

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE I-710 OVERSIGHT POLICY COMMITTEE**

**A Meeting Held at Progress Park
15500 Downey Avenue
Paramount, CA**

October 29, 2003

I. Call to Order

Co-Chair Colonna called the meeting to order at 6:40 p.m.

II. Roll Call

Roll Call was taken by the Gateway Cities COG Executive Director.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Co-Chair Frank Colonna, Long Beach; Co-Chair Sam Peña, Maywood; Daniel Crespo, Bell Gardens; Jim Dear, Carson; Hugo Argumedo, Commerce; Isadore Hall III, Compton; Frank Gurule, Cudahy; Juan Noguez, Huntington Park; Keith McCarthy, Downey; Hector de la Torre, South Gate; Gene Daniels, Paramount; John Calhoun, Port of Long Beach; Sharas Bangalore, Caltrans; Thomas Warren, Port of Los Angeles; Hasan Ikhata, SCAG.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT: George Cole, Bell; Fernando Pedroza, Lynwood; William Davis, Vernon; Gloria Molina, County of Los Angeles; Ray Maekawa, MTA.

ALSO PRESENT: Councilmember Nancy Ramos, Commerce; Bill Grady, Office of Congresswoman Linda Sanchez; Ronald Gonzalez, Office of Assemblyman Rudy Bermudez; Robert Farrell, Office of Assemblyman Mervyn Dymally; Adrian Garcia, Office of Assemblyman Alan Lowenthal; Bill Pagett, Chair, I-710 Technical Advisory Committee; Richard Powers, GCCOG Executive Director; Jack Joseph, GCCOG Deputy Executive Director; Robert Messinger, GCCOG General Counsel; Deborah Chankin, GCCOG Director of Program Development; Don Camph, GCCOG Transportation Advisor.

III. Pledge of Allegiance

Member Daniels led the pledge of allegiance.

IV. Amendments to the Agenda

Member Argumedo requested that Item IX. B. be moved to the front of the agenda. It was the consensus of the OPC to grant Member Argumedo's request.

V. Public Comments

Mr. Bill Grady, District Director for Congresswoman Linda Sanchez, expressed the congresswoman's regrets that she could not attend the meeting because she was in Washington. He said that Representative Sanchez is in support of safety improvements for I-710.

Mr. Noel Park, San Pedro Homeowners Association, stated that he was concerned about safety on I-710, but his specific comment was about air quality. He recommended two articles on air quality to the committee members: one article in the Los Angeles Business Journal on cancer risk, and the other article, by Dr. John Miller, which discussed the health effects of diesel exhaust. Mr. Park said that poor air quality is going to kill more people on I-710 than accidents and said that port activities continue to spill over onto neighboring residents. Mr. Park commended the Gateway Cities COG on their initiative to retire old trucks from operating on the freeways.

Mr. Bob Eula, Commerce, said that he would like to address two different items. The first has to do with the letter that the City of Commerce sent to the OPC. Mr. Eula endorses the position that the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) should have a vote with regard to the OPC decision to select a Locally Preferred Strategy. Mr. Eula would also like to see the Atlantic Boulevard viaduct component (Item 9B) dropped from further consideration in the study.

VI. Consent Calendar

- A. Minutes of the June 25, 2003, and July 9, 2003, Meetings of the I-710 Oversight Policy Committee

It was moved by Co-Chair Pena, seconded by Member Daniels, to approve the consent calendar. The motion was approved unanimously.

IX.B. Request to Delete the Atlantic Boulevard Viaduct from Further Consideration

Member Argumedo, City of Commerce, excused himself and was temporarily replaced by his colleague, Councilmember Nancy Ramos, due to a conflict of interest on this agenda item.

In presenting the item to the committee, Mr. Richard Powers reported that a majority of the Commerce City Council had been advised by legal counsel that they could not deliberate or vote on the I-710 Major Corridor Study because they live within 500 feet of the Atlantic Boulevard Viaduct that is currently proposed as part of one of the "build" alternatives. He said that the Commerce City Council has placed a formal request with the OPC that the Atlantic Boulevard Viaduct be dropped from further consideration. He reported that the staff engineers for both the Gateway Cities COG and the I-5 Joint Powers Authority have recommended that the Atlantic Boulevard Viaduct be eliminated. This would also have the effect of eliminating the conflict of interest that exists for a majority of the members of the Commerce City Council, which handicaps that City in being able to represent itself with respect to issues relating to I-710 within the City of Commerce.

Member McCarthy asked if there would be any unintended consequences if this element of the truckway concept were to be removed.

