

9.0 SELECTION OF A PREFERRED STRATEGY

9.1 Decision-Making Process

The Oversight Policy Committee was vested by the four study funding partners (MTA, Caltrans, Gateway COG and SCAG) with decision making authority for the I-710 Major Corridor Study, including selection of the Locally Preferred Strategy (LPS). As described in Section 1.3 of this report, the Oversight Policy Committee is comprised of elected officials from participating cities and the County of Los Angeles; executive managers and/or senior staff from three of the principal partners (MTA, Caltrans, and SCAG); and a Commissioner from each of the Ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles. The Oversight Policy Committee is advised by three sets of advisory committees – the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and the Tier 1 and Tier 2 Community Advisory Committees (CACs). The I-710 TAC was created at the onset of the study and is made up of technical and engineering staff from the municipalities located within the I-710 Study Area; the principal study partners; the Ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles; and staff from the Federal Highway Administration/Federal Transit Administration (FHWA/FTA), Southern California Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD), the California Highway Patrol (CHP), and other stakeholders such as the Automobile Club of Southern California.

The MTA Board directed staff to establish a community advisory committee for the I-710 Major Corridor Study in May 2003 in response to concerns expressed by the communities regarding the potential impacts of the final set of five alternatives when these were made public in the spring of 2003. This concept was fully endorsed by the Oversight Policy Committee, which then took steps in early summer of 2003 to develop and implement a tiered community advisory committee structure for the I-710 Study to strengthen the level of public input for project decision-making. Each city is different and the tiering structure of the I-710 Community Advisory Committees needed to be able to respond to the organizational framework and processes within each city. The membership, tiering structure, roles and responsibilities, and key activities of the Community Advisory Committee(s) are detailed in Section 2.5 of this report.

After receiving reports from the advisory committees, the Oversight Policy Committee deliberated and made a decision regarding a Locally Preferred Strategy in November 2004. The foundation for the I-710 Locally Preferred Strategy was the recommendations made by the advisory committees on the Hybrid Strategy as well as policy and operational considerations raised by the public and these committees. This process is described further in Section 9.2 of this report. The OPC's LPS decision was then forwarded to the MTA Board of Directors for consideration.

On January 2005, the MTA Board adopted the I-710 Locally Preferred Strategy. The MTA is vested by the state with planning and programming authority for transportation projects within Los Angeles County. MTA's Long Range Transportation Plan guides transportation development in Los Angeles County over a period of twenty-five years. It identifies strategic priorities for projects and services that are regionally significant, but require new or additional revenue sources. The LRTP is essentially a blueprint for transportation improvements. The Locally Preferred Strategy for the I-710 Corridor defines the physical and operational transportation improvements and policies that are approved for further development and implementation in the I-710 Corridor over the next 25 years. The I-710 Locally Preferred Strategy becomes a component of MTA's Long Range Transportation Plan.

Subsequent also to its adoption by the MTA Board, the I-710 Locally Preferred Strategy is forwarded to SCAG for inclusion in the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), which is the official long range transportation plan for the six-county SCAG region. Upon inclusion in the Regional Transportation Plan, the I-710 Locally Preferred Strategy becomes eligible for federal funding participation. SCAG is also charged with the responsibility of assessing the adequacy of the I-710 Major Corridor Study based upon regional and federal guidelines for these types of studies, which are called Regionally Significant Transportation Investment Studies (RSTIS). This assessment is conducted by the RSTIS Peer Review Group, which is comprised of staff from study sponsors, SCAG, Caltrans, the county transportation agencies/authorities, state and federal resource agencies, FHWA and FTA. The committee has determined that the I-710 Major Corridor Study has appropriately followed the RSTIS guidelines; a letter of completion was prepared and forwarded to SCAG's Transportation and Communications Committee for their endorsement.

Sections 9.2, 9.3, and 9.4 elaborate on these steps of the I-710 Major Corridor Study decision making process.

9.2 I-710 Oversight Policy Committee Actions

The I-710 Oversight Policy Committee met on September 30, 2004 to receive the reports from the Tier 2 Community Advisory Committee and the Technical Advisory Committee, as well as public comment related to both reports. The recommendations of these two advisory committees are summarized in Sections 7.0 and 8.0 of this report. After consideration of these two reports, the Oversight Policy Committee then met on November 18, 2004 and adopted the Locally Preferred Strategy for the I-710 Major Corridor Study. In addition, they adopted four recommendations providing direction and guidance for the future phases of project development and on companion actions. The full text of these adopted actions are included in Appendix U of this report.

