



## Environmental Subject Working Group

June 4, 2009

Commerce City Hall, Emergency Operations Center

# MEETING SUMMARY

## INTRODUCTION

On Thursday, June 4, 2009, the I-710 Project Team met with the Environmental Subject Working Group (ESWG) at Commerce City Hall. The purpose of the meeting was to:

- Provide an update on project happenings since the last meeting of the ESWG on April 13, 2009
- Review a comparison matrix outlining how the health related research questions prepared by Human Impact Partners that guide a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) will be addressed in the I-710 EIR/EIS
- Give an overview of the Community Impact Assessment (CIA)—including process, topics covered, and timeline

The meeting was attended by 27 individuals, including nine officially designated members of the ESWG, six interested members of the public, and 12 representatives of the I-710 Project Team.

ESWG members in attendance were Angelo Logan (Commerce LAC), Clara Solis (East LA LAC), Roye Love (Carson LAC); Frances Keeler (Future Ports), David Randall (Montebello Unified School District), Paul Simon (LA County Public Health), Elina Green (UCLA Center for Occupational and Environmental Health); Susan Nakamura (SCAQMD); and Susan Ahn (Long Beach Unified School District). Other meeting attendees included Liz Garcia (City of Commerce), Ian MacMillan (Los Angeles Unified School District), Elena Rodriguez (Long Beach Alliance for Children with Asthma), Ed Milos, Bahram Fazeli (Communities for a Better Environment), and Erin Huffer.

In attendance from the Project Team were Rob McCann, Jayna Goodman, and Megan Mettee (LSA); Nancy Pfeffer (Network Public Affairs); Pat McLaughlin and Jesse Froehlich (MIG); Jack Waldron (URS); Susan Gilmore and Devon Cichoski (Metro); Jerry Wood (GCCOG); and Ron Kosinski and Garrett Damrath (Caltrans).



## PROJECT UPDATES AND MEETING RECAPS

MIG facilitator Pat McLaughlin called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m. and briefly reviewed the agenda for the evening. Ms. McLaughlin reminded participants of the upcoming meeting of the Corridor Advisory Committee (CAC) on June 18, and encouraged their attendance. She then gave a brief recap of the previous ESWG meeting, where members of the group had raised concerns with Caltrans regarding the process for determining significance thresholds; and discussed the relationship between the Air Quality/Health Risk Assessment (AQ/HRA), the EIR/EIS, and the Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP). The group had also prepared comments for the CAC, which ESWG Member Angelo Logan presented at the April 16 CAC meeting. Finally, Ms. McLaughlin reviewed the outcomes of the April 16 CAC meeting, and requested that Jerry Wood of GCCOG do the same for the April 30 Project Committee meeting. Mr. Wood reported that the Project Committee approved: 1) the project geometrics to move forward as long as the Project Team addresses comments from the TAC, LACs, and FHWA, and, 2) the selection of four alternatives to carry forward into the EIR/EIS technical studies (Alternatives 5A, 6A, and 6B).

Ron Kosinski, Deputy Director of Caltrans District 7 gave a brief status update on the AQ/HRA, stating that the study was underway, and that Caltrans had recently conferred with EPA to share the communities' concerns regarding the exclusion of quantitative analysis of certain elements. Although there are a few protocol items still being discussed with EPA, they have had a positive reaction to the overall protocol, according to Mr. Kosinski.

The Group raised the following concerns and discussion points related to the AQ/HRA and Caltrans' process for determining significance thresholds:

- Mr. Logan inquired as to the status of the ESWG's submitted questions, comments and concerns related to the AQ/HRA.
  - Rob McCann of LSA responded that the ESWG's comments would be revisited at the June 18 meeting of the CAC, at which point the Project Team would present formal responses to outstanding questions and issues, as well as additional information pertaining to the AQ/HRA and the group's concerns.
- ESWG Member Susan Nakamura requested more information on Mr. Kosinski's conversation with EPA, noting that EPA, AQMD, and other agencies do specify significance thresholds, and that she recommends Caltrans adopt these established thresholds for the I-710 Corridor Project. Ms. Nakamura stressed the importance of determining significance thresholds in advance of studying the effects of a project, and that SCAQMD's standards would provide an appropriate guideline for the I-710 Corridor Project because the entire study area is contained within the South Coast Air Basin.
  - Mr. Kosinski responded that it is possible significance will be determined in advance and that SCAQMD standards may be used, but the decision will be deferred to a later date as yet to be determined. Caltrans' practice is, as always, to determine significance on a case-by-case basis, based on preliminary study of the project area. He noted that another Caltrans concern is that thresholds set in advance in Los Angeles County for a specific project could set a precedent of these thresholds then needing to be applied statewide rather than case-by-case or area-by-area. Mr. Kosinski stated that he expects a continuing dialogue with

