



Board Report

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PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE MAY 18, 2022

Motion by:

DIRECTORS HAHN, SOLIS, MITCHELL, AND DUTRA

I-710 South Corridor Motion

The I-710 South Corridor is a 19-mile stretch of the I-710 Freeway, from East Los Angeles in the north to the Ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles in the south. Connecting the ports with shipping and warehousing facilities in Southern California, this corridor is a goods movement corridor of national significance, as 40% of all waterborne or containerized imports into the United States come through the Ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles, which have become California's and America's loading docks. Metro has been studying ways to relieve congestion and improve safety along the I-710 South Corridor for more than two decades.

Of the 1.2 million people who live along the I-710 South Corridor, nearly 1 million, or 83 percent, identify as Black or Hispanic. These residents face some of the worst air quality anywhere in the country, as the corridor accounts for 20% of all particulate emissions in Southern California. The I-710 South is known as the "diesel death zone" owing to very high levels of diesel pollutants within a quarter-mile either side of the freeway. These high levels of pollutants have been linked to health challenges including decreased lung function, asthma, increased lung and heart disease symptoms, and chronic bronchitis in communities along the corridor, which also face long-standing disparities in health and access to healthcare.

In 2018, the Metro Board of Directors voted in favor of the I-710 South Corridor's Environmental Impact Report's recommended "Alternative 5C." That Board decision was contingent on Federal approval, in order to fully fund the project. In 2021, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) formally opposed "Alternative 5C" on the grounds that any increase in vehicles and trucks along the corridor would increase particulate emissions in communities that are already heavily impacted by particulate emissions. Subsequent to that decision, the State of California also announced that it would not support "Alternative 5C."

Beginning in mid-2021, Metro staff initiated a new process to reimagine the corridor, convening a Task Force comprised of stakeholders representing labor, the ports, local elected leadership, goods movement industry, and community-based organizations. That Task Force now also includes several working groups and a Community Leadership Committee to help inform future project direction and decision-making. In addition, the Gateway Cities Council of Governments (COG) convened an Ad

Hoc Committee, comprised of elected leaders representing cities along the corridor, which considered and approved Guiding Principles and Projects and Programs which are the COG's preferred approach for improving the quality of life for corridor residents and enhancing the operational efficiency benefitting the corridor's users.

The steps taken in the past year by Metro to chart the path forward for this project are commendable. Even as the larger capital project has seen the environmental review process need to restart, the challenges along the I-710 South Corridor not only remain but continue in many ways to further deteriorate. The Ports are seeing record imports, and many of these products are being trucked out, on the I-710 Freeway, creating even more congestion along and near the freeway, further exacerbating safety issues and worsening air quality for communities throughout the corridor.

Since the time of the Board's 2018 action on the I-710 South Corridor, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) has adopted a new standard for evaluating freeway projects, known as "The Transportation Analysis Framework: Evaluating Transportation," implementing provisions of SB 743 (Steinberg, 2013), focused on reducing "Vehicle Miles Traveled" (VMT). The State has also adopted the "California Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure," or CAPTI, which aligns the State's transportation infrastructure investments with its climate, health, and equity goals, with a goal of significantly reducing VMT.

Additionally, the Biden-Harris Administration has issued new Federal policies "securing environmental justice and spurring economic opportunity for disadvantaged communities that have been historically marginalized and overburdened by pollution," including Executive Order 14008 and the Justice40 Initiative. The Federal Highway Administration has also issued a policy document associated with implementing the new Bipartisan Infrastructure Law that states, in part, "The Policy prioritizes projects that move more people and freight by modernizing and increasing the operational efficiency of existing roads and highways over projects that expand the general purpose capacity of roads and highways."

The original vision for the I-710 South Corridor was a \$6 billion freeway project, leveraging nearly \$1 billion in local funding to be matched by \$5 billion in State and Federal funding. While most of the local funding remains in Measures R and M, any major investments in the corridor will need State and Federal support, and Metro should seek a similar 5-to-1 State/Federal-to-Local match goal.

SUBJECT: I-710 SOUTH CORRIDOR MOTION

RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE Motion by Directors Hahn, Solis, Mitchell, and Dutra that:

Given that the 710 Task Force will very soon be finalizing the project's Vision Statement, Guiding Principles, and Goals, the Chief Executive Officer shall report back on the Task Force's recommendations for these project directives in June 2022 for Board consideration and approval.

Given the 710 Task Force's pending Vision Statement, Guiding Principles, and Goals, we, further direct that the 710 South Corridor Project shall be renamed, in consultation with the 710 Task Force

and corridor stakeholders, in order to be more inclusive of the priorities and approaches that will be advanced in the future of this project, with attention to more than just the freeway, with a new name to be presented to the Board for consideration and approval in September 2022.

Given that capacity expansion freeway widening will not get support from Caltrans or the U.S. EPA, we adopt as Board policy that capacity expansion freeway widening will no longer be in the project.

We, therefore, further direct the Chief Executive Officer to:

- A. Develop and Implement a project Investment Plan, which:
1. Incorporates feedback from the 710 Task Force and its Working Groups and Community Leadership Committee, the Corridor Cities, and the Gateway Cities Council of Governments, and community stakeholders;
 2. Aligns initiatives with funding opportunities, including:
 - a. An Early Investment Plan for a minimum of three initiatives that will apply for available State and Federal funding opportunities in Calendar Year 2022; and
 - b. A Mid- and Long-Term Investment Plan for initiatives that can reasonably apply for Federal and State funding opportunities in out years;
 3. Leverages applicable Measure R and Measure M funds to maximize deliverables and Federal and State funding matches;
 4. Provides a suite of major investments that can be completed no later than 2028;
 5. Identifies Federal funding opportunities that can be incorporated into the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act “Grants Strategy and 5-Year Implementation Plan” currently under development for presentation to the Metro Board;
- B. Engage the California Department of Transportation and State Transportation Agency, California Air Resources Board, California Energy Commission, and the U.S. Departments of Energy and Transportation and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, to develop guidance around the Mid- and Long-Term Investment Plan.
- C. Engage city, county, and regional partners, including the South Coast Air Quality Management District and Los Angeles Cleantech Incubator, to organize and support local initiatives as part of the project’s Investment Plan; and
- D. Report back in September 2022 on the development and implementation of this Investment Strategy, including the minimum of three initiatives applying for available State and Federal funding in Calendar Year 2022.