9.2.1 I-710 Locally Preferred Strategy

The Oversight Policy Committee approved the recommended Hybrid Design Concept and the related supporting elements as the Locally Preferred Strategy for the I-710 Corridor:

- Hybrid Design Concept, which consists of ten (10) mixed flow lanes, specified interchange improvements, and four (4) truck lanes between the intermodal rail-yards in Vernon/Commerce and Ocean Boulevard in Long Beach
- Alternative B – Transportation System Management/Transportation Demand Management (TSM/TDM) Improvements
- Improvement to arterial highways within the I-710 Corridor
- Construction of truck inspection facilities to be integrated with the selected overall design concept

The Locally Preferred Strategy adds general purpose capacity to I-710, as well as separating trucks from autos to the fullest extent feasible by adding truck-only lanes. By definition, the Locally Preferred Strategy includes all of the transportation projects of the No Build Alternative (Alternative A) as these comprise the future year 2025 condition in the I-710 Corridor. As described above, the Locally Preferred Strategy also includes all of the programs, policies, and strategies from Alternative B, the Transportation Systems Management/ Transportation Demand Management Alternative.

The Oversight Policy Committee, as part of the LPS decision, also committed to an additional “mini” study of the segment of the Corridor between Atlantic/Bandini and SR-60 to determine an acceptable design concept and scope for that segment of the Corridor. The results of this mini-study will be reviewed by the impacted Tier 1 Community Advisory Committees, the Tier 2 Community Advisory Committee, and the Technical Advisory Committee. These advisory committee recommendations will be considered by the Oversight Policy Committee prior to its adoption of the design concept and scope for this segment of the Corridor, which will then be referred to the MTA for inclusion in the I-710 Locally Preferred Strategy. It is anticipated that these efforts will be concluded by Summer 2005.

The cost of the I-710 Locally Preferred Strategy is estimated to be at least \$4.95 billion in 2004 dollars, which includes the estimated costs of the Hybrid Design Concept up to Washington Blvd. and the TSM/TDM elements, but excludes the as yet to be specified arterial street improvements, the truck inspection facilities, or any improvements to I-710 north of Washington Blvd.

Specific components of the I-710 Locally Preferred Strategy are defined as follows.

Hybrid Design Concept

Refer to Figure 9.2-1 for a map of the I-710 Hybrid Design Concept. The I-710 Hybrid Design Concept is made up of the following elements:









Exclusive Truck Facility on I-710

- 4 lanes (2 in each direction) mostly at-grade between Ocean Boulevard and the intermodal rail-yards in Vernon/Commerce, with the truck lanes being elevated at the following locations: near the SR-91 interchange; north of I-105 near Imperial Highway; and north of Slauson Avenue.
- Dedicated ingress/egress points for trucks at selected locations: north of Ocean Boulevard (ingress northbound, egress southbound); north of I-405 (ingress northbound, egress southbound); SR-91 interchange (NB I-710 to EB SR-91, WB SR-91 to SB I-710, EB SR-91 to NB I-710, and SB I-710 to WB SR-91); south of Firestone Boulevard (ingress southbound, egress northbound); and north of Atlantic/Bandini Boulevard (ingress southbound, egress northbound).
- Horizontal alignment is generally as follows:
 - Split on both sides of I-710 from Ocean Boulevard to north of Pacific Coast Highway.
 - Decked over I-710 for a short stretch north of Pacific Coast Highway to Willow Street.
 - On the east side of I-710 from north of Pacific Coast Highway to south of Imperial Highway, largely (though not entirely) within the existing State right-of-way or the Southern California Edison right-of-way.
 - Decked over the northbound I-710 for a short stretch south of Imperial Highway.
 - On the west side of I-710 from Imperial Highway to Gage Avenue.

