



Metro

Meeting Notes

Subject: *ExpressLanes* Demonstration Project
I-10, I-110 North, and I-110 South Corridor Advisory Group Summit Meeting

Date: Tuesday, March 2, 2010

Time: 7:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

Location: Board Overflow Room, 3rd Floor
Metro, One Gateway Plaza, Los Angeles, CA 90012

In Attendance:

CAG Members	Organization
Ryan Barlow	Enterprise Rideshare
Jan Bohn	Atkinson Construction
Russell Brown	Downtown Neighborhood Council
Lynn Chen	Asian Business Association
Jill Crump	City of Torrance
Devon Deming	Los Angeles World Airports
Fred Dock	City of Pasadena Department of Transportation
Katie Gagnon	San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership
Alex Gonzalez	City of Covina
Veronica Hahni	Los Angeles Neighborhood Initiative
Bradley Henning	Historic Downtown Business Improvement District
Michael Jones	Crenshaw Chamber of Commerce
Marianne Kim	Southern California Auto Club
Christine Lee	Empowerment Congress North Area Neighborhood Development Council
Jin Hyung Lee	Korean Culture Center
James Lee	City of Torrance
Derick Mahome	City of Torrance
Jim Mills	City of Torrance
Hilary Norton	FAST
Joyce Perkins	Los Angeles Neighborhood Initiative
Sgt. Cindy Pontes	California Highway Patrol
Barry Sedlik	California Business Ventures
Greg Tabak	Enterprise Holdings
Warren Whiteaker	Southern California Association of Governments
Presenters	Organization
Lynda Bybee	Metro
Stephanie Wiggins	Metro
Ron Kosinski	Caltrans
Peer Ghent	LADOT
Other Attendees	Organization
Susan Gilmore	Metro
Joanne Kawai	Metro
Kathy McCune	Metro
Bronwen Trice	Metro
Le Chen	Caltrans
Allison Morrow	Caltrans

I. Welcome and Overview of Meeting Agenda

Lynda Bybee, Deputy Executive Officer, Metro Regional Communications, opened the meeting and noted that with the public hearings for the draft environmental documents fast approaching, the time is opportune for all three CAGs (I-10, I-110 North, and I-110 South) to convene. Following self-introductions a brief summary of community outreach activities over the past seven months was provided:

- Six (6) public hearings on the toll rates and tolling policy were held in June 2009; the toll rates and tolling policy were approved by the Metro Board of Directors on July 23, 2009.
- Since that time Metro has held over 50 community stakeholder and legislative briefings with offices of elected officials, neighborhood councils, and key grassroots organizations in the San Gabriel Valley, City of Los Angeles, and the South Bay.
- Primary areas of interest for San Gabriel Valley stakeholders included:
 - Transit operations and facility improvements on the I-10 El Monte Busway
 - El Monte Transit Center improvements and Pomona Metrolink Station expansion.
- Key areas of interest for the City of Los Angeles and South Bay stakeholders included:
 - Roadway improvements at Adams Blvd.
 - Bus station and park and ride lot improvements along the I-110 Harbor Transitway
- Areas of common interest for stakeholders along both corridors included:
 - Increased service of the Metro Silver Line (I-110 Harbor Transitway and I-10 El Monte Busway)
 - Improved connections between feeder bus lines and the Metro Silver Line
 - Toll technology and infrastructure aspects of the programs
 - Transponder distribution and marketing
 - Enforcement
 - Mitigation for low-income commuters
 - Environmental benefits of the program

These issues, as well as issues raised in this CAG Summit Meeting and upcoming public hearings, will be incorporated into ongoing planning for the *ExpressLanes* project.

II. Project Update

Stephanie Wiggins, Executive Officer, Metro Congestion Reduction Initiative, provided a project update with information about the project's schedule change, draft administrative account proposal, draft low income commuter assessment, and next steps. The following is a summary of the presentation.

