

# REPORT OF THE CHIEF LEGISLATIVE ANALYST

DATE:

May 5, 2017

TO: Honorable Members of the Rules, Elections, Intergovernmental Relations, and Neighborhoods Committee

FROM: Sharon M. Tso *Sharon Tso* C.F. No.: 17-0245  
Chief Legislative Analyst Assignment No.: 17-04-0458

SUBJECT: AB 287 (Holden) "State Highway Route 710 (SR-710) Advisory Committee"

**CLA RECOMMENDATION:** Adopt the attached Resolution to include in the City's 2017-18 State Legislative Program SUPPORT for AB 287 (Holden) that would establish the SR-710 North Advisory Committee (Committee) to study the alternatives in the SR-710 North Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and require Caltrans to implement the alternative recommended by the Committee but prohibit the implementation of a freeway tunnel or a surface freeway alternative.

## SUMMARY

Efforts to complete the 6.2-mile segment of the SR-710 between I-10 and I-210, often referred to as the "710 freeway gap closure," have moved forward in fits and starts over the past 60 years. The proposal to construct a freeway tunnel project that would run through El Sereno, South Pasadena, and Pasadena has divided communities in the San Gabriel Valley for decades. Caltrans owns and still maintains hundreds of homes in the corridor that were purchased in the 1960s to preserve the corridor for construction of the proposed freeway. Over the past ten years, the concept of a SR-710 tunnel between I-10 and I-210 has been proposed as an alternative to a previously proposed surface freeway.

Measure R provided \$750 million for Caltrans and the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) to conduct a SR-710 North Study to evaluate mobility and find traffic congestion solutions between the western San Gabriel Valley and the east/northeast area of Los Angeles. The project study area is approximately 100 square miles and generally bounded by the I-210 on the north, I-605 on the east, I-10 on the south, and I-5/SR-2 on the west.

In January 2013, Caltrans and Metro completed the Alternative Analysis phase of the Study. In March 2015, a Draft EIR was released, which evaluated and identified cost estimates for the following five alternatives: the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Alternative, the Freeway Tunnel Alternative, the Light Rail Transit (LRT) Alternative, the Transportation System Management/Transportation Demand Management (TSM/TDM) Alternative, and the No Build Alternative. Both agencies are currently reviewing comments received on the Draft EIR/Environmental Impact Statement, working to identify a preferred alternative, and finalizing the environmental document.

According to Motion (Huizar - Bonin) (C.F. 17-0245), none of the proposed build options currently under review sufficiently balance the transportation and mobility needs of the surrounding communities or the region. The Motion further states that the tunnel option directly exposes residents of all communities along its route to unnecessary health, safety, and monetary cost risks due to significant design flaws. Lastly, the Motion highlights the fact that the tunnel design is in direct conflict with the City's long-standing position against the construction of any freeway that would traverse the City of Los Angeles, as noted below:

- December 9, 2008 (09-0002-S189) the Council adopted a position to oppose the extension of the SR-710 through Zones 1 and 2 as defined by Caltrans in their SR-710 (North) Tunnel Technical



- Study and oppose legislation and/or administrative action regarding the extension of the SR-710 (North) unless amended to include language protecting the community of El Sereno by specifying that the freeway tunnel portal must begin and end south of Valley Boulevard.
- August 28, 2012 (12-0002-S82) the Council adopted a position to oppose the extension of the North Long Beach 710 Freeway along several proposed alternatives and any above ground highway or freeway that would cut through the City of Los Angeles.

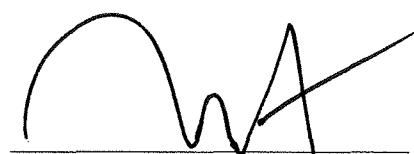
On February 2, 2017, Assembly Member Holden introduced AB 287 that would require Caltrans, in consultation with Metro, to establish the 17-member SR-710 North Advisory Committee (Committee) to study the alternatives considered in the Draft EIR and other transit options to improve travel in, and environmental impacts of, the project area, along with alternatives not considered by the environmental report. The Committee would be made up of three people from Caltrans; two from Metro; two representatives each from the cities of Alhambra, Los Angeles, Pasadena and South Pasadena; two members of the Assembly; and two members of the Senate.

The bill would require the Committee, by January 1, 2019, to make recommendations in a report to the Legislature, Caltrans, and Metro on the most appropriate and feasible alternative in the SR-710 North project area to improve air quality and public health, improve traffic safety, modernize the freeway design, address projected traffic volumes, and address projected growth in population and employment and activities related to goods movement. Specifically, AB 287 would require Caltrans to implement the alternative recommended by the Committee, if appropriate and feasible, but would expressly prohibit the Committee from considering or recommending, and would prohibit the Caltrans from implementing, a freeway tunnel or a surface freeway alternative. The bill would also limit the portion of Route 710 included in the California freeway and expressway system to the portion between Route 1 and Route 10.

