



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

**Meeting Notes
Wednesday, June 26, 2013 at 8:30 a.m.**

**Orange County Transportation Authority
600 S. Main Street, Orange CA 92868
Conference Room 103/104**

Policy Working Group Participants

Members

Steve Bos
Byron Brno

Diana Carey
Ron Casey
John Collins
Sean Crumby
Steve Jones
Michael Levitt
Mark Lewis
Gary Miller
John Moorlach
Pamela Newcomb
Raja Sethuraman
Ken Sprague
Bob Stachelski
Paul Van Dyk
Marwan Youssef

Organization

City of Long Beach
Office of Long Beach City Councilmember Gerrie Schipske,
5th District
City of Westminster
Rossmoor Community Services District
City of Fountain Valley
City of Seal Beach
City of Garden Grove/OCTA Board of Directors
City of Seal Beach
City of Fountain Valley
City of Seal Beach/OCTA Board of Directors
Orange County Board of Supervisors
Office of Orange County Supervisor John Moorlach, 2nd District
City of Costa Mesa
Office of Orange County Supervisor Janet Nguyen, 1st District
City of Huntington Beach
City of Long Beach
City of Westminster

Agencies and Consultants

<u>Name</u>	<u>Agency</u>
Niall Barrett	OCTA
Ellen Burton	OCTA
Christina Byrne	OCTA
Rose Casey	OCTA
Darrell Johnson	OCTA
Ted Nguyen	OCTA
Andrea West	OCTA
Cindy Azima	Caltrans
James Pinheiro	Caltrans
Gary Slater	Caltrans
Sylvia Vega	Caltrans
Macie Cleary	Parsons
Neal Denno	Parsons
Kevin Haboian	Parsons
Noelle Afualo	Simon Wong Engineering
Evelyn French	Simon Wong Engineering
Jeannie Kim	Consensus Inc.
Janet Ouch	Consensus Inc.

I. Welcome, Self Introductions and Opening Remarks

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

Christina Byrne thanked the group for all their efforts on the I-405 Improvement Project Policy Working Group (PWG).

OCTA CEO Darrell Johnson thanked the group for taking time out of their busy schedules to participate in the I-405 Improvement Project planning process. He gave an overview of the agenda including the environmental process, public review period, design refinements, and project next steps. He stated the Draft Environmental Impact Report / Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) public comment period was May 18 to July 17, 2012. Since that time, OCTA and Caltrans have begun reviewing the Draft EIR/EIS comments and preparing responses for inclusion in the final EIR/EIS. Since the release of the Draft EIR/EIS, OCTA staff has worked hard to address corridor city concerns in addition to the Boards concerns.

He thanked the PWG for being an integral part of the decision making process and that OCTA anticipates Caltrans selecting the Preferred Alternative in fall 2013. If not, Mr. Johnson stated that the I-405 Improvement Project may not be able to meet the current Measure M2 schedule.

John Collins mentioned that he was disappointed with the I-405 Improvement Project planning process. He said that the Policy Working Group voted unanimously for Alternative 2, and felt this decision was never presented to the board. Darrell Johnson clarified that information regarding the Policy Working Group's support of Alternative 2 was included in the Locally Preferred Alternative staff report presented to the OCTA Board in October 2012.

Darrell Johnson recognized Mayor Collins concern and promised that the role of the Policy Working Group and Stakeholder Working Group is captured and mentioned to the Board.

