



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

**Minutes of Meeting  
Thursday, December 2, 2010**

**8:30 a.m.  
Orange County Transportation Authority  
600 S. Main Street, Orange CA  
Conference Room 103/104**

Attendance

**Policy Working Group Participants**

**Name**

Tiffany Andrews  
John Collins  
Larry Crandall  
Sean Crumby  
Cristy Delp  
Troy Edgar  
Don Hansen  
Steve Jones  
Ray Kromer  
Mark Lewis  
Allan Mansoor  
John Moorlach  
Jake Ngo  
Janet Nguyen  
Danielle Richards  
Raja Sethuraman  
Bob Stachelski  
Tri Ta

**Organization**

Office of Council Member Schipske, City of Long Beach  
Council Member, City of Fountain Valley  
Mayor, City of Fountain Valley  
City of Seal Beach  
Office of Supervisor Nguyen; OC Board of Supervisors  
Council Member, City of Los Alamitos  
OCTA Board Member; Council Member, City of Huntington Beach  
Mayor Pro Tem, City of Garden Grove  
City of Fountain Valley  
City of Fountain Valley  
OCTA Board Member; Mayor, City of Costa Mesa  
OCTA Board Member; Supervisor, OC Board of Supervisors  
City of Westminster  
OCTA Board Member; Chair, OC Board of Supervisors  
Office of Supervisor Moorlach; OC Board of Supervisors  
City of Costa Mesa  
City of Huntington Beach  
Council Member, City of Westminster

## **Agencies and Consultants**

<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b><u>Agency</u></b>
Niall Barrett	OCTA
Jim Beil	OCTA
Tom Bogard	OCTA
Ellen Burton	OCTA
Christina Byrne	OCTA
Rose Casey	OCTA
Darrell Johnson	OCTA
Will Kempton	OCTA
Macie Cleary	Parsons
Neal Denno	Parsons
Kevin Haboian	Parsons
Jason Majzoub	Parsons
Henry Nguyen	Caltrans
Sylvia Vega	Caltrans
Jennifer Labrado	Consensus Inc.
Marianne Ng	Consensus Inc.
Michelle Sinning	Consensus Inc.

### **I. Welcome, Self Introductions and Opening Remarks**

Supervisor John Moorlach opened the meeting, welcomed those in attendance and asked for self introductions.

OCTA CEO Will Kempton thanked the group for all their efforts on the I-405 Improvement Project. He explained that their input will help OCTA capture the most viable alternatives for the project. Supervisor Moorlach stated that later in the agenda, attendees would hear that the project is moving along well in the environmental process and that a Draft Environmental Document is planned to be drafted by spring 2011. The staff and consultants are being pushed very hard to accelerate the project.

Rose Casey explained that spring 2011 is when the technical work will be done; then the document will go to Caltrans for review.

Mr. Kempton said that both federal and state documents are being put together because OCTA doesn't want to close the door on any opportunities for funding. He continued that Caltrans has a process that is laid out pretty clearly in terms of time frame. OCTA is working with Caltrans to accelerate the project and move it forward more rapidly. Mr. Kempton said that OCTA has relied on the Policy Working Group to provide input on development and implementation consistent with Measure M2 to add two lanes in each direction between SR-55 and the county line. Thanks to the help of the PWG, consensus has been built in the corridor. Mr. Kempton believes that as an organization, OCTA has done a very good job at outreach, as evidenced in the West County Connectors (WCC) Project. OCTA plans to take the same approach in

collaborating with communities along the I-405 as it did with the WCC project. Thankfully, adequate public input has been received. OCTA is doing what it can to move the environmental document forward, and hopefully see some time savings on the project.

Mr. Kempton stated that the economy won't come back rapidly, and there will probably be an impact on the construction industry for some time. If OCTA can get the project out to bid sooner, it will save substantial dollars, because this is an expensive project regardless of the alternative selected.

Mr. Kempton concluded by stating that the staff and consultants have been doing an excellent job. He welcomed the mayor of Fountain Valley, Larry Crandall, who will be sworn in as an OCTA board member on December 13. He then acknowledged current OCTA Board Members in attendance, including: Council Member Don Hansen, Mayor Allan Mansoor, Supervisor John Moorlach, and Supervisor Janet Nguyen..