Assembly Member Holden has stated that AB 287 would remove consideration of the controversial tunnel option and encourage a community-led solution. Those who support the bill, assert that the tunnel alternative does not reflect current day community values, environmental policies, or current transportation planning aspects that recognize congestion-relieving projects often induce further vehicular travel demand.

#### BILL STATUS

4/17/2017	Failed passage - reconsideration granted.
4/6/2017	Amended in the Assembly Committee on Transportation
2/2/2017	Referred to Assembly Committee on Transportation



Maria Souza-Rountree  
Analyst

#### Attachments:

1. Resolution
- 2.AB 287 (Holden)

## RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, any official position of the City of Los Angeles with respect to legislation, rules, regulations or policies proposed to or pending before a local, state, or federal governmental body or agency must have first been adopted in the form of a Resolution by the City Council with the concurrence of the Mayor; and

WHEREAS, Caltrans and the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) are conducting environmental studies on five alternatives for the SR-710 North project, including: a freeway tunnel, light rail, bus rapid transit, street and intersection improvements and the legally-required no-build option; and

WHEREAS, on February 2, 2017, Assembly Member Holden introduced AB 287 that would require Caltrans, in consultation with Metro, to establish the SR-710 North Advisory Committee to study the alternatives considered in the State Route 710 North Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) view and other transit options to improve travel in, and environmental impacts of, the State Route 710 North project area, along with alternatives not considered by the EIR; and

WHEREAS, the legislation would require the Advisory Committee, by January 1, 2019, to make recommendations in a report to the Legislature, Caltrans, and Metro on the most appropriate and feasible alternative in the State Route 710 North project and require Caltrans to implement the alternative recommended by the Advisory Committee, if appropriate and feasible, but would prohibit the Advisory Committee from considering or recommending, and would prohibit Caltrans from implementing, a freeway tunnel or a surface freeway alternative; and

WHEREAS, on December 9, 2008 (09-0002-S189) the Council adopted a position to oppose the extension of the SR-710 legislation and/or administrative action unless language was included to protect the community of El Sereno by specifying that the freeway tunnel portal must begin and end south of Valley Boulevard; and

WHEREAS, on August 28, 2012 (12-0002-S82) the Council adopted a position to oppose the extension of the North Long Beach 710 Freeway along several proposed alternatives and any above ground highway or freeway that would cut through the City of Los Angeles;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that, with the concurrence of the Mayor, that by the adoption of this Resolution, the City of Los Angeles hereby includes in its 2017-18 State Legislative Program SUPPORT for AB 287 (Holden) that would establish the SR-710 North Advisory Committee to study the alternatives in the State Route 710 North Draft Environmental Impact Report and require Caltrans to implement the alternative recommended by the advisory committee but prohibit the implementation of a freeway tunnel or a surface freeway alternative.

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 6, 2017

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2017–18 REGULAR SESSION

**ASSEMBLY BILL**

**No. 287**

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**Introduced by Assembly Member Holden**

February 2, 2017

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An act to amend Section 253.1 of, and to add Section 622.2 to the Streets and Highways Code, relating to transportation.

**LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST**

AB 287, as amended, Holden. State Highway Route 710: advisory committee.

Existing law provides that the Department of Transportation has full possession and control of all state highways and associated property. Existing law designates and describes state highway routes, *and also describes the state highway routes in the California freeway and expressway system*, including *all of* Route 710 in the County of Los Angeles.

This bill would require the Department of Transportation, in consultation with the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, to establish the ~~I-710 Gap Corridor Transit Study Zone~~ *State Route 710 North* Advisory Committee, with a specified membership, to study the alternatives considered in the State Route 710 North Draft Environmental Impact Review and other transit options to improve travel in, and environmental impacts of, the ~~I-710 Corridor~~ *State Route 710 North* project area, along with alternatives not considered by the environmental review. The bill would require the advisory committee, by January 1, 2019, to make recommendations in a report to the Legislature, the Department of Transportation, and the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority on the most appropriate

and feasible alternative in the I-710 Corridor State Route 710 North project area to improve air quality and public health, improve traffic safety, modernize the freeway design, address projected traffic volumes, and address projected growth in population and employment and activities related to goods movement, employment, and create jobs.