Mr. Jerry Wood, consultant engineer to the Gateway Cities COG, stated that this element would provide little benefit at a high cost. The intended purpose of the Atlantic Boulevard Viaduct is to provide a direct freeway connector between I-710 and I-5. Mr. Wood said that the missing connectors at I-5/I-710 need to be added, but not along Atlantic Boulevard. The I-5/I-710 interchange along with other interchanges such as the I-405/I-710 do need to be fixed.

Co-Chair Pena asked if conceptual plans for any alternative designs to the I-5/I-710 had been drawn up. Mr. Wood responded that they did not have specific solutions yet.

It was moved by Member De La Torre, seconded by Member Crespo, to eliminate the Atlantic Boulevard Viaduct concept from further consideration. The motion was approved unanimously.

At the conclusion of this item, Member Argumedo returned to the meeting, replacing Nancy Ramos.

VII. Communications

A. Communications from the City of Commerce Dated August 5, 2003

Mr. Richard Powers directed the committee's attention to a letter that had been received from the City of Commerce requesting that the I-710 OPC provide the Community Advisory Committee with a formal vote in the selection process for a Locally Preferred Strategy. Mr. Robert Messenger, legal counsel for the Gateway Cities COG, reported adding a voting member to the OPC would require an amendment to the existing Memorandum of Understanding among the four partner agencies that created the OPC (Gateway Cities COG, Caltrans, MTA, and SCAG), and that only those four parties have the authority to change the membership or voting authority of the OPC.

Co-Chair Colonna commented that not all of the cities have the same framework or process of assigning members to the CAC and that there is potential for uneven representation. The structure of the OPC provides one equal vote for each of the fourteen cities in the I-710 Corridor. He said that he sees the role of the CAC as being an important advisory body in the process, but not a full weighted vote. For example, he will pay close attention to the advisory committees in his city. Co-Chair Colonna asked other committee members for their comments and input regarding this discussion item.

Member De La Torre observed that the OPC is a representative board that is consistent with our system of government. He is reluctant to embark on a path that leads into uncharted territory with regard to state and federal decision-making procedures. Each of the cities' OPC members were elected by their communities and each can be being voted out. He said he does not feel that is appropriate to pass the buck to others. At some point, elected officials need to make decisions. Member De La Torre said he also shares Co-Chair Colonna's concern on the potential for uneven representation as to how the members of the CAC are selected.

Member Argumedo said that the letter in question was sent by the Mayor of Commerce. He said that he agreed with several of Member De La Torre's points. He, too, will be listening closely to CAC members from his city. He also noted that the City of Commerce has only one vote on the OPC and yet the City of Commerce bears a disproportionate amount of the impacts. Member Argumedo said that he was satisfied with the compromise for the structure of the CAC that was worked out during the last meeting by the OPC. He requested that Mr. Powers remind him and the committee what that compromise was. Mr. Powers replied that he could not recall the precise formula, but that staff could look this up and provide a response to the committee.

Member Daniels said that he concurred with Member De La Torre.

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Member McCarthy recommended that staff look into the Los Angeles Unified School District process for bringing public input to that body. He suggested they also formally include reports from the CAC on the OPC agenda at every meeting.

Co-Chair Pena reminded the committee of the two-tier process for the CAC committee structure. Member Argumedo asked Mr. Powers to describe the process and the intended communication structure between the CAC and the OPC.

Member Dear commented that the community advisory committees are integral to the process and the elected representatives are obligated to listen to what they have to say.

Mr. Alan Hose, Windward Homeowners Association, Long Beach, was recognized by Co-Chair Colonna. Mr. Hose directed the OPC members to the pages of the minutes from June 25th and July 9th OPC meetings that recount the discussion of the corridor-level CAC membership.

Co-Chair Colonna said that each city has its own process for nominating members as its representative(s) on the CAC. He requested that staff research the issue and report back on what was agreed upon at the next OPC meeting.

It was moved by Member McCarthy, seconded by Co-Chair Pena, to receive and file the communication from the City of Commerce. The motion was approved unanimously.