II. Presentation - Project History and Build Alternatives

Niall Barrett began the presentation by showing the 12-mile project area and explained that there will be 17 bridge replacements throughout the project corridor. To provide some project background, Niall Barrett reviewed the project history from when the Major Investment Study (MIS) was launched in 2003 and considered 13 alternatives. Niall Barrett explained that in 2005, the MIS was approved with one general purpose lane in each direction. In 2006, when Orange County voters approved to renew Measure M, the I-405 Improvement Project moved forward as Project K. Niall Barrett clarified that Project K is what the public now understands as Alternative 1. Between 2008 and 2009, the Project Study Report (PSR) was completed, and Alternative 2, to add two general purpose lanes to the I-405 was introduced. Next the project moved forward into the Environmental Phase. However, due to increased scope and the recession cost assumptions for the project increased and the projections for revenue decreased. In 2009, the Project Team returned to the OCTA Board of Directors to introduce Alternative 3 as a means of funding the I-405 project.

Alternative 3 proposed to add one general purpose lane and one high-occupancy toll (HOT) express lane to be combined with the existing carpool to operate as a two-lane express facility. In 2011, Caltrans and OCTA completed the Traffic and Revenue Study and projected that the revenue from the tolls would be able to fully fund the incremental cost of Alternative 3.

Niall Barrett explained the three Build Alternatives and difference between the original cost estimates and the revised cost estimates due to proposed design variations. The revised cost estimates reflect design variations proposed in response to comments received on the Draft EIR/EIS. For Alternatives 1, 2 and 3, staff is proposing removal of the braided ramps in the City of Fountain Valley, reducing the cost estimate by \$50 million. Specifically for Alternative 3, the express lanes at Euclid Street and Ellis Street would be truncated, eliminating the SR-73 connector, and reducing the cost estimate by \$180 million. Niall Barrett explained that Alternative 1 originally was estimated to be \$1.3 billion and would add one general purpose lane in each direction. The revised cost estimate with variations reduced the cost to \$1.25 billion. Alternative 2 would add two general purpose lanes in each direction. Though Alternative 2 was originally projected to be \$1.4 billion, the variations reduced the cost to \$1.35 billion. Alternative 3 would add one general purpose lane and one HOT or express lane and was originally projected to cost \$1.7 billion but the variations reduced the cost to \$1.47 billion. Niall Barrett noted that Alternative 3 costs more because it is a longer project, extending to SR-73.

Michael Levitt asked if Alternative 3 is described as a general purpose lane and a High-Occupancy Toll (HOT) Lane. He asked why the diamond lane or carpool lane was removed as part of Alternative 2. Darrell Johnson clarified that the carpool lane remains under Alternative 2. Mayor Collins asked if the carpool lanes under Alternatives 1 and 2 will be similar to the

SR-22 freeway. Darrell Johnson said the carpool lanes under Alternatives 1 and 2 would be continuous access, similar to the SR-22 freeway.

III. Presentation - Public Comments/Themes, Last Several Months and the Supplemental Draft EIR/EIS

Niall Barrett outlined common themes OCTA has identified as a result of feedback from the corridor cities throughout the public comment period (May 18, 2012 – July 17, 2012). OCTA has a demonstrated history of working with the community to address concerns. Comments received during the DRAFT EIR/EIS public comment period include: avoid reconstruction of the Fairview bridge, business relocations in Fountain Valley, parking impacts in Westminster, Almond Avenue sound wall reconstruction in Seal Beach, the potential traffic impacts at the Los Angeles and Orange County line transition, as well as the perception of tolling and high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) 2+ conversion and use of transponders.

John Collins asked if by relocation, would the project relocate or *take away* the businesses in Fountain Valley. Niall Barrett and Jim Beil clarified that the project will help the businesses relocate to a similar location as indicated in the Draft EIR/EIS. However, OCTA is coordinating with Caltrans to remove the braided ramps at the Magnolia Interchange. The final approval of the braided ramp removal would be included in the Final EIR/EIS.

Gary Miller mentioned that the corridor city groups as well as Chairman John Moorlach recommend Alternative 2. Diana Carey asked if the Fairview Bridge would remain intact. Niall Barrett explained that under Alternative 3, the Fairview Bridge would need to be replaced. However, the team has explored truncating options to avoid removal of the Fairview Bridge. Darrell Johnson also explained that the staff recommendation in October 2012 included truncating Alternative 3 at Euclid Street.

