



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

**Meeting Notes
Wednesday, June 12, 2013 at 8:30 a.m.**

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

Stakeholder Working Group Participants

Members

Marie Antos
Tony Avalos
Mark Bloeser
Steve Bos
Victor Cao
Diana Carey
Ron Casey
Ernesto Chaves
Colin Edwards
Eloy Gomez
Don Goodbrand
Misha Houser
Steven Mendoza
Chad Morgan
Lucy Olmos
Aldofo Ozaeta
Salim Rahemtulla
Kari Rigoni
David Roseman
Raja Sethuraman
Gregg Smith
Schelly Sustarsic
Paul Van Dyk
Paul Wilkinson

Organization

Seal Beach Historical Society
Los Alamitos School District
Office of Long Beach City Councilman Patrick O'Donnell
City of Long Beach
Building Industry Association/Orange County
City of Westminster
Rossmoor Community Services District
Metro
Office of Assemblymember Travis Allen
Golden Rain Foundation-Leisure World
California Highway Patrol, Westminster
Office of Long Beach City Councilmember Gerrie Schipske
City of Los Alamitos
Office of Assemblymember Allan Mansoor
Metro
City of Westminster
Naval Weapons Station Seal Beach Public Works Department
John Wayne Airport
City of Long Beach
City of Costa Mesa
Seal Beach Naval Weapons Center
College Park East Homeowners Association
City of Long Beach
Costa Mesa Chamber of Commerce

Jerry Wood
Jay VanWormer
Tamara Werkmeister
Paul Wilkinson

Gateway Cities Council of Governments
Fountain Valley Homeowners Association
HNTB
Costa Mesa Chamber of Commerce

Agencies and Consultants

<u>Name</u>	<u>Agency</u>
Niall Barrett	OCTA
Jim Beil	OCTA
Ellen Burton	OCTA
Christina Byrne	OCTA
Rose Casey	OCTA
Ted Nguyen	OCTA
Andrea West	OCTA
Cindy Azima	Caltrans
James Pinheiro	Caltrans
Gloria Roberts	Caltrans
Gary Slater	Caltrans
Smita Deshpande	Caltrans
Macie Cleary	Parsons
Neal Denno	Parsons
Jason Majzoub	Parsons
Janet Ouch	Consensus Inc.
Jeannie Kim	Consensus Inc.

I. Welcome, Self Introductions and Opening Remarks

Niall Barrett 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.

Niall Barrett also 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 comments and preparing responses for inclusion in the final EIR/EIS. OCTA staff has worked hard to address corridor city concerns in addition to the Boards concerns.

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 increased scope and to the recession cost assumptions for the project increased and the projections for revenue decreased respectively. Therefore 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 lane 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 associated with Alternative 3.

Niall Barrett explained the three Build Alternatives with the original cost estimate and the revised cost estimates due to proposed design variations. The revised cost estimate reflected 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 would reduce 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 would reduce 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 would reduce the cost to \$1.47 billion. Niall Barrett noted that Alternative 3 costs more because it is a longer project, extending to SR-73.

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.

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 initial Draft Environmental Impact Report / Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS), the PDT 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 will be through newspaper advertisements, email communications, print and social media, postcard mailings and one public hearing to be held in the City of Long Beach. OCTA will communicate not only to the occupants who live within the study area, but will extend communication throughout the project corridor including the College Park West community in the City of Seal Beach who are concerned about the Studebaker interchange.

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

Niall Barrett mentioned that the “Potential Mitigations Identified” slide has been prepared earlier this year and now needed to be updated. 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 County. 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 lanes into express lanes. 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.

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 starting June 28, 2013 for 45 days. Meanwhile, the project team will work towards proceeding with preliminary design and right-of-way tasks that are common to all alternatives. In August 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 in September 2013. The Project Development team will select the preferred alternative in October 2013, and if the current Locally Preferred Alternative moves forward, construction will begin in 2015 and is anticipated to be complete in early 2020.

The Project Team plans to reconvene the Stakeholder Working Group and Policy 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 in August 2013. Niall Barrett closed the presentation and opened up the discussion for feedback from the Stakeholder Working Group.

V. Stakeholder Feedback and Questions

Jerry Wood: I have more comments than questions. There's a lot more going on in the I-405 than on your list. The Gateway Cities and MTA are working on a transportation plan and we are reaching out to the people on our periphery. For example, we have the 405 Working Group, the South Bay Council of Governments (COG), the 605, the San Diego Valley Council of Governments. We'd like to work with OCTA on the south end of the project. We'd rather work with you than just respond to the environmental document. We think there is a lot more collaboration that needs to occur. We will continue to attend the PWG meetings, but I think there is more than that that needs to be done.

Jim Beil: OCTA is kicking off its long range transportation plan and concepts. And that's the process where we will start looking at the long term needs of the county and what we want to do. It's about an 18 month process. The kick off for that process was just last Monday. We appreciate the invite and look forward to participating in any meetings that the Gateway COG plans.

Jerry Wood: We have a planning group. There's a lot to be said for collaboration. We are going to be looking at these transportation projects in a way that hasn't been done before. If you want us to make a presentation to your board, we can totally do that. You know where I'm at, so I'm happy to do that.

Niall Barrett: Thank you.

David Roseman: Niall, I want to thank you for using the words “significant impact” and “mitigation”. What I’m concerned about and OCTA continues to use those words with respect to the impacts within Long Beach. What I’m concerned about is as Caltrans is the lead agency for the environmental document, adopted those same words within the Supplemental Draft.

Niall Barrett: I believe that’s cumulative impact and I don’t remember saying significant impact. Cumulative impact was the word –

David Roseman: And the word mitigation.