VIII. Workshop on Highway Safety

A. Presentation on the Interstate 710 Truck Corridor Safety Project, California Highway Patrol

California Highway Patrol Assistant Chief Art Acevedo said that the CHP is committed to safety on I-710. He is aware of the high profile accidents that have recently occurred on I-710, but would like to take the opportunity to present some accident statistics that might place these incidents in perspective. They estimate that 50,000 trucks are using I-710 each day and, of these, about 25,000 are port-related. I-710 averages 660 truck-involved accidents a year between Ocean Boulevard and I-5, but recent data indicates that this number is dropping. In 2000, there were 638 accidents. In 2001, there were 569 accidents. In 2002, there were 537 accidents. In part, this trend could be attributable to the fact that the I-710 was designated a Safety Corridor, which meant that a grant funded a program of safety improvements during the 2001 and 2002 time period. The focus of the safety improvements were on added enforcement and educational programs targeted to the businesses and trucking industries in the corridor. The CHP further notes that about 6000 accidents take place each year, countywide,

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which means that I-710 represents about 10% of these accidents. In truck-related accidents, about 50% of the time, the truck drivers are at fault and about 50% of the time it is the automobile driver. Oftentimes, it is the automobile driver who is making an unsafe move too close to a truck that creates the accident.

CHP Captain Craig Klein pointed out the charts on safety statistics. The majority of truck-related accidents occur during business hours. Truck accidents are also highest during the weekdays. For Saturdays and Sundays, the numbers are much lower comparatively. I-110 has about one fifth of the truck collision activity that I-710 has. It goes without saying that a tremendous number of trucks are on I-710. Consequently, the CHP devotes a lot of resources on a daily basis to inspection and enforcement. These fall into four categories: (a) mobile unit that conducts level 1 spot inspections of trucks; (b) white Camaros that write citations to trucks and also cars that make unsafe movements in front of trucks (approximately six of these vehicles work the I-710 corridor); (c) regular CHP patrol; and (d) additional units (funded, in part by grants) that are allocated to I-710 at different times as needed.

Member De La Torre asked the officers if they were aware of the truck inspection facility that has been proposed in the I-710 Study. Captain Klein responded that he and his officers have been participating in the Technical Advisory Committee meetings and that the CHP is aware of the proposal for a Class A port of entry facility and are very supportive. He also stated that a truck inspection facility of this type would also allow for CARB and AQMD to inspect trucks for emissions violations, which speaks to the air quality concerns that the committee has been discussing. The CHP finds that a vast majority of the accidents are attributable to "rules of the road" violations and only a small percentage are caused by truck equipment failure.

Chief Acevedo said that the problem is that there is way too much traffic for the facility. The left-side egress at the I-710/I-5 interchange is a particularly bad location; but that could be resolved by limiting truck access to this connector. The CHP is aware that engineering solutions cost a great deal of money; however, some things could be done immediately. For example, the advisory sign at the Washington Blvd. on ramp that directs trucks to use I-710 to SR-60 to access I-5 could be made into a regulatory sign.

Co-Chair Pena asked if there were some clear design problems that needed to be rectified. He described the portions of the I-710 where there is very little shoulder. Captain Klein replied that the lack of shoulder was a problem, but not an insurmountable one. Generally the patrol unit will pull the automobile off of the freeway to a local side street. This also helps address the congestion problem that occurs when other vehicles slow down to look.

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Member Daniels asked if the trucks were required to display a sticker that indicated they had met their inspection requirements. Captain Klein responded that there is a 90-day inspection sticker, but not all trucks are complying. The CHP can only spot check a small portion of trucks so they are not able to catch everyone. However, it is their observation that the overall condition of the trucks using the freeway has markedly improved in past five to ten years, particularly when compared to twenty years ago.

Member McCarthy asked if the CHP preferred an inspection facility within the ports, on the side of the freeway, or not at all. For example, placing a facility on the side of a freeway could create congestion as well. What does the CHP see as being the tradeoffs? Chief Acevedo said that given the state budget problems they would feel extremely lucky to get one inspection station. Two inspection stations would be highly desirable, but not likely.

Member Calhoun commented that less than 15 percent of all the vehicles using I-710 over a 24-hour period are trucks coming and going from the ports.

Chief Acevedo explained that it is true; that many trucks use the I-710 that are not necessarily going to the ports. However, the ports are a location where high numbers of trucks are concentrated, which makes it easier to enforce.

Member Calhoun asked if a state law could be enacted that required trucks to maintain a minimum distance from each other so that vehicles, including cars, can change lanes more easily and safely.

Captain Klein said that the Vehicle Code does contain a section that addresses tailgating. The enforcement of this measure is somewhat subjective on the part of the officer. He noted that the truck volumes on I-710 are very high; essentially the number three lane is already a "wall of trucks." If the state were to enact, say a 200 foot distance requirement, then it would likely create a huge queue that could back up into the ports.

Member Calhoun asked if the CHP had ever considered the use of cameras to speed up investigations of accidents. Chief Acevedo responded that they do use cameras, but that because of the liability issues as well as the family's right to know, it is important to conduct a full investigation to make sure that all the information is collected and analyzed. They consider a fatality accident to warrant the same level of scrutiny as a homicide.

