

**OCTA  
I-405 Improvement Project  
Policy Working Group**

**Minutes of Meeting  
Wednesday, March 4, 2009**

**9:00 a.m.  
at the Orange County Transportation Authority  
600 S. Main Street, Orange CA  
OCTA Board Room**

Attendance

**Policy Working Group Members**

| <u>Name</u>           | <u>Agency</u>                        |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| John Moorlach (Chair) | Orange County Board of Supervisors   |
| Janet Nguyen          | Orange County Board of Supervisors   |
| Cindy Quon            | Caltrans District 12                 |
| Allan Mansoor         | Costa Mesa                           |
| Raja Sethuraman       | Costa Mesa                           |
| John Collins          | Fountain Valley                      |
| Ray Cromer            | Fountain Valley                      |
| Steven Jones          | Garden Grove                         |
| Larry Crandall        | Huntington Beach                     |
| Gil Coerper           | Huntington Beach                     |
| Keith Bohr            | Huntington Beach                     |
| Cathy Green           | Huntington Beach                     |
| Mark Lewis            | Huntington Beach                     |
| Dean Grose            | Los Alamitos                         |
| Gordon Shanks         | Seal Beach                           |
| David Carmany         | Seal Beach                           |
| Tri Ta                | Westminster                          |
| Marwan Yohssef        | Westminster                          |
| Joel Rattner          | Rossmoor Community Services District |
| Henry Taboada         | Rossmoor Community Services District |

**Non-Members**

| <u>Name</u>      | <u>Agency</u>            |
|------------------|--------------------------|
| Paul Taylor      | OCTA                     |
| Tom Bogard       | OCTA                     |
| Rose Casey       | OCTA                     |
| Christina Byrne  | OCTA                     |
| Kevin Haboian    | Parsons                  |
| Macie Cleary     | Parsons                  |
| Michelle Sinning | Consensus Planning Group |
| Lisa Levy-Buch   | Consensus Planning Group |

## **I. Introductory Comments/Welcome**

Supervisor John Moorlach welcomed the committee members and made introductory comments. He introduced Paul Taylor as participating on behalf of Art Leahy. Sup. Moorlach stated that the Board provided staff permission to explore the HOT lane concept, and requested that the Policy Working Group (PWG) discuss the status of the project and the HOT lane issue. He added that the Board noted that part of the motion to allow it to move forward was to go through the PWG first.

## **II. Selection of Policy Working Group Vice Chair**

Supervisor Moorlach nominated Kathy Green as Vice Chair and Council Member Gil Coerper seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

## **III. Introduction of Technical and Outreach Consultant Team**

Rose Casey introduced Parsons as the technical consultant. Christina Byrne introduced Consensus Planning Group as the outreach consultant.

## **IV. I-405 Project Status and Alternatives**

Ms. Casey began a formal PowerPoint presentation of the project. Ms. Casey stated that the distance from the 73 freeway to the 605 freeway is 13.5 miles. She added that it carries the greatest volume in the world at the north end intersection of the 405, 605 and 22 freeways for 24 hours per day. She presented a slide showing the corridor's current volume of 300,000 vehicles per day, with a 2035 forecast of 370,000 vehicles per day. The 2035 forecast for the section between SR-22 and I-605 – which sees the highest volume of traffic in the U.S. – is 415,000 vehicles per day,

Councilmember Coerper, referring to the traffic slide, asked for clarification on how many hours of traffic there were a day. Ms. Casey responded that there were 24 traffic hours in a day.

Councilmember Collins asked the price tag of Alternative 1 and Alternative 2. He asked if OCTA had studied the effectiveness of HOT lanes. He stated that most sentiment on HOV & HOT lanes is that it's really not more effective. Ms. Casey replied that studies have found that HOVs work well certain at times of the day.

Marwan Yohssef asked if the plans call for one toll lane. Ms. Casey addressed by presenting the project alternatives. She stated that Alternative 1 (at a cost of \$1.2 billion) and Alternative 2 (at a cost of \$1.7 billion) would add one to two lanes in each direction, respectively. She stated that the HOT lane gives new options to carpools at a reduced

rate or free. An individual asked if carpoolers would be free and Ms. Casey replied that they would look into that. She went on to add that the maximum number of lanes to add is 2 in each direction. She said that Alternative 4 is constrained by the amount of \$500 million for now. OCTA is looking for additional funds and it may involve sequencing of projects. She clarified the intent of the drawing and stated that it was conceptual. She added that the purpose is to show number and type of lanes, not the footprint.

Mr. Yohssef asked Ms. Casey that when she discusses the two lanes, would they be substandard. Kevin Haboian responded that the first five months of the study are to look to at options. Caltrans wants to see the full environmental impacts of two standard lanes, he explained. Mr. Haboian went on to explain that they want to see if the final impacts are significant; this is the process they are going through.

Mark Lewis commented that some trips are short commute trips. He declared that a HOT lane may create problems for local trips.