- A clarification was requested regarding timeline.
  - As discussed at the previous meeting, preliminary study findings will be reported near the end of this calendar year, after which point the group will be able to give input on significance determinations and other areas of interest.
- With regard to Health Risk Assessment (HRA), Mr. Logan noted that there are some universal “human-based” significance standards that should not be considered project-specific.
  - Mr. Kosinski acknowledged this point, and again noted that it would be necessary to consult with agencies regarding these standards. Even if quantitative standards exist, numbers often mean different things to different people (or different agencies) when it comes to analysis and policy action. Mr. Kosinski also reminded the group that this project will improve air quality in the corridor, and encouraged members to think of project mitigations as more of “enhancements.”
- Various group members re-emphasized concern with Caltrans’ methodology. Ms. Nakamura stated that HRA is not as fuzzy of a science as many people believe, and that many agencies have established standards.
- ESWG member Paul Simon pointed out that an HRA typically measures health risks in terms of incremental changes as compared to existing conditions. In an area like the I-710 corridor where the baseline condition is so significantly substandard, an HRA may measure large incremental benefits to improvement measures that still yield substandard results. For this reason, more stringent standards should be considered in highly impacted areas such as the I-710 corridor.

Before moving on to the primary agenda items, Mr. Wood called the group’s attention to the bound project notebooks that he had distributed to each ESWG member for their information.

## **COMPARISON OF TOPICS ADDRESSED IN THE I-710 EIR/EIS AND THE HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT (HIA) RESEARCH QUESTIONS PRESENTED BY HUMAN IMPACT PARTNERS**

Mr. McCann began his presentation by thanking Dr. Simon and Mr. Logan for their presentations to the ESWG at the April 13 meeting, noting that they were helpful in clarifying the community’s primary concerns regarding public health. In response to the research questions that had been presented related to health impacts, Mr. McCann drew the group’s attention to printed handouts of a matrix listing the set of research questions, and how each one would be addressed in the I-710 EIR/EIS, supporting technical studies, and/or the AQAP. Mr. McCann first reviewed the numbered classification system for the research questions, which indicate whether each question is (1) already included in the EIR/EIS, (2) can be included if additional information is available from existing sources, (3) will not be included due to lack of relevance to the I-710 Corridor Project or lack of available information, (4) needs further clarification, or (5) will be included in the AQAP. He noted that the majority of the

questions were classified as (1), and went on to highlight a few example research questions from the spreadsheet.

Questions and comments from the group during the discussion on the research questions included:

- A request for more information on the data sources that will inform the CIA and other studies that address the research questions, and a desire to view methodologies and analyses. Members are also interested in follow-through with how impacts will be addressed once they are identified, noting that in the case of the SR-47 EIR/EIS, many impacts were identified but not avoided or mitigated.
  - Mr. McCann noted that this evening's agenda would not allow for detailed discussion of data sources, and that the data sources and methodologies for each component could, in fact, each comprise an entire future meeting agenda. Ms. McLaughlin encouraged members to review the information provided and follow up with topics of interest for more discussion at future meetings.
- ESWG Member Elina Green requested more information on the alternatives under study, noting that a detailed understanding of these is the missing link for the ESWG at this point in terms of really understanding the impacts of the project.
- Ms. Green also inquired whether the Project Team would be open to considering literature and studies that explore the links between the built environment and health issues such as obesity, diabetes, air quality related problems, and others. As a potential resource, she noted that Human Impact Partners (HIP) has an extensive database of such information.
  - Mr. McCann encouraged the group to share any resources they feel are relevant to the project.
- Mr. Logan requested that the Project Team provide more detail on the matrix in terms of the extent to which each of the research questions is addressed.
- ESWG Member Roye Love noted the importance of considering the significant negative impacts that are currently suffered in the corridor, particularly in communities of color, and the history of such injustices.
- In response to a mention of the project timeline and the need to move forward with technical studies, Mr. Logan expressed that, while important, schedule and timeline should not be the primary drivers of decision-making. Rather, sound methodologies, responsiveness to local community needs, and good decision-making should take precedence.
- The group requested that Caltrans do a quantitative analysis of construction impacts based on a reasonable worst case scenario, as is typical for port projects. Mr. Logan noted that the issue of construction impacts is a sticking point for the CAC.
  - Mr. Kosinski noted that a quantitative estimate of overall construction emissions will be performed, but no dispersion modeling will be done for individual construction phases because not enough is known about funding sources, which will affect the eventual staging and phasing (timing) of construction, which, in turn, affect impacts.
- Ms. Nakamura recommended that more information be provided on item 68 on the response matrix, regarding analysis of construction impacts.

