MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
I-710 CORRIDOR EIR/EIS PROJECT COMMITTEE

A Meeting Held at the Gateway Cities Council of Governments  
16401 Paramount Blvd.  
Paramount, CA  

January 31, 2012

I. Call to Order

Co-Chairman Hurtado called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

II. Roll Call

Roll Call was taken by self-introductions:

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:  Gil Hurtado, City of South Gate, Co-Chair; Ana Maria Quintana, City of Bell; Sergio Infanzon, City of Bell Gardens; Frank Gurule, City of Cudahy; Luis Marquez, City of Downey; Gene Daniels, City of Paramount; Elba Guerrero, City of Huntington Park; Felipe Aguirre, City of Maywood; Larry Forester, City of Signal Hill; Patrick De Chellis, County of Los Angeles; Thomas Fields, Port of Long Beach; Garrett Damrath, Caltrans; Diane DuBois, MTA; Alison Linder, SCAG; Susan Seamans, SBCCOG (ex officio).

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:  Bob Foster, City of Long Beach, Co-Chair; Jim Dear, City of Carson; Denise Robles, City of Commerce; Lillie Dobson, City of Compton; Maria T. Santillan, City of Lynwood; William Davis, City of Vernon; Douglas Krause, Port of Los Angeles; Joe Aguilar, I-5 JPA; Barbara Messina, SGVCOG; Mark Sedlacek, LADWP (ex officio); Garry Garrigue, Southern California Edison (ex officio).

ALSO PRESENT:  South Gate Vice Mayor William De Witt; Long Beach City Engineer Mark Christoffels; Long Beach Director of Government/Strategic Affairs Tom Modica; South Gate City Engineer Mohammad Mostahkami; Vernon Director of Community Services Kevin Wilson; Frank Quon, Executive Officer, Highway Programs, MTA; Ernesto Chaves, Transportation Planner, MTA; Adrian Alvarez, Project Manager, MTA; Lucy Olmos, MTA; Danielle Valentino, MTA; Ron Kosinski, Caltrans; Mark Stanley, Executive Director, San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy; Richard D. Jones, General Counsel, GCCOG; Richard Powers, Executive Director, GCCOG; Jack Joseph, Deputy Executive Director, GCCOG; Jerry Wood, GCCOG Engineer; Jack Waldron, Project Manager, URS; Dave Levinsohn, URS; Rob McCann, President, LSA; Julia Lester, Environ; Esmeralda Garcia, Project Manager, MIG; J. D. Douglas, InfraConsult; Martin Berknir, Siemens; Mark Evans, HDR; Angelo Logan, East Yards Communities
for Environmental Justice; Martha Herrera, Long Beach Alliance for Children with Asthma; Martha Cota, Long Beach Alliance for Children with Asthma.

III. Pledge of Allegiance

Member Daniels led the Pledge of Allegiance.

IV. Amendments to the Agenda

There were no amendments to the agenda.

V. Public Comments

Angelo Logan, East Yards Communities for Environmental Justice, expressed concern over the process of how the Health Impact Assessment was rolled out. He said there were gaps in communication and in the chain of decision-making. He said information has not been before the Project Committee to advocate that the Health Impact Assessment be included in the EIR/EIS.

VI. Matters from Staff

There were no matters from staff.

VII. Consent Calendar

It was moved by Member Forester, seconded by Member Guerrero, to approve the minutes of the meeting of June 30, 2011. The motion was approved unanimously.

VIII. Reports

A. Electrification Concept for the Freight Corridor

Jerry Wood introduced Martin Berknir of Siemens, who gave a PowerPoint presentation demonstrating a catenary system developed by Siemens that allows trucks to convert from using diesel to the electrical power provided by the catenary as long as they are attached to the system. He showed a brief video on the test system currently in use in Germany.

Member Marquez asked how much this system would cost. Mr. Berknir said he couldn’t answer specifically, but that a system could pay for itself within one year.