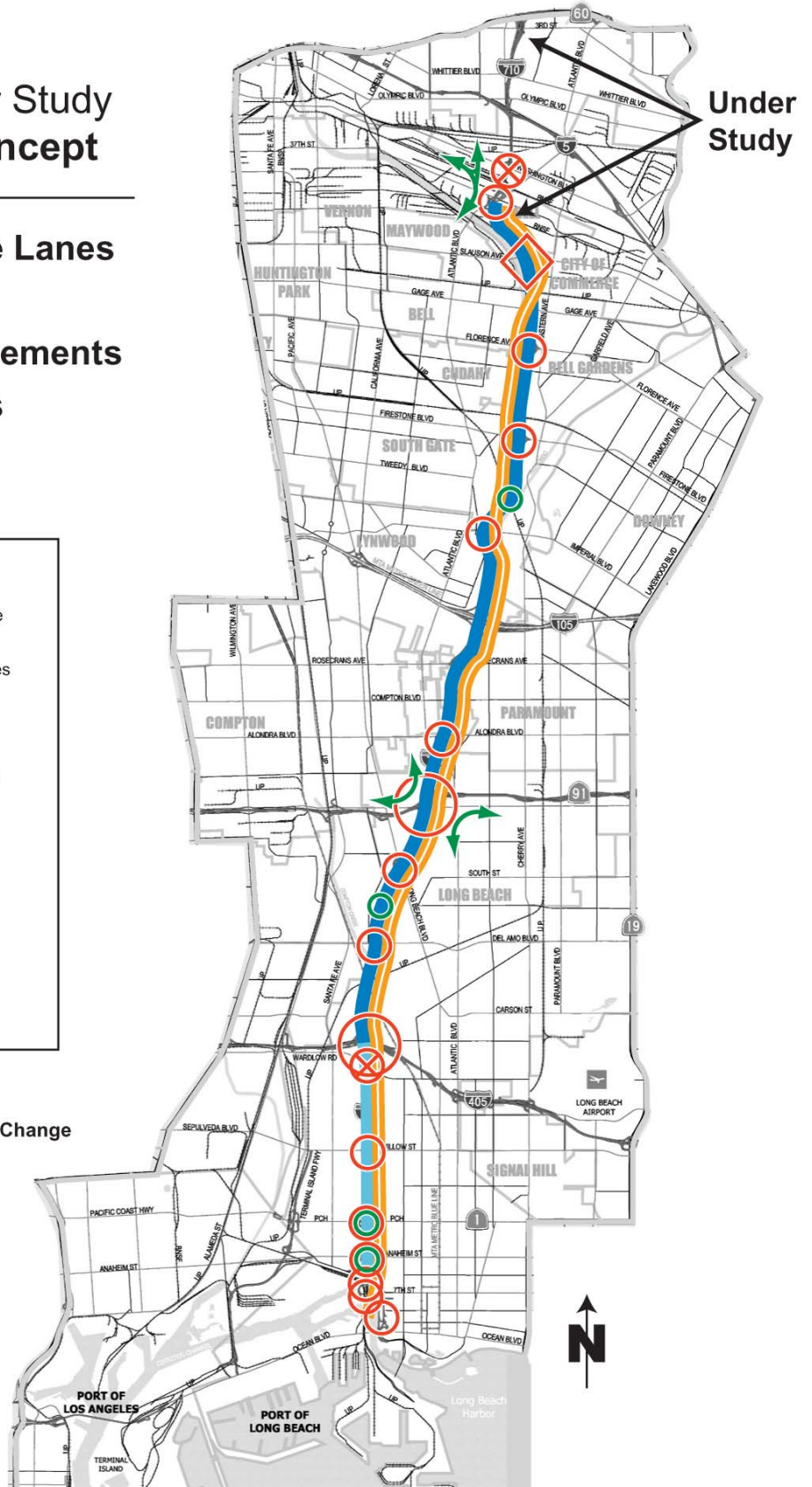
Figure 9.2-1

I-710 Major Corridor Study Hybrid Design Concept

- 10 General Purpose Lanes
- 4-Lane Truckway
- Interchange Improvements
- Direct Truck Ramps

LEGEND	
	Add One Mixed Flow Lane (Each Direction)
	Add Two Mixed Flow Lanes (Each Direction)
	Exclusive Truck Facility
	Interchange Improvement
	New Interchange
	Eliminate Interchange
	Truck Ramps
	Truck Ingress/Egress

Preliminary Concepts, Subject to Change



Source: Jerry Wood, Consultant, in association with MMA, Inc. and Nolan Consulting, Inc., April 2004

- On the east side of I-710 from Gage Avenue to Bandini Boulevard.
- Split on both sides of I-710 from Bandini Boulevard to south of Washington Boulevard.