Niall Barrett reviewed the project's status over the last several months. In October 2012, Alternative 1 was selected as the OCTA Board of Directors' recommendation. In December 2012, the Long Beach traffic study was prepared in response to comments by the Gateway Cities Council of Governments, City of Long Beach and City of Seal Beach. In April 2012, Caltrans submitted findings from the high-occupancy vehicle lane degradation study to the OCTA Board of Directors. In early 2013, the OCTA Board of Directors requested OCTA staff explore two new concepts – Concept A and B.

Niall Barrett explained that after reviewing public comments received during the Draft EIR/EIS circulation, Caltrans prepared a Supplemental Draft EIR/EIS in order to further examine the existing and future traffic flow in the City of Long Beach. OCTA is scheduled to begin the circulation of the Supplemental Draft EIR/EIS on June 28, 2013. The community will be notified about circulation of the Supplemental Draft EIR/EIS through newspaper advertisements, email communications, print and social media, postcard mailings and one public hearing to be held in the City of Long Beach.

As part of the Supplemental Draft EIR/EIS, 36 additional intersections have been evaluated to measure the demand, capacity and level of service within the City of Long Beach not considered in the Draft EIR/EIS.

Chairman John Moorlach noted that the Policy Working Group was told that the project will be short on funding and that's when the toll lanes were introduced. In 2012, it became apparent that it was not necessary; because the M2 project could be fully funded by M2 revenues.

Gary Miller mentioned that it is important to show that the Board of Directors chose Alternative 1 in October 2012. The degradation study was based on the 1% of drivers who use low emission vehicles. Chairman Moorlach explained that in 1999 California (Davis) said that drivers can drive solo with the low-emission vehicle decal. Without the decal, we would not have a degradation study. He encouraged PWG members to mobilize to oppose the bill to extend decal exemptions because it is causing new problems.

Darrell Johnson clarified that the I-405 express lanes was introduced in 2009. At the time staff did not highlight the opportunity to reinvest excess revenue well to the board. OCTA has been able to reinvest excess revenue on the SR-91 Express Lanes back into the corridor. The State Senate mandates that the funds be reinvested in the corridor.

James Pinheiro explained that though he is pleased that HOV lanes are being utilized, the speed and throughput in these lanes need to be maintained and improved. He voiced his concern that drivers will lose incentives to carpool if the HOV system is inefficient. Chairman Moorlach explained to the Working Group that decision-makers need to rethink legislations. He explained that the group is there to vote to put carpool lanes as part of the project; he also questioned why managed lanes were not integrated as part of SR-22. Chairman Moorlach was concerned that the discussion revolving the I-405 Improvement Project was similar to the El Toro project. Darrell Johnson reminded the group that the managed lane workshop was intended to help explain the process and that it was planning for the future of the county. James Pinheiro explained that operational and management options need to be discussed, and that the group needs to consider economic, real estate and operational limitations.

Diana Carey also mentioned that Measure M2 promised the public general purpose lanes. She felt that most of the outreach efforts were focused on explaining Alternatives 1 and 3, rather than Alternative 2, which was what the public wanted. Chairman Moorlach closed the discussion by thanking Mr. Pinheiro for the dialogue, and being able to openly discuss options. He returned the discussion back to Niall Barrett to continue the presentation.

Niall Barrett explained that after reviewing public comments received during the initial Draft Environmental Impact Report / Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS), Caltrans prepared a Supplemental Draft EIR/EIS in order to further examine the existing and future traffic flow in the City of Long Beach. OCTA is scheduled to begin the circulation of the Supplemental Draft EIR/EIS in late June 2013. Outreach to notify the community of the Supplemental Draft EIR/EIS will be executed through newspaper advertisements, email communications, print and social media, postcard mailings and one public hearing to be held in the Long Beach area.