The project goals are to move more people, not more vehicles, by:

- Increasing the throughput of HOT lanes,

- Ensuring effectiveness (mode shift),
- Ensuring efficiency (cost of the project relative to benefits),
- Ensuring equity (addressing the impact on low income commuters),
- Educating the community through extensive community outreach, and
- Executing the demonstration project for one-year

The budget for the project (\$291 million) includes the following:

- 50% for transit facilities (including park and ride lot improvements, station expansion, and maintenance facility improvements),
- 20% for transit operations (including new buses, dual hub bus rapid transit, and vanpools),
- 25% for toll technology and infrastructure (including bottleneck improvements and additional HOT lane)
- 5% for Express Park

Schedule Adjustment

The community and CAGs have commented that the project’s success will be enhanced if the roadway improvements are completed before tolling begins, and the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) has agreed. On February 25, 2010 the Metro Board authorized the Chief Executive Officer to amend the existing agreements with USDOT to extend the deadline for the conversion of HOV lanes to HOT lanes on I-10 and I-110 for up to 19 months to allow for completion of the roadway improvements in each corridor. With completion of the physical improvements, the one-year toll lanes experiment is slated to begin in 2012. This is contingent on State legislation to extend Metro’s authority to levy tolls for the year-long experiment.

New bicycle lockers have been installed at Artesia and El Monte Transit Centers.

Administrative Account Fees

Typically electronic toll collection is used to effectively manage lanes as it is less labor intensive than toll booths and it prevents back-up queuing on the roadway. It works with all existing toll facilities in California. All tollpayers pay via a pre-paid account. There is no automatic ability to identify carpoolers/vanpoolers (only visual). However, LA County *ExpressLanes* will use an upgraded FasTrak transponder whereby users can self-declare vehicle occupancy: single occupant, HOV 2, or HOV 3+. This will allow carpoolers/vanpoolers to be automatically identified so they won’t get charged a toll. It will reduce cheaters and thereby protect carpoolers and vanpoolers. In addition, it will establish a pre-paid balance to off-set charges when not carpooling.

A handout of the Draft Administrative Account Fees was distributed. The purpose of these fees is to address the costs incurred by Metro associated with issuing a transponder to each vehicle and the costs associated with maintaining a toll account. There are three types of fees:

- Account Set-up/Establishment – One time only
- Account Replenishment – User generated
- Account Administrative Service – Per occurrence

Metro's Draft Administrative Account Fees are guided by the following:

- Fiscal Responsibility (The draft fee structure attempts to ensure that all costs incurred by Metro can be recovered from the proposed fees.)
- Tailor to LA County (Metro will develop appropriate low income commuter toll credits/discounts and provide incentives to those who rideshare.)
- Comparison to other HOT lanes in California (By creating an account administrative fee structure that is similar with other California agencies, Metro reduces the risk that the public will enroll with any one agency over the other.)

Low Income Commuter Assessment

The Draft Low Income Assessment is required by State law. As a result, staff has developed the preliminary findings:

- Low income commuters, defined as LA County residents with annual household incomes of \$35,000 or less, are likely to be impacted.
- The following mitigation for low income households has been proposed:
 - A \$25 credit for the account set-up/establishment fees that can be applied to the transponder deposit or pre-paid toll balance
 - Waiving the monthly \$3 non-user fee
 - Limiting eligibility to one low income commuter discount per household address
 - Providing alternative options for unbanked customers (prepaid Visa TAP card)
- Operational performance measures have been identified.
- Metro will be the first in the State to offer a low income discount/toll credit program.
- Transit riders benefit substantially from the \$70 million investment in transit and increased transit service.

The impact of the proposed toll credit/discount program is as follows:

- With the \$25 toll credit/discount, low income drivers would be induced to pay during certain times/directions:
 - I-10 WB Morning Peak (SOV and HOV 2)
 - I-10 WB Evening Peak (SOV and HOV 2)
 - I-110 NB Morning and Evening Peak
 - I-110 SB Evening Peak
- Waiving the monthly non-user fee addresses low-income commuter traditional behavior of low activity on HOT lanes.

Next Steps

The schedule for the next two months is as follows:

- Caltrans' Draft EIR/EA Public Hearings are scheduled for March 9 and 10, 2010.
- Caltrans will use Facebook, Twitter, and live web streaming to help boost participation at the public hearings.
- March 17, Ad Hoc Congestion Pricing Committee
- April 2, Deadline for Written Public Comment on the Caltrans Draft EIR/EA

- April 22, Metro Board Meeting
- The Transponder Distribution Plan is currently being developed.

