.
- Sgt. Michael Stefanoff - Enforcement Strategy
 - Enforcement would not change for these two corridors. California Highway Patrol (CHPs) is a state agency and state enforcement policies are uniform.
 - Enforcement for the HOT lanes will fall under the California Highway Patrol Code of Regulations “2300” series. There are 3 sections that regulate the avoidance of a toll.
 - The sticker or the mechanism that will be utilized must be in a designated location on the windshield. It must be affixed and needs to be properly displayed. With regard to enforcement, CHP will look for the proper display of the transponder, as well as, ensuring that the transponders are being read.
 - Refusal to pay a toll would be a violation.
 - The CHP will have dedicated officers for this program. This will be part of their daily responsibilities.
 - Depending on the technology that will be used our enforcement strategy may be altered.

III. CAG Members - Questions & Comments

▪Toll Technology and Infrastructure

- Will there be an increase in cost in order to implement enforcement? (Rob Charles)
- How will the transponder be able to determine the number of people in a vehicle?
- Will there be a fine or penalty? If so, which agency would oversee the administration of that penalty?
- The process could be subject to human error. In that event is there an appeal policy in place?
- At this time, on the I-10, there are no physical barriers. As part of this project, will physical barriers be constructed?
- What about excess revenue for tolls? After the one year demonstration project will the revenue go towards paying for lanes? If so, how much will be invested in the corridor?
- Is there a guarantee that the excess revenue from the tolls will be reinvested in the San Gabriel Valley?)
- Will there be different maximum toll amounts for the two corridors?
- Has an estimate regarding the cost of a violation during peak hours been determined?
- With increased vigilance the capacity will improve.
- How will you advertise the prices of the tolls?
- What are the improvements that will be implemented?

▪Intelligent Parking Management

- In which corridor will the Intelligent Parking Management be utilized?
- How many parking spaces are available in Downtown?
- Will the revenue from the meters go to the LA General Fund?

IV. Survey Questions for CAG Members

- Lynda Bybee presented the CAG members with a series of 5 questions to provoke discussion and ideas.
 1. What aspects of the project interest you most?

Transit Operations

- The result of less congestion will be appealing particularly because Cal State LA is a commuter school. (Jonathan Avalos)
- The transportation improvements, distribution of funding and impact on arterials.
- Getting people/our patrons to Downtown especially during rush hour?

- Will commuter lots be expanded? The availability of additional money to supplement buses/vans.
- Participation of local/small businesses.
- Time savings and a return to an “acceptable” transit speed.

Toll Technology and Infrastructure

- The cost of the tolls, mitigation measures, end-user and how user-friendly is this process. How easy will it be to educate public and facilitate enforcement?
- The on/off ramps interaction with the toll lanes and mitigation measures regarding impacts to local streets
- Procedurally, how will tolls be raised? How will money be used? The enforcement issue is huge. Overall how will congestion be decreased on both HOV and general use lanes?

Intelligent Parking Management

- What impact will the Intelligent Parking Management have on LA Trade Tech? Currently we have huge parking issues. LA Trade Tech could provide personnel/training.

2. What would you be looking for as an advocate for this project?

Community Outreach

- Bringing people closer to the Downtown area. Potential partnership with LA Trade Tech.
- Communicate to the public that the “lanes” are being improved.
- Congestion relief, increased speed and reinvestment of excess revenue.
- Restore integrity to the travel time ratio. Duration of commute needs to be addressed.
- Reduce travel time, improved air quality and enforcement.

3. What are the most important messages that the project team needs to provide to the public, to get better understanding of project? We need to entice people. What are critical messages to get attention and be a selling point?

Community Outreach

- Communicate that you are “improving” lanes.
- Forward thinking is part of the solution. There is a misperception of the process. The public needs to understand that their taxes are paying for the improvements to the lane not the existing lane itself.
- In general the perception is that toll roads are inequitable. Even the name “congestion pricing” creates this perception. There are universal benefits.
- This is a comprehensive approach to traffic management it is not financially based/driven.
- The toll issue needs to be de-emphasized. The press will pick up on that. The totality and benefits of the project need to be promoted.

4. From what other sources are you learning about this project?

Community Outreach

- I have studied this at Cal Poly and personal use.
- None
- No other
- Research/conference papers
- My son uses the 91. Older people will be more resistant to this concept than younger people.
- People need to understand the original meaning of the word “Freeways.”

5. Any suggestions that the project team needs to provide more information?

Community Outreach

- Your message needs to be loud and clear that the Congestion Reduction Demonstration Project will improve the quality of people's lives. "FastLanes" is a chance to give people back their lives.
- Metro should be transparent with respect to ridership numbers and data. Communicate why this is a good project.
- Hours of operation for the buses for theatre/Downtown patrons.
- Provide examples of other similar successful projects.
- Do we have any estimates as to the amount of time a commute will be reduced?
- Are there any vehicle maximum weight control limitations?
- Are there any AQMD contradictions?

V. Closing Remarks & Next Steps

Lynda thanked all participants for sharing their time and contributions. She reiterated that the CAG meetings would occur on a quarterly basis. Additionally, Metro would like to arrange a summit meeting which would convene all three of the CAGs (I-10, I-110 North & I-110 South). Continued communication and participation was encouraged.