Cindy Quon stated that the FHWA classifies the 405 as an Interstate and therefore the FHWA needs to be a partner to determine options. The standard lane widths are a federal standard, and are used as a basis in making the decision. So OCTA needs to identify what the impacts are, then the federal government and the state will decide based on study results. She added that they need to identify potential impacts and mitigation (above-ground, under-ground, and substandard.)

Raja Sethuraman asked if Caltrans would provide answers after the five-month study period. Ms. Quon replied that this all happens during the Environmental Phase. She stated that public and stakeholder participation is key and that they are at the beginning of the process. Ms. Casey stated that during the next 5 months, OCTA would be evaluating these issues and the environmental benefits and impacts. Mr. Sethuraman went on to ask if OCTA is evaluating HOT and HOV lanes. Mr. Haboian answered that they are reviewing Alternative 2, the HOV lane, and Alternative 3, the HOT lane.

Supervisor Moorlach stated that it was critical that Mr. Yohssef and Councilmember Tri Ta to be part of this group. He stated it is very important that they attend all of these meetings to have a voice in the process.

Councilmember Collins asked if there would be collection points and asked where toll stops would be located. Mr. Haboian answered that they envision an electronic system for now that would limit access for effectiveness of the project.

Ray Kromer added that the goal is to move traffic. There are east/west traffic chokes. He stated that they need to evaluate the east/west arterials and how different options will affect city streets. Mr. Haboian answered that the benefit of new alternatives is evaluating a second HOT lane versus a second HOV lane versus the second GP lane.

David Carmany asked about the benefit of HOT lanes. Mr. Haboian stated it's finding a different way to fund the project. The 91 freeway is an example.

Ms. Casey stated that they are also giving everyone a choice. All income levels use the 91 toll road and it depends on the day and if it is worth spending to be in an uncongested lane.

Councilmember Coerper asked if they would be rehashing old ideas, and if there was any new information. Mr. Haboian stated that the HOT lanes and Alternative 4 were new.

Mr. Lewis asked if HOT lanes would finance the operation and maintenance or capital investment through public-private partnerships. Ms. Casey stated that it would also be possible to generate funding for future improvements.

Nick DeJong asked about the amortization of money and Mr. Haboian answered that they would be studying this.

Mr. Haboian stated that they envision conducting two to three potential revenue/operational effectiveness scenarios for pricing/policies. During the first five months they would be looking at the best places to start and end the HOT lane, and also looking at the footprint and if they could remain within the footprint.

Councilmember Larry Crandall stated they have studied a bunch of options in the MIS (elevated, etc.) and don't want to repeat it. Mr. Haboian replied that they won't revisit old issues. Mr. Crandall added that he is concerned about access points. If they don't leave enough, it won't help their cities.

Paul Taylor stated that the 91 is one example, but technology has advanced/evolved since the 91 freeway, which is 20 years old. He says that there are more options for tolling technology.

Councilmember Crandall stated that perhaps they could get a video demonstration of the HOT lane options.

Tom Bogard stated that OCTA is providing mobility choices. These (HOT lanes) will benefit other lanes by taking traffic out of the other lanes. Even if you can't get in and out, it is still providing a benefit to the other travelers. He added that the other benefit is that it creates funding options and the benefits also increase the level of service and increase funds.

Supervisor Moorlach stated that adding toll lanes to an existing freeway is a big sales job. He stated that two lanes would have to be provided anyway, versus the 91 freeway that was built separately.

Mr. Bogard replied that it's a funding issue. He stated that we don't have \$1.2 billion or \$1.7 billion at the moment. He stated that maybe OCTA can't fund the two lanes without HOT funding.

Ms. Casey stated that the schedule will involve the environmental process. She added that the next PWG meeting would cover revenue information and initial study information and would occur before the end of the Early Action Plan period, and then there will be another meeting during the EIR Process. Ms. Casey stated that the scoping meetings will be taking place September 2009 but there is no detailed design at that point; rather we will be presenting the general alternatives. They discussed hosting four meetings in the corridor and will be identifying locations.

An unidentified speaker asked about the schedule availability and Ms. Casey answered that it would be available in September.

Councilmember John Collins asked when is the ROD/NOD and what is the timeline for the decision. Ms. Casey said it would be in March 2012.

## **V. Community Outreach Activities and Stakeholder Working Group**

Christina Byrne stated that the community outreach effort will start in April/May with the SWG meeting. She recommends visiting the Web site regularly for project updates.

Councilmember Crandall asked about scheduling the Fountain Valley City Council Briefing. Ms. Byrne responded that it is already on the calendar in April.

## **VI. Discussion**

Supervisor Moorlach asked Ms. Casey to discuss SB 442. Ms. Casey stated that SB 442 demonstrates additional opportunities for P3 and design build. She added that they would need to apply for the program. P3 and D/B could save one to two years on the project.