General Purpose Traffic Improvements on I-710

- One additional general purpose lane in each direction from Ocean Boulevard to the Shoemaker Bridge.
- Two additional general purpose lanes in each direction from Shoemaker Bridge to I-405.
- One additional general purpose lane in each direction from I-405 to Atlantic Boulevard.
- Shifting the freeway centerline at various locations between Shoemaker Bridge and Atlantic Boulevard to attempt to minimize right-of-way impacts.

Interchange Improvements – Truck-Related

- Add a truck interchange on the exclusive truck facility providing a northbound exit ramp and a southbound entrance ramp viaduct for trucks only along Sheila Street south of Washington Boulevard providing direct access to/from the UP and BNSF rail yards. Also provide a southbound exit ramp and a northbound entrance ramp using the viaduct from the rail yards.

Interchange Improvements – General Purpose Traffic

- Eliminate some of the design deficiencies at I-405/I-710 and SR-91/I-710 interchanges.
- Reconfigure approximately 13 local access interchanges between and including Ocean Boulevard at Shoreline Drive in Long Beach and Atlantic Boulevard/Bandini Boulevard in Vernon/Bell.
- Add one new interchange (Slauson Avenue).
- Eliminate freeway access at 9 locations:
 - Entrance from 7th Street to SB Shoreline Drive (1 ramp).
 - Connection from Shoemaker Bridge to Pico Avenue (1 ramp).
 - Connection from Pico Avenue to Shoemaker Bridge (1 ramp).
 - SB exit to and NB entrance from Wardlow Road at I-710 (2 ramps).
 - NB and SB I-710 to Santa Fe Avenue (1 ramp).
 - Exit from WB SR-91 to Alondra Boulevard (1 ramp).
 - Exit from EB SR-91 to Cherry Avenue (1 ramp).
 - WB exit to and EB entrance from Atlantic Boulevard at SR-91 (2 ramps).
 - All ramps at Washington Boulevard (4 ramps).

Elements of the TSM/TDM Alternative (Alternative B)

The elements of the Transportation Systems Management/Transportation Demand Management (TSM/TDM) Alternative largely consist of operational investments, policies, and actions aimed at improving goods movement, passenger auto and transit travel, and reducing the environmental impacts of transportation facilities and operations in the Study Area. Specific improvements drawn from the TSM/TDM Alternative are detailed as follows. Added

explanation of how some of the goods movement strategies would operate are provided in Appendix K of this report.

Mainlines on I-710

- Additional ramp metering.
- Aesthetics (landscaping and hardscape treatments along I-710).
- Continuous high-mast illumination.
- Improved signage on I-710.

Interchanges/Arterials

- I-710 ramp terminus/arterial improvements:
 - for example, curb and gutter, including aesthetics improvements
 - mostly in state right-of-way
- Implement parking restrictions on major parallel arterials during peak periods.

Goods Movement

- Empty container management through policies and incentives.
- Expanded drayage truck emission reduction program.
- Extended gate hours at the ports:
 - move toward 24 hour / 7 days a week operations
 - incentives / disincentives (emphasize policy recommendations, not mandate)
 - include all entities in the supply chain

Transit

- Additional Blue/Green Line feeder bus shuttles.
- Enhanced community service (local circulators).

Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS)

- Expand ITS Corridors:
 - expand “depth” of ITS coverage on two identified ITS corridors (I-710/Atlantic; I-105 Corridor)
 - emphasize system connectivity

Improvement to Arterial Highways within the I-710 Corridor

While the Major Corridor Study proposed three alternative packages of arterial improvements within the Study Area, the I-710 Technical Advisory Committee did not recommend a specific set of arterial highways for improvement nor the types of improvements to be implemented. The determination of these specific arterial highway improvements is left to be determined in a future study. Section 10 of this report discusses these arterials in more detail.

Construction of Truck Inspection Facilities to be Integrated with the Selected Overall Design Concept

The final component of the Locally Preferred Strategy is the construction of one or more truck inspection facilities within the Corridor. While the Major Corridor Study did assess a truck inspection facility that would be located within Southern California Edison right-of-way adjacent

to northbound I-710 between Del Amo Blvd. and Long Beach Blvd., the I-710 Locally Preferred Strategy did not determine a specific location for one or more truck inspection facilities. This determination is left for a future study.