As part of the Supplemental Draft EIR/EIS, 36 additional intersections have been evaluated to measure the demand, capacity and level of service within the City of Long Beach not considered in the Draft EIR/EIS.

IV. Presentation - Potential Mitigations Identified, Other Programs and Studies, and Concept A and B

Under Alternative 1 the Supplemental Draft EIR/ EIS proposes improvements at five intersections. Under Alternative 2, the Supplemental Draft EIR/EIS recommends nine intersections, and under Alternative 3, eight intersections.

Niall Barrett discussed OCTA's participation in many discussions and programs as part of OCTA's long range transportation plan, beyond the I-405 and Orange Count. These include LA Metro's High-Occupancy Toll Lane Demonstration Program for the I-10 and I-110, and Conversion Feasibility Study for the I-405 Freeway high-occupancy vehicle lanes to high-occupancy toll lanes, and the I-605 "Hot Spots" Feasibility Analysis. The Southern California Association of Governments, with Los Angeles Metro and OCTA have also explored the Express Travel Choices Study.

In response to the OCTA Board of Directors recommendation to the project team to study additional concepts for the I-405 Improvement Project, Concept A and Concept B were introduced. Concept A is essentially Alternative 2 with two general purpose lanes added in each direction and the conversion of the carpool lane into express lanes. One express lane with two general purpose lanes will be added as part of the project. Concept B is a variation of Alternative 2 with the second northbound general purpose lane being eliminated north of Valley View Street.

Niall Barrett explained that Concept A can be seen as a new alternative and Concept B is design variation to Alternative 2. The project team is currently studying the two concepts and plans to update the OCTA Board of Directors in September.

Darrell Johnson reminded the Policy Working Group that OCTA is committed to working with the City of Long Beach as the I-405 Improvement Project progresses.

Gary Miller mentioned that with Option A, B and the Locally Preferred Alternative, the project is back to three alternatives. Darrell Johnson replied that it is imperative to deliver on Measure M2 because of the revenue and cost. Mobility needs to be improved, and the Options are not intended affect the current progress of Alternative 1. The team wants to move on Alternative 1 as that is what Orange County voters voted on in 2006.

Mark Lewis stated that the group talks in depth about Measure M2 and Alternative 1. He feels that OCTA, Parsons and Caltrans are doing a lot of work to fit two lanes in the project corridor. He reminded the group that voters voted for more capacity, and asked the team to consider the fact the public may be put through four years of construction for only one additional lane of capacity.

John Collins explained that Orange County voters voted for less traffic and that the true Locally Preferred Alternative is Alternative 2. Raja Sethuraman explained to Mark Lewis that Right of Way impacts were a concern in regards to Alternative 2 in the past. Rose Casey also reminded the PWG that Alternative 2 was considered just as equally as the other two alternatives during the environmental process. John Collins asked if Concept B is basically Alternative 2 with a lane drop at Valley View St. Niall Barrett explained that Concept B is a design variation of Alternative 2 with the second general purpose lane being truncated at Valley View St.

IV. Presentation - Path Forward, Next Steps and Closing Remarks

Niall Barrett reviewed the next steps for the I-405 Improvement Project. He explained that the Supplemental Draft EIR/EIS will be circulated in June 2013. Meanwhile the project team will proceed with work to begin preliminary design and right-of-way tasks that are common to all alternatives. In September 2013, the project team plans to complete screening of the new concepts and will return to the OCTA Board of Directors to present the findings from Concept A and Concept B. Also in September 2013, the OCTA Board of Directors may choose to select a different Locally Preferred Alternative. Depending on the direction from the Board, another Supplemental Draft EIR/EIS may be developed and circulated. The Project Development team will select the preferred alternative, and if the current Locally Preferred Alternative moves forward, construction will begin in 2015 and is anticipated to be complete in early 2020.

James Pinheiro noted that the project team is working closely with OCTA and Caltrans, but has operational concerns with Concepts A and B.

