


CITY OF LOS ANGELES
INTER-DEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

Date: May 9, 2017

To: Honorable City Council
c/o City Clerk, Room 395, City Hall
Attention: Honorable Mike Bonin, Chair, Transportation Committee

From: Seleta J. Reynolds,  General Manager
Department of Transportation

Subject: **STATE ROUTE 710 NORTH STUDY – ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (CF 17-0245)**

SUMMARY

CF 17-0245 instructs the Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT), in coordination with the Chief Legislative Analyst, to assess the alternatives identified in the State Route 710 North Study environmental impact report (EIR) and to recommend strategies consistent with the City policy if Metro evaluates supplemental alternatives.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the City Council:

1. **ADOPT** LADOT's recommended strategies identified in this report for evaluation as an alternative in the State Route 710 North Study EIR and potential implementation with Measure R funds reserved to address the 710 gap closure.
2. **INSTRUCT** LADOT to submit this report to the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) as the Metro Board considers the certification of the DEIR and selection of a preferred alternative.

BACKGROUND

In 2015, Caltrans, in cooperation with Metro, released a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the State Route 710 North Study. The study area for the DEIR included 100 square miles in an area bounded by the City of Los Angeles to the west, the City of La Canada/Flintridge to the north, the City of Irwindale to the east, and the City of Monterey Park to the south. The study evaluated strategies to remedy chronic congestion problems in the area and the DEIR identified the following five project alternatives:

- No Build
- Transportation System Management / Transportation Demand Management
- Bus Rapid Transit
- Light Rail Transit
- Freeway Tunnel

Measure R, approved by the voters in 2008, provided up to \$780 million in funds for improvements related to State Route 710 North gap closure and congestion relief.

DISCUSSION

LADOT submitted an official comment letter, dated August 5, 2015, during the DEIR public circulation period. Caltrans accepted the comments, which are attached for reference, as official DEIR comments. The Department of City Planning and Council District 14 also submitted comment letters in 2015 that described opposition to the Freeway Tunnel alternative.

Since the preparation of the State Route 710 North Study DEIR, the City has adopted key plans and initiatives related to transportation and mobility. The new Mobility Element (Mobility Plan 2035) stresses the importance of implementing complete streets to enhance safety, access, and mobility for all users of the transportation system. This plan establishes a “safety first” commitment to street design, which aligns with Vision Zero. Mobility Plan 2035 also includes mode share and vehicle-miles-traveled (VMT) reduction goals that match the objectives of the City’s Sustainability pLAN.

In the context of the plans and policies adopted since the 2015 comment letter, the list below is an updated list of improvements within the City of Los Angeles that Metro should evaluate in any supplemental analyses prepared for the State Route 710 North Study DEIR. These improvements are expected to enhance safety and mobility and reduce greenhouse gas emissions and VMT within the study area.

A. Safety

- Implement improvements along the Vision Zero priority corridors within the study area (Eastern Avenue, Figueroa Street, Huntington Drive, and Eagle Rock Boulevard). Alhambra Avenue and Valley Boulevard may also benefit from similar improvements. Such improvements may include new traffic signals, crosswalks, curb extensions, protected bicycle lanes, traffic signal timing modifications, and additional safety countermeasures.
- Implement Quiet Zone enhancements, quad gates, pedestrian crossing safety measures, right of-way fencing, railroad warning systems, and additional safety measures as needed, along the Valley Boulevard rail corridor.

B. Mobility Plan 2035 Networks

- Consistent with the Transit Enhanced Network identified in the Mobility Plan 2035, evaluate Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) improvements on Huntington Drive and Valley Boulevard. In conjunction with the Countywide BRT analysis, Metro should lead the evaluation and outreach and coordinate with other cities in the study area. If the evaluation and outreach demonstrates stakeholder support and strong ridership potential, then the selected project alternative should include investments in BRT enhancements along these roadways.
- Consistent with the Mobility Plan 2035, evaluate possible implementation of bicycle network improvements along Alhambra Avenue, Eagle Rock Boulevard, Eastern Avenue, Figueroa Street, and Huntington Drive.

C. Transit Services

- Evaluate and implement transit amenities and improvements to enhance access to existing transit services along Eastern Avenue, Figueroa Street, Huntington Drive, Monterey Road, Soto Street, and Valley Boulevard. Such improvements can include bicycle parking, enhanced bus shelters, “next bus” technologies, bus stop relocations, streetscape features, and additional enhancements.
- Provide service upgrades to the DASH community circulators within the study area. Such upgrades may include service hour extension, route expansion, and upgrade of fleet to electric buses.

D. Operational and Safety

- Implement traffic signal upgrades along Alhambra Avenue, Eastern Avenue, Huntington Drive, and Valley Boulevard that include, but are not limited to, new CCTV cameras, left-turn phasing, and new vehicle detector loops. Such upgrades improve LADOT’s ability to provide real-time signal timing remedies to improve the safety and orderly flow of all users of the transportation system.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

There is no significant fiscal impact to the General Fund. The improvements listed in the report, if approved by Metro, would be funded by Measure R funds.