The bill would require the department to implement the alternative recommended by the advisory committee, if appropriate and feasible, but would prohibit the advisory committee from considering or recommending, and would prohibit the department from implementing, a freeway tunnel or a surface freeway alternative. *The bill would also limit the portion of Route 710 included in the California freeway and expressway system to the portion between Route 1 and Route 10.* The bill would make legislative findings and declarations.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.  
State-mandated local program: no.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

1        SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the  
2 following:

3        (a) The I-710 Corridor is a critical artery to the state, region,  
4 and Los Angeles County for the transportation of goods and  
5 passengers by connecting the county's ports to distribution centers  
6 and railways.

7        (b) The earliest iterations of I-710, former State Highway Routes  
8 7 and 167, were designed in 1933 to improve north-south mobility  
9 in Los Angeles County extending from the harbors of San Pedro  
10 and Long Beach to the San Gabriel Valley.

11      (c) I-710 incorporated these former routes into the Interstate  
12 Highway System that was constructed in the 1950s and 1960s,  
13 specifically to connect the Port of Long Beach to the industrial  
14 center of Los Angeles, facilitating the transport of manufactured  
15 goods to the port.

16      (d) Construction of the I-710 freeway has terminated at the I-10  
17 freeway, stopping short of its intended connections and  
18 terminations: *freeway, and I-710 does not extend through to I-210.*

19      (e) There are seven east-west freeways and seven north-south  
20 freeways in the Los Angeles Basin critical to the transportation of  
21 goods and people in the highly urbanized county.

1       (f) I-710 is one of two north-south freeways that terminate in  
2 the San Gabriel Valley and do not connect to other freeways,  
3 forcing traffic onto local streets or other freeways.

4       (g)

5       (e) The residents and commuters of the I-710 Corridor, *Corridor, north of I-10,* are facing elevated levels of diesel particulate  
6 emissions and are experiencing traffic congestion, high truck  
7 volumes, and high accident rates on a daily basis.

8       (h)

9       (f) The United States Environmental Protection Agency has  
10 stated the South Coast Air Basin, which includes the I-710  
11 Corridor, is an extreme ozone nonattainment area and a  
12 nonattainment area for small airborne particulate matter between  
13 10 and 2.5 microns, which is commonly attributed to vehicle traffic  
14 and contributes to high rates of cancer.

15       (i)

16       (g) The highest levels of these air toxins in the Los Angeles  
17 Basin are found along the I-710 corridor.

18       (j) ~~The significant residential and commercial development that  
19 has taken place along the I-710 Corridor since its initial  
20 construction, along with the negative environmental impacts, have  
21 caused significant concerns for local communities.~~

22       (k)

23       (h) In 1998 the Federal Highway Administration published a  
24 record of decision approving a surface freeway with six mixed-flow  
25 lanes and two high-occupancy vehicle lanes to close the 6.2-mile  
26 gap between I-10 and I-210, crossing through Los Angeles,  
27 Alhambra, South Pasadena, and Pasadena, but ~~later in 2003~~  
28 rescinded it due to litigation and community concerns. *concerns and an injunction prohibiting freeway construction.*

29       (l)

30       (i) The Department of Transportation (Caltrans) has conducted  
31 feasibility studies of alternatives to the surface freeway route  
32 including alternative freeway routes, light rail construction, bus  
33 system improvements, and tunnels to mitigate the environmental  
34 impacts of air toxins due to vehicle traffic.

35       (m)

36       (j) In 2015, Caltrans and the Los Angeles County Metropolitan  
37 Transportation Authority completed ~~an~~ *a draft* environmental  
38 impact report, the State Route 710 North Draft Environmental

1 Impact Review, that studied the impacts of these alternatives,  
2 including a cost-benefit analysis, that evaluated the travel time  
3 benefits, capital expenditures, vehicle operating costs, system  
4 operations and maintenance costs, safety effects, emissions effects,  
5 employment benefits, and residual values.

6 (n)

7 (k) There continues to be significant community and local  
8 government concern about the safety and efficacy of the proposed  
9 tunnel alternative and its \$2 \$3.1 billion to \$3 \$5.6 billion cost.

10 (o) ~~Caltrans states that the purpose of the I-710 Corridor~~  
11 ~~Northbound Freeway Project is to improve air quality and public~~  
12 ~~health, improve traffic safety, modernize the freeway design,~~  
13 ~~address projected traffic volumes, and address projected growth~~  
14 ~~in population and in employment and activities related to goods~~  
15 ~~movement.~~

16 (p)

17 (l) An advisory committee should be established by Caltrans,  
18 in consultation with the Los Angeles County Metropolitan  
19 Transportation Authority, to resolve the transportation problems  
20 caused by the I-710 gap in the State Route 710 North project area  
21 while fully considering the concerns of local communities.