B. Presentation on Freeway Safety Operations and Design

Mr. Frank Quon, Caltrans District 7 Deputy Director, provided a report on some of the recent safety improvements that are in process for I-710. These include:

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- advance guide signs for SB I-710 lanes to warn motorists of the upcoming left-side freeway connector for SB I-5 for the I-710/I-5 interchange
- warning signs of radar enforcement
- ramp meter adjustments at the I-105/I-710 freeway connectors
- corrected some pavement areas that were particularly bad
- pavement rehabilitation of I-710 between Rt. 1 and I-405, including shoulder improvements, new pavement, and improved vertical clearances
- reconstruction of I-710 in the vicinity of Del Amo Boulevard, including auxiliary lanes, bridge widening, and lengthened acceleration / deceleration lanes

The following projects are planned for I-710:

- pavement rehabilitation of I-710 north of I-405, including new pavement, lengthened acceleration / deceleration lanes, shoulder widening, and new concrete median barrier
- establish I-710 as a “port of entry”
- conduct feasibility studies to address the left-side connectors at the I-710/I-5 interchange
- reconstruct the Florence interchange
- provide overhead guide signs on SR-91 at the I-710/SR-91 interchange
- follow up on recommendations that result from the I-710 major corridor study such as the reconstruction of key interchanges; widening; or new lanes

Mr. Quon said that collaboration is the key to getting needed safety improvements. As I-710 is a safety corridor, they have been focusing on the “Three “E’s””: engineering; enforcement; and education. Their immediate plan is to build on corridor recommendations and actions; pursue added funding sources; promote expanded gate hours; support proposed safety inspections; and boost public outreach efforts.

Member Daniels asked if would be possible to increase the height of the median barriers for purposes of safety and to provide a visual barrier to motorists in opposing lanes so that they do not slow to view incidents.

Co-Chair Colonna cited the fatality accidents that have recently occurred on I-710 and he sees the lack of a concrete median barrier as a contributing factor. He would like to retain the funding for the I-710 pavement rehabilitation and improvement projects. Safety on I-710 is a very high priority.

Mr. Doug Failing, Director, Caltrans District 7, said that he agreed that this is the time to focus on the funding problem. The state budget issue is more than a general fund issue. It reaches into the special funds. The I-710 corridor is vital to the region. Consequently, Caltrans is looking into identifying and constructing high priority elements (e.g., the median barrier) of the program. Another approach would be to bond to pay for the proposed improvements and then pay off the bonds with future revenues. Mr. Failing said that this second approach would take a great deal of support from this committee.

Co-Chair Colonna said that he sees the median barrier as being the first step. He suggested that the committee look into drafting a request that would be submitted to Sacramento. Mr. Messinger recommended, in light of the fact that this was not an agenda item that a resolution be brought back at the next meeting of the OPC making this request. Mr. Failing said that he would provide the specific description of the concrete barriers for use in the resolution.

Member McCarthy asked if there was any evidence available that demonstrated that concrete median barriers prevented accidents.

Mr. Quon responded that the concrete median barriers are helpful, but they have had experiences with trucks penetrating a concrete barrier, depending upon the situation and the conditions. Mr. Quon noted that an additional benefit of a concrete median is that they are much easier to repair, which is both a time and a safety factor.

Mr. Failing said that they need about \$280 million for the project between I-405 to I-10. They are projecting that it will be less costly than their original estimates, because they have learned from their experience on the segment between Rt. 1 and I-405. Portions or pieces of the project (e.g., I-405 to Firestone) could be built for less, possibly \$110 million. About \$40-45 million would be needed for the median upgrades. The state of California has a cash flow problem, even though the funds have been authorized.

Co-Chair Colonna said this funding item will be placed on the agenda for the next meeting. He requested that staff work with Caltrans for the appropriate wording of the resolution or letter to Sacramento.

C. Presentation on Programming for Highway Safety Improvements, Automobile Club of Southern California

Mr. Hamid Bahadori, Senior Policy Administrator of the Automobile Club of Southern California, described the I-710 corridor from the perspective of the membership of the Automobile Club. He said that they have heard a lot about the I-710 from its members. Almost 50,000 trucks use the I-710 every day. I-710

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has outlived its standards and roadway designs. The “do nothing” alternative is not an acceptable option. He feels that it is advisable to approach the problem incrementally. Since head-on collisions tend to be the most horrific, the concrete median should be a high priority. Mr. Bahadori observed that I-710 has a higher proportion of the accidents occurring in the Los Angeles basin since 10% of the accidents are taking place on I-710, although I-710 is not carrying 10% of the region’s traffic. He said that to address the design problems, some right of way takes are going to be unavoidable. He said that the Automobile Club can assist in the lobbying effort through its access to five million club members and through staff legislative resources.