Darrell Johnson stated that moving forward, the project team anticipates advancing on the project development of the Measure M2 project (Project K), and initiating preliminary design and right-of-way tasks common to all alternatives as well as further studying Concept A and Concept B. If the team is on schedule, they will provide an update to OCTA's Regional Planning and Highways Committee on August 5, 2013 with preliminary feedback from Stantec and Caltrans. OCTA plans to reconvene the Stakeholder Working Group in August to share new information gathered from the Concepts as well as findings from the circulation of the Supplemental Draft EIR/EIS in the City of Long Beach. The project team also plans to meet with the Technical Working Group. The team plans to return to the Board of Directors in September 2013. He informed the group that AB 401 (D-Daly) will allow the project to pursue Design-Build, saving the project \$60-90 million. This means that the project duration and construction will be more efficient.

Steve Bos expressed appreciation to the project team for the continued dialogue with the City of Long Beach. Steve Bos explained that the City of Long Beach has been working with the Gateway Cities and Metro and have seen the Draft Supplemental Traffic Study. He stated that he looks forward to reviewing the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Report / Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) on Friday.

Christina Byrne outlined the outreach efforts in preparation of the release of the Supplemental Draft EIR/EIS. She showed a preview of the public notice to be published in the Federal Register on Friday. Ms. Byrne explained that the public review period is from June 28 to

August 12, 2013. She also explained that the Public Hearing will be held at Hill Middle School, with the formal presentation beginning at 6:30 p.m. In addition to the Public Hearing Notice, information regarding the public hearing will be distributed through e-blast communication to the entire I-405 Improvement Project and West County Connectors Project databases, print ads, as well as 14,000 postcard mailers. OCTA's website will include a banner to publicize the release of the Supplemental Draft EIR/EIS. The next Policy Working Group meeting will be on September 4, 2013 at 8:30 a.m. She explained that the date is contingent the progress of the screening analysis of Concept A and B. Chairman Moorlach closed the presentation and opened up the discussion for feedback from the Policy Working Group.

V. Stakeholder Feedback and Questions

Diana Carey: I just want to reiterate the Corridor Cities' position. We don't want to be considered as a pilot project, we want to collaborate in meetings and Westminster is concerned with heights of the intersections. We look forward to the release of the Supplemental Draft EIR/EIS on Friday. I'd also like to mention that because of the degradation study, there is heavy input with regard to toll lanes.

John Collins: Do you have to sign in to see the Draft EIR/EIS at the Library?

Macie Cleary: No, you can go and see it. Caltrans also has a hard copy at their office in Irvine that you can view.

Sylvia Vega: Just to clarify, the Supplemental Draft EIR/EIS isn't the full document. It is specific to Long Beach.

John Collins: It doesn't get into the other issues, such as acquiring property?

Sylvia Vega: The Supplemental Draft EIR/EIS specifically addresses the City of Long Beach.

Marwan Youssef: Mr. Pinheiro mentioned concerns with Concepts A and B. When will we know those concerns in detail and will Caltrans come up with a solution?

James Pinheiro: We are working to flush out concerns. Caltrans staff is working with OCTA and Parsons staff to resolve the issues.

Mark Lewis: Can we go back to Slide 13, Path Forward? Is Alternative 3 not considered anymore?

Darrell Johnson: Alternative 3 is off the table unless the Board brings it back.

Sylvia Vega: When Caltrans' PDT meets, we will go over each alternative equally. We don't want to disrupt the environmental process.

VI. Closing

Christina Byrne introduced Noelle Afualo from Simon Wong Engineering as the new outreach team for the I-405 Improvement Project. Chairman Moorlach closed the meeting and stated on behalf of the Policy Working Group that they want to work with Caltrans and OCTA, and that if they need to be educated on managed lanes, then that is an option to explore. Chairman Moorlach adjourned the meeting.