Niall Barrett: Right.

David Roseman: So, when this document comes out in the next couple weeks, will the document label the impacts as significant within Long Beach and will that document commit to mitigation in Long Beach?

Smita Deshpande: Yes.

David Roseman: Thank you. Long Beach has also gotten a letter from Caltrans saying you are not interested in any of our comments related to the draft that we’ve seen. And I’m kind of curious as to why you are not interested in any participating agency comments.

Smita Deshpande: What we said is to submit your comments during the circulation of the Supplemental Draft document.

Niall Barrett: We are trying to make sure your comments are documented.

David Roseman: We sent a letter to you, we want to have comments but we feel that Caltrans isn’t interested or concerned.

James Wood: You mentioned one more thing; you said that there will be one more public hearing on the recirculated document. I assume that will be in Orange County. Do you know where the location is?

Christina Byrne: It will be at Hill Classical Middle School on Studebaker in the City of Long Beach. We haven’t finalized the location but that’s location we are exploring.

James Wood: And the date?

Christina Byrne: We don’t have one at this time, but it should be in mid-July.

Diana Carey: I wanted to give the group a brief update on what some of our concerns have been and what the corridor cities have stated in letters and presentations to the Board. We did ask for engineering outreach, which prior to several months ago, when they were trying to

mitigate the issues within the Environmental Impact Report were very successful. For Westminster, it says parking, but actually we had huge issues. We were able to meet with the engineers about the bridge height and saving some of our business areas, and we were able to get that mitigated down to where it was just parking. So that's a positive. I am really pleased when I look at this to show that they will be reconvening the technical group, we did have one group meeting already, but we want it to be kind of a meat-and-potatoes type thing and we wanted to make sure that happened prior to any discussion of a chosen alternative. Also, the corridor cities have made it abundantly clear with regard to the toll alternative. We think there should be a county wide discussion on this. We do not want to be the pilot project for tolls for the county, nor do we think that the county should be relying on toll lanes. It does seem to us that the emphasis to this point has been very heavily gaged to the tolling. I did want to mention the degradation study that came out. We are very concerned that that will be the excuse if you will, to be going with toll lanes. One of the reasons we have the degradation study is because of the low-emission vehicles which account for 1-2% of the vehicles using high-occupancy vehicle lanes. That is one of the reasons for the study. It is ironic that 2% of the vehicles would have triggered this study to possibly cause tolls. I am not alone in that perception. Many directors on the Board have that issue as well. That being said, the other issue we are very concerned with, and I am glad that Long Beach is here today, we are concerned with the northbound backup and that is why we have proposed the idea of a modification to Alternative 2. We were not aware of outreach to north of the county line and we don't know if there is room north of the county lines or if that has been discussed up there or what the situation is. But those are our main considerations and we have articulated those to OCTA.

James Pinhero: So with regard to the degradation study, it's true that 1-2% of the users are the stickered vehicles, but the problem in the HOV lanes is much bigger than the sticker problem. Basically the demand for those lanes is exceeding capacity for the lanes. The HOV lanes on the 405 are working very well in the sense that carpooling has picked up to the degree that the lanes are saturated during the peak periods. We need to find a way to keep those lanes moving. We want to keep encouraging people to carpool and we want more people to get through the lanes. I think the person-throughput is our real focus. If we look at the entire corridor, we look at the HOV lane and the general purpose lane, how are we going to get the most people through that corridor during peak periods, and by far, we're moving many more people through the HOV lanes than the general purpose lanes. These lanes are far more efficient as far as person-throughput. There is no general purpose lane that can equate to that and produce as many people.

Diana Carey: We understand that, and some of it we question because anytime you are forcing people out of the HOT lanes and by the OCTA's own figures, when the price point on gasoline is 4%, the usage of toll lanes go down. This is an expensive proposition for people to go through the 12 miles. Some of the estimates earlier were up around \$13.00 per trip. What we've seen with experimental and pilot projects, is it forces people into the GP lanes. So you may get a better flow in the HOT lanes and HOV lanes, but you've slowed the capacity on the rest of the freeway. I'm a science person and I used to teach biology, and we all know that if you do something in one place, you'll cause an issue in another place. And that is a concern for the general population that we can't afford \$13.00 for one direction to drive down the freeway. I know that Director Moorlach has addressed that at the meetings.. That's our

concern, that you're trying to fix this problem here, but you're slowing everyone else down on the other sides. And I've been to the meetings for the I-110 and all of that but I've also driven the 110, and just so you all know I drive the freeways on numerous occasions at different parts of the day to get an idea of what's going on. I accept your comments but that's our response.

James Pinhero: The HOV system or the HOT system allows the potential for vanpools, small buses and large buses. These modes of transportation can move many more people with more trip reliability. I think that is a very important tool that we can't offer through the general purpose lanes. If you look at the 10 in Los Angeles, I believe they're moving at least 5,800 people in those lanes during peak hours, that's because they're running busses in those lanes. HOT lanes offer more potential in the future.

Diana Carey: Well, agree to disagree. I accept some of your comments.

IV. Stakeholder Feedback and Questions

Christina Byrne closed the stakeholder working group discussion by reiterating that the public hearing will be sometime in mid-July at Hill Classical Middle School off of Studebaker in the City of Long Beach. The project team is working to finalize the location and will heavily publicize the meeting and will ensure that everyone in the Stakeholder Working Group will receive adequate notification. The Stakeholder Working Group will reconvene on August 20th, same time and same place, and the Policy Working Group will reconvene in early-September. Both committees will meet before meeting with the OCTA Board in September.