9.2.2 Additional Oversight Policy Committee Actions

The Oversight Policy Committee adopted four additional actions to support the LPS decision and in response to community issues regarding the I-710 Corridor, as expressed in the Tier 2 Community Advisory Committee's report. These actions are:

1. Request the Gateway Cities Council of Governments to return with suggested steps for initiating the development and implementation of a corridor level air quality action plan to include not only technical but also funding, institutional structure and legislative strategies as well as an approach to holding public agencies with jurisdiction in the Corridor accountable for progress in meeting air quality and public health objectives in the Corridor and Region.
2. Forward the Tier 2 report in its entirety to be accepted as pre-scoping guidance to the preparation of the EIR/EIS.
3. Request the Gateway Cities Council of Governments to identify and pursue appropriate avenues to implement those Tier 2 recommendations that prove to exceed the scope of any I-710 transportation improvement project and report back to the community.
4. Request MTA and COG staff to suggest a process and structure for continuing community participation throughout the environmental analysis.

9.3 MTA Board Action

Based on the OPC Action of November 18, 2004, the Locally Preferred Strategy was forwarded to the MTA Board for its consideration and action. On January 27, 2005, the MTA Board met and adopted the Draft Final Report of the I-710 Major Corridor Study. Additionally the Board acted to:

1. Authorize the Chief Executive Officer to proceed with the preparation of a Scope of Work and Funding Plan that will include funding commitments from multiple partners for the environmental phase of the project pursuant to the Major Corridor Study's Locally Preferred Strategy and use input from the I-710 Community Advisory Committees in the environmental scoping process. The Scope of Work should also include assessment of impacts to the I-170/SR-60 interchange and evaluation of alternative project delivery methods.
2. Direct MTA staff to report back to the Board with the results of the East Los Angeles Mini-Study and that results be included into the Locally Preferred Strategy prior to initiating scoping for the EIR/EIS;
3. Receive the TIER II report to be accepted and utilized as pre-scoping guidance for the EIR/EIS;

4. Direct the MTA CEO, with the assistance of our state and federal advocates, to work with the appropriate governmental and non-governmental agencies to form a multi-jurisdictional entity to coordinate the appropriate aspects of the project, including identification of a funding plan with funding sources from multiple partners, and upon formation, the multi-jurisdictional partnership be tasked with identifying strategies for achieving near-term improvements to the Corridor's air quality and that the strategies be identified prior to initiation of the EIR/EIS Request for Proposals.

9.4 RSTIS Peer Review Group

The I-710 Major Corridor Study was conducted according to SCAG's Regionally Significant Transportation Investment Study (RSTIS) guidelines. The RSTIS is necessary for major projects seeking federal funding. As such, the RSTIS is part of the federal planning process, yet decision-making takes place at the local and regional levels.

Under the Final Metropolitan Planning Rules (23 CFR Part 450.318) that guide the RSTIS, the I-710 Major Corridor Study is an integral element of a metropolitan area's long range planning process. The RSTIS evaluation leads to a decision on a design concept and scope for transportation investments in the corridor – a Locally Preferred Strategy – that is then incorporated into a metropolitan area's transportation plan.

Once the purpose and need, design concept, scope, and other elements have been adopted into the Southern California Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and the transportation improvement program (TIP), the Locally Preferred Strategy can then be advanced into environmental review and preliminary engineering. Consideration of more detailed design issues and completion of National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements occur in this next phase.

SCAG has organized a RSTIS Peer Review Group that operates according to the Association's adopted guidelines for the conduct of RSTIS studies in the SCAG region and provides advice to study sponsors and review of study process. Peer Review Group members include technical staff from study sponsors, SCAG, Caltrans, the county transportation agencies/authorities, state and federal resource agencies, FHWA, and FTA

The MTA, as lead agency for the I-710 MCS, has been keeping the RSTIS Peer Review Group apprised of study status and progress for the duration of the Study, since its initiation in early 2001 through periodic briefings. Now that the study is concluding, the MTA has requested, and the Peer Review Group has granted, a RSTIS Letter of Completion at their meeting on December 16, 2004. This signifies that the I-710 Major Corridor Study has followed the adopted procedures for execution and completion of the RSTIS¹. The MTA can then incorporate the Locally Preferred Strategy resulting from the I-710 RSTIS into their Long Range Transportation Plan and then, by amendment, into SCAG's RTP and TIP. This Letter of Completion was formally ratified by SCAG's Transportation and Communications Committee at their February 2005 meeting.

¹ *Procedures Manual for Regionally Significant Transportation Investment Studies (RSTIS)*, Southern California Association of Governments, March 1, 2001.