



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Transportation Agencies Seek Input on I-710 Enhancements

Paramount, Calif. – April 30, 2002 – A group of state and regional transportation and planning agencies is seeking input on a full range of options it has developed to improve travel conditions along Interstate 710 between the Port of Long Beach and State Route 60, the Pomona Freeway

Twelve alternatives -- each including a package of improvements -- have been developed based on thorough analyses of existing and future conditions as well as extensive input from public workshops and community meetings over the past several months.

The alternative strategies incorporate a wide range of capital investments and service improvements to provide the public and decision-makers with a list of possible choices from which to select the best transportation solution for the Long Beach Freeway Corridor. Some of the proposed options build on current planning efforts such as added bus service, freeway ramp metering, and the use of advanced technologies to manage traffic and to inform motorists about better routes to avoid traffic congestion. Additional options under consideration include strategies intended to consolidate truck trips and to encourage truck traffic to shift over into the late evening or early morning hours.

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Additional options take a long-range range view with an eye to a more permanent fix of some of the most critical problems facing the Long Beach Freeway Corridor, both now and in the future. These major transportation improvements would extend far beyond the pavement replacement and median reconstruction efforts that are already taking place on I-710. Topping the list of alternative proposals for I-710 are: interchange redesign projects; exclusive truck lanes; carpool lanes similar to I-110; freeway widening; and possibly a new rail line in the median of I-710. In some cases, the major capital investment projects to I-710 could be combined with capacity improvements to primary street arterials that lead to I-710 or that run parallel to I-710.

"We will need to look at these options very carefully, especially their potential impacts," said South Gate City Council member Hector De La Torre, chair of the I-710 Oversight Policy Committee. "Although improvements to the Long Beach Freeway are badly needed and long overdue, some of the proposed alternatives will not be easy to implement and funding is still an open question. This is a critical step in the process as we narrow the options and select the most effective overall transportation solution for the region and for the communities along I-710."

The policy committee is overseeing the I-710 Major Corridor Study, with a target completion of December 2003, and is charged with the effort to investigate the feasibility of various facility improvements to accommodate future traffic levels on the I-710 Corridor. The study is being conducted jointly by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) and the Gateway Cities Council of Governments (COG).

The I-710 Oversight Policy Committee is scheduled in June 2002, to narrow the alternatives to five from 12. A Locally Preferred Strategy and a priority list of improvements are expected to be selected by Spring 2003.

(MORE)

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The I-710 Oversight Policy Committee is chaired by South Gate's De La Torre and is co-chaired by Long Beach City Council member Frank Colonna and Maywood Mayor Sam Pena. The committee includes one representative each from the cities of Bell, Bell Gardens, Commerce, Compton, Cudahy, Downey, Huntington Park, Long Beach, Lynwood, Maywood, Paramount, South Gate and Vernon, and one representative each from the Port of Long Beach, MTA, Caltrans and SCAG.

Additional information about the study and the alternative strategies can be obtained by logging on to the COG web site at www.gatewaycog.org. Or you can call in to the I-710 Study Information Hot Line at (323) 960-4406.

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