Member Forester asked when this system would be commercially available. Mr. Berknir answered that it would be available in about two years.
Co-Chairman Hurtado asked how the catenary system is paid for. Mr. Berkner said it could work as a tolling system with a meter that measures usage.


Rob McCann, LSA, began a PowerPoint presentation by reviewing the purpose and need for the project, the studied project alternatives, and the CEQA and NEPA requirements for an EIR/EIS.

Dave Levinsohn, URS, discussed the key findings of the traffic studies: that travel time savings would be realized over the no-build alternative with all build alternatives, with significant savings achieved in alternatives 6A, 6B, and 6C, all of which call for a separated freight corridor for no-emission trucks. Furthermore, the geometric improvements and separation of trucks and cars would reduce the accident rate. Similarly, Mr. Levinsohn explained, there would be significant travel time savings on adjacent arterials by shifting truck traffic to I-710. He said the build alternatives include improvements to 42 intersections in the corridor.

Mr. McCann then summarized the key water quality findings. He said all of the build alternatives incorporate water treatment systems. Water quality systems would treat approximately 87% of the project area. In response to a question from Member Forester, Mr. McCann stated that the build alternatives result in a significant reduction of untreated runoff into the Los Angeles River compared to current conditions.

Mr. McCann discussed the noise analysis and said, while construction noise may occasionally dominate the immediate area around construction, no adverse noise impacts are anticipated by complying with Caltrans’ standards and local noise ordinances. He said there would be permanent traffic noise abatement through the construction of sound walls.

Mr. McCann presented several examples of how the visual impacts of the freeway and freight corridor would be mitigated by landscaping, increased setbacks, and sound and view barriers that would be constructed on the mainline freeway and freight corridor.

Julia Lester, Environ, reviewed the air quality/health risk assessment analysis. She said emissions generally model lower in 2035 under all alternatives compared to the 2008 baseline and that all build alternatives produce lower emissions than the no-build. She presented charts showing the reductions in NOx and particulate matter under the various build alternatives relative to 2008. With regard to near-roadway health
risks, both NOx and particulate matter would be reduced compared to 2008. Ms. Lester said alternatives 6B and 6C would reduce cancer risk from the no-build alternative, but there would be a greater cancer risk under alternatives 5A and 6A. She said there would be potential impacts at the north end of I-710.

Mr. McCann reviewed the next steps of the EIR/EIS as incorporating the technical studies’ results into the draft EIR/EIS, circulating the draft EIR/EIS for public review, holding public hearings and workshops, identifying and selecting the preferred alternative, and completing the final EIR/EIS.

Member DeChellis complimented Julia Lester for making a very technical subject understandable in her presentation.

Member DeChellis said it appears that East Los Angeles will bear the brunt of the traffic and air quality impacts. He said he wants County staff to meet and address their comments before the release of the EIR. He said if MTA and Caltrans wait until public review for the identification of all significant impacts, the analysis may require expanding the project scope, likely requiring circulation of the EIR for public review a second time, adding unnecessary delay to the project.

It was moved by Member DeChellis, seconded by Member Infanzon, that MTA and Caltrans, prior to the release of the draft EIR/EIS for public review: 1) send the complete traffic and air quality studies to the cities and the County for review and comment; 2) meet with the cities and County to review and discuss their comments; and 3) develop alternatives to mitigate all significant project impacts and discuss the alternatives with representatives of the impacted communities.

Rob McCann said that the consultant team has been meeting with the city staffs throughout the process to take their comments on the traffic impacts and that the final traffic study would be released to the cities and the County for review in two weeks.

Member Forester said he opposed the motion because it would unnecessarily delay the project based on conjecture about what the traffic and air quality impacts might be. He said there would be the opportunity during the public review of the draft EIR for comments.

Member Marquez said that this project has already gone through nine years of study with unprecedented public participation and he could not support further delay.
The COG General Counsel advised the Project Committee that any action taken by them would only be advisory to Caltrans.

After further discussion, Co-Chairman Hurtado asked for a voice vote on the motion. The motion failed on a voice vote.

It was the consensus of the Project Committee to receive and file the report.