22 (q)

23 (m) The advisory committee should review the transit options  
24 proposed in the State Route 710 North Draft Environmental Impact  
25 Review and also consider all other alternatives, other than a ~~tunnel~~,  
26 *tunnel or surface freeway*, including alternatives not included in  
27 the review, and recommend a proposed solution.

28 SEC. 2. (a) The Department of Transportation, in consultation  
29 with the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation  
30 Authority, shall establish the ~~I-710 Gap Corridor Transit Study~~  
31 *Zone State Route 710 North* Advisory Committee to study the  
32 alternatives considered in the State Route 710 North Draft  
33 Environmental Impact Review and other transit options to improve  
34 travel in, and environmental impacts of, the ~~I-710 Corridor State~~  
35 *Route 710 North* project area.

36 (b) The advisory committee shall consist of all of the following:

37 (1) Three representatives of the Department of Transportation.  
38 (2) Two representatives of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan  
39 Transportation Authority, appointed by the authority.

1       (3) Two representatives each from the City of Alhambra, the  
2       City of Los Angeles, *Angeles City Council District 14*, the City  
3       of Pasadena, and the City of South Pasadena, appointed by the  
4       applicable city.

5       (4) ~~Two~~ Three members of the Assembly that represent the  
6       I-710 Corridor State Route 710 North project area or their  
7       designees, appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly.

8       (5) ~~Two~~ Three members of the Senate that represent the I-710  
9       Corridor State Route 710 North project area or their designees,  
10      appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules.

11      (c) Participation on, and appointment of members to, the  
12     advisory committee by the Los Angeles County Metropolitan  
13     Transportation Authority and the cities shall be at the option of  
14     each local agency. Members of the advisory committee shall serve  
15     without compensation that is specific to serving on the committee.  
16     The Department of Transportation shall provide staff to the  
17     advisory committee.

18      (d) On or before January 1, 2019, the advisory committee shall  
19     make recommendations in a report to the Legislature, the  
20     Department of Transportation, and the Los Angeles County  
21     Metropolitan Transportation Authority on the most appropriate  
22     and feasible alternative ~~in the I-710 Corridor Gap for the State~~  
23     Route 710 North project area to improve air quality and public  
24     health, improve traffic safety, modernize the freeway design,  
25     address projected traffic volumes, and address projected growth  
26     in population and ~~employment and activities related to goods~~  
27     movement: employment, and create jobs. In conducting its study,  
28     the advisory committee shall take into consideration the input of  
29     residents living in the I-710 Corridor State Route 710 North project  
30     area. The committee shall consider development of open space,  
31     light rail options, and traffic calming options, and may consider  
32     alternatives not considered in the State Route 710 North Draft  
33     Environmental Impact Review. The report to the Legislature shall  
34     be submitted pursuant to Section 9795 of the Government Code.

35      (e) The advisory committee shall not consider or recommend  
36     the freeway tunnel alternative proposed for implementation in the  
37     State Route 710 North Draft Environmental Impact Review, *or*  
38     *the surface freeway alternative*, and the department shall not  
39     proceed with implementation of ~~that alternative~~: *those alternatives*.  
40     The advisory committee shall have no authority to make

1 recommendations regarding the properties acquired for the I-710  
2 freeway.

3 (f) If appropriate and feasible, the Department of Transportation  
4 shall implement the alternative recommended by the advisory  
5 committee in its report submitted pursuant to subdivision (d) in a  
6 manner consistent with applicable laws.

7 *SEC. 3. Section 253.1 of the Streets and Highways Code is*  
8 *amended to read:*

9 253.1. The California freeway and expressway system shall  
10 include:

11 Routes 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 14, 15, 18, 24, 28, 32, 34, 37, 40, 44,  
12 47, 48, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 59, 60, 61, 63, 65, 67, 68,  
13 70, 71, 73, 74, 78, 80, 81, 83, 85, 87, 88, 89, 90, 93, 97, 100, 102,  
14 103, 105, 107, 108, 118, 121, 122, 124, 125, 126, 134, 136, 139,  
15 140, 145, 148, 149, 154, 156, 161, 163, 164, 179, 181, 183, 184,  
16 199, 205, 210, 215, 217, 221, 223, 230, 232, 234, 235, 237, 238,  
17 239, 241, 242, 247, 249, 251, 257, 258, 259, 261, 280, 330, 371,  
18 380, 405, 505, 580, 605, 680, 710, 780, 805, 880, and 980 in their  
19 entirety.

20 *The California freeway and expressway system shall also include*  
21 *Route 710 from Route 1 to Route 10.*

22 SEC. 3.

23 SEC. 4. Section 622.2 is added to the Streets and Highways  
24 Code, to read:

25 622.2. The department shall not implement a freeway tunnel  
26 or surface freeway for Route 710 between Route 10 and Route  
27 210.