Councilmember Tri Ta of Westminster stated that he appreciates the OCTA update. He added that they are still concerned with the HOT lane, and that Westminster will strongly oppose going outside the footprint. The MIS stated four to five homes in Westminster, and they want to keep it that way. More communication from OCTA would be helpful to the committee, he said. They need to keep residents informed with all the information available.

Councilmember Crandall stated that the Central Corridor MIS was updated last week and they will be doing the EIR before 2012. They should include that study because new cars in there are in the future.

Joel Rattner expressed concern about traffic and the Seal Beach Boulevard Bridge. He stated that he is concerned with the construction impacts in Seal Beach. Mr. Rattner asked if there is guaranteed funding for the entire project. He inquired that if money ran out; would they have serious impacts on traffic? He asked if sales tax revenue is down, would impact funding?

Mr. Bogard stated that they never had a problem in the past. They make sure they have money and contingency plans before they move forward. OCTA has completed more than 40 projects without problems. He stated they will understand costs through this study, and will commit the money before they move forward. Once they have committed, they must finish.

Ms. Casey added they will be making improvements to Seal Beach Boulevard, but it is not part of this project. The WCC project will add lanes at Seal Beach Boulevard, and that project has federal funding and Proposition 1B Bond money.

Mr. Rattner asked if OCTA would be improving with current funds? He stated that the Seal Beach Bridge will be torn down in phases. He added that there is a Fire Department on one side of the bridge and the community is concerned of the possible increase in response time. Mr. Rattner went on to discuss that there is an increased load on Los Alamitos Fire Department and Seal Beach Fire Department already. They are concerned that the construction time would run over.

Ms. Casey stated that all lanes will be back on after the first phase. During the first phase, they will be maintaining an emergency access lane for emergency needs and will leave incentives for the contractor. OCTA will be briefing the Rossmoor board next week, she added.

Mr. Yohssef stated that they received OCTA's response to the letter from Westminster. He noted that that communication will continue between Westminster and OCTA until the Mayor and Council are comfortable with the process. They are concerned about diagrams and footprint and will be voicing concerns until comfortable.

Councilmember Crandall asked if the committee could receive a copy of the letter. Ms. Byrne responded that she would share with the group.

Councilmember Coerper stated that they have been working on this a long time and they think they can move this project faster. He added that the process seems so repetitious and they need to move forward. Mr. Haboian responded that they will have answers over the next five months.

## **VII. Public Comments**

Ms. Carey, a 405 Citizen's Ad Hoc Committee Member and Westminster resident, stated that when this project was first introduced in the MIS phase, the Westminster stakeholders had issues with the openness of OCTA. She stated that with the advent of the West County Connector Project, OCTA did an outstanding job of informing and doing what they said they would do. Ms. Carey noted that Ms. Byrne and Ms. Casey have been great. The City of Westminster wrote a letter to Art Leahy and the response was not wholly what they had expected. She explained that when the city signed onto Measure M, Alternative 4 (LPA) only took five homes at the Springdale ramp. Since that time, OCTA has indicated it wants to widen or go beyond the guidelines. She stated that the information that OCTA puts out on this project is confusing – OCTA will get a lot of pushback if it doesn't clarify the terms. Ms. Carey explained that the toll lane is a secondary issue and they would like a definite answer that OCTA will hold to Measure M. She stated that there are different configurations and "generally" staying within lanes is not enough information. She went on to use the analogy, "either you are pregnant or not pregnant; you are not kind of pregnant." She stated that their concerns are with the current diagrams. She noted that it looks like OCTA will not be staying within the existing right of way. The diagram is the same that was used in 2005 for Alternative 8. Ms. Carey urged OCTA to keep the same labels that were used during the MIS. She added that this project should be Alternative 4, Options A, B & C. Because this is a new alternative, they are now looking for unequivocal clarification that will be staying within the right of way. Ms. Carey requests to know if OCTA will be staying with lanes. She stated that Westminster only supported Measure M because of the selected LPS.

Paul Taylor commented that OCTA's commitment remains to Measure M, and the project will stay within footprint of the freeway as it is the best use of freeway property.

Ms. Carey stated that they need understanding. She asked if the EIR would be required to show full widths. She also asked to clarify if there would be public meetings starting in July 2009, after the draft EIR is formulated. Ms. Carey stated that according to Ms. Quon you have to show at full lane widths. She asked if this was accurate. Ms. Quon stated that it's part of the environmental process, to look at full standard alternatives then see how to minimize or mitigate impacts. Ms. Carey asked if they are looking at Alternative 4 and Alternative 8 from the MIS, which were previously rejected?

Rose Casey responded that she would have to go back and reference the MIS to remember the details of Alternative 8.

Supervisor John Moorlach suggested that Ms. Carey's questions be answered outside this forum.

Ms. Casey replied that the draft environmental document would be ready in 2011. In September 2009, there will be public scoping meetings to discuss the four alternatives. She said they will have a Stakeholder Working Group to provide input.

**VIII. Next meeting/Adjournment**

Ms. Byrne stated that the next PWG will be held in August.