

**Metro**PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE
MARCH 14, 2007

SUBJECT: ROUTE 710 TUNNEL

ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE AND AUTHORIZE THE CHIEF
EXECUTIVE OFFICER TO PROGRAM FUNDS FOR ROUTE
710 TUNNEL NEXT STEPSRECOMMENDATION

- A. Receive and file this status update on efforts to advance the tunnel concept on Route 710.
- B. Authorize the Chief Executive Officer to program \$5 million in the 2006 STIP augmentation funds for preliminary engineering and technical studies leading to environmental clearance for the Route 710 Tunnel. Metro's contribution is contingent upon Caltrans programming of \$5 million in Interregional Transportation Improvement Program (ITIP) funds for these studies.

ISSUE

At the December 7, 2006 Board meeting, staff presented the Route 710 Tunnel Technical Feasibility Assessment report. At that meeting, a motion was passed directing Metro staff to work with Caltrans in its effort to initiate the next phase of the Route 710 Tunnel, and to report back to the Board in 90 days with a status update.

With respect to promptly initiating the next steps, Caltrans is drafting a scope of work for the necessary engineering and technical studies that will be utilized in the environmental clearance process.

With respect to forming an advisory group, Caltrans, in consultation with Metro, is in the process of retaining a community outreach facilitator to assist with forming a committee(s) consisting of representatives from affected local jurisdictions and agencies to develop a framework for participation by all of the interested stakeholders.

With respect to funding, Caltrans is currently going through its ITIP process to secure \$5 million in addition to the existing available funds to conduct the next phases of analysis. Caltrans has indicated to Metro that its request for ITIP funds is contingent upon Metro also providing \$5 million. Metro staff is recommending that the Board program \$5 million through the 2006 Los Angeles County's State

Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Augmentation process. The ITIP and STIP augmentation funds along with \$2.4 million in previously earmarked federal SAFETEA-LU funding and \$1 million in previously programmed STIP funding, would be sufficient to conduct preliminary engineering and technical studies.

POLICY IMPLICATION

The programming of \$5 million for the Route 710 Tunnel is consistent with Board direction to promptly initiate the next steps.

ALTERNATIVE CONSIDERED

The Board may choose not to program \$5 million in 2006 STIP augmentation funds for the Route 710 Tunnel next steps. This action may result in the loss of Caltrans \$5 million in ITIP funding since the ITIP fund is contingent upon Metro's contribution. Without ITIP and/or STIP funds, Caltrans may not be able to move forward with the Route 710 Tunnel effort in a timely manner.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The staff recommended \$5 million will be programmed in the 2006 STIP augmentation funds.

BACKGROUND

Staff completed the Route 710 Tunnel Technical Feasibility Assessment in June 2006. Immediately after the completion of the technical assessment, staff conducted an extensive outreach process in order to inform the communities of the assessment findings and obtain their feedback. Comments made by community members as well as agencies were collected and attached to the Assessment report.

At the December 7, 2006 Board meeting, staff presented the Assessment report. At the meeting, a motion was passed directing Metro staff to:

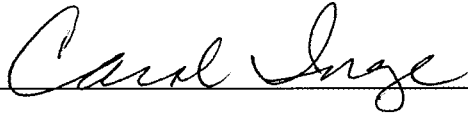
- Work in close coordination with Caltrans to promptly initiate the next steps, including environmental clearance, tunnel alternatives analysis, preliminary engineering, etc.;
- Encourage Metro and Caltrans to form an Advisory Group to ensure interests are represented during the next phase, consisting of SGVCOG, SCAG, LA County Districts 1 and 5, and the cities of Alhambra, Glendale, La Canada-Flintridge, Los Angeles, Monterey Park, Pasadena, San Marino and South Pasadena;

- Support Caltrans' efforts to obtain \$5 million through the Caltrans' ITIP process to add to the \$3.4 million of SAFETEA-LU and State funding already earmarked for the project so that Caltrans can conduct the environmental clearance/tunnel alternatives analysis; and
- Report back to the Board in 90 days to update status of the next steps.

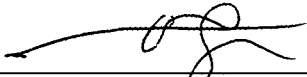
NEXT STEPS

Staff will continue to work with Caltrans to initiate the next steps, and to participate in Route 710 tunnel related committees.

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