## **II. Project Review**

Niall Barrett informed the PWG that he had been managing the WCC project until a few months ago. Now, he is taking a more active role in managing the I-405 Project with Rose Casey. Mr. Barrett gave an overview of the I-405 Project and explained the plans to widen the freeway from Interstate 605 down to State Route-73. He stated that the I-405 is one of the most heavily congested freeways in Orange County and that numerous traffic delays occur due to its congestion. Since the last PWG meeting in August 2009, a lot of hard work has been done on developing engineering estimates and furthering the process for considering alternatives. Alternative 1 includes adding one general purpose lane for an estimated \$1.5 billion, Alternative 2 has two general purpose lanes for an estimated \$1.7 billion and Alternative 3 provides a two-lane express toll facility for an estimated \$2.0 billion. The Express Alternative includes an additional general purpose lane in each direction.

## **III. Right-of-way Status**

Kevin Haboian provided background on the right-of-way (ROW) status and stated that after the Major Investment Study (MIS) was completed, the alternative that was preferred had only one lane in each direction. A ROW footprint was established to ensure that the ROW impacts were minimized. He stated that since the MIS phase, a few more alternatives have been investigated that add two lanes in each direction. The project team is working on the task of staying within the ROW footprint, even if two lanes are added. Mr. Haboian said that currently, the potential for staying within the footprint looks good because they are shifting alignments and taking other measures to minimize the ROW impacts that had been previously defined.

A visualization of the existing condition and build alternatives at the Springdale Street overcrossing was then presented as an example of how the design team is working to add capacity while minimizing expansion of the ROW. In the existing condition, three

rows of columns support the overpass and there is a landscaped area between the outside edge of the shoulder and the ROW line. The I-405 Improvement Project entails replacing the overpasses and eliminating the bridge's outside columns to fit additional lanes and keeps all the concepts generally within the existing freeway ROW footprint. Mr. Haboian described the Build Alternatives as follows:

#### **Build Alternative 1: Add One General Purpose Lane in Each Direction**

- Adds a single general purpose lane in each direction of the I-405 freeway from Euclid Street to the I-605 interchange
- Provides interchange improvements within the project limits

#### **Build Alternative 2: Add Two General Purpose Lanes in Each Direction**

- Adds two general purpose lanes in each direction of the I-405 freeway from Euclid Street to the I-605 interchange
- Provides interchange improvements within the project limits

#### **Build Alternative 3: Express Facility Alternative**

- Adds one toll lane to the existing carpool lane that will be managed together (Federal Highway Administration tolling authority required)
- Adds a single general purpose lane in each direction of the I-405 freeway from Euclid Street to the I-605 interchange
- Provides interchange improvements within the project limits

### **IV. Speed and Throughput Metrics**

The next topic discussed was expected travel speeds and vehicular throughput. Kevin Haboian explained how throughput and speeds decline as congestion increases. The actual speeds for the existing 2010 conditions were shown. Mr. Haboian explained that the existing speeds on the facility today were determined based on conducting floating car surveys. In the carpool lane, the speeds were roughly 35 mph traveling northbound during the PM peak hour; in the general purpose lanes, the speeds were around 28 mph. Mr. Haboian pointed out that looking ahead to 2040, 30 years from now, in the No Build Alternative scenario the speed drops to 10 mph. He added that there is enough traffic expected in 2040 to build 20 lanes in this corridor, but that type of extensive expansion would be unacceptable given the number of impacts.

Mr. Haboian went on to compare the Alternatives. Under Alternative 1, a general purpose lane would be added in each direction. This Alternative provides more capacity than under the "No Build" Alternative and speeds would go up slightly. However, both the carpool lanes and the general purpose lanes would be congested. Looking at Alternative 2, two general purpose lanes would be added in each direction and as with Alternative 1, there would not be much of a difference between the carpool and general purpose lanes. Under Alternative 3, speed in the express lanes was projecting to be

approximately 65 mph. This managed lane concept would maintain a good level of service for those individuals who were willing to pay the toll. However, because there is only one new general purpose lane in each direction, speeds in the general purpose lanes were lower than in Alternative 2.