- Mr. McCann noted that quantitative analysis of certain construction impacts would be included, as had been outlined by Julia Lester of ENVIRON.

Before continuing with the agenda, Ms. McLaughlin noted the time, and the group agreed to extend the meeting by a half-hour to 8:30 in order to accommodate the remaining agenda items. She again encouraged members to submit outstanding questions regarding the response matrix via email so that the Project Team can present more detail on topics of interest at future meetings.

## **OVERVIEW OF THE COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (CIA)**

Mr. McCann presented a slideshow on the CIA, referring meeting participants to their own printed handouts. He began by reviewing the community impact concerns from the Tier 2 Report. He then went on to outline the process of the CIA, which includes establishing a baseline and affected environment for each analysis topic; analyzing the impacts of CIA components within the project area for each alternative under study; and developing avoidance, minimization, mitigation, and enhancement measures.

Mr. McCann then elaborated on each of the CIA components, which include land use; park and recreation facilities; community character and cohesion (supported by individual community profiles); development trends and growth; environmental justice; economics; community facilities and services; relocations; access and parking; and community perspectives. He emphasized that some of these components will be studied very specifically based on the project study area, and that others are studied on a more regional basis. After explaining the approach to each component in more detail, Mr. McCann reviewed the timeline for the CIA, which parallels that for the AQ/HRA and other technical studies. A draft CIA is scheduled to be completed near the end of the calendar year, followed by a period of review of findings, and development of avoidance, minimization, mitigation, and enhancement measures. The final CIA will be completed in early 2010, and findings will be integrated into the draft EIR/EIS, which will be circulated for public review in late summer 2010. Next steps for the CIA will be to continue the development of the draft community profiles for review by the Local Advisory Committees (LACs) in summer 2009.

Questions and comments from the group regarding the CIA included:

- How are future land uses determined?
  - The study relies on regional plans, general plans, information from school districts, relocation data, and other such sources.
- Clarification was sought as to what was meant by impacts to community facilities, and whether these would be health or other impacts.
  - The study will measure the direct physical effects of impacts to community facilities, for example, if access to a park is changed by an alternative, how might this affect its use by the community? These questions can be quantified to some degree.
- To what level of detail will results be presented? Given that the team must collect baseline data, and then consider the possible impacts of each alternative on each community and on the corridor as a whole, it seems that great detail may be impossible.

- This level of detail will be provided in the complete document and appendices. An executive summary will include tables for those who want an overview. To facilitate review by community members, the CIA report will be structured to have a separate section for each community. Many community members are interested in impacts to their own communities, but the EIR/EIS will also include impacts to the corridor as a whole.
- How will communities be made whole again after relocations? For example, individual business owners can “remain whole” from a financial and business viability perspective by relocating, but a community itself may not remain whole if the services, goods, jobs, or intangible benefits provided by that business are no longer located in the community due to relocation of businesses.
  - This is one of the challenges of the project and it is possible there will be individual instances that cannot be avoided or mitigated. The first objective is to look for relocation opportunities that are as near as possible to the original location.

## **NEXT STEPS**

Ms McLaughlin asked the group for priority topics for discussion at future ESWG meetings. The ESWG decided to revisit the topics of Environmental Justice and Economics at the next meeting. The group was also encouraged to follow up via email ([patm@migcom.com](mailto:patm@migcom.com) or [jessef@migcom.com](mailto:jessef@migcom.com)) if other topics of interest arise.

The next meeting of the Environmental Subject Working Group will be held in about a month. An exact date was left for later determination.

Ms. McLaughlin adjourned the meeting at 8:30 p.m.