

SR 710 EIR/EIS TAC Meeting No. 15 – Staff Notes

On Wednesday May 14, 2014, Metro held its 15th SR 710 North Technical Advisory Committee meeting at Metro headquarters. Metro's staff and the consultant Technical Team (TT) presented information on the following items:

1. Public Outreach Activities
2. Project Report and Environmental Studies Documentation Update
3. Update on Preliminary Engineering and Environmental Technical Studies
4. Next Steps

1. Public Outreach Update: Metro's staff reiterated the recent announcement that the release date for the Draft EIR/DEIS would be delayed until February 2015 and provided general information about the format of future Public Hearings for the DEIR/DEIS. Metro staff reiterated prior comments that there will be at least two public hearings for the project where members of the public can provide written or verbal comments on the adequacy of the environmental document. The circulation period for the DEIR/DEIS has been extended to 90 days.

Metro staff indicated that public outreach efforts would be continued during the extended DEIR/DEIS preparation period, but no specifics were provided. TAC members requested that Metro provide presentations on the projects status to City Councils for cities in the area affected by the project.

2. Project Report and Environmental Studies Documentation Update: The update included the following elements:

Recap of Previous TAC Meeting: The Technical Team provided a recap of the highlights of the feedback received during the last TAC meeting. These feedbacks are reported on Slides 8-10 of the presentation and included the following answers to questions received:

- The sediment removal project for Devil's Gate Dam is included in the cumulative analysis
- The Draft Project Report is included as part of the Draft EIR/EIS
- There will be 2 public hearings on the DEIR/DEIS
- The comment period will be 90 days
- A Health Risk Assessment will be conducted (not a Health Impact Assessment)
- The cost-benefit analysis will be released at the same time as the DEIR/DEIS, but is not part of the DEIR/DEIS
- Physical barriers will not be used to restrict trucks from the tunnel (if that alternate is selected); any truck prohibition/restriction will be via signage and enforcement
- The decision about whether trucks may use the project will be decided as part of and at the time the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) is selected
- The DEIR/DEIS will address financial feasibility of building a tunnel, but will not address how the project is to be financed or paid for
- The Executive Summary of the DEIR/DEIS will be translated into Spanish and Mandarin
- Hard copies of the EIR/EIS will be provided at certain libraries yet to be designated
- The exact impact of SB 743 changes on the DEIR/DEIS are yet to be determined, but are estimated to be minimal given the timing and the nature of the project

3. Update on Preliminary Engineering and Environmental Technical Studies: This update included:

Travel Forecasting Approach: (Slides 12-14) The consultant team indicated that the primary reason the DEIR/DEIS is taking longer is that the forecasting model changes, while anticipated, have taken longer than expected. Essentially, an unanticipated update to the 2012 model in June 2013 and a longer than expected validation period for the study area forecasting model are the primary cause of the delay. Extended testing of the 2012 model in the study area, particularly for sensitivity to tolls on the tunnel also extended the schedule. Because other analyses in addition to transportation (air quality, noise, etc.) are dependent upon the forecast modeling results, those analyses have only just started as of February 2014.

Preliminary Engineering Update: (Slides 17-21) The consultant team presented an update on the TSM/TDM Alternative (see map) that highlighted the changes made to the projects in that alternative. Only one roadway project is in Pasadena – an extension of St. Johns Avenue from Del Mar to California Boulevard. Questions about how that extension would connect to California Boulevard if the ramp from the SR 710 stub remains in place were raised. The consultant team is to follow up with the City of Pasadena.

The Freeway Tunnel Alternative update indicated that the tunnel design has been updated to allow the existing bridges that carry Union Street and Colorado Boulevard over the SR 710 to remain unchanged (although not said, presumably, the Green Street Bridge would need to be reconstructed). The single bore (four lanes) tunnel option has been revised to add an extension of St. Johns Avenue from Del Mar to California Boulevard (described as “to improve local circulation”) and would allow for northbound access from the tunnel to Pasadena Avenue north of Del Mar. Staff raised issues about the St. Johns connection and the consultant team is to follow up.

Environmental Studies Update: (Slides 23-33) Slide 22 shows a listing of the status of all of the environmental studies. Highlights were presented for the Air Quality analysis, emphasizing that the analysis will be looking at conformity with the State Implementation Plan, localized effects on sensitive receptors and greenhouse gas emission. The Health Risk Assessment was outlined and a map of receptor sites was presented (Slide 29). A dispersion model will be used. Techniques to be used in the visual analysis were reviewed (Slides 31-33). Views of the tunnel portal and buildings to be added in the portal area will be included in the analysis. A view from inside the tunnel may not be included.

Cost-benefit Analysis: (Slides 37-49) The consultant team introduced the methodology for the cost-benefit analysis and explained terms. The Cal-B/C spreadsheet tool will be used in the analysis. The team indicated that sensitivity testing could include the cost of pollution (possibly through health costs and mortality rates) and that the value of time during commuting could be adjusted to account for being able to work while commuting on transit. Catastrophic events (e.g. a fire in the tunnel) are considered atypical and not normally included in cost-benefit analysis, but the team indicated that it might be possible to include such events in the sensitivity testing using a risk assessment approach.

The analysis, being economic in nature, will be based on current dollars and the value and cost over time will be expressed as Net Present Value in the findings. The presentation was descriptive, rather than quantitative and the team did not disclose what specific values or range of values are being used for constants in the analysis (rate of return, etc.) Tolls and transit fares will not be included as direct costs

in the model – the team explained the economic rationale about why these external costs are adequately incorporated in the other variables in the analysis. More discussion on this subject is expected in the future.

During the public question period, the consultant team explained more fully how they have defined the toll scenarios for the tunnel alternative and variants:

- The single bore (four lane) tunnel will be dynamically tolled (i.e. the amount of toll will vary depending upon level of congestion) to attain an optimal level of traffic operation in the tunnel – this means that the toll will be used to constrain demand for the tunnel so that traffic remains free flowing at all times. The sensitivity testing with the forecast model showed that optimum conditions occur at no more than 1500 vehicles per lane per hour and that an average toll of \$4.00 would be necessary to constrain volume to no more than that level.
- The dual bore (eight lanes) tunnel would have a lower toll since additional roadway capacity is available in that variant. The amount of toll was not specified. It was noted that more traffic would use the dual bore tunnel than would use the single bore tunnel.

4. Next Steps

- Finalize Technical Studies
- Finalize with Preliminary Engineering and Reports
- Continue preparation of the Draft Environmental Document
- Expected release of the Draft EIR/EIS - February 2015

All technical studies will be released concurrently with the DEIR/DEIS and not before.

➤ **Next Meeting:** The next Metro TAC meeting is scheduled for July 9, 2014.

These staff notes and a copy of the Metro's PowerPoint Presentation for this TAC meeting are being posted on the City's SR-710 Website at <http://cityofpasadena.net/SR710/>.

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