Mr. Haboian said the vehicle throughput trends were similar to what was discussed regarding speed characteristics. He pointed out that looking at 2040, throughput would drop and there would be gridlock condition [“gridlock” is defined as a high-traffic condition with minimal flow] if the No Build Alternative was selected. Under Alternative 1, one general purpose lane would be added in each direction allowing more vehicles through. The carpool lane throughput would remain the same. Under Alternative 2, there would be an increase in vehicle throughput compared to the throughput seen today. Of all the alternatives under construction, Alternative 3 would be expected to provide the most throughput during peak hours due to the lack of congestion in the managed express lanes.

## **V. Lane Dispersal at LA County Line**

Neal Denno said that there have been concerns about what happens to traffic at the Orange/LA County Line with the additional lanes. Previously the question had been, “Are we building a huge funnel that might create a traffic jam at the LA County line?”

Supervisor Moorlach added that Long Beach, Caltrans and OCTA are working together on the Seal Beach concerns regarding ingress/egress in and out of College Park West.

Mr. Denno discussed the alternatives in terms of lane additions at the Orange/Los Angeles county line. Mr. Denno explained that today, there are four general purpose lanes on the I-405 at the County line, and that situation does not change under any of the proposed alternatives.

The West County Connectors (WCC) project has just started construction and will add an additional HOV lane on I-405 as it approaches the county line. This additional HOV lane will be directly connected to the existing I-605 HOV lane and will therefore not be dropped at the county line on I-405. That will be the existing condition when the I-405 project begins construction.

Alternative 1 would add one northbound general purpose lane from Euclid Street, terminating into the I-605 connector. Alternative 1 would also add one auxiliary northbound lane between the Seal Beach Boulevard I-405 on ramp and the SR-22 connector/7th Street exit. Neither of the new lanes would be carried to the county line on the I-405 so would not create a lane drop.

Alternative 2 would add two northbound general purpose lanes from Fountain Valley, one of which terminates into SR-22/7<sup>th</sup> Street exit and the other of which terminates into I-605 connector. Neither of the new lanes would be carried to the county line, so Alternative 2 would not create a lane drop.

Alternative 3 is similar to Alternative 1 with one exception — the carpool lanes would become part of express lane system but would match the carpool lanes on I-605 and I-405 as they entered LA County with the second express lane converging to the I-605. All of the proposed new lanes would serve I-605 or SR-22/7<sup>th</sup> Street and would be arranged so that a bottleneck would not occur at the LA/OC County line.

This solution was set up to avoid the problem of having a lot of lane drops at the LA/OC county line on the I-405, he explained.

## **VI. Schedule for Environmental Document and Questions**

Macie Cleary presented a graphic of the project schedule. Ms. Cleary said that the project team is currently preparing the Draft Environmental Document. The project team is making sure preliminary designs for each of the alternatives have been developed to minimize permanent ROW impacts. She then discussed putting together the technical reports that feed into the environmental document, including noise impact, air quality, and assessment of community impacts. The effort includes analyzing almost two dozen technical subjects. These technical reports are currently being prepared and will be used to prepare the environmental document for submittal to Caltrans. Caltrans has the responsibility of reviewing and approving all the information in the document before it is released. Caltrans will then circulate the Draft Environmental Document, currently scheduled for November 2011. At that point, public comments will be collected over a 45-day review period and will then be responded to. The Final Environmental Document will be completed approximately one year after the Draft Environmental Document is released.

## **VII. Stakeholder Feedback and Questions**

Council Member Tri Ta asked to clarify that whichever alternative is selected, how will there be no impacts?

*Kevin Haboian said that based upon the footprint established in the MIS, at that time, there were only a handful of single family home impacts. These measurements are not final, but the project team is working hard to avoid those previously identified impacts and they appear to have been reduced.*

Mayor Larry Crandall asked if the cross section shown is representative of all the overpass crossings throughout the corridor. He wanted to know if the exact footprint will be seen on Brookhurst St.