At this point, Co-Chair Colonna asked if there were any questions or comments regarding the workshop presentations.

Captain Klein said that CHP Headquarters had agreed to print 10,000 more safety brochures, 1,000 safety posters, and 2,000 bumper stickers.

Co-Chair Pena commented that he would like to see the ports move closer to a 24-hour/7-day operation. He cited CHP’s chart that shows the high proportion of accidents that are occurring during business hours.

Noel Park, San Pedro resident, commented that counting trucks on the freeway is not the same as counting cars. Traffic engineers consider trucks to be the equivalent of more than one car as they are longer and are slower to start and stop.

Linda Ivers, Long Beach resident, commented that safety is a concern of everyone’s. She said that she recommends that the Committee consider use of technology for safety improvements. She cited examples such as: having the ports refuse to load trucks that do not carry valid inspection stickers; truck license and registration renewals should require equipment inspection; and use of transponders and electronic readers that verify those trucks with an inspection certificates as an enforcement measure.

Alan Hose, Long Beach resident, suggested that diamond interchange designs are probably safer as he is aware of a truck that overturned on one of the ramps at the Pacific Coast Highway/I-710 interchange. He said he believes that the tight radius of the loop ramp was likely a contributing factor. Also, the transition from I-405 (NB) to I-710 (SB) is dangerous as there are too many weave movements occurring along this freeway connector in too short a distance. Mr. Hose also referred the Committee’s attention to the meeting minutes from the previous OPC meetings for the discussion of the proposed composition of the I-710 CAC.

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Chief Acevedo commented that a tax subsidy that encouraged shippers and receivers to stay open during night-time hours would be beneficial for a 24 / 7 truck operation.

Adrian Garcia, representing Assemblyman Alan Lowenthal's office, stated that they support safety measures for truckers and vehicles on I-710. They also support the proposed upgrades to the median barriers. He said that their office can be contacted if help is needed.

Member De La Torre said that when bad incidents occur on I-710, then the major arterials such as Garfield, in essence, become the I-710 freeway. Major incidents have taken place three times in the last two weeks. He requested that Caltrans or CHP notify the cities so that they can deploy their officers to handle the overflow traffic.

Chief Acevedo responded that they could do a better job of this and will try to do so in the future. Another measure that they can take is to make sure that they close freeways at major freeway interchanges so that traffic is not forced onto the local roadway network during bad incidents.

Bill Pagett, I-710 TAC Chair, commented that in the MTA Call for Projects the I-710 Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) improvement program has been included and will be moving forward. This program will consider items such as variable message signs for incident management. The County of Los Angeles has selected a consultant, who is expected to complete their work by June of 2005.

Member De La Torre said that the spillover traffic is not only a safety issue, but an environmental one as well, since the trucks are idling in the middle of residential neighborhoods.

Member McCarthy said that he observed that SCAG is including proposals in the draft Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), such as an increase in the gas tax (10 cents starting in 2010), to raise revenue to fund needed transportation improvements.

IX.B Update on Community Advisory Committee

Mr. Richard Powers introduced this agenda item. He summarized that the OPC had approved the Tier I and Tier II concept for the structure of the community advisory committees. He announced that the MTA had approved a contract with the firm of Moore, Iacafano, and Goltsman to coordinate the next phase of public outreach and to work with the community advisory committees. He introduced Linda Bybee, MTA Deputy Executive Director, who spoke regarding the for public outreach for the I-710 study. Ms. Bybee said that as the OPC works towards a

hybrid alternative, we will need to address the public's concerns as well as the transportation issues. She said that as we move into the environmental phase of the project, no issue will be left behind.

Ms. Bybee introduced the team of outreach consultants, led by Pat McLaughlin. Ms. McLaughlin introduced the balance of her team and provided some background information on her firm. She also briefly described the communication and decision-making structure of the community advisory committees, whereby recommendations will flow from the Tier I committees to the Tier II CAC and then on to the OPC. She envisions that it will be an iterative process, where they will build on successes to achieve consensus.

VII. Adjournment

For the next OPC meeting, a meeting date of Thursday, November 20th, was proposed and discussed. Since the nominations of the CAC will be on the agenda, it is important to pick a date where most of the members will be able to attend. As several members had conflict for the 20th, an alternative of Thursday, November 13th was identified as the best date.

It was moved by Member De La Torre, seconded by Member Crespo, to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved unanimously.

Co-Chair Colonna adjourned the meeting at 9:00 p.m.