III. Overview of Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (EIR/EA) and Public Hearings Schedule

Ron Kosinski, Deputy District Director for Environmental Planning, Caltrans District 7, provided overviews of the Draft EIR/EA for the I-10 and I-110. There has been extensive community participation to date, including mayoral interviews, stakeholder briefings, public community workshops, and media briefings. Caltrans' formal scoping period was from June 16 through July 17, 2009.

The Caltrans environmental process includes the following aspects: understanding the project, understanding the environment, determining the potential impacts, using a multidisciplinary team of specialists, trying to avoid/minimize/mitigate impacts, and incorporating community concerns into the document. Through this process, Caltrans is addressing environmental issues (hazardous materials, environmental justice, and community impacts), construction impacts (air quality and hazardous waste), and noise impacts. It has been determined that construction impacts are not very significant.

The draft environmental documents were made available at Caltrans District 7 beginning Friday, February 12, 2010 and were sent to elected officials, state, federal, and local agencies. Now is the time to weigh in and provide comments as the public comment period will close April 2, 2010. Caltrans will stream the hearings live and utilize Facebook and Twitter to help boost participation. It is anticipated that the final environmental documents will be approved in May 2010.

Draft EIR/EA I-110 (Harbor Freeway/Transitway) HOT Lanes Project

This project would convert the existing I-110 HOV lanes to High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes beginning at Adams Boulevard and extending to Artesia Transit Center and modify the Adams Boulevard overcrossing to maximize efficiency and improve traffic conditions.

The Draft EIR/EA public hearing is scheduled as follows:

Interstate 110 (Harbor Freeway/Transitway) HOT Lanes Project

Tuesday, March 9, 2010

Andrew Norman Hall

Los Angeles Orthopaedic Hospital Foundation

2400 S Flower St

Los Angeles, CA 90007

6pm – 8pm

There will be an informal open house from 5pm – 6pm.

Draft EIR/EA I-10 (San Bernardino Freeway / El Monte Busway) HOT Lanes Project

This project would convert the existing I-10 HOV lanes to High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes beginning at Alameda Street and extending to the I-605. A total of two HOT lanes, in each

direction from I-710 to I-605 would be created by utilizing the wide buffer areas and median shoulders and restriping the existing HOV and mixed flow lanes.

The Draft EIR/EA public hearing is scheduled as follows:

Interstate 10 (San Bernardino Freeway/Busway) HOT Lanes Project

Wednesday, March 10, 2010

Metro San Gabriel Valley Service Sector

Council Chambers

3449 Santa Anita Av, 3rd Floor

El Monte, CA 91731

6pm – 8pm

There will be an informal open house from 5pm – 6pm.

IV. Update on Express Park

Peer Ghent, Senior Management Analyst, Meter Operations Division, City of Los Angeles Department of Transportation, provided an update on the Express Park project. The project area is bounded by the I-10 and I-110 Freeways, Alameda Street and Adams Boulevard. The project includes 5,500 on-street metered spaces, 7,500 off-street public parking spaces in City operated facilities, including Pershing Square, Convention Center, Civic Center, and El Pueblo.

The project goals are as follows:

- Increase availability of on-street parking by making 10-30% of spaces on each block available through “right” pricing that is convenient to pay
- Reduce traffic congestion and pollution by reducing the number of cars “cruising for parking and a implementing a parking guidance system to help people quickly locate the best available parking - on or off-street.
- Encourage a shift in travel choices; encourage those driving alone to consider more efficient options, such as carpooling, transit, etc.