*Kevin Haboian responded that the footprint will be very similar.*

Mayor Allan Mansoor asked if the homeowners have been notified yet.

*Kevin Haboian stated that the SWG has been informed as well as representatives from the homeowners' communities. Scoping meetings were held, and outreach is continuously being conducted as well. Supervisor Moorlach explained that OCTA has tried its best to make sure that Westminster is at all the meetings and is trying hard to make everything fit.*

Supervisor Moorlach asked for an explanation of why Caltrans wants a buffer in the middle of the freeway and not at the side.

*Kevin Haboian explained that full standard 10-foot shoulders on both sides of the I-405 are proposed in both directions. He referred back to the visualization to show the outside shoulder widths, which appeared smaller on one side of the rendering but were in fact standard.*

Supervisor Moorlach asked Mr. Haboian to define the term "floating car."

*Kevin Haboian explained that "floating car" represents when the project team sends someone to drive a car on the facility and that person drives the average speed of the other vehicles.*

Supervisor Moorlach asked if 10 lanes could be added on both sides of the freeway to manage the traffic in the future. He wanted to know what could be done if the decision was made to expand further after the proposed replacement of all the overcrossings.

*Kevin Haboian explained that while there is the demand for more lanes, there are ROW constraints so any large-scale additional widening is unlikely. Hypothetically, the bridges would have to be rebuilt to expand any further. He stated that they looked at double-decking the freeway in the MIS and the public reacted negatively.*

Supervisor Nguyen asked for further detail on what the reaction of the community was regarding the double-decking.

*Kevin Haboian stated that through the visual simulations, the community got to see how the double decking looked. Not only were there visual concerns, but the noise impacts were greater because the elevated noise would carry further.*

Mayor Crandall asked about the early version of the MIS having a lot of property takes in Westminster. Mayor Crandall wanted to know how many lanes it was.

*Kevin Haboian said that at that time, the number of lanes was similar except that having barrier separations created more shoulders and more width.*

Supervisor Nguyen asked if Alternatives 2 & 3 could be combined and what the impacts would be if that were an option.

*Kevin Haboian explained that combining Alternatives 2 & 3 would create the need for an additional 25 feet of ROW outside of the identified footprint. The project team worked to pull all the tricks out of the bag in order to minimize impacts of the alternatives currently being considered.*

Council Member Troy Edgar asked about impacts to homeowners.

*Kevin Haboian said that the project is coming up close to backyards. Neal Denno said that there is one location where the corner of a backyard will be clipped. Mr. Haboian added it is an angular back yard.*

Council Member Edgar wanted to know if the homeowners had been spoken with and whether there were any issues.

*Mr. Haboian said that the project team is scheduling public meetings and will have additional outreach and communications with the property owners as part of the process.*

Council Member Edgar asked if there would be any impact on the Seal Beach bridge design and whether the decision on alternatives would impact the building of the bridge.

*Supervisor Moorlach said that when driving on SR-22, people don't see bridges. The I-405 is more expensive to deal with because of all the bridge crossings. He said that the team is trying as carefully as possible not have to do things twice. As an example, he explained, the WCC project is still in process, so if possible, the team would like to accommodate everything in one fell swoop. He said that communication and getting letters of support would be important and the team must consider whether Little Saigon would be impacted. The construction will be temporary but once the project is completed, everyone should be happy. He added Christina Byrne has been communicating via Twitter, emails, and the website.*

*Niall Barrett stated that the Seal Beach bridge is being built long enough to accommodate the future I-405 improvements.*

Council Member John Collins wanted to stress the need for continuous access, egress, etc.

*Rose Casey stated that the plan at this point is for the HOV lanes to have continuous access. The cross section design assumes that it will be possible. She also noted that continuous access may not be possible with the Express Lanes Alternative.*

Supervisor Moorlach wanted to know why they don't move forward with continuous access now on the I-405.