C. I-710 EIR/EIS Update on Review Period and Translation of Executive Summary

Jerry Wood introduced Ron Kosinski of Caltrans to discuss the review period for the draft EIR/EIS. Mr. Kosinski said the minimum review period required under CEQA is 45 days, but Caltrans had agreed at the beginning to go to 60 days. He said he believes 60 days should be fine because there has been a significant amount of review. However, he said there may be an informal extension to 70 days depending on the comments received.

The COG Deputy Executive Director recounted the Project Committee’s previous action to direct that the executive summary of the draft EIR/EIS be translated into other languages consistent with the COG’s policy in the past. He said the standard used has been the federal Voting Rights Act, which requires translation of voting materials into languages where at least 5% of the residents of a jurisdiction speak a particular language and are not conversant in English. Using those criteria, he said, the executive summary would be translated into Spanish, Vietnamese, Korean, Tagalog, and Khmer (Cambodian).

It was moved by Member Daniels, seconded by Member DuBois to receive and file the report. The motion was approved unanimously.

D. I-710 Corridor Project EIR/EIS Engineering Update

Jack Waldron, Project Manager for URS, gave a PowerPoint presentation summarizing the engineering work completed to date. He said the work ahead in the next three months would be to continue work on the draft project report and approval process, as well as a geometric design check. He said the schedule called for the draft EIR/EIS to be released early this year for public review.

It was moved by Member Gurule, seconded by Member DuBois, to receive and file the report. The motion was approved unanimously.

E. I-710 Corridor Project EIR/EIS Environmental Update
Rob McCann, LSA, gave a PowerPoint presentation which reviewed the environmental studies completed to date. He said the work in progress included the final Community Impact Assessment, final energy study, final Air Quality/Health Risk Assessment, and a final historic property survey report.

It was moved by Member Gurule, seconded by Member DuBois, to receive and file the report. The motion was approved unanimously.

F. I-710 Corridor Project EIR/EIS Community Participation Update

Esmeralda Garcia, MIG, reviewed the community participation activities since July. She summarized the upcoming presentations to be made to the subject working groups, local advisory committees, and the Community Advisory Committee.

It was moved by Member Daniels, seconded by Member DuBois, to receive and file the report. The motion was approved unanimously.

G. I-710 Early Action Projects Report

Frank Quon, Executive Officer for Highway Programs, MTA, discussed the status of the current early action projects. He said there are three utility studies that are proceeding: the south utility study has been underway since the summer; the contract for the north study has been awarded by the MTA Board; and the contract for the central study is scheduled to be awarded by the MTA Board in April. Additionally, he said, the contract for the sound walls feasibility study has been awarded. He said another likely early action project is the Firestone Blvd. onramp in South Gate.

It was moved by Member Daniels, seconded by Member Gurule, to receive and file the report. The motion was approved unanimously.

H. Measure R Funds Update

Frank Quon, MTA, reported that the Measure R funds are being used to fund the early action projects he reported on earlier.

It was moved by Member Forester, seconded by Member Gurule, to receive and file the report. The motion was approved unanimously.

I. Gateway Cities COG Engineer Report
Jerry Wood summarized the upcoming open houses and community meetings. He said he will be reaching out to cities for ideas on early action projects.

It was moved by Member Gurule, seconded by Member Forester, to receive and file the report. The motion was approved unanimously.

IX. Matters from the I-710 EIR/EIS Project Committee

Member Infanzon commented that even though the project has been going on for nine years we must still be open to ideas and issues that come from newer people involved in the project.

Member Daniels said the reason the project has taken so long is the extensive outreach that has been done to the community.

Member Quintana thanked Jerry Wood and the MTA staff for their assistance in the recent Bell outreach event.

Member Gurule said one of the reasons this project has taken such a long time is that the community has demanded a lot.

The COG Executive Director commended Jerry Wood for his work in saving the project after the initial negative reaction.

X. Matters from the Chair

Co-Chairman Hurtado asked committee members to make sure that their alternates attend if they are unable to attend the next meeting.

XI. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by consensus at 8:41 p.m.