The project elements are as follows:

- New parking meter technology
 - Multi-space pay stations
 - Enhanced single space meters
 - Payment options (coins, credit card, and cell phone)
 - Capable of charging demand-based parking rates depending on time of day and length of stay
- Vehicle sensors
 - Sensors in parking spaces that provide real time occupancy data to the parking management system
 - Integration with meter data
 - Optimize rates, time limits, and hours of operation
 - Help traffic officers set enforcement priorities
- Real time parking guidance system
 - On-street dynamic message signs
 - Cell phones using voice recognition

- Web-enabled mobile devices (iPhone, Blackberry)
- In-vehicle navigation systems (pending industry support)
- Integrated parking management system
 - Data warehouse for all transaction data
 - Provides parking management information
 - Dashboard
 - Recurring reports
 - Adjusts parking rates and hours in real time
 - Provides parking and collection data to users
 - Adjudication
 - Parking Enforcement
 - Accounting, Collection, and Auditing

The LADOT Parking Management Center is now operating and displaying real time information. Express Park is funded by \$15 million from the USDOT grant and \$3.5 million in local funds. All systems are scheduled to be fully operational by July 2011. Express Park is part of the LA Congestion Reduction Demonstration Project (ExpressLanes) which will be evaluated for one year.

The anticipated results of Express Park are as follows:

- The benefits of new meter technology tested by the City will extend to the entire Downtown LA area.
- The time spent looking for available parking will be reduced resulting in:
 - Less traffic congestion
 - Improved traffic flow for transit and private vehicles
 - Reduced pollution
- When parking demand is high and parking rates are increased, some drivers will be encouraged to shift to more efficient and economical transportation alternatives.

V. CAG Questions and Commentary

Transit Operations (including vanpool, bus, rideshare)

- Is work being done to attract a car-share service in Downtown LA? Is Metro is working with any private car-sharing services in Downtown LA. ?
- How and when will the new clean-fuel buses be deployed?

Toll Technology and Infrastructure

- Will Metro be able to collect any data from the transponders so the project team can know who's involved in the congestion pricing project?
- If the improvements on the I-10 are causing the schedule delay, why not open the I-110 first?
- How is the low income commuter defined?
- Is a transponder necessary for all vehicles?
- Can non-Los Angeles County residents purchase transponders?
- If you're an occasional carpooler and you open your account with cash or check, will you have to pay \$75 up front?

- The \$40 account establishment fee [if the account is opened with a credit card/debit card] is going to be a big issue for carpoolers/vanpoolers. People who are already ridesharing in those lanes will view this fee as a huge negative.
- There is more justification for a transponder “deposit” than for a “pre-paid balance”. Metro should at least provide carpoolers/vanpoolers some sort of discount. It’s better to charge them less up front because they’re already upset that they have to get a transponder.
- Will there be opportunities to make adjustments to the administrative account fees, for example, if there is a negative response in the community? Could the deposit requirements be changed, if necessary?
- With switchable transponders, do drivers have to declare [vehicle occupancy] in advance?
- What do you think the likelihood is that rental car companies will invest in transponders?
- Are there arrangements for people [e.g. commuters with non-switchable Fastrak transponders] who are using other toll facilities?
- The requirement that commuters use the *ExpressLanes* four times per month to avoid the monthly non-user fee may be too high for some commuters who only come to Downtown LA two times per month. Has Metro considered extending the requirement to transit, for example, enabling commuters to accumulate the four-time- per-month requirement through transit trips as well as vehicle trips?

Draft EIR/EA

- Assuming this demonstration project is a success, what environmental review needs to be done to make it permanent? How will Metro/ avoid a gap in service?
- When do you anticipate a Record of Decision?

Express Park

- Is LADOT going to partner with Downtown Dash on this project?
- The new meters (with credit cards) are expensive.
- Do you anticipate that the revenue generated from this project will cover operations/enforcement? Will there be any cost to the City?
- Is it true that the new system will alert you when your meter is running low? Does it also alert the ticket givers?

VI. Wrap Up

Ms. Bybee thanked participants for attending and for sharing their ideas and feedback, noting that it is critical for Metro to continue to hear from the CAGs and stakeholders along both corridors as the project moves further into the planning and implementation phases. Metro will continue to brief key grassroots organizations on the project and will provide updates to the CAGs on the project’s progress, notes from this meeting, and alerts about when the next CAG meeting will take place. CAG members were encouraged to spread the word about the upcoming public hearings and to contact Bronwen Trice, Sr. Community Relations Officer, Metro Regional Communications, if they would like to recommend an organization for Metro to contact.