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
CALIFORNIA

Seleta J. Reynolds
GENERAL MANAGER



ERIC GARCETTI
MAYOR

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
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August 5, 2015

Mr. Garret Damrath
Caltrans District 7
Division of Environmental Planning
100 S. Main St., MS-16
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Subject: SR-710 North Study - Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS)

Dear Mr. Damrath:

The Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT) staff has reviewed the SR-710 Draft EIR/EIS issued by Metro and Caltrans. Out of the proposed alternatives, which include Transportation System Management/Transportation Demand Management (TSM/TDM), Bus Rapid Transit, Light Rail Transit, and several Freeway Tunnel alternatives, only a few elements of the proposed TSM/TDM improvements directly affect local streets within the City of Los Angeles' jurisdiction. Therefore, we have limited our comments to the effectiveness of those proposed improvements.

There are five locations within the City of Los Angeles where the consultant has proposed modifications to the existing street and intersection geometry. Upon closer examination, our staff found deficiencies in most of the proposed improvements.

The proposed local street and intersection improvements are listed in Table 2.3 of Chapter 2 of the Draft EIR/EIS. The following proposals are within the City's jurisdiction:

- | | | |
|------|---|---|
| L-1 | - | Figueroa Street from SR 134 to Colorado Boulevard |
| I-1 | - | West Broadway/Colorado Boulevard intersection improvements |
| I-2 | - | Eagle Rock Boulevard/York Boulevard intersection improvements |
| I-3 | - | Eastern Avenue/Huntington Drive intersection improvements |
| I-45 | - | Eagle Rock Boulevard/Colorado Boulevard intersection improvements |

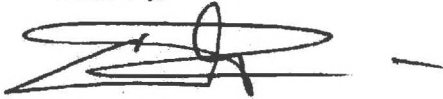
Proposal L-1 would require a large property take and create double right-turn lanes onto the freeway on-ramps, which are not consistent with LADOT standards. The other proposals would likely create controversial issues within the affected communities, since they would require parking removal, require property acquisitions, create signal phasing issues, and/or result in no substantive transportation

benefits. Some of the listed modifications advocate adding double right-turn lanes at intersections, which would create signal phasing and pedestrian safety concerns, and therefore, are not advisable under the current LADOT standards.

The only component of the TSM/TDM alternative that may benefit regional transportation and relieve congestion is the Connector Road between Valley Boulevard and Mission Road, which includes an underpass crossing beneath the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) corridor. LADOT previously analyzed a similar project and the related impacts at the SR-710/Valley Blvd intersection; however, a connector road between Valley Boulevard and Mission Road was met with strong objections from the local Council office and the El Sereno Community.

If you have any questions, or would like to discuss this project further, please contact me at (213) 972-4963, or Larisa Bolotsky of my staff at (213) 972-5024.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carlos Rios', with a horizontal line underneath.

Carlos Rios
Senior Transportation Engineer, LADOT

c: Kevin Ocubillo, CD 14
Daniel Mitchell, LADOT
Michael Hunt, LADOT
Larisa Bolotsky, LADOT

MOTION

The I-710 North Study is being conducted to explore transportation improvements that will increase mobility and improve traffic efficiency in east/northeast Los Angeles and the western San Gabriel Valley.

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transit Authority (Metro), in conjunction with the California Department of transportation (Caltrans) released a Draft Environmental Impact Report in March 2015 which analyzed the environmental impacts of five project alternatives: a No Build Alternative, Transportation System Management / Transportation Demand Management (TSM/TDM) Alternative, Bus Rapid Transit Alternative (BRT), Light Rail Transit (LRT) Alternative and a Freeway Tunnel Alternative.

None of the build options sufficiently balance the transportation and mobility needs of the local community and the regional area. Specifically, the tunnel design is in direct conflict with the City's position against any freeway that would cut through the City of Los Angeles (12-0002-S82, 09-0002-S189). Furthermore, the tunnel directly exposes residents of all communities along its route to unnecessary health, safety and monetary cost risks due to significant design flaws.

Assemblymember Chris Holden has introduced Assembly Bill 287 (AB 287) to create a 17-member I-710 Gap Advisory Committee to review a range of traffic calming, green space, and mass transit options for the 6.2 mile gap of the I-710 North study area in order to make recommendations to the state legislature. AB 287 would prohibit the California Department of Transportation from considering a tunnel as an option due to the negative impacts from cost, additional car trips, and greenhouse gas emissions.

Broad based community opposition to a I-710 North freeway has been consistent since the project was first conceived. It is vital that any identified alternative incorporate community based solutions, and it is in the City's interest to pursue, including through the aforementioned processes at Metro and the state Legislature, potential transportation investments that would benefit its residents.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Department of Transportation and Chief Legislative Analyst report in 30 days with an assessment of the alternatives in the EIR to identify those most benefitting the City and the El Sereno area surrounding the project. The report should also recommend any additional strategies consistent with City policy which merit analysis using Measure R funding set aside for the 710 North study area, to expand the transportation benefits to Los Angeles in any eventual 710 North project.

I FURTHER MOVE that the Chief Legislative Analyst, with assistance from the Department of Transportation, be requested to report with an analysis of AB 287 to assess its potential impacts on the City and to recommend the City's legislative position and any possible amendments for ensuring its benefit to the City.

PRESENTED BY:



JOSE HUIZAR,

Councilmember, 14th District

SECONDED BY:



MAR - 3 2017