*Tom Bogard stated that OCTA has a program underway right now to convert the entire Orange County HOV system into continuous access. He stated that in about 2-3 years from now, it will be all converted.*

Council Member Collins stated that it would be great. He wanted to know if other agencies will also be doing that.

*Tom Bogard said, yes, he anticipated that they would.*

Tiffany Andrews shared that the City of Long Beach's biggest concern is the bottleneck at the I-605. They have been very happy with the improvements at the SR-22. She stated that having a new bridge and lanes will be great once they are open.

Council Member Ta asked if they can start construction without completing the EIR.

*Macie Cleary responded that it was not possible.*

Supervisor Moorlach asked about the two projects occurring close to one another. He mentioned that the West County Connectors is under construction.

*Rose Casey stated that the WCC project has an approved environmental document.*

Council Member Hansen asked if access will be open on the Toll facility (referring to Alternative 3).

*Kevin Haboian explained that they are envisioning that, in addition to the beginning and end points, two intermediate access locations are planned. The Express Facility will begin at the I-405/SR-22 overlap section, and will end in the vicinity of the SR-73.*

Supervisor Moorlach stated that if they have a transponder, it will charge users accordingly.

*Kevin Haboian explained the collection of the tolls could be similar to that of the system already in place on the SR-91.*

*Neal Denno stated that Magnolia/Warner and Bolsa/Goldenwest are the street locations of the intermediate access points.*

Council Member Hansen asked where people will merge when they exit the HOT lane.

*Kevin Haboian stated that the technical team is currently working on the transitions – exploring the issue created when a vehicle exits the Express Lanes, it will be merging into the general purpose lanes. This is why the ROW impacts aren't for certain, because the merging options are still being investigated.*

Mark Lewis asked about the travel speed and throughput on slides 8 & 9. Mr. Lewis wanted to know the difference between Alternative 2 & 3, where they see an increase speeds in the HOV lane but a significant decrease of speed in the general purpose lanes. He also asked how the project is evaluating the difference between a toll facility and not. He is curious about how it compares to the SR-91 in terms of value and return on investment because it seems like they are compromising a lot in terms of giving up a general purpose lane.

*Darrell Johnson stated that they will have to look at the trade off, as well as “how do we fund the project.” Mr. Johnson explained they have to take it through the board and committee process. Consequently, they are not ready to roll out the information yet. Mr. Johnson stated that the toll component is the tradeoff between the two.*

Mark Lewis asked Mr. Johnson if he meant that there was not a “bank of money” for funding for Alternatives 1 & 2.

*Darrell Johnson stated that, yes, that was correct, and the tolling facility could provide that funding mechanism.*

*Tom Bogard stated that additionally, air quality must be considered. It might be difficult to get a project that adds two general purpose lanes approved, especially traveling at low speeds. We might need 20 lanes but we can’t build them because of AQMD limits. Or we would have a facility where a driver can plan his trip because he knows he has an alternative to sitting in traffic; this gives him a reliable trip time. This is currently a hot topic, deciding how one can best manage the assets they currently possess.*

Mark Lewis stated that there is a lot of public education needed.

Raja Sethuraman stated, in respect to air quality, the other 5,000 cars in the general purpose lanes have their speed at half. He is not sure how the overall picture is.

*Tom Bogard explained that Parsons will be evaluating this with the environmental studies.*

*Macie Cleary stated that she will take a look at that. She is hopeful that speed increases will show air quality improvements.*

*Tom Bogard stated that when they widened the I-5 through Anaheim, it was built to allow 12 lanes (five general purpose). But if you go out there now, you will notice that there are only 10 lanes. Mr. Bogard explained that this is because they weren’t allowed to add those other lanes due to air quality issues. Southern California already exceeds the allowable limits.*

*Kevin Haboian shared that, additionally, if you look at the throughput numbers, in the general purpose lanes there is so much demand and they are faced with jammed*

*conditions so throughput is low. If they're operating in a free flow condition, there would be roughly 2,000 vehicles per lane getting through rather than 1,200.*

### **VIII. Closing**

Christina Byrne thanked the Policy Working Group members for their participation and stated that the PWG will convene again in summer 2011.